1. **Document Information**

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| **Terms of Reference:** | Permanence Panel |
| **Date:** | 20/12/2023 |
| **Version:** | V1.0 FINAL |
| **Author:** | Julian Watkins and Vicki Whitehead |
| **Owner:** | Julian Watkins |

1. **Document Control**

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| **Version** | **Date** | **Author** | **Change Ref** | **Pages/Section affected** |
| V0.1 | 1st November 2023 | Julian Watkins and Vicki Whitehead | Initial Draft | All |
| V0.2 | 1st November | Debbie Raymond | Lifelong Links | Purpose and Membership |
| V0.3 | 21st November 2023 | Becky Hopkins & Jassi Broadmeadow | Revised | All |
| V1.0 | 20th December 2023 | Becky Hopkins & Jassi Broadmeadow | Final version | All |

1. **Sign Off**

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| Position | **Date** |
| Permanence Panel | 20th December 2023 |

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| Date Adopted | **20th December 2023** |
| Review Frequency | 6 monthly |
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| Date review required | June 2024 |

### Terms of Reference: Permanence Panel

We are committed to achieving permanence, stability, and a positive sense of identity for all children in our care. As corporate parents, we want our children to feel loved, secure, and to have hope and ambition for their future. This panel will support those goals, and restorative practice, by providing senior management oversight to permanence planning for children.

**There are five key areas that will be considered by the panel:**

1. Permanence plans for children who will remain in care, to provide support, challenge and practice direction that leads to good long-term outcomes.
2. Resource requests that promote stability, permanence, and matching.
3. Plans that support family and connected people to offer permanent care for children or offer other contributions through lifelong links.
4. Practice guidance and direction for children who are experiencing multiple changes of carer or are in homes that do not match their needs, for example, children living in children’s homes.
5. To review, agree and celebrate long-term matching that create permanence and a clear sense of belonging for children in our care.

**Key Principles**

# The Permanence Panel will be in two parts:

**Permanence Panel Part 1 will:**

* Track permanence plans and ensure that all children in our care have a primary permanence plan by the time of their second review.
* Review resource requests that support timely and secure permanence planning.
* Consider applications and advise on home searches for children who have experienced multiple moves or are in care arrangements that do not meet their long-term needs due to their age and stage of development.
* Provide oversight of permanence and contingency planning for children in long term care
* Review practice or decision making at the request of the child’s Independent Reviewing Officer

**Permanence Panel Part 2 will:**

* Review next steps for children where there has been an unplanned ending, including a recommendation for a reflective learning circle, where appropriate.
* Consider proposed long-term matches for children. A consideration of support needs will form part of the process as will a consideration of the child’s wishes and feelings and sense of identity.
* The last panel of every month will be reserved for formal approval of matching. These will be celebratory, and may include the child, carers, family members or other appropriate people. Where a match is agreed then the panel administrator will draft the matching letters to carers, birth parents and children and offer a matching certificate.

**Membership**

The Permanence Panel will be weekly, chaired by either the Head of Service for Permanence and Transition or the Head of Service for Quality Assurance. In their absence the Head of Service for Fostering and Kinship may assist.

* Head of Service Permanence and Transition (Chair)
* Head of Service Quality Assurance (Chair)
* A representative from Fostering
* A representative from Commissioning and Resources
* A representative from Lifelong Links
* A representative from Virtual School
* A representative from Health (where appropriate)
* A representative from CAMHS (where appropriate)
* A representative from Finance (resource requests)

**It is expected that the child’s Social Worker and their Team Manager, or Service Manager attend the panel.**

**Ways of Working and Paperwork**

Administration for requests to attend permanence panel will be completed by the panels team. Business support process are contained within the following document*;* [*Business Support Process Permanence Tracking and Matching Panel.docx (sharepoint.com)*](https://devoncc.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/CountyPanels-PermanencePanelPart1-Tracking/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?action=edit&sourcedoc=%7B50877fcb-49dd-464a-88d4-599a2197adac%7D&wdOrigin=TEAMS-ELECTRON.teamsSdk.openFilePreview&wdExp=TEAMS-CONTROL&web=1)

# Submission of Reports

**Part 1**

* Permanence Plan, and minutes from the permanence planning meeting will be required, as well as a short form explaining the request to the panel.
* Where a child has experienced disruption in the last 4 weeks, the form needs to explain the child’s care history and any challenges so that the panel can understand the reason for the disruption.

**Part 2**

* Where a proposed long-term fostering match is being considered, the matching form will be presented alongside the most recent Fostering Household Review. Panel members may also review on Eclipse the most up to date assessment, care plan and Child in Care review.
* Where a long-term match is to be considered then the child’s foster carers will also be invited to attend as well as the supervising social worker. Where appropriate, the child will also be supported to attend their matching meeting to celebrate the outcome, as well as birth family members where appropriate.

**Frequency of Meetings**

The panel will be held weekly. Panel agendas will be sent out by the panel administrator prior to the meeting taking place. The last panel of every month will celebrate agreed matches that include children, their carers, and families where appropriate.

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| Outcomes and Decision Making Minutes and actions from the meeting will be recorded on the child’s Eclipse record contemporaneously.  Where a long-term fostering match has been confirmed at the panel, letters will be sent to the foster carers, the child’s birth parents and the child who will also receive a Matching Certificate confirming the match. Reports Prepared by the Permanence Panel A report will be prepared by the Panel Chairs on a six-monthly basis reporting on the work of the panel, the progress of achieving permanence for our children, any themes, or areas of good or of less than good practice, as well as plans for the future.  The report will also offer some insight into any learning regarding the premature endings of any long term matched or connected placements in order that we can collectively learn more about our own practices and about the needs of individual children and young people. |