

Children and Young People Committee

Inquiry into Adoption

Pre-consultation response from
Pembrokeshire County Council,
Children's Social Services

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1. What is the main issue of concern in relation to adoption in Wales?

Consultation with Adoption workers and Social workers has identified the following issues.

Availability of adopters- We need to increase the availability of adopters in Wales in order to maintain cultural links and contact for children with siblings/birth parents if required. A shortfall of adopters may cause delays, and also may limit options during the matching process. If a child has specific needs this may also cause significant delay, and may reduce the chance of identifying adoptive parents. There is a feeling that this is not reflecting the rights and needs of the child.

The Public Law Outline- the PLO process has caused delays, in particular in relation to requests for completion of viability assessments during court proceedings. Good adoptive parent/s may be denied the opportunity to see their child's first steps, first solid foods, etc, these are important bonding times for parents. It is unlikely that the PLO will change so we must consider amending the Adoption Process to minimise delay. When there is an obvious case for adoption e.g. relinquished babies after 6 weeks or where the child is a younger sibling of children already removed for adoption., we should be doing Concurrent Placement in line with the way that Kensington and Chelsea have adopted this way of working (not as in Brighton and Devon) and as Coram did for their research on attachment. At the 'Should be Placed' decision making stage the Adoption Panel should be advised that it is the intention to seek the court's permission (if the courts are involved) to place concurrently

If you had to choose one objective for the Committee to focus on, what would it be? How would this benefit adopted children and adopted parents?

A focus on concurrent planning would ensure adopted children are placed within their adoptive families at an earlier age which would be beneficial for attachments and healthy emotional development.

2. Do you agree with the priorities identified by the Committee and are these the most important issues for the Committee to focus on? Or is anything you think is missing that should be included in the inquiry?

These are agreed and discussion also needs to take place concerning a national Adoption Service to allow more cross authority working and negate need for huge expense in placing children outside the consortium or authority area. When looking at barriers the paperwork process should also be examined as further delay around placement of a child with its adoptive family, is often dictated by when the formal

notices are sent out, often a few weeks after decisions are made. This is not placing the interests of the child at the forefront.