

Independent Reviewing Officers



One Minute Guide

What is an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)?

An independent reviewing officer (IRO) is appointed by the local authority for every child in care. It is a legal requirement under Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

Employed by the Council, within CSF Commissioning and Prevention, IROs have at least 5 years social work experience and have acquired the right skills to carry out the role. They work **independently** from the case-holding social work team and all other professionals that looked after children and their families have contact with.

IROs have a duty to monitor the performance and quality of the local authority's function as a corporate parent and identify and report on areas of poor practice as well as celebrating good practice. This reporting includes themes in relation to the collective experience of looked after children and the service they receive.

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.

Statutory responsibilities include:

- ✓ **scrutinise** and **challenge** if the needs of the child are not being met or plans are not being progressed in a timely manner.
- ✓ **monitor** all support from the agencies involved and keep track of progress through pre- and post-review processes.

Main responsibilities include:

- ✓ **review** each child or young person's **care plan** to make sure it is **effective**.
- ✓ listen and **promote the voice of the child or young person** to make sure their wishes and feelings are taken into account.
- ✓ **contact the child or young person** prior to their review and between reviews to hear their wishes and feelings and find out how they would like to **contribute to their meeting**.
- ✓ encourage **positive participation** of the child or young person in their review; often demonstrated by children's involvement at the meeting and through the development of their child friendly care plan.
- ✓ **chair** a child or young person's **statutory review meeting**.
- ✓ make certain that **reviews are timely** and focused on the child and young person's needs.
- ✓ have **regular contact** and **work closely** with the social worker to improve the child or young person's outcomes and make sure they receive the best care.
- ✓ **raise practice concerns** through the Care Planning Alert Process, when appropriate and necessary.
- ✓ IROs read and provide a view on the local authority's care plan during **care proceedings**.

For more information please see the [IRO HANDBOOK](#)

