

## Where were we?

- IRO Service has developed since late 2014 to a position of stronger standing in the CFS with a strengthened approach to challenge in respect of supporting good care planning and outcomes for children. However, there was a need for further strengthening and consistency as regards the challenge and quality assurance approach from the IRO Service.
- Wealth of experience, expertise and knowledge across the IRO Service with ability to offer consultation in a number of lead areas including Children Using Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Mental Health, Youth Offending/Remand/Secure Accommodation. IROs trained in Signs of Safety and championing this approach in their role .
- Meaningful relationships between IROs and children and young people with IROs in contact with and visiting children including those placed at a distance.
- Strong performance as regards timeliness of LAC Reviews and children's participation
- IRO Service Regional and National links and training and development opportunities.
- Significant backlog of decisions from LAC Reviews



## What have we done?

- Introduced more robust systems and management oversight to support IROs in timely turnaround of LAC Review decisions
- Developed IRO Quality Assurance Alert & IRO Challenge activity including challenge meetings between the IRO Service managers and Assistant Director.
- Provision of bespoke training and development opportunities through Regional IRO Training Workshops
- Developed and maintained links with Cafcass and representation on Family Justice Board and Performance sub-group; Use of IRO view template in court, IRO Cafcass protocol and independent legal advice has provided opportunity for influence in care proceedings.

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## What else do we need to do?

## What difference have we made?

- Development of an evaluation tool to gain feedback about the quality and experience for young people of their Review and the IRO Service.
- Improved use of data to establish evidence of IRO activity on child's case and links with QA in capturing contact and visits.
- Further training and development work with IROs alongside that across CFS to ensure a consistent and robust approach to care and permanence planning for every child with strengthened management oversight processes – avoid drift and delay
- Sustain progress as regards timely turnaround of decisions from LAC Reviews
- Continue to refine and enhance QA Alert process ensuring consistent and full use by IROs; capture the difference this is making/outcomes for children and young people; continue to collate themes that inform service improvement and development.
- Increase capacity in the IRO Service



- Made significant inroads into IRO backlogs of LAC Review decisions
- Through use of QA Alert & Challenge Meetings, highlighted areas for concern as well as those of good practice across social work teams/management/services and influencing changes/improvements in practice e.g. seeing some improvements in performance as regards paperwork for LAC Reviews and contributing to the permanence and matching improvement work across the department.
- Identified areas for improvement as a result of IRO Training and development e.g. need for strengthened approach across the service in respect of oversight and governance of SGO pathways for children. Task & Finish Group established to address this.
- Influenced decision making in care proceedings to support good outcomes and make progress on stuck cases.

Owner:

Review Date: