

**National Approach to Statutory Advocacy**  
**Local Authority Report RCT 2021 - 2022**  
**Collated Quarterly Report**  
**Quarter 1: April - June 2021**

**Headline Report**

During quarter one, 29 young people accessed the Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) service, presenting with 38 issues. Active Offer (AO) referrals have continued to decline with only six young people referred in this quarter, less than half when compared to the previous quarter. We have also observed a decrease in young people accessing the IBA service, although as in the previous quarter, over two thirds of young people working with advocates are accessing Issue Based Advocacy for the first time.

**Active Offer**

During the quarter, 94 children and young people became eligible for the Active Offer:

CP:	5-9 yrs x 41	10 - 15 yrs x 37	16+ yrs x 5
CLA:	5-9 yrs x 7	10 - 15 yrs x 2	16+ yrs x 2

A total of 38 children and young people rejected the offer of an Active Offer meeting when it was suggested by their social worker, while 14 accepted. Of the 14 who accepted:  
two later decided they did not want to proceed  
three were referred for the Active Offer  
nine were unfortunately incorrectly referred for IBA.

However, we received six Active Offer referrals, three for young people who were not included in the monthly eligibility reports received from RCT. It is also unclear how the remaining 42 responded to the discussion with their social worker.

Of the six AO referrals received, there were an equal number of Children Looked After and those in the Child Protection (CP) arena. In the previous quarter, young people in the CP arena made up 85% of referrals. Four were male and two were female. More females than males were referred for AO during the quarter, and the majority were aged between six and eleven. In the previous quarter, there were an equal number of young people aged between six and eleven, and twelve and sixteen.

Advocates were available to provide the Active Offer to all young people referred within five working days during this quarter although only 67% of young people referred had contact with an advocate within five working days. Reasons for delay include additional risk assessments for face-to-face visits, specifically waiting for responses from venues in order to complete the assessment. One young person declined a virtual meeting within five working days and requested a school visit. 83% of young people received the Active Offer within six working days of referral, and one young person was not able to be contacted on any of the numbers provided. A letter did not result in a response and the referring social worker was informed. TGP Cymru have recently implemented a more streamlined approach to the internal risk assessment process, which should minimise future delays while planning face-to-face visits with young people.

**Issue Based Advocacy**

Advocates worked with seven young people living outside of RCT in areas including Caerphilly, Swansea and Cardiff. Of the 29 referred, 10 young people were CLA, 13 young people were CP, and six were open to Care and Support. This represents a small decrease in referrals for young people in the CP arena and a significant decrease in referrals for CLA, less than half of those received in quarter four. The gender split this quarter was fairly even, with 13 males and 16 females. This is a similar gender split as that of the previous quarter.

The age category with the highest referral rate was the 06-11 group with 18, followed by the 12-16 age group with nine. This a decrease of four for the 06-11 group when compared to the previous quarter and only half as many referrals for the 12-16 age group.

Social services made the highest number of referrals during this period with 18 young people referred this way. Nine referrals came from young people directly. Self-referrals have previously made up the majority of issue-based referrals, as they often follow a successful Active Offer meeting. Two issue-based referrals were made by Independent Reviewing Officers.

Meetings continue to be the largest issue advocates support young people with, making up over half of the 38 issues referred. Advocates supported more young people with Case Conferences than any other meeting, followed Core Group Meetings and CLA Reviews.

76% of young people accessing the issue based service had a conversation with their advocate, either face to face, by video call or phone call within five working days of the IBA referral being made, rising to 83% within six working days. Reasons for young people not receiving this contact within five working days include one young person changing their mind about speaking to an advocate, and two young people not being available when the advocate had arranged to call. One young person, who required a face to face visit due to complex needs, met with his advocate within seven working days of the referral being made, despite the advocate having to complete several risk assessments both internally and those of the placement.

### **Service Information**

The team manager attended the Corporate Parenting Panel evening event, to introduce the service to wider members and key stakeholders. An operational advocacy meeting with RCT also took place this quarter and both the team manager and director attended the CLA Quality Assurance panel. Discussion at this meeting focussed on the Active Offer (AO) and it was felt by senior managers present that young people are routinely offered the AO meeting and that reasons for declining this offer are recorded. RCT have agreed to collate and provide this information which will be included in future reports.

Visiting Advocacy continues in four Local Authority community homes across RCT. Support continues to be virtual at present with weekly contact. During this period, 48 telephone contacts were made across the four units.

TGP Cymru have recently implemented a new consultation process and employed a Quality Assurance Officer to oversee it. Although this has allowed young people to provide feedback more independently, it has resulted in less feedback being received, as there are now not as many young people completing feedback forms with their advocates. TGP Cymru plan to adopt multiple methods of collecting the views of young people in the future and CTM will pilot a system in which young people will be able to fill in a feedback form online. Eleven young people completed feedback forms during quarter one.

