

Independent Reviewing Officer

Annual Report 2013/2014

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



I really liked that my IRO came to see me at my house before the meeting.

Young Person

I liked that my IRO supported me and worked with me to look at what I wanted to achieve.

Young Person



Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL

The Independent Reviewing Service

The purpose of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is to ensure that an appropriate care plan is in place for every child looked after by Gloucestershire County Council. IROs are responsible for ensuring that the health, emotional well-being, education, contact, religious and cultural needs of each young person are being addressed through the planning process.

What does that mean to me?

Regular review meetings involving the child and their family are chaired by IROs. These meetings are held to ensure that an appropriate plan has been drawn up by the child's social worker and to check that progress is being made in achieving the plan.

The Teams Provide an IMPACT statement:

Independent – we are independent service which enables children and young people's voices to be heard

Multi- agency – we work with lots of other services and teams, including social workers (to ensure children and young people needs are met)

Protect – we protect and promote children and young people's welfare

Achievable plans – to meet children and young people needs that have been set out in their care plan

Challenge – we challenge services when child's or young person's needs haven't been met

Timely manner – we do this quickly in order to improve children and young people's outcomes


The annual report is written to highlight good practice and also bring to light areas where practice improvement is needed. This leaflet has been produced to tell children and young people about emerging themes and trends.

Outcomes for Children in Care

The IRO service is well placed to monitor outcomes for the children who become looked after. The roles of IRO focus on ensuring permanent outcomes are achieved as quickly as possible. In practice this means ensuring that most of children spend as short a time looked after as possible – so situations where stability and security are promoted are achieved quickly.

There are a number of possible long term outcomes for children who become looked after, the most common being:

- 1. Returning home**
- 2. Being adopted**
- 3. Achieving permanence via Residence Order/Special Guardianship Order**
- 4. Leaving care via supported living in the community or independent living**
- 5. Remaining in care (usually with a plan to live long term with foster carers)**



"I like how we planned what's going to happen in the future"

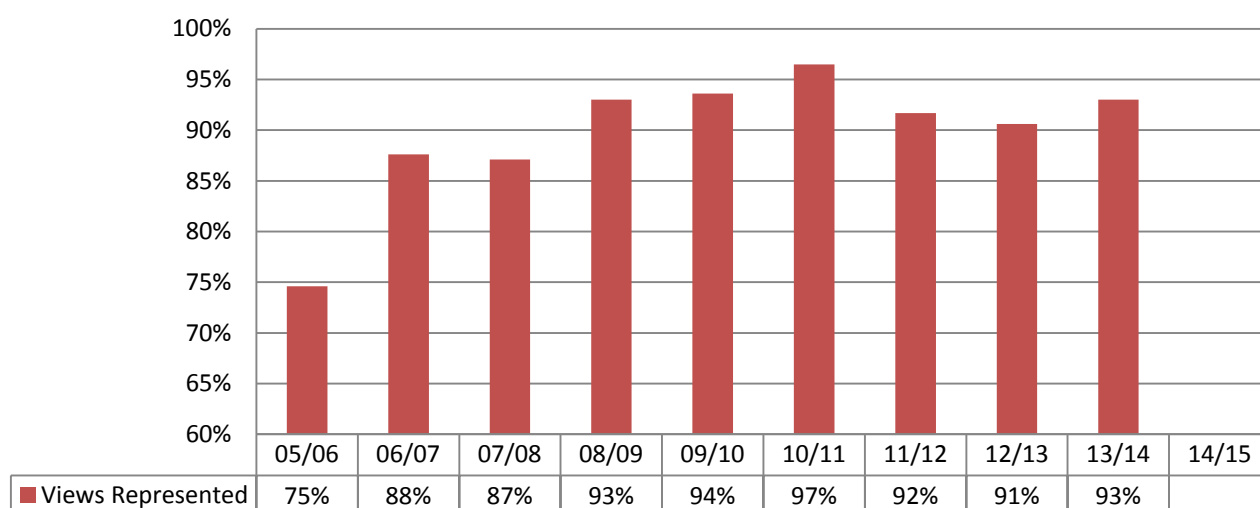
Young Person

Participation of children at all their review meetings

- The number of children participating in their review has increased since last year
- IROs work hard to engage all children and young people and performance continues to be above 90%
- IRO have continued to encourage young people over 11 to chair their own reviews
- In 2013/2014 seventy one reviews were chaired by young people

Listening to the voice of the young person is at the heart of the reviewing process. Wherever possible IROs are speaking to young people prior to reviews to find out whether they are happy with their care and to see what they would like to achieve through their review. When IRO obtains the views of the young person must make sure that decisions and actions are taken as a result.

PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN (aged 4+) AT ALL THEIR REVIEWS



"Child's Voice – You'll be hearing from us"

Challenges and Stats

As part of our role, we effectively challenge the quality of care plans and influence positively the work and planning for children's futures. If plans are not of a good quality, we will ensure that we take this to senior managers and leaders. This is how many challenges we have done on your behalf.

CONCERNS RAISED 2013/14									
Team	Social Work Practice issues	Child Safety issues	Placement / Post 16 planning issues	Permanence / Drift issues	School issues	Other issues	Total	No of reviews	%
Children & Families teams	17	1	5	8	0	3	34	567	6 %
Children in Care team	14	0	5	3	0	5	27	354	8 %
Permanence team	1	0	0	4	0	0	5	261	2 %
Post 16 & Asylum teams	1	1	6	0	0	0	8	261	3 %
TOTAL	33	2	16	15	0	8	74	1443	
2012/13	18	3	10	16	3	4	54	1332	

Overwhelmingly the responses have been positive, with young people reporting that IROs are chairing their reviews to their satisfaction. This feedback reflects feedback obtained through previous surveys where more than 90% of young people reported they were happy with their reviews.

"I'm just happy contact is good with me and mum"

Young Person

Encouraging Participation

The County Council employs 10 Ambassadors for Vulnerable Children and Young People to help children and young people have their voices heard by the services they use. Some Ambassadors have been in care and some are still receiving support as care leavers.



How do Ambassadors support young people in care?

Ambassadors helped re-design the reviews consultation form to get your views before your meeting.

They help run the 11-16's and Post 16's forums for children in care and make sure children's views, ideas and opinions are heard at the children in care council. They also put on engagement events where children can take part in the fun activities like "Fun in the Sun" and tell us what they think is going well and what can be improved.

VOICE
gloucestershire
"your voice, we listen"



**To read the full copy with all the details of the
Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report, speak
to your IRO.**