



THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF DETERMINATIONS (IRD) (ADOPTION) (WALES) REGULATIONS 2005

The IRD Regulations mirror the English Independent Review Mechanism Regulations in many respects. Whilst in England the function is managed by BAAF¹ the Welsh Assembly Government chose to retain administration of this service.

The regulations aim to act as a reviewing function of the actions of adoption agencies in relation to prospective adoptive carers who have applied for but been refused registration, or who have been approved as prospective adopters but have had their registration reviewed and cancelled.

The IRD Panel has a duty to review the determination of an agency if a prospective or approved adopter asks it to do so, and whereas the IRD panel can form a view on a given case matter it does not have the power to overturn or amend a decision of an adoption agency.

The precise effect or indeed effectiveness of such a process is yet to be determined, but the Regulations do permit for an entirely independent Panel to form an opinion on the suitability of an applicant and its findings, dependent upon its outcome, may either confirm the original decision or determine that the applicants might be a suitable prospective adopter. The agency that has had its determination reviewed may then choose to accept the IRD recommendations (i.e. to approve an applicant) or indeed choose to not accept its findings. In any event, if the matter were to be referred to the Local Authority Ombudsman, it is inevitable that the IRD Panel recommendation would be considered and may influence the Ombudsman and inform their opinion, notwithstanding the merits of the IRD Panel competence in the eyes of the Ombudsman.

In any event, the Applicant and the Adoption Agency will benefit from an independent analysis, which will be guided by the principle that children's needs are paramount.

Williams Ross Consultants Limited (WRCltd) were hitherto contracted to a Welsh County Council in the form of its Director & Principal Consultant (Anthony Williams) acting as independent Chairman of its County-wide Adoption Panel. In that capacity he was recommended/sponsored to act as an IRD Panel Member, and was trained as such by the Welsh Assembly Government as a listed and prospective IRD Panel member. He has since retained his nominated/listed status although no longer associated with any agency in Wales, but as hitherto retains his role as Chairman of an English local authority adoption Panel which permits his continued capacity to act as an IRD member.

It is with considerable pleasure and pride that the very first IRD Panel to be formed is to be chaired, by invitation of the Welsh Assembly Government, by Anthony Williams. This is credit to his standing within the social care profession as a whole, as a valued professional in adoption matters and as a competent chairman.

Bio WRCltd:

Williams Ross Consultants Limited previously operated as Williams Ross Consultants (unincorporated from February 2000 – January 2003). The Company was incorporated in February 2003 and remains an active private limited company. The company comprises of Anthony Williams and Lorraine Ross.

The company has a wide customer base across the UK and has undertaken work in Eire and Guernsey.

Further details are obtainable from www.williamsross.co.uk

Bio Anthony Williams:

Anthony Williams is by birth a Welshman although has lived in England since aged 18 years. He studied at Oxford and Bristol universities and obtained a post graduate Diploma in Applied Social Studies (Bristol) after successful studies at Oxford (Manchester College – Oxford¹) university. He also holds the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) awarded by the former Central Council for Education & Training in Social Work (CCETSW²) in 1980.

He had a distinguished career in local government to the grade of 3rd tier senior children's services manager before embarking on his independent consultant career in 2000. He has during his career served either as an advisor to, member or chairman of either or both consecutively both adoption and fostering panels since 1985.

He has acted as a children's guardian and expert witness in the Courts which is a backbone to the work of both consultants. In addition among his many and varied contractual work Anthony has undertaken numerous children act complaint investigations and acted as an inspector for both a local authority and the former (English) National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) – as they became, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI).

¹ Now Harris Manchester College

² The functions of the CCETSW have been assumed by the GSCC (General Social Care Council) in England and CCW (Care Council for Wales) in Wales and its sister agencies in Scotland and Northern Ireland