

INVESTING IN VOLUNTEERS FINAL REPORT



**Older Citizens Advocacy York (OCAY)
2021**

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Summary information

liV host organisation	Volunteer Now
Assessment date(s)	15 Dec 2021

Assessor	Dane Gould
Name of lead assessor	Janet Lewis-Jones
1st assessment/renewal	1st Renewal
Assessment outcome	Met

About the organisation

Older Citizens Advocacy York (OCAY) was founded in 2001 by a group of older people and is a local charity based in the centre of York set up 'to provide relief to older people in need in the City of York and its surrounding area by the provision of a general advocacy service'. They became involved in a pilot run by 'Better Government for Older People', intended to orchestrate better services and communities that worked for older people. OCAY emerged to meet these needs, ensure inclusion, and get older people's voices heard. They have continued to evolve over the years, with funding from the National Lottery Community Fund supported by smaller grants from City of York Council wards and grant-making organisations alongside their own fundraising. OCAY have offered an independent, free, and confidential advocacy service to those over the age of fifty in the City of York area for 20 years and continue to successfully advocate for those in need. The organisation is based at the Priory Street Centre, a community building that is owned by York CVS and accommodates other Third Sector organizations such as York CVS, Healthwatch York and the Welfare Benefits Unit.

OCAY supports clients with a really diverse range of issues. They help people with benefits, including information, form-filling, and assessments; also with consumer complaints, family, housing, and employment issues and have helped people find out about activities taking place in their communities. OCAY has two volunteer roles, that of Volunteer Advocate and Friend of OCAY. The advocate role can cover all of the issues outlined above although some volunteers do specialise for example, Universal Credit. Friends of OCAY support with such things as delivering leaflets, fund raising and outreach. At the time of the liV assessment there were 35 active volunteer advocates and 8 Friends of OCAY.

OCAY is governed by a board of trustees and has 3 part-time staff. The Fundraising Charity Manager manages the work of OCAY overall and monitors and develops the effectiveness of the service on an ongoing basis. This post is responsible for applying for grants, and leading organisational development. The Lead Advocate (liV Lead) gives support and supervision to volunteer advocates, manages their own caseload, carries out initial meetings with all clients and supports OCAY development work. The Charity Support Assistant is the first line of contact for clients, volunteers, and external organisations, provides the day to day administrative, financial, and business support for OCAY, and also undertakes outreach work in the community. The Charity Manager who is responsible to the Board of Trustees for the operation and strategic development of the organisation heads the organisation's management structure and line-manages the Lead Advocate and the Charity Support Assistant. Overall responsibility for volunteering at the organisation lies with the Charity Manager.

Since the last liV assessment in 2018, there have been significant developments in how OCAY's volunteer programme has developed. One of the main developments is that they are now working with a much higher number of volunteers, in 2018 they had 11 active volunteers and now in 2021 they have 35 active volunteers. Volunteers come from a wide variety of backgrounds, with more young people and students recruited in the 18 to 25-year-old age range. Previously a high proportion of OCAY's volunteers were of retirement age.

Another significant development is the improvement to the training programme for volunteer advocates. The training is delivered by a staff member and an experienced volunteer and OCAY continually reflect on sessions that are delivered so that improvements can be made. The delivery of an online training programme has enabled OCAY to continue to train new volunteers during the pandemic. The training programme has been developed to incorporate 4 key sections – induction, advocacy skills, safeguarding and record keeping. All new volunteer advocates must participate in this training programme.

During the pandemic OCAY managed to make the volunteering programme more accessible for volunteers. They offered Zoom information and peer support sessions for volunteers on a monthly basis during lockdown and saw a significant increase in numbers attending the programme. Some volunteers reported that these sessions provided 'a lifeline' for them during the lockdown, as they were very socially isolated. OCAY continue to offer an online programme for volunteers.

Another change has been the development of the role of an Associate Member on the Board of Trustees. This role is taken by a current Volunteer Advocate and the idea is that the role would bring the volunteer perspective to the board.

In the previous assessment in 2018, a development point noted that insurance was not available to people over 75 years old and this could be a potential barrier to volunteering. OCAY have explored this issue with various insurers who have confirmed that insurance is not available for the over 75s. OCAY do make this very clear to volunteers both in training and one to one sessions. Despite this fact the organisation still have a number of volunteers over 75 who volunteer and want to continue to do so.

How the organisation was assessed

At the time of the liV assessment, members of staff and some volunteers were back working at the OCAY offices, so the assessment interviews were scheduled to take place face-to-face, remotely and by phone with liV Assessor based at the OCAY offices. However, in line with a change to Government guidance, all the assessment interviews took place remotely. The assessment took place over 1 day via Zoom or phone. At the time of the liV assessment 35 volunteers were active as Volunteer Advocates. Friends of OCAY were not active at this point as community fund raising and outreach had been suspended due to the Covid lockdowns.

To meet the sampling criteria, 15 volunteers from the Volunteer Advocate role were interviewed. The Assessor gave the Lead Advocate clear guidance on the breadth of the sample of volunteers to be chosen for the assessment interviews. Volunteers were identified by the Assessor for the assessment interviews and substitutes were in place in case any volunteers were unable to attend. All volunteers invited for interview were able to attend.

Volunteers interviewed represented a range of ages, lengths of service and genders. Ten volunteers were interviewed via Zoom in one group of 3, and 7 individually. Three volunteers were interviewed by telephone. The Associate Trustee (also a Volunteer Advocate) was interviewed via Zoom.

The Charity Manager and the Lead Advocate were interviewed in a pair via Zoom, and the Charity Support Assistant was interviewed individually via Zoom. The Charity Support Assistant has contact with volunteers but no supervisory responsibilities for them. The Chair of the Board of Trustees (also a Volunteer Advocate) was interviewed by phone.

NUMBER OF SITES, BRANCHES, LOCATIONS:	1
NUMBER INCLUDED IN INTERVIEW SAMPLE:	1
NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS:	35
NUMBER INTERVIEWED:	15
NUMBER AS % OF TOTAL:	43%
NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER ROLES:	2
NUMBER OF ROLES SAMPLED BY INTERVIEW:	1
NUMBER AS % OF TOTAL:	100%

NUMBER OF STAFF:	3
NUMBER INTERVIEWED:	3
WERE TRUSTEES INTERVIEWED?	Yes

WRITTEN EVIDENCE:

A number of documents were reviewed at self-assessment and during the liV journey, these included: the Volunteer Statement (volunteer policy equivalent), the Adult Safeguarding Policy, Confidentiality Policy, Volunteer Recruitment Policy, and an example of the OCAY email newsletter.

Further evidence included a summary of results from OCAY’s pilot Long-Term Impact Survey June 2021, the OCAY Strategic Plan 2021-2026, Annual Report 2020-21, and the Decision tree template.

An liV Improvement Action plan was not required, but the OCAY liV Steering Group also submitted as evidence with their self-assessment, their own Development Plan with actions/improvements against liV Practices in the 6 quality areas for 2022.

Meeting the standard

Quality area 1: Vision for volunteering

Volunteering is embedded within the overall vision, values, culture and aims of the organisation and its impact is recognised and communicated. Organisations understand why they involve volunteers

Practice		Met
1.1	Volunteering is planned and reviewed in line with the organisation's vision, strategy, and values	Yes
1.2	Volunteering is valued as part of the culture of the organisation and the benefits of volunteering are understood and communicated	Yes
1.3	The impact of volunteering in contributing to organisation aims is understood and communicated	Yes
1.4	Volunteer involvement is reflected in management, financial and resource planning	Yes

The OCAY Strategic Plan and Action Plan 2021-2026 highlights the importance of achieving Investing in Volunteers, 'liV has been rigorously supported by the Trustees to ensure that it was shaped by volunteers and that OCAY continues to meet their needs and can develop the most effective support structures possible for volunteers. We believe that volunteers are at the heart of our organisation, and that investing in their roles is the key to offering an excellent service.' A member of staff said, 'We did a big organisation-wide consultation to develop the strategic plan, we looked at what worked, what could be improved. We did this through lockdown and involved staff, trustees, volunteers, and clients'. The Associate Trustee said, 'It was so good to be involved with the liV steering group, I was partnered up with one of the trustees – it really focussed our minds to look at how OCAY were doing' and a member of staff said, 'Volunteers in the liV steering group were fantastic, we have learnt so much from this'.

Volunteers were aware of their impact for example, they led on OCAY's 2021 liV reaccreditation journey, and carried out a Long-Term Impact Survey pilot in June 2021, that 'gained useful insights into the longer-term impacts of clients working with OCAY', the results summary outlines the impact that volunteers have throughout the organisation and across its services, and clearly demonstrate why they involve volunteers. A member of staff said, 'The impact of volunteers is also highlighted in monitoring reports to funders, our newsletters, through feedback from clients and one-to-one feedback from volunteers, and our annual report which is published on our website'.

All volunteers interviewed positively expressed how volunteering has many benefits for themselves, OCAY and the local community, 'A sense of purpose is really important to me, a client called to say that she has now got the full disability allowance, this is life changing for her, I feel good that I was instrumental in this' and a member of staff said, 'We wouldn't be here without volunteers, without their breadth of talent and experience, they are very passionate and go the extra mile, maybe more so than staff – our role is to support volunteers.'

Quality area 2. Planning for volunteers

People, policies, and procedures have been put in place to ensure volunteering is well-managed

Practice		Met
2.1	There are specific and proportionate systems and processes for volunteer involvement that are regularly reviewed	Yes
2.2	Relevant people in the organisation are aware of systems and processes relating to volunteering and why they are important	Yes
2.3	There are designated people responsible for volunteers and volunteering that have experiences, competencies, and attributes for the role	Yes
2.4	Systems are in place to ensure the management of risk, safeguarding, health and wellbeing and protection of volunteers, the organisation, and others	Yes
2.5	There are problem solving procedures to deal with issues raised by or about volunteers	Yes
2.6	Records of volunteer involvement are maintained in line with data protection	Yes

OCA Y has a Volunteer Statement which provides consistency across the organisation in delivering on the volunteer programme. Volunteers are involved in reviews of volunteer-related policies and procedures for example, as part of the liV reaccreditation, they reviewed all the policies and procedures from all the quality areas and practices within the Investing in Volunteers framework. All staff who support volunteers have the relevant skills and experience and volunteers were consistently positive about staff members, 'They are amazing, we all have a great relationship with them, you probably have lots of volunteers who say this, but I do feel like I am part of a family and I'll be here as long as I can be' and 'I've been here a few years now and OCA Y is better run than it has ever been.'

OCA Y emphasise the importance of volunteers' wellbeing throughout their policies and procedures, their Volunteer Statement and at induction. Members of staff emphasised the importance of the wellbeing of volunteers. Volunteers said, 'Staff ask how we are doing, our wellbeing, we have one-to-one sessions, they take all our issues very seriously – they are great at protecting us', 'I feel that we are being thought of all the time – staff always ask us if we are ok, and we know that we can talk about anything' and 'Volunteering here is so flexible, because of my health the staff always reassure me there's no pressure to volunteer, they always have my best interests at heart – wonderful.'

Quality area 3. Volunteer inclusion

There is a positive approach to inclusion, equity and diversity and a proactive approach to making volunteering accessible

Practice		Met
3.1	The organisation is inclusive and managed in a way that encourages the involvement of and is welcoming to a wide range of people	Yes

3.2	There is a proactive approach to increasing volunteer diversity, addressing under-representation, and including targeted groups as part of the organisation's inclusion, equity and diversity aims	Yes
3.3	Information about volunteering opportunities is made as widely available as possible using a range of methods and there is active engagement with a diverse range of people	Yes
3.4	Where possible there is a wide range of accessible opportunities that can be adapted throughout the volunteer's journey	Yes

The Volunteer Statement and the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy sets out OCAY's values with regard to equality and highlight the importance of diversity. Messaging on inclusion, equity and diversity is included within induction and training and supported by organisational policies. The OCAY Equality and Diversity policy also has a Declaration of Abidance which staff and volunteers (including Trustees) must sign to confirm that they have read the policy and will comply with it. Members of staff said, 'We now have an Equality, Inclusion and Diversity baseline for trustees, volunteers and staff. We report to trustees every other month and staff and volunteers have completed Unconscious Bias training', 'In January 2022 we are conducting an Inclusion Maturity Review, so we promote to as wide a client group as possible' and 'We are also a pilot organisation for Diversity and Ability, a multi-award-winning, disabled-led social enterprise championing neurodiversity and disability inclusion.'

Comments from Volunteers included, 'I am in a wheelchair, and I have great support from the office, I don't always value myself, but OCAY definitely do, they are wonderful' and 'OCAY are really keen to improve diversity, we are really looking at diversity – we are passionate about diversity'. OCAY undertakes annual equalities and diversity monitoring and shares its review with Age UK, to enable benchmarking with other organisations. Plans are also in place for OCAY to deliver an Equality Impact Assessment, 'to put a structure around the subject of equality and diversity'. OCAY promotes its volunteering opportunities through a range of media that includes their own services, their website, relevant local development agencies and networks, the press, workshops, information stalls, presentations, newsletters, social media, and community settings.

Quality area 4. Recruiting and welcoming volunteers

It is easy for people to find out about opportunities, explore whether they are right for them, and get involved

Practice		Met
4.1	People are clear about the opportunities available and the process to become involved	Yes
4.2	Recruitment processes and checks are timely, fair, consistent, straightforward, and appropriate	Yes
4.3	Recruitment is a two-way process for volunteers to find out more and that considers how individual and organisational needs can be met	Yes
4.4	Volunteers are provided with any necessary information, introductions, and training for their role	Yes

The work of OCAY is widely publicised, and this includes information about how volunteers support the organisation. There is a clear recruitment and induction process which is consistently applied and includes ample opportunity for prospective volunteers to consider if the opportunities on offer are right for them. All recruitment processes are consistent with the organisation's equality and diversity statement, as contained in the Equality and Diversity policy.

All volunteers were very positive about their recruitment process and their induction, 'The training is excellent, whatever training is available I do it because I know it's going to be so good. I always feel well prepared, we've had offers to shadow more experienced volunteers, it's all very helpful' and 'We discussed training for volunteers in the liV steering group, and there was consensus that all the training at OCAY is excellent.'

Volunteers spoke about the mandatory training they are required to attend, the training programme has been developed to incorporate 4 key sections – induction, advocacy skills, safeguarding and record keeping. All new volunteer advocates must participate in this training programme. They also talked about how they can access any training whether classroom, remotely or online, that is relevant to their role or development. OCAY's Strategic Plan and Action Plan 2021-2026 includes developing new volunteer roles for example, Advocacy for prison leavers, Advocacy for ex-service personnel and their families, and Advocacy for people with dementia and other cognitive impairment, members of staff confirmed this.

Quality area 5. Supporting volunteers

Volunteers feel supported at all times, that they are a part of the organisation and that their contribution makes a difference

Practice		Met
5.1	Volunteers feel appropriately supported in their role and able to discuss all aspects of their volunteering	Yes
5.2	Volunteers and everyone in the organisation who comes into contact with volunteers are clear about the scope of volunteer roles and what volunteers can expect from the organisation	Yes
5.3	Volunteers have the opportunity to discuss how they are doing	Yes
5.4	Volunteers have opportunities to express their views and ideas and to be involved in relevant decision making	Yes
5.5	Volunteers feel there is good communication between themselves and the organisation	Yes
5.6	There are systems for volunteers to have a positive and managed exit	Yes

Volunteers commented that they feel they 'are an integral part of the organisation', 'how well they are supported', and that this is outlined in role descriptions, recruitment, policies and at induction and training. All volunteers were very positive about the support they receive from staff, 'Staff are brilliant at supporting us, it's a two-way thing – excellent'. Members of staff talked about the importance of supporting volunteers, 'Volunteering is a balance, we are very flexible allowing

volunteers to do a range of things, a real positive – they never feel as if they should have to do something’. Volunteers were clear about the scope of their role, ‘We cover boundaries a lot, we are advocates not advisors, they are very different things’ and ‘Boundaries have slipped once or twice. One client started relying on me like I was a financial assistant, and you can get drawn into the private life of clients if you are not careful. I talked to the staff, and they are great, I agreed when they suggested that I disengage with that particular client’.

Volunteers are regularly involved in reviews of volunteer-related policies and procedures for example, training materials for volunteers. They appreciate being consulted about the development of practice in relation to volunteering and the wider organisation. A volunteer said, ‘Staff give us great feedback about clients, it all gets relayed back to us which is something I love’ and a member of staff said, ‘Volunteers are very good at feeding back and they are excellent at supporting each other’. Excellent examples that demonstrate volunteers’ contribution include their involvement in OCAY’s pilot Long-Term Impact Survey and the Investing in Volunteers reaccreditation where they led on the liV self-assessment journey and produced the self-assessment document for submission.

Eighty percent of volunteers who responded to OCAY’s most recent annual volunteer survey gave OCAY a 10/10 for how supported they felt in their role.

Quality area 6: Valuing and developing volunteers

Volunteers are valued and there are opportunities for volunteers to develop and grow through their experience

Practice		Met
6.1	Volunteers feel their contribution is meaningful and rewarding	Yes
6.2	Volunteers feel valued by and a part of the organisation	Yes
6.3	The experiences, attributes, and competencies that volunteers bring are recognised and they have opportunities to develop them	Yes
6.4	Volunteers have the opportunity for connecting with and learning from other volunteers where appropriate	Yes
6.5	Volunteers’ future aspirations are supported where appropriate	Yes

Volunteers feel that their contribution is meaningful, they enjoy their roles and feel valued, ‘Every three weeks we have zoom sessions with other volunteers, we can submit a case to talk about and it’s great to hear the vast experience and knowledge from other volunteers for example, issues about a care home, how to overcome these. I know that our clients are in good hands’, ‘In the peer support group, I feel part of a bigger organisation, you know you are not out there on your own’ and ‘I feel so valued and volunteering at OCAY gives me a sense of using my skills and principles from social work, developing these skills, learning new skills, it’s great to see what I can bring to the role’.

Volunteers talked about the ‘welcoming atmosphere’ and being ‘routinely thanked at the end of each volunteering session’. Highly praised was the support from staff and other volunteers, ‘I feel like I belong to the organisation, we have volunteer get-

together, zoom sessions, social quizzes and games, bowling and going out for meals pre-pandemic – they really do value us’. Volunteers also talked about attending weekly, monthly, and annual staff and volunteer meetings, catch ups and reviews where they can discuss progress, challenges, and successes. Peer support sessions alternate monthly with Information/Training sessions to ensure that all volunteers have regular opportunities for learning and development.

Ongoing training is provided in all areas identified in the OCAY Training and Development Policy. These have included training on the database, DWP benefits, Dementia Training and Equality Training, and specifically Unconscious Bias in response to volunteer feedback. Volunteers described being able to access training that’s relevant to their role or their personal development goals and how their ‘goals are reviewed at their support and review sessions’. Volunteers said, ‘I have attended lots of training courses for example PIP, Universal Credit, and the Charity Manager brings in guest speakers at the Welfare Benefit Unit’ and ‘I am looking forward to continuing to contribute, still learning lots from volunteers, and from clients and from staff.’ Members of staff spoke about the importance of valuing volunteers and helping them to realise their aspirations, ‘Volunteers are brilliant – brilliant to work with and the peer support groups which I have attended are brilliant.’

Future Plans

OCAY has recently been awarded National Lottery funding for the next 3 years. This means they will continue to be able to provide appropriate support to all the volunteers who deliver their service. OCAY plan to recruit volunteers from diverse back grounds and will be going through a Maturity Inclusion Review this year to ensure that their policies do not discriminate in any way.

Volunteers will continue to have opportunities to be involved in planning and organisational decision making, particularly through the development of the Associate Trustee role and regular consultation through surveys and feedback mechanisms described in the liV self-assessment.

OCAY will continue to review and develop their training to ensure it continues to meet the needs of new volunteers. They will also review how to move to a hybrid model of delivering training, peer support and one-to-ones as they return from the Covid lockdown restrictions.

OCAY are also planning to develop further involvement of experienced volunteers in the training of new volunteers so that ideas and experience of working with their client group are shared.

Strengths

A number of strengths were identified during the assessment, these are detailed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the quality area and specific practice of the Investing in Volunteers standard.

There is recognition that consulting volunteers helps to develop and improve the whole organisation, as well as the individual volunteers, and builds the togetherness of the OCAY volunteer family. Consulting volunteers also contributes to volunteers feeling 'a valued part of the organisation', and that their 'opinions and feedback have an impact'. Members of staff interviewed encourage volunteers to let them know if they have ideas about new ways of doing things or improvements. The Investing in Volunteers quality standard and its framework has played an important part in the review of all aspects of volunteering across OCAY.

A great example of consulting volunteers was their involvement in OCAY's liV reaccreditation journey, with volunteers leading on the liV reaccreditation in the form of a Steering Group. Working in pairs, volunteers assessed the quality areas and practices, then fed back their findings to the main group and input into the final self-assessment. The resulting self-assessment submitted to the liV Assessor was excellent, and comments from the volunteers involved included, 'It's fantastic the amount of trust and confidence they [OCAY] have in us', 'In the steering group we worked in pairs on different areas, then swapped pairs so we weren't with the same people all the time, we passed drafts around to look at in pairs, then to the whole group, it worked so well' and 'The really nice thing was the openness that was there, the staff were incredible, very collaborative, inclusive, sharing our expertise of how we are working'.

(Vision for volunteering 1.1,1.2, Supporting volunteers 5.3, 5.4).

Supporting volunteers is embedded in the organisation's ethos and values. The organisation has substantial support mechanisms in place for all volunteers, and this was confirmed by interviewees and in their policies, strategies, and plans. Volunteers rate support very highly and comments included, 'They are always up for a chat on the phone anytime and they've been very supportive during Covid – it's one of the nicest places to work' and words used to describe this support included 'amazing', 'fantastic', 'caring' and 'committed'.

All volunteers have a named member of staff who supports them, and a member of staff said, 'I support volunteers mainly through one-to-one sessions and we have our annual review. We encourage volunteers to talk to us at any time, there is always someone available to listen.' There is recognition that the continuous support volunteers enjoy has a positive impact on their recruitment, their wellbeing, their personal development, retention of volunteers, and their feeling of being valued. There is also recognition that emotional care for volunteers positively impacts on the well-being of volunteers, staff, and the wider organisation. Volunteers recognise that OCAY 'ensure the wellbeing of all volunteers, it's a priority', 'any issues related to my

volunteering or personal life, staff are always there' and the 'the support from staff is fantastic'. A member of staff said, 'We encourage volunteers to let us know if they are struggling, their wellbeing is so important to us'.
(Planning for volunteers 2.3, 2.4, Supporting volunteers 5.1).

Another strength is how OCAY value volunteers and highlights how volunteers feel empowered and enthused in their work with clients. Valuing volunteers is embedded in OCAYs' ethos and values throughout the whole organisation, for example, in its media, its website, case studies, impact statements, strategies, and policies and procedures that relate to volunteers. All staff interviewed praised volunteers and expressed how valuable they are to the organisation.

Volunteers talked about how valued they felt, and comments included, 'The staff always let you know that you have done well, I feel part of a team, it's the best organisation I have ever worked for', 'Yes, I feel so valued, we are responded to, staff are always attentive, say thank you – I love it', 'We volunteers bring such a diversity of experience, a huge range of skills and OCAY recognise this and they value it', 'We all know that without volunteers we wouldn't exist, the organisation is so enriched by having volunteers' and 'Everyone is really helpful, we have extra training sessions, they put on sessions around Universal Credit and DWP, any issues we talk to staff – they are very responsive.'
(Valuing and Developing Volunteers 6.2, 6.3).

Continuous development and improvement

Suggestions for continuous development and improvement are offered to help the organisation be even better than it already is in relation to involving volunteers. The adoption of these suggestions and progress against them will be followed up on and more fully explored during the renewal assessment in three years' time. The numbers in brackets refer to the quality area and specific practice of the Investing in Volunteers standard.

- All volunteers interviewed enjoy OCAY's Peer Support sessions, but a number of volunteers could not regularly attend or not attend at all due to the 'regular fixed schedule'. All volunteers interviewed, whether they could attend or not, felt that the sessions were 'really important', that 'they felt they were part of something bigger' and 'the case studies discussed are very valuable'. To make the support sessions more accessible, suggestions from volunteers included 'rotating the times of the support sessions', and 'recording them, so that those who could not attend could access them in their own time'.

Development: To give all OCAY volunteers the opportunity to benefit from Peer Support sessions, it is suggested that OCAY could review when peer support sessions are scheduled. Although sessions can easily be recorded and shared with current technology, permissions may be required from OCAY volunteers to allow this. (**Valuing and developing volunteers** 6.4).

A Volunteer Advocate is now an Associate Member on the Board of Trustees, enabling more insight into the board's governance. OCAY are considering recruiting a Deputy Associate Member to attend meetings when the Associate Member is unable to do so. Comments from the current Associate Member on the Board of Trustees included, 'I got involved because I wasn't sure what the trustees did and thought I could bring something to the trustees. I wasn't really told what the role would be, I've been in the role now for about 12 months, I enjoy it, but I find it a bit confusing'. Volunteers interviewed were unclear about the role, 'I don't really know what the role is, but I think something like it is needed, a conduit between volunteers and the board' and 'I think the role is a good idea, but I think we need some more comms around it for example, what is the purpose of this role, I think it needs to be more defined'.

Development: It is suggested that OCAY could undertake a review of the role of Associate Member taking into consideration the purpose of the role. With input from trustees, staff, and volunteers this should help to better understand the role and communicate this to the wider organisation. (**Vision for volunteering** 1.1, 1.2).