

Executive Summary

This report is prepared in accordance with Statutory Requirements to inform the Corporate Parenting Board and Senior Leaders about the council's performance in respect of the children in the care of the local authority.

In York the number and profile of the care population has remained broadly similar over the last 5 years, however a higher percentage of children in care are now looked after subject to statutory order rather than voluntary agreement, with very few coming into care without first receiving some form of coordinated intervention from Children Social Care, indicating effective early intervention is helping to prevent all but the most vulnerable coming into care.

There has been an increase in the number of placement disruptions, with more children experiencing over 3 changes of placement, fewer remaining in the same placement over 2.5 years and a higher number of children needing to be placed with out of area, independent fostering and residential placements. Increased workload demands have arisen as a consequence of social workers in the safeguarding teams dealing with a higher number of court proceedings and social workers in the permanence teams responding to placement disruptions and more distanced placements. There has been a consequential impact on social work availability, that has contributed to some children experiencing intervention by duty workers and or multiple changes of social worker.

Despite these pressures IROs report that children generally continue to be in the right placement, with the right care plan and the right legal status and IRO's report that the standard of corporate parenting continues to be good or outstanding for 83% children. IRO's report that children are generally receiving the health, educational and emotional wellbeing support that they require and that family contacts generally continue to be well promoted, however there has been an adverse impact in the timeliness with which some care plans, placement plans, health plans, education plans and assessments / social work reports for reviews have been completed.

IROs are working with social work teams and children in care to address these concerns. Despite the pressures there has been an improvement in the timeliness of child care review meetings and distribution of review records and there is now more consistent identification and reporting of these practice issues. Further improvements need to be made regarding the extent to which young people are directly participating in their reviews and care planning decisions and the embedding of mid way reviews by IROs to effectively track and oversee implementation of care planning decisions and expedient resolution of issues raised.

It is recommended that priorities in the coming year should aim to

1. Raise placement stability by increasing sufficiency of local placement provision and reduce use of out of area and independent care provision.
2. Build in social work sufficiency to reduce reliance on agency workers.
3. Embed effective and expedient Quality Assurance reporting and feedback processes to quickly identify, track and address any service shortfalls and make individual workers and teams more aware and accountable for their own key performance indicators.
4. Increase the numbers of Children and Young people actively participating in their reviews and care planning.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report is produced in accordance with statutory requirements of the Care Planning Regulations, for the IRO Manager to produce an annual report for the scrutiny of the Corporate Parenting Board to inform senior leaders of performance in respect of the local authority's function as corporate parent for children in the care of the local authority. The report provides information about current performance, emerging trends and key service priorities identified for development for the coming year.

1.2 The IRO's primary task is to ensure that the individual care plans for any children in the care of the local authority fully reflect the child's assessed needs, that the actions in the plan are consistent with the local authority's legal responsibilities to the child and that any drift or delay in implementing the plan is robustly addressed.

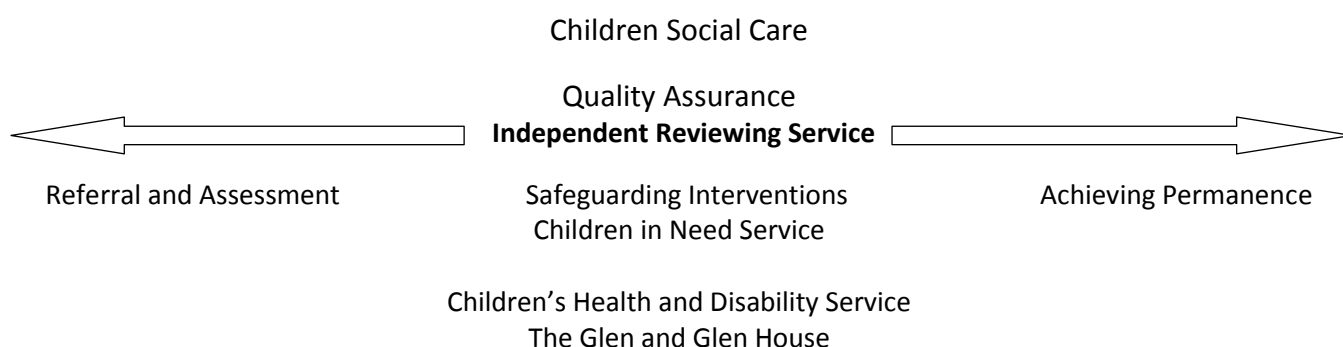
1.3 IRO's core responsibilities are to;

- monitor the activity of the local authority as a corporate parent and alert senior manager's to any issues of concern / report on good practice
- ensure that children's care plans are based on a current and informed assessment, and provide an effective response to the child's individual needs;
- identify and address any gaps in the assessment process or provision of service;
- provide a safeguard to prevent 'drift' in care planning and the delivery of services;
- ensure that the child's voice, wishes and feelings are reflected in the plan and that the child fully understands the implications of any changes to their care plan
- ensure that the child understands how an advocate could assist them and their entitlement to one

1.3 In accordance with the wishes of York's Children in Care Council, (the Show Me That I Matter Panel), Looked After Children in York are referred to in this report as Children and Young People in Care (CYPIC).

2. Profile of the IRO Service

2.1 In accordance with statutory requirements, this report focuses on the work undertaken by the unit in relation to children in care. This constitutes approximately a third of the IROs overall workload in York, as since September 2016, IROs working for CYC uniquely also oversee planning and review of children subject to Child Protection (CP) Plans, Children in Need (CIN) plans, Foster Carer's (FC) annual reviews and Quality Assurance of residential provision. This extended IRO remit facilitates consistency in planning, review and application of threshold criteria across Children Social Care, and broadens IRO's oversight of any individual child's care journey to include pre and post care interventions. Children are likely to experience several changes of social worker as they move through the social work service areas, but they should now retain the same IRO throughout.



2.2 The Independent Reviewing Service is sited within the Quality Assurance Group in Children's Social Care, based at West Offices alongside the CSC management team, social work teams and Children's Rights and Advocacy Service.

2.3 The IRO service consists of:

- 1 FTE Service Manager who reports to the Quality Assurance Group Manager – independent of CSC service delivery
- 6 FTE IROs undertaking the CYPIC, CIN and CP reviews, (made up of 5 full time workers and 2 part time workers)
- 1 FTE IRO (Placements) undertaking the foster carer's annual reviews, inspection of CYC's registered provision (The Glen) and quality assurance of externally commissioned residential care provision (two part time workers job share this post)

2.4 Within the Independent Reviewing Service there are 10 individuals in total covering the 8 FTE posts, all of whom are employed on permanent contracts. The longest serving member of the unit joined the council in 1992 (before CYC became a unitary authority) and has worked in the IRO service since 2004. The most recently appointed IRO, joined the team in January 2018. Four members of the Service worked as Reviewing Officers in York prior to the major restructuring of the unit in September 2016, and the other 6 were recruited to their current posts following this restructure. Most children have had the same IRO for at least a year, with a significant number retaining the same IRO for over 3 years. Maintaining this consistent relationship is recognised as very important by children, carers and IROs alike.

2.5 Of the 10 workers within the IRO Service Unit 8 are female and two are males. 9 of the Service members are White British and one is White/ Swedish.

2.6 All IROs have at least 5 years post-qualifying experience as a social worker and are registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council. 5 members of the unit have previously held manager roles in social work services, including looked after children and leaving care services, safeguarding, quality assurance, fostering and residential services. The other IROs have extensive experience working in referral and assessment, adoption, children in need and fostering services.

2.7 IROs and their manager access a diverse range of training appropriate to their development needs and the specific areas of knowledge required by the needs of the young people on their caseloads. Training undertaken within the last 12 months has included induction training for IROs delivered by NAIRO/team mentors, Making Research Count workshops in relation to promoting optimal outcomes for children in care, impact of neglect and safeguarding practice, workshops on reflective practice, analytical report writing, Early Permanence Placements, therapeutic interventions, Integrated Assessment Framework and use of evidenced based tools; briefings from CYC's legal services about key changes to legislation / case law and attendance at the Family Justice Board Annual Conference. IROs and their manager also participate in the regional IRO practitioner's group and the regional IRO manager's group and guests at the IRO team meeting have included the Assistant Director Children's Services, and Managers of the Pathway team, Adoption Team, Safeguarding teams, Permanent Placement Team, CIN teams, Children's Rights Officer, Family Conference Coordinator, CSE coordinator and the Head teacher Virtual School for CYPIC.

2.8 All members of the team have monthly supervision and contribute to monthly team meeting and peer audits. Learning arising from these audits is reviewed in individual supervision and the collective data arising from the audits is shared and discussed with the team as part of monthly team meetings. The team also have thematic case discussions and cascade learning from any training attended in a monthly peer supervision session.

2.9 The Independent Reviewing Service has contributed to practice improvement activity across children's services in a number of ways including delivery of multi agency child protection training delivered on

behalf of CYSCB, induction sessions for students and newly appointed social workers, participation in the Speak Up task group, training for Designated Teachers re care planning, training for CSC staff re report writing, early adoption of the Integrated Assessment Framework; active promotion of Family Group Conference, Advocacy Service and use of graded care profile and practice educator role for a social work student.

2.10 The IRO perspective is represented by the manager in a number of forums including CYSCB Partnership, Practice, Scrutiny and Review Group, Legal Gateway Meeting and Permanence Panel and guest attendance at York Association of Foster Carer's support group. The IRO manager has also provided interim line management cover for the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) dealing with allegations against professionals.

3. Quantitative information about the IRO service

3.1 The IRO Handbook recommends that a caseload for a full-time IRO is between 50 and 70 children in Care. In York no IRO has been allocated more than 50 CYPIC although total overall number of allocated children has varied between 80 and 110 children (FTE) as IROs are also allocated children subject to Child Protection and Child in Need plans, for whom the IRO task is less time intensive. (IROs do not have statutory requirements to undertake the same level of pre-meeting consultation / and post review oversight of children subject to CP and CIN plans and these review meetings are usually undertaken as whole family meetings rather than the individualised format of most CYPIC reviews).

Table 1 : IRO caseload

Number of children with an allocated IRO (end of year snapshot on 31 st March each year)					
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017-18
CYPIC	221	193	191	204	197
CP	125	124	135	171	167
CIN	Pre 2016 service restructure			219	199
Total number of C/YP allocated ÷ number of FTE IROs	346 ÷ 4	317 ÷ 4	326 ÷ 4	594 ÷ 6.5 *	563 ÷ 6
Average IRO caseload at year end	87	79	82	91	94

*There were 4 FTE chairing the CYPIC and CPC reviews and 3 FTE workers chairing the CIN reviews until the roles merged to 6 FTE IROs in Sept 2016

3.2 The size of caseload alone does not indicate the workload for each IRO as in addition to the above differentials, workload is also determined by considerations such as the number of out of authority placements, frequency of placement disruptions, large family groups and / or unaccompanied asylum seekers etc. (for whom there are additional considerations such as the use of interpreters, establishing jurisdiction, meeting additional cultural needs and placement considerations).

3.3 During the reporting period there has been a marginal increase in the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children moving to York (4 new UAASC) but a significant rise in the number of children experiencing changes of placement, which has necessitated a higher level of IRO oversight and more frequent reviews. IROs attribute some of this disruption to a reduction in the number of fostering placements available in York and increased need to use newly commissioned placements that are previously untested by CYC and often out of area. The consequent impact on continuity of education, health and support services, frequency of family / friend contacts, and travel time for workers supporting and reviewing children in these placements all increase the likelihood of further placement breakdown. **The need to improve the sufficiency of and choice of local placements is seen by the IRO team as being the primary priority for development in the coming year.**

Table 2 ; Placement stability

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017-18
% of CYPIC having 3 or more moves of placement	9.5%	11.9%	8.9%	7.4%	11.7%
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017-18
% of the CYPIC looked after for at least 2.5 years who've lived in the same placement at least 2 years, or whose adoptive and previous placement lasted at least 2 years	61%	58.3 %	63.6%	66.83%	58.8%

3.4 There have been a total of 580 CYPIC and Adoption reviews chaired during the year (5% rise on the 553 undertaken the preceding year) of which 95% were held on time, which is a significant improvement on last year (67%).

Table 3: Timeliness of Reviews

% CYPIC reviews held within statutory timescales	2013 -14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
	86%	90%	85%	67%	95%

3.5 There has been a similar improvement in the timeliness of review recording and distribution of records. (these performance measures were significantly affected during 2016 due to implementation of a new ICT system and major service restructure).

Table 4 : Timeliness of completion and distribution of CYPIC review records

% CYPIC records completed within 15 wd	2016-17 total	2017-18 Total	April-June 2017	July-Sept 2017	Oct-Dec 2017	Jan-March 2018
	23%	72%	68%	65%	95%	84%
% distributed within 20 wd	24%	66%	53%	54%	68%	90%

3.6 The above improvements in performance were achieved in part because of a slight reduction (2%) in the number of Child Protection conferences and a 43% reduction in the number of CIN reviews that IROs have chaired this year, compared with last year. The reduction in CIN reviews has arisen as the CIN managers are now confirming the detail of the CIN plan when CIN referrals are accepted with IROs now chairing the first reviews at 3 months rather than within 15 working days of allocation. This change has proved to be beneficial to expedient and streamlined service delivery as CIN managers are now more proactively involved in early confirmation of the details of the CIN support that their team are to deliver rather than the IRO doing this, with IRO's providing more independent oversight and challenge.

Table 5 : Overall number of meetings chaired by IROs

	2016-17 total	Q1 2017-18	Q2 2017-18	Q3 2017-18	Q4 2017-18	2017-18 total	Trend
CYPIC Reviews	553	160	145	133	142	580	5% rise
CP Conf	321	55	77	86	96	314	2% fewer
CIN reviews	474*	72	72	67	60	271	43% fewer*
Total	348÷6.5*	287 ÷ 6	294 ÷ 6	286 ÷ 6	298 ÷ 6	1165 ÷ 6	6% fewer
Average	207	48	49	48	50	194	

*There were 4 FTE chairing the CYPIC and CPC reviews and 3 FTE workers chairing the CIN reviews until the roles merged to 6 FTE IROs in September 2016

4. CYPIC Profile and trends

4.1 The number of CYPIC has remained fairly static across the year, with a total variation of 21 (a high of 206 in April dipping to a low of 185 in October). We are aware through the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional partnership that many partner authorities have experienced a more marked rise in the number of children in care and children subject to protection plans, that has not been experienced in York. We attribute this to the effectiveness of the early intervention offer being coordinated through the newly formed Local Area Teams, impact of the newly formed Immediate Response Team and take up of Family Group Conferencing from Initial Child Protection Conference (an initiative the IROs have been instrumental in helping to promote). Ongoing review of the data will help to evidence if this positive progress is maintained long term.

Table 6 : Number of CYPIC and children subject to Child Protection Plan by Month

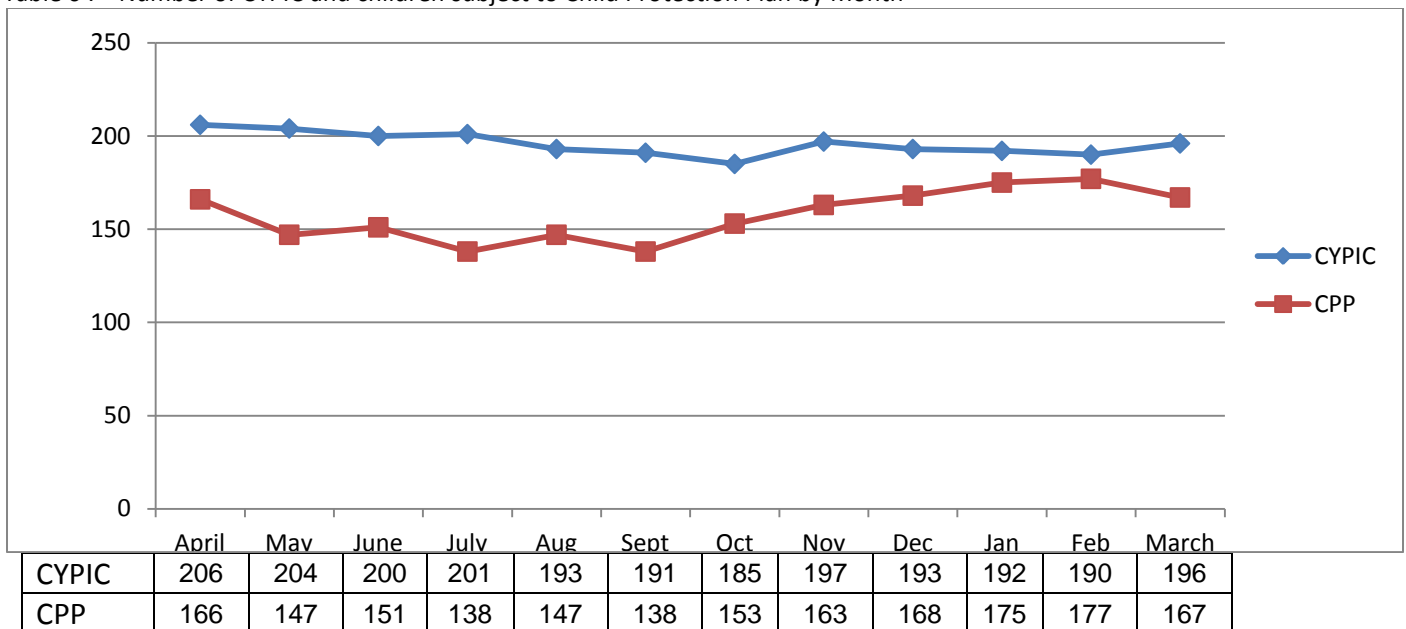
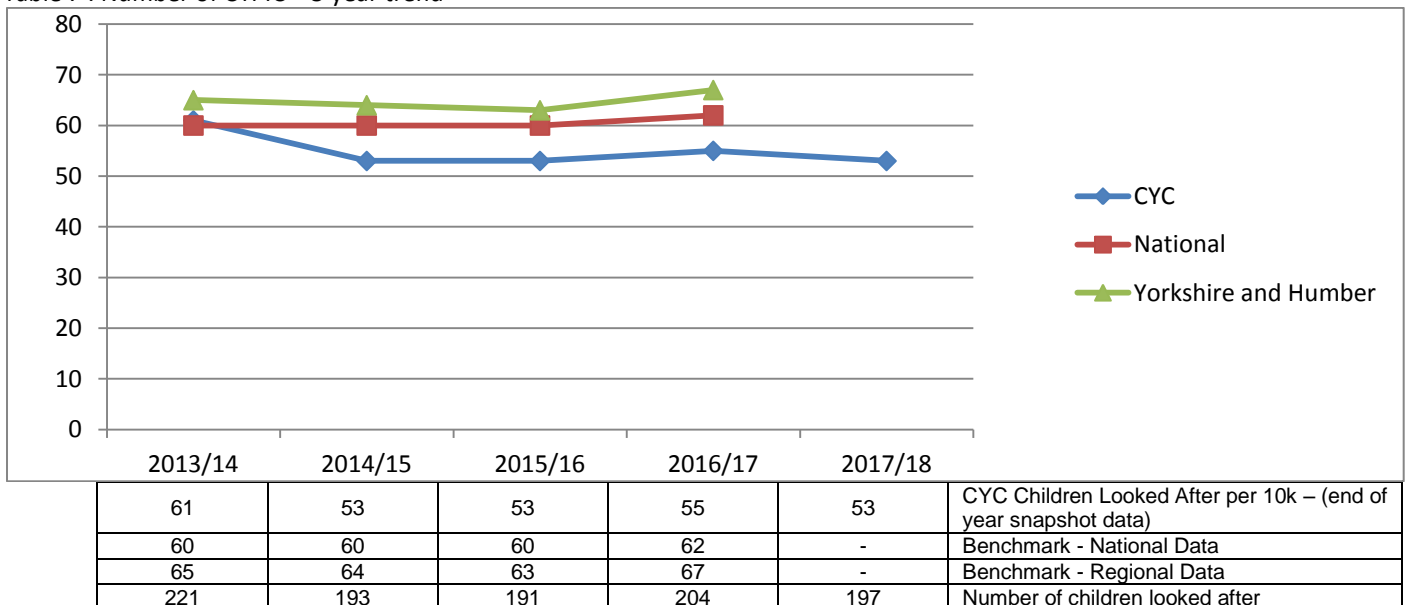


Table 7 : Number of CYPIC – 5 year trend

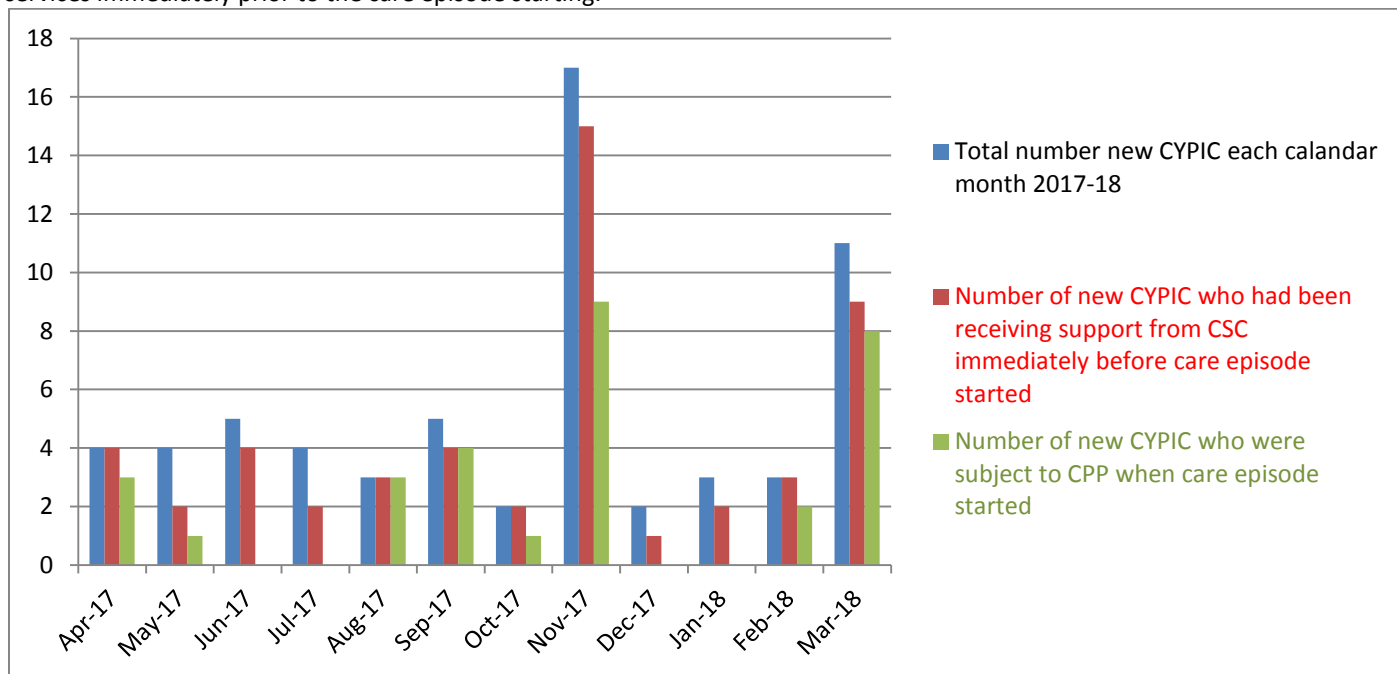


4.2 Whilst the total number of children in care in York has remained fairly static across the year there was a notable spike in new care episodes in November and March. This spike arose as a consequence of court proceedings being initiated in respect of 6 separate sibling groups.

Profile of children coming into care

4.3 Analysis of the circumstances of the children coming into care across the year indicates that coordinated support was in place for the majority of the children prior to the care episode beginning to try to avoid the need for local authority care. Of the 63 children and young people who became CYPIC during the year 51 (81%) were receiving CSC support coordinated by either the Safeguarding, CIN and / or Immediate Response Teams prior to the care episode starting of which 31 (49%) were subject to child protection plans.

Table 8. Number of CYPIC starters by month showing those subject to Child Protection Plan and / or . Receiving CSC support services immediately prior to the care episode starting.



4.4 12 of the 63 children (19%) were not known to / or receiving support services Children’s Social Care immediately prior to the care episode starting, however it would have been difficult to have pre-empted or avoided the care episode for these children as 4 were unaccompanied asylum seeking children, 3 were concealed pregnancies/relinquished babies and 5 were children at risk of immediate safeguarding concerns necessitating alternative care arrangements

4.5 20 children (32%) were receiving support via CSC but made the transition into care directly from CIN or Immediate Response Team without intervention having been stepped up to include a protection plan, however there was limited opportunity for this, given the circumstances leading to the care episode, as 3 were made subject to police powers of protection, 2 were remanded into care, 3 were already subject to Supervision Orders and 1 was a young man receiving short break care as a consequence of disabilities for whom there were no safeguarding concerns.

Table 9: Profile of children / young people starting their care episode 2017-18

Total number of new CYPIC in year Broken down by age		Gender		Ethnicity					Legal status when are episode started			
		Male	Female	White British	White Asian	White other	Other mixed	Other ethnicity	S20	Police prot EPO/ICO/	Reman d	
2016-	Year total	56	30	75	0	0	3	8	51	29	6	
	86	65%	35%	87%			3.5%	9%	59%	34%	7%	
2017-2018	Year total	40	23	46	2	2	8	5	27	34	2	
	63	63%	37%	73%	3%	3%	13%	8%	43%	54%	3%	
	Age when CYPIC started		Male	Female	White British	White Asian	White other	Other mixed	Other ethnicity	S20	Police prot EPO/ICO	Reman d
	<1yrs	17	13	4	13	1	1	1	1	5	12	-
	1-4	10	5	5	7	-	-	3	-	2	8	-
	5-9	15	6	7	11	-	-	2	-	5	8	-
	10-15	14	8	6	11	1	1	1	-	7	6	-
16+	9	8	1	4	-	-	1	4	7	-	2	

4.6 Consistent with preceding years there continues to be more boys coming into care. The highest differential this year was amongst babies aged under 12 months (13:4 ratio) and young people aged over 16 (8:1 ratio), the latter explained in part as the 4 unaccompanied asylum seeking children and 2 young people remanded into the care of the local authority were males aged 16 or above.

4.7 There was a marked reduction this year in the number of children who started their care episode subject to voluntary parental agreement, with a corresponding rise in the number of children whose care episode started as a consequence of either police protection or court order (the majority of whom had been subject to child protection plans and / or coordinated support services), indicating that only the children most at risk of harm are coming into care, with other children being supported within their own families. Ongoing review of this data will establish whether increased use of early help services, Immediate Response Team and Family Group Conferencing will help to further reduce the number of children requiring local authority care.

Profile of all children in care (5 year trend)

4.8 The overall profile of CYPIC in York has been broadly consistent across the last 5 years with little variation in the gender or age profile and just a small increase in the number of CYPIC who are not White / British. This reflects the changing demographics in the wider population of York and a small number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children. This change is not matched by the ethnic profile of staff or foster carers within CYC, who currently continue to be almost exclusively White British.

Table 10: Number of CYPIC by Ethnicity

Snapshot data a year end	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Percentage of White British CYPIC	95%	96%	95%	94%	89%

Table 11: Number of CYPIC by Gender

Snapshot data a year end	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of Male CYPIC	121	101	98	108	107
Number of Female CYPIC	100	92	93	96	90

Table 12: Number of CYPIC by Age

Snapshot data a year end	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	
Number of CYPIC Under 1 year old	6	8	13	11	10	◀▶ Neutral
Number of CYPIC aged - 1-4 years -	30	23	19	24	27	◀▶ Neutral
Number - of CYPIC aged 5-9 years -	45	36	37	35	33	◀▶ Neutral
Number of CYPIC aged 10-15 years -	92	90	78	82	85	◀▶ Neutral
Number of CYPIC aged 16+ years -	48	36	44	52	42	◀▶ Neutral

4.10 The number of children in care subject to either full or interim care orders has marginally increased in the last year whilst the number of children in care due to S20 voluntary agreement has reduced, this reflects a national trend following judicial and national scrutiny about use of S20. The number of children subject to Placement Orders (Freed for Adoption) continues to remain relatively low. This trend also reflects the national picture, which appears to be linked to increased use of other permanence options such as Child Arrangement Orders and Special Guardianship Orders.

Table 13 : Number of CYPIC by Legal Status

Snapshot data a year end	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	
Number of CYPIC under legal code - Interim care order	13	22	30	20	30	▲
Number of CYPIC under legal code - Full care order	126	105	106	126	132	▲
Number of CYPIC under legal code - Freed for Adoption or Placement Order	27	11	9	5	5	▲
Number of CYPIC under legal code - Accommodated under S20	55	55	44	52	29	▼
Number of CYPIC under legal code - Youth justice legal Statuses	0	0	0	1	1	◀▶ Neutral
Number of CYPIC under legal code - Detained on CP grounds in LA accommodation	0	2	2	0	0	◀▶ Neutral

4.11 The IROs work proactively with the social work teams to ensure the right permanence plan, and legal status is in place for every child and young person in care. The Quality Assurance Monitor completed by IROs following every child care review confirms that IROs continue to be satisfied that very few CYPIC are not subject to an appropriate legal status / placement. Where concerns have been identified they have generally reflected the increased focus on converting some voluntary S20 arrangements for children for whom a return to their family's care is not in the C/YP best interests.

Table 14: QAF Data: Is the current or proposed legal status / placement appropriate for the child ?

Appropriateness of legal status	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
In the IRO's view is the current / proposed legal status is NOT appropriate	5/485 1.04%	16/554 2.8%	13/579 2.24%
In the IRO's view the current / proposed placement does NOT fully meet child's assessed needs	18/485 3.7%	13/554 2.3%	12/579 2.07%

Table 15: Number of children by longevity of Care episode at year end

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	
Duration in care at period end - <6 months	27	25	25	35	33	◄► Neutral
Duration in care at period end - 6-12 months	11	22	22	28	19	◄► Neutral
Duration in care at period end - 1-2 years	23	19	27	26	33	◄► Neutral
Duration in care at period end - 2-4 years	61	41	30	29	34	◄► Neutral
Duration in care at period end - 4+ years	99	86	87	86	78	◄► Neutral

Profile of children leaving care

Table 16 : Reason care episode ended

Reason Care Episode ended	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	DOT
Number of care episodes ending in year	84	89	65	74	73	
<u>CLA Ceased - Adopted (Application unopposed) - (YTD)</u>	1	9	3	7	7	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - Adopted (consent dispensed with by court) - (YTD)</u>	14	7	0	2	3	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - Left care to live with parents, relatives, or other person with no parental responsibility - (YTD)</u>	0	5	9	3	4	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - Accommodation on remand ended - (YTD)</u>	0	1	0	4	1	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - Age assessment determined child is aged 18 or over and support not required - (YTD)</u>	0	0	1	2	0	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - Moved abroad - (YTD)</u>	0	0	0	0	0	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - Died - (YTD)</u>	0	0	0	0	0	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - Care taken over by another LA in the UK - (YTD)</u>	2	0	0	2	0	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - Returned home with parents/relatives etc - (YTD)</u>	31	3	1	-	-	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - Child returns home as part of their agreed care plan - (YTD)</u>	0	9	16	15	8	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - Child's return home is immediate - (YTD)</u>	0	4	2	7	6	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - Residence order granted - (YTD)</u>	0	6	1	0	3	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - SGO made to former foster carers - (YTD)</u>	2	9	1	6	7	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - SGO made to former foster carer who was a relative or friend - (YTD) (New for 2018/19)</u>	-	-	-	-	-	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - SGO made to former foster carer other than a relative or friend - (YTD) (New for 2018/19)</u>	-	-	-	-	-	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - SGO made to other carers - (YTD)</u>	5	3	5	1	5	◄► Neutral
<u>CLA Ceased - SGO made to other carer who was a relative or friend - (YTD) (New for 2018/19)</u>	-	-	-	-	-	◄► Neutral

CLA Ceased - SGO made to other carer not a relative or friend - (YTD) (New for 2018/19)	-	-	-	-	-	◀▶ Neutral
CLA Ceased - Moved into independent living (supportive) - (YTD)	11	14	2	5	9	◀▶ Neutral
CLA Ceased - Moved into independent living (non supportive) - (YTD)	2	2	0	1	3	◀▶ Neutral
CLA Ceased - Sentenced to custody - (YTD)	5	1	0	3	1	◀▶ Neutral
CLA Ceased - Ceased for any other reason - (YTD)	10	13	20	13	12	◀▶ Neutral
CLA Ceased - Transferred to Adult Services residential care - (YTD)	1	3	1	1	4	◀▶ Neutral

4.12 The majority of care episodes in York continue to end positively with the biggest cohort being children and / young people being supported to return / move to the care of parents or relatives, (18), children being adopted (10) or being made subject to Special Guardianship Order (12).

4.13 91% of care leavers aged between 17 and 21 were deemed to be in suitable accommodation and 75% were in employment or training, both considerably higher rates than national and regional comparators.

Table 17: Suitability of accommodation for care leavers

% of care leavers in suitable accommodation aged 17-21 (19-21 until 2016/2017)	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
	100.00%	95.00%	92.00%	97.44%	91.00%
Benchmark - National Data	77.80%	81.00%	83.00%	84.00%	-
Benchmark - Regional Data	81.10%	86.00%	85.00%	86.00%	-

Table 18 : Number of Care Leavers aged 17+ years in employment or training

<u>leavers in employment, education or training aged 17-21 (19-21 until 2016/2017)</u>	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	
Monthly	57.50%	68.00%	75.64%	71.00%	75%	Up is Good
<u>Benchmark - National Data</u>	45.00%	48.00%	49.00%	50.00%	-	-
<u>Benchmark - Regional Data</u>	47.00%	53.00%	52.00%	50.00%	-	-

These positive outcomes are evidenced in the IRO quality assurance framework.

5. IRO impact on the outcomes for children and young people

5.1 A key responsibility for IROs is to ensure that the child's wishes and feelings are known and are influential in formulating the care plan. IROs must also establish whether the child knows their own rights and entitlements in law, for example that they can make a complaint, have an advocate or apply to court under S8 of the Children Act.

Table 17 : IRO consultations

Percentage of Children seen and spoken to prior to Review	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2017-18
	45%	35%	34.5%	38%	31%	33%	34%	34%

5.2 As well as consulting with the child/young person prior to the review, IRO's also encourage and support children and young people to attend their review meeting; the child/young person's participation is prioritised above that of family members, if it is not possible for both the child and family to meet together.

5.3 During the year children attended 38.5 % reviews and 35% did not attend their review but had their views represented by an advocate or by indirect means, evidencing increased use of the Independent Advocacy Service. 19.4% of CYPIC were aged 4 or under at the time of their review, so they would be unlikely to attend the review meeting, leaving 7% who didn't contribute when they could have. It remains a key aspiration to further raise the number of children and young people directly participating in their reviews.

Table 18 : CYPIC participation in their reviews

	2013 14	2014 15	2015 16	2016 17	2017 18
Child under 4 at time of Review	15%	13%	18%	17.4%	19.4%
Attends or speaks for him/herself	40%	41%	38%	39.5%	36.7%
Attends, views rep. by Advocate	2%	0.5%	1%	1.3%	.8%
Attends, views given non-verbally	0%	2.5%	0.3%	0.6%	1.0%
Attends but does not convey views	0.5%	1%	0.7%	0.4%	.01%
Doesn't attend but briefs advocate	7%	11.5%	15%	10%	10.6%
Does not attend but conveys views	32.5%	24.5%	23%	21.3%	24.6%
Does not attend or convey views	3%	6%	4%	9.5%	6.3%

5.4 In November 2017 representative from the Independent Reviewing Officers attended Speak Up Youth to discuss with young people their experiences of being involved in their reviews. This included speaking with young people to find out how they would prefer to be consulted in terms of their review and looking at the barriers that prevent young people from attending. This piece of work is ongoing and focusing on reviewing existing consultation forms and identifying possible tools that could be created to help promote young people's participation within the review process. IROs are also consulting colleagues from neighbouring authorities who report higher participation rates, to identify any best practice models of intervention.

5.5 A key IRO function is to identify issues and trends in services provided to CYPIC, and report these to senior managers and elected members. IROs do this by routinely competing monitoring data after every review, and reporting on the issues that are being raised by IROs as quality assurance processes or informal & formal disputes.

5.6 IRO's evidence their monitoring of the progress of plans between reviews by conducting a brief "mid-way check" between reviews, an evidenced dialogue between IRO and social worker to ensure that care planning is on track. IROs also demonstrate their "footprint" on a case by making a record of their intervention and oversight on the children's records. By actively monitoring progress in this way it becomes less likely that, when it is time for reviews to take place, that the IRO is faced with any unexpected developments on cases.

5.7 In York IROs continue to report that the placement, legal status, care plan and quality of corporate parenting are good or outstanding the vast majority of children

Table 19 : Quality of care plan and corporate parenting

Quality of care plan in IROs view	IRO rating	2015/16 total	2016/17 total	Q1 2017	Q2 2017	Q3 2017	Q4 2018	2017/18 total
	Outstanding	1.4%	1.8%	1%	.6%	1.5%	1%	1.2%
Good	89%	80%	79%	80%	88%	81%	81.6%	
Req Improv	9%	18%	14%	12%	11%	14%	12.6%	
Not recorded	0.2%	0%	7%	11%	-	3.5%	5.5%	
Quality of corporate parenting in IRO's view	Outstanding	0.8%	4.1%	2%	.6%	3%	1.4%	1.7%
	Good	89%	82%	79%	80%	86%	87%	81.8%
	Req Improv	9.15%	13.3%	13%	12%	11%	8%	10.8%
	Not recorded	89%	80%	6%	11%	-	4%	5.5%

5.8 Where IROs raise concerns they generally tend to be practice issues, relating to poor quality or out dated Education Plans, Care Plans, Health Assessments and Placement Plans or concerns relating to overdue statutory visits. IROs frequently identify multiple concerns affecting individual children and young people. Competing workload demands within the social work teams is such that there is sometimes some delay in identified issues being completed even after the social work team have acknowledged and agreed to address the shortfall. Improved reporting tools and cycles are being developed to help promote improved tracking and responsiveness to issues raised at an informal level, to help disseminate learning and avoid issues needing to be escalated through the formal resolution process

Table 20 : IRO Resolution Activity

	2016/17 total	Q1 2017	Q2 2017	Q3 2017	Q4 2018	2017/18 total
Number of QA Monitors completed	554	160	145	132	142	579
Number of children affected		17	25	26	69	137
Number of issues raised in total	202	30	55	68	152	305
Issues addressed at informal resolution stage	201	30	54	68	152	304
Issues addressed via formal resolution	3	-	1	-	-	1
Resource issue - placement	1	-	1	-	-	1
contact provision	8	5	1	-	-	6
educational provision	4	2	1	-	2	5
health provision	-	-	-	-	1	1
emotional wellbeing provision	3	-	2	2	1	5
Care Planning- management of CSE	-	-	-	-	-	-
management of missing episodes	-	-	-	-	-	-
achieving change of legal status	4	2	2	-	1	5
Planning for permanence	6	2	1	2	-	5
Securing a permanent placement	4		-	1	5	6
Practice- Decisions from last review not acted on	17	2	5	7	15	29
insufficient evidence of child's voice	3	-	-	4	-	4
Delay in allocating social worker	3	1	1	-	-	2
Statutory visits not in timescale	18	4	4	8	13	29
No / poor quality placement plan	15	3	5	7	12	27
No /poor quality care plan	25	4	17	9	23	53
No / poor quality pathway plan	11	-	4	2	3	9
No / poor quality assessment of need	9	-	2	4	1	7
No / poor quality health assessment	18	2	2	8	11	23
No / poor quality PEP	30	2	5	11	17	35
No/poor quality life story work	7	1	1	2	2	6
Inadequate preparation for review (usually delayed / absent Social work report)	14	-	1	1	45	47
Other	2	-	-	-	-	-

5.9 IROs have good professional relationships with children's social work teams. Where issues or differences of opinion exist, IROs will always seek to resolve the matter informally with the social worker or the social worker's manager. Co location of the IROs with the social work teams facilitates prompt

identification and resolution of most issues. This approach supports York's relationship based approach in which the IROs employ a solution-focused, collaborative approach to prevent issues escalating into a formal dispute, and most key performance indicators evidence practice improvements since the preceding year.

Table 21 : Health Assessments and Education Plans

Health assessments and education plans Snapshot data at year end	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	
% of health needs assessments undertaken for children in care for more than 1 year	92.89%	66.00%	74.50%	60.99%	72.41%	Up is Good
% of dental checks undertaken for children in care for more than 1 year	92.89%	74.15%	53.10%	29.08%	44.83%	Up is Good
% of Under 5's with Health Assessments Up to Date	82.15%	92.85%	100.00%	97.14%	53.33%	Down is Bad
% of PEP completed	83.70%	70.10%	NC	NC	NC	
Average strengths and difficulties score of the emotional and behavioural health of children in care continuously for 12 months at 31 March	15.9	13.1	13	16.11	15.19	Down is Good

5.10. There have been formal disputes relating to just one child during 2017 / 18, (negotiations led to additional funding being agreed to fund therapeutic intervention and enhanced fostering allowance to help secure a child in placement).

5.11 The IRO Unit are co located and maintains close working relationship with the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service. The Service offers advocacy to children and young people in care and, if necessary, will support them through the City of York Corporate Complaints procedure. Advocates continue to support CYPIC with issues similar to those identified by the IROs. IRO's were responsible for 4% of the referrals made to the advocacy service this year, and have helped to promote many of the referrals made to the service by social workers and foster carers.

Table 22 ; Issues that the advocacy service has supported CYPIC with.

Theme	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Contact issues	13%	3%	15%	11%
Unhappy with Social Work services	11%	17%	7%	15%
Placement issues	13%	11%	12%	17%
Disagreement with Care Plan	11%	5%	7%	7%
accessing support / services	5%	8%	0%	4%
Support in decision making	45%	50%	42%	37%
Issues re-education provision	-	-	3%	4%
Other	2%	6%	12%	12%

In Summary

5.12 Based on the data arising from IRO consultations with young people, Quality Assurance Monitoring and referrals to the advocacy service key issues to be addressed in the coming year include:

1. Sufficiency of local placement provision is currently impacting on placement stability and social work workload. It is a priority that CYC seeks to recruit, train and appropriately support a larger and more diverse pool of local authority foster carers to reduce the use of costly out of area and independent care provision.

2. Some children are experiencing multiple changes of social workers and interim cover by different agency and duty social workers as a consequence of increased social work sickness and recruitment issues. It is a priority that more is done to address workload pressures, to improve staff morale, attendance and retention and to reduce reliance on agency workers.
3. Competing workload demands are impacting on quality and timeliness of completion of social work assessments, reports and key statutory processes. There is a need to improve and embed effective and expedient Quality Assurance reporting and feedback processes to quickly identify, track and address any service shortfalls and make individual workers and teams more aware and accountable for their own key performance indicators.
4. Competing caseload demands are similarly impacting on the time that workers have available to spend with children and young people and properly engage them in ongoing assessment and care planning processes. More needs to be done to Increase the numbers of Children and Young people actively participating in their reviews and care planning.

6. Service development objectives for Independent Reviewing Service 2018 - 19

6.1 IMPROVING QUALITY OF CARE PLANNING

Objective Child care reviews improve outcomes for children by raising the quality of social work assessments, reports and care plans and enabling expedient identification and resolution of any emergent issues	
Actions to date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in timeliness of meetings and distribution of review records. • Expansion of QA monitoring to include CIN and FC reviews as well as CYPIC and CPC • Peer development sessions and audit to raise consistency of expectation and reporting across IRS • Introduction of midway review process to better track and promote implementation of care planning process and decisions 	Future Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of an integrated care plan / review report to streamline assessment and planning process • Development of an Quality Alert process within the ICS Mosaic case recording system to track resolution of any practice issues raised by IRO / review process • Introduction of Quarterly Service Report to facilitate outward cascade of performance monitoring.
Measurable outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting and audit activity evidences improved performance regarding timeliness of sw reports for reviews • Reporting and audit activity evidences that effective action is taken to address any issues raised • Reporting and audit activity evidences a reduction in the number of practice issues raised by IROs • Reporting and audit activity evidences good performance regarding timely resolution of issues raised 	

.2 IMPROVE INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION IN REVIEWS

Objective Children, young people and their parents are proactively engaged with care planning process and care planning decision making.	
Actions to date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to Speak Up group to help develop 	Future Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IROs will promote and offer creative engagement with children, varying the format of meetings, use of tools and toolkits and ensuring reviews are child-centred meetings.

<p>improved process and tools for participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active promotion of advocacy service to help improve participation rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IROs will promote and offer a range of options to maximise parental inclusion, including phone consultation and separate consultation meetings. • IROs will ensure that efforts are made to locate and encourage parents to be engaged in the review process (even if they do not attend the meeting) and IROs will evidence appropriate challenge if this is not achieved. • IROs will work with fostering service to help promote and embed the expectation that reviews are facilitated in the foster home wherever this is appropriate and what the C/YP wants. • IROs will evidence on the review record how children are to be advised of review outcomes, and will routinely send the C/YP a tailored written record of the review decisions unless this is deemed unnecessary or inappropriate.
<p>Measurable outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly monitoring and audit activity evidences that more children are seen by IRO, directly participate in their review and / or help to co-facilitate the meeting • Monthly monitoring and audit activity evidences that more parents are consulted by IRO and directly participate in the care planning review process. 	

6.3 ACHIEVE REUNIFICATION WHEREVER POSSIBLE

<p>Objective 3 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SUPPORTED TO SAFELY REMAIN, OR RETURN TO, THE CARE OF THEIR BIRTH FAMILIES WHERE EVER POSSIBLE.</p>	
<p>Actions to date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active promotion and pursuit of reunification with family as the 'first choice' option where ever this can be safely achieved. • IROs actively promote use of the Family Group Conference coordinator 	<p>Future Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IROs actively promote parent's participation in the review process and seek to resolve any breakdown in communication / contact. • IROs will routinely explore options for improving contact / family time with siblings, maternal family and paternal family when reviewing children. • IROs will proactively monitor care plans of children placed with parents in order to ensure these arrangements do not continue longer than necessary.
<p>Measurable outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting will evidence that more children return to live with their family or extended family members • Reporting will evidence that PWP arrangements do not persist for longer than 18 months unless emergent welfare concerns arise. 	

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