



### What is my Care Plan?

Your social worker has to write down what they will do to help you while you are in care and this is called a Care Plan.

It says what we are going to do to support you in your education, hobbies and in your health, religious or cultural needs and how long it is thought you will need to be looked after for. It is also agreed how we can help you have contact with family and friends.

Depending on your age, you may be asked to sign your Care Plan, along with your parents, social worker and his or her manager.

Each review must always consider:

- whether to confirm or change your Care Plan
- who needs to do what to make sure you are getting everything you need
- when they need to do this by.

### Local dispute resolution

If the IRO and your social worker can't agree on what is best for you then they will try and sort this out and the IRO will take this up with a more senior person. This is called the escalation procedure. The IRO has a responsibility to raise any concerns or issues on your behalf to help try and sort this out.



### Advocates

If you are unhappy with anything in your Care Plan or you don't think you are being treated fairly then you can ask your IRO or your social worker for an advocate.



### What does an advocate do?

Your advocate will listen to your views and help you to understand what's going on. Your advocate will meet you a few days before any meeting where your plans are being discussed to help you to work out how you would feel most comfortable having your say. For example, you may want to make a video recording for the meeting, or write down or draw what you want to say. You can take these to the meeting, or ask your advocate to go to the meeting on your behalf.

If you go to the meeting your advocate will help you to speak out at the meeting or speak out for you if you prefer. Your advocate will make sure people listen to your views.



Contact details:

Name of Independent Reviewing Officer:

Mobile:

Email:

Name of social worker:

Mobile:

Email:



## Independent Reviewing Officers: *A Guide for Young People*

## What is this guide about?

It is all about Independent Reviewing Officers, who are also known as IROs. They are the people who chair reviews for children and young people living in children's homes or foster care (sometimes we say looked after children or being in care). They have an important role in deciding what happens in your future.



## What the Independent Reviewing Officer will do for you

The main job of an IRO is to make sure that your Care Plan meets your needs. The IRO reviews and checks that your social worker and Brent Council are doing everything they should do to care for you like any good parent would. IROs are in charge of your Looked After Child reviews and you should have the same IRO at all your reviews. This is so you can both get to know each other.

You should be given the name of your IRO shortly after you start to be looked after, and they will meet you before every review meeting to see what you want to say at your meeting.



## Others things your IRO will do include:

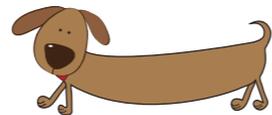
- ensure care plans are right for you and approve any changes
- write down and send out the recommendation from your Looked After Child reviews
- make sure that everything in your Care Plan is happening
- ensure that everyone is focused on meeting your needs
- make sure timely and appropriate actions are taken to meet your needs
- make sure that you can say what you want to and this is listened to and taken seriously.

Your IRO must ensure that your voice is heard and that you have a home that is right for your needs and that you can keep in touch with all the people who are important to you so that you can do well in life.

## Your review

When you first become looked after you, your parents, carers, and social worker meet to make sure all the important arrangements have been made. This includes contact with friends and family, how you will get to school and any health needs you have, as well as the things you like to do in your spare time. This may happen before your move, but, if not, it will happen in the first three days.

The first review meeting will happen within 28 days of you being looked after and this is a meeting where you will meet your new IRO. The next meeting is three months after the first one and after that every six months.



## Why do you have these meetings?

You have review meetings because it gives you and the people helping you an opportunity to discuss your living arrangements and everything else that affects your care such as will you move back to your parents or another relative, or will you be in foster care or a residential home. Any changes to your care can be discussed at your review and it is important that your views are always taken into account.

## Who comes to your reviews?

Your social worker will ask you who you think should come to your review. Usually, this would include your carers, parents, family members, teachers and your advocate (if you have one) and most importantly you.

## How do you get to have your say?

As it is your meeting, it is important that your views are heard.

Your social worker will talk about the future plans with you before the review and you can tell them how you feel.

If you feel unable to come to the review, your social worker, or your advocate, will let people know what you think and feel. You can also have an advocate at the meeting with you.

Another way to get your views across is by filling in the consultation form. You will be sent a consultation form before the review meeting. This is for you to write down all the things you want raised at the meeting. An advocate or your carer, or anyone else that you

trust can help you fill this in if you don't want to do it on your own.

Before the meeting, the IRO will offer you the opportunity to talk on your own about the meeting and also the plans that have been made for you.

## What happens at the meeting?

Before the meeting your social worker will have written a report and you will be able to see this beforehand. The report covers things like your health, how you are getting on with your education, what other activities you are doing, if things are OK where you are living, and if you are happy with the contact you have with your family.

The IRO will start the meeting by asking everyone there to say who they are and give everyone a chance to talk about how things are, the plans that have been made and any changes that may need to be made. The IRO will be taking notes at the meeting of what has been discussed and what else needs to be done such as making any other appointments for you.

