Community Impact

# A Guide to Collecting Advice and Advocacy Impact Data

## The Advice and Advocacy Evaluation Toolkit

## Contents



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## 1. About this guide

This guide is for organisations providing advice and advocacy services that need a practical way to collect evidence about the difference their work makes. It explains how to select outcomes, use existing case and monitoring data, and collect additional evidence from clients where this is needed.

The guide recognises that advice and advocacy can be delivered in very different ways, from a single advice session through to sustained casework, representation and formal advocacy. It therefore focuses on matching data collection to the type and duration of support provided and to when outcomes are likely to become visible.

It should be used alongside '*An Outcomes Framework for Advice and Advocacy Services*', which sets out the eight outcome areas and associated indicators. The appendices provide practical tools for collecting and organising evidence, including advice and advocacy outcome surveys, a composite case-study form and a monitoring tool.

## 2. Why measuring advice and advocacy is different

Measuring the impact of advice and advocacy services presents a particular challenge as the two forms of support often produce change in different ways. Advice can often involve a single session without any ongoing intervention being needed.

A person may receive information, guidance or practical help and then exit the service, with the full consequences of that support only becoming apparent later on. Advocacy, however, is more often a longer and more drawn-out process. An advocate may, for instance, work alongside or on behalf of a person over a period of time, engaging with other organisations, challenging decisions or representing the person as circumstances develop. The impact of advice may therefore only become visible after contact with the service has ended, while the impact of sustained advocacy may develop throughout the life of a case.

## *2.2 Measuring Advice Impact*

Both forms of support can also generate several different kinds of evidence about change. Activities such as giving information, completing forms, contacting agencies, negotiating or preparing appeals describe what the service did. Immediate case outcomes such as additional income secured, debt reduced, an appeal won or an entitlement accessed show what happened as a result of that work. Wider outcomes may then emerge from those case results, such as greater financial security, reduced anxiety, increased independence or greater control (Moffatt, Noble and White, 2012; Farr et al., 2014; Naven, Withington and Egan, 2012; Robotham et al., 2019).

The distinction between advice and advocacy therefore creates different evaluation challenges. With advice involving a single session or a small number of contacts, the organisation may have only one opportunity to collect information directly from the person, while the most important changes may not yet have happened. With sustained advocacy, there may be repeated contact over weeks or months, but outcomes may develop gradually and may depend on several actions, organisations and decisions. The following sections look at these two measurement problems in more detail.

Advice can involve a single session without any further support being needed. In other cases, it may involve a small number of contacts around a specific issue. Support may include advice, information and guidance, help completing a form, preparing for an assessment, drafting correspondence or identifying an entitlement. This creates a particular measurement problem for advice provision because the point at which advice is delivered is rarely the point at which its effects become most visible. At the time of contact, the organisation can usually record what the person needed help with, what the adviser did and any immediate result that is already known. However, many important outcomes may occur later. A benefit claim may take weeks to be decided. A housing issue may depend on a response from a council or landlord. Additional income may only later affect whether someone can afford heating, food, rent or other essential costs. Practice evidence shows this distinction clearly. Case records commonly contain hard outcomes such as additional income secured, backdated payments, rent arrears cleared or an entitlement awarded. They also show that the significance of these outcomes can lie in what happens afterwards. Additional income can mean being able to meet utility costs, reduce financial worry, live more independently or avoid relying on family support.

This means that the evidence available at the end of an advice contact can be incomplete. A case may record that an application was submitted, an entitlement identified or a referral made, while the eventual decision and its consequences remain unknown. In other cases, a financial or case outcome may already be known, but its wider effect on the person's circumstances has not yet had time to emerge. A further difficulty is that advice records can mix different kinds of information together. Practice case records show activities, financial gains, decisions, wider personal changes and anticipated future outcomes sometimes being reported within the same outcome field. This can make it difficult to distinguish between what the adviser did, what immediate result was achieved and what subsequently changed for the person.

## *2.3 Measuring advocacy impact*

Advocacy is often more sustained. Rather than consisting of a single intervention, it can involve a sequence of actions over time. An advocate may communicate with other organisations, negotiate, gather evidence, challenge decisions, coordinate agencies, support complaints or represent the person through a formal process. Housing disputes, anti-social behaviour cases, hate-crime cases and complex benefits problems may continue for weeks or months and involve several organisations.

This creates a different measurement problem. Change may occur at several points during the case rather than at one clear endpoint. A person may understand their rights better, feel more supported or gain confidence before the underlying issue is resolved. At the same time, the eventual hard outcome may depend on a decision made by another organisation, such as a local authority, housing provider, benefits agency or tribunal. Studies of advice and advocacy have found that support can produce changes before the final problem is resolved. People may experience relief because someone is helping to manage a complex problem, feel more able to deal with an organisation because an advocate is supporting them, or gain confidence and understanding while the case is still ongoing (Stamp, 2012; Farr et al., 2014; Naven, Withington and Egan, 2012; Robotham et al., 2019). These changes are different from the eventual case result. An advocacy case may therefore show evidence of improved confidence, understanding or control even where a final decision has not yet been reached.

The same issue can also involve very different levels of advocacy. Assistance with a PIP claim might consist of one or two sessions preparing someone for an assessment. The same case might instead develop into evidence gathering, mandatory reconsideration and an appeal over several months. Housing support might consist of one email to a council, or it might become a long-running case involving a housing association, police and other agencies. The presenting issue therefore does not indicate how intensive or sustained the intervention has been. Two people recorded under the same broad category, such as benefits or housing, may have experienced very different forms of support and very different opportunities for change. This makes it difficult to compare cases or aggregate outcomes without understanding what actually happened during the intervention.

## 2.4 Implications for evaluation and data collection

These differences create several practical challenges for evaluation. The first is timing. Advice outcomes may become visible only after contact has ended, while advocacy outcomes may emerge at several points during a longer case. There may therefore be no single measurement point that captures the full effect of either form of support.

The second is distinguishing between different levels of change. Advice and advocacy records can contain case work activities, immediate case results and wider personal outcomes. These are related, but they are not the same thing. Completing an application is an output. Securing an entitlement is an immediate case outcome. Being able to afford heating or feeling less anxious may be a wider consequence of that outcome. Treating these as equivalent can make impact reporting difficult to interpret.

The third is that many outcomes depend partly on external organisations and decision-makers. Advisers and advocates can provide information, gather evidence, negotiate and represent a client, but they do not necessarily control the final decision. A case may therefore involve substantial and potentially beneficial support even where the eventual external decision is delayed, unresolved or unsuccessful.

The fourth is variation in intensity and duration. A single advice session, two contacts around an application and six months of complex advocacy may all appear within the same broad service category. The amount of contact, the opportunities for change and the point at which outcomes become visible can therefore vary substantially between clients.

Finally, the evidence available through routine case recording is uneven. Hard outcomes such as money secured, arrears cleared or appeals won are often relatively concrete. Wider changes such as confidence, independence, security, control or wellbeing are less likely to be captured consistently, particularly where the person has left the service before those changes emerge. This creates a risk that evaluation reflects the outcomes that are easiest to record rather than the full range of changes associated with advice and advocacy.

## 3. Defining advice and advocacy: what types of support

Before deciding what to measure, it is useful to be clear about the types of advice and advocacy support that people receive through an intervention. Advice and advocacy are broad terms and can include very different forms of support. Across the experimental, controlled and non-experimental studies reviewed for the accompanying guide '*An Outcomes Framework for Advice and Advocacy Services*', interventions included providing information about rights and entitlements, signposting and referral, helping people complete applications, providing specialist welfare or debt advice, negotiating with creditors or other organisations, supporting appeals and, in some cases, acting directly on a person's behalf (Mackintosh et al., 2006; Naven, Withington and Egan, 2012; Howel et al., 2019; Robotham et al., 2019). For example, Howel et al. (2019) describe an intervention involving a full assessment of welfare entitlement followed by active assistance with claims, including completing application forms on behalf of participants and providing continuing support until assistance was no longer required.

These forms of support are not mutually exclusive. A person may move between several types during the same case. Someone may initially receive information about a possible entitlement, then receive help completing an application, require the adviser to contact an organisation when the claim is delayed, and later need support to challenge a decision or make an appeal. Welfare-rights interventions in the reviewed studies commonly combined assessment, advice and active assistance rather than providing information alone (Mackintosh et al., 2006; Howel et al., 2019). The purpose of the categories is therefore not to place every case into a single box, but to identify the main forms of support that an intervention provides. Table 1 summarises the types most consistently represented across the reviewed studies and evaluations.

*Table 1 – Common types of advice and advocacy*

| Type of support | What this can include |
|---|---|
| Advice, information and guidance | Providing information; explaining rights, benefits, financial options or processes; giving one-off advice; helping someone understand what action they can take next (Naven, Withington & Egan, 2012; Robotham et al., 2019). |
| Signposting and referral | Signposting to other sources of help; referring someone to another advice or support service; helping someone access mental-health or other support services (Naven, Withington & Egan, 2012; Robotham et al., 2019; Barnes et al., 2018). |
| Practical support | Assessing benefit entitlement; helping with benefit claims and applications; completing application forms; helping with correspondence; supporting access to other organisations and services (Howel et al., 2019; Barnes et al., 2018). |
| Casework | Providing sustained one-to-one work on debt or welfare problems; progressing benefit or income-maximisation cases; helping manage debts; contacting creditors or other organisations; following a case through beyond initial advice (Naven, Withington & Egan, 2012; Robotham et al., 2019; Stamp, 2012). |
| Representing clients | Acting on a client's behalf; communicating directly with debt, welfare or other organisations; negotiating with creditors; advocating for the client in dealings with external organisations (Naven, Withington & Egan, 2012; Robotham et al., 2019; Stamp, 2012). |
| Appeals and formal representation | Supporting appeals; advocacy, representation and mediation; representing or supporting clients at tribunals or court proceedings (Naven, Withington & Egan, 2012; Robotham et al., 2019). |

The degree to which the adviser or advocate takes action is a separate feature of the intervention. Some support is primarily enabling: the person receives information, develops understanding and is supported to take the next step themselves. Other interventions are more active. Barnes et al. (2018), for example, describe workers jointly agreeing support plans with participants, helping with official correspondence and supporting access to relevant agencies. Howel et al. (2019) describe advisers completing benefit applications on behalf of participants and continuing to follow up cases where required. In specialist money advice, advisers may communicate and negotiate directly with creditors, while Robotham et al. (2019) found that caseworkers could effectively take responsibility for complex interactions with debt and welfare organisations and advocate for clients.

This distinction can be important for evaluation. Advice, information and guidance may reasonably be expected to change a person's knowledge, understanding, confidence or ability to act. Practical support and casework may additionally produce concrete case outcomes such as increased income, reduced debt or a resolved housing problem. Representing clients and formal appeals may produce outcomes involving a changed decision, access to an entitlement, redress or progress within an external process. These differences do not mean that one form of support is more effective than another. They mean that the outcomes it is reasonable to expect depend partly on what the intervention actually does.

The issue being addressed is also separate from the type of support provided. Advice may concern benefits, debt, housing, employment, utilities, care, health or access to other services, and the same type of activity can be used across several of these areas. Farr et al. (2014) make this point explicitly in arguing that there is no single form of generic advice because different problems require different forms of intervention. Robotham et al. (2019) similarly found that clients could receive specialist casework across debt and welfare issues, while Reece et al. (2024) recorded multiple advice issues within individual cases. For example, a person seeking help with a benefit may initially need information about eligibility. They may then need practical support to complete a claim, followed by casework to obtain evidence or chase a delayed decision. If the claim is refused, the same case may move into representation or formal appeal. The presenting problem has remained broadly the same, but the form and intensity of support have changed. An evaluation therefore needs to identify the support that was actually provided rather than assuming that all people recorded as receiving “advice” experienced the same intervention.

