

Decision Maker: CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES POLICY
DEVELOPMENT AND SCUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: 17th November 2022

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

Title: INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT
2021/22

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

Ward: All Wards

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an account of the activity of the Independent Reviewing Service between April 2021 and March 2022. This report evaluates the effectiveness of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service in ensuring the Local Authority, as a corporate parent, discharges its statutory responsibilities towards looked after children.
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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 The Children, Education and Families PDS Committee is requested to note the progress and actions of the Independent Reviewing Officers in discharging their statutory duties and contributing to the aims of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: The report evidences the impact of the role of the Independent Reviewing Officers in achieving positive outcomes for looked after children.
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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: No Executive decision.
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Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: Not Applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): All Bromley children in care
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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

- 3.1 There continues to be high support and challenge to Reviewing Officers to improve outcomes for children and make a real difference to their lives. The Reviewing Officers have continued to work hard to improve the quality of their tracking between reviews of the progress of children's care plans. The model of writing review minutes to the child or young person is fully embedded and was recognised by Ofsted in their focussed visit during the year.
- 3.2 Our Reviewing Officers have supported the strengthening knowledge in Children's Social Care of the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer, delivering seminar style training about the role.
- 3.3 Group Managers and the Head of Service have continued to extend the reach of the service through membership of the full range of decision-making panels, including Legal Gateway Panel, Placement Panel, Children in Need Panel and the Permanency Panel, as well as a Child Protection Scrutiny Panel run by the service.
- 3.4 The challenge for the service continues to be demonstrating consistently good and excellent work to support and challenge the Division to achieve the best and most timely outcomes possible for children and young people. A particular area of priority focus, underpinned by our quality assurance work, is to enhance the challenge and scrutiny of permanence planning during the early stages of children's journeys when they are received into care.

4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

See section 2 above.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Policy/Financial/Personnel/Legal and Procurement Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	[Title of document and date]