



Hampshire
County Council

Hampshire Children's Services Care Plan Audit 2020/21

Presentation to Children & Families Advisory Panel
12 October 2021

Independent Reviewing Service (IRS) Annual Care Plan Audit 2020/21

The Independent Reviewing Service undertakes an annual audit of the quality of children's care plans in Hampshire. The findings from the audits are used to develop and enhance practice, and to improve outcomes for children who are looked after.

The audit focused on the following areas:

- ✚ **The Care Plan** (*looking at the desired outcomes for the child, what actions and outcomes are expected from each agency, and the services and interventions that are required to meet the child's day to day and long-term needs*)
- ✚ **The Personal Education Plan (PEP)** (*looking at strengths, attendance and achievements, SMART academic targets, learning needs, and educational progress*)
- ✚ **The Health Assessment (HA)** (*looking at and ensuring every child has an individual up to date health plan, physical, emotional health and behavioural needs of children and how that is included in the care plan, how the child's wishes, and feelings have been acted upon*)
- ✚ **Needs of the child** (*looking at how the care plan takes in to account specific needs including needs relating to disability, identity, gender, culture, faith, language etc.*)
- ✚ **The Child Looked After Review** (*looking at participation, contribution, inclusion, multi-agency input*)
- ✚ **Equality and Diversity** (*looking at cultural, religious, positive identity, linguistic backgrounds, access to and provision of services etc.*)

Methodology

- Between 30 November 2020 and 4 January 2021, 21 Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) completed a care plan audit following each Child Looked After Review.
- The audit contained 68 questions and included direct answers from children, parents and carers.
- 272 children's plans were audited, an increase from the number audited in 2019 (208).
- In the 20/2021 audits the questions were both qualitative and quantitative to establish if the Hampshire Approach is having a positive impact on care planning and contributes to achieving good outcomes for children.

Key Findings

- Over 98.5% of care plans reflect the needs of the child (an improvement from the 66% in 2019).
- 228 (83.82%) of children reported that their life had improved since becoming looked after which demonstrates that their care plan is meeting their needs. There are notable differences in the findings of 2020/21 audit in comparison with the previous year – the new format care plan **My life, My Future** is capturing how the child's needs are being met and making a positive difference to the child's view and understanding of their journey.
- In 89.3% of cases audited the IRO found that children's equality and diversity needs were being met, this is significantly higher than previous years, 39.9% in 2019.
- Clear evidence of how the permanence plan for the child will be achieved in 76% of cases (an 8% increase from 2019).
- When planning for children it is important to consider contingencies should 'plan A' not be possible; there was an increase of 24% in the 2020/21 results which demonstrated that 86% of care plans evidenced contingency plans.

Key Findings contd.

- For 58% of children their attainment levels had increased since becoming looked after and 112 children had grown in confidence which impacted on their social skills, resulting in more children participating in after school activities.
- Key people, including the child (where age/understanding appropriate), had attended the PEP meeting in 93.6% of cases, a significant increase of 52.2% from the audit results reported in 2019.
- For 239 children (93%), their health had improved since becoming looked after.
- 245 children (88%) reported they have regular exercise and 245 children reported having an attachment to their primary carer and that children had a good bedtime routine and were provided with a healthy diet.
- The audit established that 64.3% of children did not require any professional emotional support and 175 of the 272 children audited are having their emotional needs met by their primary carer.
- In the 2020/21 audit findings 156 (57.4%) children attended their looked after review, an increase of 2.6% from the 2019 audit.

Areas for development

- The new care plan has been designed to be more inclusive and should be signed by the child and parent. The audit findings show that 43 children signed their plan, and 79 parents which is an improvement from 2019. This is an area of focus for the Independent Reviewing Service (IRS) who are working with children and parents to ensure that the care plan is signed by the child and by parents following the looked after review.
- The dental and optician results have been impacted by the national lockdown as routine appointments were not offered. This area of improvement is linked to a multi-agency action plan and the Independent Reviewing Service is working with the social work teams and foster carers to ensure that regular health and dental appointments are made, and that children attend. IROs are confirming and monitoring this through the reviews and report on this through the monthly performance meetings.
- The audit findings noted an improvement in the number of children attending their review, however the focus for IRS is to increase the number of children who attend their review and participate in their care planning. Some children have told us that they prefer to attend their reviews using various platforms and an action plan is in place which is looking at developing hybrid meetings alongside face to face meetings as a way of ensuring that as many children as possible attend and contribute to their reviews.

Summary

- The audit completed this year demonstrated that for the majority of children who are looked after by Hampshire Children's Services their life has improved, not just in the stability of care provided, for them personally but in their academic and social skills, that they feel safe, loved, and cared for and are happy.
- The audit has highlighted some positive findings which clearly show an improvement in comparison to the 2018 and 2019 audit results.
- The audits have identified some areas for development and the IRS already have plans in place to address the areas that have been highlighted through the audit process.