



Item No. 9

Meeting Date

Wednesday 25th October 2023

Glasgow City Integration Joint Board Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee

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Welfare Rights and Money Advice Performance 2022-2023

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to report on the performance of Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership's (HSCP) Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team for 2022-23, including details of money advice provision commissioned by the Health Improvement Team. Also included is some activity that is being undertaken as part of a response to the cost of living crisis.

Background/Engagement:

The IJB Finance and Audit Committee noted the first comprehensive Welfare Rights and Money Advice performance report for 2017-18 at its September 2018 meeting. Subsequent annual reports were presented to the Committee in October 2019, October 2020, December 2021 and December 2022.

Recommendations:

The IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

a) note the content of this report.

Relevance to Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan:

Developing a competent, confident and valued workforce, and focusing on continuous improvement within a culture of performance management, openness and transparency.

Implications for Health and Social Care Partnership:

Reference to National Health & Wellbeing Outcome:

Outcome 8. People who work in health and social care services feel engaged with the work they do and are

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	supported to continuously improve the information, support, care and treatment they provide Outcome 9. Resources are used effectively and efficiently in the provision of health and social care services.
Personnel:	The report outlines the current training and support activity and ongoing requirement to remain abreast of developments in welfare reform for frontline social work staff.
Carers:	The report covers the training provided by the Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team to carers centres on relevant benefits matters.
Provider Organisations:	No Implications.
Equalities:	No Implications.
Fairer Scotland Compliance:	By supporting service users to maximise their entitlement to benefits, the HSCP seeks to reduce the impact of socio-economic disadvantage experienced by these citizens. Maximising income enables service users to reduce impacts of poverty and meet the financial costs of daily living. This in turn has a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.
Financial:	<p>The Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team is the main team that provides support and advice to service users, HSCP staff and partner agencies. The total staff complement is 40.7 fulltime equivalent posts for which the annual staff costs are in the region of £2.07m.</p> <p>Over the course of April 2022 to March 2023, across all sections of the Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team, there were a total of 5,239 e-form referrals of which 2,287 were either maximized or required simple advice with the remaining 2,952 proceeding to full assessments. In addition, there were 324 appeal tribunals. Collectively, this has resulted in generating £6.02m in additional benefits.</p>
Legal:	No Implications.
Economic Impact:	Supporting benefit recipients to maximise their entitlement increases the ability of recipients to engage in economic activity within the city and reduces the economic impact of the reduction in benefits experienced as a result of wider benefits reform activity. The Fraser of Allander Institute has in reports quantified the linkage between benefit income being spent in local economies and the creation and retention of local jobs.

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Sustainability:	No Implications.
Sustainable Procurement and Article 19:	No Implications
Risk Implications:	If the performance of the Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team is not recorded, monitored and reported on, then there is a risk that resources are not used as effectively and efficiently as they can be with service improvements identified.
Implications for Glasgow City Council:	Staff will be required to record, analyse and report on HSCP Welfare Rights and Money Advice provision, whether provided or purchased, as part of the HSCP's/IJB's performance reporting arrangements.
Implications for NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde:	As above

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to report on the performance of Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership's (HSCP) Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team for 2022-23, including details of money advice provision commissioned by the HSCP's Health Improvement Team. Also included is some activity that is being undertaken as part of a response to the cost of living crisis.
- 1.2 This is the sixth comprehensive Welfare Rights and Money Advice annual performance report. The IJB Finance and Audit Committee previously noted reports at its [September 2018](#), [October 2019](#), [October 2020](#), [December 2021](#) and [December 2022](#) meetings.

2. Background and Service Description

- 2.1 The HSCP has Welfare Rights and Money Advice provision both within a Social Work and Health context.
- 2.2 **Social Work Directly Provided Provision (Fuller details in Section 3)**
 - 2.2.1 The Social Work Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team is managed centrally as part of the Business Development section within the HSCP. The service is integrated across the HSCP and provides assistance to frontline staff so they can support service users to ensure that their benefits are maximised. Most service users rely on one or more benefits, many of which continue to be affected under the UK Government's welfare reforms, and the forthcoming managed migration to Universal Credit. In addition, many disabled service users are in the process of migration to the Scottish Government's Adult Disability Payment. With the continuing impacts of the cost-of-living crisis it is important that service users are supported to maximise their benefit entitlement by frontline staff and where matters are of a more complex nature, the Welfare Rights team take referrals and work directly with service users.

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2.2.2 The service is delivered via several sub-teams at centre and in each of the HSCP's three localities. These are:

- Income Maximisation Team
- Appeals Team
- Information and Training Team and
- three area Locality Teams (North East, North West and South).

2.2.3 There is also a centralised Welfare Rights and Money Advice function relating to the Debt Arrangement Scheme (DAS).

2.2.4 Outwith the Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team, there is Social Work's Financial Assessment Income Team (FAIT). The FAIT team focuses on supporting service users and their representatives to complete financial assessments for chargeable services, working closely with the Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team.

2.3 Health Purchased Service Provision (fuller details in Section 4)

2.3.1 There is a partnership between the Glasgow City Council Financial Inclusion Team located in Glasgow City Council's Chief Executive Department and the HSCP. This offers a range of local money advice services for NHS staff to make referrals regarding patients and service users. Fuller details are in Section 4 of this report.

3 Social Work Directly Provided Provision

3.1 Social Work Income Maximisation Team

3.1.1 The Income Maximisation Team is a centre-based team that supports service users across the city who receive a chargeable non-residential care service to maximise their income. These services include Home Care, Day Care, Tele-care Alarms and Personalisation.

3.1.2 The Income Maximisation Team has read-only access to the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) Client Index System (CIS/Searchlight). This allows staff to identify service users who are already in receipt of their maximum benefit entitlement, and it enables the appropriate charge for the service to be applied without the need for a visit to the service user. Any service users where their income appears to be less than their benefit entitlement, or who are not in receipt of an appropriate disability benefit, are contacted by staff in the team, and they are supported to make any appropriate benefit claims.

3.1.3 Number of Financial Assessments. During 2022-23, there were 2,477 referrals to the Income Maximisation Team, this was slightly up on 2,293 in 2021-22. Of these referrals, 1,528 proceeded to a full assessment, down on 1,869 in 2021-22, with the remainder being already maximised.

3.1.4 Benefit Claim Volumes. The types of benefits most commonly under-claimed by service users who get a chargeable service are the disability benefits, and the Income Maximisation Team is often able to increase the rate of award of those benefits. The following table details the number of benefit claims and

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their type made for service users over the 12 months to April 2023. The disability benefits of Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payments (PIP) account for 33% of the claims. A further 39% relates to consequential additional entitlement, mainly Council Tax Exemption and Severe Disability Premium. The success rate for concluded benefit claims is 88% (compared to 92% last year). The number of claims made over this period is down on the previous year, 377 compared to 519, this being primarily due to the number of clients already having their benefits maximised.

Table: Number of Benefit Claims by Benefit Type and Percentage Breakdown.

Benefit Claim	Attendance Allowance	Carers Allowance	Council Tax Reduction / Exemption	Disability Living Allowance	Employment and Support Allowance	Housing Benefit	Scottish Welfare Fund	Pension Credit	Personal Independence Payment	Severe Disability Premium	State Pension	Universal Credit/Tax Credits	Total
Claims 2021-22	139	12	161	15	23	27	7	38	42	40	2	13	519
% 21-22	27%	2%	31%	3%	4%	5%	2%	7%	8%	8%	0%	3%	100%
2022-23	94	10	103	9	21	11	5	50	22	45	1	6	377
% 22-23	25%	3%	27%	2%	6%	3%	1%	13%	6%	12%	0%	2%	100%

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- 3.1.5 Financial Gains Arising from Successful Claims. In 2022-23 the team generated £3.39m in additional benefits for service users. Of this amount, £1.40m was arrears of benefit and £1.99m was ongoing entitlement (see table below). This is an increase on the combined gain of £2.32m in 2021-22.

