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**Process for IRO Collective Escalation**

**August 2023**

**Collective IRO Escalations**

The IRO has a crucial role to play in ensuring that the local authority fulfils its responsibilities as a corporate parent for all the children that are living in council care. As part of its monitoring role, the IRO also has a duty to monitor the performance of the local authority’s function as a corporate parent and to identify any areas of poor practice. This should include identifying patterns of concern emerging not just around individual children but also, more generally, in relation to the collective experience of the children we care for.

Where IROs identify more general concerns around the quality of the local authority’s services to the children we care for, the IRO should immediately alert senior managers about these. Through the ongoing monitoring of individual care plans, the IROs are in a good position to identify themes in relation to the collective experience of the children we care for. These themes can also be identified by the IRO Group Manager in individual supervision.

When themes emerge, the IROs will discuss in IRO team meetings and reflect on the impact of these emerging themes on the service our children and young people living in council care receive. If certain actions at a more strategic level are needed (i.e. a revision of a particular policy or an improvement of performance on a specific area), the IROs will raise a collective alert. Recognising the independent role of the IROs, the collective alert will initially be drafted by the IROs before being agreed and finalised by the IRO Group Manager (with the input of all IROs). The IRO Group Manager will share with the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Head of Service before raising with the relevant Head of Service or at Director level. The timeframe for an initial written response/acknowledgement should be two weeks and depending on the complexity of the issue raised, a timescale given for a more detailed response/resolution or plan outlining what steps or actions are going to be taken to address the concern raised, given within four weeks of it being raised. The IRO Group Manager, and where appropriate the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Head of Service, will follow up on progress being made at four weekly intervals and updates presented to Children’s Senior Management Team and Corporate Parenting Board until an agreed resolution has been reached.

The raising of a collective escalation should not prevent the IROs from initiating the Resolution Process for individual children affected by the issue by sending an IRO Management Alert in the normal way. Equally important, the IRO should recognise and report on good practice on individual cases, or collectively if appropriate, by emailing the social worker/manager involved, Learning Academy, as well as the relevant Head of Service and Director, to recognise the good practice and the impact it has made.