



GP Surgeries Outreach Advice Service Project Report

January 2015 – December 2016



Executive summary

Citizens Advice York (CAY) worked in partnership with Priory Medical Group (PMG) to deliver this advice service within two GP surgeries in areas of high need in the City. City of York Council Financial Inclusion Steering Group provided £67,003 funding over 2 years for the advice service from January 2015 – December 2016.

Advice sessions were set up at Rawcliffe Surgery on Tuesdays and Cornlands Road Surgery on Thursdays with four one hour appointment slots per day.

Overall we were able to exceed the target of delivering 220 appointments a year, with 700 appointments being booked over the 2 year project of which 470 were attended by 255 individual clients.

The service advised these clients on a total of 1,572 issues. Benefits and tax credits were by far the main issue for clients at 61.5%, followed by debt at 16% of the total issues.

As a result of our advice 85 clients were able to access 190 financial outcomes totalling annualised income of £382,211. Again the highest gains were made through advice on entitlement and claiming benefits and tax credits.

Clients told us their problems were having wide effects on their lives, 69% reported their issues were causing stress and worry and 56% said their health was being affected. 84% clients told us they had benefited from the advice given, with 51% have their issues dealt with completely.

Clients told us the advice they received and the ability to deal with their issues have a big impact on wider aspects of their lives. Whilst it is well established that advice provision helps people's peace of mind and reduces stress, and this is confirmed by 74% of service clients, the impact on physical health and well-being is less recognised. A high number of clients, 72%, reported their health and comfort e.g. physical health had improved following advice.

Impacts on other areas of people's lives were also significant. About two thirds of people said they were feeling more confident after advice. 59% said their relationships with family and friends had improved and over half said they were more able to manage their bills.

72% clients said the service was brilliant and a further 22% said it was good. Typical of the feedback from clients was

"Everything was explained to me in a way I could understand and I was invited to return should I need any further help. I also found it helpful to be able to see an advisor at my doctor's surgery."

92% of staff at the surgeries and partners said the service was very useful. All said it was in the right locations, worked very well and met the needs of clients. Feedback included *"Issues that would have taken time with the GP have been directed to the service which has resulted in the GP's not having to spend as long with the patient on these occasions and enabled them to hand it over to someone who is a specialist in these situations."*

Service Background

Citizens Advice York (CAY) worked in partnership with Priory Medical Group (PMG) to deliver this advice service within two GP surgeries in areas of high need in the City. City of York Council Financial Inclusion Steering Group provided £67,003 funding over 2 years for the advice service from January 2015 – December 2016.

The city wide anti-poverty strategy selected the funding and expansion of advice services in GP surgeries as a priority for action. Addressing financial inclusion is a core priority within City of York Council, and strategies to help embed actions into the local area are key to reducing poverty, supporting vulnerable people and improving our residents' economic wellbeing.

The purpose of co-location in GP surgeries follows evidence based practice from previous successful income maximization services delivered both by York Learning and York CAB. GPs are able to refer patients where their financial and health issues are intersecting and in many cases the health symptoms are a direct result of stress caused by financial difficulties or low income. In normal GP surgery delivery, substantial amounts of time are taken up with patients who need non clinical interventions around finance and benefits and a co located service streamlines this and can expedite applications for benefits such as PIP through accessing medical records where supporting medical evidence is required.

The service would be for the benefit of patients; open to anyone the surgery felt might benefit from it and would accept referrals from practitioners, reception staff and other health professionals. Patients would also be able to access the service directly themselves without the need for a GP appointment.

There is strong evidence that inequalities in health arise because of inequalities in society: inequalities in education, employment and working conditions, housing and neighbourhood conditions, standards of living, and, more generally, the freedom to participate equally in the benefits of society.⁸ In York there is a gap in life expectancy of 8.5 years for men between the most affluent wards compared to the most deprived.

GPs are often faced with clients experiencing the effects of inequality and it having a negative impact on their wellbeing with increased anxiety, stress and depression being common. However, there is an increasing body of evidence that demonstrates the positive impact of social welfare advice in these situations and especially in terms of early interventions.⁹

We anticipated the social prescribing/community referral aspect of the Outreach Adviser's role will provide a route to psychosocial support for vulnerable/at risk groups, for example low-income single mothers, recently bereaved elderly people, people with chronic physical illness, newly arrived communities, people with mild to moderate depression and anxiety, people with long-term and enduring mental health problems, frequent users of primary care.

Service Aims

The aim of the service was to

- increase the use of non-medical interventions to improve patient wellbeing by providing a dedicated broad-spectrum social welfare advice and social prescription/community referral service within a health setting
- mitigate negative impacts of ongoing welfare reforms, which have been shown to impact on people's health and worsen existing conditions²
- provide an accessible gateway for patients to and between community resources, organisations and groups including self-help, health-inspected statutory services and council led initiatives and the York advice and information sector
- pilot, monitor and evaluate the service within two health settings over a one year period with a view to making any eventual model more widely available in other locations.

The service

Citizens Advice York managed the service deliverables and outcomes employing an Outreach Adviser 34hrs per week to deliver the service and providing appropriate supervision and quality of advice checking through their own internal systems and structures.

Priory Medical Group provided accommodation at the GP surgeries in Cornlands Road and Rawcliffe, including room, heating, lighting, phone usage, some admin and management costs for referrals and appointment booking.

The advice service was available to patients registered with Priory Medical Group (PMG). All referrals/appointments to the services were made through PMG via their central phone line 09104 781423 or at surgery receptions.

The service was developed in Cornlands Road surgery and Rawcliffe Surgery. Acomb and Clifton are two areas of the City in highest need in relation to measures of deprivation. Citizens Advice York have an ongoing weekly outreach service in Tang Hall, the other area of highest need, therefore Acomb and Clifton were identified as the priority locations for the service. Advice sessions were set up at Rawcliffe Surgery on Tuesdays and Cornlands Road Surgery on Thursdays with four one hour appointment slots per day.

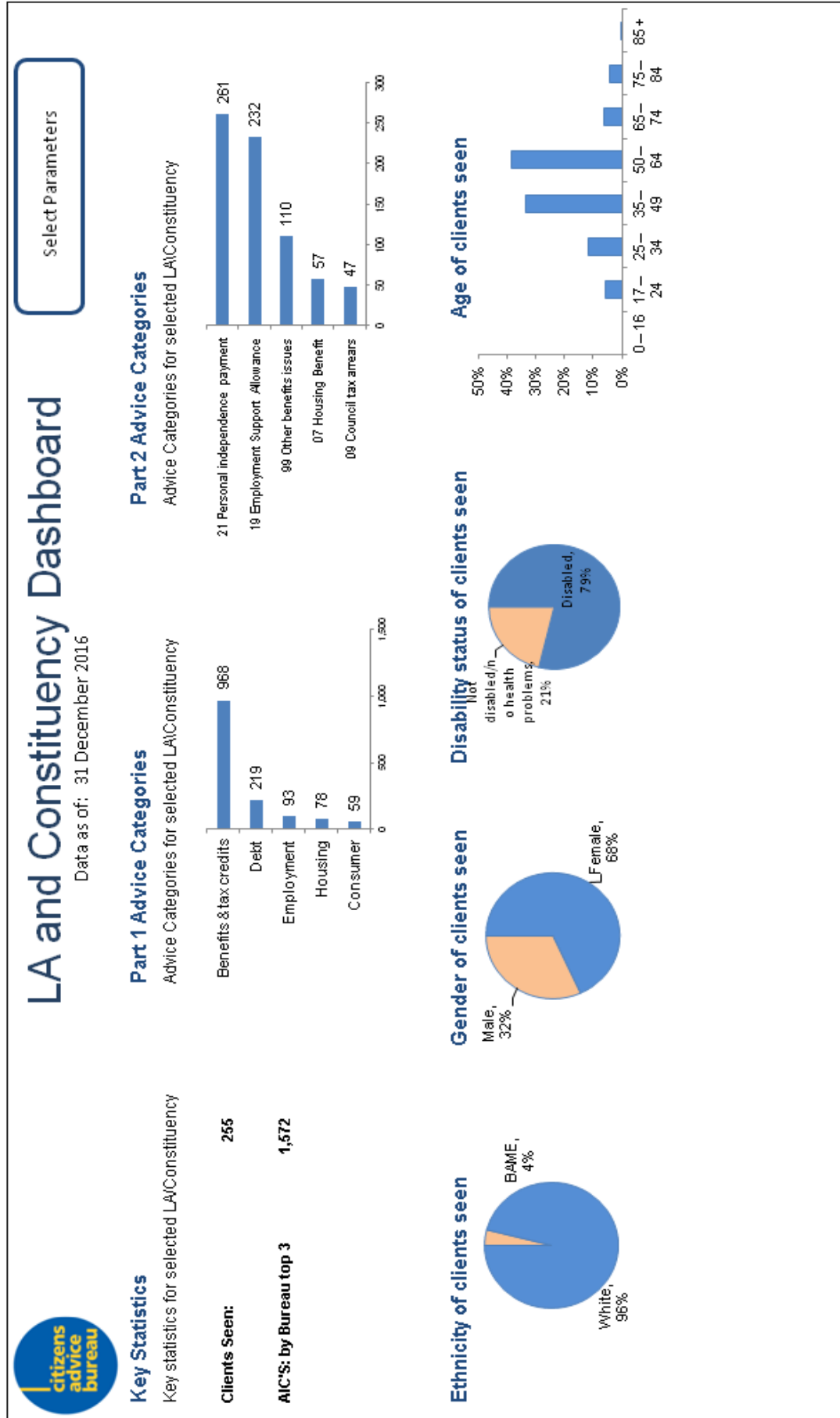
The sessions were promoted within PMG at staff meetings and via email. The sessions were advertised locally through posters and leaflets, a press release and social media were sent out, information was included in the Advice York Directory and circulated to a wide range of partners across the City. Publicity and take-up was reviewed regularly and further posters and leaflets were distributed to other surgeries and banners were placed in waiting rooms. There has also been information about the service in the magazine of St Luke's Church in Clifton – Grapevine.

Outcomes and performance indicators

Outcome	Measure	Outputs Jan 2015 – Dec 2016
Deliver outreach advice service	220 advice appointments per year for patients from GP surgeries in two surgery locations	847 appointments were available 700 appointments were booked 470 appointments attended 255 individual clients 1,572 issues raised
Increase awareness of information and advice services	40 instances of 2nd tier support to surgery staff and support workers to use self help and information materials and make appropriate referrals.	Adviser has attended staff meetings, provided guidance on benefits available and encouraged appropriate referrals. However, this has not been as extensive as first envisaged.
Increase income	We will monitor the benefits gained	85 clients have achieved 190 financial outcomes totalling £382,211
Reduce health issues and increase well-being	We will carry out evaluation in year one of the service with a sample of clients to ensure the advice given is providing positive outcomes.	Evaluation forms have been sent out to clients using the advice service, 39 forms have been returned. These show positive outcomes for clients.

See below for detailed outcomes.

Overall project summary



Weekly advice sessions at Rawcliffe Surgery on Tuesdays and Cornlands Road Surgery on Thursdays were well attended. During 2016 due to space availability and potential need for the service in Huntington, we tried alternating advice sessions with Rawcliffe and Huntington surgeries. Take up of these sessions was not as good as at Rawcliffe and patients from Huntington area seemed happy to travel to Rawcliffe Surgery advice sessions.

Overall we were able to exceed the target of delivering 220 appointments a year, with 700 appointments being booked over the 2 year project of which 470 were attended by 255 individual clients.

The service advised these clients on a total of 1,572 issues. Benefits and tax credits were by far the main issue for clients at 61.5%, followed by debt at 16% of the total issues. Employment and housing were the next highest number of issues at 6% and 5%, followed by health and community care and relationship and family issues both at 2%.

Advice issue	Count of AIC's
Benefits & tax credits	968
Debt	219
Housing	78
Employment	93
Consumer goods & services	5
Travel & transport	13
Utilities & communications	29
Financial services & capabilities	12
Relationships & family	34
Legal	16
Health & community care	35
Immigration & asylum	4
Education	4
Tax	9
Discrimination	18
Other	35
Grand Total	1,572

As a result of our advice 85 clients were able to access 190 financial outcomes totalling annualised income of £382,211. Again the highest gains were made through advice on entitlement and claiming benefits and tax credits for 68 clients which totalled £357,970; 11 clients received advice on managing a total of £18,973 debt.

Overall 62 clients received on-going weekly income of an average £100 per week. 57 clients were assisted to achieve one off financial gains at an average of £871.21.

Evidence shows that clients receiving increased income through money advice are more likely to spend increased income in the local community, which provides wider benefits within the City.

For every £1 funding for this service £5.70 was achieved in financial benefits for clients and the local community.

This table shows financial outcomes by advice area.

Advice Area > Issue	Number of Outcomes	Unique Clients	Annualised Value
Benefits & tax credits	127	68	£357,970
Debt	14	11	£18,973
Housing	2	2	£0
Health & community care	4	4	£951
Discrimination	1	1	£0
Other	24	19	£935
Relationships & family	2	2	£305
Tax	2	2	£0
Travel & transport	6	6	£2,056
Utilities & communications	8	6	£1,020
Grand Total	190	85	£382,211

This table shows financial outcomes by category

Financial Outcome Category	Number of Outcomes	Unique Clients	Annualised Value
Income gain	137	74	£359,882
Not recorded/not applicable	26	20	£2,281
Debts written off	2	2	£14,153
Re-imburements, services, loans	20	18	£3,347
Income loss	1	1	£0
Repayments rescheduled	4	3	£2,548
Grand Total	190	85	£382,211

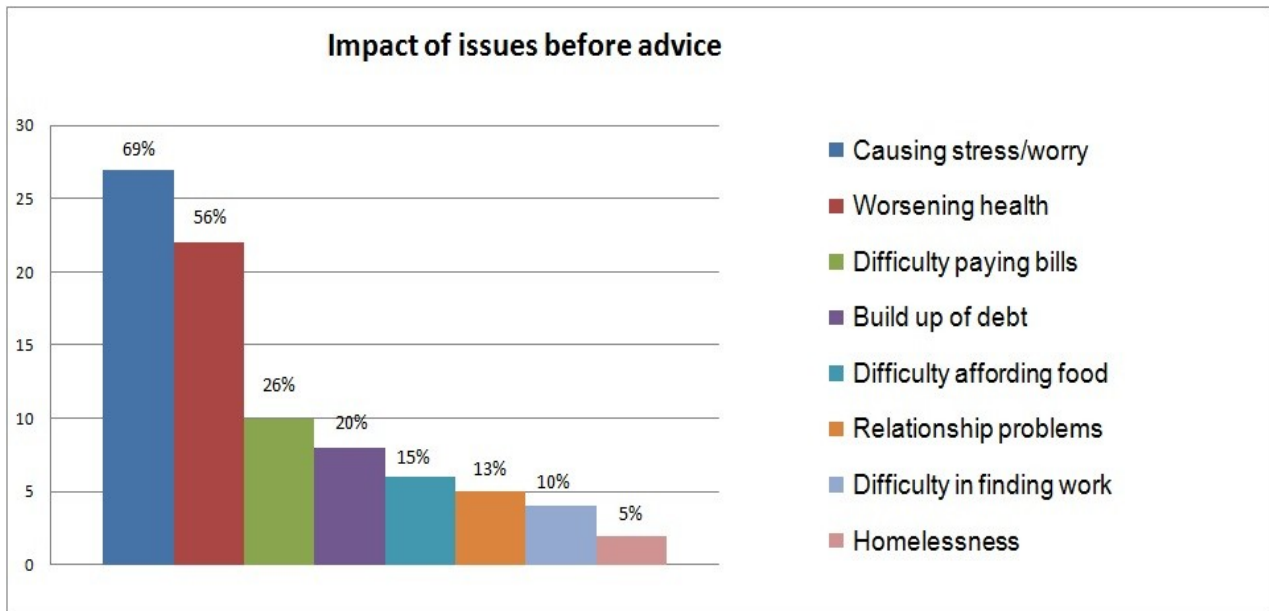
This table shows the breakdown of financial gain by frequency

Frequency	Number of Outcomes	Unique Clients	Annualised Value
One-Off	98	57	£49,659
Ongoing-Annual	6	5	£10,198
Ongoing-Calendar Month	2	2	£420
Ongoing-Weekly	84	62	£321,934
Grand Total	190	85	£382,211

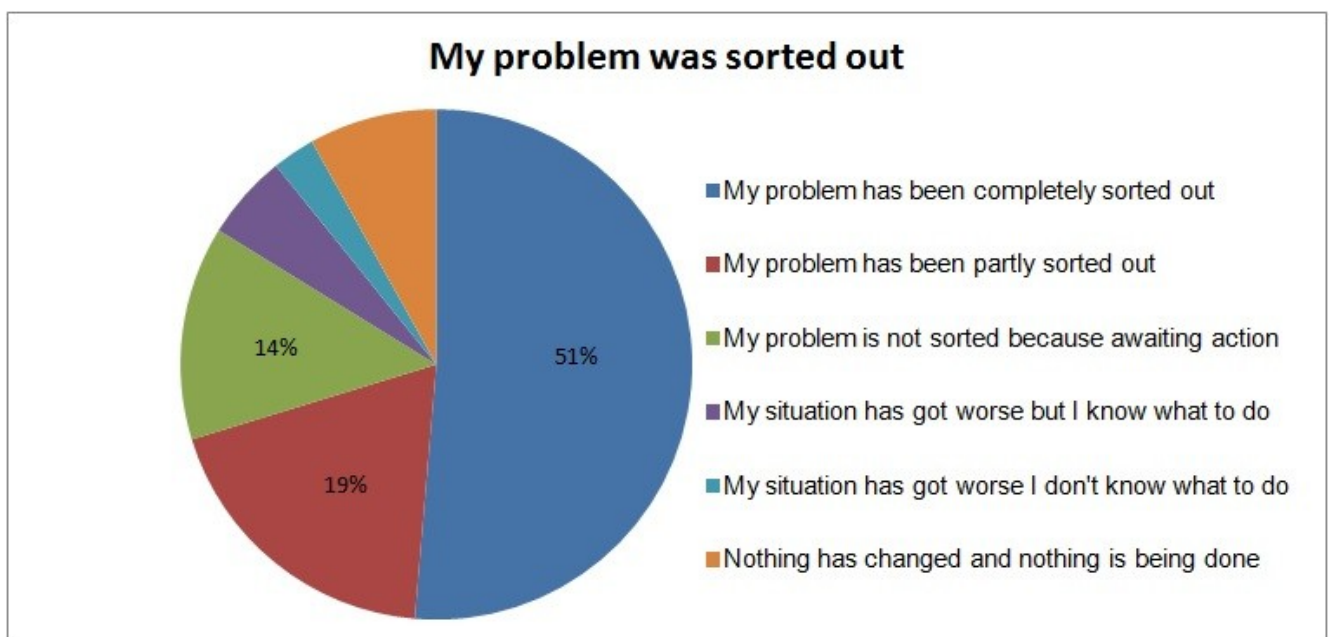
Impacts on clients

We surveyed clients for feedback on how their issues were affecting them and their family before seeking advice and the impact of the advice they received. The results below are based on answers from 15% of clients.

Clients told us their problems were having wide effects on their lives, particularly causing stress and worry and ill-health.



84% clients told us they had benefited from the advice given, with 51% have their issues dealt with completely. A further 14% were on going. 64% clients said they could not have sorted out their issues with out our advice and a further 28% said it was fairly important to dealing with the matter.



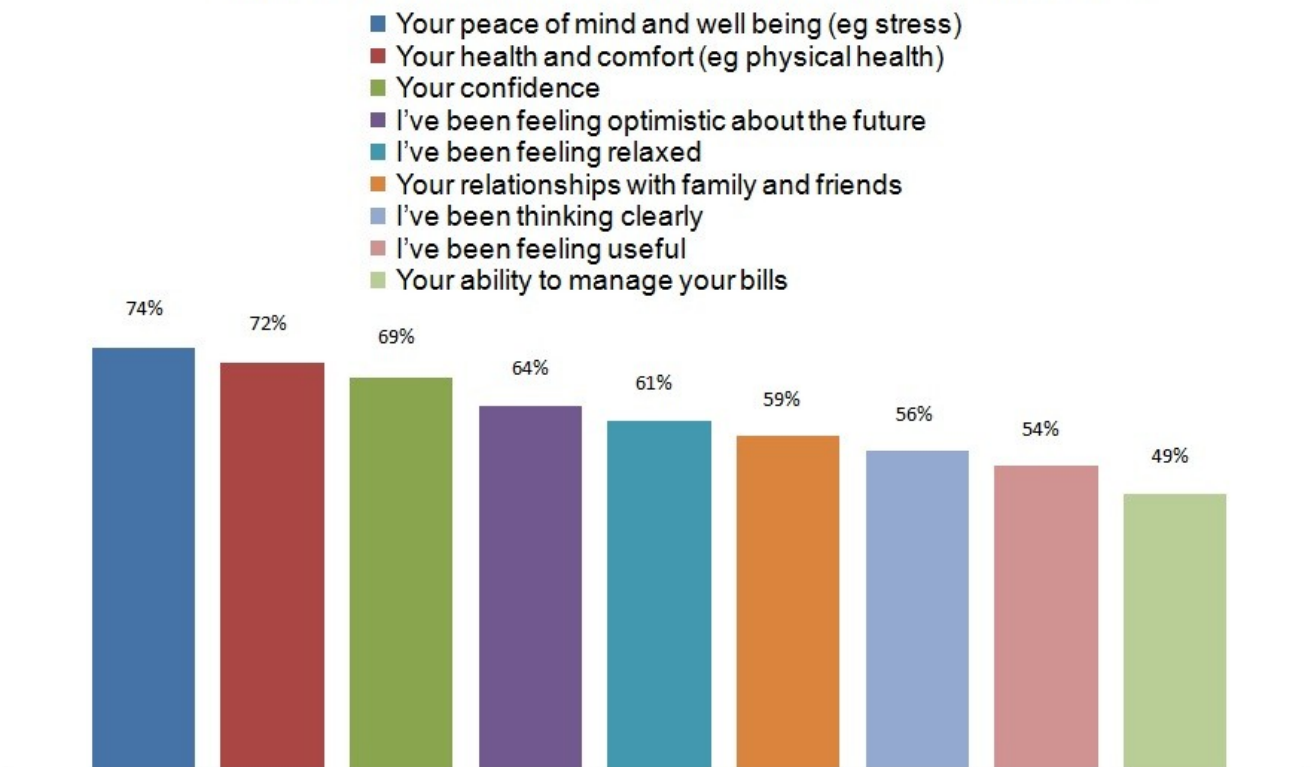
How important was the advice you received in helping you sort out your issue



Clients told us the advice they received and dealing with their issues have a big impact on wider aspects of their lives. Whilst it is well established that advice provision helps people’s peace of mind and reduces stress, and this is confirmed by 74% of service clients, the impact on physical health and well-being is less recognised. A high number of clients, 72%, reported that their health and comfort e.g. physical health had improved following advice.

Impacts on other areas of people’s lives were also significant. About two thirds of people said they were feeling more confident after advice. 59% said their relationships with family and friends had improved and over half said they were more able to manage their bills.

Improvements in clients health and well-being following advice



Case studies

A client with severe mental health issues including severe anxiety when she leaves the house was happy to be able to come to a familiar setting for advice. She was struggling financially due to “bedroom tax” because her oldest child had moved out and she is not in a position to be able to move to a smaller property due to her health. She was also receiving letters from bailiffs about a debt that is not hers and had a council tax debt because of the changes in council tax benefit which mean she now has to pay 30% of her council tax rather than it all being covered by benefits.

The adviser enabled the client to successfully apply for a discretionary housing payment to cover the shortfall in her rent for the next four months; helped her apply for a discretionary council tax payment and for Personal Independence Payment. The adviser contacted the creditor and bailiff to explain that she was not responsible for the debt and they have accepted this so she should not hear from them again.

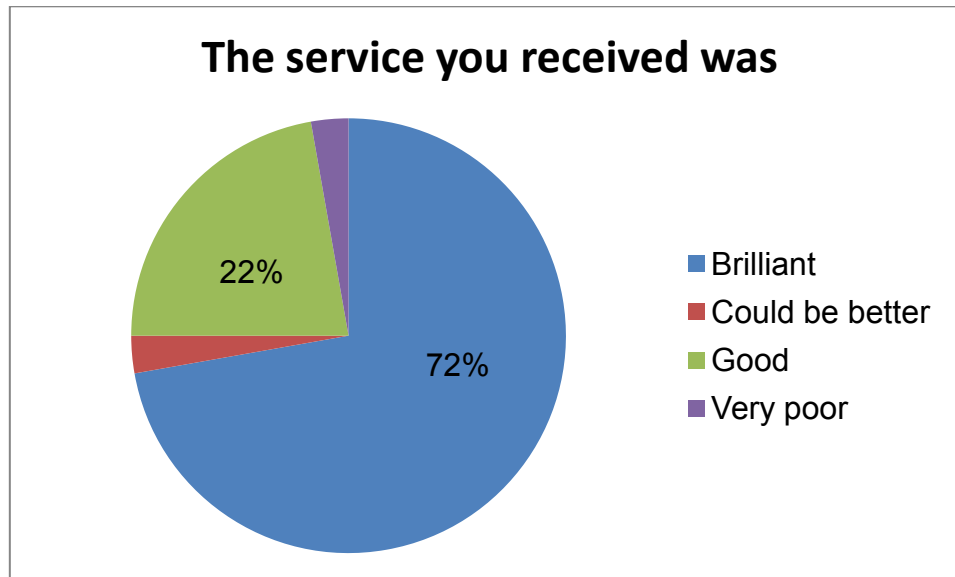
A client with a debilitating skin disorder which means she has great difficulty carrying out tasks such as preparing food, washing and dressing, came because she had been refused Personal Independence Payment. She was also suffering depression because she felt useless and wanted to be able to contribute something towards the household costs. She had herself completed the application and the request for a review when it was first refused and wanted to know what she could do next.

