

Title: Escalation Process for IROs	 Brent		
Author: Goitom Mebrahtu Updated in July 2018	Issue 2	Date: July 2018	
Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to set out the London Borough of Brent’s IRO escalation procedure.		
Who is Responsible	Brian Grady, Operational Director		
Legislation	Children Act 1989 Independent Reviewing Officers Guidance: Department for Education and Skills: June 2004 (“The DfES Guidance”): available on the Internet at www.dfes.gov.uk/adoption . The Review of Children’s Cases (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2004 (“The IRO Regulations”). The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005. The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Reviewed Case Referral) Regulations 2004 (“the CAFCASS Regulations”).		
Forms / links			

Escalation Process for Independent Reviewing Officers

Introduction

This procedure applies to those situations in which the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) for a looked after child believes that the responsible social work team may be in breach of its duties to the child. This procedure does not apply where there are practice concerns about a particular social worker

Possible examples of when this may be implemented include:

1. Preparation of the child's Care Plan
2. Concerns about the Care Plan
3. Reviewing the child's case
Drift in care plan
4. Implementing decisions or recommendations from a review
5. Delay in allocating a social worker
6. Visits to the child
7. Sibling or other contact
8. Placement decisions
9. Services to the child
10. IRO Not Been Kept informed about significant change
11. Disagreement about the Permanency plan including rehabilitation

Key regulations and guidance

- a. Independent Reviewing Officers Guidance: Department for Education and Skills: June 2004 ("The DfES Guidance"): available on the Internet at www.dfes.gov.uk/adoption.
- b. The Review of Children's Cases (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2004 ("The IRO Regulations").
- c. The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005.
- d. The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Reviewed Case Referral) Regulations 2004 ("the CAFCASS Regulations").

Recording and Support

The IRO must ensure that all actions to resolve matters are recorded in the child's electronic file (Framework-I), including informal action. Any correspondence from the Local Authority will be uploaded onto Framework-I by the relevant individual.

At any point, without it being a formal referral, the IRO can contact CAFCASS Legal for guidance. IROs can also seek independent legal advice through contacting the Head of Legal Services, who will arrange for such independent advice to be provided.

The IRO needs to ensure that in any discussion or correspondence with the social work staff, that clear expectations are set around timescales for response or resolution in order to prevent drift for the child.

1. **If the IRO has concerns about Implementation of Care Plan**
2. **The IRO in the first instance should discuss the concern with the allocated Social Worker and the supervisor. The IRO should record these discussions on e mail and then case notes which are copied to the team manager.**
3. **Where it has not been possible to resolve the matter at this level, the IRO should discuss this with the team manger to agree a way forward. The team manager has 3 working days to respond.**
4. **If no resolution has been reached The IRO should raise the concerns in writing with the relevant Service Manager and the Review, Engagement & Participation Principal Officer, who will acknowledge the receipt of the complaint / Dispute and will inform the LAC review administrator (BIBS). The Service Manager has 5 working days to respond. At this point the complaint should be recorded by the reviewing administrator who will inter this in to a spread sheet. This will be kept in the shared drive as a record of the child, the matter in dispute and the date it was raised with the Service Manager.**
5. **If there is NO Service Manager to formally respond in writing to the IRO; then,**
6. **The IRO to raise the concerns with the Head of Service. This can be done via email. The Head of Service has 10 working days to respond. When the response is sent they will be copied to the Review, Engagement & Participation Principal Officer, so the spread sheet can be updated with the date of response / resolution.**
7. **The Child's IRO and the Head of Service should then discuss whether the IRO is satisfied with the response and if not, discuss what further action is needed.**
8. **The IRO can progress any dispute above Service Manager to the Head of service for Safeguarding & Quality Assurance as the non-line senior manager.**
9. **The Operational Director, Strategic Director, Chief executive and ultimately CAFCASS can be contacted if the issues cannot be satisfactorily resolved. At each stage the IRO should have a discussion with the Team manager for the IROs and Head of Service and set a time scale.**
10. **At any point the IRO can contact CAFCASS or the Official solicitor for legal advice.**
11. **The propose of the spread sheet is to:**
 - **Monitor the number of issues that are taken to team mangers level and above**
 - **Identify the type of matters and themes that are being raised**
 - **Monitor responses and timescale to issues raised with the view of improving outcomes for Looked after children and raise standards.**
 - **Identify learning needs and incorporate this within the wider L&D offer**