



Children's Social Care (CSC) Permanence Planning Policy and Procedures

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1 Purpose

The Children Act 1989 regulations state that *'permanence is the long term plan for the child's upbringing...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'*.

This document provides guidance to social work staff involved in planning permanence for the children and young people they work with. For some children a safe return home may be the best way to achieve permanence but for other children this will not be possible. This policy describes the considerations and procedures for children in care whatever outcome for permanence is sought. For some children planning for their future permanence will need to be initiated pre-birth to ensure the safe care of the child at birth. For others, they may come into care in adolescence and need planning to ensure they can reach adulthood with safe, secure and supportive carers. Consideration about permanence and the best outcomes for children and young people must be kept in mind at the start of a child's involvement with children's services and best practice principles must underpin any professional interventions.

This policy and the associated procedures provide a framework for all professionals involved in permanence planning.

2 Definition

DFE Statutory Guidance

Permanence is the long-term plan for the child's upbringing and provides an underpinning framework for all social work with children and their families from family support through to adoption. The objective of planning for permanence is therefore 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. One of the key functions of the care plan is to ensure that each child has a plan for permanence by the time of the second review, as set out in the statutory guidance to the 2002 Act. Achieving permanence for a child will be a key consideration from the day the child becomes looked-after. The permanence planning process, informed by multi-agency contributions, will identify which permanence option is most likely to meet the needs of the individual child, taking account of his/her wishes and feelings.

A range of options for permanence exist, all of which can deliver good outcomes for individual children:

- *For many children, permanence is achieved through a successful return to their birth family, where it has been possible to address the factors in family life which led to the child becoming looked-after.*
- *For other children routes to permanence outside the care system may include:*
 - ✓ *Family and friends care, particularly where such care can be supported by a legal order such as a child arrangement order, special guardianship order or in a few cases, adoption;*
 - ✓ *Adoption, which for many children can offer the best route to a lifelong and legally permanent new family. Twin track or parallel planning, including concurrent planning, may provide a means to securing permanence by adoption at an early stage for some children;*
 - ✓ *Other non-family and friends' carers supported by a legal order such as a child arrangement order or special guardianship order.*

- *For those children who remain looked-after an important route to permanence is long-term foster care. Where the permanence plan for the child is long-term foster care this may be where the current short-term placement is assessed to meet the long-term needs of the child for permanence or where a new placement is identified for the child as a result of an assessment and matching process.*
- *It is also important to think about the needs of older children and young people in relation to achieving permanence in their lives. They may not be able to live with birth parents for a variety of reasons nor wish to be in a foster home or to be adopted but prefer to live in a children's home where they can also achieve a sense of security and belonging. The care planning process must also identify adults such as wider family and friends or other connected people who can provide emotional support and a long-term trusting relationship which will provide continuing support, particularly during periods of transition. Good quality work with families can help the young person build bridges back to his/her parents or other family members who may be able to provide that support even though it is not possible for the young person to live at home.*

3 Principles of permanence planning

3.1 Aim

The primary aim of permanence planning is to ensure that all children and young people in care, or who may need to come into care, are provided with care arrangements that deliver continuity, consistency and security of care and support which positively promote their attachment to parents, carers and adopters and an individual sense of security, self-esteem and identity. This is important for children whatever their age and situation. Achieving permanence for older children and young people and unaccompanied asylum seekers also recognises the importance of maintaining and developing ties with key people who will remain reference points for the young person into young adulthood and beyond. The needs of this group of children and young people are addressed in section 10 of this document.

3.2 Theoretical underpinning

The theoretical underpinning of this policy is based on developmental trauma and attachment theories. This includes understanding that in order to develop into healthy, contributing young people and adults, children need the opportunity to form secure attachments to a parent / primary carer who can provide sensitive and attuned parenting within secure, consistent and permanent relationships. Most children in care have not had this opportunity and therefore, in order to compensate for the impact of their early life experiences, placement with permanent carers is needed at the earliest opportunity.

This provides a basis of stability from which the child can develop physically, emotionally and intellectually.

Long-term stability means the sense of a permanent home with the same family or group of people, as part of the same community and culture, and with long-term continuity of relationships and identity.

3.3 Involvement of children and young people

Children and young people should be helped to understand their plan for permanence including reasons for the choice of placement, who they are to live with, why they cannot return to birth parents and plans for contact in an age and developmentally appropriate way. This should involve

direct work with the child to ensure they have an understanding of their lived history; this supports preparation for the future and placement into an alternative home. This ensures that where a child cannot live with their family, they are prepared by their social worker, so the child understands what it means to be looked after away from their home. Older children and young people approaching adulthood also need to be given explanations and help to understand what practitioners are wanting to achieve for them

3.4 Timescales

Permanence planning is governed by the statutory timescales within the Care Planning Regulations and all children should have a permanence plan by their second review. However, best practice recognises that this is the latest date by which a permanence plan should be agreed. Early planning should include Permanence planning and be assisted through the Public Law Outline. Timescales are:

- Pre-Proceedings must conclude within 16 weeks. This is Statutory Guidance on Court Orders.
- Twenty-six weeks for Care Proceedings to conclude.
- For all children placed in care under an Interim Care Order or Section 20 (Children Act 1989) a permanence plan should be established prior to the second statutory review and confirmed within a further 6 months.

3.5 Parallel planning

Permanence planning is a staged process involving contingencies where several options are explored at the same time before a final decision can be made. The options for the child to return home, be placed with relatives or other connected persons, be placed for adoption or long-term fostering will be considered as parallel plans to avoid delay.

3.6 Safety planning considerations

The decision to place a child home with birth parents permanently should only be made alongside a clear understanding of the worries or danger. A robust safety plan must be in place that addresses and mitigates these identified risks, through the active involvement of a network of reliable and safe people. The likelihood of the placement sustaining and meeting the child's needs until the child is 18 and beyond must be considered.

Where children and young people cannot be brought up in their birth family, arrangements for them to be cared for on a permanent basis by relatives (or other connected persons) needs to be explored at the earliest opportunity. Other forms of permanent care are then considered when these options are not viable. Whilst it is generally considered that a safe placement with family or friends is preferential to a stranger placement, it's important that exploration of these options does not disproportionately delay securing permanence for the child. Therefore, it may be necessary to consider this in parallel with other permanence options.

4 Child, Young Persons wishes and feelings

The child or young person's wishes and feelings (age appropriate) must be actively sought and taken into consideration at all key points of the permanence planning process.

The child or young person's identity, ethnic, cultural, belief and faith language background and

sexual identity must be considered, and plans must be explicit as how these will be met in placement. Every effort should be made for the child or young person to be brought up in a family which provides the best match to meet these needs. However, this should not prevent them from being placed with carers from a different background if they can best meet the child or young person's needs as it avoids delay in achieving permanence for the child.

5 Route to Permanence

5.1 Local Provision

Where possible, children should be placed in local provision unless it has been clearly identified that such a placement poses a risk to the on-going safety and wellbeing of the child. A decision to place a child out of area must have been considered within the context of the permanence plan.

Consideration can be given to a range of alternative options at the same time to avoid delay in planning. The type of permanence being sought will be determined by the needs of the child or young person.

Where children's cases are before the court, there is a requirement for permanency planning to be in place and placement options to be noted in the Care Plan. Parallel planning options will be considered at the Permanence Planning Meetings (PPM).

5.2 Reunification - returning home

The first stage within permanence planning is work with families and children in need, to support them staying together. Staying at home offers the best chance of stability. This however has to be balanced against the risk of harm to the child.

If a child has been removed, every effort needs to be made for the child or young person to be reunified with their birth family. Again, this must be balanced against any possible risk of further harm to the child or young person.

Procedures in place to effectively support families through Early Help services and Child in Need and Child Protection Plans prior to coming into care should reduce the demand for additional assessments. Where there have been long standing concerns the Pre-Proceedings Framework may be utilised within the Public Law Outline which will identify the need for further assessments.

Where previous children have been removed from a parent or parents, a reassessment of their circumstances may need to be made to ascertain any change or progress.

It is essential as part of any plan for a child to return home, to provide effective monitoring and support through a robust multi-agency network, working in partnership with the parents/carers. This ensures the provision of effective help to parents and the child as well as an early alert to potential breakdown.

5.3 Placement with Family or Friends / Connected Persons

If the child or young person cannot be returned to their birth parent(s), every effort must be made to secure a placement with a family member or friend (Connected Person) as their carer, provided it is safe to do so.

It is essential that the Connected Person (family and friends) being assessed is informed of the long-term expectations, including the financial implications of caring for the child or young person.

A permanent placement with a Connected Person within the family network has the potential advantage of enabling the child to remain within their own family or network. However, these arrangements can present challenges:

- ✓ The parenting concerns that were present for the birth parent(s) may also be apparent in the extended network;
- ✓ The connected carer may not be able to restrict involvement from the birth parent(s), which may undermine or destabilise the placement.

An assessment needs to fully explore these issues to ensure that a placement with connected carers will be safe and enduring and be well supported through the provision of a robust safety plan, and a clearly identified network of safe adults.

Children placed with connected persons are children in care until their carers are granted a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement Order. ([See orders Section](#))

5.4 Adoption

- Adoption process and policy is informed by Adoption Statutory Guidance . Adoption transfers parental responsibility from the birth parents and others, including the Local Authority, permanently and solely to the adopter.
- A child who is not already a citizen of the UK acquires British Citizenship if adopted in the UK by a citizen of the UK.
- Adoptive placements can be achieved through the granting of a Placement Order or where the child has been formally relinquished by the birth parent(s). Where children are being relinquished for adoption by their parents, the safeguarding social worker should seek immediate advice from the Aspire Adoption Permanence Co-ordinator.
- Adoption has the following potential advantages as a permanence plan:
- The adoptive carers exclusively hold parental responsibility;
- The child or young person is no longer looked after;
- There can be no future legal challenge to overturn the Adoption Order;
- Decisions about continuing contact will usually be made by the new parents, on the child's behalf, who are most in touch with the child's needs. However, this will be subject to any Contact Order if made by the court at the time of the Adoption Order or later;
- The child is a permanent family member;
- Adoptive parents have the right to request an assessment for support services at any time after the order is made.

Adoption has the following potential disadvantages as a permanence plan:

- It involves permanent legal separation from the birth family;

- There is no review process;
- Ongoing contact with the birth family is at the discretion of the adoptive parents unless there is a Contact Order in place.

Family finding should begin as soon as adoption is under consideration. Whilst a child usually cannot be placed for adoption until a Placement Order is made, potential adoptive families can be considered prior to this, where the Agency Decision Maker has decided that the child should be placed for adoption. A child can be placed with approved adopters who have been temporarily approved as foster carers. Should a Placement Order be made, they would be able to go on to adopt the child.

5.5 Early Permanence also known as Fostering to Adopt / Temporary Approval of Approved Prospective Adopters as Foster Carers

Social worker should ensure they hold a permanency planning meeting with the Adoption Service where it is possible a child could be placed into an initial foster placement that would become an adoptive placement. The Adoption Service will be able to provide expertise and guidance on the use of this option. This option can be considered during PLO and discussed with parents; it can also be considered for those cases where the care plan is for the child to be removed when they are born. Contingency planning should also allow for the preparation of a fostering to adopt family placement, for example, where a mother and baby placement may not be successful and there is the potential for separation from birth parents.

5.6 Long term (Permanent) Fostering

A long-term fostering arrangement can be with a family member or friend (connected person) who has been approved as a foster carer for a specific child or with an in-house or independent fostering agency carer.

This option has proved to be particularly successful for older children who have retained strong links to their birth families, and where the foster carers wish for the continued involvement of the Local Authority.

Long Term Permanent fostering has the following potential advantages as a permanence plan:

- The local authority shares parental responsibility where there is a Care Order and will have a key role in negotiating contact and other issues;
- The Local Authority can share some of the day-to-day decision-making with foster carers, where appropriate, using Delegated Authority;
- The Care Planning and Fostering Regulations 2015 allow for less frequent social work input and for greater decision making to be given to the foster carer where the child is to remain long term and the foster carer is assessed as being capable of acting in the parental capacity;
- There is continuing social worker support to the child and the foster family, and the placement is regularly reviewed to ensure that the child's needs continue to be met;
- It maintains legal links to the birth family which can still play a part in the decision making for the child.

Permanent Fostering has the following potential disadvantages as a permanence plan:

- Lack of full parental responsibility for the foster carers;
- Continuing social work involvement and regular Looked After Children Reviews may be regarded as destabilising to the placement, where they are not welcomed by the child;
- Possible stigma attached to the child or young person due to being in care;
- The child is not a legal member of the family: This may hinder their view of belonging and if difficulties arise, some carers may be less willing to persevere and seek solution;
- Post care and/or post 18 the carers have no legal responsibility towards the young person.

5.7 Residential provision

A residential setting can be considered only when the needs of the young person are assessed as being best met outside of a family placement or when a family placement that adequately meets the needs of the young person is not available. This care should focus, where possible, on supporting the young person to reach a point where they can return to live within a family setting and care planning should reflect that goal. For some young people with very complex needs that are best met within a residential environment, this will be the long-term permanency option.

6 Orders available to secure children

As well as adoption these orders can be used to secure children with family and friends, carer or Foster Carers.

6.1 Special Guardianship

A Special Guardianship Order should be considered for children who require permanent stability and security, but not the absolute legal break with their birth family that is associated with adoption. It can also provide an alternative for achieving permanence in families where adoption, for cultural or religious reasons, is not an option.

A Special Guardianship Order has the following potential advantages as a permanence plan:

- The carers have majority parental responsibility and authority to make day to day decisions;
- The arrangement has added legal security as leave of the court is required to discharge the Order, and will only be granted if a change of circumstances can be established;
- Maintains legal links to the birth family;
- The assessment of needs would be undertaken by Aspire Adoption. Where a child is in care immediately prior to the making of the Special Guardianship Order, then the Special Guardian, child or birth parent can at any time ask for an assessment for Special Guardianship support services. The local authority (or in our case Aspire Adoption, on behalf of the local authority) may undertake an assessment but where it chooses not to, then it will be recorded why. Special Guardianship Orders where the child was previously a child in care also has access to Adoption Support Funding for therapy services, where appropriate.
- The Special Guardianship Support must be reviewed at least annually.

A Special Guardianship Order has the following potential disadvantages as a permanence plan:

- May not bring the sense of belonging an Adoption Order may provide;
- As the child or young person is not a legal member of the family it may hinder their sense of belonging and, if difficulties arise, some special guardians may be less willing to persevere and seek resolution;
- Although there are restrictions on making an application to discharge the order, such an application is possible, and therefore the child, young person or carers may not feel totally secure;
- Does not provide the financial security as in the case of long-term fostering;
- The order lasts until the child reaches 18. After that time, there is no formal legal connection between the Special Guardian and the child.

6.2 Child Arrangement Orders

Child Arrangement Orders were introduced in April 2014 by the Children and Families Act 2014 (which amended Section 8 Children Act 1989). They replace Contact Orders and Residence Orders.

A Child Arrangements Order means a court order regulating arrangements relating to:

These orders set out who the child is to live with and/or who the child will spend time and can be granted to more than one person whatever their living arrangements. If a Child Arrangements Order states that the child will live with a person, that person will have parental responsibility for that child until the order ceases. Arrangements for parent's contact can either be direct e.g. face to face meetings, or indirect e.g. by letter or exchange of cards.

Some orders will make very specific arrangements for the child; other orders will be more open with detailed arrangements to be made between the parties by agreement. Child Arrangements Orders are not only made in respect of parents; there can also be orders for arrangements between siblings, and wider family members. Sometimes the order will give directions that contact is to be supervised by a third person, or that contact is to take place in a specific location.

A Child Arrangement Order which specifies with whom the child is to live, has the following potential advantages as a permanence plan:

- It gives Parental Responsibility to the carer whilst maintaining the parents' Parental Responsibility;
- The child will no longer be a child in care and therefore, there need be no social work involvement, unless this is identified as necessary;
- There is no review process;
- The child will not be a child in care and so less stigma is attached to the placement;
- Any contact is likely to be agreed and, if considered necessary by the Court, set out in a Contact Order.

A Child Arrangements Order has the following potential disadvantages as a permanence plan:

- It is less secure than Adoption or Special Guardianship in that an application can be made to revoke the Order. However, the Court making the order can be asked to attach a condition refusing a parent's right to seek revocation without leave of the court;
- There is no formal continuing support to the family after the Order is made although in some instances, Child Arrangements Order Allowances may be payable by the local authority (discretionary);
- There is no professional reviewing of the arrangements after the Order unless a new application to court is made, for example by the parents for contact or revocation. (NB New applications to court may be expensive to defend, and the carers would have to bear the cost if not entitled to assistance with legal costs).

7 Consideration of the needs of each child

7.1 Siblings

In the case of siblings, an early decision should be taken as to whether it is in the best interests of each child to be placed together or separately, and the impact on each child of that decision. The decision should be based on a balanced assessment of the individual needs of each child in the group, and the likely or possible consequences of each option on each child.

For each child in a sibling group the long-term advantages and disadvantages of kinship care or adoption, with or without their siblings, should be carefully assessed and updated as new evidence comes to light, with appropriate recommendations. Preconceptions about sibling placements are unhelpful, while some siblings will do better in separate placements, others will be best placed together.

The likelihood of future disruptions should be considered and inform matching and sibling placements. Carers where children with complex needs are placed together as siblings should be assessed and supported appropriately to provide adequate care to siblings to prevent disruption.

The impact on children who remain in the care system due to unavailability of sibling placements should form part of the assessment and be weighed against the risk/benefit of separation. It should be borne in mind that outcomes for care leavers are poorer than their peers at the same age, and a significantly higher number are likely to be unemployed or not in education or training.

7.2 Together and Apart' sibling assessment

The template (appendix 5) will ensure that the following is addressed for each child and include:

- Direct work with the children to ensure their wishes are identified;
- Information from relatives, friends and professionals about how they relate to one another;
- Each child's attachment style;
- In utero development issues, pre and post-natal care;
- Information from Parental Health (PH), Obstetric Report on Mother, Neonatal Report on child (M/B), Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire Ratings, Child's Permanence Report and/or other recent assessments of the child;
- The complexity of each child's needs;

- The nature of the sibling group especially each child's perception of the importance of brothers/sisters;
- Whether the children have shared childhoods and/or heritage?
- How plans to part or reunify children will be carried out;
- Whether targeted family finding should take place;
- What support will be needed for the placement;
- What contact will be in the children's interests if they are not to be placed together.

This outcome of the assessment should be considered within a Permanency Planning Meeting and must inform the type of placement and carers that are required to meet the individual needs of each child. Thoughtful, reflective practice must be evidenced, and a risk assessment carried out, using the Signs of Safety provided in the Together or Apart assessment template.

8 Permanence Planning Meetings

The purpose of a Permanence Planning Meeting is to consider the most effective route to securing permanency for a child or young person. Every child or young person in care must have an overarching Permanence Plan which is formally agreed at the second Statutory Child in Care Review. That is within four months of coming into care. The Permanence Planning meetings will also monitor the progress of life story work for the child and the preparation work being undertaken with the child in relation to transitioning to another family.

Permanence Planning Meetings must be an integral part of the social work response when families are in significant difficulties and an Initial Permanence Planning Meeting must be held when the following apply:

- The Family Support team must convene a Permanence Planning Meeting during a pre-birth assessment, or prior to the child coming into care, when the likely outcome is removal from the birth parent(s).
- Prior to a Legal planning meeting. If not, it should be held immediately afterwards.
- During proceedings whenever the decision has been made to apply to the court to share parental responsibility (to be held no later than 6 weeks before final Care Plan is filed with the court);
- Within 20 working days of a decision (approved by the Designated Manager) for a child to enter care or by the first CLA review;
- Where the child is accommodated in an emergency, a Permanency Planning Meeting must be held within 20 working days (by the first CIC review);

There must be a Review Permanence Planning Meeting at least every 12 weeks but more frequently in certain circumstances. The meetings should follow the second CIC review and should fall in between each subsequent CIC reviews until permanence has been obtained. In addition, Review Permanence planning meetings will take place when needed:

- To address drift, especially when a child is in care under a Section 20 Accommodation arrangement;
- 6 weeks prior to a final Care hearing with the care plan confirmed along with the contingency care plan. Care plans can include Adoption, Special Guardianship, Child Arrangement Order and long-term fostering.
- Within 2 weeks of the first Child in Care review, when rehabilitation home is uncertain;

- Where there are potential risks to the stability of a permanent placement (e.g. violence/risk of abduction/need for geographical distance);
- When it has not been possible to achieve the Care Plan objectives for permanence.
- When a Placement Order (for Adoption) has been made and there is a requirement for a further statutory review under the Adoption Agencies Regulations, 3 months and 6 months post order to consider why the child had not been placed. A Permanence 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 care. That is before the final review meeting. This Review Permanence Planning Meeting should focus on the young person's after care arrangements and the impact that this status will have on their leaving care entitlement.

An early Statutory Review must follow a Permanency Planning Meeting if there is a change of Care Plan from the one recommended at the child or young person's last Statutory Review.

8.1 Family Group Conferences/Network Meeting

A Family Group Conference or Network Meeting should take place at the earliest opportunity to identify whether anyone in the network may be able to provide secure and stable care based on the child's needs. This process reduces the number of unsuitable viability assessments being undertaken and can greatly assist in identifying and bringing together a network of safe people who, in the event of the child returning to live with birth family, would maintain ongoing responsibility to protect the child from experiencing harm or abuse. The Family Group Conference should establish a view as to whether it is reasonable to pursue a full assessment or whether there are fundamental reasons not to consider that placement as suitable.

A Family Group Conference or Network Meeting should be convened.

- Prior to a child coming into care to establish what family support is available to support the children remaining at home and if this is not possible due to safeguarding concerns to look at friends and family and connected persons who may be able to care for the child.
- To support the provision of a robust safety plan and provide a clearly identified network of safe adults.
- As part of a reunification plan to determine the support available
- When there is a need to clarify and support future contact arrangements
- As part of a review assessment.

A referral from for FGM is available as Appendix 3.

8.2 Contributions to permanence planning

The Permanence Planning Meeting will be chaired by the Team Manager for the child. Attendees will be as follows:

- Chair – Team Manager
- Social Worker / Assistant Team Manager
- Aspire Adoption Permanence Co-ordinator/Agency Adviser
- Fostering Supervising Social Worker
- Other professionals (including Health & Education) where appropriate

- IRO representative
- Foster Carers
- Where appropriate consideration should be given to inviting the parents to the meeting.

At the Permanence Planning Meeting (PPM) consideration is given to include the foster carer and their supervising social worker, recognising that they have information with regards to the child's needs and also ensuring that they are then aware of the planning that is taking place for the child.

8.3 Information considered at Permanence planning meetings

See meeting template below [\(Appendix 2\)](#). The Permanence Planning meetings will consider the following areas:

- Background of the Child(ren)
- Current Legal Context
- Current Assessment in Progress with Probable Outcome
- Child(ren)'s Health
- Child(ren)'s Education / Geographical Needs
- Child(ren)'s Wishes / Feelings
- Views of Parents / Other Significant Adults
- Discussions of Relevant Options / Likely Outcomes
- Actions
- Review Date

8.4 The recording of Permanence planning meetings

The recording of PPM's is essential to evidence the discussed permanence planning for children in care. Where possible the minutes for the PPM should be completed and signed off by the Chair within 48 hours and recorded in the child's electronic file within 72 hours. Service Manager sign off will form part of the workflow for these meetings.

The Minutes will become part of the submission to the ADM where a Care Plan of Adoption is to be considered, and they may be included as part of the evidence bundle in Care Proceedings.

It is particularly important for those children who may be deemed more difficult to place, that these meetings involve the right people and that they evidence the decision-making that articulates the final plan. These will be:

- Sibling groups
- Children with more complex need, including those who have suffered significant abuse and neglect leading to developmental delay and impaired attachments.
- Children with additional needs and disability
- Children who have experienced several placements moves both within the family network and in foster care

9 Permanence Planning and Tracking Meeting

Depending on the care plan for the child and the considerations in section 8, the PPM determines the frequency of review meetings. The plan for permanence should be reviewed and tracked by

Service manager / team manager.

The Permanence Planning and Tracking Meeting will ensure there is good practice in the delivery of care planning across operational services including the role of the IRO. All plans for Permanency are agreed at the Child in Care review and recorded. Following the review within 3 months there should be confirmation of the match for long term fostering at the requisite fostering panel for in house carers and IFA carers.

There is an expectation that a child's case is considered at the Permanence Planning and Tracking Meeting within 4 weeks entry into Local Authority Care and then reviewed at regular intervals, (frequency being based on the care plan for the child and court timescale) until the child's permanent placement is secured.

The Permanence planning and Tracking meetings take place at least fortnightly and are chaired by the Service Director. Attendance is required by the Team Manager who will be able to present the care plan and the contingency plan with all appropriate dates. IRO manager should attend the meeting to ensure that escalations are in place when there is evidence of impact on a child's welfare because of delayed permanence planning and appropriate placement progression. This meeting will oversee and approve the permanence plans, offer advice and challenge drift and delay. Timescales will be monitored against government guidance.

In the first instance the Permanence Planning and Tracking Meeting will oversee the management and operational decision making to ensure it meets the child's needs.

10 Achieving a Permanence plan for older children and young people

Permanence for young people accommodated after 16 and those who are Leaving Care is vital to their success as adults. Young people leaving care are supported under the Local Offer, but the primary aim remains, wherever possible, for young people to be supported through the continued care offered by their foster carers through "Staying Put".

10.1 Staying Put

Staying Put is a key component of a comprehensive set of permanency destinations for young care experienced people aged 16 and over. The Children & Families Act 2014 formalised arrangements that set an expectation that young people should remain with their foster carers, where appropriate, beyond their 18th birthday.

Staying Put as a long-term option for young people should be raised with their foster carer at least one year before the young person's 18th birthday, although it should be a feature of longer term planning from the Child in Care Review immediately prior to their 16th birthday, so that discussions around support and finances can be had without the pressure of a time deadline.

Final planning for Staying Put as the preferred option should be discussed at the penultimate Child in Care Review before the young person's 18th birthday, and the decision should be ratified via the Permanency Panel, incorporated into the Pathway Plan and signed off at the final Child in Care Review.

10.2 Staying Close

For young people who have been accommodated in residential provision, the option of **Staying Close** resembles the support envisaged in the Staying Put arrangement. Staying Close enables

young people to live independently in the area of their former residential placement and receive on-going support from the placement to support their transition to independence. Exploration, planning and approval should mirror the process outlined above for Staying Put but should also be mindful of the implications around future provision of secure housing options, the young person's longer-term support needs, and the potential benefits of local family and friendship networks.

10.3 Independent Accommodation

Move on to semi-independent supported accommodation and full independence should take place only when the young person is ready for these transitions. Readiness follows stages of preparation that equips them, both practically and emotionally, for this significant step towards a successful adulthood. For some young people this level of preparation may not have been possible, but commissioned placements should ensure, as much as is possible, that young people receive support to equip them to navigate this level of self-responsibility successfully.

When young people are placed in semi-independent supported accommodation/supported lodgings the focus expected from the provider is equipping young people for independence. Positive transitions are supported through young people developing and building on a set of practical skills around self-care and health, money management, maintaining stable accommodation and making safe choices in relation to lifestyle and relationships.

Young people whose needs are best met in semi-independent supported accommodation or supported lodgings are presented at Care & Access to Resources Panel (CARP) for approval. For those between 16-18 the Pathway Plan will be reviewed and endorsed at the LAC Review.

It is recognised that in most instances these types of accommodation are unregulated and should be primarily used for young people who are accepted as homeless between 16-18, and who do not wish to live, or it is not suitable for them to live, in a family-based fostering placement. For most young people being initially accommodated at this late stage, accommodation is provided under Section 17 or Section 20 if they elect to become looked after. For those over the age of 18 years they are offered as part of their transition into adulthood.

10.4 Personal Advisor Support

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 has opened a pathway for continued support to young people who are care leavers through the extension of Personal Advisor support up to the age of 25, whether or not young people remain in education or training. We will work with young people and continue to make an offer of support from a Personal Advisor at least once every year, when young people are not in regular touch with the Care Experienced Young Persons' Team. Where young people accept the offer of renewed support the Personal Advisor will undertake the Needs Assessment and prepare the Pathway Plan.

Young people will be involved in a meaningful and proactive way in their needs' assessments, in setting the goals of their Pathway Plan and how these are reviewed.

The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 offers additional support to young people, particularly those who are 16-17 and request an assessment under the Southwark Judgement. As such BCP has developed an improved homelessness and accommodation pathway introduced for 16/17-year olds and care leavers at risk of homelessness, with a greater focus on young people staying at home if safe to do so with innovative education options.

10.5 Care Leavers with Disabilities & Complex Needs

Disabled young people and those with complex needs who are likely to require ongoing support from Adult Services will have the same access to relevant care leaving services as any other young person. Their Pathway Plan will be informed by a need's assessment as with any other care leaver, but assessment in these circumstances will assess whether the young person will have ongoing need for care and support beyond 18. The assessment will identify how the young person's ongoing needs may impact on their welfare, what outcomes the young person wants to attain, and what care and support is required to help in achieving those goals. The social worker will need to assess whether it is likely that support will need to continue beyond 18, and the Pathway Plan must then set out the identified need for ongoing support will be met and by whom. This may be by remaining in a residential placement, ongoing support via a **Shared Lives** arrangement or supported independent living. Although case responsibility may transfer to an Adults Services team, the Care Experienced Young People's Team will continue to offer support to ensure the young person, as a Care Leaver, accesses the full range of services that meets their needs.

10.6 Support to Care Leavers who are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

The young person's immigration status does not influence the requirement to provide care leaving support. Unaccompanied children must be provided with the same support as for any other care leaver, as set out in legislation.

The young person's status as an unaccompanied or trafficked child must be considered as part of the assessment of needs that informs the Pathway Plan and reviewed accordingly by the IRO. As with any care leaver, transition planning will consider the challenges and issues, such as education or preparing for independent living. Planning for a care leaver who entered the UK as an unaccompanied or trafficked child should consider any additional support needed to navigate the systems they will interact with in the UK.

Given the lack of supportive family and friendship networks that many unaccompanied or trafficked children experience, the Care Experienced Team should be mindful of the risks of isolation when young people move towards independent living. There should also be awareness of the ongoing risk of renewed exploitation if a child was originally trafficked into the UK, or through their vulnerability as a result of social isolation.

Pathway planning to support an unaccompanied young person's transition to adulthood should cover all those areas that would be addressed within any other care leaver's plans as well as any additional needs arising from their specific immigration issues. Planning must take into consideration their care needs within the context of wider asylum and immigration legislation and how these needs will change over time.

Planning may be based around short-term achievable goals whilst "leave to remain" status is determined. This may mean that transition planning could initially take a dual or triple planning perspective, that considers the different outcomes possible at this stage of the process, but which become clearer as the young person's immigration status is resolved.

Planning cannot pre-empt the outcome of any immigration decision and may be based on:

- A transitional plan for the period before any permanent immigration status is granted.
- Planning that incorporates longer-term goals should the young person be granted long-term permission to stay.

- Planning that considers a return to the young person's country of origin, either as a result of their own desire to return or because leave to remain is not granted.

Claiming asylum can be a complex process. Social workers and personal advisors should work with the care leaver's legal representative and the dedicated decision-maker at the Home Office to ensure that the young person understands the process of claiming asylum and all the possible outcomes, and to provide them with necessary support to enable a full and fair process.

Planning for a return to the young person's country of origin may be difficult, but Pathway Plans should include contingencies that consider how the young person's best interests can be achieved if they have to return to their home country. Planning should always consider the implications for the care leaver if any application for leave to remain is refused and any appeal dismissed.

10.7 Access to public funds, welfare benefits and other public funds

Financial support for young people should address their needs as eligible care leavers and those related to their immigration status. Pathway Plans should address funding arrangements for education and training and recognise how the young person's immigration status, in the absence of a leave to remain decision, may limit some education, training and employment opportunities.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Permanence Planning Flowchart and Pathways to Permanence Flowchart

The following templates should be used:

Appendix 2. Initial Permanence Planning Meeting

Appendix 3. Review Permanence Planning Meeting

Appendix 4. Permanence Planning and Tracking Panel Referral Form

Appendix 5. Family Group Conference Referral Form

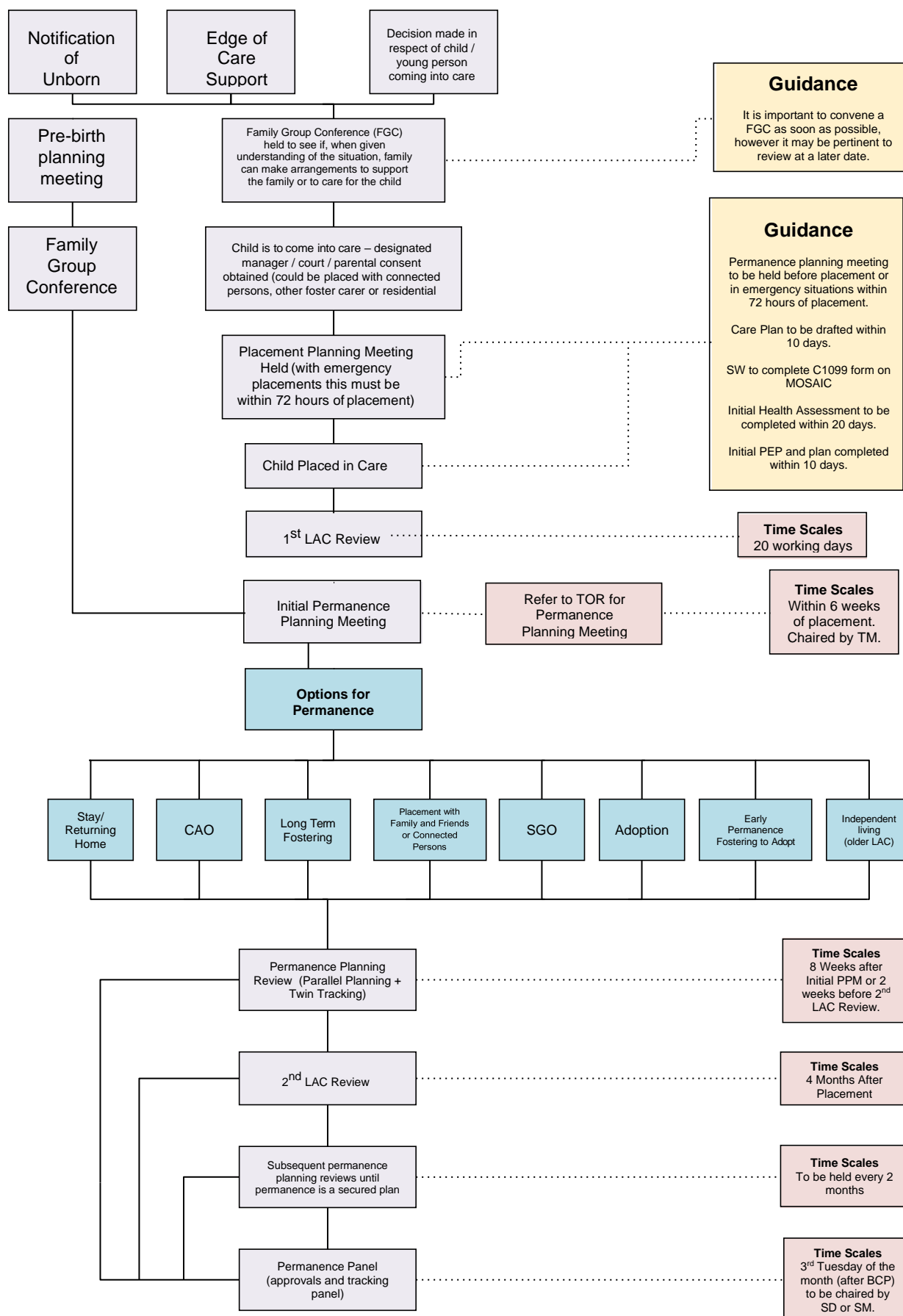
Appendix 6. Together and Apart Assessment

Appendix 7. IRO Checklist for Permanence

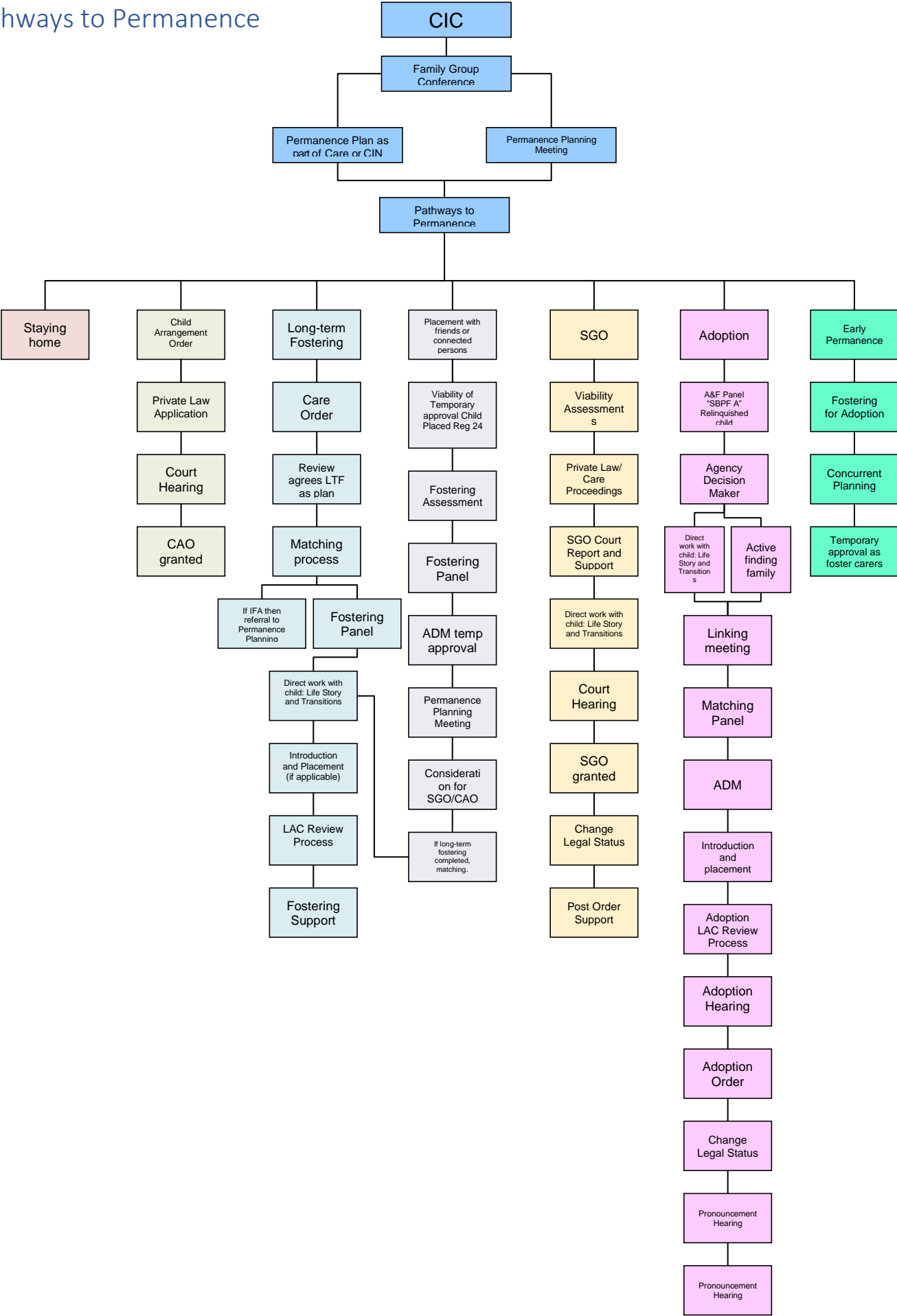
Appendix 8 Checklist for Social Workers and Team Managers

Appendix 1 – Permanence Planning Flowchart

The question “how are the child’s permanence needs being met?” must be at the core of everything we do.



Pathways to Permanence





Initial Permanence Planning Meeting (PPM)

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Date and Time: | |
| Venue and Location: | |

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| Present: | |
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| Minute Taker: | |
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| | | | |
|---|--|----------------------|--|
| Child's Name: | | | |
| Date of Birth: | | Age: | |
| Electronic Record ID: | | Legal Status: | |
| Ethnicity: Disability: | | | |
| Placement Provider Details: Name: Address: | | | |
| Allocated Social Worker: Practice Manager: Team Manager: | | | |

| |
|--|
| Summary of Background |
| Case summary |
| Current Legal Context |
| Current Assessments in Progress with Probable Outcome |
| Child(ren)'s Health |
| Child(ren)'s Education / Geographical Needs |
| Child(ren)'s Wishes and Feelings |
| Views of Parents and Other Significant Adults |

| | | |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Views of the IRO | | |
| | | |
| Name of IRO: | | Date of Next CiC Review: |
| | | |
| Discussions of Relevant Options / Likely Outcomes | | |
| | | |
| ACTION | | |
| <i>Details of Actions</i> | <i>Who will do this</i> | <i>By When</i> |
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| Review Date | | |
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| Chair's Comments | | | |
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| Chair's Signature: | | Date: | |
| Service Manager Comments | | | |
| | | | |
| Service Manager Signature: | | Date: | |

Appendix 3

Adult and Children's Directorate
Children, Young People & Families Services (CYPFS)



Review Permanence Planning Meeting (PPM)

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Date and Time: | |
| Venue and Location: | |

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| Present: | |
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| Minute Taker: | |
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| | | | |
|---|--|----------------------|--|
| Child's Name: | | | |
| Date of Birth: | | Age: | |
| Electronic Record ID: | | Legal Status: | |
| Ethnicity: Disability: | | | |
| Placement Provider Details: Name: Address: | | | |
| Allocated Social Worker: Practice Manager: Team Manager: | | | |

| |
|--|
| Review of Actions / Outcomes |
| Current Legal Context |
| Current Assessments in Progress with Probable Outcome |
| Child(ren)'s Health |
| Child(ren)'s Education / Geographical Needs |
| Child(ren)'s Wishes and Feelings |
| Views of Parents and Other Significant Adults |

| | | |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Views of the IRO | | |
| | | |
| Name of IRO: | | Date of Next LAC Review: |
| | | |
| Discussions of Relevant Options / Likely Outcomes | | |
| | | |
| ACTION | | |
| <i>Details of Actions</i> | <i>Who will do this</i> | <i>By When</i> |
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| Review Date | | |
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| Chair's Comments | | | |
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| Chair's Signature: | | Date: | |
| Service Manager Comments | | | |
| | | | |
| Service Manager Signature: | | Date: | |



Permanence Planning & Tracking Panel Referral Form

Please send completed referral forms and requested documentation to

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| Child's Name: | <input type="text"/> | | |
| Care Director /Mosaic no: | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Date of Birth: | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Ethnicity: | <input type="text"/> <i>Other Please Specify</i> | | |
| Disability: | <input type="text"/> <i>Other Please Specify</i> | | |

| | | |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Legal Status: | <input type="checkbox"/> Interim Care Order <input type="checkbox"/> Care Order <input type="checkbox"/> Section 20 <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(Please specify)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Remanded into Custody <input type="checkbox"/> Special Guardianship Order <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision Order |
| Type of Placement: | <input type="checkbox"/> IFA <input type="checkbox"/> B&B <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(Please specify)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Residential School <input type="checkbox"/> Supported Lodgings <input type="checkbox"/> Bespoke Package |
| Name of Provider: | <input type="text"/> | |
| Placement Address: | Postcode: | <input type="text"/> |

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Reason for Referral: | <input type="checkbox"/> Long-Term Fostering Approval <input type="checkbox"/> In-House <input type="checkbox"/> IFA <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption <input type="checkbox"/> SGO / CAO <input type="checkbox"/> Reunification Home <input type="checkbox"/> Review of Permanence Plan |
|----------------------|---|

| | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Social Worker: | <input type="text"/> |
| Team Manager: | <input type="text"/> |
| Date: | <input type="text"/> |

