



IMPACT REPORT 2022



'Creating Change'

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An Extraordinary Year

A Message From our Chair of Trustees

Who would have thought that as I write this we would still be recovering from the pandemic, with the country now facing a cost-of-living crisis that is expected to be felt by all. Throughout the year we had been warned of the energy price cap increase, which will result in a hike in everyone's gas and electricity bills. We have seen the cost of rent, food and petrol prices rise. For the last year the debt advice sector has been speculating about when it will see an increase in demand for its service as Covid restrictions are lifted and normal collection activity resumes.



Nikky Myers
Chair of Trustees

For Money Advice Plus it has been a year of both challenges and successes. We have seen a few longer-term members of staff evaluate their work-life balance and leave the Charity. We have had success in recruitment, employing staff who work entirely remotely, but have seen an increased difficulty in employing experienced Money Advisers in the local area of Brighton and Hove. This difficulty is not confined to Money Advice Plus and has been experienced sector-wide as experienced money advisers have left the sector because of the pause on the recommission of debt advice services by the Money and Pension Service. On the positive side, Money Advice Plus has looked to employ trainees, thereby offering professional skills development opportunities locally.

As always, the focus of Money Advice Plus, its trustees, staff and volunteers is to provide a quality service to our clients. We saw an increase in the number of both clients and households supported, with a massive number of welfare benefits (£2.5M) claimed and debts relieved (£2.3M), in addition to other financial benefits to clients (£0.5M).

In what has been another extraordinary year I would like to thank our patrons, trustees, volunteers and without a doubt the Money Advice Plus team for all its continued hard work. Despite all the challenges you have faced you have met them head-on and made a real difference to the people you have supported.

Who We Are & What We Do



Money Advice Plus is a registered charity, working both locally in Sussex and nationwide. Our vision is for everyone to have the advice and support they need to manage their own money effectively. We will achieve this by delivering person-centred money advice services. We will actively engage with those who find this the most difficult, improving well-being and financial resilience.

Money Advice Plus delivers a range of high quality, specialist money advice and casework services. We specialise in both telephone and face-to-face advice, enabling us to work nationwide.

Our financial capability work helps people look at and understand their relationship with money, helping them to move forward with financial confidence.

Our Brighton Money Management work provides a money handling service which is offered to the most vulnerable, in the form of cash delivery, bill paying and budget administration. We are appointees for many of our money-handling clients, meaning that we have complete responsibility for their benefits claims. Uniquely, the Charity can be made a deputy in the Court of Protection for people who lack capacity and are unable to manage their finances.

Our Financial Support Line for Victims of Domestic Abuse and its casework service, developed in partnership with Surviving Economic Abuse, is one of a kind in the UK. The service supports victim-survivors by providing money advice through a lens of economic safety, understanding the additional risks for those who are experiencing economic abuse and coerced debt. Our innovative Economic Abuse Evidence Form is currently being trialled for a potential national rollout by all financial services and debt advice organisations

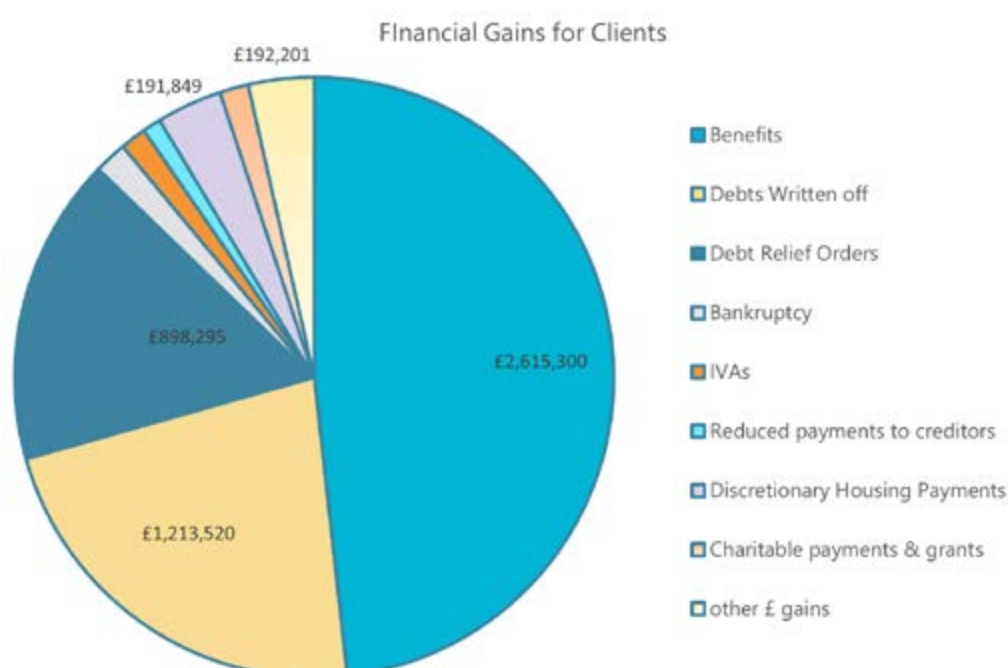


Our Values

- *Quality is core to our work and ethos*
- *Our clients are our priority*
- *We embrace difference and diversity*
- *We work in partnership*
- *Integrity is behind all that we do*

Our Impact

As always, the focus of Money Advice Plus, its trustees, staff and volunteers is to provide a quality service to our clients. This year we have seen an increase in the number of both clients and households supported, with a massive number of welfare benefits (£2.5M) claimed and debts relived (£2.3M), in addition to other financial benefits to clients (£0.5M).



Our charitable purpose is to help people manage their money effectively and we address this by providing the services described in the 'Who we are & what we do' section of this report. Evidence of the practical benefit of our services is demonstrated by our performance.

This year we assisted 4,562 people with debt and welfare benefit problems. These numbers are for just one year, but the impact on each client is immense, and for some, has life-changing outcomes.

IN 2021-22 WE ACHIEVED THE FOLLOWING OUTCOMES FOR CLIENTS:

4,562

people were helped with their debt and benefit problems

1,984

people received advice and casework in Brighton & Hove, and throughout East & West Sussex

2,578

people received telephone advice and casework across the country

£2,220,572

in increased benefits income was secured for our clients

£372,623

worth of one-off payments were secured for our clients

£524,472

in charitable grants, refunds and compensation was obtained for our clients

£2,283,862

of our clients' debt was relieved, via writing off or formal insolvencies

£54,135

we negotiated with creditors to reduce clients' payments by £54,125

Altogether, including charitable payments and other financial outcomes, our clients were better off by a total of **£5,314,600** per year. This is an average of **£1,164** per client, or **£3.80 for every £1 spent on our service.**

A Word from our Clients

'If it wasn't for Money Advice, who take my mental health with considerations, if it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be able to cope, and to know they are there when things have got bad for me! thank you!!! I cannot thank them enough.'

