

**One Minute Guide**

**Looked After Child Review Process**

**For Foster Carers, Residential Workers and**

**Connected Person**

**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 the child, their birth parents and you.

IROs have general duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child, which includes monitoring how the local authority is working with and supporting the child to meet their needs and achieve the best outcomes for the child. IROs also meet with the child, if they are old enough and have the ability to express their views, wishes and feelings and to 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 can be carried out either as a single meeting or a series of meetings with the child and those people who are closely involved with the care of the child. **It is the child’s meeting and the focus will be on them.** During the review the IRO will look at the current care arrangements for the child and the plan for their future. This is carried out at meetings and completed in consultation with the child, you, their birth parents, any significant other family members and other professionals supporting and working with the child.

An IRO will chair the child’s review meeting. It may be that they do this in conjunction with the child, if the child is of an age and ability to do so and they wish to take a lead in chairing their meeting. 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.

**Who decides who attends and where are reviews held? –** It is the child’s meeting and they should decide, in discussion with their social worker, where they would like to have the meeting and who they would like to be at the meeting. The best place is usually somewhere the child feels comfortable - such as where they live or somewhere else that they want it to be. Some children prefer it being where they live, others want it in a council building or at school. The child should be asked where they would prefer the review to be held.



**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 may be invited, depending on the child’s wishes. If the birth parents are not invited, they will be given an explanation in writing. The IRO will offer to meet with them 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 starts to be looked after. 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.

**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.
* 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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