

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

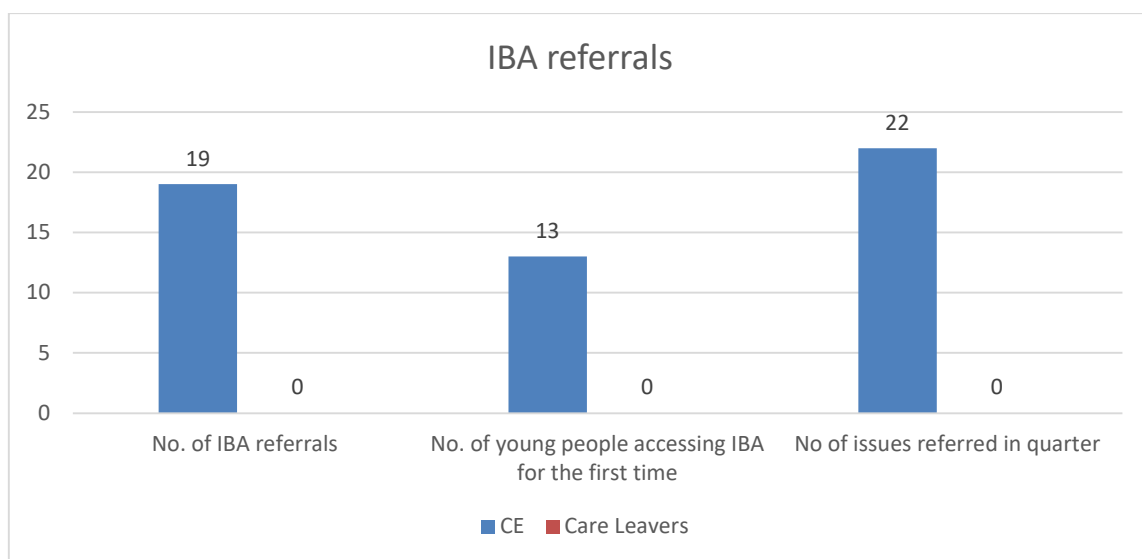
Quarter Three October 2022 – December 2022



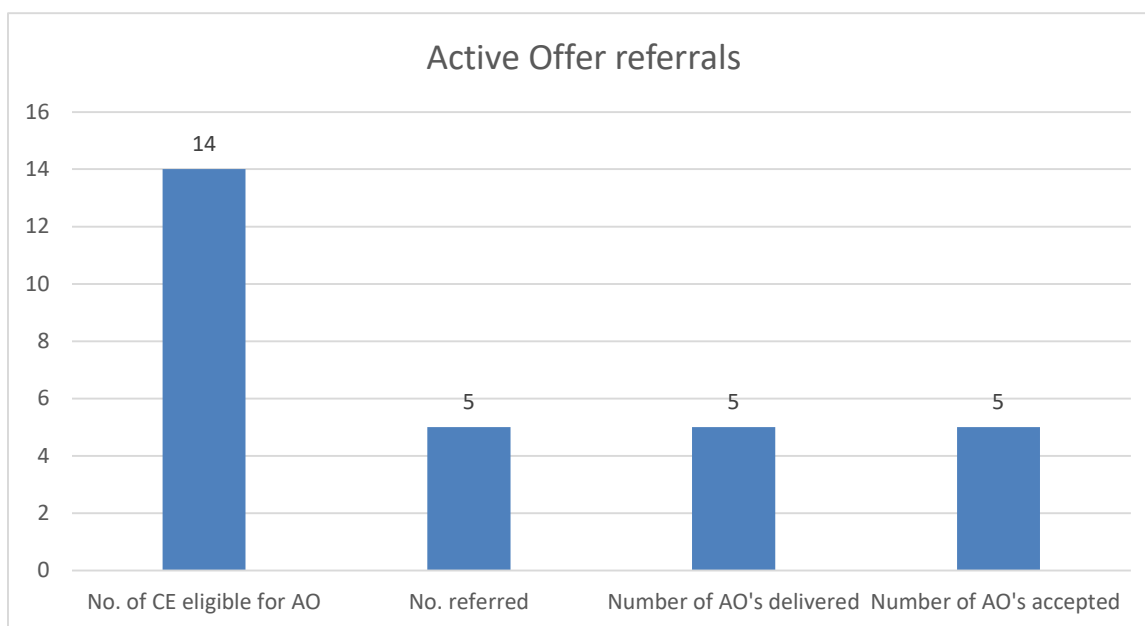
In quarter three, 35 young people accessed Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) and 20 young people were referred for the Active Offer (AO) across RCT.

This report provides information on the service delivered to care experienced (CE) young people and care leavers only.

In quarter three, 19 CE young people accessed IBA, presenting with 22 issues. Five care experienced young people were referred for the AO. No care leavers were referred for advocacy services.



In quarter three, 15 of the 19 CE young people accessing IBA were doing so for the first time.



According to information provided by RCT, 14 CE young people became eligible for the AO in quarter three, compared to 22 in quarter two. Five AOs were delivered by advocates and five young people accepted the AO and went on to receive IBA.

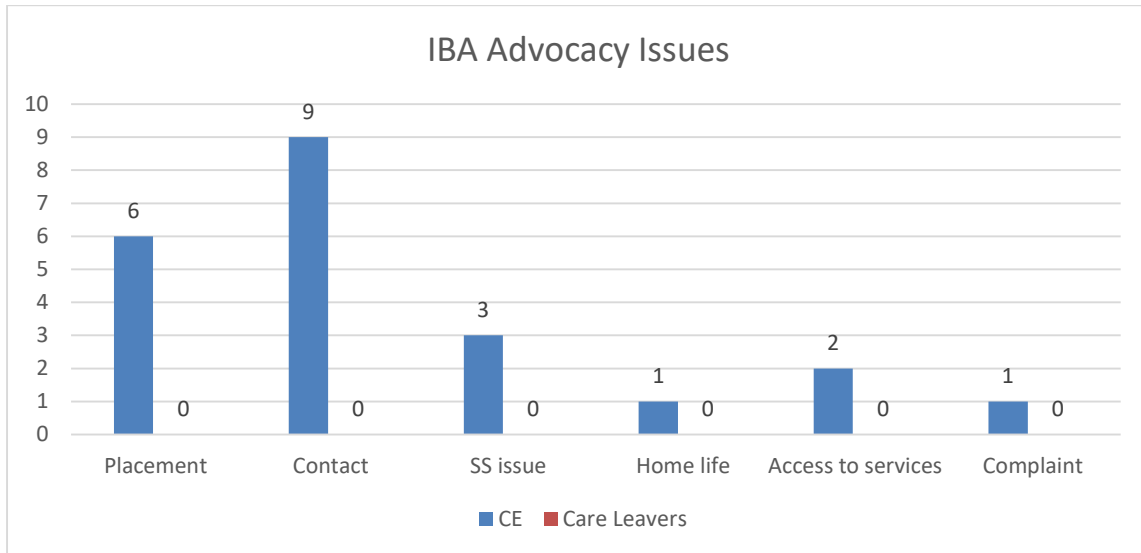
Of the five young people referred for AO via the CLA pathway in quarter three, three also became eligible in quarter three. The remaining two young people became eligible in quarter two.

Three of the 14 young people who became eligible for AO via the CLA pathway were referred for AO in quarter three, and all three accepted the AO and went on to receive IBA. This means 21% of those eligible in quarter three were referred for AO, compared to 23% in the previous quarter.

