

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

AGENDA

**Meeting to be held in the Civic Centre (Committee Room 2) on
Monday 3 July 2017 at 5.30pm**

Part I

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| 1. Apologies for Absence | |
| 2. Declarations of Interest | |
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| Minutes of Meeting held on 3 April 2017 (copy attached) | |
| 4. Change Council Update | - |
| Report of the Change Council (copy to follow). | |
| 5. Health of Looked After Children | 11 |
| Report of the Safeguarding Children Lead Nurse (copy attached). | |
| <i>Please note that CYPS Data Dashboard will be printed separately.</i> | |
| 6. Independent Reviewing Officer – Looked After Children Annual Report | 15 |
| Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer (copy attached). | |
| 7. Regulation 44 Visits | 39 |
| Report of the Foster Carer Reviewing and Regulation 44 Officer (copy attached). | |

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Information contained within this agenda can be made available in other languages and formats.

ELAINE WAUGH
Head of Law and Governance

Civic Centre
SUNDERLAND

23 June 2017

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 3 April 2017 in Committee Room 2,
Civic Centre, Sunderland at 5.30pm**

Part I

Present:

Members of the Board

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Councillor L Farthing (in the Chair) | Washington South Ward |
| Councillor R Davison | Redhill Ward |
| Councillor B Francis | Fulwell Ward |
| Councillor L Lauchlan | Washington Central Ward |
| Councillor C Marshall | Doxford Ward |
| Councillor P Smith | Silksworth Ward |
| Councillor W Turton | Houghton Ward |

Young People

Billy Hardy
Blaine Richardson

Also in Attendance

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Councillor L Williams | Washington Central Ward |
| Councillor P Gibson | Silksworth Ward |
| Councillor M Beck | Fulwell Ward |
| Councillor D MacKnight | Castle Ward |
| Councillor M Turton | Copt Hill Ward |
| Councillor S Foster | Castle Ward |

All Supporting Officers

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Alex Hopkins | Director of Children's Services and Chief Executive, Together for Children |
| Debra Patterson | Director, Children's Social Care, Together for Children |
| Sharon Willis | Service Manager, Together for Children |
| Sheila Lough | Service Manager, Together for Children |
| Emma Stewart | Commissioning Specialist, Together for Children |
| Maurice Davis | Foster Carer |
| Kay Dixon | Foster Carer |

Anne Brock
Jill Stewart
Angela O'Dell
Gillian Kelly

Safeguarding Children Lead Nurse and
Designated Nurse LAC
NTW CYPS
NTW CYPS
Governance Services

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Scanlan, Lawson, McClennan and Stewart.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

30. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

Annual Update on the Virtual School

Councillor Smith enquired if an appointment had been made to the Virtual Headteacher post and the Chair advised that Simon Marshall was still acting up into the position and a permanent appointment had not been made at this point.

Change Council Update

Blaine Richardson presented the report of the Change Council and advised that the Change Council had supported the Self-Harm Awareness Day at Washington Mind in March. Loren had been instrumental in running some of the activities and the event had been aimed at self-harm not being a taboo subject.

The Board was reminded that the Change Council had now split into two age categories to enable it to be more focused, however some of the work plan would still involve both groups.

Kieran had recently met with the local authority chief executives from the region along with other young people from the regional children in care council. The issues to take forward from the meeting were: -

- Free leisure passes for all looked after children and care leavers across the North East;
- Specific apprenticeships and work experience opportunities for care leavers with extra support;

- For all children in care to keep their social worker until 18 but also receive support from a personal adviser from 16 onwards; and
- Councils to look at new and creative ways for supporting lodgings and young people moving into independence.

Kieran had also met with the local authority leaders and this had been another positive meeting culminating in the suggestion that a regional memorandum of understanding may be created to ensure that all care leavers in the region received the same service.

Four young people from the 16+ Change Council group would be attending a residential at Kielder on 19 April. The aim of the weekend was to identify the top issue for care leavers and the ballot paper which had been issued to all young people aged 11-21 in care or leaving care across the region was attached to the report from information.

Work continued to redesign the complaints and compliments leaflet and the group would be looking at the changes made by the Communications team at their next meeting.

Councillor Smith queried the situation with free leisure passes and Blaine advised that this was going to be taken forward at the residential event. The Chair indicated her surprise that this had not yet been put into effect and noted that this needed to be taken further than what was on offer in the homes. Sharon Willis commented that Stockton Borough Council had secured a good deal in relation to this and that she could seek information from them on their scheme. Alex Hopkins also undertook to raise this matter with partners.

In relation to apprenticeships, Councillor MacKnight stated that she had recently attended a meeting of the Sunderland Boys Fund charity which could help young people with tools, equipment and clothing as they were entering employment and the Chair added that the Hope Springs organisation could also assist in this area.

31. RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Sunderland Looked After Children's Pledge

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

Update on Semi-Independent Homes and Supported Lodgings

The Strategic Service Manager – Accommodation submitted a report providing Members with a service update with regard to the expansion of the internal semi-independent accommodation for care leavers.

All of the three internal provisions at Elwin Terrace, Chester Road and Burlington Close had been fully occupied since the last report to the Board and there was now one manager across the services which had ensured greater consistency and a co-

ordinated approach. There was a mixture of young people in the provision from externally commissioned placements and the authority's own internal homes and foster placements. Planned moves from children's homes into internal semi-independent provision had enabled four young people to return to the city from externally commissioned placements.

The Supported Lodgings scheme had expanded since the last report was presented to the Board and there were now nine providers offering up to 14 placements. One provider had left the scheme but were now offering a 'Shared Lives' placement for a young person over 21 years old. There were currently nine young people placed and five vacancies. Young people were carefully matched to Supported Lodgings placements to maximise the chance of positive outcomes.

A potential new provider for Supported Lodgings was being assessed and the scheme would be re-advertised once re-branding had been completed following the transition to Together for Children. The planned rise in payment for Supported Lodgings providers had been achieved so that it was now equivalent to that for Staying Put carers at £197.80 a week.

Seven of the current providers were attending a consultation event with a view to them offering emergency placements for young people in crisis. One young person had recently been placed as an emergency and this was working well. A Supported Lodgings provider had also received the Jeannie Pounder award at the recent Sunderland Stars event in recognition of the exceptional pattern of support which she provided for two care leavers in her home and the immeasurable difference she had made to their lives.

The Allocations and Pathways Panel continued to meet on a weekly basis and the Commissioning Specialist attended these meetings which assisted with planning for young people and meant that fewer placements were being made in a crisis situation.

Councillor Davison asked if there were care leavers who required emergency placements and Sharon advised that the emergency placements offer was for 16-17 year olds who were presenting as homeless but who required the same level of service as care leavers.

Following consideration of the report, it was: -

32. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Annual Report of the Fostering Panel

The Strategic Services Manager submitted a report informing the Board of the work of the Fostering Panel from April 2016 to March 2017.

Sunderland City Council's Fostering Service had now become an Independent Fostering Agency following the transition to the new company and would be known as Together for Children Fostering – Sunderland. This change would not have any

significant impact on the service offered but it was likely that the work of the Panel would come under greater scrutiny from Ofsted.

There continued to be two Fostering Panels convened each month, chaired by the same independent person. Catherine Witt, Principal Social Worker had been appointed as the Agency Decision Maker and was due to observe her first panel meeting later in the month. She would hold regular meetings with the independent Chair of the panels going forward.

The service was working with Creo Communications on foster carer recruitment and creative solutions were being sought to recruit more carers with some young people being keen to be involved in the process. The panel profile had now been completed which provided a summary of panel members' experience and reasons for joining the panel which applicants could read before they attended a panel meeting. This also fed into the annual appraisal process.

Councillor Kay continued to represent elected Members at one of the fostering panels and his support and input were valued by panel members. Sheila Lough advised that if any other elected Member wished to join the second fostering panel to represent the voice of the corporate parent, then they would be very welcome.

Panel members had undertaken training in November 2016 on 'Allegations Management – Implications for Carers and Panel' and had provided extremely positive feedback on the session. All of the panel appraisals were up to date, although there was a slight issue with some of the technical detail which it was hoped would be resolved soon.

Both of the panels were very busy, with the largest area of work being assessments for Connected Carers. The Panel had observed an improvement in the quality of assessments for Connected Carers and there had also been an improvement in the attendance of the child's social worker or team manager at the panel meetings.

The Panel had escalated one case to the previous Agency Decision Maker as there was evidence of missed opportunities, drift and delay for three siblings. The Panel had also heard one appeal following a re-assessment of a foster carer which did not recommend suitability to practice.

Future developments for the panel were mainly around the greater involvement of young people in the proceedings and enabling greater involvement of potential foster carers in discussion about their assessments.

Councillor MacKnight asked if social workers were now more permanently allocated to each individual child and Sheila Lough advised that the workforce was being stabilised and that the majority of social workers in the Permanence Team were permanent members of staff. There was only one member of agency staff in the Fostering Team and the remainder were permanent.

Councillor MacKnight went on to ask how long Family Carer Assessments would take and Sheila stated that these would be carried out over of a period of 16 weeks. The assessment had to be very carefully considered as workers had to be convinced

that the arrangement would be suitable. These situations could be extremely complex and involved extended family relationships which would not be an issue for foster carers.

Councillor Williams queried how many young people were placed with family or friends rather than foster carers. Sheila explained that this depended on the plan for the child, their age and the other carers available. Currently 76 children were placed with connected carers and 413 were in foster care. The figure had been greater than that as a number of children had been secured by a court order and had subsequently come out of the care system.

