

Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service

IRO Annual Report 2015/2016

Author	Maria Anastasi Deputy Head of Safeguarding	Classification	OFFICIAL - PUBLIC	Date of First Issue	31.08.2016
Owner	Anne Stoker Head of Safeguarding	Issue Status	Approved 31 st August 2016	Date of Latest Re- Issue	
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Contents	Pages
1 Purpose of service and legal context	3
2 Role and function of the Service	4
3 Professional Profile of the IRO Service	5
4 Activity and Key Performance Indicators	6 - 11
5 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	12
6 Management Oversight, Quality and Dispute Resolution Process	13
7 Achievements in 2015-16	14
8 Review of the 2015/16 annual action plan and planned developments and key priorities 2015/16	15 - 16
9 Appendix 1 – case examples	17 - 18

1. Purpose of Service and Legal Context

- 1.1 The Annual Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) report is produced by the Children's Safeguarding and Quality Service which sits within the Children's Services division of Enfield Council it has been approved for publication by Director of Children's Services management team (DMT). The report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the IRO Service within the Local Authority as required by statutory guidance. This report should be read in conjunction with the Enfield Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) annual report.
- 1.2 Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) were introduced nationally to represent the interests of looked after children. Their role was strengthened through the introduction of statutory guidance in April 2011. The Independent Review Officers (IRO) service standards are set within the framework of the updated IRO Handbook, Department for Children, Schools and Families (2010) and linked to revised Care Planning Regulations and Guidance which were introduced in April 2011.
- 1.3 This report identifies good practice as well as highlighting areas for development in relation to the IRO function. The responsibility of the IRO is to offer overview, scrutiny and challenge with regard to case management and regularly monitoring and following up between Reviews as appropriate. The IRO has a key role in relation to the improvement of Care Planning for Looked After Children (LAC) with particular emphasis upon challenging drift and delay.
- 1.4 In Enfield the IROs are also responsible for chairing Child Protection conferences, complex Child Sexual Exploitation strategy meetings, Disruption Meetings and final reviews of Supervision Orders. The Service Manager is also the LADO and the service provides a duty service to primarily support the LADO function. In addition the report provides an overview of the other activities and functions of the Children's Safeguarding Quality Service including information on the performance of the unit in a range of responsibilities.
- 1.5 The service has additional responsibilities which are not reported on within this document this includes the role of the Principal Social Worker and coordinating the functions of the Enfield Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB)
- 1.6 This report includes some historical analysis and the most current up to date information from 2015-2016.

2. Role and Function of the Service

2.1 The Service promotes continuous improvement in safeguarding performance and service delivery and is committed to achieving the best outcomes for all children and young people in Enfield, particularly the most vulnerable, such as those children who are looked after and those subject to Child Protection Plans.

2.2 The Service has an independent role to ensure that all children, whatever their background, receive the same care and safeguards with regard to abuse and neglect.

2.3 The Safeguarding Service is responsible for the following statutory functions:

- Convening and chairing of child protection conferences
- Convening and chairing of reviews for looked after children
- Convening and chairing of reviews for children placed for adoption
- Convening and chairing of complex abuse meetings
- Convening and chairing the final review for Supervision Orders
- Carrying out the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) functions in respect to allegations against staff and volunteers
- Chairing disruption meetings

2.4 In addition to the above the Service has responsibility for participation of children and young people including promoting MOMO (see page 11 for details about MOMO).

The Service has representation in the following meetings:

- MAPPA (multi-agency public protection arrangements)
- Placement Panel
- CDOP (child death overview panel)
- MASE (multi-agency sexual exploitation) police led meeting
- Risk Management Panel
- Participation and Kratos (Children in Care Council) meetings
- Corporate Parenting Panel
- Strategic and Operational Signs of Safety Steering groups

2.5 The statutory Independent Reviewing function of the Service is core business, meeting the Government's requirements and performance indicators, but the scope of the service is far wider than this. The IROs chair child protection conferences which strengthen continuity of care planning and promote sustained professional relationships for children and young people. The IRO child protection conference chair becomes the LAC reviewing officer should a young person need to come into the care system.

