What is an Independent Reviewing Officer?

Your Independent Reviewing Officer or IRO's job is to help make sure that your time in care is as positive as possible and that you have access to lots of opportunities while you're being looked after. They make sure that the plan for your care is a good one, helps you to do well and is right for you. Your IRO has an important role at your child and care review meetings. What is my Child and care review meeting? Your IRO will ask the people who know you like your carers, parents, and social worker, what they think about the plan for your care. They do this in your Child in Care Review Meeting, which takes place at least once every six months. You are the most important part of this meeting, and your IRO will make sure they know how you feel about being in care and what you want to happen before the meeting takes place They will also speak to you about when and where you think meetings should happen and who you want to invite. You can come to all, or part of a meeting and they will help you to take part and share your views and opinions. You can even lead or chair the meeting if you want. Your IRO will support you to do this and help you prepare. How does my IRO support me at my review meetings? At every review meeting your IRO should check that you understand how you should be cared for, that you have a safe home, that you are healthy and happy, that you are helped to do well in school, that you can see your family if this is possible, that you are encouraged with your hobbies and interests. That your views are shared and thought about when decisions are made. Your identity, so what makes you you, is thought about and that you know about extra help you can have in your meetings called advocacy and how to make a complaint if things aren't going well. After the meeting, they will send everyone who attended a report with what was spoken about, any decisions that have been made and what needs to happen next in it. They'll also check with your social worker that these things are happening in the weeks and months following the meeting. How can I get in touch with my IRO? Your IRO will visit you not only when it is time for a child and care review meeting. You are able to contact them in between visits too If you want to speak to them. Your carer or another trusted adult can help you phone, text, or email your IRO. Your social worker will also be able to help you do this. If you cannot reach your IRO, your social worker or a trusted adult, you can phone the IRO Service on oh 3000 416128. What if I need more help? You or a trusted adult can also speak to Virtual School Kent Participation Team at the [VSK\_Participation@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk) or the Young Lives Foundation at [advocacy@ylf.org.uk](mailto:advocacy@ylf.org.uk). Your IRO is there to support you through your time in care, help ensure it's as positive as it possibly can be, and make sure you get your voice heard in your own care planning.