

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Title:

Permanence for Children

1. SUMMARY

This procedure relates to a process which will enable children to develop secure permanent attachments to committed carers. It should be read in conjunction with North Yorkshire County Council Permanence Policy for Children (Appendix 1).

2. LINKED PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTS

Local Authority Circular LAC (2001) 22.

[Looked After Children – Review of Care Plans – Section 3.4](#)

[Placement with Parents – Section 3.17](#)

3. LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Children Act 1989.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

General Managers, Service Managers, Members of Adoption or Fostering Panel to adhere to the process outlined in the "Action" section below.

5. ACTION

Principle

- *North Yorkshire County Council will do everything possible to achieve permanence for all children and young people it looks after.*
- *If children do need to be looked after, the aim is to return them to their parents as quickly as possible, providing this action will safeguard and promote their wellbeing. Consultation with young people should take place at all times.*
- *A Plan for Permanence will be prepared by a Social Worker by the 4-month Statutory Review.*

- *If a return to parental care is not viable, the option of placement with extended family or friends on a permanent basis will be suggested by the Social Worker. (If the child is subject to a Care Order / Interim Order, any carer who looks after him / her must be assessed under the Fostering Service Regulations – Approval of Family & Friends as Foster Carers for Specific Carers (Section 5.16)*
- *The Social Worker will then organise for an allowance to be paid on the same basis as stranger carers.*
- *From the outset, the Social Worker should encourage the relatives to apply for a Residence Order (or Adoption Order, if appropriate). These discussions should be recorded on the case file.*
- *Where possible, adoption should be actively considered.*
- *Should the relatives continue to care for the child, this should be supported, providing it is compatible with the assessed needs of the child.*
- *If adoption does not appear to be the best option or the carers are unwilling to adopt, a Special Guardianship Order should be considered by the Social Worker (see Appendix 1). The Social Worker should record in the case file the reasons why this course of action is followed / not followed.*
- *If this is not followed, long-term foster care should be considered by the Social Worker. The reasons why this course of action should be followed / not followed should be recorded on the case file.*
- *All Plans for Permanence, apart from rehabilitation, should be endorsed by the Adoption or Fostering Panel.*

6. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 North Yorkshire County Council Permanence Policy for Children.

7. COMPLIANCE TO EQUALITIES

'North Yorkshire County Council is committed to equality and to making fair and equitable treatment an integral part of all we do. We will take action to identify and eliminate any directly or indirectly discriminatory practices which act as barriers to achieving this objective. We oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination whether on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex or gender reassignment, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability, or any condition or requirement which places a person at a disadvantage and cannot be objectively justified'.

The full text of the Equalities Policy statement can be found on the Intranet or be obtained from the Corporate Personnel Policy Unit at County Hall, Northallerton.

8. DISTRIBUTION

North Yorkshire County Council's intranet

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE**

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Permanence Policy for Children

A Permanence Policy is a framework that looks at all options for enabling children to develop secure permanent attachments to committed carers, for the duration of childhood and into adulthood. North Yorkshire County Council will do everything possible to achieve permanence for all children and young people it looks after. In accordance with Local Authority Circular LAC (2001)22, 'a Plan for Permanence will be produced for all looked after children by the 4-month Statutory Review'.

For most children, permanence will be provided by one or both of their parents. The first plank of North Yorkshire County Council's Permanence Policy is to support families in order to reduce the need for children to be looked after. If children do need to be looked after by the County Council, our primary aim is to return them to their parents' care as quickly as possible, provided that this option will safeguard and promote their wellbeing.

If a return to parental care with planned support is not considered viable, we shall explore the option of members of the child's extended family or friends providing care on a permanent basis. Sometimes, this is achieved by agreement with family members and Children's Social Care involvement is minimal and of short duration. If a child is subject to a Care Order/Interim Order, any carer who looks after him/her, who is not a parent, must be assessed under the Fostering Service Regulations. In order to help members of a child's extended family provide good care for a child we will pay an allowance on the same basis as stranger carers, whether it is a short or long-term placement (Munby Judgement). At the outset we shall encourage the relative to apply for a Residence Order or, occasionally, for an Adoption Order. These Orders enable them to become fully responsible on a permanent basis for all aspects of the child's parenting. We may continue to provide financial support in these cases, although the Local Authority loses its legal responsibility for the child.

For some children, their relatives will continue to foster them into adulthood, preferring this option to a Residence Order or adoption. Such 'kinship' care has been shown by research to be more successful than fostering by strangers; therefore, we shall actively promote and support long-term foster care by extended family members and friends, provided that it is considered compatible with the assessed needs of the child or young person for permanence.

If return to parents or the extended family/friends with planned support is not viable, the possibility of adoption must be actively considered, as adoption has the advantage of providing permanence with legal security.

For those children for whom adoption is not considered in their best interest, a Special Guardianship Order should be considered. Special Guardianship Orders will meet the needs of some children who cannot live with their birth parents. The Special Guardianship Order is to establish a permanent Order that offers the foundations for a child and their carer to establish a lifelong legal relationship, while recognising the continuing importance of the child's

connections to their birth family. Special Guardianship fills the gap between Residence Orders and adoption and between foster care and adoption.

For those children whom Adoption, Residence / Special Guardianship Orders are not appropriate, but who could benefit from a placement which offers more security, long-term fostering should be considered as a positive option for securing permanent attachments to committed carers. This type of 'permanence' will require careful assessment of the child's needs and careful matching to carers able to make a commitment for the duration of childhood and beyond.

The requirement of Local Authority Circular LAC(2001)22 for a Permanence Plan to be produced after a child has been looked after for 4 months means that the options for permanence outlined above will be pursued in tandem and not sequentially, in order to minimise drift and delay for children. All Plans for Permanence, apart from rehabilitation to parents, will be endorsed by the Adoption or Fostering Panel. Likewise, all matches, whether they are with prospective adopters, or for permanence with extended family members or with long-term foster carers, will be approved by the Adoption or Fostering Panel.