

# Worcestershire Children First

<p><b>OUR VISION</b></p> <p>Worcestershire to be a wonderful place for all children and young people to grow up.</p>	<p>WORCESTERSHIRE <b>CHILDREN FIRST</b> </p>	<p><b>OUR MISSION</b></p> <p>Supporting children and young people to be happy, healthy and safe.</p>
--	--	--

## OUR VALUES



**CHILDREN AT OUR HEART**

We will keep children and young people at the heart of everything we do



**VALUE FAMILY LIFE**

We will support and empower parents to care for their own children well



**GOOD EDUCATION FOR ALL**

We will value education as the best start in life for all children and young people



**PROTECTION FROM HARM**

We will act in a professional and timely way to protect children from harm

# Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report 2020 / 2021



**Introduction:**

This report captures the performance, feedback, and next steps of the IRO Service in Worcestershire for the year 2020/2021. The report provides an evidence base for what's working well, what we need to improve on, the impact our service is having on children and young people and where our priorities are focused for the year ahead.

**Contents Page:**

1. Exec Summary
2. Context of the IRO Service
3. Workforce & Management
4. IRO Quality Assurance
  - a. KPIs
  - b. Audits
  - c. Service User Feedback
5. DRPs & Practice Acknowledgements
6. Our Covid Response
7. Signatures

## 1. Executive Summary:

This executive summary highlights what we know about ourselves in the IRO Service:

What is Working Well...	Areas for Focus...
<p>The IRO Annual Report has evidenced sustained &amp; continuous improvement in timely CLA Reviews for Children with an average of <b>96% in time and a high of 98%</b>.</p> <p>We heard from children, families, carers, and professionals, <b>407 pieces of feedback</b> has evidenced that virtual working has been effective, and Reviews have been to the quality children need.</p> <p>The IRO Service has been responsive to the pandemic and ensured that the majority of children have had their <b>views heard and have attended &amp; participated</b> in their meetings – children have told us this through their feedback.</p> <p>We have embedded a Quality Assurance programme in respect of the IRO Service and this has evidenced areas of good practice; this was through <b>489 audits of children’s experiences</b> from mid-way and targeted audits.</p> <p>We know from our staff health check that our <b>staff feel valued</b>; 99% of staff report <b>good visibility, accessibility to responsive management support</b> and 98% receiving regular and <b>reflective supervision</b> which considers their learning and development.</p> <p>We have a <b>stable and experienced workforce in the IRO Service</b>, all members of the IRO Service have over 10 years qualified experience, practice observations also evidenced Reviews being chaired to a high quality.</p> <p>We have seen a <b>reduction in the volume of formal DRPs</b> being required across the service; many are dealt with at an early/informal stage and <b>Practice Acknowledgements have increased</b>.</p> <p>The IRO Service was <b>responsive to the Pandemic</b>, we ensured we worked flexibility, so reviews were held in a timely manner, children were seen and supported to have their views heard.</p>	

<p>We know we need to ensure <b>every child we work with</b> has the right experiences and <b>understands the IROs Role and their Plan</b>; this is what some children told us we need to focus on.</p> <p>All children &amp; young people can attend &amp; participate in their meeting in the way which works best for them.</p> <p>Our key audit learning is that we need to ensure <b>our recommendations from CLA Reviews are SMART</b>.</p>
---

## 2. Context of the IRO Service

The responsibility of Local Authorities is to provide Looked after Children and Care Leavers the best possible experiences in life and support their hopes, wishes and aspirations as any good parent should, this is our privileged role as corporate parents. The Children Act 1989 [amended 2004] and the Care Planning Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 specify the duties of the Local Authority to appoint an IRO when a child first becomes looked after. The IRO should ensure that the Local Authority gives due consideration to any views expressed by the child and the IRO has a responsibility to monitor the Local Authority's performance of its functions in relation to the child's case.

The regulations clearly specify circumstances when the Local Authority should consult with the IRO, for example, proposed change of placement, change of education plan, or serious incident. They also specify the actions that the IRO must take if it is felt that the Local Authority is failing to comply with the Regulations or is in breach of its duties to the child. The statutory duties of the IRO are to (section 25b (1), 1989 Act

- Monitor the performance by the local authority of their functions in relation to the child's care journey.
- Participate in any review of the child
- Ensure that any ascertained wishes and feelings of the child are given due consideration
- Perform any other function which is prescribed in regulations

The primary task of the IRO is to ensure that the care plan for the child fully reflects the child's current needs and those actions in the care plan are consistent with the LA legal responsibilities towards the child. There are now two clear and separate aspects of the function of the IRO.

- Chairing the child's review meeting and monitoring the child's care journey on an ongoing basis.
- The monitoring function should include identifying any areas of poor practice or drift and delay in care planning that impacts directly on the child and should be appropriately escalated. Equally the IRO should also recognise and celebrate good practice that has positively impacted on the child's care experience.

## 3. Workforce & Management

The IRO service is situated with in the Safeguarding Quality Assurance Service alongside the Independent Chairs for Child Protection Conferences and the LADO Service; the service is supported by a Business Support Team; each Team has a dedicated Practice Manager. The Service is under overall direct management of the Group Manager for SQA, Daniel Gray.

We have a diverse team of IRO in terms of gender, ethnicity, and age and all bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the team. All have been Team Managers and/or Service Managers – this enables us to have a robust service embedded in practice wealth.

The IRO Service is at full establishment presently and we have achieved and maintained a fully staffed and permanent workforce; this has been a strength of the Team which brings consistency and stability for children who are looked after.

### 3.1 Supervision:

All IROs have bi-monthly supervision with the Practice Manager as well as other support & development opportunities.

All IROs complete, a recently revised individual diagnostic tool, that they send to the Practice Manager before supervision. This reflects the work the IRO has completed since last supervision and captures information such as caseload, case closures, participation and attendance of children, formal and informal DRPs, audit activity, learning and reflection on what has gone well any worries they have and what needs to happen; this promotes accountability for each IRO and is used in supervision with all IROs.

### 3.2 Management:

In addition to receiving one to one supervision the service has several mechanisms to ensure that we are sharing information and promoting practice development these are:

- **Monthly Meetings:** Monthly team meetings where information is shared from across the service, ideas are brought to the table, and we invite speakers in and track agreed team actions.
- **SQA Service Meetings:** these meetings are held twice a year for the whole of the SQA service – we celebrate our achievements and look to focus on areas of improvement.
- **Signs of Safety:** The whole team have completed the two-day Signs of Safety training and five members of the team have completed the five-day training; they are Practice Champions for the IRO Service. IROs use a strength and relationship-based approach to Children's Reviews and this is applied through the Signs of Safety Model of Practice.
- **End to End Leadership Meeting:** End to End Leadership Meetings are bi-monthly meetings for all Senior Managers, Front Line Managers, Advanced Practitioners, and IROs/CP Chairs from across the service. This is a forum to share and celebrate good practice, disseminate key information/learning, and build relationships with wider staff.
- **Ask and Tell:** The whole service have an opportunity to meet with the Group Manager Daniel Gray and ask any questions they may have, this is a monthly opportunity for staff to join the ask and tell session, which staff have found very helpful and informative.
- **Regional Practice Meetings:** All IROs are invited to the Regional practice meetings with other IROs to share practice.
- **Practice Observation:** In 2020/2021 all IROs have a practice observation of them chairing a CLA Review, individual verbal & written feedback was given to all IROs, a summary of the findings can be read here:



Direct observation  
report for the Indep

### 3.3 Case Loads

Our IRO caseloads have remained consistent and we have given additional IRO Capacity to support an increase in looked after children. We know from our staff health check that our staff feel valued, that they feel supported and guided by managers and they feel engaged and central to the vision and purpose of the service. 99% of staff report good visibility, accessibility to responsive management support and 98% receiving regular and reflective supervision which considers their learning and development.

#### **4. Covid-19 Response**

In March 2020 the Government Announced lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Worcestershire Children First Social Care & Safeguarding developed our Covid-19 Service Delivery Protocol this protocol has been regularly updated in line with government advice.

##### **Review Meetings:**

We have continued to hold Looked after Review Meetings for children & young people, we have ensured that these meetings continue to be held within timescales, these have been virtual meetings with families and partners joining online however more recently they have been held in the carers home where safe to so and others have been supported to join on line– these have been successful meetings and our participation and engagement remains a strength.

##### **Direct Contacts:**

IROs have continued to contact children and young people to Keep in Touch with them as highlighted in my report.

##### **Statutory Looked after Visits:**

As part of the response in our Covid-19 Protocol, Independent Reviewing Officers have supported the service and have been undertaking Statutory Visits who are placed in out-of-county External Residential and IFA placements; these visits will be undertaken at the point of the child's looked after review and either 12 weeks before or 12 weeks after their review.

It was a great end to end use of resources during Covid-19 maximising on the Social Work professional resource, minimising number of visitors to a child and family / placement to reduce risk of spread of infection, but keeping welfare and safeguarding paramount to maintain face to face where there were any concerns raised. Within our Covid-19 Service Protocols we set clear criteria for the visiting pattern to children looked after, the IRO Service supported by visiting children out of county in external residential and IFA placement during Phase 1 and 2 of our response (April to August respectively).

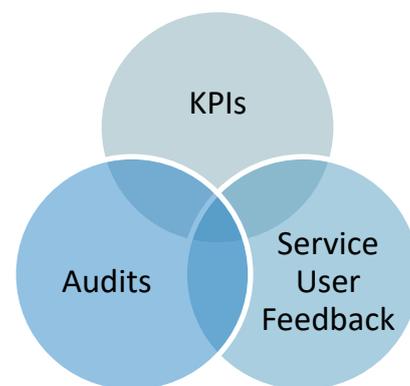
In Phase 3 our priority for children who are looked after was to support them to:

- maintain a relationship with their carers and allocated workers / IRO's
- remain stable in their care placements
- resume school attendance and establish and maintain friendships
- maintain relationships with their birth parents where this is part of their care plan
- have support for their emotional wellbeing
- be protected as much as possible from contracting and or spreading the virus

IROs supported with visits every twelve weeks as part of the child's Looked after Review and a Virtual Visit at a 12-weekly interval.

## 5. IRO Quality Assurance

In SQA we have systems to Quality Assure our work, this is through Key Performance Information, Service User Feedback and Audits.



### 5.1 KPIs

Key Performance Indicators help us understand how much we are doing and the timeliness of our work, this is the first measure of knowing ourselves well. We measure IRO Performance through the SQA Dashboard which is a live system to help us track & monitor team & individual performance.



#### Key Performance Indicators

Measure	Numerator	Denominator	Result	Indicator	Target	WCC 17/18	Statistical Neighbours 17/18	Relevant Management Information	Definition
CLA Reviews on time	336	346	97.1%	●	%			CLA Reviews in a Period	<a href="#">Link</a>
ICPCs within 15 days	92	100	92.0%	●	%		78%	Initial Child Protection Conferences in a Period	<a href="#">Link</a>
BCPCs within timescales	226	226	100.0%	●	%		93%	Review Child Protection Conferences in a Period	<a href="#">Link</a>

#### 5.1.1 CLA Reviews

Timely looked after reviews are essential to effective and timely care planning for children and young people who are looked after. A key priority of SQA was to improve the timeliness of review meetings held in Worcestershire for our children. The below graphs demonstrates a consistent improvement of review meeting timeliness, the year 2020/2021 saw a total of **1977 Reviews held – the average of meetings held in time for 20/21 is 96% with a high of 98%**. Interestingly 2 years running there has been a dip in performance in January of approx. 12% then it picks up very sharply again in the proceeding months.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
19/20	97%	94%	92%	93%	93%	88%	92%	91%	93%	86%	88%	99%
20/21	96%	95%	96%	95%	96%	96%	97%	97%	96%	87%	98%	98%

This remains an on-going service priority to promote achieve and sustain timely review meetings for our looked after children.

As a team we use an individual IRO Diagnostic Tool which has been revised in January this year, to provide better qualitative information and individual accountability, and greater IRO independence this is submitted to the Practice Manager every 8 weeks in line with supervision and is used as a tool for discussion/reflection. This is only one part of performance management of the service.

### 5.1.2 Children's Participation and Attendance

Promoting children's participation and attendance within Looked after Reviews is essential to ensure their voice is captured, listened to and that our outcomes are based on their wishes and feelings. This requires creativity in our approach as we work with a wide range of children with differing needs.

#### Participation of young people:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>19/20</b>	96%	92%	93%	94%	94%	91%	96%	96%	95%	93%	94%	90%
<b>20/21</b>	93%	93%	93%	93%	92%	95%	93%	97%	95%	88%	95%	96%

In the year 2019/2020 we had an average of 93% of children and young people participating in reviews with a high of 96%. This has remained consistently good for the year 2020/2021 even with the challenges of Covid 19; **we had an average again of 93% of children and young people participating in their reviews with a high of 97% 20/21** shows a consistent improvement on last year's data.

#### Attendance of young people:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>19/20</b>	69%	67%	68%	60%	72%	64%	70%	65%	52%	65%	62%	50%
<b>20/21</b>	55%	54%	52%	74%	77%	71%	69%	62%	63%	60%	77%	71%

In the year 2019-2020 the average of attendance at reviews was 70% with a high of 72%, in the year 2020/2021 we had an average **attendance of children at reviews of 72% with a high of 77%**, so there has been an improvement across the year by 2%.

#### IRO Direct Contact:

These are specific case notes to capture IRO Visits and phone calls to children and young people between Review meetings, to strengthen their footprint, evidence their work and to capture children and young people's views. In the year 2020/2021 **IROs completed 1032** direct contact summary episodes this is less than the previous year.

As above, the Independent Reviewing Officers have supported the service and have been undertaking Statutory Visits, it was a great end to end use of resources during Covid-19 maximising on the Social Work professional resource and keeping children's safeguarding as our focus whilst managing the restrictions brought by the pandemic.

## 5.2 Audit Activity

Audit activity is the second strand of our Quality Assurance Framework, over 2020/2021 we have worked hard to embed an approach of how we audit our own work in the IRO Service, this comes through part of the mid-way audits, but also Targeted Audit activity on key areas of practice, below is a summary of this learning. Learning is shared with the IRO Service through individual feedback, reports, team presentations and most recently in an SQA Service Event that was held virtually.

### 5.2.1 Mid-Way Audits:

In 2020/2021 we completed 119 mid-way audits in the IRO Service.

- Across the year we have identified strengths through our IRO Footprint and Engagement, and this has been a consistent theme of the mid-way IRO Audits.
- The volume of audits and feedback completed by the IRO Service remains a strength.

### 5.2.2 Targeted Audits:

We have completed several targeted audits in the IRO Service over the last 12 months, we completed 5 targeted audits for 189 children and one larger dip-sample audit on 181 children; this meant in total **370 had their experiences of the IRO Service Audited** in 2020/2021.

Targeted Audit Theme	Number of Children	Snapshot Summary/learning	Embedded Document
<b>CLA Review Minutes &amp; Recommendations (Quarter 1)</b>	<b>22</b>	A targeted audit of 22 (2 per IRO) Looked after Reviews was completed, to look at the quality of minutes and outcome focused recommendations since the launch of Liquid Logic. The audits found reviews were timely and minutes were completed in 20 days of the review in all but 1 case and these had been distributed; the overall quality of minutes were good quality. Overall, the notes were written in Child friendly language, however, there is some use of jargon and things could be explained more. Most of the Reviews are written to the young people although some will skip from writing to the YP then writing about them; IROs need to be more consistent. Although there is evidence that children/YP are present, there is a lack of evidence of the young people giving their views at the meeting. IROs have all received feedback on the audits and discussed in a Team Meeting.	 Targeted CLA Audit.docx

<p><b>Formal DRP audit (Quarter 2)</b></p>	<p><b>30</b></p>	<p>There were 30 formal DRPs completed across the 12-month period for Through Care, these were jointly audited by Group Managers for SQA and Through Care</p> <p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IROs appropriately identify drift and delay in cases, the audits also demonstrated a good use of mid-way audits, tracking of cases and IRO recommendations from CLA Reviews. Other means were used before going straight to a formal DRP.</li> <li>• When Drift is identified, action is taken to progress children’s plan.</li> <li>• Managers acknowledge and respond well to DRPs and take action to address the required actions.</li> <li>• The use of Signs of Safety within the DRP form helps identify good practice as well as identifying the practice concern, this then leads to a clear IRO recommendation of what needs to happen.</li> <li>• The DRP process appears well embedded – this was also recognised by Ofsted in the ILACs inspection (June 2019), they said “IROs use a well-developed escalation process to resolve practice issues”.</li> <li>• The application of DRPs is appropriate in the majority of cases.</li> <li>• In the previous 12-month period, there was 61 formal DRPs, for this audit period it reduced to 30 – evidencing an improvement in cases progressing in a timely manner and not requiring a DRP.</li> </ul> <p><u>Areas of Development:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that IROs use discussions with Team Managers consistently to resolve matters at an early stage; in doing so, this would have reduced the DRPs by 3 within the audit.</li> <li>• Ensure that if Team Managers are not responding to IRO communication, that IROs use their own management structure (IRO Practice Manager/SQA Group Manager) to progress issues at higher management level if required.</li> <li>• To ensure that Managers do respond to IRO communication.</li> </ul>	<p> Targeted Audit - Drift Delay vFinal v.1</p>
--	------------------	---	--

<p><b>CLA Review Attendance – Dip Sample (Quarter 2)</b></p>	<p><b>181</b></p>	<p>Quarter 4 of 2019/2020 saw a reduction in children &amp; young people attending their CLA Reviews, this gave an overall average reduction of 6% of children who attended their review in the year 2019/2020 from year 2018/2019.</p> <p>The pattern of this reduction was then seen in Quarter 1 of 2020/2021. A dip-sample audit was undertaken of CLA Reviews held across Quarter 1 where the child or young person did not attend their review; this was undertaken by individual IROs on their own case work. Overall, 11 IROs completed the audit which included reviews for 181 cases.</p> <p>A number of themes were identified for the reasons why children/young people had not attended their review:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Child &amp; Young People have said they did not want to attend their CLA Review but wanted to share their views in another manner, through a separate discussion with their IRO or Social Worker, Consultation Document etc.</li> <li>2. Some children &amp; young people did not want to attend a virtual meeting (skype or zoom)</li> <li>3. In a minority of cases the IRO has not appropriately recorded that the child had attended</li> <li>4. In some cases, children and young people have Complex Disabilities and was not appropriate to attend the meeting, but was seen/spoken to separately to support participation through other communication</li> <li>5. In some cases, the CLA Reviews have been held as a series of meetings, the child has attended on of these and this has not been recorded accurately</li> <li>6. There was a theme that for a couple of IROs they had a higher proportion of non-attendance at CLA Reviews for children and young people allocated to them</li> </ol>	<p> Quarter 2 Targeted Audit - CLA Attendanc</p>
<p><b>Informal Dispute Resolution Audit (Quarter 3)</b></p>	<p><b>19</b></p>	<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application of Informal DRP is appropriate, they are used at the right time and are addressing the right issues.</li> <li>• The correct informal DRP case note type is being used across the IRO and CP chairs</li> <li>• Evidence of Informal DRPs being resolved at an early stage and if not are being escalated to formal DRPs</li> <li>• Evidence of conversations with Team Managers and SW to reach resolution on the file</li> </ul>	<p> Informal DRP audit Q3 final.docx</p>

		<p><u>Areas for development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is learning to ensure we are consistently recording informal DRP within the case records, so it is clear on the resolution and actions.</li> <li>• Some informal DRPs are not tracked/followed up by IROs and/or CP Chairs and this is a key piece of learning.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>IRO footprint and minute audit (Quarter 3)</b></p>	<p><b>94</b></p>	<p>As Practice Manager for the IRO service i audited 94 sets of minutes from looked after reviews and tracked them all for evidence of IRO footprint.</p> <p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having audited the 94 sets of minutes it is encouraging to see the minutes are in the main comprehensive and the quality is good there is just some inconsistencies in the style of writing, but all have a SOS approach recognising strengths, worries and what needs to happen.</li> <li>• All of the 94 audits re IRO footprint evidenced a significant improvement in IRO footprint on Childrens files over the last 12 months, again some inconsistencies in style of writing, but overall evident on Childrens files.</li> </ul> <p><u>Areas of development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All reviews should be written to the child, proof reading before ending the episode would ensure a more consistent approach.</li> <li>• Headings should be in bold.</li> <li>• IROs should provide narrative re Legal status and care plan not just a “yes”</li> <li>• IROs to be mindful re language used so it is easy to read and clear with minimal jargon in it.</li> <li>• Actions should have clear timescales and person responsible for each task</li> <li>• Date of next meeting should be in the record (if there is going to be another meeting)</li> </ul>	<p> IRO footprint and minute audit 15th o</p>

<p><b>Quality of Plans Audit (Quarter 4)</b></p>	<p><b>24</b></p>	<p>A cross-service audit to look at outcome plans and recommendations from CLA Reviews, POT Meetings and Conferences.</p> <p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of plans are clear, specific, and measurable – language is used in a way to support families to understand what needs to happen</li> </ul> <p><u>Areas for development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• key learning across all plans was to ensure that timescales are explicitly clear and measurable.</li> <li>• some actions have an outcome goal but do not always define the steps required to achieve the overall goal.</li> </ul>	<p>  Quality of plans audit- March 2021( f</p>
--	------------------	---	---

### 5.3 Service User Feedback

Service user feedback is the third strand of our Quality Assurance Framework, this helps us understand how children, families & professionals experience our services. In 2020/2021 we heard from 270 children, 39 parents, 38 carers and 70 professionals, this meant **417 individuals told us their views of the IRO Service.**

#### 5.3.1 Feedback from Children & Young People

191 children shared their views through Mid-Way Audits and Targeted Feedback. 112 children gave us feedback on the IRO Service through targeted feedback, the majority of children 107 (96%) told us that they felt listened to & the review heard their views and considered them. 97 children (87%) told us they understood the outcome/recommendations of the meeting, and 88% (99 children) told us they understood the role of the IRO.

In Mid-Way Audits 79 children were asked a range of questions they told us...59 out of 63 children (94%) were happy with how their looked after review was held and chaired by their IRO, 68 children (100%) who answered this question told us that they felt safe where they lived.

Overall, the majority of young people gave positives in respect of participating in their meetings, being able to share their views and how the meeting heard and considered them. However, for some young people they did not fully understand the outcome of their meeting or the IROs specific role, we can see the majority of young people did know and have these opportunities, but this is an area of focus and improvement for us. As a service we have reflected on this feedback to ensure that all young people do understand the IROs role, their meeting and the outcomes from these...we are ensuring IROs are being clear in all meetings about this, giving young people more opportunities to speak with their IRO to help understand.

Is there anything we could do better?

*"Yes, I don't always attend my meeting's and share my views with my foster carer. It would have been nice to have had a call after from my IRO although my foster carer does update me after the meetings"*

*"I would like to attend my Review meeting as well as have separate conversations with my IRO, my last one was arranged when I was in school, so I was not able to join in. I am used to using Microsoft Teams so would be happy to join video calls"*



Is there anything we did well you want to tell us about?

*"my IRO listens and understands"*

*"Asks if I need help and what she can do to sort things out for me"*

*"I like my IRO, she understands me and gives me separate time to share my views without other people listening. She is really nice and gives good advice. My social worker also makes sure that my IRO knows my views"*

*"You get my point across to perfection she says exactly what I say"*

### 5.3.2 Feedback from Parents

39 birth parents gave us feedback in the survey, they told us:

	Question	Feedback
1.	Did you have an opportunity to speak with the IRO before/after the CLA Review?	80% said yes
2.	Did they help you understand the role of the IRO?	92% said yes
3.	Did the IRO help explain how the Review was going to work?	95% said yes
4.	Do you understand the recommendations from the review and what everyone will do next?	90% said yes
5.	Was it recognised what was going well in respect of the child/placement during the review?	95% said yes
6.	CLA Reviews are currently virtual, were you supported to attend and contribute to the meeting online?	80% said yes
7.	Did the meeting hear the views of the child/young person and take them into consideration?	85% said yes
8.	Were you given the opportunity to share your views and opinions?	97% said yes

#### Parents said...

*"Online meeting went ok, felt involved, difficult situation but felt I was listened to"*

*"Like being included as a Dad"*

*"No nothing at all, IRO is amazing and helpful and straight but honest and kind"*

*"Delays in minutes being sent to birth parents appeared to be a common feature"*

*"IRO is an amazing, she is fair and honest and kind and always treats me with respect"*

