

# Corporate Parenting Board

## 9 November 2017

<b>Report title</b>	Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service 2016-2017	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Young People	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Emma Bennett- Children and Young People	
<b>Originating service</b>	Safeguarding	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Dawn Williams	Head of Service – Safeguarding
	Tel	01902 550655
	Email	<a href="mailto:Dawn.williams@wolverhampton.gov.uk">Dawn.williams@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>
	Mandy Lee	Safeguarding Manager-Children
	Tel	01902 550654
	E-mail	<a href="mailto:Mandy.lee@wolverhampton.gov.uk">Mandy.lee@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Children in Care Council 27 September 2017 Children and Young People Management Team 19 October 2017 People Leadership Team 30 October 2017	

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### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Utilise this report to inform strategic planning for Wolverhampton's Looked After Children population
2. Hold the Safeguarding Service to account in their delivery of services to Looked After Children

## **1.0 Purpose**

1.1 Wolverhampton Safeguarding Service has statutory responsibility for overseeing and ratifying the care plans for Looked after Children (LAC) via the activity of the Independent Reviewing Officers. As a result, the service is duty bound to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with an annual report that outlines the activity of the service, the impact for children and recommendations for service improvement that will enhance young people's experiences. The annual report for 2016/17 is attached. The Corporate Parenting Board has received annual reports in preceding years

## **2.0 Background**

2.1 The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 reinforced and strengthened the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), enabling more effective independent oversight and scrutiny of the child's case. It has ensured that the child is able to meaningfully participate in planning for their own care and that the care plan that the local authority prepares for them is based on a thorough assessment of the individual child's needs.

2.2 In March 2010, the Government issued statutory guidance, The IRO Handbook, for Local Authorities and IROs on care planning and reviewing arrangements for LAC. The IRO Handbook states that the statutory duties of the IRO are to:

- monitor the Local Authority's performance of their functions in relation to the child's case;
- participate in any review of the child's case;
- ensure any ascertained wishes and feelings of the child concerning the case are given due consideration by the appropriate authority;
- perform any other function which is prescribed in regulations.

2.3 The guidance became effective on 1 April 2011, as a revision to the Children Act 1989. Volume 2 of the 'Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations and statutory guidance 2010'. There is an expectation that IROs are more involved with children who are looked after, not just in the Looked After Children review meeting. More contact with the child, the carers and the staff involved is also expected. This is particularly the case in matters where the IRO has concerns about the case and needs to monitor the matter between statutory reviews.

2.4 All looked after children, including children who are in an adoptive placement prior to an Adoption Order, are covered by the legislation. This applies to all children who are the subject of a care order (under section 31 of the Children Act 1989), or who are voluntarily accommodated for a period of more than 24 hours (section 20 of the Children Act 1989), including those described in this report as in Short Break Care, or who are placed for adoption under the Adoption and Children Act 2002. It also covers those who are compulsorily looked after, such as those remanded by the court to local authority accommodation. Since the publication of the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) in December 2012, it has been the responsibility of the Local Authority to look after all young people who are remanded into custody. These young people now require an allocated IRO and LAC reviews in their place of custody.

### **3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.**

- 3.1 The annual report provides an outline of activity covering the period 2016-2017 and determines actions to be progressed in 2017-2018.
- 3.2 The IRO service has remained stable, with an experienced and capable staff team. The Ofsted Inspection of 2017 found that 'Independent reviewing officers (IROs) are effective in driving improvements in practice and performance, leading to better outcomes for children looked after. A stable and experienced team of IROs has been given additional resources, to ensure that IROs are able to continue to deliver a high-quality service'.
- 3.3 Caseloads for IRO's have been manageable, which has enabled the team to be more effective in driving improvements and to spend more time seeing children.
- 3.4 The report shows that, overall, the service has been effective in terms of the timeliness of reviews and the participation of children in reviews, but there is still room for improvement. This is reflected in the plans for 2017-2018

### **4.0 Financial implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The IROs are funded by the Safeguarding Service within the People directorate. [AS/24102017/Z]

### **5.0 Legal implications**

- 5.1 The relevant legislation is contained within the body of the report. There are no direct legal implications arising from the report. [TC/01112017/R]

### **6.0 Equalities implications**

- 6.1 The Annual report recognises issues of equality for Children who access the safeguarding service and how equality is represented within the service.

### **7.0 Environmental implications**

- 7.1 None

### **8.0 Human resources implications**

- 8.1 None

### **9.0 Corporate landlord implications**

- 9.1 None

### **10.0 Schedule of background papers**

- 10.1 None.

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CITY OF  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
C O U N C I L

Annual report

Safeguarding Service

Looked After Children  
2016 - 2017

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The IRO Handbook (issued in March 2010) is the statutory guidance for Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) and local authorities on their functions in relation to case management and review of children in care, known as looked after children (LAC). It states that the IRO Manager (known as the Safeguarding Manager – Children, in Wolverhampton) should be responsible for the production of an annual report for the scrutiny of the members of the Corporate Parenting Board. It should also be available to the public on the Council website.
- 1.2 This report covers the period from April 2016 – March 2017 This is the 8th annual report.
- 1.3 The Safeguarding Service is based at the Priory Green Building in Pendeford, Wolverhampton.
- 1.4 Dawn Williams is the Head of Safeguarding (HOS) and has overall responsibility for the IRO functions and ensures independence from the line management of cases and the allocation of resources within Children and Families Services. Mandy Lee is the Safeguarding Manager-Children. The management of the IRO team involves the provision of supervision to the IROs and responsibility for the team including ensuring that reviews are held on time and that they are correctly administered. The Safeguarding Manager also manages an IRO who undertakes foster home reviews.
- 1.5 As prescribed by the national IRO Managers Group, this report will endeavour to ‘highlight areas of good practice and areas which require improvement, identify emerging themes and trends, describe areas of work which the service has prioritised during the year, and will prioritise in the coming year.’
- 1.6 The IROs have a key role in assuring the quality of the case planning for those children and young people who are looked after by the local authority. The purpose of this report is to provide information on the work undertaken by the IROs in 2016 – 17 and to outline the priorities for the next year.

## **2. Purpose of service and legal context**

- 2.1 The arrangements for the statutory reviews of children in care, known as looked after children (LAC) in Wolverhampton, were amended and updated by Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. The Act introduced the new statutory role of the Independent Reviewing Officer. In September 2004, local authorities were required to appoint Independent Reviewing Officers with the remit of:
  - chairing the authority’s LAC reviews
  - monitoring the authority’s review of the care plan
  - and where necessary, referring cases to the Children and Families Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) to take legal action as a last resort if the failure to implement the care plan might be considered to breach the child’s human rights.In addition, there is an expectation that the IROs will quality assure the local authority’s care planning for children in care.

2.2 Legislation for the reviewing of LAC cases is supported by detailed guidance which has been taken into account in making arrangements in Wolverhampton. The guidance includes Every Child Matters, Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and Statutory guidance, the IRO Handbook.

***Looked After Children:***

2.3 The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 reinforced and strengthened the role of the IRO, enabling more effective independent oversight and scrutiny of the child's case. It has ensured that the child is able to meaningfully participate in planning for their own care and that the care plan that the local authority prepares for them is based on a thorough assessment of the individual child's needs.

2.4 In March 2010 the Government issued new statutory guidance, The IRO Handbook, for Local Authorities and IROs on care planning and reviewing arrangements for LAC. The IRO Handbook states that the statutory duties of the IRO are to:

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- participate in any review of the child's case;
- ensure any ascertained wishes and feelings of the child concerning the case are given due consideration by the appropriate authority;
- perform any other function which is prescribed in regulations.

2.5 Since April 2011 there has been an expectation that IROs are more involved with children who are looked after, not just in the LAC review meeting itself. More contact with the child, the carers, and the staff involved is expected. This is particularly the case in matters where the IRO has concerns about the case and needs to monitor the matter between statutory reviews.

2.6 All looked after children, including children who are in an adoptive placement prior to an adoption order, are covered by the legislation. This applies to all children who are the subject of a care order (under section 31 of the Children Act 1989), or who are voluntarily accommodated for a period of more than 24 hours (section 20 of the Children Act 1989), including those described in this report as in Short Break Care, or who are placed for adoption under the Adoption and Children Act 2002. It also covers those who are compulsorily looked after such as those remanded by the court to local authority accommodation. Since the publication of the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) in December 2012, it has been the responsibility of the Local Authority to look after all young people who are remanded into custody. These young people now require an allocated IRO and LAC reviews in their place of custody.

### **3. Quantitative information about the service**

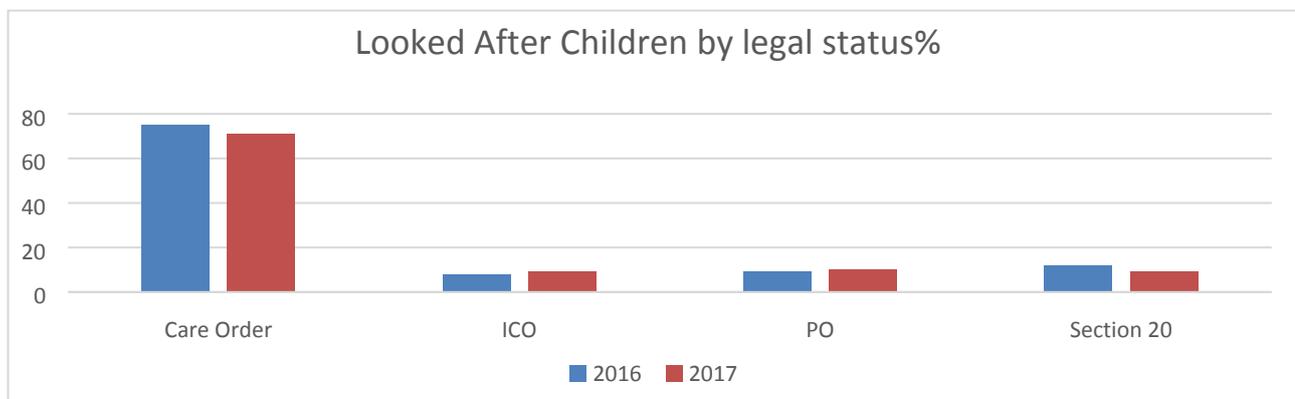
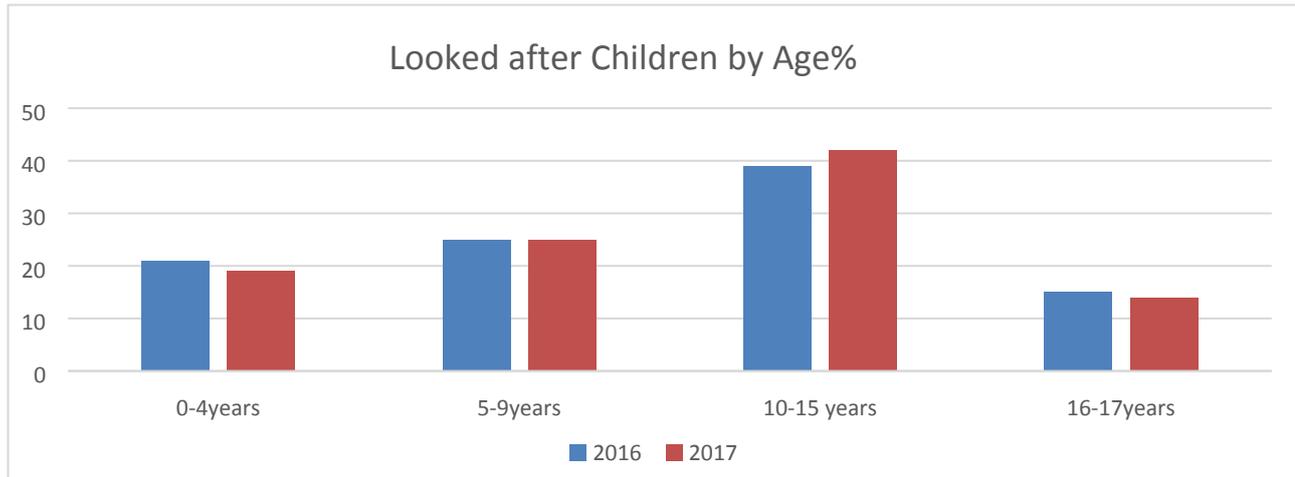
3.1 The Service has an establishment of 9 FTE IRO's. The team has been fully staffed since December 2014. A further 0.5 IRO post has been established, on a temporary basis, with the secondment of a 0.5 Foster Home Reviewing Officer to an IRO post. This will be reviewed in