Feedback from young people in relation to TGP Cymru's Advocacy Service has again been overwhelmingly positive:

Ten stated they found the service helpful.

Seven felt the service made a difference to their situation.

Nine felt they now know more about their rights.

Nine felt more confident since receiving support.

Nine felt their views were considered.

Nine young people providing feedback stated they would use the service again. One young person commented:

*"It was good to have someone to talk to and say how I am feeling"*

Another stated:

*"My social worker knows how angry I am now"*

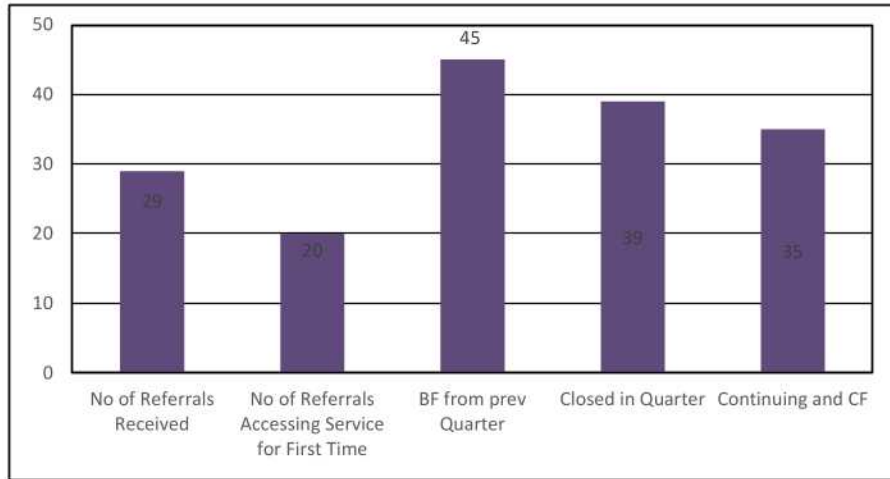
Please find below an example of advocacy work undertaken during the quarter from within RCT. The name has been changed to protect the young person's identity.

**Situation:** Mel is 15 years old and lives in a residential home. Mel wanted contact with her friend who lives in Pontypridd.

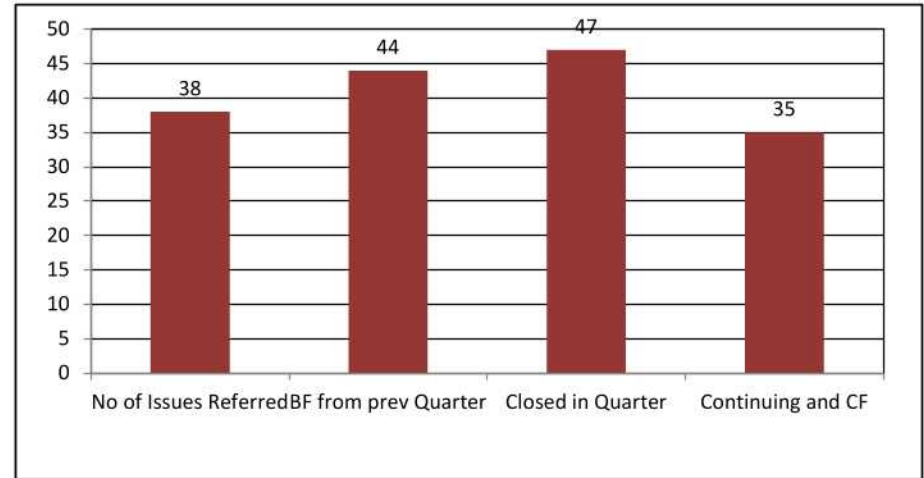
**Action:** The advocate contacted Mel's social worker and asked if contact could be arranged, suggesting that if the social worker had any concerns around this, she consider supervised contact, at least in the first instance. The advocate explained that the staff from Mel's residential home had suggested they were willing to supervise contact.

**Outcome:** Mel's social worker completed the necessary checks on Mel's friend and supervised contact was arranged. It will take place on a weekly basis, which Mel is very happy about.

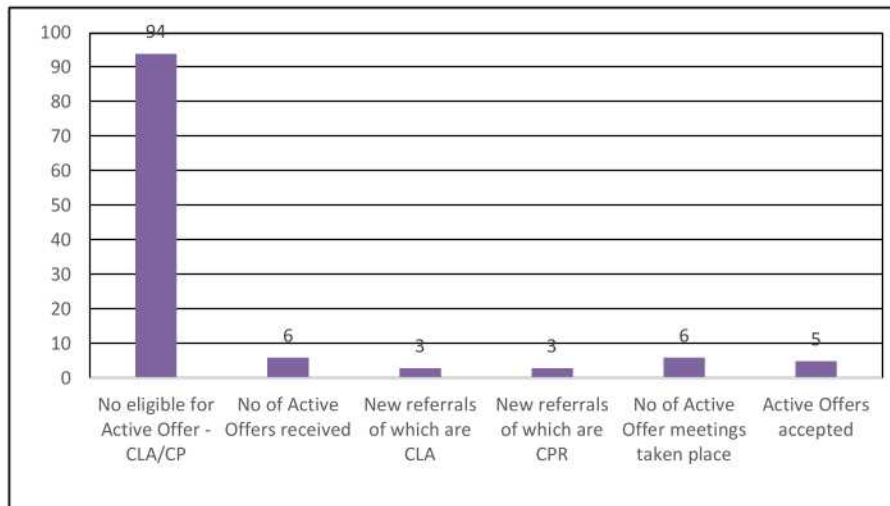
**1a. Advocacy Cases - Young People - Issue Based Advocacy**



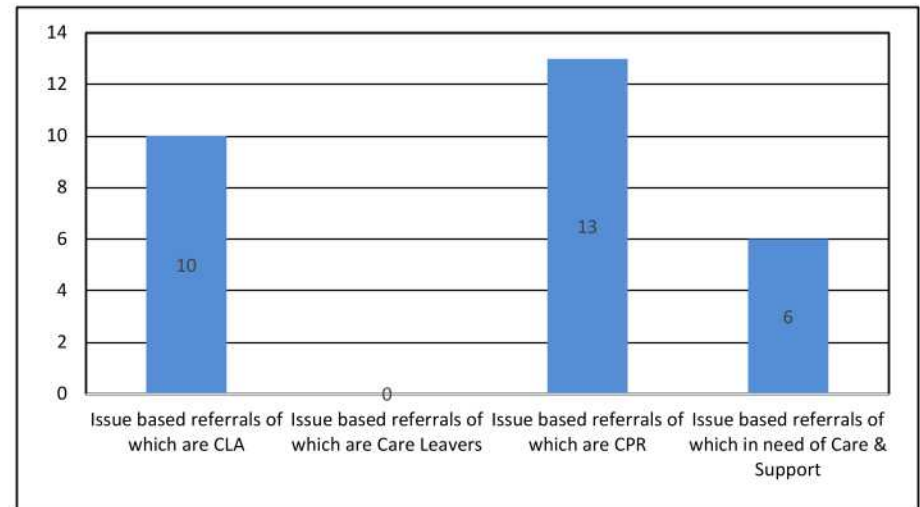
**1b. Advocacy Cases - Interventions - Issue Based Advocacy**



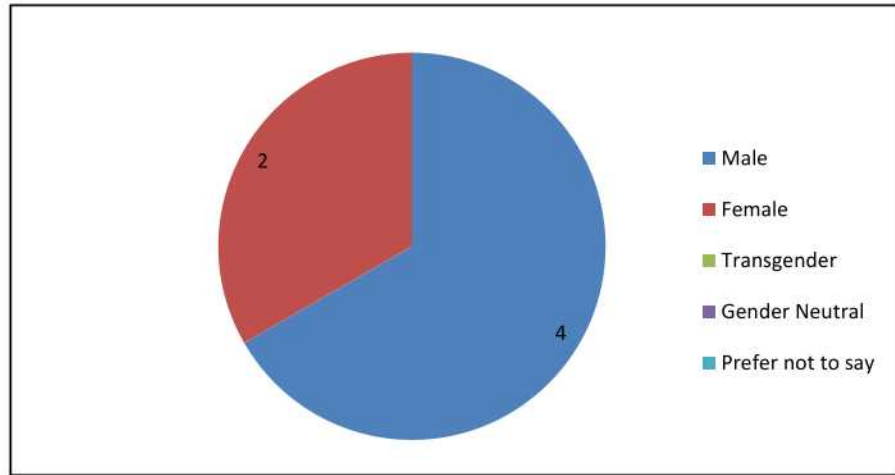
**2a. Eligibility Criteria: Active Offer**



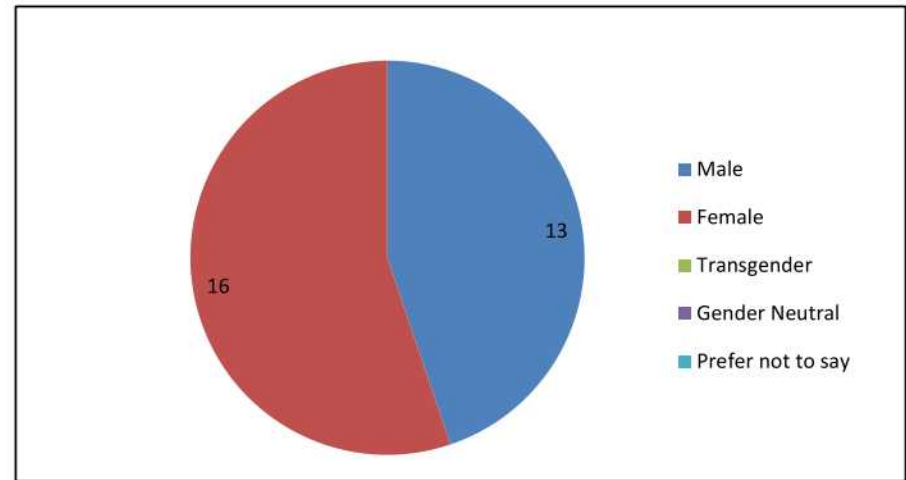
**2b. Eligibility Criteria: Issue Based**



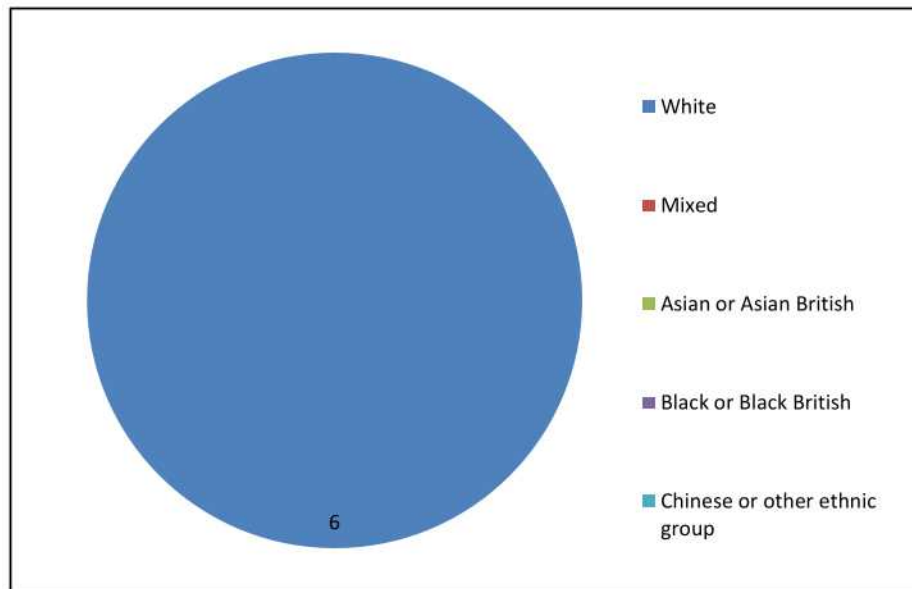
3a. Demographics: Gender - Active Offer



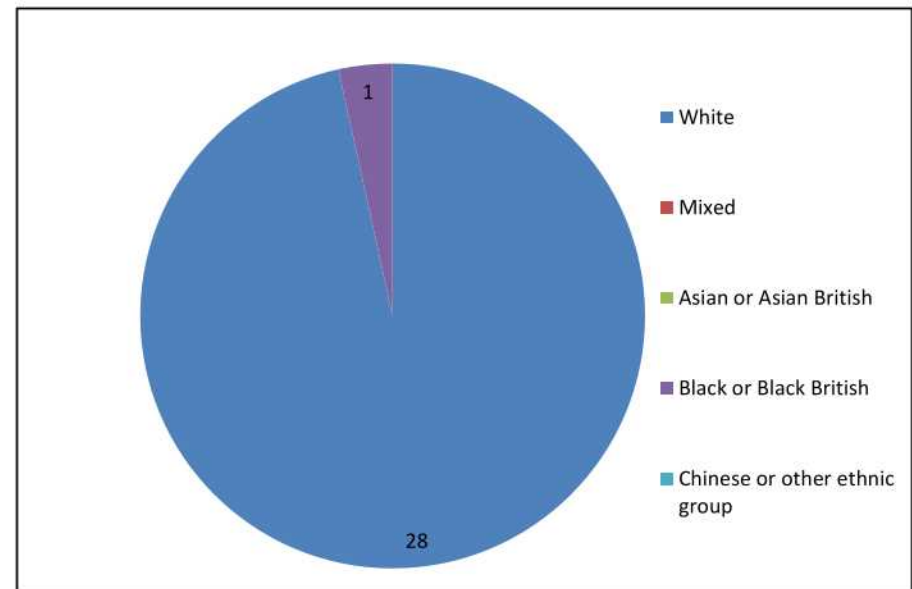
3b. Demographics: Gender - Issue Based



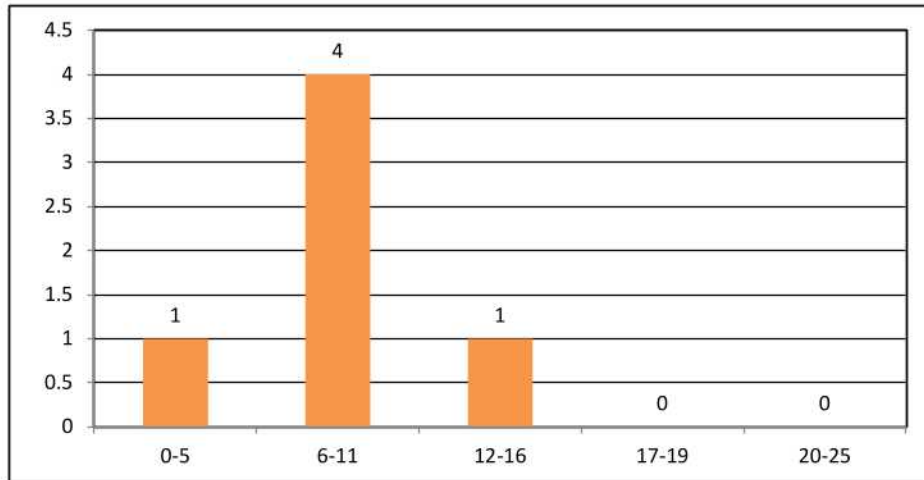
