**Good practice for communication between the children’s guardian (CG), social worker (SW) and independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).**

There should be constructive and good quality communication between the CG, SW and IRO throughout the duration of the care proceedings.

There are different stages of proceedings where it is essential, wherever possible, for discussions to take place and are listed below.

* CG to have discussion with the SW and IRO prior to filing their initial analysis to the court in advance of the case management hearing, to include discussion about the child’s interim care plan and family time. CG’s initial analysis should specifically include outcome of discussion with IRO and their views.
* Discussions then as and when required, with each professional being responsible for initiating a discussion if something significant happens.
* CG and SW should have a discussion before the final care plan is filed to include discussions about any assessments completed by the SW, final care plan and family time.
* CG and IRO should have a discussion before the final care plan is filed to include discussions about the proposed final care plan and family time.
* IRO should complete the separate IRO template for substantive hearings where welfare decisions are to be taken (and not simply convey their views through the SW and CG).
* CG to complete their final independent enquiries and to then have further discussions with the SW and IRO to discuss final care plan and advise what the CG is going to recommend in their final report to the court. Final report to court should specifically include outcome of discussion with IRO and their views.
* This should ensure that the CG’s final report to court can indicate what is and what is not agreed by the CG, SW and IRO in respect of the final care plan and narrow the issues to be reviewed in the issues resolution hearing and to be addressed in a final hearing.