

National Approach to Statutory Advocacy
Local Authority Report RCT 2022 - 2023
Collated Quarterly Report
Quarter 1: April - June 2022

Headline Report

During quarter one, 48 young people accessed the Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) service, presenting with 61 issues. This represents a small increase in young people accessing issue-based advocacy when compared to the previous quarter. Active Offer (AO) referrals also increased with 19 young people referred in this quarter, five more than in quarter four. Some 18 young people went on to receive issue-based advocacy following their successful AO meeting. Of those young people accessing the issue-based service, 58% were doing so for the first time. It is possible that some of this number is made up of young people who did not access the AO service when they first became eligible.

Active Offer

According to information received from RCT, 87 children and young people became eligible for the Active Offer during the quarter:

CP:	5-9 yrs x 35	10 - 15 yrs x 36	16+ yrs x 3
CLA:	5-9 yrs x 3	10 - 15 yrs x 9	16+ yrs x 1

A total of 57 children and young people rejected the offer of an Active Offer meeting when it was suggested by their social worker, and 15 accepted. Six young people didn't have the AO conversation as their social worker deemed it inappropriate.

The reasons for rejecting the AO meeting were as follows:

Didn't want an advocate/no reason given	17
Didn't understand Advocacy	5
Have too many people involved/identified someone else to talk to	23
Advocacy not needed/feel able to speak for themselves	6
Social worker deemed referral inappropriate (anxiety, lots going on)	5
Social worker deemed referral inappropriate (child young and non-verbal)	1

It is unclear how the remaining 15 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 June report, indicating this information will be available at a later date.

Of the 15 young people who were recorded as accepting the AO on the spreadsheet, five were referred. One young person was referred for IBA instead of AO, and another will be included in the next quarterly report as she was referred in July. The remaining eight young people who are recorded as accepting the AO but not referred will be sent to RCT for investigation. TGP Cymru received a total of 19 AO referrals in quarter one. Five of these became eligible in quarter one and 11 became eligible in the previous quarter. The three remaining referrals could be for young people who became eligible for AO before the previous quarter.

Of the 19 AO referrals received, young people in the Child Protection (CP) arena made up 79%; the same percentage as the previous quarter. Only four Children Looked After (CLA) were referred for AO, one more than the three referred in the previous quarter.

The majority of young people referred for AO were aged between 6-11. Twice as many young people of this age were referred than the next most popular age group of 12-16. This has been the usual age pattern with the exception of the previous quarter when slightly more 12-16-year-olds were referred than 6-11-year-olds. During this period, we also received three AO referrals for children aged under six years old. Females made up 58% of young people referred for AO, a decrease on the previous quarter when females made up 71%. Referrals for males increased from four in quarter four, to seven in quarter one.

A total of 61% of young people received their Active Offer within five working days of referral. One AO meeting did not take place as when the advocate tried to arrange the visit they found the young person had not given consent. The main reason for a delayed AO visit was either the referrer or the young person requested a school visit and the advocate had to wait for the school term to resume following the Easter or half term holiday. Some 89% of young people referred received the AO within ten working days of the referral being made.

Issue Based Advocacy

Advocates worked with six young people living outside of RCT in areas such as Merthyr Tydfil, Swansea, Powys and the West Midlands.

Of the 48 referred, 22 young people were CLA, 24 young people were in the CP arena, and two were care leavers. This represents a more even split compared to previous quarters when a much larger proportion of young people receiving issue based advocacy were in the CP arena. The gender split saw 28 girls, 19 boys and one transgender young person accessing the issue-based service. This represents a return to the trend of more females accessing the issue-based service than males but only a slight decrease in males compared to the previous quarter.

The age category with the highest referral rate continues to be the 6-11 group with 30, three times the number of referrals from the 12-16 age group with 10. This gap widened during quarter one, with an increase in referrals for those aged 6-11, and a slight decrease in referrals for those aged 12-16. Four young people over the age of 16 also received issue-based advocacy, one more than in the previous quarter.

Referral source for IBA referrals continues to follow a similar pattern to previous quarters, with the majority of referrals made by young people themselves, followed by social services. Social services made issue-based advocacy referrals for 14 young people during this quarter, one less than in the previous quarter. Most issue-based referrals (27) 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. IRO's and residential staff made three IBA referrals and two were made by TGP Cymru's Restorative Approaches and Family Group Meeting Service.

We have recently implemented a change to the way we record how children and young people are supported at meetings in order to capture more data about what young people are sharing. For example, when a young person requests advocacy support at a meeting, instead of recording the issue as 'support at meetings' the advocate will record the issue as the main issue the young person would like to present at the meeting, such as contact, home life or access to services. We are still able to record advocacy attendance at meetings but will do this separately. This will result in a reduction of 'support at meetings' issues but will tell us more about what issues young people want to discuss both in and out of meetings.

During quarter one, 'support at meetings' was the main issue 22 times, however, advocates supported children and young people to share wishes and feelings at 24 meetings, 19 of which they attended all or part of in person. This included 9 Family Group Meetings, 8 Core Group Meetings and 5 CLA Reviews. 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 whoever is chairing the meeting, and request the wishes and feelings be read out. The advocate will also ask for feedback relating to the young person's wishes and feelings which they will then share with the young person.

Meetings continue to be the largest issue advocates support young people with, with support at meetings making up 36% of issues referred. This is however a reduction compared to the previous quarter, when support at meetings made up a significantly higher percentage of issues referred at 66%. In the same period, contact issues rose to 17 from ten, and home life was the issue for eight more young people in quarter one compared to quarter four.

A total of 94% of young people referred for issue-based advocacy had contact with their advocate within five working days of the referral being made.

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. 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 keeps in touch via telephone contact instead.

Service Information

On April the 6th, the advocacy team manager attended the RCT fostering team meeting, and also attended the foster carer virtual meeting on the 28th. This was a good opportunity to promote the AO and the IBA service to foster carers and answer any questions about the referral process.

In May, the TGP Cymru quarter four progress report was shared at the quarterly Advocacy Strategic Steering Group Meeting and the advocacy team manager also met with the Feedback, Engagement, and Improvement manager to discuss strategies for promoting advocacy within social work teams.

The advocacy team manager attended the June CSMT where there was an emphasis on children's rights and participation and on the 27th of June the advocacy team manager presented the quarter four progress report at the RCT Children Looked After Quality Assurance Panel (CLAQAP) meeting.

Two advocacy presentations with audio have now been completed and shared with relevant partners in RCT. The first presentation aims to raise awareness of TGP Cymru services in general. The second focuses 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.

One new recruit joined the CTM advocacy team in June. She will be working full time and mainly in the RCT area, with some covering work in Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend.

TGP Cymru's quality assurance officer is continuing 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 have not been successful in increasing the number of young people providing feedback during this quarter but will continue to amend the system to allow as many young people as possible to independently evaluate the service. It is possible that a problem with the Freepost envelopes which has now been resolved, and the change of head office address may have contributed to the lower than usual response from young people during quarter one.

In quarter one, four young people either posted a feedback form or gave feedback to the quality assurance officer over the phone. Four stated they found the service helpful, four felt the service made a difference to their situation, four felt more confident since receiving support, four felt more included in decisions and four felt their views were fully considered and their views represented. Three of the four young people providing feedback stated they would use the service again.

Case Example

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: Kristian is a Child Looked After and asked for advocacy support to enable him to secure appropriate accommodation when he turned 18.

Action: The advocate made arrangements to meet with Kristian at his home. He wanted to meet there as he felt comfortable and could talk privately but also have the support of his foster carer if needed.

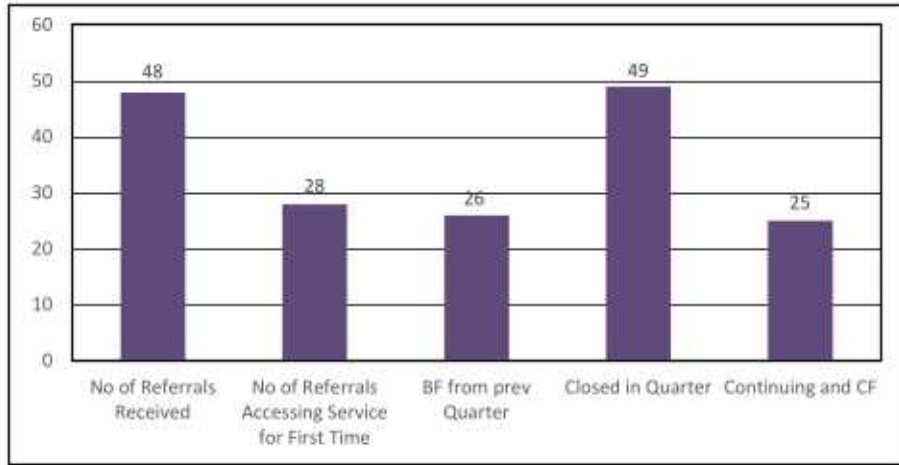
Kristian explained he was going to be 18 in August and could not remain in his current home. Kristian had bid on a rental property via Homefinders. If successful, he wanted help in securing the property. Kristian was anxious about what would happen if he wasn't successful in securing the property, and also shared that his social worker was on long term sick

leave and he didn't get on very well with his new worker. Because of this, Kristian wanted to find out if he was able to work with a YPA instead but unfortunately he was on sick leave too. Kristian told the advocate he had been accepted into the Basic Income Pilot Scheme for Care Leavers and asked the advocate for help in communicating with the housing officer.

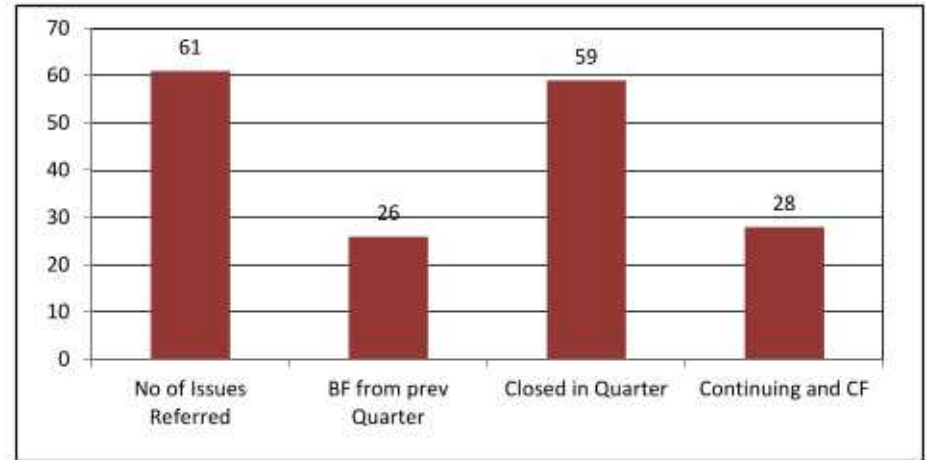
The advocate helped Kristian keep updated with the process by liaising with the Housing Officer and the Social Worker, and also help Kristian to reassure the Housing Officer he was able to afford the rent and bills on the new flat by helping him explain the Basic Income Pilot. The advocate was also able to arrange meetings between Kristian and the professionals involved which helped him to feel more confident about sharing his concerns and asking any questions. This also helped to speed up the process.

Outcome: Kristian feels more confident about communicating with different professionals with the support of his advocate. His original social worker is back in work and Kristian is pleased to be working with her again. He now has the keys to his own flat and will be moving into it just in time for his 18th birthday. Kristian phoned his advocate on the day he got the keys describing the flat and was very happy he had a home for the future. Kristian has asked his advocate to do a closure visit to the flat once he has moved in and his advocate is looking forward to visiting him then.

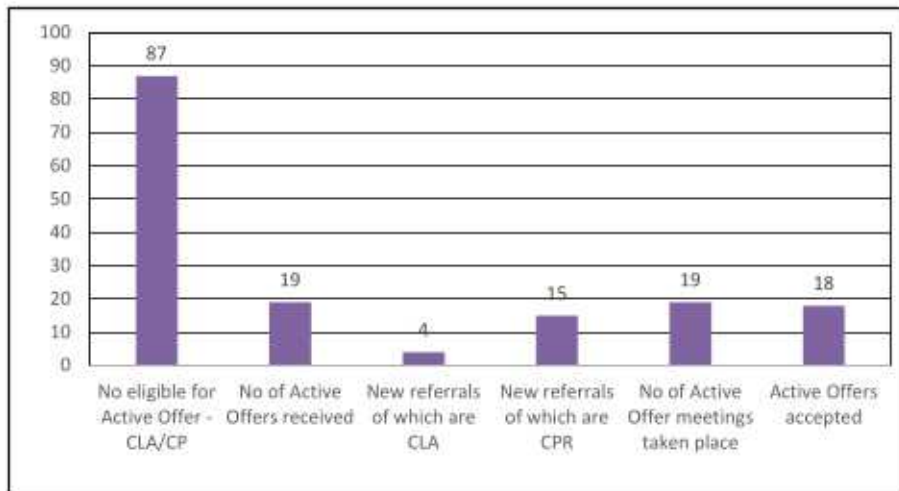
1a. Advocacy Cases - Young People - Issue Based Advocacy



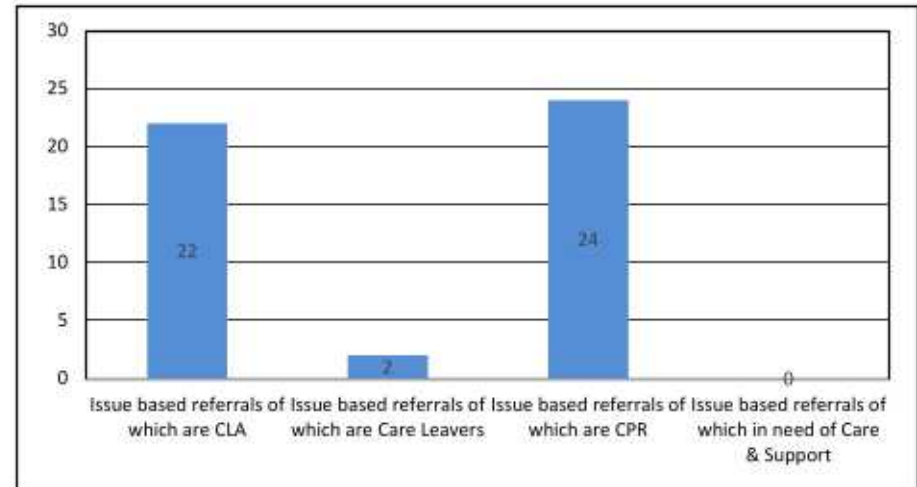
1b. Advocacy Cases - Interventions - Issue Based Advocacy



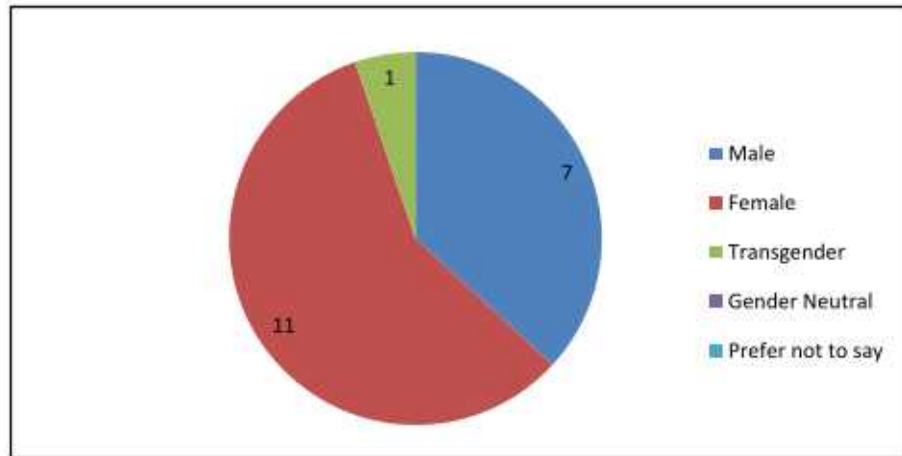
2a. Eligibility Criteria: Active Offer



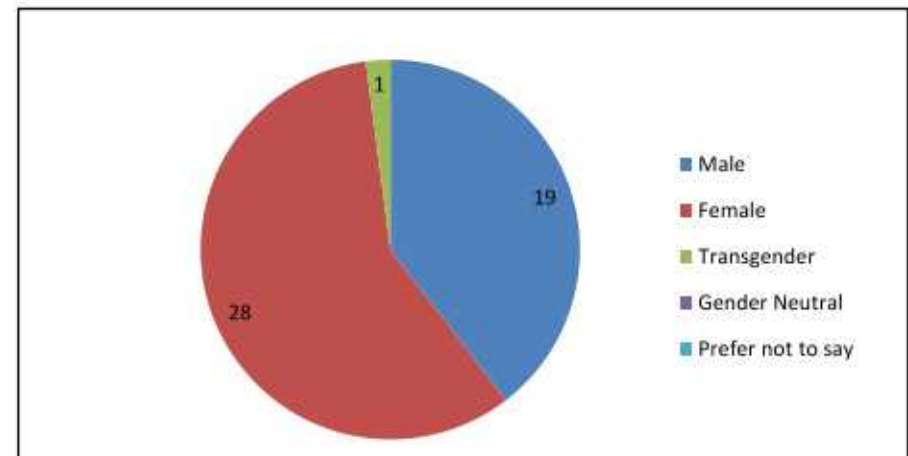
2b. Eligibility Criteria: Issue Based



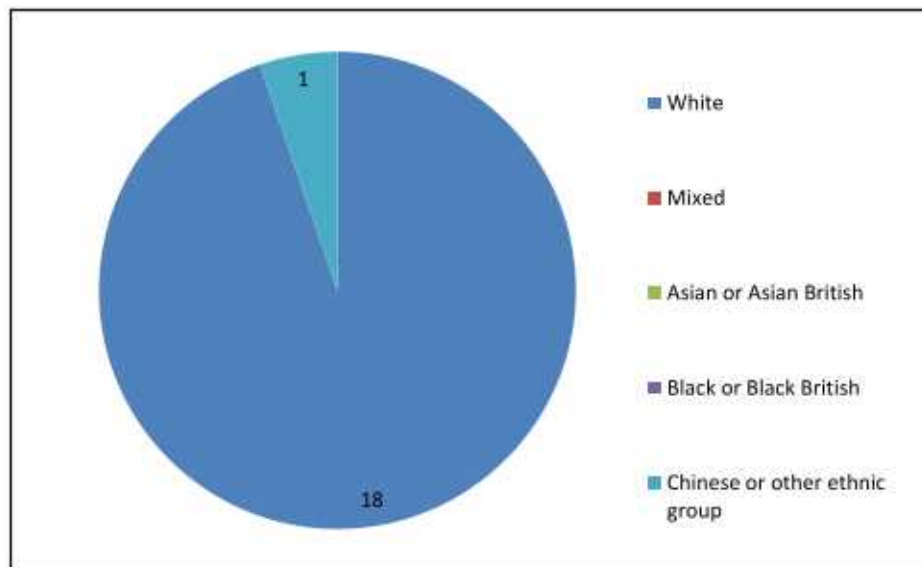
3a. Demographics: Gender - Active Offer



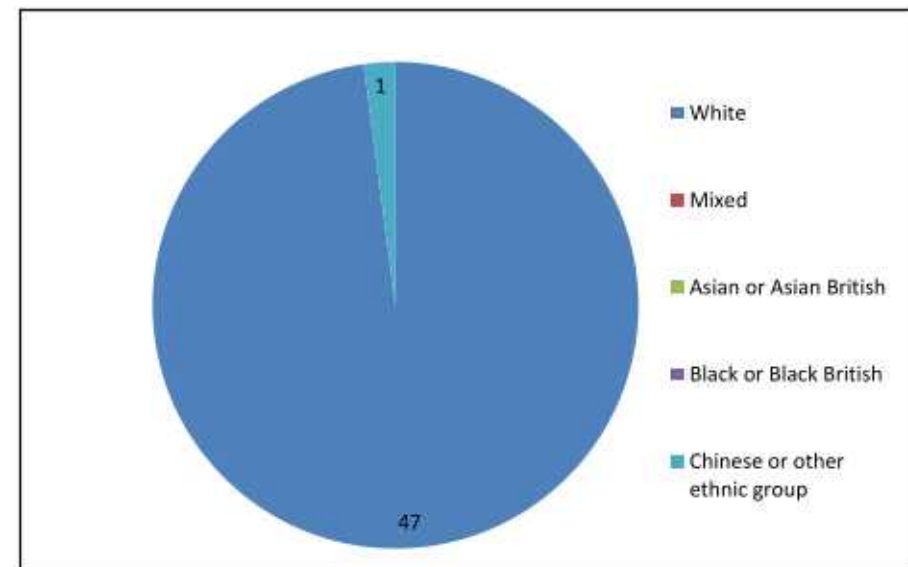
3b. Demographics: Gender - Issue Based



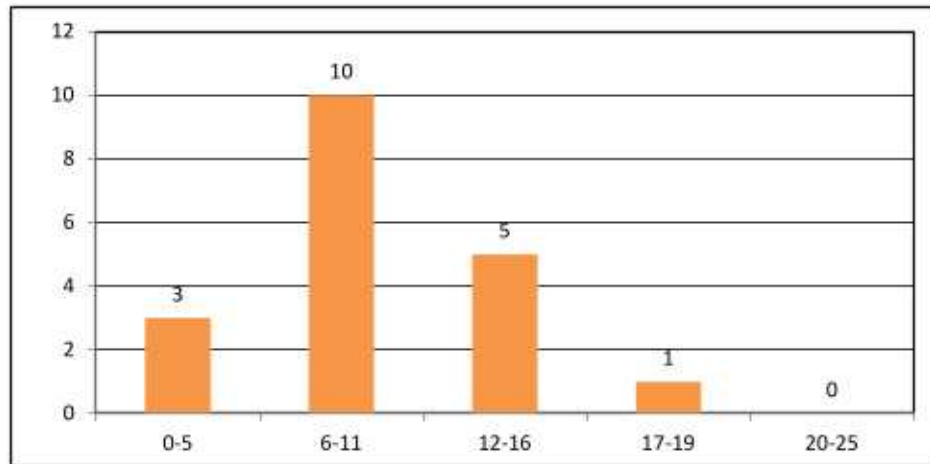
3c. Demographics: Ethnicity - Active Offer



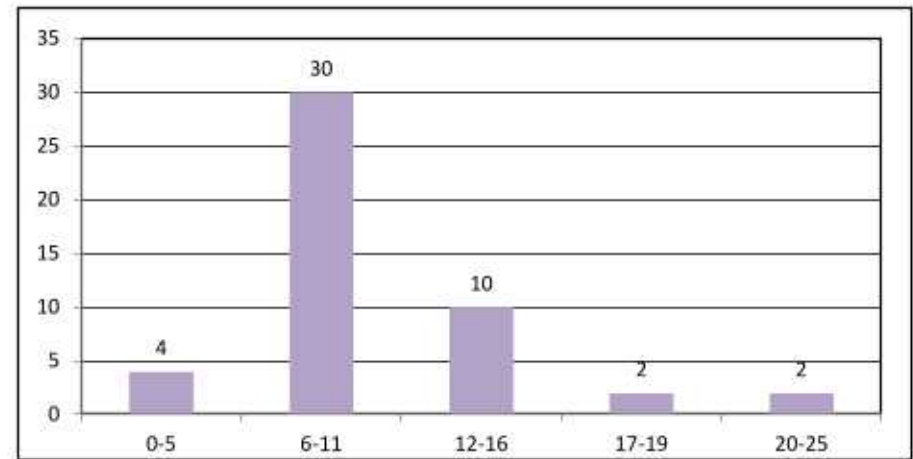
3d. Demographics: Ethnicity - Issue Based



