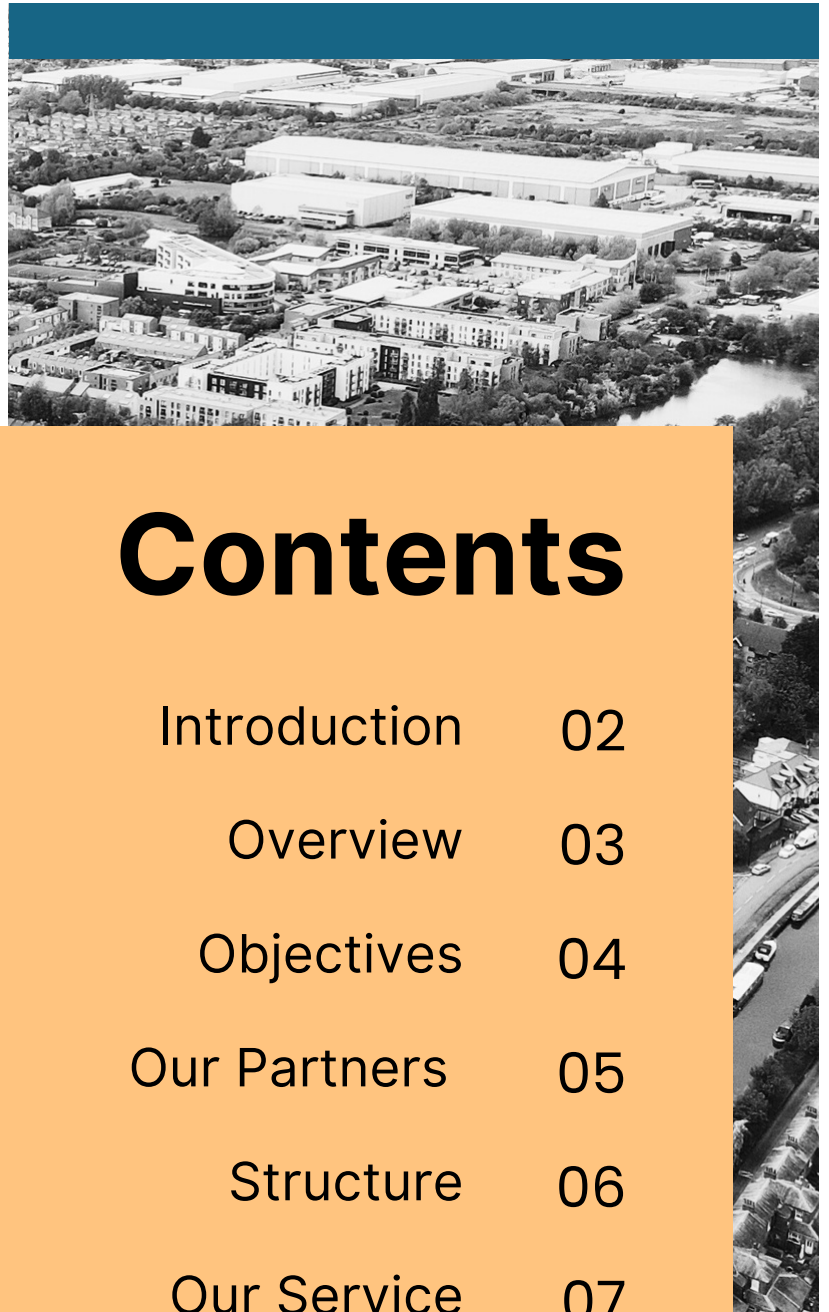




Annual Report

2023-24





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Introduction

We are proud to share the Enfield Connections Annual Report 2023-24, which highlights the impact of our services on supporting Enfield's vulnerable residents.

Enfield Connections provides free information and advice to residents aged 18 and over, helping them:

- Navigate long-term care needs
- Determine when to seek adult social care support
- Maintain their independence for as long as possible

This year brought significant challenges for our residents, including the ongoing cost of living crisis, housing difficulties, and the closure of Enfield Disability Action.

In response, we remained committed to delivering essential services, helping residents access benefits, vital support, and skill-building opportunities to confidently engage with statutory agencies.

Our mission is to provide timely and relevant advice that empowers residents to take control of their circumstances and remain independent, ultimately reducing reliance on emergency and crisis services.

Through partnerships with local charities, we continue to reach Enfield's most vulnerable adults, ensuring they receive the guidance they need to stay safe and well in their homes.