Other terms describe how advice and advocacy are organised rather than a separate type of support. Outreach or co-location, for example, describe where and how people gain access to advice. Several studies delivered welfare advice through healthcare settings, while the Money Advice Outreach programme took specialist advice into more than 100 community locations (Mackintosh et al., 2006; Day, Collard and Davies (2008); Reece et al., 2024; Barr et al., 2025). Similarly, telephone, online and face-to-face advice describe modes of delivery. Robotham et al. (2019), for example, evaluated both an information website and a referral-only telephone casework service. These features may affect access, engagement and what data can practically be collected, but they are not in themselves different advice or advocacy activities.

The important question for an organisation is therefore not simply what issue it advises on or whether it describes its service as “advice” or “advocacy”, but what workers actually do with and for the people they support. Identifying the main type of support, the degree to which the worker takes action, and whether a case moves into representation or formal challenge provides the starting point for deciding which outcomes are relevant to measure.

## 4. Measuring advice and advocacy outcomes

The outcomes measured should reflect the support people actually receive and the problem being addressed. Different forms of advice and advocacy can contribute to several outcomes at the same time. Welfare-rights advice, for example, is associated with increased income and access to entitlements, while debt and money advice can contribute to problem resolution, reduced financial pressure and greater control (Mackintosh et al., 2006; Howel et al., 2019; Stamp, 2012; Farr et al., 2014).

The duration and intensity of support also matter. Advice may involve a single contact, while casework and advocacy can continue over a longer period. Some changes, such as greater understanding of rights or options, may occur quickly, while financial, housing or other case outcomes may take longer to emerge. Sustained advocacy may also produce changes in confidence, control or understanding before the final case result is known (Naven, Withington and Egan, 2012; Robotham et al., 2019; Stamp, 2012).

Immediate case outcomes should therefore be distinguished from the wider changes they enable. Securing a benefit, reducing debt, clearing arrears or overturning a decision are important outcomes in themselves, but their significance may also lie in what happens next. Additional income may allow someone to meet essential costs or live more independently, while resolving a housing or debt problem may reduce anxiety and increase security. Advice and advocacy outcomes should therefore capture both immediate case results and the wider changes that can follow from them.

The presenting problem also affects which outcomes are relevant. Financial security is particularly relevant to benefits, debt and money advice; independent living may be more relevant to housing, care or support; and knowing my rights and access to rights and justice may be particularly important where someone needs to understand, exercise or challenge a right or entitlement.

The accompanying *An Outcomes Framework for Advice and Advocacy Services* identifies eight areas in which advice and advocacy may contribute to change: financial security; solving problems; wellbeing; being in control; independent living; being connected; knowing my rights; and access to rights and justice. These outcomes were developed from the outcomes measured across the systematic reviews, experimental and controlled studies, non-experimental evaluations and practice evidence reviewed.

Organisations should select the outcomes that have a clear relationship to the support provided rather than attempting to measure all eight. Table 2 summarises the outcome areas that may be relevant to each type of support. It is intended as a guide to outcome selection, not as a claim that a particular form of support will necessarily produce a particular outcome.

*Table 2 – Types of advice and advocacy and potentially relevant outcomes*

| Type of support | Financial security | Solving problems | Wellbeing | Being in control | Independ ent living | Being connect-ed | Knowing my rights | Access to rights and justice |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Advice, information and guidance | ✓* | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓* | | ✓ | ✓* |
| Signposting and referral | | ✓ | ✓* | ✓ | ✓* | ✓* | ✓ | ✓* |
| Practical support | ✓* | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓* | | ✓ | ✓* |
| Casework | ✓* | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓* | ✓* | ✓ | ✓* |
| Representing clients | ✓* | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓* | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Appeals and formal representation | ✓* | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓* | | ✓ | ✓ |

NOTE: A tick indicates that the reviewed evidence provides a reasonable basis for considering the outcome. An asterisk indicates an outcome that depends particularly on the presenting problem or circumstances of the person. Financial security, for example, is particularly relevant where support concerns benefits, debt or other financial problems, while independent living may be relevant where the case concerns housing, care or support needs. Many of the studies reviewed evaluate interventions that combine several forms of support, so the table should not be interpreted as evidence that an individual component of advice or advocacy causes a particular outcome.

The same case may also contribute evidence to more than one outcome. Securing a benefit may represent improved financial security and access to an entitlement, while also helping to solve the presenting problem and increasing the person's options. An appeal that changes an incorrect decision may represent access to rights and justice, but may also improve control, financial security or wellbeing depending on what the decision concerned. The purpose of the framework is therefore to help organisations identify the different changes that are relevant to their work, rather than requiring each case result to be assigned to only one outcome.

Finally, organisations should distinguish between outcomes that can be identified through case records and those that require information from the person receiving support. Money secured, debt reduced, a problem resolved or a decision overturned can often be recorded directly. Changes in worry, confidence, control, independence or understanding usually require the person to report what has changed. This distinction, together with the duration and structure of the intervention, determines how those outcomes should subsequently be collected and is considered in Section 5.

## 5. Data collection

The most appropriate way to collect data depends on how advice or advocacy is delivered, what the organisation needs to be able to report, and what can realistically be collected from the people using the service. The starting point should therefore be the evidence that would be operationally useful, then working backwards to identify what information is needed, where it can already be obtained from service records, and what additional data needs to be collected directly from clients.

This is particularly important because advice and advocacy should not rely on surveys alone. Case data can often provide strong evidence about the presenting problem, the support provided, the duration and intensity of the intervention, and hard outcomes such as additional income secured, debt reduced, an entitlement obtained or a decision overturned. Monitoring and administrative data can show who was supported, how often, for how long and through which forms of support. Client surveys and interviews are most useful for information that these records cannot provide, particularly what the immediate case result enabled or changed in the person's life.

The main considerations are therefore whether support involves a single contact or sustained work; how much contact the person actually has with the service; whether there is a clear beginning and end to the intervention; when the case result becomes known; and when any wider impact is likely to become visible. These factors determine whether outcome data can reasonably be collected at one point, before and after support, during the life of a case, or through later follow-up.

One-off advice presents a particular difficulty. The service may be able to record a concrete result, such as additional income secured or an application completed, but the person may have left the service before the wider consequences can be observed. The organisation may therefore know what was achieved without knowing what it enabled. Where later impact matters, some form of follow-up is needed, but this also has to recognise that clients may have little reason to remain in contact once their immediate advice need has been addressed.

Sustained casework and advocacy provide different opportunities. Where there is repeated contact, information can be collected as the case develops and changes in the person's circumstances can sometimes be measured between the beginning and end of support. However, case closure should not automatically be treated as the point at which outcomes are measured. An external decision may still be pending when the service finishes its work, while the wider consequences of a successful appeal, financial award, housing decision or other result may only emerge later.

The toolkit therefore combines several forms of evidence rather than requiring every organisation to use the same method. It includes an Advice Outcome Survey, Advocacy Outcome Survey, Staff Composite Case-Study Form and Monitoring Tool. The outcome tools are linked directly to the indicators in the Advice and Advocacy Outcomes Framework, allowing organisations to select the outcomes relevant to the support they provide. Case and monitoring data are used where information can be obtained through normal service delivery, while surveys and interviews are used where information needs to come directly from the person receiving support.

Table 3 summarises the main intervention structures and the data-collection approaches most suited to each.

*Table 3 – Intervention type and data collection*

| Intervention | Data-collection methods | Explanation |
|---|---|---|
| One-off advice | Case data; monitoring/administrative data; follow-up survey or interview where feasible | The organisation may have only one substantive contact with the person. Case data can record the issue, support provided and any immediate or subsequently known hard outcome, but wider changes may only become visible after the person has left the service. |
| Advice involving a small number of contacts | Case data; monitoring/administrative data; client survey or interview; later follow-up where required | Several contacts provide more opportunity to record case progress and immediate changes, but the final result or wider impact may still occur after support has ended. |
| Sustained casework | Case data; monitoring/administrative data; baseline and endline survey; individual interview where useful | Repeated contact over a defined period makes it possible to track the support provided, case progression and changes in relevant outcomes alongside hard case results. |
| Sustained advocacy | Case data; monitoring/administrative data; baseline and endline survey; individual interview | Advocacy may involve repeated action over weeks or months. Data can therefore capture changes occurring during the process, as well as the eventual case outcome and wider changes for the person. |
| Formal appeals or complex representation | Case data; monitoring/administrative data; baseline and endline survey; individual interview; follow-up where required | Formal processes may be lengthy and the final decision may occur after substantial work has already taken place. Later follow-up may also be needed to establish what the eventual result changed for the person. |
| Open-access or variable-contact advice and advocacy | Case data; monitoring/administrative data; periodic survey where appropriate; interviews with a sample of clients | People may receive very different amounts and types of support and there may be no consistent start or end point. Outcome evidence therefore needs to be interpreted alongside the amount and type of support actually received. |

# Appendices- Data-collection tools

The following tools are designed to support practical data collection across different forms of advice and advocacy. They should be used selectively, based on the type of support provided, the outcomes being measured and the point at which those outcomes are likely to become visible. The tools are intended to complement case and monitoring data rather than replace them.

Where questions or fields are followed by tags in square brackets, for example [D1] or [G3], these refer directly to the relevant indicator in '*An Outcomes Framework for Advice and Advocacy Services*'. This allows organisations to see exactly which outcome and indicator each question is intended to measure and to select only those items that are relevant to their service.

## *Appendix 1 – Advice outcome survey*

The Advice Outcome Survey is designed for people receiving one-off advice or a small number of contacts. It measures changes that are not usually available from case records alone, particularly what the advice or resulting case outcome enabled for the person. Case records may already show hard outcomes such as additional income secured, debt reduced, an entitlement obtained or a problem resolved, while the survey captures changes in areas such as worry, control, confidence, understanding of rights and ability to act.

The survey is not designed as a pre/post measure. For one-off advice there is often no meaningful opportunity to collect a baseline and endline because the person may have only one substantive contact with the service, while many of the wider effects of the advice will not yet have occurred when that contact ends. It is therefore intended primarily as a later follow-up measure, once sufficient time has passed for the advice or resulting case outcome to have affected the person's circumstances.

The survey should be linked to case and monitoring data using an anonymised client or case ID. This allows survey responses to be analysed alongside hard case outcomes, including financial gains, debt reduction, successful applications and resolved problems. Organisations can therefore examine whether these concrete outcomes are associated with wider changes in people's circumstances, rather than relying on either survey data or hard outcomes alone.

1. The problem I came for help with has been resolved or substantially improved. [B1]
2. My situation is more stable. [B2]

3. The advice helped prevent the problem from becoming more serious. [B3]
4. I feel less worried or anxious about my situation. [C1]
5. I feel less overwhelmed or under pressure because of the problem. [C2]
6. I feel more in control of my situation. [D1]
7. I am better able to make informed choices about what happens next. [D2]
8. I have more realistic choices or options available to me. [D4]
9. I feel more confident dealing with my situation. [D5]
10. I understand the rights or entitlements that are relevant to my situation. [G1]
11. I understand the options available to me. [G2]
12. I know what action I can take next or where to get further help if I need it. [G3/G4]
13. Thinking about the advice you received, what is the main difference it has made to you? [Free text]

## *Appendix 2 – Advocacy outcome survey*

The Advocacy Outcome Survey is designed for people receiving sustained advocacy or casework. It measures changes that are not usually available from case records alone, particularly changes in wellbeing, control, confidence, understanding of rights and ability to act. Where possible, the same questions should be completed at the beginning and end of support so that change over the period of advocacy can be measured. The survey should be linked to case and monitoring data using an anonymised client or case ID. This allows changes in survey outcomes to be analysed alongside hard case outcomes such as additional income secured, debt reduced, an entitlement obtained, accommodation retained or a decision overturned. Organisations can therefore examine whether these concrete outcomes are associated with changes in areas such as financial security, worry, control or independence, rather than relying on either survey data or hard outcomes alone.

1. I feel that the problem I needed help with is under control. [B1/B2]
2. I feel confident that progress can be made with my situation. [B4]
3. I feel worried, anxious or stressed about my situation. [C1]
4. I feel in control of my situation. [D1]
5. I am able to make informed choices about what happens next. [D2]
6. I am able to make plans and take action on them. [D3]
7. I have realistic choices or options available to me. [D4]
8. I feel confident dealing with my situation. [D5]
9. I know the rights or entitlements relevant to my situation. [G1]
10. I understand the options available to me. [G2]
11. I know what action I can take next. [G3]
12. I feel that my views are heard and considered by the organisations involved. [H2]

13. I feel able to use a complaint, review or appeal process if I need to. [H3]
14. What is the main difference the advocacy support has made to you?

## *Appendix 3 –* Staff case study form

Composite case studies bring together evidence from several similar advice or advocacy cases to show a recurring pattern of need, support and outcome. They are more useful for evaluation than relying on a single client story because they reduce the risk of treating one unusual case as representative of the whole service and allow organisations to make broader claims about how particular types of case tend to develop. A composite case is not the story of one real person with identifying details changed. It is a combined account constructed from several comparable cases, using routine case records to describe the common starting point, support provided, pathway through the service and outcomes recorded. The form below provides a simple structure for recording this information and developing a composite case summary. For fuller guidance on the method, see *Developing Composite Case Studies and Case Typologies: A Practice Guide* (Community Impact, 2026).

1. Case group/type:

- Number of cases reviewed:
- What do these cases have in common?
- Typical presenting issue or starting point:
- Typical advice or advocacy provided:
- Typical level and duration of support:
- What usually happened during the case?

2. Immediate case outcomes:

- Problem resolved or improved:
- Financial gain / debt reduction:
- Entitlement or service accessed:
- Decision changed / appeal outcome:

- Housing or other practical outcome:
- Cases still unresolved:

3. Wider outcomes identified:

- Financial security:
- Solving problems:
- Wellbeing:
- Being in control:
- Independent living:
- Being connected:
- Knowing my rights:
- Access to rights and justice:

4. What appears to have helped produce these outcomes?
5. What common barriers or differences were identified?

Composite case summary: Write a short account of the typical pathway across these cases, from presenting issue through support provided to the outcomes recorded. Do not present it as the story of one real client.

## *Appendix 4 – Monitoring tool*

Use these headings to record the core information generated through routine advice and advocacy delivery. It should capture the support provided and hard case outcomes, while client-reported wider outcomes are collected through the relevant survey.

| Field | Record |
|---|---|
| Anonymised client/case ID | |
| Presenting issue | |
| Type of support provided | |
| Case opening date | |
| Case closure date | |
| Number of contacts | |
| Case status | Open / Closed / Awaiting external decision |
| Problem resolved or improved | Yes / Partly / No / Ongoing |
| Benefit or entitlement secured | Yes / No / Pending / N/A |
| Financial value secured | £ |
| Debt or arrears reduced | £ |
| Service or support accessed | Yes / No / Pending / N/A |
| Housing retained or secured | Yes / No / Pending / N/A |
| Decision challenged | Yes / No / N/A |
| Decision changed or overturned | Yes / No / Pending / N/A |
| Appeal / complaint outcome | Successful / Partly successful / Unsuccessful / Pending / N/A |
| Crisis or escalation prevented | Yes / No / N/A |
| Other hard outcome | |
| Follow-up required | Yes / No |
| Outcome survey completed | Yes / No / Date |

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## About Community Impact

Community Impact is an independent evaluation and impact consultancy working with charities, community organisations, funders and commissioners to improve how they understand, measure and use evidence to support service improvement, programme development, commissioning and organisational decision-making.

Our approach focuses on producing evaluation that is proportionate, practical and operationally useful. We support organisations to develop theories of change and outcomes frameworks, design data-collection tools and evaluation systems, undertake evaluations, analyse existing service data, and strengthen their internal evaluation capacity.

We also work with organisations to review and rationalise existing outcomes and measures, map evaluation approaches across programmes and portfolios, and develop common measurement frameworks where evidence needs to be understood or aggregated across different forms of provision.

Alongside commissioned evaluation and consultancy, Community Impact develops practical evaluation resources and toolkits that organisations can use independently. These translate evaluation methods and research evidence into approaches that can be applied within everyday service delivery, particularly where organisations have limited evaluation capacity or work in complex community settings.

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