

**Permanency Tracking Panel**

**Terms of Reference**

**Introduction**

Permanency planning is essential for all looked after children to avoid drift and progress plans for security and attachment. The objective of planning for permanence is to ensure that children have a secure, stable, and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond.

Permanence is a framework of emotional, physical, and legal conditions that gives a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment, and identity.

Permanency is a guiding principle for all services working with children and families and applies to all children looked after.

**Permanency Tracking Panel**

**Purpose of Panel**

* To ascertain how the child’s permanence needs are going to be met
* To consider the child’s voice, views, wishes and feelings in relation to securing permanence for them
* To monitor the progress of plans which should incorporate parallel planning where appropriate
* To ensure all plans are progressed in a timely manner, are relevant and multi-agency in nature
* To monitor and report on the themes and issues that the Trust can learn from and adapt accordingly, including placement stability and the use of stability and disruption meetings

Permanence is achieved through a number of routes: return to family, adoption, special guardianship, connected person placement, child arrangement order and long-term fostering.

There is no hierarchy in respect of permanence options and all plans should be child focussed and underpinned by a robust assessment of the child’s needs now and in the longer term.

All of these will be duly considered by the Panel.

**The Panel will:**

* Monitor the progress of permanence plans for looked after children upon the conclusion of care proceedings to reduce drift and delay in achieving the agreed plan
* Advise and make recommendations in respect of care planning for and consider the potential for the use of early permanence placements. For families where previous children have been placed for adoption consider the appropriateness of early discussions with previous adoptive families
* Monitor and advise on permanency planning processes to maintain a focus on plans being progressed in a timely manner
* Track permanency planning from the conclusion of proceedings through to the point it is secured for the child i.e., permanent return to family network, adoption order, special guardianship order, child arrangement order or approved match of a permanent fostering placement
* Endeavour to resolve any presenting issues/obstacles and ensure that there is effective communication between the professionals involved
* Escalate concerns with senior manager, as required, where cases highlight drift or difficulties that will hinder implementation of agreed plans
* Provide 6 monthly reports to the SLT on the numbers of cases reviewed, outcomes and any practice issues
* Provide oversight in relation to matched placements which disrupt and make recommendations in relation to convening a disruption meeting
* Monitor cases in respect of changes of permanence care plan and ensure that revocations of orders are progressed in a timely way e.g., placement or care orders
* Panels will agree a review period on a case-by-case basis generally between 3 and 6 months.

**Panel Meeting Structure**

Due to the volume of children and young people in the care of NCT tracking panels will be convened as follows:

* Permanence Tracking – Children and young people with a care plan of rehabilitation, long-term fostering, SGO, and those for whom the plan is to step down from residential care will be tracked via the Permanence Tracking panel which will meet twice a month. The permanence co-ordinator and chair of the panel will liaise, to agree panel agendas and the permanence co-ordinator will send invites to social workers to attend panel to provide a verbal update on plans for the child or young person, timescales and any barriers to progressing plans.
* Adoption – tracking and monitoring of the cohort of children for whom adoption is the plan will be incorporated into the established adoption tracking process managed via the Voluntary Adoption Agency. This panel will meet monthly. If a child’s plan changes from adoption their plan will then be monitored via the main tracking panel process until permanence is achieved. The permanence co-ordinator and chair of the panel will liaise to agree panel agendas and the permanence co-ordinator will send invites to social workers to attend panel to provide a verbal update on plans for the child or young person, timescales and any barriers to progressing plans.

Following panel meetings, a record of the key points discussed, any actions and timescales for review by panel will be recorded and uploaded to CareFirst by thepermeance co-ordinator. Any escalations in relation to practice will be followed up by the panel chair with the respective service or team manager.

**Panel Membership:**

Permanence Tracking

* Chair – Service Manager Children in Care
* Permanence co-ordinator
* IRO representative
* Fostering Service Manager
* Placement Team representative
* Service Manager Residential Homes – as appropriate

Adoption

* Chair – Adoption Service Manager
* Adoption Team manager / Practice Manager
* Adoption Business Support
* IRO representative – with lead for adoption
* Permanence Team Manager

**Accountability:**

The Panel is accountable to SLT

**Frequency:**

Permanence Tracking Panel meetings will take place fortnightly on a Tuesday for half a day each time

Adoption Tracking Panel will take place monthly on a Tuesday