CELCIS

Centre for excellence
for looked after children in Scotland

The Impact of the CELCIS Permanence and Care Team

Summary version

CELCIS

November 2014

Improving care experiences

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1 Introduction

1.a Background

This document provides an overview of key findings from the evaluation of the work of the CELCIS national Permanence and Care Team (PaCT) from its inception in September 2012 to September 2014. The full findings of the evaluation are presented in detail elsewhere (Gadda & Harris, 2014).

There had been growing concerns in Scotland about delay and drift in permanence practice, particularly as children who experience unstable and non-permanent care are more likely to experience a range of negative outcomes (see for example Selwyn, Frazer, & Quinton, 2006). In 2010, the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA, 2010) conducted a review which highlighted significant delays and missed opportunities resulting in poor outcomes for children. A study by the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration in 2011 found that for a sample of 100 children, legal permanence was not achieved quickly, taking between one and ten years from their first involvement with social services (Henderson, Hanson, & Whitehead, 2011). In response, the Scottish Government committed to:

> *Establish a "Permanence Team" to provide bi-lateral support to all Local Authorities to help reduce their outstanding permanence caseloads, and develop and disseminate good practice across Scotland through events, seminars and workshops(Scottish Government, 2011, p. 16).*

CELCIS was commissioned by the Scottish Government to establish the national Permanence and Care Team to work across Scotland supporting Local Authorities and other bodies to improve permanence processes and practice for children and young people. CELCIS recruited the PaCT team which comprises a small group of full-time and sessional consultants, a researcher and an administrator.

2 PaCT Early Activities and Highlights

Here we briefly draw attention to some of PaCT's early activities and work highlights. We then consider in more detail the tasks, approaches taken and some specific areas of focus.

It may also be useful to refer to Appendices 1-3 which map the locations of different activity types and which detail PaCT achievements against defined outcomes and actions initially identified by the Scottish Government for PaCT's work.

Early Activities

2.a Early consultation and planning

The team gathered information about children's needs and about permanence processes from various reports, statistical returns and wider sources including the Scottish Government and the Courts. This was a difficult task, as information was not always readily available, and sources did not always agree. The team also initiated an 'Understandings of Permanence questionnaire' to gather information about the attitudes, skills and confidence of the professionals who were potentially working to achieve permanence for children.

Key early activities also focused on building relationships, consulting with stakeholders and planning ongoing work. Within months of its establishment the team had met with 27 of the 32 Local Authorities, as well as key agencies and national bodies to discuss issues around permanence and priorities for the work of the team. From these discussions a programme plan and a logic model were developed.

Appendix 3 revisits these objectives, mapping key achievements against each.

Another important early task for the team was to clarify and agree on the meaning of 'permanence' complementing the Scottish Government definition that defines permanence as 'providing children with a stable, secure, nurturing home and relationship, where possible within a family setting that continues into adulthood. We recognise that there are a range of different routes to permanence and the most appropriate route to permanence will depend on the needs and the circumstances of the child.'

A clear definition was needed so that PaCT and the organisations working with them would communicate effectively, avoid duplication and agree the purpose of future work. After a brief review of the literature the following working definition was agreed:

> *Permanence practice includes planning how best to stabilise families before care is needed. Permanence planning aims to support children's reunification with their families following an episode of care. When this is not possible its aim becomes to ensure that children have a secure stable and loving family (Schofield, Beek, & Ward, 2012). In the UK, adoption and long-term foster care have historically been the preferred options to permanence when reunification with birth family is not possible (ibid).*
>
> *Permanence for looked after children is not, however, simply about the type of placement. It is also, and perhaps more importantly, about the continuity and stability of relationships, the quality of care provided to children and a commitment to offering 'family' membership (Munro & Hardy, 2006; Tilbury & Osmond, 2006). Family being understood here in its broadest term to include any individual, group or institution committed to fostering an enduring relationship with the child; and where there is reciprocity of emotional investment and entitlement. Additionally, good quality care and family membership should be underpinned by legal security.*

The impact of this activity has been to bring clarity, influence attitudes and broaden the debate. The full report gives examples of changes in the way in which managers and practitioners spoke and thought about permanence, and examples of parliamentary debates which draw on the work of the team:

> *It is interesting because we are having a number of debates in terms of what we mean by permanency, because some people refer to permanency, see it very much in terms of permanence orders, adoption etc. etc. and we're not losing sight of that, but permanence can also be reunification. It can sometimes be some of those longer term placements (Service Manager).*

2.b Mapping permanence processes and systems

PaCT produced a flow chart which illustrated the steps and legislative requirements underlying the permanence process (see Fig 3 in the main report). This flow chart has been shared and used very widely.

The impact of this simple tool has been significant, enabling policy makers, managers, practitioners and others to view and understand the entirety of the permanence system and the pathways within it. This has been an essential step in formulating strategy for improvement and has facilitated and expedited discussions by reducing the risk of miscommunication. See Figure 4 (Gadda & Harris, 2014).

2.c Identifying priorities

A number of more detailed consultation activities occurred; this included six LACSIG Regional Events.

The regional events involved stakeholders from across the sector including Social Care, Panel Members, Reporters, Voluntary Agencies and the NHS. The results of these events were reported by LACSIG (2012). Common barriers to effective permanence practice were identified, including poor tracking of cases, difficulties between Social Workers, Hearings and the Court and a lack of clarity around effective use of family contact.

The impact of these activities was to allow the appropriate prioritisation of action and support at the local and national levels; this has included indirect action (providing support, advice and training to professionals and decision-makers) and where required direct action (e.g. additional capacity to progress permanence cases).

2. d Understanding of Permanence questionnaires

These were used by the PaCT team to establish understanding of permanence by key stakeholders. Approximately 500 questionnaires have been completed. Just over half of the respondents indicated that they were quite or very confident in dealing with permanence cases; the remainder indicated that they did not feel confident or had not dealt with a permanence case before.

