

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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	14 November 2019
Subject:	Independent Reviewing Service – 6 Month Report

Summary:

This report is the six month report on the Independent Chair's Service. It serves to update members of the Corporate Parenting Panel on the work undertaken between April and October 2019 and includes an update on priorities identified for 2019-20.

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the six month report on the Independent Chair's Service and seek assurance that the identified priorities are on track to be achieved by March 2020.

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 (IRO) 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 Independent Chairs Service consists of combined roles so that an Independent Chair is responsible for chairing and managing child protection conferences alongside the IRO duties and functions. The attached report therefore details performance across both these roles to ensure members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are provided with a holistic overview.

2. Conclusion

The last six months has seen continued progress in developing the service and the priorities identified earlier this year are all on track to be achieved by the end of March 2020. In addition there has been significant scrutiny and feedback by Ofsted in April 2019 and a Learning Day in October. The feedback from both of these events was extremely positive.

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	Independent Chair's Service Six Month Report October 2019

5. Background Papers

This report was written by Carolyn Knight, who can be contacted on 01522 553732 or Carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk