

## **Summary of the suggestions made at the APPGA&F Meeting 16-10-12**

### ***The need for increased and guaranteed Adoption Support:***

More children could be placed and more adopters would come forward if enhanced adoption support packages were available to them -

- There should be a mechanism to allow for support to get over the transition period between 18-25
- Adoption support packages that involved a guaranteed allowance based on assessed needs would provide more adopters
- an Action Plan that guaranteed support would facilitate more adopters by taking out the risk of not being able to access the appropriate support that might be required, for example CAMHS support
- adopters needed financial assistance for at least twelve months to cover costs such as time off work, a larger car and perhaps domestic help
- Ultimately this was much less expensive than three children in care
- A financial support package is not just about money - it is about giving a message that we appreciate and support the job you are doing for the nation's children

### ***Additional qualified social workers:***

- There is an acute shortage of qualified social workers and this needed to be addressed
- The shortage of experienced s/ws in the field of adoption needed attention this was further compounded by an even greater shortage of managers

### ***Recruitment:***

- The VAAs and some LAs were good at recruitment and perhaps they should do it for others
- The 500 sibling groups waiting should be targeted (this might require support in the form of housing, cars and other necessary daily life requirements)
- More needed to be done to maximise the recruitment and approval process in order to address the BME, older and complex needs of children that were "stuck" in the system

### ***VAAs:***

- VAAs needed some funding/guarantees to help them take the risk of moving forward and increasing their capacity
- There needed to be a level playing field for the good of the children waiting
- Some funding needed to be given to the VAAs to assist their growth plans
- Local Authority's needed to stop seeing VAAs as expensive and a last resort for placing children. Also VAAs needed to be used for all types of placement, not only those children who were harder to place or had complex needs

### ***Matching:***

The challenge of matching needed to be broadened and there needed to be more creativity in achieving matching –

- Adopters should be introduced to those children waiting at the earliest opportunity

- BAAF activity days were successful and there needed to be more
- The visual presentation of children needed more attention and, for example, the images used of them and/or the clothes they are dressed in mattered and affected their chances of being matched

Christie Prickett  
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