

Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

Date: Tuesday, 3rd November, 2020

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Virtual Meeting - Zoom - Public Access via
YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/bathnescouncil>

Councillors: Vic Pritchard, Michelle O'Doherty, Jess David, Ruth Malloy,
Mark Roper, Andy Wait, Paul May, Liz Hardman and Alison Born

Co-opted Voting Members: David Williams

Co-opted Non-Voting Members: Chris Batten and Kevin Burnett

The Panel will have a pre-meeting at 9.30am

Mark Durnford

Democratic Services

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NOTES:

1. Inspection of Papers: Papers are available for inspection as follows:

Council's website: <https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

2. Details of decisions taken at this meeting can be found in the minutes which will be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting. In the meantime, details can be obtained by contacting as above.

3. Broadcasting of Meetings

The Council will broadcast the images and sounds live via the internet

<https://www.youtube.com/bathnescouncil>

The Council may also use the images/sound recordings on its social media site or share with other organisations, such as broadcasters.

4. Public Speaking at Meetings

The Council has a scheme to encourage the public to make their views known at meetings. They may make a statement relevant to what the meeting has power to do. They may also present a petition or a deputation on behalf of a group.

Advance notice is required not less than two working days before the meeting.

Further details of the scheme can be found at:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=12942>

5. Supplementary information for meetings

Additional information and Protocols and procedures relating to meetings

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13505>

**Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel -
Tuesday, 3rd November, 2020**

**at 10.00 am in the Virtual Meeting - Zoom - Public Access via YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/bathnescouncil>**

A G E N D A

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point in the meeting declarations of interest are received from Members in any of the agenda items under consideration at the meeting. Members are asked to indicate:

(a) The agenda item number in which they have an interest to declare.

(b) The nature of their interest.

(c) Whether their interest is a **disclosable pecuniary interest** or an **other interest**,
(as defined in Part 2, A and B of the Code of Conduct and Rules for Registration of Interests)

Any Member who needs to clarify any matters relating to the declaration of interests is recommended to seek advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer or a member of his staff before the meeting to expedite dealing with the item during the meeting.

4. TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN
5. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

At the time of publication no notifications had been received.

6. YOUTH FORUM / IN CARE COUNCIL UPDATE (TO FOLLOW)

The Panel will receive a presentation on this item from representatives of the Youth Forum.

7. CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

The Cabinet Member(s) will update the Panel on any relevant issues. Panel members may ask questions on the update provided.

8. BSW CCG UPDATE

The Panel will receive an update from the B&NES, Swindon & Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BSW CCG) on current issues.

9. EDUCATION UPDATES - SCHOOL PERFORMANCE / NARROWING THE GAP / SACRE (Pages 7 - 12)

This report provides the Panel with a wide range of requested education updates.

10. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 13 - 42)

The Panel review the annual report so as to ensure members are appraised on the care provided to children for whom the Local Authority are responsible.

11. YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2020-21 (Pages 43 - 66)

The Local Authority has a statutory duty, in consultation with named legal partners Health, Police and Probation, to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan. The Plan sets out agreed actions to help prevent youth offending and re-offending across Bath and North East Somerset.

12. DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING

The Panel will receive a verbal update on this item.

13. PANEL WORKPLAN (Pages 67 - 72)

This report presents the latest workplan for the Panel. Any suggestions for further items or amendments to the current programme will be logged and scheduled in consultation with the Panel's Chair and supporting officers.

The Committee Administrator for this meeting is Mark Durnford who can be contacted on mark_durnford@bathnes.gov.uk, 01225 394458.

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Children, Health & Wellbeing Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	Tuesday 3 rd November 2020	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	Education Updates – School Performance, Narrowing the Gap, Virtual School, Early Years and SACRE	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
None		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report provides the development and scrutiny panel with a wide range of requested education updates, these are listed below:
- School performance
 - Narrowing the Gap
 - SACRE
 - Virtual School
 - Early Years
- 1.2 The development and scrutiny panel is advised that a full set of academic results for all children in our schools in B&NES is not available this year. This is due to primary academic test's not being carried out and the individual nature of how secondary children's academic results were decided. Alongside this, the DFE' formally decided not to collect academic performance data in any format this year.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the development and scrutiny panel is assured that whilst education results are not available this year to be analysed, that the Local Authority remains proactive and is working strategically to improve the educational outcomes of its most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents.
- 2.2 That the development and scrutiny panel is advised of the good progress the Virtual School for Children in Care continues to make and that it has been awarded

additional funding, alongside only two other LA's in the country, to expand its offer to more children with a social worker.

- 2.3 That during lockdown the LA worked proactively alongside all schools to ensure that education provision was available for children of keyworkers and vulnerable children.

3 THE REPORT

Primary School performance

- 3.1 Due to the CV19 pandemic and the lockdown, no formal tests were sat within primary schools and as a result neither the DFE nor the LA requested data from any primary setting. During lockdown all primary schools in B&NES were asked to facilitate home learning for all pupils. This was often delivered via information sent directly from class teachers and tutors to family homes, or in some cases via on-line lessons. To ensure that all families were able to access education, schools prepared and delivered home learning packs.
- 3.2 All primary schools in B&NES remained open during lockdown to provide face to face educational support to children of keyworkers and vulnerable children. The local authority monitored the school offer to these children and offered additional support to vulnerable families to ensure that children were able to access education. The attendance rates of vulnerable children in B&NES schools was good and in line with the south-west average and above the national average.
- 3.3 This school term all primary schools in B&NES are assessing children to see if the lockdown has impacted upon the educational progress that children could have been expected to make. This information will be used as a baseline and justification for any curriculum adaptations and planned expenditure of the Covid Catch-Up money provided to all schools via the DFE. Though there is no data available to judge the closure of the Pupil Premium / Non-Pupil Premium Gap in BANES, the general school of thought is that lockdown had a more significant detrimental impact on pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, therefore use of the National Tutoring Programme (This is additional to the Universal Catch Up Fund and specifically for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups) will be vital for all schools.

Secondary School Performance

- 3.4 Formal examinations for Key stage 4 and 5 were cancelled during the lockdown. Instead, secondary schools were asked to allocate grades at KS4 and KS5. The methodology for doing this was a challenging process with changes to the system used. These challenges were widely reported in the national media and did cause disruption. However, all children, due to finish their education in KS4 & KS5, were allocated school assessed grades to enable them to go on to the next stages of their education, training or employment.
- 3.5 In the spring of 2020, the DFE formally announced that it would not be collecting any educational performance data from schools and has stated that it does not expect any school to be judged or compared in any way by this year's formal examination results. Schools were advised that if they wished to publish their results, they could do, but that this was a decision for each school.

- 3.6 The LA did ask for some basic results information from each school; in particular, the LA was keen to understand any implications for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. However, the information we received was limited and not submitted by all schools. In line with the DFE request, we have not pursued this any further. In BANES outcomes for pupils were amongst the best in the region in 2019 and there is no reason to believe that this would not continue to be the case in 2020.

Virtual School

- 3.7 The virtual school operated very effectively during lockdown to support carers and young people. Where advisable, the virtual school supported eligible children in care to take up place in a school environment. Where a return to school during lockdown was not felt to be in the best interests of a child, the virtual school offered additional support to families, which included setting timetables and offering 1-1 virtual tuition. However, during the final term of the last academic year, the Virtual School supported 69% of B&NES children in care return to their educational placements, one of the highest return rates in the South West
- 3.8 Whilst we have not requested across the board educational data, we have followed up the outcomes for our children in care in KS4 and are pleased to report that in the key subjects areas of Maths and English, our children have performed better than expected. Whilst this year's data cannot be compared fairly to previous years; it does look as though our children have performed well. One student has also applied and will be joining their preferred university course this year.
- 3.9 During the lockdown, the Virtual School expanded to offer additional support to children in need and children on a child protection plans. This expansion proved a successful way of providing additional educational support to these children and supported the role of the social worker during a difficult time. On the back of this, the virtual school bid for additional funding from the DFE's What Works Foundation to continue this expansion into the new academic year. The school was successful in this bid and has been awarded £130,000 to continue this work as a DFE Pilot area. This is fantastic news and work is currently underway to deliver this expansion to 70 additional children in need and children on child protection plans. These children will benefit from extra planning for their education, and additional resources to support their educational needs, tutoring etc.

Narrowing the Gap

- 3.10 Whilst the LA does not have data this year that is valid or reliable to judge any change in the performance of disadvantaged pupils, it is aware that the lockdown can only have had a detrimental effect on the education of these children. Narrowing the Gap for disadvantage pupils was a priority for the LA and the local education landscape before the Covid 19 pandemic and will be more so during the forthcoming academic year. The updates below describe the activity underway to collectively improve this position.

Schools Standard Board (SSB)

- 3.11 Improving the performance of disadvantaged pupils is a priority for our local SSB. The Board met this September and alongside a presentation on equalities in schools, the Board again re-iterated its commitment to improving outcomes for disadvantaged learners. Members of the Board reported that schools were in the process of carrying out indicative assessments to understand if the educational

progress for this cohort of children had been affected by lockdown. The SSB has tasked a subgroup of education leaders, with representation from the RSC office, to oversee the collection of this information and to enquire how board members will be deploying strategies and resources across schools to support the most disadvantaged.

St Johns Foundation & Inclusion Expert

3.12 During the lockdown, the LA worked with the St Johns Foundation to start to develop ideas and strategies to tackle the disadvantage gap in B&NES. These discussions have resulted in the St Johns Foundation developing a pilot programme that will work with seven primary schools in B&NES with the highest levels of disadvantage. These schools are in all regions of B&NES and are both maintained and academy schools, these are listed below:

- Twerton Infants
- St Michaels
- Roundhill
- St Martins Garden
- Castle
- St Keyna
- St Marys, Writhlington

3.13 The St Johns Foundation will look to target support into five key areas in each school. These areas are; mental health, nurture, family support, speech & language and literacy and numeracy. This pilot has been named the Primary Empowerment programme and was presented to the Schools Standards Board in September 2020. The support it delivers to schools will be commissioned by the St Johns Foundation and its outcomes tracked and evaluated by an external organisation. This programme is in early development, however, it is hoped that the pilot should be up and running by the start of the 2021 academic year. The St Johns Foundation has indicated that this will be a long-term commitment with wider support to follow once the pilot is underway.

3.14 The focused work being proposed by the St Johns Foundation represents a significant opportunity for these schools and their communities. Whilst turnaround in the disadvantage gap will not be achieved overnight, it has to be remembered that the disadvantage gap is not present in all schools in B&NES. If the educational outcomes in these schools can improve over time, then the overall picture for the disadvantaged gap in B&NES would be much more positive.

3.15 Additionally, in 2019, the local authority commissioned additional educational support for several schools from an organisation called Inclusion Expert. This organisation has been providing additional strategies for schools to improve the educational attainment of disadvantaged children. This work continued throughout 2019/20. The CV19 pandemic has delayed the completion of this work and a decision was taken to extend the time period for this work to be completed. Schools involved in the project will be contacted after the October half term to discuss how final parts of the offer can be put to best use and evaluated.

SACRE

- 3.16 Local Authorities are legally obliged to maintain a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) whose function is to meet on a regular basis to discuss relevant matters and to produce an agreed local syllabus. This syllabus should be updated every 5 years.
- 3.17 B&NES employs Dave Francis, as an Associate Advisor, (through a system called Bloom) to clerk the meetings, manage communications, monitor RE provision, provide some support to schools, produce the syllabus and any associated resources and write an annual report that has to be published and sent to the DfE. The information below provides an update on the work of SACRE locally.
- 3.18 The significant additional piece of work this year is the five yearly review of the RE Curriculum. The Associate Adviser is leading SACRE members and a small team of teachers in this process, which will fill any gaps in the existing schemes of learning and provide additional materials on religious and moral perspectives on current issues. This is being funded by B&NES Council and is supported by an Award from the Westhill Foundation and the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE (NASACRE). Training for teachers on the revised curriculum is being planned for the Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022 Terms.
- 3.19 An agreed Management Development Plan is in place. Linked to the plan, three members attended the South West SACREs Conference and others are part of a regional Learn, Teach Lead project which will make a significant contribution to the RE Syllabus Review
- 3.20 SACRE members have reviewed about 25% of school websites to check for inclusion of statutory information about RE and collective worship. This has given rise to a few issues that will need to be followed up with three identified schools.
- 3.21 The Annual Report on SACRE's work for the school year 2019-20 has been drafted and will be made available to Panel members and all schools by the end of December 2020. This includes analysis of provision and standards in RE and collective worship in Bath & North East Somerset schools and work undertaken to improve achievement, including through the Diocese of Bath & Wells.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Local Authority has a broad set of statutory responsibilities to ensure that it is able to deliver education support in a number of areas for all schools around vulnerable young people (SEND, Children Missing Education etc.), supporting maintained schools (School Improvement services etc.) and business functions that support all schools (Admissions and Transport etc.)

