Getting ready for PACE

Key information for local areas introducing the Permanence and Care Excellence programme

Permanence Team, CELCIS

January 2017

Improving care experiences

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all PACE participants for your ongoing commitment to improving outcomes for Scotland's looked after children. We look forward to working with the rest of our partners in Scotland to improve national permanence outcomes.

Introduction

In partnership with the Scottish Government and 10 local areas, we are delivering the PACE programme: an innovative and rigorous whole-systems approach to improving permanence for looked after children that works with all local agencies involved in improving the wellbeing of these children.

We are aware that all local areas across Scotland have a commitment to improving permanence for all looked after children living in their area. To support this commitment, the PACE programme is expanding to work in all 32 local areas. We are keen to ensure that the necessary preparation has been done to allow the PACE programme to be as successful as it can possibly be, and to ensure that it achieves the outcomes to which we all aspire for looked after children.

Our experience of supporting the delivery of the PACE programme has shaped this pack to ensure that new areas understand the start-up phase of the programme, the role of the PACE delivery team, and the responsibilities of the local PACE lead. The purpose of this pack is to provide useful information to support new PACE partners in preparing to take part. This information is based on the feedback from PACE participants, our continuous learning in delivering the programme, and ongoing evaluation.

We encourage all of our partners to carefully consider the contents of this pack to inform their decision about their area's readiness to participate in the PACE programme.

Policy context for PACE

The Scottish Government has explicitly stated that achieving permanence for children is taking too long. Achieving 'early permanence' for looked after children is therefore a key priority for the Scottish Government as a prolonged period of compulsory measures of care is disruptive for most children (Scottish Government, 2015).

Permanence is defined by the Scottish Government as 'providing children with a stable, secure, nurturing relationship and home, where possible within a family setting that continues into adulthood.' There are four main routes to permanence:

1 Returning or remaining at home with or after support, where family functioning has stabilised and the parent(s) can provide a safe, sustainable home which supports the wellbeing of the child. This may require on-going support for the family.

2   Permanence through a permanence order. This can be in kinship care, foster care or residential care.

3   A section 11(1)/ kinship care order (for parental responsibilities and rights, residence or guardianship) under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

4   Adoption, where the child has the potential to become a full member of another family. (Adapted from Scottish Government, 2015, p.18-19)

The Scottish Government (2011a) is clear that the initial focus in permanence planning should be on a child remaining with, or returning to, their birth family, and only if that option is not appropriate, for a kinship carer to be identified from the child's wider network. It is only in circumstances where no potential kinship carer can be identified that other options should be explored, though the Government also recommends that a process of parallel planning is employed.

Recent Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA) research assessed and tracked 200 children's journeys to permanence and found that, for the vast number of children, it took more than two years from their first contact with services to an Order being lodged in court (SCRA, 2015). SCRA reported that it was the initial stages of permanence planning that took the longest.

The Scottish Government recommends that a plan should be in place for children to return home or to another permanent placement six months after the date of accommodation (Scottish Government, 2011b). Our work so far suggests that many areas are finding it difficult to meet this target timescale. Some areas have chosen to try out new ways of working during this part of the process to try and address some of the sources of drift and delay.

The evidence and policy context for our programme is set out in *Permanence and Care Excellence: Background, Approach and Evidence* (CELCIS, 2016), and in the Scottish Government and SCRA documents referred to above.

Background on PACE

Why PACE?

Nationally, we are aware that all of our multi-agency partners recognise that improving permanence for looked after children is a key priority, and we recognise that several areas have embarked on their own journey of improvement. This is a really positive step forward and we have found that this is an excellent grounding for introducing the PACE programme. The added value of the programme is to bring a framework for making improvements to the permanence process, which ensures that the changes being made have a direct, positive impact on children's journeys.

Why the whole-system?

We recognise that permanence is an inherently complex process and that each child's journey and experience can be different. Our aim is to bring all partners who have a responsibility for achieving permanence for looked after children together to improve the process for all children. It is important that all agencies with a responsibility for achieving permanence for children participate in the programme, hence why we emphasise that this is, and requires to be, a whole-system approach.
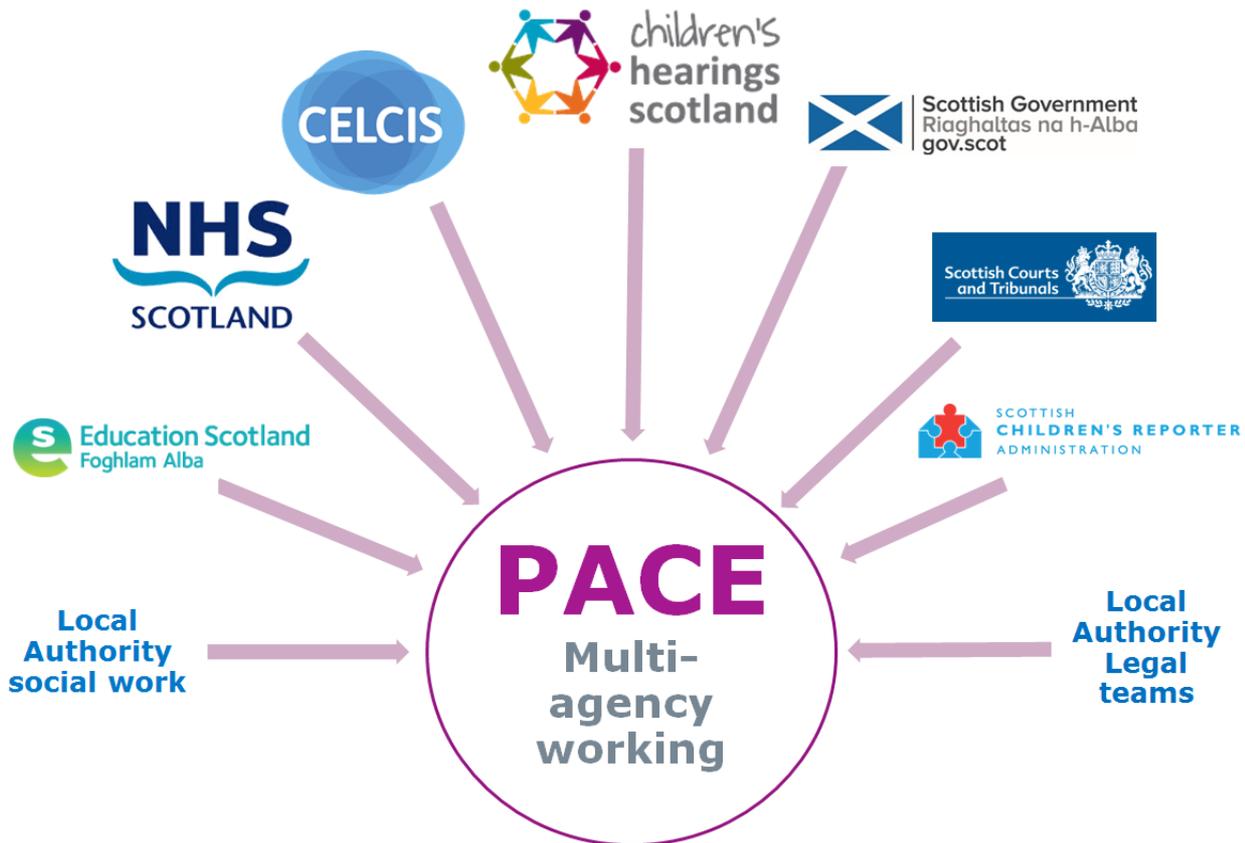
The main agencies involved in PACE are local authority social work and legal teams, education, health, Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS), Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA) and the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service. There may also be other partners who are important to involve in your area, for example, third sector organisations. The key element is that **all** partners who are involved in supporting children to achieve permanence in your area participate in PACE, and that everyone, across the whole-system, recognises the urgent priority to achieve early permanence for children. As a Looked After Children's Nurse in the programme acknowledged:

> *… when you're…thinking about GIRFEC principles, and putting children at the centre of things. If we weren't thinking about PACE, then I don't know that we would be doing these children a justice. Because I think we've got a lot of damaged children out there because they've been moved placements to placements to*

placements, and they haven't had permanence quickly enough, and I think we're doing them a massive disservice.

