

Chief Executive Report - March 2016

North Yorkshire Advocacy began the year with a clear strategic plan for development and growth.

With a statutory right to an independent advocate for those with substantial difficulties, North Yorkshire Advocacy expanded the programme of professional development, marketing and communications and accessibility to meet the challenges and demands of the Care Act legislation.

The Safe Hands project was awarded in February 2015 and the organisation began the process of implementing this specialist work.

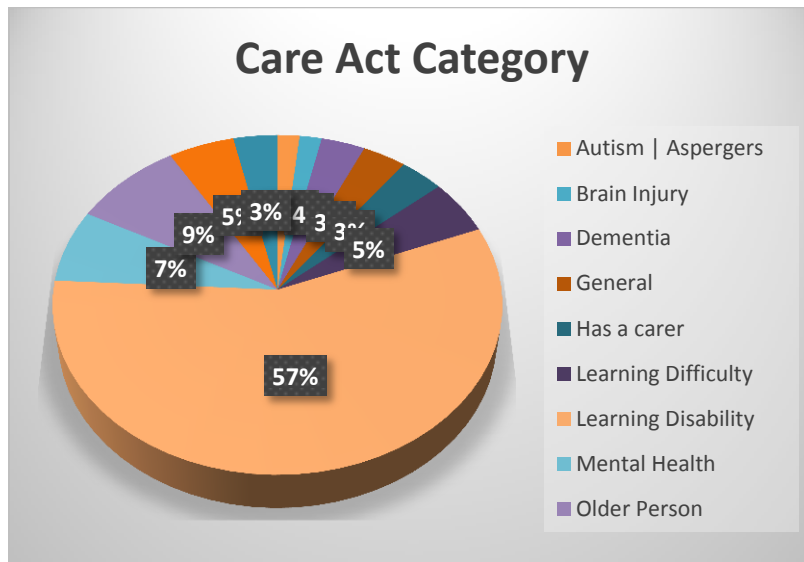
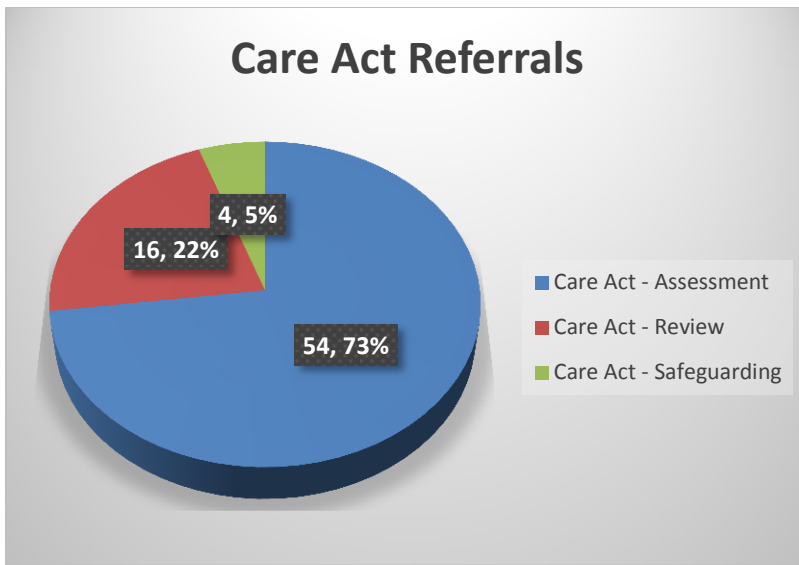
North Yorkshire Advocacy was established in January 2015 following the amalgamation of advocacy services across North Yorkshire, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with four Foundation Trustees. During the year we have been delighted to welcome six new Trustees with a wealth of skills and experiences including medical, Law and IT and Counselling. At the end of the financial year Terry Wilcox and Andrew Collingwood stepped down after many years with Hambleton and Harrogate Advocacy. Their contributions have been valued especially during the proposal of and the transition to North Yorkshire Advocacy. Maurice Cann was elected Chair on April 5th 2016.

As a provider of advocacy services across the County, offices in Northallerton and Harrogate were closed and North Yorkshire Advocacy moved more centrally to Melmerby in August 2015. A small outreach office in Skipton offers accessibility to those in rural Craven.

A new website has been designed and can be found at www.nyadvocacy.org. This platform offers access to information, project information, news, volunteering opportunities, policies and minutes of meetings. The branding follows through into the Generic and Safe Hands leaflets.

The launch of North Yorkshire Advocacy occurred in October 2015 with many colleagues from the voluntary and statutory sector attending. During the month many events were held across the County to promote the service, recruit volunteers and offer drop in sessions for communities.

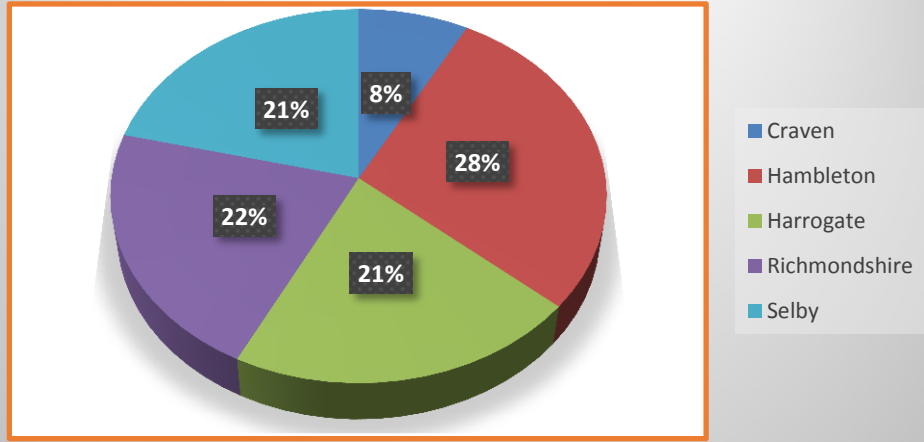
With the introduction of the Care Act 2014, local authorities have a statutory obligation to offer to all those with substantial difficulties an independent advocate. In April 2015 North Yorkshire Advocacy was awarded the generic advocacy element of the contract, the IMCA and IMHA remaining with the current provider. The variation to the three-year contract for generic advocacy to include Care Act provision retained the sub contract agreements with Scarborough Advocacy, ensuring generic and Care Act advocacy was accessible in Scarborough and surrounding villages. During that period, North Yorkshire advocacy provided a client focused service to 122 vulnerable adults referred under the Care Act over 50% of which were assessments, the greatest percentage in the 50 -64 age bracket, 57 % living with a learning disability.



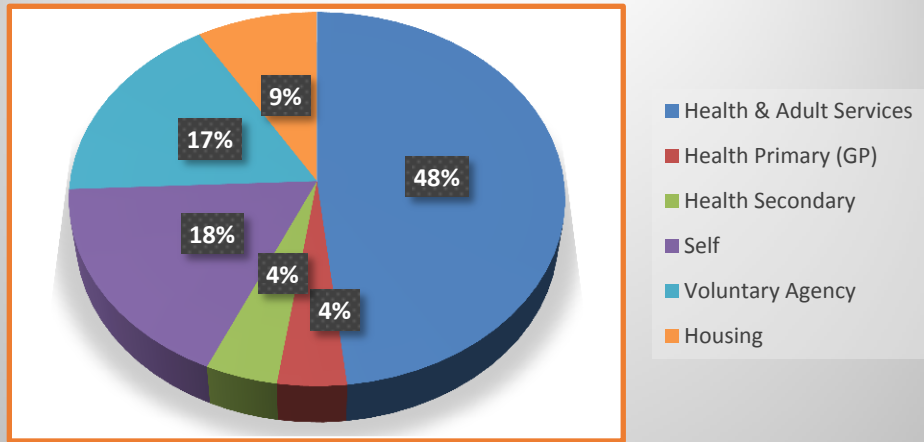
During the year, 4 members of staff committed to the IMHA qualification. In December 2015 the procurement process for all advocacy provision commenced and in February 2016 it was announced that the contract had been awarded to a regional provider.

The demand for generic advocacy, available to all those vulnerable through circumstance, poverty, health, age or disability, continued to grow throughout the year. 547 clients requesting generic advocacy were signposted to North Yorkshire Advocacy, 48% from Local Authority, 35% from voluntary sector organisations and self-referrals. The average advocacy intervention from referral to closure was 9.6 hours bringing the gross cost per client at £ 283.36.

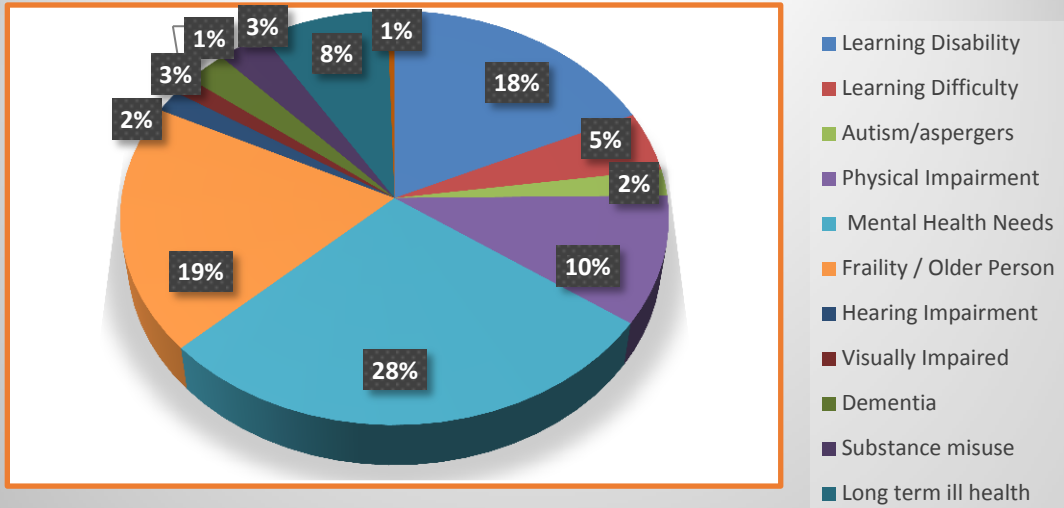
Referral District



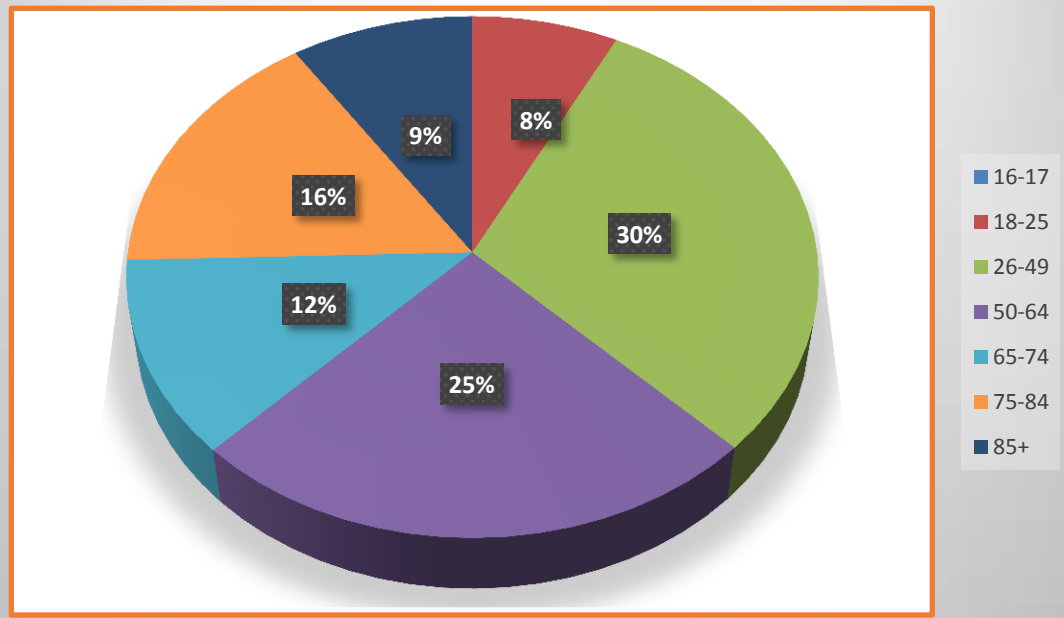
Referral Type



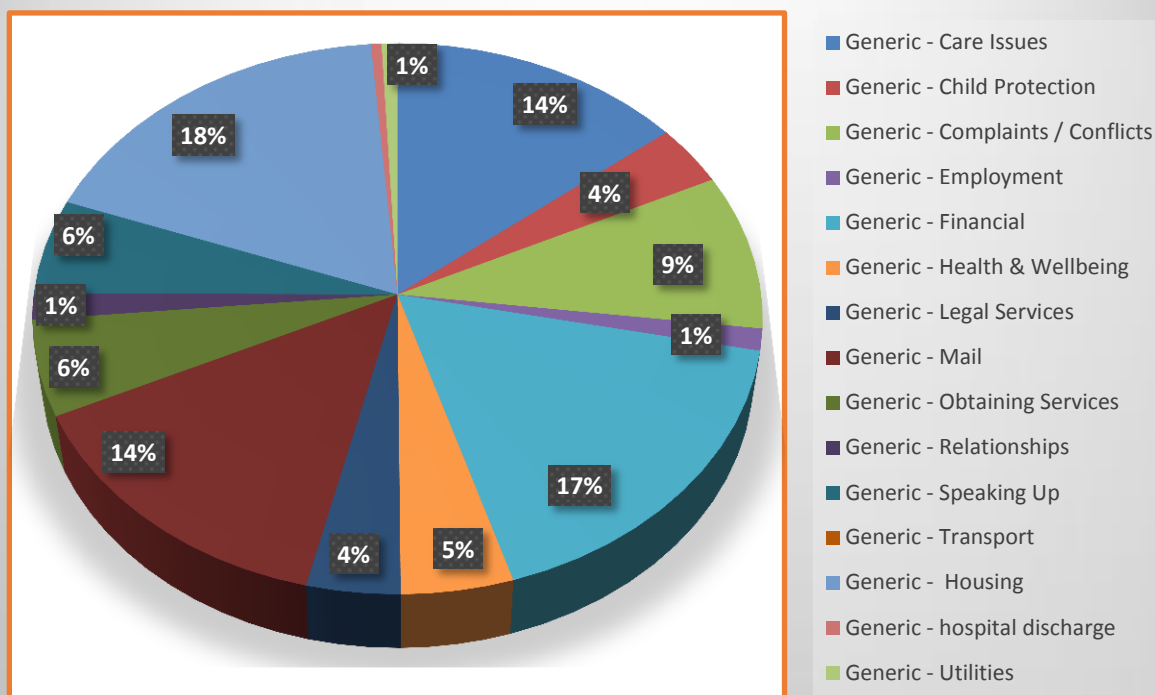
Client Category



Age



Client Issue



The Big Lottery, Reaching Communities fund supports the delivery of the Safe Hands work within Hambleton, Richmondshire and Selby. During the year, two members of staff have been recruited to the posts of Project Co-ordinator and Volunteer and Training Co-ordinator. Four part time advocates are supported through the project. The Safe Hands project has provided Mail and Finance advocacy to 137 clients in the first year, 88 female, 49 male. Work is focused within the districts of Hambleton, Richmondshire and Selby, 42% of beneficiaries from Selby, 37% Hambleton and 21% Richmondshire. The majority of beneficiaries were female (64%). Of the total number of beneficiaries, 47% were older people, 22% had a mental health issue (including dementia) and 19% suffered from long term ill health.

A further 376 Safe Hands referrals were made to the service from other agencies of which improved health and well-being were the desired outcome. To date 72 people have been referred to more appropriate services, the majority of these were to Citizens Advice Bureau. Each advocate records the sense of wellbeing with each beneficiary at the beginning and end of their support. 126 individuals (93%) recorded an improved quality of life because of a mail and finance problem resolved. 512 mail, finance and generic clients had better access to information and a greater understanding of resolution methods, feeling less isolated through gaining access to information and services. Promoting the services widely enables those isolated by rurality or health to more readily engage and other service providers to signpost. Information gathered at beginning and end of intervention using Edinburgh Warwick revealed that 229 clients stated that their mental health had improved. Of the clients presenting financial issues,

202 resulted in potential for greater income. With the information disseminated either directly with a client, a group or via media, 136 clients gained a greater understanding of modern banking systems recorded at end of service evaluations

The project aimed to recruit 10 new volunteers within the year; 19 volunteers from across the districts have been recruited and trained.

North Yorkshire Advocacy was supported throughout the year with a small grant from Hambleton District Council to train staff in British Sign Language and have available resources to enable those deaf or hard of hearing to more fully engage with services.

North Yorkshire Advocacy is greatly supported in delivering the service by dedicated and committed volunteers from across the County. The value the volunteer advocates bring to the organisations is measured not only in skills and experiences but also financially, the annual in kind contribution being approximately £ 60,000. The advocacy training programme offered to volunteers includes Safeguarding, Dementia awareness, Welfare reform, lone working and Utility provisions amongst others. All staff and most volunteers are Dementia Friends.

The staff base has fluctuated throughout the year with some leaving to pursue other careers and new staff coming on board. The organisation is fortunate in the committed, skilled and loyal staff it employs, all willing to work ever harder to meet the individual needs of our clients.

Moving forward, North Yorkshire Advocacy recognises the demand for generic advocacy services from across the County and has in place business and financial strategies to respond and develop, to meet the needs of our communities, to respond to reform and change and continue to build a customer focussed, quality advocacy service for North Yorkshire.