

Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

Introduction

This is the ninth edition of the Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter. The aim of the newsletter is to share information relating to children and families that will assist professionals across a range of disciplines to discharge their responsibilities under The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. The committee are keen to ensure that the newsletter is distributed widely to professionals. As such, if you know of any individuals or groups that would appreciate being included on the circulation list please send their email address to communicationsgroup@courtsni.gov.uk.

Recently the newsletter has been expanded to include a new section providing the opportunity to exchange information and to share new developments within the work of agencies and disciplines associated with the Children Order Advisory Committee. As usual the newsletter continues to provide details of recent judgements and new publications of relevance and interest to child care professionals in Northern Ireland.

The newsletter is divided into three sections. The **first section** lists the content with links to the more detailed summaries contained in the next two sections. The **second section** contains the information exchange whilst the **third section** contains the summaries of key literature. The material in this section is arranged under four subject headings: Law reports; Child Welfare; Medicine and Psychology; and, Youth Justice

Where possible the summaries contain hyperlinks to the original material. In other instances professionals will need to make arrangements within their own organisation to access full copies of the material listed. For example, professionals working within Health & Social Care can access journal articles and books through the Health on the Net Northern Ireland (<http://www.honni.qub.ac.uk/>) and the Medical Library at Queen's University.

The buttons at the bottom of each page will navigate you around the document
Home to this page
Return to the contents page
Back one page
Forward one page



Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

This edition of the newsletter also marks the last for one of our main contributors, Greg Kelly, who retires this summer from his position at Queen's University. His research has helped to shape policy and practice in the area of adoption, fostering and permanence in Northern Ireland and beyond. COAC has benefitted from his commitment over the past thirteen years, and in particular, his contribution to this publication cannot be underestimated. I wish him well for the future and thank him for his support.

I am also pleased to welcome Michael Heaney to the newsletter editorial committee, as the new contributor for the Youth Justice section. He replaces Dave Weir, who has moved to NIACRO – we wish him well in his new position.

We welcome all comments about how the newsletter could be improved and any recommendations from readers of material to include in future editions. Please send these to alicebeggs@courtsni.gov.uk.

Previous editions of the newsletter are also available to download or view at:
http://www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/Publications/Family_Law_and_Childcare_Literature/


His Honour Judge Derek Rodgers
Chair of the Multi-Disciplinary Literature Sub-Committee



The Editorial Committee



Chairman **His Honour Judge Derek Rodgers**



Editor **Dr John Devaney**
Lecturer, School of Sociology, Social Policy & Social Work,
Queen's University Belfast



Ms Siobhan Keegan

QC



Mr Greg Kelly

Senior Lecturer, School of Sociology, Social Policy & Social
Work, Queen's University Belfast



Dr Fionnuala Leddy

Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist



Dr Catherine Macpherson

Consultant Paediatrician, South Eastern Health & Social Care
Trust



Ms Robyn McCready

Policy Officer, Children in Northern Ireland



Mr Michael Heaney

Assistant Director, Youth Justice Agency



SECTION ONE



Contents

New Developments



The Adoption Regional Information System

Law Reports

(Compiled by Siobhan Keegan)



RE C1, C2, C3 (CHILD'S EVIDENCE: INTERVIEWS) 2008 NI FAM 100



RE JJ (WELFARE: NON ACCIDENTAL INJURY:HEROIN ABUSE) 2009 NI FAM 2

RE R (SHARED RESIDENCE APPLICATION) NO 2 2009 NI FAM 3



SE HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST-v-C 2009 NICA 23

RE T 2009 EWCA Civ 121



Child Welfare


(Compiled by Greg Kelly, Robyn McCready and John Devaney)




Peer Reviewed Journal Articles




Axford, N. (2008) Are looked after children socially excluded? *Adoption & Fostering Journal*. 32(4): 5-18.




Beckett, C., Hawkins, A., Rutter, M., Castle, J., Colvert, E., Groothues, C., Kreppner, J., Stevens, S. and Sonuga-Barke, E. (2008) The importance of cultural identity in adoption: A study of young people adopted from Romania. *Adoption & Fostering Journal*. 32(3): 9-22







Brown, H. and Cocker, C. (2008) Out of the closet into the mainstream?
Adoption & Fostering Journal. 32(4): 19-30.




Chase, D. and Hora, P.F. (2009) The Best Seat in the House: The Court Assignment and Judicial Satisfaction. *Family Court Review* 47(2): 209-238.




