



Impact and Evaluation of GP advice service in Camden

"I think that having someone who can understand a bit more about the social determinants of health...is a crucial part of what you might call contemporary general practice. The aim should be to expand the service... Patients in every practice in Camden, and indeed in north-central London, should have the ability to access a CAB worker." Camden GP

"I couldn't have done it without them. I couldn't have done it at all. I had no help around me. Everything was bleak. It was a godsend. I was extremely grateful I can't even put it into words. What can I say? They are lifesavers." GP advice service client

"The CAB service provides enormous economic benefits by reducing the workload of GPs and secondary services, as well as of mental health and social services within the community. It would be disastrous to take away something that's been so successful." Camden GP

Fiveways 
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1. Executive Summary

Camden CAB provides free information, advocacy and casework support for those who live, work and study in the London Borough of Camden.

One element of this is advice in GP surgeries via weekly or fortnightly sessions to patients, designed to reduce barriers to access for clients, notably regarding travel, trust, and ease of securing an appointment. During 2016-17 more than 517 individual patients used the GP advice service.

In response to a review of funding for the service expected during 2017, in June 2017 Camden CAB commissioned an independent organisation, Fiveways, to evaluate the GP advice service. The research aimed in particular to understand how the service makes a difference to those that use it, and what impact it has on the settings in which it is based.

The research methodology for this evaluation was a blended approach of a quantitative online survey with clients and in-depth telephone interviews with clients and with staff from the outreach settings, mainly GPs.

A total of 111 clients who had used the service since April 2016 took part in the survey. An additional 16 in-depth telephone interviews were completed, 9 with clients and 7 with professionals (predominantly GPs) from a range of delivery settings.

The key findings from the research with clients were as follows:

- Four out of five clients (81%) reported experiencing some positive change as a result of using the service, The most commonly reported change was respondents feeling less stressed, with two-thirds (66%) agreeing with this
- More than half of respondents (53%) reported being better able to deal with problems in the future, and just under half (43%) felt better able to manage their health
- A quarter of clients (24%) reported that the help from Camden CAB in the surgery resulted in them having to visit the GP less often
- Whilst the GP service clearly had value for most clients, for some the significance was huge –29% agreed with the statement that the help 'saved my life', with one in fourteen of all survey respondents (7%) strongly agreeing with this. Feedback from some interviewees supported this finding
- Approximately half of clients (45%) said that they were unlikely to have gone to another CAB office or another advice centre – for these clients the setting of the support was critical
- The vast majority of respondents (80%) were satisfied with the Camden CAB service and described the information and support they received as helpful (85%).

The key findings from the research with GPs and health professionals were as follows:

- All four GPs and the clinical psychologist (CP) interviewed mentioned the positive effect Camden CAB service has on their patients' mental and physical health

- All interviewees agreed that having an expert on social issues in-house saves them time trying to resolve issues outside of their areas of expertise
- Interviewees considered the convenience of the service to be important for their patients, especially those with disabilities or mental health issues
- GPs felt strongly that the CAB service saved their practice money by reducing attendances (especially from frequent attenders and even from the patient's family), reducing referrals to psychiatric services, and reducing prescriptions for antidepressants and anti-anxiety medication
- All four GPs and the clinical psychologist mentioned that the service reduces their workload (by not spending so much time on social issues) and their levels of stress.

The main conclusions are as follows:

- The research has demonstrated that providing the Camden CAB service in GP practices has a positive effect on patients, GPs, GP practices and the health system more widely
- The service is highly regarded by professionals and clients alike, who agree that it leads to positive change and can be genuinely transformative and indeed life-saving for some clients
- The service helps to reduce pressure on GPs and increase resources and resilience in general practice, saving GPs time and reducing service demand. The CAB service, therefore, is delivering the 2016 NHS General Practice Forward View objective to manage avoidable patient demand, and simultaneously release clinician time and improve care for patients
- The service also appears to have benefits for the funder, Camden CCG, by delivering its new model of care and its mental health mandate. It is an effective example of embedding prevention at every level of care, and it is an example of the CCG working with public health and key stakeholders to tackle the social determinants of health including housing, relationships, employment and debt.

2. Introduction

2.1 Camden CAB

Camden CAB¹ provides free information, advocacy and casework support for those who live, work and study in the London Borough of Camden. The charity provides independent, impartial and confidential advice on a comprehensive range of issues, with a high percentage of the work involving welfare benefits, debt and housing.

Camden CAB service is provided at the following locations across Camden:

- Kentish Town and Regents Park offices, where a 'drop-in' session is provided. No appointments are required, although residents can book appointments to receive specialist advice and advocacy casework to assist with debt and welfare benefits issues
- Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children
- The Royal Free Hospital Trust – service at both the Oncology Department and Renal service
- HIV services at Mortimer Market Centre and Royal Free Ian Charleson Day Centre
- Camden Health Improvement Project
- The Hive Youth Hub.

Camden CAB service is provided by both paid members of staff and volunteers from the local community. It is a registered charity and funded by a wide variety of sources (see Appendix).

2.2 Citizens Advice at GP surgeries

Advice in GP surgeries is delivered by Camden CAB using employed specialist advice workers. The service provides free independent advice, information, and advocacy on a range of issues including welfare benefits, debt, housing and employment.

Camden CAB provides advice appointments at weekly or fortnightly sessions to patients at the GP surgeries, Health Centres and West Hampstead Women's Centre (full list below). Appointments are either made by GP staff or through Citizens Advice Camden. The advice service is open to any patient/user of the service. The service is designed to reduce barriers to access for clients, notably regarding travel, trust, and ease of securing an appointment.

The service was first delivered in 1994 when a growing awareness of the links between poverty and health prompted Camden and Islington FHSA to fund Camden CAB to deliver two advice sessions at Adelaide Road, Swiss Cottage and Kentish Town Health Centre. The service is now funded by the Camden Clinical Commissioning Group (CCCG) and currently is providing sessions at the following venues:

- Adelaide Medical Centre
- Bloomsbury Medical Centre (fortnightly)
- Brondesbury Medical Centre

¹ The term Camden CAB is used to describe the charity throughout this report, reflecting the name most familiar to clients and others involved in the research. It is noted that the organisation is now known as Citizens Advice Camden

- Gospel Oak Health Centre
- Hampstead Group Practice (fortnightly)
- Kentish Town Health Centre
- Parliament Hill Medical Centre (fortnightly)
- Queens Crescent Practice (fortnightly)
- Somers Town Medical Centre
- West Hampstead Women's Centre.

During 2016-17 the GP advice service achieved the following results:

- Patients seen: 517
- Face to Face Appointments provided: 1859
- Financial Gains for patients: £549,151.

75% of patients defined themselves as having a disability or long-term health condition and 20% defined themselves as having a problem in relation to their mental health. More information about the users of the service is available in the Appendix.

2.3 Aims of the evaluation

In response to a review of funding for the service expected during 2017, in June 2017 Camden CAB commissioned an independent organisation, Fiveways, to evaluate the GP advice service.

The research aimed in particular to understand how the service makes a difference to those that use it, and what impact it has on the settings in which it is based– in this instance primarily GP surgeries.

2.4 About Fiveways

Fiveways is small consultancy for non-profit organisations that want expert help from people who know the sector well. The team is passionate about finding practical solutions to the issues that prevent non-profits from achieving more, and works with clients to identify and implement the changes required to increase their impact on society – and help them deliver more for less.

Alongside strengthening charity governance and assessing and managing risk, the company specializes in evaluating projects and services to drive future improvement, and has undertaken a wide range of impact and outcomes evaluations for national and local organisations of all shapes and sizes.

Fiveways was set up by Richard Donaldson and Justin Irwin, who jointly delivered this evaluation.

3. Methodology

The research methodology for this evaluation was a blended approach of a quantitative online survey with clients and in-depth telephone interviews with clients and with staff from the outreach settings, mainly GPs. The findings in this report are based on combined analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative research – quantitative results providing statistics, and qualitative feedback providing a deeper understanding of feelings and opinions.

3.1 Quantitative online survey

A total of 111 clients who had used the service since April 2016 were successfully contacted by telephone or email by Camden CAB staff and volunteers and agreed to take part in a survey about the service they had received².

Clients were contacted by phone between 12 July and 17 July with Camden CAB staff and volunteers using a script written by Fiveways. A copy of the survey is provided in the Appendix. Calls were randomly monitored by the Fiveways team for quality purposes and to verify that the results entered into the database reflected clients' answers. All questions were answered by at least 100 clients.

Clients who had provided email addresses were emailed on 17 July and asked to complete the survey online via a link. A reminder email was sent on 24 July; the survey closed on 27 July.

Participation was incentivised by giving those people who completed the survey an opportunity to be included in a prize draw to win one of two £20 Love to Shop vouchers.

3.2 Qualitative telephone research

For periods during the survey, clients were asked if they would like to discuss their experience of using the service in more detail over the telephone; a total of 26 clients agreed.

A selection of these clients were contacted to arrange to speak with a researcher over the phone. A total of 9 in-depth client interviews were completed³, typically lasting between 10 and 15 minutes. Quotes taken from interviewees, with permission, are included in the text below and annotated anonymously to illustrate the full breadth of response⁴.

Separately, Camden CAB asked staff at the GP surgeries and other settings if members of the team would be willing to give their feedback about the impact of the service. A total of 7 interviews were carried out with the following professionals, all from different settings:

- Four GPs (from four different practices providing the service)
- A community nurse who is part of a Health Visiting Team in one of the settings
- A clinical psychologist familiar with referring clients to the GP service
- The centre manager at a 'non-GP' service.

As above, quotes and comments provided within the text are annotated anonymously. Copies of the discussion guides used for the interviews are included in the Appendix.

² An additional 49 clients were contacted and declined to take part in the survey

³ Seven interviews were with women, two with men

⁴ Identifying details, such as names or ages, have been altered or removed

4. Findings from clients

This section details feedback from the combined quantitative and qualitative research with clients, focussing on how and why clients access the service, views on quality, and the overall impact of the service. It then gives an additional brief summary of qualitative feedback from those interviewed.

4.1 How the service makes a difference for clients

Four out of five clients (81%) reported experiencing some positive change as a result of using the service⁵, with just under half (45%) believing that the quality of their life has improved as a direct result of the service.

The most commonly reported change was respondents feeling less stressed, with two-thirds (66%) agreeing with this statement. In addition, more than half of respondents (53%) reported being better able to deal with problems in the future, and just under half (43%) felt better able to manage their health, suggesting that the advice and support given was contributing to increased resilience amongst some clients.

"It's made me a lot less stressed, cos I was really really stressed over that when my money got cut. That CAB woman, every time I went to a meeting she just put my mind at ease, cos I was really scared. She really helped me." [4]

"Getting this sorted reduced the stress and stopped me doing something out of anger. 100%." [5]

"It was stressful... Before I was worried about my son and myself because of the rules and regulations – but now I'm satisfied." [7]

"It went very very smoothly. They took a lot of pressure from my mind, a lot of pressure. I think the sickness would have been getting worse. At that particular time I was really really sick, and it would have been to a worse extent if it hadn't been for them." [3]

"I had a lot of problems, but we focussed on one. In doing so, the other problems were made easier to deal with." [Phone survey]

"I suffer quite badly with generalised anxiety, so I worry continuously about everything. Having a professional, someone who was trustworthy, someone who knows what they are talking about, helped me deal with it – just relieved a lot of stress, a lot of pressure, a lot of worry from myself. Now, I'm not so worried, my life is just a little bit more relaxed – one big thing that I don't have to worry about." [9]

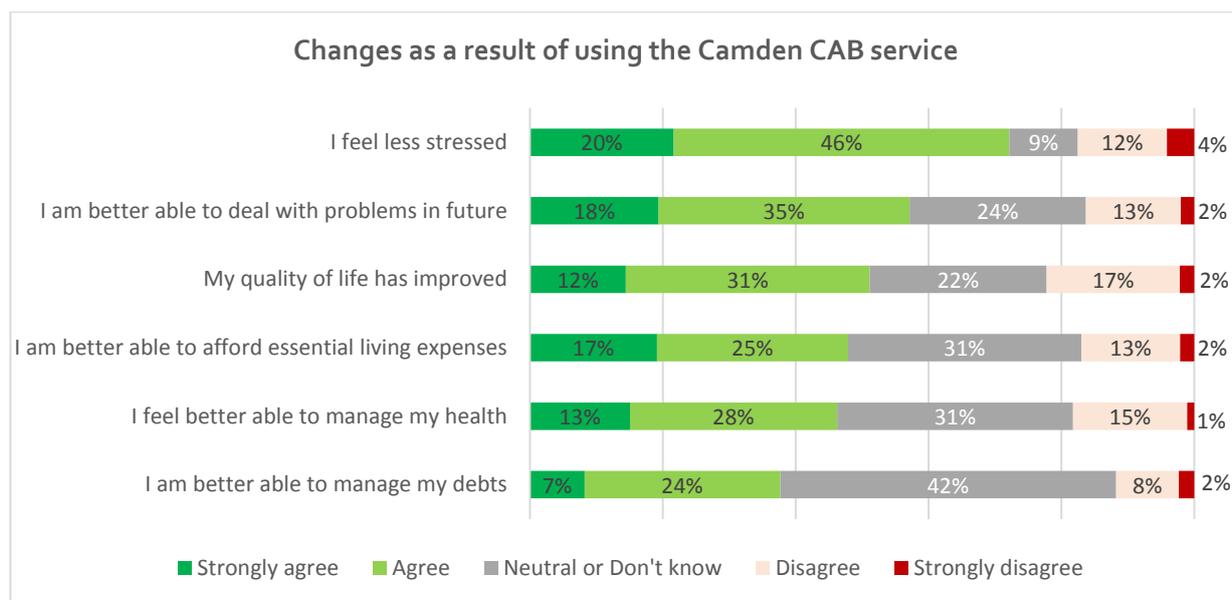
⁵ 81% of the 107 people who answered this question reported positive change against one or more of the six options in the 'changes' table

The direct financial impact on clients depended on their particular circumstances, but 42% felt better able to afford essential living expenses, and 31% felt better able to manage debts. Clearly, for some, this financial impact was extremely significant.

"Financially, I'm better off. I've never been in debt, like with bills and things, but because of the big difference in what they were given me, I was worrying – would I be able to pay my rent, and cover bills? It was just really stressful. To be honest, with the pain and everything, I didn't need all that hassle." [1]

"Through the help that I managed to get, a tribunal ruling, that benefited me getting my benefits back, getting the payments back, and the way I am today – it's because of the Citizens Advice people at the GP; they helped me." [3]

"Since using the service, they've put me back on to ESA so I don't have to go to the job centre any more, which is great for me cos of what I'm going through at the moment. I can get my benefits without having to sign on – because of doing the appeal. CAB helped me to do that." [8]



"Here are some statements about the Camden CAB GP advice service. How much you agree or disagree with them. 'After seeing the person from Camden CAB...?'"

Clients were asked what overall impact the service had on them, and what may have happened if they hadn't used it, or it didn't exist in the future. Overall 62% felt that the service made a positive difference to their life, and 42% felt that their mental health would have got worse if they had not known about the service.

"I would have had to have sorted it out myself, but I'm not sure if I would have won the case (tribunal) because I wasn't in the right frame of mind". [1]

"If the service wasn't there I would have done something that I would have regretted. I really had these mad thoughts in my head – to do something out of

anger, not something I would do normally. Go over there and say something, or actually do something physically. That was the thing that I was afraid of". [5]

A quarter of clients (24%) reported that the help from the Camden CAB in the surgery resulted in them having to visit the GP less often – with 9% strongly agreeing, possibly suggesting a reduction in visits from frequent attenders.

"I would have gone to the GP sooner or later to ask for help writing letters or something, cos it was getting too tough for me. It saved a lot of time for the GP, going straight to the Citizens Advice from the Receptionist". [3]

"I had to make an appointment with my GP and sort of say look, this is what's going on in my life. And actually, if I'd known about the (CAB) surgery in there, I could have just made the appointment myself – which also would have saved my GPs time, or would have meant that appointment could have been given to someone else". [2]

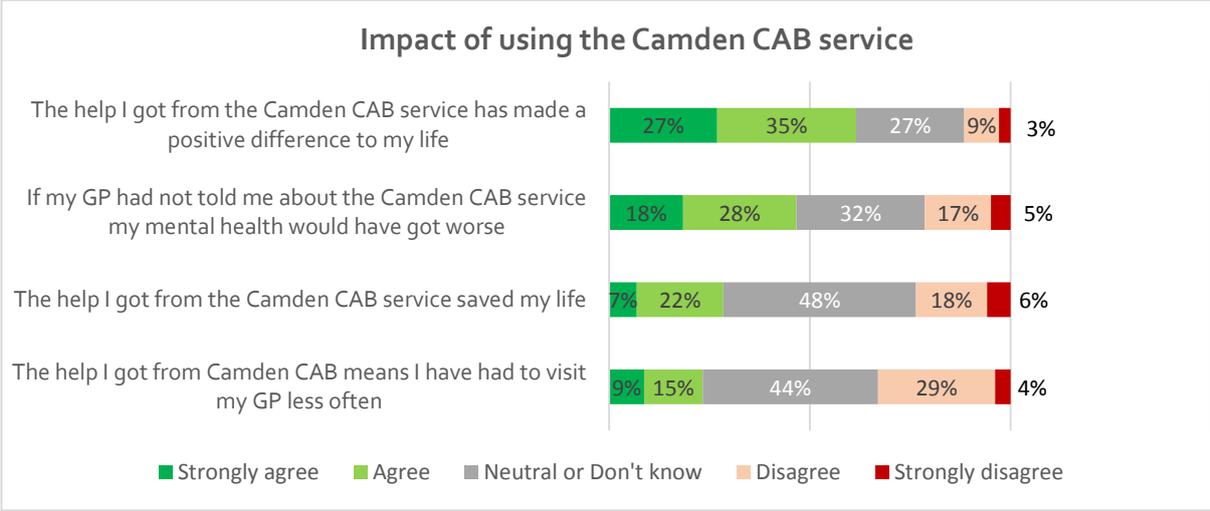
"I would have had so much more stress, and it would have lasted so much longer. If CAB hadn't have helped me I probably would have ended up going to the GP more." [8]

Whilst the GP service clearly had value for most clients, for some the significance was huge – 29% agreed with the statement that the help 'saved my life', with one in fourteen of all survey respondents (7%) strongly agreeing with this. Feedback from some interviewees emphasised the seriousness of their situations, and the impact of the service.

"I probably honestly was on the verge of being committed. When you have your finances removed from you, without notice I have to say, it causes a lot of difficulties. If CAB hadn't been able to help me, I probably wouldn't have gone to the tribunal, I would have just thought sod it." [2]

"I couldn't have done it without them. I couldn't have done it at all. I had no help around me. Everything was bleak. It was a godsend. I was extremely grateful I can't even put it into words. What can I say? They are lifesavers. They do such good work I can't say anything more." [3]

"At the risk of sounding horribly dramatic, after multiple breakdowns, bouts of alcoholism, I'm now [] years old and my life is just me and living alone in my flat. I was expressing suicidal ideation..... that was kind of where I'd gotten to at the time, when the doctor said, look, we can fight this. And he put me on to CAB." [6]



Here are some things people have said after using the Camden CAB service – how much do you agree or disagree with them?

Case study – Janette

After attending a medical assessment for her Personal Independence Payment, Janette [name changed] had her benefits cut by more than £150 a month. She was struggling to live with that much of a cut, not least as sometimes she has to pay the bedroom tax, and finding it difficult to afford basics, including her weekly shop. She had become really stressed, and was struggling to cope. She didn't know anyone who could help her, didn't understand how to fill in the various forms that she was sent, and was really scared about the next medical and the possible appeal that she had heard about.

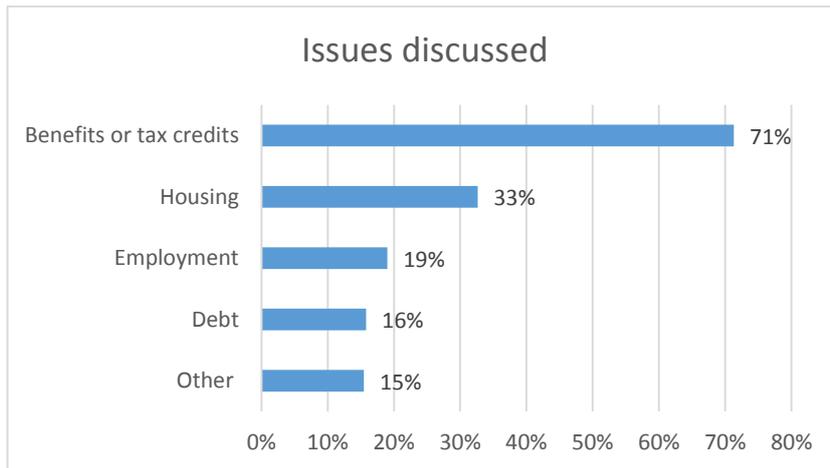
It was only when she was at her GP for a health appointment about her disability that she saw a poster for the Camden CAB service by the front desk – so she made an appointment herself. She ended up seeing the 'lovely CAB lady' three or four times. Every time they had a meeting her mind was put at ease, and she found the CAB incredibly helpful. The staff member helped her fill in the forms and explained things that she didn't understand, including what points she could get for each question.

Janette says that it was as a direct result of the help that she got from the CAB that her benefits were put back up, and that she doesn't think she would have coped without the CAB lady. In the end she passed the second medical and didn't even have to go to an appeal. She finally received the payment that she was supposed to get, and is coping OK now; she's even told a few people she knows in a similar situation to use the CAB.

4.2 How and why clients access the GP service

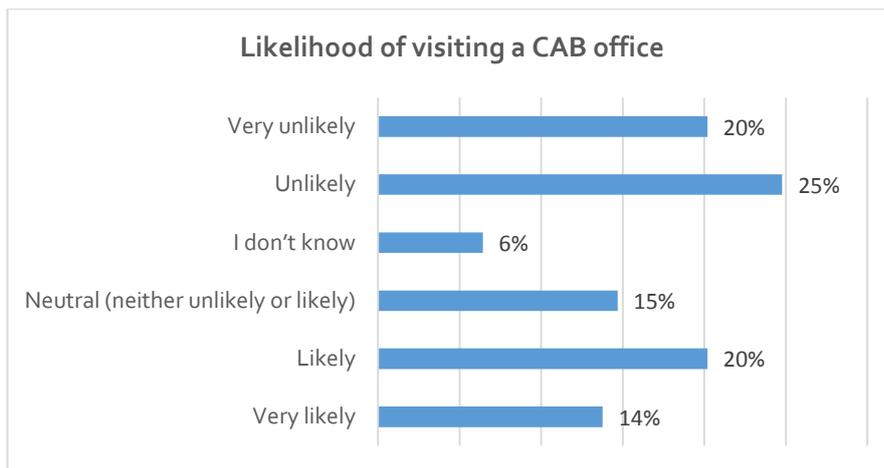
Seven out of ten clients (71%) responding to the survey reported using the service to discuss benefits and tax credits, reflecting Camden CAB’s own data. More than half of those involved in the in-depth interviews had wanted assistance with appeals processes and tribunals.

A third of clients (33%), wanted to talk about housing, 19% discussed employment, and 16% debt. The most common ‘other’ issue mentioned by respondents was legal issues, mentioned four times.



"Thinking about when you met the person from Camden CAB, which of the following issues did you discuss...?"

Approximately half of clients (45%) said that they were unlikely to have gone to another CAB office or another advice centre – for these clients the setting of the support was critical. Conversely one-third suggested that they were likely to go to a CAB office or another advice centre to get help.



"You used the Camden CAB service based in your GP surgery. How likely is it that you would have gone to a CAB office or another advice centre instead?"

The interviews and free text responses to the survey supports the evidence that the route to accessing the service varies considerably for clients – and that whilst some clients may use the GP service as one of a range of options, for some the GP surgery appears to be the only route to help.

"I was having a big problem to go to my own CAB – it was closed. I didn't know where to go at that particular time – it was just by luck that I saw the sign at the GPs reception. At that particular period of time my disease was really getting worse... there was no way that I could go to Kentish Town. It is very convenient to people who have health problems." [2]

"I am unable to go to the normal CAB office so seeing the CAB at the GP surgery was essential for me!" [Email survey]

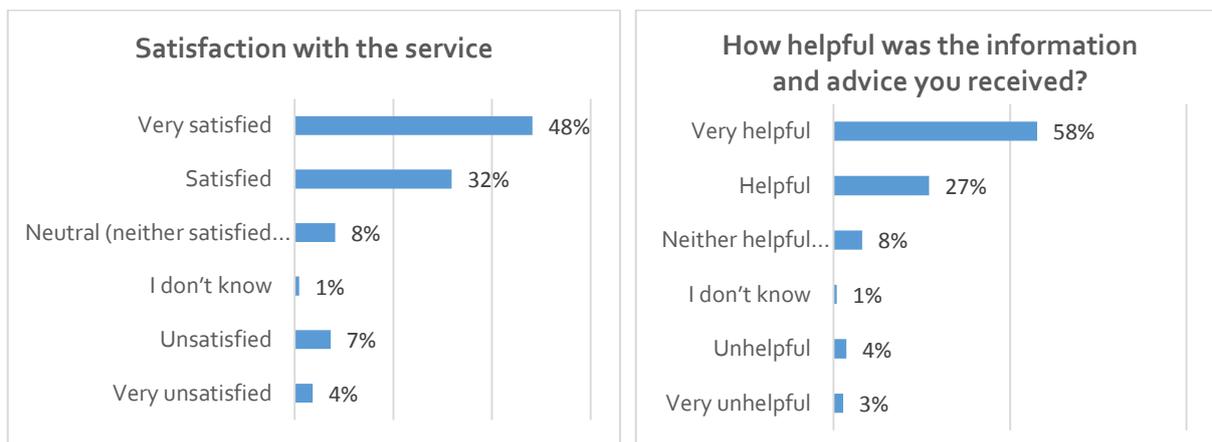
"I knew about Citizens Advice, but I didn't know that they came to GP surgeries and had appointments there. It's an environment that you are familiar with." [2]

"I just happened to notice the sign in my GP that CAB offer appointments there. I found it very useful as the nearest CAB office is a bit of a distance and due to my health I cannot stand in queues for a long time and I can never get though on the phone. This way I can just book with my GP and is much less stressful which I think is very good." [Email survey]

"I find it very useful to be able to make an appointment at the GP surgeries because in the other CAB office you have to go very early to be seen and queue outside." [Phone survey]

4.3 How satisfied clients are with the service

The vast majority of respondents (80%) were satisfied with the Camden CAB service and described the information and support they received as helpful (85%), with 58% finding it very helpful.



"How helpful was the information and advice you received from Camden CAB?" and "Overall, how satisfied were you with the Camden CAB service?"

A total of 83% agreed with the statement *"I am very grateful that my GP told me about the Camden CAB service"*, with just 3% disagreeing.

Respondents noted in particular the skills and knowledge of the workers; those responding to the survey talked about staff being 'tremendously helpful', 'very efficient', 'incredible

people', who were 'doing their best to look after me'. This was supported by the numerous positive comments of those interviewed.

"She was really helpful. She was just explaining things cos I didn't really understand about things. She told me what points I could get for each question – you know? It just was really good." [4]

"She helped me so much – the lady who we met. She told me all the rules and regulations. She properly helped me getting information, understand my problem, studied, it, she properly helped me, she properly told me – it wasn't possible for me to understand from the website." [7]

"The advisor was really helpful. She knew where the source of the problem was and wanted to sort it out. She weren't trying to rush things, she was really understanding. That made me more comfortable and reassured me." [5]

"She was very efficient, she done the letter within 20 mins, she got all the information that I needed from the doctor printed out, and then she sent anything off. So I didn't have any worry of doing all that. And she gave me photocopies of everything. She was amazing." [1]

"Very very helpful. Extremely helpful. I was really not in a right state of mind. A lot of things were going on in my mind, and they helped me sort out the right way to take things. They put everything down on paper, contacted social services, and they agreed for an immediate fund after I went to the tribunal." [3]

A total of 7% of respondents felt the support was unhelpful, with a slightly larger percentage unclear or neutral – some because they were yet to find any resolution.

"It's still a work in progress. I'd love to be able to say, 'Oh, we had the tribunal and the paperwork that she put together breezed us through and they've agreed'; and who knows, hopefully that will happen. But at this point I'm waiting for that last appointment, and then it will be a matter of waiting for a date. So I won't have an outcome for... I honestly can't say at this time." [6]

The few negative comments tended to relate to accessing the service ("appointment system should be quicker"; "was desperate for advice and waited 3 weeks"; "at least one more day a week for the advisor to come in to the GP – that would be a lot more helpful"), and to people having particularly complicated enquiries that they reported Camden CAB could not help with. Two people fed back that they were referred to a solicitor rather than given support directly, as they had hoped.

4.4 Client summary feedback

All nine clients who took part in the in-depth interviews were extremely positive about their experience of using the service. Whilst it is possible that those who agreed to carry out a follow-up telephone interview had a more extreme experience, their overall sentiments towards the service broadly reflected the survey results.

"I was just feeling so down and I was in more pain than I'd ever been in – [advisor's name] kindly helped me, filling in the forms. I wasn't in the frame of mind for doing it at the same time. She was really good and helpful. Very efficient. She did me proud, did me well." [1]

"Thank you very much for your professional, impartial, knowledgeable service... they dealt with the matter in hand, and that's what you need. They told me what I needed to do, and off I went and did it. And that helped." [2]

"Definitely, if you've got a problem, see the Camden Advice Bureau. They do help a lot. I'd advise anyone, even if you are having doubts. Can you thank the lovely lady that helped me, and tell her that I'm very grateful." [5]

"Bless the Citizens Advice Bureaux. Thank god they're still there." [6]

"All GP practices should have them, it's a great service." [8]

"It's a good service and I'm glad it's in the GPs – it's actually really really helpful to be able to go somewhere I'm familiar with, and be in a surrounding when I'm waiting to see this person where I know. So having it in my GP made it so much more accessible to me." [9]

The depth of the positive feedback was also supported by those completing the survey.

"I hope that the service continues to help the persons who need. It is a brilliant service. You help people. People need help. If I ever win the lottery I will give you funds to do your work." [Telephone survey]

"Phenomenal service, staffed by incredible people; invaluable for people to have access to it." [Telephone survey]

"Without CAB service, I would not know where I would be – even small bits of advice have been incredibly useful. CAB is there when you don't know who to turn to or where to go. It is a good place for everyone." [Telephone survey]

Case study – Sarah

Sarah [name changed] had been denied her PIP and subsequently lost her appeal. She had also lost other benefits and was finding that the financial pressure was affecting her health - she was in a very very low place, mentally very vulnerable. She felt completely invisible, like she didn't exist. She realised that she had the option of going to a tribunal, but couldn't really face going through with this, and was ready to give up.

Worried about her deteriorating health, Sarah made an appointment to see her GP and to tell them what was going on in her life. The GP mentioned that the CAB held sessions in the surgery, and made a referral for Sarah. She was delighted, as it was in an environment that she was familiar with, she knew how to get there, and she was pleased that the CAB worker would know in advance why she was seeing them. She realised that if she'd known about the CAB in the surgery, she would have made the appointment directly, rather than waiting to be referred by her GP.

Sarah ended up having a number of really helpful appointments. In particular she found the CAB worker knowledgeable and clear. The worker knew about benefits, knew what Sarah could claim for, and gave sound impartial advice. Regarding the appeal, she made it very clear where Sarah had to send the information, by when, and encouraged Sarah to tell her when she had sent it, to make sure that Sarah was within the timescales.

The CAB worker also collated information from Sarah's GP and got them to fill out an assessment form, clarifying what she needed to outline specifically documenting what Sarah struggles with.

Prior to the tribunal the worker made it very clear what Sarah should expect, for example telling her what the panel would consist of, roughly how long it would take, what she needed to tell them, and to what level of detail.

Sarah won the tribunal – on hearing that it was upheld she burst into tears. It had been a long and stressful process to go through which was nearly overwhelming, having consumed the best part of a year of her life. Sarah is extremely grateful for the professional, impartial, and knowledgeable service that she received, and would recommend it to anyone.

5. Findings from health settings

This section focusses on the feedback from the interviews carried out with professionals from seven different settings, primarily four GPs from four different surgeries. It considers benefits for patients, practices, and GPs personally, and concludes with a final piece of feedback from each interviewee.

5.1 How GPs feel the service benefits their patients

All four GPs and the clinical psychologist (CP) interviewed mentioned the positive effect the Camden CAB service has on their patients' mental and physical health. This is because their patients can quickly access expert advice and guidance with social issues that affect both their mental and physical wellbeing and that of their family. One GP said that the presence of the CAB service meant that *"some people who feel suicidal because they feel overwhelmed can find the support they need."* [GP3]

"People's social problems end up becoming medical issues – both mental (anxiety, depression) and physical (palpitations, chronic pain). When they get help to navigate the system, their mental and physical health improves considerably." [GP4]

"These are patients who get into vicious circles and once one thing happens they don't cope with that, that leads the breakdown of the next thing, it's just like dominoes, one thing falls apart in their lives and everything falls apart. So, I think the CAB service either helps stop the dominoes falling down or actually put them back up again." [GP2]

"I can think of a patient that I saw the other day - someone who was really quite profoundly depressed - who had sought advice from your service who told me that he would not have been able to make it to one of the other services because his depression had curtailed his activity. He was able to get some very useful support on managing a couple of issues which, as GPs, we would not have been able to do... his wellbeing has changed, his anxiety levels have changed, his approach to life has changed, and his access to [the GP] service has reduced." [GP1]

The community nurse (CN) and centre manager (CM) were both less able to comment directly on health benefits for clients, but were clear that the service was of high quality.

"There's lots of ways that the service benefits patients. They get an understanding of what their rights are, how they can get out of the situation that they are in. I have heard really good things, and the quality is good, from what I understand." [CN]

"The feedback is good, all the clients seem to be happy – every worker who has worked with us has been really really good. It really is beneficial to have the service going. They see the women with the complicated cases." [CM]

The GPs noted the expertise of the CAB service in supporting their patients to "navigate the system" to resolve social problems such as benefits and housing. For example, a CAB adviser at the practice can ensure that the content of letters or forms completed by GPs in support of patients' claims is based on what the system requires – which ultimately benefits the patient. One GP mentioned that *"patients have a better outcome if they use the CAB service than if they had to rely on GPs for these matters [i.e. accessing benefits]."* [GP3]

Interviewees also considered the convenience of the service to be important for their patients – especially those with disabilities or mental health issues who may find travelling difficult as they may be unable or unwilling to access advice services elsewhere.

"It is much better to refer people to their practices rather than stand-alone services because many patients are vulnerable and fearful of new people and environments, so having a previous relationship with their GP helps them overcome their insecurity. It also makes a positive difference for people with young children who may have difficulty going somewhere other than their local practice." [CP]

"I can redirect patients to the front desk to book an appointment rather than sending people home with instructions to go elsewhere and join a queue, which might never happen given the mental condition of some of these patients." [GP1]

"It is normally the families that are more chaotic who need the help the most. Most of these families are living within 20 minutes of the health centre – they are not going to make appointments to visit other offices, they won't wait with young children. Getting the bus is too much for some people." [CN]

The centre manager noted that *"women feel safe"* getting help within the centre, and that partnership work with the CAB team was particularly effective for their vulnerable clients.

5.2 How GPs feel the service benefits their practice

All interviewees agreed that having an expert on social issues in-house saves them time trying to resolve issues outside of their areas of expertise.

"GPs don't need to spend time they do not have addressing issues for which they do not have the skills. Having someone qualified to deal with these issues on site means that GPs can actually concentrate on the job that matches their medical skills." [GP1]

"The CAB service fills a gap in practitioners' knowledge and saves time and resources. It's very difficult to access help services at the moment, so practitioners feel relieved that they know where to refer patients instead of having to spend valuable time trying to find the best way to solve non-medical problems that they don't know how to deal with... It saves the NHS and our Trust a lot of time." [CP]

"They've definitely taken some of our load off – they have expertise in many things, if the cases are very complicated, definitely they have helped." [CM]

"Sometimes we see a family that is fixated on housing – if CAB can help them with that, we can carry on focussing more on the child because that other part which is really important to the family, has been dealt with." [CN]

Two GPs felt strongly that the CAB service saved their practice money by reducing attendances (especially from frequent attenders and even from the patient's family), reducing referrals to psychiatric services, and reducing prescriptions for antidepressants and anti-anxiety medication.

"I think a lot of frequent attenders do have social issues that need addressing... and a significant amount of appointments could be saved if patients were redirected to CAB...It [the CAB service] actually saves money across the board." [GP2]

"It [the CAB service] has significantly reduced GP consultations and referrals, as well as the demand for other services offered by the practice. Moreover, it has reduced the need to prescribe medication... It saves money and results in better care for all patients, not only those in need of the CAB service. It reduces the demand on our services, reduces waiting lists, and enables other people to be seen sooner, because it creates capacity." [GP4]

The other two GPs felt unable to say whether the service saved the practice money – however they did not feel it should be judged on financial terms but rather on the positive impact it had on patients.

"Demonstrating that the service saves money is difficult. I don't think it can be viewed in financial terms. It works in terms of delivering appropriate help, therefore it is a matter of quality rather than financial impact. Does a nurse save any money? Well, probably not, but it helps to deliver something which is much better than the doctors could do." [GP1]

"It's impossible to determine whether there are fewer appointments [because of the CAB service] but it saves GPs' time and resources, and it can safely be said that patients receive better care." [GP3]

Two GPs described what would happen in their practice if the service was not there:

"There would be more patients – presenting more anxiety and physical problems derived from it, more families disintegrating, more child safeguarding issues, more consultation time spent writing letters for patients or painstakingly searching online for services to signpost patients to, more patients leaving the practice without having been helped, being referred directly to social services and told to sort out their problems themselves." [GP2]

"People who feel particularly overwhelmed because they don't have the language skills or the experience to sort out their situation by themselves would end up not doing anything at all and therefore losing out on benefits. That would deteriorate people's living standards even further, making them feel anxious and unwell – thus perpetuating the cycle. There would need to be an increment in referrals to psychologists and counsellors to make up for the loss of the CAB service, putting more pressure on the system." [GP4]

The centre manager was particularly concerned about the impact not having the service would have on their other work:

"If CAB were to go, my god, I can't bear to think about it. Where would we refer? It is very vital, especially now when there are constant welfare changes." [CM]

One benefit mentioned by two GPs was that the CAB service made the practice "more trustworthy" and it improved patients' confidence in the GPs as they see their needs being addressed by the practice, rather than being sent elsewhere.

The clinical psychologist mentioned that being able to refer people to the CAB service in GP surgeries was easing the pressure on their clinic. People with more serious mental health problems were receiving administrative support from CAB allowing them to maximise therapeutic time with their clinician. This was speeding up patients' recovery because they can focus on their treatment without worrying about more pressing, practical problems.

The only downsides mentioned about the service were the need to find the physical space to host the service, and an increased administrative workload on reception staff. One GP mentioned that these factors were "more than compensated" by the results achieved by the service [GP4]. Another described how highly the service was prioritised in their practice.

We've seen the number of patients increase, so we've had to bring in more doctors as well as other services to meet the demand, putting pressure on the capacity of the building. But the practice has made a choice to prioritise the CAB service because it takes pressure away from the whole system. We find that CAB is invaluable so we've used room times for CAB rather than physiotherapy... Physiotherapy can be done elsewhere whereas CAB can't be done elsewhere, it's much better on site". [GP2]

5.3 How GPs feel the service benefits them personally

All four GPs and the clinical psychologist interviewed mentioned that the service reduces their workload (by not spending so much time on social issues) and their levels of stress.

Interviewees mentioned the stress that can be caused by not knowing how to help people (as social issues are outside their areas of expertise), conflict with patients when they don't feel they have been helped, and the increased demand for support with social issues.

"As we have an avenue that we can send the patients down, which is local and within the practice, within the consultation we don't feel helpless as practitioners, and therefore we don't get frustrated which can affect our own wellbeing" [GP2]

One GP mentioned that working collaboratively with the CAB, and other services, was a source of motivation for them:

"We are very keen on working very closely with CAB, with social workers, with the mental health services, and we all come to meetings together, and we all liaise with each other. Working together and communication makes it a more rewarding place to work." [GP4]

5.4 GP summary feedback

All seven interviewees viewed the service extremely positively. It is likely that those who agreed to be interviewed had more knowledge or more positive views than some who did not respond to interview requests. However, the extent to which they value the service is made clear by a final quote from each.

"The CAB service prevents the escalation of mental problems. Patients with severe depression get the help they need, and that GPs would not be able to provide, and they gain back control of their lives and their health, reducing the need for frequent consultations." [GP1]

"By improving patients' wellbeing by non-medicalised means, you decrease their healthcare costs in general... The CAB service is cost-effective because it is making people better." [GP2]

"I think that having someone who can understand a bit more about the social determinants of health...is a crucial part of what you might call contemporary general practice. The aim should be to expand the service, not cut it out. It would be regressive to take it away. Patients in every practice in Camden, and indeed in north-central London, should have the ability to access a CAB worker." [GP3]

"The CAB service provides enormous economic benefits by reducing the workload of GPs and secondary services, as well as of mental health and social services within the community. Moreover, the effect on the physical and mental wellbeing of patients should outweigh the financial costs of maintaining the service. It would be disastrous to take away something that's been so successful." [GP4]

"This service needs to be kept running. This is a very deprived area and CAB gets a lot of referrals from people who really need it. People just don't engage with services if they are not close enough. It's definitely good for us and for the families as well. [CN]

"The service has saved days of NHS money because practitioners can concentrate on providing mental health support rather than filling in forms, and patients get help much faster. Without the service people would not get help quick enough and their mental health would deteriorate – severe cases would be on the rise and vulnerable people would need much longer treatments to recover and some would become suicidal. Therefore, investing on the service actually saves money across all the other mental health and social services." [CP]

"These services are needed. I don't know how more I can argue how important it is to have these services. It's really vital. These are human beings, and everything affects them. If the housing is not up to par, if the benefits or finances are not there, if they lose their job – it's like a cascade of other things which happen – they start drinking, there is violence, children go hungry..... And this is all connected to health. It's very vital to keep the services going." [CM]

6. Conclusions

Feedback from clients illustrates that the service is highly regarded and leads to positive change for four out of five users, most commonly feeling less stressed and being better able to deal with problems in future – effectively being more able to cope and becoming more resilient.

It is also apparent that many clients only access the service because of the locations from which it is based, and that the location of the service in the GP practice is therefore critical.

Whilst the impact is significant on all clients, for some the work of Camden CAB in GPs surgeries is genuinely transformative and indeed life-saving.

These findings are reflected by all four GPs and the other professionals interviewed, who were all extremely positive about the value of providing the CAB service in GP practices, and who, on an individual level, have witnessed the direct benefits experienced by their patients in terms of improved health, especially mental health.

In the BMA survey of GPs in England (2016) 84% of GPs described their workload as excessive, and 27% described their workload as excessive *and* significantly preventing quality and safe care⁶. In 2015 Commonwealth Fund research, stress levels amongst British GPs were found to be so acute that almost 30% were planning to quit in the next five years. 20% had become ill in the previous year and 59% found their work stressful⁷. In response to these pressures, the NHS GP Health Service was launched in 2017 to offer specialist mental health support for GPs to help them cope with the demands on them.

The research has found that Camden CAB service reduces levels of stress in GPs as they do not feel the pressure of having to resolve social problems that lie outside their areas of expertise. In addition, being able to refer into the service means they do not run the risk of patients feeling they have not been adequately supported. In fact, having the CAB service in the practice was seen to increase GP morale by creating a feeling that patients are being cared for holistically and effectively, ensuring more GP consultation time can be spent on medical concerns, and encouraging collaborative team working.

It is clear that GP practices benefit too. Some GPs see the financial benefit of providing the service in terms of reduced attendance (supported by the finding that one quarter of clients visited the GP less often thanks to the CAB service), reduced referrals to secondary services, and reduced cost of medication. Preventing the escalation of problems clearly reduces demand and associated cost. The service helps to reduce pressure and increase resources and resilience in general practice

In previous research, Citizens Advice reported that GPs spend almost a fifth of their consultation time dealing with non-health issues, and 80% of GPs feel that dealing with non-health queries results in decreased time available to treat other patients' health issues⁸. Another study revealed that welfare advice provision in primary health settings can reduce

⁶ British Medical Association: *Survey of GPs in England - full report* (2016)

⁷ The Health Foundation: *Under pressure – what the Commonwealth Fund's 2015 international survey of general practitioners means for the UK* (2016)

⁸ Citizens Advice: *A very general practice: How much time do GPs spend on issues other than health?* (2015)

by an estimated 15% the time GPs spend on benefits issues, and leads to fewer repeat appointments and fewer prescriptions.⁹

Feedback from Camden GPs and clients supports these findings and reveals how the Camden CAB service saves GPs time and reduces service demand. The CAB service, therefore, is delivering the 2016 NHS General Practice Forward View objective to manage avoidable patient demand, and simultaneously release clinician time and improve care for patients.

Overall, therefore, the research has demonstrated that providing the Camden CAB service in GP practices has a positive effect on patients, GPs, GP practices and the health system more widely.

The service also appears to have benefits for the funder, Camden CCG, by delivering its new model of care and its mental health mandate.

By addressing wider social determinants of health alongside medical services, the collaboration between CAB and GP practices is a good example of the CCG's aspirations to deliver "joined up" services designed around the whole person, and integrate the voluntary sector into mainstream services.

The research has shown that the CAB service in GP practices plays an important role in preventing ill-health and the escalation of physical and mental health issues. In this regard, it is an effective example of embedding prevention at every level of care, a key principle of the CCG's new model of care, and a core concept of Camden's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The CCG's mental health programme mandate (2014) says that to 'ensure sustainable, maximum positive health impact within the resource available it is important for us to work with public health and key stakeholders to also tackle the social determinants of health including housing, relationships, employment and debt'.¹⁰

The CAB service clearly helps to tackle these social issues. Those using the service report a positive impact on their mental health, with two-thirds of survey respondents feeling less stressed, and 46% agreeing that their mental health would have got worse without the service. In addition, from the evidence of the clinical psychologist who participated in the research, when the CAB deals with social issues, more clinical time is freed up within mental health services, allowing people with mental health issues to access help sooner.

Richard Donaldson

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⁹ The Low Commission and Advice Services Alliance: *Evidence review and mapping study on the role of advice services in health* (2015)

¹⁰ Camden CCG mental health programme mandate (2014) p6 point 4.8

Appendices

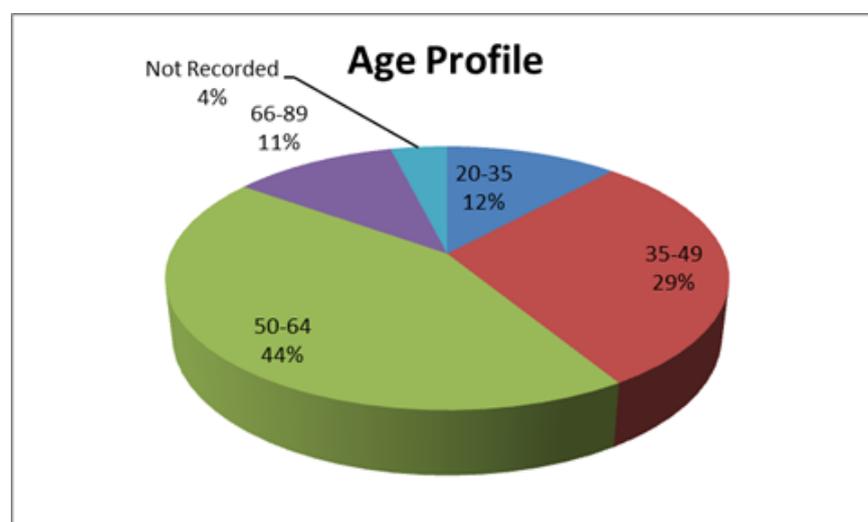
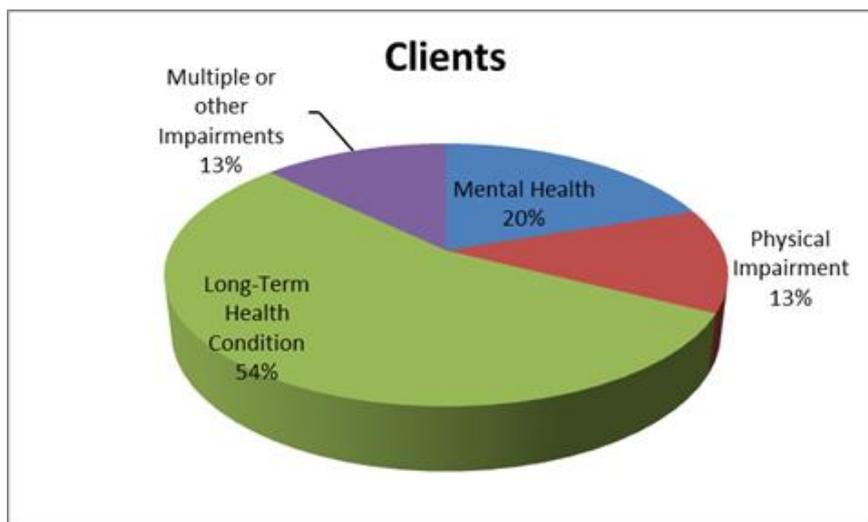
i. Citizens Advice Camden funding

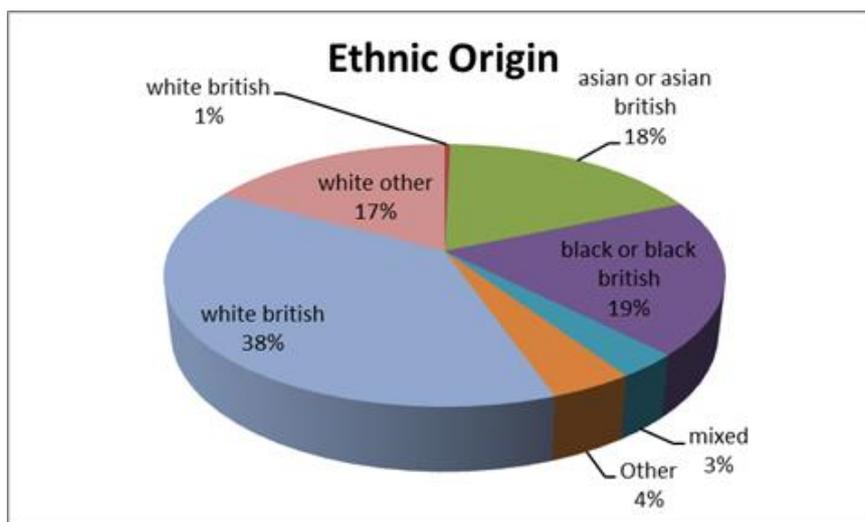
Citizens Advice Camden is a registered charity and its services are funded through contracts, grants and commissions from the following bodies:

- Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund
- Camden & Islington Public Health
- LB Camden
- NHS Camden Clinical Commissioning Group
- Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity
- Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust
- Thames Water Trust Fund
- Turning Point

The organisation also receives a small amount of donations from local businesses and charitable trusts.

ii. Additional information about clients 2016-17





iii. Client survey questions

Question	Response options
<p>Hello, I'm calling from Camden CAB, and was hoping that I could ask you some questions about our GP service that you used recently.</p> <p>It's for some external research which is being carried out, and will take about 10 minutes.</p> <p>Is that OK with you?</p> <p>Thank you very much. Your feedback will help us understand the difference the service we offer in GP practices makes to those who use it – and, if you would like, on completing this survey you will be invited to enter a prize draw to win one of two £20 Love to Shop vouchers.</p> <p>Your answers will be treated as confidential and anonymous, so please be frank and honest.</p> <p>Would it be OK if I recorded the call, for quality purposes?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p>
<p>Firstly, thinking about when you met the person from Camden CAB, what issues did you discuss? (tick as many as apply to you)</p>	<p><i>Benefits or tax credits</i></p> <p><i>Housing</i></p> <p><i>Debt</i></p> <p><i>Employment</i></p> <p><i>Health</i></p> <p><i>Other</i></p> <p><i>Yes/No/I don't know</i></p>
<p>How helpful was the information and advice you received from Camden CAB?</p>	<p><i>Very helpful</i></p> <p><i>Helpful</i></p> <p><i>Neutral (neither helpful nor unhelpful)</i></p> <p><i>Unhelpful</i></p> <p><i>Very unhelpful</i></p> <p><i>I don't know</i></p>

Question	Response options
Overall, how satisfied were you with the Camden CAB service?	<i>Very satisfied</i> <i>Satisfied</i> <i>Neutral (neither satisfied nor unsatisfied)</i> <i>Unsatisfied</i> <i>Very unsatisfied</i> <i>I don't know</i>
You used the Camden CAB service based in your GP surgery – how likely is it that you would have gone to a CAB office or another advice centre instead?	<i>Very unlikely</i> <i>Unlikely</i> <i>Neutral (neither unlikely or likely)</i> <i>Likely</i> <i>Very likely</i> <i>I don't know</i>
I am going to read out some statements about the Camden CAB advice service. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with them? [statements rotated] After seeing the person from Camden CAB, I am better able to afford essential living expenses After seeing the person from Camden CAB I am better able to manage my debts After seeing the person from Camden CAB I am better able to deal with problems in future After seeing the person from Camden CAB, my quality of life has improved After seeing the person from Camden CAB, I feel less stressed After seeing the person from Camden CAB, I feel better able to manage my health	<i>Strongly agree</i> <i>Agree</i> <i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> <i>Disagree</i> <i>Strongly disagree</i> <i>I don't know</i>
Here are some things people have said after using the Camden CAB service – how much do you agree or disagree with them? The help I got from the Citizens Advice service has made a positive difference to my life The help I got from Citizens Advice means I have had to visit my GP less often I am very grateful that my GP told me about the Citizens Advice service If my GP had not told me about the Citizens Advice service my mental health would have got worse The help I got from the Citizens Advice service saved my life	<i>Strongly agree</i> <i>Agree</i> <i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> <i>Disagree</i> <i>Strongly disagree</i> <i>I don't know</i>

Question	Response options
Is there anything else you would like to say to Camden CAB about the service you received?	<i>For caller – please type gist of feedback into the box</i>
<p>The external researchers who are carrying out this work for us would like to speak with some people about their experience of the GP advice service in more detail.</p> <p>Would you be willing to speak to someone over the phone for about 15 or 20 minutes at a convenient time in the next week or so?</p>	<p>Yes No</p>
<p>Thank you – please can I have your email address or phone number, and they will be in touch to try to arrange a convenient time to speak.</p> <p>I just need to tell you something about how your email address or phone number and answers you have given will be used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your responses to this survey will remain confidential. • Providing your email address or phone number is optional, by doing so you consent with your personal data being processed as follows. • As personal data, your email address or phone number will be kept securely and password protected. It will only be used in relation to this research project and not be passed to anyone else. Only Fiveways, the researchers selected by us can access the survey data to analyse the results. • We are using software called Survey Monkey. Your answers to the survey, including your email address and phone number if you choose to provide it, will be stored temporarily on Survey Monkey's data servers in America. • Once the research is completed all personal data will be deleted. <p>Can I confirm you are OK with that?</p> <p>Thanks again for helping us.</p>	<p><i>Email address Phone number</i></p> <p>Yes No</p>
If you are not okay with that I will not record your email address/ number as part of this survey - that means our external researchers will not be able to contact you. It also means we will not be able to enter you into the draw to win one of two £20 shopping vouchers as a thank you for doing the survey - is that okay?"	<p>Yes No</p>
<p>As mentioned earlier, as a thank you for doing this survey we would like to enter you into a prize draw to win one of two £20 Love to Shop vouchers.</p> <p>[If needed.....Love2shop Vouchers can be redeemed in over 20,000 stores, restaurants and attractions, with over 150 top brands to choose from such as Argos, Debenhams, HMV, Iceland, New Look, River Island, TK Maxx, Matalan, Mothercare, Superdrug and Halfords].</p> <p>Would you like to be entered into this prize draw?</p>	<p>Yes No</p>

Question	Response options
Thank you – please can I have your email address and I will enter you into the draw. <i>[Returns to data collection and statements]</i>	<i>nb. not asked if previously given details for interview</i>
Those are all my questions. Thank you once again for completing this survey and for your time and feedback. Goodbye. [Click "Finish/Next"]	

iv. Client interview discussion guide

All clients have already completed the telephone survey containing a number of quantitative questions and a couple of follow up/open questions (*'What other issues did you discuss?', and 'Is there is anything else you would like to say to Camden CAB about the service you received?'*). In these interviews we are looking to capture a greater understanding of the impact of the service on some of the clients, specifically what has changed for them emotionally and practically, how their behaviour has changed, including in relation to further appointments with the GP, and get some understanding of what may happen if the service didn't exist.

A discussion guide is not a fixed script. It is more of an aide-memoire to remind the interviewer of the topics to be covered. It can be adapted according to the findings from previous interviews and during each call as, depending on the flow of the conversation, the interviewer will make a judgement as to what questions to ask and how and when to prompt for more detail.

The main areas of questioning are in bold with possible prompts and secondary questions shown in italics. We do not expect all questions below to be relevant to all clients.

Hello, my name is X and I am calling from the independent research agency Fiveways on behalf of Camden CAB, as agreed. Thank you for so much for completing the telephone survey for us last week, and for agreeing to an additional phone call to talk a bit more about the CAB's service at your GP practice.

Is this still a good time to talk? It should take about 10-15 minutes? [If no, rearrange]

To confirm, this interview is confidential, so we won't pass on your comments to CAB directly, and nothing you say will mention your name or any of your circumstances.

Just so I can concentrate on our conversation and make my notes afterwards, I would like to record our discussion. The recording is only for Fiveways use and will not be shared with anyone else - is that okay? [Yes/no – turn on recorder as required]

-
- To start with, can you just briefly tell me why it was that you wanted to use the CAB service at the GP?**

*How did you feel before you saw the CAB advisor?
[No need for too much detail]*

2. How did you find out about the CAB service?

Did your GP mention it first?

Did you see a poster or someone in the surgery?

Did you know about CAB in general before going to your GP?

3. Why didn't you go to a CAB office or another advice centre instead?

[Prompt: convenience, trust, referral?]

4. How was the service for you?

How helpful was it?

What specifically did the advisor help with?

What was the person you spoke to like?

How many times did you see the advisor(s)?

Is there any way that CAB could improve the service?

5. What has changed for you since using the service?

[Prompts based on survey responses]

In what ways do you feel less stressed?

How are you better able to deal with problems?

How are you better able to manage your health?

[Also: general positive difference, afford essential living expenses, manage my debts, improved quality of life]

Is there anything else that you think the service has changed for you? (mental health, well-being, family, children)

How quickly did any of these changes happen?

6. Has using the service made you visit your GP less often?

Have you made more or less GP appointment?

7. What do you think you would have done if you hadn't used the service at the GP?

Would you have found help elsewhere?

Have you looked elsewhere at any point?

If the service wasn't available in the GP practice, what do you feel would be different?

8. What would you say to someone else thinking of using the CAB GP service?

Would you recommend it?

9. What would you say to your advisor about the service they provided?

10. Do you have any other comments or feedback on the CAB service?

Thank you very much indeed for your time and insight. Just to confirm, we would like to use some of your comments anonymously in our report – is this OK with you? Do you have any further questions about this evaluation and phone call?

Call escalation

- A. Safeguarding: if a client is understood to be an adult at risk or a vulnerable adult as defined by Citizens Advice Camden policy, and there are safeguarding reasons why it may be appropriate to breach client confidentiality, the Fiveways team will end the research call immediately and contact Margie directly with all relevant information, for Margie to decide on next steps to be taken.
- B. Additional support required: if a client states that they need additional support from Citizens Advice Camden, the Fiveways team will record key details on the follow up sheet provided, and send this to Margie within 1 working day.

v. GP and practice staff discussion guide

Those working in GP practices are likely to be time pressured, we may have less than 15 minutes to talk, so the questions are focussed on the key things we need to know to describe how the outreach service meets the CCG's priorities.

A discussion guide is not a fixed script. It is more of an aide-memoire to remind the interviewer of the topics to be covered. It can be adapted according to the findings from previous interviews and during each call as, depending on the flow of the conversation, the interviewer will make a judgement as to what questions to ask and how and when to prompt for more detail. The main areas of questioning are in bold with possible prompts shown in italics.

Hello, my name is X and I am calling from the independent research agency Fiveways on behalf of Camden CAB, as agreed. Thank you for agreeing to help us with some research about the impact of the CAB's outreach service in GP practices. Is this still a good time to talk; it should take about 15-20 minutes? [If no, rearrange]

To confirm, this interview is confidential. None of the comments you make will be attributable to you.

Just so I can concentrate on our conversation and make my notes afterwards, I would like to record our discussion. The recording is only for Fiveways use and will not be shared with anyone else - is that okay?

1. How would you describe the quality of the service offered by the CAB in your practice?

What do you base this answer on?

2. How do you think having the CAB service in your practice benefits (your) patients?

What affect do you think it has on their mental health?

What affect does it have on preventing the escalation and development of health issues?

In what other ways do you think it benefits them? (debt/money?)

3. How do feel having the CAB service “on site” benefits the practice?

What affect does it have on demand for GP appointments? Does it help the practice to offer more GP appointments?

What affect does it have on reducing frequent attenders?

Do you feel it helps to save the practice any money? (if so, how?)

Does it increase the practice’s resilience - i.e. is it better placed to tackle challenges and continue high quality care for patients?

Do you feel it has any adverse impact on the practice?

Has the practice received any feedback or done any research that describes how the service benefits the practice?

4. How does having the CAB service in the practice benefit you personally?

Does it take any pressure off in terms of workload or stress? Do you feel your workload is increased by patients who are in financial hardship?

(for GPs) Are you able to reduce the time you spend on social support? and increase time for medical support? Do you feel fewer social (non-health) issues are being raised during consultations?

5. If the service was not available in the practice – what do you feel would be different?

How quickly would any changes become apparent?

What do you think would be different for any of your colleagues in the practice?

How easy would it be to signpost people to other community advice services – would GPs know what is available?

Do you feel the practice would be willing to pay to have the CAB service in the practice?

6. What would you say to the CCG about the future of the service?

7. Do you have any other comments or feedback on the CAB service?

Thank you very much indeed for your time and insight. Just to confirm, we would like to use some of your comments anonymously in our report – is this OK with you?

Do you have any further questions about this evaluation and phone call?