

**Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE,
Interim Director of Children's Services**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	25 July 2019
Subject:	Annual Report on the Independent Chair's Service

Summary:

This report introduces the Annual Report on the Independent Chair's Service. This is a statutory requirement and serves to update the Corporate Parenting Panel on the services to Looked After Children in Lincolnshire

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the Annual Report on the Independent Chair's Service and endorse the priorities for 2019-20.

1. Background

Every child who is 'looked after' by Lincolnshire County Council must have a Care Plan. This document details the long-term plan for the child's upbringing, and the arrangements made by Lincolnshire Children's Services to meet the child's day-to-day needs. All local authorities have a statutory duty to review the Care Plan regularly, within legislative timescales, as stipulated in the Care Planning and Case Review Regulations 2010.

It is a legal requirement for every child who is looked after to have an Independent Reviewing Officer appointed to them under Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. The Independent Reviewing Officers' handbook (2010) specifies that the Independent Reviewing Officer should provide continuity in the oversight of matters relating to a child being looked after, and that they should strive to establish a consistent relationship with the child. The statutory duties of the Independent Reviewing Officer include the following:

- Monitor the performance of the local authority and their function in relation to the child's case
- Participate in any review of the child's case
- Ensure that any ascertained wishes and feelings of the child are given due consideration by the appropriate authority
- Perform any other function which is prescribed by the regulations

It is a statutory requirement to provide an annual report in respect of the Local Authority's Independent Reviewing Service. The attached report is the completed annual report for the year 2018-19.

2. Conclusion

Priorities for 2019-20

- Further embed Signs of Safety (SOS) across Child Protection and LAC - to promote use of Family Network Meetings, genograms, eco maps and safety plans, promote family and friends time.
- To engage parents more pro-actively and if they don't attend LAC reviews, to make efforts to contact them and if necessary and/or appropriate to write directly to them.
- Promoting referrals to Life Links (Life Links is a new strand of work being offered through the Family Group Conference Service for Looked after Children and Care Leavers. To enable them to develop a life time of support from the people they choose.)
- Ensure that mental health is focussed on particularly in LAC reviews. All IROs to undertake the LSCB mental health course.

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the Annual Report on the Independent Chair's Service and endorse the priorities for 2019-20.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Annual Report on the Independent Chair's Service

5. Background Papers

This report was written by Carolyn Knight, who can be contacted on 0152253732 or carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk.