

Children and Young People Committee

AD16

Inquiry into Adoption

I am emailing following a letter received from St David's Children society concerning our experiences and views of adoption.

Myself and my husband were approved by the St David's panel at the end of October 2011. We made an initial telephone enquiry about adoption in November 2010 which was shortly followed by an initial visit by a St David's social worker. We felt that this initial meeting was helpful as it enabled us to better understand the process and to carefully consider adopting. We decided to make an initial application to adopt to St David's and attended a very useful 3-day preparation course in January 2011. The course dealt with lots of difficult issues and was tough going. The course was organised as an initial 2-day course followed by a third day a week later. We felt this was appropriate as it gave us time to assimilate the information we were provided with. We made a formal application following the course and began the assessment process in late March/ early April 2011. As there was a delay between the application and assessment beginning, we attended an additional workshop that told us what to expect of the assessment process before it began. We also attended a workshop about introduction and meeting the children's social workers shortly before going to panel. The workshops were useful forums to discuss the adoption process and enabled us to meet others going through the process and thus expand our support network.

We did find the assessment process hard and long at the time but now after the fact, we understand the need for such an assessment process. The assessment process was made easier by having a good relationship with our assessing social worker. We particularly felt challenged when having to cite examples of our experience with children. To have some of the experience listed on the competencies you would need to have already had children.

We went to matching panel in December 2011 and began introductions on 9th January 2012. Our two boys have now been living with us nearly 3 weeks and we can say it was all worth it. We continue to receive weekly visits from both our social worker and the children's. They have both been supportive, we are also aware of having access to the support group at St David's.

The entire process has been quick for us and we believe this can be attributed to the professionalism of St David's and the fact they solely dedicate themselves to the work of adoption and not other child protection issues. We have also been impressed with the swiftness of action and care that the local authority, from which our two boys came, have demonstrated.

The media has focussed upon many negatives of the adoption system in recent months and whilst there may be issues, there are also many positives and the adoption process can not be rushed at the cost of diligence when a child's future is at stake.

I hope you find the above comments helpful and wish you well in your enquiry.