

BOLTON GATEWAY AND PERMANENCE PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction and overall objective

1.1 Permanence is the long term plan for the child's upbringing and provides an underpinning framework for all social work with children and their families from family support through to adoption. The objective of planning for permanence is therefore to ensure that children have a secure, stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond and to give them a sense of security, continuity, commitment, identity and belonging and this includes some of our most vulnerable children and young people who have complex needs.

1.2 The aim of this Panel is to ensure every Looked After Child and Young Person in Bolton has a plan for permanence that is achieved in a timely way in line with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review legislation (June 2015).

1.3 The Gateway and Permanence Panel scrutinises the decision making when a child or young person is becoming looked after; this is to ensure we are doing everything possible to prevent this and when it is necessary for a child or young person to become looked after, to ensure early permanence planning is effective, in line with the priorities as set out in Bolton's Permanence Strategy – Forever Planning for Bolton's Children and Young People; and to ensure the proposed option of permanence is in the best interests of the child or young person concerned.

2. Purpose of Panel

2.1 Scrutiny not decision making:

Any decisions relating to the child are made between the Social Worker, Team Manager and Head of Service through Case Management Discussion.

In the event a decision is made that the child should be accommodated by the Head of Service, presentation of the case at panel is in order to scrutinise this decision.

In the event a decision is made about resource / provision in accordance with the Resource Approval Process (Appendix 1); presentation of the case to Permanence panel is to scrutinise this decision making and whether the appropriate resource / provision is allocated to the child.

2.2 The Purpose of the panel will be to scrutinise:

a) The early Permanence Planning for children who are at risk of becoming looked after or who have just been accommodated into local authority care.

b) Cases where there has been drift or delay in the identified plan for permanence; this will include children in foster care under short term approval for a long period of time where there is no clear plan to match them long term, children who have been subject of placement with parents for over 2 years with no plan to progress towards discharge of care order, children

who are subject to placement orders however there is concern that adoption can no longer be achieved.

c) The Permanence planning for children in residential care; the decision making regarding placement options and resource allocation for this cohort of children and young people.

d) The panel will ensure the Independent Placements Agreements (IPAs) demonstrate clear expectations on the child's placement to ensure we are receiving value for money and outcomes are focused and measurable.

e) The Panel will promote and facilitate collaborative working with senior professionals from Health, Education and Social Care where there are proposals for children to receive joint or tripartite funding.

f) Ensure that the resource approval and review process is followed robustly to ensure high quality provision for Bolton children and value for money.

3. Criteria for presentation at the panel

3.1 Gateway criteria

a) The child is at risk of becoming looked after (Edge of Care)

b) there is a plan for the child to become looked after (Head of Service has agreed social worker to issue care proceedings or has agreed to accommodate under section 20 of the Children Act 1989)

c)The child has become looked after in an emergency

3.2 Permanence criteria

a) There is an active placement request for residential provision for the child.

b) The child has been placed in residential provision.

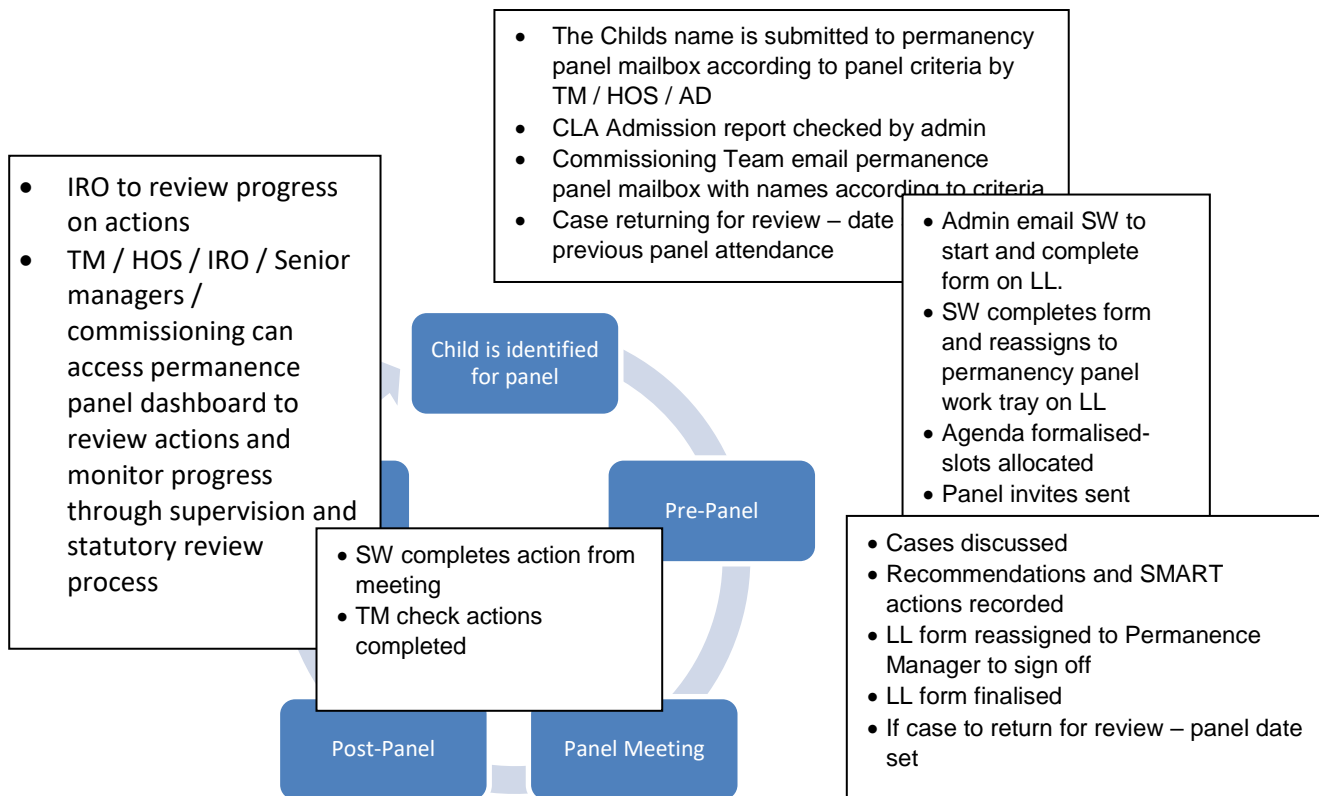
c) Where the child/ young person has had several placement searches with no offer of placement

d) When a third placement request has been completed for a child in 12 months

e) review of children / young people who are in external provision that are approaching the end date of the agreed length of time in provision.

f) The panel may wish to scrutinise the permanence planning for a child if there is delay to permanence being achieved for them

4. Panel process



Please see **Appendix 2** for Panel Administration process

5. Panel Membership

In line with its function the Panel will be multi-agency and representatives will comprise of:

- Assistant Director (chair)
- Manager for Permanence
- Senior Head of Service
- Head of Service, Looked After Children and Leaving Care
- Head of Service, Children's Resources
- Head of Service, Safeguarding
(Heads of service on rotation)
- IRO Manager
- Permanence Lead Nurse for LAC
- Virtual School Head – to attend for relevant cases
- Manager of SEND Assessment Service – to attend for relevant cases

Social Care Commissioning Manager
YOS manager – to attend for relevant cases
Panel Administrator

6. Roles of relevant professionals

6.1 Social Worker –

Social workers will be notified by email if a child is to be presented to panel.

The Social Worker is to complete the liquid logic form for panel by the deadline given. This should be brief and succinct and highlight any issues with permanence planning, the voice of the child and the IRO.

Once Liquid Logic form completed and reassigned to the Permanency Panel work tray on Liquid Logic the social worker can request a preferred time by emailing permanencypanel@bolton.gov.uk

The Social Worker is to attend Panel at their allocated slot time.

A Social Worker can complete and reassign a Gateway and Permanency Panel document on liquid logic to the Permanency Panel work tray if they believe a case has met the panel criteria.

See guidance – Appendix 3

6.2 Team Manager –

A Team Manager can refer the name of a child to be discussed at Panel if they believe the criteria has been met.

The Team Manager is notified when a Social Worker in their Team is required to present a case to panel. A reflective discussion on the case prior to panel attendance will support the social worker to prepare. It is at the Team Managers discretion whether they believe it is necessary to attend Permanence Panel with the Social Worker.

The Team Manager monitors the actions from Panel in Supervision and Case Management with the Social Worker

6.3 – Independent Reviewing Officer –

The independent reviewing officer will be notified of the agenda by the IRO manager on the Friday before panel. IRO can email their views to the Social Worker and their manager (panel representative) to share at panel.

The IRO monitors the actions from the Panel in regard to the Permanence Planning for the child and utilises their escalation policy if necessary.

6.4 - Commissioning role in relation to panel –

The Commissioning Team can refer the name of a child to be discussed when the criteria is met to Permanencypanel@bolton.gov.uk

Commissioning Representative at Panel provides - the cost of the provision / proposed provision, highlights if the outcomes table in the Individual Placement Agreement requires updating

Commissioning representative records on the commissioning tracker whether the finance is agreed and what date till.

Accountability:

The Panel is accountable to the Children's Senior Leadership Team.

Appendix 1 - Resource approval process

This process is to offer financial scrutiny to effectively manage the budget when making a or continuing a placement and is not intended to override the decision to look after a child.

Every looked after child will be given an expected duration to their funding so that the Local Authority can predict the expenditure for that child and account for this in the overall budget.

Step 1 - Approval process

1.1 Head of Service approval by way of email is sent to commissioning BEFORE the provision / placement starts for the following:

- a) Any placement under £1000 per week
- b) Independent Fostering Placements

1.2 Assistant Director approval by way of email is required by commissioning BEFORE provision / placement starts for the following:

- a) A placement above £1000 per week
- b) All Residential placement
- c) unregulated placement
- c) Any provision request that is off Framework (eg. Family support, transport)
- d) Any additional funding to the provider not in the initially agreed placement cost - These cases should attend Permanence Panel however decision may need to be made between reviews, then case will be added to the list for next permanence panel

1.3 Information required by Assistant Director in order to make a decision regarding funding – (5 lines in an email) as the HOS would have been involved in the decision making therefore the:

- a) Child – brief information about the child’s needs
 - b) Cost of resource / provision being requested
 - c) purpose of provision / resource being requested
 - d) proposed duration of the provision
 - e) other options exhausted and why not suitable
- (5 lines in an email)

1.4 When approval is given this must be given an end date by the person approving (this is the date you expect the resource to end or financial review is needed as the cost should have changed or reduced)

Step 2 - Tracking Finance

2.1 Once approval email received by the commissioning team the relevant information is entered into the Commissioning Tracker: ‘approved Y/N’, ‘who approved’, ‘end date’

2.2 Commissioning enter a financial review date a month prior to the end date onto the tracker.

2.3 When the financial review date arrives – commissioning email the Team Manager / Head of Service to notify them of the end date of the provision and if funding is still required this requires reapproval to continue.

Step 3 – Reviewing Finance

3. Commissioning and Finance review the changes in cost of all LAC Children once a month on the end of existing meetings.

This identifies:

- a) If there are changes in cost either party are unaware of
- b) Ensures that the finance and commissioning team have the same information
- c) If there has been any provision commenced where approval has not been sought within the above process

Step 4 – Resource challenge process

4.1 Once each month a list of children is compiled by commissioning which will include:

- Cases where approval from AD has not been confirmed for finance above £1000 week
- Financial agreement has been given outside of the process and has come to the commissioning team's attention.
- Resources that have continued past deadline without approval.

4.2 Commissioning send this list to Assistant Director and Head of Service prior to resource challenge meeting. Head of Service is to investigate the decision making prior to the meeting.

Step 5 – Resource challenge meeting

5.1 Resource challenge meeting once every month following SSMT with Kath Smith from Commissioning present – who will input on tracker whether resource is approved, the review date and end date.

5.2 If steps 1 and 2 are followed there will be no cases to discuss at the resource challenge meeting.

Appendix 2 – Gateway and Permanence Panel administration process

Step 1 – Panel Admin email Heads of Service and Commissioning Mailbox for childrens names that meet the panel criteria. CLA Admissions report is also checked.

Step 2 - Panel Admin email Social Worker, Team Manager and Head of Service to notify them of case to be presented to Permanence Panel (Wednesday before panel)

Step 3 – Social Worker completes section A of the Gateway and Permanence Panel Document and REASSIGN's this to the Permanence Panels work tray (by 12pm on Friday before panel). **(Social Worker is not to finalise the form as this will close the form down)**

Step 4 – Admin pickup the form and complete Section B of the form in Panel meeting (Thursday morning)

Step 5 – Admin reassign the form to Permanence Manager to verify and approve.

Step 6 - Form is verified and approved by Permanence Manager (within 2 weeks of panel) (Draft form can be viewed in 'draft forms on LL until form finalised)

Step 7 – Once the form is finalised the following information pulls through on dashboard report – Child, Date of Panel attendance, Cost of Placement, Actions, Date of next Panel

Step 8 – Admin view dashboard to check when minutes have been finalised in order to send approved minutes to Panel members who don't Have access to Liquid Logic

Step 9 - IRO / TM / HOS / Commissioning view dashboard to monitor actions and escalate

Appendix 3 Guidance for Social Worker's presenting cases to the Permanence Panel

Outcomes for children – The Care plan

The Care Plan for a child must:

- Focus on outcomes
- Clarify expectations of all professionals involved and timescales for actions to be achieved
- Be informed by the wishes and views of the child
- Identify a clear plan for Permanence that considers 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.

Appendix 4 –
Guidance for cases where the child has complex Health and/or Education needs

1. Health

For cases where Social Workers are requesting a funding contribution from Health; the Health professionals on the Panel will explore the following prior to escalating the case to Health commissioner:

- 1) Health Needs are identified
- 2) Question 1- can this health need be met through existing commissioned health provision
 - Yes – refer to statutory health services and if there is a block seek advice from LAC health professionals
 - Not sure – refer to statutory services for assessment/ seek advice from LAC health professionals
 - No – see number 3
- 3) Social worker to gather information to inform needs led commissioning of provision and this will need to include:
 - Social needs assessment
 - Diagnostic formulation from clinician
 - Current plan
 - Crisis plan
 - Future plan with a clear indication of outcomes to be met within first three months
 - Consideration of whether the proposal the only way of meeting the needs
- 4) Review by CCG

2. Education

- 1) Education Needs are Identified –
- 2) If in Education child has had a PEP in timescale
- 3) If not in Education – child has had a PEP
- 4) Have the services through the PEP been explored if appropriate – referral to Ed Psych / referral to education / in school provisions / positive chances
- 5) Is a referral to SALT appropriate – this requires a referral through an early help assessment
- 6) If child is placed in Bolton – do they meet the criteria for referral to outside provisions such as Lady Wood Outreach
- 7) Question – can this Education need be met through an existing Education provision / process such as EHCP assessment. (Schools must provide a tiered response that adheres to the SEND code of practice before the threshold for an EHCP assessment has been met).

Include details if the child has been discussed at a recent 'Education referral meeting' with Team Manager, LAC Education Advisor, SEND Manager, Virtual School Head and Education Psychologist