

Your Independent Reviewing Officer



**Leaflet for Children and Young People
aged 12 and over**

This leaflet explains how Kent County Council Children's Social Services makes plans for your care and how your Independent Reviewing Officer reviews those plans with you and the people working with you.

Your Care Plan

Your Care Plan sets out in writing how you will be cared for and what needs to be done for you to make the plan work and who will do it. It also sets out what you want from the plan and what you need to do.

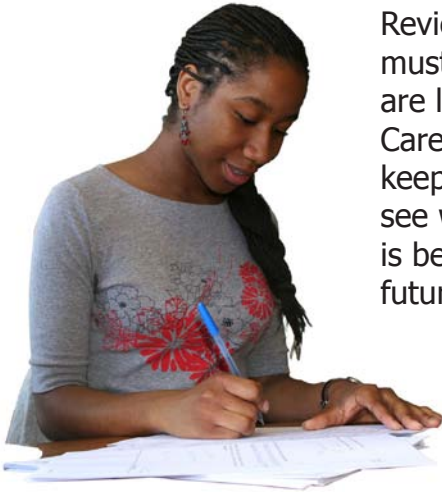
Your Care Plan includes:

- Who will look after you (your placement)
- Where you will go to school or college
- How we will make sure you are healthy
- How you can do the things you enjoy such as sport or hobbies
- When and where you will see your family and the people who are important to you
- How you can practice your religion and culture
- Any legal issues
- What will happen to you in the future

Your Care Plan will also set out what will happen if your plan is not working. This is called a Contingency Plan.

Your Social Worker and their manager are responsible for your Care Plan. They must listen carefully to your wishes and feelings about the plan. They must also listen to what your parents have to say and talk to other people working with you such as your teacher.

Your Review Meeting



Reviews are meetings which Social Services must hold regularly for all young people who are looked after. Reviews are to agree your Care Plan and to make sure everyone is keeping to the plan. Reviews are also to see whether everyone is satisfied with what is being done and to make plans for the future.

People who are invited to your Review Meeting

This is your meeting. It is important that you are there so that everyone can consider carefully what you have to say about any decisions that are made.

The other people who may be there are:

- Your parents/relative
- Your carers
- Your social worker/Key worker
- Your teacher
- Your foster carer's social worker
- The Children's Guardian
- The Looked After Children's nurse or school nurse
- The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)
- Other adults working with you
- Your Independent visitor or advocate
- Your foster carer

You should have a say about who is invited and who you do not want to be at the meeting. You may ask to have someone to support you at your review.

Where the review meeting is held

You should have a say about where your review meeting is held. It could be where you live, at your school or at your Social Worker's office.

How often review meetings happen

The first review meeting is held within four weeks of you becoming looked after. The second review meeting is held within three months of the first. There will be a review meeting every six months after that if you are still looked after.

If there are changes to your Care Plan or if things are not working out for you, a Review Meeting may be held. You can ask for a Review Meeting.



The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

Every child and young person who is looked after must have an IRO. It is their job to:

- Chair your Review Meeting
- Check that your Care Plan is right for you
- Make sure that everyone listens to what you have to say and considers it carefully when they are making decisions
- Make sure everyone has their say
- Check that everyone is keeping to their part of the plan
- Check that there are clear plans for your future
- Check that you know how to make a complaint

When reviewing your Care Plan the IRO will want to hear about what you have done well or any problems you may have so that you can get the help and support you need.

Your IRO will want to meet with you before the meeting to make sure you understand what the meeting is all about and to hear what you have to say. This will give you an opportunity to say what you want to talk about and if there are things you do not want to talk about.

Attending your Review Meeting

You should be part of any decisions for your future. If you are worried about talking in the meeting you can ask someone you trust to speak for you. You do not have to stay for all of the meeting and you can take a break at any time. You can tell your Social Worker or carer or the IRO and they will make sure this happens.

Any help or support you need should be provided for you such as an interpreter or communication tools.

If you decide you do not want to go to your review meeting you can talk to your carer or Social Worker or someone you trust. If you like, you can write down your views for your IRO to say at the Review Meeting on your behalf.

Preparing for your Review Meeting

Before your Review Meeting you will be given a Consultation Book to record what you want to say. You can also write a list or send a text to help you say what you want to say. If you wish to chair all or part of your review, your Social Worker or IRO will support you with this.

After your Review

Your Social Worker or carer or the IRO should talk to you after your meeting to make sure you understand what was discussed and the decisions that were made. If there were decisions made you do not agree with they will make sure you understand why that decision was made.



Making a Complaint

If you do not agree with any decision that was made you can speak to your carers and Social Worker or contact your IRO. If you are still not satisfied you can make a complaint.

To make a complaint or for further information you can contact:

Independent Reviewing Service:

- North West

Worrall House
30 Kings Hill Avenue
West Malling ME19 4AE

Tel: 03000 412261
email: IROServiceNW@kent.gov.uk

- South East

Brook House
Reeves Way, John Wilson Business Park
Whitstable CT5 3SS

Tel: 03000 418682
email: IROServiceSE@kent.gov.uk

Advocacy and Independent Visitor Service:

- Young Lives Foundation

71 College Road
Maidstone ME15 6SX

Tel: 01622 683815
email: advocacy@ylf.org.uk

