

# THE DISRUPTION OF ADOPTION AND PERMANENT FOSTER PLACEMENTS

A Scottish Perspective

PRACTICE BRIEFING 3: KEY MESSAGES FOR THE  
CHILD'S JOURNEY, MATCHING, INTRODUCTIONS AND  
PRE- AND POST-DISRUPTION PLACEMENT SUPPORT



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## KEY MESSAGES

Key messages for the child's journey, matching, introductions and pre and post placement support include:

- Following reception into accommodation, reunification processes need to be undertaken as soon as possible so that decisions regarding permanence for those children who cannot return home are not delayed. Delays in finding permanent placements for some of the children in this study added to their insecurities and increased challenges when they were finally placed.
- Introducing a child or young person to a new permanent placement needs to be well-planned and based on an assessment of the child and carers/adopters' needs. Consideration needs to be given to the timing of introductions to ensure that they are not rushed. They should take place at an appropriate time when key professionals are available, so that the child and family can be supported through this key transition.
- The importance and value of maintaining children's previous relationships needs to be given a higher priority. The view that maintaining existing relationships can confuse and upset children should be challenged. The impact of cutting off relationships on children's sense of self and their capacity to form and sustain future relationships needs to be considered.
- Both foster and adoptive carers need to be adequately supported to meet the needs a child may have in the short, medium, and longer term. They must have access to flexible and responsive support over the lifetime of the placement, including (timely) support for mental health needs.
- Recommendations arising out of the assessments of either of carers/adopters or children should be taken seriously. Such recommendations are made following an extensive assessment process and should not be discarded lightly. Ignoring or neglecting them is likely to come at a cost and should only be done following further assessment.
- There is a need to ensure that additional support needs of children are robustly assessed at an early stage and that agencies work together to ensure that appropriate services and supports are put in place to meet such needs.
- Agencies need to take account of children's ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the permanence process.
- The importance of life story work and for professional staff and carers/adopters to feel confident speaking to children about their stories, in terms of skills and knowledge and time, needs to be recognised.
- Given their previous life experiences, many children in permanent placement will have experienced trauma, and consequently there is a need to anticipate and plan for future placement difficulties and how children, young people and carers will be supported when such issues arise. This is particularly relevant in respect of anticipating difficulties in adolescence.

## HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

For more information or a copy of the full study, contact:

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