

# Report of the Assistant Director (Children's Social Care) to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2017

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**Subject:****Report for the Independent Reviewing Officer Service April 2015 –  
December 2016****Summary statement:**

This report examines the work of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) who review the care plans for all Looked After Children in Bradford. The report presents performance data and demonstrates the robust oversight of care planning in Bradford MDC.

The production of an IRO annual report is required under the regulations contained in the IRO Handbook. The report should provide evidence as to the effectiveness of the reviewing service, examine the quality of the reviews offered to young people and set targets for the development of the service.

The report also includes Bradford's IRO Quality Assurance findings for the period 17<sup>th</sup> September 2015 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016. The findings cover the IROs assessment of the delivery of children's services to Bradford's Looked after children through the completion of audits, challenges made by Bradford's IROs for drift and delay and acknowledgements of good social work practice.

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## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1** This report examines the work of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) who review the care plans for all Looked after Children in Bradford. The report presents performance data and demonstrates the robust oversight of care planning in Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** Following the case of *Re S* in 2002 the House of Lords raised concerns that Services to Children could be in breach of the children's and parents' rights under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act. The Government responded with Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 which amended the Children Act 1989 and established the role of Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).
- 2.2** This role was further strengthened by the IRO Handbook, regulations and statutory guidance for IROs that came into force in 2011, to improve care planning and strengthen the role of the IRO. The responsibility of the IRO has changed from the management of the review process to a wider overview of the individual child's care including regular monitoring and follow-up between looked after child reviews. This has increased the importance of mid review checks and processes. The IRO has a key role in relation to the improvement of Care Planning for Children Looked After and for challenging drift.

## **3. REPORT ISSUES**

None.

## **4. OPTIONS**

None.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

None.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 That the Corporate Parenting Panel notes:**

- (i) The work undertaken by the IRO service and its ongoing role in providing robust and challenging reviews of all Care Plans.
- (ii) The improvements over the past 12 months in children's participation, the continued improvement in timeliness and the successful introduction of a quality assurance process for the service.
- (iii) The contribution and value added by the IRO service through reporting findings of the Quality Assurance to the Strategic Leadership Management group.
- (iv) The continuation of good working collaboration with our social work teams and partner agencies to achieve best outcomes for Bradford's Looked After Children.
- (v) The production of the IRO Annual Report to be synchronised with the submission date for the Bradford Corporate Parenting Panel.
- (vi) That the Panel endorses the work plan for year 2016/17.

**7. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None.

**8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

None.

**9. APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1** – Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Team 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 – December 2016.