**NEWHAM TIMELINE and WORKFLOW**

**PERMANENCE PLANNING FOR CHILDREN IN CARE**

Date of publication: 30th September 2020

Date of review: 30th September 2021

1. This document should be read in conjunction with Newham Children’s Service online procedures **Care and Supervision Proceedings and the Public Law Outline** and **Permanence Planning Guidance**, and **Pre-proceedings Public Law Outline Timeline and Workflow and Guidance** (Local Resources)**.**

2. This timeline starts from the point a child or young person becomes identified as requiring a permanence plan. Permanence planning should already have started ie through pre-birth assessment and planning, a child protection (CP) or child in need (CIN) plan, and pre-proceedings Public Law Outline (PLO). This may have included identifying potential alternative carers (which should be considered at the earliest opportunity), and convening a Family Group Conference.

3. Some children may already be subject to care proceedings when they become looked after in which case the permanence planning process should be in train with a clear timeline leading to the Final Hearing date (please see **Timeline and Workflow - Permanence Planning for Children Subject to Care Proceedings but not Looked After –** Local Resources). In these cases an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will not have been involved and so it is important that at the point the child becomes looked after, the IRO is included in the permanence planning process.

4. If a Legal Planning Meeting (LPM) has been held to confirm that threshold is met to issue proceedings (including if it is decided to enter pre-proceedings PLO) the LPM should agree the child’s initial care plan and identify the assessments and referrals that are required, with timescales. A Permanence Manager attends all LPMs.

5. In some cases a child will become looked after under s.20 Children Act 1989 and a management decision is made not to start pre-proceedings PLO or to issue care proceedings immediately eg the plan is for reunification to parent(s) within a given timescale, or permanent placement with a family member. Permanence planning is still required in these cases however to ensure that:

(i) a clear contingency plan has been identified and is being progressed alongside the primary plan in case this fails

(ii) the primary plan is progressing in a timely way.

7. For older children who become looked after, predominantly those aged 16+ who are unlikely to become subject to Court proceedings, an alternative permanence planning process may be appropriate (please see **Timeline and Workflow - Permanence Planning for Older Children Looked After Not Subject to Care Proceedings** – Local Resources). This will be discussed at the Permanency Planning Panel.

8. Practitioners and managers should refer to the **Terms of Reference** for Permanency Planning Meetings (PPM) and Permanency Tracking Panel to clarify the purpose and functions of these meetings and the administrative arrangements. These can be found in the Local Resources folder.

**Week 1**

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| * A child becomes looked after under s.20 Children Act 1989 or an Interim Care Order (ICO)
* The case holding Practice Lead (PL) and Social Worker (SW) confirm the child’s interim care plan and agree the actions to be undertaken to progress the child’s permanence plan (including contingency planning); this will be recorded as a Supervision note in Azeus, and all activity will be given timescales
* An IRO is appointed within 5 days of a child becoming looked after. The date for the first review will be confirmed with the SW
* The SW will ask the parent(s) to confirm any family members or friends they would like assessed as potential alternative carers for their child
* The SW will book a Family Group Conference if this has not already been held
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**Weeks 1- 2**

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| * The SW discusses the child with the Regional Adoption Agency if they are aged 12 or under or have younger siblings, to ensure a parallel plan for adoption commences in a timely way.
* The timetable for actions relating to the adoption process will be agreed and recorded on Azeus.
* The Permanence Manager will be alerted and a Permanence Planning Meeting will be arranged within 4 weeks.
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**Week 4**

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| * The **initial Permanency Planning Meeting** (IPPM) is held and will be chaired by the Permanence Manager
* The SW will update and submit the Permanence Planning template to the Chair three working days prior to the IPPM for circulation to attendees
* The IPPM will:
1. confirm the child’s identified needs
2. confirm the Assessments / referrals to be undertaken and timescales
3. start to record a timeline of activity tracking back from the Final Hearing if the case is in Court proceedings
4. confirm the child’s primary care plan and contingency planning ie there could be parallel or multiple plans at this stage
* if a **long term foster placement** could be required the Fostering Team will agree the timeline for creating a profile for the child, and family finding.
* if an **adoptive placement** could be required the RAA will work alongside the SW staff to:
	1. agree the timeline for completion of the Child Permanence Report (CPR), parental Health forms, parent’s consent to access their health records and Form M/B
	2. agree to request an Adoption Medical within 4 weeks of the CPR completion date, or if the case is in proceedings, seek direction from the Court if the parent’s refuse to agree to the Medical
	3. if the case is in proceedings, consider whether the Court should be asked for permission to advertise for the purposes of family finding during the Court process
* IPPM attendees must include the child’s SW, PL and Service Manager. In addition consideration for the virtual school and LAC nurse to be present and any clinician involved.
* Brief discussion points and actions will be recorded on the Permanence Planning template.
* The child will be referred to the Permanency Tracking Panel Administrator and added to the Permanence Tracker.
* The child’s first **LAC Review** will be held within 4 weeks of the child becoming looked after and the IRO will review the progress of permanence planning. If a date has not been set for the IPPM, the IRO will record a decision for this to be arranged within one week and will alert the Service Manager within 1 working day
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**Week 6**

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| * The child is presented to the **Permanency Tracking Panel** (PTP) which is chaired by the Head of Service Children Looked After
* The SW will update and submit the Permanence Planning template to the Panel Administrator 3 working days prior to the Permanency Tracking Panel for circulation to attendees
* The PTP will:
1. review the progress of permanence planning for the child including family finding
2. ensure there is a clear contingency plan which is also being progressed
3. confirm that the planning timeline agreed by the IPPM is being adhered to
* Brief discussion points and actions will be recorded on the Permanence Planning template and this will be stored in Documents
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**Weeks 8, 12, 16 and 20 (ongoing if the case is not in Court proceedings)**

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| * **4 to 6 weekly PPMs** will be chaired by a Permanence Manager, unless the complexity of the case or lack of progress requires Service Manager involvement
* The SW will update and submit the Permanence Planning template to the Chair 3 working days prior to each PPM for circulation to attendees
* PPMs will:
1. review the progress of the child’s permanence plan (including contingency planning) and family finding, and how this will meet the child’s assessed needs
2. agree urgent remedial action if timescales are slipping
3. escalate concerns to the child’s Service Manager or Head of Service
* Brief discussion points and actions will be recorded on the Permanence Planning template and this will be stored in Documents
* The child’s care plan must be updated on Azeus
* Any proposed change of care plan must be discussed with the child’s IRO and their views must be recorded on Azeus
* PPMs will continue to be held for children who are looked after but not subject to Court proceedings until their permanent / long term placement is identified, or they cease to be looked after.
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**Weeks 10, 14 and 18 (ongoing if the case is not in Court proceedings)**

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| * The child will be presented tothe **PTP** on a 4 to 6 weekly basis to review the progress of permanence planning and family finding
* The SW will update and submit the Permanence Planning template to the Panel Administrator 3 working days prior to each PTP for circulation to attendees
* PTP attendees must include the child’s PL and Social Worker.
* Urgent remedial action will be agreed if timescales are slipping or the care plan is unclear
* Brief discussion points and actions will be recorded on the Permanence Planning template and this will be stored in Documents
* Children who are looked after but not subject to Court proceedings will continue to be presented to PTP until the Chair confirms this is no longer necessary, or the child ceases to be looked after.
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**By Week 16**

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| * The child’s second **LAC Review** will be held
* The progress of the child’s permanence plan will be reviewed and the IRO will identify any areas of concern including drift or delay, this could result in escalation to the child’s Service Manager and / or Head of Service, particularly if the child’s permanence plan is unclear or is not meeting their assessed needs.
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**Week 24 for cases in Court proceedings (or two weeks before final evidence is due to be filed, if earlier)**

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| * The **final PPM** (FPPM) will be held two weeks before the local authority is due to file its final evidence and will be chaired by the Permanence Manager.
* The SW will update and submit the Permanence Planning template to the Chair three working days prior to the final PPM for circulation to attendees
* Attendees must include the child’s SW, PL, the IRO should ideally attend.
* The FPPM will:
1. review the progress of permanence planning and family finding
2. agree actions prior to filing final evidence / final hearing, with timescales
3. confirm the child’s final care plan
4. escalate any drift or areas of concern to the Head of Service CLA
* Brief discussion points and actions will be recorded on the Permanence Planning template and this will be stored in Documents
* The child’s final care plan must be updated on Azeus
* If the IRO does not attend the FPPM their views regarding the final care plan must be sought and recorded on Azeus
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**Week 26 (if the case is in Court proceedings)**

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| **Final Hearing**If the final care plan is for Adoption and this is not endorsed by the Court, the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) must be informed. |

**Week 30 and thereafter every 4 weeks**

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| * **PPMs** will continue to be held every 4 weeks if a **Placement Order** has been granted but the child has not been matched with adopters
* PPMs will be chaired by the Permanence Manager
* PPMs will continue to be held until the child is matched or there is a decision from the ADM to change the care plan from adoption
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**Week 32**

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| * A child made subject to a **Placement Order** will be presented to **PTP** until they have been matched with adopters and Life Story Work and Letter for Later Life have been completed
* The frequency to attend PTP going forward will be set by the Chair on a case by case basis
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**Week 34 and thereafter every 2 months**

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| * **PPMs** will continueto be held if a  **Care Order** has been granted but the child has not been matched with their long term carer(s)
* PPMs will be chaired by a Permanence Manager
* PPMs will continue to be held every 2 months until the child is matched
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**Week 38**

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| * A child made subject to a **Care Order** but not matched with their long term carer(s) will be presented to **PTP** until they are matched and Life Story Work has been completed
* The frequency to attend PTP going forward will be set by the Chair on a case by case basis
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