Conway, P. (2009) Falling between minds: The effects of unbearable experiences on multi-agency communication in the care system. *Adoption & Fostering Journal*. 33(1): 18-29.



Devaney, J. (2009) Chronic Child Abuse: The Characteristics and Careers of Children Caught in the Child Protection System. *British Journal of Social Work* 39(1): 24-45.




Farnfield, S. (2009) A modified Strange Situation Procedure for use in assessing sibling relationships and their attachment to carers. *Adoption & Fostering Journal*. 33(1): 4-17.




Forrester, D., Copello, A., Waissbein, C. and Pokhrel, S. (2008) Evaluation of an intensive family preservation service for families affected by parental substance misuse. *Child Abuse Review* 17(6): 410-426.




Franklin, A. and Sloper, P. (2009) Supporting the Participation of Disabled Children and Young People in Decision-making. *Children & Society* 23(1): 3-15.




Ingley, G. and Earley, L. (2008) 'One in, one out'? The dilemma of having multiple children in foster placements. *Adoption & Fostering Journal* 32(3): 73-85.





Masson, J. (2008) Controlling costs and maintaining services - the reform of legal aid fees for care proceedings. *Child and Family Law Quarterly*. 20(4): 425-448



Mayer, B. (2009) Reflections on the State of Consensus-Based Decision Making in Child Welfare. *Family Court Review* 47(1): 10-20.




McAuley, C. and Davis, T. (2009) Emotional well-being and mental health of looked after children in England. *Child & Family Social Work* 14(2): 147-155.




Neil, E. (2009) Post-Adoption Contact and Openness in Adoptive Parents' Minds: Consequences for Children's Development. *British Journal of Social Work* 39(1): 5-23.




Payne, L. (2009) Twenty Years on: The Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the United Kingdom. *Children & Society* 23(2): 149-155.



Price, J.M., Chamberlain, P., Landsverk, J. and Reid, J. (2009) KEEP foster-parent training intervention: model description and effectiveness. *Child & Family Social Work* 14(2): 233-242.



Randall, J. (2009) Towards a better understanding of the needs of children currently adopted from care: An analysis of placements 2003-2005. *Adoption & Fostering Journal*. 33(1): 44-55.



Roach, G. and Sanders, R. (2008) The best laid plans? Obstacles to the implementation of plans for children. *Adoption & Fostering Journal*. 32(4): 31-41.



Turkington, S. and Taylor, B.J. (2009) Post-adoption Face-to-face Contact with Birth Parents: Prospective Adopters' Views. *Child Care in Practice* 15(1): 21-38.

Forthcoming Events

Conferences

Children and the Law: International approaches to children and their vulnerabilities

20 years of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

SECTION TWO

New Developments

ARIS NI : development project to help identify potential adoptive families



The Adoption Regional Information System (ARIS) is a new initiative funded by the DHSSPS to set up a regional adoptive family finding database for Northern Ireland. BAAF has been awarded Resource Grant funding to develop, set up and run the ARIS project until October 2011. The advantage of BAAF operating such a system is that it has a regional overview and is organisationally separate from the adoption agencies that make the “best interest decisions” on behalf of children from the Looked after Children population and who approve prospective adoptive parents.

In Adopting Best Care: An Inspection of Statutory Adoption Services (DHSSPS Northern Ireland 2002) it was recognised that “there are currently no formal arrangements between boards to share information about children in need of adoption placements and no facilities to enable trusts to explore the suitability of families who are on the adoption waiting lists of other boards”.

The need for a regional family finding database was again recognised clearly in Adopting the Future: a Consultation Document (2006). In that document, the department recognised that ‘the need to find permanent families for children is an intrinsic long-term element of the process of delivering the best outcomes for children who cannot live with their birth parents.’ The Department also recognised that ‘it is essential that planning and performance management are informed by sufficient and reliable information on the adoption service, collected and collated centrally.’

The document further stated its hope ‘to ensure that focused effort goes into finding a permanent new family for looked after children waiting to be adopted’, and said it ‘will consider options to find a family for a child through a regional system where it has not

Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

been possible to do so locally. A database will be established which will provide agencies with improved information to ensure that children are provided with the best possible choice of adoptive families.' Following its development, ARIS will meet that policy intention and will introduce a much needed regional family finding database to Northern Ireland.

The vital importance to all children of experiencing stability and permanence within a family was further recognised in Care Matters in Northern Ireland - A Bridge to a Better Future (2007), where the DHSSPS stated that 'where children cannot be adequately cared for within immediate family and wider networks, it is imperative that we move swiftly to restore their sense of permanence, security and normality in an alternative family environment.'

There is already considerable evidence in England and Wales of the success that such a regional database can have. The Adoption Register for England and Wales has now been in operation for 8 years and has been operated by BAAF for the last 4 years. During this period, there has been an incremental rise in the number of children on the adoption register who have been matched with families year on year – from 109 in 2005, 157 in 2006, 199 in 2007 and 268 children in 2008.

The Adoption Register for England and Wales also provides invaluable centralised information on the needs of children awaiting adoption and the profile of waiting prospective adopters. ARIS hopes to bring the same benefits to Northern Ireland.

More recent figures on the time it is taking to place children after a best interests decision are one of the clearest arguments for project investment in this area: The Community Information Branch Statistical bulletin 2007 - 2008 indicated that in 2008 only 36% of children were placed within 12 months of the best interests decision in Northern Ireland, while in England 75% were placed within 12 months (2006). Both fall short of the DOH standard (LAC(2001) 33): 'By the 31st of March 2005 at least 95% of



Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

Looked After children should be placed within 12 months of the decision that adoption is in the child's best interests.' There is clearly a need to develop a regional focus in Northern Ireland on adoptive family finding for children in the Looked After system and to gather information on both those children and the approved adopters who are available. ARIS hopes to have a direct impact on adoption in Northern Ireland as it will provide a much needed family finding service for all children in Northern Ireland awaiting adoption. It will also improve the central collection of information relating to children needing adoption and approved adopters.

For more details contact:

Frances Nicholson or Catherine Mullin

BAAF Northern Ireland

Botanic House

1-5 Botanic Avenue

Belfast BT7 1JG

T: (028) 9031 5494

F: (028) 9031 4516



SECTION THREE

Law Reports

(Compiled by Siobhan Keegan)

SUMMARY

The Court of Appeal in Northern Ireland has issued an important judgement in RE C's application in relation to whether a parent can apply for an Article 8 order when a child is in voluntary care in order to establish contact arrangements. In Re C1,2,3 Mr Justice Morgan deals with the issue of establishing facts from child interviews and the pitfalls of interviews which are not video taped. He also deals with issues of rehabilitation after a non accidental injury and where a mother has a serious drug history in JJ's case. Mr Justice Stephens looks at issues of shared residence and the use of mediation in RE R and the English Court of Appeal deals again with the issue of care order versus supervision order in the case of RE T.

RE C1, C2, C3 (CHILD'S EVIDENCE: INTERVIEWS) 2008 NI FAM 100

In this case Mr Justice Morgan deals with the proofs required to establish allegations made by children. This was a case involving five children aged 10-4 years. Certain threshold criteria were agreed but there was a dispute about four remaining categories i.e.

1. Whether any of the children were subjected to cold baths or showers.
2. Whether any of the children were put into the bin as a punishment.
3. Whether any of the children were locked in bedrooms or cupboards
4. Whether any of the children were deprived of food as a punishment.

These matters had to be determined in evidence because the Judge considered that there were significant in determining the future care planning .The principal evidence in relation to the 4 matters at issue consisted of accounts of disclosure made by the children at interview with social workers in the Child-Care Centre. The interviews were

not video taped. Mr Justice Morgan analyses the strengths of such evidence and decides that the allegations cannot be established on the balance of probabilities.

RE JJ (WELFARE: NON ACCIDENTAL INJURY:HEROIN ABUSE) 2009 NI FAM 2

This case involved a young child JJ born on the 31st of October 2005. He was placed in voluntary care on the 25th of February 2006 following the discovery of some injuries ie bruising to mouth, a rib fracture, a fracture of the humerus. His mother had a chronic history of heroin abuse. His father was in prison at the time of hearing. The parents had a previous child who died. Threshold had been established and in relation to non accidental injuries the Judge decided that the mother was solely responsible for the humerus injury and that both mother and father were in the pool of perpetrators for the other injuries. The mother sought rehabilitation to her care. This was not accepted by the Judge due to the risks involved and the fact that family support networks did not appear as strong as they should be. An alternative plan was accepted ie that the child should be placed with the paternal grandparents. The Trust recommendation was that contact to the mother should also be reduced. That argument was rejected by the Judge who decided to maintain the level of contact in place in recognition of the strong relationship between mother and child.

RE R (SHARED RESIDENCE APPLICATION) NO 2 2009 NI FAM 3

This case involved a long running private law dispute. The child R was aged 11. The father had previously applied for a shared residence order and been refused. He was granted contact. The first hearing found that the father was controlling and that shared residence would lead to insecurity and potential emotional damage to the child given that dynamic. The second application was brought by the father on the basis of the child's wishes. The evidence of the child's wishes was not set out objectively and to the contrary there was evidence from the mother that after contact the child had said 'Dad says he wants me half and half, half with him half with you.' The preliminary issue was as to the wishes and feelings of the child. The father wanted these views

ascertained by the Official Solicitor. The mother did not for fear of emotional harm. The Judge declined to allow the child to be interviewed at this stage. Rather he made comprehensive directions for mediation without involvement of the child.

SE HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST-v-C 2009 NICA 23

This judicial review case was heard before Lord Justice Coghlin and then on appeal to the Court of Appeal. The issue was whether or not a court had jurisdiction to make an Article 8 contact order in proceedings involving a voluntary placement of children in care. LJ Coghlin said you could make an order and the Trust appealed. The appeal was dismissed. Lord Justice Girvan said that: 'The answer to the question whether the court has a power to make an Article 8 order in a case such as the present must be found within the 1995 Order itself. The question involves the construction of the statutory provisions. The construction of the statute must be approached in the light of the statutory imperative to ensure that the child's welfare is paramount. A construction which advances the welfare of children is to be preferred to one which limits the power of the court to exercise its powers in the interests of the child. In addition the proper construction of the legislation is to be arrived at by reference to the wording of the Order which cannot be restricted or expanded by subordinate legislation.' He found assistance in various legislative provisions ie Article 9(1) which expressly precludes an Article 8 application where a child is in care. Such an order was not so precluded when a child is placed by way of voluntary arrangement.

RE T 2009 EWCA Civ 121

This was a case in the English Court of Appeal. The subject child had suffered non accidental injuries which were unexplained and which the parents denied. The initial plan was not to rehabilitate. Then the guardian came up with some suggestions for rehabilitation with supports. At the hearing all parties agreed that a supervision order for 2 years was the appropriate order but the Judge decided to make a care order. That was overturned on appeal and Sir Mark Potter gives the leading judgment and analysis of the law in this area. He does agree that a trial Judge has the ultimate

discretion in relation to the making of orders however on the facts he states that a supervision order was clearly most appropriate.

He says at paragraph 63 'As observed by Hale J in the Oxfordshire County Council case, there must in general be cogent and strong reasons to force upon a local authority a more draconian order than that for which it has asked. All the more is that the case when the child's guardian supports the making of a less draconian order as appropriate to the child's needs. In my view, no such strong and cogent reasons were demonstrated in this case. I would therefore allow the appeal and vary the care order made by the Judge to that of a 12-month supervision order effective from the date of the judgment of this Court.'

Child Welfare


(Compiled by Greg Kelly, Robyn McCready and John Devaney)

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

Axford, N. (2008) Are looked after children socially excluded? *Adoption & Fostering Journal*. 32(4): 5-18.

The concept of social exclusion has become ubiquitous in the discourse of children's services in the UK over the last ten years. But is it a useful concept? The author sets out a definition of social exclusion and examines the extent to which it applies to looked after children, since they are commonly referred to as being 'excluded' or 'vulnerable to exclusion'. He discusses the implications for how service providers define and help these children and for how childhood social exclusion is studied.

Beckett, C., Hawkins, A., Rutter, M., Castle, J., Colvert, E., Groothues, C., Kreppner, J., Stevens, S. and Sonuga-Barke, E. (2008) The importance of cultural identity in adoption: A study of young people adopted from Romania. *Adoption & Fostering Journal*. 32(3): 9-22



This article examines attitudes regarding cultural and national identity in a group of 165 young people adopted from Romania. The attitudes of their adoptive parents are also explored. The adoptive parents were interviewed over three or four time periods, when their children were 4/6, 11 and 15 years, and the adopted young people at the age of 11 and 15. The majority of the adopted young people had an interest in Romania and expressed a wish to visit their country of origin. However, there was no association between this interest in Romanian identity and levels of self-esteem. The majority of the adoptees saw themselves as English or Anglo-Romanian. A small minority saw themselves as Romanian; these adoptees had both lower self-esteem and a higher level of deprivation-specific problems. The degree of sustained interest shown by adoptive parents in the importance of Romanian identity was associated with the adopted young people's interest in Romania. However, parental interest in this issue had significantly declined by the time the children were 11 years old, by which time fewer adoptive parents than young people had plans to visit Romania in the future.

Brown, H. and Cocker, C. (2008) Out of the closet into the mainstream?


[Adoption & Fostering Journal](#). 32(4): 19-30.

Recent public debates have discussed lesbians and gay men caring for children as a novel phenomenon, but such arrangements are not new. This article tracks debates concerning lesbian and gay families and examine the relationship between policy and practice that is evidence based and ideologically driven. They outline the complexities of adoption and fostering practice within its political and social context and argue that the paramountcy of the child's welfare is the lynchpin to understanding the issues involved with the placement of children with lesbian and gay carers. The emphasis, in examining the detail of practice, is on recruitment, assessment, matching and support.

Chase, D. and Hora, P.F. (2009) The Best Seat in the House: The Court Assignment and Judicial Satisfaction. *Family Court Review* 47(2): 209-238.

Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter


Issue 9 Summer 2009



A survey of 355 judges examined the differences in judicial satisfaction between those assigned to problem-solving courts—such as drug treatment and unified family—and judges in other more traditional assignments such as family law and criminal courts. The unified family court systems, like drug treatment courts, have generally adopted the principles of therapeutic jurisprudence. Significant differences were found on each of the three survey scales: (1) helpfulness, (2) attitude toward litigants, and (3) positive effects of assignment. The judges who were in the problem-solving courts (drug treatment and unified family court) scored higher on all three scales than those who were not (traditional family and criminal court). The group of problem-solving court judges consistently scored higher than the other group of judges, with the drug treatment court judges scoring the highest. The group of traditional criminal court and family court judges scored less positively, with the criminal court judges having the lowest scores. The problem-solving court judges were more likely to report believing that the role of the court should include helping litigants address the problems that brought them there and were more likely to observe positive changes in the litigants. They were also more likely to believe that litigants are motivated to change and are able to do so. They felt more respected by the litigants and were more likely to think that the litigants were grateful for help they received. The problem-solving court judges were also more likely to report being happy in their assignments and to believe that these assignments have a positive emotional effect on them.

Conway, P. (2009) Falling between minds: The effects of unbearable experiences on multi-agency communication in the care system. *Adoption & Fostering Journal*. 33(1): 18-29.


Why does well-intentioned policy fail to translate into positive outcomes for children in care? The Government has made significant investment to improve educational attainment and placement stability for looked after children, yet gains have been disappointing and children in care are still achieving far below their peers. Multi-agency working and better communication between professionals are seen as a prerequisite for improving outcomes. This article explores why this commendable






policy recommendation often results in splits, divisions, rivalries and, paradoxically, a failure to communicate within and between services for vulnerable children, sometimes with devastating consequences. Complaints abound and a culture of blame is endemic. Without a deeper understanding of how traumatised young people communicate their disturbance, and how the individuals and systems around the child respond, this well-intentioned policy will always be at risk of breaking down at vulnerable 'fault lines' in the system, with children's needs falling into the gaps. It is suggested that, for the project of multi-agency work to be effective in improving outcomes for looked after children, the psychoanalytic concepts of splitting and projection need to be integrated and applied at all levels of policy development and service provision.

Devaney, J. (2009) Chronic Child Abuse: The Characteristics and Careers of Children Caught in the Child Protection System. *British Journal of Social Work* 39(1): 24-45.


The introduction of the Quality Protects initiative in England and the focus on performance management has challenged social services departments to examine the systems, processes and outcomes for children who have their name on a child protection register. Research indicates that approximately one-quarter of the situations in which children are registered could be described as chronic—that is, they remain on the child protection register for significant periods of time, experience more than one period of registration or suffer a further incident of significant harm whilst subject to a child protection plan. In this article, the findings from a research study conducted into this group of vulnerable children in Northern Ireland are reported, focusing on the characteristics of the children and their families, and their careers in the child protection system. The paper concludes with observations about the weak conceptualization of performance management and the need to recognize the complexity of the factors that influence children's careers in the child protection system.









