

**One Minute Guide**

**Looked After Child Review Process**

**For Adopters**

**What is an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)?**

An Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is appointed by the local authority for every child in care. They work **independently** from the case-holding social work team and all other professionals who are working with your child, their birth parents and you.

IROs have general duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, which includes monitoring how the local authority is working with and supporting the child to achieve the best outcomes. IROs will meet with your child, if they are old enough and able to express their views, wishes and feelings and review their written care plan. For children under four or those with profound disabilities the IRO will usually observe them in their living environment.

IROs are an integral part of the team working to improve outcomes for looked after children, working with and promoting the voice of the child or young person helping to ensure effective plans are in place for the child or young person’s future.

**About the review process:**

A **review** is a process which carried out either as a single meeting or a series of meetings with your child and those people who are most closely involved in their care. It is your child’s meeting and the focus will be on them.

During review meetings the IRO will look at the current care arrangements for your child and the plan for their future. They may also consult with others outside the meeting such as birth parents (if appropriate), any significant other family members and other professionals supporting and working with the child. The aim will be to limit attendance at the review meetings to those most directly involved with the child, this is to avoid making the review meeting difficult for your child to manage.

An IRO will chair the child’s review meeting. It may be that they do this in conjunction with your child, if they are of an age and able to do this. It is the IRO’s job to make sure that everything possible is being done to meet the child’s needs and an **effective plan** is in place for them, in order to achieve the best outcomes for the child whilst they are looked after by the local authority.

**Do I attend the child’s review meeting?**

Yes, you will be invited to attend and asked to **contribute** to the child’s review meeting.

Birth parents are usually not invited, but will be offered to meet with the IRO separately as part of the review process and their views will be reflected in the review records.



**Timing of the review meetings:**

The **first** review meeting must be held within four weeks after the child being placed in an adoptive placement. The **second** must be held within 3 months of the initial meeting and thereafter reviews must be held at least every six months or more frequently is needed. For children in an adoptive placement they will continue to have review meetings until the adoption order has been granted and the celebration hearing has concluded. Thereafter they will no longer be looked after child.

**What happens before, during and after a review meeting?**

The IRO and Social Worker should consult with you fully as part of the review process to look at whether the child has:

* A written care plan and you should have a copy.
* Their wishes and feelings listened to and taken into account (age appropriately).
* Their cultural, educational, health and any other identity needs met.
* Their progress reviewed and next steps identified.
* Satisfactory family time arrangements in place for the child where/as appropriate.
* Realistic changes made to the care plan regarding their day to day and future care.
* An updated written care plan that has been explained to you.

**How to make a comment, compliment or complaint:**

The Council has a procedure through which you can raise any comments, compliments or complaints. The complaints process is made up of three stages, for more information please click on the link [How to make a complaint](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/your-council/complaints-comments-and-compliments/how-to-make-a-complaint-about-childrens-social-services)

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