make the call

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An Examination into the Reach of Make the Call

September 2023

NISRA
Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency

Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann
um Staitisticí agus Taighde

NICS
ECONOMIST PROFESSION

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Make the Call Wraparound Service (hereafter referred to as Make the Call) from the Department for Communities helps people get access to benefits, supports and services that they may be entitled to. Make the Call evaluates its annual performance each year and reports on the amount of annual benefit generated, people benefiting, and the number of successful claims. The analysis included in this report has been carried out using Make the Call's own proprietary administrative data and this report focuses predominantly on the reach of the Make the Call service throughout Northern Ireland (NI).

1.2 Aim of the Research

The research project aims to examine the reach of the Make the Call service within NI. Specifically, the report seeks to analyse the Make the Call data to identify the demographics who are/are not engaging and identify any trends over the time period. Additionally, comparison of the Make the Call data, where applicable, to the demographics of those Pension Credit potentially entitled non-recipients (PENR) as identified in the Pension Credit: Estimates of Benefit Take-Up 19/20 analysis will be considered.

Using Make the Call's proprietary data, the research will consider the outputs from the financial years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. Specifically, this will involve examination of three areas of information; call data, outreach support and potential entitlements.

- Call data refers to all calls between customers and Make the Call. The majority of these relate to inbound calls from customers to Make the Call. The term 'callers' will be used in this document to denote both those who have made inbound calls, and those who have received an outbound call from Make the Call.
- Outreach support data refers to referrals received by Make the Call for visits by outreach officers to customers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these visits were typically carried out remotely until November 2022.

- Potential entitlements are where a Make the Call benefit advisor has conducted a benefit entitlement check with a customer and established potential entitlement to a benefit and/or a service.

Examples of characteristics considered include overall records for each year that is analysed, age breakdown of the individual subject of the enquiry and analysis of the benefit and or service relating to the enquiry. These characteristics can also be considered with other geographical identifiers such as the Local Government District (LGD) or the settlement type to examine how interactions with Make the Call differ across NI. The research does not consider certain demographic breakdowns such as sex type, family type and community background as this information is not available in the datasets provided.

1.3 Overview of Key Statistics

The following section will provide key findings from each of the three information areas.

Within the call data information, the overall calls and individuals are considered, whilst for outreach support the overall number of visits and people visited is detailed. Examination of the potential entitlement information shows both the number of individuals where a benefit entitlement check resulted in a potential entitlement, and the overall number of potential entitlements i.e., one user may have had more than one check completed over the three-year period for more than one benefit/service.

All figures will be rounded to the nearest 100 and all percentages will be rounded to the nearest percentage point, unless otherwise stated. Individual totals and proportions have been calculated based on the raw unrounded data. Subsequently overall totals may not sum due to rounding.

1.3.1 Call Data Information

Table 1.1 details the number of inbound calls made to Make the Call through the BT Next Generation Contact Centre (NGCC) covering the years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. The number of calls has generally increased over the three-year period with 40% of calls made to Make the Call in 22/23 (65,300).

Year	Number of Inbound Calls	Proportion
20/21	45,500	28%
21/22	51,200	32%
22/23	65,300	40%
Overall	162,100	100%

Table 1.1: Table detailing the number of inbound calls made to Make the Call as recorded on the NGCC system.

It should be noted that not all of these calls will be recorded on the Make the Call database. This is due to the fact that the figures in Table 1.1 include calls to Make the Call relating to general information, a wrong number which requires signposting elsewhere or where the caller chooses to not provide further information or proceed with a check for benefit/service entitlement. Moving forward therefore, the analysis will focus on those calls which have progressed to the stage where they have been recorded on the Make the Call database.
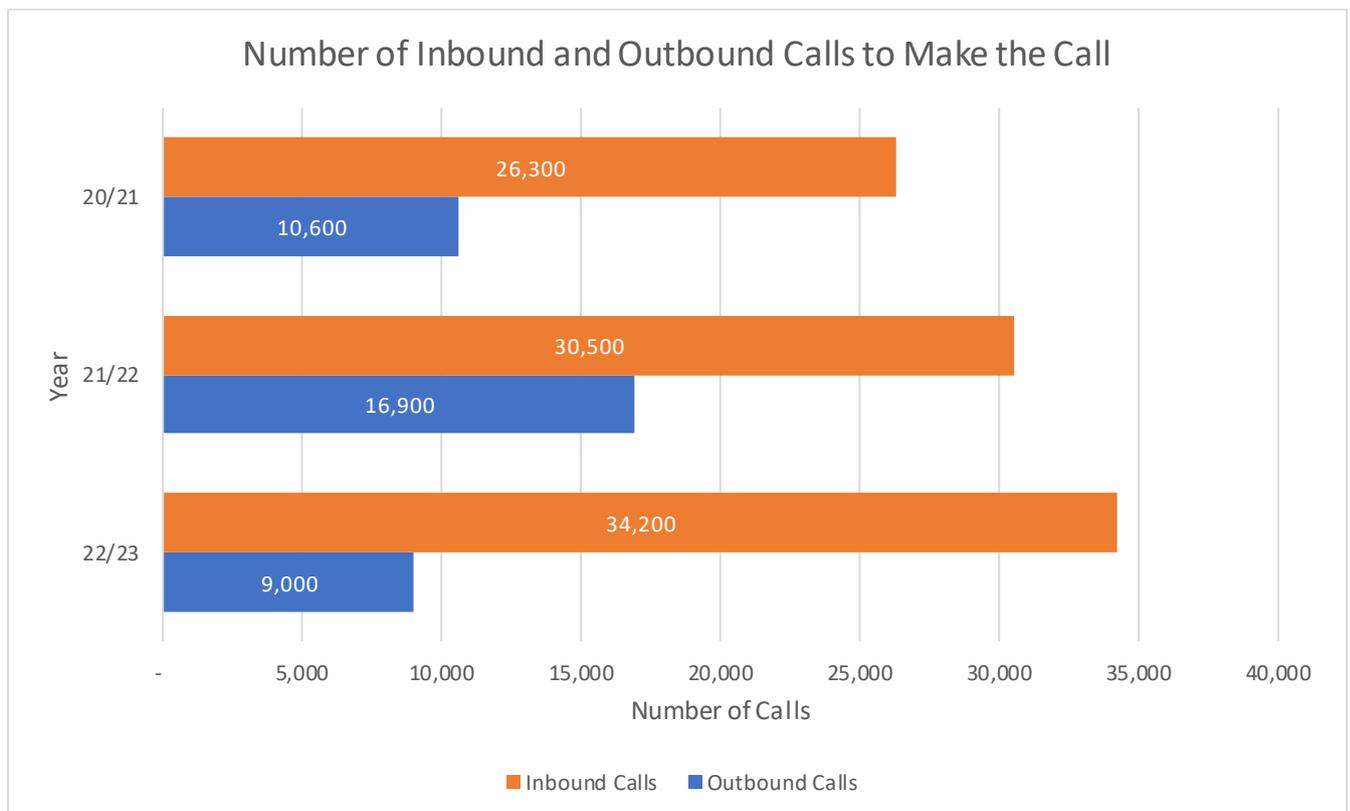

Figure 1.1: Bar chart detailing the numbers of inbound and outbound calls to Make the Call from 20/21 to 22/23

Based on this information, from 20/21 to 22/23, there were 127,600 distinct calls to Make the Call from 81,100 individual callers. Of these calls, 91,100 are defined as inbound i.e., made by a customer to Make the Call, with 36,600 defined as outbound calls (from Make the Call to the customer). Figure 1.1 details the breakdown of both inbound and outbound calls respectively within each of the three years noted. In general, there is an increase in the number of inbound calls from 20/21 to 22/23 of 7,900. The highest volume of inbound calls is received in 22/23 at 34,200. The highest volume of outbound calls is seen in 21/22 with 16,900 in this year. It should be noted that the process for dealing with Discretionary Support referrals changed in 22/23 which helps explain the drop in outbound call volume despite the increase in inbound calls. Overall, it may be likely that there was an increased number of calls in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It should be noted that as Figure 1.1 details distinct calls per year, an individual may be included on more than one occasion (or within both inbound and outbound calls) depending on the number of calls they have made.

