

Insights into Adult Disability Payment:

Evidence from Citizens Advice Scotland

Quarter 1 2026-27



The Citizens Advice network in Scotland 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 it.

Demand for ADP advice remains high, underscoring the vital role of advice services

From April to July 2026



More than **9,300** people sought our advice about ADP, almost **500 more people** than the same time last year



Almost **35,000 pieces of ADP advice** were delivered in a single quarter, accounting for **more than a quarter** (28%) of all social security advice demand



Over half (52%) of ADP awards we supported were granted at initial application, demonstrating our advice facilitates the right decision to be made the first time

Lengthy and complex dispute journeys are leaving people overwhelmed

From April to July 2026



Demand for appeals support increased, with more than 1,300 people seeking advice, a **13% increase** on the same quarter last year



One in five ADP advice issues involved challenging a decision, with advisers delivering nearly **7,600 pieces of advice** on re-determinations and appeals



Re-determinations and appeals supported by our advisers unlocked **over £2.1 million** in ADP entitlements

People challenging ADP review decisions continue to experience uncertainty due to inconsistent decision-making. Advisers across Scotland report volatility in outcomes during both planned reviews and reviews triggered by a change in circumstances. Most re-determination requests following a review do not result in a change of outcome¹. This means that many people proceed to a lengthy and often distressing appeal process to seek resolution.

As a result, many people turn to their local CAB for support to navigate documentation and gather evidence to challenge decisions, increasing demand for our advice and representation services.

¹ [Adult Disability Payment - to 30 April 2026 - Tables.xlsx- T28](#) - around two thirds of redetermination requests following review were not decided in favour of the requestor during February to April 2026



Lynn's experience

Lynn went to her local CAB for support with an ADP appeal. She lives with complex post-traumatic stress disorder and had reported a deterioration in her condition to SSS. Despite this, both the review and subsequent re-determination reduced her award, resulting in the loss of the Mobility component. The decisions cited a lack of ongoing treatment, despite Lynn accessing intensive therapy through her GP during periods of mental health crisis. After unsuccessfully challenging the decision twice, Lynn now faces a lengthy and stressful appeal process.

Under current arrangements, SSS is unable to carry out a re-determination once an appeal has been lodged. As a result, appeals that could be resolved earlier must still proceed to a hearing, delaying a resolution of disputes and creating additional pressures on the system.



The CAS solution

The Scottish Government should prioritise the **commencement of section 8 of the Social Security (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2025**, empowering SSS to carry out a further re-determination after an appeal has been lodged. This would align with the Scottish Government's commitment to Public Service Reform by streamlining the process, reducing demand on a public service and improving outcomes.

Delays are making the appeals process unduly difficult for people

Our advisers are typically representing people at tribunal hearings more than nine months after an appeal is lodged, with waits sometimes extending to a year and a half. These delays can prolong uncertainty and make hearings more difficult, as people are required to recall their circumstances from many months earlier.



Claire's experience

Claire appealed a decision to refuse her an award of ADP with support from her local CAB. Although the appeal was lodged in January 2025, a hearing of the case did not take place until June 2026. Claire is 18 and lives with a physical disability and a learning disability that affects her communication. After almost 18 months of waiting, she found the hearing overwhelming. Questions that appeared unrelated to her claim, including whether she had any tattoos or piercings, left her confused and distressed, making it more difficult for her to engage effectively and communicate her support needs to the Tribunal.



The CAS solution

The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) must **strengthen guidance on the evidence required to support an appeal and how it will be considered**. This would reduce the submission of late or irrelevant evidence and support efficient proceedings. The approach of the SCTS should be flexible and proportionate, working closely with stakeholders, appellants and SSS to manage cases fairly.

Late submissions can jeopardise a fair appeal hearing



This quarter, our network supported people to secure over **£800,000 in entitlement** following First-tier Tribunal appeals across both ADP components. This reflects the significant proportion of ADP advice CAB advisers dedicate to supporting people through the appeals process.



Advisers work closely with people to ensure they can participate fully in appeal hearings. However, they continue to report administrative issues that can undermine the effective and fair conduct of hearings, including **submissions being lodged at a late stage and documentation arriving out of chronological order**.



Our advisers report experiencing hearings being adjourned to allow sufficient time for parties to consider all the evidence. This prolongs uncertainty for people and creates additional pressure for advisers supporting them through an already challenging appeals process.



Insight from Advisers: Theresa's experience

Just six days before Rory's appeal hearing, Theresa, his CAB representative, received more than 100 pages of additional submissions from SSS. The appeal papers already ran to over 300 pages. Theresa was under considerable pressure to prepare Rory's case effectively in a very short time. While an adjournment would have given her more time, it would also have delayed a decision for Rory, who was already struggling to manage his health needs in the absence of an ADP award. Theresa experienced anxiety about how to achieve the best outcome for Rory.



The CAS Solution

SSS must ensure that once an appeal has been lodged, **all relevant documentation is reviewed and submitted in a timely manner**. This is essential to give people and their representatives adequate time to prepare and reduce the risk of avoidable adjournments.

Dedicated escalation routes would enable issues to be identified promptly, leading to faster resolutions and better outcomes for people

The need for faster case escalation where operational barriers arise or safeguarding concerns are identified has been a longstanding concern among advisers. A dedicated, national process would enable people and their families to access vital income in a timely manner and avoid unnecessary hardship. It would also provide a more effective route to resolving issues, freeing up adviser time to focus on supporting people rather than navigating administrative barriers. Earlier resolution of issues would reduce demand on advice services and SSS, increasing capacity to support more people with their social security needs.



Insight from Advisers: Shiraz's experience

Shiraz, a welfare rights adviser, completed a Special Rules ADP application for a kinship carer with terminal cancer. When no payment had been received a month later, Shiraz became increasingly concerned about the delay. She contacted SSS and re-sent the required form confirming that a qualifying diagnosis of terminal illness has been made (BASRIS form) but received no confirmation that it had been received. Without any update, Shiraz felt distressed that she was unable to reassure a seriously ill person with a caring responsibility that the support they needed was on its way.



The CAS Solution

SSS should prioritise delivering a nation-wide escalation route for advisers at the earliest opportunity to support timely resolution of issues and improve outcomes for people.

About Citizens Advice Scotland

Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) is the membership body that represents The Citizens Advice network, Scotland's leading advice charity. Advisers across all corners of the country work in Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) to provide free, impartial and confidential advice. The Extra Help Unit (EHU) is a statutory service supporting people and small businesses in vulnerable circumstances with energy and postal complaints across Great Britain. They also support heat network customers in Scotland. Each year our network helps hundreds of thousands of people, putting millions of pounds back in people's pockets. By looking at a person's complete circumstances, CAS has 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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