



NYAS Rhondda-Cynon-Taff

Children Services Quarterly Narrative Report

1st September-30th November 2016

1. Progress of service this period.

- 21 new referrals were received in this period.
- From the 21 referrals, 25 issues were supported by the advocacy service.
- 30 cases were managed in this quarter.
- 22 of these cases have now closed.
- The majority of young people referred to the service this quarter were aged 11-16.
- We have attended, supported and represented children and young people at 13 meetings this quarter. For further breakdown and purpose of the meeting see RBA report card.
- Advocacy support with regard to LAC review meetings and placement were the highest referral issues this period.
- 8 referrals have been directly received from Social Workers.
- 4 referrals have been received from the Independent Reviewing Officers team.
- The following table will provide information on the number of referrals received from each team.

Team	Number of referrals.
Independent Reviewing Officers Team	4
Ty Trevethick/East 2	3
16+After Care Team	2
Disabilities Team	3

- Please note included in figures above the young people referred to the service include:-
- 2 young people with learning difficulties.
- 4 young people with disabilities these included:- Autism, ADHD, complex attachment disorder, and Arthrogyrosis, Cerebral palsy and global development delay.

Service Promotion, development and training.

- All information points within the local authority hold NYAS information leaflets.
- Newly recruited advocates have completed shadowing Senior Advocates in their work.
- NYAS staff have undertaken training regarding the Social Care and Well Being Act and Role of the Independent Person in secure reviews.
- Advocacy awareness raising sessions were delivered to young people and staff in Brynda and Beddau community homes. Also to the Manager and Staff Team in Nantgwynne which provides respite for a young people with a range of disabilities
- The 'Eye to Eye' Counselling Service also reported benefiting from a NYAS Advocacy awareness raising session. Identifying that many young people they meet with could

benefit from advocacy support.

- NYAS launched the Peer Advocacy and Peer Mentoring Services delivering for children and young people across Wales. The peer mentoring service which is funded by Comic Relief and is a joint initiative with Voices from Care will provide peer mentors who will ideally be care experienced themselves to support young care leavers to gain employment.

The peer advocacy service will enable care leavers and those who have used NYAS services to develop their skills and gain experience in the sector of advocacy. The Peer Development Worker has made contact with the 16 + Team and Children's Services to promote the service and we already have a number of care leavers who are interested in becoming Peer Mentees, Mentors and Peer Advocates.

- NYAS are aware and are concerned that there has been a delay in the implementation of the National Approach with regard to the offer of advocacy services.

The All Wales Advocacy group, which NYAS Chair has written to the Welsh Government and Children's Commissioners Office highlighting these concerns.

- NYAS 'Have your say' feedback cards continue to provide valuable feedback within the Rhondda Cynon Taff advocacy project. The results of which are used to make positive improvements to the service.

2. Themes and Issues this period

1. This quarter the highest number of advocacy referrals received, were for requests for advocacy representation and support at meetings. Though overall such referrals remain low. This remains a key area where referrals need to increase. It would be beneficial to meet with commissioners to discuss setting up an operational task group so NYAS and Rhondda Cynon Taff can work together to ensure all children and young people are provided with an offer of advocacy at key times.
2. This quarter we received a number of requests for advocacy support with regard to placement issues. Placement issues have also remained a recurring theme raised by children and young people this year. These issues have included young people requesting to remain in a placement where the plan was to move them. Or requests to move from a placement where the young people were unhappy.
3. Contact with family members also remains a recurring theme raised by children and young people. All referrals were for requests for family contact to be stopped, started or changed. NYAS will continue to advocate and recommend to Children's Services that this is an area that needs prioritising when care planning for children and young people. During this period children and young people have reported an improvement in being made aware of and consulted with regard to their family contact arrangements.
4. There were no Complaints made to the advocacy service this quarter.
5. NYAS is also able to report that Advocacy referrals with Education as an issue are slowly increasing. This is encouraging and is a direct result of NYAS Advocacy awareness raising sessions with relevant Teams. NYAS hopes to see this continue as more children and young people are consulted with regarding their Education.

2. Is anyone better off?

NYAS aim to achieve 100% feedback from children and young people at the point of case closure. From the 22 cases closed this quarter NYAS received 7 completed feedback forms in addition to the positive verbal feedback provided from 15 of the young people.

From all feedback received, no areas of concerns were highlighted. All commented that they felt 'listened to' and advocacy had made their situation 'better.' All children and young people said they would recommend the service to others.

Please refer to the RBA report for feedback breakdown.

The following feedback has been received directly from children, young people and from professionals who wished to provide professional third party feedback on the advocacy service. Collated from 'Have your say' feedback cards

"Thank you for helping me in the meeting and asking my questions I feel much better now I understand what's going on more."

"I'm glad we attended the meeting together. As sometimes I get upset in my LAC Reviews. So it's good that I have an advocate to say everything clearly that I want to say."

"I was pleased and felt happy you were there to read out my views, wishes and feelings report."

CYP comments on advocacy helping them achieve their outcomes.

"My new foster placement is going ok and everything else is all going much better. I'm glad I have all the NYAS information if I need advocacy again."

"I'm pleased that I can now ring my brothers and sisters and other people in my family who are important to me. My social worker is trying to help me see my Dad."

Three young people commented on feeling positive about the advocacy service.

"I enjoyed working with NYAS you were a good advocate. I appreciated it to be honest."

"My advocate was very helpful." Smiley face drawn.

"Advocacy was really helpful and supported me. I will definitely contact NYAS again if I need you."

3rd Party Feedback: See below feedback received from professionals, inclusive of professionals and Foster Carers.

Disabilities Social Worker "Thank you your help and advocacy support it made a huge difference to K."

Foster Carers commented on the outcomes of the advocacy for young people in their care.

"Thank you for supporting A and being so understanding."

"Thanks for all your help with D, we and they really appreciated it."

The following case studies have been chosen to illustrate the range of issues and varying levels of advocacy support needed by the children/young people referred to the service.

Case Study 1 –P. Issues-LAC Review and Placement.

P is 13 years old and subject to a section 31 full care order.

P was referred to NYAS advocacy service following an offer of advocacy being made at their last LAC Review.

P wanted to discuss "Things I want returned to me, using a mobile phone and seeing and staying with my Auntie. I also want you to go to the LAC Review meeting for me please."

What did the Advocate do?

- Contacted P. and arranged an initial advocacy visit.
- Allowed P to take control of visit dates and times.
- Reviewed the advocacy role including confidentiality and consent to share

information.

- Allowed P to utilise the service to meet their needs by prioritising their issue.
- Enabled P to discuss and explore concerns, views, wishes and feelings.
- Supported P to put their views, wishes and feelings in writing and forward to the social worker.
- Supported P to develop an advocacy action plan which included the advocate providing feedback for P on all issues raised.
- As requested by P the advocate attended the LAC review to present P's views, wishes and feelings report.
- As requested the advocate then met with P a week after the LAC review to discuss the positive outcomes for P.

Outcomes for P.

- Increased confidence.
- Improved positive communication skills through the advocacy process.
- Increased awareness of rights and entitlements.
- Enhanced skills in making informed choices.
- The advocate presented P's views, wishes and feelings at the LAC review.
- An assessment was undertaken on P's favourite Aunt which resulted in P being able to enjoy increased contact and overnight stays.
- P did get their possessions returned with help and support from both the social worker liaising with the fostering Agency.
- P worked with their foster carer and social worker on demonstrating safe use of a mobile phone.

P provided the following feedback to the advocate "Although some things took longer you did get answers and things done to arrange all the things I'd asked. Getting my things back made me feel more settled in my new Placement. I learned as well more about being safe and understand things better. I do feel happier now and am glad I had an advocate especially to help explain how I felt and why things were important to me."

Case study 2 – Issues- Placement and Education

D is aged 19 and is in receipt of services as a disabled young person suffering with Cerebral Palsy, Scoliosis and Osteoporosis.

D was referred to the service by the social worker following a discussion with the young person. D had been away for three years attending a Residential College and felt that to return home "would set me back years."

D wanted advocacy support at a forthcoming Accommodation Panel Meeting to take forward "my views, wishes and feelings and to help me represent why I want to be able to choose a Residential Placement that meets my needs and which will allow me to achieve my full potential."

What did the Advocate do?

- Contacted D to arrange an initial visit.
- Allowed D to take control of visits dates and times.
- Reviewed the advocacy role including confidentiality and consent to share information.
- Allowed D to utilise the service to meet their needs by prioritising their own issues.
- Allowed D to discuss and explore concerns, views, wishes and feelings.
- Supported D to put their concerns, views, wishes and feelings in a Letter that could be read and the Accommodation Panel Meeting. The Letter included a request to view a DVD that D had made in Star College. Note the initial information Letter had

stated that the DVD would not be viewed.

Outcomes for D

- Increased confidence
- Awareness of rights and entitlements
- Enhanced skills in making informed choices.
- Enabled D to explore concerns and express their views, wishes and feelings.
- Improved communication skills through the advocacy process.
- Enabled D to explain and demonstrate through the DVD why the Placement he had chosen was unique in meeting his needs.
- Positive engagement with professionals through the advocacy process.
- Following a review of all information presented to the Accommodation Panel including viewing the DVD. D was awarded a place at his chosen Placement.

D provided the following feedback to the advocate I want to say thank you without the help of NYAS I couldn't have pushed funding further for a Placement that meets my needs. I knew the Panel viewing my DVD was essential as it allowed me to be represented at the Meeting. I will be starting at my chosen Placement later this year."

Cases now closed.

3. Independent Visitor Service.

During the period three referrals were made to the NYAS Volunteer Independent Visiting service under the RCT contract. NYAS has visited the young people and remained in contact and are now progressing our new Volunteer Applications.

- NYAS will continue to promote the Independent Visitor service to social care practitioners.
- The Project Leader is now actively working with the 'Interlink' Volunteering Officer in Pontypridd and Student Volunteering Officer in Uni-Glam on Volunteer Recruitment. The Independent Visitor Role is now registered with both as a volunteering opportunity.
- The registration of the Independent Visitor Role on the Volunteering Wales web site and all promotional activity has now been successful in attracting potential volunteers who are currently going through the recruitment process.

4. Key recommendations

(NYAS recommendations to LA's for service improvement)

- NYAS has continued to ask children and young people of their understanding and involvement in their care planning. This quarter NYAS closed twenty two advocacy cases and received feedback from all young people. 14 young people reported they knew about their care plan. All were aware that they could request a copy and one of the young people had done so. 10 young people said that they had been consulted with regarding their care plan. This quarter knowledge regarding care plans is positively increasing. The overall feedback this year provides a positive indication that children and young people referred to the service are aware of their care plans and slowly those reporting being involved in the making of their plan is increasing. NYAS will continue to highlight to children services departments the importance of children and young people's involvement in the care planning process. NYAS would welcome the opportunity in working with the local authority to develop a child friendly version of care plans.
- As a crucial and key priority NYAS would like 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 suggests that a pilot be implemented within named child care

teams by way of a service information letter to children and young people at key stages of their time in care. This will allow us to monitor the workability of the potential implementation of the active offer of advocacy and its impact on referrals to the service. This was discussed at our recent meeting with commissioners. NYAS would welcome working with the local authority to implement utilising the information letters prepared for children's services.

- NYAS recommends children and young people are consulted with early on in the planning process. When changes are being considered with regard to placement. Children and young people have fed back to NYAS, consistency in placement and information about any new placement is very important to them and they would like to be involved/ consulted on the decisions regarding placement earlier in the care planning process. NYAS would be happy to share with the local authority good practice processes to support children and young people to have a say in these matters.
- NYAS is pleased to report that through working with the Disabilities Team and Residential Units. Advocacy referrals for children and young people with a wide range of disabilities/additional needs, continues to increase. NYAS will continue to support children and young people with disabilities to ensure they are involved in both the care planning process and are included and given an opportunity to have a say in decisions being made about them.

ADVOCACY Report Card: Performance Accountability
Reporting period: Quarter 1 - 1st September 2016 – 30th November 2016 Rhondda Cynon Taff

	How much did we do?	Target	Q1	Result (Quarterly, unless otherwise stipulated)	Accumulative
	Male/ Female annual breakdown statistics	21	21	Male – 11 Female – 10	21
	Statistics by age				
	0 – 10yr olds		6	Male - 3 Female - 3	6
	11- 16yr olds		11	Male - 5 Female - 6	11
	17+		4	Male - 3 Female - 1	4
	Total				21
1.	Number of referrals received, broken down by referral source			Advocate/Coordinator Social Worker Social Services-IRO LEA Parent/Family Self-referral Support Worker Foster Carer Total	3 8 4 1 3 0 1 1 21
2.	Number of advocacy cases allocated to named advocates up to 30th November 2016. NYAS Rhondda Cynon Taff has supported 30 IBA advocacy cases this quarter. There were 22 case closures. NYAS will be carrying 8 open cases forward into to the next quarter.	No target		Gail Humphreys Colin White Annette O'Rourke Annabel Oxford Julia Gay Wayne Marsh Dennis Warwick Gaynor Madgwick Michael Pearson Mariam Raza	4 6 1 1 1 1 2 3 1 1

3.	Number of cases closed	Cases to be monitored and closed within 3 months of initial referral		22 cases were closed this quarter.	
4.	Status of referrals (as at submission date) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepted • Declined (reason why declined) • Undergoing assessment 	100%	100%	21 cases referred were accepted and allocated to an advocate for action.	
		No target	0%	No referrals were declined by the service this quarter.	
		No target	N/A	No cases are currently Under assessment.	
5	Issues presented for advocacy support				
	The information below highlights key issues brought to NYAS this quarter. The table will provide an indication of how many children/young people received advocacy support with this particular issue. NB -Children and young people may present more than one issue which requires advocacy support on.				
	Contact		2	Advocacy requests to support children and young people with family contact. All referrals were requests for family contact to be stopped, started or changed. See case studies narrative report.	2
	Placement Issues (breakdown, change etc)		6	Referrals received for advocacy support around placement issues. The issues consisted of requests to move placement/remain in placement and requests for support to improve relationships within placement. See case studies narrative report.	6
	Education		2	Two referrals were received for advocacy support regarding suitable educational placements. See case studies narrative report.	2
	Communication		1	One young person requested advocacy support to take forward their views, wishes and feelings regarding changing their name.	1
	Homelessness		1	A referral was received for advocacy support for a care leaver who was homeless and in the London area.	1
	Representation at Meetings	LAC		Referrals were received for representation or support	

	Includes support, preparation and attendance for LAC reviews, CIN meetings, core groups & CP conference. (For further information see narrative report).	Reviews	12	at Looked After Child Reviews to promote the general views, wishes and feelings around review topics. See case studies narrative report	12
		CP Process	1	Conferences/Meetings Additional support provided to understand Child Protection procedures. Where the child/young person was unable to attend advocacy representation was provided and feedback given to ensure a fully inclusive process.	1
	Total Issues supported by advocacy this quarter		25	Total Issues support year to date	25
	Legal status of referrals:				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Order <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In County - Out of County 	In county Out of county	10 11	NYAS received 21 advocacy referrals for those children and young people known as looked after, eleven of which were placed out of county.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full care order –Section 31 		14		14
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim care order – Section 30 		2		2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodated – Section 20 		2	Young PERSON also UASC	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 17 CIN/CP and CWD 		2		2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving Care 		1		1
	Total		21		21
6.	How well did we do it?				
19.	% cases where case was allocated to Advocate within 1 working day		90%	3 cases were not allocated to an advocate within one working day due to receiving incorrect contact details.	86%
20.	% cases where (when decided child needs to see an Advocate) child-Advocate meeting within 3 working days of allocation		90%	3 cases were not contacted within 3 working days due to reasons stated above.	86%

21.	% referrals acknowledged within 3 working days		100%	All referrals received were allocated and acknowledged with the child/young person within 3 working days.	100%
22.	% children matched to Advocate within 5 working days		100%	All referrals were matched to an advocate within 5 working days as outlined within NYAS allocation standards.	100%
23.	Number of referrals – at 21 per quarter or more?		21	21 referrals were received this quarter. Target met.	21
24.	Is anyone better off? Did we make a difference? Based on Advocacy Standards.				
	Feedback on cases closed offered by young people.				
				NYAS closed 22 cases this quarter and received feedback from all young people. Further information on feedback including quotes can be found on the quarter 1 narrative report.	
1.	How happy were YP in the support that they received from NYAS?		100%	All said they were happy with the support they received.	100%
2.	Did young people get enough information on what was happening from NYAS?		100%	All commented- kept informed	100%
3.	How well did YP understand what was happening?		100%	All young people's feedback said that they understood what was happening to them.	100%
4.	How well did YP feel listened to?		100%	All children and young people said they felt listened to.	100%
5.	Were YP treated fairly by NYAS?		100%	All felt they were included and treated fairly.	100%
6.	Would the YP recommend NYAS		100%	All young people stated they would recommend NYAS to others.	100%
7.	Did NYAS make the situation better/worse?		100%	All young people reported that advocacy made their situation better.	100%
8.	Children with Disability reporting they were happy with services received?		N/A	No young people fed back to the service using the disability feedback forms.	