

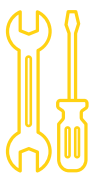


# Insights into Adult Disability Payment: Evidence from Citizens Advice Scotland

## Quarter 1 2025-26

The Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) network is the largest independent provider of Adult Disability Payment (ADP) advice outside of Social Security Scotland (SSS). We provide holistic support across multiple areas to people who need our help.

From April to June (Q1) 2025, the network gave almost **20,000 pieces of advice about the Daily Living Component of ADP to 8,355 people**. ADP represented nearly a quarter (22%) of all social security advice provided.



**One in four (24%)** of those we support reported being in employment, demonstrating the role of ADP in supporting people to obtain and maintain work.



The majority of people receiving ADP advice were aged **45 and over (at least 63%)**, potentially indicating a higher prevalence of disability or long-term health condition within older people.



**One in four (24%)** reported balancing health management with a caring responsibility.



More than half of people seeking ADP advice **(57%)** live in areas of multiple deprivation. **11%** live in a remote rural area or remote town.



**Nearly half (46%)** of those we supported with advice about ADP were provided with at least one other type of advice at the same time.

## Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) are supporting more people with advice to challenge decision-making than ever before

Redeterminations and appeals together represented 20% of ADP Daily Living advice provided by the Citizens Advice network in Scotland. This time last year it represented just 10%. Some of this demand reflects the challenge of getting decisions right first time, and the need for improvements to the assessment process. Julie's experience illustrates the limitations of the current assessment process and the impact of when decision-making goes wrong.



### **Julie's experience**

Julie approached her local CAB to challenge a decision to refuse her ADP. She was struggling with financial hardship and anxiety after being considered dishonest in her claim. Julie uses a mobility scooter as she has had one leg amputated and also struggles with mental ill health. The CAB adviser concluded that, rather than SSS conducting a full functional assessment, it “seems to have been assumed that a prosthetic limb acts as a complete and effective aid, restoring near-normal function, failing to acknowledge [Julie's] real-life limitations”. The adviser was able to work with Julie to submit a redetermination request.



### **The CAS solution:**

SSS should take forward the recommendations from the Independent Review of ADP to enable people navigating the application process (including the functional assessment) to better describe how their disability or sickness impacts on their daily lives. This would reduce the anxiety many people face when applying for ADP, whilst improving the accuracy of application responses.

## **The appeal process can cause additional distress, confusion and delay**

Evidence from across our network reveals that ADP decision-making can be unpredictable; for some people with complex needs it can feel impenetrable. The process to challenge decisions can be protracted and stressful, this is compounded by a legal framework that prevents SSS from completing a subsequent re-determination once an appeal has been lodged.



### **Chloe's experience**

Chloe went to her local CAB after she was refused an award of ADP. Chloe has a Functional Neurology Disorder, experiencing up to fifteen seizures a day. She has access to a wheelchair, but cannot self propel due to right side paralysis. The CAB adviser supported Chloe with an appeal submission. This resulted in SSS conceding that Chloe should have been awarded 12 points for both Daily Living and mobility, having been awarded 0 points for both components at the redetermination stage. Chloe has been left confused as she awaits the decision of the Tribunal, who may not agree with SSS.



### **The CAS solution:**

SSS must be empowered to complete a further re-determination following an appeal having been lodged. While this has been addressed by section 8 of the [Social Security \(Amendment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2025](#), the provision is not yet in force.

## **Concerns about decision-making can deter people from reporting changes in their circumstances**

There continues to be significant demand for advice on reporting changes in circumstances: 10% of advice provided in this Q. Up by 17% on the previous quarter.

Advisers explain that many people they support demonstrate a reluctance to report a change in circumstances because of a perceived risk of losing an award. Analysis of the reserved equivalent of ADP, Personal Independence Payment (PIP), concluded that the sum of PIP being underclaimed in this way in FYE 2025 was 4.1% (£1,060m) of the budget for that payment. There is a risk that this pattern could begin to be mirrored in Scotland.



**The CAS Solution:** To support accurate decision-making, people should be provided with the option to discuss their circumstances to specialist social security agency staff from the outset of their application.

## Advice that changes lives

Our advice plays an indispensable role in ensuring that people can realise their right to social security. CAB advisers are uniquely placed to view social security as part of the wider landscape of a person's life; many of those being supported are facing a variety of barriers and living with multiple interacting health challenges.

The advice provided by our network has a profoundly positive impact on people's lives. **In Q1, our advisers recorded securing ADP entitlement worth £7,258,067** (ADP Daily Living entitlements worth £5,443,551 and ADP Mobility entitlements worth £1,814,516). An award of the Daily Living Component of ADP was recorded in 55% (977) Daily Living advice cases. In more than half (56%) of cases in which an award was recorded, the Daily Living component had been granted at initial application.



### Andrea's experience

Andrea contacted her local CAB because she found the ADP application form daunting. Andrea has a pacemaker and lives with severe breathlessness, arthritis, lower back pain alongside depression and anxiety. Andrea was let go by her employer due to her health and wants to find alternative employment. Andrea was supported to complete the ADP application form and obtain supporting information; she was also provided with advice on employment support and other entitlements.

## Escalation routes for advisers would improve the experiences of sick and disabled people and ensure more people get the support they need

Following participation in the pilot launch of Pension Age Disability Payment (PADP), our advisers have been supporting people throughout the national roll out of the payment. The "bedding in" of a new application process, alongside ongoing transfer cases, has highlighted the need for advisers to have a dedicated escalation route.



### Insight from Advisers: Amy's Experience

A CAB adviser, Amy, was working from a health setting to support Imran, an eighty-year old man, with his PADP application. Unreliable internet connection meant the SSS website was inaccessible. Amy supported Imran to complete a PDF of the application, helping him to initiate the claim using conference calling. Imran was later told by an SSS call handler that he had submitted the wrong form. SSS agreed to accept the alternative form, but asked Imran to provide Amy's name and phone number. Imran was confused, he did not share the information and as a result experienced delays to his application. Amy says that this could have been quickly corrected if she had access to an escalation route.



### The CAS solution:

The national roll-out of a dedicated escalation route, and a referral pathway between advice services and local delivery teams, is essential to ensure the rapid resolution of operational barriers and immediate safeguarding referrals. CAS welcomes the inclusion of third-party mandates into the applications for PADP – this should be extended to other disability related applications. This would enable CAB advisers to support people with their ADP applications in a seamless way.

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## About Citizens Advice Scotland

The Citizens Advice network in Scotland is Scotland's largest independent advice provider. Advisers across all corners of the country work in Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) to provide free, impartial and confidential advice. Our Extra Help Unit (EHU), based in Glasgow, helps people resolve complex and time-sensitive energy problems. Each year our network supports hundreds of thousands of people, unlocking millions of pounds worth of financial gains. By looking at a person's complete circumstances, CAS gains an unparalleled insight into the scale and complexity of what's happening in communities throughout Scotland.

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To explore our work developing solutions based on our evidence of the social security system, devolved and reserved, visit our [social security hub](#).

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