

# **Independent Reviewing Officer Service Child Protection Annual Report 2016/17**

## **1 Purpose of the Annual Report**

- 1.1 This report covers the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017. The report will be presented to the Sunderland Safeguarding Board, Children Services Senior Management Team, Corporate Parenting Board and the Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.2 The report updates on the progress made since the last annual report 2015-2016 and the impact that the work has had upon children and young people. The report provides an overview of areas of service improvement, emerging themes, examples of good practice and the IRO service priorities for the next 12 months. The report focus is upon performance in relation to Child Protection. A separate report is provided in relation to Looked After Children

## **2 The role and function of the Child Protection Chair within Child Protection**

- 2.1 The Independent Reviewing Service (IROs) has a dual role of Independent Reviewing Officer and Child Protection Conference Chair (CPCC). This report focuses upon the role of the CPCC
- 2.2 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 outlines the following in relation to the CPCC role:-
  - Is accountable to the Director of Children's Services.
  - Where possible the same CPCC should chair subsequent Child Protection Reviews.
  - Should be a professional, independent of operation and/or line management responsibilities for the case.
  - Should meet the child and parent in advance to ensure they understand the purpose and the process.
- 2.3 The central role of the CPCC is to ensure that Child Protection Conferences are managed and chaired in accordance with the above and Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board's (SCCB) Child Protection Procedures.

## **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 CPCC/IRO service due to retirement. As the overall capacity has increased, there has been a strong emphasis on recruitment to a permanent team. The recruitment drive has been very successful and by June 2017, all newly appointed IRO 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 work force.
- 3.4 All CPCC/ IRO's in Sunderland are qualified Social Workers and are registered with the Health Care Professionals Council. They undertake a dual role of CPCC/IRO and all 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
- 3.5 The IRO Service has maintained its independent scrutiny and challenge through:-
- Strengthening and communicating directly with children and young people to understand their views, wishes and feelings about what they want to happen and how their CP Plan could help reduce risk for them.
  - Building upon relationships with Social Workers, Team Managers, Operational Managers and Directors through open discussion around practice and service developments and ensuring every team has a dedicated CPCC/IRO link person.
  - Sharing of monthly data in relation to DRP's and QPR's with Children's Social Care, identifying themes and practice issues.
  - The development of the Independent Review Service score card will support and direct service priorities on a monthly basis.
  - Strengthened relationships with Elected Members and raised awareness of the role of the CPCC has been achieved via the presentation of the annual report to both the corporate parenting group and the scrutiny committee and in participation in elected members training.

- The service now has a clear pathway to seek independent legal advice should there be a need.
- The IRO service has continued to work closely with SSCB members by attending the Quality Assurance sub group and undertaken auditing work on their behalf.

#### **4 Child Protection Process for Children and Young People 2016/17**

- 4.1 On the 31st March 2017, Sunderland had 425 children who were subject of child protection plans. At the same period of time last year Sunderland had 438 children subject to child protection plans this represents a reduction of 2.7% of children subject of plans.
- 4.2 On the 31 March 2017, the rate of children subject to a child protection plan per 10,000 children in Sunderland was 78.3% this is reduction on the same period last year of 80.1%

#### **5 Timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC's)**

- 5.1 The performance relating to the timeliness of ICPC's is calculated by how many conferences are held within 15 working days from the date of the strategy meeting, whereby the decision has been made to undertake a child protection investigation. The outturn 2016/17 showed 80% of all ICPC's were held within timescale. This represents a 14% increase in our performance compared with the previous year.
- 5.2 Reasons for ICPC's being out of timescale are reported to senior management. During this reporting year ICPC timescales have not been met for the following reasons:
- Late notification
  - Calculation Error
  - Missing Report
  - Non-Attendance by Social Worker
  - Conference not quorate
- 5.3 The national average for the percentage of ICPC's held in timescale is 77%. Whilst Sunderland performance is above the national average at 80%, the IRO service continues to work with Children's Social Care to improve in this area. The following actions are being undertaken:
- Monthly reporting to senior management in Social Care, to ensure updated information with regards to reasons why ICPC's go out of timescales is shared; so that if need be this can be addressed with individuals.