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 This report is not requesting any resources or advising of any resourcing changes

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 An EIA has not been completed for this report as this is an information providing paper. However, the reporting Director needs to consider equalities issues within the contents of these reports and how an EIA could add additional value to the content and recommendations

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 8.1 As this is an information only report and no decisions are being made over any changes in service delivery, it is considered that the recommendations in this paper will not adversely impact on climate change or the councils position of being pro-active on matters that affect climate change.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 None

10 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 No additional consultation has outside of the Service area has been completed for this information report.

Contact person	Chris Wilford – Director Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding
Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Children’s Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	03 November 2020	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2019 – 2020	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2019 -2020		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 An annual report of the Independent Reviewing (IRO) Service for Looked After Children is required in accordance with the Children and Young Person's Act 2008 and subsequent statutory guidance published by the Department for Education. The report is produced in order to provide the Director for Children's Services, the Lead Member for Children and the Corporate Parenting Board with information pertaining to the work of the Independent Reviewing Service (IRS) which is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the care provided to children and young people for whom the Local Authority are corporate parents.
- 1.2 The Children's Health and Wellbeing Panel review the annual report so as to ensure members are appraised on the care provided to children for whom the Local Authority are responsible.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to;

- 2.1 Note the consistently high number of children in care reviews that are held within statutory timescale thus ensuring the needs of children and young people in care are being appropriately reviewed and care plans effectively scrutinised. The IRO manager has ensured that IRO's have a workload that allows them to have the capacity needed to maintain good oversight of care planning for children and young people in care.
- 2.2 Note the number of children and young people in care that are placed over 20 miles from their family home / community and consider what additional support can be provided to children's social care to increase the number of foster carers available within Bath and North East Somerset. Children need to feel that they

can maintain connections with the important people in their life even if they are unable to live within their families.

- 2.3** Consider the positive feedback that was received directly from children, young people and their carers about their experiences of the Independent Reviewing Officers within Bath and North East Somerset. Feedback from children, young people, their carers, parents and other family members is an area that requires greater resources and focus.

Recognise the quality assurance mechanisms in place within the Independent Reviewing Service and the use of quarterly reports to highlight to senior managers within children's social care the delivery of child in care reviews, themes identified by Independent Reviewing Officers, recommendations being made at child in care reviews and an understanding of the escalations and challenges made by IRO's.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1** Please see attached the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) annual report for 2019-2020 which sets out how the IRO Service continues to ensure that Bath and North East Somerset Council are meeting the needs of the children and young people for whom it is corporate parent.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1** The appointment of an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) for a child or young person in the care of the Local Authority is a legal requirement under section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. Since 2004 all local authorities have been required to appoint an IRO to protect children's interests throughout the care planning process.
- 4.2** The IRO Handbook was introduced in 2010 providing statutory guidance for IRO's and setting out the functions of the local authority in terms of case management and review for looked after children.
- 4.3** The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulation 2010 apply specifically to children who are looked after by a local authority. The objective of these Regulations is to improve outcomes for children in care by improving the quality of the care planning processes.
- 4.4** IROs are required to oversee and scrutinise the Care Plan devised for every child or young person placed in the care of the Local Authority. The IRO will ensure that everyone who is involved in the child or young person's life fulfils the responsibilities placed upon them.
- 4.5** IRO's are expected to ensure that;
- Review meetings are held for all children and young people who are being cared for by the Local Authority,
 - The views and wishes of children and young people in care are heard and considered when decisions are being made about them,
 - Children and young people understand their care plan and any changes to this,

- The Local Authority is a good corporate parent to all children and young people in care by ensuring they get the same opportunities, support, love and care that other children living within their families receive.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 No request is being made for additional resources.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and can be found on the Children's Services Equality Impact Assessment Web Page- [Children's Services Equality Impact Assessment Web pages](#)

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 The Independent Review Service uses various methods of travel which will contribute towards reducing the services carbon footprint. IRO's use public transport, share travel with colleagues and work from a range of settings.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 This report has been reviewed and endorsed by all Independent Reviewing Officers within Bath and North East Somerset Council.

10.2 The report was presented for consultation at the Bath Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership (BCSSP) Quality and Performance Group on the 21/09/2020.

10.3 The report was shared with the Director for Children and Young People's Specialist Services on 17/09/2020.

Contact person	Sarah Hogan Deputy Lead for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance (Children and Young People) Telephone: 01225 396810
Background papers	None
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

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Bath & North East Somerset Council

Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

Author:

**Sarah Hogan,
Deputy Lead for Safeguarding and Quality
Assurance: Children and Young people.**

Date: September 2020

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1. Introduction and Purpose of the Annual Report

- 1.1 The report is produced in order to provide the Director for Children's Services, the Lead Member for Children and the Corporate Parenting Board with information pertaining to the children and young people that are currently placed in the care of the Local Authority.
- 1.2 The IRO Handbook (2010) provides statutory guidance to all Local Authorities regarding children that are placed in the care of a Local Authority. The guidance seeks to ensure improved outcomes for looked after children in order that they can reach their full potential. Section 7, paragraph 11 sets out that the manager of the IRO Service must provide an annual report on the delivery of the IRO Service which can then be scrutinised by members of the Corporate Parenting Board.
- 1.3 This annual report will provide information as to;
 - the profile of the Local Authorities Looked After Children,
 - the IRO Service structure and development,
 - the inclusion and participation of children, young people and their parents
 - the review and monitoring of individual care plans for children in care,
 - area's for development over the course of 2020-2021.
- 1.4 Following presentation to the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Quality and Performance Group of the Bath Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership and the Corporate Parenting Board, this report will be placed on the Council website as a publicly accessible document.

2. Reporting Period

- 2.1 This report covers the period from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020. Some of the data sets may vary slightly from those published by Council Children's Services due to minor variations in the timeframe for data capture, and the uploading of data onto various systems.

3. The Legal, Statutory and National Context of the IRO Role

- 3.1 The appointment of an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) for a child or young person in the care of the Local Authority is a legal requirement under section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. Since 2004 all local authorities have been required to appoint an IRO to protect children's interests throughout the care planning process.
- 3.2 The IRO Handbook was introduced in 2010 providing statutory guidance for IRO's and setting out the functions of the local authority in terms of case management and review for looked after children.
- 3.3 The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulation 2010 apply specifically to children who are looked after by a local authority. The

objective of these Regulations is to improve outcomes for children in care by improving the quality of the care planning processes.

3.4 IROs are required to oversee and scrutinise the Care Plan devised for every child or young person placed in the care of the Local Authority. The IRO will ensure that everyone who is involved in the child or young person's life fulfils the responsibilities placed upon them.

3.5 IRO's are expected to ensure that;

- Review meetings are held for all children and young people who are being cared for by the Local Authority,
- The views and wishes of children and young people in care are heard and considered when decisions are being made about them,
- Children and young people understand their care plan and any changes to this,
- The Local Authority is a good corporate parent to all children and young people in care by ensuring they get the same opportunities, support, love and care that other children living within their families receive.

4. Bath and North East Somerset Council as Corporate Parent

4.1 Being a Corporate Parent means doing everything possible for the children and young people in the care of Bath and North East Somerset Council ensuring that these children and young people get the same opportunities as other children who have remained living within their families.

4.2 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 Section (1) (1-4) and (2) (1-2) defined for the first time in law the responsibility of Corporate Parents, seeking to ensure that as far as possible, Local Authorities provide secure, nurturing, and positive experiences for looked after children, young people and care leavers.

4.3 In order to thrive, children and young people require care that consistently meets their needs. In February 2018 the Department for Education (DfE) produced statutory guidance for local authorities which sets out the seven corporate parenting principles, with the intention that these provide all children in care as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences.

The Principles

- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of children and young people in care,
- To encourage children and young people in care to express their views, wishes and feelings,
- To consider the views, wishes and feelings of the children and young people in care,
- To help children and young people in the care of the local authority to gain access to, and make the best use of, services,

- To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for all children and young people in care,
- To ensure children and young people in care are safe, have stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- To prepare children and young people in care for adulthood and independence.

5. The Bath and North East Somerset Council IRO Service

5.1 Following a re-structure at Director Level, the IRO service now sits under the Director for Education, Inclusion and Children's Safeguarding. The change in Directorate has not caused any disruption to the work of the IRO's and has preserved the high level of independence that IRO's in Bath and North East Somerset have.

5.2 The IRO Service remains part of the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service which is responsible for the delivery of Child Protection Conferences and the Management of Allegations against a person in a position of trust. In terms of the IRO functions, these are undertaken by two part-time IRO's and four full-time Independent Chairs. Independent Chairs will undertake the role of the IRO, CP Chair and Local Authority Designated Officer. Having a dual role allows for much more flexibility across the service and results in children, their families and carers receiving a timely and responsive service.

5.3 The IRO service has been fortunate to gain some additional administrative support this year, this has enabled the service to review some of its processes, consider alternative ways of communicating with carers of children in care and provides much needed support to the IRO's in terms of their work.

5.4 All full-time members of the team receive monthly supervision with part-time staff receiving supervision on a six-weekly rotation. Supervision allows opportunity for reflection, consideration of the needs of the children placed in the care of the Local Authority, review of performance, statutory compliance and areas for development / learning.

5.5 Team Meetings continue to be held every four to six weeks and in this reporting period there have been two development days which have focused on;

- How to ensure children and young people know their rights and entitlements as children in care;
- Children and young people having clarity as to the purpose and role of the IRO;
- Strengthening the child's voice in their review;
- Ensuring those involved in the care of children and young people contribute to their review;
- Records being child focused and presented in a way that children and young people can access.

5.6 Unfortunately, the South West Regional IRO Practitioners Group (SWIRO) has not taken place in this reporting period, there are however plans to reinstate this

group in late 2020. This will be an opportunity for IRO's across the region to share practice, consider themes affecting children in care and build upon existing knowledge.

5.7 Local Authorities have a duty to provide IRO's with access to independent legal advice (IRO handbook, 2010, Para 6.13). In Bath and North East Somerset, a new reciprocal arrangement has been made with North Somerset Council specifically for the provision of independent legal advice for IRO's. In this reporting period however, there have been no instances where an IRO or the IRO manager has identified a need for such advice.

5.8 All IRO's are required to have an enhanced DBS check, be registered with Social Work for England and are encouraged to be a member of the National Association of Independent Reviewing Officers (NAIRO).

6. IRO Caseloads and Services Performance

Table 1: Total Number of Children in Care over five-year period

	March 2020	March 2019	March 2018	March 2017	March 2016
No. Children In Care	181	192	168	160	158
Average IRO Caseload for FTE	53	47	62	60	N/A
CLA start	75	96	73	85	52
CLA end	86	81	62	68	14
% increase of children in care from previous year	-5.8%	+14.2%	+5%	+1.2%	12.05%

Figures taken from Children's Social Care data and IRO Service Case Tracker

6.1 As the above data shows, the numbers of children and young people in care in this reporting period is fairly static from the previous year, with more children leaving care in the last 12 months than entering which is the first instance in which this has occurred for the last five years.

6.2 When reviewing the reasons for a child or young person leaving care, the top four were due to a young person becoming 18 (20), children returning home (17), a Special Guardianship Order being granted (15) and children being adopted (13).

6.3 All care plans for children and young people are scrutinised and reviewed by their appointed IRO with final care plans requiring the endorsement of the IRO. For young people approaching their 18th birthday the IRO will convene a final

child in care review to ensure plans are in place to support the young person as they move into adulthood and that actions agreed at the previous review have been completed or are being progressed. IRO's also use the final review to celebrate the young person's achievements so that they hopefully leave the meeting feeling positive about themselves and the future.

Table 2: No. of children and young people allocated to an IRO during 2019/2020.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Average IRO Caseload for FTE	41	58	54	53

Figures taken from IRO Service Case Tracker

- 6.4 The appointment of an IRO when a child or young person comes into care is the responsibility of the IRO Service Manager. Allocation will be determined by the existing workload of the IRO, whether the child is already known to an IRO or Independent Chair, the number of children in the family, the location of the child's placement and the complexity of the child's needs and level of care planning required. It is important that IRO's have a workload that is reflective of their capacity and expertise.
- 6.5 The IRO handbook sets out that a full-time IRO should aim to have 50-70 children allocated at any one time, as the above data shows, in this reporting period IRO's have held an appropriate caseload. It is important that IRO's have enough capacity in order to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and the workload of every IRO is continually reviewed in supervision.
- 6.6 The IRO service continues to use a caseload monitoring system to identify which children have the most complex of needs and who in turn may require more input and oversight by their IRO.

Table 3: Number of Child in Care Reviews over five year period

	March 2020	March 2019	March 2018	March 2017	March 2016
Children In Care allocated to IRO	181	192	168	160	158
Total Reviews held	528	454	461	404	398

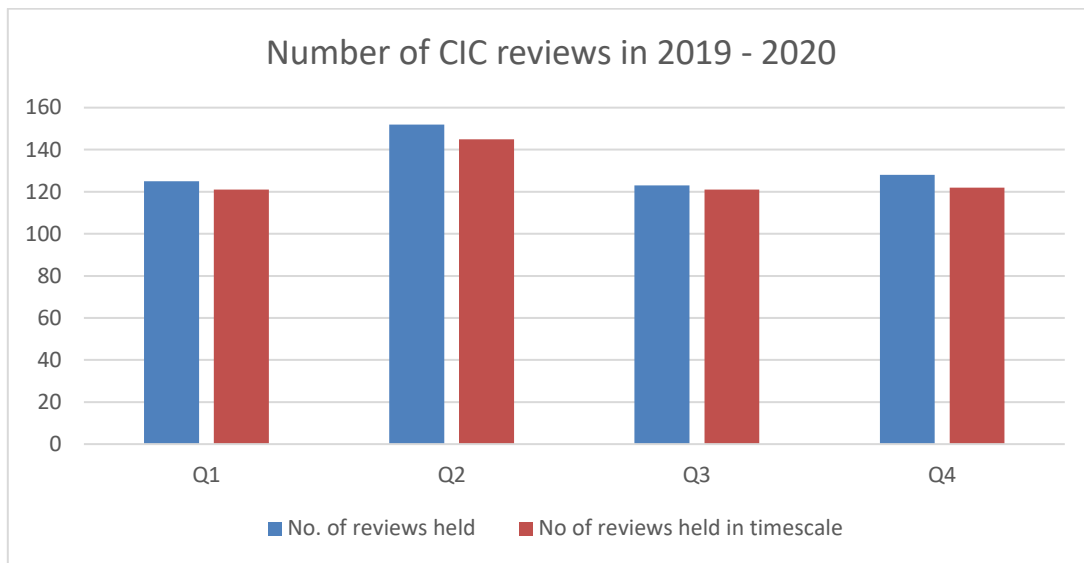
Figures taken from Children's Services data

6.7 The IRO Service chaired a total of 528 child in care review meetings in 2019-2020, an increase of 74 from the previous year when the number of children and young people in care was higher. An increase in the number of child in care reviews can raise question as to placement stability, however as discussed later in this report, the stability rate for children in Bath and North East Somerset remains fairly static. There can be a number of reasons as to why children and young people require a review or additional reviews, which whilst not exhaustive include;

- the complexity of a child or young person's needs,
- the court timetable meaning additional reviews are required so that final care plans can be ratified,
- a change in care plan and the IRO needing to review this in order to provide their view,
- a change in placement,
- moving to an adoptive placement

6.8 The IRO service monitors closely the family finding process for children whose care plan is adoption, the IRO handbook suggests that children subject to a Placement Order should have their first review within three months of the Order being granted and thereafter within six months of the last review. IRO's in Bath and North East Somerset often seek to hold reviews for children subject to Placement Orders but not yet placed with adopters every three to four months, a higher level than required, allowing any issues of drift or delay to be identified promptly.

Graph 1: Timeliness of child in care reviews



Figures taken from Children's Social Care data

6.9 Between the 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 there were only 19 reviews that could not be held in timescale and as such this means that on average across the year 96% of the reviews held were within the appropriate timeframe. This is a significant improvement and is beyond the 87% target set for the service.

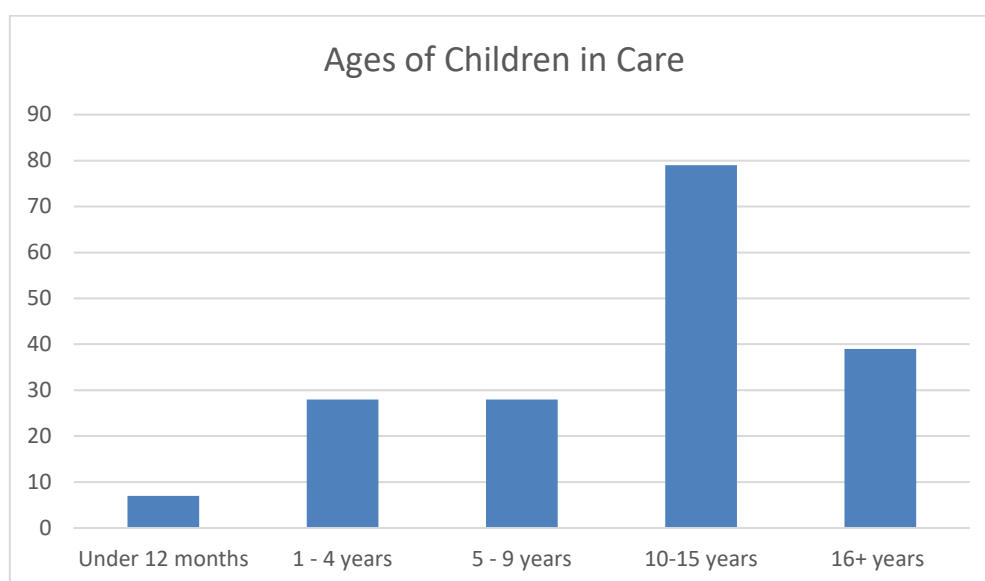
6.10 The manager of the IRO service routinely scrutinises performance data and discusses at every supervision any reviews that are deemed to be overdue or coming up in the next 30 days.

7. Profile of Children and Young People in Care in Bath and North East Somerset:

Gender:

7.1 In January 2020 the Department for Education (DfE) produced its annual statistics of looked after children in England up to the period ending 31/03/2019. This showed that 56% of children in care were male, with 44% being female, similar to 2018. In Bath and North East Somerset, the gender breakdown has again remained stable and is line with the national picture, with males accounting for 54% of the children and young people placed in the care of the local authority and 46% female.

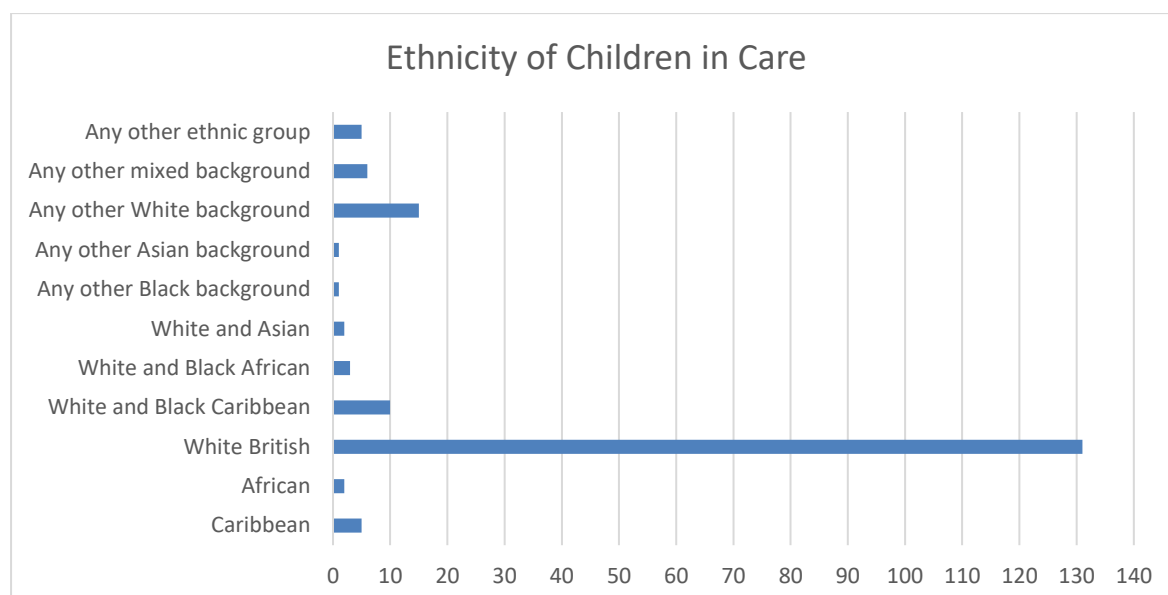
Graph 2: Number of children by age as of 31st March 2020



Figures taken from Children's Social Care data

7.2 As of the 31/03/2020 the largest cohort of looked after children were 10-15 year olds who accounted for 44% of the entire number of children and young people in care of the Local Authority. Young people aged between 16-18 were the second largest group accounting for 22%, with children under 12 months old being the smallest at 5%. The ages of children in care has therefore remained on par with last year and mirrors what was seen nationally across England as of 31/03/2019.

Graph 3: Ethnicity of children and young people in care



Figures taken from Children's Social Care Data

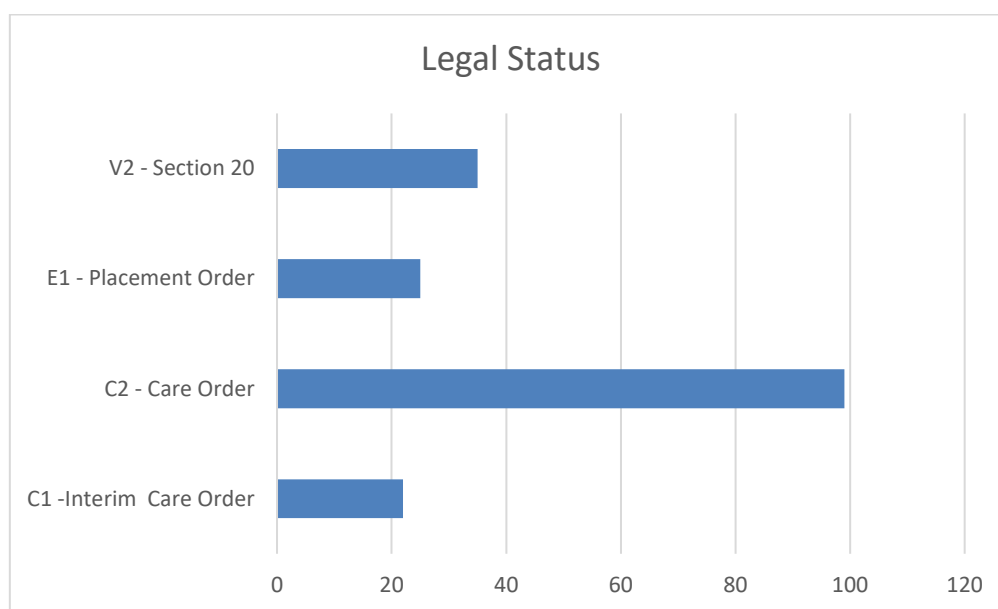
7.3 As the above shows, the majority of children and young people in the care of the Local Authority are White British, accounting for 72% of the entire child in care

population. This is again in line with the picture across England as of 31/03/2019 when 74% of children and young people in care were White British.

7.4 Whilst White British children and young people account for two thirds of the child in care population within Bath and North East Somerset, the Local Authority is responsible for meeting the cultural needs of all the children and young people placed in its care.

7.5 It is vital that a child's identity is fully considered by those caring for them and working with them, this goes beyond just knowing a child's ethnicity but understanding their cultural heritage, how they feel in the community they live, providing opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of their culture, promoting their first language or mother tongue, respecting and allowing a child or young person to participate in traditional ceremonies and celebrations. IRO's always explore the child and young person's cultural and identity needs and ensure these are being met and are included in the child's care plan.

Graph 4: Legal status of Children and Young People in Care



Figures taken from Children's Social Care Data

7.6 Of the 181 children and young people in the care of the Local Authority as of the 31/03/2020, 99 (55%) were subject to a full Care Order, meaning final decisions about their long-term care had been made. 21 (12%) children were subject to an Interim Care Order, meaning these children are yet to know their permanence plan and 25 (14%) children were subject to a Placement Order with the Local Authority therefore having permission to undertake family finding with the view to these children being adopted. The remaining 35 (19%) children were in the care of the Local Authority with the agreement of the child's parents. These figures are broadly in line with those published by the DfE in January 2020 for the period ending 31/03/2019 which reported that of all the children and young people in care, 75% were subject to a Care Order (including Interim Care Order) and 18% were placed voluntarily. However, the main difference was the number of children subject to a Placement Order which accounted for only 7%. It is positive

that babies and very young children in Bath and North East Somerset when unable to live with their parents or family members have a care plan of adoption.

Table 4: Legal status grouped by age:

Age group	Section 20	Interim Care Order	Care Order	Placement Order
Under 12mths	1	4	0	2
1 – 4 years	0	3	5	20
5 – 9 years	0	4	20	4
10 – 15 years	12	11	55	1
16 – 18 years	22	0	17	0

Figures taken from Children's Social Care Data

7.7 The above table provides an overview of the legal status of children and young people in care in relation to their age. As the data highlights, there are no children under 12 months old subject to a Care Order which is what would be expected, a child of this age should not have a permanence plan which is long-term foster care as this prevents them from having the opportunity to grow up in a family with a parent. The majority of children aged between 1 – 4 have a care plan of adoption as reflected by the 20 Placement Orders, again this would be an appropriate long-term care plan and one in which the IRO would have formed a view on, there were no final care plans of adoption in this reporting period that were not endorsed by the child's IRO.

7.8 A Placement Order should be considered for all children where it is assessed that this is in their best interests, that they will be able to identify with a new family and where the harm and abuse in which they have experienced will not pose a risk of adoption breakdown. As the above data shows, there are a small number of children who are aged between 5-9 years where a Placement Order was granted at the conclusion of proceedings. IRO's monitor the progress of family finding and would expect within nine months of the Placement Order being granted that children had been matched to or placed with adopters, where this has not proven successful, the IRO will expect the Local Authority to re-consider the care plan. A child in care review should always be held at the point it is decided that a child's long term care plan is foster care, an IRO is expected to escalate any issues of delay in terms of care planning or where Placement Orders have not been revoked. Of the four Placement Orders at the end of this reporting period for children aged between 5-9 all were in the process of being revoked.

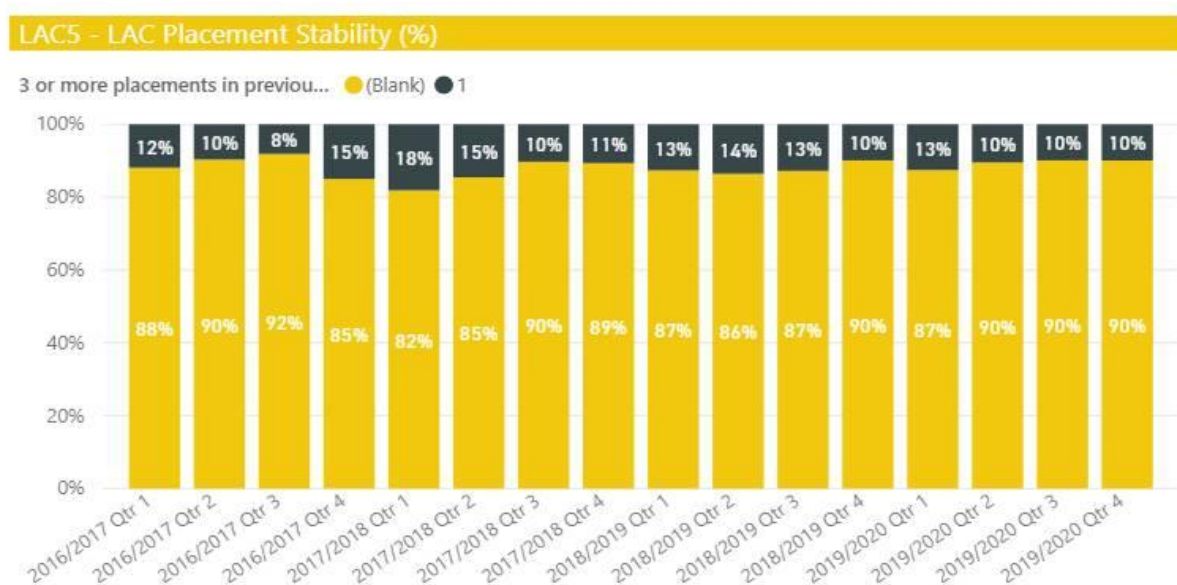
Children placed at distance from Bath

7.9 To ensure children and young people in the care of the local authority remain connected to their local community, family and friends, and to limit the level of disruption in a child/young person's life, local authorities should always first try to place a child or young person in care within the geographical area of their family home. The challenge however is the number of carers available locally and ensuring that carers have the appropriate skills to meet the child and young

person's needs and that any risks of being within relative proximity to their family can be managed. The recruitment of foster carers for Bath and North East Somerset must continue to be an area of focus, the more carers the Local Authority have available the more opportunity there is for children and young people to be placed within their local area.

- 7.10 Due to the geographical size of Bath and North East Somerset and the small communities found across the authority it is not always possible for a child to be placed within their local area, in this reporting period 124 (69%) children and young people in care were placed outside the boundary of the local authority or 20 miles away from their family home. In December 2019, the Children's Commissioner published their report 'Pass the parcel – children posted around the care system' which identified that as of 31st March 2017/2018 41% of children and young people in care were living out of area, with 11,352 children and young people living more than 20 miles away from their home. The report highlighted that the number of children living out of the area has risen by 13% since 2014. The report acknowledges there are a number of reasons for children being placed at such distance from their home, but often it was identified that the location of the placement was simply because there was nowhere more suitable for them locally.
- 7.11 Placement availability for children and young people in Bath and North East Somerset continues to be a challenge. IRO's maintain direct contact with all children and young people despite where they live. IRO's will ensure they visit every child or young person and for children placed at a distance from home will pay particular attention to how the child feels about where they live, how they are being supported to maintain relationships with their family and friends and what provisions are in place for their health and educational needs. Where the young person or child has specific needs requiring input from other agencies such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) the IRO will expect there to be clarity as to the steps being taken to ensure these services are accessible and in place.
- 7.12 IRO's should always be made aware when there are concerns about the stability of a child or young person's placement and be invited to attend the disruption meeting. In Bath and North East Somerset, whilst there is good liaison between children's social care and a child's IRO, there remain some occasions when IRO's are not notified in a timely way of significant events surrounding a child or young person's placement. Should IRO's be in disagreement with plans surrounding a child's placement they will seek to resolve informally in the first instance with the Team Manager responsible for oversight of the child or young person's care plan, should this prove unsuccessful IRO's will utilise the dispute resolution protocol and pass concerns to the manager of the IRS for liaison with the relevant Head of Service. As per last year, there has been no use of the dispute resolution process related to a child or young person's placement.

Graph 5: Percentage of Children and Young people having 3 or more placement moves within 12 month period.



Figures taken from Children's Services Data

7.13 18 (10%) children and young people in care have experienced three or more placements in this reporting period. As the above graph shows, placement stability has been fairly static over the last five years. Whilst the number of children experiencing 3+ moves over the last 12 months has remained stable, given the importance of all children and young people experiencing placement stability the IRS will be seeking access to data that will provide greater oversight of the total number of moves that children and young people in care experience in a 12 month period.

Unaccompanied, Asylum Seeking and Trafficked Children:

7.14 The number of young people in the care of Bath and North East Somerset who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum remains very low accounting for 4% of the entire child in care population.

7.15 As of the 31st March 2020 there were seven young people in the care of the Local Authority who were seeking Asylum, with three of these young people having arrived over the preceding 12 months. The ages of the young people range from 14 – 17 years old, with five being males and two females. All these young people are residing with foster carers or in supported lodgings in the areas of Croydon, Bristol, Keynsham and Trowbridge.

7.16 For all young people seeking Asylum their journey to the UK will undoubtedly have been one that involved fear and uncertainty, followed by a sense of loss upon arriving in a country and culture unfamiliar to them. Local Authority's are responsible for ensuring the needs of these children and young people are met, that they receive the same opportunities and the professionals surrounding them

have the same aspirations for these children and young people as any other child placed in care.

7.17 Asylum seeking children live with high levels of uncertainty about their future, not knowing whether they will be granted permission to remain indefinitely in the UK. Immigration issues therefore remain a focus for all IRO's, with IRO's seeking assurances that young people have access to the necessary legal advice and are being supported with the immigration process. As young people approach 18 years of age, they cease to be looked after by the local authority, IRO's expect the plans post 18 to be clear at the final child in care review and where there is ambiguity, the IRO will follow this up prior to the young person's 18th birthday.

8. Child Focused Reviews, Participation and Feedback

Table 5: Children and Young People's participation in their review

Participation code	Number of Reviews	Percentage (%)
PN0 – Under 4 at time of review	124	24%
PN1 - Attends - participates verbally	255	48%
PN2 - Attends - participates through advocate	6	1%
PN3 - Attends - conveys view non verbally	17	3%
PN4 - Attends - no contribution	14	3%
PN5 - Does not attend - Advocate only	14	3%
PN6 - Does not attend - facilitative medium	60	11%
PN7 - Does not attend - no form of participation	38	7%
Total with Participation Code	528	
Total Reviews	528	

Figures taken from Children's Services Data (NI66 Local)

Participation:

- 8.1 The child in care review is the child's meeting, the social worker should be talking with the child or young person 20 working days before the meeting is due to take place to ascertain who they would like to be present at the review and where they would like their review to be held. The IRO handbook states that the child (if appropriate to their age and understanding) and their parents should be present for the whole review, if it is deemed appropriate and in the best interests of the child (Para 3.17). Where an IRO and the child or young person's social worker agree that a parent and / or the child should not be in attendance the IRO will ensure that they see the child ahead of the review and provide the parents with consultation documents and / or arrange a meeting with them separately.
- 8.2 In this reporting period of the 528 reviews held, 255 reviews saw the child or young person being in attendance and contributing towards the meeting. In this reporting period there were 124 reviews where the child was under four years of age at the time of the review and as such nationally are deemed not to have participated in their review. Children under four are seen by their IRO either ahead of their review or promptly following it, children will always be seen in their placement with their carer and for children able to engage, IRO's will find creative ways in which to do this.
- 8.3 Of the 17 reviews held where the child or young person has attended and conveyed their views non verbally, this will include children with additional needs, children who are unable to communicate verbally and those children and young people who attend in person, complete a consultation form but during the meeting do not verbally contribute.

Children and Young Peoples Feedback:

- 8.4 Feedback from children and young people continues to be a challenge for the service. Following the poor response rate last year from children and young people the manager of the IRS wrote directly to all children and young people aged 11 - 17 years (124), their carers and where appropriate their parents in order to obtain their thoughts on the child in care review meetings and the work of the IRO. The letter highlighted that feedback would help improve the IRS and how the IRO helped them. Children and young people were encouraged to reply by post, email or by telephone, they were also encouraged to speak with their foster carer if they didn't want to respond but wanted their views included in the foster carers feedback.
- 8.5 Out of the 124 letters sent, only 19 children and young people responded. Whilst this small number of children and young people are not representative of the entire children and young people in care, their feedback is important and has been discussed in supervision with every IRO and will be considered in terms of service development. The IRS would welcome support from Children's Social Care, the Corporate Parenting Board, Off the Record (Advocacy Service) and the In Care Council (ICC) to identify alternative ways feedback from children and young people can be obtained.

Table 6: Children and Young Peoples feedback about reviews

Question Asked	Response			
Do you know who your IRO is?	14 – Yes		3 - No	
Have you received a letter from your IRO with their picture and contact details?	6 – Yes		10 - No	
How often do you see your IRO?	Once a Year	Twice a Year	Three times a year	More
	6	7	2	1
Do you speak to your IRO alone?	10 – Yes		5 – No	2 - Sometimes
Does your IRO talk to you about?	Placement	Social Worker	Family / Friends	
	10	10	14	
How well does your IRO listen?	1-3	5-7	8-10	
	3	6	10	
Where you sent a consultation form?	11 - Yes		7 - No	1 - Unsure
Did you fill it in?	11 -Yes		2 – No	1- Unsure
Did your foster carer or social worker ask your views about;	Time and day of review		13 – Yes	4 - No
	Venue		12 – Yes	5 – No
	Who to attend		14 – Yes	3 – No
	Content of discussion		13 -Yes	4 - No
Did you think the review talked about the right things?	15 – Yes		2 – No	
Did you say what you wanted to?	13 – Yes		3 - No	
Did the adults answer your questions?	12 – Yes		1 – No	1- Unsure
Was anyone missing you would have like to be there?	5 - Yes		12 - No	
Was anyone there you didn't want to be there?	1 – Yes		16 - No	
What do you think about the time it took?	Too short	About right	Too long	
	1	5	12	

8.6 In August 2019, the IRS re-introduced a letter which is sent to all children shortly after coming into care, this tells them who their IRO is, what their job is, how to contact them and includes a photograph. It would appear that not all children are receiving these letters and feedback from the In Care Council is that these letters could be altered to reflect the age of the child receiving them. In the coming year the service will look to review the content of the letters and how these are shared.

8.7 All children and young people in care should have the opportunity to speak with their IRO alone, social workers and carers should be supporting this and advocating to the child or young person what the role of the IRO is. Out of the 19 responses, 10 children and young people stated that they saw their IRO alone, five shared that they didn't and two stated they saw them alone sometimes.

8.8 Children said about their IRO;

- ❖ *'She helped get the SW to do what they need to do'.*
- ❖ *'She got me to speak and see my brother again'.*
- ❖ *'She has talked to my SW about lots of things'.*
- ❖ *'She has taken me out and got me food'.*
- ❖ *'She is there for me'.*
- ❖ *'She listens to me'.*
- ❖ *'She helps me get what I need'.*

8.9 Whilst the number of responses from children was low, there were no negative comments received by a child about their IRO, with the comments above suggesting children and young people value the role of their IRO and have a good relationship with them. The IRS wants all children and young people to feel confident that their IRO listens, can be contacted, relied upon and is there to ensure their needs are being met.

8.10 To form greater links with children and young people in care, an IRO within the service has formed a link with the In Care Council (ICC), this allows opportunity for dialogue between children, young people and the IRS. Currently a piece of work is being undertaken with the ICC about what children want to know when coming into care and how they would like this information to be provided to them. This piece of work was identified by the IRS as being necessary after learning that children were no longer receiving a LAC pack upon entering care. The IRS and Children's Social Care wish for all children and young people coming into care to know their rights and entitlements and have information available to them that helps them understand what is happening, who the people are around them and where they can go for support and advice. Within the LAC pack (Information Pack) the IRS would wish to see included details about the IRS, the role of the IRO and the arrangements surrounding child in care reviews.

8.11 **Feedback from adults:** As set out in 8.3, the IRS sought feedback from carers (124) of children and young people aged between 11 -17 years. Letters were also sent to these children's parents (82). Like the children and young people, the response rate from carers and parents was extremely low with only five parents out of 82 responding and only 29 out of 124 carers responding. Again,

this is extremely disappointing as was a big piece of work for the IRS to undertake, further work needs to be undertaken to strengthen feedback from carers, parents and family members with consideration of using different mediums in which to obtain this feedback.

Table 7: Feedback from foster carers (29) and parents (5):

Question Asked	Response				
	Once a Year	Twice a Year	Three times a year	More	
How often do you or the children you care for see the IRO?	7	15	4	3	
Who would you speak to if you were worried or unhappy with the IRO or review meeting?	SSW	SW	IRO	Manager	Unsure
	10	10	2	3	1
Does the IRO talk with you ahead of the review meeting?	16 – Yes		6 - No		
Do you feel able to share your views?	28 – Yes		1 - No		
Where you sent a consultation form?	25 – Yes		9- No		
Did you complete and return	21 - Yes		7 – No		
What do you think about the consultation form?	Fine		10		
	Needs updating		2		
	Not received		3		
	Waste of time		1		
	Prefer phone call		2		
	Comprehensive		3		
Did you receive the minutes in a timely way?	20 – Yes	11 – No	2 – Sometimes	1 – Not sure	
Did the minutes capture what was discussed?	17 – Yes	0 – No	0 – Sometimes	4 – Haven't received	
What do you think about the time it took?	Too short		About right	Too long	
	0		31	1	

The above figures vary as not all respondents completed every section of the feedback form.

8.12 Whilst the feedback above is based on low numbers it does provide some insight into the delivery of the IRS. The manager of the IRS would wish to see all IRO's speak with carers ahead of the child in care review meeting, given some reviews are held at six-monthly intervals it would be nice for carers to have the

opportunity to touch base with the IRO ahead of the meeting, it would also allow opportunity for the carer to raise issues they may not feel so confident in doing within the meeting. This will be an area for ongoing discussion with members of the IRS.

8.13 The IRS sends consultation forms to carers and other significant adults ahead of a child's review, IRO's have reported that more and more carers are feeding back that they would prefer a conversation with the IRO ahead of the review as opposed to having a form to complete. In the coming year the IRS intends to review how consultation with parents, carer and other significant adults takes place.

8.14 Minutes of reviews should be sent within 20 working days of the child in care review, at present there is no mechanism in place that allows for tracking of review minutes. The completion and timeliness of review minutes is discussed in supervision with IRO's and the IRO administrator is expected to keep a tracker of review dates and when minutes are sent. This area of performance requires more stringent reporting and as a result this has been logged with the LiquidLogic design team who have agreed to consider during the next upgrade.

8.15 Feedback from carers and parents about the IRO;

- ❖ ***'Brings the attention of certain matters that may not have been actioned, SW takes IRO role more seriously than other key people around the child'.***
- ❖ ***'Always helps having someone independent, good at holding people accountable if actions not completed'.***
- ❖ ***'The IRO makes it clear we can speak with her about anything'.***
- ❖ ***'Child has a good relationship with IRO, she feels comfortable around her and relaxed enough to talk to her about her thoughts and feelings'.***
- ❖ ***'IRO has good relationship with the children and really wants to get to know them and understand them'.***
- ❖ ***'It is helpful to know the IRO is there to ensure everything is done correctly'.***
- ❖ ***'Very helpful – bring structure and has helped child a lot'.***
- ❖ ***'Ensures oversight, a friendly consistent face over the year, good source of advice and guidance to ourselves and the child's social worker'.***
- ❖ ***'IRO listens, is very understanding, sensitive to child's needs and completes action'.***
- ❖ ***'Very informative and knows the children well'.***

8.16 The feedback above highlights the positive relationships that IRO's in Bath and North East Somerset form with children, young people, their carers and parents and the value that IRO's within Bath and North East Somerset add to children and young people in care.

9. Dispute resolution and escalation:

- 9.1 The IRO Handbook (March 2010) sets out that one of the key functions of the IRO is to resolve problems arising out of the care planning process (Para 6.1). Whilst IRO's are expected to establish positive working relationships with social workers of the children for whom they are responsible this should not prevent the IRO from addressing any concerns they may identify for a child in respect of their placement, care plan, resources available and poor performance. In working with a child or young person the IRO will need to be satisfied that their care plan reflects their needs and that the actions within it are consistent with the Local Authority's legal responsibilities towards them as children or young people in care.
- 9.2 All local authorities are expected to have in place a formal process for the IRO to raise concerns and in November 2013 the Issues Resolution Protocol for Children and Young People in Care within Bath and North East Somerset was devised. The protocol was revised in 2016 and is accessible online via the council's procedures manual.
- 9.3 In Bath and North East Somerset, IRO's will regularly have contact with a child's social worker and any issues pertaining to a child's needs or care planning are often resolved informally between the IRO and the Social Worker. There will be occasions however when this is not possible and as such the IRO will look to bring matters involving the child to the attention of the Social Worker's manager or Team Manager. Unfortunately, the child's records too often do not reflect the informal issues that have been raised by an IRO, work is already underway within the service to address this, with exploration as to how and where informal issues can be captured. Within supervision IRO's are expected to alert their manager of all informal issues they have raised.
- 9.4 Where the informal issues remain unresolved and where these are deemed to be sufficiently serious and impact on a child's care plan or safety, the IRO will formally escalate their concerns to the Manager of the IRS so that these can be brought to the attention of the relevant Head of Service for resolution, as per the Issues Resolution Protocol. In this reporting period there were eight occasions where it was deemed necessary to access the formal issues protocol in relation to concerns about;
- levels of risk to a child in care and inadequate safety planning,
 - final care plans being filed with court without the ratification of the IRO,
 - significant delay in care proceedings being issued,
 - assessment not sufficiently addressing risks and vulnerabilities,
 - delay in seeking expert assessment for a child in care impacting on knowing what placement would best suit the child's needs,
 - a child not being seen within the statutory timeframe,
 - IRO deeming care proceedings to be necessary,
 - inadequate educational provision.
- 9.5 With input from Heads of Service and further action being taken to consider the concerns raised by the IRO, seven of the eight formal issues were resolved. One

issue was unsatisfactorily resolved, the decision was taken not to utilise the protocol and escalate to Director level as there were no immediate risks identified in relation to the child and the IRO agreed they would keep close oversight to ensure no further un-necessary delay.

- 9.6 The Manager of the IRS had wanted to develop a process within Liquidlogic Children's System that would enable prompt identification of both informal and formal use of the Dispute Resolution Protocol. This piece of work was unfortunately delayed due to staffing within the service but is now underway and should be completed towards the end of 2020.

10. Quality Assurance by the IRO

- 10.1 IRO's are required to maintain close oversight of the care planning for children and young people in care, this means that they must keep oversight of the progress for children in care in between their reviews. Social Workers have a duty to inform a child's IRO of significant changes / events in the child's life and any proposed changes in care plan should be discussed with the IRO before being implemented.
- 10.2 In Bath and North East Somerset the IRO's routinely review the child's records and seek updates from the child's social worker in between reviews. Children and young people whose needs are more complex or where there are concerns about increased levels of risk or risk of placement breakdown, IRO's will be more vigilant as to how plans for these children and young people are being progressed, with sometimes weekly discussions taking place with the social worker or carer.
- 10.3 Ahead of every child in care review the IRO will undertake an audit of the child's records. IRO's review whether there is evidence that the child is being seen within statutory timescales or as agreed at last review, that when seen the child or young person's voice is being captured. IRO's expect to see strong evidence of management oversight and supervision in LCS and information pertaining to a child's PEP and health assessment. For young people approaching their 16th birthday, IRO's expect to see consideration has been given to starting their Pathway Plan and for those beyond 16 expect to see this completed.
- 10.4 Following the child in care review, the IRO will comment in the audit as to whether the child's care plan is up to date, whether the social worker prepared and provided a report 48 hours before the review, that an assessment of need has been completed in the last two years and whether advocacy has been offered / accessed by the child or young person.
- 10.5 As a result of the additional administrative support available to the IRS the data from the audits can now be collated and in turn analysed. A quarterly report is now prepared by the manager of the IRS which is presented at the Specialist Services Contract Monitoring Meeting and provides information as to the delivery of child in care reviews, summary of themes identified by IRO's, recommendations made for children and young people in care at their review

and an overview of the escalations / challenges made by IROs. Where practice issues are identified, these form part of Children's Services Improvement Plan.

11. Advocacy

- 11.1 Advocacy to children and young people in care within Bath and North East Somerset is provided by Off the Record and referred to as Shout Out! This service is available to all children and young people in care from seven years old. Between 1st April 2019- 31st March 2020, Off the Record reported in their end of year report that 31 children accessed advocacy support, with advocates supporting children and young people at 22 child in care reviews. As set out in para 8.9, the IRS want all children and young people to have information provided to them about their entitlement to advocacy and how they can access this, to see whether this increases the number of children accessing the service.

12. Liaison with Children's Services

- 12.1 To strengthen communication with those working across children's social care and to promote the role and responsibilities of an IRO, each IRO is now linked to a team within children's social care. The IRO is expected to attend a minimum of two team meetings a year, providing opportunity for discussions about each service area and changes that might be considered. The IRO is also available to meet with new Social Workers and Managers as part of their induction so that there is clarity about the expectations of the child's social worker, the processes within Bath and North East Somerset and the arrangements in place to deliver positive child in care reviews.
- 12.2 The Manager of the IRS in their capacity as Deputy Lead for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance continues to meet regularly with the Head of Service for Safeguarding Outcomes and Care Outcomes to ensure there is effective communication and collaboration between Children's Services and the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service. The meeting considers key themes and issues that have arisen for children and young people in care and those subject to a child protection plan.

13. Progress as to plans for 2019 - 2020:

- 13.1 The IRS identified 10 areas of practice for progress during this reporting period, out of the 10, three remain outstanding and will be carried forward into 202-2021.

Promotion of the role and responsibilities of an IRO for those working in Council Children's Services;

Completed: Every team within Children's Services has an IRO link with them who is expected to attend as a minimum two team meetings a year and meet all new starters to the team as part of their induction so that the role of the IRO can be considered and processes clarified as to the reviews of children and young people in care.

Identification of children and young people in high risk groups for experiencing placement instability;

Completed: IRO's identify children and young people at risk of placement instability and appropriately highlight these in supervision. Children's Social Care are seeking to implement a matching panel for children and young people who require long-term foster care, the aspiration is that this process will ensure the needs of the child / young person can be met by the carer and where levels of need are deemed high there is an appropriate plan of support. The Manager of the IRS has been working with the Head of Service for Care Outcomes to design this process, the implementation has been delayed as a result of Covid-19.

Identification of support being provided to stabilise placements.

Completed: IRO's consider what support is needed by the carers to meet the child or young person's needs, IRO's speak with social worker for the child / young person and the supervising social worker where there are concerns about placement stability to consider what additional support can be provided to stabilise the placement.

Understanding and knowledge of the use of unregulated placements.

Completed: In supervision, the IRO is required to highlight all children allocated to them that are placed in an unregulated placement. IRO's seek to ensure the needs of the child and young person can be suitably met by the placement and that there are up to date risk assessments in place. Where these are missing IRO's will raise with the social worker and their manager. At the end of this reporting period, the Manager of the IRS and Head of Service for Care Outcomes agreed to meet bi-monthly to review all children and young people in an unregulated placement so additional scrutiny could be given to this group of children / young people.

Participation of children and young people in the child in care review process;

Completed: In this reporting period only 7% of children and young people did not participate in their review.

Feedback from children, young people, their families and carers in order to shape and influence practice and service delivery;

Outstanding: This is an area that will need to be taken forward for the coming year (2020 – 2021).

Children and young people will have access to life story work delivered in an age appropriate way;

Outstanding: Children and Young People in the care of Bath and North East Somerset have access to life story work but this is not always undertaken at the

right time, there are also inconsistencies as to how this is approached with children and young people having different experiences. The IRS is working with Children's Social Care to devise practice guidance for life story work, identify tools that can be used to facilitate this work and where this work can be stored.

Continue to focus on improving the quality of pathway planning for 16 – 18 year olds;

Completed and Ongoing: The IRS worked with Council Children's Services to design a review form that is a Pathway Plan review and incorporates the Care Plan. IRO's ensure outstanding Pathway Plans feature in all recommendations made at a child's review, where these remain outstanding the IRO will escalate to team manager.

Continue to focus on improving the number of 16-18 year olds who are engaged in education, employment or training;

Ongoing: All children in care reviews for young people approaching their 16th birthday explore what plans are in place for post 16.

Availability of data that enables identification of themes and patterns for children and young people in care, which in turn can direct practice changes and improvements;

Completed: Quarterly reports were introduced at the end of Q4 which provide an overview of themes and patterns, this report is presented at the Specialist Services Contract Monitoring Meeting, attended by the Director of Children and Young People Specialist Services, the Director of Education, Inclusion and Children's Safeguarding, the Strategic Commissioner Officer, Heads of Service and the Service Development Manager for Children's Social Care.

12. Next step for the IRO Service 2020-2021:

12.1 The areas of focus for 2020 – 2021 include;

- Increasing feedback from children, young people, their carers and parents.
- Developing data reports that will enable greater scrutiny of the services performance, use of the dispute resolution protocol and identification of any issues and themes affecting children and young people in care.
- Ensuring children and young people having access to information about their rights and entitlements and what it means to be in care.
- Working in partnership with Children's Social Care to develop and implement practice guidance about life story work.
- Ensuring children and young people are being actively encouraged to participate in their review and those that appear disengaged are focused upon to increase engagement and ensure their voice is heard.

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Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING	Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING DATE:	3 November 2020	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	Youth Justice Plan 2020-21	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: FINAL DRAFT Youth Justice Plan 2020-21		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty, in consultation with named legal partners Health, Police and Probation, to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan. The Plan sets out agreed actions to help prevent youth offending and re-offending across Bath and North East Somerset.
- 1.2 Due to the current pandemic, the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales has advised there is no requirement to submit the Plan to them this year and therefore no national framework for completion. The Youth Offending Service Management Board has agreed to preparation of a shorter Plan in light of this.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to:

- 2.1 Review and comment on the Youth Justice Plan in advance of its consideration by Cabinet and Full Council

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 The principal, statutory aim of the youth justice system is to prevent youth offending by 10-17 year olds. The Youth Justice Plan reviews the latest

performance indicators and the national Standards self-assessment and reflects on learning about delivering services during a pandemic;

3.2 Actions in the work plan will help make Bath and North East Somerset a safer place and support children to work towards crime-free lives with better prospects for the future;

3.3 The Youth Justice Plan 2020-21 is attached as an appendix to this report.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Preparation of a Youth Justice Plan is required under Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

4.2 All work with children at risk of offending or re-offending takes full account of their status as children before their status as potential offenders and prioritises safeguarding them within their communities as well as in their family settings.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 The Council is the lead partner in the multi-agency arrangements to prevent youth offending, working closely with Police, Probation and Health Services. All partners have statutory responsibilities to participate in the resourcing of the Youth Offending Service and are maintaining their current level of support; £26,689 from the National Probation Service, £59,842 from Avon and Somerset Police and £45,994 from the local Clinical Commissioning Group; this includes staffing costs and a contribution towards running costs. The Council makes the greatest contribution in terms of staff, cash and additional support, including office accommodation and financial and human resources support services. In 2020-21, the Council is contributing £454,515 towards a total budget of £805,446, most of which pays for staff salaries. This contribution is within the existing Council approved budget.

5.2 The work of the Service also depends upon a core Ministry of Justice grant of £183,222 and a second grant of £24,967 towards the costs of funding any secure remand places needed. The Police and Crime Commissioner's direct contribution remains at £10,217 and is used to support the Service's preventative work undertaken by the Compass team.

5.3 Submission of a Youth Justice Plan and national staffing and quarterly data returns are conditions for receipt of the Youth Justice Board grant. In addition, the Service was asked to submit a Recovery Plan and the Youth Justice Board has acknowledged its receipt and confirmed it fulfils all requirements.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance. This is incorporated into the Youth Justice Plan itself.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out. It references a level of disproportionality within the youth justice system which is currently being examined as part of the Avon and Somerset Local Criminal Justice Board under its Lammy Review. The local Youth Offending Service is actively involved in this review and is committed to implement agreed recommendations

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 8.1 A number of children who work with the Youth Offending Service undertake community reparation projects to help develop their understanding of the harm they have caused others and make indirect amends. These projects change over time but currently include managing an allotment, writing letters to adults living in residential homes and a bike scheme. In more normal times, the service works with a range of partners including the Council Parks Department, the National Trust Rainbow Woods, Bath Cats and Dogs Home, Julian House Build a Bike, Genesis Furniture Project, PEOPLE charity shop, Radstock SWALLOW Café, Chew Magna Community Farm and Bath City Farm

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 None

10. CONSULTATION

- 10.1 This report has been drawn to the attention of the S151 Officer and approved by the Monitoring Officer;
- 10.2 The Youth Justice Plan draws on feedback from young people who have worked with the Youth Offending Service over the last 12 months;
- 10.3 Governance has been reviewed and continues to rest with the Youth Offending Service Management Board, now operating as a Sub Group of the Bath and North East Somerset Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership. Performance and the new work plan have been discussed with the Youth Offending Service Management Board, the Custody Review Panel, the Youth Crime Prevention Board and members of the Youth Offending Service itself.

Contact person	Sally Churchyard, Head of Young People's Prevention Services Sally_churchyard@bathnes.gov.uk 'Phone: 07980 998711
Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

Bath and North East Somerset Youth Justice Plan 2020-21



Working in partnership to prevent youth offending

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1. Introduction

1.1 Requirement to produce a Youth Justice Plan

Youth Offending Services and the partner organisations they work with have a statutory responsibility to prevent offending by children and young people aged 10-17 years. This Plan has been written in accordance with Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and includes learning and activities arising from recent self assessment activity and delivery under the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the pandemic, the Youth Justice Board does not require submission of a Youth Justice Plans this year but has instead, asked for a Recovery Plan as a condition of its grant. This has been submitted and approved and actions arising from it have also informed the Work Plan.

1.2 Ambition for children at risk of offending and re-offending

We are working to prevent offending and improve children's outcomes as set out in the wider Children and Young People's Plan 2018-21: We want all children and young people to enjoy childhood and to be well prepared for adult life and parents to take responsibility for understanding and meeting their children's needs, enjoying their childhood with them and preparing them for adult life. Work with children at risk of offending and re-offending contributes to all outcomes sought locally, particularly that children are safe.

- Children and young people are safe;
- Children and young people are healthy;
- Children and young people have fair life chances;
- Children and young people are engaged citizens in their own community.

1.3 Responding to children's needs

Criminal justice and other agencies share the responsibility for working to prevent youth offending and keeping children and the wider public safe. Youth Offending Services carry particular responsibilities for assessing and working with children to address a range of needs linked to their risk of offending. Professionals from Police, Health, Social Care, Education and the National Probation Service help make up the multi-agency Youth Offending Service and work in an integrated way alongside other specialists and a group of volunteer Referral Order Panel Members. They have key statutory functions, including the assessment and supervision of children aged 10-17 subject to Out-of-Court Disposals and community and custodial Court Orders, giving a voice to those harmed by youth offending, enabling those who have offended to make amends for the harm they have caused, strengthening parenting skills and where, necessary, supporting effective transitions into adult services. This work is supported by a prevention service, Compass, which works with children aged 8-17 years who are assessed as being at high risk of offending and with their families.

2. Service Delivery under the Covid-19 Pandemic

1. Introduction: response to the impact of Covid-19

As the implications of the pandemic became clear and following government advice, some Youth Offending Service staff started to work from home in the week beginning 16 March 2020 and all were working from home by 23 March when most offices were closed. The key challenge was to maintain a statutory service whilst ensuring that young people and staff were kept safe from Covid-19. Initially, the priority was to maintain contact with young people in order to understand and support them with any safeguarding and mental health needs.

The Service took early steps to 'RAG'-rate its statutory and voluntary caseloads in order to identify young people with the greatest likelihood of offending and/or with welfare or safeguarding need. In practice, the most vulnerable young people known have continued to receive a consistent and responsive service. For most in this vulnerable group, weekly face to face appointments have continued, supplemented by telephone contacts. This has meant practitioners have been able to assess and respond to the emerging needs of young people and their families as lockdown continued and more recently, has eased. This has been a frightening time for young people and their families and many engaged well in different ways of working and particularly appreciated the contact and someone outside their immediate families to talk to about what was happening.

A few families were 'shielding' and their young people were reluctant to meet and so they, and those rated lower risk, together with some parents / carers, were contacted and supported by telephone. This means of communicating had mixed responses and practitioners reported that many young people felt anxious and uncomfortable talking on the telephone and so it was difficult to get an accurate understanding of how well they were coping. For most young people, especially where there was already a good relationship established with their worker, weekly sessions were usually conducted through socially distanced walks in their local neighbourhood or parks. Some meetings took place on doorsteps or within young people's gardens and although this was considered adequate, it raised difficulties with privacy and so limited the scope of conversation and young peoples' engagement. Where practitioners were able to have frank discussions with young people about the challenges they had been facing in the lockdown, they could provide support and understanding and assess their overall wellbeing. It was also an opportunity to discuss how they had been engaging in home schooling and seek to address the difficulties they encountered with this. Having face-to-face contact and an ability to have confidential conversations has been invaluable in supporting young people and has, in many instances, strengthened relationships between the worker and young person.

Practical support was offered to families across the RAG-rating, including sharing information and signposting on to other support and some food and medical deliveries.

For the first few weeks, young people appear to have remained indoors and there were reports of pressure on families and concern about an increase in domestic abuse. As they started to venture outdoors again, there were reports of anti-social behaviour and some violent and vehicle-related offending. The Service has worked alongside wider partnership initiatives to tackle domestic abuse and serious violence and has also tailored its contact with individual young people. A number of common issues have been identified with young people including access to education, employment and training, social isolation, mental health issues, difficulties in adhering to lockdown restrictions and access to information technology. There have been excellent examples of the staff team adapting to the new working environment to address such needs including supporting access to school, supporting post-16 provision, using technology to deliver interventions, addressing social isolation, supporting parents and carers and developing new reparation opportunities.

Much continues to be learned about innovative ways to deliver this service during the pandemic. The wider network of Youth Offending Services and partner agencies as well as internal colleagues within Children's Services provide ideas and learning and strengthen the service's ability to continue to work with children even if there are further restrictions on people's movements.

3 a. Children's Voices

The Youth Offending Service has continued to listen to children about their experience of the service including under lockdown and how it could be improved to better meet their needs. Focused pieces of work have been undertaken, for example, two young people travelled to London to support a charity consultation and later attended a Youth Offending Service Management Board to talk to strategic leaders about their experiences. They have continued to play an active role in staff recruitment and helping with the layout and decoration of meeting rooms.



What work did the Youth Offending Service do with you during lockdown?

It was weird over lockdown as that was such a long time and I talked to people over the phone that I hadn't met before.

In lockdown it was good to meet with my worker as I had nothing else to do - that was a good thing.

Writing the letters to old people in care homes was really good. I've never written a letter before except at school especially to someone I don't know. They were good responses from the old people too. Good to communicate like that -it was hard writing the first one but easier when I got a reply, the replies were nice and it was a good thing to do.

When the meetings are not in a formal environment it helps me. As when it's formal you think it's quite long and you can't really be bothered for it and that's why you miss appointments but when the environment is different like going for a walk or going to a cafe it doesn't feel so much like a chore.

I was disappointed not to use a studio to record but that was Covid!





What difference has working with the Youth Offending Service made to you?

My worker has helped me to calm my anger.

At the time I thought it was the worst thing to ever happen to me but I look back now and realise I would have most likely been in prison by now. I have worked with YOS for a long time, a few years and it has helped me a lot in many ways like understanding how the victim feels and learning how to control myself when I see friends fighting others.

The CV I did with the education worker was good and I used it at (local employer) today and they said they would get back to me, I was encouraged by this.

I am kinda sure that I am not likely to be doing the things I was doing before. Now I have my own job and I feel independent and am able to do my own thing. I definitely don't want to mess that up.



YOS has kept me out of trouble and this was helpful to me and my family.

I found it helpful to look at things like housing and income.

I liked the relationship focus of the work. My caseworker listens well and help me sort things out.

YOS has helped me in loads of ways like being able to understand my actions. Why I do the things I do, the consequences of my actions and how my actions affect others. As before working with YOS I never would have thought about them things.

I've been working with YOS since October 2019. I liked getting out and doing practical work like at the allotment. It's been good to meet up regularly with my case worker, having someone there that I can talk to.

The education worker helped me do a CV and helped me look for apprenticeships and jobs and she regularly updated me on jobs and apprenticeships and now I have an apprenticeship in a restaurant working in the kitchen which is what I wanted to do.



What could we do to improve the service?

I think it helps if the young person only has 1 or 2 workers depending on the length of their Order. As having different workers constantly can be frustrating as you have to form a new relationship with them and like start over again.

In the past I have been lucky enough to work with a friend who also works with YOS. It's not for everyone but it helped me and her to attend appointments together and made it enjoyable for us both.



With reparation I think the things that are done should benefit someone-either the young person or the community. From my experience I had to clean a charity shop... take all the things off the shelves and put them on again. I know it's probably helping the shop owner but it's not really productive. Reparation should be about giving back to the community, that's what I think. Things like a bake sale for charity or something that will benefit someone.

b. Victims' Voice

The Service values feedback from those who have been harmed by children's offending behaviour and have later taken up the offer of a service to provide answers to their questions, receive letters, experienced something being 'put right' or even had opportunities to meet for mediation:

'The incident was very scary and, although he was not the only one involved, we're really grateful for his letter of apology' (husband and wife whose car was damaged whilst driving).

'I'm glad that you could tell the young person what might have happened, and I'm reassured that this won't happen again' (elderly victim near his greenhouse when stones thrown caused glass to smash).

'The young person worked really hard gardening and chatted to us, which was great' (from staff following direct reparation for having caused criminal damage) at a cemetery.

'It's been so good for all of us to tell our story and hope it helps the YOS work to bring us back together' (family members of young person who had threatened them and caused damage to the home).

'Thank you for letting me know what happened at the panel – it's good to know that they will be getting some help with their anger' (victim of criminal damage to their home).

'The (shuttle) mediation helped answer some of our questions about why the assault happened' (parents of a young person assaulted outside school by peers).

'We really appreciated having the apology, which was extremely well-written and carefully thought out' (mother and daughter assaulted whilst visiting Bath).

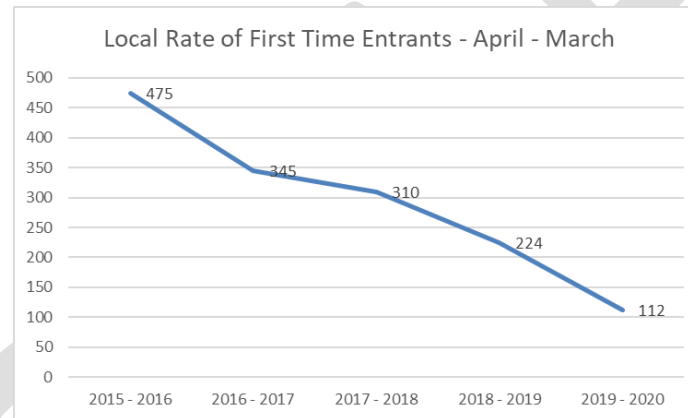
4. Performance

National Indicators

There are three national indicators for youth justice. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, local data has continued to be provided to the Youth Justice Board as required but no national comparison data has been published for re-offending and first time entrants.

A. First time entrants

The indicator is the number of young people aged 10-17 who received their first substantive outcome (Caution, Conditional Caution or Conviction) shown as a rate per 100,000 young people in the general population. The number and rate continue to reduce significantly, reflecting the positive impact of specific youth crime diversion and prevention and wider early help services which mean that children's needs and behaviour can be addressed before they become entrenched.

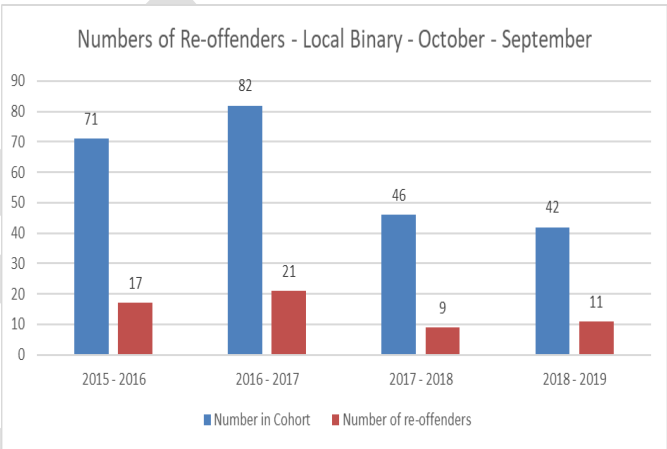
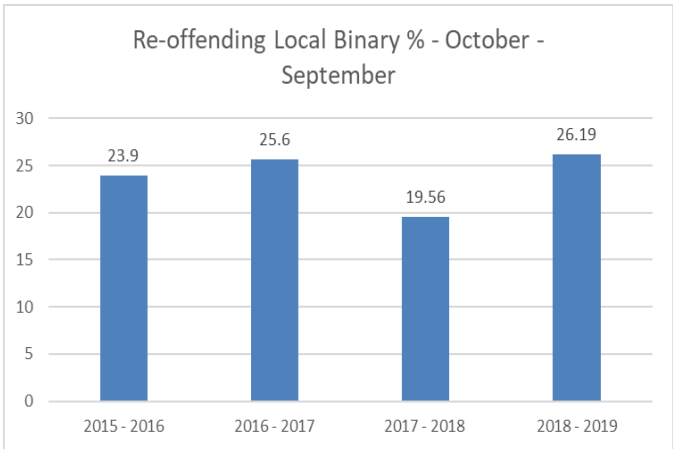


B. Re-offending

The indicator is the rate of re-offending after 3 months and 12 months of a cohort of young people who received a substantive outcome (Caution, Conditional Caution or Conviction). This is shown as a binary rate (the overall percentage of young people who re-offended) and as the rate of new offences per young person who re-offended.

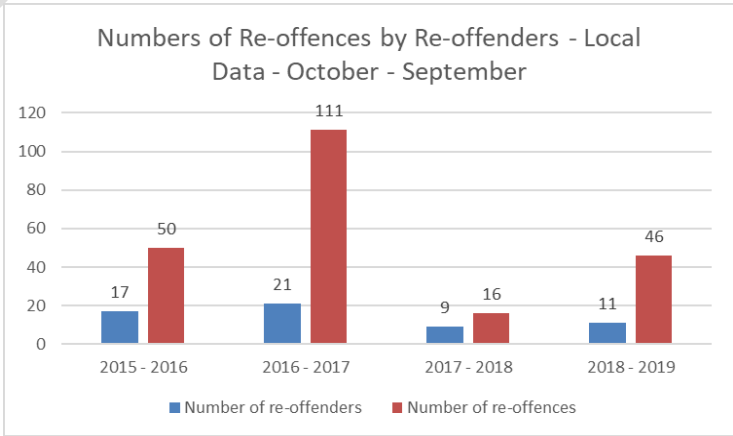
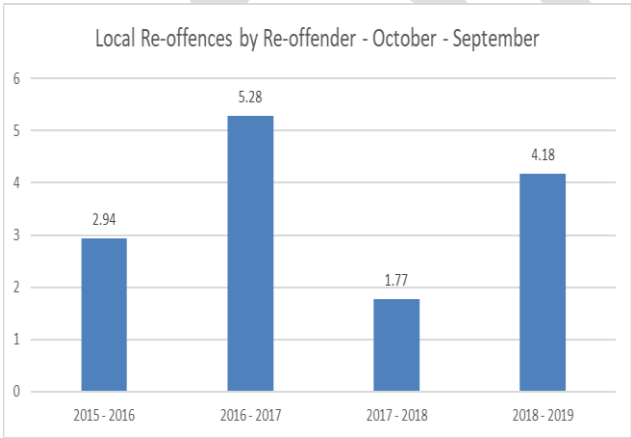
a. YOS Binary Data October 2018 – September 2019:

The tables below are taken from the local live re-offending toolkits for 12-month cohorts. The binary rate has increased from 19.56% to 26.19% but the cohorts are very small –11 out of 42 compared with 9 out of 46.



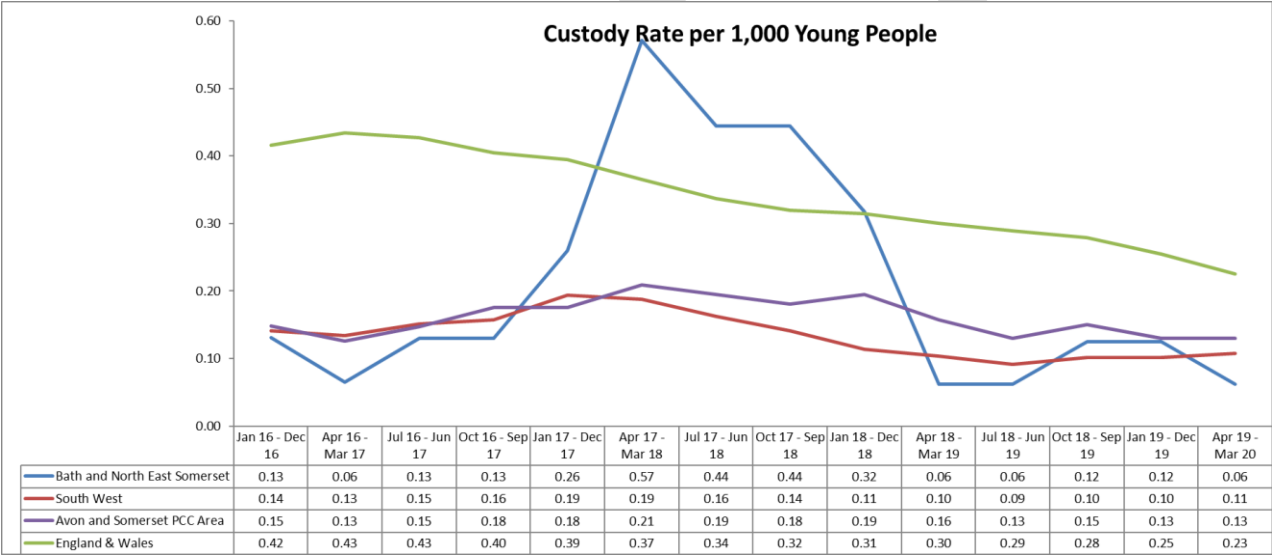
b. YOS Re-offences per Re-offender:

This rate of re-offending increased significantly from 1.77 to 4.18. Eleven young people committed 46 further offences in the 2018 – 2019 cohort, compared with 9 young people who committed 16 offences in the 2017 -2018 cohort. As numbers in the formal youth justice system continue to reduce, there is a much greater proportion of children with complex needs which impact on their offending.



C. Custody

This indicator is the number of custodial sentences passed by the Courts, presented as a rate per 1000 young people aged 10-17 in the general population. The local ambition remains to keep young people out of custody wherever it is safe to the public to do so because outcomes for young people in custody tend to be poorer than for those sentenced within the community. The multi-agency Custody Review Panel monitors outcomes, identifies learning and recommends actions in respect of young people at risk of custody as part of its standard agenda. The Youth Offending Service works closely with other children's services to develop community proposals wherever it is considered safe to do so. Performance is considerably improved, with just one custodial sentence in each of the last two years and the custody rate reducing from 0.12 to 0.06. All comparators have also shown a reduction in the same period.



Self assessment

Youth Offending Services are obliged to work in accordance with a National Standards Framework and during 2019-20, were asked to conduct a comprehensive self assessment of adherence to a revised set of Standards. Locally, the Management Board played an active part in this assessment, including participating in an audit of cases and review of policies, procedures and protocols and judging against the following.

Judgment for each standard	Strategic (management board and partner self-assessment)	Operational (case file assessments)
Outstanding	A comprehensive assurance system is in place and there is regular support and challenge by all partners at the management board and within each respective agency. This includes driving improved outcomes for each standard 1-5 and thereby the children in receipt of the services	80% + or majority of all cases sampled
Good	The assurance approaches are well evidenced frequent and there is a focus on achieving the outcomes for each standard 1 – 5.	65 - 79% or most cases sampled > 85%
Requires improvement	There is some evidence of assurance approaches but this is not systematic.	50 – 64% or in some cases sampled
Inadequate	There are insufficient approaches to assurance.	under 50% or inconsistent or too few cases sampled

The local evidenced adherence was scored as follows and associated improvement actions have been oncluded in the annual Work Plan below:

National Standards	Self Assessment	Self Assessment
National Standard 1 – Out of Court Disposals	Strategic audit: Good	Operational audit: Outstanding
National Standards 2 – Work in Courts	Strategic audit: Good	Operational audit: Outstanding
National Standard 3 – In the Community	Strategic audit: Good	Operational audit: Good
National Standard 4 – Work in Custody	Strategic audit: Good	Operational audit: Outstanding
National Standards 5 - Transitions	Strategic audit: Requires improvment	Operational audit: Outstanding

5. Risks to future delivery against youth justice outcomes

The following risks have been identified for delivery of the Youth Justice Plan and the statutory purpose of preventing youth offending.

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Actions to reduce/manage the risk
Exploitation of young people, including into offending	High	High	The Service now plays a key role in the Serious Violence Operational Group (as well as the Exploitation Operational Group), giving opportunity to raise concern about individuals and networks, work with colleagues to address risks and seek assurance about how the partnership is working together to keep children and the wider public safe. It will be involved in a contextualised safeguarding audit to help take this practice forward.
More serious youth offending, including serious violence	High	Medium/ High	A small number of young people, often those who are being exploited, are at risk of committing violent and drug dealing offences. Those who carry knives are at heightened risk of committing serious violent offences. The Service has reviewed the interventions it uses and is working with the wider partnership through the Serious Violence Steering Group, to ensure that support to young people is 'joined up,' with a key focus on prevention. Continued participation in the enhanced case management pilot also presents opportunities for more structured, trauma recovery, work.
Increase in Looked After Children offending	High	Medium	The Service is leading on a local protocol to prevent unnecessary criminalisation of Looked after children. Implementation of this will support a partnership review of the use of restorative responses.
Increase in ethnic minority background disproportionality	High	Medium	The Service is now populating a national toolkit to improve understanding of this issue and is working with the Local Criminal Justice Board Lammy Sub-Group to understand how improvements can be made across the board.
Insufficient readiness for Inspection	High	Low	The Youth Offending management and team are actively preparing for Inspection, using the national framework. It is a standing item at Management Board.
Not able to deliver the Work Plan	High	Low	Regular review in management meetings and Management Board oversight and the Council's Scrutiny arrangements will hold everyone to account and provide support in progressing this.

Maintaining staff and business continuity	Medium	Medium	The relatively small Service is particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in staffing levels when people leave or are Sick. This is exacerbated under the current pandemic. The Service has reviewed its business continuity plan and risk assessments and operating models and is keeping these under careful review in light of the latest government, Public Health and Council advice. Commitment to staff well-being and provision of good quality Supervision and training support staff in this difficult time as well as maintaining its reputation and ability to attract good candidates.
Maintaining two office bases	Medium	Medium	Use of the central Bath reporting office depends on having two staff available for cover and is linked with staffing levels as above. This is kept under careful review.

6. Youth Justice Work Plan 2020-21

National Standard 1: Out of Court Disposals		
Actions	Owner	Timescale
1. Propose making the Out of Court Disposal Panel a Sub-Group of the YOS Management Board to support local accountability and oversight	Chair of YOS Management Board	September 2020
2. Complete the B&NES protocol for Reduction of Criminalisation of Looked After Young people, including a focus on transitions.	Head of Service (with task and finish group)	September 2020
3. Ensure planning is explicitly done with the young person and their parent / carer after the Panel meeting and that the young person has a copy of their plan	Operational Manager	September 2020
4. Explore extending Out of Court Disposal Panel membership to make it more representative of the partnership	Head of Service	December 2020
5. Undertake a local review of Out of Court Disposal outcomes in relation to ethnicity and gender and consult on actions needed	Business and Performance Manager	December 2020
6. Revise the quality assurance and audit framework to include Out of Court Disposals and ensure independent oversight, including from Board members	Head of Service	December 2020
7. Survey pre-Court work satisfaction rates of children and their families and of those harmed by their offending and introduce any changes identified	Operational Manager	March 2021
8. Develop a pathway to show integration of youth crime preventative activity with a focus on serious violence	Head of Service (with Youth Crime Prevention Board and Serious Violence Steering Group)	March 2021

9. Consider how we measure effectiveness of all local youth crime prevention activity including collating service user feedback	Head of Service (with Youth Crime Prevention Board)	March 2021
10. Introduce an overall diversion strategy for B&NES	Police	March 2021
11. Review information sharing protocols to ensure they are up-to-date and fit for purpose	Business and Performance Manager	March 2021
National Standard 2: Court		
Actions	Owner	Timescale
1. Promote use of Magistrates' Pre Sente Report feedback system to ensure feedback in every case	Court representative on Management Board	September 2020
2. Reintroduce the Court information leaflet for young people	Operational Manager	September 2020
3. Introduce quarterly monitoring of congruence between Court proposals and outcomes	Business and Performance Manager	September 2020
4. Undertake a review of Court outcomes by gender and ethnicity and consult on actions needed	Business and Performance Manager	December 2020
5. Update Remand Management Protocol	Operational Manager	December 2020
National Standard 3: In the Community		
Actions	Owner	Timescale
1. Utilise the 'Social GRRRAACCEEESSS' tool in staff Supervision to ensure consideration is given to a wider range of diversity issues ¹	Operational Manager and	September 2020

¹ An acronym for a learning tool describing aspects of personal and social identity and related power and privilege, from Research in Practice, funded by the Department for Education

	Deputy Team Manager	
2. Ensure workshops for YOS practitioners and Panel Members to improve 'SMART' planning	Operational Manager	September 2020
3. Design and deliver a workshop about diversity to the YOS and ensure follow up in case discussions and Supervision	Deputy Team Manager	December 2020
4. Update Protocols with key partner agencies including Social Care, Police and National Probation Service (to include clarity about identification of enduring worker and delivery of the Enhanced Case Management and AMBIT approaches where relevant)	Head of Service (with Avon & Somerset Heads of Service)	March 2021
National Standard 4: Secure		
Actions	Owner	Timescale
1. Refresh SEND-Youth Custody Protocol	Education Officer	December 2020
2. Strengthen use of the Custody Exit Information Form to record young people's feedback on their experience of custody including transportation from Court to custody, being able to call family on their first day in custody and their experience of how behaviour is managed in order that the YOS and/or Board can escalate any issues	Operational Manager	March 2021
3. Explore the feasibility of Community Paediatricians inputting to initial health assessments for Looked After Children in custody	Chair of the YOS Management Board	March 2021
National Standard 5: Transitions		
Actions	Owner	Timescale
1. Review and address challenges around youth safeguarding assessments when transitioning to adult services	NPS member of the YOS Management Board	March 2021
2. Undertake analysis of young people's re-offending after they have transitioned to NPS and incorporating their feedback on the experience of transition	NPS member of the YOS Management Board	March 2021

Organisational Structure and Responsibility		
1. Review how YOS can continue to work safely in the coming months as the lockdown arrangements change and it anticipates increased demand.	Chair of Management Board and Head of Service	Ongoing
3. Clarify how services can be provided to shielded children and families	Operational Manager	Ongoing
3. Keep the BCSSP aware of the challenges over the next few months. The Management Board needs to continue to champion the work of the YOS and ensure it is sufficiently resourced.	Chair of Management Board and Head of Service	Ongoing
Organisational Culture		
1. Refresh the vision and values statements for youth justice in B&NES	Head of Service	September 2020
2. Consult on what has worked well for children under lockdown and what they would like to see continued or developed as a result of recent innovations	Operational Manager	December 2020
3. Re-visit concept of observed practice/peer reviews and feedback including as part of a wider Practice Week	Head of Service	December 2020

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CHILDREN, ADULTS, HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

This Forward Plan lists all the items coming to the Panel over the next few months.

Inevitably, some of the published information may change; Government guidance recognises that the plan is a best assessment, at the time of publication, of anticipated decision making. The online Forward Plan is updated regularly and can be seen on the Council's website at:

<http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgPlansHome.aspx?bcr=1>

The Forward Plan demonstrates the Council's commitment to openness and participation in decision making. It assists the Panel in planning their input to policy formulation and development, and in reviewing the work of the Cabinet.

Should you wish to make representations, please contact the report author or, Democratic Services (). A formal agenda will be issued 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Agenda papers can be inspected on the Council's website and at the Guildhall (Bath), Hollies (Midsomer Norton), Civic Centre (Keynsham) and at Bath Central, and Midsomer Norton public libraries.

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Director Lead
3RD NOVEMBER 2020				
3 Nov 2020	Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Youth Forum / In Care Council Update	Sarah McCluskey Tel: 01225 394464	Director Children & Young People
3 Nov 2020	Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	School Performance / Narrowing the Gap / SACRE	Christopher Wilford Tel: 01225 477109	Director Children & Young People
3 Nov 2020	Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report	Sarah Hogan Tel: 01225 39 6810	Director Children & Young People

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Director Lead
3 Nov 2020 5 Nov 2020 12 Nov 2020 E3237	Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel Cabinet Council	Youth Justice Plan 2020-21	Sally Churchyard Tel: 01225 395442	Director Children & Young People
19TH JANUARY 2021				
Page 67	Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Mental Health Strategy for B&NES, Swindon & Wiltshire (Response to COVID)	Karyn YeeKing Tel: 01225 477347	Director of Adult Social Care, Complex and Specialist Commissioning
	Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Care Home Commissioning	Karen E Green, John Turkson Tel: 01225 396441,	Director of Adult Social Care, Complex and Specialist Commissioning

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Director Lead
	Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Violence Reduction Unit	Sally Churchyard Tel: 01225 395442	Director Children & Young People
	Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Child Exploitation	Rachel Allen- Ringham Tel: 01225 477927	Director Children & Young People
9TH MARCH 2021				
	Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Virgin Care Commissioner - Six Month Update Report	Claire Thorogood, Lesley Hutchinson Tel: 01225 477272, Tel: 01225 396339	Director of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance
	Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Culverhay Site - Options Update	Christopher Wilford Tel: 01225 477109	Director Children & Young People

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Director Lead
	Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Corporate Parenting	Mary Kearney-Knowles Tel: 01225 394412	Director Children & Young People
18TH MAY 2021				
The Forward Plan is administered by DEMOCRATIC SERVICES: Democratic_Services@bathnes.gov.uk				

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