

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

**Date:** 14 March 2023

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

**Title:** INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER 6 MONTH UPDATE REPORT

**Contact Officer:** Stuart Hills, Head of Service Quality Improvement  
Tel: 020 8461 7801 E-mail: stuart.hills@bromley.gov.uk

**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 a six month update of the activity of the Independent Reviewing Service to January 2023. 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.

---

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked 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.
- 

### Corporate Policy

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

### 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: £ N/A
  5. Source of funding: N/A
- 

### Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): N/A
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
- 

### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable: No Executive decision.
- 

### Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: Not Applicable
- 

### Customer Impact

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

### 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 continue to challenge significant gaps in service provision for children but their capacity during the year to date has been impacted by the level of demand both in our child protection system and within our 'new normal' of numbers of children looked after. This impact is recognised in our Quality Assurance work and some key areas have been identified to strengthen the impact of the role through a series of bespoke bitesize learning and development sessions with out Reviewing Officer group. The model of writing review minutes to children and young people is fully embedded and our young people feedback that they are experiencing improved reviews and relationships with their Reviewing Officers. The service continues to extend its reach across the overall practice across the Department with membership of all key decision making panels and our Reviewing Officers will be commencing attendance to strengthen their overview of permanency planning for our children looked after at the earlier stage of their journeys.
- 3.2 A full report presenting the six month update of the activity of the Independent Reviewing Service to January 2023 is attached at Appendix 1.

### 4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

See section 2 above

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