

One Minute Guide to Permanence

In Devon we carefully consider early permanence planning, which is best practice for children who may come to our attention and require a statutory service.

Permanence is a framework of **psychological/emotional, physical** and **legal** condition that gives a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity.

The objective of planning for permanence is to ensure that children have a secure, stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond and to give them a sense of security, continuity, commitment, identity and belonging. It is also important to remember that older children and young people also need to achieve permanence in their lives although they may not wish (for a variety of reasons) to be in a foster home or to be adopted.

With the child at the centre of our thinking and our work, Children's Social Care believe there are a number of principles that underpin permanency for a child:

Early Planning: For children with Child in Need/Child Protection Plans or Pre-proceedings, we provide families with the best service through avoiding delay in assessments that inform us on how best to support families to keep children at home.

Family: If it is not safe for a child to be cared for by their parents, alternative care arrangements for the child are explored within their extended network of family and friends via a Family Group Conference. Proposed alternative family and friend carers will need to be able to nurture and promote these principles of permanence throughout the child's childhood.

Twin track or Parallel Planning, including Concurrent Planning, may provide a means to securing permanence at an early stage for children.

Timeliness: Decision-making must be within the child's time scales in order to prevent drift and delay.

Review: If a child is in our care, a child's permanence plan should be established at the 2nd Child in Care Review and recorded in the child's Care Plan, Report for Review and Review Minutes.

Where a child's remains a child in care, then planning should be subject to continuous assessment and review at Permanence Panel until they are matched to their permanent home.

Belonging: Permanence offers children a feeling of belonging to someone who is parenting them on a daily basis.

Security: A feeling of security and being loved as a member of a permanent family or care setting.

Stability: The child expects the placement to continue and be stable.

Voice: The child's wishes and feelings along with their age and understanding are always taken into account in planning for permanence.

Identity: To be consistent with or fully able to support their ethnicity, language, religion and culture. Note that due consideration no longer has to be given to a child's religious persuasion,

racial origin and cultural and linguistic background when matching a child with prospective adopters.

Life story: The child is supported to explore and accept their birth family and history. Parents are encouraged and supported to provide information about themselves and about the child's birth and early life in support of this.

Family Time/Contact: The child has positive on-going family time/contact with parent(s), family and friends where appropriate. The purpose of the family time/contact should be clearly defined in the child's plan and meet the child's needs.

Siblings: Children will be placed together whenever possible unless the individual needs of children are assessed as them requiring a separate home.

Learning: Stability in educational provision and training.

Self-confidence: Positive engagement in sports, hobbies and interests in order to promote their resilience and build self-confidence.

Independence: The child is assisted and supported into living independently when they choose, and this is safe and appropriate.

Staying Put: The child feels a sense of belonging with carers vocalising their obligation to continue to support them as they move from adolescence into adulthood; belonging does not end at the age of 18 years.

Permanence Planning for Children with Child in Need and Child Protection Plan

Early Permanence planning discussions are not just for children in our care, but, also for children with a child in need and child protection plans.

By having early permanence discussions, we are able to support families by providing evidence-based interventions earlier, better enabling children to remain with their families.

Achieving permanence for children to remain at home will depend upon:

- The capacity of the parents/carer to understand and meet the needs of the child.
- The quality of attachment and relationship the child experiences with their parent/carer;
- The quality of the intervention and support provided by professionals working with the child and their family.
- Consideration of extended family members via Family Group Conference
- The level of cooperation of all involved in the permanence planning.

The updated [permanence planning form](#) will be used to discuss early permanence planning for children with child in need and child protection plans or pre-proceeding's processes and request a formal permanence discussion at Permanence Panel ([see flowchart](#)) to seek agreement to issue care proceeding's or request resources to provide support for parents and families for children to remain at home, for example a psychological assessment/PAMs assessment to determine the support the parents may require to safely parent their children.

Children in our Care Permanence Planning

The revised permanence planning form will be used as a multi-agency form for child in care permanence planning meetings and request for resources (that cost over £2000) at Permanence Panel.

Any meeting we have about children should always include the question "how are the child's permanence needs being met?". Permanence must be at the core of everything we do.

- Reunification/Staying at Home
- Placements with Kinship Carers / Family and Friends Carers
- Adoption
- Early Permanence Placements / Fostering for Adoption
- Special Guardianship (SGO)
- Child Arrangements Orders
- Long Term Fostering
- Permanence and Residential Care

The '[Permanency Planning Meeting](#)' process aims to develop a formal approach to permanency planning and can aid in smooth transitions and avoiding drift. Permanency Planning Meetings differ from the child's statutory Child in Care Review Meeting, which is the child's meeting, chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer.