

Appendix A

Independent Reviewing Service Report from April 2019-March 2020



Report Context:

- Introduction
- Legal Context
- Core IRO Functions
- Composition of IRO Team
- Reviewing Activity : Child Protection
- Reviewing Activity : Looked After Children
- Number of Reviews and timeliness
- Reviewing Performance
- Caseload
- Business Support

General Themes

- Consultation
- Case Dispute Resolution and Complaints
- Achievements & Challenges
- IRO Service Development and Achievements
- IRO Service Priorities

Introduction

The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service has an authoritative role, in assuring the quality of care planning is achieved. The Independent Reviewing Officers Guidance Wales 2004 states this report must identify good practice but must also identify issues for further development, including those where urgent action is required. The guidance urges the Local Authority to make effective use of the reports from its IRO service so that it can be satisfied that its services can achieve best outcomes for the children and young people concerned.

This Independent Reviewing Service report focuses upon the work of the IRO service from April 2019 to March 2020. As part of the services quality assurance role, the report contains performance information in respect of the statutory reviewing of children who are Looked After, including children with plans for Adoption and Young People with Leaving Care LAC/Pathway Plans (under 18) by Bridgend County Borough Council. It also includes information on children subject of a child protection plan and reviews of these plans at Child Protection Case Conferences.

The report also includes information that relates to regulatory requirements in respect of: resolution case disputes; IRO caseloads; participation and consultation of young people in their Reviews, challenges and achievements in the reporting period and service priorities for 2019-20.

Legal Context

The appointment of IRO's by Local Authorities is a legal requirement and their core functions are governed by the legal regulatory framework outlined below:

- The Adoption and Children Act 2002 detailed the requirements on Local Authorities in respect of the appointment of IRO's.
- The Independent Reviewing Officers Guidance (Wales) 2004.

Core Functions

The Independent Reviewing Service has an important quality assurance function and works towards ensuring all children within the care of Bridgend County Borough Council has a robust effective care plan. This plan is aimed towards improving outcomes for children and young people in providing a stable and secure childhood where their health, education and emotional wellbeing is promoted through effective care planning. It is the function of the Independent Reviewing Service to ensure the care plan is appropriate and progresses safeguarding for children and young people whilst ensuring all their identified needs are being met.

Independent Reviewing Officers are required to independently review the care plans of all Looked After children and those children with a Child Protection Plan and subject of the Child Protection Register. The Review meeting will include consultation with and attendance of relevant agencies (health, education and Police etc) and will usually include the child/young person, their Social Worker, carers and family members. Time scales for Reviews are set out in the Children Act 1989 & part 6 of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014, with the first Review taking place within 20 working days, the next Review is held within three months following the initial and then subsequent Reviews are held six months from the second Review. Subsequent Reviews are held every six months unless there has been an unplanned change of placement where a Review must be held within 20 working days.

Within Bridgend County Borough Council, the IRO Service has the following roles and responsibilities:

- The IRO service has a statutory responsibility under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, Wales Safeguarding Procedures and the IRO Guidance for Chairing all Child Protection Conferences and multi-agency Looked After Children Reviews, including those children placed for Adoption.
- To Review and oversee the effectiveness and the appropriateness of Care Plans for those Children and Young People the Council has responsibility for who are subject of a Child Protection Plan, those children and young people within its care.

- The Independent Reviewing Service are responsible for ensuring all Looked After Children Reviews and Children Protection Conferences take place within compliance as outlined in regulations and to provide a report on each Looked After Children Review to include recommendations to any changes to the child/young person's Care Plan and to monitor the progress of the Care Plan by tracking cases between Reviews.
- To ensure the child/young person's rights are protected and enhanced.
- To ensure the voice of the child is heard throughout the care planning process and to monitor the child's wishes and feelings have been recorded and documented throughout the Care Planning process.
- To support and advise through a mentoring and coaching role to social work staff in relation to effective care planning.
- To raise IRO concerns through the agreed Resolution Protocol and to escalate unresolved concerns regarding care planning to the appropriate level of the Local Authority's management structure. To consider the need to seek independent legal advice and possible referral of a case to Cafcass. The quality assurance function of the IRO service aims to highlight concerns around specific cases and also any trends relating to care planning practice. It also has a duty to highlight good practice.
- To ensure all care experienced children and young people are subject to Health Plans to promote their health and development. The IRO's have responsibility to ensure the Health Plans are monitored and meeting the children's needs within the Looked After Children Reviewing process.
- All care experienced children and young people are subject to a Personal Education Plan (PEP). The IRO is responsible for ensuring this is in place and are regularly reviewed to ensure all educational needs are being met.

- Under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014, the role of the IRO have expanded to cover responsibility for the child's case and the not just the Review and this is set out in the IRO Standards.

Composition of the IRO Service

Over the last year, there have been some changes to the composition of the service. The Independent Reviewing Service consists of a full time Team Manager, four full-time and four part-time IRO positions. The current IRO cohort have a wealth of experience and all have been qualified Social Workers for a substantial period of time. The IRO Service Manager has been in the post since June 2019.

Caseloads

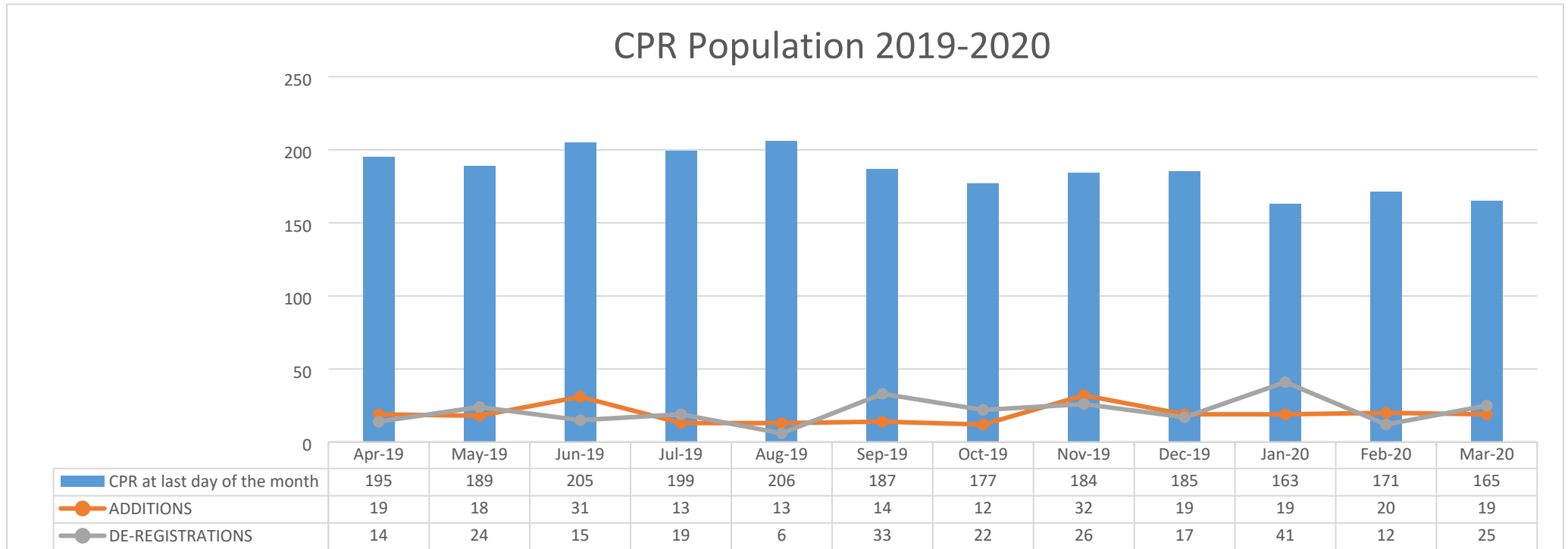
There have been some changes made to the IRO Caseloads since the previous annual report and this is as a result of IROs no longer reviewing post 18 plans. This has helped to address concerns by the team regarding capacity to implement the IRO Practice Guidance Standards which brought more activity to their workload.

The average full time IRO caseload is currently between 90–100 cases whilst part-time staff are holding average caseloads of 65. The service would ideally like a full time caseload to be 90 for each IRO as this will allow sufficient time to be given to each case to effectively monitor and review and address any issues that may arise. It has been a committed principle of the service to maintain the same IRO wherever possible so that valuable information held by IROs, particularly knowledge of the child's history and family dynamics is not lost. This means that care experienced children have had an element of continuity in their lives, with their IRO often being the only person who has remained consistent for the child through changes of team structures, placements and often their social workers.

Child Protection Register (CPR) Population.

Children subject to the CPR in this period has continued to fluctuate however the average monthly number has been 185 as noted in chart 1 below.

Chart 1



The IRO Service held 235 Initial Child Protection Conferences and 595 Review Child Protection Conferences between April 2019 & March 2020 shown in chart 2. The total number of child protection conferences held in compliance is 98%.

Chart 2

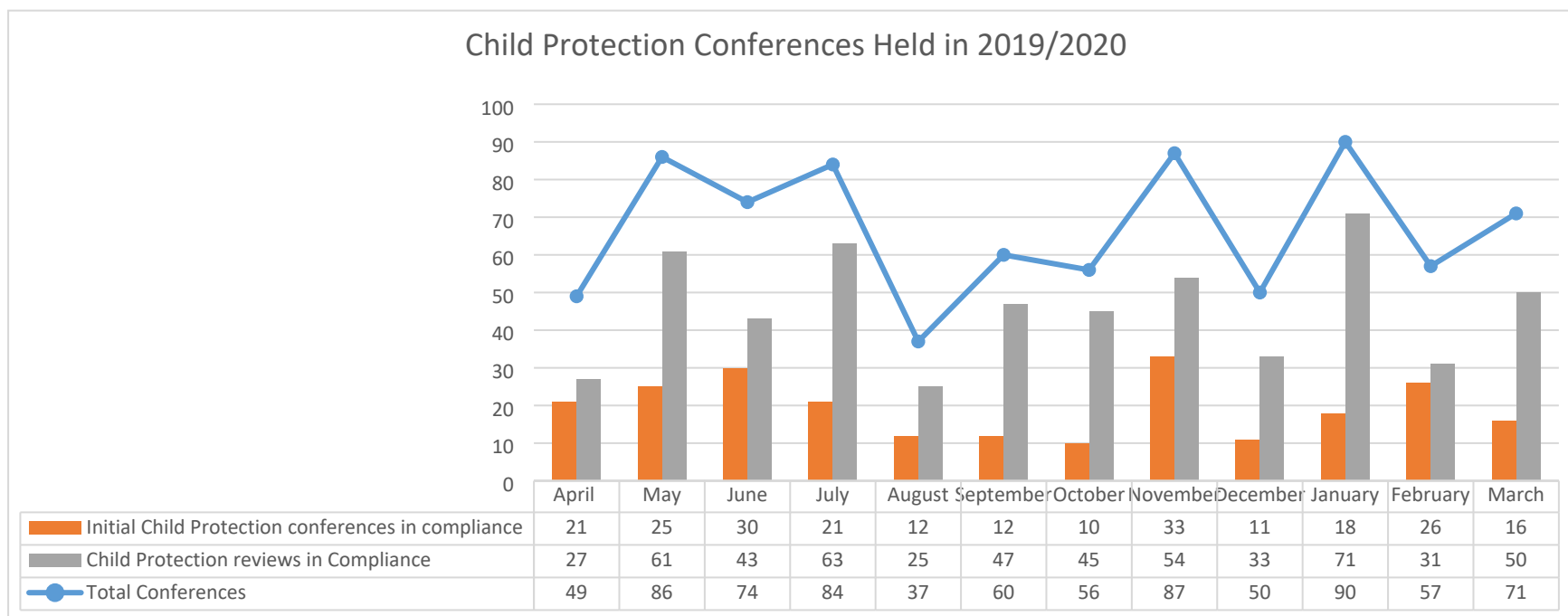


Chart 3 below identifies it is age groups 5-15 years who are the largest proportion of children subject to Child Protection registration. The smallest age group is 16-18 yrs.

Chart 3

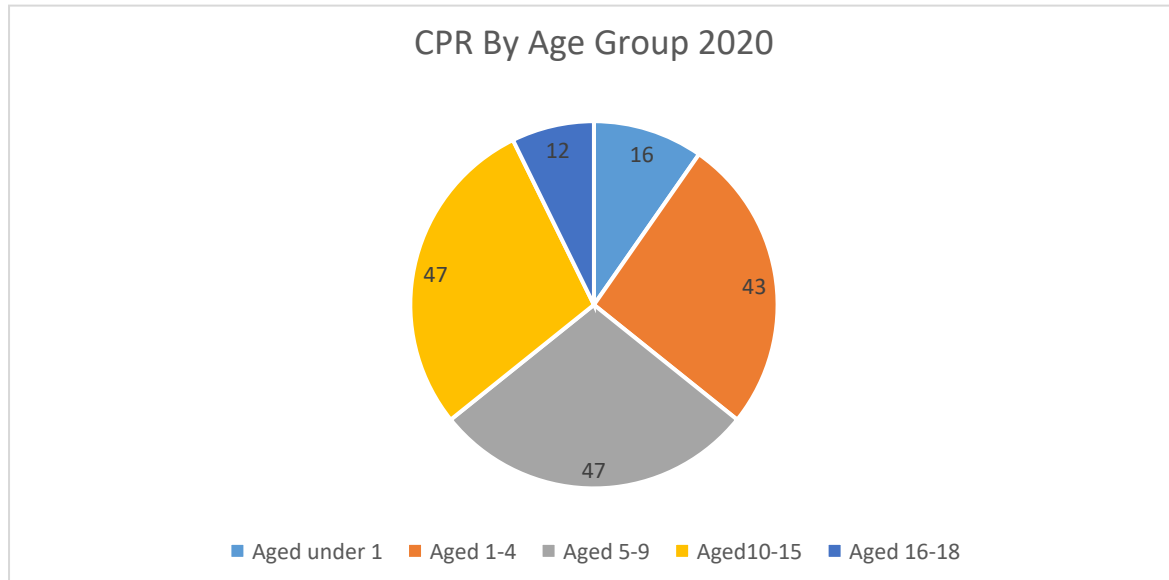
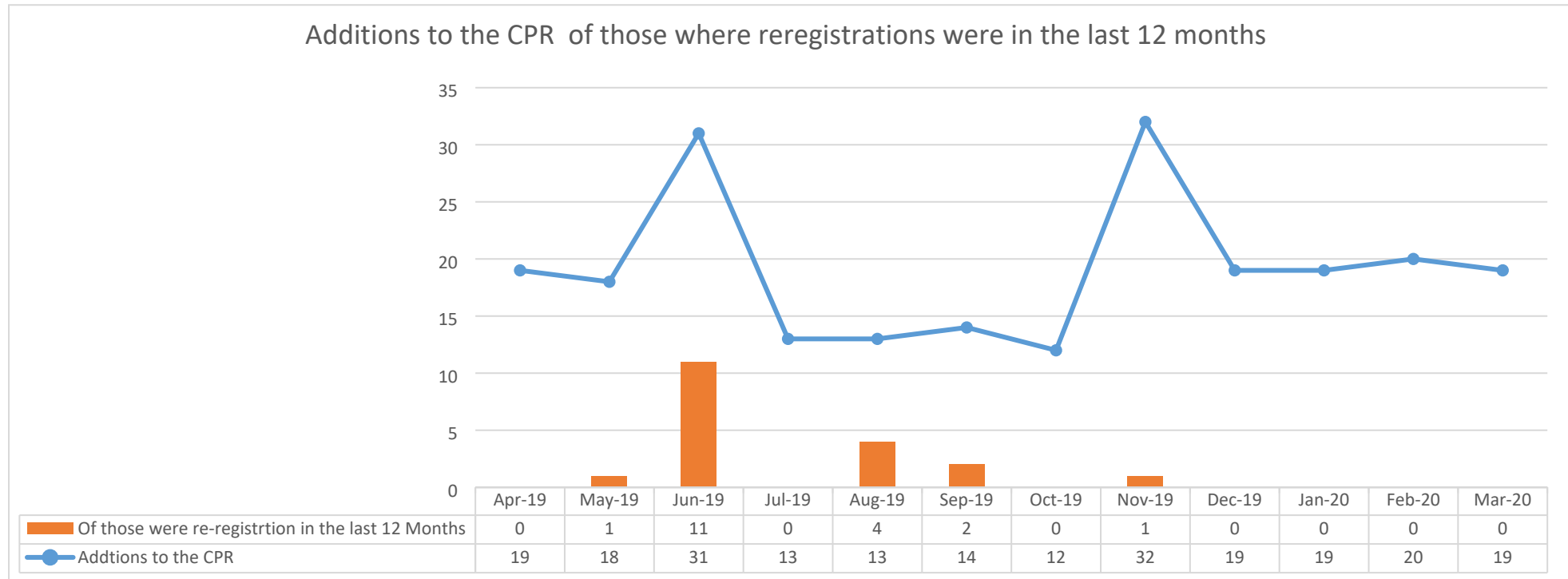


Chart 4 below records an increase in the number of children being re-registered within a year of de-registration.

Chart 4

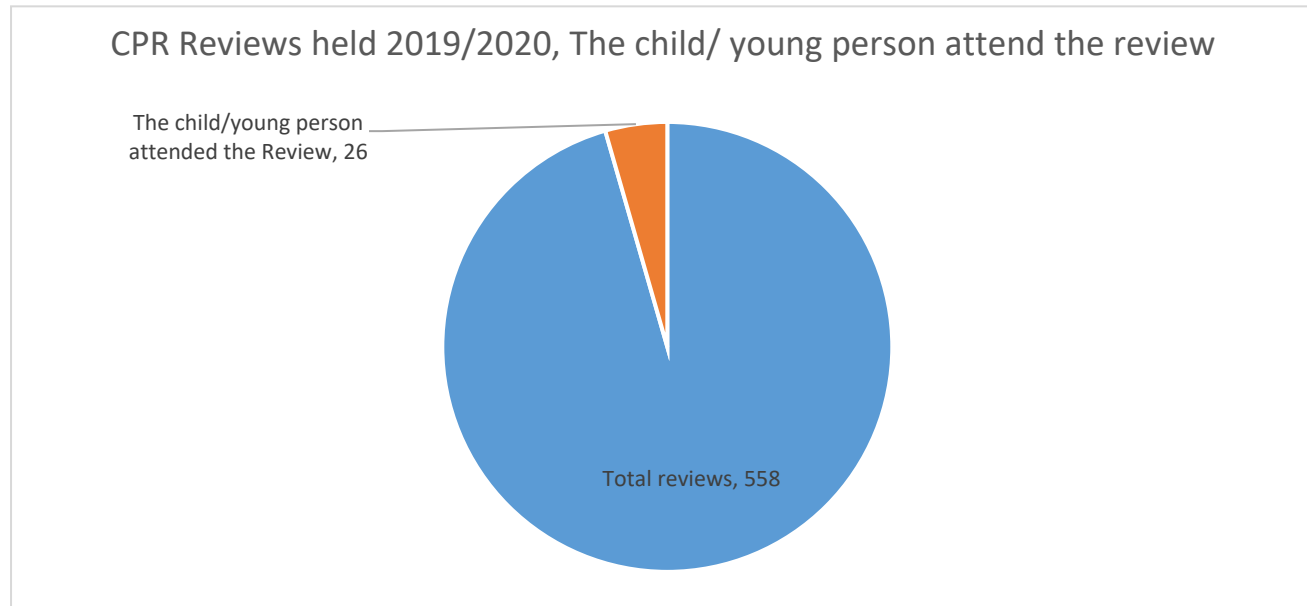


The number of re-registrations to the child protection register has increased between April 2019 and March 2020 from 14 to 19 however it is noted there was a large sibling group who were re-registered in June 2019. On further scrutiny it was concluded that some of these cases returned to the conference arena as a result of disguised compliance at the point of their earlier de-registration and some as a result of being closed prematurely once stepped down to Care and Support. It was noted that, of the children who were re-registered within one year of de-registration, a high proportion were cases where Domestic

Abuse was the main safeguarding concern. From scrutinising these cases it became clear the children were de-registered because the parents had either separated or completed work around the effects of domestic abuse on children and following a period of no domestic abuse incidents the children were removed from the CPR. However many were then re-registered within one year because there had been a further incident of domestic abuse, some of these were where the parents had resumed their relationship. The IRO Service will continue to recommend at RCPC where a child is de-registered that their case remain open on a Care and Support basis for at least 3 months and the case is not to close without a Care and Support meeting taking place. Any case that returns to an Initial Child Protection Case Conference (ICPC) within 12 months of being de-registered will be audited by the IRO Service Manager to scrutinise the processes that were followed and consider any lessons that can be learnt. The audit will be provided to the Safeguarding Team Manager and Senior Management Team.

Children's participation at Child Protection Review Conferences.

Chart 5



Children's participation at their Review Child Protection Case Conference (RCPC) is hugely important, however it is recognised it may not be appropriate for children or young people to attend any or all of the meetings but there are mechanisms in place to enable them to attend part of the meeting and meet with the chairperson separately. This is an area for improvement in Bridgend as it is only a very small proportion of children and young people who are attending their meetings. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures have placed greater emphasis on the importance of the child's attendance at their conference and Bridgend are rolling out training to practitioners currently with part of this training focussing on how children can participate in their conference and have their voice heard.

Care experienced population

Chart 6

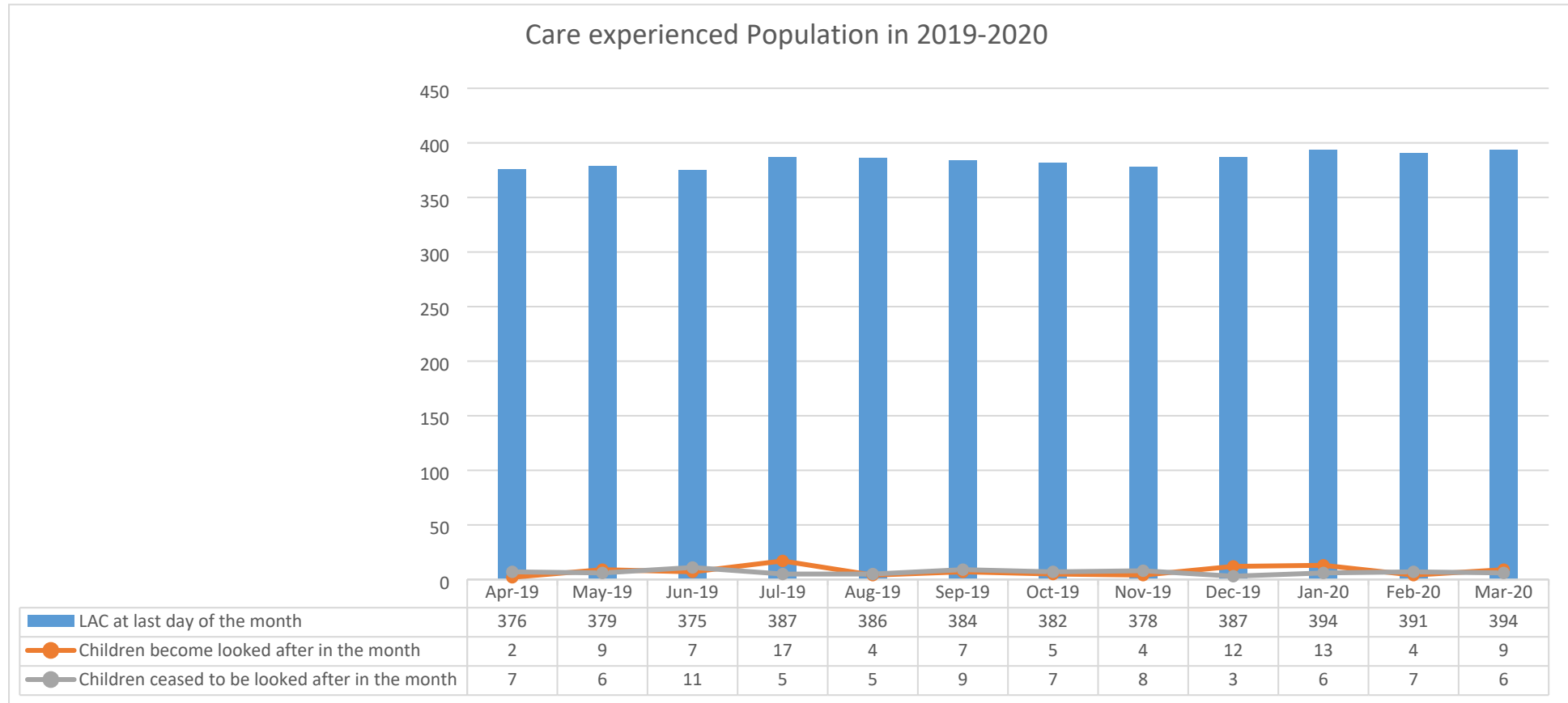
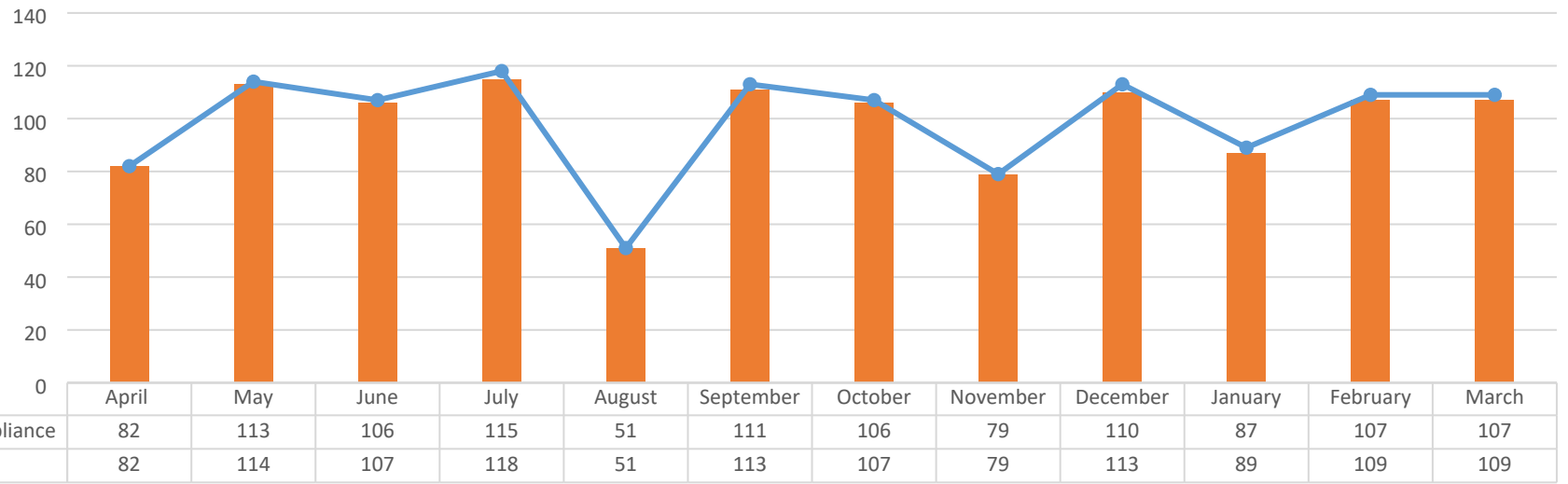


Chart 7

Looked After Reviews Held in 2019/2020



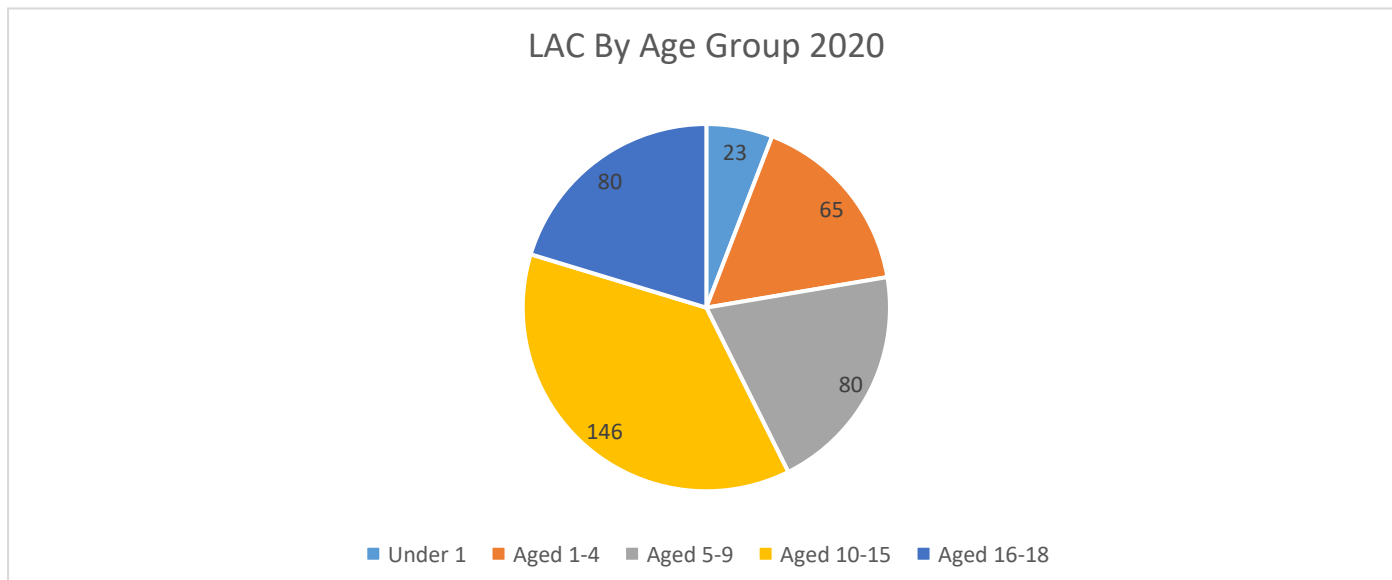
| Held in Compliance | April | May | June | July | August | September | October | November | December | January | February | March |
|--------------------|-------|-----|------|------|--------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|---------|----------|-------|
| No | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Yes | 82 | 113 | 106 | 115 | 51 | 111 | 106 | 79 | 110 | 87 | 107 | 107 |
| Grand Total | 82 | 114 | 107 | 118 | 51 | 113 | 107 | 79 | 113 | 89 | 109 | 109 |

Chart no 7 above shows how care experienced children numbers have continued to fluctuate over the last year. There have also been a large number of unplanned placement breakdowns which has put increased demands on the reviewing service. Since the reporting period four Reunifications Workers have been recruited to support children's foster placements.

There were a total of 17 Reviews of children who have experienced care held out of compliance between 2019/20. Scrutiny of these figures show that the majority of Reviews convened out of timescales were as a result of the 'change of circumstances' form not being completed in a timely manner by the Social Worker within the Safeguarding Teams. It is this form which alerts the IRO Service to an unplanned placement change and the need for a further Review meeting. However this form has recently been simplified for completion on the WCCIS and is now a much shorter document. It is hoped this will result in its completion in a satisfactory timescale. The importance of this matter and its impact upon the IRO service has been raised with Safeguarding Team Managers. More importantly children and young people have a right to have their review within a timely manner.

However, there were a small number of LAC Reviews that were not completed within compliance due to IRO sickness and lack of capacity within the team to cover these Reviews at such short notice. Since the implementation of the IRO Standards, it is good practice to hold a mid-point review meeting to ensure progress is being made and this also assists in early identification of issues rather than waiting for the Review itself to note outstanding concerns or drift in a child care plan. The IROs are holding mid-point meetings via telephone, virtual platform and email and the feedback is positive in terms of identifying drift earlier.

Chart 8



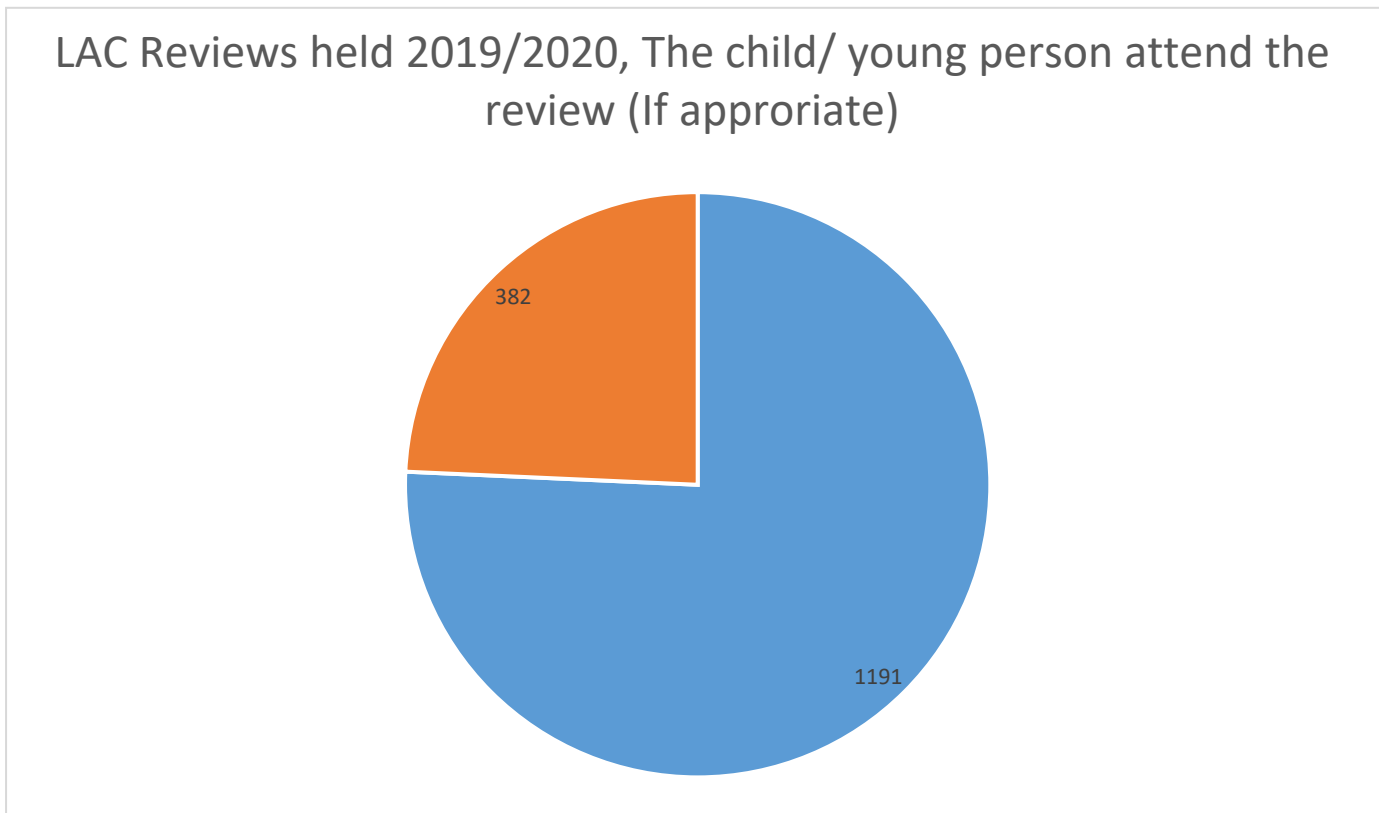
As can be seen in chart 8 above, the largest proportion of care experienced children are in the age category of 10-15 years and the smallest proportion being under 1 year old. Bridgend has an in-house service called Baby in Mind, this is a

pioneering programme designed to prevent new-born children entering into the care of the Local Authority. This service commenced in 2018 and comprises of a specialist team including practitioners whose backgrounds include Health Visiting, Social Work and family support workers.

In its first year the service worked with 38 families and 87% of the babies worked with remained out of the care system.

The service has continued to see successes but at the time of writing they have not published the latest figures. However it is clear this service has greatly reduced the numbers of under 1 year olds becoming accommodated in foster placements and mother and baby placements.

Chart 9



It is clear from chart 9 above that further work is required to encourage children who are looked after to attend their review meetings where appropriate. To encourage this the IRO Service may need to give greater consideration to the timing and venue of the meetings and explore these issues with the young people when they consult with them and younger children through direct work their Social Workers. As a service we would wish to see these numbers increase and will consult with the Fostering Team to explore how we can together encourage foster carers to support young people to attend their Review meeting. Since the report period and as a result of the Covid 19 Pandemic, consultation has been taking place virtually and the anecdotal feedback from the IRO's is positive with many young people preferring this method of communication.

Advocacy.

In the period of April 2019 – March 2020 a total of 203 referrals were made to Tros Gynnal Plant Advocacy Service for ongoing advocacy support. It remains a priority for the IRO Service to ensure all children involved in the child protection process or care experienced children have the opportunity to access advocacy support. The IRO's ensure they discuss this when they consult with children and young people. They raise the issue of advocacy at all meetings and record advocacy numbers in the quality assurance audits. The IRO's ensure every child or young person receives an Active Offer for Advocacy services. The Active Offer ensures the Social Worker has explained what Advocacy is and how it can support them. Children and young people who become looked after and/ or are being discussed at a Child Protection Conference are entitled to receive an Active Offer of advocacy support. However the Active Offer should be consistently and regularly revisited with children and young people.

Business Support.

There have been changes to arrangements for Business Support supporting the IRO Service. Previously the service was supported by four child protection clerks and one fulltime and one part time Business Support staff to assist with facilitating Looked After Children Review meetings. The service has been realigned resulting in the child protection clerks being separated from the LAC support team, who are now part of the central Business Support Team. The child protection clerks have been reduced from four to three clerks. This has impacted upon the efficiency of the service and the IRO service have

noticed an increased pressure on the child protection clerks in meeting increasing demand i.e. increase in child protection conferences being held and an increase in the number of children on the child protection register. The clerks are also committed to supporting other services which has reduced their availability to the IRO service. The IRO Service and Business Support have agreed to have a quarterly interface meeting to address any challenges and monitor any issues of compliance.

Team Meetings

The IRO Service have held monthly team meetings with regular attendance by other services/agencies e.g. Western Bay Adoption Service, quarterly meetings with Cafcass, Vulnerable Groups, Disabled Children's Team, Permanency Team, Voices from Care, Legal Department and Commissioning service. There have also been meetings held between the IRO's and the Head of Service on a quarterly basis.

Case Dispute Resolution and Complaints

Between April 2019 & March 2020, the IRO's raised concerns on 9 cases under the IRO resolution protocol. These were primarily as a result of concerns the young person's Care Plan was not being progressed and in some instances identified work not being completed and the completion of documents outstanding. Disputes were resolved at Team Manager and Group Manager level. The IRO service have continued to escalate cases to the Senior Management Team where compliance has not been met in terms of frequency/timeliness of statutory visits and core groups.

There were no complaints in relation to Child Protection Conferences that required resolution via an independent panel.

Previously the IRO Service reviewed the arrangements for Consultation with children and young people and completed a small survey with care experienced young people seeking their views on an effective consultation document. The general theme was that they reported they would like to have an App. They also said they would like to be able to see their Social Worker more often.

Changes were made to the electronic consultation document and it was hoped the process was more user friendly ensuring children and young people are engaging in their reviews and their voices are being heard throughout the care planning

process. However an improvement in the number of consultation forms completed was seen but overall this statistic remained low. Enquiries of such an App had taken place, looking at the possibility of an interactive App which would enhance consultation and obtain the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people even further. There are two Apps currently in development, one is called Mind of My Own and the other is MUSE. We had hoped to make further progress with this but this particular App was deemed not suitable to and further progress has been delayed due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

The active participation of care experienced young people in planning their care should contribute to improved outcomes. To ensure that the views of children and young people are listened to, good practice dictates they should either attend and/or participate in their review meetings or should at least be able to express their view by some other appropriate method. It is imperative that work continues to grow and develop better means of accessing the voices of children.

IRO Quality Assurance Audit

The IRO's chaired/reviewed 2,022 meetings between April 2019 and March 2020. 1,506 quality assurance audits were completed relating to these meetings. The service aims to complete a quality assurance audit following every meeting as this identifies good practice and where practice needs to improve, where processes haven't been adhered to and any pertinent themes that may require further exploration.

The IRO service have continued to work with the safeguarding teams to improve practice around child protection conferences and this has been extended through to other agencies such as the Health Visiting services, School Nurses and Midwifery Services. The next stage is to work at improving the quality of Looked After Children reviews on a multi-agency basis.

The quality assurance audit form provides data on practice standards and captures data and information relating to the IRO standards. Once completed by the IRO following the meeting, the form automatically goes to the Safeguarding Team Manager of the case holding team for their scrutiny and management oversight. This form also alerts the Safeguarding Team Manager to any outstanding pieces of work, compliance issues and identifies areas of good practice.

Challenges and Achievements

The IRO guidance and practice standards were introduced at the beginning of 2019. IRO's have worked to improve tracking and monitoring as advised within the Practice Standards and Good practice Guide. Arrangements for Independent legal advice for IRO's have been agreed with a reciprocal arrangement between Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot legal departments. The IRO's have accessed this support on a number of occasions. However, the standards have introduced a new process to completing Looked After Children reviews which includes the involvement of the Team Managers. This is achieved when the IRO sends the Team Manager the meeting recommendations within 5 days of completing the Review and that Team Manager has 5 days to respond to these recommendations. This is now embedded and working well within the service quickly identifying any area of disagreement and enabling these issues to be resolved at the earliest stage. IROs are holding mid-point meetings with the allocated Social Worker and this is also supporting the identification of drift early.

Consultation with children and young people needs to be improved to ensure their voice is being heard. Whilst the IRO have worked to improve the consultation document for children and young people, challenges remain in encouraging them to complete the document. The IRO service is to ensure this is a priority to develop creative ways of engaging and encouraging participation of all children and young people. The development of an App may well improve consultation and participation. IRO's routinely check that children and young people know about advocacy and how it can support them in having a real say in decisions affecting their lives. Our rates of referrals to the TGP Advocacy Service are very pleasing.

The IRO service has a direct relationship with the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS) and can, if required, refer matters of concern or report directly to CAFCASS where deficits in care planning for care experienced young people cannot be resolved locally but are sufficiently significant as to impact on the outcomes for children and young

people. To date, the IRO service has had no cause to refer to CAFCASS but liaises with them regularly on individual cases within the public law arena. IROs in Bridgend work to a standard that has improved liaison between the CAFCASS children's guardians and Safeguarding Social Workers within family proceedings. As a result IROs are alerted more quickly to issues arising in the court process and can liaise at an earlier stage where disputes arise with the Local Authority. This relationship provides Guardians Ad Litem with the means to communicate issues arising directly with the IRO that are relevant to the on-going development and monitoring of a care plan, either during proceedings or following an order being granted.

The IRO Team meet with CAFCASS on a quarterly basis to discuss practice, themes and good practice examples.

The IRO Service has also been involved in rolling out training across the directorate and Education by facilitating the Working Together programme and by attending Team Meetings to support practitioners in the writing of child protection conference reports.

Service Priorities

- To increase the contact between the IRO with children and young people.
- To work alongside safeguarding colleagues to achieve permanency for all children and reduce the numbers of care experienced children within a safe and appropriate plan.
- The development of child consultation and participation through a more accessible medium.
- To work alongside Safeguarding Teams and Social Care Development Workforce Team (SCDWP) to improve practice around Looked After Children Reviews and the Care Planning Process.
- To ensure appropriate care plans are progressing in a timely manner to prevent and avoid drift in children's cases.
- To continue to focus on increasing participation of children and young people at Looked After Children Reviews.
- To ensure every care experienced child and young person has a stand-alone and in date Care Plan.

- To collate thematic practice issues identified from the QA's and use these to develop learning themes and improve practice
- IROs will continue to promote advocacy services and the active offer to children and young people and make these referrals where consent has been given to support the child/young person's voice.

Appendix 2 ACTION PLAN

Please see below service priorities Action Plan

| | |
|------------|--|
| B | Completed |
| R | A problem needs serious attention and action now |
| A | Issues are being managed and if addressed should not affect delivery |
| G | On track, in progress, any minor risks/ issues being managed |
| NYS | Not Yet Started |

Independent Reviewing Service Action Plan 2020/2021

| IRO Service | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|----------|----------------|--------|----------|--------|----------|-----|
| | Owner | Due date | Recommendation | Action | Evidence | Update | Last RAG | RAG |
| | | | | | | | | |

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|----|-----------------------------------|----------|--|--|--|---|-----|-------|
| 1 | IRO Service Manager and each IRO. | Nov 2020 | To increase the contact between the IRO with children and young people. | <p>IRO Service Manager will continue to be involved in the progress of the MUSE App.</p> <p>Each IRO will ensure they give the child/YP the opportunity to meet with them to discuss their LAC review or CP Conference.</p> | <p>IRO Service Manager will attend all consultation meetings in relation to the development of this APP.</p> <p>Data collection of consultation rates will be included in the 6 monthly IRO Report.</p> | <p>Some progress is being noted during this Covid pandemic as young people appear to prefer consultation over the phone or virtually using Skype or MS Teams.</p> <p>Low rates of consultation documents. Service Manager has liaised with the Fostering Team to ask Foster Carers to encourage the children in their care to complete the consultation form.</p> | N/A | Amber |
| 2. | IRO Service Manager and each IRO. | Nov 2020 | To work alongside safeguarding colleagues to achieve permanency for all children and reduce the numbers of care experienced children within a safe and appropriate plan. | <p>IROs to ensure at the 2nd LAC Review the plan for the child is clear. If the plan isn't clear, the IRO will monitor and track the case and inform the appropriate Safeguarding Team Manager.</p> <p>IROs to ensure they consider all</p> | <p>IRO Service Manager to attend the LAC reduction Strategy Meeting held on a bi-monthly basis.</p> <p>During Supervision with IROs the IRO Service Manager will discuss alternative orders and options of care and add these identified</p> | This process is currently working well. IRO Service Manager has identified a number of cases where alternative care options could be considered resulting in the child no longer being Looked After. | N/A | Green |

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| | | | | appropriate options for care experienced children such as SGOs. | cases to the discussions at the LAC Reduction strategy Meeting. | | | |
| 3. | IRO Service Manager | Nov 2020 | The development of child and young person consultation and participation through a more accessible medium. | <p>IRO Service Manager will continue to be involved in the progress of the MUSE App.</p> <p>Each IRO will ensure they give the child/YP the opportunity to meet with them to discuss their LAC review or CP Conference.</p> | <p>IRO Service Manager will attend all consultation meetings in relation to the development of this APP.</p> <p>Data collection of consultation rates will be included in the 6 monthly IRO Report.</p> | This has been on-hold due to Covid 19. | N/A | NYS |
| 4. | IRO Service Manager and each IRO. | Nov 2020 | To work alongside Safeguarding Teams and SCDWP to improve practice around care experienced children and their Looked After Children Reviews and the | IROs will ensure they complete the IRO Quality Assurance document following every LAC Review. This will automatically be sent to the Safeguarding | The rates of completed QA forms will increase in the next year and the data will be included in the IRO 6 month report. IRO Service Manager will | <p>IRO Service Manager continues to raise cases of concern at the weekly Team Managers meeting.</p> <p>IRO Service Manager continues to present training alongside the training department and is facilitating introductory</p> | N/A | Amber |

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| | | | <p>Care Planning Process.</p> | <p>Team Manager for their scrutiny.</p> <p>Should the IRO identify concerning practice, they will raise this with the IRO Service Manager and the Safeguarding Team Manager. They will track the progress to a resolution and initiate the IRO Protocol where necessary.</p> <p>IRO Service Manager will facilitate training alongside the Training Department to support and improve practice.</p> <p>IRO Service Manager will facilitate induction sessions to new starters and newly</p> | <p>attend all IRO protocol Meetings to support the IROs and facilitate resolution.</p> | <p>sessions to new starters and newly qualified staff.</p> | | |
|--|--|--|-------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|----------|---|--|--|---|-----|-------|
| | | | | qualified Social Workers to support their professional development. | | | | |
| 5. | IRO Service Manager and each IRO. | Nov 2020 | To ensure appropriate care plans are progressing in a timely manner to prevent and avoid drift in children's cases. | <p>At every LAC Review the IRO will check the child has a Care Plan that is up to date and meets the child's needs. The IRO will recommend at each LAC Review that the Care Plan is updated to reflect the changes agreed at the current LAC Review.</p> <p>The IRO will track each child and ensure their Care Plan has been updated. The IRO will hold mid-point meetings to prevent drift and</p> | <p>The rates of IRO Quality Assurance forms being completed is increasing and this will continue moving forward.</p> <p>IROs are holding mid-point meetings for each child who is Looked After however there are times the child's SW does not respond. In these cases the IRO will raise this with their Service Manager and the safeguarding Team Manager.</p> | <p>Each IRO is currently compiling lists of all the children who have out of date Care Plans and is making the Safeguarding Team Manager and Social Worker aware and is tracking the case to ensure the Care Plan is completed.</p> <p>IRO Service Manager ensures when attending the LAC Reduction Strategy meeting and monthly Performance meeting that for any child who is discussed, the date of their Care Plan is checked to ensure it is up to date and where not it is flagged with the Safeguarding Team Manager.</p> | N/A | Amber |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|----------|--|--|---|--|-----|-------|
| | | | | <p>take action where drift is identified.</p> <p>Each IRO will complete the IRO Quality Assurance form following each LAC review as this informs the SW and their Team Manager of any out of date Care Plans.</p> | | | | |
| 6. | IRO Service Manager and each IRO. | Nov 2020 | To continue to focus on increasing consultation and participation of children and young people at Looked After Children Reviews. | <p>IROs to ensure they offer to consult with each LAC child as appropriate for their age and level of understanding and to use a means of communication that the child chooses. This includes face to face meeting, phone, Skype and MS Teams.</p> | <p>The IRO Quality Assurance form captures the consultation data and this will be included in IRO 6 month report.</p> <p>IRO Service Manager will during Supervision sessions discuss the importance of consultation and ensure it remains a priority for each IRO.</p> | <p>Since Covid restrictions have been in place IROs have found many young people prefer to be consulted via virtual means such as Skype.</p> <p>IROs report many young people have attended their LAC reviews while in the lock down period as they have had greater availability to attend.</p> <p>IRO Service Manager has added Consultation as a Supervision agenda item to ensure it is discussed in Supervision sessions with each IRO.</p> | N/A | Amber |

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| 7. | IRO Service Manager and each IRO. | Nov 2020 | To ensure every care experienced child and young person has a stand-alone and in date Care Plan. | <p>At every LAC Review the IRO will check the child has a Care Plan that is up to date and meets the child's needs. The IRO will recommend at each LAC Review that the Care Plan is updated to reflect the changes agreed at the current LAC Review.</p> <p>The IRO will track each child and ensure their Care Plan has been updated. The IRO will hold mid-point meetings to prevent drift and take action where drift is identified.</p> <p>Each IRO will complete the IRO Quality Assurance</p> | <p>The rates of IRO Quality Assurance forms being completed is increasing and this will continue moving forward.</p> <p>IROs are holding mid-point meetings for each child who is Looked After however there are times the child's SW does not respond. In these cases the IRO will raise this with their Team Manager and the safeguarding Team Manager.</p> | <p>Each IRO is currently compiling lists of all the children who have out of date Care Plans and is making the Safeguarding Team Manager and Social Worker aware and is tracking the case to ensure the Care Plan is completed.</p> <p>IRO Service Manager ensures when attending the LAC Reduction Strategy meeting and monthly Performance meeting that for any child who is discussed, the date of their Care Plan is checked to ensure it is up to date and where not that this is flagged with the Safeguarding Team Manager.</p> | N/A | Amber |
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| | | | | form following each LAC review as this informs the SW and their Team Manager of any out of date Care Plans. | | | | |
| 8. | IRO Service Manager and each IRO | Nov 2020 | To collate thematic practice issues identified from the QA's and use these to develop learning themes and improve practice. | The data will be scrutinised for the 6 monthly IRO Report. | Any practice themes identified will be provided to the Training Department and Team Managers at the weekly Team Meeting. If required the IRO Service Manager will be available to support the Training Team in facilitating training sessions to address these deficits. | The Quality Assurance forms are being used currently to identify out of date Care Plans as a theme and this is being addressed by the IROs with the Social Workers and their Team Managers. | N/A | NYS |
| 9. | IRO Service Manager and each IRO. | Nov 2020 | IROs will continue to make children and young people aware of the advocacy service. | This is currently monitored via the IRO Quality Assurance form and will be scrutinised for the | The referral numbers to Tros Gynnal from Bridgend are the highest in the Western Bay area. | BCBC rates of referrals to advocacy support are pleasing currently and have increased in the last year. | N/A | Green |

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| | | | | <p>IRO 6 month report.</p> <p>IROs will ensure when consulting with young people they ask if they would like the support of the Advocacy Service.</p> <p>IRO Service Manager will liaise with the Group Manager for Case Management and Transition periodically to check the referral rates have not decreased.</p> | <p>IROs report good evidence of advocacy discussions and offers being made between Social Workers and Children.</p> | | | |
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