**What is a Looked After Children’s Review?**

A Looked After Children’s review is a meeting held by an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The purpose of the meeting is to review the Child’s Care plan. This includes reviewing the quality of the placement and plans for health, education and family time. Looked After Children’s Reviews take place within 20 working days of a child becoming looked after/ a change in placement, within 3 months of the initial review and a minimum of every 6 monthly thereafter.

An IRO is an experienced Social Worker whose role is to ensure that Children’s Care Plan’s are legally compliant and are in their best interests. They have no operational or line management responsibility for children’s allocated Social Workers which means that they are independent from any decisions that are made by the Children’s Social Work service.

**What happens before a Looked After Children’s Review.**

Within 24 hours of a child becoming Looked After, the Social Worker/ Team manager must change the legal status on MOSAIC and ensure that the placement details are correct. Notification must also be sent to the Safeguarding Unit.

Upon an IRO being allocated, the Social Worker and IRO will make arrangements for the Looked After Children’s Review, and invitations will be sent. This should be 15 working days prior to the review.

A Care Plan should be completed within 10 working days of a child becoming Looked After.

The child will be seen in placement within 5 working days of becoming Looked After/ change in placement.

A Social Workers report should be completed 5 days prior to the review.

Consideration should be given to the child’s participation at the review. The child should be invited to attend all or part of the meeting where appropriate.

**What happens during and after the review?**

Chairing Looked After Children’s reviews is the responsibility of the IRO. It is important that the IRO chairs reviews in a manner that:

* Keeps the best interests of the child as paramount.
* Ensures the voice of the child/ young person is heard clearly.
* Enables parents or others with parental responsibility to be involved and takes their views into account; and
* Ensures scrutiny of the Care Plan, including challenging the Local Authority.

**During a review the IRO will consider:**

• Significant changes since the last review

• Whether the decisions of the previous review have been successfully implemented

• The legal status of the child, progress of any Court timetable and any required changes to the legal status

• Permanence planning

• Family time and the maintenance of significant relationships for the child. • Whether the placement is meeting the child's needs

• Education - including the current TPEP and consideration of any EHCP

• Leisure activities

• Health needs

• Identity needs

• The child's views

• Reunification and whether this should be considered and/or progressed and any **action to be taken.**

The IRO will make recommendations at the review that will be sent to the Team Manager within 5 working days of the review. The recommendations will become ‘decisions’ after 5 working days. If the Social Worker/ Team Manager do not agree with the recommendations, a discussion should take place with the IRO within 5 working days. The minutes will then be completed within 20 working days.

The IRO will hold a mid-way review between reviews to consider the progress of the plan and any barriers. The IRO will also monitor the progress of the plan between reviews. If the IRO identifies any drift/ delay/ statutory requirements not being met or the child living in unsafe circumstances the IRO will request a meeting with the Social Worker and Team Manager or will escalate matters using the escalation policy.

**Expectations of the Social Worker following the review:**

Following the first visit, subsequent visits should be a minimum of 6 weekly (for children placed in foster care or residential care). Visits to children placed under Placement with Parent Regulations or Connected Persons should be weekly until the initial review and monthly thereafter. Visiting frequently for children subject to S38.6 arrangements should be as agreed within the review. Children over 4 should be seen alone during every visit and sleeping arrangements should also be seen.

The Care Plan should be updated within 10 working days of the review.

The Social Worker should discuss any planned changes to the Care Plan with the IRO. This may include changes in regards to placement, health, education, family time and the Court time table. In the event of unplanned changes/ events, the IRO should be informed within 1 working day. These may include but are not exclusive to S47 investigations, missing episodes, a placement change, and allegation against carers.