# Practice Alerts Guidance - IRO/CP Escalation

The aim of this document is to provide you with guidance to help you understand the purpose of practice alerts, when they are needed and the required outcome to be achieved.

This should be read in conjunction with the IRO Escalation Policy - <http://www.proceduresonline.com/llr/childcare/rutland/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/IRO%20Escalation%20Policy%20January%202017.docx?zoom_highlight=practice+alerts>

**Introduction**

Working Together 2018 makes it clear that safeguarding children is everyone’s responsibility and effective, collaborative working is essential. Rutland children’s social care needs to ensure that there are robust systems in place to check that safeguarding of children is effective and delivers good outcomes. The need for staff to feel confident in their understanding of when and how to raise effective challenges about practice is essential in achieving the best outcomes for children.

**Review in Child Protection cases**

The Child Protection Plan must be progressed between conferences by the Core Group and the family. If recommendations have not been met the social worker and Core Group must give a reasoned explanation of why this has not happened and provide alternative actions that may have taken place. If crucial elements of the Child Protection Plan e.g. initiating legal proceedings, have not been actioned, the Independent Chair must be kept informed between Child Protection meetings

The social worker's report to conference must be evidence-based and have a clear risk analysis of the current situation and appropriate recommendations. The Social Work report must be available 2 days prior to an Initial Child Protection Conference and 3 days prior to a Review Child Protection Conference. This should be shared with the family to allow them time to review and correct any factual inaccuracies. The report must always be endorsed by a manager in line with the above timescales.

Significant failures in any of the above aspects of child protection can lead to the Independent Chair initiating a Practice Alert.

**Review in Children Looked After cases**

The Care Plan must be progressed between CLA reviews by the Social Worker, the family, and all professionals involved with the child. If recommendations have not been met the social worker and team manager must give a reasoned explanation of why this has not happened and provide alternative actions that may have taken place.

The social worker should see the child within 3 days of them being placed with carers and regularly, at least 4 weekly, in their placement. **Statutory visits must take place in the placement, where the child should be seen alone and their bedroom also seen.**

Significant failures in any of the above aspects of the Care Plan can lead to the Independent Chair initiating a Practice Alert.

**Practice alert - Reason codes**

There are 13 reason codes for practice alerts which might be raised by the IRO/CP Chair, detailed below:

1. Report not completed for CPC/CLA review
2. Core Group not help/ recorded within required timescales
3. Care/CPC plan not updated/progressed
4. Statutory visit not undertaken within required timescale
5. Agreed action not completed – CPA/CLA
6. Childs views not ascertained
7. Child/family not included/invited to meeting
8. Life story work /direct work not completed
9. Assessment not completed within required timescale (parenting/pre-birth/CSE/domestic abuse)
10. Missing protocol not followed
11. IRO/CP Chair not informed of significant event
12. Pathway Planning not completed within required timescales
13. Other

**Resolution process**

There are four stages to the dispute resolution process. The Independent Chair has the discretion to proceed directly to stage 3 and 4 in more serious or urgent cases.

**A response is required within 5 working days of receipt of any practice alert.**

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| **Stage** | **Manager** |
| Stage 1: | Team Manager (with line management responsibility for the worker) |
| Stage 2: | Service Manager |
| Stage 3: | Head of Service |
| Stage 4: | Director for People |
| Stage 5: | Independent Chair of the LSCB |
| Stage 6: | CAFCASS (using Dispute Resolution Process – IRO Handbook) |

**Recording and communicating that a case is subject to alerts**

The Independent Chair should verbally inform the members of a Child Protection Conference or Children Looked After Review of any practice alerts they have raised since the previous meeting or which they intend to initiate subsequent to the current meeting.

The Independent Chair shall record all practice alerts on the child’s file and also recorded on the practice alert tracker on SharePoint, by the Quality Assurance Service – <http://sharepoint01/sites/ICTTest/workprogramme/Social%20Care%20Trackers/CSC%20Practice%20Alerts.xlsx>

Each practice alert will be raised by a **single case note** to ensure that these are in one place and do not appear as multiple alerts. The Independent Chair will create the Practice Alert Case Note, and managers are required to respond using the same case note clearly detailing their response to resolve as quickly as possible. The case note will only be finalised once the alert has been responded to appropriately and the independent chair is satisfied this can be closed. **The independent chair will finalise all practice alert case notes.**

All reasonable efforts should be made to resolve practice alerts at stage 1 and stage 2, prior to stage 3 – escalation to Head of Service.

**A response is required within 5 working days of receipt of any practice alert.**

The Quality Assurance Service will report quarterly to the Performance and QA meeting, on the number of alerts that have been raised, the themes raised as concerns and whether the timescales for resolution have been met.