

DSCB Annual Report – a more thorough breakdown on IRO QA Notifications "Statutory Requirements not met"

Where an IRO has significant concerns about practice or other issues affecting a child's care plan then the IRO can instigate the QA notification process:

The QA notifications for 2018/19 were made up as follows:

Reason	Number
Drift or Delay	6
Excellent Practice	11
Non completion of Significant Tasks	11
Persistent Poor Practice	4
Statutory Requirements Not Met	59
Total	91

The greatest number of QA notifications were raised for statutory requirements not met. At the request of the CYP Scrutiny Committee a further breakdown of these notifications has been undertaken.

The Deputy Head of Services recognises that the number of occurrences where the statutory requirements were not met is too high and as a result of this further exploration was undertaken to establish whether children's care plans were delayed or they were left in an unsafe situation, this was **not** found to be the case.

The reasons why statutory requirements were not met were due to several different reasons.

There were 17 incidents when the young person was not visited within timescales. On further scrutiny of this information there was one occasion when the social worker was off sick and many other instances when the visit was undertaken but it was late. For young people in care there are statutory visiting timescales, these differ depending on when the young person came into care, what the legal basis is and what type of setting they may in. If the visit is not completed by the due date it is classed as late and formal QA notification is undertaken.

There were 30 QA notifications for review paperwork not completed within timescales by the social worker. It is a requirement that the paperwork is completed 3 days in advance of the review and sent to the IRO. This provides sufficient time for the IRO to prepare for the review and consider the care plan. In all of these instances the review went ahead as information was shared by other professionals involved and the child's care giver which meant that the IRO was able to endorse the care plan. The paperwork was subsequently completed by the social worker.

There were 6 QA notifications for SW not attending the statutory review, from the notifications it has not been possible to break down the reasons for this. Usually the main

reason why social workers don't attend a review is because they are off sick, and cover has not been possible to be organised due to the short notice and unplanned nature. It can be confirmed that all the reviews went ahead, as the IRO had sufficient knowledge about the child and care plan.

There were 6 instances when the IRO service was not informed in appropriate timescales that the young person had come into care, this may have resulted in the review being late and thus missing its statutory deadline. Statutory guidance states that the manager of the IRO service is advised that a child has become looked after within two working days and IRO appointed within the first five working days.

Conclusion

There were over 1200 reviews undertaken in 2018/19. Over 96% of the reviews were completed within timescales and over 97% had young people participating in their reviews. Whilst we strive to ensure all statutory tasks are completed, given the challenges that social workers face with increasing numbers of children in care and the competing demands of their role it does sometimes lead to a statutory task not being completed or being completed within timescales.

The IRO service continues to maintain scrutiny oversight of this and the DHOS meets regularly with operational services to raise matters of concern in order to improve practice.

On reviewing the formal QA notifications in more depth, it can be concluded with confidence that no young person was left at risk on the basis of the formal QA notifications. If this was the case, the issue would have been immediately escalated to the Deputy Head of the Independent Reviewing Service.

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