Table: Financial Gains Arising from Successful Claims

Period	Arrears	Annual Additional Benefit	Combined
April 2021 to March 2022	£647k	£1.67m	£2.32m
April 2022 to March 2023	£1.40m	£1.99m	£3.39m

- 3.1.6 The workload for the Income Maximisation Team remains high due to the number of service users that receive a chargeable service. The charging policy has expanded over the years to cover Telecare, Personalisation and Day Care in addition to traditional Home Care.
- 3.1.7 The impact of many benefit savings under the UK Government's Welfare Reform agenda has to date not had such a detrimental impact on older people who are the predominant group of service users by the Income Maximisation Team and have been exempted from the majority of the welfare reforms. Also, younger service users supported by this team have significant disabilities, and as such they have been able to achieve the tougher disability tests to maintain the same level of disability benefits. Furthermore, the receipt of the disability benefit for younger service users has in turn provided protection from other changes such as the Benefit Cap. Currently the disability benefits are moving from Department of Work and Pensions to the Scottish Government/Social Security Scotland and service users will require support to transition to these new benefits. Child Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments have now been replaced by Scottish Benefits Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment for all new claimants. The remaining benefit to replace Attendance Allowance is planned to be rolled out at some point in 2024. Existing claimants of the legacy DWP disability benefits will remain on those benefits and will be transitioned to the new benefits through managed migration.

3.2 Social Work Appeals Team

- 3.2.1 The Appeals Team represents Social Work service users and other Glasgow residents at Social Security Appeal Tribunals to challenge unfavourable benefit decisions. The volume of appeals and scheduling is under the control of HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS), and HSCP Welfare Rights Officers are invited to participate where they are cited as the representative by the person pursuing the appeal. There is a service level agreement with the HSCP that specifies the maximum number of appeals that the HSCP can represent at in any one week; there is however no minimum level. During the COVID-19 pandemic, HMCTS scheduled appeals below the maximum and this continued through 2022-23.
- 3.2.2 Number of Benefit Appeal Tribunals. In the year to 31 March 2023, the Appeals Team was contacted by HMCTS to represent service users and residents at 324 appeal hearings. This was up on 298 appeals in 2021-22.

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- 3.2.3 Types of Appeals. The majority of appeals continue to relate to disability benefits (refer to the following table). This year the HSCP has seen fewer Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and an increase in Personal Independence Payments (PIP) appeals. The HSCP has not yet seen the expected increase in the number of Universal Credit (UC) appeals. Since September 2019, all new, unfit-for-work claimants were required to claim UC instead of the former means-tested Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). The HSCP had anticipated that the number of UC appeals would start to rise and that the number of appeals for the legacy benefits would start to fall. DWP has reduced the reassessment of existing ESA awards pending migration to UC. Also, PIP awards are no longer being routinely reviewed by DWP as these are now in the process of transitioning to the Scottish Government's Adult Disability Payment (ADP).

3.2.4 Table: Number of Appeals by Benefit Type and Percentage Breakdown

Benefit Type/Appeal	Other benefit	Carers Allowance	Child Benefit	Tax Credits	Disability Living Allowance and AA	Employment and Support Allowance	Housing Benefit	Income Support / Job Seekers Allowance	Pension Credit	Personal Independence	Universal Credit	Total
2021-22	3	2	3	1	33	14	4	4	1	198	35	298
Percentage	1.0 %	0.7 %	1.0 %	0.3 %	11.1 %	4.7 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	0.3 %	66.4 %	11.7 %	100%
2022-23	1	5	0	2	16	3	1	0	3	265	28	324
Percentage	0.3 %	1.5 %	0.0 %	0.6 %	4.9 %	0.9 %	0.3 %	0.0 %	0.9 %	81.8 %	8.6 %	100%

- 3.2.5 In 2022-23 there was an 8.7% increase in the number of appeal tribunals hearings where we were the representatives. This is in contrast to the 35% decrease in 2021-22. Of the appeals in 2022-23, 56 were conducted by telephone hearings, 20 by video hearings and 248 where the appellant attended in person. The year before most appeals were conducted by video appeal with only 20 in-person appeals. HMCTS is continuing to have a maximum of two video/telephone appeals in any one session. This still means that fewer appeals were being heard than in previous years.