*"Involving me and listening to me even when I swore"*

*"I get very stressed before reviews so having the call just before helps me to relax a bit and keeps me calmer in the meeting"*

*"IRO is the best as she is very kind, understanding and always listens and has a solution"*

*"Meeting was good felt included to have my say, liked doing it virtually meant I didn't have to travel"*

*"Connection was a bit hit and miss so I was called so could still be part of the meeting, which was fine"*

### 5.3.3 Feedback from Carers

38 foster carers gave us feedback in the survey, they told us:

	Question	Feedback
1.	Did you have an opportunity to speak with the IRO before/after the CLA Review?	74% said yes
2.	Did they help you understand the role of the IRO?	97% said yes
3.	Did the IRO help explain how the Review was going to work?	97% said yes
4.	Do you understand the recommendations from the review and what everyone will do next?	100% said yes
5.	Was it recognised what was going well in respect of the child/placement during the review?	100% said yes
6.	CLA Reviews are currently virtual, were you supported to attend and contribute to the meeting online?	97% said yes
7.	Did the meeting hear the views of the child/young person and take them into consideration?	95% said yes
8.	Were you given the opportunity to share your views and opinions?	100% said yes

#### Carers said...

*"Including me and my opinions in the meeting"*

*"Good mediator and would address drift and delay with SW promptly at the meeting"*

*"IRO attended my home so wasn't virtual for me but others were called in, it worked well"*

*"liked the IRO coming to my home and calling others in I felt it worked well and was less stressful for us"*

*"meeting was for 3 children in our care, but each child was discussed one by one and given equal importance and I looked at the notes once they came so I know what will happen as I often forget"*

*"I was worried about how the virtual review would work but it was fine, and no one had to travel"*

*"Delays in minutes being sent"*

*"No, I like the format virtually and would like to continue like this a lot less stressful for me and my foster child"*

### 5.3.4 Feedback from Professionals

Across Quarter 3 2020/2021 we have undertaken a targeted survey with professionals who have virtually attended a Looked after Review through our Covid-19 service delivery response. The survey was sent to professionals through our Quality Assurance Practice & Procedures Group (QAPP); therefore, this was distributed through Social Care, Education, Health, Police, and other key agencies who would attend Looked after Reviews.

We received feedback from 70 professionals through the survey, they told us:

	Question	Feedback
1.	Have you been able to access the Review Meeting Virtually?	96% said yes
2.	Did the IRO enable you to share your views and opinions?	99% said yes
3.	Did the Review hear the views of the family?	97% said yes
4.	Did the Review hear the voice of the child??	97% said yes
5.	Were clear recommendations and next steps agreed?	99% said yes
6.	Did the IRO enable you to give a view on the Care Plan?	90% said yes

- Overall, there have been key strengths from the feedback provided by partners, evidencing that meetings have remained effective.
- The voices of both children and families have remained heard and part of the meetings.
- Agencies have been able to attend and felt able to contribute to the meetings.
- The feedback from partners have been positive around how chairs have managed these meetings.

### 6. DRPs & Practice Acknowledgements:

A crucial role of the IRO is to quality assure the work of the Local Authority; if a concern arises then the Dispute Resolution Process is initiated, this is a process where the IRO can raise a concern for a child or young person and the Social Work Manager will respond.

We have a clear DRP Framework, and this is available to all staff on Practice Standards – Social Care.

The IRO Service also looks to identify and celebrate good practice; this is achieved through a Practice Acknowledgement. This is a specific Liquid Logic Form where the IRO can formally record and recognise practice of Social Work Teams.

Our DRP Summary for 2020/2021:



DRPs & PA Data  
Summary - Quarter 4.

This report summarises the use of DRPs and Practice Acknowledgements across 2020/2021 – this report tells us that we have seen:

- We have seen a reduction in the volume of formal DRPs being required across the service.
- We continue to see a higher number of Informal DRPs being issued – supporting to resolve matters at an early stage.

- An increase in Practice Acknowledgements – evidencing good practice
- The development of our DRP Dashboard to now support our weekly, monthly & quarterly analysis and tracking of DRPs

## 7. Signatures



Daniel Gray  
Group Manager SQA



Sally Branchflower  
Practice Manager IRO Service

10<sup>th</sup> June 2021