NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

Permanence Strategy

2026-2029





Contents

Contents **2**

Foreword **3**

Introduction **4**

Our Permanence Principles **5**

Our Objectives **6**

How we will Provide Support **7**

Finding the right Family and Home for every child **8**

Family Finding 8

Family Seeing and Family Finding 8

Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together and Connected 10

Keeping in touch indirectly 10

Indirect family time 11

Protected Characteristics 11

Independent Reviewing Officers 12

The Mockingbird Family Model 12

Planning for Permanence **13**

Assessing and Planning for Permanence 14

Permanence & Local Placements **15**

Options for Permanence **15**

Continue to live at home with support and Reunification to return home 16

Supported to live with Family or Friends/ Connected Persons 16

Long-Term Fostering 17

Child Arrangement Orders 18

Special Guardianship Orders 19

Adoption 20

Regional Adoption Agency **21**

Appendix A **22**







Foreword

We are proud to present North Yorkshire's Permanence Strategy—a refreshed and ambitious plan that builds on the foundations of our 2022–2025 strategy.

This updated strategy reaffirms our commitment as corporate parents to ensure every child and young person has the opportunity to grow up in a safe, stable and loving home, with strong and lasting relationships and a sense of identity and belonging.

We will work with children, young people, their families and wider networks to achieve the right permanence for them and ensure they continue to feel supported, connected and cared for as they grow into adulthood.

As set out in our Being Young in North Yorkshire Strategy 2025–2028, we want every child and young person to be happy, healthy, safe and supported to achieve.

Most children grow up safely within their families, surrounded by people who love and care for them. When families experience difficult times, we will work alongside them, building on their strengths and the support of their wider family and networks, to help children remain safely at home wherever possible.

Where a child cannot safely remain at home, we will make sure they are cared for in a safe, stable and loving home, while continuing to support the relationships and connections that are important to them.

Looking after children is one of the most important jobs a Local Authority does, we are committed to doing it well and improving outcomes for the children in our care.

We want every child to grow up in a safe, stable and loving home, surrounded by people who know, love and care about them. We will work alongside children and families, building on their strengths and the support of their wider family and networks, so children can remain safely at home wherever possible.

If a child needs to come into care, we will continue to explore opportunities for them to safely return home. Where this is not possible, we will help them find a loving and stable home while supporting the relationships, identity and sense of belonging that are important to them.



Councillor Janet Sanderson
Executive Member for Children and Families Service



El Mayhew
Corporate Director for Children & Young People's Service

Introduction

We are dedicated to supporting our Children in Care to live happy, healthy lives and achieve the best possible outcomes they can. This strategy has been developed to outline how we will achieve permanence for our children and young people.

For children who are no longer able to remain with their birth family, research has shown that outcomes are significantly improved for them when they are in an environment that is safe, secure, demonstrates empathy, warmth, stability and the child feels cared about.

In North Yorkshire there are a small number of children, for whom it is not in their best interests to return to their family home after a period of care. For these children we will make plans to achieve permanence for them. Central to our decision making is understanding their wishes and feelings which inform our plans for permanence. It is important that all age groups are able to achieve permanence, whether this is in a foster family, adoptive family, or in other types of placements where they can achieve a sense of security, stability and belonging.

Permanence does not end when a young person reaches the age of 18. For many young people, permanence is demonstrated through enduring relationships and support networks that continue into adulthood.

The Permanency framework creates 3 aspects, as outlined in the Care Planning Guidance 2011:

Legal	• Definining who has parental responsibility;
Emotion or Psychological	• The child feels attached to an adult who provides a stable, loving and secure relationship;
Physical or environmental	• The child has a stable home environment .



Our Permanence Principles

‘Our Ambition’

North Yorkshire Council wants every child to grow up in a safe, stable and nurturing family environment, with the relationships, identity and sense of belonging that support them throughout childhood and into adulthood.

We will pursue permanence at the earliest opportunity in ways that strengthen families, minimise delay and maximise children's opportunities to remain connected to the people and communities that matter most to them.

By 2029 we will:

- Increase the number of children achieving permanence through family-led solutions.
- Reduce delay in permanence planning and decision making.
- Improve placement stability.
- Improve reunification outcomes where children return home.
- Strengthen support for adolescents and care experienced young people.
- Ensure children experience lifelong, enduring relationships beyond statutory involvement.

Every child deserves to feel safe, loved and that they belong. These principles guide how we will work together to make that happen.

We will do our very best to ensure all children in our care grow up in stable and secure arrangements and are supported to safely leave care when appropriate.

Children and young people are at the heart of everything we do.

We will listen to what matters to them and ensure their needs, wishes and aspirations shape our decisions, plans and services.

We will have high hopes and ambitions for every child and young person, helping them build on their strengths, enjoy their childhood and achieve their goals.

We will listen to what matters to them and support them, at the right pace, to grow into adulthood with the relationships, opportunities and sense of belonging we would want for our own children.

Every child and young person will have a voice. We will listen, take their views seriously and make sure what matters to them helps shape the decisions about their lives and future.

We will work alongside children and young people, their families and carers, making sure their voices, experiences and what matters to them shape the plans, support and care they receive.

We will recognise every child as an individual, making sure their care and support reflects their age, identity, experiences, strengths, needs and what matters to them.

We will listen, learn and improve, using what children and young people tell us to make lasting changes that improve their lives and experiences.

Our Objectives

The overarching objective of planning for permanence is to provide safe, stable, and secure placements with loving families to support the child through childhood and prepare them for adulthood.

To ensure we place the child at the centre of our permanence planning process, there are two questions that we must keep at the core everything we do:

“How are the child’s permanence needs being met?”

“Would this be good enough for my child?”

Where it is necessary for a child to leave their family, there are a number of key objectives at the centre of our Permanence Planning:

- A child should be in care for as short a time as needed to secure a safe, supported return home.
- If it is safe to do so we will put plans in place to support the child to return to their family.
- If a child cannot return home, plans must be made for alternate permanent care whilst keeping alive the options to support a child to leave care where appropriate.
- Family members and friends should always be considered in the first instance.
- Permanence should always be secured through the appropriate legal order to meet the child’s needs.
- Where it is not in the child’s best interest to live within the family network we will identify alterative permanent carers. This may be through Child Arrangement Orders, Special Guardian Orders, Long Term Fostering or Adoption.
- If an older child wants to live independently, and the services thinks this could be suitable, then this may be considered.

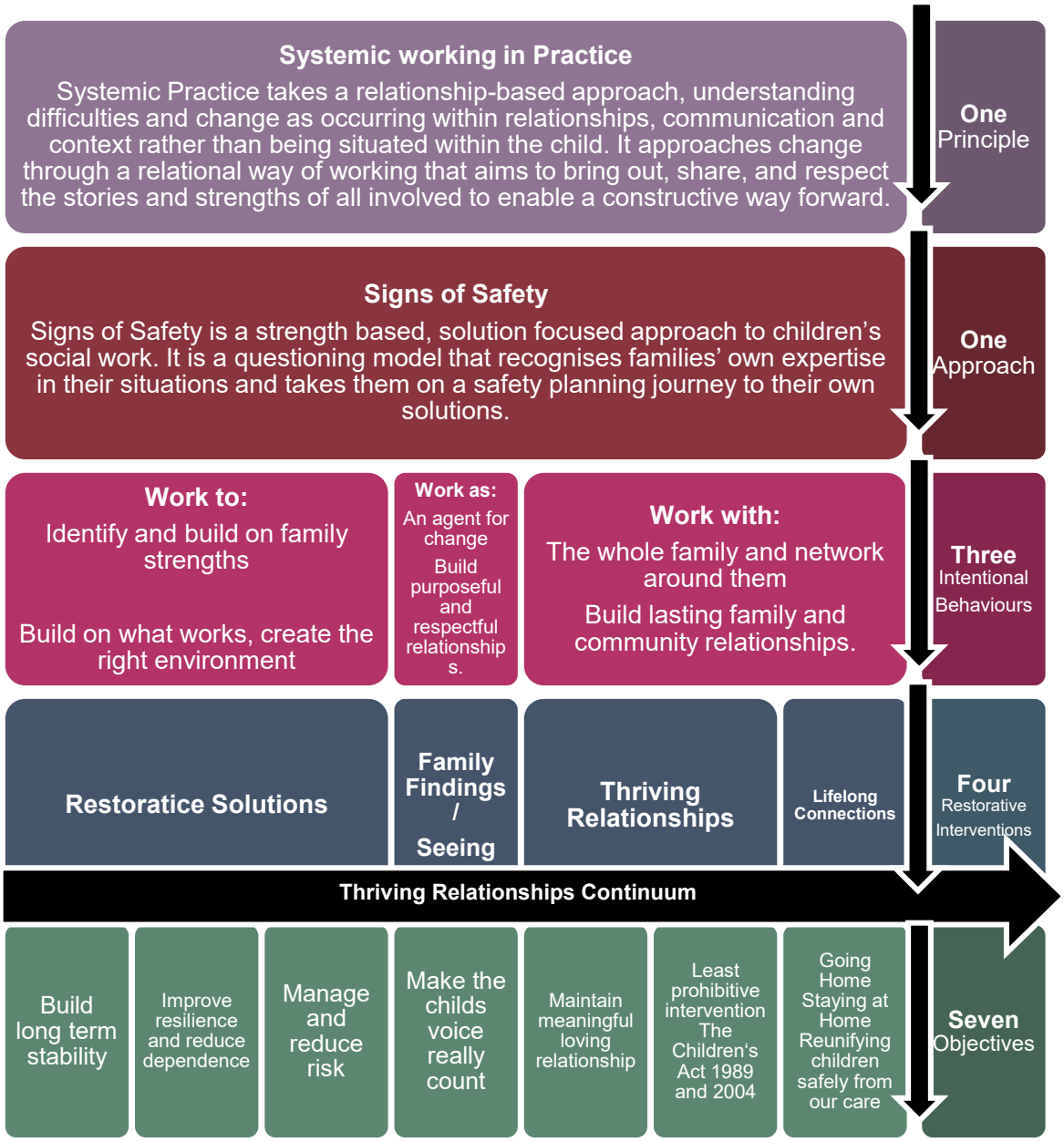
How we will Provide Support

The diagram below lays out the model of practice we follow in North Yorkshire when providing the support children, young people and their families need to overcome challenging and difficult circumstances. We believe that stable relationships should be established between workers, children, young people and their families and networks, working alongside them and always look for strengths within the work that is done.

This model of practice acts as the foundation upon which we develop individual plans to ensure the children and young people we support achieve the best possible outcomes:

Our Purpose:

To support positive change that continues after we no longer need to be involved. We will create conditions that allow relationships to flourish. Our collaboration in practice with you is built to deliver this outcome.



Finding the right Family and Home for every child

Family Finding

Our Family Finding model seeks to build or maintain a young person's family support network. The model identifies relatives and other supportive adults who could provide permanency, sustainable relationships and support through the transition to adulthood and beyond.

With a focus on the child's safety, families are empowered to formulate realistic and sustainable plans to meet their long-term needs. Plans might be focused on keeping the child/young person safe at home, or on improving the long term outcomes for the child.

This could include:

- Increasing the likelihood of the child returning home after a period in care;
- Finding a family member or friend who will care for the child if the child is unable to remain at home;
- Improving well-being of the child;
- Improving placement stability and the child's support network;
- Reducing the likelihood of re-entry into care; and
- Increasing a child's sense of belonging.

The Family Finding process is carried out by the child's social worker. The model works on the principle that relatives should be located and consulted regardless of where they may live. The model considers that parents may be seeking assistance in planning and providing for the basic and future needs of their children that relatives may be best placed to provide.

The aim of Family Finding is to overcome the limitations of traditional family work which may isolate children and parents, by incorporating extended 'kinship' groups and seeing the child in the context of the family.

Family Seeing and Family Finding

In North Yorkshire, we believe that children and young people should have people in their lives who know them, love them and are there for them as they grow up.

We work with Kevin Campbell, who developed Family Finding and co-created Family Seeing. This approach helps us work alongside children, young people and families to find and strengthen the important relationships around them. These might be parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, wider family members, family friends or other people who are important to them.

We want to understand who matters to a child, who could be part of their life and how those relationships can be supported and strengthened. We build on the strengths that already exist within families and help families and their wider networks find solutions together.

This is an important part of how we think about permanence in North Yorkshire.

Where it is safe and in their best interests, we will support children to live with or return to their birth or extended family. Where this is the child's permanence plan, it is important to:

- Clearly communicate to the family what needs to happen to enable the child to return home, and the timescales;
- Understand family ties and long-term relationships with family, school and the community; and
- Use Family Group Decision Making to help facilitate safe, and clear permanence plans

When this is not possible, we still want children to have stable, loving homes, strong connections with the people who matter to them, and a sense of identity and belonging that lasts into adulthood.

North Yorkshire continues to work with Kevin Campbell and colleagues to help our staff develop these skills through training, coaching and practical support.

In simple terms, our aim is:

Every child should have a safe and loving home, a strong sense of belonging and people around them who know them, care about them, know their story and will continue to be there for them:

- **Put the child and their voice at the heart of decisions**.
- **Find and strengthen family and other important relationships** as early as possible.
- **Build on the strengths of families and their networks**, helping them find their own solutions.
- **Support families to be actively involved in planning** and decisions about their children.
- **Be open and honest about worries, risks and what needs to change** to keep children safe.
- **Be clear about everyone's role** and what support is available or needed.
- **Keep children connected to the people, relationships, identity and history that matter to them.**
- **Explore children remaining with or returning to their family wherever it is safe to do so.**
- **Find the right permanence for every child,** providing lasting safety, stability, love and belonging.



Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together and Connected



Brothers and sisters can be some of the most important people in a child's life, providing love, belonging, shared memories and a connection to who they are.

We will do all we can to keep siblings together where this is safe and right for them, and their relationships will be considered from the very start of permanence planning.

Where brothers and sisters cannot live together, we will listen to each child, help them understand why, and make sure their relationship remains important. We will actively support children to stay connected and spend meaningful time together, including with half and step siblings, unless this would not be in their best interests

Where the plan is adoption and other permanence plans, decisions about brothers and sisters living together or apart will be made as early as possible, taking account of each child's individual needs, wishes and feelings and the importance of protecting relationships that can last a lifetime.

Keeping in touch indirectly

It might not always be possible to keep in touch with everyone face to face or it might be that in between face-to-face time together there are supplementary telephone calls, emails or video calls.

It's really crucial that everyone in the child's network recognises the importance of keeping in touch. Everyone that loves or cares about a child should be involved in the making and reviewing arrangements and should always have the child's best interests at the heart of any decision made.

The plan for permanence; The parental role of the permanent carers; and the benefit of contact.

Direct family time is less likely to be effective if a parent: Disagrees with the plan for permanence; Does not accept the parental role of the permanent carer; Does not accept their own minimal role with the child; Is unreliable in their commitment to family time; and Has no significant attachment to the family.

The views of the child, such as if they do not wish to have direct contact, must be considered and given considerable weight.

Keeping in touch with the child's network

It's really important to recognise that children have their own networks which will predominantly be made up of their family and friends but might also include others like sports coaches, pets or their friend's parents.

When it is in the child's best interests it is important that children remain connected to their network in as natural a way as possible. This will help to maintain their identity, give

reassurance, provide an on-going source of information and will minimise the sense of loss which will assist adopters if the permanency plan for the child is adoption.

Research also shows that the more connected a child is to their network, the more successful and stable a placement with alternative carers is.

Whilst we know that direct face to face time together is the best way to keep connected, technology has provided different options including video calls, text messages, social media and messaging apps like WhatsApp.

Direct face to face time together works best when everyone can agree on the plan for permanence and when parents are supported to understand the decisions made about their children needing alternate carers.

It's also best when everyone recognises the child's network and the importance of the child keeping in touch with the people and pets that are important to them and that the network is empowered to help make sure it happens.

It also works best when children are able to keep in touch with the people that are important to them in the same ways everyone else does, like visiting the park or going to the cinema, rather than sitting in a centre with a "supervisor". Having fun and having things to do together makes for really good memories and will lead to less dysregulation following the event.

Direct face to face time can be difficult if there are disagreements about the best plan for permanence or where parents don't accept that their child needs alternate carers. It can also be negative if people let the child down when there is a plan to meet up or have a call.
The child's views should be considered when making, reviewing, progressing or restricting time together.

Indirect family time

Any level of indirect family time with people from the child's past must be agreed and accepted by all parties. They should agree on what format this will take and must be renegotiated if the child's needs change.

Protected Characteristics

The child's wishes and feelings and their protected characteristics must be taken into account when establishing the right permanency placement. The permanent home should promote links for the child's race, culture, disability and religion where possible.

Children with SEND should have the same ambition for permanence as all children.



Permanence planning will be undertaken alongside Education, Health and Care Planning, preparation for adulthood arrangements and transition planning to ensure children experience stable and enduring relationships throughout childhood and adult life.

Permanence planning will recognise the additional support needs of disabled children and young people and seek to minimise disruption to education, health provision and community connections.

Independent Reviewing Officers

The Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) service has a statutory responsibility to chair a child in care review and to monitor the child's case on an on-going basis. An IRO will be appointed to each child with 5 working days of becoming a child in care and will chair their Children in Care Reviews; the initial review will be within 20 working days of becoming a child in care followed by a second review within 3 months then by subsequent 6 monthly reviews. As part of this process, at the second review the IRO must be satisfied that the Local Authority has explained to the child and parents what the plan for permanence is.

It is the IRO's role to review and agree to the plan for permanence, ensuring that it is the most appropriate for the child. Where it is not possible to identify a single plan for permanence at the second review, a `twin-track' or `multi-track' plan will be identified and time scales will be attributed to any pieces of work that are needed to formulate a single plan for permanence.

IROs will provide appropriate challenge and escalation where progress towards permanence is delayed, helping ensure that every child has a clear plan for a stable, loving and lasting home.

The Mockingbird Family Model



The Mockingbird Family Model is an important part of North Yorkshire's approach to strengthening fostering and supporting stable, loving and lasting family relationships for children. The model creates an extended-family network around foster families, with a Hub Home Carer providing practical support, trusted relationships, shared activities and planned or emergency Sleepovers, alongside a constellation of satellite foster homes. This helps children experience continuity and belonging, while foster carers benefit from a strong network of peer and practical support.

North Yorkshire has continued to develop and expand its Mockingbird approach, with four established Hubs across the county, including two in the East, one in the West and a newer Hub in Selby, alongside a further Hub being developed in Scarborough during 2026 with a particular focus on supporting foster carers caring for teenagers. This development is intended to strengthen fostering homes for children's stability, support children to remain in family-based care wherever possible and create opportunities for young people to step down successfully from residential care.

The experience of North Yorkshire's established Scarborough constellation also demonstrates the wider contribution

Mockingbird can make to permanence. Children have experienced a range of positive permanence outcomes, including adoption, safe return to family and progression towards living with a parent, while maintaining the relationships, connections and sense of belonging developed through the constellation.

Planning for Permanence

At the core of everything we do is the question “How the child’s permanence needs being met?” and this is always considered when doing an assessment or intervention with a family. Along with our multi-agency partners we will work with the child and all relevant and connected people to develop the right arrangement.

