

**Decision Maker:** CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES PDS COMMITTEE

**Date:** Tuesday 9 November 2021

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

**Title:** INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER 6-MONTHLY UPDATE

**Contact Officer:** Stuart Hills, Head of Service: Quality Improvement  
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**Chief Officer:** Director of Children's Services

**Ward:** (All Wards);

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1. Reason for report

The annual report of the role and function of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) based in Children's Social Care is a statutory report.

The report gives commentary on the Local Authority's duties in relation to Corporate Parenting and the activities of the IROs in discharging their duties for individual children and young people. These activities include the review of care plans for our children looked after, support and challenge as part of our system of continuous learning and improvement, and other statutory functions in line with the guidance in the IRO Handbook.

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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**The annual report of the activities of the Independent Reviewing Officers is scheduled for note.**

## Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

Summary of Impact: The Independent Reviewing Service experienced a year of increased stability and grew into a service that consistently demonstrated its footprint and impact for children and young people, challenging care planning where this was due and in a more structured and visible way. Performance improved with 94% of reviews now held within timescale. Challenges were faced particularly in finding a lasting solution to the need to use locum Reviewing Officers, particularly to cover two legacy part time posts within the service. The positive work of the service has increasingly been recognised through the Practice Assurance Stocktakes led by our external consultant and the Quality Improvement service has increased its role in this work as well as in the practice reviews that underpin these stocktakes.

- 9.2 There remain challenges for the service to demonstrate good quality relationships with young people which in many ways has been hampered by a relatively new group of Reviewing Officers and the restrictions of the pandemic. This work will include continued strengthening and collaborative working partnerships with all our colleague services to build a culture of appreciation and understanding of the unique role that Reviewing Officers hold within the Children's Social Care Department, and how this can be put to the most effective use.

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## Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable
2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People

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## Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable:
2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
3. Budget head/performance centre: Not Applicable
4. Total current budget for this head: £ Not Applicable
5. Source of funding: Not Applicable

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## Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): Not Applicable
2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Not Applicable

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## Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement
2. Call-in: Not Applicable:

## Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: Not Applicable
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## Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Our cohort of children looked after
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## Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

**3. COMMENTARY**

The commentary is contained within the annual report attached to this item.

**4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN**

The role of the Independent Reviewing Officer and this report demonstrate positive impact for vulnerable children and represents the discharge of statutory duties towards children looked after.

**5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no policy implications in relation to this report.

**6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

**7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications in relation to this report.

**8. PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no procurement implications in relation to this report.

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	[List non-applicable sections here]
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	[Title of document and date]