



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Cenedlaethol

National
Adoption
Service

Modernising planning for post adoption contact

Achieving More Together
/ Cyflawni Mwy Gyda'n Gilydd

Where are we now?



- Virtually all children placed for adoption today have a plan for indirect 'letterbox' contact once or twice a year, but many of these may not be maintained.
- From the NAS contact audit in 2022, approximately 15% of children had a plan for any type of direct contact – this is very close to the reported figure from a research briefing in 2020, which found that amongst the 4 nations of the UK, Wales had the lowest proportion of children with a plan for direct contact (16%) compared to 54% in Northern Ireland.

[Post-adoption contact in the 4 nations of the UK, Jones, McDonald & Brooks \(2020\)](#)

What is the purpose of contact?



- Build or maintain relationships.
- Assure a child they are loved and remembered.
- Ease the pain of separation and loss.
- Give permission to settle in a new family.
- Support reparation and recovery after abuse.
- Provide a reality check.
- Reassure that birth relatives are alive and well.
- Help children to understand their history and identity (particularly for black and ethnic minority children).
- Support life story work and allow children to ask questions about why they do not live with birth parents.

Baynes and Neil (2015)

*How can we best achieve this for each child - direct, indirect, or remote?
If direct contact is not safe, how else can we meet these needs?*

Guidance for contact planning



Comprehensive guidance was published in the NAS Good Practice Guide on Contact 2019

- How much has practice in Wales changed over the past 4 years – to what extent are decisions about contact influenced by the GPG?
- How can we promote and embed best practice in a pragmatic way, given high levels of staff turnover?

Contact planning tool

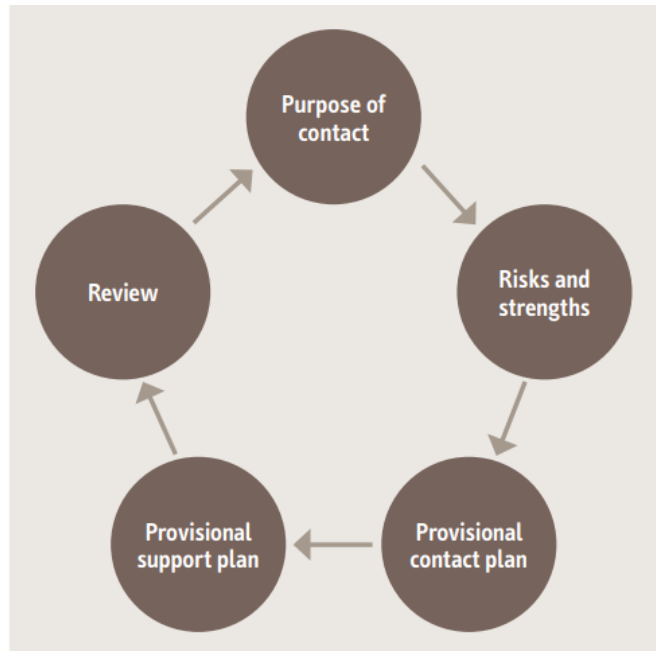


Something is needed, that helps practitioners draw up and revise plans for contact, which is:

- Based on the needs of the child
- Adapted to individual circumstances – *not a formulaic response*
- Best practice - drawing on research evidence
- Simple to use and avoids duplication

A potential resource: Contact: Making good decisions for children in public law Planning Tool

Developed by Elsbeth Neil at UEA



‘Planning contact for children in permanent placement is a dynamic process, rather than a one-off event’



‘Although contact plans are for children they are enacted by adults and may be helped or hindered by relationships between them and the support that does (or does not) exist.’

Achieving more together / Cyflawni mwy gyda'n gilydd

Documents



Brief guidance - based on Beth Neil tool and aligned with the Contact Good Practice Guide – 4 pages

Contact planning tool - for a specific child, to accompany the brief guidance – 2 pages

N.B. These are not intended to replace the Good Practice Guide, but to complement/to be used alongside it.

Principles and aims



To provide practitioners with practical tools to make plans for contact that:

- Consider a child's likely needs in the longterm
- Reflect best practice
- Are evidence based
- Informed by research

Implementation



The guidance and planning tool are to be used in making plans and preparing key documents from an early stage, by taking practitioners through a structured process, which supports reflective practice, while avoiding duplication of effort.

- Preparation of CAR/B for Should be Placed for Adoption Decision
- Linking/Matching
- Adoption Support Plan
- Reviewing post adoption support needs