

Permanency Planning Meeting

Information for parents and carers



This is a statutory review meeting to plan for the future of a child or young person looked after by Devon County Council.

It will:

- look at a child or young person's history and current situation
- hear an assessment of the young person's needs, and look at the best way to meet those needs in the future
- decide on a long-term plan for their future.

Why are the meetings held?

Permanency Planning Meetings are held because children and young people in care need to have plans for their long-term future.

Permanency planning should give a child or young person a greater sense of security, and, if possible, a family for life. The aim of the meeting is for them to know where they will live and who they will live with.

When is a meeting held?

The meeting will be arranged when a child or young person has been in our care for more than four months.

If there is more than one option for the child and these all need to be looked at, there may be more than one meeting.

What will happen in the meeting?

The social worker will give a brief history of the child or young person, and an assessment of their current needs.

Other people present will be asked to add more information and their views on the situation

After considering how best to meet the child or young person's long-term needs, a plan can be agreed.

What options are considered?

The first option is whether the young person can safely return home to their birth parents or previous carers.

If this is not possible we will look at:

- living with friends or relatives
- living with a foster family
- living in residential care
- living independently
- adoption.

Who will be at the meeting?

The child or young person will be invited, along with people who know them, including:

- you and anyone else with parental responsibility
- your solicitor (if necessary)
- the child's current carers
- any relative with a legitimate interest in the child's future.
- the child's social worker and practice supervisor
- health and education professionals
- Devon County Council's solicitor (only where necessary)
- the child or young person's guardian (if one has been appointed)
- an advocate for the child or young person
- anyone else with the chairperson's agreement.

What is an advocate?

An advocate is an independent person who makes sure that the meeting hears the wishes and feelings of the child or young person.

The advocate visits the young person to discuss the meeting with them, and helps the young person to express their views at the meeting, or reads out a statement written by them.

Where will the meeting be held?

We will try to have the meeting at a local social care services office, a hospital, health centre or similar building.

How long will the meeting last?

The meeting should last a maximum of one and a half hours, but it may be longer if more than one child or young person in the family is being discussed.

What role do we have in the meeting?

You are essential to the meeting and are encouraged to join in discussions and decisions.

If you feel unable to express your views you can:

- bring a supporter to help you
- put your views in writing
- ask to speak to the chairperson before the meeting.

Who chairs the meeting?

The meeting is chaired by a **Permanency Planning Officer**. This person is part of Children and Young People's Services and is not part of the planning process for the child or young person.

How will the meeting be recorded?

someone will take minutes of the meeting and write up a report. Afterwards a copy of this report will be sent to everyone who was invited to the meeting.

What happens if I disagree with the plan that is made?

It is important that you agree with the plan. The chairperson of the meeting will try to make sure that your views are heard and that any plan has your full support.

If your child is currently part of legal proceedings and we make a plan at the Permanency Planning Meeting that you disagree with, you will be able to put your reasons for this to the court at the Care Order hearing.