



Evaluation

YAP

Schools Project

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By

Youth Advocacy and Participation

@ the Junction

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Also a special thanks to the student social workers who supplied information for this project.

## **Abstract**

This piece of research sets out to provide a detailed account of the work undertaken by the Schools Advocacy Project, part of Colchester Mind's Youth Advocacy and Participation (YAP) service.

The Schools Advocacy Project has been successfully working now in primary and secondary schools in Colchester since 2006. The service offers independent and confidential advocacy (with the exception of Child Protection) to pupils who are in the transition from Year 6 Primary School to Year 7 Secondary School, aged 10-13. However, as the project progresses it is inevitable that we see young people across the age range. If students have deemed it beneficial to talk to an advocate early on in their schooling in Year 6 and they are known to the advocate or to the service then they will access the service again.

However, as the schools advocacy project main aim is to assist transition this piece of research only focused on Year 7 students. This would allow us to gain a much clearer insight on the actual problems and anxieties experienced during transition and to highlight whether talking to a school advocate is beneficial during this transition period.

Therefore the research project concentrated on the three secondary schools that the Schools Advocacy Project currently operates from. In total 280 questionnaires were distributed of which there were 191 responses. We were extremely pleased with the high response rate which allowed the findings to be much more valid.

What is evident from the research findings is the importance of early intervention by a schools advocate. The findings showed, certainly in relation to specific issues and concerns regarding transition to secondary school that young people after talking to an advocate either at junior or secondary school actually found it easier to cope. Those who had not spoken to a school advocate certainly found it more difficult to cope with their transition in many areas.

Colchester Mind's Youth Advocacy and Participation (YAP) service's aim is to promote emotional well being and good mental health during this stressful transitional period. This is difficult to quantify so informal evaluations were handed out to users of the service in order to provide their views and feedback after working with the advocate during transition.

Reflecting on all the evidence generated by this piece of research, although it validated the importance of the service it also raised a number of other problems. In particular, methods of access and marketing. This also has implications on the service as if more students wish to access a schools advocate then the demands on the service will also grow.

## **Introduction**

This is an evaluation of the review of the Schools Advocacy project, one of the services offered by the young person's services of Colchester Mind at the Junction. The Schools advocacy project is now offered in a number of schools in the Colchester area of North East Essex by Colchester Mind's Youth Advocacy and Participation (YAP) service. Six of the schools in which we work are funded by the Essex Children's Fund, through the Colchester Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP). Due to additional funding from our local Primary Care Trust (PCT) we have extended the service to a further three schools, meaning that we visit nine schools in total. These consist of three secondary schools, each with two feeder primary schools. This means that there is consistency for young people who attend a primary school who can then continue to use our service in the first year that they transition into senior school. The schools were targeted as most of the schools are in areas where higher social and economic problems exist and had been in special measures. Therefore the Schools Project provides extra support for young people who may face the social consequences related to poverty and social exclusion.

As the service has now been running successfully for three years there are students who were seen during their initial transition who continue to use the service mainly during period of crisis, knowing that they will be supported throughout their schooling. Therefore we do have 25 open cases of students who are in Years 8/9/10/11 using the service.

Also as our work in schools is more widely valued and understood by school staff and students these then refer other young people again across the year groups to access an advocate. Due to the nature of MIND and the importance we place on good mental health and emotional well being we never turn away any young person who wishes to use the service.

However, as our main aim is to work with young people during transition the focus of the research project was to target Year 7 students. The main aim of the research study was to provide a detailed picture as to whether the work done during this stressful period had any effect on the young persons mental health and emotional well being and if using the service helped them to make an easier and successful transfer to secondary school.

## **Aims and Objectives**

- To provide a detailed feedback on the main issues and concerns felt by young people during transition to secondary school.
- To identify the types of problems young people asked the service to help them with.
- To establish whether the young people using schools advocate had any effect during transition to secondary school.
- To identify young people perceptions of the service.
- To investigate if Year 7 students value the service (which is independent of the school) and wish it to continue.
- To obtain views from Year 7 students regarding the effectiveness of the service.

## **Background Information**

Although this project focuses on transition, the School Advocacy Service deals with a multitude of other issues, including young carers, relationships issues regarding parents, step-parents and siblings. Colchester as a Garrison town, and at a time when a lot of fathers are out fighting in Iran and Afghanistan, has very specific needs. The YAP School Advocacy service is in schools which are directly affected by these issues. By having the service it enables young people in schools to talk openly about their concerns and anxieties. Often they cannot do so at home for fear of upsetting the delicate balance as mothers themselves are trying to cope alone. Often these concerns exacerbate the fears a young person has regarding transition. The early intervention of many of these issues does alleviate young persons' anxieties and so thus promotes good mental health.

The Office of National statistics found in 2008 that if a young person experiences up to three stressful life events, such as divorce of parents, bereavement or serious illness, then they are significantly more likely to develop a behavioural disorder (ONS 2008)

Although children are often not perceived as 'equal citizens' they do contribute to society as being part of our culture and the main agent for change. This is made difficult for young people if they are not empowered to make decisions and not taught how to be responsible for instigating positive change in their own lives. School is an appropriate institution for learning, which needs discipline to control students and instil values. However, there is not the time to individually teach young people how to deal with the complex social issues which arise in everybody's life and the skills of how to work through these (or live with them).

Emotional literacy skills are vital to our emotional development, affect how we contribute to society and need to be explored in a safe environment with skilled adults, who allow the young person to lead discussions and find their own answers.

Confidentiality is used within the advocate's relationship with the young person to give them autonomy and control over what is done with the information that they share. This helps build trust and empowers the young person, removing the fear of repercussions about what they disclose. All advocates working in the Schools' Project follows the Code of Practice for Advocates.

It must be highlighted that MIND has clear procedures to follow the Safeguarding Children Policy 2006. When conversations held with the advocate concern significant harm including; abuse, someone considering suicide; someone at risk of harming themselves or harming other people; the advocate will discuss these issues with 'the person that needs to know'.

All young people are spoken to and asked to sign a statement of Confidentiality (Appendix D) before advocacy starts. In schools the Advocates refer child protection disclosures into the school system via the schools child protection lead.

Knowing this the young person can then make an informed decision regarding whether they choose to share anything. The young person may, however, ask the advocate to talk to a teacher or have support writing a letter to a parent to get their voice heard. Article 16 of the UN Convention for Rights of the Child:-Gives all children have the right to privacy.

CRAE (2009) found that many young people criticised their lack of control over the extent of personal information shared about them. One young person interviewed stated

*"I told a teacher something once that I thought I could trust, and they were going back to my mum, and when I got home, I got in so much trouble for it, so it was really bad"* ( CRAE 2009).

The independence of an Advocate means they can work with the young person without disclosing information to teachers, parents or other pupils (unless necessary or requested).

Article 12 of the UN Convention for Rights of the Child:- A child who is capable of forming his or her own views has the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

School Advocates understand how the schools function. Advocates do not disclose to schools the nature of what has been discussed with the young person unless they have requested to do so or if it deemed child protection issue. The nature of the work is to enable young people to engage fully in school life and become more independent within their new setting. Early intervention with a school advocate is not only important in coping with transition but to avoid school phobia and to allow the young person to participate more successfully in school life. This is extremely important especially for boys who from new research findings from the Royal Economics Society has found that

*'Boys who stay on at school for an addition year see their future salary increase by an average of 13% - regardless of their intellectual ability'*  
(The Observer 19.04.09).

There is no evidence relating to girls in the study but it would suggest that they too would also see an increased correlation between staying on at school and doing well. It must be noted that girls in general perform better at school than boys (Radio 4: 20/4/09)

School is often regarded as a safe and contained haven for many young people, especially those who may be experiencing difficulty in other areas of their lives. Therefore it can be a traumatic and confusing experience when it is time to leave for senior school. Transition can be emotionally very difficult for some young people; it can also be a frightening and intimidating place due to challenges in educational learning, social learning and bullying. Through the Schools Project, Advocates have seen that young people can feel overwhelmed about the transition from primary to secondary school. Even very minor details like where to park their bike can seem extremely worrying, and although appearing very trivial can be extremely daunting to a young person. Having one to one time with young people gives them a chance to express and explore any areas of their life where there is conflict for them.

*“Advocacy is speaking up for yourself or for others when you think people with power over your life are ignoring your needs”*

(Tufail and Lyon 2007:17)

## Transition

Hannah Frankel (2007) confirms the problems of transition.

*'Making the leap from primary to secondary school can be scary ..... it can be a frightening and intimidating experience. Used to the security of a primary and the familiarity of just one or two teachers, "big" school is not always a happy place to be, or an easy environment in which to learn. '*

In her article Frankel (2007) highlights the problems and from the research undertaken by Linda Hargreaves

*"The new intake children make not one but several transfers in the first few days, and then multiple daily transitions between differing environments and ethos's. Everything from room layout to behaviour regimes and teaching styles is different. Most survive and adapt, but a significant minority go under or adopt risk-avoidance strategies."*

This is again reiterated by Santrock (2004 :391) who also focuses on the changing, physical, emotional, intellectual and social needs that are also occurring at the same time as transition.

*'The transition takes place at a time when many changes-in the individual, in the family, and in school are occurring simultaneously. These changes include puberty and related concerns about body image; the emergence of at least some aspects of formal operational thought, including accompanying changes in social cognition; increased responsibility and independence in association with decreased dependency on parents; change from a small contained classroom structure to a larger, more impersonal school structure; change from one teacher to many teachers and change from a small, homogeneous set of peers to a*

*larger, more heterogeneous set of peers; and an increased focus on achievement and performance and their assessment .'*

There are a great range of problems that young people experience during this time as Santrock (2004) identified. These findings are upheld by ChildLine, which runs a 24-hour free telephone counselling service for children, counselled around 120,000 children in 2002/03. The majority of calls or letters - nearly 80 per cent - were from girls. The main types of concern expressed were bullying (22,000), family relationship problems (16,000) and physical abuse (14,000). Bullying was the major concern expressed by both girls and boys, accounting for around 20 per cent of enquiries. However girls and boys varied in the other types of concerns they expressed. A higher proportion of girls than boys were counselled regarding pregnancy or concern for others, while a higher proportion of boys expressed a concern about physical abuse. (2002/03: Social Trends 34)

These findings also are reflected in the types of issues and concerns that young people have when they use the Schools Advocacy Service. The research also highlighted the need for voluntary organisations and charities that play an important role in providing help to children who have problems (2002/03: Social Trends 34)

One of Frankel (2007) tips for a smooth transfer which has relevance to the YAP Schools project is that

*'Support needs to be sustained and involve at least one adult recognising their strengths and small successes.'*

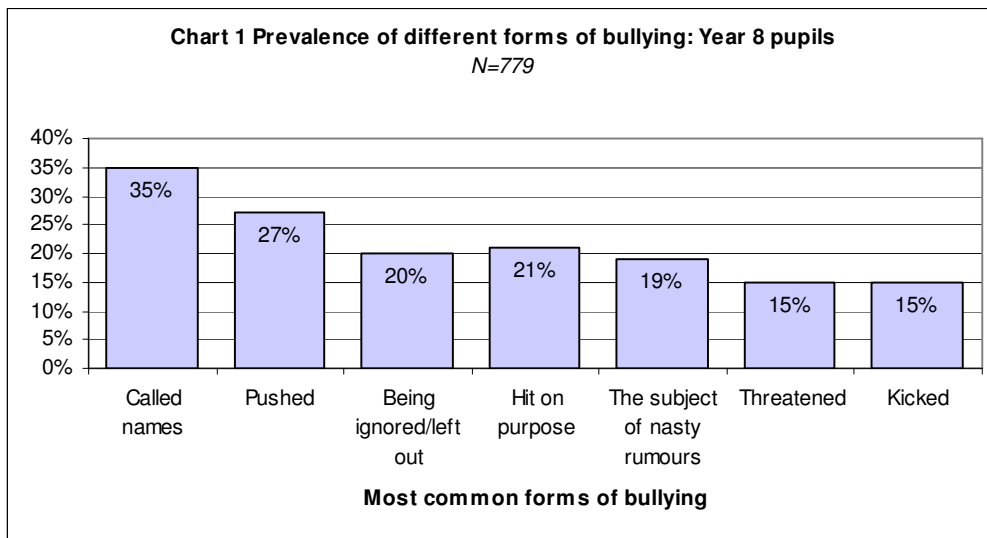
Part of the work of the school advocate is to assist young people 'to increase their resources and confidence' which is included in the contract between Advocate and Young Person (see Appendix E).

As confirmed by Childcare Social Trends 34 2003 one of the major concern that the Schools Advocacy project deals with is that of bullying. Again this is validated by the research conducted by the Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) (Davey 2009), it was found that bullying was the top issue that children disliked about school. This is in agreement with Bloom's findings (Bloom: February 2008) that 'bullying tops the list of worries'. It was found from research from the Effective Pre- School, Primary and Secondary Education project after speaking to 1,190 pupils moving to secondary school that

*'Bullying was the key obstacle to transition. A quarter of Year 7 pupils had some experience of bullying at school. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds found it hard to settle, with three – quarters struggling to get used to new routines'*

(Bloom: February 2008)

Christine Oliver and Mano Candappa (2003) research (see Chart 1 on next page) showed that Year 8 pupils showed the difference forms of bullying with a higher level of physical bullying: being pushed and hit on purpose represented the second and third most common forms of bullying. A large proportion also reported being socially ostracised. A minority of all pupils reported experiencing racist, sexist or homophobic name-calling, or sexualised bullying. Although the numbers were small, it would appear that bullying by electronic communication is emerging as a new form of bullying: 4% reported that they had received nasty text messages and 2% reported that they had received nasty e-mail messages



This has been confirmed in the advocacy work done in the primary and secondary schools by MIND. However, young people often choose not to tell school staff as sometimes young people feel bullying is being tolerated or ignored.

