

Sustainable Debt Advice Project Pilot

Final Evaluation

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Sustainable Debt Advice Project Pilot – Final Evaluation - Executive Summary

Introduction and background to the evaluation

1. AdviceUK, in partnership with Payplan and ACM Solutions¹, has conducted a pilot to test the viability of a sustainable debt advice model. The Sustainable Debt Advice Project (SDAP) set out to explore whether alternative sources of funding could be found for free debt advice by seeking to establish whether or not the Fair Share creditor contribution model was a viable model for sustainable funding of the free debt advice sector.² It also aimed to improve the sustainability of debt repayments, benefiting both clients and creditors. The project was led by AdviceUK, in partnership with Payplan, with funding from Friends Provident Foundation.
2. The initial rationale for the project emerged through challenges facing the free debt advice sector in meeting demand. Increasingly, the sector did not have the capacity to meet current demand and this situation was deteriorating as demand increased and capacity reduced due to the cuts in public sector funding. It was felt that the free debt advice sector needed to develop alternative sources of funding if it was to have the capacity to meet the demand for debt advice. SDAP was developed as one of several potential ways in which new and sustainable funding and debt advice could be provided. The organisations behind the project, although hopeful that it would be successful, also accepted that it was important to explore the feasibility of the model to ascertain if it was suitable for rolling out across the free debt advice sector. However, if it was to be proved unviable, then it was still seen as being of benefit to the sector through the learning that would be generated by the pilot.
3. The SDAP pilot formally began preparatory work in Autumn 2011 and the pilot ran between the start of April 2012 and the end of March 2013.

How does SDAP work?

4. The SDAP model has two key mechanisms:
 - Low offer or token payments to multiple creditors through a single payment via the Paylink disbursement system (this is set up and administered by the pilot debt advice agencies on behalf of their clients)
 - A fast track process for referring clients to Payplan for Debt Management Plans (DMP)/Individual Voluntary Agreements (IVA) (see glossary at appendix 1 for explanation of terms)
5. In addition, SDAP provided an enhanced range of services to clients, including a streamlined application process for a basic bank account and a prepayment card for clients who do not have or do not wish to open a bank account.

¹ Payplan is a trading name of Totemic Limited. Payplan provides free debt management plans (DMPs), Individual Voluntary Agreements (IVA) and debt advice. You can find out more by visiting: <http://www.payplan.com>. Throughout this report we refer to two types of support provided by Payplan via the SDAP model – the first is referrals from the participating pilot agencies to Payplan to set up DMPs and IVAs. The second is the participating pilot agencies setting up and administering multiple low offer or token payments via a system called Paylink. This system is owned and provided by Payplan for use by debt advice agencies working with the SDAP model. ACM Solutions supplies and supports the AdvicePro case management system. ACM Solutions played an important part in adapting and supporting the AdvicePro part of the SDAP solution.

² Under a Fair Share model, a debt advice agency receives a fee income from contributions from creditors to whom debt payments by clients are distributed.

6. The SDAP was delivered in partnership with nine free to client debt advice agencies, representing a mix in terms of clients and size.

Evaluation aims

7. The evaluation of the SDAP pilot has been conducted in two waves – an interim and a final evaluation. The interim evaluation took place mid-way through the pilot and reported in August 2012. The final evaluation builds on this interim evaluation and has been conducted at the end of the pilot. The aims of the final evaluation were as follows:
 - Identify the impact of SDAP on advice agencies, advisers, clients and creditors
 - Assess the financial, practical and ethical viability of the model
 - Indicate whether there is potential to roll-out the model to other advice agencies/the wider free debt advice sector
 - Identify any learning from the pilot which can inform the roll-out of SDAP and its future operation

Approach to the evaluation

8. The evaluation has included both qualitative and quantitative evaluation techniques. At the heart of the evaluation has been the involvement of the pilot agencies and their advisers, clients, AdviceUK staff and other stakeholders including creditor representatives. The evaluation methods included:
 - Reviewing monitoring data collected via the pilot, including data collected via AdvicePro, Paylink and Payplan (the case management and disbursement systems) and through regular monitoring surveys conducted with pilot agencies
 - Financial modelling of debt repayment cases administered through Paylink (for low offer or token payments) and Payplan (for Debt Management Plans/IVAs referred to Payplan) to identify the potential Fair Share income generated for agencies and Payplan
 - A telephone survey of 109 clients, including existing clients, lapsed clients and clients that were referred to Paylink or Payplan but never began making payments
 - In-depth qualitative telephone interviews with 12 clients (9 existing clients, 2 lapsed clients and one that did not take up the option to set up a payment arrangement with SDAP)
 - In-depth qualitative telephone and face to face interviews with project leads in each of the nine pilot agencies
 - Interviews or focus groups with advisers in five of the nine agencies (Advice NI, BDAC, Money Advice Plymouth, Money Advice Plus Services, Luton Rights)³
 - 11 in-depth qualitative telephone interviews with stakeholders in the debt advice and creditor sectors (please see appendix 2 for list of stakeholders interviewed)
 - An interview with the AdviceUK project manager delivering the SDAP pilot

³ Advisers in other agencies were not interviewed due to their size where in most cases the project lead was also the main, or one of the main advisers, working on the SDAP pilot.

Summary of key findings

9. Overall, 470 clients across the nine pilot agencies have benefited from the SDAP model. This amounts to total debt of over £6 million and nearly £35,000 a month surplus income⁴ across all clients that have been successfully referred. This breaks down as follows:
- Referrals to Paylink (for low offer or token payments to multiple creditors): 308 clients / £2,895,000 debt / £9,334 monthly surplus income (49 cases have also been referred since January 2013 and are not distributing as yet but in time may become active)
 - Referrals direct to Payplan (for DMPs/IVAs): 162 clients / £3,171,000 debt / £25,500 monthly surplus (there are also 52 cases which have been referred since January 2013 and are in the process of being set-up)
10. Overall, the evidence presents a mixed picture about the success of the SDAP pilot and model. The positives are as follows:
- SDAP has generated commitment and interest amongst the debt advice and creditor sectors
 - There is evidence that clients have managed debts effectively and have improved their wellbeing from accessing SDAP repayment arrangements
 - SDAP has the potential to be practically and financially viable for agencies, AdviceUK (the sector could generate income of up to £94,000 per annum) and Payplan (which could generate income after costs of up to £360,000 over a three year period)⁵. However, this potential has yet to be realised due to the current low volume of successful referrals (although with technological and process improvements some of this potential could be realised)
 - There is no evidence that SDAP affects the independence of advice provided to clients
11. However, the negatives from the pilot are as follows:
- The volume of referrals to both Paylink (the low offer or token payments disbursement system) and to Payplan for DMPs and IVAs is low in absolute terms and as a proportion of overall caseloads (5% of cases have been successfully set up on Paylink or as a DMP/IVA)
 - SDAP is unlikely to provide a significant funding stream to the free debt advice sector or an individual agency based on the current proportion of referrals. For example, projections suggest that, depending on the size of the agency, their client mix and the number of referrals, income to agencies varies from between £0 to £16,500 per annum
 - There is evidence that the SDAP pilot has increased the workload on advisers and agencies, especially when referring and managing cases through Paylink

⁴ Surplus income is income over that required to cover the costs of living. It is a useful indicator of the potential amount of debt that can be repaid.

⁵ Payplan have stated that their motivation for involvement with SDAP is not commercial and that as long as the project covers its costs they remain committed. The potential income of £360,000 over three years does not include the cost of Payplan staff to support the project and any potential investment Payplan may make to improve the technology behind SDAP. Payplan has also stated that it is open to an on-going discussion about the level of payment to AdviceUK and the agencies, with regular reviews to ensure a reasonable distribution of income back to the agencies.

(although it is possible that some adviser time has been saved as a result of the streamlined process for making DMP and IVA referrals to Payplan)

- Underlying all this there have been problems in the technological implementation of the pilot with a lack of integration between AdvicePro (the case management system) and Paylink and Payplan systems (respectively the low offer or token payments and DMP/IVA disbursement systems) which is acting as a barrier to making referrals and managing cases
- It is also unclear at this stage, due to the limited evidence available, whether SDAP-based repayments are more sustained than they would otherwise be, to the benefit of both creditors and clients. It is also unclear whether there is a positive financial impact for creditors.

What should the SDAP pilot do next?

12. Based on the key findings of this evaluation highlighted above it is inconclusive as to whether the pilot should be rolled out beyond the pilot agencies. On one hand, the concept of the model is broadly supported by the debt advice and creditor sectors, it has helped clients that have made repayments through SDAP and there is potential for the model to generate income and increased referrals over time. On the other hand, the existing level of referrals and potential income to agencies and the sector is low, while the existing Paylink system and processes appear to increase the workload on agencies.
13. A major barrier to the success of the pilot and model has been technological problems. If these technological issues were resolved by integrating AdvicePro, the Paylink and Payplan disbursement systems and improving the Paylink system itself, SDAP could be a valuable addition to the free debt advice sector. If these systems were improved it is possible that more successful referrals would be made, while the administrative burden placed on the debt advice agencies could be reduced. However, it is also worth noting that even if technological improvements were made, given the typical client base of many free debt advice agencies, there may never be a substantial volume of referrals, especially to DMPs or IVAs. This is because many clients will not have the appropriate level of surplus income to meet the criteria for referral to a DMP or IVA. Equally, one of the main reasons cited by agencies for not referring clients to either Paylink or Payplan is that clients preferred alternative debt management strategies, including self-help, liaising with creditors directly and debt relief orders. However, the client mix at many agencies could be well suited to increased referrals to Paylink to make low offers or token payments, if the technology made this easier to do.
14. Ultimately, AdviceUK, Payplan and ACM Solutions need to make a decision as to whether they are prepared to invest the time and money in addressing the technological issues surrounding SDAP to help realise its potential. Consequently, if AdviceUK and Payplan are prepared to invest in the model, this evaluation makes the following recommendations about the rollout of SDAP:
 - Until technological improvements are made and embedded, any initial rollout should be gradual and subtle, targeting key debt advice agencies rather than being actively launched to the wider debt advice sector
 - Fundamental to the success of any rollout is investment in the technology behind the model. This involves investment in two key areas:
 - Developing a new Paylink system which makes it easier to set up and manage cases

- Integrating Paylink and Payplan systems with the AdvicePro case management system to reduce duplication, ensure all appropriate information is submitted as part of a referral and allow for the effective monitoring of cases by the agency once it has referred clients to Paylink or Payplan
- The development of this new technology and systems should actively involve the pilot agencies to ensure that the new systems maximise their full potential
- Develop systems, branding and materials that create a seamless offer and experience for clients moving between their advice agency and Payplan to help reduce drop-outs
- Consider initially rolling out the Payplan DMP/IVA referral option separately from the Paylink low offer or token payments option, while the latter system is being developed. It may be several months if not longer until a new Paylink system is developed and AdviceUK/Payplan may not wish to wait that long to progress the rollout of the model. However, there is a danger that if Paylink, as it currently stands, is rolled out that it could undermine the whole project and concept behind SDAP⁶
- Remove the secondary benefits of the pre-paid MasterCard and streamlined access to a basic bank account from the model. These were not considered important and were not utilised in the pilot
- Explore developing a partnership with Citizens Advice to progress and promote the model together within both the debt advice and creditor sectors. As part of this, explore whether SDAP can be developed to be delivered with other organisations' systems and processes, not just AdvicePro and Payplan, so as to allow agencies flexibility in signing up to the model

⁶ However, removing Paylink from the model should only be seen as a short term solution. A low offer or token payments to multiple creditors disbursement system (i.e. Paylink) is an important part of the SDAP model and the value of SDAP in the future relies on an effective low offer or token payments system being available.

**Sustainable Debt Advice
Project Pilot – Final
Evaluation**

Main Report

Sustainable Debt Advice Project Pilot – Final Evaluation

Main Report

Section 1: Introduction

Introduction and background to the evaluation

- 1.1 AdviceUK, in partnership with Payplan and ACM Solutions⁷, has conducted a pilot to test the viability of a sustainable debt advice model. The Sustainable Debt Advice Project (SDAP) set out to explore whether alternative sources of funding could be found for free debt advice by seeking to establish whether or not the Fair Share creditor contribution model was a viable model for sustainable funding of the free debt advice sector.⁸ It also aimed to improve the sustainability of debt repayments, benefiting both clients and creditors. The project was led by AdviceUK, in partnership with Payplan, with funding from Friends Provident Foundation.
- 1.2 The initial rationale for the project emerged through challenges facing the free debt advice sector in meeting demand. Increasingly, the sector did not have the capacity to meet current demand and this situation was deteriorating as demand increased and capacity reduced due to the cuts in public sector funding. It was felt that the free debt advice sector needed to develop alternative sources of funding if it was to have the capacity to meet the demand for debt advice. SDAP was developed as one of several potential ways in which new and sustainable funding and debt advice could be provided. The organisations behind the project, although hopeful that it would be successful, also accepted that it was important to explore the feasibility of the model to ascertain if it was suitable for rolling out across the free debt advice sector. However, if it was to be proved unviable, then it was still seen as being of benefit to the sector through the learning that would be generated by the pilot.
- 1.3 The SDAP pilot formally began preparatory work in Autumn 2011 and the pilot ran between the start of April 2012 and the end of March 2013.

Evaluation aims

- 1.4 The evaluation of the SDAP pilot has been conducted in two waves – an interim and a final evaluation. The interim evaluation took place mid-way through the pilot and reported in August 2012. The final evaluation builds on this interim evaluation and has been conducted at the end of the pilot. The aims of the final evaluation were as follows:

⁷ Payplan is a trading name of Totemic Limited. Payplan provides free debt management plans (DMPs), Individual Voluntary Agreements (IVA) and debt advice. You can find out more by visiting: <http://www.payplan.com>. Throughout this report we refer to two types of support provided by Payplan via the SDAP model – the first is referrals from the participating pilot agencies to Payplan to set up DMPs and IVAs. The second is the participating pilot agencies setting up and administering multiple low offer or token payments via a system called Paylink. This system is owned and provided by Payplan for use by debt advice agencies working with the SDAP model. ACM Solutions supplies and supports the AdvicePro case management system. ACM Solutions played an important part in adapting and supporting the AdvicePro part of the SDAP solution.

⁸ Under a Fair Share model, a debt advice agency receives a fee income from contributions from creditors to whom debt payments by clients are distributed.

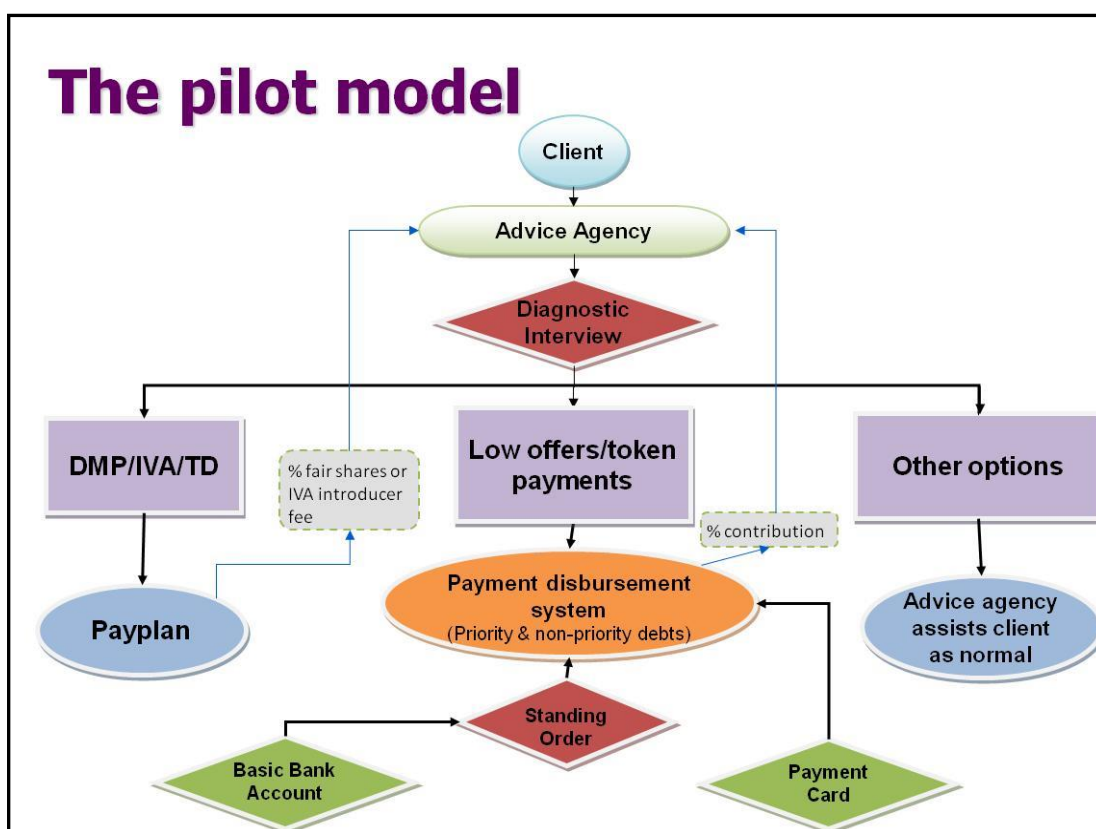
- Identify the impact of SDAP on advice agencies, advisers, clients and creditors
- Assess the financial, practical and ethical viability of the model
- Indicate whether there is potential to roll-out the model to other advice agencies/the wider free debt advice sector
- Identify any learning from the pilot which can inform the roll-out of SDAP and its future operation

How does SDAP work?

1.5 The SDAP model has two key mechanisms (the SDAP process is illustrated in figure 1):

- Low offer or token payments to multiple creditors through a single payment via the Paylink disbursement system (this is set up and administered by the pilot debt advice agencies on behalf of their clients)
- A fast track process for referring clients to Payplan for Debt Management Plans (DMP)/Individual Voluntary Agreements (IVA) (see glossary at appendix 1 for explanation of terms)

Figure 1: SDAP process



1.6 In addition, SDAP provided an enhanced range of services to clients, including a streamlined application process for a basic bank account and a prepayment card for clients who do not have or do not wish to open a bank account.

1.7 There were nine debt advice agencies involved in the pilot, which represented a mix of size in terms of volume of clients and number of advisers, a mix of delivery mechanisms (face to face, telephone and web advice) and a mix of geography and client profiles. The nine agencies were:

- Advice NI
- Bristol Debt Advice Centre
- The Crosby Community Association
- Fair Money Advice
- Money Advice Plymouth
- Luton Rights Ltd
- Money Advice Plus Services
- Two Pennies Money Advice
- West View Advice & Resource Centre Ltd

1.8 SDAP had a number of intended outcomes for clients, agencies and creditors:

For clients:

- A more sustainable means of making low offer and token payments
- Less likely that the client will need to return to the agency
- Easy set-up of a basic bank account, with standing order for a single monthly payment and expanding the range of services offered to clients
- Potential improvements in the personal circumstances of clients as a result of an improved debt position e.g. physical and mental health and wellbeing

For Agencies:

- Reduction of workload for DMPs and IVAs, with cases handed over to Payplan
- More income for the agency may be generated, through the Fair Share model (but not during the pilot phase)

For Creditors:

- Improved sustainability of debt repayments
- Fewer payments to process due to the use of Payplan's streamlined payment disbursement system

Approach to the evaluation

1.9 The SDAP pilot developed a series of success measures to help evaluate its success. These measures cover financial, practical and ethical issues for clients, agencies, creditors and other stakeholders. The success measures have been translated into key evaluation questions answered throughout this report:

- Has the project delivered against its intended outputs?
- Has the project been effectively managed?
- Has the project been effectively implemented?
- Is SDAP financially sustainable for agencies and the wider free debt advice sector?
- Is SDAP financially (and practically) sustainable for AdviceUK?
- Is SDAP commercially viable for Payplan?
- Has SDAP been practical and financially beneficial for creditors?
- Does SDAP provide new and sustainable debt management options for clients?

- Does participating in SDAP have a positive impact on clients' physical and emotional health and wellbeing?
- Does SDAP work in practice for advisers, allowing them to provide new options for clients while not increasing their workload?
- Does SDAP work in practice for the debt advice agencies overall, allowing them to provide new options for clients while not increasing their workload?
- Can SDAP be rolled out to the rest of the free-to-client debt advice sector, being easily adapted and implemented in different environments e.g. with IT systems other than AdvicePro?
- Has the Fair Share net been extended, with additional creditors added to the Payplan disbursement system?
- Is SDAP being administered and promoted ethically by agencies, with advice to clients not compromised and agencies continuing to provide independent and objective advice not influenced by the potential Fair Share opportunities?
- Has SDAP reached all types of clients, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or disability?
- Should SDAP be rolled out to other advice agencies?

1.10 The evaluation has included both qualitative and quantitative evaluation techniques. At the heart of the evaluation has been the involvement of the pilot agencies and their advisers, clients, AdviceUK staff and other stakeholders including creditor representatives. The evaluation methods included:

- Reviewing monitoring data collected via the pilot, including data collected via AdvicePro, Paylink and Payplan (the case management and disbursement systems) and through regular monitoring surveys conducted with pilot agencies
- Financial modelling of debt repayment cases administered through Paylink (for low offer or token payments) and Payplan (for Debt Management Plans/IVAs referred to Payplan) to identify the potential Fair Share income generated for agencies and Payplan
- A telephone survey of 109 clients, including existing clients, lapsed clients and clients that were referred to Paylink or Payplan but never began making payments (see appendices for copies of the questionnaire)
- In-depth qualitative telephone interviews with 12 clients (9 existing clients, 2 lapsed clients and one that did not take up the option to set up a payment arrangement with SDAP)
- In-depth qualitative telephone and face to face interviews with project leads in each of the nine pilot agencies
- Interviews or focus groups with advisers in five of the nine agencies (Advice NI, BDAC, Money Advice Plymouth, Money Advice Plus Services, Luton Rights)⁹
- 11 in-depth qualitative telephone interviews with stakeholders in the debt advice and creditor sectors (please see appendices for list of stakeholders interviewed)
- An interview with the AdviceUK project manager delivering the SDAP pilot

1.11 Discussion guides and questionnaires were developed to ensure a consistent and appropriate line of questioning across the different interviews and to ensure full

⁹ Advisers in other agencies were not interviewed due to their size where in most cases the project lead was also the main or one of the main advisers working on the SDAP pilot.

coverage of the aims and objectives of the evaluation (these are included in the appendices to this report).

Reporting

1.12 The findings from the qualitative and quantitative elements of the evaluation are integrated within the report. The qualitative interviews were recorded. These recordings were listened back to, and used to conduct a thematic analysis to identify key themes and issues emerging from the evaluation. Quotes have been used to provide evidence and bring life to the findings.

1.13 The rest of the report is divided into the following three sections:

- Section 2: Project outputs and process
- Section 3: Project impacts and issues
- Section 4: Summary and concluding points

Section 2: Project outputs and process

Key findings/issues:

- Over 450 clients, with a total debt of over £6 million and nearly £35,000 a month surplus income have been successfully referred to Paylink and Payplan
- Agencies successfully referred relatively low volumes to Paylink or Payplan
- In both absolute and relative terms the number of successful referrals raises questions about the future impact of the SDAP model
- There is scope that the volume of referrals could increase over time once processes are embedded and improved, although there may be a natural ceiling limiting the number of referrals that can be made
- The potential 'market' of eligible clients for referral could be about double that currently referred by agencies to Paylink and five times that currently referred to Payplan
- The conversion rate of referrals to the successful distribution of payments seems to be in line with industry expectations, suggesting that SDAP has established effective referral mechanisms
- There is scope for the referral process to Payplan to be further enhanced which may result in an even higher conversion rate and more successful referrals
- There has been little to no take up of the pre-paid MasterCard offer and streamlined access to a basic bank account through Barclays
- The project has been effectively managed and agencies felt well supported by AdviceUK and Payplan
- The technological implementation of the model has not gone to plan, with a consequent impact on the overall effectiveness of the pilot and volume of referrals

Introduction

- 2.1 This section presents the project outputs and discusses the processes implemented to deliver the pilot.
- 2.2 The key evaluation questions answered by this section are:
- Has the project delivered against its intended outputs?
 - Has the project been effectively managed?
 - Has the project been effectively implemented?

Has the project delivered against its intended outputs?

Over 450 clients, with a total debt of over £6 million and nearly £35,000 a month surplus income have been successfully referred to Paylink and Payplan¹⁰

2.3 The headline statistics show that 470 clients across the nine pilot agencies have benefited from the SDAP model. This amounts to total debt of over £6 million and nearly £35,000 a month surplus income across all clients that have been successfully referred and payment arrangements established. This breaks down as follows:

- Referrals to Paylink (for low offer or token payments to multiple creditors): 308 clients / £2,895,000 debt / £9,334 monthly surplus income
- Referrals direct to Payplan (for DMPs/IVAs): 162 clients / £3,171,000 debt / £25,500 monthly surplus

Agencies successfully referred relatively low volumes to Paylink or Payplan

2.4 In total, 308 cases have been successfully referred to Paylink and have distributed payments to creditors (49 cases have also been referred since January 2013 and are not distributing as yet but in time may become active). This represents 3% of the overall caseload of participating agencies.

2.5 In terms of referrals to Payplan for DMP/IVAs, a total of 162 successful referrals have been made. This represents 2% of the overall caseload of participating agencies. There were also 25 DMP/IVA cases which are no longer distributing (this could be due to change of circumstances of the client) and 52 cases which have been referred since January 2013 and are in the process of being set-up.

2.6 The greatest number of cases has come from a single agency – Advice NI. This is partly a function of Advice NI having the largest caseload and also a function of Advice NI being commissioned by the Northern Irish Assembly to deliver a very similar model in partnership with Payplan. This commission allowed Advice NI to dedicate more resources to the pilot and place greater emphasis on the pilot than some agencies were able to, as well as develop a close working relationship with Payplan. Therefore, Advice NI represents a potential good practice example to other agencies and an example of the level of referrals that other agencies could make. However, even in light of this, only a small proportion of Advice NI's caseload is being referred to Paylink or Payplan.

2.7 It is also worth noting that one of the pilot agencies – Fair Money Advice – did not make any referrals. One of the reasons cited for this, explored later in this report, is that some ethnic minority clients preferred self-help debt strategies and setting up payments directly with creditors.

¹⁰ By successfully referred, we mean where a payment arrangement has been established and payments made. Surplus income is income over that required to cover the costs of living. It is a useful indicator of the potential amount of debt that can be repaid.

Figure 2: Client volumes and Paylink/Payplan cases by agency

Agency Name	Cases	Paylink referrals (distributing) ¹¹	Payplan DMP/IVA Active cases ¹²	
	No. cases opened since 1/5/2012	Total no. of cases (% of overall caseload)	Total no. of active cases (DMP) (% of overall caseload)	Total no. of active cases (IVA) (% of overall caseload)
Advice NI	4643	139 (3%)	76 (2%)	49 (1%)
Bristol Debt Advice Centre	2192	60 (3%)	14 (1%)	4 (0%)
The Crosby Community Association	306	34 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Fair Money Advice	1087	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Luton Rights	898	14 (2%)	1 (0%)	1 (0%)
Money Advice Plymouth	882	5 (1%)	5 (1%)	9 (1%)
Money Advice Plus Services	895	21 (2%)	1 (0%)	0 (0%)
Two Pennies Money Advice	290	23 (8%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)
West View Advice and Resource Centre Ltd	492	12 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Totals	11685	308 (3%)	99 (1%)	63 (1%)

In both absolute and relative terms the number of successful referrals raises questions about the future impact of the SDAP model

2.8 Several stakeholders and pilot agencies were concerned that the pilot has not generated sufficient volumes to justify its roll-out to other advice agencies. However, other stakeholders and agencies felt that even if the model has a positive contribution to a small number of clients that it is of value to the debt advice sector:

‘I think the number of referrals has been disappointing . . . I think it is difficult to say the project has been a success when the number of referrals is so small. I don’t think it means they shouldn’t roll it out, but if they do they will need to think very carefully about it.’ Stakeholder

‘There’s no doubt that the number of clients referred to Paylink and Payplan is quite low . . . but in my view if this approach benefits even just one client then it’s a success . . . that’s one better outcome for a client. So if any agency is prepared to offer the option and if it is made available by Payplan and AdviceUK then it’s got to be a good thing.’ Stakeholder

¹¹ This refers to cases which are currently distributing or have distributed at some point over the pilot period. There are a further 49 cases which have been referred since January 2013 that are not yet currently distributing and in time may become active cases.

¹² This refers to cases which are currently distributing. There were a total of 25 cases which are no longer distributing (this could be due to change of circumstances of the client), 52 which have been referred since January 2013 and are in the process of being set-up and a further 124 which were not successful referrals. This represents a conversion rate, in line with industry expectations, of 60% of referrals to successful set up of a DMP/IVA (based on combining those cases currently distributing and previously distributing divided by all cases (excluding those that are under three months old and still being processed so the outcome is not yet known)).

There is scope that the volume of referrals could increase over time once processes are embedded and improved, although there may be a natural ceiling limiting the number of referrals that can be made

2.9 The reasons for the low volumes vary from agency to agency. A fuller account of these reasons is covered throughout this report. In summary, most of the reasons could be managed or overcome in time and with improved processes:

- Some clients have not heard of Payplan or Paylink and are uncomfortable being referred to a 'debt management' company and would rather have their case managed by the agency
- A slow start at the beginning of the pilot from some agencies, while they got used to the systems and the model
- Some agencies went through structural changes outside of this pilot, which affected the resources they could dedicate to the pilot
- Some advisers were reluctant to promote the model (although it was suggested by some advisers that this was because the Paylink system was not fit for purpose)
- Some advisers and agencies found administration around Paylink time consuming
- Some advisers and agencies were reluctant to refer to Payplan due to a concern that the agency will lose control of the case

2.10 Some of the agencies felt that the model would become more popular over time once they, their advisers and clients became more familiar with it:

'I don't think we would do lots more referrals than we have, but we would definitely do more . . . we've had problems getting used to the system and we've had lots of staff changes . . . once it becomes the norm . . . once clients have greater awareness and faith in it . . . then I'm sure we'd refer more clients.' Agency

2.11 However, one of the main reasons cited by agencies for not referring clients is that clients preferred alternative debt management strategies, including self-help, liaising with creditors directly and debt relief orders. And specifically in terms of referrals to Payplan for DMP/IVAs, agencies said that most of their clients did not fit the criteria for such a debt management strategy:

'I do offer clients the opportunity to use Paylink, but only if they have lots of creditors . . . if they have just three or four then it's easier to get them to deal with the creditors directly.' Adviser

'We offer it to every suitable client . . . but for some it just isn't right for them . . . most of our clients prefer a debt relief order . . . if they have a choice to pay off their debts in one hit they are going to take it.' Agency

'The problem for us is that very few of our clients will ever be suitable for a DMP or IVA. They just don't have the disposable income for it. It is the nature of the clients we see. They are much more likely to be suitable for a

token offer and making payments through Paylink, but even then that might not be right for them.' Agency

The potential 'market' of eligible clients for referral could be about double that currently referred by agencies to Paylink and five times that currently referred to Payplan

- 2.12 The above points suggest that SDAP may be a niche offer, suitable for only a minority of clients. Even if this is true, the potential size of this niche is greater than the current level of successful referrals, suggesting there is unrealised potential which may become realised over time and through improvements to processes and systems. Based on an analysis of all cases opened by the pilot agencies throughout the life of the pilot, there were at least 346 clients that set up token offer or pro rata payments directly with creditors without using Paylink. This suggests that if agencies referred all these cases to Paylink, the proportion of referrals to Paylink could more than double.
- 2.13 Similarly, some 1,171 cases could have been eligible for referral to a DMP or IVA. This information is taken from financial statements made by agencies in AdvicePro and the true number could be higher, as many of the other cases may never have been developed with the client into a full financial statement. However, we should also note that many clients may effectively be ineligible as they may require face to face support and would not cope with telephone support provided by Payplan. Nonetheless, the suggestion is that some 10% of all cases could be eligible for referral to a DMP/IVA which is a fivefold increase in the number of successful referrals made during the life of the pilot. If these figures were realised it would have a notable effect on the financial viability of SDAP for agencies, the sector and Payplan.

The conversion rate of referrals to the successful distribution of payments seems to be in line with industry expectations, suggesting that SDAP has established effective referral mechanisms

- 2.14 Overall, 370 cases were referred to Paylink (excluding cases referred since January 2013 and are still in the process of being set-up) with 308 successfully distributing. This equates to a successful referral conversation rate of 83%. There are no benchmarks to compare against¹³, although qualitative evidence from agencies and clients (see section 3) suggests that the alternative approach which involves the client setting up payments directly with creditors themselves can sometimes result in clients failing to set up payment arrangements, especially where multiple creditors are involved.
- 2.15 In terms of referrals to Payplan for DMP/IVAs, a total of 162 successful referrals have been made. There were also 25 DMP/IVA cases which are no longer distributing (this could be due to a change of circumstances of the client) and a further 124 which were not successful referrals. This represents a conversion rate of 60% of referrals to successful set up of a DMP/IVA (based on combining those cases currently distributing and previously distributing divided by all cases (excluding those that are under three months old and still being processed so the outcome is not yet known)). Although there are no specific figures available to compare against, Payplan state

¹³ The only way to accurately compare the conversion rate of cases set up through Paylink would be to conduct a controlled cohort study with clients that were eligible for Paylink, but opted to set-up payments themselves directly with creditors (this would be required as agencies do not tend to keep detailed records about the success of self-help cases). This would require a substantial investment in research which was beyond the scope of this evaluation and the available budget.

that these conversion rates are in line with expectations and the conversion rates they experience through other referral mechanisms.

There is scope for the referral process to Payplan to be further enhanced which may result in an even higher conversion rate and more successful referrals

2.16 Currently, some 60% of referrals to Payplan result in the successful set-up of a DMP or IVA. Agencies and Payplan suggest this could be higher if processes are enhanced. This could involve a combination of:

- Training, especially having agency advisers conducting joint training with Payplan advisers, to help ensure greater synergy in the process for determining the eligibility of a client and setting up a case
- Developing seamless handover mechanisms (for example, the agency passing the client directly on to Payplan while the client is in the company of the agency adviser)
- Agencies providing more information to Payplan at the point of referral (for example, the financial statement being sent across as part of the automated referral process. It is also believed that this could save time to avoid clients being asked financial questions twice first by the agency and then by Payplan)
- Improved technology to facilitate a seamless handover and improved referral and case monitoring processes
- Developing joint branding and presenting the referral over to Payplan as being part of the same offer to the client to avoid the client feeling as though they are just being passed over to a different organisation

‘The referral process works quite well, but it could definitely be improved . . . I think there’s more we could do to learn about each other’s processes (Agency and Payplan) . . . we’ve started calling Payplan while we are on the phone or have the client with us . . . that way you can guarantee that the client is in contact with Payplan . . . I also don’t understand why Payplan don’t use the financial statement . . . we spend lots of time putting that together and then Payplan just re-do it and sometimes do it differently . . . if we had an agreed approach it would save us all time and help ensure that less cases are declined . . .’ Agency

‘You’ve got to show clients that this is all part of the same thing . . . if clients feel that you are just passing them over to an organisation they don’t know anything about, they will run a mile . . . Clients need to be told that this is a partnership and Payplan are a sister [or partner] organisation, part of the same solution for clients . . . it’s got to be something at the heart of any materials and advertising . . . it’s got to be packaged together.’ Agency

There has been little to no take up of the pre-paid MasterCard offer and streamlined access to a basic bank account through Barclays¹⁴

2.17 Two clients signed up to receive a pre-paid MasterCard, with no activity registered on those cards to date. Most agencies said that this was because they felt the card did not suit their clients and that some clients were being put off by the fees associated with the pre-paid MasterCard:

‘I’m just not sure about it [the pre-paid MasterCard] . . . we did look at it, but we just felt it wasn’t right for our clients . . . it’s not something we think they would use and the charges are a bit of an issue . . . the idea of it is fine, but I’m just not sure it’s right for us.’ Agency

‘We do offer it to our clients, but most of them just aren’t interested in it . . . I think they’re put off by the charges and some of them just don’t really understand it . . . it’s a good option to have, but I think there will be limited take up.’ Agency

2.18 No clients made use of the streamlined access to a basic bank account through Barclays. Agencies and advisers said this was because in most cases clients already had bank accounts and if they did not it was sufficiently straightforward to support clients to open an account:

‘We have offered it to our clients but there’s not been any demand . . . I can’t think of a client that hasn’t got a bank account already.’ Agency

‘We do have the occasional person who doesn’t have a bank account, but it’s just as easy to tell them where to go and what to do to set up an account . . . most banks are very helpful about this nowadays.’ Adviser

2.19 Several agencies and stakeholders considered the basic bank account and pre-paid MasterCard benefits as very much secondary:

‘This is all good and decent stuff, but I’m not sure how popular they will be and most importantly they are secondary to the key aims of this project, so I don’t see them having a role in determining the success of the pilot.’ Stakeholder

‘Access to a basic bank account is an important part of the money advisers’ toolkit and to help their clients manage their debts . . . but it’s fairly easy to set up a bank account and money advisers are skilled in helping their clients set up a bank account . . . and there is no way that agencies would be able to be set up an account as trusted intermediaries on behalf of the client and bank . . . so I’m not sure if including this streamlined access to a bank account has any place in the SDAP model . . .’ Stakeholder

¹⁴ Bristol Debt Advice Centre has also set up a relationship with the Bristol Credit Union under the SDAP pilot to refer clients to open accounts. However, as yet there have not been any referrals between the two organisations, although both remain committed to doing so.

Has the project been effectively managed?

The project has been effectively managed and agencies felt well supported by AdviceUK and Payplan

2.20 All participating agencies and stakeholders involved in the direct delivery of the project felt that the project had been managed effectively and that AdviceUK and Payplan had provided appropriate levels of support.

‘I don’t think you could have managed the project much better. AdviceUK and Payplan provided lots of support and help. There were times when we needed to help or to change things, but they responded to this and other requests for help . . .’ Agency

‘I think AdviceUK and Payplan have worked well together . . . they’re both credible organisations which helps the project . . . and from what I’ve seen they’ve genuinely worked in partnership to try to make the pilot a success.’ Stakeholder

Has the project been effectively implemented?

The technological implementation of the model has not gone to plan, with a consequent impact on the overall effectiveness of the pilot and volume of referrals

2.21 The implementation of the SDAP model was delayed by about four months due to practical and technological challenges.¹⁵ The project had always intended to establish electronic referral, data transfer and case management links between AdvicePro (the case management system managed by agencies) and Paylink (the low offer or token payments distribution system) and Payplan (the DMP/IVA distribution system). However, once the pilot process began it was considered too expensive and time consuming to deliver these technological aspects at the pilot stage of the project. In the end, a short-term solution was identified for the purposes of the pilot. However, several agencies felt that the lack of integration of the system was a barrier to making referrals, especially to Paylink. For some agencies and stakeholders, finding a permanent solution to integrate the systems and make the process straightforward for agencies will be key to the future success of the model:

‘The main challenge was about knowing what was required and could be done in the timescales and resources available . . . in the end it just wasn’t possible to build the systems needed, but we found a way around it that works for now . . . if this becomes something that is rolled out we will need to find a more permanent solution, which I’m sure we can, although the cost and time involved in building this will need to be considered when thinking about the feasibility of rolling out the pilot.’ Stakeholder

‘The technology has worked fine, and it’s easy, with just a press of a button to refer to Payplan . . . but if this project was extended it would definitely need to look at making the technology more streamlined . . . at the moment we have to enter case details in twice – to AdvicePro and Paylink. . . and when we refer to Payplan we have no simple way of

¹⁵ The pilot had originally planned to go live at the start of January, but in practice agency training commenced on the 9th March and the first live SDAP transaction was 23rd April 2012. The pilot was extended by 3 months to the end of March 2013 to make up for the delay.

knowing how the case is progressing . . . but I'm sure if this is rolled out then these issues would be resolved.' Agency¹⁶

'I think it's a real shame that they didn't get the technology working right . . . it's difficult to know how successful or effective SDAP could be as I don't think it was tested to its full potential . . . it definitely meant we were less keen to make referrals . . . I think they missed a trick there . . . but whatever they do I think they need to get the technology right before rolling it out.' Agency

2.22 Similarly, agencies and advisers raised concerns about the effectiveness of the Paylink system. Many saw the system as a barrier to making successful referrals and consider an improved system as essential to the successful rollout of the SDAP model:

'Paylink is just not a very good system . . . there are so many things wrong with it . . . the principle of it is good, but in practice it just takes so much getting used to and so much time to get a client successfully set up on it. Once you've got it working o.k, it is good, but it takes a lot of effort and time to get it working.' Agency

'As it stands, I don't think Paylink should be rolled out . . . you could end up alienating new agencies and upsetting your clients . . . it is just not reliable . . . but yes, if they improved the system . . . and integrated all the systems then I think it could work . . . but not now.' Adviser

¹⁶ In terms of referrals to Payplan, weekly reports are sent to the agencies. However, they are not entirely adequate as they do not update case status information in AdvicePro. So if an agency is using AdvicePro as its master case management system, they do not easily see what has happened to a case. In terms of Paylink cases, some agencies reported that it is difficult to find out if cases/issues need addressing and there is no automatic link between updating a case in Paylink and this updating the case in AdvicePro or vice versa.

Section 3: Project impacts and issues

Key findings/issues:

- SDAP has the potential to be financially viable for agencies, although it is unlikely to generate a significant new funding stream for the sector or individual agencies
- The SDAP model has the potential to strengthen positions with existing funders and help secure new sources of funding given the new and innovative service offer to clients
- There is potential for SDAP to be financially sustainable for AdviceUK through a management fee
- There is potential for SDAP to be commercially viable for Payplan, although it is important to note that Payplan are committed to SDAP as long as it covers their costs
- SDAP has been positively received by some creditors, although there is little evidence of it having a positive financial impact on creditors to date
- Providing a new debt management option for clients with low offer or token payments is considered an important feature of SDAP by stakeholders, advice agencies and advisers
- Clients suggest their repayment arrangements made through Paylink or via Payplan make it easy, affordable and are likely to be sustainable
- Paylink increases the likelihood of some clients setting up a debt repayment arrangement
- Some clients experienced problems accessing SDAP repayment arrangements
- SDAP is not suitable for most clients, with debt relief orders and self-help often the preferred debt strategies
- Clients overall seem to support and value their SDAP repayment arrangement
- Making debt repayments through SDAP has a positive impact on clients' health and wellbeing
- There is evidence that extra workload is being placed on advisers when they set-up and administer low offer or token payments to multiple creditors through Paylink (although it is possible that some adviser time has been saved as a result of the streamlined process for making DMP and IVA referrals to Payplan)
- Agencies are committed to the pilot and appreciate the potential benefits to clients, but they have concerns about the workload placed on their advisers and the long-term sustainability of the model
- For SDAP to be distinctive and add value, Paylink and Payplan systems need to be integrated with AdvicePro or at least easily integrated with other case management systems
- The Fair Share net has not been extended in the life of the pilot, but it should remain a long term aspiration of SDAP
- There is no evidence of agencies providing bias or unethical advice
- SDAP has reached all types of clients, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or disability, although non-white British clients are less well represented
- There is support for rollout of SDAP, pending improvements to the systems and technology

Introduction

3.1 This section focuses on identifying impacts and issues against the pilot success measures. These measures have been turned in to the following evaluation questions:

- Is SDAP financially sustainable for agencies and the wider free debt advice sector?
- Is SDAP financially (and practically) sustainable for AdviceUK?
- Is SDAP commercially viable for Payplan?
- Has SDAP been practical and financially beneficial for creditors?
- Does SDAP provide new and sustainable debt management options for clients?
- Does participating in SDAP have a positive impact on clients' physical and emotional health and wellbeing?
- Does SDAP work in practice for advisers, allowing them to provide new options for clients while not increasing their workload?
- Does SDAP work in practice for agencies, allowing them to provide new options for clients while not increasing their workload?
- Can SDAP be rolled out to the rest of the free-to-client debt advice sector, being easily adapted and implemented in different environments e.g. with IT systems other than AdvicePro?
- Has the Fair Share net been extended, with additional creditors added to the Payplan disbursement system?
- Is SDAP being administered and promoted ethically by agencies, with advice to clients not compromised and agencies continuing to provide independent and objective advice not influenced by the potential Fair Share opportunities?
- Has SDAP reached all types of clients, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or disability?
- Should SDAP be rolled out to other advice agencies?

Is SDAP financially sustainable for agencies and the wider free debt advice sector?

SDAP has the potential to be financially viable for agencies, although it is unlikely to generate a significant new funding stream for the sector or individual agencies

3.2 One of the main motivations for some agencies taking part in the pilot was to test whether a Fair Share model could generate a significant income stream during an uncertain funding climate. However, based on the pilot, most of the agencies doubt that the model will provide them with a notable income:

'One of our main reasons for participating was to see if we could generate income from the approach . . . we are always on the look out for new funding sources . . . I did not expect it to be huge, but in practice it looks like it is going to be peanuts to us . . . it doesn't mean it's not a good idea, it just means the funding incentive is less powerful.' Agency

- 3.3 Several stakeholders, in addition to the agencies, also considered the potential to generate a new funding model through redistribution of Fair Share income back to agencies as one of the main purposes of the pilot. Again, these stakeholders felt that the model had not demonstrated that it would represent a notable new funding stream for agencies:

‘For me, finding a new way to fund the debt advice sector is the biggest reason for the project . . . funding is increasingly uncertain, especially in the current economic climate and with cuts in public spending . . . we need to find a way to bridge the gap between a decrease in funds and an increase in demand . . . if this pilot can show that a Fair Share model can work and if it can develop the infrastructure to deliver this then it’s been successful.’ Stakeholder

‘The idea of it was good. Agencies have been providing referrals to debt management companies for years and so they deserve to get back some income from this . . . the problem is that it seems that the income is going to be quite small . . . if more clients are referred then it will look better, but at the current level the income is going to be minimal. Saying that, any income is better than none . . . so if the systems are in place then it would make sense for an agency to sign up.’ Stakeholder

- 3.4 AdviceUK and Payplan have developed a provisional payment model which would involve Payplan paying a fee for each DMP referred which lasts at least 6 months and a fee for each IVA referred that lasts at least 6 months. This payment would be paid to AdviceUK who would then distribute the funds to participating agencies, after subtracting a management fee.¹⁷ The following table shows, based on existing case loads and referrals rates, that this payment model could be worth over £94,000 per annum if it was rolled out in a first wave to key target agencies.¹⁸ However, it also shows that for individual agencies, income levels are small – ranging from zero to £16,500 per annum.¹⁹

¹⁷ Referrals to Paylink would not result in payment to agencies as Payplan states the operation of the system is at best cost neutral and there is not sufficient excess income to return to agencies.

¹⁸ This is based on a roll-out with all debt advice agencies that use the AdvicePro Money Module (which represents an annual caseload of c27,000 cases based on the top 60 agencies), alongside the existing pilot agencies (excluding Citizens Advice Bureaux). Obviously this annual income figure would increase if the rollout extended to other agencies including agencies not using AdvicePro and Citizens Advice Bureaux. Likewise, the income would decrease if only a proportion of agencies participated.

¹⁹ These figures do not take in to account any potential management fee subtracted by AdviceUK.

Figure 3: Potential income to agencies and sector²⁰

Agency	Potential income per annum ²¹
Advice NI	£16,500
Bristol Debt Advice Centre	£2,250
The Crosby Community Association	£0
Fair Money Advice	£0
Luton Rights	£270
Money Advice Plymouth	£2,700
Money Advice Plus Services	£50
Two Pennies Money Advice	£100
West View Advice and Resource Centre Ltd	£0
Sub-total (all pilot agencies)	£21,950
Roll-out to AdvicePro Money module users (total caseload c27,000 per annum)	£72,500
Grand total	£94,500

3.5 Ultimately, most agencies felt there would be limited financial benefits of SDAP to them. However, overall most felt that it was probably cost neutral and the lack of income would not put them off, especially if new systems are introduced to make SDAP more streamlined and Paylink more efficient:

‘Initially there’s definitely a cost to the agency, in staff time, in getting used to the systems . . . but I think once you get in to it, it’s o.k. The income is likely to be small but any income received should cover the cost of being part of SDAP. Overall, I think it just about covers itself.’ Agency

‘At the moment I’d probably say that it has increased our costs . . . we definitely spend more time on managing cases through Paylink than we did without it . . . but if we can get some money for making referrals for DMPs and if they improve Paylink to make it better to use and linked to AdvicePro then I think it could be worth it.’ Agency

The SDAP model has the potential to strengthen positions with existing funders and help secure new sources of funding given the new and innovative service offer to clients

3.6 Several agencies highlighted that being part of the pilot had improved their reputation with some existing or new funders and helped build partnerships and capacity which would appeal to funders. So even if SDAP does not generate notable funding

²⁰ The table implies that the income would be apportioned to each agency based on their number of referrals (less any cut that AdviceUK takes) and this is currently AdviceUK’s preferred approach. It is not the purpose of this evaluation to consider in depth various operating models. However, alternative approaches could be adopted and may be worth considering. For example, there is potential for income to go in to a sector pot and result in ‘in-kind’ benefits to participating agencies such as a discounted access to AdvicePro and/or discounted AdviceUK membership and/or discounted training. Another alternative could be to distribute income to agencies based on their client base (size and type) rather than the number of cases they successfully refer. This would reduce the risk of the income stream biasing advice to clients in favour of making referrals to DMPs and IVAs.

²¹ Figures have been rounded up. They take in to account potential successful referrals in the pipeline identified within a year, but awaiting establishment and payments to begin. This model assumes that all agencies will be able to receive a Fair Share income. In some cases, there may be pre-existing contractual arrangements with other funders which would prohibit the receipt of Fair Share income. This will need to be explored by participating agencies before they sign up to SDAP.

streams for some agencies there is the potential that participating in SDAP will give an agency an advantage when competing for limited funding opportunities. However, it is worth noting that no agencies said that the initial interest from funders had actually directly resulted in new funding or prevented their existing funding from being reduced during the life of the pilot:

‘Several of our funders really like this . . . they like that we can make it easy for our clients, their service users, to make payments . . . I’d say that it has definitely improved our position with our funders and they are already talking about how they can fund us in the future . . . it wasn’t expected but it’s definitely a positive outcome of being involved.’ Agency

‘SDAP and the Paylink part of it was a part of our bid to win the Government contract . . . being able to offer it was definitely a plus in being commissioned.’ Agency

‘Our funders do like it, they like the idea that it can deal with non-priority debts which will allow people to focus on paying their rent or bills . . . but it hasn’t led to any new funding . . . I’m not sure it will . . .’ Agency

Is SDAP financially sustainable (and practical) for AdviceUK?

There is potential for the SDAP to be financially sustainable for AdviceUK through a management fee

3.7 In the end, AdviceUK will determine whether SDAP is financially sustainable for itself. It is likely that any initial rollout of SDAP would require similar resource commitments to those required to support the delivery of the pilot. It is also likely that support will be required to administer payments to participating agencies. There may also need to be financial investment in systems to integrate AdvicePro with Paylink and Payplan referral mechanisms. In order to pay, at least in part, for any of the above, it is possible that AdviceUK will take a management fee out of payments received from Payplan. The following table highlights the potential value of the management fee, which could range from £8,500 to £42,500 per annum depending on the size of the management fee (and the number of organisations participating in SDAP):

Figure 4: Potential management fee income for AdviceUK

Management fee %	Value of management fee to Advice UK
10%	£8,505
30%	£25,515
50%	£42,525

Note: based on rolling out the model fully to key target agencies as per figure 3.

Is SDAP commercially viable for Payplan?

There is potential for SDAP to be commercially viable for Payplan, although it is important to note that Payplan are committed to SDAP as long as it covers their costs

3.8 Ultimately Payplan will judge the commercial viability of the SDAP model. However, Payplan have said that their main reason for being involved is not commercial and as

long as the model 'covers costs' then they would still be interested in progressing with the project beyond the pilot.

3.9 Based on the existing data available, there is potential for Payplan to earn over a three year period up to £360,000. However, in reality the return is likely to be less than this for the following reasons:

- The figures do not include the additional project management costs incurred by Payplan for supporting the SDAP model
- The IVA figures do not allow for potential drop off rates, or the risk of unforeseen circumstances which could include creditors reducing their levels of payment, the impact of Universal Credit, or changes in process required by the Money Advice Service
- Payplan, in principle, agree with the recommendation in this evaluation that there is the need for further investment in technology to make SDAP a success. Therefore, any investment would incur costs that are not currently allowed for within this modelling
- Finally, Payplan has stated that it is open to an on-going discussion about the level of payment to AdviceUK and the agencies, with regular reviews to ensure a reasonable distribution of income back to the agencies

Figure 5: Potential Fair Share return to Payplan over three year period per case referred and if rolled out successfully to target agencies²²

	Per case (over three years)	Income across all sector referrals (over three years)
Min DMP income ²³	-£5	-£2049
IVA income ²⁴	£1,087	£362,000
Total	£1,082	£360,000

Note: figures are after deductions have been made to agencies for referrals

Has SDAP been practical and financially beneficial for creditors?

SDAP has been positively received by some creditors, although there is little evidence of it having a positive financial impact on creditors to date

3.10 There is no hard evidence available to date²⁵ to prove if SDAP has or will have a positive financial impact on creditors in the form of greater and more sustainable payments than would have been collected through alternative debt repayment arrangements. However, anecdotal evidence from creditors and agencies suggests that the model is well received by creditors, especially setting up low offer or token payments through Paylink:

‘I’ve definitely had some positive comments from creditors . . . they seem more willing to accept a token offer arrangement and even to agree a

²² This is based on a three year timescale in line with how Payplan present their costs. However, the average length of a Payplan DMP is 8 years. An IVA lasts for 5 years, although there is no guarantee that the full number of estimated IVAs will reach their full term.

²³ Based on confidential costs and Fair Share return estimates supplied by Payplan over a three year period of payments, with an average Fair Share return of 7.5%.

²⁴ As above, combining nominee and supervisory fees. Annual supervisory fees are calculated at the industry average of £400 per annum per case. The IVA income is based on a three year timescale in line with how Payplan present their costs.

²⁵ This is because creditors state that there are not sufficient cases available to make a judgement on this yet.

lower level . . . I think they like it because it's coming from a trusted source rather than an individual . . . they like it because it's part of a considered system . . . I think they think it's more likely to lead to them receiving payments.' Agency

'The level of payments is not really on the radar . . . but the idea of it is good and I can see how it could lead to more sustainable payments . . . making DMP or IVA payments through Payplan will be well received by creditors . . . Payplan have a good reputation and are well established so it's a good partnership for AdviceUK to be part of and a good service for their members to provide to their clients.' Stakeholder

Does SDAP provide new and sustainable debt management options for clients?

Providing a new debt management option for clients with low offer or token payments is considered an important feature of SDAP by stakeholders, advice agencies and advisors

3.11 Stakeholders, agencies and advisors felt that being able to offer clients with low offer or token payments the opportunity to make payments to multiple creditors through the Paylink disbursement system was a major feature of SDAP:

'The main benefit I expect to be achieved through the project is being able to provide an alternative solution for clients . . . it may not be right for everyone but there is no doubt that for some people using Paylink will be ideal and will make their life easier and potentially make their repayments more sustainable . . . I fully support the idea of making it easier for people to pay.' Stakeholder

'Fair Share was a factor for us, but we always saw the main benefit of this about being able to provide new solutions to clients . . . we have lots of clients that are suitable for making low or token offers and we were attracted to being able to make this easier for them.' Agency

Paylink increases the likelihood of some clients setting up a debt repayment arrangement

3.12 In terms of Paylink specifically, several advisers and agencies suggested that being able to offer Paylink to their clients increased the likelihood of them setting up a repayment arrangement:

'Some of my clients have over 20 creditors . . . there's no way they could manage repayment arrangements with all of them . . . so a system like Paylink is just excellent for them.' Adviser

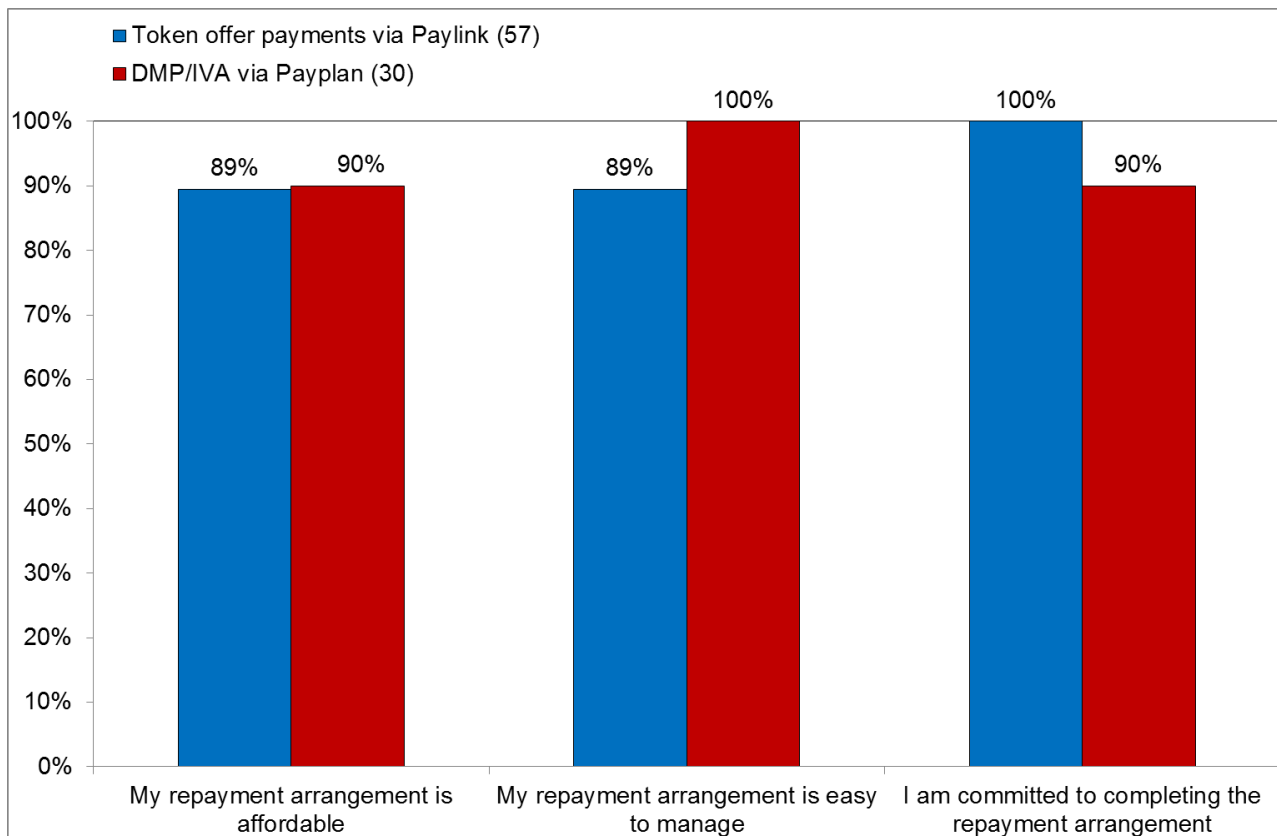
'I've had clients in the past where you know they will never get round to setting up payments with their creditors . . . we give them all the standard offer letters so they can get things set up and then offer support to help them physically set up the payments through standing orders, but it never gets that far . . . it was just too difficult for them . . . some clients like the idea of Paylink because we do it all for them . . . it's easy for them . . . there are definitely some clients that we set up on Paylink that wouldn't

have done it on their own . . . it gets them started on the road to dealing with their debts.’ Agency

Clients suggest their repayment arrangements made through Paylink or via Payplan make it easy, affordable and are likely to be sustainable

3.13 In a one year pilot, where DMPs and IVAs may last up to five years or longer, it is difficult to provide hard evidence about how sustainable payments have been through SDAP.²⁶ However, active clients (i.e. existing payees) through Paylink and via Payplan were very positive about their repayment arrangements. Clients said that the repayment arrangement was affordable (agreed by 89% of Paylink clients interviewed and 90% of Payplan clients interviewed), easy to manage (agreed by 89% of Paylink clients and 100% of Payplan clients interviewed) and that they were committed to completing the repayment arrangement (agreed by 100% of Paylink clients and 90% of Payplan clients).

Figure 6: Client’s perspective on affordability, ease of payment and sustainability



Note: Numbers in brackets are the number of respondents – current payees only
 % are those that agree with statement

3.14 Clients said they opted for the payment arrangements because they felt it would be affordable, easy and that they would therefore be more likely to make and maintain payments:

²⁶ In terms of Paylink, the sustainability of payments is difficult to gauge and compare against alternatives. This is because making low offers or token payments through Paylink is not designed to be a permanent repayment arrangement. However, in the longer term it would be relevant to capture information about how Paylink clients have been supported to move on to different debt strategies once their circumstances allow.

'It just made sense to me . . . I've tried in the past to speak to my creditors directly but it's difficult . . . I liked the idea of making just one payment and that being it . . . so far it's worked out well and I don't see why I'll stop making the payments . . . it's only a few pounds a month and so I can afford it.' Client (Paylink)

'It's been really easy for me, my adviser suggested I set up a DMP and they put me in touch with Payplan . . . it's been an easy process and I'm now making payments which mean that in a few years time I'll be debt free . . . it's worked well for me.' Client (Payplan DMP)

Some clients experienced problems accessing SDAP repayment arrangements

3.15 Some agencies, advisers and clients provided examples of where being referred to Paylink or Payplan had been problematic for clients. This was often where a client had difficulties being set up on Paylink or had been referred to Payplan but not managed to set up a DMP or IVA²⁷:

'I'm just not sure the Paylink system works as well as it should . . . I've had a client who was set up on it but then kept on getting demand letters from creditors . . . it was nothing that couldn't be sorted but in the end the client just decided to go down a different route because they thought it wasn't working and wanted to get the creditors off their back.' Adviser

'It does concern me that we refer some clients to Payplan and nothing happens. The feedback reports are helpful so at least we can track what's happened, but there's a danger that a client will just fall between the cracks . . . they come to us . . . we refer them to Payplan and then if that doesn't work, where are they left?' Agency

'I liked the idea of paying all my debts in one monthly payment . . . it sounded really easy when I was told about it . . . but then it just seemed to take ages to get it all sorted . . . money came out of my account but I still got creditor letters . . . in the end I just had to stop it [making the payment] . . . I couldn't afford making payments and creditors still being on at me . . . I was worried I'd have to pay twice.' Client (Paylink)

'I was really disappointed with it all . . . I was referred to Payplan but didn't meet their criteria . . . I didn't know what to do . . . I'd spoken to two organisations and neither could help me . . . but I got some different advice and now I'm paying my debts off in a different way.' Client (Payplan)

²⁷ It may be the case that this disappointment is not necessarily to do directly with SDAP but with other factors such as inappropriate assessment by the agency or Payplan or the client not providing the agency or Payplan with all their information. However, the end result is that a client has been referred through SDAP to Payplan which has failed to achieve a positive outcome for a client. This further demonstrates the need to improve systems and processes to increase the proportion of successful referrals.

SDAP is not suitable for most clients, with debt relief orders and self-help often the preferred debt strategies

3.16 Agencies and advisers said that one of the main reasons for the low volume of referrals was that in most cases their clients do not have the disposable income for a DMP or IVA. Agencies and advisers also said that the majority of their clients preferred to complete a debt relief order or to manage the creditors themselves. This suggests that SDAP may be a niche product for the type of client that accesses free debt advice provided by agencies like those taking part in the pilot:

‘For some it is definitely a good solution . . . but most of our clients do not fit the DMP or IVA criteria . . . It [low offer or token payments through Paylink] is definitely a good solution for some clients, some genuinely want to pay off their debts and Paylink is a good way to get them started until they get back on their feet . . . but most do not want to go down the token offer route . . . if they have a choice to go down the token offer route or to wipe their debts away in one big swoop through a debt relief order, most will go with a debt relief order.’ Adviser

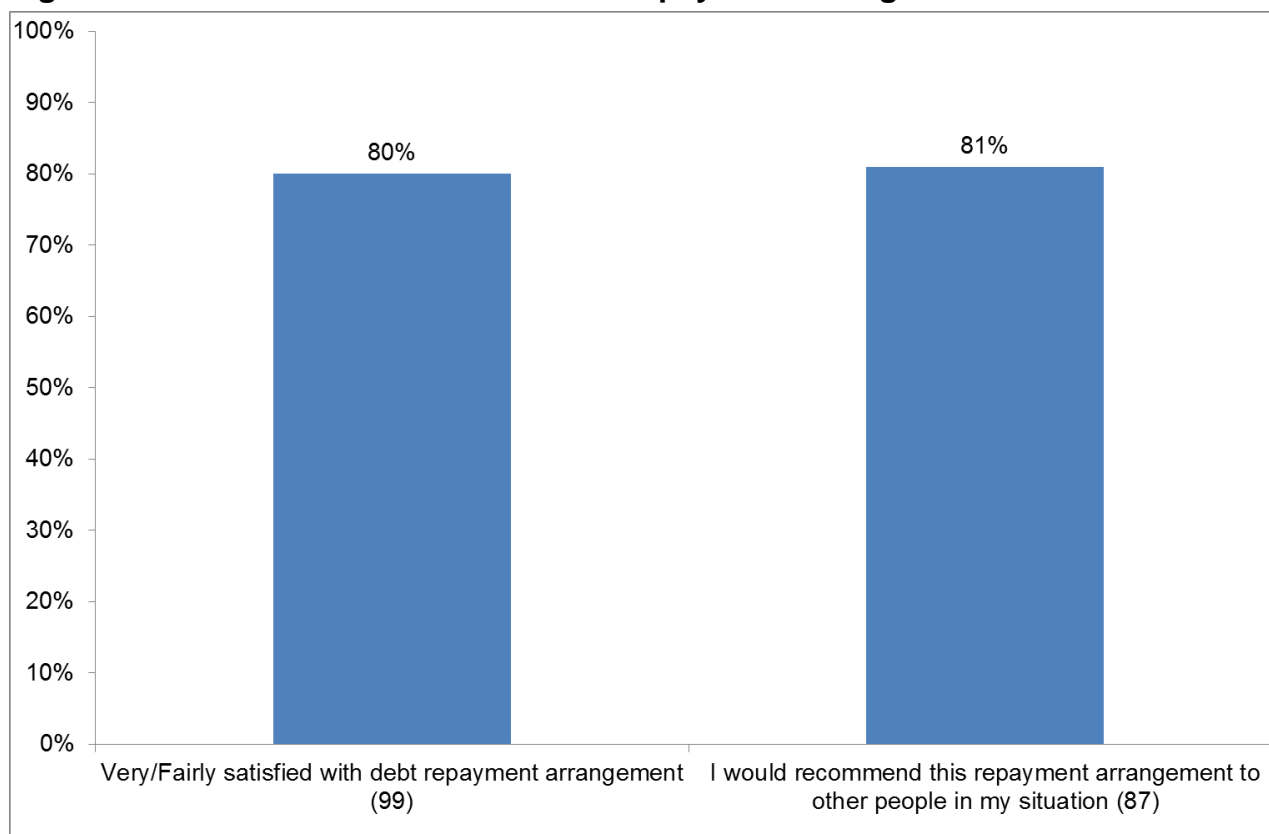
‘We are promoting the option to our clients but they are telling us that they do not want to give up control . . . they do not like the idea of letting someone else manage their finances and liaise with their creditors . . . they want to do that and so we work with them to find self-help solutions to better manage their debts.’ Agency

Clients overall seem to support and value their SDAP repayment arrangement

3.17 Across all clients, whether existing or former clients and whether making payments via Paylink or Payplan, overall there was support for their repayment arrangement. Overall, 80% of clients interviewed were at least fairly satisfied with their debt repayment arrangement and 81% would recommend their repayment arrangement to other people in their situation²⁸:

²⁸ There are no publically available benchmarks to judge these results (and those for the other questions) against, but the results seem very positive and suggest that the SDAP model has a positive impact on clients overall.

Figure 7: Overall satisfaction with SDAP repayment arrangement



Note: Numbers in brackets are the number of respondents to each question – first question includes current and lapsed payees, second question includes current payees only. There are more respondents to the satisfaction question as this was asked to both existing and lapsed clients.

3.18 As one client summed up that on balance SDAP is positive and promotes sustainable payments:

'It wasn't as easy to set up as I thought it would be . . . but it works well now . . . once you've dealt with all the paperwork and the initial problems it works fine now and I'm happy with it . . . it feels good to be dealing with my debts . . . I won't stop now, I'll carry on until I'm debt free.' Client (Paylink)

Does participating in SDAP have a positive impact on clients' physical and emotional health and wellbeing?

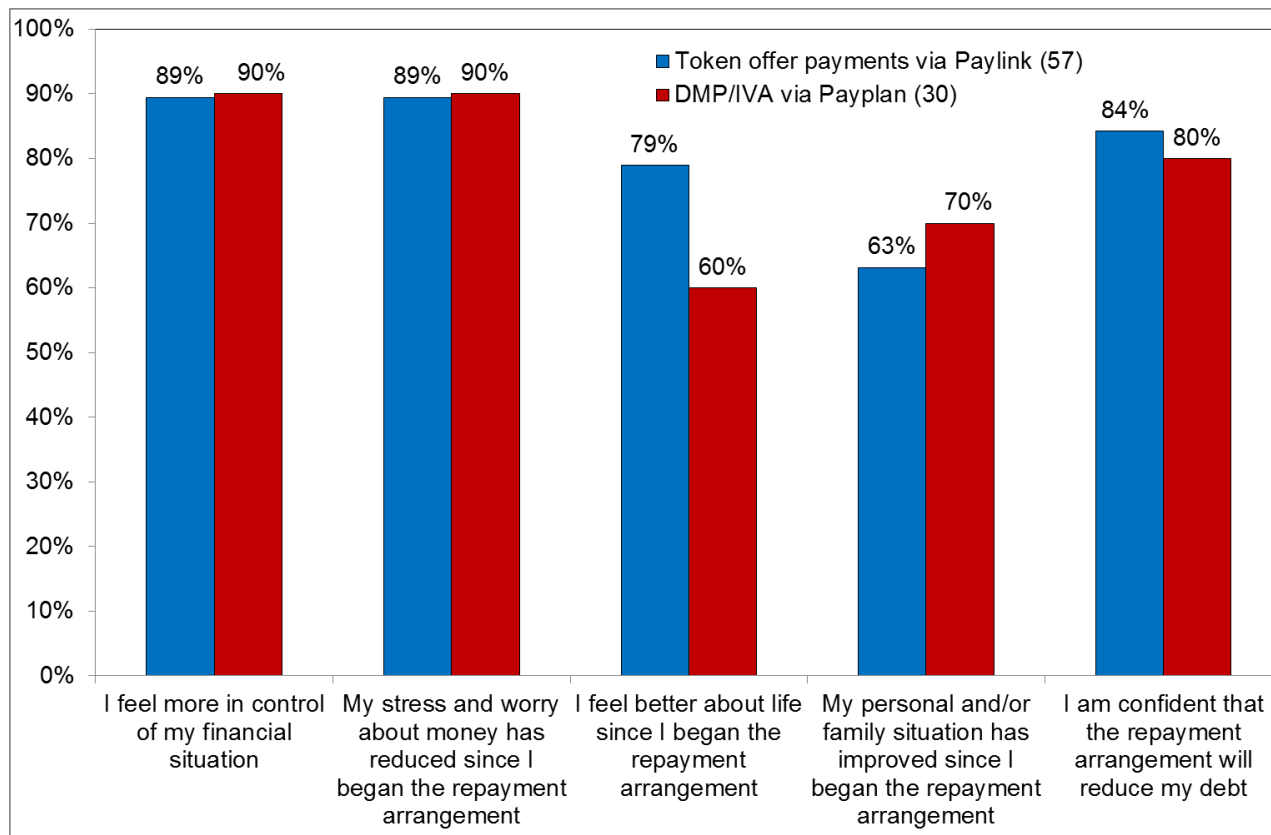
Making debt repayments through SDAP has a positive impact on clients' health and wellbeing

3.19 The majority of active clients (i.e. existing payees) through Paylink and via Payplan agreed that their repayment arrangement had a positive impact on their health and wellbeing. Clients said:

- They felt more in control of their financial situation (agreed by 89% of Paylink clients interviewed and 90% of Payplan clients interviewed)
- Stress and worry had reduced since they began their repayment arrangement (agreed by 89% of Paylink clients and 90% of Payplan clients interviewed)
- They felt better about life (agreed by 79% of Paylink clients and 60% of Payplan clients)

- Their personal and family situation had improved (agreed by 63% of Paylink clients and 70% of Payplan clients)
- They were confident that the repayment arrangement will reduce their debt (agreed by 84% of Paylink clients and 80% of Payplan clients)

Figure 8: Impact on health and wellbeing



Note: Numbers in brackets are the number of respondents to each question – current payees only
% are those that agree with each statement

3.20 Several clients gave emotive examples of how their debt repayment arrangement had helped them:

‘I was in a really bad place, my debts were out of control . . . I needed help and it was made easy for me . . . I now feel so much better knowing I am trying to do something to pay off my debts and get back on with my life . . . it was always in the background, but now I don’t have to worry about it . . . I’m not getting chased any more by creditors.’ Client (Paylink)

‘Yes, things are better for me and my family now . . . I’d tried to sort it out myself before but just getting some good advice and working with a professional company has really helped . . . I’m in control now . . . I know how much I have to pay each month and I have a plan in place to pay off our debts . . . I don’t have to worry any more about being chased . . . it’s a big weight off our minds and means we can actually get on with dealing with other things in our lives.’ Client (Payplan)

Does SDAP work in practice for advisers, allowing them to provide new options for clients while not increasing their workload?

There is evidence that extra workload is being placed on advisers when they set-up and administer low offer or token payments to multiple creditors through Paylink (although it is possible that some adviser time has been saved as a result of the streamlined process for making DMP and IVA referrals to Payplan)

3.21 Several agencies and their advisers said that referring and managing cases through Paylink was time consuming and adding to their casework time above and beyond that required to administer alternative debt management strategies.²⁹ This was often raised as one of the barriers to making referrals to Paylink:

‘It does take a long time to get a case set up on Paylink . . . first of all it’s the duplication of having to input data on to Paylink that you’ve already put on to AdvicePro . . . then it’s just a bit fiddly to get a case set up . . . I can’t say on average how long it takes, but it definitely takes longer than we’d like it to and it takes longer than what we did before . . . it’s better now as we have admin support . . . we just provide the initial advice and our administrator takes it forward . . . that helps, but I’m not sure we’ll always be able to afford the admin in the future.’ Adviser

‘The problem is in the on-going management of it . . . it doesn’t take ages to get the information on the system, but then you have to deal with creditors and if circumstances change you have to keep on going back in to the system . . . it becomes very time consuming and almost a full time job to keep on top of it all.’ Adviser

3.22 Most advisers said that the process of making referrals through to Payplan for a DMP or IVA was straightforward and not time consuming. It is possible, that this process is helping reduce the workload on advisors and agencies. However, there is scope to further enhance this process through incorporating the financial statement and list of creditors in the referral process and integrating AdvicePro and Payplan systems further by including a feedback loop:

‘We’ve always made referrals to Payplan and other debt management companies . . . the automated referral process from AdvicePro to Payplan is good . . . in the past we just e-mailed or called them, now it’s a simple touch of the button.’ Adviser

‘It’s easy to refer a case over to Payplan, but I think it would be good to take over the financial statement information too . . . we go through all that with the client and then so do Payplan . . . it seems to be a duplication and is also a bit annoying for the client having to go through it twice. I appreciate that Payplan need to do their own checks but I’m sure they’d benefit from seeing the financial statement.’ Adviser

²⁹ Without SDAP, if an adviser helps a client set up low offer or token payments to a creditor then the case would normally be left alone until a scheduled review after 3/6/9/12 months. With SDAP, if payments are going through Paylink then the agency has an on-going commitment to make sure that payments are continuing to go through as planned, then trying to resolve any problems that may arise.

'The system works, but it would be better if you could see progress with a case through AdvicePro . . . they do provide weekly feedback but it's not part of AdvicePro and it would be good for each adviser to be able to keep tabs on the progress of each client they've referred.' Adviser

3.23 Data recorded on AdvicePro by the pilot agencies supports some of the above points, suggesting that managing a case through Paylink is taking longer than referring to other debt management strategies. For example, where time spent was recorded, 67% of Paylink cases took at least 4 hours compared with just 18% of all cases and 33% of Payplan cases.³⁰

Figure 9: Time spent on case management

Time spent	All Cases	Paylink Cases	Payplan Cases
Up to 1 hour	39%	2%	18%
1 - 2 hours	19%	6%	28%
2 - 4 hours	23%	26%	21%
4 - 8 hours	11%	31%	17%
More than 8 hours	7%	36%	16%

Source: AdvicePro

Does SDAP work in practice for agencies, allowing them to provide new options for clients while not increasing their workload?

Agencies are committed to the pilot and appreciate the potential benefits to clients, but they have concerns about the workload placed on their advisers and the long-term sustainability of the model

3.24 The pilot agencies are committed to the pilot and in most cases can see the benefits of offering SDAP options to clients. However, most agencies said that the workload associated with using Paylink was notable:

'I'm glad we're part of the pilot and it is a good option to offer for clients, but it does require a lot of work . . . a lot more work than I expected . . . it takes quite a while to put things on to Paylink and you have to do a lot of chasing up . . . at the moment it is definitely a more time consuming and expensive option . . . it's partly just because it is a new system, but it does take a long time . . . I think if they can join up AdvicePro and Paylink then it could be a lot easier . . . it would save you having to input details twice and it would be easier to manage cases and keep an eye on things . . . If they don't sort out the technology side of things I'm not quite sure if it would work in the future because the workload is so much more for each client.'

Agency

3.25 Some agencies were also concerned that as time goes on the workload will grow as they have more cases to manage via Paylink, meaning that they retain open cases rather than close them. Some agencies saw this as a challenge that would be difficult to overcome, while others saw it as just requiring a new way of working and a different mind-set:

³⁰ It can be argued that clients taking up a Paylink option are already involved in more time-consuming full case work regardless of the debt management strategy adopted.

'I think it's a good idea but I am concerned what happens over time . . . it isn't just a matter of loading a case on to Paylink, you then have to monitor it and keep the case open, so what happens as and when you start building up more and more cases, I'm just not sure how sustainable that will be . . . I'm not sure we'll have the time to do it.' Agency

'Managing cases through Paylink requires a new way of working . . . we're used to opening and closing cases as quickly as possible and we have targets through our MAS (Money Advice Service) funding which require us to do this . . . Paylink though means that you have to keep managing a case and we'll have to build in regular reviews to make sure cases are working fine . . . I'm not saying we can't do it and won't do it, but it is more work and a different way of working.' Agency

3.26 In terms of referrals to Payplan, agencies did not report this adding to their workload and all appreciated the ease of initial referrals through AdvicePro to Payplan. At the same time, those that had previously referred to Payplan said that it was not much different to them referring via e-mail or over the phone.

Can SDAP be rolled out to the rest of the free-to-client debt advice sector, being easily adapted and implemented in different environments e.g. with IT systems other than AdvicePro?

For SDAP to be distinctive and add value, Paylink and Payplan systems need to be integrated with AdvicePro or at least easily integrated with other case management systems

3.27 In principle the SDAP process could be rolled out to any debt advice agency, providing them access to the Paylink system and setting up a referral process with Payplan. However, this is something an agency could do without any support from AdviceUK and in many cases already happens. The current distinctiveness of SDAP³¹ is that it uses AdvicePro to create a straightforward referral process to Payplan for DMPs and IVAs, with the potential for financial return to agencies. Similarly, there is a call from the pilot agencies for this integration to be further embedded, enhancing the functionality between AdvicePro and Payplan and integrating the Paylink and AdvicePro systems. Some agencies suggested that it would be a shame if participation in SDAP required agencies to have access to AdvicePro, partly due to the licence costs involved. However, other agencies recognised that without AdvicePro and the potential integration of systems, they could not see what SDAP provided over and above what was already available:

'What is SDAP? For me it should be about having all the systems in one place . . . before the pilot we already referred to Payplan . . . we just e-mailed or called them . . . and we could just use Paylink ourselves . . . we don't need AdvicePro and AdviceUK for that . . . I think what could make SDAP stand out is if all the systems were joined together . . . you'd need AdvicePro for that, but it's a good case management system so it makes

³¹ It should also be acknowledged that another potential advantage of SDAP, although one not mentioned by agencies, is that there is central body such as AdviceUK responsible for training, ensuring consistency, checking ethical standards are maintained and providing a means for negotiating and distributing some Fair Share income back to the agencies.

sense to use it . . . getting money back from Payplan helps, but again could that be set up with Payplan directly . . . do we need SDAP for that?' Agency

'It would be good to look for ways for SDAP to be rolled out without having to have AdvicePro . . . it's a good system but there are others out there too . . . and it's quite expensive so it could be a barrier to being part of SDAP . . . it would be good if they could find a way to develop the technology to just bolt on Paylink and a referral process to Payplan to whatever case management system you were using.' Agency

Has the Fair Share net been extended, with additional creditors added to the Payplan disbursement system?

The Fair Share net has not been extended in the life of the pilot, but it should remain a long term aspiration of SDAP

3.28 A secondary intended outcome of the SDAP pilot was to widen the Fair Share net to new creditors. However, several stakeholders felt that this outcome would be difficult to achieve in any notable way within the life of the pilot and should be more of a long-term outcome and one that should be done on an industry wide level rather than through SDAP itself³²:

'I think we've pretty much reached a level with Fair Shares, it can take up to 18 months to reach agreement with a new creditor and we've almost saturated the creditors that are willing to take part in Fair Shares. If in the long term this pilot shows that it is worthwhile for creditors to get involved then we may be able to extend Fair Share to more and different creditors, but it's a long term process.' Stakeholder

3.29 However, there is the opportunity to work with the Money Advice Service on this aim, as they are currently committed to promoting Fair Share amongst creditors.

Is SDAP being administered and promoted ethically by agencies, with advice to clients not compromised and agencies continuing to provide independent and objective advice not influenced by the potential Fair Share opportunities?

There is no evidence of agencies providing bias or unethical advice

3.30 Several stakeholders said that it is essential to ensure that clients are offered appropriate options for dealing with their debts and that agencies avoid the potential for pushing clients towards a referral to Paylink or Payplan to generate Fair Share income:

'I think one of the key success measures for me has to be whether clients have been given appropriate and fair debt advice . . . there is a real risk that agencies could find themselves encouraging a client to take up an option that isn't suitable for them because it generates an income for the agency.' Stakeholder

³² The SDAP did explore extending the Fair Share net including holding discussions with Southern Trent Water. The project found that in this case there were insufficient volumes from SDAP to justify taking discussions further. It also highlighted what a long process it is to set up a Fair Share arrangement, with sign-off needed at a senior level of the participating organisation.

3.31 The pilot agencies were very conscious of this issue and in all cases were adamant that they continued to provide ethical, fair and unbiased advice:

'We are promoting SDAP but only as part of a range of options to our clients . . . it is good to offer it, but many of our clients are seeming to prefer debt relief orders and those we may have previously expected to refer on to Payplan are seeming to want to opt for bankruptcy . . . ultimately, we advise the client but they make the final decision.' Agency

'I can see the dangers and it is something to be mindful of . . . but any decent money advice agency and adviser will always provide impartial advice . . . it is our job . . . I can't see a situation where I or others would push a client towards something which did not suit them.' Adviser

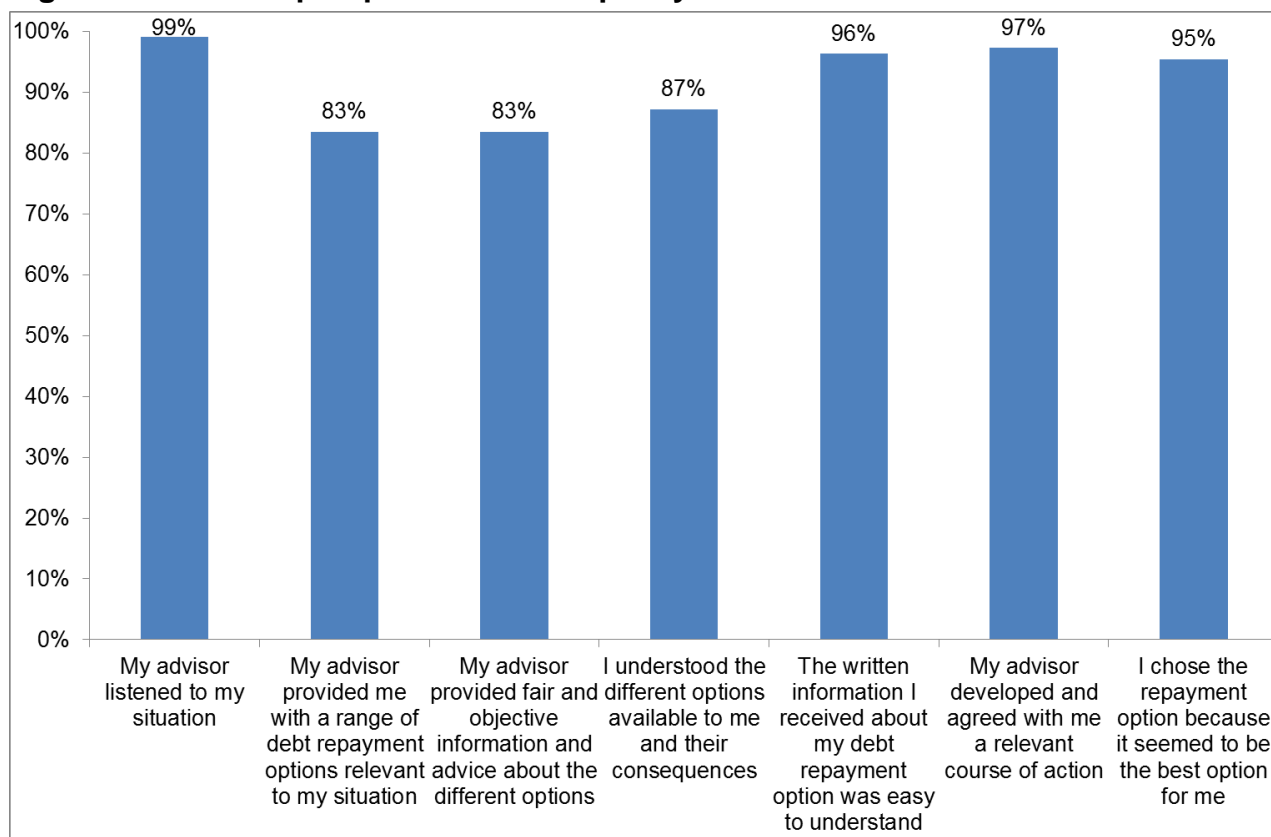
3.32 However, some agencies did raise a concern that if the income levels from DMP/IVA referrals became significant that it could lead to unethical and biased advice and therefore proposed a system which meant that income did not come direct to the agency:

'There's a danger of the lines being blurred between free advice and the fee charging sector . . . if an agency receives income direct from referrals then it is possible they might start to provide advice that can help them generate more income. A way around this is for the income to go back to a third party, such as AdviceUK. They could then use it to benefit the sector as a whole rather than provide income direct to an agency . . . it completely removes the potential problem.' Agency

3.33 From the client perspective there is evidence that pilot agencies provided ethical, fair and unbiased advice. For example:

- 99% of clients interviewed said their adviser listened to their situation
- 83% said their adviser provided a range of options
- 83% said their adviser provided fair and objective advice
- 87% said they understood the different options available to them
- 96% said the written information was easy to understand
- 97% said they agreed a relevant course of action with their adviser
- 95% said they chose the repayment option because it was the best option for them

Figure 10: Client's perspective on the quality of advice received



Note: 109 respondents (including existing and lapsed clients and clients that never took up the SDAP repayment option after initial referral). % are those that agree with statement.

3.34 This evaluation appreciates that in an ideal world the above answers would all be at 100%. However, there is no evidence from the evaluation which highlights where a client did not receive ethical advice. Those clients that did not agree with the above statements tended to do so because they had not managed to set up a sustainable debt repayment arrangement and were more expressing their disappointment with that than raising any concerns with the ethics of the advice received:

'I think I received really good advice . . . my adviser listened and looked at all the information I gave her . . . she talked me through my options, gave me lots of advice and time to think through it and in the end we agreed the best way forward.' Client

'I was just disappointed . . . I went in there to sort out my problems but it hasn't done it . . . the initial advice I received at the time seemed o.k . . . there was nothing wrong with it . . . but it hasn't worked out and I'm still not dealing with my debts.' Client

3.35 It is also worth noting that data was transferred between agencies and Payplan throughout the pilot in line with data protection requirements and in a secure way. This is an issue that will continue to have to be observed in the future, especially with more integrated technology which could allow wider access to client data. Protocols and policies will have to be developed to ensure the confidentiality and security of client data.

Has SDAP reached all types of clients, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or disability?³³

SDAP has reached all types of clients, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or disability, although non-white British clients are less well represented

3.36 The case data highlights that clients of all genders, age, ethnicity and disability have set up repayment arrangements through SDAP. However, non-white British clients are less well represented amongst Paylink and Payplan cases when compared to all cases. For example, 26% of all cases are made up of non-white British residents compared to 15% of Paylink cases and 10% of Payplan cases.³⁴

Figure 11: Cases by demography

	All Cases	Paylink Cases	Payplan Cases
Gender			
Male	43%	37%	45%
Female	57%	63%	55%
Age			
Under 25	8%	8%	3%
26-35	24%	23%	23%
36-50	41%	41%	48%
51-64	21%	24%	21%
65+	6%	5%	5%
Ethnicity			
White British or Irish	74%	85%	90%
Asian	5%	2%	2%
Black British or African	14%	8%	1%
Mixed	2%	2%	0%
Other	5%	2%	6%
Disability			
Yes	6%	14%	2%
No	94%	86%	98%
Long-term limiting illness			
Yes	10%	20%	4%
No	90%	80%	96%

Source: AdvicePro

3.37 This is not a major issue and not necessarily one that can be overcome, but some agencies suggested that culturally some ethnic minorities may prefer to retain control over their finances and operate with cash rather than set up arrangements through Paylink and Payplan:

‘I think there is a cultural issue, many of our clients do not want to give up control . . . they don’t know from one week to the next exactly how much money they have . . . they often get money in cash from family and friends . . . they’re not able or in some cases not willing to commit to an agreed payment plan . . . they prefer less formal arrangements.’ Agency

³³ These are the only equality groups monitored in AdvicePro that had sufficient data to analyse.

³⁴ The issue of different demographic groups wanting different debt repayment options could warrant further research.

Should SDAP be rolled out to other advice agencies?

There is support for rollout of SDAP, pending improvements to the systems and technology

3.38 There are mixed views amongst agencies, advisers and stakeholders about the future of SDAP. Some fully support its rollout, others support it with caveats and some are less supportive. The general consensus seems to be that there should be some technical and technological improvements put in place before any major rollout, it should be rolled out softly and ultimately it is a decision for AdviceUK, Payplan and participating agencies:

‘I think they should roll it out . . . it has already shown that it provides benefits to some clients . . . I don’t think it matters if it’s only a small number . . . if it provides a better outcome to some clients then it’s a positive addition to the sector.’ Agency

‘Overall, I think it just about deserves to be rolled out . . . In principle it’s a good idea . . . but they need to get the systems working right first . . . they definitely need to improve Paylink. I think if they rolled that out as it is it would put advisers off . . . it could undermine the whole project . . . and they could also look at improving the integration between AdvicePro, Paylink and Payplan . . . if they get all that right then it could be good for agencies and clients.’ Adviser

‘To be honest I’ve been a bit disappointed . . . I don’t think it’s made an overwhelming case to be rolled out . . . the take up has been quite small and the pilot agencies have found it quite difficult to work with the systems . . . that doesn’t mean they shouldn’t roll it out to other agencies . . . but if they do they need to do it slowly and softly . . . just target key agencies first and take it from there . . . I don’t think they’re in a position to make a big song and dance about it.’ Stakeholder

‘To a large part it’s up to AdviceUK and Payplan . . . if there is some evidence it works . . . even if it’s a marginal decision . . . if they feel they can make it work then they should press ahead.’ Stakeholder

3.39 Some stakeholders also raised the potential for AdviceUK to join forces with Citizens Advice which is undertaking a similar pilot³⁵:

‘I think it’s been good that there’s been two separate pilots – it helps add to the body of knowledge. But I think moving forward I’d quite like to see them working together to maximise the benefits of the model and really influence the creditor sector.’ Stakeholder

³⁵ The Citizens Advice pilot is focussing on direct referrals to a free DMP and IVA organisation. It does not include a low offer or token payment aspect. Although Citizens Advice have been engaged as part of this evaluation, their pilot has only just completed and it is too early to compare the relative success of each pilot. However, plans are in place for AdviceUK and Citizens Advice to share the findings with each other and discuss their plans for the future.

Section 4: Summary and concluding points

Summary of key findings

- 4.1 Overall, 470 clients across the nine pilot agencies have benefited from the SDAP model. This amounts to total debt of over £6 million and nearly £35,000 a month surplus income³⁶ across all clients that have been successfully referred. This breaks down as follows:
- Referrals to Paylink (for low offer or token payments to multiple creditors): 308 clients / £2,895,000 debt / £9,334 monthly surplus income
 - Referrals direct to Payplan (for DMPs/IVAs): 162 clients / £3,171,000 debt / £25,500 monthly surplus
- 4.2 Overall, the evidence presents a mixed picture about the success of the SDAP pilot and model. The positives are as follows:
- SDAP has generated commitment and interest amongst the debt advice and creditor sectors
 - There is evidence that clients have managed debts effectively and have improved their wellbeing from accessing SDAP repayment arrangements
 - SDAP has the potential to be practically and financially viable for agencies, AdviceUK (the sector could generate income of up to £94,000 per annum) and Payplan (which could generate income after costs of up to £360,000 over a three year period)³⁷. However, this potential has yet to be realised due to the current low volume of successful referrals
 - There is no evidence that SDAP affects the independence of advice provided to clients
- 4.3 However, the negatives from the pilot are as follows:
- The volume of referrals to both Paylink (the low offer or token payments disbursement system) and to Payplan for DMPs and IVAs is low in absolute terms and as a proportion of overall caseloads (5% of cases have been successfully set up on Paylink or as a DMP/IVA)
 - SDAP is unlikely to provide a significant funding stream to the free debt advice sector or an individual agency based on the current proportion of referrals. For example, projections suggest that, depending on the size of the agency, their client mix and the number of referrals, income to agencies varies from between £0 to £16,500 per annum
 - There is evidence that the SDAP pilot has increased the workload on advisers and agencies, especially when referring and managing cases through Paylink

³⁶ Surplus income is income over that required to cover the costs of living. It is a useful indicator of the potential amount of debt that can be repaid.

³⁷ Payplan have stated that their motivation for involvement with SDAP is not commercial and that as long as the project covers its costs they remain committed. The potential income of £360,000 over three years does not include the cost of Payplan staff to support the project and any potential investment Payplan may make to improve the technology behind SDAP. Payplan has also stated that it is open to an on-going discussion about the level of payment to AdviceUK and the agencies, with regular reviews to ensure a reasonable distribution of income back to the agencies.

(although it is possible that some adviser time has been saved as a result of the streamlined process for making DMP and IVA referrals to Payplan)

- Underlying all this there have been problems in the technological implementation of the pilot with a lack of integration between AdvicePro (the case management system) and Paylink and Payplan systems (respectively the low offer or token payments and DMP/IVA disbursement systems) which is acting as a barrier to making referrals and managing cases

4.4 It is also unclear at this stage, due to the limited evidence available, whether SDAP-based repayments are more sustained than they would otherwise be, to the benefit of both creditors and clients. It is also unclear whether there is a positive financial impact for creditors.

What should the SDAP pilot do next?

4.5 Based on the key findings of this evaluation highlighted above it is inconclusive as to whether the pilot should be rolled out beyond the pilot agencies. On one hand, the concept of the model is broadly supported by the debt advice and creditor sectors, it has helped clients that have made repayments through SDAP and there is potential for the model to generate income and increased referrals over time. On the other hand, the existing level of referrals and potential income to agencies and the sector is low, while the existing Paylink system and processes appear to increase the workload on agencies.

4.6 A major barrier to the success of the pilot and model has been technological problems. If these technological issues were resolved by integrating AdvicePro, the Paylink and Payplan disbursement systems and improving the Paylink system itself that SDAP could be a valuable addition to the free debt advice sector. If these systems were improved it is possible that more successful referrals would be made, while the administrative burden placed on the debt advice agencies could be reduced. However, it is also worth noting that even if technological improvements were made, given the typical client base of many free debt advice agencies there may never be a substantial volume of referrals, especially to DMPs or IVAs. This is because many clients will not have the appropriate level of surplus income to meet the criteria for referral to a DMP or IVA. Equally, one of the main reasons cited by agencies for not referring clients to either Paylink or Payplan is that clients preferred alternative debt management strategies, including self-help, liaising with creditors directly and debt relief orders. However, the client mix at many agencies could be well suited to increased referrals to Paylink to make low offers or token payments, if the technology made this easier to do.

4.7 Ultimately, AdviceUK, Payplan and ACM Solutions need to make a decision as to whether they are prepared to invest the time and money in addressing the technological issues surrounding SDAP to help realise its potential. Consequently, if AdviceUK and Payplan are prepared to invest in the model, this evaluation makes the following recommendations about the rollout of SDAP:

- Until technological improvements are made and embedded, any initial rollout should be gradual and subtle, targeting key debt advice agencies rather than being actively launched to the wider debt advice sector
- Fundamental to the success of any rollout is investment in the technology behind the model. This involves investment in two key areas:
 - Developing a new Paylink system which makes it easier to set up and manage cases

- Integrating Paylink and Payplan systems with the AdvicePro case management system to reduce duplication, ensure all appropriate information is submitted as part of a referral and allow for the effective monitoring of cases by the agency once it has referred clients to Paylink or Payplan
- The development of this new technology and systems should actively involve the pilot agencies to ensure that the new systems maximise their full potential
- Develop systems, branding and materials that create a seamless offer and experience for clients moving between their advice agency and Payplan to help reduce drop-outs
- Consider initially rolling out the Payplan DMP/IVA referral option separately from the Paylink low offer or token payments option, while the latter system is being developed. It may be several months if not longer until a new Paylink system is developed and AdviceUK/Payplan may not wish to wait that long to progress the rollout of the model. However, there is a danger that if Paylink as it currently stands is rolled out that it could undermine the whole project and concept behind SDAP³⁸
- Remove the secondary benefits of the pre-paid MasterCard and streamlined access to a basic bank account from the model. These were not considered important and were not utilised in the pilot
- Explore developing a partnership with Citizens Advice to progress and promote the model together both within the debt advice and creditor sectors. As part of this, explore whether SDAP can be developed to be delivered with other organisations' systems and processes, not just AdvicePro and Payplan, so as to allow agencies flexibility in signing up to the model

³⁸ However, removing Paylink from the model should only be seen as a short term solution. A low offer or token payments to multiple creditors disbursement system (i.e. Paylink) is an important part of the SDAP model and the value of SDAP in the future relies on an effective low offer or token payments system being available.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary of terms

Payplan

Payplan is a trading name of Totemic Limited. Payplan provides free debt management plans (DMPs), Individual Voluntary Agreements (IVA) and debt advice. You can find out more by visiting: <http://www.payplan.com>.

Debt Management Plan (DMP)

An agreement between an individual and their creditors to make a set regular payment to pay off their debts. To qualify, clients tend to need a surplus income (i.e. income left over after living costs) of at least £50 a month and ideally at least £100 a month. A DMP can last for up to 8 years.

Individual Voluntary Agreement (IVA)

A formal and legally binding agreement between an individual and their creditors to pay all or some of their debts. Regular payments are made through an authorised debt specialist called an 'insolvency practitioner'. The typical term for an IVA is 5 years.

Paylink

Paylink is a system which distributes low offer or token payments to multiple creditors on behalf of a client. The payments are set-up and administered by money advice agencies. The Paylink system is owned and supported by Payplan. Paylink can also be used for higher offers of repayment. There may be cases where the client meets all the criteria for a Payplan DMP or IVA, but they prefer for their case to be handled by their local agency, rather than over the phone by Payplan.

Fair Share

Under a Fair Share model, a debt advice agency receives a fee income from contributions from creditors to whom debt payments from creditors are distributed.

Appendix 2 - List of interviews conducted

In addition to interviews with the pilot money advice agency managers and their staff, the following are the money advice and financial sector stakeholders interviewed as part of the final evaluation. This list was developed in conjunction with AdviceUK and the SDAP Project Advisory Group.

Money Advice and Financial Sector Stakeholders interviewed

Who	Organisation	Role	Comment
Helen Clark	Payplan	Project Co-ordinator	Day to day contact for Payplan
Lisa Colclough	Citizens Advice	Service Development Consultant	Project lead for Citizens Advice Pilot
John Fairhurst	Payplan	Managing Director	Main strategic lead from Payplan and member of Project Advisory Group
Sim Ilyas	Institute of Money Advisors	Director of Professional Services	Member of Project Advisory Group
Paul Jones	Liverpool John Moores University	School of Sociology and Social Policy	Member of Project Advisory Group
Colin Kinloch	Money Advice Service	Debt Advice Policy Lead	Member of Project Advisory Group
Alex MacDermott	Credit Services Association and Nationwide Building Society	Special Advisor (CSA) and Money Advice Liaison Manager (Nationwide Building Society)	Member of Project Advisory Group
Ali McLaren	ACM-S (AdvicePro)	Director	Day to day AdvicePro liaison
Paul Ross	BBA	Director of Retail	Member of Project Advisory Group
Andrew Thompson	Friends Provident Foundation	Grants Manager	Chair of Project Advisory Group and day to day funder contact
Laura Tough	Barclays Bank	Head of Citizenship and Consumer Affairs	Creditor perspective and liaison for setting up streamlined access to a basic bank account

AdviceUK Staff interviewed:

- Andrew Hull – SDAP Project Coordinator
- David Hawkes – National Money Advice Coordinator

Appendix 3: Advice UK SDAP – Advice Agency Manager Wave 2 Discussion Guide - Final

Process and logistics

- In-depth interviews to last c45-60 minutes
- Interviews conducted with agency managers/supervisors/lead contacts
- Discussions will be recorded and used in analysing and reporting the findings

Overall aims/areas for discussion during interviews:

- Key features and potential benefits of SDAP model
- Experience and challenges of implementing the pilot/model
- Impact of the pilot/model on clients, advisors and the agency
- Future challenges and rolling out the model

Discussion Guide

Introduction (c2 mins)

Key points to note

- Background to study
- Public Perspectives' role and background
- Discussions will be recorded
- Stress anonymity and confidentiality
- Set ground rules – no right or wrong answers, honest and open
- What happens to the information
- Any questions?

Key lines of questioning

Key features and potential benefits of SDAP model (c5-10 mins)

- When we spoke several months ago, you outlined your reasons for taking part in the pilot and what you felt were the key features and potential benefits of SDAP. What would you now say are the key features and potential benefits?

Prompt:

- To advice agencies? E.g. Fair Share? Further advice option?
 - To clients? E.g. Ease of making payments? Sustainability of payments?
 - To creditors? E.g. Sustainability of payments?
 - What about access to a streamlined bank account?
 - What about access to a pre-paid master card?
 - What about links with credit unions? (only relevant for BDAC)
- How has SDAP met with your expectations?

Experience and challenges of implementing the pilot (c10-15 mins)

- How have you found implementing the pilot?

Prompt:

- What worked well/what didn't work so well?
 - Technological/technical system implementation? Inc. use of Advice Pro and Paylink/referrals to Payplan
 - Relationship with Advice UK?
 - Relationship with Payplan?
 - Changes to the way your agency has to work/cultural changes?
 - Training staff/getting staff on board?
 - Clients understanding the process/wanting to be part of the process?
 - Materials and systems to promote and administer SDAP?
- How have you tried to ensure that advice has been administered objectively and fairly, despite the potential for Fair Share to come back to the agency and despite pressure from Advice UK to deliver high volumes of referrals?
 - If a client decides that token payments, a DMP or a IVA, is their best option, are there particular types of clients that are better suited to taking up SDAP, or who would be unlikely to take up SDAP?

- What do you think about the help and support you've received from Advice UK to implement the pilot?
- And what do you think about the help and support you've received from Payplan?

Impact of the pilot (c15-20 mins)

- What do you think the impact of the pilot has been on your organisation, your funders, your advisors and your clients and their creditors?

Prompt:

- Impact on agency e.g Improved systems? Monitoring and performance management? Improved advice options/offer to clients? Potential Fair Share income? Impact on other funding?
- How has SDAP helped you in bidding for more funds for your agency?
- Impact on advisors e.g. Improved advice options/offer to clients?
- Impact on clients e.g. Easier payments? More sustainable payments? Impact on wellbeing?
- Do you have any examples or case studies of the impact on clients?
- How have creditors responded/reacted to SDAP?
- Did any of your SDAP clients take advantage of an introduction to a Barclays basic bank account, or a ClearCash card payment card? If so, how well did this work?
- Have there been any issues or negative impacts of the pilot on your organisation, your advisors and your clients?

Prompt:

- Cultural change for organisation?
- Impact on staff time?
- Impacted on the nature of advice given and the options available to clients?
- How sustainable is the model for your organisation?

Prompt:

- Will it be financially viable?
- What do you expect in terms of Fair Shares proportions back from Payplan, to make it viable? Or any other financial incentives?
- Do you think you can save time and costs by utilising this model?
- Will your organisation be able to sustain this model of working?
- If a client selects a DMP, IVA or token payments as their debt strategy, how does SDAP compare with other options?

Prompt:

- Is it 'just one other option'? Or will it be a leading option you offer to appropriate clients?
- What are its strengths compared to other options What are its weaknesses?

Future challenges and rolling out the model (c10-15 mins)

- Advice UK are considering rolling out the model to other agencies once the pilot is over. Are there any key issues or challenges that need to be managed to ensure a successful roll-out?

Prompt:

- E.g improved technology, more support, change/improved processes, new/different services offered to clients?
- The take up of SDAP for most agencies has been below that anticipated in their applications. Why do you think that is the case?

Prompt:

- Could anything have been done differently from Advice UK, Payplan or the agency to have increased take-up?
- Can anything be done differently to ensure take up is maximised in the future?
- Overall, about a third of DMP and IVA cases referred to Payplan have not been successfully converted into a DMP or IVA. What could be done to improve this?

Prompt:

- Most failures have been caused by difficulties making contact with the client, or clients not meeting Payplan's DMP or IVA criteria – how can this be improved?
- Are there any other services that could be added into SDAP to provide clients more support, or to make SDAP easier for agencies?
- If a future rollout included a proportion of Fair Share coming back to the agency, how would you make sure that this does not make the agency give advice biased to SDAP options?
- How can SDAP be best promoted to other agencies to ensure a successful roll-out?

Prompt:

- Do you think it should be rolled out?
- Will your agency participate?
- What are the key features that need to be promoted to other agencies?
- Would you be willing to be a [buddy / coach / guide / ...] to another agency that wanted to implement SDAP, to help them get going?

Summing up (c5 mins)

- Overall, is there anything else you would like to say about the pilot/model?
- Facilitator to sum up the key messages identified from the discussion to sense check that understood correctly
- Facilitator to outline next steps – what will happen to the information
- Any final questions?

Appendix 4: Advice UK SDAP – Advice Agency Advisors Wave 2 Discussion Guide - Final

Process and logistics

- In-depth interviews or discussion groups to last c45-60 minutes
- Interviews/discussion groups conducted with agencies where there are front-line advisors involved with SDAP in addition to the agency manager/supervisor
- Discussions will be recorded and used in analysing and reporting the findings

Overall aims/areas for discussion during interviews:

- Key features and potential benefits of SDAP model
- Experience and challenges of implementing the pilot/model
- Impact of the pilot/model on clients, advisors and the agency
- Future challenges and rolling out the model

Discussion Guide

Introduction (c2 mins)

Key points to note

- Background to study
- Public Perspectives' role and background
- Discussions will be recorded
- Stress anonymity and confidentiality
- Set ground rules – no right or wrong answers, honest and open
- What happens to the information
- Any questions?

Key lines of questioning

Key features and potential benefits of SDAP model (c5-10 mins)

- What are the key features and potential benefits of SDAP?

Prompt:

- To advice agencies? E.g. Fair Share? Further advice option?
 - To clients? E.g. Ease of making payments? Sustainability of payments?
 - To creditors? E.g. Sustainability of payments?
 - What about access to a streamlined bank account?
 - What about access to a pre-paid master card?
 - What about links with credit unions?
- How has SDAP met with your expectations?

Experience and challenges of implementing the pilot/model (c10-15 mins)

- How have you found implementing the pilot/model?

Prompt:

- What worked well/what didn't work so well?
 - Technological/technical system implementation? Inc. use of Advice Pro and Vulcan/Paylink/referrals to Payplan
 - Relationship with Advice UK?
 - Relationship with Payplan?
 - Changes to the way your agency/you has to work/cultural changes?
 - Training to use systems/model?
 - Clients understanding the process/wanting to be part of the process?
 - Materials and systems to promote and administer SDAP?
- How have you ensured that the SDAP model has been offered fairly and objectively to clients?
 - If a client decides that token payments, a DMP or a IVA, is their best option, are there particular types of clients that are better suited to taking up SDAP, or who would be unlikely to take up SDAP?"
 - What more could be done to help you and other advisors offer and administer SDAP?

Impact of the pilot (c15-20 mins)

- What do you think the impact of the pilot has been on your organisation, advisors and your clients?

Prompt:

- Impact on agency e.g Improved systems? Monitoring and performance management? Improved advice options/offer to clients? Potential fair share income? Impact on other funding?
 - Impact on advisors e.g.? Improved advice options/offer to clients?
 - Impact on clients e.g. Easier payments? More sustainable payments? Impact on wellbeing?
 - Do you have any examples or case studies of the impact on clients?
- Did any of your SDAP clients take advantage of an introduction to a Barclays basic bank account, or a ClearCash card payment card? If so, how well did this work?
 - Have there been any issues or negative impacts of the pilot on your organisation, your advisors and your clients?

Prompt:

- Cultural change for organisation?
 - Impact on staff time?
 - Impacted on the nature of advice given and the options available to clients?
- How do you feel SDAP compares to other debt advice options?

Prompt:

- Is it 'just one other option'? Or will it be a leading option you offer to appropriate clients?
- What are its strengths compared to other options? What are its weaknesses?

Future challenges and rolling out the model (c10-15 mins)

- Advice UK are considering rolling out the model to other agencies once the pilot is over. Are there any key issues or challenges that need to be managed to ensure a successful roll-out?

Prompt:

- E.g improved technology, more support, change/improved processes, new/different services offered to clients?
- The take up of SDAP for most agencies has been below that anticipated in their applications. Why do you think that is the case?

Prompt:

- Could anything have been done differently from Advice UK, Payplan or the agency to have increased take-up?
 - Can anything be done differently to ensure take up is maximised in the future?
- Overall, about a third of DMP and IVA cases referred to Payplan have not been successfully converted into a DMP or IVA. What could be done to improve this?

Prompt:

- Most failures have been caused by difficulties making contact with the client, or clients not meeting Payplan's DMP or IVA criteria – how can this be improved?
- Are there any other services that could be added into SDAP to provide clients more support, or to make SDAP easier for agencies?
- How can SDAP be best promoted to other agencies to ensure a successful roll-out?

Prompt:

- Do you think it should be rolled out?
- What are the key features that need to be promoted to other agencies?

Summing up (c5 mins)

- Overall, is there anything else you would like to say about the pilot/model?
- Facilitator to sum up the key messages identified from the discussion to sense check that understood correctly
- Facilitator to outline next steps – what will happen to the information
- Any final questions?

Appendix 5: Advice UK SDAP – Clients Wave 2 Discussion Guide - Final

Process and logistics

- In-depth interviews to last c30 minutes
- Interviews conducted with current/active clients
- Discussions will be recorded and used in analysing and reporting the findings

Overall aims/areas for discussion during interviews:

- Repayment journey
- Engagement with advice agency and Payplan
- Impact of repayment arrangement

Discussion Guide

Introduction (c2 mins)

Key points to note

- Background to study
- Public Perspectives' role and background
- Discussions will be recorded
- Stress anonymity and confidentiality
- Set ground rules – no right or wrong answers, honest and open
- What happens to the information
- Any questions?

Key lines of questioning

Repayment journey (c10 mins)

- Can I just confirm how you are currently making repayments?
- What prompted you to do something about your current debts?
- What previous attempts have you made to do something about your debts?
- Why did you choose this debt repayment arrangement?
- Why did you choose it over other options?

Engagement with advice agency/Payplan (c5-10 mins)

- How did you find the initial advice and support you received from your advice agency?
- How well did the agency explain to you what is involved in [making your repayments via Paylink] / [being referred to Payplan]?
- How did you find setting up your payment arrangement via Paylink or Payplan?

Impact of repayment arrangement (c5-10 mins)

- What impact has your repayment arrangement had on your financial situation?
- What impact has your repayment arrangement had on you? E.g sense of financial control, ability to cope with life, sense of wellbeing?
- Overall, what do you think about your repayment arrangement?

Summing up (c5 mins)

- Overall, is there anything else you would like to say about your repayment arrangement?
- Facilitator to sum up the key messages identified from the discussion to sense check that understood correctly
- Facilitator to outline next steps – what will happen to the information
- Any final questions?

Appendix 6: Advice UK SDAP – Creditors Wave 2 Discussion Guide - Final

Process and logistics

- In-depth interviews to last c30 minutes
- Interviews conducted with creditors
- Discussions will be recorded and used in analysing and reporting the findings

Overall aims/areas for discussion during interviews:

- Key features and potential benefits of SDAP model
- Experience of repayments through SDAP
- Future challenges and rolling out the model

Discussion Guide

Introduction (c2 mins)

Key points to note

- Background to study
- Public Perspectives' role and background
- Discussions will be recorded
- Stress anonymity and confidentiality
- Set ground rules – no right or wrong answers, honest and open
- What happens to the information
- Before we begin, I'd like to just remind you how SDAP works - clients make single regular payments that are disbursed to all of their creditors. This either uses Payplan's systems, if a DMP or IVA, or is operated by the debt advice agency if token payments or low offers are being made
- Any questions?

Key lines of questioning

Key features and potential benefits of SDAP model (c5-10 mins)

- What would you say are the key features and potential benefits?

Prompt:

- To advice agencies? E.g. Fair Share? Further advice option?
- To clients? E.g. Ease of making payments? Sustainability of payments?
- To creditors? E.g. Sustainability of payments?

- How do you feel SDAP compares to other methods of debtors paying back their debts?

Prompt:

- Is it 'just one other option'? Or should it be a leading option offered to appropriate clients?
- What are its strengths compared to other options? What are its weaknesses?

Experience of SDAP (c5-10 mins)

- Thinking about clients that have made repayments through SDAP, how have you found the model?

Prompt:

- Ease of setting up payments with Payplan or with Agencies via Paylink?
- Repayment amount?
- Sustainability of payments?

Future challenges and rolling out the model (c5-10 mins)

- What does the SDAP pilot/model have to prove to be considered a success?

Prompt:

- What does the project need to do/show to demonstrate that it is a success?

- Advice UK are considering rolling out the model to other agencies once the pilot is over. What do you think needs to happen to ensure a roll out is successful?

Prompt:

- What needs to happen to win over advice agencies, clients, creditors and the wider sector?
- Do you think the model should be rolled out?
- Are there any other services that could be added into SDAP to make it more attractive to agencies, clients and creditors?
- How can you/your organisation support the roll-out?

Summing up (c5 mins)

- Overall, is there anything else you would like to say about the pilot?
- Facilitator to sum up the key messages identified from the discussion to sense check that understood correctly
- Facilitator to outline next steps – what will happen to the information
- Any final questions?

Appendix 7: Advice UK SDAP – Stakeholders Wave 2 Discussion Guide - Final

Process and logistics

- In-depth interviews to last c45 minutes for PAG members and c30 mins for non-PAG stakeholders
- Interviews conducted with c10 identified stakeholders
- Discussions will be recorded and used in analysing and reporting the findings

Overall aims/areas for discussion during interviews:

- Key features and potential benefits of SDAP model
- Experience and challenges of implementing the pilot
- Impact of the pilot/model
- Future challenges and rolling out the model

Discussion Guide

Introduction (c2 mins)

Key points to note

- Background to study
- Public Perspectives' role and background
- Discussions will be recorded
- Stress anonymity and confidentiality
- Set ground rules – no right or wrong answers, honest and open
- What happens to the information
- Any questions?

Key lines of questioning

Key features and potential benefits of SDAP model (c5-10 mins)

- When we spoke several months ago (for those stakeholders previously interviewed), you outlined what you felt were the key features and potential benefits of SDAP. What would you now say are the key features and potential benefits?

Prompt:

- To advice agencies? E.g. Fair Share Further advice option?
 - To clients? E.g. Ease of making payments? Sustainability of payments?
 - To creditors? E.g. Sustainability of payments?
 - What about access to a streamlined bank account?
 - What about access to a pre-paid master card?
 - What about links with credit unions?
- How has SDAP met with your expectations?

Experience and challenges of implementing the pilot (c5-15 mins) (only ask to PAG members and Payplan)

- How do you think implementation of the pilot/model has gone?

Prompt:

- What worked well/what didn't work so well?
 - Relationship between agencies, Advice UK and Payplan?
 - Challenges of implementing the systems between agencies and Payplan?
 - How do you feel the implementation has gone within Payplan itself? (For Payplan interviewees)
- What do you think about the role played by Advice UK to implement the pilot?
 - What do you think about the role of the Project Advisory Group?

Impact of the pilot/model (c5-10 mins)

- What do you think the impact of the pilot/model has been? (Only ask to PAG members)

Prompt:

- On agencies?
- On clients?

- On creditors?
 - On Payplan?
 - On the wider money advice sector?
- Have there been any issues or negative impacts of the pilot/model? (Only ask to PAG members)
 - How do you feel SDAP compares to other debt advice options?

Prompt:

- Is it 'just one other option'? Or will it be a leading option offered to appropriate clients?
- What are its strengths compared to other option? What are its weaknesses?

Future challenges and rolling out the model (c5-10 mins)

- What does the SDAP pilot/model have to prove to be considered a success?

Prompt:

- What does the project need to do/show to demonstrate that it is a success?
- Advice UK are considering rolling out the model to other agencies once the pilot is over. What do you think needs to happen to ensure a roll out is successful?

Prompt:

- What needs to happen to win over advice agencies, clients, creditors and the wider sector?
- Do you think the model should be rolled out?
- Are there any other services that could be added into SDAP to make it more attractive to agencies and clients?
- How can you/your organisation support the roll-out?

Specific question for John Fairhurst/Ali McLaren:

- What do you want to see from the pilot to justify Payplan investing more in the technology and in a national roll-out? How much of this have you seen so far? How confident are you that you will get the evidence you need to progress the model further?

Specific question for John Fairhurst/Helen Clarke (Payplan)

- Overall, about a third of DMP and IVA cases referred to Payplan have not been successfully converted into a DMP or IVA. What could be done to improve this?

Prompt:

- Most failures have been caused by difficulties making contact with the client, or clients not meeting Payplan's DMP or IVA criteria – how can this be improved?

Summing up (c5 mins)

- Overall, is there anything else you would like to say about the pilot?
- Facilitator to sum up the key messages identified from the discussion to sense check that understood correctly
- Facilitator to outline next steps – what will happen to the information

Appendix 8: SDAP Client Survey (current payees/active cases)

Hello, my name is . . . and I am calling on behalf of Advice UK. You recently gave your permission to be contacted to answer some questions about your experience of setting up a new debt repayment arrangement after you visited xyz advice agency (note to interviewer: please note advice agency from contact list).

I'd like to spend up to 15 minutes asking you some questions. Advice UK have asked my company, Public Perspectives - an independent research organisation, to conduct the interviews to help evaluate the effectiveness of the support you received.

Are you able to take part? (Note to interviewer: if respondent can not take part now, please arrange call back)

You are one of over 100 people we want to interview. I want to stress that what you say will be treated anonymously and confidentially. This means that your name and details will not be linked to your responses and nothing you say will get back to your advice agency or creditors.

Q1 How are you currently making debt repayments? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and if respondent is unable to answer then ask prompted. Select one answer only

- Paylink (a single monthly payment administered via the Paylink system with the support of the money advice agency)
- Payplan DMP (A debt management plan - a single monthly payment administered via Payplan - the debt repayment company)
- Payplan IVA (Individual voluntary arrangement set up via Payplan)

Q2 Can you confirm that you are currently making payments? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select one answer only. If they are not currently making payments you will be directed to the end of the questionnaire

- I am currently making payments
- I was making payments but stopped
- I never made payments

Q3 What previous attempts have you made to repay your current debts? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select all relevant answers

- Dealing with creditors individually
- Sought advice from Citizen's Advice Bureaux
- Sought advice from other money advice organisations
- Sought advice from fee charging money advice company (e.g. Payplan)
- Other debt repayment activities

- No previous attempts
- If 'other', please specify
-

Q4 **What prompted you to do something about your current debt(s)? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select all relevant answers**

- My previous attempts to manage my debt(s) had failed
 - My debts were getting unmanageable
 - I need to improve my financial situation
 - My debts were causing me stress and worry
 - My debts were affecting my family and personal life
 - I was receiving demand letters from creditors
 - Bailiffs were chasing the debt
 - I was threatened with eviction/repossession from my home
 - I was threatened with disconnecting my services
 - My creditors started legal proceedings against me
 - Other
- If 'other', please specify
-

Q5 **What alternative repayment arrangements did you consider? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and if respondent is unable to answer then ask prompted. Select all relevant answers**

- Paylink
- Payplan DMP (Debt Management Plan)
- Payplan IVA (Individual Voluntary Arrangement)
- Other DMP
- Other IVA
- Debt relief order
- Bankruptcy
- Self help (with support and advice from an advice agency i.e. take control of debt repayments on their own)
- Agreeing repayments with creditors themselves, without the help of a debt advice agency
- Other
- I did not consider an alternative repayment arrangement

If 'other', please specify

Q6 Why did you choose this current repayment arrangement? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and select all relevant answers

- One single monthly payment makes it easy to pay my different creditors
- One single monthly payment makes it more affordable to pay my different creditors
- The arrangements were set up for me by the agency/Payplan, making it easier to deal with the different creditors
- I know exactly how much I need to pay back each month, making it easier to budget the rest of my expenditure
- My money advisor encouraged me to select this option
- Other

If 'other', please specify

Q7 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the support you received in choosing your repayment arrangement? Note to interviewer: Make clear to respondent this set of questions relates to the initial advice and support received from their advice agency and not subsequently via Payplan (if they were referred on to Payplan).

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My advisor listened to my situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My advisor provided me with a range of debt repayment options relevant to my situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My advisor provided fair and objective information and advice about the different options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understood the different options available to me and their consequences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The written information I received about my debt repayment option was easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My advisor developed and agreed with me a relevant course of action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I chose the repayment option because it seemed to be the best option for me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note to interviewer: If respondent is making payments via Paylink, please ask following questions at Q8

I feel more in control of my financial situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My stress and worry about money has reduced since I began the repayment arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel better about life since I began the repayment arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My personal and/or family situation has improved since I began the repayment arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am confident that the repayment arrangement will reduce my debt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am committed to completing the repayment arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend this repayment arrangement to other people in my situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q11 Overall, how satisfied are you with the debt repayment arrangement? Note to interviewer ask prompted and then select relevant answer

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neutral
- Fairly unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied

Q12 Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the advice and support you received or your debt repayment arrangement?

Q13 Would you be willing to take part in further research about your experience of setting up a new debt repayment arrangement? This will involve a slightly longer interview to discuss your experiences in more detail for which we will pay you a £10 cash thank you payment. The interview will be conducted over the phone and will be held at a time/date convenient to you.

- Yes
- No

Note to interviewer: only ask following questions if data is missing in contact database

Note to interviewer - read out: I'd like to ask you some questions about you. This will help us understand if there are differences in opinion between different groups of people. We just want to stress that what you say is anonymous and confidential, this means that your responses will not be linked to your name or personal details.

Q14 Are you? **Note to interviewer: Do not ask question, just note down gender**

- Male
- Female

Q15 What was your age on your last birthday? **Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and code appropriately**

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 and over

Q16 How would you describe your ethnic background? **Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and code appropriately**

- White British
- White other
- Black or Black British
- Mixed
- Asian or Asian British
- Any other ethnic group
- Refused

Q17 What is your current employment status? **Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and code appropriately**

- Working full-time
- Working part-time
- Self employed
- Registered unemployed
- Long term sick
- Carer
- Unfit for work
- Retired

Q18

What level of debt did you have when you first visited the advice agency? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and code appropriately

- Under £10,000
- £10,000-£20,000
- £20,000-£30,000
- £30,000-£40,000
- £40,000-£50,000
- Over £50,000

That's now the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for all your time and help. Note to interviewer: if respondent has any questions you can not answer they can call Public Perspectives on FREEPHONE 0800 533 5386

Note to interviewer: You will only be directed to this statement if the respondent is not currently making payments.

"O.K - we are currently only interviewing those that are currently making repayments. Thank you for your time and we may be in touch in the future to ask you about your experience of setting up your debt repayment arrangement."

For Office Use only: Note to Interviewer: Please write in Client Unique ID Number:

For office Use only: Note to Interviewer: Please write in your Interviewer ID Number:

Appendix 9: SDAP Client Survey (lapsed payees)

Hello, my name is . . . and I am calling on behalf of Advice UK. You recently gave your permission to be contacted to answer some questions about your experience of setting up a new debt repayment arrangement after you visited xyz advice agency (note to interviewer: please note advice agency from contact list).

I'd like to spend up to 10 minutes asking you some questions. Advice UK have asked my company, Public Perspectives - an independent research organisation, to conduct the interviews to help evaluate the effectiveness of the support you received.

Are you able to take part? (Note to interviewer: if respondent can not take part now, please arrange call back)

You are one of over 100 people we want to interview. I want to stress that what you say will be treated anonymously and confidentially. This means that your name and details will not be linked to your responses and nothing you say will get back to your advice agency or creditors.

Q1 How were you making debt repayments? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and if respondent is unable to answer then ask prompted. Select one answer only

- Paylink (a single monthly payment administered via the Paylink system with the support of the money advice agency)
- Payplan DMP (A debt management plan - a single monthly payment administered via Payplan - the debt repayment company)
- Payplan IVA (Individual voluntary arrangement set up via Payplan)
- Other

If 'other', please specify

Q2 What previous attempts have you made to repay your current debts? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select all relevant answers

- Dealing with creditors individually
- Sought advice from Citizen's Advice Bureaux
- Sought advice from other money advice organisations
- Sought advice from fee charging money advice company (e.g. Payplan)
- Other debt repayment activities
- No previous attempts

If 'other', please specify

Q3

What prompted you to do something about your current debt(s)? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select all relevant answers

- My previous attempts to manage my debt(s) had failed
- My debts were getting unmanageable
- I need to improve my financial situation
- My debts were causing me stress and worry
- My debts were affecting my family and personal life
- I was receiving demand letters from creditors
- Bailiffs were chasing the debt
- I was threatened with eviction/repossession from my home
- I was threatened with disconnecting my services
- My creditors started legal proceedings against me
- Other

If 'other', please specify

Q4

What alternative repayment arrangements did you consider before setting up this repayment arrangement? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and if respondent is unable to answer then ask prompted. Select all relevant answers

- Paylink
- Payplan DMP (Debt Management Plan)
- Payplan IVA (Individual Voluntary Arrangement)
- Other DMP
- Other IVA
- Debt relief order
- Bankruptcy
- Self help (with support and advice from an advice agency i.e. take control of debt repayments on their own)
- Agreeing repayments with creditors themselves, without the help of a debt advice agency
- Other
- I did not consider an alternative repayment arrangement

If 'other', please specify

Q5 Why did you choose this [Paylink or Payplan] repayment arrangement? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and select all relevant answers

- One single monthly payment makes it easy to pay my different creditors
- One single monthly payment makes it more affordable to pay my different creditors
- The arrangements were set up for me by the agency/Payplan, making it easier to deal with the different creditors
- I know exactly how much I need to pay back each month, making it easier to budget the rest of my expenditure
- My money advisor encouraged me to select this option
- Other

If 'other', please specify

Q6 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the support you received in choosing your repayment arrangement? Note to interviewer: Make clear to respondent this set of questions relates to the initial advice and support received from their advice agency and not subsequently via Payplan (if they were referred on to Payplan).

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My advisor listened to my situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My advisor provided me with a range of debt repayment options relevant to my situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My advisor provided fair and objective information and advice about the different options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understood the different options available to me and their consequences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The written information I received about my debt repayment option was easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My advisor developed and agreed with me a relevant course of action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I chose the repayment option because it seemed to be the best option for me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note to interviewer: If respondent was making payments via Paylink, please ask following questions at Q7 - this is automated through the on-line survey

Q7 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the repayment arrangement you set up via Paylink?

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know

My advice agency provided me with all the support I needed to set up my repayment arrangement via Paylink	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was easy to set up my repayment arrangement via Paylink	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My advice agency clearly communicated what I needed to do to set up my repayment arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My advice agency kept me up to date on how I am doing in paying off my debts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note to interviewer: If respondent is making payments via Payplan through a DMP or IVA, please ask following questions at Q8 - this is automated through the on-line survey

Q8	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the repayment arrangement you set up with Payplan?						
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	The transfer to Payplan (from my advice agency) was quick and efficient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	My advice agency provided me with all the support I needed to transfer over to Payplan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Payplan supported me throughout the process in setting up my repayment arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	It was easy to set up my repayment arrangement with Payplan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Payplan clearly communicated what I needed to do to set up my repayment arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Payplan kept me up to date on how I am doing in paying off my debts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note to interviewer: Ask to all

- Q9** **Why did you stop the debt repayment arrangement? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and select all relevant answers**
- I could no longer afford the repayments
 - My financial circumstances changed making the repayment arrangement inappropriate
 - My personal circumstances changed making the repayment arrangement inappropriate
 - I decided an alternative repayment arrangement was better for me
 - I didn't fully understand the repayment arrangement [Paylink or Payplan] when I first signed up for it/showed interest
 - I wasn't happy with the repayment arrangement

- The support I received from Payplan or my advice agency wasn't what I expected
- I prefer to manage my debts myself
- I completed my debt repayments and am no longer in debt
- Other

If 'other', please specify

Q10 Overall, how satisfied were you with the debt repayment arrangement? Note to interviewer ask prompted and then select relevant answer

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neutral
- Fairly unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied

Q11 What are you now doing to repay your debts and manage your finances? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and select relevant answer

- I have set up an alternative debt repayment arrangement
- I have repaid all my debts
- I am not doing anything at the moment
- Other

If 'other' please specify

Q12 Note to interviewer only ask appropriate respondents: If you set up an alternative debt repayment arrangement what are you currently doing? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and select all relevant answers

- Other DMP (Debt Management Plan)
- Other IVA (Other Individual Voluntary Arrangement)
- Debt relief order
- Bankruptcy
- Self help (with support and advice from an advice agency i.e. take control of debt repayments on their own)
- Agreeing repayments with creditors themselves, without the help of a debt advice agency

Other
If 'other', please specify

Q13 Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the advice and support you received or your debt repayment arrangement?

Q14 Would you be willing to take part in further research about your experience of setting up a new debt repayment arrangement? This will involve a slightly longer interview to discuss your experiences in more detail for which we will pay you a £10 cash thank you payment. The interview will be conducted over the phone and will be held at a time/date convenient to you.

- Yes
 No

Note to interviewer: only ask following questions if data is missing in contact database (if not missing, then complete answers from the contact list)

Note to interviewer - read out: I'd like to ask you some questions about you. This will help us understand if there are differences in opinion between different groups of people. We just want to stress that what you say is anonymous and confidential, this means that your responses will not be linked to your name or personal details.

Q15 Are you? **Note to interviewer: Do not ask question, just note down gender**

- Male
 Female

Q16 What was your age on your last birthday? **Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and code appropriately**

- 18-24
 25-34
 35-44
 45-54
 55-64
 65 and over

Q17 **How would you describe your ethnic background? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and code appropriately**

- White British
- White other
- Black or Black British
- Mixed
- Asian or Asian British
- Any other ethnic group
- Refused

Q18 **What is your current employment status? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and code appropriately**

- Working full-time
- Working part-time
- Self employed
- Registered unemployed
- Long term sick
- Carer
- Unfit for work
- Retired

That's now the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for all your time and help. Note to interviewer: if respondent has any questions you can not answer they can call Public Perspectives on FREEPHONE 0800 533 5386

For Office Use only: Note to Interviewer: Please write in Client Unique ID Number:

For office Use only: Note to Interviewer: Please write in your Interviewer ID Number:

Appendix 10: SDAP Client Survey (Closed cases)

Hello, my name is . . . and I am calling on behalf of Advice UK. You recently gave your permission to be contacted to answer some questions about your experience of setting up a new debt repayment arrangement after you visited xyz advice agency (note to interviewer: please note advice agency from contact list).

I'd like to spend up to 10 minutes asking you some questions. Advice UK have asked my company, Public Perspectives - an independent research organisation, to conduct the interviews to help evaluate the effectiveness of the support you received.

Are you able to take part? (Note to interviewer: if respondent can not take part now, please arrange call back)

You are one of over 100 people we want to interview. I want to stress that what you say will be treated anonymously and confidentially. This means that your name and details will not be linked to your responses and nothing you say will get back to your advice agency or creditors.

Q1 How were you making debt repayments or intending to make debt repayments? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and if respondent is unable to answer then ask prompted. Select one answer only

- Paylink (a single monthly payment administered via the Paylink system with the support of the money advice agency)
- Payplan DMP (A debt management plan - a single monthly payment administered via Payplan - the debt repayment company)
- Payplan IVA (Individual voluntary arrangement set up via Payplan)
- Other

If 'other', please specify

Q2 What previous attempts have you made to repay your current debts? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select all relevant answers

- Dealing with creditors individually
- Sought advice from Citizen's Advice Bureaux
- Sought advice from other money advice organisations
- Sought advice from fee charging money advice company (e.g. Payplan)
- Other debt repayment activities
- No previous attempts

If 'other', please specify

Q3

What prompted you to do something about your current debt(s)? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select all relevant answers

- My previous attempts to manage my debt(s) had failed
- My debts were getting unmanageable
- I need to improve my financial situation
- My debts were causing me stress and worry
- My debts were affecting my family and personal life
- I was receiving demand letters from creditors
- Bailiffs were chasing the debt
- I was threatened with eviction/repossession from my home
- I was threatened with disconnecting my services
- My creditors started legal proceedings against me
- Other

If 'other', please specify

Q4

What alternative repayment arrangements did you consider before attempting to set up this repayment arrangement? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and if respondent is unable to answer then ask prompted. Select all relevant answers

- Paylink
- Payplan DMP (Debt Management Plan)
- Payplan IVA (Individual Voluntary Arrangement)
- Other DMP
- Other IVA
- Debt relief order
- Bankruptcy
- Self help (with support and advice from an advice agency i.e. take control of debt repayments on their own)
- Agreeing repayments with creditors themselves, without the help of a debt advice agency
- Other
- I did not consider an alternative repayment arrangement

If 'other', please specify

Q5 Why were you interested in this [Paylink or Payplan] repayment arrangement? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and select all relevant answers

- One single monthly payment makes it easy to pay my different creditors
- One single monthly payment makes it more affordable to pay my different creditors
- The arrangements were set up for me by the agency/Payplan, making it easier to deal with the different creditors
- I know exactly how much I need to pay back each month, making it easier to budget the rest of my expenditure
- My money advisor encouraged me to select this option
- Other

If 'other', please specify

Q6 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the support you received in choosing your repayment arrangement? Note to interviewer: Make clear to respondent this set of questions relates to the initial advice and support received from their advice agency and not subsequently via Payplan (if they were referred on to Payplan).

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My advisor listened to my situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My advisor provided me with a range of debt repayment options relevant to my situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My advisor provided fair and objective information and advice about the different options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understood the different options available to me and their consequences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The written information I received about my debt repayment option was easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My advisor developed and agreed with me a relevant course of action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I chose the repayment option because it seemed to be the best option for me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note to interviewer: Ask to all

Q7 Why did you not take up the debt repayment arrangement? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and select all relevant answers

- I was never contacted again by my advice agency
- I was never contacted by Payplan

- My financial circumstances changed making the repayment arrangement inappropriate
- My personal circumstances changed making the repayment arrangement inappropriate
- I decided an alternative repayment arrangement was better for me
- I didn't fully understand the repayment arrangement [Paylink or Payplan] when I first showed interest
- I wasn't happy with the repayment arrangement
- The support I received from Payplan or my advice agency wasn't what I expected
- It was too difficult to set-up the repayment arrangement
- I didn't meet Payplan's criteria to set up a DMP or IVA
- I prefer to manage my debts myself
- I only needed/received advice
- Other

If 'other', please specify

Q8 **What are you now doing to repay your debts and manage your finances? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and select relevant answer**

- I have set up an alternative debt repayment arrangement
- I have repaid all my debts
- I am not doing anything at the moment
- Other

If 'other' please specify

Q9 **Note to interviewer only ask appropriate respondents: If you set up an alternative debt repayment arrangement what are you currently doing? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and select all relevant answers**

- Other DMP (Debt Management Plan)
- Other IVA (Other Individual Voluntary Arrangement)
- Debt relief order
- Bankruptcy
- Self help (with support and advice from an advice agency i.e. take control of debt repayments on their own)
- Agreeing repayments with creditors themselves, without the help of a debt advice agency

Other
If 'other', please specify

Q10 Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the advice and support you received or your debt repayment arrangement?

Q11 Would you be willing to take part in further research about your experience of setting up a new debt repayment arrangement? This will involve a slightly longer interview to discuss your experiences in more detail for which we will pay you a £10 cash thank you payment. The interview will be conducted over the phone and will be held at a time/date convenient to you.

- Yes
 No

Note to interviewer: only ask following questions if data is missing in contact database (if it is not missing, please add in answers from contact list in to the survey)

Note to interviewer - read out: I'd like to ask you some questions about you. This will help us understand if there are differences in opinion between different groups of people. We just want to stress that what you say is anonymous and confidential, this means that your responses will not be linked to your name or personal details.

Q12 Are you? **Note to interviewer: Do not ask question, just note down gender**

- Male
 Female

Q13 What was your age on your last birthday? **Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and code appropriately**

- 18-24
 25-34
 35-44
 45-54
 55-64
 65 and over

Q14 **How would you describe your ethnic background? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and code appropriately**

- White British
- White other
- Black or Black British
- Mixed
- Asian or Asian British
- Any other ethnic group
- Refused

Q15 **What is your current employment status? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and code appropriately**

- Working full-time
- Working part-time
- Self employed
- Registered unemployed
- Long term sick
- Carer
- Unfit for work
- Retired

That's now the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for all your time and help. Note to interviewer: if respondent has any questions you can not answer they can call Public Perspectives on FREEPHONE 0800 533 5386

For Office Use only: Note to Interviewer: Please write in Client Unique ID Number:

For office Use only: Note to Interviewer: Please write in your Interviewer ID Number:
