



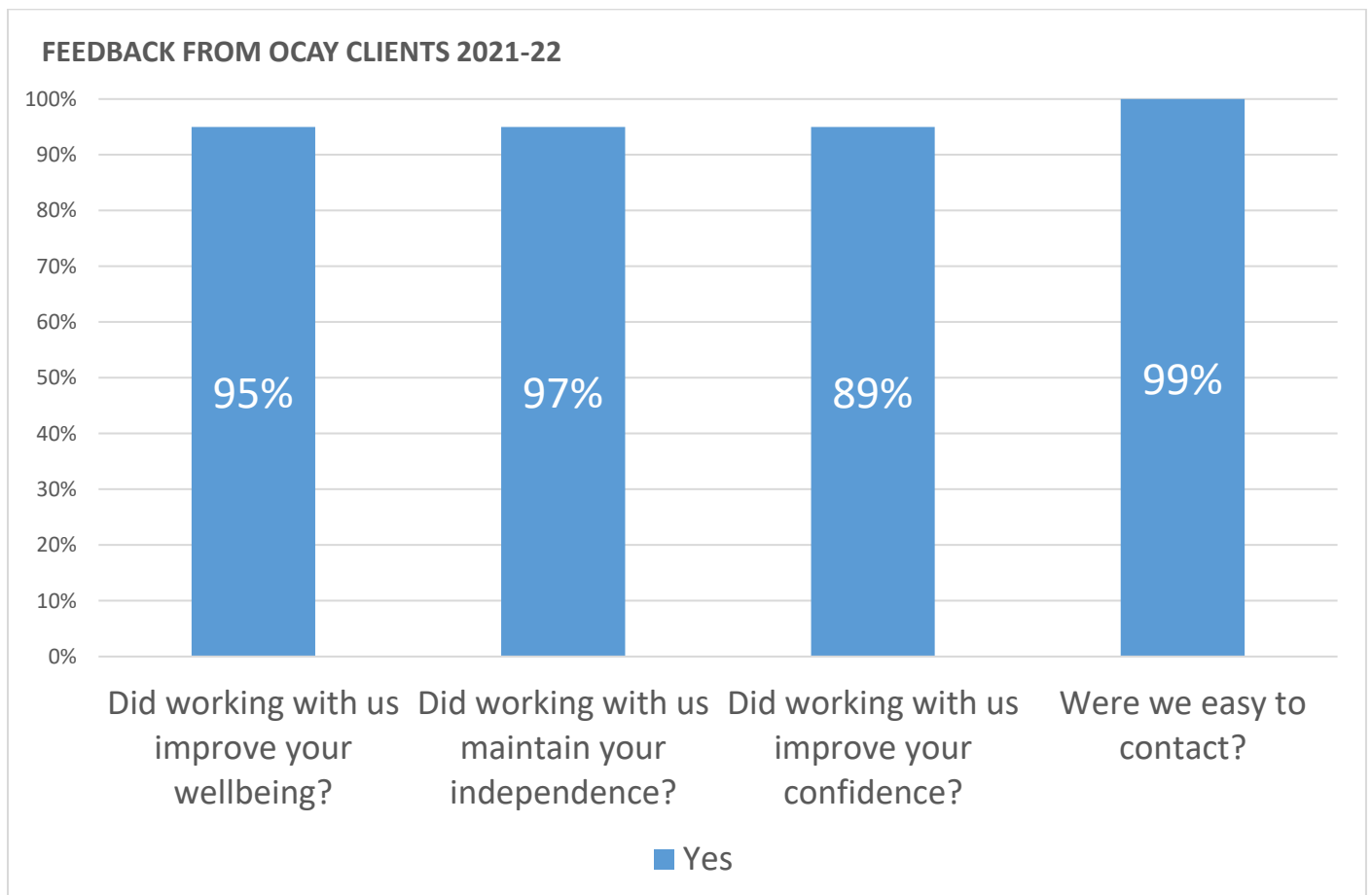
## OLDER CITIZENS ADVOCACY-YORK

### ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

Registered Charity No. 1173795

OCAY was founded in 2001 by a group of older people. 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. We emerged to meet these needs, ensure inclusion, and get older people's voices heard. We 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 our own fundraising.

We have offered an independent, free and confidential advocacy service to those over the age of 50 in the City of York area for 21 years and continue to successfully advocate for those in need.

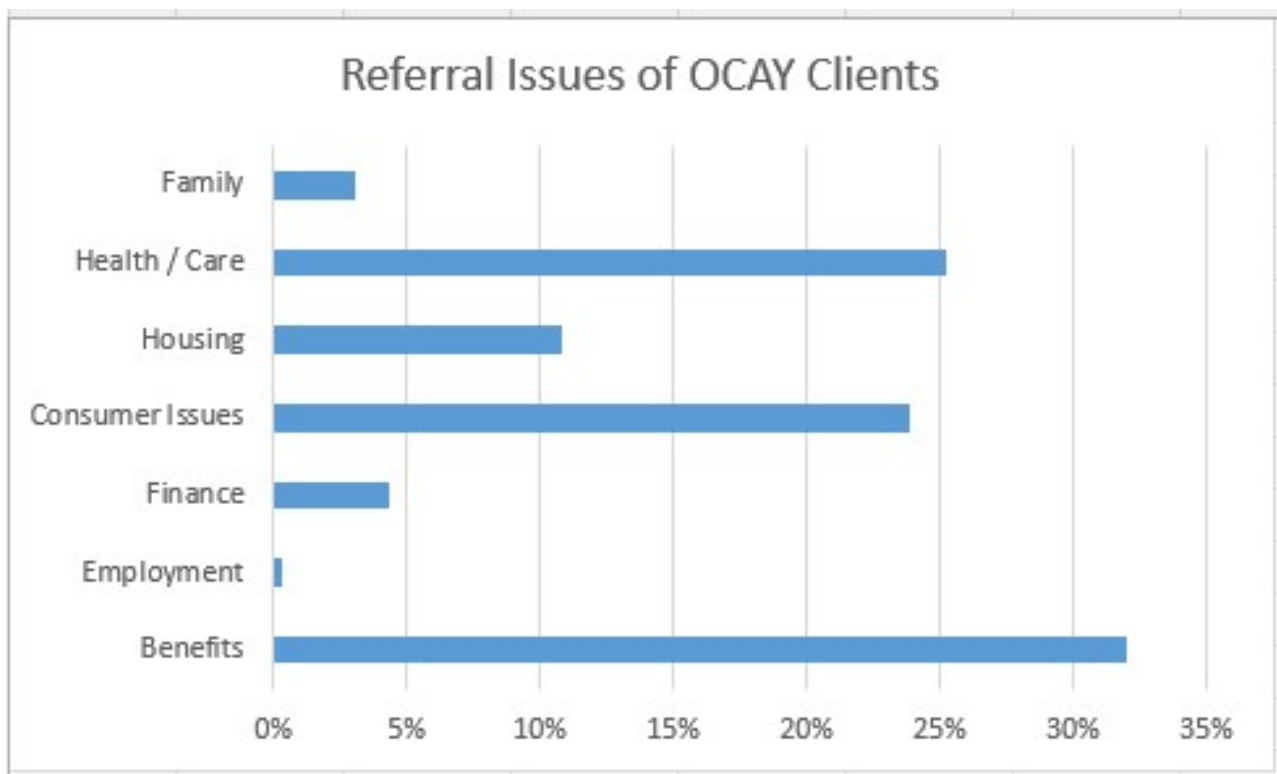




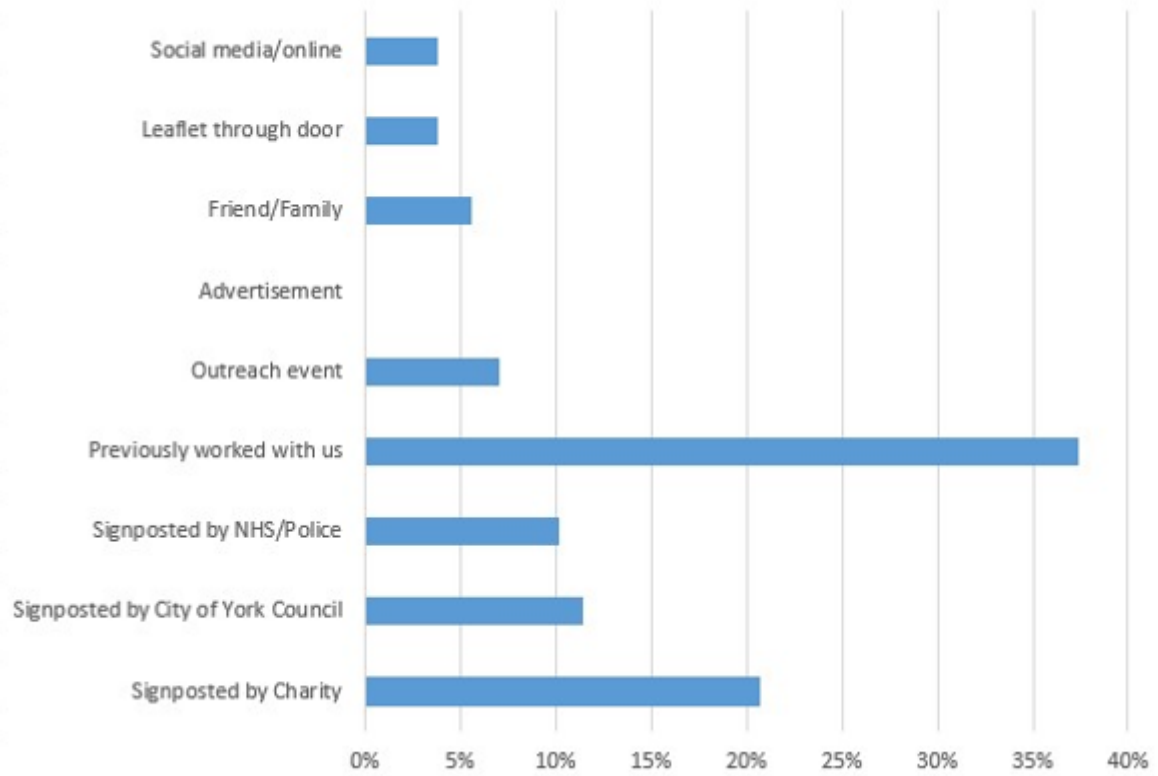
supported 463 older people in York in 2021/22

OCA Y supports clients with a really diverse range of issues. The current trend is helping more people with benefits, including information, form-filling and assessments. We've also helped with consumer complaints, family, housing and employment issues and we have helped people find out what is going on in their communities. We've seen an increase of people looking for support around Blue Badge applications in the past year from 4 in 2020/21 to 50 this year. We've spent **1271** hours directly advocating for clients this past 12 months. That's an average of **4.7 hours** of support for each client, which is an increase in **273 hours** but a decrease in time spent with each client by -1.5 hours. This is due to initial meetings being carried out over the telephone and offer advocates have been able to help over the telephone rather than face to face during the pandemic, ensuring the safety of everyone.

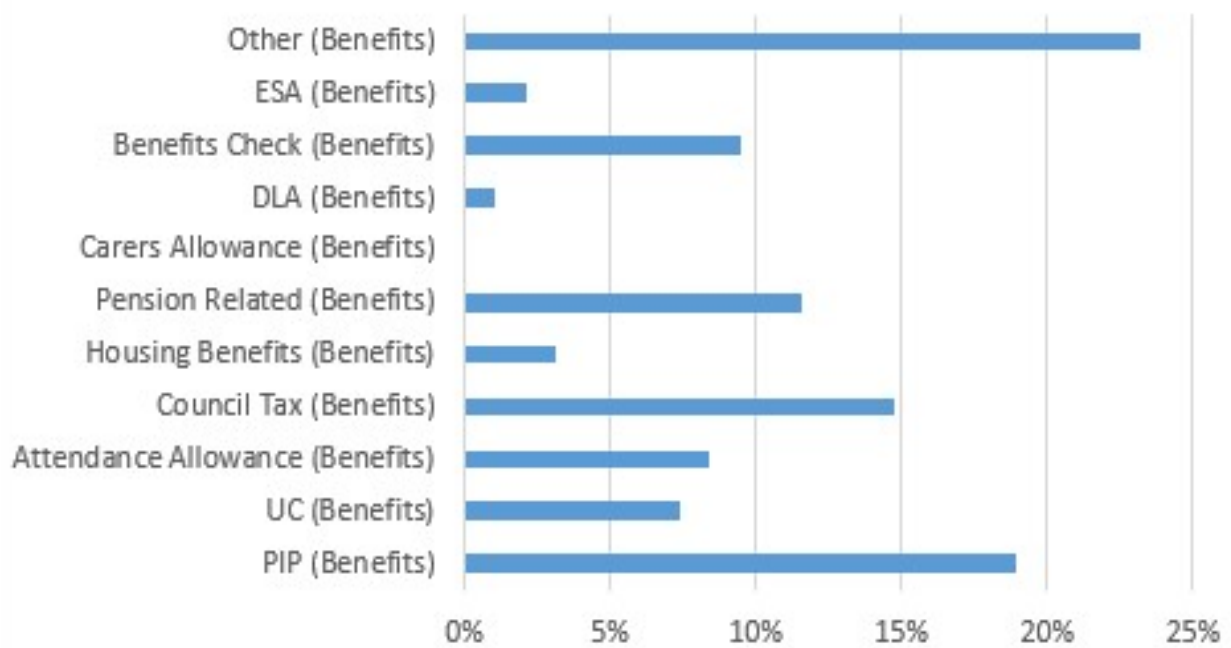
Clients come to OCA Y in a variety of ways - many are referred to us by organisations across the city, some contact us directly by phone or by email, some enquire via our website, others have heard about us through a friend or have previous experience working with us. Following the Coronavirus we are looking to starting to post leaflets through doors again and advertise in local magazines and papers to ensure that everybody is aware of our service and know they can contact us, whatever the issue.



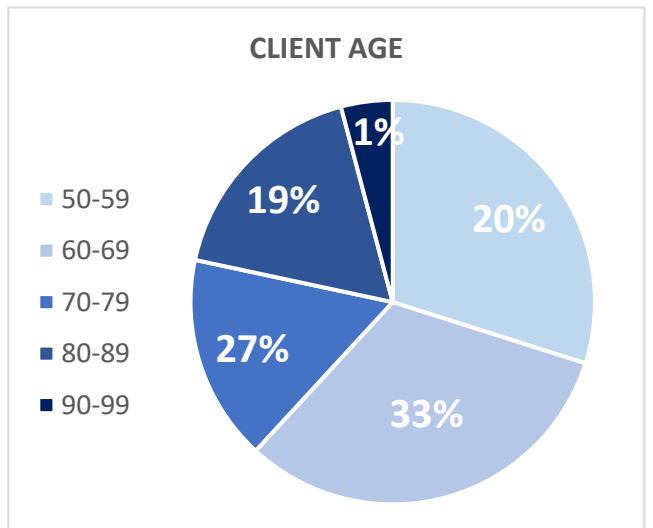
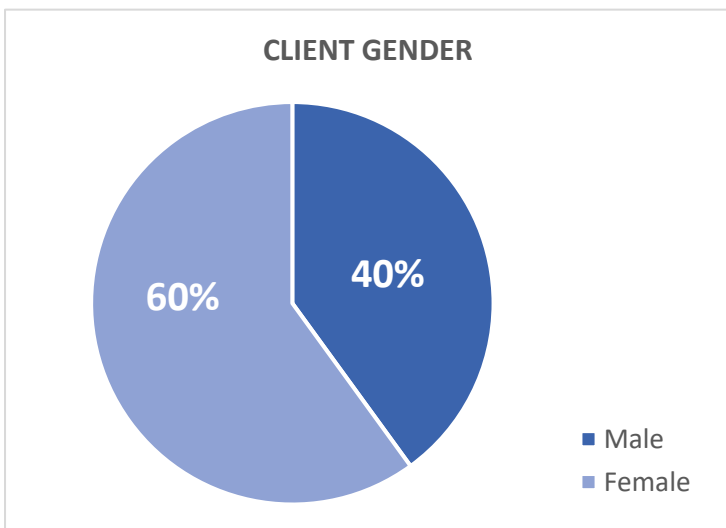
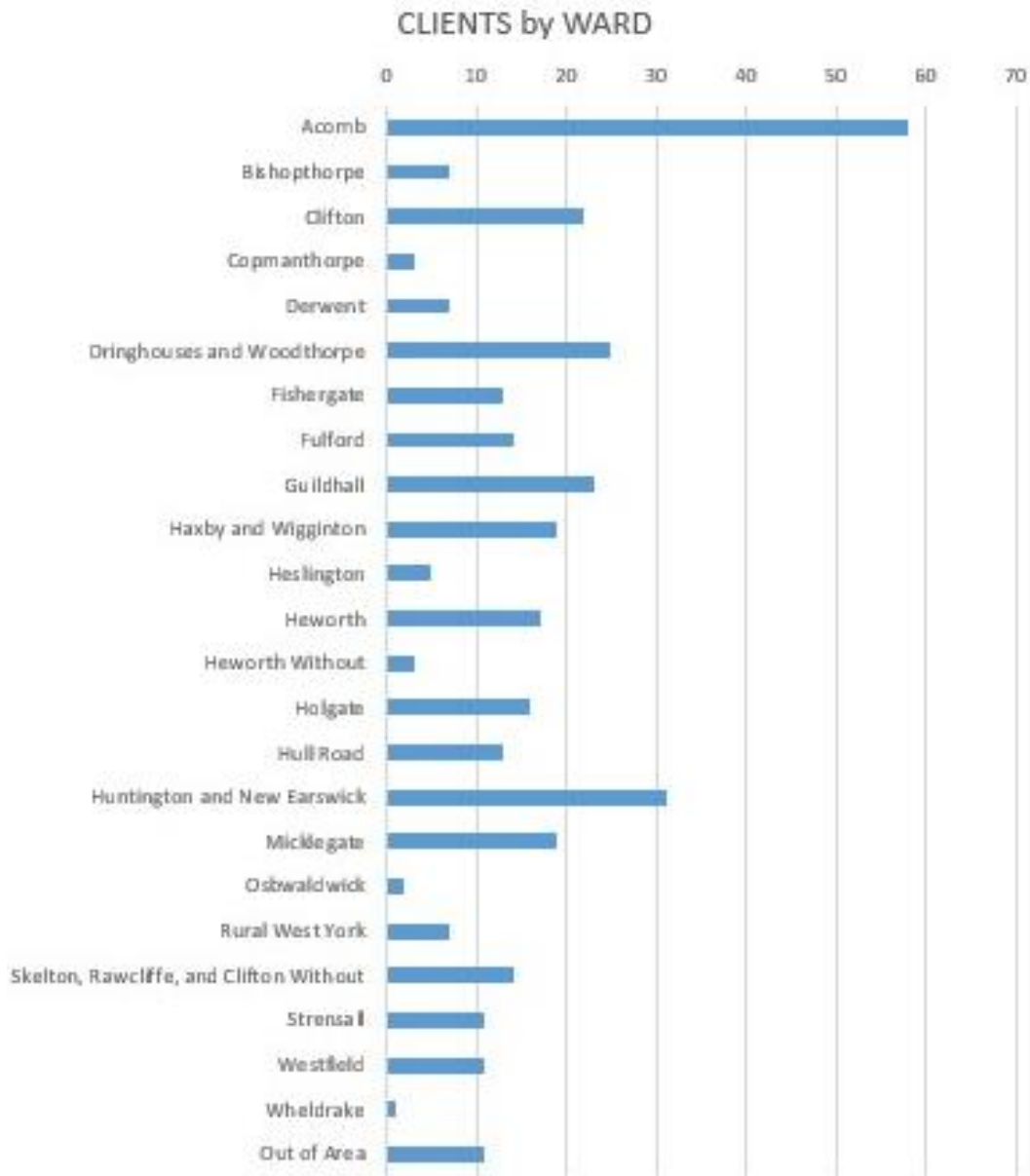
### "How did you hear about OCAY?"



### Breakdown of Benefits Issues



# Where our clients come from





**currently has 25 volunteer advocates and 9**

**Friends of OCAY...**

## Case Studies

Our service could not operate without our volunteers. We are very proud of the work that they do. They help a wide range of older people, supporting them with many different issues such as...

A client wanted help to complete a Blue Badge application as it was their first. They had severe back pain and had to take medication for this. They wanted a Blue Badge so that they could get parking when they visited the local hospital. The advocate spoke to the client on the phone and made an online application on their behalf. The application was successful, and they were awarded a Blue Badge. The client was very happy with the service and would use us again. They would recommend us to other people.

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A client approached us for help with an Attendance Allowance application. The client had applied a few years ago and been turned down but since then their health had deteriorated. The client had various medical conditions. A volunteer advocate came forward to help with the application. They did research into the application process. The advocate filled in the application under instruction from the client and their son. The application was successful, and the client was awarded the higher rate of Attendance Allowance which is £92.40 per week. The client was very pleased with the outcome.

A client approached us who could not use their cooker as it was not working, so had to use a microwave instead which was not very practical. The client was on a low income and benefits and could not afford a new cooker. A volunteer advocate came forward to help the client. The volunteer looked on the Turn 2 Us website for details of charitable trusts who could provide grants for individuals. The volunteer found a suitable trust and applied for a grant for a new cooker. The application was successful, and a grant was provided towards a new cooker. The client was very pleased, and a new cooker will help to improve their quality of life.

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A client wanted help with a PIP review form. They had complex, long term mental and physical health issues. They came to OCAY for help to fill in the form. A volunteer advocate came forward to help them. The volunteer encouraged them to collect relevant medical evidence including a supporting letter from their doctor. The volunteer supported the client to compile a draft copy of the review form. They helped the client to decide what information was relevant and would support the claim. The PIP form was submitted. The claim was successful without the need for an assessment.

The client's award was increased, and they received the standard mobility component of PIP as well as the enhanced rate for daily living. The award was extended until 2025.

**Trustees, October 2021– September 2022:**

Matthew Knight (Chair –from 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022)

Gillian Caldicott (Vice Chair from 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022)

Tracey Dennison (Trustee from 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021)

Sylvia Doughty (Secretary)

James Grainger (Honorary Treasurer - Associate Trustee)

Sharon Beattie

Chelsea Martin

Louise Reid (stepped down May 2022)

Rachel Totten (stepped down August 2022)

**Bankers:** HSBC & CAF

**Examiner of Accounts:** Caroline Cook

**Patron:** Professor Dianne Willcocks

**Honorary Vice President:** Douglas M. Craig, OBE

**Address:** The Priory Street Centre, 15 Priory Street,  
York, YO1 6ET

**Telephone:** 01904 676200

**Email:** [info@ocay.org.uk](mailto:info@ocay.org.uk)

[www.oldercitizensadvocacyyork.org.uk](http://www.oldercitizensadvocacyyork.org.uk)

# OCAY

**currently has 2 staff members, and 8 trustees**

**Dan Brittan, Lead Advocate:** Dan manages his own caseload and carries out initial meetings with all clients. He also gives support and supervision to volunteer advocates. He uses his advocacy expertise to support development work and has just started to do outreach, such as St. Sampsons.

**Abi Willis, Charity Administrator:** Abi is the first line of contact for clients, volunteers and external organisations. She provides the day to day administrative, financial and business support for OCAY. She also undertakes outreach work in the community.

**Abi and Dan are currently working together to run OCAY with the support of the trustees.**

## Chair's Report – Matthew Knight



It's been a year of considerable change for OCAY, but we have remained resilient thanks to the tremendous commitment of both our staff and our volunteer advocates. Having emerged from the pressures and frustrations of Covid we now face a winter of mounting case numbers (particularly benefits cases) as people struggle to cope with the cost of living and other pressures. The challenges are great, but so is our resolve, and we are determined to find ways of helping more York residents in the year ahead. In particular my thanks go to the advocates who have taken on additional cases in recent months and/or have committed to doing so during the winter. We are always looking of course for new advocates, so please do point any possible new recruits towards our Lead Advocate Dan Brittan.

