

Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs)

A Guide for Young People

What is an IRO?



Your IRO is an experienced Social Worker who wants to make sure Children in Care are given the best possible opportunities while being looked after.

Your IRO has an important role at your Child in Care Review Meetings. At the meeting, they should check that:

- you understand the plan for your care.
- you have a safe home and that you are happy and healthy
- you are supported with your hobbies and interests
- you get to spend time with your family and other people important to you wherever possible
- your education and employment goals are supported
- your individual needs and identity are considered.

Your IRO will ask about your future plans and goals to make sure you are given opportunities to prepare for adulthood.



How does your IRO support you?

The Top 10 things your IRO should be doing to support you are:

- Speak with you on your own ahead of your Review Meeting.
- Ensure you have been offered a consultation form so you can easily share your views.
- Ask you who you would like at your meeting, what you would like to talk about, and where and what time the meeting should be held.
- Prepare for your meeting by speaking with professionals and your family and reading reports.
- Support you to take part in your meeting if you want to.
- Tell your Social Worker if they are unhappy with your Care Plan.
- Share a record of your meeting with you and those who attended.
- Speak with your Social Worker to ensure there has been progress on agreed tasks in the weeks and months following your meeting.
- Ensure you have a record of who your IRO is and how you can contact them outside of meetings.
- Explain how you can ask for an advocate or make a complaint.



What is a Child in Care Review Meeting?



The people who work with you must meet regularly to talk about whether your Care Plan is working and meets your needs. This is called a Child in Care Review. Your IRO will support you to have your say in your Review and will follow up to make sure that your Social Worker has completed any agreed actions.

Your first Child in Care Review Meeting must happen within 20 days of you coming into care. The second Meeting is then held within 3 months. After that, there will be a Review Meeting every 6 months whilst you are in care.

The Review is your meeting and all about you so it is very important that your IRO knows how you feel about your Care Plan and what you would like to happen.

How can I get in touch with my IRO?



You can phone, text or email your IRO if you would like to speak to them.

You can also ask your IRO to visit you outside of Child in Care Review Meetings.

You can find out more about the role of your IRO and find their contact details on the Kent Cares Town website:

<https://kentcarestown.lea.kent.sch.uk/secondary/who-will-support-me>

If you cannot reach your IRO, your Social Worker, or a trusted adult, you can phone the IRO Service on **03000 416128**.

What if I need more help?

You can also contact the Virtual School Kent Participation Team by emailing

VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk or the

Young Lives Foundation by emailing **advocacy@ylf.org.uk**.



kentcarestown.lea.kent.sch.uk