



Advocacy & Independent Visiting

Corporate Parenting Board

22nd November 2023





our vision

- Every child and young person has the right to be heard.
- Every child has the right to feel safe.
- Every child has the right to be involved in decisions being made about them.

our mission

At NYAS we **listen** to what children and young people want, care about what they say and **empower** them to have their voices heard.

We ensure their wishes and feelings are expressed and acted upon to improve their situation and help them build a better future.

We will never stop in our efforts to influence, lobby and campaign to bring about positive changes and ensure children's and young people's rights are understood and upheld.

our values



Collaborative

We work closely with colleagues and partners to deliver an outstanding service to the children and young people who need us.



Accountable

We are open, transparent and accountable, taking responsibility for what we do.



Respectful

We value and respect each other and the people we work with, embracing diversity and nurturing trust.



Empowering

We listen to children and young people when they feel they are not being heard, inform them of their rights, and empower them to change their lives for the better.

Advocacy & Independent Visitor Service - Lancashire

2022-2023 Annual Overview

Advocacy

The Advocacy Service is available to:

- CYP who are Looked After (CLA) by LCC
- CYP who are Care Leavers, until they reach age of 25
- Children in Need (CiN) under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including unaccompanied asylum seeking CYP and trafficked children
- CYP subject to a Child Protection Plan
- Young Carers following assessment by the Young Carers Service
- 16/17 Homeless young people
- CYP (approaching 18 years) undergoing assessments to enable them to participate effectively in the planning and review processes for their transition to adult services. The Service is available where the CYP would have substantial difficulty in engaging with the care and support process; has no one else appropriate who is able to advocate on their behalf and wants an independent advocate.
- CYP with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) in transition to adult services
- CYP accessing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in transition to adult services
- Young Carers in transition to adult services.

Advocacy Referrals 2022-2023

Quarter	CP	IBA	Total
Q1	18	43	61
Q2	31	73	104
Q3	19	66	85
Q4	6	82	88
	74 (35 previous year)	264 (222 previous year)	338 (257 previous year)

Care Leaver – 21

S20 – 42

S31 – 115

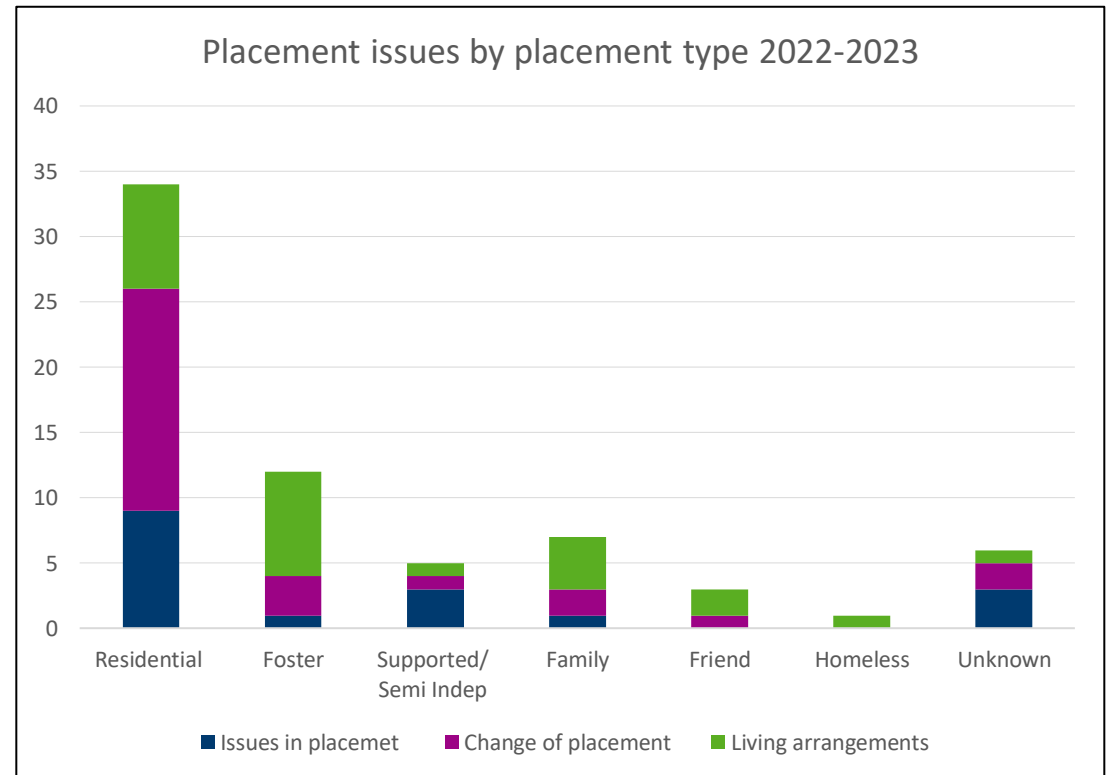
Interim - 27

Advocacy Support

Most common reason for advocacy:

- CLAR review
- Change of placement
- Living arrangements
- Issues in placement

Breakdown of placement related issues by placement type. NYAS CHIP system is unable to differentiate between in house and private residential or foster care placements.



Feedback

- *Thank you so much for ur work u have done with me. u stood strong next to me fighting my corner every step of the way. u don't understand how much work u have done for me, it's means a lot (CYP about their advocate)*
- *Having an advocate really helps, it helps understand what is going on and I have someone to talk to*
- *I just wanted to say thank you for putting my voice online to social workers and stuff.*
- *Personally, and professionally I never had any doubt from day one that Suzanne was truly committed to this advocacy process and, to ensuring that M's voice was not only heard but valued within that process. I have learned so much from working alongside Suzanne on this case. The final touch of actually recording M's experiences so that they could be shared with the local authority nearly had me in tears. I learned so much about active listening, active questioning and listening for what was not being said in the process from Suzanne. I actually feel more confident in my day-to-day practice on these points and I put that directly down to working on this case. M was not at all confident when this process started – why would he be? As a recently arrived UASC who was suffering from extreme anxiety he had no idea of what he could ask for or expect and, he knew nothing of this system of 'care' and support that he was now within. Suzanne made an instant rapport which balanced showing an expert knowledge of what the complaints system was all about and an easy and clear communication style with someone for whom English is a third language. In our role as support workers at Salaam Care it is also part of our job to advocate for the rights and entitlements of the vulnerable young people we support. I truly feel that is what we have done by working alongside Suzanne through NYAS, the experience has been illuminating and inspiring. To have achieved a positive outcome for M is quite something and he feels lifted by seeing that advocacy and knowing your rights can have a life-changing impact on your life prospects. In another life, I feel that Suzanne and I and my colleagues would be part of a crack team of lawyers advocating for rights brought in when nothing else has worked. Please do congratulate Suzanne for her dedication, knowledge, expertise and support through this from M as well as us, the staff. (Following stage 1 and stage complaint and positive outcome)*
- *Brenda is simply brilliant! I have worked with Brenda in relation to a few young people over the last 5 years or so and she is just so good. I have heard a few other PA's on our team also praising her. So knowledgeable, understanding and there has never ever been any judgement on our young people and she just explains everything so brilliantly to our young people and is 100% their voice when they are struggling to be heard. Brenda is also so informative to PA's as well, keeping us all in the loop and helping us understand processes as well. Brenda always copies us in emails and rings us back if she misses a call. I honestly think you have an absolute star of an employee with Brenda, and I know you will already know but I really just wanted to tell you from mine/our perspective.*

Independent Visitors

- The IV service received 40 new referrals this contract year.
- 10% of IV referrals from 2022/23 live out of area in Blackpool, Bury, St Helens and Barnoldswick.
- 46 young people matched to a volunteer in the contract year
- 18 young people are waiting to be matched to an Independent Visitor



Feedback

- *She is full of joy and happiness, knows how to relate to children my age, she is fun to be around, she is a good listener and gives good advice and she is able to build a relationship quickly. I look forward to seeing her. (About their IV)*
- *I just want to say that the match between Philip/Sandy and June/April is an amazing one. The girls rely on Philip and Sandy; the IV's know this and adapt quickly to the girls needs. June can leave my house in a bad mood but come back happy. Sometimes visits are short and at other times it can be a full day. In all honesty I don't want their visits to ever end as it helps me get some rest from the girl's demands.*
- *Being an Independent Visitor is a very fulfilling role, by supporting and befriending young people, you are helping them develop new skills and interests, and you can learn along the way too! I enjoy visiting with the young person I am matched with, because we are always joking around and having fun doing the activities that we both like!*

Priorities and request to CPB

- A significant priority for the service is to explore innovative recruitment processes as recruitment to the Independent Visitor is challenging. NYAS has comprehensively promoted opportunities to volunteer. However, NYAS's involvement with other local authorities and the National Independent Visitor network (NIVN) shows this to be a national issue post covid pandemic with significantly less applications.
- Can members of the CPB assist with sharing and promoting the volunteer Independent Visitor opportunity?