



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CYNGOR BWRDEIS TREF SIROL RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

Bydd cyfarfod rhithwir o'r **Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol** yn cael ei gynnal ar

Dydd Mawrth, 30 Ionawr 2024 am 1.30 pm

Swyddog cyswilt: Hannah Jones - Uned Busnes y Cyngor (07385401954)

MATERION I'W TRAFOD

1. DATGAN BUDDIANT

Derbyn datganiadau o fuddiannau personol gan Aelodau, yn unol â'r Cod Ymddygiad.

Nodwch:

1. Mae gofyn i Aelodau ddatgan rhif a phwnc yr agendwm mae eu buddiant yn ymwneud ag ef a mynegi natur y buddiant personol hwnnw; a
2. Lle bo Aelodau'n ymneilltuo o'r cyfarfod o ganlyniad i ddatgelu buddiant sy'n rhagfarnu, rhaid iddyn nhw roi gwybod i'r Cadeirydd pan fyddan nhw'n gadael.

2. COFNODION

Cadarnhau cofnodion o gyfarfod y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol ar 2 Hydref 2023 yn rhai cywir.

(Tudalennau 5 - 10)

**3. GWERTHUSIAD O'R MODEL CLWSTWR YSGOLION AR GYFER
GWARIANT GRANT DATBLYGU DISGYBLION I BLANT SY'N
DERBYN GOFAL YN YSTOD BLWYDDYN ARIANNOL 2022–2023**

Derbyn diweddariad mewn perthynas â gwerthuso'r model clwstwr ysgolion ar gyfer cyllid Grant Datblygu Disgyblion i Blant sy'n Derbyn Gofal yn ystod blwyddyn ariannol 2022/23 yn Rhondda Cynon Taf.

(Tudalennau 11 - 52)

4. TROS GYNNAL PLANT CYMRU

Derbyn adroddiad cynnydd chwarterol Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru.

(Tudalennau 53 - 80)

5. ADRODDIAD BLYNYDDOL MABWYSIADU RHANBARTHOL Y FRO, Y CYMOEDD, A CHAERDYDD 2022–2023

Derbyn Adroddiad Blynyddol y Cydwasanaeth Mabwysiadu Rhanbarthol.

(Tudalennau 81 - 160)

6. Y DIWEDDARAF O RAN CYFRANOGIAD PLANT A PHOBL IFAINC Â PHROFIAD O FOD MEWN GOFAL

Derbyn diweddariad ar y cynnydd sydd wedi'i wneud mewn perthynas â Strategaeth Cyfranogiad 2023-2026 a rhoi adborth ar y gweithgareddau cyfranogiad a gynhaliwyd gan y Gwasanaethau i Blant yn ystod y chwarter diwethaf.

(Tudalennau 161 - 200)

7. GWASANAETHAU CYFIAWNDER IEUENCTID CWM TAF

Derbyn diweddariad mewn perthynas â gwaith Gwasanaeth Troseddau'r Ifainc Cwm Taf.

(Tudalennau 201 - 230)

8. TRAFOD CADARNHAU'R PENDERFYNIAD ISOD:

“Bod y cyfarfod yma'n cadw aelodau o'r wasg ac aelodau o'r cyhoedd allan o ystafell y cyfarfod, yn unol ag Adran 100A(4) Deddf Llywodraeth Leol 1972 (fel y'i diwygiwyd), yn ystod trafod yr eitem nesaf, ar y sail y byddai'n debygol o olygu datgelu gwybodaeth eithriedig yn ôl diffiniad paragraff 13 o Ran 4 Atodlen 12A i'r Ddeddf.”

9. Y DIWEDDARAF MEWN PERTHYNAS Â STRATEGAETH GOFAL PRESWYL 2022-2027: PLANT SY'N DERBYN GOFAL

Derbyn adroddiad eithriedig Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau i Blant.

(Tudalennau 231 - 240)

10. GWASANAETHAU CYMDEITHASOL – CWYNION A CHANMOLIAETH

Derbyn trosolwg o weithredu ac effeithiolrwydd trefn gwynion statudol y Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol.

(Tudalennau 241 - 268)

11. MATERION BRYS

Trafod unrhyw faterion sydd, yn ôl doethineb y Cadeirydd, yn faterion brys yng ngoleuni amgylchiadau arbennig.

Cylchrediad:

Y Cynghorwyr Bwrdeistref Sirol:

Y Cynghorydd G Caple (Cadeirydd)

Y Cynghorydd R Lewis (Is-gadeirydd)

Y Cynghorydd C Leyshon

Y Cynghorydd J Bonetto

Y Cynghorydd P Evans

Y Cynghorydd S Hickman

Y Cynghorydd S Rees

Y Cynghorydd S Trask

tudalen wag

CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL RHONDDA CYNON TAF

BWRDD RHIANTA CORFFORAETHOL

Cofnodion o gyfarfod rhithwir y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol a gynhaliwyd Dydd Llun, 2 Hydref
2023 am 10.00 am.

Y Cynghorwyr Bwrdeistref Sirol - Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol Aelodau oedd yn bresennol:-

Y Cyngorydd G Caple (Cadeirydd)

Y Cyngorydd R Lewis Y Cyngorydd C Leyshon
Y Cyngorydd J Bonetto Y Cyngorydd P Evans
Y Cyngorydd S Hickman Y Cyngorydd S Rees
Y Cyngorydd S Trask

Swyddogion oedd yn bresennol

Mr N Elliott, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Ms A Lloyd, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau i Blant
Ms C Jones, Pennaeth Materion Mynediad a Chynhwysiant
Ms C Miles, Cyfreithiwr Gofal Plant
Ms L Hawkins, Pennaeth Ysgol Rithwir
Ms J Evans, Pennaeth y Gwasanaeth Ymyrraeth Ddwys
Ms R Hughes, Rheolwr Arfer a Chyflawniad Carfan Magu
Ms E Walters, Pennaeth Partneriaethau
Ms M Davies - TGP

19 YMDDIHEURIADAU AM ABSENOLDEB

Croesawodd y Cadeirydd Gynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol S Hickman i'w chyfarfod cyntaf o'r Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol. Doedd dim ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb.

20 DATGAN BUDDIANT

Yn unol â Chod Ymddygiad y Cyngor, ni wnaethpwyd unrhyw ddatganiadau mewn perthynas â'r agenda.

21 COFNODION

Cadarnhau cofnodion o gyfarfod y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol a gafodd ei gynnal ar 18 Gorffennaf 2023 yn rhai cywir.

22 CYMORTH IECHYD MEDDWL

Rhoddodd Gyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau i Blant wybodaeth i'r Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol am y gwasanaethau sydd ar gael i wella lles emosiynol a diwallu anghenion iechyd meddwl pobl ifainc ag anghenion gofal a chymorth.

Cafodd sylw'r aelodau ei dynnu at adran 4 yr adroddiad, a oedd yn rhoi'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf ar y meysydd canlynol o ddarpariaeth y gwasanaeth:

- Strategaeth y Blynyddoedd Cynnar;
- Datblygu'r Dull Ysgol Gyfan o'r enw Shine;
- Ymsefydlu'r Un Pwynt Mynediad ar gyfer Gwasanaethau Iechyd Meddwl Plant a'r Glasoed ('CAMHS');
- Lansio'r Rhaglen Gwella Gwasanaethau Niwrowahaniaeth;
- Datblygu Dull Therapiwtig ar gyfer Plant sy'n Derbyn Gofal;
- Carfan Teuluoedd Therapiwtig.

Er y cafodd ei gydnabod bod pwysau cynyddol ar y Bwrdd Iechyd, mynegodd sawl Aelod bryderon ynghylch hygyrchedd y Gwasanaethau Iechyd Meddwl Plant a'r Glasoed a'r gallu i ymateb i anghenion pobl ifainc. Wrth ei holi am natur y berthynas waith gyda chydweithwyr yn y Gwasanaethau Iechyd Meddwl Plant a'r Glasoed, dywedodd y Gyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth wrth yr Aelodau fod gwaith integreiddio cadarnhaol yn cael ei wneud ond bod anhawster i gael mynediad at ymgynghori.

Siaradodd y Gyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth am yr Asesiad Iechyd i Blant sy'n Derbyn Gofal a ddarparwyd gan y Bwrdd Iechyd, a chynigiodd y byddai'n fuddiol defnyddio dull sy'n llai seiliedig ar glinigau ac yn fwy integredig, o hyn ymlaen.

Nododd y Cadeirydd fod Plant sy'n Derbyn Gofal, mewn rhai achosion, yn aros am tua thair blynedd i gael mynediad at y gwasanaeth Niwrowahaniaeth a chynigiodd y dylid estyn gwahoddiad i un o gyfarfodydd y Bwrdd yn y dyfodol i Fwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Cwm Taf Morgannwg a chynrychiolwyr o'r Gwasanaethau Iechyd Meddwl Plant a'r Glasoed ('CAMHS') a'r Rhaglen Gwella Gwasanaethau Niwrowahaniaeth.

PENDERFYNODD y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol i wneud y canlynol:

1. Nodi cynnwys yr adroddiad; ac
2. Estyn gwahoddiad i Fwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Cwm Taf Morgannwg fynychu cyfarfod o'r Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol yn y dyfodol i drafod yr Addewid, y Gwasanaeth Iechyd Meddwl Plant a'r Glasoed, a'r Rhaglen Gwella Gwasanaethau Niwrowahaniaeth.

Nodwch – doedd Cynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol S Hickman ddim yn bresennol ar gyfer yr eitem yma.

23

NEWYDDION DIWEDDARAF Y GWASANAETH MAGU

Darparodd Pennaeth y Gwasanaeth Ymyrraeth Ddwys a Rheolwr Arfer a Chyflawniad Carfan Magu wybodaeth i'r Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol am gynnydd y gwasanaeth Magu ers ei lansio ym mis Mai 2023.

Amcan prosiect Magu yw darparu llwybr cymorth integredig i fenywod beichiog a darpar dadau trwy wasanaethau ymyrraeth gynnar a ffiniau gofal, gan ganolbwyntio ar feithrin sgiliau a chydnerthedd a lleihau risg. Mae'r dull

ymyrraeth gynnar yn darparu cymorth wedi'i dargedu i deuluoedd er mwyn atal rhagor o ymyrraeth statudol gan leihau nifer y plant sydd angen mynd i gartrefi gofal yn syth ar ôl eu geni neu yn eu blwyddyn gyntaf yn y pen draw.

Tynnodd y Pennaeth Gwasanaeth sylw'r Aelodau at adran 4 o'r adroddiad, sy'n nodi amcanion Prosiect Magu a'i gynnydd hyd yma'n glir. Er mai dim ond ers mis Mai 2023 y mae'r prosiect wedi bod ar waith, roedd y swyddog yn falch o roi gwybod i'r Bwrdd am y 51 o atgyfeiriadau sydd wedi'u gwneud hyd yma a bod yr adborth gan ddefnyddwyr y gwasanaeth wedi bod yn gadarnhaol.

Roedd un Aelod yn falch o nodi'r cynnydd sydd wedi'i wneud ac yn edrych ymlaen at dderbyn data cymharol yn y blynyddoedd i ddod. Siaradodd yr Aelod am ei rôl hi ar y Panel Mabwysiadu a chyfeiriodd at achosion o rieni'n colli plant ar ôl iddyn nhw gael eu rhoi mewn gofal yn syth ar ôl eu geni. Dywedodd yr Aelod ei bod hi wedi'i chalonogi o glywed bod modd i Brosiect Magu atal canlyniadau torcalonnus o'r fath.

Gofynnodd Pennaeth yr Ysgol Rithwir a fyddai swyddogion yn gweithio gyda phob teulu hyd nes bod y plentyn yn flwydd oed. Eglurwyd mai'r nod oedd gweithio gyda phob teulu nes bod y plentyn yn flwydd oed, ond mai'r disgwyl oedd y byddai lefel yr ymyrraeth yn lleihau wrth i amser fynd heibio.

Diolchodd y Cadeirydd i'r swyddogion am yr adroddiad cynhwysfawr a phwysleisiodd bwysigrwydd ymyrraeth gynnar.

PENDERFYNODD y Bwrdd:

1. Nodi cynnwys yr adroddiad.

Nodwch – doedd Cynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol S Hickman ddim yn bresennol ar gyfer yr eitem yma.

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ADRODDIAD MONITRO GWASANAETH ADOLYGU ANNIBYNNOL CYFARWYDDWR CYFADRAN Y GWASANAETHAU CYMUNED A GWASANAETHAU I BLANT

Rhoddodd y Pennaeth Partneriaethau wybodaeth i'r Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol am gyflawni swyddogaethau'r Swyddog Adolygu Annibynnol ar gyfer plant sy'n derbyn gofal (PDG) yn ystod y cyfnod rhwng 30 Mehefin 2022 a 30 Mehefin 2023.

Cafodd yr aelodau drosolwg o'r gweithgaredd adolygu o'r cyfnod ynghyd â data cyflawniad cymharol manwl.

Diolchodd y Cadeirydd i'r swyddog am yr adroddiad cynhwysfawr a siaradodd am werth cymryd golwg annibynnol ar sicrhau bod anghenion Plant sy'n Derbyn Gofal yn cael eu diwallu gan yr Awdurdod Lleol.

Siaradodd y Cadeirydd am leoliadau y tu allan i'r sir a holodd os oedd modd rhoi bai ar ddiffyg lleoliadau am y ffigurau. Dywedodd y swyddog fod argaeledd lleoliadau yn fater cenedlaethol a bod dod o hyd i leoliad addas ar gyfer anghenion mor gymhleth yn aml yn anodd. Nododd y swyddog, pan mae pobl ifainc yn dymuno cael eu lleoli nôl yn y sir, mae'r garfan yn gweithio gyda nhw i ddod o hyd i leoliadau addas ond roedd yn cydnabod bod llawer gyda theulu neu

mewn lleoliadau hirdymor ac doedden nhw ddim yn dymuno cael eu lleoli nôl yn y sir.

Gan gyfeirio at y gostyngiad sylweddol mewn gorchmynion mabwysiadu, gofynnodd y Cadeirydd a oedd unrhyw bryderon. Siaradodd y swyddog am ddiwygio'r Amlinelliad Cyfraith Gyhoeddus ac roedd yn gobeithio bod y gwaith gyda theuluoedd cyn gwneud cais yn y llys, ynghyd â Phrosiect Magu yn cael effaith ar y gostyngiad yn nifer y plant sydd angen eu mabwysiadu.

PENDERFYNODD y Bwrdd:

1. Nodi cynnwys yr adroddiad.

25 TROS GYNNAL PLANT (TGP) CYMRU

Rhannodd Tros Gynnal Plant yr wybodaeth ddiweddaraf â'r Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol am gynnydd ar gyfer cyfnod chwarter 1, a oedd yn cwmpasu mis Ebrill 2023 hyd at fis Mehefin 2023.

Clywodd yr Aelodau fod 49 o bobl ifainc wedi manteisio ar y gwasanaeth Eiriolaeth yn Seiliedig ar Faterion yn ystod y cyfnod, a chafodd 29 o bobl ifainc eraill eu hatgyfeirio ar gyfer y Cynnig Gweithredol ledled Rhondda Cynon Taf. Dywedodd y Swyddog fod 11 o bobl ifainc â phrofiad o dderbyn gofal ac 1 person sy'n gadael gofal wedi manteisio ar y gwasanaeth Eiriolaeth yn Seiliedig ar Faterion, a oedd yn cwmpasu gyda 14 o faterion, a chafodd 6 pherson ifanc â phrofiad o dderbyn gofal eu hatgyfeirio ar gyfer y Cynnig Rhagweithiol.

Clywodd yr aelodau bod 24 o bobl ifanc â Phrofiad Gofal wedi dod yn gymwys ar gyfer y Cynnig Rhagweithiol yn ystod y cyfnod. Cafodd 7 o'r cynigion hynny eu gwrthod ac o'r 6 o bobl ifanc â phrofiad o dderbyn gofal a gafodd eu hatgyfeirio ar gyfer y Cynnig Rhagweithiol, daeth 4 yn gymwys ar gyfer y gwasanaeth yn ystod y chwarter a daeth y 2 arall yn gymwys yn y chwarter blaenorol.

Mae hyn yn golygu bod 25% o bobl ifainc cymwys wedi'u hatgyfeirio ar gyfer y Cynnig Rhagweithiol o'i gymharu â 18% yn y chwarter blaenorol.

Diolchodd y Cadeirydd i Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru am yr adroddiad llawn gwybodaeth a dywedodd fod yr astudiaethau achos yn enghreifftiau gwych o bwysigrwydd gwaith eiriolaeth.

PENDERFYNODD y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol ar y canlynol:

1. Cydnabod y gwaith a wnaed gan TGP Cymru.

26 TRAFOD CADARNHAU'R PENDERFYNIAD ISOD:

PENDERFYNWYD bod y cyfarfod yma'n cadw aelodau o'r wasg ac aelodau o'r cyhoedd allan o ystafell y cyfarfod, dan Adran 100A(4) o'r Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol (fel y'i diwygiwyd), yn ystod trafod yr agendwm nesaf, ar y sail y byddai'n debygol o olygu datgelu gwybodaeth eithriedig yn unol â diffiniad paragraff 14 o Ran 4 o Atodlen 12A o'r Ddeddf.

27 Y DIWEDDARAF MEWN PERTHYNAS Â STRATEGAETH GOFAL PRESWYL

2022 I 2027: PLANT SY'N DERBYN GOFAL

Rhannodd Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau i Blant wybodaeth â'r Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol am blant mewn lleoliadau sy'n Gweithredu Heb Gofrestru (OWR), a chynlluniau'r Gwasanaethau i Blant ar gyfer cefnogi'r plant hynny, a dod â'r trefniadau hynny i ben.

Ar ôl ystyried yr adroddiad eithriedig, **PENDERFYNODD** y Bwrdd:

1. Nodi'r wybodaeth a oedd wedi ei chynnwys yn yr adroddiad;
2. Derbyn adroddiadau dilynol tan nad oes sefyllfaoedd OWR ar gyfer pobl ifainc sy'n derbyn gofal yn Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 11.02 am

**Y Cynghorydd G Caple
Cadeirydd.**

tudalen wag



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

30 JANUARY 2024

PUPIL DEVELOPMENT GRANT (PDG) LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL CLUSTER MODEL DURING THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2022/23

Author(s): John Welch, Lead for Well-being & Vulnerable groups Central South Consortium
Linda Hawkins, Headteacher for Virtual School for Children Looked After RCT

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Elected members with an update on the evaluation of the school cluster model for the Pupil Development Grant for Looked After Children (PDG LAC) funding during the financial year 2022/23 in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- 2.1 Consider the information contained within this report.
- 2.2 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.
- 2.3 Consider whether they wish to receive a further report to evaluate the PDG LAC cluster model for 2023/24.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that the Corporate Parenting Board is kept informed on the ongoing cluster – based funding mechanism for distributing PDG LAC grant funding and the processes in place to evaluate its impact on the provision made for Children Looked After (CLA) in schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The RCT Virtual school works in partnership with the Central South Consortium (CSC) to ensure that there is a consistent approach to support children who are looked after or care experienced in schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This partnership ensures clusters and schools have systems and processes in place so that every looked after and care experienced pupil has the right to appropriate provision. Support within clusters looks to enable the pupils to fulfil their potential and that all

schools drive equity and excellence. It is hoped this will lead to improvement for pupils in their academic, personal, and social aspects of their lives irrespective of their circumstances.

4.2 Welsh Government provides additional resources through the Pupil Development Grant for Children Looked After (PDG LAC) to enhance the provision made by Local Authorities for looked after and care experienced children with the overarching aim of raising educational attainment and removing any barriers for those pupils.

4.3 Central South Consortium has three overarching roles:

- Provide a regional school improvement service to all schools on behalf of our partner Local Authorities.
- Provide appropriate Professional Learning opportunities for stakeholders at all levels to support local, regional and national priorities.
- Work with Welsh Government and partners to develop, share and implement national policy.

The PDG grant continues to be managed centrally by the Central South Consortium (CSC). The Lead for Well-being and Vulnerable groups oversees the administration of the grant as part of the equity and excellence section of the CSC business plan.

4.4 As part of the quality assurance process across the CSC region, schools are required to submit a cluster plan to access the PDG LAC funding. Plans are assessed on whether they will look to enhance curriculum opportunities, to support social and emotional needs of their learners and meet the bespoke needs of the learners which would subsequently have an impact on the agreed key priorities. Schools are encouraged to include the PDG LAC funding within School Development Plans (SDP) and identify outcome measures. Clusters are required to evaluate the effectiveness of their PDG LAC strategic plans at the end of each financial year as part of their plan for the next financial year. Examples are included below.

4.5 Clusters are encouraged to consider evidence-based interventions and approaches that are particularly effective for pupils who are currently looked after or care experienced. Specific consideration must be given to evidencing arrangements for collaborative and partnership working to ensure priorities are met jointly.

5. FUNDING ALLOCATION 2022-23

5.1 For 2022-23 the overall PDG LAC allocation for the consortium was allocated as follows:

- Salary for Regional Lead based in Central South Consortium;
- Support for CLA pupils placed outside of Wales;
- Local Authority delegated Bursary Grant;
- Training calendar provided to school staff.
- School to school working through the cluster plans.

The CSC lead for PDG LAC left post in October 2022. The decision was made not to replace this role and the lead for well-being and vulnerable groups would take over the administration of the grant.

5.2 Schools have continued to make applications for funding on a cluster basis in line with expectations from the Welsh Government to regionalise PDG LAC funding throughout the four Welsh education consortia.

- 5.3 Appendix 1 highlights the total PDG LAC expenditure for 2018/19 through to 2022/23 for each RCT school cluster. Allocation of funding was provided to school clusters based on LA central data. PDG LAC Cluster Leads within each cluster are required to provide comprehensive strategic plans outlining the intended spend.
- 5.4 Appendix 2 details the funding allocations for RCT based on each financial year highlighting the total PDG LAC funding for RCT, LA bursary funding allocation along with allocation of funding for those children placed outside of Wales in English authorities.
- 5.5 As a regional group all strategic plans are shared with the respective Virtual School Headteacher and CLA Education Coordinator within each LA to provide comment, feedback and to ensure quality assurance. Appendix 3 details examples of cluster bid application forms for (2022/23). The bids demonstrate the innovative ways in which our schools are working with looked after and care experienced pupils. Appendix 5 provides an example of an evaluation of a completed cluster plan for 2022/23.
- 5.6 All LAs within the CSC region are allocated a bursary fund to ensure Local Authority Children Looked After in Education teams/Virtual Schools can respond to the bespoke needs that arise specific to the demands of each local authority. The team in RCT submit a LA plan to CSC for this additional part of the grant. In 2021/22 the bursary was £70,471 and in 2022/23 the allocation was £71,164. In addition RCT received an additional £12,425 from Central South Consortium due to the PDG LAC lead leaving and the underspend in professional learning.
- 5.7 Appendix 4 demonstrates the RCT Bursary allocation for 2022/23 which was used to support young people sitting English and Maths GCSEs in Year 10 and 11 and evidence-based approaches to meet the needs of children and young people transitioning to Comprehensive school and/or other schools.

6. EVALUATION OF THE PDG LAC CLUSTER MODEL APPROACH

- 6.1 The cluster model approach for the allocation of PDG LAC distribution has been in place since April 2018. As clusters, schools are required to submit a cluster plan for PDG LAC funding. These are subject to approval and scrutiny by the Virtual School Headteacher and CLA Education Coordinator alongside the lead for well-being and vulnerable groups in CSC.
- 6.2 The clusters have this year again been diligent in attempting to meet the bespoke needs of LAC and care experienced children. Cluster plans have a continued focus on well-being, providing bespoke support for learners and upskilling staff in dealing with trauma.
- 6.3 Well-being initiatives as part of the cluster plans in RCT continue to feature heavily in the use of the grant. The well-being initiatives included Thrive, ELSA and Trauma informed training.
- 6.4 The CSC professional learning offer allowed schools to access a wide range of training opportunities relevant to support the needs of vulnerable learners. Schools report it is becoming increasingly challenging to release staff for professional learning during the year. Reasons included shortages of supply teachers and staff needing time for curriculum development. This resulted in attendance at professional learning being lower than anticipated. Below are the number of delegates that accessed the professional learning offer in CSC for 2022/23.

Event	Number of attendees			
	Primary	Secondary	Middle	Grand Total
ACE's adoption and learning: supporting adopted learners in school		1		1
Behaviour, Emotions and Connections for Adopted learners	3	1		4
Children Looked After Friendly Schools Level 2	3		1	4
Children Looked After Friendly Schools Level 3	3		1	4
FASD Awareness Raising for school staff	6			6
Protective Behaviours	2			2
Psychological First Aid	3	1		4
Relationship Based Play	5			5
Sensory Regulation in the Classroom	7	10		17
The role of key adults with vulnerable pupils in educational settings	2	1		3
Understanding the impact of trauma	9	1		10
Grand Total	43	15	2	60

- 6.5 Post 16 destinations for RCT CLA learners continues to be a priority for the Virtual School and close links are maintained with the Care 2 Work Team, the Youth Engagement and Participation Service, colleges and training providers. This joint working has ensured that pupils who are nearing the end of their statutory schooling have planned destinations for further education, employment and training.
- 6.6 Increased numbers of pupils are attending their PEP reviews. The PEP process is person-centered and includes what is important to and for the child/young person, what is working/not working and aspirations for the future. Further work needs to be completed to ensure all younger pupils know what a PEP is and that all pupils are engaged in the PEP process. Teacher responses are positive, although the CLA Governor role needs to be promoted amongst staff in school. The main drawback of the evaluation is the lack of foster carer engagement and this needs to be improved for the future.
- 6.7 Strengths of the PDG LAC cluster applications have been as follows:
- Clusters are committed to supporting the well-being needs of their pupils.
 - Clusters are endeavoring to provide a consistent adult for pupils to access.
 - Clusters are committed to developing relationships.
 - There is increasing consistency in the plans submitted.
 - Common approaches are seen to be developing across the clusters and each school cluster seem to be working effectively.
 - There is acknowledgement between clusters that investing in vulnerable pupils and providing effective strategies to support the well-being needs of these pupils will assist schools to developing positive outcomes for all.
- 6.8 Areas of focus for development identified by RCT and CSC include:

- Promote the PDG LAC cluster meetings and encourage schools to attend and participate in the PDG LAC cluster meetings.
- Sharing innovative practice across the local authority and CSC region.
- Work with Welsh Government to share with schools their funding allocation and allow more time to support the needs of the pupils.
- Schools to meet earlier in the summer term to ensure a rigorous and timely planning process for PDG LAC expenditure.
- Ensure that each school cluster submit robust evaluations and that they are a pivotal part of the PDG LAC planning process.

6.9 The bursary element of the PDG LAC has continued to enable the RCT CLA Virtual School to respond to identified local needs. All aspects of the bursary workstream are evaluated and inform future priorities for subsequent bursary bids. There remains to be a growing need to support young people in gaining qualifications and provide bespoke support to identified pupils. The RCT CLA Virtual School continues to evaluate the effectiveness of these aspects of the bursary and will remain an ongoing priority in the coming years.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The PDG LAC grant is a Welsh Government priority and therefore the terms and conditions of the grant are adhered to fully.

7.2 The purpose of the grant is to ensure that some the most vulnerable pupils are given opportunities to develop well in schools and look to ensure good achievement and educational attainment.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 There is no consultation required for this report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

9.1 School clusters are allocated funding from the PDG LAC grant available from the Welsh Government.

9.2 A lump sum of £3000 is also given to each cluster for the needs of formerly children looked after which is part of the terms and conditions of the grant. We are currently in the tenth year of this grant and updates are awaited from the Welsh Government regarding the allocation for next year.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 PDG LAC is administered according to Welsh Government guidance. There is a robust monitoring system in place to ensure effective use of the grant in line with the terms and conditions of the grant.

11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE PLAN AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

11.1 The underpinning principles of the PDG LAC support the Council's Corporate Priorities to build a strong economy and to promote independence and positive lives for everyone and ensures that the Sustainable Development principle and the Wellbeing Goals of the Wellbeing for Future Generations Act (Wales) underpin the vision and working practices of the service.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 It is evident that RCT schools are fully committed towards broadening their skills and expertise to support vulnerable pupils, this can be seen in their strategic planning and cluster applications to enhance the learning outcomes and opportunities for vulnerable learners.
- 12.2 The Virtual School remains fully committed to ensuring that RCT Schools continue to meet the educational and emotional well-being needs of our LAC or care experienced learners.
- 12.3 The Virtual School provides a termly programme of training for Designated Persons for CLA in schools and Governors. The training supports the principles of the PDG LAC by facilitating networking and developing awareness and providing information on:
- Particular challenges for Children Looked After (CLA) within educational settings and meeting the needs of pupils who have experienced developmental trauma.
 - Making trauma-informed decisions
 - The local context of CLA in RCT, the support that is available and how it can be accessed.
 - The role and responsibilities of the Designated Person for CLA and the CLA Link Governor.
 - The importance of a Personal Education Plan (PEP), and the school's role and responsibility in developing and maintaining this statutory document.
 - Statutory time frames for PEPs, IDPs and PCP Reviews
 - Quality assurance processes for PEP and PCP Reviews
 - Out of county monitoring
 - Relevant guidance and policies and help to plan for any future changes/updates.
 - Support and guidance to ensure effective multi-agency working.
- 12.4 School clusters have been proactive with their cluster planning for this year and have been able to implement where possible innovative and bespoke strategies and interventions to meet the needs of their learners. An example of the impact of this work is included below in Appendix 5. Evaluations focus on identifying the impact that this funding has had on the achievement, well-being and attendance and exclusion needs of the pupils.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

30TH JANUARY 2024

**PUPIL DEVELOPMENT GRANT (PDG) LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)
EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL CLUSTER MODEL
DURING THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2022/23.**

Officer(s) to contact:

John Welch, Lead for Well-being & Vulnerable groups Central South Consortium
Linda Hawkins, Headteacher for Virtual School for Children Looked After RCT

RCT PDGLAC funding per cluster 2018/19-2022/23

RCT PDGLAC funding per cluster 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

RCT PDG LAC Funding per Cluster	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Aberdare Community School	£38,291	£34,721	£38,597	£45,370	£47,621
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	£28,045	£25,714	£28,489	£41,839	£36,019
Cardinal Newman R.C. Comprehensive	£9,072	£11,616	£12,668	£10,944	£16,386
Ferndale Community School	£31,081	£22,581	£24,973	£33,895	£33,342
Hawthorn High School	£18,558	£23,364	£25,852	£29,040	£27,541
Mountain Ash Comprehensive School	£21,974	£21,797	£24,094	£25,950	£25,310
Pontypridd High School	£29,943	£30,805	£34,202	£33,895	£39,589
Porth County Community School	£13,625	£16,315	£17,942	£33,895	£35,127
Special Schools RCT	£29,563	£28,063	£31,126	£25,950	£32,450
St John Baptist C.I.W. High School	£11,348	£12,399	£13,547	£17,123	£21,741
Ysgol Nantgwyn	£21,974	£19,839	£21,897	£33,453	£34,235
Tonyrefail Comprehensive School	£34,117	£30,021	£33,323	£37,867	£36,466
Treorchy Comprehensive School	£26,527	£20,231	£22,337	£31,246	£36,466
Y Pant Comprehensive School	£23,492	£24,930	£27,610	£25,509	£22,633
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda	£8,313	£10,049	£10,910	£19,771	£19,063
Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg	£8,313	£10,441	£11,350	£10,503	£9,693
Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun	£7,933	£10,441	£11,350	£11,827	£18,171
Ysgol Llanhari	£4,518	£4,566	£4,758	£6,089	£4,785
Total funding per cluster	£366,686	£357,893	£395,026	£474,166	£496,638

Funding allocations for RCT based on financial years
(as highlighted in paragraph 5.5)

Funding allocations for RCT CBC based on financial year	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
PDG LAC Funding for RCT	£366,687	£357,893	£395,026	£474,166	£496,638
LA Bursary	£42,592	£42,654	£70,983	£70,471	£83,589
Outside of Wales (£1,150 per pupil)	£10,350	£6,900	£5,750	£14,950	£5,750

5 x PDG LAC Cluster Strategic Plan Example 2022/23

Plan A

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Objective		Outcome / Intended Impact			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Further improve understanding and awareness of childhood trauma and its potential impact on children. 2. Develop approaches and strategies across the cluster to support children that may be experiencing difficulties. 3. Basic training in several interventions and approaches to improving emotional well-being. 4. Pupils emotional well-being supported in school by appropriate staff 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s needs are being met more effectively through a greater understanding of all staff across the cluster. • Greater progress in all areas as emotional needs are met. • Environments are created or further developed within cluster schools that are conducive to emotional well-being. 			
Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
1.					
<p>To develop as a trauma informed schools through a cluster approach</p> <p>Whole staff training on joint INSET day on Trauma Informed Schools</p>	<p>The training will enable schools to implement trauma informed practice to help improved pupils’ mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Many staff in the cluster will attend the training and the webinars</p>	<p>Spring term</p>	<p>CLA lead in each school. The training will enable schools to implement trauma informed practice to</p>	<p>£995 whole staff training Via teams 2 whole school webinars £449</p>

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
<p>Two whole school webinars based on the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Schools to Become Trauma Informed and Mentally Healthy for All Whole School Implementation of Trauma Informed Practice to Promote Mental Health Cultures for All 				help improved pupils' mental health and wellbeing.	
2.					
<p>Online Lego Therapy Practitioners training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theory of Lego Therapy and how this can be applied to intervention How to assess children to level of competency of Lego therapy 	<p>Pupils' attitudes to learning improves.</p> <p>Staff confidence improves.</p> <p>Greater understanding of childhood trauma and it's effects and how to support emotional well-being.</p> <p>Schools building capacity to support learning and behaviour</p>	<p>Relevant staff In schools interested 2 staff per school</p>	<p>Completed in Spring Term- Online training. Individual schools to choose one of the following dates;</p>	<p>CLA Lead and Working Party</p>	<p>£215 per person plus supply cost of £165. Allocation for 15 primary schools £5700</p>

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicalities of setting up and maintaining this intervention • How to use Lego therapy to support vulnerable children with more complex issues 			17/1/23 21/2/22 14/3/22		(All schools to pay for training out of individual budgets £500 for schools with no CLA pupils to build capacity)
3. 					
To deliver social and emotional support to CLA learners including the delivery of ELSA programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All CLA pupils are offered the most appropriate social and emotional support to meet their individual needs e.g. ELSA • Improved attendance of those pupils receiving support by the end of the intervention. • Improved engagement of those pupils receiving support by the end of the intervention. 	CLA lead and appropriate staff trained and delivering in each school	Spring Term	CLA lead in each school	Staffing costs for training and delivery of intervention £62563
4.					

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
To share good practice through the cluster such as the achievement of Bronze Award	Cluster as a professional learning community sharing good practice. Shared drive for best practice. RCT network established to share best practice and support CLA in all schools	Headteachers	Spring Term	Cluster lead	No cost
5.					
To develop a Cluster CLA Policy and CLA friendly framework.	Sharing of good practice. Ensuring consistency of support across all schools	Cluster Leads	Spring Term	Working party and CLA Champions	No cost

Plan B**CLUSTER STRATEGIC PLAN**

Objective		Outcome / Intended Impact			
5. To raise achievement and attainment of all CLA pupils. 6. To improve attendance. 7. To support social and emotional wellbeing. 8. To reduce exclusions. 9. High aspirations for all CLA pupils reducing low achievement.		Outcome/Intended Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLA pupils to achieve their target grades. • All CLA pupils to aim for 100% attendance. • All CLA pupils to feel supported socially and emotionally. • A safe environment/room established for CLA pupils to use during anxious/emotional periods. • Vast amount of resources available to support CLA pupil's academic and social wellbeing. • Trained and well knowledgeable key workers to support all CLA pupils. 			
Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
1. To raise achievement and attainment of all CLA pupils.					
Data shows overview of CLA progress and achievement over time with identified support when needed. These indicators can include national tests (English, mathematics and Welsh where applicable), attendance, wellbeing, exclusions. Interventions to be put in place to help boost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track pupil performance in mathematics/numeracy. • Up skill pupils with basic mathematics to build confidence and consolidation of learning. • Mymaths (Variety of resources to fit all needs and abilities of CLA pupils). Package to be 	All Cluster schools	Ongoing assessment with a baseline test in Sept 2022	Teaching Assistants / Designated teacher of CLA / ALNCo / teachers / Primary Head Teachers	Mymaths = £370 Numicon resources for each school in cluster = £500 x 8 = £4000

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
<p>basic numeracy and literacy skills and raise the attainment of all CLA pupils.</p>	<p>used at home as well as in class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numicon resources for CLA pupils to understand the basic number skills. • Reading interventions/resources to support the ELIP. All schools in cluster to expand on literacy resources and programmes such as Project X, Rigby Star, Dockside, Story World, Rapid Reading. • High Quality resources to boost phonics and basic number skills as well as curriculum aligned resources that help pupils make rapid progress. • Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract maths joint training for all primary schools in the cluster to have a highly effective approach to teaching that develops a deep and 				<p>Reading intervention books for all schools = £500 x 8 = £4000</p> <p>Mrs Mactivity License = £200</p> <p>Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract Training for all cluster primary schools = £945.90</p>

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
	sustainable understanding of maths in pupils.				
2. To improve attendance					
Data is used effectively to monitor progress and intervene where sufficient progress is not being made and to ascertain why. Data to provide evidence to monitor improvement in social and emotional wellbeing and attendance and to reduce the risk of exclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plan is put in place for data collection. • Identified data has been agreed by CLA workers to share and disseminate (GDPR discussed) • Pupils show progress in at (attendance, wellbeing, academic, engagement, Safeguarding etc.) This can be monitored through class charts, Boxall and PERMA. • One Page Pupil Profiles are in place and have been agreed with the child and home. Pupils transitioning from Year 6 take their One Page Profile 	All Cluster schools	Ongoing	Teaching Assistants / Designated teacher of CLA / ALNCo / teachers	Class Charts = £6131.40 (PHS) Boxall subscription = £500 Boxall Tokens for each primary school 8 x £100 = £800
3. To support social and emotional wellbeing.					

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
<p>To Develop pupils social and emotional difficulties through practical experiences both within and outside the classroom (intervention and or class)</p> <p>Lego therapy is carried out with CLA pupils at least once a week</p> <p>All CLA pupils to have ELSA sessions and drop in ELSA available when required.</p> <p>Mindfulness sessions and interventions developed to reduce CLA pupils stress and anxiety and to help the CLA pupils manage this more effectively and work through their worries more quickly.</p> <p>Introduce Drawing and Talking to assess the social and emotional skills of CLA pupils quickly and effectively, ensuring they can respond in the right way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New cluster staff members to attend LEGO therapy training held in house. • Lego resources are purchased and audited to the effectiveness of these resources. • ELSA resources to support transition from primary to secondary. Emotional bingo, ELSA Support network resources, little book of big anger, Learn about feelings, mindfulness etc.. • Outdoor sensory resources to make a calming outdoor environment for all CLA pupils to be able to use throughout the day (sensory garden area). This will include windchimes, outdoor blackboards and chalk for outdoor learning, den area etc. • Pupils show improvements in in at least 1 area (attendance, wellbeing, academic, 	<p>All cluster schools</p>	<p>Pupil voice</p> <p>CLA Leaders in Cluster schools</p> <p>Data improvement recorded from Boxall, PERMA, Class charts</p>	<p>Teaching Assistants / Designated teacher of CLA / ALNCo / teachers</p>	<p>Cost of Lego resources = £300</p> <p>ELSA Resources = £250</p> <p>Outdoor sensory resources to help with anxieties and stress = 8 x £500 = £4000</p> <p>ELSA Training for Trerobart Primary school = £350</p> <p>ELSA Supervision =</p>

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
<p>Targeting support and action plans can be put in place almost immediately, with tailored strategies and activities that meet the needs of the individual pupil.</p>	<p>engagement etc.). This can be monitored through PERMA and Boxall plan to be developed and reviewed throughout the year and targets set.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition sessions between schools to continue to make a closer link with CLA pupils throughout the year. We aim to work with pupils from Years 5 onwards and to share skills and resources between schools. Our plan is for an ELSA trained TA from X School to continue to visit the primary schools to work with their CLA pupils and for them to also come to Pontypridd High school for periods of time over the year to work on our site to get familiarise themselves with the environment. • Drawing and talking training to be able to work in a targeted way with CLA pupils who may 				<p>8 x £100 = £800</p> <p>Drawing and Talking (2 staff in cluster to train) = £299 x 2 = £596</p> <p>Pupil emotional, social and</p>

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
	<p>have experienced interruptions in their development. Staff to be able to select from a raft of practical, creative and fun activities that can be used in school and at home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional and Social wellbeing support library set up for pupils to read easy literature which will help them understand their emotions, panic, anxieties and mental health Books recommended by EP include, 'Help, I've got an alarm bell going off in my head', 'Help, my feelings are too big', 'The kids guide to staying awesome and in control', 'Positively Me' etc... 				mental health books = £250
4. Trained and well knowledged key workers to support all CLA pupils					
Cluster CLA group has been established and training is identified to access as a group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLA group to meet three times a year to discuss and monitor progress of the CLA interventions and programmes. 	All cluster schools		Designated person for CLA	Non contact supply cover for 6 days

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
<p>An introduction to trauma informed practice and PACE.</p> <p>MAP and PATH training for schools and members of our team to support vulnerable learners using PCP planning tools, particularly around transitions.</p> <p>Wellbeing programme training including Trauma informed schools, Real Love Rocks Health Relationships, Spectrum Project Early Years Healthy Relationship programme, R Time, Trauma Informed Practice, ELSA Project and Bereavement Project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the schools in the cluster have completed the CLA Friendly schools Level 1, 2 and 3 training. Remaining schools will train this academic year. • CLA group discuss transitions between primary and secondary schools. • To ensure PEP's are up to date and accurate for transition and ready to be used as a working document. • Secondary school DT of CLA to attend CLA Review meetings of Year 6 pupils. • Secondary school DT of CLA to attend CLA Review meetings of Year 6 pupils. • Cluster CLA Passport has been devised and is used as a working document. • CLA workers have agreed the PCP and THE 'All About Me' formats. 				<p>cover £105 per day x 6 = £630 x 7 schools = £4410</p> <p>School to cover other costs for staff to attend courses.</p>

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
5.High Aspirations for all CLA pupils, reducing low achievement.					
<p>At Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 there is evidence CLA pupils are targeted for examination revision opportunities.</p> <p>Testing and tracking of all CLA pupils. This can be seen from Incerts.</p> <p>Data for wellbeing measures accurately identifies CLA interventions needed and there is evidence of implementation and support.</p> <p>School data is available to CLA learners and carers as part of the documentation process and individual target setting. This is data from testing the pupils on the Sandwell Early Numeracy test, Lucid tests (reading single words, spelling, reading comprehension accuracy, reding comprehension</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WRAT 5 Reading and spelling test to assess all CLA pupils ability and place interventions where required. • GL Assessments for all primary schools in the cluster to provide accurate information to support judgements and make well informed decisions about pupils' reading skills and their understanding of core subjects. To be able to also identify potential learning difficulties, including social and emotional barriers to the learning pupils may have. 	<p>X School</p> <p>All cluster primary school's</p>	<p>Twice a year</p> <p>Termly</p>	<p>Designated person of CLA / ALNCo</p>	<p>Lucid Exact £525</p> <p>Lucid Rapid = £433</p> <p>WRAT 5 Reading and spelling test = £397 GL Assessment for each Primary School in cluster: X = £1242 X = £3000 X = £1259 X = £1290 X = £2339.70 X = £1200</p>

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
speed, handwriting speed, typing speed).					
TOTAL					£39,589

Plan C

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Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
1. Cluster schools to raise awareness of Mental Health strategies and training in emotional and behavioural development					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff trained at Level 1 CLA Friendly School and training maintained Level 1-3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff trained in CLA Friendly and implement knowledge in day to day working Governors emailed training in CLA level 1 and through Google Meet CLA Friendly school level 1 training for AH 	SLT	Spring 23	Training for all staff annually in CLA Level 1 Governors to have awareness of CLA pupils and level1 training Assistant Head to have CLA Friendly school training LLevel 1 and 2	Free – twilight sessions Cost £165 x supply x2 = £330
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness of Mental Health strategies Embed Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing working closely with Shine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff to attend appropriate training following participation of WSAMHW 	SLT	Autumn22-Spring 23	Oct 2022-Mar 2023	£357
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness of Mental Health strategies, Raise awareness of attachment theory, ACES, ELSA, Relationship based play through staff attending training sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment, Emotion coaching, ELSA training for , ACES awareness completed for key staff. Staff to attend Helen Worrall training Relationship Based Play 	DL, SJ, SG	Autumn, 22 Spring23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attending courses Training for identified staff ELSA trained staff in all departments of school 	Supply cost 6 days x £80= total £480

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
Mental Health First Aid for Schools course (Concept Training - £75) attended by three members of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health First Aid Training • Suicide Awareness Training • Understanding the Impact of trauma • Protective Behaviours <p>Suitable resources will be purchased to ensure that these interventions will run as required</p> <p>Trained staff will have an enhanced understanding of Mental Health and pupils with ALN</p> <p>Sensory Engagement for Mental Well-being (Sensory Projects - £95) to be attended by two members of staff</p>	SLT	Autumn, 22 Spring23	Staff questionnaires Evaluation forms of the two training sessions attended	£95 x 2 = £190 £80 x 1 day (cover) £252.50 (£75 x 3 is £225 £95 x 2 is£190) =£415
CLA Workshop – Drug Awareness motivational speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All KS4 and Post 16 pupils to attend workshop to improve resilience and mental health 	SLT	Autumn 22	Feedback from pupils obtained following workshop.	£1300 - cost of speaker
Team Teach instructors training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 members of staff trained in team teach – enhancing 	SLT	Autumn 22	Completion of training by identified staff	3x£600=£1800

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
	capacity across school and RCT.			Training provided across cluster	
NAS training course – Emotional health and wellbeing of pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increased understanding of the complexities of Autism. Classroom strategies for supporting pupils with Autism. The ability to structure the environment to foster independence. 	School staff	Autumn 22	Staff attends training Implementation of strategies throughout the school is visible.	2 days supply £330 Training cost to be confirmed
Develop staff knowledge of Mental Health to positively support CLA pupils with mental health difficulties.	Embed Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing working closely with Shine. Staff to attend appropriate training following participation of WSAMHW	SLT	Autumn 22	Staff evaluations following training.	4 days £80 x 4 = £320 =
Support CLA pupils to develop Emotional Resilience	Staff to be trained in the DESTY Island Emotional Resilience Programme.	Identified staff	Autumn 22	Wellbeing Tracking of CLA pupils participating in Desty.	£700
2 staff to train as Thrive practitioners.	Additional, 2 in-house Thrive practitioners to ensure that Thrive is embedded into the schools practice.	MH LD	Spring '23	Completion of the relevant training and improved access to the provision for CLA pupils.	£1000

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
2. All schools to continue to further develop Trauma Informed Skills base and provision.					
Trauma Informed leadership Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Wellbeing manager to undertake training and become senior mental health lead at the school and complete assessment. 		March 31st 23	Completion of training.	£700 training Total- £700
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Becoming a Trauma Informed School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff attend Trauma informed School course. 3-year plan for more staff to become Trauma Informed- - staff in each area to be Trauma Informed Diploma level 		Autumn 22- Spring 23	Course completed and achieved by staff	Course costs £1200x 4 = £4800 + 10 days cover £80 x 10 =£800 x 4 = £3200 = £8000
Trauma and Mental Health Informed School accreditation	Staff members trained in TIS and have TIS practitioner award status.	Identified staff	September 31 st	Awarded Trauma and Mental Health Informed School.	£1270 - cost of accreditation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trauma Informed/ motional PLC with other special schools in cluster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PLC to meet up to discuss TIS and share good practice <p>Meet termly, and discuss the merits of well-being tools and</p>	TIS LEADS	Autumn 22/ Spring 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TIS Leads from each special school to discuss good practice and ways forward 	cost of cover £165 3 half days cover costs = 3 x 82.50= £247.50

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
	how it has worked in the individual schools				= £247.50
Support CLA pupils experiencing trauma or distress as part of TIS development.	Identify staff to attend training (TIS Diploma) Improve awareness of the impact of trauma on pupils Resources for TIS	Identified staff	Autumn 22- Spring 23	Staff evaluations following training. resources for TIS	Course fees- £1200 Cover £800 (10 days x £80) £150 Total-£2150
Develop a whole school approach using TIS	All staff to complete Whole school TIS 1 day training	SLT	January 9 th 2023	Staff evaluations following training. Tracking of pupil wellbeing.	£1295
Trauma Informed Schools diploma training	A member of staff each term will pass the 10 day diploma course	Identified staff	Autumn 22- Spring 23	Use of diploma in school work, supervision sessions termly.	(£80 x 10 days x 2 = £1600 £1200 x 2 = £2400 Total £4000) (£400 from PDG CLA – remainder to be picked up by the school)

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
Trauma Informed School	Another member of staff to attend Trauma informed School course	Identified staff	Autumn 22- Spring 23	Course completed and achieved by member of staff	Course costs £1200= £1200 Supply - £165 x 10 - £1650 = £2,850
Improve provision in outdoor and play skills to promote emotional wellbeing					
Resources for extending outside play areas to promote emotional health and well-being. To enhance the play provision for CLA pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources purchased for improving mental and physical health through outside play and also through games for inside play. Improved opportunities for peer-to-peer play and staff to pupil engagement. 	SLT	Autumn/ Spring 23	observations improved play throughout school sites Monitoring of enhanced provisions to be monitored via learning walk opportunities.	Cost of resources £310 £400

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
Resources to be purchased to enhance the outdoor provision	Resources to be purchased to ensure sufficient equipment for sensory activities for the pupils who need it e.g. body sock, trampette	SLT	Spring 23	Class timetables Provision Mapping Resources used by staff Staff questionnaires Meetings with OT/Physio SLA	£528
Develop an 'Emotional' Wellbeing Area	Create a Desty wellbeing area for pupils to practice Desty principals to develop their Emotional Resilience.	sLT	Spring 23	Pupil Progress Reviews with the focus on Wellbeing/Behaviour trackers.	£537
Improving well-being and mental health through sports sessions with Dallaglio Rugby Works	Weekly sessions attended by all CLA learners and some peers	SLT	autumn/ SPring 23	Each session is well attended, and pre/post questionnaires show engagement and improved wellbeing	£2500 x 2=£5000 Total £5000
2. Schools to track pupil wellbeing and develop programmes to improve wellbeing					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motional Programme for each pupil supported through the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each pupil to maintain their motional programme and to have interventions as 	TYM staff	Autumn 22	TIS Staff to review progress in Motional	Cost of motional

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
	identified through motional programme				£165 x 1 covers = £165
Engage in a tool to track wellbeing and measure impact.	Train 2 staff members in using Boxall Profile Identify pupils' wellbeing/behaviour targets from Boxall. Identify strategies required to support CLA pupils positively.	Identified staff	Autumn 22- Spring 23	CLA lead and teaching staff to review progress in scheduled Pupil Progress reviews.	£199x2=£398
Motional training for all relevant staff in order for them to assess the pupils in their classes	Staff will show an understanding of how to use Motional All pupils will be assessed using Motional	Identified staff	Autumn 22- Spring 23	Motional programmes for all pupils	£80 x 6 = 480 480 total spent £32,450

Plan D

CLUSTER STRATEGIC PLAN

Objective		Outcome / Intended Impact			
To support all pupils, particularly CLA, to develop the skills and confidence to regulate their own emotions and achieve high levels of emotional well-being.		For every pupil to be taught mindfulness by qualified practitioners in our own schools and to be able to practise mindfulness throughout their lives.			
Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
Mindfulness for Educational Leaders (MEL) UP to 10 staff from cluster schools to attend 8 session course.	Leaders to gain valuable understanding of the programme and ensure engagement with the vision of the project	HT/Sen Leaders	8 weeks from Nov 2022	Staff completing course to complete evaluations practice.	8 sessions over 5 weeks (1/2 day sessions) £2500 Supply costs 8 x £75 x 10 £6000
Mindfulness training to be offered to staff who are interested in supporting the students. Three separate sessions with up to 20 delegates from cluster schools at each event.	Key staff to be trained in each school to support CLA learners	CLA DSP	8 weeks from Nov 2022	Staff completing course to complete evaluations practice.	£100 per delegate 20x£100 x 3 £6000 Supply cover 60 staff ½ day cover @ £75

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
					£4500
2.					
<p>Identified staff to undertake next level training in order to deliver mindfulness training to pupils. “The Present” – Age 3-7 Paws B – Ages 7-11 Paws .B – Ages 11-16 (NB: All staff will need to have completed the first course and to have been practicing mindfulness themselves for at least 4 months after the course has been completed to be able to access this training)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 2 members of staff in every school are qualified to teach mindfulness to children and young people at an appropriate level. All pupils access mindfulness provision at least once in Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 & 4 over time. Pupils in our schools to develop a secure understanding of how mindfulness techniques can help them find alternative ways of coping when things get difficult. All pupils become more resilient learners. Incidents of pupils losing self-control are reduced. <p>Pupils are better equipped to find their own solutions to difficulties.</p>	<p>DSP/JHD lead to liaise with JJ</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff who complete this training to begin to deliver mindfulness sessions to pupils (and parents?) from April 2019. Staff evaluations Pupil evaluations Listening to learners’ feedback Lesson observations 	<p>6 staff to complete “The Present” 6 x £600 £3600 Supply cover 18 x £165 £2970</p> <p>4 staff to complete “Paws B” 4 x £600 £2400 Supply cover 12x £165 £1980</p>

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
					2 staff to complete “.B” 2 x £600 £1200 Supply cover 6 x £165 £990
3. OPTION EXTRA IF FUNDING ALLOWS					
Mindfulness courses for parents and carers are offered in every school.	Parents and carers have an understanding of the benefits of mindfulness and are able to use these strategies to support their parenting as well as their own emotional well-being. Parents and carers of CLA are specifically invited to attend these courses.	HT and CLA lead in schools	8 weeks from November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent questionnaires • Levels of parental engagement in the school are increased 	6 mindfulness for parents courses run at £500 per course £3500
4.					
Mindfulness training sessions for governors are undertaken in every school.	Governors have an understanding of the benefits of mindfulness and the importance of support the emotional well-being and development of pupils and staff.	HT to liaise with X in planning	January 2023	Governors' contribution to the whole school self-evaluation.	Trainers to deliver introductory sessions to governors at the beginning of the programme.

Activities/Actions	Success Criteria	Staff / School	Target Date	Monitoring and Evaluation	Cost/Resources
5.					
Taster sessions for all staff in the cluster.	3 sessions to be held in 3 venues; X Comp Primary school Top of the Valley Primary School bottom of the valley X	All staff	Spring 2023	Gather feedback from staff through Q&A sessions	No charge – sessions after school
6. Contingency					
Additional supply cover will be needed in key areas of training	Some extra time needed in some training areas				£826
TOTAL					£36,466

Plan E

Amcan		Canlyniad/Canlyniad artaethedig			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sefydlu gweithgor ADY/Lles Clwstwr i gwrdd yn dymhrol 2. Datblygu strategaethau dysgu ac addysgu cyson ar draws y clwstwr gan ffocysu ar darllen, llythrennedd a chyfathrebu. 3. Buddsoddi yn ClassCharts a Provision Maps – Meddalwedd Map Darpariaeth, Diogelu, cofnodi clod, fel strategaeth clwstwr ar y cyd. – y cynllun yw y byddai'r grant yn parhau i ariannu hyn yn y dyfodol tra bod y grant yn parhau. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhannu arfer dda / disgyblion yn symud yn hyderus rhwng y Cyfnodau Allweddol • Strategaeth lles clwstwr - Hyfforddiant a datblygu strategaethau / rhannu arfer da • Cysoni darpariaeth ymyraethau a thracio cynnydd • Cysoni a gwella'r broses o drosglwyddo gwybodaeth fugeiliol a chysoni'r defnydd o broffiliau ar draws y clwstwr. • Cynnydd a chynhwysiant y disgyblion PMG unigol ar draws y clwstwr 			
Gweithgareddau / Camau Gweithredu	Meini Prawf Llwyddiant	Staff / Ysgol	Dyddiad Targed 2023	Monitro ac Arfarnu	Cost/Adnoddau Angen
1. Sefydlu gweithgor Lles/ADY Clwstwr i gwrdd yn dymhrol					
<p>Ffocws ar y ddeddf ADY + Cwricwlwm i Gymru – Trosglwyddo effeithiol drwy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proffil Disgybl / cofnodi ymyraethau – dull cyson gan y clwstwr a rhannu mapiau darpariaeth er mwyn rhannu arfer dda a chynllunio DP staff • Hyfforddiant i'r feddalwedd Provision Maps yn parhau fel bod y wybodaeth 	<p>Proffil wedi ei ddatblygu gan PMG – rhannu arfer dda yn digwydd trwy strategaeth gytun</p> <p>Defnydd llwyddiannus o'r feddalwedd Provision Maps</p> <p>Data wedi ei drosglwyddo yn llwyddiannus i systemau</p>	<p>Athrawon Bl.6 bob Ysgol + CADY</p>	<p>Mai 2023</p>	<p>Cyfarfodydd CADY Clwstwr</p> <p>Gwerthusiad o'r cynllun trosglwyddo</p> <p>Cefnogaeth ysgol i ysgol i</p>	<p>Gweler isod</p>

Gweithgareddau / Camau Gweithredu	Meini Prawf Llwyddiant	Staff / Ysgol	Dyddiad Targed 2023	Monitro ac Arfarnu	Cost/Adnoddau Angen
<p>wedi ei gofnodi a'i gyflwyno yn gyson ar draws y clwstwr.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bydd angen hyfforddiant ar yr ysgolion cynradd ac amser i ddatblygu'r defnydd ar y cyd. 				<p>rhannu arfer orau</p> <p>Strategaeth gytun ar waith a wedi ei chefnogi</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cyfarfodydd Gweithgor CADY 	Cydweithio parhaus	CADY + Athrawon BI.6	Mai 2023	<p>Cyfarfodydd Clwstwr</p> <p>Gwerthusiad o'r cynllun trosglwyddo</p>	<p>Cyflenwi x11</p> <p>3 Cyfarfod 1 diwrnod = £5445</p>
<p>2. Datblygu strategaethau dysgu ac addysgu cyson ar draws y clwstwr gan ffocysu ar darllen, llythrennedd a chyfathrebu.</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diwrnod HMS Clwstwr – Cydweithio cwricwlwm + hyfforddiant strategaethau dysgu ac addysgu Sefydlu gweithgorau dysgu ac addysgu gan ffocysu ar darllen, llythrennedd a chyfathrebu. 	<p>Staff i dderbyn hyfforddiant</p> <p>Diwrnodau i gydweithio a ddatblygu startegaethau ar y cyd.</p>	Holl staff y clwstwr	Mehefin 2023	<p>Cyfarfodydd Clwstwr</p> <p>Gwerthusiad o'r cynllun trosglwyddo a diwrnodau HMS</p>	<p>Gweithgorau -</p> <p>Cyflenwi Staff x6 (3 diwrnod)= £2970</p> <p>Cynorthwywyr x7 (</p>

Gweithgareddau / Camau Gweithredu	Meini Prawf Llwyddiant	Staff / Ysgol	Dyddiad Targed 2023	Monitro ac Arfarnu	Cost/Adnoddau Angen
					2 diwrnod) = £1120
3. Buddsoddi yn ClassCharts a Provision Maps – Meddalwedd Map Darpariaeth, Diogelu, cofnodi clod					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parhau gyda'r buddsoddiad i feddalwedd Edukey - ClassCharts a Provision Maps Cofnodi a thracio cynnydd PMG Cofnodi a thracio Map Darpariaeth ar gyfer disgyblion Tracio a Monitro ymyraethau Rhannu gwybodaeth gyfredol cywir Trosglwyddo data o systemau cynradd i Rhydywaun mewn ffordd cyson Rhannu arfer dda 	<p>Elfennau gwahanol y meddalwedd ar waith ar draws y clwstwr.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mapio darpariaeth ADY Cynradd ac Uwchradd - Bl.6 y cynradd - Bl.7 -11 X <p>Yr elfennau isod ar waith ac wedi eu arfarnu – Classcharts, Map Darpariaeth Provision Maps, Diogleu Plant</p>	Staff ar draws y clwstwr	Parhaus – adolygiad bob tymor	<p>Ysgolion unigol</p> <p>Cyfarfodydd Clwstwr</p> <p>Gwerthusiad o'r cynllun trosglwyddo</p>	Cyfanswm Edukey am flwyddyn i'r clwstwr – 5 ysgol cynradd = £8760
Cyfanswm y gwariant					£18,295*

PDG LAC RCT Bursary - Period of Agreement: April 2022 - March 2023

CYTUNDEB GWASANAETH LEFEL / SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

PDG LAC

1. Ffocws yr Hyfforddiant/Cefnogaeth
Focus for Training/Support

Following a positive evaluation from previous years, the continuation of targeted Tuition support for year 10 and 11 pupils will be delivered to improve GCSE attainment. Year 6 tuition will be in place to support literacy and numeracy development in readiness for transition to secondary school.

Targeted intervention for RCT CLA pupils to work towards avoiding exclusion and improve engagement, attendance, and attainment. This will be delivered for a time limited period with robust evaluation.

Bespoke support for students who are moving from authority to authority. This will be provided on an individual needs basis and will aim to avoid drift and delay.

Enhanced transition support for year 6 CLA pupils. Schools will be provided with support from the Virtual School Team to support this. An information session will be held in January 2023 delivered by the Virtual School Team. Schools will be required to submit costed plans to request funding up to the value of to £500 to hold the transition sessions.

2. Gorolwg o'r buddiannau/Deilliannau
Overview of Expected Benefits/ Outcomes

- Improved GCSE results for pupils in Years 10 and 11
- Improved attendance and engagement and robust evaluations informing the best way to support pupils in the future.
- Reduced exclusions.
- Identification of alternative provision for pupils permanently excluded or not engaging.
- Timely school moves both in and out of county.
- Avoidance of drift and delay
- Consistent transition to Year 7
- Excellent engagement and attendance at Year 7.
- Improved mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Reduced anxiety.

3. Niferoedd plant mewn gofal mewn ysgolion/Clwstwr (os yn gymwys)
School/Clusters involved and CLA numbers (if applicable)

There are 425 CLA pupils attending RCT schools

Evaluation PDG CLA Cluster Plan 2022-23

Evaluation Pupil Development Grant for Looked After Children (below is an example of a cluster evaluation at the start of 2023/24)

<p>1. Was the PDG CLA cluster plan appropriate and did it meet the needs of CLA learners across the cluster? (please delete as appropriate)</p>
<p>Effective</p> <p>Increased opportunities for cluster working. Strengthened links between all cluster schools. Greater consistency in approach to strategies in place All are having a positive impact on staff knowledge, understanding and confidence to support CLA learners as well as supporting transition</p>
<p>2. As a result of the PDG CLA funding, how has learner well-being improved?</p>
<p>Cluster Trauma informed approach has been developed throughout the year, all staff have an increased knowledge and confidence when dealing with pupils who have experienced Trauma. A greater understanding of individual learning needs and how to manage these effectively. Staff have a greater understanding of behaviour and the reasons behind key behaviours as well as how to manage them. Common language used amongst staff ensure that there is consistency in approaches across the school and cluster. Staff have a greater understanding of trauma and are therefore more empathetic towards learners, valuing the Trauma Informed Strategies (TIS) and utilising these regularly. This has ensured that learners feel listened to, empathised with and are able to use staff to support regulation. Staff are more equipped to help learners regulate their emotions. Strategies are embedded and are therefore having a positive impact on the whole school ethos. 1-1 support through ELSA interventions has ensured learners have an additional confidence.</p>

Pupils have an increased self-awareness, self-esteem, and friendships groups.
 Staff are more equipped to support parents in managing behaviours at home, learners are therefore feeling more supported through home-school links ELSA- sticking to the strict 6-week block is having a bigger impact on pupil progress.
 TIS - staff increased knowledge of supporting learners with high level of needs.
 Learners are happy, they feel safe and understand who their emotional available adults are.
 A range of calm down zones throughout the school supports the learners at times of dysregulation, they have voiced that these are helpful

3. What improvements have been made in the attainment of CLA pupils?

Increased confidence of learners equipped with a toolkit of strategies to support at times of dysregulation.
 SALT support has had a huge impact on helping to improve oracy skills for individuals. Support has been given to families and staff members to ensure that targets can be achieved in between sessions.
 Staff training has ensured consistency across the school in supporting individuals with Speech difficulties.
 Parent support sessions has ensured parents are upskilled to support learners fully at home.
 Improved oracy skills of learners through SALT interventions
 The range of resources and strategies to use between sessions has ensured targets are easily planned and achieved.

4. How are the attendance and exclusion of CLA pupils being addressed?

Pupil has returned to home.
 Pre exclusion and Team around the child meetings with carers, social worker and LA to identify next steps.
 Generally, no differential between CLA learners and non CLA children with exclusions
 CLA learners in all schools are improving their attendance.

tudalen wag



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

30th JANUARY 2024

TROS GYNNAL PLANT (TGP) CYMRU UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Board with an update of progress made by Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the work undertaken by TGP Cymru, the content of which is attached at Appendix 1.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is important for Members to note the progress, themes and issues highlighted by the TGP Cymru, in order to work in partnership to ensure the best possible outcomes are reached for those in our care system.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 As part of the Board's Terms of reference, TGP Cymru are invited to attend meetings to enable both the TGP Cymru and Children Services to discuss issues that affect service delivery in the community on a strategic level and to work in partnership to provide improved and better outcomes.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 There is no consultation required for this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

9.1 The work of the Corporate Parenting Board links directly to the Council's Corporate Plan priority – 'Rhondda Cynon Taf's Children will receive a great start in life...'

9.2 The work of TGP Cymru links to the Future Generations Well-Being Goal of a more equal Wales, by ensuring that children and young people are supported when decisions are being made about them. This ensures that young people have access to a range of information in order to fulfil their potential.

9.3 In addition to the duty to listen to young people and involve them in decisions, the Part 10 Code of Practice (Advocacy) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the duties to consider the provision of independent professional advocacy in certain circumstances for:

- Children who are looked after (who should benefit from an active offer of professional independent advocacy) or have previously been looked after
- Children who are subject to an assessment of need or a care and support plan or child protection enquiries

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 TGP Cymru are invited to attend meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board, to provide a broader understanding and contribution into the services available to young people and vulnerable adults.

National Approach to Statutory Advocacy

Local Authority Report - RCT 2023 - 2024

Collated Quarterly Report

Quarter 2: July - Sept 2023

Headline Report

During quarter two, 61 young people accessed the Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) service, presenting with 72 issues; a notable increase when compared to the previous quarter. Some 44 young people accessed the service for the first time, 18 more than in quarter one. We received Active Offer (AO) referrals for 44 young people in quarter two, 15 more than in quarter one and the highest number of AO referrals we have received in one single quarter to date.

Active Offer

According to information received from RCT, 107 children and young people became eligible for the Active Offer during the quarter:

CP:	5-9 yrs x 36	10 - 15 yrs x 43	16+ yrs x 5
CLA:	5-9 yrs x 6	10 - 15 yrs x 11	16+ yrs x 6

In quarter two, a total of 35 children and young people were recorded as rejecting the offer of an AO meeting when it was suggested by their social worker, and 38 recorded as accepting, eleven more than in the previous quarter.

Two young people were recorded as not being offered an AO referral. One because parents felt he did not have the capacity to understand the concept of advocacy. The other was already in receipt of issue-based advocacy support.

The reasons for rejecting the AO meeting were as follows:

Rejected without reason	5
Did not want to engage with any service or want to meet anyone else	3
Identified someone else to talk to including SW, family member or other professional	14
Didn't feel service was needed	3
Rejected by family due to level of understanding (age or ALN)	1
Not the right time	1
Already engaged with TGP Advocacy Services	1
Reason for rejecting left blank	7

It is unclear how the remaining 33 young people responded to the discussion with their social worker, and we will look at updated reports in the coming months to check if this information has been added.

Of the 38 young people who accepted the AO on the spreadsheet completed by RCT, 28 were referred for AO. The remaining two young people who are recorded as accepting the AO referral in quarter one but not referred have been sent to RCT for investigation.

TGP Cymru received 44 AO referrals in quarter two. 42 of those young people became eligible for the AO in either quarter two, or in the previous quarter.

Headline Report Contd

The remaining two young people are not on this year's AO spreadsheet but could have become eligible in the previous calendar year. A total of 40 Active Offer meetings took place and 37 young people accepted the AO and went on to receive Issue Based Advocacy support.

Of the 44 AO referrals received, young people in the Child Protection (CP) arena made up 75% compared to 80% in the previous quarter. 11 Children Looked After (CLA) were referred for AO, almost twice the number referred in quarter one.

Half of the young people referred for AO were aged between six and 11, followed closely by those aged between 12 and 16, a change when compared to the previous quarter when most young people referred for AO were aged 12 or over.

AO referrals for females more than doubled, rising from nine in quarter one to 25 in quarter two and making up 57% of referrals, compared to just 31% in quarter one. Of the 44 young people referred for AO, 55% received it within five working days of the referral being made. The main reasons for delay were parents/carers requesting to postpone visits, mostly due to holidays, and advocates being unable to contact parents/carers to arrange a visit. Three young people changed their mind about meeting with an advocate following referral and we are waiting on more information from the referrers in relation to consent and capacity for several young people referred into the service. 70% of young people received the AO within 12 working days of the referral being made.

Issue Based Advocacy

The number of young people referred for IBA in quarter two increased by 12 when compared to quarter one. The majority of IBA referrals were for children and young people in the child protection (CP) arena, making up 59% of referrals, just slightly less than in the previous quarter. The number of Care Experienced young people referred for IBA increased from 11 in quarter one to 19 in quarter two and increased their percentage share of referrals from 22% to 31%. Referrals for children subject to Care and Support Plans decreased slightly from eight to six, while we received no IBA referrals for care leavers in quarter two.

We observed increases in IBA referrals for both males and females in quarter two, however the more notable increase was for females who made up the majority of referrals in quarter two with 52%.

In quarter two, the age category with the highest referral rate was again the 12-16 group who made up 51% of all young people referred, compared to 55% in the previous quarter. Referrals for young people aged 6-11 increased by ten when compared to quarter one and made up 44% of IBA referrals.

Self-referral continues to be the most popular route into the IBA service for young people, followed by social worker referrals. Self-referrals made up 79% of IBA referrals in quarter two and are most often the result of a successful AO meeting, or a young person who has previously received advocacy support contacting their advocate directly with a new issue. We are continuing to record advocacy attendance at meetings separately and the recording of issues instead of meetings will tell us more about what young people want to discuss both in and out of meetings.

During quarter two 'support at meetings' was the main issue only seven times, however, advocates supported children and young people to share wishes and feelings at meetings 46 times, of which 26 times they shared them in person, either face to face or virtually. The meetings were made up of 18 Child Protection Case Conferences, 11 CLA Reviews, six Core Group meetings, four planning meetings, three Family Group meetings, three school meetings and a Secure accommodation Review (SAR) meeting.

When an advocate cannot, or it is inappropriate for the advocate to attend a meeting, they will usually email a wishes and feelings report to the social worker or whomever is chairing the meeting, and request the wishes and feelings be read out. The expectation is that the social worker will then respond to the young person via the advocate, and the advocate will then contact the young person to discuss the response. Advocates continue to report some difficulty in obtaining feedback for young people, particularly when they haven't attended the whole meeting.

In quarter two, most young people accessing IBA again wanted to talk about issues at home; either recorded as 'placement issues' or 'home life'. Young people also wanted advocacy support to help share wishes and feelings about contact arrangements and support them to share wishes and feelings at meetings. Other issues included school issues, social services issues, emotional wellbeing issues and access to services.

Contact was recorded as the main issue for 18 young people during quarter two. Some young people wanted to raise contact issues relating to more than one person meaning 18 young people asked their advocate to share wishes and feelings about contact for 32 individuals or groups of individuals. Most young people shared that they wanted to spend more time with loved ones, this was nine times in relation to a mother, eight times in relation to a father, seven times in relation to a sibling or siblings, and twice in relation to friends or wider family. Four young people raised wanting to stop spending time their father, while two wanted to stop spending time with grandparents and a stepparent.

Some 79% of young people referred for IBA had contact with their allocated advocate within five working days of the referral being made. Some visits were delayed following requests from families to postpone visits, and some young people were previous service users who were happy to have initial contact with their advocate over the phone.

Visiting Advocacy

Residential Visiting Advocacy (RVA) continues in five Local Authority community homes across RCT. Face-to-face visits have continued monthly in Bryndar and Beddau. The remaining three homes, Carn Ingli, Nantygwyn and Ty Brynna have advised monthly visits are not appropriate and have requested the advocate visits every two months and stays connected via telephone contact instead. The RVA advocate is currently providing IBA to two young people living in RCT community homes.

A review of the RVA services was postponed previously to allow us to concentrate on recruitment and advocacy capacity. We had hoped to continue this piece of work during quarter two, but unfortunately, due to sickness within the team we have not been able to restart this work. We hope to restart this piece of work when the team is back at full capacity.

Service Information

The (C.E.) young people and Care Leavers advocacy quarterly progress report was shared at RCT Corporate Parenting Panel at the beginning of July.

The advocacy team manager was invited to the LAC Nurse team meeting in July but unfortunately the meeting was cancelled. Information about advocacy referral routes were shared with the team and we hope to be invited to attend a future meeting.

Following recruitment in quarter one, three new team members joined the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Advocacy Service in quarter two. These are, one full-time advocate, one senior advocate who will work 30 hours per week along with a new casual advocate. Unfortunately, we have experienced some sickness within the team in quarter two, with one full time advocate and the senior advocate having to take extended leave following medical procedures. Both team members are due to return within the next three to four weeks from which time, we are confident recent capacity issues will be addressed and allow us to respond effectively to the recent increase in advocacy referrals.

In recent months, advocates have continued to report difficulty in obtaining feedback for young people when they have sent wishes and feelings reports to some social workers. On receipt of referral, social workers are made aware that the expectation is that the recipient of any wishes and feelings report will respond to the young person's wishes and feelings and the advocate will then visit the young person again to discuss the response. The lack of response, as well as being frustrating for the young person, also adversely affects the capacity of the advocate as it can mean some young people's cases are open longer than they need to be.

Young People's Feedback

As a team, we are continuing to discuss different ways of making it as easy as possible for young people to evaluate the service they have received from TGP Cymru. Young people can scan a QR code which allows them to fill in a short questionnaire about the advocacy service on their own mobile phones. Advocates carry this code with them, and they are also sent to young people following the end of a piece of work. A paper copy of the feedback form is also sent by the Quality Assurance Officer at the end of a piece of work along with a Freepost envelope. Young people can either post the form, scan the code or take a picture of the filled in form and email or text it to the service.

Advocates also carry the Freepost envelopes with them in case a young person wants to fill in the form during a final or closing visit and are encouraged to remind young people their thoughts and opinions about the service they receive are very important to TGP Cymru and they are welcome to share them in whichever way they feel comfortable.

To further encourage young people to share their feelings about the advocacy service we have also introduced a monthly prize draw, whereby children and young people who provide feedback will have the chance to win a £20 gift voucher.

We are pleased to report that in quarter two, the number of young people providing feedback has increased with the service receiving feedback from ten young people.

Of those ten:

Nine stated they found the service helpful; seven felt the service made a difference to their situation, eight felt they knew more about their rights, ten felt more confident since receiving support, nine felt more included in decisions, and ten felt their views were fully considered and their rights represented. Nine of the ten young people providing feedback in quarter two stated they would use the service again, and one person left this space blank.

When explaining why they felt the advocacy service had been helpful, one young person said:

"Gail read out the letters in the meeting like we asked and has been very nice and helpful."

When explaining how advocacy support helped them feel more confident, one young person said:

"Because I feel more confident in myself."

When explaining how advocacy made her feel more included in decisions, one young person said:

"I can say my views at meetings and people listen."

Case Example

Please find below an example of advocacy work undertaken during the quarter from within RCT. The names have been changed to protect the young person's identity.

Situation Ryan was 16 years old when he was referred to the advocacy service by his Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). In the referral, the IRO described concerns raised by Ryan's carers about his school placement and wanted Ryan to access advocacy services as there were differing opinions about whether Ryan was happy at school, and if he would choose a different setting if he were able to express his opinions. Ryan's additional needs mean it isn't possible for him to access the mainstream advocacy service, and an advocate was allocated to assess whether or not a Non-Instructed Advocacy (NIA) piece of work was appropriate.

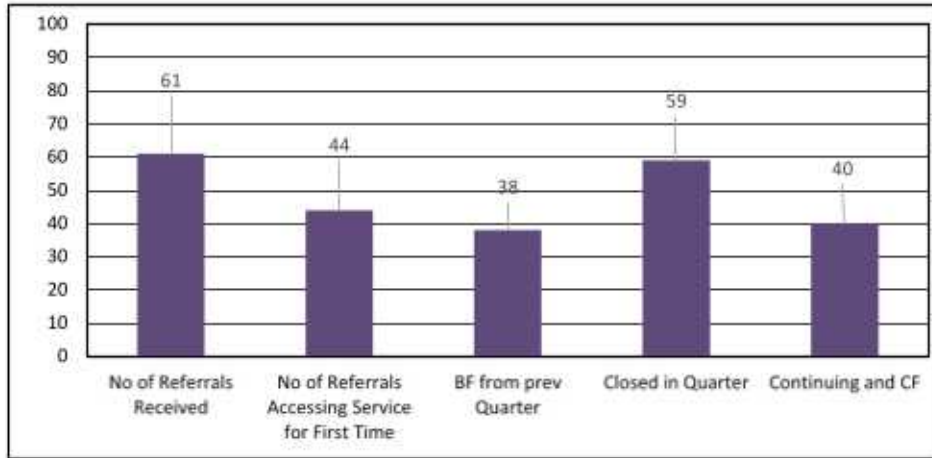
Before arranging to visit Ryan, the advocate contacted both his carers and the referrer to gather information on his communication methods, and any other information about his triggers or anything that would indicate he was uncomfortable with the advocates presence as Ryan was unable to consent to a visit from the advocate.

The advocate also gathered information from those that know Ryan best, about the most appropriate place to visit him and any information relating to safeguarding.

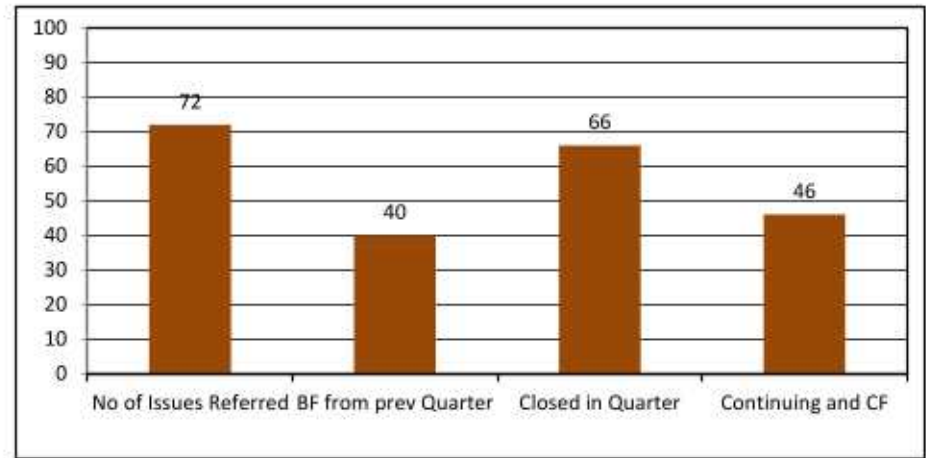
Action The advocate then visited Ryan several times in different settings, making detailed notes of both Ryan's behaviours and interactions, and any other information, specifically about how Ryan communicates his likes and dislikes offered by Ryan's care givers both at school and at home.

Outcome After the observations were complete, the advocate produced an NIA report, outlining the observation visits and posing questions based on those observations. The questions centred around Ryan's school placement being able to offer him opportunities to express choice and influence in his daily life, as well as express his individuality supported by those who have a relationship with him and understand his limited communication. The questions are designed to encourage decision makers to think about Ryan's situation from his point of view, as he is unable to clearly share his wishes and feelings. The report was shared with the IRO who made the referral and was considered in the discussions around Ryan's school placement.

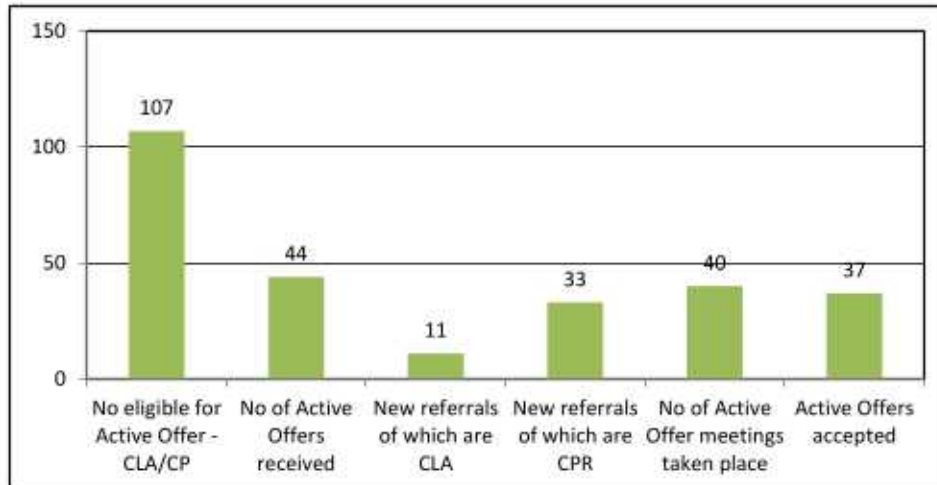
1a. Advocacy Cases - Young People - Issue Based Advocacy



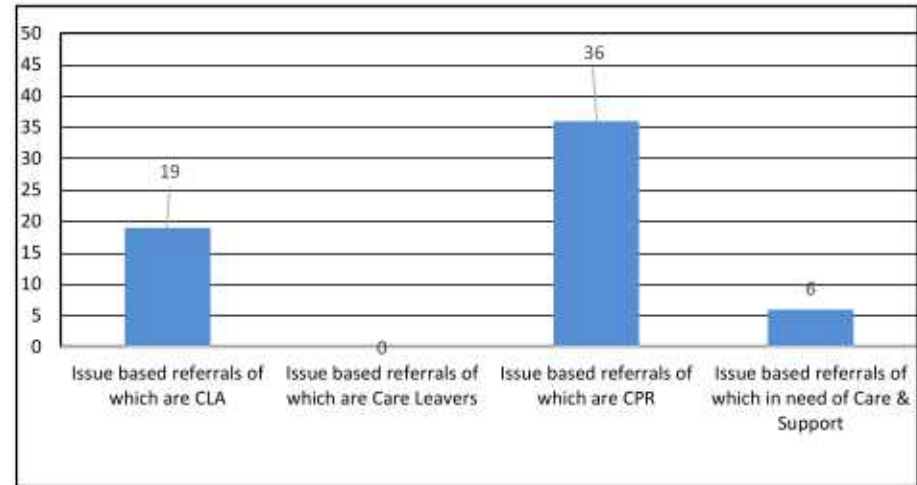
1b. Advocacy Cases - Interventions - Issue Based Advocacy



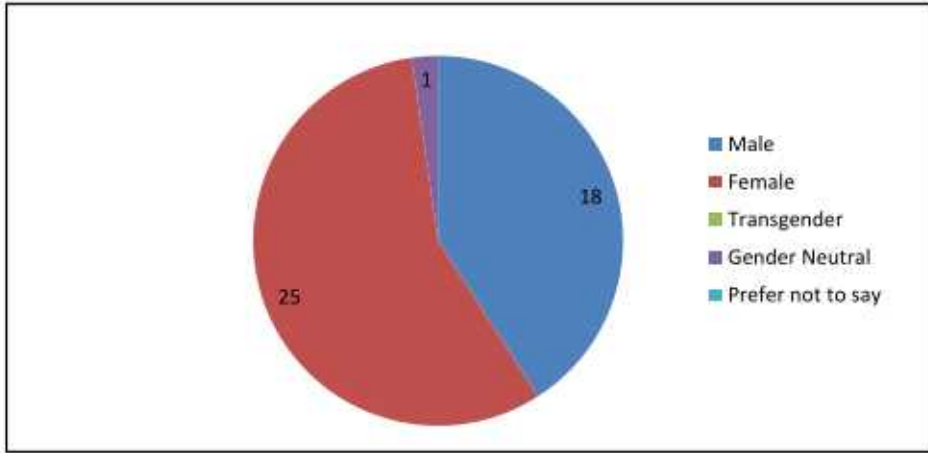
2a. Eligibility Criteria: Active Offer



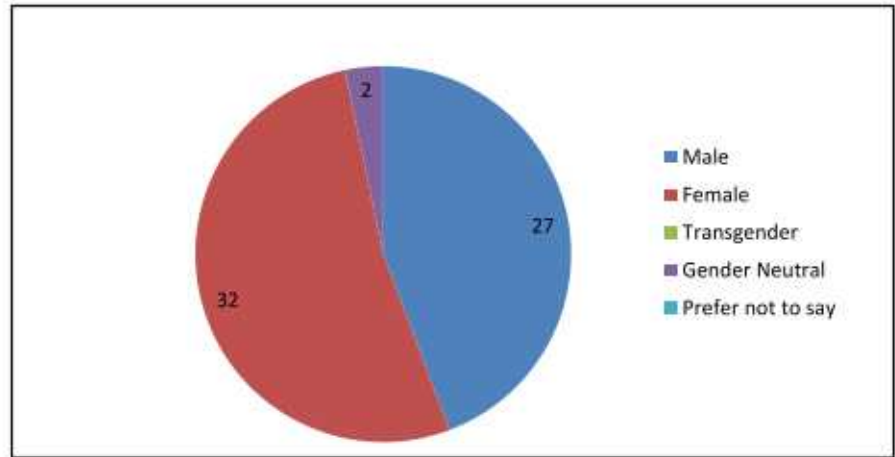
2b. Eligibility Criteria: Issue Based



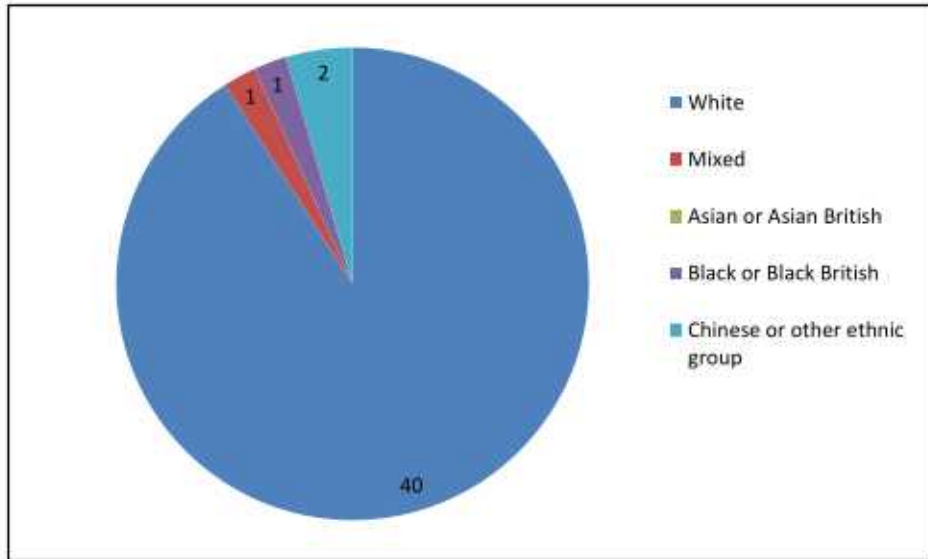
3a. Demographics: Gender - Active Offer



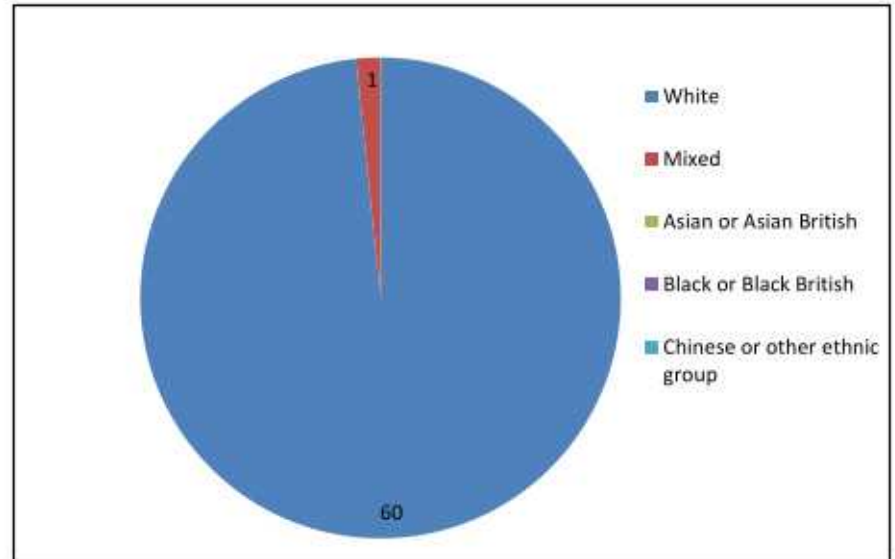
3b. Demographics: Gender - Issue Based



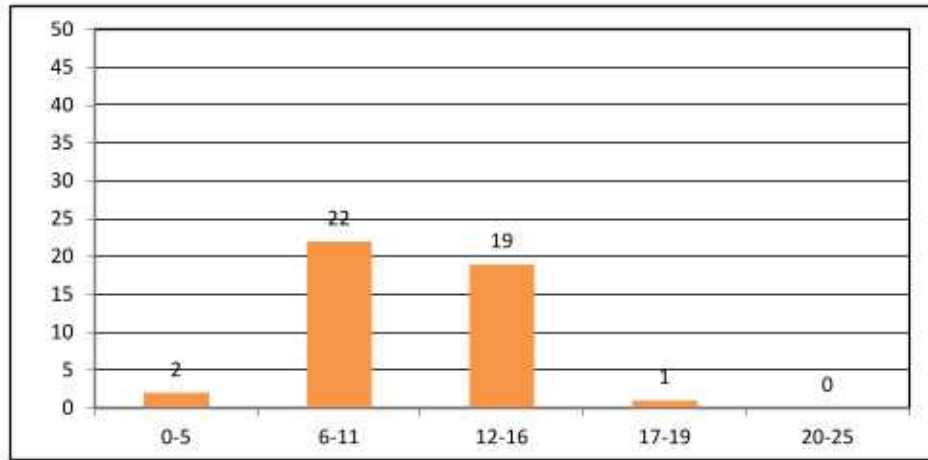
3c. Demographics: Ethnicity - Active Offer



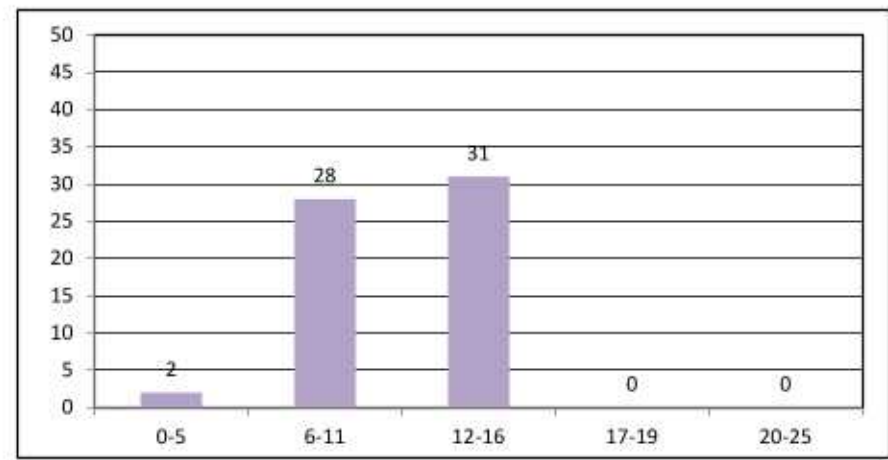
3d. Demographics: Ethnicity - Issue Based



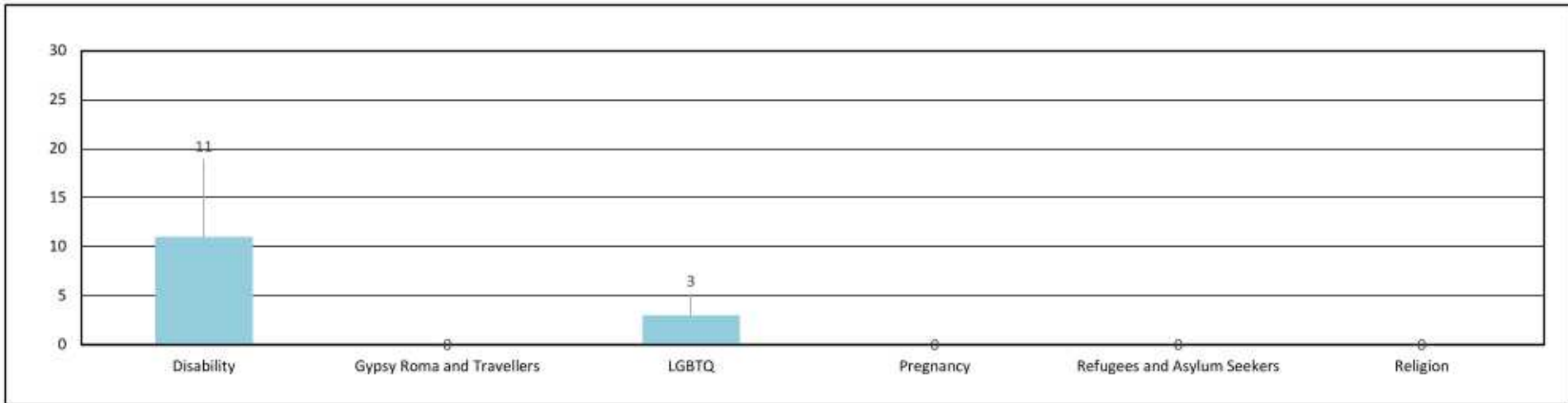
3e. Demographics: Age - Active Offer



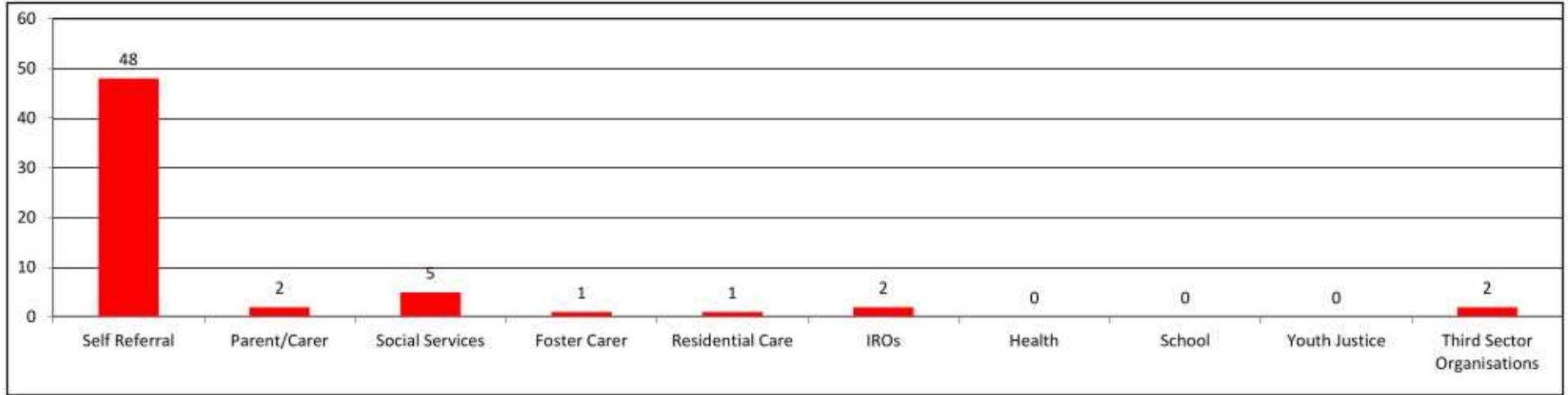
3f. Demographics: Age - Issue Based



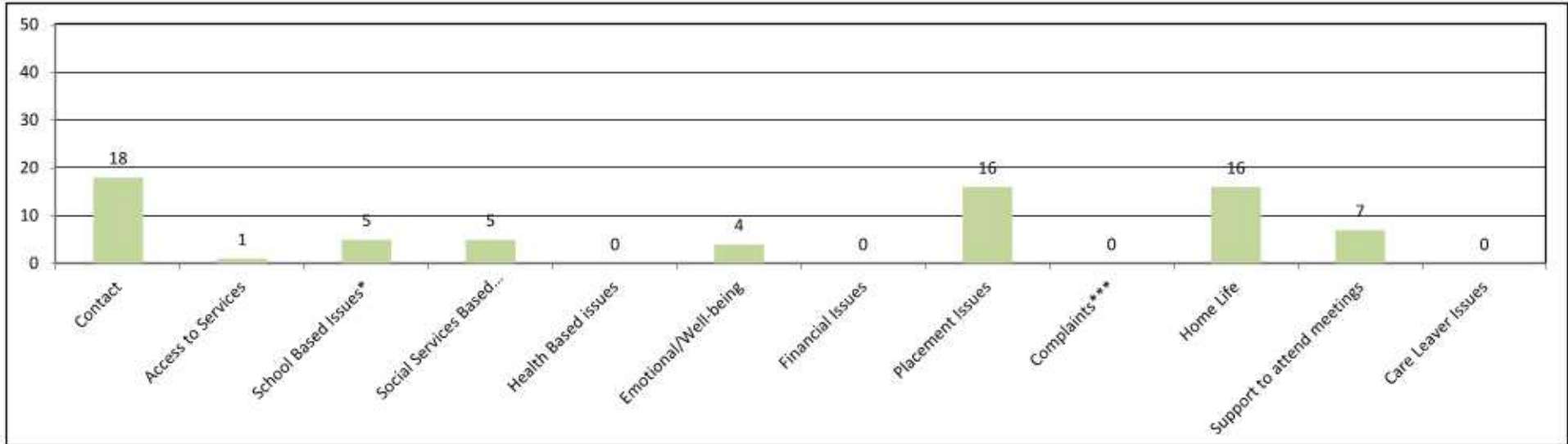
4. Protected Characteristics



5. Referral Source per young person - Issue Based only



6. Issues Presented

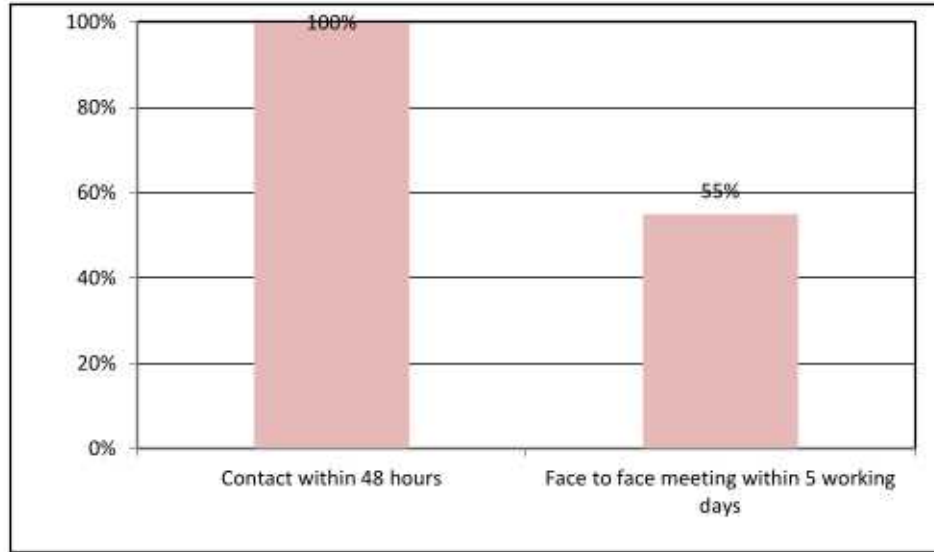


* School based issues including: SEN/ALN, exclusions, bullying, transport.

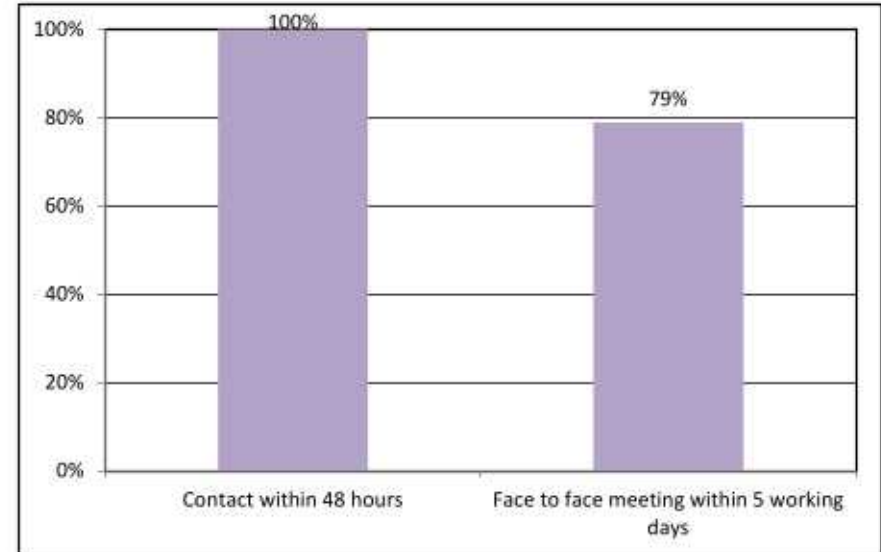
** Social Services based issues including: relationship with worker, care plan, service provided.

*** Complaints refer to any complaints made against statutory services, including Social Service, Police, Health, YJS

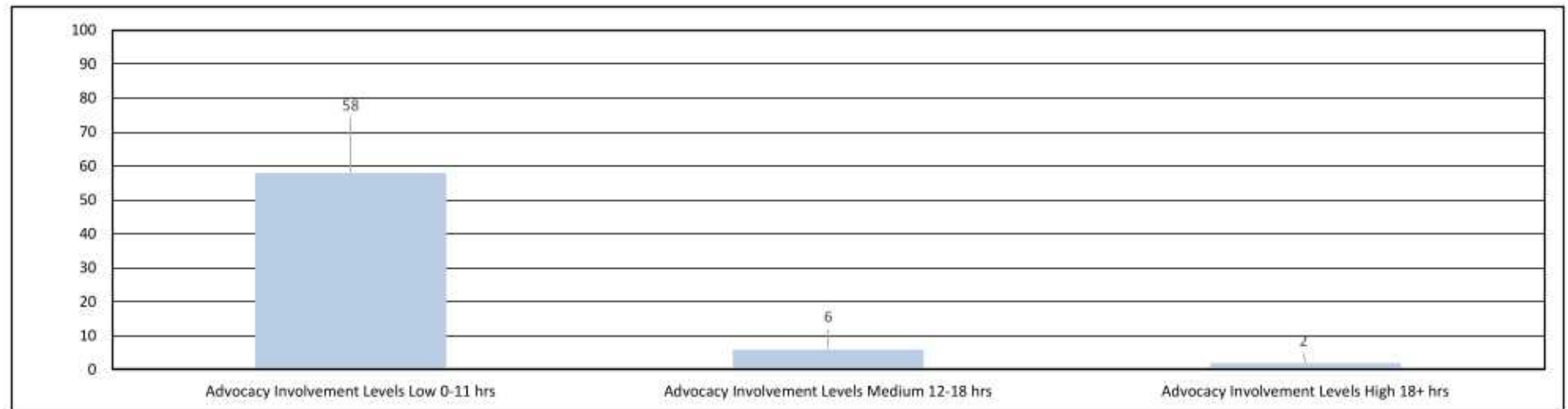
7. Service Performance - Active Offer



Service Performance - Issue Based



8. Level of Advocacy Intervention at point of Issue Closure



9.Outcomes: linked to The National Advocacy Standards & Outcomes Framework

<p>Outcome 1</p>	<p>Children and young people find good quality independent advocacy easily available and accessible.</p>	<p>Across the two service areas, 67% of young people had contact with their advocate within five working days of referral, an increase of 6% when compared with quarter one.</p> <p>Advocates continue to support young people placed out of county, both virtually and in person if requested. Nine young people living outside of RCT were referred for IBA in this period. They lived in Monmouthshire, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Powys, Swansea and Cardiff.</p> <p>As soon as a new advocacy referral is received, our administrator posts a comprehensive advocacy pack to the child or young person. The pack includes lots of information about advocacy, our service and other support services available in Cwm Taf. The advocate is then able to follow up on this during their initial meeting and use the pack as a resource to introduce some of the key concepts such as advocacy and Children's Rights, directly with the child or young person. The young person is then able to keep the pack and have access to this information, even if they choose not to continue with advocacy support.</p> <p>As detailed above, the review of our RVA service will restart when the team is at full capacity. This will ensure young people living in community homes in CTM have access to good quality and effective visiting advocacy services, supported by community home staff.</p>
<p>Outcome 2</p>	<p>Children and young people have their privacy and confidences respected and their wellbeing safeguarded and protected.</p>	<p>Direct work with young people continues to take place during face-to-face visits, although occasionally advocates will contact young people over the phone. This sometimes happens following a request from a young person, or it might be offered if a visit cannot be arranged before a specific meeting. The advocate will always offer a follow up face-to-face visit in this situation.</p> <p>We ask the referrer to tell us where the young person would like to meet the advocate at the point of referral, and the advocate will always attempt to visit the young person at a place they have specified. This is usually in their home or at school, and advocates report many young people find it easier to share how they feel about their home life while at school, where privacy and confidentiality is often easier to maintain.</p> <p>We continue to offer virtual contact to those few young people who prefer to engage over the phone or via a video call. Advocates report some older young people prefer to engage via phone and email, especially if they have work or education commitments.</p>

<p>Outcome 3</p>	<p>Children and young people are valued for their diversity, treated with respect and all forms of discrimination against them are challenged.</p>	<p>During this quarter, of the 61 young people accessing IBA, five have additional learning needs, three have ADHD, two have ADHD and Tourette's and one has ASD and ALN.</p> <p>When young people have additional learning needs, advocates always take advice from their social worker and others who know them best in order to communicate as effectively as possible.</p> <p>One young person was receiving ongoing Non-Instructed-Advocacy (NIA) at the beginning of quarter two.</p> <p>Three young people identifying as LGBTQ were referred for issue-based advocacy in this quarter.</p> <p>Three unaccompanied asylum seeking young people were referred for AO in quarter two. Our Asylum Rights Project (ARP) are currently taking the lead on these cases and the young people will be supported, via translation services to access the service in the language of their choice.</p>
<p>Outcome 4</p>	<p>Children and young people are empowered to take the lead in relation to advocacy services and their rights, wishes and feelings and championed.</p>	<p>Young people consistently tell us they feel empowered to speak up for themselves following advocacy intervention and advocates always encourage young people to speak for themselves when they feel able to do so.</p> <p>As highlighted in the feedback section above, when young people have a positive experience following an advocacy intervention, they often feel encouraged to continue to share their feelings, and challenge decisions they are unhappy about, with or without the support of their advocate.</p> <p>In this period, one young person was supported by her advocate to access independent legal advice in relation to sibling contact.</p> <p>Another young person stated on their feedback form, that following advocacy intervention they</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"can now go to my CLAR."</i></p>
<p>Outcome 5</p>	<p>Children and young people participate in the design, planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy services.</p>	<p>The CTM Advocacy Service Participation Lead will continue to be responsible for keeping up to date with participation and consultation opportunities within Cwm Taf Morgannwg.</p> <p>All young people receiving advocacy support will continue to be offered the opportunity to feedback to TGP Cymru to allow us to monitor the services provided and make improvements where needed. We will continue to make changes to our feedback process to ensure young people experience no barriers in expressing their views about the service they have received.</p> <p>As detailed above, we hope to restart a piece of consultation work with young people living in local authority community homes to capture their thoughts about visiting advocacy. Following this consultation, we will, in partnership with managers of the homes make any necessary changes to ensure all young people are able to access an effective visiting advocacy service.</p>

**Cwm Taf Morgannwg Independent Advocacy Service
RCT Care Experienced Young People and Care Leavers
Report**

Quarter Two July 2023 – September 2023

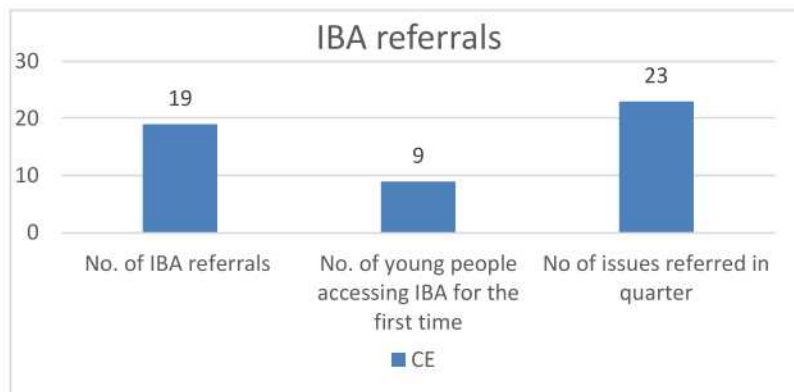


Activity Overview

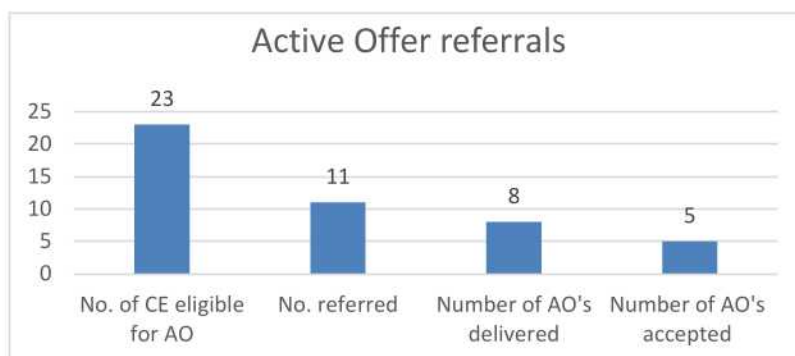
In quarter two, 61 young people accessed Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) and 44 young people were referred for the Active Offer (AO) across RCT.

This report provides information on the service delivered to care experienced (CE) young people and care leavers only.

In quarter two, 19 CE young people accessed IBA, eight more than in the previous quarter. Those 19 young people presented with 23 issues. 11 care experienced young people were referred for the AO, five more than in quarter two, and no care leavers were referred for IBA.



In quarter two, nine of the 19 CE young people accessing IBA were doing so for the first time, four more than in the previous quarter.



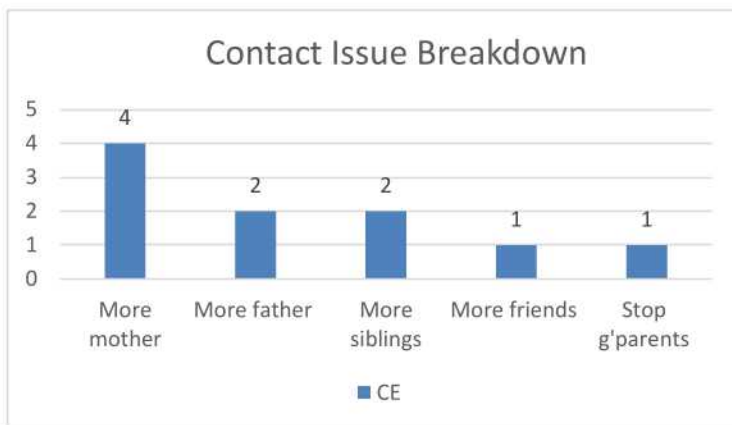
All but one of the 11 young people referred for AO in quarter two became eligible for AO in either quarter one or quarter two.

Ten of the 23 young people who became eligible for AO via the CLA pathway were recorded as rejecting the opportunity to receive the AO in quarter two. The most common reason for rejecting the opportunity receive the AO was young people felt well enough supported by their social worker. The reasons included not wanting to engage with any professionals, feeling that they can advocate for themselves, and wanting to think about it in the future. One person is recorded as rejecting the AO as they already had an advocate.

Nine young people are recorded as accepting the opportunity to meet with an advocate and all nine were referred for AO. Two young people were not referred for AO as their social worker assessed they did not have capacity to understand or consent to the referral. We do not know if the two remaining eligible CE young people have been offered the opportunity to receive the AO by their social worker as this is not recorded on the spreadsheet provided by RCT, although we note the two names are included in the most recent (September) report and it is likely this information will be available in the coming months. This means 38% of those eligible in quarter two were referred for AO, compared to 25% in the previous quarter.



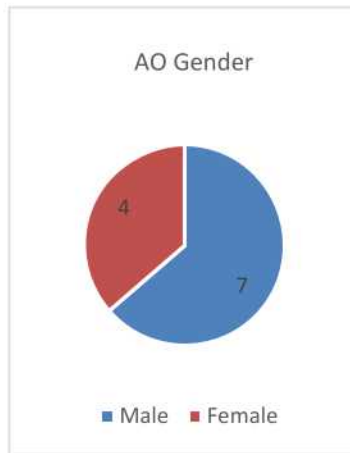
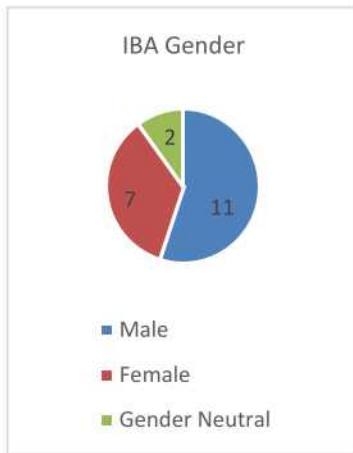
The most popular issues in need of advocacy support in quarter two, were placement followed by contact issues. Placement was also one of the most popular issues in the previous quarter.



Five young people presented with contact issues, and some of those five wanted to share feelings about more than one person. In quarter two, five young people shared their feelings about time spent with ten different individuals or group of individuals. The most popular issue was young people wanting to spend more time with their mother.

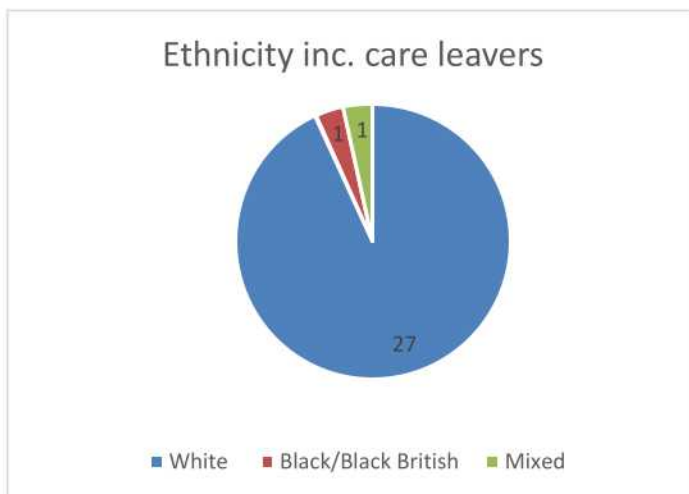


'Self-referral' and social services referrals continue to be the most popular route into the IBA service for care experienced young people. Self-referral is usually either the result of the young person accepting the AO and going on to received IBA, or the young person contacting their advocate directly with a new issue. One referral was made by a TGP Cymru FGM Coordinator.

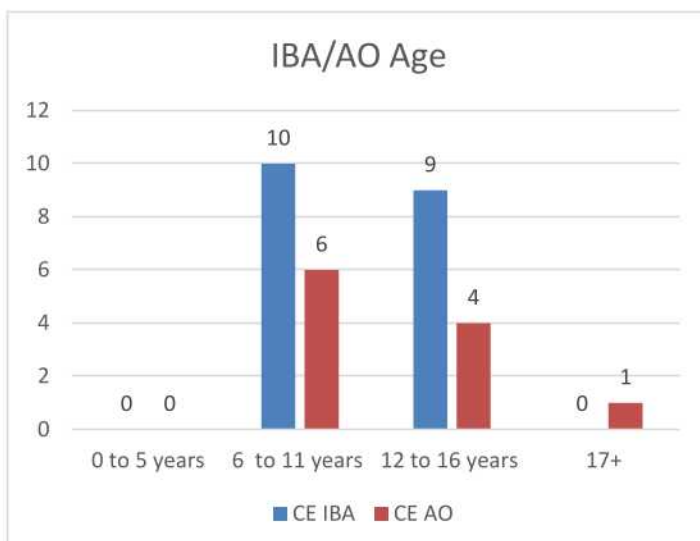


Most CE IBA referrals were for males for the third consecutive quarter. One gender neutral young person was also referred for IBA in quarter two.

Males also made up the majority of AO referrals, as they did in the previous quarter.



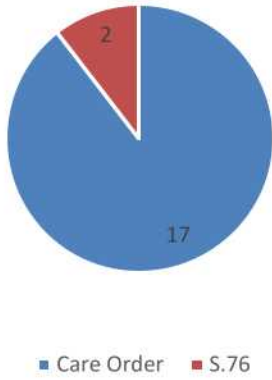
Most CE young people accessing advocacy services in quarter two described themselves as white.



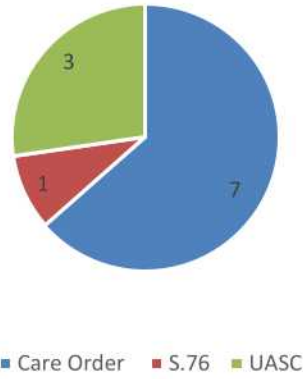
IBA referrals were split almost evenly between those aged between 6 and 11 years, and those aged between 12 and 16 years.

The majority of CE young people referred for AO were also aged between 6 and 11 years, a change from the previous quarter when most young people were aged 12 or over.

IBA Legal Status



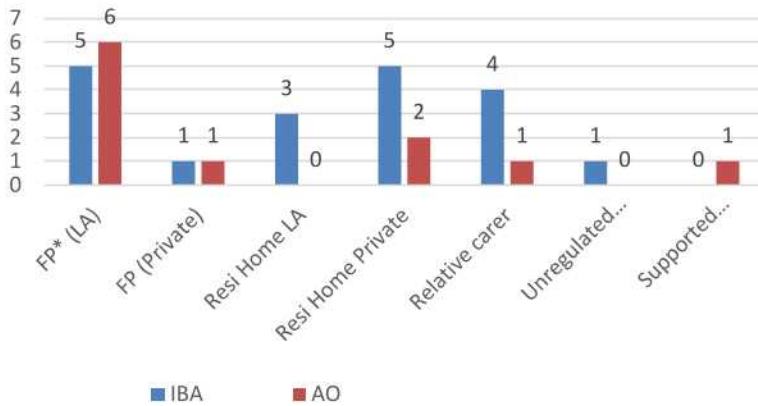
AO Legal Status



Most CE young people accessing IBA and AO in quarter two were again subject to full care orders.

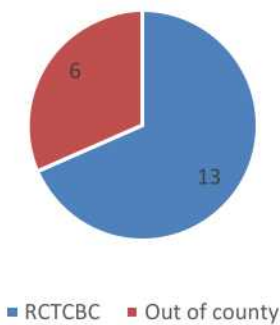
Three unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people were referred for AO but did not continue onto IBA.

IBA/AO Type of Placement

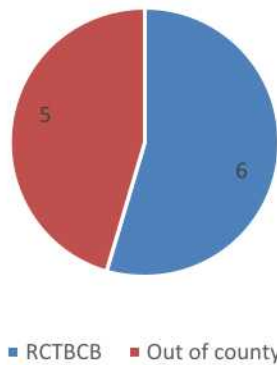


Most CE young people accessing advocacy services in quarter two were living in LA foster placements and community residential homes.

IBA Area inc. Care Leavers



AO Area



Advocates supported six CE young people living outside of RCT in quarter two. Other areas included Swansea, Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, and Pembrokeshire.

Five CE young person referred for AO lived outside of RCT, Newport, the Vale of Glamorgan and Swansea.

Other information

Four CE young people with additional needs were referred for IBA in quarter two. Two have diagnosis of ADHD and one has a diagnosis ADHD along with Tourette's, while another has additional learning needs.

One piece of Non-Instructional Advocacy (NIA) work was completed in this period.

Visiting Advocacy

Residential Visiting Advocacy (RVA) continues in five Local Authority community homes across RCT. Face-to-face visits have continued monthly in Bryndar and Beddau. The remaining three homes, Carn Ingli, Nantygwyn and Ty Brynna have advised monthly visits are not appropriate and have requested the advocate visits every two months and stays connected via telephone contact instead. The RVA advocate is currently providing IBA to two young people living in RCT community homes.

A review of the RVA services was postponed previously to allow us to concentrate on recruitment and advocacy capacity. We had hoped to continue this piece of work during quarter two, but unfortunately, due to sickness within the team we have not been able to restart this work. We hope to restart this piece of work when the team is back at full capacity.

Service Information

The (C.E.) young people and Care Leavers advocacy quarterly progress report was shared at RCT Corporate Parenting Panel at the beginning of July.

The advocacy team manager was invited to the LAC Nurse team meeting in July but unfortunately the meeting was cancelled. Information about advocacy referral routes were shared with the team and we hope to be invited to attend a future meeting.

Following recruitment in quarter one, three new team members joined the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Advocacy Service in quarter two. These are, one full-time advocate, one senior advocate who will work 30 hours per week along with a new casual advocate. Unfortunately, we have experienced some sickness within the team in quarter two, with one full time advocate and the senior advocate having to take extended leave following medical procedures. Both team members are due to return within the next three to four weeks from which time, we are confident recent capacity issues will be addressed and allow us to respond effectively to the recent increase in advocacy referrals.

Conclusion and looking forward.

We are pleased to observe an increase in both IBA and AO referrals for CE young people in quarter two and note more CE young people accessed the service for the first time than in quarter one. We were also pleased to observe another increase in the percentage of eligible CE young people being referred for AO. We appreciate the detailed information regarding the AO take up we receive from the LA and will continue to keep in contact with RCT and share information with a view to understanding the take up of advocacy services in the area.

Case Example

Please find below an example of advocacy work undertaken during the quarter from within RCT. The names have been changed to protect the young person's identity.

Situation Ryan was 16 years old when he was referred to the advocacy service by his Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). In the referral, the IRO described concerns raised by Ryan's carers about his school placement and wanted Ryan to access advocacy services as there were differing opinions about whether Ryan was happy at school, and if he would choose a different setting if he were able to express his opinions. Ryan's additional needs mean it isn't possible for him to access the mainstream advocacy service, and an advocate was allocated to assess whether or not a Non-Instructed Advocacy (NIA) piece of work was appropriate.

Before arranging to visit Ryan, the advocate contacted both his carers and the referrer to gather information on his communication methods, and any other information about his triggers or anything that would indicate he was uncomfortable with the advocates presence as Ryan was unable to consent to a visit from the advocate.

The advocate also gathered information from those that know Ryan best, about the most appropriate place to visit him and any information relating to safeguarding.

Action The advocate then visited Ryan several times in different settings, making detailed notes of both Ryan's behaviours and interactions, and any other information, specifically about how Ryan communicates his likes and dislikes offered by Ryan's care givers both at school and at home.

Outcome After the observations were complete, the advocate produced an NIA report, outlining the observation visits and posing questions based on those observations. The questions centred around Ryan's school placement being able to offer him opportunities to express choice and influence in his daily life, as well as express his individuality supported by those who have a relationship with him and understand his limited communication. The questions are designed to encourage decision makers to think about Ryan's situation from his point of view, as he is unable to clearly share his wishes and feelings. The report was shared with the IRO who made the referral and was considered in the discussions around Ryan's school placement.

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Cwm Taf Morgannwg Independent Visitor Service

Report

April 2023 – September 2023



Scope

The service has been provided for children and young people who are looked after by Cwm Taf Morgannwg, who have little or no contact with their birth family (as defined in The Children Act 1989).

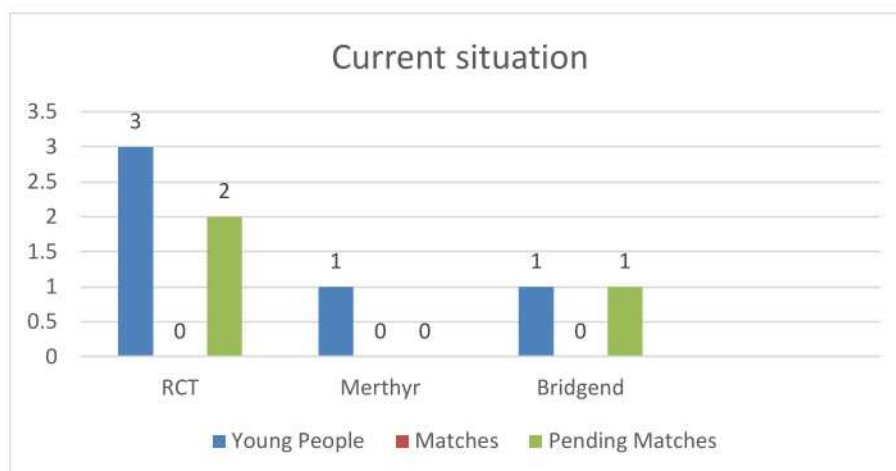
Background

This is the seventh Independent Visiting report, for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region, referred to throughout this report as CTM. CTM comprises three local authorities: Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT), Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils.

We have observed increased interest in volunteering opportunities during this period, and four new potential volunteers started the recruitment process, and one new volunteer has finished the process and is pending being matched. The recruitment process is robust and therefore lengthy, and volunteers require mandatory training before matches can begin.

Matches

The graph below represents the current situation across CTM as of 30th September 2023.



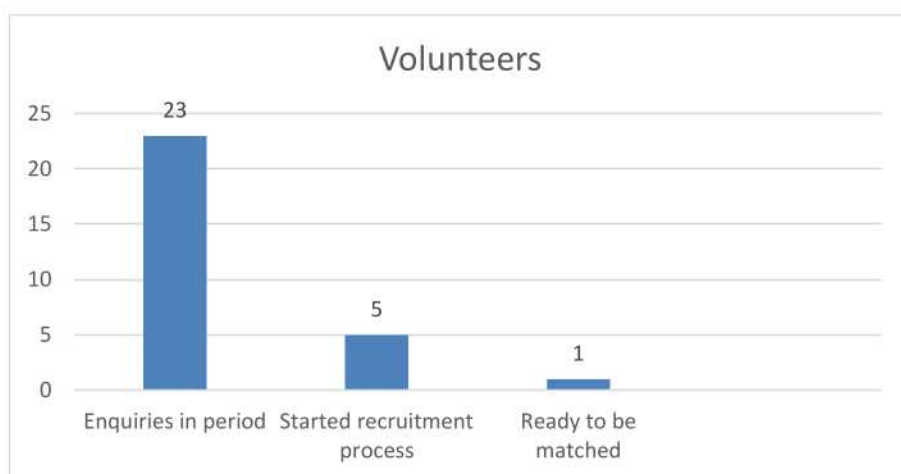
Currently, RCT has three children and young people referred into the service, with no matches. One referred RCT young person, is currently based in Devon. The IV Coordinator has contacted local services but has not yet been able to source a potential volunteer for this young person.

The two remaining RCT young people waiting for an IV are siblings which has prolonged the matching process as we will attempt to match them at the same time. However, we have two potential volunteers awaiting training who we will look to match with the siblings. We are hopeful this will happen in quarter three or the beginning of quarter four.

Merthyr has one young person referred into the service, with no matches. A volunteer was identified as a potential match for this young person at the end of the period, however, the IV Coordinator was asked by both the foster carer and the social worker to put the IV referral on hold as they wanted the young person to complete another piece of work before a match was made. This will be followed up in quarter three.

Bridgend has one young person referred into the service; the IV coordinator will explore the potential of a match with a new volunteer in the next period.

Volunteers



Throughout this reporting period we have received enquiries from 23 potential volunteers and sent out 23 application packs which include information about the IV role. We have accepted five new volunteer applications; one has completed the process and the remaining four are just waiting for the safeguarding and induction training. We are aiming for the remaining four to complete the process in quarter three.

Activity in Quarter Three and Four

Two new IV referrals were received between April 2023 and September 2023.

No new matches were made during this period; however as mentioned above, a volunteer for the Merthyr young person was identified, however professionals decided it was not the right time for him to be matched.

During this period, one matched RCT young person had four visits with their Independent Visitor although this formal IV relationship has now ended as the young person has turned 18.

Another match also ended at the beginning of the period as the young person turned 18 at the end of quarter one. We have been advised the volunteers and young person keep in touch informally, outside of their TGP Cymru role.

Feedback

To date no formal feedback from young people has been collected, however feedback from volunteers on visit record forms has been very positive. The IV coordinator will aim to collect some feedback from the two young people's who matches have recently ended.

Service Information

A dedicated Independent Visitor (IV) Coordinator joined the team in March. The IV Coordinator is currently working 30 hours per week and is employed to coordinate the IV service across both Cwm Taf Morgannwg and Mid and West Wales. We are hopeful that by combining the posts, we will be able to pool resources and grow this service area.

So far, the IV coordinator has –

- started an in-depth social media campaign with an emphasis on promoting the service in local hubs. This is carried out monthly and has generated the most interest and engagement in the volunteering role, all current potential volunteers found out about us on Facebook.
- Worked to develop a relationship with Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO) and attended a Children and Family networking meeting in person.
- Attended an open day for students at Bridgend College and has also been invited back to any future open days.
- Visited local supermarkets to enquire about having a table to advertise, a date is still to be confirmed.
- Contacted Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT) We will be invited to any future advertising events and leaflet was shared.
- Merthyr College – contacted the college and they agreed to share the leaflet with students.
- Swansea University – invited us to join the website they use to advertise local volunteering opportunities, currently in the process of setting up and account to advertise.
- We have updated our leaflets and promotional equipment to give a better understanding of the role and more information.

Previous priorities:

- **Attempt to facilitate matches for all young people on the waiting list.**
Despite several applications and one volunteer completing the recruitment process, we have not been able to facilitate any new matches in this period, but we are hopeful

to have a number of new matches in the next period when the potential volunteers complete training.

- **Continue to pursue those who made enquiries about volunteering with an aim to overcoming barriers and beginning the recruitment process.**

We have contacted all previous potential volunteers; however, none were able to begin the recruitment process. This was due to personal circumstances, and no barriers were identified.

- **Promote the IV Service with Children's Services across the Cwm Taf Region.**

We are going look at promoting the service to the children's services across Cwm Taf when more potential volunteers complete the training and are ready to be matched.

Future Priorities:

- **Get the potential volunteers through training and matched with young people.**
- **Continue to network with local organisations.**
- **Develop a process to allow children and young people who have been matched with an IV to formally share their views about the service.**
- **Continue the social media campaign and search for new groups/pages to share the information in areas IVs are most needed.**

Summary

Despite the challenges of volunteer recruitment, we are pleased to have attracted increased enquiries from potential volunteers. We are looking forward to getting the potential volunteers through their training and getting them matched. We believe the recruitment of a dedicated IV Coordinator working four days per week across the two regions has greatly enhance our ability to promote the service and attract volunteers.

We will continue to prioritise recruiting volunteers, and matching young people referred into the service as soon as possible.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

VALE, VALLEYS AND CARDIFF REGIONAL ADOPTION COLLABORATION ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

30TH JANUARY 2024

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR G CAPLE

Author: Annabel Lloyd, Director of Children's Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to provide Corporate Parenting Board members with information about the performance of the Regional Adoption Collaboration (RAC) Board.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- 2.1 Note the information.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Adoption is an important permanence option for younger children where reunification cannot be considered. The RAC is required to present an annual report to elected members.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Vale, Valleys, and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) as part of the National Adoption Service in Wales (NAS), provides a regional adoption service to the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cardiff Council and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council.
- 4.2 This is VVC's seventh annual report and covers the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2022. (Annual report). The report has been extended to cover the first six months of this reporting year to incorporate the

requirement to review the service under Regulation 39 of the Local Authority Adoption Services (Wales) Regulations 2019. It also incorporates the reporting requirements set out in the governance arrangements for the region in one report. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided is an accurate record of the activity and quality of the adoption service.

4.3 The annual report has the following Appendices:

Appendix 1 sets out key performance data in respect of children by quarter and local authority.

Appendix 2 provides information in respect of adopter enquiries and recruitment of adopters.

Appendix 3 provides information in respect of Adoption Support.

Appendix 4 provides information in respect of Adoption Panel activity.

5. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out in relation to this specific report,

6. **WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Likewise, a Welsh Language Impact Assessment has not been carried out in relation to this specific report

7. **CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

7.1 Staff, partner agencies, Panel members, young people and parents are often involved in developmental activities linked to the National Adoption Service.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

8.1 The work outlined in this report is delivered within children's services budgeted resources.

9. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

10.2 The work outlined here will help the Council to meet three of the seven wellbeing goals that The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' puts in place as follows:

- A more equal Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities

10.3 The proposed changes are also consistent with the sustainable approach promoted by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act through the five ways of working:

- Long-term – the proposals seek to make a long-term difference to people's lives, the way we work with families and the Council's resources.
- Prevention – the proposal is fundamentally focused upon strengthening our prevention offer.
- Integration – Partner organisations work jointly to achieve good outcomes for children and families
- Collaboration and Involvement – Families, and staff are often involved in the evaluation and proposal

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 At the end of the reporting period, the service is able to report a healthy level of performance. In terms of the placement of children for adoption, a significant number have been placed in a timely way and there are less children waiting. The region has not experienced a marked reduction in referrals for adoption as apparent in other areas, but this will be continue to be monitored closely on a regional and national basis. Similarly, VVC has also been able to approve a significant pool of adopters during this time with the result that more children can be placed within the region. The need however, to continue to recruit more adopters for our more complex children remains a priority for VVC whilst at the same time managing the expectations of those adopters waiting. The reduction in enquiries to adopt again will need to be monitored carefully to ensure that the service can respond proactively and remain innovative in order to attract the best families.

12.2 Going forward Adoption Support probably represents the biggest set of challenges for VVC. The requirement to build robust Adoption Support plans for children with ongoing support as needed and for this to underpin our core offer for adopters does impact upon our ability to adequately resource these requirements. The need to reduce our

waiting list for services and to ensure that our service is targeted to those most in need remain a priority.

- 12.3 The requirement to develop Adoption Support services is set against a backdrop of an ever-increasing national improvement agenda. The full implementation of the NAS Good Practice Guides places new expectations upon the way services work with adopters, birth parents and children and young people both pre and post adoption. The full impact of these new ways of working will need to be monitored and evaluated. The appointment of the Social Care Officers within the service provides the region with an exciting opportunity to meet some of these expectations especially in terms of follow up with adoptive families and birth parents post adoption and so their roles will need to be developed to meet these expectations. Meeting the objectives laid out in the NAS Adopt Cymru 2025 does also place other expectations upon the service which will have to be evaluated so that gaps in meeting these objectives can be identified.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

30TH JANUARY 2024

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH
THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR G CAPLE**

**VALE, VALLEYS AND CARDIFF REGIONAL ADOPTION
COLLABORATION ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023**

Officer to contact: Annabel Lloyd, Director of Children's Services

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APPENDIX A



VALE, VALLEYS, AND CARDIFF ADOPTION COLLABORATIVE REVIEW OF SERVICE AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

For Period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2022

NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE



**Achieving More Together /
Cyflawni Mwy Gyda'n Gilydd**

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VALE, VALLEYS, AND CARDIFF ADOPTION COLLABORATIVE (VVC) ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1st APRIL 2021 to 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** Vale, Valleys, and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) as part of the National Adoption Service in Wales (NAS), provides a regional adoption service to the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cardiff Council and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council.
- 1.2** This is VVC's seventh annual report and covers the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2022. The report has been extended to cover the first six months of this reporting year to incorporate the requirement to review the service under Regulation 39 of the Local Authority Adoption Services (Wales) Regulations 2019. It also incorporates the reporting requirements set out in the governance arrangements for the region in one report. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided is an accurate record of the activity and quality of the adoption service.
- 1.3** The report has the following Appendices:

Appendix 1 sets out key performance data in respect of children by quarter and local authority.

Appendix 2 provides information in respect of adopter enquiries and recruitment of adopters.

Appendix 3 provides information in respect of Adoption Support.

Appendix 4 provides information in respect of Adoption Panel activity.

2. SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

- 2.1** The organisational and managerial structure of the service has remained unchanged during this period with service delivery structured around Family Finding, Recruitment & Assessment, Adoption Support and Business Support.
- 2.2** The context for service delivery during a significant part of the reporting period has been the global pandemic and the impact this has had upon the way services are delivered. VVC's office has largely remained closed during this time with the majority of staff working from home. Some Business Support staff have continued to work from the office to carry out core tasks and staff utilise the office for specific purposes and to improve work life balance. Due to the geographical spread of the region staff had been used to agile working and so have adapted well to the hybrid mix of face to face and virtual working arrangements. Office working was subject to a risk assessment process during COVID -19, but this has been relaxed as national restrictions have eased.
- 2.3** Despite the restrictions the service has continued to face increased demands, particularly in relation Adoption Support. These pressures are set against an ever-increasing national agenda and the implementation of the NAS Good Practice Guides during 2021-22. A review of capacity issues and the impact of the implementation of the new initiatives upon service delivery was undertaken in April 2021 and presented to VVC Management Board. The report contained an options appraisal for additional resources to meet the increased demand in the immediate, medium, and longer term. These options were further considered by the regional Heads of Service in July & September 2021. Additional investment to employ 2.5 Social Care Officers within the Adoption Support Team and additional capacity within the Business Support Team was agreed and was submitted as part of the cost pressures process in each of the four authorities.

- 2.4** Quarterly meetings of VVC's Management Board have continued to be held and twice-yearly meetings of the Joint Committee. An additional Joint Committee meeting was convened in September 2021 to consider the proposals to meet the capacity pressures prior to the budget setting process.
- 2.5** The budget for the Collaborative is managed by the Vale of Glamorgan and is monitored closely by the Management Board and approved by the Joint Committee. Due to the vacancy position and revenue generated by VVC adopters being utilised by external agencies, the end of year position reported a significant underspend in the budget for 2021-22. A proposal to retain the underspend within VVC was agreed by Management Board and Joint Committee. These monies are being allocated to provide additional Adoption Support services, independent assessments, and the regional contribution to the TESSA programme.
- 2.6** VVC 's financial and governance arrangements are subject to an annual audit by Bridgend and Vale Internal Audit Shared Service. This audit was conducted remotely in May 2022 and recommended "Reasonable Assurance as a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control were in place". The areas for improvement which were identified related to the financial process in respect of purchasing cards and the need to review VVC's WASPI/ISP. An action plan in respect of the audit recommendations has been developed and an update against the plan has recently been provided for the auditor.
- 2.7** There has been no change to the membership of the Management Board during this period although the membership of the Joint Committee changed in May 2022 following the local elections. This caused a delay in convening the meeting scheduled for May 2022 and so a combined meeting of VVC Management Board and Joint Committee took place in July 2022. The Directors for the partner authorities also attended this meeting.
- 2.8** The Operational Group has continued to meet although competing demands placed upon local authority representatives and managerial gaps within VVC has impacted upon frequency of meetings and quoracy. As a result of this the terms of reference for

the Operational Group have been revised and agreed by Management Board to allow a quoracy of three officers from the partner authorities and an agreed mechanism for agreeing matters outside the meeting where one partner authority is absent. A joint Heads of Service & Operational Group meeting was held in June 2022 to look at Adoption Support issues and a further meeting of the Operational Group was held in September 2022 enabling the schedule of meetings to resume.

- 2.9** The agendas for all these levels of regional governance have remained full, incorporating a range of matters including budget approval, performance reporting, setting service priorities and relevant aspects from the national agenda. IPC attended the July 2021 meeting of the Management Board to present the regional findings in respect of IPC'S Evaluation of the Adoption Support Framework.
- 2.10** The service has continued to comply with all required performance monitoring and reporting to the National Adoption Service (NAS). Internal data collection systems have been adapted to incorporate the increased range of measures required to support the two-stage model of adopter assessment and the new raft of adoption support measures which will be collected from October 2022. The Regional Manager has been part of a working group initiated by Western Bay to develop the adoption modules for WCCIS. These have now been completed and work is underway to build them into the national system. Meetings have been held locally to begin the process of VVC transferring their record system onto WCCIS once the new system is live.
- 2.11** The Regional Manager and Team Managers remain active participants in national forums and subgroups. The Regional Manager attends monthly meetings for Regional Adoption Managers facilitated by NAS and monthly meetings which involve representatives from the voluntary adoption agencies. In addition, the Head of Service for the Vale of Glamorgan, as host authority and the Regional Manager attend bi - monthly meetings with other regional and national leads to plan the business delivery of the national service from a regional perspective. In 2021 the Regional Manager contributed to the development of NAS guidance in respect of the transfer of Adoption Support cases at the three-year point post Adoption Order. The Recruitment &

Assessment Manager was also part of a national group developing NAS' Welsh Early Permanence Strategy.

3. Staffing

- 3.1** The overall staffing establishment remained the same during 2021, although there has been some staff turnover in all teams. Within the Recruitment & Assessment Team, three experienced Social Workers began their maternity leave during 2021 and another experienced full-time member of staff changed roles to fill a vacancy in the Adoption Support Team. Attempts to fill all these vacancies were unsuccessful although a temporary part time appointment was made to fill one of the positions. Slippage monies were therefore allocated to buy in independent support to assist with some of the assessment work within the team especially in respect of non- agency applications.
- 3.2** Within the Adoption Support Team, an experienced member of staff left at the beginning of the period to take up a post within NAS Central Team although this position was filled via internal transfer. Some agency cover has been provided to address some of the pressures within the team funded from the reserves.
- 3.3** In terms of the specialist posts funded from the 2019 Welsh Government investment for adoption services, the service monitors any movement of staff within these posts carefully to ensure that gaps are covered quickly, and performance is maintained. The Regional Adoption Manager completed six monthly returns to NAS during 2021-22 to report upon the performance of the region in relation to these posts to ensure continuation of the funding.
- 3.4** As a result of the discussions concerning capacity within the service regional partners agreed to some additional investment to support the work of the Adoption Support Team and to review the structure of the Business Support Team to take effect from April 2022. The new Social Care Officer posts have been created and recruited to and work is underway to reconfigure posts within the Business Support Team to provide additional capacity.

3.5 Similar to other services, VVC experienced a number of staff contracting COVID -19 during this period requiring periods of absence from work alongside a couple of staff on long-term absence. This was carefully monitored by the service and appropriate support systems were put in place.

4. SERVICE FUNCTIONS

4.1. Performance against each of the service functions is outlined under the following sections of the report alongside areas of development.

5. FAMILY FINDING

5.1 Family Finding and its' associated activities remains a key area of activity for the region and the ability to place children effectively and promptly underpins all other activities.

5.2 The number of children referred for adoption totalled **155**. Over the past three years referral levels have shown slight fluctuation with an increase in 2020-21 which reduced again in 2021-22 but overall remain fairly stable. Nationally there is a trend towards a decrease in the number of children referred for adoption and therefore this will need to be monitored in 2022-23 for any noticeable reduction.

5.3 **48%** of children referred to VVC were withdrawn and did not require a plan of adoption which positively shows alternative Care Plans have been put in place for those children. This figure is an increase from the 43% of referrals withdrawn in the previous year and may reflect the work being undertaken by local authorities to reduce the number of children needing to be 'looked after'. As noted in previous years, withdrawn referrals in many instances do not equate to a decrease in workload for the service as a lot of work is undertaken to progress the adoption process prior to it being discontinued, particularly from administrative roles within VVC.

5.4 The number of 'Should be Adopted' decisions made in respect of children increased during this year to **90** (from the 80 and 81 in previous years). This is to be expected in

line with a higher number of referrals during 2020-21 which resulted in 'SBA' decisions within that year and in 2021-22.

- 5.5** The region has recorded **79** Placement Orders being made within the year, which shows an increase from figures in the past couple of years and which would be expected in line with increased referrals and Should be Adopted decisions. It is anticipated that this figure will continue to fluctuate but not significantly from this level based upon the number of referrals received during 2021-22. Should referral rates significantly decline there will be a noticeable impact on the number of Placement Orders granted.
- 5.6** VVC placed **85** children for adoption during the year which is a considerable increase from the 65 of the previous year. This would seem in line both with an increase in Placement Orders but also the successful recruitment of adopters undertaken by the region. Planning for placements in the early part of 2021-22 had to take into account Covid-19 risk assessments but as the year progressed this became less of a necessity. Due to the careful planning of Social Workers within the service the additional demands around Covid-19 have not caused significant delay in placing children for adoption.
- 5.7** Just **34%** of children matched with adopters waited more than the benchmark of 6 months from Should be Adopted decision to matching which is positive and reflects the increased availability of adopters within the region. VVC continues to place a high proportion of our children with VVC approved adopters (**72%**) maintaining a similar level to recent years.
- 5.8** At the end of the March 2022 there were **51** children on Placement Orders awaiting an adoptive placement (down from 63 in the previous year). Of these 17 had active links and went on to be matched with adopters during Q1 of 2022-23. It is positive to see a continued decrease in the number of children waiting for adoptive placements.

- 5.9** There were **80** Adoption Orders granted during the year which is a continued pattern from previous years. There were no placements which disrupted during 2021-22 which is hugely encouraging.
- 5.10** Performance in relation to the provision of Life Journey Material for children being placed for adoption has improved considerably over recent years and is 100% at matching and 90% of final materials at the 2nd adoption review. There remain some challenges for the capacity of Social Workers within the local authorities to finalise the later life letters for children which affects the 2nd review performance. The Life Journey Work Co-ordinators are developing further training and guidance to assist in improving the quality of the materials provided as well as on how to support local authority Social Workers to achieve 100% compliance. As a region we will be exploring the impact of the new performance indicators for 2022-23 in relation to life journey work which form part of the new measures to be collected from October 2022.
- 5.11** The Life Journey Work Co-ordinator post is now shared between two part-time workers due to the previous Co-ordinator leaving the post in autumn 2021. The Co-ordinators offer regular support, advice, and guidance to the Life Journey Work Practitioners within our partner authorities and in addition offer workshops/briefings to local authority teams. The Life Journey Work Co-ordinators support the allocation process within each authority and monitor performance across the region. The Co-ordinators are developing an Improvement Plan to support both improvement in measurable performance and in qualitative feedback on the materials themselves.
- 5.12** During 2021-22 the Transitions Worker supported **40** children through a combination of direct work, support for foster carers and adopters and completion of Trauma Nurture Timeline reports. Transitions support is provided for all our children aged 3+ and has become integral to the service that we offer and to our ability to provide an enhanced level of support to children moving on to adoption. The demand on this service over the past year has meant that priority has had to be given to the direct work needed for children and other aspects of the role have had to wait longer e.g., training and Understanding the Child Days. VVC has continued to review the impact

of the expectations from NAS Good Practice Guides and consider the capacity implications for our service.

- 5.13** VVC has continued to embrace the use of all available family finding methods over the year. The team liaises closely with the Adoption Register Wales (ARW)/LinkMaker team to ensure information is updated and monitored in a timely manner. We have been able to participate in national profiling events and an Activity Day over the past year. During 2021-22 we continued to refer children into the Adopting Together Scheme although the one match identified through this scheme could not proceed until the start of 2022-23 due to a legal challenge made by birth parents.

Family Finding Performance 1 April 2021 -30 September 2022

- 5.14** The number of children referred for adoption during the first six months of 2022-23 is **73**. If this trend continues for the remainder of this reporting year this will place referrals on a similar trend to previous years. Whilst nationally there has been a decrease in referrals into adoption this doesn't appear to be reflected regionally within VVC.
- 5.15** It is too early to consider the rate of children referred who have been withdrawn as many of these children are still within care proceedings and so the plan for adoption could change. In previous years this has been between 43-48% of referrals.
- 5.16** To date **34** 'Should be Adopted' decisions have been made. This could reflect a slight decline in the number of 'Should be Adopted' decisions for the year if this figure were doubled in the second 6 months however it is too early to draw any conclusions. Likewise, the region has recorded **33** Placement Orders being made which is in line with the number of 'Should be Adopted' decisions and rate of referrals. Should referral rates significantly decline there will be a noticeable impact on the number of Placement Orders granted.
- 5.17** VVC has placed **28** children for adoption during the year to date. There has been a slight reduction in Placement Orders over recent years which would result in less children requiring placement for adoption. However, family finding and matching

activity for the start of Quarter 3 is scheduled to be very busy and therefore we anticipate a higher rate of placements during Quarter 3.

- 5.18** 48% of children matched with adopters during the year to date waited more than the benchmark of 6 months from Should be Adopted decision to matching. This does however include a sibling group of 4 who were placed with in-house adopters, and which slightly inflate the figure. 75% of children placed this year so far have been placed with in-house adopters.
- 5.19** As at the end of September 2022 there were **53** children waiting for an adoptive placement. 20 of those children have an 'active link' defined as the matching meeting having taken place and the matching panel having been booked. 3 children have an alternative care plan being pursued where they will be remaining with their current foster carers and for 1 child's foster carers are currently being assessed as prospective adopters, albeit not defined as yet as an 'active link'. Therefore, there are 29 children still waiting for a link, 22 of which had their Placement Orders within the last 6 months.
- 5.20** There were **41** Adoption Orders granted within the first 6 months of 2022-23 which is a continued pattern from previous years. There have been no placements which disrupted during 2022-23 which is hugely encouraging. One match did not proceed to placement due to a sudden change in personal circumstances for the adopter during the introductory period.
- 5.21** Performance in relation to the provision of Life Journey Material for children being placed for adoption has been maintained at a similar level.
- 5.22** During the first 6 months of the year our Transitions worker has supported **30** children through a combination of direct work, support for foster carers and adopters and completion of Trauma Nurture Timeline reports. Some of these children were referred in 2021-22 and so work has continued into 2022-23 and 11 of these have been new referrals in this year.

- 5.23** As indicated earlier one child was placed in the first quarter of 2022-23 under Adopting Together and a further match for a sibling group of two under is being considered.
- 5.24** One child has also recently been placed under a Welsh Early Permanence arrangement which allows the adopters to foster the child prior to the plan for adoption being agreed.

6. RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT

Marketing

- 6.1** For the past few years, VVC's Marketing and Recruitment Strategy has continued to focus on raising the profile of the service and helping the public see the Collaborative as very much their first choice when they are exploring adoption. This has been achieved by ensuring VVC has a physical and virtual presence. The Recruitment and Marketing Officer's role remains essential in ensuring the service develops both platforms to continue to raise VVC's profile.
- 6.2** During 2021 -22, VVC utilised the opportunity to include an information insert into the Council Tax mail drops for all residents of Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. Unfortunately, the Council Tax Team serving the Vale of Glamorgan confirmed they were not able to assist us for this particular year. Shortly after residents received the inserts, the service saw a small increase in the number of enquiries quoting the fact that they had received our details in the post, and this had prompted their enquiry. It is hoped that this type of marketing will serve as a reference point should individuals wish to consider adoption in the future.
- 6.3** As a result of COVID restrictions, the service continued to face challenges in exploring opportunities to attend in-person marketing events but as the restrictions have eased VVC has begun to focus upon some in person events. In August VVC were able to have a stand at the Vale of Glamorgan show. In addition, members of VVC staff assisted and represented the service at this year's National Eisteddfod of Wales. VVC also supported the national service in having a presence at this year's Cardiff Pride. Two of the three adoptive parents who participated in the Pride adoption discussion

were VVC adopters. More recently, VVC's Recruitment & Assessment Manager was interviewed live on BBC Radio Wales for an afternoon segment promoting adoption. All of these events have led to positive engagement with the public and supports the goal of raising the general awareness of the service.

- 6.4** Our Marketing Officer remains proactive in ensuring posters and physical information promoting the service is being displayed in high footfall areas across the region. In addition to physical advertising, VVC has utilised social media. VVC has active Instagram and Facebook accounts where we encourage existing adoptive families to remain engaged with us along with buying pay-per-click advertising. The service has experienced positive engagement through these platforms and the reach of the pay-per-click advertising is substantial.
- 6.5** Looking ahead, VVC intends to revisit the Council Tax inserts for all four local authorities, to continue building on our social media presence and explore all appropriate opportunities to attend in-person community events. To date the strategy appears to be working as over half of our enquirers continue to be members of the community who come direct to the service via our website.

Recruitment of Adopters

- 6.6** VVC received a total of **369** enquiries during 2021-22. This is a decrease when compared to the previous reporting year (377) but an increase when compared to 2019-20 (336). A reduction in the number of enquires has been reported by the other four regional Collaboratives and it is now a pattern being observed by our enquiry numbers for the first six months of 2022-23 where 98 enquiries were received compared with 165 for the same period last year.
- 6.7** VVC continues to maintain a well-established and professional tracking system whereby a response to all enquiries is made within five working days (typically within 1 working day). When tracking enquiries, as much information as possible is captured to understand the enquirer's circumstances and how they heard about our service. Every enquiry is followed up by the Marketing Officer on three occasions (within the first week, followed by 1 month and 6 months).

- 6.8** Whilst neither VVC nor the national service have commissioned any research into understanding the reasons behind the reduction, it is suspected that a number of factors are pertinent e.g., the cost of living and fuel crisis could be leading to people being more cautious about beginning the process at such an uncertain time. As part of the monitoring of enquiries, reasons for non-progression are recorded in order to better understand the decline in enquiries.
- 6.9** During 2021-22 the Collaborative hosted nine virtual Information Evenings for prospective applicants. These events were delivered remotely by VVC's Recruitment and Assessment Manager and Marketing Officer. 113 households attended these events and feedback received has continued to be positive. This represents a small decrease in the number of households that attended an Information Evening when compared to the previous year (136 households).
- 6.10** Since April 2022, five virtual Information Evenings have been held with a total of 50 households attending. This again represents a decrease when compared to the same period last year as 73 households attended. This is unsurprising given the reduction in the number of enquiries.
- 6.11** Since January 2021 VVC's virtual Preparation to Adopt training course has been jointly delivered with one of our neighbouring adoption collaboratives, Western Bay and a member of staff from VVC. This collaboration has worked well, as it affords applicants greater flexibility in attendance. The feedback regarding the course content and delivery is universally positive. In order to enable participants to build networks with other participants, a WhatsApp group has been set up for VVC participants which enables them to remain connected if they chose to do so.
- 6.13** The course was held on nine occasions during the last reporting year and on four occasions during the past six months. One course was cancelled due to this being scheduled for the same date as the state funeral of Queen Elizabeth II.

- 6.14** During 2021-22 59 VVC households attended the preparation training. Out of these 59, four withdrew following the training as they no longer felt adoption was the right choice for them. A further four applicants withdrew during the assessment process. Reasons included ill-health, change of mind, and change of circumstances.
- 6.15** In addition to the Preparation to Adopt training course, the service also offers a bespoke second-time adopters 1-day training course. This course is scheduled when there are sufficient number of attendees. When numbers are insufficient to hold the training, individual assessing social workers weave the topics and themes covered in the training into their assessment sessions.
- 6.16** During the first six months of this reporting year, one further second time adopter training course has been held with a total of six households attending. One of these households withdrew following the training citing they felt they needed more time to reflect before deciding to adopt again.
- 6.17** During 2021-22 **64** adopter approvals were recommended by VVC's Adoption Panel with **59** of those recommendations being ratified by the Head of Service at 31 March 2022. This represents a small decrease when compared to previous year's performance where **66** approvals were ratified. Despite the reduction, this remains a significant number of approvals and is a pleasing outcome given the restrictions upon service delivery.
- 6.18** These approvals are broken down as follows, **25** RCT, **19** Cardiff, **9** Vale of Glamorgan, **3** Merthyr Tydfil and **3** other (**2** Bridgend and **1** Powys). Of those approved **45** were first time adopters, **12** were second time adopters and **2** foster carers were assessed for children already residing in their care.
- 6.19** The majority of the applicants approved during 2021-22 have been linked with children from within the region. Two families have been matched with children from other areas, one from North Wales and the second Wiltshire. Two applicants withdrew post their approval due to a change in their circumstances. As indicated under the family finding section, a significant number of VVC children have been placed with in-house

adopters. However, due to the reduction in the number of children waiting, VVC has accrued a significant of approved adopters who awaiting a suitable match. This trend has been noted across Wales and is being monitored by NAS.

- 6.20** During the first six months of 2022-23 **30** approvals were recommended by VVC Adoption Panel with **26** being ratified to date.
- 6.21** On 1st April 2019 changes to the Adoption Agency Regulations came into force introducing a two-stage model of adopter assessment. Due to the pandemic Welsh Government allowed for an easement to the Regulations during 2020 enabling the two stages to run together. The temporary easement came to an end on 30 September 2021 and since 1st October 2021 any new enquiries are managed under the new model. The new way of working and tighter timescales are being closely monitored and reported upon. A more accurate picture of compliance with the model will be available during second half of the reporting year.

7. ADOPTION SUPPORT

- 7.1** The service continued to experience an increase in the demand for post adoption support services and requests for assessment of post adoption support needs during 2021-22. **117** new referrals were received during this period when compared with **74** received during the preceding year demonstrating a **58%** increase in service demand. During the first half year 2022-23 referrals have stabilised with **32** new referrals received. However, the nature of these referrals are becoming increasingly more complex and therefore require more staff time.
- 7.2** Referrals for Access to Birth Records for adopted adults have stabilised during the period with a total of **47** referrals being received. There has also been a continuation in requests for information under the Post Commencement Regulations 2005 as a number of those enquirers have reached 18 years of age. **29** referrals for Intermediary Services have also been received.

- 7.3** Due to an existing backlog of work, there a waiting list for all Adoption Support services. Work has however been undertaken with the team to review the current workload and the role and remit of the service. An audit of caseloads is being undertaken. A triage process and a case priority system has been introduced into the service to ensure that critical cases are allocated.
- 7.4** The team has continued to be proactive in seeking alternative means of supporting families with a monthly virtual quiz, a monthly toddler group and the development of a birth parent support group.
- 7.5** By utilising some monies from the reserves, VVC was able to commission an NVR course for 20 families facilitated by Adoption UK during the year. Two courses on the Circle of Security have also been facilitated by an agency worker and team member. The service piloted a Welsh Language Support Group for Welsh speaking adopters facilitated by an external facilitator which will now be adopted at a national level. In addition, the ENFYS Psychology service for Cardiff and Vale offers Nurturing & Attachment courses which families have been able to access.
- 7.6** Due to the lifting of restrictions, VVC was able to support a programme of Easter activities for young people supported by the Children and Young Person's Co-ordinator and a successful family fun day was held for over **80** families in July 2022.
- 7.7** The grant funded posts are continuing to be embedded into the region and to enhance the overall service provision maintaining positive links with national counterparts. The Birth Parent Adviser has been proactive in developing a range of support mechanisms for birth parents. This however is a part-time role and the capacity to further develop this work is currently under consideration.
- 7.8** The TESSA Co-ordinator's role has had a positive impact on supporting lower priority needs. The Co-ordinator undertakes assessments of need and processes referrals of families who may be eligible for the service. **75** referrals have been made to TESSA by VVC during the period April 2021 to September 2022 which is one of the highest in

Wales. The role has also been important in sign-posting families to other relevant services.

- 7.9** The Children and Young People Co-ordinator has continued to be directly involved in supporting Adoption UK Connected groups on a monthly basis with staff from the Connected service. These groups have returned to face-to-face meetings. The service caters for adopted children and young people 7 upwards, **83** children and young people from VVC are registered with the service. In addition, the postholder provides direct support sessions to children within the region and has also supports direct contact sessions for adopted children.
- 7.10** The NAS Good Practice Guides place a number of expectations upon the service to continue to improve Adoption Support services. One aspect is the requirement to undertake check in visits with adopters and birth parents post Adoption Order. The service is developing a process whereby this can be delivered a year after the Adoption Order has been granted and at the three-year point. It is envisaged that the newly appointed Social Care Officers will assist with this process and the support to birth parents will be linked to the post adoption contact service. In addition, NAS has developed a strategic plan, Adopt Cymru 2025 which details several objectives to improve adoption support services. This plan will form the basis of the regional business plan going forward but will require additional resource to enable the objectives to be met.
- 7.11** A new service, MAPPS, has been introduced within RCT and Merthyr Tydfil in conjunction with Health and an independent provider to provide therapeutic support for children. Requests for therapeutic support packages for adopted families are now being considered by this service.
- 7.12** VVC does not manage a budget for the provision of adoption support services although undertakes assessments of support needs which may recommend an adoption support package to the respective authority where the adoptive family resides. The budgets to support such provision is held in the respective local authority. The total expenditure on adoption support services for the reporting year was **£186,484.95**

which covers **90** children. The average spent per child has increased to **£2072** per child, although this only represents **24 %** of children who are being supported by the team.

7.13 The Operational Group has discussed increasing demand for therapeutic services for adoptive families and additional mechanisms to screen the assessments are being put in place to ensure that families receive the best outcomes.

8. ADOPTION PANEL

- 8.1** VVC continues to manage a central list of Adoption Panel members. In terms of practical delivery, Panel sittings are scheduled four times a month and are currently held virtually.
- 8.2** The workload of the Panel remains high, and the new national templates have increased case preparation time for Panel members. During the eighteen-month period, **126** cases were heard.
- 8.3** During the past eighteen months, VVC has been proactive in recruiting several new Panel members, with a particular focus upon increasing representation of adoptive parents and adopted people. There is an ongoing need to increase our Social Worker membership from our partner authorities whilst recognising that workload constraints often prohibit this.
- 8.4** Panel member training has been restarted and a course was held in September 2022 facilitated by AFA Cymru for Panel chairs and members. Other national training opportunities have been offered to Panel members on the Good Practice Guides and Welsh Early Permanence.
- 8.5** As part of the recent audit, DBS checks for all Panel members are being updated and a programme of annual reviews is scheduled.

9. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

- 9.1** Two complaints have been received during this period. One complaint was from an adoptive parent concerned about the availability of services to support her adopted son. The second complaint was from an adoptive parent concerned about the level of therapeutic support available for her child. Both complaints were investigated and resolved at Stage 1.
- 9.2** Regional staff have continued to receive positive feedback on the range of services they provide from a range of sources: service users, local authority colleagues, other agencies, and the Adoption Panel. Staff are encouraged to collate this information, as contribution to their own personal development plans.

10. Consultation, Engagement and Quality Assurance

- 10.1** An ongoing priority for the service has been to develop our quality assurance framework. VVC managers have been working closely with the Vale of Glamorgan's Quality Assurance Officer in devising robust service user questionnaires. These are being used in order to gain the feedback of service users and to listen to the views on the areas for improvement. VVC has a well-established mechanism to gain the views of service users from the point of enquiry to attending our preparation training and reports are now being collated and the findings are shared with the service. Questionnaires have also been developed post placement and following the Adoption Order which are also now being collated. Going forward there is a need to seek constructive feedback at the point of approval which will provide reflections upon the assessment process, preparation, and Panel experience.
- 10.2** In terms of Adoption Support, evaluation of the service has continued at key points of delivery and the TESSA Co-ordinator has developed a questionnaire for all families in receipt of TESSA which complements the evaluation being undertaken at a national level. Recent discussions have taken place with the Quality Assurance Officer to agree the best mechanism to undertake check-ins with birth parents.

11. Policies and Procedures

- 11.1** At the end of 2020-21, VVC undertook an audit of policies and procedures to contribute to the work being commissioned at a national level by NAS to develop a common suite of policies for the service. This work is nearing completion.
- 11.2** The Family Finding Manager has developed a Matching Guide for practitioners which is based upon the Good Practice Guide and relevant research. This Guide has been disseminated to Childcare Teams across the region. A risk assessment tool has been developed to consider facilitating direct a contact session between prospective adopters and birth parents.
- 11.3** In addition, the service has begun to utilise some of the new processes contained in the Good Practice guides such the Trauma Nurture Timeline and the revised Adoption Support Plan.

12. CONCLUSION, FUTURE PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES

- 12.1** At the end of the reporting period, the service is able to report a healthy level of performance despite the constraints imposed upon service delivery during COVID - 19. Staff have demonstrated an ability to adapt to change and yet also focus upon core tasks. In terms of the placement for children a significant number have been placed in a timely way and there are less children waiting. The region has not experienced a marked reduction in referrals for adoption as apparent in other areas, but this will be continue to be monitored closely on a regional and national basis. Similarly, VVC has also been able to approve a significant pool of adopters during this time with the result that more children can be placed within the region. The need however, to continue to recruit more adopters for our more complex children remains a priority for VVC whilst at the same time managing the expectations of those adopters waiting. The reduction in enquiries to adopt again will need to be monitored carefully to ensure that the service can respond proactively and remain innovative in order to attract the best families.

- 12.2** Going forward Adoption Support probably represents the biggest set of challenges for VVC. The requirement to build robust Adoption Support plans for children with ongoing support as needed and for this to underpin our core offer for adopters does impact upon our ability to adequately resource these requirements. The need to reduce our waiting list for services and to ensure that our service is targeted to those most in need remain a priority.
- 12.3** The requirement to develop Adoption Support services is set against a backdrop of an ever-increasing national improvement agenda. The full implementation of the NAS Good Practice Guides places new expectations upon the way services work with adopters, birth parents and children and young people both pre and post adoption. The full impact of these new ways of working will need to be monitored and evaluated. The appointment of the Social Care Officers within the service provides the region with an exciting opportunity to meet some of these expectations especially in terms of follow up with adoptive families and birth parents post adoption and so their roles will need to be developed to meet these expectations. Meeting the objectives laid out in the NAS Adopt Cymru 2025 does also place other expectations upon the service which will have to be evaluated so that gaps in meeting these objectives can be identified.

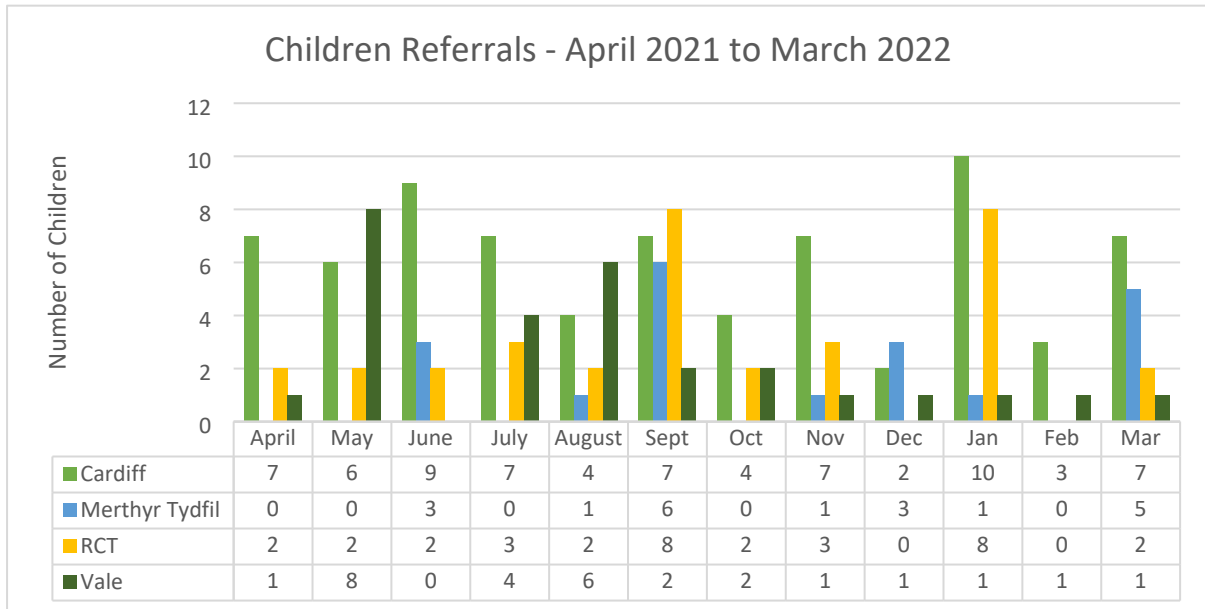
Angela Harris
Regional Adoption Manager

tudalen wag

Appendix 1 – Family Finding

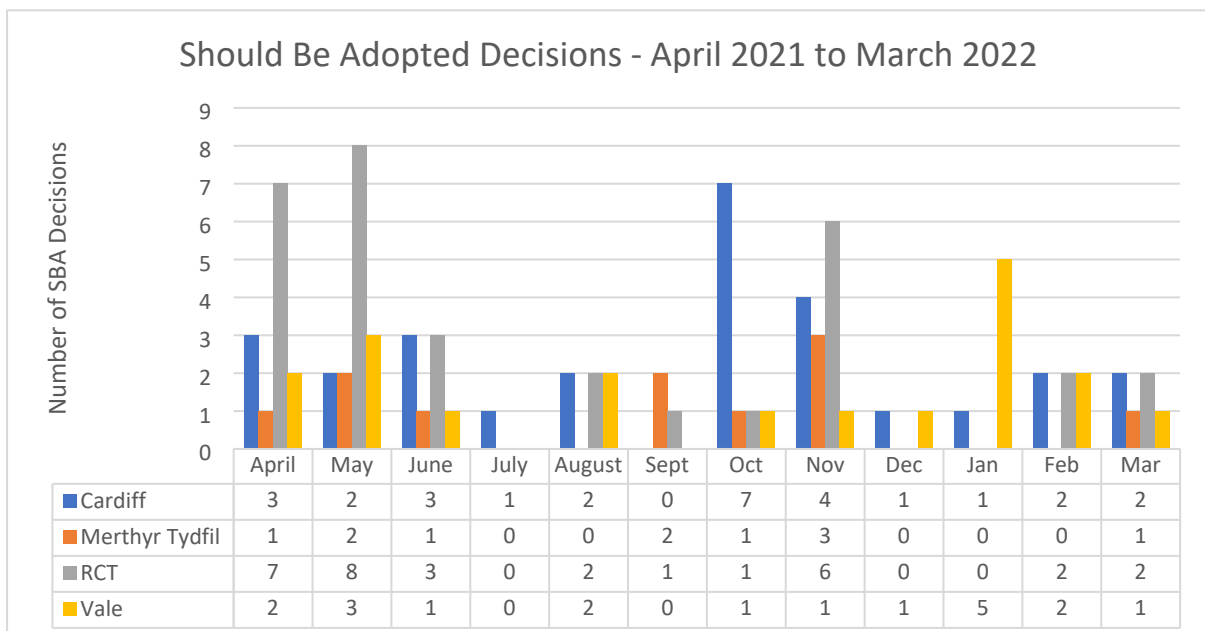
Referrals

155 children have been referred to the service since April 2021.



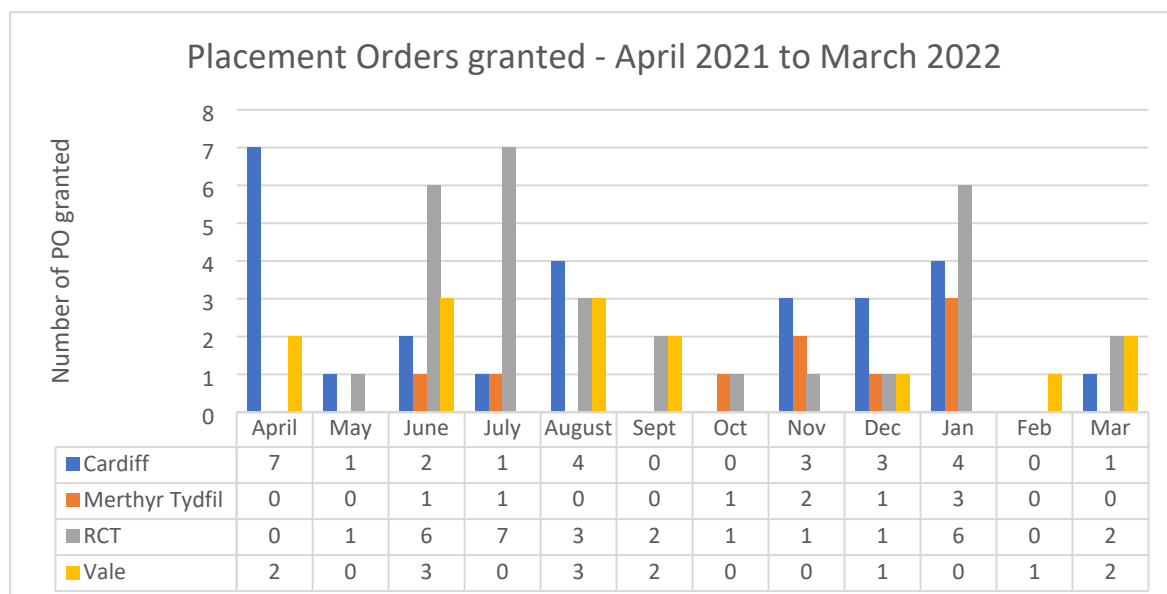
Should be Adopted Decisions

90 SBA decisions have been made during the reporting period.



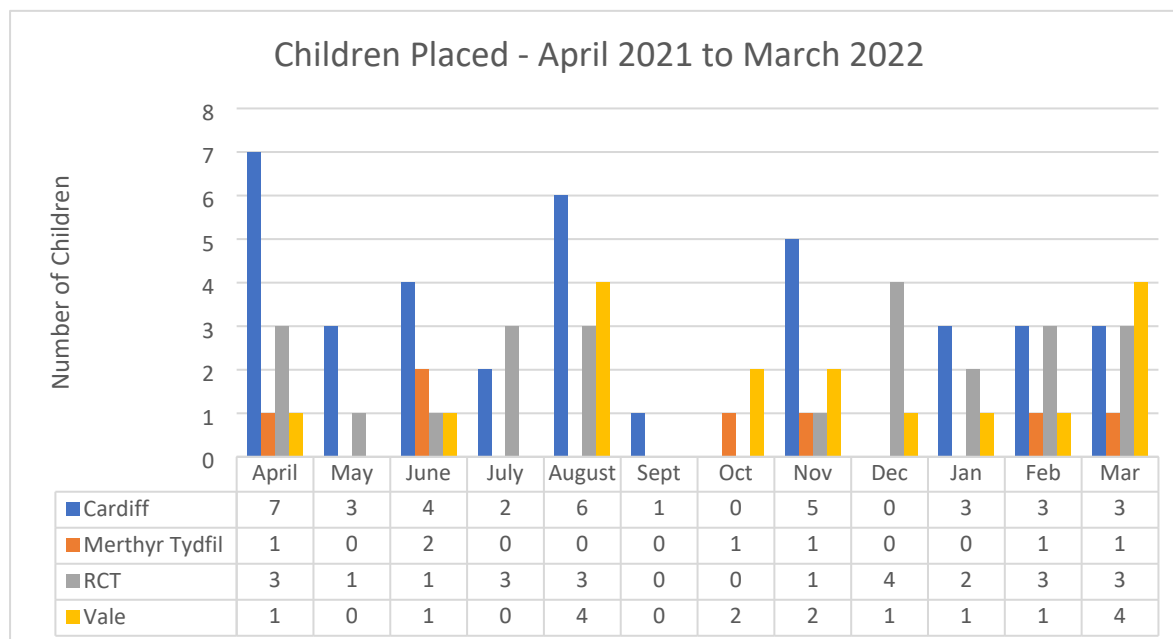
Placement Orders

79 Placement Orders were granted in the period April 2021 to March 2022.



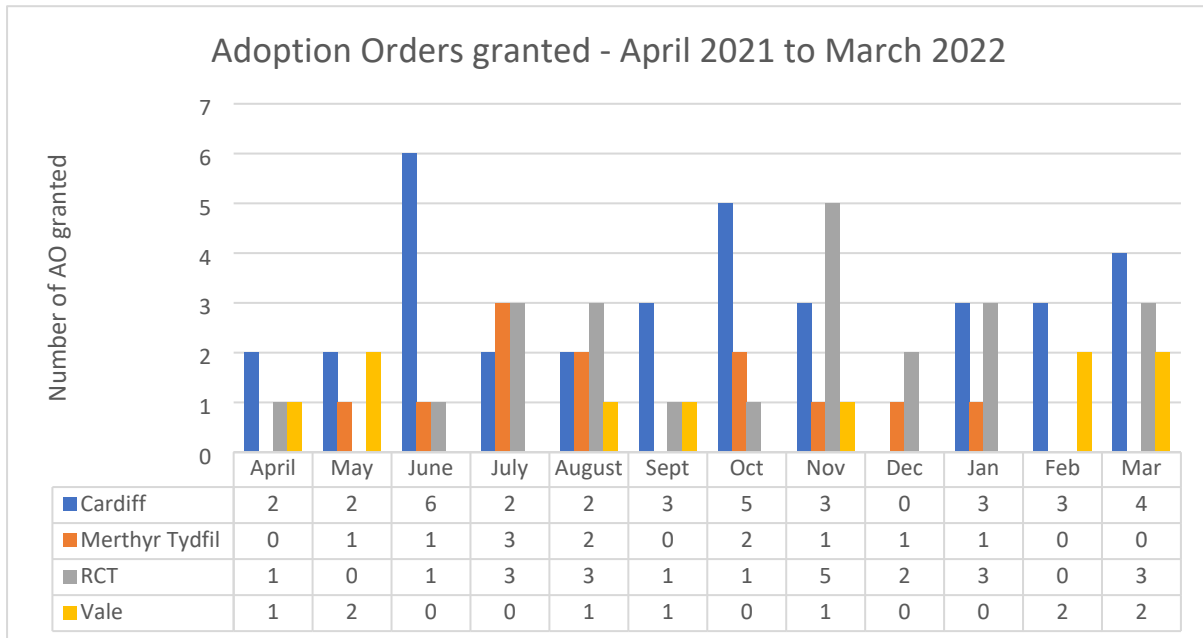
Children Placed

85 children were placed between in the reporting period.



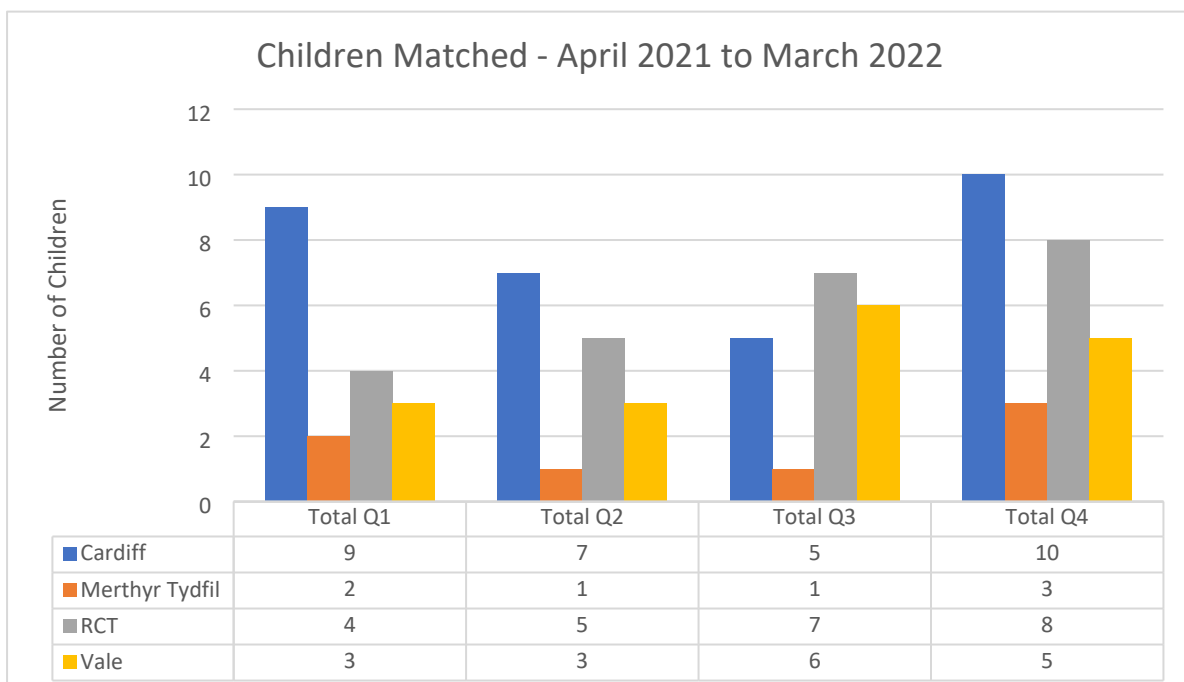
Adoption Orders

80 Adoption Orders were granted in the reporting period.



Children Matched

79 children were matched to adopters during the reporting period. This figure is consistent with comparative data for same period in previous year.



Number of children Matched since April 2020 who have waited longer than 6 months (or 3 months for a relinquished child under 6 months of age) to progress from “Should be placed for Adoption” decision to approve to Match

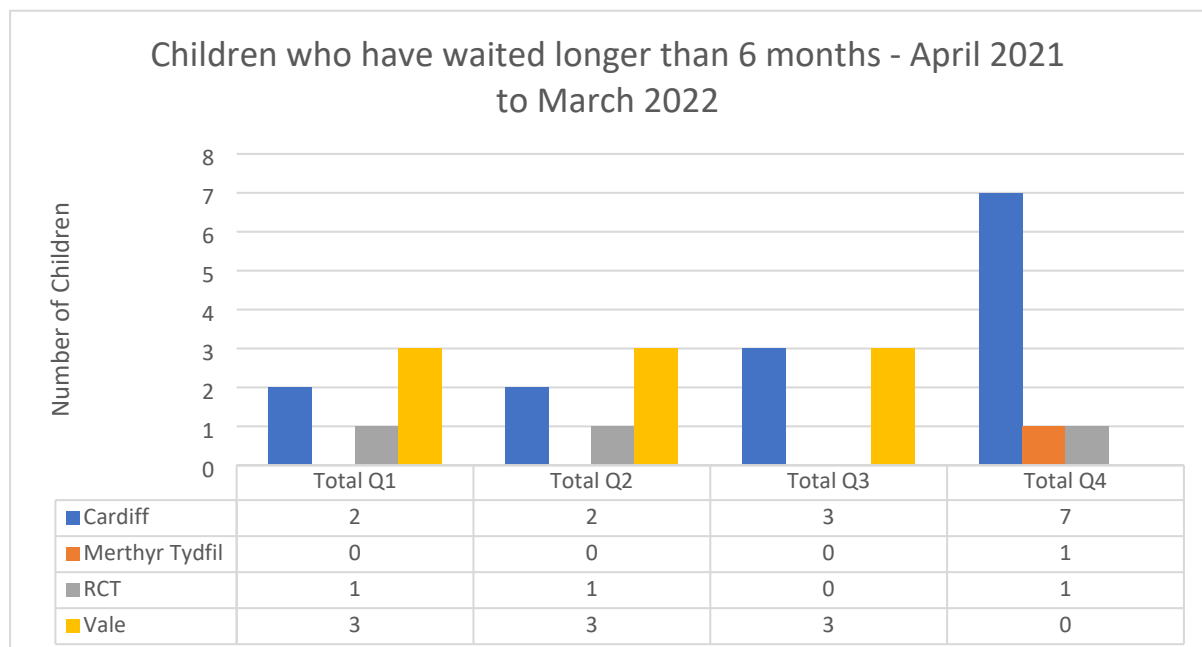
27 children matched in the reporting year have waited longer than six months to progress.

Of the **6** children matched in Quarter 1 who waited longer than six months to progress, two children were siblings, one child was 7 years old, 2 children were delayed as a result of foster care assessment and 1 child was delayed as a result of new medical information.

Of the **6** children matched in Quarter 2 who waited longer than six months to progress; 2 children were aged 4+, 2 children were BME, 2 children were a sibling group, and for 3 children, no suitable link was available.

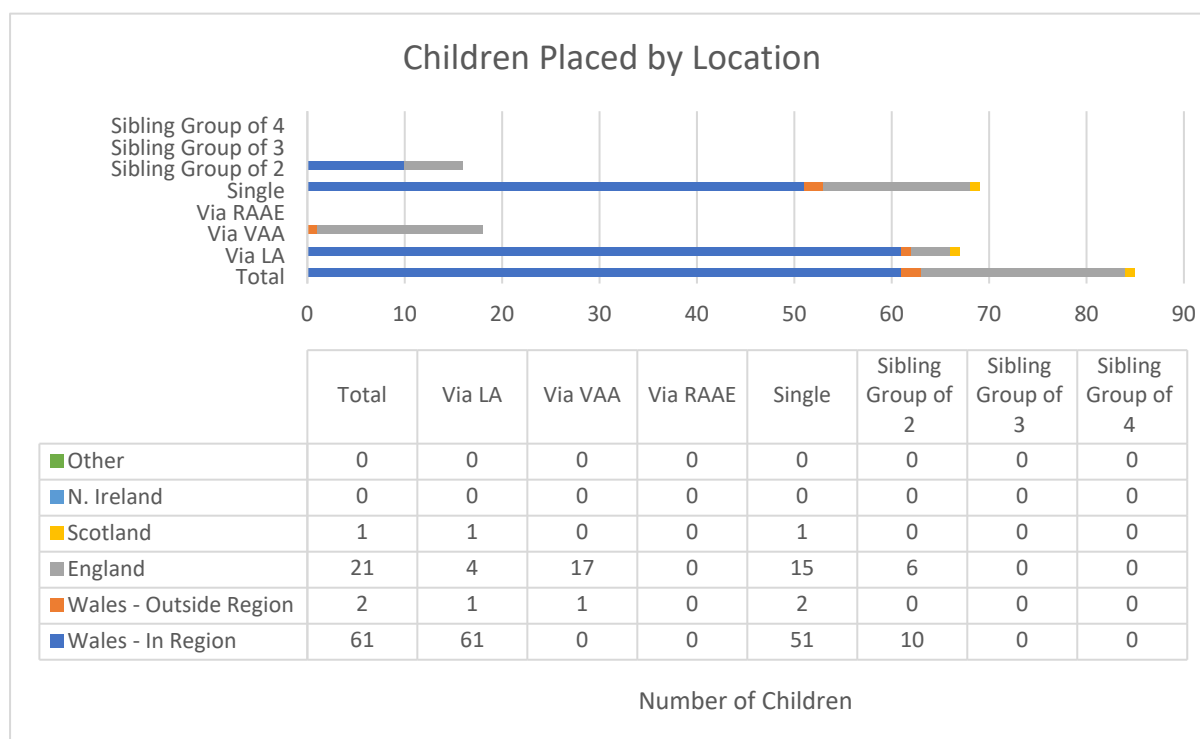
Of the **6** children matched in Quarter 3; 2 children were a sibling match and aged 4+, 1 child was 4+, and 3 children were delayed as a result of foster care assessment.

Of the **9** children matched in Quarter 4, two children were siblings, three children were aged 4+, one child was BME and three children were delayed as a result of foster care assessment and/or complex needs.



Type of placement

72% of children have been placed with VVC adopters, **25%** of children were placed in England and the remaining **3%** were placed within Wales but outside of the region and Scotland.

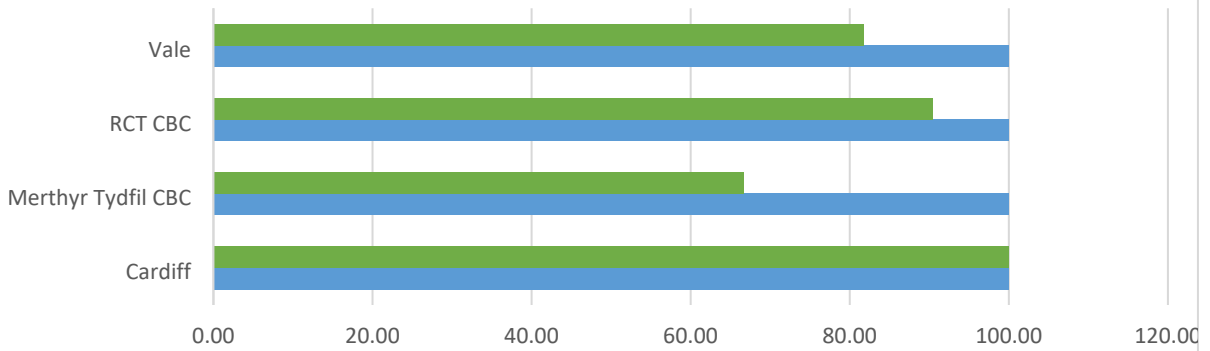


Life Journey Work

In the reporting period, 100% of life journey material in draft format is made available at the time of panel. An improvement is observed in life journey material available at the point of 2nd Review when compared to previous year. It should also be noted that in instances where life journey material has not been available at the point of 2nd review, further investigation has revealed either the review was bought forward, or adopters have been difficult to engage and have needed prompting to approve the final draft of the life journey book.

M20, M20A and M21 - Life Journey Work – April 2021 to March 2022						
	Matches	LJ Materials	2nd Review	LJ Materials	Panel %	2nd Review %
Cardiff	31	31	34	34	100.00	100.00
Merthyr Tydfil CBC	7	7	9	6	100.00	66.67
RCT CBC	24	24	21	19	100.00	90.48
Vale	17	17	11	9	100.00	81.82
Total	79	79	75	68	100.00	90.67

Life Journey Materials available at Panel and 2nd Review - April 2021 to March 2022

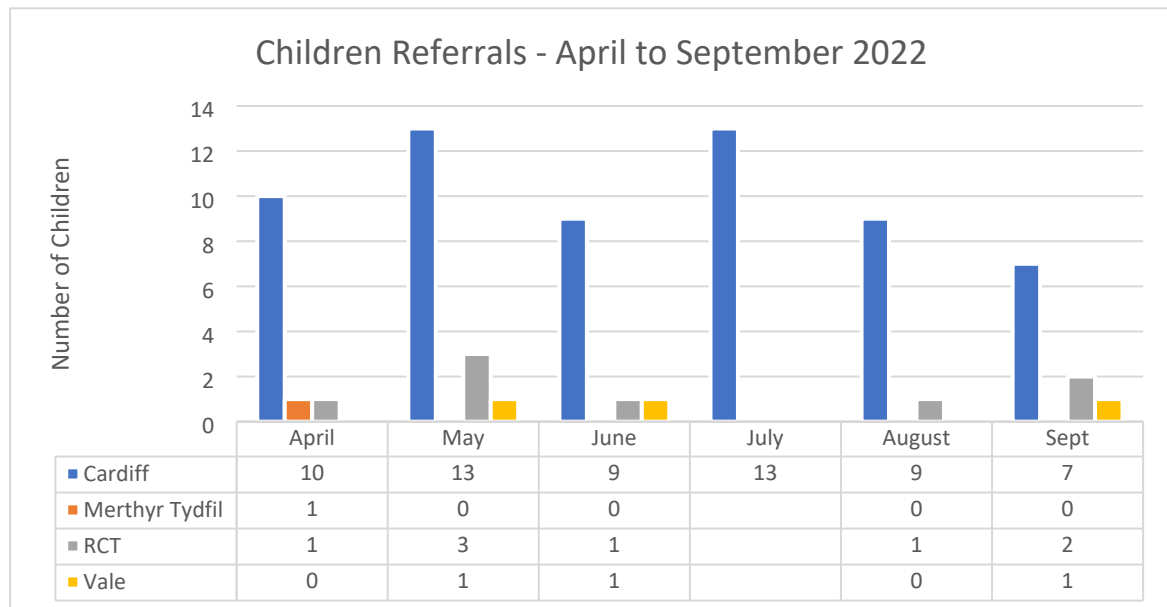


	Cardiff	Merthyr Tydfil CBC	RCT CBC	Vale
■ Matches				
■ LJ Materials				
■ 2nd Review				
■ LJ Materials				
■ Panel %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
■ 2nd Review %	100.00	66.67	90.48	81.82

Family Finding – April to September 2022

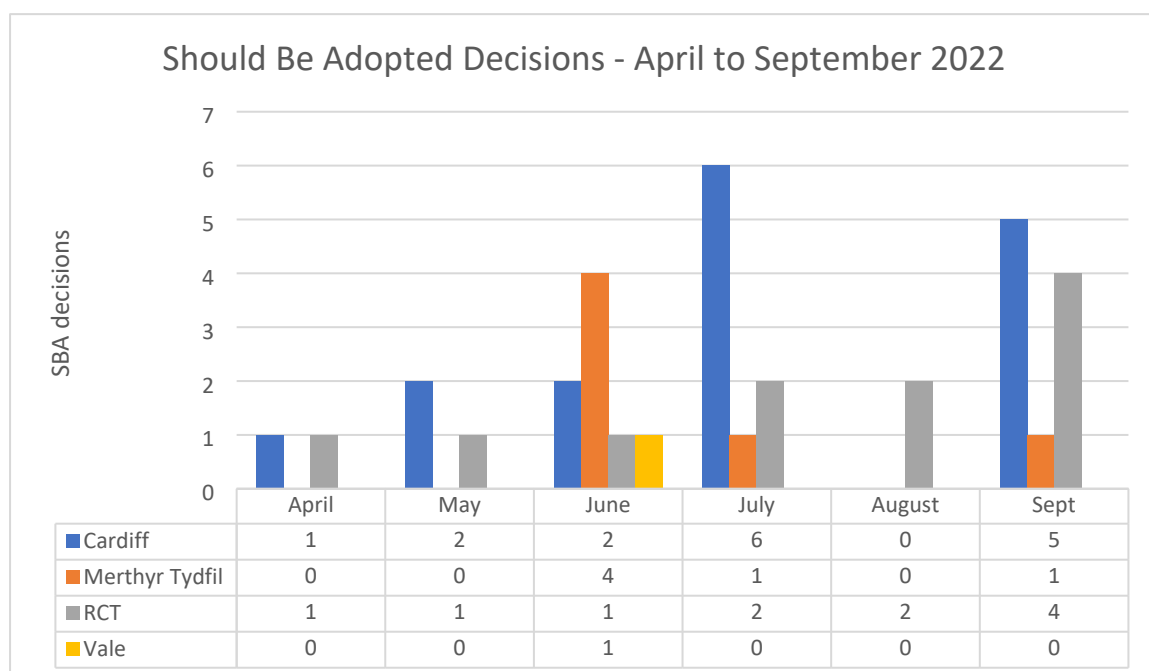
Referrals

73 referrals have been received during the reporting period.



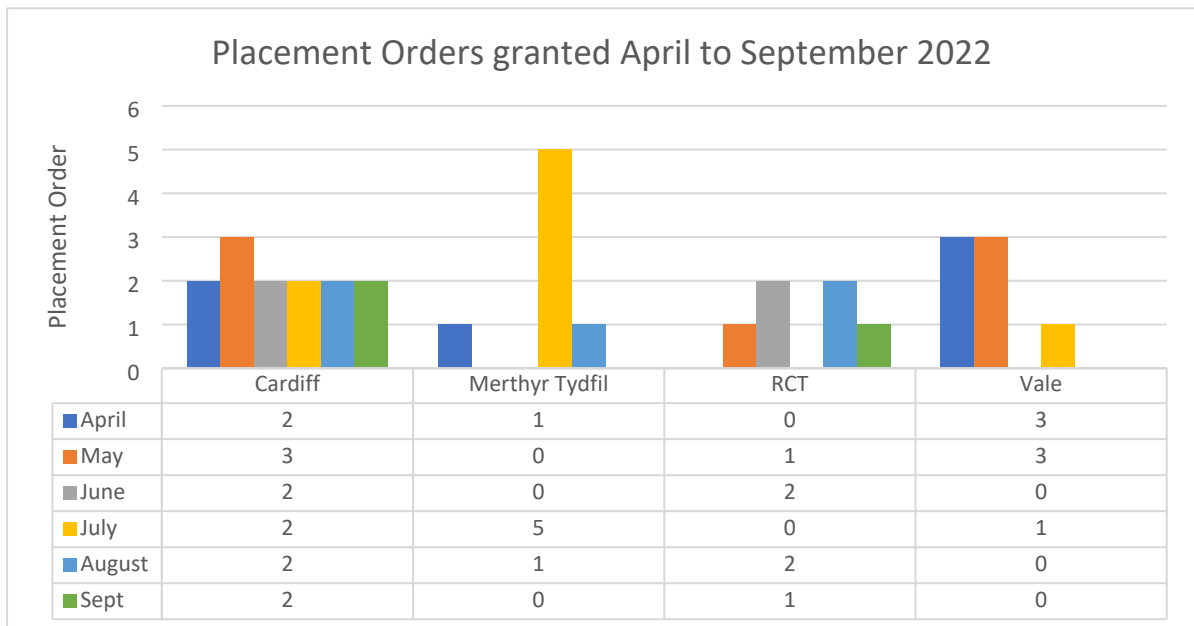
Should be Adopted Decisions

34 SBA decisions were made during the first half year.



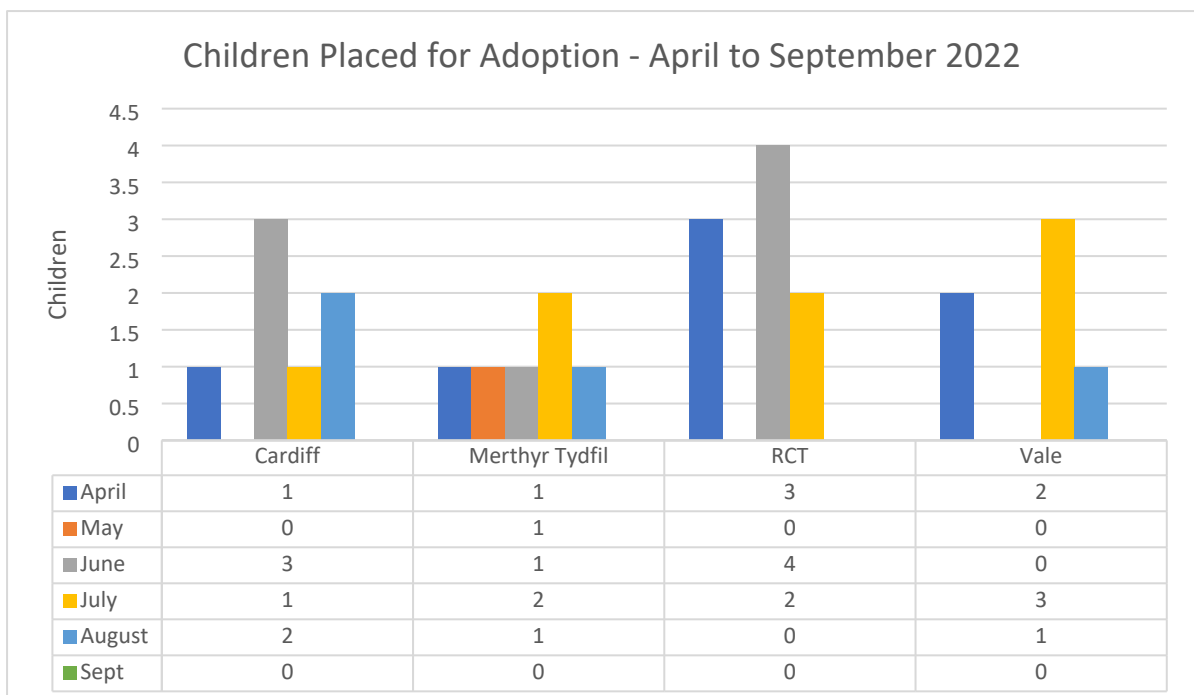
Placement Orders

33 Placement Orders were granted during the reporting period.



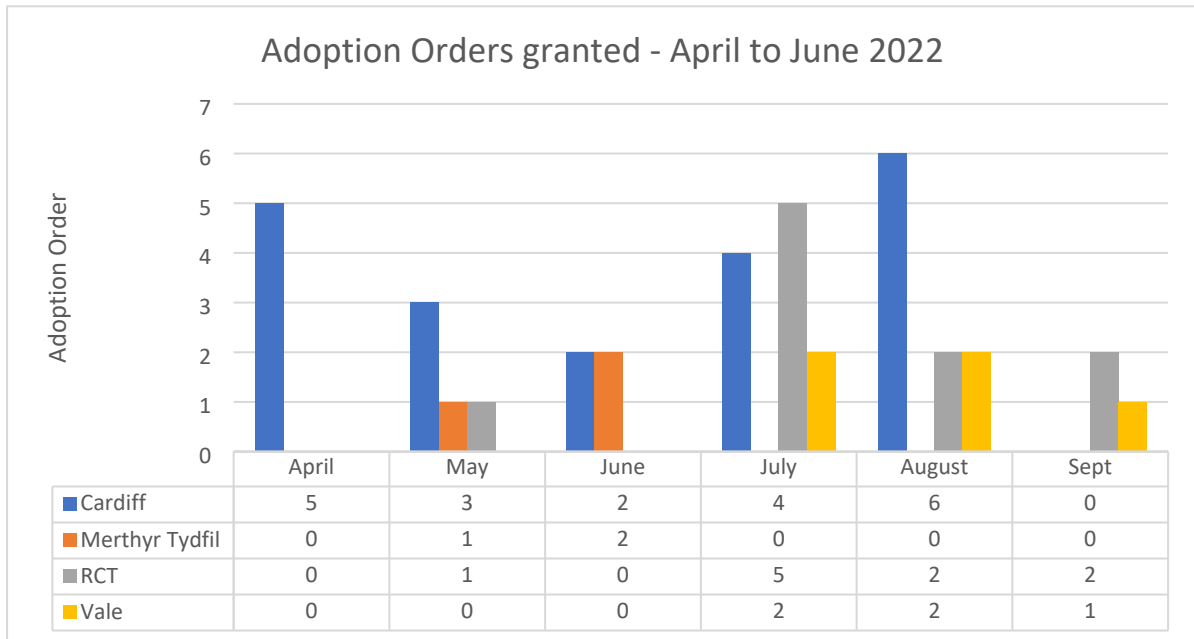
Children Placed

28 children were placed with their adoptive families during the reporting period.



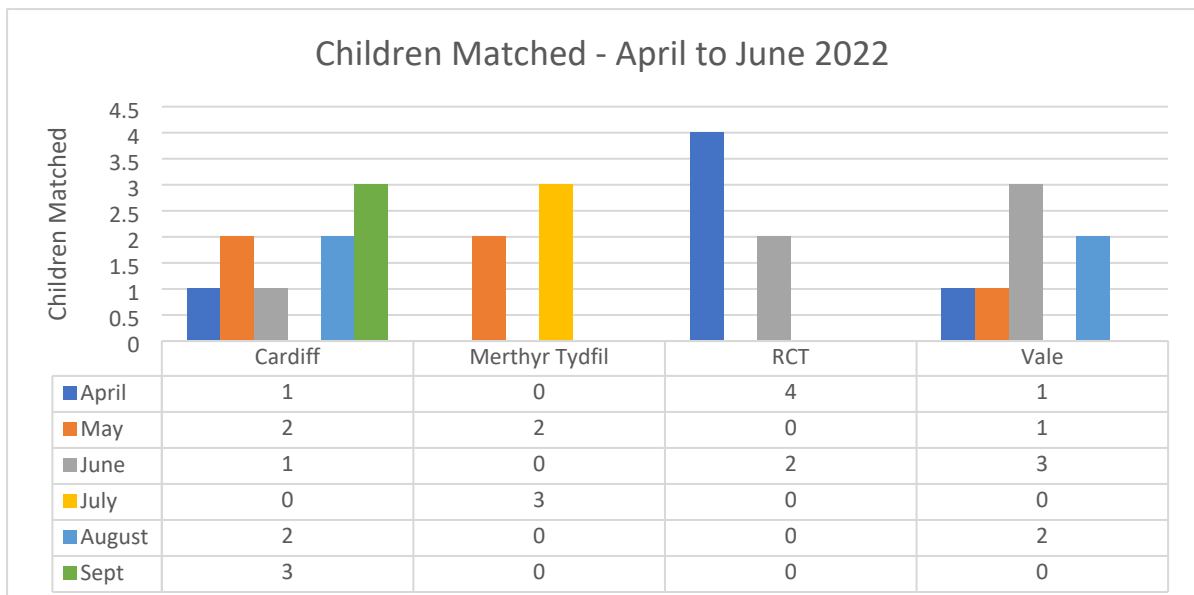
Adoption Orders

38 Adoption Orders were granted.



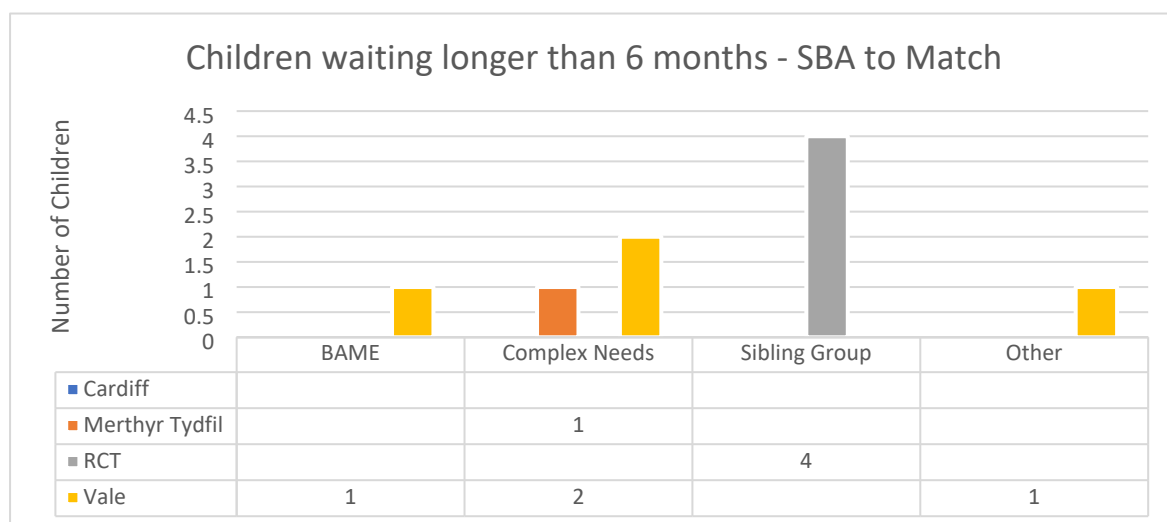
Children matched

27 children were matched during the period April to September 2022.



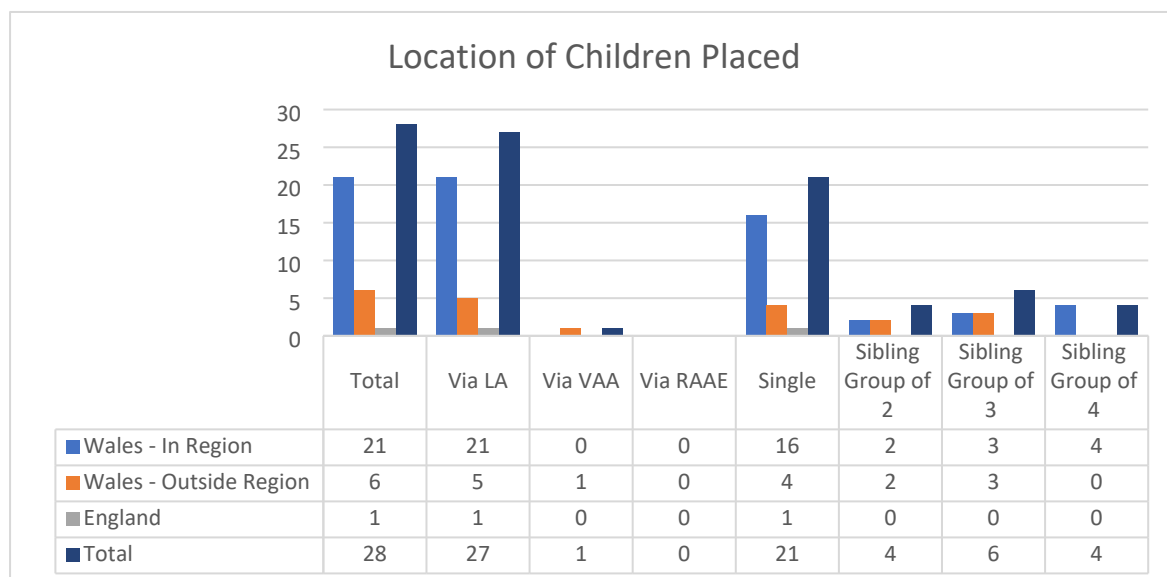
Number of children Matched since April 2021 who have waited longer than 6 months (or 3 months for a relinquished child under 6 months of age) to progress from "Should be placed for Adoption" decision to approve to Match

8 children waited longer than six months to progress from SBA to matched. Four children were part of a sibling group, three children have complex needs and one BAME child's prospective adopter withdrew at the point of introductions, so family finding has restarted.



Type of placement

75% of children were placed with VVC adopters. 21% of children were placed in Wales and 4% of children were placed in England.

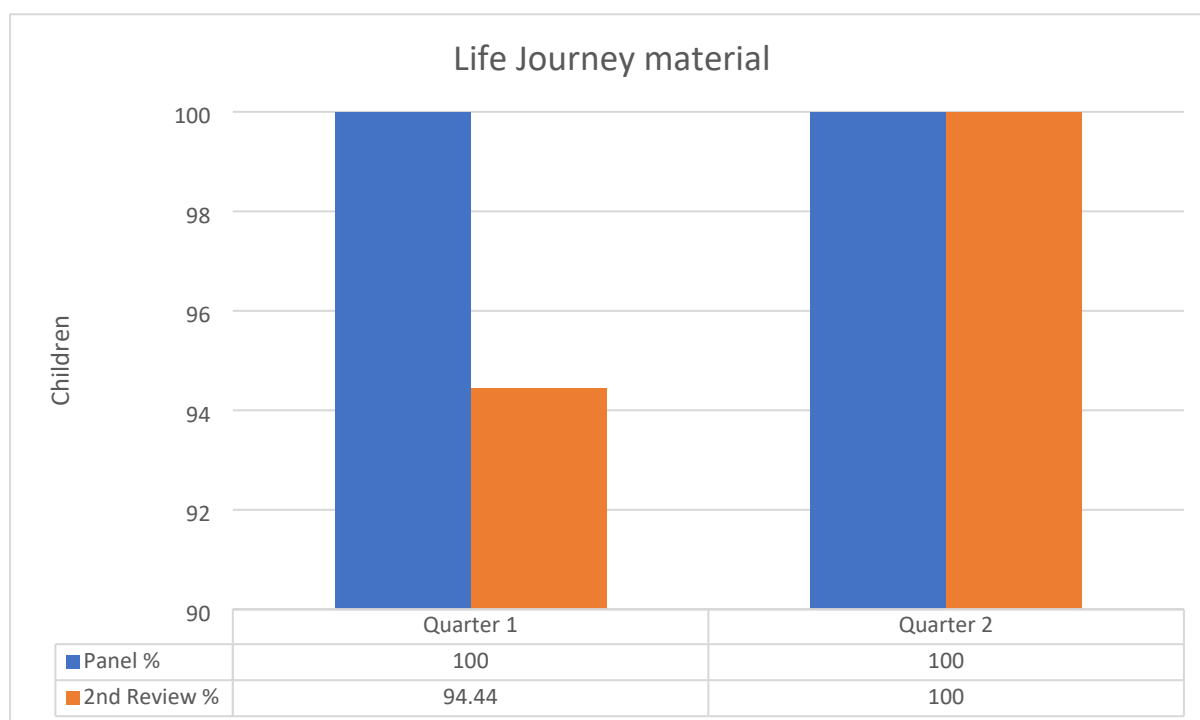


Life Journey

In the reporting period, **100%** of life journey material in draft format is made available at the time of panel. An improvement is observed in life journey material available at the point of 2nd Review when compared to previous year.

M20, M20A and M21 - Life Journey - Accumulated Data						
	Matches	LJ Materials	2nd Review	LJ Materials	Panel %	2nd Review %
Quarter 1	17	17	18	17	100	94.44
Quarter 2	10	10	10	10	100	100.00
Total	27	27	28	27	100	96.43

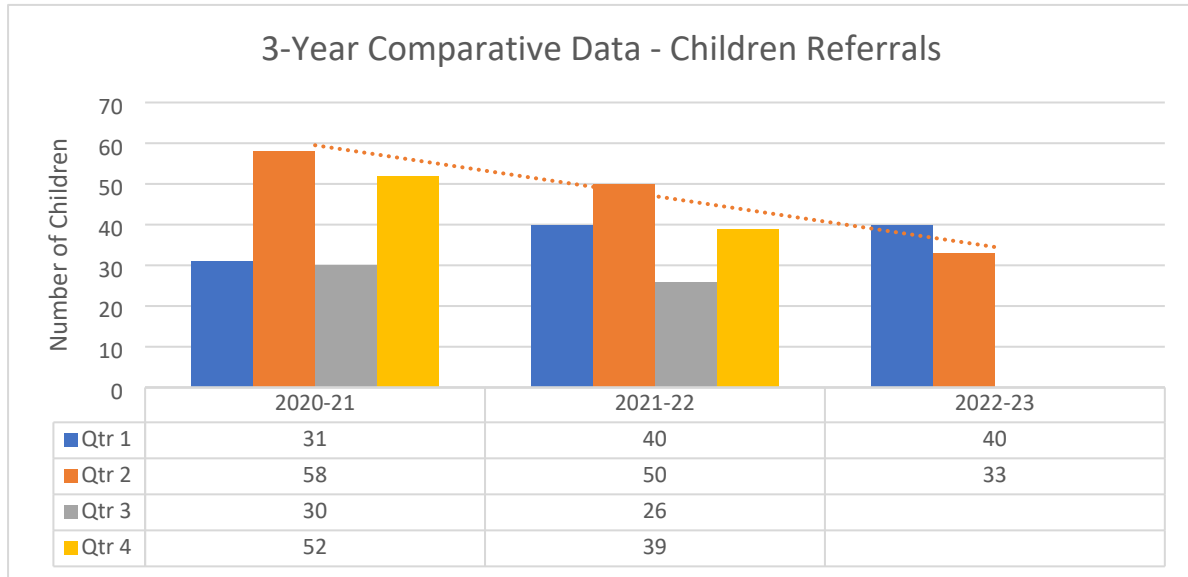
In Quarter 1, Merthyr Tydfil reported the delay in providing later life journey material at the point of 2nd Review because adopters were difficult to engage and needed prompting to approve the final draft of the life journey book.



Comparative Data April 2020 to September 2023

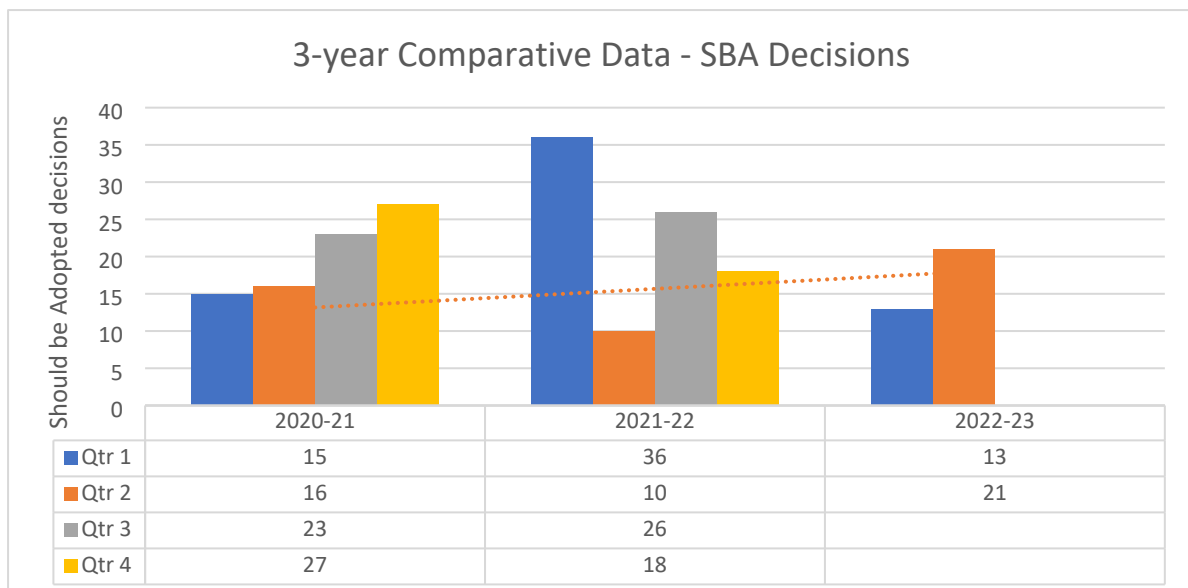
Referrals

Over the past three years, referrals to the service have remained stable. Nationally, for the same comparative period, other regions have reported a decrease in the number of referrals. When comparing referrals at the mid-year point of the year (April to September), an **18%** decrease is noted and is less than other regions. This trend will need to be monitored for the rest of the year to establish whether this is consistent with national trends.



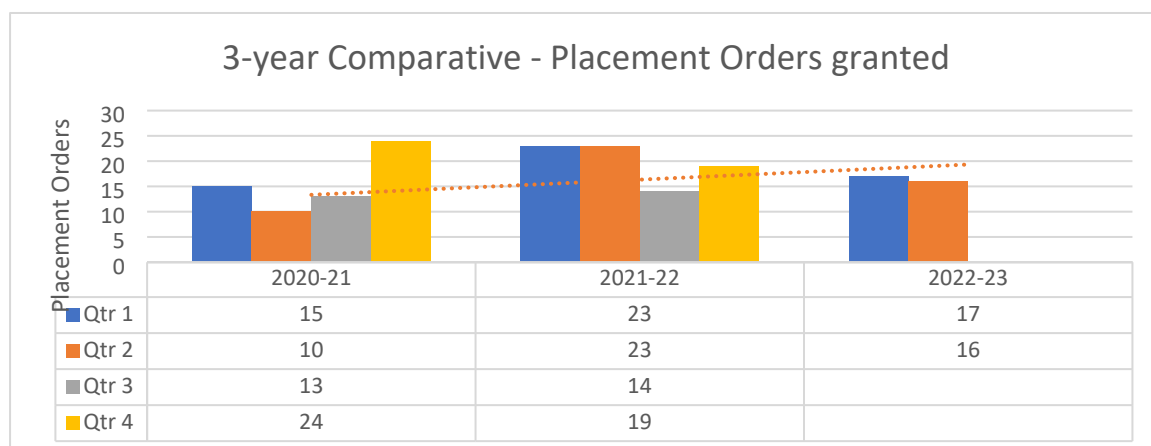
Should be Adopted

Should be Adopted decisions over the three-year period remain stable. When comparing data at mid-year point, a **9%** increase is observed when compared to 2020-21 and a **26%** decrease is observed when compared to 2021-22.



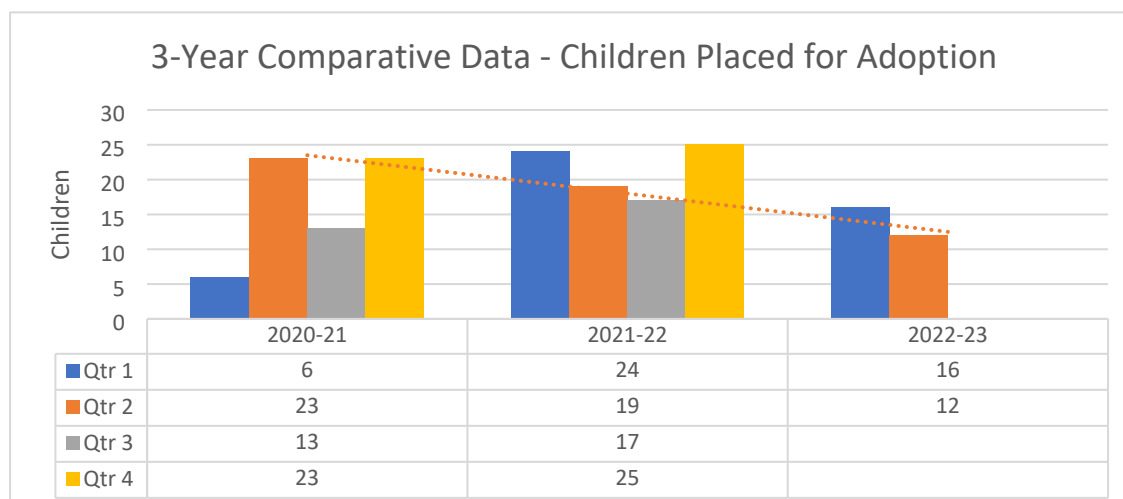
Placement Orders

VVC observed a slight decline in placement orders in around 2019/2020 but not as significantly as being felt across Wales at present. Our rates of Placement Orders within VVC remain consistent albeit with a larger cohort of these from Cardiff rather than the other local authorities. Cardiff's referral rates remain steady into the adoption service at present. The Vale of Glamorgan noted a decline in care proceedings over the past year although report that recently these have been increasing again. Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil both report a change in the way they are working under PLO/pre-birth and that this has been having an impact. Merthyr advise that they have seen a decrease in the rate of children becoming looked after linked to a number of service developments. RCT note the work being undertaken in assessment pre-proceedings including parent and child placements but are mindful that these are situations which inevitably involve risk management and there could be an increase in referrals to adoption if alternative care arrangements are not sustainable.



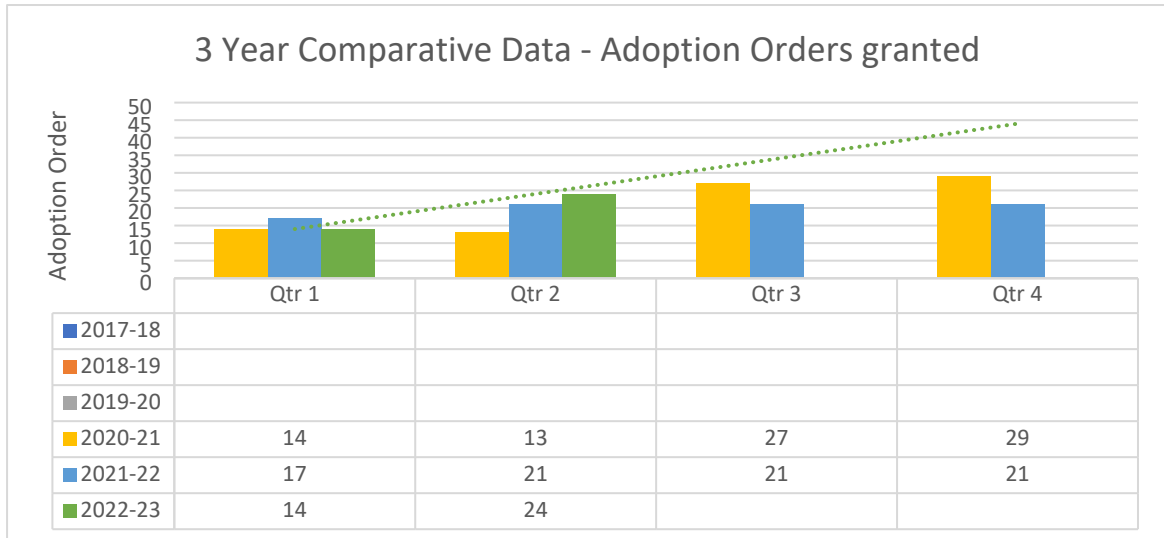
Children placed

A noted decrease (34%) is noted when compared to the same period in previous year. This is consistent with the decrease in the number of children waiting.



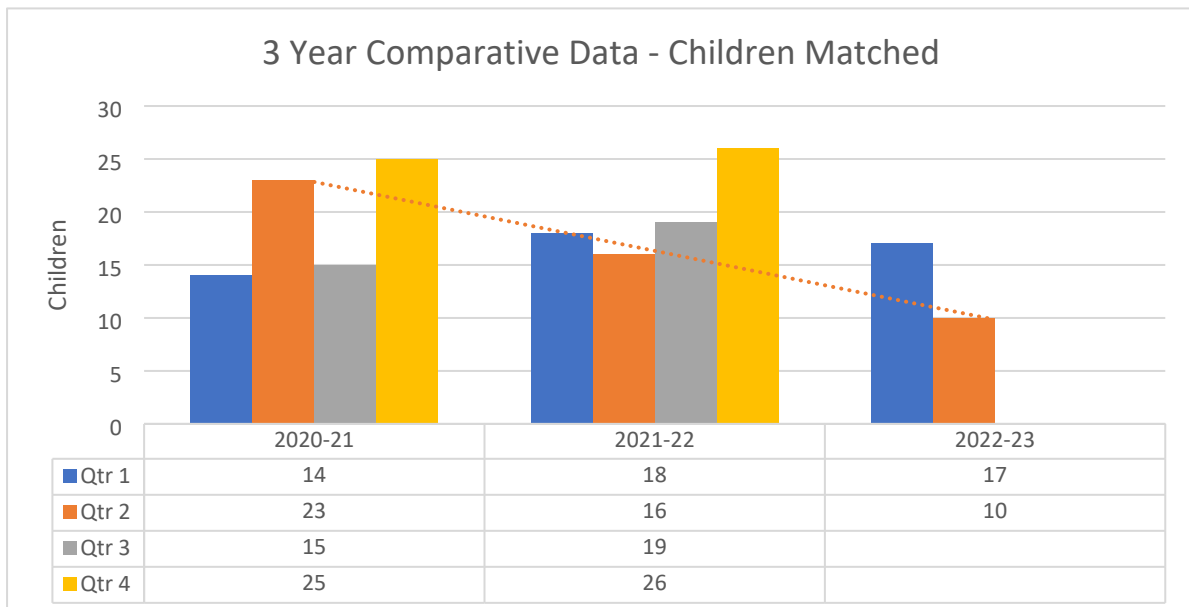
Adoption Orders

An increase in the number of Adoption Orders granted is observed when compared to previous years.



Children matched

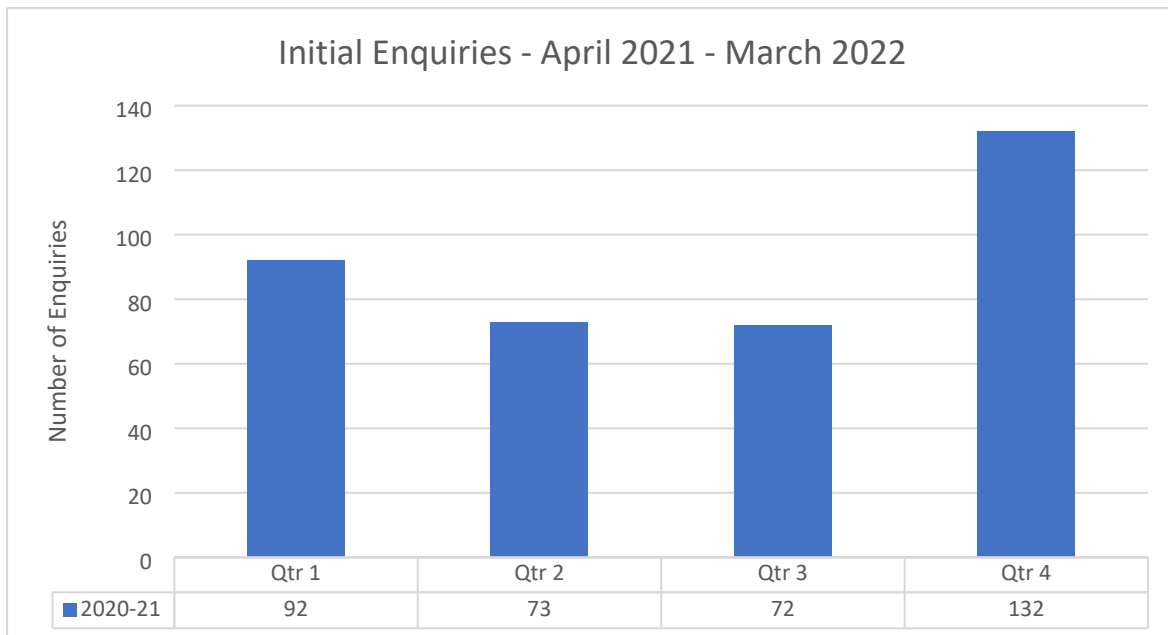
A downward trend is noted in the number of children matched, which is consistent when considering the number of children waiting.



Appendix 2 – Recruitment & Assessment

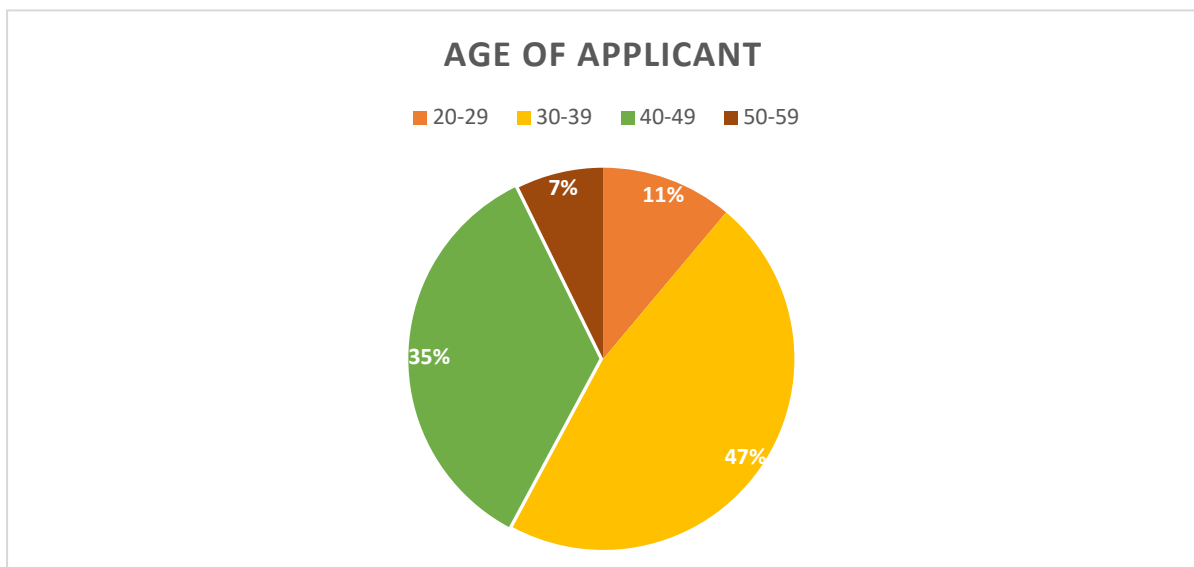
Initial Enquiries

369 initial enquiries were received during the reporting period. 100% of enquiries received a response by phone, e-mail, or letter within 5 working days. Comparative data continues to demonstrate an upward trend in the number of initial enquiries received. **48%** (178 initial enquiries) did not progress after requesting further information.



Age

Of the 369 initial enquiries, **47%** of applicants were aged between 30-39 years of age, **35%** were aged between 40-49 years of age.



Ethnicity

94% of all applicants identify as WHITE. **6%** of applicants identify as BBAC, ASAB or MIXD.

Definitions are taken from Children looked after census 2021-22, Office for Statistics, Welsh Government as follows:

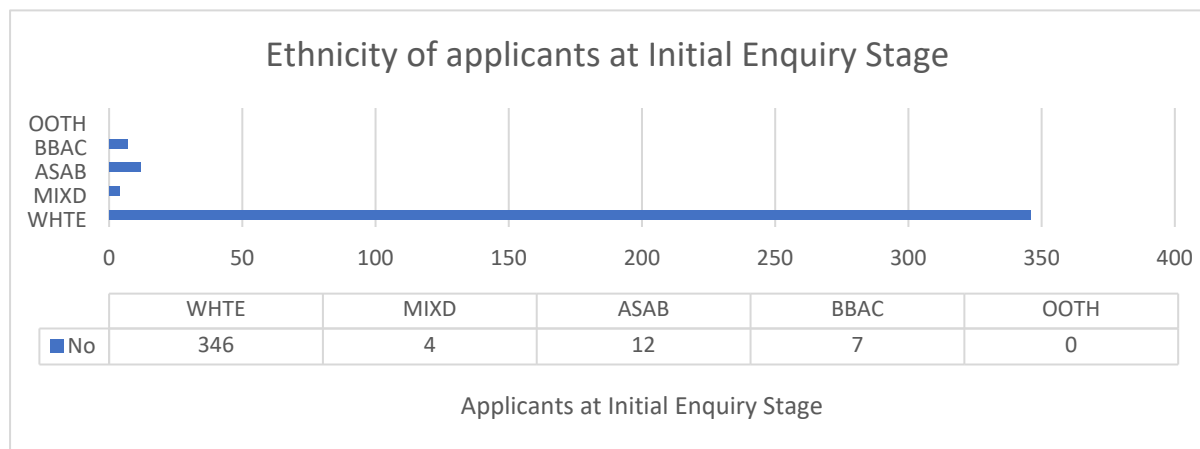
WHITE - White

MIXD - Mixed ethnic groups

ASAB – Asian or Asian British

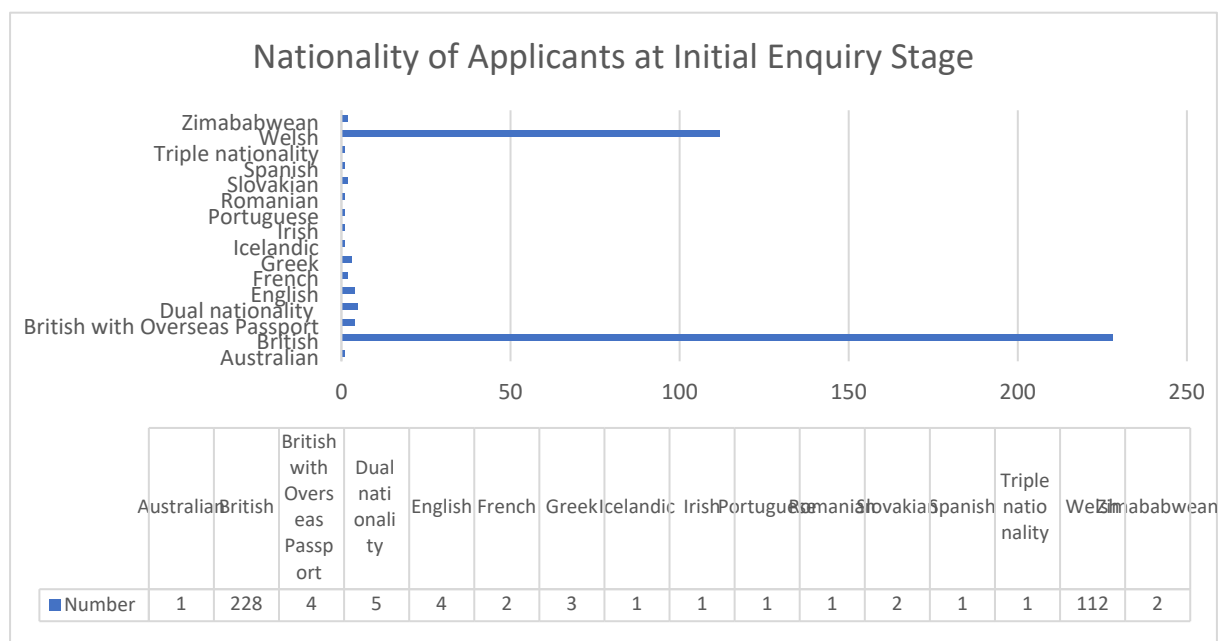
BBAC – Black, African, Caribbean or Black British

OOOTH - Other ethnic group



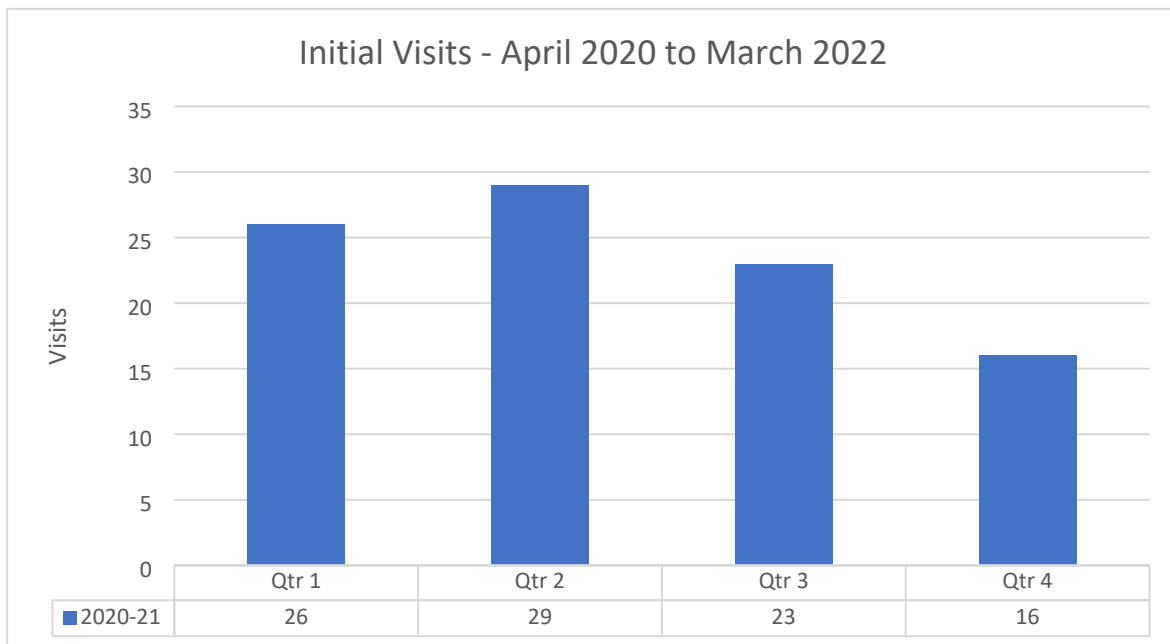
Nationality

62% of applicants disclose they are British. **30%** of applicants disclose they are Welsh.



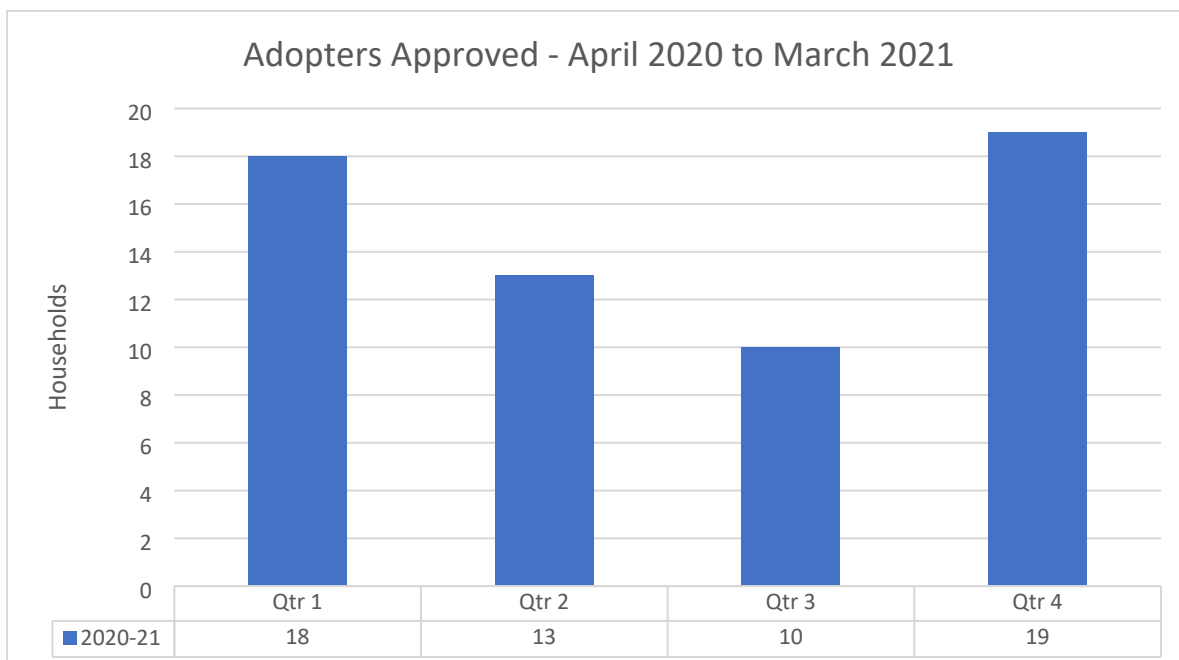
Initial Visits

93 initial visits took place during the reporting period. When compared to previous years, the number of initial visits is consistent with previous years.



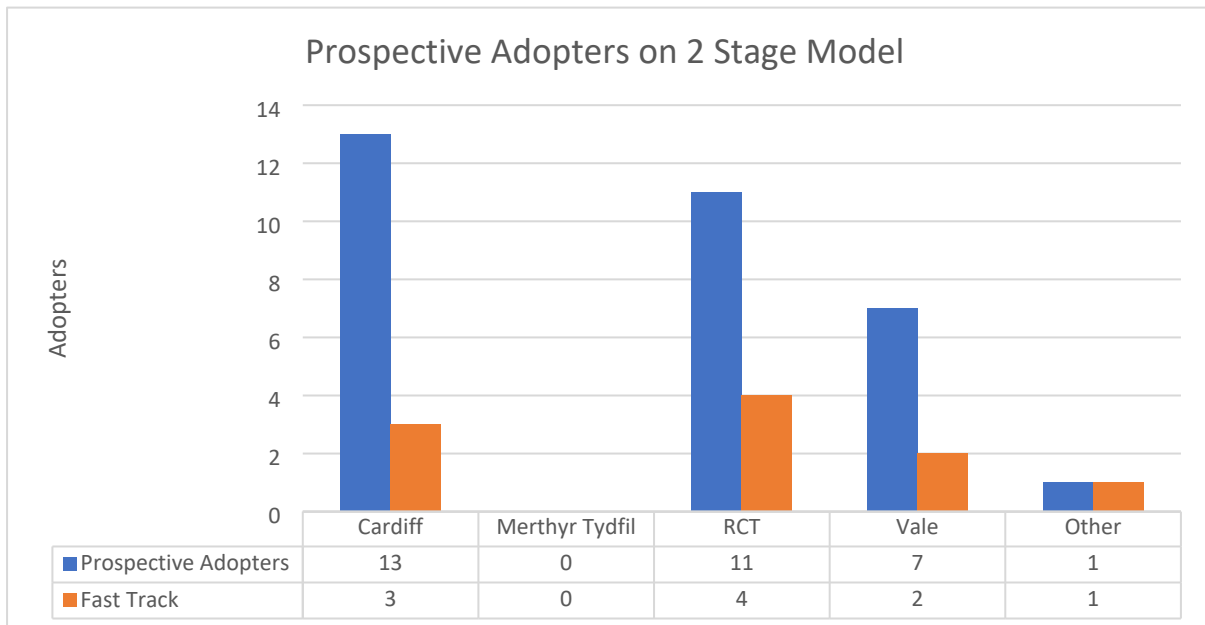
Adopter Approvals

59 adoptive households have been approved to adopt during the reporting period. **60** adoptive households were presented at panel, 1 of which was awaiting ratification at the end of Quarter 4.



2 Stage Model

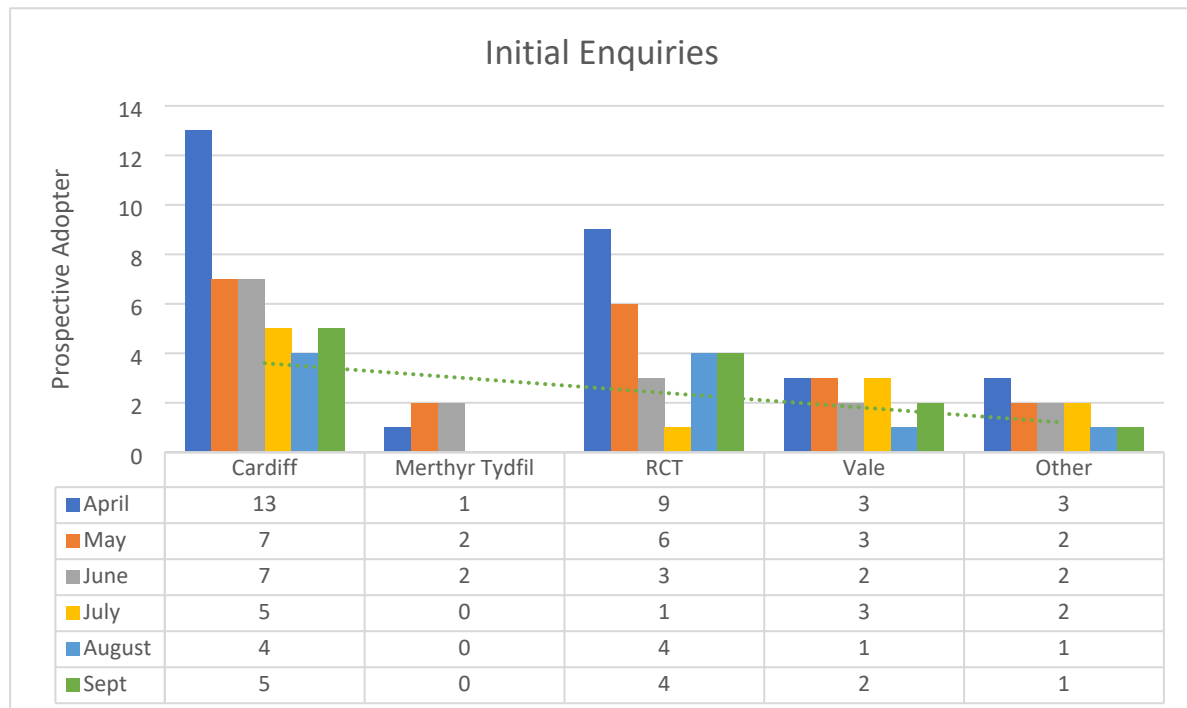
With effect from 1st October 2021, the 2-Stage model for Recruitment & Assessment of Adopters came into effect. **32** prospective adopters have started Stage 1 of the process. **31%** of prospective adopters are fast tracking as 2nd time adopters.



Recruitment & Assessment – April to September 2023

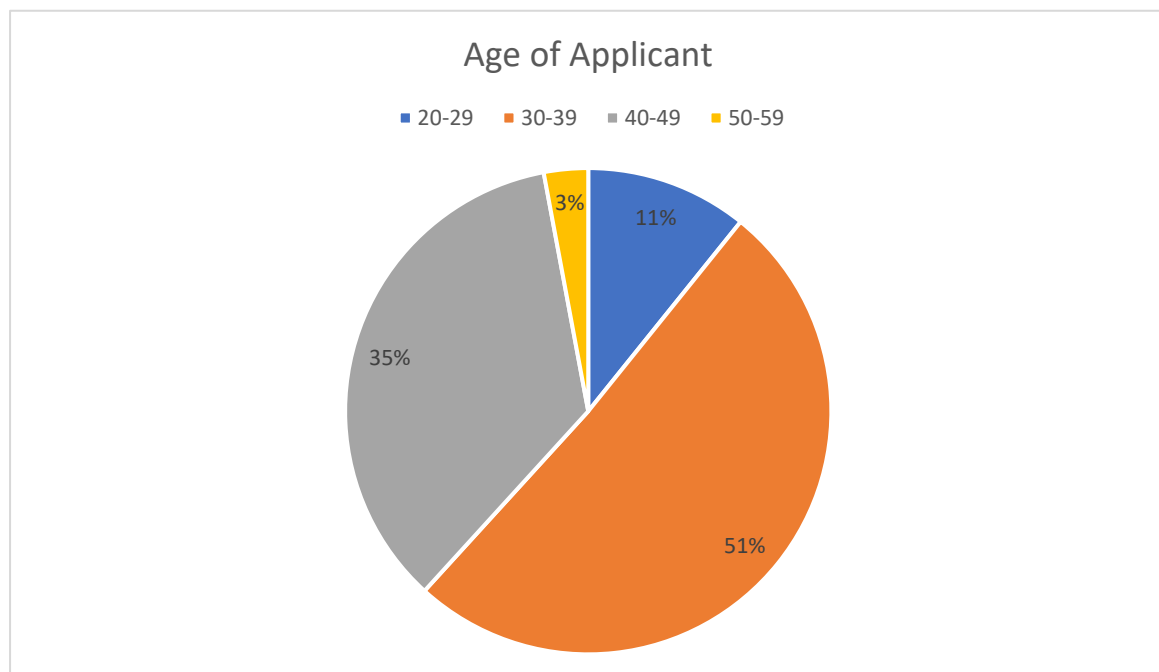
Initial Enquiries

98 enquiries over the six-month period.



Age

Of the 98 enquiries, **51%** are aged between 30-39 and **35%** are aged between 40-49.



Ethnicity

84% of all applicants identify as WHITE. **6%** of applicants identify as BBAC, ASAB or MIXD.

Definitions are taken from Children looked after census 2021-22, Office for Statistics, Welsh Government as follows:

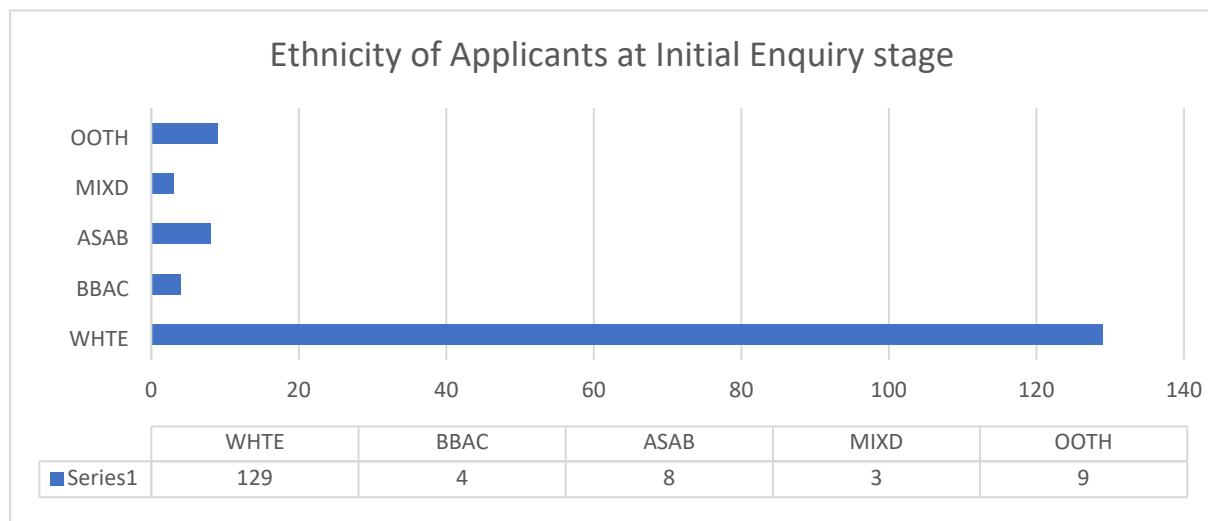
WHITE - White

MIXD - Mixed ethnic groups

ASAB – Asian or Asian British

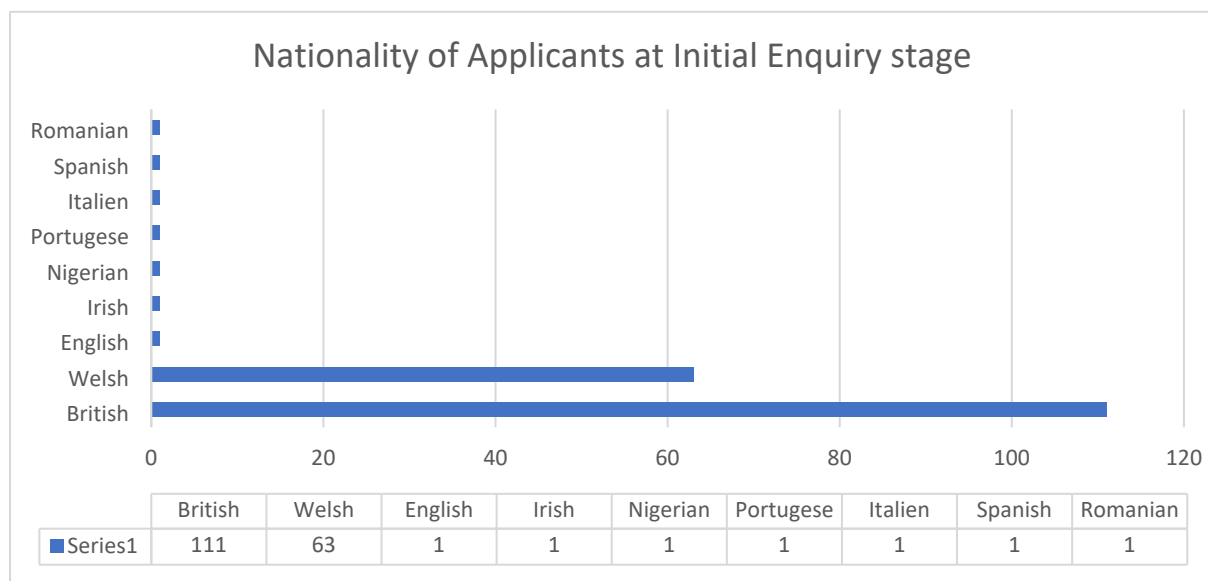
BBAC – Black, African, Caribbean or Black British

OOOTH - Other ethnic group



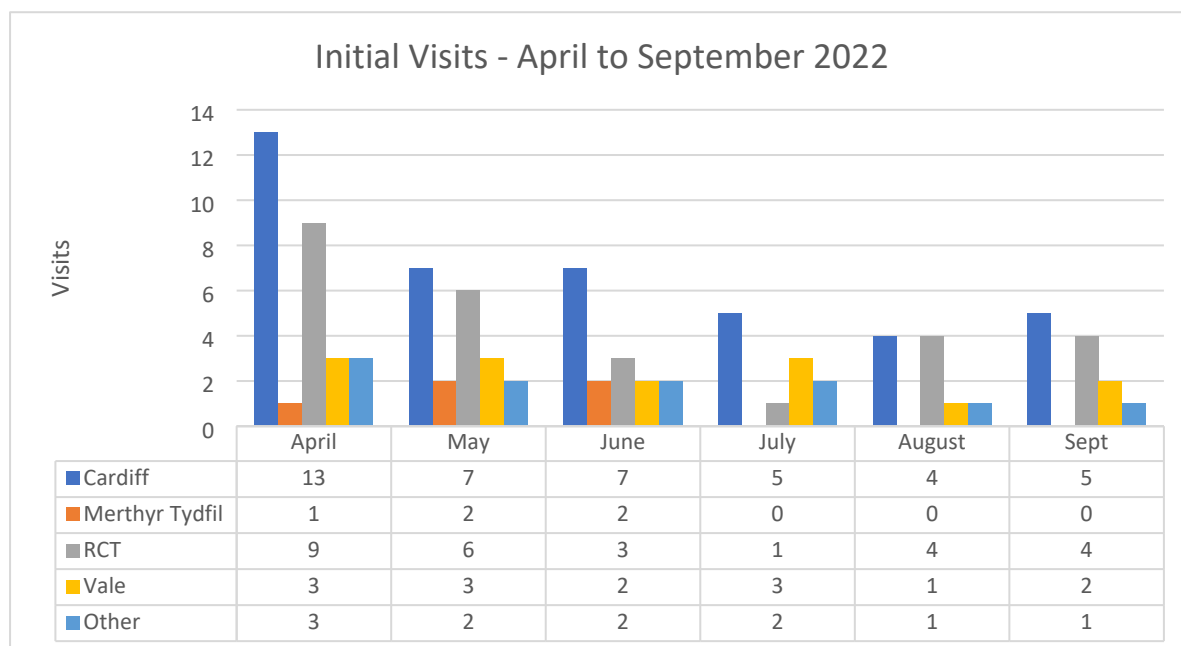
Nationality

61% of applicants disclose they are British, **35%** disclosed they are Welsh and **4%** disclosed other nationalities.



Initial Visits

26 initial visits were carried out during the reporting period.

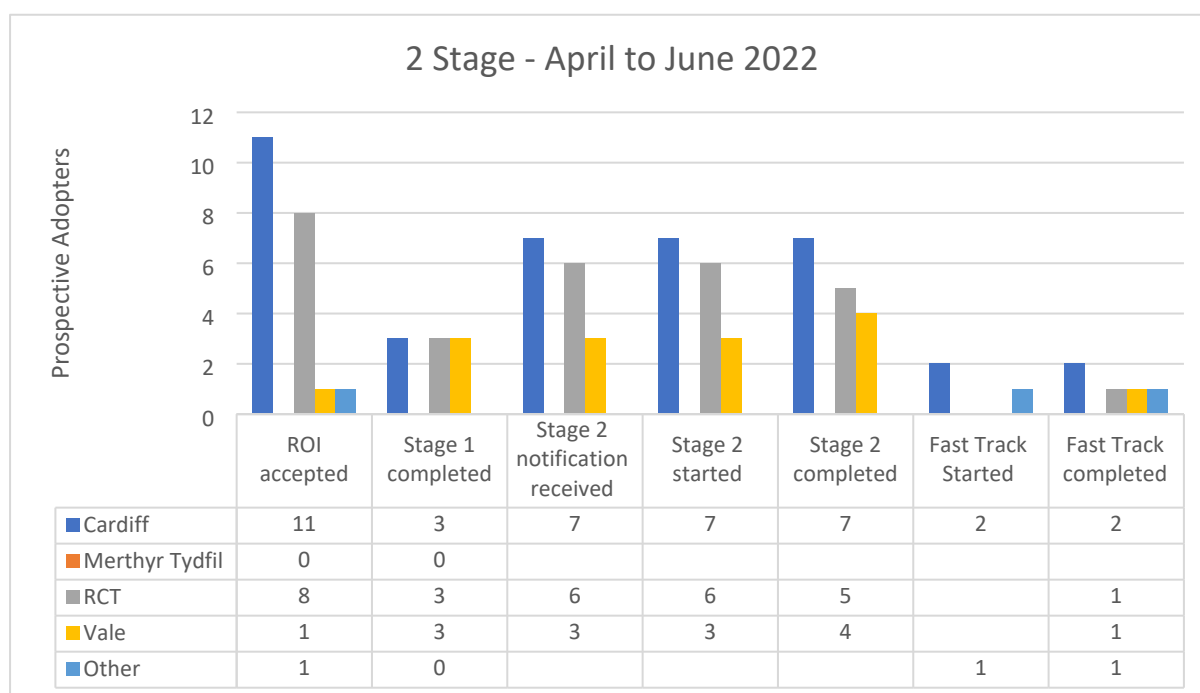


2 stage model

21 Registrations of Interest were received during the reporting period.

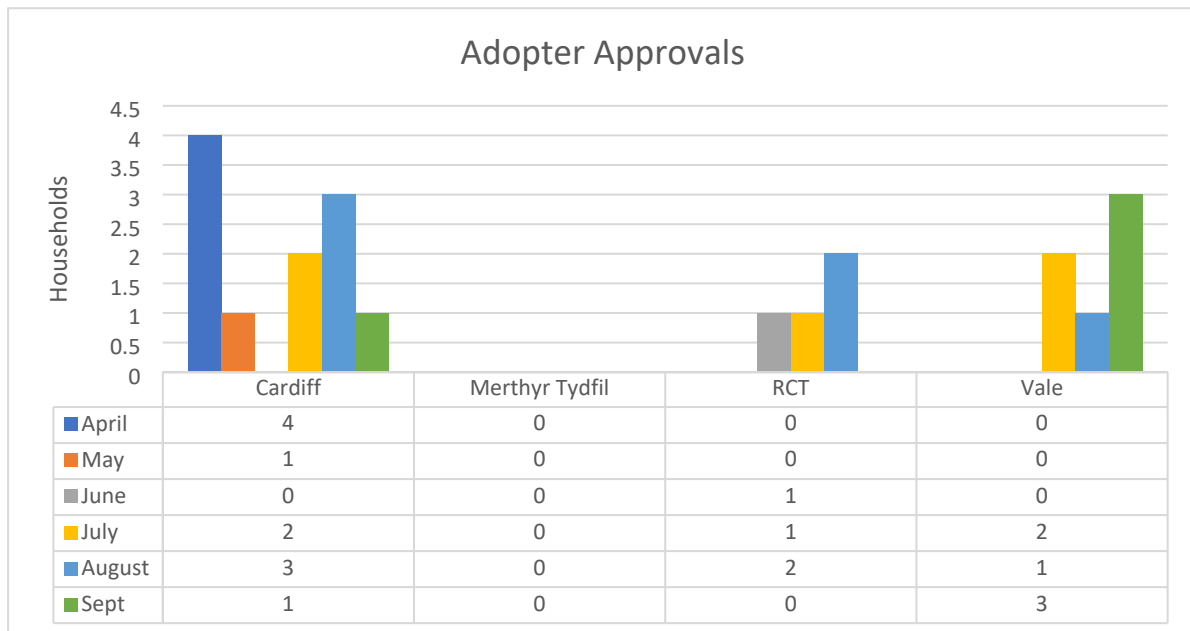
9 prospective adopters completed Stage 1 of the process and progressed to Stage 2.

3 prospective adopters fast-tracked their application, and **5** prospective adopters completed the fast-track process.



Adopter Approvals

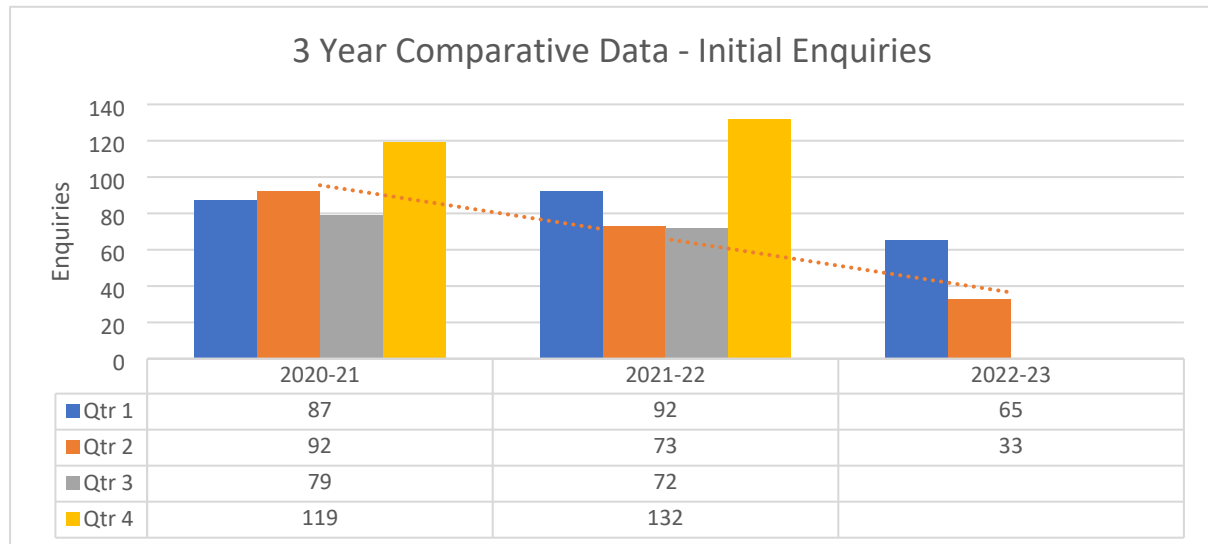
30 adopters have been approved during the reporting period.



Comparative Data April 2020 to September 2023

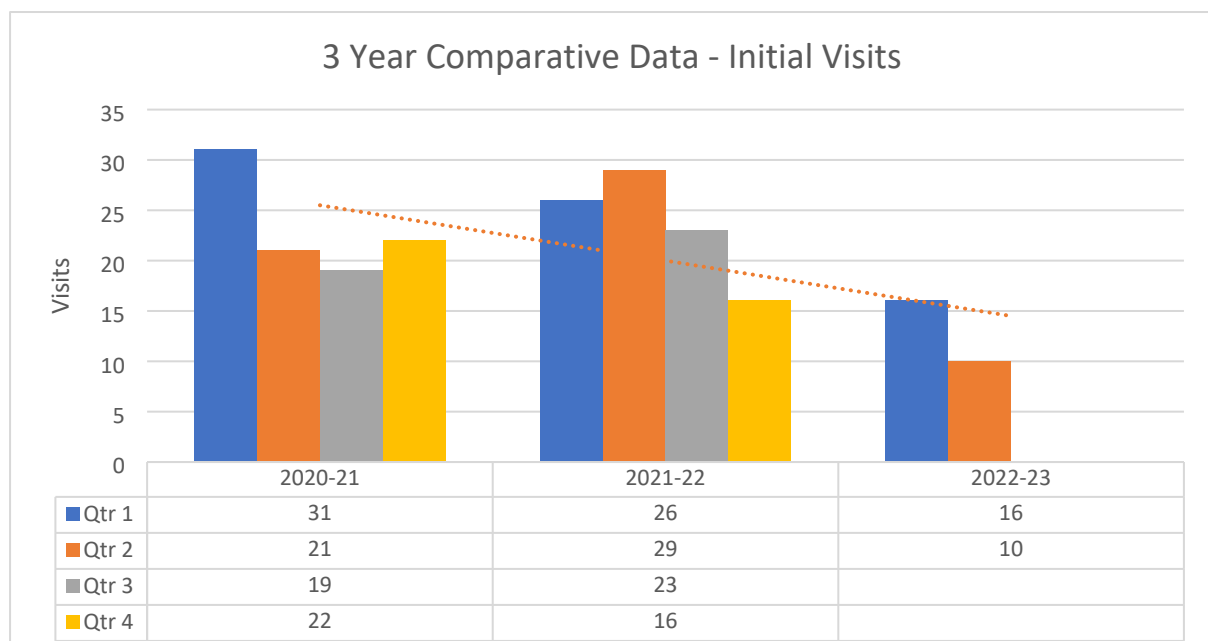
Initial Enquiries

A national trend has been observed over the past year in the number of enquiries for adoption. VVC however, are only just starting to see a reduction in the number of enquiries received.



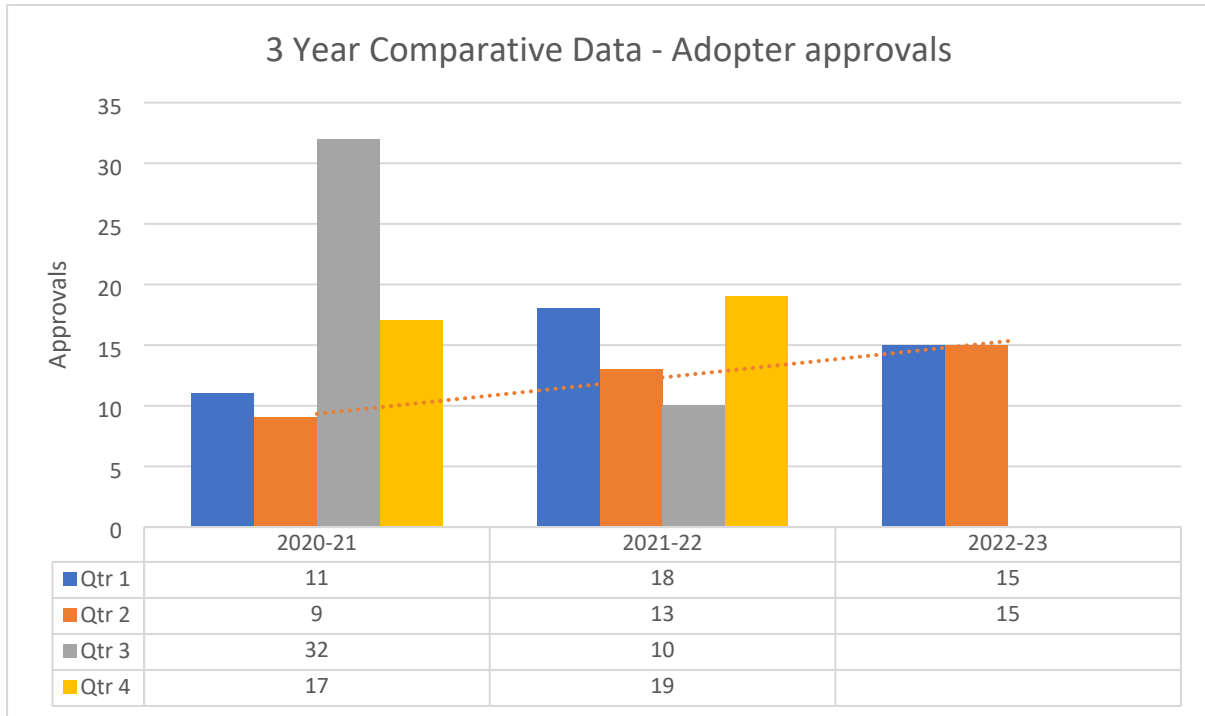
Initial Visits

Comparison of data held over the three years at the mid-year point indicate a year-on-year decrease (**50%**) in the number of initial visits being carried out. This is, however, consistent with the number of enquiries being received.



Approved Adopters

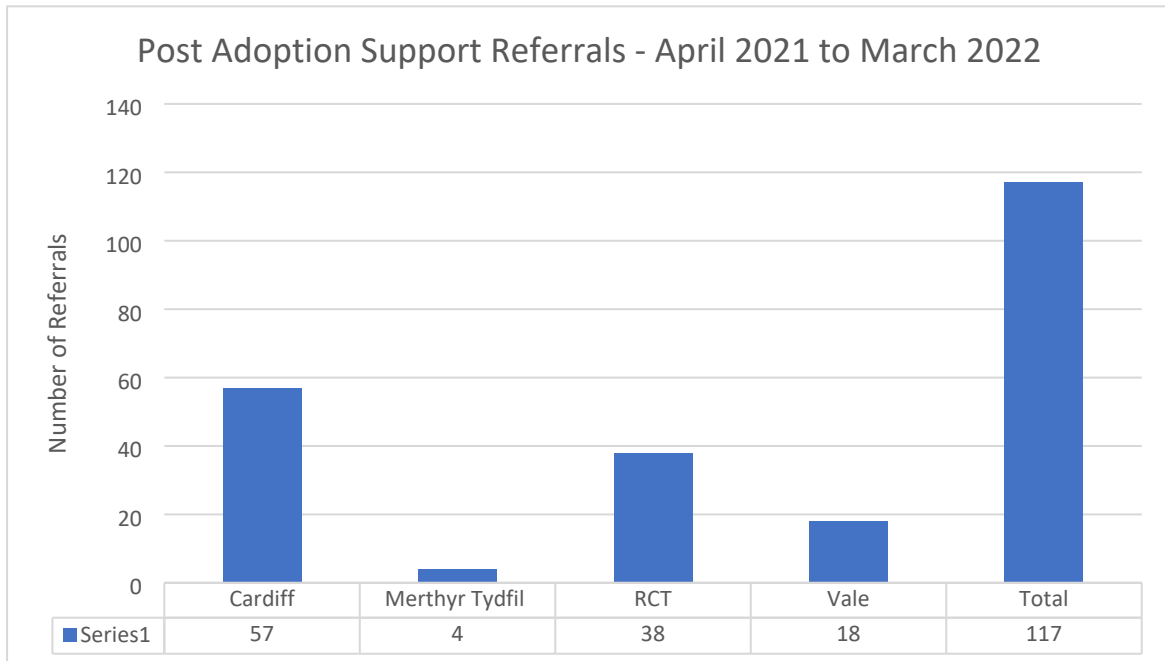
Adopter approvals for the first half of year remain stable when compared to 2021-22, with an increase in approval when compared to the same period in 2020-21.



Appendix 3 – Adoption Support

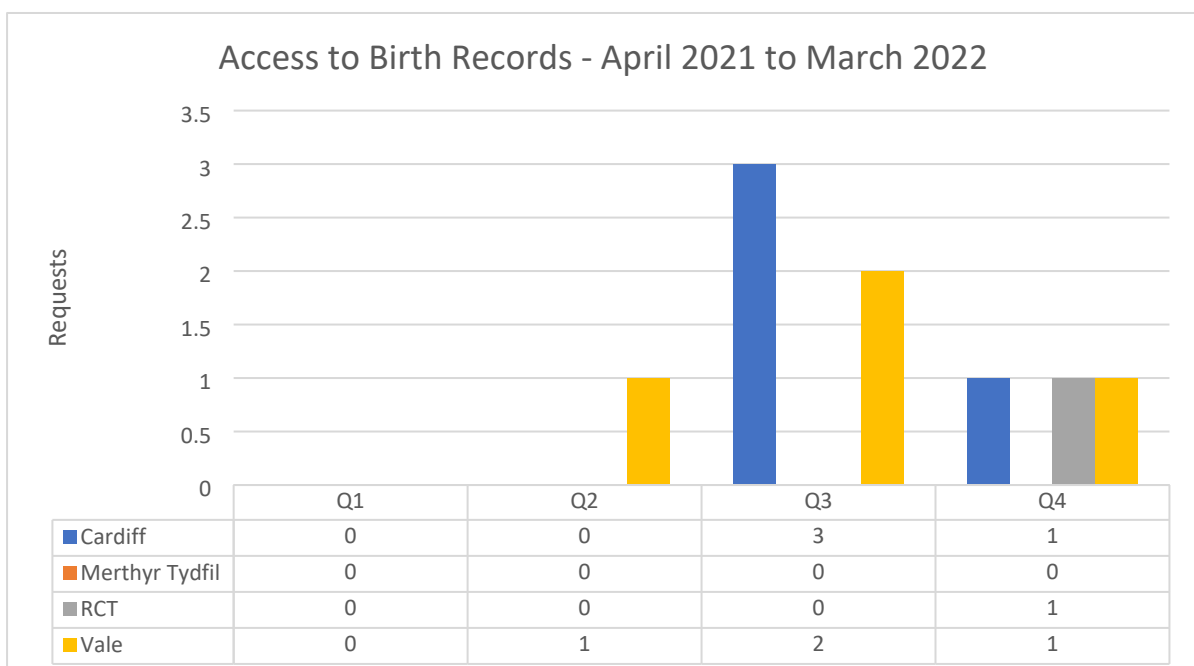
Referrals

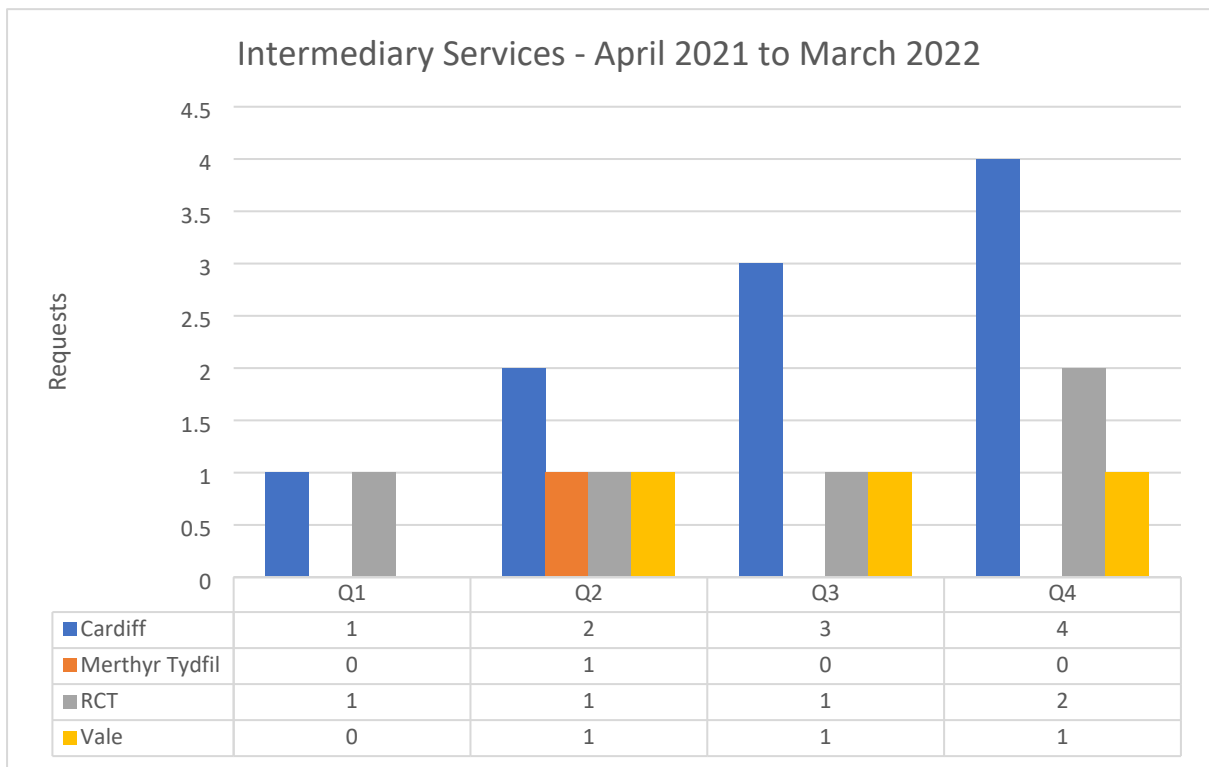
117 Post Adoption Support referrals were received during the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022. **51%** were received from Cardiff, **25%** were received from RCT, **19%** were received from Vale of Glamorgan and **6%** were received from Merthyr Tydfil.



Access to Birth Records and Intermediary Services

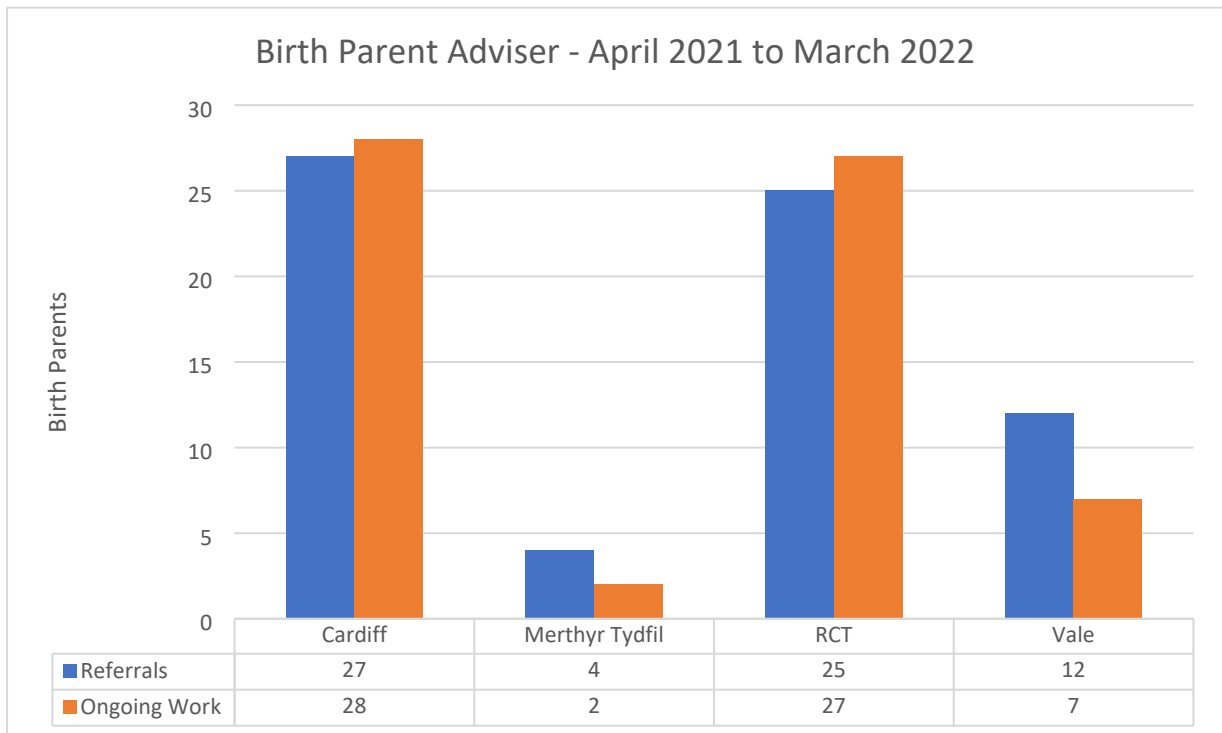
28 referrals were received for Access to Birth Records and Intermediary Services.





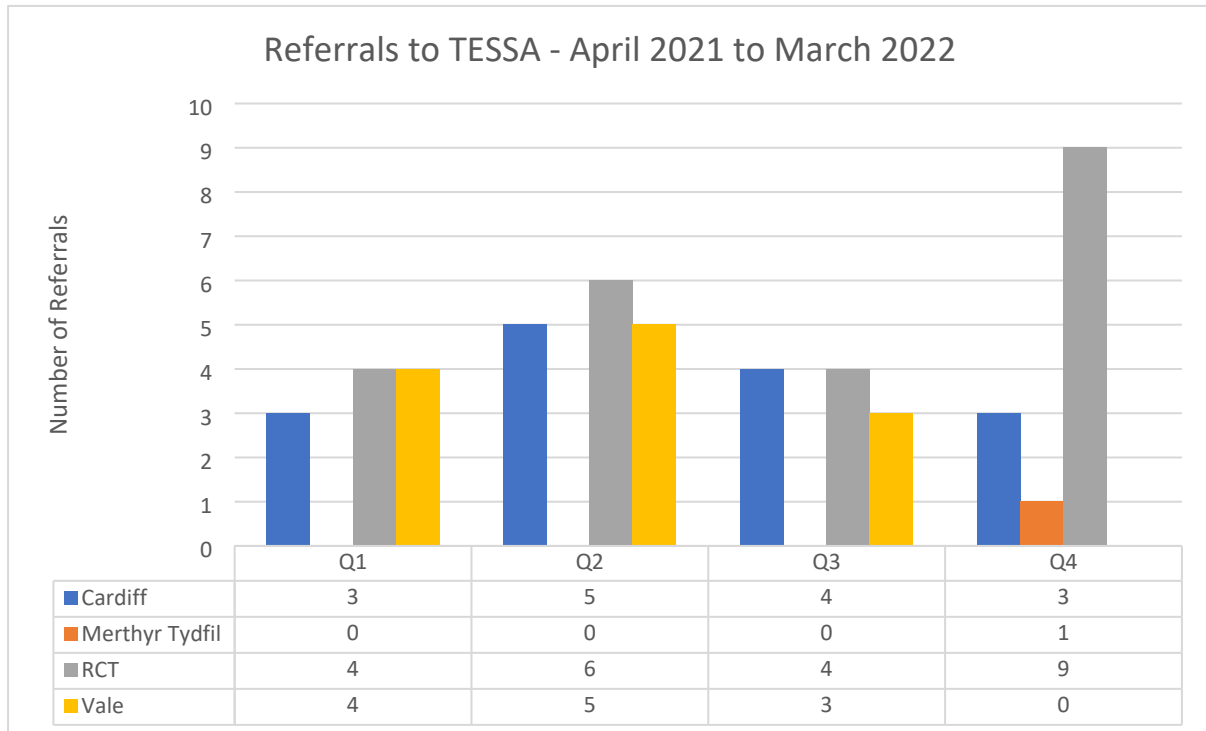
Birth Parent Adviser

68 referrals were made during the reporting period April 2021 to March 2022. **64** birth parents continue to receive ongoing support from previous referrals.



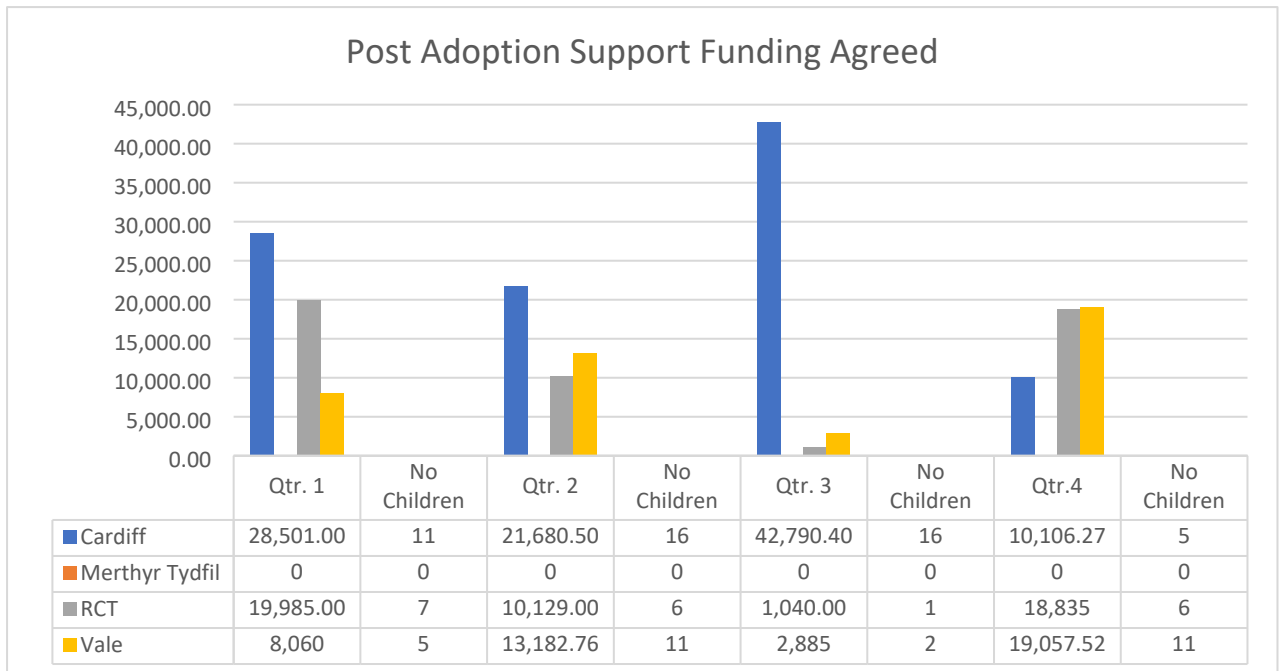
TESSA

51 Referrals were received for TESSA during the reporting period (April 2021 to March 2022).



Financial Expenditure

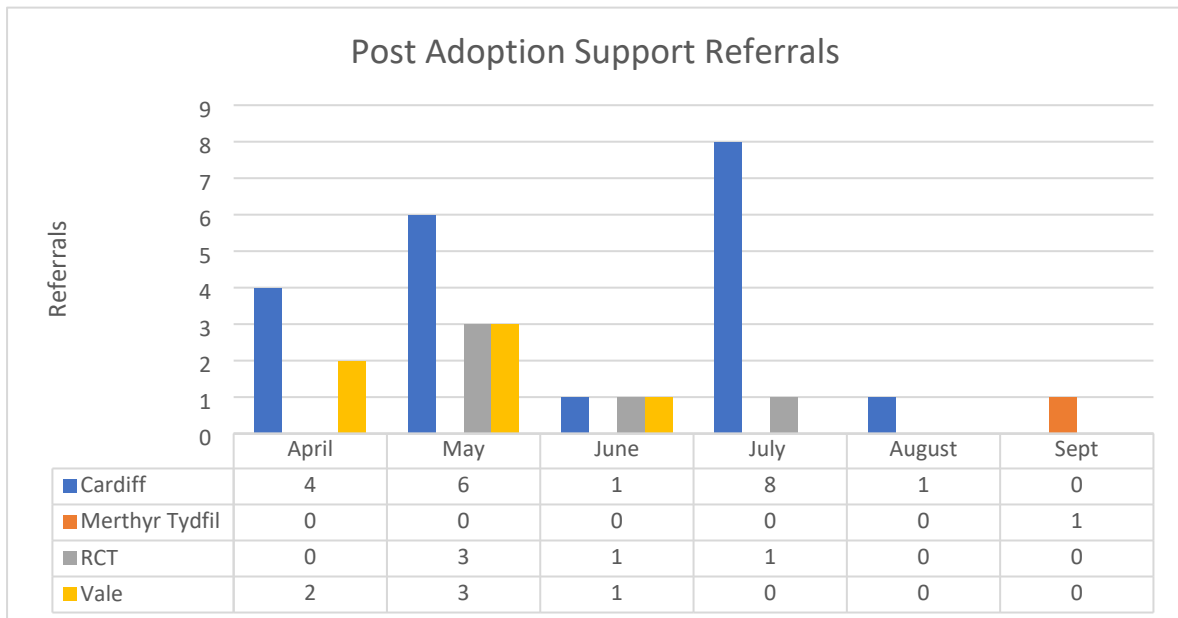
During the reporting period April 2021 to March 2022, 97 children were approved to receive funded therapeutic support packages.



Adoption Support – April to September 2022

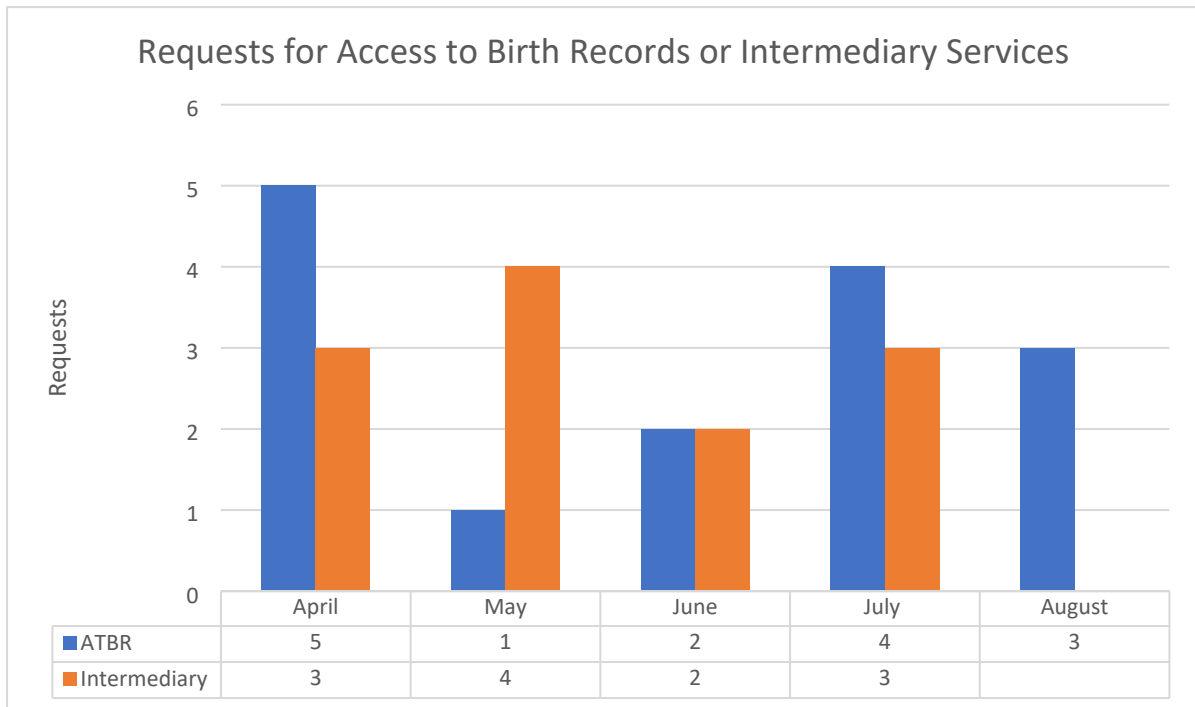
Referrals

32 new referrals for Post Adoption Support were received during the reporting period.



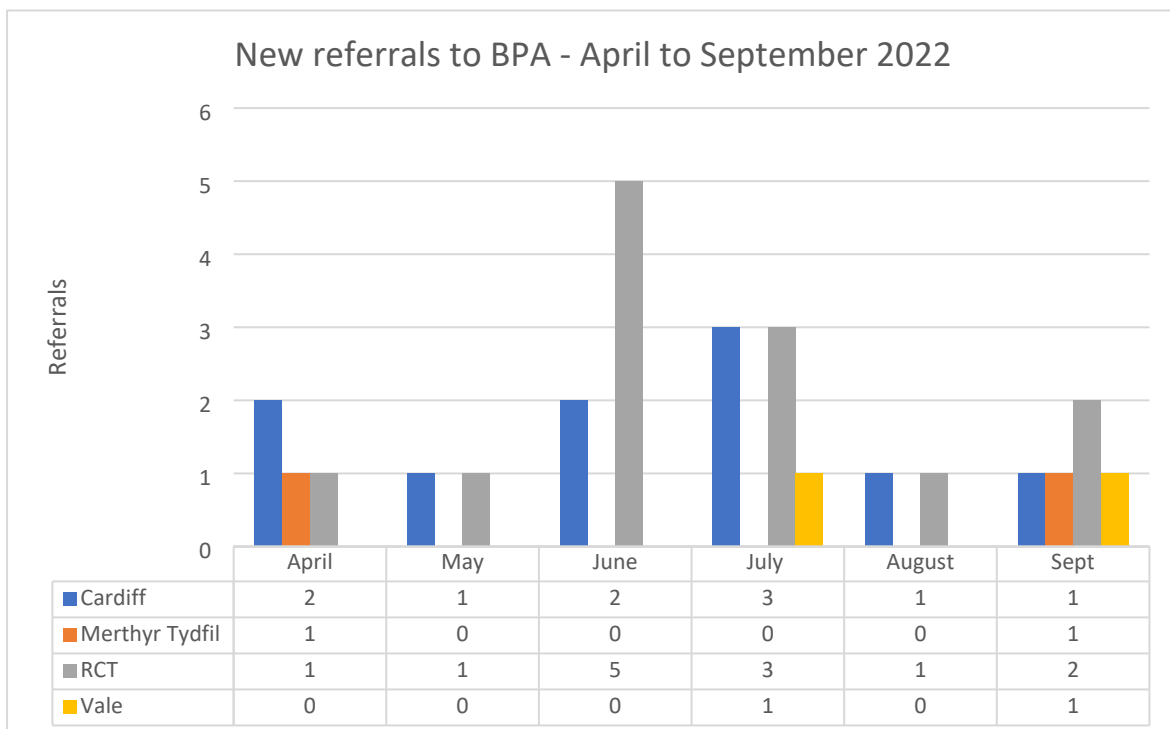
Access to Birth Records and Intermediary Services

27 referrals were received for Access to Birth Records and Intermediary Services.



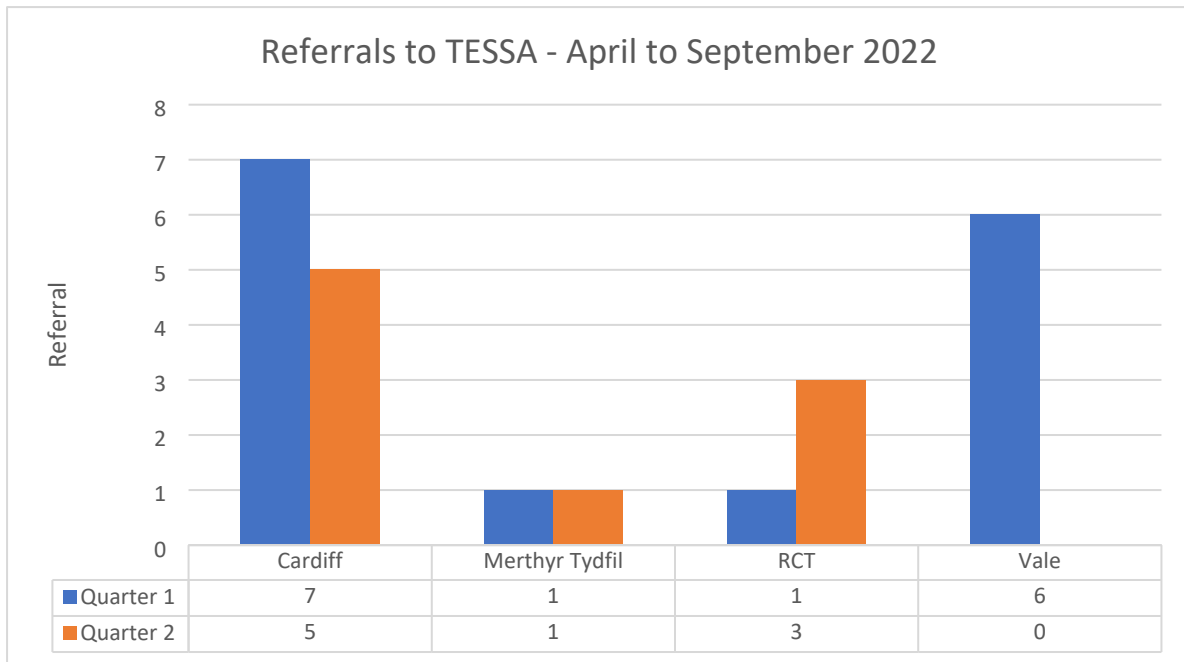
Birth Parent Adviser

27 new referrals to the Birth Parent Adviser were received during the reporting period.



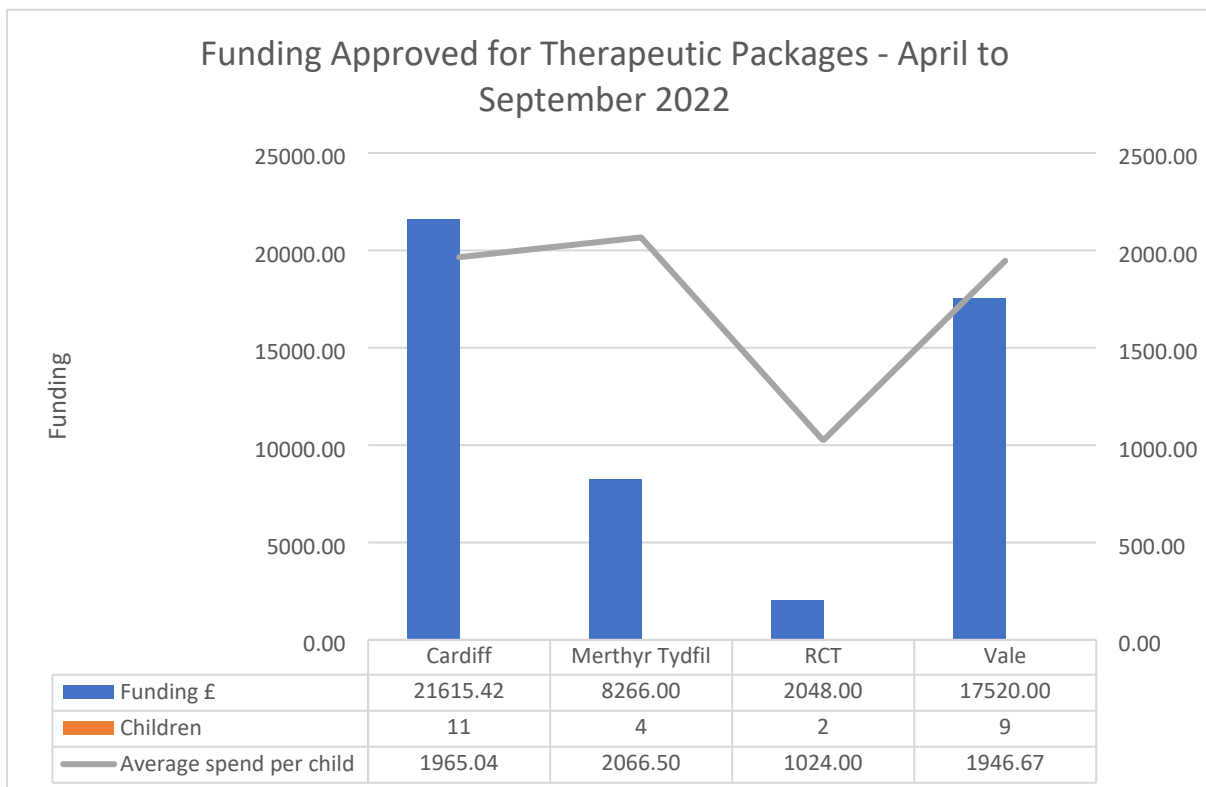
TESSA

15 new referrals to TESSA were made during the period April to September 2022.



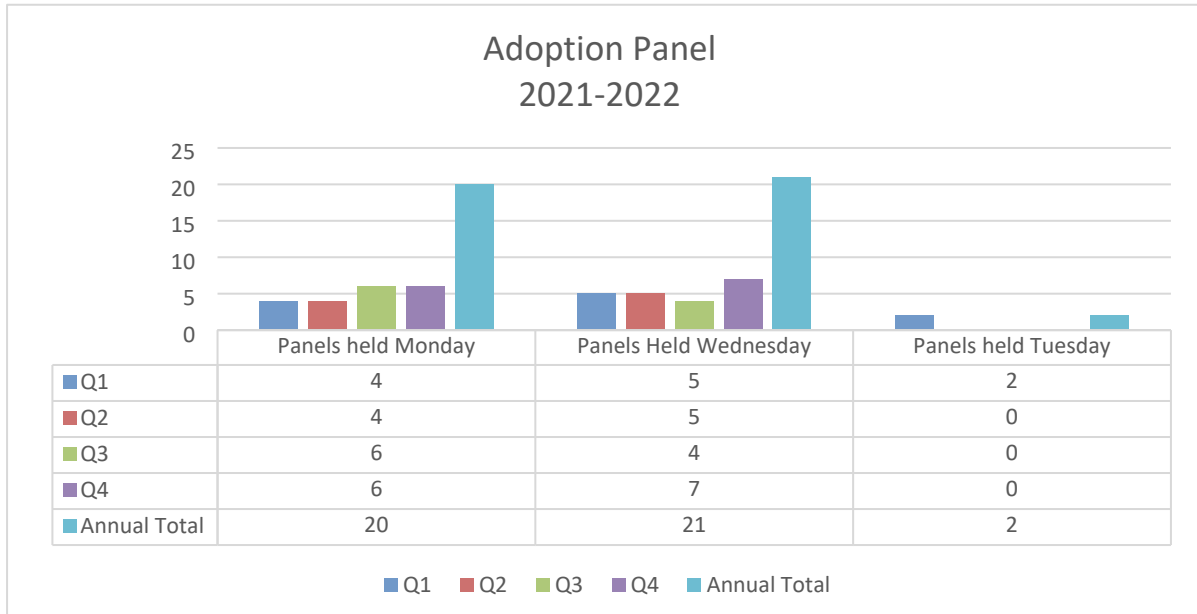
Financial Expenditure

26 children were approved by local authority for therapeutic packages.



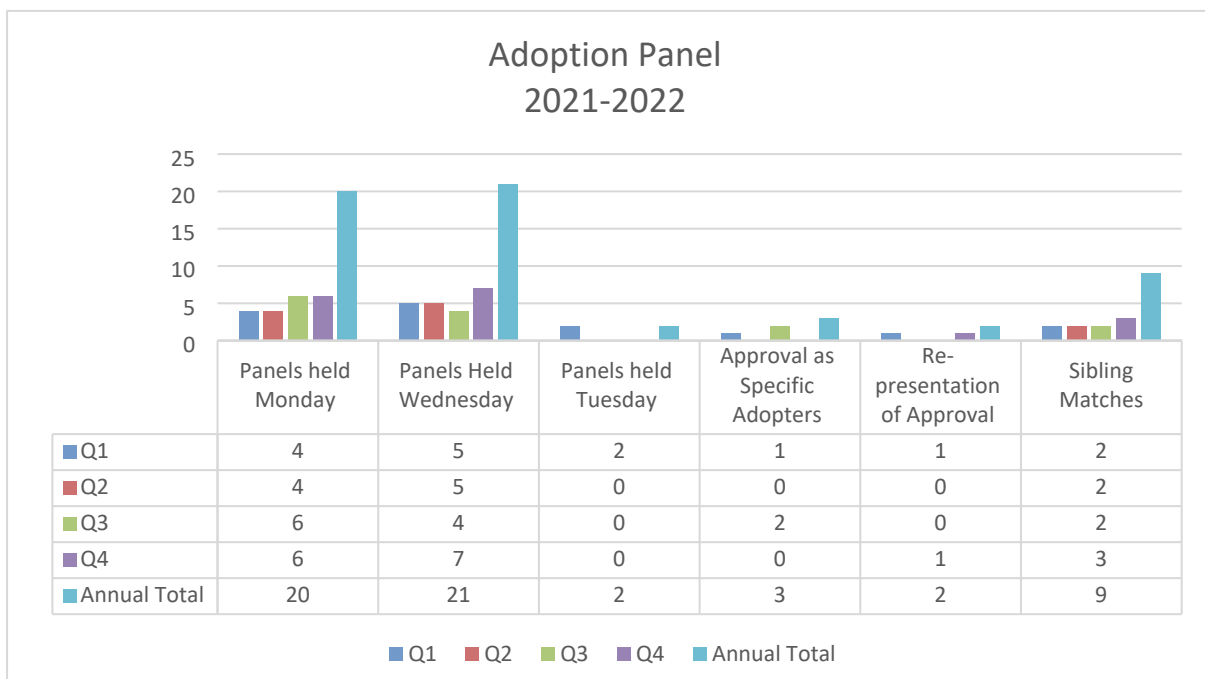
Appendix 4 - Adoption Panel

43 Adoption Panels took place during the reporting period. 50 Adoption Panels were originally scheduled during the year. 7 panels were cancelled as there were no cases scheduled. 4 all-day panels were held.



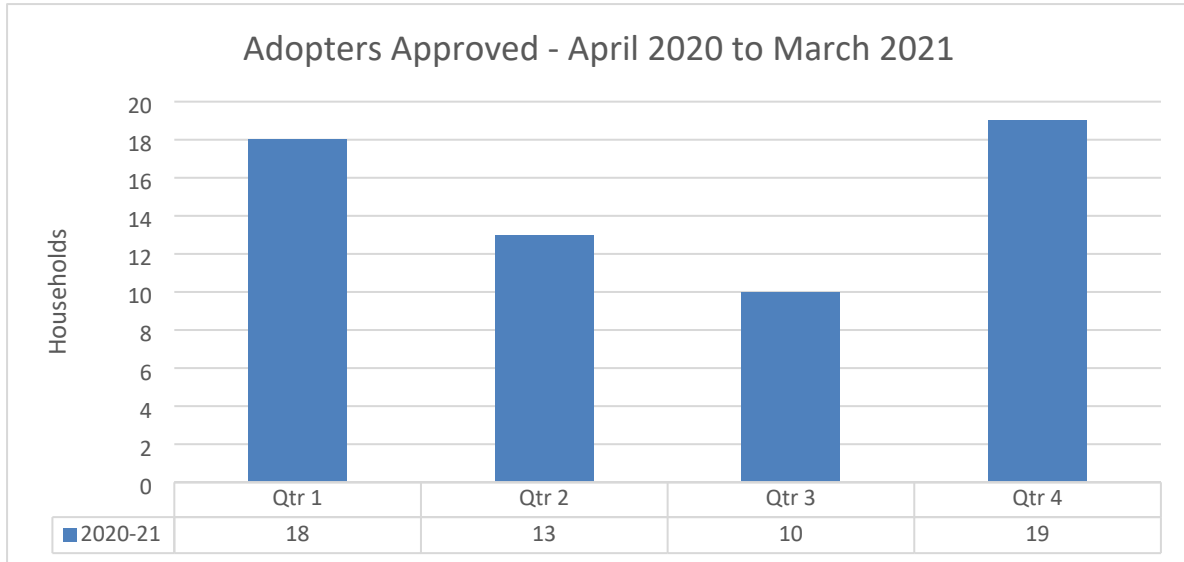
Adoption Panel cases

126 cases were presented to Adoption Panels. 53 prospective adopters were presented for approval and 70 matches were presented. 3 ratified adopter approvals were carried over from previous quarter.



Adopter approval

59 adoptive households have been approved to adopt during the reporting period. **60** adoptive households were presented at panel, 1 of which was awaiting ratification at the end of Quarter 4.



Matches

70 children matches were presented to Adoption Panel during the reporting period. Of the 70 children matches, 9 sibling groups were matched.





Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative
Quarter 2 Performance Report 2022-23
Position as of 30 September 2022

Introduction

This report provides an overview of Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) performance against key indicators in respect of children and adopter as agreed by the Regional Management Board.

Raw data held by the four local authorities and the regional collaborative has been used to provide an overview of performance for the six-month reporting period. The report looks specifically at the performance priorities for children, life-journey work, and adopters.

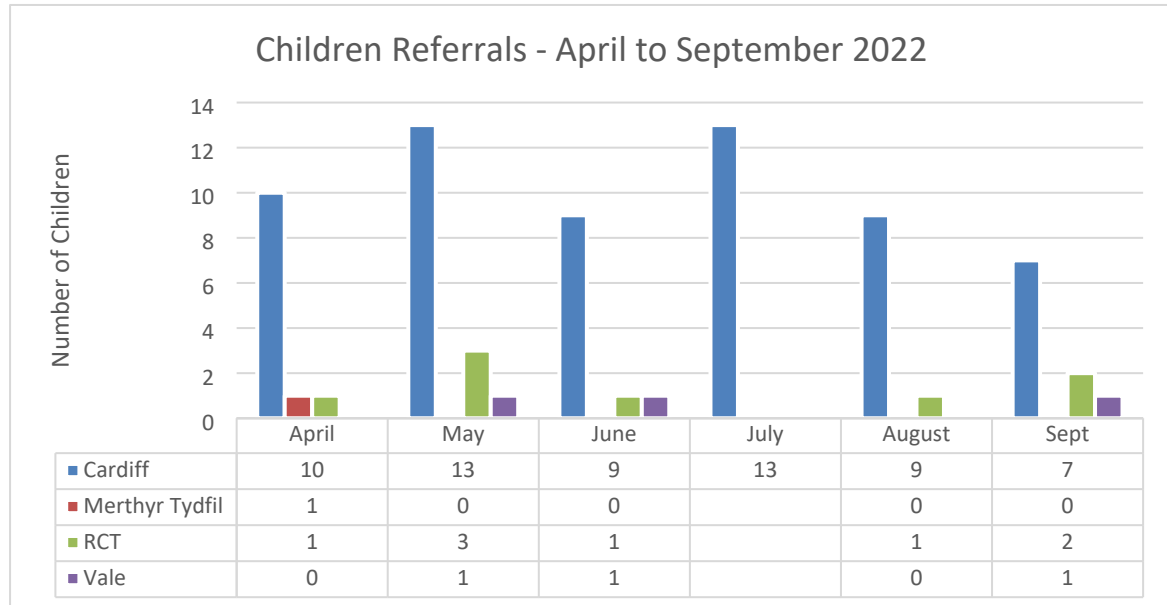
Key headlines (April to June 2022):

- ❖ **28** children placed
- ❖ **75%** children have been placed with VVC adopters
- ❖ **100%** of Life Journey material available at point of matching panel.
- ❖ **98** initial enquiries
- ❖ **30** adopters approved

Children

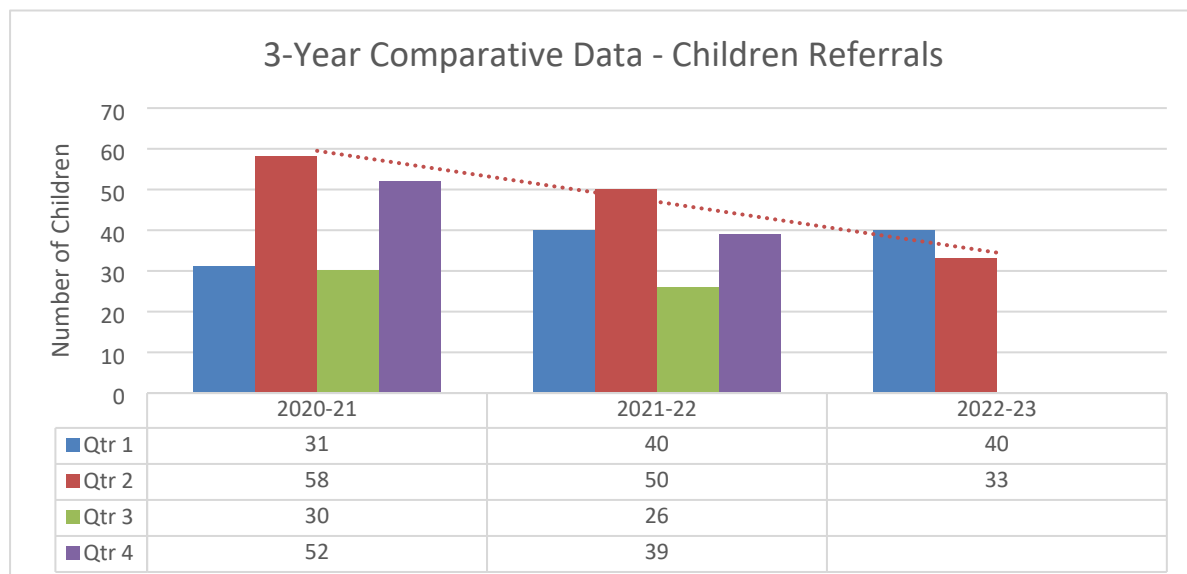
Referrals

73 referrals have been received during the reporting period.



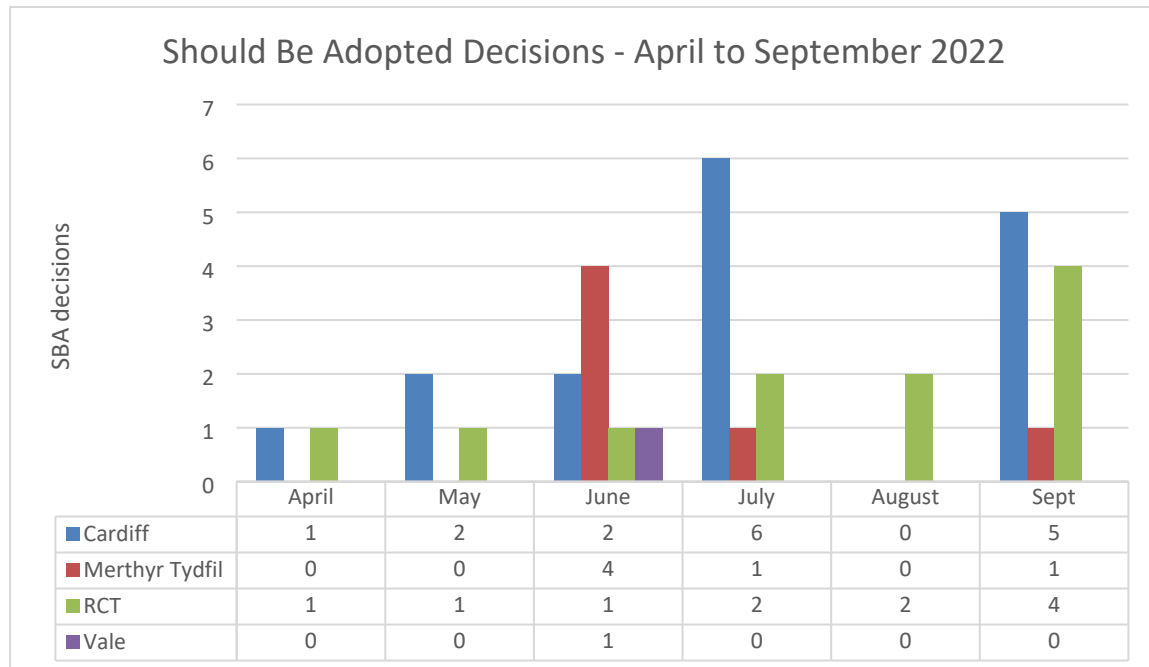
Comparative Data

Over the past three years, referrals to the service have remained stable. Nationally, for the same comparative period, other regions have reported a decrease in the number of referrals. When comparing referrals at the mid-year point of the year (April to September), an **18%** decrease is noted and is less than other regions. This trend will need to be monitored for the rest of the year to establish whether this is consistent with national trends.



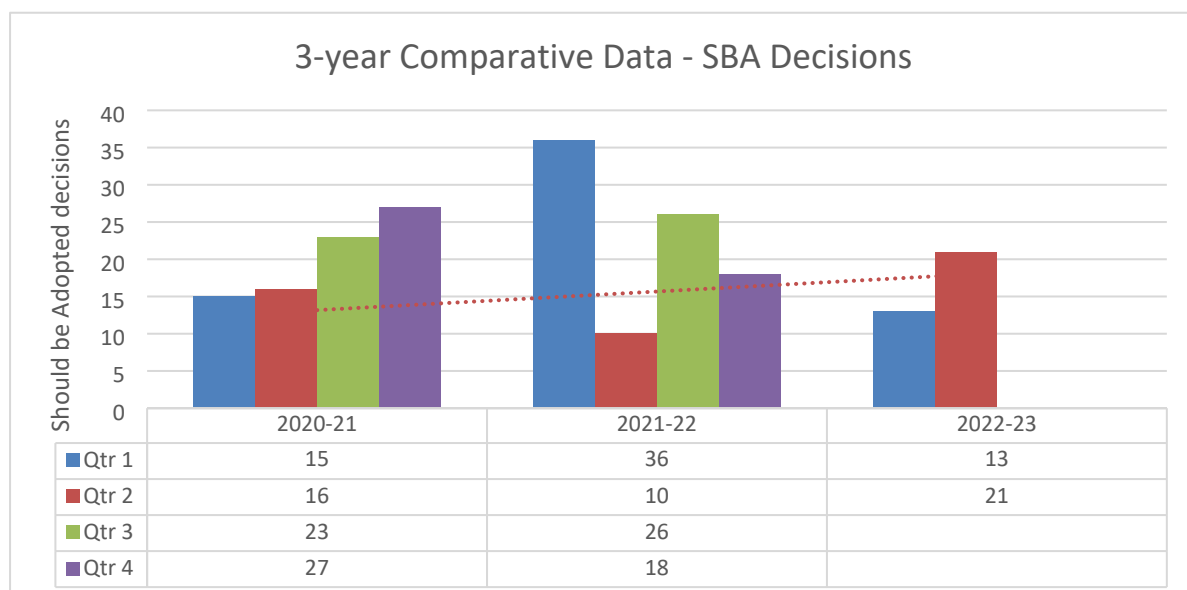
Should be Adopted Decisions

34 SBA decisions were made during the first half year.



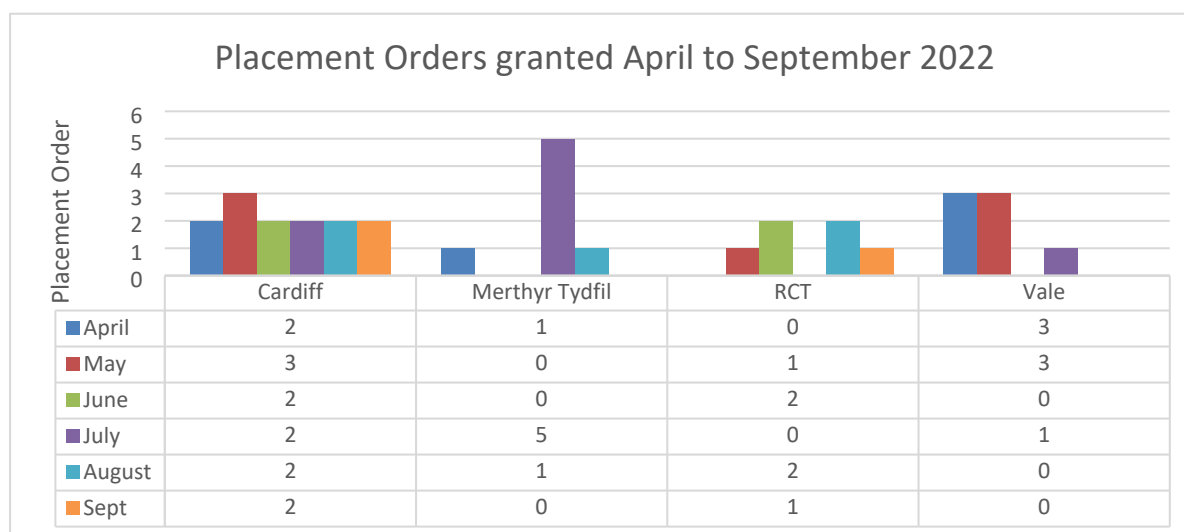
Comparative Data

Should be Adopted decisions over the three-year period remain stable. When comparing data at mid-year point, a **9%** increase is observed when compared to 2020-21 and a **26%** decrease is observed when compared to 2021-22.



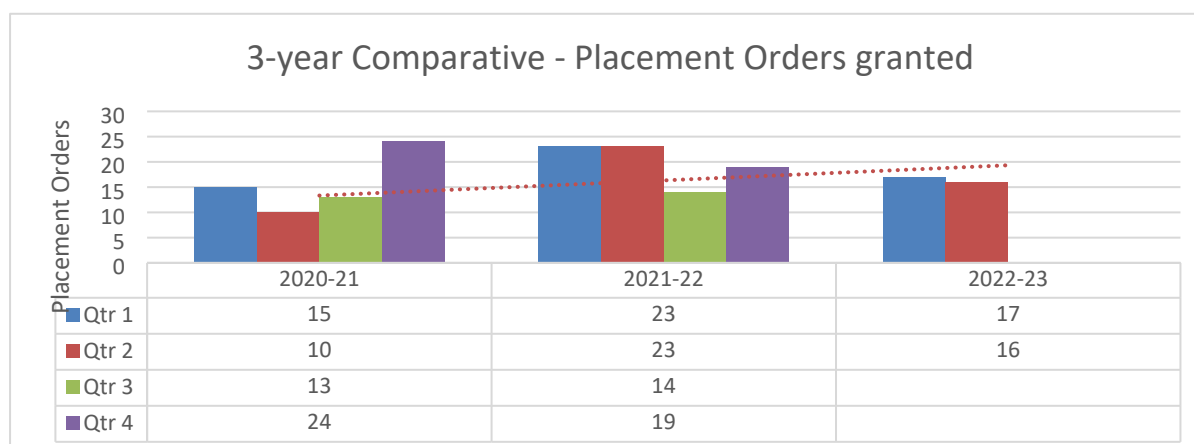
Placement Orders

33 Placement Orders were granted during the reporting period.



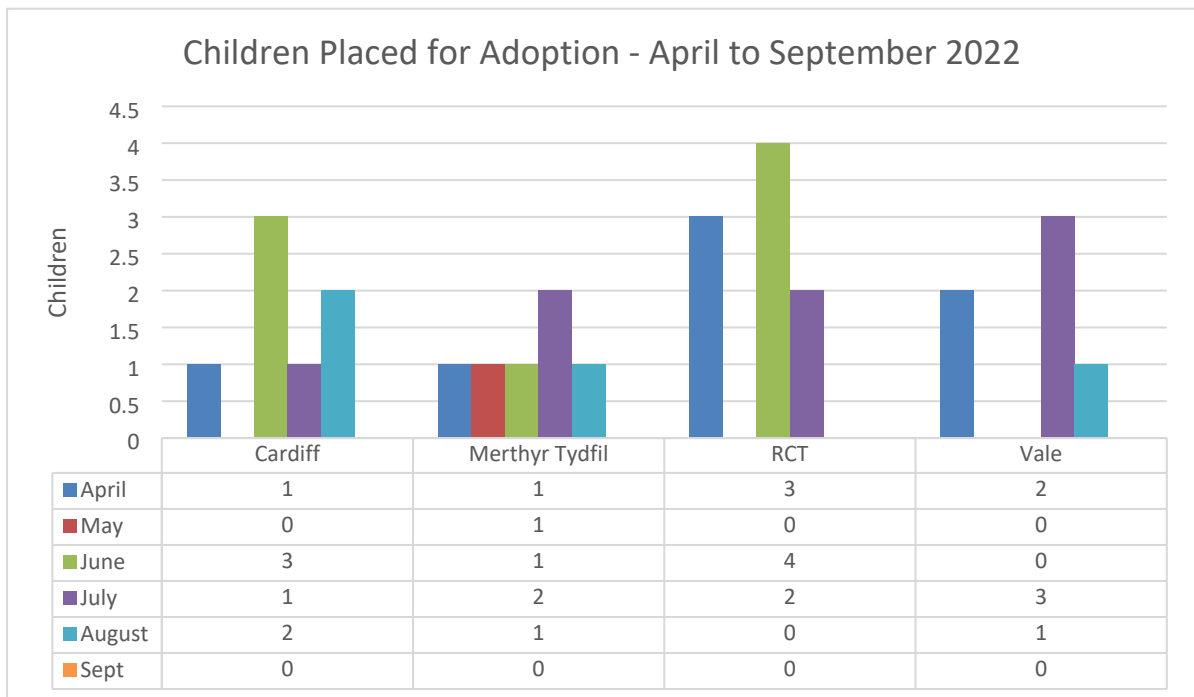
Comparative Data

VVC observed a slight decline in placement orders in around 2019/2020 but not as significantly as being felt across Wales at present. Our rates of Placement Orders within VVC remain consistent albeit with a larger cohort of these from Cardiff rather than the other local authorities. Cardiff's referral rates remain steady into the adoption service at present. The Vale of Glamorgan noted a decline in care proceedings over the past year although report that recently these have been increasing again. Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil both report a change in the way they are working under PLO/pre-birth and that this has been having an impact. Merthyr advise that they have seen a decrease in the rate of children becoming looked after linked to a number of service developments. RCT note the work being undertaken in assessment proceedings including parent and child placements but are mindful that these are situations which inevitably involve risk management and there could be an increase in referrals to adoption if alternative care arrangements are not sustainable.



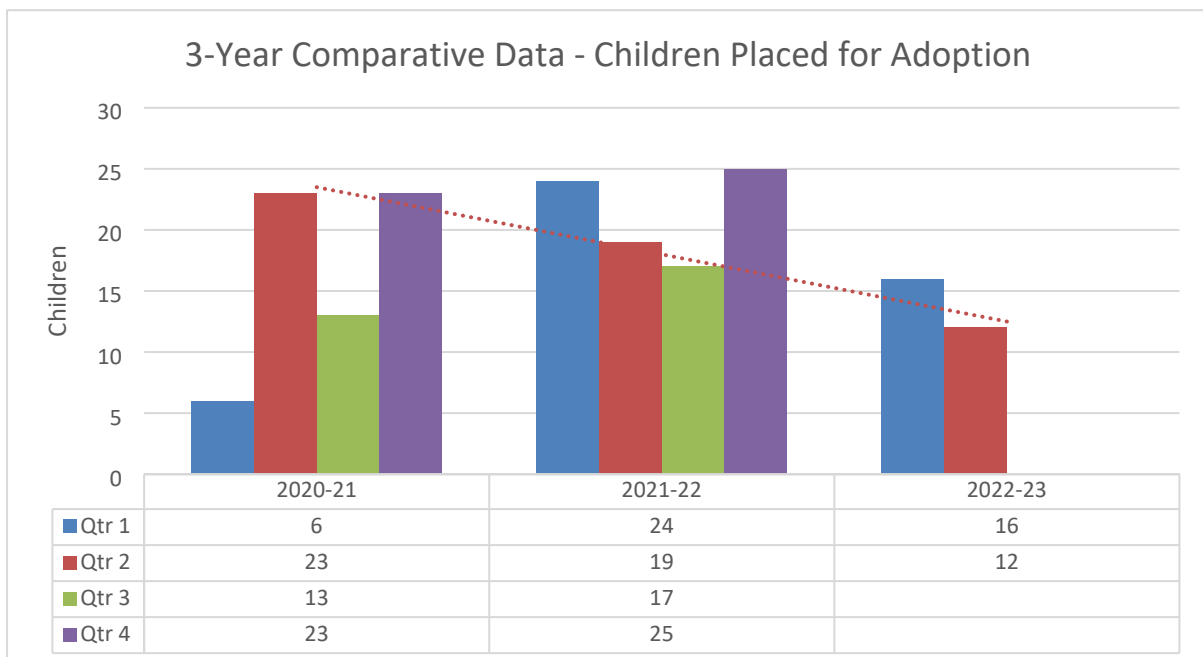
Children Placed

28 children were placed with their adoptive families during the reporting period.



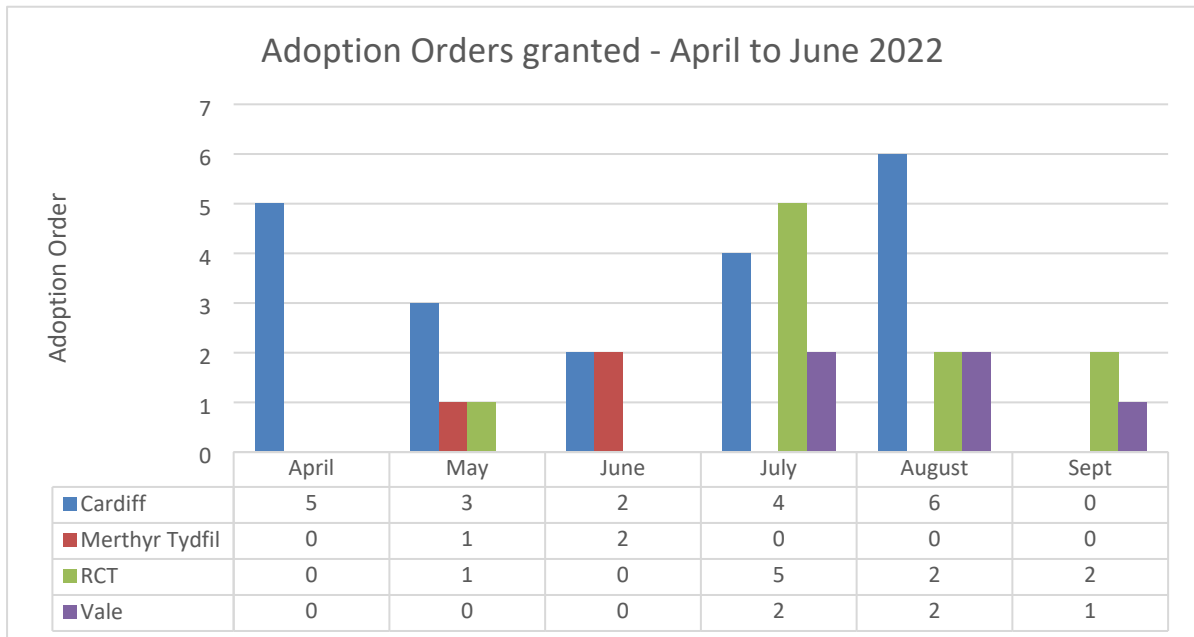
Comparative Data

A noted decrease (**34%**) is noted when compared to the same period in previous year. This is consistent with the decrease in the number of children waiting.



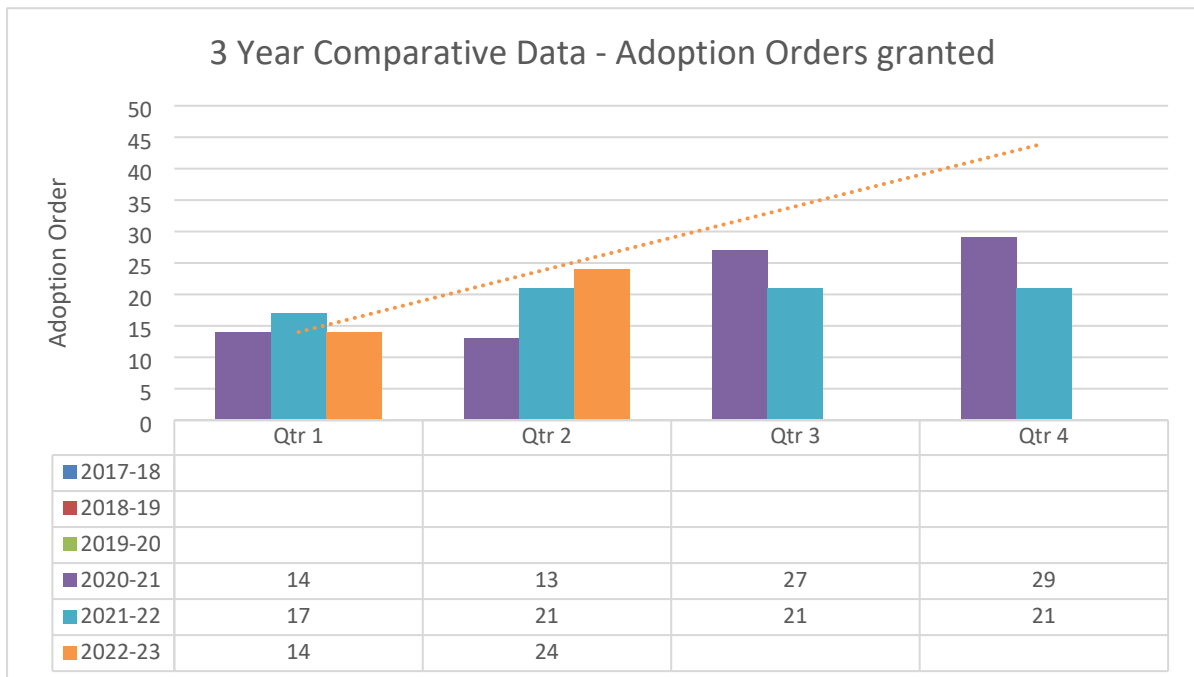
Adoption Orders

38 Adoption Orders were granted.



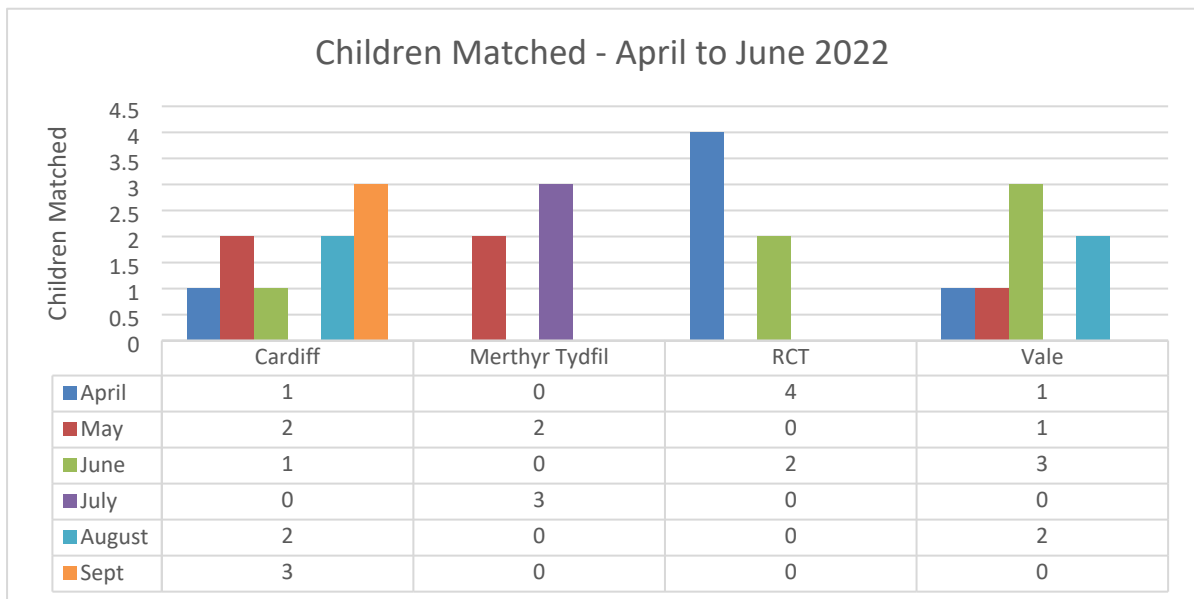
Comparative Data

An increase in the number of Adoption Orders granted is observed when compared to previous years.



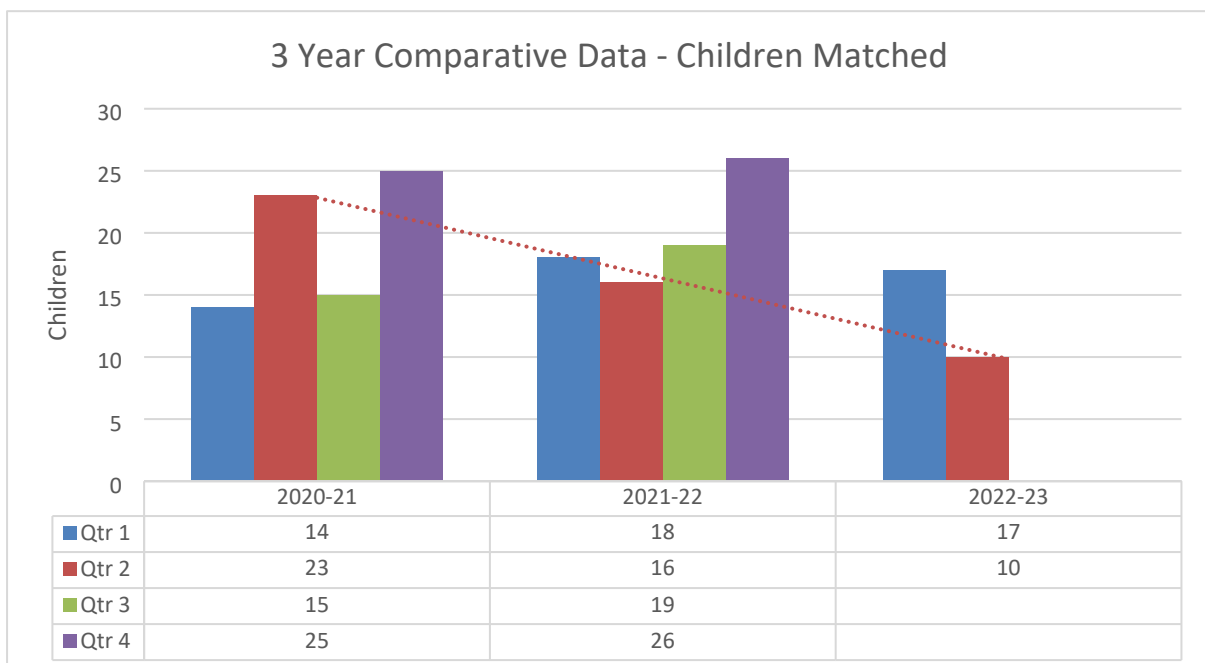
Children matched

27 children were matched during the period April to September 2022.



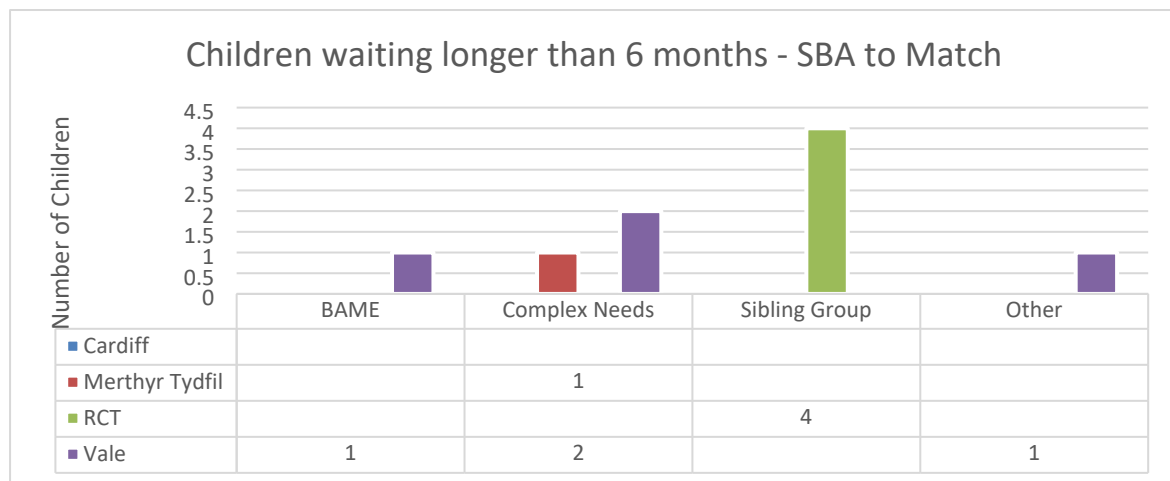
Comparative Data

A downward trend is noted in the number of children matched, which is consistent when considering the number of children waiting.



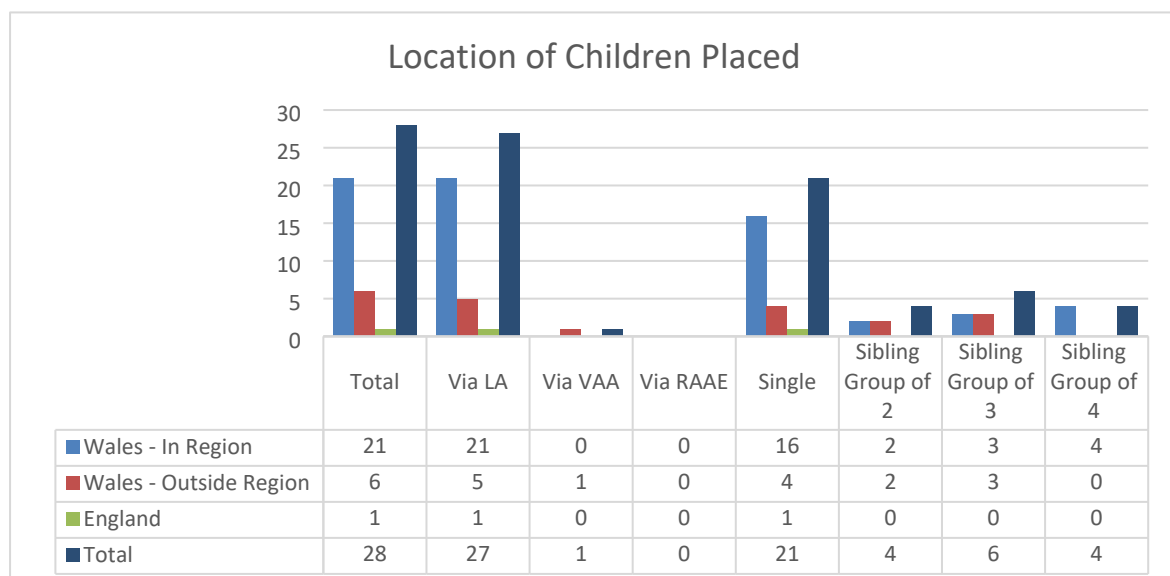
Number of children Matched since April 2021 who have waited longer than 6 months (or 3 months for a relinquished child under 6 months of age) to progress from "Should be placed for Adoption" decision to approve to Match

8 children waited longer than six months to progress from SBA to matched. Four children were part of a sibling group, three children have complex needs and one BAME child's prospective adopter withdrew at the point of introductions, so family finding has restarted.



Type of placement

75% of children were placed with VVC adopters. 21% of children were placed in Wales and 4% of children were placed in England.

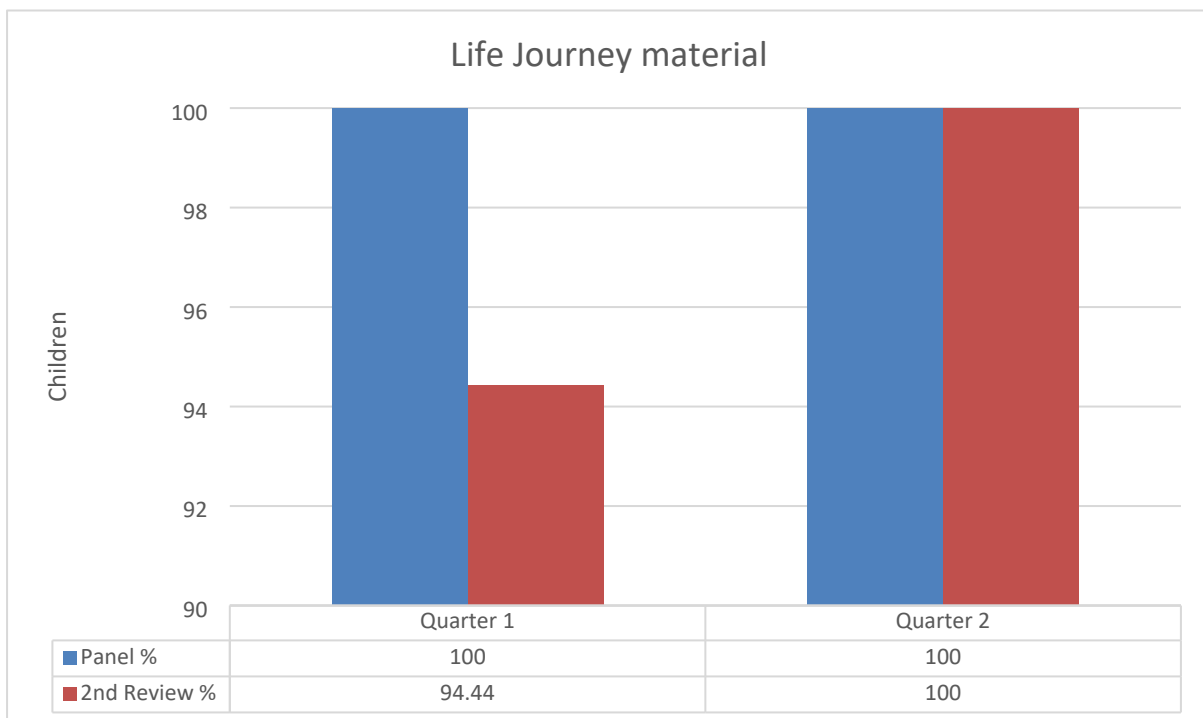


Life Journey

In the reporting period, **100%** of life journey material in draft format is made available at the time of panel. An improvement is observed in life journey material available at the point of 2nd Review when compared to previous year.

M20, M20A and M21 - Life Journey - Accumulated Data						
	Matches	LJ Materials	2nd Review	LJ Materials	Panel %	2nd Review %
Quarter 1	17	17	18	17	100	94.44
Quarter 2	10	10	10	10	100	100.00
Total	27	27	28	27	100	96.43

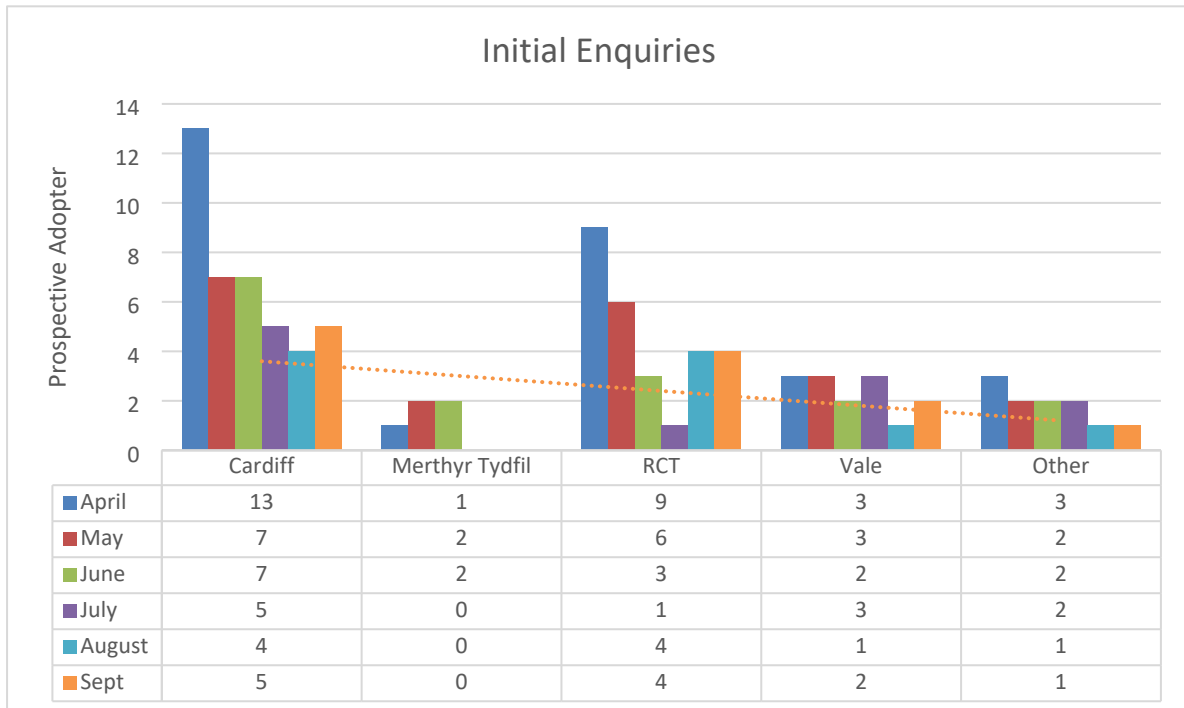
In Quarter 1, Merthyr Tydfil reported the delay in providing later life journey material at the point of 2nd Review because adopters were difficult to engage and needed prompting to approve the final draft of the life journey book.



Adopters

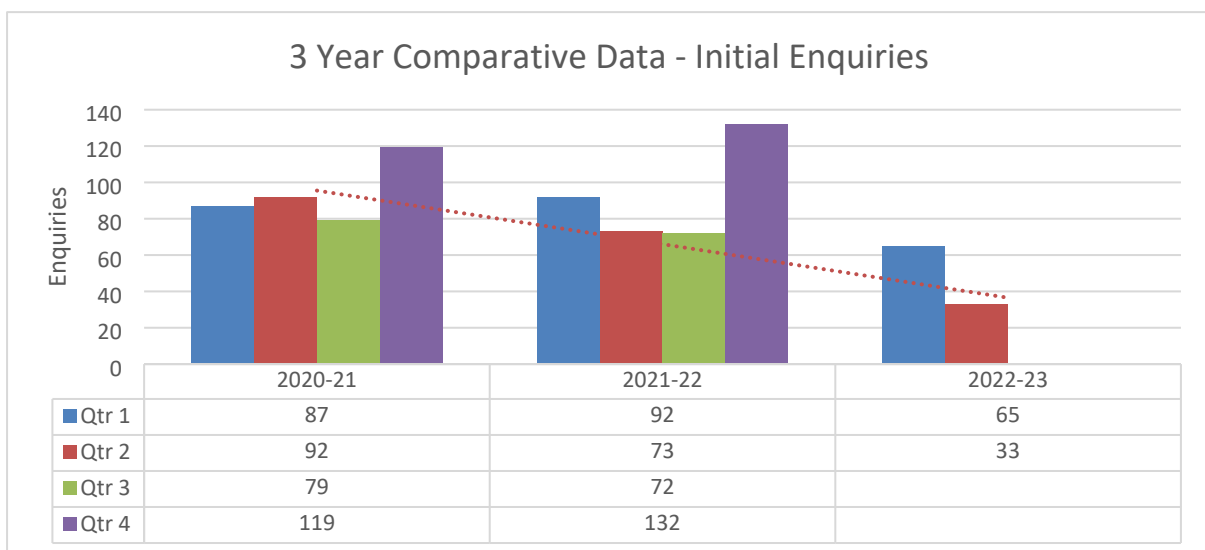
Initial Enquiries

98 enquiries over the six-month period.



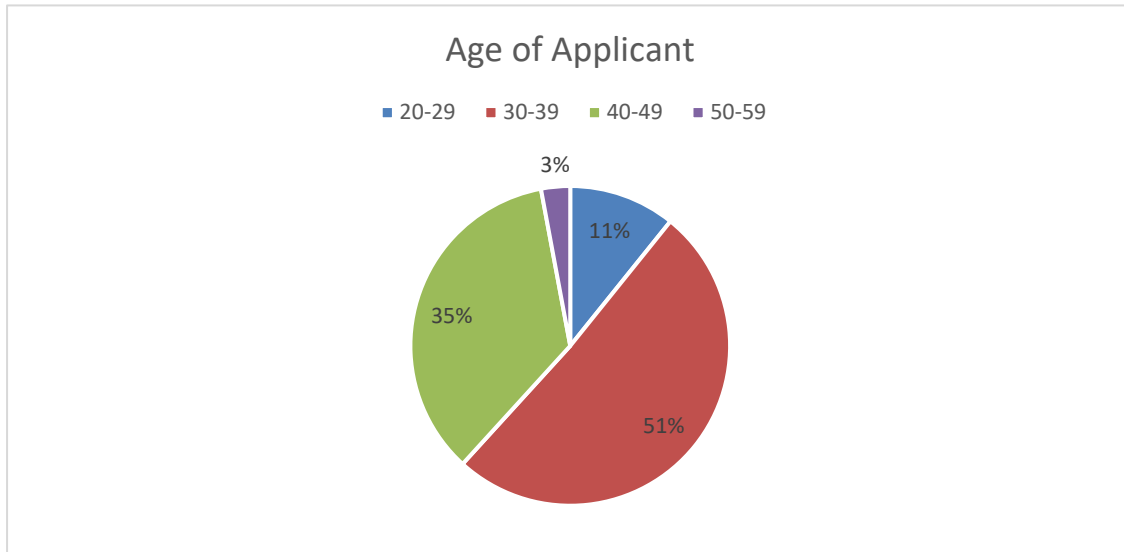
Comparative Data

A national trend has been observed over the past year in the number of enquiries for adoption. VVC however, are only just starting to see a reduction in the number of enquiries received.



Age

Of the 98 enquiries, **51%** are aged between 30-39 and **35%** are aged between 40-49.



Ethnicity

84% of all applicants identify as WHITE. **6%** of applicants identify as BBAC, ASAB or MIXD.

Definitions are taken from Children looked after census 2021-22, Office for Statistics, Welsh Government as follows:

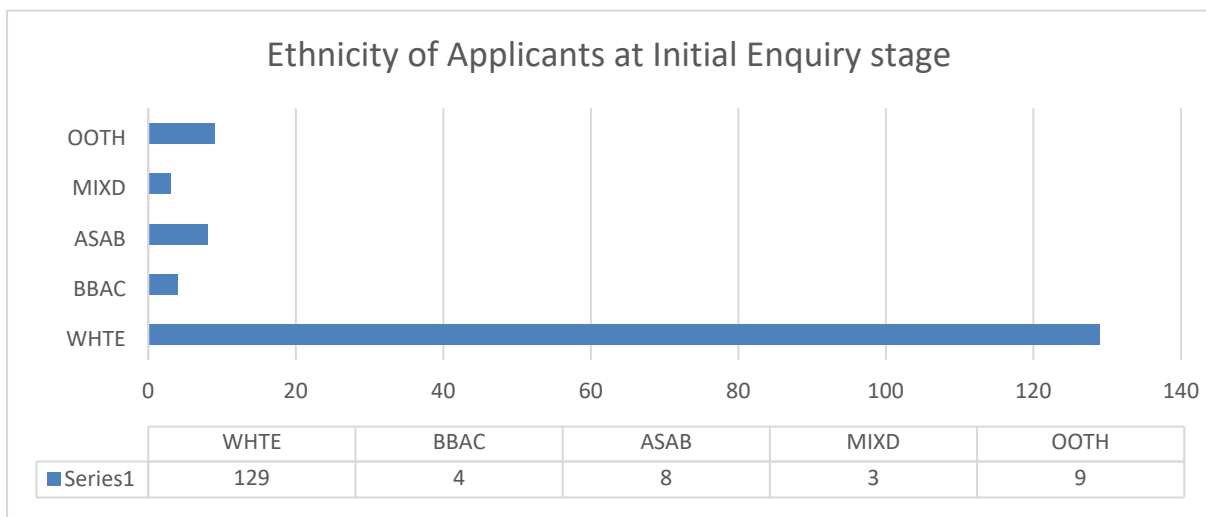
WHITE - White

MIXD - Mixed ethnic groups

ASAB – Asian or Asian British

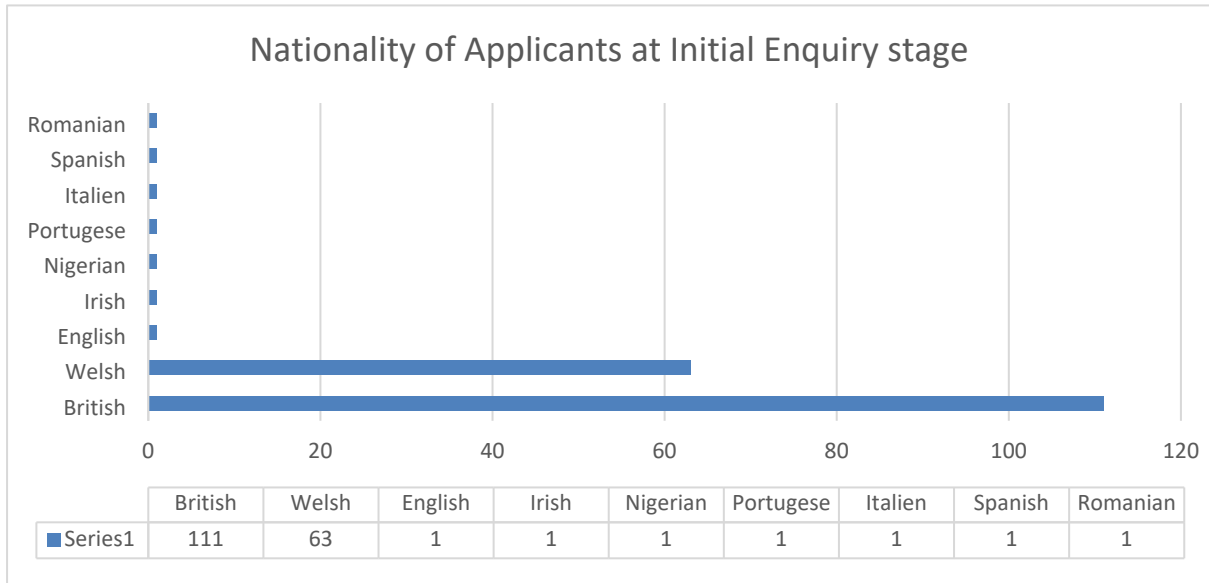
BBAC – Black, African, Caribbean or Black British

OOH - Other ethnic group



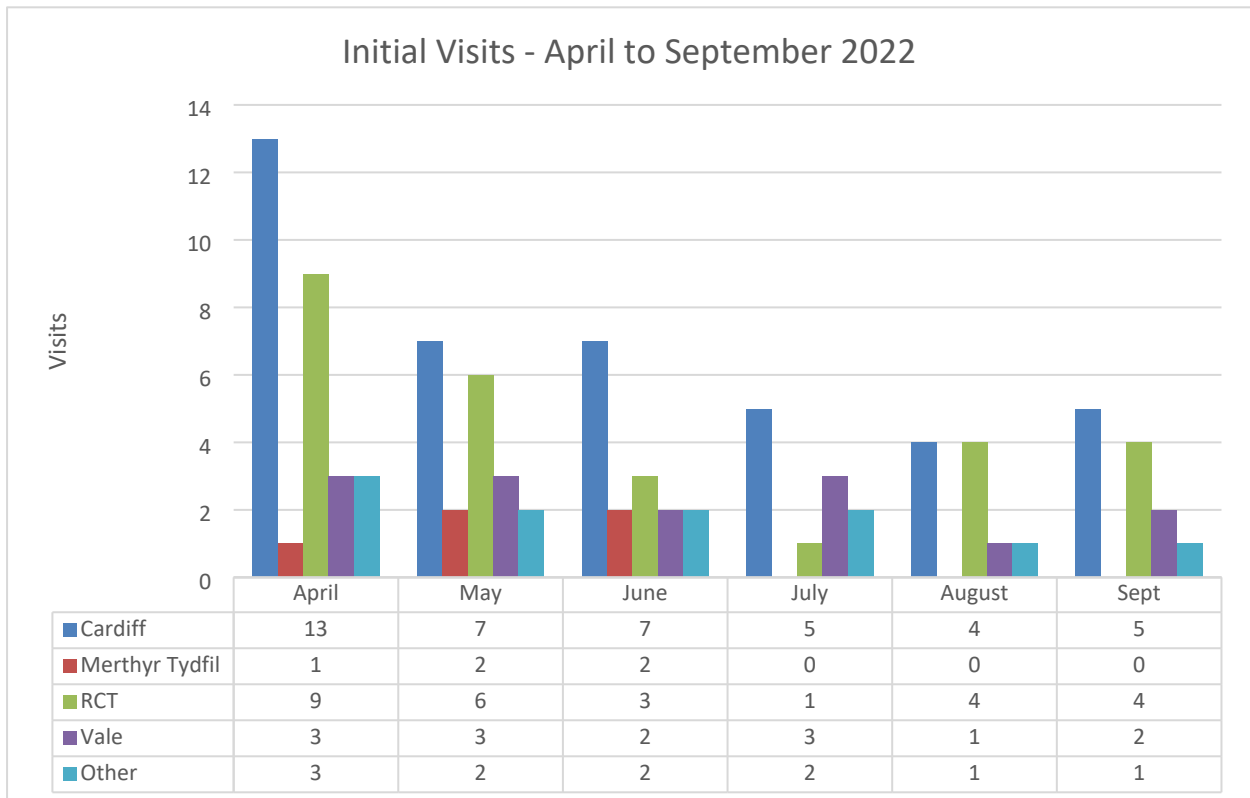
Nationality

61% of applicants disclose they are British, **35%** disclosed they are Welsh and **4%** disclosed other nationalities.



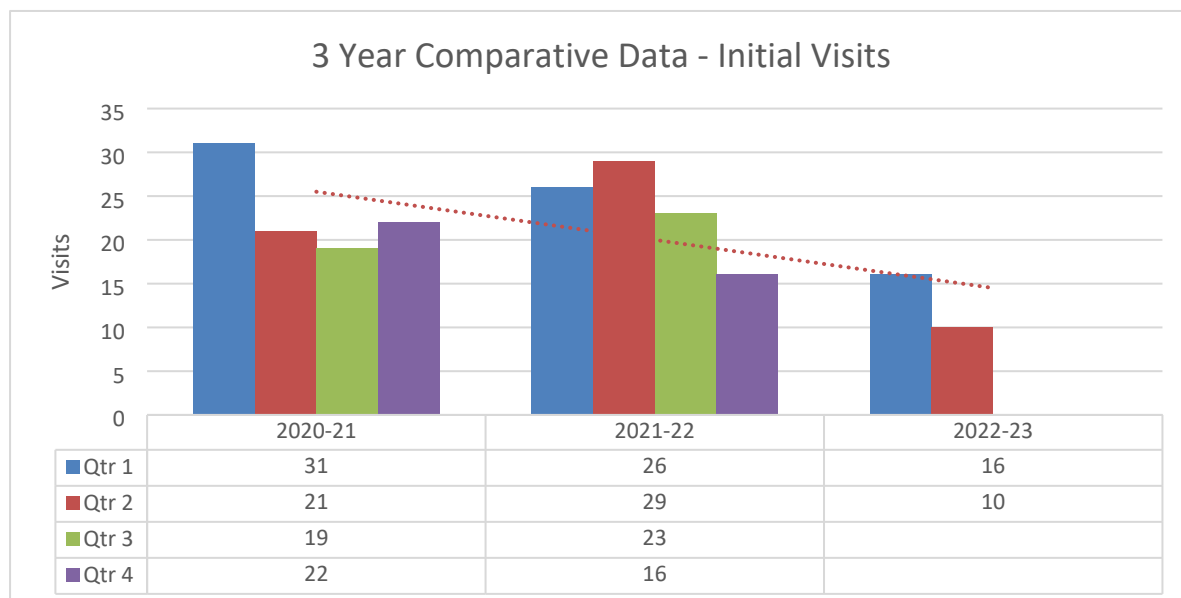
Initial Visits

26 initial visits were carried out during the reporting period.



Comparative Data

Comparison of data held over the three years at the mid-year point indicate a year-on-year decrease (**50%**) in the number of initial visits being carried out. This is, however, consistent with the number of enquiries being received.

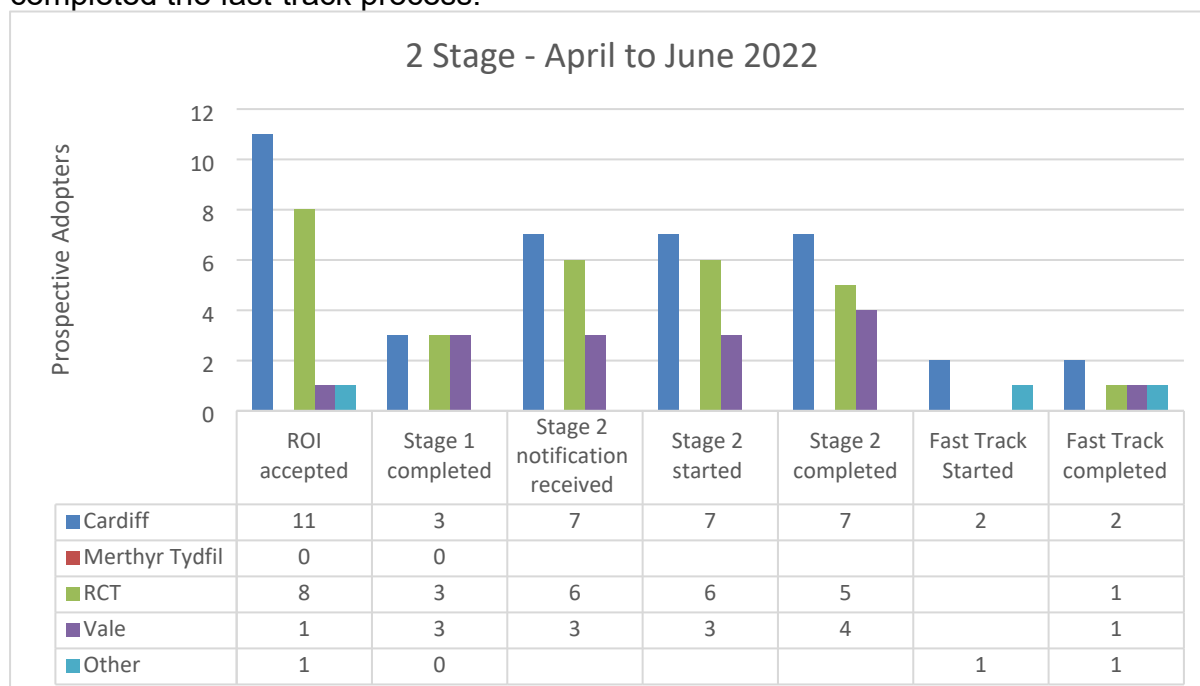


2 stage model

21 Registrations of Interest were received during the reporting period.

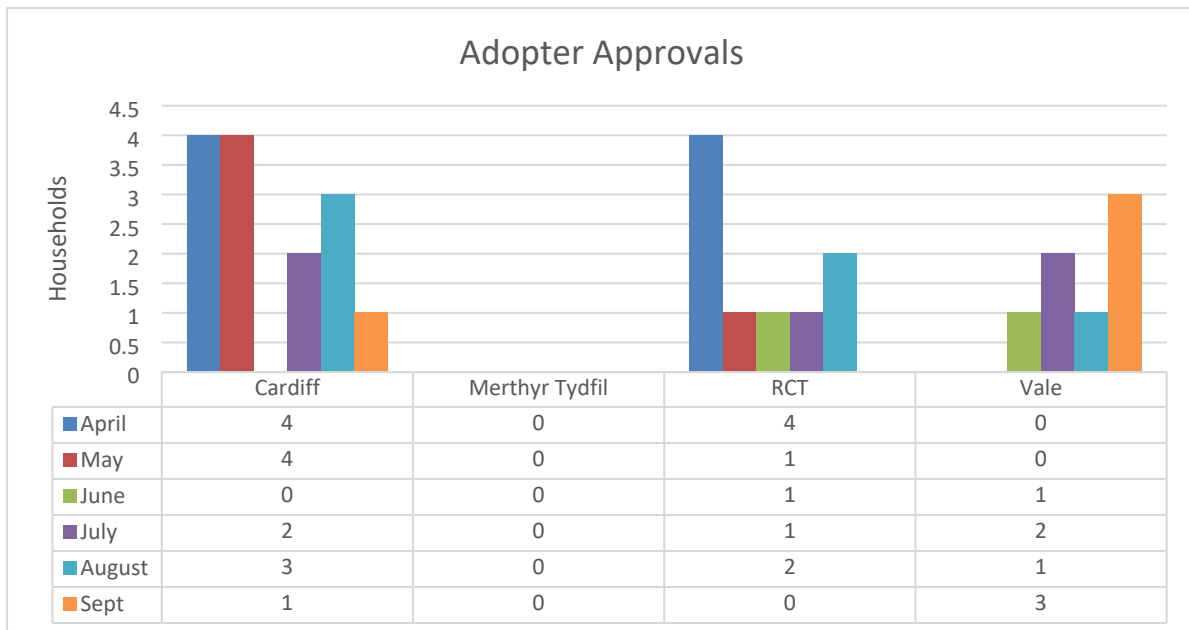
9 prospective adopters completed Stage 1 of the process and progressed to Stage 2.

3 prospective adopters fast-tracked their application, and **5** prospective adopters completed the fast-track process.



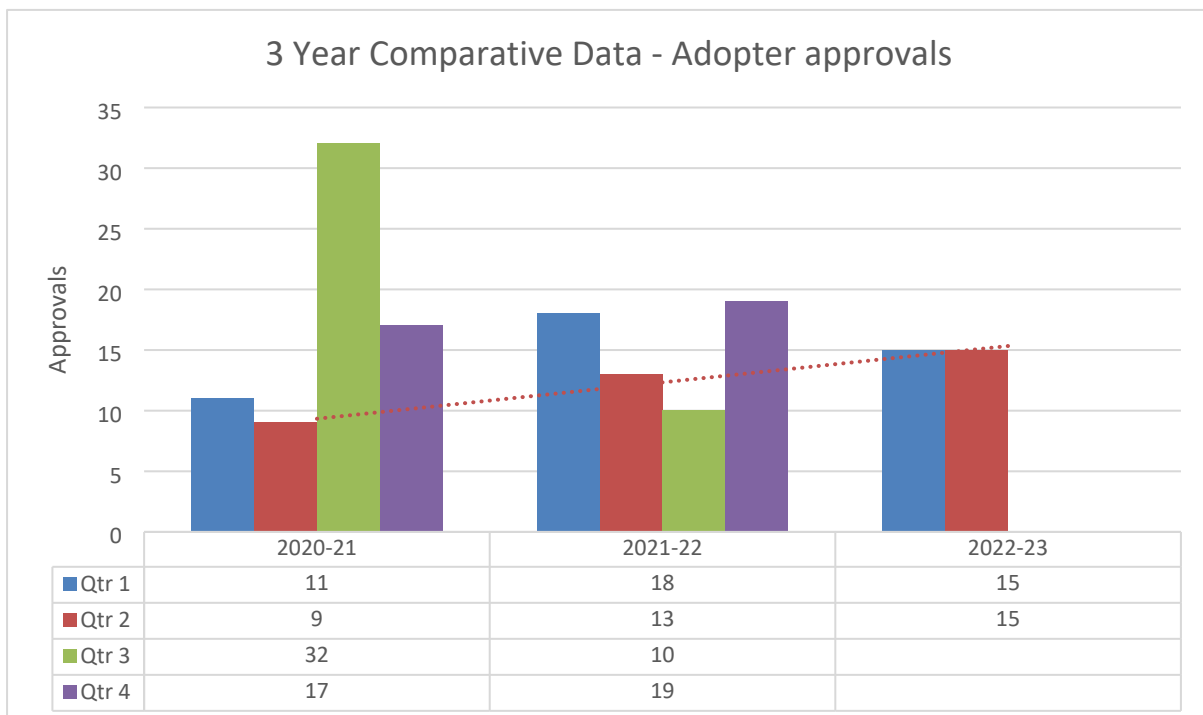
Adopter Approvals

30 adopters have been approved during the reporting period.



Comparative Data

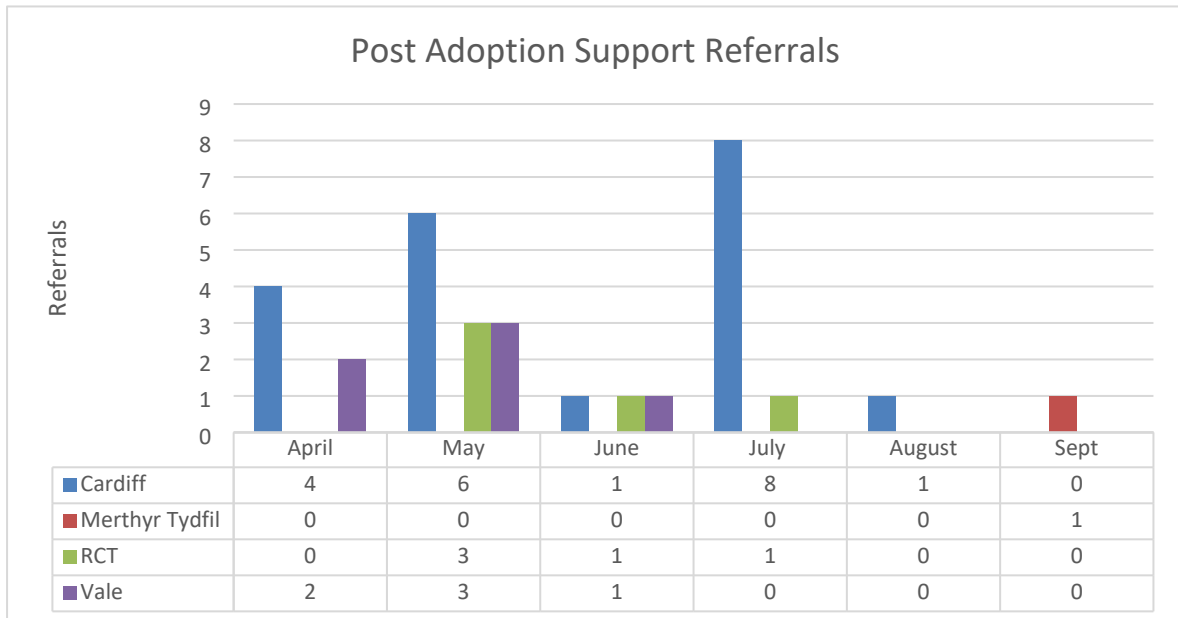
Adopter approvals for the first half of year remain stable when compared to 2021-22, with an increase in approval when compared to the same period in 2020-21.



Adoption Support

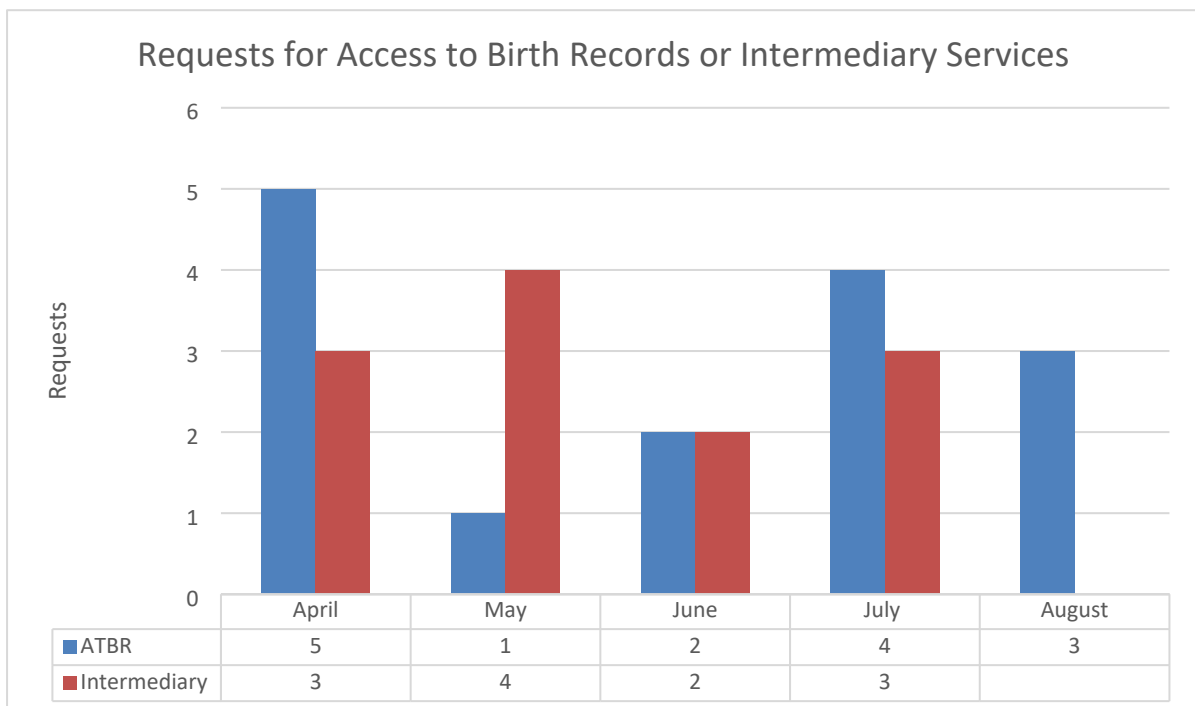
Referrals

32 new referrals for Post Adoption Support were received during the reporting period.



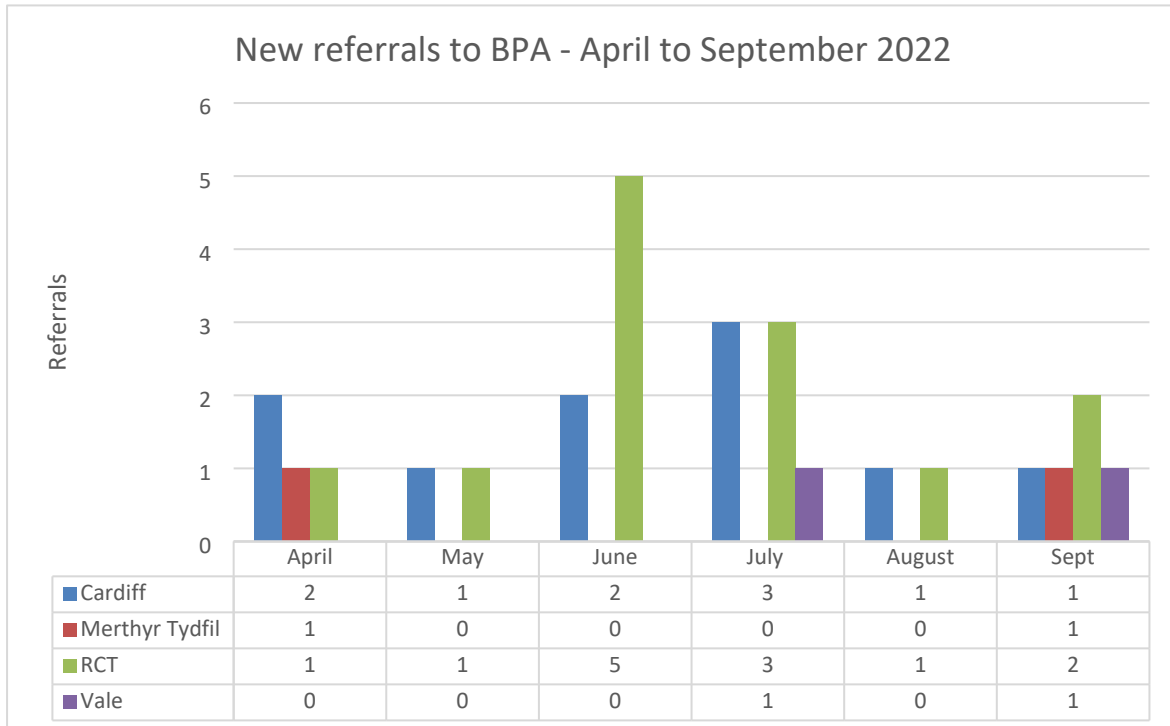
Access to Birth Records and Intermediary Services

27 referrals were received for Access to Birth Records and Intermediary Services.



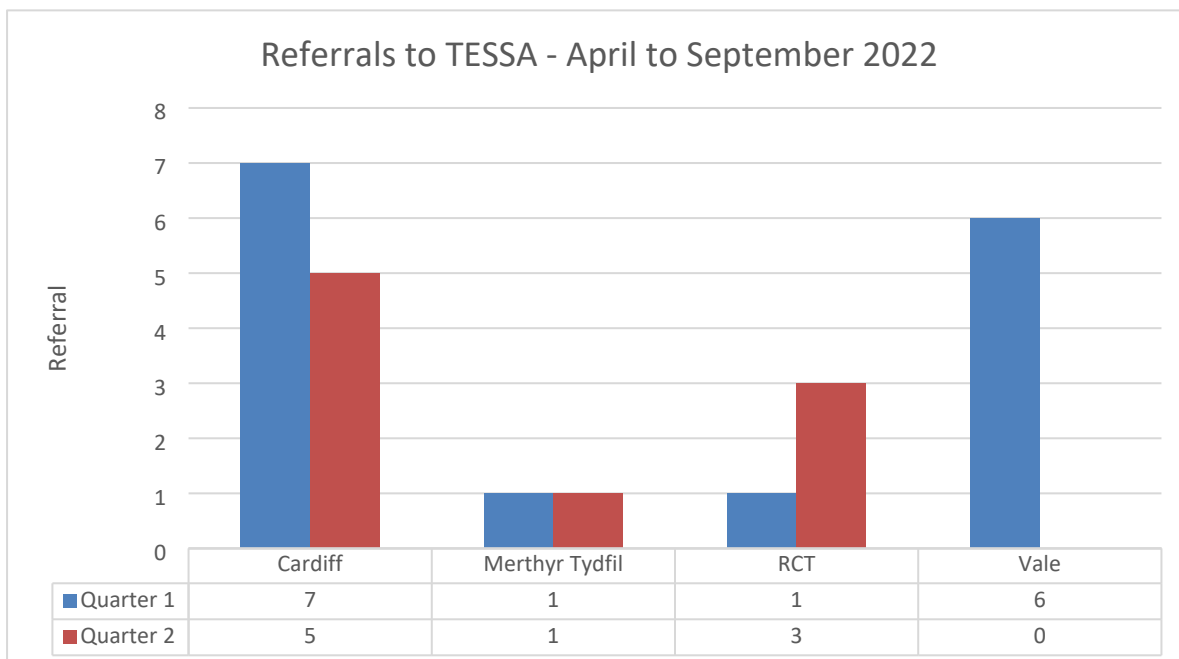
Birth Parent Adviser

27 new referrals to the Birth Parent Adviser were received during the reporting period.



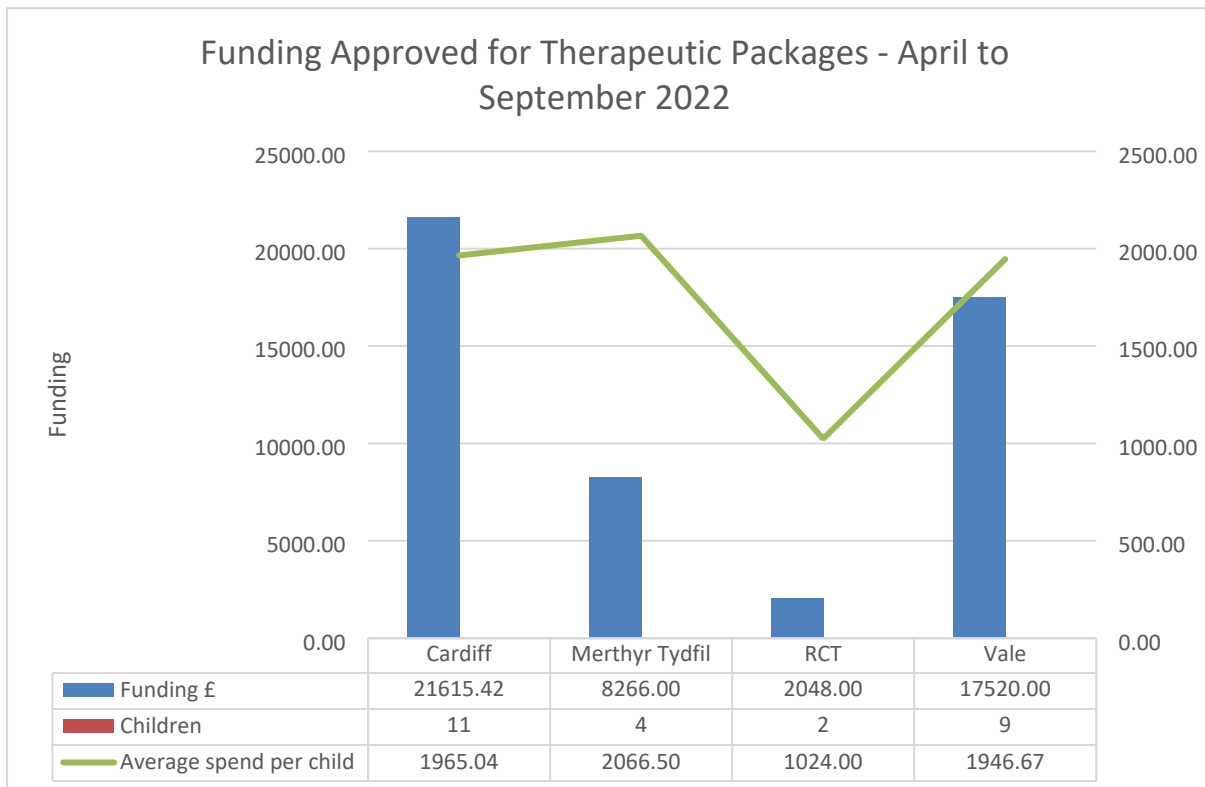
TESSA

15 new referrals to TESSA were made during the period April to September 2022.



Financial Expenditure

26 children were approved by local authority for therapeutic packages.





RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

30TH JANUARY 2024

PARTICIPATION QUARTERLY UPDATE FOR CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**Author: Nicole Katchi- Graduate Officer- Participation
(Children's Services)**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the quarterly progress achieved in taking forward the implementation plan as part of the Participation Strategy 2023-2026 and to provide feedback on the participation activities Children's Services have held in the last quarter. Also, to update members about the request from Cabinet for a report on the draft Corporate Parenting Board Charter that links to Welsh Government's 'Corporate Parenting Board Charter- A Promise from Wales' (see appendix 1).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the information contained within the report.
- 2.2 Comment on the information provided.

3. BACKGROUND/ PROGRESS TO DATE

- 3.1 The Participation Strategy 2023-2026 has been finalised and a steering group has met to take forward a key action for developing public facing information for children, young people and families. The Transform Team for Children's Services are leading on this. An aspect of this project will be to redevelop our website information for care experienced children and young people. This is taking forward feedback from the 'Get Involved' survey and in person participation events, where young people have said they would like more accessible information that they

can quickly look up along with information for supporting their mental health and wellbeing.

‘Get Involved’ conversations

- 3.2 As part of continuing and strengthening the ‘Get Involved’ conversation with care experienced young people, participation events were held with young people aged 11 to 15 on the 22nd September 2023 and 10th November 2023 at the YMa, Pontypridd (see appendix 2 and 3). Young people got involved in an arts and crafts session and a session making non-baked desserts (based on previous feedback). Young people also shared their voice about what is going well for them and what could be improved for children and young people. This information will be referenced in the annual Voice report in May 2024.
- 3.3 In December 2023, Residential visits were also held for young people in Bryndar and Beddau making Christmas crafts and hearing feedback about developing young people’s care and support. A visit to the 16+ drop in was also held in December 2023 to hear young people’s voice for service developments and improvements through crafts, discussion and games.
- 3.4 A CLA Celebration event was held on the 29th November 2023 at the Heritage Park Hotel as a joint celebration between the Virtual School for Children Looked After and Children’s Services. Over 35 young people were nominated for achievement awards in education, personal achievements, arts and sport. Our Sing Proud Cymru choir that is made up of children, young people and carers performed for us as part of Voices from Care Cymru including a song with the use of Makaton along with inspirational speeches and performances from children and young people. Corporate Parenting Board Members also attended. Over 100 children, young people, carers and staff attended to recognise young people’s achievements.
- 3.5 A Participation newsletter will be sent to children, young people, parent/carers and staff to provide an update on how we are hearing children and young people’s voice and how young people can get involved in redeveloping our public facing information (website) to meet their care and support needs.
- 3.6 For young people to engage with the Corporate Parenting Board in a face to face session, it would be necessary to arrange an informal introduction based on ‘Who are the Corporate Parenting Champions’ in RCT through either a short video or a Corporate Parenting Board newsletter explaining who the Corporate Parenting Board are, what they do, how the board will support young people to share their voice about care and support and why they would like to meet with the young people. Many young people and Carers don’t have prior knowledge of what the Corporate Parenting Board represent. The introductions will provide information to children, young people and carers to encourage them to engage with the Corporate Parenting Board through events and an annual question and answer-based session.

- 3.7 The Transformation Team in Children's Services are developing accessible public facing information for children, young people, carers and families. This includes revised content for children looked after and care leavers. This information will be piloted with young people from March/April 2024.
- 3.8 The Graduate Officer for Participation has prepared a draft Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for RCT that builds on Welsh Government's 'Corporate Parenting Board Charter- A Promise from Wales'. The draft pledge will go to Cabinet in February 2023 prior to sharing with the Corporate Parenting Board. This builds on the voice and participation work in RCT from September 2022 to the present for care experienced young people and how we develop our key priorities to engage and support care experienced children and young people in RCT.
- 3.9 As part of our engagement with children and young people, Voices from Care Cymru have also been delivering their 'Sky's the Limit' workshops for young people aged 8- to 13-year-olds through accessible wellbeing events that include a Christmas Party, two pantomime events at the New Theatre Cardiff and Park and Dare. They've also held a New Years Party for care experienced young people and a Techniquet trip for young people in Residential care. Voices from Care Cymru have a 'Sing Proud Cymru' choir for children and young people in RCT that meet once a week during term time.

4 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY

- 4.1 This is an information report.
- 4.2 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as required as part of the future implementation process.

5 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 5.1 This is an information report.
- 5.2 Further consultation will however be undertaken as part of the work of the participation strategy.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications aligned to this report.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 7.1 The legal requirements for children and young people are set down within the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

8 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 8.1 This links to the Children's Services Delivery Plan 2023 to 2024 that, 'Children's Voices Are Heard: To improve engagement with children and young people, to ensure co-production and that the voice of the child is heard in service development and delivery.'
- 8.2 It also links to the work of the Children's Commissioner for Wales that champion's the development of a Children's Rights Approach grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

9 NEXT STEPS/ ACTIONS

- 9.1 The Transformation Team in Children's Services are developing accessible public facing information for children, young people, carers and families. This includes revised content for children looked after and care leavers. This information will be piloted with young people from March/April 2024.
- 9.2 Provide information leaflets to care experienced young people and carers/family in February 2024 to explain the purpose of participation events and engaging young people to share their voice for service developments. This may support consultation with a wider range of children and young people who are looked after.
- 9.3 The Graduate Officer for Participation has prepared a draft Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for RCT that builds on Welsh Government's 'Corporate Parenting Board Charter- A Promise from Wales'. The draft pledge will go to Cabinet in February 2023 prior to sharing with the Corporate Parenting Board.
- 9.4 Continue to work with Children's Services colleagues and ICT in developing the accessibility of the 'My Voice, My Review' through Widgit software that includes text and symbols for easy reading. The Reviewing Team will also pilot this information with young people once the Widgit software is ready to be used.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

30 January 2024

Officer to contact: Nicole Katchi

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Corporate Parenting Charter – A Promise from Wales

“A SHARED PARENTING PLEDGE”

gov.wales

What is Corporate Parenting?

- Corporate parenting promotes the collective responsibility of local authorities to safeguard and promote the rights and life chances of care-experienced children and young people. Children can find more information about their rights here: [Children’s Commissioner for Wales – UNCRC Childrens Rights](#).
- Supporting care-experienced children and young people through their childhoods and as they leave care should be the responsibility of all public sector bodies.
- We want these bodies to understand and develop their responsibilities towards care-experienced children and young people, and to ensure they have the same life chances as all children living in Wales.



Why a Charter? What’s it for?

- A Charter is a set of principles and promises. This Charter has been developed in collaboration with care-experienced young people.
- This Charter is a set of promises that can be adopted by any public sector body when engaging with care-experienced children and young people.
- It also sets out shared principles that all bodies and their leaders should follow when providing services to care-experienced children and young people.
- We want all public sector bodies and senior leaders to sign up to this Charter as a good Corporate Parent. This Charter is not exclusive to local authorities and public bodies, and we would welcome any members of the third sector and private sector to sign up and become a Corporate Parent.
- The development of this Charter takes into account the overarching duties laid out in Part 2, General Functions of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Specifically, that a person exercising functions in relation to an individual for example a looked after child must have regard to the characteristics, culture and beliefs of the individual (including, for example, language). www.law.gov.wales/social-services-and-well-being-wales-act-2014-further-legislation-codes-and-guidance-made-under-act
- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked After and Accommodated Children) will be revised to include additional guidance on the Charter. The updated Code of Practice will be published in 2024 and Charter will be reviewed as part of this process.

Which kind of public sector body, public service or professionals do we mean?

This charter is for any public sector body or individual who engages with or is responsible for care-experienced children and young people to adopt. For example:

- Politicians – Welsh Ministers, Members of the Senedd, (**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 4**).
- Independent Bodies – The Children’s Commissioner, The Future Generations Commissioner and The Welsh Language Commissioner.
- Local Authorities – councillors, chief executives, directors of social services, local authority commissioners and procurement teams, housing and education, Foster Wales and National Adoption Service.
- Local Health Boards.
- NHS Trusts.
- Regional Partnership Boards.
- Social Care Providers – Local authorities, residential children’s homes and independent foster agencies.
- Social Care Professionals and practitioners – social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), personal advisers, youth and support workers, residential children’s home staff, foster carers, kinship carers and adoptive parents.
- Housing Providers – housing associations.
- Education – schools, governors, universities, colleges and Qualifications Wales.
- Transport for Wales.
- Third Sector Organisations and voluntary adoption agencies or services.
- Inspectorates – Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Estyn and Health Inspectorate Wales (HIW).
- Cafcass Cymru.
- Department for Work and Pensions.
- Police – youth justice teams and those supporting individuals in custody.
- Employers/Apprenticeship/Traineeship providers.
- Other public bodies: National Resources Wales, National Park Authorities, The Arts Council of Wales, Sport Wales, National Library of Wales and National Museum of Wales. (**As listed in Section 6 of the Wales Future Generations Act 2015**).

Shared Principles for Corporate Parents

- **Equality** – We will support care-experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as every other young person in Wales. This is because all children have rights, no matter who they are (Article 1. UNCRC)
- **Eradicate Stigma** – We will recognise care-experienced children and young people for who they are, not just by their experience of being in care. This is because all children have a right not to be discriminated against (Article 2)
- **Togetherness** – We will work alongside care-experienced children and young people to ensure their views, feelings and ideas are integral to, influence and inform the services they receive and the way they receive those services. This is because all children have a right to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12).
- **Support** – We will ensure professionals working with care-experienced young people understand their care experiences children and young people’s needs and/or have access to information an training.
- **Ambition** – We will ensure every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and can enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activities. This is because all children have a right to be the best they can be (Article 3 and 29) and have the right to relax and play (Article 31).
- **Nurture** – We will make all care-experienced children and young people feel valued, respected, cared for and loved. This is because all children have a right to be safe and protected from harm (Article 19) and because all children who are not living with their families should be checked on regularly to make sure they are okay (Article 25).
- **Good Health** – We will provide support to access the right health care and advice needed to support the best physical, mental health and general well-being for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have the right to the best possible health and support (Article 24 and 39).
- **A Stable Home** – We will seek out and provide stable places to live that are right for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have a right to special protection if they don’t live with their family (Article 20). This is because any adoption must be overseen by Government to make it supports the young person in their growth and development, is lawful and that it prioritises children’s best interests (Article 21).



- **A Good Education** – We will provide opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to learn/develop and help them become who they want to be. This is because all children have a right to an education (Article 28 and 29).
- **Thrive** – We will ensure all care-experienced children and young people are prepared for the future and are able to make positive choices for independent living and adulthood. This is because all children have a right to reach their potential (Article 3 and 29).
- **Lifelong** – We will work to provide access to and raise awareness of the support and information available after leaving care. This is because adults have a duty to act in children's best interests (Article 3).

Our Promises as Corporate Parents

Set out below are the promises all Corporate Parents should fulfil when working with care-experienced children and young people:

- We will take time to listen to all care-experienced children and young people and ensure their views, wishes and feelings are heard and actively considered in all decisions made about them.
- We will treat all care-experienced children and young people with respect.
- We will involve all care-experienced children and young people in decisions that are made about them.
- We will keep all care-experienced children and young people informed about our involvement with them and explain our actions to them.
- We will use straightforward language when we communicate with all care-experienced children and young people.
- We will show compassion when considering the needs of all care-experienced children and young people.
- We will work with all care-experienced children and young people to help them achieve their goals.
- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people of the process to make a complaint should they feel we are not adhering to this charter.
- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people that they have a right to access independent advocacy to make sure their views, wishes and feelings are heard during decisions being made or when they are unhappy and want something stopped, started or changed.



References

Reference	Description
UNCRC Article 2	The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say and whatever type of family they come from.
UNCRC Article 4	Governments should make these rights available to children.
UNCRC Article 12	Respect for children's views. Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously.
UNCRC Article 19	Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.
UNCRC Article 20	Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly, by people who respect their religion, culture and language.
UNCRC Article 21	Adoption. Government must oversee the process of adoption to make sure it is safe, lawful and that it prioritises children's best interests.
UNCRC Article 24	Children have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.
UNCRC Article 25	(Review of treatment in care). If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example with a foster family or in a hospital they have a right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances.
UNCRC Article 28	Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.
UNCRC Article 29	Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, their own and other cultures and the environment.
UNCRC Article 31	All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.
UNCRC Article 39	Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.

UNCRC

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international agreement that protects the human rights of children up to the age of 18. It recognises not only their basic human rights but gives them additional rights to protect them from harm as one of the most vulnerable groups in society. In 2011 the Welsh Government made the UNCRC law in Wales, with the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. The Measure places a duty on Welsh Ministers to have a due regard to the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols when making their decisions. Altogether there are 54 articles in the convention. Articles 1-42 set out how children should be treated.

For further information on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child please visit: The Welsh Government's UNCRC website [Children's rights | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#).

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Would you like to be part of our 'Get Involved' Young People's group?



For care-experienced young people
aged 11 to 17 in Rhondda Cynon Taf

What's involved?

- As a member of the **'Get Involved' group** you will be asked to share your views and experiences on how we can improve services for care-experienced young people.

To get involved, you can email
Nicole Katchi at nicole.katchi@rctcbc.gov.uk
or phone 07880 044595 by **Thursday 14th**
September 2023



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'Get Involved' Participation event

(care experienced young people aged 11 to 17 years old).

Friday 22nd September 2023 from 4pm to 5:45pm
Weston workshop, YMa, Pontypridd

Hoffet ti fod yn rhan o'n grŵp 'Cymera Ran' i bobl ifainc?



Ar gyfer pobl ifainc 11-17 oed yn Rhondda Cynon Taf sydd â phrofiad o dderbyn gofal

Beth fydd yn digwydd?

Bydd ein gweithdy 'Cymera Ran' cyntaf yn cael ei gynnal ddydd Gwener 22 Medi 2023 rhwng 4pm a 5.45pm yng Ngweithdy Weston, YMa, Stryd y Taf, Pontypridd, CF37 4TS

Bydd byrbrydau ysgafn ar gael.
Bydd pobl ifainc yn derbyn TALEB am gymryd rhan.

- Fel aelod o'r grŵp 'Cymera Ran' bydd gofyn i ti rannu dy farn a phrofiadau mewn perthynas â sut mae modd i ni wella gwasanaethau ar gyfer pobl ifainc sydd â phrofiad o dderbyn gofal.

Er mwyn cymryd rhan, anfone e-bost at Nicole Katchi ar nicole.katchi@rctcbc.gov.uk neu ffonia 07880 044595 erbyn dydd lau 14 Medi 2023



Would you like to be part of our 'Get Involved' Young People's group?



For care-experienced young people aged 11 to 17 in Rhondda Cynon Taf

What's involved?

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Key Questions for Discussion

What ideas can we think of to get more young people involved in decision making?


- How do we get more young people involved?
- What are the barriers that stop young people participating?
- What activities should we do?
- What would be the best venue? When and how often?
- Mind map the ideas through creative ways and verbal discussion with each other and staff.

Visuals for young people

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What would be the best venue?
When and how often?

How can we get more young people involved in DECISION making?



The illustration shows two hands cupping a scene. The scene includes a town with buildings, a bus, and a park with people playing. The word 'DECISION' is underlined in the text above.

Mind map or
Create a poster
of our ideas




What activities
Should we do?



How do we get
more young
People involved?
😊🗣️👂😊


What are the
barriers that stop
young people getting
involved?


Visual timetable


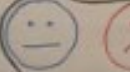

 VISUAL TIMETABLE

4.10pm - GETTING TO KNOW YOU

4.25pm - Why are we here?

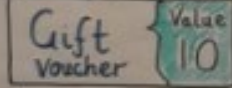
4.30pm -  What's going well?


4.45pm -  Our ideas

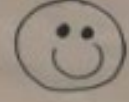
5.00pm - Break   

5.10pm - Collect our ideas

5.40pm - Voucher and our next group event.

 Value 10

5.45pm - Home time 

See you soon 

We asked the following ‘How do we get more young people involved?’

- Young people said that for young people to share their feedback with adults- matching an activity to this would be important for them.**
- Activities include sports (rugby, football and dodgeball), board games, cinema, arts and crafts, pantomime, trips to museums and group games.**
- 6 young people aged 11 to 16 attended the participation event.**
- 2 additional young people couldn't attend due to extracurricular activities paid for by their carer but would like to attend on either Tuesdays or Thursday evenings.**

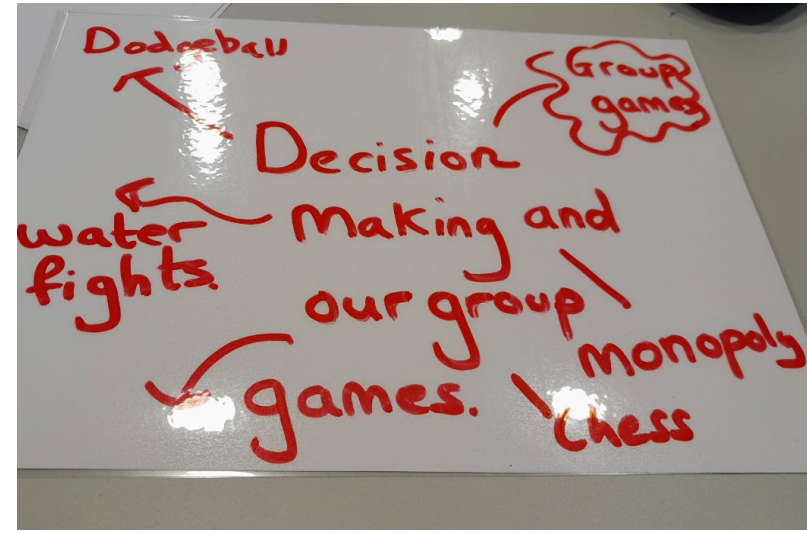
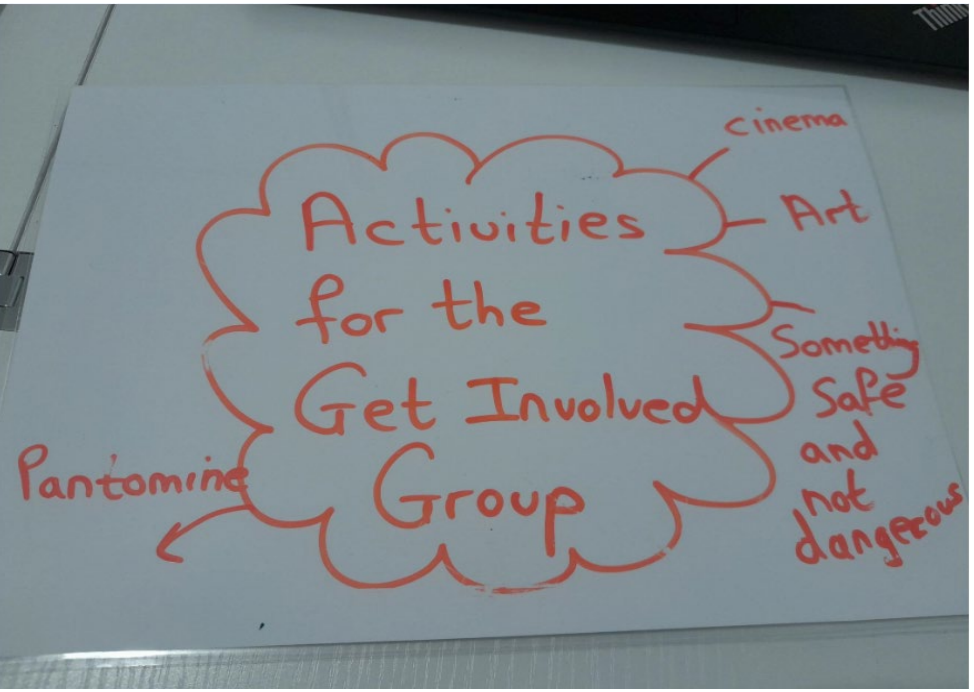
like to play football

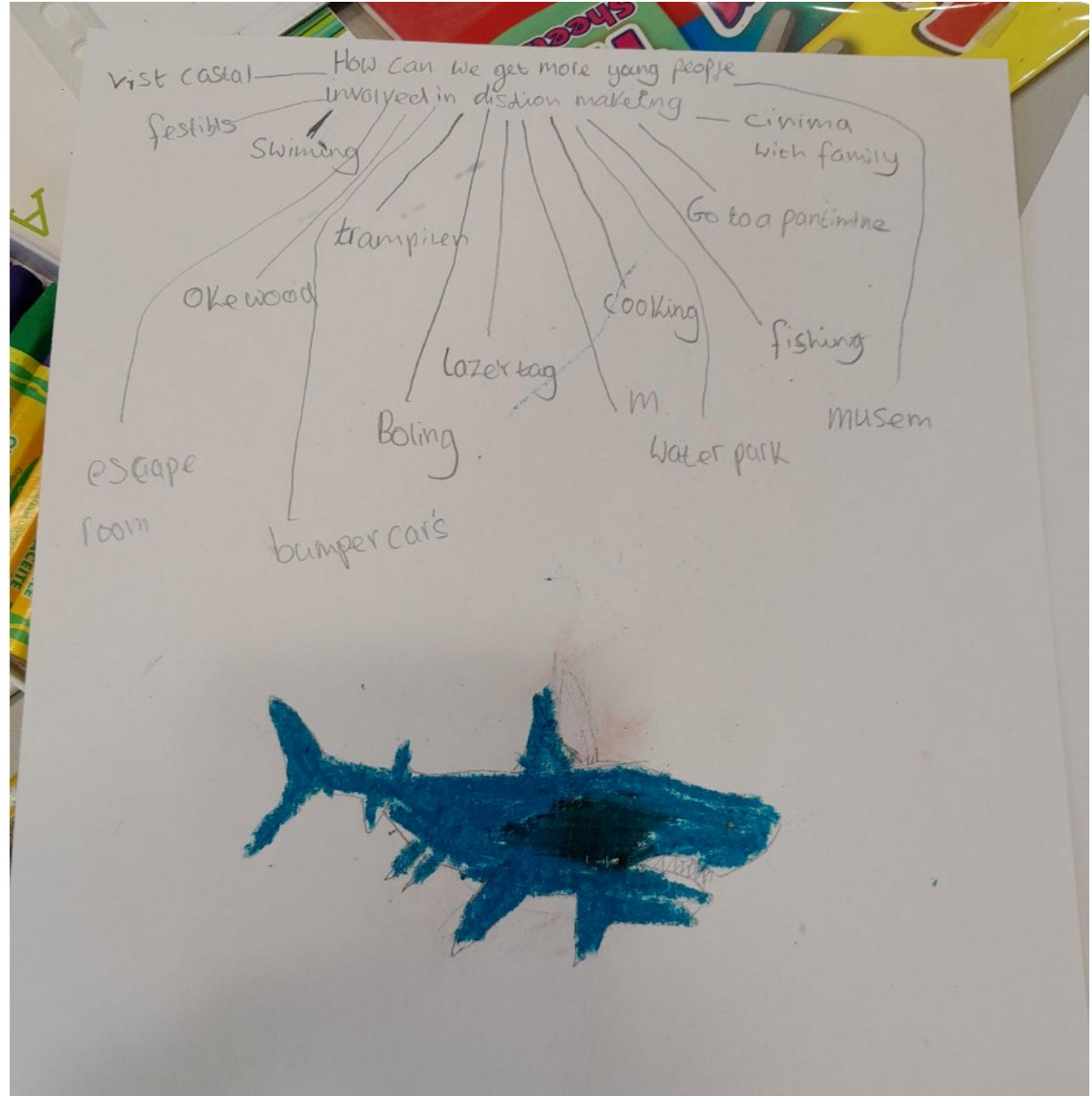
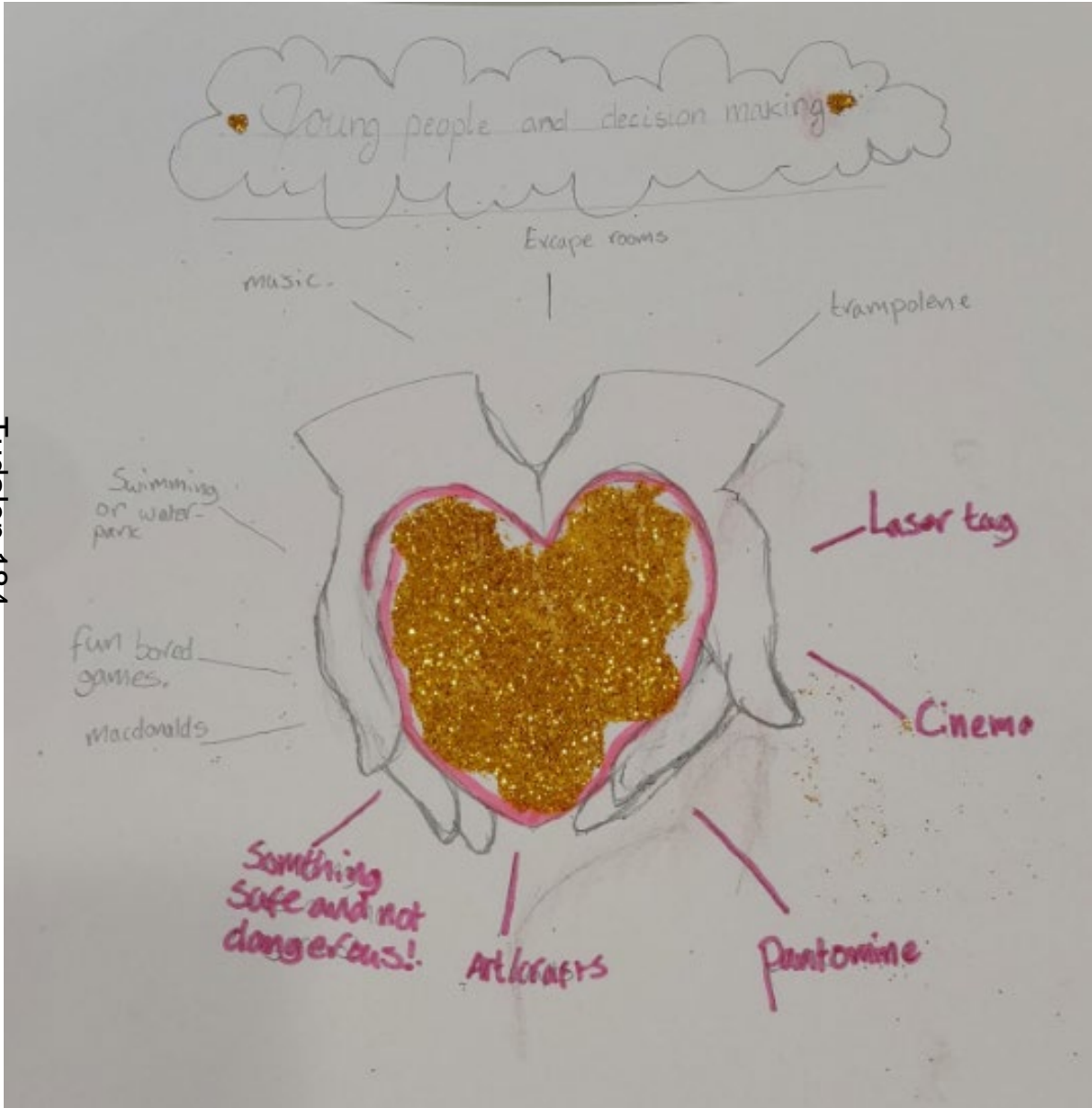
Castle

museum

escape room.

I play
rugby

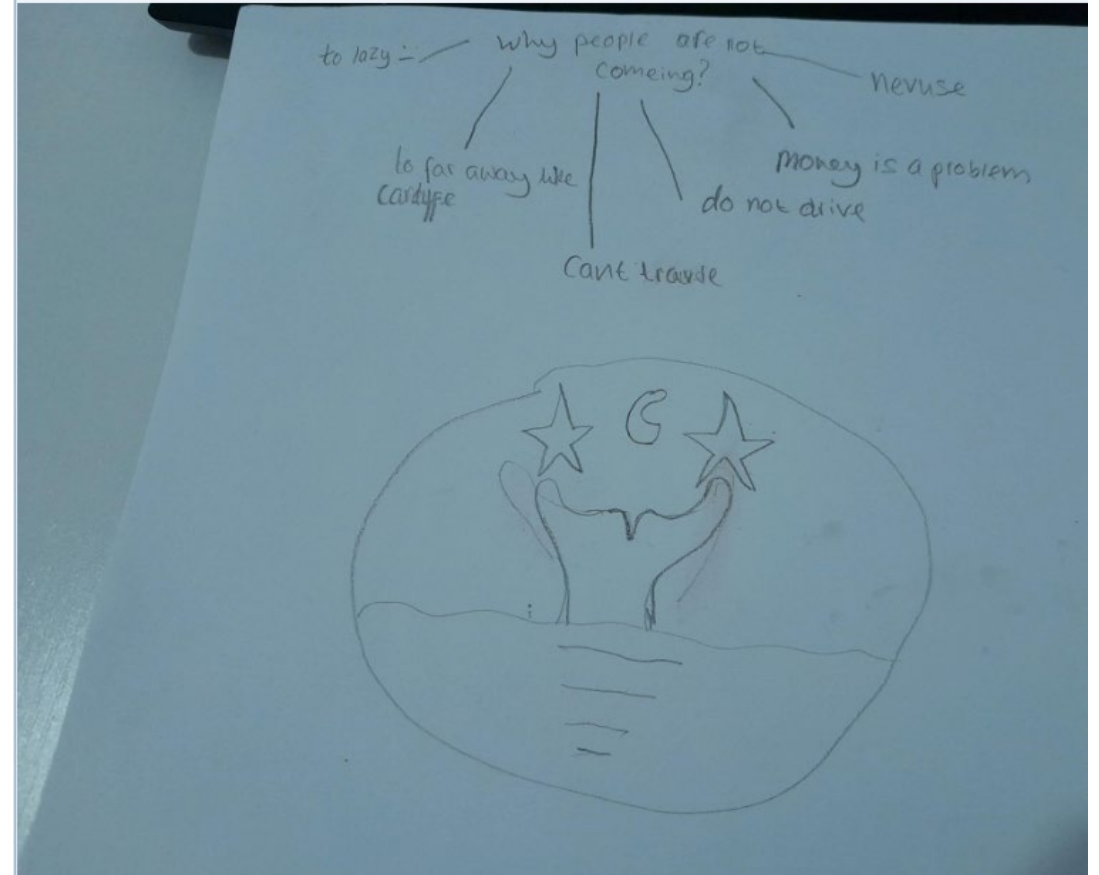




We asked the following 'What are the barriers that stop young people from participating?'

Young people said...

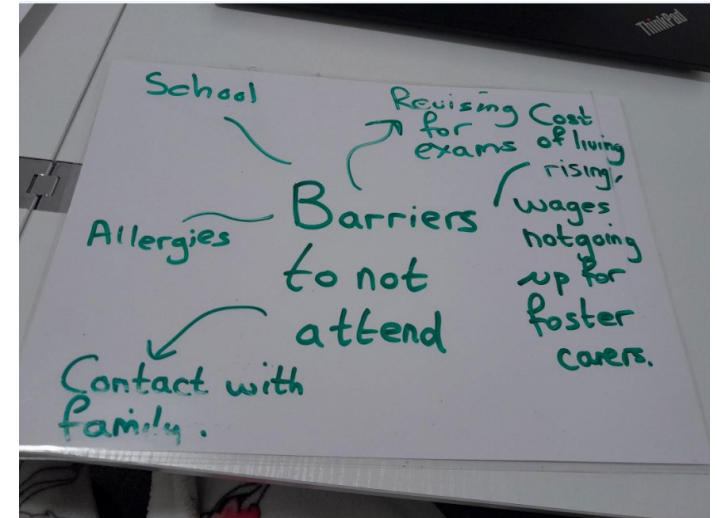
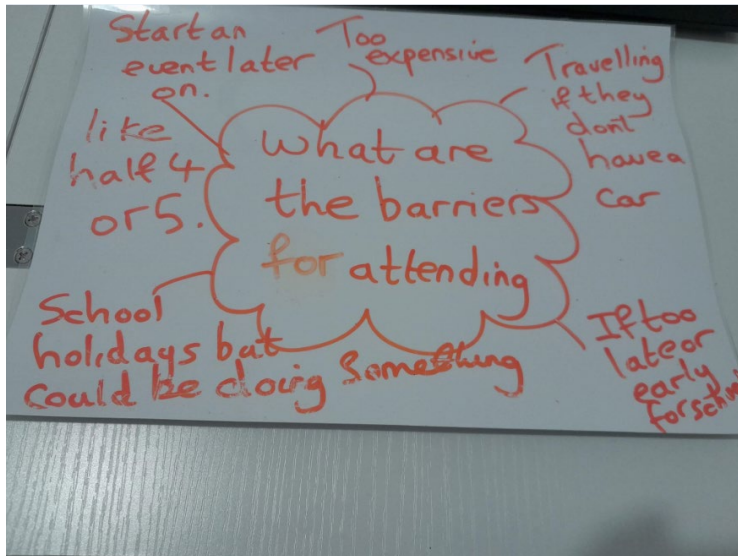
- 'Nervous.'
- 'Money is a problem.'
- 'Can't travel.'
- 'Do not drive.'
- 'Too far like Cardiff.'



Barriers for young people to attend participation events

- 'School and after school homework takes up time especially in years 10 and 11.'
- 'Revising for exams.'
- 'Events start too early.'
- Young people said that '4pm is too early as young people need time after school and time to travel for an event.'
- 'Travelling is a barrier if carers don't have a car, or you need to get a bus after school.'
- 'School holidays can be a barrier if you're doing something.'
- 'Cost of living rising.'
- 'Wages not going up for foster carers.'
- Young people said, 'contact with family members can prevent them attending.'

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Make Sure its on a Friday.

Music

Travel - Prices £

Travel = Money.

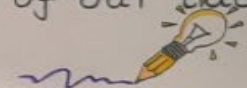
Bus prices.

How can we get more young people involved in decision making?

Travel Costs
School homework

What are the barriers that stop young people getting involved?

Mind map or Create a poster of our ideas



How do we get more young people involved?
😊💬😊

Make sure its from 5pm - 6.30pm

Ideas from young people to increase participation

'Events starting from 5pm to 6:30pm on weekday evenings such as a Friday... and every month or two months.'

'Venues close to buses and the bus station.'

'Travel costs reimbursed/ available bus tickets.'

'Tell people on Social media about events.'



Would you attend another participation event?

All young people (6 out of 6) said they would like to attend again.

Voices from Care Cymru updates

- Choir sessions for care experienced young people every Wednesday after school during term time.

VFCC
VOICES FROM CARE CYMRU

SING PROUD CYMRU

THIS IS A CARE COMMUNITY CHOIR!
SING PROUD. SING LOUD. SING TOGETHER!

WEDNESDAYS 4.15-6.15PM
TERM TIME!

SING PROUD CYMRU is a Friendly, Fun, Relaxed group. All abilities, needs and strengths included.

We are a community of Care Experienced Children (Fostered/CLA/Kinship/Adopted/Leavers), Foster Carers, Support/Social Workers and Kinship Carers. All Welcome! From any area in Wales. All Ages!

VOICE teamwork LEARNING FRIENDSHIP
FUN TOGETHERNESS BELONGING HAPPY UPLIFTING CONFIDENCE

THE SHELLEY HALL
THE YMA
TAFF STREET
PONTYPRIDD
CF37 4TS.

If you are interested in attending, please contact
Voices From Care Cymru on:
02920 451431 /
info@vfcc.org.uk

BBC Children in Need

Come along to our 'Get Involved' Young People's group



For care-experienced young people
aged 11 to 15 in Rhondda Cynon Taf

What's involved?

- As a member of the **'Get Involved' group** you will be asked to share your views and experiences on how we can improve services for young people. **We'll get to make tasty non-bake treats and desserts for you to enjoy!**

To get involved, you can email
Nicole Katchi at nicole.katchi@rctcbc.gov.uk
or phone 07880 044595 by
Friday 3rd November 2023

We meet on **Friday 10th November 2023**

From **4:15pm to 5:45pm** at **Weston Workshop, YMa, Taff Street, Pontypridd, CF37 4TS**

Light snacks will be provided.
Young people will receive a **£10 VOUCHER** for participating.





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'Get Involved' Feedback Event Tasty treats workshop

Friday 10th November 2023 at the Weston
Workshop, YMa, Pontypridd,
4:15pm to 5:45pm

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- 
- 5 out of 6 young people attended the event.
 - As part of hearing young people's feedback, we asked the following questions whilst making non-baked desserts.
 - **What is positive (going well for you now?)** 😊
 - **List three things that could be improved/made better for young people?**
 - **Who asks your views/ opinions about things that affect you?**
 - **Do you feel listened to by the adults that support you?**
(Yes, No, Sometimes, Don't know'
Tell us more about this...
- 



End of event questions

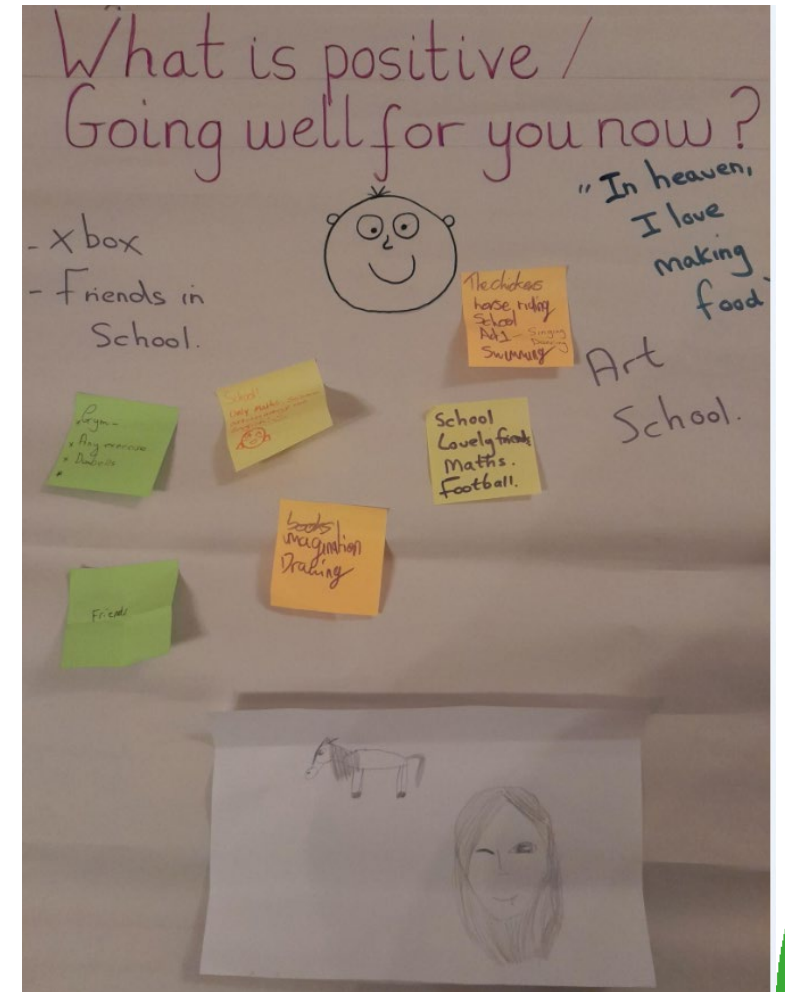
- What did you enjoy about today?
- Would you like to get involved in supporting other young people to have their say on what matters to them?



Feedback from Young People

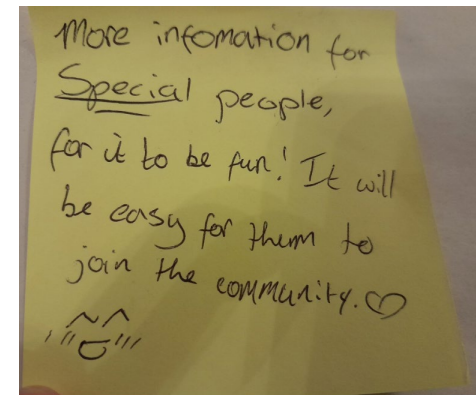
What is positive, going well for you now?

- 'Xbox'
- 'Friends in School'
- 'Art, school'
- 'I'm in heaven, I love making food...' (comment about the event)
- 'Books, imagination and drawing'
- 'Friends'
- 'Gym, any exercise'
- 'School, lovely friends, maths and football'
- 'Chickens, horse riding, school, singing, dancing and swimming'



List three things that could be improved/ made better for young people?

- *'More info for special people (young people with additional learning needs) for it to be fun. It will be easy for them to join the community.'* (young person aged 11)
- This young person discussed further and said, 'More information on the internet for young people to access and to get involved in the community.'
- *'Info about mental health for young people.'* (young person aged 14)

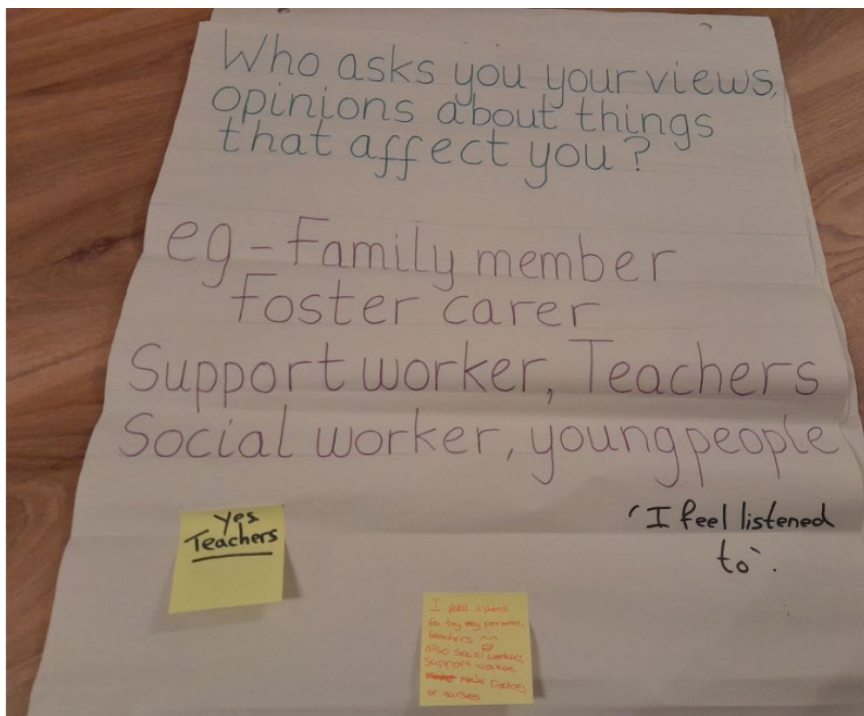
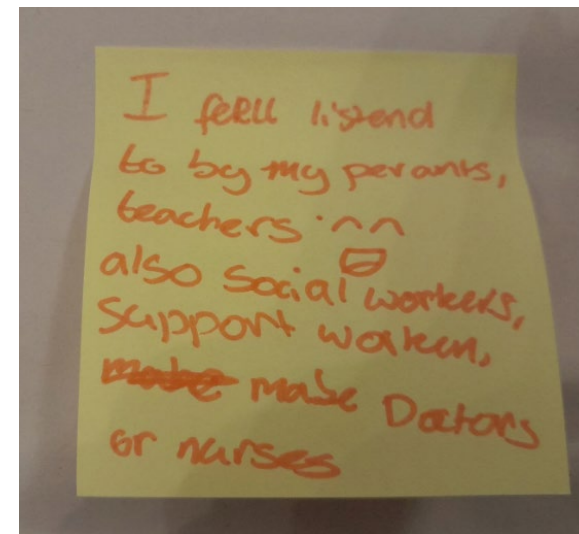


Who asks your views/opinions about things that affect you?

- 'Yes Teachers'
- 'I feel listened to'
- 'Teachers'
- 'I feel listened to by my parents, teachers, also social workers, support workers, most doctors and nurses.'

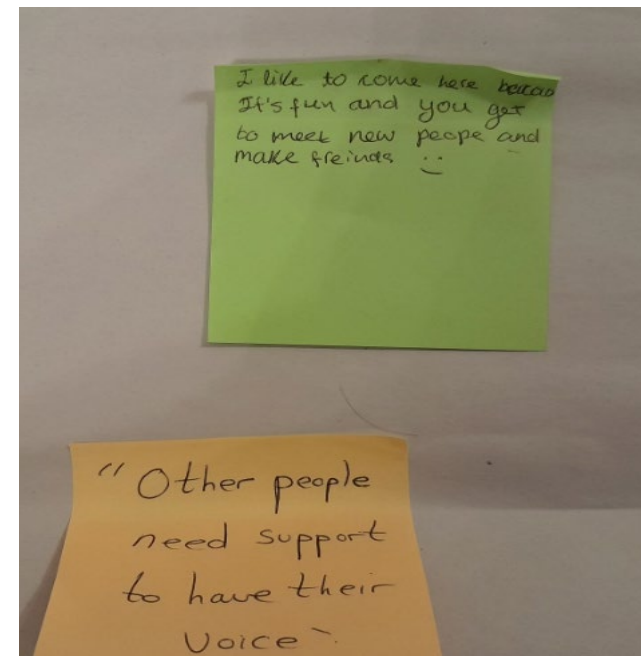
Do you feel listened to by the adults that support you?

- 4 out of 5 young people said they always feel listened to.



End of event questions

- What did you enjoy about today?
- Would you like to get involved in supporting other young people to have their say on what matters to them?



Foster carers feedback following the session via email.

'I just wanted to say thank you (young person) was super excited telling us all about the session she can't wait to attend another, just what she needs as she is unable to go out with friends like her sister.'

- *'I would like to come back because it's really fun and interesting. I would like to help other people's voice' (aged 11)*
- *'I really enjoyed; can we do an animal activity' (aged 11)*
- *'I like to come here because it's fun and you get to meet new people and make friends.'* (aged 13)
- *'Yes, it's fun' (aged 13)*
- *'Maybe, If I'm not at the gym' (aged 14)*





Photos from the event

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

CWM TAF YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE (YJS)

30TH JANUARY 2024

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR G CAPLE

Author: Lyndon Lewis, Head of Cwm Taf Youth Justice Service
Tel: 01443 827300 / 01685 724960

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Corporate Parenting Board regarding the 'All Wales Protocol for Reducing the Criminalisation of Children and Young People 2022' presented to Board in January this year, and provide updated local information regarding care experienced children in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the publication of this report.
- 2.2 Receive further reports in due course in order to be updated on local/regional data and how progress and improvements made contributes to better outcomes for care experienced children.
- 2.3 Consider an invite to relevant partner agencies on their use of the All Wales protocol and any service developments planned or currently in place that promotes practice that reduces unnecessary criminalisation of care experienced children.

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 This protocol, published in May last year, is intended to assist professionals who come into contact with care experienced children and young adults while carrying out their work, and to share a common framework of principles and expectations informed by an approach that actively promotes children's rights and which safeguards and promotes their well-being.
- 3.2 The work began in January 2021, when a task and finish group set up for reducing the criminalisation of care experienced children and young people in Wales (as part of a wider ministerial Advisory Group for improving outcomes for children) requested knowledge and data on the current number of Children Looked After (CLA) within the Youth Justice system. A snapshot for the Wales Youth Justice caseload was

taken on 1st February 2021, and Task and Finish Group members interrogated the findings and reported back to the Advisory group.

- 3.3 To provide further local context, the number of out of court disposals are increasing, therefore diverting children and young people from formal sanctions, and a criminal record. This is a positive trend which aligns with policy direction and the drive to reduce the criminalisation of children and young people wherever appropriate. The approach aligns with the 'Child First' vision set out in the Youth Justice Board's Strategic Plan 2021 – 24.
- 3.4 Cwm Taf YJS has been proactive in developing a child first approach which treats children as children and seeks to ensure that they are not unnecessarily criminalised as a result of their vulnerability or the challenges they face. The YOS has a Child First 'champion' within the team who has led on the implementation of a Child First Strategy for the service with accompanied guidance for all staff.
- 3.5 Following the completion of the initial work outlined above, a report suggested improvements for subsequent data collections to strengthen the depth of data available and information provided. Data collection from Youth Justice Services has taken place on a frequent basis and a further data lift took place during 2023, with another anticipated in due course. As a result of a number of collaborative events held with various stakeholders, including children and young people, a Toolkit and other training and resources for professionals has been produced (refer to link below). Appendix 2
- 3.6 A short video presentation that explains the tool kit more fully can be found on this site: <https://www.missingpeople.org.uk/reducing-the-criminalisation-of-care-experienced-children-and-young-adults-in-wales-a-practical-toolkit-for-professionals#section-4>

4. DATA FOR RCT CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

- 4.1 The initial exercise carried out for the Youth Justice Board last year, looked at children across Wales receiving an Out of Court Disposal or a Community Order from court. 15% of the total were children looked after (CLA). A snapshot between April 2021 – March 2022, showed 13% of 'children looked after' were subject to an Out of Court Disposal and 27% for the smaller cohort received a court order.
- 4.2 The figures of Children Looked After known to our service and produced on a quarterly basis, tends to vary between 10% and 15%

RCT children with interventions starting April 22 to March 23:

- 4.3 More recently, further work has been undertaken whereby a total of 317 Prevention Interventions (including, Anti-social behaviour contracts and voluntary Interventions) started in the period April 2022 to March 2023. Of those, 29 were CLA (9.1%).
- 4.4 The number receiving Out of Court Disposals, Street Disposals and Outcome 22 disposals was 246, with 19 of the total being CLA (8%).

- 4.5 As expected, there was a much smaller cohort from court, and of 32 children receiving a community order, 7 were CLA which equates to (22%).
- 4.6 Overall, a total of 594 children started an intervention with the YJS in the period and of these 55 were CLA (9.2%).
- 4.7 Figures for the RCT area before and since the launch of the protocol shows the following, with little if no clear difference to the numbers coming through, although there may be other factors contributing to this, such as a general rise in numbers coming to the attention of our service presenting with complex needs.

May 21 to April 22

YJS Interventions	587
Total children	419
Of those children, CLA	46 (10.9%)

May 22 to April 23

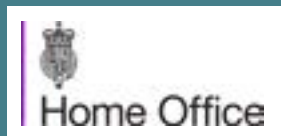
YJS Interventions	586
Total children	428
Of those children, CLA	46 (10.7%)

- 4.8 The YJS will undertake further evaluation on this at the end of March 2024. The effectiveness of the protocol therefore is difficult to gauge at this stage in its development. However, it's use has been brought to the attention of the YJS Management Board, subsequently prompting discussions amongst partners regarding current practice that contributes to higher CLA numbers in the system and the need to embed a trauma informed approach across the partnership in the longer term.

5. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 This protocol has been shared again with the Youth Justice Services Management Board in September this year in order to keep the wider partnership informed of its impact and the work taking place to help reduce the numbers of children entering the youth justice system. It will be important that future training regarding the protocol and use of the accompanying toolkit should be delivered on a multi-agency basis to ensure that whenever possible the protocol is implemented and has a positive impact on outcomes for children and young people.
- 5.2 Cwm Taf YJS is sensitive to the challenges we face regarding the over representation of CLA children in the criminal justice system and to be proactive in ensuring that our work alongside Children's Services, placement providers, educational settings, health services, the Police and other criminal justice partners, challenges unnecessary criminalisation.
- 5.3 The YJS will continue to monitor and analyse data on an annual basis, (recognizing that trends and challenges will change overtime) and continue to embed a trauma informed approach to practice with a strong focus on the child's life journey, identity

and experience, whilst continually monitoring disproportionality within the service. This work is outlined in the current Cwm Taf YJS 'Child First' action plan which sets out how we will achieve this, and on a broader note, develop practice for any child where national or local research indicates they may receive a disproportionate outcome, e.g. children who have experienced ACES, have 'Additional Learning Needs', who are Looked After, Care experienced, females and Black and Ethnic Minority Children.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

All Wales Protocol

Reducing the criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults

Expectations for practice across agencies to reduce the unnecessary criminalisation of care experienced children (up to the age of 18) and young adults (up to the age of 25)

Introduction

1. The term 'child' here is used to refer to a person up to the age of 18 years old. The term 'young adults' is used here to refer to a person who is aged 18 to 25 years old.
2. We recognise that teenagers may not like being referred to as children and will prefer the term young person. The use of the term 'child' in this guidance does not mean that practitioners should use the term in practice with everyone under 18.
3. The protocol is aimed at a range of organisations including, local authority children's services, care providers (fostering services, children's homes and other provision), police forces, Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), Probation Services, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), HM Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS), local Youth Justice Judiciary, HM Prison and Probation Service and local health services including mental health. This is not an exhaustive list and all services that work with care experienced children, young people and young adults in some way, including the third sector have a role to play.
4. Where a child is looked after by the state, we have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare and to act as good corporate parents so they can each reach their full potential. These responsibilities extend for some young people (who have been in care) up to their 25th Birthday.
5. Those carrying out functions under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 also have a duty to pay due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child (UNCRC). Every child is entitled to rights under the UNCRC without discrimination. When children are in care the question we must ask is, '*Would this be good enough for my child?*'
6. Coming into contact with the criminal justice system is related to an increased likelihood of future offending and there is a shared duty of care to divert children and young people from the criminal justice system, wherever possible, including those who are care experienced.
7. The majority of children who enter care, do so due to abuse and neglect, and will experience Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) and trauma; this has an impact on their emotional and behavioural development. This can result in behaviour that is perceived as challenging.
8. ACEs have been identified as a key risk factor for offending and victimisation, respectively.¹ Child Criminal Exploitation by nature involves children in offending behaviour. There is also a link between risk of Child Sexual Exploitation and involvement in the youth offending system, especially for boys.²

9. We have already made significant strides in reducing the criminalisation of children. Since December 2009, the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system in England and Wales has dropped by 84%. This is a credit to all of the agencies and practitioners involved.
10. However, although the vast majority of children who are care experienced do not get involved with the justice system, on February 1st 2021 a snap shot of Welsh Youth Offending Team caseloads evidenced that 21% were in care or were care leavers.³ This includes prevention activity to stop potential criminal behaviour. Data for 18 – 25year olds who are care experienced is not consistently available across Wales at this time.
11. The David Lammy MP and Charlie Taylor reviews⁴, highlight particular disadvantages faced by Black Asian and Minority Ethnic care experienced children, young people and young adults, who find themselves over-represented in both the care and criminal justice systems.
12. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out requirements to ensure local services are provided to prevent children from offending and to promote their future welfare.
13. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 also sets out requirements for the care and support of children in care and care leavers.⁵ . The overall purpose of Part 6 of the Act is to safeguard and promote the well-being of children in care and accommodated and care leavers. . It also aims to promote resilience and achievement of personal well-being outcomes.
14. The Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales⁶ sets out the Welsh Government and Ministry of Justice shared vision for youth justice in Wales. It takes a ‘children first’ approach to youth justice, to ensure that it is child-centred rather than service focused, ensure that it meets the individual needs of children and is trauma informed and responds to their best interests. Across Wales a national approach to diversion and early intervention has taken place through the Bureaus operating in most Youth Offending Team (YOT) areas.
15. The Welsh Government funds the ACEs Support Hub⁷ that continues to play a central role in developing public services in Wales which are not only ‘ACE aware’ but also trauma informed, linking with the work of Traumatic Stress Wales.
16. Early Action Together is a programme designed to take a public health approach to policing vulnerability across Wales using an ACE lens and being trauma informed. The Early Action Together ACEs learning network provides helpful information for the public, practitioners and Police about the Early Action Together programme and its work in relation to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The aim is to share useful information and research about ACEs as well as best practice and resources. [RSPH | Welcome to the Early Action Together ACEs learning network](#) This Early Action Together

ACEs learning network has been developed by Public Health Wales, all four police forces in Wales and key partner organisations across the UK.

17. Traumatic Stress Wales⁸ is funded by Welsh Government and aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people of all ages living in Wales at risk of developing or with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or complex post-traumatic stress disorder (CPTSD). Traumatic Stress Wales is a national initiative that works through a network of easily accessible, locally based services centred around the people they are trying to help with streamlined care pathways to avoid unnecessary repeated referral and assessment. The initiative covers children, young people and adults, and is co-produced, co-owned and co-delivered by all relevant stakeholders, including people with lived experience of PTSD and CPTSD.
18. The Welsh Government Programme for Government 2021- 2026⁹ sets out our ambitions for and commitments to work to support children, young people and people who face the greatest challenges. This includes specific commitments towards children looked after and care leavers.¹⁰
19. Taken together, existing and developing policy, arrangements to support practice and the commitments of the Programme for Wales provide a firm foundation of shared ambitions for child-centred, ACE aware, trauma informed practice that will support the aims and implementation of this Protocol.

Purpose of the protocol

20. This protocol sets out best practice for avoiding the criminalisation of care experienced children (up to the age of 18) young adults (up to the age of 25) whenever possible.
21. This national protocol ('the protocol') is intended to promote practice across agencies, supported by local and regional arrangements, to help reduce the unnecessary criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults.
22. The Welsh Government considers that the protocol should assist those who come into contact with care experienced children and young adults while carrying out their work, in sharing a common framework of principles and expectations informed by an approach that actively promotes children's rights and human rights.
23. The protocol is a framework for good practice for those working with care experienced children up to the age of 18 and young adults up to the age of 25. It aims to avoid their prosecution wherever possible and appropriate, by encouraging a response to incidents which reduces the likelihood of criminalisation, offending or reoffending through promoting:
 - Practice that is ACE aware and trauma informed and is underpinned by an understanding of impact of childhood experiences on neuro-

development and presenting behaviour;

- Child-centred practice with a focus on what matters to the child ; listening to children’s views and taking their opinions into account in developing policy and in the way we practice;
- Practice that recognises in line with the [Wales Safeguarding Procedures](#) and [All Wales Practice Guides](#) that Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is a safeguarding issue. Children who are abused through CCE should be considered as children first and their care and support needs should be considered in the same way as for any child. Child Criminal Exploitation including County Lines can and does cause significant harm to children.
- Practice that is underpinned by an understanding of the interrelated nature of safeguarding issues such as going missing, Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Harmful Sexual Behaviour and trafficking. While at the same time understands the need for a consistent child-centred response based on individual needs in line with the [Wales Safeguarding Procedures](#) and [All Wales Practice Guides](#) and multi-agency statutory guidance¹¹. All of which take a children first approach to prevent the criminalisation of children whenever possible.
- Practice that recognises that foster carers and residential placement carers are a key part of the team¹² in understanding the individual needs of children, the approach that a child or young person is most likely to be responsive to and in working with agencies to plan for the care and support of children and young people.
- Early intervention, diversionary practice and a restorative approach to create environments founded on relationships, respect, inclusivity, fairness and tolerance.

24. A strong corporate parenting ethos recognises the care system is not just about keeping children safe, but also about prevention, promoting recovery, resilience and wellbeing. This requires corporate parents to ensure that work across social care, placement providers, educational settings, health services, the police and other criminal justice partners, prevents unnecessary criminalisation.

25. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking and migrant children who are care experienced are especially vulnerable should they go missing from their care placement. Not only are they at risk of being exploited and harmed, they are also often at heightened risk of being coerced into crime, including being radicalised. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child gives special protections which Wales has adopted. The Welsh Government has published advice on support for and the entitlements of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, [Unaccompanied asylum seeking children: guidance](#)

[for professionals | GOV.WALES](#) and an [Unaccompanied asylum seeking children: age assessment toolkit | GOV.WALES](#)

26. Supervision, reflective practice and a consistent response to care experienced children and young adults across agencies should consider the question “*Would such behaviour lead to an arrest if they had been living with their family*”?

Implementation

27. The Welsh Government expects agencies and relevant partnerships to consider the ways in which the approach set out in this protocol can best be implemented in a way that impacts on practice, prevents criminalisation whenever possible and has a positive impact on outcomes for care experienced children, young people and young adults so that they can enjoy good well-being and realise their rights.
28. The Welsh Government will work with partners to consider and agree action that can be taken at a national level to effectively support the implementation of this protocol.

1. Promoting rights and giving children and young people a voice

29. In exercising their functions relating to children in care and accommodated, local authorities have overarching duties to have due regard to Part 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as set out in section 7 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
30. A person exercising any functions under Part 6¹³ of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 must have regard to the overarching duties set out in section 6 of the Act. This means that anybody exercising functions in relation to a child in care or accommodated, or in relation to those leaving or who have left care must:
- ascertain and have regard to the child or young person's views, wishes and feelings, so far as is reasonably practicable;
 - have regard to the importance of promoting and respecting the child or young person's dignity;
 - have regard to the characteristics, culture and beliefs of the child or young person (including, for example, language;)
 - have regard to the importance of providing appropriate support to enable the child or young person to participate in decisions that affect them (to the extent to which this is appropriate in the circumstances, particularly where the child or young person's ability to communicate is limited for any reason).
31. A child centred approach to policing aims to prevent any unnecessary criminalisation of children (persons under the age of 18) and prevent future offending, this includes giving children and young people a voice. The NCPP [National Strategy for Policing Children and Young People \(safe4me.co.uk\)](http://safe4me.co.uk) sets out that all children should be treated as children first in every encounter.¹⁴
32. The Children's Commissioner for Wales has produced a framework for working with children, grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: [The Right Way - A Children's Rights Approach - Children's Commissioner for Wales \(childcomwales.org.uk\)](http://childcomwales.org.uk) and [A Children's Rights Approach for Social Care in Wales - Children's Commissioner for Wales \(childcomwales.org.uk\)](http://childcomwales.org.uk)
33. Listening to, learning from, and acting on children and young peoples' voice is vital for effective policies and practice. The Welsh Government expects partners to seek care experienced children and young adults' contribution to the implementation of local arrangements for delivering this protocol. This includes seeking their views on the planned development or commissioning of services to support the aims of this protocol on a local or regional basis.

34. Children are entitled to an active offer of advocacy¹⁵ from a statutory Independent Professional Advocate (IPA) when they become looked after or become subject of child protection enquiries leading to an Initial Child Protection Conference. The ‘active offer’ is made directly to the child by the Advocacy Service. An ‘active offer’ is a sharing of information about the statutory right and entitlement of a child in particular circumstances to access support from an Independent Professional Advocacy Service. Information must be shared with them that includes an explanation about the role of Independent Professional Advocacy.
35. Guidance on Regulation 29 of *Statutory Guidance For service providers and responsible individuals on meeting service standard regulations for Care home services , Domiciliary support services, Secure accommodation services, and Residential family centre services*¹⁶ sets out that as part of their induction, staff receive behavioural support training that is relevant to their role to make sure any control or restraint practices are only used proactively and when absolutely necessary, in line with current national guidance. Current national guidance sets out expectations for child/person-centred planning and positive behaviour approach to reduce the use of restrictive practices¹⁷ in line with human rights. This approach will also contribute to a reduction in the incidents that can lead to the criminalisation of children and young people.
36. The regulation guidance also requires that service providers ensure a positive and constructive approach is adopted to support an individual’s behaviour. Any strategies or measures taken to support the individual’s behaviour are consistent with meeting the individual’s needs for care and support; the well-being of other individuals for whom care and support is provided.
37. Guidance on Regulation 22 of *Statutory Guidance Fostering Services This statutory guidance relates to Parts 2 to 16 of The Regulated Fostering Services (Services Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2019*,¹⁸ contains similar advice. That service providers ensure arrangements are in place so that whenever foster parents are using forms of control or restrain:
- providers are able to check that it, is used as part of a pro-active approach to behavioural support:
 - is proportionate to the risk of harm and the seriousness of that harm to the child receiving care and support or another person
 - takes account of the assessment of the child’s needs;
 - follows current legislation and guidance.

Current national guidance sets out expectations for child/person-centred planning and positive behaviour approach to reduce the use of restrictive practices¹⁹ in line with human rights. This approach will also contribute to a reduction in the incidents that can lead to the criminalisation of children and young people.

38. The regulation guidance also requires Service providers ensure a positive and constructive approach is adopted by foster parents to support a child's behaviour. Any approach to support the child's behaviour is consistent with meeting the child's needs for care and support and the wellbeing of other members of the foster parent's household who may be affected by the placement made.

2. What this means for practice

39. Many care experienced children, young people and young adults will have experienced trauma and/or abuse before coming into care. Those young people abused through harm such as child sexual exploitation (CSE) or child criminal exploitation (CCE) experience the added trauma of emotional, psychological, physical and/or sexual abuse. They will have experienced multiple abuses and breaches of trust.

40. These experiences can impact on the ways in which children and young people act and engage with others. The fact that children may be perceived as uncooperative, aggressive, and unwilling to engage²⁰ and as 'risk taking' can mean that they are, misunderstood and negatively perceived by practitioners. Engaging in behaviors seen by adults as 'risky' can often be understood by children as a way to cope and assert some control.²¹ Children participating in a Welsh Government commissioned consultation²² talked about practitioners sometimes judging them, blaming them or 'branding' them.

41. The ways in which we respond to care experienced children and young adults needs to be informed by an understanding of the full context of their life. Getting to a position of trust with a child who has been shaped by a history of being let down or hurt by adults' demands and deserves the time to develop a relationship with the child.

42. Welsh Government legislation and policy seeks to promote a rights-based approach to practice with children and adults. This means involving them in decisions about the support and services they receive and the outcomes they want to achieve. It also means planning to meet needs in a child and person centred way that promotes wellbeing and the opportunities for individuals to realise their rights.

43. One of the implications of this for practice is the need to plan with, and for, children and adults so that measures are in place to prevent situations arising where they behave in way that people find challenging and that escalate into situations where property is damaged or there is a risk of harm to the individual or others. Information from significant people in the individual's life can help to inform care and support planning to achieve this.

44. Listening to children and young people and finding out what matters to them should be part of a child-centred planning to help make them feel secure and reduce the likelihood of them going missing and/or being put at risk of abuse and exploitation.
45. The approach to involving children and the significant people in their lives in planning for care and support should be meaningful and appropriate to the age, capacity and communication needs of the individual. This means providing additional support for some children through an advocate²³ to ensure that their views are heard. Part of a discussion with a child about their care and support plan should include sharing with them information about the intentions set out in this All Wales Protocol and the commitment to avoid criminalisation whenever possible.
46. There is evidence that an over-reliance on specialist risk assessment tools does not always support child-centred practice and may detract from professional judgement.²⁴ Where used, risk assessment tools should only inform a wider assessment of care and support needs. The process should not result in meetings where the focus is on the risk assessment and reducing a risk score without considering wider care and support planning to sustain change and support well-being in a child centred way.
47. Restrictive practices such as restraint or seclusion should only ever be used as a last resort to prevent harm to the individual or others, in line with expectations set out in the [Reducing restrictive practices framework 2021 | GOV.WALES](#). The advice on child and person centred planning and positive behaviour approaches set out in the Framework will support practice which will also reduce the likelihood of incidents occurring which could lead to the child or young person coming into contact with the police.
48. Wherever possible if an incident occurs, children should be given time to calm down, if they are not calm, to talk in the presence of a known and trusted practitioner or in private if they prefer, when they share their account of what has happened. The child should be given the choice about who is present when they give their account of the incident, wherever this is practical and possible. This can be an important opportunity to understand the child or young person's perspective - both to inform decision making about how to respond in their best interests and to avoid criminalisation wherever possible.
49. Seeking children's views after an incident, including where they have come into contact with criminal justice agencies, is an important part of reviewing decisions about their care and support in order to reduce the likelihood of future incidents. This discussion should wherever possible take place without the presence of others involved in the incident.
50. Proactive strategies can include environmental changes, to make the environment more suitable for the child or young person and teaching new skills or behaviours, so that behaviours that challenge become less likely.

51. Reactive strategies might include distraction, de-escalation, active listening, or withdrawal. These strategies can form a useful part of the proactive approach to inform care and support planning to reduce the likelihood of incidents that may lead to the police being called or to children and young people going missing where they will be at risk.
52. Consultation with children and young people²⁵ who are care experienced identified that the police should be regular visitors to placements – not just attending when something has gone wrong, but there to build relationships with them and to understand each other better.

[Check Your Thinking – Resources to support safeguarding practice with young people, for use by all those working with and caring for young people.](#)

Resources and materials have been developed from research and partnership work with children young people, foster carers, and social care and allied professionals. They are designed for use by all those working with and caring for young people. They share messages from young people with experiences of exploitation and harm, about how they experience support. The messages are also from those working with and caring for children and young people, about support needed and some of the challenges involved in keeping them safe. All the resources are designed as reflective tools to help you 'check your thinking' about key issues in safeguarding children and young people from exploitation, harms and other abuses, such as: assessing and managing risk, responding to children and young people, multi-agency practice, the importance of language and child-centred approaches.

3. Responding to incidents

53. Sometimes incidents occur because practitioners put in places rules and sanctions with the intention of keeping children safe and managing risks. Children may react to the enforcement of these rules and sanctions in a way that escalates situations so that their behaviour challenges others or where a response to 'risky' behaviour results in a call to the police.
54. When responding to an incident every practitioner should ensure that they ask the child for their own account of what has happened. There may be a situation where immediate action is necessary to ensure the safety of the child or others.
55. As part of all children's care and support plans there should be rigorous assessments and plans in place to respond to individual children's behaviour. Effective de-escalation requires practitioners to make rapid and structured assessments of the immediate and foreseeable risks, considering care planning, risk assessment and positive behaviour support planning for the individual child.
56. When incidents arise at the place where the child lives, carers should attempt to manage them in a way informed by information in the individual's care and support plan, through application of the positive behaviour policy and through internal resolutions such as restorative approaches, without police involvement wherever possible and appropriate.
57. Carers need to consider the nature and seriousness of the incident before deciding how to respond and whether to involve the police. This should be in line with positive behaviour policies within the setting. Positive behaviour policies should include a cooling off period allowing all parties time to reflect, unless the incident is so serious that more immediate action is required.
58. The police should not be used for behaviour management or matters a reasonable parent would not have called the police over. Consideration should always be given to whether the police would be called if the incident had occurred in a domestic setting. Positive behavioural support policies and training for carers and staff on how to apply them will contribute to a reduction in incidents where children behave in a way that challenges others.
59. Responding to an immediate offence/situation should involve efforts to understand the full circumstances of the incident and to identify whether the child or young person may be a victim. Efforts to gain a full understanding of the situation should wherever possible be undertaken in a place where the child or young adult feels safe and supported.²⁶

60. There is an expectation that local authority officers, residential care workers or foster parents plan with and for care experienced children and young people in a child-centred way that meets their needs and minimises the risk of incidents arising. When incidents do arise, carers should strive to manage them at the placement through internal resolutions such as restorative approaches.
61. Where this is not possible due to the severity of the situation, or where there is concern about immediate safety, police should consider use of discretionary powers to apply an informal resolution response (such as a community resolution). It is good practice for such procedures to include a cooling-off period and sufficient time for decisions to be informed by the advice of key professionals (e.g. registered manager and key worker, foster parents, social worker or police link workers for residential settings).
62. Understanding the potential for a child to have their details retained on police databases, which remain searchable and potentially may be disclosed into adulthood, should allow those caring for children and to make an informed judgement about involving the police. It is important for all agencies and those caring for children to be clear about how they will decide to respond to an incident and whether any other alternatives should be considered e.g. a restorative meeting.

4. Care experienced young adults (aged 18 or over)

63. [Part 6 Code of Practice \(Looked after and accommodated children\) \(gov.wales\)](http://gov.wales) under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) sets out Support for children aged 16-17 who are still being looked after (a 'category 1 young person'). This describes a comprehensive framework of assessment, care and support planning, intervention and case review by local authorities to prepare 16 and 17 year olds for the time when they will no longer be looked after.
64. When a child in care is about to turn 16, the local authority must prepare a pathway plan. This plan will capture the actions required from the local authority, the child's carer, the child, birth family and other identified parties to assist the child to make a successful transition from care into adulthood. The pathway plan will build upon the child's existing Part 6 Care and Support Plan, which will be subsumed within the pathway plan.
65. The Part 6 Code of Practice also sets out duties on local authorities to provide support for those children and young adults who have ceased to be looked after. These include care leavers under the age of 18 (referred to in the Act as a 'category 2 young person'), care leavers aged 18 and over (a 'category 3 young person'), and care leavers who reconnect to care at 21 for education and training (a 'category 4 young person'). It also deals with young people who left care under a Special Guardianship Order (a 'category 5 young person'), and other former looked after or accommodated children who may be entitled to advice and support (a 'category 6 young person').
66. The Part 6 code sets out a local authority's legal responsibilities in respect of post-18 living arrangements for young adults in foster care. Local authorities are required to set up local 'When I am Ready' schemes in line with the requirements in the code. 'When I am Ready'²⁷ arrangement is the term used in Wales for an arrangement whereby a young adult in foster care remains with their former foster carer beyond the age of 18.
67. However, many young adults who are care experienced still have to make accelerated transitions into independence. Many young adults also have to negotiate adulthood while coping with the continued impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma. This will be different for every individual but there is clear evidence that for some, these childhood experiences can present additional challenges to enjoying well-being into adulthood.²⁸
68. That is why legislation and the Code of Practice set out duties on local authorities to plan with them for when they leave care and to provide support as they grow into young adults. Once a child ceases to be looked after, if they are a "relevant child", or a "former relevant child", the local authority must appoint a Personal Advisor (PA) to support them up to the age of 21, and up to 25 if requested. They act as the focal point to ensure

that care leavers are provided with the right kind of personal support.

69. Services provided by Local Authorities for young adults who are care experienced should develop and maintain constructive working relationships with local criminal justice services to help personal advisers and other partners, make the right links to support these young adults, including the use of pathway planning to divert them from offending, support them if they are transferring from YOT to Probation Service supervision, support them if in custody, or supervise and assist them in the community on release from custody as part of their resettlement plan.

5. Police decision-making when responding to incidents involving care experienced children, young people and young adults

70. Where it is not possible to avoid involving the police due to the severity of the situation, or where there is concern about immediate safety, police should consider use of discretionary powers to apply an informal resolution response (such as community resolution).
71. Where the police are required to record an incident as a crime but feel further action (other than safeguarding) is not in the public interest, they have the discretion to resolve the report accordingly by applying Outcome 21 from the National Police Outcomes Framework. Outcome 21 is set out as: *Further action, resulting from the crime report, which could provide evidence sufficient to support formal action being taken against the suspect is not in the public interest - Police decision*. This will therefore, not be recorded as a police sanction on the Police National computer (PNC).
72. Children (under the age of 18) should not be taken to police stations on matters that allow for an alternative approach. However, in cases where this is judged to be absolutely necessary, they should be adequately supported by their responsible local authority or care setting.
73. Police, social workers, and carers should also consider what will happen when the child is discharged from the station. The options at this time are; being released without charge / no further action; charged with an offence; released under investigation; bailed or referred to the relevant Youth Offending Team for consideration by a diversion panel.
74. There is an expectation that where a care experienced child or young adult comes into contact with the criminal justice system, their responsible local authority is contacted and has input in decision-making.
75. In circumstances where a community resolution is inappropriate, the police will refer the case to the local Youth Offending Team (10 to 17 year olds) who through multi agency decision making with the police will agree the most suitable course of action, including diversion from criminalisation/prosecution.
76. Multi agency diversion panels are designed to consider and provide informed decision-making, based on an assessment by the YOT of the child's needs to determine the most suitable outcome. The process has regard to the best interests of both children and victims of crime, with a view to protecting potentially vulnerable children and protecting the public.
77. The decision making should consider what the most appropriate disposal is for the child, what help and support they need and depending on the

type of disposal whether a restorative intervention, would be appropriate. It should take into account of the wishes of those harmed as well as seeking to address the needs of the child to reduce the risk of repeat offending.

6. Supporting care experienced children and young adults in the criminal justice system and reducing offending

78. There will be instances where children and young adults who are care experienced will be charged with an offence. The home authority must ensure that the child or young person is legally represented by a solicitor with expertise in youth justice and supported whilst at the police station by an Appropriate Adult, ideally by an adult who knows them well. This should include measures to ensure that the child or young person understands what is happening to them.
79. All agencies should ensure that care experienced young adults who come in to contact with the criminal justice system are aware of their rights to legal representation and/or advocacy support.
80. Local authorities should explain to children in care and care leavers what they should do and say if they come into contact with the police or criminal justice agencies. This will allow support services, including their Personal Advisor, to be notified and involved in decision-making and case resolution.
81. Where they consent to their notification, police and criminal justice agencies should seek and encourage the involvement of the care leaver's former responsible authority and / or their support network in decision-making. This is regardless of whether their contact with police occurs inside or outside that authority.
82. All agencies should ensure that care experienced young adults who come in to contact with the criminal justice system are aware of their rights to legal representation and/or advocacy support.
83. Children should not be held at the police station for longer than is necessary because support and/or accommodation isn't available.
84. All local agencies/protocol partners should sign up, and adhere, to the *All-Wales guidance for the appropriate management and transfer of children and young people by the Police and Local Authorities Under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984²⁹* and seek to avoid holding care experienced children and young people overnight in police cells wherever possible.
85. It is important that they are not disadvantaged because of their care/former care status, when the decision is made about whether to grant bail or not. Consideration is also likely to be given to whether they can return to their place of residence depending on the nature of offence committed.

86. If the police are proposing to deny bail, every effort should be made to identify whether bail supervision and support could be provided to prevent this occurring and to find alternative accommodation if it is required. The Police have a duty to make the request to the local authority and the local authority to consider it.
87. Where the child, young person or young adult does not admit to an offence, or where the offence is serious enough to merit considering prosecution, individual circumstances and those of the offence should be carefully considered when deciding if charging and prosecution is appropriate.²¹.
88. Although only applying to offences committed in children's homes, the [Crown Prosecution Service Guidance on Youth Offenders](#) section on Behaviour in Children's Homes provides a useful way of looking at aggravating and mitigating factors when deciding whether prosecution of care experienced children is appropriate regardless of the child's type of placement.
89. Any decision to charge and prosecute a child or young adult should consider whether their actions are due to exploitation, human trafficking or modern slavery. If they are a victim of trafficking or modern slavery, the non-prosecution principle within the Modern Slavery Act 2015 should be considered and, if appropriate, applied. Furthermore, the local authority should be pro-active in assisting the Crown Prosecution Service in reaching informed decisions when considering cases involving care experienced children.
90. If a care experienced child or young adult receives a community sentence, their carers, social worker or personal advisor, YOT or probation case manager, should continue to work closely together, share information and clarify their roles and responsibilities to ensure that the child, young person or young adult receives the support they need.
91. If a custodial sentence is likely, the carers, YOT worker, probation officer, social worker or personal advisor should work together to prepare the child, young person or young adult, explaining what will happen and how they will be supported. The YOT worker or probation officer should request any relevant information from the social/worker/personal advisor ahead of them preparing the pre-sentence report.
92. [Guidance for the joint working arrangements between Youth Offending Teams and Local Authority Children's Services for children in custody in Wales \(November 2020\) - Youth Justice Resource Hub \(yiresourcehub.uk\)](#) is intended to ensure that staff in YOTs and children's services work together effectively in the discharge of their specific duties towards children and young people to meet their needs and to support their reintegration and resettlement.

93. It is especially important to ensure young adults who are transitioning between YOT and probation services do not fall through the gaps. The responsibilities of agencies are outlined in the [Youth to adult transition principles and guidance for Wales - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-to-adult-transition-principles-and-guidance-for-wales)
94. A Framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales 2018-2023³⁰ sets out how Prison and Probation services will, in collaboration with all relevant agencies, to further reduce the number of people entering the criminal justice system and support people who have committed offences not to re-offend. The framework includes advice in relation to supporting care leavers.
95. Across Wales 18+ diversionary schemes, commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) in conjunction with Welsh Government and HMPPS are now in operation. Any adults that meet the criteria are automatically referred to the scheme upon admission of guilt.

Part 11 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

96. The [Part 11, Code of Practice \(miscellaneous and general\) | GOV.WALES](https://www.gov.wales/government/publications/part-11-code-of-practice-miscellaneous-and-general) under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the duties placed on local authorities in respect of adults with care and support needs who are in the secure estate in Wales. This duty exists regardless of their place of ordinary residence in Wales or elsewhere before their detention, and a change in how existing responsibilities for the care and support of children in the secure estate (whether detained in England or Wales) are fulfilled.
97. The home local authority must fulfil their duties towards a child looked after during their period of detention in accordance with the requirements of Care Planning, Placement and Review of Cases (Wales) Regulations 2015 and to former looked after children on their release.
98. Local authorities must continue to fulfil their duties in relation to sections 105 – 108 of the 2014 Act (keeping in touch, personal advisers, pathway assessment and plans, pathway assessments and plans post 18 living arrangements) and these continue to apply to category 2 and to relevant category 5 and 6 young people during the period that they are detained.
99. The local authority must meet its responsibilities for adult care leavers in the secure estate, at the appropriate time. The local authority's responsibilities to care leavers are suspended where the local authority has no ability to fulfil these responsibilities during the time the child is detained but are triggered again when the individual is released. Section 185(5) excludes some of the support for care leavers aged 18 years and over that they would otherwise have been entitled to receive while they are detained in the secure estate.

100. Adult care leavers aged 18 years and over (category 3); care leavers who reconnect at 21 with education and training (category 4), young people who left care under a Special Guardianship Order (category 5), and other former looked after children who may be entitled to advice and support (category 6) are not entitled to receive some of the support which they would otherwise be entitled to receive in accordance with Part 6 of the 2014 Act during the time they are detained in the secure estate. Entitlements within sections 110,112,114 and 115 of the 2014 Act are disapplied during the period of detention.
101. Custodial establishments should nominate a named representative to act as the link with the care planning process for each child in care during their time in custody.
102. Custodial establishments should do all they can to prepare children and young people for transition back into the community and support transition arrangements. Resettlement planning should begin at the start of the remand period or sentence and be a continued focus of required planning meetings during the time in custody. Resettlement planning should include the individual's wishes and views, and arrangements tailored to their individual needs.
103. Children, young people and young adults who are care experienced should not be disadvantaged regarding early release compared with other children in custody. Early release and use of release on temporary license can encourage good behaviour and engagement with resettlement plans and, as such, should be considered where possible.

Restorative justice gives victims the chance to meet or communicate with the child or young person to explain the real impact of the crime (if it is appropriate) – it empowers victims by giving them a voice. It can help children and young people to learn from their mistakes and help them to take responsibility and make amends. There are various forms of direct and indirect reparation.

A restorative approach is essentially about working with individuals who have offended to help them understand their own needs and to empathise with and, therefore, understand the needs of others, allowing them to develop understanding of the impact of their actions. This can range from informal day-to-day restorative approaches related to building relationships through to more formal restorative justice conferences.

Restorative approaches seek to establish an environment where mutual regard is foremost, and to repair or resolve a harm that has been perpetrated. It is a process whereby the victim has an opportunity to be heard and to state the impact of the behaviour and the individual who has offended has the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions. Restorative approaches need to be informed by the following six principles:

Restoration – the primary aim of restorative practice is to address and repair harm.

Voluntarism – participation in restorative processes is voluntary and based on informed choice.

Neutrality – restorative processes are fair and unbiased towards participants.

Safety – processes and practice aim to ensure the safety of all participants and create a safe space for the expression of feelings and views about harm that has been caused.

Accessibility – restorative processes are non-discriminatory and available to all those affected by conflict and harm.

Respect – restorative processes are respectful of the dignity of all participants and those affected by the harm caused.

To avoid causing additional harm, professionals should consider the impact of restorative processes on the child or young person, bearing in mind their individual characteristics such as religion, culture or individual vulnerabilities and experiences. The child or young person should be given an opportunity to have their voice heard. It should not be automatically assumed that a child or young person is solely to blame for an event and they should be afforded an opportunity to put their version of events across

¹ Baglivio, M; Wolf, K; Piquero, A. and Epps, N. (2015) 'The Relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and Juvenile Offending Trajectories in a Juvenile Offender Sample', *Journal of Criminal Justice Volume 43*, Issue 3, May–June 2015, Pages 229-241

² Cockbain, E; Brayley, H; Ashby, M (2014) *Not just a girl thing: A large-scale comparison of male and female users of child sexual exploitation services in the UK*. Barnardo's, London.

³ Snap shot data from all Youth Justice Services across Wales on 1st Feb 2021.

⁴ [Lammy Review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) [Review of the youth justice system - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

⁵ [Children in local authority care: code of practice | GOV.WALES](http://gov.wales)

⁶ [youth-justice-blueprint_0.pdf \(gov.wales\)](http://gov.wales) [Supporting young people in the Justice system | GOV.WALES](http://gov.wales)

⁷ [about – Ace Aware Wales](http://aceaware.wales)

⁸ [Home -Traumatic Stress Wales \(nhs.wales\)](http://nhs.wales)

⁹ [Programme for government: update | GOV.WALES](http://gov.wales)

¹⁰ See Pages 4 and 10 of the Programme for Government.

¹¹ [Safeguarding children at risk of abuse or neglect | GOV.WALES](http://gov.wales)
[Safeguarding children from child sexual exploitation | GOV.WALES](http://gov.wales)
[Safeguarding adults at risk of abuse or neglect | GOV.WALES](http://gov.wales)

¹² [Fostering Wellbeing | The Fostering Network](http://thefosteringnetwork.org)

¹³ [Children in local authority care: code of practice | GOV.WALES](http://gov.wales)

¹⁴ [CYP Chart 2018 v5 \(safe4me.co.uk\)](http://safe4me.co.uk)

¹⁵ The National Approach to Statutory Advocacy (NASA), is a standardised approach to statutory advocacy services being delivered by the six Regional Social Services Collaboratives. These arrangements are set out in the [Code of Practice on Advocacy \(Part 10\)](#) under the Social services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

¹⁶ [Statutory Guidance for service providers \(gov.wales\)](http://gov.wales)

¹⁷ [Reducing restrictive practices framework 2021 | GOV.WALES](http://gov.wales)

¹⁸ [Statutory Guidance - Fostering Services \(gov.wales\)](#)

¹⁹ [Reducing restrictive practices framework 2021 | GOV.WALES](#)

²⁰ Sharp-Jeffs, N; Coy, M; and Kelly, L. ,2017, *Key messages from research on child sexual exploitation: Social Workers* , Centre for Expertise on child sexual abuse, London Metropolitan University

²¹ Hallett, S. (PI), Forrester, D., and Verbruggen, J. ,2016-18, *Keeping safe? An analysis of the outcomes of work with sexually exploited young people in Wales*. Health and Care Research Wales.

²² Dynamix, (2018) *How do we measure children by what they think, and not by what their experiences are?* Welsh Government commissioned safeguarding consultation with young people.

²³ Advocacy can take many forms, each with the common aim of supporting individuals to have their voices heard, to clarify options and to express their views, wishes and feelings. See Annex 3.

²⁴ <https://www.csacentre.org.uk/resources/blog/risk-tools-risk-talk-and-relationships/>
<https://www.csacentre.org.uk/our-research/responding-to-csa/risk-tools/>

²⁵ Consultation with children and young people, February 2021 undertaken by the 4C's.

²⁶ Sharp-Jeff, N; Coy, M. and Kelly, L. (2017) *Key messages from research on child sexual exploitation: Police*, Centre for Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse

²⁷ [when-i-am-ready-good-practice-guide-march-2016.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

²⁸ [Adverse Childhood Experiences - Public Health Wales \(nhs.wales\)](#)

²⁹ [The management and transfer of children and young people in police custody | GOV.WALES](#)

³⁰ [Framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales 2018-2023 \(iomcymru.org.uk\)](#)



A new way of working

to reduce the number of care experienced children and young adults who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

We are pleased to share with you

A practical toolkit for use by professionals

Reducing the Criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults in Wales: A Practical Toolkit for Professionals - Missing People

 Please click to access toolkit

This toolkit aims to turn the principles in the [All Wales Protocol: reducing the criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults](#) into practice. We hope it will be used extensively as a resource to train and support multi agency colleagues working with care experienced children and young adults.

National Charity Missing People in partnership with Llamau and consultant Claire Sands were commissioned by the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4Cs) to develop this toolkit.

As part of this project, we consulted with over 65 children and young adults who are care experienced. Their views have shaped the content within the Toolkit and we thank them for their views.

Please share with your colleagues to raise awareness of this valuable resource. This toolkit is available in Welsh or English. You can select your language preference via the dropdown menu to the right of the search bar.



Claire Sands

missing people

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