

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Primarily, thank you to CPAG in Scotland! Thank you for all the hard work that you put into the support, advice and expertise that you provide frontline advisers and organisations across Scotland.

We would also like to express our thanks to everyone who participated in the primary research, your input has been incredibly valuable to this evaluation.

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Introduction: CPAG in Scotland



Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) was established in 1965 and is the leading charity campaigning for the abolition of child poverty in the UK and for a better deal for low-income families and children.



The organisation aims to raise awareness and understanding of the causes of poverty, its scope and scale and the impacts poverty has on children's lives; whilst enabling those in poverty to maximise their incomes and contributing to positive policy changes for households in poverty.

Since 2004, the Scottish Government has funded Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland to develop, organise and deliver welfare rights training, information and casework support to advisers and other frontline workers.



The Evaluation



The primary purpose of this evaluation was to assess the extent to which all aspects of CPAG in Scotland's second tier advice services ensure that households are able to maximise their available incomes and contribute to the overall outcome of reducing the number of families and households with children who live in poverty.



The evaluation involved two main components:

Secondary data analysis of monitoring and evaluation data collected by CPAG in Scotland



Primary data collection, through a questionnaire and follow-up qualitative telephone interviews

CPAG in Scotland's Services



CPAG in Scotland provides a wide range of services to frontline advisers and support agencies.

Handbooks, Factsheets and e-bulletins

Free and paid-for resources covering a wide range of topics including (but not limited to) welfare benefits, universal credit, debt advice, housing benefits and child support.

The Advice Line

Offering free, independent, expert, up-to-date advice and information on all aspects of the benefits and tax credits system.

E-Learning

Free practical learning and resources on social security benefits in Scotland and the UK.

Conferences and training

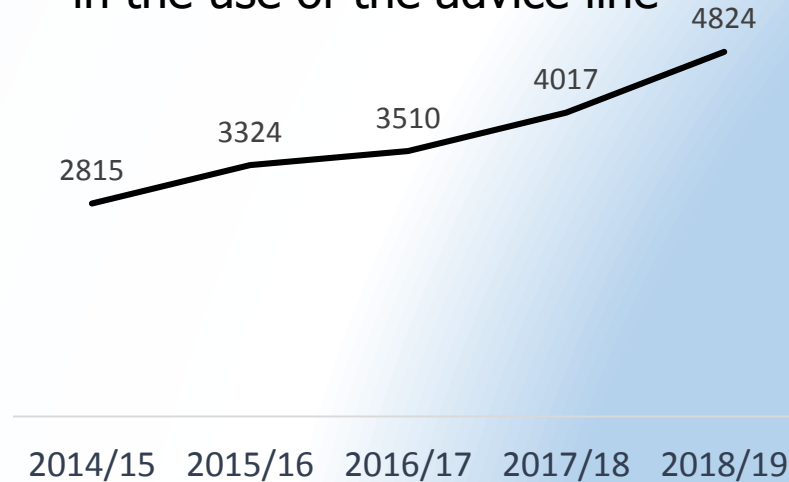
CPAG holds paid-for trainings on a wide range of topics related to benefits, priority groups and appeals as well as an annual welfare rights conference covering topical events and providing practical, up-to-date information to help advisers and clients.

Advice Line

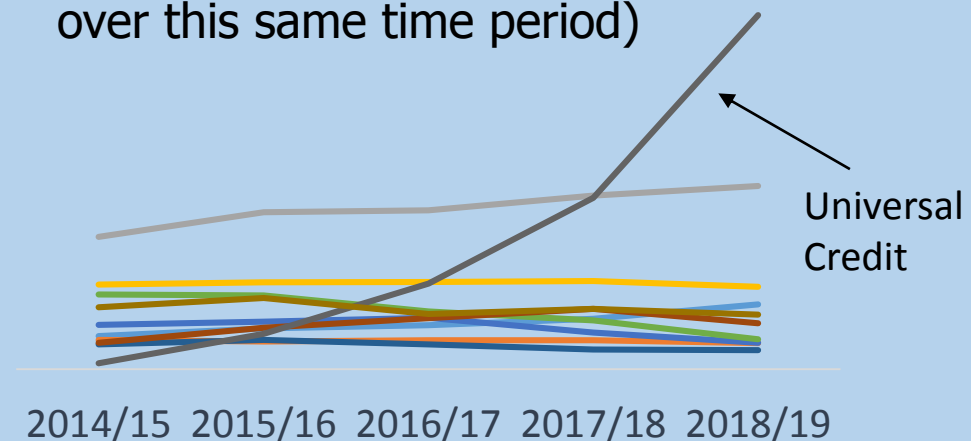


Over
16,000
enquires were
made to CPAG in
Scotland's advice
line between
2014/15 and
2018/19

Data from these five years show
that there has been a 42% increase
in the use of the advice line



This was largely due to the increase
in enquiries made about Universal
Credit (a nearly 6000% increase
over this same time period)



Advice Line



[CPAG] are very authoritative. They provide high quality advice and when you go with a particularly complex issue you know that they will be able to answer it, even if they can't then and there they will go away and come back to you with an answer

The advisers are so friendly and so helpful. They are always able to help me with any issues I am having quickly and efficiently



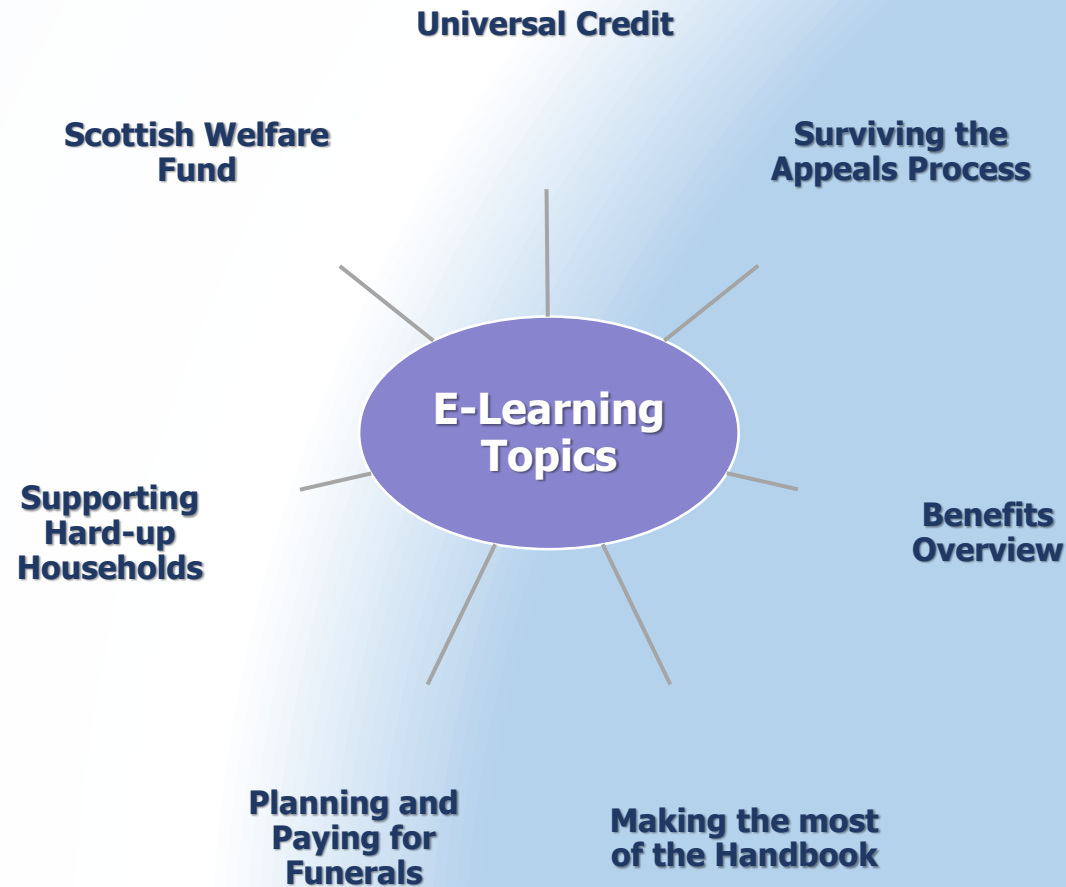
100%
of respondents to
CPAG in
Scotland's annual
surveys between
2014 and 2019
were satisfied
with the **Advice
Line's overall level
of service**

Survey Question	Response
Staff explained the advice clearly	100%
Staff were knowledgeable and approachable	100%
The advice line helps to resolve issues for clients more quickly	100%
The advice line helps advisers to achieve better outcomes for clients	100%

E-Learning



Between 2014 and
2018 E-learning
courses were
accessed
72,419
times!



93%
of respondents to
CPAG in
Scotland's annual
surveys rated the
E-learning courses
as either good or
excellent.

Conferences and Training

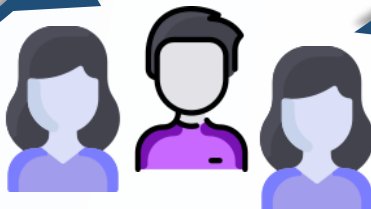


Concerns have been raised by advisors in the questionnaire and qualitative interviews that the conference and trainings can be financially and geographically limiting.

Whilst I enjoy the training, I do find it rather expensive and [it] may effect smaller organisations' [ability to attend]

I think the CPAG trainings are really good. However, for an organisation like ours, that is volunteer-run, the cost is very high

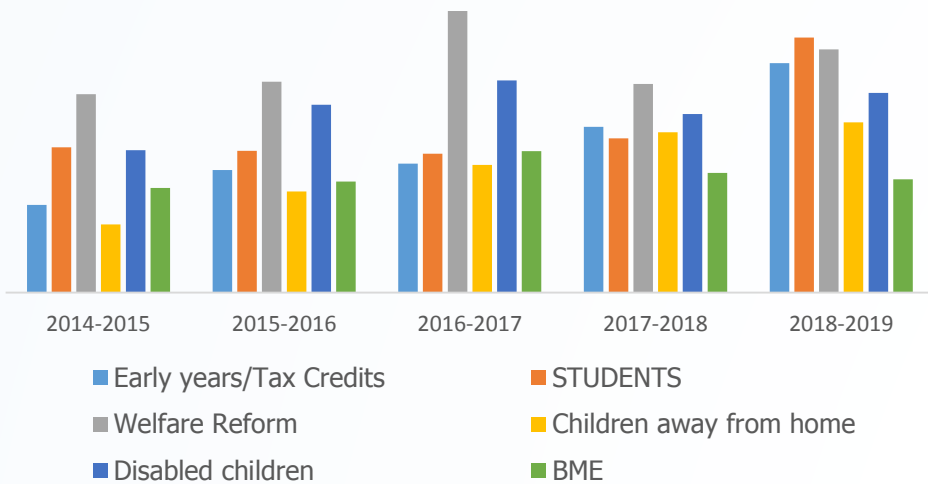
It has been some time since I attended [Welfare Rights] conference because the cost is high and my organisation is unable to pay for it



Demand for **training courses** has varied, depending on the subject, and the changes in the courses available in a given year make it challenging to generalise about overall trends. However, since its introduction in 2017/18, the training course on 'Universal Credit' has been the most widely attended by far.

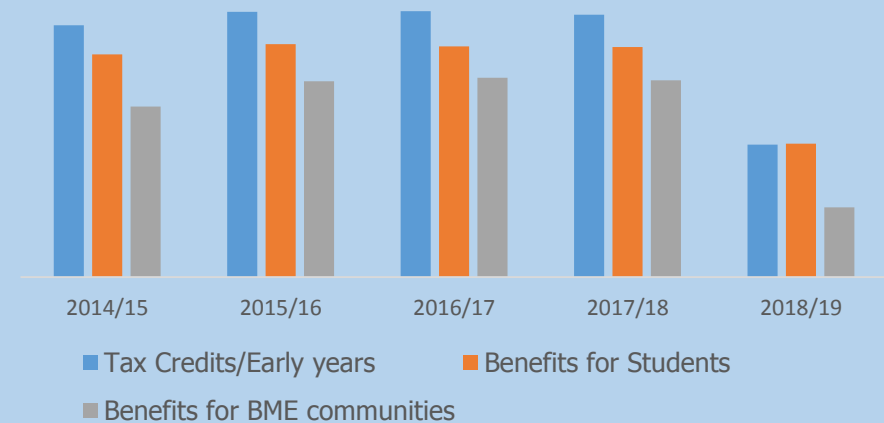
Year	Topics	No. of participants	No. of courses	No. of events
2018-2019	Families/ early years	359	14	9
	Students	262	12	4
	Children in care	198	4	3
	Disability and carers	261	8	5
	Minority ethnic	228	4	4
	Universal credit	1002	48	6
	Appeals representation	68	5	0
	Other	530	21	8

Handbooks, Factsheets and e-bulletins



There has been a small but steady increase in the number of factsheets downloaded across a range of topics between 2014 and 2018.

The use of e-bulletins remained fairly constant until the introduction of GDPR regulations which led to a sharp decline.



Handbooks, Factsheets and e-bulletins



Qualitative information collected in the questionnaire and telephone interviews suggest that the handbooks are generally well received, used often and contain useful, up-to-date information. Some advisers commented, however, that it would be useful for the handbooks to be available in digital format.



I think for me it would be very useful to have the handbook (welfare benefits and tax credits) available online but I also like to have the paper version to hand so that I can leave little bookmarks for easy access.



82% of stakeholders responding to the Scottish Government's qualitative interviews reported using the Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits Handbook regularly.

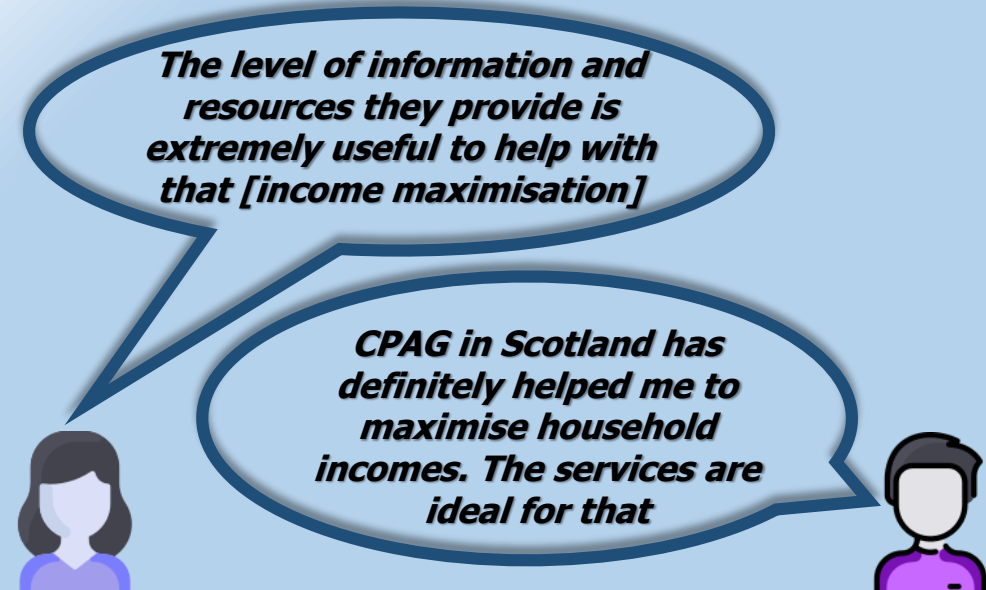
Income Maximisation



Income maximisation for clients is a key outcome for frontline advisers and key indicator that the support that they receive from CPAG in Scotland is effective.

Unfortunately, many frontline advisers and the organisations they work for report that they do not have the capability built into their systems, or the capacity due to their workload, to effectively collect data on income maximisation.

With the exception of the website and the welfare rights conference, two thirds or more of respondents to the Scottish Government survey felt that CPAG services provided a major contribution to income maximisation for their clients.



	No contribution	Minor contribution	Major Contribution
Advice Line	0.9%	14.2%	76.6%
Training (in person or online)	1.5%	14.5%	73.6%
Online resources (Factsheets, e-bulletins, appeals toolkit)	0.3%	27.6%	63.5%
Handbooks	1.2%	10.1%	82.8%
CPAG Website	2.7%	36.2%	46.3%
Welfare Rights Conference	9.2%	24.0%	23.7%

Recommendations



Similar to the previous evaluation in 2011, CPAG in Scotland's second tier advice, information and training services have evaluated positively. This is clearly seen in both the secondary data provided to us by CPAG in Scotland, and in the primary data we collected through the survey questionnaire and stakeholder interviews. There are, however, a number of key recommendations to be considered.

1. Many stakeholders reported that it is impossible or very difficult to collect data on whether or not **income maximisation** has been reached for their clients. As this is an essential part of an effective evaluation of whether the services provided are achieving their desired effect, it would be helpful for CPAG in Scotland to establish an advisory group to discuss options of how to more effectively collect data on income maximisation.
2. Given its popularity, **E-learning could be expanded and improved**, increasing the range of topics and the depth of information provided, especially in light of the current pandemic and the inability for advisers to attend in-person trainings.
3. The advice line is received extremely favourably, however, there is a perceived need and strong desire amongst frontline advisers for **increased capacity**.
4. There is a desire for greater availability of digital and online versions of **in-print resources**.
5. There is a desire for the development and provision of **template letters** and/or **digitally generated case letters** for advisers to tailor to their clients situations.

Want to know more?

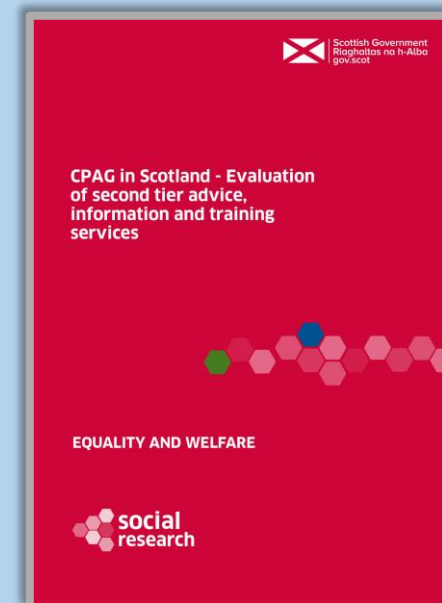


This short infographic document covers the key information drawn from the evaluation of CPAG in Scotland's second tier advice services.

If you would like to read the evaluation report in its entirety, or would like to know more about a particular aspect of the evaluation, the full document can be found here:



<https://www.gov.scot/ISBN/978-1-80004-802-7>



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