

# YOUR REVIEWS

This leaflet explains all about your CLA (Child Looked After) review meetings (called reviews).

## What is a review?

Reviews are to look at how you are being looked after and make sure everything is ok. You are the most important person in the review, so it is good if you can go to your review if possible.

## How often will I have a review?

Reviews must happen at least every six months. The first two reviews happen sooner – within 20 days of coming into care and then again within 3 months.

## Where do reviews take place?

You should have a say in where your review takes place. Some people choose to have their review where they live in their placement, some prefer to have it at school, or a different venue.

## What is an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)?

Your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is there for you. **Their main job is to make sure that your care plan (which says how you will be looked after) is meeting your needs.** They are seen as independent and they have the power to challenge things, in your best interest.

The IRO will usually chair your review – or in other words, run the review meeting. You can also chair your review, or you can chair it jointly with your IRO. If you want to do this, speak to your IRO. You can learn how to chair your review through the CHICC (Children in Care Council) who run a training session every year in the school holidays.

In between reviews your IRO will follow up to make sure everyone is doing what they said they would do.

## Here are some important things to know about IROs:

- Everyone in care must be given an IRO
- If you have brothers and sisters in care they will usually have the same one as you
- You should be able to make contact with your IRO when you want to
- You should keep the same one the whole time you're in care, if possible
- If your IRO does change (perhaps they are leaving their job) they should introduce you to your new one
- You should never be without an IRO
- They should meet you in person before every review.



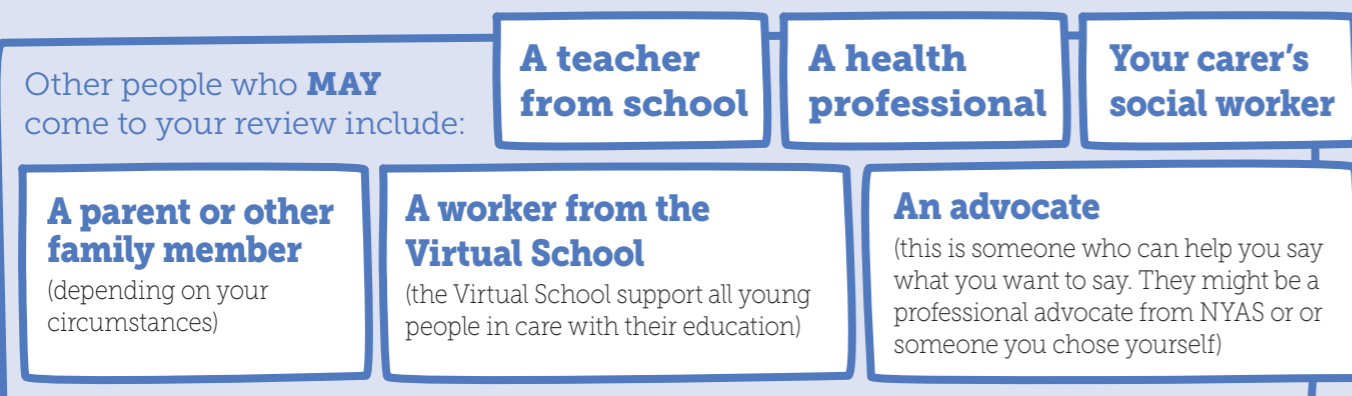
# WHAT SORT OF THINGS DO REVIEWS COVER?

Your review should include:



# WHO GOES TO REVIEWS?

All the people involved in the plans for looking after you should have a say in who attends your review. The people who will **ALWAYS** be at your review are:



# HOW DO I GET MY VIEWS ACROSS?



**The best way..**  
**..to make sure you get your views across is by going to your review.**  
Your IRO should speak to you beforehand on your own before the review starts. This is when you can tell them how you want your review to be. For example, who you want to sit next to, what you want to speak about first, whether you want people to leave after they have covered their bit (eg teachers). Also you can tell your IRO if there is anything you want to bring up.



# ARE REVIEWS HELPFUL?

Reviews should be helpful, as one young person put it, **reviews 'make sure that everyone does what they are meant to, make sure the child gets their say and make sure things get done'.**

**Another young person, aged 13yrs, used her review to improve contact arrangements.**

She'd been in care for 6 years and was living in a long term foster placement. She attended her review and explained how she was unhappy with how contact with her family

was happening. She said her contact was happening at a family centre which was more suited to younger children. As a result contact was changed to contact in the community and within two months she started seeing her parents away from the contact centre.



# WHERE ELSE CAN I GO FOR SUPPORT?

**If you are not happy about anything to do with how you are being looked after and you feel you are not being listened to, you can get independent help from NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service).** They have advocates who do not work for Children's Services who can help you get your views heard by attending meetings or writing letters on your behalf.

**Your IRO can also refer issues up to senior managers in Hertfordshire County Council.** This is called 'escalation' – you can ask your IRO about it.

You can also make a comment, compliment or complaint about anything – your IRO can explain how you do this.

**Your IRO is:**

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**Their contact details are:**

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**Other useful contact details:**

**NYAS:**

Call **0808 808 1001**  
Visit **www.nyas.net**  
Email **help@nyas.net**

**CHICC:**

Call **07812323854**  
Email **CHICC@hertfordshire.gov.uk**

