# Permanently Progressing?

## Building secure futures for children: Phase 2 Middle childhood

### Information for Chief Social Work Officers, Heads of Service and Service Managers

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*Permanently Progressing?* is an important longitudinal study seeking to better understand the experiences of care experienced children in Scotland by exploring:

children’s routes to the range of permanence destinations (with parents, kinship carers, foster carers, or adoptive parents),

* their experiences, wellbeing and outcomes,
* how they keep in touch with parents, brothers and sisters with whom they no longer live, and other family members and people who are important to them, and
* what sources of support are available to them, their families and those who care for them.

We are examining experiences and pathways to permanence for all 1,836 children who became looked after in 2012-13 when they were aged five or under. There are three phases to this study, tracking children’s progress at key life stages. Phase 1 focused on early childhood, Phase 2 (the current phase) is focused on middle childhood and Phase 3 will explore adolescence/early adulthood.

Reports and summaries for Phase 1 are available at: [Permanently Progressing? reports and summaries](https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/faculties/social-sciences/our-research/research-areas/centre-for-child-wellbeing-and-protection/research/permanently-progressing/).

#### How can you help?

We are asking social workers and service managers in your local authority to help by:

* assisting us to identify participants for survey and interviews,
* forwarding information on the study to kinship carers, foster carers, adoptive parents and birth parents, and
* completing the survey questionnaires on a sample of the children identified for the study.

We are very grateful to the social workers and service managers who worked with us in Phase 1, and we hope you will participate in Phase 2. We also welcome involvement from local authorities who weren’t involved in Phase 1 but wish to be involved in Phase 2.

#### Research Outline (December 2020 – September 2024)

Phase 2 builds on the findings of Phase 1 and is revisiting the children in middle childhood (now aged between 7 and 13 years). The study involves analysing information from administrative data, questionnaires and interviews:

##### Administrative Data

We will be analysing administrative data provided in a secure form by the Scottish Government. Children Looked After Statistics (CLAS data) and Child Protection data up to 2022 for the 1,836 children in this study will be linked to education data from: the national Pupil Census (including on additional support needs); Attendance, Absences and Exclusion data; and the Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels data.

##### Surveys

In Phase 1, 19 out of 32 local authorities completed surveys detailing the experiences of 433 of the 1,836 children. This provided valuable information for children, families, practitioners, and policy makers. If your local authority participated in Phase 1 we will ask you for updates on the status of the children in your local authority who were part of the original sub-sample. Social worker and caregiver surveys will focus on the child’s progress and wellbeing, and will be distributed to social workers, kinship carers, foster carers and adoptive parents. We would welcome participation by local authorities who were not able to take part in Phase 1 but would like to be involved in Phase 2.

##### Qualitative Interviews

We will be conducting interviews with:

**Children**  
These interviews will explore the child’s perspective on being part of a kinship, foster or adoptive family, their connections with other important people, school and friendships, and experiences of support services.

**Kinship carers, foster carers and adoptive parents**  
These will explore children’s development and progress, family and relationships, and the sources of support that have helped, would have helped, or might help in future.

**Parents who have a child living permanently away from them**  
These will explore how parents keep in touch (in person or via information exchange) and how this has changed over time, what supports they have, the relationships they have with the child and the family who the child lives with and how these relationships have changed over time.

#### How to become involved

To confirm that you would like your local authority to take part in Phase 2 please email Helen Whincup, Principal Investigator - <mailto:helen.whincup@stir.ac.uk> - and include the contact details of the person in your local authority best placed to help, ideally by the beginning of August 2021.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please email Helen.

