

National Approach to Statutory Advocacy

Local Authority Report - RCT 2021 - 2022

Collated Quarterly Report

Quarter 3: Oct - Dec 2021

Headline Report

During quarter three, 32 young people accessed the Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) service, presenting with 38 issues. 12 young people were referred for Active Offer (AO). Of those young people accessing the issue based service, 47 percent were accessing advocacy for the first time. Both IBA and AO referrals have decreased when compared to the previous quarter, but remain higher than in quarter one. Despite the decrease, more than twice as many young people accepted the Active Offer in quarter three than in quarter one.

Active Offer

According to information received from RCT, 86 children and young people became eligible for the Active Offer during the quarter:

CP: 4 yrs x1 5-9 yrs x 38 10 - 15 yrs x 23 16+ yrs x 6

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

However two young people were counted twice as they met the criteria for AO via both the CPR and CLA pathways, making the actual number of eligible young people 84.

A total of 50 children and young people rejected the offer of an Active Offer meeting when it was suggested by their social worker, and 11 accepted.

20 young people were recorded as rejecting the AO without a reason. Either there was no information recorded in the reason column, or the reason recorded was 'child refused' or something similar.

30 young people rejected the offer to meet with an advocate with a recorded reason. The most common reasons were:

12 said they would prefer to speak to a family member, social worker or other professional

Four young people's parents were not in agreement with the referral

Four young people felt they could express themselves or don't have a need for advocacy

Other reasons included not wanting any other professionals involved, preferring to access alternative support such as ELSA or the social worker feeling the child or young person didn't understand the concept of advocacy.

It is unclear how the remaining 23 young people responded to the discussion with their social worker, although 18 of these young people are included in the December report, indicating information about how most of the 23 young people responded to the discussion with their social worker will be available at a later date.

Of the 11 young people who accepted the AO on the spreadsheet, seven were referred. Two young people became eligible at the end of the previous quarter and were referred in October. Two young people were referred but not recorded as accepting the AO on the spreadsheet. One young person was referred for AO but isn't on the spreadsheet sent by RCT in Q2 or Q3. This makes 12 AO referrals received altogether. Four young people were recorded as accepting the offer of an AO meeting in quarter three but were not referred to the advocacy service.

The 12 young people referred for Active Offer were split evenly between those in the child protection (CP) area and those who were children looked after (CLA). This is a significant increase in CLA and the first time those in the CP arena have not made up the majority of AO referrals. The majority of young people were again aged between six and eleven, with only three young people over the age of 11 referred for AO. Males and females were referred in equal numbers.

Of the 12 young people referred for Active Offer, 42% had contact with their advocate within five working days. Five young people requested school visits which were delayed by school holidays. Two visits were delayed due to waiting for Covid-19 isolation to end. All 12 young people had contact with an advocate within ten working days of referral.

Headline Report Cont'd

Issue Based Advocacy

Advocates worked with six young people living outside of RCT in areas including Caerphilly, Cardiff, Swansea and Newport. Of the 32 referred, 11 young people were CLA, 20 young people were CP, and one was open to Care and Support. This represents a continuation of most young people receiving issue based advocacy being in the CP arena. The gender split saw 18 girls and 13 boys accessing the issue based service, again continuing the theme of more girls accessing the issue-based service observed in previous quarters.

The age category with the highest referral rate continues to be the 06-11 group with 18, followed by the 12-16 age group with 9. Five young people aged five or under also received issue-based advocacy.

Social services made issue-based advocacy referrals for 11 young people during this quarter, six less than in the previous quarter. Most issue-based referrals (20) were made by young people directly. This is usually a result of young people accepting the Active Offer, or young people who have previously used the service to contact their advocate directly to access the advocacy service for a new issue. One young person was referred by their Independent Reviewing Officer.

Meetings continue to be the largest issue advocates support young people with, with support at Core Group meetings making up over half of the 33 issues referred. Young people were also referred for support with CLA reviews, case conferences and legal meetings.

Of the 34 young people accessing Issue Based Advocacy, 94% had contact with their advocate within five working days. Two visits were cancelled just before Christmas following the decision to temporarily suspend face to face visits due to the Covid-19 situation.

Visiting Advocacy

Visiting Advocacy continues in four Local Authority community homes across RCT. Face-to-face visits have resumed at two community homes (Bryndar and Beddau) with visits taking place in December and planned for January. The remaining two homes have asked for a less structured approach although the visiting advocate will continue to offer monthly face-to-face visits as well as telephone contact.

Service Information

Two new recruits joined the CTM advocacy team in November. One part time independent advocate and one casual advocate. This recruitment is helping to cover the absence of another team member who is currently on long-term sick leave. We have produced and provided up to date information on the AO referral process for front line practitioners.

We have continued to implement and adapt a new consultation process. Although the new system allows more young people to express their views independently, we are looking at expanding the system with a view to increasing the number of young people evaluating the service each quarter. CTM is currently piloting a system in which young people receive a link and are able to fill in a feedback form online and as face-to-face visits increase we will offer the young people opportunities to express views about the advocacy service with the support of their advocate. Four young people independently completed feedback forms during quarter three:

Four stated they found the service helpful, two felt the service made a difference to their situation, four felt they now know more about their rights, four felt more confident since receiving support and four felt their views were considered. All four young people providing feedback stated they would use the service again.

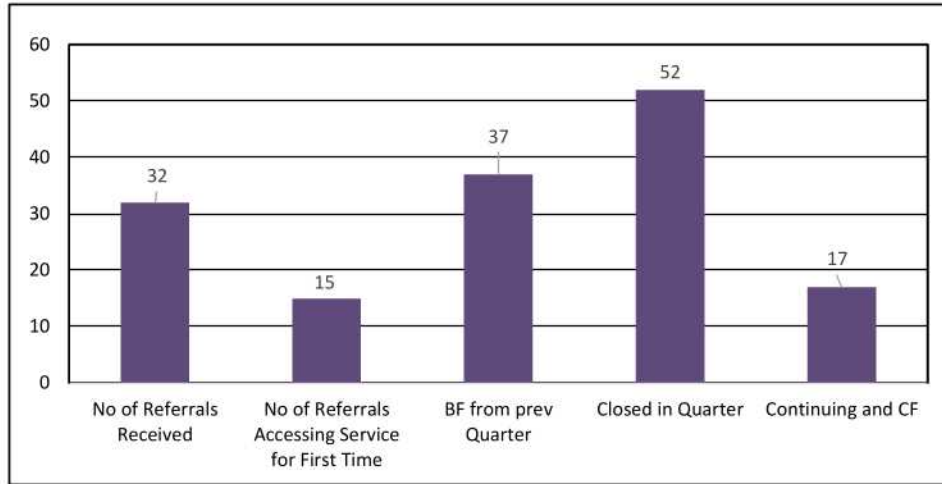
Please find below an example of advocacy work undertaken during the quarter from within RCT. The name has been changed to protect the young person's identity.

Situation: Lexi is an 11 year old girl who has lived with her foster family for over seven years. Lexi has been asking for some time to be known as the same surname as her foster family. The issue had been brought up by social workers in previous CLA reviews but Lexi's mum was not in agreement to this, partly because she wasn't sure if this was really what Lexi wanted.

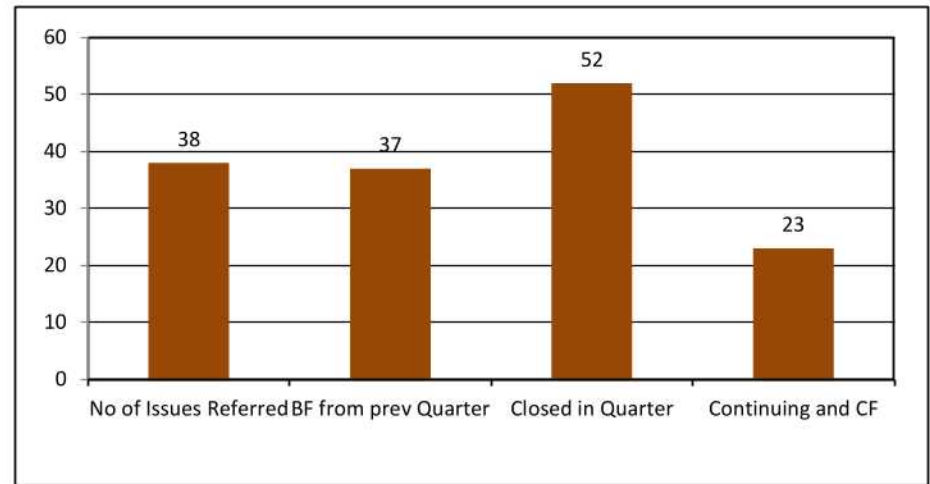
Action: The advocate spoke to Lexi who said she didn't feel the need to meet with the advocate in person, and was happy to talk about her wishes and feelings over the phone. Lexi was very articulate and explained to the advocate she had been asking to be known by her foster family's surname for as long as she could remember, and felt that if she could get her mum to really understand how strongly she felt about it, her mum might agree. The advocate went over Lexi's wishes and feelings and agreed to share them at her upcoming CLA Review.

Outcome: Lexi's wishes and feelings were shared at her CLA Review. Lexi's mum agreed to the name change, in part because she trusted that Lexi's wishes and feelings had been gained independently. Lexi was very happy with the outcome.

