

Older Citizens Advocacy – York (OCAY)

Longer Term Impact Survey

December 2021

Report and summary of results



Word cloud created with descriptive explanations provided by questionnaire participants.

Methodology

A team of volunteers and OCAY staff members formed a working group to develop the questionnaire, a script, and the method of delivery. The script and questionnaire were drafted to enable a degree of consistency in how longer-term impact was to be explored. Idea development took place via Zoom and email. A pilot survey was undertaken in May 2021.

Following piloting the original survey in May 2021 and the report in June 2021, it was decided that it might be beneficial to collect the case type. This was to allow responses to be examined via this lens to see if any patterns could be determined, or whether the type of issue had any bearing on how respondents answered. The case type was provided to the volunteers undertaking the survey and added to the questionnaire when being completed. Case type was then grouped (family, health/care, housing, consumer issues, finance, employment, benefits) to ease analysis. The questionnaire and script were adapted following the pilot and finalised (appendix 1).

A sample of 30 clients were selected at random to be interviewed. All the cases had been closed between six and 12 months before the interviews took place. A team of five volunteers used the script and questionnaire to undertake the survey over the telephone in November 2021. The volunteers who carried out the survey had not worked with the clients previously. This was decided to be the most appropriate way of gathering responses to enable participants to answer the questions honestly. A letter was sent to each client informing them of the survey (appendix 2), when they would be contacted, and by whom. The letter also explained how to let OCAY know if they did not want to take part. Consent for contact was gathered when clients initially accessed the service. Clients' details were not recorded along with their responses meaning they were fully anonymous.

Results

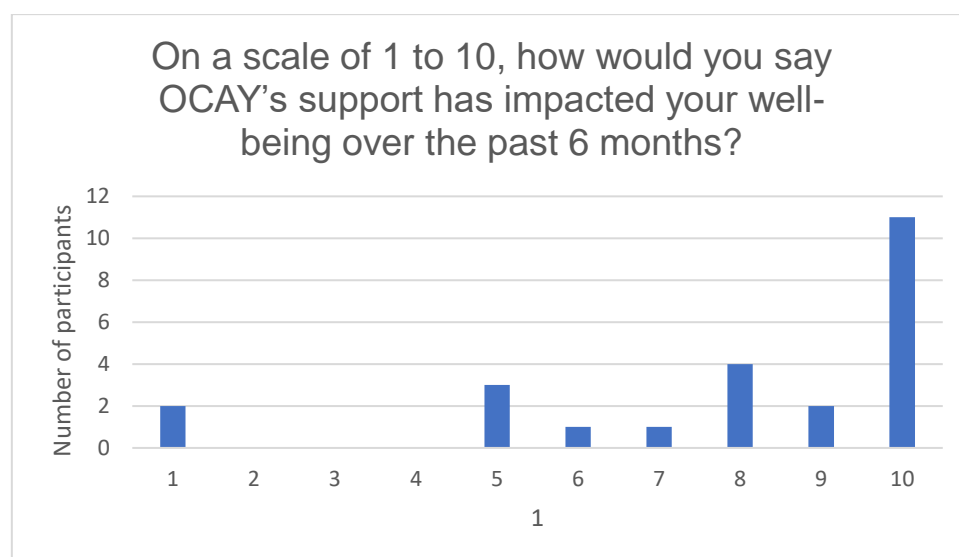
A total of 24 clients agreed to complete the questionnaire which resulted in an 80% response rate. The clients who did not participate in the questionnaire were either unable to remember working with OCAY, were ill or did not answer the telephone when called.

There was variation in terms of whether each respondent answered all questions, and this is noted against each question below with reasons for non-completion if available.

Of those who agreed to complete the questionnaire, 6 clients had help with consumer issues (25%), 6 with housing issues (24%), 7 with benefits (29%), 4 with health/care issues (17%) and one with a family issue (4%). This compares with our statistics for all cases at end of Q1 2021-22, the period when the sample cases had been closed, as follows consumer issues 19%, housing 23%, benefits 26%, health/care 28%, family 0%, finance 4% giving a representative sample.

Question 1 and 2

‘On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning it has had no impact and 10 meaning it has had a huge impact; how would you say OCAY’s support has impacted your well-being over the past 6 months?’



All participants responded to this question, with 18 giving a score of 7 or above in relation to OCAY’s support having an impact on their well-being over the past 6 months; one scored a 6, three scored a 5; and two participants gave a score of 1.

Table 1. Average score for question 1 by case type.

Case type	Average score
Consumer issues	7
Housing	9
Benefits	7
Health/Care	8
Family	10

When asked to explain the reason why a participant gave their score on the scale, those scoring the service as having had an impact on their well-being as a 7 or above stated things such as:

- 'Had marvellous treatment'.
- Person who helped me was excellent and fully realised the position I was in, including the health issues I had.
- I definitely needed help during the telephone assessment and my advocate was very, very helpful.
- Helped to set me on the right road.
- Helped me greatly got an immediate response.
- Advice was good, allowed me to take control.

The client who gave a score of 6 mentioned:

- Feeling listened to and supported: 'I feel better in that I can get out; this helps my well-being.'

Those who gave a score of 5 mentioned they were very grateful for the help they had from OCAY but this 'did not amount to much' due to the nature of the issue raised or that support was also provided by other agencies.

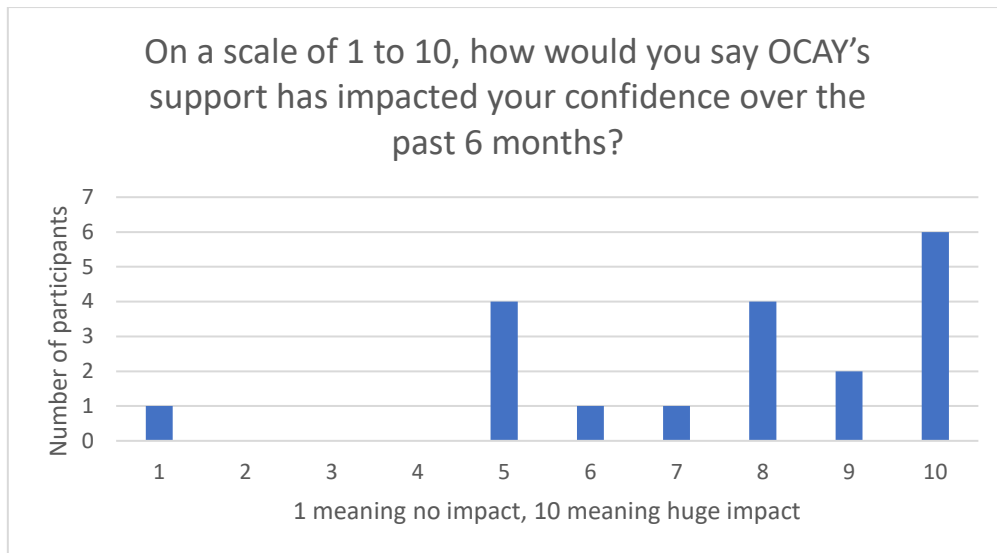
One of the clients who gave a score of 1 mentioned:

- 'It hasn't changed my life'.
- 'It hasn't helped me in any way, shape or form'.
- It was 'brilliant' that the advocate filled in the form but they were 'not that impressed with the form filling' and did not feel it 'encapsulated their disabilities' or summed up how they 'affected their everyday life'.

This client was not awarded the mobility component until around nine months later after they had a face-to-face assessment and had got a supporting letter/report from their GP. Had the form been filled in better in the first place they felt it may not have taken so long and they may not have had to go through so much additional stress.

[Question 3 and 4](#)

'On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning it has had no impact and 10 meaning it has had a huge impact; how would you say OCAY's support has impacted your confidence over the past 6 months?'



Nineteen participants responded to this question; with 13 scoring a 7 or above in relation to how OCAY's support had impacted their confidence over the past 6 months; one providing a score of 1 on the scale; four giving a score of 5 and one giving a score of 6.

[Table 2. Average score for question 3 by case type.](#)

Case group	Average
Consumer issues	7
Housing	8
Benefits	7
Health/Care	9
Family	9

When asked why the participants gave this score, those scoring 7 or above provided explanations such as:

- I felt 'listened to' by OCAY given the confidence to better manage 'other things in the future.'
- Had a lot of help and that improved confidence.
- Lifted spirits, taken pressure off and helped alleviate worries.
- Gave me confidence to be able to ask for help if I need to know again.
- Without them I wouldn't have gone to the Tribunal.
- Got the blue badge and that has helped my confidence and in dependence.
- It felt really good to get help from you.

When those who scored a 5 or 6 were asked why they had chosen their score, they explained:

- OCAY did help when I asked and I had a problem with a tree. They found a price for me but has caused problems with my neighbour.
- 'found it very interesting to read the literature and think about its contents, and it was also 'an excuse to talk about it as well'. they went on to say how they was still receiving 'funny' telephone calls but now understood the best course of action was to end the call and not enter any discussions.
- 'Stopped me worrying I thought I had gone past the date to challenge the PIP assessment'

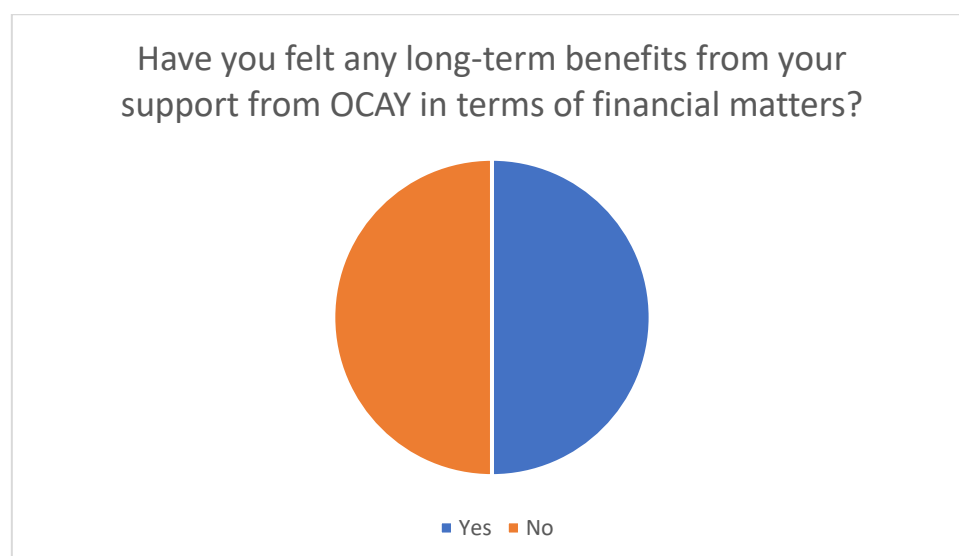
The participant who gave a score of 1 explained that they suffered from anxiety and depression and had been off work for two years. During this time receiving mail was too much to handle. They were incapable of filling in the mobility part of the PIP form so, had they not had OCAY's support to complete the form, they would not have received the award.

Question 5

Following the pilot, it was recommended that we provide the survey team with the issue that the client required help with so that we could better understand the responses to the different parts of question 5.

Question 5a

'Have you felt any long-term benefits from your support from OCAY in terms of financial matters?'



Twenty-one participants provided an answer for this question, with 11 saying they did feel long-term benefits from OCAY's support in relation to financial matters and 10 saying they did not. Five of the participants who said they did feel long term financial benefits had successful PIP assessments or tribunals. The other case types were related to savings on living costs such as energy supplies or help with refunds. Two PIP cases said they did not have long term benefits in relation to financial matters, 1 case reporting a reduction in income. The remaining cases who said that they did not feel long term benefits in relation to finance were about with issues not related to finance.