The permanence planning process will ensure:



Assessing and Planning for Permanence

Assessing and planning for permanence starts with understanding what will give each child the greatest sense of stability, security and belonging, both now and in the future. This means thinking about:

- continuity and stability for children who may return to their family, as well as those who need another plan for their care; and
- lasting permanence, where children know where they belong, who will care for them and who will remain important in their lives as they grow up.

Our assessment and planning for permanence will:

Focus on what matters for the child, including their needs, wishes and long-term outcomes

Consider what will provide lasting stability and belonging, including the support the child and their family may need and how important relationships with parents, siblings and the wider family network will be maintained. The assessment will include:

- Outcomes for the child
- Their wishes and feelings
- The child's and family's support needs
- How the child and family, friends/ connected persons remain in contact when it is in their best interests; and
- Evidence that the plan is clearly linked to previous assessments of the child's needs.

Wherever it is safe and right for the child, we will work with families towards a return home. At the same time, we will consider alternative permanence options so that there is a clear plan for the child without unnecessary delay. Where court proceedings are needed, planning will follow the Public Law Outline and its 26-week timescale

Whether or not a family is involved in court proceedings, we will take a consistent and timely approach to assessment and planning, with a clear focus on achieving permanence for the child without delay

Permanence is about helping every child and young person have people they can rely on, a place where they feel they belong, and relationships that last. North Yorkshire is committed to ensuring that care experienced young people continue to benefit from stable relationships, practical support and a sense of belonging as they transition into adulthood. Where appropriate, opportunities will be promoted through initiatives such as **Staying Put**, enabling young people to remain living with former foster carers beyond the age of 18. The



development of a local **Staying Close** offer will further strengthen support for young people leaving residential care, helping them to maintain important relationships and access ongoing guidance as they move towards independence. Alongside these arrangements, permanence planning will consider the wider network of family members, carers, trusted adults and community connections that can provide enduring support throughout adult life. Recognising that permanence is not defined solely by legal status or accommodation, we will work with partners across housing, education, health and employment services to ensure care experienced young people have the relationships, opportunities and practical support needed to thrive in adulthood.

Permanence & Local Placements

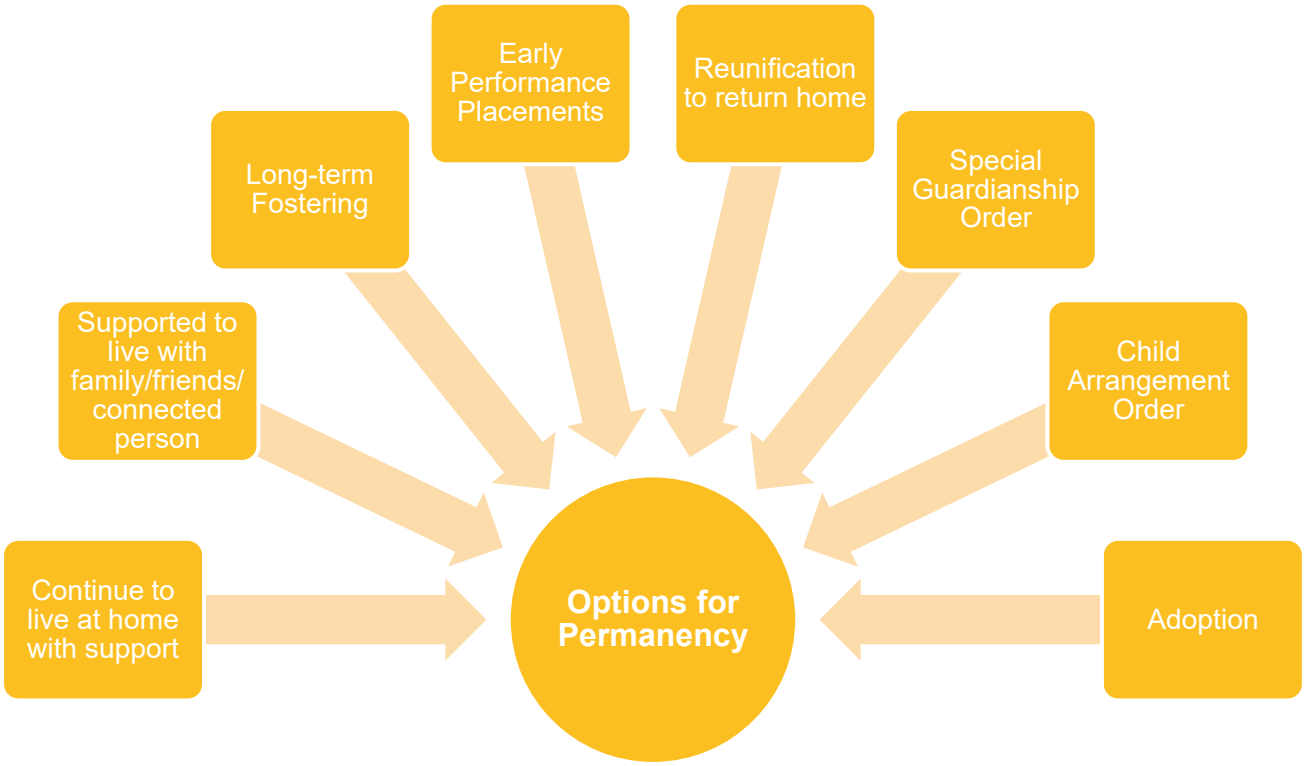
Every child should feel that they belong and stay connected to the people and places that matter to them. Wherever a child lives, we will support important relationships with family, friends and their wider network, where this is safe and right for the child.

We will aim for children to live within or close to their community wherever possible. If a child needs to live further away, this will be based on the child's individual needs and we will make sure the right support is in place.

Throughout a child's journey in care, we will continue to consider whether they can safely return home or live within their family network. This will be regularly reviewed with the child and the people involved in their care, so that opportunities for family-based permanence remain open wherever this is in the child's best interests.

Options for Permanence

Every child deserves a safe, loving and lasting home. We will listen to children, understand what matters to them and work with their family and network to find the right route to permanence, giving every child stability, belonging and relationships that last.



Continue to live at home with support and Reunification to return home

Where it is possible and safe to do so, the best place to provide care is in the family. We will support the family to stay together and ensure that the home is a safe and caring place.

Research has shown that supporting the family to stay together has a higher success rate for the outcomes for children, this must be balanced against the risk of harm to the child and what the child wants.

What this means	Other considerations
• The child remains with their birth family. • It is more likely that a family will stay together long term. • Gives the best chance of stability.	• May require continuing social work involvement. • May not always be successful.

Supported to live with Family or Friends/ Connected Persons

If a child cannot safely remain at home, early planning is undertaken in an enabling way to determine who should care for them. We work with the family/friend to secure an appropriate home.

This will either be as part of the plan to return home or the preferred permanence option. It is important to establish at an early stage which relatives or friends might be able to provide the care the child needs.

Family members do not need to be approved as connected people, there are other means that the Local Authority can support these arrangements. For example, Child Order Arrangement or a Special Guardianship Order.

What this means	Other considerations
• The Local Authority retains a role in negotiation between foster carers and their birth family for example, spending time with the family. • The child retains their links to their birth families.	• Staying at home or returning home will require continuing social work involvement. • Family, friends or connected people may not be available to, or may not want to, care for the child.



Long-Term Fostering

Long term fostering can provide children with a stable, loving home and a strong sense of belonging throughout childhood and beyond. It can be particularly important for children who want to maintain meaningful relationships with their birth family and wider network.

Where long term fostering is the right permanence plan, we will support children and carers to build secure, lasting relationships, while continuing to listen to the child and regularly consider whether opportunities to safely return home or live within their family network have changed.

What this means	Other considerations
• The local authority will work with foster carers and birth families to support positive relationships and agree family time that meets the child's needs. • There is continuing support for the child and foster family in a placement which is regularly reviewed. • It maintains legal links to the birth family who can still play a part in the decision making for the child.	• The local authority retains shared parental responsibility where a Care Order is in place. • Social work involvement and Children in Care Reviews continue. • Reviews should support, not disrupt, stability and belonging. • Long-term fostering does not create the same legal status as adoption. • Relationships with carers should be supported to continue into adulthood.

Early Permanence Placements

Early Permanence Placements help babies and young children experience stable, loving care at the earliest opportunity while decisions about their future are being made. The child lives with carers who are approved adopters and initially care for them as foster carers. If adoption is agreed as the right permanence plan and a Placement Order is granted, the child can be formally matched with them for adoption.

What this means	Other considerations
• Early Permanence Placements provide consistency, safety and stability at a very early stage in a child's life. • Reduces the number of moves that children experience before they achieve permanence. • Parental responsibility is held exclusively by the carers/adopters . • Child centred, taking the challenges and risks away from the child and instead places them with the adults. • Parental responsibility is shared between the matched adopter, Local Authority and parent. Once the Adoption Order has been granted the legal parental responsibility lies with the adoptive parent/s.	• Early Permanence Placements are only suitable for a small number of children. • Foster carer is required to support the child to see the family up to the adoption order is granted, consider arrangements for the birth family to have contact through the post box arrangement. Thereafter arrangements will be made between future birth family and adoptive family.

Child Arrangement Orders

A Child Arrangements Order may be used to increase the degree of legal permanence in a placement with family or friends/ connected persons, or a long-term fostering placement. The Order confers Parental Responsibility, to be shared more equally with the parents than with Special Guardianship, which in some cases may be a more appropriate arrangement.

The holder of a Child Arrangements Order does not have the right to consent to the child's adoption nor to appoint a guardian; in addition, they may not change the child's name nor arrange for the child's emigration without the consent of all those with Parental Responsibility or the leave of the court.