Farnfield, S. (2009) A modified Strange Situation Procedure for use in assessing sibling relationships and their attachment to carers. *Adoption & Fostering Journal*. 33(1): 4-17.



This article describes a modification of the Strange Situation Procedure (SSP), commonly used in the assessment of infant and pre-school children's attachment, for use in the assessment of sibling relationships. The modified SSP was developed for use in cases where social workers had to decide whether or not to split up groups of siblings for placement in adoptive or long-term foster homes. However, it can also be applied as an aid to understanding sibling interactions in other contexts as well as the attachment of siblings to one another and to birth or substitute parents. Following some practical and theoretical comments, an account of the procedure is given together with case examples.



Forrester, D., Copello, A., Waissbein, C. and Pokhrel, S. (2008) Evaluation of an intensive family preservation service for families affected by parental substance misuse. *Child Abuse Review* 17(6): 410-426.



Parental misuse of drugs or alcohol is recognised to be an issue for a high proportion of families to known social services, and for many children who enter care. However, there is limited research on what is effective in working with such families. This article reports on an evaluation of an Intensive Family Preservation Service (named 'Option 2') aimed at families in which parents misuse substances and children are considered at risk of entering care. The study used mixed methods. A quasi-experimental element compared solely data relating to care entry (e.g. how long children spent in care and its cost) for Option 2 children (n = 279) and a comparison group of referrals not provided with the service (n = 89) on average 3.5 years after referral. It found that about 40 per cent of children in both groups entered care, however Option 2 children took longer to enter, spent less time in care and were more likely to be at home at follow-up. As a result, Option 2 produced significant cost savings. A small-scale qualitative element of the study involved interviews with 11 parents and seven children in eight families. The findings suggested that Option 2 was a highly professional and appreciated service. For some families it achieved permanent change. For others,

particularly those with complex and long-standing problems, significant positive changes were not sustained. The implications for services designed to prevent public care, particularly where there are substance misuse issues, are discussed and recommendations for policy and evaluation made.

Franklin, A. and Sloper, P. (2009) Supporting the Participation of Disabled Children and Young People in Decision-making. *Children & Society* 23(1): 3-15.

Increasing children's and young people's participation in decisions, about their own care and about service development, is a policy priority. Although in general participation is increasing, disabled children are less likely to be involved than non-disabled children and it is unclear to what extent children with complex needs or communication impairments are being included in participation activities. This article presents research exploring factors to support good practice in participation and discusses policy and practice implications.

Ingley, G. and Earley, L. (2008) 'One in, one out'? The dilemma of having multiple children in foster placements. [*Adoption & Fostering Journal* 32\(3\): 73-85.](#)

Practitioners in a specialist service for looked after children and their carers have indicated a tendency for children to be placed in households where there are multiple foster children. This has led to concern that previously settled children's placements were disrupting following the introduction of a new child into the household. A file audit was conducted to gather information regarding the incidence of disruption and the contributing factors, as reported in clients' files. While the study reported here did not show a high rate of movement into placements, it did indicate that when a new child was moved into the home of an already 'established' child, the 'established' child's placement was often disrupted. In addition, qualitative information obtained from files and letters revealed that conflicts with another child in placement, either a sibling or unrelated child, was the most frequently cited factor associated with disruption. Attachment literature and ideas from the study of adoptive families and sibling



Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

relationships in birth families are drawn upon to explain these findings, and recommendations are made to lessen the potential difficulties associated with the multiple placements of children in foster homes.

Masson, J. (2008) Controlling costs and maintaining services - the reform of legal aid fees for care proceedings. *Child and Family Law Quarterly*. 20(4): 425-448

This article, based on an analysis of legal aid data for a sample of care proceedings commenced in 2004, examines the costs of providing legal representation to mothers, fathers and children, and the variations in those costs between different areas, courts and cases. It discusses the reform of legal aid in care cases and identifies the types of cases where the fixed fee scheme, introduced in October 2007, provides more or less than the old hourly rate system and considers the likely impact on solicitors' practice of the new scheme. It also reviews whether the scheme will succeed in controlling legal aid expenditure and discusses who the level of funding for legal representation in care cases might be assessed.

Mayer, B. (2009) Reflections on the State of Consensus-Based Decision Making in Child Welfare. *Family Court Review* 47(1): 10-20.

Consensus approaches to child protection decision making such as mediation and family group conferencing have become increasingly widespread since first initiated about 25 years ago. They address but are also constrained by paradoxes in the child protection system about commitments to protecting children and to family autonomy. In a series of surveys, interviews, and dialogues, mediation and conferencing researchers and practitioners discussed the key issues that face their work: clarity about purpose, system support, family empowerment, professional qualifications, and coordination among different types of consensus-building efforts. Consensus-based decision making in child protection will continue to expand and grow but will also continue to confront these challenges.



McAuley, C. and Davis, T. (2009) Emotional well-being and mental health of looked after children in England. *Child & Family Social Work* 14(2): 147-155.

The national prevalence studies of the mental health of looked after children in Great Britain provide sobering reading. Forty-five per cent of looked after children in England were found to have a diagnosable mental health disorder. In contrast, this is to one in 10 in the general population. Carers estimated that mental health problems were even more widespread. Children with mental health disorders were also more likely to have education, health and social issues. This paper discusses the findings and argues for early intervention along with inter-departmental and interdisciplinary approaches. The recent Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Review clearly indicates that issues of access to appropriate and timely Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services remain. However, the introduction of evidence-based approaches is encouraging. Young people's views on the services they want and on what is important for emotional well-being and mental health are important considerations.

Neil, E. (2009) Post-Adoption Contact and Openness in Adoptive Parents' Minds: Consequences for Children's Development. *British Journal of Social Work* 39(1): 5-23.

This paper explores openness in adoption on two levels: what contact children were having with their birth family (structural openness) and the openness of adoptive parents when it comes to thinking and talking about adoption (communicative openness). Children placed for adoption under the age of four years were followed up an average of six years post-placement. In-depth interviews were carried out with adoptive parents and parents completed the child behaviour checklist (CBCL). Children having face-to-face contact with their adult birth relatives were compared with those where the contact plan was letterbox contact. The communicative openness of adoptive parents was rated using a qualitative coding system. Adoptive parents involved in face-to-face contact arrangements were found to be more communicatively open than parents involved in letterbox contact. Children's emotional and behavioural development was not related to either the type of contact that they were having with their birth families or the communicative openness of their adoptive parents. It is

suggested that further follow-up of this sample in adolescence (using a range of outcomes) is required. This research suggests that social workers need to remain open-minded about the possible impact of contact on children, resisting blanket predictions of either help or harm.

Payne, L. (2009) Twenty Years on: The Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the United Kingdom. *Children & Society* 23(2): 149-155.

Since ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, the UK Government has submitted three reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. This article explains the reporting process and provides an overview of the most recent recommendations from the Committee.

Price, J.M., Chamberlain, P., Landsverk, J. and Reid, J. (2009) KEEP foster-parent training intervention: model description and effectiveness. *Child & Family Social Work* 14(2): 233-242.

In this paper, we describe the development and history of the Keeping Foster Parents Trained and Supported (KEEP) foster-parent training intervention. KEEP intervention represents a modified version of the Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care intervention developed by interventionists at the Oregon Social Learning Center and is designed to provide training and support for children ages 5–11 in regular foster care. We also report on the initial findings from a programme of research focused on determining the effectiveness of the intervention. Thus far, the results indicate that the intervention is effective in reducing child behaviour problems and that the effects of the intervention are mediated through changes in parenting behaviour. There is also evidence that the KEEP foster-parent training intervention increases the chances of a positive change of placement (e.g. child reunited with biological parents) and mitigates the negative risk-enhancing effect of a history of multiple placements. We conclude with a discussion of unanswered questions and directions for future research.

Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

Randall, J. (2009) Towards a better understanding of the needs of children currently adopted from care: An analysis of placements 2003-2005. *Adoption & Fostering Journal*. 33(1): 44-55.

This article summarises the findings of an in-house study undertaken by Families for Children, a voluntary adoption agency based in the southwest of England. It took a consecutive sample of 103 children placed from care for adoption between 2003 and 2005, using *Matching Needs and Services*, a method designed for analysing need in child care populations and developing services best suited to meeting them. The study identified nine need groups of varying degrees of complexity and looked at the service responses to those identified needs. The children placed came from 41 local authorities ranging from nearby local authorities to the wider southwest, London and the southeast, the Midlands and the north of England. The sample offers a snapshot of the contemporary challenges presented by children placed for adoption from care.

Roach, G. and Sanders, R. (2008) The best laid plans? Obstacles to the implementation of plans for children. *Adoption & Fostering Journal*. 32(4): 31-41.