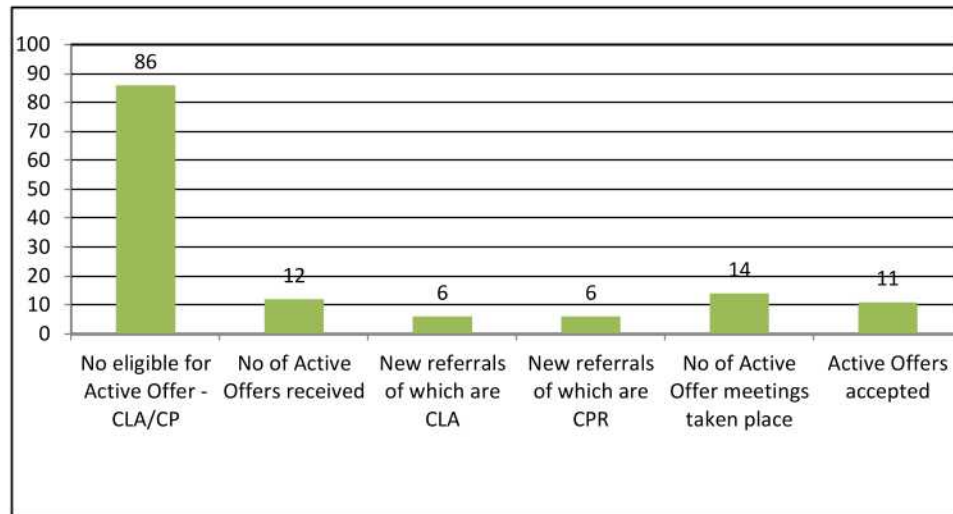
1a. Advocacy Cases - Young People - Issue Based Advocacy



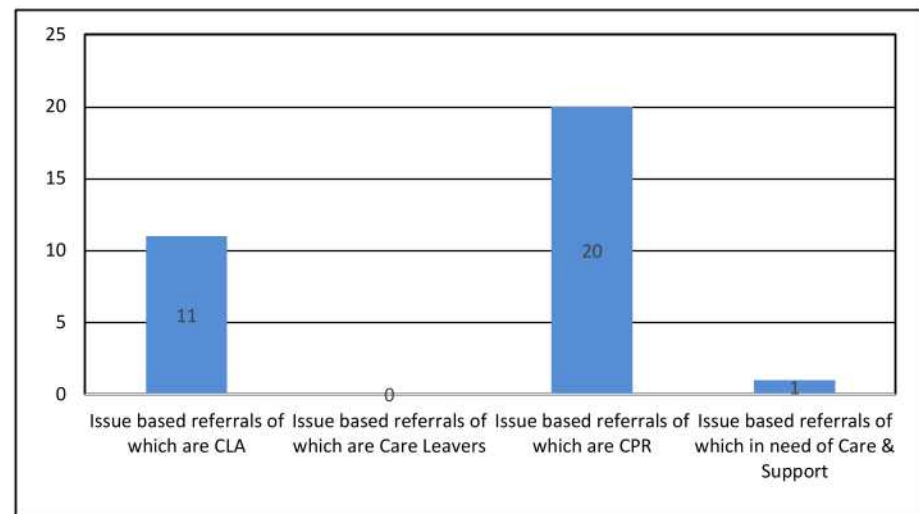
1b. Advocacy Cases - Interventions - Issue Based Advocacy



