

Corporate Parenting Board

5 March 2014

Report of the Director of Adults, Children and Education

Draft Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officers' Manager

Summary

1. The focus in this draft report relates to the work of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO).

Independent Reviewing Officers have specific responsibilities, including:

- promoting the voice of the child;
- ensuring that plans for looked after children are based on a detailed and informed assessment, are up to date, effective and provide a real and genuine response to each child's needs;
- making sure that the child understands how an advocate could help and his/her entitlement to one;
- offering a safeguard to prevent any 'drift' in care planning for looked after children and the delivery of services to them; and
- and monitoring the activity of the local authority as a corporate parent in ensuring that care plans have given proper consideration and weight to the child's wishes and feelings and that, where appropriate, the child fully understands

Background

2. The Independent Reviewing Officers are qualified Social Workers registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council and subjected to regular Disclosure and Barring Service enhanced checks.

All have relevant and appropriate skills, bringing to the role specialist knowledge and experience including Children's Social Care safeguarding management, youth offending management, fostering and adoption work, work in therapeutic and third sector services, residential services management and performance management and quality assurance work. All have substantial experience of effective direct work with children and young people.

They are independent of City of York Children's Social Care and are not involved in preparation of children's care plans or the management of cases or have any control over resources allocated to a case.

The draft report affords a detailed overview of the service in 2013-14. It outlines 5 key priorities in 2014-15.

1. To deliver the enhance IRO role for children and young people
2. To change business processes to better support the IRO role
3. To increase the participation of children and young people in their reviews
4. To ensure appropriate independent challenge to the City of York as corporate parent to improve outcomes for children and young people
5. To see more children and young people

Consultation

3. The work of each of the officers reporting to the board is undertaken with consultation with service users e.g. looked after children and care leavers foster carers, adopters,. Feedback from Show Me That I Matter and I Matter Too (representatives of all looked after children) York Area Foster Carers Association, is regularly sought and incorporated into the service development.

Options

4. There are no options for decision, as the information provided is intended to progress information sharing with the Board about the experience of looked after children.

Council Plan

5. The Corporate Parenting Board will be ensuring that the work of partners for looked after children contributes to the aims of
 - The Children and Young People's Plan
 - Building strong communities
 - Protecting vulnerable people

Through the positive outcomes for looked after children , the aim is for them to be able to benefit from and contribute to

- Get York moving
- Create jobs and grow the economy
- Protect the environment

Implications

- **Financial**
Not applicable
- **Human Resources**
Not applicable
- **Equalities**
Not applicable
- **Legal**
Not applicable
- **Crime and Disorder**
Not applicable
- **Information Technology**
Not applicable
- **Property**
Not applicable

- **Other**

Not applicable

Risk Management

8. Not applicable

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board notes the Manager's draft report relating to the work of the Independent Reviewing Officers, with particular reference to the priorities for 2014-15

Reason

To ensure that the independent reviewing officers are undertaking work which offers appropriate challenges to the care provision for looked after children and young people and to improve it in accordance with the Looked After Children's Strategy 2012-15.

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Report Approved

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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report