



# Item No. 9

Meeting Date      Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019

## Glasgow City Integration Joint Board Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee

**Report By:**                      Mike Burns, Assistant Chief Officer Children’s Services and North East Operations

**Contact:**                        Susan Orr, Head of Children’s Services (South) / Families for Children

**Tel:**                                0141 427 8235

<b>PERMANENCE IN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES</b>
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<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To advise the IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny committee of the approach to permanence planning in children and families services in Glasgow.
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<b>Background/Engagement:</b>	Permanence means giving a child or young person a sense of security, continuity, stability and belonging. It means that they know where they are going to be living for the rest of their childhood and who is going to look after them. Achieving permanence for children and young people who need it is a key priority for Glasgow City HSCP and is embedded within the Children’s Integrated Services Plan.
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<b>Recommendations:</b>	The IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:  a) Note the contents of the report; b) Support the proposal to work with the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) team to seek opportunities to improve practice in this area; and c) Support the proposal to benchmark with other relevant authorities and cities across the UK.
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**Relevance to Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan:**

The IJB Strategic Plan outlines 5 key priorities that apply to all HSCP services including those that support young people and children:

- Early intervention, prevention and harm reduction.
- Providing greater self-determination and choice.
- Shifting the balance of care.
- Enabling independent living for longer.
- Public protection – including keeping vulnerable people safe from harm.

**Implications for Health and Social Care Partnership:**

<b>Reference to National Health &amp; Wellbeing Outcome:</b>	Relates to a number of outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People who use health and social care services have positive experiences of those services, and have their dignity respected</li><li>• People using health and social care services are safe from harm</li><li>• Resources are used effectively and efficiently in the provision of health and social care services</li></ul>
<b>Personnel:</b>	Existing children and families social work teams are responsible for the work described in this report.
<b>Carers:</b>	Foster Carers, Kinship Carers and parents are key to the delivery and meeting good permanent outcomes for children and young people who are care experienced.
<b>Provider Organisations:</b>	There are a number of organisations providing family support, assessment of need and support to kinship carers which support permanent outcomes for children and young people.
<b>Equalities:</b>	The report is advising on current practice and outcomes it is not a major policy, service change or development and as such an EQIA is not deemed necessary at this stage. The wider Children’s Transformation Programme, of which the work detailed in this report is a part, has been subject to <a href="#">EQIA</a> .
<b>Fairer Scotland Compliance:</b>	The Children’s Transformation Programme and the Family Support Strategy, of which the work around permanence is part, actively seeks to reduce inequalities and to ensure that children who are socio-economic disadvantaged positive outcomes are actively promoted.

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<b>Financial:</b>	There is significant financial investment in care placements and support for children and young people in care placements.
<b>Legal:</b>	There are clear statutory duties under The Children (Scotland) Act 1995, Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 and the Children's & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 that underpin this work.
<b>Economic Impact:</b>	Achieving permanency for children and young people help to ensure that they are more likely to have positive long term outcomes
<b>Sustainability:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Sustainable Procurement and Article 19:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Risk Implications:</b>	Risks associated with not fulfilling legal duties are mitigated by the robust procedures and audit and reporting activity in place.
<b>Implications for Glasgow City Council:</b>	None
<b>Implications for NHS Greater Glasgow &amp; Clyde:</b>	None

**1. Background**

1.1 Permanence means giving a child or young person a sense of security, continuity, stability and belonging. It means that they know where they are going to be living for the rest of their childhood and who is going to look after them. Achieving permanence for children and young people who need it is a key priority for Glasgow.

**1.2 What are the options for achieving permanence?**

There are a number of ways that a looked after child can be placed in a permanent placement. These include:

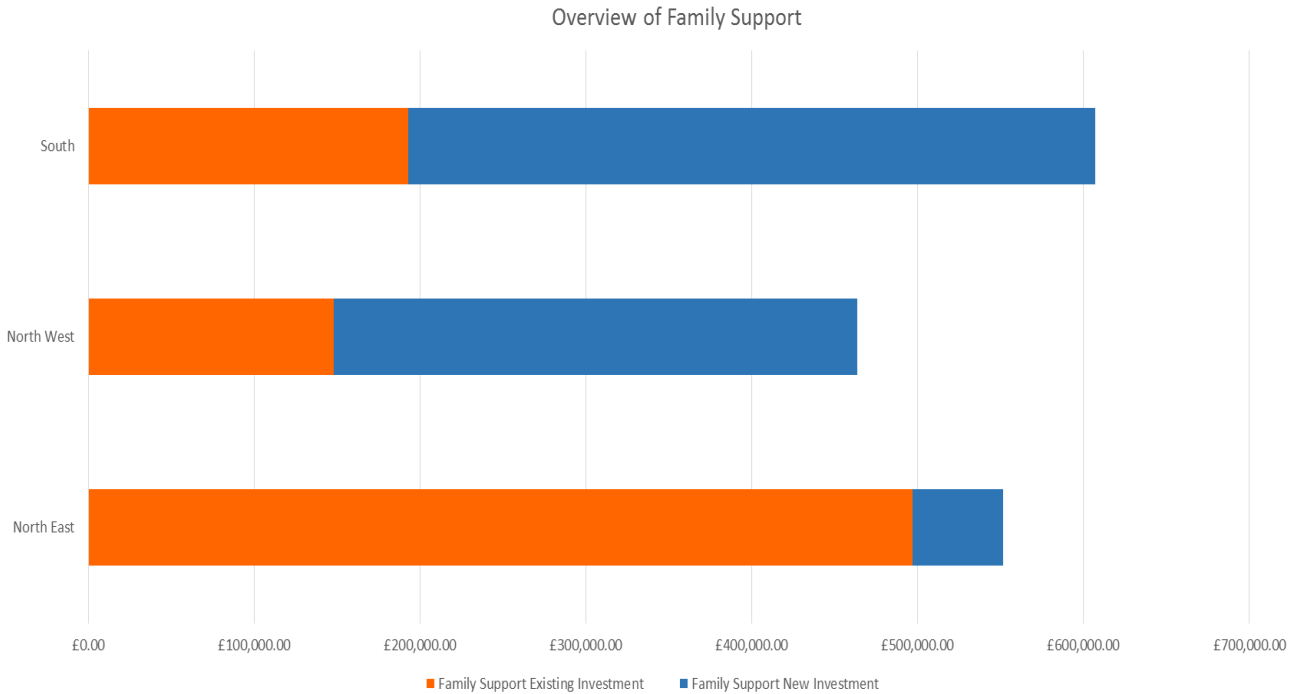
- Kinship placements
- Residence Orders
- Adoption
- Long Term Foster Care.

1.3 Which option is best for any particular child or young person will depend on individual circumstances.

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**2. Impact of Glasgow’s Transformation Programme and Investment**

2.1 Glasgow City IJB has supported the Children’s Transformation Programme and the vision and aspiration to reduce the numbers of children and young people becoming looked after and those in high cost care and the reinvestment in community based family support services. The reinvestment programme has commenced and consequently there is increased opportunities for families to access support at an earlier stage. This is generally achieved by Health Visitors and Social Workers identifying families in need and accessing supports via the Early Years Joint Support teams. The scale of this investment is highlighted in the chart below.

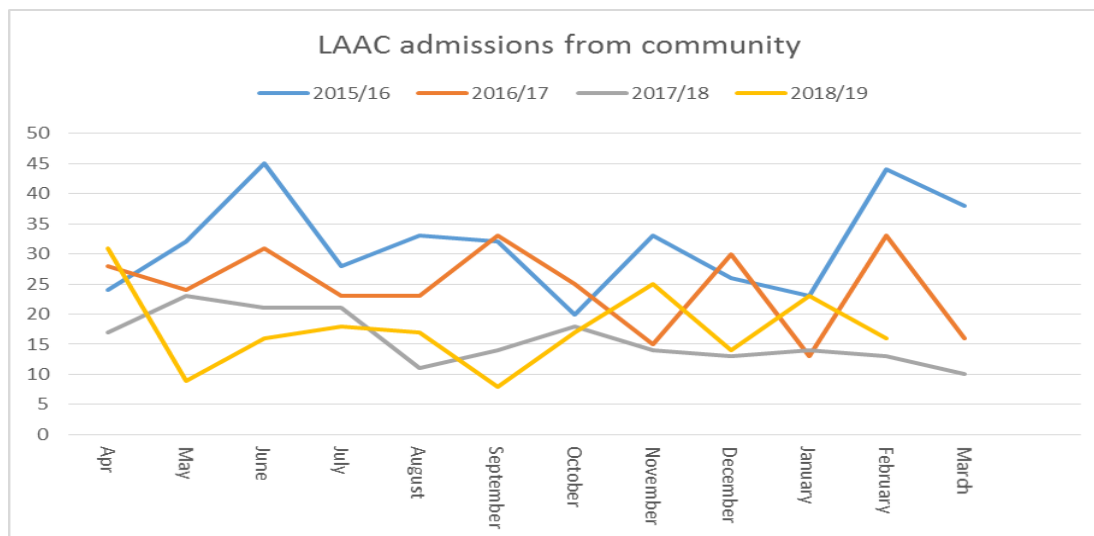


2.2 In 2015 the Scottish Government committed £20 million investment over four years in Health Visiting in Scotland. This investment has meant a significant increase of 123 health visitors for Glasgow City. The investment has ensured that the Health Visitor caseloads have decreased substantially and a new universal child health pathway (pre-birth to school entry) has been introduced which increases the number of contacts/assessments undertaken by health visitors. This investment provides further additional supports to families in the early years.

2.3 In addition there has been Scottish Government investment in the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP). FNP is a licensed programme, originally developed in the USA, in which specially trained nurses work with first-time young mothers to develop their parenting capacity and support them to make positive choices for themselves and their children. It also seeks to support these families to achieve their short and long terms goals and aspirations. There are now 3 FNP teams across Glasgow City.

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- 2.4 Since 2016 there has been a slowdown of children entering the formal care system (looked after and accommodated children) as the following graph demonstrates. The numbers of children and young people in fostering and in residential placements has reduced from 1420 in July 2016 to 1090 in August 2019. This includes young people over the age of 18.



### 3. Planning for Permanence for Children and Young People

- 3.1 As previously stated ensuring children and young people are established in permanent placements is a priority for Glasgow. The expectation is that permanence planning commences six months after the child or young person is placed in a care placement. Plans can be made concurrently with plans to return home if this becomes a realistic option.
- 3.2 When children under five are placed in a care placement, almost always in foster care, it is critical that assessments of parental ability to care for them is commenced immediately to provide the best outcome for the child as soon as is practicably possible. This work is undertaken by social workers in conjunction with the Family Assessment and Contact Team (FACS) or the Glasgow Infant and Family Team (GIFT).
- 3.3 FACS is service run and funded by Glasgow City HSCP. The FACS service will work directly with families over a three month period over which time they will observe the parents and the child having contact with each other. This will normally be once a week and will take place at one of two bases. They will interview the parent (around six contacts) speaking about things like their background, their understanding of their child and why they came into care. They will look at information from records and on the family as well as speaking to other people who have worked with the family. At the end of the assessment they will write a report which will include a recommendation about future arrangements for the child's care to make sure he/she gets the best lifelong care.

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3.4 GIFT is a service run and funded by the NSPCC. It brings together specialists in infant mental health and social care, and works with a family over a nine to 15 month period. It assess each parent's health and wellbeing including:

- mental health
- any addiction issues
- exposure to trauma or violence.

They then establish treatment goals and offer tailored support to address problems and strengthen the parent-child relationship. Treatment might include one or more of a range of evidence-based interventions.

Findings of the assessments are reported to social work and legal teams and give advice about the help the child needs and help inform decisions about the child's care.

3.5 Both these approaches are being evaluated by a team at Glasgow University led by Dr Helen Minnis. BeST<sup>2</sup> is a randomised controlled trial comparing the infant mental health service (GIFT) with Social Work Services as-usual (FACS). It aims to find out what is the best approach for young abused and neglected pre-school children coming into foster care.

3.6 Placing children in nurturing foster placements can help them recover rapidly, but it is not known whether it is better for children's long term development to place them with substitute (foster or adoptive) families or return them to birth or extended families who have been helped to get over their problems. The study commenced in December 2011 and will report in 2021. In the meantime, their qualitative interviews and focus groups with foster carers, birth families, social workers and members of the legal system continue to give us rich information about how services work and how families respond and progress is reported via a regular feedback session with managers.

3.7 Two thirds of children and young people in Glasgow's provided fostering services have been in their placement for 2 years or more.

3.8 For older children and young people their care and planning for the future is undertaken via the Looked After Child Review process. Often, though not always, children and young people who are in care placements are subject to compulsory supervision orders from Children's Hearings. These orders are reviewed at least annually. Children's Hearings can decide to continue these orders even if Social Workers are recommending alternative plans. These situations can be particular contentious when dealing with face to face contact between children and their parents.

## 4. Obtaining Permanent Outcomes for Children and Young people

4.1 It is always the priority for children and young people to return to their birth family or relative's wherever possible, in line with legislation. There are currently 1300 children and young people in Kinship Care placements in the city. Some Kinship Carers have applied and obtained Residence Orders which although still supported financially the

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level of Social Worker support can reduce or indeed cease. Kinship Carers are encouraged where the child is settled with them to apply for a Residence Order. There are currently 224 children subject to Residence Orders.

- 4.2 Where a child or young person cannot return home either to a parent or wider family member efforts are made, where it is their interests, to secure them legally via a Permanence Order in residential or long term foster care. A permanence order provides a mechanism by which a Local Authority can apply to the Court to have the parental responsibilities and rights (PRRs) in respect of a child vested in the Local Authority. In the majority of cases this involves having the PRRs removed from the child's parents when they are unable to satisfactorily exercise and discharge these responsibilities and rights and are likely to be unable to do so. The Local Authority can also seek to have the PRRs vested in another person, for example foster carers. Currently 201 children and young people of the 908 children and young people looked after and accommodated (those under age 18) are subject to Permanence Orders in Glasgow City.
- 4.3 Scotland wide data or UK equivalent data is not easily accessible to benchmark whether performance in this area could be improved and it is felt further discussion with other relevant authorities and cities could be of benefit.
- 4.4 While the number of children and young people in care placements is reducing overall this is due to not only to the slowdown in admissions but to the number of discharges. UK Research shows that of all young people who have been in care placements between 60 to 65% return to the family home or to live with relatives. Glasgow is no different with 62% of discharges over the period reported returning to the family home or to kinship care.
- 4.5 The following table shows the discharge destinations of Glasgow's children and young people between July 2016 and August 2019.

Home to parents	Kinship Care	Leaving Care Service/ own tenancy	Adoption
350	106	203	76

## 5. Opportunities to Further Improve

- 5.1 Glasgow has, for many years, accommodated a significant number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people. When children and young people arrive in Glasgow and are under the age of 18 they are generally accommodated within provided residential services. There are currently 26 such young people in provided residential. The Unaccompanied Asylum Children and Young Peoples Team are currently working with a total of around 280 young people, permanence planning for this group of young people is complex. A Host Families

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Service model however, is being developed and is being recruited to offer family based options for this vulnerable group.

- 5.2 To further support the planning for children and young people in care placements an independent audit and review team is being established. This team who will be deployed to ensure all of our children and young people have up to date high quality care plans in place. This is part of our overall transformation programme and is linked closely to the work of the Care Experienced Team. Work is underway with CELCIS to enhance and develop Glasgow's fostering and residential services to support carers and residential staff to prevent placement breakdown. Audit work undertaken to date has evidenced that where children and young people have high quality assessments and plans in place their placements are more likely to succeed.
- 5.3 Family group decision making has now been rolled out across the City following the successful test of change in the North East. Two additional teams have now been established in the South and North West. It is expected that this will ensure that prior to children becoming accommodated detailed exploration with families will take place to ensure children and young people can remain with a family member where it is safe to do so.
- 5.4 It is also the intention for one team in the South of the city to begin work with the CELCIS Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) Programme. In partnership with the Scottish Government, CELCIS have developed an innovative and rigorous whole-systems approach to improving permanence for looked after children, working with all agencies involved in the welfare of these children. There have been a number of demonstration projects across Scotland which have been successful and from which it is hoped we can learn and improve.
- 5.5 In utilising the funding of the Care Experience Fund, Children's Services is also adapting the stability index developed by the Children's Commissioner for England. This index audit's stability for every child around placement moves, school moves, change of social worker and contact with brothers and sisters. The Health and Social Care Partnership have commenced an audit into the 105 children and young people currently resident in foster care in the three Ayrshire Councils (North, East and South) to capture the level of stability and permanence.

## 6. Recommendations

- 6.1 The IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
  - a) Note the contents of the report;
  - b) Support the proposal to work with the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) team to seek opportunities to improve practice in this area; and
  - c) Support the proposal to benchmark with other relevant authorities and cities across the UK.

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