2.6 The service has additional responsibilities which include the role of the Principal Social Worker and coordinating the functions of the Enfield Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) that are not reported on in this document. The Head of Service is also the named Child Sexual Exploitation lead, Signs of Safety lead and the Principal Social Worker.

3. Professional Profile of the IRO Service

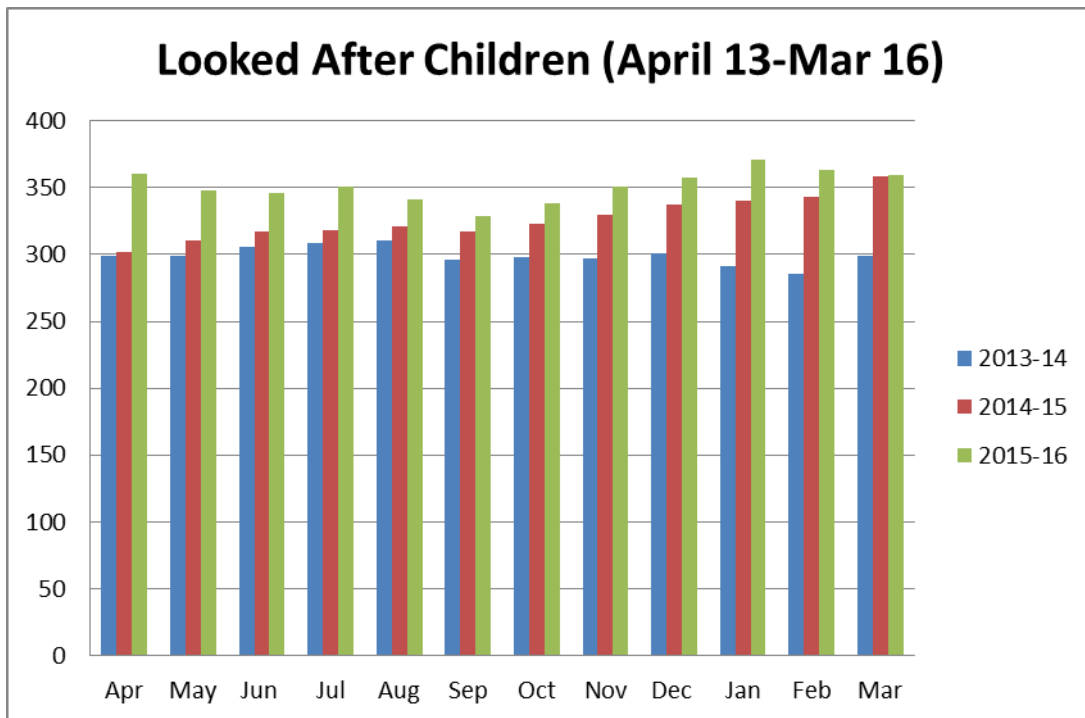
- 3.1 Responsibility for the activity and development of the Service lies with the Head of Safeguarding, Quality and Principal Social Worker who reports directly to the Director of Children's Services.
- 3.2 The direct link to the ESCB presents the Service with a key role in the analysis of inter-agency performance monitoring and quality assurance activity.
- 3.3 The current staffing structure includes:
- Head of Service, Quality and Principal Social Worker
 - Service Manager and LADO
 - 7 . 5 Independent Reviewing Officers (6 full time and 3 part-time)
 - 1 ESCB Business Manager with 3 support staff (2 fulltime equivalent)
 - 1 Signs of Safety Practice Coordinator and Project Manager
- 3.4 The IRO guidance makes it clear that an effective IRO service requires IROs who have the right skills and experience, working within a supportive context. The Enfield IROs have many years of relevant social work and management experience, and professional expertise.

The IROs are all at an equivalent level to Children's Social Care Team Managers in Enfield. The service is appropriately diverse.

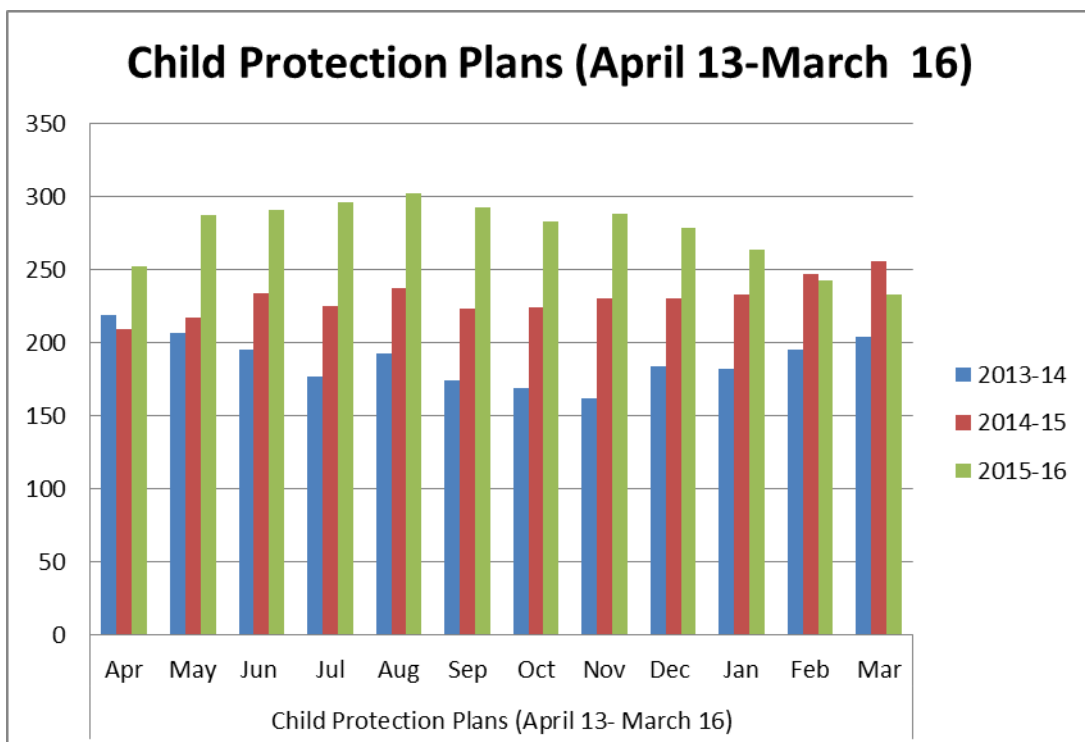
4. Activity and Key Performance Indicators

4.1 Looked After Numbers and Child Protection

Looked After Children (April 13 - March 16)



Child Protection Plans (April 13 - March 16)



- 4.1.1 The charts above provide the numbers of children subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) and Looked After (LAC) at the end of each month since April 2013.

2015/16 saw an increase in children subject to CP plans in the first half of the year peaking at **302** in August 2015. There has been a steady decrease month on month from November 2015 with **233** children subject to plans at the end of March 2016. The decrease from August 2015 to March 2016 is significant at 23%. This may have been impacted by the bulge in child protection referrals received in the first half of the year many of which were linked to child sexual exploitation (CSE).

A number of factors have impacted upon the reduction of children subject to child protection plans. Firstly the partnership overseen by Enfield Safeguarding Children Board has embraced Signs of Safety (SoS) which is an internationally recognised model for direct work with children and families. It is an outcome-focused, strengths-based model with a robust risk management framework & includes a range of principles, processes and tools to guide the work. Secondly the local specialist CSE team became operational in July 2015 and by the end of the year referrals were being held within this team with strong child in need plans in place thus reducing the need for child protection plans.

The number of LAC has had a small rise and fall during 15/16 but remains approximately the same at the end of March 2016 (359) as it was in March 2015 (358). There was a significant increase in the LAC population 3 years ago and this has remained consistently high over the last 2 years.

