

## SCRUTINY PANEL

19 November 2015

### INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICERS ANNUAL REPORT

#### Report of the Director for People

Strategic Aim:	Creating a safer community for all	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr R Foster, Portfolio Holder for Safeguarding Children and Young People	
Contact Officer(s):	Steve Tanner, Head of Children's Safeguarding and Improvement (Interim)	01572 758493 stanner@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors		

#### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel:

1. Note the performance of the service in ensuring all LAC reviews have been carried out in line with statutory timescales in 100% of cases and the positive feedback received from customers about the quality of the service provided by the IRO service.
2. Note the recommendations contained within the report and the action being undertaken in response to these recommendations by People Services, as detailed in appendix 1.
3. Note the introduction of 6 yearly meetings between the DCS and IRO manager and the incorporation of the reports' recommendations into the children's services improvement plan which is monitoring by the Service Improvement Board (SIB)
4. Note that the availability of CAMH's provision is being addressed through the Corporate Parenting Board with health colleagues and on the regional commissioning/transformation board "Better Care Together" of which the DCS for Rutland is a member.

#### 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the annual report of the independent reviewing officer (IRO) into the quality of care provided to children looked after by the Council (children in care).

#### 2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 This report relates to the Council strategic objective two: "protecting vulnerable communities" and also to the Council's role as corporate parent for looked after children.

- 2.2 The Council is required to provide a reviewing service to oversee and review the work of the Council in promoting and delivering care plans for individual looked after children (children in care for whom the Council is corporate parent). This must be independent of the operational line management of the social work teams responsible for looked after children's cases. The IRO is also responsible for monitoring the performance of the Local Authority's functions in respect of each review. If appropriate and if there is an unmet need for a Looked After Child, the IRO can refer the child to the Children and Family Court Advisory Service (CAFCASS) who may consider legal actions on behalf of the child against the Local Authority.
- 2.3 The Annual Report for the Independent Review Service is a statutory requirement, with guidance stating that managers of the Independent Review Service should provide an annual report for scrutiny within the Council.

### **3 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Overall, whilst there are some areas where further improvement is needed such as in relation to health, the report shows that looked after children in Rutland are well cared for and appropriately placed, have placement stability, are making progress, and that the Council is discharging its corporate parenting responsibilities well in conjunction with its partners. It shows good engagement in the care planning process which is undertaken in a timely fashion with good involvement from children and young people, their families, as well as foster carers and partner agencies.
- 3.2 The areas for improvement for the organisation are detailed in an appendix and have been incorporated into the service improvement plan.

### **4 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

IRO Handbook:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/337568/iro\\_statutory\\_guidance\\_iros\\_and\\_las\\_march\\_2010\\_tagged.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/337568/iro_statutory_guidance_iros_and_las_march_2010_tagged.pdf)

### **5 APPENDICES**

- App 1 - IRO annual report
- App 2 - Local Authority response to IRO annual report

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577. (18pt)