3c. Demographics: Ethnicity - Active Offer



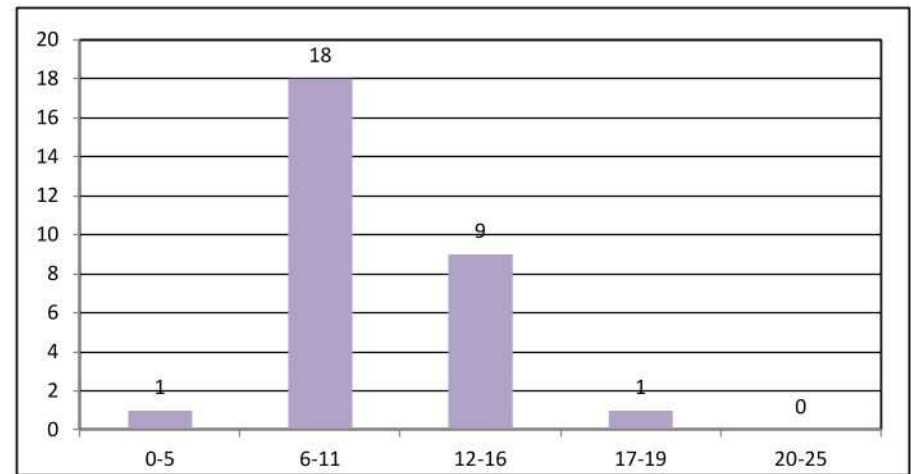
3d. Demographics: Ethnicity - Issue Based



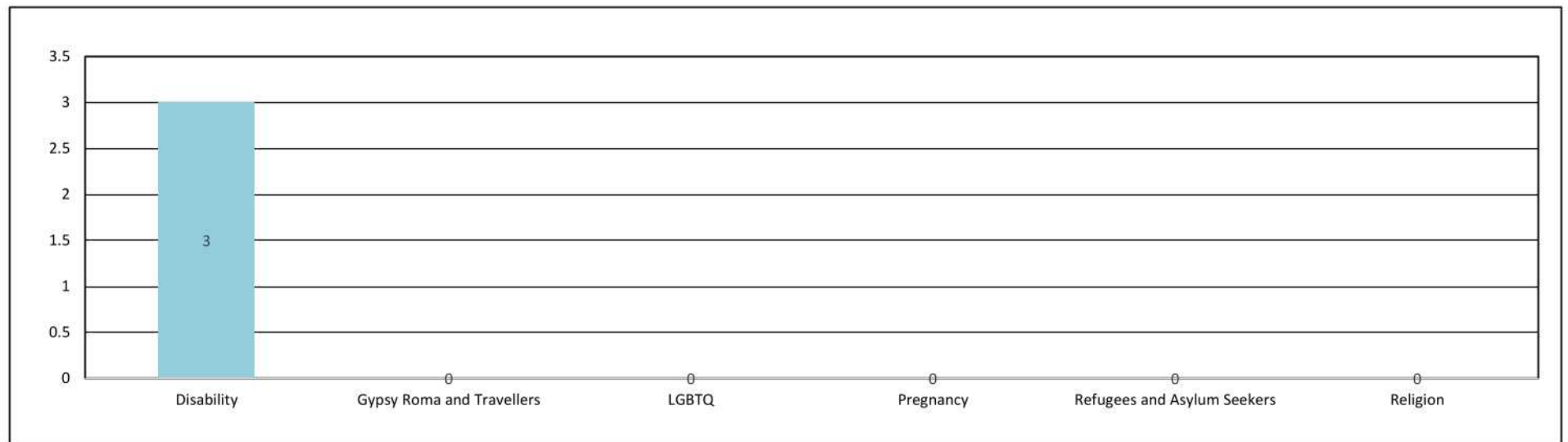
### 3e. Demographics: Age - Active Offer



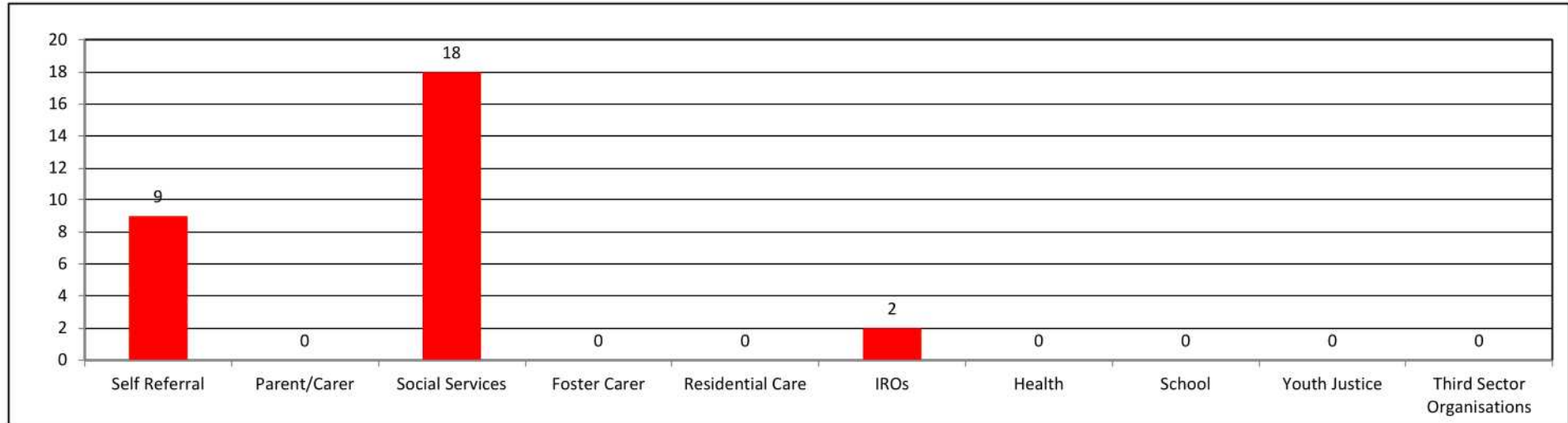
### 3f. Demographics: Age - Issue Based



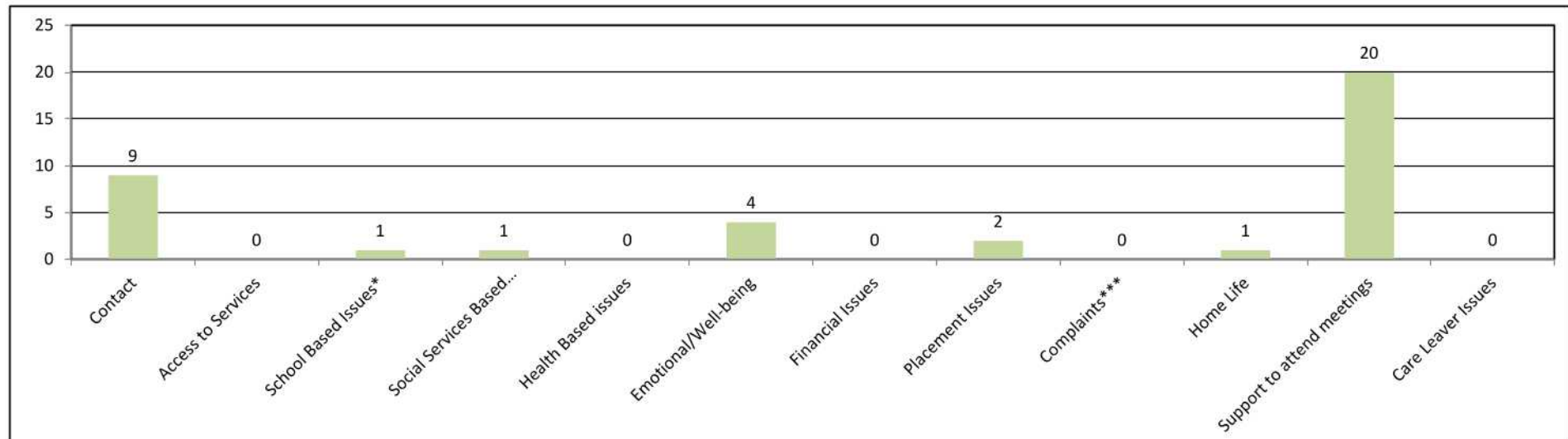
### 4. Protected Characteristics



## 5. Referral Source per young person - Issue Based only



## 6. Issues Presented

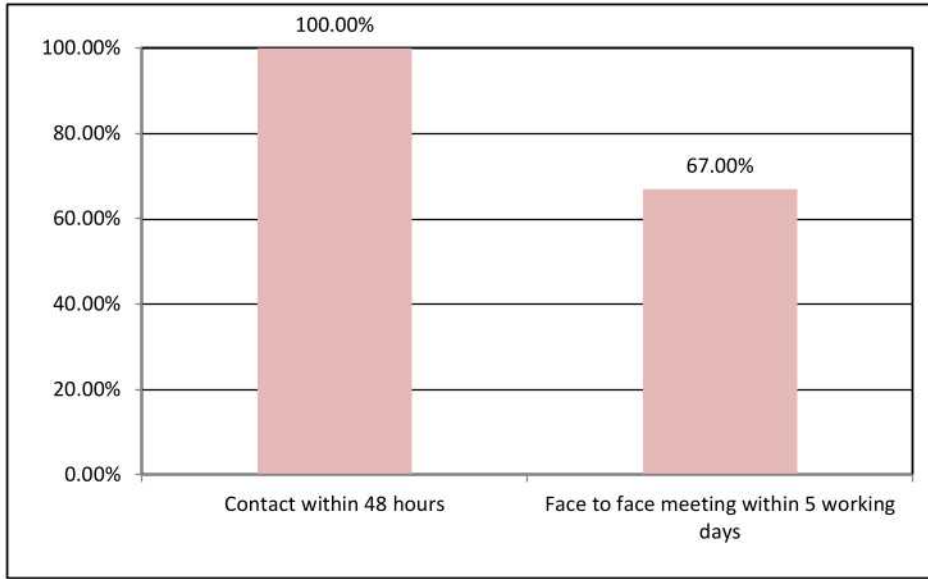


\* School based issues including: SEN/ALN, exclusions, bullying, transport.

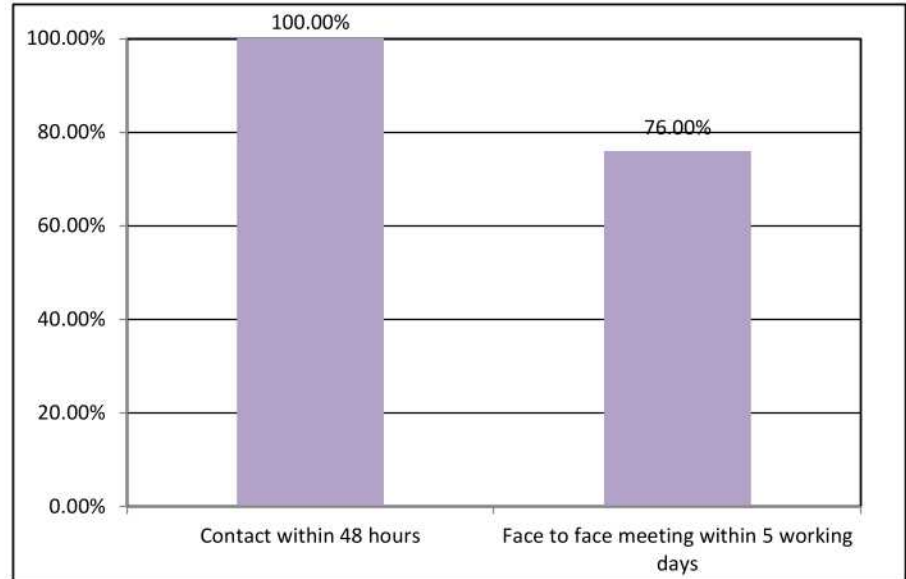
\*\* Social Services based issues including: relationship with worker, care plan, service provided.

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

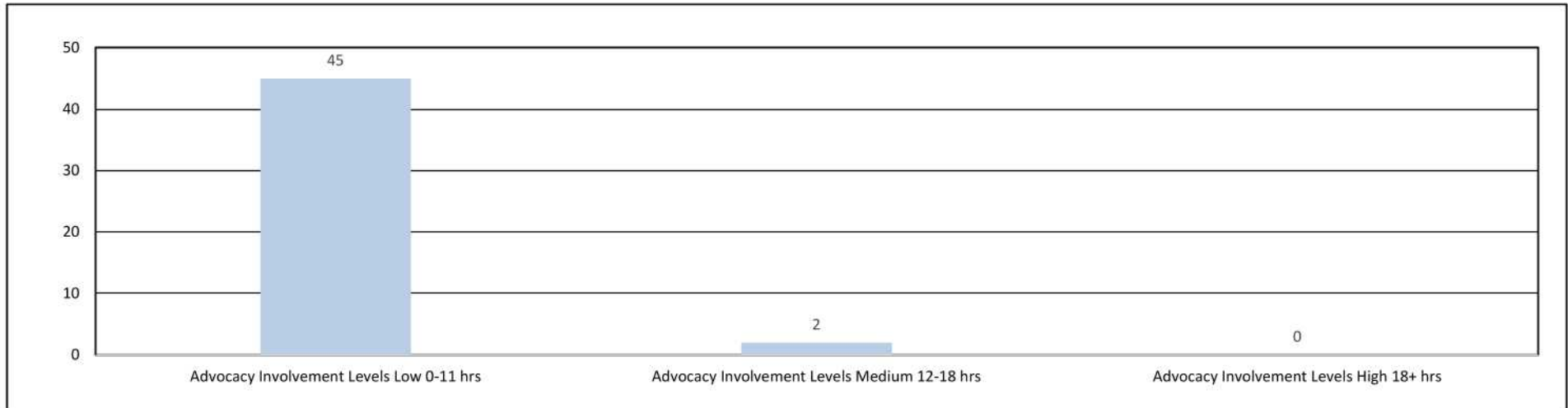
### 7. Service Performance - Active Offer



### Service Performance - Issue Based



### 8. Level of Advocacy Intervention at point of Issue Closure



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

		Comments
Outcome 1	Children and young people find good quality independent advocacy easily available and accessible.	<p>TGP Cymru are continuing to adapt to the changing COVID situation and because of this, more face-to-face visits have taken place during this quarter.</p> <p>The service aims to be as responsive as possible, however the increase in face-to-face advocacy, and the risk assessments that go along with it, is partly responsible for a decrease in young people meeting with their advocates within five working days. TGP Cymru have recently implemented a new internal risk assessment process which we are confident will help to overcome this issue.</p> <p>The team manager provided an overview of advocacy and the RCT perspective to the Corporate Parenting Board and attends quarterly meetings.</p>
Outcome 2	Children and young people have their privacy and confidences respected and their wellbeing safeguarded and protected.	<p>Advocates have become skilled in building relationships with young people virtually, but are also alert to the possibility that some young people are unable to conduct conversations privately. There could be several reasons for this, including a lack of somewhere private to engage in a virtual conversation, or being concerned a parent or carer could hear what they are saying, even when in a different room.</p> <p>Advocates remain flexible, and led by young people when arranging times and dates for virtual calls, but are also happy to request to undertake a face-to-face visit when they feel it is needed to maintain the integrity of the advocacy</p>
Outcome 3	Children and young people are valued for their diversity, treated with respect and all forms of discrimination against them are challenged.	<p>During this quarter, three disabled young people received issue-based advocacy, all three are diagnosed with ASD.</p>
Outcome 4	Children and young people are empowered to take the lead in relation to advocacy services and their rights, wishes and feelings and championed.	<p>Young people consistently tell us they feel empowered to speak up for themselves following advocacy intervention. One RCT young person described how she now had "someone else" to help her tell her social worker how she was feeling during this quarter. Below is a selection of direct quotes from young people's completed feedback forms:</p> <p><i>"I can have an advocate who will be my voice"</i></p> <p><i>"I have an advocate who can speak to other people about how I feel"</i></p>



<b>Outcome 5</b>	<b>Children and young people participate in the design, planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy services.</b>	<p>All young people who have received advocacy continue to be asked for feedback in order for TGP to monitor the services provided and make improvements where needed.</p> <p>A new, more independent and streamlined service has been implemented which we feel has allowed young people to provide honest opinions without worrying about offending the advocates they have worked with. We will continue to monitor and adapt this process, to allow as many young people to tell us how they feel about the advocacy service as possible.</p>
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