



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

21ST SEPTEMBER 2020

TROS GYNNAL PLANT (TGP) CYMRU UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Board with an update of progress made by Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the work undertaken by TGP Cymru, the content of which is attached at Appendix 1.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is important for Members to note the progress, themes and issues highlighted by the TGP Cymru, 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, TGP Cymru are invited to attend meetings to enable both the TGP Cymru 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...'

9.2 The work of TGP Cymru links to the Future Generations Well-Being Goal of a more equal Wales, by ensuring that children and young people are supported when decisions are being made about them. This ensures that young people have access to a range of information in order to fulfil their potential.

9.3 In addition to the duty to listen to young people and involve them in decisions, the Part 10 Code of Practice (Advocacy) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the duties to consider the provision of independent professional advocacy in certain circumstances for:

- Children who are looked after (who should benefit from an active offer of professional independent advocacy) or have previously been looked after
- Children who are subject to an assessment of need or a care and support plan or child protection enquiries

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 TGP Cymru are invited to attend meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board, to provide a broader understanding and contribution into the services available to young people and vulnerable adults.

National Approach to Statutory Advocacy

Local Authority Report - (RCT) 2020 - 2021

Collated Quarterly Report

Quarter 1: April - June 2020

Headline Report

During quarter one, 29 young people accessed Issue Based Advocacy, presenting with 46 issues. A further 19 young people were referred for the Active Offer. Advocates supported 12 young people living out of area in counties including Powys, Herefordshire, and Carmarthenshire.

Although advocates have not been undertaking face to face visits due to Covid-19 restrictions, we are pleased to report that every one of the 19 young people referred for Active Offer was able to receive the Active Offer either via a phone call or Face Time. Of the 19 young people referred, 95% had contact with their advocate within five working days, with only one young person speaking to their advocate within nine working days because of incorrect contact details provided by the referrer. Of the 19 young people referred, 14 young people accepted the Active Offer and went on to receive Issue Based Advocacy for the first time.

All 29 young people receiving Issue Based Advocacy had contact with their advocate within five working days of the referral being accepted.

Restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic have meant that advocates and young people have had to significantly adapt the way in which advocacy relationships are built and maintained. Advocates have reported that although nothing will replace the benefits face-to-face contact can provide, children and young people have been overwhelmingly positive and open about having contact with their advocate over phone calls and virtual applications. Advocates have quickly and effectively developed new and innovative ways of engaging with young people virtually, including introducing young people to their pets, drawing pictures together and sharing playlists. Despite the largely positive feedback in relation to virtual working, advocates have reported concerns such as not being sure the young person was able to speak privately, or if the conversation was being listened to by family members or carers.

Active Offer referrals have decreased from 35 in quarter four, to 19 in quarter one. Despite this decrease, the percentage of young people accepting the Active Offer and going on to receive Issue Based Advocacy has increased from 54 percent in quarter four to 74 percent in quarter one. Issue Based referrals have remained consistent with 28 young people being supported via the issue based service in quarter four compared to 29 young people quarter one.

We have continued to see more Active Offer referrals for males than females, and for more than twice the number young people involved in child protection processes than children looked after. This is consistent with previous quarters. During quarter four, more than half of the young people referred for Active Offer fell into the 12-16 age category, while in quarter four more Active Offer referrals were made for young people aged between 6 and 11 years. This helps to explain the higher take-up of the Active Offer during quarter one, as previously, young people aged between 12-16 have been more likely to access the issue-based service.

During the quarter, young people requested advocacy support at meetings 36 times, making it the most popular issue for quarter one. Young people mostly requested support with core groups, followed by CLA Reviews and case conferences.

We have observed an increase in males accessing the issue based service, with 18 males compared to 11 females receiving Issue-based Advocacy. Previously, more females than males have accessed Issue Based Advocacy.

One Care Leaver was supported to share his views in relation to transition at his Pathway Plan Review, while another was supported by his advocate to make contact with a solicitor.

Headline Report Cont'd

Towards the latter part of quarter one, advocates started to use newly implemented Advocacy Action Plans with young people receiving Issue Based Advocacy. The plans include a detailed 'review and closure' section, completed at the end of a piece of work with young people. This allows young people to provide feedback on whether or not they feel more included in decisions being made about them, feel more confident as a result of advocacy, feel advocacy made a difference to their situation or feel more knowledgeable about their rights. During quarter one, 13 young people were closed to the service. Of the 13 closed, six young people completed a 'Review and Close' form with their advocate. All six reported their advocate did what they agreed, that they know more about their rights and feel more confident as a result of using the advocacy service. All six also said they would use the service again.