93%

of our clients were satisfied with our services and the support they received

72%

of our clients felt in control of their debts

100%

of our Brighton & Hove clients knew who to talk to about immigration queries

94%

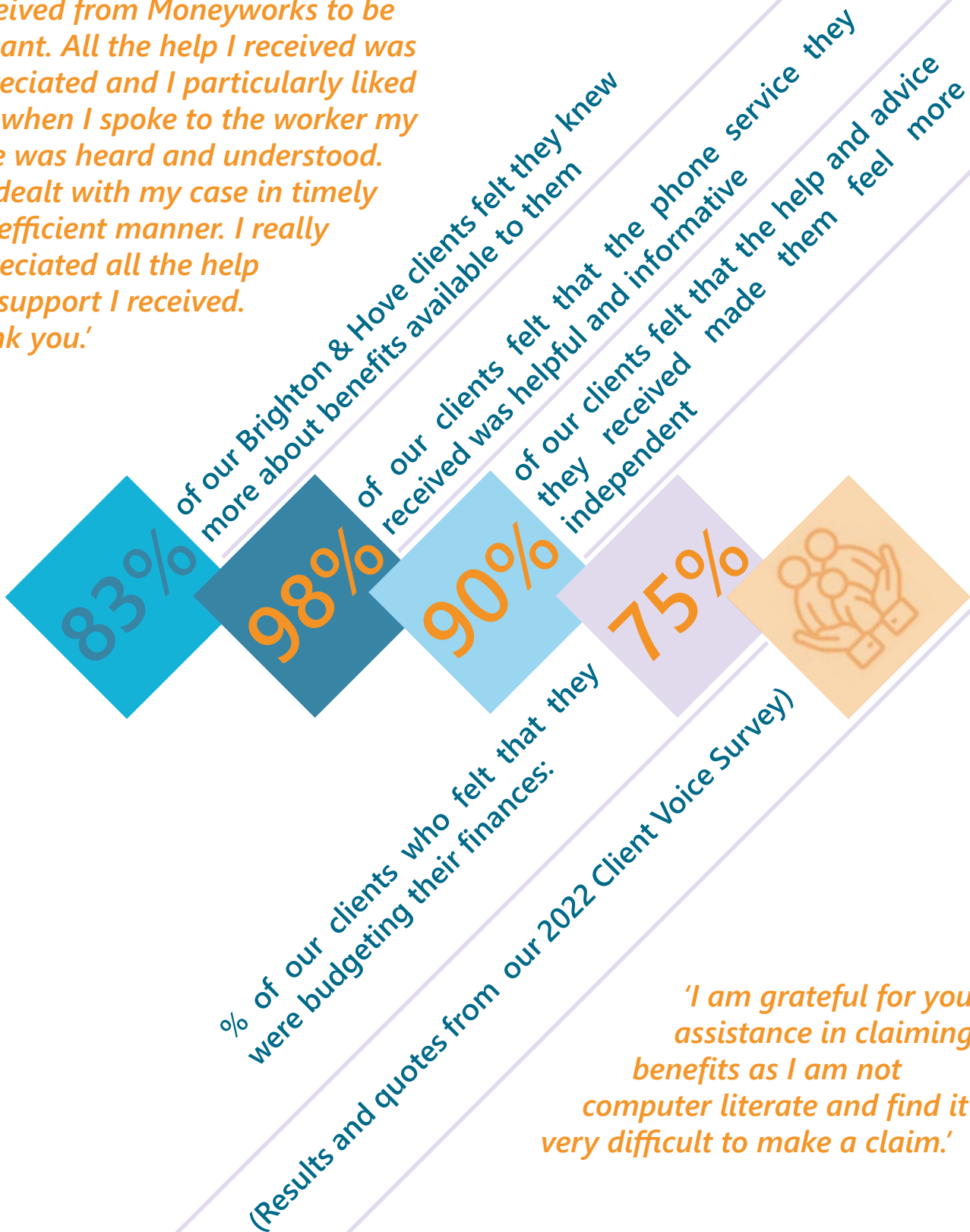
% of our Brighton & Hove clients who felt more confident in accessing help if needed in the future:

71%

% of our Brighton & Hove clients who said they felt less stressed and anxious:

'I'm so grateful for the support I was given by one of your workers. My debts, benefits and financial situation was really stressing me out. My worker referred me to a foodbank, helped me do a budgeting plan and helped me sort out debts. Thank you!'

'I found the help and support that I received from Moneyworks to be brilliant. All the help I received was appreciated and I particularly liked that when I spoke to the worker my voice was heard and understood. She dealt with my case in timely and efficient manner. I really appreciated all the help and support I received. Thank you.'



'I am grateful for your assistance in claiming benefits as I am not computer literate and find it very difficult to make a claim.'

Highlights of our Year

Domestic Economic Abuse Project

Our support for victim-survivors of domestic abuse continues to grow and in March 2022 we secured additional funding from the National Lottery Community Fund and the Henry Smith Foundation to support our partnership with Surviving Economic Abuse, enabling us to jointly run the Financial Support Line and casework service for the next three years. This funding has allowed the partnership to continue piloting our innovative Economic Abuse Evidence Form and develop a strategic plan for delivery and growth, with a particular focus on an equity strategy for victim-survivors.

'I am so happy that your service is out there – your service has been a saviour for so many of the women we support, it really has been great.'

- Referral to DEAP

Claire's Story:

Financial Support Line and NatWest Circle Fund

CASE STUDY

Claire* and her young children were forced out of their home by the perpetrator and were destitute for several days. The Police have assisted, and they are now safe and in temporary accommodation, Claire says she is now safe.

Claire has no access to her or her children's possessions and required police assistance to help her access their possessions. To enable the collection of her possessions she needed to hire a vehicle and pay for storage. She had to use her benefit income to pay for this. This, however, left her without money to pay for food or for petrol to get her children to school. She also had no clothes for herself or the children until their possessions had been collected

From the NatWest Circle fund, we were able to award Claire £300 Claire says: *'I am just so grateful. I can give my children clean clothes, and a change of clothes and be able to get them to school.'*

* Client's name has been changed

Dawn's Story:

Financial Support Line Casework Service

CASE STUDY

Dawn* rang the Financial Support Line after being signposted to us. She had previously left her husband, who had been abusive, 10 years ago and was safe. Her mental health had deteriorated due to the abuse, and she suffers from anxiety and depression, agoraphobia and physical disabilities.

During the relationship, she said she was isolated from her family as the perpetrator would not allow her to access transport. She had no access to any bank accounts as he would say that she was 'stupid' and didn't understand, and he had therefore taken over all the finances out through online banking which she wasn't allowed access to. Dawn was given an allowance to use and had to provide receipts every week to him to account for what she had spent. She had to show him her phone every day so he could check who she had been talking to.

After she had fled the abuser, she tried to close their joint account which was £400 in credit. The bank refused to close the account without the perpetrator's signature. The perpetrator then ran up a £2,000 overdraft. The bank told her that she was jointly and severally liable for the whole amount and pursued her for the debt.

Dawn described how the perpetrator also made her sign for a loan, screaming in her face and not allowing her time to read the documents. He said it was her fault that he needed the loan. She felt she had no option but to sign but she never saw the full details of what she was signing for.

We discussed common features of economic abuse and I validated that her experience was of abuse. Dawn said that she thought it was just her and expressed how helpful this call was. I highlighted her ability to manage her finances and reach out for help demonstrated that she is not "stupid" or bad with money. She has been financially independent since she left the perpetrator. Dawn was referred to our casework service for debt advice.

After debt advice, the client initially thought a Debt Relief Order was the way forward. It took a while for Emma to send in the paperwork and after many conversations and much reassurance, validating her experience, she is now feeling empowered and confident from our support to move and pursue debt write-offs as her chosen solution. The client explained that this is a big milestone for her as she would normally react by burying her head in the sand and not reading emails.

* Client's name has been changed

Working with Housing Associations

We work in partnership with a number of housing associations, who fund us directly to provide specialist debt, financial wellbeing and welfare benefits advice to their tenants.

Claudia's Story:

Support to a housing association tenant via telephone advice over 15 months

CASE STUDY

Case Background

Suzanna* was referred to us for telephone-based money advice by her landlord as rent arrears were building up on her rent account. She was under-occupying the property but was not allowed to move to a smaller home due to the arrears on her account.

When we first made contact with her Suzanna told us she was 61, and lived in a four-bedroom Housing Association property with her adult son who was claiming Universal Credit. Her son was not making any contribution to the household living costs, and Suzanna was dependent on him to manage her banking as she did not have her own bank account. The client also had difficulty reading. She had no access to a computer and had never used one.

Suzanna had not worked for many years due to a combination of health problems including arthritis, anxiety and depression and asthma. In addition, she confided that she was an alcoholic. As we worked with her it became clear that her relationship with her adult son was difficult: eventually he left the home, Suzanna had a panic button installed and he was prohibited from returning.

What We Did

Suzanna's money problems came to a head when she was told she would be moving from Jobseeker's Allowance to Universal Credit. This meant that her Housing Benefit stopped and she became responsible for making payments from her Universal Credit to her landlord. Her lack of access to the internet and low digital skills led to a series of miscommunications. The situation had deteriorated rapidly, and rent arrears started to increase. We could see that she needed support to sort the situation out. There were opportunities for her to increase her income, including applying for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), a single-person discount on her council tax, and help from her water supplier to pay off arrears on her account and to move her to a reduced tariff. On all fronts there were obstacles around Suzanna not being able to access a computer, and delays dealing with the DWP, Local Authority and Water supplier. We made numerous calls and sent many emails to each of these agencies, to be met with requests for the same information, claims



CASE STUDY

that letters had been sent out, requests for bank statements when the client did not have an account, and claims that paperwork had not been completed or sent in. We arranged and attended two conference calls to support Suzanna in dealing with these outside agencies. Throughout we liaised with Suzanna landlord to keep them updated on progress and review the rent arrears situation.

What We Achieved

As a result of our interventions and support Suzanna was able to open a new bank account in her own name, giving her control over her own finances, and enabling her to provide the evidence required to access other benefits such as DHP.

The local authority awarded DHP for six months initially, then a further six months, which enabled Suzanna to repay her rent arrears and pay the shortfall due to under-occupancy.

After the departure of her son the local authority eventually awarded Suzanna the single-person discount backdated and her Council Tax account was brought out of arrears. Suzanna's water supplier awarded a grant to pay off her arrears and placed her on a 50% reduced tariff.

The Figures

The rent arrears of £1,026 was managed by way of a payment plan and this amount was paid off in full, enabling Suzanna to be eligible to downsize her home. DHP of £1,905 was paid. Water arrears were paid off by a grant. Ongoing monthly water charges were reduced from £44 to £22. Receiving a single-person discount reduced Suzanna's Council Tax liability to £0.

At the time of referral to us, Suzanna had a deficit budget and was falling further behind every month. After working with us she was left with a small disposable income of £160 per month.

Brighton & Hove Lift Up Project

The Lift Up Project is for people who are 'just about managing' and who need help to manage on the money they have via a combination of Grants, Specialist Debt and Benefit Advice and Financial Capability Coaching. It is available to residents of Brighton and Hove only.

Daniel's Story

Daniel* felt he was working a lot, but never had any money at the end of the month. He had never completed a personal budget and was initially against the idea. As the coaching process progressed, Daniel completed a budget and became aware of exactly where his money was going every month.

When Daniel first saw the full amount of debt owed, he stated he felt optimistic. However, when discussing this debt with him during the sessions it became clear that Daniel did not consider his spending on credit cards as a debt. Once Daniel's mindset had changed towards his debts, he made the decision to take out a debt management plan, saving £300 per month. He also explored and implemented daily savings opportunities, which he added to a vision board at home to monitor progress.

Daniel used the £300 per month saved to set up two savings accounts, one for specific savings goals and the other for an emergency fund. He was encouraged to set specific, realistic savings goals which would increase motivation to save. Daniel initially saved small amounts to get into good savings habits. He automated the savings process and decided to review the process monthly.

Daniel first got into a lot of his debt following a traumatic incident involving his motorbike and was initially reluctant to make any decisions about the bike, even though fixing it could save money. He was awarded a £300 Liftup grant to go towards the cost of fixing the bike, saving him money on travel costs. He described feeling like a weight had been lifted and his mental health had improved slightly, with the grant relieving some short-term financial pressure.

Initially, Daniel did not want to apply for PIP, even though he was eligible for the benefit. He felt that as he was working, he shouldn't be receiving benefits. After having the space in the coaching sessions to discuss, the client decided to apply for PIP, which would relieve his financial pressure further, and help him with his employer if he were to take more time off from work in the future due to ill health.

At the start of the coaching process, Daniel stated that when he was younger, he received no financial education, which he thinks contributed to his financial difficulties. He never spoke to friends or family about money. Throughout the sessions, having had the chance to talk about his finances in a safe space, Daniel decided he would talk to his mother in the future about his finances. Towards the end of the coaching process, he also developed strategies to avoid getting into similar financial problems in the future.

* Client's name has been changed

CASE STUDY

Brighton & Hove Money Management

Our money handling service is offered to the most vulnerable, in the form of cash delivery, bill paying and budget administration. We are appointees for many of our money handling clients, meaning we have complete responsibility for their benefits claims. Uniquely, Money Advice Plus can be made a legal deputy by the Court of Protection for people who lack capacity and are unable to manage their finances. Our support is flexible and person centred – this means that each client has an individualised support plan designed to enhance their ability to make choices and remain in control of their money. Our money handling and money management service has many benefits for clients with different needs including:

- Helping to control overspending
- Ensuring essential bills are paid
- Protection from economic abuse
- Helping to manage substance misuse
- Alleviation of anxiety about money and bills



This year our money handling work has:

- Supported 437 people who received a money handling service, primarily in Brighton and East Sussex
- Handled £4,892,000 of clients' money
- Made payments out to the value of £4,720,000, ensuring essential bills were paid and that clients had appropriate access to their money



Lynn's Story:

Brighton & Hove Money Management

Lynn* was referred to Money Advice Plus by Assertive Outreach Team. She had been living in residential care for over a year as her previous rented accommodation was unsuitable (third-floor flat). When we met, she was waiting to move to extra care housing, where she now lives.

Lynn has a diagnosis of schizophrenia, and has previously been admitted to hospital for support. Prior to her referral, her physical health had deteriorated to the extent that she could no longer leave her flat. Lynn has oedema in her legs, as well as osteo arthritis, and has experienced numerous falls. The decline in her physical health was having an adverse impact on her mental health.

Lynn was getting ESA and DLA paid to her bank account but had no access to this money due to her mobility issues. She is not able to manage online banking and shopping.

We worked with Lynn so she could receive her state pension in place and this is now paid directly to Money Advice Plus. We deliver cash to Lynn every week at her home and she has carers to help with her shopping. Lynn has access to a shop on the ground floor of her building and the shopkeeper will deliver her shopping to her if she needs it.

Lynn received a demand from debt collectors relating to a water bill for her old flat. Lynn was really worried about this. We liaised with Southern Water to let them know the date that she moved out and they cancelled the debt collectors and confirmed that she does not owe anything.

Lynn is unable to use the internet for shopping or banking and cannot get out to the shops. We have supported Lynn with her online shopping. Lynn is really pleased with the reclining chair that we helped her to order so that she can raise her legs when she is sitting down and relieve the symptoms of oedema. We have also helped her to buy a new TV and a blood pressure monitor.

Lynn says that due to her mobility issues, she can't go dancing or go out to a restaurant anymore. But she is very happy with us delivering money – this means that she can use the cafe and shop in her supported housing.

* Client's name has been changed

Financial Review 2022

The year ended 31st March 2022 was the first year in our history that our total income was almost £1.4 million. Total income increased by 8% compared with the previous year's figure of £1.2 million. The two main elements of our income are money management services, totalling £657,266, and money advice services totalling £732,530. This is the first year that our money advice services has grown to be substantially larger than our money management services.



Other income comprised £5,914 from donations and legacies and £1,430 from investment income. There was also an unrealised gain from investments of £7,273 due to a favourable change in the market value of our investments at year-end.

Total expenditure amounted to £1.39 million. This represented a 8% increase on the previous year. Staff remuneration and associated expenses accounted for the bulk of our expenditure, amounting to £1.25million (89% of total expenditure) and represented an 9% increase on the previous year. We continue to seek to ensure that all projects are funded on a full cost recovery basis and are working hard to make sure future costs are forecasted adequately.

This year we have maintained all our grants and contracts, and in certain cases we have secured additional funding to enhance current services. Due to the need to upgrade IT hardware and software, we have operated close to our budget for this year. These upgrades have put us in a much stronger position moving forward.

The bulk of our income derives from income on contracts and grants. We are now in the third year of a five-year contract under which we provide money management services to clients referred by Adult Social Care of Brighton & Hove City Council. This contract accounts for 47% of our total income for 2021-2022. We have just secured three years of funding for our service to victim-survivors of domestic abuse. The certainty of this income means that we are now less dependent on negotiating the bulk of our funding on an annual basis than in previous years. Most new funding is paid in arrears and close management of our cash flow is therefore of critical importance. As of 31st March 2022, bank and cash balances totalled £479,844, a slight increase on the balance in the previous year of £338,221.



Funders & Partners

We'd once again like to thank our wonderful funders and partner for making the work we do possible. You can see their logos on this page.



'Money Advice Plus provides an invaluable service to people in Brighton & Hove who require support to manage their money. The money management service they offer enables people to remain in their own homes and live independently in the community.'

- Brighton & Hove Council

'It has been great working in partnership with Money Advice Plus. The support they provide to our customers has helped them to work towards a more confident financial future and create a long-term positive impact in their lives. The team are happy to come and share knowledge and explain the service to our frontline teams which means we can make the best referrals and offer a great customer journey to our residents.'

- Sovereign Housing

Moving Forward

Our Chief Executive, Karen Perrier, looks ahead to 2023 and beyond

As we move past the ups and downs of the pandemic, we find ourselves in the grips of a cost-of-living crisis, an energy crisis, and a volatile economic environment. It is a time of great economic uncertainty and as people struggle to manage their finances, and to afford the necessities of food, light and heat, the need for our service continues to grow. The question of how we meet the unprecedented demands, along with the economic instability of funding, is one we will look to address through the delivery of our 2022-2025 strategy 'The Pathway to Change'.



Karen Perrier, Chief Executive

What we do know is that Money Advice Plus has firm foundations, strong governance and leadership, and fantastic staff and volunteers, all committed to delivering a quality service. We will continue to work towards our vision 'for everyone to have the advice and support they need to manage their own money effectively' by delivering person-centred money advice services, actively engaging with those who find this the most difficult, improving wellbeing and financial resilience.

We will do this by driving our strategic aims forward:

- **Maintaining and strengthening our services to enable people to deal more confidently with their money.**
- **Embedding our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion in everything we do.**
- **Promoting Money Advice Plus to be known as a centre of excellence.**
- **Ensuring staff are enabled to provide high-quality services to our clients.**

As we consider the difficult times ahead and the shape of Money Advice Plus we will underpin our work and the decisions we make with our values.

Acknowledgements and Thanks

Money Advice Plus sincerely thanks all the people without whom our work would not be possible.

Our dedicated board of trustees who donate their time and expertise: Nikky Myers (Chair), Jonathan Hyman (Treasurer), Gemma Dunn, Nick Gray, Richard Stewart, Bryan Coverdale, Tracie Church. Money Advice Plus could not operate without our fantastic board. Between them, the trustees ensure that the organisation fulfils its aims and objectives, is properly run and led, is a good employer, and is forward thinking. They meet every two months together as a board, and more frequently in smaller groups.

We would like to thank those that left Money Advice in the course of the year: Asif Chaudhery, Olivia Hobson and Phill Dunn.

Money Advice Plus is supported by a team of wonderful volunteers: Martin O'Donnell (of Etiqa), Lisa Robertson, Ana Fernandez, Jane Wright and Mark Schnabel. Our thanks go out to all of those that have supported us through this difficult period and it has been great to see our volunteers return to the office.

We'd also like to give a big thank you to all our partners who we have worked with throughout the year.

We would also like to give a special acknowledgment to the commitment and dedication of our colleague and friend Rachel Haney, who this year died after a long battle with cancer.

Lastly, thank you to our Patrons, David Lepper, Caroline Lucas MP, Stephen Lloyd, and Peter Kyle MP. They all continue to be extremely supportive and helpful in the work we do.

Money Advice Plus is the trading name of the registered charity and company Money Advice and Community Support Service. Registered Charity No 1045340 Company No 3029782
Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority: registration number 618927

We'd love to hear from you!

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