**Frequency of review meetings in stable long-term placements**

The statutory guidance “[*Permanence, long-term foster placements and ceasing to look after*](http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_113256-7.pdf)[*a child DfE March 2015*](http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_113256-7.pdf)*”* instructs local authorities to consider whether it is appropriate, in specific cases, to convene review meetings every twelve months as opposed to every six months. The guidance is clear that in cases where this is agreed, there will continue to be a six-monthly review cycle. This would mean that the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) would review the child’s care plan and care, without convening a review meeting for alternate six-monthly reviews. This guidance was incorporated into [The Children Act 1989](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441643/Children_Act_Guidance_2015.pdf) [guidance and regulations, Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review (2015)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441643/Children_Act_Guidance_2015.pdf).

Statutory guidance states:

* 1. *“Where a child is placed in a long-term foster placement and has been in this placement for more than a year, consideration should be given to whether it is necessary to hold a meeting as part of each review”*
  2. *“The social worker should consult with the IRO and the child (where appropriate to age and understanding) in reaching a decision about holding a meeting. The consultation, information gathering and review process will continue on a six-monthly cycle. In circumstances where it is agreed that a meeting will not be held as part of every review, a meeting should be held at least once a year. The factors leading to the decision to hold review meetings on a less frequent basis should be recorded in the child’s care plan”*

The guidance stipulates that consideration should be given “where a child is in a long-term foster placement and has been in this placement for more than a year”.

The social worker will require their team manager’s approval before making a request for reduced frequency of review meetings to the allocated IRO. The social work team’s Service Manager to be informed of the proposed change. The social worker and IRO will be expected to provide evidence that the reduction is appropriate and proportionate for that child or young person.

If a request for a reduction in review meeting frequency is made to the allocated IRO they will be expected to confirm their own independent assessment of the suitability of the proposed arrangements. The request should be considered at a review meeting and if agreed, such a recommendation should be put forward by the IRO.

In Surrey the following criteria will need to be met, before considering moving to 12 monthly face to face review meetings:

* + - That the child or young person wants less frequent review meetings.
    - That the IRO has visited and discussed the proposal with the child or young person, and it is clear that the child or young person is able to communicate their wishes about the frequency of review meetings.
    - That they are over 10 years of age.
    - That they are in a long-term stable placement.
    - That they have been in placement for at least two years.
    - That they have stable school attendance, a PEP and good school engagement.
    - That the network around the child or young person is in support of less frequent review meetings.

Where there is also a younger sibling in placement for whom the placement is also a long- term stable placement and has been in placement for more than two years, individual case consideration should be given to extending this request to cover the young sibling too. His/her views should also be sought and considered.

The IRO will present the request to their Service Coordinator for the Independent Reviewing Service for the decision to be ratified. An Independent Chair Oversight case note will be recorded on the child’s record to confirm the ratification of the request.

The social worker should thereafter update the Case Summary sheet on the front page of LCS for child/young person where it clearly states the agreement frequency of review meetings in the placement.

This arrangement can be reviewed and changed at any time to bring back more frequent review meetings if circumstances within the placement and with the child or young person changes.

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**Flowchart for frequency of review meetings in stable long-term placements** A step by step process

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