

Permanency Monitoring Group Terms of Reference

September 2019

Definition of Permanence

Permanence is the framework of emotional permanence (attachment), physical permanence (stability) and legal permanence (the carer has parental responsibility for the child) which gives a child the sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity. The objective of planning for permanence is therefore to ensure that children have a secure, stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond.

A range of placement options for permanence exist, which can deliver good outcomes for children. These include:

- Return to birth parents where it has been possible to address the factors in family life which led to the child becoming looked after
- Shared care arrangement
- Permanence within the looked after system which could include residential care, long-term unrelated foster care or family and friends care
- Legal permanence through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders.
- Early permanence through Fostering for Adoption.

The purpose of a **Permanency Monitoring Group** is to track progress of children's journeys through the looked after system at an operational level, and for senior managers to assure themselves that actions are being taken to progress their plans for permanence appropriately. This group is an effective forum for not only tracking and monitoring but also in addressing practice issues.

Purpose

- To track all cases (S76 and within court proceedings) where children/YP are not in identified or matched permanent placements.
- To monitor progress of children when a Permanence Plan has already been identified but is yet to be finalised.
- To ensure that the Local Authority safely reduces its LAC population in line with its reduction expectation.
- To monitor all new Looked After Children to ensure that by the second LAC review all children have a clearly identified Permanence Plan.
- Identify issues thematically that have contributed to delays in achieving a final permanency placement – e.g. courts, delay between S76 and proceedings, lack

of timely adoption/permanent fostering placements for children: lack of expediency in progress of parallel planning process from the second review.

- Identify procedural and policy changes identified through core business of the meetings.
- Collating thematic information and using this to provide constructive challenge and change, which contribute to improved partnership working with both the judiciary and CAFCASS.
- To identify training needs to support social workers to strengthen and support understanding and confidence with permanency planning in line with pre-consultation: knowledge and skills statement for achieving permanence.

Process

- PMG will be held on a six weekly basis to ensure/monitor progress on permanent placement planning for Looked After children. The meeting will be jointly chaired by the Group Manager for Safeguarding and the IAA Service and by the Group Manager for Case Management and Transition. In their absence the meeting will be chaired by the PO for Case Management or the IRO Service Manager.
- Each of the service areas will be represented by a nominated Team Manager from Children's Social Care who will provide case updates relating to the permanence plans. If they are unable to attend they must nominate an appropriate deputy to attend in their absence.
- To assist the meeting the chair will identify particular thematic/practice issues that warrant further discussion. Once key cases have been identified, paperwork will be circulated and read by the group members in advance to support discussions. There is an expectation that panel members are prepared in advance. Any actions identified in the previous meeting should have been completed and an update will be required to be provided at the next meeting.
- The chair will finalise the agenda one week in advance of the meeting which will then provide sufficient time for group members to prepare for the forthcoming meeting. This will then be circulated to group members and the case relevant managers within the service area.
- Themes/Issues including statistical and qualitative data will be shared within the Senior Management Team Meeting which includes the Head of Children's Social Care.
- The meeting will be serviced by dedicated Business Support

Membership

- Group Managers for Safeguarding and IAA Service & Case Management and Transition (jnt Chairs)
- Principal Officer Case Management and IRO Service Manager (jnt vice chairs)
- Team Managers in Safeguarding Hubs, Children with Disability & Transition, Just Ask Plus, Fostering.
- Family support Service Manager
- Permanence Social Worker
- Child Care Lawyer
- Business Support

Outcomes

- All children who become looked after will have an identified permanence plan that is monitored through achieving better outcomes for children/young people and targeting the timely provision of resources. It is anticipated that there will be an associated benefit of reducing the Looked After Children population and associated costs.
- The LAC population is safely reduced in line with the reduction expectation.
- There is an increase in the use of alternative orders such as Special Guardianship Orders.
- The number of children/young people who are placed outside of Wales or out of county is reduced.
- The time that children/young continue are subject to Placement with Parents Regulations is reduced.
- All blocks and barriers to achieving this are identified as early as possible and where necessary are actively challenged both internally and externally.
- Learning from placement breakdowns and disruption meetings to ensure that we as Corporate Parents who strive to achieve placement stability through appropriate placement matching and choice.
- The authority knows how many children they are planning to care for in the longer term and those whose plans for permanence may have other opportunities for permanence.