

(extract from report provided to City of York Council by CAY 8/8/17)

CAY is an independent local charity entirely reliant for funds on grants and donations. It is a member of the national Citizens Advice organisation (CitA) which, in return for a small membership fee, provides, among other things, training and reference materials, a client case management system and a quality assurance process. It also audits local Citizens Advice offices.

In 2016-17 CAY saw 5600 clients, helped them with 14371 different problems, claim over £1.7m of unclaimed benefits and write off debts of £1.25m (after a full assessment of the client's financial situation and long term ability to repay). This made a tremendous difference to peoples' lives.

The work of CAY falls into 4 main areas:

- **General Advice in West Offices:** this is the core and largest part of CAY. It comprises a comprehensive service of independent information and advice on a wide range of issues including, among other topics, welfare benefits, debt, housing, employment law and immigration. There is a Drop In Service, when people turn up and, after a brief assessment interview, are provided with information, directed to another organisation or given an interview with one of a team of volunteer advisors; this is the case in over 65% of instances and usually takes place within an hour or two. The volunteer advisors are supervised and supported by paid professional supervisors.

General Advice also includes Adviceline, a telephone advice service, and a specialist welfare benefits team, paid staff and volunteers, supporting clients with more detailed case work. The General Advice service is funded by a CYC SLA grant of £122k pa for the three years to March 2018 and other CAY funds as available.

Volunteers deliver the vast majority of advice provided by the General Advice team. In total Volunteer advisors and admin

support input is equivalent to c. 6 FTEs 'working' alongside the equivalent of c. 3 FTE paid staff.

- Outreach General Advice: general advice provided by paid staff at a number of outreach locations in York, for example Tang Hall and Acomb. This is funded by a range of grants from local wards committees, parish councils, Tang Hall Big Local and the Financial Inclusion Steering Group.
- Specialist Projects: a number of specialist projects, often only for 1-2 years, providing, for example specialist debt casework funded by the Money Advice Service (MAS).
- Research & Campaigning: using the unique insight provided by our clients we research and campaign on local issues and with CitA. This is mandatory for all members of the national organisation.

All paid supervisory and advice staff, and volunteer advisors, undertake rigorous initial training and regularly update their knowledge.

The quality of advice is assessed through a thorough internal case checking process and CitA quality assurance checks. CitA also track client service. The new CitA QAA results show CAY scoring 4 greens and one yellow in the RAG ratings for quality (red, amber, yellow, green, the top rating) and initial results indicate 4 greens and one amber, for client service; this is for poor access due to the reduced opening hours.