



Permanence Procedures for children aged over 12 years

June 2011

Introduction

Concern is often expressed in relation to the drift that some Looked after Children and Young People experience in progressing through to permanency or to the acknowledgement and formal recognition of their need for long-term care. Members of the fostering team, legal services section and children and families area team and service managers have considered what might be some of the factors that result in drift. As a consequence the following procedures will be implemented for an initial period of 15 months, following which time review and adjustment will be made. The start date should be September 2011.

The Children these procedures apply to

These procedures will apply to those Moray Council looked after children who have been in foster care, kinship care and/or residential care arrangements within or out with Moray, for more than 6 months. These procedures will not apply to those looked after children who are on home based supervision orders.

The following will inform which route might be pursued to make a permanence plan, or confirm the long-term status of the child: -

- (i) The views of the child, parents and current carers
- (ii) The age of the child
- (iii) The legal issues and advice

Permanence Monitoring and Development Group - Children (Care planning)

Thea McAlpine, analyst with TMC, will highlight within the CLAS stats which are sent to the Placement Services Manager every month, those children who have been accommodated for a period of more than 6 months. The Placement Services Manager will forward details to the **Permanence Monitoring and Development Group – Children (Care planning)**

The core remit of the **Permanence Monitoring and Development Group – Children (Care planning)** will be: -

- (i) To oversee the processes, from a child being identified as being in need of permanence, or long term placement, to the child being placed with permanent carers, with the aim of assisting workers to avoid drift and unnecessary delay;
- and
- (ii) To analyse processes, issues, and numbers for use in informing strategic planning

Permanence Procedures

Looked After Children younger than 12*¹ years

All children who have been looked after for more than 6 months will have their circumstances considered by the **Permanence Monitoring and Development Group – Children (Care planning)**

The Permanence Monitoring and Development Group – Children (Care planning)

- (i) Will confirm the LAC review recommendation that for children who are less than 12 years of age, their needs for permanence will require being progressed through the Moray Permanence Panel. For this a form E will be required.
- (ii) Will communicate with legal services about children being referred to **Permanence Monitoring and Development Group - Children (Care planning)**
- (iii) Will advise the secretary to the permanence panel when children have been referred to the **Permanence Monitoring and Development Group - Children (Care planning)**.
- (iv) Will confirm with the social worker which other social workers have recently completed E forms/ attended panel – to create opportunities for peer support.
- (v) Will consider placement need in each case against potential available resources, and where appropriate identify at an earlier point when special recruitment or other agency services might be required.
- (vi) Confirm with the worker key tasks and timetabling of processes between LAC Review, and Business meetings and the Moray Permanence Panel.

Looked After Children aged 12* years and older

All children who have been looked after for more than 6 months will have their circumstances considered by the **Permanence Monitoring and Development Group - Children (Care planning)**.

The Permanence Monitoring and Development Group - Children (Care planning): -

- (i) Will make a recommendation on the best forum to consider the plans for children who are 12 years of age and older and who require their permanence plan being made, or their long-term

¹ * Age is only an indicator – It depends on the young person's understanding.

care confirmed. The alternatives are either the Moray Permanence Panel, (for this a form E will be required), or a less formal group known as the Young Persons Placement Panel (for this no form E will be required however the headings within the form E will inform reports and LAC reviewing processes).

- (ii) All processes detailed above, for children under 12 years of age, will apply if the child is over 12 years of age and the **Permanence Monitoring and Development Group - Children (Care planning)** recommend that he/she should be presented to the Moray Permanency panel.
- (iii) Factors that will influence the recommendation on whether or not the child should be presented to the Moray Permanence panel include: - the views of the child/ parents/ carers and whether there is any plan to alter current legal status.
- (iv) If there is recommendation to alter the legal status (for example to apply for a PO/ POA/ adoption) then the child's case, using the E form must be presented to the Moray Permanence Panel, irrespective of age.
- (v) If there is no recommendation for a change in legal status excepting where kinship or foster carers are seeking residency through s 11 order, and the child is older than 12yrs and the views of the child, parents and carers are in agreement with planning then permanence can be considered at the "**Young Person's Placement Panel**".
- (vi) The report to the LAC review and the minute of the LAC review should detail that all headings have been considered and recorded and make a recommendation on the plan that is to be presented to the "**Young Person's Placement Panel**".
- (vii) The minute and LAC report should be sent to Chair of the "**Young Person's Placement Panel**", who will be the Placement Services Manager.
- (viii) Where the young person's plan is to remain with an existing carer or move to an identified Foster Carer the Fostering & Adoption Team will ensure that the carers have the necessary approval to provide permanent or long term care.
- (ix) The young person's Social Worker and the Foster Carers' Supervising Social Worker must complete and submit matching reports identifying how the young person's needs will be met by the particular carers.
- (x) Membership of the "**Young Person's Placement Panel**" will comprise not less than 3 of the following 4

- (a) the Placement Services Manager, or the Casework Services Manager in the absence of the Placement Services Manager, their role is to Chair the meeting
 - (b) the Fostering Manager
 - (c) one Area manager, from an area other than that from which the child being considered originates
 - (d) one senior social worker, from an area not included above.
- (xi) The “**Young Person’s Matching Panel**” will meet every second month if there are agenda items.
- (xii) Papers **MUST** be sent 3 weeks in advance to the group email address PermanenceProcedures12@moray.gov.uk
- (xiii) The Young Person will be invited to attend if it’s in his/ her interests to attend. The carer will be invited to attend. The social worker will be expected to attend.
- (xiv) Minute of discussion and recommendation will be sent to John Carney, Children and Families Social Work Manager for approval.
- (xv) Any contentious or challenged aspect will be considered by Sandy Riddell, Director.