- A new allocation process has been put into place to ensure that ICPC's are now provisionally planned at the start of the section 47 investigation giving Social Care and the IRO Service the full 15 days to plan the ICPC.
- Strengthen the CPCC role through the use of the Quality Performance Records process (QPR) to ensure that practice themes are raised.

## **6 Timeliness of Child Protection Reviews**

- 6.1 The SSCB procedure states the following with regards to the timeliness of reviewing:-
- 6.2 "The Child Protection Plan and its criteria should be reviewed at a Child Protection Review Conference (RCPC) which should be held within three months of the Initial Child Protection Conference and then at intervals of no more than 6 months."
- 6.3 The outturn for 2016/17 showed that 98% of RCPC's were held in timescale. For eight months within the year performance was either 99% or 100%. The lowest performing month was August 2016 at 96%, due to issues of attendance.
- 6.4 The reasons for conferences being held out of timescale are as follows:
- Calculation error
  - Missing Report
  - Non-attendance by a significant person
  - Non-attendance by a social worker

## **7 Progression of Child Protection Plans**

- 7.1 In March 2016 there were 55 children and young people who were subject to plan for more than 12 months compared with 57 in March 2017. Work is being undertaken with Child Protection Conference Chairs to ensure that where it is identified that a child or young person has been the subject of a child protection plan for more than 12 months, the Chair must ask, on behalf of the child or young person the reasons why. Where it is identified that the delay in the plan is due to practice issues the CPCC is aware of their responsibility to raise a QPR.

## **8 Quality Performance Reports (QPR's)**

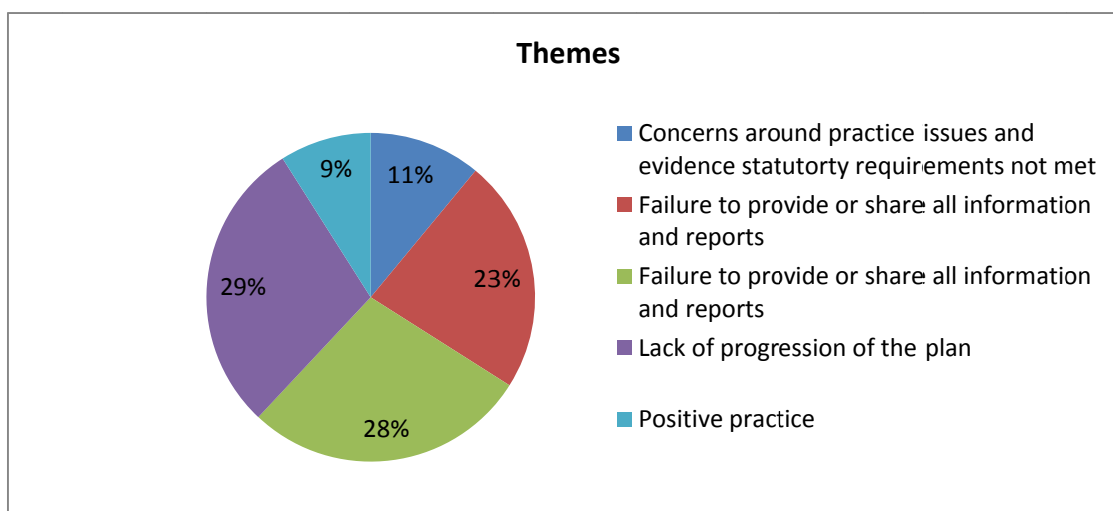
- 8.1 In Sunderland, the Child Protection Conference Chair has the responsibility to raise any quality or performance issues within the QPR process. The purpose is to ensure that for issues of drift and delay in the planning for a child or young person there is a timely resolution in keeping with the child or young person's need. The QPR process is a 5 stage process with a 20 working day timescale from start to finish.