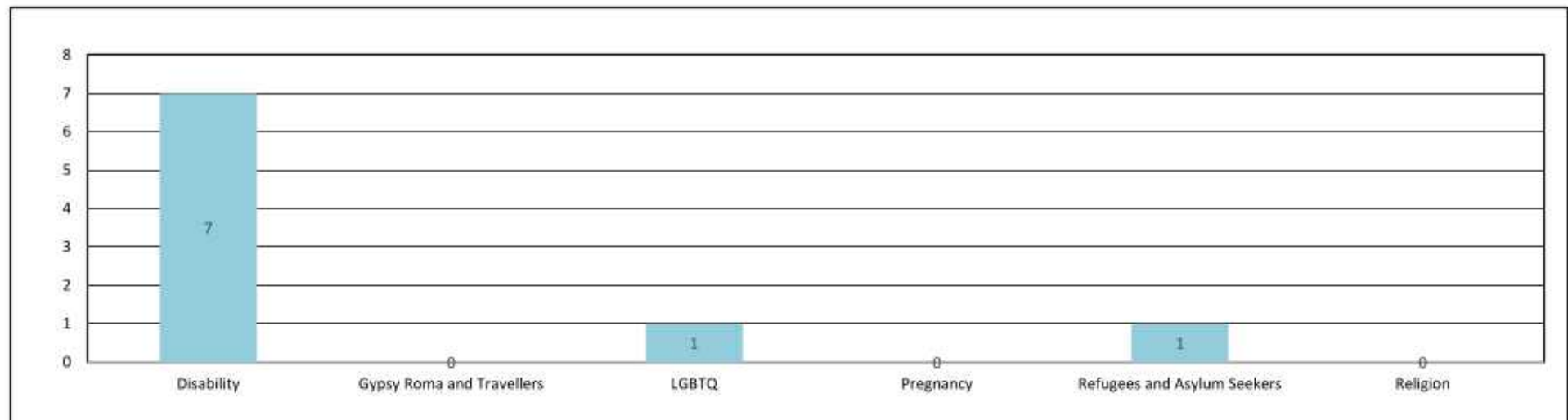
3e. Demographics: Age - Active Offer



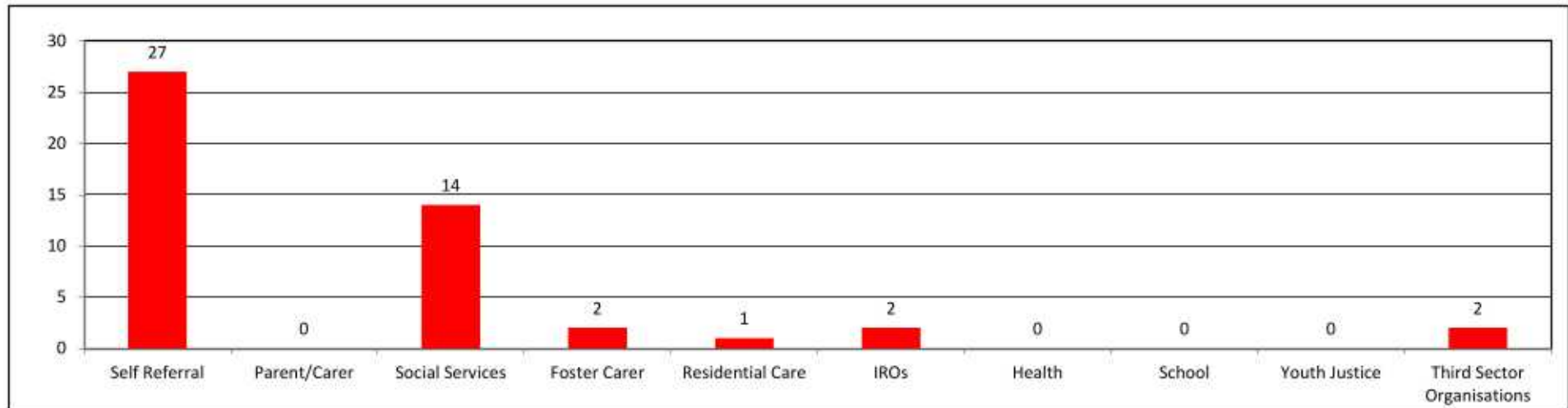
3f. Demographics: Age - Issue Based



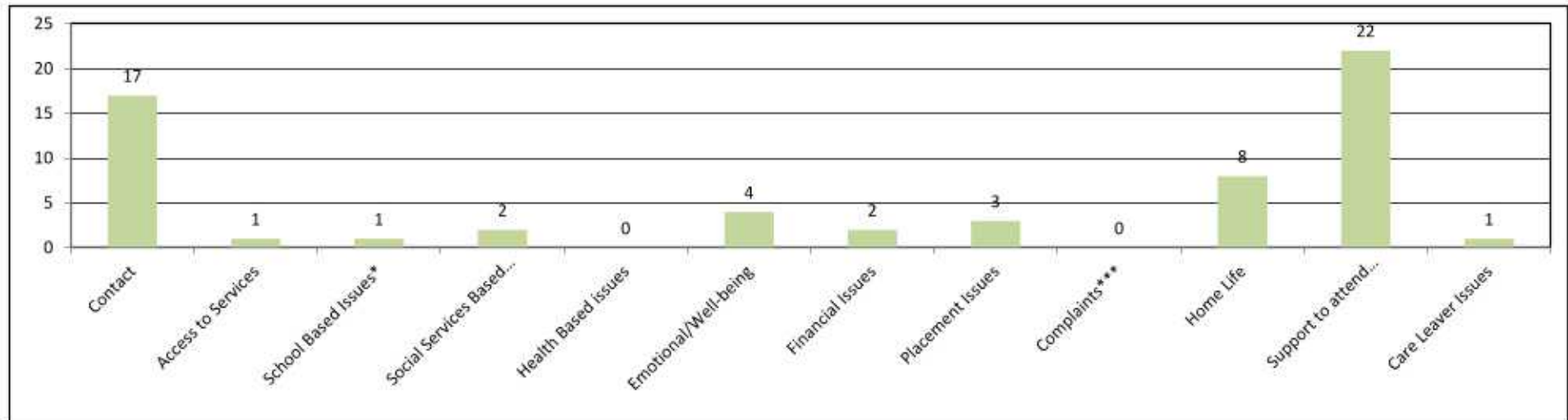
4. Protected Characteristics



5. Referral Source per young person - Issue Based only



6. Issues Presented

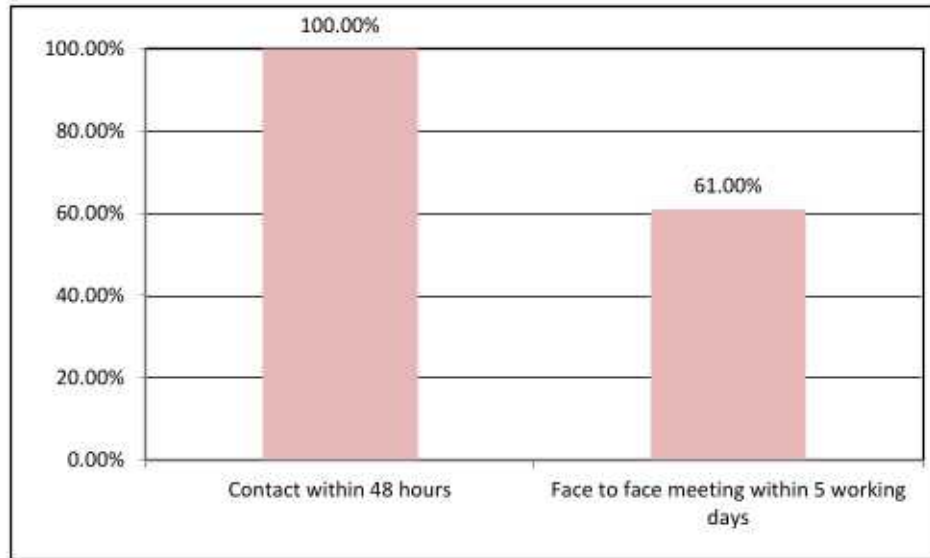


* School based issues including: SEN/ALN, exclusions, bullying, transport.

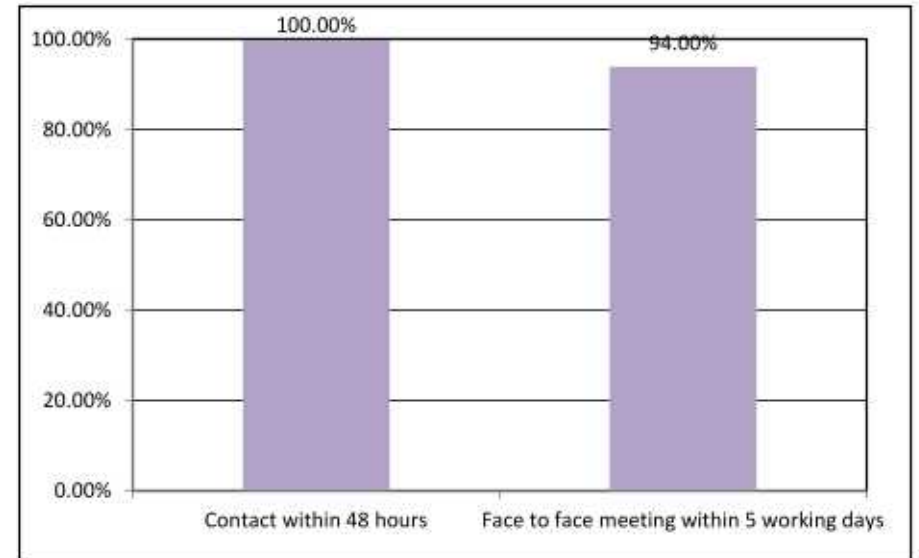
** Social Services based issues including: relationship with worker, care plan, service provided.

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

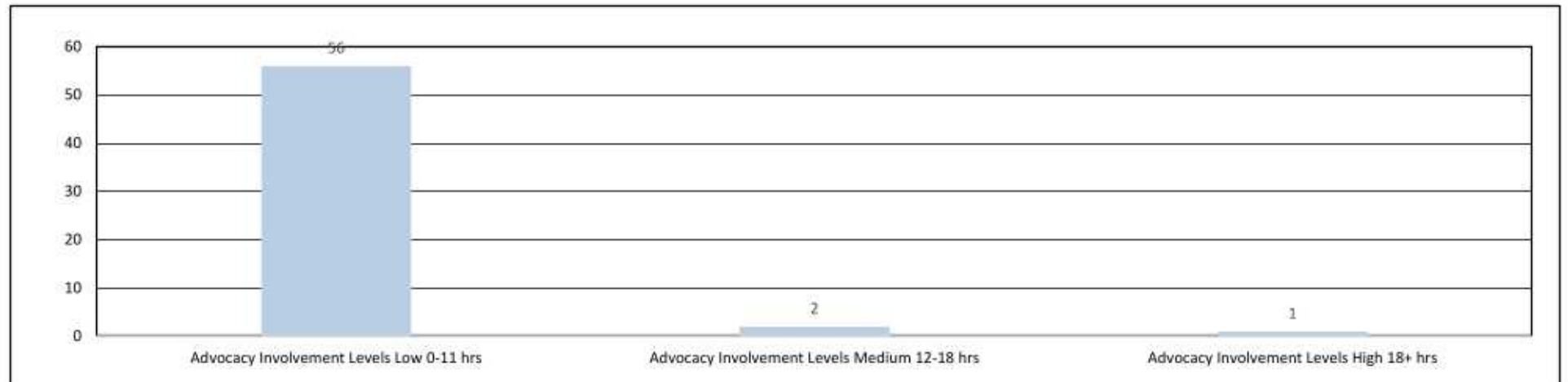
7. Service Performance - Active Offer



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>Across the two service areas 78% 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. Advocates worked with six young people living outside of RCT in areas such as include Merthyr Tydfil, Swansea, Powys and the West Midlands.</p> <p>As detailed above, the advocacy service was promoted in two meetings during quarter one and two presentations about advocacy have been shared with relevant partners.</p>
Outcome 2	Children and young people have their privacy and confidences respected and their wellbeing safeguarded and protected.	<p>The vast majority of direct work with young people continues to take place during face-to-face visits. We also offer virtual contact and although advocates report most young people prefer face-to-face visits, some older young people prefer to engage via phone and email, especially if they have work or education commitments.</p> <p>Advocates always endeavour to provide privacy when arranging to meet with a young person but will remain flexible and allow the young person to choose how, when and where they would like to meet. Young people's homes are risk assessed and the assessment allows the advocate to anticipate any confidentiality issues that may arise.</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, seven disabled young people received issue-based advocacy. Four had additional learning needs, one had ASD, one had ADHD, one had a stammer.</p> <p>One unaccompanied asylum seeking young person received issue-based advocacy in quarter one.</p> <p>One young person accessed a Pashto interpreter via his advocate during quarter one.</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, via their advocates and feedback forms that they feel empowered following advocacy intervention. When describing how advocacy made a difference to her situation, one RCT young person described how she is now <i>"more confident"</i>, and another said they <i>"felt a lot happier"</i> after having advocacy support.</p> <p>Two young people expressed how advocacy had been helpful, left them feeling they were more included in decisions and more knowledgeable about their rights by making them feel heard. They wrote <i>"I have a voice"</i> and <i>"it made my voice heard."</i></p>

Outcome 5	Children and young people participate in the design, planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy services.	<p>The CTM Advocacy Service Participation Lead will continue to 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 participate in a summit where they will be supported to share their experience of local authority care, and how they feel it can be improved.</p> <p>Several young people from the CTM region took part in a Welsh Government consultation regarding the transition from CAHMS to AMHS, facilitated by TGP Cymru. The final report will be available shortly.</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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