

CELCIS REACH: Alison Penman | Understanding children's journeys

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In this film interview, Alison Penman, Locality Social Work Manager from Dumfries and Galloway, explains how her team has been able to use data to help visualise a child's journey through care.

What we have to do first, is find the data and when we began our journey with CELCIS and [PACE](#), we had to go manual into files and extract specific decision-making points through the child's journey which was hugely cumbersome. We then developed Permanence Data Form which would allow us to collect data about looked after children from the very point that they became looked after – whether that was looked after at home or whether that was becoming accommodated. So, now after every decision we can meeting, whether it's a Looked After Child Review or Case Conference, or a Children's Hearing, the social worker will then record the decision of that meeting on to that Permanence Data Form which is at the front of the child's record. From that we've trained people to extrapolate that data and put it onto timelines. We then have a very clear visual representation of both the decision-making points and the child's journey, so that would include the type of different placements and different decisions that are made. We can then use that as a visual representation in Looked After Child Reviews to help people in terms of their planning. We can use it alongside assessments where we can provide an additive to go along with the timeline. We can use it with safe-guarders who are trying to make sense of, quite often, years and years of historical information, and that allows them to pinpoint the bits that they may want to look at in a bit more detail. And we can also use it within children's hearings and permanence panels, where these are people who have a very fleeting intervention in a child's life but actually can get quite a quick grasp about the use of the timeline. We also use it, obviously, with children and with parents. Again, for parents it helps them understand the journey that their child has experienced and for the children - often the children that we work with are quite young and are not articulating their views, but actually as they become older we can use that as a tool with them to help them make sense of what's happened with them.

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