**Care planning reviews**

**For children subject to a placement order.**

This guidance applies to the reviews where the adoption agency has authority to place a child for adoption either through a [**Placement Order**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/placement_order.html) or [**Parental Consent to Adoptive Placement**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/parental_consent_adoptive.html). It sets out the different timescales that apply depending on whether or not the child has been placed for adoption by the adoption agency. Once a child is made the subject of a Placement Order it is the responsibility of the Social Worker to ensure that the child’s record is updated and made secure by limiting access.

**RELATED GUIDANCE**

[**Promoting the Education of Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children (DfE)**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children)

**AMENDMENT**

In May 2019, [**Section 5, The Conduct of Adoption Reviews**](https://plymouthchildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_adoption_reviews.html?zoom_highlight=adoption+review#Conduct_adopt_reviews) (bullet point 1.f) was amended to reflect the status of adopted children as being ‘Previously Looked After’ when considering their educational needs. A link to DfE guidance on Promoting the Education of Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children was also added.

 **1.** **Arrangements for Adoption Reviews**

Once an adoption agency has [**Authority to Place for Adoption**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/authority_place.html), there is a requirement to review the child's case under the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005. Until the child is placed for adoption, this runs alongside the requirement to hold a Looked After Review in relation to the child under

[**Looked After Reviews Procedure**](https://plymouthchildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_look_aft_rev.html).

The child's social worker should provide written information about the intended arrangements for Adoption Reviews, to the child (depending on age and understanding), to the prospective adopters (usually this will be part of the Introductions meeting), and to any other person considered relevant, such as the child's parents.

**Convening and Chairing Adoption Reviews**

All reviews for children subject to a placement order Thewill be chaired by the child's [**Independent Reviewing Officer**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/indep_reviewing_officer.html).

The child's social worker, in conjunction with the Independent Reviewing Officer, will invite relevant persons to Adoption Reviews.

There is no requirement to invite birth parents to Adoption Reviews or to consult them prior to a Review, but the child's social worker, in conjunction with the Independent Reviewing Officer, may consider that their views should be ascertained and reported to an Adoption Review or that the parents should be invited in appropriate cases.

**Timescales for Adoption Reviews**

The timescales for holding Adoption Reviews will depend on whether the child has been placed for adoption.

**Adoption Reviews of children not yet placed for adoption**

Where the child has not been placed for adoption, arrangements must be made so that an Adoption Review is held:

* No later than 3 months after authority to place the child for adoption has been obtained;
* At least every 6 months thereafter until an adoptive placement is made.

**3.2 Adoption Reviews of children who have been placed for adoption**

Where the child has been placed for adoption, arrangements must be made so that an Adoption Review is held:

* Within 4 weeks of the placement;
* Not more than 3 months after the first review unless an application for an adoption order has been made;
* At least every 6 months thereafter until an adoption order has been made or the adoptive placement ends.

Where there are concerns that the placement is at risk of breaking down, an Adoption Review must be convened immediately.

Where a placement has been made with parental consent and notice is received that such consent has been withdrawn, a Review must be convened immediately and urgent legal advice should be taken as to whether there are grounds for an application for an [**Emergency Protection Order**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/emerge_prot_order.html)/ [**Interim Care Order**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/interim_care_order.html) (if no [**Care Order**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/care_order.html) exists) and/or a [**Placement Order**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/placement_order.html).

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example child protection concerns and/or significant risk, no decision to move a child from a placement shall take place without a formal review having taken place. In such circumstances, legal advice should be sought as soon as possible and prior to any action being taken.

**All Cases**

The child's social worker must inform the Independent Reviewing Officer of any failure to make arrangements agreed at a review or any significant changes in the child's circumstances at a review, so that a decision can be made as to the need to convene a further Review.

**Reports for Adoption Reviews**

The child's social worker will prepare a report for the Adoption Review, incorporating the views of the child, the prospective adopters and the prospective adopters' Social Worker (where the child is placed), the birth parents or family members (in appropriate cases) and any other relevant person (for example health visitor or teacher), which should be circulated prior to the meeting.

**The Conduct of Adoption Reviews**

1. The Adoption Review will consider the following areas:
	1. Whether it remains satisfied that the child should be placed for adoption;
	2. The child's needs, welfare and development, and whether any changes need to be made to meet the child's needs or assist his/her development;
	3. Review the existing arrangements for contact and whether they should continue or be altered;
	4. Where the child has been placed for adoption, the arrangements in relation to the exercise of parental responsibility for the child and whether they should continue or be altered;
	5. The arrangements for the provision of adoption support services for the adoptive family and whether there should be any re-assessment of the need for those services;
	6. In consultation with the appropriate agencies, the arrangements for assessing and meeting the child's health care and educational needs as a Previously Looked After Child.
	7. Any concerns;
	8. Outstanding Court proceedings;
	9. Where the child is placed for adoption, the timing of the adoption application;
	10. The timing of the 'Later Life Letter' from the child’s social worker being given to the prospective adopter (this will usually be within 10 working days of the adoption ceremony, i.e. the ceremony to celebrate the making of the adoption order);
	11. The responsibility for providing Court reports;
	12. The frequency of future reviews and the date for the next Review.
2. Where the child is the subject of a Placement Order and has not been placed for adoption by the time of the first six month Review, the Review must also:
	1. Establish why the child has not been placed for adoption and consider what further steps it should take to arrange for the child to be placed for adoption; and
	2. Consider whether it remains satisfied that the child should be placed for adoption.
3. At the 2nd review in the following the granting of the placement order ie 4 months the IRO must escalate concern if the child is not placed with their prospective adopters. This is to establish actions required, what steps have been taken in order to identify adopters and record this clearly to the childs record. This must be monitored through mid-point check and oversight. This is to prevent risk of drift in matching and keep the plan on track when holding the 6 month review and associated actions set out in 2(i) and 2(ii)
4. The [**Independent Reviewing Officer**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/indep_reviewing_officer.html) must ensure that the views of the child are properly understood by the Review and taken into account.

Where the child wishes to take proceedings on their own account, for example to apply for the revocation of a Placement Order, the Independent Reviewing Officer must assist the child to obtain legal advice or establish whether an appropriate adult is able and willing to provide legal advice and/or bring the proceedings on the child's behalf.

The IRO should advise the child about his or her right to appoint an advocate where they have problems or concerns;
5. The Independent Reviewing Officer must also ensure that anyone responsible for implementing a decision taken at the review is identified, and that any failure to review the case or implement decisions made at a Review is brought to the attention of senior managers within the agency;
6. Any decisions made at the Review should be notified in writing to the child (depending on age and understanding), the prospective adopters (where the child has been placed for adoption) and any other person considered relevant by the child's social worker and the Independent Reviewing Officer, such as the birth parents;
7. The information obtained during an Adoption Review, any decisions made at the Review and the minutes of any meeting arranged to consider any aspect of the Adoption Review must be placed on the child's [**Adoption Case Record**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/adoption_case_record.html);
8. Where a child has been placed for adoption but not adopted within 12 months, the child's social worker must present a further report to the Adoption Panel identifying the length of the delay, the reasons and the steps being taken to address any difficulties;
9. Where an agency decision has been made to place a child for adoption but the child has not been placed within 6 months, the child's social worker must present a further report to the Adoption Panel identifying the length of the delay, the reasons and the steps being taken to address any difficulties, including consideration of a review of the adoption plan and/or a possible change to long-term fostering/separation of siblings.

**After an Adoption Order is made**

Once an Adoption Order is made, the child's social worker should complete the Adoption Case Record and ensure that the necessary work has been undertaken to complete the adoption process. The Adoption Case Record should then be closed and sent to the adoption service for safe storage within 2 months of the Adoption Order being granted.

The computer recording system should also record the Adoption Order.

The case file should not be closed until the later life letter has been completed and recorded, and provided to the adoptive family.