September 2017 and it is proposed that this will be made permanent. There have been two additional agency IRO's in post in order to manage high caseloads arising from high numbers of looked after children. The post on Principal Independent Reviewing Officer (0.5fte) was established in 2016. The post holder supports the Safeguarding Manager with the management of the team.

- 3.2 The team has remained stable, other than the use of agency workers, over the period, and is increasingly experienced. The majority of the team have a mixed caseload of LAC and Child Protection. 3 of the permanent IROs only hold LAC cases. The makeup of caseloads is regularly reviewed.
- 3.3 The IRO Handbook recommends IRO caseloads of 50 – 70 children per IRO. The average caseload (including LAC, children on a CP plan, and those receiving care through short breaks (S20) on 31 March 2017 was 81 children. This compares to 70 at March 2016. The difference is due to the increased number of children subject to Child Protection Plans, which has doubled in the last 12 months. Although the caseloads are higher than last year, they are still within reasonable limits.
- 3.4 The team is made up of 3 men and 10 women. The team is made up of IROs from different ethnic backgrounds. (3 black/Asian, 1 black Afro/Caribbean/mixed heritage and 9 white British.) This adequately reflects the children we are serving. The looked after children of Wolverhampton were from the following backgrounds on 31.3.17. 60% white British, 4% Asian, 13% black/British/African/Caribbean, 9% mixed white/blackAfrican/Caribbean, 2% mixed white/Asian, 12% other.
- 3.5 The service also has 1 Independent Foster Home Reviewing Officer who is responsible for chairing Foster Home reviews.

### **Quantative information regarding the LAC population & CP population**

- 3.6 There were 643 looked after children at 31/3/17, compared to 653 in 2016. Of these 262/41% were female (277/42% in 2016) and 381/59% were male (376/58%in 2016) . The charts below show the percentage of children in care by age and legal status. The data shows a slight reduction in the numbers of young children in care, whilst the proportion of older children has increased. This may be the result of effective plans to move young children on to permanence, whilst there is remaining legacy of older young people who will not leave care until adulthood.
- 3.7 In relation to legal status, the chart below shows the percentage of all children remaining subject to Care Orders has decreased, whilst children subject to other legal orders has remained relatively stable. The percentage subject to section 20 has fallen. This suggests the reduction of the number of children in care has been achieved through successful permanence planning and effective early intervention to keep children out of care.



#### 4 Qualitative information about the IRO service

4.1 Under the provisions of the *Review of Children's Cases Regulations (1991)*<sup>3</sup> local authorities are required to review the case of any child who is Looked After or provided with accommodation as follows:

- First review must take place within 28 days of the date upon which the child begins to be looked after or provided with accommodation;
- Second review must be carried out no later than 3 months after the first review; and
- Subsequent reviews shall be carried out not more than 6 months after the date of the previous review.

4.2 The date of the next review should be brought forward:

- If there is an unplanned change of placement or other substantial changes to the care plan.
- If the IRO has specific concerns about a child and directs that the review be brought forward.
- Any request from the child or parent(s) for a review to be brought forward should be given serious consideration.

4.3 82% of all LAC in 2016/17 were reviewed in line with statutory timescales (90% in 2015/16). This is a decrease on the previous year. The reasons for this dip in performance has been

analysed. There was a marked increase in the number of reviews out of timescale in November 2016 and January 2017. A number of these were due to sickness absence and beavement, which impacted on the reviews of larger sibling groups. A proportion of LAC reviews will always go outside of timescales due to practical considerations, such as sickness of key participants or other crisis on the day. Timeliness of reviews has improved since.

- 4.4 A total of 1615 (1834) Looked after Children (LAC) reviews took place in the relevant period- 92% of which were in timescale.
- 4.5 An IRO is allocated to all LAC within 24 hours of the Safeguarding Service being informed of that child's entry into care. Written information about the IRO and the reviewing service is shared with the child prior to their first review, in the form of child friendly postcard type information booklets. Children can make direct contact with their IRO's mobile phone by calling, by text or by email.
- 4.6 The majority of sibling groups, whether placed together or not, are allocated to the same IRO. This ensures consistency of information exchange, oversight of care planning and decision-making, including sibling contact, and is particularly of benefit when children have different social workers.
- 4.7 The involvement of children in their own reviews is regarded as an essential part of the process. *'A key task for the IRO will be to ensure that the review processes, and particularly review meetings, remain child and family centred'* (IRO Guidance, Adoption and Children Act 2002.) The IRO has an important role in ensuring that the child:
- can make a meaningful contribution to their review;
  - speaks for themselves if they are able and willing to do so; and where this is not possible that their views are conveyed by someone else on their behalf or by an appropriate medium; and
  - has been given the opportunity to make a written contribution to the meeting, particularly if they have chosen not to attend or are unable to attend for some other reason.
- 4.8 The recorded achievement in this area of activity is also a measure of local authority performance, although no longer a national performance indicator. At 31 March 2017 93% of children participated in their reviews. This is a slight increase on 2016 (92%). The service aims to improve this level of participation and has taken steps to improve recording of children's contribution to reviews.

Case example:

Child A is 8 years old and has been in care for 6 years with a care plan of long term fostering. The current IRO has been allocated to Child A for 4 years.

Initially, when first appointed, due to high caseload and distance to the placement, the IRO had been unable to visit prior to the review date.

It had been difficult to obtain her wishes and feelings because of her age and understanding, and as time passed, the IRO became concerned that Child A did not fully understand her position as a child in care.

As the IRO's caseload reduced, she was able to start to visit Child A prior to each review (every six months) and initially spent time building her relationship, playing games together. This has paid off, and Child A is now able to understand the IRO's role and is comfortable talking to her.

During the last visit, it was possible to have a more in depth discussion about her circumstances and Child A was confident enough to express her wishes about contact with her birth family. As she expressed her views so clearly, this has meant that contact plans have been able to progress to meet her needs.

There will always be a proportion of children who do not want to participate or for a variety of reasons, do not make themselves available to the IRO and do not take up other forms of consultation.

Case Example:

CS is a young person aged 13. She has been in care since early 2014. The IRO has been allocated since 2014. Her care plan is long term foster care and she is happy and stable in her long term placement.

CS does not wish to take part in the review process as she associates her review and IRO with unhappy feelings about her mother and what happened to her. CS doesn't want to see her mother or for her to find out where she is. So far, efforts to reassure her have not been successful. She refuses to complete a written consultation document. The IRO has written to CS and given her opportunities to take part in her reviews, suggesting a range of different ways she could contribute, but she has chosen not to respond. On this basis, the IRO has made the decision not to attempt to see CS but will write to her at least once a year to keep the possibility of her participating open.

- 4.9 Children aged 7 and over receive a written invitation to their review meeting along with the consultation document inviting their contribution to the review. The IRO is required to speak with the child alone prior to the first review and before every subsequent review (regulation 36). The requirement for direct contact with the child extends to observation of babies and younger children.
- 4.10 The Independent Reviewing Officers Guidance, Adoption and Children Act 2002, states that '*The IRO has an important role in ensuring that all parties to the review are able to make an effective contribution.*' In order to assist in this aim, age appropriate consultation papers continue to be sent to the child/young person, and carers, prior to a review. The child's consultation paper provides the IRO with a picture of the child's feelings about the various aspects of their care and the services he/she is receiving, and assists the IRO in ensuring the child's voice is heard. The service has been aware that many young people would prefer other means to provide their view, and (Mind of My Own) MOMO has been introduced. IRO's are increasingly speaking with parents outside of the review meeting, if their presence is not in the best interests of the child, to ensure they can represent their reviews both in the meeting and in the record of the meeting.

4.11 1 child was reviewed by an IRO under the Short Break Statutory Guidance (Section 20(4) of the Children Act 1989) in 2016/17 (2 in 2015/16).

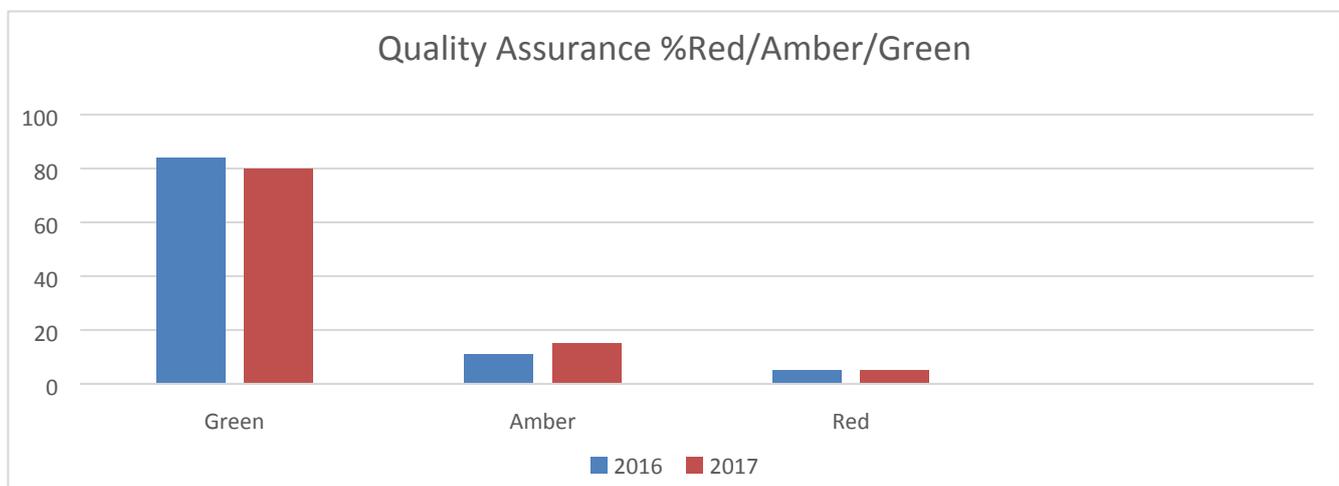
4.12 It should be noted that Ofsted inspection of Wolverhampton in 2017 found that: 'Independent reviewing officers (IROs) are effective in driving improvements in practice and performance, leading to better outcomes for children looked after. A stable and experienced team of IROs has been given additional resources, to ensure that IROs are able to continue to deliver a high-quality service'.

## 5. Conduct of the organisation in relation to the review

- 5.1 The IRO's quality assure each child's case at every review which include the following:
- Quality of preparation for review by social worker, including report preparation, preparation of the child/young person and sign off by manager,
  - Quality of care planning, including how up to date the care plan is,
  - Quality of contribution by the child/ young person and other attendees, to review,

Detailed reports are now available on the findings of this quality assurance work, which means the service is now able to identify trends and patterns of practice and bring them to the attention of Childreb's Social Care. The Safeguarding Manager-Children provides a report to the Children and Young People's Management Team quarterly, highlighting areas of good practice and areas for concern and action.

- 5.2 The RAG(Red/Amber/Green) quality rating system, in respect of the LAC reviews, including the progress of plans, preparation for the meeting and the quality of reports has been used consistently in Wolverhampton since August 2014. Forms are completed on the CareFirst database before the review record is completed. In 2016-17, RAG ratings were issued in relation to 1615 LAC reviews (1813 in 2015-16). The chart below compares ratings compared to 2016. This shows an overall reduction in the quality of work, but the percentage where there are serious concerns about drift and delay has remained static.



- 5.3 A notification is automatically sent to the responsible social workers and Social Work Unit manager, and ensures they are alerted to the status (red, amber or green) of the child's plan. It identifies any concerns the IRO has about a child or their care plan, and should be a clear and valuable part of the quality assurance of the Local Authority's work which is provided by the IRO. There is an expectation that the responsible Children's Social Care manager responds to the IRO in all red and amber cases. Where the IRO feels their concern is not being addressed, they would commence the agreed dispute resolution process.
- 5.4 The IROs complete a Recognition of Excellent or Good Practice notification when there is evidence of high quality practice. 52 notifications were awarded in 2016-17 (15 Excellent, 37 Good). This compares to 42 notifications in 2015-16. The IRO's have recognised the positive impact that recognition of good work has on teams, and therefore actively seeks to improve recognition.

## 6. Conduct of the organisation in relation to Case Management

- 6.1 During 2016 - 17 a number of formal dispute resolution protocols were implemented in Wolverhampton. This protocol commences when the IRO identifies serious concerns about drift or delay in a child's case and is unable to resolve the difficulty with the social worker or their manager. There were 18 informal stage meetings, 2 stage 1 meetings and 1 stage 2 meeting and 1 stage 3 meeting.

### **Case example- Informal stage dispute resolution**

R has been in care since November 2013. The IRO has been allocated to R for nearly 4 years. There had been delay in progressing Review decisions to acquire legal documents and translate newspaper articles detailing circumstances surrounding R's father's murder for her life journey work.

R remained without any form of proof of identity. This has meant she hasn't been able to apply for a passport or for British Citizen. Without identification R has been unable to complete work experience at a preferred work place (pharmacy or medical setting) because DBS cannot be done without identity; this in turn means that R will not have the required work experience to apply for a pharmacy course at university. This has also delayed her application for a National Insurance number.

R wanted to understand the circumstances surrounding her father's death, searches herself via the internet were returning disturbing information. It had been agreed that newspaper articles about this would be translated, but this had not happened.

The IRO met with R before the review. She was angry because failure to implement actions had impacted on her life. The IRO advised R of the right to complain via the formal process and to seek advocacy. She suggested R waits until after the review when we will see if a resolution could be found.

R remained unsatisfied and pursued a formal complaint; the IRO escalated her concerns and had informal dispute resolution discussion with the social work manager.

The IRO is now satisfied that matters are being addressed and there is monthly management oversight, the IRO receives monthly updates and it is clear that progress is now being made. R is satisfied with the action and outcome achieved.

6.2 Reduced caseloads have meant that the IRO's are now more effectively able to monitor cases between reviews. In September 2015 audit found that there was little clear evidence of how the IRO was monitoring and intervening in case outside of the review process. Since that time, a revised recording procedure has been put in place and IRO's regularly record their actions on the child's file. Audit now shows that the IRO 'footprint' on the child's file is well evidenced.

## **7. Core Entitlements for Looked After Children**

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers conducted an inquiry with the Who Cares Trust in 2013/4 which found that looked after children and care leavers did not always know their rights and entitlements. There are ten core entitlements: Five for looked after children and five for care leavers. These are:

- You must have a care plan which says what your needs are now and how they will be met.
- The care plan must include your views and these must be taken into consideration
- No important decisions about you should be taken without a review meeting unless it's an emergency
- Looked after children aged 16-19 should get a £1,200 bursary if staying in full time education.
- When a social worker visits you, they must speak to you alone, unless you refuse, it's not appropriate at the time, or the social worker is not able to.
- You can ask your authority for £2000 for the setting up home allowance.
- Your local authority must give you help with the costs of getting and keeping a job
- You must be given a copy and an explanation of your assessment and Pathway Plan
- If you are in higher education, your local authority must provide you with vacation accommodation.

In 2016/17 a task group has reviewed Wolverhampton's response to the Core Entitlement. The group found that the Local Authority is fully compliant. However, it was not clear that young people would always be aware of their entitlements. As a result, work has been undertaken to update and improve the information provided to children and young people in leaflets and on the Children in Care webpage. The IRO service has produced a flyer to give to children to remind them of their rights and key contact information.

## **8. Consultation with Young People - Feedback from the Children in Care Council**

Most young people were aware of their IRO's name and spoke positively about them. All the young people were familiar with the consultation booklet. Many young people do not like the current booklet and it was agreed that the CICC would help design a new booklet.

Most of the young people were aware that MOMO existed, but most had not used it, and had not been shown how to use it by their IRO or Social Worker. It was agreed that we need to do more to help children become aware of how to use it.

The young people agreed that the three priorities for this year were right and did not suggest any additional ones.

## **9. Review of last year's priority areas for improvement and action**

9.1 Monthly reporting of key information to be provided to the IRO service. It remains a priority for improved and more regular reporting to the Safeguarding service in respect of:

- Timeliness of reviews/conferences
- Participation
- Quality assurance information
- RAG ratings and timeliness of responses

**Completed- RAG rating and quality assurance information is now provided regularly and this is reported quarterly to CYP Management Team**

9.2 Improve proportion of children participating in reviews and develop performance reports in relation to IRO consultation with children. The IRO service will fully support the roll out of the electronic new child consultation tool 'Mind Of My Own' app (MOMO).

**Partially complete- A new IRO Child Consultation document was developed in 2016 and it is possible to receive performance reports from this. Participation has slightly improved from 2015/6, but remains a challenge to improve further. The service has supported the roll out of MOMO, but take up has not been as strong as anticipated and more work is needed in this area.**

9.3 Institute an annual process of seeking and evaluating social worker feedback in relation to IRO performance.

**Completed- survey of social workers in relation to IRO performance was completed, with positive feedback received. This will be an annual process.**

9.4 To institute a task group with the LAC service in relation to the delivery and reporting of the Who Cares Trust Five entitlements for Looked After Children and Five entitlements for Care Leavers.

**Completed- a task group was convened to review delivery of the entitlements. There is evidence that Wolverhampton effectively deliver all the entitlements, though some work has been needed to ensure children and young people are aware. Improvements have been made or are in progress to the information provided to young people via the website and leaflets. A flyer has been produced by the IRO service to remind young people of their entitlements. The content of the flyer was agreed by the Children in Care Council.**

9.5 To explore more ways to help young people have greater awareness of the role of the IRO, such as through social media and Children in Care website.

**Completed, the Children in Care website has been updated and a new flyer has been produced, reminding children and young people about the IRO role.**

## **10. Priorities for 2017-18**

- 10.1 To improve participation of children and young people in their LAC reviews by further promoting MOMO and through the development of other means of participation, in consultation with the Children in Care Council
- 10.2 To improve the timeliness of reviews
- 10.3 To improve parental participation in LAC reviews and improve performance monitoring in this area.

## **11. Conclusion.**

- 11.1 This report has highlighted the work of the IROs in Wolverhampton from April 2016 to March 2017 and is an update on the last annual report.
- 11.2 The service needs to evidence, through the enhanced quality assurance role, RAG rating and dispute resolution that they are an effective service with a culture of intervening and challenging when there is drift and delay or issues effecting children's human rights and/or their safety. This report shows the service has improved in this respect. However, further improvement is needed for the service to be more effective in identifying trends and patterns in practice and therefore more effectively contribute to whole service development.
- 11.3 The next report will cover the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.