

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

Quarter One April 2024 – June 2024

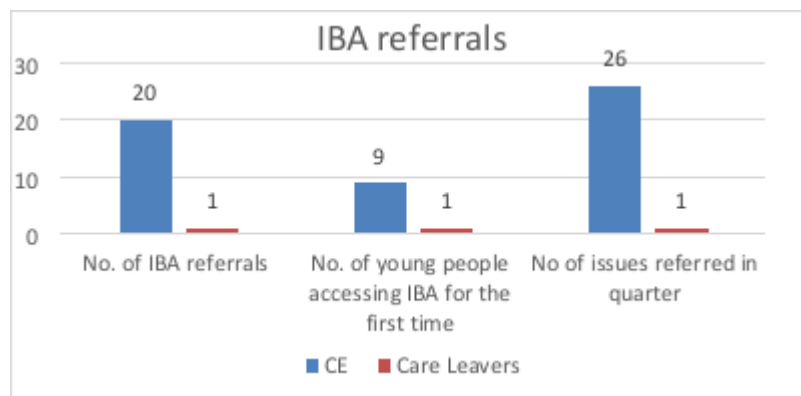


Activity Overview

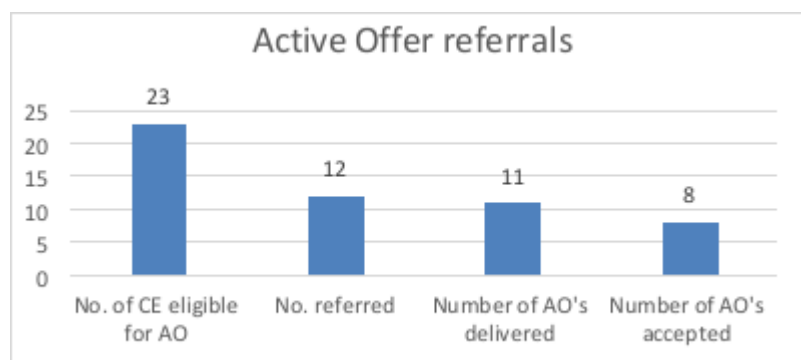
In quarter one, 65 young people accessed Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) and 43 young people were referred for the Active Offer (AO) across RCT.

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

In quarter one, 21 CE young people accessed IBA, including one Care Leaver, three more than in the previous quarter. Those 21 young people presented with 27 issues. 12 care experienced young people were referred for the AO, four more than in quarter four.



In quarter one, ten of the 21 CE young people accessing IBA were doing so for the first time.



In quarter one, 23 CE young people became eligible for the AO, and we received 12 referrals. 11 AO meetings were held, and eight young people went on to receive IBA.

Six of the 12 CE young people referred for AO in quarter one became eligible for AO in the same quarter whilst four 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.

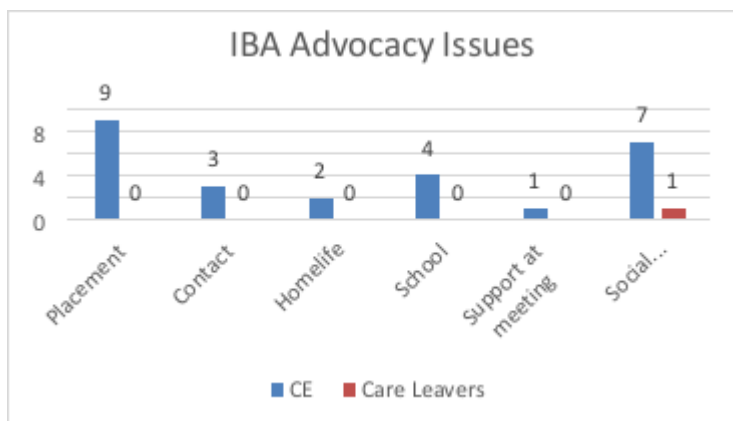
In quarter one, ten young people were recorded as accepting the opportunity to meet with an advocate following discussion with their social worker. Six of the 23 young people who became eligible for AO via the CLA pathway were recorded as rejecting the opportunity to receive the AO in quarter one. Reasons for rejecting the AO were provided for four young people:

Parents felt there was no need for advocacy: 2

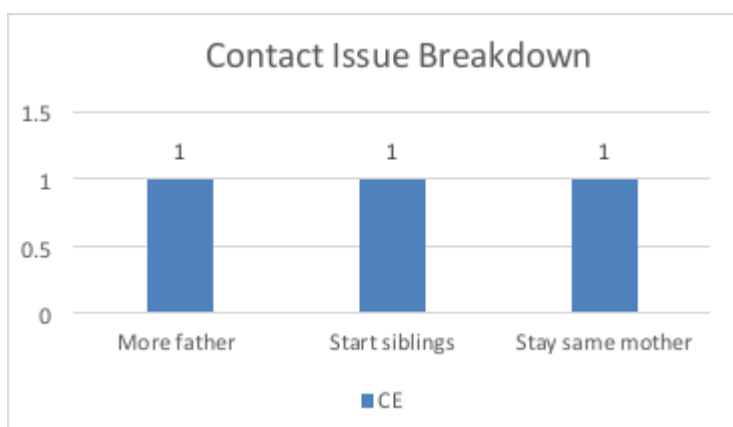
Young person didn't feel they needed advocacy: 1

Social workers decided not to have the AO discussion with three young people who became eligible, two because they were already in receipt of advocacy services from other organisations, and one because the social worker felt the young person wouldn't be able to understand.

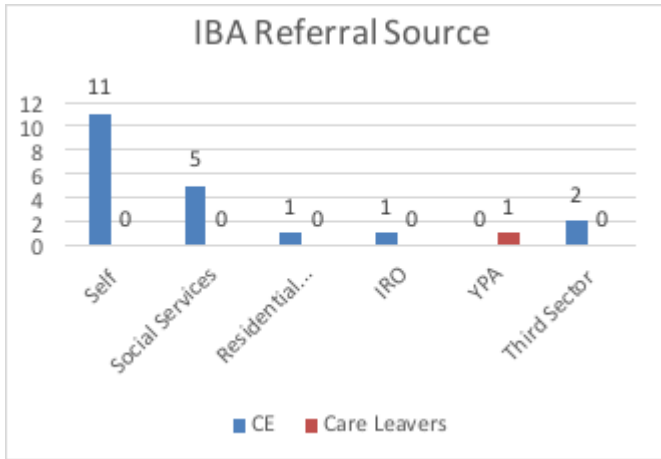
We do not know if the three remaining eligible CE young people have been offered the opportunity to receive the AO by their social worker as this is not recorded on the spreadsheet provided by RCT, although we note it is likely this information will be available in the coming months. This means 26% of eligible CE young people were referred in quarter one, although we know at least 78% of those eligible had a conversation with their social worker about advocacy.



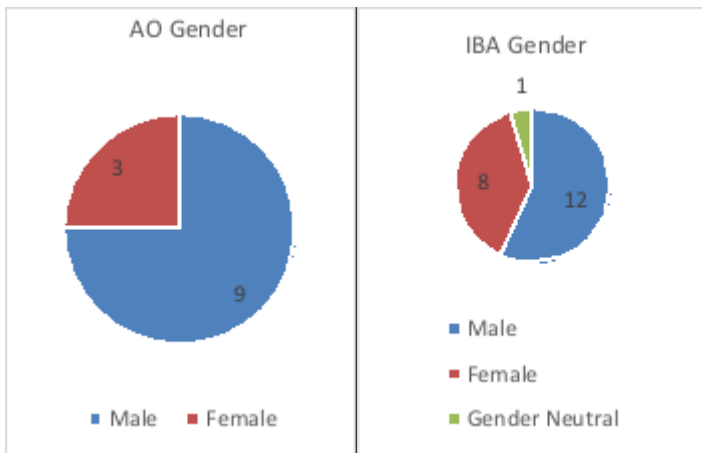
The most popular issue in need of advocacy support in quarter one was again 'placement' followed by social services issues. Most young people presenting with placement issues had issues with rules or relationships in placement or wanted to move somewhere else.



Three young people presented with contact issues in quarter one. One young person wanted to spend more time with their father, another wanted to start spending time with siblings and another wanted the arrangements in place for her to spend time with her mother to remain unchanged.

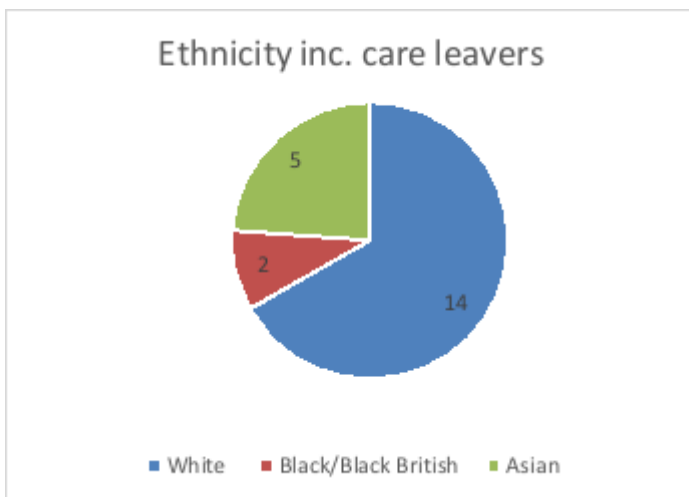


'Self-referral' and Social Services referrals continue to be the most popular route into the IBA service for care experienced young people. Self-referral is usually either the result of the young person accepting the AO and going on to receive IBA, or the young person contacting their advocate directly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

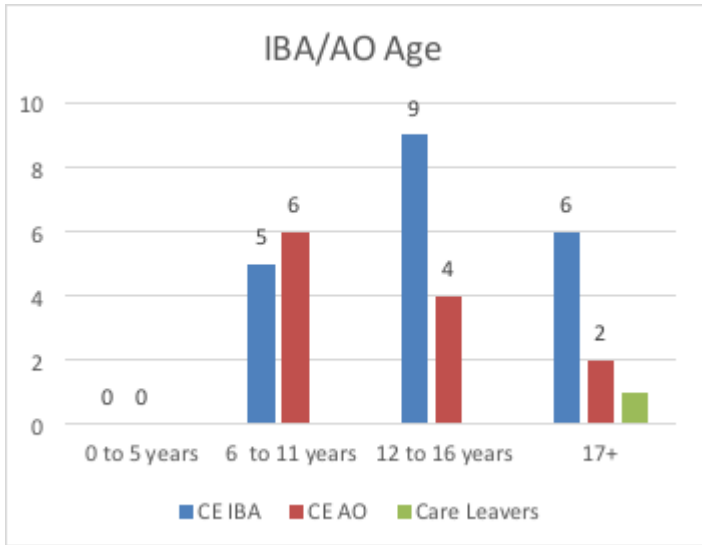


As in the previous quarter, most IBA referrals were for males in quarter one. One gender neutral young person was also referred for IBA in quarter one.

Most AO referrals were again made for males in quarter one, with only three of the 12 CE AO referrals being made for females.

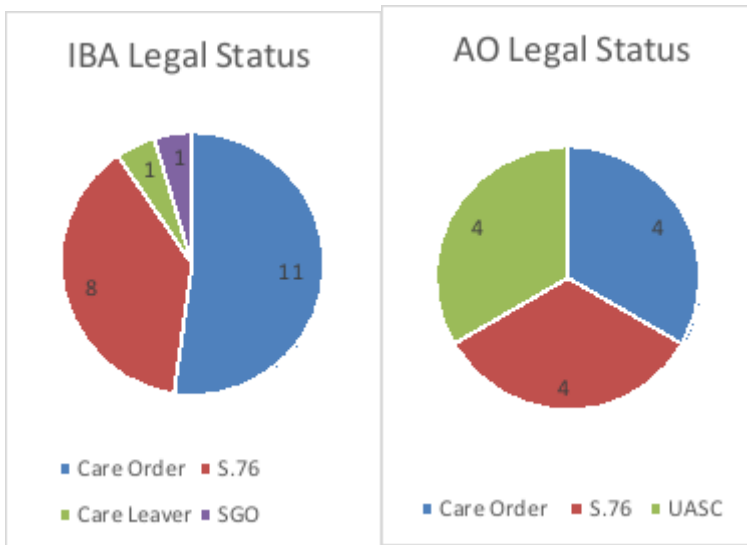


Most CE young people accessing IBA in quarter one described themselves as white.



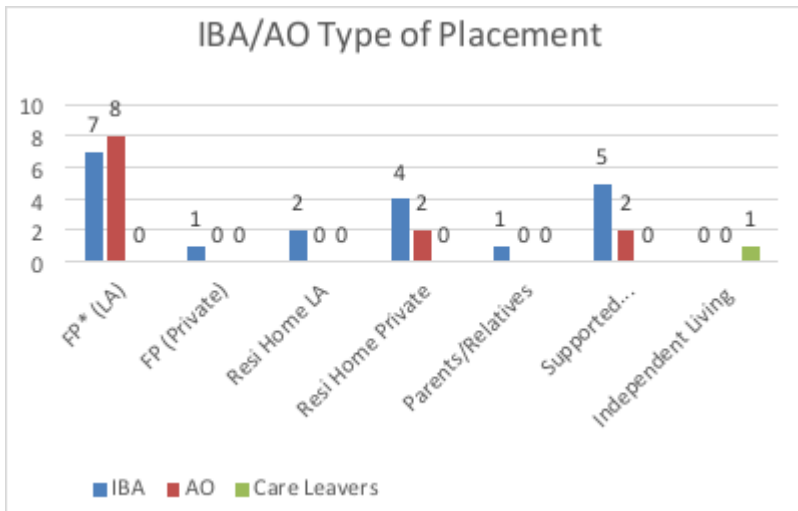
As in the previous quarter, most young people accessing IBA in quarter one were aged between 12 and 16 years, although we observed an increase in young people aged over the age of 17 years accessing IBA in quarter one.

In a change from the previous quarter, most CE young people referred for AO were aged between six and years, with an increase of six AO referrals.

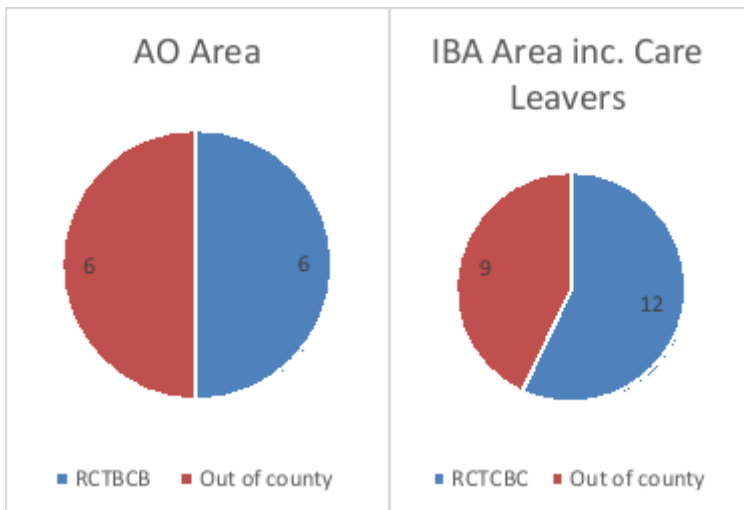


Most CE young people accessing IBA in quarter one were again subject to full care orders. Seven unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people accessed IBA in quarter one.

Four unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people were referred for the AO in quarter one.



Most CE young people accessing advocacy services in quarter one were living in a local authority foster placement.



Advocates supported seven CE young people living outside of RCT in quarter one. Other areas were Swansea, Cardiff, Newport and Carmarthenshire. Most young people living outside of RCT were unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people.

Six CE young people referred for AO lived outside of RCT in Newport and Swansea.

Other Information

Two CE young people with additional learning needs were referred for IBA in quarter one.

Seven unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people were referred for advocacy services in quarter one. They are being supported to access advocacy in the language of their choice via interpreter services. The languages are Arabic, Farsi, Kurdish Kur Manji and Vietnamese.

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.

A review of the RVA services was postponed previously to allow us to concentrate on recruitment and advocacy capacity. Following the retirement of the previous residential

visiting advocate, a new advocate has been recruited to continue in the role. The new advocate will also add Willowford House and Cartref Mynydd to his visiting list and plan a review of the service which will include consultation with both children and young people, and staff working in the community homes.

Service Information

The (C.E.) young people and Care Leavers advocacy quarterly progress report continues to be shared at the RCT Child Looked After Quality Assurance Panels and at RCT Corporate Parenting Board.

Following recruitment in quarter three, a new full time senior advocate role has been created, and the successful candidate started her role at the beginning of April. As mentioned above, a casual advocate has also been recruited to take over the residential visiting advocacy (RVA) role. A new Independent Professional Advocate (IPA), working four days per week has also been recruited, and we are currently in the process of recruiting a new full-time advocate to replace another team member who left the team at the end of the June, after securing a new position abroad.

During quarter one, the CTM team completed internal training in Non-Instructed Advocacy (NIA) and began internal Restorative Engagement training to be completed during the next quarter. We plan to offer some awareness raising in NIA to disability teams when the team is back to full capacity.

On April the 9th, the Care Inspectorate Wales completed their first Inspection of TGP Cymru's Advocacy Services. We are pleased to share the inspection report was very positive and include some quotes from the report below.

'The overall governance of the service supports a culture of inclusivity, empowerment and a rights-based approach in providing high quality advocacy to children and young people. Policies and procedures place children and young people at the centre of the service and supports them to express their views and ensure their wishes are heard and respected.'

'Children and young people are treated with dignity and respect and their rights and entitlements are upheld. Advocates are passionate about their engagement with children and young people. They ensure their voices are heard and they receive the right support and representation to contribute to decisions that affect their lives and have their confidences respected.'

The full report will be published by the CIW on their website in the coming months.

Conclusion and Looking Forward

We are pleased to observe increases in both IBA and AO referrals for CE young people in quarter one. We continue to 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: Linh is a 15-year-old unaccompanied asylum-seeking young person. He was referred to the advocacy service via the Active Offer (AO) pathway.

Action: The advocate arranged an interpreter to enable her to deliver the Active Offer of advocacy in Linh's first language which is Vietnamese. Linh accepted the AO and asked his advocate to help him share his wish to live with a foster family. His advocate shared this wish with his social worker who initially explained it was unlikely that suitable accommodation could be found. Linh's advocate met with him again to support him to share his wishes and feelings at his CLA Review. One of Linh's wishes was that the date of his next CLA Review be brought forward. This was agreed and the date for the next CLA Review was set for seven weeks' time.

Outcome: Linh was very happy his meeting was brought forward and happy to be told a placement with a foster family had been identified for him. Linh is now settling into his new home and his advocate will continue to support him to share his wishes and feelings as and when he needs support.