

**THE MORAY COUNCIL
FOSTERING AND ADOPTION TEAM
PERMANENCE PROCESS
Updated version March 2014**

<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Process for Fostering and Adoption</u>
72 hours LAC	<p>Initial LAC if child placed on emergency basis</p> <p><u>Link to Part X Emergency Measures for Documents and Procedures</u> (this link will be available with full version of the Lac Manual)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the issues/ risks? • What needs to change? • What supports will be made available to the family to assist in these changes / reduce risks • What are the child's views? • Engage parents in family tree/eco maps. <u>Link here to Eco-map 20.2</u> • Helpful to start sibling relationship assessments in early days while still living with own family as resources often dictate separation in the short term and this could help to inform permanence later. • Information can be used positively to look at current support and will be helpful at a later date if plan is permanence away from home.
6 weeks LAC	<p>LAC review (or first review if child's placement was planned)</p> <p>For more information follow links to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Part II – including Early Care Planning for Children's Hearing</u> • <u>Part XII – Reviews</u> <p>(These links will be available with the full version of the Lac Manual)</p>

From the 6 week review

Parallel planning starts - to consider a return home that would be both safe and **sustainable** or permanent care away from home.

Make a full options appraisal of the Permanence Options, including a return home.

Systematically consider the pros and cons of all Permanence Options including current and Kinship carers. Discuss any possibilities with Kinship Social Worker.

Recommended Resources:

Action for Children – A referral can be made to Action for Children via the Resource Panel to access support for assessment of parenting capacity. Action for Children has a range of assessment tools and discussion regarding the most appropriate tool should take place prior to any referral.

Specialist Assessment - There are a range of specialist assessments that can be sought if felt appropriate. Funding is an area team issue – this is being audited over a period of 12 months.

Together or Apart – Assessing Brothers and Sisters for Permanent Placement (useful pre-amble and some sheets at back – sibling relationships checklist) Jenifer Lord and Sarah Borthwick. BAAF

Securing Children's Futures: Good Practice in Permanence Planning and Family Placement. Observing contact handbook. This also has the sibling relationships Check-lists in the back. BAAF. (speak with F&A team for details of TMC staff who have undergone this training in terms of available advice).

Managing Contact: Henrietta Bond. BAAF.

Links to Assessment Tools in Practitioner Handbook (Full Lac Manual)

[7.5c How to Access BAAF Website](#)

If it appears that the child cannot return home and once you have completed a FULL appraisal of the permanence options.

Make Legal referral using Legal Services Referral Form 7.18 (Link) - the referral must be with the legal department 6 weeks prior to the next LAC review.

	<p>It is essential that you discuss the legal referral with your line manager before submitting.</p> <p>In some cases there will be insufficient time to complete the necessary assessments and the LAC review that would recommend a particular permanence plan should be postponed to allow for the work to be completed and the legal opinion obtained. This should only happen following full discussion with the LAC reviewing officer.</p>
	<p>Working in partnership with children and families:</p> <p>Revisit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the issues? • What needs to change? • What supports will be made available to assist in the changes, including consideration of support for parents and parenting assessment. • These supports will need to be clearly evidenced as will the outcomes, and used as evidence.
	<p>The importance of permanence - Permanence is a framework of emotional, physical and legal conditions that gives a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity.</p>
	<p>March 2011 SCRA Research Report 'Care and Permanence Planning and Adoption for LAC' concludes a 'need for greater focus in decision making on the level of known risk a parent presents to a child and the balance between a parents right to care for their child and the child's right to be cared for within a family.</p> <p>...multiple delays and interventions can harm (a child's) emotional and physical well being now and for the rest of their lives.'</p> <p><u>Link to Resources – SCRA Report (Full Lac Manual)</u></p>
<p>12-16 weeks</p>	<p>This is usually the agreed timescale at the LAC for the above tasks to be carried out.</p>

<p>3 month LAC Review (held 12 weeks after 6 week review)</p>	<p>LAC Review – approximate timescale.</p> <p>Legal Opinion (Legal referral Form 7.18 Link) will have been sought 6 weeks prior to this review.</p> <p>If evidence clearly suggests children to be placed away from home on a permanent basis agree at LAC that a return home is not in the child's best interests and permanence away from home is the agreed plan.</p> <p>Depending on circumstances at this stage the recommendation may only be for a permanence plan, in general terms. If the evidence is sufficient and all options for permanence have been assessed, it may be that a specific permanence plan be made - e.g. adoption. Otherwise the specific permanence plan will have to be made at a further LAC Review.</p>
<p>Further LACR if necessary re specific permanence plan</p>	<p>From the LAC Review record in Action Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Anticipated date for the child's permanence plan to be heard at The Moray Permanence Panel or Young Person's Placement Panel. (See Permanence Procedures for children aged over 12 years.7.29) b) Is there is to be collaborative working with the Fostering and Adoption Team in completing the child's Form E? If not agree who advises Fostering and Adoption Team re plan for permanence to allow for early consideration of permanent placements. c) Kinship Care Worker to work with Area Team in assessing kin, if this has not already happened at the 6 week stage. d) Ensure Formal Permanence Opinion using 7.18 Legal Referral Form (Link here) has been carried out. e) The date of a further LAC Review, if necessary, to make the specific Permanence Plan. f) Work with the Child in Preparation for Permanence (detail therapeutic input and counselling in Action Plan) g) The date of the Child's Profile (Needs) meeting h) The date of the Business Meeting i) Timing of child's medical (for Adoption only, unless Medical Advisor suggests is necessary for fostering) <p>If a child has complex health needs and is being considered for long term fostering, discussion to take place with the Associate Specialist in Community Paediatrics (currently Dr Helen Green) regarding the need or not for permanence medical. Tel: 01343 567090.</p> <p><u>(6.1 Link to Permanence Panel Procedures)</u></p>

	Agree and record a specific Permanence Plan e.g. PO; POA; Adoption etc.
20 weeks [approx] Child Profile Meeting and Business Meeting	<p>Child's Profile (Needs) Meeting (Approx 2 weeks after LAC)</p> <p>The purpose of this meeting is to consider the child's needs with a view to matching, and will inform the CAPRA form or inform the report for the Young Person's Placement Panel if applicable. (See <u>procedures for over 12's 7.29</u>)</p> <p>This is a multi agency professionals meeting.</p> <p>Child's Social Worker to convene in conjunction with Chair.</p> <p>Meeting to be chaired by Fostering & Adoption Senior/Manager or Reviewing Officer.</p> <p>Parental and child views must be sought prior to this meeting and good practice would indicate this to be an ongoing process.</p> <p>The agenda will follow the Child's Needs Pro forma.</p> <p><u>14.13 Link to Child's Needs Pro forma</u></p> <p><u>In attendance:</u> Chair Child's Social Worker Fostering & Adoption Link Social Worker [Adoption] Previous foster carers and current foster carer (if this is felt to be helpful or Link Social Worker to foster carers will bring foster carers views to meeting) Previous and current respite carers Child (where appropriate)</p> <p>Any other professional who has clear knowledge of the child (e.g. Action for Children, Health professionals)</p> <p>With older children consideration can be given whether it would be beneficial for them to attend part of the meeting. This to be assessed on an individual basis.</p> <p>If time constraints do not allow for the above or practicalities such as child care are problematic, it may be considered as effective for the Child's Social Worker and Link Social Worker (Fostering or Adoption) to visit with carers, current and previous, and other workers, and to gather information using the Child's Needs Proforma.</p>
20 weeks [approx] [cont]	

	<p>Business Meeting (Approx 2 weeks after LAC)</p> <p><u>Link to Business Meeting Proforma 7.16b</u></p> <p>Child's Social Worker to convene in conjunction with Chair.</p> <p>Meeting to be chaired by Fostering & Adoption Senior/Manager or Reviewing Officer.</p> <p>In Attendance</p> <p>Child's Social Worker and/or their Senior. Fostering and Adoption Link Social Worker to the Foster Carer. Fostering and Adoption Link Social Worker (Adoption if adoption is being considered) Kinship worker [if necessary]</p> <p>For review at this meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Previous supports offered to birth parents /parenting capacity assessment/evidence. b) Legal route and grounds/parental agreement. c) Other options re permanence including full consideration of Kinship Care. d) Parental and child's views including on prospective placement. If considering a PO/POA is child approaching age 12 and likely to consent? e) Can the child be placed in Moray and reasons? f) Placed with siblings or apart. g) Contact – with whom/what type.-include detail of any letterbox arrangement agreed. h) Potential adopters/carers/current foster carers. i) Face to face meeting with adopters? j) Necessity for specialist input / SAAS etc (Especially in relation to points f/g). k) Adoption allowances. l) Adoption medical (fostering one if required – needs led). m) Agree roles, including post permanent placement
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	<p>support to birth family.</p> <p><u>Link7.16c Roles for progressing 'Family Finding'</u></p> <p>n) Consideration to be given to Adoption Support Services.</p> <p>o) Consideration of timing for legal framework, dependant on plan.</p>
ENSURE:	<p>Legal opinion has been received. Further discussion may be had with Legal Services prior to Permanence Panel.</p> <p>If there is any change of circumstances* at any point that might affect the permanence plan discuss with Legal Services.</p> <p>*e.g. separation of parents or change of partner.</p> <p>A date for completion of Form E or Report for Young Person's Placement Panel will be set at this meeting</p> <p>A date will also be set for either Permanence Panel or Young Persons Placement Panel.</p> <p>Case Social Worker to book a slot on Permanence Panel (via alison.dunbar@moray.gov.uk or Young Person's Placement Panel. (<u>See over 12's procedures</u>)</p>
Either :	Over 12 procedure – to be consistent with Permanence Panel, reports should be received 2 weeks before.
Report for Young Person's Placement Panel	
Or	All paperwork is to be received by Secretary to the Panel, 3 weeks in advance of panel.
FORM E	Panel Members will receive copies in advance of Panel date.
Either Young Person's Placement Panel or Permanence Panel	<p>Permanence Panel (<u>Link to Procedures 6.1</u>) (date agreed at Business Meeting).</p> <p>To consider plan for permanence, and to make recommendation.</p>
	Decision by Agency Decision Maker within 21 days of Panel; and formal Notices sent to the birth parents by Legal

	<p>Services (including s105 Notices to unmarried birth fathers without PRRs where we have their address)</p> <p>Timescales are set out in Lexi Plumtree's Book Permanence and Adoption for Children. A Guide to the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007. BAAF</p> <p>Given potentially short timescales (especially in the case of agreed route of POA) consideration should be given to starting the Court Report at this point.</p> <p><u>Link to Guidance on Court Reports 7.19</u></p> <p><u>Link to Legal and Children's Hearing Process Flow Chart 14.8</u></p> <p><u>Link to Section 95 Procedure 14.3</u></p>
	<p>Children's Hearing – this is the formal Advice Hearing, as requested by TMC Legal team, which happens after the Agency has made the decision on the Permanence Plan and the parents have had the opportunity to respond to the formal Notice telling them of the Permanence Plan (usually 28 days).</p> <p>This Hearing may also request a change of residence for the child if adopters have been identified and matched with the child.</p> <p>The Advice Hearing also includes a full case review.</p> <p>If parents do not respond to notices from Legal Services then we must assume that they will contest the placement so <u>timescales may apply.</u></p> <p>If the Child is 12 and over refer to document <u>7.29 Permanence Procedures for Children 12 and over (Link)</u></p>
MATCHING	<p>Potential matches can be explored internally by the Fostering and Adoption Team sharing some of the child's information with potential adopters/carers, providing confidentiality of child is maintained. Foster carers/adopters are made aware that the plan has not yet been approved at Permanence Panel. Potential adopters/carers to be made aware this is an exploration only, of how they might meet a child's needs. Approval to be sought from (F&A Team) Manager before this happens.</p> <p>Once the recommendation for permanence has been approved an active, formal search can be made for potential adopters/carers.</p>

	<p>Please note it is the Child's Placing Agency that determines the Linking and Matching Procedures. These are Moray Procedures. Other Areas Procedures may vary.</p> <p><u>Link to flow chart</u></p>
Form E Or Report on Young Person over 12/Form F	<p>Once the plan is approved through the above channels an exchange of Form E/Child's Report and Form F is made between Child's Social Worker and Fostering and Adoption Link Social Worker to the adopters/carers re a potential match.</p>
Linking meeting	<p>(PLEASE NOTE This meeting will only take place if more than one adoptive or foster family is being considered.</p> <p>If only one family is identified, then the Fostering and Adoption Link Social Worker for the child's carers and/or The Fostering and Adoption Team Senior, the Childs Social Worker and/or their Senior and The Fostering and Adoption Social Worker for the prospective carers will meet together for full discussion of the carers' suitability and child's needs. (Chair and minute taker to be agreed within the meeting)</p> <p>The Linking Meeting will be convened and chaired by the Reviewing Officer or Fostering and Adoption Senior/Team Manager.</p> <p>A decision will be made as to which adopters/permanent carers will be progressed, based on needs of the child identified at The Child's Profile Meeting, The Business Meeting, information contained in the Form E/Child's Report and the Permanence Panel Minute.</p> <p>Record brief details of other potential matches and reasons why these were not progressed. This information will be required at the Matching Panel.</p> <p>In attendance:</p> <p>Chair Child's Social Worker and / or Senior Fostering and Adoption Link Social Workers (<u>of all potential adopters/foster carers</u>) and/ or Senior. Fostering and Adoption Link Social Worker of child's current placement.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order of preference to be made, re potential adopters/carers. • Only the first on the list, who will be the only one to have received the Form E/Child's Report, to be visited. • If after this visit it is not considered to be a viable match, the next potential adopter/carer can be visited. • Child's Social Worker and/or Senior make the visit. • For out of area placements Fostering and Adoption Social Worker should be present. • Adopter's/carer's Fostering and Adoption Link Social Worker will be present. • Only 1 adopter/carer is put forward to matching panel. Meantime Legal Services will be lodging the PO or POA in Court, if this is the decision of the Agency. • There is some flexibility about the timing of lodging of the PO - no strict time limit so a child may be moved before the PO is lodged. • With a POA there is a time limit of 28 days from the date of the Children's Hearing advice to lodging the POA in Court. The completed court report must be forwarded to TMC Legal advisor as soon as possible to ensure any changes can be made prior to application. Good practice suggests at least 5 working days prior to the end of the 28 day limit. • Once the POA is lodged the Children's Hearing have to refer the case to the Sheriff, to change the place of residence, before they are allowed to vary the Supervision Requirement. <u>Link to Sec 95 Procedures</u>
Matching	<p>Once the decision has been made to forward a specific adopter/carer a meeting will be arranged by the Fostering & Adoption Link Social Worker to the adopters/carers, between the adopters/carers and :</p> <p>The current foster carers The Medical Advisor (if necessary) Legal services (if necessary)</p> <p>NB - this discussion is not to provide advice to prospective carers but to inform them of the intended legal route to permanence</p> <p>The above can happen if this is an in area placement</p> <p>Check with each Local Authority on their procedures</p> <p>These meetings will be after the decision has been made to progress the adopters/carers as a match, but prior to matching panel.</p>

