

IRO Dispute Resolution Flowchart

Process for Addressing Practice and other Concerns

Revised July 2015

Practice or other concerns identified by Independent Reviewing Officers for Children Looked After

YES

Inform DHoS IRO or
Deputy Head of Service
(operational)

Serious enough to warrant
immediate action

NO

ISSUE NOTIFICATION

IRO completes Issue Notification email alert to SW and TM. SW and TM have 72 hours to respond to Issue Notification email. If the response is satisfactory then this is signed off by IRO. If no response is received or inadequate response then formal QA Notification instigated.

STAGE 1

IRO issues Quality Assurance Form (stage 1) to the relevant person & their manager - normally social worker & Team Manager to respond within 10 working days. IRO signs off response when received if satisfactory. If response is not received in timescale or not satisfactory, IRO to discuss case immediately with the DHoS IRO Service to decide what further action needed. The completed Alert Forms will be logged electronically by IRO.

STAGE 2

DHoS IRO Service to discuss issues with operational Deputy Head of Service or HoS for the case immediately following the discussion with IRO. This discussion will be recorded on the child's file by the DHoS IRO within 24 hours. Urgent action plan to be agreed with actions to be taken within one week

STAGE 3

If issues cannot be resolved, Head of Service (operational) & Head of Service QA to discuss. If necessary a Professionals meeting should be held within one week following the stage 2 discussion, to be chaired by Head of Service QA with attendance of social worker, IRO, Team Manager & operational Head or Deputy Head of Service to discuss and agree actions to be taken within one week.

STAGE 4

If following meeting, issues still not resolved satisfactorily, Head of Service QA will discuss concerns with Service Director or Strategic Director as appropriate, to agree if any further action can be taken before referral to CAFCASS made

The principles in this process should also apply where the dispute relates to another part of the Council. The relevant Service Director should be informed if the matter progresses to Stage 3 or beyond in these situations.

1. Issue Notification Criteria

There will be an on-going dialogue between the IRO and the worker/manager in relation to the welfare of the child and significant events (refer to Care Planning Regs 2010), and the IRO should be informed and consulted.

They will express their views, drawing on their expertise in care planning, knowledge of legislation and the child, and where they are not in agreement with any proposed action or have other concerns, they will have further discussion.

In the first instance if appropriate the IRO will raise an Issue Notification, this will be in the form of a completed Issue Notification email on LL. The completed email will generate a notification for the SW and TM. The SW and TM will be expected to respond in 72 hours.

The Issue notification can be completed anytime and may cover

- Poor practice - this can include the SW has not following up a decision from a statutory review, not keeping the IRO informed about changes, lack of preparation for the review, poor quality reports or failure to complete required tasks or lack of progress
- Non-attendance - sw not attending statutory review
- No reports – reports not generated through LL on time for the review
- Child not supported to participate in the review process

If any of the above criteria for Issue Notification is repeated or has a significant impact on child/young person, a formal QA notification should be done.

2. Formal QA Notification Criteria

Where there are significant concerns that may impact on the care plan for the child/young person the IRO may go straight to formal QA notification and/or consider calling an early review.

Formal QA notifications may be completed at any time, though typically following a review, and MUST be done in all cases where:

- LA has not complied with the agreed care plan
- Drift/delay in implementation in care plan
- Failure to complete significant tasks agreed in reviews within the review period where this will have a detrimental impact on the child
- Failure by any agency to comply with statutory requirements eg visits, sharing of court documents, school provision etc.
- Excellent practice