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**Guidance for Agency Decision Maker (ADMs)**

**and Permanency Planning Meetings (PPMs)**

**Agency Decision Maker Meetings (ADM):**

* *Purpose:* Agency Decision Maker Meetings, or ADMs, are held when the decision has been made that the care plan for a child should be Adoption. The role of the ADM meeting is to receive agreement, or a recommendation, from the Agency Decision Maker that this care plan is in the child’s best interest based on all evidence available.
* *Attendees should include:* Deputy Director or Head of Safeguarding (Chair), Team Manager, Social Worker, and Permanency Champion Manager (ADM Advisor).
  + Service Manager and Head of Service may also attend, as per preference.
  + In-house SGO/Kinship Assessor may also attend, to speak to their assessments. This may be at the request of the Deputy Director.
  + Legal may also attend in cases where there are complicated legal considerations.
  + The Deputy Director or Head of Safeguarding is a mandatory attendee due to being the designated ‘Agency Decision Maker’.
* *Booking an ADM:* Social workers will need to have made a request for this meeting to the Permanency Champion Manager in advance (with the agreement of their Team Manager and Service Manager). The Permanency Champion Manager is responsible for arranging the meeting and ensuring all documents and evidence are available.
* *Papers required:* The Permanency Champion Manger will provide the Social Work Team with the papers that require completion in advance of the ADM meeting. Papers required will include:
  + Adoption Medical and any feedback from other health professionals
  + Child Permanence Report (CPR)
  + IRO View (template provided)
  + Legal advice (template provided)
  + Social Work Declaration for ADM (template provided)
  + Coram BAAF Form CR-C – Foster carer feedback
  + All assessments undertaken during proceedings (Parenting Assessments, Psychiatric/Psychological/Cognitive, Viability/SGO/Connected Carer, Forensic Risk/Sexual Risk/Capacity to Protect, Hair Strand Testing etc)
* *Timing:* All papers will be required for submission to the Permanency Champion Manager TWO WEEKS prior to the ADM meeting. This is to allow for the Quality Assuring of all documents by the Permanency Champion Manager, to include documents such as the CPR being returned to the Social Worker for amending if required. The CPR must have been quality assured by the Social Worker’s Team Manager and Service Manager in advance of submission to the Permanency Champion Manager.
  + This is also to allow a period of NO LESS THAN ONE WEEK for papers to be provided to the Deputy Director or Head of Safeguarding, who will be Chairing the ADM meeting, and to allow them time to ask any clarifying questions in advance of the meeting if required.

OF NOTE: should all documents/assessments not be available in advance of the ADM meeting, this cannot go ahead, as the Agency Decision Maker will not be fully informed as to the outcome of all assessments, and thus will not be able to make a fully informed recommendation.

* *The Meeting*: The social work team will be asked to provide an overview of the case and why adoption is the only realistic care plan for the child. A discussion will be held with the Deputy Director and a formal recommendation made at the time of the meeting.
  + The Permanency Champion Manager will make a formal note on Mosaic regarding the outcome of the meeting.
  + The signed minutes of the meeting will be completed within 7 days, provided to the Social Work Team, and uploaded to Mosaic.
  + A Letter to parents will be completed, signed by the Agency Decision Maker within 7 days.
* *Some things to consider:*
  + Have all permanency options been explored so as to ensure that the proposed plan being put before the ADM is the best possible option?
  + Is there an assessment in the bundle that is in contrast to our recommendation? Can we show a clear evidenced analysis as to why this assessment does not undermine our recommendation to the ADM?
  + Is it clear how we have included fathers and the paternal family within our assessments and if not, is it clear why this is a gap?
  + Have we considered siblings within our recommendations – need for same/different permanency plans? Contact?
  + Have we undertaken the work needed to evidence to the Court that we have done everything to reunite this child with their parents?
  + What are we proposing for contact post-Placement Order, should this be granted by the Court? If we are not proposing there be future face-to-face contact, is there a clear reasoning why this is the proposal?

**Permanency Planning Meetings (PPMs) (previously known as Family Finding Meetings):**

* *Purpose:* The purpose of the Permanency Planning Meeting is to discuss all permanency options for a child and to track the progression of these options to avoid delay. We want to ensure children are in the best permanent care arrangements as soon as possible.
* *Attendees should include*: Permanency Champion Manager (Chair), Team Manager, Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer or Child Protection Chair, IRO Service Manager, SGO/Connected Carer Assessor (if available), Foster Carer, Supervising Social Worker, Family Finder (in-house or ALS).
  + Mandatory attendees include the Permanency Champion Manager, Social Work Team, Supervising Social Worker, and Family Finder.
  + If the IRO, Child Protection Chair, foster carer and SGO Team are unable to attend, their views/updates should be sought in advance.
  + Other professionals (Children’s Guardian, education, health, etc) are not required to attend as they do not speak to the permanency planning process, rather have independent views. Their attendance is most notable at CLA reviews and Child Protection Conferences.
* *Timing:* The majority of PPMs will be held on Thursday morning between 9:30-12:30. Four 45-minute slots will be allocated each week so as to enable teams to be clear as to when PPMs are being held, ensuring their attendance.
  + The initial PPM will endeavour to be held 10 days after a child becomes looked after, if not held already, to ensure that parallel planning is happening from the earliest possible time.
  + PPM dates may be set (or amended) at the time of Legal Planning Meetings (LPMs), Legal Tracking Meetings (LTMs) or Permanency Tracking Meetings by the Permanency Champion Manager.
  + The Permanency Champion Manager will set the date/time of subsequent PPMs at the end of each PPM. Timing will consider the dates of other key meetings (key court hearings, CLA reviews, review LPMs, PLO meetings, etc) so as to avoid repetition.
  + PPMs will be held approximately EVERY 8 WEEKS. Any exceptional circumstance in relation to timescales will be clearly outlined within PPM minutes.
* *All possible permanency plans for the child(ren) are being tracked at the PPM.* All PPMs will explore the following options:
  + Return to/remain in care of parent(s)
  + Move to/remain in care of other parent(s)
  + Move to/remain with connected person/kinship carer/Special Guardians
  + Move to/remain in Long-term Foster placement
  + Move to/remain in Early Permanence placement
  + Adoptive placement
  + Move to/remain in residential placement
* *The Meeting:* Discussions within the PPM will focus on the permanency needs of the child(ren). The discussion will begin with a review of how the children are doing and their current status. To note, detail regarding health and education will be discussed, however not in detail due to these areas being monitored within PEPs, CLA reviews, and Health Assessments. Clear actions will be set that focus on permanency planning for the child(ren) to ensure there is little delay. The Permanency Champion Manager will place a case note on Mosaic immediately following the PPM noting actions agreed, with minutes to follow within 7 days. The Permanency Champion Manager will be the only one to open and complete Permanency Planning Meeting episodes on Mosaic.

* *Some things to think about:*
  + The CPR is a working document and thus the status of this will be regularly tracked at PPMs. We want to avoid CPRs being completed at the last minute alongside final evidence, as this can create delay in permanency being confirmed (I.e. presentation to ADM, panel, family finding).
  + Adoption: have we held an Adoption Medical? Have we explored the potential for placement with the adopters of siblings? Are we nearing final hearing and in need of an ADM decision for Adoption?
  + SGO: has an SGO Support Plan been completed and the prospective SG’s had sight of this and received independent legal advice?
  + Have we requested a Family Finding statement from the Fostering/Adoption team in relation to timescales for potential matching and placement?
  + Fostering: Have we explored with the current carer whether they may be interested in becoming a long-term carer for this child? If so, we would need to have the Family Finder begin working with the family, hold a Matching Meeting and book into Fostering Panel for matching.
  + Have we held a Family Group Conference to explore family options?

**\*\* NOTE: case notes for all ADM decisions and PPM actions will be placed in case notes for that child(ren) on Mosaic by the Permanency Champion Manager. \*\***

Beth Biederman

Permanency Champion Manager

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