

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Adoption and Fostering

Co-Chairmen: Edward Timpson MP, Tom Harris MP

Secretary: Jessica Lee MP; Treasurer: Lisa Nandy

22nd February 2012, 4.00 pm in the House of Commons

In Attendance: N.B. Includes only those that signed the attendance sheet

Edward Timpson	MP
Jessica Lee	MP
Chris Smith	CVAA
Christine Prickett	CVAA
Mary Lucking	DfE
Jan Fishwick	PACT
Jim Clifford	Baker Tilly
Lyn Charlton	After Adoption
Alistair Griffin	After Adoption
Colin Pettigrew	Sefton
Jonathan Pearce	Adoption UK
Erika Pennington	Adoption UK
Carolyn Oliver	Barnardos
Ian Crompton	Faith in Families
Jeanne Kaniuk	Coram
Alice Noon	Coram
Caroline Davis	Families for Children
Judy Wright	Independent Panel Chair
Helen Oakwater	Blueyonder
Rachel Falconer	CAFCASS
Terry Connor	Cabrini
Norman Goodwin	Adoption Matters NW
Shirley Elliot	Coram
Stephen Small	St Andrew's Children's Society
Denise Golding	Family Futures
Laura Alayo	Family Futures
Louise Hernon	Fostering Solutions
Sylvia Little	Lewisham
Steve Miley	Hammersmith & Fulham
Margaret Dight	SSAFA
Lesley-Ann Doughty	SSAFA
Susan Lucas	Assist
Amanda Forshaw	Caritas Care
Alison Miller	St Francis' Children's Society
Lucia Hodgson	St Francis' Children's Society
Peter Sandiford	CASA
Steve Lane	PAC
Murray Stewart	Adoption UK
Hugh Pelham	Fostering through Social Enterprise
Vince McGrath	Pathway Care
Claire Brackley	Pathway Care
Makh Belsham	Care Leaver
Lance Belsham	Care Leaver

Enquiries:

Christine Prickett clerk to the APPGAF

CVAA UK (Consortium of Adoption Agencies)

Email: c.prickett@cvaa.org.uk

Felicity Lacey	Excel Fostering
Sophie Jackson	Student Journalist - project on Care Leavers
Paul Adams	BAAF
Jadwiga Ball	CCS
Sue Lewis	Assist
Flo Chiwetu	Banya
Melanie Tearse	Fostering network

Apologies:-

Peter Bottomley	MP
Baroness Gibson	House of Lords
Eleanor Laing	MP
Elaine Dibbden	BAAF
Bob Broad	London South Bank University
Andy Stott	BAAF
Karen Elphick	Compass Children
Natasha Finlayson	The Who Cares Trust
Anna Sharkey	Adoption Focus
Stephanie Bishop	Essex
Marion Layberry	Safehouses
Naomi Angell	Osbornes Solicitors LLP
Harvey Gallagher	NAFP
Kevin Williams	TACT Care
Gillian Kirsch	Norwood
Lynda Gilbert	Independent
Sarah Borthwick	Brighton & Hove Panel Chair

1	The Chair, Edward Timpson (ET) MP, opened the meeting at 4.00 pm and welcomed those in attendance.
2	ET Introduced the programme for the meeting: i) Lyn Charlton CEO of After Adoption and Colin Pettigrew, Director of Children’s Services Sefton. “The Safebase Partnership Model” ii) Jan Fishwick Chair Designate of CVAA and CEO of PACT and Jim Clifford – Principal, and Head of Non-Profit Advisory Services, Baker Tilly. Visiting Fellow Cass Business School “The Potential of Social Impact Bonds” To include a local Authority response. iii) Jonathan Pearce CEO and Erika Pennington Press & PR officer of Adoption UK “Adoption Support and Financial Support – headline findings from recent Adoption UK surveys and research”
3	i) Lyn Charlton CEO of After Adoption and Colin Pettigrew, Director of Children’s Services Sefton. “The Safebase Partnership Model” <i>Please see the attached slides.</i> Lyn Charlton (LC) introduced The Safebase Partnership model and explained how it operated highlighting some aspects of the programme as well as some of its advantages:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme was based on building on the strengths of families and laying down good foundations • The programme had a 98% success rate • 32% of the cases referred had already received intervention from CAMHS • Disruption rates were very low at 2%
4	<p>Colin Pettigrew (CP) then informed the group how useful he thought the programme was from his perspective as a Director of Children’s Services. He went on to outline some of the advantages of using the programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scheme gave very good value for money • It helped to up-skill his workforce • It is a good example of a positive and thriving private and public partnership • Most important of all it provided the post adoption support that some adopters required to ensure their child’s placement was a success. •
5	<p>Jeanne Kaniuk Coram: There are a number of parenting programmes available but there is a bonus of families learning together. Also there should be CAMHS input and other support, not either/or. LC replied: The programme is set in the context of a wider service and aims to intervene as early as possible. CP replied The programme is not a silver bullet but one tool albeit a very useful one.</p>
6	<p>Stephen Small St Andrews Children’s Society: Local authorities in Scotland have a more defined requirement to provide adoption support through legislation. This allows for a known provision and cost. Families say that this makes a great deal of difference. LC replied: Family finding has gone up by 29% because of adoption support. CP replied: We provide the Safebase programme in Sefton because families tell us they feel reassured when supported. This area was rated as outstanding by Ofsted and we want it to be at the forefront of our adoption services next year. Jim Clifford comment: Adopter Parent and from Baker Tilly (see also below) Practical assistance at 8.00pm at night cannot be underestimated. Also the importance of starting such regimes from the beginning.</p>
7	<p>ET thanked LC & CP for their presentation and introduced the second. ii) Jan Fishwick (JF) Chair Designate of CVAA and CEO of PACT and Jim Clifford (JC) – Principal, and Head of Non-Profit Advisory Services, Baker Tilly. Visiting Fellow Cass Business School “The Potential of Social Impact Bonds” To include a local Authority response. <i>Please see the attached slides.</i></p> <p>JC introduced the Social Impact Bonds (SIB) scheme explaining that in essence it was intended to assist the placement of “hard-to-place” children by introducing a financial scheme that would allow for suitable families to be found and appropriate adoption support given to them and their child(ren). JF added that the adoption register was testament to how many children are</p>

	waiting to find homes.
8	<p>From the floor :</p> <p>Do you think you will be able to place children with severe disabilities?</p> <p>JC replied:</p> <p>This is what we hope to do. However, there is a considerable difficulty with these children post 18 and it does often result in potential adopters not wanting to commit.</p>
9	<p>From the floor :</p> <p>How many Local authorities have agreed to take this scheme forward?</p> <p>JF replied:</p> <p>We have discussed it with Matt Duckley from ACDS who seemed quite positive and we will be consulting with other Directors of Children’s Services.</p> <p>CP comment:</p> <p>Many Directors of Children’s Services have spending commitments of £7.5 million but only a £5 million budget. Therefore our starting position is a deficit one. However, this scheme appears to offer value for money and I shall investigate it further with my finance officers.</p>
10	<p>Paul Adams BAAF:</p> <p>Where are the children that are being discussed?</p> <p>JF replied:</p> <p>They are in short-term care waiting to be adopted. There is a huge shortfall of adopters for these children and they will go into long-term residential care.</p> <p>Jeanne Kaniuk Comment:</p> <p>For these children foster care would be a positive outcome. Care plans for them are adjusted to meet the situation but are not necessarily in the best interest of the child.</p>
11	<p>ET thanked JC & JF and introduced the third presentation.</p> <p>iii) Jonathan Pearce (JP) CEO and Erika Pennington (EP) Press & PR officer of Adoption UK “Adoption Support and Financial Support – headline findings from recent Adoption UK surveys and research”</p> <p><i>Please see the attached slides.</i></p> <p>JP explained that the survey was intended to find out more about adopters’ understanding of, and need for, adoption support services. The aim is to gain a better picture of the provision of adoption support services across the UK and in turn improve access so that adopters can parent children adopted from the care system in a safe, secure and loving environment.</p>
12	<p>Chris Smith CVAA: Comment</p> <p>I endorse what JP has said and without adoption support we will see a rise in disruptions.</p> <p>Statement from the Midlands Family Planning group highlights current shortage of resources within Local Authorities in provision of adoption support.</p> <p>JF Comment</p> <p>In some Local Authorities adoption support teams have actually been disbanded.</p> <p>ET Comment:</p> <p>This message needs to be known at all levels of government. I shall write to</p>

	<p>the Children's Minister and inform him about the adoption support example in Scotland and give him the statement from the Midlands Family Placement group.</p> <p>I shall also suggest that Martin Narey attends this group.</p>
13	<p>From the floor. Comment</p> <p>Local Authorities have pressures about what they can cut and they need to get into a long-term mind set.</p> <p>CP. Comment:</p> <p>Perhaps Ofsted should be asked to look into how much is spent on adoption support and measure its effectiveness. Also there is the matter of assessment.</p> <p>LC. Comment:</p> <p>Education comes up yet again and it is the area where we have our biggest battle. It needs to be brought into sharp focus.</p> <p>ET. Comment</p> <p>This needs to be fleshed out for the Minister.</p>
14	<p>ET Question:</p> <p>How many parents knew that they should have an assessment even though it is their formal right?</p> <p>JP replied:</p> <p>Approximately 50% knew they were entitled to an assessment. Many of those that ring the helpline do not know they can ask for adoption support.</p> <p>JK Comment:</p> <p>Although they would be advised to have an entitlement booklet what they are entitled to keeps changing.</p> <p>ET Comment:</p> <p>An adoption charter would detail what adopter's entitlements are.</p>
15	<p>From the floor:</p> <p>It would be reassuring if vulnerable children were catered for by multidisciplinary teams that included health and education.</p> <p>ET replied:</p> <p>More work is required around the issue of health assessment and necessary therapeutic care. There is no health representative on the expert working group.</p> <p>Norman Goodwin Adoption Matters. Comment:</p> <p>As areas develop some of these questions are being asked of the relevant departments.</p>
16	<p>Margaret Dight (MD) SSAFA. Question</p> <p>Is it not time that a holistic approach is applied to the issue of adoption support? A comprehensive assessment should be made at the beginning of the adoption process and the money be made available by the treasury. Families should not be beaten into the ground before they are given help and this situation has existed for twenty years and is still not resolved. I beg you that money is made available.</p> <p>ET replied:</p> <p>I am happy and will pass this message on to the Minister. The good news is that we do have the ear of those that can influence the situation. The treasury needs to be made aware that adoption support ultimately cuts costs and delivers better outcomes for children.</p> <p>MD comment:</p> <p>There needs to be flexibility in re-assessments that take into account the</p>

	<p>qualities required to parent sibling groups and vulnerable children. We must not be asked to function in a narrow focus and populist approach.</p> <p>From the floor:</p> <p>Perhaps now is the time for us to take advantage of what is happening and work together to achieve successful outcomes.</p>
17	<p>ET thanked everyone for their attendance at what had proved to be a lively and interactive debate.</p> <p>He informed all that the next meeting in April would have a fostering focus.</p>
18	<p>The meeting closed at 6.00pm</p>