

Fostering and Permanency Tracking  
Terms of Reference

Purpose

***To focus on the child's journey by placing a greater focus on reducing delay, improving outcomes and achieving a permanent arrangement for their care.***

The aim of the Permanency Tracking Meeting is to ensure that all Looked After Children and Young People in Central Bedfordshire have appropriate Permanency Plans that are implemented in a timely manner to avoid drift and delay.

As such the Tracking Meeting will have a number of key functions:

1. To track all Pre-birth Assessments and planning for unborn and new born babies for whom a plan for adoption is being considered
2. **To track all children with a primary or contingency plan for long term fostering or adoption**
3. To review all placements that have not been approved as long term to ensure children and young people have the right placement to meet their needs and that the permanency plan for the child is being implemented

***Within 8 weeks of any child coming into care, the allocated Social Worker must attend the Tracking Meeting to present the plan; to address any blocks or barriers to implementation and timescales. Actions will be agreed with specific timescales. The cases will be tracked by Tracking Meeting and the case will be considered again in advance of the 4 month LAC Review where the Permanency Plan will be signed off. If there is a change to the care plan or any delay, you will be required to return to Tracking Meeting sooner.***

The following cases will also be considered by Tracking Meeting :

- **Children and young people currently subject to court proceeding and the Local Authority final care plan is long term fostering or adoption**
- Children subject to Placement Orders for eight months and who are not placed with adopters
- Children subject to Placement With Parents for any more than 9 months
- Children subject to Section 20

Tracking Meeting Membership: in line with its function the Tracking Meeting will be multi- agency. Representatives will comprise of:

- Practice Manager for Conference and Review Service (Chair),
- Practice Manager for the Looked After & Care Leavers Service and Family Placement Teams,
- Practice Manager of Family Support Team,
- Practice Manager of Adoption Team,
- Practice Manager of Fostering Team.

- Representatives from Children with Disability Service and Youth Offending Service will also be invited to attend Tracking Meeting as appropriate.

### Tracking Meeting Structure

#### Part 1) Adoption tracking;

This section of the meeting will ensure that all blocks and barriers to achieving a successful adoption placement within timescales are addressed. All children on the adoption tracker or who are subject to a Placement Order will be considered.

(45 minutes).

#### Part 2) Plans for Permanence Long Term Fostering, Residential Care:

The Tracking Meeting will review cases where Social Workers is proactively progressing plans for permanency, as agreed in the child's review and as **part of a Court Care Plan**.

(60 minutes)

Part 3) The robust scrutiny of plans and placements as identified by Tracking Meeting as being in danger of drift and delay:

- Such decisions will be made based on performance information:
- Young People in residential care;
- Children subject to Section 20 for more than 3 months
- Children placed with friends and family foster carers
- Children not in permanent placements including Placement Orders at 8 months
- Children subject to Care Orders placed at home

(45 minutes)

### Accountability

The Tracking Meeting is accountable to the Children's Senior Management Team.

### Tracking Meeting Process

- The Tracking Meeting will meet fortnightly for two and half hours
- The Tracking Meeting Administrator will circulate the agenda 3 working days before the Tracking Meeting
- Any additional matters that Tracking Meeting members or key Stakeholders wish to add to the agenda need to be sent to the Tracking Meeting Administrator 3 working days before Tracking Meeting
- Children are presented to Tracking Meeting by the relevant Team Manager and the allocated Social Worker who are required to address all relevant issues of the case including the detail of the care plan, legal status, timescales, and specific action to secure permanency and highlight any actual or potential risk of drift or delay. The Social Worker will submit an up to date Care Plan and chronology a week in advance of the Tracking Meeting date

- A written record of the Tracking Meeting discussion for each child will be prepared by the Tracking Meeting Administrator and will be uploaded onto Mosaic.

**The record will include the following;**

1. Notes of Discussion
2. Confirmation of the care plan, legal status and permanency classification for each child
3. Agreed decisions and recommended actions (SMART)
4. The Tracking Meeting Administrator will maintain an up to date Tracking Template providing an audit trail of the key care / permanency planning milestones and dates

**Appendix 1 - Practice Guidance**

**Outcomes for children**

Assessments of a child's needs in relation to the Permanence Plan must:

- Focus on outcomes
- Consider stability issues, including the child's and family's needs for long-term support and the child's needs for links, including contact, with his or her parents, siblings, and wider family network
- Social Workers must ensure the child's Permanence Plan is clearly linked to previous assessments of the child's needs

**Identifying the right Permanence Plan for children**

**Options:**

<b>Adoption</b>	<b>Permanent Fostering</b>
Child's primary need is to belong to a family who will make a lifelong commitment	Primary need is for a stable, loving family environment whilst there is still a significant level of continued involvement with the birth family
Child's birth parents are not able or not willing to share parental responsibility in order to meet their child's needs, even though there may be contact	Child has a clear sense of identity with the birth family, whilst needing to be looked after away from home
Child needs an opportunity to develop a new sense of identity whilst being supported to maintain or develop a healthy understanding of their past	There is need for continuing oversight and monitoring of the child's developmental progress
Child expresses a wish to be adopted	Birth parents are able and willing to exercise a degree of parental responsibility