The questionnaire helped to identify relevant needs, barriers and causes of delay. Around 500 social workers, support workers and managers from nine Local Authority areas have now completed the questionnaire; most of these participants (71%) have five years or more experience. The PaCT team will revisit the questionnaire with

stakeholders during 2015 in order to establish if there has been an increase in their confidence following on from our partnership work together.

2. e Local Authorities engaged with the PaCT team

To date 30 Local Authorities have worked with the PaCT team. Appendix 1 provides a series of maps which show the location of different types of PaCT activity in Local Authorities. Appendix 4 provides two case studies detailing examples of the approach taken.

2. f Practice Exchange workshops

These have promoted confidence and have enabled the sharing of emerging practice across Scotland. The team have so far delivered four Practice Exchange Workshops (PEWs). These have engaged just short of 300 key stakeholders in permanence from across Scotland.

2. g Learning and development opportunities in permanence practice

These have been delivered to over 1000 stakeholders across Scotland.

2. h Improving permanence processes

The team have focused on the following areas:

- Concurrency planning work involving five Local Authorities, SCRA, CHS and one independent adoption agency on the East Coast. There are plans to extend this initiative to the West Coast in 2015. Support has been provided to the South Lanarkshire Parenting Assessment and Capacity Team model.
- Early assessment work as a key indicator of success in permanency practice.
- Developing the PACE improvement programme which is currently working across three Local Authority areas in Scotland.

2. i Achieving Permanence for disabled children

Tackling Barriers and Developing Solutions for Disabled Children and Young People in Foster Care

- This was a partnership involving Quarriers, TFN, Strathclyde University and CELCIS PaCT to raise awareness of permanence for children with a disability
- This work has led to the establishment of the Children with Disability research group – hosted by Strathclyde University, with membership from Glasgow University,

Edinburgh University, CELCIS, Quarriers and TFN. This group will be considering the development of further research bids during 2015.

2. j Whole-system child care and protection flow chart

- This serves to illustrate the interrelated processes around the whole system for children and young people, and has been produced for the first time in Scotland by PaCT.
- This *Permanence Flow Chart* was one of the most popular resources downloaded from the CELCIS website between October and December 2013.

2. k Informing policy

The team have been involved in a significant amount of work to support the development of policy. This included having a key role in the LACSIG Care Planning Hub and the National Foster Care Review. PaCT has also helped to shape the development of the Children and Young People Act, and related guidance, through contributions to CELCIS briefings and wider policy work.

PaCT also worked with the Scottish Government in relation to Adoption Service Plans by analysing early examples and considering what content should be covered. The team is also working with the Scottish Government in the formulation and delivery of the National Care and Permanence Plan, which will include guidance on family contact. Similarly, written and oral evidence was given to the Scottish Parliament Education and Culture Committee to inform the Inquiry into decision-making on taking children into care.

The impact of the team's work has been positive in informing national debates. An example of this is the significant influence which the issues raised by the PaCT has had on the Parliament's permanence debate held in November 2012. Furthermore, the work of PaCT is frequently drawn on or referenced by Scottish Government officials when providing evidence of how permanence practice and processes are being improved in Scotland. The team has also influenced policy debate through the provision of research evidence.

Policy information and support on specific themes has enabled an increased policy focus, for example on family contact, permanence for disabled children and the appointment of Safeguarders.

2. l Research

Another way in which the PaCT has contributed to policy is by providing research capacity. We have led on research in the following areas:

- Safeguarder research: '*Safeguarding the interests of children: Exploring the reasons for the appointments of Safeguarders by the Children's Hearings*'. This research is a partnership of Local Authorities, Children 1st, CHS, SCRA and Scottish Government. So far 130 Children's Hearing Panel members, 81 Safeguarders, and 72 Social workers have taken part in this research.
- Evaluation of post-adoption support with Scottish Adoption.
- Evaluation of the Scottish Borders' Early Years Assessment Team.

See the full report for details of all research activity conducted to date.

2. m 'Toolbox' kits, protocol documents, etc.

The PaCT have developed a number of outputs or tangible items both to raise the awareness and understanding of staff and other stakeholders and to support staff in their roles. Tools such as this can be useful in providing systems or structures for activity and act as an aide-memoire guiding activity and ensuring progress. These tools include:

- Contact agreements (6 LAs).
- GANTT charts detailing work tranches and timescales for concurrency planning (1 LA & 1 partner agency).
- Pathways and workflows for improvement to MI systems (9 LAs).
- Pathway to assessment in early assessment team (2 LAs).
- Protocol documents on, amongst other things, permanence planning procedures (3 LAs), and support plans for adoption (2 LAs).
- Toolbox kits on childhood neglect, disguised compliance, and case law (2 LAs).
- Workshop booklet on purposeful contact (3 LAs).

3 Partnership In Progress

A fundamental tenet of PaCT's approach is to work in partnership with relevant bodies and organisations; this increases reach and maximises impact, ensuring that work is sustainable and effective. The team has worked with the majority of Scottish Local Authorities, various national bodies and third sector organisations. A selection of the

work done with partners is highlighted in Figure 1; more examples are provided in the full report.

Figure 1 Examples of PaCT partnerships

3.a Knowledge mobilisation:a key demonstration of impact

Critical to the team's approach has been the dissemination of knowledge and information to enable participants from within and beyond the sector to increasingly inform their work with reference to evidence. A number of approaches have been used, including those which bring people together and those which produce written outputs for dissemination.

The team has brought people together in groups of different sizes through seminars, symposia, evaluation and sharing of practice, and research dissemination. Often these activities involve a considerable amount of input from partners with particular areas of expertise. Mutual exchange of practice and knowledge is encouraged through, amongst other things, Practice Exchange Workshops (PEWs). In terms of written outputs, the team has produced materials; for example, they have developed and shared toolbox kits encompassing protocols and materials to support planning, along with best practice models and research reports. The PaCT have also produced and shared pathways and workflows, proforma contact agreements, numerous practice briefings, discussion papers, research reports and journal articles; details of these are given in the full report. Together with Local Authorities and their IT departments, they have supported the implementation of improved management systems.

The impact of these activities has been extensive and varied; in summary, there have been changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, policy and practice. Evidence suggests there have been benefits on the ground, such as improvements in the quality and robustness of reports going to Hearings, better use of evidence, increased confidence in dealing with permanence cases, increased awareness of options and alternative approaches:

> *I use the website, I use the CELCIS website, and the newsletter […] and try to keep up to date, and it's useful to have somebody else looking for some of the new information. So I find the website very helpful (Team Manager).*
>
> *Excellent information. It will assist the Legal Team in providing advice, support and representation (Participant at PEW 4).*
>
> *The work of the permanence and care team at CELCIS […] is important. We need to ensure that when decisions are made, either legislatively or by a social worker on the ground, they are based on evidence (Fiona McLeod MSP, Scottish Parliament 2013, p.253399).*

3.b Consultancy work with Local Authorities

PaCT has provided direct consultancy work with 30 of the 32 Local Authorities in Scotland in order to bring improvements in quality and consistency of assessment and planning. This work has been substantial, but the nature and intensity of it has been tailored to the needs of the area. A number of case studies are given in the full report.

The team has used a number of organisational and developmental strategies in this work, for example, conducting case reviews, mapping processes, conducting peer audits, facilitating permanency meetings, delivering training, providing exemplars and toolkits, providing mentors or supporting the establishment of early assessment teams.

(Please see Appendix four for case study examples of work carried out in partnership with two Local Authorities.)

A service manager in one authority which had previously found it difficult to obtain external support (because of its location) listed a range of activities that they were aware that PaCT had undertaken:

> *[They] support continuous improvement in permanency planning. PaCT have visited [LA], mapping exercise, systemic analysis, identifying and advising on decision making process and governance; individual cases reviews and plans outlined to progress permanence; info shared re service developments e.g. social pedagogy and intensive fostering projects; tools, policies and procedures from other areas shared; meeting with Social Work team and Panel Members to highlight needs of children; establishing monthly teleconference for consultation and advice with a small group of Children and Family Social Workers, Fostering and Adoption Social Workers, seniors and legal services (Services Manager).*

> *I think it [the PaCT] had a definite positive impact. [… It] honed people's skills […] actually, showed them the best practice, not just reminded them […] the difference was palpable (Team Manager).*

> *I absolutely think it's been excellent […] the team will also tell you that. […] extremely informative, helpful but, more importantly, approachable, consistent and doing with - not doing to you (Services Manager).*

The impact of PaCT's direct consultancy work with Local Authorities has perhaps been most notable. In adding capacity to progress permanency cases, identifying and resolving barriers, increasing practitioners' knowledge and confidence and implementing a wide range of improvements:

> *… the peer review process was really quite helpful in clarifying some of the issues and also, almost, in providing a sort of additional supervision or support that might not have been readily available. […] the teaching... well, not the teaching but the... sort of training and sharing of ideas and sharing of how to use evidence and how to present has been really helpful, as have the more concrete procedures that have followed (Team manager).*

4 Areas of special focus

Using the approaches detailed above, PaCT has worked across a broad range of areas.

4.a Focus area: Working with legal professionals

One area of concern which was identified through various consultation activities was that some legal professionals were in need of greater insight and understanding as to why permanence practice should be prioritised in order to prevent drift for children and young people.

Through further investigation, PaCT found that delays were often the result of failings in the interface between the legal and social care systems. Legal advice and systems in Local Authorities have been improved through the introduction of information management systems, flow charts and other tools which facilitated discussion between social care professionals and legal teams.

In addition, PaCT, together with partners in Scottish Government and BAAF, reviewed legal issues related to permanence and discussed with the Government whether changes to court rules and processes could speed up permanence.

The impact of this work has been to improve relationships, communication and understanding between social care, local authority legal advisors and legal professionals in Hearings and Courts.

> *Until the PaCT started its work it was typical for the discussion about permanency to be dominated by complaints about the role of legal stakeholders. With the insight PaCT has given Scottish Government and Local Authorities, it is both much clearer when the problems are with legal stakeholder, and their extent (PaCT Consultant).*

4.b Focus area: Family contact

Another aspect of practice fundamentally important to children's experiences, outcomes and permanence is family contact. Early consultations and the Understandings of Permanence questionnaire highlighted the contested nature of contact, suggesting that the various key stakeholders often held disparate views about the nature and purpose of contact. In respect of providing permanence to a child, a critical task of contact is often to provide the opportunity to assess family relationships and parenting capability. The principle of acting in the best interest of the child underpins these decisions, but is itself often disputed.

PaCT has identified a number of factors which stand in the way of providing effective child-centred contact which promotes the best interests of the child. Considerable packages of learning and development in relation to contact have been delivered. These have been delivered to social workers, support workers, panel members and reporters in 16 local authority areas. In one local area more than 400 staff were involved in these activities.

Packages of consultancy support have been tailored to local need, and materials such as family and social work contact agreements have been introduced. The introduction of agreements is important as it:

> *[…] makes the purpose of contact crystal clear when you're working towards a rehabilitation plan; it makes it clear when you're not working towards rehabilitation, and it improves the evidential basis when you get into court (PaCT consultant).*

PaCT members also contribute to national fora on contact and share learning with national bodies.

The impact of this work has been to change practice, improve children's' experiences and increase knowledge and confidence, as well as raising awareness and changing attitudes:

> *The Panel made direct reference to the [CELCIS attachment] training. The Social Worker thought that she might have a job to convince Panel Members, but they set contact themselves. The parents saw Panel Members and Social Workers thinking in the same way, which reinforced for the parents that it was the right decision (Senior manager).*

> *...the Locality Reporter Manager came back and said that they made a decision to stop contact because they'd thought about that question [put forward in the learning and development session], 'why are we having contact? Where is the, you know, in what way is this contact supporting the child's emotional welfare, development and self-esteem?' And they couldn't answer that it was. So they terminated the contact (PaCT consultant).*

4.c Focus area: Concurrency

PaCT has also been involved in thematic work promoting and supporting concurrency planning whereby in relevant cases the twin goals of reunification and adoption are simultaneously pursued rather than being tackled sequentially. This work has drawn together two partnerships in separate geographic areas involving 10 Local Authorities and three voluntary agencies. These two partnerships have progressed concurrency planning in different ways. One developed a vision statement, business case, financial agreements and commitments to minimum numbers of placements. The other area has formed a partnership and PaCT has help to identify a potential provider from the voluntary sector; as at December 2014 discussions are ongoing.

The impact of this work has been to raise the profile of concurrency as a valid and valuable option to increase knowledge and to advance plans for the introduction of concurrency planning in two separate areas.

> *The impetus for this renewed effort to get a concurrency model going has come from CELCIS … [PaCT] has allowed access to these discussions that we would have struggled to manage to get ourselves… What we've found very useful is that [PaCT] have been able to be a source of information, and statistical gathering, and best practice gathering that helped inform our discussions, which has saved ourselves and the other agencies that might be involved with concurrency a lot of leg work (Voluntary Agency Director).*

As a result of this work, one Voluntary Agency is now offering concurrent placements to be purchased by interested Local Authorities; with one Local Authority already committed to purchasing some of these placements.

In addition, work in this area has promoted the development of early assessment teams in several Local Authorities.

4.d Focus area: Introducing improvement methodology

As part of their response to the SCRA report, the Scottish Government flagged an intention to develop a 'whole-systems change management process'. In 2013 they approached CELCIS to request that PaCT develop an intensive programme of work, initially in two local authority areas to trial an improvement methodology for whole-systems change. The resulting programme of work followed the approach outlined by Langley et al. (2009) and was based on bringing stakeholders from across systems together to agree aims and develop theories of change, using PDSA (plan, do, study, act) cycles to make and evaluate change. This programme of work was entitled the PaCE programme (Permanence and Care Excellence) and began in 2014.

The early impact of this work has been twofold: first, testing the use of improvement methodology, and second, direct intensive support to improve permanence. A separate progress review for the PaCE programme is being undertaken.

As well as these four focus areas, there were a number of key activities carried out by the PaCT covering, amongst other things, permanence for disabled looked after children, early intervention, assessment and planning. Further details about all the different areas of work carried out by PaCT can be found in the full evaluation.

5 Visual summary of PaCT's impact

PaCT is a relatively recent development, but already there are signs that its work at both local and national levels has positively influenced policy and practice. These effects are described briefly in this summary and in more detail in the full report (Gadda and Harris 2014).

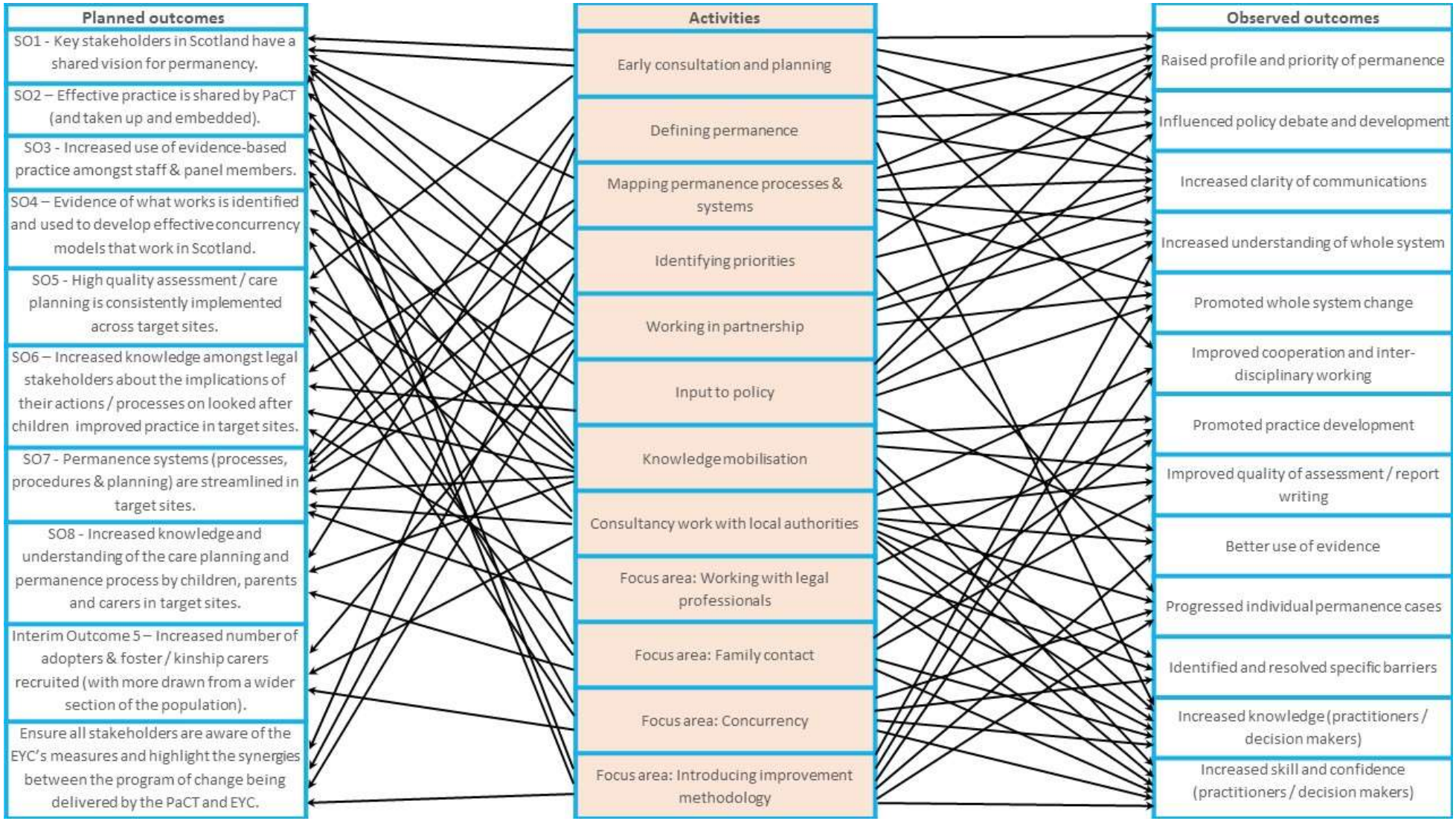
Figure 3 summarises overall impact by displaying links between a list of activities performed and lists of observed outcomes and planned outcomes as earlier identified in Table 1. These lists are not exhaustive and not all links can be displayed. The purpose of the diagram is primarily to give a general impression of the impact of the team's work; we do not expect most readers will study the detail of each arrow. But the figure may usefully emphasise the connected and overlapping nature of the work.

PaCT is perhaps typical of many complex interventions; there is a network of contributory causes (activities) and effects (outcomes). It will be seen that each outcome is achieved through a collection of different activities; equally, individual activities contribute to a number of diverse outcomes.

It is likely that impact has been further maximised through the synergies between the activities; for example, engaging in one activity may ideally position the team to identify and respond to other opportunities for intervention. Equally, forming a good working relationship through one activity may facilitate delivery of other work.

Readers seeking further information are advised to consult the full report, the authors or members of the PaCT team.

Figure 1. Impact summary diagram



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7 Appendices

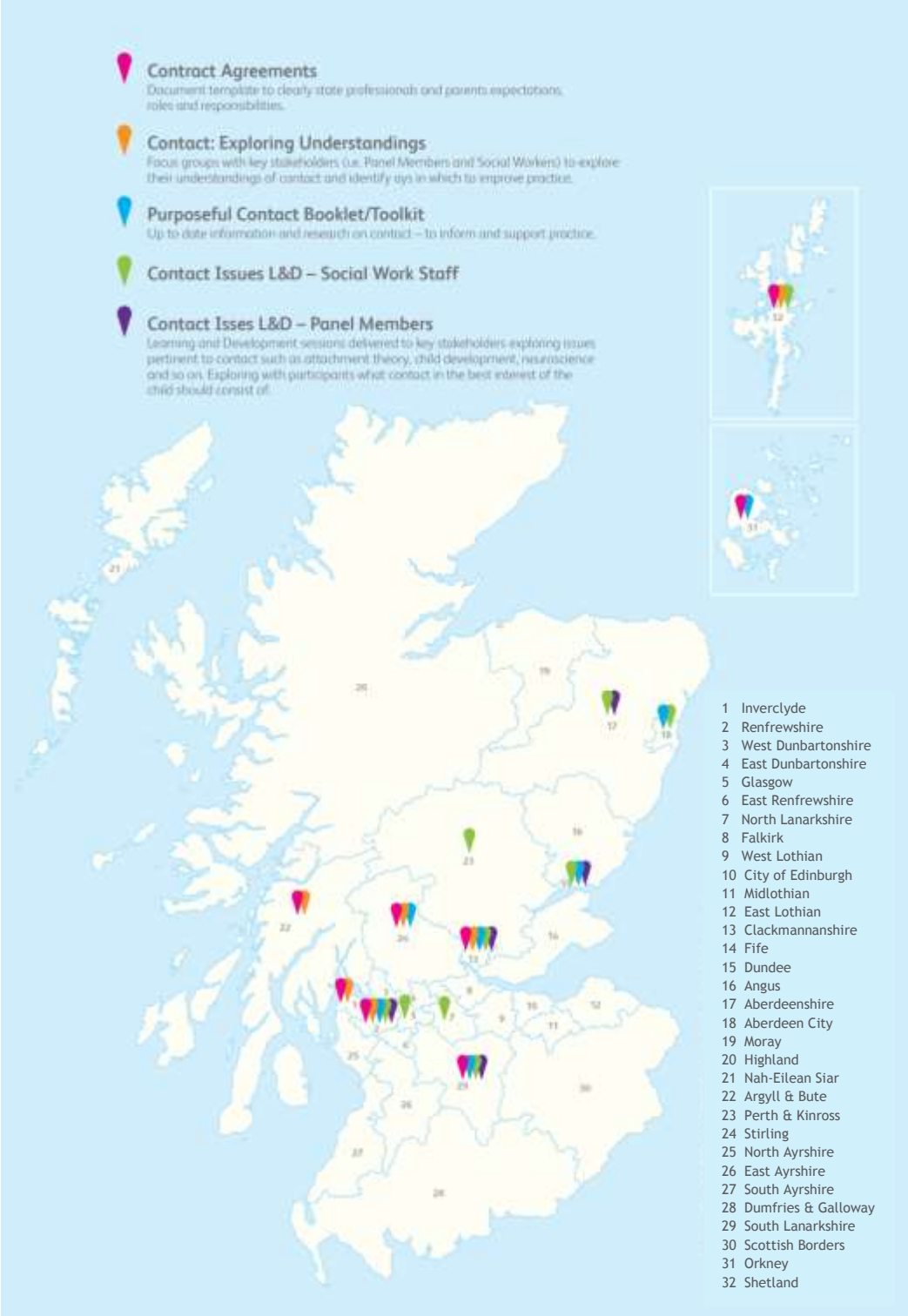
7.a Appendix 1 Mapping locations of PaCT work

Authorities with whom PaCT has explored the implementation of concurrency models

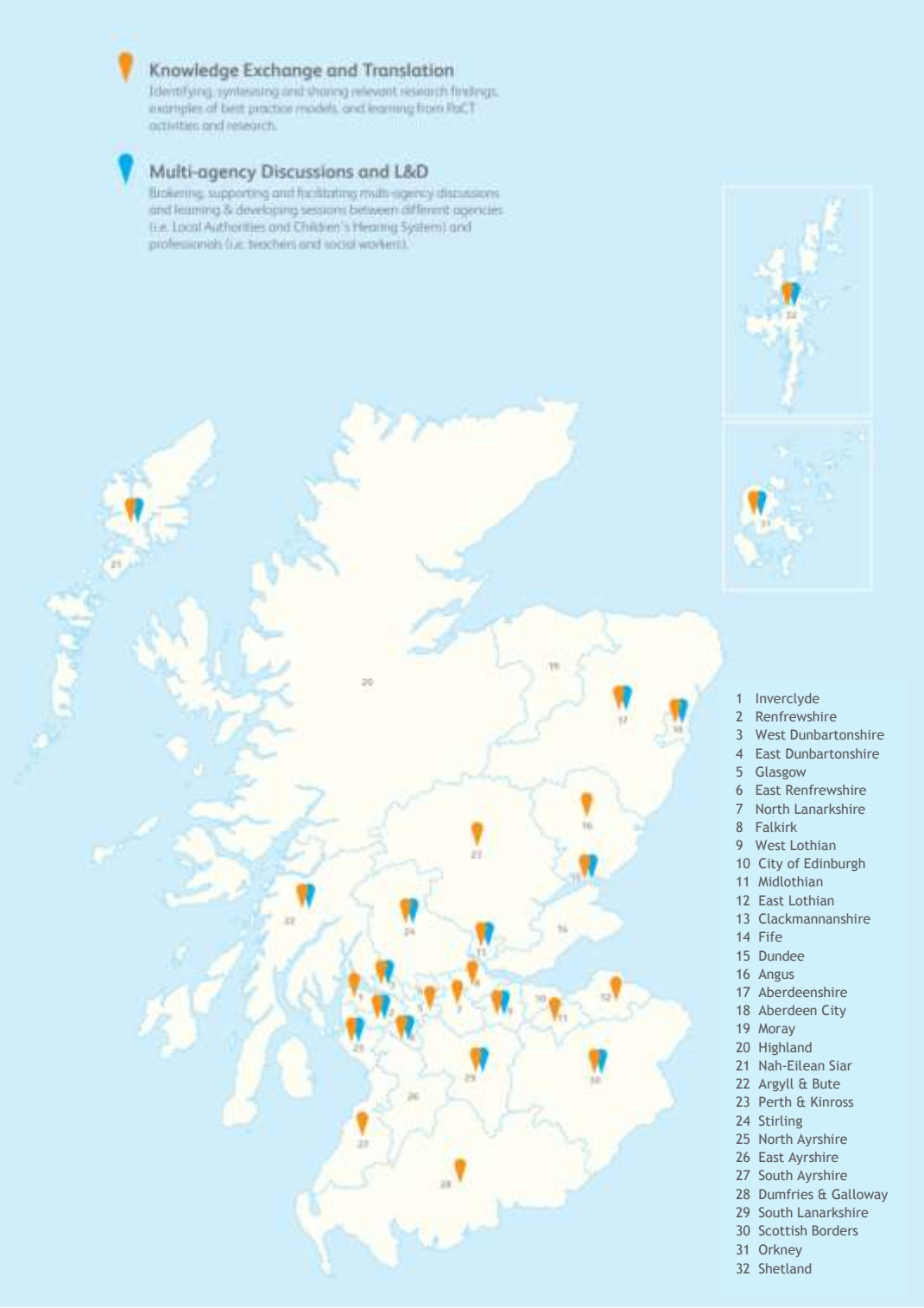
Authorities with whom PaCT used process mapping, case analysis and peer reviews

Authorities where PaCT activities aimed at improving permanence procedures and systems were undertaken

Authorities where PaCT activities relating to contact undertaken



Authorities where PaCT knowledge exchange activities, multi-agency discussions and learning and development were undertaken



7.b Appendix 2:PaCT activities in relation to actions identified by Scottish Government

See Table 6 (Gadda & Harris, 2014)

Action identified by SG	Examples of activities carried out by PaCT
Collate information about, and evaluate the effectiveness of, parenting assessment tools and practice.	• PaCT has identified a number of examples of good practice (e.g. Early Assessments Teams in Renfrewshire and Scottish Borders) and shared this throughout its work with Local Authorities (LAs) as well as through the Practice Exchange Workshops. • With the input and support of PaCT, two Local Authorities are setting up their own Early Assessment Team • Evaluation of the Scottish Borders Early Years Assessment Team. See Box 4 (Gadda & Harris,2014).
Support and encourage concurrent planning practice, produce guidance on implementing concurrent planning, and evaluate practice.	• Produced Case for Concurrency report. • Set up the East Coast Concurrency Implementation Group and took over the coordination of the West Coast consortium. • Building relationships between agencies resulting St Andrew's Children's Society (SACS) working in partnership with Coram to provide concurrent placements for the East Coast Concurrency Implementation Group. • One LA now committed to purchasing concurrent placements from SACS.

Action identified by SG	Examples of activities carried out by PaCT
Provide support and materials relating to: good practice in relation to family support, rehabilitation programmes, interpersonal communication and managing conflict; support services for parents with substance misuse problems; early years and child development including brain development.	• PaCT has been promoting and supporting the use of Family and Social Work agreements. • PaCT has jointly developed and delivered Learning & Delivery (L&D) sessions for Social Work Staff and Panel Members focusing on, amongst other things, attachment theory, brain development, the impact of neglect and abuse on children's healthy development and so on. • With Children 1st, PaCT has been promoting the use of Family Group Conferencing as a way in which to support families in reaching the best possible decisions for children, and to reduce conflict.
Showcase and promote good practice models	• To date, four Practice Exchange Workshops were carried out and another five are planned. • Learning and development sessions have been carried out with staff in all LAs PaCT worked with – these have, amongst other things, highlighted and promoted good practice around parenting capacity assessments, contact arrangements and data collection and management.
Collate information about, and develop good practice tools on attachment and child development	• Toolkits and workshops have been developed and shared with LAs and other stakeholders, such as Panel Members and Reporters. See Appendix 3(Gadda & Harris, 2014).

Action identified by SG	Examples of activities carried out by PaCT
To develop and introduce new materials and training opportunities for practitioners and decision-makers.	• Learning and development sessions delivered to LA staff, National Health Service, Children's Hearings Scotland, voluntary agencies staff, legal professionals and policy makers. This included current learning on attachment, child development, brain development and issues around contact. • Learning and development material around contact has been shared with West Lothian College and is informing the development of new training for Panel Members.
Work with Scottish Government, Looked After Children Steering Implementation Group and one or more LAs to map the care journey with an initial focus on permanence and adoption.	• Process mapping activity to identify areas of delay and duplication, carried out with all LAs PaCT has worked with. See Figure 15 (Gadda & Harris, 2014). • Permanence Flow Charts developed and widely distributed and used by LAs and Scottish Government.
To scope and then introduce a whole-systems approach in partnership with one or more Local Authorities	• Permanence and Care Excellence Programme developed in partnership with the Scottish Government, and being developed in two LAs from January 2014.(See PaCE evaluation).

7.c Appendix 3 : PaCT's achievements in relation to short-term outcomes and key evaluation questions

Short-term outcomes and key evaluation questions	Achievements
SO1 – Vision for permanency • What is the stakeholders' vision for permanency, and is it shared across different groups? • What value is there in having a shared perspective of and/or vision for permanency?	• Extracts from the Parliament's debate on permanence, the Education and Culture Committee's reports, and interviews with professionals mentioned above indicate that there is now a common vision for permanency in Scotland. This is in line with the definition promoted by PaCT focusing on the quality of care provided to children and the commitment to offer family membership in all care settings. • With PaCT's input, permanence planning is becoming part of everyday practice, with a greater number of professionals and decision-makers aware of its importance. • As Box 8 (Gadda & Harris, 2014) illustrates, a shared understanding leads to better, and faster, decision-making.

Short-term outcomes and key evaluation questions	Achievements
SO2 – Sharing practice [Strategic area (SA)– Promoting and supporting the ongoing development and learning of Social Work staff] • To what extent has practice shared by PaCT been taken up and embedded? • What benefits has this brought?	• A number of approaches have been used to share promising practice amongst practitioners and decision-makers from most Las. See **Error! Reference source not found.**). • As Box 5 (Gadda & Harris, 2014) illustrates, the PaCT has raised awareness amongst practitioners and decision-makers of areas of practice requiring further attention. This has resulted in a greater focus on these areas and a number of actions being implemented to bring about improvements. • Most Practice Exchange Workshop participants indicated that they enjoyed the opportunity to learn about best practice models, to exchange ideas with colleagues and to reflect on their own practice. Most intended to use key learning points from the events in their practice and some were also keen to share this learning with colleagues. • PaCT is sharing the knowledge it has gained in the past two years with local and national stakeholders, influencing changes at local and national levels.

Short-term outcomes and key evaluation questions	Achievements
SO3 – Use of evidence by staff and Panel Members [SA – Promoting and supporting the ongoing development and learning of Social Work staff] • How has increasing the knowledge of staff and panel members (concerning contact, child development, and attachment) influenced their understanding of the implications of their actions? • What impact has this had?	• The Understanding of Permanence questionnaire identified some issues in relation to Social Work staff's confidence in dealing with permanence cases. In light of this evidence, the PaCT has delivered learning and development sessions on a number of topics including attachment theory, brain development and best practice around contact. • Box 9 (Gadda & Harris, 2014) provides an example of how the L&D and Knowledge Exchange (KE) activities carried out by PaCT have supported staff and Panel Members in making use of evidence in their practice and decision-making. • As Box 9 (Gadda & Harris, 2014) illustrates, L&D sessions have increased participants' knowledge and confidence, which will in turn lead to better decision-making.
SO4 – Supporting concurrency models in Scotland [SA – Concurrency and early assessment and intervention] • How effective has the PaCT been at identifying and learning about concurrency models and practice? • What influence have PaCT had on developing concurrency models that work in Scotland?	• As Sections 4.4 and 5.4 (Gadda & Harris, 2014) illustrate, PaCT has had a key role to play in identifying suitable models of concurrency for implementation in Scotland, and in promoting the supporting their implementation. • As a result of these actions, one VA is now offering concurrent placements, whilst one LA has committed to purchase these placements. See Box 11 (Gadda & Harris, 2014). Without PaCT's input it is unlikely that such progress in implementing concurrent planning in Scotland would have been achieved.

Short-term outcomes and key evaluation questions	Achievements
SO5 – Quality and consistency of assessment/care planning [SA – Promoting and assisting Local Authorities in establishing processes and systems to ensure effective and timely permanence] • In what ways have PaCT influenced the quality of assessment/care planning in target sites? • Has the quality and consistency of assessment/care planning improved?	• Findings from the Understanding of Permanence questionnaire identified some key learning and development needs with regard to assessment and care planning. In response, the PaCT has developed and delivered a number of learning and development sessions to Social Work staff to assist them in these tasks. • PaCT has collated information about parenting assessment tools and identified models of good practice in Scotland, and shared these with LAs through L&D sessions and KE activities. • The PaCT has promoted the introduction of Early Assessment Teams and the implementation of concurrent planning. As a result, Early Assessment Teams have been introduced in two LAs with one of these now implementing concurrent planning. See Box 11 and Box 12 (Gadda & Harris, 2014). • The PaCT has promoted the use of Family and Social Work Agreements to ensure greater clarity of purpose and timescales for all those involved in assessing parents' capacity. Eight LAs are now considering or are in the process of implementing these agreements. • Peer reviews have supported staff in producing better quality care plans. See Box 13 (Gadda & Harris, 2014).

Short-term outcomes and key evaluation questions	Achievements
SO6 – Understanding of legal stakeholders [SA – Legal issues] • Has the understanding of legal stakeholders about the implications of their actions on the lives of looked after children changed?	• The PaCT worked with the Scottish Government and other stakeholders to review legal issues impacting on permanency planning and processes, and to consider changes to court rules with the aim of improving permanence. • The PaCT has supported Social Work and legal services staff in considering ways in which to develop a common understanding about what is in the child's best interests and to improve inter-agency work and relationships. • The PaCT has assisted with the drafting of procedural documentation which should help ensure clarity of roles in relation to case management decisions. • Issues with regard to the interplay between legal and social services identified by the PaCT are now being fed into the judicial reviews and the CHIP so that a common plan for the improvement of these services can emerge.

Short-term outcomes and key evaluation questions	Achievements
SO7 – Improving permanence systems - processes, procedures and planning. [SA – Promoting and assisting Local Authorities in establishing processes and systems to ensure effective and timely permanence] • How have permanence systems changed in target sites? • What impact has streamlining systems had on quality/consistency/staff effectiveness/outcomes for children? *Sub – theme: Developing Management Information (MI) Systems Where MI tools have been developed, has this helped LA staff to undertake their roles more effectively/efficiently?	• Through process mapping and case analysis, the PaCT has aided LAs in identifying key issues leading to delays in permanency planning and ways in which to address these. This has included indirect action (providing support, advice and training to professionals and decision makers) and, where required, direct action (e.g. additional capacity to progress permanence cases). • The PaCT has supported LAs in reviewing and updating their guidance to staff so that there is greater clarity with regard to processes, procedures and timescales. • Two flow charts were created :one of the permanence processes and one of the child care/protections systems. These have been widely distributed and used by practitioners, decision-makers and policy-makers. The charts provide clarity to all stakeholders about the process, and a common framework of reference. • PaCT has supported the development and improvement of LA's MI systems, so that children's progress through the system can be more readily and easily tracked. Box 14 provides an example of how this work has been carried out. • This work is now informing the development of a national data set for permanence.

Short-term outcomes and key evaluation questions	Achievements
SO8 – Understanding of children, parents and carers • How has PaCT's work influenced children's, parents' and carers' understanding of the care planning and permanence process (in target sites)?	• The work the team has carried out with Children and Families Social Work staff and Managers, as well as other key stakeholders such as Panel Members and Reporters, will result in professionals being clearer and feeling more confident about their knowledge and understanding about permanence planning and processes and the need to remain child-centred and family-focused at all times. This, in turn, will lead to better practice with children, young people and their parents and carers, and to them having access to better, more up-to-date information that will further their understanding of permanence planning and processes.

7.d Appendix 4: Case study examples of work PaCT has carried out in partnership with two Local Authorities

Case Study One: Local Authority A

- Local authority A includes some of the most severely deprived communities, and has some of the highest numbers of Child Protection registrations. Aware of the difficulties it faced, local authority A requested PaCT's assistance in developing and implementing an improvement plan in their permanence planning processes.
- Between September and November 2012, CELCIS and Council staff worked together to establish key areas of permanence activity that required action. Since then an extensive range of activities and support has been delivered, such as: process mapping, management information system development, strengthening multi-disciplinary relationships, support and mentoring and contact workshops.

I think it [the PaCT] had a definite positive impact. … [It] honed people's skills, reminded them of…well, actually, showed them the best practice, not just reminded them, and looked at strategies to put in place and move forward and I think they genuinely have moved forward... the procedures and awareness of permanence,

even though it had been highlighted as something that was of key interest when I started, the difference was palpable (Team Manager).

- By offering consistent and ongoing support, the PaCT's consultants developed strong relationships with staff in the authority and, as the Services Manager puts it, were 'accepted as part of our team'. This ensured that staff felt comfortable in seeking support and skills development opportunities from the consultants proactively:

  … [staff] really valued [the support] actually, and sought [consultant] out, used the time appropriately, asked advice … (Services Manager).

- The learning and development sessions, as well as the knowledge sharing strategies, were well received by stakeholders; with many noting the positive impact this had had on practitioners' confidence and ability to progress permanency:

  I think the stuff with [PaCT consultant] and the teaching…well, not the teaching but the…sort of training and sharing of ideas and sharing of how to use evidence and how to present has been really helpful, as have the more concrete procedures that have followed. […] having somebody there in a consultative role has helped staff to feel more confident about how to share that practice and make sure that they're following up…(Team manager).

- This, in turn, leads to improvements in practice:

  I think any time when you're sharing best practice openly and that becomes the model in how you work in a team just contributes to the improvement of the team. […] I think just…even just having the discussion, making it part of ordinary practice, part of your ordinary day-to-day work, that you discuss research, you discuss the law, you discuss theories, and then that sort of underpins what you're doing (Team manager).

<u>Case Study Two: Local Authority Q</u>

- When PaCT met with authority Q, social work managers expressed concerns that the needs of children were not always the basis for contact arrangements. It was agreed that PaCT would support authority Q in reviewing its guidance on contact for Social Work staff.
- Between October 2013 and April 2014, 11 learning and development sessions were delivered to over 100 staff including front line managers, reviewing officers, Social Workers, Family Support Workers, Panel Members and Reporters. Overall, the sessions were very well received, with some participants commenting that:

When planning contact I will use the tools that were raised at today's training. Good preparation for contact, ensuring that the child is paramount in any assessment. […] Enjoyed this training – it was very well presented and easy to understand (Social Worker).

Confirmed knowledge of contact assessment. Identified appropriate resources/reading for future plans. […] Extremely useful training (Social Worker).

It has assisted me in questioning Social Workers about their recommendations. […] Useful and enjoyable day (Panel Member).

- For most participants (85%), having a detailed knowledge of the aims and objectives of contact was essential to meeting the needs of children involved in permanence processes. However, just under a third of participants had no previous training on issues about contact and contact agreements (29%). Of those who indicated that they had had no previous training, 11 were Panel Members, nine were Social Workers and eight were Family Support Workers. These Learning and Development sessions have contributed to addressing this gap.

About CELCIS

CELCIS is the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland. Together with partners, we are working to improve the lives of all looked after children in Scotland. We do so by providing a focal point for the sharing of knowledge and the development of best practice, by providing a wide range of services to improve the skills of those working with looked after children, and by placing the interests of children at the heart of our work.

For more information

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