

Adopt South West Guidance on Early Permanence Planning for Children

It is the fundamental right of every child to belong to a family; this principle underpins the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which the United Kingdom ratified in 1991. Where children cannot live with their birth parents for whatever reason, society has a duty to provide them with a stable, safe and loving alternative family. It is important to remember that delay can have a significant effect on achieving permanence for children. That is why the legislation makes clear that delay in coming to decisions, and in the subsequent stages of the process, is likely to prejudice the child's welfare. Research shows that delay in the adoption process can have negative consequences for the child's psychosocial outcomes and reduces the likelihood of finding an adoptive family. (Statutory Guidance on Adoption)

Early Permanence (Fostering for Adoption) is where a child is placed with carers who are both approved adopters and then temporarily approved as foster carers for a specific child. It is a fostering placement which may lead to adoption by those foster carers, where it is decided that adoption is the plan for the child. The advantage of this type of placement is that the child will be able to be placed much earlier with foster carers who are likely to go on to become the child's adoptive family.

- It is important to consider early permanence at the earliest stage possible in care planning, in order to reduce the number of moves for a child.
- Where early permanence is being considered it is essential that exploration and assessment of the wider family and friends has been progressed.
- It is important to consider early permanence for those children within parent and child placements at the review points where the indicators are the child may not remain in the care of their parents and where the parallel assessment of family are seemingly negative.
- It is recommended that Team Managers use the 'Early Permanence Screening matrix' with social workers when care planning for children and considering FfA.

<https://earlypermanence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Fostering-for-Adoption-Good-Practice-Guide-web-Coram-Centre-for-Early-Permanence-2017-1.pdf> (Appendix 2, pg 120)

Process Map

Local Authority Social Worker

Liaison with ASW family finding team manager.

Completed Early Permanence referral form.

Following shortlisting of prospective carers, home visit to take place with by LA social worker and family finder.

If agreement to pursue then ADM for Early permanence decision to be booked with the Agency Decision Maker.

Reg25a drafted by LA social worker in conjunction with family finding worker.

Early Permanence is the Plan

LA to have dedicated tracking meeting to identify children who may require a early permanence placement.

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Family finding manager to attend early permanence tracking meeting

Family Finding team manager triage's referral and processes no later than 2 working days after receiving.

Family finding planning discussion will be arranged within a maximum of 3 working days of receipt of the referral.

In instances where it is time sensitive then the family finding team manager will respond immediately to the LA social worker.

Allocation of family finding social worker/practitioner to start family finding.

Liaison with LA social worker around prospective carers.

Home visit with LA social worker.

Support LA social worker in drafting the Reg25a.

Draft transition planner – if applicable