

Kent County Council

Corporate Parenting Select Committee

Kent County Council's IRO service

The Kent Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service is part of Kent County Council's Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Directorate, sitting within the Children's Safeguarding Unit. The role of the County IRO Manager is undertaken by the Head of Quality Assurance.

There are 2 IRO teams:

- The East and South Kent Area Team (1 Team Manager and 12 IROs)
- The North and West Kent Area Team and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Team (1 Team Manager and 10 IROs)

The IRO function for children and young people in care is separate from the chairing of child protection (CP) conferences, which is undertaken by the other arm of the reviewing service. KCC employs 11 CP chairs, which are incorporated into 1 county team, managed by a CP Chairs Team Manager. Together, the 2 IRO teams and CP Chairs team form one county service.

In May 2012 the capacity of the IRO service increased from 15 to 22 full-time IRO posts. A further increase of 2 full-time or equivalent IRO posts was agreed in April 2014 in order to reduce further IRO caseloads and enable IROs to undertake a more robust level of case oversight.

In addition to the permanent IROs within the service, the IRO service employs additional IROs on zero hour contracts (2 as at 31st March 2014) to assist in chairing reviews when there are vacancies/staff sickness.