



Children's Safeguarding and Social Work

Corporate Parenting Service

Statutory CLA reviews

1 Purpose

Statutory reviews allow the child's professional network to monitor whether the care plan is achieving desired outcomes and remains the right plan for the child by:

- monitoring the progress made in implementing the child's care plan
- ensuring tasks agreed at previous reviews have been carried out
- allowing the professional network to share any new information about the child's needs and circumstances
- agreeing any changes to the plan in order to continue to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

The review process is overseen by the child's IRO and details of their wider role can be found in the division's IRO service policy.

<https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/media/3189/working-with-iros.pdf>

It should be noted that significant changes to a child's care plan can only be made at a statutory CLA review unless this is not reasonably practicable.

2 Frequency

Statutory CLA reviews must take place at a minimum frequency of:

- within 20 working days of the child becoming Looked After
- within 3 months of the first review, then
- subsequently every 6 months.

However, these are **minimum requirements** and reviews should be held as required by the circumstances of the individual case regarding any significant changes to the care plan.

If the child is placed in a statutory long-term foster placement that has been presented to the Adoption, Fostering and Permanence Panel and/or agreed by the Agency Decision Maker, reviews should be held at the normal frequency for the first year of the placement.

However, consideration can be given to holding only one formal review meeting annually and conducting a less formal six-monthly review where consultations are carried out but no formal review meeting is held. Details are available in the Long Term Fostering policy available at:

<https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/media/3205/long-term-fostering-policy.pdf>

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There is also a duty to hold reviews whenever the following circumstances arise:

- at the request of the IRO: see the divisional policy on the IRO service for details of circumstances when an IRO is likely to request that a review is brought forward
- where following a statutory visit there are concerns that the placement is not safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare
- the child is about to be discharged from care and a review is not scheduled to take place beforehand
- the child receives a custodial sentence but a review is not scheduled to take place until the sentence is completed
- an accommodated child is being discharged from care but is not returning to their parent's care.

3 Arrangements for reviews

3.1 Consultation with the IRO

The social worker should consult with the child's IRO at least 15 days before the review meeting is due to be held to discuss:

- who should be invited
- progress of the case since the last review
- any written reports that will be presented at the review meeting
- additional items for the agenda
- any other relevant information.

3.2 Date of review

As soon as social workers receive the outcome "First CLA Review" on MOSAIC after the child has been pCLAed, they should contact the child's allocated IRO to arrange the date. Dates for subsequent reviews should be set at each review meeting.

If a child is subject to any other plan, for example a child protection plan or an intervention plan provided by YOS, this plan may be reviewed at the same time as the care plan. Where a child is subject to a child protection plan, please see the "Safeguarding and child protection for CLA" policy for details on how both plans will be reviewed together.

3.3 Time and venue

Children should be consulted on the time and venue of the review, but in order to ensure their attendance, avoid disrupting their education and to keep their looked after status confidential, it is recommended that reviews are held outside of school hours either at the placement or CSSW offices.

3.4 Reviews held out of time

It is Camden's policy that all reviews are held within the statutory timescales. If this is not possible, the social worker must report this to the child's IRO and the IRO manager, who may agree to the review being held in 2 parts.

The first part of the review must be held before the due date in order to remain within timescales and will involve the social worker meeting with the child's IRO to:

- review the care plan
- discuss any concerns regarding the placement
- agree any urgent action that must be carried out prior to the second part of the review
- set the date of the second part of the review.

Any decisions and actions from this part of the meeting must be recorded on the child's MOSAIC case record, and the social worker should begin the updated assessment.

The second part of the review will be the formal review meeting itself which should be conducted in the normal manner. However, when recording the review on MOSAIC, social workers and IROs must clearly record that the review has been held in two parts.

3.5 Inquorate reviews

To be quorate, a review must be attended by key people in the child's life; the carer, parent (where appropriate) and the social worker and the child (where appropriate).

If any of these are unable to attend at the scheduled date, the review cannot go ahead and the social worker should consult with the IRO with a view to either changing the date or arranging the review over 2 meetings to remain within timescales as stated in section 14.3.4.

Any new review dates should be notified to:

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- all review participants
- the team manager
- the CLA service manager
- the CLA Head of Service
- the IRO service manager.

If the allocated social worker is unable to attend the review on the day, the team manager should consult with the IRO and every effort made to identify a suitable team member who can attend in the social worker's place.

If a scheduled review is found to be inquorate on the day, the IRO will go ahead with the meeting but may need to telephone key staff to consult on decisions and obtain views.

If the IRO is unavailable on the day, the IRO service manager will make every effort to find a replacement chair or make arrangements for the review to be held over 2 meetings as described in section 14.3.4.

4 Attendance at reviews

4.1 Deciding on attendance

Social workers should consult with the child and their parents and the IRO in order to agree who should attend the review and whether there is anyone who should not attend. As the review should be as child-focused as possible, as few people as possible should attend although consultation and information gathering prior to the review should take place as widely as possible.

The following people should attend the review meeting:

- the IRO (as chair)
- the social worker and their supervisor or manager
- the foster carer or residential key worker
- the child
- their parents or anyone with parental responsibility.

Other professionals or significant people may be invited if they need to share information with the meeting, but to protect confidentiality, social workers may choose to consult with rather than invite other professionals, or arrange for them to attend part of the review.

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Children over the age of 4 should be encouraged to attend their review meeting. Parents should also be encouraged to attend, but only if this is in the child's best interests.

4.2 Invitations

Invitations to reviews should be arranged by the social worker via the MOSAIC meetings episode and the task passed to the Business Support Officer to send out letters. Invitation letters, together with relevant consultation forms, should be sent out at least 2 weeks before the date of the review.

4.3 Consultations

As part of the review process, social workers must consult with:

- ***the child:*** children should complete the CLA consultation form relevant to their age (4-11 and 11+ and 16+) with the help of either their social worker or their foster carer or key worker.
- ***their parents:*** parents should be asked to complete their consultation form, but social workers should meet with the parents to go through the form as part of their preparation for the review. The consultation form should be completed even if the parent is not attending.
- ***any other significant person, including independent visitors:*** any other person whose relationship with the child is important should be consulted and asked to complete the relevant consultation form, even if they will not attend the meeting.
- ***the foster carer or residential key worker:*** foster carers and residential key workers should be asked to complete their consultation form and may wish to do this with the help of their supervising social worker.
- ***a representative from the child's school:*** the child's teacher or the designated CLA teacher at the child's school should complete the consultation with education form as well as ensuring that the child's PEP has been updated in time for the review.
- ***a relevant health professional;*** a health professional that sees the child regularly, for example a health visitor, GP or school nurse, should be asked to complete the health consultation form.

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- ***any other relevant professional providing a service for the child***; for example, If the child receives services from CAMHS, the person working with the child should be asked to contribute a written report to the review.

All consultation forms are available from the Business Support Officer. Completed consultation forms should be returned to the social worker who should pass them on to the IRO at least 2 days before the review.

4.4 Helping children and parents to participate

Social workers should meet with children and parents at least 2 days prior to the review in order to help them prepare. This should involve:

- explaining the purpose of the review, who will be at the review and why and how the review will be conducted
- exploring how they can best take part in the review process in order to make their views known
- explaining to children that although their wishes will be taken in to account, they will only be acted on if it is thought to be in their best interests.

Social workers should ensure that they provide help for parents to attend reviews, for example providing financial assistance with travel costs.

Children and parents should be encouraged and enabled to participate fully in the review process especially if they will not be attending the actual review meeting. Social workers may consider appointing an advocate for the child or finding alternative methods of them to put across their views to the review. Social workers may also wish to discuss with parents whether they need anyone to attend with them to support them during the meeting.

5 Exclusion from reviews

Although it is Camden's policy that parents should be encouraged to attend their child's review meeting, there may be exceptional cases where it is felt that it is not in the child's best interests for them to attend the whole meeting or to attend at the same time as the child.

Exclusions may be considered where:

- a child strongly objects to their parent's attendance and the social worker and IRO believes the objection is reasonable

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- there is evidence to suggest that the parent's presence at the review would prejudice the child's welfare
- there is evidence that the parent's presence would seriously hinder the review process due to their behaviour, for example threats of violence, or incapacitation through intoxication or mental health problems
- there are conflicts between family members that the child should not witness.

In these cases, the social worker should consult with the IRO to discuss the matter and decide on excluding parents or making alternative arrangements for separate attendance at the review. When deciding, a balance must be struck between the parent's right to be involved in the review process and the need to safeguard the child and progress the review meeting.

Where a parent is to be excluded from all or part of the review meeting, the IRO should write to the parents to:

- explain why the decision has been taken
- notify them of any arrangements for them to participate in the review process by separate attendance
- detail how long the exclusion will take effect and how it will be reviewed
- explain how they will receive feedback from the review meeting if they are unable to attend
- offer to meet them in order to explain the decision if this is appropriate
- provide a copy of Camden's complaints procedure.

Decisions to exclude a parent should also be notified to the manager of the IRO service and the CLA service manager and Head of Service and a record of decisions on exclusion recorded on MOSAIC by the IRO as a consultation.

Exclusions should be time-limited and regularly reviewed. The social worker and team manager should consult with the IRO manager to review the reasons for excluding the parents from the review meeting. If parents raise the issue of exclusion, this will be passed on to the IRO manager to be dealt with.

If an incident happens during a review meeting that either adversely affects the child or severely disrupts the meeting, the IRO may either end the meeting or exclude the parent immediately.

Following this, the IRO should write to the parents notifying them of why they took this decision and what further action may be taken and consult with the social worker

and the manager of the IRO service to decide on whether an exclusion needs to be put in place.

6 Conduct of review meetings

6.1 Documents

The social worker must complete the *updated assessment and progress on care plan record* and send the completed record to their manager via the task on MOSAIC for authorisation.

Social workers must ensure that the following documents are completed and up to date and passed to the IRO at least 3 working days before the date of the review:

- the updated assessment and progress on care plan record
- the PEP
- the Health plan and review health assessment
- completed consultation forms
- any other report provided for the review.

6.2 Prior to the meeting

The IRO should ensure that arrangements for the conference have been carried out and that all information is available and participants are able to attend. If it is felt that not all the information needed to review the care plan is available, the IRO will consult with participants to decide whether or not to adjourn a review meeting. An adjourned review must be scheduled to take place within 20 working days of the original date.

If the review is to go ahead, the IRO should meet with the child and the parents beforehand to explain how the meeting will be conducted and to find out their views and what they think should be discussed at the review

6.3 During the meeting

As chair, the IRO is responsible for the general conduct of the meeting and for ensuring that:

- the review remains child focused and as open and informal as possible
- the language of the review is accessible to children and that everyone understands what is being discussed and agreed
- everyone, particularly the child and their parents, are able to fully participate and have an opportunity to state their views

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- the date for the next review is set, as well as any other planning needed to progress the decisions of the review
- all agreed actions have a timescale set and a designated professional named as responsible for carrying out the action
- everyone fully understands what has been agreed, particularly any changes to the care plan, and that any dissensions have been noted.

The IRO must also ensure that the child is aware of their right to:

- apply for an order under section 8 of the Children Act
- apply for the discharge of a care order
- make a complaint
- access an advocate.

6.4 After the meeting

The IRO and social worker should meet with the child and their parents, where appropriate, to discuss the outcomes of the review and to ensure that they fully understand what decisions have been reached and why. This is particularly important where there has been a significant change in the child's overall care plan. The IRO should also give the child and parents a user satisfaction form for completion.

The IRO should complete the chairs monitoring form immediately after the conference and the *Chairs report and updated care plan record* within 5 working days of the review being held. The report should include a short record of the discussions held in the review meeting, including:

- how the care plan is meeting the child's needs
- the views of all those involved in the review process
- any changes needed to the plan
- a list of decisions made by the review meeting
- any tasks to be carried out, by whom and within what timescales.

The review record should be sent to the CLA service manager via the task on MOSAIC for authorisation and to agree resources. Once the authorised review record is returned, the IRO should forward it to the Business Support Officer for immediate distribution.

The IRO is responsible for deciding on who should receive a copy of the record, and care should be taken regarding distribution of minutes to parents who did not attend the review or who were only present for part of the meeting.

6.5 Mid-review meeting

Where reviews are being held at a frequency of 6 months, a mid-review meeting should take place between the social worker, team manager and the child's IRO to monitor the implementation of decisions and recommendations made at the previous review meeting.

The date for the meeting will be set at the statutory CLA review to take place within 3 months. The social worker should prepare a report for the IRO on progress and any issues that may have arisen. The issues should be discussed and agreed in supervision and a short written report sent to the IRO prior to the meeting.

The outcome and decisions of a mid-review meeting should be recorded by the IRO as a consultation on the relevant case note and an alert added for the social worker and manager.