

INTRODUCTION

This information is being given to you because you are considering placing, or have recently placed, your child in the care of your local Social Services department, and you are considering the possibility of your child being placed for adoption.

Your social worker will talk to you about the different placement options for your child, one of which is Fostering for Adoption.

This leaflet aims to give you some information about this type of placement and how it is different from your child being placed with mainstream foster carers and possibly then moved on to the care of prospective adopters (if you remain of the view that placement for adoption is the best option for you and your child).

WHAT IS FOSTERING FOR ADOPTION?

Fostering for Adoption is where infants and young children are placed with foster carers who are also approved to adopt. These carers are carefully 'matched' to any child placed in their care and they agree to look after the child on a fostering basis, while the decision is made about whether he/she will return to the care of his/her birth parent(s) or another relative or whether he/she will be adopted.

While you are considering the different possibilities for your child's future care and reaching your decision about whether he/she should be placed for adoption your child could be placed with mainstream foster carers or with Fostering for Adoption carers. If he/she is placed with mainstream foster carers and you

reach the decision that he/she should be placed for adoption he/she will then experience a change of placement when he/she moves on to the care of his/her future adoptive parents. If your child is placed with Fostering for Adoption carers during this period he/she will not then experience a change of placement as, provided that he/she is doing well in the care of his/her Fostering for Adoption carers, his/her placement with these carers will be changed from a fostering placement to an adoptive placement and your child will be legally adopted by them.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR MY CHILD?

If your child does not return to your care or to the care of one of your relatives or friends he/she will be able to remain with his/her foster family and to be adopted by them rather than experiencing the disruption that a further change of carers/placement will cause him/her.

Your child will be placed in his/her future adoptive family from as young an age as is possible and this is likely to support him/her to form strong attachments and to then be able to achieve to the best of his/her abilities.

WILL FOSTERING FOR ADOPTION STOP MY CHILD BEING RETURNED TO MY CARE IF THAT IS THE CHOICE I MAKE?

No. If you are the child's birth mother or, if you are your child's birth father and hold parental responsibility for your child, your parental rights and responsibilities will not be affected by him/her being in a Fostering for Adoption placement. The local authority will be looking

after your child at your request and will not legally acquire any level of parental responsibility for him/her.

The Fostering for Adoption carers will be approved as short term foster carers and your child will be placed with them under the Fostering Regulations. A Placement Agreement will be drawn up, just as it would if your child was in any other short term foster placement, and you will have the same rights to see your child and/or to have him/her returned to your care, as you would have if he/she was placed in another short-term foster placement.

Your child's social worker will keep you updated about your child's progress and will support you to maintain the level of contact with your child that has been agreed with you.

WHAT WILL BE EXPECTED OF ME?

The expectations of you will be just as they would be if your child was placed with any other foster carers. It is hoped that while you reach a firm decision about your child's future care you will maintain the contact arrangements with your child that are agreed between you and the local authority.

If you reach the decision that adoption is the right placement option for your child you will be asked to co-operate in providing the information that will be required to enable this plan to be achieved. This will include information about yourself and your family and possibly family photos for your child to have as he/she is growing up. You will be provided with information about adoption and offered the opportunity to have some sessions with an independent counsellor to help you to better

understand the adoption process and to come to terms with your loss.

Most children who are placed for adoption will continue to have a low level of contact with their birth parents and sometimes with other close relatives through a 'letter box' arrangement. These arrangements enable the child's birth relatives and his/her adoptive parents to exchange written information about themselves and the child (and sometimes photos) usually on an annual basis.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I DECIDE TO RESUME THE CARE OF MY CHILD?

Many birth parents who consider the possibility of placing their child for adoption, decide after a few days or weeks, or in some cases after a few months, to either resume their parenting of their child or to place their child in the care of a close family member (e.g. his/her grandparent/s). If you make the decision to reclaim your child you should discuss your position, views and circumstances with your child's social worker who will then help you to plan for your child's return home.

The local authority fully supports the idea that wherever it is safe and appropriate for them to do so, children should have the opportunity to grow up in the care of their birth families and the fact that your child is placed with Fostering for Adoption carers will not affect your rights to resume your parenting role to him/her or to make alternative plans for your child.

If you would find it helpful to discuss your options around placing your child for adoption with an independent Birth Parent Counsellor you should discuss this with your social worker or contact:

The Birth Relatives' Project Worker Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service

York House
Sheet Street
Windsor
Berkshire
SL4 1D
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01628 683760



Fostering For Adoption A Guide for Parents Who Are Considering Placing Their Child for Adoption