

## Guidance for child / young person permanency and matching

1. Central Bedfordshire have recently reviewed the process of agreeing child permanence and this guidance aims to set out clearly the revised process and highlight expectations of Social Workers in supporting this process.

Note1.1: One of the key functions of the care plan is to ensure that each child has a plan for permanence by the time of the second review, as set out in the statutory guidance to the Adoption and Children Act 2002 Act. At the second Looked After Review (held within three months (91 days) of an Initial Looked After Review), there is a requirement to focus on the Permanence Plan, to ensure it provides permanence for the child within a timescale which is realistic, achievable and meets the child's needs. (The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations - Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review June 2015).

Note 1.2: Under the revised process matching decisions for children aged under 13 are considered by the fostering and permanence panel; permanency and matching decisions for children aged 13 and over are considered by the 13 plus permanency and matching panel.

### Record of permanence decisions for children and young people with a care order:

2. When a child/young person becomes 'Looked after' by Central Bedfordshire considerations for their permanence plan begin. Throughout the court process parallel plans for the child's permanence will be pursued and at the end of the proceedings the court will agree the best plan for permanence for that child / young person.
3. When a judge makes a Care Order for a child / young person with a long-term plan of foster care or a Care and Placement Order with a long-term plan of adoption, this becomes the child / young person's permanence plan. As this decision has been made within a family court there is no need for CBC to review or consider this separately.
4. **Action:** Within 24 hours of the final hearing concluding, childcare **Social Worker** to record on Mosaic 'permanence plan agreed' and input the date of the care order being granted. This can be added via the registrations tab and selecting this option on the dropdown list.
5. Where the court determined care plan is for a child / young person to be placed in the care of a **family and friends foster carer** this foster placement is considered to be the matched foster placement due to the overview and scrutiny of the court. As this decision has been made within a family court there is no need for CBC to review or consider this separately.
6. **Action:** within 24 hours of the final hearing concluding, child care **Social Worker** to record on child's Mosaic record that the foster placement is matched from the date of the granting of the care order and notify the Supervising Social Worker and

Fostering Team Manager so that they can record on the carers record. This can be added via the registrations tab and selecting this option on the dropdown list.

7. In situations where the child / young person is not living with **the family and friends foster carer** at the point the Care Order is made, whilst the permanency plan is recorded as agreed on the date the care order is made, the matching will need to be recorded on the child and carers front sheet on Mosaic when the child moves into that placement.
8. The ongoing care plan for the child / young person, continues to be reviewed through the LAC review process with Independent Reviewing Officer oversight. Changes in the care plan, whilst the Care Order remains in place do not affect the permanence plan.

#### **Record of foster placement matching decision for children and young people with a care order**

9. For children / young people subject to a Care Order and placed in a foster placement (not friends and family) the LAC review will keep under consideration matching of the child / young person and the foster placement
10. Please note: the foster carer needs to be approved for long term fostering in order for matching to progress. If they are not approved the Supervising Social Worker will need to progress this and for long term to be agreed prior to progressing the matching process.
11. When the LAC review members agree, with the oversight of the Independent Reviewing Officer, that matching is ready to be progressed then depending on the age of the child / young person the following process should be followed:

#### **Fostering match for children and young people aged 13 and over with a care order (please see flowchart at the end of this guidance)**

12. **Action:** the childcare **Social Worker** emails the A&F panel admin to book onto the **13 plus permanency and matching panel**. A&F panel admin will then circulate the instructions on how to progress.

Note12.1: for IFA placements the childcare Social Worker to attend **resource panel** to gain agreement for long term funding for the placement.

13. The childcare Social Worker is the lead worker to ensure that the report required for the panel is completed by all involved and submitted to A&F panel admin by the deadline required for the panel.

14. The panel will consider the request for matching and make recommendation to the ADM to progress, or alternatively will return to the social worker team with requests for further information to be submitted to the panel to support the decision making regarding matching.
15. Panel applications will be progressed to the ADM for ratification of positive matching recommendations. The ADM will add the registration to the front page of mosaic to indicate the placement is matched. The childcare Social Worker will inform the child/young and professionals involved of the outcome of the fostering matching panel and update the care plan accordingly. The Supervising Social Worker will add the registration to the foster carers front page of Mosaic.

#### **Fostering match for children and young people under the age of 13 with a care order**

16. **Action:** the childcare **Social Worker** uses mosaic workflows to book onto the **fostering and permanency panel**. A&F panel admin will confirm date of panel booked.

Note 16.1: for IFA placements the childcare Social Worker to attend **resource panel** to gain agreement for long term funding for the placement.

17. The childcare Social Worker is the lead worker to ensure that the report required for the panel is completed by all involved and submitted to A&F panel admin by the deadline required for the panel.

Note 17.1: There is no longer a need to progress the full CPR and checklist of additional documents previously required by the fostering matching panel.

18. The fostering matching panel will consider the request for matching and make recommendation to the ADM to progress, or alternatively will advise the social work team of their reasons for not progressing the recommendation to the ADM. If not agreed the childcare Social Worker will inform the child/young person and professionals involved the outcome of the fostering matching panel and update the care plan accordingly.
19. Fostering matching panel requests that are agreed will be progressed to the ADM for ratification of positive matching recommendations. The ADM will add the registration to the front page of the child's mosaic records to indicate the placement is matched. The childcare Social Worker will inform the child / young and professionals involved of the outcome of the fostering matching panel and update the care plan accordingly. The Supervising Social Worker will add the registration to the foster carers front page of Mosaic.

#### **Record of permanence decisions for children and young people whom CBC support as Looked After due to a Section 20 agreement, aged 16 and over:**

20. The permanence plan for any child/ young person whom CBC support as Looked After due to a Section 20 agreement, including unaccompanied asylum seeker young people, will be represented in the child / young person's care plan and scrutinised via the IRO as part of the LAC Review with recommendations as to whether this is supported and to be progressed.
21. When the LAC review supports that the permanence plan for a child / young person whom CBC support as Looked After due to a Section 20 agreement, is to remain in the care of the local authority then this needs to be presented to the 13 plus permanence and matching panel.
22. If the child / young person whom CBC support as Looked After due to a Section 20 agreement is placed in a foster placement, agreement to match to this foster placement should also be considered and agreed through the permanency planning process and reflected in the care plan which is reviewed by the Independent Reviewing Officer.
23. The permanence plan and request to match a child / young person aged 13 or above with their placement needs to be presented to the 13 plus permanence and matching panel. This requirement is necessary due to the absence of court proceedings for these children / young people.
24. **Action:** the childcare **Social Worker** emails the A&F panel admin to book onto the 13 plus permanency and matching panel. A&F panel admin will then circulate the instructions on how to progress. The childcare Social Worker is the lead worker to ensure that the report required for the panel is completed by all involved and submitted to A&F panel admin by the deadline required for the panel.
25. The panel will consider the request for permanency and where applicable also for matching (if they are approved for long term fostering) to a foster placement and make recommendation to the ADM to progress, or alternatively will return to the Social Worker team with requests for further information to be submitted to the panel to support the decision making regarding matching.
26. For panel applications progressed to the ADM for ratification of permanence, and where applicable also positive matching to a foster placement, the ADM will add the registration (s) to the front page of mosaic to indicate that the permanence plan is agreed, and where applicable that the foster placement is also matched. The Social Worker will reflect this change in the child / young person's care plan which will be discussed at the next LAC review. Where a match has been agreed the Supervising Social Worker will add the registration to the foster carers front page of Mosaic.

Note 26.1: there is **no process for agreeing a permanency plan for a child or young person under the age of 16** subject whom CBC support as Looked After **subject to a Section 20 agreement**, as long term accommodation for children under Section 20 under the age of 16 is not considered an appropriate permanency plan for most children/young people.

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However, where this might be considered as a potential option this should be considered on a case by case basis with senior management oversight.

Note 26.2: In the event of a **matched fostering placement breaking down** and the child/young person moving to another placement, procedures for placement breakdown and placement move will be followed; this could include an increased frequency of visiting.

The childcare Social Worker is responsible for ending the matched placement registration on the front page of the child's mosaic record following placement move. The Supervising Social Worker is responsible for ending the matched placement on the foster carer's mosaic record. Independent reviewing officer is required to provide oversight and check to ensure that this deregistration has been progressed. The LAC review that will be held within 20 working days of the placement move to review the updated care plan for the child / young person

## Permanency and matching process

Agreement reached in LAC review that permanency and/or matching process will commence. LAC review to determine that the foster carers are approved as long term foster carers.

### Process for IFA carers:

- CSW to notify placements team & ask that they approach agency to explore matching discount.
- CSW to attend resource panel to gain agreement for long term funding for the placement.

Under 13: CSW progresses mosaic workflows to book onto fostering and permanence panel  
13 and over: CSW emails A&F admin to book onto 13+ permanency and matching panel.

Permanency and matching report needs to be completed by the following people;

- CSW completes this first.
- Team Manager reviews this & gives their recommendation.
- Supervising SW or residential Key Worker completes their section.
- Team Manager for SSW or residential Key Worker reviews it and adds their view.
- Independent reviewing officer adds their views
- Childcare Practice manager reviews the whole document.

Finalised report to be shared with the panel admin

Fostering and permanence panel or 13+ permanency and matching panel takes place

Panel agree with the recommendation

Agency Decision Maker (ADM) reviews and ratifies the panel decision

Permanency and matching not agreed; permanency planning meeting/s to be held and care plan updated.

- ADM adds a case note of the decision & changes registration to show permanency and where applicable matching is agreed.
- ADM emails CSW, IRO, SSW and panel admin their decision.
- Panel admin prepare a certificate for the IRO to present at the next LAC review
- Panel admin moves the completed form out of the panel box folder & saves it to the Child / Young persons box folder within the legal folder.
- IRO confirms and celebrates at the next LAC Review