Appendix 5

FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCES Referral Form



REFERRAL CRITERIA:

| Type | Description | Please tick |
|--------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Children In Need | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Child Protection | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Public Law Outline | Where the Public Law Outline is being considered or in process | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Early Help | Children, young people and families not subject to or to prevent the escalation to statutory Services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Looked After Child | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

REFERRER:

| Referrer's Name | Local Authority & Team | Direct Line | Working days/ hours | Email |
|-----------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------|
| | | | | |

REFERRED CHILD/REN:

| Name | Date of Birth | Age |
|------|---------------|-----|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

PARENTS:

| Name | Address including Postcode | Phone numbers | Parental Responsibility? | |
|------|----------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

OTHER EXTENDED INDIVIDUALS:

| Name | Address | Phone |
|------|---------|-------|
| | | |
| | | |

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Does the family require an interpreter? | Yes | No |
| Does the child/ren have an advocate in place? | Yes | No |
| Is it likely that the child/ren will need an advocate? | Yes | No |
| Are there any special needs within the family/child? e.g. disability. Please outline: | Yes | No |

KEY AGENCIES INVOLVED:

| Name | Agency | Telephone |
|------|--------|-----------|
| | | |
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Reason for meeting: (Please include a brief description of the current situation and if known the proposed questions to be addressed)

Family view of referral:

Young person's view of referral:

| Are the family in agreement with this referral being made? | Yes | No | Date discussed: |
|--|-----|----|-----------------|
| Referrer's signature | | | |
| Referrer's line manager and contact details | | | |

Please note: *the referrer needs to attend the entire Family Group Conference*

Please email this referral to:

Brokerage Officers
Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council
Town Hall
Access to Resources Team, Extension 3 Bourne Avenue
BH3 6DY
01202 458012 artbrokerage@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

| | | | |
|---------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| Date received | | Date of allocation | |
| Name of coordinator | | Date inputted | |

| AREA OF RISK | Historic risk? | Current risk? | If current please give <u>further detail</u> of any plan in place, any additional evidence, source of risk information. |
|---|----------------|---------------|---|
| Violence/ Aggression/ Threatening Behaviour | | | |
| Physical Illness/ disabilities | | | |
| Additional risk areas: | | | |

Appendix 6 - Together and Apart Assessment PROMPTS

1 Outcome of direct work with child/ren to gain information on:

a) Who they regard as brothers/sisters, closeness or distance in relationships:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

b) Who can tell us how these siblings relate to one another?

- Other siblings
- Parents
- Previous partners
- Foster carers/previous carers
- Social workers
- Teachers/nursery staff
- Key people to consider?

2 Background Information

A sibling assessment must inform the type of placement and carers required to meet the individual needs of each child. Thoughtful, reflective practice must be evidenced. The individual child's needs will take into consideration in utero developmental issues, pre-natal care and post-natal care. These early experiences will inform the type of placement and carers required. Issues in relation to birth trauma including oxygen deprivation, smoking through pregnancy, parental mental health and learning difficulties will need to be balanced against potential positive sibling relationships as these developmental factors contribute to later placement disruptions thereby creating increased separation and attachment anxiety and poorer outcomes for children and young people.

The likelihood of future disruptions should be considered and inform matching and sibling placements. Carers where children with complex needs are placed together as siblings should be assessed and supported appropriately to provide adequate care to siblings to prevent disruption.

The impact on children who remain in the care system due to sibling placements being unavailable should be considered. It should be borne in mind that outcomes for care leavers are poorer than their peers at the same age, and a significantly higher number are likely to be unemployed or not in education or training. Younger siblings who remain in care will also be affected as older siblings leave.

PH - Parental Health medical reports must be available to inform decision making and provides an opportunity to assess likely future behaviour, cognitive development and

mental ill health.

Forms M/B- Obstetric Report on Mother, Neonatal Report on Child.

SDQ - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire ratings.

CPR - Child's Permanence Report or recent assessments of the child.

3 Thinking about the children, their needs, and their relationship with one another:

a) What are we worried about?

- Harm including being specific about the delay in finding a family.
- Past harm including neglect, physical or sexual abuse, multiple placements in background, drug or alcohol use, mental health, domestic violence.
- Complicating Factors, including marked differences in needs.
- Risks including sexual acting out between siblings, exploitation based on gender, scapegoating, danger of re-traumatising, rivalry.
- Impact on the carers where there are medical and disabilities. Ability and capacity to manage sibling groups of 2 or more.

b) What's working well?

- Include existing relationship with carers and each other; behaviours, including evidence of sharing; evidence of reciprocity, how they model on each other.

c) What needs to happen?

- What is the level of parenting intensity required for each child?
- How might this be affected by the sibling dynamic?
- Based on the assessment of attachment, what parenting style is required for each child?
- If the relationships are positive between the children are adopters available to care for them as a group, and if not, how can they best be placed to maintain relationships.
- Carer matching - If the sibling group cannot, be placed together, carers (fostering and adoption) can be matched to provide ongoing relationships within close geographical areas. This will support relationships in school and socially.
- If we decide it is in the children's interests to separate what form should post adoption contact take? Will it need support, or can it be managed by the adopters?
- What support will the carers need?

- How will introductions be managed? Which child will be introduced first (if siblings are to be placed together) and how long will the adopter have to adapt to parenting the first child placed, how will starting at school be managed etc.
- If children are currently in separate placements how will re-uniting them be managed? If together now how will separate placements be managed?

4 Rating

On a scale of 0 to 10 where **10** is that the children have secure attachments, can share activities, reciprocate, and model on each other, and **0** is where the attachments are insecure or disordered, and/or the relationship between them is abusive and likely to cause one of them serious harm, where do you rate this relationship?

Rating

Effective Permanence Planning seeks to provide children and young people with secure, stable relationships in family settings that demonstrate warmth and loving support through childhood and into early adulthood. This provides children and young people with a sense of security, continuity, commitment, identity and belonging that will anchor them as adults. Even where older children and young people may not wish, or not able to be, in fostering or adoptive families, there is a need to achieve placement stability and longevity which provides a similar sense of security, warmth and belonging.

The IRO has a central part to play in ensuring that a child or young person's need for permanency is being met and the review, scrutiny and challenge role of the IRO is the core element of holding other parts of the service to children to account for the quality of services delivered.

