



Children Services Practitioners Workshops

May 2020

Permanence and Planning

Newham
Together

A stylized illustration at the bottom shows the backs of five children of different ethnicities and ages, all wearing different colored shirts (orange, green, blue, yellow, purple). They are standing close together, forming a semi-circle.

The best place
for Children and
Young People



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Purposeful Permanence Planning

Permanence is the framework of legal, physical and emotional permanence which gives a child a sense of who they are, by providing security, continuity; commitment and identity throughout childhood and into adulthood.

Legal - e.g. staying with birth parents, Adoption, Court Orders such as Child Arrangements order, Special Guardianship Order or Care Order;

Emotional - when the child feels attached to an adult who provides a stable, loving and secure relationship and creates a sense of belonging;

Physical or Environmental - a stable home environment within a familiar neighbourhood and community where the child's identity needs are met.



Children's Plans

- Plans should identify the most important and urgent outcomes to be achieved for the child
- Security of knowing where they will live has got to be one of the most important for any child
- To reduce delay options for permanence need to be progressed concurrently
- Plans should be Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant and have timescales that reflect the urgency for the child giving pace to the work



Focussed Matching

What's important for this child

Areas considered in Matching	Description of child's identified needs wishes	Any current support being provided to meet this need?	Prospective carer's potential to meet the child's needs	Are future support needs identified and included in the Support Plan?
Child's views and wishes. Any worries the child has e.g. fear of dogs. Consider location. Child's interests.				
Health, including mental health and disability				Yes/No
Education				Yes/No
Emotional & Behavioural Development				Yes/No
Identity including ethnicity, religion, culture and language, beliefs.				Yes/No
Family and Social relationships				Yes/No
Social Presentation, inc interests and hobbies [sporty or not sporty]				Yes/No
Self-care skills				Yes/No
Contact				Yes/No



Focussed Delivering permanence

- The goal is to ensure children know where they will live, where they belong as soon as possible
- That they have a secure ,stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond and to give them a sense of security and identity
- Its about having a family for life, a sense of belonging and connectedness that they can build with their carers.
- It starts by helping children stay in their birth family where possible
- When children can not stay in the care of their parents considering whether there are potential carers in the wider family or network of important relationships for the child
- Sustaining relationships with brothers and sisters and other significant relationships helps children have a sense of identity and security
- Together and apart assessments for brothers and sisters



Permanence Planning for all children

Children cannot wait for the security of knowing where they will live and feel safe and secure

- Plans should not drift where there is inconsistent evidence of safety during a CIN Plan Careful analysis of the impact of cumulative harm for the child during their life to date should be undertaken to inform next steps. Specific measurable plans will make progress or lack of progress clearer more measurable
- Reuniting a child who is looked after with family is more likely to be achieved within 6 months

- Children should not drift in S20 for more than 2 yrs. Legal steps may be needed to enable the Local Authority to plan for the child's future.
- All Plans should be subject to scrutiny and challenge at the CLA review. A permanence plan or twin track plan should be identified by the 2nd Review
- CLA Plans can only be changed in consultation with a CLA review this includes change of permanence plan or change of placement plan



Permanence Planning

Options for permanence:

- Successful return to birth family, (where the factors that led to the child becoming looked after have been addressed confirmed by updated assessment and proposed CIN plan approved at AD/DCS level);
- Shared care arrangements;
- Placement with a family member or friend, through use of Connected persons regulations, Child arrangements order; Special Guardianship or an Adoption order;
- Long term or permanent foster care;
- Remain with the birth family with a twin track plan for adoption or other permanence option.
- Adoption: Foster to adopt and twin track or parallel plans may be the most positive way to secure permanence at an early stage.



Newham Permanence process

- Permanence should be addressed in all plans CIN;CP;CLA and should be the first priority goal/outcome
- Permanence options concurrently progressed during PLO
- For children who are looked after permanence plans should be scrutinised by the operational permanence panel within 10 days of the child becoming looked after.
- A Permanence Planning meeting should then be held within 1 month of the child becoming looked after and subsequently reviewed monthly.
- The 2nd CLA review should consider and approve the proposed permanence plans being progressed.
- The operational permanence planning meetings and subsequent CLA reviews should review progress of the permanence plan and challenge delay.
- Options to progress permanence for the child should be completed during child care proceedings to inform the local authority care plan, so that children do not wait, [progressing temporary connected carer placement or foster to adopt placements] pending decision making by the courts.



Writing Good Plans

Planning for safety

Purpose: the child, their family and professionals know what needs to be achieved. Identify the goals of the work, outcomes for the children

- Identify the family's own support network. Use genogram safety circles eco map
- Use a family network meeting to engage the family's supporters
- Families set their own agenda and bring together their own resources to make things happen
- Help families or young people take responsibility for putting things right
- Family's proposals developed with the worker throughout the work
- From considering the context of the difficulties, what is working well and what we are worried about identify what needs to change – and what would the change look like – the outcome for the child
- Identify how daily life will be different for the child
- Use ideas initiated by the family or developed from identifying exceptions (occasions when things have been better/ good)
- What we need to do more of/ less of to achieve the outcome
- Reviewed during visits
- Checked / tested in formal meetings CIN Meetings or Core Groups or CLA Review.



A Plan is a Journey, focused on priority goals/outcomes rather than focused on services

- The most important aspect of planning is that the plan is co-created with the family; children; carers and an informed safety network.
- The plan is monitored and refined carefully over time and the commitments of the plan are made and owned by the parents and carers in front of their own children, kin and friends.
- This is not something that can be created by professionals deciding on the rules and then trying to impose them on the family.
- Meaningful plans: what specifically do we need to see to be satisfied this child is safe / achieving desired outcomes?



Bottom lines and plan rules

- The easiest way to distinguish between outcomes and bottom lines is think of the difference between what is to be done and conditions during the plan.
- The outcome should articulate what must be achieved - outcome; the bottom line requirements are the conditions of how this must be achieved
- Key safety people who the children can contact if they have any concerns.
- People to assist the parents/ carers and who will monitor the children's safety.
- Contingency plan.
- People the family or parents need to avoid.
- The age at which young children/infants will have the Words and Pictures and the safety plan explained to them
- Specifying how long the safety plan must be in place for
- The consequence of no change should be clear
- Be decent and honest with families at all times



Example plan

Planned outcomes for the child	Measure of Progress: How to know if we are closer to our outcome	Actions [to deliver outcomes]	By whom	Timescale
Damian will feel safe and not worry about Mum as he sees her not under the influence of drugs	Angie is drug free when spending time with Damian	Angie will get to contact sessions with the Damian on time and not take drugs before contact	Angie	Within 4 weeks by the 1st February
Damian will more often receive Angie's best care he will feel safe	Angie is more in control of her drug use so that she can limit use to times when Damian is in the safe care of an agreed safety person	Angie will develop strategies with her substance misuse worker to manage her cocaine use so she can have care of the children drug free	Angie and Drugs worker	Within 6 weeks by 14th February
Damian will be kept clean and have a good diet and show weight gain. He will not ingest drugs	Angie is keeping her home clean and free of drugs and equipment. She is buying food	Angie will keep her home clean and will not have drugs in the home or use them in her home Angie will have help to develop routine	Angie and Family Support Worker	Within 6 weeks by 14th February
If Damian can not be cared for by his mother he has alternative permanent carers	Damian has a permanent carer	SW progress viability assessment of Lisa Brown. SW to commence life story work for Damian SW to book permanence Planning meeting	Social Worker Fostering Worker	Within 6 weeks by 14th February Within 6 weeks Within 10 days by 20th January

