

# Working Together to... Reduce Drift and Delay



## Introduction

Aberdeen City Council recognised that children were experiencing most drift and delay when they could not be returned to parental care and the plan was for the child to be placed in a kinship arrangement with extended family members.

To understand why there were delays in the system we began gathering data about the time it took to reach each milestone in the child's journey and this gave a clear indication that the longest delays were being experienced in the assessment of kinship carers.

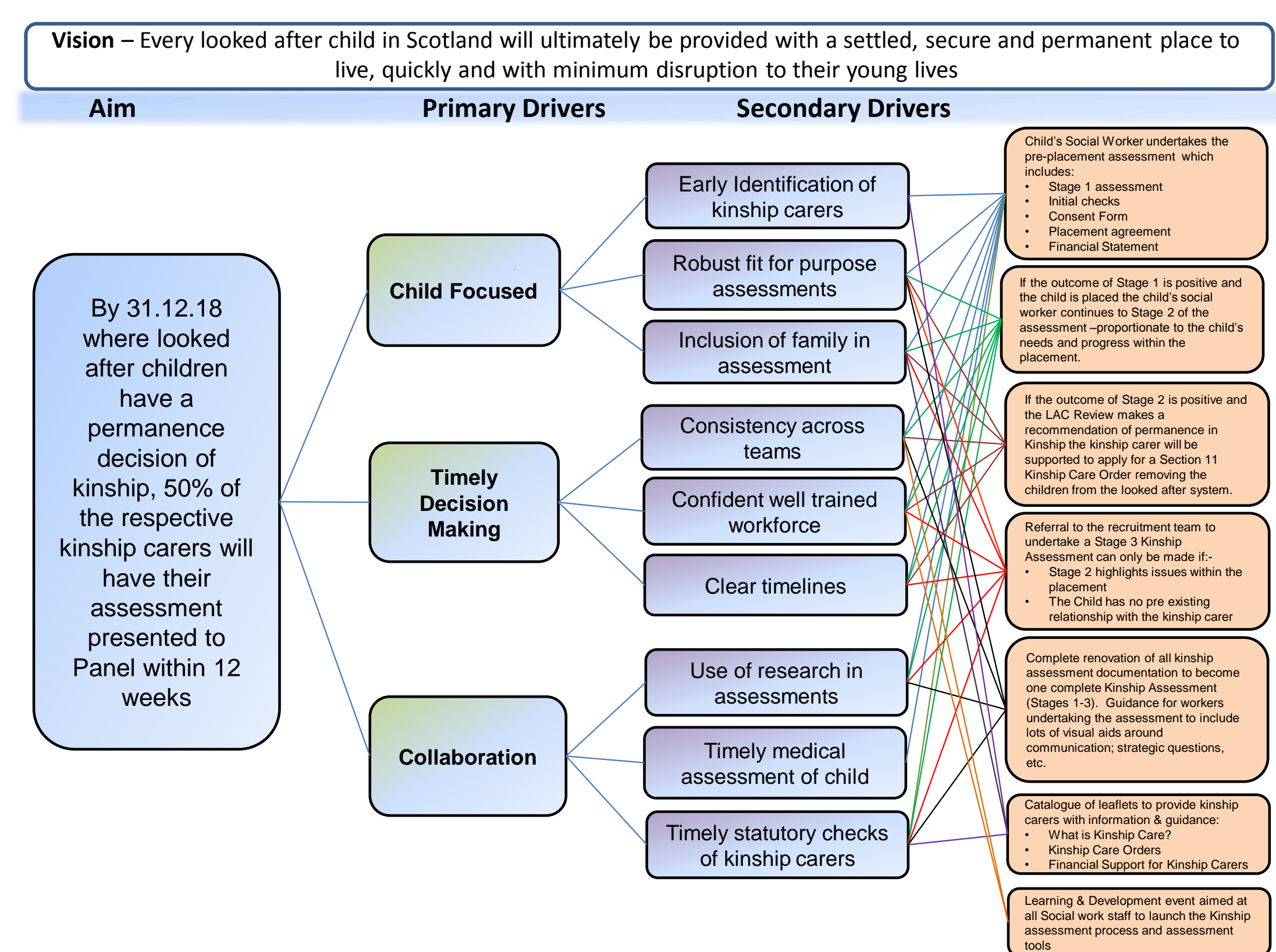
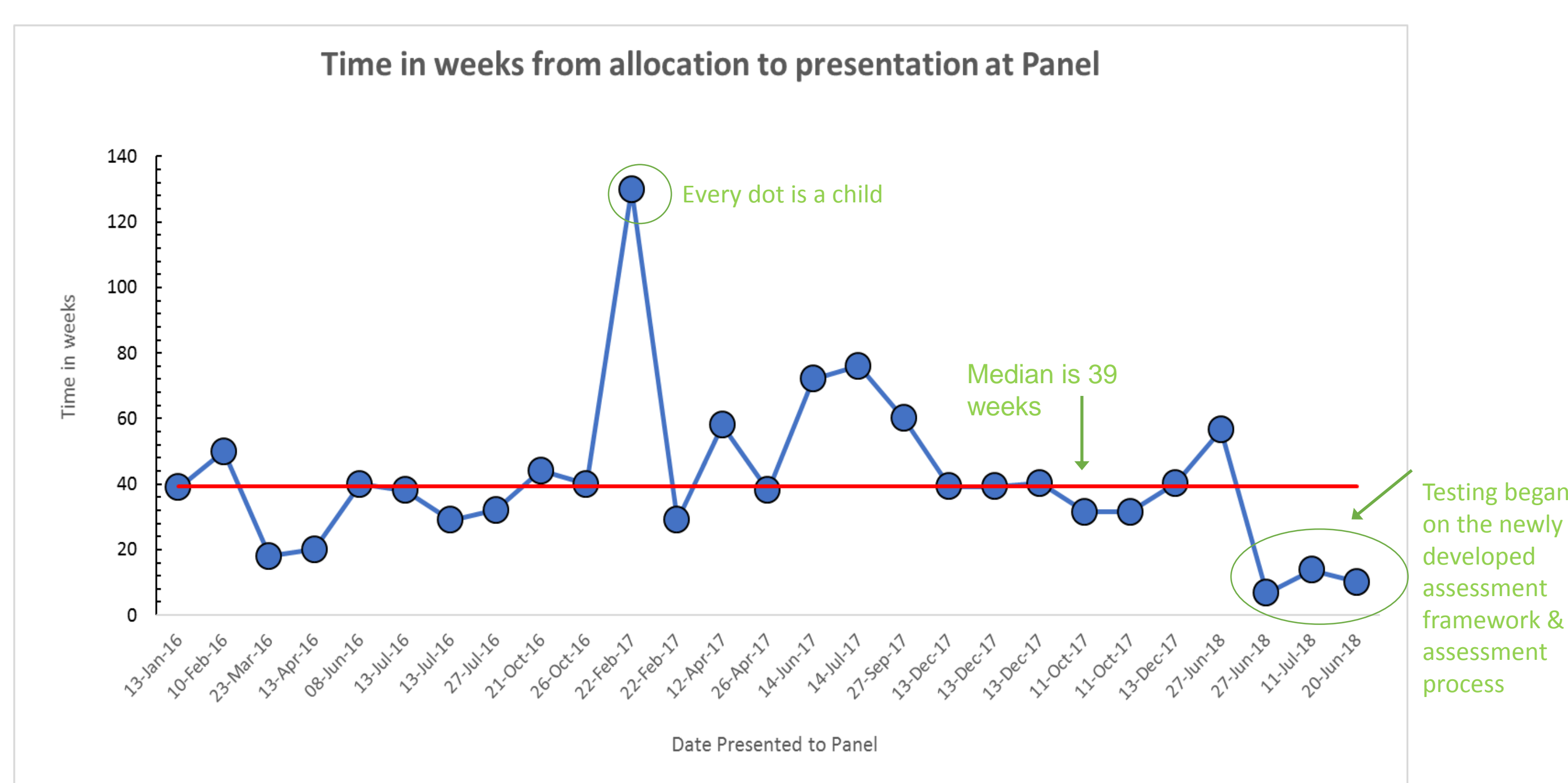
Using the data we spoke to the workers who carried out the assessments to try and understand what they believed were the factors impacting on assessments being completed timeously – the feedback highlighted overwhelming caseloads; conflicting demands of caseloads and an assessment framework that was not fit for purpose.

We drew on the skills & knowledge from colleges in the sector; we ensured our framework held true to the principles of the GIRFEC national practice model and we researched the models used in New Zealand and Holland where there is a high level of successful and sustainable kinship placements.

Our draft assessment framework began to undergo testing and the initial results showed that assessments were being completed quicker; the new process was easier to follow and the assessment itself was proportionate to the needs of the child and the placement.

## Aim

By 31.12.18 where looked after children have a permanence decision of kinship, 50% of the respective kinship carers will have their assessments presented to the Alternative Family Care Panel within 12 weeks.



The project group agreed that focussing on the assessment framework would be the priority.

## Next Steps

The new assessment tool will continue to be tested in a range of conditions so we continue to gather evidence that supports our theory of change.

The initial results are positive and we want to be sure that the new process continues to reduce drift & delay before we begin to think about embedding the new process and framework into practice.

## Key learning

**STAKEHOLDERS** – engage with everyone involved in the process and pay particular attention to what the people who do the work are telling you.

**RESEARCH** - don't reinvent the wheel – whatever your improvement work involves I'm sure someone else, somewhere else will have tried something similar.

**DATA** – without it you can't be sure that you need to make improvements and without it you don't know that any changes you have made have led to improvement.

## Resources and Learning



## Achievements

The skills and knowledge I have gained supported an opportunity to work at Celcis as a Permanence Consultant (Improvement Adviser). This role provided me with a wealth of experience in leading and delivering large scale, multi-agency improvement projects as well as teaching the model for improvement to a range of sectors on a National basis.