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3.2.6 Table: Number of appeals sessions and number of appeals

	No of Appeal Sessions	Number of appeals
2021-22	210	298
2022-23	190	324
Percentage Change	-10%	+8.7%

3.2.7 The HSCP has again this year compared its appeal numbers with the same three local authorities as last year to ensure that there was nothing unusual about the volume of appeals within Glasgow. There is again this year a large reduction across these local authorities. However, the reduction in Glasgow is markedly less than is being experienced in these authorities elsewhere (see table below). In 2022-23, North Lanarkshire started supporting service users to go through the Mandatory Reconsideration process (see 6.4) and supported 293 residents, this may account for their drop in appeals in 2022-23.

3.2.8 Table: Change in Appeal numbers in Glasgow and three other Local Authorities for comparison.

Council	No of appeals 2020-21	Percentage Reduction in 2020-21	No of Appeals 2021-22	Percentage Reduction in 2021-22	No of Appeals 2022-23	Increase / Decrease
Glasgow	462	45%	298	35%	324	8.7% increase
North Lanarkshire	440	42%	217	50%	139	36% decrease
North Ayrshire	400	36%	197	51%	361	83% increase
Dundee	112	45%	44	60%	Not available	

3.2.9 Success Rate of Concluded Appeals and Total Amount Gained. Of the 324 appeals, 264 were concluded with a 66% success rate, which was up on the previous year's success rate of 54%. The success rate in previous years had remained relatively static around 65%. Over the last few years, the HSCP had anticipated a drop in the success rate to reflect the ever-toughening rules for benefits. A factor attributable to the reduction in success rate in 2021-22 was the screening by HMCTS to allow some appeals without the need for a hearing; this was a COVID-19 measure that has since been dropped.

3.2.10 The total amount gained from appeals in the year to 31 March 2023 was £1.34m containing £593K in annualised ongoing entitlement and £743k in backdated benefit. The total gain is up on last year's figure of £1.04m. The increase is to be expected due to the increase in the number of appeals. The average financial gain for successful appeals was £7,678, which is down on last year's figure of £10,505 but up on £6,268 for 2020-21.

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3.3 Social Work Information and Training Team

3.3.1 During the whole of 2020-21, welfare rights training provision was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Training to frontline Social Work staff and voluntary organisations recommenced in 2021-22 in an online form using MS Teams. In 2022-23 the HSCP returned to delivering training face-to-face (see table at 3.3.3 below).

3.3.2 The Information and Training Team keeps abreast of all benefit changes. During 2022-23 the team continued the practice, which started during COVID-19 restrictions, of providing HSCP Welfare Rights Officers with regular email updates to ensure they were up to date with the many benefit changes so that they could in turn support Social Work staff and service users.

3.3.3 Table showing the number of training events delivered during 2022-23 and for 2021-22

2021-22									
Training Subject	Benefits Entitlement for EEA Nationals	General Benefits	Universal Credit	Employment & Support Allowance	Universal Credit SDP Gateway	Personal Independence	Disability Benefits Case transfers	Child Disability Payment	Benefits for Carers
76 Events	20	15	19	3	11	5	1	1	1

2022-23									
Training Subject	Benefits Entitlement for EEA Nationals	General Benefits	Universal Credit	Scottish Benefits	Cost of Living	Adult Disability payment Payments	Scottish Welfare Fund	Child Disability Payment	Other
109 Events	7	11	21	24	11	24	4	3	4

3.3.4 In addition to the above, there was also input to local and national forums. This included online presentations to several of the quarterly Rights Advice Scotland conferences.

3.4 Social Work Debt Arrangement Scheme

3.4.1 The Debt Arrangement Scheme (DAS) is a scheme set up by the Scottish government to support people to pay back debts in a manageable way without the threat of court action from the creditors. On the introduction of the Debt Arrangement Scheme (DAS) in 2004 there was a requirement to have specifically trained advisers to work in this area of debt advice. Since then, the

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requirement to have specially accredited works has been removed and now this is delivered by advice projects themselves. The HSCP does not take on any new DAS cases but there are however existing cases that will take up to 10 years for the client to complete their repayment plan. There is one worker who supports the ongoing DAS cases, which amounts to less than a 0.5 FTE post.

3.4.2 There is a continuing promotion of the DAS scheme as part of the HSCP's general Welfare Rights and Money Advice training to up-skill other agencies and encourage them to use DAS themselves.

3.4.3 The level of activity within the DAS caseload is set out in the table below.

Table: DAS Activity

Activity	2021-22	2022-23
The total number of open DAS cases on Advice Pro	78	71
Total debt contained within those DAS cases	£1.74m	£1.57m
The number of new cases during financial year	0	0

3.5 Social Work Area Locality Teams

3.5.1 Within each of the HSCP's three localities (North East, North West and South) there is a sub-team of Welfare Rights Officers who provide support to frontline Social Work staff to deal with the benefit issues of their service users. This support builds on the training provided by the Information and Training Team and further enables frontline staff to support service users. Where matters are of a complex or complicated nature then the Welfare Rights Officer will take a referral and work directly with the service user to address benefit and debt issues. It is important that the correct balance is maintained between taking referrals and being available to provide support to frontline staff.

3.5.2 The locality-based staff also provide the following support:

- support to Housing Association tenants where there is risk of an eviction
- support to Community Case Work Teams
- ongoing support to Kinship Carers where there are benefit issues. There are approximately 1,000 Kinship Carers looking after approximately 1,300 children from Glasgow
- checking Residential Care financial assessments in conjunction with the Financial Assessment and Income Team (FAIT) (see Section 3.6 below) and
- support to service users who are still going through migration process to new benefits and
- support to staff in Glasgow Life's Family Finance Key Worker project.

3.5.3 Within South Locality there is the Roma Project where there is a dedicated Welfare Rights Officer working directly with the Roma community.

3.5.4 From the new e-forms that were implemented in 2020-21, the team has been able to record the number of referrals and how many of those progressed to a full assessment. Outcomes of benefit claims made within the localities are also now recorded where services share this information (see tables below).

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3.5.5 Table: Number of referrals within the locality teams and those that proceeded to a full assessment

Year	Referrals	Full Assessments
2022-23	2,762	1,424
2021-22	2,383	1,287

3.5.6 Table: Number of Successful Benefit Claims in 2022-23 notified to locality team by Service Users by Benefit Type

Benefit Claim	Attendance Allowance	Carers Allowance	Child Benefit	Council Tax Reduction / Exemption	State Retirement Pension	Disability Living Allowance	Employment and Support Allowance	Child Tax Credit	Pension Credit	Personal Independence Payment	Adult Disability Payment	Child Disability Payment	Universal Credit	Other	Total
2022-23	39	5	33	8	5	7	11	6	11	137	10	19	25	4	320
% 22-23	12%	2%	10%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	43%	3%	6%	8%	1%	100%

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3.5.7 Table: Number of Successful Benefit Claims notified by service users for previous year 2021/22 for comparison.

Benefit Claim	Attendance Allowance	Carers Allowance	Child Benefit	Council Tax Reduction / Exemption	Discretionary Housing Payment	Disability Living Allowance	Employment and Support Allowance	Housing Benefit	Pension Credit	Personal Independence Payment	Severe Disability Premium	Scottish Welfare Fund	Universal Credit	Other	Total
2021-22	41	17	27	32	7	37	33	12	38	169	14	21	52	12	512
% 21-22	8%	3%	5%	6%	1%	7%	6%	2%	7%	33%	3%	4%	10%	2%	100%

3.5.8 There was a drop in the number of recorded outcomes primarily due to many service users already being in receipt of the full benefit entitlement but also due to service users not having their disability benefits reviewed by DWP in anticipation of migration to the Scottish Disability Benefits. From the decisions on benefit in 2022-23, the locality teams generated £1.29m in additional annualised on-going benefit. This is down on £1.7m last year but proportional to the number of recorded successful claims. This does not however include all successful outcomes as service users do not always advise of their successful claim.

3.6 Social Work Financial Assessment and Income Team (FAIT)

3.6.1 Within the HSCP, the Financial Assessment and Income Team (FAIT) supports the Community Care Finance section and care managers in relation to charging for Residential Care and Adults Services service users. All associated financial assessment guidance and support is done through FAIT. Through the work of the FAIT this reduces the care manager's work in this area and allows them to concentrate on support and care management rather than dealing with financial assessments. The team uses the DWP's Searchlight system and Glasgow City Council Revenues and Benefits Academy system to verify figures. FAIT ensures that income collected through client contributions for the care and support the service user receives is correctly charged. FAIT also refers to the Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team to ensure that income is maximised. The FAIT carries out preventative work with regards to debt management with service users.

3.6.2 The FAIT works in partnership with a selection of services including care managers, Care Home Finance Team, Adults Finance Team, Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team, DWP, Glasgow City Council Customer and Business Services, Local Authority Care Home staff, service providers, Adults with Incapacity staff and the HSCP Commissioning Team. FAIT brings these areas together to deliver a service to some of the HSCP's most vulnerable service users to complete financial assessments.

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- 3.6.3 The FAIT provides a more robust and holistic assessment process to service users ensuring income is maximised in all cases and that the financial assessment information is received timeously. The financial assessment process can become particularly complex when property and capital are involved, as well as when there are vulnerable service users who lack capacity. The team ensures the information in these instances is collated and passed to the Care Home Finance Team who assess and monitor service users within these categories to ensure the accuracy of the assessment and ensure that the HSCP is reimbursed for any funding that has been provided when capital/property cannot be accessed by the service user.
- 3.6.4 In 2022-23 the team supported 1,368 service users within Older People Services and 1,331 within Adult Services through the financial assessment process – a total of 2,699. This was a 14% increase from year 2021-22 where the team supported 1,277 and 1,100 service users respectively – a total of 2,377.
- 3.6.5 As COVID-19 restrictions were easing during year 2022-23, FAIT Finance Officers started to resume basing themselves at SW area team localities – this ensures continuing collaborative working between FAIT and care managers.
- 3.6.6 Home visits to service users or their representatives has also resumed. This can be at a service user's home address if non-residential care or at a care home for residential service users. This helps to complete the financial assessment process and ensures a correct charge is applied quicker.
- 3.6.7 Points to note for year 2023/24:
- for non-residential assessments FAIT now includes disability related expenditure (DRE) as part of assessment. This ensures a service user's expenditure over and above their care package is included if it is as a result of their disability and
 - for HSCP care home debts, there will be a dedicated finance officer that will be pursuing these.

4. Health Purchased Service Provision

4.1 Financial Inclusion Partnership

The HSCP is a key funding partner with Glasgow City Council for Financial Inclusion services across the city. This supports community-based NHS staff to make direct referrals for patients who have money worries, to a range of dedicated money advice providers

- 4.1.1 In 2022-23, NHS staff across the Financial Inclusion Partnership made 4,771 referrals; this represents a 6% decrease compared to 2021-22 (5,074). Significantly, 68% of referrals (3,260) were made by NHS staff groups (e.g., Health Visiting, Midwifery) engaging with families with children under 5 years old, therefore contributing to mitigation of child poverty.
- 4.1.2 3,456 clients received a service in 2022-23, a 3% decrease compared to 2021-22 (3,552). Almost £5.6m in financial gains was achieved for clients. This was fairly evenly split between Early Years and other NHS clients at £2.6m and £3m, respectively.

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- 4.1.3 In addition, there was a noticeable increase in debt managed for clients, at over £1.5m (£325k housing debt, £1.2m non-housing debt); this was more than double the £770k debt managed in 2021/22. Reports of increased gas and electricity arrears and use of personal loans and credit cards to cope with the unprecedented rise in living costs will be contributing factors to this increase. Similarly, there was a large increase in Council Tax managed at £295k (compared to £90k in 2021-22).

4.2 Welfare Advice and Health Partnerships

- 4.2.1 The two-year Scottish Government funded programme to embed delivery of a Welfare Rights service in General Practice commenced in February 2022, overseen by HSCP Health Improvement staff and the Improvement Service. In 2022-23, 84 GP Practices across Glasgow City participated in the programme: 1 citywide practice, 35 North East, 26 North West and 22 South. Each Practice receives one day per week of Welfare Rights Advisor time, including half a day to directly engage with patients and half a day to process resulting tasks. A dedicated advisor is aligned to each GP Practice to provide continuity of care.
- 4.2.2 The initial impact of the service has been exceptionally positive. In 2022-23, 5,472 referrals were made by GP Practice staff resulting in 7,803 individual Welfare Rights and Money Advice cases; £5m in financial gains was achieved for patients. In addition, £1.6m in debt was managed, the majority (£1.2m) for non-housing debt, including gas and electricity arrears, personal loans and credit card use for essential living costs.

4.3 Maternity Matters

- 4.3.1 Maternity Matters, the Money and Debt with Advocacy Service for women attending the Special Needs in Pregnancy Service (SNiPS), is a specialist service that supports vulnerable women during pregnancy. Some women accessing the service may have left the care system, be survivors of domestic abuse, asylum seekers, ex-offenders and/or be experiencing substance misuse problems, mental health issues or other vulnerabilities. In 2022-23, 190 referrals were made to the service with 292 repeat clients, increases of 25% and 13% respectively in comparison to 2021/22. Clients achieved financial gains of £553k and total debt managed was £89k, increases of 45% and 75% respectively compared to 2021-22. 90% of clients had an annual income of <£15k with 36% <£6k. A total of 98 travel cards were provided to women who had no money to pay for travel to their maternity appointments.

4.4 Thrive Under 5 (TU5)

- 4.4.1 TU5 is an early intervention project to support healthy weight for children under 5 years old, with a focus on mitigating food insecurity and child poverty. The project operates in three neighbourhood areas: Ruchazie / Garthamloch / Cranhill (North East), Drumchapel (North West) and Priesthill, Househillwood, Nitshill and Pollok (South). The project has now received Year 3 funding and has been extended until May 2024.
- 4.4.2 Participating families receive a financial health check (via Money Matters) and gain access to a suite of enhanced supports in line with their needs. These include vouchers for fuel and cooking equipment, weekly access to recipes and meal packs (for 8 weeks) and food pantry membership vouchers with

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tokens. The project has also worked in partnership with the Alexandra Rose Charity to provide access to free fruit and vegetables in Drumchapel and Ruchazie.

- 4.4.3 In 2022-23, 254 families were referred to the service. 142 families received meal packs (1,136 meals), 135 families received food pantry memberships (equating to 1,620 'shops'), 87 families received cooking equipment items and 190 families were supported to access Alexandra Rose vouchers to spend on fruit and vegetables.

4.5 Parkhead Nursery Test of Change

- 4.5.1 HSCP Health Improvement staff, Parkhead Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and Parkhead Nursery implemented a test of change to explore awareness of child benefits offered by Social Security Scotland and support families to uptake entitlements. 41 families responded to a parent consultation in April 2022, which identified knowledge gaps in relation to Best Start Grant, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment. Subsequently, Nursery staff referred 30 families to the Parkhead CAB Money Advisor for a benefit check between March and October 2022. Applications were completed for Personal Independence Payment, Child and Adult Disability Living Allowance, limited capacity for work (Universal Credit), Income Support, Child Benefit, School Clothing Grant and the Early Learning Payment. This resulted in financial gains of £22,935. In addition, assistance was provided with managing council tax debt, rent arrears, reductions in Universal Credit overpayment, kinship care support, child maintenance and applying for a home improvement loan. This work has now concluded.

5. Support to Internal and External Groups

- 5.1 With continuous Government changes to welfare benefit entitlement and also the current cost of living crisis, there has been a consistent need for the HSCP Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team to participate in a number of steering groups and boards to provide welfare reform updates, as well as expert advice on benefit issues. There are also several benefits that are in the process of being devolved to the Scottish Government, requiring the introduction of new Scottish Regulations that will continue this need.
- 5.2 Corporate groups supported by the Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team during 2022-23 and continuing include:
- Corporate Welfare Reform Group. The HSCP takes the lead on the following three workstreams:
 - Personal Independence Payments
 - Engagement and
 - Council Charging
 - Poverty Leadership Panel (PLP)
 - Scottish Welfare Fund Steering Group
 - Benefit Cap Group
 - No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Internal Group
 - Kinship Care Steering Group and
 - Child Poverty Steering Group.

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5.3 The team also provides input to external groups:

- Scottish Government Illness and Disability Benefits Advisory Group
- Scottish Government Terminal Illness Implementation Group
- Scottish Government Data Sharing (Benefits) Steering Group
- Scottish Government Benefit Take Up Group
- Social Security Scotland Operational Reference Group
- Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Scottish Customer Representatives Group
- No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Scotland Network
- Rights Advice Scotland and
- Welfare Rights training to voluntary organisations.