1.3.2 Outreach Support

There has been a continual increase in the number of outreach visits from 20/21 to 22/23. Figure 1.2 details that these have risen from 9,600 in 20/21 to 16,500 in 22/23 – a percentage increase of 73%. In total, over the three-year period there have been 39,800 outreach support visits to approximately 30,800 people. Note that the same person may have received multiple outreach support visits, and these are included in the yearly breakdown provided in Figure 1.2.
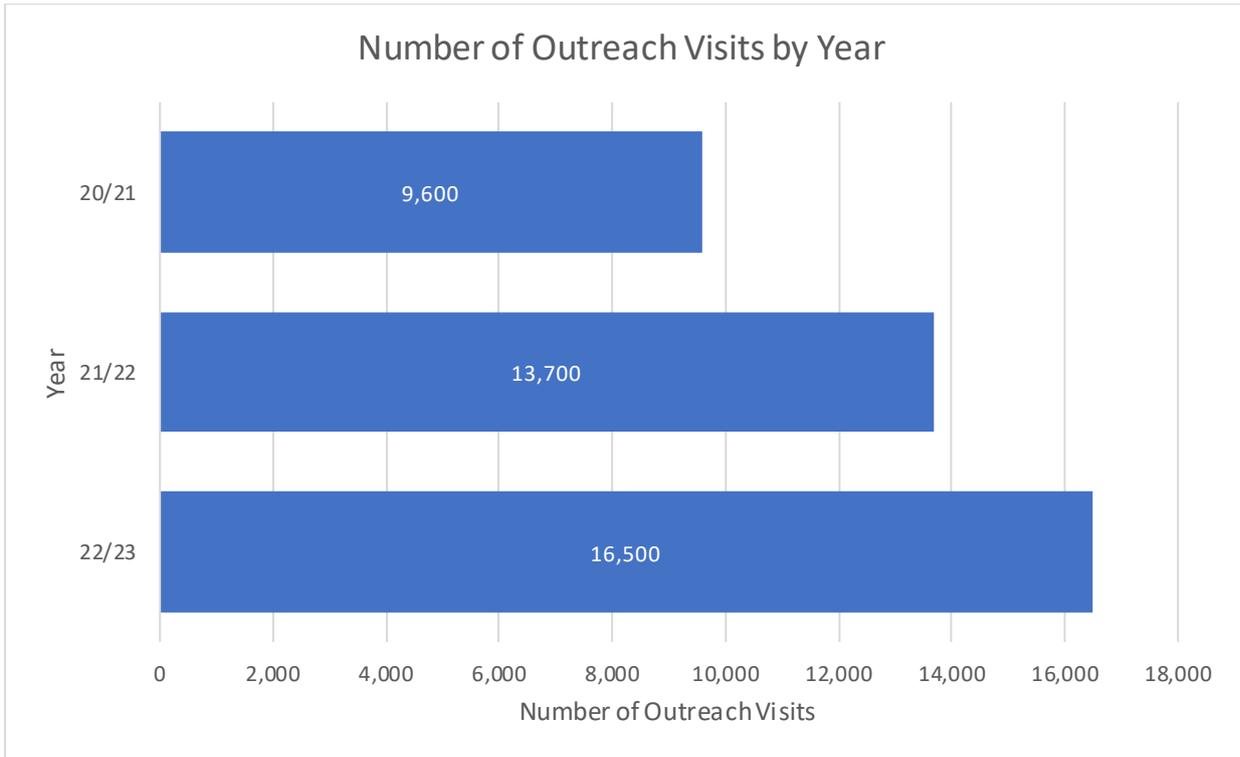
Number of Outreach Visits by Year

Year	Number of Outreach Visits
20/21	9,600
21/22	13,700
22/23	16,500

Figure 1.2: Bar chart detailing the number of outreach visits from Make the Call from 20/21 to 22/23

It should be noted that due to the COVID 19 pandemic, visits were typically carried out remotely until November 2022.

1.3.3 Potential Entitlements

Table 1.2 details both the number of distinct individuals where the benefit entitlement check resulted in a potential entitlement, and the overall number of potential entitlements identified, for each of the three years. There was a spike in both the distinct individuals and potential entitlements in 21/22 at 23,900 and 40,700 respectively. Again, it is unclear whether this is an outlier (potentially related to the COVID-19 pandemic) since there was a decrease in 22/23 to 18,800 individuals and 31,900 potential entitlements – thus bringing the 22/23 figures broadly in line with 20/21.

Year	Number of individuals identified to have one or more potential entitlements	Total number of potential entitlements to benefits and services identified	Number of potential entitlements per individual identified
2020/21	19,300	33,800	1.75
2021/22	23,900	40,700	1.70
2022/23	18,800	31,900	1.71
Overall:	56,600[1]	106,400	1.88

Table 1.2: Numbers and proportions of individuals identified as having one or more potential entitlements and the number of potential entitlements to benefits and services overall from 20/21 to 22/23.

This report will look at each of the three information areas within the context of certain demographic characteristics, namely age and geographical breakdowns. Examination of the relevant benefits and services supplied will be carried out for the potential entitlement check information.

Key Takeaways

- From 20/21 to 22/23, there were 127,600 distinct calls to Make the Call from 81,100 individual callers. Of these, 91,100 are inbound calls with 36,600 outbound calls. The highest volume of inbound calls is received in 22/23 (34,200) with the highest volume of outbound calls in 21/22 (16,900).

- The number of outreach visits has risen over the three-year period from 9,600 in 20/21 to 16,500 in 22/23 – a percentage increase of 73%.

- 21/22 saw the highest number of both distinct individuals identified as having one or more potential entitlements, and the overall number of potential entitlements to benefits and services, at 23,900 and 40,700 respectively.

- Overall, on average this generated 1.88 potential entitlements per individual identified from 20/21 to 22/23.

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[1] It should be noted that Table 1.2 details the number of individuals identified to have one or more potential entitlements in a given year. As a result, distinct individuals may appear across more than one year, and consequently, the overall number of distinct individuals (56,600) will not give the same figure as adding each yearly figure together.

2. Age Analysis

All three information areas analysed contain the age of customers who are the subject of the engagements with Make the Call. In this section of the report, age is considered in two ways: Age Group which details pension age, working age and child age, and Age Band which is a breakdown of customers within a certain age bracket – this analysis considers people by ten-year age bands.

2.1 Age Group Analysis

Figure 2.1.1 details the age group breakdown for the call information, outreach services and potential entitlements. It should be noted that this is normally in relation to who the call relates to rather than the caller directly, hence the presence of calls relating to children. However, for those aged under 16 when not relating to a disability benefit, the parent will be the named customer.
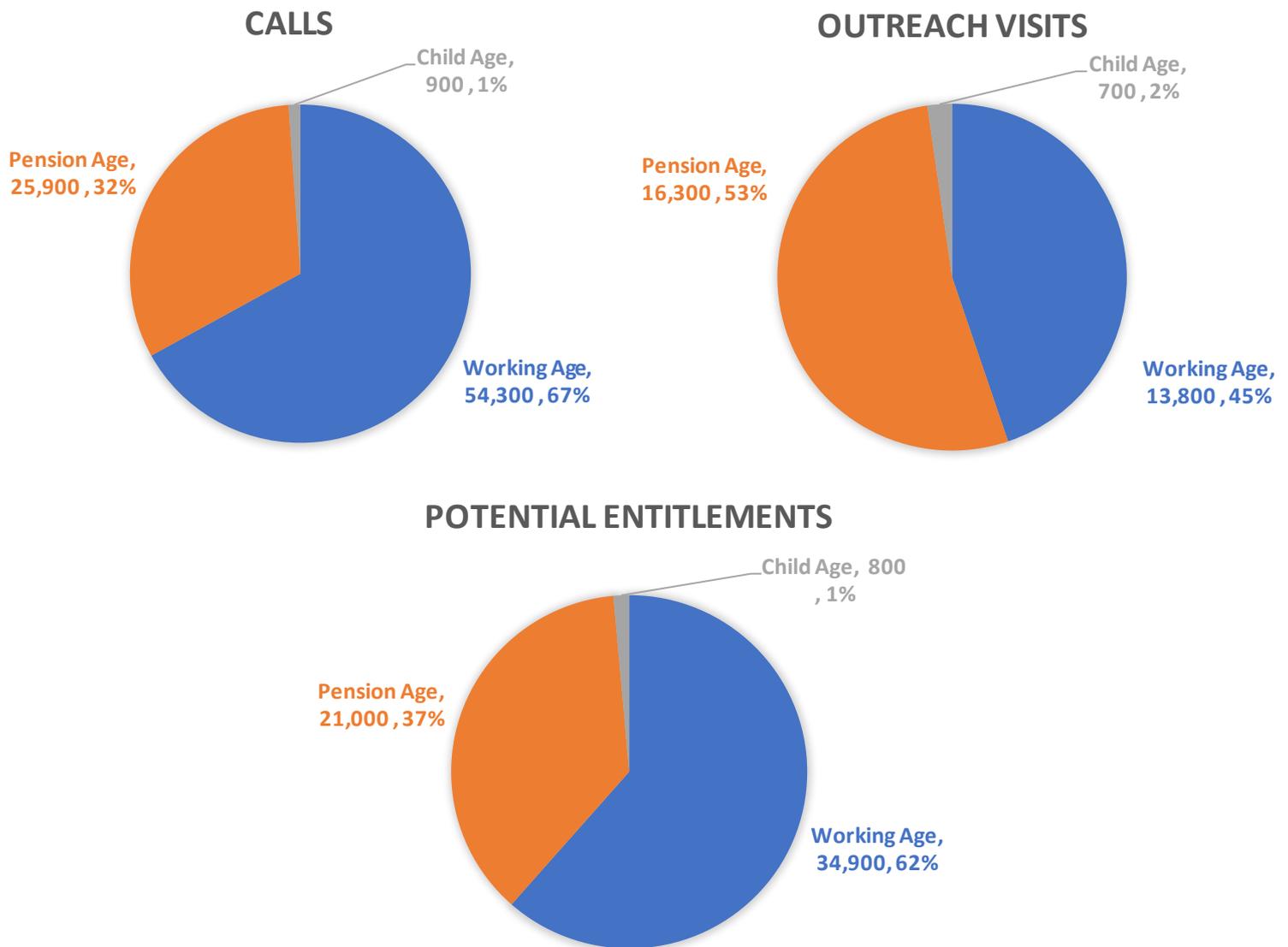
CALLS

Child Age, 900 , 1%

Pension Age, 25,900 , 32%

Working Age, 54,300 , 67%

OUTREACH VISITS

Child Age, 700 , 2%

Pension Age, 16,300 , 53%

Working Age, 13,800 , 45%

POTENTIAL ENTITLEMENTS

Child Age, 800 , 1%

Pension Age, 21,000 , 37%

Working Age, 34,900, 62%

Figure 2.1: Age group breakdown of call data, outreach visits and potential entitlements

Figure 2.1 shows that the call data has the highest proportion of working age people as the subject of the enquiry at 67%. This decreases to 62% for potential entitlements. The outreach services data shows a contrasting view with more visits to people of pension age than working age. The working age proportion is 45% in this instance, with 53% relating to pension age individuals. As outreach visits are more prevalent in cases where someone requires additional support to that provided over the phone (e.g., help to fill in an application form for benefits/support), this may explain the difference compared to both

calls and potential entitlements. The proportion of all three information sources relating to children are comparable and make up either 1 or 2% in each instance.

