**Somerset County Council**

**Children’s Social Care**

**Child’s Journey Framework – Permanence Pathway**

****

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Owners | Strategic Manager, Resources |
| Authors: | Operations Managers, Resources |
| Version: | 2.0 |
| Date: | January 2017 |

**Version Control**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Version number | Status | Date amended | Name | Comments – amendments made |
| 1.0 | Final |  | Becky Hopkins | Agreed at Operational Managers Meeting. |
| 2.0 | Final | January 2017 | Becky Hopkins | Clarification and updating |

**Contents:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Section Number | Title | Page Number |
| 1 | Introduction | 3 |
| 2 | Threshold and decision to accommodate | 4 |
| 3 | Care planning | 6 |
| 4 | Permanence | 11 |
| 5 | Placement stability | 13 |

Permanence Pathway

The Permanence Pathway is outlined below and links directly to the Practice Framework. The outline pathway includes a number of prompts and links to more detailed information, including signposting, links to research, and relevant policies and procedures.

Care Planning includes and runs concurrently with Permanence Planning and Placement Planning.

Standard icons have been used to help you identify things that need to be included and/or considered.

Key: Steps on Permanence Pathway Key: What else do you need to think about?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| C:\Users\LXIsaacs\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\28O7JTCH\Family_Puzzle[1].png | Partnership working |
| C:\Users\LXIsaacs\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\LVXWWTBU\lightbulb_by_trixyrogue[1].jpg | Key points flag |
| C:\Users\LXIsaacs\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\LVXWWTBU\signposts[1].png | Guidance & links to further information |
| C:\Users\LXIsaacs\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\3WOOS7OZ\voice_of_user3[1].jpg | Voice of the child |
| C:\Users\LXIsaacs\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\J9NID7IN\Have_You_Got_A_Story_To_Tell[1].png | Life story work |
| C:\Users\LXIsaacs\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\J9NID7IN\Happy-family[1].png | Permanence |
| C:\Users\LXIsaacs\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\28O7JTCH\question-mark-in-blue-round-button-6154-large[1].png | Think… |

Childcare Team (including CWD) (CT)

Fostering Team (FT)

IRO’s (IRO)

Placements Teams (PLT)

Permanence Team (PT)

Family Finders (FF)

Leaving Care (LC)

For up to date templates, please access Toolkit: <http://enterprise.somerset.gov.uk/Learning_Guide/CSCToolkit/Switchboard/switchboard.html>

For up to date policy and guidance documents, please access Tri-x: <http://www.proceduresonline.com/somerset/cs/>

Permanence Pathway: Threshold and decision to accommodate

Steps on Permanence Pathway Actions Required What else do you need to think about?

Evidence from:

* Pre-birth assessment
* C&F Assessment
* Strategy Discussions
* S47 Investigation

Assessment processes are summarised in the Practice Framework Handbook

Permanence Planning Starts Here!

What might the possible outcomes and options be?

****

****

Threshold Decision

***Why might this child need to come into care?***



Consider options. These may include:

* Family Group Conference – coming soon!
* Care Diversion Meeting
* CIN (Child in Need) including support plan to stay at home
* Child Protection Conference
* PLO (Public Law Outline) Process
* Initiate Care Proceedings
* Family & Friends Care (see Family and Friends policy)
  + Informal arrangement   
    Connected Persons: see Connected Persons Policy
  + Child Arrangement Order
  + Private Fostering: see Private Fostering Policy
  + Special Guardianship: see Special Guardianship Policy

For PLO: recommendation to initiate PLO given by Area Operations Manager via Area Legal Panel. Recommendation to initiate PLO ratified by Legal Gateway Panel.

Is the voice of the child clear?

Life story work should begin for all children who may live away from their birth family: see Life Story Work Guidance.

Think creatively. Can a plan be put in place to support the child to remain at home in the first instance or to be cared for by extended family or friends? Have we exhausted all family and friends options?





****



Safety Plan

** **

****

If threshold is met and a CLA placement may be needed refer to At Risk of Care (ARC) Panel. Options to consider are:

* Family and Friends
* Foster placement
* Residential placement
* Fostering for Adoption

In an emergency Strategic Manager can make the decision to make a child looked after until the next ARC Panel.

Cases can be discussed at ARC Panel at any point, not just in a crisis situation. Early identification of issues reduces the risk of coming in to care and increases the opportunities to provide appropriate support within the family.

The threshold for young people aged 16/17 following the Southwark Judgement is different. See Department for Children, Schools and Families guidance.

Placement Planning and Matching continues!



****

Permanence Pathway: Threshold and decision to accommodate (cont’d)

Steps on Permanence Pathway Actions Required What else do you need to think about?

