

Attending a Looked After Child Review

Information for Professionals

Includes information pertaining to significant changes introduced by the 'Towards a Stable Life and a Brighter Future' Regulations and the Children Act 2004



This information may be provided, by request, in other languages, in other formats (e.g. CD) or in simplified version. Please contact 01446 704608 to make arrangements.

Introduction

For all children and young people who are looked after it is important that they, their parents, the people caring for them, and the professionals working with them know what the arrangements are for their care and the plans for the future.

Social Services are required by law to ensure that plans for looked after children and young people are reviewed regularly by an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) who is not responsible for providing their care.

An Independent Reviewing Officer will be allocated to each child/young person when they first come into care and, as far as possible, this will remain the same person for the length of time the child/young person is looked after.

The Independent Reviewing Officer's role is to check that the plans for each child's/young person's future are the right ones and that arrangements to meet their day to day needs, such as education, contact and health are in place.

As a professional involved with the child/young person, you are an important part of this process and your views will be sought.

Review meetings

The Independent Reviewing Officer will hold regular meetings to check that the plans and day-to-day arrangements are right for each looked after child/young person. Unless the child/young person has made a specific request for a professional not to be invited to the review, and this has been agreed by the Independent Reviewing Officer, you will be invited to attend these meetings and to contribute your views. If for any reason you are unable to attend, your views can be expressed before the review and shared at the meeting.

If a child/young person requires an interpreter, this will be arranged prior to the review, usually by the child's/young person's social worker.

If the Independent Reviewing Officer is not happy that the right plans are in place for the child/young person, or is concerned that matters are delayed, they are able to make formal representation to managers and senior officers within the Vale of Glamorgan Council and, if required, to CAFCASS Cymru. This process is documented and can be found in the Children and Young People Services' Policy and Procedure Manual.

How often will reviews happen?

There has to be a review within 28 days of each child/young person becoming looked after, or after any significant move or change. Where a significant move or change has taken place, this should be reported to the Independent Reviewing Officer, so the question of arranging an early review can be considered.

There then has to be another within 3 months, and then at least every 6 months.

If the child/young person only stays in a foster or residential home for short periods, the first review will be in 3 months and after that every 6 months.

If you feel a review needs to be held sooner than this, please talk to the child/young person's social worker or Independent Reviewing Officer.

Towards a Stable Life and a Brighter Future

These regulations came into force from 1st July 2007 and are intended to strengthen arrangements for the placement of looked after children.

The changes are comprehensive and involve four sets of regulations and accompanying statutory guidance. The new regulations replace the Placement Regulations 1991.

Placement of Children (Wales) Regulations 2007

- When considering arrangements to place the child, particular consideration must be given to any mental health needs or special educational needs the child/young person may have.
- Local authorities must refer the child's/young person's case to the relevant placement panel if they plan to place the child out of area (before the placement is made or no later than 25 working days after the placement is made). An appropriate care plan, informed by a core assessment, should be in place for each child and include specific detail in respect of how the child/young person's health and educational needs will be met.
- The role of the Independent Reviewing Officer has been strengthened and when reviewing looked after children, the Independent Reviewing Officer must be assured that suitable 4

health and education provision has been arranged for placements both within and out-of-area.

- Decisions to place a child out of area must be endorsed by Placement Panel and circumstances reported to the Lead Member for Children and Young People Services.
- The GP, Local Education Authority etc must be notified of a placement change prior to or no later than 10 working days after placement at the same time seeking a transfer of the child's health and education records (if the child is placed out of area). This must be followed up to ensure transfer takes place.
- Where health assessment cannot be made prior to placement it must take place prior to the first review and a written report made available for that meeting. Health assessments must consider the child's mental health needs.
- Responsibility for undertaking initial health assessments and preparing a written report is extended to a registered nurse and copies must be forwarded to the child's GP.
- Child must be registered with a GP no later than 10 working days of placement and have access to a dentist no later than 20 working days of placement.
- The local authority register must include the child's NHS and Social Services identification number. If the child is in a residential home, the register must also include the name of the child's link worker. These details must be included on the ICS system at time of placement.

Review of Children's Cases (Wales) Regulations 2007

- The statutory duties of the Independent Reviewing Officer have been extended to monitor compliance of the new regulations as part of the child case review process. The Independent Reviewing Officer must be assured that suitable health and education provision has been arranged for placements both within and out-of-area.

Children's Homes (Wales) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2007

- From November 2007, all managers of children's residential homes must be registered as managers with the Care Council for Wales.
- Registration with the Care Council will be a requirement for all staff to work in a children's residential home.
- All children placed in children's residential homes must have a designated link worker who will be responsible for promoting the health and educational welfare of the looked after child. The contact details for the link worker must be included on the child's placement plan.
- The regulations also specify acceptable, minimum numbers of qualified staff and permanent staff within the home.

Local Health Boards (Functions) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2007

- From July 2007, for children placed out of area (looked after children, children with long term health needs, children placed in residential schools away from the area they live) the

originating/home LHB will remain responsible for resourcing the secondary care. This applies to all placements from July 2007 and there is no retrospective accountability.

- Conflict resolution arrangements have been introduced for disputes relating to resourcing of services for children affected by the regulations and for those between originating and host LHB.

Children Act 2004

- Details of children placed out of area must be reported to the lead member for the Children and Young People and the Children and Young People Framework Partnership.
- All placements must have regard to the Children Commissioning Support Resource Support (CCSR) database.
- Local authorities are required to designate a specialist practitioner (LAC Education Coordinator) to address the educational needs of looked after children and care leavers within the local authority area.
- Local Health Boards and NHS Trusts are required to designate a specialist health practitioner (LAC Nurse) to coordinate the child's health care plan and address the health needs of looked after children and care leavers.
- The requirement for every LAC to have a high quality personal education plan (PEP) is strengthened and extended to include children/young people leaving care.
- LHB's are required to have a list of all children placed by the local authority both within and outside the local authority area.

How can I contact the child/young person's Independent Reviewing Officer?

The Independent Reviewing Officers are based at:

The Docks Office
Subway Road
Barry
CF63 4RT

01446 704608

Complaints and comments

If you wish to make a formal complaint, you can ask for a complaints leaflet and/or write to:

Complaints Officer
Subway Road
Barry
CF63 4RT

Or telephone: 01443 704800