Nuffield Foundation

Understanding the justice needs gap in England and Wales

Full report

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List of abbreviations

A&A	assistance and advice
AJA	Access to Justice Act
AME	average marginal effects
CFA	Conditional Fee Agreement
CI	confidence interval
CPA	Civil Procedure Act
CPR	Civil Procedure Rules
CSJS	Civil and Social Justice Survey
DRM	dispute resolution mechanism
ECF	Exceptional Case Funding
GLNS	Global Legal Needs Survey
HMCTS	His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service
ILNS	Individual Legal Needs Survey
LASPO	Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012
LNS	Legal Needs Survey
LPRS	Legal Problem and Resolution Survey
LSB	Legal Services Board
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
TCEA	Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007
TLS	The Law Society
WJP	World Justice Project

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Executive summary

This Review examines the justice system in England and Wales from the perspective of people experiencing everyday civil, family, and administrative justice problems. It applies a standardised framework of people-centred justice outcome indicators to three national legal needs surveys conducted by government and legal services institutions in 2004, 2014–15, and 2023 and brings this evidence together with more than two decades of reform and implementation evidence to examine whether people can obtain the support they need and resolve their justice problems on fair terms.

The review is separated into two complementary parts. Part A examines the full justice journey and how this relates to problem resolution, process fairness, and trust. Part B examines differences in people's justice needs and resolution pathways across reform contexts since the late 1990s, particularly in relation to major reforms, policy changes, and wider pressures on the justice system.

The findings of this Review make a case for understanding both the gap between people's justice needs and the solutions available to them, and the inequalities in people's ability to access support and resolve their problems on fair terms.

- **Part A points to substantial and uneven gaps between people's justice needs and their ability to obtain support, navigate processes, and reach fair resolution.**
  - More than one-third of adults experienced a non-trivial justice problem.
  - However, substantial gaps remained in people's ability to address those problems: nearly four in ten people who needed assistance and advice did not obtain it, three in ten who needed a dispute resolution mechanism did not access one, and nearly three in ten people whose process had concluded still had an unresolved problem; only just over half considered the concluded process fair.
  - These gaps were unevenly distributed. Legal capability was the clearest recurring divide across access, trust, process experience, fairness, and resolution, while disability, education, income, and experiencing several problems were associated with disadvantage at particular stages in the justice journey.
  - Income was not strongly associated with overall problem prevalence, but the types of problems that people faced differed by income. Considering problem severity, among people on lower incomes, more common problems are not necessarily less severe, a trend that has been observed among people on higher incomes.
  - The accumulation of problems was also associated with greater disadvantage: people experiencing several problems were more likely to report multiple hardships, to still have an ongoing process, and, where a process had concluded, to have an unresolved problem.

- Different forms of support need to be considered together: after accounting for observed differences in people and their problems, estimated resolution was lowest among people who accessed a dispute resolution mechanism without also obtaining assistance and advice, and higher among those who obtained both.

- **Part B points to a recurring concern across three distinct reform contexts: the potential that changes in justice processes and support placed demands on people that were harder to meet when they had fewer resources, lower legal capability, or more demanding problems.**

  - In Period 1, the 2004 Civil and Social Justice Survey (CSJS) evidence is interpreted in relation to early civil procedure reforms that increased what parties were expected to do before reaching court, while changes to publicly funded legal assistance altered what support was available and how it was provided. People facing problems more directly affected by these changes appeared less likely to reach resolution, with point estimates suggesting larger shortfalls among people on lower incomes and with lower educational attainment. The statistical evidence was imprecise but is interpreted alongside the broader body of evidence on reform and implementation.

  - In Period 2, the 2014–15 Legal Problem and Resolution Survey (LPRS) evidence is interpreted in relation to a reform context in which changes to court and tribunal administration occurred alongside reforms to legal-aid funding and, through the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO), substantial restrictions to the scope and financial eligibility of civil legal aid. Problems more directly affected by the reforms were less likely to be resolved overall, and among people on lower incomes, substantially less likely. Estimates for education and legal capability pointed in the same direction, although they were less precise.

  - Under Modernisation, Period 3, the 2023 Individual Legal Needs Survey (ILNS) evidence is interpreted in relation to the continuing implementation of court and tribunal Modernisation, alongside COVID-19 and Brexit. There was little overall difference in resolution between routes more and less directly shaped by Modernisation. The survey did not show clear differences in this relationship by income or access to assistance and advice, although income does not directly capture digital or geographic barriers to access, and the assistance and advice measure combines diverse forms and quality of support. The estimates nevertheless suggested that people with lower legal capability and those facing more severe problems were less likely to resolve their problems through routes more directly shaped by Modernisation, although these differences were not statistically conclusive. Considered alongside the wider evidence on implementation, these patterns raise concerns about the challenges modernised processes may pose for people with greater support needs.

  - The survey relationships are associational (they do not imply causation) and are interpreted alongside the structured review of what the reforms changed, the mechanisms through which those changes could plausibly affect people's justice journeys, and wider evidence on their implementation.

Across Parts A and B, disadvantage is most visible where demanding problems and justice processes meet limited resources, lower legal capability, and insufficient support. The findings therefore point to justice inequality as relational: disadvantage depends not only on people's circumstances, but on how those circumstances interact with the demands of their problems and with the justice pathways available to address them. A people-centred assessment should look beyond whether services exist or processes conclude, to whether people in different circumstances can obtain and use the support they need to resolve their problems on fair terms.

Policy recommendations

1. Design for where disadvantage compounds

People face problems of different severity and complexity, with different resources and capabilities. Furthermore, disadvantage can compound before people reach a process, such as people in lower-income households being more exposed to problems involving welfare, debt, and housing insecurity. Reform should therefore consider not only average outcomes, but who is most exposed to the problems and services affected, and whether changes risk reinforcing existing inequalities, and should use this understanding to improve the design of justice processes so that they remain usable for people facing compounding disadvantage.

2. Manage scarcity-driven trade-offs explicitly

Reform can make processes simpler or more efficient while also changing what people themselves must understand, prepare, and manage. The Review does not argue that earlier levels of provision could have been sustained, or that outcomes would have been better without reform. Where resources are constrained, reform must ask how choices about funding and efficiency redistribute demands between institutions, services, and individuals; which people-centred outcomes and forms of support are protected; and who is expected to absorb the consequences.

3. Treat support and resolution routes as complementary

Where legal capability, problem severity, interconnected problems, or procedural demands make self-navigation difficult, services and resolution routes need visible entry points, coordinated and effective referrals, and sustained human support to be effective. Therefore, prioritise the frontline functions that help people identify, navigate, and resolve problems effectively, rather than assessing resource needs only through existing institutional structures.

4. Assess people's outcomes as well as institutional performance

Measures of cost, timeliness, throughput, and process completion remain important, but they cannot show on their own whether people resolve the underlying problem or whether outcomes differ across people and problems. Reform should therefore be assessed not only by whether processes become faster, simpler, or more efficient, but also by whether people can obtain and use the support available to them and resolve their problems on fair terms.

5. Build better evidence for future reform

Despite substantial differences between successive surveys, considerable common analytical ground can be found. This approach can be leveraged in other contexts where data availability allows. Yet changes in measurement, survey design, and sample size continue to limit what can be examined consistently, particularly where multiple forms of disadvantage intersect. Future surveys require greater continuity in core measures, including severity, multiple problems, legal capability, access to services, resolution, duration, fairness, and hardship – as well as survey designs that support robust disaggregation and stronger links between legal needs, administrative, and service data. Together, these sources can provide a fuller picture of both people's justice outcomes and the systems intended to respond to their needs.

Introduction and analytical framework

This Review examines the state of people-centred justice in England and Wales, asking three questions:

- How large is the gap between people's justice needs and the solutions they can access effectively?
- How does this gap vary across places and population groups?
- How has this gap evolved alongside major reforms, policy changes, and wider pressures on the justice system since the late 1990s?

To answer these questions, this Review examines two threads: England and Wales' comparatively rich and longstanding legal needs survey evidence produced over nearly two decades across government, regulatory, research, and professional institutions; and more than two decades of civil justice reform.

The Review operates with the following scope: it focuses on the non-criminal justice problems covered by legal needs surveys, spanning civil, family, and administrative justice, including employment disputes. It deals with the legal needs of individuals; business legal needs, while important, fall outside the scope of this Review. A justice problem is understood as a problem with a legal dimension, regardless of whether the person recognises it as legal, seeks help, or takes formal action (Genn and Beinart 1999).

One major contribution of this Review is the **systematic reconstruction and harmonisation of common concepts and indicators across more than two decades of legal needs surveys** that were not designed as a single series, but instead were developed by different institutions, with changing questionnaires, routing, and measurement approaches. Rather than treating these surveys as directly comparable, the Review identifies where concepts and measures can be aligned, where meaningful comparisons can be made, and where differences in survey design constrain interpretation. This creates a usable basis for examining patterns in people's justice experiences alongside major reforms and wider pressures on the justice system, while also identifying concrete gaps in the consistent measurement of important aspects of people-centred justice. (See Appendix: Methodology for more details.)

Another major contribution is that the Review puts **a people-centred justice outcome indicator framework designed to be applicable across jurisdictions and justice systems** into practice using existing legal needs data, keeping people's needs, experiences, and outcomes – not institutional activity alone – at the centre of the assessment. The Review starts from the justice problems people experience in everyday life rather than from courts, procedures, or other justice institutions. The analysis then follows people's justice journeys:

- Can they obtain the information, assistance and advice, and dispute resolution mechanisms they need?
- Is their problem resolved?
- Is the process fair and timely?
- Do problems generate wider hardship?
- Do people trust justice actors to act competently and fairly?

These stages and indicators largely follow a standardised people-centred justice framework developed through the work of World Justice Project (WJP) with international partners (HiiL et al. forthcoming), and they provide the basis for identifying a mismatch between people's justice needs and the solutions available to them.

Elements of the people-centred justice outcome indicator framework

Problem resolution refers to whether the underlying justice problem itself has been fully resolved, rather than simply whether a case or process has ended.

Information can help people recognise the legal dimensions of a problem, understand their rights, and identify possible pathways towards resolution.

Assistance and advice provide more tailored guidance, practical support, advocacy, or representation to help people decide what action to take, navigate procedures, and, where needed, connect with other relevant services. They may be provided by lawyers, advice organisations, public agencies, unions, charities, health and social-service professionals, employers, and insurers.

Dispute resolution mechanisms are the routes through which people seek to resolve a problem through agreement, facilitated settlement, an authoritative decision, or another form of redress. They include negotiation; courts and tribunals; ombuds institutions, regulators and other designated authorities; community or religious bodies; mediation, conciliation and arbitration; and insurance claims.

Post-resolution support includes mechanisms and services that help secure the implementation of, compliance with, or adaptation of agreements and rulings after a resolution has been reached.

Outcome fairness concerns whether the result of efforts to address a problem is perceived as fair, while process fairness concerns whether the way in which the problem is handled is perceived as fair, irrespective of the outcome.

Timeliness concerns whether the process of addressing a problem proceeds and concludes without undue delay.

Hardships capture the wider consequences associated with justice problems across health, psychological well-being, family and social relationships, safety and security, economic and material circumstances, and substance use.

Trust encompasses two related dimensions: trust in the competence and accessibility of the civil justice system and lawyers, and trust in the fairness of the justice system across socio-economic groups, including whether people's financial resources affect their access to legal help, quality of representation, or outcomes.

This Review applies the above framework to recent and historical legal needs survey data from England and Wales. As introduced above, it combines this quantitative evidence with a structured review of reforms, policy documents, evaluations, and wider access-to-justice research. The reform review identifies major changes that could plausibly have affected people's justice journeys, the mechanisms through which they may have done so, and the problem types, population groups, and manners of resolution most likely to have been affected. The reforms are aligned with each survey's fieldwork dates and recall period – that is, the period of time respondents were asked to think back on when reporting justice problems – to establish which reform context each survey can plausibly inform analysis of. The surveys therefore provide population-level snapshots of people's experiences at different points in the reform history, rather than continuous observations of each reform period. This alignment provides the structure for the analysis across reform contexts.

The framework also provides a foundation for future measurement. By documenting both the common analytical ground and the remaining discontinuities between surveys, it establishes a baseline against which future legal needs evidence can be designed, interpreted, and compared more consistently.

Together, these contributions turn a fragmented evidence base into a more integrated and policy-relevant account of people-centred justice in England and Wales. They provide a fuller picture of whether justice pathways are available, usable, and effective from people's perspective; and of how these experiences differ across population groups and what can – and cannot – be learned from existing legal needs evidence about differences across reform contexts. The resulting account is intended to complement the administrative, operational, financial, and evaluative evidence needed for a comprehensive assessment of the justice system.

Methodology

The Review makes a methodological contribution by applying a standardised framework of people-centred justice outcome indicators to three distinct national legal needs surveys that were not designed as a single series. It systematically assesses and, where possible, harmonises differences in survey design and measurement, identifying where meaningful comparisons can be supported and where limitations remain. Using the 2023 Individual Legal Needs Survey (ILNS), Part A goes beyond conventional measures of problem prevalence and unmet need to examine how justice problems and hardship intersect, whether people obtain the assistance and advice and dispute resolution mechanisms they need, and whether their problems are resolved on fair terms. It also examines how these experiences differ across population groups and stages of the justice journey, distinguishing process completion from problem resolution and other dimensions of people's experiences.

The Review also combines quantitative survey analysis with a structured examination of more than two decades of justice reforms, their implementation, and wider access to justice evidence. Rather than treating successive surveys as a continuous trend series, it examines relationships separately within each survey and interprets the resulting patterns in light of three distinct reform contexts. This mixed methods approach enables Part B to examine how access to support and problem resolution relate to people's exposure to different reform contexts, whether these relationships vary across population groups and justice journeys, and how the observed patterns can be understood in the context of distinct reforms. As mentioned above, the findings are interpreted as patterns and relationships rather than causal estimates of reform effects. Further details on the research

design, analytical methods, indicator harmonisation, and associated limitations are provided in the 'Methodology' and 'Methodological note' appendices.

Roadmap to the Review

The Review develops these findings in two substantive parts, followed by an integrated discussion of the findings and their implications.

Part A examines the current state of people-centred justice in England and Wales using the 2023 survey, addressing the first two questions at the start of this introduction. It follows people from the justice problems and hardships they experience through trust, access to services, process completion, problem resolution, and process quality and examines how these experiences vary across population groups and how access to services is related to outcomes.

Part B examines problem resolution patterns across distinct reform contexts or analytical periods. It sets out the major reforms and wider pressures considered, explains how evidence from differently designed legal needs surveys is harmonised to support comparison where possible, sets out how core people-centred justice outcomes were operationalised as consistently as the available survey designs allow, and then examines how patterns in problem resolution differed across successive reform contexts and among people with different resources, capabilities, and types of problems.

The **Discussion** then brings together the evidence from Parts A and B to consider what these findings imply for understanding and addressing justice inequality.

The current state of people-centred justice in England and Wales

1. The overall picture: everyday justice needs and outcomes

2. Justice problems

3. Hardships

4. Trust

5. Access to services and advice

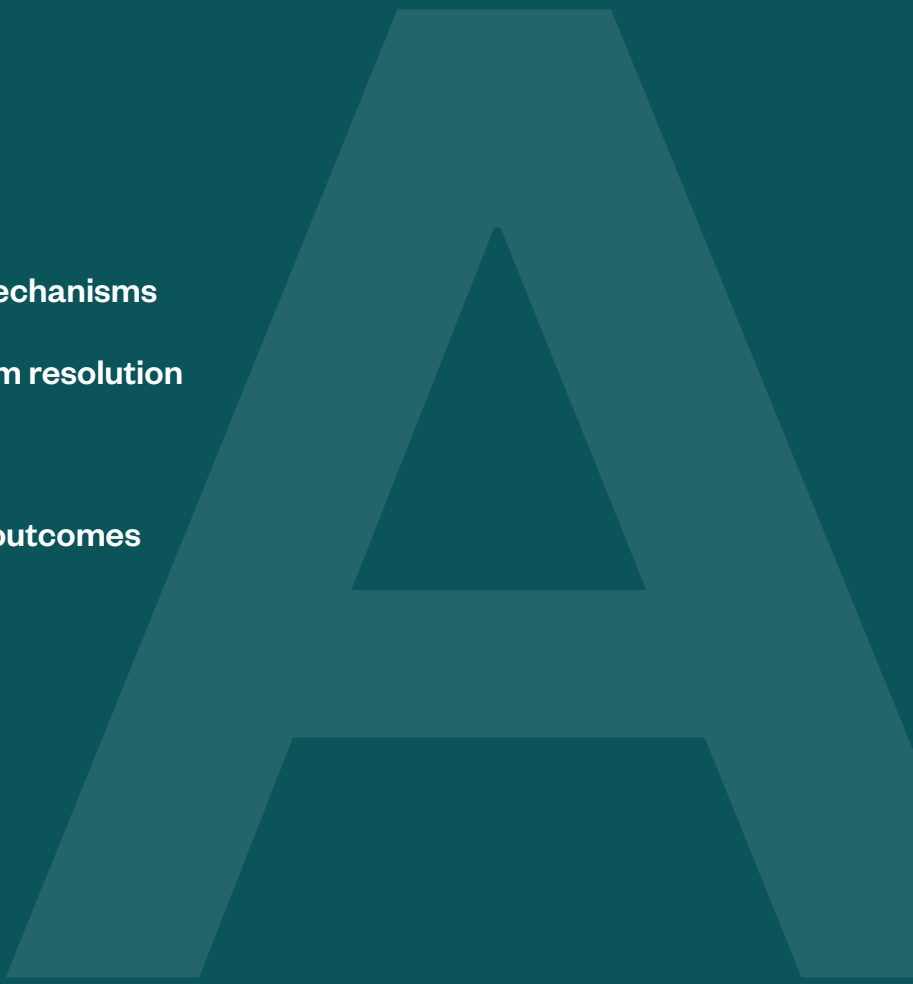
6. Access to dispute resolution mechanisms

7. Process completion and problem resolution

8. Process fairness and quality

9. Access to services and justice outcomes

10. Summary of Part A findings



A. The current state of people-centred justice in England and Wales

Two central questions the Review asks are: how large is the gap between people's justice needs and the solutions they can access effectively, and which population groups face the greatest gaps? To answer these questions, Part A examines the full justice journey, beginning with the problems people experience and their wider consequences, and extending through whether justice actors are trusted, access to assistance, advice and dispute resolution, whether the problem is resolved, and whether the process is fair and timely. The final analysis brings these dimensions together by examining how access to services is associated with problem resolution, process fairness, and trust.

This part combines descriptive estimates with analyses across population groups, problem types, and justice pathways, as well as adjusted estimates examining how access to services relates to problem resolution. The findings are interpreted alongside evidence from a structured literature review, which provides context on the policy and service environment and was guided by the Review's conceptual framework. Selected indicators are compared with the World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey (WJP GLNS) as broad European reference points. To distinguish more consequential justice problems from the wider range of legal issues captured by the survey, the analysis focuses on 'non-trivial', contentious issues: those that respondents considered sufficiently serious and that involved a dispute or disagreement. Applying these criteria uniformly across surveys helps improve comparability across reform contexts by consistently focusing on the same subset of justice problems.

1. The overall picture: everyday justice needs and outcomes

KEY FINDING

For **people, justice** is reflected in whether **justiciable problems** can be **addressed**, needed **support** is **available**, and **solutions** are fair and **effective**.

People's justice experiences extend beyond their interactions with courts and formal institutions. They encompass the justiciable problems that arise in daily life, the pathways people follow to address them, the support available along the way, and whether those efforts lead to resolving the justice problem through a fair, timely, and effective process. Everyday justice problems can quickly generate or deepen socio-economic hardships. The ability of justice services to respond effectively can therefore help prevent justice problems from escalating, support people's economic, social, and health well-being, and shape whether institutions are seen as capable, fair, and worthy of trust. **Figure 1** provides an overview of how people in England and Wales experience everyday civil, family, and administrative justice problems: how common these problems are, the wider hardships associated with them, and people's trust in justice actors. This approach starts from people's experiences rather than from the perspective of courts and other justice institutions.

1.1. Prevalence of justice problems

KEY FINDING

Around **1 in 5** people experienced a substantive **housing justice problem**, closely followed by family justice problems.

More than one-third of adults in England and Wales (34%) experienced a non-trivial, contentious justice problem during the previous four years. These are problems involving a dispute or disagreement between two or more parties and rated 4 or higher on a 1-to-10 seriousness scale. Housing was the most common category (21%), followed by family problems (17%) and accident and health problems (14%). (See Appendix: Table 1 for how the problems reported in the 2023 Individual Legal Needs Survey (ILNS) are grouped into these categories.)

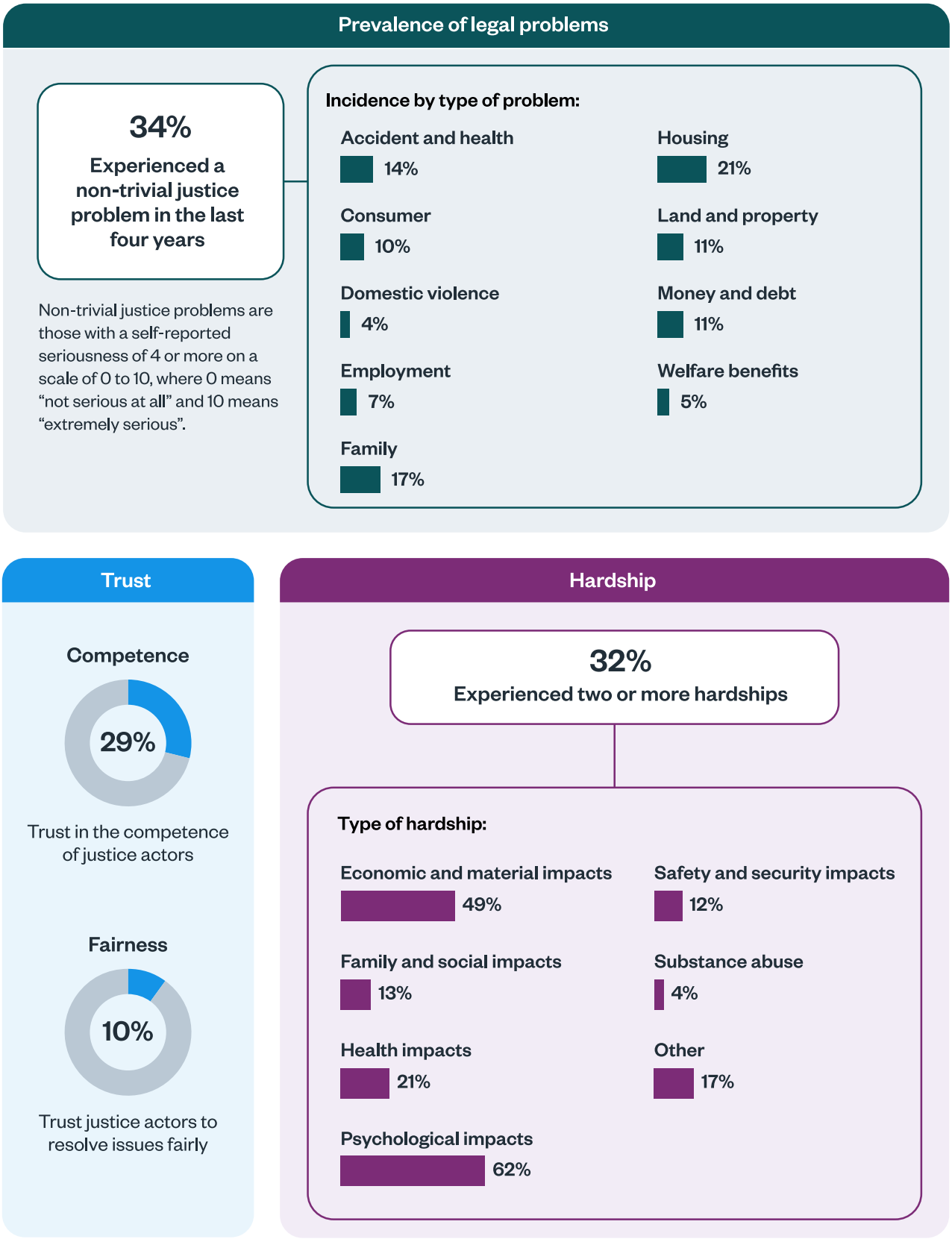
This Review focuses on justice problems with substantial consequences for people's lives. Furthermore, to support comparison of patterns across distinct reform contexts over time, we therefore restrict the analysis to non-trivial, contentious problems, for which severity is measured consistently across the relevant surveys. This restriction is an analytical choice made for the purposes of the Review and does not question the broader approach of the 2023 ILNS, which is designed to capture a wider range of legal issues. The narrower definition avoids combining serious disputes with routine transactional matters whose severity cannot be identified, although it excludes serious non-contentious problems that may require justice services, such as the sale of a house. Accordingly, the 34% estimate should be understood as a lower-bound measure of the broader population that may require such services.

The analysis also uses a common set of problem categories to support comparison across surveys. It therefore excludes several matters covered in the 2023 ILNS for which sufficiently comparable measures are not available across surveys. These include power of attorney, school education, mistreatment by the police, arrest, mental health, child protection, discrimination, and citizenship and identity problems. **For comparison with other European countries**, the Review also draws on the World Justice Project's GLNS (WJP n.d.), adapted in 2024 through the EUROVOICES project for subnational analysis across the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) regions of 26 of the 27 European Union Member States, excluding Ireland. These comparisons are intended to help contextualise the findings of this Review, but the surveys are not perfectly comparable. The 2023 ILNS problem recall period is four years, as opposed to two in the WJP GLNS. Additionally, the 2023 ILNS analysis excludes citizenship and identity, community, education, and law-enforcement problems, which are included in the WJP GLNS. Some of these omitted categories may involve highly consequential experiences; their exclusion improves comparability with the other surveys utilised in Part B (2004 Civil and Social Justice Survey (CSJS) and 2014–15 Legal Problem and Resolution Survey (LPRS)) but further narrows the scope of the prevalence estimate.

The Legal Services Board-published 2023 ILNS estimate is therefore substantially broader: when lower-severity matters, non-contentious problems, and the wider set of problem categories are included, 66% of adults reported at least one legal issue during the previous four years (Legal Services Board and The Law Society 2024, 7). These methodological differences help explain both the lower prevalence reported in this Review and England and Wales' position towards the lower end of the EUROVOICES country distribution. Comparisons with either source should therefore be treated as broad reference points rather than like-for-like estimates.

These choices also shape the interpretation of subsequent access indicators. Restricting the analysis to non-trivial, contentious problems concentrates the assessment on matters that are more likely to generate a need for assistance or dispute resolution. It does not, however, determine whether observed access rates will be higher or lower than those calculated using a broader universe. Lower-severity problems may be less likely to require help, but those that do require help may be easier to address, while more serious disputes may generate greater need but also present greater barriers to obtaining effective support. Given the available data, this approach provides the most consistent basis for comparison because it applies the same seriousness threshold across surveys and supports a clearer assessment of how access patterns have changed across reform contexts.

Figure 1. Justice problems, hardship, and trust at a glance



The wider consequences of justice problems

KEY FINDING

Among people with significant justice problems, **fewer than 1 in 3** trusted justice actors to resolve them effectively, and **only 1 in 10** trusted them to do so fairly.

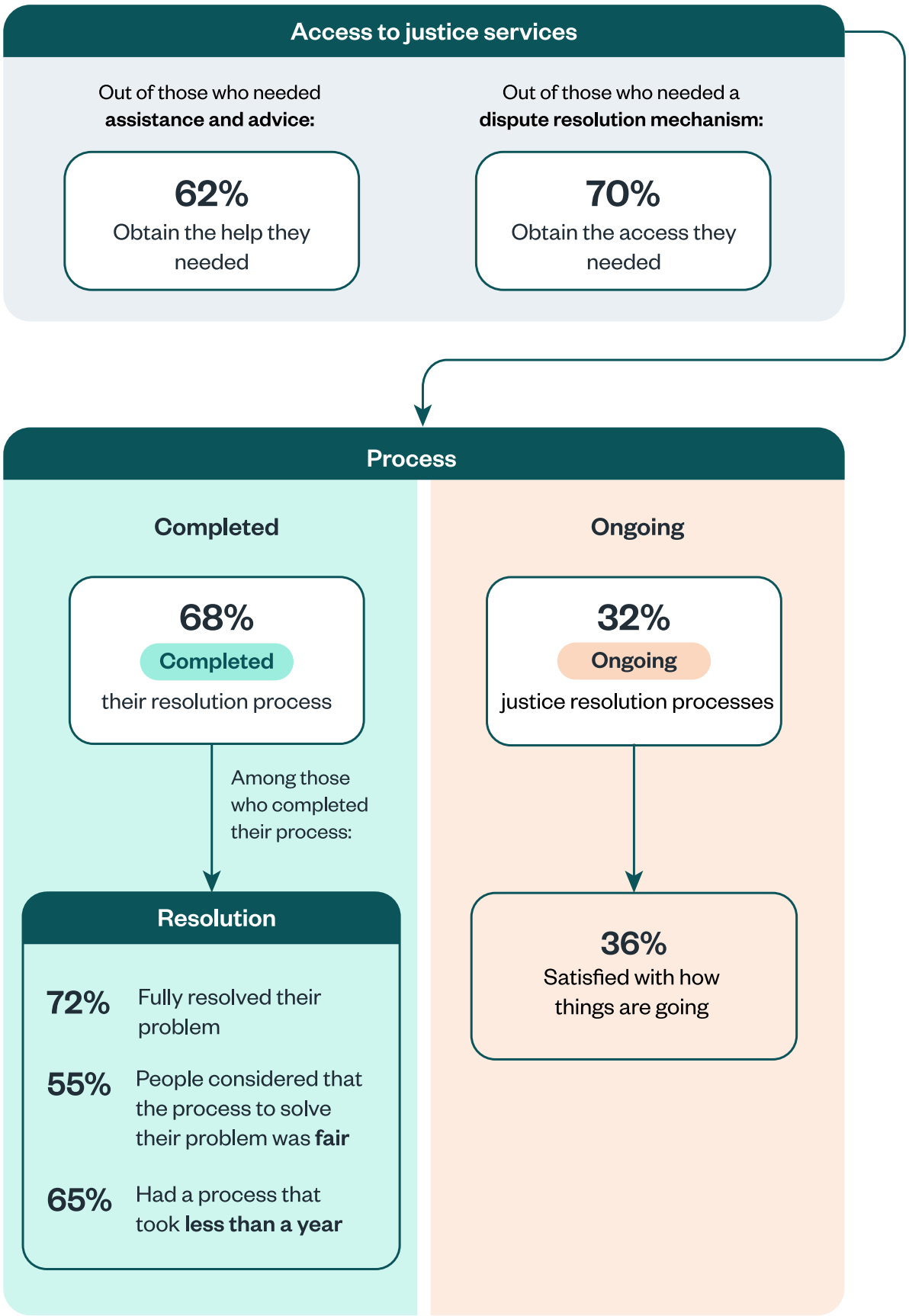
When justice problems are not addressed effectively, they may worsen and create additional demand for health and mental healthcare, housing support, welfare assistance, employment services, and other social and human services. Their consequences often extend well beyond the original dispute, affecting people's finances, family relationships, personal security, and overall well-being. Nearly one-third of respondents with non-trivial justice problems – 32% – experienced hardships across two or more areas of their lives. Psychological impacts were the most common, affecting 62% of these respondents, while nearly half experienced economic or material impacts.

The effectiveness and quality of justice services are also important for building trust. Only 29% of respondents with justice problems trusted justice actors to resolve issues effectively, and only one in ten trusted them to do so fairly.[1] Where people do not expect justice actors to be competent or fair, they may be less willing to seek help, engage with a process, or turn to services early enough to prevent further harm. Improving the accessibility and quality of justice services is therefore important for increasing demand for such services, supporting problem resolution, and strengthening confidence that seeking help will produce a useful and fair response. Distinguishing institutional efficiency from people's ability to access and use justice services is particularly important because successive reforms have pursued faster, more consistent, and less costly processes while also restructuring or narrowing access to publicly funded assistance. Yet improvements in institutional efficiency may not produce equivalent gains in people's experiences if they cannot obtain the support required to participate effectively and on equal terms (Constitutional Affairs Committee 2007a; Uraz 2025).

Figure 2 presents whether people were able to access assistance, advice, and dispute resolution mechanisms, and what they experienced once a resolution process was underway or completed. It distinguishes access to services from later outcomes, including whether the problem was resolved, whether the process was fair and timely, and whether people with ongoing processes were satisfied with progress. This makes it possible to distinguish the formal availability of a pathway from whether people could use it effectively and obtain a satisfactory result.

1 The estimates on trust in the competence of justice actors and trust in justice actors to resolve issues fairly are out of all respondents with non-trivial justice problems, regardless of their justice journeys. This differs from the estimates presented in **Figure 2**, which measure people's perceptions of fairness regarding their specific justice processes. For that reason, these figures are not directly comparable.

Figure 2. Access to services and resolution experiences at a glance



Access to assistance, advice, and dispute resolution

Accessible information, practical assistance, advice, and dispute resolution can contribute to addressing problems before their consequences spread across different areas of people's lives. Among people facing non-trivial justice problems who needed assistance and advice, 62% were able to access an adequate form of it. This includes guidance, practical support, advocacy, or representation from lawyers, advice organisations, public agencies, unions, charities, health and social-service professionals, employers, and insurers.

Among people facing non-trivial justice problems who needed a dispute resolution mechanism, 70% accessed one. Dispute resolution mechanisms include negotiation; courts and tribunals; ombuds institutions, regulators, and other designated authorities; community or religious bodies; mediation, conciliation, and arbitration; and insurance claims. Access to a mechanism does not necessarily mean that people obtained the information or assistance required to navigate it effectively. This is particularly relevant where reductions in early advice have shifted assistance towards a last-resort model and where people have not been adequately referred to relevant legal or social support (Uraz 2025; Harrison et al. 2024). The remaining gaps therefore point to the need for both accessible resolution mechanisms and timely support that helps people use them before their problems persist or produce further hardship.

Resolution status and experience of the process

Among people experiencing a non-trivial justice problem, 68% reported that their resolution process was complete. The conclusion of the process did not always mean that the underlying problem had been fully resolved: among those whose resolution process had finished, 72% reported that their problem was fully resolved. Among people whose process concluded, 55% considered the process fair, regardless of the outcome, and 65% said that it took less than one year.[2] Among those whose process remained ongoing, 36% were satisfied with how things were going.[3] The distinction between process completion, problem resolution, timeliness, and fairness is important because reforms intended to encourage earlier settlement and improve procedural efficiency may shorten or conclude a process without necessarily securing full resolution or improving people's experience of fairness (Genn 2012).

KEY FINDING

Completion of processes does not always deliver resolution of justice problems, and ongoing processes often generate limited satisfaction: **28%** of those whose process had finished had **persisting justice problems**, while only **36%** of those **still seeking resolution** were **satisfied** with how things were going.

2 The findings in this report regarding timeliness of the resolution process are not directly comparable with those expressed in the *2023 Individual Legal Needs Survey: Exploring Unmet Legal Needs* report as the base population being evaluated – those who have resolved their problem – is inconsistent across reports (Legal Services Board 2024).

3 Summary reports of the findings of the 2023 report currently report not overall satisfaction but rather satisfaction with services provided by their main adviser (Legal Services Board and The Law Society 2024).

Taken together, the findings presented above indicate that justice problems are common and frequently accompanied by wider psychological, social, and economic consequences. They also point to low trust, gaps in access to needed services, and mixed experiences of resolution, fairness, timeliness, and satisfaction. The following sections examine each part of this picture in greater depth before assessing how access and outcomes have evolved alongside major changes to the justice system.

These findings introduce a central tension examined throughout the Review. Reforms may have expanded or streamlined some routes to resolution, but their benefits are uneven where people lack early advice, cannot afford assistance, or must navigate increasingly fragmented or remote entry points. The following sections examine where these needs and disparities are concentrated before assessing how the patterns have evolved alongside changes in justice-service provision.

2. Justice problems

Building on the headline prevalence estimate presented in Section 1.1, this section draws on legal needs survey evidence, capturing justice problems and experiences whether or not they reach a formal institution or service. It examines how these problems are distributed across problem types and population groups, how often multiple problems occur together, and how prevalence and severity intersect. These patterns provide a fuller picture than the national prevalence rate alone of where justice needs are concentrated and can help guide interventions responsive to differences in problem type, severity, and population circumstances (Lawton and Sandel 2014). **Figure 1** presented prevalence by problem category, while the subsequent analysis examines differences by sociodemographic characteristics, severity, and co-occurrence.

Prevalence should not be interpreted as a simple measure of justice-system performance. Differences may reflect variation in people's exposure to economic circumstances and institutional and public spheres; their ability to recognise and report problems; access to public services; and the social conditions under which particular disputes arise. A lower reported prevalence may therefore reflect fewer experienced problems, but it may also reflect differences in whether problems are acknowledged and reported, particularly among groups with lower legal capability (The Canadian Bar Association 2013). For this reason, aggregate prevalence is most informative when examined alongside problem type, severity, co-occurrence, and sociodemographic disparities. These dimensions help distinguish differences in exposure from differences in recognition and reporting, reveal concentrations of need concealed by the national average, and identify where preventive policies, stronger protections, improved administrative processes, or coordinated services may be most useful. In some contexts, prevalence patterns may also inform targeted public legal education intended to prevent specific problems (Pleasence et al. 2019). Most of the reforms considered in this Review were directed more immediately at the pathways for obtaining advice and resolving problems than at the underlying conditions that cause problems to arise. Prevalence patterns are therefore used primarily to identify which groups and problem types are most exposed to the service pathways affected by these changes.

When measured consistently over time, these patterns can also inform the assessment of primary prevention, understood as efforts to prevent unnecessary justice problems before they arise (Leavell and Clark, 1953). Changes in overall prevalence, the concentration of particular problem types, and the groups most affected may indicate whether the conditions that generate recurring justice problems are improving, persisting, or becoming more unevenly distributed. Because these conditions extend well beyond the justice system, changes in prevalence cannot by themselves be attributed to procedural, legal-aid, or service-delivery reforms.

2.1. Prevalence of justice problems across population groups

KEY FINDING

Justice problems peak during **mid-life** and are driven by **legal capability, disability, and education** rather than income or geography. Crucially, lower reporting among disadvantaged groups reflects barriers to recognising legal issues, not an absence of actual need.

Figure 3 shows the prevalence of one or more justice problems across relevant sociodemographic characteristics, with significant variation in prevalence across groups. The largest and clearest disparities were:

- People with higher legal capability reported substantially more justice problems than those with lower capability (46% compared with 30%).
- People with disabilities reported more problems than those without disabilities (41% compared with 32%).
- People with advanced qualifications reported more problems than those with no qualifications (36% compared with 23%).

The confidence intervals for these groups show little or no overlap, indicating that these differences are unlikely to reflect sampling variation alone. These patterns should be read alongside those presented in the subsequent sections: people with lower legal capability and those with fewer qualifications were less likely to access needed assistance and advice, while people with disabilities experienced higher multidimensional hardship and reported lower trust. Lower reported prevalence among some groups should therefore not be interpreted as indicating lower justice need: it may also reflect differences in exposure, recognition, and reporting.

The combination of lower reported prevalence and lower access among people with fewer qualifications or lower legal capability is plausibly consistent with a service environment that places substantial responsibility on individuals to recognise a problem's legal dimensions, determine whether assistance is available, and locate the correct entry point. The Ministry of Justice's 2019 review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) reforms identified widespread uncertainty about which areas of law and types of case remained within the scope of civil legal aid (MoJ 2019b).[4]

Age-disaggregated estimates of problem prevalence followed a life-stage pattern. Adults aged 25–54 reported the highest prevalence (38%), compared with 32% among those aged 18–24 and 30% among those aged 55 and older.[5] This is consistent with the larger number and range of interactions people typically have during these years across employment, housing, family, financial, and public-service systems. Women also reported a slightly higher prevalence than men, at 36% compared with 33%. Income differences were comparatively limited: prevalence was 36% among people with incomes below £32,000 and 37% among those with incomes of £60,000 or more, with overlapping confidence intervals.[6] Although the survey is weighted to reflect the ethnic composition of the adult population of England

4 As part of the MoJ's review of LASPO, the Legal Services Board (LSB) submitted written input pointing to research findings indicating that "there are misunderstandings amongst consumers about the type of legal issue for which legal aid is available" following the implementation of LASPO (Legal Services Board 2018). So, ambiguities around the availability of services seemingly compounded the substantive decreases in legal-aid availability.

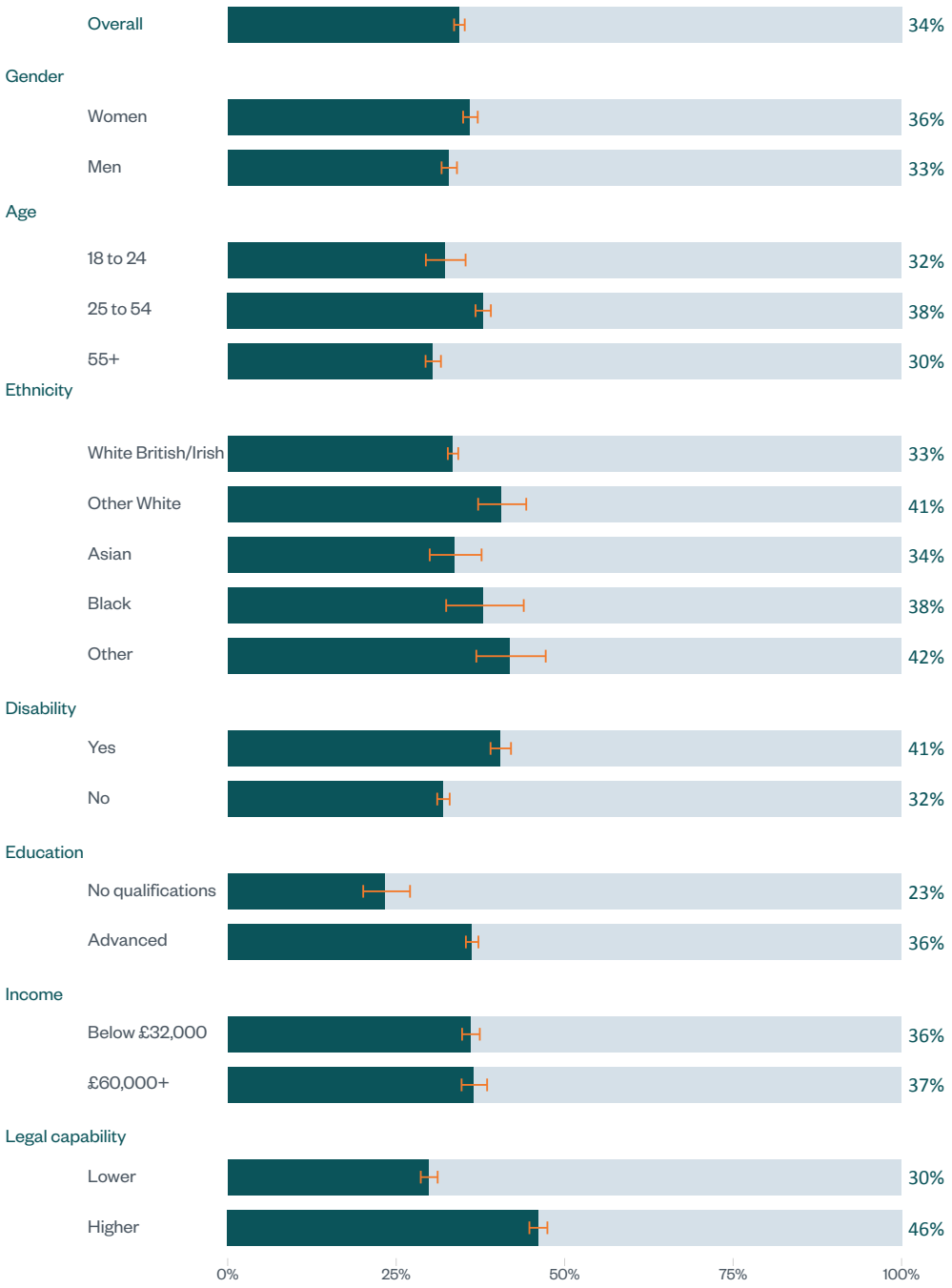
5 The use of these three age bands (18–24, 25–54, and 55 and older) was informed by the available sample sizes and a comparability assessment of the data collected in each of the three surveys utilised here.

6 Regional estimates were more closely clustered, ranging from 31% in Yorkshire and the Humber to 37% in the North East. The pattern does not show a consistent north–south divide. Higher prevalence in London and the South East may partly reflect greater economic participation, mobility, legal capability, and interaction with housing, employment, and other systems, all of which can increase both exposure to disputes and their recognition. By contrast, the relatively high estimate in the North East may reflect greater socio-economic vulnerability and exposure to recurring problems. Similar prevalence levels may therefore arise through different pathways. Most regional confidence intervals overlap, however, and the differences are smaller than those associated with legal capability, disability, and education. Regional patterns should consequently be examined alongside population composition, problem severity, and sociodemographic characteristics rather than interpreted as direct effects of place alone.

and Wales, estimates for some ethnic groups are based on relatively small numbers of respondents, particularly when examining specific stages of the justice journey. While the analysis adopts a minimum weighted subgroup size of 50 as a reporting threshold, meeting this threshold does not guarantee precision. Differences by ethnicity are therefore generally not interpreted further in Part A, given the uncertainty surrounding these estimates and the overlap in confidence intervals across groups.

Figure 3. Prevalence of justice problems

Percentage of respondents who experienced at least one non-trivial justice problem in the past four years, by socio-economic group



Note: Values for middle-income, medium education, and medium legal-capability groups are not shown here but are available in the supplementary appendices. For ethnicity, 'Other' includes Mixed/Multiple ethnic background and Arab/Other categories.

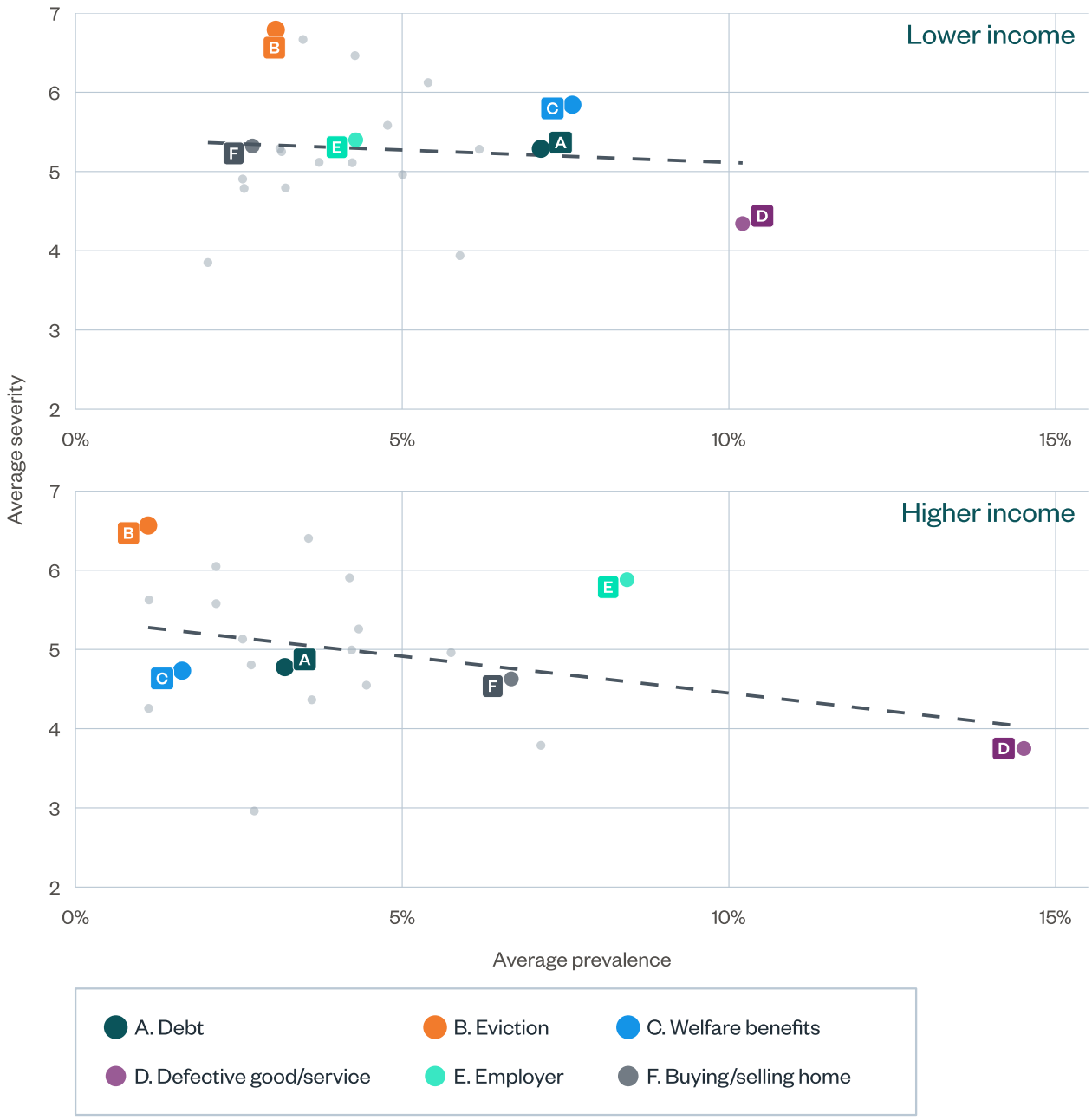
2.2. Nature and severity of justice problems by income

Figure 4 examines the relationship between prevalence and severity across two panels defined by respondents' reported household income: below £32,000 and £60,000 or more. Findings for the middle-income group are discussed in the text and available in the supplementary appendices. Each point represents a problem type. The horizontal axis shows the weighted percentage of respondents in that income group who experienced the problem, while the vertical axis shows its average self-reported severity among those who experienced it, on a 1–10 scale. The dashed line summarises the relationship between prevalence and severity within each displayed income group.

As discussed in the previous section, overall problem prevalence varies little by income. The more meaningful differences concern the types of problems people experience and how consequential they are when they occur. The relationship between prevalence and severity also differs by income. For higher-income group, the downward-sloping line shows that the most prevalent problems tended to be less severe. The middle-income estimates followed a similar pattern.[7] Among respondents living in households with reported incomes below £32,000, this relationship appeared weak or absent: relatively common problems could still have serious consequences. People on lower incomes therefore do not appear to benefit from the same 'severity buffer' as those in the other income groups.

7 Refer to Table S1. Prevalence and average severity of justice problems, by income band in the supplementary appendices for these estimates.

Figure 4. Prevalence and severity of justice problems, by income



Note: The figure presents 22 problem categories with a weighted prevalence of at least 1% in each of both displayed income groups and sufficient observations to support stable comparisons. Categories falling below 1% in either displayed group or based on very few observations were omitted. These are adoption or fostering, home repossession, problems with a tenant or squatter, re-mortgaging or transferring equity, and planning applications. Problem-specific prevalence and severity estimates are survey-weighted. Severity is self-reported on a scale of 1–10 where 1 is the least severe and 10 is the most severe.

KEY FINDING

People on lower incomes are more likely to face **welfare, debt, homelessness, and eviction** – problems that can directly threaten their financial and housing security. The problems they experience **most often are not necessarily less severe.**

Lower income. Problems were more heavily concentrated around financial and housing security. Welfare and benefits problems affected 8% of this group, compared with 3% of middle-income respondents and 2% of respondents in households with incomes of £60,000 or more. This pattern reflects greater reliance on public income support and greater exposure to administrative decisions that can directly affect people's ability to meet basic needs. Welfare and benefits problems also tended to be more severe for the lowest-income group, reinforcing that frequent interaction with these systems does not make the resulting problems less consequential. This concentration is relevant because welfare benefits are among the areas in which access to publicly funded legal assistance narrowed substantially. LASPO removed most welfare-benefits matters from the scope of legal aid, and the number of providers holding welfare-benefits contracts fell sharply (Burrows and Domínguez 2026) – for example, in Wales, the number of providers fell from 31 to 3 (Harper 2018, 2). The findings discussed here do not indicate that these reforms caused welfare problems, but they show that those on lower incomes are disproportionately exposed to a problem area in which locally available specialist assistance has contracted.

Debt followed a similar pattern, affecting 7% of the lowest-income group, compared with 4% of the middle-income group and 3% of the highest-income group. For people with fewer financial resources, debt problems may be harder to absorb and more likely to compound existing material hardship. The pattern therefore points to both greater exposure and greater vulnerability to the consequences of debt. This concentration also means that limitations in the availability or accessibility of debt advice are likely to affect those on lower incomes disproportionately, including where access was channelled through the Civil Legal Advice Telephone Gateway, which LASPO made the sole publicly funded entry point for advice on certain debt problems (PLP 2018).

Housing insecurity was less common overall but disproportionately concentrated among people on lower incomes. Homelessness affected 4% of the lowest-income group, compared with 2% of the middle-income group and 1% of the highest-income group. Eviction from rented property affected about 3% of both the lowest and middle-income groups, compared with 1% of the highest-income group. Both homelessness and eviction were among the most severe problem types in all three panels. Their consistently high severity suggests that these experiences are not normalised by greater exposure: the principal inequality lies in how much more likely those on lower incomes are to face problems that are serious for anyone who experiences them. This pattern is also relevant to the documented reduction in early and locally accessible housing advice. Where assistance becomes available only after a problem has escalated, opportunities to prevent eviction, homelessness, or related hardship may be reduced (Uraz 2025).

Anti-social behaviour by neighbours, relationship breakdown, and domestic violence were also more prevalent among people in the lowest-income group. Together, these patterns show a concentration of problems capable of affecting financial stability, housing, safety, health, and family life.

Middle Income. Middle-income respondents generally occupied an intermediate position. Welfare and benefits problems, debt, and homelessness were less prevalent than among the lowest-income group but more prevalent than among the highest-income group. At the same time, employer, consumer, and property-related problems became more common, reflecting a gradual shift in the institutions and markets to which people were exposed.

KEY FINDING

People on higher incomes are more exposed to employment, consumer, and property-transaction problems.

They appear to benefit from a clearer 'severity buffer': the problems they experience most often tend to be less severe, while the most severe problems are less common.

Higher Income. Problems were more concentrated around employment, consumer issues, and property transactions. Employer problems affected 8% of this group, compared with 6% of middle-income respondents and 4% of respondents in households with incomes below £32,000. Problems involving defective goods, services, or professionals affected 15%, compared with 13% and 10%, respectively. Problems involving buying or selling a home affected 7% of the highest-income group, compared with 4% and 3%, respectively. These patterns likely reflect greater participation in formal employment, consumer markets, and property ownership rather than a greater overall burden of justice problems.

Some problems that were more prevalent among higher-income respondents nevertheless tended to be more serious when experienced by people on lower incomes. This was the case for consumer problems and problems involving the purchase or sale of a home. The pattern reinforces the distinction between exposure and consequence: higher-income groups may encounter certain problems more often, while lower income groups may have fewer resources available to absorb their effects.

Taken together, the findings do not show meaningful income differences in overall problem prevalence or average severity. Instead, income shapes the composition of justice problems and the circumstances in which their consequences are experienced. For those on lower incomes, moreover, commonly experienced problems are not necessarily less severe, and the inverse relationship between prevalence and severity observed among middle and higher-income groups was not evident. This distinction matters for interpreting later findings on access to assistance and the sources from which it is obtained. Reductions in publicly funded or locally available assistance may affect income groups differently: those on lower incomes are more concentrated in welfare, debt, and housing problems and have fewer financial resources to replace unavailable support with market-based legal services, while some of the middle-income group may fall above legal-aid eligibility thresholds without being able to afford private legal assistance.

2.3. Co-occurrence of justice problems

KEY FINDING

Justice needs often trigger each other. Welfare, domestic violence, housing, and debt problems show particularly **strong overlap**, indicating that people experiencing these problems **may require coordinated support across several areas** rather than assistance with a single issue.

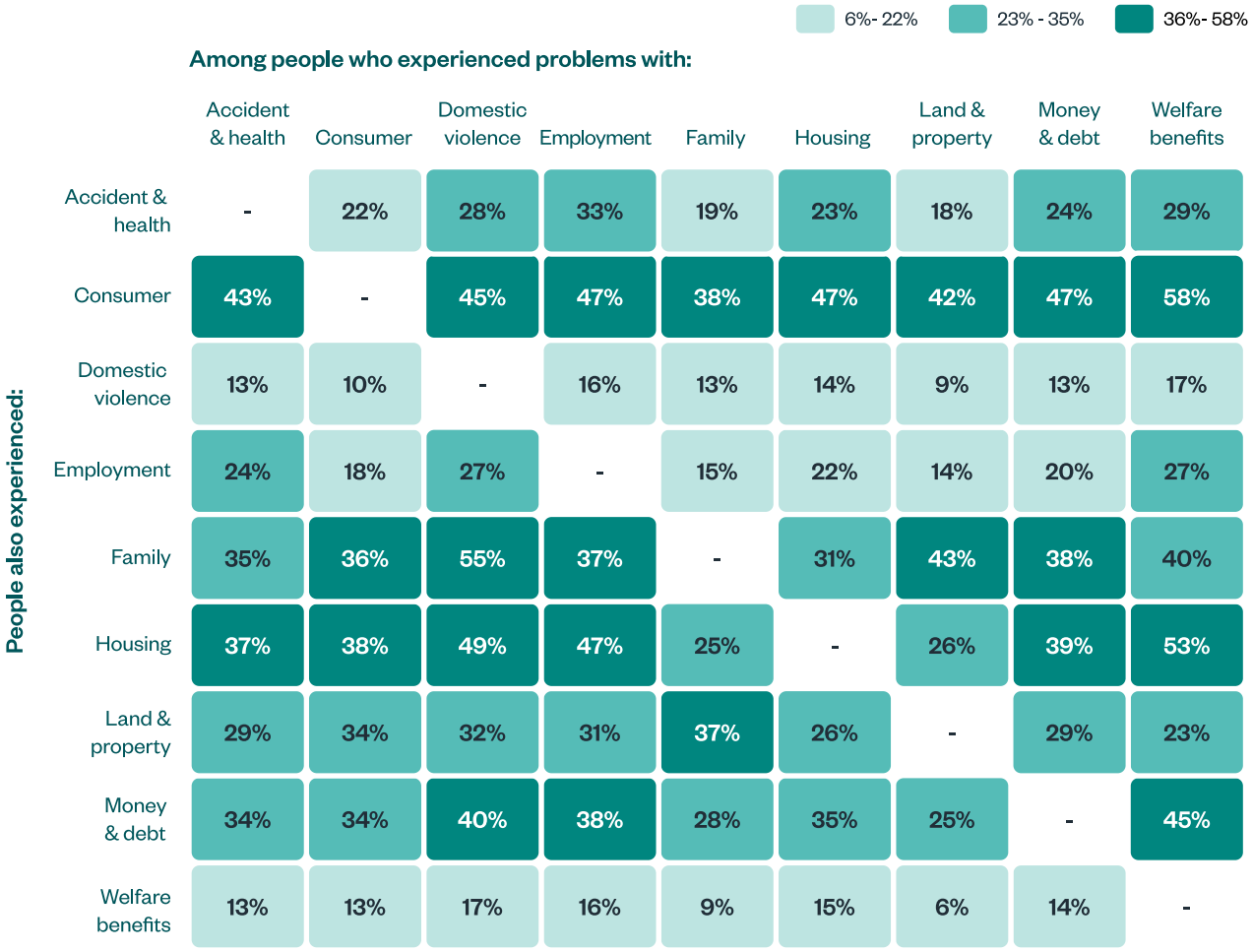
Figure 5 presents the extent to which different categories of justice problems co-occur among respondents. The highest overlaps are concentrated around welfare, housing, debt, domestic violence, and family problems. Consumer problems are the most common accompanying problem across nearly every category, affecting between 38% and 58% of people experiencing other types of problems. This partly reflects their broad prevalence, but also shows how disputes involving services, purchases, or professionals cut across otherwise distinct justice needs.

The strongest concentrations involved problems connected to financial and social vulnerability. Among people experiencing welfare problems, 58% also experienced a consumer problem, 53% a housing problem, and 45% a money or debt problem. Domestic violence was also closely connected with other problems: 55% of people experiencing domestic violence also reported a family problem, 49% a housing problem, and 40% a money or debt problem. These patterns point to clusters of interconnected problems and related needs spanning income, housing, and family security, rather than single, self-contained disputes. These clusters matter in a service environment organised around separate legal categories, eligibility rules, and entry points. Following reductions in the scope of legal aid, third-sector advice providers faced greater demand, while assistance was often delayed, general, or limited to one-off advice. Category-specific or short-term support may therefore address only part of an interconnected cluster of problems (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2018).

Employment problems similarly overlapped with consumer and housing problems, both at 47%, as well as money and debt and family problems. Accident and health problems also occurred alongside a broad range of other issues, particularly consumer, housing, family, and money and debt problems. An important note is that these patterns refer to co-occurrence without establishing whether one problem caused another or the direction in which problems developed. The concentration of linked problems nevertheless reinforces the importance of holistic assessment and coordinated support across legal, housing, welfare, health, employment, and family services.[8]

8 Further research could complement this analysis on the co-occurrence of justice problems with a cluster analysis to further explore the ways in which people may be more likely to experience overlapping justice problems.

Figure 5. Co-occurrence of justice problems



Note: Each column represents people who experienced the problem named at the top. Reading down the column shows what percentage of those people also experienced each of the other problems – for example, 55% of people who experienced domestic violence also experienced a family problem. When reading across a row, each percentage is relative to the group of respondents who experienced the problem type indicated at the top of that column – for example, reading across from domestic violence shows 13% of people who experienced a family problem also experienced this. These values will not sum to 100% as respondents could experience more than one additional problem.

3. Hardships

KEY FINDING

Justice problems can **spill into other areas** of people's lives: nearly **one-third** experienced multiple hardships, with people **with disabilities 1.7 times as likely** as people without disabilities, **women 1.5 times as likely** as men, **and people with four or more problems more than twice as likely** as those with one to report them.

Effective access to justice matters not only because it helps resolve legal problems, but also because timely assistance can help limit the wider harms they cause. Justice problems can affect multiple areas of people's lives, including health, psychological well-being, family and social relationships, safety and security, economic and material circumstances, and substance use. These multidimensional effects can deepen financial insecurity, ill health, housing instability, and relationship strain, while increasing demand for health, welfare, and other public services. Assistance and resolution can therefore serve a tertiary-prevention function by containing harms beyond the original dispute.[9]

Psychological impacts were reported by 62% of respondents with a non-trivial justice problem and encompass a broad range of experiences. A measure of hardships based on any singular type of hardship, including psychological impacts, would therefore produce a substantially higher estimate and provide less insight into multidimensional effects. **As a supplementary comparison**, 27% of respondents experienced at least one hardship when psychological impacts were excluded. This places England and Wales near the lower end of estimates from the WJP GLNS for EU countries other than Ireland, which ranged from 21% to 57%, with a median of 50%. This comparison is indicative rather than directly equivalent: the WJP measure covers four core types of hardship, while the ILNS measure includes a somewhat broader set of non-psychological impacts.

Figure 6 presents the percentage of respondents who experienced hardships in at least two areas of their lives. Overall, 32% experienced such hardships. The largest disparities were associated with disability, gender, legal capability, and income. People with disabilities were substantially more likely to experience multiple hardships than those without disabilities, at 43% compared with 26%. Women also reported multiple hardships more often than men, at 38% compared with 26%. People with lower legal capability were more likely to experience multiple hardships than those with higher capability, at 38% compared with 28%. This indicates that the wider burden of justice problems is not evenly distributed: once a problem occurs, women, people with disabilities, and people with lower capability are more likely to experience effects across several areas of their lives. Accessible and timely support may therefore be especially important for addressing their interconnected needs and reducing the risk of further harm. The estimates do not identify the source of these disparities and should not be interpreted as evidence that service changes caused the reported hardships. That

9 This preventive role is particularly relevant to the shift away from funding early advice towards assistance provided later in the justice journey. Uraz (2025) describes the removal of funding for early legal advice under LASPO as shifting civil legal aid towards a last-resort model, reducing the support available before problems escalated to formal proceedings.

said, the higher hardship rates among people with disabilities and lower legal capability are plausibly consistent with evidence that remote and self-directed pathways are harder to navigate for people who require additional assistance, and that vulnerable users are not always referred effectively to relevant support (Uraz 2025; Harrison et al. 2024).

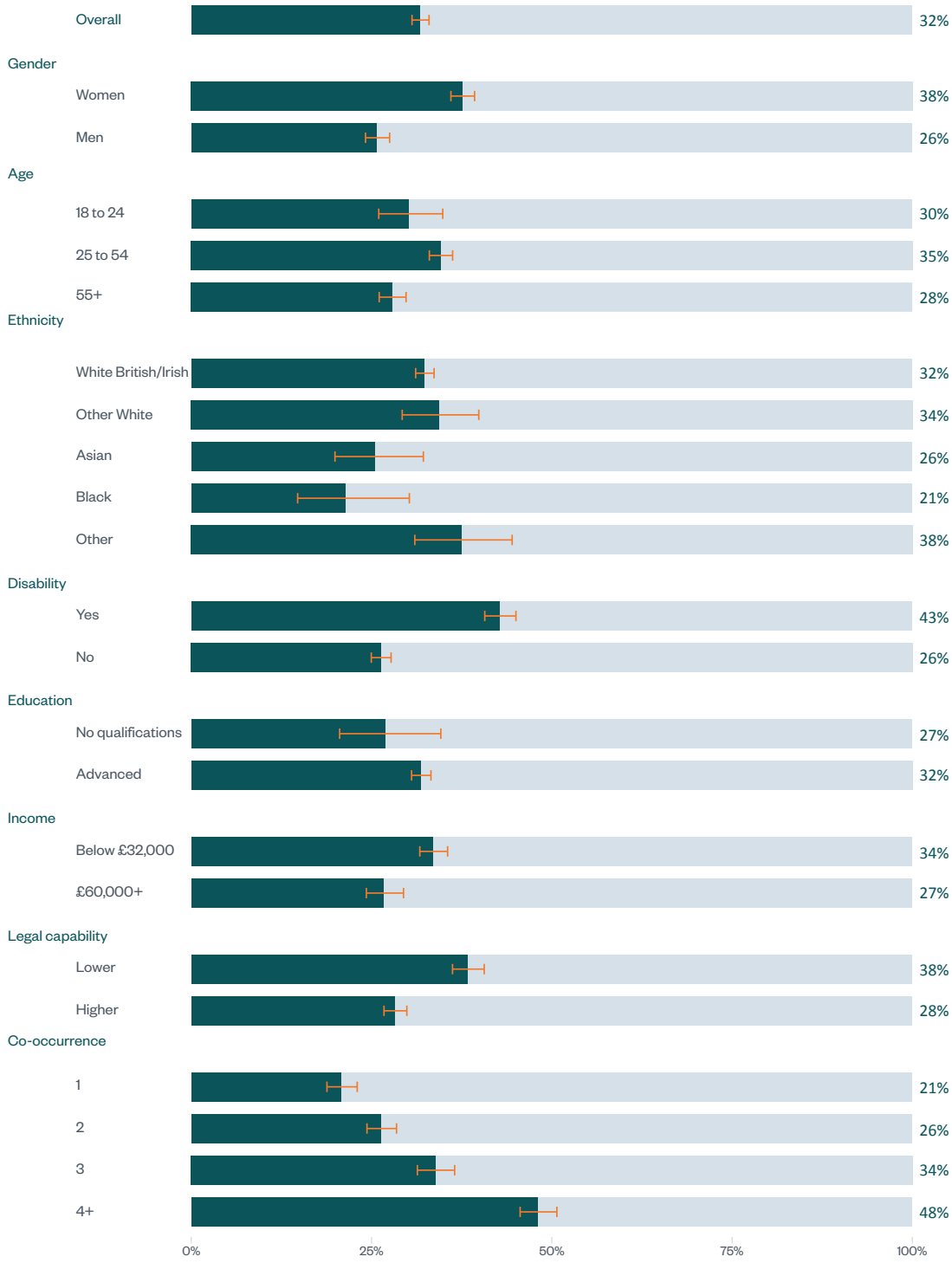
Income differences were also evident in the wider effects of justice problems. Although overall prevalence varied little by income, 34% of respondents reporting household incomes below £32,000 experienced multiple hardships, compared with 27% of those reporting £60,000 or more. This disparity is consistent with differences in the nature and severity of the problems experienced: people on lower incomes were more exposed to high-stakes problems involving welfare, debt, homelessness, and eviction, and some problems were more severe for them when they occurred. The hardship gap may therefore reflect both the kinds of problems people face and the resources available to limit their wider effects. It may also be consistent with the more limited alternatives available to people on lower incomes when publicly funded or locally based assistance is unavailable. Provider contraction can require people to travel farther, absorb additional costs, or proceed without advice, while remaining providers may lack the capacity to offer timely or sustained assistance (Harper 2018; Uraz 2025).

The strongest pattern was associated with the accumulation of justice problems. Among people with one justice problem, 21% experienced multiple hardships. The proportion was about 1.2 times as high among those with two problems, 1.6 times as high among those with three, and more than twice as high among those with four or more. This steady increase indicates that justice problems can compound: as problems accumulate, respondents become increasingly likely to experience effects across several areas of their lives. The pattern is consistent with concern that delayed, generalised, or one-off assistance may be insufficient for people facing several interconnected problems (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2018). It reinforces the importance of identifying linked needs early and providing sustained, coordinated support across justice, health, housing, welfare, and other services.[10]

10 An example of sustained, coordinated support is medical-legal and health-justice partnerships, which "respond to the challenges faced by disadvantaged, marginalized and 'made vulnerable' populations, including needs for early intervention and prevention, holistic problem solving, and systemic advocacy on structural injustices" (Leering 2026). A 2018 mapping of health justice services in England and Wales identified nearly 400 such types of services (Beardon and Genn 2018).

Figure 6. Multiple hardships as a result of justice problems

Percentage of respondents who experienced at least two hardships as a result of their justice problems in the previous four years



Note: The hardship indicator identifies respondents who reported impacts in at least two of six broad categories: health; psychological well-being; family and social relationships; safety and security; economic and material circumstances; and substance use. "None of these" and other uncategorised responses are not counted towards the indicator. Values for middle-income, medium-education, and medium-legal-capability groups are not shown here but are available in the supplementary appendices. For ethnicity, 'Other' includes Mixed/Multiple ethnic background and Arab/Other categories.

4. Trust

KEY FINDING

Less than a third trust the competence of the justice system. This falls to **only 1 in 5 people with lower legal capability** and **1 in 4 people with disabilities**, pointing to the need for services that are easier to navigate, more responsive, and more accessible.

Trust and the quality of justice services can be mutually reinforcing (OECD 2017). People may be more willing to seek help, disclose information, and accept outcomes when they expect to be treated fairly (Tankebe 2009; Jackson et al. 2012). In turn, services that are responsive, reliable, impartial, timely, and respectful can strengthen trust (OECD 2017), while distrust can discourage engagement and cooperation (Levi and Stoker 2000).

4.1. Trust in the competence and fairness of justice actors

Figures 7 and 8 examine two related dimensions of trust among people who experienced non-trivial justice problems. **Figure 7** measures trust in the competence and accessibility of the civil justice system and lawyers, including perceptions of promptness, efficiency, ease of going to court, value for money, lawyers' approachability and responsiveness, and their relevance to people's needs. **Figure 8** measures trust in the system's fairness across socio-economic groups, including whether financial resources affect outcomes, access to legal help, and the quality of representation. To note, this operationalisation of trust is limited to the information made available in the survey questionnaire and should not be taken as a fully comprehensive measure.[11] These figures report the views of people who experienced non-trivial justice problems, regardless of whether they accessed justice services or whether their own problems were resolved; the association between those experiences and trust is examined later in the report.

11 As considered in the conceptual framework that this report is informed by, an individual's trust in the justice sector, actors, and institutions is something that can both shape their engagement with these entities and in turn be shaped by their interactions. The authors acknowledge that the elements of trust presented in this report (specifically, trust in justice actors to act fairly and efficiently) are not all encompassing. However, the scope of the operationalisation of this indicator is limited to the information available via the legal needs surveys used here. Additionally, due to the various measurements that build the trust indicator evaluated in this report, there is not a direct comparison available from other reports, including the 2023 summary reports and the OECD estimates of "trust in courts and legal system". While helpful indicators, they provide more limited information on perceived trust in specific actors or the system overall, rather than a composite of relevant measures (Legal Services Board and The Law Society 2024; OECD 2024).

KEY FINDING

Trust in fairness is even lower and varies little across most groups, indicating a broadly shared concern that financial resources shape access, representation, and outcomes and **calling for system-wide action to improve affordability and socio-economic equity.**

Trust in competence varied significantly across several population groups. It was 39% among adults aged 18–24, compared with 26% among those aged 55 and older.[12] People without disabilities reported higher trust than people with disabilities (31% compared with 25%), while trust was higher among people on higher incomes than among those on lower incomes (34% compared with 26%). The largest disparity was associated with legal capability: 35% of people with higher legal capability expressed trust, compared with 19% of those with lower capability. Trust also tended to decline as the number of justice problems increased. Differences by ethnicity and region were less consistent, and several estimates were less precise.

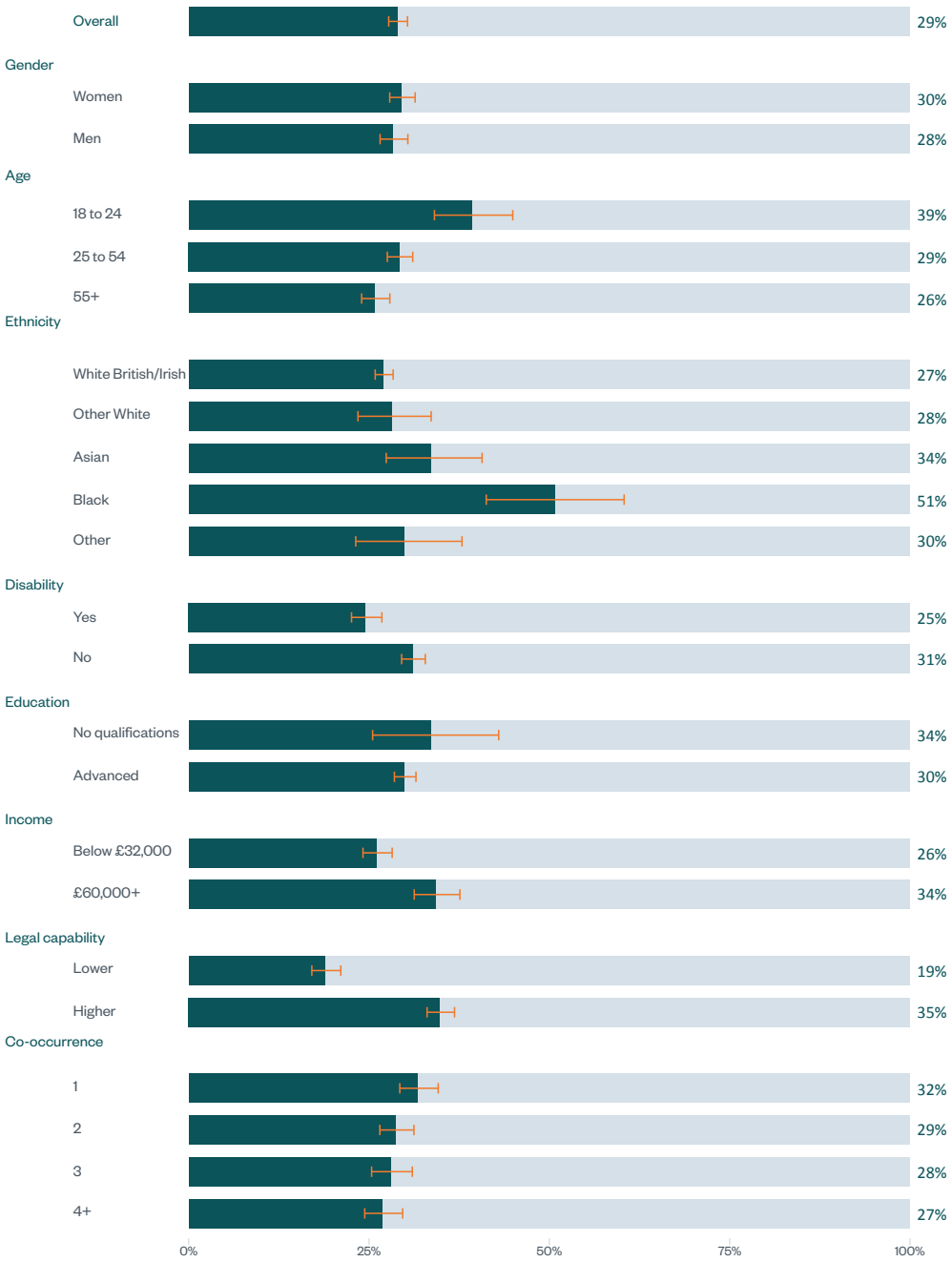
Trust was low on both dimensions, but especially on fairness. Overall, 29% expressed trust in the competence and accessibility of the justice system and lawyers, while only 10% trusted the system to operate fairly regardless of people's financial resources. The larger deficit therefore concerns not only whether the system is perceived as effective and accessible, but also whether people believe that those with fewer resources can obtain comparable outcomes and legal assistance.

Trust in fairness remained very low across most groups. Younger adults and some ethnic and regional groups reported somewhat higher levels, although several of these estimates had wider confidence intervals. Differences by gender, disability, income, legal capability, and number of problems were generally limited, suggesting that concerns about whether financial resources shape justice outcomes and access to legal help are broadly shared. The especially low level of trust in fairness therefore points to the need to improve not only the effectiveness and accessibility of justice services, but also their affordability and capacity to provide equitable outcomes and representation across socio-economic groups.

12 The higher levels of trust among younger respondents observed in the 2023 ILNS contrast with findings from a 2022 survey by the Good Law Project and YouGov, which found relatively lower reported levels of trust in justice sector-related professions among younger adults. The Good Law Project/YouGov survey (n = 4,687 adults in Great Britain) asked respondents, "How much, if at all, do you trust the following professionals?" Regarding judges, the highest rate of trust was reported among adults aged 50 and older (68% of respondents in both the 50–64 years old group and the 65+ group), followed by those aged 25–49 (64%) and those aged 18–24 (56%). On lawyers, rates of trust were 53% of respondents age 65+, 51% among those 50–64, 49% among those 25–49, and 46% of those aged 18–24 (Good Law Project and YouGov 2022).

Figure 7. Trust in the competence of justice actors

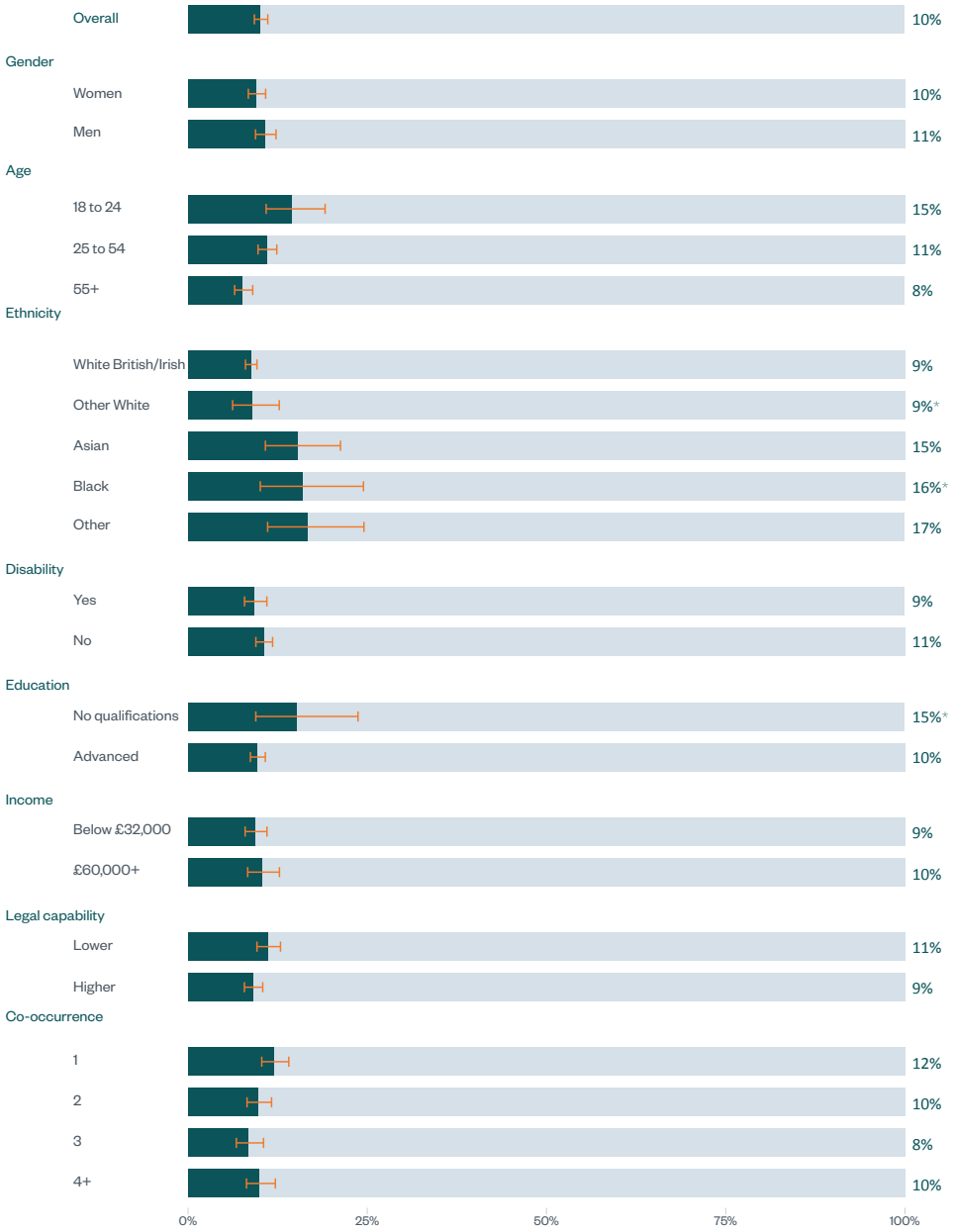
Percentage of respondents with non-trivial justice problems who trust in the competence of justice actors



Note: The indicator combines C4 and C12g items from ILNS 2023 on respondents' general impressions and experience of the civil justice system. It captures perceptions of the system's performance, accessibility, and value, including promptness and efficiency, ease of going to court when needed, value for money, and whether taking a case to court is worth the trouble, together with lawyers' approachability, timeliness, responsiveness, attentiveness to people's concerns, and suitability as a source of help. Items are coded so that higher values indicate greater trust in the competence and accessibility of the justice system and lawyers. To avoid giving greater weight to the larger lawyer-perception battery, the overall score first averages items within C4 and C12g separately and then gives equal weight to the two resulting sub-scores. Values for middle-income, medium-education, and medium-legal-capability groups are not shown here but are available in the supplementary appendices. For ethnicity, 'Other' includes Mixed/Multiple ethnic background and Arab/Other categories.

Figure 8. Trust in the fairness of justice actors

Percentage of respondents who experienced non-trivial justice problems and trust that justice actors operate fairly, regardless of people's financial resources



Note: The indicator is based on survey item C4 in the ILNS 2023, which asked respondents about their general impressions and experience of the civil justice system, excluding criminal justice. The indicator combines five items assessing whether outcomes and access to legal help are perceived as fair across income and resource levels, including the affordability and quality of representation. Specifically, the five items assess whether people with fewer financial resources receive worse outcomes, whether skilful and resourceful parties are more likely to obtain what they want, whether lawyers are too expensive for most people, whether people like the respondent can afford legal help, and whether the quality of legal representation differs between richer and poorer people. Items are coded so that more positive responses indicate greater trust. Responses are averaged to construct a higher-trust score, and the graph reports the average score across five items for the relevant respondent group. Values for middle-income, medium-education, and medium-legal-capability groups are not shown here but are available in the supplementary appendices. For ethnicity, 'Other' includes Mixed/Multiple ethnic background and Arab/Other categories. Estimates marked with an asterisk are based on fewer than 50 weighted observations; these subgroup estimates are less precise and should not be used to draw firm comparisons with other groups.

5. Access to services and advice

KEY FINDING

Among people with non-trivial justice problems, **95% needed assistance and advice**, yet **38% of this group did not gain access.**

Justice services can support people at different stages of their justice journeys, including before they recognise a problem as legal or know what action to take (Mayson 2023). Information, assistance, and advice are especially important for helping people with different levels of legal capability understand their options, navigate relevant processes, and participate effectively in resolving their problems. While all three services can help them recognise the legal dimensions of a problem, understand their rights and options, and identify possible pathways towards resolution, information is more general.[13] Assistance and advice, in comparison, provide guidance and practical support tailored to the individual and their unique circumstances (Sandefur 2020; Greacen 2022).

When provided early, assistance and advice can also help prevent problems from escalating (Pleasence et al. 2014). They can also reduce imbalances between parties with different levels of resources and legal knowledge and connect people with other justice, health, housing, and social services when their needs extend beyond the original problem.

5.1. Coverage of assistance and advice among people in need

Figure 9 distinguishes whether respondents needed information, assistance, and advice, and – among those who needed it – whether they accessed it. Under this approach, need was nearly universal: 95% of respondents with non-trivial justice problems were considered to need assistance and advice, while only 5% were classified as not needing it.[14] The measure treats respondents as needing assistance and advice when they obtained it or when their responses indicated that a barrier prevented access. These barriers included not knowing where to seek advice, being unable to identify a suitable adviser, expecting advice to make no difference or to be too expensive, and facing practical constraints such as time or distance. Respondents who explicitly reported that their issue was being, or had been, concluded without advice, that they knew enough to handle it themselves, or that they did not need a dispute resolution mechanism were classified as not needing assistance and advice.

13 This section does not report a separate measure of access to information because the 2023 ILNS captures only targeted access by respondents already looking for potential advisers. Ideally, legal needs surveys could capture a comprehensive measure of whether people obtained the neutral, timely, and understandable information needed to recognise and address their problems, including general legal education, procedural guidance, referrals, and self-help resources.

14 The LSB analysis of the 2023 ILNS reports a lower estimate of legal need (measured as whether respondents needed support to deal with their legal issue) using the same survey. However, its analysis is restricted to resolved contentious legal issues, whereas the present report includes ongoing justice problems when estimating the need for assistance and advice (Legal Services Board 2024). The estimates also differ due to the applied severity constraint, meaning that the problems considered in this report are only those that were reported as 4 or more on a severity scale where 1 is least severe and 10 is most severe. The estimates are therefore not directly comparable.

KEY FINDING

19% of people who needed and didn't access assistance and advice **cited cost as a barrier.**

Among those who needed assistance and advice, 62% accessed it, while 38% did not. Access was recorded when respondents obtained needed advice, practical assistance, advocacy, or representation from a qualifying source, including legal and advice providers, public and community services, relevant professionals, employers or trade unions, and family or friends with relevant knowledge. The findings therefore identify a substantial gap between widespread need and access to appropriate support. The indicator records whether assistance was obtained, but not whether it was timely, sustained, or sufficient to address complex or interconnected needs. Among respondents who needed but did not access assistance and advice, 19% cited cost, while 25% cited practical accessibility barriers, including time, distance, or difficulty obtaining an appointment.

KEY FINDING

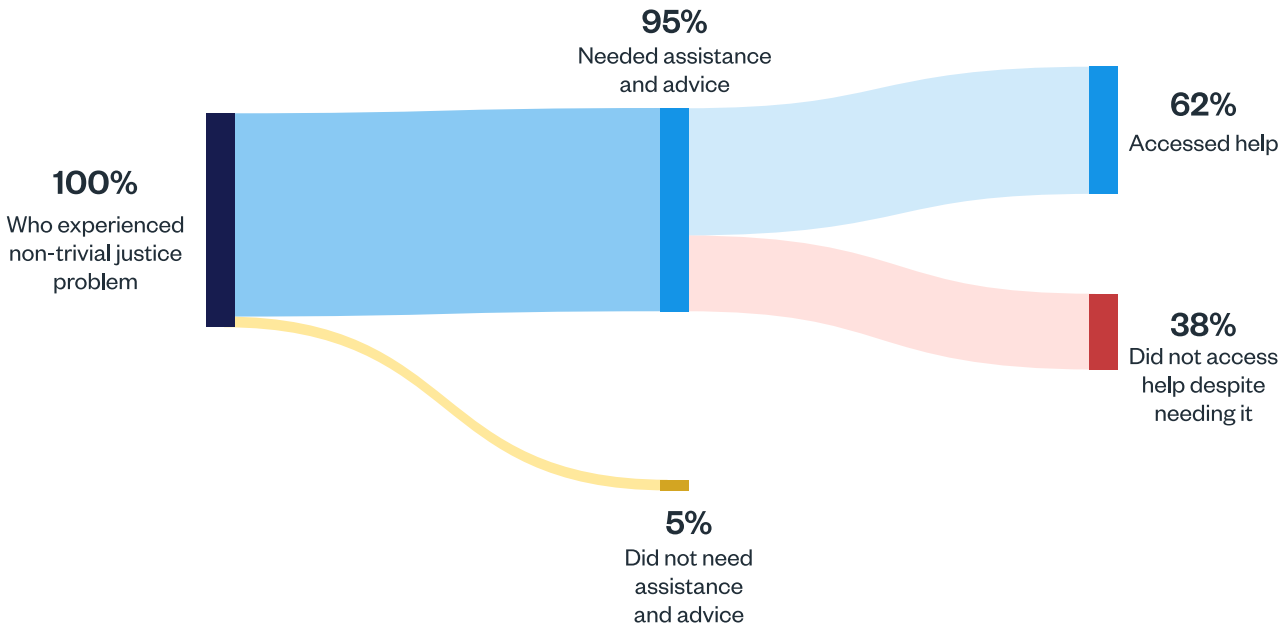
Among people who needed but did not access assistance and advice, **25% cited practical accessibility barriers**, such as time and distance.

The 38% access gap and the barriers respondents reported should be understood within a provider landscape reshaped by successive changes to legal-aid funding and delivery. Earlier reforms shifted greater responsibility for some social-welfare matters towards not-for-profit advice organisations whose geographic coverage was uneven, while fixed-fee and procurement arrangements raised concerns about the viability of local provision (DCA 2005a; Constitutional Affairs Committee 2007b). LASPO subsequently removed major areas of civil law from the scope of legal aid and reduced payments to providers. Later assessments identified uncertainty about the assistance that remained available, provider exits, longer journeys to reach services, and pressure on the capacity of those that remained (NAO 2014; MoJ 2019b; Harper 2018; Uraz 2025). These reforms do not by themselves explain the access gap observed in 2023, but they identify pressures that correspond closely to the barriers respondents reported, including cost, difficulty identifying a suitable adviser, distance, and difficulty obtaining an appointment.

Access in England and Wales was higher than the estimates reported across the **EU comparison countries** in the WJP (n.d.) GLNS. Those estimates ranged from 27% to 55%, with a median of 39%. The comparison should be treated as a broad benchmark rather than a like-for-like ranking. The ILNS measure includes a relatively broad group of respondents considered to need assistance and advice, including some who did not obtain help but whose responses indicated a barrier. All else equal, this broader basis would tend to reduce, rather than increase, the estimated access rate. Differences in survey questions, routing, qualifying sources, and coding nevertheless limit direct comparison. Even with these caveats, the 62% estimate places England and Wales above the range observed across the EU comparison countries, while the 38% access gap remains substantial.

Figure 9. Need for and access to assistance and advice

Percentage of respondents with non-trivial justice problems who needed assistance and advice and, among those who needed it, whether they accessed it[15]



Note: Access is calculated among respondents considered to have needed assistance and advice. Respondents are counted as having accessed it when they obtained needed advice, practical assistance, advocacy, or representation from a qualifying personal, professional, public, or civil-society source. Those who did not access it are treated as having needed it when they reported cost, practical, informational, or other barriers, declined to state why they did not seek help, or used a dispute resolution mechanism without assistance and advice. Respondents who explicitly reported no need are excluded.

15 The indicator measures access to information, assistance, and advice by calculating the percentage of respondents who successfully obtained it among all those who needed it. Access is recorded when respondents obtained needed advice, practical assistance, advocacy, or representation from at least one qualifying source. These include knowledgeable family or friends; local authorities and advice organisations; lawyers and other legal professionals; trade unions and professional bodies; police, regulators, insurers, employers, elected representatives, and charities; and relevant financial, health, social-service, or other professionals.

Respondents who did not access assistance and advice are treated as having faced a barrier when they reported that they did not seek it because they could not identify a suitable adviser, did not know where or how to obtain advice, believed advice would make no difference, expected it to be too expensive, or thought it would be too difficult because of time, distance, or similar practical constraints. The same classification applies when they declined to answer the follow-up question asking why they did not access assistance and advice. Respondents who were not asked the follow-up question and did not report accessing assistance and advice were coded as facing a barrier if they nevertheless used a dispute resolution mechanism.

For the purposes of the calculation, respondents who accessed assistance and advice or faced a barrier to doing so are considered to have needed it. Respondents are classified as not needing assistance and advice, and are left out of the calculation, when they reported that the issue was being or had been concluded without advice, that they did not need help because they knew enough themselves, or that they did not use a dispute resolution mechanism because they did not need one.

5.2. Access to assistance and advice across population groups

Figure 10 examines access among respondents who needed assistance and advice. Access was 53% among adults aged 18–24, compared with 62% among those aged 25–54 and 65% among those aged 55 and older. The higher rate among older adults may reflect greater accumulated experience in navigating institutions and addressing problems. The pattern may also partly reflect the composition of the mainly online sample, as the older adults who participated may have had stronger digital skills than the older population overall.

Education and legal capability followed similar patterns. Access was 53% among people with no qualifications, compared with 63% among those with advanced qualifications; and 54% among people with lower legal capability, compared with 68% among those with higher capability. Income differences were smaller but also significant: 61% among people reporting incomes below £32,000, compared with 66% among those reporting £60,000 or more. Together, these disparities suggest that people with fewer educational, financial, or legal resources are less likely to obtain needed assistance and advice.

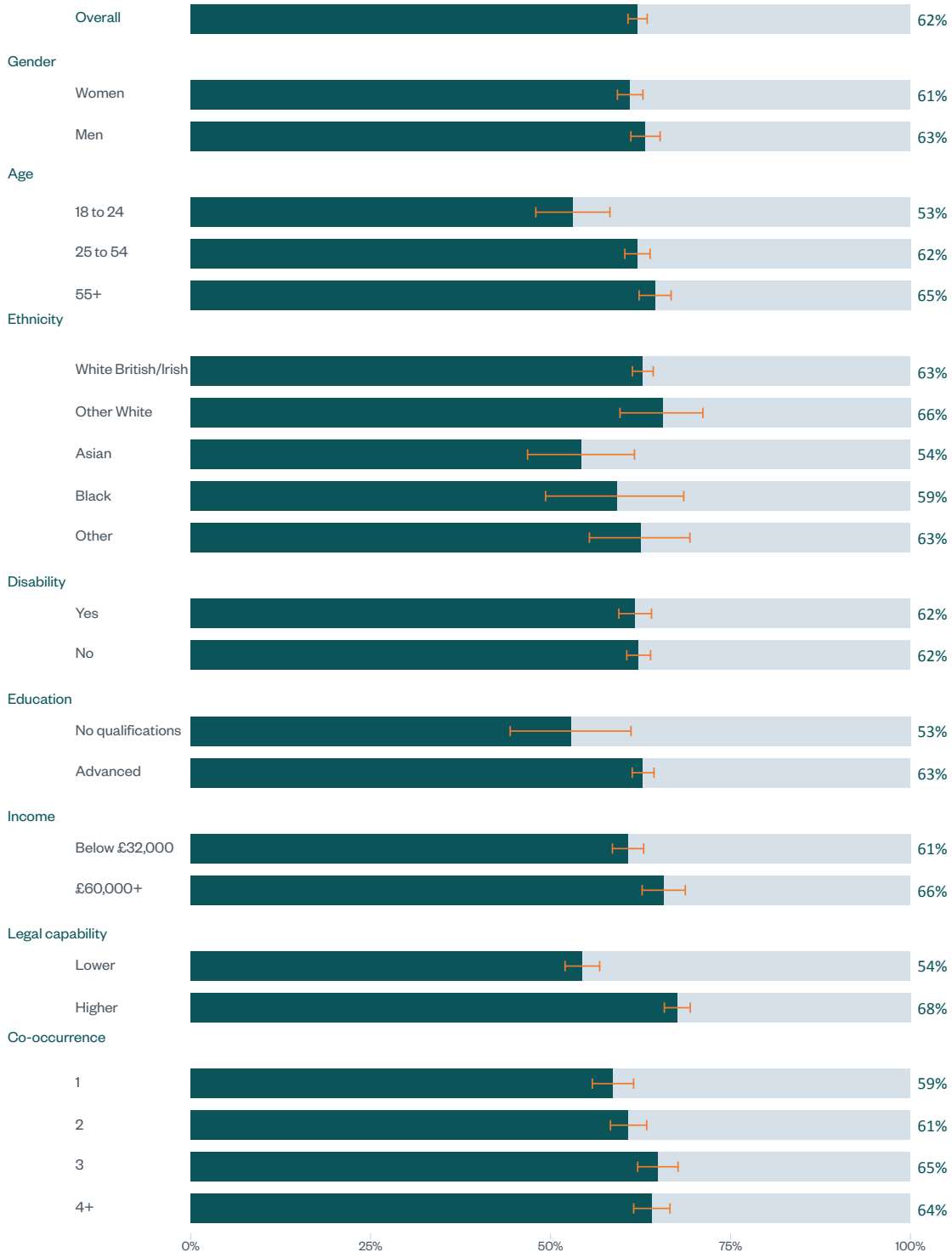
KEY FINDING

Access was lowest among younger **adults and people with lower legal capability: only about half obtained the help they needed**, compared with roughly two-thirds of older adults and those with higher capability. Smaller gaps by **education and income** point to the **same pattern**.

The differences by education and legal capability are particularly relevant to changes in how people enter and navigate assistance services. Telephone gateways and digital channels can extend access for some users, but they also require people to recognise the nature of their problem, determine what assistance may be available, and follow the appropriate route. Digital delivery can disadvantage people with limited access to technology or lower digital capability, while the mandatory Civil Legal Advice Telephone Gateway was associated with users dropping out of the service or abandoning their cases (PLP 2018; Uraz 2025). These changes cannot be identified as the cause of the disparities reported in **Figure 10**. They do, however, provide context for why service models that require greater independent navigation may create particular difficulties for people with fewer qualifications or lower legal capability. The lower access rate among people on lower incomes similarly underscores the importance of cost and the availability of affordable alternatives.

Figure 10. Access to assistance and advice

Percentage of respondents who had access to appropriate assistance and representation out of those who experienced a non-trivial justice problem in the previous four years and needed access



Note: The graph reports access to assistance and advice within each group, among respondents considered to have needed it. Access, barriers, and no need are coded as described in the note to **Figure 9**. Values for middle-income, medium-education, and medium-legal-capability groups are not shown. For ethnicity, 'Other' includes Mixed/Multiple ethnic background and Arab/Other categories.

5.3. Patterns in the use of assistance and advice services

Figure 11 examines the primary source of assistance and advice among respondents who accessed it. Providers are grouped into four types according to their institutional role.

Figure 11. Primary sources of assistance and advice

The primary source of assistance and advice for those who accessed it, by legal capability and income[16]



Note: The graph reports the primary source used by respondents who accessed assistance and advice, among those considered to have needed it. Access is coded as described in the note to Figure 9. Legal practitioners include solicitors, barristers, Chartered Legal Executive, licensed conveyancers, and other lawyers providing market-based legal services. Advice services include council advice and enquiry services, Citizens Advice, Law Centres, other advice services, and charities operating as frontline justice providers. Claims and complaints mechanisms include the police, professional bodies, insurance companies, and regulators, which provide structured routes for initiating a claim, report, or complaint outside the legal advice market. Personal and auxiliary support includes family and friends; financial, health, and social-service professionals; employers; MPs and councillors; and other sources outside the primary legal and advice infrastructure. Percentages across the four source categories within each subgroup may not sum to 100 because of rounding. The estimated access to legal practitioners, marked with an asterisk, is based on fewer than 50 weighted observations. These subgroup estimates are less precise and should not be used to draw firm comparisons with other groups.

Most respondents received their primary support from either personal or auxiliary support, while relatively few used legal practitioners as their primary source. This distribution underscores that reforms focused only on courts or access to market-based legal services would overlook much of the assistance people actually use. The pattern highlights the importance of the reach and capacity of frontline advice services, as well as effective triage and referral between auxiliary providers, advice organisations, legal-aid providers, and other appropriate services.

The prominence of advice services and personal and auxiliary support is particularly significant because reductions in legal-aid coverage affected demand across the wider assistance network,

16 Building on this analysis, an area of further research could use interactions of income and capability to delve further into how these factors influence access to assistance and advice services.

not only the services funded directly through legal aid. Charities and other not-for-profit advice providers reported greater demand from people who could no longer obtain specialist publicly funded assistance, and had to operate under funding uncertainty.[17] Capacity pressures could, in turn, limit the depth and continuity of support, leaving some providers able to offer only general or one-off advice rather than assistance sustained across the course of a problem (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2018; NAO 2014; Uraz 2025). The figures presented in Figure 11 therefore provide evidence that these services are not peripheral to the justice journey: for many respondents, they were the principal source of the assistance obtained.

The pattern varied by people's legal capability and financial resources.[18] Among people with lower legal capability, 48% received their primary support from personal and auxiliary support, compared with 39% of those with higher capability. Advice services were the primary source for 33% of people with lower legal capability, compared with 40% of those with higher capability. In comparing sources of primary support across population subgroups, it is worth noting that if an individual's use of one type of advice service offsets another, specific attribution of how this offsetting happens is beyond the scope of this paper.

KEY FINDING

Personal and auxiliary support, such as **family, employers, and health or financial professionals**, was the primary source for **48% of people with lower legal capability**, compared with 39% of those with higher capability. Frontline advice providers such as Citizens Advice, Law Centres, council services, and charities were less often their primary source. This highlights the **need for accessible, well-signposted, and adequately funded advice services** for people with lower legal capability.

Among respondents who obtained support, people with lower legal capability therefore received it more often through existing personal or professional relationships and less often from dedicated advice providers. This suggests that familiar relationships and services may provide an important point of contact for people who have greater difficulty identifying and navigating formal assistance pathways. It may also indicate that dedicated advice providers do not reach people with lower legal capability as consistently as they reach those better able to identify and navigate available services.

The role of these intermediaries becomes more consequential where access is organised through specialised or remote entry points. In such a system, family members, employers, health and social-service professionals, and other familiar contacts may be called on to help identify the nature of a problem and connect a person with an appropriate provider. Evidence that people experienced uncertainty about the scope of available assistance and difficulty navigating telephone and digital

17 We thank one of our reviewers for his input on the funding uncertainty experienced by and affecting the operations of charities.

18 Individual-level characteristics such as income and legal capability are far from the only factors that can influence engagement with personal and auxiliary support. For example, research on social welfare legal (SWL) advice, informed by case studies of four local authorities in England and Wales (Deeplish, Bryngwran, Hackney, and Dartmouth), found that advice-seeking behaviour can be influenced by both individual and community characteristics – including ethnicity, social networks, and social capital – "underscoring the importance of community-based, culturally sensitive services" (Nason et al. 2024).

routes indicates that these referral functions cannot be assumed to operate effectively without clear and reliable connections to specialist services (MoJ 2019b; PLP 2018; Uraz 2025). The implication therefore extends beyond referral: advice services must also be visible, easy to navigate, available through accessible local and remote channels, and sufficiently resourced to serve people without requiring high levels of legal or digital capability.

Income shaped a different part of the provider pathway. Advice services were the primary source for 41% of people on lower incomes, compared with 35% of those on higher incomes, while legal practitioners were the primary source for 3%, compared with 10% among people on higher incomes. Use of claims and complaints mechanisms differed little across these groups. The findings are consistent with a justice-service landscape in which frontline advice organisations play a particularly important role for people with fewer financial resources, while market-based legal providers are more often the primary source for those with greater resources.

KEY FINDING

People on lower incomes were **more likely to receive their primary support from advice services**, such as Citizens Advice and Law Centres (41% compared with 35% among people on higher incomes), and **less likely to receive it from legal practitioners**, such as solicitors and barristers (3% compared with 10%). This highlights both the **central role of adequately funded frontline advice services and the income-related gap in access to market-based legal help.**

This income pattern is significant because publicly funded assistance narrowed in several areas, including welfare, debt, housing, and family problems, in which people with fewer financial resources may have the greatest need for an affordable source of specialist support. Provider contraction could also require people to travel farther or absorb additional costs, while financial eligibility rules may exclude some on middle incomes who remain unable to afford private legal assistance (PLP 2019, 15; Harper 2018; Uraz 2025). The reliance of lower-income respondents on advice services therefore reinforces the importance of sufficient and sustainable capacity across frontline provision, particularly where market-based legal services are not a realistic substitute.

Taken together, Figures 9 to 11 indicate that access depends on more than whether some form of assistance exists. It also depends on whether people can identify an appropriate source, afford and reach it, navigate its entry requirements, and obtain support from a provider with sufficient capacity. While not causal, these findings indicate that the consequences of narrower eligibility, reduced local provision, remote entry points, and provider capacity constraints are likely to fall unevenly across income and legal-capability groups and across the different services from which people obtain support.

The findings point to the need for stable funding and sufficient capacity across frontline advice services, affordable access to appropriate legal assistance where needed, accessible local and remote entry points, and reliable connections between personal, professional, advice, and legal services. These measures would reduce the extent to which income or the ability to navigate a fragmented system determines the support people ultimately receive.

6. Access to dispute resolution mechanisms

KEY FINDING

Around **6 in 10** respondents with non-trivial justice problems **needed a dispute resolution mechanism**. Among them, 69% accessed at least one, while **31% encountered barriers** and did not.

For people whose justice problems involve a dispute, engaging with a dispute resolution mechanism may be an important step in their justice journey. They may reach an agreement directly, ask a neutral third party to help them reach one, or turn to a third party that decides the outcome, which may be binding. The role of the third party therefore ranges from facilitating agreement to determining the outcome (Department of Justice Canada n.d.).

Dispute resolution mechanisms vary in their formality, whether participation is voluntary or mandated, whether the outcome is binding, and the degree of control retained by the parties or exercised by a third party (Menkel-Meadow 2015). Different people and problems may require different approaches. No single method can address every situation effectively, and reliance only on court proceedings or negotiated settlements does not capture the full range of people's needs or preferences (OECD 2021).

Access is also shaped by whether people understand the rules, costs, timelines, safeguards, and possible outcomes of the mechanisms available to them and can move between the mechanisms they need without confusion or unnecessary complications (OECD 2021). The costs of pursuing resolution can create financial strain and limit access to dispute resolution mechanisms (Sandefur 2009).

6.1. Coverage of assistance and advice among people in need

Figure 12 distinguishes whether respondents needed a dispute resolution mechanism and, among those who needed one, whether they accessed it. This approach adapts the general methodology of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.3.3, which measures whether people who experienced a dispute accessed a formal or informal dispute resolution mechanism, by type of mechanism (OECD and Pathfinders 2023).

Under this measure, 61% of respondents with non-trivial justice problems needed a dispute resolution mechanism – defined as either accessing one or reporting a barrier to doing so. These barriers included not knowing what to do, believing that pursuing a mechanism would make no difference, expecting it to be too expensive, and facing practical constraints such as time or distance. Respondents who reported that the issue was already being or had been resolved without further action, was not important enough to pursue, or did not involve a dispute, or that they believed the other party was right, were classified as not needing a dispute resolution mechanism.

Among those who needed a dispute resolution mechanism, 69% accessed at least one, while 31% did not.[19] Access was recorded when respondents used at least one formal or informal dispute

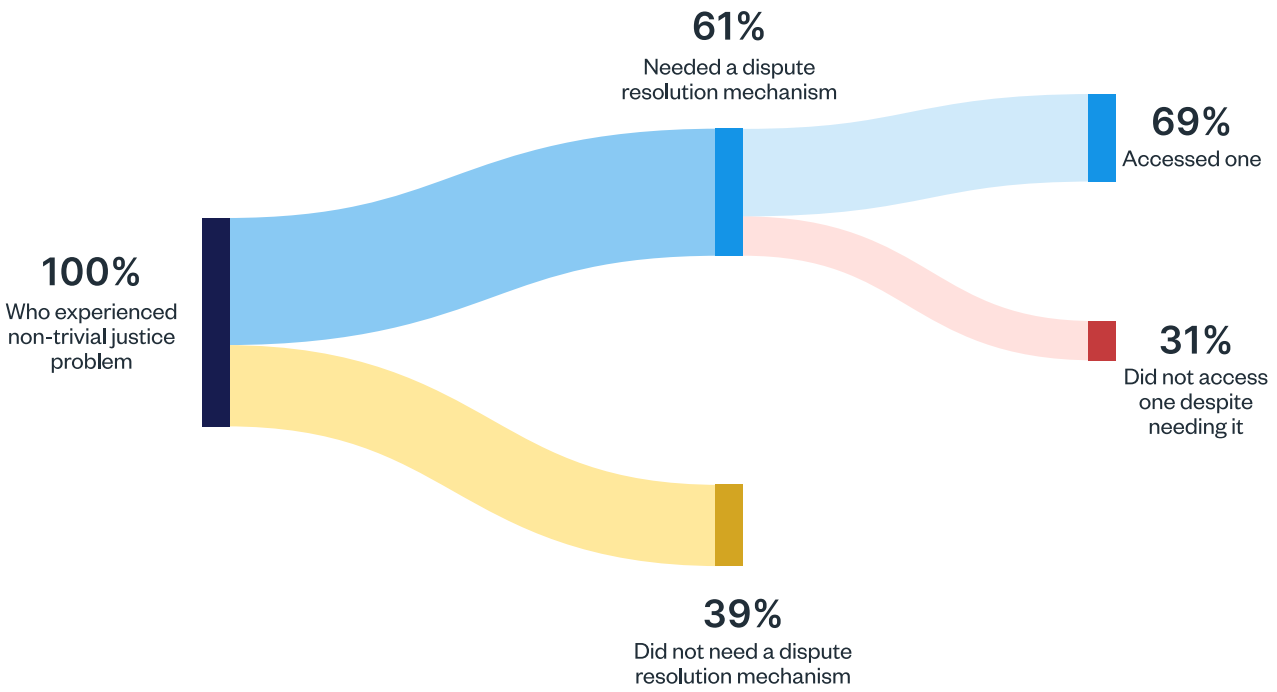
19 The proportion of respondents accessing dispute resolution mechanisms reported here is higher than that of the loosely comparable findings in the 2023 ILNS summary report (Legal Services Board and The Law Society 2024). Differences in the populations analysed, including this report's restriction to justice problems rated 4 or higher on a 10-point severity scale, may contribute to this difference. However, the estimates are not directly comparable..

resolution mechanism, including negotiation, an adjudicative or administrative process, a customary or community-based forum, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, a restorative process, or private claims-based resolution.

For the remaining 39% who did not need a dispute resolution mechanism, responses indicated that the issue was being or had been resolved without further action, was not important enough to pursue, or did not involve a dispute, or that respondents believed the other party was right.

Figure 12. Need for and access to dispute resolution mechanisms

Percentage of respondents with non-trivial justice problems who needed a dispute resolution mechanism and, among those who needed it, whether they accessed it[20]



Note: Access is calculated among respondents considered to have needed a dispute resolution mechanism. Respondents are counted as having accessed one when they obtained at least one qualifying formal or informal mechanism. Those who did not access one are treated as having needed it when they reported informational, financial, practical, or other barriers, declined to state why they did not seek a mechanism, or were not asked the follow-up question and obtained neither a dispute resolution mechanism nor information, assistance, or advice. Respondents who reported no need for further dispute resolution are excluded from the estimation of access.

20 The indicator measures access to dispute resolution mechanisms by calculating the percentage of respondents who obtained at least one among all those considered to have needed one. It adapts the general approach of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.3.3 to the questions available in the 2023 ILNS. Access is recorded when respondents obtained at least one needed mechanism through negotiation, a litigious or adjudicative pathway, administrative resolution, a customary or community-based forum, a restorative process, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, or private claims-based resolution.
Respondents who did not access a dispute resolution mechanism are treated as having faced a barrier when they reported that they did not seek one because they did not know what to do, believed that it would make no difference, expected it to be too expensive, or thought that it would be too difficult because of time, distance, or similar practical constraints. The same classification applies when they declined to answer the follow-up question asking why they did not seek a mechanism. Respondents who were not asked the follow-up question and did not report accessing a dispute resolution mechanism were coded as facing a barrier when they also did not access information, assistance, or advice.
For the purposes of the calculation, respondents who accessed a dispute resolution mechanism or faced a barrier to doing so are considered to have needed one. Respondents are classified as not needing a dispute resolution mechanism, and are excluded from the access calculation, when they reported that the issue was already being or had been resolved without further action, was not important enough to pursue, or did not involve a dispute, or that they believed the other party was right. Direct negotiation is classified as access rather than as no need.

This measure records whether respondents obtained at least one mechanism. It does not distinguish between the different types of mechanisms used, whether the mechanism obtained was the one best suited to the problem, or whether the process ultimately produced an effective or fair resolution. These later aspects of the justice journey are examined separately.

Comparisons with other European countries should be treated as indicative rather than like-for-like. The England and Wales estimate is restricted to non-trivial, contentious problems because the 2023 ILNS measures seriousness only for contentious issues. It therefore covers a narrower set of problems and excludes non-contentious matters. At the same time, among the smaller subset of respondents who reported more than one occurrence of the selected type of problem, the ILNS asked about the second most recent occurrence. The focal problem may therefore have been relatively recent and had less time to progress to a dispute resolution mechanism.

6.2. Access to dispute resolution mechanisms across population groups

Figure 13 presents lower access among younger adults and among people with lower legal capability (63% compared with 75% for higher capability), fewer qualifications (63% compared with 72% for advanced qualifications), and lower incomes (68% compared with 74% for incomes of £60,000 or more), while access varied little by gender or disability.

The larger differences by legal capability and educational qualifications are especially important when considered alongside the reasons given for non-access. Among the 30% who needed but did not access a mechanism, 81% either did not know what to do or believed that pursuing one would make no difference. The access gap therefore appears to involve not only financial or practical resources, but also the ability to identify how to proceed and confidence that taking action will be useful. Legal capability, awareness of available pathways, and perceptions of whether services will be effective can all influence whether people use dispute resolution services.

KEY FINDING

Access to dispute resolution mechanisms was lower among people with fewer educational, legal, and financial resources. It was 63% among people with lower legal capability or those with no qualifications, compared with 75% among people with higher capability and 72% among those with advanced qualifications. Access was **also lower among people on lower incomes. Younger adults** had the lowest age-group estimate, at 61%.

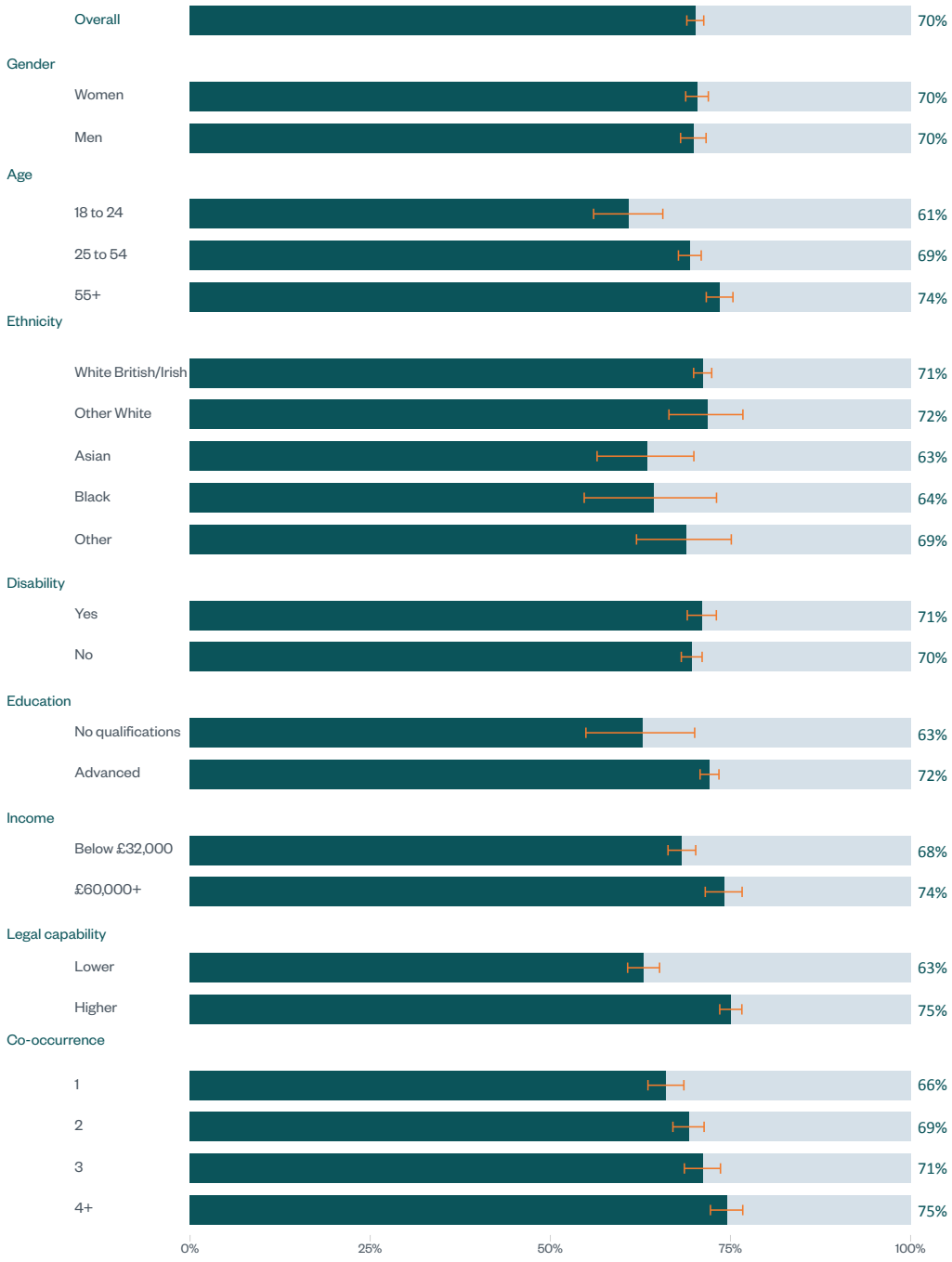
Assessments of changes to legal-aid scope and delivery, including greater reliance on telephone and digital routes, have raised concerns about reduced access to early advice, people dropping out before reaching appropriate support, weaknesses in referral and guidance, and difficulties using these routes without sufficient financial, legal, or digital resources (NAO 2014; PLP 2018; PLP 2020; HMCTS 2024; Uraz 2025). These sources do not establish that the reforms caused the differences reported in **Figure 13**. They provide context for why people with fewer legal, educational, or financial resources may face greater difficulty moving from a justice problem to a dispute resolution process.

Access was lower among younger adults than among older groups, although this may partly reflect differences in the types of justice problems experienced at different stages of life rather than age alone. The comparatively high access estimate among adults aged 55 and older should be interpreted cautiously, as the mainly online survey may have disproportionately included older adults with stronger digital skills and greater capacity to navigate justice processes than the older population overall.

Access for the problem examined was 75% among respondents who had experienced four or more justice problems, compared with 66% among those who had experienced one. This does not mean that respondents with several problems accessed a mechanism for each of them.

Figure 13. Access to dispute resolution mechanisms

Percentage of respondents who had access to a dispute resolution mechanism out of those who experienced a non-trivial justice problem in the previous four years and needed access



Note: The graph reports access to dispute resolution mechanisms within each group, among respondents considered to have needed it. Access, barriers, and no need are coded as described in the note to **Figure 12**. Values for middle-income, medium-education, and medium-legal-capability groups are not shown here but are available in the supplementary appendices. For ethnicity, 'Other' includes Mixed/Multiple ethnic background and Arab/Other categories.

6.3. Access to dispute resolution mechanisms by type

KEY FINDING

Among respondents who accessed a dispute resolution mechanism, **58% used negotiation**. All other mechanisms were recorded much less often.

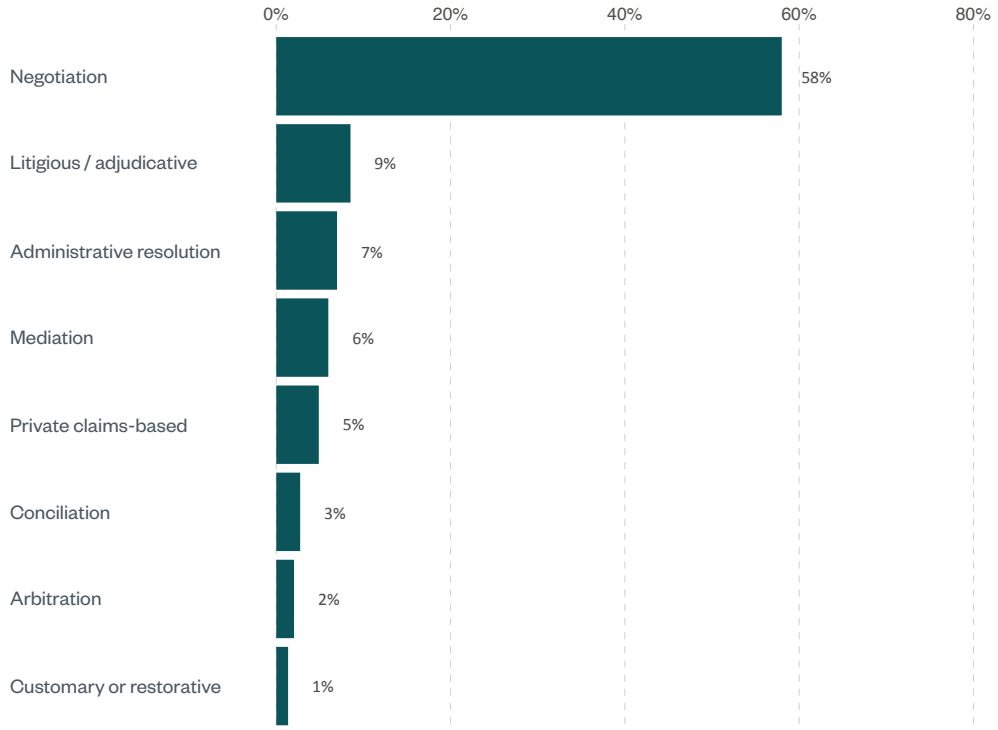
Among respondents who accessed a dispute resolution mechanism, negotiation[21] was by far the most commonly recorded route, at 58% (see **Figure 14**). All other mechanisms were used much less frequently: 9% accessed a litigious or adjudicative process, 7% an administrative resolution process, 6% mediation, and 5% a private claims-based mechanism. Conciliation, arbitration, and customary or restorative mechanisms were each recorded for 3% or less. Access was therefore concentrated in direct negotiation rather than in mechanisms involving third-party facilitation or determination.

This pattern is broadly consistent with the longstanding emphasis in civil justice policy on encouraging settlement before litigation and treating formal court proceedings as a later resort in appropriate cases (Pleasence et al. 2006; De Girolamo and Underhill 2022). The findings nevertheless remain descriptive and do not establish that these policy developments caused the observed distribution.

21 In this analysis, respondents are counted as having utilised negotiation if they indicated that they communicated with the party they had an issue with. While the question does not further specify, it is reasonable to assume that such an approach may likely be somewhat informal. This could indicate that many people who do utilise dispute resolution mechanisms do so in an informal manner.

Figure 14. Types of dispute resolution mechanisms accessed

Percentage of respondents who accessed a dispute resolution mechanism, by type of mechanism accessed



Note: The graph reports the types of dispute resolution mechanisms accessed among respondents counted as having accessed at least one mechanism in Figures 12 and 13. The percentages describe the mechanisms accessed and do not assess their suitability, effectiveness, fairness, or contribution to the eventual resolution of the problem.

7. Process completion and problem resolution

Even after a person has accessed a dispute resolution mechanism and their case has received a resolution, the underlying justice problem may persist. Problem resolution is therefore the central outcome of a justice journey because it captures whether the problem itself has ended, rather than simply whether a case or process has concluded (Verdonschot et al. 2008; Farrow and Jacobs 2020). A process may continue for an extended period, while its conclusion may still leave the problem unresolved, including where efforts were abandoned or the outcome was not recognised and respected by those involved.

When resolution does occur, this may be through an agreement, an independent decision, action taken by one of the parties, or another outcome that brings the matter to an end. This need not involve a formal legal institution, since people may resolve problems directly or through informal mechanisms (Genn and Beinart 1999; Sandefur 2007; Pleasence and Balmer 2014). The analysis therefore distinguishes between process completion and problem resolution. It first examines whether the resolution process was complete and then, among respondents whose process had ended, whether the underlying problem was fully resolved.

Among respondents with a non-trivial justice problem, 68% reported that the process of trying to address it was complete, while 32% were still seeking a resolution.[22] Of the 68% whose process was complete, 72% considered their problem resolved, leaving 28% with a finished process but without the underlying problem being resolved.

7.1. Completion and ongoing resolution processes

Figure 15 shows that process completion varied most clearly by education, disability, and the number of justice problems experienced. The process was complete for 53% of respondents with no qualifications, compared with 70% of those with advanced qualifications, and for 61% of respondents with a disability, compared with 71% of those without one. Completion also declined as the number of problems increased, from 70% among respondents with one or two justice problems to 64% among those with four or more.

KEY FINDING

Process completion was lowest **among people with no qualifications and those with a disability**, meaning that ongoing processes were most common in these groups: **only about half and 6 in 10**, respectively, had reached the end of the process.

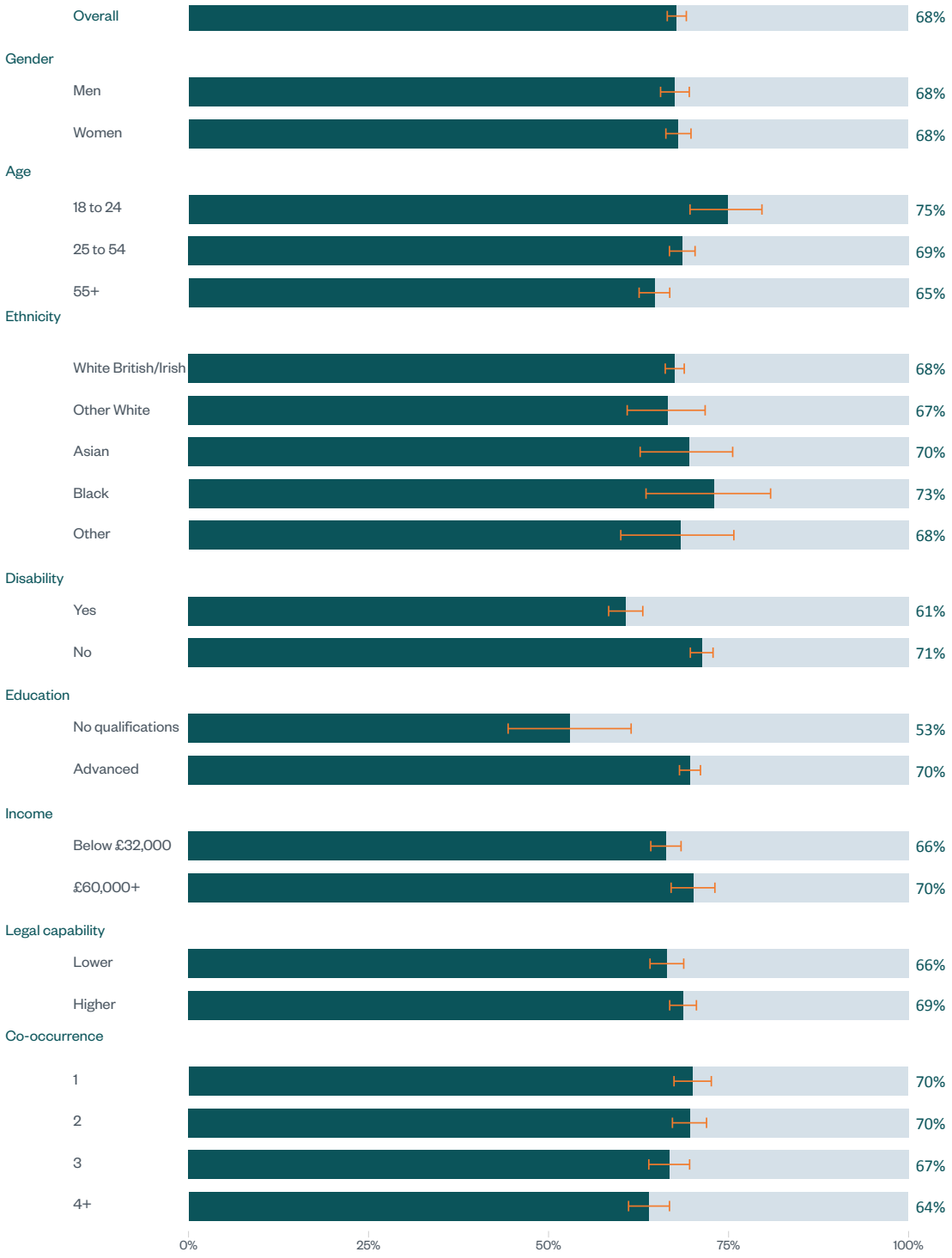
These patterns indicate that some groups were more likely to remain in an ongoing resolution process. Assessments of justice-service delivery have raised concerns about the demands placed on people to identify appropriate services, understand procedures and eligibility requirements, and navigate telephone, digital, and self-service routes without sustained support (NAO 2014; PLP 2018; PLP 2020; HMCTS 2024; Uraz 2025). This provides context for the lower completion estimates among people with fewer qualifications or additional support needs, but it does not establish that these service changes caused the differences observed here.

The pattern by age was different. Process completion was highest among adults aged 18–24, at 75%, and lowest among those aged 55 and older, at 65%. This difference should not be interpreted as indicating higher rates of problem resolution, since completion only records whether the process had ended. Differences by gender, income, and legal capability were comparatively small. As with the preceding indicators, the confidence intervals overlap across ethnic groups, making differences difficult to distinguish.

22 The 2023 ILNS summary report does not present a comparable estimate as findings are limited to problems that are already completed (Legal Services Board and The Law Society 2024).

Figure 15. Completion of resolution processes

Percentage of respondents with non-trivial justice problems who reported that their resolution process was complete, by population group



Note: The graph reports whether respondents considered the process of addressing their justice problem complete. A completed process does not necessarily mean that the underlying problem was fully resolved. Values for middle-income, medium-education, and medium-legal-capability groups are not shown here but are available in the supplementary appendices. For ethnicity, 'Other' includes Mixed/Multiple ethnic background and Arab/Other categories.

7.2. Problem resolution among completed processes

KEY FINDING

For **nearly 3 in 10 people**, the **resolution process ended** but the **underlying problem** did not.

Among respondents whose resolution process was complete, 72% reported that the underlying problem had been fully resolved (see **Figure 16**). The remaining 28% reported that the underlying problem persisted after the resolution process had ended. The indicator measures problem resolution only among respondents who were finished with the process.

As a supplementary comparison, the 72% estimate for England and Wales sits slightly above the median of 70% across the European countries included in the WJP comparison (with a range of 61–86%). This places England and Wales around the middle of the distribution. The comparison is best understood as a broad benchmark rather than directly equivalent. As noted above, the 2023 ILNS estimate for England and Wales covers a narrower set of problem types, is restricted to non-trivial, contentious problems, and uses a four-year recall period rather than the two-year period used in the WJP (n.d.) GLNS.

Resolution was lower among respondents with a disability, no qualifications, lower legal capability, and multiple justice problems.[23] Among completed processes, 66% of respondents with a disability reported that the problem was fully resolved, compared with 75% of those without a disability. Resolution was also lower among respondents with no qualifications than among those with advanced qualifications, at 65% and 73%, respectively.

The largest difference was associated with legal capability. The problem was fully resolved for 66% of people with lower legal capability, compared with 76% of those with higher capability. This matters because process completion alone can conceal unequal outcomes: while completion differed little by legal capability, people with lower legal capability were substantially less likely to report that the underlying problem had been fully resolved.

Problem resolution also fell to 65% among respondents who had experienced four or more justice problems, compared with 76% among those with one. Multiple problems may involve interacting legal and non-legal issues and require responses from several institutions or services. Previous assessments have identified difficulties in addressing such problem clusters through fragmented systems of advice and support (DCA 2005a). This provides relevant context, although these findings do not establish why individual problems remained unresolved.

By contrast, full resolution varied little by age: between 72% and 73% of respondents in each group reported that the underlying problem had been resolved once the process was complete.

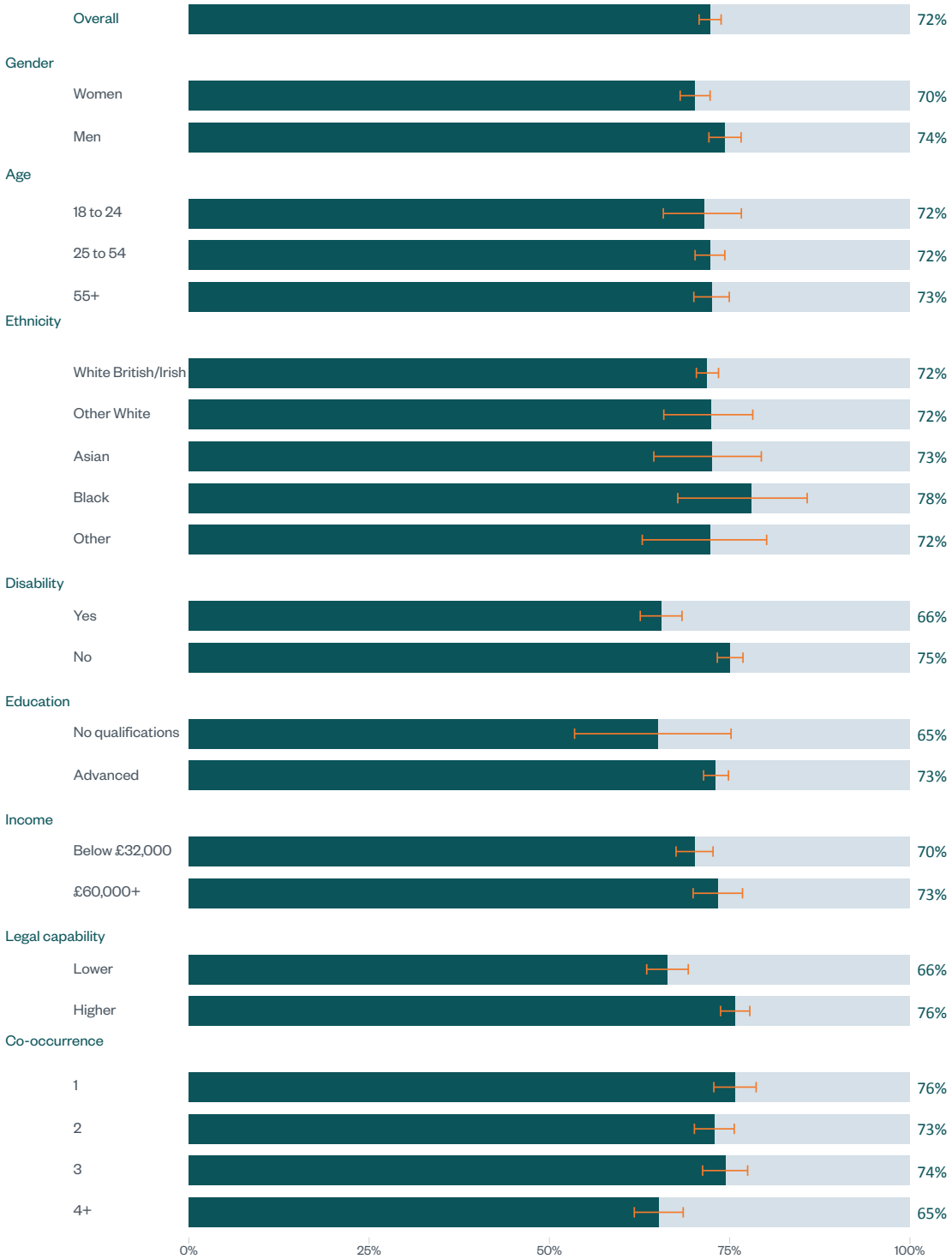
23 These figures are derived via aggregate descriptive statistics, and therefore there is potential variation by type of legal problem. These findings are broadly consistent with the findings presented in the 2023 ILNS summary report suggesting that those with disabilities and with lower legal capability are less likely to solve their justice problem, though this report provides further insight into the influence of education and problem co-occurrence (Legal Services Board and The Law Society 2024; Legal Services Board 2024).

Younger adults were therefore more likely to have reached the end of the process, but not more likely to have resolved the problem itself. Justice services should therefore be assessed not only by whether people complete a process quickly, but by whether the information, assistance, and dispute resolution mechanisms available are sufficient to resolve the underlying problem. Effective referral and support may remain important even where processes are designed to be quicker or easier to navigate (MoJ 2021; Harrison et al. 2024; HMCTS 2024). Differences in resolution by income were also modest. Differences in problem resolution by ethnicity were not clear, as the confidence intervals overlapped across groups.[24]

24 Although the survey is weighted to reflect the ethnic composition of the adult population of England and Wales, the higher rate of problem resolution among Black respondents (78%) is based on a relatively small subgroup of 64 respondents whose resolution process had concluded (weighted base = 151). This estimate should therefore be interpreted cautiously.

Figure 16. Resolution of justice problems

Percentage of respondents whose resolution process was complete who reported that their justice problem was fully resolved, by population group



Note: Resolution is calculated only among respondents who reported that their resolution process was complete. The measure records whether the underlying problem was fully resolved, regardless of the route used or whether a formal justice institution was involved. Values for middle-income, medium-education, and medium-legal-capability groups are not shown here but are available in the supplementary appendices. For ethnicity, 'Other' includes Mixed/Multiple ethnic background and Arab/Other categories.

7.3. Perceived fairness of justice problem outcomes

As people conclude their justice processes, their assessment of the outcome's fairness captures whether the resolution addressed their needs, repaired harm, and was understood by those involved (Verdonschot et al. 2008). A resolution may bring the process to an end without being considered fair or acceptable by everyone involved.

Among respondents whose resolution process had ended, 57% considered the outcome basically fair to everyone concerned (**Figure 17**). This was lower than the 72% who reported that the underlying problem had been fully resolved. A problem may therefore be brought to an end without the result being regarded as fair by everyone involved. The difference reinforces the importance of assessing problem resolution and perceived fairness as distinct dimensions of justice outcomes.

The clearest difference was by legal capability: 44% of people with lower legal capability considered the outcome fair, compared with 65% of those with higher capability. Perceived fairness was also lower among respondents who had experienced four or more justice problems than among those who had experienced one, at 47% and 62%, respectively.

KEY FINDING

Legal capability marked the sharpest divide: people with lower legal capability were **10 percentage points less likely to report full resolution** and **21 points less likely to consider the outcome fair**.

Smaller differences were observed by disability, education, and gender. The outcome was considered fair by 52% of respondents with a disability, compared with 59% of those without one; by 51% of respondents with no qualifications, compared with 57% of those with advanced qualifications; and by 53% of women, compared with 60% of men. Differences by age and income were limited. Estimates varied across ethnic groups but were less precise and should be interpreted cautiously.

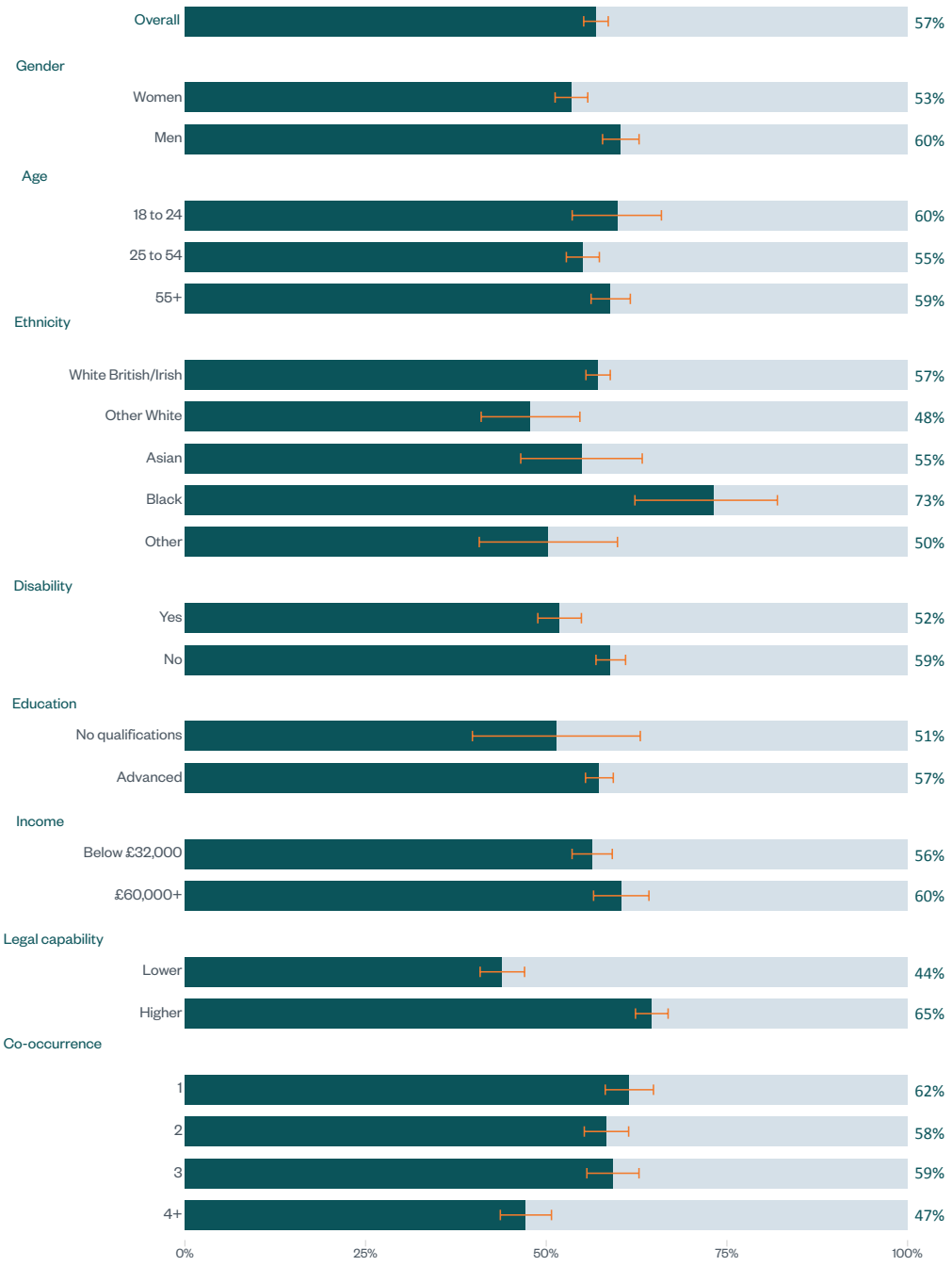
Taken together, these patterns underline the need to consider not only whether a process ended or a problem was resolved, but also how the resulting outcome was experienced. Perceptions of fairness reflect whether people understood the outcome, whether it addressed their needs and harms, and whether they were able to participate meaningfully in reaching it. The lower estimates among people with lower legal capability and those facing multiple problems are consistent with concerns that complex or fragmented pathways can make it harder to understand and influence outcomes or to address interconnected needs (DCA 2005a; Uraz 2026). The findings do not, however, establish why individual outcomes were considered fair or unfair.

The conditions under which people enter and participate in resolution processes are also relevant to outcome fairness. The Civil Procedure Act (CPA) encouraged parties to consider alternative dispute resolution (ADR) throughout the case. A party that refused without reasonable grounds could face an unfavourable costs decision, even if it ultimately succeeded in the litigation (De Girolamo and Underhill 2022). Reduced access to early advice can limit the support available to understand options and navigate resolution pathways (NAO 2014; Uraz 2025), while weaknesses in referral and

guidance can make appropriate services harder to reach (HMCTS 2024). These issues are especially significant in disputes involving power imbalances, where safety, freedom from coercion, and non-discrimination are central to assessing the fairness of a resolution.

Figure 17. Fairness of the outcome

Percentage of respondents whose resolution process was complete who reported that the outcome of the issue was basically fair to everybody concerned, by population group



Note: Fairness is calculated only among respondents who reported that their resolution process was complete. The measure records whether respondents felt that the outcome was basically fair to everybody concerned. Values for middle-income, medium-education, and medium-legal-capability groups are not shown here but are available in the supplementary appendices. For ethnicity, 'Other' includes Mixed/Multiple ethnic background and Arab/Other categories.

8. Process fairness and quality

A process can end without feeling fair: how people are treated, heard, and informed along the way is itself a core measure of justice. Procedural justice concerns the fairness of the processes through which decisions and outcomes are reached, rather than the outcome alone (Tyler 2000, 2007). It is generally understood as a perceptual phenomenon, shaped by whether people feel heard, are treated with dignity and respect, encounter neutral and trustworthy decision-making, and receive explanations that allow them to understand and participate in the process (Tyler and Huo 2002; Leben 2014; Nagin and Telep 2017; OECD 2017). These experiences also influence the legitimacy of justice institutions, trust in justice actors, and adherence to agreements over time (Tyler 2000; Tyler and Huo 2002).

The 2023 ILNS provides three complementary indicators of process quality. Among people whose resolution process remained ongoing, 'satisfaction' records whether they were satisfied or very satisfied with how things were turning out at the time of the survey. Among those whose process had concluded, 'process fairness' records whether they considered the process fair to everybody concerned, regardless of the outcome, while 'timeliness' is measured through the duration of concluded resolution processes, calculated from respondents' reported start and conclusion dates and distinguishing processes that lasted more than one year from those completed within a year.

8.1. Satisfaction with ongoing justice processes

KEY FINDING

Only **1 in 3 people** with an ongoing process **were satisfied** with how it was going. Satisfaction was especially low among **people with lower legal capability**, at just over **1 in 5, and among adults aged 55 and older**, at **fewer than 3 in 10**.

Among people whose resolution process remained ongoing, 36% were satisfied or very satisfied with how things were turning out (**Figure 18**). Satisfaction varied most clearly by legal capability and age. It was twice as high among people with higher legal capability as among those with lower capability, at 44% and 22%, respectively. This pattern extends the findings from the previous section. People with lower legal capability were less positive about how an ongoing process was developing and, once the process had ended, were less likely to consider the problem resolved or the outcome fair. Processes that rely heavily on self-navigation may place greater demands on the knowledge and skills captured by legal capability. Previous assessments have linked complex self-help requirements and limited assistance with confusion and difficulty understanding options and participating effectively (Uraz 2025; Hunter et al. 2020). These sources provide context for the pattern but do not establish why satisfaction differed in the ILNS.

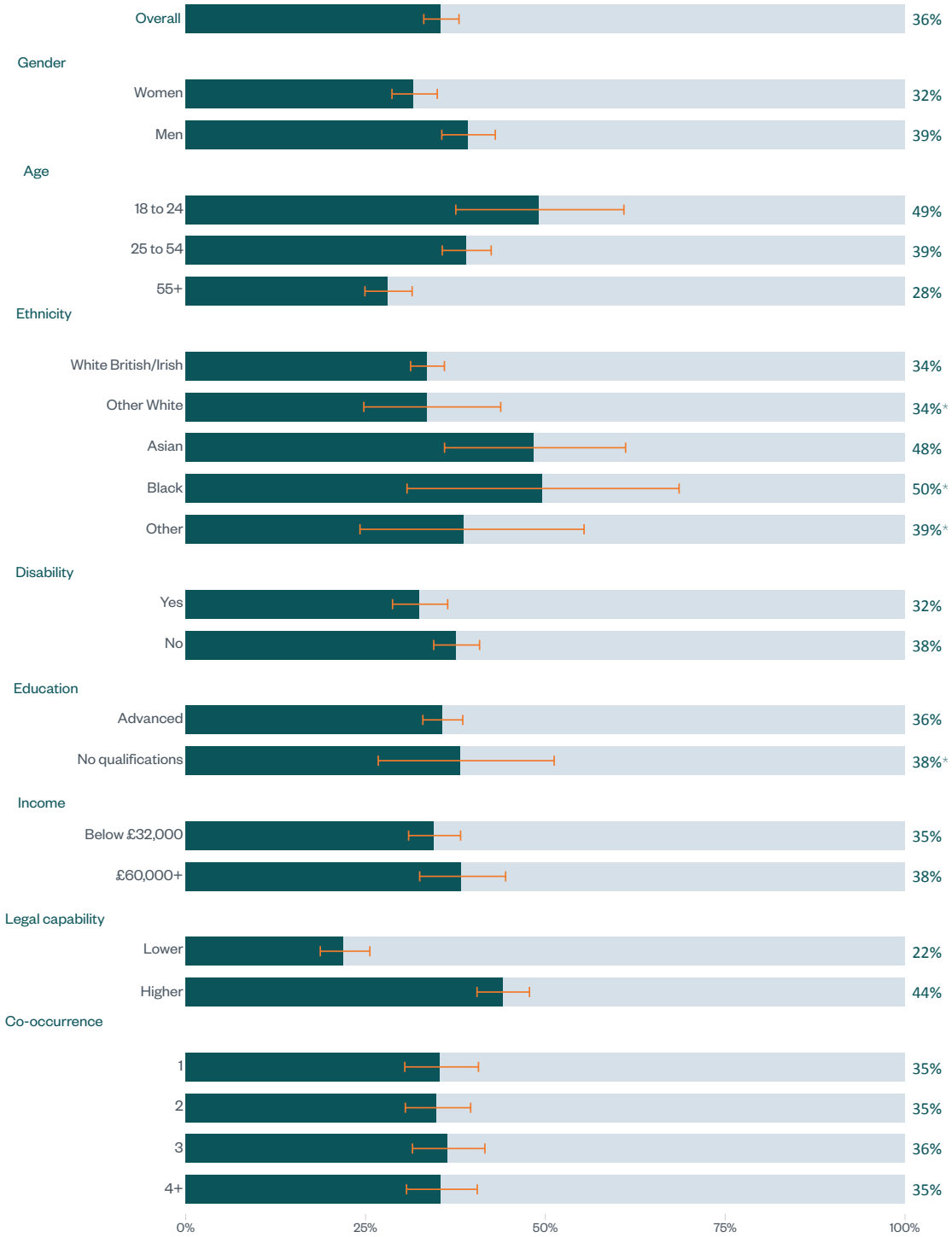
Satisfaction was also highest among adults aged 18–24, at 49%, compared with 39% among those aged 25–54 and 28% among those aged 55 and older. The low estimate among adults aged 55 and older is notable because the mainly online survey may have disproportionately included older adults

with stronger digital capability. The pattern is therefore unlikely to reflect particularly disadvantaged older respondents and may understate dissatisfaction in the wider older population. It may also reflect higher expectations of how a resolution process should progress.

Satisfaction was also lower among women (32% compared with 39% for men) and people with a disability (32% compared with 38% for those without). As relevant context, evidence from vulnerable court users indicates that inadequate referral to support services and difficulties obtaining affordable assistance can leave some people less prepared to participate effectively in proceedings (HMCTS 2024). Differences by education, income, and the number of problems experienced were limited. Estimates for some ethnic groups were based on small subsamples and should be interpreted cautiously.

Figure 18. Satisfaction with ongoing processes

Percentage of respondents with ongoing non-trivial problems who were satisfied or very satisfied with how things are turning out



Note: Satisfaction is calculated only among respondents whose resolution process was ongoing. It combines respondents who were satisfied or very satisfied with how things were turning out at the time of the survey. Values for middle-income, medium-education, and medium-legal-capability groups are not shown here but are available in the supplementary appendices. For ethnicity, 'Other' includes Mixed/Multiple ethnic background and Arab/Other categories. An asterisk indicates a weighted subsample smaller than 50.

8.2. Perceived fairness of justice processes

Among people whose resolution process had concluded, 55% considered the process fair to everybody concerned, regardless of its outcome (**Figure 19**). **As a supplementary comparison**, estimates of this indicator range from 47% to 78% across the European countries included in the WJP (n.d.) GLNS, with a median of 59%. This places England and Wales slightly below the middle of the distribution. The comparison is relatively well aligned in that both surveys use a direct binary assessment of fairness and restrict the measure to people with a non-trivial problem whose resolution process had concluded. It should nevertheless be treated as a broad benchmark rather than a like-for-like ranking. The ILNS asks whether the process was fair to everybody concerned, while the WJP (n.d.) GLNS asks more generally whether the process followed was fair. The surveys also differ in recall period, problem coverage, routing, and administration. Even with these caveats, the England and Wales estimate falls within the European range but below its median.

KEY FINDING

Only just **over half considered the process fair. Fewer than half of people with lower legal capability** or **4 or more justice problems** did so, compared with about 6 in 10 people with higher capability or one problem. Perceived fairness was **also lower among women and people with a disability.**

The clearest difference was again associated with legal capability. Process fairness stood at 43% among people with lower legal capability, compared with 61% among those with higher capability. This closely parallels the earlier findings on outcome fairness in the previous section. The legal-capability disparity therefore extended to both how people experienced the process and how they assessed its result.

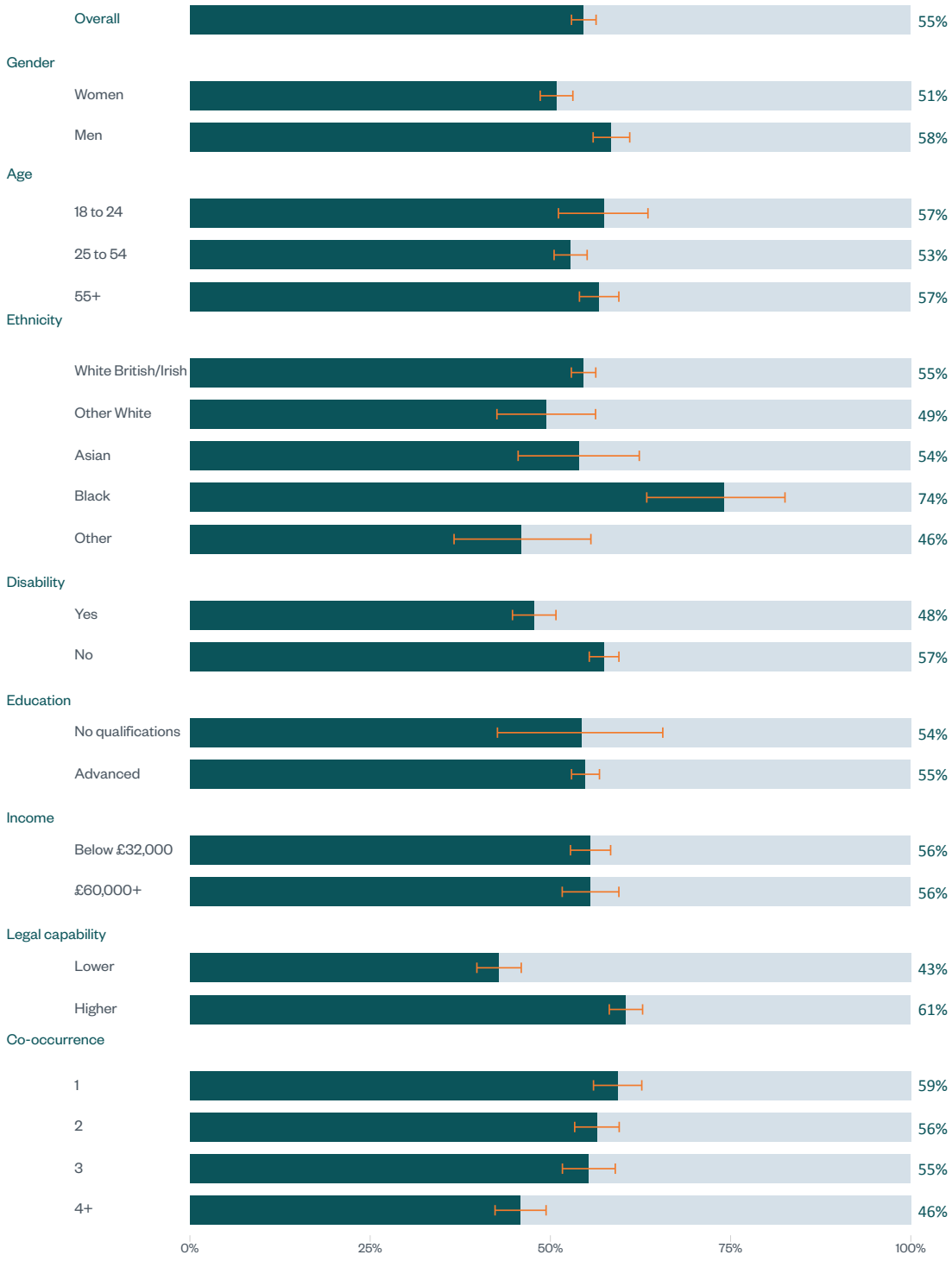
The difference by legal capability appeared in both process and outcome fairness and warrants particular attention. For added context, limited or delayed advice has been associated with confusion, exclusion, powerlessness, and reduced ability to participate effectively in some justice pathways (Uraz 2025; Hunter et al. 2020). Such experiences may have contributed to the lower average fairness reported by people with lower legal capability, although the survey does not establish the extent of that contribution. A separate concern applies to people facing multiple problems: earlier assessments found that advice services were often not organised to address interconnected problem clusters (DCA 2005a).

Process fairness was also lower among people facing multiple justice problems. It was considered fair by 46% of those who had experienced four or more problems, compared with 59% of those who had experienced one. Fairness was also notably lower among people with a disability and among women: 48% of people with a disability considered the process fair, compared with 57% of those without one, while the figures were 51% for women and 58% for men. Differences by age, education, and income were limited. Although estimates varied across ethnic groups,[25] the confidence intervals were wide for several groups and do not support firm conclusions.

25 The estimate for Black respondents is based on 61 unweighted respondents (weighted base = 193). Although the survey is weighted to reflect the adult population of England and Wales by ethnicity, this estimate is based on the narrower subgroup of Black respondents with a non-trivial justice problem whose resolution process had concluded and should therefore be interpreted cautiously.

Figure 19. Perceived fairness of concluded justice processes

Percentage of respondents with a non-trivial justice problem whose resolution process had concluded who felt that, regardless of the outcome, the process was fair to everybody concerned



Note: Process fairness is calculated only among respondents whose resolution process was complete. Values for middle-income, medium-education, and medium-legal-capability groups are not shown here but are available in the supplementary appendices. For ethnicity, 'Other' includes Mixed/Multiple ethnic background and Arab/Other categories.

8.3. Duration of concluded processes

KEY FINDING

Nearly **two-thirds of concluded justice processes** finished **within a year**, but around **4 in 10 lasted longer for women and people with a disability, no qualifications, lower legal capability or multiple problems.**

Among people whose resolution process had concluded, 35% said that it had taken more than one year, while 65% completed the process within a year (**Figure 20**). Processes lasting more than a year were consistently more common among women and people with a disability, no qualifications, lower legal capability, or three or more justice problems, with this affecting around four in ten people in these groups.

The age pattern was different. Only 23% of adults aged 18–24 experienced a process lasting more than a year, compared with 37% of those aged 25–54 and 35% of those aged 55 and older. Together with the process completion findings above, this indicates that younger adults were more likely to have concluded their justice process and to have done so within a year. They were not, however, more likely to have fully resolved the underlying problem, which varied little by age. These findings provide further evidence that the conclusion or shorter duration of a justice process does not necessarily mean that the problem was resolved or that the process was fair.

8.4. Upfront information on processes and complaint mechanisms

KEY FINDING

Among people who successfully reached an adequate source of assistance or advice, **fewer than half received upfront information about what to expect**, and only **4 in 10 received information on how to complain or seek correction if something went wrong.**

In addition to the indicators of process fairness above, the ILNS captures aspects of procedural clarity and correctability among respondents who successfully reached a main adviser. These measures cover the information provided at the outset and whether respondents were told about complaint or correction mechanisms. They provide evidence on relevant dimensions of procedural justice.

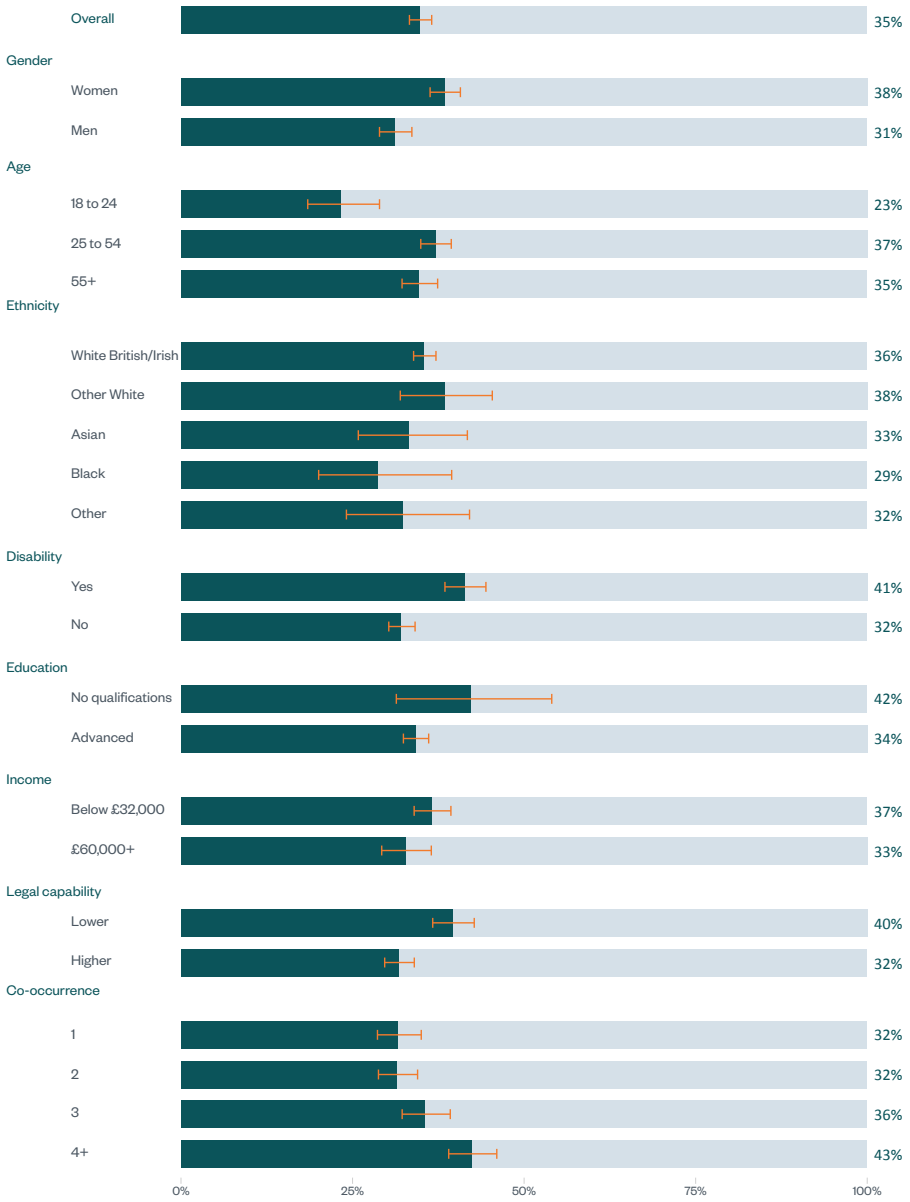
Clear explanations, an understanding of available choices, and knowledge of how mistakes can be corrected support people's ability to respond when a service fails (Leben 2014; Vermunt and Steensma 2016; Hagan and Kim 2018). Among respondents who successfully reached an adequate source of assistance and advice, 38% received upfront information[26] to help them understand their justice journey. This covered the likely duration and outcome, costs, potential difficulties, and how

26 While this information may have been provided in the form of a client care letter, the survey does not clarify.

the case would be handled. In addition, 40% received information about how to make a complaint or seek redress, such as through the Legal Ombudsman, or about indemnity insurance if something went wrong. In each case, fewer than half received information that could help them anticipate the process or respond when a service failed. Limited early information reduces awareness of available options and may constrain informed decision-making, while guidance on complaint routes helps people identify the appropriate channel for seeking correction (Uraz 2025; Tyndall et al. 2018).

Figure 20. Duration of the resolution process

Percentage of respondents whose process resolution took more than a year among those who reported a non-trivial justice problem in the previous four years and whose resolution process had concluded



Note: Duration is calculated only among respondents whose resolution process was complete. The measure records whether the process took more than one year. Values for middle-income, medium-education, and medium-legal-capability groups are not shown here but are available in the supplementary appendices. For ethnicity, 'Other' includes Mixed/Multiple ethnic background and Arab/Other categories.

9. Access to services and justice outcomes

Previous sections examined access to information, assistance and advice, and dispute resolution separately from problem resolution, process fairness, and trust. This section brings these measures together. Access to services can help people understand their options, participate effectively, and sustain their efforts to address a justice problem. Problem resolution, perceived fairness, and trust are core outcomes that should orient the performance of justice systems.

The problem-based and justice pathway analyses that follow examine how access and outcomes vary by the type of justice problems people face and what these patterns mean for service performance. They consider whether obtaining needed information, assistance, advice, or access to a dispute resolution mechanism is associated with problem resolution, process fairness, and trust; whether outcomes differ across service pathways and sources of assistance; and whether particular combinations of services are associated with stronger outcomes. This helps identify whether poorer outcomes are concentrated among people who cannot access needed services, those who reach a dispute resolution mechanism without adequate assistance, or those relying on particular service pathways or sources.

Problem-based analyses

Different justice problems engage different services, institutions, and routes to resolution. Considering this, the following problem-based analyses examine access and outcomes by problem type, helping to identify where overall averages conceal differences in access to justice services.

9.1. Access to justice services across problem types

KEY FINDING

Access to services depended on the type of problems experienced: e.g., **welfare benefit problems had lower access to both assistance and dispute resolution; consumer** problems showed an **imbalance:** 75% accessed dispute resolution but only half accessed assistance and advice.

Access to assistance and advice varied considerably across problem types, as presented in **Figure 21**. It was highest for accident and health and family problems, at about three-quarters, but around half or less for domestic violence, welfare benefits, and consumer problems. Access to dispute resolution mechanisms varied less across most categories. It was highest for land and property and consumer problems, at 78% and 75%, respectively, and lowest for domestic violence, at 44%.

The balance between the two forms of access also differed. Among people experiencing accident and health problems, the proportion who obtained needed assistance and advice was higher than the proportion who accessed a needed dispute resolution mechanism. The reverse was observed for consumer, housing, land and property, money and debt, and welfare-benefits problems. Consumer problems provide the clearest example: half of those who needed assistance and advice obtained it, compared with three-quarters of those who needed a dispute resolution mechanism.

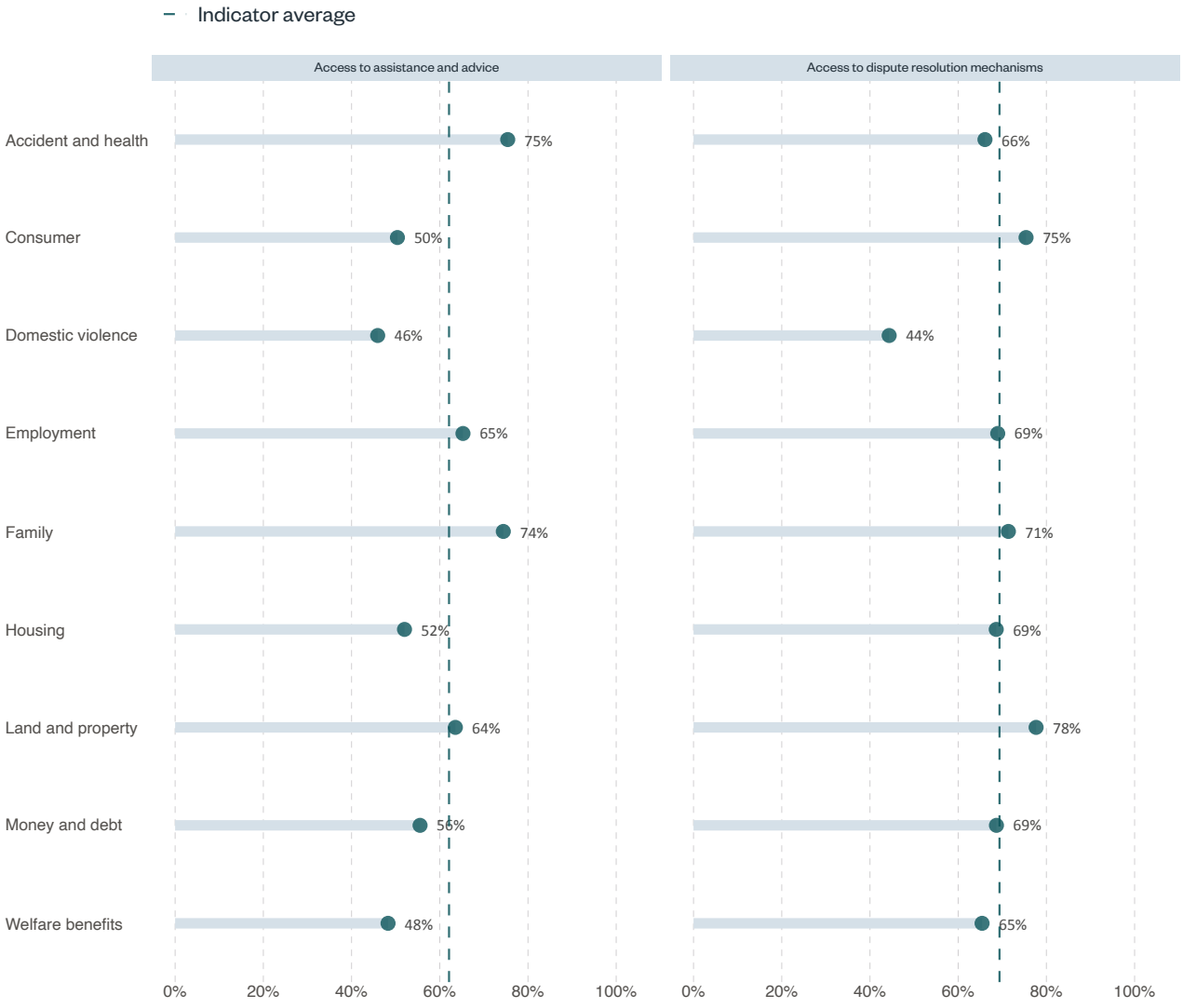
The comparatively low access to assistance and advice for welfare benefit, housing, and money and debt problems should be considered in the context of successive restrictions on publicly funded advice. Earlier contracting reforms reduced the number of solicitors providing publicly funded advice and weakened provider capacity and geographic coverage in social welfare law, while LASPO subsequently removed or narrowed legal-aid coverage for many welfare-benefit, debt, and housing matters (DCA 2005a; PLP 2018; Uraz 2025). At the same time, complaints procedures and the expansion of standardised or online resolution routes provided more direct pathways to dispute resolution for consumer, money, and housing problems. However, this was not accompanied by a corresponding expansion in access to needed independent assistance and advice (Tomlinson et al. 2022; Lamont and Low 2024).

These developments provide context for the patterns observed in 2023, although the analysis cannot establish whether the reforms caused them. The effects of Modernisation[27] were also uneven for people facing digital barriers. Against this backdrop, two distinct patterns emerge. For domestic violence and welfare benefit problems, access was comparatively low through both assistance and advice and dispute resolution. For consumer, housing, and money and debt problems, access to dispute resolution was higher than access to assistance and advice, consistent with the availability of complaints, claims, and online resolution routes that could be used without equivalent access to independent support.

27 The HMCTS (His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service) Reform Programme, commonly referred to as Modernisation, is discussed in more detail in Section 1 of Part B.

Figure 21. Access to justice services by problem type

Percentages show access to needed assistance and representation services and dispute resolution mechanisms, by problem type, among respondents who experienced non-trivial justice problem(s) in the past four years and needed the relevant service or mechanism[28]



Note: The vertical dashed line in each panel indicates the overall access rate among respondents with non-trivial justice problems who needed the corresponding service. Problem type estimates are calculated within the same respective populations.

28 Percentages show the share of people who accessed assistance and representation or a dispute resolution mechanism, by problem type, among those who experienced a non-trivial legal problem in the previous four years. Respondents are coded as having accessed assistance and representation if they successfully obtained information, advice, or other assistance from a person, professional, advice provider, public body, representative body, charity, or other organisation. Respondents are coded as having accessed a dispute resolution mechanism if they, or someone helping them, took action to deal with the issue, including communicating with the other party; organising evidence; using or responding to a court, tribunal, authority, ombudsman, regulator, religious or community body, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, or insurance claim; or another action. Problem categories are included in Appendix: Table 1.

9.2. Process fairness and problem resolutions across problem types

KEY FINDING

Consumer problems had the **highest** levels of both **resolution and** perceived process **fairness**, while **employment** problems had the lowest.

For people who concluded their justice processes, problem resolution and perceived process fairness varied by problem type and did not consistently move together (**Figure 22**).

Consumer problems combined the highest estimates for both problem resolution and process fairness, at 80% and 70%, respectively. Employment problems presented the opposite pattern, with the lowest estimates for both outcomes, at 64% and 41%, despite access rates close to the overall averages.

Other problem types displayed sharper contrasts between resolution and fairness. Domestic violence had comparatively high problem resolution, at 77%, but one of the lowest estimates of perceived process fairness, at 49%. Previous research on domestic abuse has documented both barriers to timely legal assistance and representation and concerns about how survivors are treated within justice processes (Birchall and Choudhry 2018; Tsalapatanis et al. 2026). Housing and family problems also had relatively high resolution, at 75% and 74%, while fairness remained close to the overall average, at 55% and 60%, respectively.

Welfare benefits problems followed the reverse pattern: problem resolution was among the lowest, at 65%, but process fairness was comparatively high, at 61%. Money and debt problems similarly had relatively high fairness, at 62%, although problem resolution, at 72%, was close to the overall average.

These differences indicate that the value of access depends on whether the pathway provides the type and intensity of support required by the problem.

KEY FINDING

Domestic violence showed the sharpest disconnect: **77% of problems were resolved**, but only **49%** of respondents **considered the process fair.**

Consumer problems combined comparatively high access to dispute resolution with the strongest estimates for both resolution and fairness, consistent with the availability of complaints and other redress routes that may meet the needs of some disputes without extensive assistance and advice. Housing problems presented a more mixed pattern. Problem resolution was also relatively high, but access to assistance and advice was comparatively low, and process fairness remained close to the overall average.

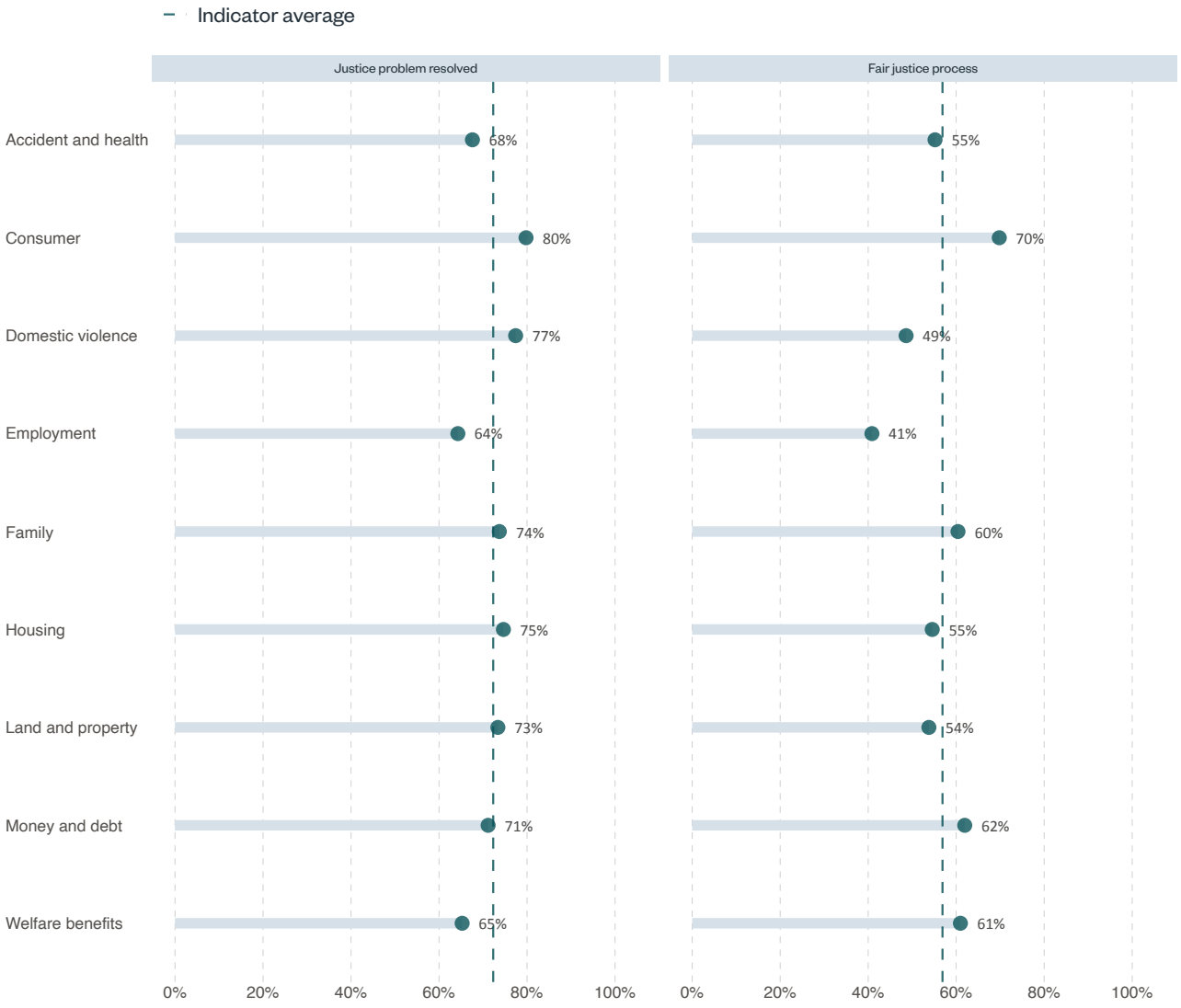
Welfare benefits problems followed a different pattern: access to dispute resolution and perceived fairness were comparatively high, yet problem resolution was among the lowest. Reaching an

administrative or appeals process may therefore be insufficient where resolving the underlying problem requires early or coordinated assistance, particularly because welfare, debt, and housing problems may be interconnected (DCA 2005a; Harper 2018).

Domestic violence most clearly illustrates the distinction between resolution and people's experience of the process. Access to both assistance and advice and dispute resolution was the lowest of any problem category and, as mentioned above, perceived fairness was significantly lower than resolution rates among concluded processes (49% and 77%, respectively). This 28-percentage-point difference reinforces the need to assess whether a problem was resolved separately from how the process was experienced, particularly where substantial power imbalances may be present. The service-level analysis that follows therefore considers not only whether people reached a service, but also the support they received and the pathway through which the problem was addressed.

Figure 22. Process fairness and problem resolution by problem type

Percentage of respondents with concluded resolution processes who considered the process fair and whose justice problem was fully resolved, by problem type[29]



Note: Estimates are calculated among respondents with non-trivial justice problems whose resolution process had concluded. The vertical dashed line in each panel indicates the overall rate for the corresponding indicator within this population.

29 Percentages show the share of people who accessed assistance and representation or a dispute resolution mechanism, by problem type, among those who experienced a non-trivial legal problem in the previous four years. Respondents are coded as having accessed assistance and representation if they successfully obtained information, advice, or other assistance from a person, professional, advice provider, public body, representative body, charity, or other organisation. Respondents are coded as having accessed a dispute resolution mechanism if they, or someone helping them, took action to deal with the issue, including communicating with the other party; organising evidence; using or responding to a court, tribunal, authority, ombudsman, regulator, religious or community body, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, or insurance claim; or another action. Problem categories are included in Appendix: Table 1.

Justice pathway analyses

The following justice pathway analyses examine how different combinations of assistance, advice, and dispute resolution relate to problem resolution, process fairness, and trust. They also consider the value of information from advisers, the sources from which people obtain help, and the routes through which issue outcomes are ultimately brought about. Together, these analyses distinguish simply reaching a justice service from having the support needed to use it effectively. As justice services are not provided within a vacuum, these findings are not intended to imply that one type of justice service is superior to another. Rather, these findings inform the identification of where gaps in guidance and sustained assistance may affect people's ability to remain engaged and reach an outcome.

9.3. Access to justice services and problem resolution

Figure 23 and **Figure 24** examine the relationship between access to assistance and advice, access to a dispute resolution mechanism, and problem resolution. The percentages are adjusted estimates that account for differences in people's characteristics and the justice problems they encountered.

KEY FINDING

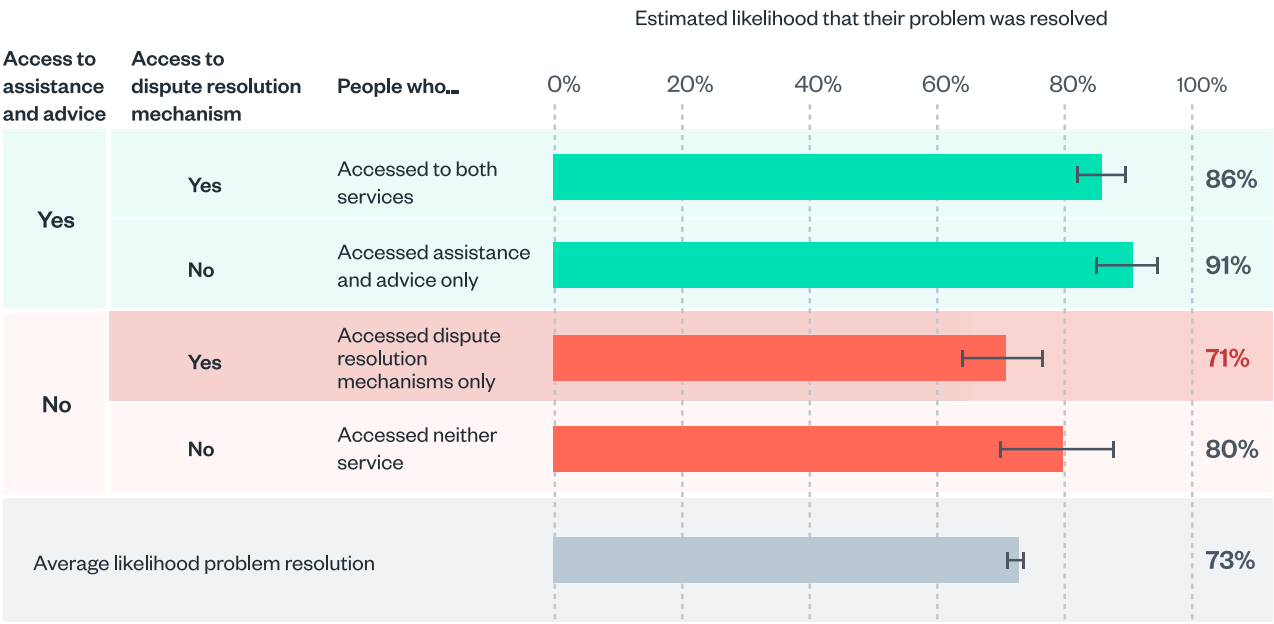
Among **people who needed a dispute resolution mechanism**, those who accessed one **without assistance and advice had the lowest estimated problem resolution**, underscoring the importance of early support to help people prepare for and participate effectively in the process.

Among people who needed a dispute resolution mechanism, those who obtained the assistance and advice they needed had higher adjusted estimated resolution, whether or not they also accessed a dispute resolution mechanism (**Figure 23**). Resolution was estimated at 86% among people who accessed both services and 91% among those who obtained assistance and advice without accessing a dispute resolution mechanism. By comparison, it was estimated at 71% among those who accessed a dispute resolution mechanism without assistance and advice and 80% among those who accessed neither service.

The clearest contrast was between people who accessed a dispute resolution mechanism without assistance and advice and those who used a dispute resolution mechanism but also obtained support they needed. One plausible interpretation of how assistance and representation contribute to problem resolution, supported by existing research, is that this support can help people prepare for and participate effectively in dispute resolution processes. That is, reductions in early advice and delayed access to representation can leave people insufficiently prepared for formal proceedings (PLP 2018; Uraz 2025).

Figure 23. Access to justice services and resolution of justice problems

Predicted chance of resolving a non-trivial justice problem for people who needed a dispute resolution mechanism, by access to assistance and advice and to a dispute resolution mechanism



Note: Predicted probabilities are based on logistic regression models restricted to people who needed access to a dispute resolution mechanism. The model accounts for relevant sociodemographic characteristics and differences in problem type and severity. The outcome is expressed as the predicted probability that the justice problem was resolved. 95% confidence intervals are shown in brackets. See Model 1 in Appendix: Table 2 for full regression results.

KEY FINDING

Similarly, **among people who did not need a dispute resolution mechanism, assistance and advice** was associated with substantially **higher estimated resolution**, at 78% compared with 55%.

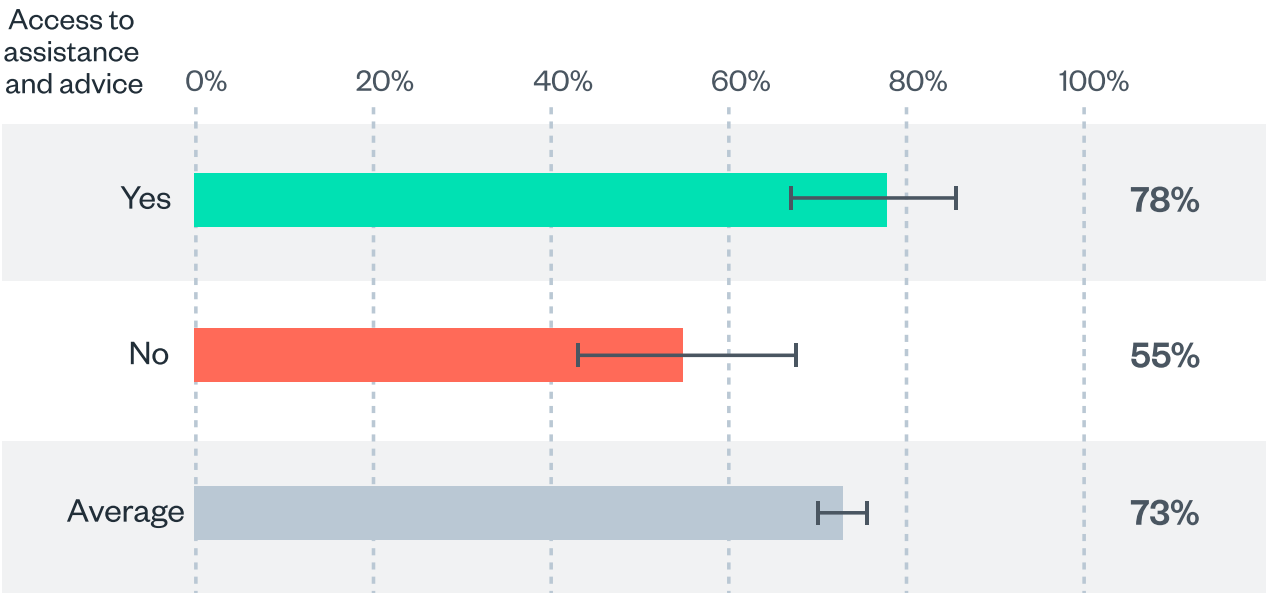
Among people who did not need a dispute resolution mechanism, estimated resolution was 78% among those who obtained assistance and advice, compared with 55% among those who did not **(Figure 24)**. Although the evidence for this difference is less clear than for the contrast seen in **Figure 23**,[30] this 23-percentage-point difference is consistent with assistance and advice helping people understand their position, assess their options, and take action without third-party dispute resolution.

Taken together, the findings associate assistance and advice with higher estimated resolution both among people who needed a dispute resolution mechanism and among those who did not.

30 For people who did not need a dispute resolution mechanism, the 95% confidence intervals for those who did or did not obtain assistance and advice overlapped narrowly.

Figure 24. Access to assistance and advice and resolution of justice problems

Predicted chance of solving a non-trivial justice problem for people who did not need a dispute resolution mechanism, by access to assistance and advice



Note: Predicted probabilities are based on logistic regression models restricted to people who did not need access to a dispute resolution mechanism. The outcome is expressed as the predicted probability that the justice problem was resolved. 95% confidence intervals are shown in brackets. See Model 2 in Appendix: Table 2 for full regression results.

9.4. Assistance, resolution, fairness, and trust

KEY FINDING

Nearly **2 in 3 people who obtained needed assistance and advice** considered the **process fair**, compared with about 2 in 5 who faced a barrier.

Access to assistance and advice was associated with substantial differences in problem resolution and process fairness (**Figure 25**). Among people who needed this support, 78% of those who accessed it resolved their problem, compared with 64% of those who faced a barrier. The difference in process fairness was larger: 64% of people who accessed assistance and advice considered the process of seeking resolution to their problem to be fair, compared with 41% of those who needed it but did not obtain it. People who managed without help while going through their justice journey had levels of problem resolution and process fairness close to those of people who accessed assistance and advice.

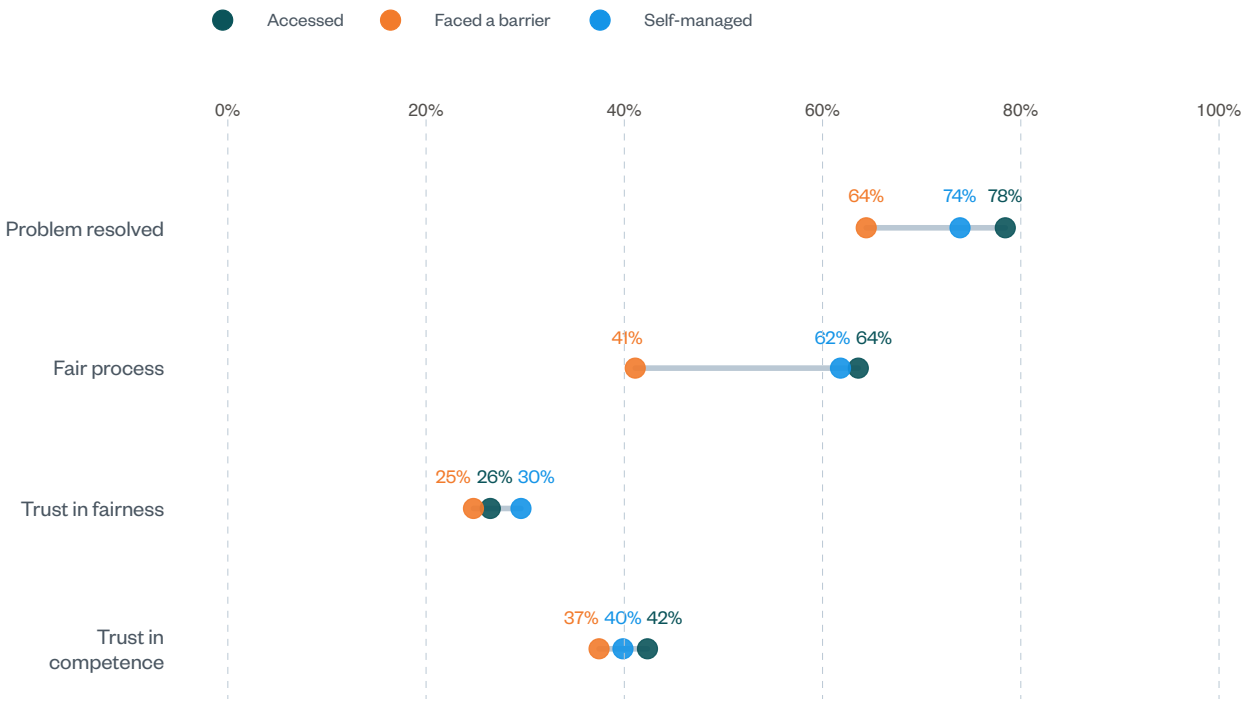
KEY FINDING

Problem resolution was also higher **among those who obtained this help, at 78%**, compared with 64% among those who needed it but did not receive it.

Trust varied much less than problem resolution or process fairness. Trust in the fairness of the justice system ranged from 25% to 30% across the three groups, while trust in the competence and accessibility of the justice system and lawyers ranged from 37% to 42%. Access to assistance and advice was therefore most clearly associated with whether the problem was resolved and whether the resolution process was considered fair, rather than with broader impressions of the justice system and lawyers. The limited variation in trust is consistent with these broader judgments developing cumulatively through multiple experiences and assessments of institutional behaviour, rather than being reshaped by a single service interaction (Tyler and Huo 2002; Citrin and Stoker 2018).

Figure 25. The value of receiving assistance and advice

Percentage of respondents with non-trivial justice problems whose problem was resolved, who considered the resolution process fair, and who trusted the fairness and competence of justice actors, by access to assistance and advice



Note: 'Accessed' includes respondents who needed and obtained assistance and advice; 'Faced a barrier' includes those who needed it but did not obtain it; and 'Self-managed' includes those who did not need assistance and advice or managed the process without it. Each outcome is calculated among respondents eligible for that measure, so the population reference may vary across outcomes.

KEY FINDING

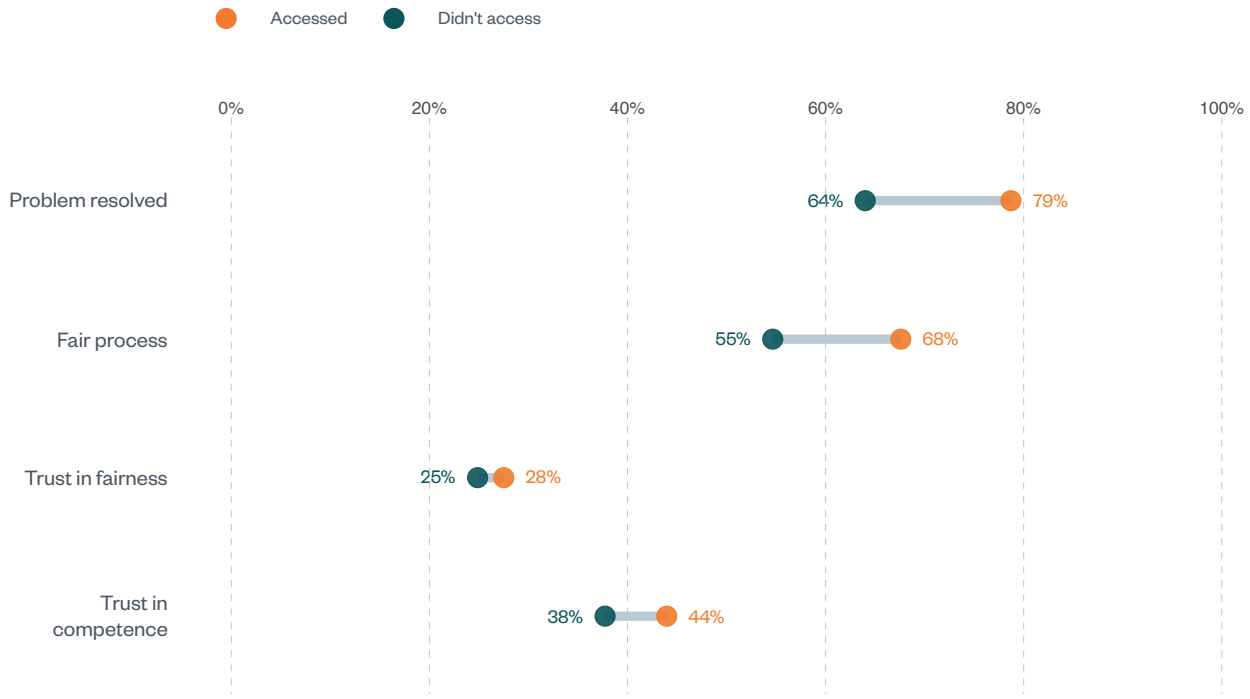
Among people who received help, **nearly 4 in 5 of those given sufficient information resolved their problem, and almost 7 in 10 considered the process fair**, compared with about 2 in 3 and 55%, respectively, among those who did not receive sufficient information.

Among people who accessed a source of help and answered questions about their initial communication with their main adviser, those who received sufficient information about their process had higher levels of problem resolution and perceived process fairness (**Figure 26**). Nearly four out of five people who received this kind of information resolved their problem, compared with close to two-thirds among those who did not. Perceived process fairness was also higher among those who received sufficient information, at 68%, compared with 55% among those who did not.

Differences were smaller for trust in the competence and accessibility of the justice system and lawyers, and smaller still for trust in the system's fairness. The association with information was therefore stronger for assessments of the particular justice journey than for broader impressions of the justice system and lawyers. As in the preceding analysis of access to assistance and advice, this pattern is consistent with trust reflecting accumulated experience and broader assessments of institutional conduct, rather than changing substantially in response to a single interaction. However, these trust measures do not cover the full range of assistance and advice providers and are not tied to the particular adviser or source that provided the information. They therefore cannot indicate whether receiving information affected trust in that specific provider.

Figure 26. The value of receiving sufficient information from advisors

Percentage of respondents with non-trivial justice problems whose problem was resolved, who considered the resolution process fair, and who trusted the fairness and competence of justice actors, by access to sufficient information about the process from sources of help



Note: The information score is calculated among respondents who accessed assistance and advice and answered the question about their initial communication with their main adviser. It represents the percentage of nine topics on which respondents received information: expected duration and outcome; likely and additional costs; potential difficulties; who would handle the matter; how to complain; the Legal Ombudsman; and indemnity insurance. A score of 100 indicates that information was received on all nine topics, while a score of 0 indicates that none was received.

9.5. Sources of help and justice outcomes

KEY FINDING

Of those **who accessed claims and complaints mechanisms, 4 in 5 resolved their problem and 7 in 10 considered the process fair**, highlighting the value of clearly defined routes while **underscoring the need for specialist support in more complex problems or those involving power imbalances.**

Problem resolution followed two broad patterns across the four primary sources of assistance and advice (**Figure 27**). Around four in five people resolved their problem when their primary source was either an advice service or a claims and complaints mechanism. Resolution was closer to three in four among people whose primary source was either a legal practitioner or personal and auxiliary support.

Perceived process fairness varied more across the four sources. About seven in ten people whose primary source was a claims and complaints mechanism considered the process of seeking resolution of their problem to be fair, compared with six in ten among those who relied principally on personal and auxiliary support. Advice services and legal practitioners fell between these points. By contrast, trust in fairness (25–29%) and competence (40–44%) varied little across the four sources of assistance and advice. These descriptive differences should be read in context, as the categories serve different people and problems, perform different functions, and may enter the justice journey at different stages.

KEY FINDING

Around 4 in 5 people **whose primary source was an advice service resolved their problem**, underscoring the value of **accessible frontline support** and the need to **address provider shortages, rising demand and harder-to-navigate entry routes.**

- **Advice services** include Citizens Advice, Law Centres, council advice and enquiry services, other advice services, and charities operating as frontline justice providers. The comparatively high rate of resolution associated with advice services is consistent with the importance of an accessible institutional source that can help people move beyond general information and apply available options to their circumstances.[31]
- **Claims and complaints mechanisms** include the police, professional bodies, insurance companies, and regulators approached to make a claim, report a problem, or submit a complaint. The comparatively high levels of resolution and process fairness associated with this category may partly reflect the relatively straightforward nature of matters that can be addressed through a clearly defined institutional process, rather than the greater effectiveness of the actors within it.[32]

KEY FINDING

Among those who obtained **help from a legal practitioner, 76% resolved their problem and 66%** considered the **process fair, but this group had already navigated affordability, eligibility, provider-availability, and case-selection constraints.**

31 This kind of actor may provide early guidance, problem diagnosis, tailored assistance, and referral to support problem resolution, particularly where people face interconnected problems or must navigate specialised, telephone, or digital entry routes. This role has become more important, but also more difficult to sustain, across successive periods of reform. Reductions in publicly funded solicitor provision and the later narrowing of legal-aid coverage increased demand on frontline and not-for-profit providers. Provider closures, congestion, and uneven geographic coverage could restrict how many people were reached and whether assistance continued throughout the problem. The movement towards telephone and digital delivery created further demands on people's ability to identify the correct service and navigate its entry requirements. Advice services may therefore be particularly valuable where they provide accessible and sustained support, while their capacity to do so may be constrained precisely where needs are complex or interconnected (DCA 2005a; Constitutional Affairs Committee 2007a; NAO 2014; PLP 2018; Uraz 2025).

32 Unlike sources whose primary role is to advise, these actors may form part of the institutional route through which action is initiated and a response or remedy pursued. For some relatively straightforward or standardised matters – including certain consumer and insurance problems – structured complaints, claims, and other redress processes may provide a defined route forward without conventional legal representation. The later development of online and streamlined processes may also have made some claims easier to initiate and progress. These routes may be less sufficient when a problem requires specialist legal analysis, formal enforcement, extensive evidence, or support in responding to a better-resourced party. The category also brings together organisations with different procedures and powers, so these advantages should not be assumed to apply equally across all claims and complaints mechanisms (DCA 2005a; Frontier Economics et al. 2025).

- **Legal practitioners** include solicitors, barristers, licensed conveyancers, Chartered Legal Executives, and other lawyers providing market-based legal services.[33] Among people who successfully obtained professional legal help, 76% resolved their problem, a comparatively lower level than among those using advice services or claims and complaints mechanisms, while 66% considered the process of seeking resolution to their problem to be fair, the second-highest level across the four source categories. Access to legal practitioners has been shaped cumulatively by affordability and legal-aid eligibility, the availability and geographic distribution of providers, fixed-fee and procurement arrangements,[34] and firms' assessments of the value, prospects, and financial risks of accepting particular cases. LASPO further narrowed access to early and sustained advice, while court Modernisation increased the importance of help with online and procedural requirements. The lower resolution estimate is therefore consistent with legal practitioners being reached for more demanding or less readily resolved problems, after several financial and institutional filters have already shaped who obtains representation. At the same time, their comparatively high process-fairness estimate is consistent with professional legal assistance helping people understand procedures, prepare and present their case, and participate more effectively, even where the underlying problem remains difficult to resolve (Constitutional Affairs Committee 2007a; PLP 2018, PLP 2020; HMCTS 2024; Uraz 2025).

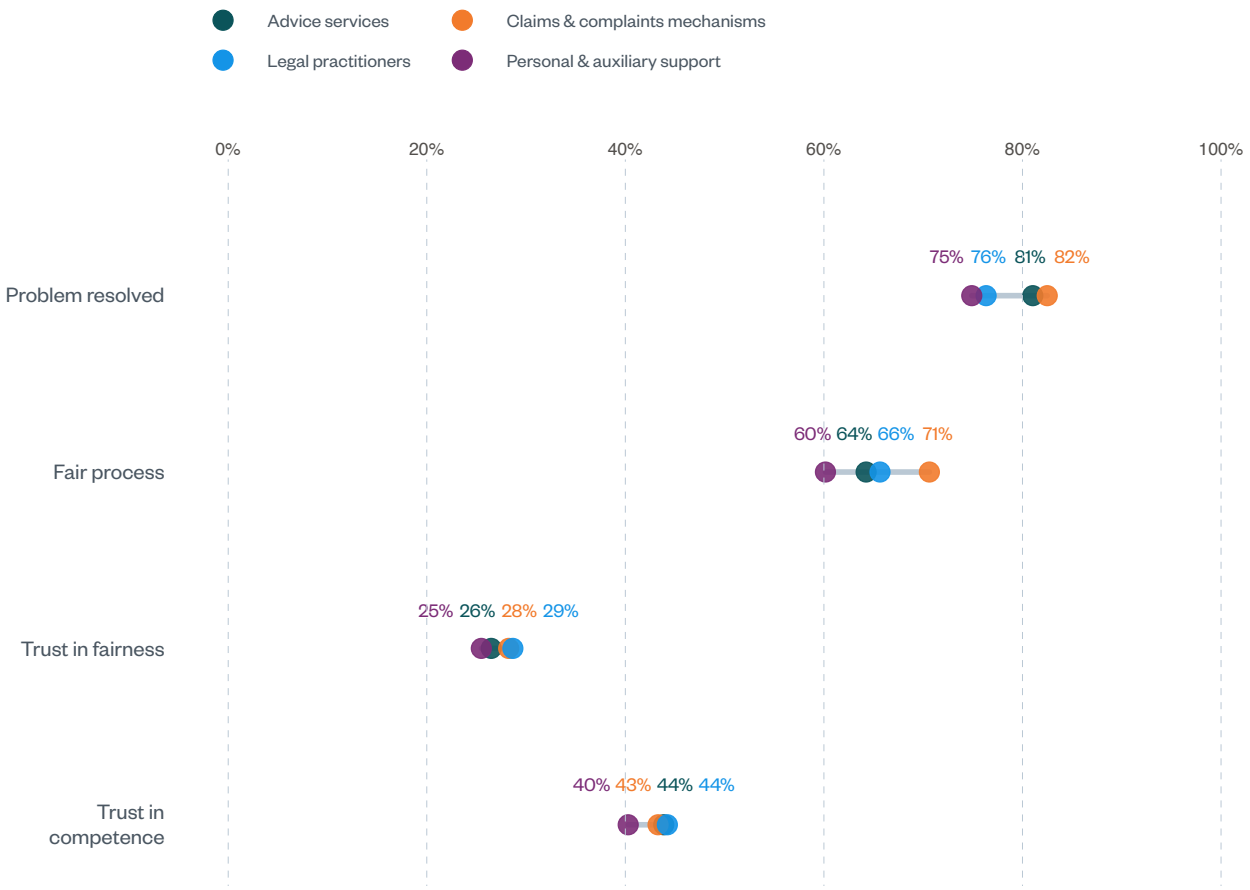
- **Personal and auxiliary support** includes qualified family and friends, accountants and financial advisers, doctors and social workers, employers and other professionals, MPs and councillors, and other sources accessed through an existing personal or professional relationship. These actors may provide a familiar and accessible first point of contact, but they are not necessarily dedicated justice providers. Their intermediary role may have become more consequential as the assistance network grew more fragmented and increasingly relied on telephone and digital channels. They may lack the specialist knowledge, formal authority, or capacity to provide sustained assistance throughout a complex justice journey. The comparatively low level of process fairness among people relying primarily on this support should therefore not be read as evidence that familiar contacts lack value. It may instead reflect the limits of support that operates outside, and may have little influence over, the process through which the problem is ultimately handled (MoJ 2019b; PLP 2018; HMCTS 2024; Uraz 2025).

33 Their role can involve specialist legal analysis, representation, preparation for formal proceedings, and support in responding to procedural requirements or opposing parties. The cases reaching practitioners may consequently include complex, high-stakes, or non-standard matters for which a complaints procedure, general guidance, or self-navigation is insufficient.

34 As one of the reviewers notes, such procurement arrangements may include third-party litigation funding, which is "an arrangement involving a funder, who is independent of both the claimant and their law firm, providing funding to cover some or all costs". Under such funding agreements, the litigant is often required to pay back the funder, specifically when their case is successful (Solicitors Regulation Authority 2026).

Figure 27. Sources of help, problem resolution, and process fairness

Percentage of respondents with non-trivial justice problems whose problem was resolved and who considered the resolution process fair, by sources of help



Note: For each primary source of assistance and advice, the dots show the percentage of respondents meeting each outcome. 'Legal practitioners' comprise market-based legal professionals; 'Advice services' comprise public, charitable, and frontline advice providers; 'Claims and complaints mechanisms' comprise the police, professional bodies, insurance companies, and regulators approached to make a claim, report a problem, or submit a complaint; and 'Personal and auxiliary support' comprises help obtained through personal or professional relationships outside the primary legal and advice infrastructure. Each outcome is calculated among respondents eligible for that measure, so the population reference varies across outcomes.

9.6. Access to dispute resolution mechanisms and justice outcomes

Access to a dispute resolution mechanism was only modestly associated with problem resolution in the descriptive comparison. Resolution stood at 72% among people who accessed a needed mechanism, 68% among those who faced a barrier, and 72% among those who managed their problem without accessing one (**Figure 28**). This comparison does not distinguish whether people also obtained assistance and advice. In **Figure 23**, after accounting for differences in people's characteristics and the problems they faced, estimated resolution was lowest among those who accessed a dispute resolution mechanism without that support.

KEY FINDING

Access to a needed dispute resolution mechanism was associated **more clearly with process fairness** than with resolution: 54% of those who reached one considered the process fair, compared with 39% of those who faced a barrier, **underscoring the importance of clear routes and timely support.**

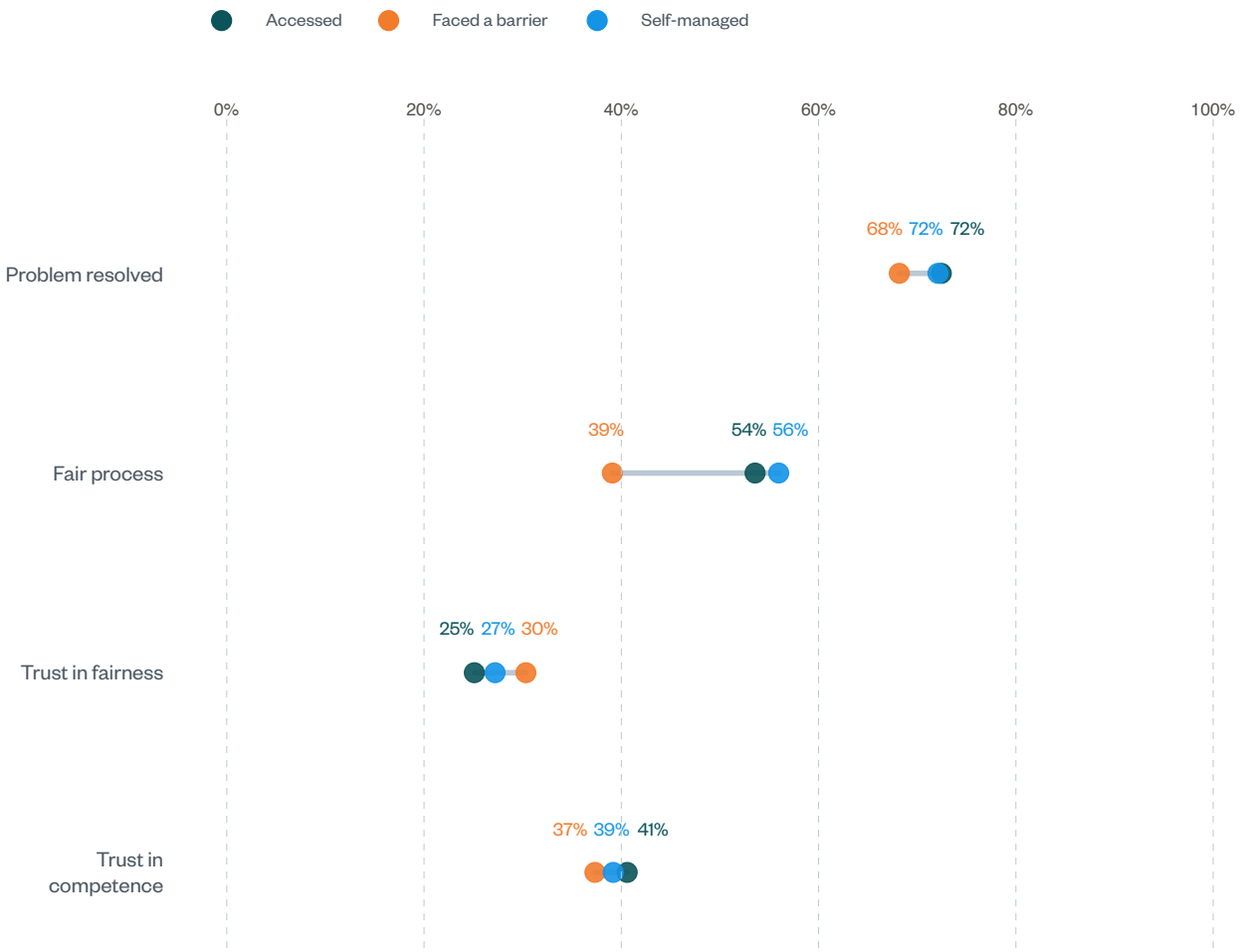
The clearest difference by dispute resolution status concerned process fairness. Among people who accessed a needed mechanism, 54% considered the resolution process fair, compared with 39% of those who needed one but faced a barrier. The estimate among people who managed without help was 56%. Both trust measures followed the same broad pattern, with the lowest levels among people who faced a barrier, but the differences between those who accessed a needed mechanism and those who faced a barrier were much smaller than for process fairness. Trust in the fairness of justice actors ranged from 25% to 30%, while trust in the competence and accessibility of the justice system and lawyers ranged from 37% to 41%.

The lower fairness estimate among people who faced a barrier needs to be understood in light of what non-access involved. Barriers included uncertainty about what to do, doubts that pursuing a mechanism would make a difference, anticipated costs, and practical constraints such as time or distance. These obstacles can prevent people from reaching a process they consider necessary and leave them trying to address the problem without a route they regard as appropriate. Fair access therefore depends not only on whether a mechanism formally exists, but also on whether people can identify and reach the appropriate route without prohibitive financial or practical demands.

Taken together with **Figure 23**, these results reinforce the distinction between reaching a dispute resolution mechanism and having the support needed to use it effectively. This distinction is particularly relevant as online, remote, and streamlined processes may make some routes easier to initiate while placing greater responsibility on users to identify the correct procedure, complete requirements, and present evidence. Clear referral pathways and timely assistance therefore remain important, particularly where problems are complex, require enforcement, or involve substantial power imbalances (PLP 2018, 2020; HMCTS 2024; Uraz 2025). The analysis that follows examines how concluded processes ended, including through agreement, a decision by a court or other formal authority, or withdrawal, providing a fuller picture of the routes through which people pursued resolution.

Figure 28. The value of access to dispute resolution mechanisms

Percentage of respondents with non-trivial justice problems whose problem was resolved, who considered the resolution process fair, and who trusted the fairness and competence of justice actors, by access to dispute resolution mechanisms



Note: 'Accessed' includes respondents who needed and accessed a dispute resolution mechanism; 'Faced a barrier' includes those who needed one but did not access it; and 'Self-managed' includes those who did not need a dispute resolution mechanism or managed the process without one. Each outcome is calculated among respondents eligible for that measure, so the population reference may vary across outcomes.

9.7. Routes to process conclusion

Figure 29 examines the primary way in which issue outcomes were ultimately brought about among people whose justice process had concluded. The analysis distinguishes six routes. Four are displayed: agreement between the parties; a decision by a court or other adjudicative or administrative authority; the problem resolving on its own or through unilateral action; and exit. Two less common routes are not displayed: agreement reached through mediation, arbitration, or conciliation; and an outcome brought about by another third party. Each of the latter accounted for fewer than one in ten outcomes in each of the main income and legal-capability groups. For space reasons, estimates for the middle-income and medium-legal-capability groups are not shown, but they broadly reinforce the same patterns. The discussion below focuses on differences that are notable relative to the uncertainty around the estimates.

KEY FINDING

Agreement between the parties occurred in around **3 in 10 concluded justice processes** and was the most common way in which issue outcomes were ultimately brought about. In around **1 in 4** concluded processes, the problem resolved **on its own or through action by one party,** while an **adjudicative or administrative decision and exit** each accounted for around **1 in 7.**

- **Agreement** between the parties was the most common route, accounting for around three in ten outcomes among people whose process had concluded.
- A decision by a **court or other adjudicative or administrative authority** was identified as the way the outcome was ultimately brought about in around 15% of concluded processes.[35] This relatively limited share underscores the importance of examining the wider range of routes through which people address justice problems, rather than assessing the justice system primarily through court processes.
- In around a quarter of concluded processes, the issue outcome was ultimately brought about either because the problem was resolved **without further action or because one party took action on its own**.
- **Exit** presented the clearest disparity. It was identified as the way the outcome was ultimately brought about for more than one in five people with lower legal capability, compared with around one in seven of those with medium capability and one in ten of those with higher capability. The lower-capability group stood apart from both the medium and higher-capability groups. By contrast, exit was almost identical across income groups, at around 13% to 14%.

KEY FINDING

Exit, meaning withdrawal from or abandonment of the justice process, was **more than twice as common among people with lower legal capability** as among those with higher capability.

35 The 2023 ILNS reports that 5% of contentious issues were resolved by a court or tribunal judgement (Legal Services Board and The Law Society 2024, 5, 21). By contrast, the 15% estimate reported in this Review concerns concluded, non-trivial problems and includes decisions by other adjudicative and administrative authorities. These figures do not contradict each other as they measure different outcomes in different subsets of problems. The 2023 ILNS reports that 5% of contentious issues were resolved by a court or tribunal judgement (Legal Services Board and The Law Society 2024, 5, 21). By contrast, the 15% estimate reported in this Review concerns concluded, non-trivial problems and includes decisions by other adjudicative and administrative authorities. These figures do not contradict each other as they measure different outcomes in different subsets of problems.

The legal-capability disparity extends the pattern identified at earlier stages of the justice journey. People with lower legal capability were less likely to access a needed dispute resolution mechanism and experienced lower problem resolution once a process had concluded. Exit identifies a further point at which participation may break down: remaining engaged until the outcome is brought about through agreement, a decision, or another substantive route. Evidence on uncertainty about how to proceed and difficulties navigating services without sufficient guidance provides relevant context, although the analysis does not establish why people exited (PLP 2018, 2020; HMCTS 2024; Uraz 2025).

Overall, most ways in which issue outcomes were ultimately brought about were broadly similar across income and legal-capability groups. The clearest disparity concerned exit among people with lower legal capability, reinforcing the importance of support that helps people remain engaged through to an outcome.

Figure 29. How justice processes ended, by route

Percentage of respondents with a non-trivial justice problem in the previous four years whose justice process had concluded, by the primary way in which the issue outcome was ultimately brought about, legal capability, and income



Note: Only the four most common ways in which issue outcomes were ultimately brought about are shown. Agreements reached through mediation, conciliation or arbitration, and outcomes brought about by another third party, are not shown because each accounted for less than 10% of concluded processes among respondents in the lower , middle , and higher-income groups and among those with lower, medium, or higher legal capability. For space reasons, estimates for respondents with middle incomes or medium legal capability are also not shown, but they broadly reinforce the same patterns.

10. Summary of Part A findings

To what extent are people able to access effective solutions to their justice needs?

More than one-third of adults in England and Wales experienced a non-trivial justice problem during the previous four years.[36] Housing problems were the most common, followed by family and accident and health problems. Many problems also occurred alongside others, particularly across welfare benefits, housing, money and debt, domestic violence, and family, pointing to interconnected needs rather than isolated disputes. These problems often had consequences beyond the original dispute: nearly one-third of people with a justice problem experienced hardships across at least two areas of their lives. Low trust formed part of the wider context in which people sought to address these problems. Based on composite indicators capturing respondents' views of the civil justice system and lawyers, fewer than one in three trusted justice actors to resolve problems effectively, and only one in ten trusted them to do so fairly.

Many people reached some form of support, but substantial gaps remained. Among those who needed assistance and advice, 62% obtained it, leaving nearly four in ten without the support they needed.[37] Those who obtained support most often relied primarily on advice services or on family, employers, and health, social-service, or financial professionals; relatively few relied primarily on legal practitioners. Among those who needed a dispute resolution mechanism, 70% accessed one, while three in ten faced a barrier.[38] The results also distinguish reaching a service from receiving the support needed to resolve a justice problem. In descriptive comparisons, people who obtained needed assistance and advice were more likely than those who faced a barrier to resolve their problem and consider the process fair. Among people who needed a dispute resolution mechanism, those who accessed one were more likely to consider the process fair than those who faced a barrier.[39] In the regression-adjusted estimates, problem resolution was lowest among people who accessed a mechanism without also receiving assistance and advice, suggesting that access to a route for resolution alone may not be sufficient when people also need support to use it effectively.

The analysis also considers whether the process used to address a justice problem had concluded or remained ongoing. Around two-thirds of these processes had concluded, while one-third remained ongoing. Only around one-third of people still seeking resolution were satisfied with how their process was progressing. Even when a process had concluded, it did not always deliver the resolution of the underlying justice problem. This was the case for nearly three in ten people whose process had ended, and 55% considered the concluded process fair. Together, these findings point to a persistent gap between the availability of justice pathways and people's ability to obtain timely support, participate effectively, and reach a fair resolution. They also underline the importance of coordinated

36 These findings are consistent with those of the 2023 ILNS and the 2023 LPRS, though the findings presented in those reports are slightly higher in part due to the inclusion of more problem types than are assessed in this report (Ames et al. 2024, 11; Legal Services Board and The Law Society 2024, 9).

37 The findings presented in this report are compatible with those expressed in the 2023 ILNS summary report, though not directly comparable as the summary report considers more problem types (Legal Services Board and The Law Society 2024, 21).

38 These findings are unable to be directly compared with the 2023 ILNS summary report, as the summary report focuses exclusively on the use of courts and tribunals, rather than the larger range of dispute resolution mechanism (DRM) services considered in this report (Legal Services Board and The Law Society 2024).

39 While not directly comparable, the 2023 ILNS summary report echoes that those who accessed assistance and advice "believe that the help they received helped them to get a better outcome" (Legal Services Board and The Law Society 2024, 20).

and sustained assistance that can respond to interconnected problems and support people as they seek to address them.

Which population groups face the greatest gaps in access to justice?

The central finding is that justice inequality does not take a single form across the justice journey: the same groups did not consistently fare worst at every stage. Instead, different vulnerabilities emerged in the recognition and reporting of problems, the hardships that followed, trust in justice actors, access to services, and the experience and outcome of resolution processes. Several of these vulnerabilities recurred across more than one dimension. Legal capability was the clearest thread running through the findings, while disability, education, income, and the accumulation of several problems were associated with more specific but sometimes substantial gaps.

The first vulnerability concerns whether a justice problem is captured in the survey at all. People with lower legal capability reported fewer justice problems than those with higher capability, and people with no qualifications also reported fewer problems. Reported prevalence can reflect both people's exposure to situations that generate justice problems and whether those problems are recognised and reported. The age pattern illustrates the first mechanism: adults aged 25–54 reported more problems than younger or older adults, consistent with greater simultaneous engagement in employment, housing, family, financial, and public-service systems. This is also consistent with broader WJP evidence that the prevalence and types of justice problems vary with people's socio-economic circumstances and exposure to different spheres of life (WJP 2023a). At the same time, lower legal capability may make the legal dimensions of problems more difficult to recognise. Lower reported prevalence among people with lower legal capability or no qualifications should therefore not be interpreted straightforwardly as evidence of lower underlying need. People with disabilities followed a different pattern: they reported justice problems more often and were substantially more likely to experience hardships across several areas of their lives. Yet even this higher reported prevalence may not capture the full extent of their need.

Hardships associated with justice problems intensified as problems accumulated. People experiencing four or more problems were more than twice as likely to face multiple hardships as those experiencing one, and multiple hardships were also more common among women and people on lower incomes. The concentration and co-occurrence of problems matter because people may need responses that address several connected legal, financial, housing, family, or health needs, rather than assistance confined to a single dispute or service. Income had little relationship with overall prevalence but substantially shaped the types of problems people faced. Welfare benefits, money and debt, homelessness, and eviction were more common among people on lower incomes. Those on middle incomes generally occupied an intermediate position, although employer, consumer, and property-related problems were relatively more prominent. The relationship between prevalence and severity also differed by income. Among those on middle and higher incomes, the problems experienced most often tended to be rated as less severe. Among people on lower incomes, this relationship was weak or absent, meaning that frequently experienced problems could still be severe. Income therefore shaped not only which problems people experienced, but also the burden associated with problems that occurred frequently.

A further divide concerned trust in justice actors and access to support. Trust in the competence and accessibility of the civil justice system and lawyers was lowest among people with lower legal capability and was also lower among people with disabilities and those on lower incomes. Trust in

fairness, by contrast, was extremely low across most groups, indicating a concern that extends beyond any single population. Particularly low trust among some groups may discourage early engagement with services, while the breadth of distrust in fairness points to a wider challenge for the legitimacy of justice processes.

Access to needed assistance and advice, as well as to dispute resolution mechanisms, was lower among younger adults, people with no qualifications, people with lower legal capability, and those on lower incomes. The age difference should be interpreted cautiously because the mainly online survey may have disproportionately captured older adults with greater digital literacy and legal capability than the older population overall. The reasons given for not reaching a dispute resolution mechanism sharpen this finding: among people who needed one but faced a barrier, four in five either did not know what to do or believed that pursuing a mechanism would make no difference. The gap was therefore not simply about whether a service existed or could be afforded. It also concerned whether people could identify a credible route into it.

These findings should be read against a service environment reshaped by the CPA, the Access to Justice Act (AJA), LASPO, and the Modernisation of courts, tribunals, and justice services. Successive reforms required more preparation to take place earlier in a case, changed how civil legal aid was funded and delivered, later narrowed its scope, and increased reliance on telephone and digital routes. These changes provide important context for the disparities observed here and for the analysis of problem resolution across reform contexts in Part B (Goriely et al. 2002; DCA 2005a; MoJ 2019b).

The disparities remained visible in whether processes had concluded, how long they lasted, and what they ultimately delivered. Ongoing processes were most common among people with no qualifications, people with disabilities, and those experiencing several justice problems. Processes lasting more than a year were also more common among these groups, as well as among people with lower legal capability and women.

Even after a process had concluded, problem resolution was lower among people with no qualifications, people with disabilities, those experiencing several problems, and people with lower legal capability. Legal capability marked the sharpest differences in people's experience of the process. Satisfaction with ongoing processes was twice as high among people with higher legal capability as among those with lower capability, while people with lower capability were less likely to consider a concluded process fair. Exit through withdrawal or abandonment was also more than twice as common among people with lower legal capability as among those with higher capability.

Age presented a different tension. Younger adults were less likely to access services but more likely to conclude their process within a year, without a corresponding advantage in problem resolution. Older adults, meanwhile, expressed particularly low satisfaction with ongoing processes. Faster conclusion should therefore not be treated as sufficient evidence of effective access: more fundamental outcomes of a justice system are whether the justice problem is resolved and the process is fair.

Taken together, the findings point to a recurring mismatch between the demands of justice pathways and the support they provide. This mismatch is most apparent among people with lower legal capability, fewer financial or educational resources, disabilities, or multiple connected problems. Effective access depends not only on whether a route exists, but also on whether entry points are

visible, frontline advice and referral are available, specialist help is affordable, and support continues through to resolution. Clear information about what to expect and how to seek review or correction may also help people remain engaged. Digital and streamlined routes may broaden access, but their benefits are likely to depend on whether they reduce, rather than shift, the burden of navigating the system.

Justice needs across distinct reform contexts

1. Reform context and analytical periods

2. Analytical expectations

3. Empirical approach

4. Findings across reform periods

5. Summary of Part B findings

B

B. Justice needs across distinct reform contexts

Part A describes the current state of people-centred justice in England and Wales. Part B examines differences in the mismatch between people's justice needs and the solutions available to them across reform contexts since the late 1990s, particularly in relation to major reforms, policy changes, and wider pressures on the justice system. It uses statistical analysis to examine whether people's chances of resolving their justice problems differ across reform contexts, whether those differences appear where the reforms were expected to have their greatest effects, and whether they vary across justice journeys and population groups, including whether people in more vulnerable circumstances are disproportionately affected.

The period from the late 1990s to 2023 was marked by substantial changes to civil procedure, legal aid, court and tribunal administration, and, more recently, the use of digital and remote justice services. These changes did not affect every justice journey in the same way. Some altered how particular types of problems were handled and the funding available for related legal assistance, while others changed the availability, delivery, or role of the services and resolution pathways people relied on to resolve them. Wider pressures, particularly COVID-19 and Brexit, also changed the environment in which justice problems arose and were addressed, with the pandemic in particular accelerating the implementation of the Modernisation reforms.

The Review therefore brings together two forms of evidence: a structured review of the major reforms and the mechanisms through which they could plausibly have affected people's justice journeys, covering changes to the justice system from the late 1990s through 2023; and quantitative evidence from legal needs surveys from 2004, 2014–15, and 2023 providing direct population-level snapshots of people's experiences. The reforms and survey evidence are mapped on a common timeline using reform implementation, survey fieldwork dates, and the periods respondents were asked to recall. Their alignment is used to define three analytical periods, which group the reforms and wider pressures that provide the context for each survey-based analysis. The analytical periods therefore organise the comparison across reform contexts; they are not continuous periods directly observed in the survey data. The reform context, definition of the analytical periods, and empirical approach are described below (Sections 1 and 3).

The quantitative analysis draws on the 2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey (CSJS), the 2014–15 Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Legal Problem and Resolution Survey (LPRS), and the 2023 Legal Services Board (LSB) and The Law Society (TLS) Individual Legal Needs Survey (ILNS). Across these surveys, the analysis harmonises core measures of problem resolution, access to justice services (specifically, assistance and advice and dispute resolution mechanisms), and legal capability, as far as their different designs allow. The Appendix: Methodological note describes

the data sources, harmonisation process, and comparability challenges in detail. Appendix: Table 3 documents the operationalisation of the core people-centred justice outcomes.

Part B first sets out the reform context and analytical periods (Section 1), followed by analytical expectations (Section 2) and the empirical approach (Section 3). Section 4 then presents the findings for each analytical period in detail, and Section 5 draws together the main findings across the three contexts.

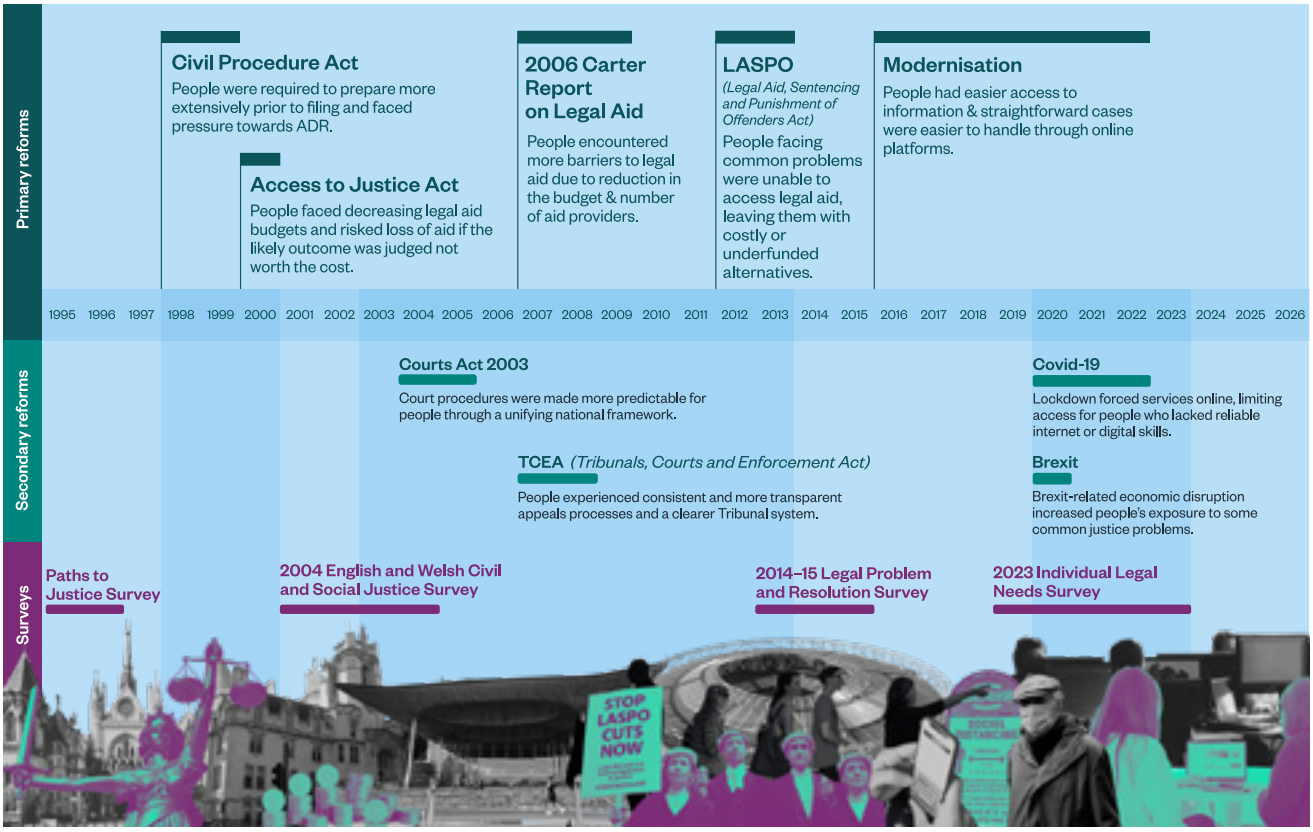
1. Reform context and analytical periods

Justice reforms matter to people when they change what it takes to resolve a problem: the help that is available, how much people are expected to manage on their own, and the routes through which they can seek a decision or agreement. The structured review identified different ways this could happen in each period. In Period 1, the early Civil Procedure Act (CPA) sought to simplify civil procedure and encouraged earlier settlement while the Access to Justice Act (AJA) changed the funding and provision of legal assistance. Later reforms (Period 2) further reshaped legal aid and court and tribunal administration. More recently (Period 3), Modernisation moved many processes online and expanded remote routes. These changes could make some justice journeys easier while placing additional demands on others, particularly people with fewer financial resources, lower education or legal capability, or more complex and interconnected problems.

The analysis focuses on core reforms and their related mechanisms identified in the literature as influencing people's ability to access justice. Reforms pertaining to broader access to justice that had implications for substantial parts of the population were prioritised, alongside broader systemic pressures.

Figure 30 places these reforms and wider pressures on a common timeline, alongside the fieldwork and recall periods of the legal needs surveys used in the analysis. The reform dates show the chronology of changes to the justice system, while the survey information shows which periods of people's justice experiences are captured by the available data.

Figure 30. Timeline of major justice reforms, wider pressures, and legal needs surveys used in the analysis, England and Wales (1997–2023)



Note: The timeline shows when major reforms were implemented or wider pressures operated and the periods covered by the legal needs surveys used in the Review. Dark green bars identify the core reforms considered in the analysis, while bright green bars identify secondary reforms with relatively more limited or indirect relevance. Purple bars show each survey's recall period – the period respondents were asked to consider when reporting justice problems. The three analytical periods, shaded darker blue on the timeline, are defined by aligning these survey windows with the reform timeline. Each survey therefore captures only the problems covered by its own recall period, providing evidence that is interpreted in relation to the corresponding reform context rather than as a continuous record of experiences across the full span of the reforms grouped in that analytical period. Further information on differences in survey recall periods and their implications for comparability is provided in the Appendix: Methodological note.

The reforms and systemic pressures shown in the timeline are described below. Reforms and systemic shocks at the top of the figure are classified as primary because of their broader implications for people's justice outcomes, while those at the bottom are classified as secondary because their effects are more limited in scope.

- **Civil Procedure Act 1997 (CPA):** The CPA was a major reform that changed the civil justice system across England and Wales. Its primary purpose was to implement the recommendations from Lord Woolf's 1996 'Access to Justice' report, which were to improve access to justice, such as by reducing the cost of litigation and complex language and rules (Woolf 1996; Legislation.gov.uk n.d.b). This was operationalised through the Civil Procedure Rules (CPR), which unified high and county courts under a single set of modernised procedures. The CPR also introduced the overriding objective to allow courts to handle cases in a timely and just manner (Korcova 2024; Legislation.gov.uk n.d.b). The introduction

of pre-action protocols was a way to reduce the cost of litigations and encourage parties to settle via alternative dispute resolutions before using the formal processes, while shifting more investigation, information exchange, and preparation to the pre-action stage, essentially frontloading processes (Korcova 2024; Lord Chancellor's Department 2002).

- **Access to Justice Act 1999:** The AJA introduced the Legal Services Commission (LSC) to oversee funding for both civil and criminal legal aid (Legislation.gov.uk n.d.a). One of the biggest changes brought about by the AJA was that it introduced a capped, cash-limited budget for civil legal aid, covering representation and legal help (Legislation.gov.uk n.d.a; Constitutional Affairs Committee 2004). The AJA also narrowed the scope of legal aid, with funding being removed from entire areas of law. For example, the majority of personal injury cases transitioned to Conditional Fee Agreements (CFAs), which made lawyers increasingly selective in what cases they wanted to take (Goriely et al. 2002). In addition, the AJA replaced the criteria of the merits test with the Funding Code, which set out more detailed criteria for deciding whether a case should receive funding, including its prospects of success, likely costs and benefits, and the availability of other funding (Legislation.gov.uk n.d.a; UK Parliament 2010). Under the contracting arrangements introduced alongside these changes, legal-aid providers worked within specific categories of law and could only open a limited number of new legal help cases. This could limit how many eligible clients they were able to assist.

- **Courts Act 2003:** The Courts Act sought to create a more unified and efficient court system (Legislation.gov.uk n.d.c). The Act consolidated court administration within a single national framework, placing statutory responsibility for supporting an efficient and effective court system on the Lord Chancellor while preserving local input through Court Boards (Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor 2005). It also introduced broader reforms to court governance and operations to promote procedural consistency across jurisdictions (Legislation.gov.uk n.d.c; UK Parliament n.d.; Lord Chancellor and Chief Secretary to the Treasury 2001). The Act reshaped the institutional conditions under which courts operated through greater administrative oversight while maintaining formal local input.

- **Carter Report on Legal Aid 2006 and subsequent reforms:** The Carter Report proposed a more market-oriented procurement model based on provider competition. Reforms subsequently implemented by government and the LSC sought to control legal-aid expenditure and increase efficiency by introducing fixed or case-based remuneration (Constitutional Affairs Committee 2007b). This changed the incentives and financial risks facing legal-aid providers, potentially making complex, uncertain, or time-intensive cases less financially viable and increasing pressure on specialist and community-based services (Legal Services Commission and DCA 2006).

- **Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 (TCEA):** The TCEA sought to replace a fragmented tribunal landscape with a simpler and more coherent administrative justice system, while also modernising enforcement and expanding the mechanisms available to manage and relieve debt (Legislation.gov.uk n.d.e). It created a unified two-tier structure for many specialist tribunals, comprising a First-tier Tribunal and an Upper Tribunal that primarily hears appeals, under the overall leadership of the Senior President of Tribunals (Legislation.gov.uk n.d.e). It also established the statutory basis for Debt Relief Orders and related mechanisms intended to provide more accessible options for over-indebted people who

were poorly served by existing insolvency procedures. Its clearest impact was to make formal tribunal pathways more structurally coherent (Legislation.gov.uk n.d.e).

- **Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO):** LASPO sought to make legal aid financially sustainable, generate substantial public savings, concentrate funding on the highest-priority cases, and discourage unnecessary litigation (MoJ 2011). It also reorganised legal-aid administration by abolishing the LSC and transferring responsibility to the Lord Chancellor. The Act reversed the previous presumption that civil matters were within scope unless excluded, replacing it with a list of matters expressly covered. It also tightened financial eligibility and reduced provider fees (McGuinness 2020; Legislation.gov.uk. n.d.d). To address some of the gaps created by the new rules, LASPO established the Exceptional Case Funding (ECF), principally for cases where withholding legal aid risked breaching a person's human rights; separately, the Civil Legal Advice Gateway required people seeking legal aid for certain problems to initially enter the system through a telephone service (MoJ 2019b; Legislation.gov.uk n.d.d). LASPO also required legal-aid qualification criteria to reflect the principle that mediation or other forms of dispute resolution may be more appropriate than court proceedings (Legislation.gov.uk n.d.d). Additionally, Part 2 of LASPO aimed to reshape the funding and costs of civil litigation and the incentives to bring, defend, and settle claims (MoJ 2019b). It did so through five statutory reforms that came into force in April 2013 (MoJ 2019a, 3). These measures formed part of the wider Jackson reform package.

- **Modernisation:** Between 2016 and 2025, His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) made several changes to modernise its courts and tribunal system. The goal of this HMCTS Reform Programme – broadly referred to as the Modernisation reforms – was to integrate modern technology to create a legal process that is just, proportionate, and accessible to all citizens (Justice Committee 2023). This includes digitising court records and back-end processes, as well as promoting user-facing online platforms that allow claims to be filed fully online. Partial digital services were introduced for processes that were previously analogue, such as probate applications and divorce proceedings. The Modernisation reforms were implemented over multiple years, not all at once. Notably, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the Modernisation reforms by forcing a quicker transition of court hearings and other legal services to online platforms as a public health measure. In the years following, the Modernisation reforms also built up and refined the processes for conducting remote hearings that had been expedited by the pandemic (The Law Society 2025; MoJ 2023). Due to the recall period of the 2023 ILNS, coverage of the influence of the Modernisation reforms is limited to reform elements that had been rolled out by December 2023, including the piloting and implementation of online platforms for specific problem types, backend digitisation aimed at justice service providers, and virtual hearing processes (MoJ 2023). This analysis does not include elements that were implemented between January 2024 and March 2025.

- **COVID-19:** Lockdowns forced court hearings and other legal services online, allowing cases to continue but making access harder for people who relied on face-to-face help or lacked reliable internet or digital skills. It also contributed or worsened problems related to employment, debt, and housing, among others (Boyle et al. 2022).

- **Brexit:** Affected justice journeys indirectly through wider economic disruption, which could create or worsen employment, debt, housing, and consumer problems.

After assessing the availability of comparable and complete datasets from relevant legal needs surveys, these were mapped on the same timeline according to their fieldwork dates and recall periods – meaning the period for which individuals were asked to recall problems or disputes they had experienced. This establishes which periods of people's justice experiences are captured by each survey and how those experiences sit in relation to the chronology of reform. The surveys identified include the 2004 CSJS, the 2014–15 LPRS, and the 2023 ILNS.[40] To anchor and validate the findings, the empirical strategy further leverages published findings from the foundational 1999 Paths to Justice survey and the 2023 MoJ LPRS. The Appendix: Methodological note provides further detail on why these surveys were selected and how differences in their designs are handled.

The alignment between this survey evidence and the reform timeline provides the basis for three analytical periods:

- Period 1 includes CPA and the AJA.
- Period 2 includes the Courts Act 2003, the Carter reforms, the TCEA, and LASPO.
- Period 3 includes the Modernisation reforms, COVID-19, and Brexit.

These periods group reforms and wider pressures that changed related parts of the justice system and provide the context against which the corresponding survey evidence is analysed.

Importantly, the periods are analytical groupings rather than direct survey observation windows: relationships are estimated separately within each survey and interpreted in relation to the reforms and wider pressures grouped within the corresponding period.

- The 2004 CSJS asked respondents about problems experienced since January 2001, or since age 18 for younger respondents, providing a snapshot of people's experiences after the main CPA and AJA changes.
- The 2014–15 LPRS asked about problems experienced in the preceding 18 months, including problems that had begun earlier but remained ongoing during that period; all problems captured by the survey were therefore ongoing after LASPO came into force in April 2013.
- The 2023 ILNS asked about problems experienced in the previous four years, so its recall window overlaps with the continuing implementation of Modernisation reforms and wider pressures including COVID-19 and Brexit.

These survey windows determine the experiences that can be examined in relation to each reform context.

40 The 2012 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Panel Survey (CSJPS) was reviewed and initially included in the variable-mapping exercise. Similarly to the 2004, 2014–15, and 2023 surveys, the 2012 survey did not permit separate assessment of barriers to accessing advice and assistance and dispute resolution mechanisms. The routing of the survey is such that the relevant questions were asked for only one problem per respondent, rather than for each problem experienced, resulting in a substantially constrained available sample. The resulting analytic samples were therefore too small to support robust estimation of the relevant outcomes or subgroup marginal effects.

2. Analytical expectations

Across the three analytical periods, the analysis asks whether people whose justice problems or resolution routes were more directly affected by relevant reforms were more or less likely to resolve their problems, and whether this relationship differed along the population or problem characteristics through which particular elements of the reforms were expected to operate unevenly (See Appendix: Table 4).

Problem resolution is the principal outcome of interest or dependent variable. It captures whether the underlying justice problem was resolved, rather than simply whether a legal process was concluded. This concept is critically important for understanding whether people's justice needs are addressed and ultimately the efficacy of the justice system: completion of the justice journey or process alone is not enough; rather, the ideal is that people's problems are fully resolved when the process is completed. Persistent justice problems are an injustice of their own and can fuel a cycle of unmet justice needs.

The analyses described below are organised around research questions set out for each analytical period and examine the associations between problem resolution, justice reforms, access to justice services, and different population characteristics. The analytical expectations differ by period because the reforms operated through different mechanisms and affected different parts of people's justice journeys. Section 3 below describes how these questions are estimated, while the Appendix: Methodological note describes the underlying survey measures and harmonisation decisions.

The analytical expectations are also interpreted in light of the conditions that prompted reform. Reforms were responses to institutional, fiscal, and wider social pressures and in some cases sought to target or sustain services under tighter resource constraints. The analysis therefore does not assume that pre-reform conditions could have been maintained unchanged, or that the relevant counterfactual is simply the absence of reform. Where public resources were under pressure, access and outcomes might also have deteriorated without reform. That counterfactual cannot be observed with the available evidence; the analysis instead examines how problem resolution and inequalities were distributed within the reform contexts that emerged.[41]

41 The authors recognise that the justice reforms considered here are far from the only policy or structural changes happening at the same time, which informs the analysis emphasis on comparing patterns in the data rather than trying to attribute causality. For example, the process to streamline six types of welfare benefits (Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, income-related Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, and Working Tax Credit) to a single Universal Credit system began in 2010 and, due to various factors, has concluded nine years behind schedule (Timmins 2026). This period of benefit reform does co-occur with some of the justice reforms under consideration here, including LASPO. One reviewer noted that justice reform is "often a response to all kinds of pressures", and when occurring against a backdrop of broader decline, the "the counterfactual might … have been things getting even worse".

Analytical Period 1: Civil Procedure Act and Access to Justice Act – 2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey

Two reforms are considered in Analytical Period 1: the Civil Procedure Act (CPA) 1997, which was implemented mainly through the Civil Procedure Rules (CPR), and the Access to Justice Act 1999 (AJA). The 2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey (CSJS) asked respondents about justice problems experienced since January 2001, or since age 18 for younger respondents.

2.1. Overall influence of CPA and AJA on problem resolution

Are people experiencing problems more directly affected by Period 1 reforms more or less likely to resolve their problems than people experiencing less directly affected problems?

Expectation. People experiencing problems more directly affected by the CPA and AJA are expected to have lower probability of resolution, on average, than people experiencing less directly affected problems.

Rationale. The expectation reflects two changes operating at the same time. The CPA, through the CPR, increased the importance of preparation, information exchange, and settlement before court, while the AJA changed the funding and provision of legal assistance available to help people navigate their problems. For some problem types, people could therefore experience greater demands early in their justice journey while also having fewer or different sources of professional support.

The AJA removed most personal injury claims from the scope of legal aid, while the Civil Funding Code removed publicly funded representation for many general contract-related problems (DCA 2005a). Private lawyers operating on CFAs often rejected complex problems lacking a higher payout or guaranteed win (Goriely et al. 2002; Lord Chancellor's Department 2001), leaving these claimants with fewer viable alternatives where public funding was no longer available and likely to abandon resolution or face persisting problems (DCA 2005a). CFAs similarly left housing dispute (for example, disrepairs) claimants unrepresented and less able to solve their problems (Lord Chancellor's Department 2001; Goriely et al. 2002; DCA 2005a).

Consumer problems were affected through a different mechanism. The removal of publicly funded representation from many general contract cases increased reliance on private payment, self-help, complaints procedures, and other consumer dispute resolution routes. These alternatives may have been sufficient for some straightforward disputes, but people experiencing complex or higher-value consumer problems may have found it harder to obtain the assistance and advice needed, likely resulting in lower resolution (DCA 2005a).

The reforms also changed the provision of publicly funded assistance and advice services. These were restructured, with some solicitors withdrawing as contracting requirements, administrative burdens, and remuneration pressures affected the viability of legal-aid work, contributing to gaps in provision (Select Committee on Constitutional Affairs 2004; DCA 2005a). Funding redirected towards non-profits did not completely offset this, given limited voluntary-sector coverage (Lord Chancellor's Department 2001; DCA 2005a; NAO 2002). However, not-for-profit provision did expand and contracts allocated providers a limited number of 'matter starts' or new legal help cases they could open, which could mean eligible clients were turned away once those allocations were exhausted. Additionally, the decline in contracted solicitors' firms suggests this expansion did not

offset the lost capacity. Domestic violence cases faced particularly acute influence: they required immediate, inadequately renumerated work, making capacity-constrained firms reluctant to accept them, likely creating greater barriers to timely assistance and advice (Select Committee on Constitutional Affairs 2004).

Because these changes did not affect every problem type to the same degree, the analysis distinguishes problems according to how directly they were exposed to the reforms.

The following classification distinguishes problem types according to how directly or consistently the reforms affected the justice journeys people followed to resolve them. The empirical analysis compares resolution between these two groups. Appendix: Table 4 documents the survey items used to operationalise this classification.

- **More directly affected problem categories:** Accident and health (personal injury and clinical negligence), consumer problems, domestic violence, welfare benefits, money and debt claims, housing (disrepairs), and land and property disputes.
- **Less directly affected justice problems:** Family and employment.

Rationale. The rationale for this classification reflects the different mechanisms through which the Period 1 reforms affected particular problem areas, including changes to procedure, legal-aid coverage, and the availability of publicly funded assistance. Personal-injury and clinical-negligence claims were covered by specific CPR pre-action protocols requiring parties to investigate and exchange information before going to court (Goriely et al. 2002; DCA 2005a). The AJA also removed most personal-injury claims from legal-aid scope, while CFAs provided an alternative funding route. This substantially changed how personal injury claims were financed, although CFAs continued to support access for many claimants; the shift also transferred greater financial risk to practitioners and could affect the incentives for selecting a case (Goriely et al. 2002; DCA 2005a; Muller et al. 2014). Clinical negligence claims continued to qualify for legal aid, since CFAs were not considered an adequate replacement, but remain classified as more directly affected given the changed pre-litigation expectations under the CPR and Clinical Disputes Protocol.

Consumer disputes had no problem-specific protocol and were governed by the CPR's general rules on court management, disclosure, settlement, costs, and case allocation, while also being affected by changes in the availability of publicly funded assistance (Goriely et al. 2002). The Civil Funding Code's removal of publicly funded representation from many general-contract cases increased reliance on other funding and resolution routes; consumer legal-aid spending fell by more than 90% after 2001, with people expected to rely more heavily on alternative funding routes (DCA 2005a).

For housing, welfare benefits, and debt, advice shifted from traditional solicitor firms towards not-for-profit providers, whose contracts increased by a fifth to a third (DCA 2005a, 16; NAO 2002) but did not fully address the gap. The number of people receiving help fell as firms turned clients away once their allocated matter starts were exhausted, alongside a decline in solicitor firms holding LSC contracts in these areas. Evidence of the period identified emerging advice deserts in some areas of the law, especially housing (Constitutional Affairs Committee 2004). For housing specifically, the AJA and LSC Funding Code replaced a relatively open funding system with a more targeted and controlled regime of publicly funded legal assistance, implemented through the Funding Code and LSC contracting arrangements, while the CPA's CPR required more upfront work and preparation

(Goriely et al. 2002; Flood 2009). Access increasingly depended on funding priorities and providers' contractual capacity. The same funding and capacity constraints affected domestic-violence assistance (Constitutional Affairs Committee 2004).

The AJA's influence on family justice problems is less clear. Solicitor firms contracted for family-law services fell by 20% by April 2003, yet new family matters receiving initial legal help rose modestly (Constitutional Affairs Committee 2004). The AJA also encouraged mediation over litigation in disputes over residence, contact, maintenance, and division of property following separation, but the overall direction of its influence on resolution is unclear. Family problems are therefore classified as less directly affected because the reform's effect is unclear, not because they were unaffected. To account for this, the empirical analysis assesses whether the findings depend on treating family problems as less directly affected, excluding them from the comparison, or classifying them as more directly affected. Employment problems are also classified as less directly affected: they were principally governed through separate employment tribunal procedures rather than the ordinary civil court procedures governed by the CPA, and their resolution pathways were not directly restructured by the AJA.

Check on access to justice services: As a secondary check, the analysis re-estimates the relationship between reform exposure and problem resolution after taking into account access to assistance and advice and dispute resolution mechanisms. This assesses whether the main pattern remains once observed differences in service access are considered. Because access to these services may itself be one pathway through which the reforms are related to resolution, this is used to inform interpretation of the consistency of the findings.

2.2. Uneven influence of CPA and AJA

The analysis then examines whether the relationship between reform exposure and problem resolution differs depending on access to assistance and advice, household income, and educational attainment.

Were people more or less likely to resolve problems affected by the reforms depending on whether they received assistance?

Expectation. Access to assistance and advice is expected to reduce the disadvantage associated with reform exposure. This is because assistance could help people understand procedural requirements, prepare information or evidence, and navigate changing routes to support.

Rationale. The CPA placed greater emphasis on early preparation and taking procedural steps before court, while the AJA changed the availability and organisation of legal assistance. Assistance and advice could therefore help people understand what was required, identify viable options, and prepare the information or evidence needed to pursue resolution. Where self-help, complaints procedures, or other alternatives were insufficient, access to appropriate assistance could help people manage demands that might otherwise make resolution more difficult (Lord Chancellor's Department 2002; Goriely et al. 2002; DCA 2005a; NAO 2002).

Were people with fewer financial, educational, or legal-capability resources more or less likely to resolve problems more directly affected by the reforms?

Expectation. People with relatively fewer resources, lower education, or lower legal capability are expected to face greater difficulty resolving problems more directly affected by the reforms. This is because the CPR frontloaded procedural requirements and effort at the beginning of people's justice journeys, while the AJA restructured and restricted access to legal aid (Buck et al. 2008).

Because legal capability is a complex construct that cannot be measured directly in the 2004 survey, the analysis looks for this expected pattern through differences by household income and educational attainment.

Rationale. Social welfare problems were treated under the AJA as interconnected issues linked to social exclusion, requiring early, coordinated support outside the courts (DCA 2005a). The LSC expanded provision through not-for-profit agencies like Law Centres and Citizens Advice Bureaux, but these lacked complete geographic coverage and case capacity, while contracting, administrative burdens, and remuneration pressures made social welfare work financially unviable for some solicitors, shrinking the pool of firms willing to take these cases (DCA 2005b; Constitutional Affairs Committee 2004). Domestic violence cases faced the same constraints, and since they often demanded immediate, substantial work, delayed advice was especially costly for lower-income claimants (Constitutional Affairs Committee 2004; Buck et al. 2005).

Most personal injury claims were removed from the scope of legal aid and shifted to the private 'no-win, no-fee' CFA market, where lawyers bore greater financial risk and could be more selective about the claims they accepted. Consumer and general contract problems were affected through a different mechanism: publicly funded representation was removed from many general contract cases, increasing reliance on private payment, complaints procedures, self-help, and other routes (Goriely et al. 2002; Select Committee on Constitutional Affairs 2004). Lower-income claimants were more likely to be rejected under both mechanisms and to have fewer alternatives when cases were complex or low-value, and increasingly relied on no-complaint procedures and self-help once public representation was withdrawn.

Some middle-income respondents could also fall outside legal-aid eligibility while lacking the resources to absorb private costs. People with personal injury claims could face difficulty obtaining representation where CFA providers considered claims commercially unattractive, while people with consumer problems could have limited alternatives after publicly funded representation was withdrawn, particularly for more complex or higher-value disputes (DCA 2005a). Higher-income respondents, by contrast, could more readily absorb private fees when publicly funded or CFA representation was unavailable.

This financial disadvantage compounded a parallel capability disadvantage. The reforms also placed greater responsibility on people to understand procedural requirements, navigate early preparation requirements, and work out how to proceed. People with lower legal capability may have been less equipped to manage these demands without active assistance. Because system rules remained highly complex, information alone was unlikely to be sufficient (DCA 2005a). Together, these financial and capability dimensions are expected to produce a larger resolution shortfall among lower and middle-income, lower-education, and lower-legal-capability respondents than among their better-resourced counterparts.

Analytical Period 2: Courts Act, Carter reforms, Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007, and Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act – 2014–15 Ministry of Justice Legal Problem and Resolution Survey

Four reforms are considered in Analytical Period 2: the Courts Act 2003; the Carter Report on Legal Aid 2006 and reforms associated with its implementation; the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 (TCEA); and the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) 2012. The 2014–15 LPRS provides a later snapshot of people's experiences in a justice system shaped by these reforms. Respondents were asked about problems experienced in the preceding 18 months, including problems that began earlier but remained ongoing during that period.

2.3. Overall influence of court, tribunal, and legal-aid reforms on problem resolution

Were people experiencing problems more directly affected by the Period 2 reforms more or less likely to resolve them than people experiencing less directly affected problems?

Expectation. People experiencing problems more directly affected by the reforms are expected to have a lower probability of resolution on average than people experiencing less directly affected problems.

Rationale. The Carter reforms increased cost-control pressures on legal-aid providers through changes to remuneration and greater provider risk, while LASPO subsequently narrowed the scope of legal aid and financial eligibility. Together, these changes reduced the availability of sustained assistance for complex or time-intensive cases. These changes may have made it more difficult for people to identify viable options, obtain appropriate support, comply with procedural requirements, negotiate with other parties, and sustain the resolution process. Provider closures, advice deserts, narrower eligibility, and congestion among remaining providers may also all have affected whether people received the needed support to resolve their problems. The Courts Act 2003 and the TCEA may have produced countervailing institutional benefits through more consistent court and tribunal structures, but those benefits are expected to have concentrated among justice journeys that reached the relevant formal institutions.

The Carter reforms placed legal-aid providers under cost-control pressure that made complex and time-intensive cases less financially sustainable and reduced the availability of assistance (Constitutional Affairs Committee 2007b; Wilding and Emberson 2026; Flood 2009). LASPO subsequently narrowed legal-aid coverage and financial eligibility (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2018; MoJ 2019b) and established the Civil Legal Advice Telephone Gateway, which required those seeking aid for a specific range of problems to call an operator service that would confirm eligibility and connect users with advice providers, to preserve access in a narrower range of circumstances (Brendon 2018; PLP 2018). Available evidence on ECF suggests that users of those mechanisms sometimes abandoned their cases rather than continuing the resolution process (PLP 2018, 11; Harper 2018). In family proceedings, increases in self-represented litigants were associated with confusion, exclusion, and stress (Hunter et al. 2020).

These reforms were introduced against a backdrop of fiscal restraint and concerns about the sustainability and targeting of public expenditure. Their policy rationale included controlling legal-aid expenditure and concentrating finite resources on higher-priority cases. The relevant counterfactual is therefore not necessarily the continuation of previous levels and forms of provision: maintaining them unchanged might itself have been difficult under the prevailing fiscal and institutional pressures. The analysis cannot determine whether those arrangements could have been sustained, or whether access and outcomes would have deteriorated further in the absence of reform. It instead examines how people fared within the reform context that was implemented.

Because these reforms did not affect every problem type to the same degree, the analysis distinguishes problems according to how directly they were exposed to the reforms. The empirical analysis compares resolution between these two groups. The detailed operationalisation is reported in Appendix: Table 4.

- **More directly affected problem categories:** Accident and health, domestic violence, employment, family, housing, money and debt, and welfare benefits.
- **Less directly affected justice problems:** Land and property and consumer.

Rationale. Period 2 reforms operated through two related mechanisms. First, the Courts Act 2003 and the TCEA changed the institutional and procedural conditions under which people interacted with courts and tribunals. Second, the reforms implemented following the Carter Review, and later LASPO, changed the availability, funding, and delivery of assistance and advice that people could use to pursue resolution (Burrows and Domínguez 2026; Chalkley 2018). The problems most directly affected by the Carter-related reforms and LASPO were those for which resolution commonly depended on publicly funded advice or representation and those removed from, restricted within, or redirected through the revised legal-aid framework. These include family problems, employment, welfare benefits, housing problems, and money and debt problems (Legislation.gov.uk n.d.d). Part 2 of LASPO, entitled "Litigation funding and costs", provides an additional basis for treating accident and health problems as more directly exposed, since it changed the costs, risks, and incentives associated with personal injury and clinical negligence claims (MoJ 2019a).

The TCEA most directly affected administrative justice and enforcement pathways. Its tribunal reforms were particularly relevant to welfare-benefit problems, while its enforcement provisions affected money and debt problems involving enforcement or debt-relief mechanisms. For the latter, the TCEA changed the procedures governing the taking control of goods and related enforcement stages (HCEO 2026). The Courts Act 2003 was less closely tied to particular problem categories: its effect was most directly relevant where a justice journey reached a formal court or tribunal (Legislation.gov.uk n.d.c; FPRC n.d.; Constitutional Affairs Committee 2007a).

Check on access to justice services: As a secondary check, the analysis re-estimates the relationship between reform exposure and problem resolution after taking observed assistance and advice and dispute resolution mechanism access into account. This assesses whether the estimated relationship changes when observed differences in service access are considered.

2.4. Uneven influence of court, tribunal, and legal-aid reforms

The analysis then examines whether the relationship between reform exposure and problem resolution differs depending on household income, educational attainment, and legal capability.

Were people with fewer financial, educational, or legal-capability resources less likely to resolve problems more directly affected by the reforms?

Expectation. People with fewer financial resources are expected to face the greatest difficulty resolving problems more directly affected by Period 2 reforms. Differences in the same direction are expected by educational attainment and legal capability.

Rationale. The remuneration and contracting reforms implemented following the Carter Review placed pressure on providers, reducing the financial viability of complex and time-intensive cases. LASPO subsequently narrowed the scope of legal aid and financial eligibility (Burrows and Domínguez 2026). These changes were likely to weigh more heavily on people who had fewer financial resources, less capacity to navigate complex eligibility requirements, or less ability to replace publicly funded assistance.

Household income is expected to provide the clearest differentiation. Those on lower incomes were more dependent on publicly funded assistance for problem types affected by Carter and LASPO, including family, welfare benefits, housing, and money and debt problems. Although some remained financially eligible for assistance, narrowed problem coverage may have prevented them from obtaining effective support.

At the same time, people whose income exceeded the legal-aid eligibility threshold could lack the resources to pay for private assistance and advice, especially for sustaining complex formal processes (NAO 2014; Burrows and Domínguez 2026). Those on higher incomes were comparatively better positioned to replace publicly funded assistance, absorb private legal fees, and manage the financial and practical costs of continuing the resolution process.

Income-related constraints may have been particularly consequential for interconnected social-welfare problems. Housing, welfare benefits, and money and debt problems frequently form clusters in which resolving one issue does not necessarily address the related difficulties (Moorhead and Robinson 2006).

Educational attainment and legal capability are expected to provide complementary forms of differentiation. People with lower educational attainment may face greater difficulty interpreting legal information, while people with lower legal capability may face additional difficulty recognising the legal dimensions of their problems and taking required steps to pursue resolution (Wintersteiger 2015). Overall, the negative association between more direct reform exposure and problem resolution is expected to be largest among people with lower household incomes.

Analytical Period 3: Modernisation and wider pressures – Legal Services Board and The Law Society Individual Legal Needs Survey 2023

The reforms and broader systemic pressures considered in Analytical Period 3 are the Modernisation reforms, COVID-19, and Brexit. The 2023 Individual Legal Needs Survey (ILNS) asked respondents about justice problems experienced during the previous four years. Unlike the earlier survey snapshots, this recall window overlaps with the ongoing implementation of Modernisation reforms, including the rapid expansion of remote and digital processes during and after COVID-19. The quantitative analysis of reform exposure focuses on Modernisation – COVID-19 and Brexit are treated as part of the wider context for the period rather than examined separately.

2.5. Overall influence of Modernisation reforms on problem resolution

Were people using routes to process conclusion more directly affected by Modernisation more or less likely to resolve their problems than people using less directly affected routes?

Expectation. People whose routes to concluding their justice journeys were more directly affected by the Modernisation reforms are expected to have a higher probability of resolving their problems, on average, than people using less directly affected routes.

Rationale. Modernisation created streamlined online problem resolution portals for various civil and administrative justice problems that were successful in increasing individuals' efficiency in resolving problems (Pilling et al. 2026). This includes evidence suggesting that time and effort were reduced for users of the online platforms (Pilling et al. 2026). "Most public users surveyed for each service found key early steps in accessing justice via the new digital processes easy or convenient" (Frontier Economics et al. 2025, 39).

The reforms have made formal dispute resolution mechanisms – especially those related to courts or tribunals and in some cases mediation – for less severe cases "convenient and expedient", with the implementation of remote hearings decreasing stress for the average population (MoJ 2021; Harrison et al. 2024).

The ability to more rapidly resolve issues in one cohesive, online platform, as well as the introduction of digitised processes for uploading documents and evidence, likely streamlined problem resolution for the average user with straightforward cases (Frontier Economics et al. 2025). However, digitised processes may also create or compound difficulties where capability is lower or problems require greater support, flexibility, or tailored handling

Because Modernisation reforms extended across a wide range of problem types, the analysis distinguishes routes of process conclusion according to how directly they were affected by the reforms.

The following classification distinguishes routes according to how directly or consistently Modernisation reforms affected them. Classification as 'more directly affected' refers to the extent to which the relevant procedures, funding arrangements, or services pathways changed; it does not imply that the reforms reduced access or worsened outcomes uniformly within each problem

category. The empirical analysis compares resolution between these two groups. Appendix: Table 4 documents the detailed coding.

- **More directly affected routes to justice journey conclusion:** Justice journeys that included a court or tribunal judgement and, to a lesser extent, mediation.
- **Less directly affected routes to justice journey conclusion:** Those whose means of process conclusion was through an ombudsman, by a decision or intervention by another formal authority, by conciliation, by arbitration, by action by another third-party, by agreement with the other party, by the other party doing what the individual wanted, by the individual doing what the other party wanted, by the issue sorting itself out, or by the individual moving away from the issue.

While the reforms examined in Periods 1 and 2 primarily affected specific types of justice problems, the Modernisation reforms reached a wide range of justice problems, instead varying in the extent to which they affected the routes through which people concluded their justice processes to different degrees. The analysis therefore identifies relative reform exposure through the route to process conclusion rather than through problem type.

Rationale. The Modernisation reforms fuelled notable changes to justice service delivery processes, primarily those related to dispute resolution mechanism and information services. From 2016 onward, HMCTS introduced new technologies to its services with the aim of making the system "more straightforward, accessible, and efficient" (Lamont and Low 2024; Pilling et al. 2026). Both user-facing and back-end processes were targeted; for example, improvements included moving away from paper-based systems by digitising documents, strengthening online case management systems, launching and improving online portals for civil and administrative justice resolution, and implementing online court and video hearing transitions (Committee on Public Accounts 2023). By 2023, the areas of law with online services fully implemented through the Modernisation reforms included processes related to probate, divorce, financial remedy, family public law, online civil money claims, damages, and social security and child support (Frontier Economics et al. 2025).

The movement towards online court hearings changed the manner of problem resolution in many cases. Digital hearings can be more accessible to some, saving people the time and cost of travelling to a brick-and-mortar service (Harrison et al. 2024).

2.6. Uneven influence of Modernisation reforms

The analysis then examines whether the relationship between reform exposure and problem resolution differs depending on access to assistance and advice; household income; educational attainment; legal capability; and problem complexity, proxied by problem severity and the co-occurrence of multiple problems.

Were people more or less likely to resolve problems affected by Modernisation depending on whether they received assistance?

Expectation. Access to assistance and advice is expected to be associated with higher resolution among people using routes more directly affected by Modernisation.

Rationale. Complex legal language – such as overly formal language and unfamiliar acronyms in letters and hearing instructions – could impede someone's ability to access such services and thus resolve their justice problems (Administrative Justice Council 2026). However, those with access to assistance and advice services to help navigate the online spaces were likely to be able to more easily understand the "more technical or legal language … used in communications from the Home Office or legal officers" (Pilling et al. 2026, 58). Because access to and understanding of information is vital for navigating online platforms, having this guidance from assistance and advice services will influence individuals' abilities to solve problems. In addition, the means of assistance and advice provision may also play a role, with face-to-face services often being considered more helpful than those conducted via telephone or video call – though access to any assistance and advice service, regardless of means, is likely to positively influence people's ability achieve problem resolution (Burton 2018; Hynes 2021).

Were people with fewer financial, educational, or legal-capability resources less likely to resolve problems through routes more directly affected by Modernisation reforms?

Expectation. People on lower incomes, with lower educational attainment, or with lower legal capability are expected to face greater difficulty resolving problems through routes more directly affected by Modernisation.

Rationale. Participation in the Modernisation reforms' online hearings and digital portal presupposes access to internet, a private space safe for the sensitive nature of a hearing, and appropriate hardware (Pilling et al. 2026). People on lower incomes, particularly in rural areas where brick-and-mortar services are more limited, were less likely to have this access and less able to absorb the cost of travelling to an alternative connection point (Harris 2020; Defra and GSO 2026).

Beyond access, using a digital process may require that users are able to self-navigate rigid digital portals that often did not allow amends or additional information once a case had started (Frontier Economics et al. 2025). Individuals with lower education, digital capability, or digital literacy were expected to face disproportionate difficulty meeting document labelling and upload requirements; and inconsistencies or errors in how evidence was filed made it harder for judges and legal professionals to locate the correct materials, which could lead to adjourned hearings or individuals abandoning the process altogether (Pilling et al. 2026). The online platforms also caused confusion around the availability of information on official government and legal websites, which are difficult to navigate due to complex language (Harrison et al. 2024; Creutzfeldt et al. 2023, 5; HMCTS 2024; PLP 2020). Those with lower legal capability and education levels are less likely to be able to navigate this technical language and these processes with limited support.

Legal capability may be particularly relevant because being comfortable using digital technologies does not necessarily mean that a person is equipped to navigate a legal process online. Digital and legal capability are distinct, but both may be needed when legal and procedural tasks have to be carried out through a digital system (Denvir and Selvarajah 2022).

Did the relationship between Modernisation and problem resolution differ depending on the complexity of the problems people faced?

Problem complexity is not measured directly in the 2023 ILNS. The analysis therefore examines this question using problem severity and the co-occurrence of multiple problems as proxies for complexity.

Expectation. People facing more complex problems are expected to have greater difficulty reaching resolution through routes more directly affected by Modernisation. This should be reflected in lower resolution among those facing more severe or multiple problems.

Rationale. More complex problems are expected to be harder to resolve through routes more directly affected by Modernisation where they require more tailored handling than standardised online processes can accommodate. The online systems have "limited functionality for complex cases", with transitions between legacy and online services not yet fully cemented (Pilling et al. 2026). Complex or "non-standard" cases that "dropped out" of the digital system into legacy paper processes were more time-consuming and decreased the likelihood of resolution with the added difficulty of navigating across multiple platforms (NAO 2023, 36).

Less severe problems completed through more affected means of problem resolution (decision through a court or authority/mediation) are more likely to fit the standardised processes that can move through the online platforms established through the Modernisation reforms. People experiencing less complex problems may therefore be better positioned to benefit from remote hearings, as they are easy to deal with and this can be done quickly.

The co-occurrence of multiple problems may capture a different dimension of complexity. People dealing with several problems at the same time may need to manage more information, services, and procedural steps, making it harder to benefit from the simplification of any one process.

3. Empirical approach

The empirical approach operationalises the questions and period-specific analytical expectations set out in the section above. The analysis centres on the resolution of justice problems and whether people's chances of resolving their problems differ according to their relative exposure to core reforms and wider pressures in each analytical period. A comparative repeated cross-sectional approach is used, with relationships estimated separately within each survey rather than treating the surveys as a continuous series or as direct before-and-after observations. Detailed information on the three surveys, their different designs, and remaining comparability limitations is provided in the Appendix: Methodological note. The harmonisation and operationalisation of the core people-centred justice indicators is documented in Appendix: Table 3.

The analytical periods refer to reform contexts, not to continuous observation windows. Each is examined using a survey snapshot with its own recall period, capturing people's experiences after or, where reforms were still being implemented, during the relevant changes. For the analyses in Periods 1 and 2, relative exposure to reforms is identified primarily by the types of justice problems people were seeking to resolve and the extent to which those problem areas were affected by the reforms, grouped following the classifications and rationale set out in the section above.

Period 3 requires a different approach. Court and tribunal Modernisation extended across a much wider range of problem types but affected the routes through which people pursued resolution to different degrees. Reform exposure is therefore identified through the route by which the resolution process concluded, distinguishing routes more directly affected by Modernisation from those less directly affected. COVID-19 and Brexit form part of the wider context for Period 3 but are not separately examined in the quantitative analysis.

Within each period, the models estimate the association between reform exposure and problem resolution to answer the questions set out in the previous section. As a robustness check, additional specifications account for differences in access to justice services, to assess whether the principal findings remain after taking these differences into account. The regression analysis uses harmonised binary measures of access to assistance and advice and dispute resolution mechanisms; their construction is detailed in the Appendix: Methodological note and Appendix: Table 3.

The empirical approach also examines whether the relationship between reform exposure and problem resolution differed across people's justice experiences, depending on their vulnerabilities and the complexity of the problems they were trying to resolve. These analyses vary by period because the reform mechanisms, available survey measures, and analytical expectations differ.

These questions are examined using interaction terms between reform exposure and the relevant respondent, service-access, or problem characteristic. The resulting estimates indicate whether people with different vulnerabilities, or people facing different types of justice problems, had different chances of resolving their problems when they were relatively more exposed to reforms, as anticipated in the analytical expectations.

In **Period 1**, the analyses examine whether the relationship between exposure to the CPA and AJA and problem resolution differs according to access to assistance and advice, household income, and educational attainment. The 2004 survey does not provide a direct measure of legal capability suitable for this analysis; income and education are therefore used to examine related but distinct financial and informational resources, as described in the previous section.

In **Period 2**, the corresponding analyses examine differences by household income, educational attainment, and legal capability.

In **Period 3**, the analyses examine differences by access to assistance and advice, household income, legal capability, problem severity, and problem co-occurrence. Educational attainment was also considered, consistent with the analytical expectation in the previous section, but the interaction is not reported because dividing the sample by education and reform exposure left too few observations in one group to support a reliable estimate.

Results are presented as the estimated probability that people resolve their problems and the corresponding differences in those probabilities, expressed in percentage points. The principal results are reported as average marginal effects from logistic regression models: the estimated percentage-point difference in the probability of resolution associated with being in the more directly affected group, holding relevant characteristics constant.

For subgroup estimates, the comparison is between people within the same subgroup who experienced a more directly affected problem or route and those who experienced a less directly affected problem or route. The models account for relevant respondent and problem characteristics, including gender, disability, education, income, legal capability where available, and, as proxies for problem complexity, problem severity and co-occurrence. The exact set of covariates differs by period according to the measures available in each survey and the specification being estimated. Appendix: Tables 8 to 13 report the full model results.

Additional checks examine whether the main findings still hold when the analysis is conducted in different reasonable ways – for example, when differences in the types of justice problems people experience are taken into account, when a different statistical model is used, and when problems are classified differently in cases where their exposure to reforms is not clear-cut. In Period 1, for example, family problems are alternatively excluded from the comparison or classified as more directly affected because the direction of their exposure to the AJA is not clear-cut.

The findings are interpreted against the analytical expectations in the section above and the evidence identified through the structured review of reforms. In particular, the analysis assesses whether relatively greater reform exposure was associated with different chances of resolving problems for people with higher and lower incomes, people with different levels of education and legal capability, and people facing more severe or multiple co-occurring problems, where these differences were expected in each period.

The approach makes it possible to draw on more than two decades of population-level evidence while recognising differences between the surveys. It is not designed to isolate the causal effect of individual reforms or groups of reforms. The surveys observe different samples at different points and under different reform contexts, and several reforms and wider social and economic changes occurred concurrently. The analytical periods are also not self-contained reform episodes: reforms introduced in earlier periods could remain in effect, continue to be implemented, or continue to shape justice pathways in later periods. The findings are therefore interpreted as associations and differing patterns across reform contexts, rather than as causal estimates of reform effects.

4. Findings across reform contexts

The findings below examine whether the period-specific analytical expectations set out in Section 2 are observable in people's chances of resolving their justice problems. Because the surveys used different procedures to select these problems, the estimates describe relationships within each survey rather than differences in the composition of problems across distinct reform contexts. The implications of these design differences are discussed in the Appendix: Methodological note.

For each period, the analysis is ordered as follows:

1. It compares people whose problems – or, in Period 3, whose routes to process conclusion – were more directly affected by the reforms with those less directly affected.

2. It examines whether the pattern differs according to the resources and support people could draw on and the complexity of the problems they experienced.

The reported differences take into account other characteristics that could also be related to whether people resolve their problems. Because several reforms and wider pressures operated at the same time, the results should be read as associations rather than as the effect of any single reform. Throughout the findings, estimates whose confidence intervals include zero, or subgroup differences that are not statistically conclusive, are interpreted as suggestive rather than established patterns, regardless of whether the direction of the coefficients aligns with the analytical expectations.

Period 1: CPA and AJA – 2004 CSJS

4.1. Overall influence of CPA and AJA on problem resolution

KEY FINDING

People facing justice problems more **directly affected by the CPA and AJA appeared less likely to resolve them** than people facing less directly affected problems.

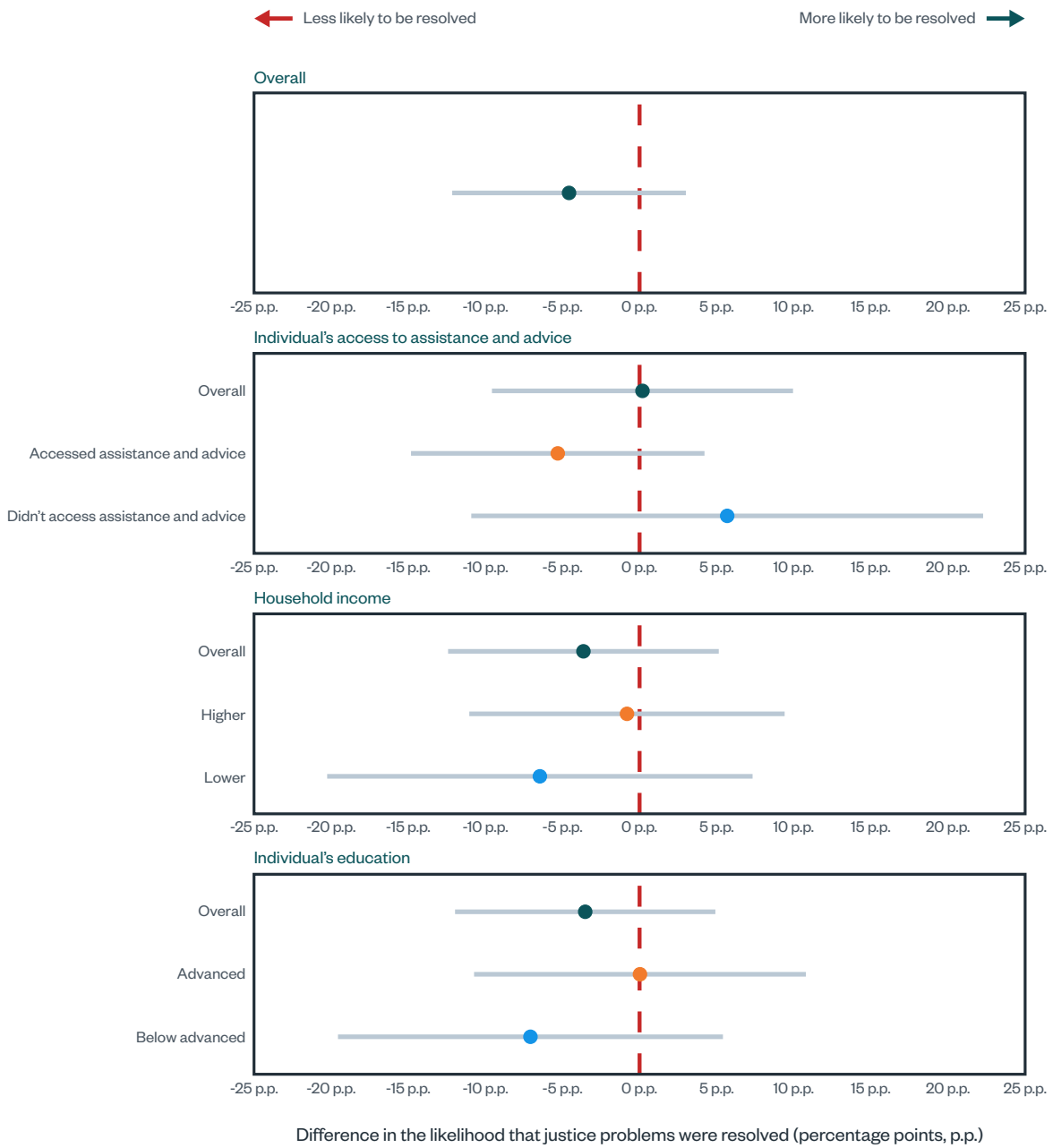
On average, people facing problem types more directly affected by the CPA and the AJA had an estimated 4.6-percentage-point lower probability of resolving their problem than people facing less directly or less consistently affected problems (95% confidence interval (CI): −12.1 to 3.0).[42] In practical terms, this is equivalent to roughly five fewer people reaching resolution for every 100 people facing a more directly affected problem, based on the modelled estimates.

The confidence interval includes zero, so the estimated difference is not statistically conclusive at the 95% confidence level. As noted above, classification as more directly affected does not mean that all problem types were affected equally or in the same way; the extent and nature of exposure varied across problems, including where alternative routes to funding or resolution remained available. The point estimate nevertheless suggests a lower probability of resolution among people facing more directly affected problems, and its direction resonates with evidence reviewed for this period showing that the reforms could simultaneously increase what people had to do early in a dispute and reduce or reshape the assistance available to help them do it. For some civil problems, the CPA required earlier investigation, information exchange, and preparation before proceedings (Lord Chancellor's Department 2002; Goriely et al. 2002; DCA 2005a). The AJA changed the alternatives available to people in different ways across problem types. Most personal-injury claims were removed from legal-aid scope, increasing reliance on conditional-fee arrangements (Goriely et al. 2002; DCA 2005a). Many general-contract and consumer matters became more reliant on private payment, complaints procedures, self-help, and other routes (DCA 2005a), while publicly funded provision for welfare benefits, debt, and housing remained constrained by provider capacity and contracting arrangements (NAO 2002; Constitutional Affairs Committee 2004). **Figure 31** places this overall estimate alongside the selected analyses of uneven influence.

42 The finding was robust to alternative treatment of family problems, whose average exposure to the reforms was difficult to classify consistently. The estimated difference remained similar when family problems were excluded (−5.5 percentage points; 95% CI: −12.6 to 3.6) or classified as more directly affected (−5.1 percentage points; 95% CI: −12.2 to 3.6), compared with −4.6 percentage points (95% CI: −12.1 to 3.0) in the principal specification. See Models 3 to 6 in Appendix: Table 8. In an additional specification that also accounted for whether people accessed assistance and advice and a dispute resolution mechanism, the estimated difference narrowed to about −2.8 percentage points (see Models 7 and 8 in Appendix: Table 8). The direction therefore remained the same, but the association was smaller after differences in service access were taken into account. Because access to justice services may itself be one of the pathways through which the reforms influenced problem resolution, this latter specification does not provide a like-for-like robustness test of the principal estimate; rather, it assesses whether the reform-exposure difference remains after accounting for these observed service pathways.

Figure 31. Problem resolution and exposure to the CPA and AJA

Estimated difference in problem resolution associated with experiencing a justice problem more directly affected by the CPA and the AJA, overall and by access to assistance and advice, income, and education



Note: This figure presents adjusted average marginal effects (AMEs) from logistic regression models of the relationship between Period 1 reform exposure and problem resolution; full results are reported in Appendix: Tables 8 and 9. The top box shows the overall adjusted AME from Model 1 in Table 8, without interactions. The boxes below show AMEs within groups defined by access to assistance and advice, income, and education and are estimated based on Models 1, 3, and 5 from Appendix: Table 9. Within each subgroup, the estimate shows the difference in the likelihood that problems were resolved between people experiencing problems more directly affected by the reforms and those experiencing less directly affected problems. The zero line indicates no estimated difference between these two exposure categories. Horizontal lines show 95% confidence intervals. AMEs are percentage-point differences in the probability of resolution; negative values indicate lower estimated resolution for more directly affected problems than for less directly affected problems. Models account for other observed differences between people and their justice problems.

4.2. Uneven influence of CPA and AJA

KEY FINDING

People on lower incomes and with lower educational attainment appeared to fare worse when their problems were more directly affected by reforms. The estimates were uncertain, but they fit with a **reform context in which people were expected to do more themselves** while publicly funded assistance was being restructured.

Figure 31 suggests that among people on lower incomes and with lower educational attainment, more directly affected problems were less likely to be resolved than less directly affected problems. The confidence intervals around these estimates are wide and include zero, and the differences between groups are not statistically conclusive. The results therefore point to a suggestive pattern rather than establishing that the influence of the reforms differed by income or education. The estimated reduction in the probability of resolution associated with greater reform exposure was larger among people on lower **incomes** than for people with more resources (6.5-percentage-point lower probability for lower income compared with only a 0.8-percentage-point lower probability for higher income). **Education** shows the same pattern for those facing more directly affected problems (7.1-percentage-point lower probability for those with below-advanced educational attainment compared with almost no estimated difference for people with advanced education).

The ordering by income resonates with the different financial options documented in the evidence reviewed for this period. Publicly funded and not-for-profit provision in social welfare areas was subject to capacity and geographic constraints (NAO 2002; DCA 2005a; Constitutional Affairs Committee 2004), while private lawyers operating under CFAs could decline personal-injury cases that were complex, uncertain, or lower value (Goriely et al. 2002; Constitutional Affairs Committee 2004). For people with fewer financial resources, losing access to one of these routes left less scope to replace it by paying privately.

The 2004 survey does not include a direct measure of legal capability. Education is therefore used as an imperfect proxy for some of the resources that may help people understand what they need to do, identify where to seek help, and navigate changing routes to assistance. Broader research from this period showed substantial variation in people's knowledge of how to deal with legal issues (Buck et al. 2008). Evidence on the reforms themselves separately suggested that providing information alone was not always sufficient where people were expected to navigate complex requirements without more active assistance (DCA 2005a).

Regarding **assistance and advice**, the analytical expectations based on the evidence reviewed for this period anticipated that this would be particularly important under the Period 1 reforms. The CPR shifted more preparation to the beginning of the process through pre-action requirements, information exchange, tighter procedural expectations, and greater pressure to settle before court (Lord Chancellor's Department 2002; Goriely et al. 2002; DCA 2005a). Assistance and advice could help people understand these requirements, prepare the information or evidence needed, identify viable options, and navigate the route to resolution, increasing their chances of resolving the

problem. This support could be particularly important where self-help, complaints procedures, or other alternative routes were insufficient, or where a problem was complex enough to require legal assistance or representation (DCA 2005a; NAO 2002).

As presented in Figure 31, the estimates do not provide clear evidence that access to assistance and advice changed the relationship between reform exposure and problem resolution in the expected direction. Both confidence intervals include zero, and the difference between the groups is not statistically conclusive. The results therefore should not be read as showing that accessing assistance and advice reduced people's chances of resolution. One limitation in interpreting these estimates is that the measure of assistance and advice groups together support from a wide range of actors and services. While all are considered to be somewhat adequate (see Appendix Table 3 for details as to what sources are considered adequate or not), they may still differ in their expertise, timing, intensity, continuity, and suitability to the problem. People classified as having accessed assistance and advice may therefore have received quite different forms and quality of support. A single measure of access cannot capture this variation.

Taken together, the income and education patterns resonate with evidence that the Period 1 reforms could ask more of people while changing the support available to help them respond. For people on lower incomes, reduced or changing access to publicly funded assistance could be particularly consequential because they had less scope to pay privately for advice or representation.

Evidence reviewed for the period suggests several mechanisms consistent with these patterns. Institutional or business 'repeat players' may have been better positioned than individual disputants to adapt to early information-sharing, case preparation, and settlement requirements, while gaps and constraints in publicly funded provision could leave people with fewer viable sources of assistance. In personal-injury and consumer matters, changes to funding and greater reliance on conditional-fee, private, complaint, or self-help routes could likewise leave some people with fewer options, particularly for more complex or uncertain cases (Goriely et al. 2002; DCA 2005a; Constitutional Affairs Committee 2004).

The CPR also placed greater emphasis on early preparation and completing procedural steps at the appropriate stage. These demands may have been harder to manage for people with lower educational attainment or fewer informational resources, particularly where support was limited; evidence from the period also suggested that information alone was not always sufficient for complex or front-loaded procedural requirements (Lord Chancellor's Department 2002; DCA 2005a; Buck et al. 2008). Taken together, these mechanisms are consistent with the suggestive pattern in the estimates: reforms intended to make processes more efficient or better targeted may have been harder to navigate for people with fewer financial, informational, or experiential resources.

Period 2: Courts Act, Carter reforms, the TCEA, and LASPO – 2014–15 LPRS

4.3. Overall influence of court, tribunal, and legal-aid reforms on problem resolution

The reform context examined in Period 2 developed over roughly a decade of institutional reform and consolidation, which followed the 2008 financial crisis and increased fiscal restraint and retrenchment in public services. Together, these reforms changed both the routes people could use to resolve justice problems and the assistance available to help them do so. The 2014–15 LPRS provides a population-level snapshot after these changes had substantially reshaped court and tribunal administration and legal aid, capturing problems experienced or ongoing during the preceding 18 months.

For the analysis that follows, the key implication is that these reforms could affect problem resolution both by changing the formal routes available and by changing whether people could obtain the assistance needed to identify options, prepare their case, meet procedural requirements, and pursue a problem through to resolution.

KEY FINDING

People experiencing common problems, such as housing, family, employment, debt, or welfare benefits, which were **more directly exposed to changes to courts, tribunals, and legal aid**, were less likely to resolve them than people facing less directly affected problems – equivalent to about **10 fewer people reaching resolution for every 100**.

The overall Period 2 estimate provides stronger evidence of lower resolution than the Period 1 estimate (see Figure 32). On average, people experiencing types of justice problems more directly affected by the Period 2 reforms had an estimated 9.5-percentage-point lower probability of resolving their justice problem than people facing less directly affected problems (95% CI: −18.4 to −0.5).[43] As in Period 1, this is an adjusted estimate: it compares people after taking other observed differences between them and their justice problems into account. The confidence interval remains below zero, meaning that the estimate is precise enough to distinguish this lower probability of resolution from no difference at the 95% confidence level. In practical terms, people facing problems more directly affected by these reforms were less likely to resolve them.[44]

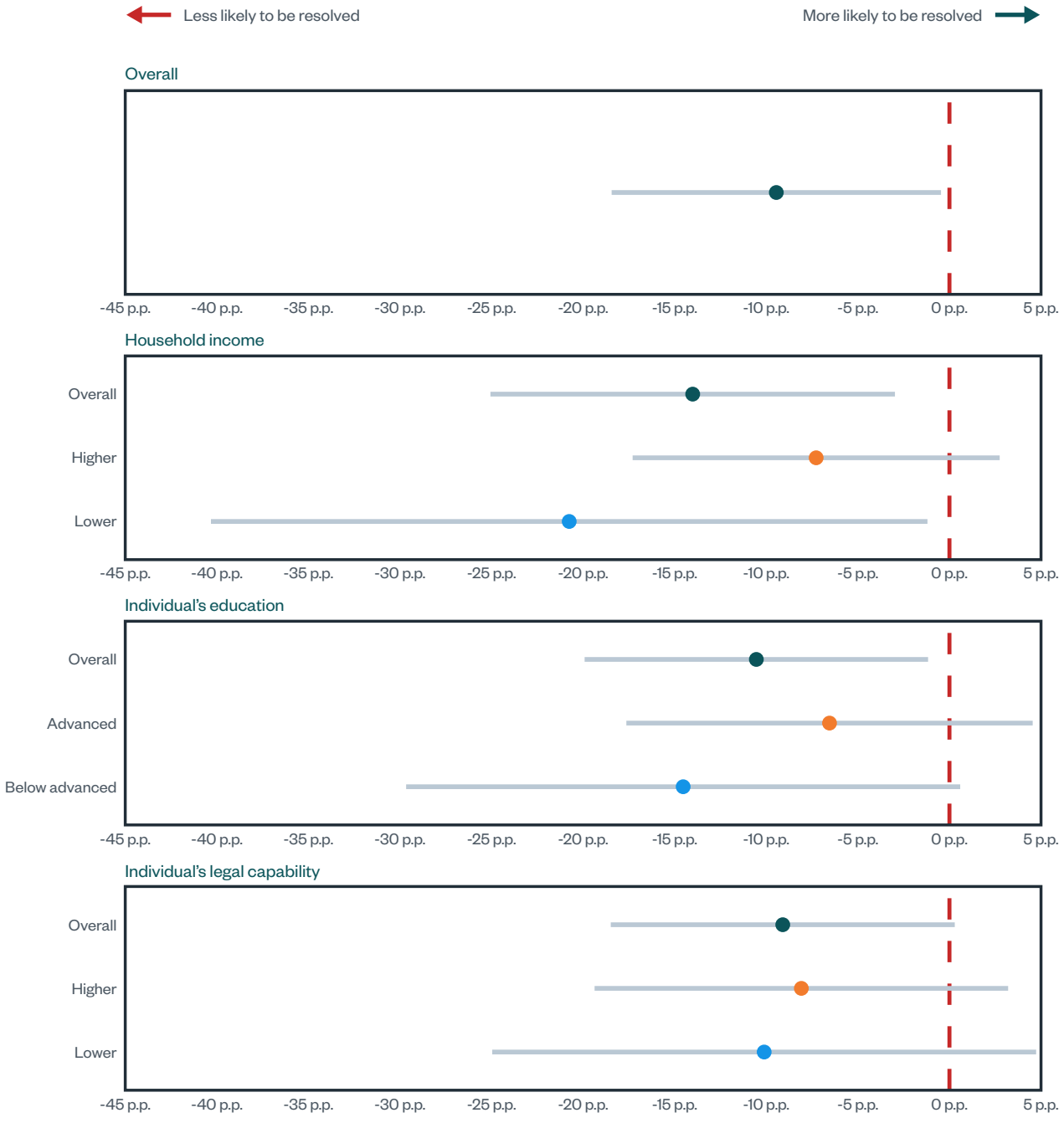
43 As the LPRS 2014–15 report findings summary covers more problems than those considered "reform influenced", the rate of resolution is not immediately comparable. Findings are consistent for resolution rates of specific problem types, such as those related to family (Franklyn et al. 2017, 86).

44 The next model examined whether this difference could be related to the service pathways people experienced while trying to resolve their problems – in particular, whether they accessed or faced barriers to assistance and advice and dispute resolution mechanisms. The estimated difference changed little, remaining about 8.8 percentage points lower among people facing more directly affected problems (see Models 3 and 4 in Appendix: Table 10). This suggests that differences in these service pathways accounted for relatively little of the overall association between reform exposure and problem resolution in Period 2. In other words, the lower probability of resolution remained observable even after taking into account whether people were able to access the assistance and dispute resolution services they needed.

The direction of this finding resonates with evidence reviewed for the period on what happened as legal-aid provision changed. Narrower legal-aid coverage and eligibility (MoJ 2019b; Legislation.gov.uk n.d.d), pressures on provider capacity (Constitutional Affairs Committee 2007b; Wilding and Emberson 2026), and reduced availability of early or sustained support could leave people with fewer viable sources of help and more of the work of understanding their options, meeting procedural requirements, negotiating with other parties, and pursuing the problem themselves (PLP 2018; Harper 2018). Research reviewed on housing, for example, linked reduced access to early advice and representation with greater difficulty obtaining favourable outcomes (Uraz 2025), while research on family proceedings documented confusion, exclusion, and stress among people representing themselves (Hunter et al. 2020). The estimate reflects this wider reform context and cannot be attributed to any one reform individually. **Figure 32** places the overall estimate alongside the selected analyses of uneven influence by income, education, and legal capability.

Figure 32. Problem resolution and exposure to the Courts Act, Carter reforms, the TCEA, and LASPO

Estimated difference in problem resolution associated with experiencing a justice problem more directly affected by the reforms, overall and by income, education, and legal capability



Note: This figure presents adjusted AMEs from logistic regression models of the relationship between Period 2 reform exposure and problem resolution; full results are reported in Appendix: Table 10. The top box shows the overall adjusted AME from Model 1, without interactions. The boxes below show AMEs within groups defined by income, education, and legal capability (based on Models 1, 3, and 5 from Appendix: Table 11). See note to Figure 31 for chart explanation.

4.4. Uneven influence of court, tribunal, and legal-aid reforms

KEY FINDING

People on lower incomes appeared to face a larger disadvantage when their problems were more directly affected by changes to court and tribunal routes and to the funding, eligibility, and provision of legal aid. Among people on lower incomes, about **21 fewer in every 100 resolved a more directly affected problem** than a less directly affected problem, compared with about 7 fewer in every 100 among people on higher incomes.

The estimated association between Period 2 reform exposure and resolution was considerably larger among people on **lower incomes** (see Figure 32). Among people in lower-income households, those facing more directly affected problems had an estimated 20.8-percentage-point lower probability of resolution than those facing less directly affected problems (95% CI: −40.3 to −1.2) – equivalent to about 21 fewer people resolving their problem for every 100 facing a justice issue more directly affected by the period's court, tribunal, and legal-aid reforms. Among people in higher income households, the corresponding difference was a 7.3-percentage-point lower probability of resolution (95% CI: −17.3 to 2.7), equivalent to about 7 fewer people reaching resolution for every 100 facing a more directly affected rather than a less directly affected problem. The difference between the two income groups is not statistically conclusive (13.5 percentage points; 95% CI: −8.4 to 35.4), so the analysis does not establish that the reforms influenced the two groups differently. Even so, the estimates point to a much larger resolution gap among people with fewer financial resources.

This ordering resonates with the different financial options people had when publicly funded assistance was unavailable. People on lower incomes had fewer alternatives when providers closed or ceased offering assistance in particular problem areas. Some people in middle-income households could exceed the financial eligibility threshold for legal aid while still lacking the resources to pay privately, particularly for complex formal processes (NAO 2014), whereas people on higher incomes were better positioned to absorb private legal fees. Advice deserts could create additional travel and affordability barriers (Wilding and Emberson 2026), while congestion among remaining providers could delay access to assistance (Uraz 2025).

Education follows the same broad ordering, although less strongly. Among people whose educational attainment was below advanced, those facing more directly affected problems had an estimated 14.5-percentage-point lower probability of resolution than those facing less directly affected problems (95% CI: −29.7 to 0.6). Among people with advanced education, the corresponding estimated difference was a 6.5-percentage-point lower probability of resolution (95% CI: −17.6 to 4.5). The point estimates therefore suggest a larger difference among people with below-advanced education, but the evidence is not precise enough to establish a difference between the education groups. This is relevant because the changes required people to work out whether their problem remained covered by legal aid and whether they qualified for support, identify the appropriate service, and, for some problems, enter the system through a telephone gateway (MoJ

2019b; Brendon 2018; PLP 2018). People with lower educational attainment may have found these requirements more difficult to navigate without sustained assistance.

By contrast, the estimates by **legal capability** are closer together. Among people with higher legal capability, those facing more directly affected problems had an estimated 8.1-percentage-point lower probability of resolution than those facing less directly affected problems (95% CI: −19.4 to 3.2). Among people with lower legal capability, the corresponding estimated difference was a 10.1-percentage-point lower probability of resolution (95% CI: −25.0 to 4.7). Both estimates are uncertain, and the results do not show the same degree of separation by legal capability as they do by income. One possible explanation is that knowing how to recognise a justice problem or identify the help needed cannot by itself make that help available or affordable. Narrower legal-aid coverage and eligibility (MoJ 2019b; Legislation.gov.uk n.d.d), advice deserts (Wilding and Emberson 2026), and congestion among remaining providers (Uraz 2025) could constrain access even for people who knew what steps they needed to take (Franklyn et al. 2017).

These results suggest that income, education, and legal capability capture related but distinct aspects of the resources people could draw on – and the barriers they encountered – when trying to resolve a justice problem. In Period 2, income has the most direct connection to the mechanisms identified in the structured review because eligibility for legal aid and the ability to replace publicly funded assistance with private help depend directly on financial resources. Education can also capture some of the resources involved in understanding eligibility requirements, identifying an appropriate service, and navigating changing routes to assistance. Legal capability captures a different capacity to recognise a problem and work out what to do, but the far-reaching nature of the legal-aid changes means that knowing what help is needed may not be enough when that help cannot be obtained.

Taken together, the results suggest that financial resources were more strongly associated with how the Period 2 reforms were experienced than education or legal capability. This pattern resonates with the evidence reviewed for the period, particularly the importance of legal-aid eligibility and people's ability to replace publicly funded assistance with private help. These findings should not be read as showing that maintaining the pre-reform legal-aid system unchanged was necessarily a feasible or superior policy option. Policymakers were responding to genuine fiscal and institutional pressures, and it is possible that the reforms mitigated deterioration that might otherwise have occurred. That counterfactual cannot be tested with these data. What the analysis does show is that within the system that emerged, people on lower incomes experienced substantially larger estimated resolution shortfalls in the problem areas more directly affected by the reforms.

Period 3: Modernisation and wider pressures – 2023 ILNS

4.5. Overall influence of Modernisation reforms on problem resolution

The 2023 ILNS captures justice problems experienced during the previous four years, a period that overlaps with the continuing implementation of court and tribunal Modernisation and wider pressures including COVID-19 and Brexit. Modernisation reforms changed the way people interacted with courts and tribunals by expanding online applications, digital case management, and remote hearings (MoJ et al. 2016; Committee on Public Accounts 2023). These changes were intended to make court and tribunal processes more accessible and efficient. The programme was implemented over several years and remained incomplete by the end of 2023, with implementation still under way and varied across services. People were therefore encountering different elements and stages of Modernisation, rather than a single, fully implemented system (NAO 2023; Committee on Public Accounts 2023).

As discussed in Section 3 above, because Modernisation reforms extended across a wide range of justice problems, there is a significant compounding influence of the earlier reforms persisting through Period 3. Due to this, reform exposure is measured differently here than in Periods 1 and 2. Rather than comparing different types of justice problems, the analysis compares the routes through which people's justice processes concluded. Court or tribunal judgments and mediation are treated as more directly affected by Modernisation, while routes such as ombudsmen, conciliation, arbitration, agreement between the parties, or the problem sorting itself out are treated as less directly affected. The detailed classification is reported in Appendix: Table 4. Importantly, reaching the end of a process is not necessarily the same as resolving the problem that led the person to seek justice in the first place.

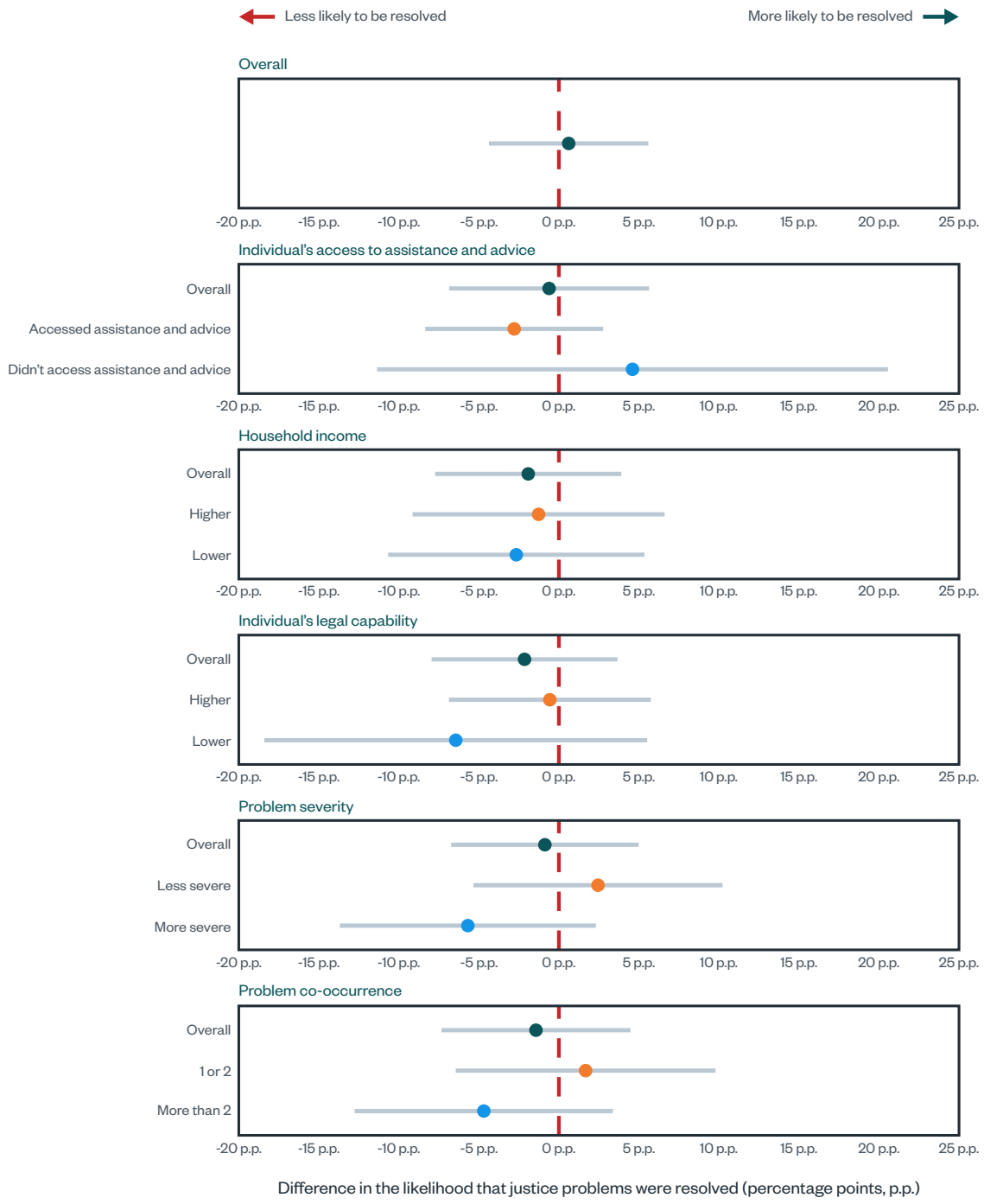
KEY FINDING

On average, people using **routes to resolution more directly shaped by Modernisation** were **about as likely to resolve their problems** as those using less directly affected routes.

The analysis does not provide clear evidence that people using routes more directly affected by Modernisation reforms were more or less likely to resolve their problems (see Figure 33). Overall, the estimated difference was very small: people using the more directly affected routes were about as likely to resolve their problem as people using less directly affected routes (estimated difference: +0.6 percentage points 95% CI: −4.4 to 5.6). One reason an average difference may be difficult to see is that the same changes could make the process easier for some people and harder for others. Moving applications, documents, and hearings online could save time and simplify a straightforward process, while creating additional demands for people who needed more guidance or whose problem did not fit easily within a standardised digital route.

Figure 33. Problem resolution and exposure to the Modernisation reforms

Estimated difference in problem resolution associated with using a route to process conclusion more directly affected by the reforms, overall and by access to assistance and advice, income, legal capability, problem severity, and problem co-occurrence



Note: This figure presents adjusted AMEs from logistic regression models of the relationship between Period 3 reform exposure and problem resolution; full results are reported in Appendix: Tables 12 and 13. The top box shows the overall adjusted AME from Model 1 in Table 12. The boxes below show AMEs within groups defined by access to assistance and advice, household income, legal capability, problem severity, and problem co-occurrence (based on Models 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 in Appendix: Table 13). See note to Figure 31 for chart explanation.

4.6. Uneven influence of Period 3 reforms

The absence of a clear overall difference could still mask important variation between people. The analysis therefore examines whether the relationship between using routes more directly affected by Modernisation reforms and resolving a problem differed according to access to assistance and advice, income, legal capability, problem severity, and the number of problems experienced. The results presented in Figure 33 provide little evidence that this relationship differed by assistance and advice or income, but the point estimates suggest differences by legal capability and problem severity.

Assistance and advice are particularly relevant in this context because Modernisation changed not only how people used courts and tribunals, but also what they could be expected to navigate themselves. People might need support to understand legal or technical language, complete digital steps, prepare documents or evidence, or navigate a process that could not remain entirely online. The analytical expectations therefore anticipated that access to assistance and advice could help people use modernised routes more effectively and increase their chances of resolving their problem.

The point estimates run in the opposite direction to the analytical expectation, but uncertainty is substantial. Among people who accessed assistance and advice, problems were an estimated 2.8 percentage points less likely to be resolved among those using a route more directly affected by Modernisation than among those using a less directly affected route (95% CI: −8.3 to 2.8). Among people who did not access assistance and advice, the corresponding estimate instead pointed to a 4.6-percentage-point higher probability of resolution (95% CI: −11.4 to 20.6). Both confidence intervals include zero, and the difference between the groups is not statistically conclusive. The results therefore provide no clear evidence that access to assistance and advice changed the relationship between Modernisation exposure and resolution in either direction. As in the Period 1 analysis, the survey measure combines different forms and sources of assistance and does not capture whether the support was timely, sustained, or well matched to the problem.

Income made little apparent difference to the relationship between using a route more directly affected by Modernisation reforms and problem resolution. Among people in higher-income households, those using more directly affected routes had an estimated 1.3-percentage-point lower probability of resolution than those using less directly affected routes (95% CI: −9.1 to 6.6), while among people in lower-income households the corresponding estimated difference was a 2.7-percentage-point lower probability of resolution (95% CI: −10.7 to 5.3). The difference between the two groups is therefore modest, providing little indication that income changed the relationship between using a more directly affected route and people's chances of resolving their problem. Income may not, however, capture all of the material constraints relevant to digital justice. Access to suitable devices, reliable internet connectivity, and a private space for remote participation may also shape people's ability to use modernised routes, but these factors cannot be examined directly with the survey measures available.

Education is presented in the descriptive analysis in Part A and is included in the analysis here to account for differences in educational attainment between respondents. However, although the analytical expectations anticipated that people with lower educational attainment could face greater difficulty using modernised routes, the interaction between education and use of routes more directly affected by the reforms is not reported (and therefore not included in **Figure 33**). Testing whether the relationship between using routes more directly affected by Modernisation reforms and problem resolution differed by education required dividing the analytic sample by both educational attainment

and whether people used a more or less directly affected route. This left too few observations in one of the resulting groups to produce a reliable estimate.

KEY FINDING

People with lower legal capability appeared somewhat **less likely to resolve their problems when using routes more directly shaped by Modernisation**. Among people with lower legal capability, **about 6 fewer in every 100 reached resolution on these routes than on routes less directly shaped by Modernisation**, compared with almost no difference among people with higher legal capability.

The point estimates show a larger difference between more and less directly affected routes among people with lower **legal capability**, although uncertainty remains substantial. Among people with higher legal capability, using a route more directly shaped by Modernisation was associated with an estimated 0.6-percentage-point lower probability of resolution (95% CI: −6.9 to 5.7) than using less directly affected routes. Among people with lower legal capability, the corresponding estimated difference was a 6.4-percentage-point lower probability of resolution (95% CI: −18.4 to 5.5). For people with lower legal capability, the direction of the estimate therefore points to lower resolution on more directly shaped routes than on less directly shaped routes. The estimates remain too uncertain to establish that Modernisation in courts and tribunals influenced the two groups differently.

This may be particularly relevant under Modernisation reforms because using a digital justice process requires more than being comfortable with technology. People also need to understand what the process requires, identify the information or evidence that matters, and work out what action to take. Research on online courts distinguishes digital from legal capability: people who are comfortable using digital technology are not necessarily equipped to navigate a legal process online, and both forms of capability may be needed to do so effectively (Denvir and Selvarajah 2022; Justice Committee 2021). Later evaluations also documented difficulties understanding online forms, correcting information after a case had begun, and managing documents in the required format (Frontier Economics et al. 2025). The lower estimated resolution among people with lower legal capability could therefore reflect the additional demands involved when legal and procedural tasks have to be carried out through a digital system. Because some of this evaluation evidence was collected after 2023, it illustrates how such demands can arise rather than explaining the survey result directly.

KEY FINDING

People with less severe problems appeared slightly more likely to reach resolution on routes more directly shaped by Modernisation, while those with more severe problems appeared less likely to do so. For less severe problems, about 2 more people in every 100 reached resolution on these routes than on less directly shaped routes; **for more severe problems, about 6 fewer in every 100 did so.**

Problem complexity may matter for a different reason. Standardised online processes may be better suited to clear, straightforward cases, while more complex or non-standard problems can be harder to accommodate within the digital process. A problem that requires more tailored handling, additional evidence, or movement between systems may therefore fit a standardised digital route less easily. The survey does not measure complexity directly, but problem severity can capture some of these differences and is therefore used here as a partial proxy.

For people with relatively less severe problems, those using more directly affected routes had an estimated 2.4-percentage-point higher probability of resolution than those using less directly affected routes (95% CI: −5.3 to 10.2). For people with more severe problems, the corresponding estimated difference was 5.7 percentage points lower (95% CI: −13.7 to 2.3). Both confidence intervals include zero, and the analysis does not establish that Modernisation exposure was associated with different resolution outcomes for the two severity groups. The opposing point estimates therefore indicate a suggestive pattern rather than a statistically conclusive difference.

This difference is worth considering alongside evidence about how digital processes handled cases of different complexity. Evidence available by 2023 showed that some digital services could not accommodate every type of case and sometimes required manual intervention or workarounds (NAO 2023). Later evaluations provide further evidence that complex or non-standard cases could require workarounds or movement between digital and paper systems (Frontier Economics et al. 2025; Pilling et al. 2026). Taken together, this evidence suggests a plausible reason why complexity could matter: a streamlined route may work well when a problem fits the process it was designed for but be less well suited to problems requiring more flexible or tailored handling. Because some of that evidence comes from after 2023, it can help interpret the result, not explain it definitively.

The **number of problems** people faced may also matter because dealing with several justice problems at the same time can increase the amount people have to manage. A modernised route may make one process easier, but it does not necessarily reduce the burden of keeping track of different information, services, or procedural steps across several problems. Among people with one or two problems, those using more directly affected routes had an estimated 1.7-percentage-point higher probability of resolution than those using less directly affected routes (95% CI: −6.4 to 9.8). Among people with more than two problems, the corresponding estimated difference was 4.7 percentage points lower (95% CI: −12.8 to 3.4). Both confidence intervals include zero, so the analysis does not establish that the relationship between Modernisation exposure and resolution differed

according to the number of problems experienced. The point estimates nevertheless indicate a suggestive contrast. That contrast is consistent with people facing several problems having more difficulty resolving them through the routes most directly affected by Modernisation, although the evidence is less pronounced than for problem severity. The survey does not show whether these problems were connected. The result therefore suggests that having several problems may make resolution harder, but it cannot tell us whether this is because people have more to manage overall or because the problems themselves are interconnected.

Taken together, the Period 3 results suggest a more uneven picture than the overall estimate alone. There is no clear overall increase or reduction in problem resolution associated with concluding a justice process through the routes most directly affected by Modernisation reforms, and there is no clear evidence that this relationship differed according to access to assistance and advice or income. However, several of the subgroup estimates point in the same direction. The point estimates were lower for more directly affected routes than for less directly affected routes among people with lower legal capability, those facing more severe problems, and, less clearly, those dealing with several problems. Although each of these estimates is uncertain, considered together they provide suggestive evidence that modernised processes may have been harder to navigate where people had less capacity to work through the process or where the problems they faced placed greater demands on them.

The quantitative evidence therefore points less to a simple question of whether Modernisation improved problem resolution on average, and more to the conditions under which people were able to benefit from it. A modernised process needs to work for both the person and the problem in front of it. Moving a process online can make some steps quicker or easier, but those advantages may not translate into resolution if people struggle to understand what is required, if a problem requires greater flexibility or tailored handling, or if several problems have to be managed at the same time.

5. Summary of Part B findings

Since the late 1990s, how have major reforms and wider pressures reshaped the gap between people's justice needs and available solutions?

This Part's findings are consistent with a recurring pattern across the three reform contexts: differences in resolution appeared where the demands placed on people were less well matched by the resources, capabilities, or support available to them – whether because assistance was harder to obtain, people were expected to manage more themselves, or more standardised routes had to accommodate more demanding problems. The dimensions along which disadvantage appeared most visible varied across contexts in the point estimates, although many of these subgroup patterns were uncertain.

In **Period 1**, the 2004 CSJS evidence is interpreted in the context of the CPA and AJA, which changed civil procedure and the funding and provision of legal assistance. People dealing with problems more directly affected by the CPA and AJA appeared less likely to resolve them than people facing less directly affected problems. The overall estimate was uncertain. Within the subgroup analyses, estimated resolution was lower for more directly affected problems among people on lower incomes and with lower educational attainment, while there was little estimated difference among people with greater financial or educational resources. Differences between the subgroup estimates were not statistically conclusive.

Period 2 provides the strongest evidence within the reform contexts examined of unequal chances of resolution. Across the reforms grouped in this period, changes to court and tribunal administration occurred alongside reforms to legal-aid remuneration and, through LASPO, substantial restrictions to the scope and financial eligibility of civil legal aid. People whose problems were more directly affected were less likely to reach resolution. Within subgroup analyses, among people on lower incomes, more directly affected problems were substantially less likely to be resolved than less directly affected problems. Among people with lower educational attainment and lower legal capability, estimated resolution was also lower for more directly affected problems, although these estimates were uncertain. The differences between the income, education, and legal-capability subgroups should therefore not be read as established differences in how the reforms influenced those groups.

Period 3 provides suggestive evidence of a different form of inequality within the continuing implementation of court and tribunal Modernisation. There was little overall difference in resolution between people using routes more and less directly shaped by Modernisation, and income and access to assistance and advice appeared to make little statistical difference to this relationship. Instead, the more notable patterns concern legal capability and the kinds of problems people were trying to resolve. Among people with lower legal capability, estimated resolution was lower for routes more directly shaped by Modernisation than for less directly shaped routes, while there was essentially no difference among people with higher legal capability. The pattern also varied by problem severity: the more directly shaped routes were associated with somewhat higher estimated resolution for less severe problems and lower estimated resolution for more severe problems, with a similar but weaker pattern among people facing several problems. These subgroup estimates were uncertain, but the absence of clearer differences by income or access to assistance and advice should also be interpreted in light of what the survey measures capture: income does not directly capture access to devices, reliable internet, or private space, or geographic barriers such as poor connectivity and limited nearby in-person services; and the assistance-and-advice measure combines diverse forms of support and does not capture whether it was timely, sustained, or well matched to the problem. The survey estimates are therefore interpreted alongside the structured review of Modernisation and wider evidence on its implementation, rather than in isolation.

Across the three contexts, the findings point to a recurring mismatch between what justice processes required and the resources, capabilities, and support people could draw on. The point estimates suggest that this mismatch appeared along different dimensions in different contexts: income and education were more prominent in the earlier-period estimates, while legal capability and problem severity were more prominent under Modernisation, notwithstanding subgroup uncertainties. These relationships are associational and do not establish that individual reforms caused the differences observed. Their significance lies in the broader pattern of evidence: the extent to which the survey findings align with the structured review of what the reforms changed, the mechanisms through which those changes could plausibly affect people's justice journeys, and wider evidence on their implementation.

Discussion of findings and policy recommendations

Discussion of findings

Taken together, the findings of this Review make a case for understanding both the gap between people's justice needs and the solutions available to them, and the inequalities in people's ability to access support and resolve their problems on fair terms.

- **Part A points to substantial and uneven gaps between people's justice needs and their ability to obtain support, navigate processes, and reach fair resolution.**
  - More than one-third of adults experienced a non-trivial justice problem.
  - However, substantial gaps remained in people's ability to address those problems: nearly four in ten people who needed assistance and advice did not obtain it, three in ten who needed a dispute resolution mechanism did not access one, and nearly three in ten people whose process had concluded still had an unresolved problem; only just over half considered the concluded process fair.
  - These gaps were unevenly distributed. Legal capability was the clearest recurring divide across access, trust, process experience, fairness, and resolution, while disability, education, income, and experiencing several problems were associated with disadvantage at particular stages in the justice journey.
  - Income was not strongly associated with overall problem prevalence, but patterns differed by income in the types of problems people faced and in whether commonly experienced problems also tended to be less severe; among people on lower incomes, they often did not.
  - The accumulation of problems was also associated with greater disadvantage: people experiencing several problems were more likely to report multiple hardships, to still have an ongoing process, and, where a process had concluded, to have an unresolved problem.
  - Different forms of support need to be considered together: after accounting for observed differences in people and their problems, estimated resolution was lowest among people who accessed a dispute resolution mechanism without also obtaining assistance and advice, and higher among those who obtained both.

- **Part B points to a recurring concern across three distinct reform contexts: the potential that changes in justice processes and support placed demands on people that were harder to meet when they had fewer resources, lower legal capability, or more demanding problems.**

    - In Period 1, the 2004 Civil and Social Justice Survey (CSJS) evidence is interpreted in relation to early civil procedure reforms that increased what parties were expected to do before reaching court, while changes to publicly funded legal assistance altered what support was available and how it was provided. People facing problems more directly affected by these changes appeared less likely to reach resolution, with point estimates suggesting larger shortfalls among people on lower incomes and with lower educational attainment, although the evidence was uncertain.

    - In Period 2, the 2014–15 Legal Problem and Resolution Survey (LPRS)evidence is interpreted in relation to a reform context in which changes to court and tribunal administration occurred alongside reforms to legal-aid funding and, through the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2023 (LASPO), substantial restrictions to the scope and financial eligibility of civil legal aid. Problems more directly affected by the reforms were less likely to be resolved overall, and among people on lower incomes, substantially less likely. Estimates for education and legal capability pointed in the same direction but were more uncertain.

    - Under Modernisation, Period 3, the 2023 Individual Legal Needs Survey (ILNS) evidence is interpreted in relation to the continuing implementation of court and tribunal Modernisation, alongside COVID-19 and Brexit. There was little overall difference in resolution between routes more and less directly shaped by Modernisation. The survey did not show clear differences in this relationship by income or access to assistance and advice, although income does not directly capture digital or geographic barriers to access and the assistance-and-advice measure combines diverse forms and quality of support. The estimates nevertheless suggested that people with lower legal capability and those facing more severe problems were less likely to resolve their problems through routes more directly shaped by Modernisation, although these differences were not statistically conclusive. Considered alongside the wider evidence on implementation, these patterns raise concerns about the challenges modernised processes may pose for people with greater support needs.

    - The survey relationships are associational (they do not imply causation) and are interpreted alongside the structured review of what the reforms changed, the mechanisms through which those changes could plausibly affect people's justice journeys, and wider evidence on their implementation.

Across Parts A and B, disadvantage is most visible where demanding problems and justice processes meet limited resources, lower legal capability, and insufficient support. The findings therefore point to justice inequality as relational: disadvantage depends not only on people's circumstances but on how those circumstances interact with the demands of their problems and with the availability, accessibility, and demands of the justice pathways through which they seek resolution. A people-centred assessment should look beyond whether services exist or processes conclude to whether people in different circumstances can obtain and use the support they need to resolve their problems on fair terms.

Building on legal needs evidence

Many of the inequalities identified in this Review sit within a well-established body of legal needs research and evidence on how justice problems are distributed, experienced, and addressed in England and Wales. Genn and Beinart's *Paths to Justice* (1999) established that justiciable problems were widespread and unevenly distributed, while subsequent Legal Services Research Centre surveys showed that problems frequently clustered and could generate wider social, economic, and health consequences, and that people could struggle to navigate appropriate sources of help (Pleasence et al. 2004; Pleasence et al. 2006). The 2014–15 LPRS similarly documented problem clustering, adverse consequences, and the wide range of strategies and sources of help people used, while finding relatively little variation in successful resolution according to strategy or advice obtained (Franklyn et al. 2017). The 2023 LPRS extended this evidence, examining multiple problems, legal capability, advice, and resolution strategies and the distinction between problems that concluded and those that were actually resolved, but it could not determine which forms of support were most useful in helping people resolve their problems (Ames et al. 2024).

The 2023 ILNS provides a complementary perspective, placing greater emphasis on legal need, professional help, legal confidence, and perceived accessibility. It estimated unmet legal need for approximately one-third of people with a resolved contentious issue, primarily because professional help had not been obtained, and found that people with lower legal confidence were less likely to obtain professional help (Legal Services Board and The Law Society 2024). Subsequent Legal Services Board (LSB) analysis found higher unmet legal need among people whose day-to-day activities were substantially limited by disability and among people on lower incomes. Not knowing where to obtain good information or advice, poorer understanding of rights and responsibilities, and lower legal confidence were also associated with unmet legal need (Legal Services Board 2024).

Against this background, the Review extends the existing evidence by operationalising a standardised people-centred justice indicator framework designed to be applicable across jurisdictions and justice systems, using the 2023 ILNS. It examines the concentration and co-occurrence of justice problems and their associated hardships; distinguishes need for assistance and advice and dispute resolution mechanisms from whether people were able to access them; examines how these different forms of access relate to people's experiences and outcomes; traces differences across the justice journey by legal capability, income, education, disability, and other characteristics associated with greater vulnerability; and distinguishes process conclusion from resolution of the underlying problem, while also examining duration, process fairness, and satisfaction with ongoing processes. Operationalising the framework in this way makes it possible to examine how need, support, process experience, and outcomes connect across the justice journey, while demonstrating the additional analytical value that can be recovered from existing legal needs data.

Examining justice inequality across reform contexts

Part B extends this contribution by creating a common analytical basis for examining patterns in problem resolution within three reform contexts using surveys that were not designed as a single series. Rather than assuming direct comparability, the Review identifies where differences in questionnaire wording, routing, denominators, and response categories can be mapped onto conceptually comparable people-centred measures and where survey-specific differences need to be retained. Relationships are estimated separately within each survey and interpreted within the corresponding reform context. The structured review provides the basis for identifying what the

reforms changed, which problems or pathways were more directly affected, and the mechanisms through which those changes could plausibly influence people's ability to reach resolution. This makes it possible to examine corresponding patterns in problem resolution and justice inequality within distinct reform contexts while preserving the limits of what can legitimately be compared. The value of examining these contexts together is therefore not to treat them as isolated reform episodes but to examine how justice inequality appears under different configurations of services, support, and processes.

Across the three reform contexts, the survey findings align with several mechanisms identified through the structured review. In the earlier periods, reforms increased what people were expected to do themselves while also changing the availability, scope, and delivery of publicly funded legal assistance; under Modernisation, routes for handling problems became increasingly standardised and digital. Read alongside the survey evidence, these changes point to a recurring issue: justice processes can place greater demands on people where the resources, legal capability, or support needed to meet those demands are unevenly distributed, or where more standardised processes are less able to accommodate demanding problems. The dimensions along which these patterns appeared differed across reform contexts, and many subgroup estimates remain uncertain.

This perspective adds something distinctive to the assessment of reform. A reform may simplify procedure, reorganise services, or create a more efficient route without necessarily improving everyone's ability to reach and use the solutions available to them or to resolve the underlying justice problem. Examining legal needs evidence within distinct reform contexts can therefore reveal inequalities in access and problem resolution that measures of institutional performance or completed processes alone may not capture.

Interpreting the evidence

The relationships discussed through the Review are associational. They cannot establish that access to a particular service produced an outcome, that the reforms examined caused the differences observed, or that the same mechanisms operated for every person. The findings are therefore interpreted as part of a broader body of evidence rather than in isolation. The analytical expectations were developed from a structured review of what the reforms changed, the mechanisms through which those changes could plausibly affect people's justice journeys, and the wider evidence on their implementation and consequences. Where subgroup contrasts are imprecise or not statistically conclusive, they are treated as suggestive rather than established differences, regardless of whether their direction aligns with those expectations. The significance of the findings therefore lies in the broader pattern of evidence: the extent to which the survey results align with what the structured review indicates about the reforms and their plausible mechanisms, whether similar patterns recur across different parts of the justice journey, and how those patterns appear within different reform contexts. The population-level perspective of legal needs surveys adds particular value to this assessment because it captures people's reported experiences of justice problems regardless of whether they reach a court, tribunal, service, or other formal justice institution. Taken together, this evidence points to several implications for policy.

Policy recommendations

Taken together, the findings point to five priorities for designing, delivering, and evaluating justice reform.

Justice inequality appears at different stages and takes different forms

Justice inequality is multidimensional: the differences visible at one stage or under one reform context are not necessarily the same elsewhere. Legal capability is the most consistent divide, while disability, education, income, and the accumulation of problems become more important in particular parts of the journey.

Inequality also reflects the demands of the problems people face, not only the resources they bring to them. Severity and interconnectedness intersect with financial and social vulnerability, while the Modernisation findings raise the possibility that some justice processes may be better suited to certain kinds of problems than others.

People may have to navigate justice processes while under financial pressure, dealing with ill health or family disruption, facing insecure housing or employment, or managing several interconnected problems at once. Processes designed around an average user operating under favourable circumstances may therefore impose greater burdens on people whose capacity is already stretched.

Policy recommendation 1: Design for where disadvantage compounds

Justice processes need to remain usable by people with different resources and capabilities and by those facing problems of different severity and complexity. Furthermore, the findings show that disadvantage can compound before people reach a process: people on lower incomes are more exposed to problems involving welfare, debt, and housing insecurity, while having fewer resources to absorb their consequences or replace support that is unavailable. Reform should therefore consider not only average outcomes, but who is most exposed to the problems and services affected and whether changes risk reinforcing existing inequalities, and use this understanding to improve the design of justice processes so that they remain usable for people facing compounding disadvantage.

Justice inequality can be shaped by the demands built into justice processes

The findings suggest that justice inequality is shaped partly by how the wider justice ecosystem is organised. State institutions have a clear role in shaping the routes, requirements, and forms of support available, and in doing so they shape the demands that justice processes place on people in different circumstances. These arrangements have also been shaped by pressure to reduce public expenditure and increase efficiency, including substantial restrictions to legal aid. The wider social and fiscal environment matters as well: justice problems may arise from or be intensified by conditions in housing, welfare, employment, health, and other public services, while those same conditions can affect the resources people have available to resolve them.

The survey evidence cannot establish the institutional origin of individual problems, but it reinforces the importance of understanding justice needs within this wider environment. The findings raise a central question for justice inequality: when support is reduced or processes are streamlined, how much of the work of understanding, preparing, and navigating a problem is shifted onto people, and who is best able to absorb those demands? This does not imply that earlier arrangements could or should simply have been retained; it means that how changes redistribute demands between institutions, services, and individuals matters for how reform affects people's ability to navigate justice processes and reach resolution and should therefore be part of how reform is assessed.

Justice cannot remove the unequal circumstances in which problems arise, but how it is organised can affect how strongly those inequalities shape people's ability to reach resolution. The court modernisation programme provides a clear example of this: people enter more standardised processes with unequal capacity to navigate them and with problems that differ substantially in their demands. Where fewer resources and greater vulnerability coincide with more demanding or interconnected problems, the flexibility and support available within the process may become especially consequential for whether those existing inequalities carry through to resolution.

Policy recommendation 2: Manage scarcity-driven trade-offs explicitly

Reform can make processes simpler or more efficient while also changing what people themselves must understand, prepare, and manage. The Review does not establish that earlier levels of provision could have been sustained, or that outcomes would have been better without reform. Where resources are constrained, the relevant questions are therefore how choices about funding and efficiency redistribute demands between institutions, services, and individuals; which people-centred outcomes and forms of support are protected; and who is expected to absorb the consequences. This lesson applies beyond any single reform period.

Justice inequality deepens when needed support is out of reach

The findings suggest that inequality in access cannot be understood simply by whether people reach a service or resolution route. People with fewer resources may also be dealing with more demanding problems, while having less capacity to replace assistance that is unavailable. Our findings reinforce the importance of support across the justice journey: among people needing it, dispute resolution was lowest for those who had not received assistance and advice and higher among those who obtained both. Although associational, this suggests that access to a route for resolution and access to the assistance needed to use that route effectively are distinct and necessary components of the justice journey.

Policy recommendation 3: Treat support and resolution routes as complementary

Effective access depends on more than whether a service or resolution route formally exists. The findings point to the importance of visible entry points, coordinated and effective referrals, and sustained human support where legal capability, problem severity, interconnected problems, or procedural demands make self-navigation difficult. This suggests that when under constrained budgets, prioritising the frontline functions that help people identify, navigate, and resolve problems effectively, rather than assessing resource needs only through existing institutional structures, may be more helpful.

Addressing justice inequality requires evidence on people's justice experiences and outcomes

Measures of timeliness, cost, throughput, and process completion provide important information about how justice institutions perform, but they do not show on their own where inequalities arise or how they are experienced. Legal needs surveys are particularly important in this respect because they start from the problems people experience rather than from their contact with a particular institution or service. They can therefore capture needs, pathways, and outcomes across the justice journey, as well as detailed problem and individual characteristics and contexts. For this reason, they are particularly well suited to measuring people-centred justice outcomes.

Greater continuity in a core set of measures – including problem severity and co-occurrence, legal capability, need for and access to services, resolution, duration, fairness, and hardship – together with survey designs that support robust disaggregation and longitudinal analysis, would make this evidence still more useful for understanding how justice inequality appears over different periods and policy contexts, while retaining scope for surveys to respond to new questions. Complementing legal needs surveys with justice system administrative data and management information would strengthen our understanding of both people's justice needs and outcomes and the system's effectiveness.

Policy recommendation 4: Assess people's outcomes as well as institutional performance

Measures of cost, timeliness, throughput, and process completion remain important, but they cannot show on their own whether people resolve the underlying problem or whether outcomes differ across people and problems.

Reform should therefore be assessed not only by whether processes become faster, simpler, or more efficient, but also by whether people can obtain and use the support available to them and resolve their problems on fair terms.

A broader and fuller evidence base will enhance future reforms

This Review demonstrates the value that can still be recovered from England and Wales' existing legal needs evidence: by reconstructing and harmonising measures across surveys and interpreting population-level evidence alongside the reforms, policy contexts ,and wider conditions in which people pursued resolution, it is possible to find considerable common analytical ground and to identify inequalities that measures confined to institutional users or processes may miss. Changes in measurement and survey design nevertheless constrain what can be examined consistently across successive legal needs surveys and place important limits on some comparisons. Sample size creates a further challenge, including in large surveys: once population characteristics, problem types, pathways, and outcomes are considered together, the number of observations within particular intersections can quickly become too small for reliable analysis. This makes the empirical study of intersecting forms of disadvantage particularly demanding and points to the importance of identifying priority intersections when surveys are designed.

Policy recommendation 5: Build better evidence for future reform

England and Wales' longstanding legal needs evidence provides an unusually rich population-level perspective on justice. This Review demonstrates how, despite substantial differences between successive surveys, considerable common analytical ground can be found. This approach can be leveraged in other contexts where data availability allows. Yet changes in measurement, survey design, and sample size continue to limit what can be examined consistently, particularly where multiple forms of disadvantage intersect.

Future evidence would therefore benefit from greater continuity in core measures, including severity, multiple problems, legal capability, access to services, resolution, duration, fairness, and hardship, as well as survey designs that support robust disaggregation and stronger links between legal needs, administrative, and service data. Together, these sources can provide a fuller picture of both people's justice outcomes and the systems intended to respond to their needs.

Taken together, the Review shows that justice inequality depends not only on the circumstances and problems people bring to the justice system, but also on how well available support and processes fit those circumstances and problems. Reform should therefore be assessed not only by whether institutions and processes become faster, simpler, or more efficient, but also by whether people with different resources and capabilities, facing problems of different severity and complexity, can obtain and use the support available to them and resolve their problems on fair terms.

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Appendix

Methodology

The Review builds on a series of legal needs surveys conducted in England and Wales. Its main quantitative sources are the 2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey (CSJS), the 2014–15 Legal Problem and Resolution Survey (LPRS), and the 2023 Individual Legal Needs Survey (ILNS). Published findings from Paths to Justice and other legal needs research provide additional context and reference points.

These surveys provide direct population-level evidence on people's justice needs, pathways and outcomes, but they were developed at different times, for different purposes, and were not designed as a single series. Their questionnaires, routing, problem definitions, respondent populations and policy emphasis changed substantially over time. The Review therefore undertook a systematic process of indicator development and harmonisation to determine how the core outcome indicators of people-centred justice could be measured in each survey and where meaningful comparison was possible (refer to Appendix: Table 3 for full details). This work builds on more than two decades of legal needs survey evidence by systematically assessing and, where possible, managing differences in survey design and measurement, and restricting the analysis where meaningful comparison cannot be supported.

The analysis presented in this Review is focused on people's experiences of 'non-trivial' justice problems, those that respondents rated as having a perceived severity greater than or equal to 4 on a scale of 1–10.[45] Applying a minimum seriousness threshold applies a consistent rule across respondents and population groups and helps keep comparisons focused on problems that better reflect the substantive needs of the population, by reducing the influence of differences in the reporting of more incidental or readily self-resolving issues. The threshold therefore defines a comparable subset whose justice journeys can be examined across the different surveys analysed in this Review.[46]

For each indicator, the authors assessed how the underlying concept was measured in each survey, including differences in question wording, routing, problem selection, respondent universe

45 The 2023 ILNS severity scale ranges from 1 to 10. In the 2014–15 LPRS, the severity scale ranges from 1 to 20 (see question D4: "Thinking about the (most recent/second most recent) PROBLEM CATEGORY (OR PROBLEM DESCRIPTION IF ONLY ONE PROBLEM (D2A)) as a whole – Consider a scale of 1-20, where 1 means that the problem was not at all serious and 20 means that the problem was very serious." For this reason and to maintain comparability, the threshold applied to the 2014–15 LPRS data is that a score greater than or equal to 8 indicates a non-trivial problem. In the 2004 CSJS, the questionnaire is structured such that respondents are only asked about their experiences of problems that were "difficult to solve" from the start. Therefore, this is considered to be comparable to the severity threshold used in the 2023 ILNS and 2024-15 LPRS, and an additional restriction is not imposed.

46 The use of a severity threshold is informed by the official OECD and OSF recommendations on legal needs surveys (see OECD and Open Society Foundations 2019) and is in line with prior WJP research (see, for example, WJP 2019, 2023a, 2023b).

and response categories. Indicators were then constructed from the relevant survey items, with recoding or combination of variables where necessary, and assessed for conceptual and empirical comparability across surveys. When calculating indicator estimates, particular attention was given to the universe of reference – that is, the denominator, or the group of respondents out of which the proportion is estimate – because the different surveys may measure the same concept among all respondents, only among people experiencing a justice problem, or among more specific groups depending on the survey pathway.

This work required more than matching questions or variable names across datasets. Historical surveys differed in their documentation and data structures, and in some cases key measures were incomplete for the purpose of this analysis or ambiguous. Questionnaires, technical reports, codebooks, and data dictionaries were therefore used alongside the underlying datasets to clarify survey structure and construct the indicators used in the analysis. Where needed, coding decisions were checked against other survey evidence and informed by consultation with experts familiar with the datasets, many of whom led, or were centrally involved, in the delivery of the individual surveys themselves. These steps were important given gaps in historical documentation, changes in survey design and the need to distinguish substantive differences in people's experiences from differences introduced by measurement.

The harmonisation process also identified both the evolution of measurement across the legal needs survey tradition and important remaining gaps. Not all core concepts in the people-centred justice framework can be measured consistently across surveys. Two gaps are especially relevant: post-resolution support is generally not captured in legal needs surveys, and in the surveys used here access to information cannot be reported separately because the relevant questions focus on a specific type of information (whether respondents found specific information on sources of help) or is measured for a small subset of people with justice problems. Measures of access based on need, problem severity and legal capability have evolved alongside broader developments in the empirical study of access to justice. This evolution is also reflected in the incorporation of people-centred civil justice measurement into the Sustainable Development Goal 16 framework, particularly through indicator 16.3.3, which measures whether people experiencing disputes access formal or informal dispute resolution mechanisms. Successive surveys reflect these wider advances in how justice needs, access and people's capacity to navigate justice processes are understood and measured. The Review manages these differences where possible through documented assumptions and harmonisation rules, including distinguishing lack of need from barriers to access and applying comparable severity thresholds or screening criteria. In other cases, differences in survey design place firmer limits on comparability. These measurement differences and limitations inform the scope of the analysis presented in the Review, including where comparisons survey evidence and reform contexts can and cannot be supported, and point to areas where future surveys could strengthen the consistent measurement of people-centred justice.

Part A approach

The quantitative analysis uses the resulting indicators in two related ways. Part A of this report uses the 2023 ILNS to provide a current picture of people-centred justice in England and Wales. It operationalises the conceptual framework across the justice journey, examining justice problems and their severity and co-occurrence; hardship; trust in the competence and fairness of justice actors; access to assistance and advice and dispute resolution mechanisms; process completion

and problem resolution; and fairness, timeliness and satisfaction with ongoing processes. It considers both overall patterns and differences across population groups and justice journeys. Where sufficiently comparable evidence is available, selected indicators are also compared with WJP Global Legal Needs Survey data from other European countries. These comparisons are used as broad reference points rather than as like-for-like benchmarks, given differences in survey design, coverage and the periods respondents were asked to recall.

Part A also extends the use of legal needs survey data beyond descriptive measures of problem prevalence or unmet need. It examines interconnected need through problem co-occurrence and multidimensional hardship; distinguishes whether a justice process has concluded from whether the underlying problem was resolved; and traces inequalities across different stages of the justice journey. It develops separate measures of trust in the competence and fairness of justice actors and examines how legal capability, income, disability, education and other characteristics relate to people's experiences across the journey. Statistical regression analysis is used to examine how access to assistance and advice and dispute resolution mechanisms is associated with problem resolution after accounting for differences in respondents and the problems they experience.

A further distinction is made between justice journey or process completion and people's outcomes. The conclusion of a process is analysed separately from resolution of the underlying problem, fairness, timeliness and satisfaction with progress. This makes it possible to consider efficiency, effectiveness and people's experience of quality as related but distinct dimensions of access to justice rather than treating process completion alone as evidence of a successful outcome.

The period covered by the Review also saw substantial changes in how people could seek help and pursue resolution. Early reforms included the Civil Procedure Act and the Access to Justice Act (AJA) 1999, which reshaped civil procedure, strengthened incentives for earlier settlement, and restructured legal-aid funding and provision. These were followed by the Courts Act 2003, the Carter reforms to legal aid, the TCEA, and the LASPO 2012, which reorganised court and tribunal administration and further changed the funding, scope, eligibility and delivery of legal aid. It also brought about changes to the funding and costs of civil litigation, and through this process further incentivised individuals to bring, defend and settle claims by changing the financial risk (MoJ 2019a). More recently, court and tribunal Modernisation increasingly shifted information, applications and hearings online, a transition accelerated by COVID-19.

A structured review of reforms, policy documents, evaluations and wider access-to-justice research provides historical and policy context for the quantitative findings throughout the Review. In Part A, this evidence helps interpret current patterns in people's justice experiences in light of longer-term changes in procedure, legal assistance, service delivery and digitalisation. These connections are used to contextualise the findings rather than to attribute current outcomes to particular reforms.

Part B approach

Part B examines how patterns in access and problem resolution appear to have evolved alongside successive reform contexts from the late 1990s to 2023, using survey evidence from 2004, 2014–15 and 2023. To structure this analysis, the reforms and surveys are mapped on a common timeline using reform implementation, survey fieldwork dates and recall periods. Their alignment is used to define three analytical periods corresponding broadly to the early civil procedure and access-to-justice reforms; subsequent court, tribunal and legal-aid reforms; and, most recently, Modernisation

alongside COVID-19 and Brexit. These analytical periods group reforms and wider pressures for the purposes of the analysis; they do not mean that the survey data capture people's justice experiences throughout the full period in which those reforms unfolded.

Because the surveys differ in sampling, data-collection mode, recall periods, problem selection, wording and routing, they are not treated as a continuous trend series. Instead, the Review uses a within-survey approach: relationships are estimated separately within each survey, and corresponding patterns are compared descriptively across distinct reform contexts. The harmonisation work establishes which concepts can support these comparisons, while the within-survey approach reduces the risk that differences in survey design are interpreted as changes in people's justice experiences.

Problem resolution provides the core common outcome. Within each analytical period, the analysis first examines how access to assistance and advice and dispute resolution mechanisms, and barriers to them, are associated with resolution, including how the two forms of access work in combination. It then examines whether resolution differs according to exposure to the reforms and wider system changes described above, and whether these relationships vary across relevant justice journeys and population groups.

The analysis uses a comparative repeated cross-sectional approach to examine how patterns in people's justice journeys and problem resolution differ across the distinct reform contexts associated with the experiences captured by each of the three surveys. Relationships are estimated separately within each survey and interpreted against analytical expectations derived from the structured reform review, including which justice problems or pathways were likely to be more affected and how changes in legal assistance, dispute resolution and the demands placed on users were expected to influence problem resolution. This approach makes it possible to draw on more than two decades of population-level evidence while taking differences in survey design into account. At the same time, the analysis is not designed to isolate the causal effect of individual reforms or groups of reforms, as several reforms and wider social and economic changes occurred within each period and the surveys observe different samples at each point. Findings are therefore interpreted as evidence of patterns and relationships across reform periods rather than as causal estimates of reform effects.

The analytical expectations also recognise that these changes may affect people differently depending on the resources, capabilities and support available to them, as well as the complexity of the problems they face. The analysis therefore considers whether the patterns associated with reform exposure differ across relevant justice journeys and population groups, including the possibility that changes may unintentionally widen existing inequalities in access to justice.

Methodological note: Data sources, harmonisation, and comparability

This section describes the data and measurement decisions underpinning the analysis in Part B. It first documents the data sources and access arrangements, then considers differences in survey design that affect comparability and the strategies adopted to manage them. It next explains how the core people-centred justice concepts used in the analysis were operationalised across the three surveys examined. Finally, it sets out how the resulting variables are used in the empirical analysis described in Part B, Section 3.

The Part B quantitative analysis draws on data from three distinct legal needs surveys: the 2004 EW CSJS, the 2014–15 LPRS, and the 2023 ILNS. The three surveys differ in how they were administered, how far back respondents were asked to recall problems, which problems entered the analysis, how one problem was selected for detailed follow-up, and how key justice experiences were measured. The Review therefore assesses comparability in two stages. First, it examines survey design differences that may affect who and what is captured in each survey. Second, examines how the common people-centred justice concepts are measured in each survey, including which respondents were asked the relevant questions, how questionnaire routing shaped the available responses, and what recoding was needed to align concepts across surveys. The remaining differences are taken into account by estimating relationships separately within each survey rather than treating the data as a continuous trend series.

