

Independent Reviewing Service

Annual Care Plan Audit 2022

Sophie Butt and Karen Cairns

Background

The Independent Reviewing Service undertook the audit during August 2022.

An audit was undertaken after every Child Looked After Review that took place within a time period.

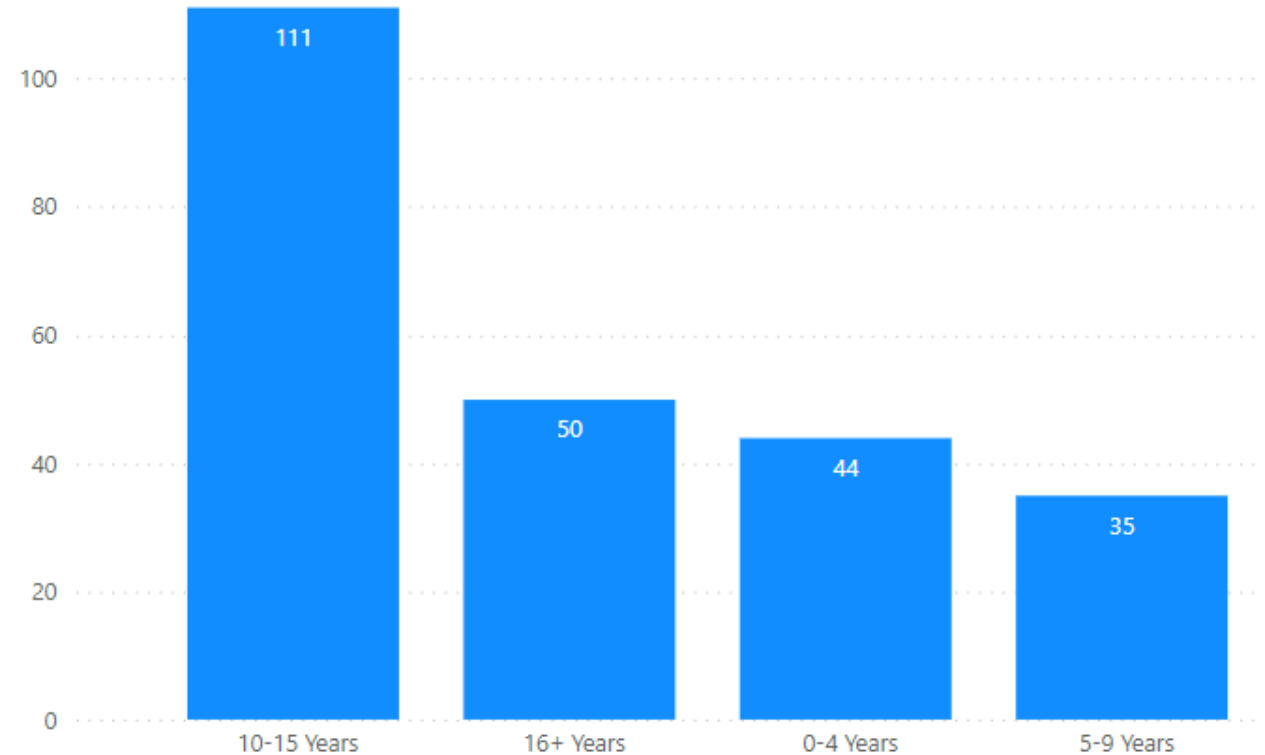
240 audits were completed and covered:

- Survey Population
- The Care Plan
- Overall Needs of the child
- The Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- The Health Assessment (HA)
- Equality and Diversity
- The Care Plan Review

Findings: Population

This data helps us understand the broad age brackets of the children in care who were being reviewed, so that we can put the findings of the audit into context.

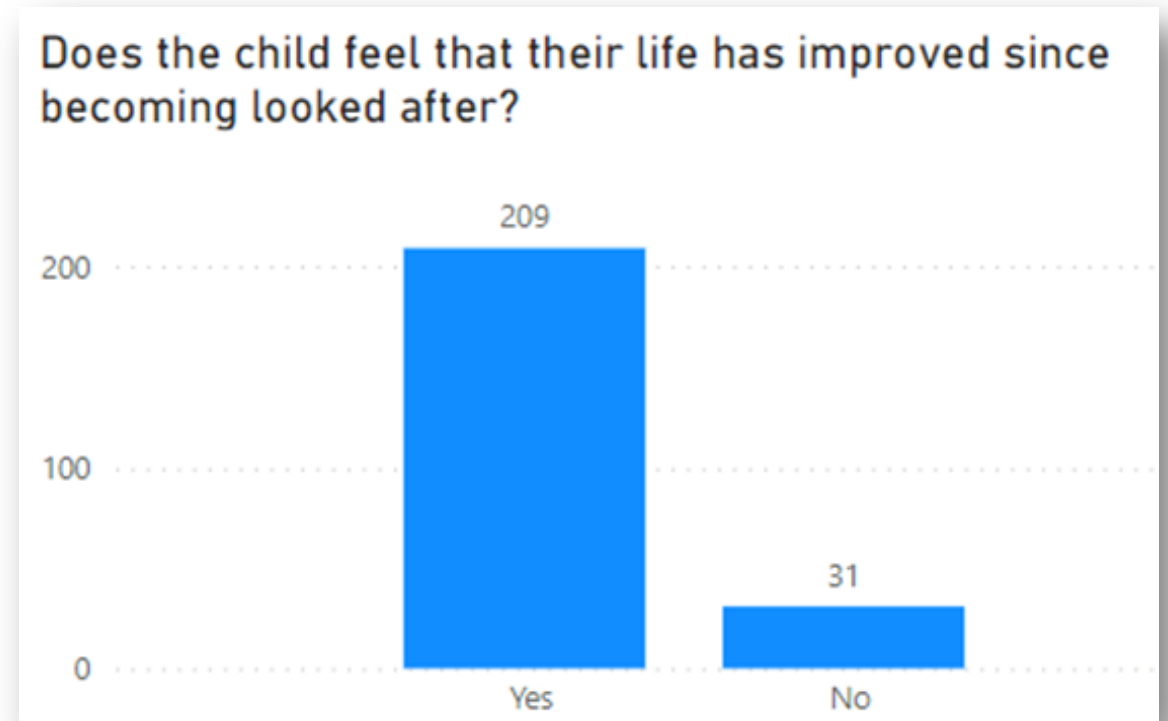
What is the age of child ?



Findings: Impact on child's life

Does the child feel that their life has improved since becoming looked after?

- 209 (87%) children feel their **life has improved** since being cared for by the local authority. This is an improvement from last year's 83% audit results.
- 173 parents (72%) believed their child's life had improved, this is a significant improvement from last year's audit.
- In 230 cases (95%) the IRO was satisfied that quality of life has improved for the child/young person since being looked after.
- This is a strong reflection of the quality of care arrangements that are in place for children in Hampshire, and that care plans are meeting the needs of individual children.



Findings: The Care Plan

Does the care plan reflect the child's day to day life?

225 (93%) care plans reflect the child's day to day life, education, health, routine, family time, culture and identity.

This demonstrates that by using the Hampshire Approach and the My Life My Future Care practitioners are able to concentrate on all aspects of children's lives, and really get to understand what is important to them.

Does the care plan reflect the child's needs?

96% of care plans reflected the needs of the child, an increase of 3% increase compared to 2020/2021 and a 30% increase from the 66% recorded in the 2019 audit results.

Does the care plan reflect permanence planning?

There was an improvement of how the permanence plan will be achieved in 86% of cases, a 3% increase compared with 2020/2021 audit results.

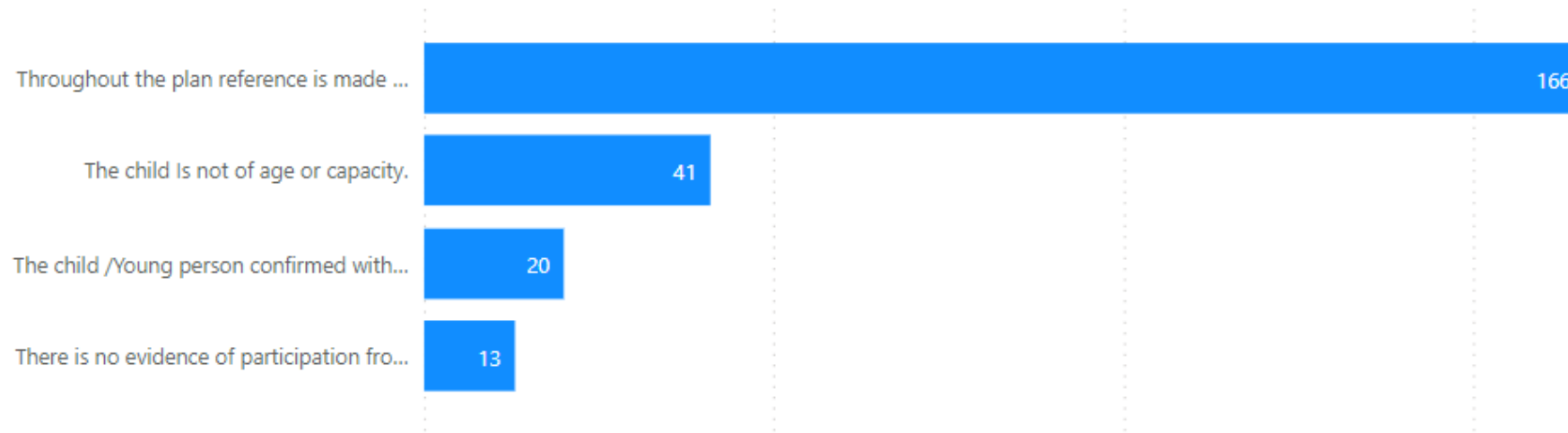
Does the care plan reflect permanence planning?

Out of 240 care plans, 156 (65%) were not signed by children and 184 care plans had not been signed by parents, team manager or social worker which is a significant drop from previous audits.

This will be an area of focus for social care teams in their work for children in care and their families, and for the IRS service to quality assure that children and their carers are happy with, and signing care plans.

Findings: Evidence of participation

How is the child/young person's participation evidenced?



- In 166 audits children were seen to participate in their care planning.
- In 193 audits it was established that life story work has been completed with the child.
- 117 parents had their views recorded within the care plan and participated within the process of care planning. However, 123 parents did not contribute. It was not clear from the audit whether the parents were not asked to contribute or were asked to but declined the opportunity.

This will be an area of focus for the IRS service over this year, and we will review the audit tool to help us understand the data from this question more in the future.

Findings: Personal Education Plans (PEP)

The Virtual School and Transforming Social Care Programme are delivering a project designed to improve the quality, compliance and impact of Personal Education Plans (PEP). The findings of this audit are in line with previous PEP review exercises and highlight the opportunity to improve how PEPs are used to improve outcomes for children. Highlights include:

- PEP meetings were held in 49% of relevant cases
- Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) score was evidenced in 57% the PEPs
- Where PEP documents could be seen, it was judged that the key people, including the child had attended the PEP meeting in 93% of cases
- Children made good progress since becoming looked after. 65 children became active in participating in outside activities, attendance improved for 58, social skills improved for 61, for 63 children their experience of school was positive, for 61 children their attainment levels had increased since becoming looked after.
- Schools are utilising the Pupil Premium in the interest and development of the child.
- 67% did not have Emotional/ Mental Health Needs that required professional services. Of the children requiring professional support, 73% had measures in place and were having their needs met.

Findings: Health Assessments

- Across the county wide, 63% of health assessments were completed. This remains in line with 2021 results.
- In 69% of these cases the health plan was available on ICS (children services system). This is a good improvement from last year's audit at 53%. For those plans which were not available in 39 cases the social worker was waiting for health plan or had received it, but it was not uploaded onto ICS.
- In 98% health plans were adequate and demonstrated the child's health needs fully.
- Of the 167, 110 children had their health improved since becoming looked after.
- Of the 167, 113 children have regular physical activity, 109 children had an attachment to their primary carer, 109 children had a good bedtime routine and 112 children had a healthy diet.

Findings: Equality

- There was clear reference to equality and diversity in 58 audits. Culture was highest at 27 (21%) followed by Language 24 (19%), Race/Ethnicity at 22 (17%).
- IROs were satisfied that equality and diversity needs were being met in 95% of cases audited which is higher than the previous year at 89%.
- In 41 (17%) of audits, which were all cases relating to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), the care plan captured the immigration/legal status of the child. The remaining 198 cases audited did not relate to children who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).
- This will be an area of focus for both the IRS service and social care teams over the coming year as we look to improve our recording of equality and diversity.

Recommendations

1. Social workers to continue to take steps to ensure that children and young people and parents are always involved in the creation/updating of their care plan.
2. Social workers and IROs, in consultation with all stakeholders, to ensure contingency plans are in place for the child should 'Plan A' prove unachievable.
3. Virtual School to continue to work with schools to ensure PEP outcomes and to oversee how funds are being used.
4. Social workers and IROs ensure that the care plan captures the immigration/legal status and that UASC receive adequate support to manage the challenge of the immigration process.
5. Explore if CLA reviews can be combined with other meetings to avoid the child having to attend several meetings.
6. IRO's will undertake midpoint progress checks between reviews to enhance IRO footprint consistently across the service and to ensure plans remain on track.
7. IRO's to demonstrate within CLA minutes how the child's views have been considered within their decision making.