



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**29<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2018**

**NATIONAL YOUTH ADVOCACY SERVICE (NYAS) UPDATE**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, CABINET & PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Board with an update of progress made by the NYAS for Quarter 3 and to receive information in respect of the 'Active Offer'.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the Quarter 3 report attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Consider the information provided in respect of the 'Active Offer' attached at Appendix 2.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is important for Members to note the progress, themes and issues highlighted by the NYAS in order to work in partnership to ensure the best possible outcomes are reached for those in our care system.

**4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 As part of the Board's Terms of reference, the NYAS are invited to attend meetings to enable both the NYAS and Children Services to discuss issues that affect service delivery in the community on a strategic level and to work in partnership to provide improved and better outcomes.

**5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

**6. CONSULTATION**

6.1 There is no consultation required for this report.

**7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

**8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

8.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

**9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

9.1 The work of the Corporate Parenting Board links directly to the Council's Corporate Plan priority – 'Rhondda Cynon Taf's Children will receive a great start in life...'

**10. CONCLUSION**

10.1 The NYAS are invited to attend each meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board, to provide a broader understanding and contribution into the services available to young people and vulnerable adults.

## Regional Independent Advocacy Service

### Rhondda Cynon Taff Quarterly Report

#### Collated Quarterly Report

Quarter 3:

Date 1st October 17 - 31st December 17

#### Headline Report

##### REFERRALS

53 new referrals were received in the period which included 15 Active Offer of Advocacy referrals and 38 Issue based referrals.

Of the 15 Active Offer of Advocacy referrals made 15 Active offer meeting took place from which 13 of the young people requested further issue based advocacy support.

From the 38 Issue based referrals, 40 issues were supported by the advocacy service.

21 of the issue based referrals have now closed.

The majority of young people referred to the service this quarter were aged 12-16.

##### ISSUES

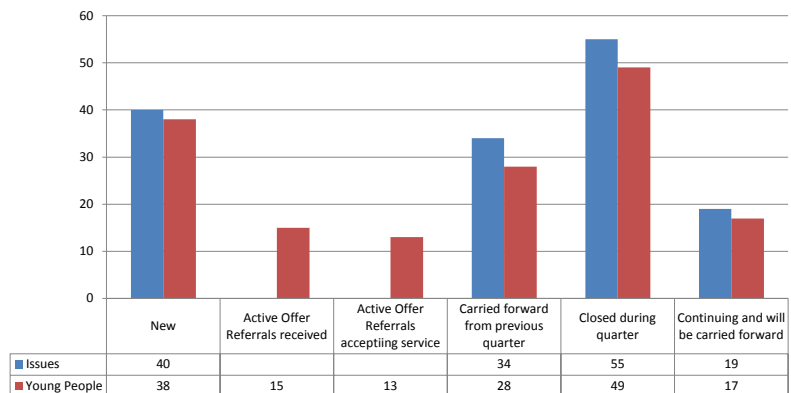
Advocacy support at Meetings was the highest referral issue this period.

We have attended, supported and represented children and young people at 29 formal meetings which included :-

13 CLAR/LAC Review meetings, 14 meetings for young people involved in child protection processes.

In addition to the service NYAS has supported 2 spot-purchase requests for an Appropriate Adult in Independent Age Assessments.

#### Advocacy Cases - Number of Issues and Young People

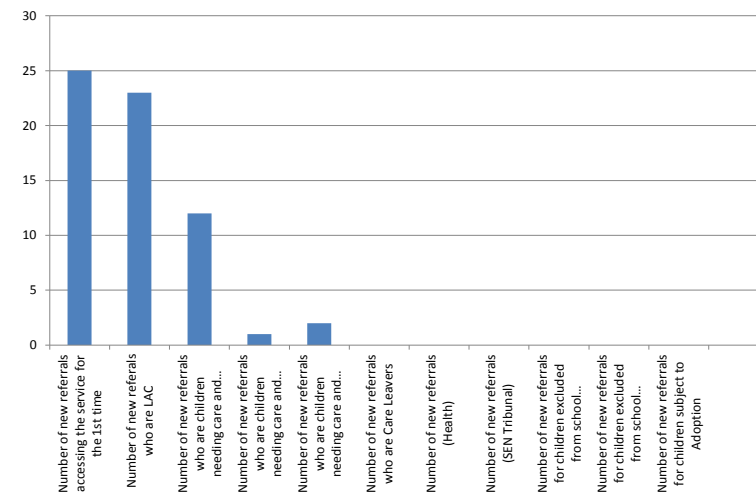


15 Active Offer referrals were received.

15 young people accepted the NYAS Introductory Visit. 13 young people requested further Advocacy support.

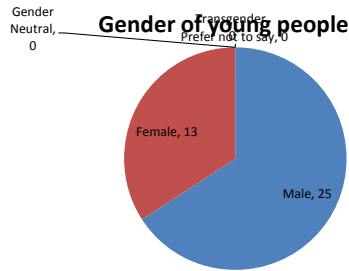
38 individual young people referred identified 40 issues requiring advocacy support.

#### Eligibility Criteria



**Demographic Information**

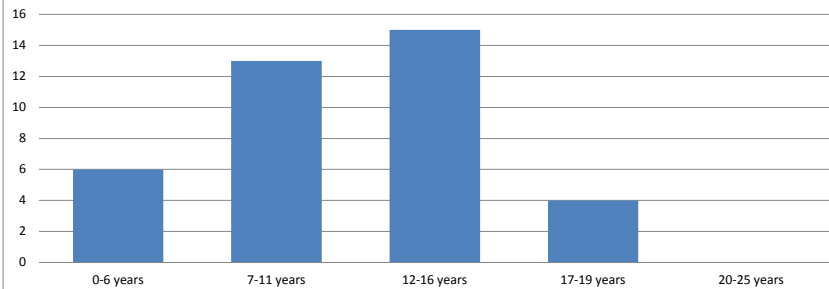
**Gender of young people**



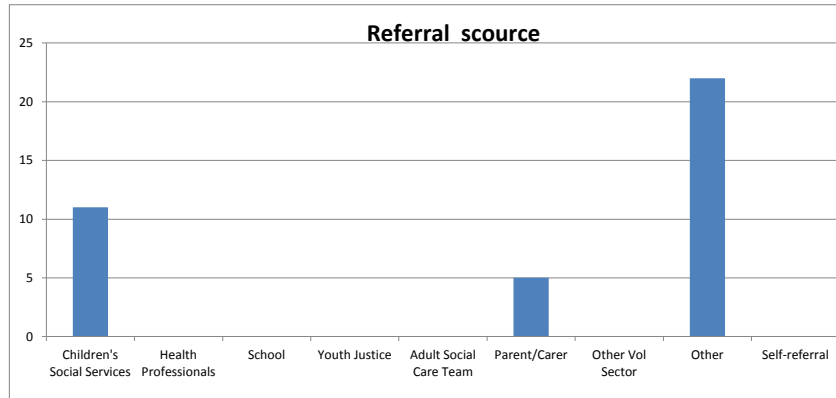
**ETHNICITY**

- Category 1 - White UK - 20
- Category 2 - White UK/Guyanese - 2
- Category 3 - White Welsh - 10
- Category 4 - Dual Parentage - 1
- Category 5 - Iraqi - 1
- Category 6 - Asian UK - 1
- Category 7 - Kurdish - 1
- Category 8 - Not Known - 1

**Age of Young People**

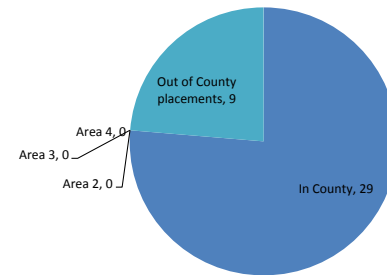


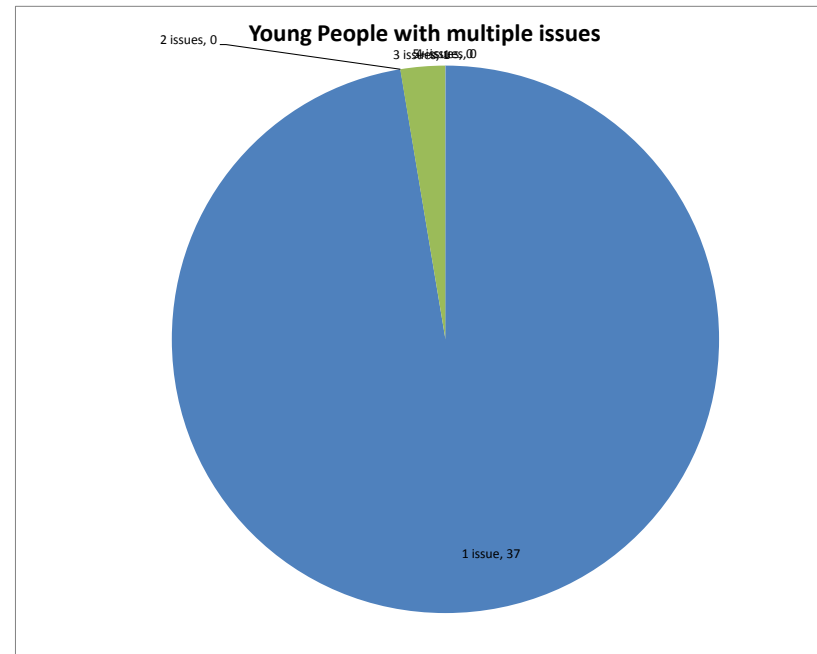
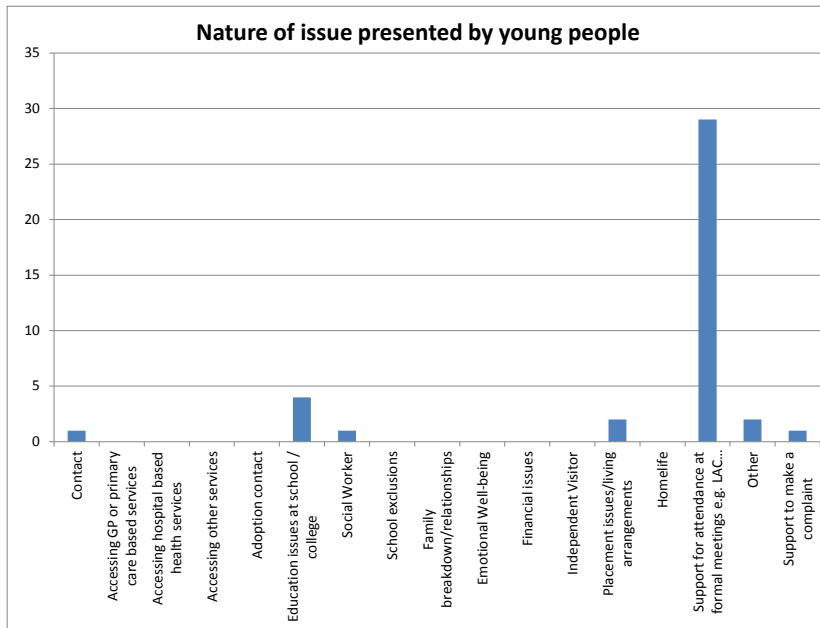
**Referral source**



**11 IBA Referrals for young people received from Childrens Services:**  
 East Teams -ITT East 2 - 2 referrals, ITT East-1 referral.  
 West Teams- ITT West 3 referrals.  
 16+ West Team= 4 referrals.IRO Team-1 Referral.

**Location of young people**





**Number of CP referrals made by Advocacy Service (+ outcome where known)**

**0**

**OUTCOME:** There were no Safeguarding referrals made by NYAS during the period.

**NATURE OF ISSUES (Other)**

10 Other issues young people requested advocacy support for included:-  
 4 Education issues, Family contact- 1, 2 Foster Placement .2 Leaving care and 1 to improve their relationship with their social worker.

**SUPPORT IN MAKING A COMPLAINT (Level and short narrative)**

**Stage 1 - Resolved.**

A young person was supported to make a Stage 1 Complaint regarding a refusal of consent to go on a planned holiday with foster carers. The Complaint was reviewed and resolved by the Local Authority and the young person was given consent to go to Germany during the October half term.

**1**

**Additional Information**

**Further narrative on issues/trends (Systemic)**

The Active Offer of Advocacy referrals and NYAS introductory visits accepted continues to significantly increase further advocacy support requested by young people involved in child protection processes. We have attended, supported and represented young people involved in child protection processes at 14 meetings this quarter in comparison to 3 child protection meetings in the same period previous year. Early indications are that the aim of reaching some of the most vulnerable children and young people is being met.

A new area of work within the Local Authority are the requests to NYAS to provide Appropriate Adults in Independent Age Assessments. At present this is on a spot purchase basis.

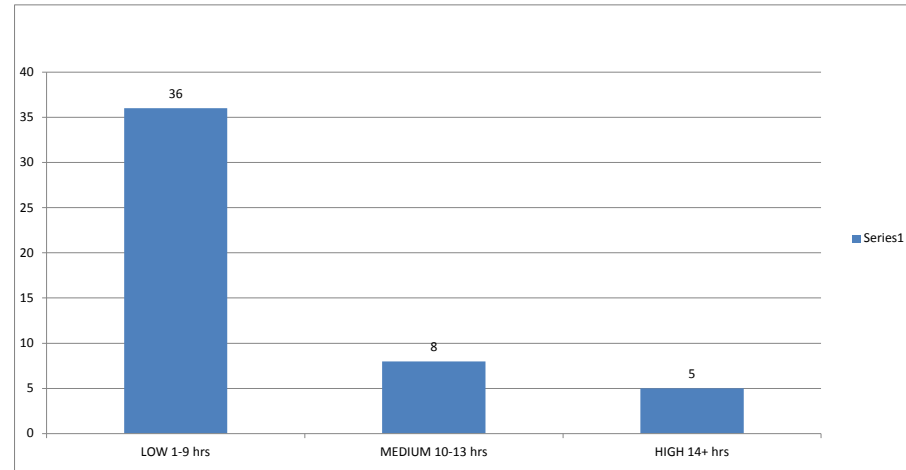
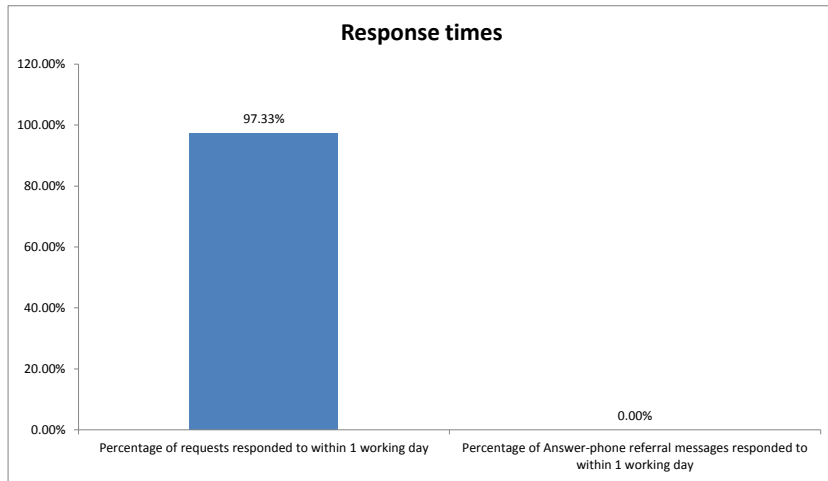
**Examples/numbers of cases where interpretation services accessed for young people**

There were 2 Spot Purchase where NYAS provided an Appropriate Adult in Independent Age Assessments.

**Requests to change an advocate (R80).**

There were no requests to change an advocate this quarter.

**Service Performance**



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Number of cases closed - feeling advocacy had helped</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>44</b> |
| 24 NYAS Feedback Forms were received. ALL young people felt NYAS had made things better and they would recommend NYAS to someone else.<br>Direct feedback provided included:-"Advocates are really good with young people and take you seriously Also I would recommend NYAS to Others to help you put your point across." |           |
| <b>Number of cases closed - not happy with response received from authority</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>0</b>  |
| Comments: Of the 21 cases closed no young people unhappy with the response received from the local authority.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |           |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>0</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Number of complaints received about the advocacy services</b>  |
| There were no complaints made regarding the advocacy service this quarter.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                   |
| <b>39</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Number of compliments received about the advocacy services</b> |
| Direct feedback received:- "I am happy with the Advocacy support I had in my Meetings to get more information and understand everything better. Now that I know who to ask and how and when to speak in my Meetings I dont think I will need Advocacy next time. I would definitely tell other young people about Advocacy and to phone you/NYAS if they needed help." |                                                                   |
| <b>0</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Number of requests to change an advocate</b>                   |
| No young people requested to change an advocate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                   |

## **Additional Information**

### ***Case Studies - with Advocacy Action Plan***

**Case Study:- P -RCT young person-Aged 14 -Subject to S31 Full Care Order - Stage 1 Complaint**

**Background: Referral received via a Telephone call from the Foster Carer on behalf of the young person to the NYAS Helpline.**

P wanted to go on a planned holiday with the foster carers and family.

Since booking the holiday the foster carers had changed their employment with the Local Authority. I.E- Previously RCT foster carers to Merthyr Tydfil foster carers.

P had been refused consent to go on the holiday by RCT due to the supervision ratio of Adult-child going on holiday. For P this meant that he would be the only family member unable to go on holiday.

**Agreed Action:** P requested that NYAS contact Childrens Services to discuss the situation and see if consent would be given to attend the holiday. Following a series of telephone calls and emails no response was received and the half term holiday dates were close.

On the 2nd NYAS visit P then decided after exploring all options with the Advocate and having received no response to send in a letter of complaint. P asked the Advocate to send in the Letter and then feedback.

#### **Outcome:**

The Complaints Unit swiftly processed the complaint.

P was given permission to go on the family holiday.

#### **Feedback**

On the return feedback visit and case closure P commented "Thank you so much for helping me. When they said I could go I was over the moon. I don't think I would have got to go on the holiday or got an answer to my letter if you/NYAS hadn't helped me. I would definitely tell other people to ring NYAS and ask for an advocate if I needed to again."

3rd Party Feedback- The foster carer thanked NYAS for helping P and commented " It has really helped his confidence in having his letter answered and that it mattered to everyone that P was included in the family holiday."

### ***Looking forward - next quarter***

NYAS Partnership working with RCT -

NYAS are keen to meet to with the Local Authority to review and discuss service delivery and development.

Our last such meeting was in March 2017 prior to implementing the Active Offer of Advocacy.

New dates need to be set for NYAS Awareness Raising/Active Offer Drop In sessions and Visits to team meetings which NYAS were asked to revisit in January 2018.

NYAS welcomes the support and recommendations of the Local Authority to continue to develop an effective joint programme of work in 2018.

### **Networking**

NYAS delivered to a Multi joint Disabilities Team Meeting – Advocacy Awareness Training including the Active Offer of Advocacy.

National Safeguarding Week

NYAS facilitated Foster Carers Training RCT.

### **Publicity and Sharing**

All web sites and web information also updated. to include new Leaflets.

NYAS information leaflets and information for young people are currently under review.

**Participation Activity Peer Advocacy/Peer Mentoring- NYAS are continuing to offer young people the opportunity to become Peer Advocates/Peer Mentors or Mentees with regard to Education, Employment and Training.**

**Peer advocates are supporting NYAS in research around Hidden Ambitions.**

**This quarter saw the start of the Young mums project funded via the Tampon Tax. This project will provide advocacy and holistic support to young mums who themselves have been/are in care. The project will also deliver healthy relationship workshops.**

### **Staff training undertaken:**

NYAS staff completed updated Age Assessment Training -Role of the Appropriate Adult in IAA Assessments.

NYAS staff updated their Level 3 Safeguarding Children Training- 'From Recognition to Response.'

National Safeguarding Week- NYAS staff attended Multi-Agency Training which included sessions from TAF Advisors, Barnardos and Human Trafficking, Drug and CSE

### **Service Improvements**

#### **Recommendations/Suggestions**

As a crucial and key priority NYAS would like to continue to work with the Local Authority in ensuring that all children and young people are aware of the advocacy service and how to access it.

NYAS have requested dates for our joint Monitoring and Contract Review Meetings NYAS welcome the opportunity to discuss collaborative working with the Local Authority continuing to ensure a robust and effective referral process is established and all practitioners are aware of the Active Offer of Advocacy.

## Briefing paper – National Statutory Advocacy Approach

The national approach to advocacy for children and young people, known to children services departments will be introduced to working practice as of the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017.

The national approach model places a duty on children's services staff to ensure all children and young people who –

- Become looked after 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017
- Become part of child protection procedures

Advocacy is required to be “actively offered” by the social worker at a meeting with the child or young person.

For children and young people in receipt of services, via a care and support plan the social worker should offer and inform them of the accessibility of the service and make a referral on their behalf where consent has been given. This offer of issue based advocacy should be recorded on the child/young person's children services file.

### **What is the active offer?**

The “Active Offer” of advocacy is in place to ensure all children and young people are offered a “face to face” 1 hour meeting with the commissioned advocacy provider when they first become known to children's service departments and thereafter at key transitional times, for example – LAC reviews, placement moves and conference meetings. During this meeting the advocacy provider will –

- Discuss the advocacy service
- Inform of rights and entitlements
- Provide information on services and support available to the child/young person
- Inform child/young person of the Children's Services Complaints Procedure.

Social care staff need to record details internally that the “active offer” of advocacy has been made available and make the relevant referral to the advocacy provider if the child/young person consents to a meeting.

The advocacy provider will provide monitoring information via the National Reporting Template on all activity relating to the active offer and ongoing case work.

The provider will compare and contrast the number of active offers provided by Social Workers to the child/young person and the numbers who go onto receive the active offer and case work.

The following flow chart will provide information to support staff of the referral process agreed.



NB – Children and young people should be reminded of advocacy services throughout the time they are receiving support from children’s services departments.

## Active offer flow chart

### Stage 1 – Active offer

(Social Worker to explain in brief the advocacy service and offer a face to face meeting with advocacy provider – Social Worker to record offer and outcome)



### Stage two – Referral to advocacy provider

(If the child/young person has agreed to meet with the advocacy provider the Social Worker should make an active offer referral to the service using the online referral form @nyas.net)



### Stage 3 – Active offer meeting

(On receipt of the referral the advocacy provider will contact the child/young person and agree a meeting date, time and venue. The advocacy provider will with consent of child/young person inform referrer of arrangements)



(Once the meeting has taken place it is deemed the following outcomes will be reached)

### Outcome 1

*Take up of advocacy – If the child or young person feels the advocacy service can provide immediate support to a specific issue the advocacy provider will close the active offer referral and open a new referral for the identified issue and provide advocacy support. The provider will inform the named referrer of outcome which should be recorded within children’s services data management systems.*

### Outcome 2

Advocacy declined - The child/young person has identified no immediate need for advocacy support. The provider will provide service information, how advocacy can help and contact details for future support. The named referrer will be informed of the outcome which should be recorded on children’s services data management systems. The advocacy providers will close the active offer referral.