

## PRACTICE GUIDANCE NOTE

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Adoption, Care Proceedings and SGO Process</b>
<b>Who is it for?</b> i.e. which team/s, service/s and/or department?	CSC teams and TACT
<b>When is it in effect from?</b>	January 217 - update June 2017 - update June 2018
<b>What is it in response to?</b>	Lack of clarity around permanency planning
<b>What is its purpose?</b> i.e. to provide guidance to staff to promote good practice etc?	Achieving permanency for children in care in a timely manner
<b>What does it amend/or replace?</b> i.e. legislation, guidance, internal policy/ procedure etc?	In addition to care planning guidance.
<b>Practice Guidance Note</b>	
<p><b>Family Group Conference</b> - The child's social worker makes the referral to the family group conference (FGC) coordinator via <a href="mailto:tactpeterboroughreferrals@peterborough.gov.uk">tactpeterboroughreferrals@peterborough.gov.uk</a> when either the following apply.</p> <p>By the 3rd Child  Protection Conference          When a Legal Planning Meeting has been held and felt appropriate          In any case of PLO being started          When Care Proceedings are or have been initiated</p> <p>The conference will bring together members of the child's family and friends' network to make decisions and draw up a plan when a child is at risk of going into care. The FGC aims to identify alternative carers for the child in the event that they cannot remain with their parents. The kinship group is asked to consider which of the alternative carers is most suitable. This may be as special guardians (SG) or temporary foster carers (Regulation 24) or a Child Arrangement Order (CAO) or even adoption.</p> <p>Following the meeting TACT will allocate a fostering social worker to undertake a joint visit with the child's social worker.</p>	

A **Permanency Planning Meeting** is held to consider the permanency options when a child is at risk of going into care, or is in care, and there is potential that they cannot remain with their parents. It should take place within 2 weeks of a LPM, or 72 hours of an EPO or Police Protection. The child's social worker requests a PPM through SCMT secretariat. This will be chaired by a Group Manager and is attended by the child's social worker, their team manager and a children in care team manager, Permanency lead CSC, TACT manager.

### **ADOPTION**

If adoption is one of the permanency options the following process should be carried out.

The **CSW** will need to contact both the Permanency lead CSC and TACT to arrange for a 'Should be placed for adoption' (SBPA) decision to be considered by the agency. The agency decision maker (ADM) will require full information to assist them in making the decision: the CPR; copies of specialist assessment reports; assessments on parents and other family members and adoption medicals. The Permanency Lead CSC will identify a date for paperwork completion taking into account court timescales.

The CSW requests an adoption medical through the LAC health service. The pack of CoramBAAF medical forms can be gained from CS admin team. Once a child has an ICO the LA can consent for the medical to take place if the parent disagrees, however it is beneficial for all medical forms to be completed in order that a child's current and future needs can be incorporated into the medical adviser's summary. Parents will need to consent to information being shared about their own health. If a child is placed with parents whilst in care proceedings, and parents do not agree to the child undertaking an adoption medical, the court will need to be asked to facilitate.

The CSW refers the birth parents to the independent birth family counselling service, to give them an opportunity to discuss and seek support for the emotional impact of the adoption plan. The service is operated by Adoptionplus. Contact them on 01908 218251.

The Permanency Lead CSC will co-produce the CPR with the CSW. It is important that the SW's consider together the child's background, any additional health, educational, emotional and development needs, their contact plans and support needs. This will assist with finding the most suitable family for the child. There is an aid memoir to assist. Please refer to the Permanency lead CSC.

TACT will allocate a family finder. The family finder will meet with the CSW and Permanency Lead CSC to complete a matching matrix and profile to assist in finding the most suitable family for the child. They will be able to advise on the likelihood of finding a family and around areas such as contact and adoption support. If the child requires interagency family finding they will complete the referral to Adoption match and Link maker and if required Adoption Activity days and exchange Days. \*For interagency links the FF will assist the SW and the adopters' SW to progress the match, including arranging a Life Appreciation Day and / or meetings and with paperwork to consider the match at adoption panel. They will write the adoption support plan in the APR. They will also arrange and chair the adoption planning meeting, draw up the plan of introductions with all parties and arrange for the payment of any expenses.

For TACT matches the TACT SW will undertake the tasks as above from \* and will also complete the adopters' sections of the APR.

### **Connected Carers**

If there are connected carers to be considered for the child, the following process should be followed:

### **Viability assessments**

The child's social worker (CSW) and a TACT SW visit the proposed carer, identified by the FGC. The CSW considers the suitability of the potential carers. The TACT SW will give advice to the carer about the roles and responsibilities of special guardians and foster carers. They will also outline the assessment process and the duties of the local authority / TACT, particularly in relation to support services. This is to ensure that the potential carer is able to make a fully informed decision.

The child's social worker completes the viability assessment and sends to TACT

### **Regulation 24 assessment**

Regulations 24 and 25 of the 2010 Regulations set out arrangements for the temporary approval of a connected person as a foster carer to allow an immediate placement for a child, to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. Once an application is received statutory checks are completed by TACT. The CSW is required to visit the child weekly until the first review. TACT will assess the connected person and also fulfil the supervising social worker duties to support them. This assessment is completed within 16 weeks jointly by the CSW and TACT. TACT books the fostering panel which considers the suitability of the foster carers and makes a recommendation to the TACT agency decision maker.

**Special Guardianship assessment**

SG assessment timescales are usually court ordered with a maximum of 12 weeks for completion. The child may or may not be living with the connected person (under Regulation 24). On receiving an application form from the potential carers, statutory checks are completed by TACT. Form C is completed as follows: CSW sections A and B; TACT sections C, D and E. TACT also completes the SG support plan. The CSW and TACT SW need to communicate throughout the assessment about its progress and any other assessments concerning the child's plan. A mid-way review is advisable for this purpose and if information comes to light which impacts on the assessment that may impact on the recommendation. TACT will collate the report which is required to be signed off by the Head of Service TACT and CSC Family Safeguarding. The report is to be sent to the legal team a minimum of 3 days before the report is due to be filed.

**Name of person/s  
issuing this practice  
note:**

Richard Powell  
 Head of Service Assessment & Family  
 Safeguarding

**Date issued:**

1.6.18