

COMMUNITY LEGAL ADVICE CENTRES: A SURVEY OF CLIENTS IN RECEPTION AREAS

Alexy Buck
Marisol Smith
Judith Sidaway
Nigel J. Balmer



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**Alexy Buck, Marisol Smith, Judith Sidaway and
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

- In March 2006 the Legal Services Commission (LSC), responsible for running the legal aid scheme in England and Wales, published its strategy for the Community Legal Service. A key component of the strategy was the setting up of Community Legal Advice Centres (CLACs) and Networks (CLANs).
- The Legal Services Research Centre (LSRC) was asked to examine and report on the establishment and early operating life of CLACs/CLANs. As part of this research, this report presents findings from a survey of clients in CLAC reception areas.

The Survey of Clients in CLAC Reception Areas

- The survey was administered face-to-face in the reception areas of Portsmouth, Leicester, Hull, Gateshead and Derby CLACs, and their outreach locations, during a one-week period in March 2009. The questionnaire was paper-based, with the option of self-completion by the client. A total of 831 interviews were achieved.

Results

- Respondents were more likely to be non-white British compared to their respective local population. Leicester CLAC had the lowest percentage of white British respondents (34 percent), followed by Derby (55 percent). Around a quarter of respondents suggested that their first language was not English, although this was highly dependent upon CLAC location.
- Overall, 17.5 percent of respondents could be classified as lone parents, though there was some variation by location, ranging from 12.6 percent for Portsmouth CLAC to 23.7 percent for Leicester CLAC.
- More than a third of survey respondents said that they had a long standing illness, disability or infirmity; and 41 percent reported that they suffered from stress, depression or some other kind of mental health problem.
- Almost a third of respondents had no academic qualification. In terms of employment status, the highest single percentage of respondents was in paid employment or self-employed (34.4 percent).
- The majority of respondents had household incomes less than £15,000.
- Many respondents felt that it was 'extremely important' to get advice (61.5 percent). A high proportion suggested that they spent 'all of their time' worrying about the problem (50 percent). When compared with respondents in the Civil and Social Justice Survey (a representative household survey), CLAC survey respondents reported spending considerably more time worrying about their problem.
- More than half of respondents either walked or used public transport to access the CLACs. For those clients whose journey had not been free, the mean cost of a return journey was £3.84 (the median was £2.96).

- Around 45 percent of respondents lived within two miles of the CLAC; only 10 percent lived more than 5 miles away. Mean travel time was 21 minutes. The majority of respondents found it 'very' or 'fairly' easy to get to the CLAC.
- A third of all CLAC users came to the CLAC with somebody else. Leicester had the highest percentage where the person accompanying was helping the respondent to understand English (24.4 percent), while Derby had the highest percentage of those helping respondents to explain the problem (30.6 percent).
- The survey showed that family, friends or work colleagues encouraged 61.7 percent of respondents to get advice.
- Respondents were also asked where they would go instead if the advice centre had not been there. The most common response was 'don't know' (60.9 percent).
- The majority of respondents using a CLAC had found out about the centre by being told about it by another person or organisation (65.8 percent), of which half had heard about the centre through family, friends or work colleagues.
- Just under half of the survey respondents said that they had been to the CLAC advice service before. Of these respondents, 47.2 percent had done so for their current problem only and 52.8 percent for other problems as well.
- Among survey respondents, 36.3 percent reported having tried to get advice somewhere else for difficult problems.
- The most important characteristics of an advice centre identified by clients (from a list provided) were 'not having to pay for advice' and the 'ability to deal with all problems in one place'. Advisor gender and ethnicity were far less important considerations.
- Respondents' opinions of the CLACs were overwhelmingly positive, with 95 percent saying they were 'very' or 'fairly likely' to recommend the centre to someone else.
- Only 6 percent of survey respondents were interviewed in outreach settings. They differed from main centre users in a number of respects. Outreach locations were likely to be closer to respondents' homes than for main centre CLAC respondents.

Research Implications

- The survey findings showed clearly that vulnerable and disadvantaged groups were using the services, although there were some differences across the CLACs, reflecting local population make-up. The CLACs were also helping people for whom the problem was having a disproportionately detrimental effect.
- CLAC users were largely drawn from low income households. A median travel cost of £3 may be a struggle for some clients. Structures that reduce the need for multiple visits for the same problem would appear to be advantageous; as would minimizing turning people away at drop-in, when they have already borne the cost of travel.

- The survey showed that CLAC users are drawn from many of the stipulated priority groups listed in CLAC service specifications.
- The findings indicate that aspects of accessibility beyond logistical factors require consideration. Social networks are clearly important in encouraging and signposting people to advice. For people without these networks, the role of others such as health professionals and social workers takes on a crucial importance. Simple measures, such as clear branding outside the CLAC, are likely to raise awareness of the service among those with and without networks. Findings also highlight the limited knowledge of alternative local sources of legal help.
- The survey fieldwork had to be planned around 'bulges' of clients. This highlights a key consequence of having a drop-in service, and the resulting challenge for CLACs of managing fluctuating client and advisor numbers.
- Given the reported ease of access of outreach locations, outreach advice may constitute an important means of ensuring access for people who might otherwise struggle to attend the main CLAC venue.
- A fundamental objective of CLACs is to offer a one-stop shop legal service for a range of problem categories. This matches the interest of people with problems who valued the policy approach of service integration.

1. INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter sets out briefly the policy background to Community Legal Advice Centres (CLACs) and Networks (CLANs). It then presents the overall research strategy devised to research and evaluate CLACs and CLANs. This contextual background is followed by the research objectives and questions for the survey of clients in CLAC reception areas.

1.1 Policy Background

In March 2006 the Legal Services Commission (LSC), responsible for running the legal aid scheme in England and Wales, published its strategy¹ for the Community Legal Service. The Community Legal Service (CLS) provides help on civil (i.e. non-criminal) problems. The strategy set out a new approach to the way that civil legal and advice services are funded, purchased and delivered.

A key component of the strategy was the setting up of Community Legal Advice Centres (CLACs) and Networks (CLANs). These are innovative in the sense that they are commissioned and funded jointly with local authorities (LAs) and other potential funders, and that their overall aim is to provide clients with an integrated and seamless social welfare law (SWL) service, including family law. The core SWL categories include: community care, debt, employment, housing and welfare benefits.

CLACs and CLANs aim to meet legal needs from diagnosis and information through to advice and assistance and legal representation in complex court proceedings. The concentration of funding pulls together key services in a geographical area into either a single entity (Centres) or brings together a consortium of providers supplying complementary services (Networks).

1.2 The Research Strategy

The Legal Services Research Centre (LSRC), the independent research division of the LSC, was asked to examine and report on the establishment and early operating life of CLACs/CLANs. The specific objectives were to research:

- the *processes* involved in setting up and running CLAC and CLAN services, thereby examining the factors which contribute to the successful commissioning, set up and delivery of integrated and seamless advice services, and identifying best practice and lessons to be learnt; and
- *client experiences* of the new services, with a particular focus on whether the CLACs are delivering on accessibility, seamlessness and integration from the client perspective.

¹ Legal Services Commission (2006) *Making Legal Rights a Reality*, London: Legal Services Commission. See also Welsh Assembly Government and Legal Services Commission (2007) *Making Legal Rights a Reality in Wales*, Cardiff: Legal Services Commission and Welsh Assembly Government.

The LSRC therefore developed a research strategy comprising two overall research elements: a process study and client-focussed studies. Using a variety of quantitative and qualitative research methods, these elements together examine the experiences of those involved in the commissioning, set up, provision and receipt of services.

The LSRC set up a Research Advisory Group, which included key stakeholders such as the Advice Services Alliance, the Law Society, the Ministry of Justice and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, who were invited to comment on key stages of the research programme.

The LSRC commissioned a research team, led by Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) with Cardiff University and independent researchers, to conduct the process study². The client-focussed studies were conducted in-house by the LSRC³.

It should be noted that the process study was able to include research on the set-up of CLANs, as well as CLACs. In contrast, the client-focussed studies are necessarily restricted to CLACs, as there were no CLANs delivering services to clients during the empirical research phase.

There are three elements to the client-focussed studies. These include a detailed qualitative study of the experiences of clients using CLAC services, an analysis of the management information collected within the CLACs and provided to the Legal Services Commission, and, lastly, a survey of clients in reception areas of the operational CLACs. This last element is the focus of this report. The report should be read in conjunction with the other two client-focussed reports.

1.3 The Survey of Clients in Reception Areas: Research Objectives and Questions

1.3.1 Research Objectives

The key objective of the client survey was to profile CLAC service users. As monitoring data for CLACs is necessarily restricted, it was important to collect more extensive quantitative data on the characteristics of CLAC users. All five operational CLACs are required to deliver services to 'priority groups'. These are specified in the contracts awarded to CLACs, and vary from CLAC to CLAC. Examples of priority groups include: the unemployed, families on low income, people of specific age ranges, lone parents, victims of violence, geographically isolated people, carers, BME communities, and people with long-term illness and disability.

The survey questionnaire therefore included detailed questions on client demographics and socio-economic status. This encompassed various indicators of disadvantage, such as long-standing illness or disability, benefit receipt and income.

² Fox, C., Moorhead, R., Sefton, M. and Wong, K. (2010) *Community Legal Advice Centres and Networks: A Process Evaluation*, London: Legal Services Research Centre

³ Buck, A., Smith, M., Sidaway, J., and Scanlan, L. (2010) *Piecing It Together: Exploring One-Stop Shop Legal Service Delivery in Community Legal Advice Centres*, London: Legal Services Commission; Smith, M. and Patel, A. (2010) *Using Monitoring Data: Examining Community Legal Advice Centre Delivery*, London: Legal Services Commission; Buck, A., Smith, M., Sidaway, J. and Balmer, N.J. (2010) *Community Legal Advice Centres: A Survey of Clients in Reception Areas*, London: Legal Services Commission.

A further key objective of the survey was to explore the accessibility of CLACs from the client perspective. A number of questions on travel to CLACs, including transport costs, were therefore included in the questionnaire. Quantitative information on previous advice-seeking behaviour and the role of others in directing clients to CLACs was also gathered.

The survey further provided the opportunity to explore those aspects of an advice service that clients regarded as important, thereby including a user perspective in the research. This perspective is investigated in much greater depth in the qualitative client-focused study.

Results are provided for each individual CLAC, as well as for all clients across the five CLACs. In addition to comparison between the CLACs, similarities and differences of CLAC outreach clients are also presented.

Lastly, where appropriate, comparisons are made to data from the English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey (CSJS), the Census 2001 and Office for National Statistics Population Estimates.

1.3.2 Research Questions

In line with the above research objectives, the survey of clients in CLAC reception areas sought to provide information on the following:

- What is the socio-demographic profile of CLAC clients? How disadvantaged are CLAC clients? How do findings relate to stipulated priority groups?
- How accessible is the CLAC location from the client perspective? Where have clients travelled from to reach the CLAC and what means of transport did they use? What were their transport costs?
- How did clients hear about the CLAC? Have clients sought advice in the past about current or previous problems?
- What is important to clients in an advice centre?
- Do CLAC clients differ depending on specific CLACs?

2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodological approach undertaken for the survey of clients in CLAC reception areas. It first describes the survey methodology, covering the general approach, questionnaire design, piloting and interview numbers. Second, we briefly describe data used for comparative purposes.

2.1 Survey Methodology

2.1.1 General Approach

The face-to-face footfall survey of clients in reception areas of the five operating CLACs and their outreach locations took place in March 2009. Questionnaires were administered to clients who visited the services during a one-week period, thereby providing a snapshot of CLAC users.

Questionnaire design, data analysis and report writing was conducted by the LSRC. The LSRC commissioned GfK NOP to conduct the fieldwork for the survey.

Before fieldwork began information was received from each centre about the approximate number of clients expected at each centre and outreach locations at different times. Some challenges in planning fieldwork at outreach locations were encountered, as the timing and location of outreach sessions was subject to uncertainty.

During busy periods two GfK NOP interviewers attended the CLACs in order to maximise the number of interviews which could be achieved. Interviews were conducted using paper questionnaires.

Interviewing was conducted in the five operating CLACs in Portsmouth, Leicester, Hull, Gateshead and Derby, and during advice sessions CLAC advisors attended in outreach centres.⁴

All visitors attending the main CLAC for advice were eligible to take part in the survey. Some CLACs also hosted extra advice sessions from external providers such as Relate or the Immigration Advisory Service, and clients attending the centre to visit these providers were also included in the survey. However, visitors who did not need advice but who were attending the centre to support friends and family members were not interviewed.

