

The role of the Independent Reviewing Officer



What additional tasks do IROs undertake?

IROs have responsibility to inform a child who has entered the looked after system who their IRO is, and ensure this is done by letter within 5 days. There is a requirement to speak to each child before their review, and if the review is not being held in the child's placement, to visit the child in placement. All children are provided with their IROs contact details in order for the child to contact them if they wish.

Child protection conference process

- Manage the child protection conference process

Foster carer reviewing process

- Manage the foster carer reviewing process

Quality assurance

- Ensure that there is consistent decision making and quality of provision for all children and young people and offering staff support in this aim
- Identify good practice and learning from case study examples
- Promote a 'back to basics' emphasis on effective assessment and planning

Problem resolution

- Ensure that problems are dealt with at the most appropriate level, using the dispute resolution process

Strategic implementation

- Ensure that agreed strategies are implemented consistently

Strategic intelligence

- Ensure that systems for monitoring performance are linked appropriately to planning, commissioning and personal performance management processes

Advice & consultation

- Provide advice on safeguarding, looked after and foster carer review processes

Development

- Contributing and driving forward service developments where appropriate

What is an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)?

IROs are experienced managers employed by the local authority. They work separately from social workers and all other professionals that looked after children and their families have contact with. IROs have a legal responsibility to make sure that the local authority is doing everything possible to meet the looked after child's needs. This includes making sure realistic plans are in place for the child's future.

What does an IRO do?

The role of the IRO is to monitor the local authorities, partner agencies and professionals performance of their duties towards looked after children. The IROs primary focus is to quality assure the care planning and review process for each child and to ensure that each child's wishes and feelings are given full consideration. Regulations have come into force strengthening the IROs duties to enable the IRO to have effective independent oversight of the child's case and ensure that the child's interests are protected throughout the care planning process.

What are the statutory duties of the IRO?

The Care Planning Regulations (2010) set out the requirements to appoint Independent Reviewing Officers. The local authority must appoint an IRO for each child who is looked after case to carry out the following functions:

- Chairing case reviews
- Monitoring the performance of the local authority's function in respect of the review
- Referring the case to an officer of the children and family court advisory and support service (CAFCASS), if appropriate
- Ensuring the child's views are understood and taken into account
- Holding to account any person who fails to carry out agreed actions or arrangements by bringing this to the attention of persons at the appropriate level in the organisation

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Further information can be accessed on the [IRO web page](#)

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