

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

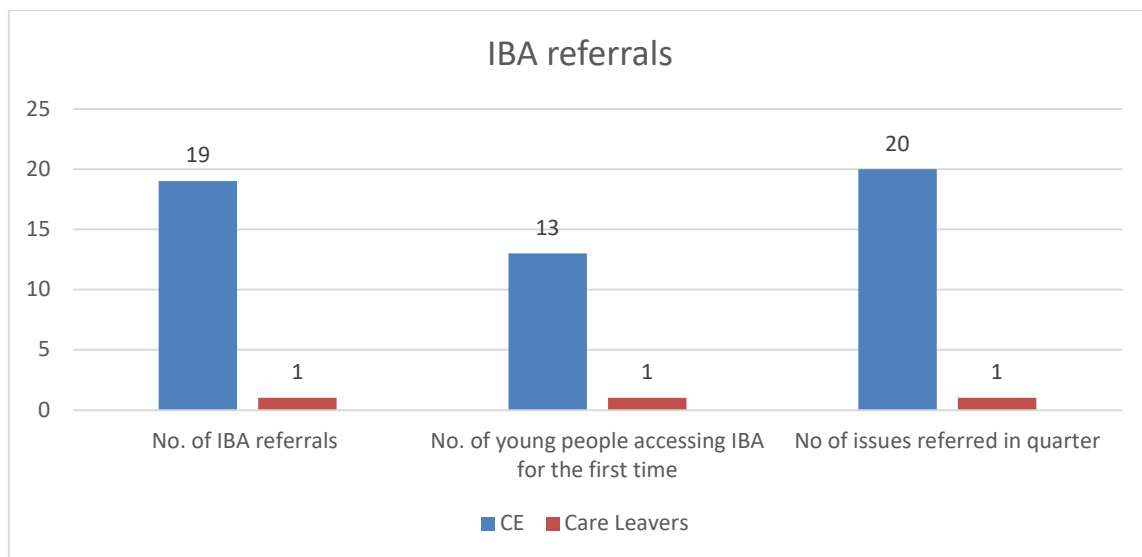
Quarter Two July 2022 – September 2022



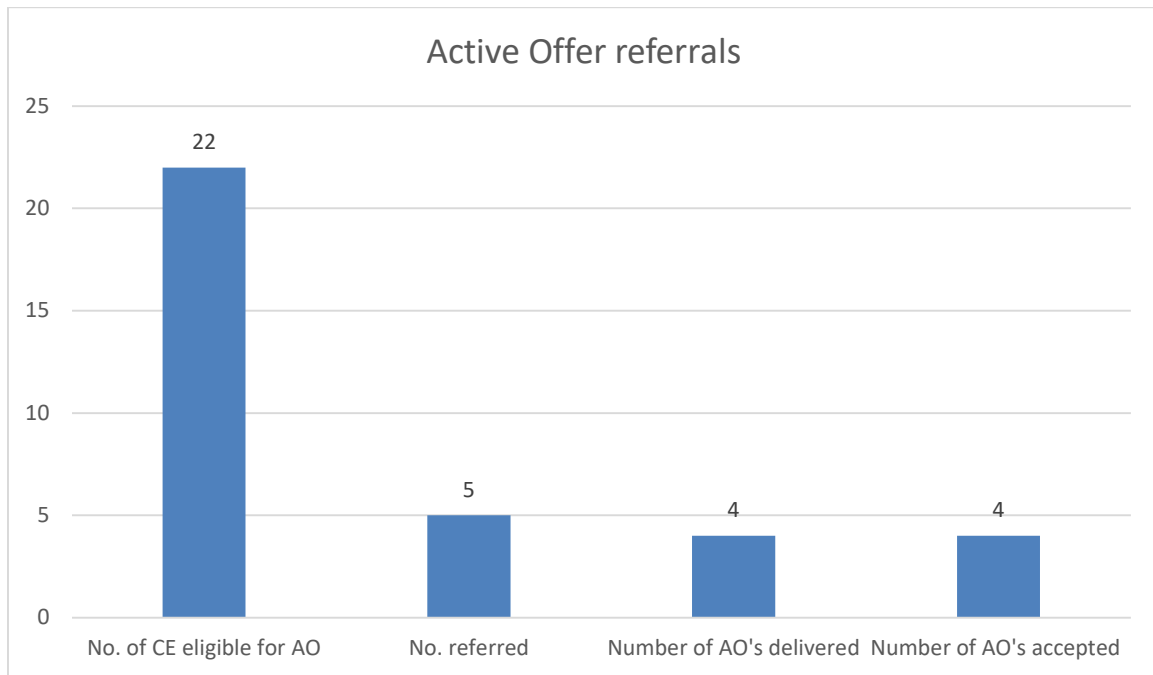
In quarter two, 46 young people accessed Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) and 21 young people were referred for the Active Offer (AO) across RCT.

This report has been prepared for RCT Corporate Parenting Board and provides information on the service delivered to care experienced (CE) young people and care leavers only.

In quarter two, 19 CE young people and one care leaver accessed IBA, presenting with 21 issues. Five care experienced young people were referred for the AO.



Some 13 of the 19 CE young people accessing IBA were doing so for the first time.



According to information provided by RCT, 22 CE young people became eligible for the AO in quarter two. Four AOs were delivered by advocates and four young people accepted the AO and went on to receive IBA. This means 23% of eligible young people were referred for AO.

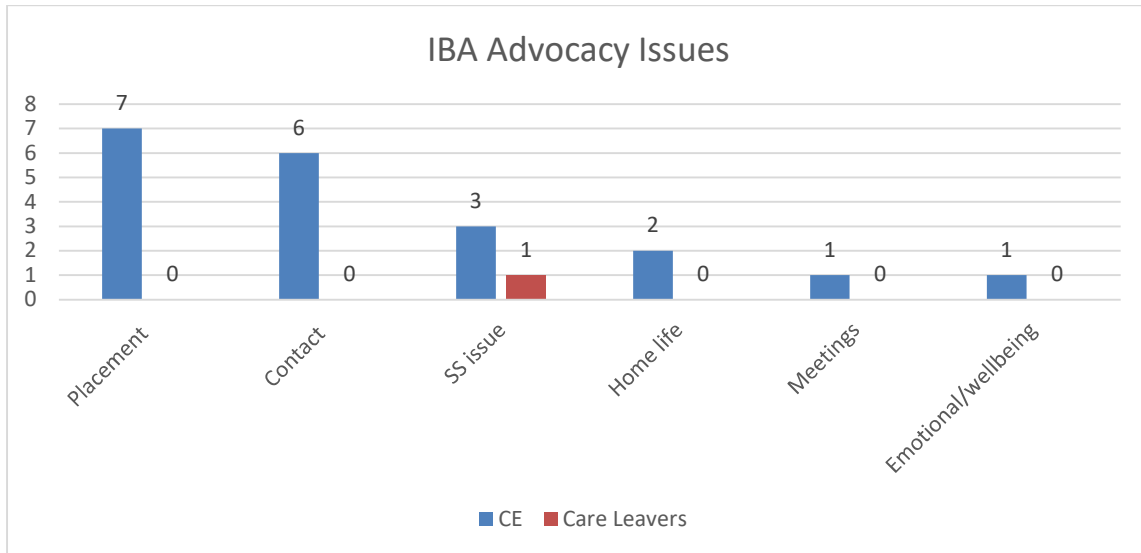
Of the 22 CE young people who became eligible in quarter two, eight young people were recorded as accepting the opportunity to receive the AO. Of the eight who accepted, five young people were referred for AO. One young person was recorded as rejecting the AO visit when offered by their social worker, but was referred for AO, and accepted in quarter two. One young person was referred for AO via the CP pathway as she was both looked after and on the CP Register at the time of referral.

We have not received referrals for two young people recorded as accepting the AO visit when it was offered by their social worker.

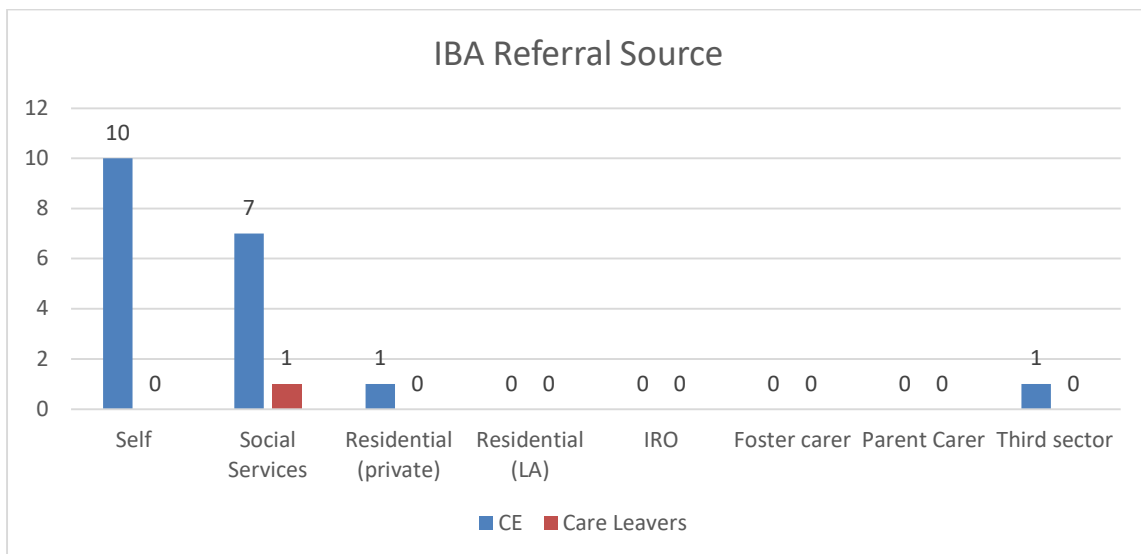
Six CE young people were recorded as rejecting the offer of an AO meeting. The main reason for rejecting the AO was that the young person felt they didn't need the service because they could talk to their social worker or another professional. One young person rejected the AO meeting without a reason but was later referred to the advocacy service.

Six eligible young people did not have the conversation with their social worker for the following reasons: three siblings were only looked after for a short period when their ICO was revoked. Two had received AOs via the CP route last year and the youngest was referred for IBA as he was too young for AO at the time. One social worker decided not to have the conversation with the young person because they were only looked after for one weekend. Another decided against the conversation with two siblings because their parents did not want them to know children's services were involved.

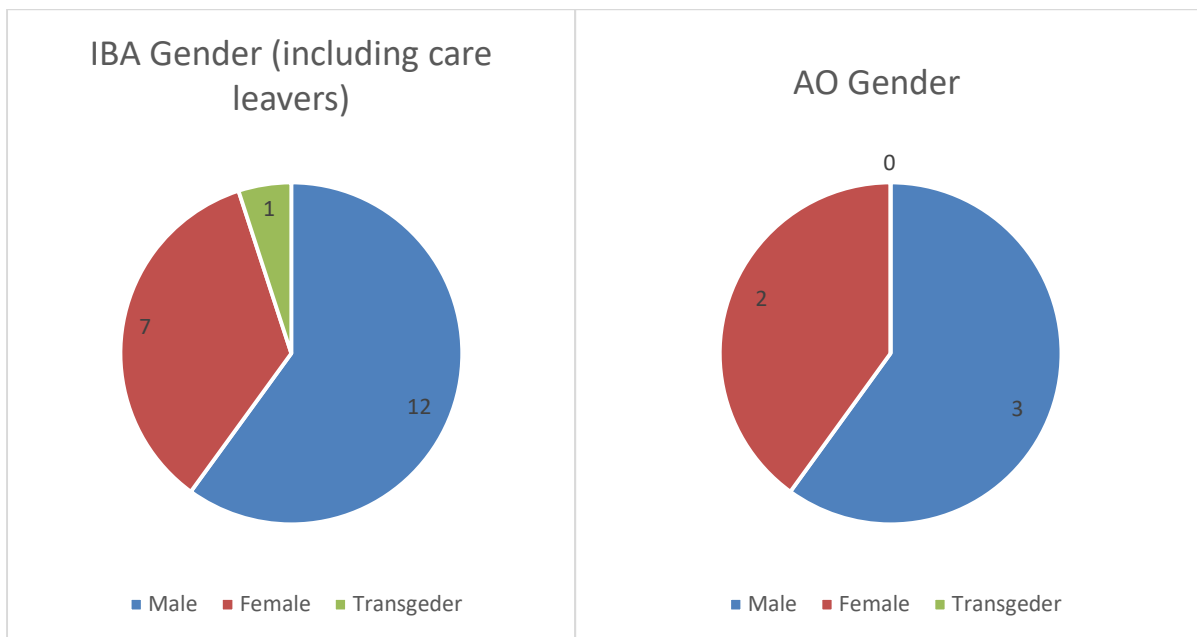
We do not know if two young people had the conversation with their social worker as they are neither recorded as accepting or rejecting the AO on the spreadsheet provided.



The most popular issues in need of advocacy support in quarter two, were placement followed by contact.

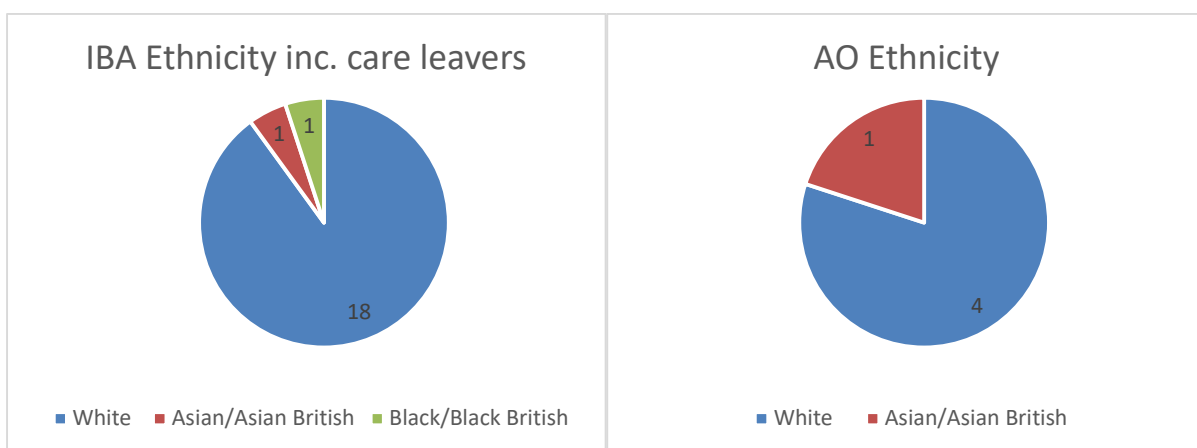


Social services referral and 'self-referral' is the most popular route into the IBA service for care experienced young people and care leavers. This is usually either the result of the young person accepting the AO and going on to received IBA, or the young person contacting their advocate directly with a new issue.



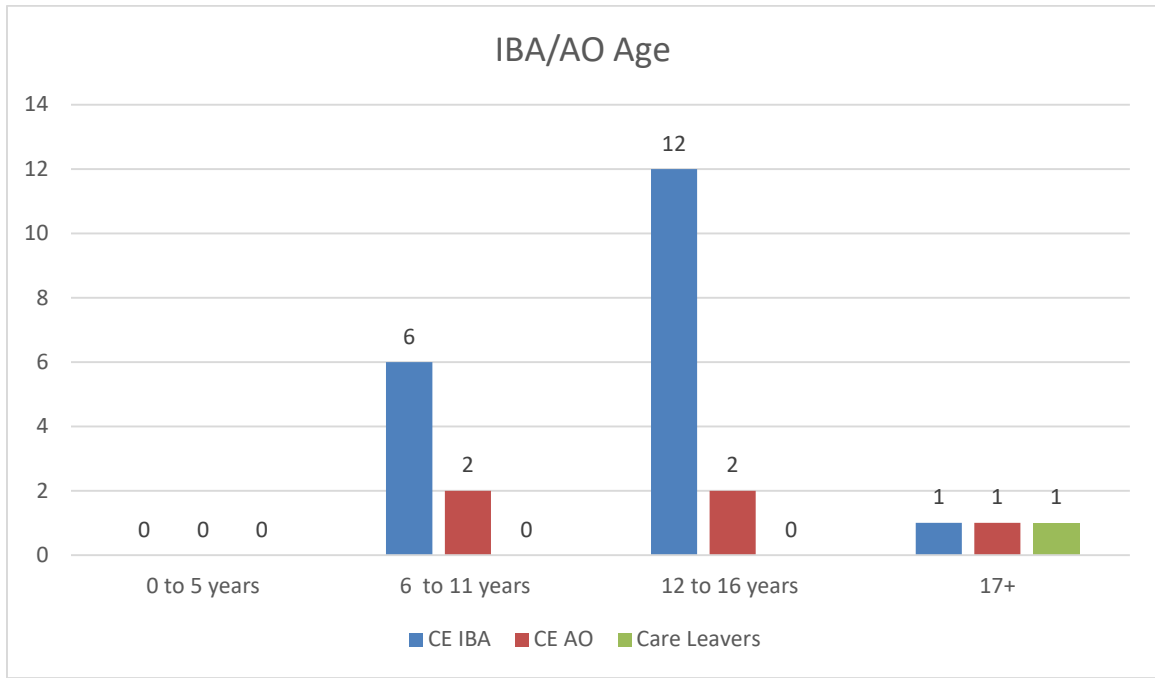
Of those care experienced young people accessing IBA in quarter two, 12 were males, compared to seven females and one transgender young person.

Care experienced young people referred for AO were split fairly evenly with three males and two females referred.



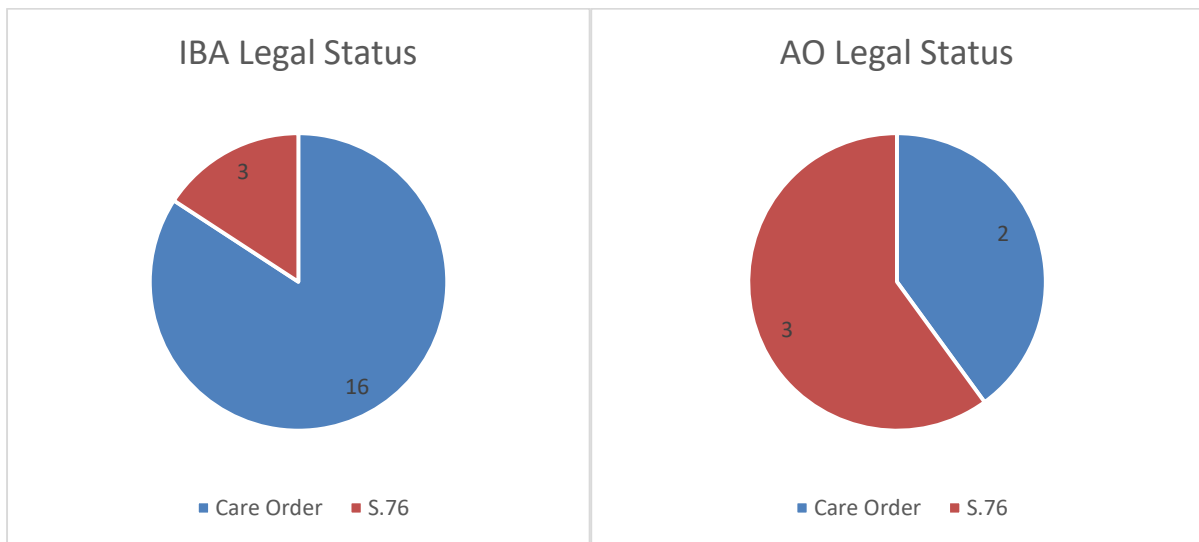
All but two of the CE young people and care leavers accessing IBA in quarter two were white.

All but one young people referred for AO described themselves as white.

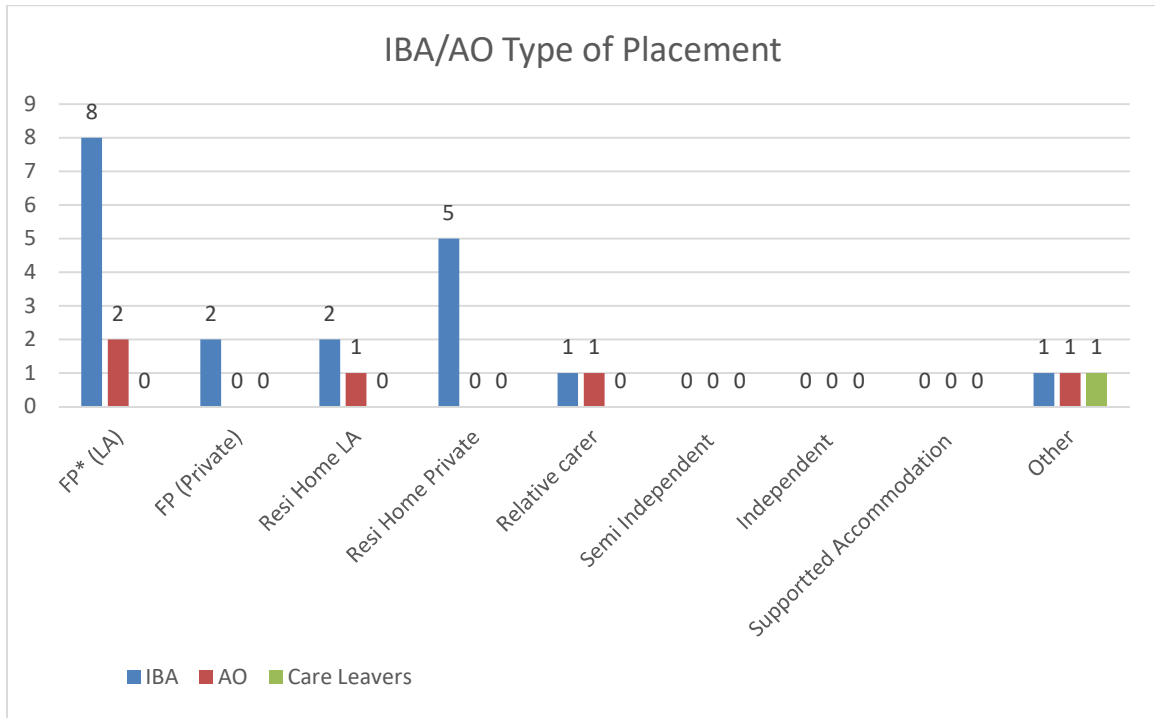


Most CE young people accessing the IBA service in quarter two were aged between 12 and 16 years.

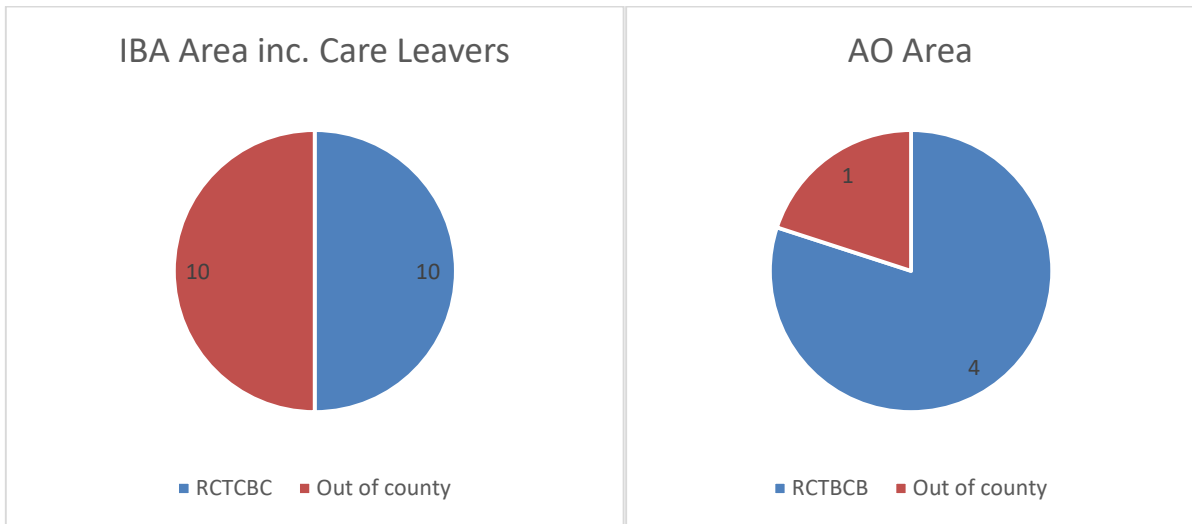
The five CE young people referred for AO were split evenly between the 6-11 and 12-16 age categories with the addition of one young person aged over 16 years.