In outreach centres only visitors who enquired about or used the legal advice service were eligible to take part in the survey. Those attending the outreach centre for a different purpose were not invited to interview. Friends and family members who were attending the centre to support the client were also not interviewed.

⁴ Legal advice sessions in Derby's outreach centres included in the survey were run by the local council rather than the CLAC itself.

2.1.2 Questionnaire Design and Completion

In order to maximise response rates and gain information from as many clients as possible the paper questionnaire was designed so that it could be administered by an interviewer or self-completed by the client. This was so at peak times (such as first thing in the morning) when several clients arrived at once, interviewers could ask clients to complete the questionnaire themselves in order to maximise the number of clients they were able to invite to interview.

This design of the questionnaire had another advantage. Some interviews were interrupted when an advisor became available to see the client. In these cases the interviewer was able to hand the respondent the questionnaire and ask the respondent to self-complete the questionnaire after their appointment (as the interviewer may not have been free at the end of the client's appointment to continue the interview). This approach worked well and helped to minimise information being lost due to these interruptions. One hundred and thirty-seven interviews included in the final data-set were interrupted but only 25 of these were returned without being fully completed. Self-completion interviews were only used at the main CLAC and were not used at the outreach centres.

As it was likely that some clients visiting the centre would have low levels of literacy, or might not speak English as a first language, before giving out the self-completion questionnaire the interviewer asked clients if they would be happy to complete the survey in this way or if they would prefer the survey to be interviewer administered. Interviewers were instructed only to give out self-completion questionnaires at busy periods and to administer as many of the interviews themselves as possible⁵.

In general, the generic terms 'advice centre' or 'advice service' were used in the questionnaire instead of 'CLAC', as researchers expected CLAC users to not necessarily be aware that the centre they were visiting was called a CLAC/Community Legal Advice Centre.

2.1.3 Pilot

Before main-stage fieldwork began, GfK NOP carried out a pilot to ascertain if there were any problems with the proposed methodology or the design of the questionnaire. The pilot was conducted in February 2009 in two CLACs. Only small changes had to be made following the pilot.

2.1.4 Interviews Achieved in Main-Stage

In main-stage fieldwork from 24th-30th of March 2009, 831 interviews were achieved⁶. Table 1 shows the number of interviews which were achieved at each location and the

⁵ In order to include the views of as many respondents as possible in the survey who did not speak English as a first language, interviewers in some cases asked friends and family members attending the centre with the client to translate the questionnaire on their behalf. This approach was used for 8 of the questionnaires.

⁶ Interviewers were given a tally sheet during their fieldwork shift to keep a record of the number of clients interviewed, the number of clients who refused to take part and the number of clients whom they did not manage to approach for interview. Using this information we can ascertain that on average 66% of clients visiting CLACs or visiting outreach centres for legal advice during fieldwork were interviewed. Fifteen per cent of clients refused to take part and 19% of clients were not

proportion which were interviewer administered versus the proportion which were self-completed. A higher proportion of interviews were self-completed in Derby and Gateshead due to large numbers of clients arriving in relatively short periods of time. The second table shows the number of interviews which were achieved at the main centres and outreach centres. A relatively small number of interviews were achieved at the outreach centres due to the small number of outreach sessions running during fieldwork and the low footfall figures at these centres.

Table 1. Total number of interviews achieved at each location by method

Location	Total achieved - interviewer administered	Total achieved - self-completion	Combined Total
Derby	71	73	144
Portsmouth	102	19	121
Gateshead	78	110	188
Hull	148	82	230
Leicester	106	42	148
Total	505	326	831

Table 2. Total number of interviews achieved at each location by type of centre

Location	Centre type	Total achieved	Overall by centre
Derby	Main	125	144
	Outreach	19	
Portsmouth	Main	111	121
	Outreach	10	
Gateshead	Main	177	188
	Outreach	11	
Hull	Main	224	230
	Outreach	6	
Leicester	Main	143	148
	Outreach	5	
Total			831

2.2 Comparative Data

approached to take part in an interview. There was, however, a great deal of variation between fieldwork shifts. For example, for 6 shifts all clients were interviewed, whereas at the other end of the scale, for 7 shifts conducted more than 50% of clients had not been interviewed (though four of these were at outreach centres where footfall figures were low and 3 of these were at main centres at sessions when footfall figures were particularly high). Due to this variation in participation levels between shifts it was felt necessary to weight the data to ensure that clients from no one shift were over or under-represented in the data. The weights were calculated to keep the total un-weighted and the weighted sample size the same (831). The statistical impact of the weighting was slight and reduced the effective sample size for the total sample from 831 to 789. During the shift interviewers also kept a record of the gender, age estimate (under 35, 35-59, 60+) and ethnicity (white/non-white) for clients who refused or did not have time to participate in the survey. This information showed that there was no consistent pattern in the profile of those refusing to take part.

2.2.1 Matching Findings to the English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey (CSJS)

The English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey (CSJS), a nationally representative survey of the adult population of England and Wales, provides detailed information on the nature, pattern and impact of people's experience of rights problems and the use and success of problem resolution strategies⁷.

For a number of analyses in this report, CLAC survey respondents were compared to respondents or problems from the English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey (CSJS). Two separate groups of CSJS respondents/problems were used; (those with) social welfare law problems and (those with) family problems. CSJS problem subcategories were chosen to attempt to mirror problem types funded by the LSC within these two categories⁸.

Findings from the CSJS have been published widely and detailed information is available as to the survey's methodology. In sum, the CSJS sample was drawn by randomly selecting residential addresses from 504 postcode sectors, spread throughout England and Wales. A total of 10,537 adult respondents (aged 18 years or older), living in 6,234 households, were interviewed face-to-face in their own homes between January 2006 and January 2009⁹.

2.1.1 Matching to Census 2001 and Office for National Statistics Population Estimates

For two questions, the survey of clients in reception areas was matched to data from the Census 2001 and the Office for National Statistics 2007 Population Estimates.

⁷ Pleasence, P. (2006) *Causes of Action, Civil Law and Social Justice*, Second Edition, Norwich: The Stationary Office.

⁸ For **social welfare law**, the following CSJS problem categories were used: employment, housing, money and debt, welfare benefits, and homelessness. For **family problems**, the following CSJS problem categories were used: divorce, family, domestic violence, and children.

⁹ The household response rate was 78 per cent (83 percent where successful contact was made with an adult occupant), and the cumulative eligible adult response rate was 58 percent.

3. RESULTS

This chapter covers survey results, starting with CLAC clients' socio-demographic characteristics. A short section on the perceived severity of problems, and a more substantial section on the accessibility of CLACs follow this. The fourth and fifth sections focus on knowledge and motivation for advice-seeking, and previous advice-seeking experiences. The sixth section presents survey results on a range of things that survey respondents said were important to them in an advice centre. Lastly, specific findings on use of CLAC outreach services are presented.

3.1 Social and Demographic Characteristics

Of the 831 survey respondents 444 (53.4%) were male and 387 (46.6%) female¹⁰. The age group of respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Age profile of survey respondents, overall and by location

	All respondents		Derby	Ports.	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
Age group	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
17-18	5	0.6	0.7	1.9	0.0	0.9	0.0
19-24	89	10.7	14.4	12.0	8.3	10.2	10.9
25-34	193	23.3	21.6	25.0	18.3	26.5	26.8
35-44	200	24.1	20.3	21.3	23.4	29.3	23.2
45-54	155	18.7	21.6	19.4	18.3	18.6	15.2
55-64	120	14.4	8.5	13.9	22.9	9.3	15.9
65 +	48	5.8	9.2	5.6	6.9	2.8	4.3
Prefer not to say	15	1.8	3.3	0.9	1.4	1.4	2.2
Not stated	6	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.5	0.9	1.4

There were some differences in age by location. Gateshead in particular, had a far higher percentage of older respondents (specifically 55-64 year olds) than other locations. In contrast, Hull in particular had far fewer older respondents. The mean age for all respondents was 42 years old (and the median was 40)¹¹.

Table 2 shows the ethnic groups of respondents across all locations. As can be seen, the majority of respondents (70.7%) described themselves as 'white British'.

¹⁰ There was very little variation across locations; 56.5% male in Derby, 55.6% in Portsmouth, 50.9% in Gateshead, 54.0% in Hull and 51.4% in Leicester.

¹¹ Differences in mean age by location were fairly modest, with a slightly higher value for Gateshead.. Mean ages were 41 in Derby, 41 in Portsmouth, 45 in Gateshead, 40 in Hull and 41 in Leicester.

Table 2. *Ethnic group of all survey respondents*

Ethnic group	N	%
White - British	588	70.7
White - Irish	3	.4
White - Other White background	42	5.1
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	3	.3
Mixed - White and Black African	4	.5
Mixed - White and Asian	1	.2
Mixed - Any other mixed background	4	.5
Asian or Asian British - Indian	42	5.0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	21	2.5
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	3	.4
Asian or Asian British - Other Asian background	15	1.8
Black or Black British - Caribbean	16	2.0
Black or Black British - African	45	5.4
Black or Black British - Other Black background	2	.2
Chinese	4	.5
Other	35	4.3
Not stated	1	.1

Not surprisingly, there were sizeable differences in ethnicity by location. Table 3 (below) further collapses survey respondents into broader ethnic groups and also similarly breaks down the local population resident within the various catchments areas (based on data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2007 Population Estimates). Unsurprisingly, following the general trend that can be observed from the 2007 Population Estimates, Leicester had the lowest percentage of white British respondents (34%), followed by Derby (55%). Within Leicester, Asian respondents made up a comparable percentage to white British, reflecting the high Asian population resident within the area. Gateshead had the lowest percentage of non-white British respondents (8%), a slightly higher rate than is observed from the 2007 Population Estimates (5.9%). Interestingly, though Hull had a similarly low non-white British resident population (8.9%), more than a fifth of waiting room respondents belonged to this group (21.1%). A similar trend could also be observed with regards to Portsmouth.

Overall, respondents to the survey were more likely to be non-white British compared to their respective local population. While it is not possible to state with certainty, it can be speculated that possible causes for these differences may include differences in the prevalence and vulnerability of problems between different ethnic populations and also the location of the CLAC services and the characteristics of its immediate community and population.

Table 3. Percentage of survey respondents by broad Ethnic group and corresponding Office for National Statistics 2007 Population Estimate percentages for CLAC catchments

Ethnic group	Location									
	Derby (%)		Ports. (%)		Gates. (%)		Hull (%)		Leic. (%)	
	CLA C	ONS 2007	CLA C	ONS 2007	CLA C	ONS 2007	CLA C	ONS 2007	CLA C	ONS 2007
White British	55.2	81.4	82.2	86.4	92.2	94.1	78.9	91.1	34.3	57.5
White Other	7.8	3.4	4.7	4.5	1.4	2.0	8.0	2.7	5.8	3.7
Mixed ethnicity	1.9	2.1	0.9	1.3	1.8	0.8	0.9	1.1	2.2	2.6
Asian	18.8	9.5	0.9	3.8	0.9	1.6	2.3	2.2	32.1	29.6
Black	11.7	2.2	4.7	1.3	1.8	0.8	4.7	1.2	19.0	4.9
Other	4.5	1.3	6.5	2.7	1.8	0.9	5.2	1.6	6.6	1.6

190 (23.1%) of 821¹² respondents suggested that their first language was not English. Again, not surprisingly, this was highly dependent upon location, with 32.9 percent for Derby, 15.2 percent for Portsmouth, 7.5 percent for Gateshead, 17.8 percent for Hull and 51.1 percent for Leicester.

The marital status of respondents overall, and by location is shown in Table 4. As can be seen, differences by location were generally fairly modest and likely to be in part driven by factors such as differences in age profile (Table 1).

Table 4. Marital status of respondents, overall and by location

Marital status	All respondents		Derby	Ports.	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Single, that is never married	358	43.6	41.9	40.2	44.4	46.4	42.3
Married and living with husband/wife	238	28.9	34.4	35.4	24.6	25.2	29.9
Married and separated from husband/wife	78	9.5	7.0	10.9	11.4	8.2	10.2
Divorced	127	15.5	13.1	10.3	18.2	17.4	15.0
Widowed	21	2.6	3.5	3.2	1.4	2.9	2.5

272 of 804 (33.8%) respondents had children living with them, with some variation by location; 50 of 152 (32.9%) for Derby, 29 of 103 (28.2%) for Portsmouth, 62 of 206 (30.1%) for Gateshead, 75 of 208 (36.1%) for Hull and 56 of 135 (41.5%) for Leicester. Overall, 141 of 804 respondents (17.5%) could be classified as lone parents, though

¹² Excluding 1 respondent who said 'don't know' and 9 where no response was given.

there was some variation by location, with 14.5 percent for Derby, 12.6 percent for Portsmouth, 15.5 percent for Gateshead, 20.2 percent for Hull and 23.7 percent for Leicester.

Table 5 shows the tenure/housing situation for all respondents, also split by location¹³. The single largest percentage of respondents was renting from the council or a housing association (37.5%), with this group making up a particularly large percentage in Gateshead (50.2%), where private renting was far less common, and a smaller percentage in Portsmouth (22.2%), where private renting was most common.

Table 5. Tenure/housing situation for all respondents, and for each location

Tenure	All respondents		Derby	Ports	Gates	Hull	Leic.
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Own it outright	67	8.2	10.0	8.7	6.8	6.5	10.7
Buying it mortgage/ loan	159	19.4	16.5	19.9	18.6	23.6	17.3
Part rent/part mortgage	8	1.0	1.7	2.5	1.0	0.5	0.0
Rent from local council/ housing association	306	37.5	29.8	22.1	50.2	33.7	44.4
Rent from private landlord	190	23.3	28.2	32.1	12.4	28.2	20.2
Live rent free	37	4.5	9.2	8.3	3.5	2.2	1.5
In temporary/emergency accommodation	19	2.3	2.2	0.7	4.2	1.0	2.7
Sleeping rough	7	0.8	0.0	0.9	0.6	1.4	1.3
Other	15	1.8	1.7	2.4	2.1	1.7	1.2
Living with parents (paying rent)	9	1.0	0.7	2.2	0.7	1.3	0.7

Of those responding¹⁴ 290 of 807 (35.9%) suggested that they had a long standing illness, disability or infirmity. 323 of 791¹⁵ (40.8%) suggested that they suffered from stress, depression or some other kind of mental health problem. However, as shown in Table 6, there were differences by location. Specifically, Gateshead respondents had a far higher percentage both with illness, disabilities or infirmities and mental health problems. In comparison, 28.6 percent of CSJS respondents with a social welfare law problem suggested that they had a long-term illness or disability and 37.4 percent suffered from some form of mental health problem. For CSJS respondents with family problems, 24.0 percent reported long-term illness or disability and 52.0 percent reported mental health problems.

¹³ 14 who gave no response were excluded.

¹⁴ Excluding 25 who did not give a response.

¹⁵ Excluding 29 who responded 'don't know' and 11 who gave no response. Part of this slightly increased number of 'don't know' or 'not stated' responses may be a result of the sensitivity of the question.

Table 6. Long-standing illness, disability or infirmity and mental health problems of respondents by location

Location	Long-standing illness, disability or infirmity		Stress, depression or some other kind of mental health problem	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Derby	40 26.5%	111 73.5%	47 31.5%	102 68.5%
Portsmouth	31 29.0%	76 71.0%	42 40.4%	62 59.6%
Gateshead	109 51.7%	102 48.3%	113 54.6%	94 45.4%
Hull	68 33.2%	137 66.8%	78 38.4%	125 61.6%
Leicester	42 31.8%	90 68.2%	43 33.6%	85 66.4%

With regard to long standing illness, disability or infirmity, CLAC respondents were also asked the extent to which the symptoms disrupted their free time. Responses were on an 11 point scale from 'not at all' (zero) to 'extremely' (ten). Summary statistics for the variable overall and by location are shown in Table 7. Overall, the mean score was around 6 and the median 7 (indicated as 'markedly' on the scale). Interestingly, the highest mean scores were for Gateshead, which also had the highest percentage of ill or disabled respondents (see Table 6). This is higher than for CSJS respondents with social welfare law or family problems who suffered from a long-term illness or disability. Their mean score was 5.1 and the median was 5.

Table 7. Respondent's assessments of the extent to which the symptoms of their illness, disability or infirmity disrupted their free time, overall and by location (on a scale from 'not at all' (zero) to 'extremely' (ten))

	Extent to which symptoms of illness, disability or infirmity disrupted free time					
	N	Mean	SD	Median	Perc. 25	Perc. 75
Overall	282	6.03	3.27	7.00	4.00	9.00
Derby	40	5.90	3.52	7.00	4.00	9.00
Portsmouth	30	5.31	3.20	6.00	4.00	8.00
Gateshead	108	6.47	3.26	7.00	4.00	10.00
Hull	63	5.75	3.17	7.00	4.00	8.00
Leicester	41	5.92	3.24	7.00	4.00	8.00

Table 8 shows the highest academic qualification achieved by 775 respondents¹⁶, overall and by location. Almost a third of respondents had no academic qualification, with this figure higher for Gateshead and lower for Portsmouth. This may partly be a function of other factors such as the generally older age profile in Gateshead (see Table 1).

¹⁶ 36 who said 'don't know' and 20 who gave no response were removed from analysis.

Interestingly, comparing data obtained from the waiting room survey to the Census 2001 suggests that CLAC survey respondents were slightly less likely to have no qualification than the catchments' general population (32.7% versus 35.9% respectively)¹⁷. Looking at individual areas, only respondents from Gateshead demonstrated a noticeably higher rate of 'no qualifications' compared to its general population (44.0% compared to 38.4%). Respondents from Hull, Leicester and Portsmouth were less likely to report having 'no qualifications' when compared to their local populations. For Hull, 26.2% of waiting room survey respondents reported having no qualifications compared to 41.2% from the 2001 Census; in Leicester, rates of no qualifications were reported by 33.5% of survey respondents compared to 38.5% from the Census and 24.3% compared to 27.8% did likewise for Portsmouth. The rates of having 'no qualifications' between survey respondents (31.5%) and the local population (31.4%) in Derby were very similar.

Overall, people responding to the waiting room survey tended to be less likely to have a higher level qualification (degree, higher degree, professional qualifications, or equivalent) than their respective populations (8.5% versus 14.9% respectively). The only exception to this appeared in Hull where 13.4% of respondents reported possessing a higher level qualification compared to 9.9% of the population living within the catchment area.

Table 8. Highest academic qualification that respondents had passed, overall and by location

	All respondents		Derby	Ports	Gates	Hull	Leic.
Highest qualification	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Higher degree/ postgraduate qual.	30	3.9	3.2	6.3	2.2	6.4	1.3
First degree	35	4.6	1.6	8.8	3.5	7.0	2.3
Diplomas in HE	74	9.6	11.0	14.2	6.0	11.4	6.6
A/AS levels/Highers	44	5.7	6.6	5.9	2.9	5.7	9.1
Trade apprenticeships	69	8.9	4.9	11.5	10.2	10.7	6.2
O level/GCSE A-C	116	15.0	12.8	17.1	17.7	15.1	11.3
O Level/GCSE D-G	55	7.1	10.3	5.9	8.5	5.8	4.2
Other qualifications	98	12.7	18.1	5.9	5.0	11.7	25.4
None of these	253	32.7	31.5	24.3	44.0	26.2	33.5

Respondents were also asked about their economic activity (in the last week). Activity for 760 respondents¹⁸ in the week before interview is shown in Table 9, for all respondents and by location. The highest single percentage of respondents was in paid employment or self-employed (34.4%), with this percentage particularly high in

¹⁷ Caution should be exercised in considering these findings due to differences in the manner in which data in the current study and the Census 2001 have been collected and analysed. For the purposes of comparison, only higher level qualifications (degree, higher degree, professional qualifications, or equivalent) and 'no qualifications' are considered here, as they appear to be directly comparable. All other qualification types have been discarded as they do not allow direct comparison between the current study and the Census 2001. Further, it should be noted that the 2001 Census is somewhat dated and may no longer provide a true reflection of the population.

¹⁸ 71 respondents were excluded, with 18 responding 'don't know', 17 'prefer not to say', 26 giving no response and 11 saying 'not working' without further information.

Portsmouth (47.7%). In line with demographics in Table 6, Gateshead had a far higher percentage of respondents permanently unable to work because of long-term sickness.

Table 9. Respondent's economic activity in the week prior to interview, for all respondents and by location

	All respondents		Derby	Ports	Gates	Hull	Leic.
Economic activity	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Full-time education	39	5.2	7.1	5.3	2.0	8.0	3.4
Paid employment or self-emp.	262	34.4	39.1	47.7	31.2	30.7	29.3
Gov. scheme/ emp. training	10	1.3	0.7	0.0	0.7	3.8	0.0
Unpaid work for a business that you own	3	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.0	1.0	0.0
Waiting to take up paid work already obtained	6	0.8	1.2	0.7	0.0	1.5	0.9
Looking for paid work or a training scheme	135	17.8	15.2	18.7	10.8	22.0	24.6
Intending to look for work but sick	24	3.1	3.3	0.7	2.4	4.1	4.6
Permanently unable to work because of long-term sickness	116	15.3	8.6	6.2	31.4	11.3	10.8
Retired from paid work	54	7.2	9.5	9.4	9.0	4.3	4.1
Looking after home or family	72	9.5	6.5	6.2	6.4	10.5	19.1
Caring for a sick, elderly or disabled person	26	3.4	6.8	3.4	3.0	1.8	2.4
Doing something else	13	1.7	2.1	0.8	3.0	1.1	0.7

Table 10 shows benefits received by survey respondents overall and by location¹⁹. Portsmouth had the highest percentage not in receipt of benefits (46.2%) with the lowest percentage in Gateshead (16.6%). It should be noted that research interviews in the Portsmouth CLAC were almost exclusively concentrated on clients attending the general help service.²⁰ Given that most clients for specialist services meet the legal aid means test, this is likely to have skewed the Portsmouth results, with those on the lowest incomes not fully accounted for. Gateshead also had the highest percentage of respondents on incapacity benefits (18.3%).

¹⁹ 5 ESA (Employment and Support Allowance) and 5 NSSA support specified as 'other state benefits' were excluded.

²⁰ The Portsmouth specialists work in a separate building, in which a whole range of services are offered. Interviewing would therefore have been difficult in this building.

Table 10. Benefits received by respondents overall and by location. Table entries show the percentage in receipt of each benefit, with respondents able to specify all relevant benefits

Benefit	All N = 831	Derby N = 154	Ports. N = 107	Gates. N = 218	Hull N = 215	Leic. N = 138
Income support	16.4	14.4	12.7	19.8	15.0	18.0
JSA	18.0	14.8	8.4	15.0	23.5	25.3
NI retirement pension/ Over 80 pension	4.9	5.6	5.6	6.6	3.5	2.9
Incapacity benefit	8.9	9.1	1.6	18.3	6.1	4.2
Disability benefits	0.5	1.4	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.8
Working Tax Credit	9.6	10.6	8.7	13.2	8.0	5.8
Child Tax Credit	17.7	19.1	14.8	15.3	18.6	20.6
Job Grant	0.2	0.6	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Child benefit	20.1	16.1	17.9	22.4	20.9	21.5
Housing benefit	18.5	11.4	11.3	24.1	23.5	15.1
Council tax benefit	18.2	16.3	9.7	24.1	18.8	16.5
Free school meals	4.3	4.6	2.7	2.8	6.2	4.4
Pension Credit	4.2	2.3	3.9	6.6	3.0	4.5
Carer's allowance	2.5	2.1	4.9	2.5	1.2	3.1
Disability living allow.	8.7	4.6	7.8	12.5	9.1	7.5
Attendance allowance	0.8	0.0	0.7	1.5	0.5	1.3
No, none of these	28.6	32.2	46.2	16.6	27.5	31.3

Finally for demographics, respondents were asked to specify their total household income before tax and other deductions. Respondents could specify annual, monthly or weekly income, though annual income is presented in Table 11 for all respondents and each location²¹. The majority of respondents had low household income, with 48.2 percent with income less than £10,000 per annum (58.5% if those saying 'don't know' are removed).

²¹ 29 refused and 32 gave no answer. A reasonably large number (n = 134) who said 'don't know' were retained in Table 11.

Table 11. Respondent's annual household income before tax and deductions for all respondents and each location

Annual household income	All respondents		Derby	Ports.	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Under £2,500	64	8.3	7.5	7.3	11.3	6.7	7.5
£2,500 - £4,999	131	17.0	11.1	11.3	18.4	20.2	20.8
£5,000 - £9,999	177	23.0	20.5	17.8	29.8	19.7	24.2
£10,000 - £14,999	131	17.0	16.6	14.0	14.2	21.1	17.8
£15,000 - £19,999	43	5.6	8.8	4.6	4.1	6.0	4.5
£20,000 - £24,999	36	4.6	2.1	15.9	2.8	4.5	2.0
£25,000 - £29,999	24	3.1	4.9	7.2	0.6	2.4	3.1
£30,000 - £34,999	12	1.6	0.7	2.5	2.3	1.0	1.7
£35,000 - £39,999	5	0.7	1.3	0.8	0.0	1.4	0.0
£40,000 - £44,999	2	0.3	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.8	0.0
£45,000 - £49,999	3	0.4	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
£50,000 or more	8	1.1	2.7	1.0	0.7	0.4	0.8
Don't know	134	17.4	23.9	14.0	15.8	15.8	17.7

Table 12 presents the same information with the 'don't know' responses removed. Gateshead had a particularly high percentage (70.6%) with income less than £10,000, with the lowest percentage in Portsmouth (42.3%).

Table 12. Respondent's annual household income before tax and deductions for all respondents and each location (with 'don't know' responses removed)

Annual household income	All respondents		Derby	Ports.	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Under £2,500	64	10.0	9.9	8.5	13.4	7.9	9.1
£2,500 - £4,999	131	20.5	14.6	13.1	21.9	24.0	25.2
£5,000 - £9,999	177	27.9	26.9	20.7	35.3	23.5	29.3
£10,000 - £14,999	131	20.6	21.7	16.3	16.9	25.0	21.6
£15,000 - £19,999	43	6.8	11.5	5.4	4.9	7.1	5.4
£20,000 - £24,999	36	5.6	2.8	18.5	3.3	5.3	2.4
£25,000 - £29,999	24	3.8	6.4	8.3	0.8	2.8	3.8
£30,000 - £34,999	12	1.9	0.9	2.9	2.7	1.2	2.1
£35,000 - £39,999	5	0.8	1.7	0.9	0.0	1.6	0.0
£40,000 - £44,999	2	0.4	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
£45,000 - £49,999	3	0.4	0.0	3.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
£50,000 or more	8	1.3	3.5	1.2	0.8	0.5	1.0

3.2 Severity of Problems

Respondents were asked how important it was for them to get advice on a five point scale, from 'extremely important' to 'not at all important'. Table 13 shows the responses of 794 respondents²² overall, and by location. As can be seen, the majority of respondents felt that it was 'extremely important' to get advice (61.5%), with this percentage at its highest in Derby (66.9%) and slightly lower in Leicester (54.3%) and particularly Portsmouth (49.1%). Responses other than 'extremely' or 'very important' were rare in all areas. No respondents said that getting advice was 'not at all important'

Table 13. *How important respondents felt it was to get advice, overall and by location*

Importance of getting advice	All respondents		Derby	Ports.	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Extremely important	383	61.5	66.9	49.1	66.5	63.2	54.3
Very important	215	34.5	31.3	42.3	31.4	31.6	41.8
Moderately important	20	3.2	1.8	5.5	2.1	3.8	3.9
Slightly important	5	0.7	0.0	3.1	0.0	1.3	0.0
Not at all important	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Respondents were also asked how much of their time they spent worrying about the problem or problems they had come to the advice centre with. (As set out in the methodology, the generic terms 'advice centre' (for main CLACs) and 'advice service' (for outreach locations) rather than 'CLAC' was used). The question was designed to replicate a question included in the continuous CSJS.

Table 14 shows how much of their time respondents felt they spent worrying about the problem/problems, both overall and split by location. Reflecting the importance of advice seeking described in Table 13, half suggested that they spent 'all of their time' worrying about the problem, with the highest percentage (59.9%) in Gateshead. Responses of 'little' or 'none of your time' were rare (4.8% overall).

Table 14. *How much of their time respondents felt they spent worrying about the problem/problems they came to the advice centre/service with, overall and by location*

Time spent worrying about problem(s)	All respondents		Derby	Ports.	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
All of your time	306	50.0	52.7	45.1	59.9	44.8	42.8
Most of your time	182	29.8	29.4	31.0	24.3	33.2	32.9
Some of your time	94	15.4	12.7	15.7	12.0	17.9	19.8
Little of your time	20	3.3	3.7	8.2	3.3	1.8	1.1
None of your time	9	1.5	1.5	0.0	0.5	2.3	3.4

This question also appeared in the continuous CSJS, with survey respondents spending less of their time worrying about problems than CLAC clients. In the case of social welfare law problems, 18.4 percent of CSJS respondents spent 'all' of their time worrying

²² A further 4 said 'don't know', 2 said 'prefer not to say' and 31 gave no response.

about the problem, 26.3 percent 'most' of their time, 29.8 percent 'some' of their time, 18.4 percent 'little' of their time and 7.2 percent 'none' of their time. For family problems, percentages were 24.6, 23.0, 26.1, 14.1 and 12.2 percent respectively. CSJS respondents spent somewhat more of their time worrying about problems where they obtained advice (23.6, 29.1, 28.0, 13.5 and 5.9 percent for social welfare law problems; 26.1, 26.4, 26.4, 11.7 and 9.5 percent for family problems, going from 'all' to 'none' of your time). However, even then time spent worrying remained far higher in the CLAC sample.

3.3 Logistical Accessibility of Services

3.3.1 Mode of Transport

Respondents were asked about the mode of transport they used to travel to the CLAC. They were able to give multiple responses where necessary, though in practice, the vast majority (792 of 802, 98.8%) gave a single mode²³. Table 15 shows the mode of transport used by respondents to travel to the CLAC, for all respondents and for each location individually. As can be seen, there was some variation by location, with the highest percentage of walking in Derby, greatest use of public transport in Leicester and greatest use of respondent's own vehicle in Portsmouth.

Table 15. Mode of transport used by respondents to travel to the CLAC, overall and for each location

Mode of transport to CLAC	All respondents		Derby	Ports.	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Walked	226	28.1	41.0	31.1	24.1	23.6	24.5
Cycled	13	1.6	2.2	1.6	0.6	3.2	0.0
Public transport	261	32.5	21.8	19.9	35.2	35.0	46.4
Taxi	11	1.4	2.6	0.7	1.8	1.5	0.0
Own household's car/vehicle	246	30.7	31.6	43.2	31.3	29.0	21.6
Lift with friend/relative	57	7.1	5.2	5.6	8.3	8.2	6.9
Other	2	0.3	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6

3.3.2 Cost of Transport

Those who used public transport, a car/other vehicle or a taxi to travel to the CLAC were asked how much it cost them²⁴. For those who gave an answer, Table 16 shows the cost of a return journey (grouped) overall, and for each location.

Table 16. Cost of a return journey to and from the CLAC, overall and for each location

Cost of travel	All respondents	Derby	Ports.	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
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²³ Of the remainder, eight gave two modes, one gave three modes and one gave six modes. 29 cases where no response was given were excluded.

²⁴ Costs were for a return journey including any parking costs, but excluding petrol costs (where relevant).

	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Nothing	295	35.5	46.6	77.8	63.2	39.6	37.4
1p to £1.99	64	7.7	8.0	9.7	11.0	15.4	9.1
£2 to £2.99	73	8.8	4.5	5.6	8.0	28.9	10.1
£3 to £4.99	94	11.3	28.4	4.2	11.0	7.4	37.4
£5 to £9.99	29	3.5	10.2	1.4	3.1	6.0	4.0
£10 or more	15	1.8	2.3	1.4	3.7	2.7	2.0

Overall, around 36 percent of those asked suggested that travel to the CLAC had cost them nothing. However, this figure was far higher for Gateshead and Portsmouth in particular. Portsmouth also had a very low percentage reporting higher costs (e.g. £5 or over). If travel cost data is not grouped (i.e. looking at the raw cost) and responses of 'nothing' removed, the mean cost of a return journey overall was £3.84 (the median was £2.96), with a minimum of 20p and a maximum of £55. For Derby, the mean cost was £4.13 (median was £3.50), with £5.21 for Portsmouth (median of £3.33), £5.07 for Gateshead (median of £2.90), £3.02 for Hull (median of £2.40) and £3.29 for Leicester (median of £3.00)²⁵.

3.3.2 Distance and Duration of Travel

Respondents were asked how far the place where they were currently living was from the CLAC, with responses shown in Table 17²⁶, both overall and for each location. Overall, it was most common for respondents to live two to five miles from the CLAC, with this group making up the majority of responses for Hull and Leicester. There was also some variation in the percentage living very close to the CLAC (less than half a mile), with this making up over twenty percent in Derby and Portsmouth and only six percent in Hull. In part, this is also reflected by the variation in walking as a mode of transport shown in Table 15 above.

Table 17. Distance from respondents' homes to the CLAC, overall and for each location

Distance to CLAC	All respondents		Derby	Ports.	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than half a mile	110	14.4	21.4	26.3	14.9	6.3	9.6
Half a mile to 2 miles	230	30.2	31.4	31.3	32.7	27.1	28.8
2 to 5 miles	341	44.9	39.3	35.4	43.6	51.6	51.2
More than 5 miles	79	10.4	7.9	7.1	8.9	15.1	10.4

Table 18 shows the time taken (grouped) to travel to the CLAC from respondents' homes, again overall and for each location.

Table 18. Time taken to travel from respondents' homes to the CLAC, overall and for each location

Time to CLAC	All respondents	Derby	Ports.	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
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²⁵ Travel costs were significantly different between locations. Conducting a simple nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis test for the five independent locations; $\chi^2_4 = 20.54$, $p < 0.001$.

²⁶ 38 cases where respondents suggested that they did not know and 33 where no response was given have been excluded.

	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than 15 minutes	212	26.5	26.3	44.1	34.8	12.8	20.7
15-29 minutes	351	43.9	43.4	38.2	40.0	43.3	54.8
30-44 minutes	191	23.9	21.7	10.8	21.4	36.9	20.0
45-59 minutes	23	2.8	4.6	2.0	1.0	4.4	2.2
1 hour or more	24	2.9	3.9	4.9	2.9	2.5	2.2

Significant variation in travel time by location is broadly in line with the variation in distance observed in Table 17. Respondents in Portsmouth had typically shorter travel times, particularly when compared to Hull. Interestingly, Gateshead also had a high percentage in the 'less than 15 minutes' group, despite a fairly average percentage of clients very close by (see Table 17).

Using ungrouped travel time (i.e. raw values), we find that mean travel time was 21 minutes (and median was 20 minutes). The shortest time travelled was two minutes and the largest 135 minutes. Derby had a mean of 22 minutes (median of 20), with 18 minutes for Portsmouth (median of 15), 19 for Gateshead (median of 15), 24 for Hull (median of 20) and 21 for Leicester (median of 20)²⁷.

3.3.3 Ease of Travel

Respondents were also asked to indicate on a five point scale how easy it was for them to get to the CLAC. Overall responses and differences by location are shown in Table 19²⁸.

Table 19. How easy respondents felt it was to get to the CLAC, overall and for each location

Ease of getting to the CLAC	All respondents	Derby	Ports.	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
	N	%	%	%	%	%
Very easy	380	47.5	46.3	64.4	47.9	48.0
Fairly easy	327	40.9	37.6	28.7	42.9	39.1
Neither easy nor difficult	44	5.5	9.4	4.0	3.2	5.4
Fairly difficult	39	4.8	4.0	3.0	4.6	5.4
Very difficult	10	1.3	2.7	0.0	1.4	2.0

The most common response overall was 'very easy', accounting for around 48 percent of responses. There were again, however, differences by location. Not surprisingly, Portsmouth had a particularly high proportion responding 'very easy', which was in line with differences in proximity (Table 17) and travel time (Table 18) by location.

Those who suggested that it was either 'fairly' or 'very difficult' to travel to the CLAC were then asked why this was the case. Of a total of 49 respondents answering the question (across all locations), 3 (5.6%) suggested lack of transport was a problem, 5 (9.6%) problems with traffic, 1 (3.0%) difficulty getting time off work, 15 (30.5%) mobility

²⁷ As with travel costs, differences in travel time were significantly different between locations. For example, conducting a simple nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis test for the five independent groups; $\chi^2_4 = 49.81$, $p < 0.001$.

²⁸ 32 cases where no response was given were excluded.

or walking difficulties, 3 (6.0%) problems with parking facilities, 2 (3.8%) referred to disability as a problem, 6 (12.4%) trouble with buses, 3 (5.8%) mentioned the location of the centre or how far away it was, 4 (7.4%) mentioned illness and 4 (8.0%) some 'other' reason.

3.3.4 Reasons for Visiting and Making Appointments

Respondents were asked about the purpose of their visit to the CLAC. Overall answers, and answers by location are shown in Table 20. As can be seen, the majority of visits were either to drop in for advice or make an appointment, though the ratio of these varied considerably by location. Respondents in Portsmouth were almost entirely dropping in for advice, with only three respondents keeping an appointment. However, as mentioned previously, it should be noted that research interviews did not take place in the second Portsmouth CLAC building, in which the specialists worked. It is therefore not surprising that there were only a small number of survey respondents with appointments in Portsmouth.

In contrast, in Gateshead there were a greater number of respondents keeping appointments than dropping in for advice.

Table 20. Purpose of visit overall, and for each location

Purpose of visit	All respondents		Derby	Ports.	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Drop in for advice	504	64.0	65.1	92.6	41.1	66.9	73.5
Keep an appointment	226	28.7	25.1	2.7	50.7	26.3	20.6
Make an appointment	38	4.9	7.5	3.0	6.1	3.7	3.1
Pick up a leaflet	2	0.3	0.8	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0
Ask for info. at reception	22	2.7	2.3	1.7	3.1	3.5	2.2
Other	20	2.5	3.0	1.0	4.0	1.4	2.2

Respondents were then specifically asked whether they had made or tried to make an appointment for advice at the CLAC. 305 of 784²⁹ (38.9%) said that they had made an appointment, 38 (4.8%) that they had tried to make an appointment but been unsuccessful as appointments were not possible for first visits, 34 (4.3%) that they had tried but failed for a different reason and 407 (52.0%) that they had not made or tried to make an appointment. Splitting this question by location (Table 21) should be viewed in the context of the differences in the purpose of visit by location shown in Table 20.

Table 21. Whether respondents had ever tried to make an appointment at the centre, and whether they were successful in doing so

²⁹ 7 respondents who responded 'don't know' and 41 who gave no response were excluded.

Location	Yes - made an appointment		Tried but unsuccessful – not possible for 1 st visits		Tried, but unsuccessful - different reason		No	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Derby	60	40.0	12	8.0	11	7.3	67	44.7
Portsmouth	12	11.8	5	4.9	7	6.9	78	76.5
Gateshead	119	56.4	8	3.8	7	3.3	77	36.5
Hull	71	36.4	3	1.5	5	2.6	116	59.5
Leicester	44	34.6	11	8.7	4	3.1	68	53.5

Those who had either made an appointment or tried but failed to make an appointment (for a reason other than appointments not being possible for first visits) were asked how easy or difficult it was to make an appointment on a five point scale³⁰. Table 22 shows how easy it was to make an appointment for all who answered the question. Results are split by location.

Table 22. How easy or difficult it was for respondents to make an appointment last time they tried, overall and by location

Purpose of visit	All respondents		Derby	Ports.*	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very easy	158	49.4	36.1	53.2	54.5	56.9	41.2
Fairly easy	107	33.2	39.1	13.1	33.0	27.8	38.8
Neither easy nor difficult	29	8.9	11.7	15.5	4.7	10.9	10.8
Fairly difficult	21	6.6	11.2	13.6	5.4	2.9	6.7
Very difficult	6	2.0	1.2	7.8	2.1	1.2	2.1

*Numbers were small for Portsmouth (n = 13) as making an appointment was rare (see above, research interviews did not take place in the separate CLAC building in which specialists worked).

3.3.5 Being Accompanied to the Centre

262 of 787³¹ respondents (33.3%) came to the CLAC with somebody else. There was relatively little difference between locations in this respect, with a slightly lower percentage for Derby (25.5%), 32.7 percent for Portsmouth, 36.5 percent for Gateshead, 36.0 percent for Hull and 32.8 percent for Leicester. Table 23 details the role of anyone who accompanied respondents to the CLAC, overall and by location. As can be seen, Leicester had a far higher percentage where the person accompanying was helping the respondents to understand English (24.4%), or where the respondent was accompanied by children (22.9%). Hull meanwhile had a higher percentage who were also seeking information or advice (40.6%), while Derby had a high proportion helping respondents to explain the problem (30.6%)

Table 23. Role of person accompanying respondents to centre (where relevant) overall and by location

³⁰ 12 who stated 'no appointment made' and a further 5 who failed to give an answer were excluded from analysis.

³¹ 45 gave no response to the question.

Role	All respondents		Derby	Ports.	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Seeking information/advice too	74	28.8	22.4	16.4	25.0	40.6	31.4
Keeping you company	123	48.0	55.6	58.1	51.2	44.8	32.9
Helping you to explain the problem	42	16.2	30.6	21.7	12.6	11.9	12.6
Helping with understanding English	14	5.3	6.1	0.0	0.0	1.2	24.4
Giving you a lift	15	5.9	7.9	0.0	6.6	8.1	4.3
Children who you are caring for	22	8.6	2.1	6.9	8.7	3.9	22.9
Other	3	1.1	0.0	0.0	1.1	2.8	0.0

3.4 Finding Advice and Obtaining Referrals

3.4.1 Being Encouraged to Seek Advice

486 of 788 respondents³² (61.7%) said that family, friends or work colleagues encouraged them to get advice. Table 24 splits this by location, with the highest percentage being encouraged to get advice in Gateshead (70.8%).

Table 24. *Whether or not respondents were encouraged to get advice by friends, relatives or work colleagues, split by location*

Location	Whether or not respondents were encouraged to get advice			
	Yes		No	
Derby	87	59.0%	60	41.0%
Portsmouth	63	63.0%	37	37.0%
Gateshead	151	70.8%	62	29.2%
Hull	116	58.9%	81	41.1%
Leicester	68	53.0%	60	47.0%

3.4.2 Advice if the CLAC Had Not Been There

Respondents were then asked where they would go instead if the advice centre had not been there. No categories were offered for guidance, with respondents provided with a box to write in an alternative source of advice or information. Figure 1 shows where respondents said they would go if the CLAC had not been there.

³² 7 responded 'don't know' and 36 gave no response.

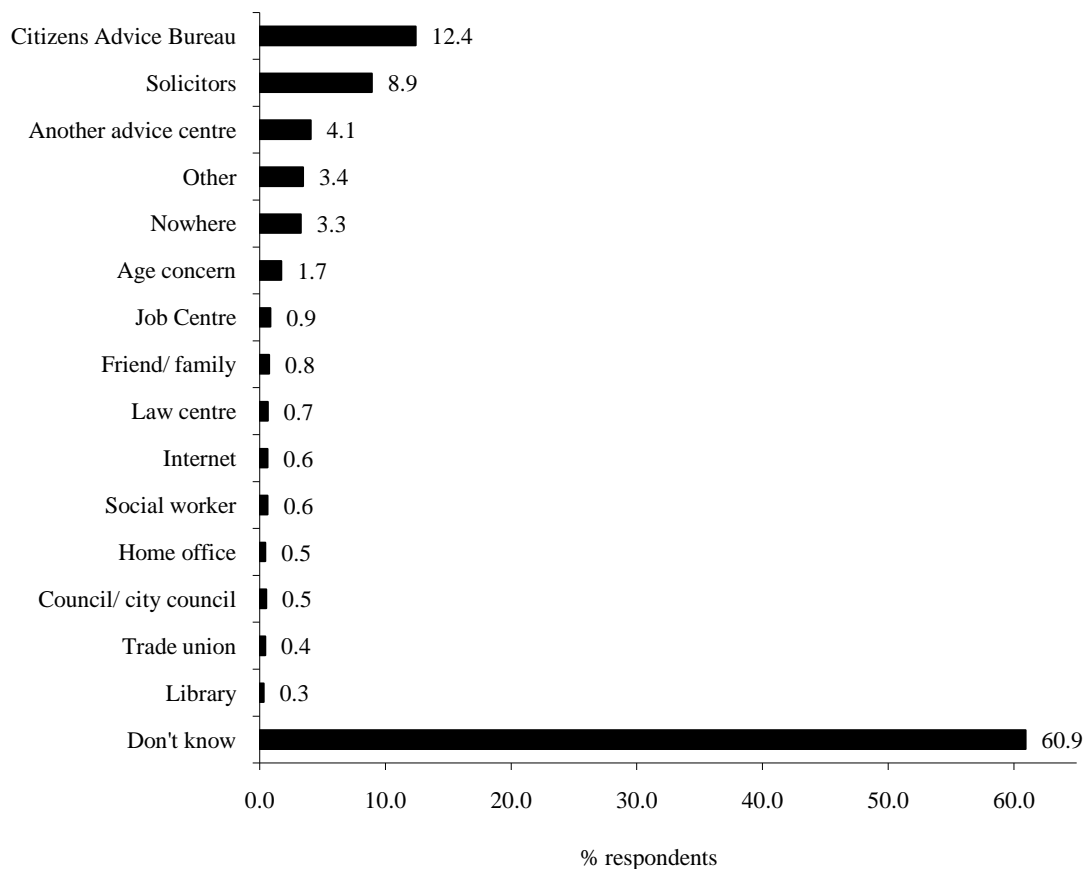


Figure 1. Where respondents said they would go if the advice centre had not been there

As shown in Figure 1, ‘don’t know’ was easily the most common answer to where respondents would go in the absence of the CLAC (60.9%). Beyond ‘don’t know’ responses, CAB (12.4%) and solicitors (8.9%) were the most common responses. Looking at answers by location showed a very high percentage saying CAB in Hull (31.7%), consistent percentages responding ‘solicitor’, a relatively high percentage saying ‘other advice centre in Portsmouth (8.4.%) and the highest percentages saying ‘don’t know’ in Derby (69.9%) and Gateshead (69.0%), compared to Leicester (58.4%), Portsmouth (47.8%) and Hull (42.9%).

3.4.3 Finding Out About the Centre and Being Referred

The majority of respondents using a CLAC had found out about the centre/service by being told about it by another person or organisation (523 of 795³³, 65.8%). Table 25 shows how respondents first found out about the CLAC, overall and by location³⁴. Being told about the service by another person or organisation was particularly common in the case of Hull (82.3%) and far less so in the case of Portsmouth (52.9%). Elsewhere, Derby had a high percentage of respondents who had been past the centre (33.2%),

³³ 6 respondents who said they did not know and 30 who gave no response were excluded.

³⁴ Note, that numbers are very small for some of the less common ways of finding out about the centre/service, particularly when splitting by location.

particularly when compared to Hull (6.1%). Portsmouth also had a higher percentage finding out about the centre using the Internet (19.0%).

Table 25. How respondents found out about the centre/service, overall and by location

How respondents found out about the centre	All respondents		Derby	Ports.	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Been past centre before*	155	19.5	33.2	20.4	26.6	6.1	11.8
Heard about it through this centre**	8	1.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.7
Another person or organisation told me	523	65.8	55.7	52.9	60.8	82.3	71.0
Local news (TV or radio)	5	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.7	0.5	1.4
Local newspapers	9	1.1	1.0	2.3	0.6	1.5	0.6
Library	17	2.2	1.3	2.0	4.2	1.0	1.6
Internet	42	5.3	4.1	19.0	4.5	1.5	2.9
Yellow pages/phone book	15	1.8	0.7	1.0	1.7	2.8	2.7
Other	21	2.7	2.1	2.4	1.0	3.3	5.3

*main CLAC only **Outreach Centre only

Those who suggested that another person or organisation had told them about the CLAC service were asked who the person or organisation was. Figure 2 shows who told respondents about the advice centre³⁵.

³⁵ There were a total of 504 valid responses to this question, excluding a further 6 who gave no answer and 13 who said 'don't know'.

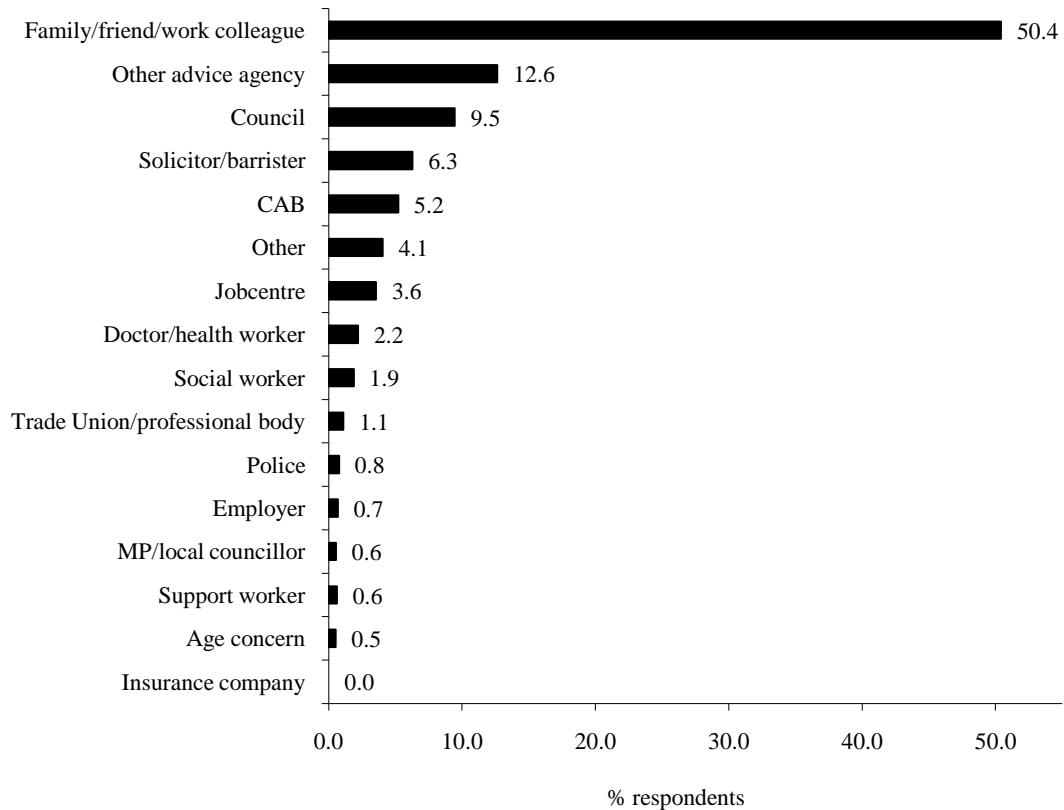


Figure 2. *Who told respondents about the centre/service (of those who heard about it through another person or organisation)*

The majority of respondents answering the question suggested that they had heard about the centre/service through family, friends or work colleagues (50.4%), with other advice agencies, the council, solicitors/barristers and CABx also all accounting for more than five percent.

Interestingly, there was some variation in who told respondents about the centre/service by location as shown in Table 26. While Gateshead, for example, had a high percentage finding out about the centre from family, friends or work colleagues (70.4%), this percentage was very small in Hull (27.6%), where other advice agencies, solicitors/barristers and the council all had far higher percentages than elsewhere. It should be noted that at the time of survey fieldwork the Hull CLAC had been open for less than six months.

Table 26. Who told respondents about the centre/service (of those who heard about it through another person or organisation), split by location

Who told respondent about centre/service	Derby		Ports.		Gates.		Hull		Leicester	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Family/friend/colleague	51	65.8	31	58.4	90	70.4	45	27.6	38	44.7
Council	1	1.0	2	3.9	13	9.9	25	15.5	7	8.6
Trade Union/prof. body	1	1.2	1	1.5	3	2.4	0	0.0	1	1.0
Other advice agency	5	5.9	2	3.8	3	2.5	39	24.0	15	17.9
Solicitor/barrister	2	2.9	4	7.1	2	1.9	20	12.7	3	3.3
Police	1	1.9	2	4.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Your employer	2	3.1	0	0.0	1	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Insurance company	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Doctor/health worker	1	1.9	2	3.8	6	4.6	2	1.1	0	0.0
Jobcentre	5	5.9	0	0.0	6	4.8	3	1.9	4	4.9
Social worker	1	1.0	1	1.9	1	1.0	2	1.1	5	5.4
MP/local councillor	1	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.5	1	0.9
CAB	2	2.3	7	13.0	0	0.0	14	8.5	4	4.7
Support worker	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.1	1	0.5	1	1.0
Age concern	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6	2	2.0
Other	4	5.4	1	1.9	1	0.5	10	6.0	5	5.9

Respondents were then asked whether any of these people or organisations had contacted the CLAC on their behalf. 51 of 497³⁶ (10.3%) said yes³⁷. Of these 51, 30 (59.1%) made appointments on behalf of the respondent.

3.5 Previous Advice-seeking Experiences

3.5.1 Previous Use of the Centre/Service and Telephone Contact

384 of 794³⁸ respondents (48.4%) suggested that they had been to the CLAC advice service before. However, as can be seen in Table 27, there was variation in percentage having used the centre before across locations. Gateshead had the highest percentage of clients suggesting that they had used the CLAC before (63%), with the lowest percentage for Portsmouth (30%). Gateshead CLAC's high percentage of repeat clients can be explained by the fact that Gateshead CLAC was the first CLAC to be established, so was in operation for longer than the other CLACs. Gateshead CLAC is also located in the same building as the CAB was previously located, so repeat clients could have had experience of advice-seeking in the building prior to CLAC establishment.

³⁶ 26 gave no response.

³⁷ 13 of 78 (16.7%) in Derby, 3 of 49 (6.1%) in Portsmouth, 13 of 126 (10.3%) in Gateshead, 14 of 157 (8.9%) in Hull and 9 of 88 (10.2%) in Leicester.

³⁸ 38 respondents gave no response.

Table 27. *Whether or not respondents had used the advice centre/service before by location*

Location	Whether or not respondents had been to centre/used service before			
	Yes		No	
Derby	80	53.0%	71	47.0%
Portsmouth	30	30.0%	70	70.0%
Gateshead	135	63.4%	78	36.6%
Hull	77	39.1%	120	60.9%
Leicester	62	47.0%	70	53.0%

Of those who had used the centre/service previously, 178 (47.2%) had done so for their current problem only, and 200 (52.8%) for other problems as well. Again, there was some variation in this by location (see Table 28), with a high percentage suggesting ‘also other problems’ for Portsmouth, and the lowest percentage for Leicester. In the case of Portsmouth, this may in part reflect the findings on ‘purpose of visit’ in Table 20. Given that Portsmouth was made up predominantly of clients receiving ‘drop-in’ advice (as research interviews took place in the CLAC building which housed the generalists), this may reduce the likelihood of multiple visits for a current problem.

Table 28. *Whether or not those who had visited the centre before did so for only the current problem, or other problems as well, split by location*

Location	Whether respondents had been to the centre/service for only their current problem or for other problems as well?			
	Only current problem		Also other problems	
	N	%	N	%
Derby	28	34.8%	52	65.2%
Portsmouth	9	32.3%	20	67.7%
Gateshead	63	46.8%	71	53.2%
Hull	41	55.5%	33	44.5%
Leicester	38	61.1%	24	38.9%

When asked whether they had ever got advice from the centre/service over the telephone rather than in person, only 83 of 787 respondents³⁹ (10.6%) said yes. Despite relatively small numbers, there were some differences by location as shown in Table 29. Specifically, use of the telephone for advice was particularly rare in Portsmouth compared to other locations. Again, this finding should be interpreted in conjunction with findings on ‘purpose of visit’ in Table 20.

³⁹ Not response was given for 44 respondents.

Table 29. Whether respondents had ever got advice from the centre/service over the telephone rather than in person, split by location

Location	Whether respondents had ever got advice from the centre/service over the telephone rather than in person?			
	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
Derby	21	14.4%	128	85.6%
Portsmouth	3	2.7%	97	97.3%
Gateshead	22	10.4%	189	89.6%
Hull	23	11.7%	172	88.3%
Leicester	14	11.0%	117	89.0%

3.5.2 Use of Other Sources of Advice

281 of 774 respondents⁴⁰ (36.3%) had tried to get advice somewhere else in the past for difficult problems⁴¹. Splitting responses by location (see Table 30) showed very similar percentages having obtained advice elsewhere for Portsmouth, Gateshead and Leicester. The percentage was slightly lower for respondents in Derby (28%) and substantially higher in Hull, where 48 percent of respondents had obtained advice elsewhere in the past.

Table 30. Whether or not respondents had ever tried to get advice anywhere else for difficult problems, split by location

Location	Whether respondents had ever tried to get advice elsewhere for difficult problems?			
	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
Derby	40	27.9%	104	72.1%
Portsmouth	33	32.9%	68	67.1%
Gateshead	73	34.3%	139	65.7%
Hull	91	48.2%	98	51.8%
Leicester	44	34.6%	83	65.4%

Those who suggested that they had tried to get advice somewhere else for difficult problems were asked from whom they had tried to get advice. Figure 3 shows sources of advice used by respondents. As can be seen, 'other advice agency' makes up the single most common response (35.1%), followed by solicitor or barrister (19.0%) and the council (16.9%). Splitting the data by location showed respondents in some locations more or less likely to have tried particular sources of advice (though this will be in part driven by the relative propensities shown in Table 30). For example, Gateshead had a slightly higher percentage using the council (18 of 72, 25.0%), while Hull had a far higher percentage using an 'other advice agency' (51 of 91, 56.0%⁴²). Elsewhere, respondents in Portsmouth had a higher percentage having used the CAB (10 of 34, 29.4%),

⁴⁰ 10 respondents suggested that they did not know and 47 gave no response.

⁴¹ Some examples of 'difficult problems' were given including 'problems with debt, problems with getting the right amount of benefit, a problem with your landlord or employer, or problems with money and children after a relationship breakdown'.

⁴² 'Other advice agency' in Figure 3 would be around 25% rather than 35% if Hull were removed.

especially compared to Gateshead (1 of 73, 1.4%). This finding needs to be interpreted in the light of the Gateshead CLAC having been open for the longest period of all CLACs, and Gateshead CLAC branding itself as a CLAC and a CAB at the time of fieldwork. In contrast, the Hull CLAC was the last CLAC to open of all the five CLACs.

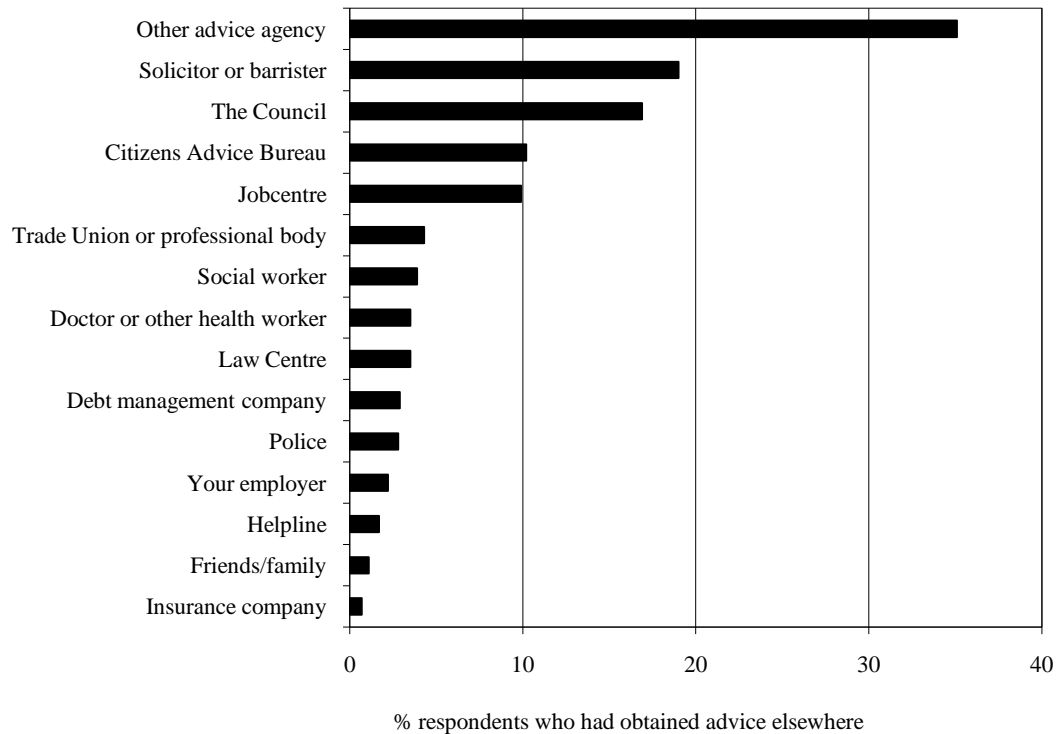


Figure 3. Other sources of advice used by respondents for difficult problems

3.6 User Perspectives

Respondents were asked to rate factors (from a list) which might be important to them in an advice centre/service such as the CLAC they were interviewed in. They were invited to respond on a four point scale from 'very important' to 'not important at all'. There was also a 'don't know' option, though such responses are excluded from the analysis below. Figure 4 shows respondents' feelings about what is important in an advice centre.

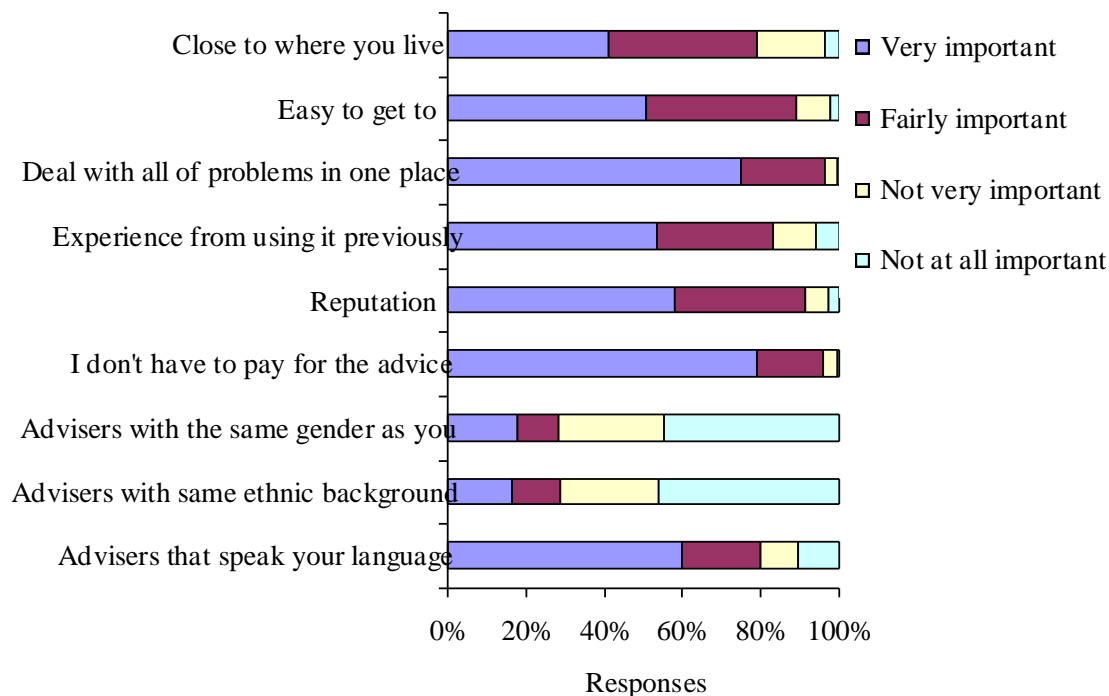


Figure 4. Respondents' feelings of what is important in an advice centre/service of this kind

As shown in Figure 4, not having to pay for advice and the ability to deal with all problems in one place appeared to be the most important characteristics of an advice centre/service. In contrast, using all data, advisor gender and ethnicity were far less important considerations. Table 31 splits data by location and presents mean values for clients' opinions of importance (by assigning a score of 1 to 'very important', 2 to 'fairly important', 3 to 'not very important' and 4 to 'not at all important'). Evidently lower scores indicate items that respondents felt were more important. There was a reasonable degree of consistency across locations, with not having to pay and being able to deal with problems in one place producing consistently low scores. Ease of access (distance and easy to get to) appeared to be of greater concern in Leicester, while gender and ethnicity of advisors continued to be of least importance.

Table 31. Respondents' opinions of what is important in an advice centre/service, split by location (note that the scale in Figure 4 has been converted to numerical values as described above, lower scores indicate items of greater importance)

Item	Derby	Ports.	Gates.	Hull	Leic.
Close to where you live	1.9	1.9	1.7	2.1	1.5
Easy to get to	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.4
Deal with all problems in one place	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3
Experience from using it previously	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.9	1.6
Reputation	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.5
I don't have to pay for the advice	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.2
Advisors with the same gender as you	2.8	3.3	2.9	3.2	2.7
Advisors with same ethnic background	2.8	3.3	2.9	3.2	2.8
Advisors that can speak your language	1.9	1.4	1.6	1.6	2.1

There were some differences in the importance placed on advice being 'close to where you live' and 'easy to get to' by both long-term illness or disability and mental health. Not surprisingly, those with a long-term illness or disability placed a somewhat greater importance on proximity and ease of access (1.7 vs. 1.9 and 1.5 vs. 1.7) as did those with mental health problems to a slightly lesser extent (1.8 vs. 1.9 and 1.6 vs. 1.7).

There was relatively little difference in the importance of advisors having 'the same gender as you' by client gender.

There were differences in views on the importance of advisor's ethnic background (being the same as clients) by client ethnicity. Black, 'other' ethnicity and particularly Asian respondents had lower mean scores (2.7, 2.9 and 2.5 respectively), particularly compared to white British respondents (mean = 3.1). For language, restricting analysis to those whose first language was not English resulted in higher scores for advisors' ability to speak their language (mean = 2.3 compared to 1.5 where respondents first language was English).

With specific reference to the service that they were using, respondents were then asked a range of questions about the CLAC's accessibility, atmosphere and facilities. Responses were rated on a five point scale from 'agree strongly' to 'disagree strongly'⁴³. Figure 5 summarises responses.

⁴³ Again, responses of 'don't know' or instances where no response was given were excluded.

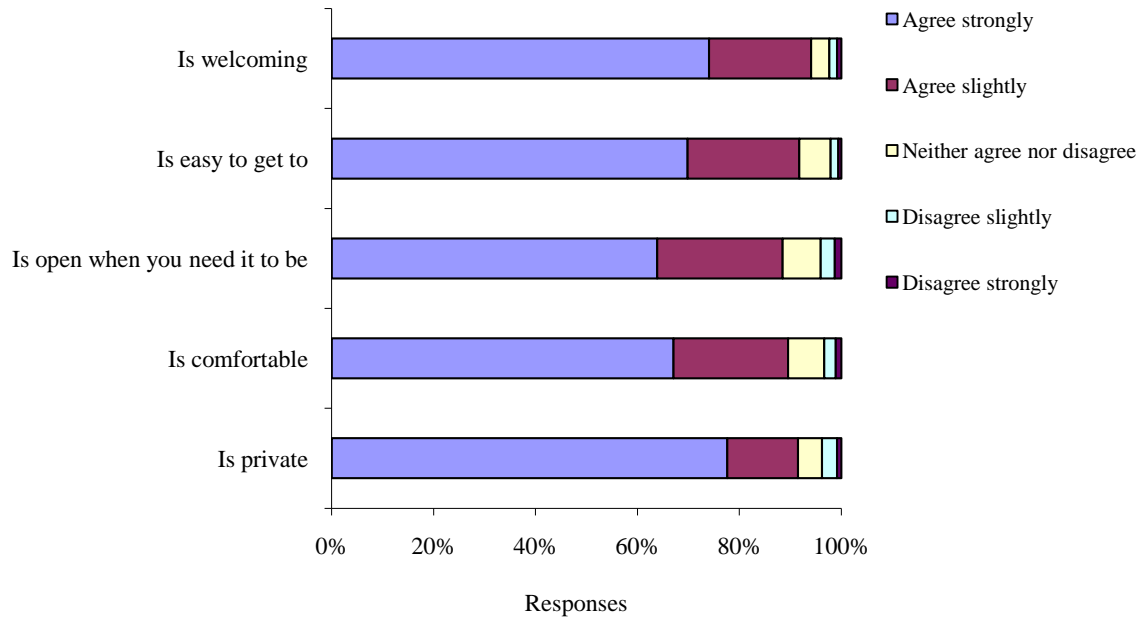


Figure 5. Respondents’ opinions of the centre/service.

As shown in Figure 5, respondents’ opinions of the centres/services were overwhelmingly positive, with negative responses (disagree slightly or strongly) very rare.

Tying in with the idea of services that are able to ‘deal with all your problems in one place’ (see Figure 4 and Table 31), respondents were asked whether they expected the CLAC service to be able to deal with the problems they came in with. 631 of 718⁴⁴ (87.9%) said ‘yes’, with 19 (2.6%) saying ‘no’ and 68 (9.5%) saying ‘in part’. Respondents were also very likely to recommend the centre to someone else. 511 of 722⁴⁵ (70.7%) said they would be ‘very likely’ to recommend the centre, 171 (23.7%) ‘fairly likely’, 34 (4.8%) ‘neither likely nor unlikely’, 1 (0.1%) ‘fairly unlikely’ and only 5 (0.7%) ‘very unlikely’.

3.7 Outreach Advice

50 of 831 survey respondents (6.0%) were interviewed in outreach settings. Despite these small numbers, the following sections compare respondents in outreach settings to those interviewed in main CLACs.

3.7.1 Social and Demographic Indicators

Those in outreach locations were similar to other respondents in gender (54.0% vs. 53.3% male). They were, however, different in age, with outreach respondents older overall (mean = 46 vs. 41, median = 50 vs. 40). 20.4 percent of outreach respondents were 55-64 and 16.3 percent over 65 years old. Using the collapsed ethnicity categories

⁴⁴ 75 who said ‘don’t know’ and 38 who gave no response were excluded.

⁴⁵ 62 who said ‘don’t know’ and 46 who gave no response were excluded.

used in Table 3, respondents in outreach locations were far more likely to be Asian (28.0% vs. 8.6%). However, as noted above, a high percentage (46.0%) was in Derby, which also had a generally high percentage of Asian respondents (see Table 3). Of all 50 outreach respondents, 31 were white British, 4 white other, 1 mixed ethnicity and 14 Asian. None were Black or 'other' ethnicity. In addition, 17 of 49 outreach respondents (34.7%) suggested that their first language was not English compared to 172 of 771 (22.3%) for those in main CLACs.

Outreach respondents were less likely to be single and never married (30.0% vs. 43.9%), with a higher percentage married and living with their spouses (48.0% vs. 27.4%). 44 percent of outreach respondents had children living with them, while 16 percent could be classified as lone parents, compared to 17.5 percent in main CLACs. Perhaps not surprisingly given differences in age profile, outreach respondents had a slightly higher percentage which owned their homes outright (16.0% vs. 7.6%) or had a mortgage (24.0% vs. 18.8%) and a lower percentage renting privately (14.0% vs. 23.4%). In both outreach and main CLACs, the largest single percentage was those who rented publicly (36.0% vs. 37.0%).

Respondents in outreach locations were also slightly more likely to report a long-term illness or disability (39.6% vs. 35.7%) but less likely to report stress, depression or some other type of mental health problem (27.1% vs. 41.6%). There were some differences in academic qualifications, with a greater percentage of 'other' qualifications in outreach locations (25.0% vs. 11.0%) though the percentage saying 'none of these' was comparable (32.7% vs. 30.3%). Outreach respondents also had higher percentages who were wholly retired from paid work (17.6% vs. 5.8%) or caring for a sick, elderly or disabled person (17.6% vs. 2.2%) and higher percentages in receipt of child tax credit (26.0% vs. 17.2%) and child benefit (31.4% vs. 19.5%). For income, the main difference was the higher percentage of outreach respondents suggesting that they did not know their household income (38.0% vs. 14.7%).

3.7.2 Accessibility of Services

Means of travel to seek advice differed between main CLACs and outreach locations. 27 of 50 outreach respondents (54.0%) walked to the CLAC, compared to only 198 of 780 (25.4%) for main CLACs. Use of public transport was also very rare in outreach locations, being used by only 3 of 50 respondents (6.0% compared to 32.9% in main CLACs). Percentages using their own household's car (or other vehicle) were comparable between outreach (32.0%) and main CLAC locations (29.4%). The lack of use of public transport among outreach respondents resulted in the majority of those asked to specify a cost of travel saying 'nothing' (20 of 23, 87.0%). Outreach locations were also likely to be closer to respondents' homes than main CLACs. 45.1 percent of outreach respondents suggested advice was less than half a mile from where they lived compared to 11.0 percent for main CLAC respondents. Similarly, travel time was reduced, with 66.0 percent of outreach respondents saying the advice was less than 15 minutes away, compared to 23.7 percent of main CLAC respondents. Not surprisingly, given the proximity and travel time differences, outreach respondents were more likely to suggest it was 'very easy' to get to the advice service (75.5% vs. 45.7% for main CLACs).

4. SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF SURVEY FINDINGS

4.1 Summary

This research report is one of three reports which provide detail on Community Legal Advice Centre (CLAC) clients. The report should be read in conjunction with the other two client-focussed reports⁴⁶.

4.1.2 Methodology

The face-to-face footfall survey of clients in reception areas of the five operating CLACs and their outreach locations took place in March 2009. Questionnaires were administered to clients who visited the services during a one-week period, thereby providing a snapshot of CLAC users.

Before fieldwork began information was received from each centre about the approximate number of clients expected at each centre and outreach locations at different times. Some challenges in planning fieldwork at outreach locations were encountered, as the timing and location of outreach sessions was subject to uncertainty. A pilot was conducted in February 2009 in two CLACs. Only small changes had to be made following the pilot.

Interviewing was conducted in the five operating CLACs in Portsmouth, Leicester, Hull, Gateshead and Derby, and during advice sessions CLAC advisors attended in outreach centres. During busy periods two interviewers attended the CLACs in order to maximise the number of interviews which could be achieved. Interviews were conducted using paper questionnaires. In total, 831 interviews were achieved.

Some comparative data was used, namely the English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey and data from the Census 2001 and the Office for National Statistics 2007 Population Estimates.