The UN Committee recommended in 2002 that the Government should

*'take measures and set up adequate mechanisms and structures to prevent bullying and other forms of violence in schools and include children in the development and implementation of those strategies....Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence under Article 19 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.'*

Davey 2009:55

Research highlighted by Rigby (2002) shows how persistence victimisation from being bullied can lead to poor physical and mental health, based on the results of consistent stress.

Rigby (1990) also notes that feelings of

*‘Humiliation’ instigated from bullying, have a direct link with suicidal ideation...Probably one of the most critical factors in precipitating suicidal ideation arising from interpersonal problems is humiliation – feelings of disgrace and public disparagement may shatter a youngster’s healthy sense of narcissism and sense of identity and the loss of a basic sense of worthwhile ness is a powerful force to increase thoughts of self annihilation.”*

(Pfeffer 1990, cited Rigby 2002:123)

In CREA’s research young people reported that there was often a reluctance for children to report bullies for fear of repercussion. In all the schools that the advocacy service work within, they have a clear policy on bullying and make sure that bullying is not tolerated.

However, time restraints for teaching staff can contribute to staff not having the opportunity to spend time with a child who is a victim of bullying. Without the right support, it is believed that a young person may not feel able to access effective education (CRAE 2009). Young people often see friendship problems as bullying.

Young people sometimes express their anger in ways that to others perceive as bullying. Advocates can help young people develop alternative ways to express anger and understand what it is that is making them angry.

It is interesting that research work undertaken by Christine Oliver and Mano Candappa (2003) confirmed the importance of the work done in schools by independent voluntary organisations

*'Confidential sources of advice, such as counseling services and voluntary organisations working with children and young people were identified as an important course of support. Such organisations were reported as enabling pupils to express their feelings, consider the options available to them, and to have some control over the pace of disclosure, should they decide to tell a teacher or parent about bullying. '*

## **Methodology**

The main aim of the study was to obtain information from students in Year 7. Due to the investigative nature of the study, combinations of quantitative and qualitative research methods were used.

The main research methods used to collect data were by means of questionnaires. The use of questionnaires, although limited offered the possibility of gaining access to a wide population. It was felt to be the most appropriate method to obtain a precise picture of current anxieties relating to transition and to find out if using an advocate had helped relieve some of these anxieties.

The questionnaires (Appendix A) were designed for self-completion and therefore had to be unambiguous, clear and uniformly workable. The format of the questionnaire was designed for easy completion.

The first part of the questionnaire was to ask general background details so that it would be clear that the response were from Year 7. Also asking what Junior School the young person came from would highlight if the Schools Advocacy Project are in the correct feeder schools, if not then it would indicate where the service would be better provided.

The second part of the questionnaire is based on previous transition research as highlighted in the background information by Hannah Frankel (2007) who highlighted these major problems for young people moving to secondary school.

There are many other issues that might also be covered, but the questions are based on the most common concerns felt during transition. This would provide a very clear picture as to which particular issues caused the most concern. Also if a young person had talked to an advocate either at junior or secondary school then

the results would illustrate an earlier transitional period than those young people who did not access the service.

The third part of the questionnaire looked at whether a young person had talked to an advocate and if so what were the types of issues they discussed. These also included broader issues such as worries about home. Liking myself more/liking who I am. This would confirm that young people did not only come to see an advocate just for transitional problems but for a wide range of other concerns too.

The fourth part of the questionnaire was to investigate Year 7's perceptions and options about the YAP Schools Advocacy Project. To provide a more in-depth understanding of their views as to whether the service should continue, access to the service and finally improvements or changes that they would suggest.

It was decided that all Year 7 students in the three secondary schools should be sampled. We compiled a questionnaire and asked our YPAB (Young Person Advocacy Board) to feedback on the content and layout. They told us that they understood them.

We had planned that for the questionnaires to be distributed to Year 7's before the autumn half term to see if they had any transitional issues and it would provide a clearer illustration of their main concerns being in the first 6 weeks. However, this proved difficult since although we had approval at school level we had to gain approval from a higher body. This delayed the sending out of the questionnaires until the end of November beginning of December. This was not ideal but a factor which was out of our control.

The best method to access young people in schools and also not to influence the response was to ask the form tutors to hand out the questionnaire to their Year 7 students. A covering letter (see Appendix B) was given out to all form tutors

outlining the nature of the project and requesting them to give all year 7 students a questionnaire to complete.

We acknowledged that this method of accessing Year 7 was problematic. Only one of the schools had forms of year 7 the other two schools use a horizontal form tutor approach whereby year 7/8/9 and 10 are mixed. We also had no control as to how or when the form tutor handed out the questionnaire or what information was given prior to the students completing them.

A total of 280 questionnaires were handed out and a total of 191 completed questionnaires were returned. This in fact was a satisfactory response rate and therefore provided evidence to give a clear picture of Year 7's views of transition and their knowledge of the schools project.

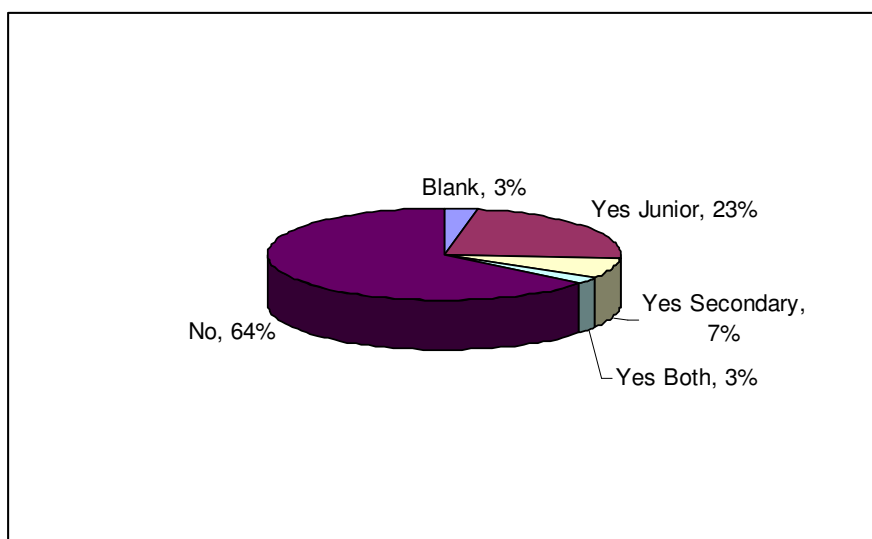
To provide qualitative data, a random sample of the year 7 students who had actually used the service were also asked to complete a short evaluation. These provided a selection from across the three secondary schools to provide some very interesting qualitative findings. The actual feedbacks from the seven evaluations are attached in Appendix F.

