**Achieving Early Permanence Panel Terms of Reference**

Permanence means:

 ***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.***

Permanence starts with the first conversation with a family and ends when a child and their family can function independent of statutory intervention.

The Achieving Early Permanence Panel is a central point for operational leadership oversight and tracking of permanence of ***all*** children who are looked after. The AEP provides support, identify gaps and prevent delay during concurrent planning for all children in care. Children must be re-referred when forever homes break down.

AEP will then feed into the Permanence Monitoring Meeting which provides a strategic overview over interface with the Regional Adoption Agency and Dudley MBC.

**Aims**

The Achieving Early Permanence Panel have the following overarching aims:

1. To track pre-birth concurrent planning for unborn babies whose parents had previous children permanently removed from their care.
2. To track permanence for children who experience the break down of their permanent home
3. To track permanency planning meetings – timeliness and outcomes, identifying themes and areas of good practice for follow up
4. To identify and escalate any barriers to permanence via the Performance Monitoring Meeting
5. To ensure best practice, through guidance, challenge and role-modelling.
6. To fulfil QA function through a quarterly report to CPP and for inclusion in the Directorate report

**Panel Membership**

* Service Manager Fostering and Permanence – Chair
* Service Manager Assessment (\*link with unborn baby network)
* Court Progression Manager
* Service Manager – Child Protection Chairs
* Achieving Early Permanence Panel Administrator

**Accountability**

The Panel is accountable to the Permanence Monitoring Meeting and through formal quarterly reporting for the quality assurance report.

**Panel Process**

* The Child Permanence Meeting Minutes/Report will serve as the guiding document for the panel.
* Panel paperwork and agenda will be available for panel members from 12pm on a Thursday prior to Mondays Panel - **(O:\Childrens Services\Children’s Specialist Services\Achieving Early Permanence Panel).**
* Panel members are required to access agenda items and associated documentation in preparation of Panel; they are expected to bring any prior knowledge from their role or service area to aid discussions.
* A written record of the case discussion and actions for each child will be taken by the Panel Administrator and will be stored in the ‘Achieving Early Permanence Panel’ folder.
* The Panel Administrator will ensure that a copy of the case discussion and actions are uploaded to the child’s file in LCS following agreement of the Minutes at Panel.
* A record of themes and practice issues will be collated with follow up actions tracked

**November 2022**