



» 'Forever Planning' for Bolton's Children and Young People

Bolton's Permanence Strategy 2019-2021



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1. Introduction

1.1 What is the aim?

This Permanence Strategy sets out Bolton Council's commitment to securing permanence for all our children and how this will be achieved. Our priority is supporting children to remain at home with family where possible and when children do have to become looked after, it is our commitment to ensuring these children have a clear plan for permanence.

Permanence planning provides an underpinning framework for all social work with children and families from the point of offering early help, if children are in need, require protection, and if they have to become looked after.

This Permanence Strategy will be embedded in the practice of all professionals across services for children in Bolton. All practitioners should be aware of their role in achieving early permanence for every child and work collectively with others in order to deliver an excellent service that contributes to every child's experience of receiving services and support in Bolton.

Bolton Council are committed to achieving the best outcomes for Bolton's children and families, key to this is that every professional delivers a high-quality service for our most vulnerable children to ensure every child has a secure, stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond.

The Children Act (1989) Guidance and Regulations sets out the clear expectation that local authorities should, wherever necessary secure permanent care arrangements for children in their care. This has been strengthened in the revised regulations where achieving permanence from the day a child becomes looked after (Care Planning Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, revised 2015).

This strategy should be read in conjunction with 'Bolton's pledge to children and young people who are looked after', which is the set of promises made by Bolton Council and partners to all children in care and care leavers.

1.2 Definition of Permanence

“ Permanence is the long-term plan for the child's upbringing and provides an underpinning framework for all social work with children and families from family support through to adoption. The objective of planning for permanence is to ensure that children have the appropriate physical, emotional and legal circumstances to provide them with a stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond and to give them a sense of security, continuity, commitment, identity and belonging ”

Care Planning and Fostering Regulations (2015)

Permanence is about having a 'family for life' (Sinclair et al, 2007) and a sense of belonging and connectedness (Schofield et al, 2012).

Bolton children and young people want permanence planning for them to be called 'Forever Planning'.



1.3 What do Bolton children who are looked after say about Permanence?

Voice 4 U is Bolton's children and young people's participation group, and this is what they had to say:

- » Young people didn't understand what was meant by the word 'Permanence'; they identified more with the term 'Forever Planning' rather than 'Permanency Planning'
- » Young people want their family to be considered to care for them first, this should depend on whether professionals think it is safe and informed by the child or young person's views
- » Young people inform us they want to feel safe and comfortable where they live, and they want to feel wanted by the person caring for them. One young person said they like their carer because they listen to them and make them feel okay, so their emotions don't get worse
- » Young people say professionals need to ask their parents what their likes are when thinking about their future if this is away from their parents
- » Talking about siblings, young people identified more with the term 'brothers and sisters'; young people spoke about how it is important for them to live with brothers and sisters if they can and that professionals need to think about when brothers and sisters are split between living with family and some in other placements and the impact this has on their relationships with each other. Young people felt they could be pushed out of their sibling group because they were placed outside of their family
- » Talking about an adult they trusted growing up, young people spoke about a teacher or key worker from school
- » Young people would rather know they are moving even if this will upset them, as this gives them time to process what is happening before they move
- » Young people want to know how long the plan is to live somewhere as not knowing is harder
- » Young people said that when the plan is for them to live with someone they do not know such as a foster carer that they should be given the opportunity to be introduced to them before they move

1.4 Our commitment to the children and young people of Bolton

Children and young people are at the heart of everything we do, Bolton's 2030 Vision sets out the clear plan of what needs to be done to support the people of Bolton to Start Well, Live Well and Age Well.

We are committed to delivering the following outcomes for our children, families and communities in Bolton which will underpin our approach to Permanence planning:

- » Giving our children the best possible start in life, so that they have every chance to succeed and be happy
- » Developing stronger, cohesive, more confident communities where people feel safe, welcome and connected
- » Our children are safe and healthy, and active
- » Our children arrive at school ready to learn and develop
- » Our children are prepared for life
- » Our looked after children aspire and achieve
- » People in Bolton stay well for longer, and feel more connected in their communities
- » People in Bolton can live independently, with choice and control
- » People in Bolton live longer, healthier lives
- » Poverty is reduced among our families and children
- » It is our responsibility to ensure every child in Bolton will have the support and services to meet their assessed needs
- » Decisions about a child's future planning will take account and respect the child's race, religion, sexuality, age and disability

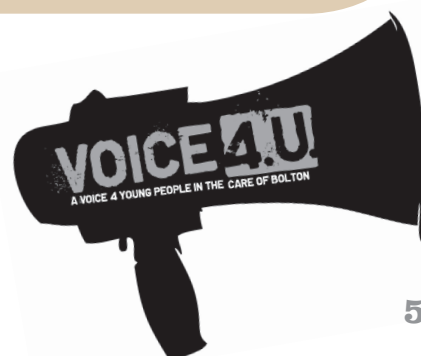
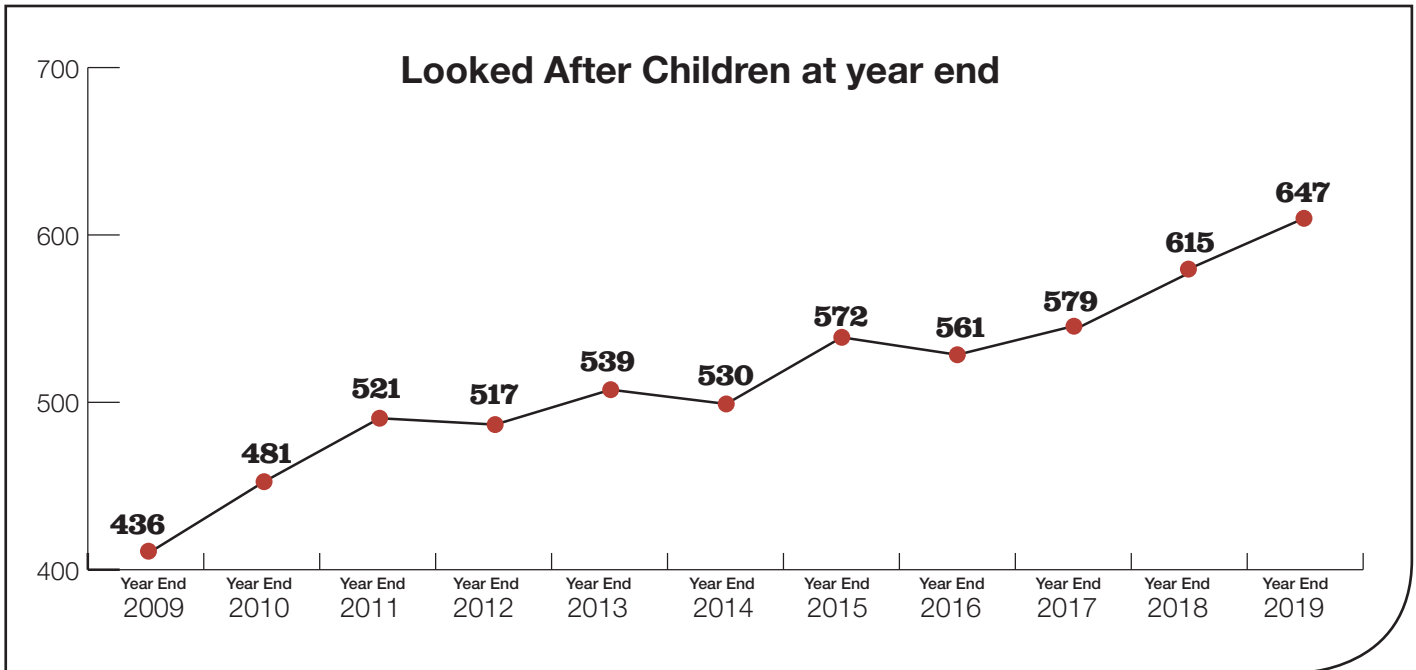


Table 1: LAC Population in Bolton



Further analysis of Bolton's Looked After Children population can be found in the [Bolton Council 'LAC Sufficiency Statement 2018-2020'](#).

1.5 What we know about Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers in Bolton

During the last 10 years Bolton's LAC population has risen from 436 (March 2009) to the current level of 647 (March 2019). This is an increase of over 48.4%. The trajectory of the rise can be seen in the table above and if the trend from 2011 continued, by 2028 there would be 960 Looked After Children in Bolton.

Further analysis of Bolton's Looked After Children population can be found in the Bolton Council ['LAC Sufficiency Statement 2018-2020'](#).

Bolton's Objectives for Permanence Planning

Effective Permanence Planning in Bolton must lead from a recognition that the population of Looked After Children continues to increase year on year, therefore our first objective is to support children where possible to remain at home and our second objective is to ensure when it is necessary for a child or young person to become looked after that permanence is achieved:

» Objective 1

Supporting children and young people to remain with their parents or carers when it is safe to do so by providing effective services and support and reducing the need for children to become or remain looked after.

» Objective 2

When children must become looked after they will have a clear pathway that identifies and secures a positive permanence solution for them in a timely way.

2. Objective 1

Supporting children and young people to remain with their parents or carers when it is safe to do so by providing effective services and support and reducing the need for children to become or remain looked after.

2.1 Helping earlier and Targeted Support

Bolton Staying Safe Division will work in partnership with parents and families, in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for children. Every effort will be made to support children remaining at home with parents with the right level of support if it is safe to do so.

Bolton Staying Safe Division are committed to the continued development of the Early Help and Targeted Services. This service is to make impact on supporting children and their families from the earliest opportunity. The aim is to provide the right support at the right time with an approach that is family friendly and strengths based. More information can be found in the [Early Help Guidance \(2018\)](#).

When there are concerns about a child the appropriate assessment will be completed and the correct level of support to meet the needs of the child and their family will be provided, plans for children and young people will be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely), and will be reviewed according to statutory timescales to ensure positive change can be achieved where possible. More information can be found in the [Children and Families – Single Assessment Protocol and Guidance](#).

Bolton will continue to provide effective targeted services for children on the edge of care with the aim of reducing risk and where possible preventing the need for children to become the subject of care proceedings and/or become looked after.

From our first involvement with children, young people and their families, they will be consulted with sensitivity and in ways that are appropriate to their age and understanding to inform our involvement with them and the decisions that may affect them.

2.2 A ‘Strengths-Based Approach’ with families

Bolton is committed to a **‘strengths-based approach’** when working with children, young people, their parents and families. This approach in practice values the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections and potential in the individuals, their families and communities. Focusing on strengths does not mean ignoring challenges or spinning struggles into strengths. Practitioners will work in collaboration with families to empower them to support each other.

It is vital that information on who the child’s extended family and connected persons is gained at the earliest opportunity. Every child should have a ‘genogram’ which details this information. This will inform proactive planning for children and enable the social worker to explore options of support within the family. In the event alternative care options for the child are required there is a full understanding of the family members, their relationships and dynamics.

Bolton is committed to implementing the Family Group Conference model (FGC). Family Group Conferences are voluntary decision-making meetings to help families find their own solutions to problems. These are sometimes referred to as family meetings. The FGC process empowers a family and their network to draw on their strengths and resources to make a safe plan for their children. FGC’s ensure the family network have a chance to hear and discuss the concerns. They also give an opportunity for everyone to be listened to including the child and young person(s). It can be an opportunity to be informed of any resources that could help them improve family life and fully explore the options for the child to remain safely with the extended family and connected person network. The ‘Family Group Conference Policy’ for Bolton will become available in the Bolton Children’s Social Care Procedures Manual.





2.3 Effective pre-proceedings intervention and the Public Law Outline (PLO)

Bolton Children Services are committed to the effective use of the 'Public Law Outline' to help families understand what they need to do and prevent drift in the decision making for children and their families. Where it is necessary to consider possible legal action to safeguard a child or young person and plan for their permanence, there is a 'pre-proceedings process' in place which must be adhered to which identifies timescales, documentation required and the need to keep the family fully informed. The effective implementation of this process when required can support children to remain with their birth families. More information can be found in the [PLO Flow chart](#) and [Bolton's PLO policy](#).

In the event the pre-proceedings process is required 'PLO review meetings' should be held to reach agreement with parents about what needs to happen to protect the child from harm so that Court proceedings are avoided where possible. If there can be no protective plan put in place for the child, the Court proceedings will be started and the 'PLO Review Meeting' will be used to advise the parents of what is proposed. There will be some cases where the meetings do not take place because the risk of harm to the child is so great or is so urgent that there is no opportunity for a PLO Meeting.

Where the legal planning in respect of a child or young person in Bolton is necessary, '[Bolton's Court Proceedings Policy](#)' sets out the procedures to be followed.

Decisions to initiate the PLO or court proceedings processes are made with the relevant Head of Service during legal planning meetings.

2.4 Gateway and Permanence Panel

The 'Gateway and Permanence Panel' scrutinises the decision making when a child or young person is becoming looked after; this is to ensure we are doing everything possible to prevent this and when it is necessary for a child or young person to become looked after, to ensure early permanence planning is effective, in line with the priorities as set by this Permanence Strategy and the proposed option of permanence is in the best interests of the child or young person concerned.

From 1st April 2019 Children who are identified under the following criteria will be required to be presented to the 'Gateway' element of the 'Gateway and Permanence Panel';

- a) at risk of becoming looked after (Edge of Care)
- b) there is a plan for a child to become looked after (Head of Service has agreed social worker to issue care proceedings or has agreed to accommodate under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989)
- c) a child has become looked after in an emergency

3. Objective 2

When children must become looked after they will have a clear pathway that identifies and secures a positive permanence solution for them in a timely way.

3.1 Principles for effective 'Permanence Planning' for Looked After Children

For Bolton Looked After Children and Care Leavers there are principles that must direct effective Permanence Planning, these are:

- » A child or young person's Permanence Plan will always be based on a high-quality assessment of their needs and their wishes and feelings
- » Children will be supported to stay with their families where it is safe to do so
- » Children should only enter care if there are no other viable options and remain looked after by the local authority for shortest possible time
- » Should the need for alternative accommodation be identified the priority will be for children to remain close to their local connections, their family, school and friends
- » Children and young people will have a clear plan for permanence by their 2nd statutory review in order to have a secure future
- » Sibling relationships will be assessed at the earliest opportunity to ensure full consideration of their relationships with each other and that this informs their Permanence Plan and placement choice. Siblings will be kept together where possible when this is assessed as appropriate and in the best interests of each child
- » When a child or young person faces a crisis and they are living at home or with family, there will be an offer of short-term support to prevent breakdown and promote placement stability
- » The chosen carers for children and young people should also meet their education and health needs

- » Where children and young people are already engaging in education and/or receiving support around their mental health locally this should be considered in their chosen plan for permanence
- » Children with disabilities will have the same access and opportunity for placements as their non-disabled peers
- » Children and young people's aspirations for the future will be maximised and skills they need to live independently will be developed with them by their carers on an ongoing basis as they grow up
- » Care leavers will be able to access 'staying put' foster care, or 'staying close' options within supported lodgings and supported accommodation

3.2 Effective planning including Multi-track Planning

The main principle of 'Multi-track Planning' is the avoidance of delay, as such it is imperative all assessments run alongside one another (as opposed to sequentially). Birth parents will always be consulted in regards to the options under consideration so their views inform the permanence planning for the child or young person. **The main effort is on returning children where appropriate, to the care of their parents whilst at the same time developing an alternative Permanence Plan within strictly limited timescales.**

Where legal planning is necessary for children and young people, the Court require multi-track planning to be reflected in the child's plan at the earliest opportunity, during pre-proceedings and during court proceedings - see [Care Proceedings Policy](#) and the [Public Law Outline \(PLO\) Procedure](#).

The Care Planning Regulations (2015) and the Adoption Act (2002), require there to be a written Permanence Plan presented at the child's second statutory review for scrutiny by the child or young person's Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). A 'Permanence Planning Meeting' will be convened and chaired by the allocated Team Manager prior to the child's second review. The Social Worker and other key professionals will attend this meeting. The permanence planning process,

informed by multi-agency contributions, will identify which permanence option is most likely to meet the needs of the individual child, taking account of his/her wishes and feelings (Care Planning and Fostering Regulations, 2015). The Permanence Plan produced from this meeting will identify the appropriate option for the child along with any contingency options and will be formally endorsed at this review.

Permanence Plans are required for all children who are looked after (except those who are 16+ years where the needs assessment and the pathway plan form the Permanence Plan for the young person)

3.3 High quality assessment of a child's needs

Assessments of children's needs in relation to his or her Permanence Plan must:

- » Focus on outcomes
- » Consider stability issues, including the child's / family's needs for long term support and the child's needs for links, including contact with his or her parents, siblings and wider family network
- » Social Workers must ensure the child's Permanency Plan is clearly linked to previous assessments of the child's needs

Children should have good access to primary health services and their educational attainment monitored by the virtual school, and if required children and young people will have access to commissioned therapeutic and specialist services to support their mental health and wellbeing. A strengths and difficulties questionnaire must be completed regularly to ensure a good understanding of the child's emotional wellbeing needs so they are fully understood and inform health assessments. It may be necessary for the child's case to be presented to the 'Gateway and Permanence Panel' if joint or tripartite funding is needed for the child from Health, Education and Social Care.

3.4 Attachment theory and stability

A knowledge of attachment theory can be invaluable in supporting Social Worker's to assess the child or young person's relationship with their care giver and/or their proposed care giver. Having an understanding of the child or young person's attachments and any issues they face must inform the Permanence Planning for them.

When working with families, attachment theory can help inform social workers of the likely impact on individuals of their experience of their parenting, especially the impact of abuse, neglect, separation and loss. This can also be used to support parents or carers to care for children in a way that promotes a secure base and in turn assist children to develop healthy internal working models and compensate for previous negative experiences. Attachment theory has implications for supporting parents to improve their parenting skills in order to prevent children becoming looked after, and for children who have to be removed from their families, it can inform the decision making about their future.

When a child or young person's Permanence Plan is for them to be placed with a new primary carer, whether this is with a connected person, adoption, fostering, or residential; Attachment theory is important to inform the Social Workers assessment of the carers ability to provide a secure attachment, consistent care and emotional warmth for the child or young person as per policy guidance contained in the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (Department of Health, 2000).

Attachment theory should also be used to understand and manage behavioural problems, assist children's Social Workers in assessing, matching and working with children, the management of birth family contact and supporting social workers in assessing potential foster carers and adopters and supporting placements.



4. Options of Permanence

There are various options to consider in the planning for permanence for a child or young person.

The first priority and commitment is for children to remain with parents or return to parents where safe to do so, permanence for children with other family members or a connected person is the second consideration, if these are not realistic options for the child, then the alternative permanence options should be considered. When it is not possible for a child to remain with family or a connected person, adoption should be considered as a realistic option prior to the other alternative plans.

To ensure that the chosen Permanence Plan for the child is achieved with no delay to afford the child the best outcomes, the relevant policy and guidance in regard to that permanence option is to be followed, and consideration given to the legal order that is most appropriate to support that permanence option.

4.1 Reunification

Where children have had to move away from their parent's care, the primary aim will be to rehabilitate children back to their parents at the earliest opportunity where it is appropriate to do so. Intensive work will need to take place within the first few weeks of the child becoming looked after or moving to other carers to achieve this. All reasonable efforts will be made to rehabilitate the child with his/her family, unless there is sufficient evidence that further attempts at rehabilitation are unlikely to succeed or will be harmful to the child.

A family group meeting or family group conference should be convened to determine what help and support is available from extended family members that may enable the child to return home and remain in the care of their parents.

When children do return home a robust assessment of need, evidencing the changes parents have made in the area of difficulty that led to the child becoming looked after, is required alongside a robust transition and support plan to ensure a sharp focus on the safe and successful reunification of a child. Children returning home are a

vulnerable group and the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018) government guidance makes it clear that local authorities have a duty to ensure arrangements are safe and supported by effective interventions and services from a range of professionals. This gives the family the best chance for success and positive outcome for the individual child.

If the child is subject to care proceedings and the proposed plan for permanence is for the child to remain living with parents, then proportionate use of the court orders available should be used; including use of supervision orders, or no order if it is safe to do so.

Where rehabilitation of a child who is subject to a Full Care Order is being considered, the NSPCC 'Reunification Assessment Model' will be utilised by the Social Worker to conduct this assessment. More information can be found in the [Placements with Parents Policy](#).

4.2 Placement with family or connected persons

If it is not possible for children to remain in the care of their parents, families may make their own arrangements for children to be cared for within their own family network. If the child needs to become looked after, Bolton's Staying Safe Division has a responsibility where possible to place children with connected persons. This may be a planned arrangement or in an emergency under Schedule 4 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2015.



Where there has been a thorough assessment process which clearly demonstrates that the proposed carer is able to care for the child until they are at least 18, placement for children with connected persons could be under the following routes:

- » Legally secured by a 'Child Arrangement Order' or 'Special Guardianship Order' ([Special Guardianship Orders Policy](#))
- » Legally secured by a 'Full Care Order' and under a 'Kinship Fostering Arrangement', ([Looked After Children Living with Connected People Policy](#))

For those children who remain looked-after, long term fostering is an important route to permanence.

Where the Permanence Plan for the child is long-term foster care the current short-term placement is assessed to meet the long term needs of the child for permanence, or where a new placement is identified for the child as a result of an assessment and matching process.

Bolton Children Services are committed to matching children in foster care to long term placements which supports the child's sense of belonging and security for these children.

More information can be found in the [Placements in Foster Care Policy](#), including 'Matching and Approval'

4.3 Adoption

In many cases where a child cannot safely be cared for by their birth parents the permanence option is that of adoption. Bolton Children Services is committed to adoption as a legal and emotional permanence option which can be considered for all children. Research strongly supports adoption as a primary consideration as a main factor contributing to the stability of children and has good outcomes.

More information can be found in the [Placement for Adoption Policy](#).

4.4 Fostering for Adoption/Concurrency

The Children and Families Act (2014) imposes a duty on local authorities to consider fostering for adoption placements in all cases where adoption may be the plan. The advantage is that the child can be placed right from the beginning of their time in care, and even from birth, with a family who have the potential to become their adopters.

More information can be found in the [Fostering for Adoption/Concurrency Policy](#).

4.5 Long term fostering

This is an option for children where there are no suitable family or connected persons available to care for the child long term. The child may have significant attachments to their birth family however are not able to live with them.