Three young people said although they were happy with the service, they didn't feel it made a difference to their situation. One young person explained *"My advocate asked what I wanted but my brother wanted to stay where he was, I still can see him but I can't live with him"*. Although this young person was unhappy with the end result, they said they would use the service again, and felt more confident after having an advocate. This highlights how young people appreciate having the support of their advocate even when their issue is not resolved in the way they would have chosen.

Advocates are currently aiming to support every young person closed to the service to complete the review and closure form following the new Advocacy Action Plan implementation.

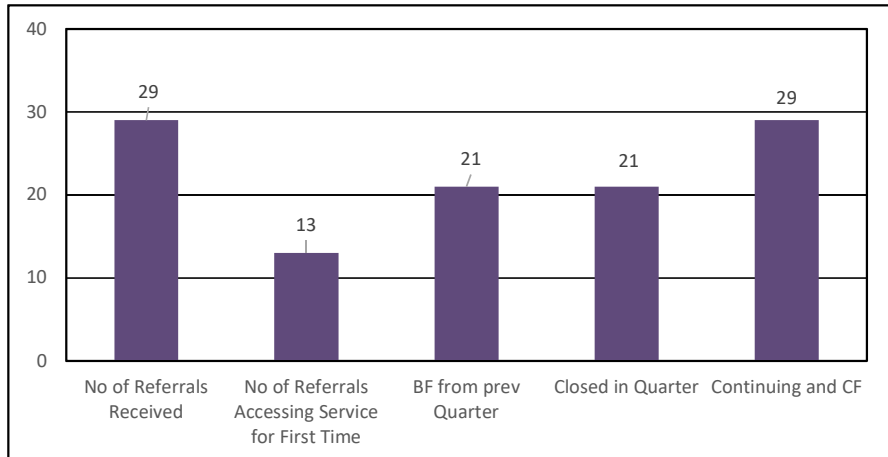
Case Example

Background: The young person 'T' asked for support with an upcoming Core Group Meeting. T had previously accepted the Active Offer and had met her advocate previously.

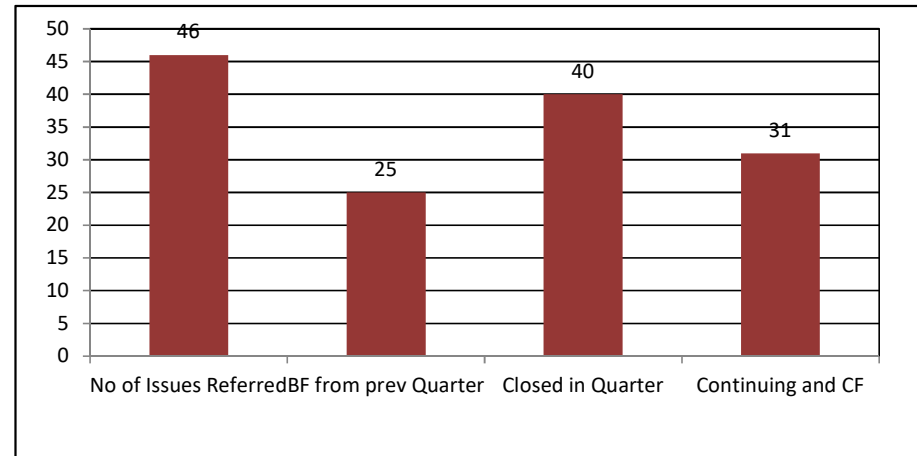
Actions: Due to Covid-19 restrictions, all contact was undertaken via phone calls or video calls. Because the advocate had supported T previously and built up a trusting and professional relationship with her, it was a comfortable situation for both to engage in a video call via WhatsApp, in private, to discuss T's wishes. After collecting and recording her wishes and feelings, the advocate checked with T that the information given was correct and that she was happy for it to be passed on. T wanted to share information about how she was feeling at home, especially in relation to the improvement in the relationship with her brother. T also had some questions including what else would need to happen in order for her name to be taken off the Child Protection Register. The advocate then compiled a report for the professionals in the meeting, outlining the information T wanted to share and the questions T had proposed. The advocate agreed to contact the social worker for an update following the meeting and to contact T to share and discuss any feedback.

Outcome: The advocate contacted the social worker following the meeting, then contacted T again by video call and relayed the outcomes. T was very happy with this as she felt the information she had shared was acted upon by the professionals to a positive result and that she had been listened to. T was happy to learn that, providing recent improvements at home were maintained, it was likely her social worker would be recommending her needs could be met via a Care and Support Plan following the next conference. The advocate asked T if she needed any further support and reminded her that she could get in touch at any time to receive advocacy support again.

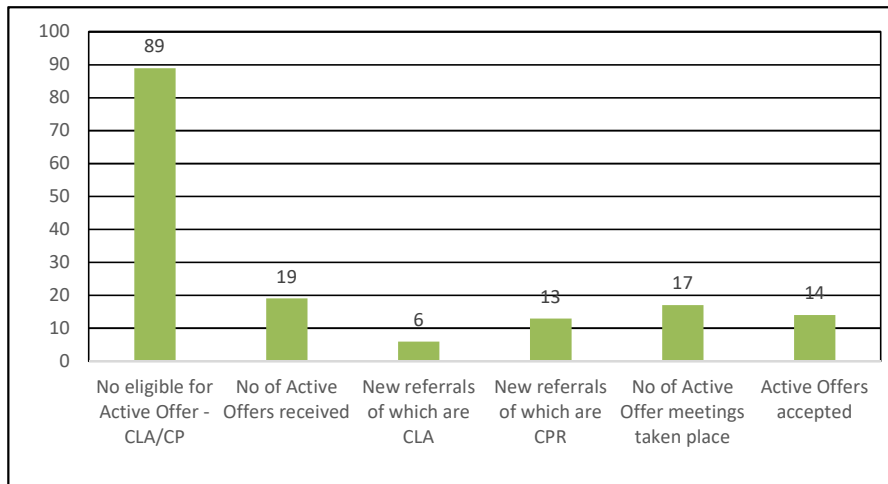
1a. Advocacy Cases - Young People - Issue Based Advocacy



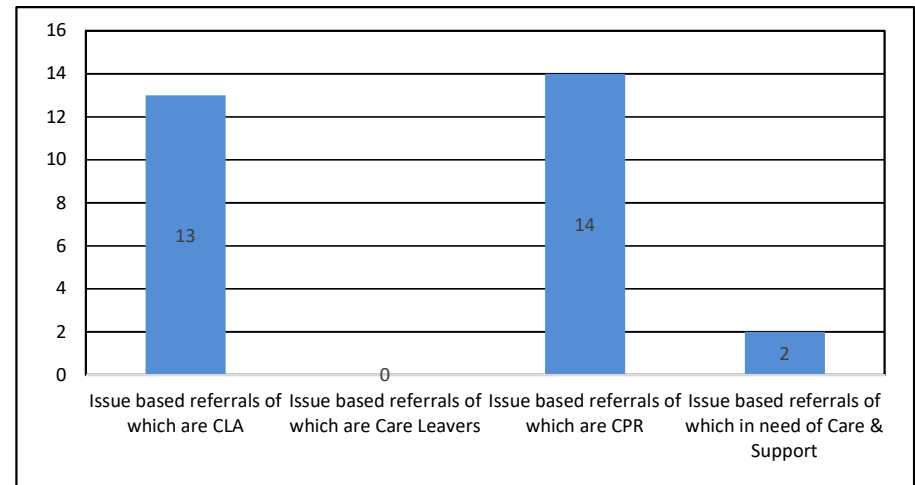
1b. Advocacy Cases - Interventions - Issue Based Advocacy



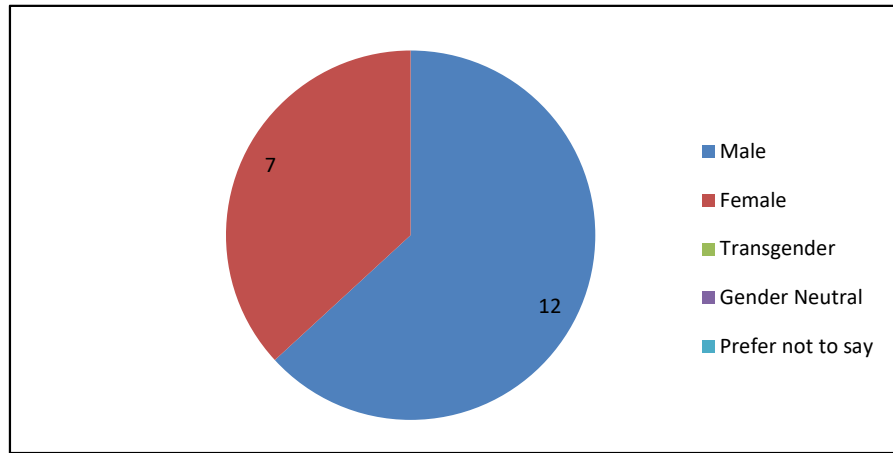
2a. Eligibility Criteria: Active Offer



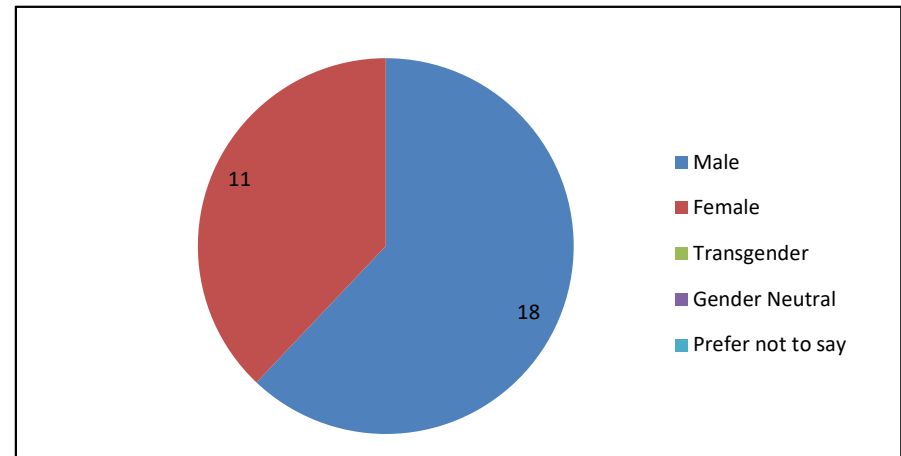
2b. Eligibility Criteria: Issue Based



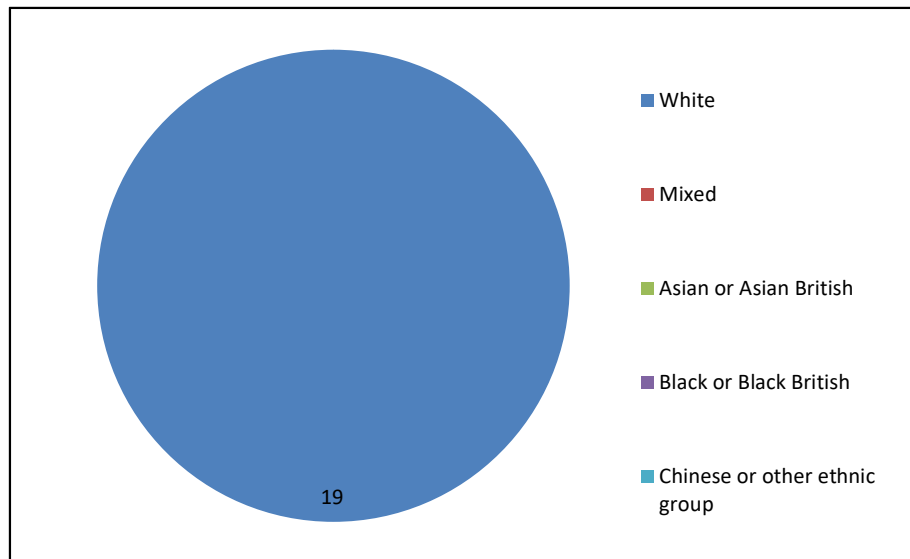
3a. Demographics: Gender - Active Offer



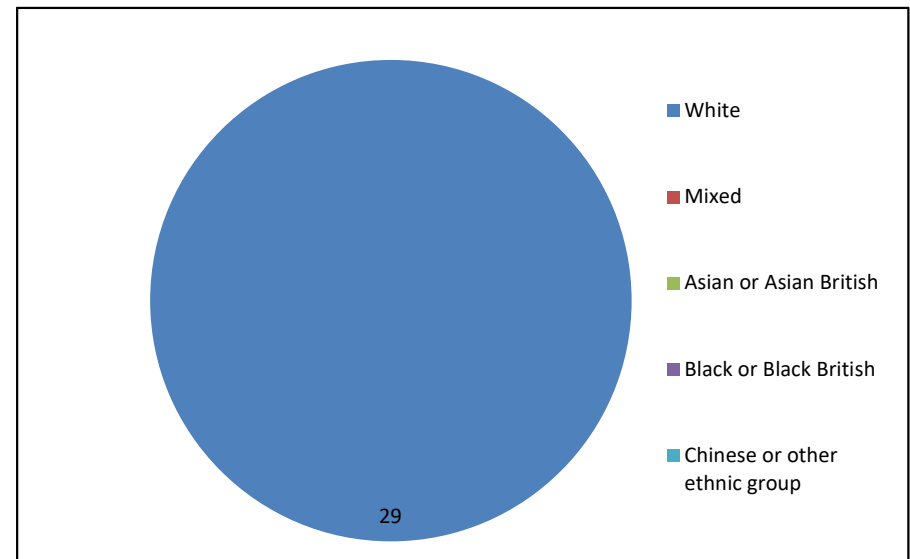
3b. Demographics: Gender - Issue Based



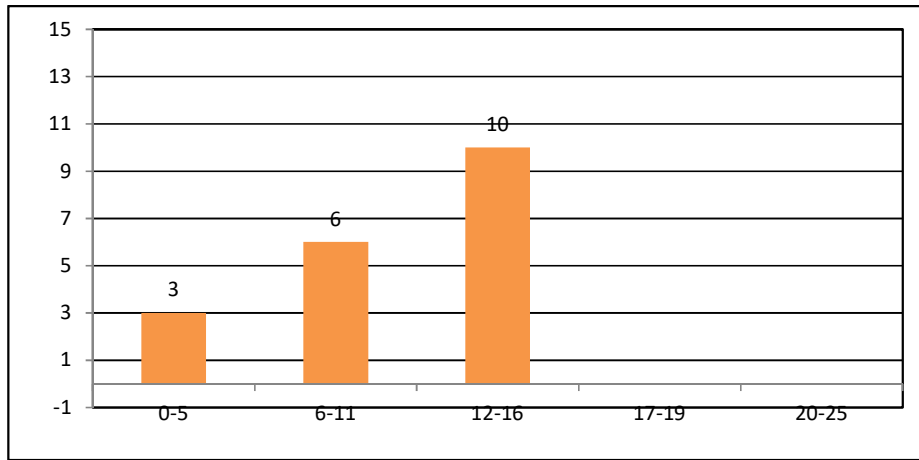
3c. Demographics: Ethnicity - Active Offer



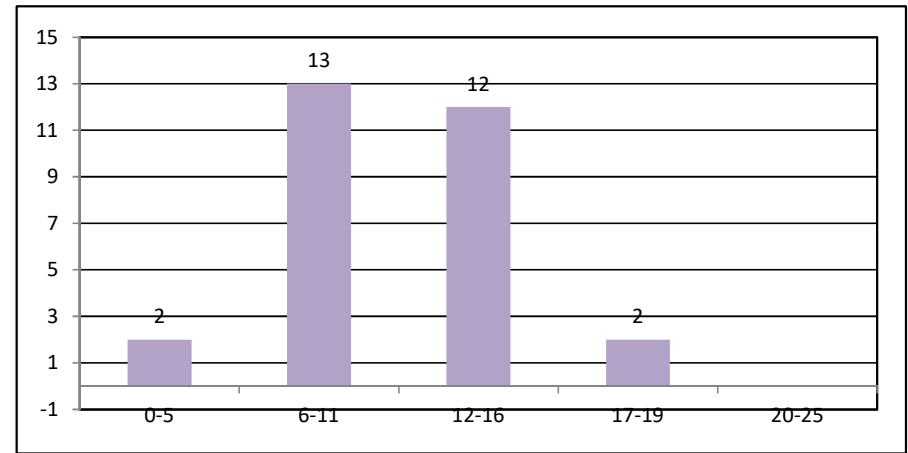
3d. Demographics: Ethnicity - Issue Based



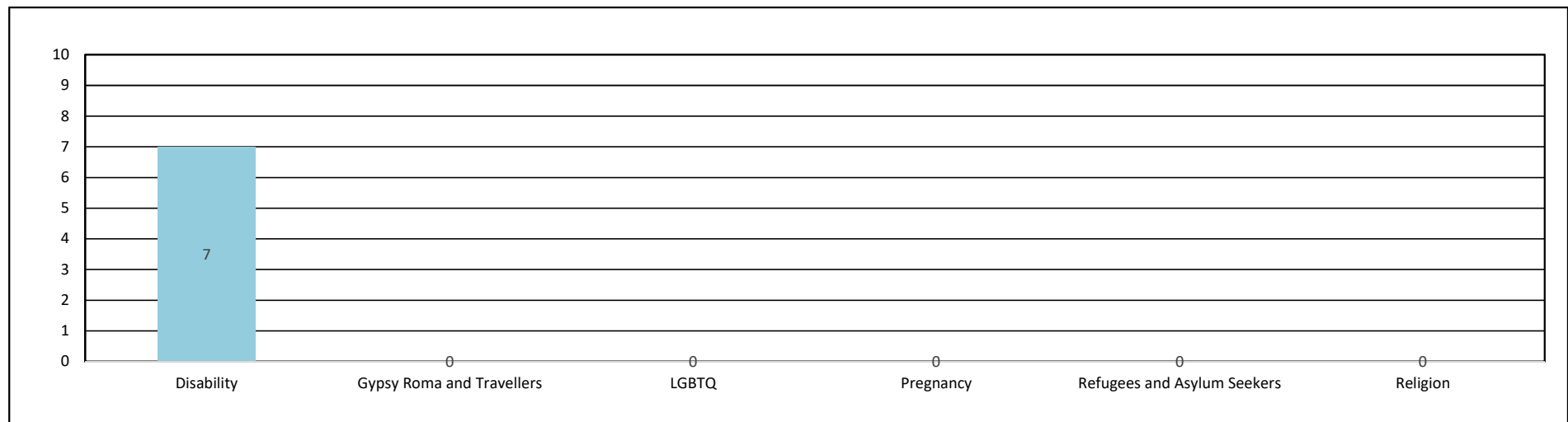
3e. Demographics: Age - Active Offer



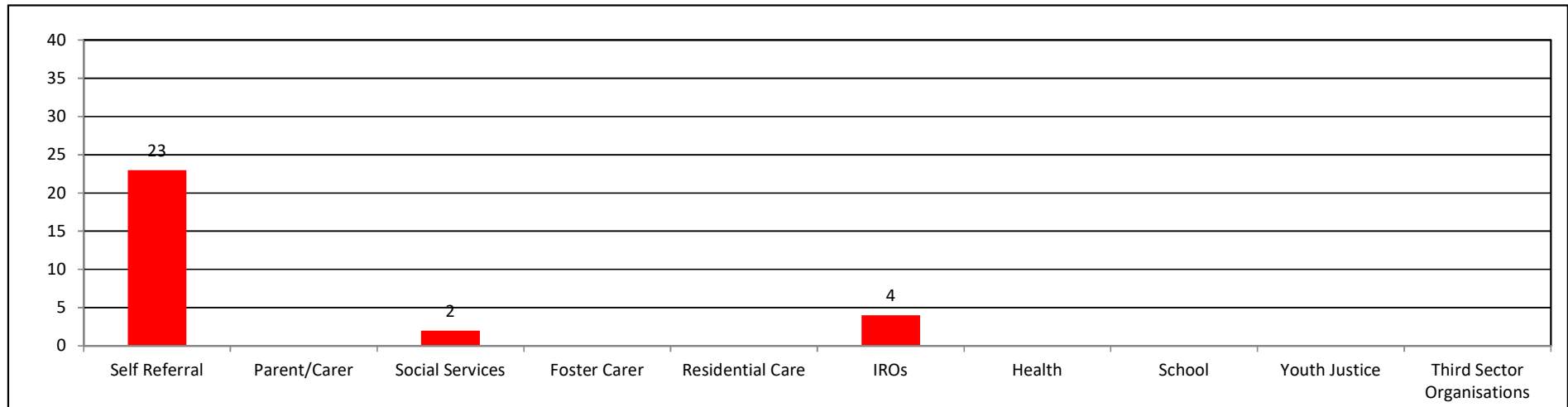
3f. Demographics: Age - Issue Based



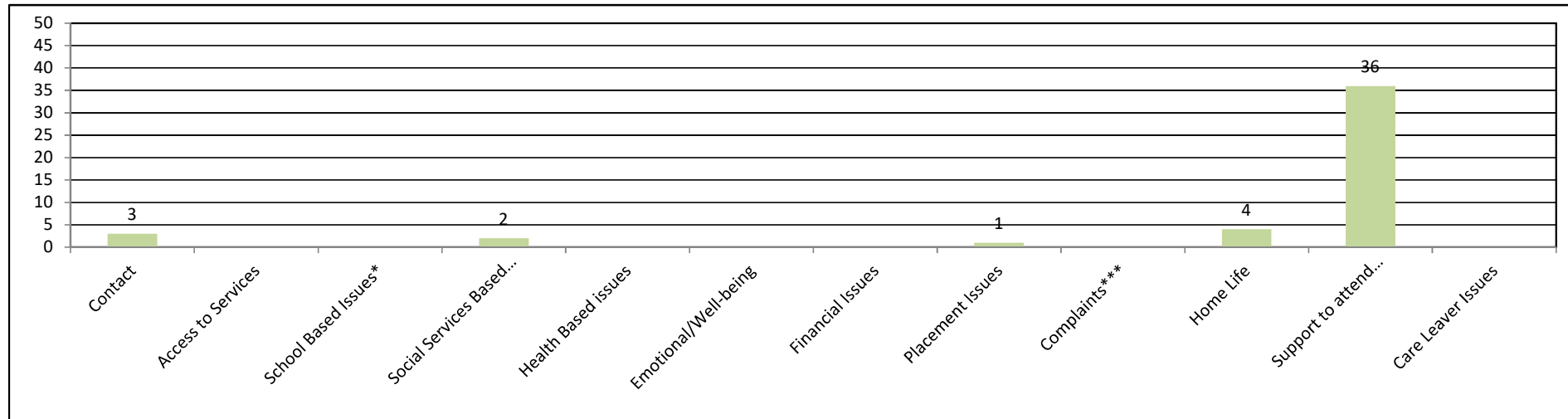
4. Protected Characteristics



5. Referral Source per young person - Issue Based only



6. Issues Presented

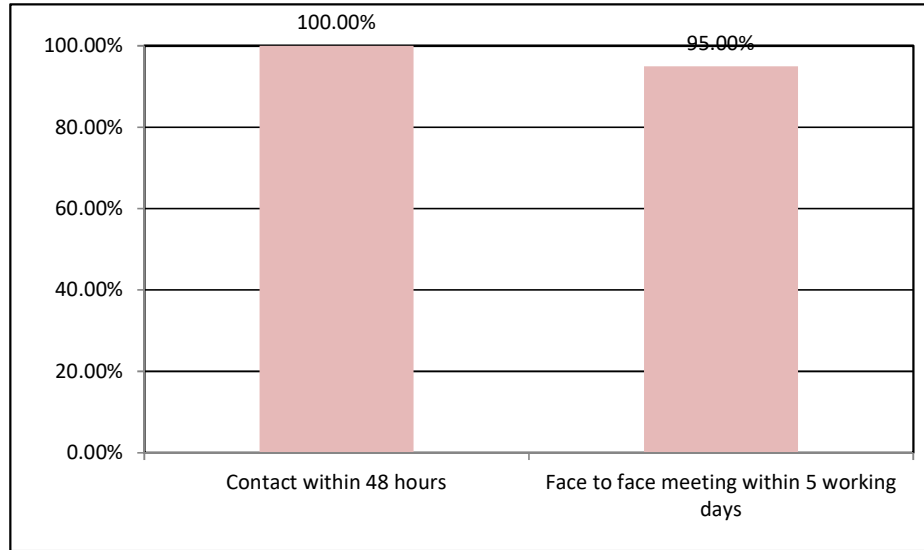


* School based issues including: SEN/ALN, exclusions, bullying, transport.

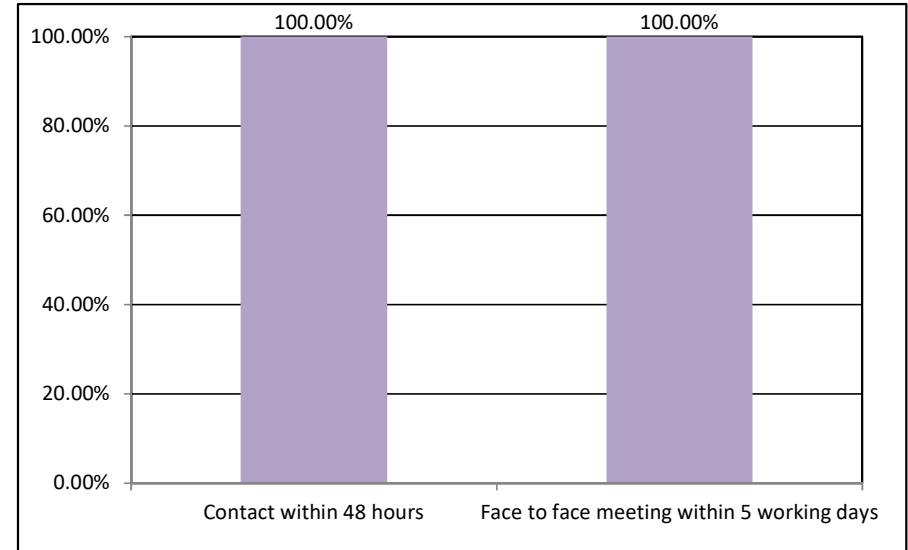
** Social Services based issues including: relationship with worker, care plan, service provided.

*** Complaints refer to any complaints made against statutory services, including Social Service, Police, Health, YJS

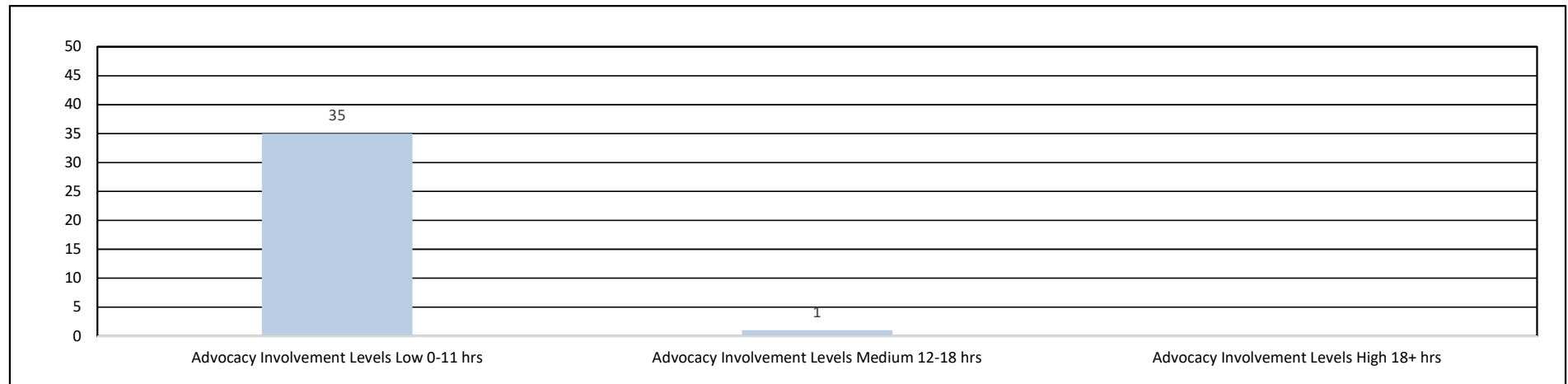
7. Service Performance - Active Offer



Service Performance - Issue Based



8. Level of Advocacy Intervention at point of Issue Closure



9.Outcomes: linked to The National Advocacy Standards & Outcomes Framework

		Comments
Outcome 1	Children and young people find good quality independent advocacy easily available and accessible.	<p>We are pleased to report a 98% success rate in young people accessing their advocate via a phone call or virtual means within five working days. Information about how to access the service during Covid-19 restrictions has been shared with practitioners and commissioners, and the usual phone number has been maintained. Throughout the quarter, referrers have been able to continue to make referrals either via email or via phone.</p> <p>Advocates have been as flexible and accommodating as possible while being unable to offer face-to-face meetings with young people. This has included being available outside of usual working hours and allowing young people to choose how, when and for how long they would like to be contacted.</p>
Outcome 2	Children and young people have their privacy and confidences respected and their wellbeing safeguarded and protected.	<p>Advocates have reported difficulties when explaining confidentiality and safeguarding, mainly when trying to do this over the phone. In some cases, it has also been difficult to ascertain whether or not young people have been afforded the privacy they need to speak freely with their advocate over the phone or virtually. This has sometimes been exacerbated by the need to use a parent or carer's phone to be able to access the young person.</p> <p>Some advocates have reported being included in 'round robin' emails from social workers, sometimes giving updates about families that they do not want young people to be party to. We are working with practitioners to ensure only information that can be discussed with the young person is shared with the advocate.</p>
Outcome 3	Children and young people are valued for their diversity, treated with respect and all forms of discrimination against them are challenged.	<p>We have not received any requests to provide the advocacy service in any language other than English so interpreter or translation services have not been required during quarter one.</p> <p>We have received enquiries in relation to non-instructed advocacy during quarter one, but after discussion, it was agreed that no appropriate issue existed and further information about the non-instructed service was shared with practitioners.</p> <p>Advocates supported seven young people described as having disabilities including ASD, learning disabilities, ADHD and Tourette's during the quarter.</p>
Outcome 4	Children and young people are empowered to take the lead in relation to advocacy services and their rights, wishes and feelings and championed.	<p>Advocates report overwhelmingly positive feedback from young people accessing the service, despite Covid-19 restrictions. Advocates have reported that in some instances, reliance on phone and video contact has meant young people have felt more able to instigate contact with their advocate themselves, rather than rely on carers or other workers. Self-advocacy is always promoted by advocates, and this has continued to be the case, one young person felt able to attend a virtual CLA Review herself following a conversation with her advocate.</p> <p>Of the 13 young people closed during quarter one, six agreed to provide feedback via the new Closure and Review part of their advocacy plans. One young person said "<i>I am going to contact Tony (advocate) when COVID-19 is over if I am still on the Register</i>".</p>

Outcome 5	Children and young people participate in the design, planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy services.	<p>During quarter one, there were no opportunities to involve young people in recruitment or service development, although we hope to be able to provide RCT young people with this opportunity in the future.</p> <p>We plan to use young people's data from newly implemented advocacy plans, to inform future planning, specifically around Covid-19 restrictions.</p>
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