

**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE - 7 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY  
SERVICES**

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICERS  
(IRO) 2014-15**

**Purpose of report**

1. To inform the Committee of the 2014-15 annual report of the Independent Reviewing Officers.

**Policy Framework and previous decisions**

2. The publication of an annual report on the activity of the Independent Reviewing Officers for Looked After Children (LAC) is a requirement of the IRO Guidance (2004) and is restated in the IRO handbook issued as statutory guidance in March 2010; these reports, attached at Appendix 1, set out the role and activity of the Independent Reviewing Officers in Leicestershire over the period from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. Within Leicestershire, IROs have a dual role whereby they undertake their statutory role as outlined in the IRO Handbook in relation to Looked After Children, as well as the chairing of all Child Protection Conferences (CPCs) and reviews convened in the authority.
3. The annual reports identify good practice but also highlight issues for further development and identify action required. The effective independence of the IRO Service in Leicestershire continues to be monitored and considered across the IRO management team and the position remains that overall, independence is not felt to be compromised, supported by evidence of challenge and support for this at senior levels within the authority. The annual report is obliged to report on the following:
  - i. An overview of the challenges about care planning in children's cases undertaken by the IRO Service and how these are escalated and resolved;
  - ii. The workload of the service and a description of the workforce of the service;

- iii. The extent of participation of children and their parents in the review process;
- iv. The number of reviews that are held on time, the number that are held out of time and the reasons for the ones that are out of time;
- v. The position in relation to the organisation, conduct and recording of reviews; and
- vi. Whether any resource issues are compromising the delivery of a quality service to looked after children.

4. In accordance with regulatory requirement the findings of the IRO annual report have been presented to the Corporate Parenting Board and will be published in full on the County Council's website along with an action plan detailing the work now underway to address the conclusions in full.

### **Consultations**

5. Not relevant in this report.

### **Resource Implications**

6. . None of note at this stage.

### **Recommendations**

7. This report is brought to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its information.

### **Background Papers**

None.

### **Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure**

None.

### **Officer(s) to Contact**

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## **List of Appendices**

Appendix A - IRO Annual Report – Children in Care 2014-15

Appendix B - IRO Annual Report Child Protection 2014-15

## **Equality and Human Rights Implications**

8. These are addressed throughout the report as the aim is to improve standards and outcomes for all children and young people in care, including disabled children, young children and those from minority and harder to reach groups. The IRO Service has a diverse compliment of staff with good representation across gender, age, sexual orientation as well as ethnicity.