



Permanence Panel, Change & Review Panel, and Finance Panel

Terms of Reference

About the Document	
Title	Permanence Panel, Change & Review Panel, and Finance Panel Terms of Reference
Purpose	To ensure all children are referred to the correct panel for decisions about their plans.
Replaces	Finance Panel, Change & Review Panels, and Permanence & Stability Panels TOR
Author & Role	Anne Baxter, Head of Service
Owner & Role	Heads of Service SW and CLA
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Read in conjunction with **Appendix 1 : Which Panel?**

Section 1 – Permanence Panel

1.0 Aim of the Permanence Panel

- 1.1 The Permanence Panel aims to deliver permanence for newly looked after children, including those children subject to Care Proceedings, by ensuring that plans are agreed as part of the permanence policy. The panel ensures that plans are clear with identifiable outcomes, services, and actions in place to meet needs.

2.0 Business of the Permanence Panel

- 2.1 To support and approve initial permanence plans for children who are newly looked after.
- 2.2 The Permanence Panel endorses initial plans for permanence made for children accommodated under Section 20 and all children subject to Care Proceedings, except those where the plan is adoption (these matters are heard by the Agency Decision Maker for Adoption, ADM).

Adoption

- 2.3 Where there is a care plan for a sibling to be considered by the Adoption ADM, and there are siblings for whom a different plan is proposed, it is advisable for ADM and the chair of Permanence Panel to jointly consider the plans and agree the sequence for decision making. Social workers should undertake a sibling assessment that examines the impact on all the children of being separated. The views of the IRO should be obtained and shared with the ADM.
- 2.4 The Adoption ADM and the Permanence Panel chair should aim to meet as soon as is practicable to discuss the different plans
- 2.5 A plan for a change from adoption should also be determined by ADM. Where there is a plan for adoption that has changed, a decision about the application to rescind the Placement Order must be agreed by ADM *before any discussion at Permanence Panel about alternative permanence plans.*

3.0 Structure

- 3.1 Permanence Panel is a weekly meeting that agrees the permanence plan for all *newly looked after* children/young people.

4.0 The timing of attendance at Permanence Panel

- 4.1 *Newly looked after children/young people*

- a. *For newly looked after children* in care proceedings, attendance at Permanence Panel is required before the submission of the Final Care Plan to court. The permanence plan is presented to panel prior to the submission of the final care plan but following the receipt of all assessments that inform the plan. This will require forward planning and timetabling, booking onto panel once the dates are agreed in court. This means that as soon as the filing date is set by the court, social workers should book their slot on Permanence Panel.
Permanence Panel considers & recommends the final legal order required to support the plan as well as the plan itself.
The views of the child, the IRO and Guardian should have been sought and included within the final care plan that is provided to the Panel
- b. For children newly subject to Section 20 arrangements attendance at panel should occur before the four-month Child Looked After Review. The permanence plan for the child is then agreed by panel and this is the plan presented to the 4-month CLA review

5.0 When not to attend Permanence Panel

- 5.1 Children where the plan is adoption. Decision is taken by the Agency Decision Maker for Adoption.
- 5.2 Long term matches for either in-house or Independent agency foster carers – Matching decisions go to Fostering Panel (where the care plan of long -term fostering has been previously agreed)
- 5.3 Unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people
- 5.4 Cases where *only* a finance decision is required – decisions should be at Finance Panel. See separate ToR for Finance panel (tbc)
- 5.5 Where an already agreed permanence plan is to be changed (These decisions go to Change and Review panel)

N.B Finance requests relating to items on the agenda of permanence panel will be determined at that panel e.g financial support for a care plan of SGO. All other finance requests will be heard at Finance Panel.

6.0 Decisions made outside Permanence Panel.

- 6.1 Permanence plans may be agreed outside Panel by the relevant Head of Service but the reason for this must be exceptional, and clearly recorded, with evidence provided of the views of all key parties.

7.0 Guidance for Social Workers on booking a panel slot and the paperwork required for Panel

- 7.1 Booking items onto Permanence Panel is done by the allocated social worker through Mosaic:

- 7.2 To book a slot on panel, start a Permanence Panel workflow on the Child's Mosaic record.
- 7.3 When selecting the type of panel required there will be a drop-down list in the booking form.
- Complete sections 1 and 2 of the booking request form.
 - Send a request to your Team Manager to sign off the booking.
 - Send a request to panel admin 'request for Permanence panel' to arrange the booking.
- 7.4 Panel admin will email a confirmation of your booking request and confirm the documents that will be required for panel. You will also be advised of the cut-off date for uploading the required documents to the workflow.
- 7.5 The social worker allocated to the child will be responsible for updating any changes to plan and the legal status records.
- 7.6 Please ensure that for Care Proceedings, the filing date for the care plan is included, as these cases will be given priority for a slot on the agenda.
- 7.7 Papers for panel should be sent no later than 12.00 Monday before the following Thursday's panel in the same week.
- 7.8 All papers should be checked and quality assured by the Service Delivery Manager before they are submitted, to ensure that they contain the appropriate information for the panel.
- 7.9 To avoid deferring of cases timetabled for Panel and ensure that urgent cases on the waiting list can be slotted in, the Social Worker or Team Manager should alert panel admin immediately when they know the permanence panel slot is not needed.
- 7.10 In exceptional circumstances where it is not possible to do this as all assessments etc. have not been received, please send available documentation and advise the administrator as to when the other documents will follow.
- 7.11 It is important that the child's social worker attends. Where there is a positive recommendation for a kinship placement, the supervising social worker who has completed the kinship assessment should also attend where possible.
- 7.12 Templates for information required for each type of item: These are also detailed in the booking form on Mosaic.

<u>PLANS, REVIEWS, CHANGES</u>	PAPERS REQUIRED
Permanence Plan (newly looked after S20, and care proceedings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most recent statutory childcare review: <i>IRO decisions only</i> • Final Court Care Plan (if in proceedings) to include child's views. • Social work report and care plan (most recent) • Family plan from Family Group Conference or other meeting • Child and Family Assessment/prebirth/parenting risk assessment (whichever is appropriate) • Any specialist reports from care proceedings (e.g., psychologist) • Kinship assessment if applicable (including support plan) <p>N.B. Please ensure that passwords are provided</p>

8.0 Panel Membership – Permanence Panel

- Head of Service, Social Work (rota basis) (Chair)
- Service Delivery Manager (SDM) Looked After, Care Leavers, and Fostering
- Service Delivery Manager, fieldwork
- Representative Manager Fostering/Kinship
- IRO Team Manager/Service Delivery Manager
- Admin Support
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9.0 Quoracy

9.1 Three panel members are required to be quorate including the Chair, an IRO representative and an SDM.

Section 2 Change and Review Panel

1.0 Aim of the Change and Review Panel

1.2 The Change and Review Panel has a reviewing and quality assurance function for those longer term looked after children where elements of permanence planning have not been achieved, or where there is a proposal to change the agreed permanence plan to a different plan. The panel aims to deliver permanence for long term looked after children.

1.3 The panel provides oversight of arrangements for children looked after. SWs will be required to attend Change and Review panel when there is a change

proposed to the original permanence plan agreed in court (for children on care orders) or at Permanence Panel (S20). Change and Review panel may also be a recommendation from a looked after review, where the review has concluded a change to the care plan is needed.

1.4 The Change and Review panel will also routinely review plans for children who have been S20 for 12 months or more, or Placed with Parents 12 months or more, or been CLA with kinship carers 12 months or more, or any other children who have not achieved permanence.

2.0 Children accommodated under Section 20 for more than 12 months

2.1 The panel will consider all children up to and including 16 years old and who are accommodated under Section 20 for at least twelve months. 17-year-old young people will be considered by exception and on request of the team or service manager with responsibility.

2.2 The panel chairs will determine which children on S20 for 12 months+ take priority for a discussion at Change and Review panel

2.3 The panel will consider:

- The wishes and feelings of the child about the current or proposed plan.
- Whether the legal status of the child is appropriate.
- Whether those with Parental Responsibility are actively exercising that responsibility, in partnership with the Local Authority.
- Whether to recommend to those with Parental Responsibility that they receive independent legal advice.

2.4 Subject to the panel's considerations the panel will agree outcomes as follows:

- That the current arrangements are appropriate, and no change is required. The panel will set a review date of no more than 12 months.
- That the Local Authority is effectively exercising parental responsibility and care proceedings should be considered. Where care proceedings are felt to be needed- this decision should be referred to Decision and Review Panel (DARP)
- That the Section 20 status is not appropriate and should be ended.

2.5 Children for whom there is a plan for adoption will not be considered by this panel and will be heard by the Agency Decision Maker for Adoption.

3.0 Children Placed with Parents or planned to return to Parents

3.1 The panel will consider all children subject to a care order and living with parents where:

- They have lived with parents for at least 12 months.
- They have elected to live with parents and where their social worker has concerns about these arrangements. **NB** *In this instance, the panel will consider children who have lived with parents for any length of time.*
- It is planned for the child to return to the care of their parents following a positive reunification assessment. **N.B.** *The referral to panel MUST be made before the child moves home.*
- *Most new placement with parents' arrangements will be approved by the Head of Service outside of panel, due to the time constraints. However, there is provision for PWP approval to be given by Change and Review panel, if this is required as part of the overall reunification plan.*

3.2 The panel will consider:

- The wishes and feelings of the child about the current or proposed plan
- whether the legal status of the child continues to be suitable and if applications should be started to revoke the care order
- whether the living circumstances of the child are suitable, and if support plans are in place to address any risks

3.3 Subject to the panel's considerations the panel will agree outcomes as follows:

- That the current arrangements are appropriate, and no change is required. The panel will set a review date of no longer than 12 months.
- That the current situation is appropriate and that the local authority should begin the process of revoking the Care Order
- That the current circumstances are not as the local authority would wish, but that they align with the wishes of the child and that such mitigation as is possible is in place. The panel will set a review date.
- That the current circumstances are not acceptable and that the Local Authority should begin steps to remove the child.

4.0 Kinship arrangements – non-progression of SGO plans agreed in court.

4.1 The panel will consider all children where an SGO was the plan agreed at court, and where it has not progressed 12 months from the date of the final hearing. The panel will also consider those children who are living with kinship or connected persons and remain subject to a Care Order for longer than 12 months after the court made the full care order.

4.2 The panel will consider:

- The wishes and feelings of the child about the current or proposed plan.
- The plan proposed by the Social Work team.
- Whether the legal status of the child continues to be suitable and if plans should be made to change it

- whether the living circumstances of the child are suitable, and if support plans are in place to address any risks

4.3 Subject to the panels consideration the panel will agree outcomes as follows:

- That the current arrangements are appropriate, and no change is required. The panel will set a review date of no longer than 12 months.
- That the current caring arrangement is appropriate, the placement is stable with good support in place and the local authority should commence discussions with carers around progression to a Special Guardianship Order.
- That the placement requires additional support in order to address identified barriers to progression towards Special Guardianship. The panel will set a review date to enable support to be co-ordinated and evidence provided that it has successfully overcome the identified barriers.
- In order to progress to a plan for Special Guardianship, the placement potentially requires support post order to ensure that the child's long-term needs are met. Such support should be captured within an SGO support plan and presented to Finance Panel for approval if it requires financial support. The panel will set a timescale for this to be achieved and a date for review if permanence has not been achieved within the agreed time.
- That the current circumstances are not acceptable and that the Local Authority should begin steps to identify an alternative placement.

The Change and Review panel may also consider any other situations regarding long term CLA where the panel chairs feel the circumstances would benefit from a panel discussion.

Following any change of care plan agreed at the Change and Review Panel, the IRO should be informed so that they can decide whether to bring forward the date of the next Looked After Review.

5.0 Frequency

5.1 Change and Review Panel will meet fortnightly to consider plans for children & young people where permanency has not been achieved. Social Workers will be notified when a child's plan will be considered.

6.0 Attending a Change and Review Panel

6.1 When a Child's plan has been selected for consideration at Change and Review panel, or if a social worker wants to book onto panel, the social worker must start the **Permanency Plan: Change and Review Panel** work step on Mosaic.

6.2 Papers must be submitted to Panel Admin no later than seven days before the date of the panel.

6.3 All papers should be checked, and quality assured, by the Service Delivery Manager before they are submitted to ensure that they contain the appropriate information for the panel.

7.0 Documents Required

7.1 Papers required vary depending on the type of circumstance being discussed.

Circumstance	Papers required
Section 20 for more than 12 months	Last SW Report to CLA Review/ Care plan IRO Report from most recent CLA Review Any specialist assessments that are relevant
Placement with Parents (Child already placed) or Planned reunification to parents	Placement with Parents / reunification assessment Last SW Report to CLA Review IRO Report from CLA Review Child's plan
Kinship arrangements – non progression of SGO	Kinship Assessment Last SW Report to CLA Review IRO report to CLA Review FRO report from last Fostering Review Child's Plan

8.0 Panel Membership – Change and Review Panel

- Head of Service, CLA (Chair)
- SDM – fieldwork
- SDM – CLA
- Representative Manager Fostering/Kinship
- IRO Team Manager/Service Delivery Manager
- Admin Support

9.0 Quoracy

9.1 Three panel members are required to be quorate including the Chair, an IRO representative and an SDM.

10.0 MOSAIC Process

<https://collaboration.leeds.gov.uk/sites/BUBOHelp/MosaicProcessGuides/Permanence%20Planning.docx>

Section 3 Finance Panel

The TOR for finance panel have been separately written by Farah Husain and Emma Naylor and will be added here in due course

Appendix 1: Which Panel?

To be read in conjunction with the Terms of Reference for Permanence Panel, Change and Review Panel and Finance Panel

Decision is about	Permanence panel	Finance panel	Change and Review panel	Fostering panel	ADM / Adoption panel	CLA review
Children Newly looked after						
Case in care proceedings – need to agree LA final care plan	✓					
Child on S20 – need to agree LA care plan before 2 nd CLA review	✓					
Placement with parents						
Children who are placed with parents and require FULL approval of the PWP arrangement (not applicable to S38.6 as these arrangements are decided by the courts)			✓			
Plans for the child to return to the care of their parents following a positive reunification assessment. N.B. The referral to panel MUST be made before the child moves home.			✓			
Children Placed with Parents for twelve months or more			✓			
Children who have not achieved permanence						
Review of child on S20 after 12 months			✓			
Children in kinship placements who remain subject to Care Order / S20 more than 12 months after their placement began.			✓			
Decision to agree significant change in the care plan, both those that are planned and supported, and those that are not			✓			

Decision is about	Permanence panel	Finance panel	Change and Review panel	Fostering panel	ADM / Adoption panel	CLA review
(e.g. those children that do not agree with the plan and effectively choose to live in alternative arrangements)						
Decision to no longer pursue SGO / CAO with current carer and child will most likely remain in long term care (e.g. long term fostering)			✓			
Decision to match a child as long term with their current foster carer (Leeds and IFA carers) where the care plan of long - term fostering has been previously agreed				✓		
Children where the IRO has raised concerns about not achieving permanence for a child following a looked after review – this is resolved via Dispute Resolution process						
Adoption						
All Children where the plan is adoption.					✓	
Decision to change plan from adoption to long term care					✓	
Decision to change plan from long term care to adoption					✓	
Decision about application to rescind a Placement Order where plan of adoption no longer viable.					✓	
Decision to separate a sibling group where one or more of the children is being placed for adoption. Owing to the complexity and timescales, a joint discussion is needed between ADM and Permanence Panel chair to agree sequence of decision making	✓				✓	
Exceptional payments		✓				
Children for whom permanence plans are in place and agreed.						

Decision is about	Permanence panel	Finance panel	Change and Review panel	Fostering panel	ADM / Adoption panel	CLA review
Decision to begin process of discharge /varying care order in line with currently approved care plan (e.g. Care order to SGO, discharge of care order in PWP)						✓
Exceptional payments		✓				

N.B The documents required for the meetings are under review, but the current arrangements are set out in the Terms of Reference