Most CE young people accessing IBA in quarter two were subject to a full care order while the majority of those referred for AO were accommodated voluntarily.



Most CE young people accessing advocacy services in quarter two were living in a local authority foster placement at the time of referral.



Advocates supported 10 CE young people living outside of RCT in quarter two, in areas including Merthyr, Swansea, Newport, Carmarthenshire and London.

One young person referred for AO lived in Bridgend.

Other information

We have received one referral for an unaccompanied asylum-seeking young person who will be supported to access an Arabic interpreter to communicate with his advocate.

Two disabled CE young people accessed IBA in quarter two (ASD and Cerebral Palsy) and one young person with additional learning needs was also referred.

Visiting Advocacy

Visiting Advocacy 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. Visiting advocacy has resulted in two IBA referrals for young people living in community homes in quarter two.

Service Information

Following the recent change to the way we record how children and young people are supported at meetings we have continued to observe increases in other issues such as contact and placement and a reduction in 'support at meetings' issues. We will continue to record advocacy attendance at meetings but will do this separately and the recording of issues rather than meetings will continue to 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 once for CE young people, however, advocates supported children and young people to share wishes and feelings at CLA reviews eight times during quarter two.

We anticipate that who young people spend time with, and how they feel at home will continue to be two of the most prominent issues young people will want to discuss with their advocates. We have planned to make amendments to the way we record contact issues in the future, which will allow us to access data more easily about who young people want to spend their time with.

The CTM advocacy team manager and administrator met with new members of the RCT social care management information team in September. This was a good opportunity to review the process by which RCT share information on young people eligible for the Active Offer service with us. The communication from the team has always been helpful and efficient and we are confident this will continue.

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: Sam is nine years old and was referred to the advocacy service following a breakdown in the relationship between Sam's aunt and uncle whom he had been living with. Sam's aunt and uncle were also his registered foster carers, and Sam had chosen to live with his uncle and his new partner following their split. Sam had been having regular contact with his aunt, but after the contact was put on hold due to his aunt having an operation, Sam said he did not want the contact to resume. Sam's aunt was concerned he was being unfairly influenced by his uncle and his new partner.

Action: The advocate planned to meet with Sam at his home, which was out of county, during the summer holidays after asking where Sam would like to meet. Sam and the advocate were able to talk privately at home, and the advocate was able to ask Sam if he would like any help to share his feelings or challenge any decisions around the current arrangements for him to spend time with his aunt. Sam explained he had decided not to see his aunt at all, mainly because when he had been spending time with her, she had asked lots of questions about his uncle's partner which he didn't like at all. Sam said his uncle was fine with him seeing his aunt, but he wanted to have a break for at least a few months while he settled into his new home. Sam was very clear that he wouldn't change his mind, even if his aunt promised not to ask him any more questions, but he would think about contact again leading up to his next CLA Review.

Outcome: As a result of Sam independently sharing his wishes via his advocate, his social worker agreed that contact with Sam's aunt would be suspended until his next CLA Review. Sam was happy with the advocate's suggestion that they visit him again before the review, to help him share any further wishes and feelings he may have. Sam felt he may be ready to see his aunt then and was really happy that it wasn't something he had to worry about or be asked about again over the next few months.

Conclusion and looking forward

Referrals for CE young people and care leavers have remained consistent when compared to the previous quarter, with an increase of one CE young person being referred for AO, and three less CE young people accessing IBA. One less care leaver accessed IBA in quarter one. This means only three care leavers have accessed the IBA service in the last six months. The Advocacy team manager will contact the 16+ team manager in the next quarter to address the lack of IBA referrals for care leavers.