



Roles and Responsibilities for The Statutory Review of Looked After Children

July 2019

Version Control

Title	Looked After Children – Statutory Roles and Responsibilities
Version	DSP 1 (Nov 2016 V2)
Date	July 2019
Author	Business Unit

Update and Approval Process			
Version	Group/Person	Date	Comments
DSP1	Business Unit	July 2019	Rebranded under new Safeguarding arrangements to reflect Statutory Guidance.

Issue Date	
Review Date	
Reviewing Officer	

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1. Introduction

1.1 Monitoring placements through supervision and review is an essential part of safeguarding the child's welfare and implementing their care plan. This guidance seeks to improve outcomes for looked after children by providing guidance to social workers, multi-agency professionals involved with the children, Team Managers, Senior Managers and Independent Reviewing Officers about how they should discharge their distinct responsibilities to ensure:

- a structured, co-ordinated approach to the conduct of a review;
- the full participation of both child and parents in the decision-making process where possible and appropriate; and
- the full participation of the child's carers, subject to the wishes and feelings of the child where age appropriate.

2.0 Purpose of Looked After Reviews

2.1 The circumstances of all children and young people looked after are reviewed in order that their welfare is safeguarded and promoted most effectively throughout their period of care.

The purpose of a LAC review is:

- To help ensure that children and young people who are looked after are given the opportunity to improve and maximise their life chances.
- To ascertain the child/young person's views.
- To consult with the child/young person's parents, carers, and any other person with parental responsibility.
- To gather information about the child/young person's progress and care including health care.
- Ensure that the overall care plan for the child remains right for them, and is achievable within a reasonable timescale.
- To discuss information and to amend plans accordingly.
- To confirm or make decisions about the child/young person's care plan.
- To identify actions required, the persons to undertake them and to set out timescales and monitoring arrangements to achieve the desired outcome.
- To monitor whether agreed actions have been carried out and explore what impacts these have had on outcomes for the child.

2.2 The status of review meetings are made clear in the *Care Planning, Placement and Case review (England) Regulations 2010, 32 (2)*

"The responsible authority must not make any significant change to (a child's) care plan unless the proposed change has first been considered at a review of (the child's) case, unless this is not reasonably practicable."

3.0 Attendance at Reviews

3.1 The number of people attending LAC review meetings will be limited to that commensurate with the child/young person's ability to engage in the meeting, and invitations to the LAC review must take into account the wishes of the child/young person. The focus of the LAC review is to reduce the formality of the meeting for the child/young person, and ensure the process is child centred.

- 3.2 It is however, imperative that the views of relevant professionals are included in the review process, and if they are unable to/not invited to attend, information should still be sought. This should include the completion of a report from health and education and other agencies (**Appendix 1, 2, 3**). This is to ensure relevant information is shared and allows professionals to challenge the plan for the child.
- 3.3 The review must be a flexible process, and will vary in relation to each child.
- 3.4 The minimum requirement for attendance at a LAC review will be the child/young person, the child/young person's parent/parents unless it is not in the child's best interests for them to be present (the IRO can arrange to see/speak to them separately) the child/young person's social worker or their team manager, the child/young person's carer and the Independent Reviewing Officer. If the child is under 5 the midwife (for newborn) or the child's health visitor must be invited to attend and the school nurse for school aged children. The child/young person's advocate where appointed and other key family members should also be present as appropriate to meet the needs of the child/young person's Plan.
- 3.5 The social worker must speak with the child 20 working days before a review to ask who they would like to attend. This must include asking them about the professionals involved in their life and the importance of their information being shared to ensure good planning for them. The most appropriate venue for the review should also be discussed.
- 3.6 Where a child has an appointed Guardian, they are to be invited.
- 3.7 Attendance by anyone other than those listed above will only be justified in the context of their contribution to that particular LAC review meeting, and their attendance should take full account of the child/young person's wishes. It may be necessary for the LAC review to be split to ensure both the contribution of the child/young person, and from relevant professionals. In such cases, the social worker should discuss the arrangements for this prior to the review with the IRO. In cases where professionals disagree with the care plan for the child then this should be dealt with via the [DSCB Professional Challenge Procedure](#).

4.0 Timing and Frequency of Reviews

- 4.1 Under the provisions of the IRO Handbook 2010, Local Authorities are required to review the case of any child who is Looked After or provided with accommodation. Each case is **first to be reviewed within 20 working days** of the date upon which the child begins to be looked after or provided with accommodation. **A second review must be carried out no later than 3 months** after the first review and **thereafter subsequent reviews shall be carried out not more than 6 months after the date of the previous review.**
- 4.2 The requirements for the frequency of LAC reviews, as stated above, is the minimum standard. However, Reviews can be brought forward if there is a change to the plan, or the child's placement changes. If the change of placement is as a result of the sudden breakdown of existing arrangements then the Independent Reviewing Officer must be informed immediately and a LAC review held without delay, which should be completed within 20 days.

- 4.3 The Placement with Parents Regulations 1991 require that a change of plan towards the child/young person's return to family members under a Care Order is brought to a LAC review meeting for agreement prior to any action being taken.
- 4.4 If the Independent Reviewing Officer or any other professional has specific concerns about a child/young person and directs that a LAC review should be brought forward, then this must occur. Any request from the child/young person or parents(s) for a LAC review should be given serious consideration.

5.0 Participation

- 5.1 Children and Young People should be able to actively participate in their reviews. Local authority performance is measured against recorded achievement in this area of activity.

"Professionals have a responsibility to facilitate this and this can only happen in a climate that encourages children/young people's ongoing involvement and empowerment." (Quality Protects Research)

- 5.2 Reviews should be a positive experience for children/young people and not a forum for criticism.
- 5.3 Children and young people of sufficient age and understanding should always be helped and encouraged to attend and participate as fully as they are able. It is expected that all children over the age of 4 years will be positively enabled to participate in their review in some way in order that their perceptions, wishes and views can be heard. This is their review and can have a huge impact on their lives. It is crucial they feel able to contribute. If appropriate the child/young person may have an advocate to express their views and wishes
- 5.4 At the LAC review meeting, the Independent Reviewing Officer must ensure the child/young person understands, and contributes where possible, to what is being discussed, and may arrange to meet with the child/young person before or after the meeting. There may be exceptional circumstances where it is not possible to meet with the child/young person, for example where a child/young person is seriously ill or has a significant disability, or would become distressed. These cases will rely on the professional judgements of social workers and other significant persons, and will be discussed with the Independent Reviewing Officer.

6.0 Contents of the Review Meeting

- 6.1 The child's LAC Care Plan will be based on a thorough assessment and will be explicitly agreed with the child/young person, their parents and their carers. This should be discussed with them prior to the review. The aim of the review is to assess how far the care plan is addressing all the child's needs and whether any changes are required to achieve this. The focus of the first review meeting will be on examining and confirming the plan and demonstrate how Darlington Borough Council is meeting its Corporate Parenting obligations to looked after children. Subsequent reviews will be occasions for monitoring progress against the plan and making decisions to amend the plan as necessary, to reflect new knowledge and changed circumstances.
- 6.2 IRO to ensure that each review addresses:
- the effect of any change in the child's circumstances since the last review;
 - whether decisions taken at the last review have been successfully implemented

and if not why not;

- the legal status of the child and whether it remains appropriate – for example, where the child is looked after under section 20 of the 1989 Act, whether this status provides the basis for legal security for the child so that proper plans can be made to provide him/her with secure attachments that will meet his/her needs through to adulthood;
- whether the child's plan includes a plan for permanence within viable timescales that are meaningful for the child– this must include plans for permanency from the second review onwards;
- the arrangements for contact in relation to the parents, siblings and other family members or significant others, whether these take into account the child's current wishes and feelings and whether any changes are needed to these arrangements;
- whether the placement is meeting the child's needs– this should include consideration of the attachment between the child and those who are caring for him/her, how the local authority is ensuring that the placement provides the quality of care that the child needs and whether any change to the arrangements is necessary or likely to become necessary before the next review;
- the child's educational needs, progress and development and whether any actions need to be taken or are likely to become necessary before the next review, in order to ensure that the child's educational needs are met and not neglected (this should include consideration of the current PEP);
- the leisure activities in which the child is engaging and whether these are meeting the child's needs and current expressed interests;
- the report of the most recent assessment of the child's health and whether any change to the arrangements for the child's health are necessary or likely to become necessary before the next review, in order to ensure that the child's health needs, including emotional health needs, are met and not neglected. The first review needs to ascertain that the statutory Initial Health Assessment (IHA) has taken place within 20 working days and if not establish reason ie. LAC Health Team still awaiting IHA paperwork in accordance with IHA Escalation SOP & Flow Chart (Appendix 2)/ DNA/CAN. If a Review Health Assessment (RHA) has not been completed, ascertain why. The IRO should ask for proof that the assessment has been requested and the relevant consent form completed
- the identity needs of the child, how these are being met, including concerns of risk;
- whether the arrangement to provide advice, support and assistance to the child continues to be appropriate and understood by the child;
- whether any arrangements need to be made for the time when the child will no longer be looked after, so that the child will be properly prepared and ready to make this significant move; whether the child's social worker has taken steps to establish the child's wishes and feelings, that the care plan has taken these into consideration and that the care plan demonstrates this;
- whether the child is being visited by the social worker at the minimum statutory intervals and when the child requests a visit; and
- that plans and decisions to advance the overall planning for the child's care have been taken and acted upon in a timely way.

6.3 The IRO is responsible for setting any remedial timescales if actions have not been taken and there is a risk of drift in the delivery of a plan that will meet the child's needs and planned outcomes within the child's timescale.

6.4 Only the LAC review meeting can confirm a significant change in the Care Plan for a looked after child. The role of the Independent Reviewing Officer, as chair of the lac review meeting, is to agree the Care Plan and endorse this if they are satisfied that it

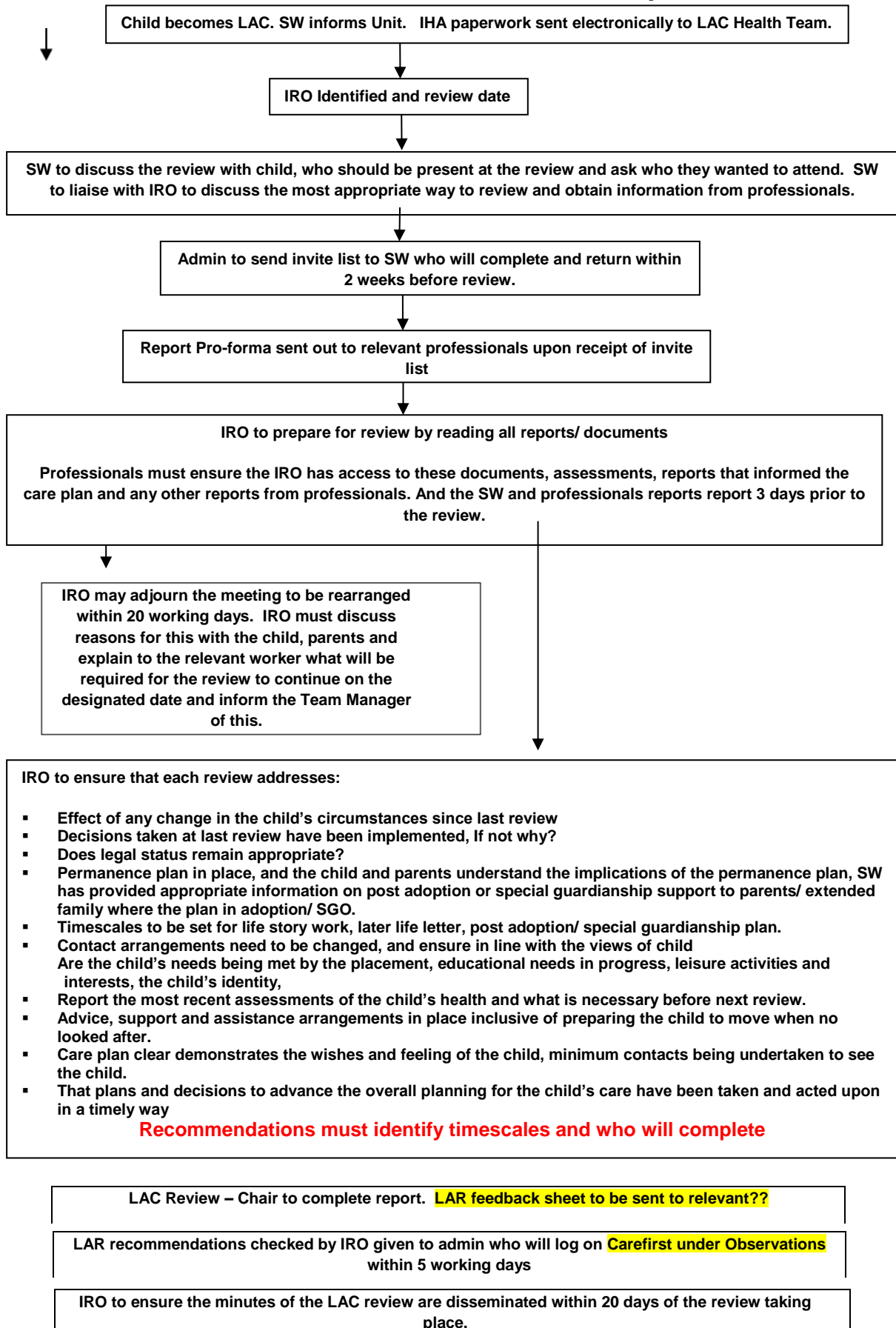
will meet the child/young person's long term needs. If the Independent Reviewing Officer is not able to endorse the child/young person's Care Plan, this will need to be discussed with the relevant children's Services Team manager to resolve the issues of concern.

- 6.5 Meetings held during the review cycle to consider aspects of the child/young person's Care Plan and enable progress to be made are part of the review process, and will inform the LAC review meeting. The Independent Reviewing Officer needs to be kept informed of such meetings, and their outcomes, and may be invited to attend if appropriate. All significant decisions relating to the child/young person's Care Plan must be considered at the earliest opportunity at a LAC review meeting. Significant decisions taken outside of LAC review meetings may risk contravening the Human Rights Act.
- 6.6 A clear and realistic Care Plan to achieve permanence for the child/young person must be prepared for the second LAC review meeting at four months. This may incorporate twin or multiple tracking, with timescales for determining the direction, particularly where this is a Court requirement in care proceedings.

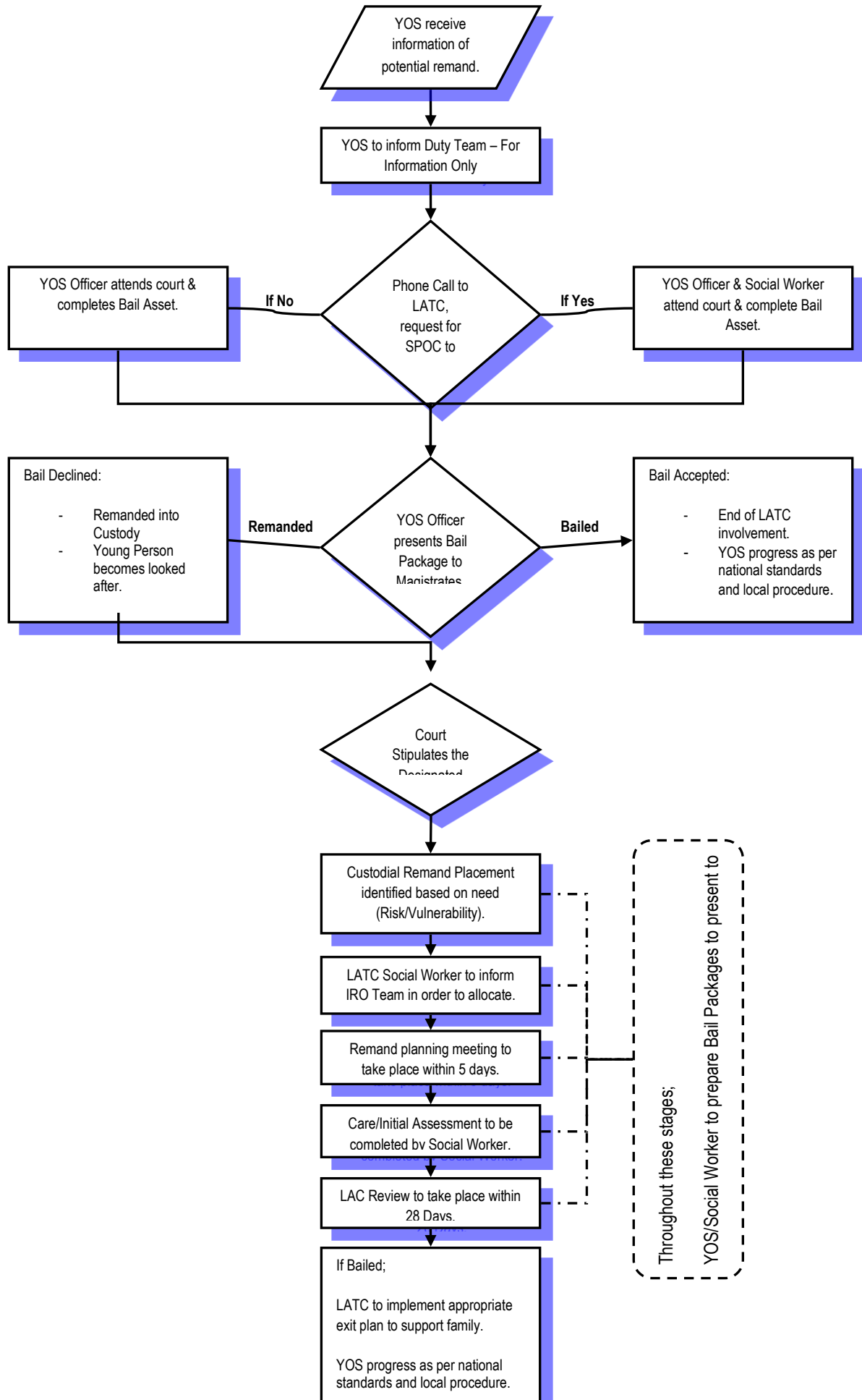
7.00 Following the Review

- 7.1 The IRO will ensure that the recommendations from the review is completed on the child's Social Care record within 5 working days.
- 7.2 The LAC Chairs report will be completed within 15 working days of the review. The social worker will distribute to parents. The Safeguarding Unit will distribute to the child, carers and professionals, within 20 working days of the meeting.

Looked After Child Process Map



YOS/LATC Flowchart



CHILD IS PLACED IN LOCAL AUTHORITY CARE

It remains the responsibility of the Local Authority Social Worker to ensure that timescales are met

DARLINGTON

**Within 2
WORKING DAYS
of becoming LAC**

LAC HEALTH ADMINISTRATOR

If no BAAF forms are received in 2 working days the LAC Health Administrator will email

MedicalConsents@darlington.gcsx.gov.uk

FAO:

- Social Worker, DBC
- Team Manager, DBC
- Service Manager Fostering, Adoption and Children's Homes, DBC
- Service Manager Assessment and Safeguarding Teams, DBC

**Within 5
WORKING DAYS
of becoming LAC**

LAC HEALTH ADMINISTRATOR

If no BAAF forms are received in 5 working days the LAC Health Administrator will email

MedicalConsents@darlington.gcsx.gov.uk

FAO:

- Social Worker, DBC
- Team Manager, DBC
- Service Manager Fostering, Adoption and Children's Homes, DBC
- Service Manager Assessment and Safeguarding Teams
- LAC Nurse, CDDFT

**Within 7
WORKING DAYS
of becoming LAC**

LAC NURSE

If no BAAF forms are received in 7 working days the LAC Nurse will contact by telephone or email

- Service Manager Fostering, Adoption and Children's Homes, DBC
- Service Manager Assessment and Safeguarding Teams, DBC
- Head of First Contact and Locality Services, DBC
- Head of Safeguarding & Improvement, DBC

**Timescales
exceeded
20 WORKING
DAYS**

LAC HEALTH ADMINISTRATOR

If no BAAF forms are received in 20 working days the LAC Health Administrator will on a weekly basis send a list of those consents which are outstanding and exceeding 20 working days to:

- Service Manager Fostering, Adoption and Children's Homes, DBC
- Service Manager Assessment and Safeguarding Teams, DBC
- Head of First Contact and Locality Services, DBC
- Head of Safeguarding & Improvement, DBC
- Health LAC Manager, CDDFT
- Designated Nurses, CDDFT/CCG

A 3 monthly report will be shared with Assistant Director of Nursing safeguarding Children and Adults and Assistant Director of Children's Service

Appendix 1

HEALTH REPORT FORM LOOKED AFTER CHILD REVIEW

We want the looked after review to be a purposeful meeting in respect of the child/ren attending your school.

The child/ren will have been asked who they want to attend and you may have been invited by them. If you have not been invited please complete this report and return to the IRO for the child/ren to the Safeguarding Children Unit, North Lodge, Gladstone Street, Darlington, DL3 6JX at least 3 days prior to the review meeting.

Name of Child	
Name of person completing the report	
Job title	
Name of child / young person's GP	
Address and name of GP Practice child / young person registered with	
Date your involvement commenced	
How often do you see the child / young person (give dates when seen)	

Summary of your involvement with the child / young person to include:- Work completed to date / Ongoing work	
Is the child up to date with immunisations IHA paperwork sent electronically to LAC Health Team (completed and signed BAAF IHA form, plus consent to share form).	
Date of last looked after health assessment	
Date of last dental check	
Date of last opticians check	
Does the child / young person have any outstanding health needs	
Does the child / young person attend CAMHS if so why?	
Does the child get support from the person caring for them? Please comment if you believe more support is needed	

Are there any concerning behaviours/risks identified in relation to this child?	
Is there anything you think we should know?	
Have you any suggestions or comments on how to improve the outcome for this child / young person	
Have you any comments regarding the Local Authority plan for the child?	

EDUCATION REPORT FORM LOOKED AFTER CHILD REVIEW

We want the looked after review to be a purposeful meeting in respect of the child/ren attending your school.

The child/ren will have been asked who they want to attend and you may have been invited by them. If you have not been invited please complete this report and return to the IRO for the child/ren to the Safeguarding Children Unit, North Lodge, Gladstone Street, Darlington, DL3 6JX at least 3 days prior to the review meeting.

Name of Child	
Name of School	
Please state if the child is attending alternative provision	
Year Group	
Name of person completing the report	
Childs attendance %	
Summary of child's attainment and any issues you feel are impacting on the child's attainment	
Does the child have a Statement of SEN?	YES / NO (Please delete)
What level/how much support is the child receiving in school?	

<p>Does the child get support from the person caring for them? Please comment if you believe more support is needed</p>	
<p>Does the child attend out of school activities?</p>	<p>YES / NO (Please delete)</p>
<p>If YES what do they attend</p>	
<p>Are there any concerning behaviours/risks identified in relation to this child?</p>	
<p>Is there anything you think we should know?</p>	
<p>Have you any suggestions or comments on how to improve the outcome for this child / young person</p>	
<p>Have you any comments regarding the Local Authority plan for the child?</p>	

REPORT FORM LOOKED AFTER CHILD REVIEW

We want the looked after review to be a purposeful meeting in respect of the child/ren attending your school.

The child/ren will have been asked who they want to attend and you may have been invited by them. If you have not been invited please complete this report and return to the IRO for the child/ren to the Safeguarding Children Unit, North Lodge, Gladstone Street, Darlington, DL3 6JX at least 3 days prior to the review meeting.

Name of Child	
Name of person completing the report	
Agency and Address	

Date your involvement commenced	
How often do you see the child / young person	
Summary of your involvement with the child / young person to include:- Work completed to date /Ongoing work	
Does the child / young person engage well with the work you are doing?	
Does the child get support from the person caring for them? Please comment if you believe more support is needed	
Are there any concerning behaviours/risks identified in relation to this child?	

Is there anything you think we should know?	
Have you any suggestions or comments of how to improve outcomes for this child / young person	
Have you any comments regarding the Local Authority plan for the child?	