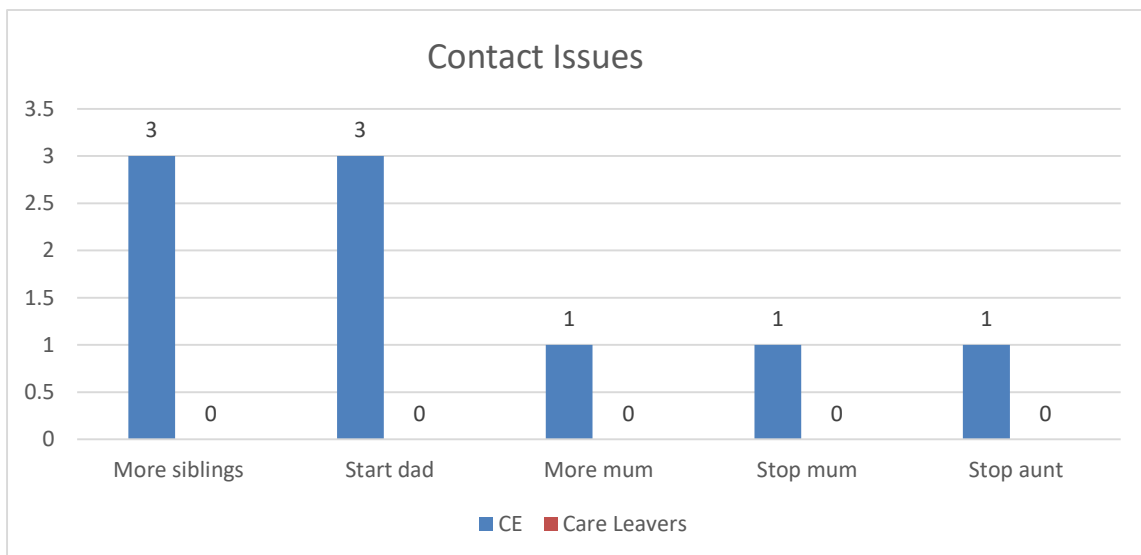
The picture is actually slightly more complicated however, as five of those who became eligible via the CLA pathway in quarter three, have since been referred for AO via the CP pathway in quarter four and three young people were already engaging in advocacy after receiving the AO via the CP pathway in previous quarters.

This means, that as of the 22nd of February 2023, 79% of CE young people who became eligible via the CLA pathway in quarter three, were either referred for AO in quarter three, referred for AO at a later date via the CP pathway, or were already engaged in advocacy services when they became eligible.

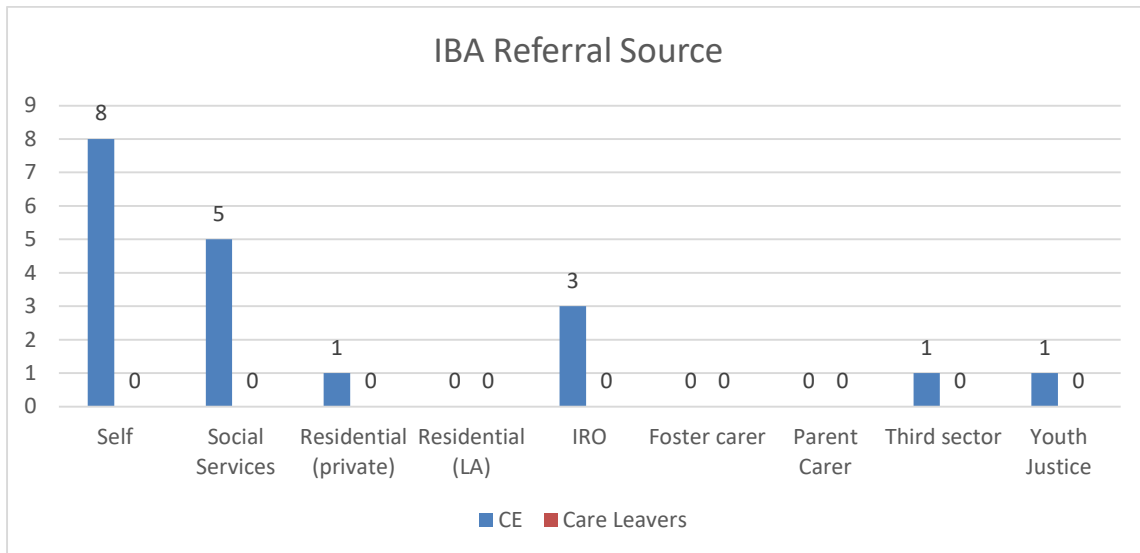
Two young people were not offered the AO meeting by their social worker because their parents did not want them to know children's services were involved, and the remaining young person was offered the opportunity to meet with an advocate but declined as he felt he had enough people in his life he was able to speak to.



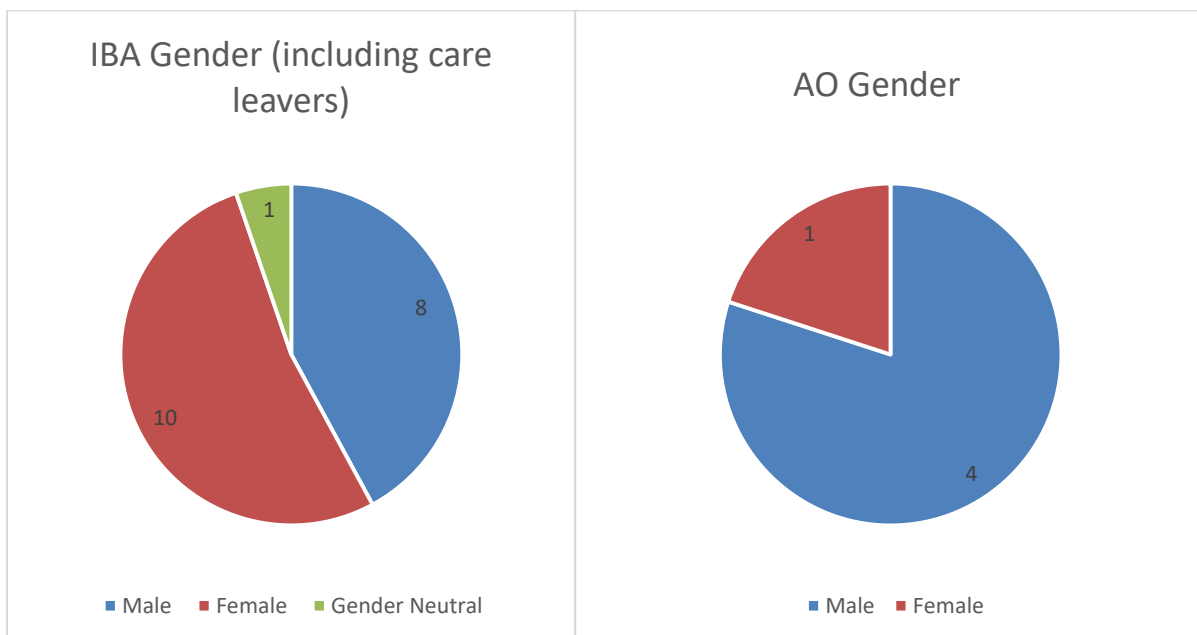
The most popular issues in need of advocacy support in quarter three, were contact followed by placement. Contact and placement were also the most popular issues in the previous quarter. Following recent changes in how we record attendance at meetings, we have also decided to amend our recording system in an attempt to capture more detail about who young people want to spend time with.



Of the nine CE young people accessing IBA support for a contact issue, seven were requesting that time spent with parents or siblings increased or started. Two young people shared they no longer wanted to spend time with their mum and aunt.

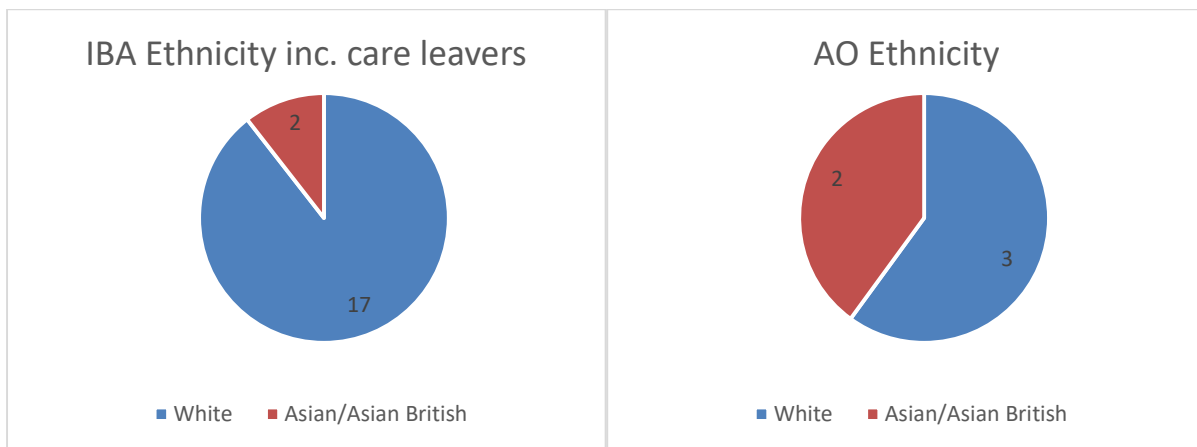


‘Self-referral’ and social services referrals are the most popular route into the IBA service for care experienced young people. Self-referral is usually either the result of the young person accepting the AO and going on to received IBA, or the young person contacting their advocate directly with a new issue.



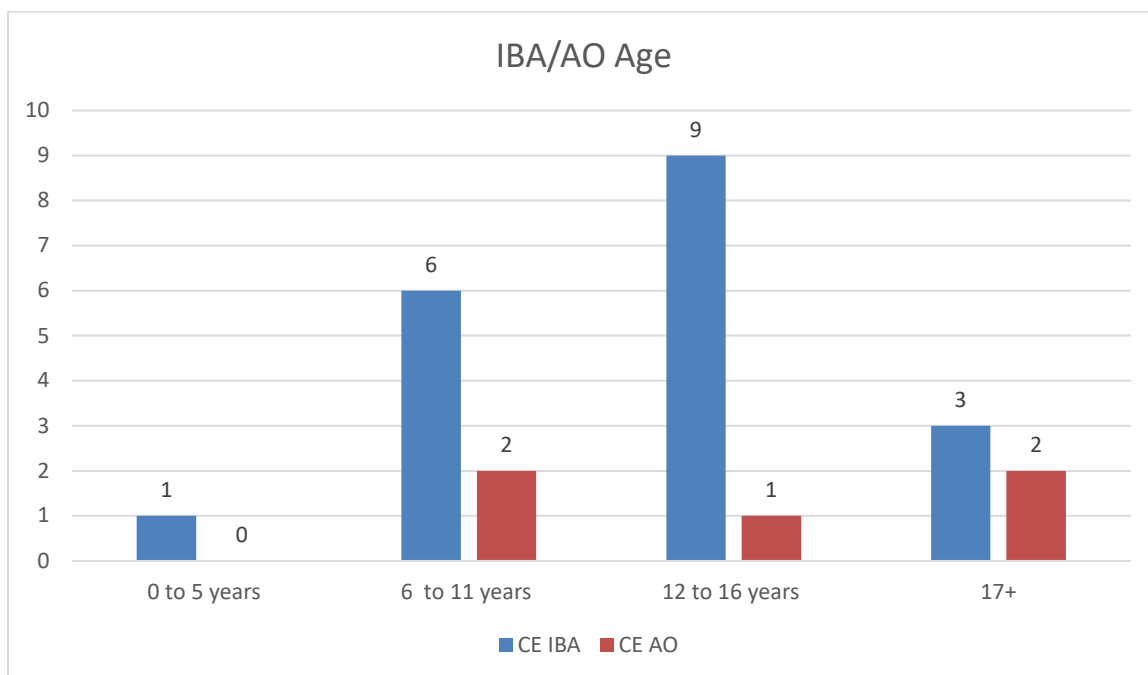
Of those CE young people accessing IBA In quarter three, 10 were females, compared to eight males and one gender neutral young person. This is a more even split when compared to the previous quarter.

