

Summary Sheet

Report Title

IRO Annual Report 2018.

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jon Stonehouse – Director – CYPS.

Report Author(s)

Tracey Arnold, Service Manager IRO and Advocacy Service, CYPS.

Ward(s) Affected

All

List of Appendices Included

IRO Annual Report – 2018.

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

DLT Leadership team and Corporate Parenting Panel.

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

IRO Annual Report - April 2017 – March 2018

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 DLT and Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to consider the content of the report that offers an overview of the function from 2017-2018, and offer feedback around the key messages and action plan to confirm if these are agreed.

2. Background

- 2.1 This Annual Independent Reviewing Officer's (IRO) Report reflects the compliance, progress and contribution the IRO service has made to the outcomes for Looked after Children in Rotherham and against required statutory legislation as set out in the IRO Handbook and Care Planning Regulations (amended 2015). This includes quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the IRO services for the period of April 1st 2017 to 31st March 2018.

The cyclical nature of a good learning organisation, the journey from compliance to quality and the health of a locality is very much embedded within the functioning of the IRO service. We have seen emerging themes in terms of stability in care planning and management grip and pace. There are much more embedded working relationships between service managers and this is changing cultures within the organisation, which translates to better communication at all tiers, better resolution of issues and swifter and ultimately better outcomes for our children. As service manager for the IRO service over the past seven months, I want to work towards a situation where our IRO's are seen as a critical friend of the organisation. We recognise that we are at the beginning of this journey and the following points are very much integral to that process.

3. Key Issues

The most important key issue for the IRO service is ensuring that it becomes an integral part of the culture within Children's services within Rotherham, as Guardians are an integral part of the Court process.

The service is developing a more sophisticated suit of data to ensure that, together with monthly performance meetings, the IRO service has a footprint in our children's lives which are linked to better outcomes. This will go some way to addressing the question, how effective is the IRO service in its critical friend function.

Children and Young people chairing or co participating in their own reviews is a fundamental development within the service. This will help shift the focus culturally from the review being seen as an administrative task, to a restorative conversation with the young person about their plans. This will link into the

development of more focused care plans and the development of child friendly plans which are formatted and focused on the child.

In order to ensure grip and pace within the IRO service, the escalation and challenge process is being reviewed. This will lie within Liquid Logic and will ensure timely responses from managers are performance managed. This ties into the development of mid-way reviews to purely focus on the progression of the child's plan.

A mature learning organisation knows itself well and a good independent IRO service is integral to this cycle. It is important that the introduction of link teams, having a voice at the AP forum, attendance at residential panel, PLOP and MST FIT, is embedded and the knowledge that comes from the IRO service about the health of the organisation is developed into a threat that runs from senior managers to social workers.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1 DLT is asked to consider the contents of the report which includes the changes and progression of the IRO Service over the last 12 months. DLT are also requested to give thought to the action plan included within the report.

5. Consultation

5.1 N/A

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 The action plan identifies a number of system and performance data changes which need to be embedded and developed over the next 6 months. I would expect that all the actions identified are addressed and completed by the 1st July 2019.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 N/A

8. Legal Implications

8.1 Rebecca Pyle, Team Manager, has had sight of the report.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 Amy Leach has had sight of the report and has no comments regarding the contents

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 The report offers a clear focus around RMBC's statutory duty to provide an IRO function as determined by The IRO Handbook and Care Planning Regulations.

11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 All IRO's are conscious and take into account Human Rights implications in all their work with young people, children and their carers and parents.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 Within the attached report

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Within the attached report

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Rebecca Wall, HoS Safeguarding, Quality and Learning.
Tracey Arnold, Service Manager IRO and Advocacy Service.

Approvals Obtained from:-

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	Neil Hardwick,	Approved on 4 th December 2018.
Assistant Director of Legal Services	Sent to Legal team manager on the 4 th December 2018.	
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)	N/A	
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	Amy Leach	Approved on 4 th December 2018.

Report Author: Tracey Arnold, Service Manager IRO and Advocacy Service.

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