

**Corporate Parenting Board  
9 January 2024**

**Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report**

**Executive Summary:**

**Reason for bringing to the Corporate Parenting Board:**

The IRO Handbook (2010) is the statutory guidance for Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) and Local Authorities on their functions in relation to case management and review of children and young people in their care. It states that the IRO Manager should be responsible for producing an annual report for the scrutiny of the members of the Corporate Parenting Board. It should also be available to the public on the Council website.

This Annual IRO report provides quantitative and qualitative data relating to the IRO Service within Walsall during the period 1st April 22 to 31st March 2023, as required by statutory guidance. The report captures performance between these dates and next steps for the IRO service across 2023/24. The report provides an evidence base in terms of describing an established and quality service which continues to support Walsall Children's Services and is key in providing good outcomes for children and young people who are looked after in Walsall. The report sets out where we need to develop and priorities for the coming year.

**Recommendations:**

**That:**

Members consider the work of the IRO service as per statutory expectation.

**Corporate Parenting Pledges**

This report correspondences to all areas of the pledge as the IRO has responsibility to ensure the holistic needs of all children in our care are met.

**Resource and legal considerations:**

No resource implications.

The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to provide each child with an Independent Reviewing Officer and to have this work scrutinised annually.

**Council Corporate Plan Priorities:**

The key priority this report relates to is children in promoting and supporting children in our care to have the best outcomes they can, however, it also relates to people and communities in its support to parents, carers and in preparing young people as they move into independence.

**Citizen impact:**

Children in care have a statutory responsibility to have an IRO provided to them, this report sets out how this is met.

**Environmental impact:**

None identified

**Performance management:**

None identified

**Reducing inequalities:**

We know that children in our care experience a number of inequalities, the IRO service aims to help drive forward improved aspirations and outcomes for this cohort. There are no specific inequalities issues arising from this report.


**Consultation:**

No consultation required for this report

**Background papers:**

None identified

**Contact Officer:**

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