



To: **Children and Young People Thematic Board**

On: **17 November 2015**

Report by:  
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Children's Services

## **Permanence and Care Excellence (PaCE)**

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The Permanence and Care Excellence (PaCE) programme launched in Renfrewshire in March 2014. Permanence and Care Excellence is a whole systems approach to improving performance in relation to permanence planning for looked after children.
- 1.2 PACE uses the Scottish Government definition of permanence as:  
*... providing children with a stable, secure, nurturing home and relationship, where possible within a family setting, that continues into adulthood.*
- 1.3 The programme employs Quality Improvement methodology to the area of permanence practice, with the aim of improving outcomes for children locally.
- 1.4 Significant progress has been made with changes to the local permanence system in order to improve outcomes for children and their families, and there is a high level of motivation and energy from staff supporting the programme to sustain this level of positive change.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Children and Young People Thematic Board is asked to note the progress of the PaCE programme in Renfrewshire.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 In 2011, the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration published national research which suggested that, across Scotland, children were experiencing various sources of drift and delay in their journey to permanence. The PACE programme represents part of the Scottish Government and CELCIS's response to evidence which suggests that looked after children and young people in Scotland experience lengthy periods of uncertainty and insecurity which impact negatively on their life

experiences and outcomes. It is recognised that the best outcomes for children are achieved when decisions are made about accommodated children returning home or requiring permanence at the earliest possible stage in their care journey.

- 3.2 Renfrewshire was chosen to be one of the two inaugural sites for the PaCE programme; the other was Aberdeen City. The PaCE programme is now being rolled out nationally. Prior to being selected as a pilot site for PaCE, Renfrewshire had introduced new approaches to reduce drift in permanency planning and the overall performance had improved with a significant increase in Adoption and Permanence work being achieved. Of particular note are the statistics in relation to Adoption for the past 5 year.

Year	Number of Children
2014/15	24
2013/14	17
2012/13	11
2011/12	18
2010/11	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>

- 3.3 Notwithstanding our improved performance, we were keen to get involved with the PaCE programme given it is a whole systems approach to improving performance in relation to permanence planning for looked after children A 'whole system' approach ensures the 'blocks' within the system are identified early and steps taken to resolve this by all partners. The programme brings together practitioners from the local authority (social work, education and legal team), health, CHS and SCRA on a regular basis to followed a structured approach to achieve whole-system improvement in permanence outcomes for looked after children in Renfrewshire.
- 3.4 PaCE employs Quality Improvement methodology (also used in the Early Years Collaborative initiative) to improve local permanence systems and practice by bringing together all partners to agree specific improvement aims, based on workers' understanding of local challenges in delivering the best outcomes for children. The analysis of what is causing drift and delay for children is underpinned by looking at the journey of children through the system (through tracking of key permanence milestones), which provides evidence of where blockages occur and, in time, an indication of whether the changes being tested are leading to improvements for children.
- 3.5 Champions' meetings take place on a six weekly basis and the five sub-groups (permanence milestones, assessment, legal processes, health and education), made up of senior managers, team managers and frontline practitioners, meet on a three weekly basis to review their progress.
- 3.6 The key aim of the Renfrewshire PACE programme is to make 95% of decisions on a child's destination within six months of the child being accommodated by 31 December 2015. A second aim has been developed to reduce the timescale for completion of permanence reports, and it is anticipated that a third aim will be developed to improve the process from the point of the Fostering and Adoption panel to the child's placement being legally secured.

- 3.7 The PACE programme has required a significant commitment of time from local authority staff and colleagues in partner organisations to develop and test changes, as well as from other staff members (including Planning and Performance team) who have worked with the delivery team to assist in the collation of data and delivery of the 'measurement for improvement' plans.

To date, the following changes have been tested:

- Use of templates for recording and evidencing recommendations in reports being prepared for Children's Hearings
- Awareness raising sessions for Panel Members and Reporters on contact, child development and attachments, and decision-making
- Introduction of permanence planning meetings
- Referral of children to SCRA on, or within a few days of, the date of accommodation
- Tracking process for Permanence Order reports
- Tracking of key permanence milestones
- Involvement of health colleagues in the permanence assessment
- Integration of parenting assessment in IA

- 3.8 Feedback about the early referral of children to SCRA around the date of accommodation was overwhelmingly positive, and led to the decision to implement this for children aged three and under. It is anticipated that more of the changes being tested will be implemented (and incorporated in the Revised Looked After Children procedures) if there is evidence that these changes are leading to improvements for children.

The following tests of change are due to commence in the next couple of weeks:

- Involvement of education colleagues in the permanence assessment
- Allocation of the same Health Visitor to foster carers and birth mothers to provide continuity of care to babies, regardless of their address

## **4. Resources**

- 4.1 In addition to the staff time committed to resourcing the programme of champions' and sub-group meetings, resource has been provided by the delivery team from Celcis and the Scottish Government although it is anticipated that this will be scaled down due to the national roll out of the programme.

## **5. Prevention**

- 5.1 The improvement plan framework allows the Children and Young People Board to plan resources and direct investment towards prevention and early intervention.

## **6. Community Involvement/Engagement**

- 6.1 The improvement plan has been developed through the Children and Young People Board and sub groups whereby the third sector is widely represented.