By keeping the needs of the child or young person central to our planning the IRO can facilitate best practice on behalf of the child and the following checklist supports that effort from the earliest point of Tier 3 intervention.

| | |
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| Family solutions within the extended family/connected persons should always be the first avenue explored if a child or young person cannot or should not be cared for by their parent/carers. The IRO should raise this question from their first involvement. | |
| If children or young people cannot be cared for by their parent/s/carers at this time, is there a plan for rehabilitation and what are the likely timescales for successful reunification? | |
| Does the placement identified, whether with family, connected persons or foster carers have the potential to be a long-term home for the child, in the absence of rehabilitation to parental care? (If not, what are the benefits for the child in being placed and what are the alternatives being actively considered?) | |
| The placement should offer emotional warmth, security and a sense of being owned and belonging for the child or young person-how is this evidenced? | |
| The placement should offer long term stability and continuity of care. Are there any known barriers to achieving this and what are the expectations of the carer, the parent/s and the child/ young person in supporting this? | |
| How have the wishes and feelings of the child, where they are of an age and understanding to provide them, been incorporated within the permanency planning. How have these been evidenced? | |
| The placement should wherever possible support the child or young person's identity in terms of ethnicity, language, religious belief and culture and always be able to respond to issues around | |

| | |
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| sexuality and gender identity. How is this supported in the permanency plan and what steps need to be taken to provide additional supports in these areas where necessary? | |
| Where there are siblings does the placement have the capacity to keep siblings together into the long-term? | |
| Where it is appropriate the permanency planning considers the child or young person's need to maintain contact with their parent/s/carers, siblings and other important people in their life. Will the placement actively support these arrangements? | |
| Where a "forever family" is not available within the child or young person's extended birth family; what Life Story work has begun to enable the child/young person to know and understand their family history and the reasons why they are being cared for outside of their birth family? | |
| Does the permanency planning take account of the child or young person's need for stability and consistency of education? How is this evidenced? | |
| The young person has the option for Staying put and the carer/s are clear that the young person is a welcome part of their family beyond the age of eighteen. How is this evidenced? | |
| For older children, will the placement provide support and assistance as the young person moves towards independence at a time of their choosing and what safeguards are in place to ensure this transition plan is safe and realistic? | - |

The IRO should review:

- The timeliness of decision-making and highlight the need to prevent any drift in achieving permanence.
- That parallel planning, including concurrent planning in adoption scenarios, is actively considered as part of early permanency planning.
- Permanency planning begins at earlier stages of the child's journey but following accommodation a comprehensive Permanence Plan must be available by the 2nd LAC Review at four months. The IRO should record this in the minutes. If a Permanency Plan is not available to the 2nd Review this should form the basis for an immediate Escalation, with a tight timescale for completion.
- Children and young people's situations change over time and the Permanency Plan should be regularly reviewed and new Plans made to meet the assessed needs of the child or young person and the placements continued ability to meet them.

Appendix 8 - Checklist for Social Workers and Team Managers

Effective Permanence Planning seeks to provide children and young people with secure, stable relationships in family settings that demonstrate warmth and loving support through childhood and into early adulthood. This provides children and young people with a sense of security, continuity, commitment, identity and belonging that will anchor them as adults. Even where older children and young people may not wish, or not able to be, in fostering or adoptive families, there is a need to achieve placement stability and longevity which provides a similar sense of security, warmth and belonging.

Practitioners and Team Managers will be initiators of a timely and focused response to the permanency needs of children and young people at the outset of social work intervention. The assessments undertaken and plans drawn up should always feature a dedicated lens on the long term aims and aspirations for children's care. There is a clear expectation that wherever possible the consideration of care options should be as follows.

PARENTAL
CONNECTED
ADOPTION
FOSTERING
RESIDENTIAL

Where children and young people cannot be looked after by their parent/s, operational teams including Fostering & ART will keep the needs of the child or young person central to our planning by focusing on the three strands of effective permanency.

- Physical permanency is rooted in good quality assessments that enable the child's needs to be understood and appropriate placements identified with carers who have the skills and resilience to meet children and young people's needs. By reducing the number of placements moves because of poor matching, children and young people are more likely to be matched to a stable and secure home setting.
- Emotional permanency is rooted in children being offered the stable setting which allows them to build long term relationships with carers, with school and friendship networks and committed professionals.
- Legal permanency is achieved through timely application to the Courts for Orders that will secure the child or young person's future with relatives, adopters or through care status. Team Managers should ask the questions set below to steer effective Early Permanency Planning.

| | |
|---|--|
| Have family solutions within the extended family/connected persons been explored if a child or young person cannot or should not be cared for by their parent/carers. Permanency conversations as part of CP assessment and planning. | |
| Even where children or young people cannot be cared for by their parent/s/carers at this time, what is your plan for rehabilitation and what are the likely timescales for successful reunification? | |
| If rehabilitation is not immediately achievable, please arrange a Permanency Planning Meeting & Legal Planning Meeting to inform decision-making at this point. | |
| Where a placement is identified, whether with family, connected persons or foster carers is there the potential for it to be a matched long-term home for the child, in the absence of rehabilitation to parental care? If not, what are the benefits for the child in being placed and what alternatives are available? | |
| The placement should offer emotional warmth, security and a sense of being owned and belonging for the child or young person- how is this evidenced? | |
| The placement should offer long term stability and continuity of care. Are there any known barriers to achieving this and what are the expectations of the carer, the parent/s and the child/ young person in supporting this? | |
| How have the wishes and feelings of the child, where they are of an age and understanding to provide them, been incorporated within the permanency planning. How have these been evidenced? | |
| The placement should wherever possible support the child or young person's identity in terms of ethnicity, language, religious belief and culture and always be able to respond to issues around sexuality and gender identity. How is this supported in the permanency plan and what steps need to be taken to provide additional supports in these areas where necessary? | |
| Where there are siblings does the placement have the capacity to keep siblings together into the long-term? | |
| Where it is appropriate the permanency planning considers the child or young person's need to maintain contact with their parent/s/carers, siblings and other important people in their life. Will the placement actively support these arrangements? | |
| Where a "forever family" is not available within the child or young person's extended birth family; what Life Story work has begun to enable the child/young person to know and understand their family history and the reasons why they are being cared for outside of their birth family? | |

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| Does the permanency planning take account of the child or young person's need for stability and consistency of education? How is this evidenced? | |
| The young person has the option for Staying put and the carer/s are clear that the young person is a welcome part of their family beyond the age of eighteen. How is this evidenced? | |
| For older children, will the placement provide support and assistance as the young person moves towards independence at a time of their choosing and what safeguards are in place to ensure this transition plan is safe and realistic? | |

Team Manager Considerations:

- Permanency Planning Meetings should be held prior to entry into care and consideration given to fostering and adoption attending in order to support timely care planning.
- The key priority is to ensure the primary carer is providing a secure attachment to the child, with a focus on the child's needs this will prevent drift.
- Ensure that appropriate legislative frameworks are in place for placements that may be categorised as 'family arrangements'. These should be considered in light of the statutory guidance provided by DFE: The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulation Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review placements 2015 . Where there are safeguarding concerns, and Local Authority are involved in changes to a child's residency, and there are no adults with Parental Responsibility; the social worker will ensure the viability and placement authorisation and management decision making at the appropriate level, is clearly recorded along with timescales. Appropriate panel oversight should be sought.
- Where the plan is for a return home, plans should specify the purposeful work to be undertaken so that it is safe for the child to return home. Outcomes to be achieved with timescales should be noted.
- That parallel planning should be actively considered at all stages of permanency planning.
- A Permanency Planning should be held following a legal planning meeting to ensure placement options are considered. Placement Arrangement meetings should be held, if possible, prior to entry into care.
- Together and Apart assessments must form part of the work to review the relationships for brothers and sisters prior to their entry into care where possible, and not later than the 2nd review. Permanency planning begins at the earliest stages of the child's journey but following accommodation a comprehensive Permanence Plan must be available by the 2nd LAC Review at four months. If the social worker does not provide a Permanency Plan at this stage that contains management oversight and sign-off an Escalation will be actioned by the allocated IRO who will set a tight timescale for compliance.
- Children and young people's situations change over time and the Permanency Plan should be regularly reviewed and new Plans made to meet the assessed needs of

the child or young person and the placements continued ability to meet them. As the child journeys through the different operational teams the respective team managers and the IRO have key parts to play in ensuring that a child or young person's need for permanency is being met. Both the Team Manager and the IRO have an oversight and challenge role in ensuring the child's needs are being met by the quality of the services and supports being provided.