

Module Outline: guidance for trainers

Module 1

Permanence: Every Child's Right

Introduction

This module serves as the foundation for the programme, giving an overview of the process and the content of subsequent modules. It provides a structured approach for participants to evaluate their current practice and identify a personal development plan in relation to achieving permanence for children/young adults. It enables practitioners to reflect on what they can contribute to achieving permanence for children/young adults in their current role.

There are numerous critical issues to be considered within permanence plans that demand well-informed debate. This module supports participants to reflect on their own and others' perspective on important, potentially contentious themes within this field.

Purposeful assessment is the cornerstone for achieving permanence. Whether participants work in early intervention, within safeguarding, child in need, residential, fostering or adoption services their focus on each child they encounter informs the plan for that child/young adult's future, regardless of whether the assessment is a one off or part of an intervention over a period of several years.

This module enables participants to begin coming together to form a learning community throughout the programme with a view to their practice leadership contributing to the development of the profession.

Participants will be encouraged to explore the application of ethical social work principles in practice with children/young adults and their families throughout this module. Issues of culture and identity are woven into the whole of this module.

The expectation is that participants already have practical experience of assessment and planning in the context of social work with children/young adults and families.

Module Aims

This module explores:

- the Knowledge and Skills Statement Achieving Permanence
- ethical social work practice and how this is enacted in the day to day process of achieving permanence for children/young adults
- a working definition of permanence planning that embraces the whole range of options that should be considered for each child (including remaining with parents) and includes children/young adults up to the age of twenty-five where indicated (C&SWA, 2017)
- principles of child-centred practice: how will the child/young adult know that the plan is unique and for them?

- why child-focused, purposeful, and holistic assessment is the fundamental cornerstone of effective permanence planning at every stage of social work engagement with children/young adults and families
- why permanence is every child and family social worker's business, regardless of role or specialism
- the importance of critically evaluating the significance of research findings for practice, understanding what research tells practitioners about permanence decision-making and how credible research findings underpin best practice
- the importance of multi-professional working in achieving permanence, including working with those closest to the child/young adult to effect best outcomes
- the dynamic between assessment, decision-making, planning and intervention in social work practice.

Key Questions for Participants

Participants will be asked to consider a series of questions:

- what are your strengths in relation to planning for children/young adults?
- what are your personal learning goals in relation to achieving permanence?
- how will you know when you have achieved your goals?
- how does uncertainty, change and loss impact on the well-being of children /young adults?
- what should your plan communicate to a child/young adult?
- what might compromise your capacity to enact your employer's responsibility as corporate parent?
- what critical themes and issues arise in your experience of achieving permanence?
- how does a focus on the child/young adult's sense of self help achieve permanence?
- what might get in the way of children/young adults having ownership of their plan?
- how have assumptions or unconscious bias (your own or other people's) affected how professionals planned for and intervened with children/young adults and their families?
- how do your core beliefs influence your practice with children/young adults and families?

Module Outcomes

Participants will be offered opportunities to:

- understand the shape of the course, how each module works, what is expected of each participant, the process of blended learning, and how course completion will be certified
- engage in collaborative working with a view to forming a safe community of learning with a culture of constructive challenge and critical thinking for the duration of the programme and beyond
- identify personal learning goals and prepare a study plan
- consider their current and future contribution to the transformation of practice, and how the interface between core beliefs and professional values drives their practice
- reflect on the impact of living with loss and uncertainty
- interrogate what permanency means, why it is important, and how it might involve competing demands/conflicted decisions
- deconstruct what a permanence plan communicates to the child/young adult and the significance of SMART/ExACT planning
- explore ethical dilemmas that practitioners face in achieving unique permanence planning for each child/young adult at every stage of their engagement with social work services
- name the challenges of working in contested political contexts
- focus on the child/young adult's identity to shape their plan and ensure the child/young adult's voice is heard.

Week One

An Introduction to the Achieving Permanence Programme

Introduces module one and ensures that participants have a good working knowledge of how the programme unfolds. Participants draw up their study plan in collaboration with their line manager.

Week One Learning Outcomes

Participants will be offered opportunities to:

- understand the shape of the course, how each module works, what is expected of each participant, the process of blended learning, and how course completion will be certified
- identify personal learning goals and prepare a study plan
- discuss/agree the theme for their policy and practice briefing with their supervisor/line manager.

Week One Essential Tasks/Activities

Participants will be asked to:

- re-read the overview/introduction to the programme
- read the programme portfolio guidance
- identify existing experience, knowledge, and expertise in relation to children and families social work
- review engagement with achieving permanence in recent and current practice
- identify existing strengths, skills, and knowledge in relation to planning for children/young adult's immediate and long-term future
- complete structured self-evaluation
- design study plan
- discuss with practice supervisor/line manager and draw up learning agreement
- watch Lemn Sissay's Ted Talk: A child of the state.

Week Two

Critical Themes and Issues

Begins to examine the ethical dilemmas associated with achieving permanence by encouraging personal reflection on social norms and family life alongside exploration of assumptions and unconscious bias.

Week Two Learning Outcomes

Participants will be offered opportunities to:

- explore ethical dilemmas that practitioners face in achieving unique permanence planning for each child/young adult at every stage of their engagement with social work services
- identify the challenges of working in contested political contexts.

Week Two Essential Tasks/Activities

Participants will be asked to:

- read the six short vignettes that address critical themes and issues in permanence planning
- write a very brief, honest, personal response to each scenario: what thoughts and feelings arise for them as they consider each child/young adult's circumstances and needs?
- reflect on their initial response to the vignettes
- ask some colleagues/lay people/partners from different disciplines to look at the vignettes and elicit their thoughts/feelings/opinions
- prepare a short reflective study (maximum 500 words) articulating this

- process and how their thinking about the issues raised is evolving
- explore four blogs about child-to-parent violence
 - identify any ideas or questions that they want to raise at the workshop in week three.

Week Three

Essential reading (available on-line in programme learning resources)

- Lynch, C. (2017) *Cooperation or Coercion? Children coming into the care system under voluntary arrangements. Findings and recommendations of Your Family, Your Voice Knowledge Enquiry*. London: Family Rights Group.

Week Four

Workshop One

Permanence: Every Child's Right

Learning Outcomes

Participants will be offered opportunities to:

- engage in collaborative working with a view to forming a safe community of learning with a culture of constructive challenge and critical thinking for the duration of the programme and beyond
- reflect on the impact of living with loss and uncertainty
- deconstruct what a permanence plan communicates to the child/young adult and the significance of SMART/ExACT planning
- focus on the child/young adult's identity to shape their plan and ensure the child/young adult's voice is heard.

Workshop Timetable

09.30 – 11.00	Introductions: the people and the programme Permanence: planning for change and uncertainty
11.00 – 11.10	Break
11.10 – 13.00	Critical themes and issues: assessment and planning
13.00 – 13.45	Break
13.45 – 15.00	Critical themes and issues in contemporary practice
15.00 – 15.10	Break

15.10 – 16.30 Focussing on the individual and hearing the child's voice

See session plan with notes for trainers for further detail of workshop content and process.

Week Five

Getting to Grips with the Challenges

Explores ethical social work practice and how this is enacted in the day to day process of achieving permanence for children/young adults.

Learning Outcomes

Participants will be offered opportunities to:

- interrogate what permanency means, why it is important, and how it might involve competing demands/conflicted decisions.

Essential tasks/activities

Participants will be asked to:

- review their practice/casework experience in permanence planning to consider the question:
"how have assumptions or unconscious bias (their own or other people's) affected how professionals planned for and intervened with children/young adults and their families?"
- discuss their findings with colleagues and/or their supervisor
- prepare a reflective study (maximum 500 words) that examines their experience of the impact of assumptions or unconscious bias.

Week Six

Transformative Practice

Explores the participants' contribution to achieving permanence for children/young adults, personal qualities, self-regulation, approach to continuing professional development and skills in working alongside others to achieve best outcomes for children/young adults

Learning Outcomes

Participants will be offered opportunities to:

- consider their current and future contribution to the transformation of practice, and how the interface between core beliefs and professional values drives their practice.

Essential Tasks/Activities

Participants will be asked to:

- reflect on their own experience of childhood and family life
- consider the question:
“how do your core beliefs influence your practice with children/young adults and families?”
- read Jim Kennedy’s special report on Cultural Competence, written for CareKnowledge, October 2017
- consider their direct work with children/young adults and families. Identify examples of how cultural competence arises from effective use of core social work skills and the enactment of values-led practice.
- ask their colleagues and managers to provide feedback about the strengths that the participant brings to their work with children/young adults and families
- prepare a short reflective study (maximum 500 words) articulating this process and how their thinking about their practice is evolving in relation to cultural competence
- confirm their decision about the theme for their policy and practice briefing and reflect on how the content of this module relates to it.

Week Seven

Essential reading (available on-line in programme learning resources)

- Boddy, J. (2013) *Understanding Permanence for Looked After Children: A review of research for the Care Inquiry*.
- Case Study: Part One: Chronology

Choice of further reading to be guided by specific learning goals identified by the participant with their manager/supervisor

- All Party Parliamentary Group for Children (2017) *No Good Options. Report of the Inquiry into Children’s Social Care in England*. London: National Children’s Bureau.
- Baginsky, M., Gorin, S. and Sands, C. (2017) *The Fostering System in England: Evidence Review Research Report*. King’s College, London and Quest Research and Evaluation Ltd.
- Become (2014) ‘*Staying Put*’ for young people in residential care: A scoping exercise. Available at: <http://www.becomecharity.org.uk/>
- Become (2017) *Perceptions of Care*. Available at: <http://www.becomecharity.org.uk/>
- Biehal, N. (2014) A sense of belonging: meanings of family and home in long-term foster care *British Journal of Social Work*, 44, 955-971.
- Department for Education (2011) *The Foster Carers Charter*, Crown. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175444/Foster_carers_charter.pdf
- Department for Education (2012) *Charter for Care Leavers*, Crown. Available at:

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/c/cl%20charter%20final%2025%20oct%202012.pdf>

- Gupta, A., Featherstone, B and White, S. (2016) *Reclaiming Humanity: From Capacities to Capabilities in understanding parenting in adversity* BJSW.
- Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies/Coram Voice (2015) *Children and Young People's Views on Being in Care – A Literature Review*.
- Hutton, A., and Partridge, K. (2006) 'Say it your own way'. *Children's participation in assessment: a guide and resources*. Barkingside: Barnardo's/DfES.
- Rahilly, T., and Hendry, E. (2014) *Promoting the Wellbeing of Children in Care Messages from Research*. NSPCC. Available at: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/promoting-wellbeing-children-in-care-messages-from-research.pdf>
- Selwyn, J. and Breiham-Crookall, L (2017) *Our Lives; Our Care: Looked after children's views on their wellbeing*. University of Bristol and Coram Voice.
- The Care Inquiry (2013) *Making not Breaking; Building relationships for our most vulnerable children*.
- The Care Inquiry (2013) *The views and recommendations of children and young people involved in the Care Inquiry*.
- Thomas, J. and Holland, S. (2010) 'Representing Children's Identities in Core Assessments.' *British Journal of Social Work*, 40, 8, 2617 – 2633.
- Ward, H., Brown, R. and Hyde-Dryden, G. (2014) *Assessing Parental Capacity to Change when Children are on the Edge of Care: An overview of current research evidence*. London: Department for Education.