

Where were we?

- The IRO service has continued to develop position of stronger standing in the CFS with a strengthened approach to challenge in respect of supporting good care planning and outcomes for children. The introduction of the QA process had strengthened this 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
- Continued use of agency IRO due to difficulties in recruiting permanent staff. This has impacted on caseloads which have be significantly over recommended numbers



What have we done?

- Developed more user friendly spreadsheet for tracking the IRO Quality Assurance Alerts to identify themes and areas requiring practice support and development.
- The challenge meetings between the IRO Service managers, ADM and Assistant Director continue to provide good senior management oversight for cases and having a positive impact on drift and delay.
- Provision of bespoke training and development opportunities through Regional IRO Training Workshops as part of EIP2 have continued to have a positive impact on the development of SOS within the Safeguarding Unit.
- Clear representation of the IRO position at the Residential Review Panel to ensure appropriate care planning decisions are being made
- 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.
- There has been an increase in the establishment for IRO



What else do we need to do?

- Development of an evaluation tool to gain feedback about the quality and experience for young people of their Review and the IRO Service..
- Improvements to the QA process to enable the data reporting to be meaningful and show impact. IRO need to ensure that escalation is recoded and to ensure that the procedure is followed.
- 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.
- Development of Signs of Safety within Looked After Children LAC reviews to ensure that they are being undertaken consistently and to enhance the inclusion of the voice and participation of the child or young person.
- To have robust management oversight of timely turnaround of decisions from LAC Reviews, to ensure that the backlog is managed and then timeliness is consistently maintained.
- 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.



What difference have we made?

- Through use of QA Alert & Challenge Meetings we have been able to highlight areas for concern as well as those of good practice across social work teams, management and services. Identifying these have enabled influence of changes and improvements in practice e.g. Contributing to the permanence and matching improvement work across the department.
- Influenced decision making in care proceedings to support good outcomes and make progress on stuck cases.
- Improvement in having a direct and pro-active role in ensuring more timely permanence decisions for children, particularly when the decision for permanence is

This page is intentionally left blank