

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	01 October 2019	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2018 -2019	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2018-2019		

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 increase in numbers of children and young people placed in the care of the Local Authority and the performance of the Independent Reviewing Service in reviewing the quality of the care planning for these children.
- 2.2 Recognise the complexity of the work that is required with children and young people and continue to support the IRO Service in ensuring that the Local Authority fulfils its statutory responsibilities to the children and young people in care.
- 2.3 Support the need for additional data reporting to be made available so that there can be greater understanding of the use of the Issues Resolution Protocol and

whether there are any themes as to the concerns identified by the IRO Service for the children and young people in the care of the Local Authority.

- 2.4** Promote the IRO Services key areas for development for 2019-2020 with colleagues in the Council's Children's Services.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1** Please see attached the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report for 2018-2019 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** An annual report of the IRO Service for Looked After Children is required in accordance with the Children and Young Person's Act 2008 and The IRO Handbook (2010) which provides statutory guidance to all Local Authorities regarding children that are placed in the care of a Local Authority. This guidance 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.
- 4.2** 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.
- 4.3** 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 looked after children by improving the quality of the care planning processes. Accompanying these Regulations is the IRO Handbook: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Independent Reviewing Officers on Reviewing Arrangements for Looked After Children. Both these Regulations came into effect in April 2011 and provide not only the framework for the work of the Independent Reviewing Service but set out the Local Authorities responsibilities to looked after children.
- 4.4** The statutory duties of the IRO are to;
- Monitor the performance by the local authority of their functions in relation to looked after children;
 - Participate in any looked after child's review;
 - Ensure that any ascertained wishes and feelings of looked after children are given due consideration by the appropriate authority; and
 - Perform any other function as set out in the regulations.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1** No request is being 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 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 7.1 The Independent Reviewing 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.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 None

9 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The report was reviewed on 22/08/2019 by members of the Local Safeguarding Children Board Performance Management Group (PMG).
- 9.2 The report will be reviewed by the Corporate Parenting Board at its next meeting.

Contact person	Sarah Hogan, Deputy Lead for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance (Children and Young People) / Local Authority Designated Officer
Background papers	<i>None</i>
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