

Appendix A – Survey Responses Summary

There were 59 responses to the survey, of which only 17 were by service users and the rest were by professional advocates or staff who refer to the services.

The main presenting issues were access to health or mental health services, support for parents undergoing child protection court proceedings, housing, and access to care services. The service users can be referred to local organisations for support.

Service users were asked if the organisation they contacted (which were mainly the Council, NHS etc) before presenting for advocacy had met their needs for support and clear communication – of the 8 who replied, 3 said yes, 3 said no and 2 said partly, in which case they should be referred back for support.

All but 1 of the 17 service users stated that the service had made a positive difference to their lives – out of a maximum of 5 for great outcome –the average score was 3.76 with most service users scoring 4 or 5. Most comments included reference to feeling supported/kept in touch with, and advocacy helped them to understand and communicate with professionals/organisations.

The main need met by Community Advocacy was support for parents undergoing Child Protection processes. However, funding has been recently awarded to a local advocacy organisation to provide advocacy to support parents with learning disabilities who are undergoing Child Protection court processes for possible removal for child. This project will include support to the parents to prevent this crisis happening.

All 13 advocates had signposted to other organisations before providing advocacy– most commonly housing (5), legal (3), specialist advice and CAB (3 each), Other advocacy (2) and GP, Immigration service.

45% have and 17% maybe would signpost elsewhere before advocacy. 50% of professionals in care did so – most commonly to Adult Social Care or NHS services, or other services. Social workers were more likely to signpost to a voluntary organisation for support with housing, benefits, employment and Adult Social Care or NHS if a mental capacity assessment was needed, or there were issues with health or care. 76% of staff in voluntary sector signposted to others also – mainly if more specialist support was needed such as legal information and advice, Welfare Rights, Immigration or Housing.

In response to the question “Do you provide advocacy services?” three social workers replied that they do so as part of their role, but used formal advocacy where the service user was eligible (for Care Act and Mental Capacity or Mental Health Advocacy). Of the Voluntary Organisations, 9 provide advocacy or in-

depth casework – for example, but for specific communities such as deaf people or carers, or people experiencing specific health conditions, or general support such as Healthwatch. A local organisation said they have started to provide advocacy for parents with learning disability who were undergoing child protection proceedings.

In terms of other comments, most respondents found the service to be a good or brilliant service, especially staff who felt it met gaps left by other advocacy services and prevented needs escalating. Most service users who had used the service found it valuable. Some professional referrers valued the professional standard of the service, but mentioned lack of capacity in the service, and needing to refer to other agencies due to low staffing numbers/hours. It was also mentioned that some service users were having mental health or other needs that are ongoing, and they keep returning to the service with similar or the same issues, and need thus need longer term support.