

## NYAS Rhondda-Cynon-Taff

### Children Services Quarterly Narrative Report

1<sup>st</sup> June-31<sup>st</sup> August 2016

#### 1. Progress of service this period.

- 21 new referrals were received in this period.
- From the 21 referrals, 23 issues were supported by the advocacy service.
- 36 cases were managed in this quarter.
- 27 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 10 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.
- 13 referrals have been directly received from Social Workers.
- 3 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	3
Ty Trevethick/East 2	2
After Care Team	2
Disabilities Team	1
Rhondda West 1 Team	4
Rhondda Principle Office	3
ACP Team	1

- Please note included in figures above the young people referred to the service include:-
- 1 young people with learning difficulties.
- 4 young people with disabilities 2 of which had additional physical disabilities these included:- autism, ADHD, complex attachment disorder, and foetal alcohol syndrome.

#### 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.
- An Advocacy awareness raising session was delivered to four new social workers in

the 16+ Team as part of their induction process.

- NYAS successfully recruited a Peer Development Worker who will be delivering both a peer mentoring and peer advocacy service 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. During the past year, advocacy referrals for young people involved in the child protection process have halved. It would be beneficial to meet with commissioners to discuss setting up an operational task group so NYAS and Rhonda 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 an equal 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. Overall, throughout the year children and young people have reported a slight 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.

## **2. Is anyone better off?**

NYAS aim to achieve 100% feedback from children and young people at the point of case closure. From the 27 cases closed this quarter NYAS received 7 completed feedback forms in addition to the positive verbal feedback provided from 22 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 going to the meeting and reading out how I felt/and getting some answers for me as I didn't want to attend the meeting."*

*"I'm glad we attended the meeting together. I liked having someone in the meeting with me."*

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

CYP comments on advocacy helping them achieve their outcomes.

*"After we'd read everything I wanted to say they suggested a course that I'm going to attend and I can have help with my bus fare to go."*

*"I'm really pleased that I can stay in my foster placement."*

*"My new social worker is nice and we get on fine now you've helped me."*

*"I'm glad you can tell my social worker how I feel."*

*"My advocacy action plan gets the thumbs up from me."*

CYP comments on how talking too and being listened to helped them.

*"I liked talking to you and I was pleased to see you. My advocate was lovely/good and easy to talk too."*

*"Thank you for coming to see me and thank you for listening. You told me lots but you listened to me lots as well."*

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

*"My advocate gave me good support and advice and was good at helping. You gave me lots of information I needed to know."*

*It was helpful having an advocate you made everything better."*

*"My advocate gave me good support, and was good at listening."*

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

*Social Workers and an Independent Reviewing Officer thanked NYAS advocates for their input/engagement with the child/young person concerned and for clearly explaining the role of an advocate.*

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

*"Thank you for clearly explaining things to the young person."*

*"It was really nice to know what B wants to say for himself."*

*"Thank you for taking things forward at the LAC review, advocacy definitely helped resolve the situation for D."*

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 –B. Issues-Educational Placement and LAC Review.**

B is 10 years old and subject to a section 20 voluntary care order.

B has arthrogyrosis and special educational needs.

B was referred to NYAS advocacy service following a discussion with their Social Worker.

B wanted to discuss "My education, and which high school I will go to as there other things that are important to me."

#### **What did the Advocate do?**

- Contacted B. and arranged an initial advocacy visit.
- Allowed B to take control of visit dates and times.

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

#### **Outcomes for B.**

- 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 B's views, wishes and feelings at the LAC review.
- The Education plan was revised to meet B's needs and requests.

B provided the following feedback to the advocate "It's really good now that everyone knows I don't want to use a wheelchair at school so I can be like everyone else. Now everybody knows too that it's very important to me to go to a religious school." "I think we should do this again before my next meeting."

Following the advocate presented B's views, wishes and feelings in the LAC review. B's Father commented "Thanks for that, it was really nice to hear what B wants to say for himself, although a bit upsetting, but really nice."

#### **Case study 2 – Issues-Placement and LAC Review.**

M aged 16 and is an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young person originally from Eritrea currently subject to a section 20 voluntary care order. The Independent Reviewing Officer made the referral as discussed with M in their LAC review.

M wanted to discuss issues in the foster Placement which included the boundaries set by the foster carer and help to prepare for the next LAC Review.

#### **What did the Advocate do?**

- Contacted M to arrange an initial visit.
- Allowed M to take control of visits dates and times.
- Reviewed the advocacy role including confidentiality and consent to share information.
- Allowed M to utilise the service to meet their needs by prioritising their own issues.
- Allowed M to discuss and explore concerns, views, wishes and feelings.
- Supported M to put their initial concerns, views, wishes and feelings in writing.
- Enabled M to identify that the help of an interpreter would also be required to discuss Issues in further detail at the LAC review.
- Explained that M could attend the LAC review supported by the advocate.
- Worked with the social worker to source a suitable Interpreter to assist M.
- Met with M and the Interpreter prior to the LAC review.
- Accompanied M at the LAC Review and presented M's views, wishes and feelings report.

#### **Outcomes for M**

- Increased confidence
- Awareness of rights and entitlements

- Enhanced skills in making informed choices.
- Enabled M to explore concerns and express their views, wishes and feelings.
- Improved communication skills through the advocacy process.
- Enabled M in determining their understanding of English and where additional support from an Interpreter was required.
- Positive engagement with professionals through the advocacy process.
- Some of M's desired outcomes were achieved. A simple contract between M and the foster carer was agreed which included boundaries and development of independent living skills. The contract was also translated in writing for M.
- For any other outcomes not possible to achieve at this time a clear explanation of the reasons why was provided to M at the LAC review through the Interpreter.

M provided the following feedback to the advocate via the Interpreter. "You/my advocate could speak for me and ask my questions. You remained with me in my Meeting and this gave me more confidence. You helped me explain things well about my placement and now we are getting on much better. I am also enjoying learning cooking and I've cooked an Eritrean meal for my foster family. I feel much happier."

Cases now closed.

### 3. Independent Visitor Service.

During the period two referrals were made to the NYAS Volunteer Independent Visiting service under the RCT contract. NYAS has visited both young people and remained in contact and are now looking for a suitable volunteer matches.

- NYAS will continue to promote the Independent Visitor service to social care practitioners.
- The Project Leader has re-established links with the 'Interlink' Volunteering Officer in Pontypridd and Student Volunteering Officer in Uni-Glam. 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 seven advocacy cases and received feedback from all young people. 8 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. 8 young people said that they had been consulted with regarding their care plan. This quarter knowledge regarding care plans is lower than previously reported during the year. 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 variety of disabilities and additional needs have increased. NYAS will continue to support the local authority in ensuring children and young people with disabilities 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 4 - 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016 – 31st August 2016 Rhondda Cynon Taff**

	How much did we do?	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Result (Quarterly, unless otherwise stipulated)	Accumulative
	<b>Male/ Female annual breakdown statistics</b>	21	33	16	26	21	Male – 7 Female – 14	96
	<b>Statistics by age</b>							
	0 – 10yr olds		6	2	2	3	Male - 0 Female - 3	13
	11- 16yr olds		22	11	17	16	Male - 6 Female - 10	66
	17+		5	3	7	2	Male - 1 Female - 1	17
	<b>Total</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>		<b>96</b>
1.	<b>Number of referrals received, broken down by referral source</b>		9	1	0	3	Advocate/Coordinator	13
			16	7	11	13	Social Worker	47
			1	1	9	3	Social Services-IRO	14
			1	2	0	0	Residential Unit	3
			2	1	1	0	Parent/Family	4
			3	1	4	0	Self-referral	8
			1	0	0	0	Support Worker	1
			0	3	1	2	Foster Carer	6
							<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>
2.	<b>Number of advocacy cases allocated to named advocates up to 31st August 2016.</b>	No target	4	2	3	3	Kaye Watkins	12
			21	9	13	8	Gail Humphreys	51
			3	0	0	0	James Roles	3
			4	4	3	2	Colin White	13
			1	0	0	0	Annette O'Rourke	1
			0	1	1	1	Annabel Oxford	3
			0	0	1	0	Fran Thrower	1
			0	0	2	0	Michael Pearson	2
			0	0	2	0	Mariam Raza	2
			0	0	0	1	Janet Galsworthy	1
			0	0	0	1	Helena Vickery	1
			0	0	0	1	Karen Poore	1
			0	0	0	3	Wayne Marsh	3
			0	0	0	1	Dennis Warwick	1
			0	0	1	0	Alyson Sefton	1
	<b>NYAS Rhondda Cynon Taff has supported 36 IBA advocacy cases this quarter. There were 27 case closures.</b>							
	<b>NYAS will be carrying 9 open cases forward into to the next quarter.</b>							

3.	<b>Number of cases closed</b>	Cases to be monitored and closed within 3 months of initial referral						27 cases were closed this quarter.
4.	<b>Status of referrals (as at submission date)</b>							
	• Accepted	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	21 cases referred were accepted and allocated to an advocate for action.	
	• Declined (reason why declined)	No target	6%	0%	4%	0%	No referrals were declined by the service this quarter.	
	• Undergoing assessment	No target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No cases are currently Under assessment.	
5	<b>Issues presented for advocacy support</b>							
	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		9	3	5	4	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.	21
	Placement Issues (breakdown, change etc)		6	8	3	8	Referrals received for advocacy support around placement issues. The issues consisted of	25



							requests to move placement/remain in placement and requests for support to improve relationships within placement.	
	Relationship with Social worker		2	1	2	0		5
	Safeguarding		1	0	0	0		1
	Resources		1	0	1	0		2
	Complaints Against Local Authority		3	4	3	0		10
	Carer		3	1	1	0		5
	Other Appropriate Services		0	1	1	0		2
	View Personal/Medical Files		0	1	0	0		1
	Pathway Planning		0	1	1	0		2
	NYAS Legal Services		0	1	0	0		1
	Education		0	1	6	0		7
	Appropriate Support		0	0	2	0		2
	Oher Immigration Issues		0	0	2	0		2
	Child Protection		0	0	2	0		2
	State Benefits		0	0	1	0		1
	Pocket Money Or Personal Allowance		0	0	0	1	A young person wanted to discuss pocket money being age appropriate.	1
	Representation at Meetings	<b>LAC</b>	10	6	6	8	Referrals were received for	30

<p>Includes support, preparation and attendance for LAC reviews, CIN meetings, core groups &amp; CP conference.</p> <p>(For further information see narrative report).</p>	<b>Reviews</b>					representation or support at Looked After Child Reviews to promote the general views, wishes and feelings around review topics. See case studies narrative report	
	<b>CP Process</b>	4	0	0	2	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.	6
	<b>CIN Meetings</b>	1	0	0	0		1
	<b>Total issues supported by advocacy this quarter</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>Total issues support year to date</b>	<b>127</b>
<p><b>Legal status of referrals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Care Order</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>In County</b></li> <li>- <b>Out of County</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>In county</p> <p>Out of county</p>	<p>27</p> <p>6</p>	<p>11</p> <p>5</p>	<p>17</p> <p>9</p>	<p>12</p> <p>9</p>	<p>NYAS received 21 advocacy referrals for those children and young people known as looked after, nine of which were placed out of county.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Full care order –Section 31</b></li> </ul>		13	8	13	10	1 YP Supervision Order	44
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Interim care order – Section 30</b></li> </ul>		0	0	0	1		1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Accommodated – Section 20</b></li> </ul>		7	6	8	7	2 YP are UASC	28
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Section 17 CIN/CP and CWD</b></li> </ul>		11	1	4	2		18

• Leaving Care			2	1	1	1		1
		Total	33	16	26	21		96
6.	<b>How well did we do it?</b>							
19.	% cases where case was allocated to Advocate within 1 working day		97%	91%	93%	90%	3 cases were not allocated to an advocate within one working day due to receiving incorrect contact details.	%
20.	% cases where (when decided child needs to see an Advocate) child-Advocate meeting within 3 working days of allocation		85%	86%	100%	90%	3 cases were not contacted within 3 working days due to reasons stated above.	%
21.	% referrals acknowledged within 3 working days		100%	100%	100%	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%	100%	100%	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?		33	16	26	21	21 referrals were received this quarter. Target met. Annual target exceeded.	96
24.	<b>Is anyone better off? Did we make a difference? Based on Advocacy Standards.</b>							
	<b>Feedback on cases closed offered by young people.</b>							

							<p>NYAS closed 27 cases this quarter and received feedback from all young people. Further information on feedback including quotes can be found on the quarter 4 narrative report.</p>	
1.	<b>How happy were YP in the support that they received from NYAS?</b>		All	All	All	All	All said they were happy with the support they received.	
2.	<b>Did young people get enough information on what was happening from NYAS?</b>		All	All	All	All	All commented- kept informed	
3.	<b>How well did YP understand what was happening?</b>		All	All	All	All	All young people's feedback said that they understood what was happening to them.	
4.	<b>How well did YP feel listened to?</b>		All	All	All	All	All children and young people said they felt listened to.	
5.	<b>Were YP treated fairly by NYAS?</b>		All	All	All	All	All felt they were included and treated fairly.	
6.	<b>Would the YP recommend NYAS</b>		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	All young people stated they would recommend NYAS to others.	
7.	<b>Did NYAS make the situation better/worse?</b>		Better	Better	Better	Better	All young people reported that advocacy made their situation better.	
8.	<b>Children with Disability reporting they were happy with services received?</b>		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No young people fed back to the service using the disability feedback forms.	