8.2 There were 98 QPR's in 2016/17. 10 of these were raised with Health, Housing, Police, YMCA and Counted 4, a drug and alcohol service. The remaining 88 were raised with Children's Social Care.

8.3 As the table below shows, 94 were dealt with at the informal or stage 1 of the procedure, indicating the commitment by all parties to the swift resolution of concerns raised by the CPCC. There were only 4 disputes escalated to stage 2.

	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4		Total	
Informal	0	0.00%	3	15.00%	3	14.29%	10	45.45%	16	16.33%
Stage 1	34	97.14%	15	75.00%	17	80.95%	12	54.55%	78	79.59%
Stage 2	1	2.86%	2	10.00%	1	4.76%	0	0.00%	4	4.08%
Stage 3	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Stage 4	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Stage 5	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

8.4 QPR's are issues in relation to 5 main areas. The main themes raised this year within the QPR process are shown below:



8.5 It is acknowledged that there is still a varying degree of use in respect of the QPR procedure within the Service. Training was delivered in March 2017 to all members of the IRO Service to ensure everyone is aware of when and how to apply the process. The training will now be part of a rolling programme delivered to CPCC/IRO's annually and with new employees as part of their induction programme.

8.6 Individual performance data in relation to QPRs is used as a tool to discuss individual CPCC's challenge during supervision sessions. It is hoped that by improving the consistent and persistent use of this process it will support the on-going improvement

for children/young people and therefore assist in raising standards and evidence themes and learning needs for all going forward.

## **9 Engagement with Children and Young People**

- 9.1 The IRO service in Sunderland uses a number of different means to seek to engage children and young people in the child protection conference process. Children and young people (as appropriate) are invited to attend child protection conferences and reviews.
- 9.2 Where children and young people are in attendance, the CPCC will invite them into a pre-meeting half an hour prior to the start of the conference as means to support their engagement. Where a child/young person is not attending a conference, the CPCC will encourage professionals working with the child or young person to collect their views either through the use of the child protection conference pack or the use of the MOMO application (Mind of My Own).
- 9.3 In the past year a total of 129 MOMO statements were completed by children/young people to enable them to share their views.

## **10 Parents views regarding conference chair's performance.**

- 10.1 In December 2016 the IRO service introduced a questionnaire to ask parents for their views on the Conference Chair's role during the course of the meeting. The completion of the questionnaire was optional.
- 10.2 During this time a total of 58 questionnaires were completed, 18 from parents who attended an ICPC and the remainder from those parents in attendance at Child Protection Reviews. A copy of the questionnaire is attached in appendix 1.
- 10.3 Analysis from the 58 completed questionnaires shows that parents feel Chairs are providing clear information about the purpose of initial child protection conferences or child protection reviews and that the Chairs are supportive, ensuring that parents' views are shared and heard during the course of the conference.
- 10.4 All parents agreed that Chairs were clear about what needed to change to promote the ending the Child Protection plan for their child or young person. A couple examples of statements provided via the questionnaires are below:

*"The Chair is keeping people informed about the updates".*

*"The Chair ensured that all professionals turn up on time with the correct and appropriate information was shared"*

## 11 Partnership Working

11.1 The IRO service in Sunderland is committed to working in partnership with agencies across the multi-agency spectrum to achieve best practice. The service is currently working closely with partners on the development of Liquid Logic, the new electronic social care system, to ensure it supports the needs of all services. The child protection plan template has also been reviewed with partners.

11.2 The IRO service has continued to be involved in key groups and developments:-

- Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB)
- SSCB audit work in the area of child protection minutes to improve standards
- SSCB Quality Assurance Sub Committee
- SSCB training in relation to safeguarding children
- Lessons learned events with multi-agency professionals to identify improvement in CP practise
- Regional training in the area of safeguarding
- IRO team attachment with Social Work teams to share and support learning in the area of child protection
- Delivery of bespoke training for Children's Services and partners
- Family Group Conference
- Independent legal advice for the IRO service

## 12 What are we doing well?

12.1 Professionals have provided examples of the positive work of Child Protection Conference Chairs:-

- *"The Chair enabled all of the concerns and strengths to be shared and discussed in a really strengths-focused and child-focused manner, and ultimately this is what was able to de-escalate the family (even granddad) and get them to agree to co-operate with us."*
- *"The Chair had understanding of the risks and how they could be best managed. CPCC had clearly taken time to make themselves aware of the issues, CPCC controlled the meeting, and was directive when required and allowed everyone the opportunity to contribute. CPCC's case management was similarly good.....I was impressed. "*
- *"I just wanted to commend CPCC on how they managed and handled the meeting. Father, is a serial complainer who is also extremely manipulative, rigid in his views and can be difficult to engage effectively meaningfully with. I felt that CPCC handled father really well as she kept re-focusing him back on the views of his children".*



- *“Professionals prior to the meeting had been typically avoidant telling the father that ‘we don’t have concerns’ leaving Children’s services as the only agency raising concerns despite their involvement in the Strategy meeting before the ICPC. In addressing the professionals, CPCC asked each one to summarise their involvement and specify the concerns. This I felt was skilful in moving past professionals’ fear of the father and again focussing on the children.”*
- *“Overall, I felt the CPCC was very well supportive as I had gone into this conference already anxious because of father’s threats to sue/complain about my involvement.”*

### **13 What has this service achieved in 2016/17?**

13.1 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 further information in Appendix 2.

- *Improving Performance Data* - The availability of performance data 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.
- *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.
- *Customer feedback* - Feedback from parents has been strengthened 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.

## **14 What do we need to do? Priorities for 2017/18**

14.1 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 3 for further information).

- Recruitment, retention and staff development – ensuring that all positions have a permanent appointment by June 2017 and ensuring that staff are fully trained to undertake their roles effectively.
- Further improve the Child Protection Conference Chair footprint and challenge on the child's case file in progressing plans and evidencing informal challenge.
- Continue to strengthen the voice of the child in looked after reviews and child protection conferences.
- Integrate the Business Support unit into the IRO Service
- Continue to build and improve relationships
- Continue to challenge the quality of practice and ensuring that emerging themes are fed into the training programme
- To strengthen the IRO Service profile in Sunderland with professionals and young people.

## Appendix 1: Parent/Carer Questionnaire

Family Name \_\_\_\_\_ (Please Print)

Date and Time of Conference \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_ (Please print)

Type of Conference:

Initial ☐

Review ☐

Transfer in ☐

**Parents/carers we would be grateful if you could spend some time completing this form.**

1) The Chair explained to me before the meeting what was going to happen

Strongly Agree

☐

Agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐

2) The Chair supported me so I was able to share my views within the conference

Strongly Agree

☐

Agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐

3) The concerns for my children were clearly explained with the conference

Strongly Agree

☐

Agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐

4) I am clear about what needs to change/happen for the conference to be able to consider ending the Child protection plan

Strongly Agree

☐

Agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐

Not Applicable

☐

**For review Conference only:**

5) The Child Protection Plan helped my family achieve positive change

Strongly Agree

☐

Agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐

Is there anything else that you would like to tell us which might help us improve the experience for parents attending a Child Protection conference?

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**Thank you for taking the time to complete this feedback form.**

putting  
the child first

Working on behalf of Sunderland City Council

[www.togetherforchildren.org.uk](http://www.togetherforchildren.org.uk)

## Appendix 2: IRO Service priorities for 2016/17

Action	Lead	Deadline	Annual Update 31.03.2017
<b>Enhance the stability of the workforce as part of future developments</b>			
<b>Recruit permanent staff to:</b> <b>IRO managers</b> <b>IRO LADO</b> <b>Foster Carer</b> <b>Reviewing Officer</b>	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.
<b>Enhanced Team development and cohesion</b>			
<b>Team Development day to be arranged.</b>	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.
<b>Remove barriers affecting performance in relation to CCM V29</b>			
<b>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</b>	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.
<b>Achieve a more effective case escalation process for practice alerts</b>			
<b>DRP and QPR processes to be reviewed and updated to include an informal stage of resolution.</b>  <b>IRO's, IRO Management and business support to further develop tracking of DRPs and QPR.</b>	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 challenge by using a sole process for both child protection and looked after.

Action	Lead	Deadline	Annual Update 31.03.2017
<b>Achieve a more systematic data collation and reporting mechanism in respect of Children looked after</b>			
<b>Ensure a single practice/SMART pro forma for recording review decisions and review minutes.</b>	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.
<b>Reduce the choice of CCM tabs to record IRO pre-review and mid-term visits from three to two to avoid potential for mistake.</b>	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.
<b>Strengthen the admin function in relation to this.</b>	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.
<b>To engage in the development of any new IT system for Children Services</b>	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
<b>Establish a reporting mechanism for the timeliness of distribution of child protection conference plans and minutes</b>			
<b>IRO Service will work with the specialist minute taking team to ensure that the practice standards and reporting mechanisms are fit for purpose.</b>	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.
<b>Increase participation of children and parents in their meetings</b>			
<b>Collaborate with participation and engagement colleagues and the change council to increase the use of advocacy, MOMO, other mechanisms.</b>	IRO Service, IRO's, Service Users, Change Council	February 2017	In July 2016 all IROs were provided with smart 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.

Action	Lead	Deadline	Annual Update 31.03.2017
<b>Increase the level of pre-review and mid-review visits of IRO's to children</b>			
<p><b>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.</b></p> <p><b>IRO's will continue to manage their diaries effectively.</b></p> <p><b>With expectation that midway review and pre CL review visit will be timetabled in advanced of the main review.</b></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.
<b>Achieve effective customer feedback and reporting mechanisms</b>			
<p><b>IRO Service will establish feedback mechanisms for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>children and young people</b></li> <li><b>families</b></li> <li><b>professionals</b></li> </ul>	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 Iac 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 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.</p>

Action	Lead	Deadline	Annual Update 31.03.2017
<b>Evaluate the increased incident of the category of emotional abuse in the child protection arena</b>			
<b>Track and analysis children who have protection plans under the category emotional abuse.</b>	IRO Managers, QA Audit functions, IRO's Business Support Staff	February 2017	<b>Ongoing</b> 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.
<b>IRO Service will utilise up to date research and development to improve the quality of practice in the service</b>			
<b>IRO Managers will liaise with Chief Social Worker and local Universities to promote bespoke learning</b>	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
<b>Whilst at the same time via staff appraisal consideration to be given individual learning needs.</b>	IRO management IRO's		Staff appraisal remains an area that requires ongoing work
<b>IRO Service will continue to improve timeliness of meetings</b>			
<b>IRO manager to continue to address the issue of timeliness with other Children Service Managers and ensure that IROs maintain timescales.</b>	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.
<b>Child protection conference will be held in appropriate child and family centered venues</b>			
<b>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</b>	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



Action	Lead	Deadline	Annual Update 31.03.2017
venues, which meet the needs of our service users.			
<b>All quality assurance mechanisms to be further strengthened</b>			
<b>IRO service is to move into Quality Assurance Directorate which will strengthen QA role of IROs.</b>	Head of Service, QA Directorate, IRO Team	October 2016	The IRO Service moved into the Quality and Performance Directorate as of 01.09.16.
<b>Elevate the sharing of good practice</b>			
<b>This will be achieved via:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision</li> <li>• Appraisal.</li> <li>• Peer audits</li> <li>• Peer observation</li> <li>• Group supervision.</li> </ul>	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.
<b>The provision of legal advice to IRO's</b>			
<b>IRO service to seek confirmation of legal arrangements for access to independent legal advice.</b>	Head of Service	July 2016	<b>Achieved July 2016</b> Arrangements were put in place with an independent solicitor to ensure that the IRO Service has access to legal advice.
<b>Business Support to the IRO Service to be further strengthened</b>			
<b>IRO Managers will continue to liaise with Business Managers in order to streamline the allocation process and develop appropriate systems to ensure effective services.</b>	IRO Managers, Business Managers, Business Staff	September 2016	<b>Achieved</b> 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.



# IRO Service-Conference Chair

## Priority Plan 2017-18

### Priority 1: Recruitment, retention and staff development

**Outcome:** All positions to have a permanent appointment.  
To maintain high staff retention rates within the Service.  
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			
All new IRO appointees to be in post no later than June 2017	No further requirement for agency staff in the IRO Service	IRO Managers	May 2017			
Fostering Reviewing and Reg. 44 Officer to be in post	Fostering Reviewing and Reg. 44 Officer in post	Gavin Taylor	May 2017			
Fully support staff 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 CPCC footprint and challenge on the child's behalf

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

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG Previous	RAG Current	Progress Update
Prior to conference every child over the age of 4 years has the opportunity to communicate / contact their identified CPCC and that the CPCC records on CCM this contact thus evidencing the CPCC's footprint.	Improved performance data.	IRO Managers	September 2017			

## Priority 3: The voice of the child

**Outcome:** To strengthen evidence that the child's voice/ participation in looked after reviews and child protection conferences informs the decisions made on their behalf

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG Previous	RAG Current	Progress Update
Increase use of MOMO within child protection conferences	Evidence the use of MOMO statements within CLA minutes.  To be evidenced through case file audits and performance information.	Child Protection Conference Chairs	Monthly via the IRO score card			.
Work effectively with Change Council members to promote the IRO/CPCC presence and utilise the advice offered by Change Council to inform our service development	IRO service web page developed for young people	IRO Manages Change Council Young People's Officer	February 2018			

#### 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 to support the service to meet its statutory requirements in terms of the disruption of CP minutes and plans to reduce the current backlog	Improvement to be achieved with regards to performance in this area	Business Manager	July 2017			
Business manager to support the IRO service with the production of relevant and timely performance data	Monthly scorecard	Business Manager/IRO managers	Monthly			

#### Priority 5: Strengthen working relationship with Social Work team

**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
<b>IRO service to maintain and develop on going team links with Social Worker team</b>	Open discussions between IRO services and the Social worker teams. Sharing of knowledge between the services	IROs with IRO management oversight	Quarterly			
<b>Reintroduction of IRO and Team Manager quarterly meeting</b>	Improved working relationships and sharing of information	Service Manger Children's Social Care	Summer 2017			
<b>IRO managers to continue to meet with Service Managers to progress discussion around case themes and issues</b>	Improved working relationships	IRO manager	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/CPCC's to be registered on the City Sunderland learning Hub	There increase in IRO/CPCC engagement in the IRO training. All IRO/CPCC to attend the minimum of two training events in a reporting year.	IRO's	June 2017			
Every IRO/CPCC to undertake appropriate training to support their personal learning	Every IRO/CPCC will complete a minimum of one day's professional training.	IRO's	March 2018			.

**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 provided by the IRO scorecard; to identify themes and performance issues within areas of looked after children and child protection	To be evidenced via performance information and case file auditing	IRO Managers	Quarterly			
Undertake audits to assess quality of IRO work and carry our audit actions	Number of audits completed  Audit gradings	IRO Managers	Monthly			
Peer observation to continue to be undertaken on quarterly cycles to support peer learning	Improve consistency of practise by IRO's	IRO's	Bi monthly			

**Priority 8: To strengthen the IRO Service profile within Sunderland**

**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 management	February 2018			