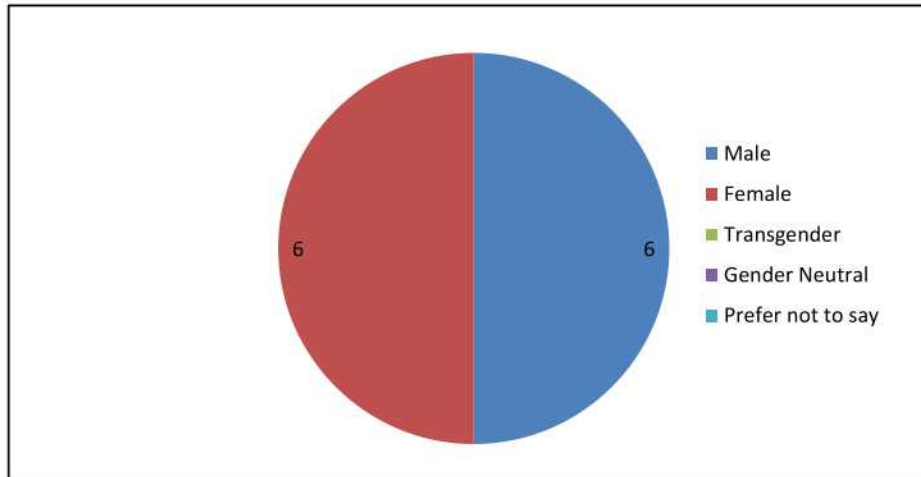
2a. Eligibility Criteria: Active Offer



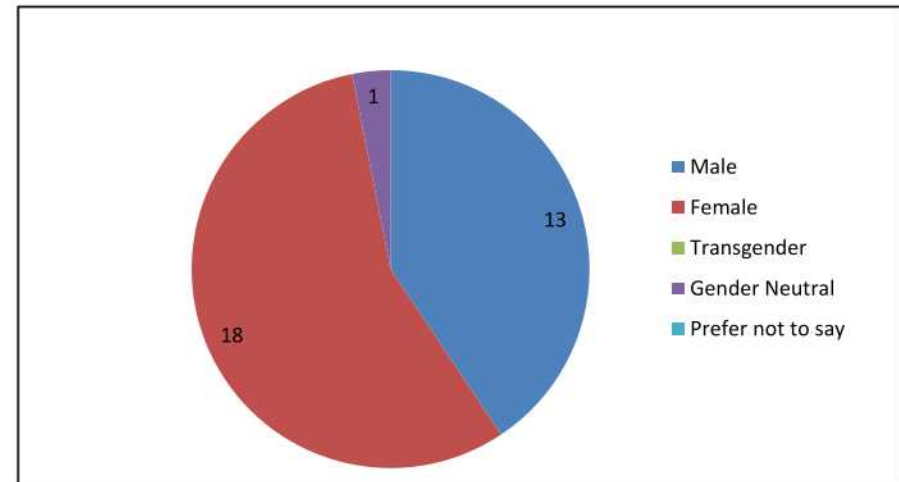
2b. Eligibility Criteria: Issue Based



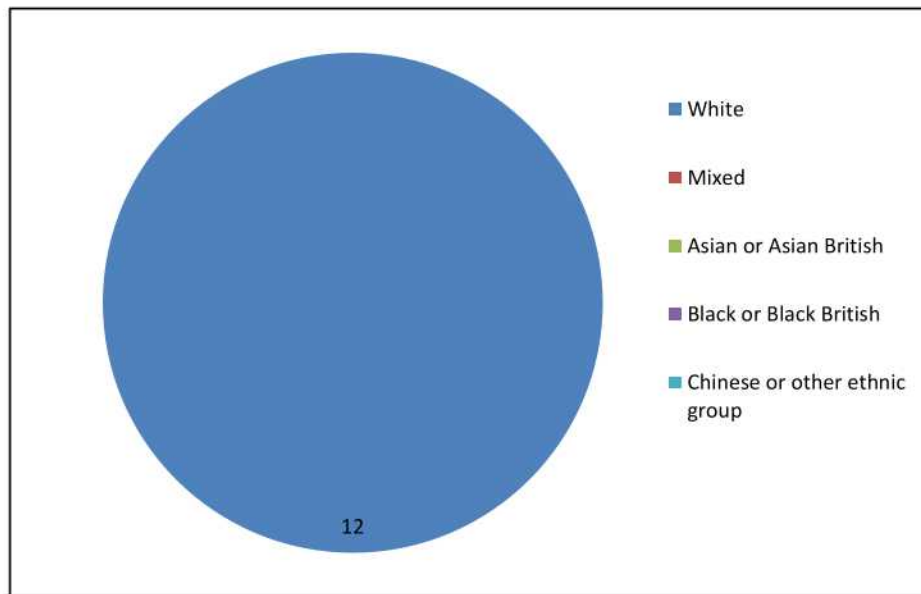
3a. Demographics: Gender - Active Offer



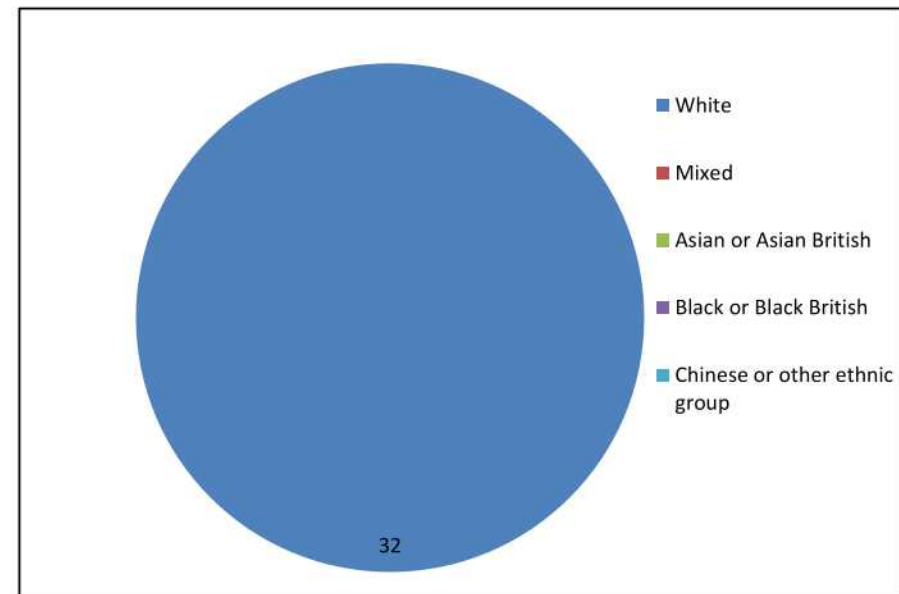
3b. Demographics: Gender - Issue Based



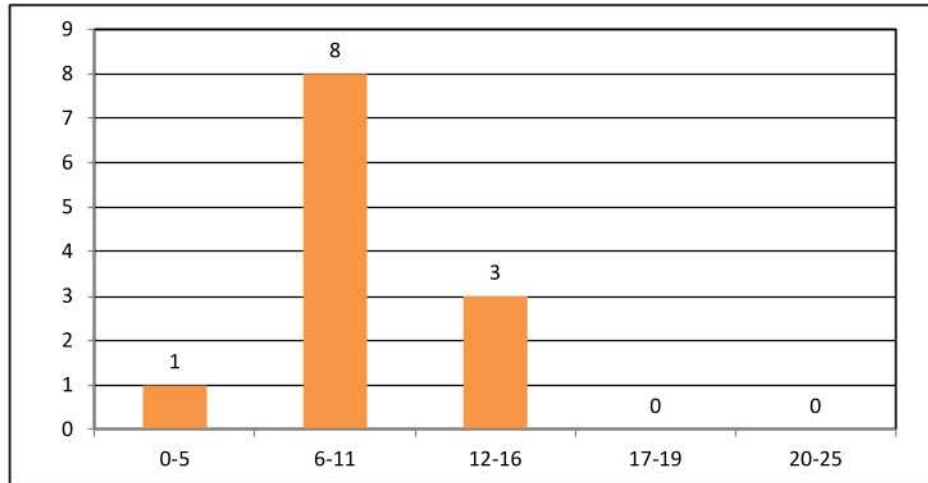
3c. Demographics: Ethnicity - Active Offer



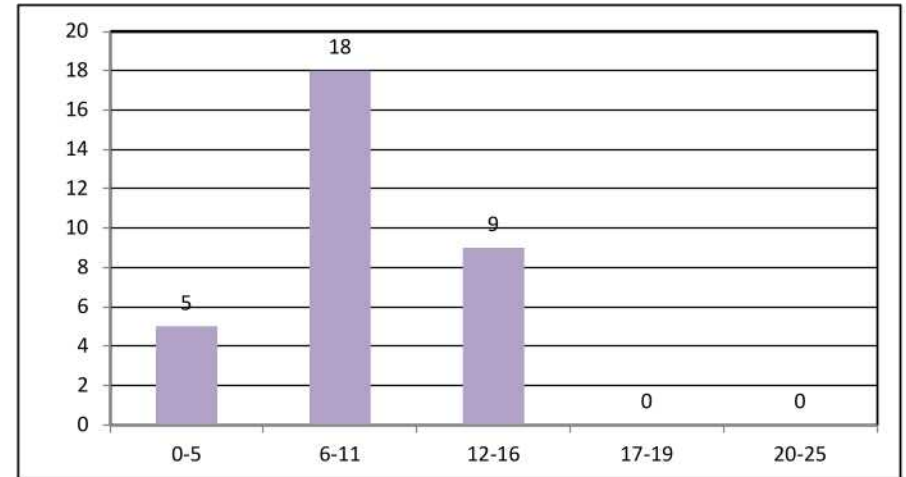
3d. Demographics: Ethnicity - Issue Based



