



Youth Advice Outcomes Pilot

Youth Access

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Executive Summary

1. Key Findings

1. Agencies found the Youth Advice Outcomes Toolkit:
 - Easy to implement and use
 - Adaptable and flexible
 - Appropriate to YIACS
 - Linked soft and hard outcomes
 - Filled gaps in current monitoring
 - Evidenced outcomes linked to national indicators such as ECM and IYS
2. All but one of the Pilots will continue to use it in the future.
3. The resulting data provides evidence of the value to users of advice work, with agencies assessing that hard outcomes¹ had been obtained for 58% of users, and over 50% of users reporting improvement in emotional, psychological *and* social well being.
4. Agencies judged that the Toolkit enabled them to meet both funders' needs for outcomes data and their internal needs for management information
5. Funders' and commissioners' acceptance of this may be dependant on raising their awareness of the major contribution of social welfare advice to positive outcomes for young people.
6. The Toolkit's strength is that it encompasses a range of monitoring requirements at the same time as being relatively easy to use.

¹ Hard outcomes: indicators of change that can be seen and measured by the agency. Soft outcomes: more subjective and qualitative indicators as assessed by the individual

2. Why Measure Outcomes?

In recent years both funders and the voluntary sector have looked to outcome measures, the difference the service makes, as a means of assessing the effectiveness of services and, the benefits accruing from funding support.

Among the reasons for collecting outcome data are:

- A means of checking if clients' issues have been fully resolved and, if not, why not.
- To feedback to services the effect of their work and pointers towards improving advice systems and practice.
- To provide an overview of service delivery and the aggregated outcomes achieved for clients.
- To evidence the effectiveness of advice work in meeting funders' requirements or expectations.

In recent years attention has been given to identifying outcomes beyond the practical gains – 'hard' outcomes – to less tangible or 'soft' outcomes. These may include improved quality of life, health gains or improved confidence and self-esteem.

For smaller, often local, organisations, development of outcome measures has presented particular difficulties, not least developing systems to run alongside pre-existing systems designed mainly to meet funder(s) requirements but also in extending systems that are based on recording hard outcomes only.

3. The Youth Access Toolkit

Youth Access was founded in 1975 to support the development of a national network of young people's information, advice and counselling services (YIACS). A significant proportion of its members are small or medium sized organisations. The development of an advice outcomes toolkit for its members takes this into account as well as the characteristics of YIACS that combine social welfare advice with counselling and support services.

In 2007, Youth Access developed the Youth Advice Outcomes Toolkit with the aim of capturing the outcomes from social welfare rights based advice work with young people. The Toolkit drew together outcome measures developed within the advice sector and a range of other national and local indicators including Every Child Matters outcome measures.

4. The Outcomes Pilot

Following a preliminary pilot in 2007, and a consultative exercise in 2008, Youth Access recruited agencies for a larger pilot and commissioned the Evaluation Trust to carry out an evaluation of the pilot and make recommendations for the future implementation of the Toolkit.

The Youth Access Pilot forms part of the *Working Together for Advice* project. The workstream aims to develop outcome monitoring tools suitable to advice agencies and to demonstrate the value of advice work. The Working Together for Advice project is coordinated by the Advice Services Alliance with funding from the Big Lottery Fund. The Youth Access Pilot was initiated in the

autumn of 2008 and completed at the end of September 2009.

5. Methodology

The existing Youth Advice Outcomes Toolkit comprised a number of separate forms. For the Pilot it was decided to replace this with a simpler two-part form: the first being a self assessment form to be completed by the user – to monitor soft outcomes; and the second to be completed by the agency, giving information about the client, the type of help given, the issues dealt with and hard outcomes identified by the agency.

Youth Access sought expressions of interest in taking part in the Pilot and ten agencies were selected as representative geographically and of agency type of YIACS.

Training and support were given throughout the Pilot to the agencies by a dedicated development support consultant. In recognition of the unique characteristics of each agency the pilot agencies were allowed flexibility in deciding the methodology they would adopt.

All the pilot agencies had current monitoring systems, which to a greater or lesser degree recorded outcomes. Their main interest in the Youth Access Pilot was in obtaining additional information, particularly around soft outcomes.

Pilot agencies were encouraged to achieve a minimum of 50 returns each by the end of the Pilot to ensure a valid sample for analysis.

Completed Toolkit forms were analysed by the evaluators.

The evaluators interviewed the pilot agencies at two stages during the Pilot, firstly at the mid point and secondly following the completion of the Pilot.

During the Pilot, regular meetings were held between the evaluators, the Development Support consultant and Youth Access to monitor progress.

Youth Access held regular discussions about the Pilot with its partners in the Working Together for Advice project's Advice Outcomes workstream: Advice Services Alliance, Citizens Advice, Age Concern England and Law Centres Federation.

6. Evaluation Focus

The evaluation focused on a series of questions:

- Usability of the Toolkit
- Feasibility
- Usefulness of the data
- Relevance of the data for funders and providers
- Application of the data to service development
- Value of advice.

7. Key Evidence

- The pilots completed forms for 518 users, exceeding the target of 500
- Users raised over 1300 advice issues – an average of 2.6 per user
- Almost a third of users (29%) had two or more social exclusion factors, e.g. homelessness or mental health problems
- Homelessness was a factor for over a third of the users and one in five had mental health issues

- Over a half (52%) of users were young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs)
- 94% of users said they had been given all the advice they needed
- Hard outcomes were achieved in 58% of cases
- Over 50% of users reported improvement in emotional, psychological *and* social well-being
- The majority of users said the form was easy to complete and were happy to answer the questions.

8. Evaluation Findings

- **Usability** The pilot agencies generally felt that the Toolkit was easy to use and succeeded in filling gaps in their own monitoring systems. Reaction from users was positive and agencies valued the combining of casework data with user self assessment.
- **Feasibility** Capacity within an organisation to use the Toolkit emerged as a key issue. As well as the time taken to identify and contact clients and subsequent analysis, it was estimated that each form required around 15 minutes of input to complete. Despite being relatively short, this would carry implications for collection on a regular basis. The fact that all the Pilots bar one said that they would continue to use the Toolkit suggests that its benefits may outweigh concerns about resources.
- **Usefulness** Identifying soft outcomes and their linkage with ECM and LAA indicators was a particular strength of the Toolkit and provided information that

many were not currently collecting. The category for 'other issues' in addition to social welfare rights based issues was useful, as it is not often captured on existing systems. Also, obtaining feedback from young people about soft outcomes provided opportunity for the individual to reflect on what had improved for them that was itself valuable. Resource constraints will influence whether the pilot agencies use it continuously or periodically.

- **Relevance of the data for funders and providers** The Toolkit's amalgamation of soft and hard outcomes was valued by the pilot agencies, many of which identified this gap in their current systems as a motive for participating in the Pilot. Overall, they felt that it not only enabled them to provide more comprehensive outcomes evidence to funders but also added to their knowledge about their own service and its users.
- **Application of the data to service development** Agencies said that the Toolkit effectively measured soft outcomes and covered the range of their work. It improved their focus on issues and the impact of their advice. The evaluative benefits of improved outcomes information should impact on service planning by enabling services to measure how well or otherwise they are meeting users' needs and identify service changes.
- **Value of advice** Youth Access has argued that young people's social welfare problems are frequently linked to emotional, personal, health and practical problems'. The resulting data provides persuasive evidence of

both the value of youth advice work, with 58% achieving a tangible or hard outcome, and its beneficial impacts, evidenced by over 50% of users reporting improvement in emotional, psychological *and* social well being.

9. Conclusions

The Toolkit's strength is that it encompasses a range of monitoring requirements at the same time as being relatively easy to use. It brings together in a single format hard outcomes data with user feedback, identification of soft outcomes, the social welfare issues on which young people were seeking advice and the level of input by the agency in responding to them.

It is also adaptable to any agency's particular circumstances in that it is not a rigid template but can be amended to meet particular needs and, with initial support, can be used to produce reports 'in-house' using commonly available software.

10. Recommendations

1. Youth Access should continue to develop and promote the Toolkit
2. The Toolkit should not be a rigid format but one that agencies can adapt for their own needs
3. Different methodologies were adopted by the pilot agencies and it is recommended that this flexibility be retained but that Youth Access facilitate learning through a user forum or on line discussion group
4. Youth Access should develop mechanisms for retrieving information from Toolkit users to support the case for advice and information

5. Agencies using the Toolkit should at the start nominate a staff member to be responsible for its implementation and operation.
6. Based on the experience of the Pilot, recommendations are made for the format of the Toolkit.

ⁱ Young People's Social Welfare Needs and the Impact of Good Advice. Kenrick. J. Youth Access. February 2007

Main Report

1. Introduction

Why Outcomes?

For many years advice and information services measured their work by numbers or volume – how many people they saw, what issues they had etc. During the 1980s attention began to focus on quality – how good was the advice and how do we measure that? Part of the response was to conduct ‘satisfaction’ surveys, which are still widely used but, while useful, gave little information to provide all the answers to a basic question – what do advice services achieve?

The increasing constraints on public finances, the principal source of advice funding, the growing demands on all funding sources from a rapidly expanding sector, and the many changes in structures and processes for delivering policy objectives, e.g. commissioning, have led to an increased focus on outcomes - in short, assessment of the effectiveness of a particular service and, therefore, the benefits accruing from funding support.

However, it would be a mistake to think that outcome measurement has been entirely driven by funders. The voluntary sector, principally national bodies and infrastructure organisations has played a significant role in the development of outcome measures. While this was in part a response to funders’ requests it was also driven by the sector’s internal needs to better inform their planning and management processes, and a commitment to demonstrating the differences made from a client perspective.

Why Measure ‘Outcomes’?

There are a variety of reasons why it can be important to collect outcomes information. Principally, they are to:

- Check with clients whether matters are sorted or whether further agency involvement is wanted or needed
- Provide feedback to advisers and advice managers about the effect of their work and pointers towards improving advice systems and practice
- Provide an overview of the scale and profile of service delivery and the aggregated outcomes achieved for clients
- Evidence the effectiveness of advice work in meeting funders’ requirements or expectations.²

What are ‘Outcomes’?

Most advice services already have systems in place to count the practical gains they achieve for their client, e.g. better housing, improved income or obtaining rights.

² Notes of a brief enquiry into ‘Outcomes’ work being done in the Advice and Voluntary Sector. Benson – Waterhouse. October 2005

However, in recent years increased attention has been given to identifying outcomes beyond the practical gains – ‘hard’ outcomes – to less tangible outcomes or ‘soft’ outcomes. These may include improved quality of life, health gains or improved confidence and self-esteem, which may occur even when ‘hard’ outcomes are not achieved.

The challenge for any measuring system is to show clearly the link between these gains and the particular intervention of the advice service.

For smaller, often local, organisations, development of outcome measures has presented particular difficulties, not least that of developing systems to run alongside pre-existing systems designed mainly to meet funder(s) requirements but also in extending systems that are based on recording hard outcomes only.

Youth Access

Youth Access was founded in 1975 to support the development of a national network of young people’s information, advice and counselling services (YIACS). It has approximately 200 members out of an estimated 350 YIACS in England. A significant proportion of its members are small or medium sized organisations. The development by Youth Access of an advice outcomes toolkit for its members is designed not only to take this into account but also the particular feature in YIACS of combining social welfare advice with counselling and support services.

YIACS face particular challenges relating to outcomes. Government policy makes local authorities responsible for leading the development of a comprehensive and integrated approach to the delivery of information, advice and guidance to young people. A central theme of the agenda is a shift to early intervention and prevention strategies in which an outcomes-led approach to local planning and commissioning activities is key.

The funding of advice services for young people is based increasingly on local authorities’ /Children Trusts’ implementation of the Joint Framework for Planning and Commissioning of Children, Young People and Maternity Services (DfES 2006) with ‘contracts based increasingly on outcomes’.

The key outcomes are set out in the Government’s³ Every Child Matters programme⁴:

Be healthy

Children and young people have a healthy start in life, are physically and emotionally healthy, choose healthy lifestyles and are sexually healthy.

Stay safe

Children and young people are safe from maltreatment and neglect, from bullying and discrimination, and have security, stability and are cared for.

³ Note that this report was written before the 2010 General Election.

⁴ H.M. Government. Every Child Matters: Change for Children. DfES-1109-2004

Enjoy and achieve

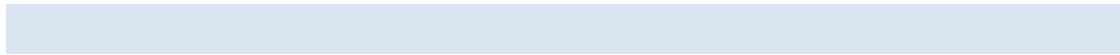
Children and young people are ready for school and learning, achieve their potential in education, attend and enjoy school, behave positively in school, and enjoy their leisure time.

Make a positive contribution

Children and young people behave positively out of school, and participate in their communities and in decision-making.

Achieve economic wellbeing

Children and young people engage in education, employment or training, go on to higher education, live in families that are free from poverty, and are ready for employment.



2. Background

Working Together for Advice

The Youth Access Pilot is part of a larger project within the *Working Together for Advice* project coordinated by the Advice Services Alliance with funding from the Big Lottery Fund.

The overall project has a number of strands and is being delivered by a consortium of national advice networks including Youth Access and is due for completion in September 2010.

The aims of the project are to:

- Increase access to advice
- Enhance the quality of advice
- Demonstrate the value of advice
- Improve the efficiency of advice services
- Build the capacity of the advice sector.

The project is divided into eight work streams:

- Developing access to advice
- User and stakeholder involvement
- Enhancing frontline advice
- Developing a quality mark
- Advice outcomes
- Developing discrimination advice
- Workforce development and training
- Promoting advice.

Youth Access' project is part of the Advice Outcomes workstream, which aims to develop a range of outcome monitoring tools suitable for advice agencies and better demonstrate the value of advice work and its impact on the lives of users of advice services.

The focus is on:

- Piloting methods of measuring outcomes
- Developing good practice guidelines
- Guidance and training tailored to particular service types, e.g. law centres or services for young people
- Working with policy makers and funders to develop agreed approaches to outcome measurement.

Youth Advice Outcomes Toolkit

In 2007 Youth Access developed the Youth Advice Outcomes Toolkit as part of its Rights to Access Project. The process included a national consultation with agencies, local consultation by agencies with staff and users and a pilot phase.

The Toolkit drew together outcome measures developed within the advice sector and a range of other national and local indicators including Every Child Matters outcome measures.

The Toolkit used a two stage self assessment process: the first being a self assessment by the user at the outset of the advice process; and the second after 3 months or at the closure of the process, whichever was earlier. The Toolkit also provided three optional forms for the advisor to record factual information, i.e. help given, user profile and hard outcomes.

As part of the Advice Outcomes workstream of the Working Together for Advice Project, Youth Access extensively consulted with its members to inform the further development of its Youth Advice Outcomes Toolkit.

Youth Access members were invited to complete an online consultation questionnaire aimed at informing ongoing work to develop and pilot outcomes monitoring systems for youth advice services.

Among the key findings from the agency survey were:

- That 84% of respondents said that evidencing the outcomes of their advice work was currently a high priority
- An enthusiasm for collecting data on 'soft' personal outcomes as well as 'hard' advice outcomes
- That for many agencies the Toolkit would be most useful if it could offer options for collecting both hard and soft outcomes data
- That some form of user self assessment was necessary.

Youth Access also held focus groups with young people and discussions with a small number of youth advice agencies and external partners.

Following the consultation, Youth Access commissioned two separate pieces of work to develop the Toolkit. The first was to provide development support to agencies agreeing to take part in a further Pilot to test a revised Toolkit. The second, for which The Evaluation Trust was commissioned, was to collate and analyse data emerging from the Pilot and carry out an evaluation with recommendations for the future implementation of the Toolkit.

The Pilot was initiated in the autumn of 2008 and completed at the end of September 2009.



3. The Purpose and Focus of the Evaluation Work

Purpose

The principal purpose of the work was to develop, pilot and evaluate the Youth Advice Outcomes Toolkit, building on the work carried out between 2006 and 2008 and to make recommendations for a mechanism that could be easily integrated into the work of youth advice agencies. The mechanism would need to be acceptable to users and provide data of use to the agencies to serve a range of purposes including:

- Advice service planning
- Policy development
- Funding accountability
- User feedback

A further purpose was to gather evidence from the pilot agencies of the value and impact of the advice interventions.

Focus

The evaluation focused on the following questions:

- How usable is the Youth Advice Outcomes Toolkit for users and staff? What revisions are required?
- Are the data collection, management and analysis demands feasible/ appropriate for the range of agencies involved in Youth Access membership? What revisions are required to the tools?
- Does the Toolkit demonstrate the value of youth advice work and its beneficial impact on the lives of youth advice agency users? For example, an improved evidence base for youth advice work showing contribution to ECM, integrated youth support and other longer term outcomes.
- Is the evidence collected appropriate to funders/ commissioners?
- Does the outcomes assessment help the agencies to improve the quality and effectiveness of their services and equip them to measure outcomes more effectively?

4. Methodology

Reviewing the Toolkit

In the autumn of 2008, consultants and Youth Access jointly reviewed the existing Toolkit, assisted by the evidence Youth Access had gathered through its consultations with agencies and users. A number of changes to the Toolkit were agreed.

The previous two-stage process involving a number of separate forms was replaced with a 'one size fits all' simpler process for the Pilot.⁵ This would be a two part form: the first being a self assessment form to be completed by the user – soft outcomes; and the second form to be completed by the agency giving information about the client, the type of help given, the issues dealt with and hard outcomes identified by the agency. See Appendix 1.

The self-assessment form – 'Have we helped?' – is for the user to complete either on their own or with assistance from the agency. The first question asks if the user felt that they had got the advice they needed. This is followed by a list of questions substantially based on the previous Toolkit but in a reduced form. The list comprises a mix of questions related to health and well-being, problems, advice issues and the impact of advice.

The previous Toolkit required answer on a scale of 1 to 10, but it was decided to simplify this by asking the user to indicate any changes they felt had happened as a consequence of the help they had been given. The options were:

- Improved a lot
- Improved a bit
- Not changed
- Got a bit worse
- Got a lot worse
- Don't know / not applicable.

Finally, users were asked what they thought of the form in terms of ease of completion, their feelings about being asked the questions and any other feedback they wished to give.

A number of other changes to the 'Have we helped?' form were considered, but not adopted, including the inclusion of questions about the impact of the problem (as opposed to the impact of the advice) and of qualitative questions, as it was decided that the simplicity of the form was crucial.

Agencies attach to the 'Have we helped?' form, a separate 'Adviser Form' giving information on:

- Client details – age, gender, ethnicity

⁵ It was envisaged, however, that a greater degree of flexibility might be required in the longer-term following the Pilot.

- Known social exclusion factors – e.g. NEET, homeless, care leaver, mental health problems
- Level of advice given – e.g. one off advice or casework
- Issues advised on – both rights based advice and other issues
- Hard outcomes achieved for the user – these were simplified from the previous version of the Toolkit to merely enable a link to be made to soft outcomes, as many agencies were already capturing hard outcomes in some form.

Finally, Youth Access conducted work to improve the formatting of the forms, so they would be more user-friendly.

The reasons for adopting this approach to the development of the Toolkit were that:

- It would be easier to encourage take up
- It was felt essential, for the purposes of data analysis as part of the evaluation of the Pilot, to match the soft outcomes to both client information (e.g. age), the issues dealt with and hard outcome information. Hence, the Adviser Form would not be optional for the pilot agencies.
- The previous two stage self assessment form was considered robust, but produced small quantities of data. If an agency completed stage one with a client, but was unable to follow up with a stage two form, the data was of little value.
- Concerns about using the stage one form with very distressed young people might mean that these clients would not be part of the data collection – an issue raised by some young people in the focus groups.

How pilot agencies used the single stage ‘Have we helped?’ form was left to them to decide, although support and guidance was provided by the Development Support consultant. They could decide to complete the exercise at any stage they thought fitted their particular circumstances. It was felt that by being less prescriptive about how an agency used the Toolkit would give more flexibility and encourage take up. However, it was recognised that it would usually be of greater value if the form were completed some time after the initial provision of advice, in order to allow time for the advice to take effect.

Agencies were given the option of a two-stage process by using the ‘Have we helped?’ form at an early stage in their contact with the user and repeating this at a later stage or when the case was closed, but none took up the option.

Defining the Outcomes

Both hard and soft outcome categories on the Adviser Form as well as other categories such as social exclusion factors were derived from a number of external indicators including:

- Local Area Agreement national indicators
- Legal Services Commission advice and information contracts

- Every Child Matters core outcome measures
- Youth Access member agencies' own experience of local commissioning.

Hard outcomes were assessed by the agencies. These were tangible gains could be clearly identified and measured. For example, if a homeless young person obtained housing as a result of the agency's intervention or their financial position was improved by obtaining additional benefits or other income.

Soft outcomes were assessed by the young person. These were more subjective and qualitative indicators. Soft outcomes are more personal measures that indicate that positive change has occurred for example increased self-confidence, improved ability to cope or reduced feelings of stress. In some categories they can be a useful check back on whether a hard outcome has made a personal difference. For example a young person who was homeless and been rehoused – a hard outcome – may feel that their housing situation had not improved. If so are there other factors that need to be addressed?

Selecting the Pilots

Youth Access sought expressions of interest in taking part in the Pilot and 23 agencies responded. Ten agencies were selected as representative geographically, e.g. urban/ rural, north/south, and of agency type of YIACS, e.g. local authority/ voluntary sector, information and advice only or including counselling services, and agency size.

Youth Access staff confirmed the agencies' commitment to the Pilot and gathered information about each agency via a telephone questionnaire giving:

- Contact details
- Services provided
- Reasons for wanting to be included in the Pilot
- Staffing
- What outcomes they would seek to monitor
- Current monitoring
- Methodology to be employed in the Pilot.

Following this a working agreement was signed with each agency (Appendix 2).

The final list of agencies taking part in the Pilot can be found at Appendix 3.

The Development Support consultant provided in-house training in the use of the Toolkit – seven of the ten agencies took up the offer of training – and supported the agencies throughout the Pilot. This included checking the completed Toolkit forms before passing them on to the evaluation team, being a contact point for any queries and liaising between the agencies, Youth Access and the Evaluation Trust. It was part of the evaluation to test the importance of such support, particularly training (see later section).

Methodologies used by Pilot Agencies

Pilot agencies were allowed considerable flexibility in deciding the methodology they would use for the Pilot. Pilot agencies welcomed this in the feedback they gave during the initial training.

All the pilot agencies had existing monitoring systems, which to a greater or lesser degree recorded outcomes. Their main interest in the Pilot was in obtaining additional information, particularly around soft outcomes, and filling identified gaps in their current data. The agencies recruited for the Pilot were asked why they wanted to take part and replied:

- *We have a range of funders requiring different outcome measures but we also want to be more proactive in producing our own outcomes data*
- *We are keen to do regular assessments and want to link our outcomes to those of Every Child Matters*
- *Having taken part in the pilot for the earlier version of the Toolkit and done other bits of outcome monitoring we feel that there is still room for improvement*
- *Our current systems inadequately cover soft and hard outcomes from our advice work*
- *We record hard outcomes but want to more about the difference we make for young people*
- *Current systems do not capture soft outcomes and inadequately capture hard outcomes*
- *We currently don't measure any outcomes from our advice work*

Appendix 4 outlines the methodology of each pilot agency.

Agencies were encouraged to achieve a minimum of 50 returns each by the end of the Pilot to ensure a valid sample for analysis. A small bursary of up to £200 was offered by Youth Access to assist pilot agencies with any costs incurred in participating in the Pilot and as an encouragement to meet the target. Seven were awarded mainly to cover extra administration or volunteer costs in contacting users, and in one case for a specific qualitative outcomes survey of past users. All ten pilot agencies completed the Pilot, with most reaching or exceeding 50 returns.

Evaluation

Completed Toolkit forms were passed by the pilot agencies to the Development Support consultant, who clarified any issues with the agencies before forwarding the forms to the evaluators. The data was entered on a spreadsheet using Excel and could then be analysed in a variety of ways. Each agency was provided with an individualised report. The overall results are included in this report.

The pilot agencies were interviewed at two stages during the pilot. Firstly, at the mid point in the Pilot using a standard list of questions to obtain consistent feedback on the use of the revised Toolkit to date and any suggestions for improvement. Their views were also sought on how they might use the Toolkit

in the future and their preferred methods of analysis, e.g. a centrally managed system or in-house.

Agencies were again interviewed following the completion of the Pilot to:

- Test whether their views had changed since the mid-term review
- Obtain feedback on the data analysis from the Pilot (all agencies were given a full analysis of their returns)
- Gather opinions on how or if they would use the Toolkit in the future and any recommendations they had for changes/improvements.

Finally, throughout the Pilot regular meetings were held between Youth Access and the consultants to assess progress against agreed milestones.



5. Findings

Key Evidence

Who were the young people involved?

In total, 518 users took part in the Pilot. Some forms were incomplete hence data does not add up to this number in every case.

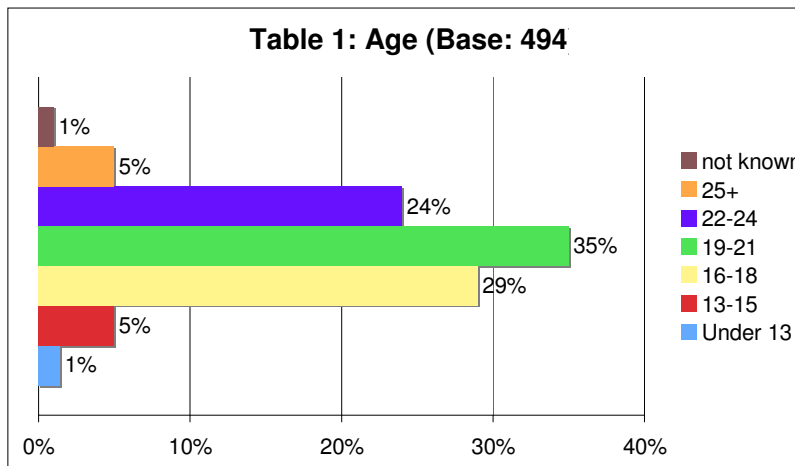


Table 2: Gender (Base: 499)

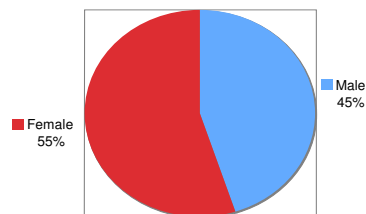
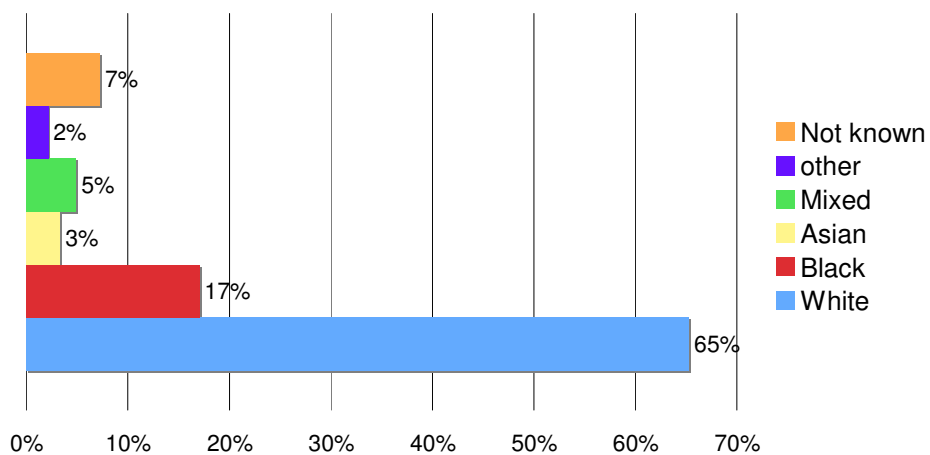


Table 3: Ethnicity (Base: 501)



What issues did they seek advice on?

Users raised over 1300 issues on which they sought advice or information, an average of 2.6 issues per user.

The principal issues were homelessness and welfare benefits for rights based advice, while relationships was the largest 'other issue' advised on.

The 'other issues' are categories of non-rights based advice issues that agencies dealt with in addition to rights advice.

The figures below give the overall results and the results broken down by age group.

The analysis shows some differences across age groups:

- Housing and homelessness featured more prominently in the 16-18 age group (64% compared to 57% overall)
- Also other issues advised on, e.g. relationships, were higher for this age group.

Table 4: Rights based issues on which advice given	Overall	16-18	19-21	22-24	Other ages
Housing / homelessness	57%	64%	60%	55%	36%
Debt	15%	11%	19%	20%	7%
Employment rights	11%	13%	14%	9%	3%
Education rights	11%	14%	8%	7%	22%
Welfare benefits	36%	39%	37%	39%	25%
Health and social care	5%	7%	4%	7%	3%
Consumer problem	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Crime / youth justice	3%	2%	3%	2%	6%
Immigration and nationality	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Human rights/ discrimination	2%	2%	1%	2%	4%
Other	2%	4%	2%	1%	1%
None recorded	14%	16%	11%	11%	24%
Other issues advised on					
Relationships	31%	43%	27%	21%	33%
Sexual health	18%	28%	13%	9%	25%
Drugs / alcohol	13%	16%	9%	11%	18%
Mental Health	18%	20%	15%	21%	13%
Education. Employment, Training and Careers	19%	25%	19%	12%	18%

What social exclusion factors for users were identified?

Agencies were also asked to select from a list on the form any social exclusion factors that could be identified for each client.

Table 5: Social Exclusion Factors		
		% of all users
Not in education, employment or training	270	52%
Homeless	194	37%
Mental health issues	108	21%
Young parent or pregnant	71	14%
Sick or disabled	48	9%
Young offender	39	8%
Substance misuse	35	7%
Refugee or asylum seeker	29	6%
Parental issues	26	5%
Care leaver	22	4%
Young carer	10	2%
Living in care, prison or other institution	10	2%
Total factors	862	

The headings listed were based on the headings most frequently used by agencies for monitoring and reporting to their funders. They reflect the factors targeted by Government in its programmes directed at young people.

Over a half (52%) of users were young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs). Reducing the proportion of 16- to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) is a priority for the Government. Being NEET between the ages of 16–18 is a major predictor of later unemployment, low income, teenage motherhood, and depression and poor physical health⁶. Of those with more than one social exclusion factor, more than three quarters (78%) were NEETs. (See Table 11, Appendix 7)

Homelessness was a factor for over a third of the users and one in five had mental health issues. It is also worth noting that homelessness was a factor for 57% of users from a Black or Asian background, compared to 37% overall.

Almost a third of users (29%) had two or more social exclusion factors indicating a high level of need among the sample group.

Only 15% (80) of young people had no social exclusion factor. Some of this figure may be due to under recording by the Pilots. Nevertheless, it may well suggest that agencies are successfully reaching the most vulnerable young people.

What did the agencies do?

In almost a half of cases the agency provided further advice assistance following the initial response to the query and in a quarter of cases provided advocacy or representation on the users' behalf.

⁶ Dept for Children, Schools and Families - Every Child Matters website

Users were asked if they felt that they had been given all the advice they needed and 94% responded that they had with 5% saying that they had only in part.

The Advisor form asked agencies to record the depth of their intervention, i.e. one off advice, further advice etc. It was difficult to analyse this reliably, as some agencies ticked or all or some of the boxes instead of just one. To be able to confidently analyse this more information on the extent of the intervention would be needed than the form currently tells us.

However, with these caveats in mind, analysis suggests the following:

- Where the agency advocated on behalf of the user (23% all users) 81% resulted in a hard outcome compared to 58% overall. These were principally housing and education / training improvements.
- This group was more likely to be homeless (56% compared to 37% overall) and to have more than two social exclusion factors (42% compared to 29%)
- They were also more likely to be within a non-white ethnic group (49% compared to 27% overall)
- Users who were actively represented by the agency also reported higher soft outcomes. For example (overall results in brackets):
 - Levels of stress -91% (70%)
 - Enjoyment of life – 72% (58%)
 - Family situation – 50% (30%)

On every indicator soft outcomes were higher for users where the agency had acted on their behalf. This may indicate that improved results come from greater involvement by the agency with the user. Alternatively, it could indicate that an agency will undertake more involvement where the need is greatest and that consequently the 'baseline' for improvement is lower than for other users.

Hard Outcomes

The form gave a list of hard outcome headings to be completed by the agencies where one or more applied. The headings were based on those commonly used by agencies for reporting to funders and an option box allowed other outcomes to be identified and specified.

In total, hard outcomes were achieved in 58% of cases. Broken down by category these were:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| • Housing improved - | 39% |
| • Financial position improved - | 26% |
| • Education improved - | 14% |
| • Health improved - | 9% |
| • Other - | 4% |

Further analysis across age groups, gender and number of social exclusion factors highlights some differences (Appendix 5 for full tables):

- Female clients achieved above average outcomes on all headings;
- Users with two or more social exclusion factors achieved above average outcomes and achieved significantly higher housing outcomes (50% compared to 39% overall), while those with only one social exclusion factor fell slightly below average;
- Overall outcomes were above average for the 22-24 age group, particularly in improvement of their financial position.

The findings raise a range of questions. Are better housing outcomes for young people with two or more social exclusion factors linked with the vulnerability test to obtain housing under the homelessness legislation? Is the achievement of above average outcomes by female clients parallel similar findings for educational achievement?

The data from the Toolkit cannot provide ready answers but it does demonstrate the Toolkit's value in pointing up issues for further exploration the results of which can contribute to service development.

Soft Outcomes

At the start of the Pilot the agencies were at different stages in developing their outcomes systems, many in response to their funders' requirements, but several seeking to improve their own knowledge about the impact of their advice on the users.

Collecting data on soft outcomes arising from the agencies advice was a critical component of the Pilot.

Tables 9 and 10 in Appendix 6 show the overall results and those for some specific categories of user. The percentages are those reporting that as a result of getting advice they felt that they had experienced an improvement i.e. 'a lot' or 'a bit' on each heading. The key points to emerge are:

- Significant improvements overall (achieved by over 50%) were reported in their:
 - Knowledge about where to get help (88%)
 - Understanding of their rights (75%)
 - Levels of stress (70%)
 - Feelings about their future ((64%)
 - Ability to deal with problems (62%)
 - Enjoyment of life (58%)
 - Confidence (57%)
 - Control over their life (57%)
- On all 15 headings improvements were above 30%
- The numbers reporting negative impacts were low – less than 6%

Many of the highest positive ratings relate to knowledge, skills and emotions, suggesting that YIACS are highly effective at developing young people as individuals. Improvements were less likely to be reported in relation to headings that are more reliant on factors outside the young person's control, such as family situation (30%), income level (33%), health (34%), involvement in education, training or employment (35%). A notable exception was the number reporting an improved housing situation (49%) where clearly the advice intervention had a direct impact.

Table 10 in Appendix 6 shows soft outcomes across several categories of user. It is significant that both those saying that they had not got all the advice they needed – admittedly only 5% of the total – and those for whom there were no hard outcomes nevertheless recorded soft outcomes that were broadly consistent with the overall averages.

Under only a few soft outcome headings did those who had not achieved a hard outcome fall well below the average, i.e. housing, income and enjoyment of life. This might be expected as income and housing are two fundamental hard outcomes and the failure to achieve these would more than likely affect the enjoyment of life.

However, this did not appear to impact on other headings such as wellbeing, personal control and understanding, which may illustrate that although advice may not always deliver a tangible gain, it can nevertheless contribute much in enabling a person to better deal with their situation.

Other Feedback

The 'Have we helped?' form allowed young people to write in any other comments they wished to make. A selection of their comments:

Help with my housing situation has helped improve my quality of life in many ways

I think without them I would be lost. Now I just live for my son and do my best

They are different from everywhere else because they don't just shove a form at you and tell you to go away. They spend time with you and you feel they are interested in you.

I feel welcome every time I come here

You're always there for me

The comments box elicited mainly positive comments about the agency and in particular the staff member they were working with. The warmth of many of the comments showed the strong degree of trust in the relationship with the agency that had built up over time.

Response to the Form

The form also asked how young people felt about being asked the questions and how easy the form was to complete.

Only seven (1%) said they would rather not answer the questions, 72% were happy to answer and 28% were 'OK' about answering. Without knowing more about the reasons that may be lie behind the 'OK' response, it is impossible to draw any form conclusions, but the very low number saying they would rather not answer confirms a generally positive response to the exercise.

Similarly, the result of the question about ease of completion perhaps needs further exploration. A range of factors may affect the response such as the method used, e.g. self completion with attendant literacy issues, or by phone – several respondents remarked that this was difficult because of the number of questions or confusion about a question.

Nevertheless, the number who found the form difficult to complete was very low.

Table 6: How easy was the form to complete?

Very easy	290	63%
Quite easy	96	21%
OK	61	13%
Quite difficult	13	3%
Very difficult	1	0%
Total	461	100%

Linking with National Indicators

The five key outcomes of Every Child Matters are woven into the Government's Performance Framework for Local Authorities⁷. Through Local Area Agreements with local authorities the Government will measure performance against an agreed set of indicators. Each Agreement will include up to 35 targets from among the 198 national indicators headlined in the Framework.

Local authorities commissioning services from youth advice services will therefore be seeking to meet targets and consequently requiring services to monitor and report how they are contributing to those aims. This will inevitably form part of the monitoring systems that Youth Access members have in place.

Does the Toolkit Help to Provide Some of the Monitoring Information?

Linking the outcomes data from the Pilot with the ECM headline outcomes shows the following:

⁷ The New Performance Framework for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships. DCLG 2007

Being healthy

- Health improvement was a hard outcome for 9% of all users, 17% of those with more than two social exclusion factors and 21% of users aged 16-18
- 34% felt their health had improved
- 70% reported a reduction of stress

Economic well-being

- A quarter (26%) of users achieved a hard outcome of improved financial position
- A third of users felt that their income had improved and 35% felt better able to manage money.

Making a positive contribution

- 57% felt they had more control over their lives
- 36% reported improvement in behaviour rising to 48% of those with two or more social exclusion factors
- 30% felt that their family situation had improved.

Enjoying and achieving

- Improved enjoyment of life was reported by 58% of users
- 64% felt more confident and 64% felt better about their future
- 35% felt that their involvement in training, education or employment had improved.

Staying safe

- A hard outcome of improved housing was recorded for 39% of cases and
- 49% of young people felt their housing situation had improved rising to 64% of those with two or more social exclusion factors.

Building Problem Solving Skills

When set against these indicators the Pilot clearly demonstrates how the advice provided by YIACS contributes to achieving the ECM targets.

The results from the Pilot support a finding of a previous evaluation of the earlier version of the Toolkit, piloted in 2006⁸, that 'getting advice had made (young people) feel better able to deal with other problems'.

For example, 88% reported improved knowledge about where to get help, 75% reported improved understanding of their rights and 62% felt better able to deal with future problems.

As has been shown, 52% of users were young people not in education, employment or training (NEETS), a key target group for government initiatives

⁸ Rights to Access Project: Interim Evaluation Summary Report. MBA. January 2007.

and included as national indicator in Local Area Agreements. The overall results quoted above were equally true for this group and provide further evidence of the contribution of YIACS to meeting national targets. See Appendix 7)

The effect is iterative; obtaining timely advice contributes to improvements in young people's emotional, personal and health issues. It also increases their understanding of rights and their confidence that in turn builds their capacity to manage problems in the future.



6. Key Learning Points

The evaluation focused on the following questions:

- How usable is the Youth Advice Outcomes Toolkit for users and staff?
- Are the data collection, management and analysis demands feasible/ appropriate for the range of agencies involved in YA membership? What revisions are required to the tools?
- Does the Toolkit demonstrate the value of advice work and its beneficial impact on the lives of advice agency users? For example, does it offer an improved evidence base for youth advice work showing its contribution to ECM, integrated youth support & other longer-term outcomes?
- Is the evidence collected appropriate to funders/ commissioners?
- Does the outcomes assessment help the agencies to improve the quality and effectiveness of their services & equip them to measure outcomes more effectively?

1. Does the Toolkit Work?

In general, the pilot agencies felt that the Toolkit was easy to use and filled gaps in their own monitoring systems. Comments included:

- It was relatively quick to use, requiring less than 15 minutes on average to complete
- Easy to explain to young people and feedback from them was generally positive
- It better captured the results of their advice work which many other systems do not
- The combination of casework data and user perceptions, e.g. linking soft and hard outcomes, within a single process was valued
- Identifying soft outcomes and their linkage with ECM and LAA indicators was a particular strength and provided information that many were not currently collecting
- The category for 'other issues' in addition to the rights based issues was useful as it is not often captured on existing systems
- The process of obtaining feedback from young people about soft outcomes provided them with an opportunity to reflect on what had improved for them that was itself valuable.

While the overall feedback was positive, several agencies highlighted some issues that would need to be considered if it was to be used in the future.

- a. **The length of the 'Have We Helped?' form:** Some young people complained about the number of questions and said the process was boring or repetitive. This may be related to the method of collection in that gathering the information by 'phone rather than face-to-face seems to have been more difficult. One agency said that they set up a dialogue with the user rather than simply going through the questions in turn to make the process more 'user friendly'.

- b. **Pressure on resources:** Making available staff time or recruiting volunteers was a key issue. Despite the form only taking a short time to complete the forms, the pressure on already limited resources proved a problem for some agencies. Assuming a 'rule of thumb' of 15 minutes per interview to complete the 'Have We Helped?' form, to achieve a valid sample of, for example, 50 interviews – as in the Pilot – would require almost 13 hours of staff time. Added to this is the time for identifying clients and arranging interview times, collating and entering data and analysis. Whilst feasible for a short exercise, collecting such data on a regular basis could carry significant resource implications.
- c. **Methodology:**
- i. **Telephone contact:** Pilots used a mix of phone and face-to-face interviews to obtain the data. Phone presented a number of problems:
 - The 'churn rate' of phone numbers of users with mobile phones tends to be high and therefore contact numbers were often out of date
 - Going through the list of questions over the phone could be a tedious process. One agency said that 'there are so many statements and different responses to remember that it feels very laborious over the phone'
 - Confidentiality could be an issue particularly when using a landline and therefore likely to be answered by someone other than the user.
 - ii. **Selection:** A key question for Pilots was the point at which they sought feedback. They used a mix of selection criteria, from closed cases to follow up after first contact, depending on the nature of their service. Whichever was chosen, each carried its own problems. Contacting users too soon after their contact with the service and there may have been little change, but if contacted after a longer period difficulties were encountered because contact details may be out of date.
- d. **Form design:** several suggestions were made for improvements in the forms, including:
- i. Making it easier to marry the two parts by including a client identifier box on each page
 - ii. Add a 'signposting' box to the outcomes
 - iii. Add 'reason for referral' to the referral outcome box
 - iv. Add more age categories to fit better with existing systems, i.e. 13-14, 15-16, 22-25 and then 25+
 - v. Add 'Irish' to ethnicity to match Census categories
 - vi. The question about whether 'behaviour' had changed was often misunderstood or confusing. A suggestion was this be changed to 'behaviour in relation to what others expect'
 - vii. Add 'income source' to user profile
- e. **Staff training and responsibility**
 The Development Support consultant trained all but one of the pilot agencies. She found that:

- The pilot agencies that seemed to get on best with the pilot were those who had one person responsible for its implementation from the start;
- Those that arranged for the training for all the staff that were going to use the forms ensured a more coherent approach. It also led to more accurate form filling generally;
- The pilot agencies that did not have training needed more phone/online support to get their returns up to scratch.

Several pilot agencies emphasised the importance of training to get staff to commit to using the Toolkit and ensuring that interpreting and completing the forms was consistent. The importance of having a lead person was also emphasised. The Development Support consultant's report notes that 'their job role was less important – some were admin workers, some caseworkers, some managers'. However, it is important that a permanent staff member fills the role rather than relying on a volunteer who may leave at short notice, which happened in one pilot agency.

2. Are the data collection, management and analysis demands feasible/ appropriate for the range of agencies involved in YA membership?

Capacity within an organisation to use the Toolkit emerged as a key issue. Some pilot agencies used student placements and volunteers to obtain user feedback. One pilot agency raised a question about replies being lost in translation where they were working with the user, particularly by phone, and transcribing their answers on to the form and, therefore seeing it 'through their lens'.

This would seem to highlight the points already made about adequate training, support and supervision to ensure objectivity and accuracy in translating the information.

It may be worth including on the form information showing how the data was collected to enable analysis of any differences that emerge. For example, showing whether the form was self completed by the user or was done with a staff member and whether the exercise was carried out face to face or over the phone. This would help monitor the effectiveness or otherwise of different methods of collection.

But even with volunteer help the management, collation, inputting and analysis nevertheless require resources to be committed to it. It is for the individual organisation to balance the commitment against the benefits.

The fact that all the pilot agencies bar one said that they would continue to use the Toolkit suggests that its benefits may outweigh concerns about resources. The one agency not using it said their local authority had required

them to use the e-YS (electronic youth service)⁹ but felt that the Toolkit was more relevant for their advice work.

Pilot agencies continuing to use the Toolkit said they might make their own adaptations, e.g. adding to some categories, or will continue with the piloted format.

However, resource constraints will influence whether they use it continuously or periodically.

Analysis for the evaluation was done using an Excel spreadsheet. Pilot agencies felt they could easily do this themselves with training and provision of a template spreadsheet to use or adapt.

3. Does the Toolkit demonstrate the value of advice work and its beneficial impact on the lives of advice agency users?

The linkage of soft and hard outcomes in the Toolkit is a significant strength and valued by the agencies many of which identified the lack of linkage in their current systems as a motive for participating in the Pilot.

The resulting data provides persuasive evidence of both the value of advice work, with 58% achieving a tangible or hard outcome, and its beneficial impacts, evidenced by over 50% of users reporting improvement in emotional, psychological *and* social well being.

4. Is the evidence collected appropriate to funders/commissioners?

Arising out of the Every Child Matters programme, the government published its Youth Matters Green Paper in 2005 and Youth Matters Next Steps in 2006, which requires local authorities through children's trust arrangements to create a more responsive and Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS).

Integrated Youth Support is about providing a coordinated service to all young people according to their needs. All local authorities in England and Wales were required to create an Integrated Youth Support Service by April 2008.

Youth Access¹⁰ advises its members that 'the first step of the joint planning and commissioning process requires Children Trusts to look at the current pattern and recent trends of outcomes for local children and young people against national and relevant local comparators. It is very important that YIACS have data available on how their agency meets the outcomes and related targets. Firstly, to contribute to needs assessment to influence the current and future baseline of local young people's needs and secondly to demonstrate how the agency's services contribute to meeting those outcomes and targets.'

⁹ e-YS: web-enabled market database system for the recording and reporting of youth activities. CareerVision Ltd.

¹⁰ Commissioning young people's counselling services in YIACS: a toolkit for managers and fundraisers of YIACS

Providing evidence of outcomes is, therefore, a pre-requisite of obtaining funding through many, if not all, statutory programmes. Equally, other sources of funding whether from trusts or the Big Lottery are now tied to outcomes. But is the data collected via the Toolkit is appropriate to funders?

One starting point for agencies is to clarify at an early stage what any funder means by 'outcomes' and their purpose in seeking evidence. A common complaint is that funders require evidence which while important to them may have little relevance to the needs of the service they are funding. Outcome evidence ideally should meet other needs than simply that of the funder. Primarily it must inform the organisation's service planning by measuring effectiveness.

'Funders depend on grantees to achieve the outcomes they seek. Therefore, they need to understand how their actions affect grantees and how best to support their success. They need to consult them and to keep listening to them as their work develops and grows'¹¹.

Deciding what outcomes are appropriate to any particular funder consequently depends on two things: understanding what the funder is seeking to achieve by its funding and what the organisation needs to inform its service development, which by turn will increase the impact of the funding.

Youth Access' Advice Outcomes Toolkit was designed to balance both needs. Does it achieve this? Pilot agencies judged that it did. Overall they felt that it not only enabled them to provide more comprehensive outcomes evidence to funders but it also filled gaps in their knowledge about their own service and its users.

Responses included:

- *Advisors appreciated the users' perceptions as a response to the advice they had been given*
- *We will feed this data into our planning processes*
- *It was also useful for advisors to get the positive user perceptions – good to know it is not always doom and gloom*
- *The resulting data brought out a number of issues for us.*

The evidence collected through the Toolkit helped to flesh out the Every Child Matters outcomes and it also provided evidence of the links between those outcomes and related outcomes for other programmes such as IYSS, and the social welfare advice provided by YIACS.

Youth Access has argued¹² that social welfare problems are frequently linked to emotional, personal, health and practical problems. For example,

¹¹ The Foundation for Youth Music Conference - Dartington Hall (July 2005) Talk by David Carrington.

¹² Young People's Social Welfare Needs and the Impact of Good Advice. Kenrick. J. Youth Access. February 2007.

research¹³ has shown that both mental health problems and social welfare problems are common among young people and that the provision of social welfare advice may have a significant beneficial impact on young people's mental health.

The provision of good quality social welfare advice is arguably integral to achieving a wide range of young people focused outcomes. Consequently, local authorities charged with delivering integrated youth support should seriously consider including support for social welfare advice within their commissioning arrangements.

The Pilot demonstrates that it can provide data that is appropriate to funders and commissioners, but their acceptance of this may be dependant on raising their awareness of the major contribution of social welfare advice to outcomes for young people.

5. Does the outcomes assessment help the agencies to improve the quality and effectiveness of their services and equip them to measure outcomes more effectively?

Pilot agencies use a mix of monitoring chiefly to meet their funders' needs. Among the reasons they gave for participating in the Pilot were:

- More precise information of issues presented by clients
- Recording advice outcomes
- Linking outcomes to ECM
- To improve recording of both soft and hard outcomes
- Improvement of service
- To better respond to young people's needs

A common thread was a desire to improve information on soft outcomes in relation to the impact of the advice given and users' perception of the service.

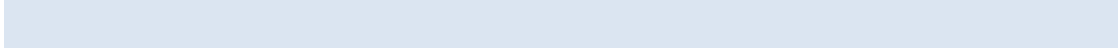
On completion of the Pilot, pilot agencies said that:

- The Toolkit proved effective in measuring soft outcomes and covering the range of work
- It effectively linked soft and hard outcomes
- It improved the focus on issues and the impact of the advice
- It was useful in proving assumptions about their service
- It would be useful in feeding back outcomes to advisors

The value to the agencies of the Toolkit has already been evidenced. It would be premature to judge its effect on quality and effectiveness, as this will only emerge over time. However, the commitment of the pilot agencies to its continued use suggests that it does improve their capacity to measure outcomes.

¹³ With rights in mind: Is there a role for social welfare law advice in improving young people's mental health? A review of evidence, Sefton, M. Youth Access, 2009.

Consequently the evaluative benefits of improved outcomes information should impact on service planning by enabling services to measure how well or otherwise they are meeting users' needs.



7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The Toolkit attempted to fill several roles within a single framework that would be:

- Relatively simple to implement
- Complementary to any existing systems used by agencies or would equip agencies that lacked current measurement systems
- Easy for agencies to analyse using commonly available software e.g. Excel
- Adaptable and flexible
- Appropriate to the needs of YIACS, with their particular combination of information, advice, counselling and support

and would also

- Identify the outcomes of rights based advice and related issues
- Enable the user to identify their own personal outcomes
- Link soft and hard outcomes
- Link with key outcomes of ECM and related programmes.

The Pilot has demonstrated that these aspirations have been largely met and that the Toolkit can offer data of use to both agencies and funders.

The Toolkit's strength is that it encompasses a range of monitoring requirements at the same time as being relatively easy to use. It brings together in a single format the hard outcomes data, which many services currently collect, with user feedback, identification of soft outcomes, the social welfare issues on which young people were seeking advice and the level of input by the agency in responding to them.

It is also adaptable to an agency's particular circumstances, in that it is not a rigid template but can be amended to meet particular needs and, with initial support, can be used to produce reports 'in-house' using commonly available software.

However, the availability of resources, principally staff time, to commit to the Toolkit is a hurdle. This may militate against its use as a permanent tool in continuous use and favour it being used periodically as a 'snapshot exercise'. The main draw on time is in obtaining feedback from the young people. To ensure the validity of the results, agencies wishing to use the Toolkit should conduct the exercise with a large enough group of users. The Pilot set a target of 50 per agency to ensure that resulting data was sufficiently representative of an agency's users.

It will be for individual agencies to judge whether the benefits justify the input. However, the results from the Pilot do show that the benefits can be substantial and worth the input. Also, familiarity with using the Toolkit may

ease the resource load as it increasingly integrates into the everyday work of the agency.

Recommendations

1. Youth Access should continue to develop and promote the Toolkit
2. The Toolkit should not be a rigid format, but one that agencies can adapt for their own needs
3. Different methodologies were adopted by the pilot agencies and it is recommended that this flexibility be retained, but agencies should be cautious about seeking user feedback too soon after the advice intervention
4. Youth Access should facilitate learning through a user forum or on-line discussion group
5. Because of the value of the data in supporting the role of advice in contributing to outcomes for young people, Youth Access should develop mechanisms for retrieving information from Toolkit users to support the case for advice and information
6. Youth Access should offer support to agencies wishing to adopt the Toolkit. In particular:
 - a. Written guidance on its use
 - b. Introductory training for staff and volunteers of agencies wishing to implement the Toolkit
 - c. An analysis template similar to that used for the Pilot and training in its use
 - d. On-going ad hoc support for agencies
 - e. Sharing learning (see above)
7. Agencies using the Toolkit should at the start nominate a staff member to be responsible for its implementation and operation
8. Redesign the Toolkit to:
 - f. Remove the phrase 'To be completed by the advisor' etc from the User Profile to reduce confusion
 - g. Include the client identifier box, e.g. case reference on each page to ease collation
 - h. Add a 'signposting' box to the outcomes
 - i. Add 'reason for referral' to the referral outcome box
 - j. Add more age categories to fit better with existing systems, i.e. 13-14, 15-16, 22-25 and then 25+
 - k. Add 'Irish' to ethnicity to match Census categories
 - l. The question about whether 'behaviour' had changed was often misunderstood or confusing. A suggestion was this be changed to 'behaviour in relation to what others expect'
 - m. Add 'income source' to user profile
 - n. Add box to show whether the form was:
 - i. Self completed by the user or with assistance from the agency
 - ii. If the latter by phone or face-to-face
 - o. Review the section on 'Level of advice given' on the Adviser form to make it clearer that only one category should be ticked and include this in the guidance on the use of the Toolkit.

APPENDIX 1 – Revised Toolkit

Have we helped?



It is very useful for us to know the **difference our advice has made**.

We will use your answers to improve our service and to show whether youth advice services make a difference

1. Did you get the advice you needed? (✓) Yes No Partly Not sure

2. Please tick (✓) one of the boxes for each statement to indicate any changes you feel have happened as a result of our services

As a result of getting advice here...	Improved a lot	Improved a bit	Not changed	Got a bit worse	Got a lot worse	Don't know / not applicable
My levels of stress have...						
My understanding of my rights has...						
My ability to deal with problems has...						
My knowledge of where to get help has...						
My feelings about my future have...						
My housing situation has...						
My income has...						
The way I manage my money has...						
My involvement in education / training / employment has...						
My family situation has...						
My behaviour has...						
My health has...						
My confidence has...						
My overall enjoyment of life has...						
My control over my life has...						

We would like to know what you thought of this form, so that we can make improvements to it.

a) How easy was this form to complete?

Very Easy

Quite Easy

OK

Quite Difficult

Very Difficult

b) How did you feel about us asking these questions?

Happy to answer them

OK about answering them

Would rather not answer them

c) Is there any other feedback you would like us to know?

Thank you very much for completing this form!

This section is to be completed by agency. Young people will remain anonymous, but we need this to help with analysis.

Client Reference: _____

Date completed	Name of advisor	First form	Follow up form	Agency name

Section 1- User Profile

To be completed by adviser - use only with a first 'Have We Helped' form

Client reference:		Date:	
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1. Gender (✓)

Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
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2. Age (✓)

Age Under 13 <input type="checkbox"/>	13–15 <input type="checkbox"/>	16–18 <input type="checkbox"/>	19–21 <input type="checkbox"/>	22–24 <input type="checkbox"/>	25 + <input type="checkbox"/>	Not known/ asked/ recorded <input type="checkbox"/>
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3. Ethnicity (✓)

White <input type="checkbox"/>	Black <input type="checkbox"/>	Asian <input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Not known/ asked/ recorded <input type="checkbox"/>
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4. (Known) Social Exclusion Factors Tick as many as apply (✓)

	(✓)
Not in Education, Employment or Training	<input type="checkbox"/>
Young carer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sick or disabled	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health problems	<input type="checkbox"/>
Substance misuse problems	<input type="checkbox"/>
Young offender	<input type="checkbox"/>

	(✓)
Homeless	<input type="checkbox"/>
Living in care, prison or other institution	<input type="checkbox"/>
Care leaver	<input type="checkbox"/>
Young Parent or pregnant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Young refugee or asylum seeker	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parental substance misuse/mental health problems/offending	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 2: help given

** to be completed by adviser with a first 'Have We Helped form'**

A. Level of advice given (✓)

1. One-off advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Further advice/assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Advocacy/putting case for the client	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Representation at court or tribunal	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. Rights-based issues on which advice given to client (✓)

Housing/ homelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Debt	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment rights	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education rights	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welfare Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health & Social Care rights	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consumer problem	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crime/Youth Justice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Immigration & nationality	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human rights/discrimination.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

C. Other Issues advised on (✓)

Relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual health	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drugs and alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ed., Employment and training, careers	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other (please specify)			

Section 3: hard outcomes

to be completed by adviser with a second 'Have We Helped form'

Level of advice given (✓)

Client referred	<input type="checkbox"/>	Client taking action themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awaiting outcome	<input type="checkbox"/>	No outcome expected	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outcome not known	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Hard advice outcome achieved for client

Please indicate all outcomes that apply: ✓

Financial position improved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing position improved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education / training / work position improved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and social care position improved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other hard outcomes (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX 2 – Working Agreement

Youth Advice Outcomes Toolkit Pilot Project Working Agreement

This agreement is between Youth Access and xxx (hereafter referred to as 'The Pilot Agency'). It sets out the responsibilities of both parties in the period 1 December 2008 – 30 September 2009.

If you are unsure about any details please discuss any issues with James Kenrick, Advice Services Development Manager
020 87729900 ext 25
james@youthaccess.org.uk

Youth Access' Commitment to the Pilot Agency

Youth Access undertakes to:

- Provide the Pilot Agency with a development support meeting with a consultant to agree how the outcome pilot will work in detail within the pilot agency.
- Provide a training session for all the pilot agency staff taking part in the pilot.
- Provide access to email and telephone consultancy during the progress of the work.
- Provide the Pilot Agency with a report on the outcomes achieved for their project based on the data submitted.
- Keep the Pilot Agency informed about any changes relevant to the Outcomes Toolkit Pilot and any changes to the support we will provide.
- Keep the organisation informed of any strategic policy that may impact on the work of the project.

The Pilot Agency's Commitment to Youth Access

The Pilot Agency undertakes to:

- Confirm commitment to trial the Outcomes Toolkit.
 - Identify a named contact person to work with the Youth Access consultant.
 - Inform Youth Access if the agency is experiencing problems with the pilot, or wishes to withdraw from this agreement.
-

- Submit outcome and statistical data, on a monthly basis to the consultant nominated by Youth Access.
- Participate fully and cooperate in the evaluation processes arranged by the Outcomes Toolkit project evaluators.
- Share appropriate information with the other pilot projects involved in the Outcomes Toolkit Pilot.

Confidentiality.

Youth Access may be required to disclose details of the organisations we are working with to the Outcome Toolkit Pilot’s funders, the Big Lottery Fund. This will be the case, unless an organisation specifically requests that this is not done. We will only disclose further information about the groups we work with if we have your express agreement.

If your organisation is unhappy about any aspect of the services provided by Youth Access, you are entitled to complain by using the Youth Access complaints procedure.

Signedon behalf of Youth Access

Signed.....Agency Representative

Signed.....Management Committee Rep

Date



APPENDIX 3 – Pilot Agencies

1. The Cabin (part of Citizens Advice Bureau) - Stockton, Durham
2. Drop In Support for Young People – London Borough of Croydon
3. No Limits - Southampton
4. Streetwise Community Law Centre – London Borough of Bromley
5. Streetwise North – Newcastle- upon - Tyne
6. Two-E Advice and Information Centre – London Borough of Enfield
7. Young Adults Advice and Support Project (YASP) - Manchester
8. Youth Information Service (YIS) - Milton Keynes
9. Young Devon youth advice centres - Exeter and Newton Abbot
10. Young Peoples' Support Foundation (YPSF) - Manchester

APPENDIX 4 – Agency Methodologies

Agency	No of client forms	Period	Selection method	Self assessment: By the client alone or with agency and mode of conduct	By who?
The Cabin	50	March - Sept	Follow up all closed in depth cases from 1/3/09 until target of 50 reached. Client contacted two days after case closure by 'phone	With agency by 'phone	Mix of advisor and admin staff and volunteers
Croydon Drop-in	37	Feb. - Sept.	Initially follow up of all files closed from 1/2/09 (mix of one off advice and in-depth cases) but eventually more random , i.e. whoever could be contacted	With agency mainly 'phone with some face to face	Advisor and volunteer
No Limits	70	May - June	Asked all face to face drop-in and appt. clients using the service during survey period	Face to face with agency	Student placements
Streetwise	60	May - Sept.	Follow up of closed cases on random basis	By phone with agency	Mix of volunteers and admin worker
Streetwise North	38	April - Sept.	Follow up of drop-in clients by phone	By phone with agency	Advisor
Two-E	50	April - August	Follow up of 10 in depth cases per month over 5 months. Cases selected by manager and advisers at supervision	Mix of phone and face to face with agency	Adviser not connected with the case
YASP	45	April - Sept.	Initially attempted two stage system with one off clients, but difficulties getting follow ups, so switched to single stage, mainly with clients of drop-in service plus some longer term clients	Mainly face to face with some by phone. Some self completed but mainly with agency	Staff member given overall responsibility

YIS	58	Jan. – Sept.	With drop-in clients at time of advice where advice session exceeds 30 minutes and is representative of rights advice	Face to face with some self completed	All advisors did some forms
Young Devon	59	March – Sept.	Mix of follow up and at time of advice with mix of clients using different services, including both long-term and drop in clients.	Mix of face to face and phone with agency	Volunteers and staff other than key worker
YPSF	51	March – Sept	Mix of follow up and at time of advice with mix of clients, including both on-going (c.60%) and one off	Mix of face to face and 'phone	Mainly social work students

APPENDIX 5 - Hard Outcomes

Table 7: Hard outcomes compared	Overall	Male outcomes	Female outcomes	One social exclusion factor	Two plus social exclusion factors
% Achieving hard outcome	58%	57%	59%	54%	64%
Outcomes					
Financial position improved	26%	23%	28%	25%	28%
Housing improved	39%	36%	41%	28%	50%
Education improved	14%	11%	16%	12%	15%
Health improved	9%	9%	10%	6%	17%
Other	4%	4%	5%	7%	3%

Table 8: Hard outcomes by age	Overall	16-18	19-21	22-24	Other ages
% Achieving hard outcome	58%	54%	63%	65%	42%
Outcomes					
Financial position improved	26%	24%	26%	33%	16%
Housing improved	39%	39%	46%	41%	18%
Education improved	14%	20%	12%	13%	10%
Health improved	9%	14%	7%	7%	7%
Other	4%	5%	6%	2%	6%

APPENDIX 6 - Soft Outcomes

Table 9: Soft outcomes								
	Total of Improved	A Lot	A bit	Bit worse	Lot worse	No change	Blank or N/A	Total
Ability to deal with problems myself	62%	24%	38%	1%	1%	30%	6%	100%
Behaviour	36%	16%	19%	1%	0%	36%	27%	100%
Confidence	57%	23%	34%	2%	0%	34%	7%	100%
Control over my life	57%	24%	34%	2%	0%	24%	17%	100%
Enjoyment of life	58%	25%	33%	3%	1%	30%	8%	100%
Family situation	30%	12%	17%	3%	3%	49%	15%	100%
Feelings about future	64%	30%	34%	2%	0%	20%	14%	100%
Health	34%	13%	20%	2%	2%	46%	16%	100%
Housing situation	49%	34%	15%	2%	1%	32%	16%	100%
Income	33%	15%	18%	2%	1%	47%	17%	100%
Knowledge of where to get help	88%	54%	34%	0%	0%	11%	1%	100%
Managing money	35%	13%	22%	1%	1%	44%	19%	100%
Levels of stress	70%	34%	36%	4%	1%	18%	7%	100%
Involvement in Training/ education/ employment	35%	15%	19%	1%	0%	44%	20%	100%
Understanding of rights	75%	36%	38%	0%	0%	19%	6%	100%

Table 10: Soft outcomes comparisons	Overall	Not given advice needed	Male outcomes	Female outcomes	One social exclusion factor	Two plus social exclusion factors	No hard outcomes (208)
Ability to deal with problems myself	62%	64%	58%	66%	59%	66%	61%
Behaviour	36%	37%	37%	36%	31%	48%	38%
Confidence	57%	60%	55%	59%	58%	59%	54%
Control over my life	57%	60%	58%	57%	59%	61%	54%
Enjoyment of life	58%	61%	56%	60%	56%	60%	48%
Family situation	30%	31%	29%	30%	27%	34%	21%
Feelings about future	64%	66%	62%	66%	65%	69%	61%
Health	34%	36%	29%	38%	29%	43%	28%
Housing situation	49%	51%	44%	52%	38%	64%	26%
Income	33%	35%	28%	37%	26%	42%	22%
Knowledge of where to get help	88%	89%	88%	88%	91%	86%	88%
Managing money	35%	37%	32%	35%	34%	40%	25%
Levels of Stress	70%	72%	65%	76%	68%	74%	65%
Involvement in Training/ education/ employment	35%	36%	33%	35%	35%	36%	34%
Understanding of rights	75%	76%	69%	79%	77%	79%	70%

APPENDIX 7: Outcomes for young people not in education, training or employment (NEETs)

NEETs comprised 52% of the total number of users taking part in the Pilot.

Table 11: NEETS outcomes			
Issue	% reporting improvement	Overall	Total NEETs 268
Ability to deal with problems	60%	62%	
Behaviour	37%	36%	
Confidence	54%	57%	
Control	54%	57%	
Enjoyment	55%	58%	
Family situation	28%	30%	
Feelings about future	63%	64%	
Health	34%	34%	
Housing situation	50%	49%	
Income	34%	33%	
Knowledge of where to get help	85%	88%	
Managing money	33%	35%	
Stress	69%	70%	
Tng/ education	32%	35%	
Understanding	71%	75%	
% achieving hard outcome	58%	58%	
Hard outcomes			
Financial position improved	25%	26%	
Housing improved	40%	39%	
Education improved	12%	14%	
Health improved	9%	9%	
Other	5%	4%	
Referred	85	144	
% achieving hard outcome	32%	28%	