Table 2.1 breaks down the number of potential entitlements identified per individual by age group. Broadly the figures across working age and pension age groups are comparable to the overall number, at 1.86 and 1.94 potential entitlements per individual respectively.

Age Group	Number of individuals identified to have one or more potential entitlements	Total number of potential entitlements to benefits and services identified	Number of potential entitlements per individual identified
Working Age	34,900	64,800	1.86
Pension Age	21,000	40,700	1.94
Child Age	800	900	1.14
Overall Total:	56,600	106,400	1.88

Table 2.1: Numbers and proportions of individuals identified as having one or more potential entitlements and the number of potential entitlements to benefits and services overall by age group.

2.2 Age Band Analysis

To examine further, the information for calls, outreach services and potential entitlements is broken down into ten-year age bandings. It should be noted that those under 20 and those over 89 have not been broken down further to avoid disclosure. Overall figures for these groups are still included.

As noted, for those aged under 16 the parent will be the named customer unless the call, visit, or potential entitlement is regarding a disability benefit. Children up until the age of 16 entitled to a disability benefit will receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA). However, for everyone else of working age, DLA is a legacy benefit which has been replaced by Personal Independence Payment (PIP). This means that many of those in the 16-19 age bracket (within the <20 bracket) engage with Make the Call as they are transitioned from DLA to PIP which requires the application and assessment as part of the process to get PIP.

2.2.1 Call Data Information

In Figure 2.2.1 the ten-year age bands (excluding those under 20 and over 89) show that generally there are more calls from individuals as the age band increases, with the peak of 16,400 (20%) occurring at 60-69. This may indicate a higher demand from people who are receiving state pension or approaching retirement age. The second highest number of calls is present for the 50-59 banding, with 13,500 in this cohort.
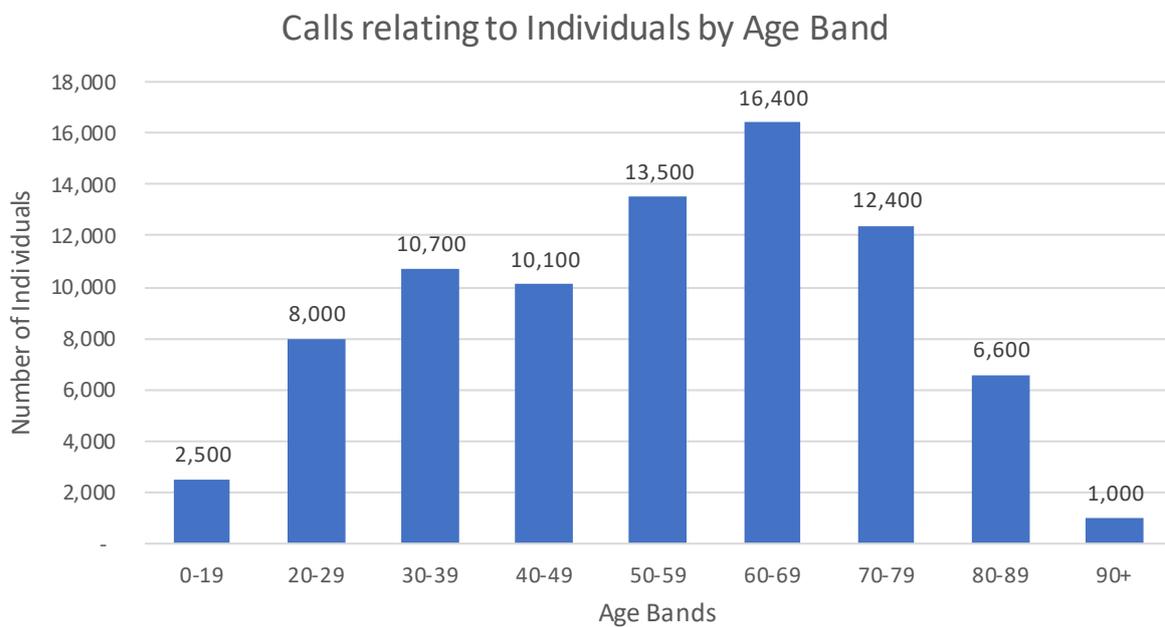
Calls relating to Individuals by Age Band

Age Band	Number of Individuals
0-19	2,500
20-29	8,000
30-39	10,700
40-49	10,100
50-59	13,500
60-69	16,400
70-79	12,400
80-89	6,600
90+	1,000

Figure 2.2.1: Number of calls relating to individuals by ten-year age bands.

2.2.2 Outreach Support

The age information is broken down further in Figure 2.2.2. Here it is noted that the largest number of outreach visits is recorded for the 70-79 banding with 6,500 (21%) from 20/21 to 22/23, indicating a higher demand from pension age individuals. The increase in demand heightens from 50-59 to 70-79 and remains high for the 80-89 band. There may be a number of factors to explain the increased need for outreach support for these age bands e.g. the potentially greater prevalence of health and mobility issues.
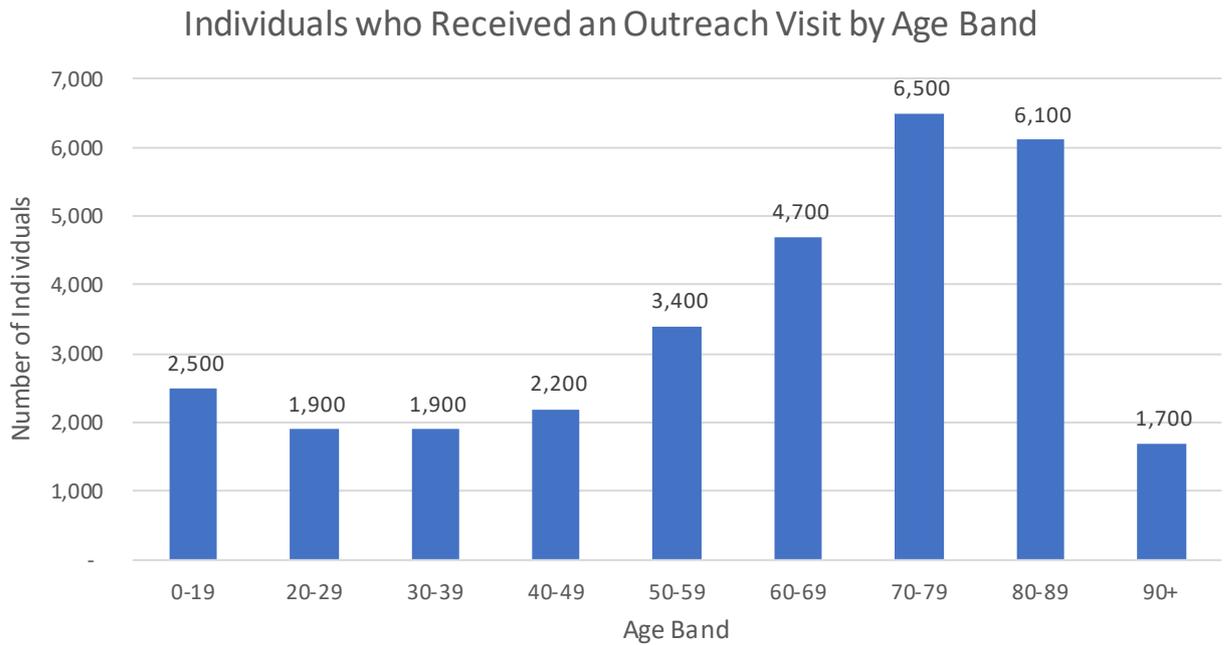
Individuals who Received an Outreach Visit by Age Band

Age Band	Number of Individuals
0-19	2,500
20-29	1,900
30-39	1,900
40-49	2,200
50-59	3,400
60-69	4,700
70-79	6,500
80-89	6,100
90+	1,700

Figure 2.2.2: Number of individuals receiving outreach visits by ten-year age bands.

2.2.3 Potential Entitlements

Much like call data and outreach support information, Figure 2.2.3 shows that the age band distribution of potential entitlements is generally high from the 50-59 to the 70-79 banding. The peak occurs in the 60-69 age band with 12,200 (21%) over the three-year period.
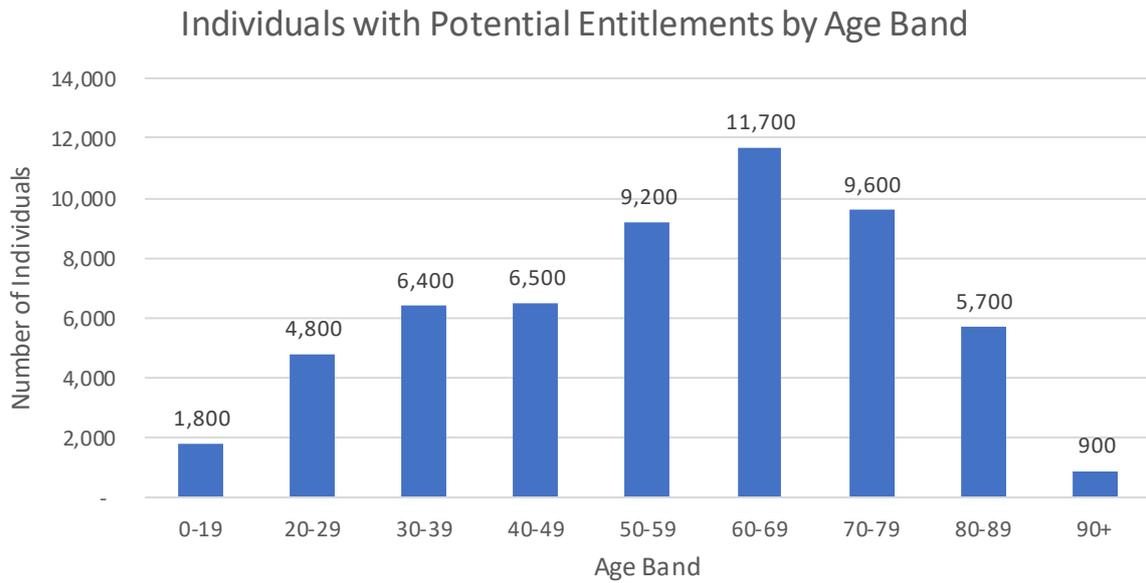
Individuals with Potential Entitlements by Age Band

Figure 2.2.3: Number of individuals receiving a potential entitlement by ten-year age bands.

2.2.4 Potential Entitlements per Capita

Considering the number of individuals receiving a potential entitlement as a proportion of the overall population within each age band, Table 2.2 shows that there is a progressively increasing proportion of individuals as the age bands increase. The largest proportion is seen for the 80-89 group with approximately 8.2% of this cohort receiving potential entitlements. Comparatively, the overall figure for those receiving potential entitlements as a share of the population is 3.0%. For this analysis, percentages have been provided to the nearest 0.1 percentage point to ensure differences between age bands are noticeable.

Age	Population (Census 2021)	Individuals with Potential Entitlement	% of Individuals with Potential Entitlements within Population
0-19	478,424	1,800	0.4%
20-29	227,790	4,800	2.1%
30-39	253,355	6,400	2.5%
40-49	243,827	6,500	2.7%
50-59	260,246	9,200	3.5%
60-69	206,513	11,700	5.7%
70-79	149,842	9,600	6.4%
80-89	69,648	5,700	8.2%
90+	13,517	900	6.6%
All	1,903,162	56,600	3.0%

Table 2.2: Number of individuals receiving one or more potential entitlements per capita.

Key Takeaways

- Call data information shows that generally there are more calls from individuals as the age band increases, with a peak of 16,400 (20%) occurring at 60-69.   The second highest number of calls is present for the 50-59 banding, with 13,500 in this cohort.

- The largest number of outreach visits is recorded for the 70-79 banding with 6,500 (21%) from 20/21 to 22/23, indicating a higher demand from pension age individuals. The increase in demand heightens from 50-59 to 70-79 and remains high for the 80-89 banding.

- The age band distribution of potential entitlements is generally high from the 50-59 to 70-79 group with the peak of 11,700 (21%) in the 60-69 age band.

- There are a high percentage of individuals with potential entitlements within the population across the 60+ age bands, with a peak of 8.2% in the 80-89 banding. This compares with 3.0% of individuals with potential entitlements for the overall NI population.

- Overall, it is clear that Make the Call has a particularly strong level of engagement with older demographics more generally. This is evident across the call data, outreach support visits and potential entitlements.

3. Geographical Analysis

In this section, the geographical breakdown for each information source is examined at both the Local Government District (LGD) level and at a settlement type level. This section aims to highlight interactions with Make the Call across NI. Please note that there may be instances where the LGD and settlement type are unknown and therefore proportions may not sum to 100%. For the LGD analysis, percentages have been provided to the nearest 0.1 percentage point to ensure differences between LGDs are noticeable.

3.1 LGD Analysis

Within the LGD analysis, each dataset is examined in turn. Firstly, the number of callers is presented, then the proportion of callers within the LGD population is provided.

3.1.1 Call Data Information

Examination of the call data information shows that the highest volume of callers is found in Belfast with approximately 20% (16,300) over the three-year period. Fermanagh and Omagh sees the lowest volume of callers (5,200) during this time. Figure 3.1.1a maps this information at an LGD level.
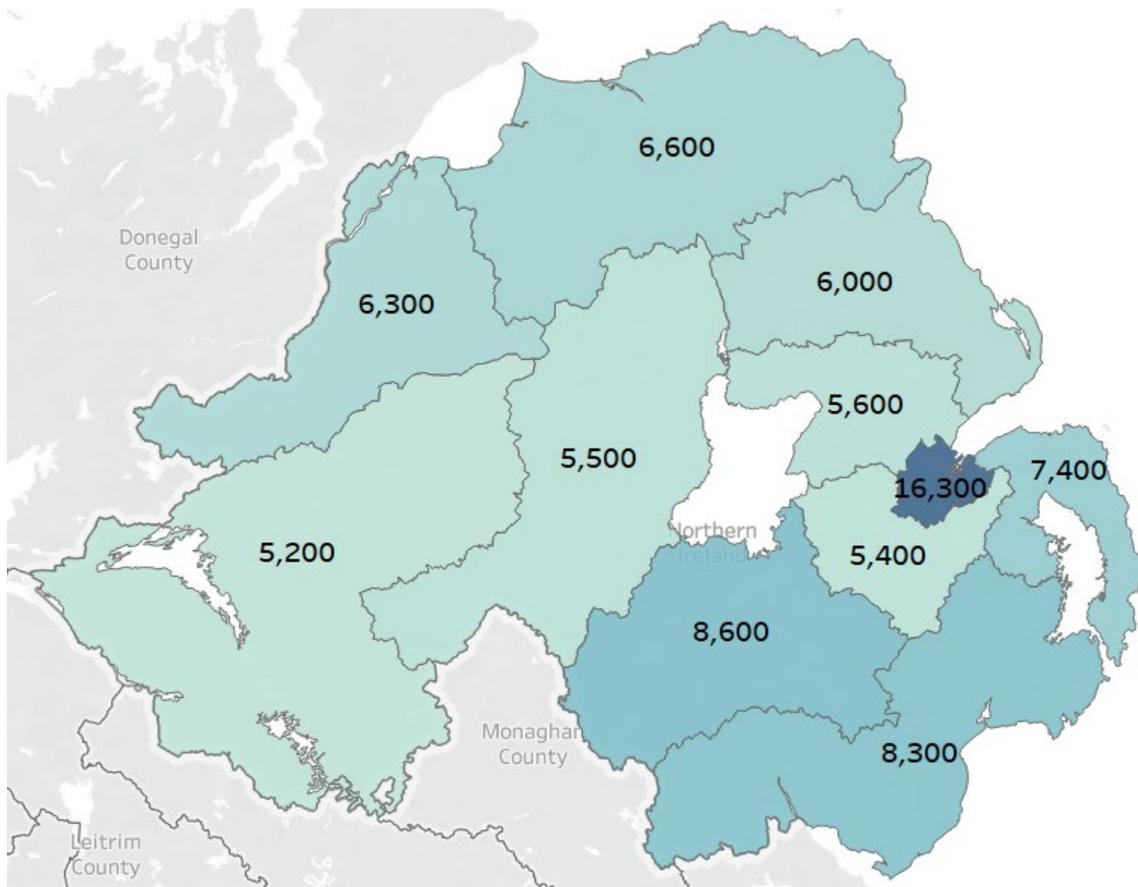
Figure 3.1.1a: Map showing number of callers within each LGD.

In addition, it is beneficial to complement this by examining the volume of callers as a proportion of the LGD population. This enables more appropriate comparisons to be made across LGDs of differing sizes. Figure 3.1.1b details this breakdown for NI LGDs. Overall, the approximate 81,100 callers represent 4.3% of the total NI population. Belfast displays the highest proportion of callers at 4.7%. Causeway Coast & Glens and Newry, Mourne & Down sit next with 4.6% of their LGD populations having called Make the Call. The lowest proportion of callers during this period is seen by Lisburn & Castlereagh with 3.6%.
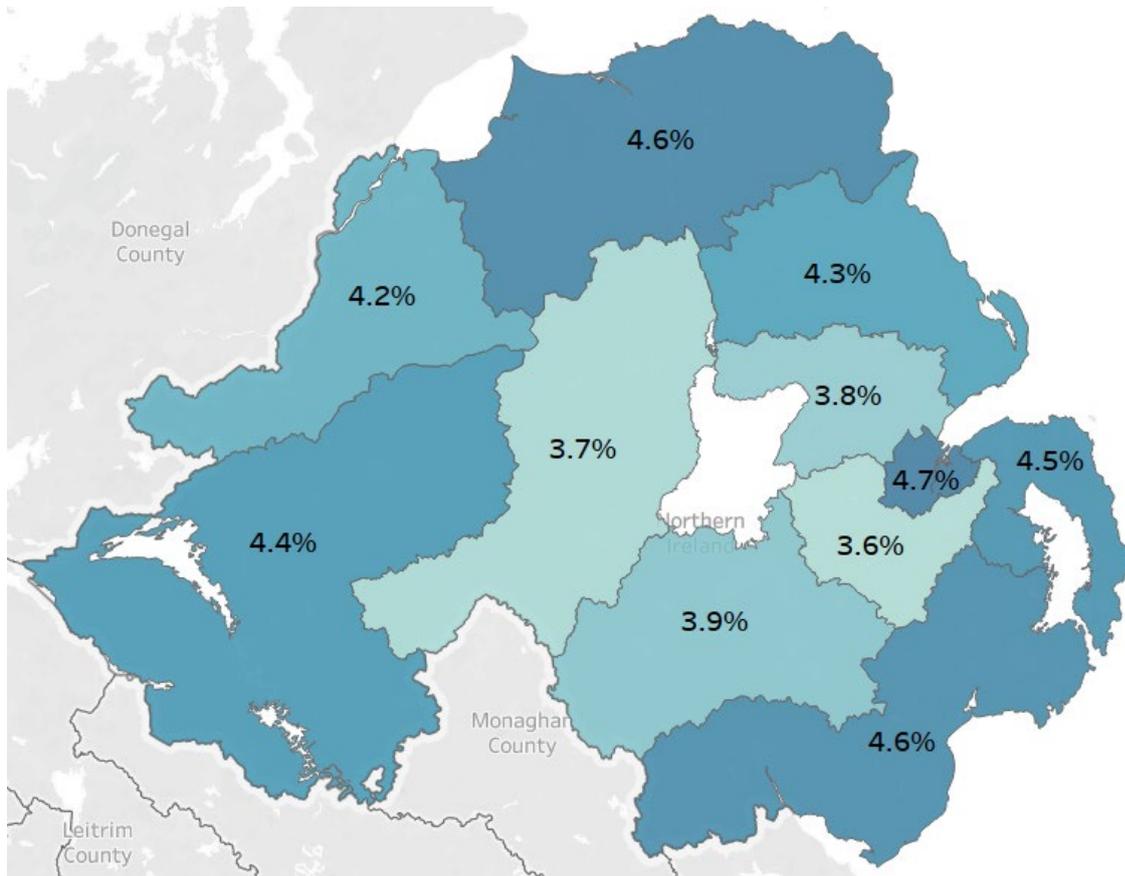
Figure 3.1.1b: Map shown percentage of callers as a proportion of the overall LGD population.

