**Conference and Review Service Outcome Resolution Practice Guidance**

**Revised March 2022**

**1. Internal Outcome Resolution within the LA**

There are 2 options that can be initiated by IROs in relation to practice concerns; IRO Informal Challenge case note (and the formal Outcome Resolution process (formerly DRP).

**IRO Informal Challenge**

The intention of having the informal stage recorded, is to allow attempts at resolution before an issue becomes significant enough to require formal challenge, including matters that need raising but may not meet the criteria for a formal challenge.

These will primarily be issues that if not addressed, will have an impact on **outcomes for children and young people** and the effectiveness of their plan. Examples can include:

* Delays in updating and finalising plans
* Key information not being recorded such as statutory visits, core groups, pathway plans
* Assessments not being up to date in line with policy requirements(e.g. reassessment within 12 months or at key triggers)

**It is recognised a degree of professional judgement will be made by the IRO in deciding when an informal challenge will be made, and the significance of issues on potential outcomes for children and young people.**

**Formal Outcome Resolution (formerly DRP)**

The Outcome Resolution process is used by IROs to challenge any areas of concern in respect of the implementation of the child's care plan in line with the IRO Handbook and child protection plan in line with child protection policy and procedures.

**The threshold for a formal outcome resolution should be issues that are directly impacting on progress of the plan for the young person and their outcomes, that require immediate attention.**

**Examples include:**

* Reports not being available in agreed timescales for conferences/reviews – leading to a direct impact on the child young person through the meeting being stood down
* Concerns regarding implementation and decisions relating to the child’s plan including drift and delay in securing permanence/progressing the plan, any risk and safeguarding concerns, placement issues (including the agreed process for unregistered placement being followed), resources
* Other issues that are directly impacting achieving positive outcomes for the child which might include concern at the functioning of core groups, oversight of the case or issues regarding statutory visiting/direct work including life story work.

Alongside or out with the Outcome Resolution the IRO can consider whether to make a referral to Cafcass, the IRO should consider the impact that a referral would have for the child. In some cases, there will be time available first to pursue the full outcome resolution in other situations, the matter will be of sufficient urgency that the dispute resolution process needs to be curtailed based on the timetable for the child.

**2. Outcome Resolution with External Agencies**

It is important that IROs are able to evidence challenge made to partner agencies in relation to their oversight role. Examples may include agencies attendance at and provision of information for conferences and reviews, agency input into delivery of a child’s plan, and other related issues.

Our suggestion is that external challenge should be logged via a case note on the child’s record (to be added) in line with the CSCP multi-agency escalation procedures outlined below

<https://cumbrialscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_conflict_res.html>

**Flowchart for Internal Outcome Resolution Process**

**STAGE 1**

Trigger out of the child’s review

**Outcome Resolution Process – Informal To Social Worker & Team Manager**

* **Agree & able to implement**
* **Don't agree & will not implement**
* **Do not have remit to implement**

**Resolved**

**No Resolution/Unsatisfactory Resolution**

**STAGE 2**

**Escalate to Service Manager**

**Copy of notification sent to IRO Team Manager**

**Resolved**

**No Resolution/ Unsatisfactory Resolution**

**STAGE 3**

**Escalate to Senior Manager**

**Copy to IRO Team Manager**

**& IRO Service Manager**

**Resolved**

**No Resolution/Unsatisfactory Resolution**

**STAGE 4**

**Escalate to Assistant Director**

**Copy to IRO Team Manager**

**& IRO Service Manager & IRO Senior Manager**

Response provided by Service Manager within 4 working days

Response provided by Senior Manager within 4 working days

Response provided within 4 working days

**TIMESCALE**

IRO can refer at any stage and a meeting considered.

Trigger in the child’s Review

**No Resolution/Unsatisfactory Resolution**

**STAGE 5**

IRO completes informal resolution form within 3 days. Team Manager responds within 3 working days

**Resolved**

**No Resolution/Unsatisfactory Resolution – Consider referral to CAFCASS**

**The decision to refer to CAFCASS can be taken at any point in the process if the matter is of sufficient urgency**

**Escalate to Director of Children's Services. Consideration given to notifying Chief Executive.**

**IRO Service Manager & IRO Senior Manager**