



Report sponsor: Andy Smith Strategic Director  
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Quality Assurance

## **ITEM 09**

### **Independent Reviewing Service - Annual Report 2020/21**

#### **Purpose**

- 1.1 As part of IRO Handbook 2010 statutory guidance there is a requirement for the manager of the IRO Service to produce an annual report for the scrutiny of the members of the Corporate Parenting Committee.

#### **Recommendation**

- 2.1 To consider content of report and make appropriate recommendations

#### **Reason**

- 3.1 It is essential that the Corporate Parenting Committee are aware of the performance of the IRO service, issues that may be impacting on this and children in care population that the IRO service is providing a service to.

#### **Supporting information**

##### **Children in Care Council Summary**

Every child that comes into care has to be allocated an IRO. The IRO's responsibility is to chair the statutory review as well as to make sure the council is taking into account the child's wishes and feelings and the care plan is right for the child. The IRO annual report provides information about the work the IRO service has done over 2020/21.

All the IRO's are experienced and qualified social workers, they are settled in their jobs. Each IRO has approximately 82 young people for whom they are responsible for, ideally they should have between 50 – 70 young people.

IRO are getting busier and spend a lot of time chairing virtual meetings in 2020/21 due to Covid lockdown. IRO's work closely with social workers and others to make sure the views of young people are listened to.

It has been a busy year for the IRO service, with more young people coming into care, more reviews, more young people involved in their meetings and a high number of reviews held on time. The feedback from young people and parents has been very good.

The IRO's work very hard to ensure that they do a good job. Feedback from inspections has said that the IRO service is good.

- 4.1 The IRO Handbook 2010 provides the statutory guidance for Independent Reviewing Officers and Local Authorities on their statutory functions in relation to case management and review of looked after children. As part of this statutory guidance there is a requirement for the manager of the IRO Service to produce an annual report for the scrutiny of the members of the Corporate Parenting Committee.
- 4.2 99% of statutory reviews held have been within required timescales. This is above our target of 97%. This is highest figure for timeliness of reviews that the IRO service has ever had.
- 4.3 The IRO service has continued to work very hard to ensure children and young people participate in their review. In 2020/21, 95% of all reviews had children and young people participating in them
- 4.4 Feedback forms of the review process from children and parents have also been overwhelmingly positive.
- 4.5 The IRO service continues to remain stable with an experienced and knowledgeable team of IRO's. The IRO service has continued to maintain and build good working partnerships with social workers and team managers in social care as well as external partners. The IRO service has had an increase on one full time IRO in 2020/21

The IRO service has worked effectively over the last year to ensure the voices, wishes and feelings of young people in care are reflected in their care plans, as well as ensuring efficiency in reaching permanency in timely way.

IRO annual report 2020/21 is attached

## **Public/stakeholder engagement**

- 5.1 NA

## **Other options**

- 6.1 NA

## **Financial and value for money issues**

- 7.1 NA

## **Legal implications**

- 8.1 Statutory obligations for the IRO service and Independent Reviewing Officers will be contained within the report

## Climate implications

9.1 NA

## Other significant implications

10.1 NA

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal		
Finance		
Service Director(s)	Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help and Children's Safeguarding	24/08/2021
Report sponsor	Andy Smith, Strategic Director Peoples Services	26/08/2021
Other(s)		