In the last 12 months we have said farewell to our former Charity Manager Ruth Potter and my predecessor as Chair Rachel Totton. OCAY owes a considerable debt of gratitude to both Ruth and Rachel for steering OCAY through an important phase of its development, a phase which secured our Lottery funding, won a National Governance Award and saw us gain accreditation as an Investor in Volunteers.

We also lost Louise Reid as a Trustee during the year, and will miss her insights, support and ideas. We hope, when the time is right, that Louise may consider re-joining us. We welcomed Tracy Dennison to the Board as a new Trustee and Tracy brings very considerable HR and organisational experience and skills to OCAY. We will be seeking to recruit new Trustees over the next few months to strengthen the Board further.

The theme of our AGM this year is "working in partnership" and I want to acknowledge the excellent support and co-operation we continue to receive from colleague organisations in the City. As a small niche charity OCAY relies on others heavily both for client referrals and generally for raising awareness of what we can offer publicity and joint working.

## What OCAY did in 2021-22

## Why we did it

### Continuing Covid -19 Impact on OCAY

OCAY had moved from a face to face to a telephone delivery model during the pandemic and we have kept this in place in the main where it is possible.

- Staff work back in the offices at priory Street unless have a positive covid test.
- Staff were provided with relevant resources and equipment.
- Volunteer advocates only doing home visits, if necessary, with more appointments over the telephone and in OCAY meeting room.

To safeguard clients, staff and volunteers; to ensure that we continued to deliver our service to older people in York; to ensure volunteers were happy to use the phone; to update our clients and give reassurance that we were still able to help.

### Volunteer Support, Recruitment and Training

Developed our volunteer support:

- Following feedback from volunteers, we delivered our regular volunteer peer support meetings using video conferencing. We are holding our first face to face group this month.
- We also held an information session in October where we had a speaker from IDAS to provide information about their services.
- Looking to volunteer social sessions to start to become face to face as well as some sessions online.
- Volunteer newsletters to be produced fortnightly as before the coronavirus pandemic.

Developed our volunteers' recruitment and training:

- We are looking to start advertising volunteer vacancies using print and social media and have an advert in the Local Link this December.
- We have started interviewing and recruiting volunteers face to face but can also use

- Volunteers can share their experience of working with different types of cases with each other and have the opportunity for learning and developing their role. The experience and skills of volunteers are valued and continue to develop.
- To increase volunteers' knowledge of services available to clients; to have information about what was happening during lockdown to other organisations.
- This helped with volunteer well-being; maintained social interaction between staff and volunteers; ensured that volunteers felt part of OCAY.
- This made it easier for potential volunteers to find out about our volunteering roles during the lockdown.
- Local people could continue to apply to volunteer and be interviewed without meeting face to face in the lockdown.
- All new volunteers gain the skills and understanding that they need in the role. The training could be delivered in a timely and very flexible way to meet the needs of new volunteers.



online conferencing when requested or is suitable. Database training is still being carried out online as it gives the volunteer a better idea of the tools they have at their disposal. Face to face training is becoming an option again, however.

- We rewrote our Induction training so that it could be delivered using video conferencing which is still being used.

- As a result, we can support more older people. The feedback from our annual volunteer survey shows that volunteers feel well supported and more confident in their role.

## Quality Standards, Monitoring and Evaluation

Demonstrating our impact:

- **We carried out a longer-term Impact survey in June/July 2022 to understand the long-term impact of working with OCAY.**

- Embedded pre and post case questionnaire:  
The questions cover feelings of control, being taken seriously, having your voice heard and the impact the advocacy issue is/was having on your well-being.

- **The responses were mainly 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 70% of the total sample who participated) saying that they would come back to OCAY for help in the future if they had a problem.**

- We want to increase our knowledge and understanding of the longer-term impact of our work on clients, to help us to improve our service delivery and find out what other factors could be impacting on older people's feelings of wellbeing.
- **Undertaking the pre and post case questionnaires, has enabled us to measure the distance travelled by clients working with us and make comparisons year on year. This also means that our improvement is led by feedback from our clients.**
- We want to understand how accessible our service is to people from different diversity strands. By comparing our data with that of the city, we can understand where we need to target our outreach work to ensure accessibility.
- **We wanted to demonstrate how we have developed ways of measuring our impact, both so that people using our advocacy service have external reassurance of the quality of the service, and to receive external recognition of the work Trustees have undertaken in this area.**

# What OCAY did in 2021–22

# Why we did it

## Outreach

Reviewed our outreach strategy following the lifting of lockdown restrictions:

- We started face to face drop ins again following the ease of lockdowns, using
- We updated our outreach flyer as we had started 2 new outreach venues in Fulford and Dringhouses & Woodthorpe wards.
- We started working in partnership with Age UK and York Energy Advice to be able to cover more areas of York via the outreach programme.
- Continuing with the partnership newsletter in response to feedback from a consultation with partner organisations.
- Continuing to update the website with planned outreach and fundraising pages to come Jan 2023.

- Continuing to keep clients, staff and volunteers safe. To continue to reach new clients and to let previous clients know that we were open and to provide information about where and how other services could be accessed.
- To inform partners about our developments; to let partners know about our performance; to give information about our referral process.
- We wanted to ensure that our website was up to date and accessible with clear, good quality information so that clients and potential volunteers could access the information they needed.

## Leadership and Strategy

Agreed new Strategic Plan 2020 -26:

- The Strategic Plan was reviewed and updated, with supporting action plans to form the basis of reporting to trustees at each board meeting.

Reviewed Trustee Roles

- Trustees took on special responsibility for areas of business.
- Role descriptions were reviewed.
- Recruitment and induction for new chair planned.

Maintained calendar of meeting using video conferencing, looking to introduce face to face meetings when able to.

Strategic Plan - To ensure that all the work undertaken by OCAY sits within our core mission.  
Action Plans - so Trustees can be assured that the Charity Manager and the staff team are delivering against the plan. The Plan is also available to funders to give assurance of our organisational focus.

To ensure that role descriptions were fit for purpose; to enable the recruitment of a new chair; to sustain good governance of the organisation; to utilise the skills and experience of all trustees.

To ensure appropriate oversight and good governance of the charity.

# What OCAY did in 2021–22

# Why we did it

## Partnerships and Networking

Maintained our work in partnerships and networks:

- Advice York Partnership.
- CVS Volunteer Forums.
- Ageing Well Partnership Board
- York Older Peoples Assembly.
- Armed Forces Covenant Steering Group.
- Human Rights Steering Group.
- Outreach partnership with Age UK and York Energy advice.

Sharing our thinking and development with partner organisations helps the voluntary sector to be sustainable and gives access to continuing new ideas and learning. The range of information gained from working in partnerships and networks also helps us to support our clients effectively and respond to the issues they have asked for help with.

## Fund Raising Strategy

- The Fund-Raising Strategy reviewed by Trustees to try to diversify funding streams.
- Our community fund raising to develop the ideas to increase community fund raising opportunities and donations of gifts in kind, such as supermarket token schemes and fixed site collection boxes. We are currently crowdfunding with Aviva Community Fund.
- Corporate Fund-Raising Plan was agreed and Corporate Fund-raising packages to be relaunched January 2023.
- Applications made to 44 Trusts and Foundations for funding for 2021/22.
- Digital Fundraising - A new area for potential development is digital fund raising. However, we may need to access training or expertise to do this. Hybrid events will be all useful in a post covid environment using social media to increase outreach.

Fundraising remains a constant and increasingly challenging focus for sustainability, with a need for new and imaginative ideas and to seek to diversify funding streams. Applications were made on a weekly basis to sustain the charity in an everchanging funding environment with a number of applications being successful.

Trustees agreed sponsorship packages to diversify our funding streams. The strategy is to enable potential sponsors to easily commit something tangible and specific. Promote the sponsorship packages to the local business community and grow a corporate database to increase the direct audience we must communicate with. We have created a tier of packages (silver, gold & platinum) that clearly details what an organisation would get for a specific amount donated. The idea is that businesses who might be interested could simply choose the package that best suits their budget and own goals.