4.1.3 Social and Demographic Characteristics

Of the 831 survey respondents across all five CLACs, 53.4 percent were male and 46.6 percent female. There were some differences in age by location. Gateshead in particular, had a far higher percentage of older respondents (specifically 55-64 year olds) than other locations. In contrast, the CLAC in Hull in particular had far fewer older respondents. The mean age for all respondents was 42 years old.

The majority of respondents (70.7 percent) described themselves as 'white British'. There were sizeable differences in ethnicity by location. Leicester CLAC had the lowest percentage of white British respondents (34 percent), followed by Derby (55 percent).

⁴⁶ Smith, M. and Patel, A. (2010) *Using Monitoring Data: Examining Community Legal Advice Centre Delivery*, London: Legal Services Commission; , Buck, A., Smith, M., Sidaway, J. and Scanlan, L.. (2010) *Piecing it Together: Exploring One-Stop Shop Legal Service Delivery in Community Legal Advice Centres* London: Legal Services Commission.

Overall, respondents to the survey were more likely to be non-white British compared to their respective local population. The difference was most marked in Hull, where a fifth of CLAC survey respondents was non-white British compared to less than 9 percent of the local population.

Around a quarter of respondents suggested that their first language was not English. Again this was highly dependent upon location, with 32.9 percent for Derby, 15.2 percent for Portsmouth, 7.5 percent for Gateshead, 17.8 percent for Hull and 51.1 percent for Leicester.

Differences in marital status by location were modest and likely to be in part driven by factors such as differences in age profile. Overall, 17.5 percent of respondents could be classified as lone parents, though there was some variation by location, ranging from 12.6 percent for Portsmouth CLAC to 23.7 percent for Leicester CLAC.

The single largest percentage of respondents was renting from a registered social landlord, although private renting was more common in Portsmouth.

More than a third of survey respondents said that they had a long standing illness, disability or infirmity; and 41 percent reported that they suffered from stress, depression or some other kind of mental health problem. There were differences by location. Specifically, Gateshead respondents had a far higher percentage both with illness, disabilities or infirmities and mental health problems. Respondents described their long-standing illness, disability or infirmity as markedly disrupting their free time.

Almost a third of respondents had no academic qualification, with this figure higher for Gateshead CLAC and lower for Portsmouth CLAC. This may partly be a function of other factors such as the generally older age profile in Gateshead. Overall, people responding to the survey tended to be less likely to have a higher level qualification (degree, higher degree, professional qualifications, or equivalent) than their respective populations.

In terms of employment status, the highest single percentage of respondents was in paid employment or self-employed (34.4 percent), with this percentage particularly high in Portsmouth (47.7 percent). Gateshead had a far higher percentage of respondents permanently unable to work because of long-term sickness.

Portsmouth had the highest percentage not in receipt of benefits (46.2 percent) with the lowest percentage in Gateshead (16.6 percent). It should be noted that research interviews in the Portsmouth CLAC were almost exclusively concentrated on clients attending the general help service, thereby not accounting fully for those most disadvantaged. Gateshead also had the highest percentage of respondents on incapacity benefits (18.3 percent).

Finally for demographics, the majority of respondents had low household income (below £15,000). Gateshead had a particularly high percentage (70.6 percent) with income less than £10,000, with the lowest percentage in Portsmouth (42.3 percent).

4.1.4 Severity of Problems

The majority of respondents felt that it was 'extremely important' to get advice (61.5 percent), with this percentage at its highest in Derby (66.9 percent) and slightly lower in

Leicester (54.3 percent) and particularly Portsmouth (49.1 percent). Responses other than 'extremely' or 'very important' were rare in all areas. A high proportion suggested that they spent 'all of their time' worrying about the problem (50.0 percent). This percentage was at its highest for respondents in Gateshead (59.9 percent).

When compared with respondents in the Civil and Social Justice Survey, CLAC survey respondents reported spending considerably more time worrying about their problem.

4.1.5 Logistical Accessibility of Services

There was some variation in transport to the CLAC by location. However, in every CLAC, more than half of respondents either walked or used public transport.

Those who used public transport, a car/other vehicle or a taxi to travel to the CLAC were asked about transport cost. Overall, around 36 percent of those asked suggested that travel to the CLAC had cost them nothing. For the remainder, the mean cost of a return journey was £3.84 (the median was £2.96).

Around 45 percent of respondents lived within two miles of the CLAC; only 10 percent lived more than 5 miles away. There was some variation among CLACs. Differences in travel time reflected these differences in distance. Mean travel time was 21 minutes (and median was 20 minutes).

The majority of respondents found it 'very' or 'fairly' easy to get to the CLAC. Those respondents who found it 'very' or 'fairly' difficult to get to the CLAC were most likely to suggest that mobility or walking problems caused the difficulty. Only 6 percent of people having a difficulty suggested that location or distance of the CLAC had caused the problem.

Overall, 64 percent of respondents reported that they were visiting the centre for the purposes of drop-in. A third of all CLAC users came to the CLAC with somebody else. There was relatively little difference between locations in this respect. Survey findings describe the role played by the person accompanying the CLAC user. For example, Leicester had a high percentage where the person accompanying was helping the respondent to understand English (24.4 percent), while Derby had a high proportion helping respondents to explain the problem (30.6 percent).

4.1.6 Finding Advice and Obtaining Referrals

The survey showed that family, friends or work colleagues encouraged 61.7 percent of respondents to get advice. There were some differences in location with the proportion ranging from 53 percent in Leicester to 70.8 percent in Gateshead.

Respondents were asked where they would go instead if the advice centre had not been there. The most common response was 'don't know' (60.9 percent). Beyond 'don't know' responses, CAB (12.4 percent) and solicitors (8.9 percent) were the most common responses.

The majority of respondents using a CLAC had found out about the centre by being told about it by another person or organisation (65.8 percent). Derby had a high percentage

of respondents who had been past the centre (33.2 percent), particularly when compared to Hull (6.1 percent).

Those who suggested that another person or organisation had told them about the CLAC service were asked who the person or organisation was. The majority of respondents answering the question suggested that they had heard about the centre through family, friends or work colleagues (50.4 percent), with other advice agencies, the council, solicitors/barristers and CABx also all accounting for more than five percent.

Interestingly, there was some variation in who told respondents about the centre/service by location as shown in Table 26. While Gateshead, for example, had a high percentage finding out about the centre from family, friends or work colleagues (70.4 percent) this percentage was very small in Hull (27.6 percent), where other advice agencies, solicitors/barristers and the council all had far higher percentages than elsewhere.

Respondents were asked whether any of these people or organisations had contacted the CLAC on their behalf: 10.3 percent said 'yes'. In over half of these cases an appointment was made for the respondent.

4.1.7 Previous Advice-Seeking Experiences

Just under half of the survey respondents said that they had been to the CLAC advice service before, although this figure varied by location. Of those who had used the centre previously, 47.2 percent had done so for their current problem only and 52.8 percent for other problems as well.

Around 10 percent of respondents reported receiving advice from the centre over the telephone rather than in person.

Among survey respondents, 36.3 percent reported having tried to get advice somewhere else for difficult problems. Respondents said that 'other advice agency' was the single most common alternative, followed by solicitor or barrister and the council.

4.1.8 User Perspectives

Respondents were asked whether a range of things were important to them in an advice centre/service such as the CLAC they were interviewed in. The most important characteristics of an advice centre identified were 'not having to pay for advice' and the 'ability to deal with all problems in one place'. Advisor gender and ethnicity were far less important considerations.

There were some differences in the importance placed on advice being 'close to where you live' and 'easy to get to' for clients reporting a long-term illness, disability or mental health problem. There were differences in views on the importance of advisor's ethnic background (being the same as clients) by client ethnicity.

Respondents' opinions of the CLACs were overwhelmingly positive, with the majority of respondents agreeing with the statements that the CLAC was welcoming, easy to get to, open when you need it to be, comfortable and private. Respondents were also very likely to recommend the centre to someone else, with 95 percent saying they were 'very' or 'fairly likely' to recommend the centre to someone else.

4.1.9 Outreach Advice

Only 6 percent of survey respondents were interviewed in outreach settings. They differed from main centre users in respect of age, being older overall, and marital status, with a higher percentage married and living with their spouses (48.0 percent vs. 27.4 percent). Outreach respondents also had higher percentages who were wholly retired from paid work (17.6 percent vs. 5.8 percent) or caring for a sick, elderly or disabled person (17.6 percent vs. 2.2 percent) and higher percentages in receipt of child tax credit (26.0 percent vs. 17.2 percent) and child benefit (31.4 percent vs. 19.5 percent).

Mode of travel to obtain advice was different between main CLACs and outreach locations, with higher percentages walking to the outreach location compared to the main centre CLAC. Outreach locations were likely to be closer to respondents' homes than for main centre CLAC respondents: 45.1 percent of outreach respondents suggested advice was less than half a mile from where they lived, compared to 11 percent for main CLAC respondents.

4.2 Research Implications

4.2.1 Service Reach and Accessibility

Findings from the survey in CLAC reception areas show that vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are using the CLAC services. There were, however, differences across the CLACs, reflecting local population make-up. This included CLAC users whose first language was not English, with high percentages reported in Leicester and Derby.

Aside from socio-demographic vulnerability indicators such as long-term illness and disability, household income and benefit receipt, CLAC survey respondents reported that their problems were having a serious impact on their lives. When compared to the general population with similar problems, CLAC users reported spending much more time worrying about their problem. So it appears from the survey results that CLACs were not only serving disadvantaged groups, but were helping people for whom the problem was having a disproportionately detrimental effect.

Whilst CLAC users came from a range of income groups, the majority had annual gross household incomes below £15,000. Not surprisingly given these findings, the survey respondents interviewed placed a high importance on the CLAC advice being free. In this context, the cost of travel to CLACs is worthy of comment; a median cost of £3 may be a struggle for some clients, in particular for clients for whom it is necessary to make several visits to the CLAC for the same problem. So whilst 9 out of 10 survey respondents said it was easy to get to the CLAC, cost issues are relevant both for CLAC location and for service delivery. Service structures that reduce the need for multiple visits for the same problem would appear to be advantageous; as would minimizing the practice of turning people away at drop-in, when they have already borne the cost of travel to the CLAC.

In regard to CLACs serving stipulated priority groups, the survey shows that CLAC users are drawn from priority groups listed in CLAC service specifications. These include the

unemployed, people on low incomes, people with long-term illnesses and disabilities, lone parents, young and old people and BME communities. In a survey of this kind, conducted in an open setting, it has not been possible to determine whether other stipulated priority groups were visiting the CLAC; for example, victims of domestic violence, members of faith groups and ex-offenders.

The findings further indicate that aspects of accessibility beyond logistical factors require consideration. A third of CLAC users had found out about the service from a family member, friend or work colleague; many people also came to the CLACs with somebody else for support. These social networks are clearly important in encouraging and signposting people to advice. For people without these networks, the role of others such as health professionals and social workers takes on a crucial importance. The CLAC making use of these channels, through relationship building and advertising, should not be neglected. Simple measures, such as clear branding outside the CLAC, are also likely to raise awareness of the service among those with and without networks. Overall, around one in five CLAC users interviewed had found out about the service by simply having been past the centre. The marked variability in this proportion among individual CLACs illustrates the impact visible external branding can have, though other factors need to be taken into account as well.

Service reach and accessibility take on a new dimension when looking at CLAC users' knowledge of other advice services. Overall, sixty-one percent of survey respondents did not know where they would have gone instead, if the CLAC had not been there. Even in CLAC locations where there were CABx, the percentages were relatively high, for example, in Leicester. These findings highlight the limited knowledge of alternative local sources of legal help.

4.2.2 Implications for Service Delivery

Some other lessons for service delivery flow from the conduct of the survey. The fieldwork had to be planned around 'bulges' of clients. This highlights a key consequence of having a drop-in service, and the resulting challenge of managing fluctuating client and advisor numbers. Similarly, the challenges in planning fieldwork at outreach locations, namely in regards to the consistent and reliable scheduling of outreach sessions, illustrate the challenges facing CLACs in extending access through outreach. Relatively low survey interview numbers in CLAC outreach locations further illustrate that footfall figures were low; indicating that careful planning of CLAC advice resources in outreach locations is essential.

The research results demonstrate that people who accessed the CLAC service through outreach had a different profile to main centre CLAC users. Given the reported ease of access of outreach locations, outreach advice may constitute an important means of ensuring access to people who might otherwise struggle to attend the main CLAC venue.

A fundamental objective of CLACs is to offer a one-stop shop legal service for a range of problem categories. A key implication for service delivery is that this objective matches the interest of people with problems. As mentioned above, this factor was identified by respondents as one of the most important characteristics of an advice centre; nearly as important to respondents as advice being free. The policy approach of integration of services is responsive to user preferences.