Those who answered 'Yes' to this question were asked to describe these benefits with participants stating that:

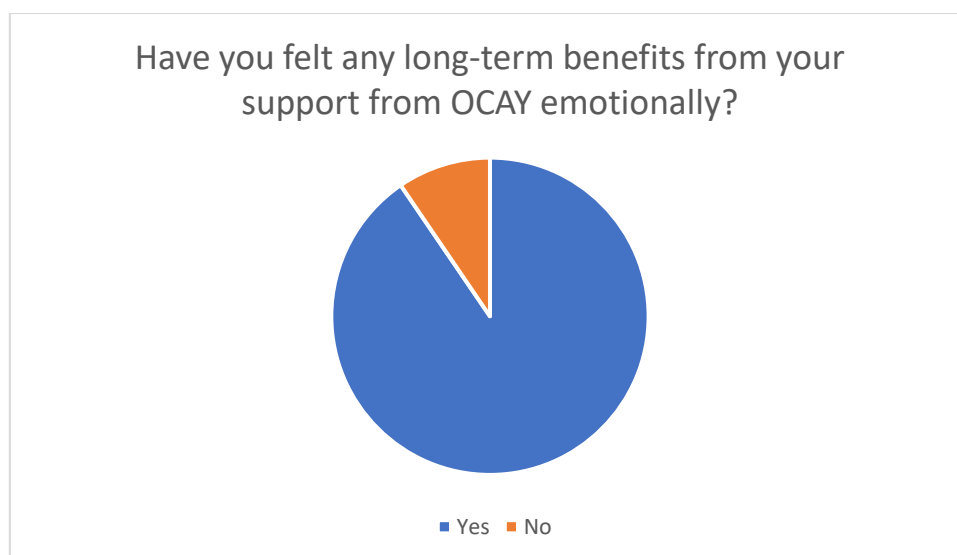
- My PIP application was successful
- Financial assistance has lifted a burden.
- Helped radically – part and parcel of general income.
- Can pay bills now – huge relief. People don't realise how the extra money makes it so much easier.
- OCAY had made them more aware of their money and what they need to do now.

[Table 3. Responses by case type](#)

Case group	Yes	No	Did not answer
Consumer issues	2	2	2
Housing	3	2	1
Benefits	5	2	0
Health/Care	1	3	0
Family	0	1	0

[Question 5b](#)

'Have you felt any long-term benefits from your support from OCAY emotionally?'



Twenty-one participants answered this question, with 19 of them stating they did feel long-term benefits from their support from OCAY emotionally and 2 saying they did not. However, a client who responded that they did not commented 'No-one talks to me I wish I hadn't cut the tree down.'

Those who responded 'Yes' to this question were asked to describe how they were impacted emotionally, and they described the following:

- 'heartening' to talk to someone at OCAY with some know-how who was 'sympathetic' to my plight. This was contrasted with the frustrations resulting from the increasing role of computers and technology in customer services.
- 'Made me feel worth helping'. Rarely leaves the house so it has made a difference.
- Suffers from complex post-traumatic stress – 'but not down in the dumps anymore', confident in keeping their home, and is eating properly.
- 'I felt fully supported and listened to. The process made it easier to cope with me problem as I had help from an understanding advocate'
- 'Knowing I can ask for help has been really helpful and getting the help has given me emotional support just when I needed it.'
- OCAY's support to secure a refund made them 'feel better' because it was one less thing to worry about among a long list of things to deal with and they are prone to anxiety and depression. It also meant they slept better at night.

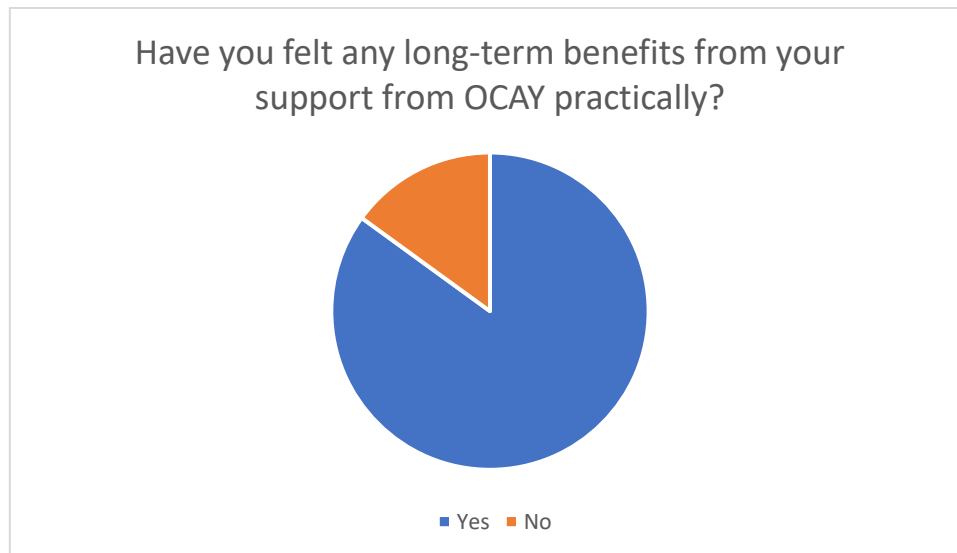
[Table 4. Responses by case type](#)

