

HARROW PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

Annual Report: Sept 2017 – Aug 2018

Reported to: Corporate Parenting Panel due Jan 2019
Next report due: Oct 2019

Introduction

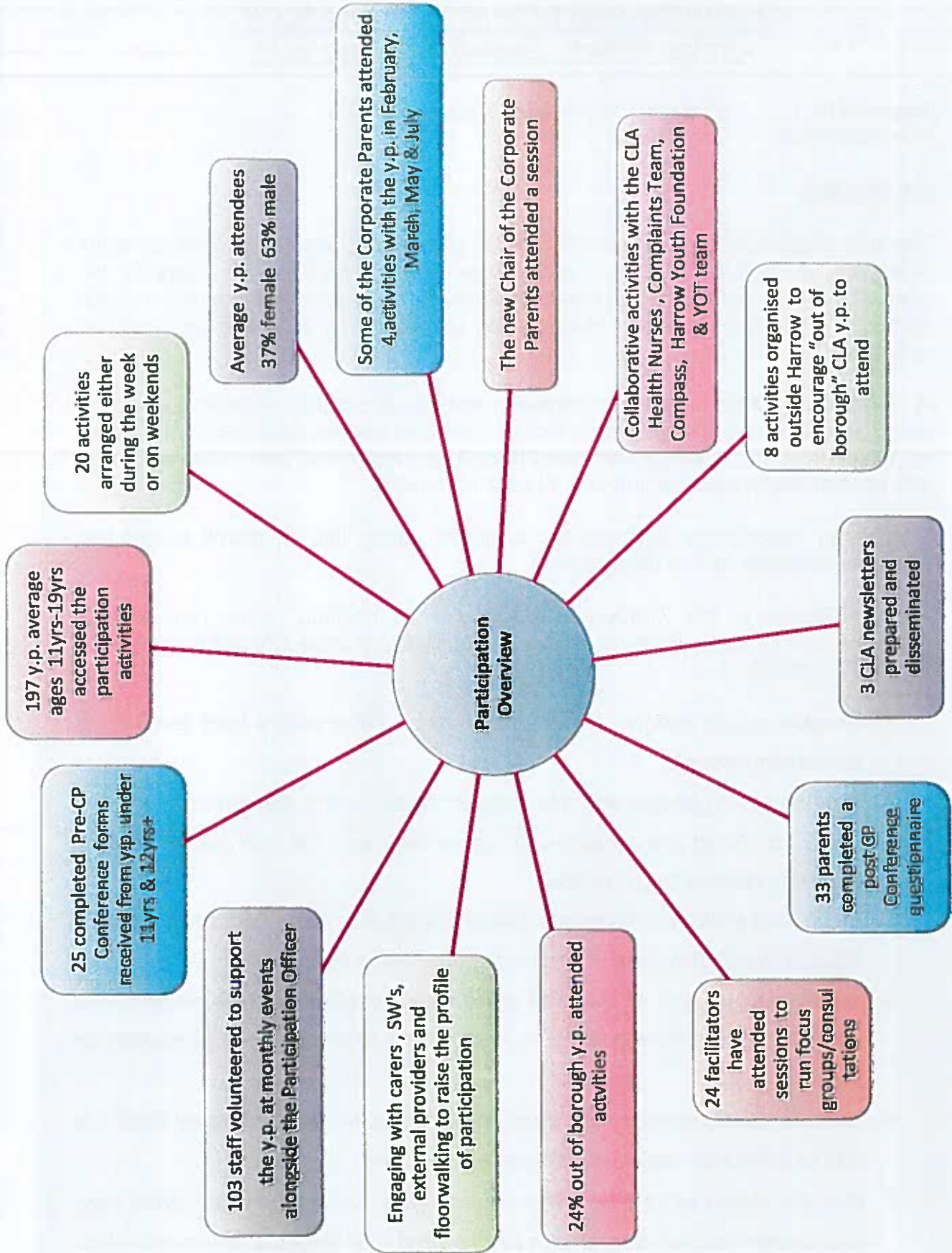
The aim of participation is to listen to children and young people's opinions, to be the voice for all children in care and to liaise with professionals to support the children/young people to help make improvements. Participation is a process where someone influences decisions about young people's [YP] lives and this leads to change.

A Participation Officer's role is information sharing and dialogue between children, young people, (particularly children looked after and careleavers) and adults based on mutual respect, in which the young people can learn how their views are taken into account and shape the outcome of such processes.

This report summarises the progress achieved during this 12 month period and signposts areas for further development.

Harrow Council is the 'Corporate Parent' for all children, young people and careleavers in its care. Because of this responsibility, Harrow Council is committed to The Pledge below:-

- 1. Provide young people with a safe home to live where they feel happy and taken care of.***
- 2. Provide young people with the support to do well in education.***
- 3. Listen to young people about things in their own life and about the care that they receive from Harrow.***
- 4. Be honest with young people about things that have happened in their life and the decisions that are made about their care.***
- 5. Help young people to develop good relationships with the people who care for them and the people in their life that are most important to them.***
- 6. Provide young people with support and opportunities to enjoy their life and to have interests and hobbies of their own.***
- 7. Provide young people with the support they need when they leave care to become independent and to be the best that they can be in adult life.***



The Impact of Participation: examples include

- The monthly participation activities have encouraged the CLA YP and Careleavers to develop strong friendships and they engage with each other on social media so that they can discuss attending the CLA activities together;
- During an activity, one of the YP disclosed that they were self-harming. This information was immediately forwarded to the YP's SW, the carer's SW and the carer was contacted;
- A carer asked for support and it was arranged for the CLA YP to volunteer at a local indoor play area during the summer;
- A CLA YP who was only in care during the summer, was invited to attend the Beyond Limits summer events before the YP returned to their birth family. The YP enjoyed the events enormously and even asked if they could attend the events once they had returned home;
- A football extravaganza was organised with Harrow School agreeing that their facilities could be used free of charge. A team of CLA and Careleavers YP attended and were invited to play against a team of YP from Brent. A team of Harrow Civic staff played against the older YP;
- A Harrow young carer was the only YP who wanted to work with Radio Harrow during the summer. It was arranged that the YP engineered and produced a radio show;
- Tickets were requested for the FA Community Shield. 2 tickets were donated and these were given to a carer who attended the match with their CLA YP;
- 4 Careleavers were accompanied to Lords Cricket Ground to volunteer for the day.

Referrals for further support, arising through participation activity:

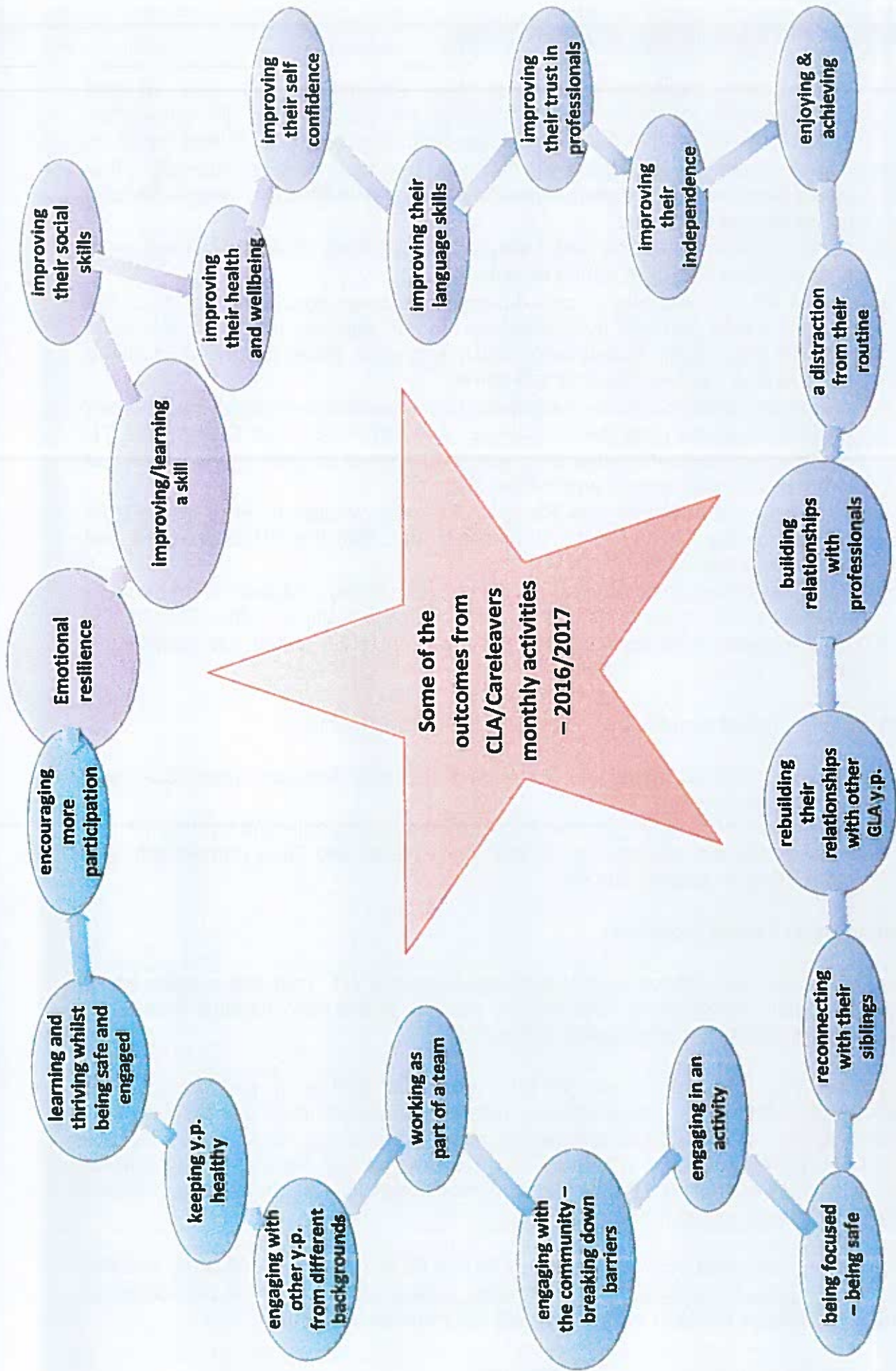
- Regular referrals made to Virtual School with requests from CLA and Careleavers YP;
- Information and advice sourced for carers requesting activities for their YP;
- The local police contacted to support sessions around 'Stop and Search' and 'shoplifting' to support the YP.

Consultation Topics Covered

Once a month a consultation topic is discussed with the YP. This year's topics were: E-safety; health & wellbeing; complaints; alcohol awareness; healthy food; self-esteem; personal safety; knife crime; budgeting.

To widen the engagement of YP and raise the profile of participation, the Participation Officer has engaged face to face and using electronic engagement with a wide variety of individuals, teams and organisations e.g. CLA & Careleavers YP, UASC; LINAB; Children in Need (CIN) team; Advocacy; Harrow Young Carers; Harrow Youth Foundation; Harrow Virtual School; the Independent Visitors provider (SOVA) and other external organisations.

To view the numerous activities arranged for the CLA YP and Careleavers, see the link: www.harrow.gov.uk/info/200161/children-looked-after. To view the recording sheets and photos for each activity, contact the Participation Officer.

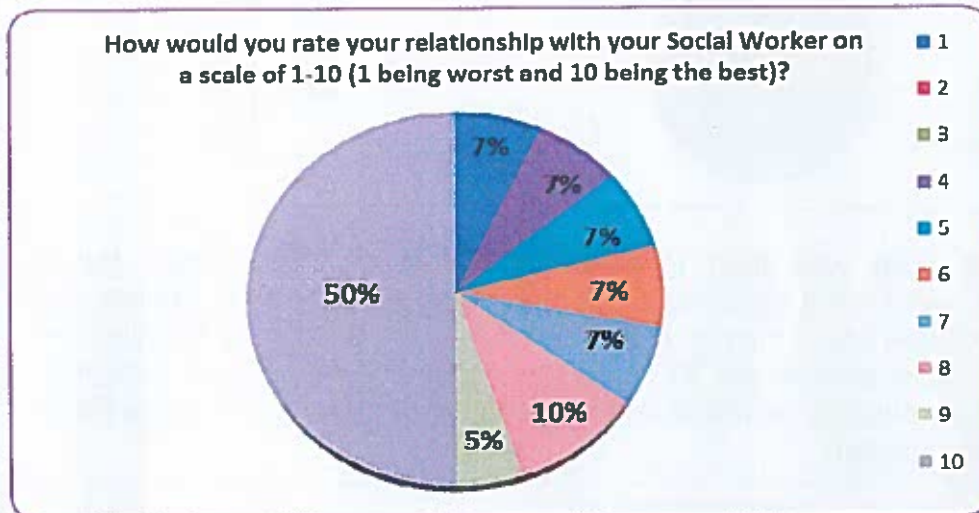


Examples of changes achieved since September 2017

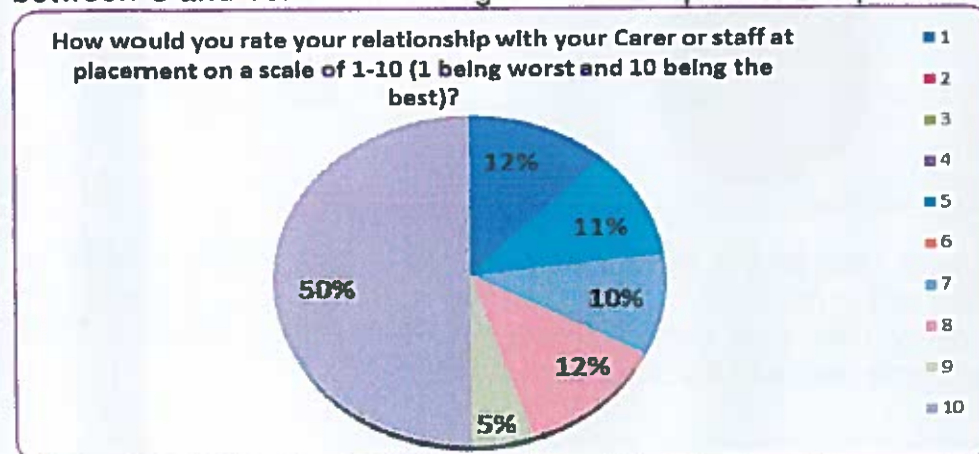
- ✓ A weekly spreadsheet with a list of YP is now sent to the local leisure centre for YP to register for free gym and swimming;
- ✓ An increase in the amount of YP's activities that the Corporate Parents attended;
- ✓ A 25% increase in the amount of completed pre-CP conference forms received from YP under 11yrs and 12yrs+;
- ✓ An increase in the amount of staff volunteering to support the YP's activities.

Consultations

32 YP met the Participation Officer on a 1:1 basis before their review and answered questions about their wellbeing. These included CLA/Careleavers both new to care and those who have been in care for longer. YP rated on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being highest/best. The results were as follows:-



Two thirds of YP responding, rated their relationship with their Social Worker between 8 and 10. This is a high number of positive responses.



Two thirds of YP responding, rated their relationship with their carer or placement staff between 8 and 10. 7 YP rated their relationships as 7 or lower.

Does your Social Worker always consider carefully the requests you make?



YP report overwhelming confidence (100%) that their Social Worker carefully considers their requests.

Do you know who your IRO is?

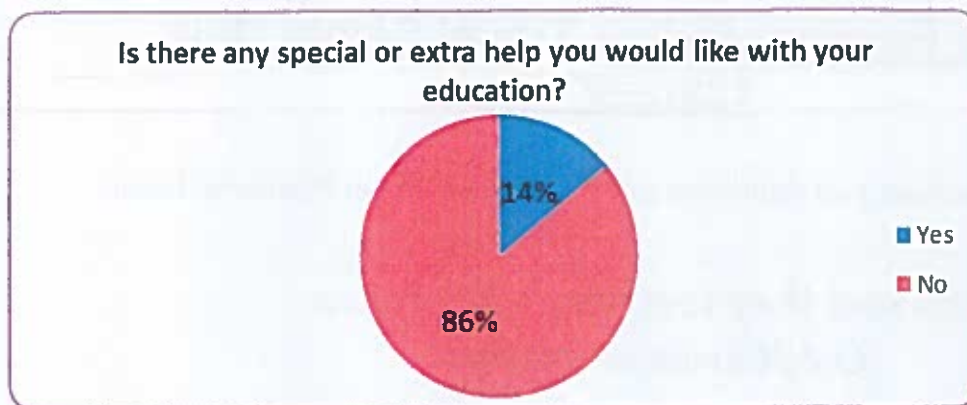


67% of YP were clear who their Independent Reviewing Officer was, but a disappointing 33% were not. Corrective action has been put in place to ensure that IRO's and Social Workers give out a pocket/wallet sized reference card, detailing the CLA/Careleavers Social Worker and IRO's contact details. Some YP can recognize their IRO's in person, but they do not always remember their names. Two new IRO's have recently been recruited.

Do you know how to make a complaint?



While 33% of YP were clear how to make a complaint, it is disappointing that 67% were not. Corrective action has been put in place as the YP are given a wallet sized information card every time they meet 1:1 with the Participation Officer. This ensures that YP are more aware of the complaints process.



Over three quarters of YP did not identify any extra help they would like with their education. If help is requested, this information is immediately forwarded to the Virtual School.

Other question responses identified:-

- 100% knew why they were in foster care;
- 50% see members of their birth family;
- 100% are happy to see their SW at their placement;
- 100% knew why their SW visits them;
- 60% said their SW spends at least one hour with them on a 1:1 basis;
- 37% said they have a care plan;
- 100% said they knew where to get health advice from;
- None of the YP said they would like an independent visitor.

All the YP responses are e-mailed to their IRO and SW. The data is input onto a spreadsheet and uploaded onto Mosaic (electronic social care records system) case record, with referrals made to the Virtual School and Independent Visitors where requested by the YP. A list is kept of all the YP who meet with the Participation Officer and is marked to indicate the gender of the YP and whether they live outside the Borough.

During the 1:1 meetings with the Participation Officer, the YP are reminded about upcoming activities they can attend. All the YP confirmed that they have received this information sent to them by post.

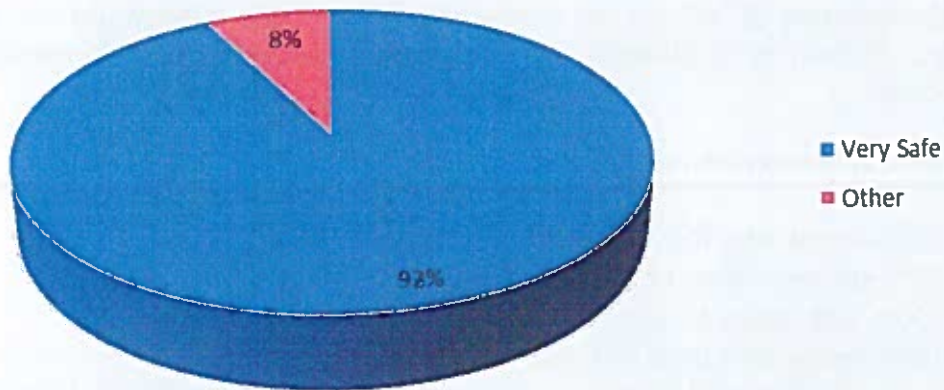
Improvement - actions taken:

- i. YP cannot always remember their IRO's names: IRO's and SW's have been re-issued with Pledge Cards on which they can add their contact details to pass onto the YP;
- ii. YP are being reminded about the Pledge when meeting with the Participation Officer on a 1:1 basis;
- iii. Only 17% of YP knew how to make an official complaint: This information is now being passed onto every YP when meeting 1:1 with the Participation Officer.

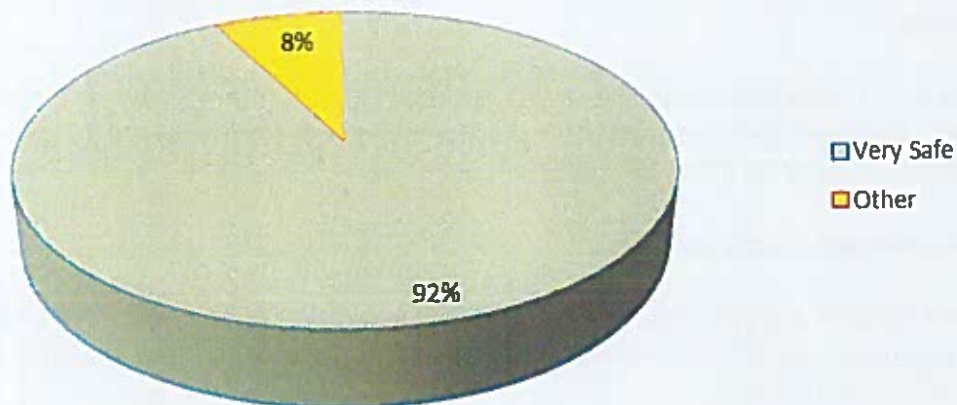
YP's Responses to a Travel Safety Quiz 12yrs-22 Yrs

(Quiz organised and delivered by the Harrow Travel Planners Team)

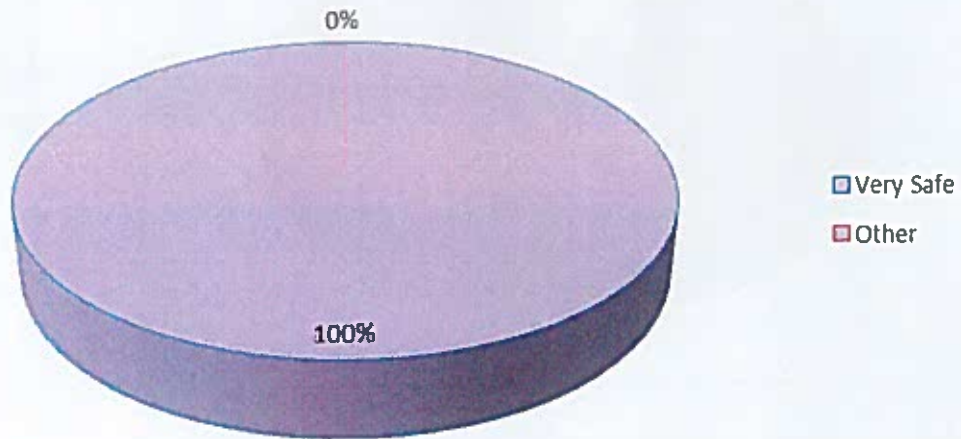
**92% said they feel very safe on the
CLA/Careleavers trips**



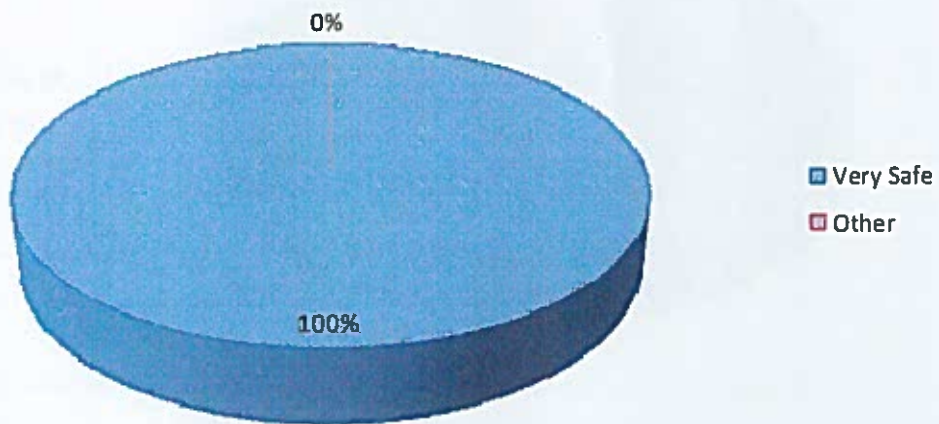
**92% said they feel very safe when travelling
around the area where they live**



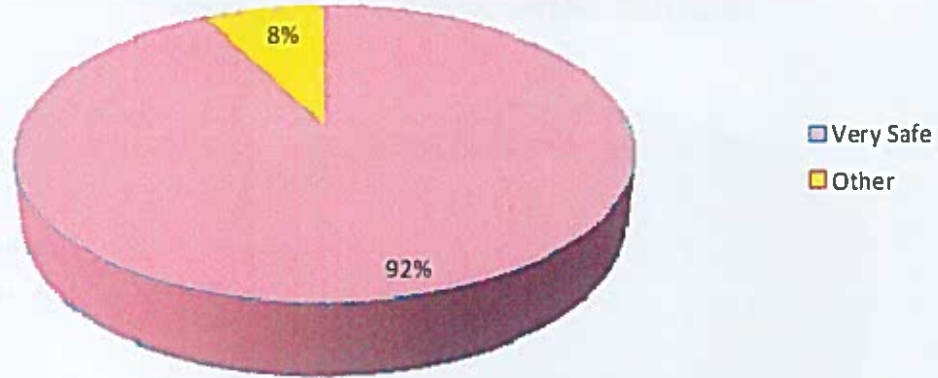
**100% said they feel very safe travelling
around other parts of Harrow**



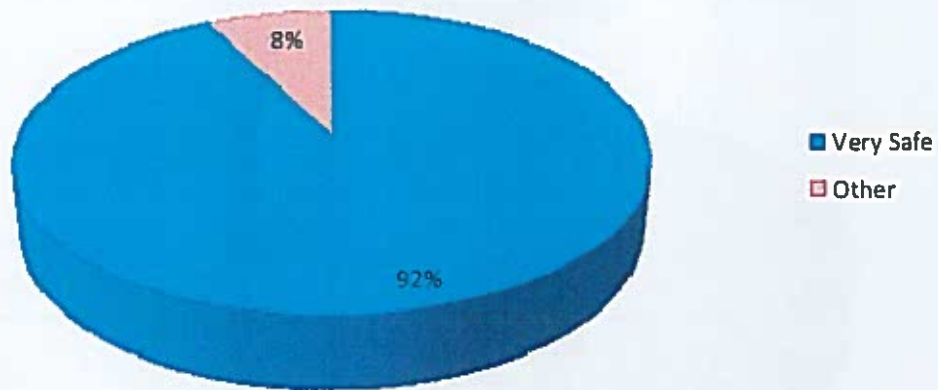
**100% said they feel very safe in school,
college or work**



92% said they feel very safe during their free time at home



92% said they feel very safe during their free time in public spaces



Jam Doughnut



Portion of white
rice



Portion of
strawberries



Frosted Cereal



One of frosted

Muffin



Strawberry muffin (RFa)

**We asked
YP (ages
11yrs-22yrs)
How many
teaspoons of
sugar in
these foods?**



Baked Beans



Jacket Potato



Meringue



Meringue (28g):

Bagel



Orange Juice



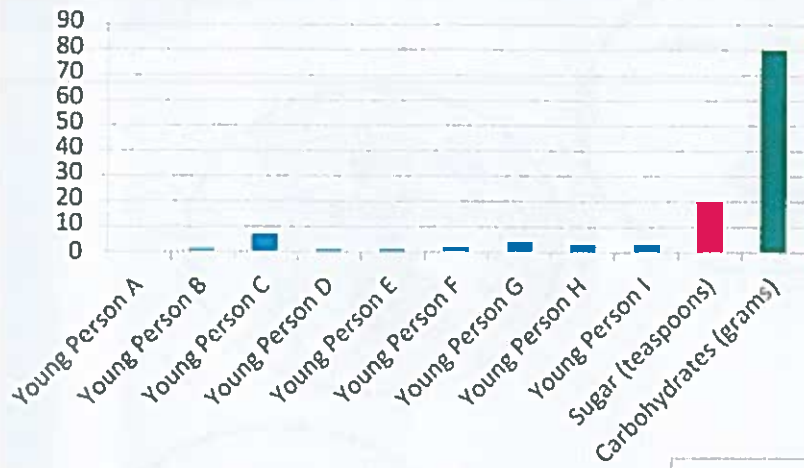
Red Bull



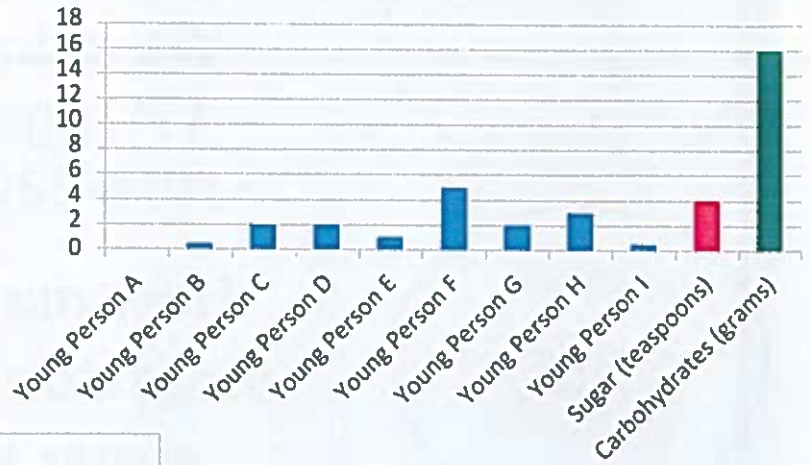
Diet Cola



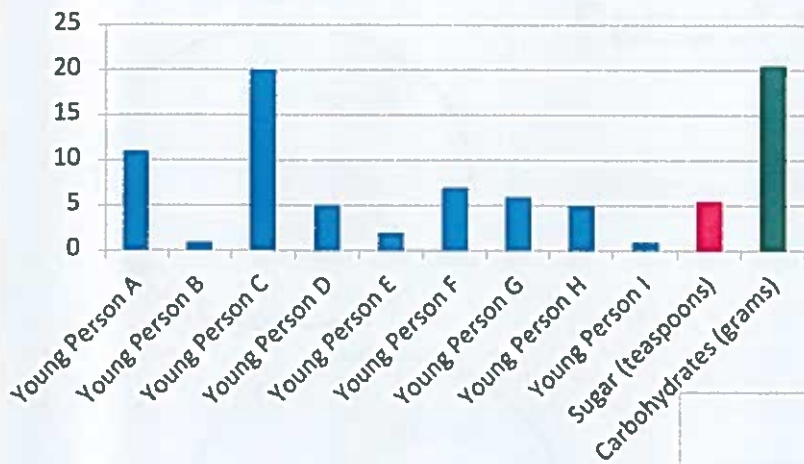
Portion of White Rice



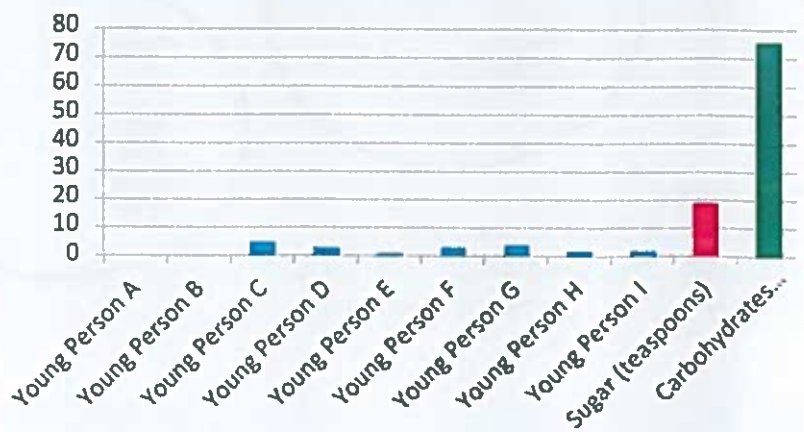
Portion of Strawberries



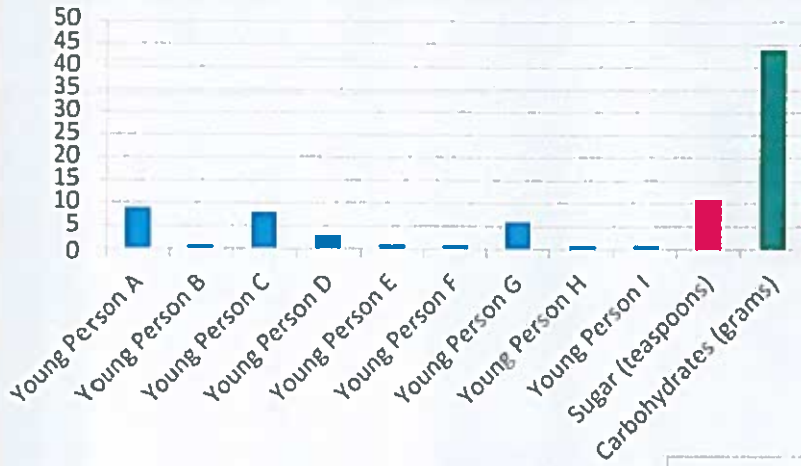
Muffin



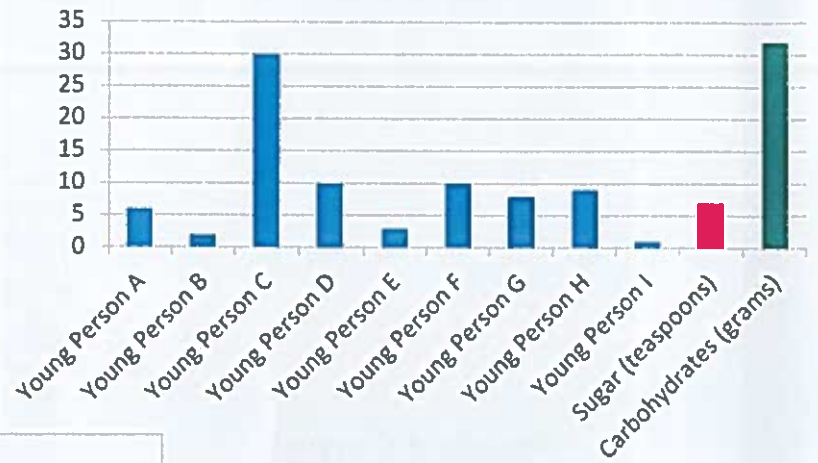
Jacket Potato



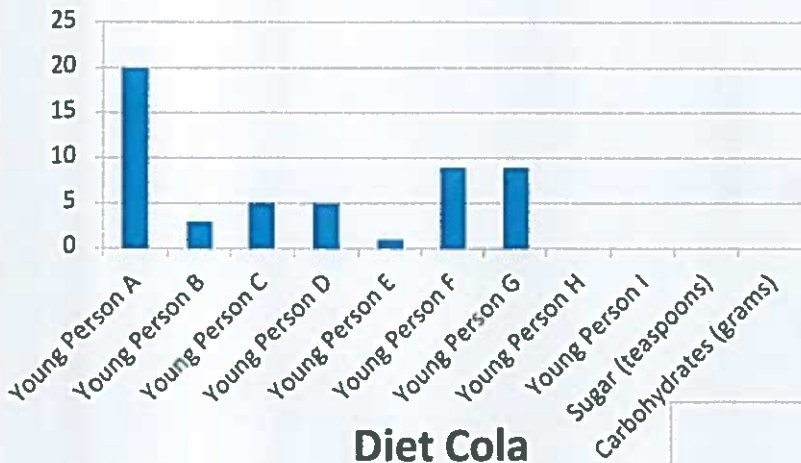
Bagel



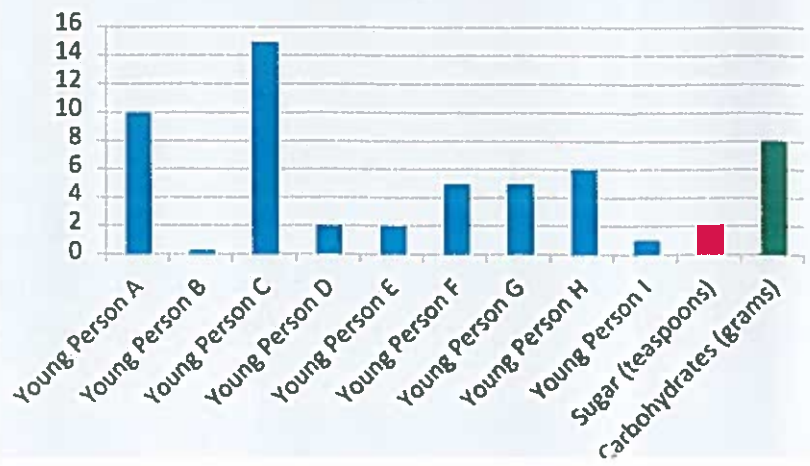
Red Bull



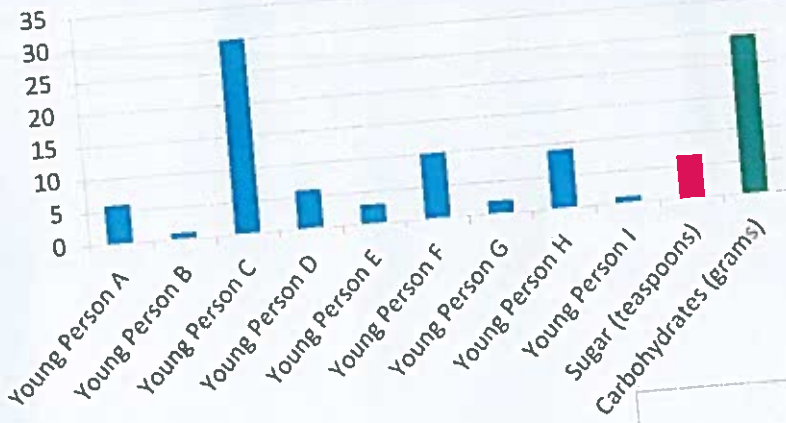
Diet Cola



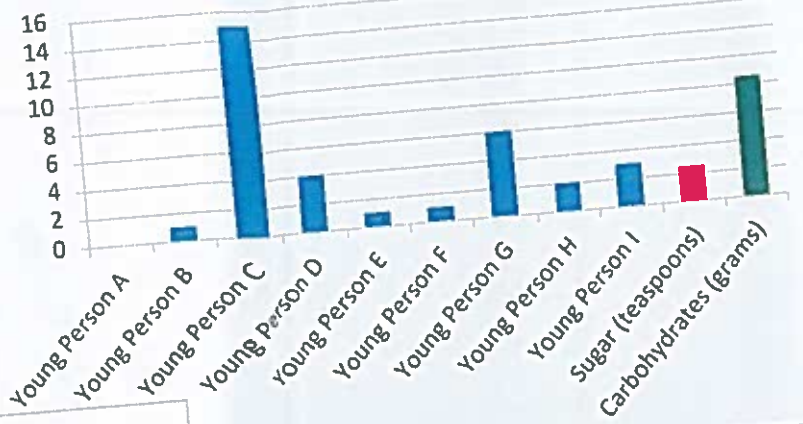
Orange Juice



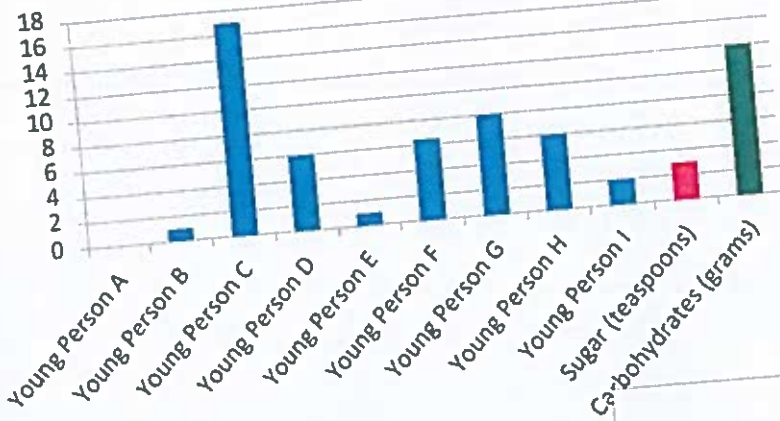
Meringue



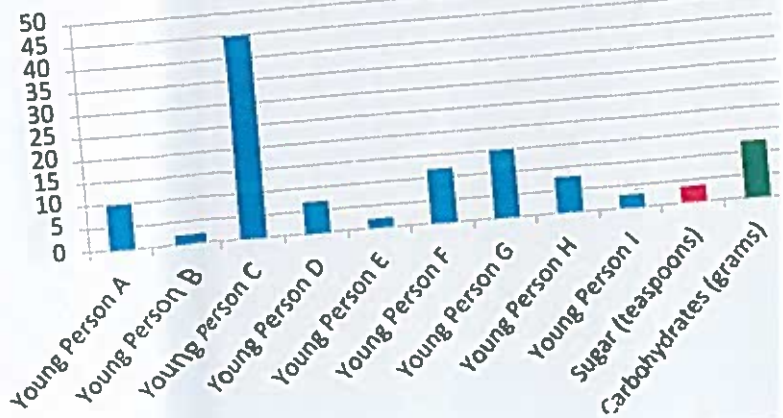
Baked Beans



Frosted Cereal



Doughnut



Disability Team – CLA YP

There are 8 CLA YP supported by the disability team, 6 male, 2 female, 5 have advocates. All 8 CLA are out of borough placements. Due to the severe LD, none of the YP can or have expressed a wish to join Harrow Youth Parliament. The ages of the CLA YP are from 10yrs – 17yrs+.

Future plans

- Increase the number of CLA/Careleaver YP attending the participation activities;
- To increase the communication between the SW's and YP: A "Training the Trainers" session for YP is to be arranged, after which the YP will deliver training directly to the SW's to improve communication;
- Continue to meet with the CLA YP/Careleavers on a 1:1 basis before their Reviews;
- Continue to keep the CLA YP/Careleavers and carers advised about upcoming Beyond Limits and community activities that they can engage in;
- Continue to encourage the CLA YP/Careleavers to apply for apprenticeships and employment;
- Continue to encourage the CLA YP/Careleavers to register for free access to swimming and gym facilities;
- Continue to encourage impact evidence outcomes based reports received from invited facilitators who engage with the CLA/careleavers YP;
- Preparing, collating and reviewing monthly participation consultation topics to ensure that YP are making informed choices to improve their personal safety.
- There are occasionally issues around finding an interpreter when meeting 1:1 with YP before their review – this has been reported to the Careleavers manager
- The Independent Visitors team are not able to provide interpreters so less UASC and LINAB YP are able to access their service – more liaison with the IV staff;
- The YP have stated that they do not want to attend a yearly meeting with the Corporate Parents in a formal setting, so it was agreed that once a year, a specific activity will be arranged locally for the Corporate Parents and YP to attend together.
- The Corporate Parents are regularly invited to attend activities that the YP engage in.

