

Achieving permanence

Guidance for trainers: Programme overview

Introduction

This briefing sets out how the programme is structured, the participant's journey and your role within it. It should be read alongside the:

- programme introduction and overview
- workshop guidance for trainers
- module outline guidance for trainers
- participant workbook.

The participants

The Achieving Permanence programme is aimed at experienced children and family social workers.

Before nominating them for the Achieving Permanence programme, participants' line managers/supervisors verify that they already evidence enhanced skill and confidence in:

- whole family assessment
- direct work with children/young adults and families
- preparation of analytical reports, ability to articulate defensible decision making
- the practical skills required to prepare for and attend court.

It is a requirement that participants enrolled on the programme are:

- qualified for more than two years
- experienced in child and family social work
- experienced in care proceedings, either directly, or by shadowing another worker through a case
- engaged in regular reflective supervision.

The programme design assumes that participants are prepared for, and open to advanced level learning, and already have a clear understanding of:

- child development
- the impact of trauma and neglect on children/young adult's well-being
- attachment and resilience
- child care and family law
- anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive social work practice.

They are also expected to:

- have/are working towards a consistently high level of skill in child and family social work
- be consolidating all the requirements set out in the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Approved Child and Family Practitioners
- be engaged in complex and challenging practice.

Roles and responsibilities

Responsibility for learning and development is shared between you, the participant, and the participant's line manager.

Your role as trainer is to lead and facilitate the Achieving Permanence programme on behalf of your cohort.

This role requires you to:

- have a good working knowledge of all the research, theory, practice material and tools used in the programme
- demonstrate deep understanding of children and families social work practice
- model an ethic of care, anti-oppressive principles, and relationship-based practice
- create a culture of collaboration and challenge throughout the Achieving Permanence programme
- actively manage the process and group dynamic of all four workshop days.

You are also committed to supporting individual participants where they might need additional help or guidance before, during, after, and in between workshops.

Participants may choose to discuss areas of special interest with you, and ask you for advice to help them identify and agree on relevant further reading. You may find yourself deeply engaged in participants' casework and practice dilemmas, in which case you must be clear that while happy to explore and discuss issues, responsibility for decisions and action rest with the practitioner and their line manager/supervisor.

Where you become aware of issues relating to the safety of children/young adults, vulnerable adults, or participants you are responsible for ensuring appropriate action is taken to safeguard them.

Participants are expected to:

- participate in all four face to face workshops
- actively engage in online learning
- build evidence of the development of their knowledge and expertise throughout the programme. (The programme is designed as an iterative process of personal and professional development, where participants review their practice, consolidate experiential and formal learning, and work with their

peers and line managers/supervisors to set themselves new developmental goals)

- produce evidence of their enhanced skill in direct work with children/young adults, parents, care-givers, and other professionals
- create a practice portfolio that demonstrates the personal/professional development achieved and the impact of learning on practice
- engage in self-directed learning, and to take personal responsibility for their development, with a view to gaining confidence to make decisions in complex and unpredictable situations
- be fully accountable both for their behaviour within the programme, and for their practice
- link new learning to their current work with children/young adults and families.

Line managers/supervisors play a crucial role before, during and at the end of this programme.

They are required to ensure that the participant:

- can commit to and fulfil every aspect of the programme
- has agreed with them on what they hope to achieve (personal learning goals)
- will have opportunities to put their learning into practice
- will have opportunities to demonstrate progress as they develop new skills and knowledge
- knows that clear processes are in place to manage any complaints or difficulties that might arise (for example in relation to selection, attendance, participation, support, guidance and supervision, completion, or assessment)
- participant is able to attend the mandatory one day workshops for all four modules
- knows what release arrangements are specified, and has reached agreement about how much of their own time candidates will commit to independent study
- discusses their learning and development in supervision
- is, if needed, given new opportunities such as secondments, joint working etc. to enable participants to practise and demonstrate the required skills and knowledge while they are on the Achieving Permanence programme.
- is supported to move towards more autonomy and leadership as they progress through the programme.

Participants receive a Certificate of Completion when they have completed all the Achieving Permanence programme components. Their line manager/supervisor is responsible for providing formal, written verification that the participant has completed a satisfactory portfolio, and has demonstrated advanced social work practice that is consistent with the Knowledge and Skills Statement Achieving Permanence (2016).

Programme structure

The programme consists of four modules, each involving seven weeks of study.

In weeks one, two, five and six of each module, participants work independently on tasks and activities set out in the programme workbook. They are asked to discuss some of these with their line managers/supervisors. The focus in these weeks is on reflection and advanced, well-informed and evidenced social work practice.

Weeks three and seven of each module are designated as reading weeks. Essential reading is specified in the workbook for those weeks. All essential reading is available to participants online. The focus in these weeks is on developing a robust understanding of critical issues that impact on achieving permanence.

You lead a workshop in week four of each module. Workshops are designed to focus primarily on consolidating core social work competence, building advanced, relationship-based skills, and exploring professional ethics.

The Workshops

The face to face workshops are designed to be thought provoking, to stimulate critical reflection and informed debate. Plenary sessions, small group discussions, pairs activities and individual tasks all demand that participants critically evaluate complex issues, think systemically, and engage empathically with the needs of children/young adults and caregivers. As trainer, you must be actively engaged with participants throughout each stage of the day, monitoring their discussions, keeping them on track, challenging them, and designing questions that drive exploration.

Your training style should fit with the expectation that each participant brings energy, commitment and creativity to working with the complex situations, theoretical challenges and legal dilemmas that beset achieving permanence.

The PowerPoint slides serve as stimuli to support discussion, rather than as teaching content for the trainer to deliver. They are annotated with suggestions about how to use them so that they guide and structure the workshop.

A plan for all four sessions of each workshop is set out in your Workshop Guidance for Trainers. Each session is prefaced with its timetable, goals, the preparation and materials required, and essential messages that must be conveyed. Notes are also provided to help anticipate any difficulties that might be encountered in each session.

The session plan contains detailed instructions for both content and process. When you are leading a workshop, you will have to accommodate your own, and the participant cohort's skills, aptitudes, and preferences. You will need to make your own judgements about pace, training process, and style of delivery. You may choose to design and develop your own teaching interventions (e.g. by replacing a drawing task with role playing exercises). If you do decide to adopt a different process, you must ensure both that the learning needs of the group are met, and that the specified

content (itemised session-by-session within the guidance as “essential messages to convey”) is successfully delivered.

Case studies and vignettes

Several case studies have been written for this programme, each intended to support learning in specific ways.

1. Six short vignettes

Six short vignettes are set out in the participant workbook for Module 1, week two. Having read these, participants are asked to complete a series of tasks in preparation for Workshop One.

2. “Bradley”

During Workshop One, session two, this case study is presented in three parts, and is intended to be used to support small group activities and plenary discussion in three distinct stages, as Bradley’s story unfolds.

3. Four short vignettes

In the second workshop, four short vignettes provide stimulus for discussion in session one.

4. “Olivia and her un-named son”

In Module 3, participants are asked to read “Olivia and her un-named son” during week two in preparation for the workshop in week four. This is a very long and complex case study designed to support a series of activities and discussions about defensible decision-making throughout the afternoon of Workshop Three.

5. Continuing case study

This is a case study in six parts which is used throughout the programme as follows:

- Part One: Chronology is presented as a reading task in Module 1 week six, in preparation for Workshop One
- Part Two: Coming into placement supports a small group exercise in Workshop Two, session one
- Part Three: First placement crisis is used in Workshop Two, session four
- Part Four: Chloe leaves placement forms the basis for a series of independent learning tasks for participants in Module 3, week one

- Part Five: Permanence planning
is used as stimulus for independent learning activities in Module 4, week one
 - Part Six: Planning for Chloe
is used as stimulus for a reflective exercise in Module 4, week two
6. Real-life case study.

Participants are asked to identify a situation in which they are professionally involved and consider it from different perspectives throughout the programme with specific activities/tasks set during:

- Workshop One, sessions 3 and 4
- Module 2, week one
- Workshop Two, session one
- Module 2, week five
- Module 3, week five
- Module 3, week six
- Module 4, week one
- Module 4, week two
- Workshop Four, all day.