



**Independent
Reviewing Officer
Service Annual Report**

**A Summary Report for Children
and Young People**

April 2019 to March 2020

October 2020





Our vision for all Looked After Children and Young People

"To ensure that, through the independent review process, protection and care plans for children meet their individual needs and secure better outcomes for children and young people."

Your IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer) will ensure your protection and care plans will meet your individual needs which will make sure you have the best outcomes possible.

We are committed to you and will help you to achieve your best by focusing on your strengths and celebrating your achievements.

IRO's work creatively and praise the positive work undertaken with looked after children, which is very important to make sure children are safe, happy, healthy and are being supported to build a promising future.

The Voice of Nottinghamshire Children and Young People

The IRO service ensures the voice of Children and Young People are listened to and any issues they raise are talked about and the right action is taken for them.

Every effort is made to make sure the voice of Children and Young People is heard, some Children and Young People choose to speak with their IRO on their own, some come to their review and some ask an advocate to speak on their behalf.

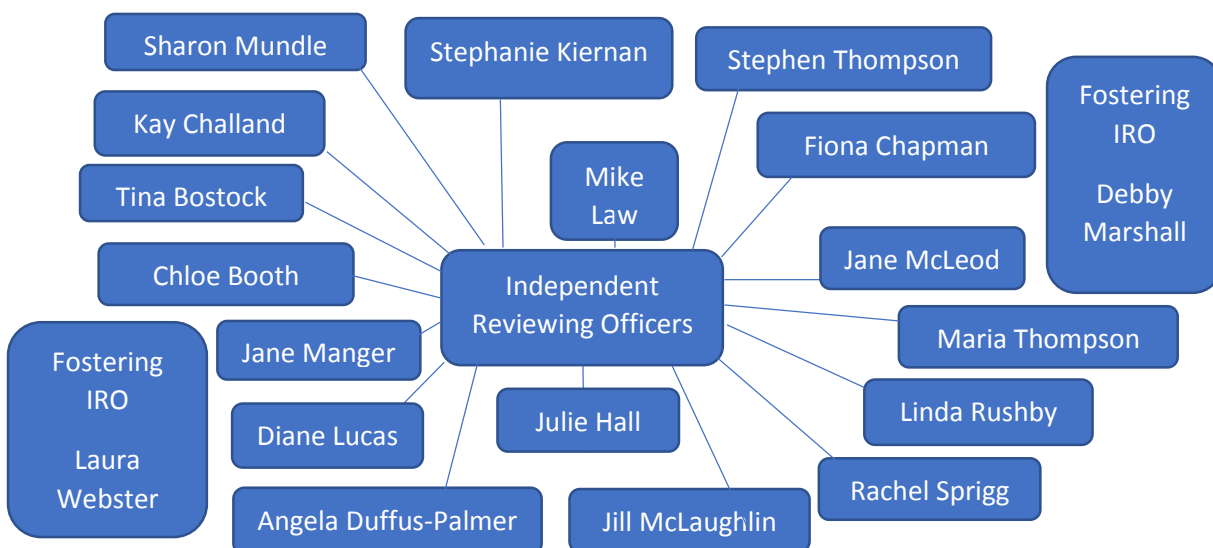
A report has to be written every year on how we are doing.

This report talks about:



What is the Independent Reviewing Officer Service?

The Independent Chair Service makes sure that Children and Young People who are Looked After or going through the Child Protection process are listened to and get the care and support they need. We make sure people work together and share what works well to make things better for Children and Young People.





Children and Young People who are Looked After

- At the end of March 2020, there were 923 Children and Young People being looked after by the Local Authority.
- 40% of Children and Young People attended their reviews
- 45% of Children and Young People did not attend their reviews, but asked for their wishes and feelings to be shared at their review
- 4.2% of Children and Young People did not attend their reviews but asked for an advocate to speak for them
- IRO's continue to work to ensure all Children and Young Peoples' Care Plans are meeting their needs and changes to their Care Plans are made when needed.
- IROs make sure they ask Children and Young Peoples' wishes and feelings through talking to and visiting them, also through their social worker or carer, these tend to be young people who either do not want to be involved in their review or are happy to be told how their Care Plan is meeting their needs by their IRO's, or by their carers or their social workers afterwards.



Achievements of some Children and Young People

YP got a contract with Nottingham rugby team and applied for Basford college to study with

Homeless 17yr old signed himself into care. Actively sought out employment which involved travelling on two buses to get to work and back

YP did not manage mainstream school from age of 11, wanted to work with young people so started focusing on Maths and English with aim to go to college. The plan was for them to return to mainstream one day a week. IRO helped them put a good argument together so the school was receptive to this

16-year-old young person taking GCSE's. Is very focused on doing well and moving onto to do A levels with a view to going to University to become a history teacher



What's happened during this year?

The IRO's Chaired 2159 Children and Young Peoples' Looked After Child reviews by the end of March 2020.

This is many more than the year before when there were 1850 reviews held.

IRO's use of technology has been used more with Looked After Child reviews because of Covid- 19, this has worked well for some Children and Young People who have told their IRO's that they felt more able to join their review, while others prefer to meet face to face in their reviews.

IRO's continue to work to make sure that Children and Young People are encouraged and supported to participate in their review. All Children and Young People continue to be offered the opportunity to complete a Listen to Me consultation booklet or through other creative ways to include them in their Looked After Child review.



There has been the introduction of the Mind Of My Own app IROs continue to encourage children and young people to use as a means of conveying their views. The Mind Of My Own app was launched in September 2019, which is an app that makes it easier for Children and Young People to be able to express their views, thoughts and feelings to social workers/IROs and any other significant professionals who

are working with them. A real positive to using this app is that Children and Young People can send their views, wishes and feelings to their workers at any time they want.

At the beginning of this year we took a proposal to the Children In Children Council who have agreed for the making of a short film, one for younger Children and one for Young People. These films will provide Children and Young People with an easy to understand film about who is involved in their care and how they will be supported when they become looked after. The films will also be used with professionals who are involved in providing care and support to Looked After Children.

The making of the films has been slowed down by Covid-19, but we are working to finish these over the next 6 months.

There are 2 IRO's who review Foster Carers only who are now placed in the Independent Chair Service, they are managed by one manager and continue to work independently focusing on Foster Care Reviews.



What Children, Young People and their carers said:

Children and Young People, their carer's and parents continue to make positive comments about the involvement of the IRO in their lives and for many the IRO has been the most consistent professional in their life.

Here are some Good Social Work Practice Stories shared by IRO'S:

- Social Worker has a good relationship with the mother, who trusted the Social Worker who had spoken for her to make sure she had the services she needed.
- The Social Worker made sure their report for the review was on time and to a good standard and showed a good understanding of the young person's needs.
- Lots of good work by the Social Worker which meant a child had a very positive move to a residential home, staff from the residential home praised the preparation undertaken by Social Worker.
- Looked After Child Social Worker is doing some great work with a number of teenagers by working together to keep them safe and working with their carers to make sure strong safety plans are in place for these teenagers.
- After many years apart a young person is reunited with family. Social Worker has supported this young person through life story work to understand why they came into care. The Social Worker supported the young person to see their family and more recently has made the journey with the young person to meet their family

who they have not seen for many years. The Social Worker was able to take some beautiful photographs which both the young person and their relatives now treasure.



Working together for Children and Young People



IRO's have regular meetings with Team Managers and the service to ensure there is consistent practice with:

Children in Care Council / Participation Group

Children Disability Service/Local Family Justice Board

Adoption Service/Foster carers meetings/CAMHS.





Our Key Plans for Children and Young People for 2020-2021 are:

We will work with Childrens' Social Care staff to ensure professionals who work with you focus on your achievements and make sure you get the support you need

IROs will encourage everyone involved with yourselves to use strength-based language which will focus on your views, strengths, aspirations, hopes, talents and achievements. They will also look at ways with yourselves to be supported to understand and work with professionals and social workers about your Care Plans

We will continue to work with you directly to encourage you to attend your reviews and chair them if you wish

We will work with all professionals to share and make sure the reports provided for your reviews are written in language you understand and focus on your needs as a looked after child

We will be looking at ways to make more time for IRO's to visit Children and Young People and to review your Care Plans in between reviews to make sure your needs are being met

We will be looking at how IRO's raise any concerns about the care provided to you, making sure they offer high support and high challenge to improve practice and outcomes for you as looked after children and young people

We will work with Children's Social Care staff to ensure professionals work with yourselves focusing on your achievements along with the challenges you may encounter

We will be looking at ways to make sure all those key people and organisations understand the importance of the IRO role within the Authority when working with yourselves as looked after children and young people

We will ask all Care Leavers if they wish for their IRO to provide a Post 18 service and make sure we are working in a way you find helpful and supportive

Independent Chair Service