The Chair referred to the attendance at foster care information evenings and Sheila commented that only one potential carer had attended the last event. Approaches were being sought which were more accessible and attractive, such as a Saturday Open day with a rolling programme taking place all day.

Maurice Davis commented that it was clear that the current methods did not work, that an information evening was off putting to many and an open day would relieve the pressure of that session. Debra Patterson stated that she had had a recent meeting about advertising and publicity for foster care recruitment but also highlighted that there had been 18 foster carer approvals since last April.

Having thanked Sheila for her comprehensive report, the Board: -

33. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Commissioning Placements for Outcomes

The Commissioning Specialist submitted a report providing an update on the commissioned provision at Harbour View and outlining the outcomes which were being achieved for young people accessing the provision.

Harbour View had been operational for six months and it had been agreed to commission the service in order to increase the offer for supported accommodation and to provide a greater choice of location.

The service provided high quality supported accommodation as a stepping stone for care leavers aged 16 to 21 and was fully occupied. One of the criteria for a placement in the service was that the young person should be actively engaged in education, employment or training and this was the case with all of the nine current occupants. The young people were working with staff to develop their independent living skills and their progress was discussed at fortnightly monitoring meetings to ensure that individual outcomes were being met and the provision continued to meet the needs of the young person.

Councillor MacKnight asked about the physical layout of the provision and was advised that each young person had individual sleeping and cooking facilities but that there were facilities to prepare group meals as well.

Councillor Williams queried if that would continue to meet needs as young people moved through their time at the provision and also asked about the numbers of children who were coming through the system who would want to access this provision. Emma Stewart stated that she regularly discussed with young people their preferences in terms of facilities to determine what was needed moving forward. She added that conversations began with young people when they were 15+ and that these would involve their social worker. Young People were then encouraged to visit all provision before making a decision. It was confirmed that there was no commissioned provision in Washington or the Coalfields but places were available through the YMCA.

Councillor Francis raised the attitude of the neighbours to the provision and Emma advised that a residents meeting had been held at Harbour View but there had not been an open day. She was unaware of any issues being raised by the local residents. Councillor Francis was pleased to hear this.

Upon consideration of the report, it was: -

34. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Health of Looked After Children

The Safeguarding Children Lead and the Designated Doctor for Looked After Children submitted a joint report providing an update on health activity for looked after children.

The Board were advised that the MALAP sub-group had been stood down as it was agreed that any health matters which needed to be resolved could be addressed in the MALAP meeting itself.

Anne Brock set out the improvement in compliance with statutory timescales for Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) which had to occur within 20 days of a child becoming looked after. This had improved quarter by quarter from 23% in quarter 1 to 56% in quarter 3. However there had been significant improvements in the early part of quarter 4 and compliance was 100% for February 2017. The LAC Health Team had restructured clinics to assist this improvement.

Review Health Assessments (RHAs) had to take place at least every six months before a child's fifth birthday and compliance had also improved to stand at 92% in February 2017. There was more flexibility for these appointments now, particularly for 'hard to reach' young people. Those which were out of timescale were mainly out of the area cases and therefore out of control of the local LAC Health Team, however to try and improve this, the team was now requesting that the RHAs were done three months prior to the deadline.

The performance in relation to Health passports had also improved, with compliance at 100% for February 2017.

The annual engagement survey of children and young people's satisfaction and understanding of health provision was completed in February 2017 and the results were attached as an appendix to the report. The survey was very positive and going forward, the team would ask one or two questions every month and ask young people to place responses in a comments box in the waiting room.

Alex Hopkins expressed his pleasure in seeing the performance at the level which it was and the Chair extended her appreciation to the LAC Health Team for their work to achieve these improvements.

Jill Stewart went on to give a verbal update on CYPS data for quarter 4. She advised that there were 523 young people in CYPS with nine looked after children cases being opened in month 11 and a total of 101 accepted over the year. By way of comparison there were 4,045 non-looked after children cases open. 122 referrals had been received within the year and 117 young people had been discharged. The main source of referrals was social services at 33.3% of the total, with Accident and Emergency, crisis team, GP and Youth Offending Team being responsible for the remainder of referrals.

The Chair requested that a written report be provided with the CYPS figures for the next Board meeting and asked about the pathway to the service. Jill advised that a referral would come to the duty team and would then be triaged by a team manager, clinical psychologist and member of staff in the looked after children part of the service. Urgent cases were seen within seven working days and priority referrals within 20 days. If additional information was needed then a team member would discuss that with the referrer.

Jill stated that there had only been two 'did not attends' within the last year and that in these cases, most would be offered another appointment. The Chair asked if consultations were carried out at home and Angela O'Dell said that assessments were certainly done there and therapy sessions would take place wherever the young person was most comfortable and could include evening and weekend appointments.

Councillor MacKnight queried how long that it took for a non-emergency referral to receive a CYPS appointment and also the feedback which was given to the referrer. She was advised that the waiting time for an appointment depended on the information given in the referral, however the waiting list for CYPS had reduced significantly. Any feedback given to the referrer would be with the consent of the young person involved.

Debra Patterson noted the number of referrals which did not go through the triage stage and Jill Stewart advised that 21 were not accepted and that 13 were discharged after the first appointment. The Chair commented that mental health issues for looked after children had been a longstanding matter and requested that Debra follow up with regard to those young people who did not come through the triage process.

Upon considering the report, it was: -

35. RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

(Signed) L FARTHING
Chair

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

3 July 2017

HEALTH OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

**Report of the Safeguarding Children Lead and the Designated Doctor for
Looked After Children**

1. Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on health Looked After Children (LAC) activity to Sunderland Corporate Parenting Board.

2. Compliance data for health assessments March, April and May 2017

2.1 Local Authorities are responsible for making sure a health assessment of physical, emotional and mental health needs is carried out for every child they look after. Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) must happen within 20 working days of the child becoming looked after. In order for the health team to ensure compliance with statutory timescales it is imperative they are advised of the child becoming looked after and consent for health assessments received in a timely manner

2.2

Table 1

| LAC IHAs | March 2017 | April 2017 | May 2017 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Compliance IHAs | 89% | 100% | 76% |

2.3 The decline in the compliance data for March was due to the mother of two children refusing to sign the consent forms as she was under the influence of alcohol; the other case was due to a mother refusing to sign consent until she had sought legal advice.

2.4 Compliance dropped to 76% in May as one young person was missing, 3 children were unable to attend as the parents were in court and wanted to be present at the RHA and one Foster Carer was unable to attend as she had an emergency dental appointment.

- 2.5** The RHA must happen at least every six months before a child's 5th birthday and at least once every 12 months after the child's 5th birthday. Table 2 depicts the improved compliance rate.

Table 2

| LAC RHAs | March 2017 | April 2017 | May 2017 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Compliance RHAs | 80% | 94% | 95% |

- 2.6** The March compliance data was due to a child placed out of area not being brought for a health assessment despite 4 appointments being offered. The LAC Nurse addressed this issue with the Social Worker and the LAC Nurse in the area where the child was placed.
- 2.7** The April compliance data was due to three young people not attending on multiple occasions; the LAC Nurse offered alternative appointment times and venues.
- 2.8** In May an out of area health assessment was not completed in timescales, this was outside of the control of Sunderland LAC Health Team and one young person refused to attend for appointment.
- 2.9** The LAC health team have also experienced difficulty in April as the transfer to the new Company meant notifications of Looked after or change of status were delayed. This meant appointments could not always be arranged in timescales. Similar delays were caused by the 'cyber attack' within the NHS, All staff worked very hard to ensure these difficulties were minimised.

3.0 Health Passports

- 3.1** The improvement activity around issuing of health passports was described in a previous report. Table 3 demonstrates current compliance.

Table 3

| Health passports issued | March 2017 | April 2017 | May 2017 |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Compliance Health passports | 100% | 80% | 100% |

- 3.2** The compliance dropped in March as the young person refused to attend

4.0 CYPS

- 4.1** The scorecard for CYPS is in a separate report
- 4.2** Since the last Corporate Parenting Committee agreement has been reached by North Tyne and Wear NHS Trust (NTW) and Together for Children for CYPS to hold half day weekly sessions to offer scaffolding, support and

guidance for Together for Children practitioners working with children and young people :

- on the waiting list to be seen by CYPS
- who don't have a Mental Health Care Coordinator in CYPS
- not suitable for tier 3 mental health services but advice and support is required to manage behaviours

5.0 LAC Nurse

5.1 A new LAC and Young Peoples nurse was appointed to the LAC Health Team and took up her position in April; this additional resource will allow for increased flexibility with appointments and working and engaging with hard to reach young people.

5.2 She will also be doing some work in setting up a young persons' User Group which will include LAC; this will help to capture the 'voice of the child'.

6.0 LAC Health Team

6.1 The LAC health team will continue to support the Local Authority with the Improvement Plan in respect of LAC

6.2 Joint training for foster carers about 'Allegations against Foster Carers' continues between Together for Children Sunderland and the LAC health team 3-4 times a year. The training package was re-vamped in response to an increased number of allegations against foster carers, which have produced some lessons to be learned, with videos from actual foster carers included and interactive activities. This has been evaluated well.

7.0 Recommendations

- The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to note the content of the report.



Anne Brock
Safeguarding Children Lead
Nurse and Designated Nurse LAC



Kim Barrett
Designated Doctor LAC

**Independent Reviewing Officer
Looked After Children Annual Report
1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017**

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(Data for 2017 within the annual report is provisional until the DFE figures are released)

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report covers the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017. The report will be presented to Children's Services Senior Management Team, the Together for Children Board, the Corporate Parenting Board, Children's Scrutiny Committee and the Sunderland Safeguarding Board.
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to provide information on the progress made within the Independent Reviewing (IRO) service and the impact that this has had upon children/young people. The report provides an overview of the improvements made, emerging themes and trends in performance, examples of good practice and IRO service priorities for the next 12 months. The report focuses on performance in relation to Looked after Children (LAC). A separate report is provided in relation to the Conference Chair role undertaken by the Service.

2 Legal context - The role of the IRO

- 2.1 The appointment of an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) for a child/young person looked after by a Local Authority became a legal requirement under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 which gave responsibility to IRO's for reviewing plans and placements for children in any form of placement. This requirement was replaced by the Care Planning and Placement Regulations Act 2010.
- 2.2 The IRO handbook outlines the statutory framework for the IRO to discharge their duties including; ensuring that children/young people's care plans meet their needs and that their wishes and feelings are taken into consideration. The IRO also ensures that children/young people in care have their review completed within statutory timescales.
- 2.3 The IRO has a duty to monitor the performance of the Local Authority as a corporate parent, identify practice deficits and alert managers about these in a timely manner and also to seek to achieve positive outcomes for children/young people.

3 IRO Services in Sunderland – Overview of staffing structure and training

- 3.1 In September 2016 the management of the IRO service transferred to the Quality and Performance Directorate. A new structure followed in November 2016 which permanently increased the number of IROs from 10.6 to 13.5 and IRO Management from 1 to 2. The aim of the new structure is to improve managerial oversight and to ensure that caseloads can be continually maintained, within statutory requirements.
- 3.2 In April 2017, Together for Children - Sunderland was launched and the IRO Service transferred to the Company. The IRO Service also took over the direct line management of a dedicated administration team from this date.
- 3.3 Since the last annual report, only one part time permanent staff member has left the IRO service due to retirement. As the overall capacity has increased, there has been

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a strong emphasis on recruitment to a permanent team. The recruitment drive has been very successful and by June 2017, all newly appointed IROs will have taken up their position and all team members will be permanent. The service is also working on ensuring that the administration team have a more permanent workforce.

- 3.4 Due to the success of the IRO recruitment, some reallocation of cases has been necessary. In January 2017 every looked after child/young person received a letter from the team confirming the name of their IRO. Subsequent to this, departing IRO's were asked to contact the children/ young people they were working with to wish them well and advise them of the name of the new IRO.
- 3.5 All IRO's in Sunderland are qualified Social Workers and are registered with the Health Care Professional Council. They undertake a dual role of IRO and Conference Chairing. The IRO's have a broad range of appropriate knowledge and experience including:-
- Frontline Child Protection Social Work
 - Team Management
 - Adoption and Fostering
 - Next Steps (Leaving Care)
 - Children with Disabilities
 - Therapeutic Work
 - Residential Work
 - Cafcass Work
 - Direct Work with Looked after Children
- 3.6 All IROs have access to independent legal advice if required, through a commissioned arrangement with an independent solicitor.

4 IRO - Caseloads

- 4.1 As of the 31st March 2017, there were 534 looked after children in Sunderland compared to 546 at the end of March 2016. (See Table 1)
- 4.2 The IRO Handbook states that the looked after children case load for each IRO should be between 50 and 70 whilst taking into consideration additional duties. The average IRO looked after case load (as at the end of March 2017) is 39.5 per IRO which is a reduction from March 2016. The IRO's also hold a child protection caseload averaging 31.5 child protection cases which corresponds to an approximate overall average case load of 71 cases per FTE. (See table 1).
- 4.3 During the period 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017, the IROs undertook 1660 looked after children reviews, which is a increase from March 2016 of 101 reviews.

Table 1 – IRO caseload – LAC

| March 16 | March 17 |
|----------|----------|
|----------|----------|

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| Cases and Caseload | | |
|--|------|------|
| Number of Looked After Children | 546 | 534 |
| Number of looked after children reviews | 1511 | 1660 |
| Average number of LAC cases allocated cases to IRO's within team | 51.5 | 39.5 |

5 IRO – Performance and Outcomes for Looked After Children

- 5.1 Since the Ofsted inspection in 2015, the IRO service has been working hard with Children's Services to improve outcomes for children in care. In the Ofsted monitoring visit in February 2017, Ofsted noted that *"the IRO service is more visible, and performance is improved"* (Ofsted monitoring visit 2&3rd February 2017). Whilst progress has been pleasing, the IRO service acknowledge that further work is required to improve outcomes for children/young people who are looked after and the Service will continue to ensure that the child/young person's journey is promoted and strengthened.
- 5.2 To assess the performance of the IRO Service, the Service has developed a performance scorecard which shows performance against a number of key Performance indicators (KPIs) as follows. 6 of the 7 KPIs have demonstrated improved performance from the 15/16 outturn.

Table 2 – Key Performance Indicators

| | May-15 | 15/16 outturn | 16/17 outturn |
|---|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| LAC | | | |
| % of CLA at end of period where reviews were held in timescales | 92% | 90% | 95% |
| % of CLA at end of period where young people participated in their most recent review | 94% | 96% | 97% |
| % CLA at end of period with an up to date Care Plan | 98% | 85% | 93% |
| % CLA at end of period with an up to date PEP | 71% | 86% | 81% |
| % of CLA at end of period accommodated under section 20 | 52% | 38% | 24% |
| No of Pre IRO visits completed | n/ava | n/ava | 2477 |
| Leaving Care | | | |
| % CLA at end of period with an up to date Pathway Plan (within 6 months) | 27% (Aug 15) | 81% | 94% |

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5.2.1 Timeliness of Looked After Reviews (LAR)

Within 20 working days of a child/young person becoming looked after, a LAR is required. A second review has to be convened within 3 months (91 days) of the first review if not sooner, then every 6 months (183 days) after this. Reviews can be held early and in cases whereby there is an unplanned change to the child/young person's care plan, then a review should be convened with the set review date being brought forward. 95% of reviews were held within timescale.

There are a number of reasons why a Looked After Review is held out of timescale. In September 2016, the IROs changed the system for capturing the reasons why reviews were out of timescale to ensure more consistency in the data collated. Data has therefore only been captured in relation to Quarter 3 and Quarter 4. Table 3 below shows that the majority of reviews were out of timescale due to a calculation error, which increased in Quarter 4. This is predominantly due to the number of new IROs starting within the service as the current IT Management system does not project the date of the next review which leaves reviews vulnerable to calculation errors. All IROs have been requested to plan looked after reviews 20 working days prior to them going out of timescale. In addition to this, checks are also being built into the new IT system, Liquid logic, to reduce the risk of any calculation errors going forward.

Table 3 – Reason for Looked after Reviews been out of timescale

| Reason | Qtr. 3 (Oct – Dec 2016) | Qtr. 4 (Jan – Mar 2017) |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Late notification | 1 | 0 |
| Calculation Error | 6 | 14 |
| Missing Report | 0 | 0 |
| Non Attendance by a significant person | 3 | 4 |
| Non Attendance by Social Worker | 0 | 0 |
| Series of meeting (looked after review commenced a further meeting required) | 3 | 1 |
| Total number of children | 13 | 19 |

The IROs have also sought to improve performance of LARs in timescale by:

- The IRO manager checking the date of the review at the point of allocation, to ensure that LAR's are kept in timescale.
- Addressing the reasons for any out of timescales with individuals during supervision sessions.
- Delivering training on the reviewing process to all new IROs.
- The Introduction of a daily allocation meeting in December 2016.

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5.2.2 Participation with children and young people

Engagement with children/young people continues to be a central part of the IRO role to ensure that children/young people have a voice within their looked after review process.

The percentage of young people who participated in their review was 97% as at March 2017. This is a 1% increase on the outturn in March 2016.

The IRO service utilise a number of tools to support engagement within children and young people including Viewpoint, which is a computer assisted interviewing tool which children either complete this by themselves or via the support of the Viewpoint Officer. In this year, 175 viewpoint documents have been completed and to advise the IRO of children and young people's views. In all age groups the areas requiring development / of least satisfaction were:

- A lack of life story work
- Not having a bank account
- Not understanding the role of the IRO or who they are
- Not having friends to visit where they are living. This area seemed to have most impact on the child. Several felt they would be happier where they lived if their friends could visit.

In light of the feedback that has been provided by children/ young people with regards to the IRO Service, the Service has taken action to remedy this situation. In January all looked after children/young people were written to, advising them of their IRO and how to contact them. Practice standards were introduced in March 2017 to ensure that IROs visit children at least 5 working days prior to their review. The IRO Service has reengaged with the change council and has set a priority for 2017/18 to develop information/ web page with regards to the IRO role and the current team of IROs in Sunderland.

MOMO (Mind of my own) has in 2016 through to 2017 grown in its use. A total of 139 MOMO statements have been provided and used to support the child's voice.

IRO staff attend Change Council meetings on a quarterly basis. The purpose of this is to gather and encourage the sharing of children/young people's views, to improve relationships between the IRO service and our children/young people and to seek advice and information from them which will then be used to inform future developments within the IRO service, such as changes to the paperwork/documentation which the IRO team use.

The IRO service has remained committed to support young people outside of primary role of chairing LAR's by supporting the children's participation officer in key events such as the Christmas party event organised by Change Council, forwarding nominations for the annual star award and the young achievers award.

