

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

Quarter Four January 2024 – March 2024



Activity Overview

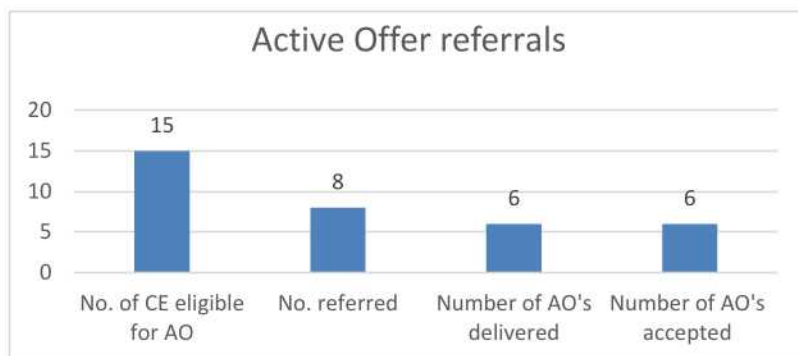
In quarter four, 41 young people accessed Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) and 32 young people were referred for the Active Offer (AO) across RCT.

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

In quarter four, 18 CE young people accessed IBA, just one less than in the previous quarter. Those 18 young people presented with 21 issues. No care leavers were referred for IBA in quarter four. Eight care experienced young people were referred for the AO, two less than in quarter three.



In quarter four, two of the 18 CE young people accessing IBA were doing so for the first time.



Four of eight the CE young people referred for AO in quarter four became eligible for AO in the same quarter whilst two became eligible in the previous quarter. The remaining two young people did not appear on the

spreadsheet provided by RCT, but are likely to have become eligible in previous quarters but initially turned down an AO referral when it was offered by their social worker.

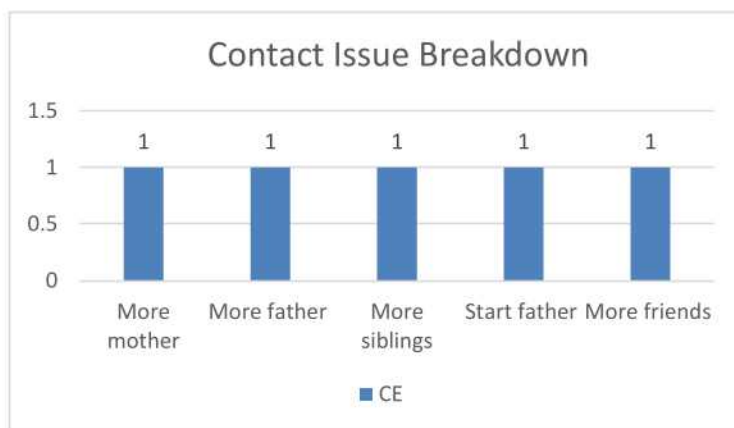
Five of the 15 young people who became eligible for AO via the CLA pathway were recorded as rejecting the opportunity to receive the AO in quarter four. There were no reasons recorded.

Five young people are recorded as accepting the opportunity to meet with an advocate and all five were referred for AO. Six young people were recorded as rejecting the opportunity to receive the AO. There were no reasons recorded for three of those young people, one young person did not want to talk to anyone else and the reason stated for the remaining two young people was that they did not have capacity to understand. Two young people were not recorded as either accepting or rejecting the opportunity to receive the AO, but the social worker stated that they wanted to think about it and would decide later. We do not know if

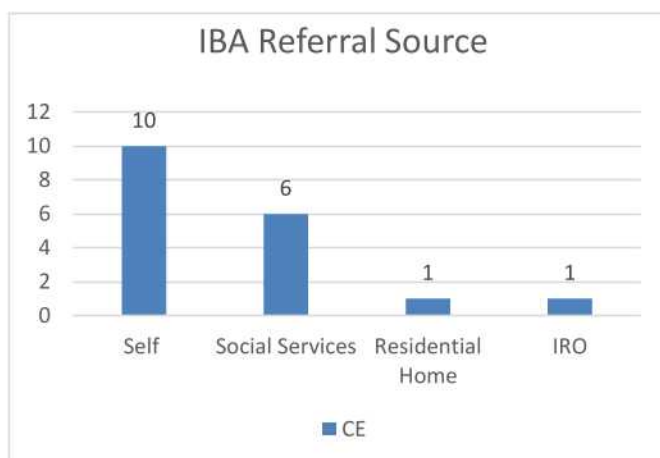
the three remaining eligible CE young people have been offered the opportunity to receive the AO by their social worker as this is not recorded on the spreadsheet provided by RCT, although we note it is likely this information will be available in the coming months. This means 33% of eligible C.E. young people were referred in quarter four, although we know at least 87% of those eligible had a conversation with their social worker about advocacy.



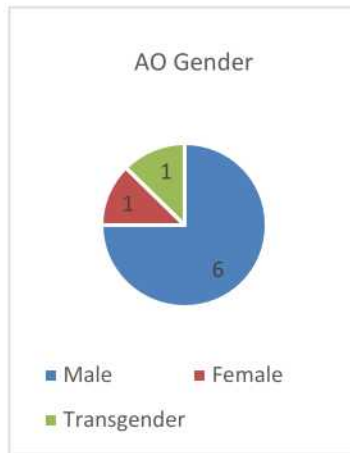
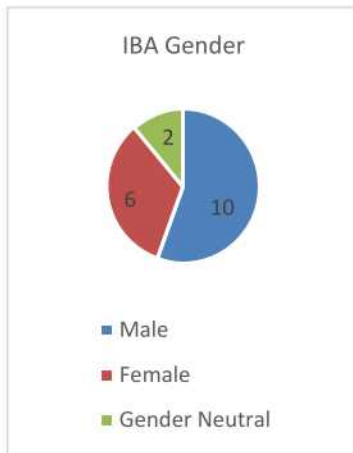
The most popular issues in need of advocacy support in quarter four were again placement followed by contact issues. We have plans to collect more detailed information in relation to placement issues in coming quarters.



Five young people presented with contact issues. In quarter four, all five young people wanted to start spending time with a family member or members, or have more time with a family members or friends.

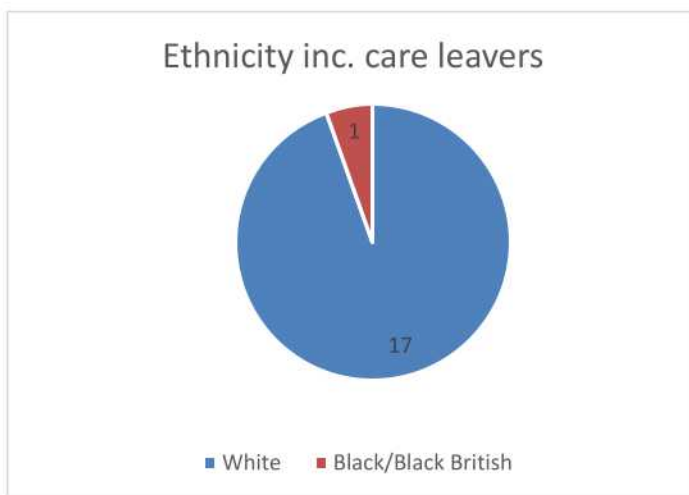


'Self-referral' and Social Services referrals continue to be the most popular route into the IBA service for care experienced young people. Self-referral is usually either the result of the young person accepting the AO and going on to receive IBA, or the young person contacting their advocate directly with a new issue.

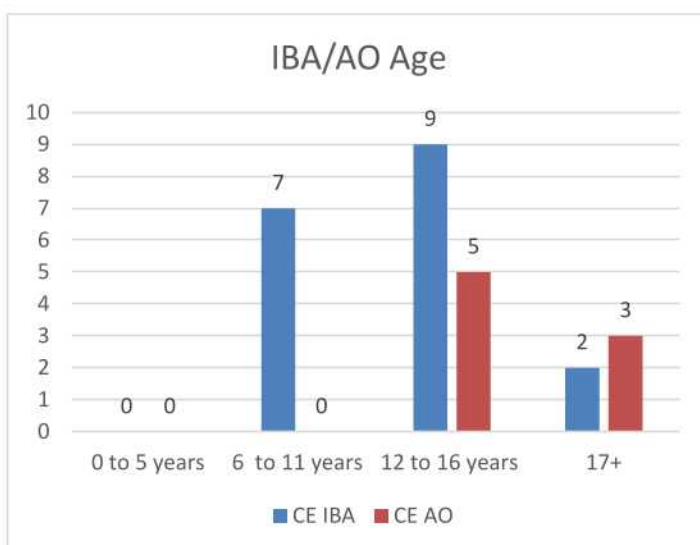


As in the previous quarter, most IBA referrals were for males in quarter four. Referrals for females decreased slightly and two gender neutral young people were also referred for IBA in quarter four.

Only one female was referred for AO in quarter four, along with six males and one transgender young person.

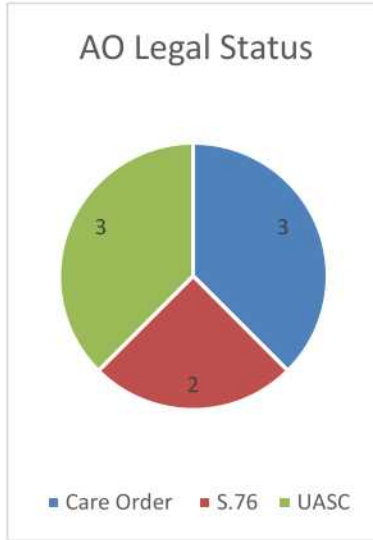
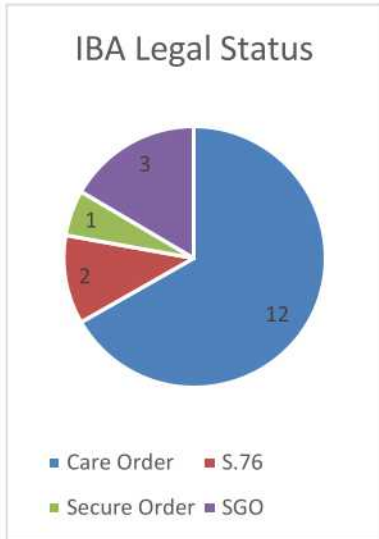


Most CE young people accessing IBA services in quarter four described themselves as white.



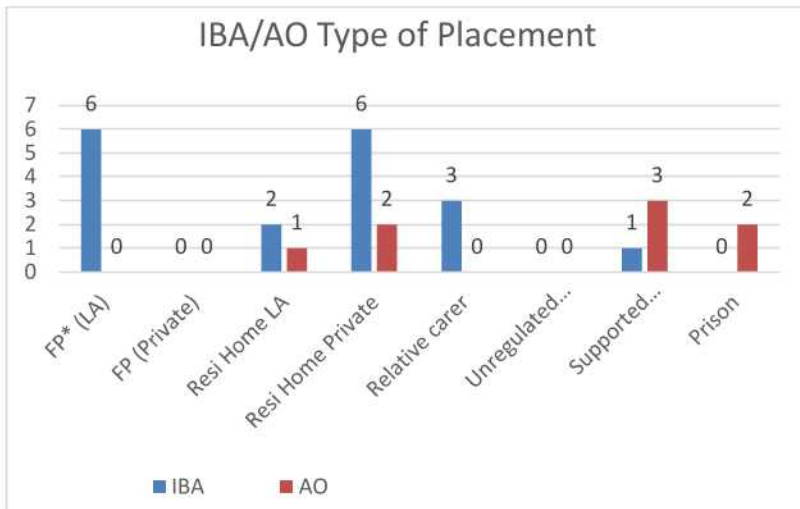
As in the previous quarter, most young people accessing IBA in quarter four were aged between 12 and 16 years, although we also observed an increase in young people aged between six and 11 years accessing IBA in quarter four.

As in the previous quarter, most CE young people referred for AO were aged between 12 and 16 years, no AO referrals were received for young people under the age 12.

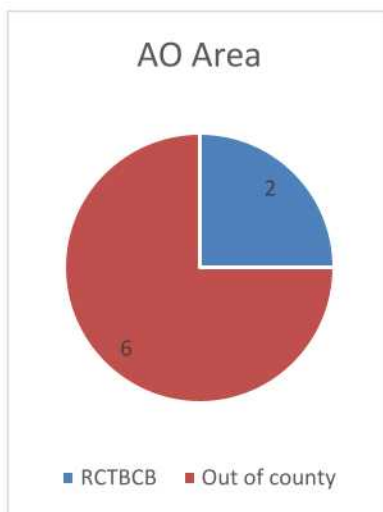
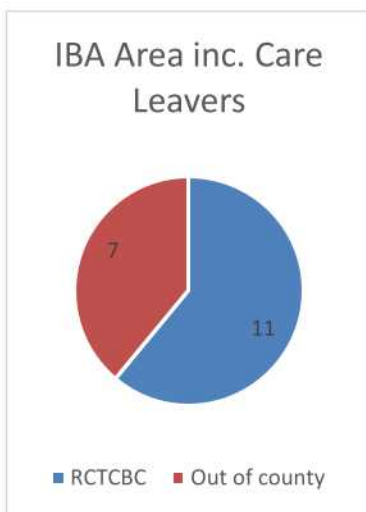


Most CE young people accessing IBA in quarter four were again subject to full care orders. One unaccompanied asylum-seeking young person also accessed IBA in quarter four.

Three unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people were referred for AO in quarter four.



Most CE young people accessing advocacy services in quarter four were living in a residential care setting.



Advocates supported seven CE young people living outside of RCT in quarter four. Other areas were Swansea, Cardiff, Newport, the Vale, Carmarthenshire, and Powys.

Six CE young people referred for AO lived outside of RCT, in Bridgend, Cardiff, the Vale and Swansea.

Other Information

Two CE young people with additional needs were referred for IBA in quarter four. One has a diagnosis of ADHD along with Tourette's, whilst another young person has a diagnosis of ADHD and additional learning needs.

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. Two young people living in RCT community homes recently completed pieces of advocacy work with the visiting advocate.

A review of the RVA services was postponed previously to allow us to concentrate on recruitment and advocacy capacity. The current residential visiting advocate plans to retire in the next quarter and we have recruited a new advocate to continue the RVA in RCT. The new advocate will be responsible for completing the review of the service, which will start during the next quarter.

Service Information

The (C.E.) young people and Care Leavers advocacy quarterly progress report was shared at the RCT Child Looked After Quality Assurance Panel in February and at the RCT Corporate Parenting Panel in March.

Following recruitment in quarter three, a new full time senior advocate role has been created, and the successful candidate is due to take up the post at the beginning of April. A casual advocate has also been recruited to take over the residential visiting advocacy (RVA) role when the current RVA retires during the next quarter. We are confident this will ensure no gap in service.

During quarter four, the CTM team completed first aid training provided by the Red Cross, and three team members completed training provided by Pause, relating to supporting mothers through Care Proceedings.

We have arranged internal training for the team, in Non-Instructed Advocacy and Restorative Engagement, to take place during the next quarter.

Conclusion and Looking Forward

We are pleased to observe continued consistency in both IBA and AO referrals for CE young people in quarter four. We appreciate the detailed information regarding the AO take up we receive from the LA and note the high percentage of young people recorded as having the AO conversation with their social worker. 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 Sam is 15 years old and lives in foster care in RCT. Sam first met her advocate last summer and they have worked together on several issues since. Sam text her advocate directly and asked for a school visit to take place before her CLA Review which was coming up the following week.

Action The advocate contacted Sam's school and arranged to visit her as soon as the school had availability. When the advocate arrived, Sam explained that several weeks ago she had some suicidal thoughts, and this has resulted in several rules being put into place to keep her safe. This included not being allowed out unsupervised. Sam said she understood this at the time but had not had any suicidal thoughts for weeks and felt much better. Sam said she was upset that the restrictions were still in place, was missing going out with her friends and felt this was having a detrimental effect on her emotional wellbeing. The advocate wrote up a wishes and feelings report for Sam, and Sam asked the advocate to attend the CLA Review with her, to help explain her feelings and why she felt it was safe for her to be allowed out with her friends unsupervised again. They also discussed several other ways that Sam could let her carers know she is safe, and the advocate agreed to help Sam put these ideas forward at the meeting.

Outcome: The advocate attended the meeting with Sam, and supported her to share her wishes and feelings, including why she was unhappy, why she felt she should be allowed out with her friends and how she could reassure her carers she was safe. Following discussions and negotiations, with Sam being supported by her advocate, it was agreed that Sam would be allowed out with her friends provided she kept her mobile phone always charged and switched on, that her carers know who she is going out with and where she is going in advance, and that Sam agrees to check in using her mobile phone at agreed times. Sam was delighted to be allowed out to spend unsupervised time with her friends.