## Results and Discussion of Findings

Overall there was a very good response rate and 191 Year 7 students completed the questionnaire from a total of 280 questionnaires that were sent out. There were 44% of males and 56% of females who completed the questionnaire and so there was only a slightly higher proportion of female who answered them but this was not significant. In proportion to the size of schools, the responses from each of the secondary schools reflected the numbers on role.

A total of 28 Colchester schools, excluding those outside the area, feed into the three secondary schools where the Schools Project is based. The main feeder schools are the ones already using the project, however there were three other primary schools that also had a high percentage 15% and 7% that feed into the schools. These might also need to be considered for the Schools project, if funding allows. Pie Chart 1 highlights the number of young people actually using the advocacy service.

Pie Chart 1: Have you talked to an advocate?

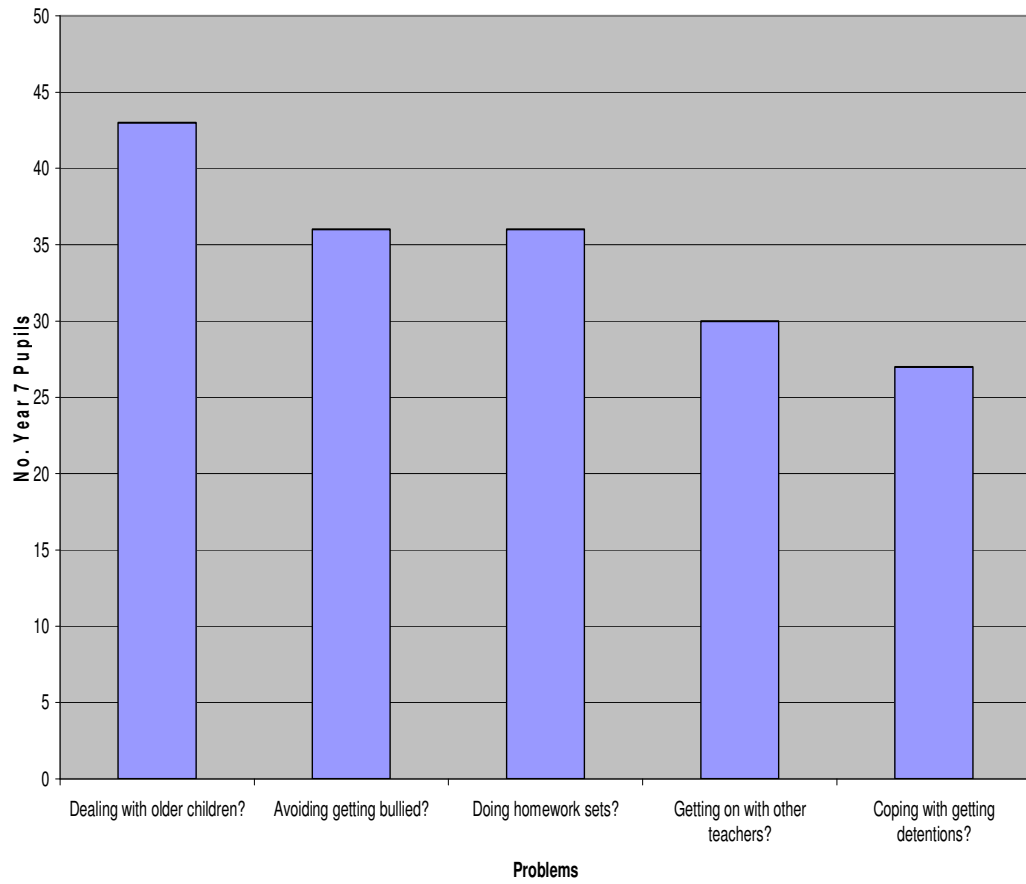


What is interesting is the fact that a higher proportion used the advocacy service in junior school 23% than that in secondary school. There could be a number of reasons of this, if using an advocate had help alleviate or make transition easier then you would expect that the number using the service would go down. This is also confirmed by the findings in Table 3 which highlights the significant difference between those who have seen a schools advocate either at Junior or Secondary School compared to those who had not. Those who had seen a schools advocate had found it easier in many of the main issues.

It should also be highlighted that young people are also more reluctant to admit seeing an advocate in secondary school as we do see a higher number of young people at secondary school than Pie Chart 1 suggests.

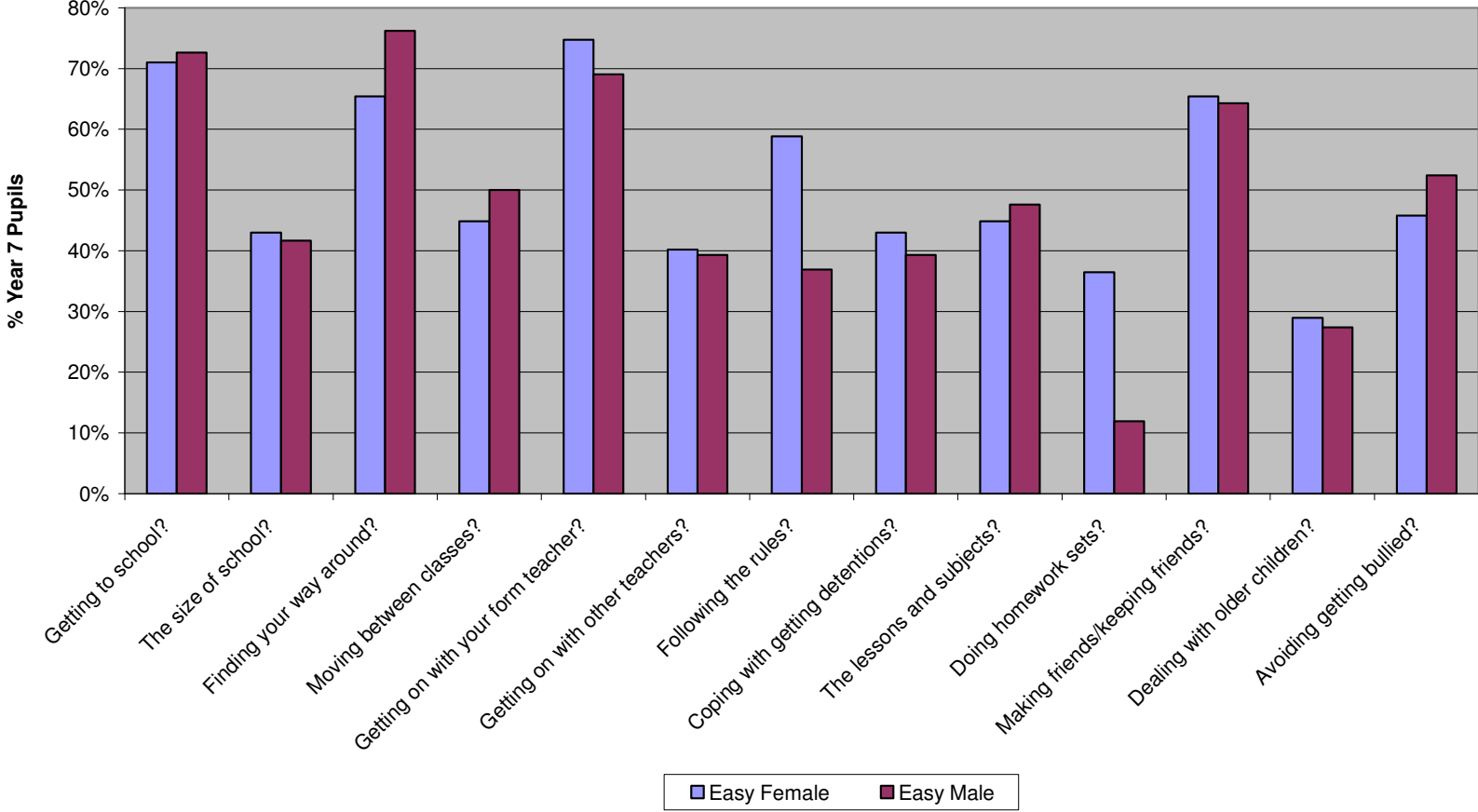
Chart 2 identified the problems experienced at transfer by the respondents. The top 5 where 23% finding it hard to deal with older children, 19% were concerned with bullying, 19% doing homework 16% getting on with teacher and 14% coping with detention.

Chart 2: Top 5 Hardest Changes when moving to Secondary School



It is more interesting to look at the comparison between girls and boys Chart 3 as there are some gender differences which the school advocate might need to consider and address.

Chart 3: Effect on moving to secondary school male/female comparison



Boys found homework much harder 31% than girls 9%. Perhaps that reflects what previous findings suggest that girls out perform boys and therefore find homework easier.

Boys also found that getting on with teacher more difficult 21% compared to girls 11%. This was interesting as both will be facing the problem of moving from teacher to teacher and so it would be expected that these results would be comparable. Maybe girls feel more confident in dealing with teachers and this is reflected in the results.

It was issues relating to bullying that showed a difference with girls more affected 21% than boys 17%. Both genders were worried about dealing with older children, 21% girls and 25% boys. Maybe feeling very vulnerable as coming from being the oldest in junior school to the youngest in the senior school had an effect on both girls and boys. It would be interesting to have found out whether those who found it OK or easy had older siblings or people who they already knew at the school.

Coping with detentions affected both boys 15% and girls 13% respectively.

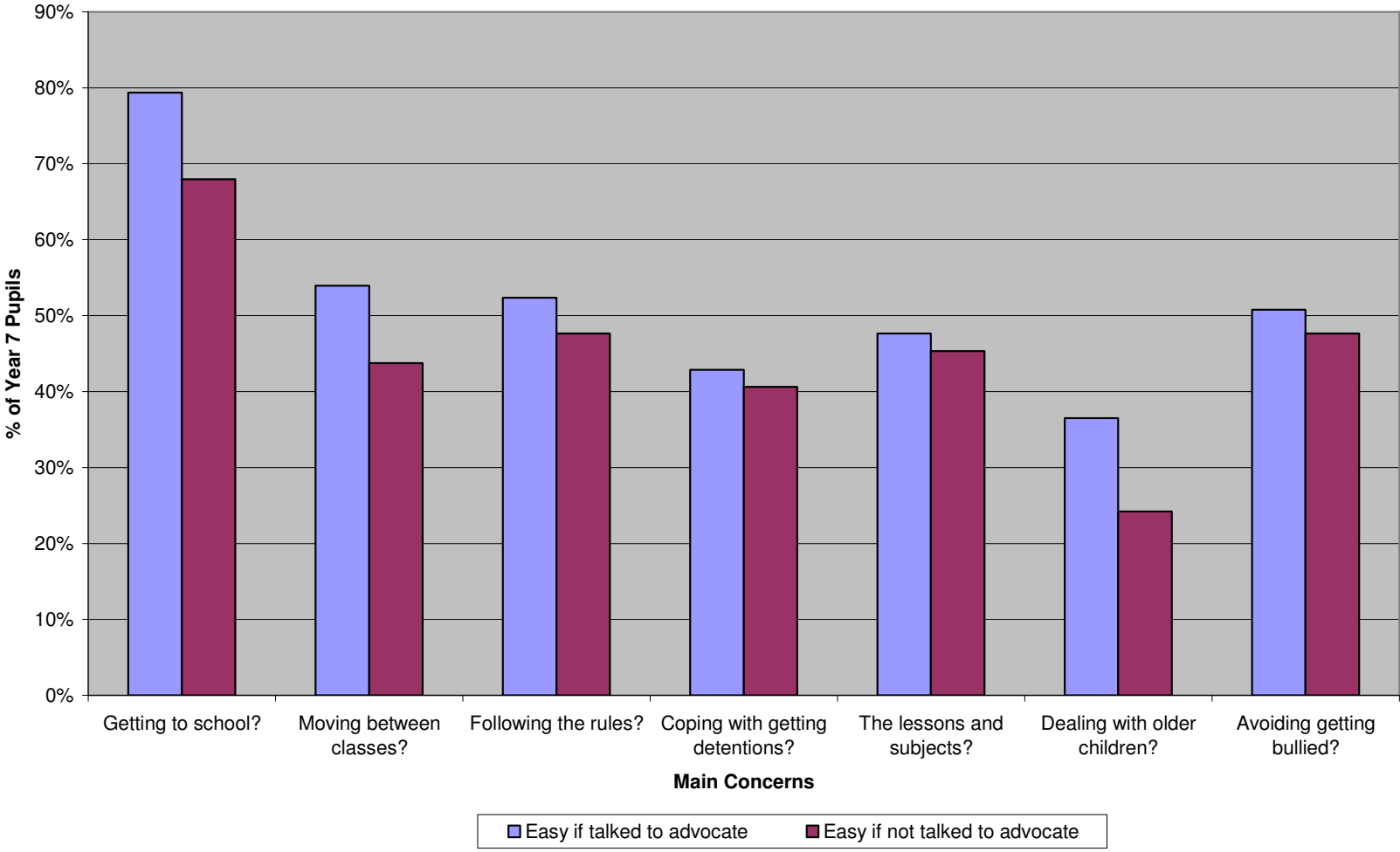
Table 1: How has it been like moving if seen by an Advocate in Junior or Secondary school?

	% Indicated Easy
Look after my health/take care of myself	51%
My worries about school	84%
Feeling safer in school	62%
My worries about home	40%
Feeling safer at home	40%
Problems with bullying	54%
Moving to secondary school/fitting in	68%
Getting on with friends/Making friends	67%
Liking myself more/liking who I am	54%
Feeling confident or stronger inside myself	56%
Getting people to listen to me/getting heard	44%
Getting information I need or want	48%
They are just someone to talk to in confidence	49%
Something else...	35%

85% of the YP who accessed our project felt that it should continue. 51% felt that the support they received helped them to better look after their health; 84% felt it eased their worries about school; 62% reported it helped them feel safer in school; 40% felt it helped with worries about home; 40% reported it helped them feel safer at home; 54% felt it helped them deal with bullying; 68% reported it helped them to fit in better at school; 67% reported it helped them to make friends; 54% stated it helped them to like themselves more, and 56% stated the project helped them to feel stronger inside themselves.

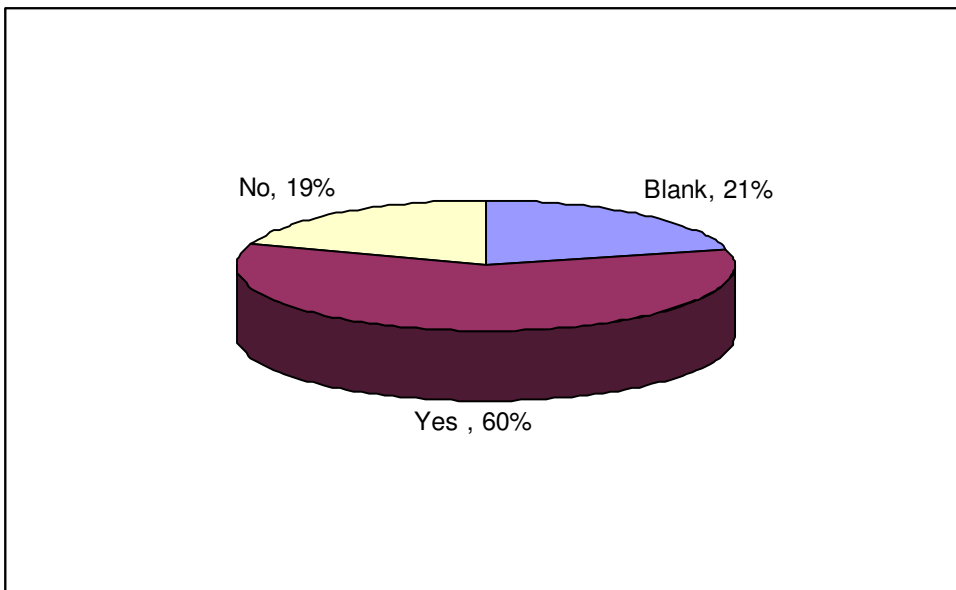
The most interesting results are illustrated in Chart 5 which highlights the significant difference between those who have seen a schools advocate either at Junior or Secondary School compared to those who had not.

Chart 5: Comparison between young people who had and had not used an advocate during transition



Those young people who had seen a schools advocate had found it easier in many of the main issues surrounding transition compared to those who had not. Young people in Year 7 who had seen a school advocate found it easier to get to school 79% compared to those who had not 68%, those who had seen an advocate found it considerable easier moving between classes 54% than those who had not seen a schools advocate 44%, Dealing with older children showed the most difference with 37% finding it easy following talking to an advocate than 24% who had not. Even bullying was 51% easier for those who had talked to a schools advocate against 48% who had not. What is interesting is that a very high proportion Pie Chart 2 stated that they would use the service again. This suggests that they did find using a school advocate beneficial.

Pie Chart 2 : Would you use the service again if you need to?



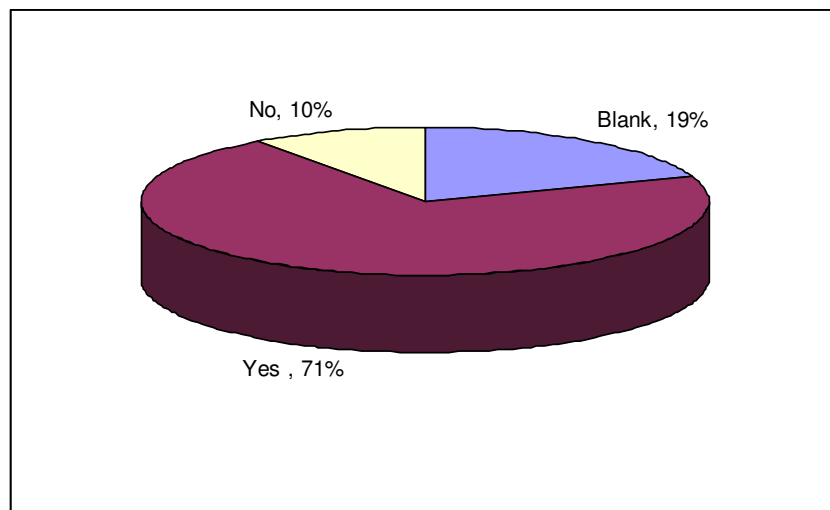
When the findings were broken down to find out if there is a gender difference as to who uses the School Advocacy service (Table 2) there were slightly more females than males but these were not significant.

Table2: Who had used the service – gender differences

	Male	Female
Blank	3%	1%
Yes Junior	9%	14%
Yes Secondary	3%	5%
Yes Both	1%	2%
No	30%	34%
TOTAL	45%	55%

The value placed on the Advocacy service is confirmed by the fact that a very high percentage wants the YAP service to continue. Pie Chart 3. When these figures are further broken down to only look at those young people who actually accessed the service then the percentage increases to 85%.

Pie Chart 3 : Should the YAP continue?



The general comments from the young people provided some interesting statements that showed the value of what the young people see in the Schools Advocacy service. These were

*'Helping you with your classes. And helping you getting around the school'*

*' Helping me so I don't get scared'*

*'They are very helpful and don't need to change anything'*

*'I think they have done a great deal of good things. I have never known any bad advice'*

*'I like them because they help me'*

These comments are also upheld by the evaluation feedback given by young people who directly accessed the service. (see Appendix G)

As the young people obviously valued the service there were a lot of suggestions as to greater access to the school advocate, there are some of their comments

*' YAP could come in more often'*

*'Come to school more often'*

*'More people to work as a YAP'*

*'More people to talk with'*

*'They could come on different days in the week rather than one day'*

However, although there is a lot of posters and details given to young people about the service there were still a high number who do not know about the service.

*'Where you can find the YAP in school'*

*'What are you about?'*

*'Don't know what YAP advocate is'*

*'I will visit if I know where it is!'*

*'To know who they are'*

This might be because the young people do not know us as the YAP service but if a picture of the schools advocates had also been put on the questionnaire then it might have given a difference response.

The young people also gave suggestions as to what we could do about the situation.

*'More posters to show us where they are'*

*'For them to hand out flyers so that you can remember where to find them.'*

*'To be told about them more often'*

*'In school the people working for YAP be more easy to find'*

These were very helpful and we will include in our discussions as to how we can increase our own marketing.

## **Conclusion**

This research project has provided a great deal of information concerning the role of the advocate in assisting the successful move to secondary school.

There was strong evidence to suggest that following talking to a schools advocate the young person did find it easier to cope with many of the issues effecting transition. A higher proportion who used the service found it easier to cope with lessons and detentions, moving between classes. However, there was significant ease in dealing with older children and issues relating to being bullied than those students who had not seen an advocate.

Findings also highlight the need for better marketing of our service so that more young people know about our service. However, it is important to stress that not all young people during transition will need to talk to an advocate , they may have enough support and own self confidence that would make transition satisfactory without any need for the service.

It was of interest to note that young people at school value the service and an overwhelming 84% requested that the service continue if they had used the service themselves. Overall 71% of all students stated that they wanted to use the service even if they had not accessed it. This suggests that the young person in schools just likes the fact that they could if they wished use the service and that in itself is a comfort to them.

## **Future/Recommendations**

The research project findings highlight the need for the YAP Schools Advocacy project service to continue. That there is statistical evidence to show that the early intervention of an advocate does reduce the young persons anxieties surrounding mainly of the concerns relating to transition from primary to secondary school.

It also needs to be recognised that as the Schools Advocacy Project develops that the young people will inevitable access the service of an advocate if they have deemed it beneficial in Yr 6/ 7. This can actually be evidenced in our work in the years 8/9/10. It therefore would be useful if further research could be undertaken to argue that funding should not just be targeted at years 6 and 7. Although transition is very stressful, it would be interesting to investigate fully if students who use the service at different times in their schooling find that an independent school advocacy service beneficial in promoting their mental well being. However, good mental health is difficult to measure. One of the aims of the YAP Service is to provide the tools for each individual to be empowered so that they are self reliant throughout life and to enable them to fulfil their own potential. From this piece of research it would appear that the young people who use the service do value the service and even those who have not used us would like the service to continue.

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## Appendix A: Questionnaire for Young People 1

<p>The YAP Schools Project (Advocacy)</p> 
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**Hi!**

Please help us out by telling us about you!

How old are you? <input type="checkbox"/>
---

What Year are you in? <input type="checkbox"/>
--

Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>
---

What Junior School did you go to? _____
--

What Secondary School are you at? _____
--

YAP Advocacy @ The Junction  
78 Maldon Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AL  
Tel: 01206-541841

What has it been like moving to Secondary school?



Getting to school?			
The size of school?			
Finding your way around?			
Moving between classes?			
Getting on with your Form Teacher?			
Getting on with the other teachers?			
Following the rules?			
Coping with getting detentions?			
The lessons & subjects?			
Doing the homework set?			
Making friends / Keeping friends?			
Dealing with the older children?			
Avoiding getting bullied?			

**Have you talked to a YAP Advocate before?**

Yes, in Junior school

Yes, in Secondary school

No, Never

**If you have talked to an Advocate, please ✓  
all the things they have helped you with.**

Looking after my health / taking care of myself	
My worries about school	
Feeling safer in school	
My worries about home	
Feeling safer at home	
Problems with bullying	
Moving to secondary school / Fitting in	
Getting on with friends / Making friends	
Liking myself more / liking who I am	
Feeling confident or stronger inside myself	
Getting people to listen to me / Getting heard	
Getting information I need or want	
They are just someone to talk to in confidence	
Something else...	

YAP Advocacy @ The Junction  
78 Maldon Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AL  
Tel: 01206-541841

**Should the YAP Project continue?**

Yes  No

**Would you tell other students about it?**

Yes  No

**Will you use it again if you need to?**

Yes  No

**Do you know how/where to find the  
YAP Advocate in school?**

Yes  No  Not sure

**What improvements or changes would you like  
to see in the YAP Schools Project? Or any  
other comments:**

## Appendix B: Covering Letter to Form Teachers

23rd February 2009

Dear Class Tutor,

### **Re Schools Advocacy Project**

Please find enclosed an evaluation form for your Year 7 students.

The evaluation is anonymous and they don't need to put their name on the form. However if they write their names on the forms by mistake, this is not a problem as no single student, or school, will be identified specifically in results. This evaluation is taking place across all the schools in which the schools advocacy project runs.

Please ask your Year 7 students to fill it in and return it to you to place back in the envelope provided and then return the envelope to our tray in the staff room (it's near the far end of the trays).

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me. You can reach me quickest on my mobile number on ..... or leave a note in our tray.

May I also take this opportunity to remind you that if you have any concerns regarding a student generally, you can refer them to us via ..... or talk to me direct.

Many thanks for your help,

.....

Young Persons Advocates

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78 Maldon Road, Colchester, CO3 3AL  
Tel: (01206) 541841  
Fax:(01206) 575 013  
E-mail: young.persons@btconnect.com

Colchester Mind limited by guarantee  
Registered Charity Number 1064309  
Registered In England Number 3374820  
Registered Office: 7 Oxford Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3  
3HN.

## **Appendix C: Links with Other Professionals:**

YAP has developed working relationships with educational professionals based around individual children and young people. These include the following professionals:

Head Teachers

Vice - Principal

Deputy Heads

Special Educational Need Coordinators (SENCOS)

Head & Assistant Head of Years

Head of Learning Zones or Houses

Learning Mentors

Student Welfare Officers

Student Service Managers

Form Tutors

Class Teacher(s) (Primary School)

Learning Support Assistants (LSA'S)

Senior LSA'S

Behaviour Support Workers

Home School Liaison Workers

Attendance Officers

Educational Welfare Officers

School Nurses / Welfare

Subject Teachers

Administrative Staff

Inclusion Room Staff

Dyslexia Unit Staff

The Designated Person for Child Protection

Board of Governors

## Appendix D: Statement of Confidentiality



### ESSEX YOUNG PERSON'S AND CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY NETWORK.

#### Statement of Confidentiality

The network of organisations provides a confidential service to all young people referred to the project. This means that anything that is discussed between you and the advocate is private and only shared amongst the network members. The advocate will not pass on any details of what you talk about unless you say this is okay.

However, there are exceptions. When conversations held with the advocate concern significant-harm including; abuse, someone considering suicide, someone at risk of harming themselves or harming other people, the advocate will discuss the following options with you and one will be followed:

- You and advocate can talk to the person who 'needs to know', (e.g. parents, social services, police, doctor) together about issues of concern;
- You can request that the advocate speaks to the person who 'needs to know' on your behalf;

If neither of the above options are followed:

- The advocate will talk to the person that 'needs to know' about the concerns without your consent.

It is important that you are aware of this policy before you begin working with the advocate. The advocate will always consult with you before discussing the issue with anyone else.

I, ....., have read and understand the above confidentiality statement.

Young person's signature	
Date:	

Advocate Signature	
Date:	

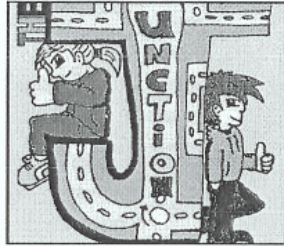
## Appendix E: Contract between Advocate and Young Person

<b>Advocacy agreement between the young person and the advocate</b>									
<b>I THE ADVOCATE/YOUNG PERSON AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:</b>									
<b>ADVOCATE AGREES</b>	<b>YOUNG PERSON AGREES</b>								
To respect young person's point of view	To respect advocate								
To listen to young person	To listen to advocate								
To assist young person to gain knowledge and resources	To share issues that concern them								
To encourage and build confidence	To actively participate								
To keep relationship confidential within the service-except (refer to confidentiality statement overleaf)	To read confidentiality policy thoroughly								
To be honest with young person	To be honest with advocate								
Not to make decisions for the young person	To make decisions about what they want to happen								
That the service we offer will be monitored	To be contacted and if you agree, you will be asked your views on the service								
That the young person can see their notes at any time	That they are able to see their notes at any time								
<b><u>Declaration for advocacy agreement.</u></b>									
I understand that, sometimes people in authority may feel I am not able to make decisions on my own about some parts of my life. This may mean having to speak with your parent(s) or the person who legally cares for you. If this happens I would:-									
a) like to be told before this happens and be included in any discussion . or b) I am happy for the advocate to discuss my case for me, and contact any person, including my parent(s) or the person who legally cares for me, as long as I have been informed.									
<i>Please delete the option you do not agree with.</i>									
I, ....., give permission for my advocate to work for me on issues that effect my life.									
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Young person's Signature</td> <td style="width: 150px; height: 30px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Date:</td> <td style="width: 150px; height: 30px;"></td> </tr> </table>	Young person's Signature		Date:		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Advocate Signature</td> <td style="width: 150px; height: 30px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Date:</td> <td style="width: 150px; height: 30px;"></td> </tr> </table>	Advocate Signature		Date:	
Young person's Signature									
Date:									
Advocate Signature									
Date:									

Advocacy agreement amended 07.01.05

## Appendix F Evaluation of YAP Schools Advocate Project

KP



### Evaluation of YAP Schools Advocate Project

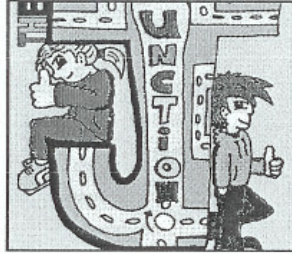
Please can you give us your comments  
good or bad about the service - and if it helped or didn't help you.

I think it is good because I have someone to talk to and express my feelings with. It makes me feel good about me and it puts a smile on my face.

Are there any things you would like us to improve?

Nothing

THANK YOU – your feedback helps us monitor what we do.



Evaluation of YAP Schools Advocate Project

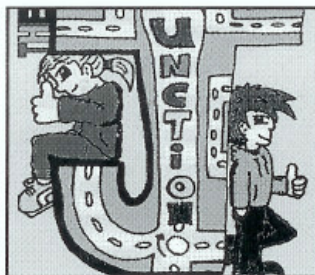
Please can you give us your comments  
good or bad about the service - and if it helped or didn't help you.

I think this service is good  
because it is all confidential about  
what u say

Are there any things you would like us to improve?

~~IA~~

THANK YOU – your feedback helps us monitor what we do.



### Evaluation of YAP Schools Advocate Project

Please can you give us your comments  
good or bad about the service - and if it helped or didn't help you.

I think its' good because they tell you  
what to do if you have a problem  
then~~s~~ if you go and do it. ~~it~~ works.

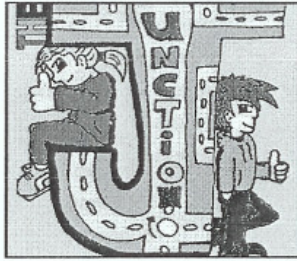
Are there any things you would like us to improve?

There is nothink they could  
improrne,

THANK YOU - your feedback helps us monitor what we do.

Jodie

2



Evaluation of YAP Schools Advocate Project

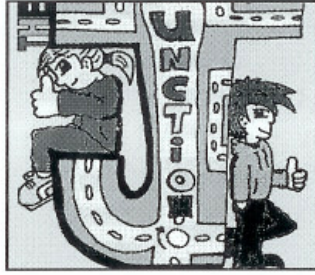
Please can you give us your comments  
good or bad about the service - and if it helped or didn't help you.

I Think They are Cool Because  
They help people sort  
out their PROBLEMS

Are there any things you would like us to improve?

No Not really

THANK YOU - your feedback helps us monitor what we do.



Evaluation of YAP Schools Advocate Project

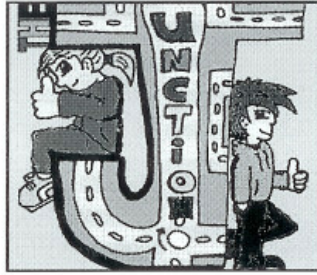
Please can you give us your comments  
good or bad about the service - and if it helped or didn't help you.

It has helped me with my spellings  
and got me support.

Are there any things you would like us to improve?

no!

THANK YOU – your feedback helps us monitor what we do.



Evaluation of YAP Schools Advocate Project

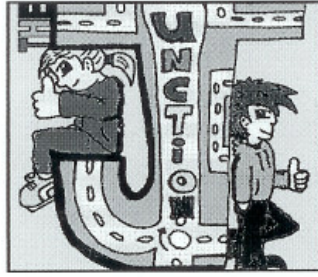
Please can you give us your comments  
good or bad about the service - and if it helped or didn't help you.

Good because my fears go away

Are there any things you would like us to improve?

I wish Claire could see me every Monday.

THANK YOU – your feedback helps us monitor what we do.



Evaluation of YAP Schools Advocate Project

Please can you give us your comments  
good or bad about the service - and if it helped or didn't help you.

Really good, yes it Really helped it  
was good my Confidence is  
better and looking much  
Positive it helps very much  
x  
thank you

Are there any things you would like us to improve?

Nothing Really x

THANK YOU – your feedback helps us monitor what we do.