



Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday, 12 January 2022

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Level 2, Town Hall Extension

Everyone is welcome to attend this committee meeting.

There will be a private meeting for Members of the Committee at 1.30 pm in the Council Chamber.

Access to the Public Gallery

Access to the Public Gallery is on Level 3 of the Town Hall Extension, using the lift or stairs in the lobby of the Mount Street entrance to the Extension. **There is no public access from any other entrance.**

Filming and broadcast of the meeting

Meetings of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee are 'webcast'. These meetings are filmed and broadcast live on the Internet. If you attend this meeting you should be aware that you might be filmed and included in that transmission.

Membership of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Councillors –

Reid (Chair), Abdulatif, Sameem Ali, Alijah, Bano, Benham, Collins, Cooley, Foley, Hewitson, Lovecy, McHale, Nunney and Sadler

Co-opted Members -

Miss S Iltaf, Ms K McDaid, Mrs J Miles, Dr W Omara and Ms L Smith

Agenda

1. Urgent Business

To consider any items which the Chair has agreed to have submitted as urgent.

2. Appeals

To consider any appeals from the public against refusal to allow inspection of background documents and/or the inclusion of items in the confidential part of the agenda.

3. Interests

To allow Members an opportunity to [a] declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they might have in any items which appear on this agenda; and [b] record any items from which they are precluded from voting as a result of Council Tax/Council rent arrears; [c] the existence and nature of party whipping arrangements in respect of any item to be considered at this meeting. Members with a personal interest should declare that at the start of the item under consideration. If Members also have a prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest they must withdraw from the meeting during the consideration of the item.

4. Minutes

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2021.

Pages
7 - 14

5. Climate Emergency and the Education Sector

Report of the Director of Education

Pages
15 - 28

This report outlines the work being undertaken by the Council to support the Education Sector in responding to the Climate Emergency declared by the City Council in July 2019, with a focus on decarbonisation. It also outlines the plans to develop this as a theme of Our Year 2022 in response to feedback from children and young people. This will enable children and young people to have their say and contribute to achieving the zero-carbon target for the city.

6. COVID-19 Update

The Committee will receive a verbal update from the Director of Education.

7. Year of the Child - to follow

8. Quality of Practice - to follow

- 9. IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer) Annual Report 2020/2021** Pages
29 - 74
Report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

This is the 2020/2021 Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing (IRO) Service for Cared for Children, which is required in accordance with the Children and Young Person's Act 2008 and subsequent statutory guidance published by the Department for Children Schools and Families in 2010 as set out in the IRO Handbook.

- 10. Overview Report** Pages
75 - 88
Report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit

This report provides the Committee with details of key decisions that fall within the Committee's remit and an update on actions resulting from the Committee's recommendations. The report also includes the Committee's work programme, which the Committee is asked to amend as appropriate and agree.

Information about the Committee

Scrutiny Committees represent the interests of local people about important issues that affect them. They look at how the decisions, policies and services of the Council and other key public agencies impact on the city and its residents. Scrutiny Committees do not take decisions but can make recommendations to decision-makers about how they are delivering the Our Manchester Strategy, an agreed vision for a better Manchester that is shared by public agencies across the city.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee reviews the services provided by the Council and its partners for young people across the city including education, early years, school standards and valuing young people.

In addition to the elected members the Committee has seven co-opted member positions. These are:

- Representative of the Diocese of Manchester – Vacant
- Representative of the Diocese of Salford – Mrs Julie Miles
- Parent governor representative – Dr Walid Omara
- Parent governor representative – Ms Katie McDaid
- Parent governor representative – Vacant
- Secondary sector teacher representative – Miss Saba Iltaf
- Primary sector teacher representative – Ms Laura Smith

The co-opted members representing faith schools and parent governors are able to vote when the Committee deals with matters relating to education functions.

The Council wants to consult people as fully as possible before making decisions that affect them. Members of the public do not have a right to speak at meetings but may do so if invited by the Chair. If you have a special interest in an item on the agenda and want to speak, tell the Committee Officer, who will pass on your request to the Chair. Groups of people will usually be asked to nominate a spokesperson. The Council wants its meetings to be as open as possible but occasionally there will be some confidential business. Brief reasons for confidentiality will be shown on the agenda sheet.

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Agenda, reports and minutes of all Council Committees can be found on the Council's website www.manchester.gov.uk

Smoking is not allowed in Council buildings.

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Further Information

For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact the Committee Officer:

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This agenda was issued on **Tuesday, 4 January 2022** by the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit, Manchester City Council, Level 2, Town Hall Extension (Library Walk Elevation), Manchester M60 2LA

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Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2021

Present:

Councillor Reid – in the Chair

Councillors Abdullatif, Alijah, Benham, Foley, Hewitson, Lovecy, Nunney and Sadler

Co-opted Non-Voting Members:

Miss S Iltaf, Secondary Sector Teacher Representative

Ms L Smith, Primary Sector Teacher Representative

Also present:

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children’s Services

Andrew Burton, Executive Headteacher, City of Manchester Learning Partnership

Phil Hoyland, Partnership Development Lead, City of Manchester Learning Partnership

Apologies:

Councillors Collins and McHale

Ms K McDaid, Parent Governor Representative

CYP/21/56

Arthur Labinjo-Hughes

The Committee held a minute’s silence for Arthur Labinjo-Hughes, the six-year-old boy killed by his father and his partner in Solihull.

The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services expressed his sorrow at the death of a child at the hands of the people who were supposed to care for him. He outlined the reviews that would be taking place to identify lessons that needed to be learnt from this case to improve child protection systems, while stating that responsibility for Arthur’s death lay with his killers. He highlighted the progress that had been made in Manchester to improve Children’s Services and how the service had opened itself up to scrutiny and Peer Reviews to support its continued improvement. He highlighted the role of the pandemic and lockdown in Arthur’s death. He reported that in Manchester social workers had continued to see children face to face during the pandemic and that, when schools had only been open for children of key workers and vulnerable children, Manchester had used a wider definition of vulnerable children; however, he recognised the challenges that the pandemic had presented, particularly due to the high infection rates in the city. He suggested that the Committee might want to look at the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care, led by Josh MacAlister, at a future meeting.

CYP/21/57

Minutes

The Chair welcomed the Committee’s new Members.

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2021.

CYP/21/58 Safe and Together: Responding to and Managing Domestic Abuse in Manchester

The Committee received a report and presentation of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services which provided an overview of the Safe and Together Model and its implementation in Manchester.

The main points and themes within the presentation included:

- Introduction and summary of the journey so far;
- Domestic Abuse Strategy;
- The impact of practice and the survivor story;
- Taking a partnership approach: the right support at the right time; and
- Next steps.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Praise for the Safe and Together model, including the shift in language and the strengths-based approach;
- Work to address the behaviour of perpetrators;
- Service provision for children and young people to manage their trauma;
- The importance of public education programmes to break the cycle of abuse, including educating young people and using billboards and libraries to raise awareness;
- The impact on families of having to flee to escape domestic abuse while, in many cases, the perpetrator remained in the family home;
- Recognising that domestic abuse was not only about violence but other forms of abuse, such as emotional and financial abuse;
- Whether data was available broken down by ethnicity of families that were being supported;
- That some family relationships could be more complicated than one party being the perpetrator and that it was not helpful to children in the family where one parent was being labelled as the abuser but this did not reflect their lived experience; and
- Peer-on-peer abuse involving children who had experienced domestic abuse in the family and how this could be addressed in partnership with schools.

The Domestic Abuse Reduction Manager advised that work with perpetrators had been expanded from working with only male perpetrators to working with any perpetrator including those from the LGBT community and those who had English as an Additional Language and work relating to child to parent violence. She advised that the offer of therapeutic counselling for children affected by domestic abuse had been expanded to support over 150 children a year, compared to 50 previously. She

informed Members that the new Domestic Abuse Act had introduced a responsibility for local authorities to provide support to all child and adult victims of domestic abuse and that Manchester Women's Aid had been commissioned to provide support to families in dispersed accommodation, which aimed to reach over 300 children. She also informed the Committee about Domestic Abuse Protection Orders, which removed the perpetrator from the family home and gave victims of domestic abuse time and space to think about what they wanted to do, and advised that she was in contact with Greater Manchester Police (GMP) about how the number of Domestic Abuse Protection Orders could be increased. She also highlighted work to manage risks where families decided to stay together, for example, work with Early Help on promoting positive relationships and the Healing Together programme.

In response to a Member's questions, the Service Lead advised that, although this model took a new approach, the focus was still on keeping children safe and she outlined how risk was managed, commenting that the work with schools had helped with this as they knew the children well and could detect changes in behaviour. She highlighted that Youth Justice was using the Safe and Together model to work with child survivors of domestic abuse and help them to understand their childhood experiences. In response to a question about adapting the model to work with diverse communities in Manchester, she advised that interpreters had played a valuable role in working with some families and that other services were utilised to improve practitioners' understanding of diverse cultures but she acknowledged that this was still an area for further development. In response to Members' questions, she outlined how a range of services and the Voluntary and Community Sector would be trained in and involved in the work to address domestic abuse. A Member advised that housing providers should be included in this work, to which the Domestic Abuse Reduction Manager responded that housing providers were involved in this work and that a programme of training was being provided to these organisations. The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services advised that the Safe and Together training had first targeted key areas, such as social workers who would be undertaking direct interventions, but was then being expanded out to other service areas and organisations. In response to a Member's question, he advised that training on this could be incorporated into the training delivered to Members. In response to a Member's question about how children could report their concerns about domestic abuse at home, he advised that all schools had a Designated Safeguarding Teacher and that a high number of referrals came through schools, which indicated that children felt safe and able to speak to teachers about their concerns.

The Domestic Abuse Reduction Manager reported that it was recognised that more work needed to be done with children and young people on promoting healthy relationships and that a public health approach was needed to tackle domestic abuse. She outlined the work taking place including a group being set up to look at how to raise awareness about domestic abuse and work with schools and the Council's Schools Quality Assurance Team. In response to a Member's question about whether there were any plans to involve football clubs in this work, she advised that work was taking place with CityCo, local businesses and sporting organisations, looking at what they could do to support the work to tackle perpetrators' behaviour.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Domestic Abuse Reduction Manager advised that her team was working closely with GMP regarding their response to domestic abuse and that GMP was currently reviewing its Domestic Abuse Policy. In response to the question about demographic data, she advised that this could be provided as a lot of data had been gathered as part of a needs assessment carried out during the development of the new Strategy. She advised that the organisation Talk Listen Change had recently been commissioned to provide interventions on peer on peer abuse and healthy relationships, working closely with schools.

Decision

To note the report and the importance of raising awareness about domestic abuse and relevant support services across different groups of staff, such as housing staff and different service areas within the Council.

[Councillor Abdullatif declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest as she had previously worked for Women's Aid Federation England and continued to do some ad hoc work within the sector as well as being a trustee of Ending Violence Against Women.]

[Ms Smith declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest as a volunteer with the Pankhurst Trust Manchester Women's Aid.]

CYP/21/59 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and Alternative Provision

The Committee received a presentation of Andrew Burton (Executive Headteacher) and Phil Hoyland (Partnership Development Lead) from the City of Manchester Learning Partnership which highlighted measures being taken to re-shape the Alternative Provision offer in Manchester in line with Manchester's Inclusion Strategy.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- New developments at Manchester Secondary Pupil Referral Unit (MSPRU);
- Participation in the new DfE Alternative Provision Task Force; and
- The creation of a revised Alternative Provision Framework for Manchester High Schools.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- To welcome the work taking place;
- What work was being done with mainstream schools, particularly secondary schools, to help them support young people at an earlier stage so that they were not excluded;
- To request more information on how youth workers were involved in this work;
- Concern about the variability of the in-house support provided by different mainstream schools and how schools would be persuaded to improve the support provided; and
- Was the number of commissioned alternative provision places based on the data from 2019/2020 and what were the anticipated trends for the number of exclusions.

The Director of Education highlighted work to support pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs within mainstream schools. She informed Members about the Every Child Project, which was part of the Inclusion Strategy, and was gathering an evidence base for what worked for young people in secondary school, particularly focusing on the transition from Year 6 to Year 7. She advised that most Manchester secondary schools were looking at what support they could provide in-house instead of sending pupils to Alternative Provision and that part of the Inclusion Strategy was to look at what was working and to share good practice.

Phil Hoyland advised that the Inclusion Strategy had changed the attitudes of the leadership teams in a lot of schools, although they still faced the challenge of being held highly accountable for examination outcomes and destinations after leaving school. He reported that the hope was that the use of Alternative Provision would no longer be viewed as a punishment but as the school investing in something positive for that young person which could not be provided on site. He informed Members that the Bridgelea Primary PRU had a long history of providing outreach support to primary schools in Manchester and that work was now taking place to extend that outreach offer to secondary schools, including providing advice on in-house Alternative Provision.

Andrew Burton reported that the vast majority of children and young people should be in mainstream education, with a PRU or Alternative Provision for those young people who could not attend that mainstream provision, and that the focus should be on preventative work and short-term placements with the aim of re-integrating young people back into their mainstream school. He advised that it was important that work with these young people should be trauma-informed but also have high expectations for them. He informed the Committee that the aim of the current work was to reduce the number of PRU sites, improving the quality of provision, having more professionals co-located and improving the teaching offer, as this was currently variable across the different sites. He advised that there were about 15 youth workers within the PRU and that they played a vital role in nurturing relationships to enable young people to access the curriculum and succeed. He advised that, in future, their youth work expertise would continue to be used, but that this might be in a slightly different way, noting that they had developed additional school-based skills through their time working at the PRU. He reported that the number of places in the PRU was being reduced and that the number of children referred to the PRU had been lower in recent years, although this might have been due to the pandemic. He advised that there had been a slight increase in numbers recently and that it was the responsibility of all education partners to embrace the Inclusion Strategy and manage the system effectively.

The Chair expressed concern about the impact of poor behaviour on classes and on teachers trying to manage children with chaotic behaviour and advised that it was not possible for all children to remain in large, mainstream classes. Phil Hoyland recognised the pressure on teachers and the impact that a child with significant behavioural issues could have on a class and that for a small minority of children Alternative Provision was appropriate. In response to the question about how schools could be held to account regarding their provision, he reported that in 2019 the Ofsted Framework changed to be slightly less data driven and to focus on the school's curriculum and that the new Framework was also clearer about off-rolling

pupils and manipulating the system to remove pupils who it was felt would negatively affect assessment data. He advised that the plans outlined in the presentation would provide a stronger, more personalised Alternative Provision, improve outcomes and re-integration into mainstream schools and reduce the use of permanent exclusions.

The Secondary Teacher Representative outlined how her school's inclusion centre, which offered in-house Alternative Provision, worked, advising that it worked well, although she felt it would be useful to have a specialist managing the centre.

Decision

To receive an update report in 12 months' time.

CYP/21/60 School Budgets 2022/23

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services which recommended changing the basis for the funding allocation across individual primary and secondary school budgets from 2022/23, in order to allow schools a longer adjustment period before introduction of the direct national funding formula.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Background information, including national changes to school funding; and
- Proposals to start a transition to the National Funding Formula.

In response to a question from the Chair about whether there were any negative responses from schools to the consultation, the Head of Finance advised that schools wanted clear figures on what the impact would be but that this level of detail was not yet available, although they had been provided with the information in appendix 1 of the report.

Decision

To note the report.

CYP/21/61 COVID-19 Update

The Committee received a verbal update of the Director of Education which outlined new developments and significant changes to the current situation, particularly in relation to schools.

The main points and themes within the verbal update included:

- New temporary measures to slow down the spread of the Omicron variant, including face coverings in communal areas, encouraging twice-weekly lateral flow tests and isolation for close contacts of people with the Omicron variant;
- That secondary schools were now required to test pupils on site, just once, on their return from the Christmas break and that they could have a staggered start to the term to facilitate this;

- Staffing issues in schools, including due to non-vaccinated staff having to self-isolate and staff illness and, while some government funding had been made available to fund temporary staff, there was a shortage of available agency staff and the eligibility criteria for the funding made it difficult to access;
- That schools had raised a number of queries and concerns about end-of-term events due to the new variant and that guidance had been circulated stating that these events could still go ahead but advising on additional measures that should be put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission;
- That some schools with high infection levels had taken the decision not to go ahead with these events;
- That infection levels were being closely monitored and that the previous week the number of positive cases had been 376 (292 children and 84 staff); and
- That outbreak control meetings were still taking place when a school reported a high number of new infections but that schools were doing an excellent job in working to reduce transmission.

The Chair asked that the guidance for secondary schools on testing and staggered starts for the next term be circulated to the Committee. The Director of Education agreed to this and highlighted the logistical issues these tests presented for schools, for example, due to halls being set up for mock examinations.

Decisions

1. To request that guidance for secondary schools on testing and staggered starts for the next term be circulated to the Committee.
2. That COVID-19 updates will continue to be a standing item on the agenda.

CYP/21/62 Overview Report

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme.

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**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 12 January 2022

Subject: Climate Emergency and the Education Sector

Report of: The Director of Education

Summary

This report outlines the work being undertaken by the Council to support the Education Sector in responding to the Climate Emergency declared by the City Council in July 2019, with a focus on decarbonisation. It also outlines the plans to develop this as a theme of Our Year 2022 in response to feedback from children and young people. This will enable children and young people to have their say and contribute to achieving the zero-carbon target for the city.

Please note the word setting is used to include all education providers including Early Years, schools, colleges, alternative and training providers and supplementary schools.

Recommendation

That members of the committee read the report and action plan.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Focus of the report.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	

A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

Manchester Climate Change Action Plan
 DfE Sustainability and Climate Change, Draft Strategy 2021

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Schools and Early Years settings have a key role in educating children and young people about sustainability and climate change and there are many examples across the city where schools prioritise this agenda both in and out of the curriculum to demonstrate their commitment to change and to make a contribution to Manchester becoming carbon neutral by 2038.
- 1.2 Children and Young people in Manchester alongside their peers nationally and internationally have voiced their concerns about the future of the planet and the need for decision makers and politicians to act and accelerate the progress needed to reduce carbon levels and prevent the increase in global average temperatures. Educators have a key responsibility to work in partnership with students to improve their school buildings, grounds and local neighbourhoods.
- 1.3 Manchester City Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and recognised it has a role in working with partners to achieve its ambitious target of becoming zero carbon city by 2038. Currently education settings contribute to over 50% of carbon emissions from public buildings. The City Council procures energy for over 90% of the schools and is therefore well placed to work with and support schools in reducing their carbon footprints. Although we are working with a very mixed landscape of maintained schools and academies in Manchester, on the whole the system is open and appreciative of the leadership, advice and support that the Council can provide. Due to the complexity of the school system, it is difficult to accurately quantify and develop an accurate picture the level of investment that schools are making to ensure their own green recovery. However, it is clear from having conversations at strategic forums and with individual schools that the Council has a clear role in helping schools to develop a road map for how they can work towards environmental sustainability.
- 1.4 In the summer term of 2020 the Director of Education requested a piece of work to identify ways that the Education Team could support schools in responding to climate change and contribute to the Councils net zero target. This initial scoping exercise informed the development of an action plan (appendix A). The action plan is linked to the five priorities of the Our Manchester Climate Change Action Plan. The plan has four main objectives:
1. To raise awareness, build capacity and skills across the workforce to implement change.
 2. To support the sector in securing additional resources.
 3. To enable children and young people to have a voice and be active partners in making sustainable changes to their school / college environments.
 4. To equip children and young people with the skills and behaviours to prepare them for the green economy.
- 1.5 The action plan will be achieved by developing a collaborative / partnership approach between the Council, the education sector and other key partners.

The partnership approach will promote the sharing of practice, the mobilising of resources and development of tools that schools can use to develop their own action plans.

- 1.6 In November (2021) the DfE published a draft strategy, Sustainability and Climate Change for education and children's services systems. The strategy outlines four priority areas: the education of children and young people about the importance of sustainability and impact of climate change, preparing young people for green skills and jobs, helping children and young people to connect with nature and the climate adaptation and decarbonisation of buildings. It is proposed that the strategy will be reviewed in 2030 and provides a plan of how schools may progress to achieving the high-level strategic aims of providing an excellent education for a changing world, net zero, resilient to climate change and with a better environment for future generations. The government is proposing two initiatives to drive the strategy, a virtual National Education Park and a Climate Leaders Award. The consultation on the draft strategy will run until March 2022 and a final strategy will be published in April 2022. Manchester is working closely with the DfE on piloting work to support schools to decarbonise (see 2.4).

2.0 Progress to date

This section of the report describes the progress that has been made towards the completion of actions in the plan and next steps for remainder of the academic year.

2.1 Conference

The Governors Support team are planning a conference for Manchester Schools in the Summer Term 2022. The conference would bring together Head Teachers, Governors and Business managers with the purpose of helping them to develop their own 'Green Recovery' action plans. We are in the process of finding out from all partners what they would like to be included in the conference and to identify potential settings who can provide a case study of their environmental improvements. A conference planning group with representation from all three parties is being set up to ensure that the conference will be of real practical use to enable schools to develop realistic plans of how to reduce their carbon emissions. Children and young people will be given the opportunity to have a voice at the conference. They will be invited to participate in the main programme but will also be supported to develop and lead their own 'zone' that will be led and run by children and young people.

2.2 Carbon Literacy Training

A communication was sent to all schools in September to inform them of the Carbon Literacy (CLT) training programme being delivered by the Council. So far, a handful of teachers have accessed this training. To increase the numbers of school staff accessing the training we are looking to try three new methods of delivery in the Spring Term these include:

1. Targeted reach out to schools to publicise the CLT training programme and encourage individual teachers to complete two sessions (total of 5 hours) to receive a certificate.
2. To deliver 2 sessions (equivalent to 5 hours) to school staff as a part of their inset / CPD programme that will include specific references where appropriate to their setting and develop actions that the staff can drive and action to decarbonise their school. All staff attending will receive a certificate,
3. To adapt the current course and reduce to a one 2-hour session aimed at school staff (and perhaps students) that will raise awareness and generate ideas for reducing carbon levels both in their personal lives and at school. This course would not be accredited.

2.3 De-Carbonisation

The five priority areas of the Manchester Climate Change Action plans provide a useful framework for settings to identify the areas where there is potential to reduce their carbon emissions. There are also several departments across the City Council who are also working with schools to support schools in making good decisions about improvements to their buildings and energy use. Work is underway to complete condition surveys for day care settings based in Council owned buildings as part of a £3m investment approved by Executive to make improvements to these buildings. There is also a proposal currently being costed to carry out a programme of condition surveys for all of our maintained school buildings from 2022. Both of these programmes will focus on big ticket areas such as boilers, condition of roofs and windows all of which impact on carbon emissions. This will give us a clearer picture about the condition and efficiency of our school and early years estate and where to prioritise capital funding.

- 2.3.1 There is a clear potential to strengthen relationships between schools and key Council departments and to work with business managers and governors to provide them with information and advice to make good decisions that will have significant impact on their carbon use. Work is underway to map out the key relationships in and outside of Council, to identify potential funding streams that schools can access and to develop case studies of good practice.

2.4 Partnership working with DfE and GMCA

Manchester has been identified as one of two Local Authorities to work with the DfE to test out ideas that will inform how the DfE will support schools in the future to reduce their carbon emissions. The first project that Manchester will be working on is the Electric Vehicle Charge Point Pilot Project. Thirty-five schools will be offered free surveys that will provide them with all the information, including the estimated cost of installing EVCP in their staff car parks and 10 schools will have EVCPs installed free of charge and the associated costs including software and licences provided for a further three years. The purpose of this pilot is to gain insight into end user behavioural

change, monetary and carbon reductions. Schools will be identified for this pilot in January and the surveys will take place in the Spring Term. The DfE are currently awaiting approval for funding for a SMART Meters Project which will also be piloted in Manchester. Approximately 20% of our schools do not have SMART meters, this is mainly to do with the cost of residual work needed to fit a meter. The DfE are proposing to provide grants of up to £1,000 towards the cost of the residual work and they have appointed a company (EDF) to carry out the work on their behalf. This project is programmed to be completed in this academic year.

The final pilot is to identify a Special School who would be prepared to test out the use of an Electric Minibus to use for transporting students to and from school as well as in the day for educational visits etc.

- 2.4.1 GMCA have also been looking at ways to support schools in developing plans for environmental sustainability. Last March they commissioned the Charity - Global Action Plan (GAP) to develop an online resource to help schools set priorities and generate their own action plans. Manchester Environment Education Network (MEEN) worked with GAP to input local information to ensure that schools could access resources, support and advice from companies and partner organisations in the Northwest. Manchester schools were invited to test out the online platform and provide feedback. The tool is now available for schools to use and will be promoted on the school's hub and other school forums.

2.5 Young People's Offer

Across the city there are a wide range of VCS partners who have an 'offer' for children and young people to educate them about the impact of climate change and the importance of sustainable environments these include Groundwork, City of Trees, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, MEEN, Manchester Museum, Forest Schools and RHS. We have established a 'Green' partners network to share information, promote collaborative working and to look at developing a more co-ordinated offer to schools. MEEN and 5 partners were successful in being awarded Holiday Activity Funding (HAF) to run workshops in schools and youth and play settings across the summer. The 'Grow your future' workshops had a focus on food and the environment and delivered 24 workshops, engaging over 700 children and young people.

- 2.5.1 Over the last two years there has been an increase in numbers of workers appointed who have a role in supporting children and young people in being active in tackling climate emergency within the city council and key partner agencies including Groundwork, Young Manchester, and the Manchester Climate Change Agency. These officers are meeting regularly to co-ordinate and strengthen the offer to children and young people, schools, and youth groups. A good example of this is the work being co-ordinated through the Keep Manchester Tidy Officer based in the Highways Team, working with Climate Change Officers and Neighbourhood Teams to promote Clean Air Days and Litter Picking schemes.

- 2.5.2 There are also a growing number of frameworks that promote a whole school approach to tackling climate change and environmental sustainability including ECO Schools, Green Schools Project, Transforming the World. All these frameworks and awards encourage the participation of students in driving change. In September last year we hosted a briefing event for ECO schools to re-launch their refreshed programme and awards and so far, 108 schools and early years settings have signed up this year to work on their Green Flag awards.
- 2.5.3 The Local Authority has a key role in communicating the offer and brokering opportunities to schools.

2.6 Our Year

Children and Young People's concerns about Climate Change and impact it will have on their futures has been highlighted as a theme emerging from the consultation carried out to inform the plans for our dedicated year for children and young people.

The Council, with partners ran two children and young people's Climate Change Summits in 2019 that provided them with the opportunity to raise their concerns with decision makers and politicians. Our Year provides another opportunity for the voice of young people to be heard and to create opportunities for Children and Young People to run social action projects that will have a positive impact on the environment.

- 2.6.1 Several key partners including MEEN, Groundwork, City of Trees, Manchester Museum and the Manchester Climate Change Agency have already started to identify ways to increase the number of opportunities for children and young people to engage and co-design projects. MCC Business partners and contractors will also be approached to support many of these projects through their social value contribution.
- 2.6.2 The year will also provide a platform for schools to reengage with the Skills for Life project including the relaunch of the Skills for the Planet resource and Climate Change Wheel. All Children and Young People engaged with environmental projects will be supported to reflect and record their own skills development and to co-design new Skills for Life projects linked to climate action. It will also be useful to explore the link between Skills for Life project and the Climate Leaders Award mentioned in the DfE draft strategy.

2.7 Green Skills

In 2019 the Work and Skills Team and Education Team started to do work with Career Leads about reviewing their Careers Education programmes to include the Green Industrial Revolution and the jobs of the future. To now regain momentum, the Work and Skills Team have commissioned Groundwork to work with our secondary schools to help them to access existing high-quality resources that educate students about existing and emerging 'Green' jobs. They have also been asked to co-design with schools

and students a resource titled Every job a 'Green' job which focuses on the behaviours and skills that future employees will require to manage their own carbon footprint.

- 2.7.1 The Work and Skills Team will work closely with GMCA Enterprise Co-ordinators and other key partners to lift this important area of a schools Careers Education Programme to ensure all students and staff are kept up to speed with jobs and careers as the Green Revolution gathers momentum.

2.8 Early Years Settings

The Early Years Teams are also looking at ways to support the sector in reducing their carbon emissions and the environmental education of young children. There are two pieces of work underway. The first is auditing the private voluntary and independent Sector (PVI) in ascertaining the opportunities and challenges facing the sector regarding change and implementing improvements so that the team can build a more accurate picture of the current position and prioritise areas that they want to focus on this year. The learning from this piece of work and the conditions survey mentioned in 2.3 will be used to encourage other parts of the Education Sector including Alternative Providers and Supplementary Schools to make improvements to their own Carbon footprints.

3.0 Promoting Active Travel

In addition to the work outlined above, there have been a number of actions to promote active travel led by Neighbourhood Services working in partnership with schools and settings and their local communities which encourage people to walk and cycle. Active travel is an essential element of the Council's vision for a sustainable transport system and reducing carbon emissions through a mode shift away from private car journey towards cycling and walking.

- 3.1 Promoting Active Travel Choices on the School Run – School Streets and Walk to School Programmes. The Neighbourhood Teams work closely with schools and parents to promote active travel choices and increase climate change awareness. The activities at schools have included:
- Delivering school assemblies to talk about active travel choices and carbon impact of short car journeys to school.
 - Producing articles for school newsletters.
 - Supporting applications for the nationally Accredited Active Travel Schemes such as the "WOW" "Walk to School Project by Living Streets Organisation and the Modeshift STARS education Scheme.
- 3.2 School Streets Sessions – "providing Traffic Free Space outside Schools" One Day Taster Sessions
- The Neighbourhood Teams, alongside Highways, have supported 20 primary schools in 13 wards across Manchester to hold one day taster "School Street" Sessions. These sessions help to promote active travel, transform the school run and encourage safe, healthy school travel whilst improving air quality

around school sites. A “School Street” taster session followed invitations to schools to request that the Council introduce temporary restrictions on motor traffic at school drop off and pick up times providing a traffic free safe space that encourages active travel. These are one day trial sessions with the Council waiving normal fees and providing expertise, legal notices, training for volunteers, signage, and barriers for the school to allow them to successfully manage the session. One Day Taster School Street Sessions have typically been held on climate change campaign days such as Clean Air Day or Car Free Day. These are opportunities for Schools, parents, and residents to come together to provide safe traffic free school travel supported by volunteer traffic marshals. Over 6,600 pupils have been able to enjoy at least one day of car free space outside their school at drop off and pick up times on the school street trial sessions across Manchester.

3.3 School Streets – Moving towards sessions every school day

Following successful one day trials, many schools have asked that they hold them more regularly. The Council was successful in September 2021 in a funding application to TFGM and has been granted £50k to roll out a pilot programme at 7 schools in Manchester that will see School Streets Sessions held every school term day. The School Streets initiative at these 7 schools will be supported by permanent Traffic Restriction Orders (TRO) and additional fixed signage. The Council will provide accredited marshal training and resources for school staff and parent volunteers. In the lead in period the participating schools as well as other schools across the city, will be encouraged to hold further one day taster sessions. These TRO orders are subject to a statutory consultation process; it is anticipated that the move to daily sessions will take place over the Summer and Autumn terms in 2022.

3.4 In addition to School Street Road Closures the Neighbourhood Teams will continue their engagement with schools to develop active travel resources, school travel plans and support packages. As schools develop more experience of active travel initiatives, they will be supported to progress to the option of School Street one day taster sessions. As the schools become more experienced through the delivery of taster sessions and other Active Travel events such as walk to school days the Council will develop a pipeline of potential applications for regular and permanent School Streets should further funding become available.

4.0 Conclusion

Climate Change was one of the key themes identified by children and young people that should be a focus for Our Year 2022. In addition to continuing to work with children and young people on this agenda, a priority going forward is working with schools and settings to ensure they are taking positive and practical actions to reduce their carbon emissions and providing them with information and tools to enable them to do this. This includes providing access to training such as the carbon literacy training and mobilising resources where available including ensuring that Manchester is proactive in working with government departments such as the DFE to access any grants or pilot schemes for our schools and settings. We are aware that many of our schools

have already prioritised this work and have produced ambitious plans to reduce their carbon emissions and it is also important that we facilitate the sharing of this practice across all schools and settings.

5.0 Recommendations

Elected members are asked to take note of the content of this report and to comment on the action plan which is attached as an appendix to the report.

Education Services Climate Change Action Plan September 2021 – July 2022

Overall Aim: To support the education sector in reducing carbon emissions and developing sustainable school and college environments that will contribute to the City’s zero carbon target -2038.

Objectives:

1. To raise awareness, build capacity and skills across the workforce to implement change.
2. To support the sector in securing additional resources.
3. To enable children and young people to have a voice and are active partners in making sustainable changes to their school / college environments.
4. To equip children and young people with the skills and behaviors to prepare them for the green economy

Objective	Priority Actions	Links to CCA P	Success Criteria	Progress September 21
1.build capacity, knowledge and skills in the workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Establish and or develop stronger links with education settings and key MCC departments. -Research and identify best practice in settings and LAs elsewhere. -To organise a conference for school leaders, governors, business managers and students. 	1&2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Directory of key contacts disseminated. -Numbers of networks / forums attended -all new schools contribute a case study and lead by example. -majority of schools participate in conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Energy, capital buildings policy, highways links, neighbourhoods established. -Repository scoped for refreshed schools' hub. Conference concept note written, idea tested with key stakeholders.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Partner with GMCA and DfE in the delivery of programmes and projects to reduce carbon across the sector -Carbon Literacy Training rolled out across all settings. -Frameworks, awards and toolkits promoted to support schools in planning and implementing change 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Manchester schools/ colleges and EY settings are engaged in regional and national developments. -schools/ settings engage in CLT for their workforce. - schools and settings using an established framework and or working towards an award 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mcr Schools testing out GMCA Global Action Plan Tool. -Contact in DfE established. -CLT information disseminated to all settings. -Eco Schools Briefing session (28.9.21) -Recruitment of schools to Carbon Schools' Project.
2. Secure Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify funding streams and other resources that schools, and settings can access. -Establish area on schools' hub to disseminate information and share practice. -Encourage schools to collaborate on securing additional resources. -Raise funds to support activities in the Year of the Child / YP 	1&2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Evidence of additional funding secured by schools and settings. -Schools and settings accessing information from School's hub -Evidence of schools working together to secure additional resources. -Sponsorship and funding secured to deliver Year of the Child / YP events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Information disseminated on funding and resources available linked to COP26. -Request for new area of school's hub submitted. -Consultation underway to identify events / activities.

3. Children and young people's voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Officers and partners co-ordinate offer to young people. -Programme of events delivered as part of year of the Child -CLT adapted to train children and young people. -Youth Led initiatives / projects, training and resources promoted to students. -Network of school and college eco clubs established. -VCS partners support children and young people deliver activities and social action projects 	2&3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Co-ordinated offer communicated to schools / settings -6 events delivered -10 schools test out training and roll out plan in place for 2022/23. -Evidence of YP leading own social action projects. -Majority of schools participating in eco clubs' network -VCS partners working in schools, youth and play settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Climate change officer and partner group established and meeting monthly. -Consultation underway -Pilot co-designed with YP -Groundwork and YMcr funding and training to support social action disseminated. -Climate wheel and Skills for Life resource disseminated to all schools. -Transform the world support 2 High Schools to establish key stage three eco clubs. -Groundwork Leadership training promoted to all High Schools. -6 VCS partners deliver 26 HAF workshops
4.Green Skills	-Resources developed / sourced to support Careers Programmes	4	- High schools and colleges embed green jobs into careers programmes	-Groundwork commissioned to identify need, and research resources.

	-CLT for Careers Leaders		-Careers leaders complete CLT Training.	-Promotion of resources on GMACS Platform. -One Education piloting resource with 6 high schools. -CLT promoted at CEIAG network meetings
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**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 12 January 2022

Subject: IRO Annual Report 2020/2021

Report of: Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

Summary

This is the 2020/2021 Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing (IRO) Service for Cared for Children, which is required in accordance with the Children and Young Person's Act 2008 and subsequent statutory guidance published by the Department for Children Schools and Families in 2010 as set out in [The IRO Handbook](#).

Recommendations

It is recommended that Scrutiny Committee Members consider the progress and impact being achieved by the IROs in Manchester and the goals set out for 2021/2022 with regard to;

1. The continuous drive for improvement of practice that has positive impacts on the planning for our children and young people in Manchester.
 2. To strengthen the participation and feedback of children, young people, parents and carers involved with the Safeguarding Improvement Unit.
-

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

In the reporting year 2020-2021 the IRO Service has successfully embedded a hybrid model of working by utilising technology, which has reduced the transport requirements of professionals attending some meetings. Whilst we are certainly not advocating a virtual service, we have found virtual platforms helpful to deliver Child Led Reviews with professionals and to keep in touch with children during Covid19 pandemic
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Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The IRO Service employ 21.5 full time equivalent staff occupied by 24 staff (4.5 job-sharers) from a range of cultural backgrounds, which reflects the culture and ethnicity of most of the children we work with.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	IROs all have at least 5 years post qualifying experience in Social Work and share their knowledge and expertise across Children's Services. The IRO Service takes a significant role in driving the improvements and developments on practice across the city.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Throughout 2021-2021 we have successfully delivered several training sessions virtually and briefing sessions to a wider section of the workforce, the impact of this is that more services across the city have a greater understanding of the role of an IRO in planning for Children.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	The IRO Service has recruited successfully during the reporting period and promoted Manchester as city that has children at the heart of everything we do and provides an excellent quality service.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	The IRO Managers for Manchester are involved within the Northwest IRO network and national work to ensure we share learning and continuously develop in line with regional and national practice.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2020-2021

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The annual report is prepared for those with executive responsibility for children's services and corporate parenting, to enable consideration of the service and to be assured that the local authority is having a positive impact on Our Children.
- 1.2 The report provides an opportunity to highlight the key data of Our Children, areas of good practice over the last twelve months and goals for 2021/2022 that recognises the key priorities and how we will achieve this.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The role of the IRO is in two parts chairing a child's review and monitoring a child or young person's ongoing care plan. The report attached discusses how this has been achieved over the last twelve months.
- 2.2 The IRO Service sits within the Children's Safeguarding & Review Service (previously named Safeguarding & Improvement Unit) and is managed by the Service Lead for Safeguarding.
- 2.3 It is important to note that during the period relevant to the report, we entered a global pandemic that forced the service to work differently in conducting Our Children's Reviews and this is reflected upon throughout the report.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 The last twelve months have been unprecedented times with managing a global pandemic while ensuring we continue with business as usual. The ability for us to adapt over the last twelve months has allowed us to ensure we continue to deliver a good service to children and that children have timely reviews. Within the context of the adaptations required over the last twelve months this report outlines the learning. The recommendations of the report set out the service priorities for 2021/2022, which link strongly to the Children & Young Peoples Plan.
- 3.2 **Priority 1: To place children and young people at the centre of everything we do.**
 - We will focus on letters to children being good quality and sent out in timescale.
 - Consulting with children in a meaningful way about their Care Plan and ensuring we are ambitious for them.
 - We will co-produce with children to better drive service delivery.
- 3.3 **Priority 2: Listen to and respond to children and young people.**
 - We will continue to hold timely reviews that are led by children.

- Recommendations will be SMART and focussed on improving outcomes for the child and will be written in consultation with children and evidence what impact they will have on them.
- We will ensure that we drive issues important to children and be involved with practice improvement.
- We will improve how we deliver our service by listen and responding to children.

3.4 **Priority 3: We will being ambitious for Our Children**

- We will ensure all children benefit from purposeful visits within 6 weeks of their review to ensure they are actively involved in their planning.
- We will work to ensure all children have a good quality care plan by their second review.
- We will work to improve the number of children supported to attend their meetings and to co-chair to ensure that they are central to the planning.
- Achieving permanence for Our Children will be the focus of work for IROs.
- We will continue to focus on the quality of Dispute Resolutions and refocus to ensure the impact on children is evidenced.
- We will continue to build strong and effective relationships with the SW Teams to ensure that we provide appropriate scrutiny and provide support in ensuring children receive the best service and achieve permanence at the earliest opportunity.

3.5 To achieve our ambitions will we invest in our IROs learning and development and have a robust approach to quality assurance and review this monthly to ensure we can evidence impact for Children.

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Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2020-2021



Report to: Children's Leadership Team

This report will also be published on the Manchester City Council external website.

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Completed: October 2021

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FOREWORD

The Annual Report provides an account of the activity of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. It evaluates the effectiveness and impact of the IRO Service in the planning and outcomes for Our Children and Young People (previously referred to as Looked After Children) and ensuring that Manchester Local Authority as a Corporate Parent is discharging its statutory responsibilities towards them and remains ambitious in what we achieve with Our Children in Manchester.

IROs have a pivotal role to play in ensuring that care plans for children effectively address their needs, consider Our Children and Young People's ascertainable views and opinions and improve outcomes for them. During the period relevant to this report, we entered a global pandemic that forced the service to work differently and enabled us to find different ways to connect with children and young people. The report demonstrates the continuous development of the IRO Service over the last year and its role in the continuous journey of practice development in Manchester.

1.SERVICE AND LEGAL CONTEXT

1.1 The role of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

The role of the IRO is set within a legal context and the framework of the IRO Handbook 2010. The appointment by local authorities of an IRO is a statutory requirement. The primary task of the IRO is to ensure that the care plans for Our Children and Young People fully reflect their needs, ensures that their wishes and feelings are given full and due consideration and that the actions set out in the plan are consistent with the Local Authority's statutory responsibilities.

The statutory duties of the IRO are set out in Section 25B (1) of the Children Act 1989 which are to:

- Monitor the performance by the Local Authority of their functions in relation to the child's case.
- Participate in any review of the child's case.
- Ensure that any ascertained wishes and feelings of the child concerning the case are given due consideration by the appropriate authority.
- Perform any other function which is prescribed in regulations.

The IRO Handbook clearly sets out the statutory roles and duties as well as the strategic and managerial responsibilities of Local Authorities in establishing an effective IRO Service. There are two clear and separate aspects to the function of an IRO outlined in the handbook, which are (i) to chair the child's review meeting and (ii) monitoring the child's progress on an ongoing basis.

1.2 Profile of the IRO Service in Manchester

The IRO Service in Manchester sits within the Safeguarding and Improvement Unit. The service is managed independently of children's Social Work line management and is therefore offering an appropriate level of independence that enables the service to effectively challenge the practice, plans, arrangements and impact for Our Children by the Local Authority. The Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Practice Improvement reports directly to the Director of Children's Services.

Management capacity in the IRO service consists of the Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Practice Improvement, the Service Lead for Children's Safeguarding and two Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Managers. In the last year, due to the increase in staffing linked to the number of Our Children in Manchester and our ambition to offer children in Manchester the best quality of service, we have reallocated capacity across the whole of the service,

with one of the two Child Protection Safeguarding Conference Managers continuing with the supervision of IROs who support our Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).

In 2020/2021 there were 21.5 full time equivalent IROs posts in Manchester occupied by 24 staff (4.5 job-sharers). While the service had a reasonably stable workforce in 2020/2021, we reallocated internal capacity to increase IRO provision by 1.5 posts. This resource came within the current staffing establishment across the service and was able to be achieved as the numbers of Children on Child Protection Plans reduced during the year. We had 2 staff leave to take up posts in another Local Authority and CAFCASS. One post was filled by an experienced IRO returning from a career break and the other was filled by an experienced Social Worker from within Manchester Children's Services. A further IRO reduced their hours as part of a flexible retirement agreement. This degree of limited movement of staff within the team is within expected levels and has not caused significant disruption to the relationships with children.

The Service employs a mix of male (4) and female (20) staff from a range of cultural backgrounds. In terms of the cultural/ethnic make-up of the staff group, 66.5% are White British/European, 21% Black African or Caribbean and 12.5% are from an Asian background. This reflects the culture and ethnicity of most of the children we work with. The staff cohort is made up of qualified social workers with many years of experience as IROs, Children's Guardians, Social Workers and Team Managers.

The impact of this is that for most children in Manchester, they have lasting and stable relationships with their IRO who will have been alongside them in their experience of care. Our children will experience the diversity of their inheritance reflected in the people who are planning with them and who can act as role models and support their ambitions.

1.3 Service response to Covid 19.

In March 2020 the Government Announced a lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Manchester Safeguarding Improvement Unit developed a Covid-19 Service Delivery Practice Guidance, which was regularly reviewed in line with government advice. The guidance recommended that all IRO activity was carried out virtually.

We continued to visit children virtually and chair Review Meetings for children & young people. We ensured these meetings continued to be held within timescale. Children, young people, families and partners joined meetings online and while this ensure that children continued to have timely reviews and participation and engagement remained a strength, in hindsight the offer to children would have been stronger if face-to-face visits and meetings could have continued. The impact of this is discussed throughout the report.

1.4 IRO Capacity

In 2020/2021 IROs in Manchester chaired 3,811 reviews, which is a very slight decrease from 2019/2020 when they chaired 3,835. Service resourcing throughout the year has

aimed to ensure that there was an adequate number of IROs in post enabling the service to ensure that IRO have the capacity to deliver effective reviews for Our Children. We have worked hard to maintain caseloads within the range of 50 - 70 children as recommended in the IRO Handbook. We are committed to caseload levels remaining under 70 per IRO to provide the capacity to carry out the duties and functions to a high standard, including sufficient oversight and challenge. This has had a positive impact on the service with the average caseload at the end of March 2021 being 65, which is a significant decrease from 2019/2020 when the average caseload was 71. This also allows us to have clear and ambitious expectations of staff for delivering a quality service for children and young people.

1.5 IRO Learning and Development

We have continued this year to ensure that IROs in Manchester are equipped with the right knowledge and skills that enable them to scrutinise practice, plans and arrangements for Our Children and Young People effectively. Manchester have been committed to providing a good virtual platform to enable virtual learning and development environments using Google Meet & Microsoft Teams from October 2020.

IROs continued to receive supervision monthly in 2020/2021. Supervision provided the IROs with an opportunity to reflect on planning, progress and outcomes for Our Children and the pro forma agenda reflects the Signs of Safety Framework so ensure supervision is strength based. IROs all continued to have the opportunity to plan their learning and development in their annual About You Appraisal in line with Manchester City Council policy.

IROs continue to have open access to expert advice through the provision of independent legal advice from Wigan Council and this is seen as a benefit to the IRO service. We know that generally IROs make most use of the independent advice to consider whether an escalation is required at a more senior level regarding a specific element of the Care Plan. An example of the impact of this is the use of Section 20. There have been several legal advice consultations around the appropriate use of Section 20, which led to a specific briefing at a Development Day to consider the shared understanding of the use of Section 20, patterns in practice and the effect on permanency planning for children. This led to greater consistency in understanding and applying case law, and more appropriate challenge and discussion with operational services.

In 2020/2021 we had hoped to continue to support staff to undertake the accredited IRO Advanced Practitioner course. Two of our experienced IROs nominated themselves to attend the course delivered by Edgehill University. Unfortunately, the course was postponed due to the Covid lockdown. We still have 7 IROs who have successfully completed the course and 2 more IROs due to commence the course in 2021/2022.

Given we have 7 staff who have completed this already, we continue to benefit from their learning and development in:

- Critical analysis of their role as an IRO with reference to current legislative, policy and guidance frameworks for Our Children in England.
- Critical analysis of the effective approaches to risk assessment and management.
- effective approaches to planning, delivering and evaluation of care and support for Our Children.
- Reflection and evaluation of IROs practice for Our Children to identify strengths and areas for effective professional development.

We have invested in creating learning spaces and have delivered monthly full-service sessions and 6 monthly Service Development Days throughout 2020/2021. The events took place virtually in October 2020 and in March 2021. Both events were well attended by IROs. Guest speakers have contributed to learning on subject areas such as a presentation from Legal focussing on the Child's Timeframe; the Child Obesity Strategy; the role of LADO, Dispute Resolutions and Safety Planning. The monthly full-service sessions focussed on learning from Audits and offering IROs the opportunity to discuss what is working well and what we are worried about. Staff also had the opportunity to attend the Children's Services Good Practice week sessions which took place in February 2021 and Staff Engagement Sessions led by the Senior Management Team.

1.6 Regional and local links

The IRO Managers attend quarterly meetings with the Greater Manchester Regional IRO Managers Group. This feeds into the National IRO Manager's Group and the Department of Education (DfE) which considers changes to policy and practice. The Greater Manchester IRO Managers Group shares data and good practice across the 10 Local Authorities.

The IRO management team are integral to several panels in the Social Work Service in which the IRO perspective and overview of planning is valued as part of the decision-making process and over-view of practice. These include the Discharge of Care Order Panel, Permanence Tracking Panels, Our Children missing from Care and Closing the Loop Panels linked to the Quality Assurance Framework. In 2020/2021, IROs were linked to specific Localities in Manchester to share their knowledge about good practice, to listen to Social Workers views about the review process and to build links with Social Workers and Team Managers in their allocated Locality and this continued using virtual platforms to connect.

As a result of the improved connectivity with localities and the increased participation in the quality assurance activity this has resulted in a reduction in our dispute resolutions, increased in compliance of reports being available prior to reviews and recommendations being completed in a timely manner ahead of reviews.

2.OUR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE DATA 2019/2020

2.1 Children and Young People Population - Children living in Manchester

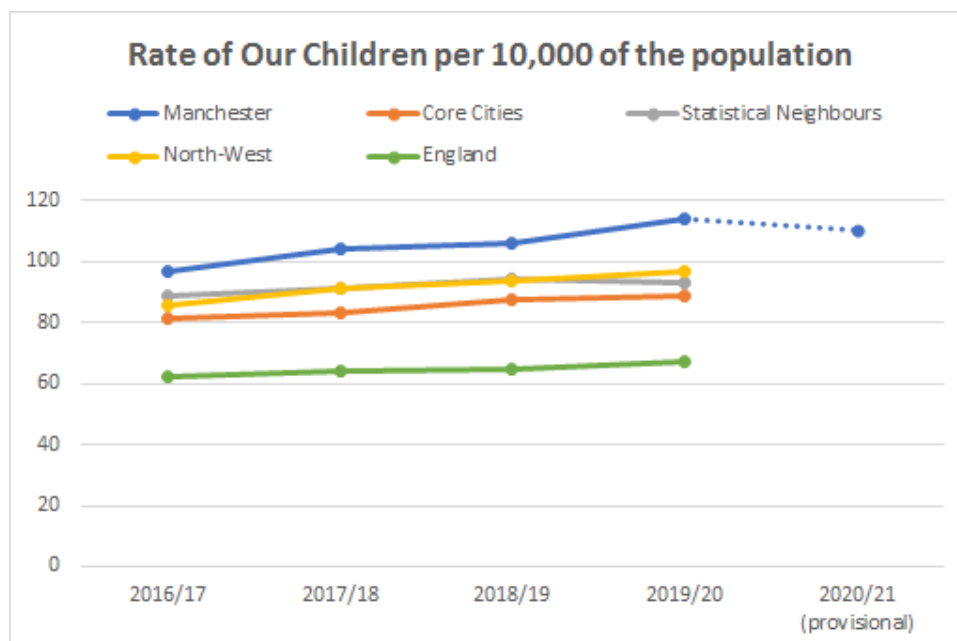
There are approximately 129,053 children and young people under the age of 18 years living in Manchester. This is 22% of the population. From this data we know;

- 33.8% of the local authority's children aged under 16 years old are living in relative low-income families (less than 60% of median income).
- The proportion of children entitled to free school meals in primary schools is 39.3%. This has increased by 8 percentage points during the pandemic (the national average is 21.5%). In secondary schools it is 38.5%, an increase of 7 percentage points during the pandemic (the national average is 18.9%).
- The proportion of children and young people with English as an additional language in primary schools is 42.4% (the national average is 21.3%) and in secondary schools is 39.3% (the national average is 17.1%).

The ONS reports that Manchester's child population has been growing over the last decade. The rate of growth overall of 2.7% seen in 2011 has been on the decline, with a little increase in 2013 and 2014 but the rate has been around 1% since 2017. This has led to around 9,500 more five- to 11-year-olds in 2019 than in 2013 (a 21.7% increase). It is expected that secondary schools will continue to see increasingly larger cohorts from 2020 through to 2030. Manchester is a city that benefits from many different cultures and backgrounds, alongside this, the issue of child poverty is a particularly significant issue in the lives of a high proportion of children and their families in Manchester.

2.2 Profile of Our Children

On 31 March 2021, 1,371 children were being looked after by the local authority (a rate of 111 per 10,000 children). The overall number has decreased from 1,407 on 31 March 2020.

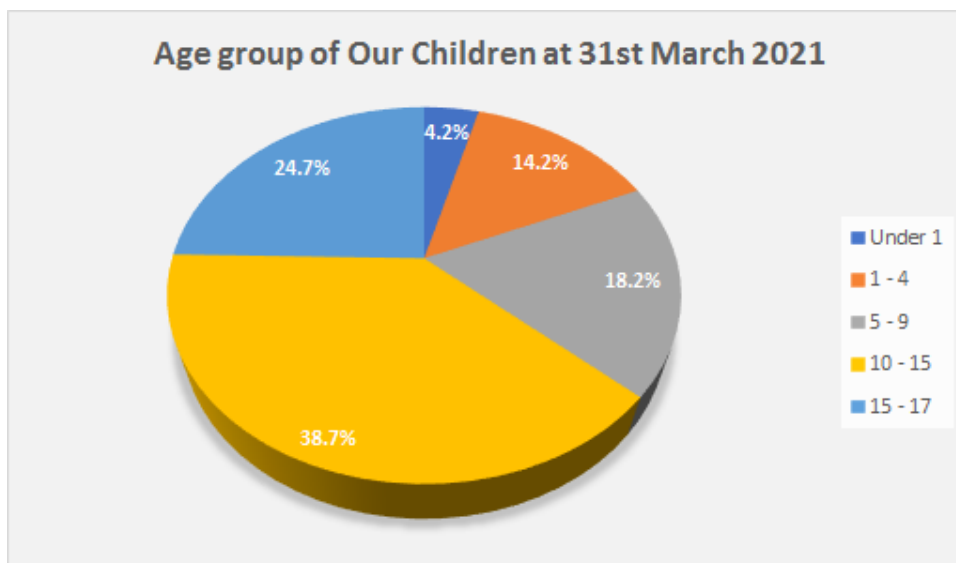


As in previous years, there are more boys (772 = 56.3%) than girls (599 = 43.7%) who are looked after in Manchester. This closely resembles the national gender split of children and young people looked after (56% / 44%).

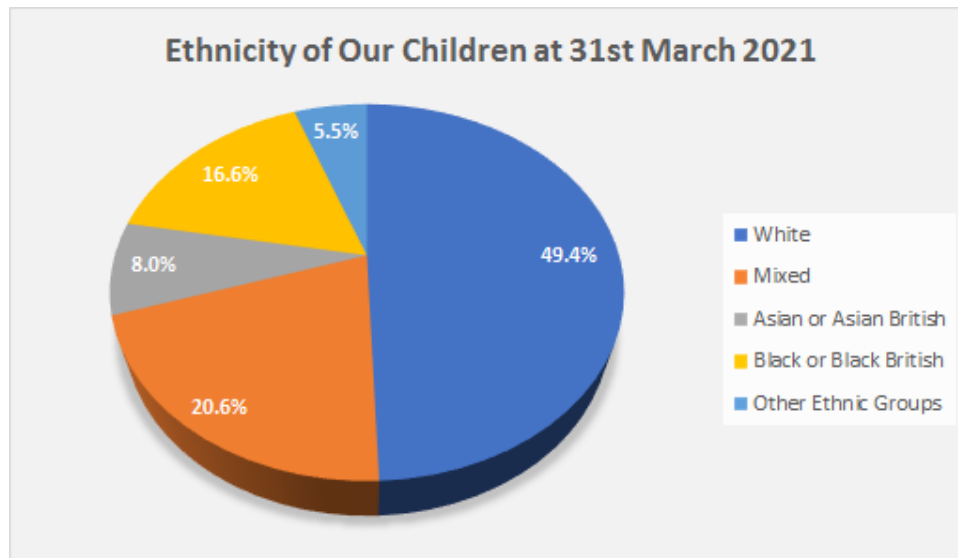
Comparing the age groups nationally, Manchester has:

- Lower under 1 percentage (4.2% v. 5%),
- Similar age 1 to 4 percentage (14%),
- Similar age 5 to 9 percentage (18%),
- Lower age 10 to 15 (38.7% v. 39%) and
- Higher age 16 to 17 (24.7% v. 24%)

Overall, the age groups of Our Children in Manchester mirror the National data.



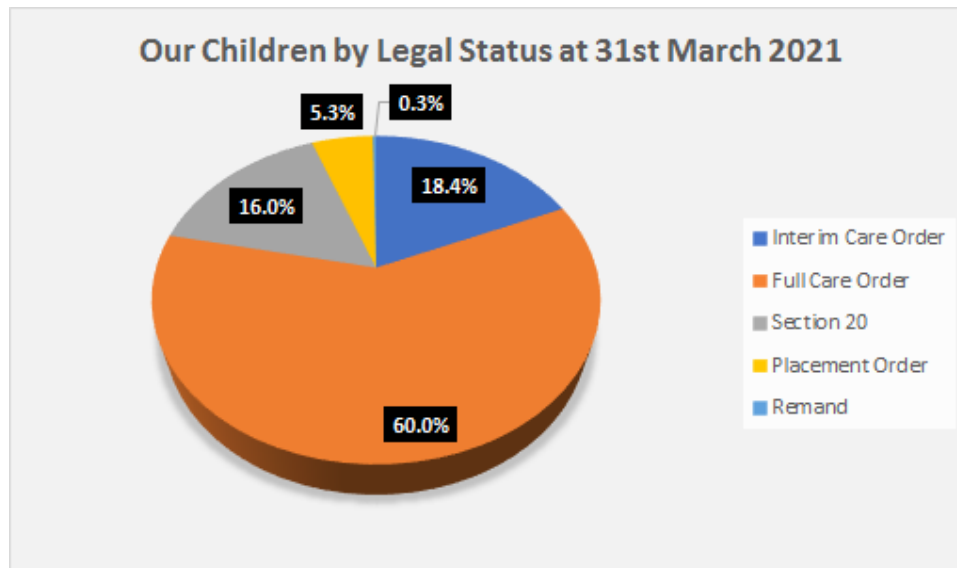
Last year saw a notable change in the number of Our Children aged 16 and 17 years which increased from 304 on 31 March 2019 to 360 on 31 March 2020. The figure this year has decreased slightly to 338 (24.7%) on 31 March 2021. The Local Authority has a strong offer for young people at the edge of care and support services provided to ensure children where safe to do so remain at home.



There has been an overall decrease in children in our care; In terms of ethnicity, there has been a further reduction in the proportion of Our Children who are White or White British (50% to 49.4%), Asian / Asian British has remained static at 8%. The proportion of those who are of dual heritage has increased from 19% to 20.6%, while Black / Black British has risen slightly from 16% to 16.6%.

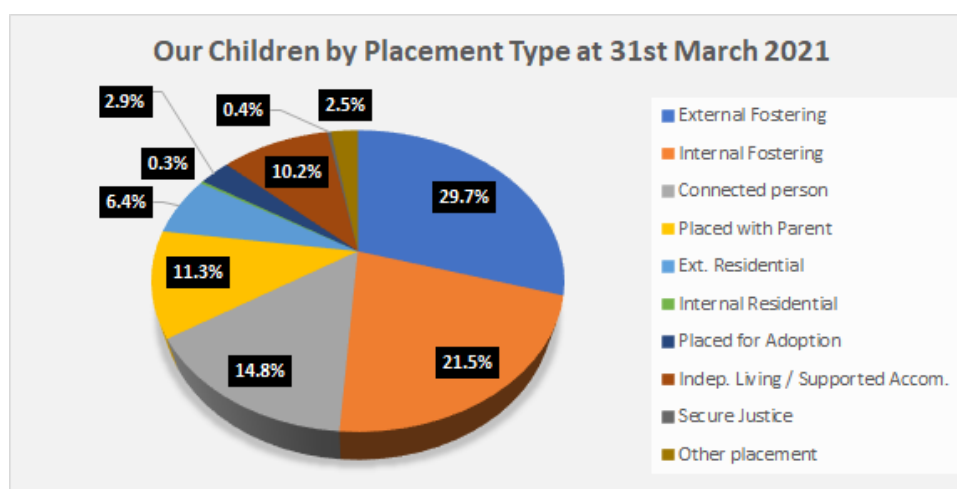
Comparing ethnicity groups nationally, Manchester has a much lower White or White British percentage (49.4% v. 74%) and much higher percentages of dual heritage (20.6 % v. 10%), Asian / Asian British (8% v. 4%) and Black / Black British (16.6% v. 7%). This reflects the ethnicity of the wider population in Manchester. It is positive that the IRO service is diverse within its staffing, which is positive for the children we work alongside. In 2020 we spent time considering Black Matters and will continue to focus on ensuring that as a service we have an enriched knowledge of the ethnic groups we work alongside.

2.3 Legal status of Our Children



The proportion of children subject to Interim Care Orders (ICO) has dropped slightly to 18.4% (previously 20.5%). At the end of March 2021, we had 252 children subject to an ICO, in March 2020 there were 289.

As you would expect, most of Our Children (60%) are subject to Care Orders. The number has decreased by 13 children in this period (2019/20: 59.3%) however the number of children subject to Care Orders has remained relatively stable over the last 12 months.



The majority of children and young people (66.3%) continue to be placed in foster care or with connected carers. This is a very slightly reduced proportion from last year when it stood at 67%. The percentage of children placed with external foster care decreased from 32% (2019/20) to 29.7% (2020/21). While the percentage of children and young people placed with connected people has remained constant around 14.8%. In terms of other placement types, there has been a slight decrease in the use of residential care from 8%

(2019/20) to 6.5% (2020/21). 695 (or 50.7%) live outside the local authority area, although 536 of those are placed within Greater Manchester.

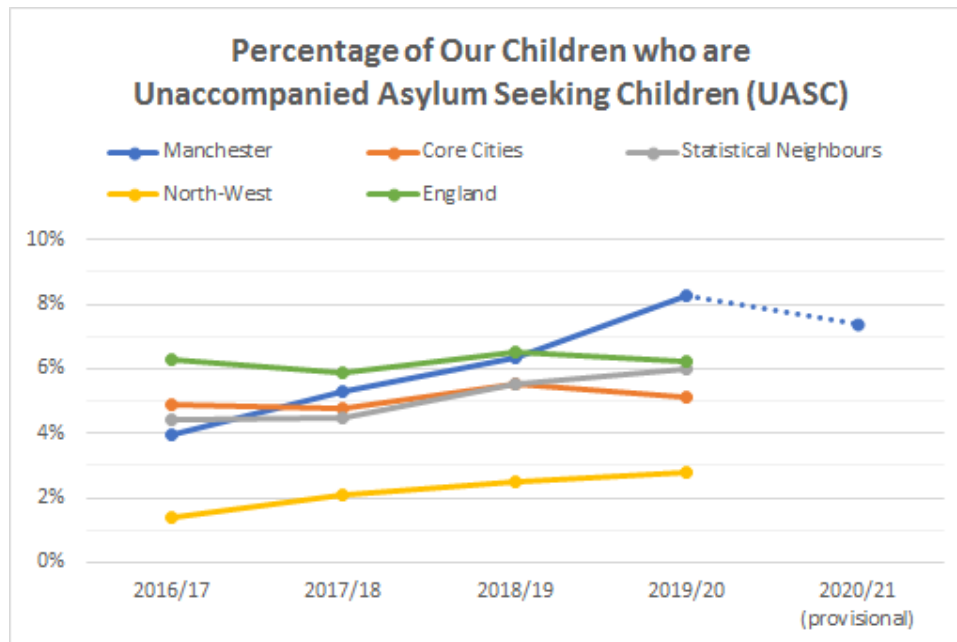
The living arrangements for Our Children reflects a shared belief that children need to stay within their communities, should be supported to live within their extended families and be able to experience the security, investment and support that family life offers. Where relevant IROs have championed arrangements for children that provide the best environment for them to thrive and achieve their potential.

2.4 Specific groups of young people (UASC)

The diagram below illustrates the slight decrease in the number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) since last year. The figure stands at 102 which represents 7.4% of Our Children population. The total is 11 less than at the same point last year. The proportion is higher than our Statistical Neighbours (6%), the Northwest average (3%) and the National average (6%) for 2019/20 (2020/2021 figures not yet published). The UASC numbers for this period have been impacted by the pandemic lockdowns and restrictions on travel. Fewer UASC arrived in Manchester via the airport. The majority arrive on trucks and are left on motorways or dropped in the city and find their way to police stations. Many young people do not know where they are when they arrive. Some young people arrive and are already aware of the Manchester football teams, the diversity of the city and links to local communities via word of mouth.

There are four IROs who are identified to primarily work and establish relationships with this cohort of young people and all are managed by the same Safeguarding Manager. This approach helps to ensure consistency across the city and this group of young people benefit from the knowledge and expertise of specialist workers. The group of four IROs offer each other peer supervision and meet regularly to identify shared practice issues. They can access training on UASC issues when available. The IROs are in regular contact with the specialist UASC Social Work Team which was established in July 2020.

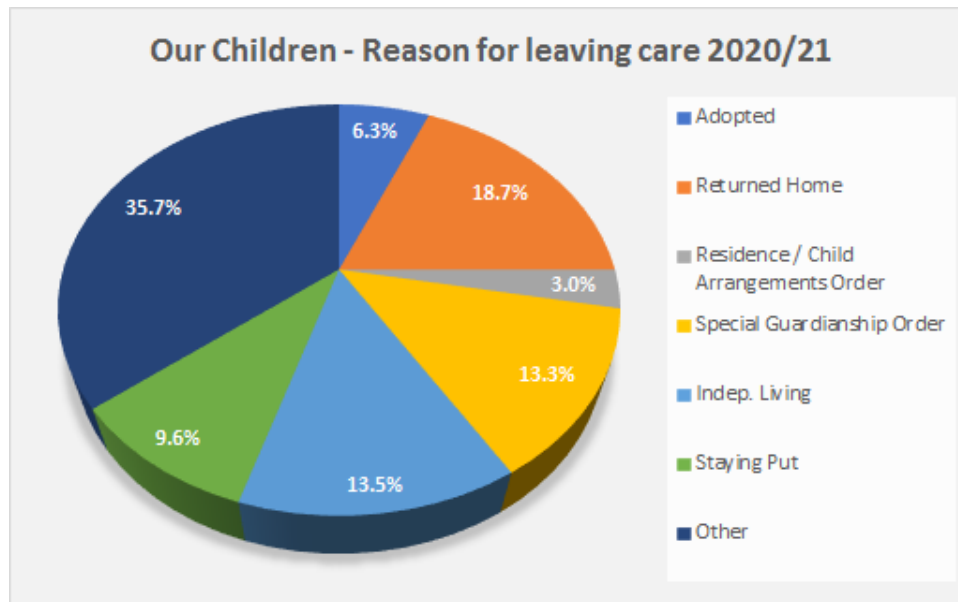
The impact of the designated IROs for UASC has demonstrated the benefits of the expert knowledge in the area, in ensuring the additional challenges they often face does not result in drift and delay for securing their plan for permanency. This is often more pressurised due to their age at the point they come into care in Manchester. The relationship with the UASC team has allowed for practice issues to be addressed both when something works well and something that needs to be improved on in a timely manner to improve outcomes for all UASC not just individual young people.



2.5 Outcomes for Children & Young People.

In 2020/21, 460 children ceased to be looked after, compared to 501 in 2019/20. The breakdown (and actual numbers) of children ceasing to be looked after, leaving care for specified reasons in 2020/21 (change from 2019/20) is below.

- 6.3% (29) Adopted (a decrease from 55)
- 18.7% (82) To live with parents, relatives, or other person, with or without parental responsibility (a decrease from 139)
- 3.0% (14) Residence / Child Arrangements Order (an increase from 11)
- 13.3% (61) Special Guardianship Order (a decrease from 73)
- 13.5% (62) Independent living (a decrease from 64)
- 9.6% (44) Aged 18 and remained with current carers (not previously collected)
- 35.7% (164) Care ceased for any other reason (an increase from 159)

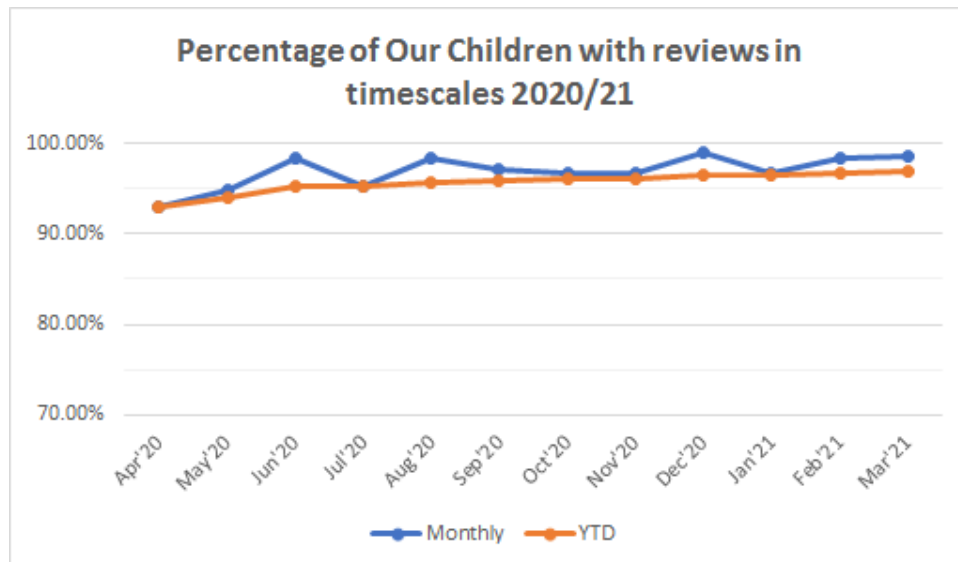


The chart above shows that Care ceased for any other reason (Other) continues to be the most common outcome for Our Children ceasing to be looked after. This tends to be the cohort of Our Children who turn 18 during the year and children whose Care Order has been discharged, an illustration of positive planning for children.

3. OUR CHILDREN STATUTORY REVIEWS

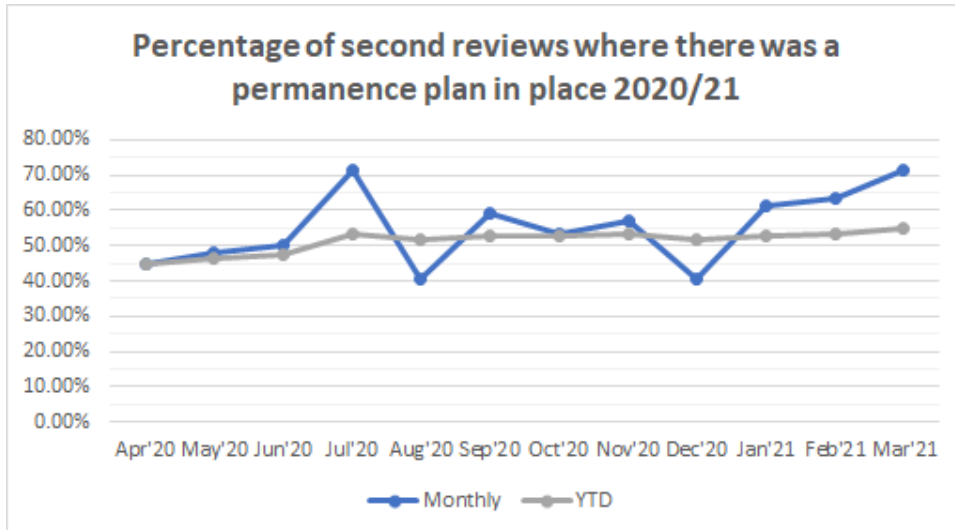
3.1 Timeliness of Our Children Reviews

The performance of Our Children Reviews held in timescale has fluctuated between 93.1% and 99.1% over the course of the year (April 2020 – March 2021). The end of year figure for 2020-21 is 96.8% (2019-20 is 98.6%). It is positive the overall performance of timeliness of reviews has remained strong this year, with less than a 2% decrease. The data demonstrates that children are having regular independent oversight in a timely way of their plan and progress against the plan.



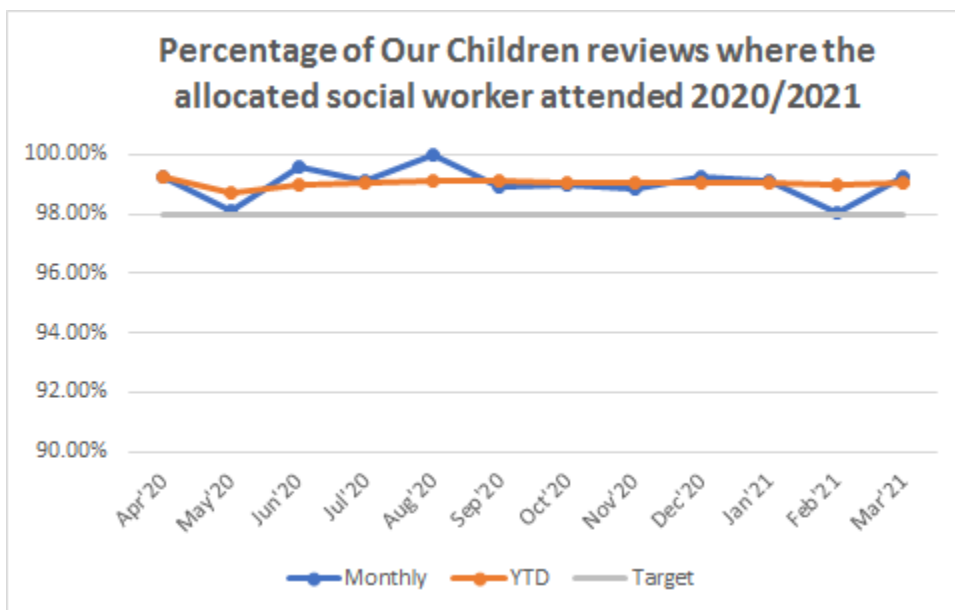
3.2 Achieving Permanency for Children and young people

In 2020/21 the end of year figure of children who had a permanence plan identified at the second review was 54.89%. The YTD figure has remained fairly static at mid 50%. The expectation is that a Permanence Planning meeting is held before the child's second review which informs the Care Plan. IROs should be ensuring this takes place. There was a query over the options of the recording of the Permanence Plan by the second review which limited the IROs responses. This has now been amended and clarified with more options so should evidence improved performance as we go forward. We know this is an area of required improvement for robust planning for children and young people. We know that Social Workers consider the primary and contingency plan for children, but this is not yet strongly evidenced. By increasing the evidence of Permanency Planning Meeting, we will ensure that meaningful discussions take place and the plan articulated well for children to be successful in achieving secure permanence and that we are ambitious in this. The outcome of this for children is that more children will have secure permanency plans in place by their second review.



3.3 Social Worker Attendance and Reports to Our Children Reviews

In 2020/21 the end of year figure of reviews where the allocated SW (or TM) attended was 99.28% (an increase from 95% in 2019-20). This is a good outcome in terms of practice and improvement which was assisted through informal and formal challenge by IROs. It is important for Our Children and their outcomes that their allocated Social Worker who knows them well attends their meetings and contributes to their plans.



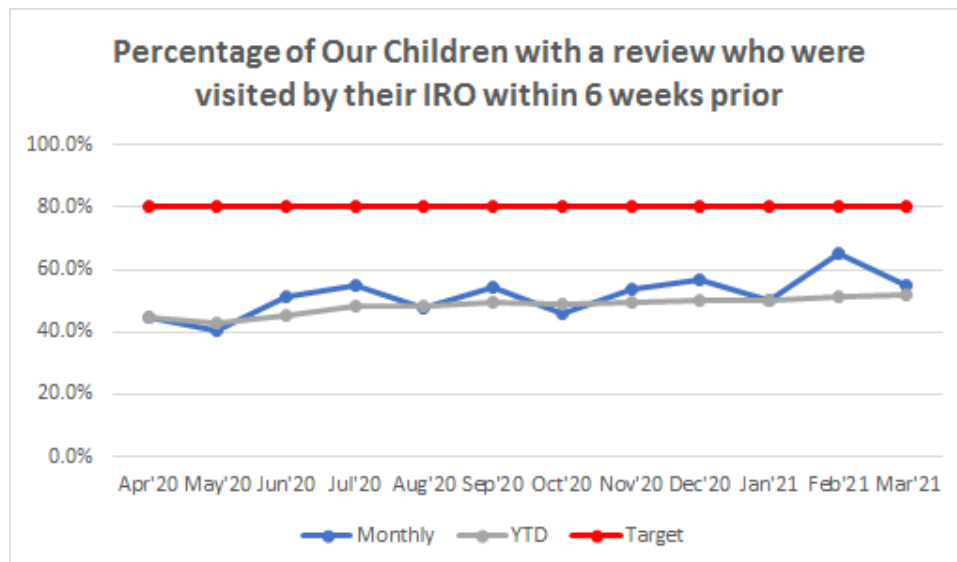
4.PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT

4.1 IRO engagement & Visits to Children & Young People

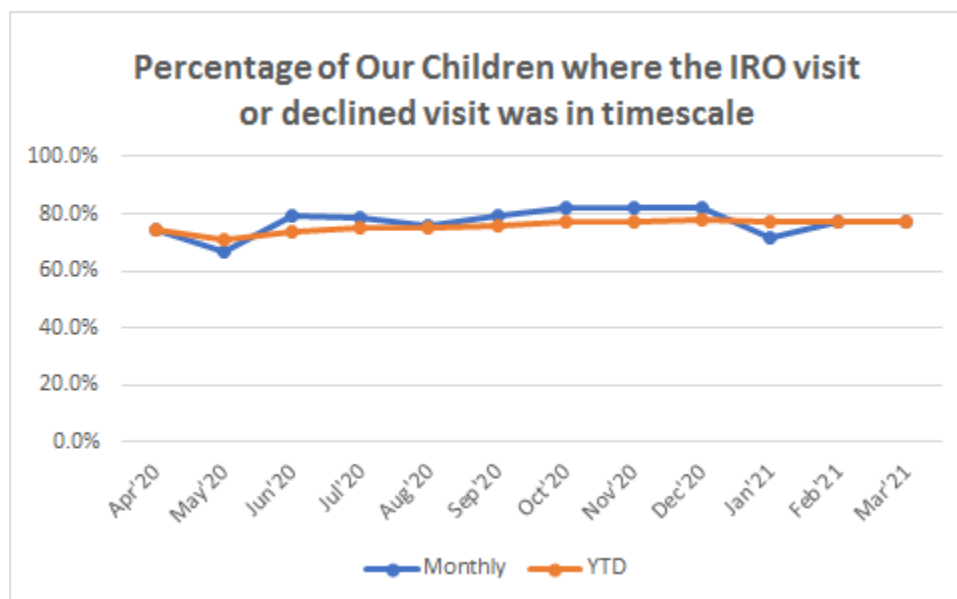
A key part of the IRO role is to ensure that children have been consulted about their views and have their wishes and feelings given due consideration in plans for their care. In March 2020 we took the decision that this would take place using virtual methods as we entered the initial lockdown for COVID19, and this was carried out in a variety of ways by IROs ringing carers and young people and arranging video calls or telephone calls.

IROs endeavoured to continue to speak privately with our children in the six weeks before their reviews. The virtual methods allowed IROs to continue to speak with children to consult about their meeting, who will attend, the timing and agenda and how best to conduct it virtual. This year IROs continued to encourage Our Children to participate in their meeting and build the child's confidence to co-chair where appropriate despite this providing challenges virtually. IROs have continued to utilise a range of tools to assist the children and young people to share their wishes and feelings.

While all children were offered virtual visits or telephone discussions before their meetings, we know that some younger children will have struggled to engage with virtual visits or telephone contact but equally some older children and young people preferred this option. The proportion of visits taking place in 2020/21 has averaged 51.8%, a decrease from 58.3% in 2019/20. As restrictions have lifted there is a focus on returning to face to face visits and reviews to ensure that maintaining meaningful relationships with children are underpinned by practice that promotes this.



As from last year, we are now able to measure how many children declined a visit within the 6 weeks prior to the review, which is 25% of total cases for 2020/21. If this measure was included within the percentage of Our Children who the IRO contacted 6 weeks prior to the review measure, then the overall percentage in timescale for 2020/21 increases to 77.4%.



This year 860 children declined a visit with the IRO within six weeks prior to the review. When children do not wish to see their IRO a range of alternative methods are offered to ensure they can share their views, set their agenda and be able to influence their care plans. Some children decline the visit choosing instead to attend their review and share their views themselves. Others agree to speak to the IRO on the day before their meeting starts. Every effort is made to ensure the child's voice can be heard, ideally directly from them, but some children choose to ask their Social Worker, parent, foster carer, teacher or advocate to share their views on their behalf.

We have continued to send all children an invitation explaining how we are conducting reviews during COVID19 and encouraging them to use the Mind Of My Own App or offered telephone contact, text, email or 'Have your Say' booklets. Young people are also provided with the advocacy service where they wish to have independent support to have their views considered.

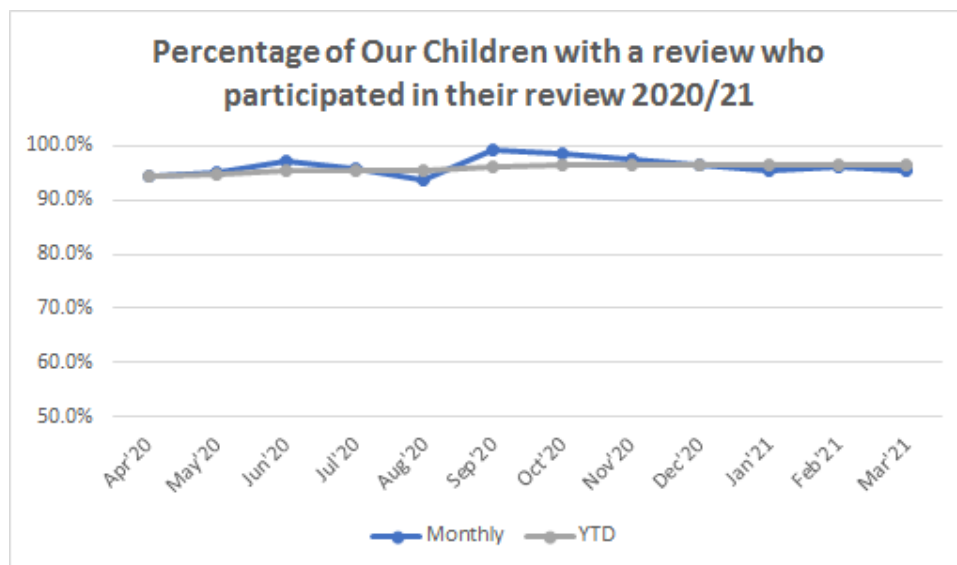
We know the next year and changes in the working restrictions mean we need to work differently with children and young people to engage them and will therefore focus next year on ensuring that all visits are face to face to build relationships up again. We will consider the material we use with children to explain why it is important for IROs to visit them face to face and how this can influence how their review meetings take place. We hope to see the numbers of our Children being seen increase and the numbers of declined visits reduce.

4.2 Participation and Engagement of Children in Our Children Reviews

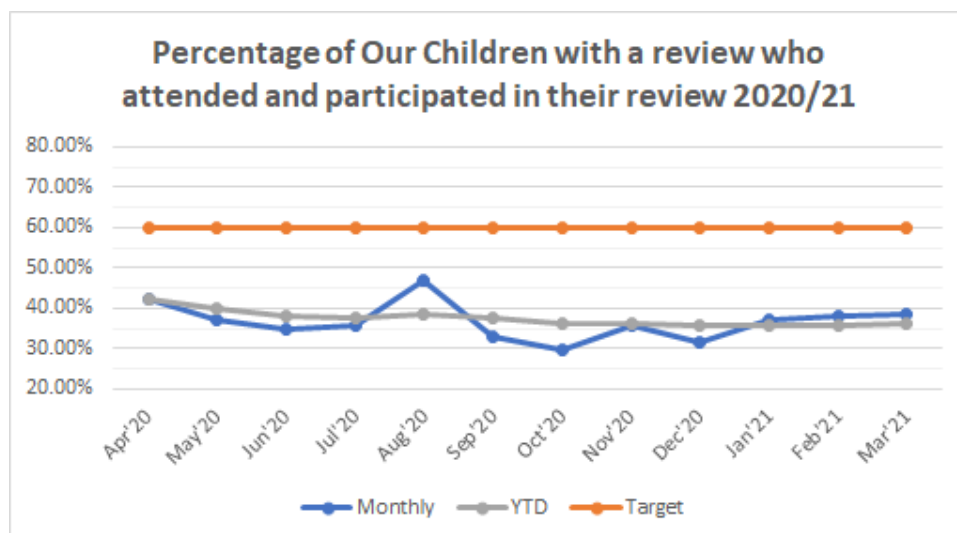
The key priority for Manchester and a primary objective of the IRO service is to ensure children are central to the decisions made about them and that they actively participate in the meetings about their care plans. A key element in delivering this objective is the measure of the young person's participation in the Statutory Review of their care plan and

care arrangements. IROs have worked hard and creatively over this period by being in contact with children over telephone, text, emails, WhatsApp to ensure that Our Children participate and engage in their reviews in a way that is meaningful and that their voices are heard using a variety of methods.

Overall **participation/engagement in the review process** has remained at 96.3%³ in 2020/21. This is a positive and reflects the dedication of the IROs in Manchester to ensure that children are given every opportunity to engage virtually through a variety of methods. There had been some anecdotal evidence suggested that the use of technology for children had meant that the participation was greater, however this does not reflect any increase in attendance.



The proportion of **children attending their reviews** has decreased from 48.4%³ in 2019/20 to 36.13% in 2020/21. This is disappointing for IROs especially given in the early period of the lockdown in March-May 2020 IROs felt that the use of technology may increase opportunities for children to attend virtually. We now know in hindsight that moving to only offering virtual reviews to children and young people meant that children felt less engaged and able to attend. IROs have fed back that some younger children struggled to engage during virtual meetings or just decided they didn't wish to attend but some older children preferred the opportunity to participate virtually.



³ Please note, children aged under 4 at the time of the review or those with no PN code are not included in any of the above measures.

The face-to-face visit and the IROs relationship with the child are significant factors in children feeling supported to attend their meetings and co-chair. It is clear from the data that the virtual option was not as effective as initially considered by IROs. IROs are keen to improve these figures going forward to demonstrate the robust relationships they have with Our Children to ensure that they are supported and encouraged to attend their reviews. Before the lockdown children and young people would be visited by their IRO face to face and this would assist in developing a trusting relationship where children and young people would feel supported, feel more able to attend their review, actively participate and co-chair. The numbers of children attending and participating in their reviews have always been an area for focus and positive ambition in Manchester. Over the last five years we have failed to see a significant increase in this percentage. As a service we need to review and respond differently if we are to achieve our ambition, this will include how IROs can be creative and demonstrate new ways of working to increase attendance that is purposeful for the child.

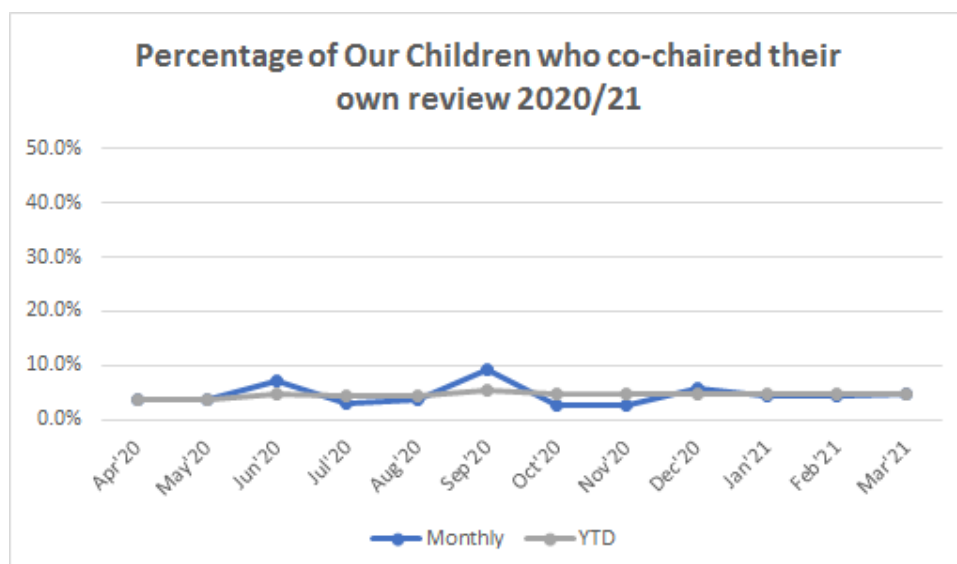
Whilst we are disappointed in the percentage of children attending and participating, we are assured that children have continued to participate with the percentage for participation remaining strong 96.3%. This is due to IROs ensuring that children have the right support to speak or adults they identify who they want to represent them. The IRO represents their wishes, feelings & views of their Care Plan or a key professional or carer represents their voice in the reviews. Children continue to be given choices on how they can participate and IROs are keen to ensure that they are given a variety of ways and people who can represent their wishes, feelings and views within their review.

The **minutes of reviews** continue to be written in a letter to the child and young person, avoiding the use of jargon. Young people provide positive feedback regarding this style and report having a greater understanding of their care plans, what people are worried about, how well they are doing and what the next steps are. This provides them with a greater understanding of the agreed recommendations and the responsibility of others in

supporting them to achieve. We believe this empowers them to be able to have influence over their planning. During the time of writing the reviews minutes as a letter to the child having achieved consistency across the service the next area of focus will be in improving the quality of those letters. We need to refocus on the purpose of the letter and how to ensure it is written to the individual child with key information that is important to them, building on examples of excellent practice. We will also seek to coproduce with children.

4.3 Our Children co-chairing their reviews

IROs continue to support and encourage young people to chair/ co-chair their own review and to set their own agendas where appropriate. We had set a provisional target of 45% over the previous years. While we continue to fall below this target, we are confident that children are well supported to engage in their reviews. The focus moving forward needs to consider more how we support young people to be empowered to co-chair their own reviews with more support from their IROs. This year the proportion has fallen to 14.6%, which is a decrease from 2019/2020 when we reached 20.8%. We believe the Covid lockdown, virtual visits and meetings has impacted on the number of children feeling able to co-chair their meetings virtually. As discussed above the increase focus of IRO visits on planning for children's reviews will hopefully have a positive impact on more children co-chairing their own reviews. We will set targets for achieving this with specific groups, eg those aged 12 – 18 rather to track achievements, than a blanket over-all percentage

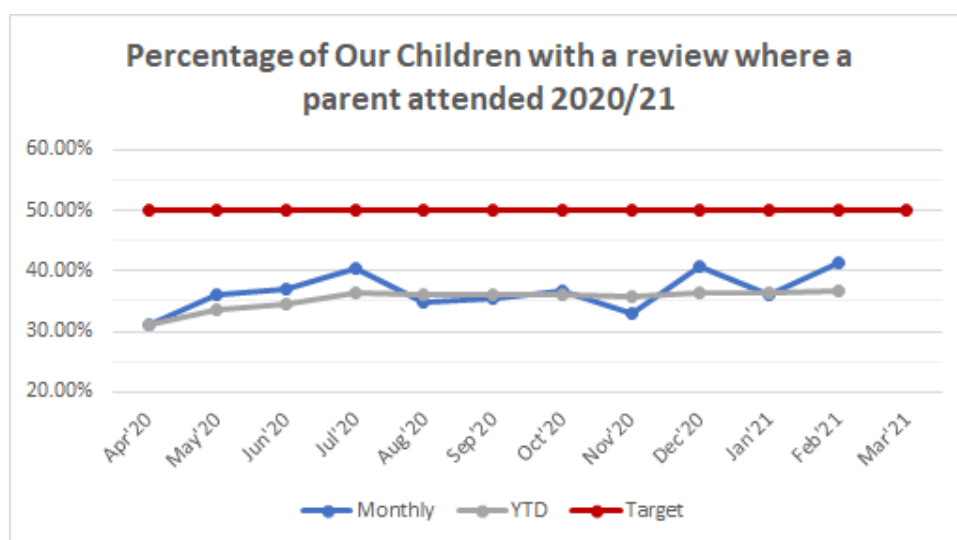


4.4 Parents attendances at reviews

We have seen an increase in parental engagement in reviews this year, which is extremely positive. We have always actively encouraged parents to engage in the review process,

wherever appropriate, as it is important to children that parent(s) can contribute to planning, share an understanding of their child's journey, retain a significant role and presence in their child's life and demonstrate a level of commitment and loyalty to their child even if living apart. In 2019/20 the proportion was 34.0%. This year it has increased to 38%. Feedback from parents have said they prefer to attend the meetings virtually as this means they don't have to travel long distances or sit in a room with involved professionals. Ideally, going forward we will support parents to attend meetings face to face when safe to do so but given the feedback virtual attendance will remain an option.

We set an initial target of 50% of parents attending reviews and whilst accepting we have not achieved that this year, we believe we need to be more ambitious around parental engagement in reviews by attending and contributing to their reviews when not appropriate for them to attend or the young person wishes for them not to attend. We want to promote parental participation as we know this is often important for children that they know professionals have relationship with their birth family. In 2021/2022 we will ensure that parents not attending reviews will be consulted as part of the review process to demonstrate the importance the IROs place on the relationship between children and their families.



As part of their overviews, IROs strive to ensure appropriate challenge is made regarding efforts to identify the whereabouts of parents who are no longer in touch with social work services to include their views in the Care Planning Reviews. IROs will also offer to meet separately or call parents who cannot attend in order to capture the parent's views regarding the care plans and arrangements for their child.

4.5 Corporate Parenting Panel

Manchester has a well-established Corporate Parenting Panel, chaired by Councillor Garry Bridges that meets monthly. The Corporate Parenting Panel is made up of representatives of the Council, its partner agencies and experts my experience, which has been actively involved in the monthly panel shaping and influencing development and improvement in services. The Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Practice Improvement is the strategic lead for Corporate Parenting.

During the pandemic year Corporate Parenting Panel have had several presentations from frontline practitioner that demonstrated the commitment from staff in ensure that the drive and ambitious for Our Children remained paramount throughout the pandemic. This included:

- Driving the voice of children in the permanence service
- Improving outcomes for children in the permanence service
- Engaging children in their reviews – IRO Service

This arrangement will be reviewed in 2021/22 to ensure that it remains connect to the experiences of the children we are responsible for.

4.6 Mind of My Own

Manchester continued to invest in the Mind of My Own App as an online communication tool. We have had some success in using this to allow children and young people to communicate with their IRO. The app is an additional tool that supports children and young people to express any worries, highlight good news or their achievements and give feedback for their reviews and other meetings.

Using Mind of My Own in 2020/2021 we know:

- Mind of My Own was used by 240 children between June 2020 and July 2021 either through children using the app themselves or completing statements with their workers.
- During this period 52 workers accessed their accounts to complete statements with children and young people and 5 of these were IROs.
- We have worked hard in Manchester to promote the app with children and young people to ensure every option is explored to gather their wishes and feelings however, children have also continued to engage with IROs using other methods. While we have seen children and young people enjoy the app most children prefer to communicate via face-to-face visits, phone calls, texting and email.

Children mainly used the app to score specific questions, “I feel safe” 1-10, “I enjoy school” 1-10. The scoring questions are extremely more popular than the free text boxes. There is not an ability to collate all the responses from children as they go to the individual worker for the young person but from dip sampling statements, we know children generally like to

talk about what they are doing, their likes and dislikes. We know the younger children enjoying using the app with their IRO and this is an interactive session during the IRO visit.

4.7 Children's Rights

In Manchester the Children's Rights service continues to be provided by NYAS. This arrangement has been in place since 2018. The contract specification covers those children and young people who have or are in receipt of support from Social Care and specifically covers for Our Children:

- Looked after Children in residential homes both within and outside the Council's administrative boundaries;
- Looked after Children in foster care both within and outside the Council's administrative boundaries;
- Manchester young people who are care leavers.

Referral breakdown 2020/2021:

Within the reporting period 01/04/2020 to 31/02/2021 NYAS received 232 referrals for Our Children Most referrals came from Social Workers, Young people and IROs. Most of the referrals received were for young people between the ages of 12 and 19 years. The youngest referral received was from a 6-year-old. The average length of time for contact to take place following referral was 3 working days. Social Workers referred 7 times more children than the IROs to NYASS in the reporting year. We know that IROs are proactive in promoting Children's Advocates and will often ask Social Workers to discuss with children consent for them to make a referral to Children's Advocate.

Issue based Advocacy and Themes 2020/2021:

The list below describes the most common themes being referred to NYAS over the last year with the top being the most frequent down to the least frequent being around pathway planning:

- Help in meetings
- Placement moves
- Contact/family
- Issues in placement
- Social worker/LA
- Support ahead of LAC Reviews
- Against Local Authority/complaints
- Appropriate Support
- Pocket Money or Personal Allowance
- Education
- Homelessness / Unsuitable Accommodation
- Transition/Adult services

- View Personal/Medical Files
- Immigration Issues
- Pathway planning

NYAS has supported 27 children and young people to make a complaint. 23 Complaints were resolved at Stage One of the complaint process and 3 complaints were referred on to Stage Two. One young person was supported by the Local Ombudsman. Most of the complaints were regarding support from Social Workers or Leaving Care Personal Assistants. This included waiting too long for information regarding their care plans or requests for changes of Social Worker or Leaving Care Personal Assistant.

The themes identified within the regular information provided by NYASS is fed into the Corporate Parenting Panel and shapes and influences service delivery. We know that the issues raised above are the issues that IROs are aware of and regularly advocate for on behalf of Our Child.

5.QUALITY ASSURANCE

5.1 The role of IRO in Quality Assurance

One of the key functions of a IRO is to resolve problems arising out of the care planning process. The oversight of IROs is critical in providing independent monitoring and providing a high support and high challenge environment for improving the outcomes for Our Children. Over the last two years we have developed our approach to quality assurance and in 2020/2021 we have introduced a new oversight practice standard that provides greater scrutiny between reviews and encourages IROs to consider the impact of the interventions of the progression of the child's plan. IROs are expected to add a detailed IRO Overview between reviews which highlights actions achieved and actions which have not been completed. This will ensure monitoring of progress between the child's meetings and identify any delay. The IRO can discuss any gaps with the Social Worker and consider whether a Dispute Resolution is required.

The Quality Assurance Framework, Dispute Resolution process and IRO oversights are designed to effectively identify, monitor and achieve service improvement for Our Children. The impact of these activities is discussed below.

5.2 Quality Assurance Framework

The Quality Assurance Framework revised in 2019 is now well embedded in the Safeguarding Improvement Unit. The Quality Assurance Framework set out not just how we gather information about children's lives but how we evidence that the information that we gather includes the voice and influence of children and young people, and that we can see the impact of good quality of practice through better outcomes for children. The framework

promotes the importance of Manchester's Golden Threads as our foundation for practice improvement.

- Good Quality Assessments
- Good Quality Plans
- Impact chronology supports decision making
- Good management oversight
- Voice and experience of child / young person evident throughout
- Evidence of strong engagement with parents, family and carers throughout our involvement.

There are clear expectations in the framework for monthly audits to be completed alongside practitioners and seen as learning spaces. It recognises that auditing activity alone will not improve the quality of practice. In the Safeguarding Unit we have focused on improving our direct observations and obtaining feedback from Our Children in 2020/2021.

5.2.1 Learning from audits -

From April 2020 to March 2021, we completed 48 audits in SIU, all have been completed alongside the IRO. We have completed learning circles where the need for shared learning was identified. Our workforce learning and development team collate and analyse the learning from whole service auditing to report on audit themes and recommend action plans, which the IRO service feed into.

Over the last twelve months the key themes and the impact for children and families in Manchester have been:

Assessment & planning.

There has been some strong evidence of planning in audits carried out for children, including evidence of EHCPs in place, effective teams around the child that knew the children well and supported change.

The audits showed good examples of assessments and assessments being updated, which had been a significant focus for IROs & CP Chairs around challenging when assessments had not been updated. Assessments considered the child's life experience and used a strength-based approach with families to evidence protective factors and worries. Whilst this remains an area of focus, we are seeing an improvement in children having updated assessments that are meaningful and support the planning.

Voice & influence of Children and outcomes

We have seen in audits that children have benefited from stable placements and that a number of children are thriving in their permanent home.

There have been some excellent examples throughout the year of direct work with children and young people and child friendly safety plans that are codesigned.

There is some good evidence of direct work both for our Children and the family on Child Protection Planning. The workers, and IROs know the children well and can articulate this throughout the audit and within recordings.

A direct observation throughout the year recognised how powerful it was to have the young person in the meeting to get their feelings across. Being a video meeting helped too, to see how it impacted on him & how strongly he felt around his previous recommendations. The IRO handled it very sensitively and gave good challenge to school.

There is some good evidence of direct work both for our Children and the family on Child Protection Planning. The workers, and IROs know the children well and can articulate this throughout the audit and within recordings.

Parental engagement

During this year we have been able to evidence some creative ways of engaging families. This is certainly not considered to be the primary method of engagement but used to promote engagement with parents that may not have previously come face to face or been involved in their children's planning. A good example of this is the use of technology to engage a father in the assessment process within an audit this month who lived overseas and Our Children's Reviews when parents would have not previously been invited but have joined virtually at the child's request, which feels safer. It's positive to see staff embrace new ways of working and using technology to break down barriers.

Role of the IRO

The audits have showed the strength of the role of the IRO in oversight for children and young people. IROs know the children well and communicate well with Social Workers to ensure there is no drift or delay in the progression of the plan. This activity is not always routinely strongly evidenced on the child's file and is known by the service as an area of improvement to better evidence our impact.

It is really encouraging that the IROs and CP Chairs use the auditing experience to reflect on the planning for children. The month's quality assurance sessions have focused on how we effectively challenge and support to better improve outcomes for children. This has included how we use the dispute resolution process to better evidence practice improvement and track impact.

5.2.2 Direct Observations

In 2020/2021 we continued to undertake regular monthly observations of IROs practice. This took place virtually and the IRO Manager joined the virtual meetings as an observer with the permission of the child. This has been extremely positive for the service and has demonstrated that while the method of conducting meetings was different the quality remained good in respect of achieving the objectives of a review meeting. The observations showed that IROs are well prepared in advance of the meeting and updated on issues in

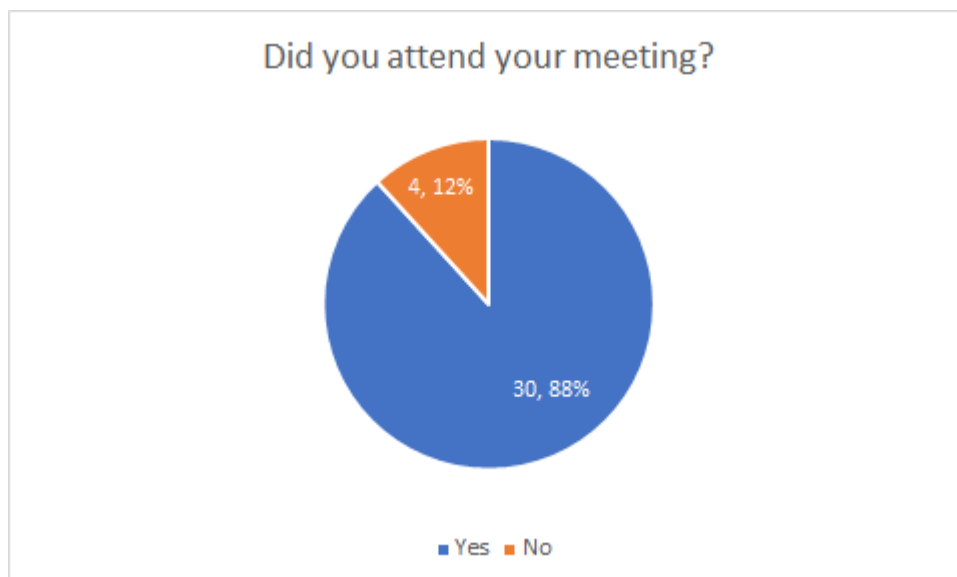
respect of the child. They are robust in their oversight of progress of care plans and continued to offer challenge when required while keeping children at the centre.

Despite the virtual methods there was evidence of a positive working relationship between the child, family, professionals and the IRO with an effective team around the child. Parents do attend but if they do not there is evidence of IROs speaking to them after the child's meeting. Children do contribute to their meetings either by attending all of the meeting or part of the meeting. Some children chose not to attend their meeting after speaking to their IRO about their wishes and feelings during their visit. What we need to improve - IROs need to ensure they agree timescales for Recommendations in the meeting with involved professionals; lack of attendance by involved professionals needs to be challenged; Signs of Safety needs to be more robustly used in children's meetings always starting with What's working Well; IROs need to consistently gather parent's views.

5.3 Feedback from children & young people -

This year we continued to contact children and young people to ask them to be involved in influencing the service we deliver. We asked children and young people in October 2020 & March 2021 would they complete a feedback form online titled "Tell us how your IRO is doing". The following charts shows some of the questions that was asked and the responses to the questions.

34 children completed an online questionnaire in October 2020. Key findings:





QUOTES FROM OUR CHILDREN about the role of their IRO:

“She listened and is understanding”

“she listens and understands me. She gets things sorted out for me”

“someone who supports me”

“she is very good and straight to point and chairs meeting very well”

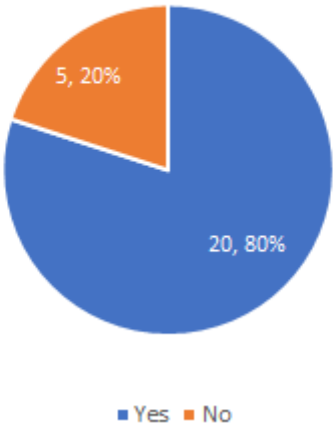
“he is very interested in what I want. He is funny I believe he will help if I ask for it”

“Someone who takes the time to listen and be interested in me and cares about my future”

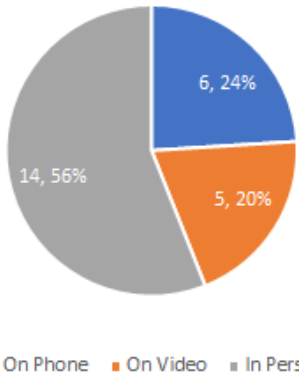
“Good listener and supports your views ☐”

25 children completed an online questionnaire in March 2021. Key findings:

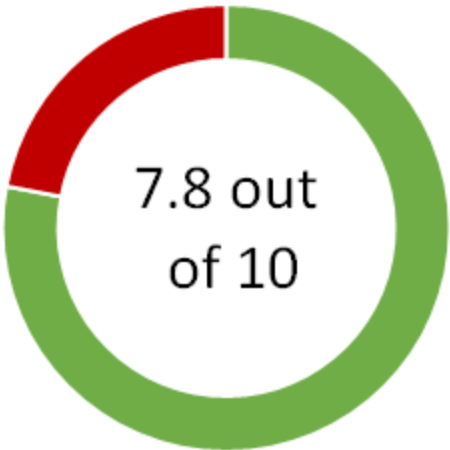
Do you feel comfortable attending your meeting?



How would you like your future meetings to be held?



Rate your meeting





QUOTES FROM OUR CHILDREN about the role of their IRO:

“my IRO is one of the best.”

“she always listens to my wishes and desires and is good at chairing meetings”

“she is someone I can talk to and trust. She listens to me point of view”.

“we have a sort of close relationship not too close but I feel very comfortable talking with her about any problems or any good things happening in the moment”

5.4 Dispute Resolutions

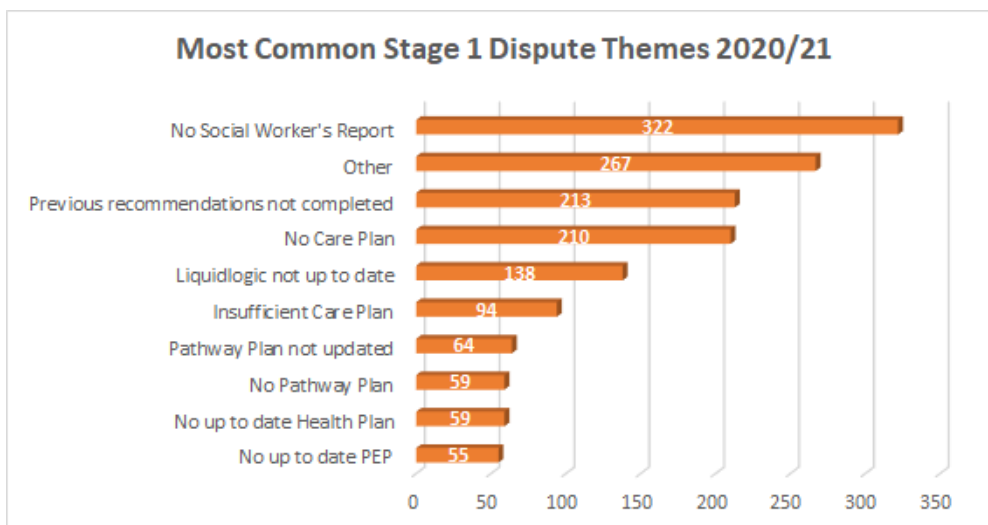
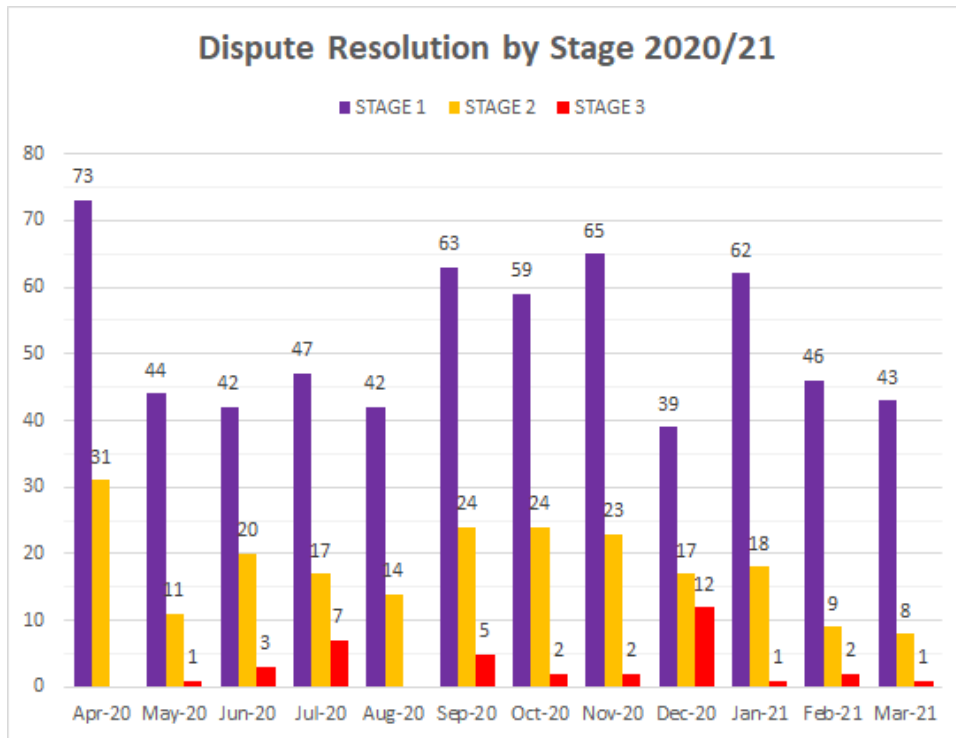
The IRO Handbook clearly sets out the importance of the Dispute Resolutions process and the role the IRO plays in resolving problems that arise out of the care planning process for Our Children. There is a well-established Dispute Resolutions process in Manchester that both IROs and Social Work teams are familiar with. The IROs actively seek resolution to issues through effective communication but are confident to escalate through the Dispute Resolutions stages when resolution is not achieved to Safeguarding Managers, Services Lead and Strategic Leads/Heads of Service, Deputy Director, Director and CAFCASS.

The IROs engage with colleagues across Social Work teams to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity and in a timely manner informally wherever possible. Where there has been no timely response or where resolution cannot be reached the issue will be escalated through the six-stage process. The aim is for issues to always be resolved within 20 working days as per statutory guidance in the IRO Handbook.

The data below regarding Dispute Resolutions is from April 2020 to March 2021. The data shows that in this period 625 Stage 1 Dispute Resolutions were completed which averages 52 per month. This is higher than the average in 2019/20 which was 43 per month. Looking at like for like data from 2019/20 (i.e., for the period July 2019-March 2020 & July 2020-

March 2021) there is a decrease in the number of Stage one disputes (685 compared to 466). This is positive as we have been promoting throughout the year the importance of resolving practice issues informally to better evidence swift response to concerns about a child’s care plan. What we are confident now is that we are escalating the right children

Stage two disputes remain constant at 153 compared to 154 while stage 3 disputes have increased from 12 to 32. This demonstrates that most disputes raised by the SIU reach a satisfactory resolution at Stage 1 of the process.



In 2020/2021 the main issue raised via the Dispute Resolution process was in respect of there being no Social Work Report prepared before a child’s meeting. This was also the

primary issue last year. This is reflective of the significant focus in January 2020 on improving the quality of the documentation for reviews. There has also been a focus on ensuring care plans were of a good standard and updated before the child's meeting. The themes from disputes have been fully considered by the service and reflect the service priorities throughout the year.

5.5 IRO Oversight

Part of the IROs role is to contribute to improving outcomes for our children with the core purpose being to ensure the care plan for a child fully reflects the child's needs and ensures that each child's wishes and feelings are given full and due consideration. Their role is to monitor the child's progress on an ongoing basis as well as reviewing the CLA Care Plan at regular intervals. To do this it was recognised that we need to:

- show regular oversight of the planning process,
- monitor the pace of progress and
- robustly challenge where there is drift and delay
- provide scrutiny of the progress and effectiveness of the child's care plan between reviews.

Guidance was introduced in September 2020 to improve IRO oversights and the quality of the oversights. This includes check-ins and mid-point overviews to ensure recommendations are being progressed. It considers the progression of the planning, the voice and influence of the child in the planning, evidence of parental involvement and impact, management oversight influencing the progression and direction of the plan and overall analysis and impact on the child. The impact of this is IROs have had greater oversight on the planning for children and when Dispute Resolutions are raised, they are timelier in improving outcomes for children.

6. OUTCOMES & IMPACT OF THE SERVICE

6.1 Progress made in 2020/2021

In writing the 2019/2020 Annual Report we were ambitious in setting out what we hoped to achieve in 2020/2021. We had entered the COVID19 pandemic and felt that we had significant learning to take and set goals to achieve in improving the service and co-producing with children in 2020/2021. We set ourselves the following goals to improve the overall outcomes for Our Children and deliver a consistently good service to Our Children and while this report clearly evidences that we have been successful in continuing to deliver an IRO service that provides timely reviews for children and prioritises their participation.

(1) To deliver the service in an agile way that is responsive to new ways of working while continuing to engage Our Children, their parents, carers, Social Workers and professionals.

We have utilised virtual platforms to ensure we remained effective in delivering the service during the Covid 19 pandemic. We built on our knowledge, skills, and resources for purposeful engagement to visit children and chair their meetings virtually. IROs are now confident in using a variety of technology to arrange and chair reviews. Most reviews took place over Google Meet (March – October 2020) Microsoft Teams (November 2020 – March 2021). Children and professionals were encouraged to turn on cameras as it was felt that being able to see each other enhanced the experience.

While staff generally worked from home during the lockdown period they adapted well to the use of technology. IROs ensured children continued to receive the support and oversight they have come to expect from their IRO. We feel that children continued to have good communication with IROs throughout the year but in hindsight, in terms of engaging children, a more child centered approach would have been to look at ways of continuing face to face visits in a safe way.

(2) We will focus on timeliness and the effectiveness of reviews.

IRO performance in respect of reviews taking place in timescale remains high. Observation and audit have assisted in identifying the effectiveness of reviews for Our Children with themes noted in the body of the report. At the time of writing the report last year we were ambitious about focusing on the timeliness of reviews and engaging children but due to Covid the ambition in terms of doing things differently didn't happen as planned. The focus was on continuing to do what we did well. We know we need to continue to focus on the quality of the reviews and ensuring children are at the centre of everything we do. This report has spoken about how we have yet to evidence the impact of some of the IRO activity around increasing attendance at reviews and the impact of this on children taking more of a central role in their reviews.

(3) Focus on the importance of continuous assessment and planning to improve the quality of decision making and the Care Plans presented to reviews.

IROs have taken the lead in ensuring that each child has a current Child and Family Assessment in place. They have managed this through a mix of discussion, support and challenge. Targets set in terms of updating assessments at least 12 monthly have made a difference to children and young people. The expectation has been that along with the SW Report an updated Care Plan has to be completed by the Social Worker prior to each review ensuring that children and young people consistently have a current plan. We see evidence that children are having more informed plans that are developed from an assessment of their needs. By focusing on continuous assessment, we are ensuring that we are ambitious for children in ensuring that their outcomes around being secure, happy and safe are assessed and analysed at regular intervals of their life.

(4) To strengthen the quality assurance function by regular feedback throughout the year, increased direct observations, and partnership feedback.

SIU Managers have undertaken monthly observations of staff. Themes have been identified in terms of practice and IROs have been spoken to individually and as a group to ensure practice is informed and shapes service delivery by the learning identified as outlined in the body of the report. The IRO links to Localities, Health and Education have meant we have had feedback on how we can work better together. We have spoken about the impact of this in the report in terms of a reduction in escalations and improvements in what we see in audits.

We have revised the Oversight procedures for IROs and this better reflects the Quality Assurance Framework with a focus on assessment, planning, voice and influence of children, parents/carers and management oversight.

We have again this year sought feedback from children and young people in the form of a questionnaire. This year we completed 2 questionnaires and again focused on engaging the carers and children via telephone calls to seek feedback and provided an online questionnaire. We are proud with our response rate, which was around 65% of children contacted responded. The vision has been more ambitious around how we sought feedback but given the situation faced, continuing to seek views of children and young people to influence practice is something we consider an achievement. The feedback from Our Children has helped us refocus on face-to-face visits being seen as a priority and improving the preparation for reviews and encouragement for children to consider how they would like their meeting to take place. The audits have provided assurance about the service we deliver and demonstrate that we know ourselves well. We know the areas we need to improve on and the priorities, which is what children have told us. As a result, we have ensured that we are clear with IROs in our expectations around all visits and reviews should be face to face. The virtual approach should be the exception with a clear rationale about why and the impact on the child.

(5) Develop closer working relationships with Localities.

IRO Managers continued to attend meetings virtually with Locality Managers throughout 2020/2021 to offer their oversight and input in respect of practice issues leading to delay for Our Children. IROs have been linked to Localities and have attended weekly workshops, listened to the views of Social Workers and Team Managers and fed this back to SIU to inform our practice. Audit outcomes and themes have been shared with Heads of Service via Closing the Loop meetings to ensure any compliments or areas for improvement are fed back directly.

We have seen this year again the reduction of formal dispute resolutions, which we believe is attributed to the work carried out with localities to improve greater understanding of the role of the IRO and their contribution to improving outcomes for children.

(6) Continue to increase the engagement of Our children ahead of their review.

We said we would do this by ensuring we promote the importance of the IRO role in speaking to Our Children in private prior to every review. Prior to lockdown the IROs were visiting children face to face within 6 weeks of their review whenever possible. IROs would speak to children and young people alone if they felt confident to do this. IROs were recording the visit and ensuring that their views, wishes and agenda items were discussed in their meeting and linked to appropriate Recommendations. Whilst we have not been able to carry out face to face visits the focus of the virtual contact with children ahead of their reviews have continued to ensure that their voice is strong in their reviews and that they are given opportunities to consider how they best wanted to participate in their review or important issues to them discussed / raised.

(7) We will focus on more qualitative learning from disputes resolutions.

The focus has changed in Dispute Resolutions from process to quality with an expectation that the impact on the child is noted in any challenge. Some changes have come about as a result of IRO links to Permanence and feedback from Social Workers and Team Managers. They fed back the importance of discussion with Social Workers and Team Managers before progressing a Stage 1 Dispute Resolution and this has been implemented consistently.

In 2021 we have started revising our Dispute Resolution form to better evidence the impact on the child on their health, safety, happiness, permanence and ensure we are being ambitious for them and raising disputes when we short fall of achieving this.

7.KEY PRIORITIES 2021-2022

Priority 1: To place children and young people at the centre of everything we do.

- We will focus on letters to children being good quality and sent out in timescale. *To do this we will ensure letters are produced with each child in mind, thinking about how they would like the letter to be presented.*
Consulting with children in a meaningful way about their Care Plan and ensuring we are ambitious for them. *To do this we will challenge when we do not have an up to date Care Plan and will seek assurance from children that they are involved in their Care Plan.*
- We will co-produce with children to better drive service delivery. *To do this we will set up a task and finish group with children and young people so they can influence how their IRO works alongside them.*

Priority 2: Listen to and respond to children and young people.

- We will continue to hold timely reviews that are led by children. *To do this we will continue to focus on performance data to ensure we prioritise children's reviews.*

- Recommendations will be SMART and focussed on improving outcomes for the child and will be written in consultation with children and evidence what impact they will have on them. [To do this we will speak to all children about their recommendations and will evidence this in how we write our recommendations.](#)
- We will ensure that we drive issues important to children and be involved with practice improvement. [To do this we will identify themes and learning and ensure this is shared with localities and amongst ourselves to improve our expertise in children and their needs.](#)
- We will improve how we deliver our service by listen and responding to children. [To do this we will think creatively about how we engage children and young people in telling us what we do well and what we could do better. We will review the value and impact of the tools and services we use to engage and advocate for children and young people.](#)

Priority 3: We will being ambitious for Our Children

- We will ensure all children benefit from purposeful visits within 6 weeks of their review to ensure they are actively involved in their planning. [To do this we will continue to oversee the performance and have visits to children a key priority.](#)
- We will work to ensure all children have a good quality care plan by their second review. [To do this we will work with localities around what good quality care plans look like and concentrate on permanence from the start.](#)
- We will work to improve the number of children supported to attend their meetings and to co-chair to ensure that they are central to the planning. [To do this by increasing the number of visits to children face to face to improve relationships and promote the importance of co-chairing / meaningful engagement.](#)
- Achieving permanence for Our Children will be the focus of work for IROs. [To do this we will participate in the Child' Journey to Permanence Training.](#)
- We will continue to focus on the quality of Dispute Resolutions and refocus to ensure the impact on children is evidenced. [To do this we will redesign the approach and focus on impact.](#)
- We will continue to build strong and effective relationships with the SW Teams to ensure that we provide appropriate scrutiny and provide support in ensuring children receive the best service and achieve permanence at the earliest opportunity. [To do this we will continue and strengthen the links of each Safeguarding Manager and IRO to localities and specialist areas.](#)

To achieve our ambitions will we invest in our IROs learning and development and have a robust approach to quality assurance and review this monthly to ensure we can evidence impact for Children.

REFERENCES / Key Documents for further reading

IRO handbook: statutory guidance for independent reviewing officers and local authorities on their functions in relation to case management and review for looked children, Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), 2010 (pp 9–12);

www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/childrenincare/a0065612/independent-reviewing-officers-iros

National Children's Bureau. The Role of Independent Reviewing Officers Report 2014.

http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/1124381/ncb_the_role_of_independent_reviewing_officers_in_england_-_final2.pdf

Adoption and Children Act 2002, section 118;

www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/adoption/b0067811/adoption-legislation/adoption-and-children-act-2002

The care planning, placement and case review (England) regulations, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2010;

www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00185-2010

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 12 January 2022

Subject: Overview Report

Report of: Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit

Summary

This report provides the following information:

- Recommendations Monitor
- Key Decisions
- Items for information
- Work Programme

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to discuss the information provided and agree any changes to the work programme that are necessary.

Wards Affected: All

Contact Officer:

Name: Rachel McKeon

Position: Scrutiny Support Officer

Tel: 0161 234 4997

Email: rachel.mckeon@manchester.gov.uk

Background Documents (available for public inspection):

None

1. Monitoring Previous Recommendations

This section of the report contains recommendations made by the Committee, responses to them, if they will be implemented, and if it will be, how this will be done.

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
8 January 2019	CYP/19/05 Youth and Play Services	To request the needs analysis ranking information for the 32 wards in Manchester.	A response to this recommendation will be incorporated into a future report.	Neil Fairlamb, Head of Parks, Leisure, Events and Youth
9 October 2019	CYP/19/39 Skills for Life	To request that the Council work to ensure that, as far as possible, all settings are involved in Skills for Life, including independent schools, and that officers look into how Skills for Life could be incorporated into the contracts when Our Children are placed in non-Council-owned residential settings.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Neil Fairlamb, Head of Parks, Leisure, Events and Youth
6 November 2019	CYP/19/46 Ghyll Head Outdoor Education Centre	To recommend that officers look into how Ghyll Head could be used by families whose children are on the edge of care.	Ghyll Head Outdoor Education and Activity Centre partially reopened in July 2021 following the delivery of the capital investment programme which developed the facilities to a modern standard. Despite the uncertainty surrounding COVID there has been a healthy return to site from Manchester schools, youth groups and community organisations. During the Summer, the We Love MCR Charity worked in partnership with the	Neil Fairlamb, Head of Parks, Leisure, Events and Youth

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
			<p>council to exclusively take over the site to host Manchester at risk families with complex needs to experience a therapeutic short break family course. Families were identified and referred through the Early Help Team and Barnardo's. Many of the families that attended had never left the city and the short break is a crucial part to succeed and grow as individuals and families, strengthening their relationship as a family unit and increasing their trust for one another, working together to achieve their goals. Feedback from the families is incredibly powerful. GLL intend to extend this offer and introduce an activity pass next summer which will give free access for the families to attend localised outdoor activity in Manchester at venues such as Debdale Outdoor Centre and the Indoor BMX track at the HSBC UK National Cycling Centre.</p> <p>Meetings have also taken place with the Manchester Leaving Care Service to strengthen opportunities for Young Carers and Looked After Children. GLL have pledged their support to contribute towards this workstream to ensure as many people can benefit from the Ghyll</p>	

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
			Head experience.	
6 November 2019	CYP/19/46 Ghyll Head Outdoor Education Centre	To request that consideration be given as to how Members and the Friends of Ghyll Head can be engaged in the work of the Stakeholder Board.	<p>A Strategic Advisory Board was established in March 2021 to provide the appropriate oversight and governance arrangements to ensure the centre delivers to Manchester schools, youth groups, community organisations and residents. The Board meets quarterly, core membership includes MCC Commercial Lead (Chair), MCC education Lead, MCC Youth Strategy and Engagement Lead, MCRactive Facilities Contract Manager, Manchester Outdoor Education Trust (MOET - former Friends of Ghyll Head) and an Elected Member.</p> <p>Following a visit from Local Members in October a number of Members have pledged their support for Ghyll Head. They have agreed to work with the management team and the Strategic Advisory Board to identify projects that may need funding, donations or volunteer hours and will reach out to the Manchester Business Community for support.</p>	Neil Fairlamb, Head of Parks, Leisure, Events and Youth
6 November 2019	CYP/19/48 Youth and Play Services - Young	To request that clear information on the availability of toilet facilities, for example, in park cafes, be included on	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Neil Fairlamb, Head of Parks, Leisure, Events and Youth

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
	Manchester	signage in parks.		
4 March 2020	CYP/20/16 Improving Children's Outcomes Through Collaboration and Working in Partnership in a Locality	To request further information on how the Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust is dealing with smoking around its hospital sites and to note that the Executive Member for Children and Schools will circulate a briefing note on work that is already taking place to address smoking in pregnancy.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Paul Marshall, Strategic Director of Children and Education Services
22 July 2020	CYP/20/26 Manchester's Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing	To request that school governors be included in the plans for schools and that CAMHS and the support on offer be included on the agenda of a future Chair of Governors briefing.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Amanda Corcoran, Director of Education
2 December 2020	CYP/20/51 Early Help Evaluation (2015 - 2020)	To ask officers to consider how Councillors could help with this work and to circulate a note to the Committee Members on this.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be circulated to Members.	Julie Heslop, Strategic Head of Early Help
2 December 2020	CYP/20/51 Early Help Evaluation (2015 - 2020)	To request that the Early Help Project Manager provide information on the number of families, in relation to the presentation slides on areas of	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Ed Haygarth, Early Help Project Manager

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
		the city and the sustainability of impacts.		
8 December 2021	CYP/21/61 COVID-19 Update	To request that guidance for secondary schools on testing and staggered starts for the next term be circulated to the Committee.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be circulated to Members.	Amanda Corcoran, Director of Education

2. Key Decisions

The Council is required to publish details of key decisions that will be taken at least 28 days before the decision is due to be taken. Details of key decisions that are due to be taken are published on a monthly basis in the Register of Key Decisions.

A key decision, as defined in the Council's Constitution is an executive decision, which is likely:

- To result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates, or
- To be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the city.

The Council Constitution defines 'significant' as being expenditure or savings (including the loss of income or capital receipts) in excess of £500k, providing that is not more than 10% of the gross operating expenditure for any budget heading in the in the Council's Revenue Budget Book, and subject to other defined exceptions.

An extract of the most recent Register of Key Decisions, published on **31 December 2021** containing details of the decisions under the Committee's remit is included below. This is to keep members informed of what decisions are being taken and, where appropriate, include in the work programme of the Committee.

Register of Key Decisions:

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Decision Due Date	Consultation	Background documents	Officer Contact
<p>Early Years - Tendered Daycare Settings (2021/07/16B)</p> <p>The approval of capital expenditure to support the continued provision of high-quality Early Years settings across the City.</p>	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 16th Aug 2021		Checkpoint 4 Business Case	Amanda Corcoran, Director of Education a.corcoran@manchester.gov.uk
<p>Youth Offer Strategy (2019/12/11B)</p> <p>To agree a Youth Offer Strategy for the next 3 years and complete the production of the strategy document</p>	Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)	13 Jan 2020		Manchester Youth Offer Strategy	
<p>Future model of care for Lyndene Children's Home (2020/07/24C)</p> <p>To agree a new model of residential, short breaks and edge of care support care at Lyndene Children's home.</p>	Strategic Director - Children and Education Services	Not before 22nd Aug 2020		Report and Recommendation	Sarah Austin sarah.austin@manchester.gov.uk
<p>Adoption Counts - Regional Adoption Agency (2021/09/30A)</p> <p>To agree the TUPE of 11 staff</p>	Executive	17 Nov 2021		Report to Executive	Sean McKendrick s.mckendrick@manchester.gov.uk

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Decision Due Date	Consultation	Background documents	Officer Contact
<p>Manchester Creative Media Arts Academy Completion Works (2021/10/11A)</p> <p>The approval of capital expenditure for completion of works outstanding at Manchester Creative Media Arts Academy.</p>	<p>City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)</p>	<p>Not before 11th Nov 2021</p>		<p>Checkpoint 4 Business Case</p>	<p>Amanda Corcoran, Director of Education a.corcoran@manchester.gov.uk</p>
<p>Contract for The Provision of a SaLT (Speech and Language Therapy) Service (2021/10/14A)</p>	<p>Strategic Director - Children and Education Services</p>	<p>Not before 14th Nov 2021</p>		<p>Report and recommendation</p>	<p>Mike Worsley mike.worsley@manchester.gov.uk</p>
<p>Contract for the Provision of: TC724 - Missing from Care Service & Return Interviews (2021/11/04A)</p> <p>The appointment of a Provider to deliver the Missing from Care Service & Return Interviews.</p> <p>The Missing from Care commissioned service will provide a statutory independent return interview service for children and young people who go missing from care. The service will contribute to the delivery of the complex</p>	<p>Strategic Director - Children and Education Services</p>	<p>Not before 4th Dec 2021</p>		<p>Report and recommendation</p>	<p>Julie Heslop julie.heslop@manchester.gov.uk</p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Decision Due Date	Consultation	Background documents	Officer Contact
safeguarding strategy which identifies key areas of work required to take place in order to meet the core objective of reducing the number of young people who go missing and those who go missing regularly in the city.					
<p>Q20347 Consultant for EYES data Migration. 2019/04/25A</p> <p>Contract is to support Manchester City Council with the migration of their Education Management System away from Capita One towards the Liquidlogic EYES solution.</p>	City Treasurer (Deputy Chief Executive)	Not before 1st Jun 2019		Report and Recommendation	Jon Nickson j.nickson@manchester.gov.uk

**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme – January 2022**

Wednesday 12 January 2022, 2.00 pm (Report deadline Thursday 30 December 2021)

Item	Purpose	Executive Member	Strategic Director / Lead Officer	Comments
Climate Change and Schools	To include road safety and air quality around schools.	Councillor Bridges Councillor Rawlins	Amanda Corcoran	Invite the Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee
COVID-19 Update	To receive a verbal update.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall/Amanda Corcoran	
Year of the Child	To receive an update on work relating to the Year of the Child in 2022.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Quality of Practice	To receive a report on quality of practice in social work.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Report	To receive the IRO Report.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Overview Report	The monthly report includes the recommendations monitor, relevant key decisions, the Committee's work programme and any items for information.		Rachel McKeon	

Wednesday 9 February 2022, 2.00 pm (Report deadline Friday 28 January 2022)

Item	Purpose	Executive Member	Strategic Director / Lead Officer	Comments
Budget proposals 2022/23 - update	Consideration of the final budget proposals that will go onto February Budget Executive and Scrutiny and March Council.	Councillor Craig Councillor Bridges	Carol Culley/Paul Marshall/Amanda Corcoran	
Homeless Families	To receive a report on Homeless Families, in particular families being placed outside of the city and the impact of this.	Councillor Rahman Councillor Bridges	David Ashmore/ Mohamed Hussein/Paul Marshall	See November 2021 minutes
The Role of GMP Engagement Officers in Manchester Schools	To receive a report on the role of GMP Engagement Officers in Manchester schools.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
COVID-19 Update	To receive a further update.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall/Amanda Corcoran	
Overview Report			Rachel McKeon	

Items To Be Scheduled

Item	Purpose	Executive Member	Strategic Director/ Lead Officer	Comments
Remote Learning	To receive a report on remote learning, to include a particular focus on Years 11 and 13 and information on the numbers of pupils who are able to access any streamed lessons or online learning that is being made available.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See November 2020 minutes
Children and Young	To receive an annual report on the	Councillor	Paul Marshall	See November 2020

People's Plan 2020 - 2024	progress of this work.	Bridges		minutes
Provision of Services by One Education	To receive a report on the provision of services by One Education.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See March 2021 minutes
Lyndene	To receive a further report on Lyndene in 12 months' time.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See March 2021 minutes
Manchester Safeguarding Partnership	To receive regular reports on the work of the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See May 2021 minutes
School dinners and healthy well-balanced meals	To receive a report on school dinners and healthy well-balanced meals for the children.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
Update on wellbeing and mental health and support for schools and settings and education for children unable to attend school due to ill health	To receive a further report on this and to invite a representative from CAMHS to this meeting.	Councillor Bridges Councillor Midgley	Paul Marshall	See September 2021 minutes
Sex and Relationship Education	To receive a report on Sex and Relationship Education in schools, including how child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation are addressed through this.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See October 2021 minutes
Youth and Play	To receive a further report on Youth and Play commissioning arrangements at an appropriate time.	Councillor Bridges	Fiona Worrall/Neil Fairlamb	See October 2021 minutes
Home School Transport	To receive a report on Home School Transport.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See November 2021 minutes

Adoption	To receive a report on adoption which includes what difference the move to Adoption Counts has made in providing stable adoption placements for Our Children and what happens when an adoption breaks down.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See November 2021 minutes
Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and Alternative Provision	To receive an update report in approximately 12 months' time.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See December 2021 minutes

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