Data access

The microdata for the 2004 EW CSJS and the 2023 ILNS are both publicly available. The 2004 EW CSJS data files were downloaded from an archived Legal Services Research Centre webpage, available through The National Archives website (Legislation.gov.uk, 2011), and shared with the team by Ash Patel of the Nuffield Foundation. The available technical guide did not include the survey cards, which were necessary for fully understanding the questionnaire. An alternative version of the technical guide (Phelps et al. 2005), containing the survey cards, was identified via the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine.

The 2023 ILNS dataset and corresponding materials (summary report, data guide, etc.) are available on the Legal Services Board website (Legal Services Board, 2023). Tom May, Research Manager at the Legal Services Board, provided additional guidance and insights into this dataset, including a copy of the survey questionnaire.

To access the 2014–15 LPRS microdata, the project was registered with the UK Data Service (project #283835: Legal Needs in England and Wales) and all individual researchers registered as users. The 2014–15 LPRS dataset – reference #8169 in the UK Data Service – is a safeguarded dataset made available to all registered users subject to the End User Licence Agreement. The authors have taken care to ensure that the End User License Agreement was fully upheld while engaging with this dataset.

Comparability of key survey methodological elements

The authors conducted a comprehensive assessment of the comparability of the surveys. Several features of survey design affect what can be compared across them. Key survey elements include the recall period, survey mode, the way non-trivial problems are identified, and the selection of justice problems for detailed follow-up. Some of these differences can be managed through harmonisation or analytical design, while others continue to limit comparability. For that reason, the analysis estimates relationships separately within each survey and compares the resulting patterns across distinct reform periods, rather than interpreting differences in raw levels as a continuous trend.

Recall period: each of the three surveys utilises a different recall period (the timeframe for which survey respondents are asked to report their experiences). The 2014–15 LPRS survey has the shortest recall period at 1.5 years, followed by 3 years for the 2004 EW CSJS survey and 4 years for the 2023 ILNS. The survey recall periods are considered in the identification of the analytical periods described in Part B, Section 1. These differences are relevant primarily to the period of justice experiences captured by each survey and therefore to how the survey evidence is aligned with the reform context. Because Part B compares patterns and differences between groups within each survey, rather than changes in the magnitude of outcomes across surveys, differences in recall period are less consequential for the principal comparisons of within-survey patterns across reform contexts.

Survey mode: the 2004 EW CSJS was conducted face-to-face, through household interviews. The 2014–15 LPRS was conducted over the telephone, and the 2023 ILNS was conducted entirely online. There are a few different potential comparability challenges here. First, face-to-face surveying requires respondents to have a fixed address and be willing and able to speak with the enumerators. Telephone and online-administered surveys may be more accessible in some regards (e.g., respondents may have a greater sense of privacy) but can introduce technological barriers to participation (both via access and usability). Because each survey mode corresponds to a different survey in this analysis, these effects cannot be separated from other differences between the surveys. The analysis therefore does not interpret differences in raw outcome levels across surveys as evidence of change across reform contexts.

Triviality constraints: justice problems range in seriousness, and this analysis focuses on the experience of non-trivial problems – that is, problems with a reported severity of 4 or more on a 1–10 scale. The 2014–15 LPRS uses a scale of 1-20 rather than 1-10, so in this case the severity threshold is imposed on problems with a severity greater than or equal to 8. The 2004 EW CSJS is unique in that the questionnaire has a baked-in triviality constraint wherein respondents are only asked about problems that are "difficult to solve". Meanwhile, the 2014–15 LPRS and 2023 ILNS ask respondents about the experience of all relevant problems, regardless of problem severity or triviality. For those two surveys, the seriousness threshold is therefore imposed analytically. No additional threshold is imposed on the 2004 EW CSJS.

Selection of focal problem: each of the three surveys begins by asking respondents about their experiences of various justice problems, with respondents able to indicate and provide initial details about multiple problems. However, as the questionnaire continues, specific reported problems are selected as the focal problems for the subsequent questions about process or about the journeys people followed to seek solution to those focal problems, as well as the outcomes they obtained. The process for selecting the focal problem varies by survey:

- 2004 EW CSJS: Respondents were eligible for main, detailed interview if they had experienced a problem and either taken one of the specified actions to address it or indicated that their reason for taking no action was not that the problem was too trivial. They were also automatically eligible in several circumstances involving divorce or actual or contemplated legal action. Where respondents had experienced more than one problem, the second most recent was selected for detailed follow-up, to increase the likelihood that enough time had elapsed for the problem to reach a resolution (BMRB 2004a, 2004b).
- 2014–15 LPRS: Where respondents had experienced problems in more than one category, one category was selected for detailed follow-up using a weighted random procedure that gave less common problem categories a greater chance of selection. Within the selected category, the most recent or second most recent problem was selected at random. (LPRS 2014–15 Technical Report).
- 2023 ILNS: Where respondents had experienced only one problem category, that category was automatically selected for detailed follow-up. Where they had experienced more than one category, one of those categories was randomly selected, with weighting to ensure that less common problem categories were sufficiently represented. Where respondents had experienced more than one problem within the selected category, the second most recent problem was selected. (LSB ILNS 2023 Technical Guide).

In cases where the respondent did not take action because they did not feel that the problem was important enough, the 2004 survey disqualified these problems from consideration in the main questionnaire, which could potentially result in the detailed follow-up sample containing relatively more consequential problems. Similarly, the prioritisation of less-common problems in the 2014–15 LPRS and 2023 ILNS surveys could cause an overrepresentation of less common problems in the detailed follow-up data. Where multiple problems were eligible for follow-up, the 2004 and 2023 surveys both selected the second-most recent problems rather than the most recent, giving the focal problem more time to progress or conclude and therefore increasing the number of cases for which later stages of the justice journey could be assessed. The implications of these differences are partly managed by analysing each survey separately and accounting for observed characteristics of the selected problems, including their severity and co-occurrence. They nevertheless remain relevant to the mix of problems represented in each survey.

Harmonising people-centred justice measures across questionnaires

A unique challenge posed by this research is the variation in survey questionnaires. While the surveys have a shared intention of assessing people's experiences of legal needs in England and Wales, the specific topics covered – and the manner in which they are explored – vary. So, in addition to assessing the comparability of the three LNS, there was an extensive effort made to harmonise the survey questionnaires to ensure conceptual consistency and accuracy, to the extent possible.

Central to this research are the following people-centred justice concepts: (a) problem resolution; (b) access to services – specifically, assistance and advice and dispute resolution mechanisms; and (c) individual legal capability. Problem type, severity and co-occurrence, together with respondent characteristics used in the regression analysis, were also aligned across surveys where required. This section describes the approach taken to operationalise these core concepts as consistently as possible across the surveys for the analysis in Part B. The harmonisation enables these people-

centred outcomes to be measured within each survey, including descriptively in terms of their magnitude and distribution, while recognising remaining differences in how the surveys measure them. Refer to Appendix: Table 3 for full details.

Problem resolution is defined as whether the underlying justice problem was fully resolved, rather than remaining unresolved or persisting, out of all of those whose justice journeys are completed.

The 2023 ILNS questionnaire facilitates the most conceptually accurate measurement of problem resolution: respondents are considered to have fully resolved their problem if they indicate that the problem is "done with – matter is resolved." Persistent problems are those that respondents indicate are "done with – matter persists but everybody has permanently given up trying to resolve it." The proportion of respondents whose problem is fully resolved is out of the sum of all people whose problem is done with – both resolved and persistent matters.

The 2004 EW CSJS and 2014 LPRS questionnaires do not offer the same level of detail as the 2023 ILNS survey, so the authors took the following approach to achieve as much conceptual comparability as possible: respondents who indicated that their problem was "now over" or "most likely now over" are considered to have their problem resolved, while those who said that their problem was "ongoing" or "too early to say" are considered to have persistent problems. This broadly follows the distinction used in the 2014–15 LPRS between concluded and ongoing problems (Franklyn et al. 2017).

In the 2004 survey, additional nuance was added via a follow-up question: if respondents said that their problem was "now over" or "most likely now over," but that the manner of process conclusion was that they "gave up trying to resolve the problem," they were considered to have a persistent problem rather than a fully resolved one. The assumption here is that giving up is not an effective resolution process. This is consistent with the distinction in the 2004 survey findings between problems that concluded through resolution and those for which attempts to resolve the problem had been abandoned (Pleasence et al. 2004). The 2014–15 questionnaire includes a similar question facilitating the identification of people who concluded their justice journeys by giving up: the published analysis of the 2014–15 survey notes that "6 per cent of adults with legal problems reported that their problem was not over, but they were putting up with it." (Franklyn et al. 2017, 97). However, for the purposes of this analysis this nuance cannot be used because the sample is too small following the imposition of the non-triviality constraint and the restriction of the dataset to problem types that are comparable across the three surveys. The 2014–15 measure therefore provides a somewhat less refined distinction between resolution and persistence.

Access to assistance and advice: central to the conceptualisation of access to assistance and advice are the notions of adequacy and need: first, while people could obtain assistance or advice from any number of sources, not all are created equally. Inadequate justice services could do more harm than good – e.g., assistance provided by someone without any relevant training or knowledge could be incorrect and lead to worsened justice journeys and poorer outcomes. Secondly, not all people with justice problems need to access justice services, such as assistance and advice, over the course of their justice journey.

Considering this, access to assistance and advice is conceptualised as the proportion of people who accessed an adequate service, out of all those who needed access in the first place. People who did not need assistance and advice are excluded from the estimation in order to provide a more accurate

sense of access for those who required it. Adequate providers of assistance and advice services include lawyers, solicitors, and barristers; non-lawyer legal advisors and services; public agencies; non-profit organisations such as Citizen's Advice; local government actors; and healthcare providers, among others.

The legal needs survey questions relevant to this assessment are those asking (1) did the respondent obtain assistance and advice, (2) if so, from whom? (3) If no action was taken or no services were engaged, what was the reason for this? Respondents who did obtain help from appropriate sources are counted as having successfully obtained adequate assistance and advice, whereas people who did not get help because they encountered a barrier (e.g., it was too expensive or they didn't know where to go) are considered to have needed assistance and advice but been unable to obtain it. The third group, those who didn't get assistance and advice because they did not need it, is identified based on responses to the question about why action was not taken – opting not to take action because the problem was not important enough, for example, indicates a lack of need rather than a barrier to access.

The routing of the survey questionnaires is such that the following assumptions had to be made in order to measure this indicator. Note that the operationalisation of these assumptions is specific to each survey; refer to Appendix: Table 3 for further detail about how the assumptions were applied in each case.

- If the respondent did not access assistance and advice services, but did need and successfully accessed a dispute resolution mechanism, they are assumed to have encountered a barrier to assistance and advice. The reasoning here is that assistance and advice services can support earlier problem resolution and prevent problems from escalating to requiring dispute resolution mechanism. Additionally, people engaging dispute resolution mechanisms arguably would benefit from having an advisor to support them through that process.
- If the respondent did not access assistance and advice services, indicated that they needed but were unable to access dispute resolution mechanism services, and did successfully access information services, they are assumed to have not needed assistance and advice services.
- If the respondent did not access assistance and advice, and they did not access dispute resolution mechanism either due to a lack of need, they are similarly assumed to have not needed assistance and advice services.
- If the respondent did not obtain adequate assistance or advice because they did not obtain any help, or the help that they did obtain was not from a qualified source (they indicated 'Other'), they are assumed to have encountered an internal barrier.

Access to dispute resolution mechanisms: similar to the approach used in assessing access to assistance and advice described above, the measurement of access to dispute resolution mechanism considers if the respondent needed it in the first place. This methodology aligns with that of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 16.3.3 (United Nations Statistical Division n.d.).

The survey routing again required certain assumptions to be made to measure this indicator. In cases where respondents obtained either information or assistance and advice services – but not dispute resolution mechanism – and therefore did not answer the follow-up question about reasons for not taking action, the following assumptions were made:

- If the respondent did not access dispute resolution mechanism but did obtain adequate assistance and advice, they are assumed to have not needed dispute resolution mechanism.
- If the respondent did not access dispute resolution mechanism, and they did not obtain assistance and advice because they did not need it, they are also assumed to have not needed dispute resolution mechanism.
- If the respondent did not access dispute resolution mechanism, and they either (a) did not access adequate assistance and advice, or (b) responses on access to information and assistance and advice are both missing, they are assumed to have needed dispute resolution mechanism but were unable to access it due to a barrier to access.

Individual legal capability – broadly understood as a person's ability to effectively make decisions about whether and how to pursue their justice journey, shaped by both internal and external factors – can influence justice journey completion and outcome, with a lower level of legal capability expected to hinder a person's ability to effectively resolve their problems (Pleasence and Balmer 2025).

Both the 2014–15 and 2023 surveys contain several questions that can be used to operationalise legal capability (see full details in Pleasence and Balmer 2018). First, both include a comparable question about if the respondent recognised or understood the legal nature of their problem. This is conceptually relevant as failure to recognise legal problems for what they are can impede the timely and effective resolution of them. Both surveys include additional questions that assess respondents' confidence in navigating hypothetical legal situations, as well as their confidence in identifying accurate information online (2014–15 LPRS) and the extent to which they understood their legal rights and responsibilities (2023 ILNS). As detailed in Appendix: Table 3, the responses to these questions were coded into a single composite legal-capability score ranging from 0 to 1 where a higher value indicates a greater level of legal capability.

Variables used in the empirical analysis

People-centred outcome indicators on access to services should, ideally, account for if the respondent needed access to services in the first place, as described above. The harmonisation described above makes it possible to operationalise this fuller concept of access for descriptive analysis, distinguishing between people who obtained adequate services, those who needed services but encountered a barrier to access, and those who did not need them. In this report, these indicators are used for the descriptive analysis in Part A; more broadly, the operationalisation can support future research seeking to measure the magnitude of access to justice services using legal needs surveys. Appendix: Table 3 documents their survey-specific operationalisation.

However, due to data constraints – specifically, the survey routing that required assumptions to be made in cases where people partially engaged with justice services and therefore did not answer questions about reasons for not taking action via other services – the regression analysis presented in this Review required adapting the indicators on access to assistance and advice and access

to dispute resolution mechanisms such that need is not considered. Specifically, for the within-survey analysis of patterns in Part B, the regression analyses utilise simpler, binary-versions of the variables that indicate whether the respondent did or did not access assistance and advice or dispute resolution mechanism, without adjusting for those who did not access due to a lack of need. Using the indicators in their more comprehensive form is not possible in these models because the assumptions required to distinguish lack of access from lack of need draw partly on respondents' use of other justice services, making the two measures interdependent and resulting in a multicollinearity issue when both measures are used in the same regression model.

Table 1. Problem categorisation across surveys

The types of justice problems considered vary slightly across the three surveys utilised in this analysis. In order to ensure the greatest possible level of comparability across surveys, the types of problems under consideration have been restricted to those which are consistently measured throughout. Additionally, some problems have been recategorised in order to facilitate this comparison.

Moreover, the analysis presented in this report considers non-trivial problems; that is, problems that respondents have identified as having a severity greater than or equal to four on a scale from 1 (least serious) to 10 (most serious). The severity questions are as follows:

- **MoJ LPRS 2014–15: Question D4:** "Consider a scale of 1-20, where 1 means that the problem was not at all serious and 20 means that the problem was very serious. To provide some examples, a score of 4 might be purchasing a washing machine that proves to be faulty and a score of 18 might be being made homeless. So what number best represents the seriousness of the PROBLEM DESCRIPTION."
    - Note: here, the scale was adjusted such that it was comparable to the 1-10 scale used in the LSB ILNS 2023 survey.
- **LSB ILNS 2023: Question L2:** Thinking about [issue asked about] as a whole... Please consider a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 represents the least serious type of issue you could face and 10 represents the most serious. What number best represents the seriousness of your issue?

The 2004 EW CSJS survey does include a question on problem severity (S35d). However, the questions about problem prevalence are phrased such that they only ask about problems that the respondent felt were 'difficult to solve'. This is treated as a baked-in severity constraint, and a further one is not imposed.

Analytical problem category	Survey	Problem type	Category from survey
Accident and health	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Any injury or health problem since (January 2001/ the age of 18), either as a result of an accident or as a result of poor working conditions?	Personal injury/negligence
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Suffering as a result of negligent or wrong medical or dental treatment	Clinical negligence
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	An accident caused by someone else	Accidents or Health
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Poor working conditions	Accidents or Health
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Injuries or health problems sustained as a result of an accident or due to poor working conditions	Accidental Illness and Injury

	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Injuries or health problems sustained as a result of negligent or wrong medical or dental treatment	Accidental Illness and Injury
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	A road traffic accident	Accidents/injuries
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Injury/ illness as a result of an accident caused by someone else	Accidents/injuries
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Injury/ illness caused by an accident at work or working conditions	Accidents/injuries
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Injury/ illness caused by a health professional	Accidents/injuries
	CSPJS 2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Negligent or wrong medical treatment	Accidents or Health
Consumer	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Electrical goods (Faulty Goods)	Consumer
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Cars or motorcycles (Faulty Goods)	Consumer
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Furniture (faulty goods)	Consumer
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Clothing/footwear (Faulty Goods)	Consumer
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Major building work (e.g. Conservatory, new roof) (Faulty Services)	Consumer
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Tradespeople (e.g. Plumbers, electricians, painters and decorators) (Faulty Services)	Consumer
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Holidays/travel (faulty services)	Consumer
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Garages (faulty services)	Consumer
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Problems related to purchasing faulty vehicles or other high value items	Purchasing goods or services
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Defective repairs to a vehicle, or other high value items	Purchasing goods or services
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Defective building work or work by trades people such as plumbers	Purchasing goods or services
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Services that were substantially short of what was promised, such as holidays	Purchasing goods or services
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Major disruption in the supply of utilities such as water, gas, Internet	Purchasing goods or services

	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Problems related to poor or incomplete professional services (for example, services from a lawyer, builder, mechanic, etc.)	Consumer
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Problems related to obtaining a refund for faulty or damaged goods	Consumer
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Major disruptions in the supply of utilities (e.g. Water, electricity, phone) or incorrect billing	Consumer
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	A defective good/service or professional	Consumer
Domestic violence			
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Suffering violence or abuse from a partner or ex-partner or other family member	Domestic violence
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Your children suffering violence or abuse from a partner or ex-partner or other family member	Domestic violence
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	N/a	N/a
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Threats or physical violence from a current partner, ex-partner or other household member	Family
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Domestic violence	Domestic violence
Employment			
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Being sacked or made redundant	Employment
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Being threatened with the sack	Employment
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Getting pay or a pension to which you were entitled	Employment
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Other rights at work (e.g. Maternity leave, sickness pay, holiday entitlement, working hours)	Employment
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Harassment at work	Employment
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Changes to your terms and conditions of employment that made things worse	Employment
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Unsatisfactory or dangerous working conditions	Employment

	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Unfair disciplinary procedures	Employment
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Getting pay or a pension to which you were entitled	Employment
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Other rights at work, e.g. Maternity leave, sickness pay, holiday entitlement, or changes to your terms and conditions	Employment
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Unsatisfactory or dangerous working conditions	Employment
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Unfair disciplinary procedures or other treatment	Employment
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Harassment or discrimination at work	Employment
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Being threatened with or being sacked or made redundant	Employment
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Being dismissed from a job unfairly	Employment
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Difficulties obtaining wages or employment benefits that were agreed on in advance	Employment
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Harassment at work	Employment
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Problems with employer	Employment
Family			
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Difficulties obtaining child support payments	Family
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Difficulties agreeing to pay child support payments	Family
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Difficulties with (residence) custody arrangements for children	Family
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Difficulties with (contact) access arrangements for children	Family
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Disputes over the division of money, pensions or property in connection with divorce or separation from a spouse or partner	Family
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Difficulties obtaining maintenance from a former partner for yourself (excluding payments for children)	Family
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Difficulties agreeing to pay maintenance to a Family former partner (excluding payments for children)	Family

	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Divorce proceedings (even if no divorce was obtained)	Divorce
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Divorce proceedings (even if no divorce was obtained)	Divorce
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Disagreement over the content of a will or the division of property after the death of a family member (Difficulty obtaining money)	Money/debt
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Obtaining or agreeing to pay child support payments	Break-up of a relationship or disputes over children.
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	The division of property, finances, other assets, debts	Break-up of a relationship or disputes over children.
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Obtaining or agreeing to pay maintenance from or to a former partner excluding payments for children	Break-up of a relationship or disputes over children.
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Agreeing where children should live and how much time they spend with each parent.	Break-up of a relationship or disputes over children.
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Divorce or separation	Family
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Difficulties obtaining child support payments	Family
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Difficulties paying child support	Family
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Dispute over child custody or visitation arrangements	Family
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Disagreement over the content of a will or the division of property after the death of a family member	Family
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	A relationship break up	Family
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Being involved in divorce	Family
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Adopted, tried to adopt or fostered a child, or applied to become an approved foster carer	Family
Housing	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Getting the landlord to do repairs or maintain the property (Dealing with landlord)	Living in Rented Accommodation
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Unsafe living conditions (Condition of accommodation)	Living in Rented Accommodation

	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Otherwise unsuitable conditions for yourself/family (Condition of accommodation)	Living in Rented Accommodation
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Getting the landlord to provide other services under the terms of the lease, such as furniture (Dealing with landlord)	Living in Rented Accommodation
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Agreeing (with your landlord) on rent, council tax, housing benefit payments, or other terms of the lease or tenancy agreement (Dealing with landlord)	Living in Rented Accommodation
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Getting your landlord to provide a written lease or tenancy agreement (Dealing with landlord)	Living in Rented Accommodation
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Transfer of tenancy on death or separation (Dealing with landlord)	Living in Rented Accommodation
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Harassment by your landlord (Dealing with landlord)	Living in Rented Accommodation
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Flatmates not paying the rent or behaving in an anti-social manner (Other problems)	Living in Rented Accommodation
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Renting out rooms to lodgers or sub-letting in a property you rented (Other problems)	Living in Rented Accommodation
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Eviction or threat of eviction (Dealing with landlord)	Living in Rented Accommodation
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Being homeless or being threatened with being homeless	Housing (homelessness)
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Being several mortgage payments in arrears	Housing (Owning your own home)
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Repossession of the home	Housing (Owning your own home)
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Being several rent payments in arrears (Problems to do with money)	Living in Rented Accommodation
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Regular and excessive noise	Neighbours
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Damage to your property or garden	Neighbours
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Other vandalism	Neighbours
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Threats or harassment	Neighbours
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Boundaries or rights of way or access to your property	Housing (Owning your own home)

	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Boundaries or rights of way or access to your property (Other problems)	Living in Rented Accommodation
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Getting a deposit back	Living in rented accommodations
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Problems agreeing the terms of your lease or tenancy agreement	Living in rented accommodations
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Problems with the transfer of lease or tenancy	Living in rented accommodations
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Problems with the transfer of lease or tenancy	Living in rented accommodations
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Problems with the transfer of lease or tenancy	Living in rented accommodations
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Being evicted or being threatened with eviction	Living in rented accommodations
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Getting the landlord to do repairs or maintain the property	Living in rented accommodations
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Harassment by your landlord	Living in rented accommodations
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Being several mortgage payments in arrears	Owning or buying residential property
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Being several rent payments in arrears	Living in rented accommodations
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Repossession of your home	Owning or buying residential property
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Regular and excessive noise by neighbours	Anti-Social Behaviour by Neighbours
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Damage to your property or garden by neighbours	Anti-Social Behaviour by Neighbours
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Boundaries, rights of way or access to your property - including passage of services such as water over other people's land	Owning or buying residential property
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Problems with a landlord about rental agreements, payments, repairs, deposits, or eviction	Housing
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Problems with a tenant about rental agreements or property damage	Housing
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Becoming homeless	Housing
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Problems with gangs, vandalism, or consumption of drugs or alcohol on the streets	Community
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Problems with your neighbours over noise, litter, parking spots, or pets	Community

	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Problems with a property you rent	Rented housing
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Problems with housemates or a sub-tenant	Rented housing
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Faced eviction from rented property	Rented housing
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Homelessness	Homelessness
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Home repossessed	Owned housing
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Anti-social behaviour by neighbours	Neighbours
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Dealing with squatters	Housing (Owning your own home)
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Planning permission or consent	Housing (Owning your own home)
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Selling or buying property (e.g. Misleading property survey, problems with lease)	Housing (Owning your own home)
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Communal repairs or maintenance	Housing (Owning your own home)
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Planning permission or consent	Owning or buying residential property
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Selling or buying property, such as a misleading property survey, or problems with a lease	Owning or buying residential property
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Communal repairs or maintenance	Owning or buying residential property
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Squatters	Owning or buying residential property
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Problems obtaining land titles, property titles, or permission for building projects for your own home	Land and Property
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Problems related to squatting and land grabbing	Land and Property
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Problems with your neighbours over boundaries or the right to pass through property, fences, or trees	Land and Property
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Problems with co-owners or community members over selling property	Land and Property

	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Re-mortgaged a property / transferred equity in a property	Owned housing
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Bought or sold, or tried to buy or sell, a house or flat	Owned housing
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Dealt with a planning application	Owned housing
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Problems with a tenant or squatter	Owned housing
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Property you own	Owned housing
Money and debt	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Severe difficulties managing to pay money you owe(d) (Difficulty paying money)	Money/debt
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Being threatened with legal action to recover money you owe(d) (Difficulty paying money)	Money/debt
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Insurance companies unfairly rejecting claims (Difficulty obtaining money)	Money/debt
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Incorrect information about you leading to a refusal of credit (Difficulty obtaining money)	Money/debt
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Unreasonable harassment from people or organisations to whom you owe(d) money (Difficulty paying money)	Money/debt
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Getting someone to pay money that they owe (Difficulty obtaining money)	Money/debt
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Being given incorrect information or advice that led you to buy insurance, pensions, mortgages or other financial products (Poor financial advice/financial management)	Money/debt
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Mismanagement of a pension fund (Poor financial advice/ financial management)	Money/debt
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Incorrect or disputed bills, excluding rent / mortgage payments (Other)	Money/debt
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Incorrect or unfair tax demands, including council tax (Other)	Money/debt

	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Repeated incorrect charges by banks or utilities (Other)	Money/debt
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Having a County Court judgement made against you (Difficulty paying money)	Money/debt
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Getting a deposit back (Problems to do with money)	Living in rented accommodations
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Harassment from people or businesses to whom you owed money	Debt
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Getting someone or a business to pay money that they owe you	Money
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Being given incorrect information or advice from a professional that led you to buy insurance, pensions, mortgages or other financial products	Money
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Mismanagement of a pension fund or an investment resulting in financial loss	Money
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Incorrect or disputed bills, excluding rent/mortgage payments or tax assessment	Money
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Being behind with and unable to pay... (v) Other household bills such as electricity, internet or TV licence	Debt
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Being behind with and unable to pay... (iii) Council tax or income tax	Debt
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Being behind with and unable to pay... (vi) Fines	Debt
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Being behind with and unable to pay... (i) Credit cards, store cards or personal loans - excluding mortgages	Debt
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Being behind with and unable to pay... (ii) Hire Purchase or on-credit purchases	Debt
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Insurance companies unfairly rejecting claims	Money
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Incorrect information about you leading to a refusal of credit	Money
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Severe difficulties managing to pay money you owed – including to family	Debt
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Difficulties collecting money owed to you	Money and Debt

	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Insurance claims being denied	Money and Debt
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Being behind on and unable to pay credit cards, utility bills (e.g. Water, electricity, gas), or a loan	Money and Debt
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Being threatened by debt collectors over unpaid loans or bills	Money and Debt
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Being threatened, harassed, or extorted by a mob, a gang or another criminal organisation	Money and Debt
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Debt	Money/debt
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Personal finance	Money/debt
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Incorrect/unfair parking tickets	Money/debt
Welfare benefits	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Amount of other grants (e.g. Housing improvement grants)	Welfare benefits
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Entitlement to welfare benefits (including council tax benefit, tax credits)	Welfare benefits
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Entitlement to state pension/ Pension credits	Welfare benefits
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Entitlement to student loans or grants	Welfare benefits
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Entitlement to other grants (e.g. Housing improvement grants)	Welfare benefits
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Amount of welfare benefits (including council tax benefit, tax credits)	Welfare benefits
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Amount of student loans or grants	Welfare benefits
	2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	Amount of state pension/ Pension credits	Welfare benefits
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Your entitlement to state benefits, tax credits, or state pensions	State benefits, tax credits, or state pensions
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Getting the right amount of state benefits, tax credits, or state pensions	State benefits, tax credits, or state pensions
	2014–15 MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey	Problems relating to delays processing a claim or application for these state benefits/credits	State benefits, tax credits, or state pensions

	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Difficulties obtaining public benefits or government assistance, such as cash transfers, pensions, or disability benefits	Public services
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Difficulties accessing care in public clinics or hospitals	Public services
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Lack of access to water, sanitation, and/or electricity	Public services
	2018 World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey	Tax disputes or disputes with other government bodies	Public services
	2023 Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales	Welfare and benefits	Money/debt

Table 2. Logistic regression results: access to services and problem resolution

Variable	(1) Needed DRM	(2) No Need DRM
Encountered barrier to assistance and representation	-0.93***	-1.04***
	(0.11)	(0.17)
Encountered barrier to a dispute resolution mechanism	0.50**	NA
	(0.25)	NA
Are women	-0.18*	-0.29*
	(0.10)	(0.17)
Age: 25-54	0.24	-0.08
	(0.22)	(0.32)
Age: 55+	0.14	-0.25
	(0.22)	(0.34)
Do not have qualifications	-0.32	NA
	(0.32)	NA
Some education	-0.03	NA
	(0.13)	NA
No qualifications / some education	NA	-0.19
	NA	(0.20)
Low legal capability	-0.58***	0.07
	(0.11)	(0.19)
Medium legal capability	-0.35**	0.54**
	(0.14)	(0.25)
Income: Below £32,000	-0.26**	-0.10
	(0.13)	(0.21)
Income: £60,000+	-0.20	0.13
	(0.15)	(0.28)
Income: Prefer not to say	-0.07	0.16
	(0.16)	(0.26)

Problem severity (continuous)	-0.09***	-0.09*
	(0.03)	(0.05)
Problem type: Consumer	1.16***	0.39
	(0.21)	(0.39)
Problem type: Domestic violence	1.43***	0.31
	(0.37)	(0.41)
Problem type: Employment	-0.03	-0.33
	(0.20)	(0.31)
Problem type: Family	0.33*	0.44
	(0.18)	(0.29)
Problem type: Housing	0.78***	0.21
	(0.17)	(0.27)
Problem type: Land and property	0.26	0.75**
	(0.18)	(0.37)
Problem type: Money and debt	0.40*	0.56
	(0.21)	(0.38)
Problem type: Welfare benefits	0.61**	-0.67*
	(0.24)	(0.38)
Constant	1.83***	2.05***
	(0.30)	(0.46)
N	2785	988

Standard errors in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Dependent variable: Problem resolved (1 = resolved, 0 = not resolved). Sample in M1 includes people who experienced non-trivial justice problems and needed a dispute resolution mechanism, while sample in M2 includes people who experienced non-trivial justice problems and needed a dispute resolution mechanism. 'No qualifications' and 'Some education' were collapsed into a single education category as a precaution against small-cell separation.

Table 3. Operationalisation of core people-centred justice outcomes

Table 3A: Operationalisation of problem resolution outcome indicator

2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey				
LNS questions:				
S33c: And would you say this [problem description] is now over or is it still ongoing? S33e: Which of these best describes how the problem or dispute was finished?				
Coding	**Interpretation**			
s33c=1, 2	The problem is over			
s33c=3, 4	The problem is still ongoing			
LNS Question	**LNS Responses**	**Indicator Value**	**Interpretation**	**Universe**
S33c	1 = Now over	1	Problem is over	All people who experienced a problem, excluding those who answered "Don't know", and excluding those who answered "6. Gave up trying to resolve the problem" to S33e.
	2 = Most likely over	1		
	3 = Too early to say	0	Problem is still ongoing	
	4 = Ongoing	0		
	-1 = Don't know	n/a		Excluded from denominator

2014–15 Legal Problem Resolution Survey				
LNS questions:				
D8: Is the problem...?				
Coding	**Interpretation**			
D8=1, 2	The problem is over			
D8=3, 4	The problem is still ongoing			
LNS Question	**LNS Responses**	**Indicator Value**	**Interpretation**	**Universe**
D8	1 = Now over	1	Problem is over	All people who experienced a problem, excluding those who answered "Refusal" or "Don't know".
	2 = Most likely now over	1		
	3 = Still ongoing	0	Problem is still ongoing	
	4 = Or is it too early to say?	0		
	8 = Refusal	n/a		Excluded from denominator
	9 =Don't know	n/a		

2023 Individual Legal Needs Survey				
LNS questions:				
L7: Is the issue ongoing or done with?				
Coding	**Interpretation**			
L7 = 4	The process is over and the problem is resolved			
L7 = 3	The process is over but the problem persists			
L7 = 1, 2	The problem is still ongoing or it is too early to say			
LNS Question	**LNS Responses**	**Indicator Value**	**Interpretation**	**Universe**
L7	1 = Ongoing	n/a		Excluded from denominator
	2 = Too early to say	n/a		
	3 = Done with - matter persists, but everybody has permanently given up trying to resolve it	0	The problem is still ongoing, or it is over but persists.	All people whose problem process has concluded.
	4 = Done with - matter is resolved	1	The problem is over and resolved.	

Table 3B: Operationalisation of access to assistance and advice outcome indicator[47]

2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey	
LNS questions:	
S27a: Thinking of this problem or dispute, when it first arose, did [you/your partner] think it would sort itself out without you/them taking any action? S28a: Did [you/your partner] try to contact any of these people or organisations to obtain advice or information to help [you/them] resolve this problem or dispute? M21why: Why were you unable to get any advice or information from [adviser]? S34a: Why didn't you (your partner) do anything to try to resolve the problem or dispute?	
For assumptions related to information:	
S28c: [Ask for each source coded at S28a] [Were you/was your partner] able to obtain some or all of the advice or information [you were/your partner was] seeking from [source]?	
For assumptions related to dispute resolution mechanisms:	
S30a: On this card are some examples of types of court or tribunal that deal with these types of problem or dispute. Did [you/your partner], or did anybody acting on [your/their] behalf, attend a court or tribunal to try to resolve [problem descriptor]?	
Coding	**Interpretation**
s28a_1 = 1, s28a_2 = 1, s28a_3 = 1, s28a_4 = 1, s28a_5 = 1, s28a_6 = 1, s28a_7 = 1, s28a_8 = 1, s28a_9 = 1, s28a_10 = 1, s28a_11 = 1, s28a_12 = 1, s28a_13 = 1, s28a_14 = 1, s28a_15 = 1, s28a_16 = 1, s28a_17 = 1	The respondent obtained adequate assistance or advice.
m15sto_1 = 1, m15sto_3 = 1, m15sto_4 = 1, m15sto_5 = 1, m15sto_6 = 1, m15sto_7 = 1, m15sto_8 = 1, m15sto_9 = 1, m15sto_10 = 1	The respondent did not get advice or information from any people or organisations (S28==None of these) due to a barrier to access.
m21why101 = 1, m21why201 = 1, m21why301 = 1, m21why401 = 1, m21why501= 1	The respondent did not get advice or information from any people or organisations (S28c==obtained none of the advice or information needed) due to a barrier to access.
s34a_5 = 1, s34a_6 = 1, s34a_7 = 1, s34a_8 = 1, s34a_9 = 1, s34a_10 = 1, s34a_11 = 1, s34a_12 = 1, s34a_13 = 1	Did not get advice or information from any people or organisations (S28a==None of these) due to a barrier to access.
s28a_19 = 1 or s28a_18 = 1 and s30a_1 = 1, s30a_2 = 1, s30i = 1, s30f = 1	Application of assumption: If the respondent did not access A&A services, but did need and successfully accessed a DRM, they are assumed to have encountered a barrier to A&A.
s27a = 1 and s28a_19 = 1	The respondent did not need assistance or advice because they thought that the problem/dispute would sort itself out without taking any action.
s28a_20 = 1	The respondent is excluded from the denominator because they do not know if they contacted someone.
m15sto_2 = 1	The respondent did not need assistance or advice.

47 This table presents the recommended operationalisation of the assistance and advice indicator for each of the three surveys. In Part B of the report, however, the access indicators were simplified for the regression analysis. The assumptions used to distinguish barriers to access from lack of need draw partly on respondents' engagement with other justice services, making the fuller assistance and advice and dispute resolution mechanism indicators interdependent. Including both in the same regression therefore results in multicollinearity. For the Part B analysis, the indicators are instead coded as simpler binary measures of whether respondents did or did not access assistance and advice or a dispute resolution mechanism, without distinguishing lack of need.

m15sto_11 = 1	The respondent is excluded from denominator because they don't know why they didn't seek help.
s34a_1 = 1, s34a_2 = 1, s34a_3 = 1, s34a_4 = 1	The respondent did not need assistance or advice.
s34a_14 = 1	The respondent is excluded from denominator because they indicated that they 'don't know' why they didn't get help.
s28a_19 = 1 and s30a_4 = 1	Application of assumption: If the respondent did not access A&A, and they did not access DRM either due to a lack of need, they are similarly assumed to have not needed A&A services.

LNS Question	LNS Responses	Indicator Value	Interpretation	Universe
S28a	1. General Enquiries	1	Obtained adequate assistance or advice	All people who experienced a problem, excluding those who answered "Don't know" or "Refused".
	2. Council Advice Service	1		
	3. Trading Standards	1		
	4. Other Council Department	1		
	5. Citizens Advice Bureau	1		
	6. Law Centre	1		
	7. Other Advice Agency	1		
	8. Trade Union/Professional Body	1		
	9. A solicitor	1		
	10. A barrister	1		
	11. The Police	1		
	12. Your employer	1		
	13. An insurance company	1		
	14. A doctor or other health worker	1		
	15. A Jobcentre	1		
	16. A social worker	1		
	17. An MP or local councillor	1		
	18. Other (please say who or what)	0	Did not obtain adequate assistance or advice	
	19. None of these	0		
	20. Don't know	n/a		
	21. Refused	n/a		

M15sto	1. Didn't occur to them to seek advice or information	0	Did not obtain adequate assistance or advice due to a barrier to access	All respondents who said they did not seek personal advice - S28 = None of these. For the problem selected in the main questionnaire. Excluding those who answered "Don't know" or "Didn't think they needed advice or information".
	3. Didn't think it would make a difference	0		
	4. Weren't sure where to go for advice or information	0		
	5. Didn't think anybody would be able to help	0		
	6. People/organisations were too far away	0		
	7. Opening hours were not convenient	0		
	8. Services were too difficult or complicated to use	0		
	9. Services were too expensive to use	0		
	10. Other (specify)	0		
	2. Didn't think they needed advice or information	n/a		
	11. Don't know	n/a		
m21why101	Don't know=-1	0	Did not obtain adequate assistance or advice due to a barrier to access	All respondents who answered "None of the advice or information I needed" to question s28c: "Were you or your partner able to obtain some or all of the advice or information you were looking for?"
	The opening hours were not convenient for you=1	0		
	Didn't understand advice or information=2	0		
	The services were too expensive to use=3	0		
	Couldn't get through on the phone=4	0		
	They weren't able/willing to help=5	0		
	Other (specify)=6	0		

m21why201	Don't know=-1	0	Did not obtain adequate assistance or advice due to a barrier to access	
	The people/organisations were too far away=1	0		
	The opening hours were not convenient for you=2	0		
	Didn't understand advice or information=3	0		
	The services were too expensive to use=4	0		
	Kept waiting too long when went to see them=5	0		
	Appointment too far in the future=6	0		
	They weren't able/willing to help=7	0		
	Other (specify)=8	0		
m21why301	Don't know=-1	0	Did not obtain adequate assistance or advice due to a barrier to access	
	Didn't understand advice or information=1	0		
	The services were too expensive to use=2	0		
	They weren't able/willing to help=3	0		
	Got no reply to letter/email=4	0		
	Other (specify)=5	0		
m21why401	Don't know=-1	0	Did not obtain adequate assistance or advice due to a barrier to access	
	Couldn't find one=1	0		
	Didn't understand advice or information=2	0		
	The services were too expensive to use=3	0		
	They weren't able/willing to help=4	0		
	Got no reply to letter/email=5	0		
	Other (specify)=6	0		
m21why501	Don't know=-1	0	Did not obtain adequate assistance or advice due to a barrier to access	
	Couldn't find one=1	0		
	Didn't understand advice or information=2	0		
	The services were too expensive to use=3	0		
	They weren't able/willing to help=4	0		
	Other (specify)=5	0		

S34a	5. Thought it would take too much time	0	Did not obtain adequate assistance or advice due to a barrier to access	All individuals who do not seek advice or information excluding those who answered "Don't know"
	6. Thought it would cost too much	0		
	7. Thought it would be too stressful to sort out	0		
	8. Thought it would damage relationship with other side	0		
	9. Was scared to do anything	0		
	10. Did not know what to do/who to go to	0		
	11. Was uncertain of my rights	0		
	12. Did not think it would make any difference to the outcome	0		
	13. Other (specify)	0		
	1. No dispute with anybody/thought other person was right	n/a	Did not need access	
	2. Did not think it was very important	n/a		
	3. Thought it would resolve itself	n/a		
	4. Problem was over and done with	n/a		
	14. Don't know	n/a		
S30a	1. Yes - respondent attended	0	Did not obtain adequate assistance or advice due to a barrier to access	All people who experienced a problem, excluding those who answered "Don't know"
	2. Yes - someone acting on respondent's behalf attended	0		
	3. No	n/a	Did not need access	
	4. Don't Know	n/a		
s30i	1. Yes	0	Did not obtain adequate assistance or advice due to a barrier to access	All people who experienced a problem, excluding those who answered "Don't know" or "Refused"
	2. No	n/a	Did not need access	
	3. Don't know	n/a		
	4. Refused	n/a		

s30f	1. Yes	0	Did not obtain adequate assistance or advice due to a barrier to access	All people who experienced a problem, excluding those who answered "Mediation/ conciliation session planned for future", "Don't know" or "Refused"
	2. No	n/a	Did not need access	
	3. Mediation/conciliation session planned for future	n/a		
	4. Don't know	n/a		
	5. Refused	n/a		

2014–15 Legal Problem Resolution Survey	
LNS questions:	
D5a: When trying to sort out this PROBLEM DESCRIPTION, did you obtain information, advice or any other form of help from any of the following? E26: Why didn't you get help from a lawyer, solicitor or barrister? E27: Why did you decide not to get help from another type of advisor or representative such as Citizens advice, a trade union, Shelter or Money advice services?	
For assumptions related to dispute resolution mechanisms:	
D7a: Did any of the following things happen as part of this problem or sorting it out?	
Coding	**Interpretation**
D5a_e = 1, D5a_f = 1, D5a_g = 1, D5a_h = 1, D5a_i = 1, D5a_j = 1	The respondent obtained adequate assistance or advice from a qualified source.
D5a_a = 1, D5a_b = 1, D5a_c = 1, D5a_k = 1, D5a_d = 1	The respondent did not obtain adequate assistance or advice because they did not obtain any help, or the help that they did obtain was not from a qualified source.
E26_d = 1, E26_e = 1, E26_f = 1, E26_g = 1, E26_h = 1, E26_j = 1, E26_k = 1, E26_l = 1 or E27_d = 1, E27_e = 1, E27_f = 1, E27_g = 1, E27_h = 1, E27_j = 1, E27_k = 1, E27_l = 1	The respondent wanted but was unable to obtain assistance or advice from a qualified source due to an access barrier.
D5a_a = 1, D5a_b = 1, D5a_c = 1, D5a_k = 1, D5a_d = 1 and D7a = 1, D7b = 1, D7c = 1, D7d = 1	Application of assumption: If the respondent did not access A&A services, but did need and successfully accessed a DRM, they are assumed to have encountered a barrier to A&A.
D5a_l = 1, D5a_m = 1, D5a_n = 1	Excluded from denominator.
E26_a = 1, E26_b = 1, E26_c = 1, E26_i = 1 or E27_a = 1, E27_b = 1, E27_c = 1, E27_i = 1	The respondent did not need assistance or advice.
E26_m = 1 or E27_m = 1	Excluded from denominator.
D5a_a = 1, D5a_b = 1, D5a_c = 1, D5a_k = 1, D5a_d = 1 and D7e = 1, D7f = 1, D7g = 1	Application of assumption: If the respondent did not access A&A or DRM, they are assumed to have not needed A&A services.

LNS Question	LNS Responses	Indicator Value	Interpretation	Universe
D5a	a= The Internet	0	Did not obtain adequate assistance or advice	All people who experienced a problem, excluding those who answered "Other answers", "Don't know" or "Refused"
	b = A leaflet, book or self-help guide			
	c= Family or friends			
	d= Those on the other side of the problem or dispute			
	k= DO NOT READ OUT: Did not obtain information, advice or help			
	e= A lawyer, such as a solicitor or barrister	1	Obtained adequate assistance or advice	
	f= Another independent adviser or representative, such as Citizens Advice, a trade union, Shelter or the Money Advice Service etc.			
	g= Police			
	h= Credit Card Company/Bank			
	i= Housing Association/ Landlord			
	j= Local Council/Council department			
	l= Other answers	n/a	Did not need assistance or advice	
	m= Don't know			
	n= Refused			
E26	d= Cost	0	Did not get help from a lawyer, solicitor or barrister due to a barrier to access.	All those who did NOT answer "A lawyer, such as a solicitor or a barrister" to question D5a. Excluding those who answered "Other answers", "Don't know"
	e= Distance to get to			
	f= Time required			
	g= Didn't know where to go			
	h= Tried to but they weren't interested in helping			
	j= Would have made the situation worse/no impact on resolving the problem			
	k= Other answers	n/a	Did not need access	
	l= Don't know			
	a= Problem not important enough			
	b= Problem resolved without need for advice			
	c = I didn't need help/knew enough myself			
	i= Problem still ongoing/may do so in the future			
	m = Refused			

E27	d = Cost	0	Did not get help from another type of advisor or representative due to a barrier to access.	All people who experienced a problem, did not access A&A, and did not answer the follow-up question (E26). Excluding those who answered "Other answers", "Don't know"
	e= Distance to get to			
	f= Time required			
	g= Didn't know where to go			
	h= Tried to but they weren't interested in helping			
	j= Problem resolved/being resolved with advice/assistance from other source/on own			
	k= Other answers	n/a	Did not need access	
	l= Don't know			
	a= Problem not important enough			
	b = Problem resolved without need for advice			
	c = I didn't need help/knew enough myself			
	i = Problem still ongoing/may do so in the future			
	m = Other (specify)			
D7	a. Did you, or somebody acting on your behalf, contact a regulator or ombudsman	0	Accessing a DRM in combination with a lack of access to A&A is assumed to imply that the respondent needed but couldn't access A&A	All people who experienced a problem, did not access A&A, and did not answer the follow-up question (E26). Excluding those who answered "Other answers", "Don't know"
	b. Did you make a claim to a tribunal or court or make use of a court process, such as money claim online.			
	c. Did the other side take a claim to a tribunal or court or make use of a court process?			
	d. Did you participate in independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration - by this we mean when a neutral third party helps both sides try to reach a solution			
	e. None of the above	0	The respondent did not access a DRM.	
	f. Don't know	n/a	Did not need access	
	g. Refusal			

2023 Individual Legal Needs Survey	
LNS questions:	
L21: In dealing with [contentious issue], did you at any time think about, try, or successfully obtain information, advice or other assistance from the following people? L22b: Were any of them a professional adviser with knowledge of the type of issue that you were facing? R1: Why didn't you do anything to try to resolve [contentious issue]?	
For assumptions related to dispute resolution mechanisms:	
L34: Did you, or anyone who was helping you, do any of these things as part of dealing with [contentious issue]?	
R2: Why didn't you try to get help from an independent adviser?	
Coding	**Interpretation**
L21_NL6_1 = 4 & L22b_NL7 = 1, L21_NL6_2 = 4 , L21_NL6_4 = 4, L21_NL6_6 = 4, L21_NL6_7 = 4, L21_NL6_8 = 4, L21_NL6_9 = 4, L21_NL6_10 = 4, L21_NL6_11 = 4, L21_NL6_12 = 4, L21_NL6_13 = 4, L21_NL6_15 = 4, L21_NL6_16 = 4, L21_NL6_17 = 4, L21_NL6_18 = 4, L21_NL6_19 = 4, L21_NL6_20 = 4, L21_NL6_21 = 4, L21_NL6_22 = 4, L21_NL6_23 = 4, L21_NL6_25 = 4, L21_NL6_26 = 4, L21_NL6_28 = 4	The respondent obtained adequate assistance or advice from a qualified source.
L21_NL6_1 = 4 & L22b_NL7 = 2 | L21_NL6_1 = 3, L21_NL6_2 = 3 , L21_NL6_4 = 3, L21_NL6_6 = 3, L21_NL6_7 = 3, L21_NL6_8 = 3, L21_NL6_9 = 3, L21_NL6_10 = 3, L21_NL6_11 = 3, L21_NL6_12 = 3, L21_NL6_13 = 3, L21_NL6_15 = 3, L21_NL6_16 = 3, L21_NL6_17 = 3, L21_NL6_18 = 3, L21_NL6_19 = 3, L21_NL6_20 = 3, L21_NL6_21 = 3, L21_NL6_22 = 3, L21_NL6_23 = 3, L21_NL6_25 = 3, L21_NL6_26 = 3, L21_NL6_28 = 3	The respondent did not obtain adequate assistance or advice because they did not obtain any help, or the help that they did obtain was not from a qualified source.
L21_NL6_* = 1|2 and R1_4 = 1, R1_5 = 1, R1_6 = 1, R1_7 = 1	The respondent did not get assistance or advice from any people or organisations due to a barrier to access.
L21_NL6_* = 1|2 and L34_1 = 1, L34_2 = 1, L34_3 = 1, L34_4 = 1, L34_5 = 1, L34_6 = 1, L34_9 = 1, L34_10 = 1, L34_7 = 1, L34_8 =1	Application of assumption: The respondent did not access assistance or advice but did access DRM, so there is an assumed barrier to A&A.
L21_NL6_* = 1|2 and L34_966 = 1, then R2_4 = 1, R2_5 = 1, R2_6 = 1, R2_7 = 1, R2_8=1	Application of assumption: If the respondent did not access A&A, and did not access DRM because of a barrier, the assumption is that there is a barrier to A&A.
L21_NL6_1 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_2 = 1 |2 , L21_NL6_4 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_6 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_7 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_8 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_9 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_10 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_11 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_12 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_13 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_15 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_16 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_17 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_18 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_19 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_20 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_21 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_22 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_23 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_25 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_26 = 1 |2, L21_NL6_28 = 1 |2	The respondent didn't think about getting help, or thought about it but did not try.
L21_NL6_* = 1|2 and R1_1 = 1, R1_2 = 1, R1_3 = 1	The respondent did not need assistance or advice.
L21_NL6_* = 1|2 and If L34_966 = 1, then R2_1 = 1, R2_2 = 1, R2_3 = 1	Application of assumption: If the respondent did not access A&A, and they did not access DRM because they did not need it, the assumption is that there is a lack of need for A&A.

LNS Question	LNS Responses	Indicator Value	Interpretation	Universe
L21	1. Family and friends = 3 | Family and friends = 4 & L22 = 2	0	Did not obtain adequate assistance or advice	All people who experienced a problem
	2. Council advice service / Trading standards = 3	0		
	4. General enquiries at local council / other local council department = 3	0		
	6. Citizens advice bureau = 3	0		
	7. Law Centre = 3	0		
	8. Other advice service = 3	0		
	9. Solicitor = 3	0		
	10. Barrister = 3	0		
	11. Licensed conveyancer = 3	0		
	12. Other lawyer = 3	0		
	13. Trade union / professional union = 3	0		
	14. The police = 3	0		
	15. Insurance company = 3	0		
L21	1. Family and friends = 4 & L22 = 1	1	Obtained adequate assistance or advice	All people who experienced a problem
	2. Council advice service / Trading standards = 4	1		
	4. General enquiries at local council / other local council department = 4	1		
	6. Citizens advice bureau = 4	1		
	7. Law Centre = 4	1		
	8. Other advice service = 4	1		
	9. Solicitor = 4	1		
	10. Barrister = 4	1		
	11. Licensed conveyancer = 4	1		
	12. Other lawyer = 4	1		
	13. Trade union / professional union = 4	1		
	14. The police = 4	1		
	15. Insurance company = 4	1		

R1	1. Issue resolved without needing to act	n/a	Did not need access	All people who experienced a problem but did not try to obtain assistance and advice (ALL L21_* == 1|2) excluding those who answered "Other" or "Don't know"
	2. The issue was not important enough	n/a		
	3. No dispute with anybody/ thought the other side was right	n/a		
	4. Didn't know what to do	0	Did not get help from another type of advisor or representative due to a barrier to access.	
	5. It would not have made any difference	0		
	6. Assumed it would have been too expensive	0		
	7. It would have been too difficult	0		
	8. Other	n/a		
	9. Don't know/ can't recall	n/a		
L34	1. Communicated with the party you had an issue with = 1	0	Did not get help from another type of advisor or representative due to a barrier to access.	All people who experienced a problem but did not try to obtain assistance and advice (ALL L21_* == 1|2) and did not answer the follow-up question (R1) because they accessed either DRM of Information (or both), excluding those who answered "Don't know"
	2. Obtained or organised evidence, or other material = 1	0		
	3. Made a claim to, made use of, or responded to a court or tribunal = 1	0		
	4. Made a claim to, made use of, or responded to a designated authority, such as an ombudsman or regulator (e.g. Ofcom, Financial Conduct Authority, etc.) = 1	0		
	5. Made a claim to, made use of, or responded to a religious or community body = 1	0		
	6. Arranged/involved in mediation (i.e. a mediator will help the two sides of the dispute to focus on the issue and consider the best way of solving it) = 1	0		
	7. Made an insurance claim = 1	0		
	8. Other = 1	0		
	9. Arranged/ involved in conciliation (i.e. a conciliator focuses on what both parties want and tries to find a way of solving the problem that both sides are happy with) = 1	0		
	10. Arranged/ involved in arbitration (i.e. an independent person listens to both sides, looks at the evidence and decides what the outcome should be) = 1	0		
	966. None of these	n/a	Did not need access to assistance and advice	
	977. Don't know / can't recall	n/a		

R2	1. Issue resolved without need for advice	n/a	Did not need access to assistance and advice	All people who experienced a problem but did not try to obtain assistance and advice (ALL L21_* == 1|2), did not answer the follow-up question (R1) and did not obtain DRM (L34 == 966), excluding those who answered "Don't know"
	2. I didn't need help / I knew enough myself	n/a		
	3. The issue was not important enough	n/a		
	4. I didn't think there are advisers that could help with this type of issue	0	Did not get help from another type of advisor or representative due to a barrier to access.	
	5. I didn't know where / how to get advice	0		
	6. It would not have made any difference	0		
	7. Assumed it would have been too expensive	0		
	8. It would have been too difficult (e.g. time, distance, etc.)	0		
	955. Other	0		
	977. Don't know / can't recall	n/a		

Table 3C: Operationalisation of access to dispute resolution mechanism indicator[48]

Outcome Indicator: People obtain access to the dispute resolution mechanism they need (SDG 16.3.3)	
2004 EW CSJS Survey	
LNS questions:	
S30a: Did [you/your partner], or did anybody acting on [your/their] behalf, attend a court or tribunal to try to resolve [problem descriptor]? S30i: Did [you/your partner] or anybody acting on [your/their] behalf contact an ombudsman to try to resolve [the problem]? S30f: Did [you/your partner] attend any mediation or conciliation sessions with any of these organisations or a similar organisation to try to resolve [the problem]? S34a: Why didn't you (your partner) do anything to try to resolve the problem or dispute?	
For assumptions related to Access to Information and Assistance and Advice:	
S28c: [Were you/was your partner] able to obtain some or all of the advice or information [you were/your partner was] seeking from [answer from S28a/S28b2 – IF more than one of any type, insert as First solicitor, second solicitor etc.]? S28a: Did [you/your partner] try to contact any of these people or organisations to obtain advice or information to help [you/them] resolve this problem or dispute?	
Coding	**Interpretation**
s30a_1 = 1 s30a_2 = 1 s30i = 1 s30f = 1	The respondent needed and successfully accessed a DRM
s30a_3 = 1 (No, respondent did not attend a court/tribunal) s30i = 2 s30f = 2 and s34a_5 = 1, s34a_6 = 1, s34a_7 = 1, s34a_8 = 1, s34a_9 = 1, s34a_10 = 1, s34a_11 = 1, s34a_12 = 1, s34a_13 = 1	The respondent needed a DRM but was unable to access one due to a barrier.
(s28a_19 = 1 or s28a_18 = 1) and (s28c = 1 or s28c =2) or (s28a_19 = 1 or s28a_18 = 1) and (s28c is missing) or (s28a is missing) and (s28c is missing)	Application of assumption: If the respondent did not access DRM, and they either (a) did not access adequate A&A, or (b) responses on access to information and A&A are both missing, they are assumed to have needed DRM but were unable to access it due to a barrier to access.
s30a_4 = 1	Excluded from denominator.
s34a_1 = 1, s34a_2 = 1, s34a_3 = 1, s34a_4 = 1	The respondent did not need DRM

48 As is the case with the preceding table, and in line with the footnote that immediately precedes this one, the operationalisation of the dispute resolution mechanism indicator shown here is the recommended approach. For the regression analysis in Part B, however, the indicator is simplified to a binary measure of whether respondents accessed a dispute resolution mechanism, without distinguishing lack of need, for the reasons described in the preceding footnote.

s30a_3 =1 s30i = 2 s30f = 2 and s28a_1 = 1, s28a_2 = 1, s28a_3 = 1, s28a_4 = 1, s28a_5 = 1, s28a_6 = 1, s28a_7 = 1, s28a_8 = 1, s28a_9 = 1, s28a_10 = 1, s28a_11 = 1, s28a_12 = 1, s28a_13 = 1, s28a_14 = 1, s28a_15 = 1, s28a_16 = 1, s28a_17 = 1		Application of assumption: If the respondent did not access DRM but they did obtain adequate A&A, they are assumed to have not needed DRM.		
s30a_3 =1 s30i = 2 s30f = 2 and [s27a = 1 and s28a_19 = 1]		Application of assumption: If the respondent did not access DRM, and they did not obtain A&A because they did not need it, they are assumed to have not needed DRM.		
LNS Question	**LNS Responses**	**Indicator Value**	**Interpretation**	**Universe**
S30a	1. Yes - respondent attended	1	The respondent needed and successfully accessed a DRM.	All people who experienced a problem, excluding those who answered "Don't know"
	2. Yes - someone acting on respondent's behalf attended	1		
	3. No	0	The respondent did not access a DRM.	
	4. Don't Know	n/a		
s30i	1. Yes	1	The respondent needed and successfully accessed a DRM.	All people who experienced a problem, excluding those who answered "Don't know" or "Refused"
	2. No	0	The respondent did not access a DRM.	
	3. Don't know	n/a		
	4. Refused	n/a		
s30f	1. Yes	1	The respondent needed and successfully accessed a DRM.	All people who experienced a problem, excluding those who answered "Mediation/conciliation session planned for future", "Don't know" or "Refused"
	2. No	0	The respondent did not access a DRM.	
	3. Mediation/ conciliation session planned for future	n/a		
	4. Don't know	n/a		
	5. Refused	n/a		

S34a	5. Thought it would take too much time	0	Did not obtain adequate access to DRM due to barriers to access	All individuals who do not seek advice or information and do not go through the process. Excluding those who answered “No dispute with anybody/ thought other person was right”, “Did not think it was very important”, “Thought it would resolve itself”, “Problem was over and done with” or “Don’t know”
	6. Thought it would cost too much	0		
	7. Thought it would be too stressful to sort out	0		
	8. Thought it would damage relationship with other side	0		
	9. Was scared to do anything	0		
	10. Did not know what to do/who to go to	0		
	11. Was uncertain of my rights	0		
	12. Did not think it would make any difference to the outcome	0		
	13. Other (specify)	0		
	1. No dispute with anybody/thought other person was right	n/a	Did not need access to DRM	
	2. Did not think it was very important	n/a		
	3. Thought it would resolve itself	n/a		
	4. Problem was over and done with	n/a		
	14. Don’t know	n/a		

S28a	1. General Enquiries	n/a	Did not need access to DRM	All people who experienced a problem, excluding those who answered “Don’t know” or “Refused”.
	2. Council Advice Service	n/a		
	3. Trading Standards	n/a		
	4. Other Council Department	n/a		
	5. Citizens Advice Bureau	n/a		
	6. Law Centre	n/a		
	7. Other Advice Agency	n/a		
	8. Trade Union/ Professional Body	n/a		
	9. A solicitor	n/a		
	10. A barrister	n/a		
	11. The Police	n/a		
	12. Your employer	n/a		
	13. An insurance company	n/a		
	14. A doctor or other health worker	n/a		
	15. A Jobcentre	n/a		
	16. A social worker	n/a		
	17. An MP or local councillor	n/a		
	18. Other (please say who or what)	0	Did not obtain adequate access to DRM due to barriers to access	
	19. None of these	0		
	20. Don’t know	n/a		
	21. Refused	n/a		
s28c	1. All the advice or information I needed	n/a	Did not need access to DRM	All people who answered question S28a that they tried to contact any of these people or organisations to obtain advice or information to help [you/them] resolve this problem or dispute, excluding those who answered “Don’t know” in s28c.
	2. Some of the advice or information I needed	n/a		
	3. None of the advice or information I needed	0	Did not obtain adequate access to DRM due to barriers to access	
	-1. Don’t know	n/a		

2014–15 Legal Problem Resolution Survey				
LNS questions:				
D7a: Did any of the following things happen as part of this problem or sorting it out? E35a: Why did you decide not to? For assumptions related to Access to Information and Assistance and Advice: D5a: When trying to sort out this PROBLEM DESCRIPTION, did you obtain information, advice or any other form of help from any of the following?				
Coding		**Interpretation**		
D7a = 1 (Respondent contacted a regulator or ombudsman) D7b = 1 (Respondent made a claim to a tribunal/ court/court process) D7c = 1 (The other side took the claim to a tribunal/court/court process) D7d = 1 (Respondent participated in an independent conciliation, mediation, or arbitration)		The respondent needed and successfully accessed a DRM		
E35_d = 1, E35_e = 1, E35_f = 1, E35_g = 1, E35_h = 1, E35_i = 1, E35_j = 1, E35_l = 1 (The respondent didn't go to a court/tribunal due to a barrier)		The respondent needed a DRM but was unable to access one due to a barrier.		
D7e = 1 and D5a_a = 1, D5a_b = 1, D5a_c = 1, D5a_d = 1, D5a_k = 1		Application of assumption: If the respondent did not access DRM, and they either (a) did not access adequate A&A, or (b) responses on access to information and A&A are both missing, they are assumed to have needed DRM but were unable to access it due to a barrier to access.		
D7f = 1, D7g = 1 (Respondent indicated 'don't know' or refused to answer about DRM services)		Excluded from denominator.		
E35_a = 1, E35_b = 1, E35_c = 1, E35_k = 1, E35_m = 1, E35_n = 1		The respondent did not need DRM		
D7e = 1 and D5a_e = 1, D5a_f = 1, D5a_g = 1, D5a_h = 1, D5a_i = 1, D5a_j = 1		Application of assumption: If the respondent did not access DRM but did obtain adequate A&A, they are assumed to have not needed DRM.		
LNS Question	**LNS Responses**	**Indicator Value**	**Interpretation**	**Universe**

D7	a. Did you, or somebody acting on your behalf, contact a regulator or ombudsman	1	The respondent needed and successfully accessed a DRM.	All people who experienced a problem, excluding those who answered "Don't know" or "Refusal".
	b. Did you make a claim to a tribunal or court or make use of a court process, such as money claim online.	1		
	c. Did the other side take a claim to a tribunal or court or make use of a court process?	1		
	d. Did you participate in independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration - by this we mean when a neutral third party helps both sides try to reach a solution	1		
	e. None of the above	0	The respondent did not access a DRM.	
	f. Don't know	n/a		
	g. Refusal	n/a		
E35	d. Court fees too high	0	Did not obtain adequate access to DRM due to barriers to access	People who answered "Yes" to question E34: Did you ever consider taking this matter to court? Excluding those who answered "Case not strong enough/ may have lost", "Problem resolved without need to", "Too trivial", "Problem still ongoing/may do in the future", "Don't know", or "Refusal
	e. Lawyers too expensive	0		
	f. Couldn't afford to take time off work	0		
	g. It would have taken too long	0		
	h. It would have been too stressful	0		
	i. Private/personal/family matter	0		
	j. I would have had to represent myself	0		
	l. Other (specify)	0		
	a. Case not strong enough/may have lost	n/a	Did not need access to DRM	
	b. Problem resolved without need to	n/a		
	c. Too trivial	n/a		
	k. Problem still ongoing/ may do in the future	n/a		
	m. Don't know	n/a		
	n. Refusal	n/a		

D5a	a= The Internet	0	Did not obtain adequate assistance or advice	All people who experienced a problem, excluding those who answered "Other answers", "Don't know" or "Refused"
	b = A leaflet, book or self-help guide	0		
	c= Family or friends	0		
	d= Those on the other side of the problem or dispute	0		
	k= DO NOT READ OUT: Did not obtain information, advice or help	0		
	e= A lawyer, such as a solicitor or barrister	n/a	Did not need access to DRM	
	f= Another independent adviser or representative, such as Citizens Advice, a trade union, Shelter or the Money Advice Service etc.	n/a		
	g= Police	n/a		
	h= Credit Card Company/Bank	n/a		
	i= Housing Association/ Landlord	n/a		
	j= Local Council/Council department	n/a		
	l= Other answers	n/a		
	m= Don't know	n/a		
	n= Refused	n/a		
D5a	a= The Internet	n/a	Did not need access to DRM	All people who experienced a problem, excluding those who answered "Other answers", "Don't know" or "Refused"
	b = A leaflet, book or self-help guide	n/a		
	c= Family or friends	n/a		
	d= Those on the other side of the problem or dispute	n/a		
	e= A lawyer, such as a solicitor or barrister	n/a		
	f= Another independent adviser or representative, such as Citizens Advice, a trade union, Shelter or the Money Advice Service etc.	n/a		
	g= Police	n/a		
	h= Credit Card Company/Bank	n/a		
	i= Housing Association/ Landlord	n/a		
	j= Local Council/Council department	n/a		
	k= DO NOT READ OUT: Did not obtain information, advice or help	0	Did not obtain adequate access to DRM due to barriers to access	
	l= Other answers	n/a		
	m= Don't know	n/a		
	n= Refused	n/a		

2023 Individual Legal Needs Survey	
LNS Questions:	
L34: Did you, or anyone who was helping you, do any of these things as part of dealing with [contentious issue]? R1: Why didn't you do anything to try to resolve [contentious issue]? R2: Why didn't you try to get help from an independent adviser?	
For assumptions related to Access to Information and Assistance and Advice:	
L21: In dealing with [contentious issue], did you at any time think about, try, or successfully obtain information, advice or other assistance from the following people? L22b: Were any of them a professional adviser with knowledge of the type of issue that you were facing? L33a: Did you at any point look for or obtain any of the following? (Please select all that apply) L34: Did you, or anyone who was helping you, do any of these things as part of dealing with [contentious issue]? A4/NA4: How easy or difficult was it to do the following?	
Coding	**Interpretation**
L34_1 = 1, L34_2 = 1, L34_3 = 1, L34_4 = 1, L34_5 = 1, L34_6 = 1, L34_9 = 1, L34_10 = 1, L34_7 = 1, L34_8 =1	Respondent needed and was able to access DRM
If L34_966 = 1 and R2_4 = 1, R2_5 = 1, R2_6 = 1, R2_7 = 1	The respondent needed but was unable to access DRM because of a barrier
If L34_966 = 1 and R1_4 = 1, R1_5 = 1, R1_6 = 1, R1_7 = 1	The respondent needed but was unable to access DRM because of a barrier
If L34_966 = 1 and L21_NL6_1 = 4 & L22b_NL7 = 2 or L21_NL6_1 = 3, L21_NL6_2 = 3 , L21_NL6_4 = 3, L21_NL6_6 = 3, L21_NL6_7 = 3, L21_NL6_8 = 3, L21_NL6_9 = 3, L21_NL6_10 = 3, L21_NL6_11 = 3, L21_NL6_12 = 3, L21_NL6_13 = 3, L21_NL6_15 = 3, L21_NL6_16 = 3, L21_NL6_17 = 3, L21_NL6_18 = 3, L21_NL6_19 = 3, L21_NL6_20 = 3, L21_NL6_21 = 3, L21_NL6_22 = 3, L21_NL6_23 = 3, L21_NL6_25 = 3, L21_NL6_26 = 3, L21_NL6_28 = 3 & L33a_1 = 3	Application of assumption: If the respondent did not access DRM, and they were unable to access A&A or information due to a barrier, they are assumed to have encountered a barrier to DRM.
L34_966 = 1	The respondent did not access DRM
L34_966 = 1 and R1_1 = 1, R1_2 = 1, R1_3 = 1	The respondent did not access DRM because they did not need it.
L34_966 = 1 and R2_1 = 1, R2_2 = 1, R2_3 = 1	Application of assumption: if respondent did not access DRM, and they indicated that they did not access A&A because they did not need it, they are assumed to have not needed access to DRM.

If L34_966 = 1 and L21_NL6_1 = 4 & L22b_NL7 = 1 or L21_NL6_2 = 4 , L21_NL6_4 = 4, L21_NL6_6 = 4, L21_NL6_7 = 4, L21_NL6_8 = 4, L21_NL6_9 = 4, L21_NL6_10 = 4, L21_NL6_11 = 4, L21_NL6_12 = 4, L21_NL6_13 = 4, L21_NL6_15 = 4, L21_NL6_16 = 4, L21_NL6_17 = 4, L21_NL6_18 = 4, L21_NL6_19 = 4, L21_NL6_20 = 4, L21_NL6_21 = 4, L21_NL6_22 = 4, L21_NL6_23 = 4, L21_NL6_25 = 4, L21_NL6_26 = 4, L21_NL6_28 = 4	Application of assumption: If the respondent did not access DRM but did obtain adequate A&A, they are assumed to have not needed DRM.			
LNS Question	**LNS Responses**	**Indicator Value**	**Interpretation**	**Universe**
L34	1. Communicated with the party you had an issue with = 1	1	The respondent needed and successfully accessed a DRM.	All people who experienced a problem, excluding those who answered "Don't know / can't recall"
	2. Obtained or organised evidence, or other material = 1	1		
	3. Made a claim to, made use of, or responded to a court or tribunal = 1	1		
	4. Made a claim to, made use of, or responded to a designated authority, such as an ombudsman or regulator (e.g. Ofcom, Financial Conduct Authority, etc.) = 1	1		
	5. Made a claim to, made use of, or responded to a religious or community body = 1	1		
	6. Arranged/involved in mediation (i.e. a mediator will help the two sides of the dispute to focus on the issue and consider the best way of solving it) = 1	1		
	7. Made an insurance claim = 1	1		
	8. Other = 1	1		
	9. Arranged/ involved in conciliation (i.e. a conciliator focuses on what both parties want and tries to find a way of solving the problem that both sides are happy with) = 1	1		
	10. Arranged/ involved in arbitration (i.e. an independent person listens to both sides, looks at the evidence and decides what the outcome should be) = 1	1		
	966. None of these = 1	0	Did not access DRM	
	977. Don't know / can't recall	n/a		

R2	1. Issue resolved without need for advice	n/a	Did not need access to DRM	All people who experienced a problem but did not access DRM (ALL L34_966 == 1), excluding those who answered "Don't know"
	2. I didn't need help / I knew enough myself	n/a		
	3. The issue was not important enough	n/a		
	4. I didn't think there are advisers that could help with this type of issue	0	Did not access DRM due to a barrier.	
	5. I didn't know where / how to get advice	0		
	6. It would not have made any difference	0		
	7. Assumed it would have been too expensive	0		
	8. It would have been too difficult (e.g. time, distance, etc.)	0		
	955. Other	0		
	977. Don't know / can't recall	n/a		
L21	1. Family and friends = 4 & L22 = 1	0	Did not access DRM due to a barrier.	All people who experienced a problem but did not access DRM (L34_966 == 1), and did not answer the follow-up question (R2)
	2. Council advice service / Trading standards = 4	0		
	4. General enquiries at local council / other local council department = 4	0		
	6. Citizens advice bureau = 4	0		
	7. Law Centre = 4	0		
	8. Other advice service = 4	0		
	9. Solicitor = 4	0		
	10. Barrister = 4	0		
	11. Licensed conveyancer = 4	0		
	12. Other lawyer = 4	0		
	13. Trade union / professional union = 4	0		
	14. The police = 4	0		
	15. Insurance company = 4	0		
L33a_1	Information to help manage the issue = 1|2	n/a	Did not need access to DRM	All people who experienced a problem but did not access DRM (ALL L34_966 == 1), and did not answer the follow-up question (R2)
L33a_1	Information to help manage the issue = 3	0	Did not access DRM due to a barrier.	All people who experienced a problem but did not access DRM (ALL L34_966 == 1), and did not answer the follow-up question (R2)

Table 3D: Operationalisation of legal capability indicator

2014–15 Legal Problem Resolution Survey					
LNS questions					
E55: Which of the following descriptions (if any) indicates how you thought of the problem when it first started? B1: First, if you had a disagreement with somebody about money they owed you, how confident would you feel dealing with the situation without help from a professional advisor? B3: Now thinking about if you were dealing with a disagreement with an ex-partner about dividing up possessions. How confident would you personally feel dealing with the situation without help from a professional advisor? C8: How confident are you that you can tell whether the information you find on the internet is accurate and reliable?					
Coding		**Interpretation**			
E55c = 1 | E55d = 1 | E55e = 1 | E55f = 1		Higher legal capability			
E55a = 1 | E55b = 1 | E55g = 1		Lower legal capability			
B1 = 1|2|3|4, B3 = 1|2|3|4, C8 = 1|2|3|4		Legal confidence score between 0 and 1 where 1 indicates higher capability and 0 indicates lower capability			
LNS Question	**LNS Responses**	**Indicator Value**	**Interpretation**	**Estimation Details**	**Universe**
E55c	1 = Criminal	1	Respondent understands the legal nature of their problem.	Individual legal capability is measured via an indicator constructed by averaging these four question (E55, B1, B3, C8). The resulting indicator ranges from 0 (lowest legal capability) to 1 (highest legal capability).	All people who experienced a problem
E55d	1 = Legal	1			
E55e	1 = Social	1			
E55f	1 = Family or community (for example something to be dealt with within the family or community)	1			
E55a	1 = Bad luck or part of life	0	Respondent does not understand the legal nature of the problem.		
E55b	1 = Moral	0			
E55g	1 = DO NOT READ OUT: None of these	0			
B1	1 = Very confident	4	Respondent's answers to these three questions are normalised into a score on a scale from 0 to 1, where a higher score indicates greater legal capability.		
	2 = Fairly confident	3			
	3 = Not very confident	2			
	4 = Not at all confident	1			
B3	1 = Very confident	4			
	2 = Fairly confident	3			
	3 = Not very confident	2			
	4 = Not at all confident	1			
C8	1 = Very confident	4			
	2 = Fairly confident	3			
	3 = Not very confident	2			
	4 = Not at all confident	1			

2023 Individual Legal Needs Survey		
LNS questions:		
L3: How would you personally describe [contentious issue]? L6: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about [contentious issue]? At the time the issue first started ... L6_1: I understood my legal rights and responsibilities		
C2: Please think about if you found yourself facing a significant legal dispute, such as: being unreasonably sacked by your employer, injured as a result of someone else's negligence, involved in a dispute over money as part of a divorce, or facing eviction from your home. How confident are you that you could achieve an outcome that is fair and you would be happy with in the following situations?		
C2_1: Disagreement is substantial and tensions are running high		
C2_2: The other side says they 'will not rest until justice is done'		
C2_3: The other side refuses to speak to you except through their solicitor		
C2_4: A notice from court says you must complete certain forms, including setting out your case		
C2_5: The issue goes to court, a barrister represents the other side, and you are on your own		
C2_6: The court makes a judgement against you, which you see as unfair. You are told you have a right to appeal		
Coding		**Interpretation**
L3	L3_NL1 = 2, L3_NL1 = 3, L3_NL1 = 4, L3_NL1 = 5, L3_NL1 = 6, L3_NL1 = 7, L3_NL1 = 8	Higher legal capability
L3	L3_NL1 = 1, L3_NL1 = 966, L3_NL1 = 977	Lower legal capability
L6_1	L6_1 = 1, L6_1 = 2	Higher legal capability
L6_1	L6_1 = 3, L6_1 = 4	Lower legal capability
C2_score	C2_1 = 1|2|3|4, C2_2 = 1|2|3|4, C2_2 = 1|2|3|4, C2_2 = 1|2|3|4, C2_5 = 1|2|3|4, C2_6 = 1|2|3|4	Legal confidence score between 0 and 1 where 1 indicates higher capability and 0 indicates lower capability

LNS Question	LNS Responses	Indicator Value	Interpretation	Estimation Details	Universe
L3	1. Bad Luck	0	Low legal capability	Individual legal capability is measured via an indicator composed of these three questions (L3, L6_1, and C2_ score). For each respondent, their legal capability is estimated as the average of the three questions, with values ranging from 0 (lowest legal capability) to 1 (highest legal capability).	All people who experienced a problem
	2. Bureaucratic	1	High legal capability		
	3. A family or private matter	1			
	4. Legal	1			
	5. Political	1			
	6. A social or community matter	1			
	7. Economic / financial	1			
	8. Health	1			
	955. Other	n/a			
	966. None of these	0	Low legal capability		
	977. Don't know / can't recall	0			
L6_1	1. Strongly agree: I understood my legal rights and responsibilities	1	High legal capability		
	2. Mainly agree: I understood my legal rights and responsibilities	1			
	3. Mainly disagree: I understood my legal rights and responsibilities	0	Low legal capability		
	4. Strongly disagree: I understood my legal rights and responsibilities	0			

C2_score	1. Very confident	4	Respondents' answers to this question are normalised into a score on a scale from 0 to 1, where a higher score indicates greater legal capability.		
	2. Quite confident	3			
	3. Not very confident	2			
	4. Not confident at all	1			
E55d	1 = Legal	1			
E55e	1 = Social	1			
E55f	1 = Family or community (for example something to be dealt with within the family or community)	1			
E55a	1 = Bad luck or part of life	0	Respondent does not understand the legal nature of the problem.		
E55b	1 = Moral	0			
E55g	1 = DO NOT READ OUT: None of these	0			
B1	1 = Very confident	4	Respondent's answers to these three questions are normalised into a score on a scale from 0 to 1, where a higher score indicates greater legal capability.		
	2 = Fairly confident	3			
	3 = Not very confident	2			
	4 = Not at all confident	1			
B3	1 = Very confident	4			
	2 = Fairly confident	3			
	3 = Not very confident	2			
	4 = Not at all confident	1			
C8	1 = Very confident	4			
	2 = Fairly confident	3			
	3 = Not very confident	2			
	4 = Not at all confident	1			

Table 3E: Categorisation of manner of justice journey conclusion, 2023 ILNS

2023 Individual Legal Needs Survey				
Manners through which people conclude their justice journey				
Question O1: Which of the following statements best reflects how the issue outcome was ultimately brought about?				
LNS Question	**LNS Responses**	**Categorical variable value**	**Categorical variable interpretation**	**Universe**
O1	1 = A court (or tribunal) judgment	1	A decision by an adjudicative or administrative authority	Those with a concluded process
	2 = It was resolved by the relevant ombudsman			
	3 = There was a decision or intervention by another formal authority			
	12 = It was resolved by mediation (i.e. a mediator will help the two sides of the dispute to focus on the issue and consider the best way of solving it)	2	Agreement reached through mediation, arbitration, or reconciliation	
	13 = It was resolved by conciliation (i.e. a conciliator focuses on what both parties want and tries to find a way of solving the problem that both sides are happy with)			
	14 = It was resolved by arbitration (i.e. an independent person listens to both sides, looks at the evidence and decides what the outcome should be)			
	5 = It was resolved by action by another third party	4	Another third party	
	6 = You and the other party came to an agreement	3	An agreement reached by the parties	
	7 = The other party independently did what you wanted	5	The problem resolving on its own or unilateral resolution	
	8 = You independently did what the other party wanted			
	9 = The issue sorted itself out			
	10 = You moved away from the issue (e.g. moving home, changing job)	6	Exit	
	11 = You and/or all other parties gave up trying to resolve the issue			
	977 = Don't know/ can't recall			

Table 4. Measurement of reform exposure

2004 English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey				
Influence of justice reforms by problem type				
Coding		**Interpretation**		
Accident and health (personal injury and clinical negligence); consumer problems; domestic violence; welfare benefits; money and debt; housing (disrepairs); and land and property disputes		Most affected		
Employment		Least affected		
Family		Sensitivity checks: the reform-exposure analysis is first estimated with family problems among the least affected, and then re-estimated with family problems among the most affected.		
LNS Question	**LNS Responses**	**Indicator Value**	**Interpretation**	**Universe**
Problem type selected for main questionnaire follow-up	Being sacked or made redundant	0	The experienced legal problem is among those **least** affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Employment)	Those whose process has concluded
	Being threatened with the sack			
	Getting pay or a pension to which you were entitled			
	Other rights at work (e.g. maternity leave, sickness pay, holiday entitlement, working hours)			
	Harassment at work			
	Changes to your terms and conditions of employment that made things worse			
	Unsatisfactory or dangerous working conditions			
	Unfair disciplinary procedures			
	Difficulties obtaining child support payments	0	The experienced legal problem is among those least affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Family). (Note: the reform-exposure analysis was re-estimated with family problems included among the most affected problem types as a sensitivity analysis. Refer to the report for full details.)	
	Difficulties agreeing to pay child support payments			
	Difficulties with (residence) custody arrangements for children			
	Difficulties with (contact) access arrangements for children			
	Disputes over the division of money, pensions or property in connection with divorce or separation from a spouse or partner			
	Difficulties obtaining maintenance from a former partner for yourself (excluding payments for children)			
	Difficulties agreeing to pay maintenance to a former partner (excluding payments for children)			
	Divorce proceedings (even if no divorce was obtained)			

	Any injury or health problem since (January 2001/ the age of 18), either as a result of an accident or as a result of poor working conditions?	1	The experienced legal problem is among those most affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Accidental illness or injury)	
	Suffering as a result of negligent or wrong medical or dental treatment			
	Electrical goods (Faulty Goods)	1	The experienced legal problem is among those most affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Consumer)	
	Cars or motorcycles (Faulty Goods)			
	Furniture (Faulty Goods)			
	Clothing/footwear (Faulty Goods)			
	Major building work (e.g. conservatory, new roof) (Faulty Services)			
	Tradespeople (e.g. plumbers, electricians, painters and decorators) (Faulty Services)			
	Holidays/Travel (Faulty Services)			
	Garages (Faulty Services)			
	Getting the landlord to do repairs or maintain the property (Dealing with landlord)	1	The experienced legal problem is among those most affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Housing)	
	Unsafe living conditions (Condition of accommodation)			
	Otherwise unsuitable conditions for yourself/ family (Condition of accommodation)			
	Getting the landlord to provide other services under the terms of the lease, such as furniture (Dealing with landlord)			
	Agreeing (with your landlord) on rent, council tax, housing benefit payments, or other terms of the lease or tenancy agreement (Dealing with landlord)			
	Getting your landlord to provide a written lease or tenancy agreement (Dealing with landlord) Getting your landlord to provide a written lease or tenancy agreement (Dealing with landlord)			
	Transfer of tenancy on death or separation (Dealing with landlord)			
	Harassment by your landlord (Dealing with landlord)			
	Flatmates not paying the rent or behaving in an anti-social manner (Other problems)			
	Renting out rooms to lodgers or sub-letting in a property you rented (Other problems)			
	Eviction or threat of eviction (Dealing with landlord)			
	Being homeless or being threatened with being homeless			

	Dealing with squatters	1	The experienced legal problem is among those most affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Land and Property)	
	Planning permission or consent			
	Selling or buying property (e.g. misleading property survey, problems with lease)			
	Communal repairs or maintenance			
	Severe difficulties managing to pay money you owe(d) (Difficulty paying money)	1	The experienced legal problem is among those most affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Money & Debt)	
	Being threatened with legal action to recover money you owe(d) (Difficulty paying money)			
	Insurance companies unfairly rejecting claims (Difficulty obtaining money)			
	Incorrect information about you leading to a refusal of credit (Difficulty obtaining money)			
	Unreasonable harassment from people or organisations to whom you owe(d) money (Difficulty paying money)			
	Getting someone to pay money that they owe (Difficulty obtaining money)			
	Being given incorrect information or advice that led you to buy insurance, pensions, mortgages or other financial products (Poor financial advice/financial management)			
	Mismanagement of a pension fund (Poor financial advice/financial management)			
	Incorrect or disputed bills, excluding rent / mortgage payments (Other)			
	Incorrect or unfair tax demands, including council tax (Other)			
	Repeated incorrect charges by banks or utilities (Other)			
	Having a County Court judgement made against you (Difficulty paying money)			

	Amount of other grants (e.g. housing improvement grants)	1	The experienced legal problem is among those most affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Welfare)	
	Entitlement to welfare benefits (including council tax benefit, tax credits)			
	Entitlement to state pension/Pension credits			
	Entitlement to student loans or grants			
	Entitlement to other grants (e.g. housing improvement grants)			
	Amount of welfare benefits (including council tax benefit, tax credits)			
	Amount of student loans or grants			
	Amount of state pension/Pension credits			
	Suffering violence or abuse from a partner or ex-partner or other family member	1	The experienced legal problem is among those most affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Domestic Violence)	
	Your children suffering violence or abuse from a partner or ex-partner or other family member			

2014–15 Legal Problem Resolution Survey				
Influence of justice reforms by problem type				
Coding		**Interpretation**		
Accident and health; domestic violence; employment; family; housing; money and debt; and welfare benefits.		Most affected		
Land and property; consumer.		Least affected		
LNS Question	**LNS Responses**	**Indicator Value**	**Interpretation**	**Universe**
Problem type selected for main questionnaire follow-up	Getting pay or a pension to which you were entitled	1	The experienced legal problem is among those most affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Employment)	Those with a selected problem for the full questionnaire
	Other rights at work, e.g. maternity leave, sickness pay, holiday entitlement, or changes to your terms and conditions			
	Unsatisfactory or dangerous working conditions			
	Unfair disciplinary procedures or other treatment			
	Harassment or discrimination at work			
	Being threatened with or being sacked or made redundant			
	Obtaining or agreeing to pay child support payments	1	The experienced legal problem is among those most affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Family)	
	The division of property, finances, other assets, debts			
	Obtaining or agreeing to pay maintenance from or to a former partner excluding payments for children			
	Agreeing where children should live and how much time they spend with each parent.			
	Disagreement over division of property after death			
	Negligent or wrong medical treatment	1	The experienced legal problem is among those most affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Accidental Illness or Injury)	
	An accident caused by someone else			
	Poor working conditions			
	Harassment from people or businesses to whom you owed money	1	The experienced legal problem is among those most affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Money and Debt)	

	Getting someone or a business to pay money that they owe you			
	Being given incorrect information or advice from a professional that led you to buy insurance, pensions, mortgages or other financial products			
	Mismanagement of a pension fund or an investment resulting in financial loss			
	Incorrect or disputed bills, excluding rent/mortgage payments or tax assessment			
	Being behind with and unable to pay... (v) Other household bills such as electricity, internet or TV licence			
	Being behind with and unable to pay... (iii) Council tax or income tax			
	Being behind with and unable to pay... (vi) Fines			
	Being behind with and unable to pay... (i) Credit cards, store cards or personal loans - excluding mortgages			
	Being behind with and unable to pay... (ii) Hire Purchase or on-credit purchases			
	Insurance companies unfairly rejecting claims			
	Incorrect information about you leading to a refusal of credit			
	Severe difficulties managing to pay money you owed – including to family			
	Your entitlement to state benefits, tax credits, or state pensions	1	The experienced legal problem is among those most affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Welfare)	
	Getting the right amount of state benefits, tax credits, or state pensions			
	Problems relating to delays processing a claim or application for these state benefits/credits			
	Problems related to purchasing faulty vehicles or other high value items	0	The experienced legal problem is among those least affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Consumer)	
	Defective repairs to a vehicle, or other high value items			

	Defective building work or work by trades people such as plumbers			
	Services that were substantially short of what was promised, such as holidays			
	Major disruption in the supply of utilities such as water, gas, Internet			
	Planning permission or consent	0	The experienced legal problem is among those least affected by the Analytical Period 1 reforms (Land and Property)	
	Selling or buying property, such as a misleading property survey, or problems with a lease			
	Communal repairs or maintenance			

2023 Individual Legal Needs Survey				
Influence of justice reforms by manner of process conclusion				
Coding		**Interpretation**		
Court or tribunal judgement and, to a lesser extent, mediation		Most affected		
Ombudsman, by a decision or intervention by another formal authority, by conciliation, by arbitration, by action by another third-party, by agreement with the other party, by the other party doing what the individual wanted, by the individual doing what the other party wanted, by the issue sorting itself out and by the individual moving away from the issue.		Least affected		
LNS Question	**LNS Responses**	**Binary variable value**	**Binary variable interpretation**	**Universe**
O1: Which of the following statements best reflects how the issue outcome was ultimately brought about?	1 = A court (or tribunal) judgment	1	most	Those with a concluded process
	2 = It was resolved by the relevant ombudsman	0	least	
	3 = There was a decision or intervention by another formal authority	0	least	
	12 = It was resolved by mediation (i.e. a mediator will help the two sides of the dispute to focus on the issue and consider the best way of solving it)	1	most	
	13 = It was resolved by conciliation (i.e. a conciliator focuses on what both parties want and tries to find a way of solving the problem that both sides are happy with)	0	least	
	14 = It was resolved by arbitration (i.e. an independent person listens to both sides, looks at the evidence and decides what the outcome should be)	0	least	
	5 = It was resolved by action by another third party	0	least	
	6 = You and the other party came to an agreement	0	least	
	7 = The other party independently did what you wanted	0	least	
	8 = You independently did what the other party wanted	0	least	
	9 = The issue sorted itself out	0	least	
	10 = You moved away from the issue (e.g. moving home, changing job)	0	least	
	11 = You and/or all other parties gave up trying to resolve the issue	0	least	
	977 = Don't know/ can't recall		n/a	

Table 5. Descriptive statistics. Period 1 (2004 EW CSJS)

Variable	Unit of analysis	Category	Sample size	Weighted sample size	Weighted %
Problem resolution	Problem	Problem persists	1226	1249.4	50.4
		Problem resolved	1195	1219	49.2
		NA	9	8.5	0.3
Reform exposure: problem group	Problem	Less directly affected	461	475	19.2
		More directly affected	1969	2001.9	80.8
Access to assistance and advice	Problem	Accessed	1275	1297.5	52.4
		Did not access	630	645.8	26.1
		NA	525	533.6	21.5
Access to dispute resolution mechanisms	Problem	Accessed	246	255.2	10.3
		Barrier	2179	2216.8	89.5
		NA	5	4.9	0.2
Household income tier	Person	Below 2004 median income	338	339.9	21.4
		Above 2004 median income	660	669.9	42.2
		NA	572	576.7	36.3
Education tier	Person	Below advanced	503	510.1	32.2
		Advanced	700	713.9	45
		NA	367	362.5	22.8
Covariates: Sociodemographics and problem characteristics					
Problem severity	Problem	Lower severity	753	756.2	30.5
		Higher severity	1293	1322.9	53.4
		NA	384	397.8	16.1
Co-occurrence	Problem	1	1177	1184.9	47.8
		2+	1253	1292	52.2
Gender	Person	Men	697	705.9	44.5
		Women	859	866.7	54.6
		NA	14	13.9	0.9
Disability	Person	No	1097	1127.6	71.1
		Yes	470	455.9	28.7
		NA	3	2.9	0.2
Problem category	Problem	Accident and injury	322	329.3	13.3
		Consumer	557	554.5	22.4
		Domestic violence	42	41.7	1.7
		Employment	260	271.6	11

		Family	201	203.4	8.2
		Housing	553	572.7	23.1
		Land and property	85	83	3.4
		Money and debt	316	324	13.1
		Welfare benefits	94	96.7	3.9

Unweighted n reports the number of observed cases. Weighted estimates apply the survey weight used in the regression models and represent the estimated population distribution. Descriptive statistics are calculated before listwise deletion.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics, Period 2 (2014 LPRS)

Variable	Unit of analysis	Category	Sample size	Weighted sample size	Weighted %
Problem resolution	Problem	Problem persists	765	779.5	45.5
		Problem resolved	873	929.4	54.2
		NA	8	5.9	0.3
Reform exposure: problem group	Problem	Less directly affected	320	298.1	17.4
		More directly affected	1326	1416.7	82.6
Access to assistance and advice	Problem	Accessed	693	681.2	39.7
		Did not access	910	991.3	57.8
		NA	43	42.2	2.5
Access to dispute resolution mechanisms	Problem	Accessed	361	373.4	21.8
		Did not access	1282	1338.1	78
		NA	3	3.1	0.2
Household income tier	Person	Below 2014 median income	488	483.8	28.2
		Above 2014 median income	1028	1107.8	64.6
		NA	130	123.1	7.2
Education tier	Person	Below advanced	459	494.9	28.9
		Advanced	568	623.8	36.4
		NA	619	596	34.8
Legal capability tier	Person	Lower	604	607.7	35.4
		Higher	1042	1107	64.6
Covariates: Sociodemographic and problem characteristics					
Co_occurrence	Problem	1	1022	1064.8	62.1
		2	397	410.1	23.9
		3	149	162.9	9.5
		4+	68	67.6	3.9
		NA	10	9.3	0.5
Gender	Person	Men	782	820	47.8
		Women	864	894.7	52.2
Disability	Person	No	925	1091.6	63.7
		Yes	713	617.4	36
		NA	8	5.7	0.3

Problem category	Problem	Accident & health	138	135.7	7.9
		Consumer	207	200.9	11.7
		Employment	227	272.3	15.9
		Family	88	83.9	4.9
		Housing	451	495.6	28.9
		Land and property	113	97.1	5.7
		Money & debt	288	292.6	17.1
		Public benefits	134	136.6	8

Note: Statistics are calculated before cases with missing data are excluded from the regression analysis. For person-level variables, each person is counted once; for problem-level variables, each reported problem is counted separately. Missing values are shown as a separate category. Sample sizes are unweighted, while percentages are weighted using the same survey weights as the regression models. Weighted sample sizes are survey-weighted estimates and do not represent the actual number of people or problems observed.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics, Period 3 (2023 ILNS)

Variable	Category	Sample size	Weighted sample size	Weighted %
Problem resolution	Problem persists	1169	1140.51	27.68
	Problem resolved	3040	2979.13	72.32
Reform exposure: route to resolution	Less directly affected	2607	2561.49	90.21
	More directly affected	313	277.84	9.79
Access to assistance and advice	Accessed	3204	3061.65	62.1
	Did not access	1861	1868.51	37.9
Household income tier	Higher	2565	2379.89	49.8
	Lower	2372	2399.01	50.2
Education tier	Higher	5880	5675.9	96.07
	Lower	161	232.26	3.93
Legal capability	Higher	4232	4134.61	68.07
	Lower	1976	1939.46	31.93
Problem severity	Higher	2821	2774.64	45.68
	Lower	3387	3299.43	54.32
Co_occurrence	1	1525	1579.08	26
	2	1837	1795.6	29.56
	3	1326	1251.36	20.6
	4+	1520	1448.03	23.84
Co-occurrence indicator	Two or less	3362	3374.68	55.56
	More than 2	2846	2699.39	44.44
Covariates: Sociodemographic and problem characteristics.				
Gender	Men	2753	3019.95	49.72
	Women	3455	3054.12	50.28
Disability	No	4124	4078.07	67.21
	Yes	2075	1989.41	32.79
Problem category	Accidental Illness/ Injury	858	865.17	14.24
	Consumer	641	605.28	9.97
	Domestic Violence	220	230.52	3.8
	Employment	456	422.95	6.96
	Family	1071	1006.86	16.58
	Housing	1245	1285.48	21.16
	Land and property	715	650.43	10.71
	Money and Debt	666	682.93	11.24
	Public benefits	336	324.43	5.34

Note: These variable statistics are at the person level.

Table 8. Association between reform exposure and problem resolution, Period 1: Base model

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Base model Logit	**Base model OLS**	**Base model, Check 1 Logit**	**Base model, Check 1 OLS**	**Base model, Check 2 Logit**	**Base model, Check 2 OLS**	**Base model, Services Logit**	**Base model, Services OLS**
Intercept (reference group)	0.18	0.544***	0.03	0.508***	0.17	0.542***	0.41	0.600***
	(0.25)	*(0.061)*	*(0.27)*	*(0.066)*	*(0.27)*	*(0.065)*	*(0.34)*	*(0.082)*
Most directly affected problem (vs. least directly affected)	-0.19	-0.046					-0.12	-0.029
	(0.16)	*(0.039)*					*(0.18)*	*(0.043)*
Most directly affected problem (vs. least affected, family excluded)			-0.20	-0.049				
			(0.19)	*(0.046)*				
Most directly affected problem (vs. least affected, family reclassified as more affected)					-0.18	-0.044		
					(0.19)	*(0.046)*		
Did not access assistance and representation							0.18	0.042
							(0.16)	*(0.038)*
Did not access a dispute resolution mechanism							-0.49**	-0.117**
							(0.23)	*(0.054)*
Are women	-0.03	-0.007	0.07	0.016	-0.02	-0.006	0.00	0.001
	(0.13)	*(0.032)*	*(0.14)*	*(0.033)*	*(0.13)*	*(0.032)*	*(0.14)*	*(0.034)*
Advanced education (vs. below advanced)	0.28**	0.068**	0.36***	0.089***	0.28**	0.069**	0.25*	0.060*
	(0.13)	*(0.032)*	*(0.14)*	*(0.034)*	*(0.13)*	*(0.033)*	*(0.15)*	*(0.035)*
Higher income, above 2004 median (vs. below)	0.02	0.004	0.04	0.010	0.01	0.003	-0.09	-0.022
	(0.13)	*(0.033)*	*(0.14)*	*(0.034)*	*(0.13)*	*(0.033)*	*(0.14)*	*(0.035)*
Has a disability (vs. no disability)	-0.55***	-0.135***	-0.53***	-0.129***	-0.55***	-0.134***	-0.65***	-0.156***
	(0.15)	*(0.036)*	*(0.15)*	*(0.037)*	*(0.15)*	*(0.036)*	*(0.16)*	*(0.038)*
Problem severity (1-10 scale)	0.00	0.001	0.01	0.003	0.01	0.002	0.03	0.007
	(0.02)	*(0.005)*	*(0.02)*	*(0.005)*	*(0.02)*	*(0.005)*	*(0.03)*	*(0.006)*
2+ co-occurring problems (vs. 1 problem)	-0.15	-0.036	-0.14	-0.034	-0.15	-0.037	-0.08	-0.019
	(0.13)	*(0.032)*	*(0.14)*	*(0.033)*	*(0.13)*	*(0.032)*	*(0.15)*	*(0.035)*
N	1061	1061	978	978	1061	1061	848	848

Note: Logit and ordinary least squares (OLS) columns present results from two different statistical models used as robustness checks. Standard errors are shown in parentheses. The main results reported in the text and figures are average marginal effects (AMEs), expressed as percentage-point differences in the probability of problem resolution and estimated from Model 1. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01.

Table 9. Association between reform exposure and problem resolution, Period 1: Moderation analysis

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Interaction model, assistance & advice Logit	**Interaction model, assistance & advice OLS**	**Interaction model, income Logit**	**Interaction model, income OLS**	**Interaction model, education Logit**	**Interaction model, education OLS**
Intercept (reference group)	0.47	0.612***	0.53	0.627***	0.54	0.629***
	(0.35)	*(0.082)*	*(0.39)*	*(0.093)*	*(0.37)*	*(0.088)*
Most directly affected problem (vs. least directly affected)	-0.22	-0.053	-0.27	-0.064	-0.30	-0.071
	(0.20)	*(0.049)*	*(0.30)*	*(0.070)*	*(0.27)*	*(0.064)*
Did not access assistance and advice	-0.21	-0.049	0.17	0.042	0.18	0.044
	(0.36)	*(0.088)*	*(0.16)*	*(0.038)*	*(0.16)*	*(0.038)*
Higher household income, above 2004 median (vs. below)	-0.10	-0.024	-0.27	-0.065	-0.09	-0.023
	(0.14)	*(0.035)*	*(0.31)*	*(0.074)*	*(0.14)*	*(0.035)*
Advanced education (vs. below advanced)	0.26*	0.061*	0.25*	0.060*	0.02	0.006
	(0.15)	*(0.035)*	*(0.15)*	*(0.035)*	*(0.30)*	*(0.073)*
Most affected × Did not access assistance and advice	0.46	0.110				
	(0.40)	*(0.096)*				
Most affected × higher household income			0.24	0.056		
			(0.36)	*(0.086)*		
Most affected × advanced education					0.30	0.071
					(0.34)	*(0.083)*
Did not access a dispute resolution mechanism	-0.47**	-0.113**	-0.49**	-0.117**	-0.49**	-0.119**
	(0.23)	*(0.054)*	*(0.23)*	*(0.054)*	*(0.23)*	*(0.054)*
Are women	0.01	0.002	-0.00	-0.000	0.01	0.002
	(0.14)	*(0.034)*	*(0.14)*	*(0.034)*	*(0.14)*	*(0.034)*
Has a disability (vs. no disability)	-0.64***	-0.154***	-0.65***	-0.156***	-0.64***	-0.155***
	(0.16)	*(0.039)*	*(0.16)*	*(0.038)*	*(0.16)*	*(0.038)*
Problem severity (1-10 scale)	0.03	0.007	0.03	0.007	0.03	0.007
	(0.03)	*(0.006)*	*(0.03)*	*(0.006)*	*(0.03)*	*(0.006)*
2+ co-occurring problems (vs. 1 problem)	-0.08	-0.020	-0.08	-0.020	-0.08	-0.019
	(0.15)	*(0.035)*	*(0.15)*	*(0.035)*	*(0.15)*	*(0.035)*
N	848	848	848	848	848	848

Note: Logit and ordinary least squares (OLS) columns present results from two different statistical models used as robustness checks. Standard errors are shown in parentheses. The main results reported in the text and figures are average marginal effects (AMEs), expressed as percentage-point differences in the probability of problem resolution and estimated from Model 1. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01.

Table 10. Association between reform exposure and problem resolution, Period 2

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Variable	**Base model Logit**	**Base model OLS**	**Base model, services Logit**	**Base model, services OLS**
Intercept (reference group)	1.46***	0.850***	1.52***	0.863***
	(0.40)	*(0.093)*	*(0.47)*	*(0.110)*
Most directly affected problem (vs. least directly affected)	-0.39**	-0.092**	-0.37*	-0.087*
	(0.20)	*(0.045)*	*(0.20)*	*(0.045)*
Higher legal capability (vs. lower)	-0.05	-0.012	-0.04	-0.009
	(0.17)	*(0.040)*	*(0.17)*	*(0.041)*
Higher household income, above 2014 median (vs. below)	-0.20	-0.047	-0.19	-0.045
	(0.20)	*(0.047)*	*(0.20)*	*(0.047)*
Advanced education (vs. below advanced)	-0.07	-0.017	-0.05	-0.011
	(0.16)	*(0.039)*	*(0.16)*	*(0.039)*
Has a disability (vs. no disability)	-0.31*	-0.074*	-0.28*	-0.067*
	(0.16)	*(0.039)*	*(0.16)*	*(0.040)*
Did not access assistance and advice			0.10	0.025
			(0.17)	*(0.040)*
Did not access a dispute resolution mechanism			-0.15	-0.034
			(0.20)	*(0.047)*
Are women	-0.18	-0.042	-0.19	-0.045
	(0.16)	*(0.038)*	*(0.16)*	*(0.038)*
Problem severity (8-20 scale)	-0.02	-0.006	-0.03	-0.007
	(0.02)	*(0.005)*	*(0.02)*	*(0.005)*
2 co-occurring problems (vs. 1 problem)	-0.29	-0.069	-0.28	-0.067
	(0.18)	*(0.044)*	*(0.18)*	*(0.044)*
3 co-occurring problems (vs. 1 problem)	-0.37	-0.091	-0.39	-0.095
	(0.29)	*(0.071)*	*(0.29)*	*(0.071)*
4+ co-occurring problems (vs. 1 problem)	-0.37	-0.089	-0.33	-0.079
	(0.40)	*(0.097)*	*(0.40)*	*(0.098)*
N	945	945	928	928

Note: Logit and ordinary least squares (OLS) columns present results from two different statistical models used as robustness checks. Standard errors are shown in parentheses. The main results reported in the text and figures are average marginal effects (AMEs), expressed as percentage-point differences in the probability of problem resolution and estimated from Model 1. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01.

Table 11. Association between reform exposure and problem resolution, Period 2: Moderation analysis

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Interaction model, income Logit	**Interaction model, income OLS**	**Interaction model, income Logit**	**Interaction model, income OLS**	**Interaction model, education Logit**	**Interaction model, education OLS**
Intercept (reference group)	2.06***	0.974***	1.77***	0.917***	1.56***	0.872***
	(0.65)	*(0.132)*	*(0.55)*	*(0.123)*	*(0.51)*	*(0.117)*
Most directly affected problem (vs. least directly affected)	-0.95*	-0.205**	-0.63*	-0.143*	-0.43	-0.099
	(0.53)	*(0.099)*	*(0.36)*	*(0.076)*	*(0.33)*	*(0.074)*
Most affected x above median household income	0.65	0.135				
	(0.56)	*(0.109)*				
Most affected × advanced education			0.35	0.079		
			(0.43)	*(0.094)*		
Most affected × higher legal capability					0.09	0.019
					(0.41)	*(0.092)*
Higher legal capability (vs. lower)	-0.03	-0.008	-0.04	-0.010	-0.11	-0.025
	(0.17)	*(0.041)*	*(0.17)*	*(0.041)*	*(0.36)*	*(0.081)*
Higher household income, above 2014 median (vs. below)	-0.78	-0.166*	-0.20	-0.048	-0.19	-0.045
	(0.53)	*(0.098)*	*(0.20)*	*(0.047)*	*(0.20)*	*(0.047)*
Advanced education (vs. below advanced)	-0.06	-0.014	-0.35	-0.077	-0.05	-0.011
	(0.17)	*(0.039)*	*(0.39)*	*(0.083)*	*(0.16)*	*(0.039)*
Has a disability (vs. no disability)	-0.28*	-0.068*	-0.28*	-0.068*	-0.28*	-0.067*
	(0.16)	*(0.040)*	*(0.16)*	*(0.040)*	*(0.16)*	*(0.040)*
Did not access assistance and advice	0.11	0.027	0.11	0.026	0.10	0.024
	(0.17)	*(0.040)*	*(0.17)*	*(0.040)*	*(0.17)*	*(0.040)*
Did not access a dispute resolution mechanism	-0.15	-0.036	-0.15	-0.034	-0.14	-0.034
	(0.20)	*(0.047)*	*(0.20)*	*(0.047)*	*(0.20)*	*(0.047)*
Are women	-0.19	-0.044	-0.20	-0.047	-0.19	-0.045
	(0.16)	*(0.038)*	*(0.16)*	*(0.038)*	*(0.16)*	*(0.038)*
Problem severity (8-20 scale)	-0.03	-0.007	-0.03	-0.007	-0.03	-0.007
	(0.02)	*(0.005)*	*(0.02)*	*(0.005)*	*(0.02)*	*(0.005)*
2 co-occurring problems (vs. 1 problem)	-0.27	-0.066	-0.28	-0.068	-0.28	-0.067
	(0.18)	*(0.044)*	*(0.18)*	*(0.044)*	*(0.18)*	*(0.044)*
3 co-occurring problems (vs. 1 problem)	-0.40	-0.097	-0.38	-0.093	-0.39	-0.094
	(0.29)	*(0.071)*	*(0.29)*	*(0.071)*	*(0.29)*	*(0.071)*
4+ co-occurring problems (vs. 1 problem)	-0.31	-0.075	-0.33	-0.078	-0.32	-0.078
	(0.40)	*(0.098)*	*(0.40)*	*(0.097)*	*(0.40)*	*(0.098)*
N	928	928	928	928	928	928

Note: Logit and ordinary least squares (OLS) columns present results from two different statistical models used as robustness checks. Standard errors are shown in parentheses. The main results reported in the text and figures are average marginal effects (AMEs), expressed as percentage-point differences in the probability of problem resolution and estimated from Model 1. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01.

Table 12. Association between reform exposure and problem resolution, Period 3

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Base model Logit	**Base model OLS**	**Base model - assistance and advice Logit**	**Base model - assistance and advice OLS**
Intercept (reference group)	1.176**	0.753***	1.653***	0.814***
	(0.477)	*(0.081)*	*(0.510)*	*(0.086)*
Most directly affected route (vs. least directly affected)	0.047	0.007	-0.144	-0.018
	(0.197)	*(0.028)*	*(0.206)*	*(0.029)*
Higher legal capability (vs. lower)	0.275**	0.038*	0.192	0.028
	(0.137)	*(0.020)*	*(0.151)*	*(0.022)*
Higher household income (vs. below)	0.046	0.006	0.025	0.004
	(0.138)	*(0.018)*	*(0.151)*	*(0.020)*
Advanced education (vs. below advanced)	0.688*	0.106	0.663	0.105
	(0.372)	*(0.069)*	*(0.406)*	*(0.075)*
Has a disability (vs. no disability)	-0.337**	-0.048**	-0.325**	-0.048**
	(0.147)	*(0.022)*	*(0.157)*	*(0.023)*
Did not access assistance and advice			-0.923***	-0.134***
			(0.150)	*(0.023)*
Are women	-0.140	-0.019	-0.148	-0.020
	(0.131)	*(0.017)*	*(0.142)*	*(0.019)*
Problem severity (4-10 scale)	-0.007	-0.001	-0.041	-0.006
	(0.035)	*(0.005)*	*(0.038)*	*(0.005)*
2 co-occurring problems (vs. 1 problem)	-0.202	-0.023	-0.172	-0.020
	(0.185)	*(0.021)*	*(0.210)*	*(0.025)*
3 co-occurring problems (vs. 1 problem)	-0.280	-0.033	-0.345	-0.041
	(0.198)	*(0.024)*	*(0.216)*	*(0.027)*
4+ co-occurring problems (vs. 1 problem)	-0.525***	-0.071***	-0.616***	-0.083***
	(0.188)	*(0.025)*	*(0.206)*	*(0.027)*
Observations	2,342	2,342	1,904	1,904

Note: Logit and ordinary least squares (OLS) columns present results from two different statistical models used as robustness checks. Standard errors are shown in parentheses. The main results reported in the text and figures are average marginal effects (AMEs), expressed as percentage-point differences in the probability of problem resolution and estimated from Model 1. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01.

Table 13. Association between reform exposure and problem resolution, Period 3: Moderation analysis

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
	Interaction model, assistance & advice Logit	Interaction model, assistance & advice OLS	Interaction model, income Logit	Interaction model, income OLS	Interaction model, legal capability Logit	Interaction model, legal capability OLS	Interaction model, severity Logit	Interaction model, severity OLS	Interaction model, co-occurrence Logit	Interaction model, co-occurrence OLS
Intercept (reference group)	1.670***	0.816***	1.658***	0.815***	1.671***	0.818***	1.451***	0.785***	1.570***	0.805***
	(0.512)	(0.086)	(0.510)	(0.086)	(0.512)	(0.086)	(0.472)	(0.082)	-0.484	-0.084
Most directly affected route (vs. least)	−0.229	−0.026	−0.181	−0.025	−0.391	−0.062	0.199	0.026	0.144	0.016
	(0.223)	(0.030)	(0.269)	(0.042)	(0.346)	(0.059)	(0.342)	(0.039)	-0.371	-0.039
Did not access assistance and advice	−0.957***	−0.138***	−0.922***	−0.134***	−0.927***	−0.135***	−0.918***	−0.133***	−0.918***	−0.134***
	(0.157)	(0.024)	(0.150)	(0.023)	(0.150)	(0.023)	(0.150)	(0.023)	-0.15	-0.023
Higher household income (vs. below)	0.029	0.004	0.015	0.002	0.023	0.003	0.027	0.004	0.014	0.002
	(0.151)	(0.020)	(0.160)	(0.021)	(0.151)	(0.020)	(0.151)	(0.020)	-0.151	-0.02
Higher legal capability (vs. lower)	0.188	0.027	0.192	0.028	0.150	0.021	0.189	0.027	0.198	0.029
	(0.151)	(0.022)	(0.151)	(0.022)	(0.164)	(0.023)	(0.151)	(0.022)	-0.15	-0.022
Problem severity (4-10 scale)	−0.040	−0.006	−0.041	−0.006	−0.040	−0.006			−0.043	−0.006
	(0.038)	(0.005)	(0.038)	(0.005)	(0.038)	(0.005)			-0.038	-0.005
2 co-occurring problems (vs. 1 problem)	−0.171	−0.020	−0.171	−0.020	−0.171	−0.020	−0.174	−0.020		
	(0.211)	(0.025)	(0.210)	(0.025)	(0.210)	(0.025)	(0.211)	(0.025)		
3 co-occurring problems (vs. 1 problem)	−0.347	−0.041	−0.345	−0.041	−0.343	−0.041	−0.361*	−0.043		
	(0.216)	(0.027)	(0.216)	(0.027)	(0.216)	(0.027)	(0.217)	(0.027)		
4+ co-occurring problems (vs. 1 problem)	−0.617***	−0.083***	−0.615***	−0.083***	−0.611***	−0.082***	−0.625***	−0.084***		
	(0.206)	(0.027)	(0.206)	(0.027)	(0.206)	(0.027)	(0.206)	(0.027)		
More severe problem (vs. less severe)							−0.046	−0.006		
							(0.157)	(0.021)		
More than 2 co-occurring problems (vs. 2 or less)									−0.334**	−0.044**
									-0.153	-0.021
Most affected x didn't access assistance & advice	0.497	0.065								
	(0.543)	(0.095)								
Most affected x above median household income			0.085	0.015						
			(0.386)	(0.055)						
Most affected x higher legal capability					0.348	0.058				
					(0.410)	(0.066)				
Most affected x more severe problem							−0.570	−0.080		
							(0.408)	(0.054)		

Most affected x more than 2 co-occurring problems									−0.437	−0.061
									-0.432	-0.055
Advanced education (vs. below advanced)	0.658	0.105	0.663	0.105	0.671*	0.106	0.644	0.103	0.647	0.103
	(0.408)	(0.075)	(0.406)	(0.075)	(0.406)	(0.075)	(0.407)	(0.075)	-0.409	-0.075
Has a disability (vs. no disability)	−0.329**	−0.048**	−0.323**	−0.047**	−0.326**	−0.048**	−0.331**	−0.048**	−0.349**	−0.051**
	(0.157)	(0.023)	(0.158)	(0.023)	(0.157)	(0.023)	(0.156)	(0.023)	-0.157	-0.023
N	1904	1904	1904	1904	1904	1904	1904	1904	1904	1904

Note: Logit and ordinary least squares (OLS) columns present results from two different statistical models used as robustness checks. Standard errors are shown in parentheses. The main results reported in the text and figures are average marginal effects (AMEs), expressed as percentage-point differences in the probability of problem resolution and estimated from Model 1. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01.

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