Case group	Yes	No	Did not answer
Consumer issues	4	0	2
Housing	4	1	1
Benefits	7	0	0

Health/Care	3	1	0
Family	1	0	0

Question 5c

‘Have you felt any long-term benefits from your support from OCAY practically?’



Twenty participants answered this question, with 17 participants believing that they felt long-term benefits from the support from OCAY practically and 3 saying they did not feel any practical long-term benefits.

Those that answered ‘Yes’ to this question were asked why they gave this answer and the following explanations were provided:

- Problem with the leaky roof was solved with the support of OCAY. Knowing that this type of support is available should they need it, has made them feel better in that they can manage.
- Client talked about how OCAY had helped them on a practical level with their finances by encouraging them to follow a fortnightly budget plan.
- In the short term OCAY helped them practically by filling in the form but the outcome of this was that in the longer term they got the full mobility award. This meant they were then eligible for a blue badge which was of enormous practical benefit because their children could now drive them into town to do a little shopping, top up the electricity and gas, etc. Similarly having the extra money meant they could better afford a taxi to the shops to top up her electricity and gas.
- Can now attend hospital appointments by themselves as can now pay for taxis and don’t have to ask family all the time. Gained a bit of independence back.
- Can get that bit closer to the shops, dentist, optician – helped enormously.
- ‘I got my driving license back’

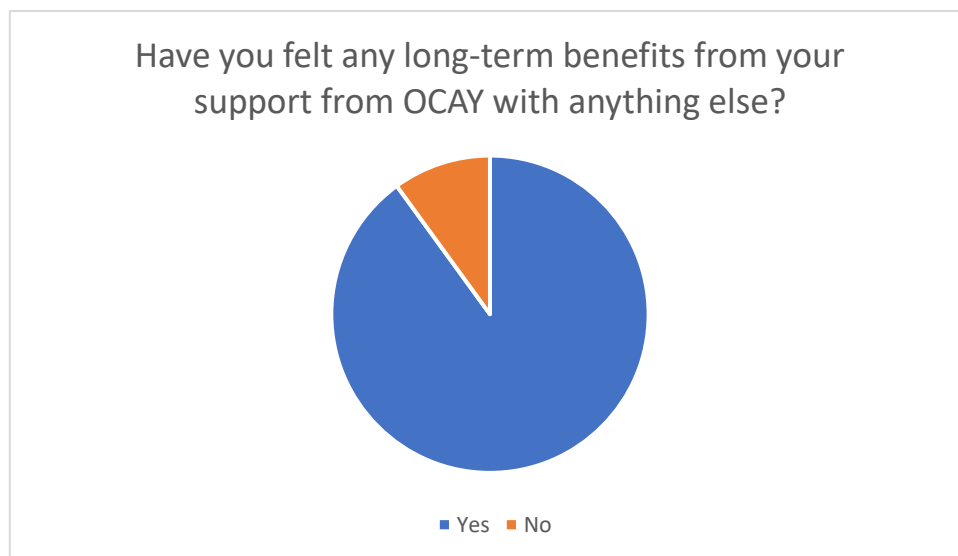
- 'The tree was cut down so I didn't have the problem with the leaves anymore.'
- 'I was able to have an OT assessment which is on-going. I was a teacher.... had to take retirement and was able to have my pension early because of the PIP assessment.'

[Table 5. Responses by case type](#)

Case group	Yes	No	Did not answer
Consumer issues	2	2	1
Housing	3	1	2
Benefits	7	0	0
Health/Care	4	0	0
Family	1	0	0

[Question 5d](#)

'Have you felt any long-term benefits from your support from OCAY with anything else?'



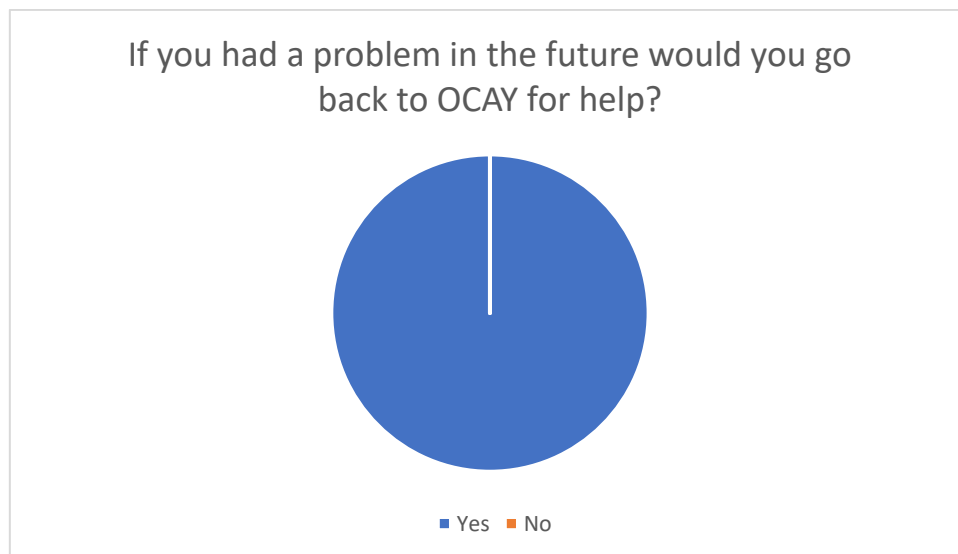
Of the 24 participants, 20 responded to this question with 18 saying they did feel long-term benefits from the support from OCAY with other aspects of their lives and 2 saying they did not.

Of those who thought the support from OCAY had long-term benefits on other aspects of their lives, they explained that:

- They really appreciate the support they have received. It has 'been a lifeline' for them and everyone has always been 'nice and kind'. They would not hesitate to recommend OCAY to others in need.
- It was wonderful to find help for over 50s usually help is only there for over 60s. Not only would I go to OCAY for help again I would like to volunteer as the service is wonderful would be happy delivering leaflets
- Excellent service and really prompt. Email follow up was good
- I found that contacting OCAY, from everyone I spoke to, I found them very helpful. I would give it a 10
- I have been very grateful for the support through my problems and would not think twice to ask for OCAY help when needed. Please say thank you to those involved I would recommend OCAY to friends
- Really good and prompt

Question 6

'If you had a problem in the future, would you go back to OCAY for help?'



Twenty-two participants answered this question, and they all said they would go back to OCAY in the future for help.

Conclusions

The responses were very favourable, participants appreciated the service and were extremely grateful for the support OCAY had provided. This is demonstrated by 100% of those answering the question (and 92% of the total sample who participated) saying that they would come back to OCAY for help in the future if they had a problem.

The responses to questions 1 and 3 demonstrate that most participants (scoring 7 or above) felt that working with OCAY did have an impact on their well-being and confidence over the past six months. The reasons provided to explain the level of the score help us to understand why this was. Participants giving a lower score identified other issues that had also impacted on their well-being and confidence. The average scores by case do not highlight any great variety in feedback, although the average score for benefits and consumer issues cases is lower for both questions indicating room for improvement in our long-term impact.

In response to question 5, most participants did provide evidence of the longer-term impact of working with OCAY. Participants who reported continued improvement in financial matters in this sample tended to have sought help with issues related to PIP applications or issues relating to savings in expenditure. However, not all applications had been successful and, in these cases, no longer term financial benefit was reported. The majority of those who responded reported continued improvement in emotional well-being and confidence and this was across all case types. This was also the case with participants reporting long-term benefits from the support of OCAY practically. However, in this case some of the comments repeated the previous sections particularly when related to finance which could also be described as a practical impact.

Tables 3,4 and 5 show by case the response rate by case type to the different parts of question 5. This shows that there was a higher longer-term impact in cases relating to benefits, housing and consumer issues. There was a longer term emotional and practical impact across all case types who responded to these questions.

The final part of question 5, 'Have you felt any long-term benefits from your support from OCAY with anything else' generated many comments to explain the positive response but these generally related to the quality of the service received rather than long term benefits in another area of their life. This could mean that we need to review how we ask this question in future surveys. It may be that the participants are hearing 'Do you want to add anything else?'

Key themes emerged when participants answered open-ended questions (allowing them to respond in their own words) in relation to OCAY and its service provision. These themes were being listened to, confidence and independence building, starting to self-advocate, appreciating the skills and understanding that advocates had, and information provision. These themes link back to the outcomes we report on quarterly; improved sense of control over the situation, having been taken more seriously, feeling their voice has been heard more and the issue is having less of an impact on their wellbeing. A general sense gained

from these responses leads one to think that use of the service empowered most of these participants in some way or another.

OCAY can also learn from the comments where participants felt that processes were long leading to feelings of frustration or disappointment despite in the longer term getting a favourable result. This survey highlights this as an issue in relation to PIP assessments. It would be useful for OCAY to review how we support volunteers to prepare clients for the length of time it takes for a PIP claim to be assessed and to fully understand the different parts of the process, what happened when. There are also improvements that can be made in how OCAY maintains contact with clients in these circumstances to try to keep them informed and reassured.

Acknowledgements.

We would like to thank the clients who agreed to participate in the questionnaire. We would also like to thank the volunteers who undertook the survey and helped to produce this report.

Appendix 1 – Script & Questionnaire

Long Term Impact Survey and script

Hello, I am a volunteer from OCAY calling to talk to you about a short survey looking at OCAY's advocacy service and how it has helped you with..... (add here the issue/s that the client had support with).

You will have had a letter that explained we would be contacting you. The survey will be used to help improve the service and your responses will be kept confidentially and reported anonymously. We are very grateful for your help.

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning it has had no impact and 10 meaning it has had a huge impact; how would you say OCAY's support has impacted your well-being over the past 6 months?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Could you please explain why you gave this score on the scale?

3. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning it has had no impact and 10 meaning it has had a huge impact; how would you say OCAY's support has impacted your confidence over the past 6 months?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Could you please explain why you gave this score on the scale?

5. Have you felt any long-term benefits from your support from OCAY in terms of ...?

a. Financial matters YES ☐ / NO ☐

- i. If yes. Please can you describe that?

b. Emotionally, YES ☐ / NO ☐

i. If yes. Please can you describe that?

c. Practically YES ☐ / NO ☐

i. If yes. Please can you describe that?

d. Anything else YES ☐ / NO ☐

i. If yes. Please can you describe that?

6. If you had a problem in the future, would you go back to OCAY for help?

YES ☐ / NO ☐

Thank you for your help today, we really appreciate it.

Appendix 2 – Letter sent to clients ahead of data collection.



Priory Street Centre, 15 Priory Street, York, YO1 6ET
info@ocay.org.uk
01904 676200
Registered charity number: 1173795

Address

.....
.....
.....

Date

Dear,

I am writing to you to ask if you would be able to help OCAY by taking part in a telephone survey.

We want to talk to people like you who have used our advocacy service and we want to hear about your experiences of receiving this support to help us understand what difference OCAY has made to your lives.

One of our volunteers,, will ring you between on using a withheld number. They will ask you some questions. The survey will usually take no more than 15 minutes, but this will depend on your responses. All responses will be kept confidential and reported anonymously.

Your answers will help us to improve the service for valued clients like yourself. We will really appreciate your help.

If you do NOT want us to call you, please can you let us know by ringing the office on 07715099498 or 01904676200 before

We hope you will decide to take part in this survey because your answers will provide valuable information to help us improve and develop the service.

Whether or not you decide to take part will not affect you using OCAY in the future, but your help will be very much appreciated.

Best Wishes,

Ruth Potter
Charity Manager.

