



One minute guide



The role of the Permanence Team

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What is the Permanence Team?

The Permanence Team work with children during court proceedings when they may need to be adopted. They also work with children whose court proceedings have finished, and a decision has been made that they do need to be adopted (sometimes called 'a plan of adoption'). For children whose court proceedings are still happening, this is called 'parallel planning'. This means adoption is one option being considered at the same time as other options – such as the child living with their parents, wider family members, or in foster care. These options are all considered at the same time so decisions about the final plan can be made as quickly as possible.

The Permanence Team social worker will work with families applying for private adoption (for example step-parents adopting step-children). They will also work with parents who decide that their unborn baby should be adopted once born. This is called adoption with consent.

During court proceedings

During court proceedings, the social worker from the Permanence Team works together with the Court Team Social Work Practice Consultant (SWPC). The Permanence Team social worker will:

- Explore and assess anyone in the family network who could care for the child until they are adults, if the court decide the parents can't.
- Complete 'together and apart' assessments, which recommend whether siblings, brothers and sisters should live together or apart in the future, and how they can be supported to have a good relationship.
- Write a 'child permanence report' which explains a child's history, health information, what they need, who their wider family are and why their birth family can't safely care for them.
- Arrange the adoption medical for the child.

A permanence planning meeting is held once all the assessments are completed. This meeting will include the social work teams, Family Finders from Adoption East Midlands, Contact Team workers who supervise family time, education and health teams, and sometimes the Independent Reviewing Officer. This meeting will consider whether adoption is the best plan for the child. If they do agree this, the information will all be considered by the Agency Decision Maker, a senior social worker in the local authority who agrees whether to sign off recommending a plan of adoption to court.



After court proceedings

If the Court agrees that a child will have a plan of adoption and grant a Placement Order, the Permanence Team social worker will take over from the Court Team social worker. They will be responsible for the child's visits, reviews and care plan. They will also start home finding for the child, complete life story work, and work to prepare the child for adoption. This will include reducing the amount of family time with parents and other family members, as agreed at the final court hearing. They will keep the child's birth parents updated on how the child is doing, and the home finding process, as well as offering the birth family counselling support.

Home finding

The Permanence Team social worker works together with Adoption East Midlands and the social workers for prospective adopters to find the right home for children. The Permanence Team social worker will read the Potential Adopters Report (PAR) for adopters who express an interest in the child. They will discuss the strengths and any worries with the other social workers. If everyone agrees it could be a good match, a visit is made to the prospective adopters – sometimes the team manager will also join the visit. During the visit there will be conversations about the child/ren, the prospective adopters, and whether they are a good match.

If everyone agrees it is a good match after the visit, the social worker will book a matching panel with Adoption East Midlands. The Permanence Team social worker should also update the birth parents that a potential match has been found.

A support planning meeting is also held. This agrees what support needs to be offered to the child and to the adopters now and in the future, based on what is known about the child's background and needs.

Moving to the adoptive placement

A lot of work goes into preparing for children to move to their adoptive placement, including lots of meetings between professionals, the foster carers and the adopters. Children will have 'farewell for now' family time with their birth family, as was agreed in their care plan at court.

Transitions for children to their adoptive home are based on a model supported by research and evidence. Each plan is unique for each child based on their needs – this is an important part of a child's journey. This could include adopters and children meeting in the community and spending time in the child's foster home getting to know each other and the child's routines, before the child starts spending time in their adoptive home. The Permanence Team social worker will continue visiting the child.

Children must live in their adoptive home for at least 10 weeks before adopters can apply for an adoption order, and the Independent Reviewing Officer must also agree that it is the right plan. Birth parents continue to have free legal advice during this time and can also appeal the plan for the child with the court.

Key contact/s

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