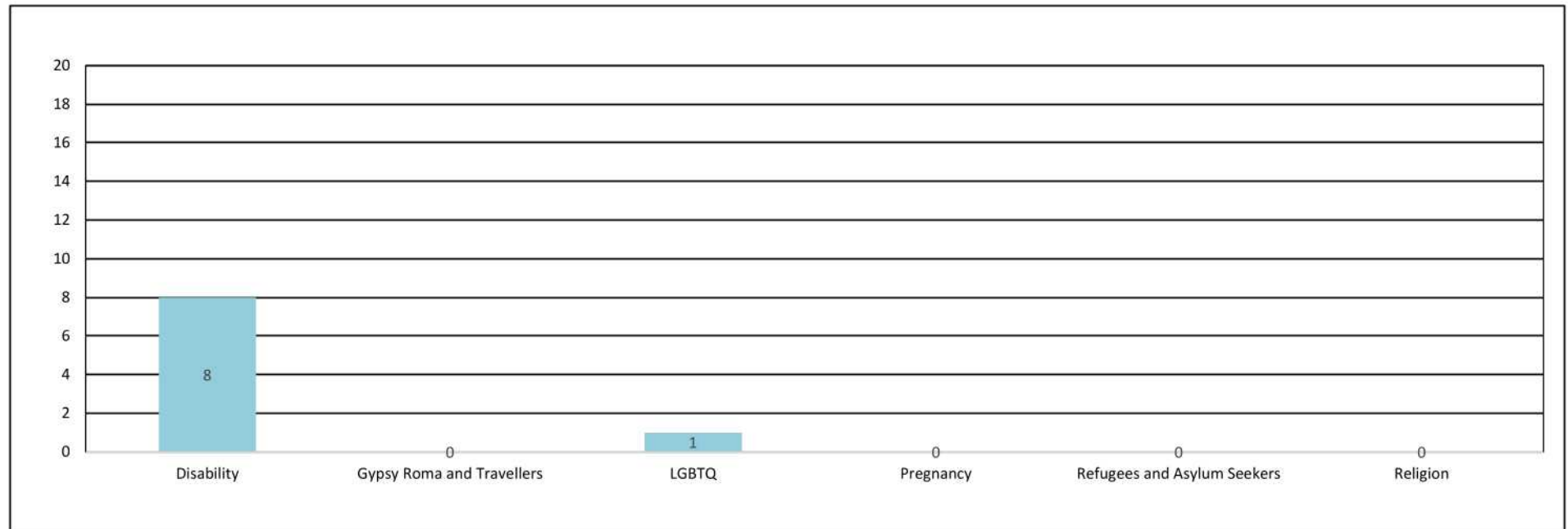
3e. Demographics: Age - Active Offer



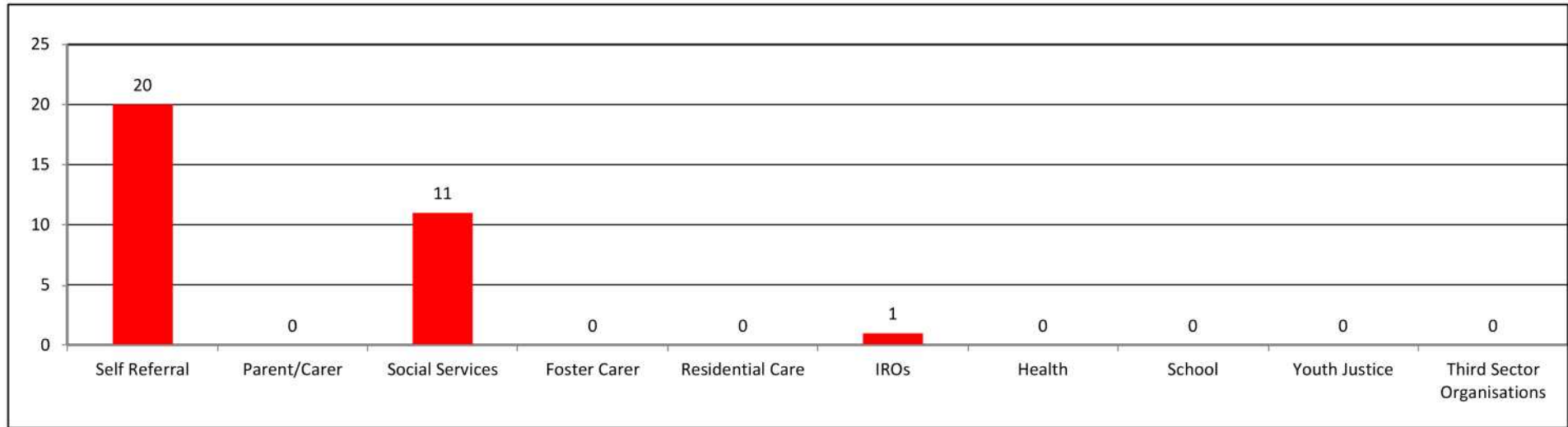
3f. Demographics: Age - Issue Based



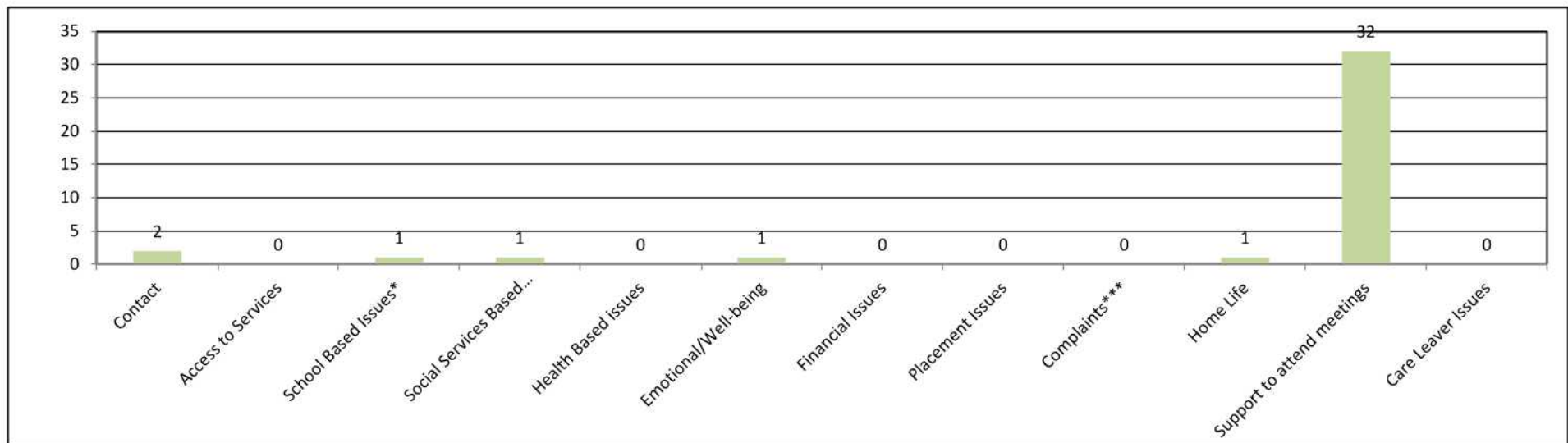
4. Protected Characteristics



5. Referral Source per young person - Issue Based only



6. Issues Presented

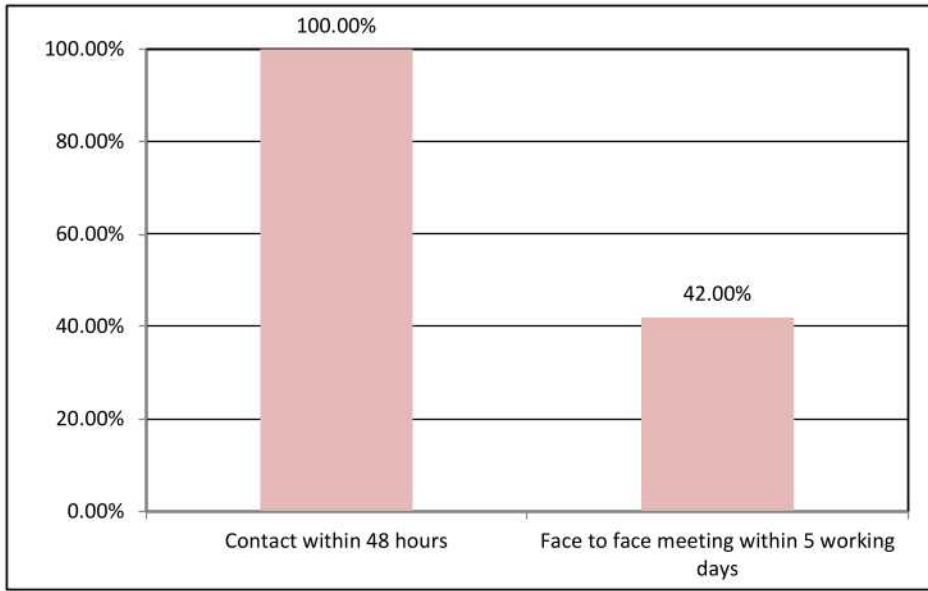


* School based issues including: SEN/ALN, exclusions, bullying, transport.

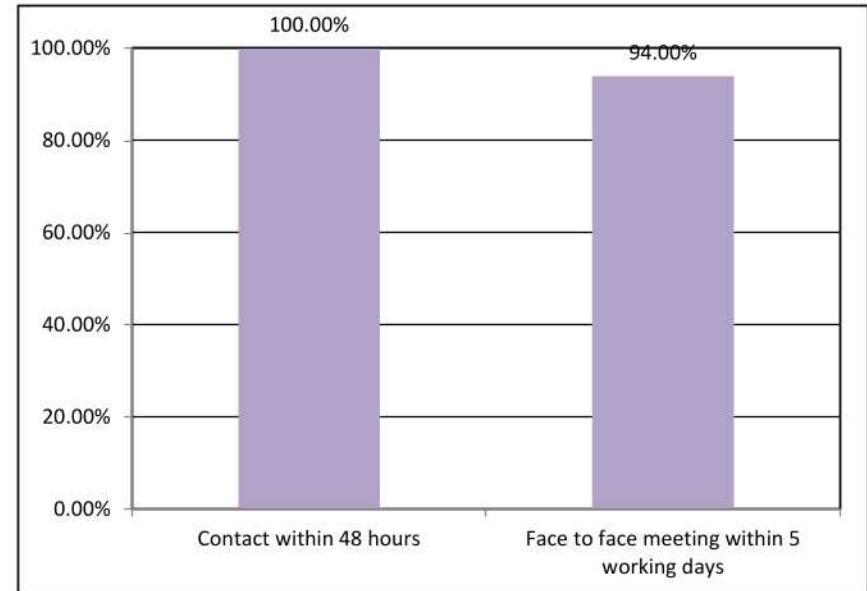
** Social Services based issues including: relationship with worker, care plan, service provided.

