

Westminster Education Forum Keynote Seminar: Next steps for supporting adopted children and children in care, and improving transitions for care leavers

Timing: Morning, Thursday, 4th June 2015

Venue: Glaziers Hall, 9 Montague Close, London SE1 9DD



WESTMINSTER
EDUCATION
FORUM

Agenda subject to change

8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee

9.00 - 9.05 **Chair's opening remarks**

Rt Hon the Baroness Butler-Sloss

9.05 - 9.25 **Improving quality of care throughout the system - priorities and challenges**

Ashley McDougall, Director, Local Service Delivery, National Audit Office

Questions and comments from the floor

9.25 - 10.15 **Increasing capacity for adoption and supporting adopted children and their parents**

How justified are concerns that growing pressure to process adoption cases, combined with an increasing caution from judges, have contributed to the recent fall in the number of children being put forward for adoption, and how might the issues be addressed? What more needs to be done to boost capacity and encourage more prospective parents to adopt? Will the introduction of regional adoption agencies, as outlined in the Education and Adoption Bill, be likely to increase adoption rates; how will this new measure be implemented and is sufficient support in place to encourage local authorities to merge adoption services? What has been the impact so far of government's 'fostering for adoption' initiative and the introduction of a 6-month timeframe for adoption assessments - have these arrangements succeeded in speeding up the adoption process? Will measures to extend entitlements for adopted children, such as ensuring access to priority school admissions, increasing pupil premium funding and providing eligibility for free early education for 2-year olds, be likely to improve social mobility for those moving into adoption and what further options might be considered? What lessons have been learnt from the piloting of the Adoption Support Fund, which pays for therapy and family support sessions for adoptive families, and how prepared are local authorities for its introduction?

Hugh Thornbery, Chief Executive, Adoption UK

Carole Sykes, Operations Manager, Adoption and Permanence, East Sussex County Council

Natalie White, Head of Virtual School for Looked After Children, Camden Council

Naomi Angell, Consultant, Osbornes Solicitors

Questions and comments from the floor

10.15 - 10.20 **Chair's closing remarks**

Rt Hon the Baroness Butler-Sloss

10.20 - 10.50 Coffee

10.50 - 10.55 **Chair's opening remarks**

Earl of Listowel

10.55 - 11.15 **Regulating children's homes and driving improvement**

Lisa Pascoe, Deputy Director, Social Care Policy, Ofsted

Questions and comments from the floor

11.15 - 12.05 **Improving safety, standards and outcomes for children in residential homes**

Do the proposed Quality Standards for children's homes sufficiently meet the complexity of needs of looked-after children - how can it be ensured that outcomes are appropriately measured and how should homes be held to account? What strategies can be put in place to reduce the number of young people in care committing criminal offences, given that one quarter of the youth custodial population are, or have been, looked-after children? What more can residential homes do to raise the educational attainment of children in care? Following government's measures to ensure children's homes are located in safe areas, has enough been done since to ensure that fewer children are placed in 'out of area placements'; should a 20-mile radius cap, as recommended by the Education Select Committee, be adopted? What is being done to address concerns that safeguarding procedures in children's homes are inadequate, following a joint APPG inquiry in 2012 that showed an estimated 10,000 children go missing from care each year? What steps can be taken to improve the permanence and stability of placements, given that almost one third of those in residential care have experienced six or more transitions? Will the proposed 'leadership and management standard' be sufficient in cultivating more effective leadership and what more can be done to improve skills, qualifications and training for children's home staff?

Jonathan Stanley, Chief Executive Officer, Independent Children's Homes Association

Martin Kelly, Head of Children and Young People's Resources, North Yorkshire County Council

Delma Hughes, Chief Executive Officer and Director, Siblings Together

Helen Jones, Head of Care (Responsible Individual), The Caldecott Foundation

Questions and comments from the floor

12.05 - 12.55 **Providing effective and meaningful transitions for care leavers**

Is enough being done to meet the needs of children leaving care and how can local agencies, such as health and wellbeing boards and education services, work together better to ensure sufficient ongoing support remains available post-18? What more can be done to ensure teenage care leavers are placed in appropriate forms of accommodation, following concerns about the adequacy and safety of temporary housing provided by councils? What has been learnt from government's Staying Put policy, which enables young people to stay in foster care up to the age of 21, and should a similar option be made available for those in residential care? What more can be done to ensure a smooth transition from care to independence and adulthood, given that 40% of care leavers will re-enter care within 5 years? What lessons can be learnt from Denmark's 'transition regime', which provides care leavers with short-term or weekend access to their former care home, and should a similar level of flexibility be incorporated into the care system in England? What more can be done to help more care leavers gain entry to university and pursue meaningful employment?

Rachel Coffey, Assistant Director, Policy and Research, Barnardo's

David Graham, National Director, Care Leavers' Association with **Mohammed Muftawu**, Experienced care leaver and Director, Touching Lives

Anne-Marie Henderson, Widening Participation Coordinator, King's College London

Nikki Kelly, Employment and Skills Manager, Tottenham Hotspur Foundation

Questions and comments from the floor

12.55 - 13.00 **Chair's and Westminster Education Forum closing remarks**

Earl of Listowel

Sean Cudmore, Deputy Editor, Westminster Education Forum