

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

Quarter Two July 2023 – September 2023

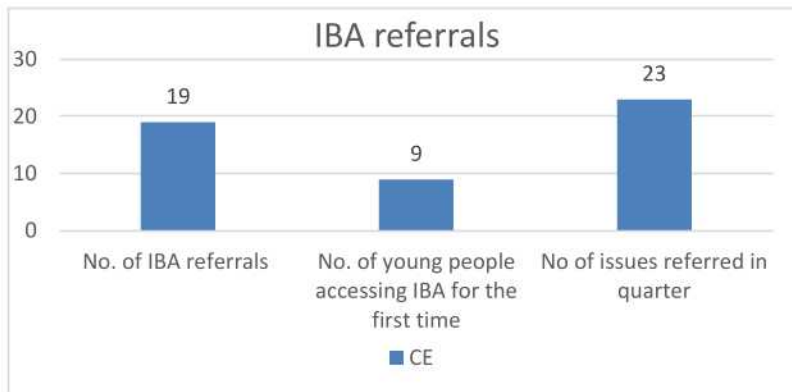


Activity Overview

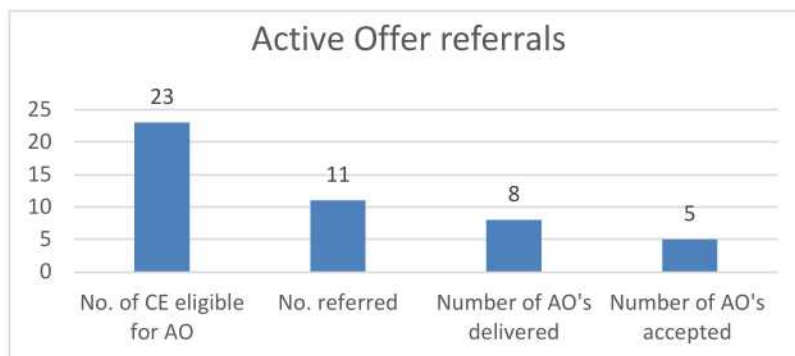
In quarter two, 61 young people accessed Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) and 44 young people were referred for the Active Offer (AO) across RCT.

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

In quarter two, 19 CE young people accessed IBA, eight more than in the previous quarter. Those 19 young people presented with 23 issues. 11 care experienced young people were referred for the AO, five more than in quarter two, and no care leavers were referred for IBA.



In quarter two, nine of the 19 CE young people accessing IBA were doing so for the first time, four more than in the previous quarter.



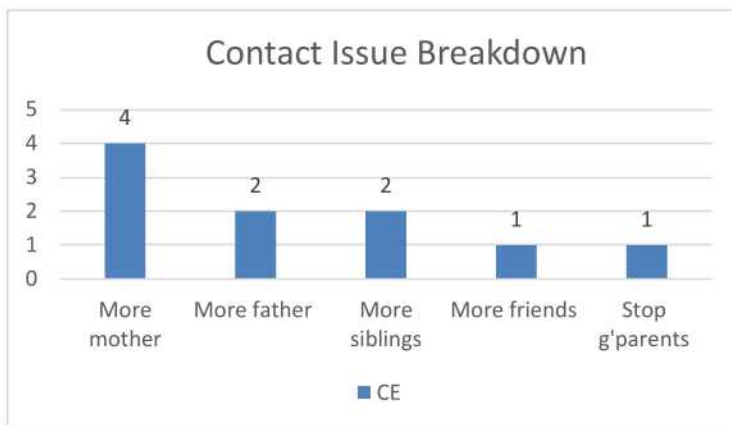
All but one of the 11 young people referred for AO in quarter two became eligible for AO in either quarter one or quarter two.

Ten of the 23 young people who became eligible for AO via the CLA pathway were recorded as rejecting the opportunity to receive the AO in quarter two. The most common reason for rejecting the opportunity receive the AO was young people felt well enough supported by their social worker. The reasons included not wanting to engage with any professionals, feeling that they can advocate for themselves, and wanting to think about it in the future. One person is recorded as rejecting the AO as they already had an advocate.

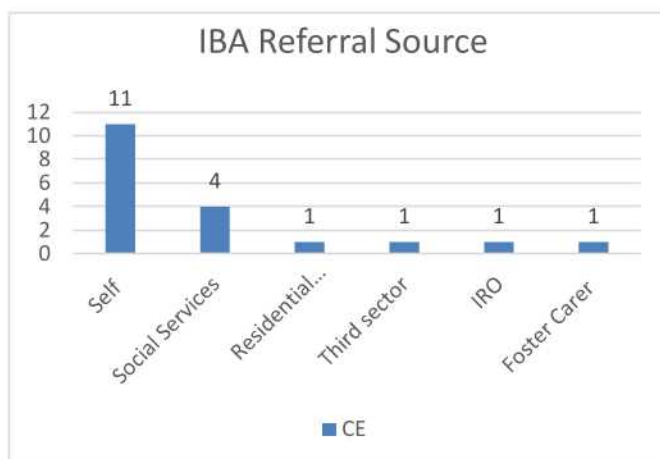
Nine young people are recorded as accepting the opportunity to meet with an advocate and all nine were referred for AO. Two young people were not referred for AO as their social worker assessed they did not have capacity to understand or consent to the referral. We do not know if the two remaining eligible CE young people have been offered the opportunity to receive the AO by their social worker as this is not recorded on the spreadsheet provided by RCT, although we note the two names are included in the most recent (September) report and it is likely this information will be available in the coming months. This means 38% of those eligible in quarter two were referred for AO, compared to 25% in the previous quarter.



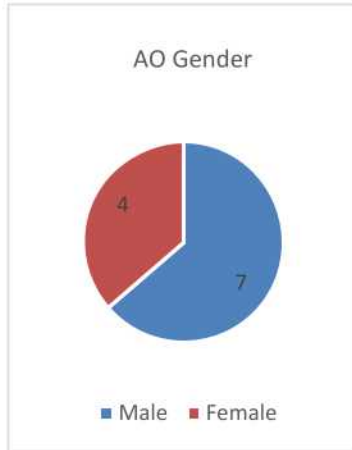
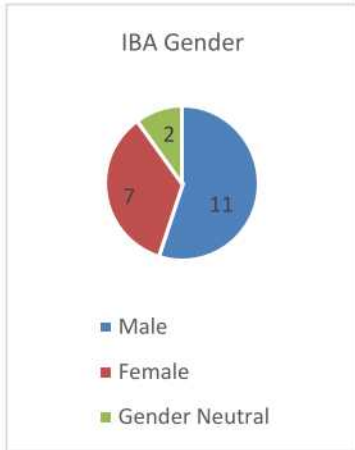
The most popular issues in need of advocacy support in quarter two, were placement followed by contact issues. Placement was also one of the most popular issues in the previous quarter.



Five young people presented with contact issues, and some of those five wanted to share feelings about more than one person. In quarter two, five young people shared their feelings about time spent with ten different individuals or group of individuals. The most popular issue was young people wanting to spend more time with their mother.

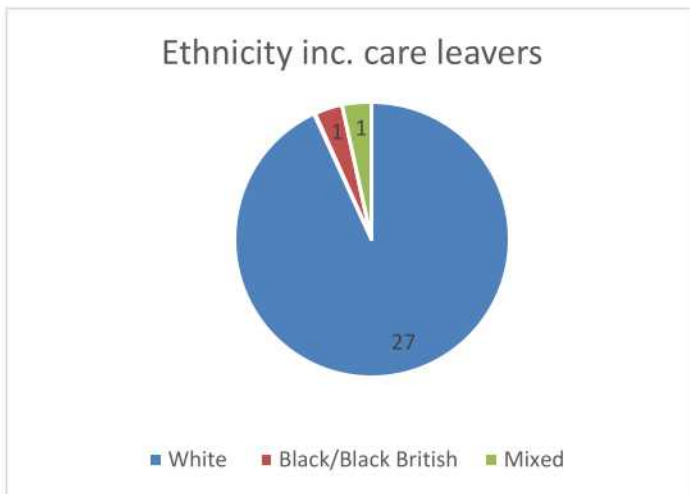


'Self-referral' and social services referrals continue to be the most popular route into the IBA service for care experienced young people. Self-referral is usually either the result of the young person accepting the AO and going on to received IBA, or the young person contacting their advocate directly with a new issue. One referral was made by a TGP Cymru FGM Coordinator.

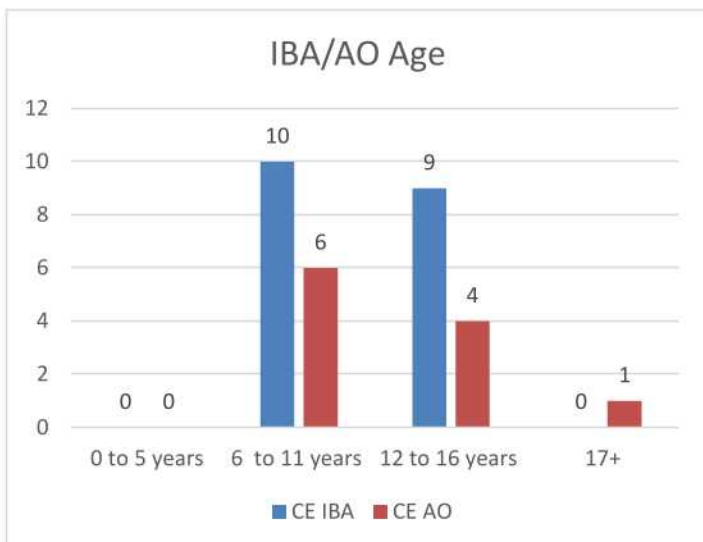


Most CE IBA referrals were for males for the third consecutive quarter. One gender neutral young person was also referred for IBA in quarter two.

Males also made up the majority of AO referrals, as they did in the previous quarter.



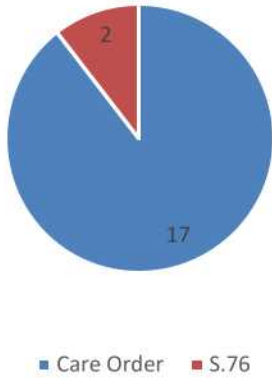
Most CE young people accessing advocacy services in quarter two described themselves as white.



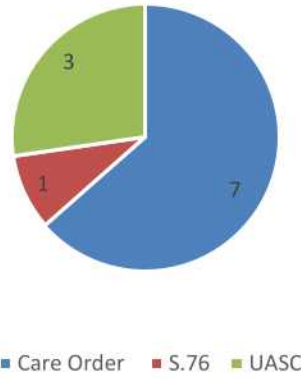
IBA referrals were split almost evenly between those aged between 6 and 11 years, and those aged between 12 and 16 years.

The majority of CE young people referred for AO were also aged between 6 and 11 years, a change from the previous quarter when most young people were aged 12 or over.

IBA Legal Status



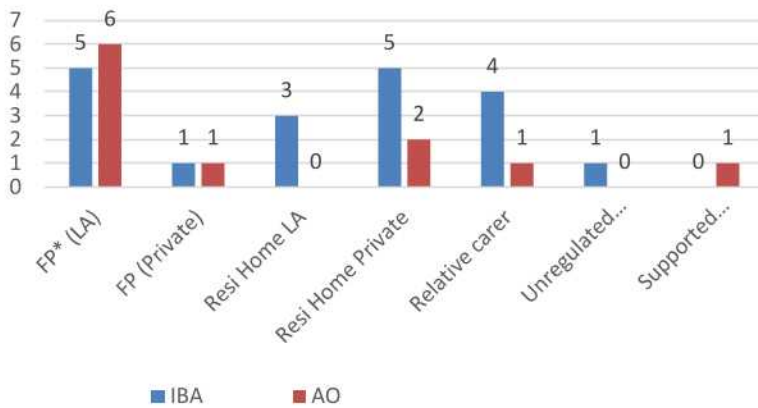
AO Legal Status



Most CE young people accessing IBA and AO in quarter two were again subject to full care orders.

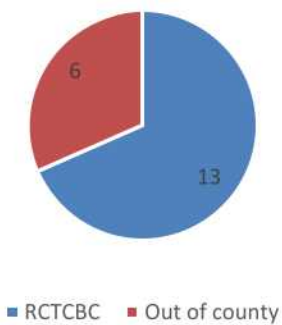
Three unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people were referred for AO but did not continue onto IBA.

IBA/AO Type of Placement

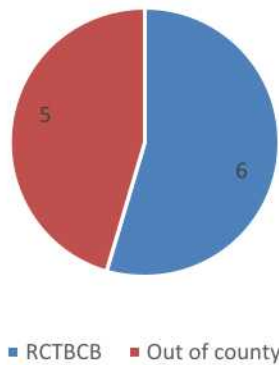


Most CE young people accessing advocacy services in quarter two were living in LA foster placements and community residential homes.

IBA Area inc. Care Leavers



AO Area



Advocates supported six CE young people living outside of RCT in quarter two. Other areas included Swansea, Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, and Pembrokeshire.

Five CE young person referred for AO lived outside of RCT, Newport, the Vale of Glamorgan and Swansea.

Other information

Four CE young people with additional needs were referred for IBA in quarter two. Two have diagnosis of ADHD and one has a diagnosis ADHD along with Tourette's, while another has additional learning needs.

One piece of Non-Instructed Advocacy (NIA) work was completed in this period.

Visiting Advocacy

Residential Visiting Advocacy (RVA) 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. The RVA advocate is currently providing IBA to two young people living in RCT community homes.

A review of the RVA services was postponed previously to allow us to concentrate on recruitment and advocacy capacity. We had hoped to continue this piece of work during quarter two, but unfortunately, due to sickness within the team we have not been able to restart this work. We hope to restart this piece of work when the team is back at full capacity.

Service Information

The (C.E.) young people and Care Leavers advocacy quarterly progress report was shared at RCT Corporate Parenting Panel at the beginning of July.

The advocacy team manager was invited to the LAC Nurse team meeting in July but unfortunately the meeting was cancelled. Information about advocacy referral routes were shared with the team and we hope to be invited to attend a future meeting.

Following recruitment in quarter one, three new team members joined the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Advocacy Service in quarter two. These are, one full-time advocate, one senior advocate who will work 30 hours per week along with a new casual advocate. Unfortunately, we have experienced some sickness within the team in quarter two, with one full time advocate and the senior advocate having to take extended leave following medical procedures. Both team members are due to return within the next three to four weeks from which time, we are confident recent capacity issues will be addressed and allow us to respond effectively to the recent increase in advocacy referrals.

Conclusion and looking forward.

We are pleased to observe an increase in both IBA and AO referrals for CE young people in quarter two and note more CE young people accessed the service for the first time than in quarter one. We were also pleased to observe another increase in the percentage of eligible CE young people being referred for AO. We appreciate the detailed information regarding the AO take up we receive from the LA and 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 Ryan was 16 years old when he was referred to the advocacy service by his Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). In the referral, the IRO described concerns raised by Ryan's carers about his school placement and wanted Ryan to access advocacy services as there were differing opinions about whether Ryan was happy at school, and if he would choose a different setting if he were able to express his opinions. Ryan's additional needs mean it isn't possible for him to access the mainstream advocacy service, and an advocate was allocated to assess whether or not a Non-Instructed Advocacy (NIA) piece of work was appropriate.

Before arranging to visit Ryan, the advocate contacted both his carers and the referrer to gather information on his communication methods, and any other information about his triggers or anything that would indicate he was uncomfortable with the advocates presence as Ryan was unable to consent to a visit from the advocate.

The advocate also gathered information from those that know Ryan best, about the most appropriate place to visit him and any information relating to safeguarding.

Action The advocate then visited Ryan several times in different settings, making detailed notes of both Ryan's behaviours and interactions, and any other information, specifically about how Ryan communicates his likes and dislikes offered by Ryan's care givers both at school and at home.

Outcome After the observations were complete, the advocate produced an NIA report, outlining the observation visits and posing questions based on those observations. The questions centred around Ryan's school placement being able to offer him opportunities to express choice and influence in his daily life, as well as express his individuality supported by those who have a relationship with him and understand his limited communication. The questions are designed to encourage decision makers to think about Ryan's situation from his point of view, as he is unable to clearly share his wishes and feelings. The report was shared with the IRO who made the referral and was considered in the discussions around Ryan's school placement.