At Risk of Care Panel

** **

****

Panel Request form to be completed by the Child’s Social Worker and the IRO view to be included.

ARC Panel makes the decision for a child to become Looked After and approves the placement search needed.

Child’s Social Worker to complete the P1 and submit to Placements Team

See ARC Panel Terms of Reference

Early Permanence Placement Procedure – this includes how to make Concurrent and Fostering for Adoption placements.

Permanence Planning – what are the possible outcomes?

Does your P1 give a rounded picture of the child, including their positive attributes?





Permanence Pathway: Care Planning

Care Planning includes and runs concurrently with Permanence Planning and Placement Planning

Steps on Permanence Pathway Actions Required What else do you need to think about?

For Fostering for Adoption see Adoption procedures.

If not already, should we be in PLO or initiating Care Proceedings? If yes, refer to Area Legal Planning.

Have you held a Permanence Planning meeting? Do you need to hold a review Permanence Planning meeting? Permanence Planning meetings should be held as early as possible and ALWAYS prior to the second (4 month) CLA Review. See section on Permanence Planning.





Permanent options to consider:

* Going home (reunification)
* Placement with family or friends:
  + Information Arrangements
  + Adoption
  + Connected persons
  + Special Guardianship
  + Private Fostering
  + Child Arrangement Order
* Adoption
* Fostering for Adoption
* Permanent Fostering

Care Planning

** **

****

Make sure your care planning includes:

* Preferred Plan
* Contingency Plan (i)
* Contingency Plan (ii)
* Timeframe for completion of viability assessments
* Consider a sibling assessment

Where the preferred plan is Adoption, refer to Permanence Team for an Adoption Link Worker to be allocated. The Adoption Link Worker will support the child’s social worker with all adoption related tasks until first review of the child after placement.

Might it be difficult to find permanent options for this child? If so, consider referral to Family Finders now.



Identification of Placement Options

**   **

****

Placement options identified by Placement Team and shared with Child’s Social Worker.

NB: If permanence plan is Fostering for Adoption, Permanence Team to identify placement options and share with Child’s Social Worker

For Adoption Matching, Permanence Team takes the lead. See Adoption Process Map.

Deputy Director Approval is required for all out of county, (including distant), placements. Approval form to be completed by the Placements Team.

For Fostering Matching, joint discussion between Child’s Social Worker and Fostering Social Worker. Matching Decision to be recorded on LCS

Is the voice of the child clear?

Remember: Care Plans need to be reviewed regularly and always updated if the plan for the child changes.

Are the reasons for your care planning decisions clear and evidenced? This should include options which are ruled out.





****

Permanence Pathway: Care Planning (cont’d)

Steps on Permanence Pathway Actions Required What else do you need to think about?

Fostering Team will lead on in-house placements.

Childcare Team will lead on external placements.

Pre-Placement planning meeting to be held.

Only in exceptional circumstances where a pre-placement planning meeting has not been possible, it MUST be held within 5 days of the placement being made.

Pre-Placement Planning form and Delegated Authority form to be completed by the Chair of the meeting.

Life story work should include documenting placement with reminder to carers about their role in providing information and photographs.

****

The child should be visited within the first week of the placement and a minimum of 6-weekly thereafter. Most children, particularly in the early days of placement will need more frequent visits. This is also important in building positive relationships with carers.

Is the voice of the child clear?





The meeting must consider the following:

* The role of the child and their parents/carers in the meeting and how they will participate.
* What support does the child/carer need and how will you and the child and carer communicate?
* How often should you visit?
* What are the contact arrangements and how will they impact on the placement?
* Have you given the carer all the information they need to look after the child well?
* What are the arrangements for introductions?
* Is everyone clear about the purposes and expectations of the placement?
* Does everyone understand the child’s legal status and the implications i.e. Section 20 or Interim Care Order?
* Have you considered the transport arrangements to and from education provision?
* Has the Virtual Head been notified that the child has become looked after?
* How often should the Fostering Social Worker and Child’s Social Worker visit?
* How will Life Story Work be undertaken and by who?
* Is the plan to support the placement clear?
* Does everyone understand potential risks of the placement and how these will be managed?
* Has the child been asked what they want from the placement?

Pre-Placement Planning Meeting

**  **

****

Purpose of pre-placement planning meeting is to:

1. Ensure carer has all the information needed
2. Clarify purpose of placement and expectations
3. Identify any issues which may impact on placement stability and identify support
4. Identify and manage risks in partnerships with carers.
5. Consider Delegated Authority.



Permanence Pathway: Care Planning (cont’d)

Steps on Permanence Pathway Actions Required What else do you need to think about?

First CLA Review within 20 working days of Placement

**  **

****

Care Plan to be reviewed by Child’s Social Worker.

Placement Plan should be reviewed in a joint visit between Child’s Social Worker and Fostering Social Worker prior to every CLA review, to inform report for review.

IRO to recommend Permanence Planning Meeting to define permanence plan is held prior to the 2nd CLA Review

Life story work should include information and evidence of significant events and relationships – birthdays, achievements while placed etc.

Children are tracked by Permanence Panel after their 2nd (4 month) CLA Review.

****



Child Becomes Looked After

** **

****

Child’s Social Worker must place the child.

Child’s Social Worker to ensure first CLA review is booked with IRO Service.

If an older child, have they been consulted about how they want their review to be conducted?



Permanence Pathway: Care Planning (cont’d)

Steps on Permanence Pathway Actions Required What else do you need to think about?

Permanence Planning Meeting

***   * **

****

Life story information and profile of child should be up to date to enable the Placements Team and Fostering Team to identify an appropriate placement.

****

Each permanence option should be considered and a rationale for the preferred option and those ruled out should be evidenced.



Permanence Planning meetings can be held at any point and should be held as early as possible in the process. They must be held before the 2nd CLA review to inform planning, to ensure transparency and ensure all options are explored with the right people involved to avoid unnecessary drift or delay.

Permanence Planning should include:

* Preferred plan
* Contingency Plan (i)
* Contingency Plan (ii)
* Timeframe for completion of viability assessments
* What does the Permanence Support Plan look like to ensure placement stability?

Where the preferred plan is Adoption, have you sought the Agency Decision Maker’s approval? See Adoption Guidance.

Meeting may be in multiple parts to consider views of all involved in relation to all options.

Is the voice of the child clear?

If permanence options include Special Guardianship, Staying Put or Permanent Fostering, Child’s Social Worker books a slot at Permanence Panel.

Have parents/carers/IRO/Children’s Guardian been considered?

Each Permanence Planning Meeting needs to consider if the current preferred plan is achievable and in the child’s best interest.



Complete Permanence Planning meeting form on LCS.

Consider the contact arrangements:

* Short-term and long-term, including potential impact on placement stability.
* Promoting / maintaining relationships with parents and siblings, including implications for reunification / later life.

Do we need to take any further legal action to achieve permanence?

Child’s Social Worker to arrange a Permanence Planning meeting to consider all permanence options.

The following should be invited to the meeting:

* Parents
* Carers
* Fostering Social Worker
* Children’s Guardian
* IRO

Permanent options to consider:

* Going home (reunification)
* Placement with family or friends:
  + Informal Arrangements
  + Adoption
  + Connected persons
  + Special Guardianship
  + Private Fostering
  + Child Arrangement Order
* Adoption
* Fostering for Adoption
* Permanent Fostering

Does the Care Plan need updating to reflect permanence options?

Can the child return home and has this been assessed?

Update Placement Information Record.

Permanence Pathway: Care Planning (cont’d)

Steps on Permanence Pathway Actions Required What else do you need to think about?

Permanence options should be clear at this stage. Permanence planning will be reviewed at each CLA review. Children under 5 will be reviewed every 3 months until permanence is achieved.

Is the voice of the child clear?

Any change to the child’s plan must be discussed with the IRO.







Permanence options should be clear. If permanence options are unclear, IRO will escalate via Dispute Resolution Process.

Case to be tracked by Permanence Panel to ensure permanence plan is progressing.

Second CLA Review (4 months)

**  **

****

Identification of Permanent Placement

**   **

****

Placements Team/Family Finders or Permanence Team identifies permanent options in accordance with permanence panel and shares with Child’s Social Worker.

For Permanent Fostering, Fostering Social Worker or Family Finder to complete Foster Carer’s Capacity to Offer Permanence Form.

Child’s Social Worker completes matching form and seeks approval for match via either Adoption Panel or Permanence Panel.

Life story work needs to move with the child to their permanent placement.

See Adoption Flowchart, Panel Guidance and Permanence Panel Guidance.

****



Does everyone involved understand what permanent fostering means i.e. placement until 21 or beyond and lifelong support? See BAAF guidance on permanent fostering.

Delegated Authority needs updating.

The permanent placement could be the one the child is already in.



Permanence Panel

**   **

****

Panel Request form to be completed by the Child’s Social Worker and the IRO’s view to be included.

Permanence Panel to begin tracking all children from the second CLA Review, monitoring the progress of permanence planning.

Permanence Panel considers all requests for placement changes and ratifies all Special Guardianship plans including providing authorisation for financial assessment, Staying Put and permanent fostering arrangements.

Is the Permanence Team aware if the plan is adoption?

See Permanence Panel Terms of Reference.



Permanence Pathway: Permanence

A number of additional tasks are required once the final permanence option has been agreed; the nature of these tasks will be affected by the permanence option chosen

Permanence Options Actions Required What else do you need to think about?

SW should remain involved to support successful return home for at least 6 months. An up to date, comprehensive C&F assessment / CIN review should be completed to confirm it is appropriate to step down. Link to Framework for Assessment.

Is the voice of the child clear?

Is the voice of the child clear?





SW will remain involved and an up-to-date C&F assessment will be completed to inform a decision regarding revocation of the Care Order.

Is the voice of the child clear?





Going Home (as a CLA)

**  **

** **

CLA processes to be followed, including:

* If child is subject to a Care Order, Child’s Social Worker to complete Care Planning Regulations (2010).
* CLA Review to be held prior to return home.

Going Home (as a CIN)

**  **

** **

Child’s Social Worker to trigger CLA Review prior to return home.

If child is over 16, Child’s Social Worker to seek approval from Director of Children’s Services.

Introductions to be well planned and at the child’s pace.

Permanence Support Plan should be agreed for any permanent option.

Life story work needs to be up-to-date and capture the transition to permanence.



****

All Cases

**    **

****

Child’s Social Worker to arrange Practical Arrangements Meeting/Placement Planning Meeting for all permanent placements. Where a placement move is required, introductions should be well planned. See Practical Arrangements Form.

Is the voice of the child clear?



Review Permanence Support Plan.

Permanence Pathway: Permanence (cont’d)

Permanence Options Actions Required What else do you need to think about?

Life story work to move with the child.

****

Child’s Social Worker to arrange Practical Arrangements Meeting and complete Practical Arrangements Form.

Permanent Fostering

**  **

** **

Child’s Social Worker to complete Special Guardianship Assessment and Support Plan and present assessment to Permanence Panel for approval.

Special Guardianship

**  **

** **

Later life letter to be completed.

Life story work to move with the child.

****

Later life letter to be completed.

Life story work to move with the child.

****

Child’s Social Worker to organise the Practical Arrangements Meeting and complete APR form.

Adoption

** **

** **

Later life letter to be completed.

Life story work to move with the child.

****

Complete Staying Put Assessment on approach to 18. Assessment to Permanence Panel for approval.

Staying Put

**  **

** **

Permanence Pathway: Placement stability

In the event that a placement is deemed to be vulnerable, a number of actions need to be taken. This applies to both interim placements and permanent placements (including Adoption where placement has been made but Adoption Order has not yet been granted). Placements (where open cases) should be supported through the regular review of the Placement Support Plan.

Monitoring a Stable Placement Actions Required What else do you need to think about?

* Does Delegated Authority need updating?
* Are contact arrangements appropriate?
* How well are we communicating with parents?
* Are children being given the right support?
* What level of support/visits does the placement need?
* Is Life Story Work ongoing?
* What events are coming up for the carers or child that might impact on the placement? E.g. Christmas, Birthday, Family events



Child’s Social Worker and Fostering Social Worker arrange regular, 6 monthly placement support meeting, or more frequently if required.

Maintaining a Stable Placement

**  **

****

Disruption meetings should be held for all permanent placements including Adoption.

They can be chaired by an IRO or Team Manager from Childcare, Fostering or Adoption.

The purpose of the meeting is to understand placement strengths and vulnerabilities and identify lessons to be learnt.

Should a return home be considered?

Remember: Care Plans need to be updated if the plan changes and needs to be reviewed on a regular basis.







Following a placement breakdown, or when an adoption is no longer an option the Child’s Social Worker to reassess the needs of the child/young person and review the permanence plan.

Fostering Social Worker to support foster carer to write an End of Placement Letter

* Child’s Social Worker and Fostering Social Worker to organise disruption meeting

Placement End (or Disruption)

**  **

****

* Hold Placement Support Meeting as soon as possible.
* Review permanence / placement support plan.
* Agree actions including review timescale.

If it is identified the placement is fragile, Child’s Social Worker and Fostering Social Worker to arrange urgent Placement Support Meeting to include:

* Child’s Social Worker
* Fostering Social Worker
* IRO
* Foster Carer
* Parents / relevant family members
* Any other involved agencies e.g. Education/Health.

It is everyone’s responsibility to share information and respond to issues affecting placement stability.

Early identification of placement vulnerabilities and support needs is crucial to ensuring placement stability.

Is the voice of the child clear?

What resources are needed to stabilise the situation?









Placement Instability

**  **

****