

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	<b>Children &amp; Young People Policy Development &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>	
MEETING DATE:	<b>10th July 2018</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	<b>Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2017-2018</b>	
WARD:	All	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2017-2018		

### 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The IRO Manager has a statutory responsibility to produce a report on the work of the IRO service for the scrutiny of the Corporate Parenting Board, this requirement was established by the IRO Handbook (2010). The report is required to set out the work undertaken by the IRO service in relation to the scrutiny and challenge of Care Planning and Service Performance.
- 1.2 Children and Young People Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel also review the report on the IRO Service to ensure Members are sighted on the care provided to children in the care of the Local Authority. The report is also discussed with the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

### 2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel are asked to:

- 2.1 Note the areas of positive performance referred to within the Annual Report, particularly the evidence that the Service are directly contributing to improving outcomes for Children and Young People in Care.
- 2.2 Note and support the IRO service's commitment to ensure that the LA delivers its statutory responsibilities to children and young people in care and their parents and carers, in particular ensuring the robustness of the issues resolution process to quickly resolve issues for children and young people.
- 2.3 Use the annual reporting requirement of the Service to inform the ongoing work of the Local Authority in raising the outcomes for the children and young people in B&NES.

### **3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

3.1 No additional resource requests to be made.

### **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL**

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 s.118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

4.2 In March 2010 the IRO Handbook was issued, providing Local Authorities with statutory guidance on how the IRO's should discharge their duties. Significantly, the Handbook stated:

4.3 The IRO has a new role conferred upon them to monitor the child's case as opposed to monitoring the review, effectively monitoring the implementation of the Care Plan between reviews (at para. 3.74)

4.4 The Handbook goes on to state that the primary role of an IRO is:

- To ensure that the care plan for the child fully reflects the child's current needs and that the actions set out in the plan are consistent with the local authority's legal responsibilities towards the child (at para. 2.10)

4.5 In discharging this role, the Handbook notes (at para. 2.14) that the IRO has a number of specific responsibilities, including:

- promoting the voice of the child;
- ensuring that plans for looked after children are based on a detailed and informed assessment, are up to date, effective and provide a real and genuine response to each child's needs;
- making sure that the child understands how an advocate could help and his/her entitlement to one;
- offering a safeguard to prevent any 'drift' in care planning for looked after children and the delivery of services to them; and
- monitoring the activity of the local authority as a corporate parent in ensuring that care plans have given proper consideration and weight to the child's wishes and feelings and that, where appropriate, the child fully understands

### **5 THE REPORT**

5.1 Please see the attached this details how the IRO Service ensures B&NES services are meeting the needs of the children and young people in 'our' care.

### **6 RATIONALE**

6.1 The requirement to share the report is set out above.

## 7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 Not Applicable.

## 8 CONSULTATION

8.1 Children and Young People in Care; Foster Carers; Parents; Children's Social Care and the Independent Reviewing Service.

## 9 RISK MANAGEMENT

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

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<b>Background papers</b>	N/A
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	