3.1.2 Outreach Support

Examining the outreach support visits data by LGD, the highest volume is found in Belfast with almost 16% (4,900) over the three-year period. The lowest volume of outreach visits is found in two LGDs with 1,900 (6.1%) in each – Antrim & Newtownabbey and Lisburn & Castlereagh. Figure 3.1.2a maps this information at an LGD level.
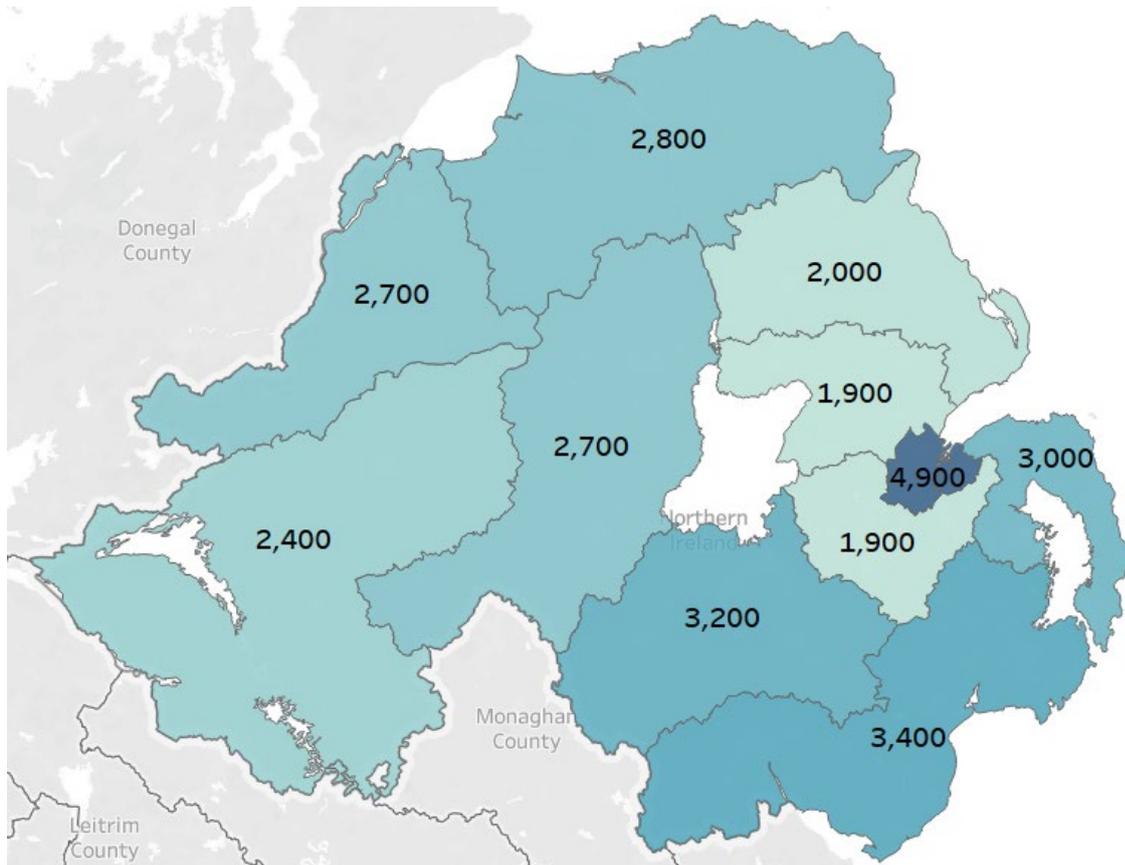
Figure 3.1.2a: Map showing the number of people receiving outreach visits per LGD.

Figure 3.1.2b examines the number of people receiving outreach visits as a proportion of the LGD population. Overall, the approximate 30,800 people visited represent 1.6% of the NI population, with Fermanagh & Omagh displaying the highest proportion of visits at 2.0%. Ards & North Down and Causeway Coast & Glens sit next with 1.9% of their LGD populations. The lowest proportion of visits across this period is seen by both Antrim & Newtownabbey and Lisburn & Castlereagh with 1.3%.
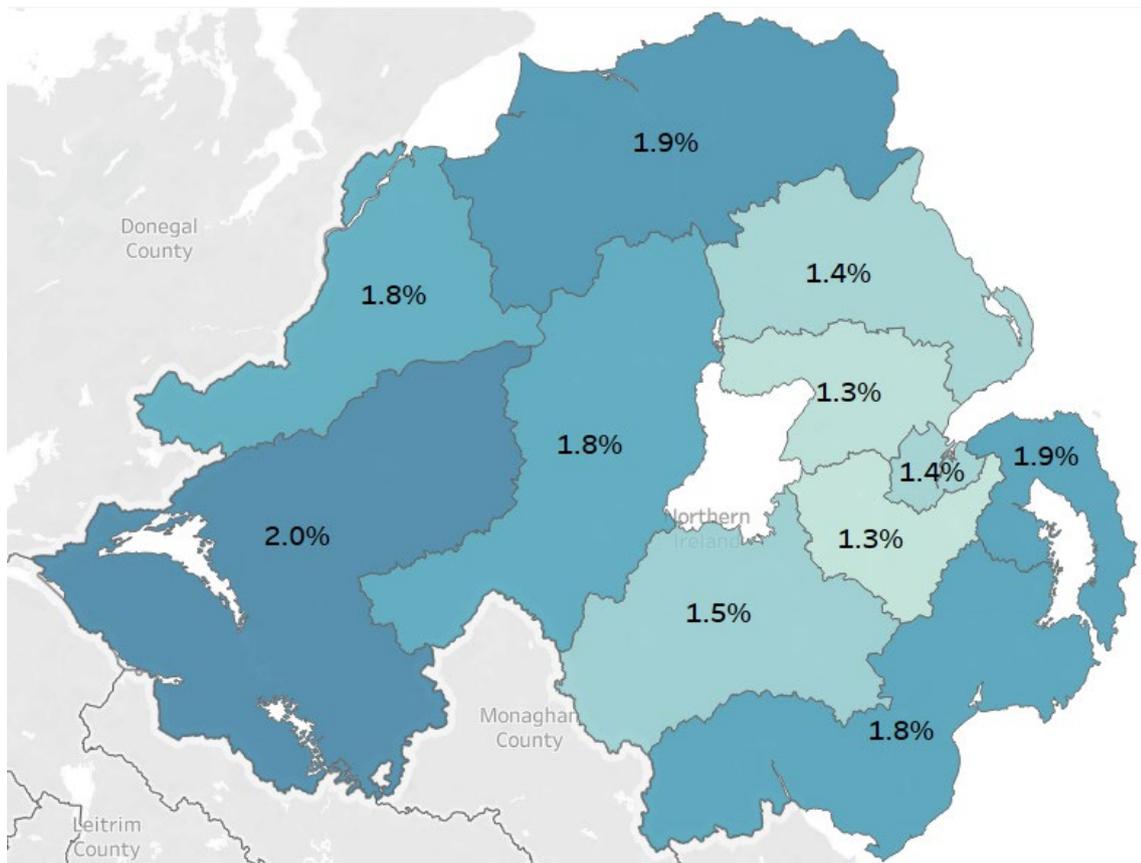
Figure 3.1.2b: Percentage of people receiving outreach visits as a proportion of LGD population.

3.1.3 Potential Entitlements

In Figure 3.1.3a we can see that the proportion of potential entitlements is similar to the call information data (as shown in Figure 3.1.1a). Belfast has the highest number of potential entitlements at 10,400 (18.3%) and Fermanagh and Omagh has the lowest potential entitlements at 3,700 (6.5%).
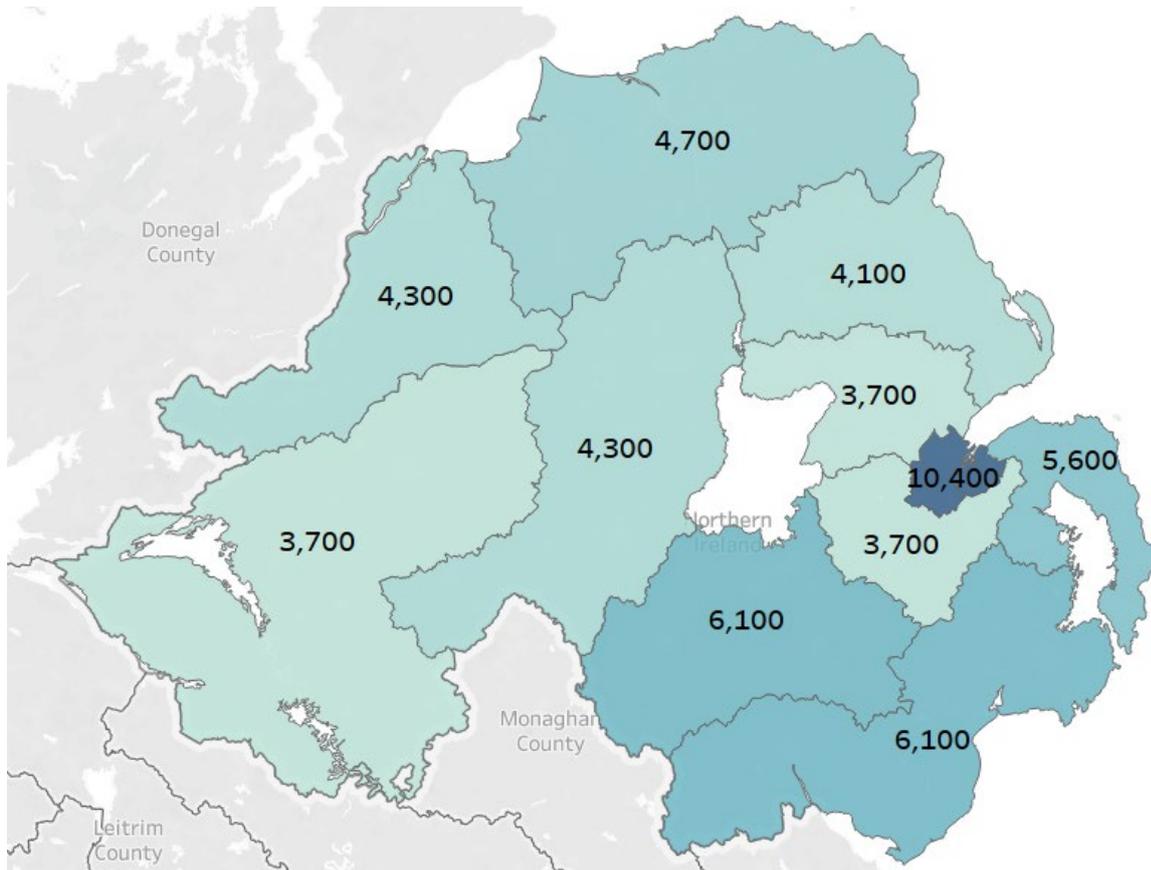
Figure 3.1.3a: Map showing the number of customers receiving a potential entitlement for each LGD.

There were approximately 56,600 individuals who had one or more potential entitlements identified during the three-year period from 20/21 to 22/23.

Figure 3.1.3b examines the number of potential entitlements as a proportion of the LGD population. Overall, the approximate 56,600 people engaged represents 3.0% of the NI population with Ards & North Down displaying the highest proportion of individuals with potential entitlements in this way at 3.4%. The lowest proportion of potential entitlements during this time is seen by both Antrim & Newtownabbey and Lisburn & Castlereagh with 2.5%.
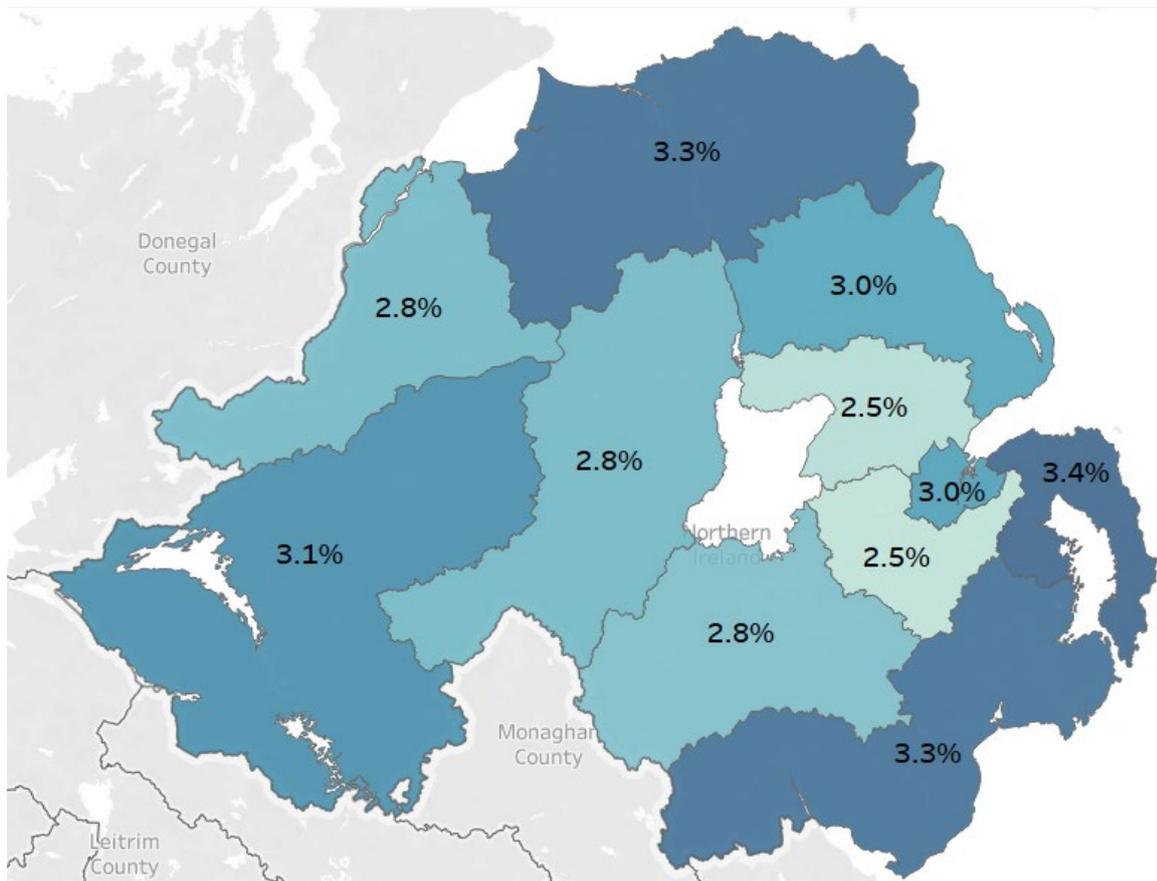
Figure 3.1.3b: Map showing the percentage of customers identified as having a potential entitlement as a proportion of the population of the LGD.

3.2 Settlement Type Analysis

Each data source is now considered in terms of settlement breakdown. This identifies whether the relevant household is designated as living in an urban or rural settlement and enables comparisons to be made across the different sources. NISRA defines an urban settlement as a settlement with a population greater than or equal to 5,000 people. A rural settlement is defined as a settlement with a population less than 5,000 people. Figure 3.2 details the settlement type breakdown for the call information, outreach visits and potential entitlements.

Call Data Information by Settlement

26,800 , 33%

54,200 , 67%

■ Urban ■ Rural
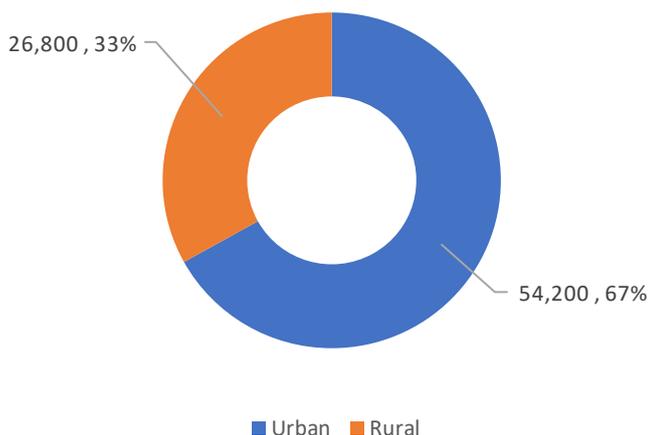
Outreach Visits by Settlement

11,200 , 36%

19,500 , 64%

■ Urban ■ Rural
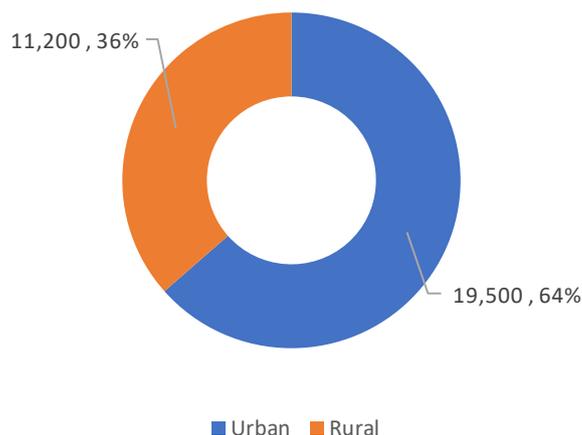
Potential Entitlements by Settlement
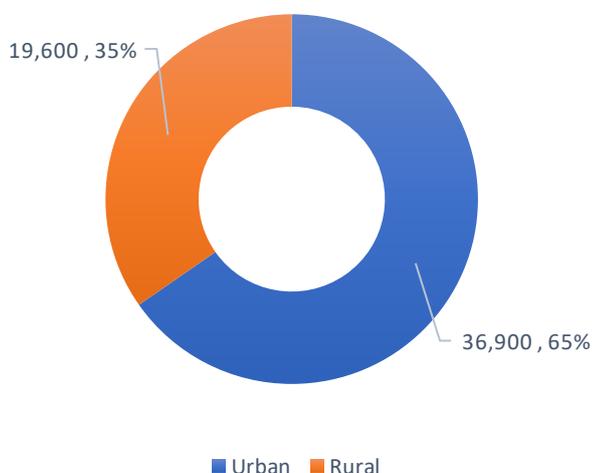
19,600 , 35%

36,900 , 65%

■ Urban ■ Rural

Figure 3.2: Settlement breakdown of call data, outreach visits and potential entitlements.

In all three instances, the majority of interactions are from those living in households designated as being in an urban settlement. This ranges from 67% (54,200) in terms of calls to 64% (19,500) for outreach visits. This generally reflects the 2:1 ratio of households (NISRA) located in urban/rural settlements in NI.

Table 3.1 details the average number of potential entitlements per individual for each settlement type. The data indicates that the number of potential entitlements per individual is broadly comparable for those living in rural settlements as opposed to urban

settlements, with 1.90 potential entitlements per individual compared to 1.86 potential entitlements per individual.

Settlement Type	Number of individuals identified to have one or more potential entitlements	Total number of potential entitlements to benefits and services identified	Number of potential entitlements per individual identified
Urban	36,900	68,800	1.86
Rural	19,600	37,400	1.90
Overall Total:	56,600	106,400	1.88

Table 3.1: Numbers and proportions of individuals identified as having one or more potential entitlements and the number of potential entitlements to benefits and services overall by settlement type.

Key Takeaways

- The call data information details 81,100 callers representing 4.3% of the NI population. At LGD level, Belfast displays the highest proportion of callers with 4.7%, with Lisburn & Castlereagh showing the lowest proportion of callers at 3.6%.

- For outreach support visits, the 30,800 people visited represents 1.6% of the NI population. The highest proportion at LGD level is Fermanagh & Omagh at 2.0%, whilst both Antrim & Newtownabbey and Lisburn & Castlereagh experienced the lowest proportion of visits across this period (1.3%).

- The 56,600 people who had one or more potential entitlements identified represents 3.0% of the NI population. Ards & North Down displays the highest proportion of potential entitlements at 3.4%. The lowest proportion is seen by both Antrim & Newtownabbey and Lisburn & Castlereagh with 2.5%.

- Across all three data sources, the majority of interactions come from those living in households designated as being in an urban settlement. This ranges from 67% in terms of calls to 64% for outreach service. This is in line with the urban rural settlement classification breakdown which is 66% urban and 34% rural based on NISRA Mid-Year Estimates.

4. Benefits and Services Analysis

The aim of Make the Call is to ensure people are receiving the benefits and services support to which they are entitled. Within the potential entitlements data, information on the specific benefits and services checked is recorded. These have been assigned based on Make the Call's own classification. Some of the benefits and services are grouped to consider the particular area of need, such as health, disability, and alleviating poverty.

When considering potential entitlements, the research had to consider both the number of checks carried out and the individual claimant. There were approximately 56,600 claimants who had a potential entitlement identified in the three-year period analysed with 106,400 potential entitlements identified. 79,300 of these potential entitlements were related to Benefit Entitlement with the remaining 27,100 relating to Service Entitlement (which can be seen in section 4.2).

4.1 Benefit Entitlement Analysis

Examining the 79,300 potential benefit entitlements, Figure 4.1 details the number of referrals for each benefit that were carried out. It should be noted that the 'Other' descriptor refers to a number of smaller benefits which have been grouped accordingly for the purposes of the analysis. As has been displayed with previous analysis, there is a significant amount of engagement with benefits for older people: 24% (18,700) of the checks have been carried out for Attendance Allowance or Pension Credit. The largest individual benefit in terms of referrals carried out is Universal Credit with 20% (16,100) of checks relating to it. This is likely due to the fact it is replacing several legacy benefits including Employment and Support Allowance and Jobseekers' Allowance, as well as Income Support, Tax Credits and Housing Benefit.
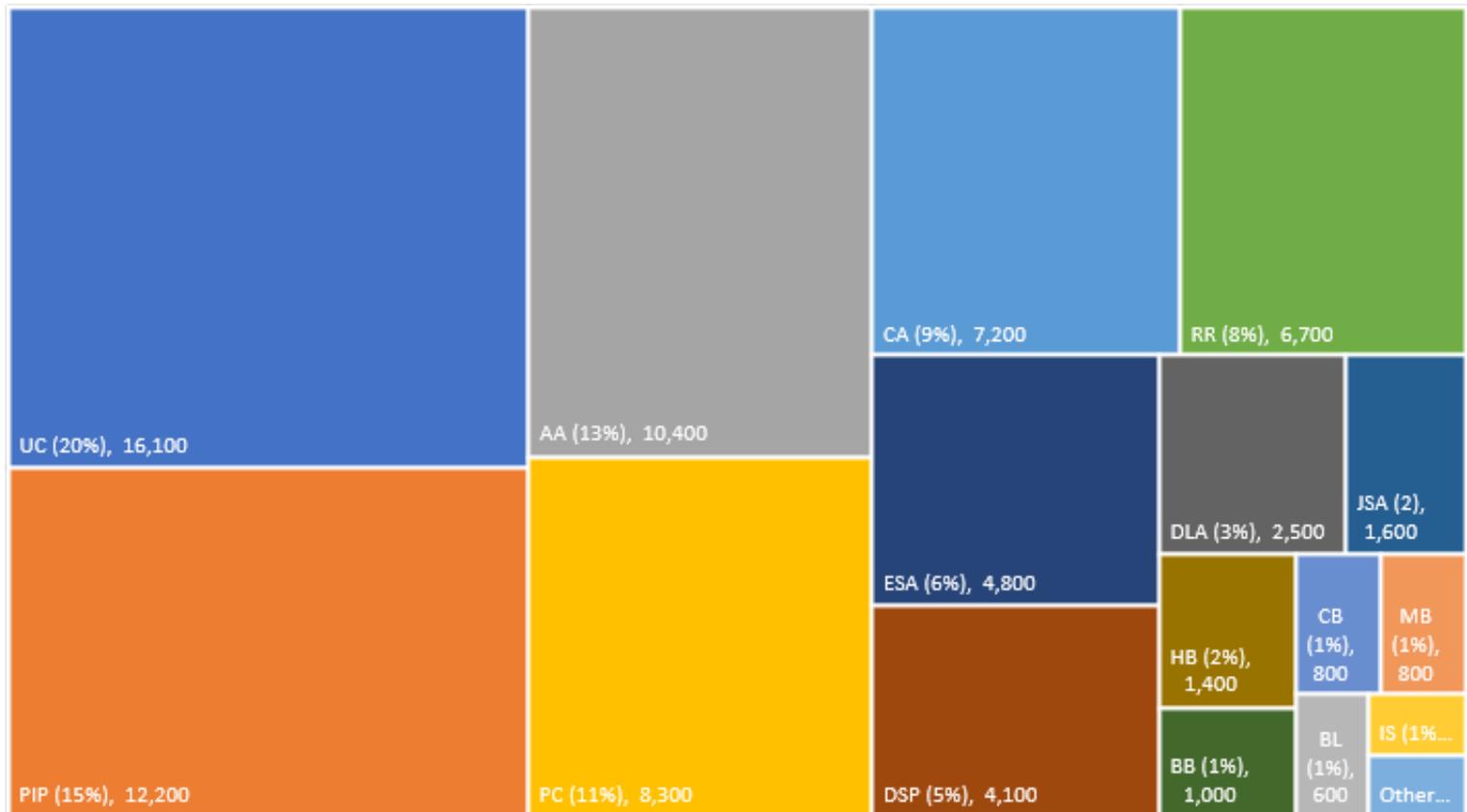
Potential Benefit Entitlements (20/21 to 22/23)

UC (20%), 16,100
AA (13%), 10,400
CA (9%), 7,200
RR (8%), 6,700
PIP (15%), 12,200
PC (11%), 8,300
ESA (6%), 4,800
DSP (5%), 4,100
DLA (3%), 2,500
JSA (2), 1,600
HB (2%), 1,400
CB (1%), 800
MB (1%), 800
BB (1%), 1,000
BL (1%), 600
IS (1%...
Other...

Figure 4.1: Potential benefit entitlements from 20/21 to 22/23.

A full list of the abbreviations contained in Figure 4.1 can be found in Annex B.

4.2 Service Entitlement Analysis

As noted earlier, there were approximately 27,100 potential service entitlements identified. For the purposes of this report, some services have been grouped more generally to make them suitable for analysis. Following this, it is evident that around 69% of all the service referrals occur for the Blue Badge Scheme and assistance with Health Care Costs. Various energy and heating schemes account for 9% of potential entitlements, services offered by voluntary and community groups for 5%, with other services in groups like transport, accessibility and those relating to care and children among the remainder.
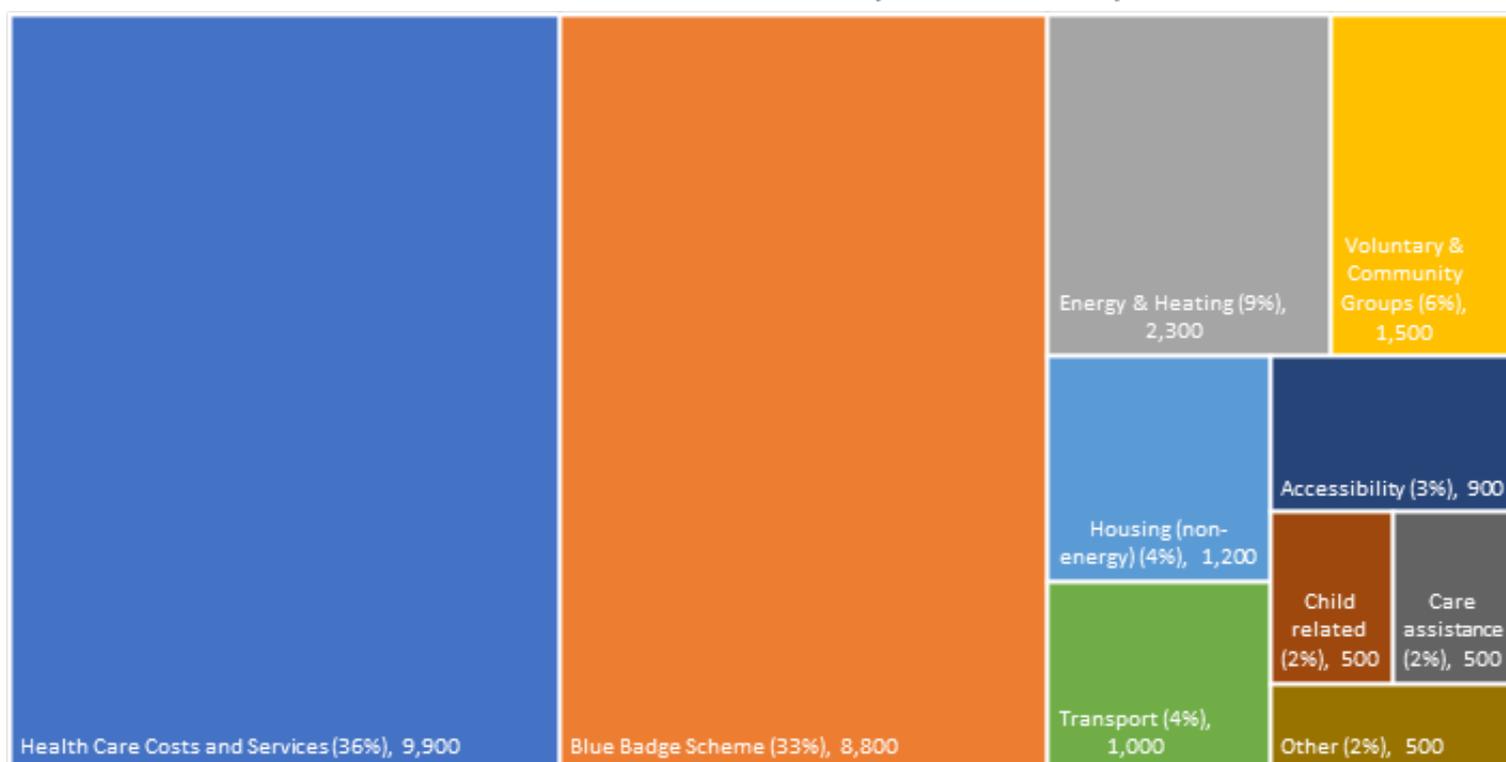
Figure 4.2: Potential service entitlements from 20/21 to 22/23.

There is a range of service providers who offer services which are available under potential service entitlements. In Figure 4.2 these services have been grouped into ten categories relating to the type of service which is provided. The Blue Badge Scheme has sufficient referrals to warrant its own category.

Another way to examine potential service entitlements is whether the service provider is a partner organization of Make the Call. Table 4.2 shows that 15% of potential service entitlements related to an organisation partnered with Make the Call, corresponding to approximately 4,100 potential service entitlements over the three-year period. This therefore means that around 23,000 potential service entitlements related to an organisation not partnered with Make the Call.

Potential Service Entitlements Relating to Partner Organisation	Proportion
Yes	15%
No	85%

Table 4.1: Proportion of Potential Service Entitlements carried out by partner organisations.

Key Takeaways

- Of the 106,400 potential entitlements identified, 79,300 related to potential benefit entitlement with 27,100 relating to potential service entitlement.

- For potential benefit entitlements, 24% (18,700) of the checks have been carried out for Attendance Allowance or Pension Credit. The largest individual benefit in terms of potential entitlements identified is Universal Credit with 20% (16,100).

- Around 69% of all potential service entitlements relate to the Blue Badge Scheme and assistance with Health Care Costs.

- 15% (4,100) of potential service entitlements were carried out in relation to an organisation partnered with Make the Call.

5. Additional Analysis

5.1 Make the Call and Pension Credit

PSU produce take-up statistics for Pension Credit, which estimates both the take-up rate and the number of potentially entitled non-recipients (PENRs) for the benefit. The most recently published information is for 19/20 and estimates that approximately 66,300 families entitled to Pension Credit received it, with an estimated 26,300 potentially entitled to Pension Credit but not receiving it. This equates to a take-up rate of 72%. Further information can be found [here](#).

One area of interest is to compare Make the Call interactions relating to Pension Credit with the number of PENRs. In terms of call data, from 20/21 to 22/23 there were approximately 7,600 people who engaged with Make the Call in relation to Pension Credit. Table 5.1 breaks this information down at LGD level and compares this to a similar breakdown of 19/20 Pension Credit PENRs.

LGD	Number of Callers relating to Pension Credit	% of Callers within specific LGD	Number of Pension Credit PENRs in 19/20	% of Pension Credit PENRs within specific LGD	Number of Callers as a % of 19/20 PENRs
Antrim & Newtownabbey	500	6%	1,800	7%	27%
Ards & North Down	800	10%	2,700	10%	29%
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	800	11%	2,900	11%	29%
Belfast	1,200	16%	3,600	14%	34%
Causeway Coast & Glens	700	9%	2,200	8%	31%
Derry City & Strabane	500	7%	1,800	7%	29%
Fermanagh & Omagh	600	7%	2,200	8%	26%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	400	6%	1,900	7%	23%
Mid & East Antrim	500	7%	2,200	8%	25%
Mid Ulster	600	7%	2,100	8%	27%
Newry, Mourne & Down	1,000	13%	2,900	11%	33%
Total	7,600		26,300		29%

Table 5.1: Comparison of calls to Make the Call relating to Pension Credit with Pension Credit PENRs for 19/20

What is evident from this is that the proportion of both callers and PENRs within each LGD is similar across all LGDs. Examining the callers as a proportion of the PENRs for each LGD, it is detailed that overall, this figure is 29%, with the breakdown at LGD level ranging from 23% in Lisburn and Castlereagh to 34% in Belfast. Without specifically examining cases who have

contacted Make the Call relating to Pension Credit and checking if these are identified as PENRs, it makes percentage comparisons difficult as it cannot be assumed that people are part of both cohorts. The differing timeframes for both pieces of data also make it challenging to draw suitable conclusions. However, it can be asserted that Make the Call is operating at a scale that can make a significant impact in reducing the PENR cohort over time.

6. Conclusion

This report is the culmination of a research project which aimed to examine the reach of Make the Call in NI. Specifically, the report looked to analyse Make the Call data in terms of call data, outreach support and potential entitlements to identify the demographics who are/are not engaging and identify any trends over the time period. Additionally, comparison of the Make the Call data to the demographics of those Pension Credit potentially entitled non-recipients (PENR) was considered.

Analysis showed that, of the 127,600 distinct calls, 91,100 were inbound calls with 36,600 outbound calls. The highest volume of inbound calls was received in 22/23 (34,200) with the highest volume of outbound calls in 21/22 (16,900). There is also a continual increase in the number of outreach support visits from 9,600 in 20/21 to 16,500 in 22/23. Overall, there were 39,800 visits to approximately 30,800 people over the three-year period examined. For potential entitlements, there were approximately 106,400 identified across 56,600 distinct individuals. The highest number of potential entitlements to benefits and services was recorded in 21/22 with 40,700 identified, relating to 23,900 individuals.

Examining the demographic breakdowns, key findings indicate that in terms of age group, working age people make up the majority of calls and potential entitlements with 67% and 62% respectively. The majority of outreach referrals however relate to those of pension age at 53%. In general, all three datasets show an increasing amount of contact as age increases. The 60-69 age band shows the highest number of both calls and potential entitlements with 16,400 and 11,700 respectively. For outreach visits, the 70-79 age band sees the highest number at 6,500 people.

The geographical breakdown is considered at an LGD level in terms of both numbers and proportion of the given LGD population. At call level, the 81,100 callers represent approximately 4.3% of the total NI population with Belfast the highest proportion at 4.7%. For outreach referrals, the approximate 30,800 people visited represent 1.6% of the NI population, with Fermanagh & Omagh displaying the highest proportion of visits in this way at 2.0%. With potential entitlements, the approximate 56,600 people engaged represents 3.0% of the NI population with Ards & North Down displaying the highest proportion of checks in this way at 3.4%. The lowest proportion across all LGDs is consistently displayed

by Lisburn & Castlereagh with 3.6% of callers, 1.3% of outreach visits and 2.5% of potential entitlements. Examining the settlement breakdown, all three data sources display similar breakdown with between 64% and 67% of interactions from those living in households designated as being in an urban settlement.

Examining potential entitlements for both benefits and services, the largest individual benefit is Universal Credit with 20% (16,100) of all potential entitlements relating to it. Of the 27,100 services, around 69% occur for the combination of health care costs and services (9,900), and the blue badge scheme (8,800).

Overall, the analysis indicates that the reach of Make the Call across NI is comprehensive in terms of the range of people engaging. The analysis in this report will inform future Make the Call campaigns and engagement. It could be possible to expand this research to include analysis of other demographic variables including sex type and partnership status were this data available. This would be subject to database limitations and general data protection regulation (GDPR) considerations. Additionally, it may be useful to examine the administrative benefits data in terms of onflows and cross-reference with the potential entitlements data for each benefit.

Annex A: Local Government District map of Northern Ireland

Figure A: Map of Northern Ireland showing the eleven Local Government Districts.

Annex B: Make the Call Potential Benefit Entitlement Abbreviations

UC: Universal Credit

PIP: Personal Independence Payment

AA: Attendance Allowance

PC: State Pension Credit

CA: Carer's Allowance

RR: Rate Relief

DSP: Discretionary Support Payments

DLA: Disability Living Allowance

JSA: Jobseeker's Allowance

HB: Housing Benefit

BB: Bereavement Benefits (this includes Funeral Payment, Bereavement Support Payment and Bereavement Benefit)

CB: Child Benefit

MB: Maternity Benefits (this includes Sure Start Maternity Payment and Maternity Allowance)

BL: Budgeting Loan

IS: Income Support

Other includes Retirement Pension, Winter Fuel Allowance, Tax Credits, Industrial Injuries, Crisis Loan, Mitigation Payments, and Community Care Grant