The adviser helped her to prepare for the appeal hearing and wrote the submission to the tribunal, as a result of which she was granted the enhanced rate of the daily living component for PIP, her score increased from 2 points at the first decision to 14 points at tribunal. The client was very happy and said she would be able to use the money to buy non-allergenic shampoos and perhaps pay a cleaner for a couple of hours a week rather than having to rely on her husband, who was working full time, to do everything.

A client with a diagnosis of severe anxiety and depression, and severe lower back pain, had been put in the “Work-related activity” group for Employment Support Allowance but was not coping with the demands put on her by the jobcentre. She was suffering panic attacks every time she had to go there. At the same time she was told that her Disability Living Allowance was ending and she would need to apply for Personal Independence Payment.

The adviser helped with the request for the ESA decision to be looked at again and also helped her to complete the PIP application, which was successful. When the decision on her ESA was hugely delayed, the adviser asked her MP to intervene. With the help of medical evidence from her GP, she was eventually put in the “support” group. Because she was now entitled to the daily living component of PIP, her husband, who was working part time, was able to claim Carer’s Allowance for looking after her. This meant they were considerably better off financially, but the client told me she wasn’t bothered about the money, she just felt that she could now concentrate on getting better.

What clients told us



Everything explained so we could understand in laymen's terms

Got advice about wheelchair for my husband who I care for still unable to get him one. Wheelchair centre have a waiting list

Very helpful and considerate and still working to a end

Very helpful easy to make appointments. Very understanding professional and polite at all times. Making it easier for me to apply for benefits

My issues remained unsolved. I eventually gave up and now receive help from CAP

They gave help and advice on who to contact - Stepchange for my son

Not much help with housing. As my parents are very supportive, I would also like to have my own place in future, but not much help was offered in this area.

Very understanding and knowledgeable nothing was too much bother

I had help with PIP form, thankfully I got something. I found the forms a lot overwhelming and the after care via text was lovely thank you.

If I was filling the form I don't think I would have given that much information or gone too much into an area. Having someone filling the form has helped in that knowing how much information is needed

Very helpful adviser. Provided information. Helped fill forms in. Was very supportive and informative contacted me via telephone and I was seen in person

Everything was explained to me in a way I could understand and I was invited to return should I need any further help. I also found it helpful to be able to see an advisor at my doctor's surgery.

I am very pleased as she is brilliant at her job and I will be definitely seeing her again

Acomb: The lady helping me was very helpful professional and dealt with my problems during one session. I've been struggling with them for a long time. Such a relief. West Offices advisors helped me dealing with my tax overpayment and self employment assessment.

The person who dealt with me was Brill

After working all my life then to be told I was to lose my job to ill health at 60. The CAB was a real life line not knowing the system. They helped me through it

Just brilliant Very good

Because I got all the information I needed and you really helped me. I wouldn't be able to do it on my own

The lady was very understanding and helpful and it was convenient that the session was held at our local GP practice

I was given clear guide lines and did get the matter resolved

Very clear advice very helpful and professional

Always put 100% effort into providing as much advice as possible and helped me out so much. Definitely recommend to people

You helped me a great deal regarding my state pension. Thank you for all your help

Adviser was knowledgeable and very helpful

I take a lot of medication when tax credits stopped didn't know I could have a HCL form rent rebate extra money

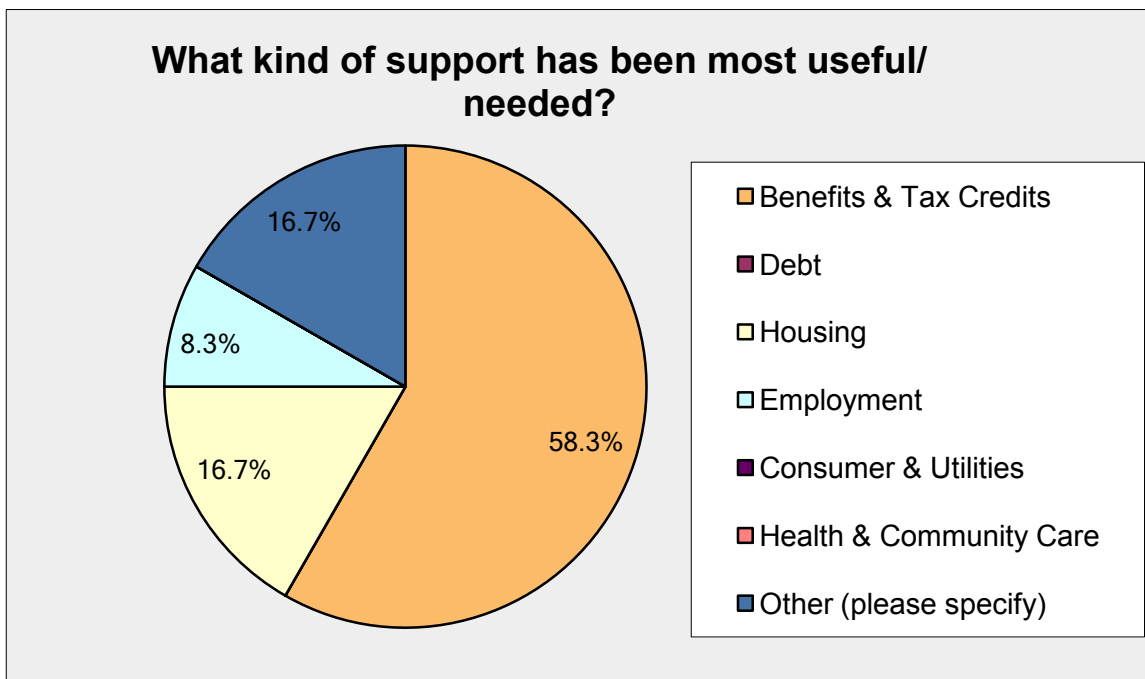
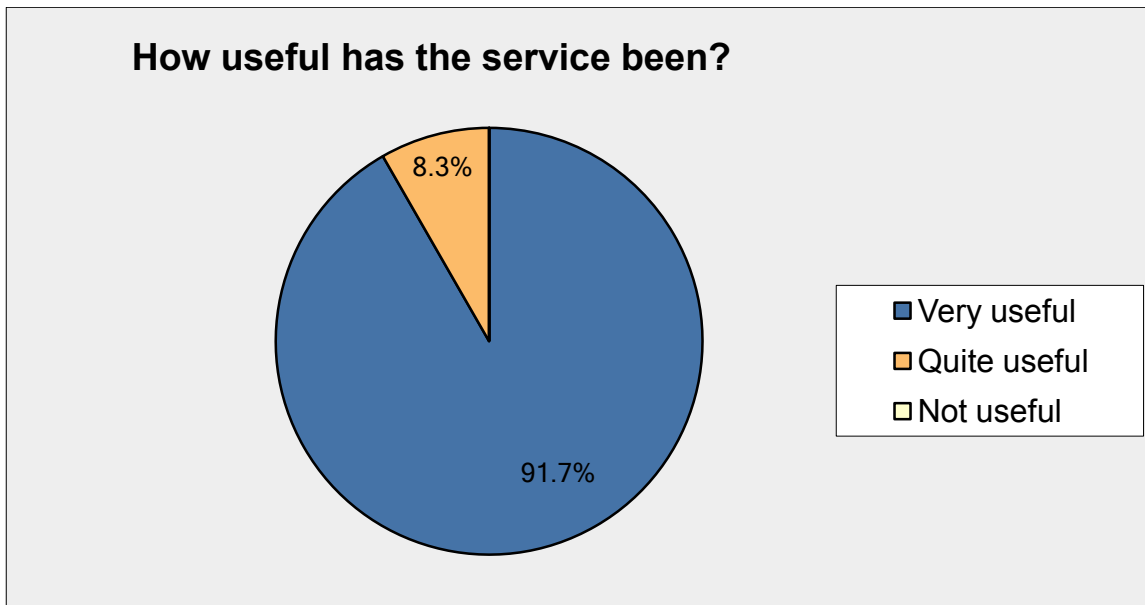
The lady I saw was very good straight away she seemed to know exactly how to deal with the matter at hand and put my mind at ease

The help we received from CAB was very helpful to us me and my sister could not have coped with out you, the support we have had from CAB Has been excellent in every way I Would recommend you to anyone that needs help

Feedback from Priory Medical Group and other partners

We circulated a survey monkey questionnaire to Priory Medical Group staff and other partners to ask for feedback on the service. We received 12 responses and feedback was very positive.

Overwhelmingly 92% reported the service as very useful and in particular advice and support on benefits and tax credits.



What difference, if any, has it made to people's lives and/or health?

Patients found very useful

Reduces stress

Huge difference, particularly with clients who have been asked to make a new claim from DLA to PIP. This often has a big impact on their mental health and being able to refer to someone who is able to support them through this process has been of huge benefit

It has made more difference to lives than health, but hopefully there is a knock on effect here.

Patients have been provided with information to ensure that they are applying for benefits to which they are entitled. I have also had patients who have been advised and helped through the appeals process.

Patients said they appreciate the advice

Ease of access to a service and easy referral

Feedback from patients has been very positive towards the service.

A lot

Convenient advice speeded up benefits claims

Has provided much needed support for vulnerable patients who might not feel able to access the service from the main offices.

It makes it a less stressful

What difference, if any, has it made to you and/or the service you are able to provide?

Has meant that I feel better able to meet needs of people I see and can provide a more holistic service

Great to be able to offer something practical and near to home at a time when other outreach

It has meant more patients have accessed the right advice in a convenient location.

I have found it very helpful to be able to tell people how they can get help with the benefits questions that I can't answer for them.

Patients are re assured someone is there locally to help

Issues that would have taken time with the GP have been directed to the service which has resulted in the GP's not having to spend as long with the patient on these occasions and enabled them to hand it over to someone who is a specialist in these situations.

More efficient service.

Patients found very useful

Helpful to have people who can give support.

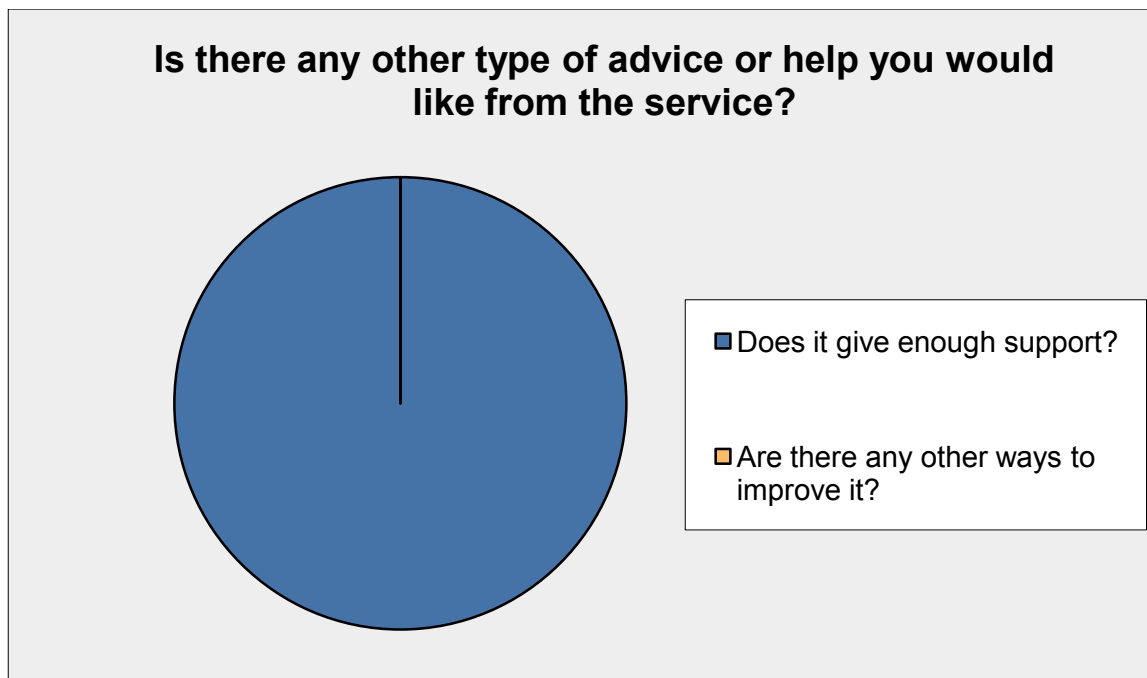
Able to refer so beneficial to receptionist

How about support for Priory Medical Group / information for staff? How well did this work? Were you able to ask questions if needed?

- Yes – adviser updates with referral outcomes which helped me to better understand the service and its remit
- Good
- Very good. Staff approachable and well informed.
- Yes worked on same day so close contact with CAB provider
- Plenty of information.
- Yes, I messaged the adviser with queries and she replied next time she was in, even though our working days did not overlap.
- Very well
- We had good support from the benefit adviser.
- Definitely
- Well
- Yes this service was available to all staff also.

Could the service be improved?

Partners told us the only improvement could be to advertise the service more widely to patients. “No, just keep providing it!”



How does this service compare to other advice and support services in York?

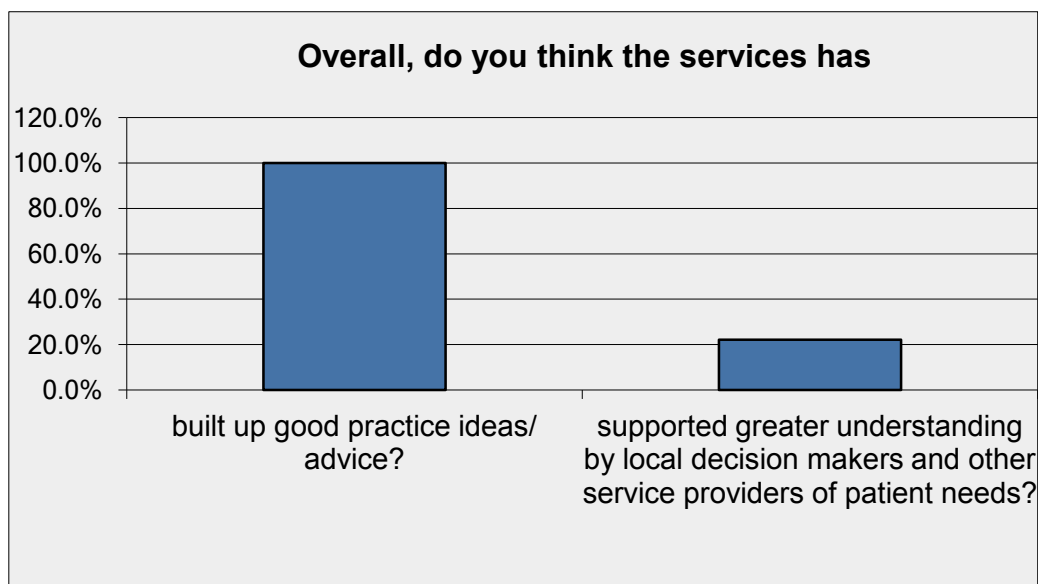
Respondents told us

- I think it's able to be more responsive
- Access was the best of any similar service I have come across
- Having this based in a doctors surgery makes it more accessible to people with a disability
- very well
- Unsure
- Not sure as have never had to use them.

How does it fit in with other services in York?

We received the following responses

- It seems to be unique in its responsiveness and being able to offer protected time slots and repeat appointments, the fact that it is based in a GP surgery is also an added benefit as this is a safe place for a lot of people and somewhere they are familiar with.
- Would be complimentary to primary care mental health workers - bring them back, please!
- As far as I am aware it works together with all other services.



Any other issues/ views

“This is a great service for people with learning and social needs. Having some one you can see face to face is a great asset”.

GP surgeries as a location for advice services

In October Citizens Advice York carried out a separate survey asking clients who used services at our main city centre services at West Offices and those who used outreach services where they prefer our services to be located.

GP surgeries was recorded as being a preferred location for people using both types of service. See appendix for more details.

Conclusions

This was an outstanding service which provided excellent outcomes both for clients and health professionals, as well as value for money.

As result of the positive outcomes for clients and the effective joint working with the York CVS Social Prescribing project, we have been able to secure further funding via York CVS to continue the service one day a week alternating between Rawcliffe and Heworth surgeries for three months until March 2017.

On the basis of the outcomes demonstrated in this report efforts should be made to secure funding to maintain this valuable advice provision to support the health and wellbeing of the people of York.

Appendix 1.

Consultation on location of services

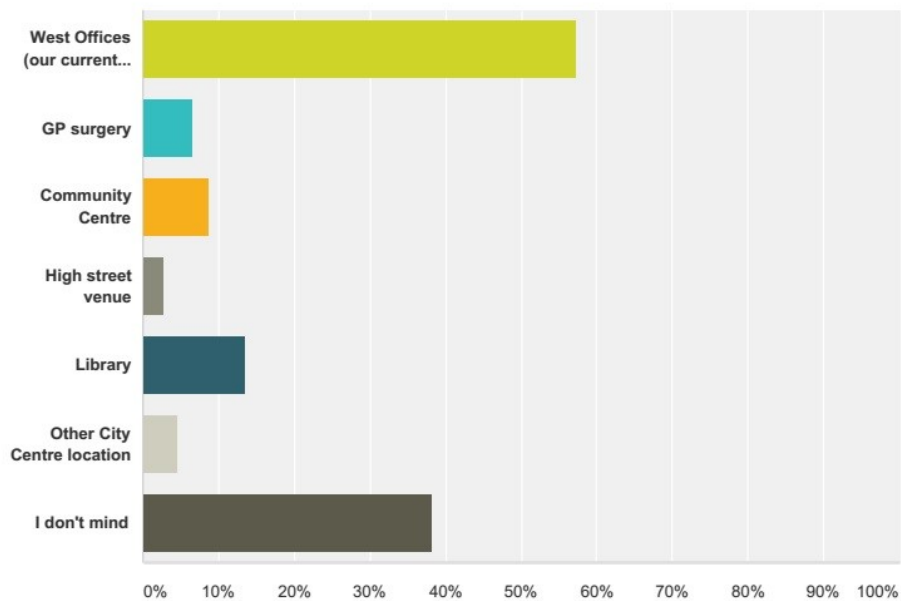
Clients attending West Offices who said they would prefer a city centre venue

Citizens Advice York User Survey (West Offices)

SurveyMonkey

Q6 City Centre Venue - where would you prefer to come? (tick all that apply)

Answered: 215 Skipped: 25

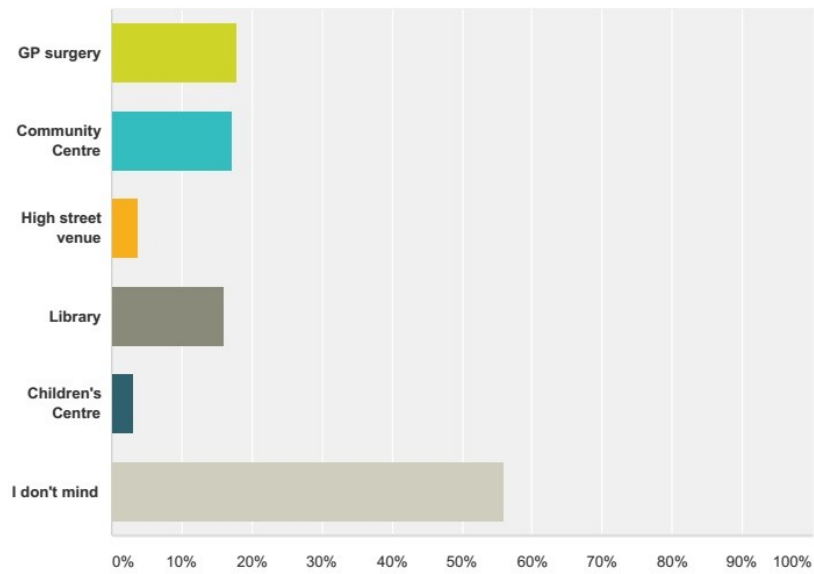


Answer Choices	Responses
West Offices (our current City Centre Venue)	57.21% 123
GP surgery	6.51% 14
Community Centre	8.84% 19
High street venue	2.79% 6
Library	13.49% 29
Other City Centre location	4.65% 10
I don't mind	38.14% 82
Total Respondents: 215	

Clients attending West Offices who said they would prefer a venue close to them

Q7 Venue close to you - where would you prefer to come? (tick all that apply)

Answered: 186 Skipped: 54

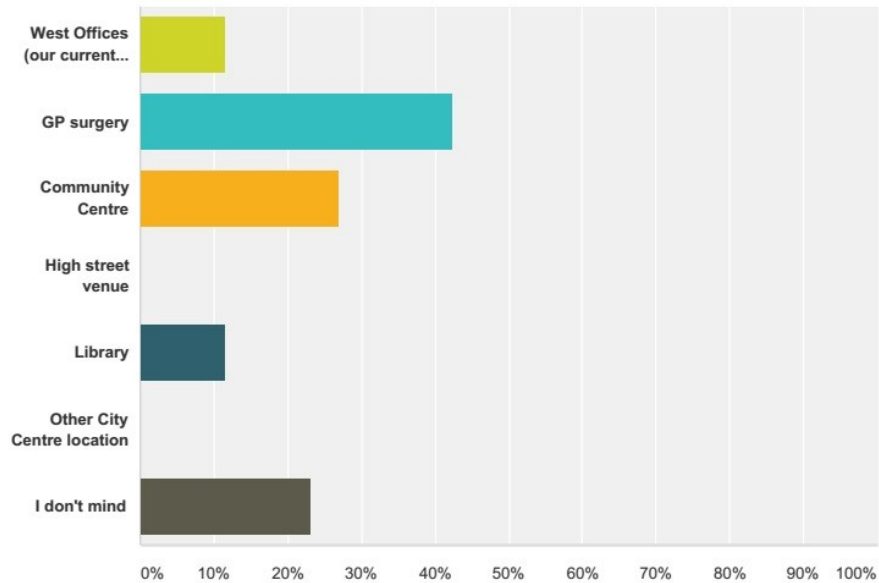


Answer Choices	Responses
GP surgery	17.74% 33
Community Centre	17.20% 32
High street venue	3.76% 7
Library	16.13% 30
Children's Centre	3.23% 6
I don't mind	55.91% 104
Total Respondents: 186	

Clients attending outreach services who said they would prefer a city centre venue

Q8 City Centre Venue - where would you prefer to come?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 11

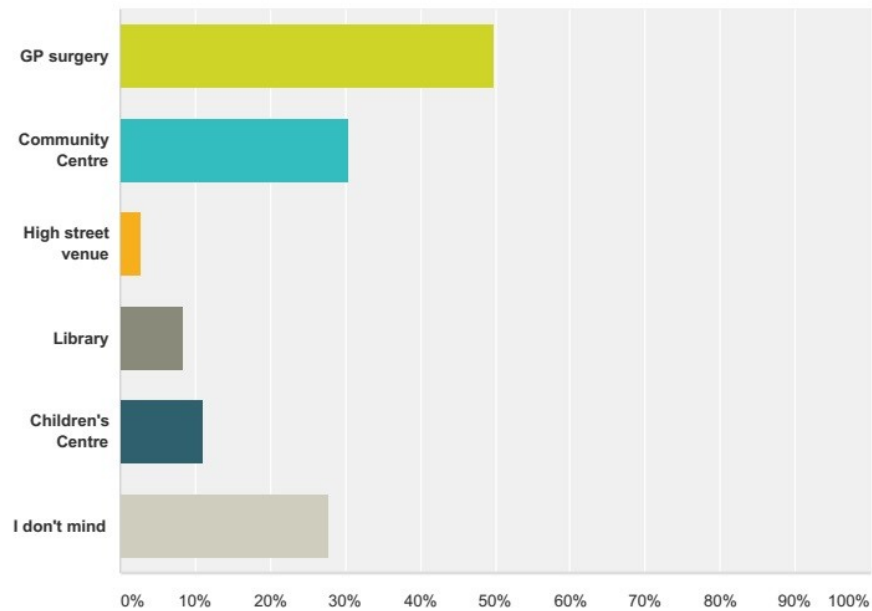


Answer Choices	Responses
West Offices (our current City Centre Venue)	11.54% 3
GP surgery	42.31% 11
Community Centre	26.92% 7
High street venue	0.00% 0
Library	11.54% 3
Other City Centre location	0.00% 0
I don't mind	23.08% 6
Total Respondents: 26	

Clients attending outreach service who said they would prefer a venue close to them

Q9 Venue close to you - where would you prefer to come?

Answered: 36 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
GP surgery	50.00% 18
Community Centre	30.56% 11
High street venue	2.78% 1
Library	8.33% 3
Children's Centre	11.11% 4
I don't mind	27.78% 10
Total Respondents: 36	