



Independent Review Officer Protocol - Support to Previously LAC 16/17 year old and Pathway Plans Post 18

Central Bedfordshire have a dedicated service to young people who have left care; however, without their 'looked after status' they lose the oversight of an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). Some of our vulnerable young people who leave care have ongoing complex and challenging needs; it is this cohort of young people who may benefit from the continued monitoring and review of an Independent Reviewing Officer. All these young people will be given the opportunity to remain with their current Independent Reviewing Officer.

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1. Aim

To support and enhance the care leavers transition from being looked after to independence.

The aim of the protocol is to ensure the young people remain supported and their plans reviewed with independent oversight of their pathway plan

The aim of the protocol is to be confident that young people are supported after leaving care and their pathway plan is implemented in a way that avoids drift and delay.

That the service previously offered to young people remains uninterrupted. This IRO Protocol - Support to Previously LAC 16/17 year old and Pathway Plans Post 18 will offer the following support:

- All IRO support post Looked After will be at the Young Person's request and no involvement will continue without the young person's consent.
- The young person will gain additional support from the IRO from an existing relationship and support to ensure their plan meets their needs and the Local Authority fulfils their role towards the pathway plan.
- The IRO will continue to scrutinise the Pathway Plan at least once between formal reviews
- The IRO will support young person as requested by them facilitating actions or requests as appropriate.
- The IRO will facilitate a statutory review of the Pathway Plan, tracking the progress matches the needs/requests of the young person.

To monitor key areas including:

- Pathway Plan
- Contact with young person
- Accommodation
- Employment/Education/Training
- Financial support
- Health

2. Process

At the final review before leaving care the young person will be asked if they wish the IRO involvement to continue. The following steps will be taken following this review to clearly record the wishes of the young person:

- Young person's decision will be clearly recorded on the last LAC Review, or if after this period a case note. If yes,
- The IRO will create a new involvement in Mosaic, from the date the role is likely to start - this can be set for a future date e.g. the date of their 18th birthday or the date they will be leaving care is a 'Relevant' young person.
- Once the young person ceases to be looked after the statutory role of an IRO will be ended on their Mosaic record.
- The IRO will outline any agreed actions clearly in the young person's case notes - there will be a number of case notes specific to this role:
 - CRS case note
 - CRS pathway plan review
 - CRS midway review
 - CRS escalation
- At each review the young person will confirm the continued involvement of the IRO, up to the age of 25 years or earlier as requested by the young person.
- The young person can withdraw their agreement to have an IRO involved in their plan at any time.
- The Allocated Worker will update the IRO with any changes in the young person's plan, including
 - Change of accommodation
 - Changes in employment/education/training
 - Significant changes in young person health
 - Changes in the agreed plan
- The IRO will complete a review of the Pathway Plan using the checklist within forms on Mosaic and alert the Leaving Care Support Worker and Team Manager via Mosaic case note when this has been completed - there is an expectation this will be completed at the review with the young person present.
- The IRO will monitor the case file once between reviews or at any other time as requested by the young person or Team Manager.
- Any dispute raised as part of the case management will be completed in accordance with the 'Dispute Resolution Protocol for Independent Reviewing Officers' guidance.
- The IRO will ensure the young person is aware of the complaints process and where to seek independent advocacy or support.
- There will be an expectation this protocol will be between the young person and their current IRO given the ongoing relationship however in exceptional circumstances a

different IRO may be considered by IRO Practice Manager and will be at the discretion of the service.

- In the event the IRO leaves employment a different IRO may be allocated depending on service capacity.

3.Frequency of Meetings

The frequency of meetings will be held every six months; additional meetings may be held but the IRO involvement will be at the discretion of the service.

4. Accountability

This protocol is accountable to:

- Young people who wish to remain involved with the IRO Service
- Practice Manager of the Independent Review Officers
- Head of Service
- Assistant Director of Children's Services