4.6 Special Guardianship Order

This is where a 'Special Guardian' undertakes to care for a child until they reach the age of 18 and beyond. These arrangements should have a support plan. The 'Special Guardian' shares parental responsibility for the child and is entitled to exercise parental responsibility to the exclusion of parents. More information can be found in the [Special Guardianship Orders Policy](#).

4.7 Residential Care

Residential care offers stability for a minority of older young people who struggle (or do not wish) to live in a family setting, these settings provide the right environment to meet their needs and develop the necessary skills for semi-independent/independent living. Some children with significant health needs and children with disabilities require residential care to meet their needs.

It is also important to think about the needs of older children and young people in relation to achieving permanence in their lives. They may not be able to live with birth parents for a variety of reasons nor wish to be in a foster home and this may not meet their needs. Living in residential care can be somewhere for some children to achieve a sense of security and belonging. The care planning process must also identify adults such as wider family and friends or other connected people who can provide emotional support and a long-term trusting relationship which will provide continuing support, particularly during periods of transition. Good quality work with families can help the young person build bridges back to his/her parents or other family members who may be able to provide that support even though it is not possible for the young person to live with them.

More information can be found in the [Placement in Residential Care Policy](#).



5. When there is delay to Permanence being achieved

When there is delay to permanence being achieved for a child or young person the Social Worker is to convene a 'Care Planning Meeting' to coordinate with the multiagency and family what actions are required under the child or young person's care plan towards achieving permanence.

The Plan should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely) and include the views of the child or young person concerned.

When a child's case meets the following criteria, their case will be required to be presented to the permanence element of the 'Gateway and Permanency Panel'.

The Gateway and Permanence Panel Guidance will be available on the Bolton Children's Social Care Procedures Manual.

This criterion is:

- a.** The child is subject to court proceedings and permanence is not expected to be achieved within the 26-week court timescale.
- b.** The child has had more than three moves in 12 months
- c.** There are difficulties securing a suitable permanence plan for the child
- d.** The child is in residential care
- e.** Joint or tripartite funding from Health, Education and Social Care may be required if the child has complex needs
- f.** The child's case was previously presented to the Gateway and Permanence Panel and is returning for review



6. The role of the IRO

The role of the IRO will be to consider, monitor, and review each individual child's care planning including:

- » The legal status and appropriateness of this
- » Children who have had more than three placement moves within a year
- » Permanence Plans are in place by the second statutory review
- » The appropriateness of the overall Care Plan
- » Placement disruption

Where concerns arise in terms of drift in permanence planning for the child, the IRO will raise this through the escalation process.



7. The 'Child's Life Story'

All children looked after by Bolton Staying Safe Division should benefit from good quality 'Life Story Work' (LSW).

Children require accurate knowledge about their past and their birth family to develop a secure understanding of who they are in order to inform a secure identity and sense of self. LSW can take a number of different forms ranging from a practitioner preparing a 'Life Story Book' for a child, to 'Life Story Work' where a practitioner works alongside the child to help them understand their life experiences.

Each approach has a valid application and practitioners will establish which approach is most appropriate for the individual child or young person given their circumstances and following [Bolton's Life Story Work and Life Story Book Policy](#). Children have the right to be well prepared for any permanent change in their life. Direct work tailored to their specific needs should be undertaken before joining a new family. Transition work, appropriate to the child's developmental stage, should be undertaken and recorded.

For adoption placements every child should have a 'Life Story Book' including clear information about their birth and life before they were adopted in accordance to this policy.



8. Bolton's pledge to children and young people who are looked after

The pledge is a set of promises made by Bolton Council and partners to all children in care and care leavers.

The pledge has been written with Bolton's Voice 4 U Children in Care Council. The pledge ensures that the council and partners will do their best to support children and young people. The pledge includes a number of actions that we will do to ensure that all children and young people's time in care in Bolton is a positive experience.



9. Advocacy services for children and young people in Bolton

Action for Children, Children's Rights and Advocacy Service is commissioned by Bolton Council to provide independent support for children and young people aged 7 to 18 years, to ensure their voice is heard in decision making processes which affect their lives.

The service works with children and young people who live in, or are placed out of, Bolton. It is important that children and young people in Bolton are supported to access advocacy services if this will be beneficial for them. [Guidance of how to refer a child or young person to Action for Children for this service](#) can be found on the Bolton Council website.

10. Securing enough accommodation for Looked After Children and Care Leavers in Bolton



For children and young people whose Permanence Plan is for them to remain looked after, Bolton's LAC Sufficiency Statement 2018-2020 sets out how Bolton Council are committed to achieving placement sufficiency for our children who require provision such as foster care, residential and supported accommodation.

Bolton Council is committed to commissioning high quality services which are outcome focused, deliver value for money and prepare young people for adulthood.

11. How will we measure the impact of Permanence Planning in Bolton?

Bolton has a continuous commitment to achieving permanence for every child, through tracking permanence, measuring impact for the child and this informing Service and Resource development.

11.1 The 'Tracking Permanence Model' represents this process:



11.2 Tracking Permanence

(for all Looked After Children linked to life time costing)

The 'Permanence Tracker' is an excel spreadsheet which contains the details of every looked after child, their Permanence Plan and the cost to the Local Authority of their care.

The purpose of the tracker is to monitor whether permanence is achieved in a timely way for every child, and so that the financial implication to the Local Authority of the child's plan is understood and informs resource allocation and development based on the needs of Bolton's children and young people.

The tracker supports the collaboration between professionals towards the aim of achieving permanence with a focus on development of practice for children where permanence has not yet been achieved.



11.3 Measuring impact for the child

Annual Report - In order to measure the impact of Permanence Planning in Bolton, the following indicators will be used to report annually and will be linked to the other annual reports produced by Bolton:

- » An increase in the number of children supported to stay at home or with family and connected carers
- » Number of children rehabilitated to the care of their parents
- » Number of children whose care orders are discharged due to living with parents or transfer to a lesser order such as supervision order and/or special guardianship order
- » Number of children matched in long term foster carer
- » An increase in placement stability – decrease in the number of children changing placements three or more times each year (fewer placement disruptions)
- » An increase in the number of siblings placed together
- » Reduction in cases stepping up to children social care

Quarterly report - will be provided in respect of the Children Looked After population in Bolton:

- » The number of Children Looked After in Bolton
- » The number of children currently residing in each placement type
- » The identified Permanence Plan for each child
- » The progress being made towards the Permanence Plan for each child

11.4 Practice and resource development

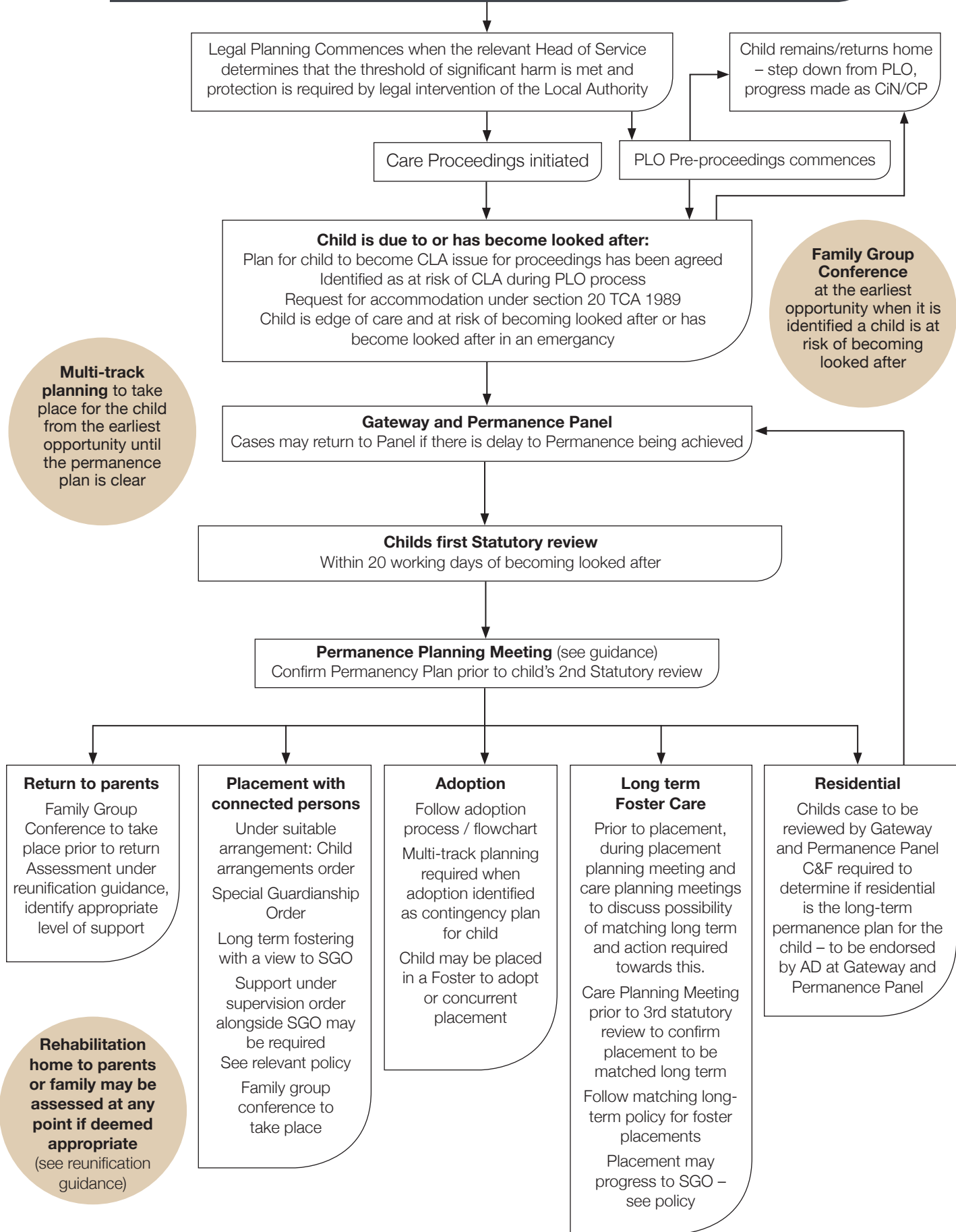
The information gathered from these reports will then be analysed; this will indicate where development is required in order to achieve permanence for every child. This analysis will focus on children's circumstances and will inform the development of practice, service delivery and resource allocation towards achieving permanence for every child:

The analysis of the impact of permanence planning in Bolton in March 2019 identified key areas for priority:

1. Development of services for families where is the plan for children to be rehabilitated back to the care of parents
2. Development of resource allocation for children who continue to require support regarding contact with family members however the plan is for the Care Order to be discharged (as threshold for this level order is no longer met)
3. Development of the support offer for children subject to Special Guardianship Order who require this
4. Development of internal care planning processes to strengthen the multi-agency SMART approach to permanence planning

Appendix A- Achieving Permanence

Early Help, targeted support, Children in Need and Children subject of Child Protection Plans - support and intervention towards permanence being achieved at home. Genogram to be completed to understand family relationships and dynamics



Appendix B - Permanence options for children of different ages

The table below is to understand Permanence Planning for different ages of children and young people when relatives are and are not available. In the event the child can not remain or return to birth parents.

This guidance should be used as a guide only to support your judgment, decision and planning. The table below may be of use to understand permanence planning for different ages of children and young people when relatives are and are not available.

Age under 7 years		Age 7 to 10 years		Age 11 to 15 years		Age 16+
Kinship care arrangements are available	No Kinship care arrangements available	Kinship care arrangements are available	No Kinship care arrangements available	Kinship care arrangements are available	No Kinship care arrangements available	Permanence Plan determined with young person through Assessment of need and Pathway Plan
Permanence Plan includes Multi-track planning until it is clear that a return to birth family is not possible and a clear plan of permanence is identified as achievable						
Family Group Conference to be offered		Family Group Conference to be offered		Family Group Conference to be offered		
Special Guardianship Order	Adoption	Special Guardianship Order	Adoption	Special Guardianship Order	Long Term Fostering	Return to birth family
Child Arrangement Order	Long Term Fostering (needs Head of Service approval if child is under five)	Child Arrangement Order	Long Term Fostering	Child Arrangement Order	Special Guardianship with existing foster carer	Kinship placement
Care Order – possibility of move to SGO / RO		Care Order – possibility of move to SGO / RO	Special Guardianship (with existing foster carer)	Care Order – possibility of move to SGO / RO		Long term Fostering (staying put)
Formal Approved Kinship Foster Care		Formal Approved Kinship Foster Care		Formal Approved Kinship Foster Care		Semi-independent provision
Where the child is 0-3 years, if at the end of the legal process the carer is not able to consider SGO / RO then the adoption route must be followed						

References

- » HM Government (2018) '[Working together to Safeguard Children](#)'
- » HM Government (2014) '[The Children and Families Act](#)'
- » Department for Education (2015) '[The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Care Planning, \(England\) Regulations](#)'
- » Department of Health (2000) '[Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families](#)'
- » Schofield G, Beek M and Ward E (2012) 'Part of the Family: Planning for permanence in long-term family foster care', Children and Youth Services Review, 34 (1) 244-253
- » Sinclair I, Baker C, Lee J and Gibbs I (2007) 'The Pursuit of Permanence: A study of the English child care system' Jessica Kingsley Publishers



» Find Children's Social Care Procedures in the Manual
www.bolton.gov.uk/cscpp

