

# THE DISRUPTION OF ADOPTION AND PERMANENT FOSTER PLACEMENTS

A Scottish Perspective

PRACTICE BRIEFING 5: KEY MESSAGES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH



## STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Our study drew on a range of reports and minutes of meetings held following the disruption of permanent placements, conducted by or on behalf of local authorities. Using documentary analysis enabled us to examine how information about the reasons, management and learning from disruptions were recorded, and to reflect on the 'voices' that were present or absent in those minutes.

We did not directly gather data from children and young people, carers, adopters, social workers or others directly affected by these events. Other studies, including the Beyond the Adoption Order studies in England and Wales, and research currently being undertaken in Scotland by Polly Cowan at the

University of Edinburgh, have involved interview methods that add further important sources of information from the perspective of people directly affected by adoption breakdowns.

In this study, the substantial difference in the number of adoption and permanent foster placement disruptions made it difficult to compare the two beyond basic descriptions.

The format, content and quality of the minutes and reports varied greatly across our sample. Some included more than ten pages of detailed information and narrative, while some summarised the content of the review as bullet points over two pages.

## KEY MESSAGES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There is a need to consider how we disseminate information, and to ensure that what we know from research is used to inform practice.

There is a need for further research in respect of:

- Managing introduction processes
- Understanding the impact of children and young people's previous life experiences on the permanence process.
- The barriers to undertaking meaningful life story work with children and young people in the permanence process.
- The barriers to supporting the mental health of children and young people in permanent placements.
- Understanding children and young people's perspectives on and experiences of disruption to long-term fostering arrangements.

## HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

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

Tim Armstrong, [t.armstrong@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:t.armstrong@dundee.ac.uk) or  
Maggie Grant, [margaret.grant@afascotland.com](mailto:margaret.grant@afascotland.com)