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

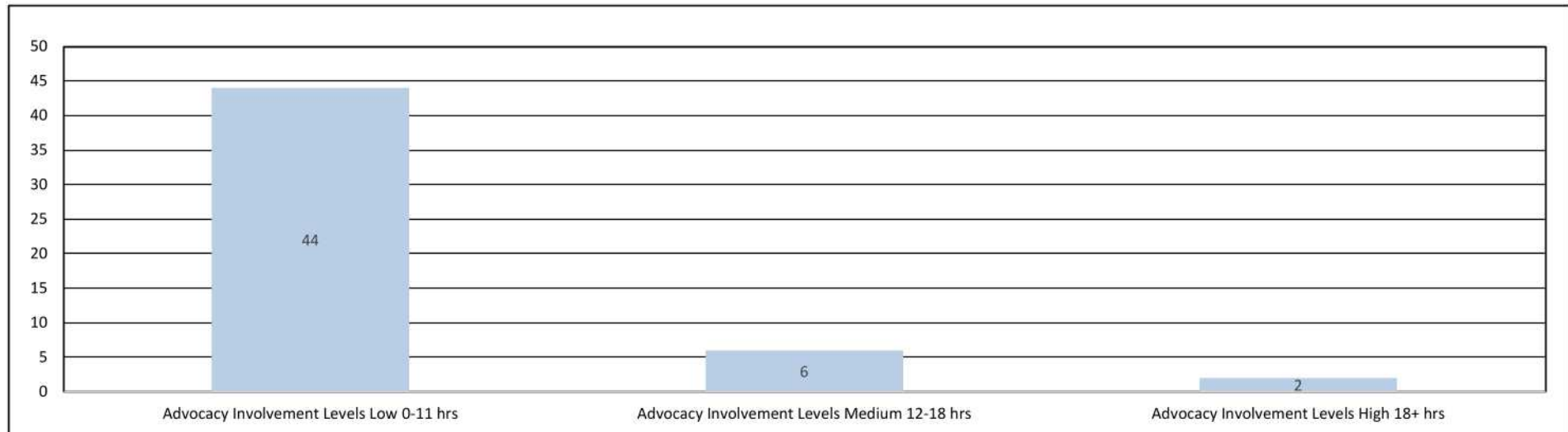
7. Service Performance - Active Offer



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>The service aims to be as responsive as possible, although external risk assessments continue to affect how quickly the advocate is able to visit the young person. The increase in Covid-19 cases and new restrictions did also affect the ability of the advocates to visit some young people referred for AO at the end of December. Across the two service areas 68% of young people had contact with their advocate within five working days of referral.</p> <p>Advocates continue to support young people placed out of county, both virtually and in person if requested.</p> <p>The AO service was promoted via a new information poster, sent to commissioners to be shared with social work teams in October.</p>
Outcome 2	Children and young people have their privacy and confidences respected and their wellbeing safeguarded and protected.	<p>In quarter three, the majority of direct work with young people took place during face-to-face visits, mostly in school following a robust risk assessment. Face-to-face visits were suspended during the week before Christmas due to the Covid-19 situation but reinstated during the first week of January for those young people unable or unwilling to engage virtually. This is often the best way to ensure the young person is able to engage confidentially, and without the concern of someone listening in or influencing what they say.</p> <p>All advocates, including new team members have up to date Child Protection Training.</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, eight disabled young people received issue-based advocacy. Four young people are diagnosed with ASD, two have additional learning needs, one had ADHD and another was diagnosed with Global Developmental Delay.</p> <p>One young person defining as LGBTQ was referred for issue-based advocacy in this quarter.</p> <p>Advocates always endeavour to allow young people to lead in terms of how they engage with the advocacy service.</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 young person explained she usually talks for herself at meetings, and felt confident about doing so, but needed support to prepare. The advocate helped her to prepare a list of questions, and contacted her after the meeting to discuss the outcome. Advocates always encourage young people to speak for themselves when they feel able to do so.</p> <p>Following advocacy intervention, one young person wrote on her feedback form;</p> <p><i>"I feel more confident about me having my own decisions in life"</i></p>

Outcome 5	Children and young people participate in the design, planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy services.	<p>CTM Advocacy is in the process of identifying a 'participation lead' within the project who will be responsible for keeping up to date with participation and consultation opportunities and support young people to share views about how the service is delivered.</p> <p>All young people who have received advocacy support are offered the opportunity to share their views about TGP Cymru's website, with an aim to implementing proposed changes to make the website more accessible for children and young people.</p> <p>All young people who have received advocacy will continue to be asked for feedback in order for TGP Cymru to monitor the services provided and make improvements where needed.</p>
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