

DATE: September 2020

TITLE: PACE and Permanence

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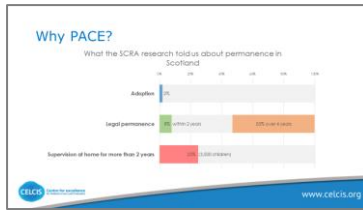
You're watching a webinar about the PACE programme from the delivery team in CELCIS at the University of Strathclyde. PACE is a quality improvement programme aiming to reduce drift and delay in permanence planning for looked after children. These webinars were recorded in the spring of 2020, so please be aware that key changes in legislation, guidance and practice may have occurred since this time.



Hello, everyone. My name is Linda Davidson and I'm one of the Permanence consultants at CELCIS. For this webinar, I'm going to provide an introduction to the PACE programme and to our understanding of permanence.



PACE is fundamentally about children; our most vulnerable children, those who are looked after at home or away from home as a result of risk, neglect or harm within the relationships that should have kept them safe. Our aim in PACE has been to work locally, alongside colleagues across the sector to ensure that every looked after child is provided with a safe, settled and stable place to live as quickly as possible, and to use improvement methodology to support change, and to share that learning across Scotland.



Why PACE?

PACE stands for Permanence and Care Excellence. The programme came about following SCRA research that was undertaken in 2011 and 2015. SCRA looked at outcomes for over 300 looked after children, and what they found was that there was significant drift and delay; with most children, on average, taking 2.4 years from becoming looked after to achieving legal permanence.

We know the long term harm of trauma, drift and delay for children, so the [SCRA research](#) created some urgency and a need for change. What the SCRA research told us about permanence in Scotland was that, at that time in 2015, only 2% of children who became looked after away from home were adopted.

Only 8% of looked after and accommodated children achieved legal permanence within two years, and for a staggering 53% it had taken more than four years. For those children subject to compulsory supervision orders at home - 25% of those children, one in four, remained on an order for two years or more.

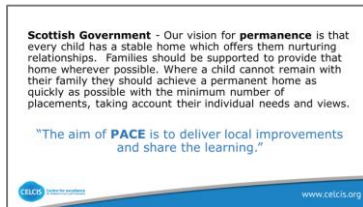


So what does this mean for children?

In 2015, [Getting it Right for Looked After Children and Young People](#) was published by the Scottish Government. The document acknowledges that most of our looked after children have experienced disruption or trauma in early life, and many have experienced adverse childhood experiences. It made a commitment that once children became looked after, we needed to work more productively to ensure that the whole system supported children to achieve the safety, security and stability of permanence as early as possible.

The research highlighted the impact of drift and delay on children; the poor health, physical and emotional outcomes, poorer educational/ employment outcomes.

At the heart of the PACE programme was the importance of relationships for looked after children and ensuring the quality and stability of those relationships.



The Scottish Government's vision for permanence is that every child has a stable home which will offer them nurturing relationships, and that family should be supported to provide that home wherever possible. However, when a child cannot remain with their family, they should achieve a permanent home as quickly as possible, with the minimum number of placements, taking into account their individual needs and views.

So the aim of the PACE programme was to deliver that improvement locally and to share the learning nationally.



There are four routes to permanence for children.

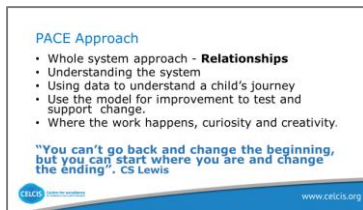
The first is that a child can return to or remain safely at home with parents.

The second is that a child is looked after within their extended family or a relationship with a friend; with a kinship care order.

The third route is a permanence order, where the local authority takes some - if not all - responsibility for the care of child or young person.

The fourth route is adoption.

Whilst this slide represents legal permanence, it's important to remember that for a child, emotional permanence is probably the most important aspect of all and can be achieved for many children before legal permanence is achieved.



So the PACE approach is a 'whole system' approach. It takes the whole system working together to improve outcomes for children. PACE has been about bringing the whole system of partners across children's services together. Crucially - engaging with Children's Hearings, with SCRA, with social work, with health, with education to help develop an understanding of each other's roles in the system, to take a shared responsibility for outcomes for children, and to have a shared understanding of the impact of drift and delay for the local children.

A critical first point, is understanding the system. I'll explain in a moment that that's not always easy. But one of the things we've been clear about in PACE is identifying that for most children, there are some key milestones to achieving legal permanence.

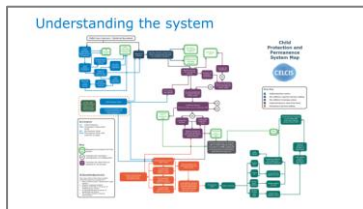
The Model for Improvement is our means of testing and supporting change. In supporting local authorities to understand their system, but also to understand what's getting in the way of making progress and to be considering - with great creativity at times - what improvements might result in better outcomes and testing those improvements with the support of the whole system.

Analysing local data is also crucial; so understanding local data, understanding what that means for local children (How many children are looked after in each area? Where are those children in terms of placement? How many placement moves have they had? The ages and stages of each child?), and generally, what does it tell us - as a group - about looked after children, including where appropriate, exploring each individual child's journey? The Model for Improvement allows us to then test change, once we have the data to understand what might be required in terms of improvement.

PACE has to be where the work happens. It's about developing curiosity about the system and creativity - "what can we do differently?" The Scottish Government - through PACE - are giving local authorities permission to think creatively and to be curious about children's journeys.

The Model for Improvement then allows us to work with local areas to consider where they are, where they want to be in the future and to try and put in place a model of how to get there and how to measure improvement.

PACE is about where the work happens. We can't go back and change the outcomes for our looked after children where drift and delay has already occurred, but we start where we are and change the ending.



This is our system.

This slide represents the children and families, legal and child protection system in Scotland. So if this is the route that children take to permanence - perhaps through child protection system, perhaps through the hearing system, the legal system and social work responsibilities - it's not easy. We do work in a very complex system in Scotland, and part of the PACE programme has been to help all agencies involved develop an understanding of the system, and where necessary to challenge whether each step in the system is required.



It's one thing to understand the system, and to have data that allows us to explore the local system, but part of PACE is also about connecting with a child's lived experience; encouraging people in local authorities and across all agencies to put themselves in the child's shoes, and understand the importance of a child's time frame.

Time is so important for looked after children. One of the ways we've supported areas to do this is with the use of timelines - visual timelines - and we have two webinars: one on how a timeline can be used and another on how to make a timeline on our website. We've also encouraged local authorities to use case examples to tell a child's story, because we want all those with a responsibility for children to understand child development, to understand the importance of their age and stage of development, and to support an understanding of the lifelong impact of adverse childhood experiences, trauma, neglect, unmet need and delay on the lifelong health and wellbeing of looked after children.



So we see PACE as an opportunity. It's an opportunity to learn, to understand what we mean by permanence, to learn from each other within each area, from the data that's gathered, from other PACE areas, crucially from parents and children themselves.

We've worked with 25 local authorities to date, and many of the improvements that they've tried and tested, are in a [Tried and Tested booklet](#) on our website.

PACE has been about understanding; it's about understanding a child's journey, as well as each other's roles. It's about using research and improvement methodology to explore and constantly question whether how we do things, is the best way to do things.

To challenge ourselves, to aim high, but perhaps start slow. To make small changes that might make a difference, and to question the causes of delay and drift locally, as well as nationally, and suggest improvements.

We've encouraged areas to be creative, and to consider new ideas to support change and that's about leadership from the frontline, right through to senior management.

Sharing has been crucial for each and every one of the PACE areas - no area can work in isolation - and examples of best practice and examples of good tests of change have been shared across Scotland to both influence local improvements and develop national change.

Ultimately, we want to improve outcomes for looked after children and to get it right for Scotland's look after children.

Thank you for listening. If you have any questions, you can go to the CELCIS website.

Thank you

Other resources:

CELCIS Knowledge Bank:
<https://www.celcis.org/knowledge-bank/>

Independent Care Review and The Promise:

<https://www.carereview.scot/>

SCRA Research pages:

https://www.scra.gov.uk/resources_articles_category/research/

Getting it Right for Looked After Children and Young People Strategy:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/getting-right-looked-children-young-people-strategy/>

Child Protection and Permanence Map and guidance:

<https://www.celcis.org/knowledge-bank/search-bank/child-protection-and-permanence-system-map/>

Tried & Tested (2018):

https://www.celcis.org/files/2915/4150/5998/CELCIS_Tried_and_Testet_2018_PACE.pdf