

## MONITORING ROLE OF IROs

The monitoring role of the IRO is set out in the 1989 Act [section 25B, 1989 Act]. Between reviews, if the care plan continues to meet the needs of the child there may be no need for any communication between the IRO and the social worker or the child. However, in the event of a change/event in the child's life that is significant, the social worker must inform the IRO. This includes:

- Proposed change of care plan for example arising at short notice in the course of proceedings following on directions from the court;
- Where agreed decisions from review are not carried out within the specified timescale;
- Major change to contact arrangements;
- Changes of allocated social worker;
- any safeguarding concerns involving the child, which may lead to enquiries being made under section 47 of the 1989 Act ('child protection enquiries') and outcomes of child protection conferences, or other meetings not attended by the IRO;
- Complaints from or on behalf of child, parent or carer;
- Unexpected changes in the child's placement provision which may significantly impact on placement stability or safeguarding arrangements;
- Significant changes in birth family circumstances for example births, marriages or deaths which may have a particular impact on the child;
- Where the child is charged with any offence leading to referral to youth offending services, pending criminal proceedings and any convictions or sentences as a result of such proceedings;
- Where the child is excluded from school;
- Where the child is running away or missing from the approved placement;
- Significant health, medical events, diagnoses, illnesses, hospitalisations, serious accidents; and
- Panel decisions in relation to permanence.

3.75 A review will not be required for every change and the IRO will determine whether the change requires a review to be convened. The IRO should consult with the child, where appropriate, and the child's wishes and feelings about the impact of the proposed change on his/her life should be taken into consideration in reaching a decision as to whether a review is necessary.

3.76 If, following communication with the social worker, the IRO is satisfied that the arrangements in the care plan continue to meet the child's needs or that the change does not have significant implications for the care plan and that a review is not necessary, a record of this agreement and the reasons for it should be placed on the child's file. The child and other relevant adults, both within the family and the professional network should be advised of this decision where appropriate.

3.77 However, a review must be convened in the following circumstances, prior to any of the following changes being implemented:

- Whenever there is a proposal for a child to leave care before the age of 18, i.e. for the child to become a relevant child, rather than an eligible child [respectively section 23A and Schedule 2, paragraph 19B of 1989 Act] (see Annex 3);
- Wherever there is a proposal for the child to move from foster care, a children's home or other placement, to supported lodgings, or to other kinds of 'semi-independent' or 'independent living' before the age of 18 (i.e. from accommodation regulated under the Care Standards Act to unregulated accommodation);
- Prior to children subject to care orders being discharged from custody;
- Wherever any unplanned change is proposed to a child's accommodation that would have the effect of disrupting his/her education or training;
- Where a change of placement is proposed that would interrupt the arrangements for the education of a child in Key Stage 4; and
- Where a change of placement is proposed for a child who has remained settled and established with the same carer for a significant period of time.