

Permanence Panel & Permanency Planning Meetings Practice Standards

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Purpose of Permanence Panel

Our Permanence Panel aims to assist in achieving permanence for our children, in line with our legal duty to ensure:

- All children have a Permanence Plan that meets their individual needs, and reviewed regular (6 weekly) with clear identifiable outcomes, service provision and actions to meet those needs
- Overview, tracking, scrutiny and escalation to minimise drift and delay in achieving Permanence
- The Permanence Plan has a clear direction and timescale by the 2nd Child in Care Review.
- Our children are with the right carers with clear outcomes for transition to adulthood.

Tracking Progress at Permanence Panel

For the avoidance of doubt, the Permanence Panel replaces:

- Permanence and Legal Tracking (PLTP), Locality Panel, Placement Resource Panel (PRP) and Children's Access to Resource Panel (CARP), DOLS, Over /Under 5 K.
- The Permanence Panel will be in two parts:
 - Permanence Panel Part 1 will address all new requests, review children's progress of plans and where there is a change in the child's permanence arrangements.
 - Part 2 will address the tracking and the progress of children and young people's permanence plans.
- Where adoption is being recommended the correct decision-making forum is Agency Decision Maker and not Permanence Panel.

Permanence Panel Membership

Service Division	Post Held
Senior Manager	Chair
Area Manager for Locality / Service	Chair if required
Children's Placements Team	Manager
Business Support	Panel administration
QARSS (for Permanence and Transition Permanence Panel)	Independent Reviewing Officer Manager

Fostering and/or Kinship Team	Manager
Education Representative	Virtual School
FGC Service	
Health Representative (for Permanence and Transition Permanence Team)	Lead Health Nurse
Legal	(Adults Dols) for DCS only, and Part 2 of tracking panel
Health Care Commissioning Group CCG	Quality Assurance Nurse (DCS)
SEND - 0-25	Service Manager (DCS)
Adult Social Care for DCS	Team Manager

Frequency and Attendance at Permanence Panel

- Permanence Panel is held weekly in all four localities and the Permanence and Transition service.
- The Social Worker and the Team Manager to attend, permanence panel Part 1 (Social worker), Permanence Tracking part 2 (Manager).

To improve quality assurance, Permanence Panel will track children and young people who do not have a permanence plan within Eclipse. In addition, Social Workers and Personal Advisors will be invited to periodically present to Permanence Panel an update for review of the child or young person's Permanence Plan. The Social Worker or Personal Advisor will be notified by email from Business Support if their young person / child is listed to be heard at panel. Supervising Social Workers will be requested to attend to update on any outstanding actions for matching.

Social Workers and Personal Advisors will request panel agreement on transitions for children and young people and attend panel for request for resilience provision or decision making on placement change resource request.

Decisions Made and Documentation Needed for Permanence Panel

A new Permanency Planning Meeting template has been designed and will replace the existing template on Eclipse.

Early permanence discussions will be recorded in the new 'Permanency Planning Template' which captures all permanence outcomes. As a minimum, the first permanency planning meeting template will record the discussion between the child's social work team and the Area Manager prior to attending the first Permanence Panel.

The Securing Permanence Policy and Practice Standards has already referenced the expectation of early permanency discussions, which are recorded in the Permanency Planning Meeting template.

The single assessment is no longer routinely required for Permanence Panel; **however**, the Area Manager may identify the need to submit an updated single assessment alongside the request documentation to panel where this may assist Permanence Panel decision making.

The 'Legal Consultation Form' is a requirement of panel for agreement to issue care proceedings (where pre proceedings has not taken place) or where immediate issue is necessary.

Area Managers can agree for a child's plan to be presented for Legal Planning Meeting following an early permanence discussion. Area Managers can authorise assessments required in pre-proceedings. The Social Worker may bring along any evidential documents require for Legal Planning Meeting as normal practice.

The table below outlines the decisions that will require attendance at Permanence Panel and the minimum documentation required for this decision to be made.

Agreement and Documentation

DELEGATION TICK LIST			
Request Type	Decision to be made	Delegated Decision Making to:	Documentation
			Permanence Planning Meeting Minutes (PPMM)
Legal	Legal Planning Meeting (initial LPM only) agreement for 2 ND Pre-proceedings and Issue in the same Panel ¹	Permanence Panel	Legal consultation form
Legal	Pre-Proceedings	Area Manager	Legal consultation form
Legal	Issuing of proceedings	Permanence Panel	Legal consultation form
Legal	Accommodation of a child into care including s.20. or Police protect (Where this is undertaken as an emergency, plan and agreed outside panel, the child/YP to be presented at next panel available).	Permanence Panel	Permanence Planning Meeting Minutes (PPMM)
Legal	The decision at LPM differs from agreement obtained at Panel (AM to discuss with LD outside panel for agreement and update Eclipse)	Area Manager	Permanence Planning Meeting Minutes (PPMM)
Legal	S37 Completed and the outcome is not to issue public law proceedings	Area Manager	Permanence Planning Meeting Minutes (PPMM)
Legal	S37 completed and the outcome is to issue proceedings and remove children from parents/carers	Permanence Panel	Permanence Planning Meeting Minutes (PPMM)
Assessment	All assessments over £1000 can be agreed by Area Manager for Pre Proceedings		
Assessment – request from Court	Independent Social Worker/Residential/community-based Assessment /Therapy (AM to discuss with LD outside panel)	AM	Permanence Planning Meeting Minutes (PPMM)

¹ When a child is presented to a permanence panel to request legal planning meeting, for the avoidance of doubt, Panel chair should provide agreement for either 2nd pre-proceedings or issuing in a case. The Social worker would not need to attend panel again to request issue or pre-proceedings once legal advice has been obtained. The agreement for LPM, and issue/or pre-proceeding's must be captured in the minutes by BS to document agreement by Panel Chair, when a SW requests LPM.

Assessment (pre-proceedings)	Not-Court Ordered - Child and Parent Assessment Team (CPAT).	Permanence Panel	Legal consultation form
Assessment (pre-proceedings)	Not-Court Ordered – PAMs Parent Assessment Manual	Permanence Panel	Legal consultation form
Assessment (pre-proceedings)	Not-Court Ordered – AIMS (Assessment Intervention and Moving on)	Permanence Panel	Legal consultation form
Assessment (pre-proceedings)	Not-Court Ordered – Specialist assessment e.g. cognitive, psychological (if over £1000)	Permanence Panel if over £1000	Legal consultation form
Assessment (pre-proceedings)	Not Court Ordered – if LPM recommended assessments to inform effective pre-proceedings not previously agreed at panel	Area Manager	Legal consultation form
Plan	Long Term Fostering Plan for Devon Council in house Foster Carers	Area Manager	Permanence Planning Meeting Minutes (PPMM)
Plan	Special Guardianship where support plan is within the SGO financial policy	Area Manager	Permanence Planning Meeting Minutes and SGO Report recommendations
Plan	Special Guardianship where support plan is over and above SGO financial policy	Permanence Panel	PPMM and SGO Report recommendations
Plan	Request or Extend a Supervision Order	Permanence Panel	Permanence Planning Meeting Minutes (PPMM)
Placement	Agreement for placement search or any alterations or changes to placement (including respite and short breaks)	Area Manager	Permanence Planning Meeting Minutes (PPMM) (Placement Stability Meetings)
Placement	Agreement for external provider resource for both short- and long-term planning	Permanence Panel	Permanence Planning Meeting Minutes (PPMM)
Placement	Matching with both internal and external foster carers (subject to matching process and meeting adhered to)	Area Manager	Permanence Planning Meeting Minutes (PPMM) Matching Report

Placement	Endorsement of Matching of a young person with foster carers.	Permanence Panel	Matching Report which includes date of IRO endorsement
Placement	Post 18 accommodation: Staying Put	Area Manager	Permanence Planning Meeting Minutes (PPMM)
Placement	Post 18 accommodation: Semi Supported Living Post	Permanence Panel	
Resources	Specific resource e.g. private therapeutic support,	Permanence Panel	Permanence Planning Meeting Minutes (PPMM)

Sending Documents to Panel

Service	Timeframe	How
Initial Response and Children and Families	2 days prior to panel	Via Panel SharePoint site. Social Workers will upload documents directly; new Social Workers will be given access by Business Support.
Permanence and Transition	7 days prior to panel	Via Eclipse childrensocialworkpanels-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

Permanence Panel Agenda

The Permanence Panel chair will expect you to be able to answer to the agenda but if you have had regular permanence planning, this will be in your last Permanence Planning Meeting notes.

- Child's name and DOB
- Date child entered care and legal status (where applicable)
- Current situation
- What actions have been completed and when (dates needed) for achieving the Permanence plan e.g. Matching Meeting completed, Special Guardianship assessment completed, Agency Decision Maker (ADM) date booked.
- Updates (where relevant to the child) from Virtual School (Education), Designated Child in Care Nurse, fostering in relation to Family Finding and Placements Team.
- What actions are outstanding and any barriers to achieving outstanding actions
- Actions and timescales agreed to progress Permanence Plan
- Date child's Permanence Plan to be reviewed at the Permanence Panel

Recording of Permanence Panel Notes

- Business Support take notes on Permanence Panel notes template located on Eclipse.
- Decisions and actions are authorised on Eclipse by the Panel chair within 48 hours of the panel occurring.
- The Permanence Tracker (countywide pre-proceedings tracker) is serviced by Business Support and is updated with a RAG rating against the child's plan indicating progress and where attention is more pressing.
- When a decision is made for Pre-Proceedings or Proceedings, the child will be added to the County Wide Pre-Proceedings Tracker in preparation for it to be reviewed at the next Panel.

A quarterly quality assurance oversight report will be completed by the Permanence Panel Chair to identify key themes related to progress and/or drift and delay to permanence and a review of the effectiveness and development of tracking procedures. The report will be discussed at the challenge board and subsequently at Senior Manager Team (SMT) meetings.

Tracking permanence data will be used from panel to inform practice development, this information is explored in manager meetings and taken to locality service development meetings.

Principles Underpinning Panel

Wherever possible and safe, families/extended families and networks should be supported to remain together. Therefore, the following will be required:

- Evidence early intervention and diversion from care was thoroughly explored through creative, strength focused and restorative practice-based planning.
- Evidence of Family Group Conferences (FGC) with the offer of FGC being mandatory to children on the edge of care. This offer must have been attempted prior to panel and the outcome recorded. It is essential families are fully supported to find their own solutions.
- Child Protection planning should be fully exhausted before approval is given to escalate via legal route (formal pre proceedings and care proceedings).
- Threshold of harm is robustly considered, and this is evidenced through timely holistic assessments.
- All accommodation and placement requests should be planned with kinship care being fully considered. Emergency placements are an exception where significant harm is likely. For all children, contingency plans should be in place.
- Panels will not be used for lengthy care planning discussions; care planning, assessments and challenge should have already taken place prior to the Panel in the Early Permanence Planning discussion held with the Area Manager.
- Wherever possible children and young people MUST inform the permanence plan (matching), unless there is a good reason for them not to. The views of the child/young person should be clear (refer to matching process).
- Children and young people's links to local geography and education must be maintained wherever possible. Consider likelihood of gaining a placement that the child will still be able to attend the current school.
- Secure placements are not to be used except in the most exceptional circumstances and will need to follow the secure criteria process:
http://devonchildcare.proceduresonline.com/p_place_sec_accom.html

One Minute Guide - Permanency Planning Meetings

In Devon we are looking at early permanence planning, which is best practice for children who may come into our care. Permanence planning discussions are not just undertaken in a multi-agency forum, practitioners and managers discuss permanency all the time.

The 'Permanency Planning Meeting' process aims to develop a formal approach to permanency planning.

The Permanency Planning Meetings should take place 6 weekly once the child is in our care and are attended by the Child's Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer where possible, Special Guardianship Social Worker and Adopt South West (where applicable) until the child or young person's permanence plan has been achieved.

There are lots of other times / circumstances when a Permanency Planning Meeting is needed:

- When there is consideration to escalate the child's plan to Pre-proceedings. Social Worker and Team Manager will have a Permanency Planning Meeting prior to attending Permanence Panel or as soon as after where action has been taken in an emergency.
- During care proceedings whenever the decision has been made to apply to the court to share parental responsibility (interim care order). The Permanency Planning Meeting is to be held no later than 6 weeks before final Care Plan is filed with the court.
- A Permanency Planning Meeting should be held within 20 working days of a decision for a child to enter care or by the first Child in Care Review, there after 6 weekly until their single-track permanence plan has been endorsed and achieved.
- The plan for permanence should be reviewed and tracked by Area Manager / Team manager every 4 weeks through 1:1 supervision and Permanence Panel until permanence has been achieved.

Permanency Planning Meetings will embed the Care Planning or Pathway Plan objectives.

- To address drift, especially when a child is in our care under a Section 20 Accommodation arrangement.
- Reunification discussion is embedded in the permanency planning process and takes place within 6 weeks of the Initial Child in Care Review.
- When long term or permanent fostering is being considered.
- Where there are potential risks to the stability of a permanent placement (e.g. violence/risk of abduction/need for geographical distance) and there is a need to consider a placement stability meeting with providers/carers;

- To achieve permanence where Special Guardianship, or a Child Arrangements Order is viable.
- Where adoption is considered scrutiny of the plan will be completed prior to the request for before booking a slot for Agency Decision Maker decision.
- For children, where a Placement Order (for Adoption) has been made, there is a requirement for a further statutory review under the Adoption Agencies Regulations, 3 months and 6 months post Placement Order to consider why the child had not been placed in an adoptive placement. A Permanency Planning Meeting should be called before these review points if continuing assessment of the child indicates that Adoption may not be viable.
- When a young person is due to leave our care, the Permanency Planning Meeting should confirm the young person's care leaving status and impact on their leaving care entitlement and transition plans. This must take place before the young person's final Child in Care or Pathway Plan Review meeting.

Business Support Panel Notes

Panel Notes to be uploaded to either Legal consultation form on Eclipse for LPM advice or permanence planning meeting (eclipse) for resource of other requests

Green boxes (drop down boxes with options)

Date	Permanence Panel – Locality
Attendees:	
Apologies:	
Matter Arising and Previous Minutes	

Grey boxes Permanence Planning template

Surname	Forename	Eclipse ID	DOB	Legal Status and/or Leaving Care Status
Social Worker/Team Manager and Team				

Discussion:

- *Current situation*
- *What actions have been completed and when (dates needed) for achieving the Permanence plan e.g. Matching Meeting completed, Special Guardianship assessment completed, Agency Decision Maker (ADM) date booked.*
- *Updates (where applicable) from Virtual School (Education), Designated Looked After Nurse, Fostering in relation to Family Finding and Placements Team.*
- *What actions are outstanding and any barriers to achieving outstanding actions*

Panel's Recommendation:

Date Child's Permanence Plan to be reviewed at the Permanence Panel

Actions:

For:

Timescale:

Actions:	For:	Timescale: