



ASAP

Armed Services Advice Project



WHAT A DIFFERENCE

**THE GROUND
BREAKING
WORK OF ASAP
2010-2015**





The Citizens Advice Service in Scotland

Citizens Advice Scotland and its member bureaux form Scotland's largest independent advice network. CAB advice services are delivered using service points throughout Scotland, from the islands to city centres.

The CAB Service aims:

- to ensure that individuals do not suffer through lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, or of the services available to them, or through an inability to express their need effectively
- equally to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally.

The Scottish CAB Service is independent and provides free, confidential and impartial advice to everybody regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

Poppyscotland

Poppyscotland provides life-changing support for the Armed Forces community. Poppyscotland reaches out to those who have served, those still serving, and their families at times of crisis and need, offering vital, practical advice, assistance and funding.

Poppyscotland's work centres around seven key areas: tailored support and funding, advice, employment, mobility, respite, housing and mental health. While much of this work is delivered directly, collaboration with other specialist organisations for the benefit of the Armed Forces community is at the heart of Poppyscotland's approach. This ensures the most effective and efficient services are provided.

Probably best known for running the iconic Scottish Poppy Appeal, Poppyscotland works all year round to raise the funds that are urgently needed to provide their life-changing services. This is only possible with the continued support of the public through donations and fundraising.

Poppyscotland leads the funding partnership for the Armed Services Advice Project.

The Armed Services Advice Project

The Armed Services Advice Project (ASAP) was established in 2010 to be a focal point for those in the Armed Forces community in Scotland needing access to advice, information and support. ASAP works with key partner organisations to ensure that clients receive the most appropriate support.

ASAP is delivered by the Scottish CAB Service, a highly trusted network with decades of experience delivering a free, independent, confidential and impartial advice and information service to the general public. ASAP is made possible by a funding partnership, led by Poppyscotland, with whom we work closely to develop the service and ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the people we support.

Acknowledgements

Lorraine Simpson, Between the Lines, for statistical analysis and commentary
www.thelinesbetween.co.uk

Introduction from Chair and Chief Executive



The Armed Forces community make up 10% of the Scottish population. Though they face the same problems as the rest of society, their needs can be acute and specific. In 2010, recognising the need for a single point of access for support and advice, Poppyscotland, leading a group of funding partners, joined with the Scottish CAB service to set up a new service, capitalising on our unique reputation for excellent free confidential advice. Five years on, the Armed Services Advice Project is making a difference to forces families across the country. Whether a client is struggling to pay bills, having problems with housing or employment, or ill health, they can approach ASAP with confidence that we will provide the best possible support. I am proud on behalf of the Scottish CAB service to set out how we have gone about changing over 7000 lives, and look forward to many more years of support.

Dominic Notarangelo
Chair, Citizens Advice Scotland



Poppyscotland is extremely proud to have been instrumental in the creation of the Armed Services Advice Project. ASAP's growth over the last five years has been truly outstanding. ASAP has made a tremendous impact in supporting the Armed Forces community in Scotland. Whilst the vast majority of Service Leavers go on to make meaningful contributions to Scottish society, it is vital that services like ASAP are available to the more vulnerable members of the Armed Forces community. We are indebted to Citizens Advice Scotland, its member Bureaux and most importantly the Regional Support Officers for their dedication and commitment to delivering the highest quality service to the client group. To achieve a return of investment of £3.54 for every pound invested in the service is a terrific return. I would also like to place on record my gratitude to the various funders who have enabled ASAP to become the success that it is today.

Ian McGregor
Chief Executive, Poppyscotland

SET UP IN 2010

The funding partnership was formed with Poppyscotland, ABF The Soldiers' Charity, Maritime Charities Funding Group, RAFBF, The Robertson Trust, SSAFA and Turn2Us.

ASAP launched with a national helpline and face-to-face advisers in bureaux covering 5 regions: Fife and Dundee; Inverness, Moray and Nairn; Lanarkshire; Renfrewshire; and, Stirlingshire.

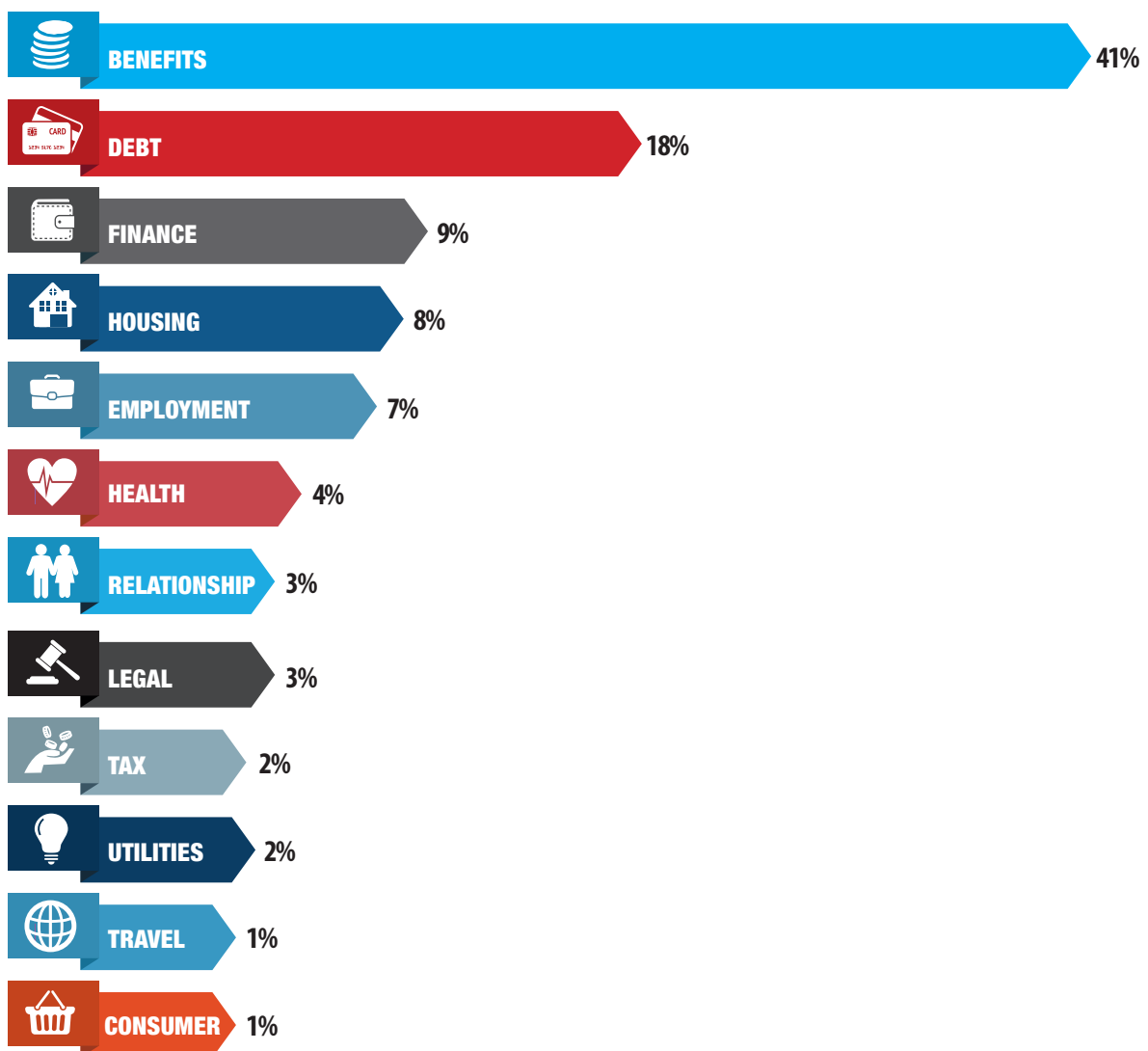


SINCE LAUNCH ASAP HAS:

- Supported 7342 individuals with over 32000 issues¹ including 1691 clients via the helpline. Many clients have a number of issues that may only become apparent once the adviser has got to know a client over several meetings.
- Helped clients make financial gains of over £5 million, for example through accessing benefits to which they are entitled, receiving a charitable grant or having debts written-off or restructured.
- Expanded from 5 to 10 regions.

¹ Some clients are seen on multiple occasions and thus are included in the statistics in more than one year where this is relevant.

Issues that ASAP clients have sought help with



2011

We supported 819 clients with 2990 issues

E-learning module produced to help civilian organisations working with members of the Armed Forces community understand the issues and where to get help www.asaplearning.co.uk

2012

We supported 1134 clients with 4642 issues

*Learning more about the needs and characteristics of the people we support, we published *Civvy Steet*, the New Frontline www.cas.org.uk/publications/civvy-street-new-frontline*

Client needs

People seek support to address a range of problems which may fundamentally impact on their quality of life. ASAP clients often experience these simultaneously, with an average of 4.4 support needs per person; combining disadvantage and unmet need, compounding the stress and anxiety they experience when dealing with difficulties.

The main issues our clients seek help with – income, employment and housing – underpin an individual's wellbeing and can significantly affect the quality of life they experience. In a recent survey of our clients², 87% said that

support from ASAP had improved their peace of mind, and 58% had improved their financial situation. The advice provided by ASAP helps people take control of their lives again, with 60% of respondents saying that our support had improved their ability to help themselves, and 68% reporting improved access to local services.

ASAP clients have raised proportionately more benefits, housing and health related issues than bureaux clients as a whole³, demonstrating that ASAP clients have greater support needs in these areas.

² Based on feedback from 81 clients gathered between June and September 2015 ³ Compared with bureau statistics for the period 2014/15

Working together

Our advisers work with and draw on support from a complex mix of organisations and groups to support clients, who often require support from a range of sources including specialist agencies. Our partnership approach to identifying and resolving issues, working with veterans' organisations and civilian support services allows our reach to extend beyond services people might typically associate with the Armed Forces community.

"SSAFA in Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire & Inverclyde appreciate the five years of support from ASAP based in Barrhead. We rely on their

expert advice, especially in relation to benefits and debts and value their ability to use The CAB Network on our behalf"

Mike Pepper, SSAFA Branch Chairman

"I would like to thank you for the valuable work you do for our residents at Rosendael. The residents are extremely happy with the support that you provide them. Your weekly visits also assist the support staff at Rosendael by freeing up our time to concentrate on other support needs."

Neil Stewart, Support Officer, Scottish Veterans Housing Association Ltd

2013

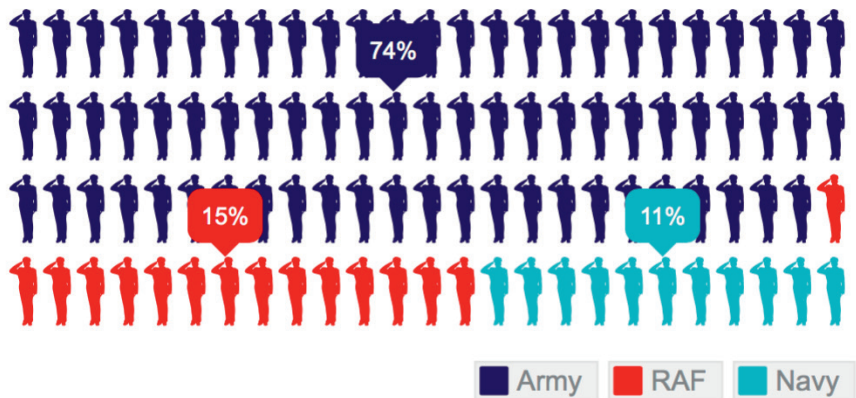
We supported 1679 clients with 5791 issues

Face-to-face advice provision was expanded with increased hours in some areas, and two new areas: Edinburgh and Lothians, funded by ASAP, and Falkirk, funded by Falkirk Council

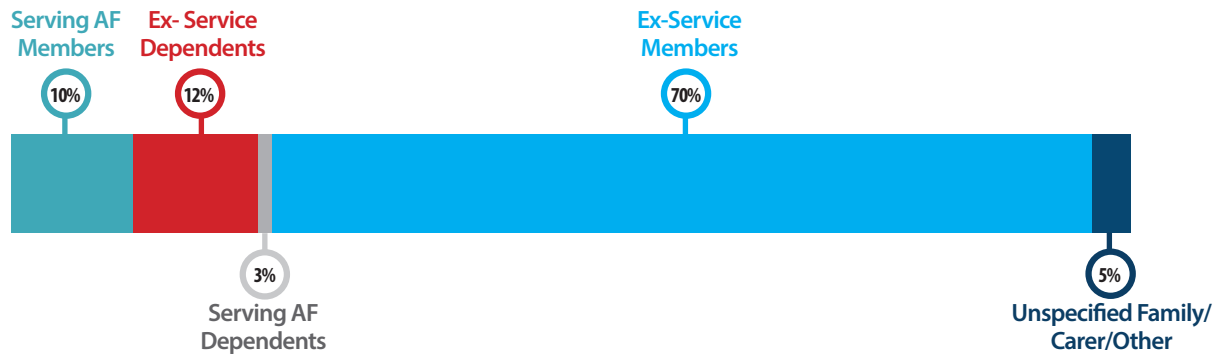




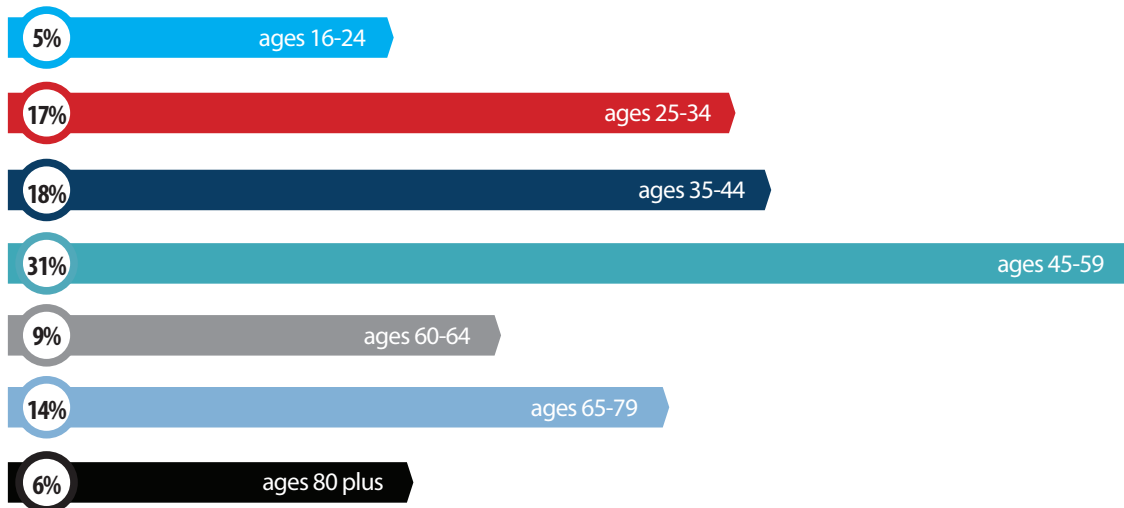
ASAP users since 2010 Forces Breakdown



Profile of ASAP clients



Client profile by age



2014

We supported 2266 clients with 8784 issues

We published "Supporting the Scottish Armed Forces Community" www.cas.org.uk/publications/supporting-scottish-armed-forces-community-2014

ASAP was extended to Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, and Tayside (Angus, Dundee and Perth and Kinross).

The ASAP Police Scotland Veterans Referral Scheme commenced April 2014 which supports vulnerable members of the Armed Forces community who come into contact with the police.

some feedback from our clients...

"Great help. Received a home visit and had a breakdown of benefits which I may be entitled to. This support was invaluable to me and gave me peace of mind"

"ASAP have helped me greatly in every aspect of my situation both physically and mentally"

"The ASAP worker that I have seen many times has improved my financial situation through benefit awards, tax issues, called relevant departments on my behalf. I feel my life is coming back on track with the support of my ASAP worker"

DAVID'S STORY

David, an Army veteran who suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), was referred to ASAP by a local veterans' charity for assistance in appealing the decision disallowing him Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

With support and representation from ASAP, David's appeal was successful, gaining him over £10,000 and entitlement in other areas. ASAP helped the relative who cared for David claim a significant backdated payment of Carer's Allowance. ASAP continues to work with David to help with other problems and he has gone on to recommend us to many of his friends so they too can benefit from our support.

JIM'S STORY

Jim, a veteran, suffers from mental health problems and alcohol dependency. An Employment Support Allowance (ESA) assessment found him fit for work, ending his benefit entitlement. He resorted to living off friends and accessing foodbanks, finally approaching his local CAB.

ASAP dealt with DWP on Jim's behalf, and after many stressful months an ESA appeal reversed the decision. The process was so distressing for Jim that he considered ending his life. As Jim's conditions have worsened a second appeal is pending; ASAP is working with Police Scotland Veterans Champion and Jim's social workers to provide written evidence. Meanwhile, we have ensured that Jim has the other benefits he is entitled to.

ASAP helped Jim onto a Poppy Break - "it was amazing just what I needed", and referred him to Combat Stress. As Jim feels isolated living alone, ASAP helped him complete an application for veteran's accommodation. Jim said, "If it wasn't for ASAP I would not be alive, you guys are the best."

2015

We supported 2471 clients with 10343 issues

Service started in Argyll and Bute.

Continued to develop outreach services and partnerships with a range of organisations.





"In 2010, I was involved in the design and implementation of the Armed Services Advice Project in Lanarkshire. Poppyscotland's vision and aspirations of the benefits that a partnership with CAS and community

based CABs, could make a real difference to the lives of the Armed Forces community were welcomed and embraced by the CAB service.

We now have five years of evidence of need and demand for the service, as well as its highly successful outcomes.

ASAP has developed the CABs 'civvy' holistic service for the benefit of the Armed Forces community by extending its reach and linkages into working partnerships which encompass the wide range of veterans' services and charities such as SSAFA; VWS; Legion Scotland, Combat Stress; Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee and many more....

Today, through CAB/ASAP, the Armed Forces community has a single gateway to help with issues at every stage of their life including, in-service, during their transitional/ resettlement phase and as veterans."

Audrey Cuthbertson,
ASAP adviser, Lanarkshire area

Get in touch

Phone: helpline **0808 800 1007**. Lines are open from 9am until 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Email: ASAP@citizensadvice.org.uk

Further information: www.cas.org.uk and www.asapadvice.org.uk

Ask us to call you: fill in the form on either of the above websites and an adviser will give you a ring back between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Call into your local citizens advice bureau: find it in the phone book or using www.cas.org.uk

Face to face advice from ASAP Regional Support officers is available in:

- Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire
- Argyll and Bute
- Edinburgh and Lothians
- Fife
- Forth Valley
- Inverness, Moray and Nairn
- Lanarkshire
- Renfrewshire
- Stirlingshire
- Tayside

These regions were chosen on the basis of need and care was taken not to overlap with existing services run by other organisations in other areas.

ASAP's current funders are:

