



# The Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Unit Annual Report

1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016

If you would like to be involved please contact NYAS on 0808 808 1001 Email: [Help@nyas.net](mailto:Help@nyas.net) or visit [www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net)

We would really like to know what you think about this child/young person version. Please let us know by emailing [deborah.cashman@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:deborah.cashman@knowsley.gov.uk)

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Every year, the Independent Reviewing team write a report to tell people of all the work they have been doing, what is going well and what things need to happen to make things better. We want young people to know what is happening, so we have written a young person version which we hope you will all read.

### What do Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) do?

- They work independently from your Social Worker and their managers
- Chair your 'Looked After Review' meetings
- Make sure that you have a Care Plan
- Ensure that you have your say in your review meetings
- Make sure people do what they actually say they will

### The Independent Reviewing Team

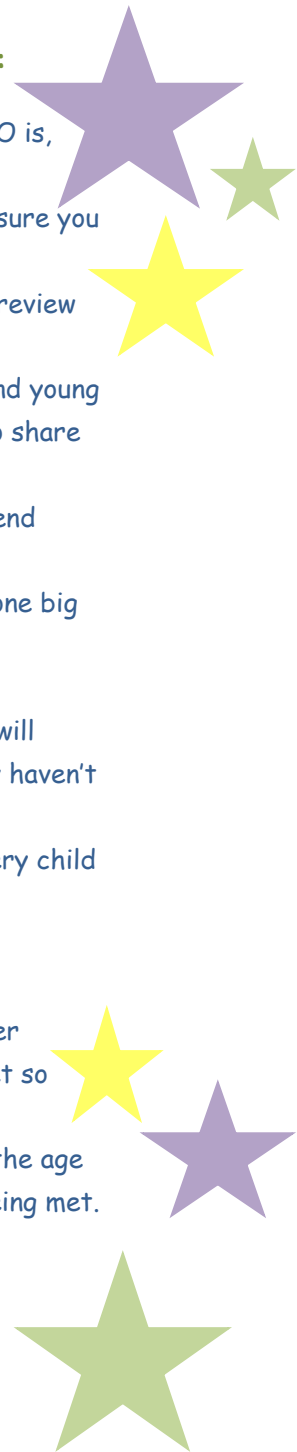
The team has nine IROs who chair all the reviews for Knowsley children and young people who live in residential, foster care and who live with their families. We also have children and young people who may be on a Child Protection Plan who also have reviews.

Colette Dutton is the Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Assurance and Debbie Cashman is the Manager and deals with the day to day running of the unit.

If you would like to contact the IRO managers about anything, you can email them at: [deborah.cashman@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:deborah.cashman@knowsley.gov.uk)

### What the IRO service will be doing this year:

- We want to make sure that you all know who your IRO is, what they do and how you can contact them.
- We want you to spend time with your IRO and make sure you meet with them before your review.
- We want the IROs to always check with you at your review how you would like them to keep in touch with you.
- We will be developing themed reviews for children and young people to allow you to be fully involved and be able to share your wishes and feelings in a more relaxed manner.
- We would like more children and young people to attend their review and want review meetings to be how children/young people want, eg smaller and not just one big meeting.
- We will keep checking what is happening about children's/young people's plans between reviews and will follow up if people have agreed to do things and they haven't done them.
- We will keep checking Social Workers have given every child a copy of their Care Plan.
- We will work with Children's Social Care to develop a child/young person friendly plan.
- We want this report to be available to all looked after children/young people and for it to be on the internet so everyone can read it.
- We will still be supporting young people's plans over the age of 18 years old to ensure that your needs are still being met.



Children/young people should have a Care Plan before coming into care or if this is not possible within 10 days.

We have found that some children/young people didn't have a copy of their Care Plan prior to their first review and we have asked Social Care Managers to make sure that you do get a copy of your plan as soon as you are looked after. We have also asked for Children's Social Care to look at both the Pathway Plan and Care Plan to be more child & young person friendly.

IROs have to make sure that any difficulties are sorted out so that the needs of children and young people are met.

We sort out lots of problems by:

- ✓ Talking to Social Workers & Social Work Managers
- ✓ Talking to Senior Managers & writing reports (like this one)
- ✓ IROs have access to independent legal advice and can contact the Court if they can't get the problem sorted.

## MEET THE TEAM



Debbie Cashman



Karen Nock



Debra Shannon



Lindsey Heaton



Wendy Simon



Joanne Sheridan



Jenny Brady



Angela Ballans



Kathleen Orrett



Jacky Evans

Last year Four IROs left - Julia Batters, Tony Cocker, Trish Parsons and Alan Doran (who retired after 42 years!). This will have meant that some of you have had changes during the year. We are sorry about these changes but are pleased to tell you that the team is now stable and all the staff are permanent with just one more IRO, Jacky Evans, who will be joining us soon.

The IROs work with children and young people across Knowsley and also with children and young people who come from Knowsley but who live outside of the area. This may be because they are living with family and friends who live elsewhere or they may live outside of Knowsley but where they are living is still very close to their home.

## What's happened between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 & 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016?

- The IROs chaired 883 Child Looked After Reviews
- On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 there were 291 young people in foster care/residential care

Who tells us what to do? How well are we doing?

The Government tell us what we have to do (see blue boxes below)

We tell you what we have been able to do (see pink boxes below)

The main thing we have to do is follow the IRO Handbook

IROs need to check how the child/young person's plan is getting on in between meetings.

Make sure children's Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are completed and getting the right support in schools and colleges.

Every child/young person should have an IRO within five days of becoming 'looked after'.

We make sure that a child/young person has an IRO as soon as we are told that they have become 'looked after'.

Children and young people should have a Looked After Review meeting:

- 20 working days after they become 'looked after'
- Then again within three months
- Then within every six months

We try to make sure all reviews happen when they should do. Last year 98.4% of the reviews happened at the right time.

Children and the young person's views should always be known at the review meeting. Remember, this is your meeting and it is important you try to attend.

The IRO will listen to your wishes regarding who attends, when and where the review takes place and will honour them wherever possible.

Children and young people must be given a copy of their review notes and they must be written in a way they can understand.

We know that the computer record of your meeting is not very friendly. We know that the IRO sometimes writes a letter to you after the review as some of you prefer this. The IRO service tries to make sure that you get a copy of your review within 20 working days of your review but at times this can take longer.