Whilst support may continue for as long as the Child Arrangements Order remains in force, the aim will be to decide which are self-sustaining in the long run. The making of a Child Arrangements Order can now be made until the child is 18. The following people may apply for a Child Arrangements Order:

- A parent or guardian;
- A party to a marriage (whether the marriage is subsisting or not)
- where the child was brought up as a child of the family;
- A person with which the child has lived for 3 years (This need not be
- continuous but must not have started more than 5 years or ended more than 3 months before the making of the application); or
- A Local Authority foster carer with whom the child has lived for 1 year.
- Where a Child Arrangements Order is already in force, a person who has the consent of those in whose favour the Child Arrangements Order was made;
- Where the child is Looked After, a person with the consent of the Local Authority;
- In any other case, a person who has the consent of all those with Parental Responsibility;
- Anyone else wishing to apply, including the child, must apply to the court for leave to make an application for a Child Arrangements Order.

What this means	Other considerations
• Child arrangements orders give parental responsibility to the carer whilst maintaining the parents Parental Responsibility. • The child will no longer be looked after and there does not need more Social Work involvement, unless this is identified as necessary. • There is no review process. • The child will not be Looked After and so less stigma is attached to the placement.	• It is less secure than Adoption or Special Guardianship in that an application can be made to revoke the Child Arrangements Order. However, the Court making the order can be asked to attach a condition refusing a parent's right to seek a revocation without the leave of court. • There is no formal continuing support to the family after the Order is made although in some instances, a Child Arrangements Order may be payable by the local Authority. • There is no professional reviewing of the arrangements after the Order unless a new application to court is made, for example by the parents for contact or revocation. (N. B . New applications to court may be expensive to defend, and the carers would have to bear the cost if not entitled to assistance with legal costs).

Special Guardianship Orders

Special Guardianship addresses the needs of children who need a sense of stability and security within a placement away from their parents but not the legal break with family that is associated with adoption.

The parents of a child may not become the child's special guardians

Special Guardianship Orders offer stability, whilst they can be revoked, there are restrictions on those who may apply to discharge the Order. The leave of the Court, if required, will only be granted where circumstances have changed since the Special Guardianship Order was made.

Any of the following may apply for a Special Guardianship Order

- Guardian;
- A Local Authority foster carer with whom the child has lived for one year immediately preceding the application;
- Anyone who holds a Residence or Child Arrangement Order with respect to the child or who has the consent of all those in whose favour a Residence / Child Arrangements Order is in force;
- Anyone the child has lived with for 3 out of the last 5 years;
- Where the child is subject to a Care Order, any person who has the consent of the Local Authority; or ·
- Anyone who has the consent of all those with Parental Responsibility for the child.

Parental responsibility will be given to Special Guardians which will be shared with the child's parents. However, the Special Guardian will have the legal right to make all day to day arrangements. The parents have to be consulted, and their consent required for: the child's change of name, adoption, placement abroad for more than 3 months and other fundamental issues.

A Special Guardianship Order made in relation to a child who is the subject of a Care Order will automatically discharge the Care Order, and the Local Authority will no longer have Parental Responsibility.

Special Guardians may be supported financially or otherwise by the Local Authority and, as with adoptive parents, will have the right to request an assessment of support services at any time after the Order is made.

What this means	Other considerations
• The special guardian will have parental responsibility and clear authority to make decisions on day-to-day issues. • There is added legal security to the Order. Parents need to apply to discharge the Order and will only be granted if a change in circumstances can be established since the original Order was made. • It maintains legal links to the birth family. • The child will no longer be in care	• The order lasts until the child is 18. • Although there are restrictions on applications to discharge the order. Applications made by birth parents are possible, this may undermine the stability of the Special Guardianship Order. • Although a parent requires leave (permission of the court) to apply for a Child Arrangements Order, they may be able to apply for a Prohibited Steps Order or Specific Issues Order without leave.

Adoption

Adoption legally transfers parental responsibility for the child permanently to the adopter(s). The child is then deemed to be the child of the adopter(s) as if he or she had been born to them and the child's birth certificate is changed to an adoption certificate showing the adopter(s) to be the child's parent(s).

The child will also acquire UK citizenship if they are not already a UK citizen (assuming they are adopted by UK citizens).

Adopters may be supported, including financially, by the Local Authority and will have the right to request an assessment for support services at any time after the Order is made.

Research strongly supports adoption as a primary consideration and as a main factor contributing to the stability of children, especially for those under four years of age who cannot be reunified with their birth or extended family.

What this means	Other considerations
• If a child has previously been in the care of another local authority and placed for adoption within North Yorkshire, it is the responsibility of the other local authority for 3 years post adoption. • Parental responsibility is held exclusively by the carers. • The child is no longer Looked After. • An adoption order is usually final and life-long and can only be set aside in very limited circumstances. • The child is a permanent family member into adulthood. • Any decisions about continuing contact and change are usually made by the adoptive parents (on the child's behalf). This can be made into a Contact Order made by the court at the time of the Adoption Order.	• Staying at home or returning home will require continuing social work involvement. • Family, friends or connected people may not be available to, or may not want to, care for the child.

Regional Adoption Agency

(One Adoption North & Humber)

The regional adoption agency was established in 2017, `One Adoption North & Humber', brings together the adoption services of 5 local authorities (North

Yorkshire, York, East Riding of Yorkshire, City of Hull, and North East Lincolnshire).

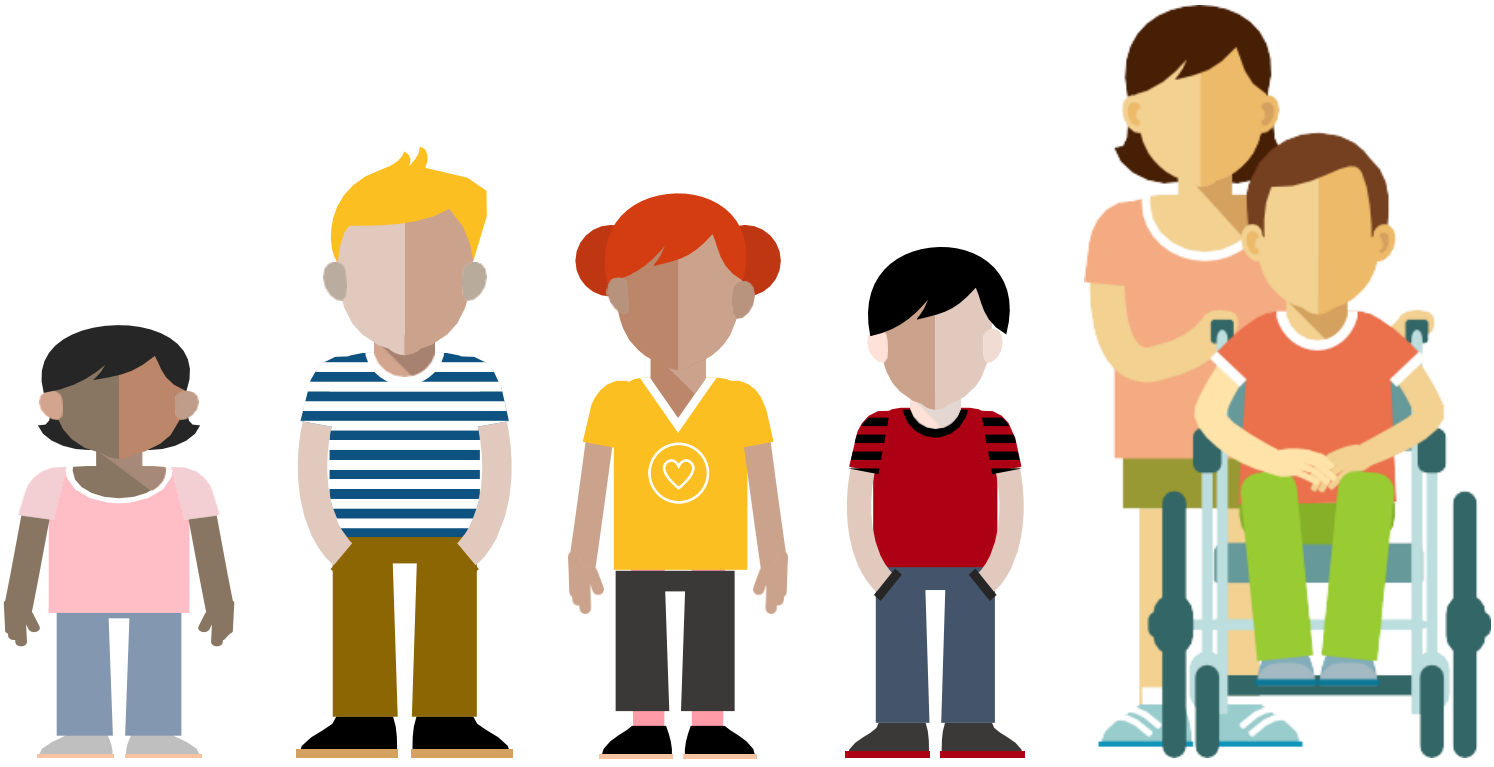
The `regionalisation' has increased the range of adopters available as each authority is no longer restricted by their own boundary. This means, for example, North Yorkshire could now place a child with an adopter in Hull for no extra cost.

The One Adoption North & Humber takes responsibility for recruiting, assessing and training potential adopters, with One Adoption Teams located in the five local authorities. The teams work alongside social workers to identify suitable, prospective adopters for children who have a plan for adoption.

By being able to access a larger pool of adopters from across the region when matching a child, it is likely to improve the quality of the match and speed up the process. Improving permanency by reducing delays and improving the longer term outcomes for children.

As well as helping assist with permanence planning and improving the matching and adoption process, moving to a regional adoption agency helps to ensure stability for adopted children through providing ongoing support and training right the way through the process.

One Adoption York & Humber works with adopters, adopted children, birth families, the voluntary and private sectors to deliver a range of adoption support services.



Appendix A

Appendix A: Where Children Live and Who Cares for Them