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5.2.3 LAC with an up to date Care Plan

The IRO service has targeted the area of care plans to ensure that every child/young person has an updated care plan. Performance in this area has improved. At the end of March 2016, 85 % of the looked after population had a care plan that had been updated within the last 6 months. As of the 31st March 2017, this is 93% which marks an 8% increase in the number of children with updated care plans. Work remains ongoing in relation to the standards of care plans and the need to ensure that care plans are written clearly with SMART outcomes.

5.2.4 LAC with an up to date Personal Education Plan

Targeted work was undertaken in January 2017 to ensure that IRO's, during the course of the LAR's, had a good understanding of a young person's Personal Education Plan (PEP) and to ensure that a completed document with SMART recommendations was seen. Work in this area continues to be required to ensure that PEP's are SMART, as whilst the number of children with PEP increased in February 2017 to 93%, a decrease is noted in March 2017 to 81%. This will remain a targeted area in 2017-18, as will oversight in terms of improving the varying quality of these documents.

5.2.5 LAC accommodated under section 20

In 2015 Ofsted raised concerns around the inappropriate use of Section 20. On the 31st March 2016, 38% of children were looked after under Section 20, on the 31st March 2017 it was 24% marking a reduction of 14%. This is an important indicator that children/ young people's care plans are progressing.

5.2.6 IRO Visits

In 2016/2017 focussed work was undertaken to ensure that children/young people were offered an IRO visit prior to their looked after review.

Performance reporting in the area has been strengthened; IRO's have been reminded of the need to record all contact with children/young people 2477 'contacts' have taken place. Between January 2017 and March 2017 there are 283 IRO Pre looked after visits.

5.2.7 LAC Pathway Plans

Performance has improved with regards to updated pathway plans. There has been coordinated work undertaken both by social workers in the Next Steps team and by IRO's who seek to ensure that a Leaving Care Assessment is commenced at the age of 15 ½ years and an updated pathway plan is presented during the course of the young person's review from the age 16 years and 3 months. At the end of March 2016 there were only 81% of young people with an updated pathway plan, whereas at the

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end of March 2017, 94% had an up to date pathway plan which represents a 13% marked increase.

In 2016, the IRO service assumed responsibility for reviewing the initial pathway plan for post 18 years of age. This ensures independent scrutiny of the pathway plan. This change was in recognition of the pivotal nature of this significant transition for our young people who were moving into adulthood.

5.2.8 LAC with Health Assessments

In relation to health, the IRO service has been targeting looked after health assessments to ensure that children and young people have an in date Health Assessment. Performance in this area has continued to be monitored to ensure improvements are achieved for looked after children/young people.

6 Secure Accommodation Review Panels

- 6.1 With regard to children/young people who have been placed in secure accommodation under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989, (Welfare Secure) a secure review panel must be arranged. As part of the IRO role it is expected that all IRO's are able to chair a Secure Review Panel and subsequent reviews. Sunderland continues to have a reciprocal regional arrangement in place with South Tyneside and Gateshead; this arrangement supports the need for an independent panel member in secure accommodation reviews. For a Sunderland child/young person the secure panel requires the involvement of two IRO's from Sunderland, plus an independent IRO from the Inter- Authority Consortium arrangement.
- 6.2 From the 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 there have been a total of 5 Sunderland children/young people who have required a secure accommodation review to be completed, all of which have taken place within the statutory timescales.

7 Dispute Resolution Process (DRP)

- 7.1 The Government wants IRO's to challenge poor practice. The IRO Handbook states that Local Authorities must have a Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) in place, where the Local Authority must work with the IRO to try and resolve any differences in relation to a child/young person's plan. The idea is that the issues can be resolved quickly without the need to escalate to senior managers or for the need for legal intervention. The timescale for the DRP process is 20 working days for a formal resolution to arising issues.
- 7.2 In Sunderland, the DRP is a 5 stage process. During 2016/17, there were 81 LAC disputes within this process. The vast majority were dealt with at the informal stage 1 of the procedure, indicating the commitment by all parties to the swift resolution of concerns raised by the IRO. There was only 1 dispute dealt with at stage 4 and none at stage 5 of the procedure.

Table 4 – Case Escalations

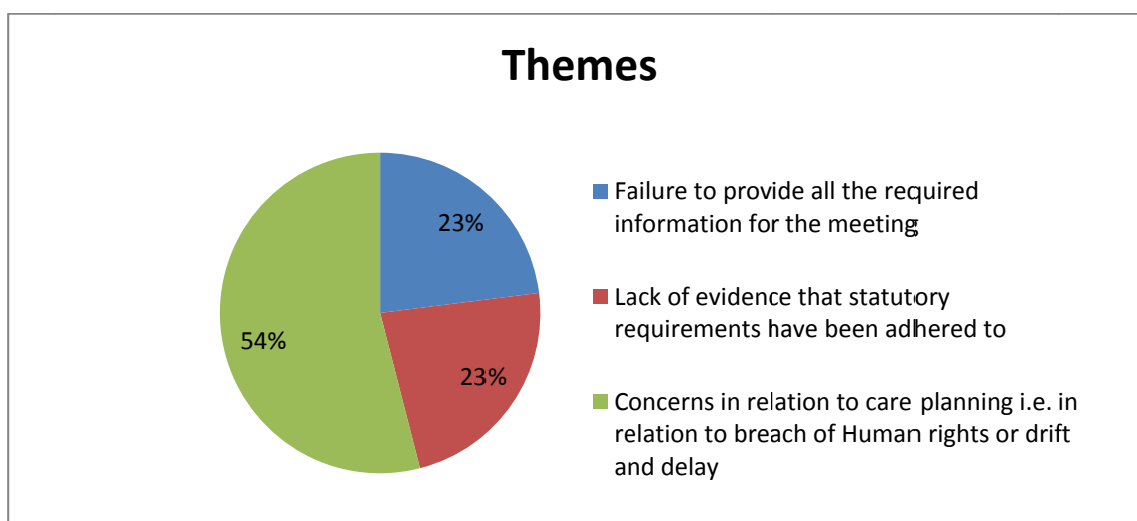
| | May-15 | 15/16 outturn | 16/17 outturn |
|---|-------------|------------------|------------------|
| Case Escalations | | | |
| No. of case escalations relating to looked after children in the period | 12 (Jun 15) | n/ava | 81 |

The main reasons for raising issues in relation to looked after children in 2016/17 are shown in the chart, however by way of example;

Case example:

A DRP was issued in respect of a sibling group age ranging 6-12years whereby the Care Plan of adoption had not been achieved and repeated requests were made by the IRO during the LAR/ Placement Order review process for Children's Services to seek a change of legal status and Care Plan. The DRP led to an agreed child focus timetable to progress the necessary changes and resulted in re-engagement of birth parents with their children.

Overview of DRP by theme



7.3 This information in relation to DRPs, is shared on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis with the Children's Services Management Team to ensure that issues are progressed and resolved in a timely manner for the child/young people.

7.4 Within the IRO service there is an expectation that appropriate challenge will take place, and that the service be seen as a 'critical friend and guardian to the Care Plan'. This leads to challenge as reflected within our figures. For example the challenge reflects differing practise standards within presented documents and the timeliness of care planning processes. The chart above depicts the categories; it is the expectation of the IRO when raising such matters that there will be a positive outcome and positive

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change for the child/young person. In the past year the impact of DRPs has resulted in improved Care Plans for children, changes in contact arrangements and more timely decisions being progressed.

- 7.5 Targeted work has been undertaken by the IRO team to ensure that the focus of the second looked after review is on ensuring that there is a long term plan for the child/young person and that the child's legal status meets their needs. Where this is not the case, the IRO ensures that they track the case on the child/young person's behalf to reduce the risk of delay and issue a DRP when appropriate. Performance data with regards to this is now also collated and is informing IRO management oversight. Performance against this will be reported in the 2018 annual report.

8.0 Partnership working

- 8.1 The IRO service has continued to work with a wide range of organisations to achieve best practice for looked after children. In 2016/17 a number of agencies have attended the IRO team meetings to deliver updates to the service. For example, the Chief Social Worker delivered learning lessons from Serious Case reviews, the Looked after Health Nurse and Doctor attended to offer updates with regards to looked after children's health assessments and health passports and the Domestic Violence Co-Ordinator gave a briefing. The Virtual School Head provided updates with regard to PEP's and work has been undertaken in relation to Family Group Conference's with the FGC Co-coordinator.
- 8.2 IRO's have individual team links with all social worker teams. This offers a means of sharing information and raises topics for learning in IRO group supervision which ultimately improves practice.

9 Corporate Parenting

- 9.1 One of the central roles of the IRO service is to support the Local Authority by scrutinising the performance of Children's Services in relation to their planning for looked after children. An IRO Manager has attended the Corporate Parenting Board and the Scrutiny Committee to update the Lead Portfolio holders in relation to the work and findings from the service.

10.0 What has the service achieved in 2015/16?

- 10.1 At the beginning of 2015/16 the IRO service identified a number of key priorities. A summary of progress against these priorities is detailed below and there is further information in Appendix 1.
- *Improving the quality of recommendations* - the IRO service provide SMART recommendations to social workers and team managers in keeping with IRO standards. The SMART recommendations provide a clear timetable for the completion of work which is evident within the LAR minutes for the child/young

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person and others to see, understand and question, thus raising accountability for all involved.

- *Improving Performance Data* - The availability of performance data in the area of looked after children/young people has been strengthened by the introduction of the IRO scorecard, which is being used to improve overall performance and promote practice improvements. It has provided strength and evidence around themes and issues which impact upon children/young people and which we can address. The service has also worked to improve which data is collected e.g. pre lac visits (PLV) being undertaken and recorded within CCM. Due to the increase in PLV we have seen increased participation figures for children/young people attending their LAR's which gives increased opportunity for the voice of the child/young person to be heard.
- *Mid way reviews* - It is the expectation that midway reviews are completed with the allocated Social Worker to ensure that recommendations are being progressed. IRO's are being actively encouraged to ensure that details from these discussions are recorded on CCM and that the IRO 'footprint' is evidenced not only following the mid-way review but also following any case discussion. This means that drift and delay is being identified sooner, which can then be challenged.
- *Drift and Delay* - Children's care plans are now more rigorously monitored by the IRO. Where there are issues with drift and delay these issues are being raised within the DRP process. The DRP process was reviewed in December 2016, further streamlining is to take place in April 2017. This streamlining will lead to one single process for the child protection conference chairs and IROs to follow when raising an issue on behalf of the child.
- *Permanency planning* - The IRO service in 2016/2017 has continued to focus upon the need for a permanency plan at the second review, due to the importance of this it will remain a priority area throughout 2017/2018.
- *Voice of child* - The working relationship with the Change Council has been strengthened and will be key within the IRO service development, this positive link will ensure that the voice of young people is heard and will guide the IRO service in its future developments.

11.0 What do we need to do? Priorities for 2017/18

- 11.1 The IRO service has achieved a number of the objectives identified in the last year's annual report. However, there is further work to be done, particularly with the recent recruitment of new IROs to drive quality and consistency across the service and to improve the scrutiny of care plans which will promote effective change for the individual child.

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11.2 The IRO service continues to remain committed to the Ofsted improvement plan and our key priorities for 2017/2018 are detailed below (please refer to appendix 2 for further information).

- Recruitment and Training – ensuring that all IRO posts are in place by June 2017 and business posts are also fully recruited to. This also involves ensuring that staff are fully trained to carry out their roles.
- Further increase the ‘footprint’ of the IRO on the child’s case file in progressing plans and evidencing informal challenge.
- Continue to strengthen the child’s voice/ participation in looked after reviews and child protection conferences.
- Integrate business support unit into IRO Service
- Continue to build and improve relationships
- Continue to challenge the quality of practice and planning seeking to improve care plans, PEP’s and assessment analysis.
- Strengthen the IRO Service Profile in Sunderland with professionals and young people

Appendix 1 IRO Service priorities for 2016/17

| Action | Lead | Deadline | Annual Update 31.03.2017 |
|--|---|----------------|---|
| Enhance the stability of the workforce as part of future developments | | | |
| Recruit permanent staff to: IRO managers IRO LADO Foster Carer Reviewing Officer | IRO Manager | December 2016 | All posts within the IRO Service as of 10.02.2017 have been successfully recruited to. The IRO Service is currently in transition from agency workers to permanent members of staff. It is anticipated that this will be achieved by June 2017 as all newly recruited staff will be in post. |
| Enhanced Team development and cohesion | | | |
| Team Development day to be arranged. | IRO Manager – IRO's | January 2017 | Whilst the IRO Service has not been able to hold a full development day in this annual year 4 dates are fixed for 2017-2018. The first of these dates was the 03.05.17. Training events however have continued to be undertaken with the IRO Service with the most recent of these being delivered on 15.03.17 covering the Dispute Resolution Process and the IRO Looked after review process. |
| Remove barriers affecting performance in relation to CCM V29 | | | |
| IRO Managers will continue to collaborate with their colleagues in Children's Services, CCM project team to achieve positive change for Service users in Sunderland | IRO Managers | July 2016 | IRO Service has had regular meetings with the senior management group in 2016 with regards to quality assurance data and CCM. The IRO Service has been represented on liquid logic development sessions in October and November 2016 and January and March 2017. The IRO Service continues to provide monthly performance data to the senior management team. |
| Achieve a more effective case escalation process for practice alerts | | | |
| DRP and QPR processes to be reviewed and updated to include an informal stage of resolution. IRO's, IRO Management and | IRO Managers , Business Manager Children's services | September 2016 | A review of the DRP process took place in December 2016. There is currently a weekly tracker on all open DRPs which is shared between Children's Social Care management team and the IRO Service. Training with regards to the DRP process was delivered on the 15.03.2017. Going forward the IRO Service is seeking to streamline how they raise |

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| business support to further develop tracking of DRPs and QPR. | | | challenge by using a sole process for both child protection and looked after. |
| Achieve a more systematic data collation and reporting mechanism in respect of Children looked after | | | |
| Ensure a single practice/SMART pro forma for recording review decisions and review minutes. | IRO Managers Business Manager, ICT | Review three monthly | A new recommendation pro forma was introduced by the IRO Service in March 2016. This was further amended in October 2016 to enable it to be compatible with version 29. |
| Reduce the choice of CCM tabs to record IRO pre-review and mid-term visits from three to two to avoid potential for mistake. | IRO Managers Business Manager, ICT | Review three monthly | Work has been undertaken and CCM tabs are in the process of being updated to achieve consistent reporting from the IRO Service. The IRO pre lac visit tab and midway review case note has been introduced and performance data for Quarter 4 is available. This has meant that performance data is now available on the number of children who are being visited by the IRO. |
| Strengthen the admin function in relation to this. | IRO Managers Business Manager, ICT | Review three monthly | A new reporting mechanism was implemented in December 2016 to enable the service to be able to report on performance in relation to timeliness of CP minutes being completed and available. |
| To engage in the development of any new IT system for Children Services | IRO Managers | Review three monthly | Over the last 6 month the IRO service has had representation on all relevant liquid logic events. The IRO Service has prioritised its engagement in the development of liquid logic as a means to ensure the system supports the role of the IRO |
| Establish a reporting mechanism for the timeliness of distribution of child protection conference plans and minutes | | | |
| IRO Service will work with the specialist minute taking team to ensure that the practice standards and reporting mechanisms are fit for purpose. | IRO Managers, Specialist Minute Taking Team Managers | November 2016 | As above this area remains a high priority going forward into 2017/18 as ongoing strengthening is required to ensure that the administration team is able to meet the needs of the business. |
| Increase participation of children and parents in their meetings | | | |
| Collaborate with | IRO | February | In July 2016 all IROs were provided with smart |

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| participation and engagement colleagues and the change council to increase the use of advocacy, MOMO, other mechanisms. | Service, IRO's, Service Users, Change Council | 2017 | phones to enable the use of MOMO whilst in the community. IROs have undergone further MOMO training in January 2017. The IRO service has attended 2 Change Council meetings to seek the views of young people in relation to the IRO team. Letters were sent to all young people in January 2017 to ensure they were advised of who their IRO was and how to contact the service if needed. |
| Increase the level of pre-review and mid-review visits of IRO's to children | | | |
| <p>IRO managers to ensure that IRO caseloads are sustained within the recommendations of the IRO handbook. (50 -70 cases). To enable IROs to undertake mid-way reviews and pre LA review visits for children and young people.</p> <p>IRO's will continue to manage their diaries effectively.</p> <p>With expectation that midway review and pre CL review visit will be timetabled in advanced of the main review.</p> | IRO Managers , IRO's | December 2016 | The IRO staffing team has been strengthened since 2016 report and the permanent structure has been implemented and recruited to. This has enabled caseloads to remain on average within 10% of the recommendation from the IRO handbook. |
| Achieve effective customer feedback and reporting mechanisms | | | |
| <p>IRO Service will establish feedback mechanisms for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> children and young people families professionals | IRO Managers, IRO's, Change council, Participation and engagement team, QA directorate | February 2017 | <p>The IROs continue to manage their diaries effectively to ensure that they are able to fulfill their IRO duties. This has seen an increase in the number of pre lac review visits being completed and an increase in the number of mid-way reviews. The IRO Service has also developed mechanisms to enable performance data to be reported on within this area of practice.</p> <p>In total 2 Change Council meetings have been attended since the last annual report and arrangements are in place to ensure the IRO Service has an effective link to children and young people in care therefore the IRO services attends Change Council, at the request of young people, on a quarterly basis. Feedback from parents has been strengthened</p> |

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| | | | via the introduction in December 2016 of a feedback questionnaire. Information to date from this questionnaire has highlighted strengths in relation to the services chairing of child protection conferences. The IRO Service has continued to attend multi agency forums and where necessary has reviewed and adapted its practice on the feedback that it has received from peers. |
| Evaluate the increased incident of the category of emotional abuse in the child protection arena | | | |
| Track and analysis children who have protection plans under the category emotional abuse. | IRO Managers , QA Audit functions, IRO's Business Support Staff | February 2017 | Ongoing Overview on the use of emotional abuse is that as there has been a decrease in the use of neglect as the category of registration there has been an increase in the use of emotional. This is due to greater level of understanding by professionals with regards to issues of domestic violence. |
| IRO Service will utilise up to date research and development to improve the quality of practice in the service | | | |
| IRO Managers will liaise with Chief Social Worker and local Universities to promote bespoke learning | IRO Service, Chief Social Worker, local Universities, Research and development forum, QA Directorate | March 2017 | In December 2016 the IRO Manager met with the chief social worker and developed a training matrix for the IRO team. Ongoing training opportunities have been undertaken whilst IROs have attended regional and national training events. IRO to consolidate work with the Chief SW to involve local Universities |
| Whilst at the same time via staff appraisal consideration to be given individual learning needs. | IRO management IRO's | | Staff appraisal remains an area that requires ongoing work |
| IRO Service will continue to improve timeliness of meetings | | | |

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| IRO manager to continue to address the issue of timeliness with other Children Service Managers and ensure that IROs maintain timescales. | IRO Managers , MASH Managers , Business Managers | July 2016 | Issues have presented themselves that have impacted the timeliness of meetings within the IRO Service. In recognition of the impact that this was having for children at the time of request for an ICPC there has been process changes which were agreed in December 2016 as an attempt to improve performance. The IRO Service continues to provide performance data for the improvement board and senior management group. |
| Child protection conference will be held in appropriate child and family centered venues | | | |
| Due to capacity issues and the shortage of suitable venues in which to hold conferences, the IRO Service will collaborate with commissioners to achieve more suitable venues, which meet the needs of our service users. | Head of Service - Commissioning Service, Children's Services | March 2017 | There remains an ongoing pressure with regards to accommodation. The IRO Service uses a wide range of buildings to ensure that it is able to meet the needs of the business. In 2017/18 ongoing reviewing of the services accommodation will need to be in place |
| All quality assurance mechanisms to be further strengthened | | | |
| IRO service is to move into Quality Assurance Directorate which will strengthen QA role of IROs. | Head of Service, QA Directorate, IRO Team | October 2016 | The IRO Service moved into the Quality and Performance Directorate as of 01.09.16. |
| Elevate the sharing of good practice | | | |
| This will be achieved via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision • Appraisal. • Peer audits • Peer observation • Group supervision. | IRO Service | November 2016 | Since September 2016 there has been a team programme of peer observation, group supervision and individual supervisions with staff. In December 2016 the IRO Service reviewed and strengthened its supervision to support outcomes and actions being SMART. In addition to this the auditing team has undertaken audits on 6 of the permanent IRO staff members. In March 2017 an IRO auditing programme started with the IRO management team to ensure the service has the appropriate level of managerial scrutiny. |
| The provision of legal advice to IRO's | | | |

| | | | |
|--|---|----------------|---|
| IRO service to seek confirmation of legal arrangements for access to independent legal advice. | Head of Service | July 2016 | Achieved July 2016 Arrangements were put in place with an independent solicitor to ensure that the IRO Service has access to legal advice. |
| Business Support to the IRO Service to be further strengthened | | | |
| IRO Managers will continue to liaise with Business Managers in order to streamline the allocation process and develop appropriate systems to ensure effective services. | IRO Managers , Business Managers , Business Staff | September 2016 | Achieved In December 2016 administration process was implemented whereby the IRO Service had 1 sole system for arranging ICPCs, RCPCs and CLAs. In addition to this a daily allocation meeting was implemented to take place at a set time. |

Independent Reviewing IRO Priority Plan 2017-18

Priority 1: Recruitment, Retention and staff development

Outcome: All positions within the IRO Services to have a permanent appointment.

To maintain high staff retention rates within the IRO Service.

IRO workforce to be skilled and competent in order to undertake roles effectively.

| Action | Success measure(s) | Lead | Time | RAG Previous | RAG Current | Progress Update |
|--|--|--------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| To seek to appoint to IRO business manager | Business Manager in post | IRO Managers | July 2017 | | | |
| Fully support fully in their development through effective induction, supervision and training | % of staff who feel supported Monthly supervision records Attendance at training courses | IRO Managers | Ongoing | | | |
| All members of staff to have an annual appraisal | % of staff who have received an appraisal every 12 months | IRO Managers | December 2017 | | | |

Priority 2: Improve the IRO footprint and challenge on the child's behalf

Outcome: Further increase the 'footprint' of the IRO on the child's case file in progressing plans and evidencing challenge

| Action | Success measure(s) | Lead | Time | RAG Previous | RAG Current | Progress Update |
|---|--|--|---|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Every looked after child has a mid-way review and all IRO contact is recorded on CCM. | % mid-way reviews within timescale IRO contact and footprint to be evidenced through case file audits | IRO/ IRO Managers and performance team | To be reviewed in the quarterly reports | | | |
| Pre CLA visits to be completed 5 working days prior to the planned review in order to effectively capture the voice of the child. | % of CLA visits completed within timescale To be evidenced through case file audits | IRO/ IRO Managers and performance team | Monthly performance data and findings from monthly audits | | | |

Priority 3: The voice of the child

Outcome: The child's voice/ participation in looked after reviews and child protection conference informs the decisions made on their behalf

| Action | Success measure(s) | Lead | Time | RAG Previous | RAG Current | Progress Update |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Increase use of MOMO/ Viewpoint within looked after reviews and child protection conferences | Number of MOMO statements/viewpoint completed as part of LAC review process | IROs | Monthly via the IRO score card | | | |
| Work effectively with Change Council members to promote the IRO presence and utilise the | IRO service web page for young people IRO attendance at Change Council Voice of Change | IRO management Change Council Young People's Officer | February 2018 | | | |

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| Action | Success measure(s) | Lead | Time | RAG Previous | RAG Current | Progress Update |
|--|--|------|------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| advice offered by Change Council to inform our service development | Council taken into consideration for service development | | | | | |

Priority 4: Integrate business support into the IRO team

Outcome: To have admin service that is fit for purpose in the supporting the IRO business

| Action | Success measure(s) | Lead | Time | RAG Previous | RAG Current | Progress Update |
|--|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| IRO admin service to support the IRO service to meet their statutory requirements | % of minutes circulated in timescale % of invites issued in timescales | IRO Business manager | 30 th July 2017 | | | |
| Business manager to support the IRO service with the development of performance data | Performance information is available each week/month for IRO managers to allow timely challenge to IRO teams. | Business manager/IRO manager s | Monthly | | | |

Priority 5: Strengthen working relationship with Social Work teams

Outcome: To ensure that the IRO service has an effective working relationship with children social worker

| Action | Success measure(s) | Lead | Time | RAG Previous | RAG Current | Progress Update |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| IRO service to maintain and develop on going team links with Social Worker team | Open discussion between IRO services and Social worker teams. Sharing of knowledge between the services | IROs with IRO management oversight | Quarterly | | | |
| Reintroduction of IRO and Team Manager quarterly meeting | Improved working relationships and sharing of information | Service Manger Children's Social Care | Start date Summer 2017 | | | |

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| Action | Success measure(s) | Lead | Time | RAG Previous | RAG Current | Progress Update |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| IRO managers to continue to meet with Service Managers to progress discussion around case themes and issues | Improved working relationships | IRO managers | July 2017 | | | |

Priority 6: Further develop IRO training matrix and improve training opportunities for IRO's

Outcome: to ensure that the IRO service has a training programme to meet staff needs

| Action | Success measure(s) | Lead | Time | RAG Previous | RAG Current | Progress Update |
|--|---|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| All IRO to be registered on the Sunderland learning Hub | Increase in IRO engagement in the training. All IRO to attend the minimum of two training events in a reporting year | IRO Managers | 1 st June 2017 | | | |
| Every IRO to undertake appropriate training to support their personal learning | Every IRO will complete a minimum of one day's professional training | IRO's | 31 st March 2018 | | | |
| IRO team to under taken a quarterly learning event on IRO practice standards | Consistent practice by the IRO team to be evidenced through case file audits | IRO Manager s | Quarterly | | | |

Priority 7: Strengthen IRO services quality assurance and safeguarding oversight

Outcome: Ensure that emerging themes are fed into the QA framework and training programme

| Action | Success measure(s) | Lead | Time | RAG Previous | RAG Current | Progress Update |
|----------------------------|---|-------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| To utilise the information | Improvements in IRO service performance | IRO Manager | Quarterly | | | |

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| Action | Success measure(s) | Lead | Time | RAG Previous | RAG Current | Progress Update |
|---|--|-------------|------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| provided by the IRO scorecard; to identify themes and performance issues within areas of looked after children and child protection | | | | | | |
| Undertake audits to assess quality of IRO work and carry out audit actions | Number of audits completed Audit gradings | IRO Manager | Monthly | | | |
| Peer observation to continue to be undertaken on quarterly cycles to support peer learning | Number of peer audits completed | IRO's | Bi monthly | | | |

Priority 7: To strengthen the IRO Service profile within Sunderland with both professionals and children and young people.

Outcome: IRO Service to become a respected and utilised resource to support better outcomes for children/young people within the City

| Action | Success measure(s) | Lead | Time | RAG Previous | RAG Current | Progress Update |
|---|--|--------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| All IRO's to identify a lead in key areas of work within Together for Children and with partner agencies. | Increased membership of appropriate steering groups | IRO's IRO Managers | February 2018 | | | |
| To develop a web page to inform children and young people about the role of the IRO and the current IRO Team. | Number of young people who know how to contact their IRO. Web analytics to track number of people viewing website | IRO Managers | December 2017 | | | |

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CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

3 JULY 2017

REGULATION 44 VISITS

Report of the Foster Carer Reviewing and Reg.44 Officer

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To provide the members of the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the findings in relation to the Regulation.44 visits to the Sunderland Children's Homes conducted from June 2016 - February 2017.

2. Background

- 2.1 The role of the independent visitor is to carry out the Regulation 44 monthly monitoring visits to all five of Sunderland's children's homes. There are currently two fulltime Foster Carer Reviewing and Reg.44 Officers, who carry out these statutory functions in accordance with current Legislation and Statutory Guidance.
- 2.2 The purpose of the visit is to ensure that all children within the home are being appropriately cared for and that their individual needs are being met, with particular reference to needs arising from their ethnicity, heritage or known disability. This is achieved through a combination of the examination of all appropriate written records and reports with particular reference to the relevant electronic log and any complaints that have been raised. Interviews will also take place with children, parents, relatives and staff as necessary to establish the standard of care being provided. As part of the report, the visitor must set out their opinion as to whether:
- Children are effectively safeguarded and
 - That the conduct of the home promotes children's wellbeing
- 2.3 Visits also assist in service development, providing a regular independent perspective on the functioning of children's residential homes. Consideration of the Regulation 44 reports is included in the Quality of Care and Leadership and Management aspects of Ofsted inspections. The visit should not be viewed as a singular event but rather contribute to building a chronology of the development of the unit to ensure that issues/ recommendations previously identified have been addressed .The checklist that is used to record the findings of the visits is compliant with the nine Quality Standards and Children's Homes Regulations and Guidance (see Appendix 1):

3. Findings Overview from Reg.44 Visits

3.1 Colombo Road

In this reporting period, the home has undergone a number of changes to the staff team. There has been an Acting Deputy Manager in post from March 2016. One member of staff has retired and three members of staff have moved on to work in other areas of the directorate. In December 2016 interviews took place and four new members of staff were appointed. The young people were consulted around their opinions and views in what they would like to see in the qualities of new staff coming to work in their home. The homes manager and members of the senior team have devised an induction process for the new members of staff who are currently being integrated into the staffing group.

The home is well maintained and now has a very smart garden shed called The “Spur” which acts as a video diary space for the young people. It also provides the young people with a relaxing and safe space where they are able to hold Council meetings, in line with the therapeutic practice of “Holding the Space”. The young people and staff have undertaken a number of interesting events to raise money for charity, these have included a fancy dress event for Red Nose Day as part of the “Keep Calm and Say No to Bullying” and a coffee morning for MacMillan cancer. Both were very enjoyable events, and all of the young people participated in making cakes and other sweet treats which included a selection of Vegan goodies as one young person who lives at the home, follows a Vegan lifestyle.

Following all of the Reg.44 visits the home was judged to “effectively safeguard “young people and “promote the children’s well-being”

During the reporting period, three young people were admitted to the home and two young people were discharged.

The home has received seven recommendations following the Regulation44 visits. These are outlined in table one section four of the report.

The home had a full inspection from Ofsted on the 15th November 2016 it was judged to be Good in all three Key areas:

| | |
|---|--|
| The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are. | Good The children’s home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good. |
| How well children and young people are helped and protected. | Good |
| The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers. | Good. |

No Statutory Requirements were made, four recommendations were made, the homes manager has completed an action plan in respect of the recommendations that was submitted to Ofsted and the all recommendations have been actioned.

Councillors James Blackburn and Louise Farthing participated in the Regulation 44 visit to the home on the 5th October 2016.

3.2 Monument View

In this reviewing period the staff team has remained stable, with one member of staff having a period of maternity leave, this leave was covered by a relief member of staff known to the young people. The home has also recruited two relief staff to ensure consistency and continuity for the young people in the event of any staffing issues. The home is well maintained and there is a large area at the back of the home which contains a small holding, with an allotment, rabbits, Guinea pigs, geese, ducks, and chickens, there is also a large ornamental pond with fish and a number of Dovecotes. There have been a number of problems with regards to the doves causing mess to the roof and the back of the home, which has been cleaned with a power hose.

Currently the construction of a yurt is taking place to create a relaxing and safe area to hold a Council meeting, in line with the therapeutic practice of "Holding the Space". The young people have raised the funds and also designed the yurt. Two successful bids to the Council's Community Chest Fund, have been made, which entailed the young people having to complete an application and present in to a panel of 8 Councillors. This has had a positive impact and enabled among other things a path to be laid in the smallholding creating wheelchair access.

The young people have also raised £500 to help purchase materials for us to build a bigger fish tank for the home's giant Gourami "Bilbo", the aim is to involve young people in the building of the new fish tank.

Young people and staff have completed a charity cycle ride for the charity 'George's Journey' raising money for a young person who suffers from Muscular Dystrophy, over the time that the young people and staff have been supporting this charity they have raised a fantastic amount, amounting to over £18,000, this is on-going with another cycle ride planned for summer 2017. One young person who lives at the home is a very active member of the "Change Council" and has helped to organise the first ever Christmas Party for Children Looked After (CLA). Recently the home has been awarded a platinum anti-bullying award in recognition of its work in this area.

Following all of the Reg.44 visits the home was judged to "effectively safeguard" young people and "promote the children's well-being."

During the reporting two young people were admitted to the home and two young people discharged.

The home has received three recommendations following Reg.44 visits as outlined in the table section four of the report.

The home had a full inspection from Ofsted on the 27th June 2016 it was judged to be Outstanding in one and Good in the three Key areas:

| | |
|---|--|
| The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are. | Outstanding The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standard of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and care. |
| How well children and young people are helped and protected. | Good |
| The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers. | Good. |

No Statutory Requirements were made, 3 recommendations were made, the home's manager has completed an action plan in respect of the recommendations that was submitted to Ofsted and the all recommendations have been actioned.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services Cllr. Louise Farthing participated in the Reg. 44 visit to the home on the 10th October 2016.

3.3 Grasswell House

Prior to this reporting period, a member of the Senior team transferred to another home in the City and this vacancy was successfully filled by an internal candidate. In October a member of staff who had a 28hr per week post at the home retired, interviews took place in December and the successful candidate took up her post in January 2017. The young people were consulted around their opinions and views in what they would like to see in the qualities of new staff coming to work in their home. The participation and engagement officer worked with the young people to establish two questions that were asked during the interviewing process.

The home is well maintained throughout and it now has a large log cabin in the spacious back garden. This is used for a number of activities, there is a table tennis table and other games/activity equipment, the space is also used as a safe place in which to hold the therapeutic "Holding the Space" "Council" meetings. The home has recently had a new boiler installed which was much needed due reliability issues with the old one. The home is set in the ground, where a large Council building was also once stood, with access via a shared drive. Since this building was pulled down the surrounding grounds have not been well maintained. In particular the lighting has been an area of concern as this has caused difficulty for young people as they leave and return to the home as they use a shared driveway.

The staff members at the home have tried their best to keep this area of grass and concrete neat and tidy however it is a large area and it has proven impossible to maintain to a reasonable standard, which has led to the surrounding area looking dilapidated. During Cllr. Farthing's visit to the home, the homes manager raised these issues and Cllr. Farthing was able to put the manager in touch with the relevant contact to sort out these issues. The home made a successful bid to the Community Chest fund and the award is going toward helping to landscape the large gardens to the side and back of the home. Young people supported by staff

prepared the plans for the proposed landscaping and are looking forward to seeing them put into place.

A young person who lives at the home took part in the Tall Ships Race and stated that it was “fantastic and a life changing experience”. Other young people visited London to attend the Youth Parliament and one young person as part of his a member of stage and film school, gained a place as an extra in the film I, Daniel Blake, which also meant that he was invited to a special opening night showing at the Tyneside Cinema. Young people and staff took part in a charity fund raising event for the BBC Children in Need Appeal, they undertook a sponsored row challenge attempting to row the length of the Chanel on a rowing machine, much fun was had and a substantial donation was made to the charity.

Following all of the Reg.44 visits the home was judged to “effectively safeguard “young people and “promote the children’s well-being.

During the reporting four young people were admitted to the home and three young people discharged.

The home has received six recommendations following Reg.44 visits as outlined in the table section four of the report.

The home had a full inspection from Ofsted on the 2nd August 2016 it was judged to be Good in the three Key areas:

| | |
|---|--|
| The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are. | Good The children’s home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good. |
| How well children and young people are helped and protected. | Good |
| The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers. | Good. |

Two Statutory Requirements and four recommendations were made, the homes manger has completed an action plan in respect of the Statutory Requirements and recommendations, that was submitted to Ofsted and the all recommendations have been actioned.

Councillors Juliana Heron and Christine Marshall participated in the Reg. 44 visit to the home on the 3th October 2016.

The Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services Councillor Louise Farthing participated in the Reg. 44 visit to the home on the 7th December 2016.

3.4 Revelstoke Road

In this reporting period a senior member of staff has moved to another service within the Directorate, this post was filled by an existing member of the staff team, another member of staff has had his contract terminated in a mutual agreement. Two workers from the relief pool have been appointed to permanent part time posts and a

new full-time member of staff took up post in February 2017. By appointing the two relief workers and the internal promotion, continuity and constancy with regards to the care provided for the young people has been achieved.

The home is well maintained throughout and there has been a big push to ensure that young people have a choice of decoration, furnishings and fittings that they wish to have in their rooms. When a bedroom becomes vacant it is redecorated in neutral shades, with new furniture, which means that when a new young person moves into the room they have time to get used to their room and can begin to personalise it with help and support from their Link Worker. There has been some delay in refurbishing a large room to the back of the home on the ground floor, which is to provide a place for the young people and staff to spend quiet "chill out" time together and also to be used as a quiet space in which to hold the therapeutic "Holding the Space" "Council" meetings. The manager has been requested to complete this work via a recommendation following a recent Reg.44 visit and is to ensure that this work is completed as soon as possible.

Three young people have been very active in the Change Council and have been involved in a number of initiatives/activities, these have included attending the Youth Parliament in London, helping to make a DVD around post 18 provisions in the City and the organization of a Christmas Party for children looked after, at the Stadium of Light. Young people have also contributed very successfully to "in your shoes" training and the training for Elected Members. One young person who has now moved on from the home is currently employed as an apprentice with the Council, in the post of Participation and Engagement Officer. A young person took part in the Tall Ships Race sailing to Scandinavia; he stated it was "great, I would do it again anytime".

The young people were also instrumental in arranging and organizing a short break to Amsterdam, booking transport, accommodation and drawing up the holiday itinerary.

Following the Ofsted Full Inspection in August 2016 when the "Impact and Effectiveness of Home Managers" was judged to Require Improvement, work has been undertaken within the home by the manager to ensure that there is a robust and effective quality assurance structure in place, which includes members of the senior team to undertake their role within the quality systems within the home. The Strategic Service Manager has also been supporting the homes manager with this task. The Ofsted Full Inspection in August 2016 when the "Impact and Effectiveness of Home Managers" was judged to Require Improvement. The inspection report highlighted a number of areas that were found to be in need of improvement; in the main these were issues around having a robust and effective quality assurance structure in place, which includes members of the senior team undertaking their role within the quality systems. With regards to the manager the inspector has highlighted that he is now aware of the strengths and areas for development within the home, but continues to struggle to have an impact on the culture of the team. Work has been undertaken within the home, by the manager to ensure that improvements have been made to the quality assurance structure, which includes members of the senior team to undertake their role within the quality systems within the home, the appointment of a new senior member of staff has also strengthened this process and

has also created a more robust senior team, that will hopefully be able to have a positive impact on the culture within the team. The Strategic Service Manager has also been supporting the homes manager with these tasks via supervision and support of the homes manager.

Also highlighted was that staff needed to be more familiar with the Quality Standards and as a whole staff team it was found that a way to gain a better understanding of the Standards was for each week in the team meeting, a staff member to “adopt” a Standard, summarizing what was already being done in the home to meet the Standard and then the whole team were able to work together to ensure a more robust approach to improve on practice in the home. Alongside this work on an action plan, was put into place. Work on improvement in these areas is ongoing.

On-going monitoring, discussion and support is taking place with the manager and senior team in Reg.44 visits, updates are sought on progress, with feedback, advice and support being provided.

Following all of the Reg.44 visits the home was judged to “effectively safeguard “young people and “promote the children’s well-being.

During the reporting period four young people have been admitted to the home and four young people discharged.

The home has received 12 recommendations following Reg.44 visits as outlined in the table section four of the report.

The home had a full inspection from Ofsted on the 8 August 2016 it was judged as Requires Improvement in two Key areas and Inadequate in one Key area.

| | |
|---|--|
| The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are. | Requires Improvement The children’s home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. |
| How well children and young people are helped and protected. | Requires Improvement |
| The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers. | Inadequate. |

Five Statutory Requirements and no recommendations were made, the homes manger has completed an action plan in respect of the Statutory Requirements, that was submitted to Ofsted and the all recommendations have been actioned. (Some of these actions have been outlined above)

Councillor Victoria O’Neil participated in the Reg. 44 visit to the home on the 14th October 2016.

The Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services Councillor Louise Farthing participated in

the Reg. 44 visit to the home on the 9th November 2016.

3.5 Sea View Road West

In this reporting period, the staff team at the Short Breaks Unit for children with disabilities has remained stable with only one staffing change with a member of staff being granted a sabbatical period. Staff have completed the following training; Level 3 training and residential care for a relief member of staff, Level 5 diploma in leadership and Management is being progressed by 3 staff members.

The home is well maintained throughout; there have been some signs of wear and tear, notably in the homes bathrooms; the large bathroom, walk-in shower room and the carpet in the hallway. These areas have now been actioned; the large bathroom is to have new flooring fitted, a new carpet has been fitted throughout the hallway, a total refurbishment has been ordered for the walk-in shower room, these refurbishments when completed will greatly improve the appearance of the home. The home now has a number of “safe space” beds/pods, these are specialist pod type beds that offer a safe and calming area for children with special needs, they are especially effective in calming young people who are on the Autistic Spectrum, they have proven to be highly successful and it is reported that a number of parents have installed them in their children’s bedrooms at home. (“Safe space” beds are endorsed by the British Institute of Learning Disability: BILD) The home also has a very well equipped sensory room and a large cinema room.

There is an extensive garden to the side of the home which is well maintained with an outdoor play area with wheelchair and bucket swings, at the rear of the home there is a greenhouse and the young people have cultivate a number of crops including strawberries and other soft fruits

The homes Ofsted Full inspection in November 2016; “the overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home” and “how well children and young people are helped and protected” were judged to “Require Improvement” and “the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers” was judged to be “Inadequate”

The areas requiring improvement included leadership and management shortfalls. These related to the monitoring of records, auditing, the evaluation of young people’s placement plans, risk assessments and support plans not being followed and managers not providing staff with practice guidance that supports young people’s development. Following the issuing of the inspection report in January 2017, the manager has put in place a number of measures to ensure that the practice within the home is moving towards improvement.

The Manager has implemented measures to improve work around the Quality and Purpose of Care Standard; within staff supervision in, weekly staff meetings and there are now regular practice guidance sessions on an on-going. Alongside this staff have received training and professional guidance in the areas of understanding of the overall aims and objectives they seek to achieve for the children and young people in their care and understanding of how the homes statement and purpose needs are mirrored in the child’s individual plans, and how best to identify and meet the area of need to guarantee, protect and promote each child’s welfare.

Staff have been provided with guidance in how to complete a more robust risk assessment for each child, an audit system on each of the children's risk assessments has now been put in place by the manager, to ensure that the assessments are robust and identify ways to manage risks and ensure the children's safety and wellbeing are paramount. The staff team have been provided with practice guidance sessions to ensure that they fully understand the Care Planning Standard so that are able to carry out their role as Key Workers to ensure the best possible outcome for children and young people. Alongside this work an action plan, was put into place, work on improvement in these areas on-going

On-going monitoring, discussion and support is taking place with the manager and senior team in Reg.44 visits, updates are sought on progress, with feedback, advice and support being provided.

Following all of the Reg.44 visits the home was judged to "effectively safeguard "young people and "promote the children's well-being.

As this is a Short Breaks Unit young people are admitted to the home and discharged, on a regular basis.

The home has received 5 recommendations following Reg.44 visits as outlined in the section four of the report.

The home had a full inspection from Ofsted on the 23rd November 2016 it was judged as Requires Improvement in two Key areas and Inadequate in one Key area.

| | |
|---|--|
| The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are. | Requires Improvement The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. |
| How well children and young people are helped and protected. | Requires Improvement |
| The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers. | Inadequate. |

5 Statutory Requirements and no recommendations were made, the homes manger has completed an action plan in respect of the Statutory Requirements, that was submitted to Ofsted and the all recommendations have been actioned. (Some of these actions have been outlined above)

Cllr. Graeme Miller participated in the Reg. 44 visit to the home on the 14th October 2016.

4 Recommendations:

| Quality Standard | Grasswell House | Monument View | Revelstoke | Colombo | Sea View Road West |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|---------|--------------------|
| Quality and Purpose of Care | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Children's Wishes and Views | | | | | |
| Enjoyment and Achievement | | | | | |
| Health and Wellbeing | 1 | | | | |
| Positive Relationships | | | 1 | 2 | |
| Protection of Children | 1 | | 6* | 1 | 2 |
| Leadership and Management | | | 2 | 2 | |
| Care Planning | 1 | 1 | | | 1 |

*These recommendations in the main related to recording within documents relating to the Protection of Children, not being completed correctly and robustly quality assured by the manager and senior team.

5 Key Messages:

- 5.1** All of our homes have had a Full Ofsted inspection in this reporting period, with one home gaining the judgment of outstanding in the key area of the overall progress and experience of children and young people living at the home. All of the homes are well maintained, are homely and provide safe and secure environments, for children and young people. The work with young people using the "Holding the Space" therapeutic "Council" meetings continues to grow and develop and is proving a valuable tool for promoting resilience and self-esteem in many young people.
- 5.2** Young people are encouraged and supported to lead active lifestyles and a number have taken part in very interesting activities such as; attending the Youth Parliament, taking part in the Tall Ships race, organizing a Christmas party for CLA across the city, a number of homes have helped and supported young people to help others, by organizing charity fund raising events. Quality assurance systems on the whole are in place across the homes, however leaders and managers need to ensure that this is robust, effective and sustainable. Managers and senior staff need to ensure that recommendations

that are made during the visits are fully acted upon, in a consistent manner, thus helping towards the imbedding of quality assurance systems across all of the homes the support and scrutiny of Elected Members, continues to add value and oversight to the visits.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1** The report has covered all five homes giving an update on Ofsted findings, and actions taken in respect of Statutory Requirements and Recommendations and a brief outline of achievements and activities within the homes.

Appendix 1 - 9 Quality Standards and Children's Homes Regulations and Guidance

- Quality and Purpose of Care
- Children's Wishes and Views
- Education
- Enjoyment and Achievement
- Health and Wellbeing
- Positive Relationships
- Protection of Children
- Leadership and Management
- Care Planning

Areas for Scrutiny:

- Are children effectively safeguarded in this home?
- Staff Actions are child centred
- Risks known, assessed, understood and responded to
- Plans are kept under regular review
- Issues anticipated

Also to be monitored the Impact and Effectiveness of Leaders and Managers:

- Does this Children's Home promote Well-being?
- Leadership is child centred
- Staff sufficiently trained, stable and competent, supervised and supported.
- Leaders and managers actively and regularly monitor the quality of care provided
- Know systems, strengths and weaknesses and take action if needed
- Work in partnership.

Independent Visitors must be able to:

- Relate to children in the home
- Assess all relevant information
- Form an impartial judgment about the quality of the homes care.

