

National Approach to Statutory Advocacy

Local Authority Report - RCT - 2021 - 2022

Collated Quarterly Report

Quarter 4: Jan - Mar 2022

Headline Report

During quarter four, 43 young people accessed the Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) service, presenting with 59 issues. This is a 34% percent increase when compared to quarter three. Active Offer (AO) referrals also increased slightly with 14 young people referred in this quarter, two more than in the previous quarter. 10 young people went on to receive issue-based advocacy following their AO meeting. Of those young people accessing the issue based service, 53% were accessing advocacy for the first time. It is possible that some of this number is made up by young people who did not access the AO service when they became eligible.

Active Offer

According to information received from RCT, 104 children and young people became eligible for the Active Offer during the quarter:

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|------|--------------|------------------|-------------|
| CP: | 5-9 yrs x 55 | 10 - 15 yrs x 32 | 16+ yrs x 7 |
| CLA: | 5-9 yrs x 5 | 10 - 15 yrs x 1 | 16+ yrs x 4 |

A total of 62 children and young people rejected the offer of an Active Offer meeting when it was suggested by their social worker, and 19 accepted.

Four 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.

Some 58 young people rejected the offer to meet with an advocate with a recorded reason. The most common reasons were:

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

14 young people felt they can express themselves or don't have a need for advocacy.

Six said they didn't want to speak to anyone.

Five said they would prefer to speak to their social worker.

Three young people's social worker felt they didn't understand.

Two young people were already working with allocated advocates.

One young person wasn't offered the AO as he was only looked after for three nights.

It is unclear how the remaining 23 young people responded to the discussion with their social worker, although again we note that the majority of these young people are included in the most recent 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 19 young people who accepted the AO on the spreadsheet, ten were referred. Three young people became eligible in the previous quarter and were referred in quarter four, and one young person was referred for AO in quarter four but did not feature on the spreadsheets provided for either quarter three or four.

Headline Report Cont'd

A further eight young people are recorded as accepting the offer of an Active Offer meeting when discussed with their social worker but to date we have not had referrals for these young people.

One young person who accepted the offer was referred in April and will be counted in the next quarterly report. This results in 14 AO referrals in quarter four.

Of the 14 AO referrals received, young people in the Child Protection (CP) arena made up 79%. Only three Children Looked After (CLA) were referred for AO compared to six in the previous quarter when young people in the CP area and CLA were referred in equal numbers. For the first time this year, the majority of young people referred for AO were aged between 12-16 while there was a slight decrease in referrals for those aged between six and eleven. Females made up 71% of young people referred for AO, an increase on the previous quarter when males and females were referred in equal numbers.

64% of Active Offer meetings took place within five working days of the referral being made. One young person changed their mind before meeting with an advocate. The referral forms for two young people contained incorrect contact details which meant the AO meeting took place later than planned. One young person had to wait for their Covid-19 isolation to end before receiving their preferred face-to-face visit. Another initial visit was delayed because carers had requested a home visit rather than a school visit for a young person with limited verbal communication but were unable to accommodate the advocate for several weeks following the referral.

Issue Based Advocacy

Advocates worked with six young people living outside of RCT. Areas include Hereford, Pontypool, Swansea, Caerphilly and Cardiff.

Of the 43 referred, 16 young people were CLA, 26 young people were CP, and one was a care leaver. This represents a continuation of most young people receiving issue based advocacy being in the CP arena. The gender split saw 21 girls, 21 boys and one gender neutral young person accessing the issue based service, this is the first time this year that girls haven't made up the majority of young people referred and represents a 62% increase in males accessing the issue-based service compared to quarter three.

The age category with the highest referral rate continues to be the 06-11 group with 23, followed by the 12-16 age group with 12. Both age groups saw an increase in referrals during quarter four. Three young people over the age of 16 also received issue-based advocacy.

Social services made issue-based advocacy referrals for 15 young people during this quarter, four more than in the previous quarter. Most issue-based referrals (23) 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 contacting their advocate directly to access the advocacy service for a new issue. Three young people were referred by third sector organisations, including two referrals made by TGP Cymru's Restorative Approaches and Family Group Meeting Service.

Meetings continue to be the largest issue advocates support young people with, with support at meetings making up 39 of the 59 issues referred. The most popular meeting young people wanted help to share wishes and feelings at was a Core Group meeting. Young people were also referred for support with CLA reviews, case conference, and family group conferences.

In quarter four, Advocates attended all or part of 40 meetings either with or on behalf of young people in RCT. This includes 14 Core Group Meetings, 13 CLA Reviews and eight Case Conferences.

88% of young people accessing the issue based service met with their advocate within five working days of the referral being made.

Two young people asked the advocate to postpone the visit until just before an upcoming meeting, one young person was in an exam when the advocate arrived to conduct the visit at school and another changed their mind about advocacy support before the visit took place. Another visit has been delayed because the advocate has been unable to reach the young person with the contact details provided and is seeking the support of the referrer to make contact.

Visiting Advocacy

Visiting Advocacy continues in five Local Authority community homes across RCT. Face-to-face visits have continued on a monthly basis in Bryndar and Beddau and started in Ty Brynna. The remaining two homes, Carn Ingli and Nantygwyn have advised monthly visits may not be appropriate following the break due to the pandemic and requested the advocate visits every two months instead.

Service Information

On January 31st the TGP Cymru quarter three progress report was presented at the RCT Corporate Parenting Board meeting. In mid-February, 450 TGP Cymru Advocacy leaflets were sent out along with a survey for Children Looked After in RCT. On February the 28th the TGP Cymru quarter three progress report was presented at the RCT Children Looked After Quality Assurance Panel (CLAQAP) meeting.

On March 16th the team manager attended a Basic Income Pilot stakeholder meeting and will continue to be involved in future consultation. This will ensure TGP Cymru advocates are able appropriately support young people involved in the pilot.

Plans are in place for the team manager to attend the fostering team meeting at the beginning of April and will offer to visit more RCT team meetings throughout quarter one.

We are also in the process of developing two presentations. The first aims to raise awareness of TGP Cymru services in general. The second will focus on the Active Offer, and aims to support front line practitioners, specifically social workers to promote the Active Offer to eligible young people and their carers.

We have continued to implement and adapt a new consultation process. The process has recently been expanded to allow the quality assurance officer to contact some young people by phone at the end of the quarter in order to give them the opportunity to provide feedback with a degree of separation from their advocate but without the effort of having to fill in and post the feedback form themselves. We will continue to amend the system to allow as many young people as possible to independently evaluate the service.

In quarter four, six young people either posted a feedback form or gave feedback to the quality assurance officer over the phone.

Five stated they found the service helpful, three felt the service made a difference to their situation, three felt more confident since receiving support, five felt more included in decisions and five felt their views were fully considered. All six young people providing feedback stated they would use the service again.

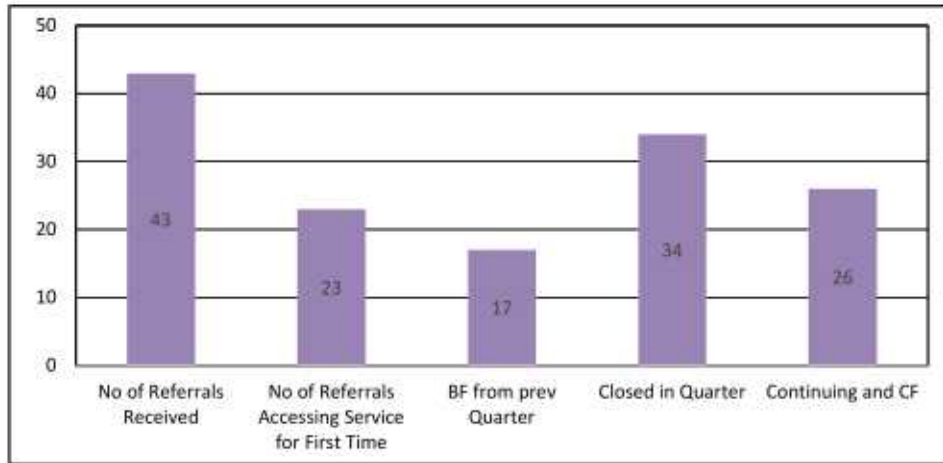
Case Example (names have been changed to maintain anonymity)

Situation: Joe is a 12 year old boy who lives in a private out of county residential placement. Joe had accessed advocacy several times before, and had requested a visit from his previous advocate, with whom he has worked with on and off for the past three years. Joe asked for the visit just a few days before his CLA Review took place. Joe is described by his social worker as having complex needs based on his low cognitive ability.

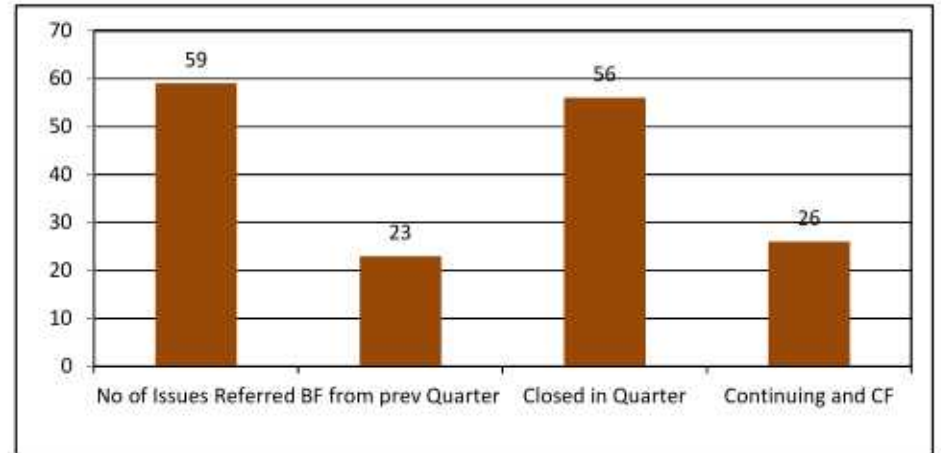
Action: Despite the short notice, the advocate was able to visit Joe the day after the referral was made. When the advocate arrived, he had Joe discussed what he would like to share at his CLA Review. Joe played on his games console as he chatted to the advocate, and the advocate remembered from previous visits that this helped Joe to feel comfortable and made it easier for him to share his thoughts. Joe asked the advocate to share that he was feeling stressed and upset every few days in placement. Joe said he wasn't sure why, but there was one particular staff member that helped him to feel better. Joe also told the advocate that he gets really excited when a new young person arrives at placement but can act mean without meaning to. The advocate wrote up Joe's wishes and feelings and emailed them to the IRO to be shared at the meeting.

Outcome: Joe's wishes and feelings were shared at the meeting, at which staff felt it was very positive that Joe recognised he was feeling stressed and upset, and had identified a staff member he who was able to help him. As a result of Joe sharing his wishes and feelings, staff at the home are able to put support mechanisms in place when Joe needs it most, such as when a new young person arrives and also provide more one-to-one sessions with the staff member Joe identified as being helpful.

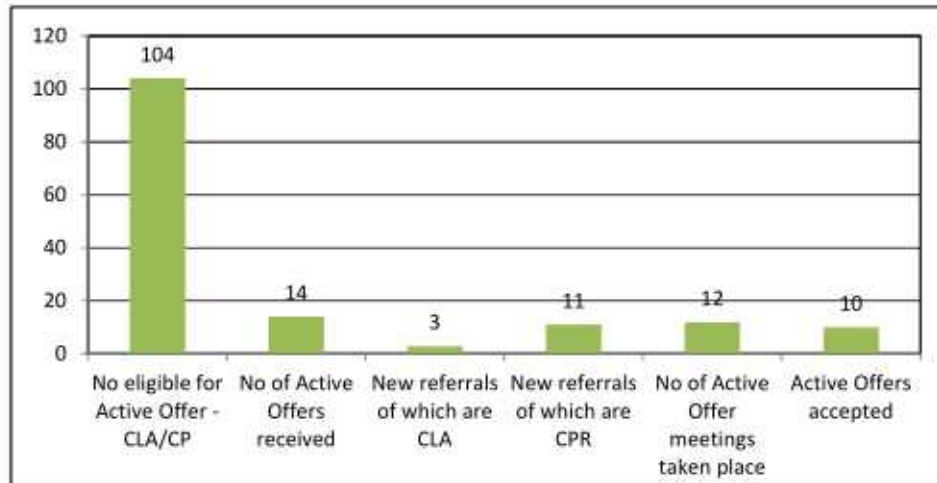
1a. Advocacy Cases - Young People - Issue Based Advocacy



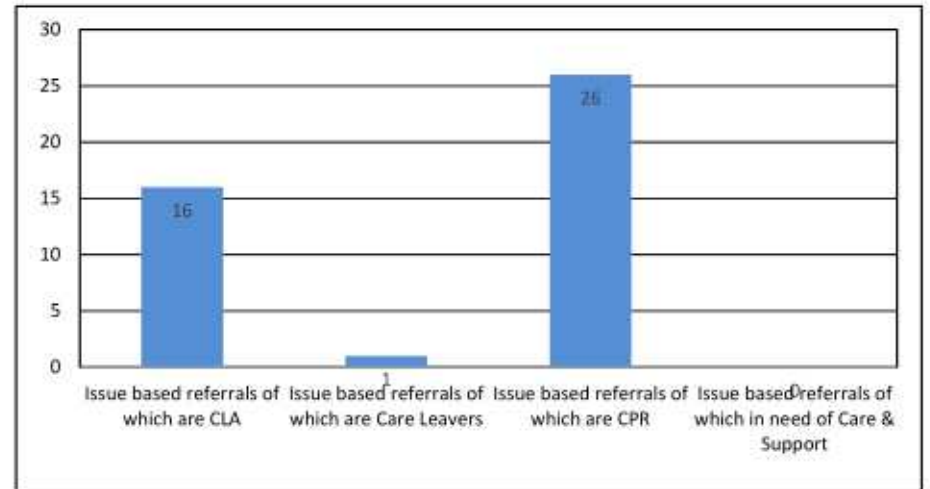
1b. Advocacy Cases - Interventions - Issue Based Advocacy



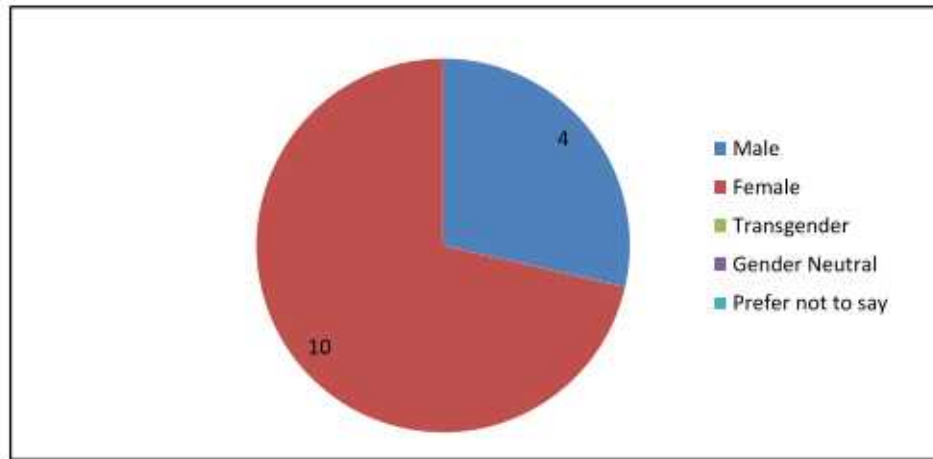
2a. Eligibility Criteria: Active Offer



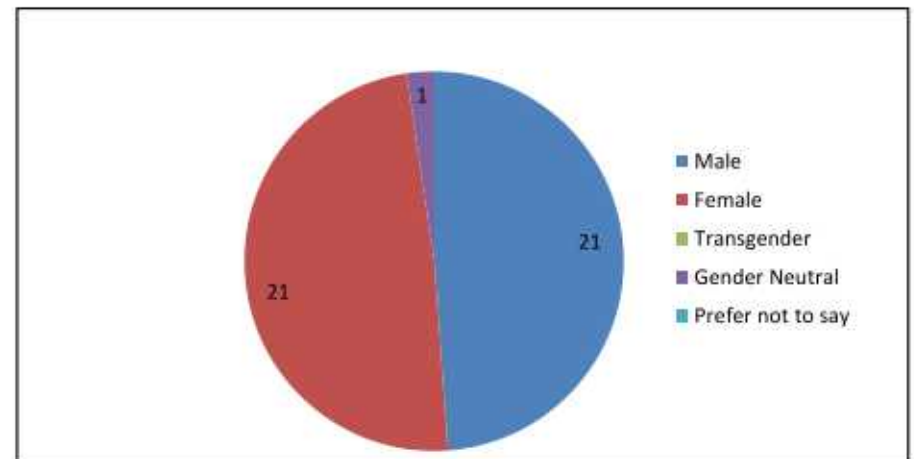
2b. Eligibility Criteria: Issue Based



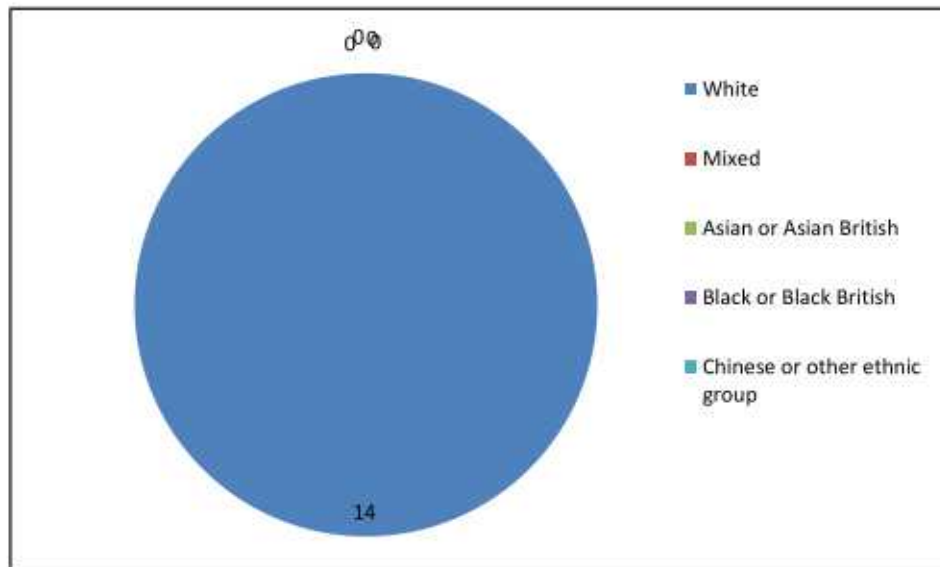
3a. Demographics: Gender - Active Offer



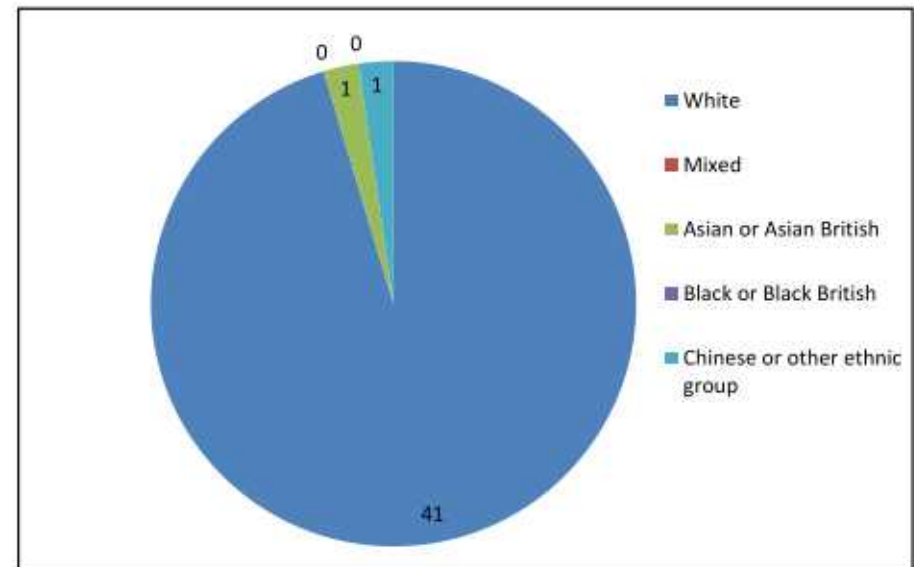
3b. Demographics: Gender - Issue Based



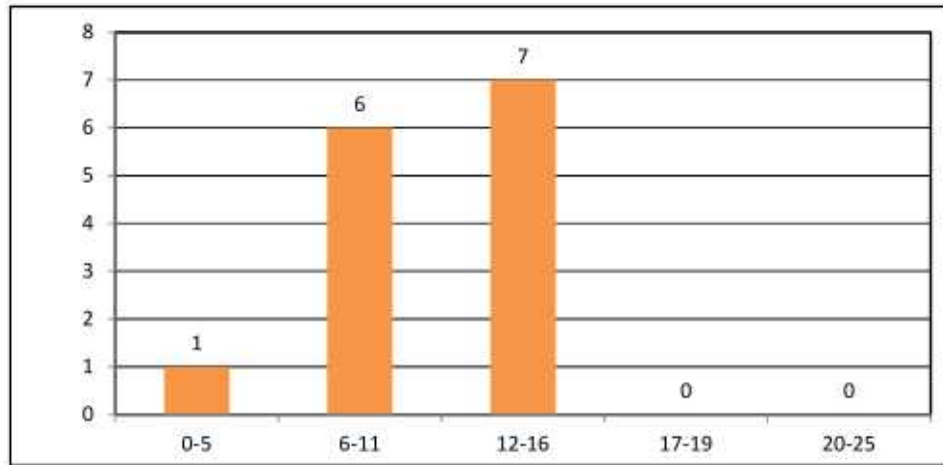
3c. Demographics: Ethnicity - Active Offer



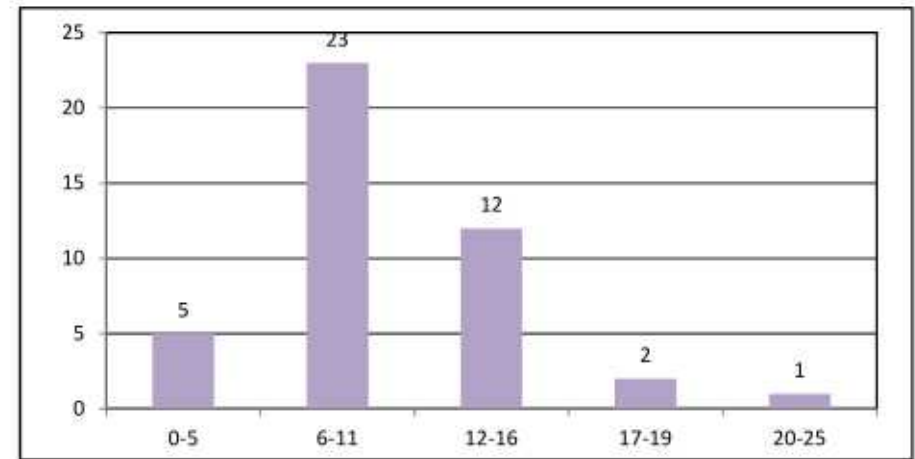
3d. Demographics: Ethnicity - Issue Based



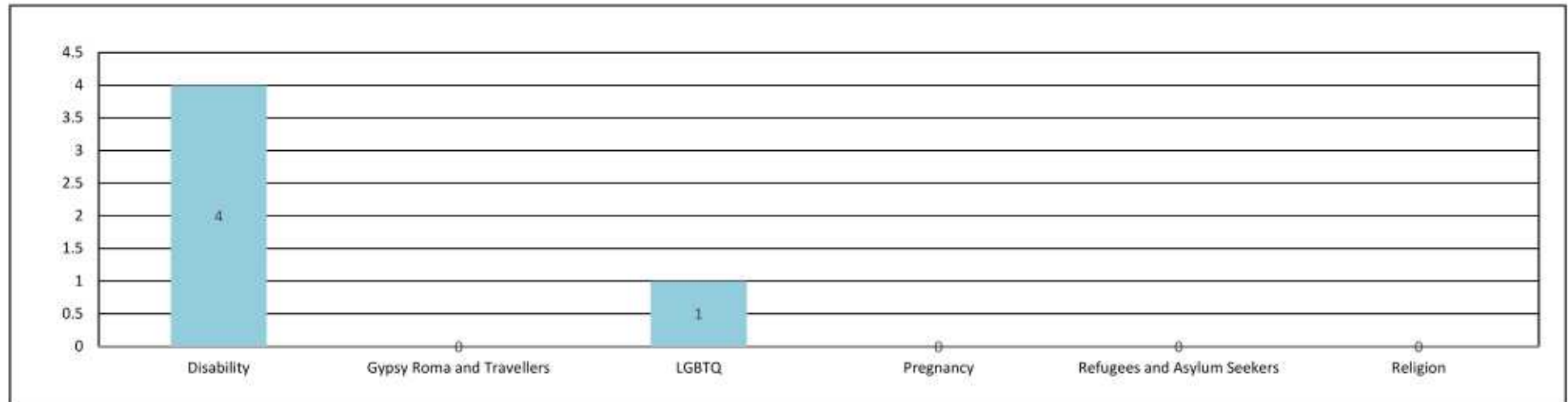
3e. Demographics: Age - Active Offer



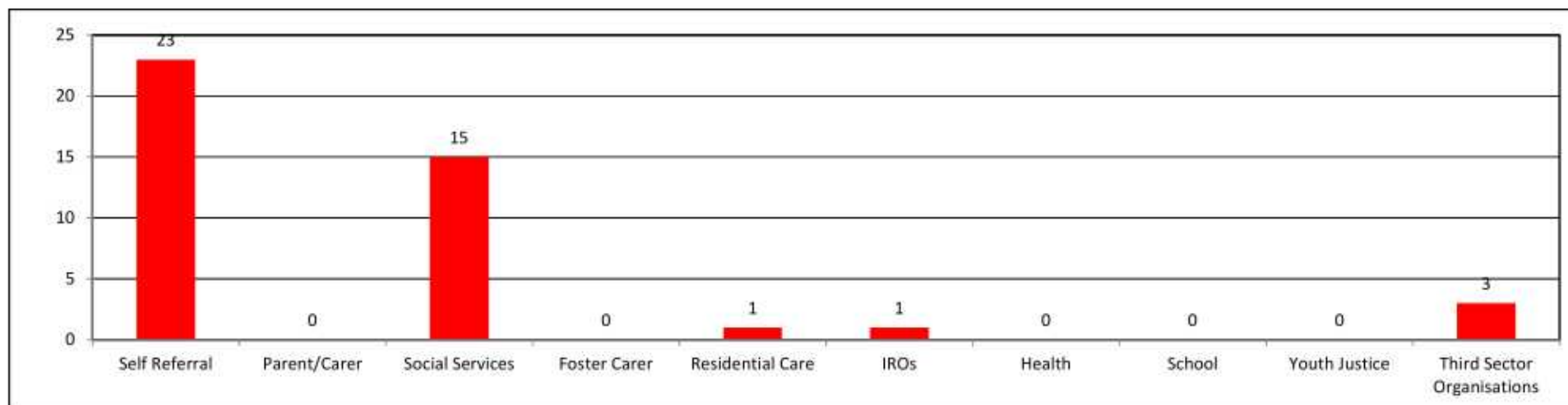
3f. Demographics: Age - Issue Based



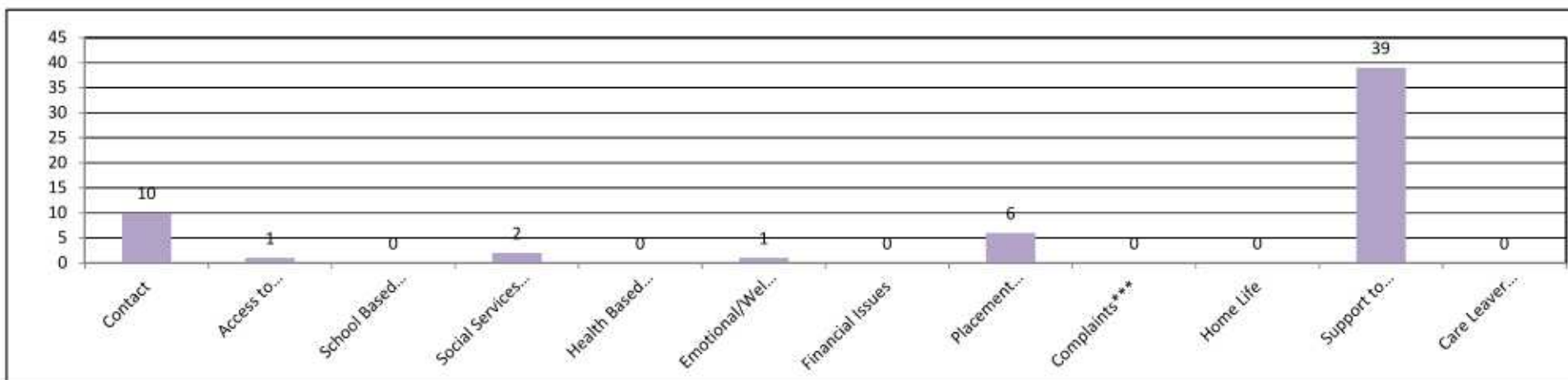
4. Protected Characteristics



5. Referral Source per young person - Issue Based only



6. Issues Presented

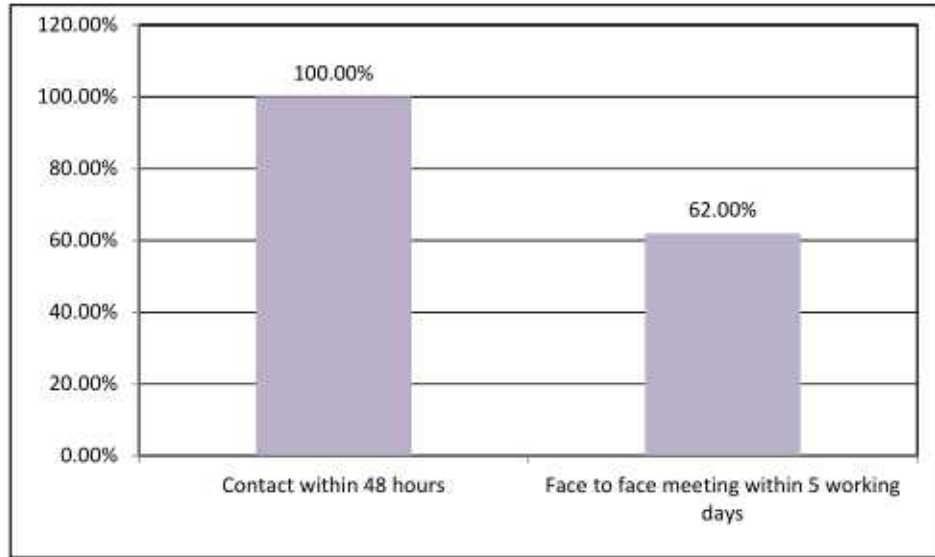


* School based issues including: SEN/ALN, exclusions, bullying, transport.

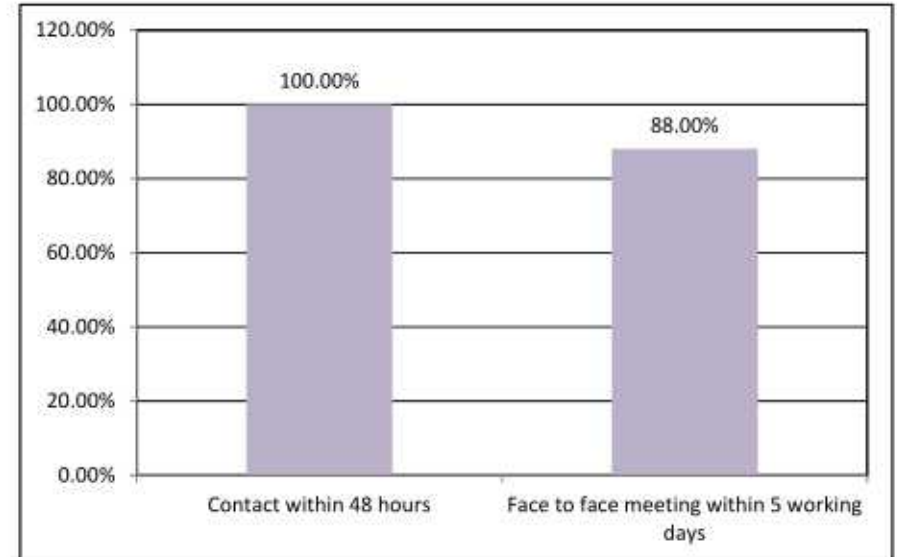
** Social Services based issues including: relationship with worker, care plan, service provided.

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

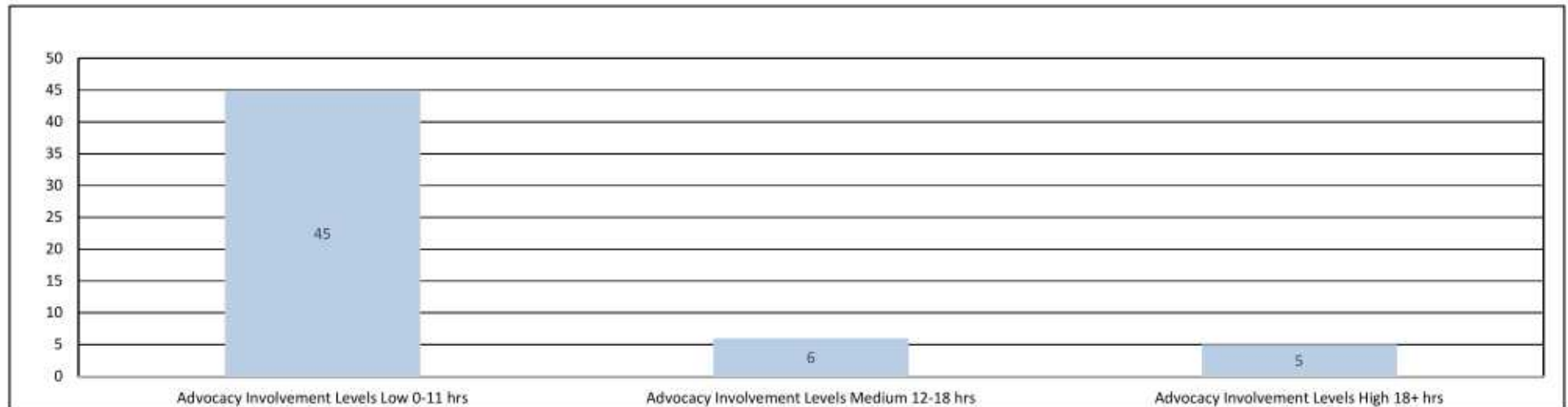
7. Service Performance - Active Offer



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 |
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| Outcome 1 | Children and young people find good quality independent advocacy easily available and accessible. | <p>The increase in Covid-19 did affect the ability of the advocates to visit some young people referred for AO at the beginning of January. Across the two service areas 75% 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 advocacy service was promoted in an IRO team meeting on the 2nd of February, following a meeting with the IRO team manager the previous week. A short film about advocacy made by young people was also shared.</p> |
| Outcome 2 | Children and young people have their privacy and confidences respected and their wellbeing safeguarded and protected. | <p>In quarter four, the majority of direct work with young people took place during face-to-face visits, and we anticipate this will continue despite also offering virtual contact to those young people who prefer to engage over the phone or via a video call.</p> <p>Advocates remain flexible and led by young people when arranging face-to-face or virtual contact. Advocates always endeavour to provide privacy when arranging to meet with a young person but will remain flexible if the young person is insisting on someone they know being present.</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, four disabled young people received issue-based advocacy. Three young people have ADHD, two have additional learning needs, and one is dyslexic. Two of the four are also currently going through the assessment process for ASD.</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 and advocates always encourage young people to speak for themselves when they feel able to do so.</p> <p>When explaining why they found the service helpful on their feedback form, one young person wrote <i>"Because I know she is going to help me, to get all my feelings and worries from me."</i> They also said they felt more included in decisions <i>"because I have an extra person to help me"</i>.</p> |

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| Outcome 5 | Children and young people participate in the design, planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy services. | <p>CTM Advocacy service has now identified a 'participation lead' 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. Currently, young people across CTM are being offered the opportunity to be consulted on mental health services, specifically transitions from children to adult services. One young person has already agreed to take part.</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. One young person advised they were unhappy about not being invited to a meeting. As a result, all advocates will now discuss young people's expectations about attending meetings at the beginning of the advocacy relationship.</p> |
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