6. Summary Analysis

- 6.1 The figures in this year's performance report show an increase in the amount of money that the HSCP has been able to generate for service users. There is also an increase in the number of appeal tribunals, but this is still lower than in the years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. While it was to be expected that there would be a drop in appeal numbers during the COVID-19 pandemic, consideration has been given to whether there are other reasons or if the drop in numbers is indicative of people giving up after the Mandatory Reconsideration or unable to connect with the service.
- 6.2 Appeals tribunal representation is provided wider than just to HSCP service users. Several local advice agencies use the HSCP's Welfare Rights and Money Advice service where they do not have resources to do it. We ensure that we emphasise the importance of pursuing matters to an appeal as part of our training to HSCP staff and to external organisations.
- 6.3 Many of the HSCP's appeals for Personal Independent Payments (PIP) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) are for repeat service users who need to engage with the appeal process every time their benefit is reassessed by DWP. Many are already familiar with the process for lodging appeals and nominating the HSCP's Welfare Rights and Money Advice service as their representative. At present, the reassessment of these benefits are not being conducted due to the migration of ESA to Universal Credit and also the migration of PIP to Adult Disability Payment.
- 6.4 Several years ago the DWP introduced a requirement for all claimants to pursue an internal process called a Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) before being given a formal right of appeal. The purpose of this process was to reduce the number of appeals. Initially this new process did not significantly impact on the number of appeals in Glasgow. It may be that this process is now achieving the Government's original objective. The HSCP is giving consideration to providing an extension of its Appeals Team's remit to also provide support to those going through the MR process. This may increase the chance of a successful MR and also provide a connection that may enable those unsuccessful at MR to proceed with our support to an appeal.

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- 6.5 Although there were more referrals to the Welfare Rights Team this year there were fewer claims lodged primarily due to many service users already receiving their full entitlement. Also, periodic reviews of benefit elements for those benefits migrating to new benefits were not taking place. As such our input to make new claims was not required. Where we were able to identify claims for benefits the results recorded show a higher income generation than last year.
- 6.6 There has also been longer delays with both DWP and Social Security Scotland decision making, currently disability benefits decisions are taking in excess of 6 months. The Welfare Rights Team has access to the DWP database where staff can check decisions but only for cases involving chargeable services. We do not have access for any other purposes and therefore the service relies on service users to advise of the outcome of their benefits claims. At present we can see details of the Scottish benefits within the DWP's database but again only for those receiving a chargeable service. A Scottish data sharing arrangement should be in place in the coming year.

7. Future

- 7.1 The transition to devolve the 11 benefits from the DWP to the Scottish Government has been progressing. Child Disability Payment was introduced towards the end of 2021 and Adult Disability Payment was rolled out across Scotland on 29 August 2022. The Scottish Child Payment was extended to children over the age of 6 from 14 November 2022. We are still to see the introduction of Pension Age Disability Payment to replace Attendance Allowance, this is expected to commence in 2024.
- 7.2 Scottish Carer Support Payment replacing the UK Carers Allowance will be piloted from 20 November 2023 with national roll out from Spring 2024.
- 7.3 The role of Social Security Scotland has expanded significantly and now plays a major part in delivering benefits in Scotland. The DWP and HM Revenue and Customs still administer the UK-wide benefits, and with Local Authorities also delivering benefits on behalf of both DWP and Scottish Government, the benefit landscape has become far more complex. This will mean that the Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team will continue to be involved in further consultation processes and will need to provide training and support to HSCP frontline staff and to local organisations on the new system and how it interacts with existing benefits.
- 7.4 The DWP has announced a migration timetable to move existing claimants of legacy means tested benefits to Universal Credit, which will present many HSCP service users with challenges to move to a monthly payment and to engage with DWP via a computer or other digital device.
- 7.5 The cost of living will continue to be a factor affecting the finances of all HSCP service users and the importance of benefit maximisation will continue to be a priority.

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- 7.6 The HSCP is taking over responsibility for the Pensioner Poverty Team from the Chief Executive's Department. The HSCP will deliver a benefit maximisation service to residents over the age of 75 who are identified from Council Tax Records as not being in receipt of a disability benefit.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 The IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
- a) note the content of this report.