

1.4.3 Looked After Reviews

Regulations and standards

England

- Regulation 7: The children's wishes and feelings standard
- Guide to the children's wishes and feelings standard
- Regulation 14: The care planning standard
- Guide to the care planning standard
- Regulation 17: Placement plan for Looked after Child

Children Act 1989: care planning, placement and case review 2015

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441643/Children_Act_Guidance_2015.pdf

Wales

- Part 6 Reviews of the child's case
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015
- The Regulated Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2019. Reg: 15,16,17,18
- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2015/1818/contents/made?lang=en>

Scope of this chapter

Looked after Reviews, sometimes referred to as 'Statutory Reviews' are the responsibility of the Placing Authority; therefore the Home Manager and staff should obtain copies of procedures from relevant authorities and assist social workers in implementing them.

This chapter summarises the normal responsibilities of the placing authority and what steps should be taken by homes in relation to them.

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1. Purpose of Looked After Reviews

A Looked after Review must take place before any significant change is made to the child's Care Plan, unless that is not reasonably practicable, including a decision to cease looking after a child.

The purpose of the Looked after Review is to:

- Ensure that appropriate plans are in place to safeguard and promote the overall welfare of the Looked after Child in the most effective way and to achieve permanence within a timescale that meets his or her needs;
- To monitor the progress of these plans and ensure they are being progressed effectively;
- To make decisions, as necessary, for amendments to these plans to reflect any change in knowledge and/or circumstances;
- To ensure the needs of children looked after as a result of a secure remand are met;
- To ensure that an Eligible Young Person moving into semi-independent accommodation is ready and prepared to move.
- To ensure that the three monthly review of the Personal Plan aligns with the child's 'Looked after Children' (LAC) review undertaken by the child's placing authority. A review of the personal plan must be undertaken after every LAC review.

It is important that decisions taken at Looked after Reviews are implemented, to ensure this responsibility for actions following the review should be clearly defined.

The key plans that should be considered at a Looked after Review are:

- Care Plan
- Personal Plan and, if there are any major changes, the Provider Assessment (Wales);
- Permanence Plan;
- Health Care Plan;
- Pathway Plan if applicable;
- Personal Education Plan (PEP);

The review should also take account of the child's Plan and any other plans or strategies (e.g. behaviour management strategy), ensuring that they are up to date, or that arrangements are in place to update them.

2. Frequency of Looked After Reviews

Usually, Looked after Reviews should be convened at the following intervals

- An initial Looked after Review should be conducted within 20 working days of the child becoming Looked after;
- The second Looked after Review should be conducted within three months of an Initial Looked after Review.

Subsequent Looked after Reviews should be conducted not more than six months after any previous review.

These are maximum timescales, Looked after Reviews can be convened sooner if consideration is being given to ending or changing the child's placement or the urgency of the case determines they should be e.g. the child's social worker assesses that the child's welfare is not being adequately safeguarded and promoted

Looked after Reviews should be brought forward in the following circumstances:

- Where the child is, or has been, persistently absent from the placement;
- Where the placement provider, parents or area authority are concerned that the child is at risk of harm;
- Where the child so requests, unless the Independent Reviewing Officer considers that the review is not justified;
- As soon as practicable where a child is moved from one placement to another on an unplanned basis or a significant change in the circumstances of a child suggests his/her placement is no longer appropriate;
- Where a significant change to the child's Care Plan is required;
- Where the Independent Reviewing Officer requests that such a review should be convened, for example, upon the request of the child, parent(s) or any other significant person;
- Where, as a result of a visit, the social worker's assessment is that the child's welfare is not being adequately safeguarded and promoted;
- Where a review would not otherwise occur before the child ceases to be detained in a YOI or secure training centre, or accommodated on remand.

Where the local authority proposes to cease to provide accommodation for a Looked after Child

Looked after Reviews are normally chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer.

3. Convening Looked After Reviews

3.1 Arranging the first review

As soon as a child becomes Looked after, the child's social worker must notify the Independent Review Unit by telephone and/or email.

This will trigger the appointment of an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) for the child. The Independent Review Unit will then arrange the date, time and venue of the child's first Looked after Review.

The venue will be agreed with the social worker and the allocated IRO - ideally the review should take place in the placement but only if suitable.

3.2 Arranging second and subsequent reviews

At the end of each review the IRO will set the date, time and venue of the next review, taking account of what is convenient for review participants.

Review dates cannot be rearranged unless there are exceptional circumstances and then only if the rearranged meeting can take place within statutory timescales, in which case the new date should be agreed by the social worker with the IRO and the Independent Review Unit who will inform the other participants.

In the event of a key participant being ill or unable to attend the review, the meeting will go ahead but the IRO may decide that the review be adjourned to a new date when all participants can attend.

3.3 Invitations and the Child's Participation

Discussions will take place between the social worker and the child (subject to age and understanding) at least 20 working days before the Review to look at who the child would like to attend the meeting and where the meeting will be held.

Invitations to reviews will be sent by the Independent Review Unit following consultation with the child's social worker and the IRO, who will decide who should be invited in consultation with the child. Invitations to reviews and consultation documents should be sent out to all those participating in the review at least 10 working days before the meeting.

The following people should normally be invited:

- The child. There is a presumption that the child will attend the review. A child's disability must not be a bar to the child's attendance;
- The parents and those with Parental Responsibility, carers and any significant people or specialists involved in the child's case, (except as set out below);
- The Key Worker from the Home;
- The most appropriate teacher at the child's school (usually the Designated Teacher for Looked after Children);
- A Personal Adviser, if the child is over the age of 16;
- An Independent Visitor, if involved;
- If required, an interpreter;
- Any other person with a legitimate interest in the child e.g. health care professional, GP, a representative from the Local Authority in whose area it is proposed that the child will be placed; (Such attendance should always be discussed with the child before invitations are made and his/her views obtained);
- The officer with lead responsibility for implementing the authority's duty to promote the educational achievement of its Looked after Children.

A balance must be struck in relation to who the child wishes to be present and the need for information and input from the professionals and family members involved. Efforts should be made to keep the number present at the review as small as possible. It may be appropriate for information to be provided in writing or at a separate meeting where the contribution is strictly factual.

Children and parents should also be informed that they can arrange to see the IRO separately if they wish or bring a supporter or interpreter to the review.

Where the child does not wish to attend the review, the IRO must at the very least speak to the child before the review - wherever possible in a face to face meeting.

The child's social worker must ensure that children and families have been given information about the Complaints Procedure. They should provide the child with details of independent advocacy services who may provide support if the child requires it.

Staff in the home should ensure that children are properly informed and prepared before the review encouraged to contribute to any report prepared by the home. If the child wishes, s/he should be assisted in preparing his/her own contribution.

4. Purpose of the Review

The Review will consider the extent to which the aims and objectives of the Care Plan and associated Personal Plan (Wales), Personal Education Plan (PEP) and, if relevant, Pathway Plan have been achieved. At the second and subsequent Reviews, the review must consider whether there is a suitable Permanence Plan in place. The child's Placement Plan to be reviewed to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the Care and associated plans.

In time for the review, or beforehand if required, the home should arrange for an up to date child's Plan to be available demonstrating what arrangements exist to meet the child's needs. The home should also produce a report of the work undertaken since the child's placement or the last Looked after Review, and evidence what has been done to achieve engagement, including any actions to taken to escalate concerns.

The agenda for each review will be agreed at the beginning of the meeting and each participant will be invited to contribute their own items to the agenda and have the opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

The IRO will decide on what actions in principle are necessary to meet the child's reviewed needs and make recommendations as to how these should be achieved.

The IROS will ensure that decisions are clear, and establish who is responsible for action and the timescales agreed for completion.

The representative of the home attending the review should take notes of the meeting and ensure the action points are recorded to prevent delay in supporting the child/young person.

5. After the Review

After the Review the social worker is responsible for updating and circulating the Care Plan, Personal Education Plan (PEP) and, if appropriate, the Pathway Plan. The Manager of the home is responsible for updating circulating the child's Plan (England), Personal Plan (Wales).

The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) normally prepares and circulates a record of decisions and recommendations within 5 working days. A full record of the meeting will completed within 15 working days and sent to all relevant parties within 20 working days of the Review.

Within 10 working days, the social worker must update the Care Plan and re-circulate it.

The home manager must complete a new child's plan (England), Personal Plan (Wales) after a six month review and ensure Lac review recommendations are stated within.

The Home's Manager has an important role in making sure that recommendations are implemented, by the home and other agencies. If there are concerns that recommendations are not being

implemented, the Home's Manager should discuss the concerns with the Independent Reviewing Officer and/or their Line Manager.

6. Role of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) has a responsibility for monitoring the child's case in between Looked after Reviews.

For example:

- Children should be told who their IRO is and how to make contact with him/her;
- The IRO must be consulted before a child is placed outside the area where the child normally lives;
- The IRO should be notified and consulted if a child persistently absents him/herself or has been missing from the home;
- Children have a right to contact their IRO if they are concerned about their placement or Care Plan;
- If the IRO has concerns about the child's case e.g. that the Care Plan is not being properly progressed, s/he has a duty to report this to CAFCASS;
- The home's manager should ensure that children are informed of their right to contact their IRO the IRO. Furthermore the home's Manager should also consult the IRO if they have any concerns about the child's placement.

7. The Home's Arrangements for Looked After Reviews

Please see [Children's Reviews Guidance](#).

8. Revision History

Date last updated: July 2020

Date of next review: July 2021

End