"I'd like to thank all stakeholders, staff, and partner organisations for their continued dedication to delivering Enfield Connections. Their commitment and collaboration make it possible for us to support Enfield's most vulnerable residents."

Tola Kolawole

Director of Health and Care

Overview of Enfield Connections

2018 Enfield Council reaffirmed its commitment to early intervention and prevention by commissioning CB Plus to deliver Enfield Connections.

This initiative ensures residents can easily access vital information and advice, helping them lead healthier, more independent lives within their communities.

Our approach empowers individuals, families, and communities by equipping them with the knowledge, confidence, and resources to navigate challenges effectively.

Through strong partnerships with local Enfield charities, including sub-contracts with Citizens Advice Enfield and AGE UK Enfield, we deliver innovative and accessible services. We sincerely thank all our partners for their dedication and collaboration.

Providing timely and relevant information helps prevent issues from escalating, reduces the need for crisis interventions, and alleviates pressure on health and social care services.

This Annual Report reflects our work throughout the 2023-2024 budget year, highlighting our continued impact in supporting Enfield residents.

Objectives

01

Partnering for Better Support

We work with voluntary, statutory, and independent organisations to provide residents with diverse information and advice services that support their well-being.

02

Providing Practical Guidance

Our service offers essential information, advice, and hands-on assistance to help individuals stay independent and actively engaged in their community.

03

Promoting Inclusivity

We support small local groups and organisations, particularly those with limited resources, ensuring all residents can access the help they need.

04

Holistic Support for Residents

Through collaboration with key organisations, we provide guidance on health and wellbeing, social activities, volunteering, employment, housing, and benefits.

05

Connecting to Specialist Services

We refer service users to specialist organisations where additional support is required, ensuring they receive tailored assistance to meet their needs.

Our Partners

Enfield Connections delivers as a partnership of local Enfield charities led by CB Plus.

We subcontract local charities to provide innovative services in Enfield. We thank all partners for their hard work and cooperation throughout this contract.

Citizens Advice Enfield

Citizens Advice Enfield provides free, independent, and confidential advice to disabled individuals about their rights and responsibilities. Clients can receive advice on benefits, including Universal Credit and legacy benefits, managing debts and advice on various housing issues.



Age UK Enfield

Age UK Enfield is an independent charity that supports older people, their families, and carers in Enfield. We strongly believe in the value, independence, and engagement of older individuals and strive to help them remain connected, active, and able to live the lives they choose.



Structure of Enfield Connections

Enfield Connections consists of four parts, delivered in partnership with different community organisations.

Enfield Connections Collective Offer:



CB Plus

- Telephone advice line.
- Face-to-face appointments.



Age UK

- Later life planning service.
- Awareness raising.
- 1:1 consultancy.



Enfield CAB

- Generic benefits advice.
- Disability Rights Advice (fast-track).

What do we offer?

An Overview:



Telephone Information Service (delivered by CB Plus)

The telephone line is available Monday to Friday - 10 am and 3 pm on 020 3960 0129



Face to Face Drop-in Services (Delivered by CB Plus)

Face to face access to those in need of support, information and advice in the borough's flagship libraries (Palmers Green, Edmonton Green and Enfield town)



Fast Track Disability Advice Service (Delivered by Citizens Advice Enfield)

Support and advise vulnerable and disabled adults about benefits, debt, housing, health and community care, employment, or immigration.



Later Life Planning (Delivered by Age UK Enfield)

Start conversations with local residents to gain confidence and feel empowered to start to make arrangements for their later life.

In more detail:

1. Telephone Information and Advice Line – CB Plus

This service is mainly for:

- Clients from the local community members and those referred from other agencies who are familiar with how the service operates
- Individuals who face barriers to accessing services, including those with mobility limitations preventing in-person attendance, people who lack digital confidence or access, and those with literacy challenges.

2. In-person services – CB Plus

This service provides face-to-face advice and guidance at Enfield's four flagship libraries to reach the most vulnerable residents. The libraries are located across the Borough of Enfield at Palmers Green, Edmonton Green, Enfield Town, and Ordinance Unity Centre. After discussions with our commissioners in Q4, we stopped delivering face-to-face sessions at Ordinance Road Unity Library.

It complements the Telephone Information Service and provides help with the following:

- Council Tax – e.g. identifying overpayments
- Rent arrears – e.g. calculating/negotiating repayment options
- Benefit applications – e.g. Personal Independence Payments and Universal Credit. Completion of online forms, such as for benefits and Blue Badges.
- Direct referrals to Enfield Council's Financial Assessment Team and Housing Team
- Signposting to assist people who are homeless to agencies that can provide legal advice, financial support, or housing, where appropriate.
- Money Management, helping people manage their income and expenditure, including bills, rent, and food.
- Signposting to Healthy Living, Recreation, and Leisure activities.

Our work showed that many service users, residents who took advantage of this service, had multiple issues, complex cases, or required assistance with form-filling, and it was possible that they would prefer to resolve the issues via the telephone.

We had conversations with the commissioner due to the lack of confidential space and the fact that the Ordinance Road Unity Library was not easily accessible. In quarter 4, we stopped the sessions at the Ordinance Road Library. In the next financial year, we aim to expand the service to provide drop-in sessions for minoritised community groups.

3. Fast Track Disability Service (Citizens Advice Enfield)

Citizens Advice Enfield Service provides free, independent, confidential advice to disabled people on their rights and entitlements, including benefits, employment, and health and social care. This fast-track service means clients can get dedicated, specific advice quickly. As part of Enfield Connections, they deliver a fast-track disability advice service. It allows us to promptly assist vulnerable residents with disabilities who need support with debt, mandatory reconsiderations, and appeals, ensuring they receive the help they require promptly.

4. Later Life Planning Project – Age UK

As part of Enfield Connections, Age UK is subcontracted to deliver a Later Life Planning Service, providing essential support and services to help older residents plan for their future.

The Age UK Later Life Planning Project encourages residents over 50 to start conversations that will empower them to talk about death positively. It helps build confidence in asking questions and ensures that all worries about dying and death are acknowledged.

Governance Arrangements

01

London Borough of Enfield

Commissioner

02

CB Plus

Prime Contractor

03

Enfield Connections

Management Board

04

Enfield Connections

Service Delivery

The Enfield Connections Management Board meets quarterly and is responsible for the operational delivery of Enfield Connections.

Membership of the board includes Age UK Enfield and Citizens Advice Enfield. CB Plus provides the secretariat for the management board.

Statistics Overview



We successfully managed **2,018 referrals** and engaged in **3,464 interactions** with residents, assisting each resident **twice on average**.



We demonstrated strong performance in meeting our contractual obligations, particularly in responding to the **increasing complexity** and **diversity of issues** raised by residents.



Notably, **45%** of these interactions occurred through our telephone advice line, and **73%** of the referrals were self-initiated.

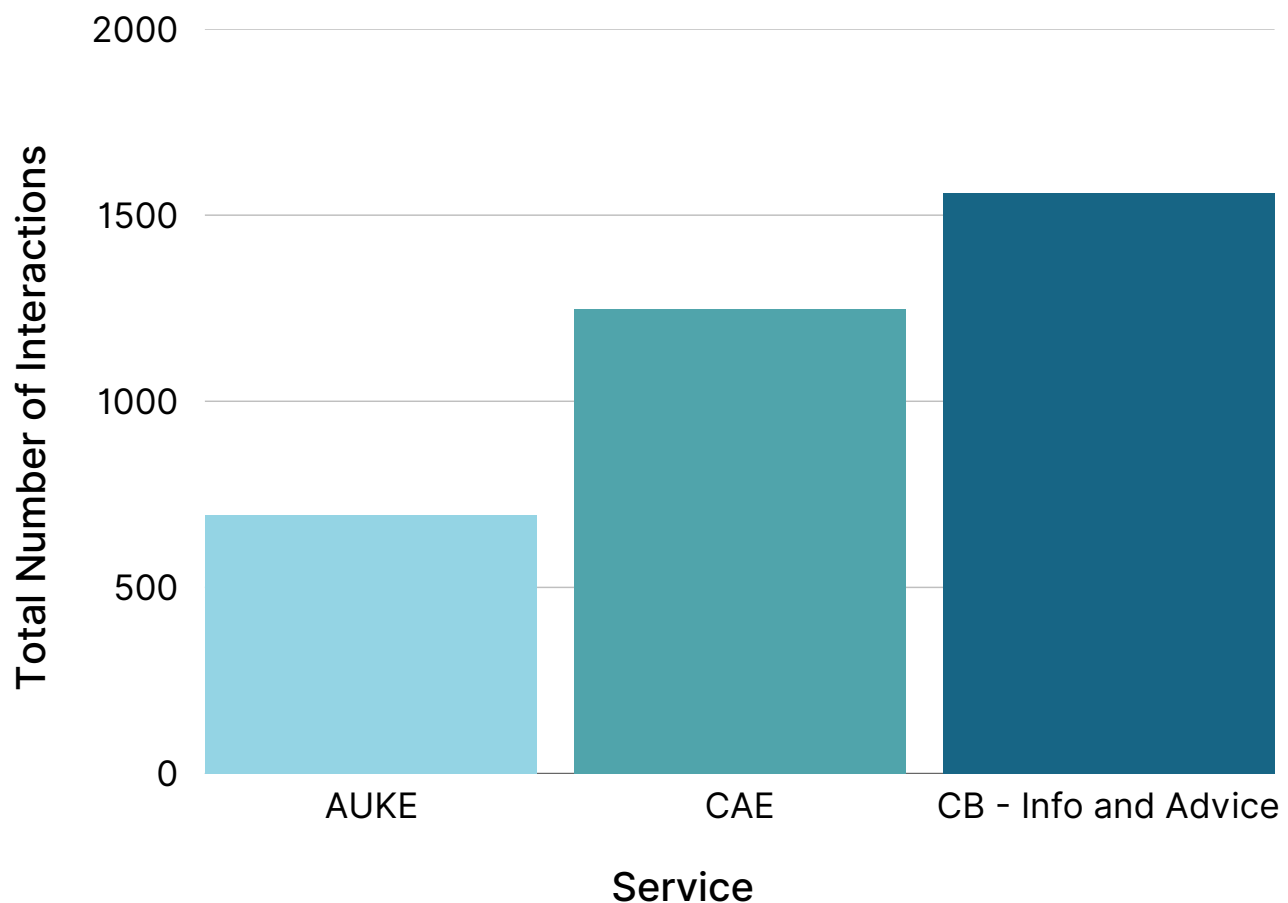


Clients appreciated resolving issues **over the phone** when possible, reserving appointments for form filling and complex cases. These achievements were realised despite our CB Plus telephone advice line and face-to-face appointments operating at **50% staff capacity** for most of the financial year.

How Clients Accessed Our Services

Demand for our telephone and face-to-face services increased significantly this year, with **70%** of interactions occurring through our telephone advice line, highlighting a strong preference for remote support. Form-filling assistance remained the most requested service.

Graph 1: Client Breakdown by Service
(April 23- March 24)



Across our partnership, Citizens Advice Enfield and AGE UK Enfield also saw high engagement. In total, there were **2,018 referrals** and **3,464 interactions** across all our services. A detailed breakdown of service usage is shown in the graph above.

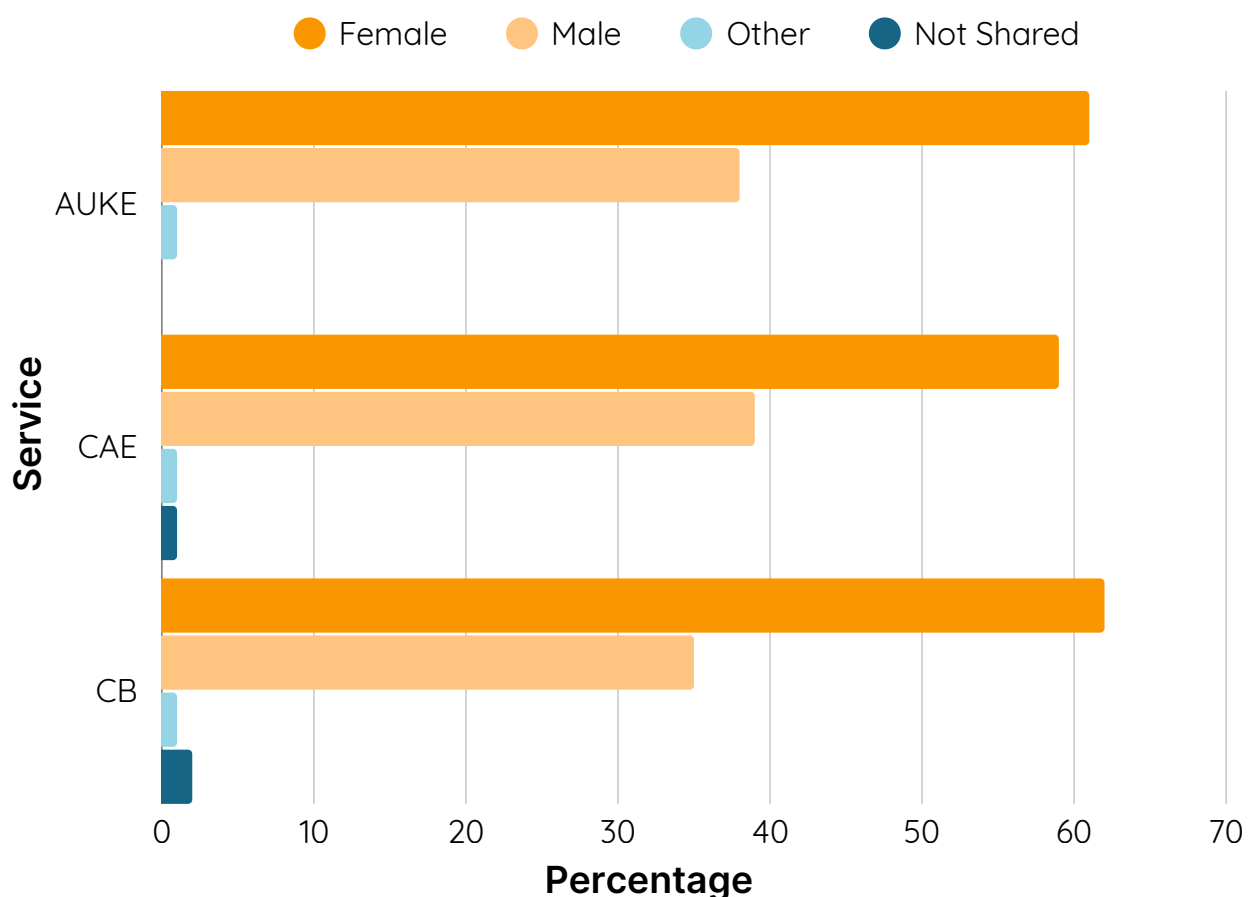
Gender Trends in Service Engagement

This year, **60%** of clients accessing our services were female, with the breakdown as follows: **61%** of Age UK clients, **59%** of Citizens Advice clients, and **62%** of those using CB Plus telephone and in-person services.

We understand that men are generally less likely to engage with support services, a trend reflected in our service usage. This pattern aligns with national data on gender differences in service engagement.

Moving forward, we are committed to increasing awareness and actively promoting our services to encourage more men to seek support.

Graph 2: Gender Distribution of Clients by Service (%)



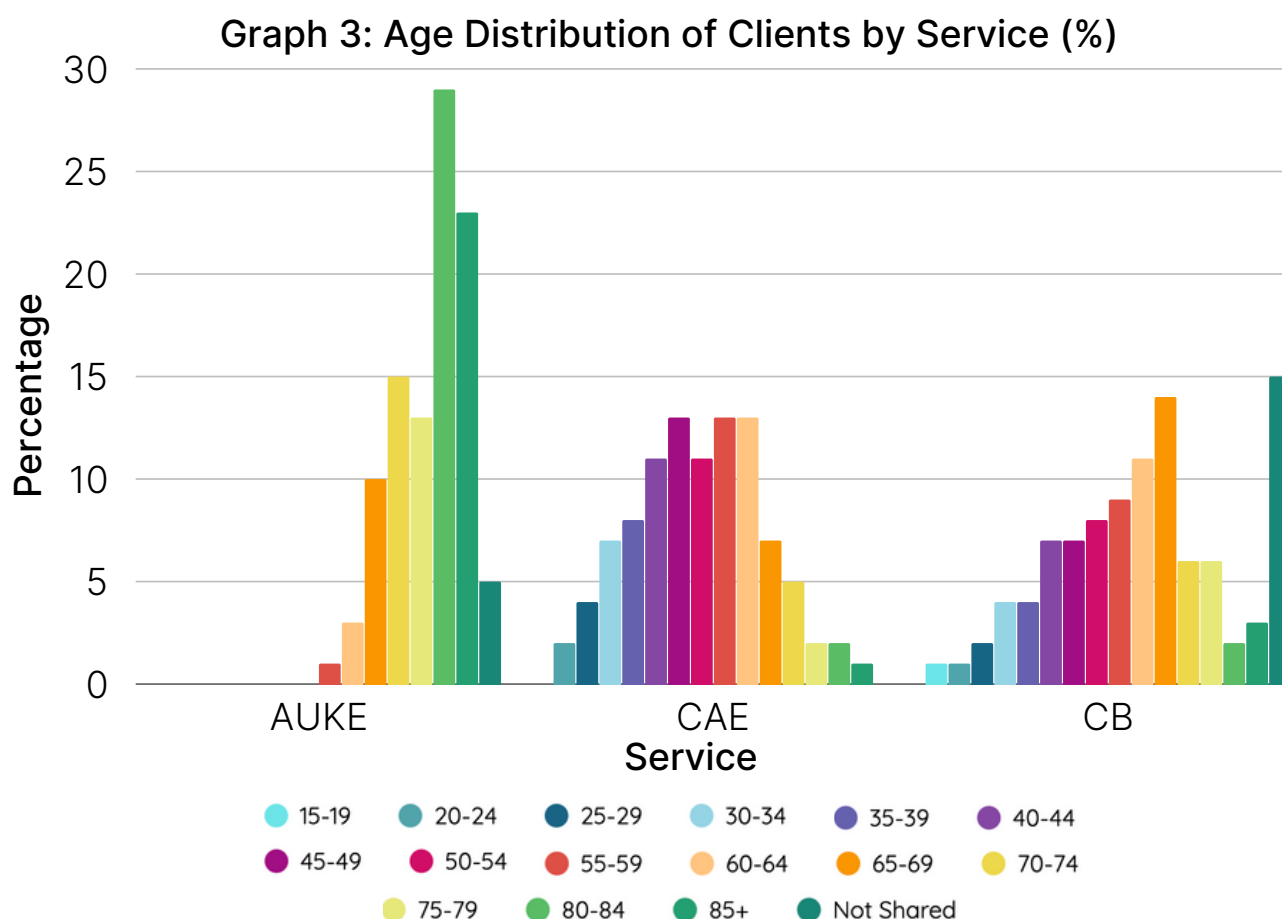
Age Demographics of Service Users

The service was most frequently used by individuals aged **60-69**, who represented **23%** of participants. Age UK primarily supported clients aged **80-84**, accounting for **29%** of their users.

At Citizens Advice Enfield, the largest groups were split between ages **45-49**, **55-59**, and **60-64**, with each age group representing **13%** of their clients.

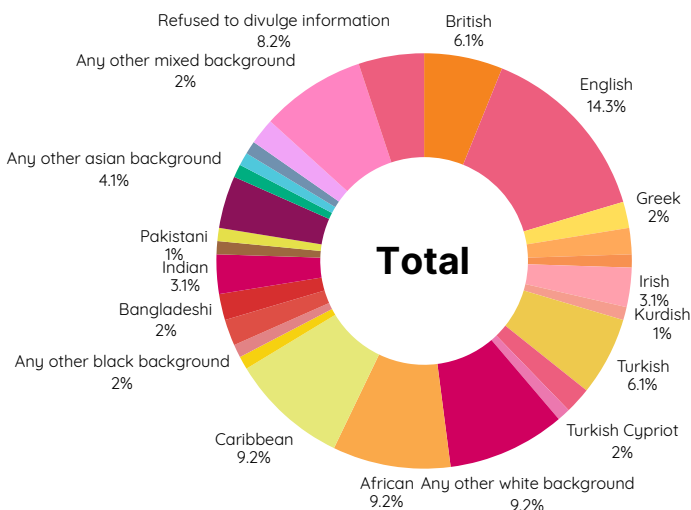
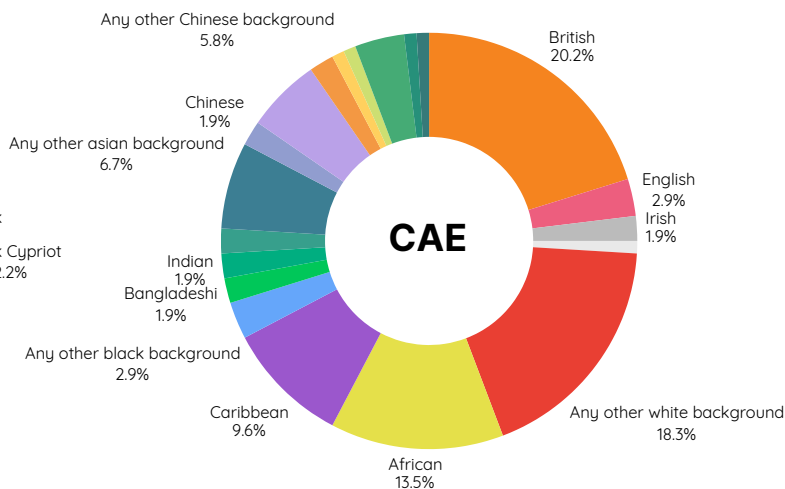
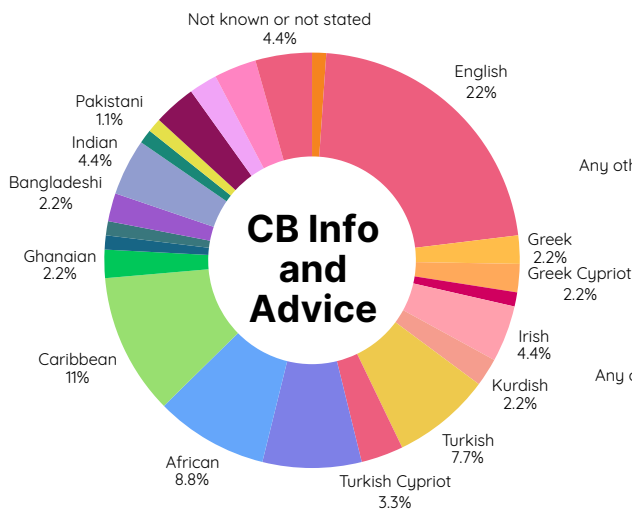
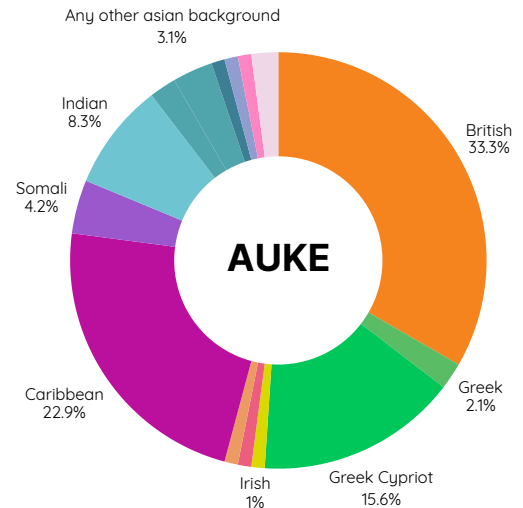
Additionally, **15%** of clients accessing the telephone advice line and face-to-face appointments did not disclose their age. Among those who did provide their age, the largest group was aged **65-69**, accounting for **14%**.

We continue to encourage all clients to share their demographic data to help us better understand service usage and ensure targeted support across all services.



Ethnicity Trends in Service Engagement

Collecting data on protected characteristics has been challenging for our partners. Across the entire service, most clients were white English (13%). Specifically, 31% of Age UK clients and 21% of Citizens Advice Enfield clients were white British. Most clients using the CB Plus Telephone Advice Line and face-to-face service were white English (20%).



We will review our data collection methods and gather feedback from our clients. Additionally, we will proactively target underrepresented groups and promote our services to them.

Case Studies and Feedback

We assess our success by collecting case studies from our partners, which help us showcase the positive impact our services have on clients. We are grateful to our clients for sharing their experiences, as these case studies highlight how they have benefited from our support.

We consistently receive positive feedback, and we're pleased to share some of the comments we've received:

The person I spoke to really listened, and they didn't make me feel judged. They helped me sort out my benefits and explained things properly. It just made such a difference knowing someone was in my corner.

*- Enfield Connections
Service User*

I'd never asked for help before, but things got too much. They listened, explained everything clearly, and made me feel like I wasn't alone.

*- Enfield Connections
Service User*

Continue reading to explore some case studies that demonstrate the difference our work makes.

Case Study - Citizens Advice Enfield

Background:

A client over the state retirement age had been receiving Personal Independence Payment (PIP) at the standard rate for both the daily living and mobility components. Due to worsening health and increased difficulty with daily activities, they informed the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) of a change in circumstances and submitted a new PIP application. However, their award remained unchanged.

Advice & Options:

- **PIP Mobility Component:** Clients over the state retirement age are not eligible for an increase in the mobility component of PIP.
- **Daily Living Component:** An increase is possible if additional support with daily activities is required.
- **Appealing the Decision:** The client was advised to request a mandatory reconsideration (MR) from the DWP, outlining areas where they required more support.
- **Potential Outcomes of Appeal:**
 - a. The original decision is upheld.
 - b. The decision is changed in the client's favour (i.e., increased benefit rate).
 - c. The decision is changed in the DWP's favour (i.e., the benefit rate is reduced or stopped).
- **Alternative Support:** If the appeal was unsuccessful, the client could apply for Attendance Allowance.

The client decided to appeal the PIP decision and was assisted in drafting a letter to request a mandatory reconsideration. The letter outlined areas where the client felt they should have been awarded more points based on the help needed for each daily living activity.

Next Steps:

- The client was instructed to send the MR request letter with supporting medical evidence by recorded delivery and to obtain proof of posting.
- The client was advised to contact Citizens Advice Enfield upon receiving the MR notice (MRN) from the DWP if they needed assistance with the appeal.

Follow-up:

A month after the appointment, the client contacted Citizens Advice Enfield to report that the DWP had reconsidered their decision upon receiving the MR request letter. The client was awarded the enhanced rate for the daily living component, while the mobility component remained at the standard rate. The client was very pleased with the outcome.



Case Study: CB Plus Face-to-Face Appointment

Background:

Client M attended an appointment at a local library, where we assisted her in completing an online Council Tax Support application to help reduce her financial burden. During the same session, she also applied for a TV licence exemption.

While at the appointment, M raised an additional concern about her faulty mobility scooter. She explained that the local mobility shop where she had purchased the scooter was refusing to assist with the necessary repairs, leaving her without reliable transportation.

Action Taken:

- We scheduled a follow-up appointment with M, during which we contacted the mobility shop. The shop informed us that the manager was unavailable but agreed to have him contact M upon his return.
- A week later, M contacted us, stating that she had not received a call from the manager. We arranged another appointment and contacted the manager again.
- The manager was unwilling to rectify the situation, claiming it was not his responsibility. He advised us to contact the manufacturer instead.

Next Steps:

We assisted M in drafting a letter addressed to the mobility shop manager, informing him of M's intention to pursue a complaint through the Small Claims Court if the issue was not resolved. We requested a response within 14 days, or the claim would be initiated.

Follow-up:

- A week later, M informed us that the mobility shop had contacted her with a proposal to replace the mobility scooter. We advised M to request this in writing to ensure she could challenge any terms if necessary.
- Two weeks later, M visited our office to show us her brand-new replacement mobility scooter and expressed her satisfaction with the outcome.



Other Services

North Middlesex Community Hub

The Community Advice Hub at North Middlesex Hospital supports patients, visitors, and staff with advice on money, debt, benefits, housing, carer support, and more. In partnership with Age UK Enfield, Haringey Connected Communities, Enfield Connections, Citizens Advice Enfield, and Enfield Carers Centre, the Hub helped 196 patients and their families or carers during this period. Support included help with GP registration, accessible transport, benefits, housing or debt issues, health condition support, and community wellbeing activities.

Enfield Council Mental Health Partnership Board

The Enfield Mental Health Partnership Board brings together health and social care commissioners, service providers, voluntary and community organisations, service users, and carers to improve adult mental health and wellbeing in Enfield. We are active members of the Board's Black and Minority Ethnic sub-group, including community and statutory organisations that deliver mental health services. As part of this work, we co-led a project to map the mental health needs of the Black community in Enfield.

Enfield Black Health Forum

We are active members of the Enfield Black Forum, delivered by the Caribbean and African Health Network. This forum has a deep reach into underserved communities in Enfield, with its membership drawn from across Enfield's Black-led communities and statutory organisations. The forum aims to work with Black-led organisations to improve health outcomes for this community and address health inequalities.

Promotion and Engagement of Service

Although we operated at 50% staffing for much of the year, we remained committed to community engagement and were proud to maintain a presence at key events and forums. These included the Wellbeing Connect Community Outreach, Somali Celebration, Enfield Carers Conference, and DWP Employment events. We're also pleased to have welcomed a new team member at the start of the new financial year, boosting our capacity and strengthening our ability to engage with the community going forward.

Social Media Engagement:

We continue to use social media to connect with residents and share updates, with Facebook and Twitter (X) helping us reach and engage the community. Facebook engagement rose significantly this year, reaching 4,800, a notable increase from the previous year, reflecting growing interest in our work. While Twitter's (X) activity was limited, it remains a valuable tool for sharing information. We remain committed to strengthening our online presence to keep residents informed and connected.

241,300%	Increase in Facebook reach from last year.
708	Facebook followers
665	Facebook likes
396	Twitter/X followers



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