

Corporate Parenting Panel – 20th July 2015

Title of paper:	Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report 2014 – 15	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Helen Blackman, Director – Children's Social Care, Vulnerable Children and Families. Helen.Blackman@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	Wards affected: ALL
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Other colleagues who have provided input:	Eve Hailwood – Principal Manager, Independent Reviewing Service evelyn.hailwood@nottinghamcity.gov.uk 0115 8764148	
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	6 th July 2015	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
Cutting unemployment by a quarter		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City		<input type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down		<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
<p>The report summarises the work of the Independent Reviewing Service during the course of 2014 – 15. The service has three core functions, two of which directly relate to the Corporate Parenting function of the City Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight of the implementation of the care plan for looked after children • Annual reviews of Foster Carers. 		
Recommendation(s):		
1	That Corporate Parenting Board members note the activity of Independent Reviewing Service over the 2014 – 15 financial year.	

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 The report from the Independent Reviewing Officer Service provides an important insight into the experience of highly vulnerable children and young people. It is also reported to the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board and will inform the Boards Annual report, which is a published document.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

2.1 The report summarises the work of the Independent Reviewing Service during the course of 2014/15. The service has three core functions

- Children looked after – The primary focus of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) with Children Looked After is to critically examine and quality assure the Care Planning and interventions of the Local Authority in respect of each child or young person looked after. Central to this is ensuring that the child's wishes and feelings are given full consideration in planning and enabling by their role, improved outcomes. Work in this area is based on national guidance contained within the IRO Handbook.
- Child Protection – In this context IRO's chair Child Protection Conferences, which make decisions about whether children should or should not be subject to a protection plan. IROs also chair meetings which look at specific risks to children and young people, e.g. Child Sexual exploitation.
- Fostering – The role of the Independent Reviewing Officer (fostering) is to ensure that the Departments foster carers provide suitable care to Looked After Children and to a standard that meets or exceeds the Departments legal responsibilities.

2.2 The report provides an update on the key achievements during the course of the year. This includes

- Increased capacity in the service, albeit not all of which is permanently established
- Work with the Business Support Service to improve the administration of the unit
- Further work to embed Signs of Safety and the production of reports in a timely fashion
- Increase the use of monitoring of the IRO caseload to ensure a balanced distribution of the work]
- The introduction of a system to provide an overview of outcomes for looked after children

2.3 The report also identifies issues which require further attention and sets these out in an action plan (see appendix 1). Key issues in this plan are:

- Achieving compliance with the IRO handbook.
- Greater participation of children and young people in decision making and planning
- Improve performance evaluation and oversight to contribute to service improvement
- Ensure outcome focussed planning leading to timely interventions from children and young people.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 None

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

4.1 None

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

5.1 None

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Has the equality impact been assessed?

Not needed (report does not contain proposals or financial decisions)

No

X

Yes – Equality Impact Assessment attached

Due regard should be given to the equality implications identified in the EIA.

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

7.1 None

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

8.1 None