- 4.1.2 There were 9 young people remanded in Local Authority Care and 21 young people remanded in secure estates throughout the year.
- 4.1.3 The number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) looked after at the 31st March 2016 was **69** this is a significant area of pressure as there were **49** UASC looked after children at the 31st March 2015, this represents a 40% increase over the year.
- 4.1.4 There were **60** children that returned from care to parents or relatives with parental responsibility during the year 15/16 (this does not include Special Guardianship Orders or Child Arrangement Orders). There were **69** children returned during 14/15. The decrease could be attributed to the changing characteristics we are seeing in the LAC population such as increase in UASC, and more young people presenting with complex and challenging behaviours.
- 4.1.5 It is good to see that the stability of placements for children looked after has increased from 64.4% in 14/15 to 69.7% in 15/16. The IROs contribute to this by ensuring robust plans are in place and intervening early when placements are showing fragility.

4.2 Child Protection and Looked After rates per 10,000

4.2.1 Rates per 10,000 are used as a method of benchmarking local authorities CPP LAC numbers against each other, using a more comparable method than simply comparing actual numbers. Figures are expressed as a ratio and are calculated by dividing the local authorities' actual numbers by its total 0-17 child population estimate sourced from the Office of National Statistics (ONS). The 2 charts which follow benchmark Enfield's rates per 10,000 of Children subject to a CPP and rates per 100,000 of LAC against average rates for its 3 comparator groups of Outer London, Statistical Neighbours and England as a whole. The data was not available for 15/16 at the time of writing this report.

Rate of CPP per 10,000 population as at 31st March of each year for the last 3 years

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enfield	28.3	25.1	31.0
Outer London	31.9	35.1	38.3
Statistical Neighbours	32.8	44.9	49.5
England	37.9	42.1	42.9

Rate of LAC per 10,000 population as at 31st March each year for the last 3 years

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enfield	28.3	25.1	44
Outer London	31.9	35.1	47
Statistical Neighbours	32.8	44.9	79
England	37.9	42.1	60

4.2.2 The charts above show Enfield has historically had lower than average rates (and therefore numbers) of children subject to Child Protection Plans (CPP) and LAC compared to various local authority comparator groups, and continues to do so. We are expecting to see a drop in the number of CP plans for 2015/16 and the LAC population is expected to remain the same.

4.2.3 At the end of March 2016, mapping has shown that the 233 children subject to a Child Protection Plan lived in the following wards:

CPP per Ward as at 31 March 2016

Bowes	2
Bush Hill Park	5
Chase	15
Cockfosters	1
Edmonton Green	14
Enfield Highway	30
Enfield Lock	16
Grange	4
Haselbury	10
Highlands	1
Jubilee	10
Lower Edmonton	23
Palmers Green	3
Ponders End	9
Southbury	16
Southgate Green	4
Town	2
Turkey Street	23
Upper Edmonton	27
Winchmore Hill	1
Out of Area	17
Grand Total	233

4.2.4 At the end March 2016, of the 233 children subject to CPP:

- 58% were male, 41% female and 1.% unborn
- 92% had a category of either Neglect or Emotional Abuse (52% and 40% respectively)
- 2% had a category of physical abuse, 2% sexual and 4% multiple categories
- 7% (17 children) were recorded as being a Child with a Disability

4.3 Child Protection Conferences and Key Performance Indicators

CPP Activity 2015/16

Becoming Subject of a CPP in the year	426
Ceasing to be the Subject of a CPP in the year	361
Subject of a CPP at 31 March	233

CPP Conferences 2015/16

Initial Conferences	337
Review Conferences	830

CPP 2 Years or More 2015/16

Total subject to CPP for 2 years or more	3
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CPP For A Second Or Subsequent Time Between 01/04/2015 and 31/03/2016

CP In Last Year	336
Previously CP within 2 years (01/04/2014 to 31/03/2016)	14
Percentage: 14 / 336	4.2%

CP Reviews Within Timescales	2014/15	2015/2016
Reviews within the year	161	
Reviews in Timescale	161	155
Percentage	100%	91.7%

4.3.1 Performance for the indicator CPP 2 years or more has been consistently good over the last few years, good performance is typified by a lower number. Performance at the end of February 2015 was 2.3%. At the end of March 2016, this was 0.9%. This is a significant decrease and would indicate that we are more robust in our planning and that the Public Law Outline process which is usually triggered at the second CP conference review is a contributory factor in avoiding drift in cases.

4.3.2 Performance for the indicator CPP for a second or subsequent time has significantly improved. At the end of February 2015, the percentage was 20.8%. At the end of March 2016, this was decreased to 4.2% (14 children). This demonstrates that there is effective work during the period that children are subject to CP plans to avoid repeat CP plans and when there is evidence that either changes to safeguard children are not made or are not sustained, we are more robust in escalating to Public Law Outline process. Another contributory factor is that the stepping down process from CP to CIN is effective.

4.3.3 Performance for the indicator CP reviews within timescales has dropped from a consistently excellent performance of 100% to 91.7%. This has been audited and strategies have been put in place to ensure this is rectified by bringing forward deadlines for dates of conferences.

4.4 Looked After Reviews and Timescales

LAC Reviews Within Timescales	2014/15	2015/16
Reviews within the year	910	953
Reviews in Timescale	890	948
Percentage	98%	99%

The percentage of Looked After Children reviews completed within timescale continues to be high, as shown in the table above. IROs completed some reviews in a series of meetings to ensure the relevant people were involved and the meeting remained child focused and friendly.

4.5 IRO case loads

- 4.5.1 The IRO Handbook recommends that case loads for IROs need to be between 50 and 70 Looked After Children cases. The size of caseload alone does not indicate the overall workload for each individual IRO as individual roles and responsibilities vary within the team.
- 4.5.2 The IRO guidance puts an emphasis on ensuring that the size of the case load enables IROs to have sufficient time to provide a quality service to each LAC including, amongst a number of responsibilities, monitoring drift, undertaking follow up work after the review, consulting with the social worker following a significant change and meeting with the child before the review. At the end of March 2016, 233 children were subject to Child Protection Plans and 360 children were looked. The average case load was approximately 48 LAC cases per IRO. In addition, IROs in Enfield chair child protection conferences.

4.6 Participation (including MOMO)

- 4.6.1 A key role of the Service is to seek regular feedback from children, young people, families and carers about their experience in care and also the difference the IRO has made to the lives of the children with whom they work. This information is collated and used to drive improvement.
- 4.6.2 Ensuring LAC are able to participate as fully as possible in planning and reviews remains a key priority for the Service and as a result there has been a significant improvement in this area. This has included more children being supported to attend their reviews, and more ways children can participate. There is still room for improvement especially in relation to children and young people with additional communication skills.
- 4.6.3 Participation figures for Looked After Children in their reviews has been consistently high over a long period of time. Data as at 31st March 2016, submitted to DfE, confirms that 95.4% of Looked After Children who were reviewed during 2015-16 participated in all their reviews held during the year. (This excludes Looked After Children under the age of four)
- 4.6.4 Enfield Children's Services have recently procured MOMO app (Mind of My Own) to help children and young people create a statement of their views, wishes and feelings. The implementation plan is led by the Participation Steering group. The plan is to use the MOMO app with children in care and care leavers from May for a six month period and then roll out widely to children subject to Child Protection Plans and Child In Need Plans.
- 4.6.5 MOMO will enable the local authority to provide quarterly and annual reports on the uptake of the service.

5 Local Authority Designed Officer (LADO)

5.1 The Enfield LADO is the Service Manager of the Safeguarding and Quality Service. The role of the LADO is to provide management and overview of cases where there are allegations against staff and volunteers who work with children from all agencies.

The LADO ensures that advice and information is given to Senior Managers within organisations and monitors the progress and timescales of these cases. The LADO ensures that there is a consistent approach to the application of policy and procedures, when managing allegations, and maintains a secure information database for all allegations.

All referrals are considered in line with Pan London Child Protection procedures and follow the local Enfield protocol, which was updated in September 2015.

5.2 The total number of allegations between 1.04.2015 and 31.03.2016 which met the threshold for LADO involvement was 48. The outcomes are as follows:

- 26 allegations were unsubstantiated (approx. 54%)
- 12 allegations were substantiated (approx. 25%)
- 6 allegations were unfounded (approx. 13%)
- 4 allegations are still being investigated (approx. 8%)

There were no malicious allegations.

5.3 In addition to the above 48 allegations, there have been approximately 70 consultations with the LADO, where the threshold for LADO intervention had not been met, and advice was offered on managing low level concerns. This activity had not previously been captured in a systematic manner and a system has now been put in place to record this activity and report.

5.4 Workshops and training around managing allegations has been provided to several services/agencies, to ensure compliance with national and local procedures and guidance and to increase confidence in dealing with these allegations. The LADO has attended London LADO network meetings.

5.5 A LADO annual report (2015-16) has been completed which provides more detailed information about the work of the LADO and a work plan which can be found on the ESCB website.

6 Management Oversight, Quality Assurance and Dispute Resolution Process



- 6.1 All children looked after and children subject to child protection plans are allocated a designated IRO from the moment they enter the system with the key aim that the allocated IRO will remain consistent, until the child is no longer looked after or subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- 6.2 The quality and effectiveness of the IRO service is closely monitored through supervision, case file audits, together with performance reporting which highlights good practice as well as any areas of concern, therefore enabling prompt action to rectify any poor IRO performance.
- 6.3 The statutory guidance states that operational social work managers must consider the decisions from the review before they are finalised. This is due in part to the need to ensure any resource implications have been addressed. Managers have five days to raise any queries or objections. This rarely happens which would indicate that managers are generally satisfied with the decisions made at the review.
- 6.4 One of the key functions of the IRO is to resolve problems arising out of the care planning process. IROs within Enfield continue to have positive working relationships with social workers and team managers of the children for whom they are responsible. Where problems are identified in relation to a child's case for example in relation to care planning, resources or poor practice, the IRO will, in the first instance, seek to resolve the issue informally with the social worker or the social workers manager. If the matter is not resolved in a timescale that is appropriate to the child's needs, the IRO will escalate the matter accordingly following the local dispute resolution process.
- 6.5 Staff together with IROs recognise that any problems or concerns regarding care plans need to be addressed initially through negotiation before instigating the escalation resolution process.
- 6.6 The escalation process gives weight and strength to the role of the IRO and emphasises the need for the IRO to be accountable for the recommendations that are made at reviews. IROs will refer to the process when actions or recommendations have not been followed up on behalf of a child/young person or where care plans have been delayed and whilst in the main the majority are dealt with at Social Worker/Team Manager level, there are some examples of where there has been escalation to Heads of Service. There has not been the need to escalate to the Assistant Director or Director as issues have been resolved at an earlier stage.
- 6.7 As part of the monitoring function IROs have a duty to monitor the performance of the local authority's function as a corporate parent and identify any areas of poor practice. This includes identifying patterns of concern emerging not just around individual children but also more generally in relation to the collective experience of looked after children and the services they receive. Equally important, the IROs recognise and report on good practice.
- 6.8 See case examples of IRO intervention and the impact of their role by reading the 2 case studies in Appendix 1

7 Achievements in 2015-16

- 7.1 The last 12 months have been challenging as always but the Service has continued to make significant steps in implementing and maintaining improvements in practice.
- 7.2 Despite some turnover of staff in the last few years, due to staff retiring or leaving, the service continues to maintain very high standards and performing consistently well. Members of the service are very experienced and highly skilled and deliver an excellent service to children subject to child protection plans and children who are looked after.
- 7.3 The Service has been at the forefront of the development of the Signs of Safety (SoS) model in Enfield and are in the process of piloting this model for chairing child protection conferences. The Head of the Service is the lead officer for this project and the Service Manager and one of the IROs are members of the Strategic Steering Group. An Operational Steering Group has recently been set up following the recommendation of the Service, to consider the practical and operational implications of the implementation of this model.
- 7.4 All the IROs have attended the two day SoS training and in addition the bespoke one day training for CP Chairs.
- 7.5 The Service will be evaluating the pilot with the view to fully implementing the model by December 2016.
- 7.6 The Service has collaborated with KRATOS to develop a Child Friendly Protection Plan, which is a tool Social Workers will use with children subject to child protection plans. This complements the Signs of Safety model for conferences and a further opportunity to ensure the child's voice is heard.
- 7.7 The Service continues to attend MAPPA, MASE and CDOP meetings and members of the service are involved in the Participation Steering Group and have strong links with KRATOS.
- 7.8 Enfield Children's Services have procured MOMO (Mind Of My Own), a modern, tech- savvy way to engage with young people. It makes it easier for them to express their views and have a say in decisions about them. The app gives 8-17yr olds and care leavers the confidence and ability to express their needs. The MOMO service delivers their views to you, pushing their wishes and feelings into the heart of decision making. The IRO's have a key role in promoting the use of MOMO.

8 Review of the 2015/16 annual action plan and planned developments and key priorities for 2016/17

ACTION PLAN 2015/16					
Area for development	Action	Lead officer	Timescale	RAG Status	Outstanding actions for 16/17
Implementation of the Ofsted 2015 improvement plan. Ensuring that the annual reports of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the independent reviewing officer (IRO) meet the requirements of the relevant statutory guidance, provide a critical analysis of their respective services and identify specific areas for improvement.	Re write and publish 2014/15 IRO report	Anne Stoker Head of Safeguarding	April 2015		
	Write and publish 2014/15 LADO report	Maria Anastasi LADO	April 2015		
Implement strengthening family's model creating a more constructive culture around child protection organisation and practice – particularly through the implementation of Signs of Safety.	Develop an implementation plan to be presented and agreed at OMG Present to ESCB and begin to plan into place with full cooperation of partners	Anne Stoker Head of Safeguarding	June 2015		
			September 2015		
Maintaining the high levels of participation in LAC reviews and improving where possible the numbers of children and young people that participate in Child Protection conferences.	Further embed the use of viewpoint by IROs championing its use Increase the number of young people supported to chair their own LAC reviews Include the above as stretch targets within IROs individual PARs	Maria Anastasi Deputy Head of Service and IROs	April 2015 onwards		Viewpoint decommissioned in favour of MOMO which was launched in 2016. Targets included in 2016/17 PARs
Embracing the Enfield 2017 transformation agenda while fulfilling the statutory requirements of the service.	Identify key areas that will require specific specialist support and ensure all statutory functions are met	2017 Leadership Team Tony Theodoulou Assistant Director Children's Services Anne Stoker Head of Safeguarding	April 2015 and ongoing throughout the year		
Implement findings from the many audits that review children subject to child protection plans and those looked after and continue to have a key role in the work of the ESCB and specifically the work of the OMG.	Review sections of audits relating to the service	Anne Stoker Head of Safeguarding Maria Anastasi LADO, IROs	October 2015		
Ensure IROs leadership and competencies remains strong and they meet the standards of the new knowledge and skills framework.	IROs to attend training and development workshops New knowledge and skills set to be used when setting PARs	Maria Anastasi	Ongoing		KSS not yet published this will be carried forward to 2016/17
Increase income generation where possible through traded services and charging for training	Review the budget monitor IROs caseloads as income generated may be offset against service pressures				
Include Kratos in the review of the effectiveness of the IROs	Develop a framework to include Kratos in the scrutiny of the IRO service				Child friendly plan developed and review of service planned in

					2016/17
Update the ESCB Managing Allegations Protocol, reviewing and embedding LADO processes.	Update the protocol Launch and embed use of the LADO referral form Explore use of liquid logic to case manage LADO records Continue to deliver multi-agency training re the management of allegations	Maria Anastasi Deputy Head of Safeguarding			
Embed the process from the new Child Sexual Exploitation multi-agency protocol	Review processes and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the IRO				

RAG STATUS



Action complete



Action taken but as yet not complete



Action requiring urgent attention/implementation

8.1 The key priorities and areas of development for 2016/17

- Evaluating the pilot the Signs of Safety Model, and fully implementing it by December 2016
- Maintaining high LAC participation and improving CP conference participation by further embedding the use of MOMO and increasing the support to young people to enable them to chair their own looked after reviews as appropriate.
- Embedding the Enfield 2017 transformation agenda while fulfilling the statutory requirements of the service.
- Continue to increase the number of young people chairing their own reviews
- IROs to attend social work knowledge and skills workshops over the forthcoming year in order to identify learning and development needs specific to the role.
- Commissioning KRATOS to audit the quality of LAC reviews

APPENDIX 1

All case studies below are provided in very broad, slightly changed terms to preserve anonymity.

CASE STUDY 1: Importance of Social Worker and independent reviewing officer discussing and reflecting on the local authority plans for children between reviews.

Background

The young person is one of a number of siblings either in foster care or adopted. She had a number of placements and the concern was whether she would settle in foster care in spite of pressure by the older siblings and mother to retain loyalty to the past family life resulting in upsetting and unsettling contact meetings for the young person.

Main areas of concern/risk:

- Neglect
- Poor parenting and inability to prioritise needs of the children
- Sexual abuse

Intervention

The allocated social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer had regular discussions between reviews to agree the plan by the local authority to support the foster placement through the intervention of the local CAMHS service and covering the costs of two overnights a week at the young person's boarding school.

The foster carer was unable to continue as she had acute personal issues. There was agreement that a local placement should be found to allow the young person to continue at the same school and CAMHS.

Direct work was undertaken by the allocated social worker with the young person to reflect on why the placement could not continue and to look forward to the next placement.

Outcomes

The local authority, although prepared to consider a bridging placement to ensure that the right foster carers for the young person could be found, identified a potentially long term foster placement close to the young person's boarding school and other services. Contact with mother has not been increased and continues to be supervised. Contact with the older siblings is under review and will only be considered when the young person is settled in placement. The foster carers talk positively and warmly about her. The boarding school report that she is calmer and less likely to embellish incidents.

Child young person's views re outcomes

The young person is happy in placement and, although only there for a relatively short time, is considered to be part of the family.

CASE STUDY 2: Importance of legal planning and contingency planning in child protection plans

Background

Three children were subjects of a child protection plans. The concerns were around mother's drinking and general neglect.

Main areas of concern/risk:

- Alcohol abuse
- Poor parenting and inability to prioritise needs of the children
- The eldest boy being beyond her care and control and being at risk from associates in the community and he admitted to smoking cannabis.

Intervention

The Independent Reviewing Officer who chaired the Child Protection Conferences set a timescale by which the family would either agree where the children would live or for the local authority to take legal action.

The local authority initiated the Public Law Outline and assessments were started. Care proceedings were then initiated. The children were placed with an elder sister.

The independent reviewing officer met with all 3 children and the older sister and escalated concerns about the arrangements in place. The older sister needed significant practical support which was then provided by the local authority. The middle child wished to be placed with a long term foster carer in the local area. The eldest boy wanted to live with a relative out of borough and the youngest wanted to remain with his relative in Enfield.

The independent reviewing officer consulted with the CAFCASS Guardian and the children's mother.

Outcomes

A close relative was assessed as a Special Guardian. The independent reviewing officer has made recommendations with regards to the support plan.

The eldest boy is placed with a relative outside of the borough and remains subject of an interim care order. The independent reviewing officer has made recommendations about how the placement be supported. The eldest boy has had difficulties in his school placement. The independent reviewing officer has recommended he be made the subject of a full care order at the final hearing. This view was supported by the CAFCASS Guardian.

The middle girl moved to an in-house foster carer in a planned way and has settled very well. The independent reviewing officer has supported that this be agreed as a long term placement.

Child young person's views re outcomes

All three children are living where they wanted to and the youngest boy and girl are doing exceptionally well and are happy with the arrangements. The eldest boy continues to have difficulties with education, however the arrangements to stay with his relative continue and the placement is being supported by the local authority as this is where he wants to stay.