



Corporate Parenting Board

11 March 2014

Report Title	Annual report Safeguarding Service Looked After Children 2013- 2014	
Classification	Public	
Cabinet Member with Lead Responsibility	Councillor Val Gibson Children & Young People	
Wards Affected	All	
Accountable Strategic Director	Emma Bennett – Children and Young People	
Originating service	Wellbeing – Safeguarding & Quality	
Accountable officer(s)	Dawn Williams	Head of Service, safeguarding Children & Adults
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Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

Utilise this report to inform strategic planning for Wolverhampton's Looked after Children population.

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.

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 April 1, 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 2013/14 and determines actions to be progressed in 2014/15.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 This report has no direct financial implications.

[NM/24022015/I]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 None – the annual report meets legal requirements

[TC/27022015/X]

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 The annual report for 2013/14 is attached. The Corporate parenting Board has received Annual reports in preceding years.