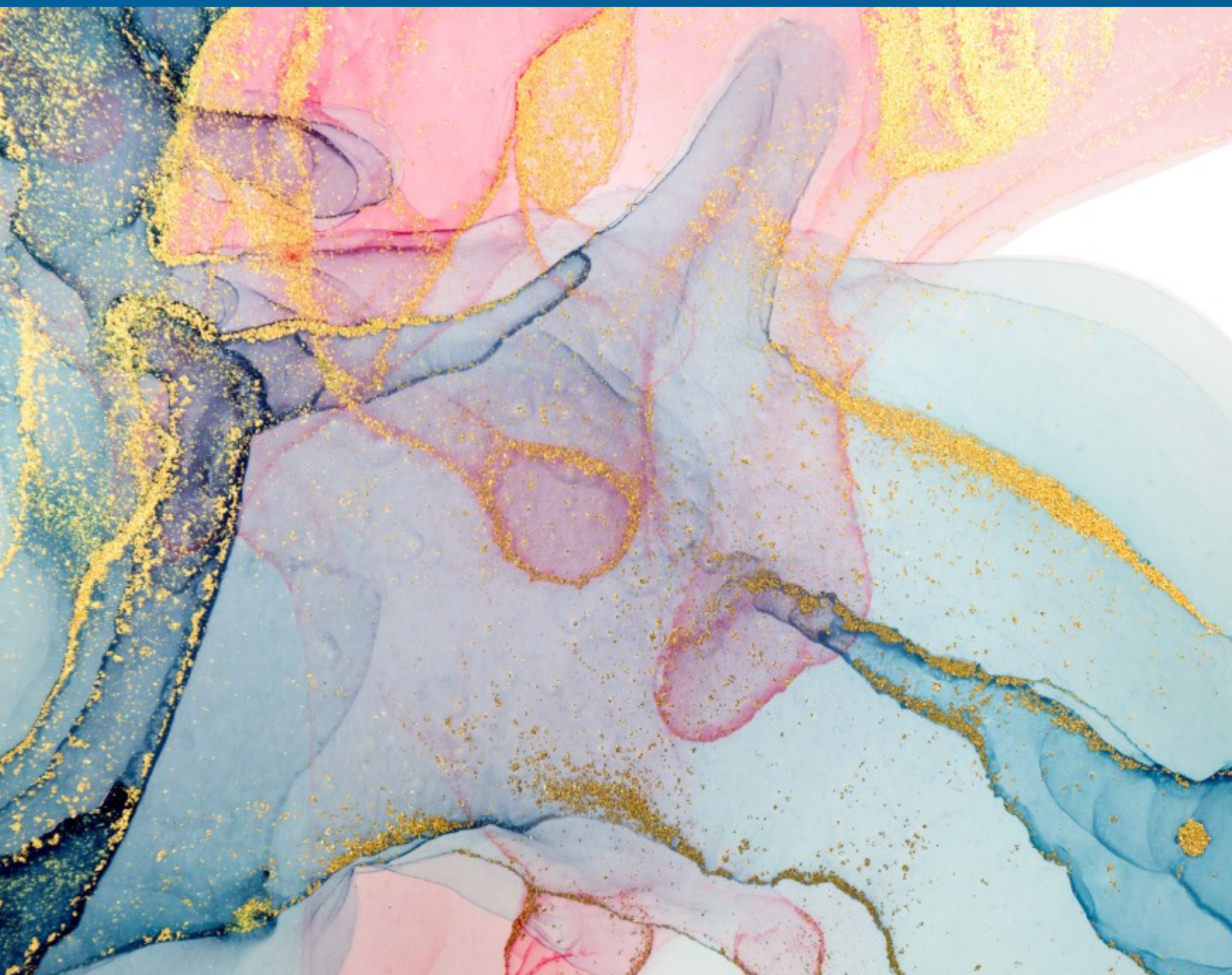


Early Permanence: Information for parents



Why have you been given this leaflet?

You have been given this leaflet because your Local Authority are currently considering whether you are able to provide 'good enough' care to your child or children. 'Good enough' is a term used in Court.

The Local Authority are worried that you may not be able to make the changes your child (ren) needs fast enough for your child(ren) not to suffer 'significant harm'. Because of these concerns, the Local Authority are currently considering whether it would be best for your child(ren) to be adopted. This may be very difficult for you to think about; therefore, sources of further information and support are listed at the end of this leaflet.

What is Early Permanence?

Early Permanence is a way of providing children with the security of a safe permanent home, as soon as possible, should they need it. Having a permanent home offers children security and stability that can benefit their physical, social and emotional development.

Staying in foster care is not always good for young children, especially if they have to move to more than one foster carer whilst the Court are making decisions about your child(ren)'s future. Your child(ren) may develop a strong attachment to their foster carer(s), but then have to move again to an adoptive family if the Court decides that your child(ren) cannot return to your care.

How does it work?

Early Permanence Carers are carers who have been approved to adopt, but who have also been approved as foster carers. Your child(ren) would be placed with these carers in either an 'Early permanence placement. An Early Permanence placement means that your child (ren) will receive foster care as a looked after child(ren), until the Court decides whether your child(ren) should return to your care or to a family member.

If the Court orders that the children return to your care or to a family member, these carers will support the child(ren)'s return and they will only ever have been foster carers. However, if the Court grant a 'placement order' (for your child(ren) to be adopted), these carers will then be able to go on to adopt your child(ren). This means that your child(ren) will not have to go through a further change in carers and they will avoid further disruption and it will give them stability as quickly as possible.

Does Early Permanence affect the chances of my child(ren) remaining in or returning to my care?

No. If the Court finds you are able to provide 'good enough' care to your child or children, in the timescales that the child(ren) needs, they will return to you. If the Court decide you cannot safely care for your child(ren), they would then consider if any family members can provide 'good enough' care. If they can, your child(ren) will return to their wider family. This is exactly the same as if the children were with traditional foster carers or a family member.

Can I meet the Early Permanence carers?

You are often able to meet the Early Permanence carer(s) if you want to, and you may see them at contact sessions. However; safety concerns for you, your child(ren) and the carers will come first, so this will be decided on a case by case basis. It is important for you to remember that the carers are not part of the Court proceedings or decision making and will only be told what they need to know in order to look after the child(ren). Your child (ren) is likely to benefit from you giving him/her/them positive messages about the carer (s), even though it may be very emotionally hard for you to do so.

You may find the idea of meeting the person(s) who may go on to adopt your child(ren) extremely hard. However, such meetings mean that children who go on to be adopted will have first-hand stories about their birth parents from their adopted parents.

What should I do next?

- Share this leaflet with people important to you (family/friends/professionals) and talk it through together.
- Work openly and honestly with the Local Authority and be honest with yourself.
- Tell the Local Authority immediately if there is anyone in your family or friends network who may be able to care for your child(ren) so that they can be assessed as carers.
- Get advice about how to talk to your child/ren about the Early Permanence Carers; however painful the situation is for you, your child(ren) needs your permission to feel safe, secure and happy with the carer(s) whilst the Court are deciding what is best for the future.

For further information/support:

- Your child's Social Worker
- Your solicitor or legal representative
- The Local Authority in which you live will be able to direct you to where independent support for families can be accessed when adoption is being discussed, or in the event that adoption takes place.
- [Birth Links](#) is a support service for birth relatives affected by adoption. It aims to provide advice, support, information and guidance and is an independent service that is part of Adoption West.