	<p>The above meetings take place so as to ensure adopters/carers have full information on the child as per National Care Standards.</p> <p>The meeting with the foster carers should take place so as to inform the adopters/carers of the children's needs, bring about some sort of positive relationship between adopters/carers and foster carers which may then help a child to move.</p> <p>This meeting would only not take place, after discussion and approval from Team Senior.</p> <p>Useful Resource for Linking and Introductions – 'Helping Children Join Adoptive Families', Sheila Byrne. Available from BAAF Website. <u>Link to joining instructions 7.5c</u></p>
Matching Forms	<p>Completed by child's Social Worker and Fostering and Adoption Link Social Worker to chosen adopters/carers. This is a collaborative document between workers.</p> <p><u>Link to Matching Form 7.23</u></p>
Matching Panel	<p>Adopters/carers do not attend this meeting in Moray, although may be asked to do so in other areas.</p> <p>The child's Social Worker and the Fostering and Adoption Link Social Worker attend.</p> <p>Matching forms are presented, and a brief additional report by the child's Social Worker is submitted outlining the process of selecting prospective families, how many were considered, giving limited details on the families visited and giving reasons for not being recommended.</p> <p>Child's Social Workers to ensure adopters / carers have all necessary written information re the child, including written medical information.</p>
Decision Maker's decision	<p>The Agency Decision Maker makes a decision and formally notifies the carers/adopters.</p> <p><u>Link to procedure for finance agreements 14.5 & 14.7</u></p> <p><u>Link to Adoption Support Leaflet 14.4 (draft)</u></p>
Co-ordination meeting	<p>– To plan introductions between adopters/carers and current foster carers and child.</p> <p><u>Co-ordination Meeting Proforma Checklist 14.9 (LINK)</u></p> <p><u>H2 Agenda Document for Co-ordination Meeting 14.9.b</u></p>

	<p><u>(LINK)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placing Siblings, Hedi Argent. BAAF • Siblings in Late Permanent Placements Alan Rushton. BAAF • Planning Transitions for Children Moving to Permanent Placement, Family Futures Practice Paper Series.
<p>Placement. See previous</p>	<p>In the event adopters/foster carers are identified and matched after the PO/POA has been lodged then note:</p> <p>If the child is on a SR a Children's Hearing needs to be called to request a move of placement. If a PO or POA is already lodged in court then the Children's Hearing have to refer the case to the Sheriff, who gives a view and puts the case back to the Children's Hearing. This can cause a delay, so all need to be prepared for this eventuality.</p> <p><u>Link to Sec 95 Procedures</u></p> <p>An Adoption Placement, if not contested, will be a placement under both the adoption regulations and fostering regulations. This is because a child who is subject to a SR or a PO or POA is still a looked after child.</p> <p>Adopters can petition the court at any time for an adoption order, but petition cannot be granted until child has been placed for 13 weeks, and is at least 19 weeks old.</p> <p>Refer to the Moray Adoption Allowance Scheme for information on type of allowance paid and relevant start date.</p> <p><u>Link to Adoption Support Leaflet 14.4</u></p>