

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE (FORMAL)	AGENDA ITEM No. 11
25 NOVEMBER 2020	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Corporate Director People and Communities	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Lynne Ayres Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills and the University	
Contact Officer(s):	Marie Saunders – Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Tel. 07730613958

ANNUAL REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO) REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: <i>Alison Bennett – Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance</i>	Deadline date: <i>N/A</i>
<p>1. It is recommended that the members of the Corporate Parenting Committee note the attached report and raise any queries with the lead officers.</p>	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to the Corporate Parenting Committee by The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Department, Peterborough City Council (PCC) in line with annual requirements.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 a) The purpose of this report is to provide statutory review and analysis of the Independent Reviewing Service.
b) The report shall be presented to Members of The Corporate Parenting Committee as requested on 25 November 2020 for their work programme.
- 2.2 This report is for The Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference 2.4.4.2 To receive statutory reports in relation to the adoption, fostering, commissioning, looked after children services and children's homes with a view to recommending any changes.
- 2.3 *How does this report link to the Corporate Priorities?*
This links to all areas of the Children in Care Pledge and Care Leavers Charter.
- 2.4 *How does this report link to the Children in care Pledge?*
As above

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item / Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. **Executive Summary**

4.1 **Introduction**

This Annual Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the IRO Services in Peterborough as required by statutory guidance. This report covers the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

The appointment of IROs is a legal requirement as set out in para 4.3 below

In March 2010, the government issued the 'Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and Statutory

Guidance.' They also published the: 'IRO Handbook, Statutory guidance for IROs and Local Authorities on their functions in relation to case management and review of looked after children.'

4.2 **Purpose of Report**

The IRO Service sits within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit with its core functions consisting of reviewing plans for children in care and monitoring the Local Authority in respect of its corporate parenting and safeguarding responsibilities. Independent Chairs in Peterborough operate a dual role and undertake both the role of the Independent Chair Person for child protection conferences (CPC) and Looked after Children responsibilities. For the purpose of this report we will refer to the Independent Chair as the IRO.

In respect of this report, the IRO Handbook states: 'The manager should be responsible for the production of an annual report for the scrutiny of the Members of the Corporate Parenting Committee. This report should identify good practice but should also highlight issues for further development, including where urgent action is needed.' (IRO Handbook 2010, page 48, paragraph 7.11).

Members of the Formal Corporate Parenting Committee are invited to view, consider and comment on the content of the report.

4.3 **Legal Context**

The appointment of an IRO for every looked after child is a statutory requirement of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the Review of Children's Cases Regulations 2004, the Children and Young Person's Act 2008 and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010.

Every child who is looked after by Peterborough City Council must have a Care Plan, which details the long-term plan for the child's upbringing, and the arrangements made to meet the child's day-to-day needs. All Local Authorities have a statutory duty to regularly review that Care Plan within legislative timescales (Care Planning and Case Review Regulations 2010).

It is the responsibility of Local Authorities to develop Care Plans and provide care that gives children in care positive life experiences and the best short and long-term life opportunities. The Children Act 1989 [amended 2004] and the Care Planning Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010, set out the duty of the Local Authority to appoint an IRO when a child first becomes looked after.

The IRO should ensure that the Local Authority gives due consideration to any views expressed by the child and the IRO has a responsibility to monitor the Local Authority's performance of its functions in relation to the child's case. Statutory guidance and regulation clearly defines circumstances when the Local Authority should consult with the IRO; for example, proposed

change of placement, change of education plan, or serious incident. The actions that the IRO must take if it is felt that the Local Authority is failing to comply with the regulations, statutory guidance and/or is breaching their duty to the child are also clear.

4.4 **Key Highlights of this Report**

- The number of children in care rose slightly from 370 at the end of March 2019 to 373 at the end of March 2020.
- A total of 1046 Child in Care Reviews were held this year
- Timeliness of Reviews continues to be excellent at 99.3%
- The IRO's Escalation process has been further developed to improve analysis of key themes to address with Children's Social Care
- The report concludes with the highlights of the IRO Service for 2019 – 20 and outlines areas for further development for 2020-21.

5. **CONSULTATION**

5.1 Parents, carers and children were consulted as part of the review process.

5.2

Further consultation with Health colleagues in order to agree a plan to move forward in terms of maximising outcomes for children.

6. **ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT**

6.1 To ensure there is a more robust approach to supporting the experiences of children and young people in order to improve their lives.

7. **REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

7.1 Statutory requirement

8. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

8.1 N/A

9. **IMPLICATIONS**

Financial Implications

9.1 None

Legal Implications

9.2 No direct implications, as the report provides factual information about a statutory role.

Equalities Implications

9.3 None

Other Relevant Implications

9.4 Child Care Reviews are held for all children in care.

The purpose of the Child in Care Review is to bring together the child, parents, carers and other professionals to plan for the child and review the Care Plan. This ensures that everything that

needs to be done to enable children to achieve the best outcomes and not drift in the care system is identified and being undertaken.

9.5 **Carbon Impact**

I have considered the Carbon Implications in respect to the Annual Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) report and consider there to be a neutral impact.

10. **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 None

11. **APPENDICES**

11.1 IRO ANNUAL REPORT