**Quality Standards for Looked After Children reviews**

Principles

Quality Standards for Independent Reviewing Officers

Quality Standards for Social Workers

Quality Standards for QARU Business Support

**This guidance should be followed by IROs and social workers once a decision has been made that a child will be looked after by the local authority.**

**Throughout the planning process it will be important to keep the core principles of Signs of Safety at the heart of the work:**

* **Working relationships are paramount**: to enable honest and respectful discussions of concerns and worries. Research shows that, irrespective of the type of intervention, professionals see better outcomes when they have a shared understanding with children, young people and the family of what needs to change, agreement on what they are aiming to achieve and the child, young person and family feel an affective bond with the worker. The principle of **‘Nothing about us without us’** should guide all planning work for children in care.
* **Thinking critically**: to minimise error, a culture of shared reflective practice and a willingness to admit you may be wrong is needed. Risk assessment is a core task and requires constant balancing of the strengths and dangers in a child’s situation to avoid the common practice problems of drifting into an overly negative or positive view of the child or young person’s situation.
* **Based on everyday experience**: Care planning is grounded in the everyday lived experience of the child.
* **Build lifelong links and support networks**: Care planning always looks to the future as well as the present to identify and build secure attachments and safe relationships within the child’s birth family, care family and wider community

“Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them become what they are capable of being.”   
― Daniel J. Siegel, [Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/24757060)

South Gloucestershire use the Signs of Safety practice model. This will be Signs of Success for looked after children and young people. Information is available on the K Drive under Signs of Safety Resources, and practice tools are available on Tri.X.

South Gloucestershire uses MOSAIC as a case record for the child and for South Gloucestershire foster carers. Work is progressed through MOSAIC. **The MOSAIC Permanence Planning and Looked After Children Workflow Guide** must be used alongside the Quality Standards to ensure the right thing is done by the right person at the right time for the child, and that this is recorded as part of their story.

**Quality Standards for Independent Reviewing Officers**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | | **Timescale** | **What does good look like? How is this monitored?** |
|  | Looked after Children’s reviews must be held according to the statutory guidance   * 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 (91 days)** of an Initial Looked After Review; * Subsequent Looked After Reviews should be conducted not more than **six months (183 days)** after any previous review * If a child moves placement the process starts again and the review should be held **within 20 days of placing**, second review at **91 days** and then every **183 days** | As indicated | Reviews are planned and held in good time  This is monitored through a tracking report and a review performance report on Mosaic  Monthly reports are produced by the QARU manager, which will highlight any reviews out of timescale |
|  | Once informed about the child being accommodated, an IRO is allocated to the child by the QARU manager  A letter is sent by QARU LAC business support to the child introducing the IRO to the child | **Within 5 working days of the accommodation**  **Letter is sent within 3 days of allocation of IRO** | Early allocation means the child can be informed who their IRO will be |
|  | Prior to the review the IRO makes contact with the social worker to discuss the child and their circumstances and how the review will be managed. Agreement is reached about:   * The date and who will need to attend the review, informed by the child’s wishes * The venue * Any special arrangements * Risk assessment and management * Whether the child would like to chair some or all of their review   The IRO will record this discussion on the child’s case file | **Within 10 working days of the child coming into care**  **3 weeks prior to 2nd or subsequent review**  **Within 24 hours** | There is advanced planning in order to ensure that the meeting is child -centred and all those who should be there are there  The venue should be child centred and likely to be the placement  If there are concerns following risk assessment controls are agreed to manage the risk |
|  | Prior to review the IRO reads key documents for the child including:  Chronology  Genogram  File records  Care Plan/Pathway plan  Health Assessment  PEP  Section 20 consent for parents/young people (in Section 20 cases)  Delegated authority form  The team manager should have quality assured the first LAC review report completed by the social worker at least 2 days before the LAC review and alerted the IRO that the report is ready to view  IRO completes LAC QA checklist  The IRO should also ensure that relevant consultation has taken place with either parent and any relevant professionals who are not going to be in attendance at the meeting | **Week prior to the review**  **At least 2 working days before the 1st LAC review** | LAC QA checklist |
|  | IRO arrives for the LAC review and meets the carers and the young person.   * Young person is seen on their own prior to the review for a discussion * Young person and IRO agree how the young person will participate in the review | **Day of the review** | Child/young person is prepared for the review and feels comfortable that they will be able to express their views |
|  | In chairing the review, the IRO will follow [practice standards and expectations](http://southgloscs.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_look_aft_rev.html#indep_rev_resp) | **At review** | Children, young people and parents are able to fully participate in the meeting and the conclusions are clear, and the plan is understood by all |
|  | The IRO will make SMART recommendations to be incorporated into the care plan with milestones for rehabilitation, permanence or transition as appropriate. These should be understood by all at the review | **At review** | The review recommendations are smart and timely |
|  | The IRO will ensure a time and date for the next review is agreed and this will always be set early to ensure the timescales are met  Review dates should be kept as far as possible and only changed in exceptional circumstances – and should always be re-scheduled to keep within timescales. Decisions to change the date have to be agreed by the IRO who will record the reasons on the file | **At review** | Reviews will be held within timescales set |
|  | The IRO will complete a record of the decisions and recommendations and share these with the social worker and social work team manager.  The team manager will consider these and if they are unable to agree them within 5 working days of receiving them, inform the IRO and the QARU Manager. The team manager and the IRO will discuss the issue if there is disagreement and agree a way forward, including how others present at the review will be informed  A written record of the review discussion and recommendations is written by the IRO and this will include reasons for the actions, including permanence planning and contingency plans. The IRO should ensure the review record is loaded onto Mosaic  Minutes are sent out by QARU business support as soon as the minutes are completed | **Within 5 working days of the completion of the review**  **Within 20 working days of completion of the review**  **Within 5 working days** | Everyone at the review knows the decisions and recommendations and if they cannot be agreed this is known and acted upon quickly |
|  | The IRO should carry out a mid-way review of the progress of the care plan. This should involve as a minimum:   * Review of the child’s Mosaic record * Review progress of the care plan * Discussion with the social worker if there are any areas of concern * Contact with the child/young person by phone, e mail or visit   The review activities should be recorded on the child’s file | **Mid-way between reviews** | The care plan is monitored between reviews and if there is drift action can be taken by the IRO and if necessary, concerns can be escalated |
|  | If the IRO is aware of any concerns about the child or their care plan, they will discuss initially with the child’s social worker. If the issues are not resolved in the timescale agreed, an escalation can be raised by:   * An e mail to the appropriate manager – as determined by the IRO * The QAR is completed by the IRO and uploaded to Mosaic * A copy to the QARU manager and LAC admin for tracking * Record on Mosaic   Concerns should be tracked until they are resolved  At least 15 working days prior to the child’s review, the social worker and the IRO are required to have a discussion about the next review. This is to plan for the meeting, including where the meeting is held, who will attend, if the child is attending etc (See No 3 above) | **At any point whilst child is looked after and concerns arise**  **3 weeks prior to 2nd or subsequent review** | Issues of concern are tackled robustly and all concerns are dealt with |
|  | Prior to subsequent reviews the review report is prepared and the care plan is updated by the social worker and signed off with comments and scaling by the team manager.  The team manager will alert the IRO that the report is ready to view | **No later than 5 days before the review** | Timely planning and preparation |
|  | Permanence decisions are made at the second review and ratified by the IRO | **Second review** | Required by care planning regulations |
|  | If a child moves placement the process will start again, and the review should be held within 20 days of placing, and the review cycle should resume as in 1 above | **As described** |  |

**Quality Standards for Social Workers and Team Managers**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | | **Timescale** | **What does good look like? How is this monitored?** |
|  | The social worker visits the child at their placement the day they are placed (or the day after if they are accommodated out of hours), and thereafter at statutory intervals  The social worker is responsible for notifying the IRO team via QARU business support via phone or e mail that the child is looked after. The e mail address is qarulac@southglos.gov.uk | **Visits will take place within the first week of placement and thereafter a minimum of 6 weekly**  **Within 24 hours** | The child/young person will know their social worker and know they can talk to them  IRO team given maximum notification to enable good planning for review |
|  | The social worker completes all relevant paperwork including the care plan, signed delegated authority and if Section 20, the parents consent form. If the child is 16 or over the Section 20 form for young people should be signed by the young person. The forms can be found on Tri.X  The social worker also needs to ensure the genogram and chronology are on file and if not will complete them  Social worker will inform the LAC nurse in order to get the health assessment underway. The LAC nurse organises the health assessment from this point  Social worker informs the Virtual Head for looked after children in order to ensure the PEP is completed. The social worker will also inform the child’s school that the child has become looked after and that they will need to organise the PEP with the Virtual School | **Within 10 working days of the child coming into care** | All necessary information is available and a plan is in place from the beginning. There is a written care plan describing the child’s needs and how these will be met. The child and family are involved in the planning and know what they are working towards from the start |
|  | Prior to the review the IRO contacts the social worker to discuss the child and their circumstances with the social worker. Agreement is reached about:   * The date and who will need to attend the review * The venue * Any special arrangements * Risk assessment and management   The IRO will record this discussion on the child’s case file | **Within 10 working days of the child coming into care**  **3 weeks prior to 2nd or subsequent review**  **Within 24 hours** | There is advanced planning in order to ensure that the meeting is child -centred and all those who should be there are there  The venue should be child centred and likely to be the placement  If there are concerns following risk assessment controls are agreed to manage the risk |
|  | The social worker should complete the consultation form with the child/young person  QARU send the consultation paperwork to the child’s parents and carers/residential unit, but the social worker should check that they are aware of the review and have sufficient time and are able to complete the consultation form or report | **At least one week before the review** | All relevant parties have the opportunity to feed into the review |
|  | The social workers report is prepared for the first LAC review (including the care plan) and shared with the parent/carer/child/young person before the first LAC review  This needs to be signed off by the Team Manager, who also adds comments and scaling before alerting IRO that the report is ready. Both need to be full and accurate and include the child’s views | **No later than 3 days before 1st review**  **2 working days before the first LAC review** | The IRO is prepared for the review and the social worker has considered the review and what should happen to the child/young person |
|  | Prior to subsequent reviews the report is prepared and the care plan is updated by the social worker and signed off with comments and scaling by the team manager  The review papers and updated care plan to be shared with young person and family prior to second and subsequent reviews  The team manager will alert the IRO that the report is ready to view. | **10 working days before the LAC review**  **7 working days before the LAC review**  **5 working days before the review** | Planning ahead gives everyone the opportunity to consider all the information particularly given the importance of decisions made at the second review  This allows for factual accuracy to be checked and any comments or challenges by young person and family to be considered |
|  | Permanence decisions need to be recommended by the point of the second review and agreed at the second review and ratified by the IRO | **Second review** | This is a requirement of care planning regulations |
|  | The child/young person is visited the day before the first review and there is a discussion about what they would like to talk about at the review  The social worker helps the child to complete their consultation form or agrees who would be the best person to do this | **The day before the review** | The child/young person is prepared for the review. They know what the purpose is and how the review will be conducted, who is invited and how they can participate |
|  | Social worker attends the review | **On review dates** | Can provide the meeting with updates and contribute to the review |
|  | Once the review record is received from the IRO by the team manager, the manager will consider these and sign them off as agreed  If the team manager is unable to agree them within 5 working days of receiving them, inform the IRO and the QARU Manager. The team manager and the IRO will discuss the issue if there is disagreement and agree a way forward, including how others present at the review will be informed  The social worker needs to update the care plan and add any agreed changes within 10 working days of the review | **Within 5 working days of receipt**  **Within 10 days of the review** | The team manager is aware of key decisions and can support them or challenge which is part of the quality assurance process |
|  | The social worker will follow up and complete all the actions from the review | **Between LAC reviews** | Review recommendations should be discussed in supervision as a further part of the QA process |
|  | The social worker will ensure health assessments are up to date and recorded on Mosaic.   * For children up to 5 years old, reviews of health assessments should be every 6 months and available for the review * For children over 5, health assessments should be reviewed annually and available for the review | **As indicated** | Child’s health is monitored and any necessary actions are taken to ensure good health outcomes |
|  | Personal Education Plans are completed every 6 months. The social worker will ensure the young person’s PEP is updated prior to every review and within 20 days of starting a new school | **Prior to review** | Child’s education is supported to ensure good educational outcomes |
|  | Any significant events relating to the child between reviews should be notified to the IRO | **At date of significant event** | IROs kept informed of significant events and are enabled to contribute their views in terms of actions as necessary |
|  | In the month preceding subsequent reviews, the social worker will liaise with the IRO who will confirm arrangements for the review as in 3 above | **At least 3 weeks prior to review** | Reviews are planned properly in advance and everyone has adequate time to prepare |
|  | If a child moves placement the process will start again and the review should be held within 20 days of placing and the review cycle should resume as in 1 above. | **As described** |  |

**Quality Standards for QARU Business Support**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | | **Timescale** | **What does good look like? How is this monitored?** |
|  | QARU business support e mails all the IROs to inform them that a child is newly accommodated in order to ensure that an IRO known to the child can chair the review | As soon as informed |  |
|  | Introductory Letter is sent from the QARU Business support to the child/young person, parent and carer informing them who the IRO is and how to contact them | Within 3 days following IRO allocation | Children, young people, parents and carers know who the IRO is and how to contact them |
|  | Once the date of the first review is agreed, invitations should be sent by the QARU business support to the list of invitees.  QARU send the consultation paperwork to the child’s parents and carers/residential unit | One week prior to the review |  |
|  | QARU send out the minutes of the meeting once completed | Within 5 working days after notes have been written up |  |
|  | Responsibilities for subsequent reviews - see 3 and 4 above |  |  |