What is the PACE programme aiming to achieve?

The aim of the PACE programme is to apply improvement methodology to identify and address areas of drift and delay in the permanence process, using a whole-system approach. To achieve this, PACE provides intensive support and improvement coaching to multi-agency partners to identify areas for improvement, and then to test changes to the local system. This process allows areas to build up a picture of what works, before implementing any changes in their system. This approach has worked well in several areas of Scotland and has been shown to have had a positive impact on children through improving the rigour and speed of permanence decisions, and by ensuring that children are in permanent destinations most suited to their needs.

In areas which have participated in the PACE programme so far, there is evidence of positive change for children. For example, our partners in Aberdeenshire have achieved their aim to ensure that all children under the age of 12 have a permanence plan in place within 9 months of the date of accommodation, which represents a 25% decrease in the time it was taking to reach the point of a permanence plan in that area. In Renfrewshire, the time taken to reach a permanence decision for children under 3 reduced by almost 50% through testing and implementing early referral of children to the reporter at the point of accommodation.

Testimonies from a number of service managers working in the areas also highlight that the PACE approach has reduced the level of drift in the process for achieving permanence for looked after children:

> *… we set ourselves one of our aims was around 90% and we're up to 60, whereas we probably started…around 30%, and it's moving, and I think that's really positive. And I know we wouldn't have done that by ourselves.*

> *… our first aim was that 95% of decisions would be made within 6 months, so that's what we're doing just now, is taking stock of… what percentage we actually achieved of that stretch aim. But there's no doubt that based on the data we are reducing timescales.*

> *There has been a reduction in time taken for children to come to our permanence panel. There has been a reduction in the time taken for children to be placed in their final placement.*

You can read, listen and watch many of the PACE partners who have shared their experience about the difference PACE has made in their local area: www.celcis.org/permanence2016.

The PACE Approach

How will the PACE programme achieve its aim to improve permanence?

The PACE programme follows the improvement approach being promoted by the Scottish Government across all of Scotland's public services (Scottish Government, 2013). The 3-step approach is designed to achieve sustainable, transformational change by:

- Agreeing a vision and an aim to work towards.
- Creating the conditions for improvement through leadership and through the empowerment and engagement of all staff.
- Testing changes on a small scale to learn what works, before making any decisions about changing current processes and/or implementing changes to current practice.

The PACE programme uses the Model for Improvement (Langley et al., 2009) as a framework for introducing, measuring and sustaining improvement in permanence. This approach has been shown to be effective specifically in the area of permanence, and fits with the Scottish Government's wider strategy for public service reform (Scottish Government, 2013).

The PACE approach guides teams to understand how their permanence system is currently working to support children to achieve permanence. This involves understanding each stage in a child's journey towards permanence, from a multi-agency perspective, and tracking how long each stage is taking. This in-depth understanding of the local permanence process is used to identify and prioritise the areas which need further improvement. This approach has been successful in other areas and has helped teams to focus their attention on the areas which are causing drift and delay for children. As one service manager described improvement methodology:

> It's actually helped us to… rather than just use gut instinct to tell us where the problems actually are, to begin to use some of the data to tell us where some of the challenges are, and where we need to make further improvements.

Changes to permanence processes are tested on a small scale initially and then scaled up if they are shown to be effective. Changes are only implemented when there is evidence to show that they are effective. For example, one area developed and tested the

procedure for referring a child to the Reporter at an earlier stage in the process, as described by the local Social Work Service Manager:

> '…the first thing that we considered doing a test of change around about was early referral to the reporter. And that's one of the tests of change that we have scaled up a couple of times now, so we have went from a position of one or two very young children being referred as early as possible to the Reporter, to actually scaling that up to all children from that team being referred to the Reporter… and we've scaled it up again to say all under one's will be subject of early referral to the Reporter.'
>
> OK, and has this been scaled up I presume because there's been positive outcomes? (Interviewer)
>
> 'Yeah, because it's very clear that there's been a significant shortening of the timescales that it's taking to get children onto legal orders.'

Feedback received from the areas we have worked in so far suggests that improvement methodology is an effective approach for improving permanence practice, and that PACE participants have valued the support of the delivery team in applying the methodology. As one service manager acknowledges:

> Yeah, I think I could have easily reviewed permanence processes, but I wouldn't have understood the improvement methodology… there was the education element of it, but there's also been the kind of support element of it as well that has been absolutely critical.

The PACE delivery team

Who is responsible for delivering the PACE programme and what is their role?

The delivery team is made up of the Scottish Government PACE Improvement Advisor, a CELCIS Permanence Consultant and CELCIS Data Analyst. The team support local staff across the whole-system to develop their aim, test changes to the permanence process and collect data to measure the impact of the changes they are making. The data are also important in order to track progress towards the aim set by the local area.

The support focuses on providing learning, support and coaching in the use of improvement methodology and a range of tools, to help practitioners to understand how local processes and practice shape the journey of each child. As the PACE programme

progresses, the aim is to build improvement capacity within the local multi-agency community to ensure that the impact of the programme is sustained over the long term (Scottish Government, 2013).
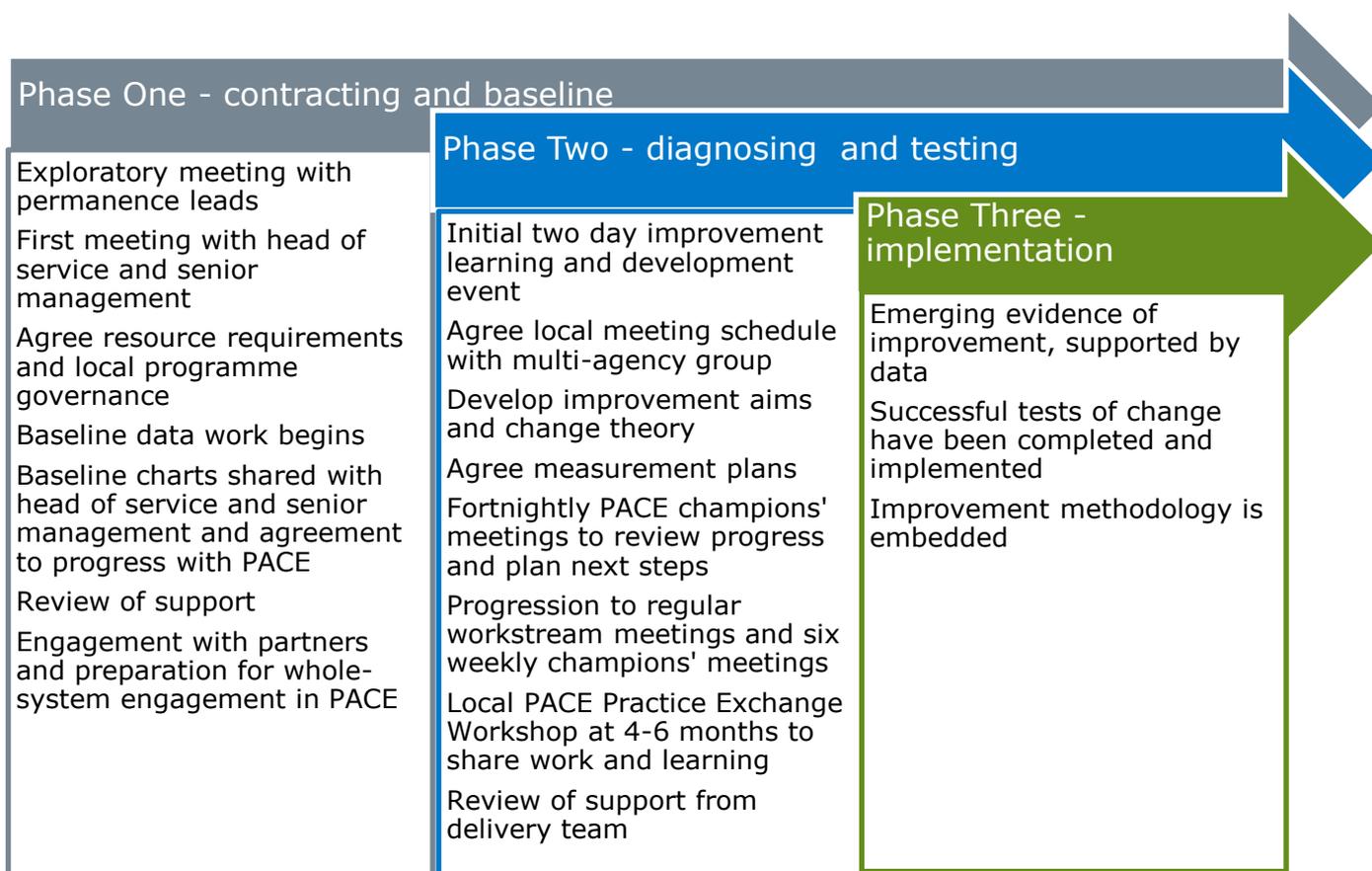
Support provided by the PACE delivery team

What level of support is offered to local areas?

The PACE programme offers initial support over three phases:

- Phase 1 – contracting and baselining
- Phase 2 – diagnosing and testing
- Phase 3 – implementation

Figure 1 Outline of PACE phases

Phase One - contracting and baseline

| Exploratory meeting with permanence leads |
| First meeting with head of service and senior management |
| Agree resource requirements and local programme governance |
| Baseline data work begins |
| Baseline charts shared with head of service and senior management and agreement to progress with PACE |
| Review of support |
| Engagement with partners and preparation for whole-system engagement in PACE |

Phase Two - diagnosing and testing

| Initial two day improvement learning and development event |
| Agree local meeting schedule with multi-agency group |
| Develop improvement aims and change theory |
| Agree measurement plans |
| Fortnightly PACE champions' meetings to review progress and plan next steps |
| Progression to regular workstream meetings and six weekly champions' meetings |
| Local PACE Practice Exchange Workshop at 4-6 months to share work and learning |
| Review of support from delivery team |

Phase Three - implementation

| Emerging evidence of improvement, supported by data |
| Successful tests of change have been completed and implemented |
| Improvement methodology is embedded |

The nature of the support provided by the PACE delivery team is agreed and shaped with each area to meet local needs. The support is co-ordinated by the PACE delivery team, in conjunction with the local area lead, and will comprise a range of the following:

Phase one

- Assistance to set up local PACE governance arrangements and reporting.

Improving care experiences

- Initial meetings with members of the PACE delivery team to engage all partners in PACE work and planning.
- Direct support from the Data Analyst, which will include support to understand and analyse data and, where required, to specify and support the data collection process.

Phase two

- An initial two days of improvement training for the PACE multi-agency group, followed by a measurement workshop to agree data requirements, and further local improvement sessions for smaller staff teams.
- Regular local support over the first 3 to 6 months for sub-group work and six weekly champions' meetings.
- In addition to face-to-face support, telephone, email and video conferencing support will be available as required.
- Ongoing data and measurement support.
- Additional learning events will be arranged to allow multi-agency participants to share learning.
- Assistance to maintain engagement with stakeholders across the whole-system, as required.

Phase three

- Reduced frequency of face-to-face support, as agreed.
- Continued telephone, email, video conferencing support, as required.
- A regular, but less frequent, schedule of champions' meetings.

Requirements for PACE

What do you need to do to be ready for PACE?

Given the urgency to ensure timely permanence for all children in Scotland, local areas will naturally feel keen to take part. As the PACE delivery team is relatively small, it is important to ensure that areas are ready to start the programme, and therefore there are a few requirements which need to be met before PACE can start.

In order to fully benefit from participating in PACE and achieve meaningful improvement for looked after children, the local area lead will be required to:

1 Demonstrate that they have made some progress in improving their permanence process, or in identifying priority areas for improvement.
2 Provide appropriate leadership and support for the PACE programme.
3 Identify a local PACE project manager, who will be responsible for securing support from partners across the whole-system, including from social work, health, education,

SCRA, CHS, relevant voluntary sector organisations, and the courts (with support from the PACE delivery team as required).

4 Identify champions who will embrace improvement methods as a way of working and who will be happy to share learning nationally.

5 Identify dedicated resource to co-ordinate PACE activity locally (we recommend a 0.5FTE post), which will involve organising meetings, producing notes of meetings and data collection.

6 Set up a local champions' group, with representation from all agencies.

7 Meet with the local improvement team – at a frequency to be agreed – to co-ordinate, manage, report on, and support the local testing.

8 Contribute to the future national roll out of PACE by occasionally contributing to learning sessions within your 'cluster' areas (which are geographically close, and which share court jurisdiction and/ or health boards), or by facilitating short visits from programme participants and staff working in other areas.

9 Share data on aims and tests of change to support local improvement and national learning.

The Memorandum of Understanding in appendix 1 should be completed by the local area lead, and submitted to Aileen Nicol, Permanence Team Lead: aileen.nicol@strath.ac.uk.

How will the programme be scaled up in our area?

The use of improvement methodology will be scaled up in a managed way that builds local capacity. Through attending regular champions' meetings, many participants will develop improvement skills, which can then be applied to other areas of work. As one service manager stated:

> I've found [improvement methodology] to be constructive, I think helpful, and I've found it to be one which I've used and which I've applied to other situations as well, so it's one that is easily for me understood and also applicable as well.

We would also support at least one person from each area to participate in improvement advisor training. This ensures that there is local capacity to embed improvement as a 'business as usual' activity, in accordance with the Scottish Government's strategy for achieving transformational change across all of Scotland's public services (Scottish Government, 2013).

Governance arrangements for PACE

In addition to attending the champions' meetings, the PACE delivery team will meet with senior managers in the local area to discuss progress with PACE. This forum is used to share any concerns about risks to the programme (for example, one agency not attending the champions' meetings), and to ensure that there is ongoing commitment from leaders to allow the work to take place.

Role of PACE champions

The PACE champions are those individuals who have been given permission from their line manager and senior manager to lead the PACE activities within their service.

Champions have responsibility for:

- Communicating the aims and methodology of the PACE programme.
- Co-ordinating tests of change within their service, and on a multi-agency basis.
- Identifying and supporting appropriate staff within their service to carry out tests of change.
- Maintaining an overview of the tests of change and test cycles as they occur.
- Carrying out the actions, as agreed at champions' meetings, and reporting on progress.
- Developing knowledge of improvement methodology and coaching others to develop improvement skills.
- Participating in national PACE events and sharing their learning with colleagues across Scotland.

The key role of a champion is to keep track of the tests of change and to present the information necessary to plan next steps. For example, where a change in the system seems to be improving children's permanence journeys, the champions will discuss how the test of change could be scaled up, possibly by involving another team or locality. The idea is to test the change across a number of different conditions (e.g. with different workers, and across different teams, or with different groups of children) before a decision is made on implementing any new working practices.

Purpose of champions' meetings

The purpose of the champions' meetings is to:

- Share learning, review progress and plan next steps for the PACE programme.
- Support the planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the PACE programme, both at a local and national level.
- Discuss issues arising from the PACE programme.
- Maximise opportunities for multi-agency partnership working, networking and information sharing.
- Provide a forum for developing a greater understanding of improvement methodology.

PACE readiness questionnaire

How will we assess if you are ready to start PACE?

In order to assess your area's readiness for PACE, we will discuss the following areas:

- Current strengths in permanence practice
- The areas which require improvement, and any steps taken to improve permanence processes and practice
- Availability of permanence data
- Multi-agency relationships and priorities
- Managing change
- Resolving difficulties
- Organisational goals
- Staff morale
- Commitment to the champions' role and protected time for this work
- Definition of permanence
- Significant events (e.g. restructure, structural changes etc.)
- Governance

We also expect the PACE local area lead in each area to complete the PACE readiness questionnaire in Appendix 2. Please submit this questionnaire to Aileen Nicol, Permanence Team Lead: aileen.nicol@strath.ac.uk.

Tracking progress for PACE

What are the specific data requirements for PACE?

In order to participate in the PACE programme, it is vital to produce permanence data for all children. This is important in order to measure the impact of the changes being tested on children's journeys and to check progress towards key aims. It involves collating data on key permanence milestones, for example, the date a permanence recommendation is made at a Looked After Children Review. We recognise that the need to collect permanence data is a new requirement for local authorities, following the amendment to the Scottish Government Children Looked After Survey return. Some areas which have participated in PACE have indicated that the PACE work has helped them to prepare for this additional reporting requirement. As one Senior Social Worker said:

> '…what we've done alongside CELCIS and developed ourselves… was the permanence marker spreadsheets, so we can actually measure now timescales for individual children. And that's been monitored on a monthly basis, so… I think we're, hopefully, a wee bit ahead in that respect.'

> OK. Just on those markers, do you happen to know do they fall in with the new CLAS dataset with permanence. (Interviewer)
>
> *'Yes, coming in in 2016, is that right? Yeah, we put them in now as well, so they're already there.'*

It is likely that additional information will be collected for PACE, to meet local needs. Through PACE, we are aiming to achieve sustainable improvements in permanence practice. As such, all permanence data should be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, and should in time become business as usual.

We recognise that permanence at home raises particular challenges in terms of the definition of milestones and collection of data. But it is essential that the journeys of children who are looked after at home are tracked to provide a complete picture of the experience of all children, regardless of their destination.

The Data Analyst will provide support on data collection. A measurement plan will be produced to ensure that the information collected is consistent for each child and can be used for measuring progress towards the aim.

Further guidelines on data security will be issued at the start of the PACE programme. It is important to note that no identifiable information on individual children (e.g. names, addresses, carers' details etc.) should be sent to CELCIS or the Scottish Government. The type of information likely to be shared will include age, gender, review/ meeting dates, and other information (usually dates) on key permanence milestones achieved.

Further Information

For further information on the contents of this pack or the PACE programme in general, please contact Aileen Nicol, Permanence Team Lead: aileen.nicol@strath.ac.uk.

Appendix 1: Memorandum of Understanding

PACE Memorandum of Understanding between Local Areas and Delivery Team

In my capacity as PACE Local Area Lead, I can confirm that I:

☐   Have read the information provided in the PACE readiness pack.

☐   Understand the expectations of our local authority as detailed in the section titled 'Requirements for PACE'.

☐   Will co-ordinate the whole-system engagement in PACE for our local area.

☐   Will arrange administrative support for PACE and co-ordination of all meetings, recognising that a 0.5FTE post is recommended.

☐   Will identify a PACE Local Authority Data Lead and adhere to the data requirements for PACE, which involves tracking permanence milestones for all looked after children.

☐   Will support the design of a data system for tracking key permanence milestones.

☐   Will allocate resource to the collation and review of permanence data.

☐   Will ensure the safe transfer of data to the Scottish Government and CELCIS, with any identifiable information on individual children removed.

Name   _____

Job title   _____

Local Authority   _____

Signature   _____

Date   _____

Please submit this MOU, along with the PACE readiness questionnaire to Aileen Nicol, Permanence Team Lead: aileen.nicol@strath.ac.uk.

Appendix 2: PACE Readiness Questionnaire

PACE Readiness Questions	Self-Evaluation Response
1. What do you consider to be your strengths in permanence practice?	
2. What do you consider to be the areas which require improvement in permanence practice and processes?	
3. What definition of 'permanence' is used in your area?	
4. What steps have you taken to improve permanence practice?	
5. What data do you currently have that tracks permanence milestones for looked after children? How is this gathered? How do you review this?	
6. How do different agencies and departments work together to promote good permanence practice e.g. SCRA, CHS, and courts?	
7. How do you manage change?	
8. How do you resolve difficulties?	
9. Is there a shared understanding of organisational goals? Please indicate if any recent staff surveys have been undertaken which can be shared with us.	
10. Who will be the key leader(s) in this work going forward? What is their understanding of the work? Do they have protected time to focus on PACE? Will their contribution be formally recognised in development plans and supervision sessions?	
11. What are you trying to achieve through PACE? What impact will this have on practice and outcomes for children?	
12. Are champions committed to improving permanence for children? Are they willing volunteers in the project?	
13. Are there any events on the horizon that might impact on the delivery of the PACE programme (e.g. restructure, planned structural changes etc.)?	
14. Are senior leaders of each relevant agency signed up to PACE? Will they be able to respond to challenges that might emerge (e.g. resource, resistance etc.)?	

Improving care experiences

Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms

Term	
Champions*	Individuals responsible for leading the PACE improvement work in their agency, including overseeing tests of change, assisting with the collation and interpretation of data, reporting progress, planning and attending champions' meetings***** Some areas have opted to use the term 'permanence lead' instead of 'champion'
Local area lead	Person responsible for co-ordinating whole-system engagement in the PACE programme, chairing champions' meetings, addressing barriers, liaising with the PACE delivery team to lead improvement and reporting to the Community Planning Partnership.
Whole-system	All of the agencies who have a role in progressing permanence outcomes for children, including local authority social work and legal teams, health, education, SCRA, CHS, the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service, and may also involve third sector and other organisations, depending on local models of service delivery
Permanence	Achieving a stable and legally secure permanent home for children, whether they are remaining with, or returning to, their birth parents; or in a kinship, fostering or residential placement, which is secured by a kinship, permanence or adoption Order (Scottish Government, 2015)
Governance	The programme management arrangements, including roles and responsibilities, process for monitoring progress, reporting arrangements and agreeing strategies to address any problems or blockages to progress
Improvement	A measurable shift towards, or full achievement of, a PACE aim
Test of change	Testing a proposed change in the local system to see if it leads to improvement. Tests are scaled up if they are successful, and tried out across different conditions (e.g. teams, localities, ages of children etc.) before any decisions are made on implementing the change (Langley, Moen, Nolan et al., 2009)
PDSA	A tool for capturing the results of the tests of change as part of a Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle, which helps to decide whether to scale up, adopt or abandon tests (Langley, Moen, Nolan et al., 2009)
Data	Tracking children's permanence journeys using milestone information (e.g. date of permanence recommendation at LAC review) to measure the impact of the changes being introduced for improving permanence outcomes. Other types of data may be captured for specific tests of change.
Model for Improvement	The three questions of: what we are trying to accomplish; how we will know that a change is an improvement; and what changes can we make that will result in improvement, together with the PDSA Cycle, make up the Model for Improvement (Langley, Moen, Nolan et al., 2009) which guides the PACE approach (see also Scottish Government, 2013)

Improving care experiences

References

Mitchell, F. and Porter, R. (2016). Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE): Background, Approach and Evidence. Glasgow: CELCIS.
https://www.celcis.org/files/7514/7254/9806/2016_08_29_PACEResearchEvidenceDraft040516_edit.pdf

Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (2016). Permanence Planning and Decision Making for Looked After Children in Scotland: Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007. Stirling: Scottish Children's Reporter Administration.

http://www.scra.gov.uk/2016/03/new-research-permanenceplanning-for-looked-after-childrenin-scotland/

Scottish Government (2011a). Care and Permanence Planning for Looked After Children in Scotland: Scottish Government Response. Edinburgh: Scottish Government

http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/352000/0118198.pdf

Scottish Government (2011b). Guidance on the Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009 and the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007. Edinburgh: Scottish Government

http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/313591/0099439.pdf

Scottish Government (2015). Getting It Right for Looked After Children and Young People: Early Engagement, Early Permanence and Improving the Quality of Care. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00489805.pdf