

Appendix 1

Adoption and Permanence Service Plan 2012 - 2013

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Assistant Principal Officer

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide details of the progress of permanence planning and the Adoption Service. A detailed statistical analysis will be given with regards to the period between 1st January 2011 and 31st December 2011.
- 1.2 In accordance with Section 4: Adoption Services Plan (Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007), the Scottish Government has requested that local authorities review their published plans in lines with this requirement. This request has also made specific links to the Scottish Children's Reporter's Administration (SCRA) research report entitled "Care and Permanence Planning for Looked After Children in Scotland". We will therefore take account of the responses to this research and set out how we will engage in the process of implementation as well as how the National Adoption Register for Scotland will be utilised by West Dunbartonshire Council.
- 1.3 The SCRA research on care and permanence planning found that it took more than two years for the majority of children to achieve permanence either through adoption or Parental Responsibilities Orders from the point of their first involvement with services. A similar exercise was conducted within West Dunbartonshire Council at the end of 2011 in preparation for an inspection of Child Protection and Permanence Services by the Care Inspectorate. We are committed to embracing the ambitions of the Scottish Government in this key area of care and to improving timescales; the numbers of children afforded permanence or adoption; and ultimately the outcomes for our Looked After Children.

2. West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) Adoption Service

- 2.1 The team within West Dunbartonshire Council is a joint fostering and adoption/permanence team led by an Assistant Principal Officer (APO).
- 2.2 The fostering and adoption/permanence team is comprised of 4 full-time and 1 part-time social workers. The remit of the team includes the recruitment, preparation and assessment of temporary, permanent, respite, shared care and adoptive carers. Following approval, ongoing support by a supervising social worker is provided to all carers.
- 2.3 The APO meets with Senior Social Workers on a quarterly basis to discuss each child who is placed within foster care (see APPENDIX I, page 10). The care plan and progress is explored and advice given. Legal Advice Meetings (LAMs) (see APPENDIX II, page 11-22) are organised and chaired by the APO following the decision to consider permanence being made at a child's LAAC review. The APO has a standing arrangement for LAMs on a monthly basis for which legal services make themselves available. The APO and legal services are also flexible in convening LAMs outwith this scheduled time if necessary.
- 2.4 Prospective adoptive parents receive on-going support whilst awaiting a match; at the point of matching; and post placement until the adoption order is granted. Prospective adopters continue to have access to the training offered to foster carers should they wish to attend. Support after this point is upon request by the adoptive family. The introduction of the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2006 in September 2009 outlined the additional responsibilities of Local Authorities to have adoption support plans. Although this is

addressed within existing assessment mechanisms a separate tool outlining the adoption support plan has been identified and will be implemented in the near future (see APPENDIX IV, V and VI, pages 26-34).

- 2.5 West Dunbartonshire Council Fostering and Adoption/Permanence Team is part of The West of Scotland Consortium which is co-ordinated by the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) and comprises 10 Local Authorities. The consortium share resources in relation to children requiring adoptive / permanence placements and is a forum to discuss and debate practice issues. Regular training for staff and carers is also available.
- 2.6 Until recently West Dunbartonshire Council had also been part of Glasgow and West of Scotland Adoption Service (GWSAS). This was co-ordinated by Glasgow City Council and focused on adoption for infants between birth to 2 years of age. It was a consortium decision that this service should cease and that Local Authorities would resume full responsibility for the recruitment, training and assessment of adoptive applicants. This was due to GWSAS no longer meeting the needs of its members.
- 2.7 West Dunbartonshire Council also makes use of the Scottish Adoption and Advice Support Service (SASS). This service provides training for staff and carers, advice and consultation, work with birth families and origins work.
- 2.8 The Scottish Adoption Register has also been established within the last year. This is a resource to track and offer a statistical analysis of children requiring permanence; adoptive / permanent foster families available; and matches made across Scotland. Where appropriate and after no match has been identified within our own resources, children and adoptive / permanent foster families will be referred to both BAAF and the Scottish Adoption Register for matching.

3. Statistical Overview

- 3.1 The following statistics are based on figures for the period 1st January – 31st December 2011:
 - During this period, 24 children were accommodated in temporary foster care.
 - Of these 24 children, 14 have been identified as needing permanent family placements.
 - 10 children returned home during this period.
 - Of the children who were LAAC before 1st January 2011, 5 returned home during this period.
 - 3 children / young people were approved for adoption by the adoption panel and were in placement with approved adopters at 31st Dec 2010.
 - 4 children were approved for adoption by the adoption panel and placed with approved adopters during this period.
 - 2 children have been approved by an adoption panel and were awaiting an adoptive placement as at 31st Dec 2011.
 - West Dunbartonshire Council received 11 enquiries for adoption, 6 of which did not proceed to become applications. There were a variety of reasons for this, e.g. changes in personal circumstances, health concerns with adopters or simply changing their mind.
 - 5 applications to adopt were received.
 - All 5 of these new applications to become adopters were approved.

- 3.2 In conducting a similar exercise to that of the care and permanence planning research, West Dunbartonshire Council found that the average length of time from a child being Looked After and Accommodated (LAAC) to achieving permanence was 3 years 4 months. There have been children where permanence plans were agreed but not achieved in relation to Parental Responsibilities Orders.
- 3.3 Timescales from the point a child becomes LAAC to convening a Legal Advice Meeting (LAM) was calculated from 1st January 2010 to 31st December 2010. The longest period was 1 year and the shortest was 5 months; the average time period being 8 ½ months. For the period 1st January 2011 - 31st December 2011 the longest time was 8 months and the shortest was 1 month. This brought the average length of time from the point a child becomes LAAC to convening a LAM down from 8.5 months in 2010 to 2.8 months in 2011. Where the length of time has been short this has been in cases where a great deal of assessment and preventative work has taken place prior to the child(ren) becoming LAAC.
- 3.4 Also during the period of 1st January 2011 – 31st December 2011, 4 adoptions were achieved (2 had been Permanence Orders with authority to adopt and 2 were direct adoption). No Permanence Orders were granted during this period.

4. Permanence Planning Progress within West Dunbartonshire Council

- 4.1 Within WDC there has been greater emphasis placed on securing permanence for infants and children within speedier timescales.
- 4.2 Between 1st January 2011 and 31st December 2011 10 children had their permanence plans registered at the Fostering and Adoption Panel. 7 of these children are already in their proposed placement, 1 potential match is in progress and 2 are still awaiting matches.
- 4.3 During this same period 10 children had their legal routes to permanence agreed at the Fostering and Adoption Panel. The route for 6 of these children was direct adoption and for the other 4 children it was a Permanence Order.
- 4.4 The number of children where there have been Legal Advice Meetings and grounds for permanence agreed was 24 (10 of whom are already in proposed placements).
- 4.5 There has been increased emphasis placed on the care planning and assessment process prior to children becoming LAAC within WDC. Efforts have been made to improve practice by putting in place clear boundaries and timescales around any parenting assessment and rehabilitation thereafter. This part of the process is fundamental to any future planning for the child, particularly where there are complex contact issues or further exploration of sibling groups being placed together or apart is required.
- 4.6 The Local Authority continues to have the option of deciding between a direct adoption or making an application for a Permanence Order with Authority to Adopt (POA). Timescales with regards to direct adoption petitions and Permanence Orders with Authority to Adopt, and deadlines for the completion of reports, continue to be met in accordance with the current legislation. There has been a shift from automatically considering a POA where the parents may contest this action. This has been based on legal services reviewing the cases where a POA was agreed on the understanding that parents were likely to contest and how checking many parents actually contested at the point the POA was lodged. There were very few cases where parents contested the action. As a result, there have been more direct adoptions agreed within Legal Advice Meetings and ratified at Adoption Panels than has previously been the case.

4.7 The Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 introduced the Permanence Order. Unlike its legislative predecessor, the Parental Responsibilities Order, this order can be tailored according to the needs of the child. For children whose needs will be best met in permanent foster placements, the local authority may apply for a Permanence Order (P.O). There are mandatory components to this order giving the Local Authority the following:

- (i) The responsibility to provide guidance
- (ii) The right to control residence

4.8 The “right to control residence” is automatically removed from the birth parents. The “responsibility to provide guidance” **may** stay with the child’s parents. The remainder of the PO is made up of Ancillary Provisions, with each provision specifying what each significant person in the child’s life may or may not agree to or be able to fulfil. For birth parents who continue to be in a position to play a role within a child’s life, it permits some continued involvement. For example, decision making around health matters may be shared with the Local Authority or may be left with the birth family.

4.9 The PO also allows permanent carers to share decision making, enabling them to give consent on matters such as health, holidays and parental consent. Contact between the child and birth family is also addressed within each PO.

4.10 Unlike adoption orders, there are no prescribed timescales for POs. In WDC previous annual reports have noted that the demands and priority of other work; e.g. child protection and meeting timescales for Hearing reports, superseded the preparation of permanence reports. The implications for children where a PO application is required but not achieved can be significant as can be seen from the findings of the SCRA research. Continued uncertainty and attendance at Children’s Hearings can create instability within placements, increasing the risk of placement breakdown and the number of placement moves a child may have throughout their childhood. WDC has taken active steps to raise the number of POs achieved for children as a supervision requirement made by the Children’s Hearing was not designed as a long term legal means of securing a child’s permanency.

4.11 In relation to all legal routes to securing permanence for a child there is an emphasis and commitment to meeting timescales. However, complexities can arise, e.g. parents appealing contact decisions made at Children’s Hearings. In such instances, any potential permanent carer is kept fully appraised and informed, bearing in mind that many of these children are already in placement with the carer.

4.12 National standards stipulate a 6 month timescale for the completion of an assessment for prospective carers. This should be from the point of initial contact. For an authority the size of WDC, this timescale is not feasible. Preparatory groups are an integral part of the assessment process and numbers dictate that these can only be held twice each year, usually April and October. Consequently, those who approach WDC in May or November will have longer waiting times. However, from the beginning of the assessment the 6 month timescale is usually met.

5. Training

5.1 Training continues to be offered by the adoption and fostering team. There is a designated worker whose remit is to develop training for carers and to promote carers’ individual learning. The amount of training in previous years had become limited as this member of staff had to resume some link worker responsibilities due to a colleague being away from

the team whilst undertaking a 6 month placement. The training work has now been reallocated within the team.

- 5.2 Preparatory groups for infant adoption (0-2 years of age) historically took place within the GWSAS. Now that this consortium is in the process of ending, Local Authorities are resuming responsibilities for this group of adopters in relation to preparatory group training. This will be an additional area of work for the team and will require some groundwork to ensure that preparatory group material for this category of applicants is up-to-date and appropriate.
- 5.3 There is post approval training which is principally aimed at foster carers' continued development but is equally relevant to adoptive carers and is available to them also (see APPENDIX III, page 22-24)
- 5.4 To raise awareness of the process of permanency planning a half day workshop was conducted within both children and families area teams in January 2011 by the Assistant Principal Officer, and the designated worker for this workshop addressed the following:
 - Overview of Adoption and Fostering Team
 - Inter-relationship between A & F Team and Area Teams (in particular under 12's teams)
 - Overview of Permanency Planning Process
 - Critical and reflective thinking about workers' own cases and practice (timescales, outcomes, SCRA report, Inspection)
 - Foundation for future learning together ("what do you want and expect from us?" and vice versa)
- 5.5 This workshop was well attended by senior social workers, social workers and family support / contact staff. The feedback was very positive with discussion and suggestions for future workshops. Family support / contact staff engaged well with the workshops and demonstrated an eagerness to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to better evidence assessment during contacts. Social workers and senior social workers benefited from the consistent messages and guidance that was being afforded to them. The APO has plans to offer further workshop opportunities on a biannual basis that focus on learning opportunities, issues and dilemmas surrounding care planning and permanence.
- 5.6 Input and ongoing advice and consultation is given by the APO on conducting parenting assessments to social workers and senior social workers. A guidance note has been provided to the area teams. In addition, the APO will disseminate and discuss recent research findings to enable staff to inform their practice and assessment with up-to-date materials.
- 5.7 With regards to the training available to adoption and fostering team staff, a review continues to demonstrate that staff are interested in undertaking the postgraduate course in family placement offered by BAAF and Strathclyde University. The financial position is currently being explored by the APO and Section Head to potentially enable staff to undertake this. Staff understand that only one candidate per year would be able to commence this course. Training is a necessary part of a social worker's registration with the requirement that workers undertake a minimum of 15 days over three years.
- 5.8 Team members and area team staff continue to attend BAAF workshops, medical and legal conferences. Such training and workshops are found to be beneficial and directly relate to practice. Key training events that workers find most useful are those in relation to completing legal reports; Form E's (which provide comprehensive information on a child in

need of placement); direct work with children and those which update staff on changes in legislation and implications for practice.

- 5.9 Supervising social workers within the Adoption / Permanence Team and the APO provide advice, guidance and consultation as and when required to area team staff on a variety of matters relating to care and permanence planning. In particular there is ongoing discussion with regards to diversity in placement options, e.g. single and LGBT carers.

6. Adoption Allowances

- 6.1 Up to 31st December 2011, WDC were paying Adoption Allowances to 14 adoptive carers for 24 children.
- 6.2 Allowances continue to be reviewed quarterly by the APO and annually by the Adoption Panel.
- 6.3 Adoption allowances are paid at the same rate as basic fostering allowances per age of the child as detailed below:

Age	Allowances
0 – 4 years	£125.09
5-10 years	£142.49
11-15 years	£177.38
16+ years	£215.74

7. Inspection

- 7.1 A joint inspection of child protection and permanence by the Care Inspectorate was conducted late autumn 2011. The report will be published in March 2012.
- 7.2 Recommendations from previous more detailed inspections of the fostering and adoption service were with regard to updating procedures; a specific induction pack for fostering and adoption social workers; and improved administrative support to the team. Further work has been undertaken to address these issues.

8. Challenges for 2012

- 8.1 The Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 came into force on 30th September 2009. Not only has this brought changes with regards to the routes to permanency, it has broadened the groups of potential applicant that can be considered. These include unmarried couples, those in a civil partnership, gay and lesbian couples. For those not married, the assessment process requires to evidence an “enduring” relationship. The assessment and approval of gay and lesbian couples has, and will continue to, challenge workers’ values and judgements. However, the ability to consider this wider group of applicants should be welcomed as it increases the possibility of family placement for children.
- 8.2 Adoption support plans (see APPENDIX IV, V and VI, pages 26-34) and services for all those affected by adoption must be developed. This is an ongoing and significant piece of work as the needs and requirements of adoptees, adopters, birth parents and any other person affected by adoption e.g. grandparents or siblings must be ascertained and eventually met.

8.3 Each child placed for adoption must have an adoption support plan. The placing Local Authority is responsible for post adoption support for the first 3 years following a placement being made. Each adoption support plan must be reviewed at regular intervals, with those affected able to request additional reviews. The additional responsibilities this brings increases the expectations of service users and the workload of the adoption service considerably.

8.4 West Dunbartonshire Council has fully embraced the need to have robust systems and resources around managing permanence planning for children and the adoption/ permanence service as a whole (full and detailed service plan is within APPENDIX VII, pages 35-39). Paying particular attention to the areas for improvement within the SCRA report with regards to decision making and implementation, the following will be the focus of our challenges:

- (i) First decision on permanence and time away from home
- (ii) Management of the permanence process
- (iii) Placements

8.5 i) First Decision on permanence and time away from home

8.5.1 Good mechanisms have been developed with regards to Quarterly meetings and Legal Advice Meetings.

8.5.2 The challenge is to increase workers' skills and confidence in care planning and assessment of children prior to accommodation, making more effective use of GIRFEC and SHANARRI tools to inform this. To achieve this there is a commitment between the adoption team and area team managers to continue with workshops relating to areas involved in care planning and permanence. The ambition is that workers will become more effective in their direct work with children and families where there is a risk of accommodation which will inform their assessment. Also, for workers to make explicit use of SMART plans alongside families so that they are clear on what is required, and why, in relation to the holistic needs of their child(ren). With regards to rehabilitation attempts/parenting assessments workers will require to be supported to conduct these in a timely manner to reduce the instances of children either drifting in foster placement when they should be returned home, or permanence being sought. The aim is that such assessments should take no longer than 6 months, at which point decisions should be reached as to the long term plan. This means that there should be no LAMs taking place any longer than 6 months after a child is LAAC.

8.6 ii) Management of the permanence process

8.6.1 As the permanence process progresses the challenge is ensuring that timescales continue to be met. In relation to Form E assessments, the APO is setting timescales of 12 weeks for their completion once grounds have been agreed at a LAM. There will be mitigating circumstances where new information comes to the fore changing such plans, however, in this event it would be expected that the SSW would request a further LAM to explore the implications of this for the child's future planning. The challenge will be balancing such timescales with other competing priorities such as Social Background Reports for the Reporter to the Children's Hearing and Child Protection work. Commitment from all responsible managers and Senior Social Workers involved in the permanence planning process should result in such work being more equally balanced with these other priorities.

8.6.2 The APO continues to track the progress of children where permanence plans have been agreed when conducting the quarterly meetings with Senior Social Workers, using the tool within APPENDIX I (page 10).

8.7 iii) Placements

8.7.1 For most admissions into care, the majority of which are in an emergency, there can be limitations in placement choice at that time. In order to minimise the number of placement moves, placing the child with a carer who has the potential to provide a permanent placement would be the ideal model.

8.7.2 The use of foster carers as adopters or permanent long term carers is actively promoted within WDC whenever this match is assessed as being in the child(ren)'s best interests.

8.7.3 Other resources utilised in seeking appropriate long term / permanent families for children are BAAF, Adoption Register, advertising to recruit for a specific child(ren) locally, utilising national media such as Be My Parent or Adoption UK.

Michele Lunan
Assistant Principal Officer
Child Care
Adoption and Fostering

February 2012

APPENDIX I – MONITORING/TRACKING SPREADSHEET FOR PERMANENCE PLANNING UTILISED BY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OFFICER

Child	DoB	SW	SSW	Date became LAAC	Date of Legal Advice Meeting (LAM) following decision at LAAC	Grounds for Perm -route	Form E due	Form E received	Any delay reason/Notes	A&F Panel	Date Placed	PO/POA/ Direct Adoption Granted	Timeline from date LAAC till LAM decision/Form E/Panel/date placed

West Dunbartonshire Council Social Work

Legal Advice Meeting

Child	
Date of Birth	
Social Worker	
Senior Social Worker	
Solicitor	
Assistant Principal Officer	
Date of Legal Advice Meeting	

Process for Legal Advice

SW/SSW agree permanent plans require to be considered.

SSW will discuss this with chair of LAAC and request review to be organised avoiding any unnecessary delay.

LAAC review considers care plan and identifies whether permanent plans require to be considered and legal advice should be sought.

LAAC review to identify key staff to prepare information for legal advice and represent views prior to the legal advice meeting. Key staff to prepare legal advice pro-forma and consider when information will be ready for legal advice meeting and request this.

Pro-forma and supporting information to be provided electronically five working days prior to legal advice meeting.

Legal Advice Meeting:

- To consider and agree whether legal grounds exist.
- To consider and agree an appropriate legal route for the child.
- To agree further action necessary to ensure plans are progressed quickly.
- To agree anticipated timescales to prepare work.
- The outcome of this meeting will be recorded in the final section of the legal advice pro-forma.
- Once completed a full copy of pro-forma to be kept in the child's file.
- Assistant Principal Officer to ensure parent(s) letter (A) sent and filed.

Progressing Plans:

- If recommendation is there are grounds to proceed SW/SSW should request a further LAAC review to consider this and make the decisions. LAAC chair to ensure there is no unreasonable delay following request.
- If Review agrees permanent plan to be pursued, SSW to send letter (B) to parent(s).
- Progress to be monitored and decided through the LAAC review process.

Information for Legal Advice Meetings

Section 1 – Background Information (To be completed by allocated social worker for each child)

(a) Care First Number

(b) Name of child / children

(c) Child / children's Date of Birth

(d) Name of Social Worker

(e) Name of Senior Social Worker

(f) Name of Area Team

(g) Date child / children accommodated

(h) Date child / children first became subject to a supervision requirement

(i) Date of LAAC Review where decision was made to seek legal advice with regards to permanency

(j) Where does the child actually reside? (*Council Area*)

(k) Who has Parental Rights & Responsibilities? (*Mother, Father, Other – Full Name(s) and supporting evidence*)

(l) If the child is over twelve years old does he / she consent to permanent plans being made (***If answer is no, permanent plans cannot be pursued***)

**No
N/A**

Yes

Outline the child's views of permanent plans, if ascertainable.

(m) Have other family members / relatives / others been considered, identified or expressed an interest?

(outline who has been considered and reasons for not pursuing)

(n) Does the child have siblings?

(o) Does the child have any cultural, religious or linguistic issues?

Section 2 - Preferred Permanent Route

Which legal route is considered to be in child's best interest?

Adoption

Permanence

If Permanency please complete the "Permanence Order" section below

If Adoption please complete the "Adoption" section overleaf

Permanence Order

Outline the key reasons why a permanent plan is required. *(use bullet points to include why it is seriously detrimental to the child living with someone with Parental Rights and Responsibilities and key points from LAAC review)*

What is the likely effect on the child? *(use bullet points to outline positives & negatives)*

Who should have responsibility for :-

(a) Health, Development and Welfare of the child

(b) Acting as child's legal representative (normally local authority)

Who should have rights for:-

(a) Control, direction and guidance

(b) Contact

What are the current contact arrangements?

Views about current contact? *(Include child's / relevant others' views, also professional view re. nature, quality, stability etc) – How is this in the child's best interests?)*

Do you think the child should have contact post order?

No Yes

If Yes to above, with whom? (*parent's, sibling's, others*)

How regularly and in what way?

Finally, please attach LAAC Review minute / Last SBR and /or any relevant background papers.

All information must be provided, electronically, five working days in advance of the meeting to the Assistant Principal Officer (Fostering and Adoption) and relevant solicitor attending or it is likely the meeting will be postponed.

Adoption

Why do you feel adoption is necessary? (*include why it is in the best interest of the child / the value of a stable family unit / what alternatives to adoption you have considered and reason(s) they have not been pursued*)

What is the likely effect on the child throughout his /her life? *(as opposed to staying with family - positive & negative)*

What are the views of others regarding adoption? (include parents with PPR, other family members, relevant others)

Are there any religious, cultural or linguistic issues requiring consideration?

What are the current contact arrangements?

Views about current contact? (Include child's / relevant others' views, also professional view re. nature, quality, stability etc) – How is this in the child's best interests?)

Do you think the child should have contact post order?

No Yes

If Yes to above, with whom? (parent's, sibling's, others)

How regularly and in what way?

Finally, please attach LAAC Review minute / Last SBR and /or any relevant background papers.

All information must be provided, electronically, five working days in advance of the meeting to the Assistant Principal Officer (Fostering and Adoption) and relevant solicitor attending or meeting will be postponed.

Note of Legal Advice Meeting

Section 2 - (To be completed by Assistant Principal Officer (Fostering and Adoption) following Legal Advice Meeting)

(a) Date and names of attendees.

Name	Designation

(b) Date of LAAC Review that made decision to seek Legal Advice

(c) Dates of any previous LAMs

(d) Do we have legal grounds?

No

Yes

Details

(e) What contact should be considered for the child (who, method, frequency)

(f) Further action required

What	Who	By When
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On completion Assistant Principal Officer (Fostering and Adoption) to ensure letter is sent to person(s) with PRR advising of the outcome and all of the above placed in child's file.

Some Recommended Reading

Name	Published By
National Care Standards for Adoption Agencies	Scottish Executive
National Care Standards for Fostering Agencies	Scottish Executive
A Child's Journey Through Placement	Falbergh, V
Preparing Children for Permanence	BAAF
Helping Children Cope with Separation and Loss	Jewett, C
Placing Siblings	Argent, H/BAAF
Together or Apart, Assessing brothers and Sisters for permanent placements	Lord & Borthwick / BAAF
Life Story Work, What it is and What it means	BAAF
Getting it Right, Social Work Court Reports in Child Care Cases in Scotland	Plumtree / BAAF

If you require any support or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the Adoption and Fostering Team at Bridge Street. They will provide expert support and guidance around all aspects of Permanency Planning. They also have information available on the Intranet.

BAAF website – <http://www.baaf.co.uk>

Scottish Executive – <http://www.scotland.gov.uk>



West Dunbartonshire
Community Health & Care Partnership

Social Work - Child Care
6 – 14 Bridge Street
DUMBARTON
G82 1NT

Date:
Tel No: 01389 771266
Fax No: 01389 608171
Our Ref:
Your Ref:

Dear (Name of Parents)

I am writing in relation to your child/ children (insert name(s) of child/ children). At a looked after review held on (insert date) it was decided that the Social Work Department would ask for advice from our legal advisor to help us make future plans for (name(s) of children).

We have now had a discussion with our legal adviser and consider that it may be appropriate to make an adoption/ a permanent fostering plan (delete as appropriate) for (name(s) of children)

We are therefore planning to hold a further Looked After Children’s review to discuss this proposal. The meeting will make clear decisions about our plans to secure (name(s) of child/ children) in a permanent placement. You will receive an invitation to attend this meeting and can bring a friend or advisor with you for support if you wish. Your Social Worker (insert name) and Senior Social Worker (insert name) would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you before the review in order to hear your views and discuss possible options for (name(s) of children).

I realise that this is likely to be distressing for you and it is important that we consider your views. You may wish to seek your own legal advice.

(insert name of Social Worker) will be contacting you shortly to arrange a meeting with you.

Yours sincerely

Michele Lunan

Assistant Principal Officer

	work place address
	Date: Tel No: Fax No: 01389 Our Ref: Your Ref:



Dear (name(s) of parent(s))

Ms Michele Lunan, Assistant Principal Officer (Child Care), previously wrote to you on (insert date) to let you know we were considering making a plan for a permanent adoptive/foster (delete) placement for your child/children (name(s) of children).

We have now held a further Looked After Children's Review on (insert date) which you were/were not (delete) able to attend.

This meeting decided that the most suitable plan for (name(s) of children) is to place him/her /them (delete) in a permanent family. The next stage is to ask the West Dunbartonshire Council Adoption Panel to agree to an adoption plan / a permanent fostering plan (delete) for (name(s) of children). Their recommendation will also be requested about the possibility of an application for an Adoption Order/ Their advice will also be requested about the application for a Permanence Order/ an application for a Permanence Order with Authority to Adopt (delete) being made. If they agree to this, the Children's hearing will then be asked for their advice about this plan for (insert

name of child/ children). This advice is needed before any application can be made to the Sherrif Court for an Adoption Order/ Permanence Order with Authority to Adopt/Permanence Order (delete).

If you disagree with the decision of the Looked After Children's Review, you have a right to appeal to (name) Team Leader (delete). I also suggest that you seek your own independent legal advice if you haven't already done so.

Yours sincerely

Senior Social Worker

APPENDIX III - Available Post Approval Training

Post Approval Training

Session 1 Structures within West Dunbartonshire Council

Session 2 Safer caring

Session 3 Moving on/Life story work

Session 4 Child Protection

New Post Approval Training Programme

Safer Training:- Two sessions over four mornings 10am to 1pm

Session 1 Caring for Carers: preventing and treating secondary traumatic stress disorders

- Understanding Traumatic Stress (10am to 1pm)
- Secondary traumatic Stress (10am to 1pm)

Session 2 Protective foster care: Managing risk and reducing vulnerability

- Understanding Hazards, risks and vulnerability (10am to 1pm)
- Assessing and managing risks (10am to 1pm)

Building Identity: Four sessions over eight mornings 10am to 1pm

Session 1: Identity and child development; celebrating diversity in the care of traumatised children

- Identity, diversity and infant attachment
- Enabling traumatised children to form a strong sense of identity and to celebrate diversity

Session 2: Life story work: enabling children to make sense of their lives

- Child development and the creation of narrative
- Enabling traumatised children to form a strong and positive personal narrative

Session 3: Family ties: working with issues in the care of siblings

- The complexity of sibling relationships
- Assessment and planning

Session 4: Contact: issues of identity and stability

- Understanding the complexity of contact
- Making child-centred plans

Carers/Staff can choose to attend all four sessions or choose to attend any one of the sessions which will entail either eight mornings to complete all or at least two mornings to attend one session of the above training.

Transitions and Endings: Three sessions over six mornings 10am to 1pm

Session 1: Resilience and Transitions

Session 2: Moving on: promoting successful transitions and constructive endings

Session 3: Growing through grief

Trauma and Recovery: Three sessions over six mornings 10am to 1pm

Session 1: Trauma

- Attachment, Trauma and child development
- Helping children to recover from and adapt to acquired impairments

Session 2: Resilience

- Understanding resilience after trauma
- Building on strengths in the child and the social network

Session 3: Healing environments

- What is a healing environment?
- Planning the healing environment

Fostering Changes: How to improve relationships and manage difficult behaviour: 10 sessions over 10 mornings 10am to 1pm

Session 1: Establishing the group

Session 2: The context of behaviour

Session 3: Praise

Session 4: Positive attention

Session 5: Rewards

Session 6: Giving instructions and ignoring

Session 7: Rewards

Session 8: Natural and logical consequences and 'time-out'

Session 9: Managing Thoughts and Feelings

Session 10: Endings and taking care of yourself

This training is very interactive and practical. It requires participants to attend, or attempt to attend all ten sessions. Each session follows on from the previous one and there is a

theme running though out. It is possible to miss one or two and with some effort catch up and complete the course.

Supplementary Sessions 10am to 1pm

Session A: Wetting

Session B: Soiling

Session C: Problem-solving with children

Session D: Communication Skills: listening and responding

Preparation Groups

Restorative Parenting (Eddie Mulhern) 10am to 3pm

Child Exploitation and Online Protection 2hrs possibly at a Quarterly meeting or in our new training suite

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LEARNING AND ACHIEVING - include both current educational needs and predicted future needs				
Support needs	Services to be provided	Person/Agency responsible	Frequency, duration & start date	Planned outcome & review

CONFIDENCE IN WHO I AM include both current needs and predicted future needs				
Support needs	Services to be provided	Person/Agency responsible	Frequency, duration & start date	Planned outcome & review

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BEING ABLE TO COMMUNICATE - <i>include both current needs and predicted future needs</i>				
Support needs	Services to be provided	Person/Agency responsible	Frequency, duration & start date	Planned outcome & review

ENJOYING FAMILY AND FRIENDS - <i>include both current needs and predicted future needs</i>				
Support needs	Services to be provided	Person/Agency responsible	Frequency, duration & start date	Planned outcome & review

LEARNING TO BE RESPONSIBLE - <i>include both current needs and predicted future needs</i>				
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Support needs	Services to be provided	Person/Agency responsible	Frequency, duration & start date	Planned outcome & review

BEING INDEPENDENT, LOOKING AFTER MYSELF - <i>include both current needs and predicted future needs</i>				
Support needs	Services to be provided	Person/Agency responsible	Frequency, duration & start date	Planned outcome & review

CONTACT					
Name of person and relationship to child	Type (letterbox, face-to-face)	Frequency, duration, venue	Supervision of contact & who will do this	Transport to/from contact - who will do it	Review of contact

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FINANCIAL AND PRACTICAL <i>include adoption allowances</i>				
Support needs	Services to be provided	Person/Agency responsible	Frequency, duration & start date	Planned outcome & review

APPENDIX V - ADOPTION SUPPORT PLAN FOR ADOPTIVE FAMILY

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
ADOPTION SUPPORT PLAN**

PART 2 - ADOPTIVE FAMILY

Prospective Adopters Name:

Social Worker:
Address: 6-14 Bridge Street, Dumbarton, G82 1NT.
Tel. No: 01389 772165 E-Mail:

Agency for Family: West Dunbartonshire Council, Adoption and Fostering Service

Date Plan Completed:

Date Plan Reviewed:

SUPPORT NEEDS TO ADOPTIVE FAMILY OR INDIVIDUALS IN THE FAMILY

Type of support need	Services to be provided & to whom	Person/Agency responsible	Frequency, duration & start date	Planned outcome & review
Training				
Support Group				
Advice and information				

SUPPORT NEEDS TO ADOPTIVE FAMILY OR INDIVIDUALS IN THE FAMILY

Type of support need	Services to be provided & to whom	Person/Agency responsible	Frequency, duration & start date	Planned outcome & review
Counselling				
Other				

APPENDIX VI - ADOPTION SUPPORT PLAN FOR BIRTH RELATIVES

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
ADOPTION SUPPORT PLAN
PART 3 - BIRTH RELATIVES**

Birth Relative Names:

Name of Worker(s) for Birth Relatives:

Address:

Tel.No:

E-mail:

Agency for Birth Relatives:

Date Plan Completed:

Date Plan Reviewed:

SUPPORT NEEDS TO BIRTH PARENTS OR OTHER BIRTH RELATIVES

Type of support need	Services to be provided & to whom	Person/Agency responsible	Frequency, duration & start date	Planned outcome & review
Contact issues				

SUPPORT NEEDS TO BIRTH PARENTS OR OTHER BIRTH RELATIVES

Type of support need	Services to be provided & to whom	Person/Agency responsible	Frequency, duration & start date	Planned outcome & review
Support Group				
Advice and information				
Counselling				

Other				
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	SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME	DATE
Birth Mother			
Birth Father			
Other Birth Relative(s)			
Child's Social Worker			
Manager (Child)			
Worker(s) for Birth Relative(s)			

Manager (Agency for Birth Relatives)			
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APPENDIX VII - Adoption and Permanence Service Plan

Vision	Local Improvement Objective	Action	Who	When	Performance Indicator / Desired Outcome
Safe	Increase number and range of adoptive placements.	Continue with regular recruitment campaigns and also specific recruitment for children that are difficult to place.	Adoption team and APO	Progress will be formally reviewed in March 2013	Increase in adoptive placements and options available with regards to matching
	Ensure adoption enquires / assessments are progressed with minimum delay	Enquiries / Assessment to be allocated immediately Should capacity be an issue then sessional staff would be used.	Adoption team and APO	Progress will be formally reviewed in March 2013	Reduction in waiting time for applicants and increase in elimination of inappropriate applicants at the earliest stage possible.
	Ensure where appropriate that siblings groups are placed together.	Social Worker for the sibling group to include sibling assessment within their Form E.	Social Worker and Senior Social Worker Young People In Mind	Progress will be formally reviewed in March 2013 and feedback given on a regular basis when APO examines individual Form Es	Form E to explicitly evidence an analysis of the sibling relationship and dynamic, including placing this in the context of historical family concerns; thereby informing decision making with regards to together or apart.

	All children, prospective adoptive carer(s) and birth families to have adoption support plans.	Adoption Support plans to be completed by the respective responsible social worker when compiling Form E and Form F assessments which will be presented at the Fostering and Adoption Panel.	Social Worker for child(ren) and Supervising Social Worker for applicant	Plans will be reviewed when presented at the Fostering and Adoption Panel and thereafter reviewed at regular intervals appropriate to the needs. A more general review of how the plans are being utilised will take place in March 2013.	Supports required are explicitly recorded and how the Local Authority endeavours to meet these in line with the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007.
	Ensure all adoption assessments are conducted in accordance with National Standards	Form F assessments to be completed in accordance with National Standards and quality assured.	Supervising Social Worker and APO	On completion of each Form F assessment.	Thorough Form F assessments and reduction in delay of approval process due to issues of concern / areas not addressed. Improve matching process.
	All prospective adopters to receive training / advice on safe caring practice.	For safe caring to be part of preparatory groups and ongoing advice thereafter.	Preparatory group training and supervising social worker	Bi-annually at preparatory groups and during individual sessions thereafter.	Increase confidence and skill in safer caring practice to ensure safer environment for children.
Vision	Local Improvement Objective	Action	Who	When	Performance Indicator / Desired Outcome
	To increase the skill and confidence of workers involved in permanence decision making for children	For a range of training opportunities to be available to workers exploring issues surrounding care and permanence planning.	BAAF, SAAS, Adoption / Permanence Team	The needs and benefits of training will be reviewed formally in March 2013. There will also be ongoing review of this in relation to the needs of workers within WDC in relation to the Workshops delivered biannually by APO and Adoption / Permanence Team.	Increase in workers skill and confidence which can be evidenced within their direct practice with children and families and assessments, i.e. parenting assessments, Form Es and legal reports
	Reduce length of time it takes to complete parenting assessments to inform rehabilitation / permanence planning.	Assessments to be time limited and progressed evaluated closely and regularly.	Social Worker, Senior Social Worker, APO.	Regular supervision between SW and SSW. Quarterly meetings between SSW and APO	Decision making with regards to rehabilitation / permanence planning takes place within shorter timescales. Initially evidenced from the length of time between a child being LAAC and a LAM taking place.

	Reduce the length of time it takes to complete Form E assessments.	Form E assessments to be completed with 12 weeks of LAM agreeing permanence planning to be pursued.	APO, SW and SSW	Timescale to be set at LAM	Increase in number of Form E assessments being completed within 12 weeks and reduction in length of time children wait for their permanence plans to be registered and the Adoption and Fostering Panel. Also a reduction in the length of time to begin seeking appropriate placement matches for the child.
	Reduce the length of time it takes to complete Permanence Orders.	Timescales to be set within LAM for PO reports.	SW, SSW, APO and Legal	Timescale to be set at LAM	Increase number of children who have their legal route to permanence secured by PO rather than lingering within the Children's Hearing system inappropriately.
Healthy	All Looked After in placement to receive the health care they need.	All children to receive appropriate medical examination and medical books to be kept up-to-date.	Social Worker and carers. LAAC Nurse	Initial medicals to take place soon after a child is LAAC and thereafter as and when appropriate, but in any event on an annual basis.	Early identification of any health and developmental concerns and for any additional supports/services to be identified at an early stage. Improvements in the general health of LAAC children in WDC.
Vision	Local Improvement Objective	Action	Who	When	Performance Indicator / Desired Outcome

	All carers have access to support the mental health needs of children and young people	Carers have access to Young People In Mind if they are placed within WDC. Carers will have access to mental health services within their own area. If support required to advocate this will be given pre and post adoption.	Young People in Mind LAAC Nurse CAMHS Should post adoption support be required for placements made outwith WDC, this will be given for 3 years after the adoption is granted and thereafter responsibility will shift to the LA the child is resident in.	Initial medicals to take place soon after a child is LAAC and thereafter as and when appropriate, but in any event on an annual basis. Outwith this supports can be accessed should it be felt necessary.	Increase in the number of children who require mental health services receiving this.
	All children and prospective adoptive carer(s) to have adoption support plans	Adoption Support plans to be completed by the respective responsible social worker when compiling Form E and Form F assessments which will be presented at the Fostering and Adoption Panel.	Social Worker for child(ren) and Supervising Social Worker for applicant	Plans will be reviewed when presented at the Fostering and Adoption Panel and thereafter reviewed at regular intervals appropriate to the needs. A more general review of how the plans are being utilised will take place in March 2013.	Supports required are explicitly recorded and how the Local Authority endeavours to meet these in line with the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007.
Achieving	All children and prospective adoptive carer(s) to have adoption support plans	Adoption Support plans to be completed by the respective responsible social worker when compiling Form E and Form F assessments which will be presented at the Fostering and Adoption Panel.	Social Worker for child(ren) and Supervising Social Worker for applicant	Plans will be reviewed when presented at the Fostering and Adoption Panel and thereafter reviewed at regular intervals appropriate to the needs. A more general review of how the plans are being utilised will take place in March 2013.	Supports required are explicitly recorded and how the Local Authority endeavours to meet these in line with the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007.
Vision	Local Improvement Objective	Action	Who	When	Performance Indicator / Desired Outcome

Nurtured	Ensure rehabilitation / parenting capacity assessments are focused and time limited with clear expectations and outcomes.	Assessments to be time limited and progressed evaluated closely and regularly.	Social Worker, Senior Social Worker, APO.	Regular supervision between SW and SSW. Quarterly meetings between SSW and APO	Decision making with regards to rehabilitation / permanence planning takes place within shorter timescales. Initially evidenced from the length of time between a child being LAAC and a LAM taking place.
	Ensure permanence plans are progressed with minimum delay.	Legal Advice Meetings (LAMs) to take place if rehabilitation is not achievable. 12 week timescale to be set for the completion of Form Es following permanence plans being agreed at LAM. Timescales to be set for completion of PO reports at LAMs and follow up on progress during Quarterly meetings	Social Worker, Senior Social Worker, APO and Legal Social Worker, Senior Social Worker and APO. Social Worker, Senior Social Worker, APO and Legal	Regular supervision between SW and SSW. Legal Advice Meetings Quarterly meetings between SSW and APO.	Reduction in drift. Increase in number of Form Es completed within 12 weeks. Increase in number of children's permanence plans being registered at the Fostering and Adoption Panel. Increase in number of PO's being sought to secure children's legal route where this is appropriate. Taking them out the Children's Hearing system and reducing the upset and uncertainty that this may bring.
	Ensure Adoption panel has a suitable range of experienced members	Review of Panel membership	Section Head		
	To increase the skill and confidence of workers involved in permanence decision making for children	For a range of training opportunities to be available to workers exploring issues surrounding care and permanence planning.	BAAF, SAAS, Adoption / Permanence Team	The needs and benefits of training will be reviewed formally in March 2013. There will also be ongoing review of this in relation to the needs of workers within WDC in relation to the Workshops delivered biannually by APO and Adoption / Permanence Team.	Increase in workers skill and confidence which can be evidenced within their direct practice with children and families and assessments, i.e. parenting assessments, Form Es and legal reports
Vision	Local Improvement Objective	Action	Who	When	Performance Indicator / Desired Outcome

	All children and prospective adoptive carer(s) to have adoption support plans	Adoption Support plans to be completed by the respective responsible social worker when compiling Form E and Form F assessments which will be presented at the Fostering and Adoption Panel.	Social Worker for child(ren) and Supervising Social Worker for applicant	Plans will be reviewed when presented at the Fostering and Adoption Panel and thereafter reviewed at regular intervals appropriate to the needs. A more general review of how the plans are being utilised will take place in March 2013.	Supports required are explicitly recorded and how the Local Authority endeavours to meet these in line with the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007. General overall improvement in pre and post adoption support. Reduction in placement disruptions
Active	All children and prospective adoptive carer(s) to have adoption support plans	Adoption Support plans to be completed by the respective responsible social worker when compiling Form E and Form F assessments which will be presented at the Fostering and Adoption Panel.	Social Worker for child(ren) and Supervising Social Worker for applicant	Plans will be reviewed when presented at the Fostering and Adoption Panel and thereafter reviewed at regular intervals appropriate to the needs. A more general review of how the plans are being utilised will take place in March 2013.	Supports required are explicitly recorded and how the Local Authority endeavours to meet these in line with the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007.
Respected / Responsible	All children and prospective adoptive carer(s) to have adoption support plans	Adoption Support plans to be completed by the respective responsible social worker when compiling Form E and Form F assessments which will be presented at the Fostering and Adoption Panel.	Social Worker for child(ren) and Supervising Social Worker for applicant	Plans will be reviewed when presented at the Fostering and Adoption Panel and thereafter reviewed at regular intervals appropriate to the needs. A more general review of how the plans are being utilised will take place in March 2013.	Supports required are explicitly recorded and how the Local Authority endeavours to meet these in line with the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007.
Included	All children and prospective adoptive carer(s) to have adoption support plans	Adoption Support plans to be completed by the respective responsible social worker when compiling Form E and Form F assessments which will be presented at the Fostering and Adoption Panel.	Social Worker for child(ren) and Supervising Social Worker for applicant	Plans will be reviewed when presented at the Fostering and Adoption Panel and thereafter reviewed at regular intervals appropriate to the needs. A more general review of how the plans are being utilised will take place in March 2013.	Supports required are explicitly recorded and how the Local Authority endeavours to meet these in line with the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007.