

# **CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**IRO Annual Report Sept 2009**

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## Introduction

1.1 The Southwark IRO Service is responsible for discharging the Council's Statutory responsibility to provide independent monitoring of its performance in relation to the Looked After Child's Review, now extended by Legislation to the whole case. For Legislative background details please see Appendix A.

1.2 This report summarises the performance of the IRO service and progress made for the period 2008-2009. It also discusses the concept of the independence of the IRO Service, an issue that arose during a proposed redeployment of staff from the Looked After Children's Service and one which recent Legislation makes provision to address in future if required through Clause 11 & 12 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

## 2 Southwark Context

2.1 The IRO Service forms part of the Quality Assurance Business Unit, the Manager of which reports directly to the Assistant Director for Children's Services (AD) making IROs independent of children's cases operational management structure where allocation of resources rests. Responsibility for both Operational and Quality Assurance services come together with the AD. In May the Service moved to Tooley Street Offices.

2.2 At present in Southwark the Service consists of Service Manager QAU for LAC, 3.8 permanent IROs and the equivalent of 4.2 IROs made up by using freelance IROs (10 persons with variable caseloads from 5-60) on a sessional basis. The structure and Management of the IRO Service is currently the subject of an internal review and a document on options will be circulated for consultation to all relevant parties including Looked After Children's group, Speakerbox, in due course.

2.3 The issue of the independence of the service and whether it can challenge operational services has contributed to Clauses 11 & 12 in the Children's and Young Persons Act 2008. Clause 11/12 provides for central Government to strip Local Authorities of the IRO function if they cannot demonstrate effective independence. Various representations including those from the London wide IRO Managers group have been made to Government to address the need to ring fence the IRO service against staff being internally transferred without being subject to a rigorous recruitment process which would secure the independence and maintain service standards.

2.4 Legislation makes clear IROs discharge an individual and not a corporate or collective responsibility. Even though they may be Local Authority employees, or as is the case with sessionals, local authority contractors, the IROs do not represent the local authority or its interests. Their sole focus is on the interests of the Looked After Child. While decisions are made by the Local Authority, the views and recommendations of IROs are their own, and cannot be amended, or countermanded by a more senior officer or an elected officer. It is therefore important to ensure their appointments are as a result of transparent and rigorous processes.

2.5 IROs can raise concerns they may have re care planning at any level of seniority within the Local Authority they feel appropriate. They also have in statute a direct line of reporting to lead elected councillor for LAC. And with the new legislation, they can refer directly to CAFCASS in parallel to seeking internal resolution of an issue re a child's human rights.

2.6 The Local Authority has a duty to ensure IROs have sufficient objectivity and separation from care planning and resource management. IROs must be confident in their own judgement and ability to challenge operational services avoiding 'too cosy' a relationship which might compromise objectivity and resolve. It is equally important that they are not 'loose canons' with unfair or unrealistic expectations of the local authority. The relationship is frequently described as that of a 'critical friend'. Any model of IRO service must therefore be subject to rigorous and transparent recruitment and appointment procedures within the local authority to ensure fair and appropriate appointments for both LAC and The Local Authority.

2.7 In future, all appointments to the IRO service must be approved by the Assistant Director Specialist Children's Services and Safeguarding, to ensure that the highest standards are maintained.

### 3 Composition of the IRO service as at Sept 2009 is

		IRO's	full time equivalent
3.1 Gender	Female	12	6.8
	Male	2	1.1
Ethnicity	White British	12	7
	Caribbean	2	1

3.2 The gender and ethnicity imbalance in the IRO service continues to be of concern as the service does not reflect the ethnicity of the care population. A recruitment campaign on the open market in Oct 2008 was not successful in redressing this imbalance. Recruitment of sessionals added a further black Afro Caribbean IRO part time candidate. The general shortage of social work staff is a national problem exacerbated by recent media coverage.

3.3. The team has been a relatively stable team with 7 IROs in post for 3-7 years .There have been 4 new to post in the last 18months ( equivalent to 2 full time posts ) .Thus retention of IROs has been good and most importantly LAC have had a continuity of IRO, often being the only worker that has remained with the child through changes of teams and social workers, carrying valuable information and history for the child and care planning. The new Legislation states a Looked After Child must have an named IRO thus careful consideration must be given to any major changes to the IRO structure or membership to ensure consistency.

3.5 The awaited statutory guidance will recommend average caseloads for IRO's. The expanded role of the IRO to now include review of the Local Authorities performance in case planning and not just a Review has increased the IROs workload and consequently caseloads will have to reduce. IROs in Southwark are now working with an average of 60 cases. Although the LAC population has decreased over the last 4 years the number of Reviews has not reflected this decrease. Contributing to this is the number of children looked after for a short period , less than a year , often requiring 2-3 reviews but as they have not remained in care for a 1 year period may not show in end of year LAC figures. Already this year ( April 2009 – 7 September 2009) there have been 120 initial reviews for newly looked after children , a significant increase on previous years and likely to be attributable to reaction to Baby P and other recent serious cases in the media. For both these reasons it is

therefore unlikely that the IRO staffing requirements will be able to decrease in the near future even if overall numbers of LAC continue to decrease. However these fluctuating changes require a flexible IRO service which must be given weight in any review of IRO service structure.

	Number of reviews per year	Numbers of Lac at end of year	Number of Initials
2005/2006	1588	647	
2006/2007	1735	633	
2007/2008	1738	576	164
2008/2009	1719	533	185
2009/		574 at aug	120 to sept 7th

## Progress for Period 2008-2009

### 5 Performance Indicators

5.1 Performance Indicators (PI's) which are directly under the responsibility of the IRO service are those for Participation of children and young people in their reviews and the timeliness of reviews.

5.2 Participation at reviews is measured through data codes, a PN7 code being defined as 'LAC does not attend review nor are their views conveyed to reviews'. The Performance Indicator is based on number of LAC who have not had even one PN7 code during the year. So although a young person may attend 2 out of 3 reviews in a year this will not fulfil the criteria for Participation. The Participation PI was 94% for the period 2008-2009 although there were only 28 PN7's out of 1718 reviews. This PI is an increase from 76% in 2003-2004 when first recorded and similar to the previous year. 20 of these LAC were aged 13+ with 13 of them choosing not to attend or give their views regardless of efforts made. See Appendix for summary of audit of PN7 codes.

5.3 Participation and consultation with parents and families is now being recorded and monitored though figures as yet are not available. These are anticipated to be available for next year following data input to the ICS system this year. A draft Protocol for Participation of Parents at Reviews is being circulated and updated draft consultation forms for parents are also in circulation awaiting feedback.

5.4 Timeliness of reviews as per statutory requirements has improved significantly from 88% in 2005-2006 when first recorded to 94% for 2008-2009. Again this Performance Indicator records numbers of Looked After children who have had all their reviews within timescale so although last year total number of reviews undertaken was 1718 only 30 were over timescales and most of these by a few days only. The awaited statutory guidance will

introduce more flexible arrangements for scheduling reviews enabling IROs to postpone the timing for reviews as per each case's need rather than adhering to such strict timescales.

5.5 There is not a Performance Indicator for distribution of reviews. However statutory guidance states good practice is to get review decisions out to children and others within 14 days after review. IROs targets in Southwark are to complete their reports and recommendations within 7 days to send to Team Managers to ratify decisions and distribute by the 14 day limit. IROs have improved their performance with this 7 day target to almost 70% of reviews now being completed in this timescale and a further 20% within 20 days. Last years concern re the distribution of signed off reviews by Team Managers has also been addressed by the LAC service and QAU in the last 6 months with Team Managers prioritising signing off any backdated reviews and a new ICS programme written to produce monthly figures for distribution .This ICS programme will also be able to show where delay may be occurring – with IRO, Team Manager or mail out. Data from this will be available for next years report.

5.6 Administrative support for invitations to child care reviews and distribution of review reports is placed within the operational services and not with the QAU service as happens for child protection conferences. A review of all admin support services in Children's Services is being undertaken and it is unlikely that responsibility for these functions will change.

## **6 IT & Integrated Children's System ICS**

6.1 The ICS Review reports have been updated to enable IROs to 'pull through' information from the Care Assess social work reports, health assessments and Personal Education Plans into the final Review Report .From the final Review report a more child friendly version without the pages of data etc can be printed for distribution . Implementation of this new Care Assess review report system has just begun and monitoring and feedback on its success will take place over the next 6 months.

6.2 IROs including all sessionals have now been provided with the technology (signify key fobs) and training to access the Southwark Records System including ICS from home. This will assist permanent workers with time management through home working arrangements and sessionals will be able to read files from home. Also all IRO reports will be on the ICS system feeding in to the ICS data collection programmes and thus avoiding the previous manual collation of information due to sessionals lack of access to ICS .

6.3 While the ICS system offers these advantages, it has not been without great consternation for most IROs as it has been for other social work staff . The amount of computer time recording and data inputting for social work staff has been a prominent concern nationally raised in recent social work enquiries. This concern is just as applicable in Southwark even though our system may be considered more advanced than many Local Authorities and Southwark LAC service does have an excellent IT officer. However there are many problems with SERCO and their delivery of an efficient IT system which Corporate Parenting Committee will be aware of.

## **7 IRO Interventions**

7.1 IROs have the responsibility through current Regulations to bring to the attention of persons at an appropriate level of seniority within the responsible authority any failure to review the case or to take proper steps to implement review decisions.

7.2 To date IROs have been carrying this responsibility out via emails and direct discussions with operational services which were not in the main recorded on ICS , the child's file . Despite having an escalation form for this purpose this appeared to be the preferred method of resolution for operational services .This has made it difficult to measure and quality assure this IRO function as only the more serious concerns would be brought to the attention of the IRO Manager. A new ICS recording format with criteria for use has now been added to enable a more transparent recording system. A summary of IROs interventions will therefore be available for next years report. In addition to this a review of the escalation policy will be undertaken .

7.3 Examples of IROs of issues IROs have made interventions on include the following

- A semi independent unit had poor standards of care and was subsequently not used by Southwark
- Lack of follow up on Review Decisions due to staff changes where there was concern of high risk of pregnancy for a vulnerable young girl
- A young person discharged home without sufficient support plan
- Drift in initiating legal planning and undertaking necessary assessments for young child
- Delay in making satisfactory post 18 arrangements for a yp with learning difficulties
- Delay in discharging a Care Order on a 16 year old yp living with parent for over a year
- Delay in completing later life letters for young children being adopted

7.5 Ensuring review decisions are implemented through monitoring in Supervision was raised in last years report and this remains an issue . However recent audits of supervision records has started to address this. Also the new ICS Review format requires the social work report to complete updates to all previous review decisions.

## **Summary**

8.1 The IRO Service has continued to maintain an efficient service contributing to good performance in Southwark against key performance indicators in the New National Indicator Set: C63 & NI66 for participation at Reviews by LAC and timeliness of Reviews . It also contributes to many other indicators through quality assuring and collection of data or raising issues on cases at appropriate levels to minimise poor outcomes e.g drift in care planning, placement stability etc

8.2 The national context has produced many creative approaches to the employment of IROs, in an attempt to maximise their independence, and has announced it will consider

other options for the management and governance of the service if independence cannot be demonstrated within Local authorities under Clause 11/12 of the CYP Act 2008. Clause 11/12 gives the Secretary of State the power to establish a separate body to carry out the functions of the IRO and charge the Local Authority. A Review of the structure of the IRO service within Southwark is being undertaken to ensure the Service is flexible in meeting fluctuating need in the future and be demonstrably independent and effective. This will include identifying a rigorous and transparent recruitment and appointment process.

