

APPENDIX 1

IRO Annual Report April 2015 - December 2016

Table Of Contents

1. The Purpose of the Report
2. Profile of the Independent Reviewing officer.
3. Statistical Information Regarding Looked after Children (LAC) and the IRO Service
4. Timeliness of LAC Reviews
5. LAC Age 4+ Participation in Reviews 2015 - 2016
6. Viewpoint consultation & Children's Feedback.
7. IRO Quality Assurance and Making a Difference
8. Analysis of QA Forms completed from 17th September 2015 to 30th September 2016.
9. The Bradford Young People's App
10. Training & Development
11. IRO Service Work Plan 2016-17

1. The Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report sets out the quality of corporate parenting and care for looked after children within Bradford MDC.

1.2 The report demonstrates;

- Areas of good practice and areas for improvement highlighted by Bradford IRO's
- Emerging themes and trends from our new Quality Assurance process.
- Outline service development priorities for the coming 12 months
- Evidence to show that IRO's have carried out their statutory functions to a good standard.
- IRO's have provided effective monitoring of the performance of the Local Authority as a corporate parent.
- IRO's have used a balance of positive as well as challenging feedback to the Local Authority as a means to support continuous learning and improvement.
- IRO's have ensured that child's wishes and feelings are included and given full consideration in their assessment, plan and review process.

2. Profile of the IRO Service in Bradford

2.1 Currently Bradford employs 13 IRO's, 9 fulltime and 4 part-time (11.2 FTE). The teams are all experienced practitioners with 5 years post qualification experience as required by the IRO Handbook.

2.2 Traditionally the IRO team has been a relatively stable entity undergoing fewer personnel changes than the social work teams however over the past year the team has coped with staff reducing their hours and the loss of an experienced worker and former practice manager who retired in March this year. We undertook recruitment in February & December which has identified three successful appointable applicants. Two have already started and the third will hopefully be with us shortly into the New Year. It should be noted that IRO's need 5 years post qualification experience which makes finding suitable candidates more challenging.

2.3 The IRO Manager has now been in post since August 2014 and has had a positive impact on the service ensuring effective supervision of staff and that IRO's are positively supported in their role.

2.4 Changes to the legal framework as part of the Family Justice Review have meant an enhanced role for IRO's requiring them to:-

- Monitor the child's case rather than simply monitoring progress in relation to reviews.
 - Oversee effective liaison with SW team and other key professionals, including CAFCASS.
 - Ensure they have all relevant information in order to effectively review a child's case.
 - Speak to the child or young person, where appropriate, and obtain their views.
 - LAC care plan must include a plan for permanence from the second review onwards.
- 2.5 The IRO also has a duty to monitor the local authority's overall performance as a Corporate Parent and to bring any areas of poor practice in the care and planning for looked after children to the attention of senior managers. Measuring the impact of service delivery is essential to achieving improved outcomes for children and their families and reducing the impact of disadvantage for vulnerable children and young people.
- 2.6 IRO's in Bradford are solely focused on reviewing plans for Looked after Children; they do not undertake additional tasks for example chairing child protection conferences or foster care reviews as is the case in some other authorities. This is a policy decision to ensure the team develops a shared expertise in reviewing and means that there are no unnecessary diversions from this task.
- 2.7 The IRO team is part of the Safeguarding and Review Service and it is accountable to the new Assistant Director of Performance and Commissioning, Jenny Cryer.

3. Statistical information regarding Looked after Children (LAC) and the IRO Service

3.1 Looked after Children in Bradford

3.2 BRADFORD LAC 2015-2016 DATA

- 3.3 NB figures have been presented giving the year end totals for financial year 1st April 2015-31st March 2016 and then figures for 1st April 2016 to 1st December 2016 for an updated comparison.

3.4 BRAFORD LAC 2015-16 DATA

AGE AT 31 MARCH 2016			
BOYS		GIRLS	
Under 1:	28	Under 1:	19
1 - 4:	60	1 - 4:	58
5 - 9:	88	5 - 9:	90
10 - 15:	185	10 - 15:	174
16 - 17:	70	16 - 17:	76
18 & over and placed in a community home:	0	18 & over and placed in a community home:	0
TOTAL BOYS:	431	TOTAL GIRLS:	417
TOTAL ALL CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AT 31 MARCH:	848		

3.5 There had been a slight reduction (3.4%) in our LAC population from 878 to 848, a reduction of 30 from the previous year 2014/15. There has also been a slight increase in the most prevalent age range 10-15. The number of boys has decreased from 460 to 431 and girls relatively stable from 418 down to 417. Whilst boys still predominate the gap has narrowed significantly over the year.

3.6 We can report that 19.8% of children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31st March 2016 were under 1 years of age, 19.3% were between 1 - 5 , 20.9% 5-9, 32.7% 10-15 and 7.5% were 16+ age range. This shows that the majority of new children becoming looked over the year are in the 10-15 age bracket.

3.7 BRAFORD LAC 01/4/16 to 01/12/16 DATA

AGE AT 1st December 2016			
BOYS		GIRLS	
Under 1:	36	Under 1:	19
1 - 4:	68	1 - 4:	79
5 - 9:	97	5 - 9:	94
10 - 15:	196	10 - 15:	172
16 - 17:	88	16 - 17:	75
18 & over and placed in a community home:	1	18 & over and placed in a community home:	3
TOTAL BOYS:	486	TOTAL GIRLS:	442
TOTAL ALL CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AT 1st December 2016:	928		

3.8 Since April this year we have seen a 9.4% increase in the number of children looked after going from 848 to 928. We have 55 more boys and 25 more girls in the looked after population. Last year the total number of children looked after went down from 878 in April 2015 to 870 in December 2015.

3.9 In an internal audit of children entering and exiting the system undertaken in October earlier this year, it was found that there has been a significant decrease in children ceasing to become looked after in comparison to the previous year over the same time period. Between April and September 2016 there is a 43% reduction, where only 107 children ceased to be looked after compared with 188 in 2015.

3.10 There has been 31% increase in Interim Care Order (ICO) applications for planned episodes of care and an 11% reduction in emergency episodes of care via Emergency Protection Order (EPO) and Police Protection Order (PPO). This is due to increased thresholds to prove and evidence imminent risk. There has been a 16% increase in

voluntary care arrangements with Section 20 accommodations.

3.11 There has been a 62% reduction in children being placed for adoption and a 26% reduction in Special Guardianship Orders (SGO's) during this same period.

3.12 There has been a 22%% increase in 0-4 age range for becoming looked after.

<u>3.13 ETHNIC ORIGIN OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AT 31 MARCH 2016</u>	
White	582
Mixed	134
Asian or Asian British	89
Black or Black British	18
Other ethnic groups	25
TOTAL :	848

3.14 The dominant ethnicity of our CLA is still white but this reduced from 611 in March 2015 to 582.

<u>3.15 ETHNIC ORIGIN OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AT 1st December 2016</u>	
White	646
Mixed	146
Asian or Asian British	83
Black or Black British	20
Other ethnic groups	13
Information not yet obtained	20
TOTAL :	928

3.16 There has been a 61% (which represents approximately 30 children) increase in White other, Eastern European, Unknown & Roma Gypsy ethnicity this year for our children looked after population.

<u>3.17 LEGAL STATUS AT 31 MARCH 2016</u>		
Care Orders:	Interim	113
	Full	572
Voluntary agreements under S.20 (single period of accommodation)		109
Freed for adoption		1
Placement Order		51
On remand, committed for trial, or detained		2
Emergency orders or police protection		0
TOTAL:		848

3.18 In comparison to 2015 ICO's reduced from 124 to 113 and there was a jump in full care orders status from 529 to 572. There had been some decrease in Section 20 and Placement Orders. Section 20 children went down from 127 to 109. Recently concern has been expressed by the Family Court regarding the inappropriate use of Section 20 by Local Authorities. The IRO service has been involved in a challenge panel looking at Bradford's performance in this respect and will be reviewing all children with this legal status to ensure that it is appropriate. Children on placement orders with plans for adoption decreased from 92 to 51. Over the year 70 adoption orders have been made which were approximately 20 less than the previous year. The reduction in placements orders is in line with the national picture that adoptions have significantly reduced as the final care plan. The preferred permanency plan being encouraged by the courts now is Special Guardianship Order (SGO).

3.19 LEGAL STATUS AT 1st December 2016

Care Orders:	Interim	147
	Full	611
Voluntary agreements under Section 20 (single period of accommodation)		101
Section 20 - Series of Placements >75 nights per year or multiple providers		12
Placement Order		49
On remand, committed for trial, or detained		1
Emergency orders or police protection		6
TOTAL:		928

3.20 Since April 2016 there has been a 30% increase in ICO and a 6% increase in full care orders status. Children subject to placement order and voluntary S20 accommodation have continued to fall.

3.21 PLACEMENT AT 31st MARCH 2016

Foster placement with relative or friend:	Inside local authority	167
	Outside local authority	34
Placement with other foster carer:	Inside local authority	331
	Outside local authority	67
Secure unit		2
Homes and hostels		102
Hostels and other supportive residential placements		1

Residential schools	1
Other residential settings	8
Placed for adoption (including placed with former foster carer)	19
Placed with own parents	89
In lodgings, residential employment or living independently	27
Other placement	0
TOTAL :	848

3.22 In house and purchased foster family placements are still the most popular placements increasing from 375 in 2015 to 398. Second behind foster families are connected persons placements with Friends and Families which have gone down from 218 to 201. Bradford MDC will have achieved SGO as the permanency plan for the majority of these 17 carers. Home and hostel placements are stable from 2015 - 2016. Placements with parents have increased slightly from 76 in 2015 to 89 in 2016.

3.23 PLACEMENT AT 01st December 2016

Foster placement with relative or friend:	Inside local authority	194
	Outside local authority	41
Placement with other foster carer:	Inside local authority	353
	Outside local authority	71
Secure unit		3

Respite Unit	9
Residential Unit	89
Residential schools	8
Placed for adoption (including placed with former foster carer)	20
Placed with own parents	107
In lodgings, residential employment or living independently	28
Other placement	5
TOTAL :	928

3.24 Since April we have seen the foster placement further increase from 398 to 424. Friends and Family placements have gone up from 201 to 235. We have seen a 20% increase in placement with parents since April. Bradford's case proceedings key worker informs that volumes of proceedings have increased so we will also see a proportionate rise in PWP. Bradford has recently had several large sibling groups subject to PWP. There has been a steady rise in section 38.6 (assessment at home) orders which even though are not PWP our ICS system does not differentiate and record them as such.

<u>3.25 CATEGORY OF NEED FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AT 31 MARCH 2016</u>	
Abuse or neglect	733
Disability	15
Parental illness or disability	6
Family in acute stress	36
Family dysfunction	45

Socially unacceptable behaviour	3
Low income	0
Absent parenting	10
TOTAL :	848

3.26 CATEGORY OF NEED FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AT 01 December 2016

Abuse or neglect	811
Disability	14
Parental illness or disability	6
Family in acute stress	29
Family dysfunction	48
Socially unacceptable behaviour	3
	1
Absent parenting	16
TOTAL :	928

3.27 Abuse and Neglect is still the main category of need and has remained constant (87%of the LAC population).

3.28 CARE STARTED / CEASED AT 31 MARCH 2016

Total Number of Children who have Started to be Looked After	302
Total Number of Children who have Ceased Care	331

3.29 CARE STARTED / CEASED AT 1st DECEMBER 2016

Total Number of Children who have Started to be Looked After	249
Total Number of Children who have Ceased Care	168

3.30 There was a slight increase of 8 new children becoming looked after, from 294 in 2015 to 302 in 2016. It once again evidenced consistency in our thresholds and care planning. The total number who ceased to be looked after over the year increased from 301 in 2015 to 331 in 2016, (10% increase). This explains the reduction in the overall LAC population on 31st March 2016 were the total was 848.

Since then we have a completely different picture. There is a big gap of 81 children between the number of new children becoming looked after and the total number who have ceased. This is reflected in the increase in our CLA population in that there is consistency of children coming into the care system but a real decrease in the speed they are leaving.

3.31 The profile in terms of children leaving care as at 31/03/2016. There were 331 children who left care in the year. Of these:-

Percentage	Outcome
20.2%	Adopted
61.3%	Returned to live with parents/relatives
0.6%	Death
0.3%	Care taken over by other LA
0.3%	Res Order
8.1%	SGO to former foster carer
3.6%	SGO not to former foster carer
1.1%	Transferred to care of adult services
2.8%	Sentenced to custody
1.7%	other

3.32 The above table shows the percentage breakdown of the outcomes of the children who ceased to be looked after during year ending 31st March 2016. 61.3% of the children returning home to parents or family show a continued commitment to keeping children within their family.

3.33 The profile in terms of children leaving care as at 01/12/2016. There were 168 children who left care in the year. Of these:-

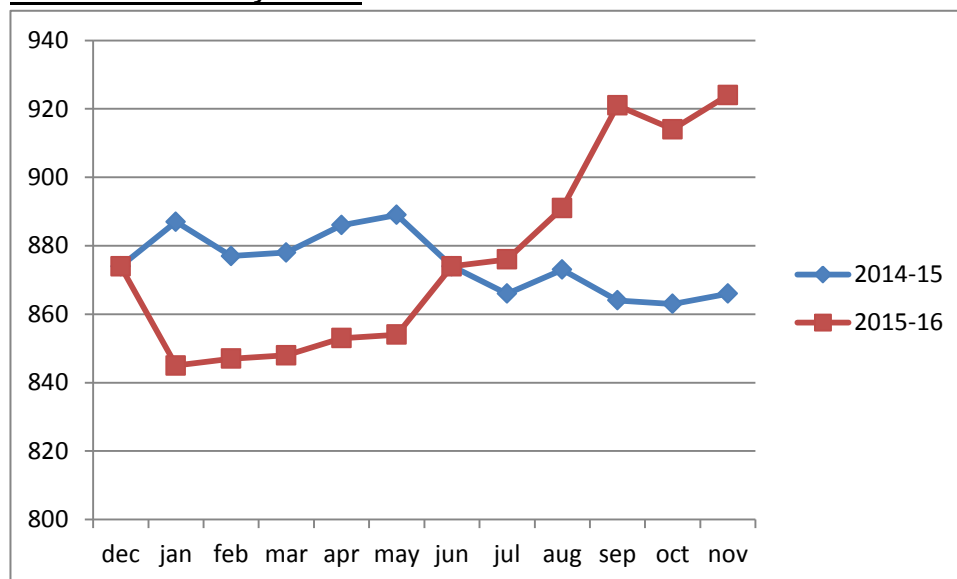
Outcome	Number YP	%
Accommodation ceased - care taken over by another authority	2	1
Adoption, application unopposed	17	10
Adoption, consent dispensed with	5	3
Ceased for any other reason	10	6
Independent living with formal support	3	2
Planned return home to parents or other person with PR	49	29
Reached age of 18,19 or 21	35	21
Residence Order / Child Arrangements Order	1	1
Returned to live with parent or relative - with no PR	4	2
Sentenced to custody	4	2
Special Guardianship Order not to former foster carers	1	1
Special Guardianship Order to former foster carers	23	14
Supervision Order	10	6
Transferred to care of adult services	1	1
Unplanned return home to parents or other person with PR	3	2

3.34 Planned return home is still the highest outcome for children leaving care however the percentage has fallen since April 2016. 21% of the 168 turned 18. There has been a slight increase in the percentage of SGO's from 12% on 31st March 2016 to 15% since then.

3.35 CLA Totals by Month

As At Date	LAC Total	IRO Caseload 78-80	As At Date	LAC Total	IRO caseload 75-82
30-Nov-15	866	77	30-Nov-16	924	82
31-Oct-15	863	77	31-Oct-16	914	81
30-Sep-15	864	77	30-Sep-16	921	82
31-Aug-15	873	77	31-Aug-16	891	79
31-Jul-15	866	77	31-Jul-16	876	78
30-Jun-15	874	78	30-Jun-16	874	75
31-May-15	889	79	31-May-16	854	76
30-Apr-15	886	79	30-Apr-16	853	76
31-Mar-15	878	78	31-Mar-16	848	75
28-Feb-15	877	78	28-Feb-16	847	75
31-Jan-15	887	79	31-Jan-16	845	75
31-Dec-14	874	78	31-Dec-15	874	78
30-Nov-14	896	80	30-Nov-15	866	76

3.36 CLA Totals by Month



- 3.37** The above table and line graph show a clear difference in the peaks and troughs of total CLA population over the 2 periods. In December 2014 & December 2015 we had the same number of CLA, with numbers rising at the beginning of 2015 and numbers falling in early 2016. The number of looked after were again the same in Jun 2015/Jun 16. In the period since the number of looked after children has risen from 848 to 924.
- 3.38** There was also a 5% increase in new children becoming looked after from April 2016 to September 2016 in comparison to the same period in 2015. More significantly there has been a 43% reduction in children ceasing to become looked after over the same period. We have also seen an increase in Interim Care Order (ICO) applications since April this year and this is in line with the national picture. The Family court forecasts a potential 20% increase in proceedings applications over the next 3 years. Factors such as welfare reform, social deprivation, new communities and less adoptions have all been identified as a cause of this trend.
- 3.39** In 2014-2015 the case load range for IRO's was 78-80 per F/T IRO over the year and from 2015-2016 75-82. The recent increase in CLA population has had an impact on IRO case loads which in turn effects their ability to meet all the requirements of the role.

4 Timeliness of LAC Reviews

- 4.1 Performance at 12th December 2016 was 98%.**
- 4.2** There were 2427 LAC Review meetings held in 2015-16 in respect of 1044 children. 98% of these LAC Review meetings were held within timescales.
- 4.3** The IRO service is proud to report improved performance of **98% of LAC Review meetings** being held within statutory timescales compared to an overall 97% in 2014-15. Our aspirational target was increased from 95% to 98% earlier this year and IRO's have managed to achieve this alongside a significant increase in the CLA population and several staff changes. IRO's have shown resolve and good teamwork in covering reviews for one another.

4.4 The timeliness of LAC reviews is a key measure for the effectiveness of the IRO service and is an indicator that is scrutinised in any Ofsted inspection. IRO's have worked hard to ensure that meetings are not delayed and have raised appropriate challenge when this is threatened.

5. Participation & Voice of the Child in Reviews (LAC age 4+) 2015 - 2016

Participation code	Total
PN1 Child attended & spoke for self	820
PN2 Child attended - advocate spoke	18
PN3 Child attended - gave views non verbally	9
PN4 Child attended without contributing	12
PN5 Child not attended, advocate briefed with views	370
PN6 Child not attended, views sent	608
PN7 Child not attended & did not send views	109
Grand Total	1946

Participation Rate (PN1 to PN6)	94.3%
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5.1 We are very pleased to report an increase in the aggregate participation performance for our LAC population, from 89.6 % in 2014 -15 to **94.3%**. On the 12th December 2016 participation has continued to be very good at 93%.

5.2 There has been a significant decrease in PN7 code, (no participation) from 196 to 109. We have addressed this area and work was undertaken at the IRO Development Day in Oct 2015 and further in a recent team meeting specifically looking at the PN codes. There was agreement between IRO's and a clear aim to continue to drive high levels of child participation and that any further PN7 entries need to be flagged up so lessons can be learnt for subsequent reviews. Not all children wish to attend their review meetings but their views should be communicated to the reviews and taken into consideration.

- 5.3** PN1 child attended and spoke for themselves is still the leading category. We have had a slight drop from 866 in 2015 to 820 in 2016. The percentage of children attending their reviews will still be the same given the reduction in the total number of looked after children at 31st March 2016.
- 5.4** We have an increase in PN6 from 447 to 608. This is where the child, young person did not attend in person but sent there views via another person or did complete the viewpoint questionnaire.
- 5.5** There has been some positive feedback from Bradfords looked after children to report. Children thanked IRO Dave Robinson for being there IRO as he now leaves the role. IRO Julie Harwood received a golden star ticket from a young girl for offering reassurance and engaging in a guess the password game. Two Unaccompanied Asylum seeking siblings prepared a surprise lunch for professionals to enjoy after the review as appreciation and thanks for their involvement.
- 5.6** We have also seen some innovation in how children participate. A foster carer had prepared a short video with the child to play at their recent review meeting.
- 5.7** A child's feedback following a recent observed review was that they did indeed know who their IRO is and further added, "he is always listening and taking notes, really nice and seems to know what he's doing. " The child felt able to say what they wanted at the meeting and the IRO helped other people to also listen. There was nothing they would want to change about their meeting.
- 5.8** We had some really good positive feedback from two siblings regarding their time in care and their relationship with the foster cares which was shared at our recent Development Day in November 2016. The girls said in a letter, "Our foster carers gave us everything we asked for and treated us just like their own daughters. We never felt shy to ask for anything as it felt like we were living in our own house. I believe that if we were not put in care we would not have the stable life we have now. They have always been there to comfort us in difficult times. We didn't feel left out and always felt part of the family. "

6 Viewpoint consultation and Children's Feedback

6.1 From 17th September to 31th September 2016 the IRO's completed 464 Quality Assurance audits which included recording of viewpoint performance. The IRO's reported that 106 viewpoint questionnaires were completed and on 234 occasions the child or young person declined to use viewpoint or it was not required due to the child's age or a complex health condition. If we subtract these 234 from the total number of audits we get view point performance of 106 / 230 audits = 46 % for the period 17th September 2015 to 30th September 2016. The actual reporting of viewpoint in IRO QA didn't start until around mid-December 2015 so we do anticipate the performance to improve with more audits this year.

6.2 Completed View point Questionnaires

Questionnaire Age range	Questionnaires Completed 2014-15	Questionnaires Completed 2015-16	01.04.16-30.11.16
LAC Review 4 to 6	75	77	33
LAC Review 7 to 9	141	133	51
LAC Review 10 to15	330	214	153
LAC Review 16 plus	49	36	32
Total	595	460	270

6.3 We have seen a 20% reduction in the number of questionnaires completed this year. This has most likely been caused by the cessation of reminder letters and recently foster carers, children/young people reporting problems with access to the web site when attempting to complete questionnaires. Viewpoint desk supports have been made aware.

6.4 The Viewpoint User group still meet every 3 months to address the reduction in completed questionnaires and drive better completion rates. Viewpoint has been introduced into the new foster carers' induction training. There is a Viewpoint link in the YP App. Viewpoint data on staying safe, being healthy etc. is now in Bradford's efficiency reports. Team managers have also been encouraged to add Viewpoint checks within their supervision with social workers.

- 6.5 IRO's use the completed online Viewpoint questionnaires to ascertain the views and feelings of the child / young person with regards to their care planning and reviews.
- 6.6 Over the year when asked the question whether they felt safe in placement our 4 - 6 age range children reported that 88% of the time they do feel safe and the other 12% reported sometimes. We had a similar response from our 10- 15 age range where again 88% reported feeling safe, 6% saying quite often, 4% not often and 2% of the questionnaires completed reported they did not feel safe. The IRO will address this before and during the review to see if there is any action to ensure the child feel safe.
- 6.7 75% of the completed questionnaires for our 10 - 15 age range report that they are aware of their right to make a complaint if they are unhappy about something. 14% requested to be informed in their review of who they can speak to. IRO's will ensure that any child / young person who is unsure of their right to complain is empowered with this information and access to Bradford's complaints procedure. A link to the complaints service is also in our new young people's smart phone app called YP app.
- 6.8 Other areas covered in our Viewpoint questionnaire include questions on entitlements, financial assistance, etc. This is more relevant for our 16+young people, however they generally choose to attend their meetings and give direct verbal feedback as opposed to completing their Viewpoint.
- 6.9 IRO's ensure that they present the views and wishes of the child / young person as a stand alone item in all their review minutes. See the following example of the child's views being presented in recent review minutes.

6.10 Young Persons Views:

“YP did not wish to fill in Viewpoint. I visited YP and her sister. YP is well and explained she is enjoying her 2 year course at College which she started this year. She does not want her LAC review to be at College as she does not wish for others to see she is looked after. YP confirmed she has everything she needs for college including a lap top. I confirmed to her that we would hold her review at A and she is fine with this. She is happy with her placement and there was nothing she wished to add. She is looking forward to going on holiday abroad in the summer. “

6.11 This is a very detailed presentation of the child's wishes, feelings and participation in her review process.

6.12 All our minutes have additional information at the end on how to contact the IRO, an independent advocacy service and our complaints unit.

7 IRO Quality Assurance and Making a Difference

- 7.1 We are pleased to report that our (in house developed) IRO Quality Assurance process has been live in our LCS Liquid Logic database since 17th September 2015.
- 7.2 We now have a QA system integrated into our LCS database where IRO's can address and report on Challenge, Good Social Work practice and undertake a Quality Assurance Audit overview in relation to the organisation, conduct and recording of reviews.
- 7.3 Each of the 464 QA audits completed from 17th September 2015 to 30th September 2016 looked at the following 5 category areas in the review process; Pre Meeting Reports, Education, Care plan, Participation and Health.
- 7.4 IRO's report that over 90% of the time we received good pre meeting reports for our reviews. 296 of the 400 (74%) personal education plans completed were audited as being up to date and of a good standard. That over 90% of the care/pathway plans audited was of good quality. 85% of the audits found evidence of the voice of the child in the assessment, plan and review process. On 86% of the cases audited, health assessments were undertaken on time.
- 7.5 These audits report on quantitative and qualitative service delivery factors.
- 7.6 The feedback from Team Managers and Service Managers so far has been very positive. They have found the QA audits very useful, not just in raising areas for improvement but also identifying good individual social work which then can be used to drive better practice across the rest of the team. Team managers have welcomed IRO's to be even more meticulous in their scrutiny and auditing.
- 7.7 IRO managers from regional's authorities have been very impressed with Bradford's QA system. Some have already been over to have a look and have implemented it into their own ICS database. This has also been the catalyst for better working collaboration between us. We have already shared further working systems and ideas.

8. Analysis of QA Forms completed between 17th September and 31st March 2016

8.1 QA's Completed

	Challenges	Good Practice	Audits
Sept 2015- Nov 2015	37	16	94
Dec 2015	9	3	36
Jan 2015- Mar 2016	21	19	186
April 2016- Sep 2016	33	13	148
Grand Total	100	51	464

- 8.2 Over the period 17th September 2015 to 30th September 2016 our IRO's issued 100 separate challenges, 51 recognitions of Good SW practice and 464 QA case file audits.
- 8.3 The challenges alone are over double the number of alerts issued under the old system in 2014-2015. We now have a whole new data set on how our IRO's make a difference to the review process.

8.4 Challenges by Outcome 23rd Nov 2015 - 30th September 2016

QA Not Resolved - NFA	6
QA Resolved - NFA	90
Dispute Resolution Process	2
No outcome - QA cancelled	2
Total	100

- 8.5 90% of the challenges were resolved without the need to escalate any further. Two challenges did escalate to Formal Dispute Resolution Process involving a meeting with the Service Manager for one and a formal sit down with the Assistant Director for the other.

8.6 Challenges by Category

Action from the last review - Outstanding tasks / Non completion of decisions	33
Assessments - needs updating	1
Assessments - No up to date / poor quality	7
Care Plan - Drift/ Delay in the implementation	9
Care Plan - Care Plan not signed off by Team Manager	1
Care Plan - Dispute in Care Plan	9
Care Plan - No Care Plan	5
Care Plan - No up to date/poor quality Care Plan/Pathway plan	9
Care Plan - None production of a Care Plan or a Pathway Plan that is not supported by a thorough needs assessment	4
Care Plan - Failure to implement significant element of the plan.	4
Case Management - Failure to notify the IRO of potential significant changes to the child's care plan	2
Case management - Concern around professional practice	5
Case Management - Inadequate or poor preparation for review	18
Case management - No allocated SW	4
Case management - SW visits not undertaken	1
Case Management - No evidence of children being seen alone	1
Drift & Delay - Delay in progressing a Child's Permanence Plan (second review onwards)	8
Drift & Delay - Failure to meet timescales	8
Education - Inadequate Education provision	7

Education - No up to date/poor quality PEP	5
Education - non completion of PEP	2
Family Links - poor communication	1
Family Links - Unsuitable / Inadequate contact arrangements	1
Health - Dental Assessment over due	2
Health - Health Assessment over due	4
Health - Inadequate health provision	5
Health - No health action plan in place	4
Legal - Delays in application for discharge of appropriate order	2
Participation - Insufficient evidence of the child's voice	4
Participation - Parents not included	4
Placed with Parents - PWP not signed by GSM	1
Placement - Concerns around the suitability of the placement to meet the child's needs	9
Placement - Delays in family finding or placement search	1
Placement - Placement does not meet child's needs	3
Placement - No up to date or poor quality sharing of information	1
Placement - No up to date / poor quality placement plan	1
Placement - Poor placement stability	1
Placement - Poor standard of care & choice of placement	2
Pre-meeting Report - No PMR	27
Pre-meeting Report - Poor Quality PRM	7
Pre-meeting Report - Pre-meeting Report not signed off by Team Manager	6
Safeguarding - Safeguarding concerns	7
Safeguarding - lack of information sharing	1
Safeguarding - Absence of Vulnerability and Risk Management Plan	1
Safeguarding - Breach of safe guarding plans & advice	1
Safeguarding - Missing protocol not adhered to	2
Services - Delay in making referral to other services & professionals	5
Grand Total	246

8.7 IRO's issued 100 challenges from 17th September to 30th September 2016. This works out to approximately 4% of the total number of children (estimated 2430 children) reviewed from 17th September 2015 to 30th September 2016. These 100 challenges raised 246 separate concerns in the various categories listed above.

8.8 The consistent top 3 categories challenged over the period are;

- 1) Actions from last review outstanding = 33
- 2) No pre meeting report presented before the review meeting = 27
- 3) Inadequate or poor preparation for the review = 18

8.9 Audits by Outcome 23rd Nov 2015 - 30th September 2016

8.10 Following consultation with the Assistant Director we began to grade all the audits with an outcome rating from 23rd Nov 2015.

Overall audit - Outstanding	86
Overall audit - Good	167
Overall audit - Adequate	72
Overall audit - Needs improvement	54
Overall audit - Challenge	4
Total	383

8.11 A new functionality of grading the audits was introduced on 23.11.2015. 383 of the audits completed have been given an outcome grade by the IRO's.

8.12 22 % of the cases audited were outstanding (86 / 383), 62% were either good or adequate and 14% were Needs Improvements with a clear action plan identified within the audit.

8.13 From mid January 2016 we have taken out adequate from the outcome grading so they now read as:

- ***Outstanding***
- ***Good***
- ***Needs Improvement***
- ***Challenge***

8.14 This is in line with National Ofsted Grading and two Needs Improvement outcomes in a row will trigger a mandatory challenge.

8.15 As a result we have seen a slight increase in the number of Needs Improvement outcomes. Team Managers have found the actions required on these audits very useful. It provides a formal record of the IRO's assessment of the quality of the social work and recommendations to improve practice and service delivery.

9. The Bradford Young People's App

9.1 The Bradford Young People's smart phone App was launched jointly with the Bradford Pledge for Children In care on 23rd December 2015. The App was developed with input from our Children in Care Council who not only held a competition for the name but also played a vital role in the development and review stages.

9.2 The App has been developed in partnership with IT, I.R.O's, Health, LAC, Leaving Care, Participation (Bradford's Children in Care Council) and other Children/Young people. The Children in Care Council have had oversight of the App from inception to launch.

9.3 Children and Young People can use the App to find a place of safety in the city centre if they feel threatened, uneasy, afraid or worried.

Future development of the app will include:-

- Health; there will be a facility for storing health information (an electronic health passport)
- Participation; Direct links including the Children In Care Council's new Face book, Twitter, Webpage, contact details, events and meeting times.
- A personal space to store important personal information.
- A link to information around employment, training and opportunities around the district.
- At the most recent audit, there are close to 150 accounts set up using the app.

10. Training & Development

10.1 The IRO Annual Conference was hosted by Sheffield Local Authority on 29th November 2016. Bradford IRO's were well presented and it was a great networking event which gave opportunity to meet colleagues working in other regional authorities. IRO's enjoyed sharing experiences and ideas. As part of the programme guest speaker and principal social worker Isobel Trowler shared her vision for the future of social work practice and her feelings on how to achieve best value from IRO's.

10.2 Over the year we have seen an improved commitment and attendance to the regional practitioners meetings. In October 2015 we hosted the meeting at our Bradford offices. As IRO manager I am observing an increased interest and willingness from my team to network and work closer with our regional partners. This is line with the national group's overview that we are a strong region.

10.3 The IRO team Development Day was on 09th November 2016. This was a joint event with our child protection team looking at the Signs of Safety framework and the impact this will have on our service. IRO's will also be attending the practice lead training session on signs of safety to assist in driving the framework through the organisation.

10.4 On the 21st January 2016 we held a team better practice workshop looking at QA update and how we can improve our outcomes process.

11. IRO Service Work plan 2016-17

11.1 The IRO service will support the review of all Sec 20 children as prompted by the Family Court to ensure that all Looked After children have the appropriate legal status.

11.2. The whole service has re-located to Margaret McMillan Tower and now reports to Assistant Director for Performance, Standards and Commissioning, Jenny Cryer. This has not changed the good working partnership with Children's Services as the IRO manager still attends the Strategic Leadership

fortnightly meetings and Deputy Directors monthly performance clinics. The Deputy Director attended the IRO team meeting to introduce himself to the IRO's and hear their views on service delivery.

- 11.3 The IRO manager will produce 6 and 12 monthly aggregate QA reports presenting the IRO's overview of the service to the Strategic Leadership Group. This will include strengths and areas to improve as evidenced in the QA section of this report.
- 11.4 IRO Service will conduct further workshops across children's services to promote the understanding of the QA process as a tool for raising standards. The first of these has been arranged for early February 2017. IRO's have already started attending the induction workshops for new social workers introducing themselves and our role. IRO's also welcome newly qualified social workers to visit and have an informal chat about where we fit into the journey of the child.
- 11.5 Alongside other service areas the IRO team will also prepare for the anticipated Joint Targeted Area Inspection. This will include the IRO manager's attendance at briefing events. An on-going commitment to delivering on the Journey to Excellence Agenda. IRO's will maintain good performance in timeliness of reviews and participation of children in their reviews.
- 11.6 The service will be kept informed and aware of the National Agenda on the role of the IRO's and Practice to Innovate opportunities for Ofsted rated "Good," authorities. It is anticipated that the IRO handbook is going to be upgraded in line with new requirements of the IRO role. The team is also committed to getting best value and welcomes being involved in improving outcomes for children.
- 11.7 Signs of Safety framework is now introduced as the social work practice model across Children's Services. IRO's will participate fully in the training in the new discipline and will introduce innovations in how they deliver Looked after Child Reviews.
- 11.8 The IRO service will continue to provide oversight and challenge around children's care plans providing additional vigilance where there are issues of children going missing.
- 11.9 The IRO manager will continue to be involved with the further development of the Bradford Young People's App to ensure that this innovative development can provide accessible, up to date information for Bradford's looked after young people.

Imran Cheema

IRO Team manager 15.12.2016