

Wiltshire Council Children's Services

Permanence Panel

Terms of Reference

Purpose

Permanence is the framework which gives a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity.

A range of options for permanence are available, including:

- Permanence achieved through successful return to birth family (where the factors that led to the child becoming looked after have been addressed);
- Placement with a 'Connected Person' Friends and Family Carer, particularly when supported by a Child Arrangements Order, Special Guardianship Order, or in some cases, adoption;
- Long Term Foster care (where agreed through the care planning and review process);
- Adoption. Twin track or parallel planning may provide a means to securing permanence at an early stage for some children.

The planning process, informed by multi-agency contributions, will identify which of the above options is most likely to meet the needs of the child and address their wishes and feelings. The child's Care Plan will set out the details of this, and how it will be implemented.

Permanence Panel will provide rigorous oversight of permanency planning for children in care and seek to prevent drift from occurring. By the time of the second Looked after Review, the child must have a Permanence Plan (incorporated into the Care Plan), to be presented for consideration at the review. The Permanency Panel will begin to track children from the third looked after review to confirm whether permanency has been achieved. For children who are subject to a placement order with a plan for adoption, their permanence is being tracked through SASS POG and in regular reviews with Adoption West.

Permanence Panel will require social workers to attend panel to present updates on the progress made towards securing permanency for individual children. While Permanence Panel will not take on responsibility for case management it will assist and advise social workers and has the authority to set specific actions and deadlines for the completion of tasks. Permanence Panel will have oversight to ensure that there is sufficient capacity on the Fostering Panel to ensure long term matches are made in a timely way.

Social workers, with the support of their Team Manager, may also refer specific children to Permanency Panel where they feel that a review will enable progress to be made.

Permanence Panel will have access to a range of management reports enabling it to take a strategic overview of Council performance. The panel Chair will write a six monthly report for the Senior Management Team, commenting on the quality and effectiveness of permanency

planning for children in care, areas where improvements are required and recommendations for future development. (LCS/POG/POB)

Membership

To be quorate panel must comprise of a social work manager, Head of Service or Service Manager and representative from the Conference and Reviewing Service or representative to substitute.

Full membership:

Netty Lee	Head of Service – Care, Placements and YPS
Michele Llewellyn	Service Manager – Children in care and Placement Services
Sara James	Service Manager – Conference and Reviewing Service
Pier Pritchard	Service Manager – Child Protection
Jay Williams	Kinship and Fostering Team Manager

Administration

The panel will be administered by OCSSMT. In preparation for the Panel, Placement Services Administration will co-ordinate the sending of invites to social workers and distribution of papers to panel members. This team will maintain the monitoring spreadsheet and act as the primary point of contact for all panel business. Correspondence should be sent to Lynn.Wheeler@Wiltshire.gov.uk

The Permanence Panel will meet on a monthly basis, usually the last Friday of the month. Panel will run from 9.30am until 1pm.

Social Workers attending Panel will be required to complete a Permanence Plan Update report and submit a copy of the current Care Plan and latest Single Assessment at least one week before the panel meeting. The Permanence Plan Update must include analysis from, and be signed-off by the social work Team Manager.

PP/ML 24.6.22

To be reviewed Annually

Next Review June 2023¹

¹ Signed off by HoS - Iona Payne 05 July 2022