## Appendices

### A Legislative Background

A.1 **The Adoption and Children Act 2002 Section 118** amended Section 26 of The Children Act 1989 by introducing a new statutory role of Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) with the responsibility of reviewing Children in Care (referred to as Looked after Children – LAC – in Southwark) cases. The **Regulations and Guidance (Independent Reviewing Officers Guidance : Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the Review of Children's Cases (Amendment) Regulations 2004)** came into effect on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2004 issued under **Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970**.

A.2 Prior to this it was acceptable for social work Team Managers to chair LAC reviews though many Local Authorities (including Southwark) had started to move to independent chairing, as had happened much earlier with independent chairing of child protection conferences .

A.3 The responsibilities of the IRO are as set out in the Guidance

- To participate in the review of children's cases and chair any meetings that are part of a Review
- Monitor the Local Authorities functions in respect of reviews
- Refer a case to CAF/CASS ( The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, an independent non departmental body reporting to the Secretary of State for Children , Schools and Families with the role of safeguarding and promoting best interests of children in family court proceedings ) where a child's rights have been breached due to actions or inactions of the Local Authority
- Ensure the children's views are given appropriate weight in decision making
- Ensure persons responsible for implementing any decisions of a review are identified and the timescale within which a decision should be completed
- Bring to the attention of persons at an appropriate level of Seniority within the authority any failure to review within timescales or make arrangements for implementation of decisions
- Ensure the child has an appropriate adult to provide assistance to bring proceedings on their behalf on their own account under the Act or assist in obtaining legal advice for this.



#### A.4 As a minimum the IRO will

- Be independent of line management of a case and the decision making process for allocation of financial resources
- Have sufficient relevant experience to undertake the functions defined.

**A.5 The Children and Young Persons Act 2008** came into force in November 2008. However the statutory guidance which will detail how this act is to be implemented is expected only at the turn of the year. The Draft Guidance is attached to this Report.

The key themes of this legislation for LAC are

- High ambitions
- Good parenting from everyone in the system
- Stability in every aspect of the children's experience
- Centrality of the voice of the child

**A.6** The Legislation aims to achieve this by strengthening the care planning duties of local authorities through

- Introducing one set of regulations and guidance for all requirements for care planning
- New arrangements for scheduling reviews
- Completing the full implementation of the Integrated Children's System (ICS) in every local authority.

**A.7** As part of this it requires Local Authorities to appoint a named IRO for each child enhancing personal accountability and individual responsibilities of each IRO. Named IROs have been allocated to all LAC cases in Southwark since 2004.

The Act reinforces the role of the IRO by:

- New Regulations which prescribe the manner in which the IRO functions are to be performed
- A new power for DCSF to issue statutory guidance to IROs and their Managers
- A new duty on the local authority to cooperate with the IRO even if not a Local Authority employee and take all reasonable steps to enable the IRO to perform his/her functions
- Requiring the IRO to ensure the local authority give due consideration to any views expressed by the child
- Requiring the IRO to monitor the local authority performance of functions in relation to the child's case not just in respect of the review
- New Powers to the Secretary of State to make provision for IRO services to be delivered by an independent national body if thought necessary ( Clause 12) ; and

- Enabling the IRO to go to CAF/CASS at any stage in parallel to escalating an area of concern within the Local Authority

A.8 The reinforcement of the IRO role has arisen out of widespread concern that the IRO role is not as effective as had been hoped for when originally introduced. IROs were thought not to be challenging enough or able to challenge the local authority decision makers sufficiently robustly to make a difference to LAC lives and care planning when appropriate. This is as a result of not one case being escalated to CAF/CASS. Nationally IROs have consulted with CAF/CASS but have not escalated a case to them, needing to exhaust the internal escalation process before this could happen. The hoped for healthy scrutiny of the local authorities care planning and corporate parenting for LAC had become more of a 'rubber stamping' exercise in many Local Authorities.

A.9 The Guidance states the '*manager for the IRO service should provide an annual report to the Lead Member with executive responsibility for Children's Services and for Corporate Parenting. This report must identify good practice but also highlight issues for further development, including those where urgent action is needed. It will be important for the Local authority to make effective use of reports from its IRO service so that it can be satisfied that its services can achieve optimum outcomes for the children concerned.*' There has been no consensus on what the detailed content of the Annual Report should be and it is anticipated that the awaited statutory guidance will provide a framework for future reports .

## **B Summary of Review Process**

B.1 A review is held at one month (28 days) after a child or young person has become looked after, then 3 months and every 6 months minimum thereafter. Children and young people, their parents and their carers along with social workers are invited to reviews. Venues are usually their placement if appropriate. Information from other involved agencies is obtained via additional meetings or reports e.g. a LAC will have an annual health assessment and six monthly Personal Education Planning meetings and the reports are available for review; other agencies such as Children's and Adolescents Mental Health Services (CAMHS) , Youth Offending Team ( YOT) may be involved, feeding their views in through reports, discussions with IROs or sometimes attending. The number of adults at meeting with the LAC is kept to a minimum to enable a more child friendly and less intimidating environment. Reviews are normally one meeting but can take the form of a series of meetings if this is required.

B.2 The agenda for a review covers Permanency Planning, placement issues, health, emotional and behavioural issues, education, leisure, contact, identity, independent living preparation and legal issues. A summary of discussion is written up afterwards with a Decision Sheet detailing actions /tasks necessary to fulfil the Care Plan. This is signed off by the Team Manager following any negotiations with the IRO if differences of opinion exist. The final report is then distributed to the LAC, parents, carers and any others identified. This process should take 14 days post review date.

## Update of 2008 Recommendations/ IRO Service Business Plan

### Service Management

Action/Task	By Whom	By When	Update
<p>1 Prepare an Annual Report for the Lead Corporate Parenting Member and Committee annually</p> <p>2 Agree the content of future Annual Reports</p>	<p>QAU Service Manager in collaboration with IROs</p> <p>Lead Member/ IRO Service Manager/ as defined in CYP Bill</p>	<p>April annually</p> <p>Jan 2009</p>	<p>Completed Sept</p> <p>Guidance awaited from DCSF on this . Last years report format to be used until then</p>
<p>3 Consideration is given to IRO service meeting with Corporate Parenting Lead Member/Committee/AD on a formal basis regularly</p>	<p>Lead Member / Rory Patterson /QAU</p>	<p>Annually /bi annual meetings</p>	<p>Agreed IRO Manager and 2 IROs to attend CPC when IRO report presented</p>
<p>4 Review of location of the IRO service , both physically and managerially within Southwark and the renaming of LAC Co-ordinators to IROS</p>	<p>Corporate Parenting Committee / Rory Patterson /QAU</p>	<p>Jan 2009</p>	<p>IRO Team including Children's Rights has moved to Tooley St</p>
<p>5 Undertake audits and quality assuring of IRO Service (including feedback from sws , foster carers , other professionals as well as LAC and parents) .</p>	<p>QAU/ Independent source</p>	<p>Annually/on going</p>	<p>Participation audit completed . A team day addressed report styles and content. IRO manager observes reviews and reads reports. To date insufficient feedback forms have been returned and this needs reviewing.</p>
<p>6 Consider undertaking minimum 2 case reviews annually for LAC cases with poor outcomes/ drift in planning/breaches in child's rights to 'learn lessons'. Agree process for this.</p>	<p>LAC Standards/QAU</p>	<p>Jan 09</p>	<p>Initial discussions with LAC Services and Carelink have taken place to agree process for this .</p>
<p>7 Devise recruitment strategy which allows for maximum opportunity to employ IROs reflective of diverse needs of LAC population</p>	<p>HR /QAU</p>	<p>2008 recruitment</p>	<p>This continues to be a challenge for the service and social work staff in general.</p>

## Be Healthy

Action/Task	By Whom	By When	Update
8 Monitor and promote health needs of LAC through reviews , referring to health initiatives& services as necessary and upwardly reporting where concerns exist and auditing outcomes	IROS	As required	ongoing
9 Participating in Health audits and Health planning groups	IROs IRO Manager	2x annually 3x annually	Completed

## Stay Safe

Action/Task	By Whom	By When	Update
10 Transfer the responsibility for independent reviewing of Children with disabilities receiving respite care from the CWD Team to the IRO service	IRO Manager/ CWD Manager	Complete transfer by Sept 08	Partially completed .  New Statutory Guidance awaited later this year
11 Collate & Analyse data for repeated Care episodes for children and families , ensuring rehabilitation plans are safe and adequately supported , devising practice guidance for rehabilitation	LAC Standards Group	By Jan 09	Discussions took place with LAC & ASAF Service. Further work required with ICS system to collate data . Individual case rehabilitation plans are monitored via reviews .
12 Consider reintroduction of 'disruption meetings' to minimise placement breakdowns and provide data for future planning and devise protocol if agreed	LAC Standards	Jan 09	A Stability Planning group meets to monitor stability of placements. Disruption meetings will be considered within this forum
13 Permanence Planning definitions and Care Plan format to be agreed. System to monitor compliance with completion and distribution of Care Plans agreed	LAC Standards/QA U/LAC Management	Sept 08	completed
14 Independent legal advice resource identified for IROS	QAU	Sept 08	Discussion with Lambeth re Interborough sharing of Legal Services and identification of Legal firms used by other Boroughs has taken place. CAFCASS have provided advice on occasions.

15 Complete strategic Review of safeguarding of LAC remanded into Southwark care or custody or LAC involved with serious crime and ensuring care planning for their return to the community is jointly undertaken.	QAU/YOT/LAC Service	March 09	IROs will chair pre release meetings for all LAC regardless of previous legal status ie S20's as well as S31's.
16 Consideration given to transferring the responsibility for Reviewing foster carers from the Adoption & Foster Care Service to the QA Service with the necessary budgetary adjustments	AD/LAC & QAU Management	Decision by Oct 08, transfer by Jan 09 if agreed	Outstanding

### Enjoy and Achieve

Action/Task	By Whom	By When	Update
17 Monitor and promote leisure activities in reviews	IROs	Ongoing	IROs via ICS collate data on leisure activities for all LAC
18 Promote the identity of LAC through monitoring of life story work , contact , diversity needs	IROS	Ongoing	Continues
19 Monitor and promote the educational needs of LAC through reviews , referring to services as required and escalating areas of concern & audit outcomes	IROs	Ongoing	Continues
20 Participating in Education Audits and Education Planning Groups	IROs  IRO Manager	2x annually  3x annually	Completed

### Make a Positive Contribution

Action/Task	By Whom	By When	Update
21 Review of admin support structure for distribution of LAC Review reports	CLA /QAU Business Managers	Jan 09	A service wide review of admin support is taking place and will address IRO admin support as well
22 Review need for 'best interests' advocacy for CWD/ special needs LAC , improve participation of CWD and	QAU Manager /Children's Rights	Sept 08	Not completed

commission resource provision	worker / CWD Team /Commissio ning		
23 Monitor distribution of Review reports , improving rate to 75% distributed within 20 days , 50% within 14 days	QAU/LAC service	By March 09	IRO completion of reports has improved to 70% in timescales; distribution has been addressed with LAC service, is improving and new ICS programme in place to monitor timescales
24 Promote the use of Review Decision Sheets by Practice Managers in supervision of social workers and . Completed Decision sheets to be signed off by Practice Managers and distributed with social work review reports . This process to be owned and enforced by Senior Management.	Senior Managemen t	Ongoing	Audit of Supervision Records is monitoring this to improve compliance.
25 Collation and feedback of data on this to teams to take place	IROs	Quarterly	New ICS review format includes previous review decision sheet format , data will be more easily collated and presented
26 Explore different ways of engaging 'hard to reach 'LAC. 27 LAC did not contribute to a review in 2007- 2008.Undertake themed audit of LAC who do not participate at all in reviews. New consultation forms for 16+ to be devised with Speakerbox	IROs/ Speakerbox	Dec 08	Audit Completed. There is limited success evidenced from research for alternative methods of consultation eg software; face to face talking with trusted adult remains the most favoured and productive method for obtaining child's views. Emphasis is on planning who and when this will take place.  Speakerbox and IROs presently updating consultation forms
27 Monitor participation of parents in Reviews , complete a Participation at Reviews Protocol	IROs	Ongoing Dec 08	Draft Parents Participation Protocol &Draft consultation forms completed for circulation
28 Devise strategy for obtaining feedback	IROs/	March 09	Feedback forms tried but not

from reviews from LAC , parents , carers and social workers and implement	Speakerbox		successful; further research required
29 Further explore introducing LAC friendly report formats and language	IROs /Speakerbox	Nov 08	ICS report format has a more child friendly print version for reading .

### **Achieve economic well being**

Action/Task	By Whom	By When	Update
30 Review the allowances for UAM	Corporate Parenting Committee/ LAC Management	Nov 08	UAM now have same allowances as all LAC .A Review of Services for UAM has been completed and new protocol in place. This requires monitoring to ensure it is fully implemented.
31 Monitor the preparation for independent living and transition arrangements for Care Leavers through Pathway Planning and in line with new Transition Protocol, referring to services as necessary and escalating concerns. New Pathway Plans/Care Plans to be adopted when introduced and training provided	IROS / LAC Service	Ongoing	New ICS Pathway Plan formats in place For complex and more vulnerable cases IROs will continue to offer chairing of Pathway Plans post 18 .

### **Equalities & Diversity**

Action/Task	By whom	By When	Update
See no's 10,22,&30 above			
32 Devise recruitment strategy which allows for maximum opportunity to employ IRO's reflective of diverse needs of LAC population	HR /QAU	2008 recruitment	Limited success. National and local difficulties with recruitment of social work staff following recent media representation of the Service contributes to this.
33 Consideration given to more strategic research & Planning for the following	LAC standards	Jan 09	

<p>groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial Referrals from Black African communities</li> <li>LAC from mixed heritage backgrounds</li> <li>LAC with special needs on the autistic spectrum</li> <li>LAC who are parents</li> </ul>	Group		<p>ICS systems continue to be updated to assist in collating information to assist with this. More work would be useful but prioritisation of work with staff shortages is necessary</p> <p>Completed. LAC Health group contributed to Southwarks Policy ongoing</p> <p>Audit of prebirth monitoring taking place; advocacy available to all LAC mothers; planning ongoing</p>
34 Review the Equalities Impact Assessment for the IRO service	QAU Manager with Team	Dec 08	Outstanding

## D References

### Legislation & Guidance

Children & Young Persons Act 2008

Independent Reviewing Officers Guidance, Adoption & Children's Act 2002

Review of Children's Cases (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2004

Review of Children's Cases Regulations 2004

Children (Short term Placements) Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 1995

Draft Guidance for the Children and Young Persons Act 2008

### Southwark Policies and Procedures

Southwark Handbook

LAC Business Unit Reports & Plans

Escalation Policy and Format

Southwark Management Information & PAF & Statistics report 2008/2009

Roisin MC Manus

Service Manager QAU LAC May 2009

QAU Sept 2009