



Gwasanaeth  
**Mabwysiadu**  
Cenedlaethol

National  
**Adoption**  
Service

**Achieving More Together / Cyflawni Mwy Gyda'n Gilydd**

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# The NAS Post Adoption Training and Development Framework

- These materials have been developed for the National Adoption Service for adoptive families.
- Their purpose is to provide a learning and development resource for adopters post placement.
- These tools can be used by groups or by individuals.
- There is lots of information in the notes below each slide so it is important to read these too as they provide much more information, and some useful ideas for more reading.

# What is this course about?

## Legal:

By the end of this session we hope you will have learnt about:

- The system for reviewing and visiting once a child is placed
- Parental responsibility
- Making an application for an adoption order
- Adoption support services
- Post adoption contact

# Parental Responsibility (PR)

- What is it?
  - 'All the rights, duties, power, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property' (s3(1) Children Act 1989)
- Who will have had PR for your child(ren)?
  - **Up until care proceedings:** birth mother and birth father (if either married to the mother or his name is on the birth certificate)
  - **When the interim care order / care order made:** birth parents and the local authority (local authority is 'senior partner')

# Who has PR?

- **When the placement order is made:** the adoption agency and birth parents
- **Upon placement with you:** the adoption agency (senior partner), you and birth parents
- Who decides on the exercise of PR when it is shared?
  - An agreement between you and the adoption agency sets out how you may exercise PR and what the AA will still want to be involved with
- **Upon adoption order being made:** you obtain full PR as if you were birth parents

# Exercising PR

- During placement and before adoption order an agreement is made on who exercises PR.
  - Examples of common issues that need to be resolved are:
    - Hair cuts
    - Which GP surgery
    - Planned surgery (e.g. tonsillectomy)
    - Change of surname (see later)Major surgery (for a serious health condition)
    - Nursery / school place
    - Use of infant paracetamol
    - Use of homeopathic treatment
    - Referral to CAMHS

# Change of Names

- Before the adoption order:
- First names:
  - Only if outside the bounds of reasonableness or it provides a security risk
- Surnames:
  - May NOT be changed before adoption order made without the consent of all those with PR or an order of the court

# Change of Names: After Adoption Order

- First names:
  - May legally change first and middle names but bear in mind the child's identity and accounting to them later on for decisions you make now
- Surnames:
  - Will be changed to your name upon the making of the adoption order



# Reviewing and Visiting Once Placed

- Once the child is placed with you there will be review meetings
- These will be chaired by the independent reviewing officer (IRO) whose task is to review and monitor the child's case until such time as an adoption order is made.
- The IRO ensures that all responsible for implementing a decision are identified and any failures brought to the attention of a senior manager. In particular they have to consider whether delay in making decisions is breaching the child's human rights

# What Do Reviews Look At?

- Whether the child should still be placed for adoption (how is the placement going?)
- The child's welfare, progress and development, and whether any changes need to be made to assist development
- The progress of Life Journey Work
- The existing arrangements for contact and whether they should continue or be modified
- The exercise of parental responsibility
- The arrangements for adoption support and whether they should continue or be reassessed
- Arrangements for health care and educational needs

# How Often Do Reviews Take Place?

- Not more than 4 weeks after placement
- Not more than 3 months after the first review
- Not more than 6 months after that
- Every 6 months until an adoption order is made or the placement ends
  
- Reviews will take place at your house. Who will attend?
  - You
  - The child(ren)'s social worker
  - Your social worker / support worker
  - Someone from education or health if additional needs

# Visits

- Usually from the child(ren)'s social worker
- How often do visits take place? As a minimum:
  - Within one week of placement
  - At least once a week until the first review (within 4 weeks)
  - After the first review, to be decided at the review on frequency (depending on support plan / level of need for support)

# DISCUSSION

- Imagine how you could make the most of both reviews and visits.
- Those who have experience, share information about reviews and visits

# Making the Application for an Adoption Order

- Find out what happens in your region – do you make the application or does adoption agency do it on your behalf?
- The application is usually made to the court where the care and placement orders were made
- Confidentiality is maintained by the court issuing a serial number which is used instead of any names

# What You Need To File:

- The application form A58, plus three copies
- The court fee (currently £170.00)
- A certified copy of the child(ren)'s birth certificate(s) – provided by SW
- A certified copy of the placement order
- A certified copy of your marriage or civil partnership certificate if appropriate
- Keep copies for yourself and send by secure route

# What Happens Next...?

- The court informs the birth parents that an application has been made and the date of the first 'directions' hearing
- You will not need to attend the first direction hearing
- The hearing ensures that everyone has been notified and everything filed (including the Annex A Report )



# What Can Sometimes Happen...?

- Birth parents may apply for 'leave' (permission) to oppose the making of the adoption order
- They have to prove that there has been a change in circumstances and, if there has been a change, the court will decide whether it is in the child's interests for them to be able to oppose the application
- If the court does grant leave, there is no need to panic! They would then have to prove that it is not in the child's best interests for him/her to be adopted (a very high hurdle)

# The Final Adoption Hearing

- Birth parents will have been given notice and may turn up
- Arrangements are made so that you do not see each other
- Some judges are happy for you not to go, others like you to be there
- The child(ren) do not attend (the judge gives leave for them not to attend)

# The Celebration Hearing (or 'Adoption Visit')

- Takes place approximately 4 weeks after the adoption order is made (to be sure there has been no appeal lodged by the birth parents – very unusual)
- The birth parents do not know this is taking place
- Usually the same court and judge / magistrates who made the adoption order
- Can be informal or formal depending on the judge
- Good to have the photos!

# Adoption Support Services

- Where is the adoption support plan formulated?
  - With the child and the CAR/B
  - At the matching stage
  - Before the adoption order is made
- You have the legal right to request an assessment of adoption support needs at any time until the child is 18.
- It is a sign of strength, not weakness, to seek support – most adoptive families need help at some stage

# Contact for Adoptive Families

- Before the adoption order:
  - Interim care order or care order – LA has a duty to provide reasonable contact. There is likely to have been regular contact, usually face to face.
  - when placement order made but child not placed, face to face contact will continue but usually at a reduced frequency, with a plan to cease contact a short time before introductions start
  - Upon placement, there is unlikely to be face to face contact

# After the Adoption Order

- The child's care plan will have a plan for post adoption contact
- As adoptive parents you have agreed, in good faith, to that plan
- Remember you will have to account to your child(ren) for your actions in later years!
- If the contact arrangements become such that they are not in the child's interests, then you can change them
- You need to inform the Adoption Agency, in writing, of your reasons for reducing or ceasing the contact that was agreed

- This course is part of a series developed by the National Adoption Service to support adopters after approval.
- These can be accessed at the National Adoption Service website.
- Please talk to your adoption support team for further information.