



## Child Protection & Permanence System Map: User Guide

### **What's is the permanence system map?**

The Child Protection & Permanence System Map ('the map') is a chart showing the possible paths a child might take when they become involved with statutory care services (i.e. social work). The map shows the essential steps which flow from decisions at each point, as well as other possible steps (e.g. appeals) within each of the five systems.

The map is an attempt to make the whole system, and the possible paths through it, visible as simply and intuitively as possible. Unfortunately, each decision making process is complex, and together they can seem overwhelming. The map provides a method for anyone involved in the system to see what possible outcomes are at any stage of the process, as well as seeing where they sit in the overall system.

### **How is it to be used?**

The map is to be used however people want to. Possible paths through the system are complicated – there is no escaping this – but the purpose of the map is to both provide an overview of the entire process for those who are not familiar with it at all, as well to provide a more detailed view of the possible outcomes and future options at any given point in the system.

Professionals or families might use it to look at the possible next steps following a referral, to see what outcomes are possible from a children's hearing, or to see what steps need to be taken to secure legal permanence for a child in a kinship placement. Having a quick reference point should help everybody build their understanding of how the system works, and by extension, how they can act to be a positive influence within it.

### **Who is it for?**

The map is relevant to social workers and other agency offices, as a quick reference tool.

These groups will be able to use the current map to help visualise the child's journey, as well as seeing the options available.

### **How would it let people/professionals improve their practice?**

Providing an overview of the whole system in one place will help professionals and others understand the journeys that children have through the care system. In particular, the 'exit points' from the system are clearly highlighted.

The care system can sometimes seem endless, and it is important that everybody focuses on making sure that children no longer need to be looked after.

The map contains information that professionals and families could look up elsewhere, but providing it in this format makes it easier to understand and saves time and effort. Professionals can better use that time working with children and families, while the families themselves might not know where else to look. Also, showing the whole system together can help both professionals and families understand how different processes link together, and when a child might be referred to, for example, the reporter.

### **What does this mean for improvement of outcomes for children?**

The map will be successful if it helps reduce misunderstandings or confusion between and within families, social workers and other professionals. If there is a shared understanding of the system and processes, it means that outcomes are less likely to be surprising, and all parties can concentrate on improving the wellbeing and outcomes for the children concerned. This may lead to smoother roads to travel in the future. Happy map reading!