CE young people referred for AO were split less evenly than in the previous quarter with four males and one female referred.



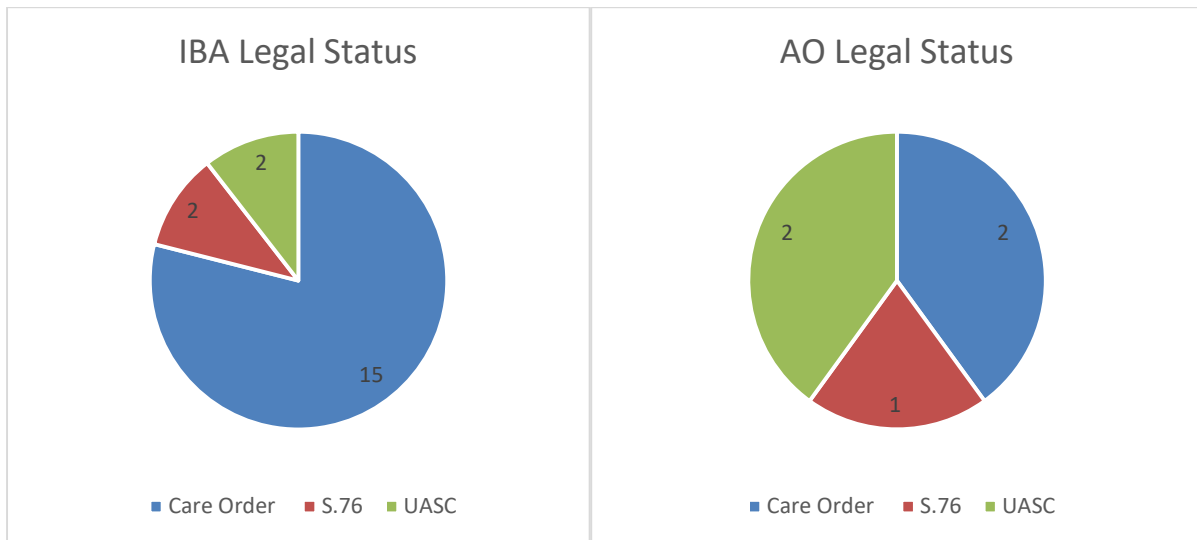
All but two of the CE young people IBA in quarter three were white.

Three of the five young people referred for AO described themselves as white.

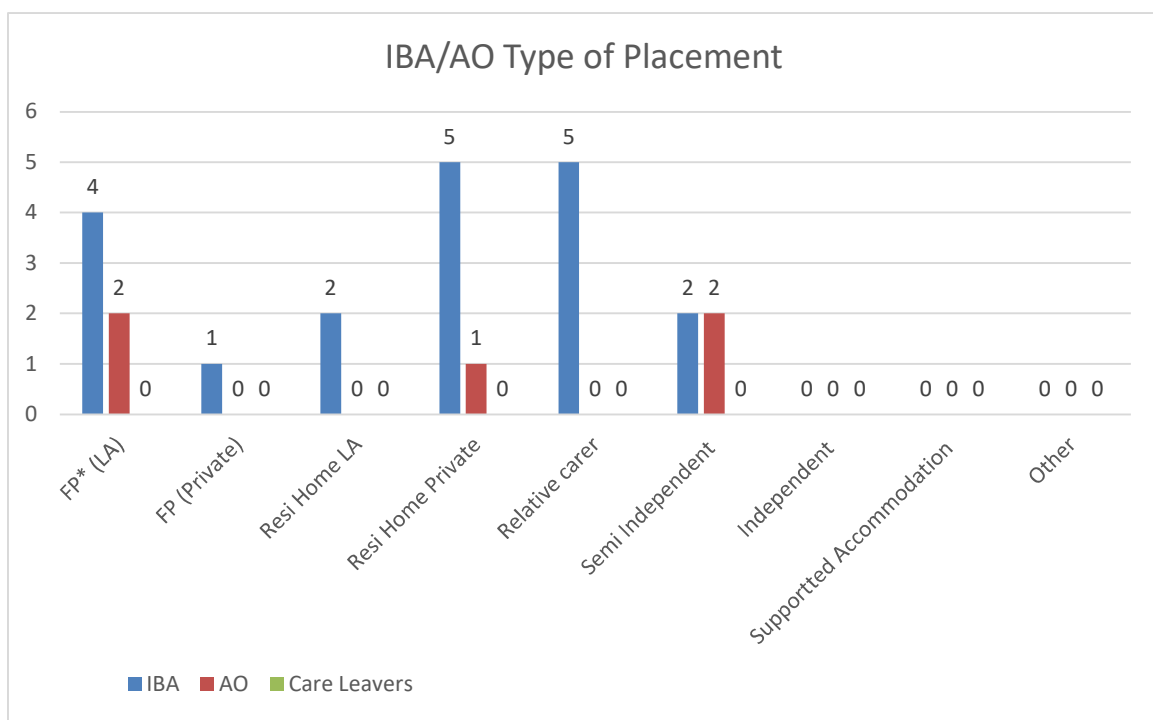


Most CE young people accessing the IBA service in quarter three were again aged between 12 and 16 years, followed by those aged between six and 11.

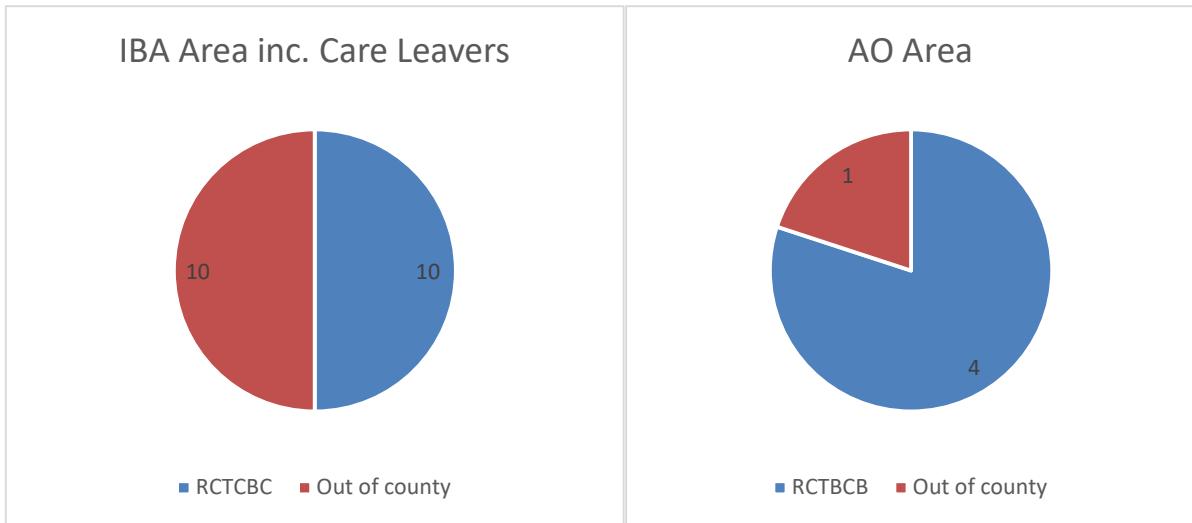
The five CE young people referred for AO were split evenly between the 6-11 and 17+ age categories with the addition of one young person aged between 12 and 16.



Most CE young people accessing IBA and AO in quarter three were again subject to full care orders. Two unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) also accessed IBA after accepting the AO.



Most CE young people accessing advocacy services in quarter three were living in residential care followed by those living with relative carers and in foster placements.



Advocates supported 10 CE young people living outside of RCT in quarter three, the same number as in quarter two. Other areas included Swansea, Newport, Carmarthenshire, Gwent and Cardiff.

One young person referred for AO lived in Cardiff, while the remaining four were all resident in RCT.

Other information

We have received referrals for two unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people who are being supported to access Kurdish Sorani interpretation to communicate with their advocate.

One young person with additional learning needs was referred for IBA in quarter three, along with one young person suffering with an anxiety disorder.

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. We are planning a review of visiting advocacy the coming months and will be contacting all community homes to assess future need and look at what has and hasn't been working well over recent quarters.

Service Information

The Advocacy team manager met with Julie Evans in October to discuss advocacy referral rates and AO take-up and plan the advocacy manager's attendance at a team meeting for RCT Children Services team managers. This took place in December and team managers from across RCT children's services were able to ask the advocacy manager questions relating to barriers to referral and clarify referral pathways. During this meeting, it was made clear that advocacy referrals can be made by phone, and sibling referrals can be made on one referral form, providing all relevant information for each sibling is present. Information was shared with the RCT team managers following this meeting and we are confident this will result in a better understanding of referral pathways and processes in the future.

Conclusion and looking forward.

Referrals for CE young people and care leavers have remained consistent when compared to the previous quarter, and we pleased that 15 CE young people accessed advocacy services for the first time during this period. We will continue to keep in contact with RCT and share information with a view to understanding the take up of advocacy services in the area.

Case Example

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

Situation: Jamie is thirteen years old and has lived with his foster carers Mike and Shelly for five years. He describes himself as very happy and has an excellent relationship with both of his carers. Part of Mike's work includes repairing and servicing motorbikes, and he owns a Harley Davidson bike. Jamie has enjoyed spending time with Mike while working on the bikes and learning about repairs, and through this, has developed a keen interest in motorbikes himself. Jamie would very much like to be able to go for a ride on the back of Mike's motorbike, ideally to Brecon to get an ice cream. Jamie told his advocate he is unhappy because he's been told the LA won't allow this as they feel it is risky.

Action: The advocate initially spoke to Jamie over the phone and asked him where and when he would like to meet. Jamie requested to meet in the 'comfy' room at his school. Jamie also asked if his foster carer could come along to the first meeting. The advocate then contacted the school and made the necessary arrangements. The advocate, Jamie and Shelly met at school, and discussed Jamie's issue. Jamie explained that it was his understanding the team manager had made the decision about riding on the bike, and he was keen to meet with her as he said he didn't understand the reason he wasn't allowed, and wanted the chance to explain in person, why he felt the decision was unfair, and made him feel different to other children who didn't live with foster families. Jamie and the advocate sent an email to the team

manager, explaining Jamie's request, and asked if she had any availability to meet with Jamie at school over the next few weeks.

Outcome: Unfortunately, the team manager declined the invitation to meet with Jamie, as she said the decision had already been made. The advocate made another appointment with Jamie, to update him, and ask how he would like to proceed. Jamie was very sad he wasn't able to talk to the team manager about the decision not to allow him to ride on the back of his carers' motorbike. He is currently deciding whether or not he would like to pursue a complaint about the decision and has asked the advocate to tell him more about the complaint's procedure.