The authors describe a study of the obstacles to the implementation of plans for children in a South Wales local authority. The files of 20 children, selected sequentially, were examined using a content analysis methodology. Ten were children in need of protection living at home with their families and ten were looked after children. Information was extracted from child protection plans, core group meetings, care plans and care plan reviews, along with important contextual information. Implementation was assessed by identifying and monitoring the progress of delayed tasks through the different stages of the child's planning and reviewing process. This provided a detailed understanding of the decision-making processes and the reason(s) for tasks becoming delayed. The results indicated that most cases experienced some delay. The main obstacles to plan implementation centred on the quality of the plans and reviews, a lack of interagency co-ordination in the provision of external services and the non-compliance of parents and carers. To address these problems and reduce the likelihood of delay, the authors suggest that social workers




should incorporate micro-planning techniques into practice, attempt to engage parents and carers fully, and improve recording procedures.

Turkington, S. and Taylor, B.J. (2009) Post-adoption Face-to-face Contact with Birth Parents: Prospective Adopters' Views. *Child Care in Practice* 15(1): 21-38.

The trend in adoption since the 1960s has been away from secrecy and towards greater openness; contact through an intermediary, and direct contact by letter, is now widely accepted. More controversial is the challenge of face-to-face contact with birth parents, and social workers involved in the decision-making process find themselves having to make recommendations to the Court that balance the rights, needs and aspirations of the various parties regarding appropriate contact. The views of four prospective adoptive couples in Northern Ireland toward post-adoption face-to-face contact with birth parents were studied using semi-structured interviews. Prospective adoptive parents saw advantages and disadvantages in face-to-face contact with a birth parent for the child and themselves. One advantage highlighted was that contact could assist the child's development of identity. However, there was an underlying discomfort about facilitating this kind of contact because of its potentially negative effects such as the confusion it could cause a child and the resultant behavioural issues that could emerge. Prospective adopters wanted professionals to give them the opportunity to express and explore their apprehensions about face-to-face contact, and to provide them with fuller information to address their concerns.

Vostanis, P., Bassi, G., Meltzer, H., Ford, T. and Goodman, R. (2008) Service use by looked after children with behavioural problems: Findings from the England survey. [*Adoption & Fostering Journal*](#). 32(3): 23-32.

This article examines data from the England survey on the use of services by looked after children with behavioural problems (or conduct disorders - CD). Of the total 1,039 looked after children who participated, 384 (37%) fulfilled criteria for CD, of whom 57 (or 17% of children with CD) had an additional hyperkinetic and 46 (or 12% of the CD group) an additional emotional disorder. Children had high rates of multiple and overlapping contacts with social care, health, education and youth justice services.



Children with additional emotional and hyperkinetic disorders had particularly high rates of contact with primary care, specialist child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), child health and special educational services. In conclusion, looked after children and young people with behavioural problems are likely to require access to a range of services, but these should be clearly defined and co-ordinated, with local care pathways and referral criteria, in order to maximise the use of resources. Although CAMHS involvement should not automatically be requested for all behavioural problems, looked after children with underlying mental health or developmental disorders would particularly benefit from specialist CAMHS input.

Worcel, S.D., Furrer, C.J., Green, B.L., Burrus, S. and Finigan, M.W. (2008) Effects of family treatment drug courts on substance abuse and child welfare outcomes. *Child Abuse Review* 17(6): 427-443.

This paper presents results from the first large-scale outcome study of American Family Treatment Drug Courts (FTDCs) - specialised courts designed to work with substance-abusing parents involved with the child welfare system. The paper examines whether court, child welfare and treatment outcomes differed for 301 families served through three FTDCs as compared to a matched sample of 1,220 families with substance abuse issues who received traditional child welfare services. Propensity score weights were used to account for measured differences between the FTDC and comparison groups. Child welfare outcomes were analysed using analytical techniques that controlled for these inherently nested data (i.e. children within a family). Overall, the study found that FTDC mothers had more positive treatment outcomes than similar mothers who were not served by the FTDC. FTDC mothers were more likely to enter substance abuse treatment services than were non-FTDC mothers, entered treatment more quickly after their initial court petition than did non-FTDC mothers, spent twice as much time in treatment than did non-FTDC mothers and were twice as likely to complete at least one treatment episode than non-FTDC mothers. In addition, data from the study indicate that FTDCs influence a key child welfare variable of interest: FTDC children were significantly more likely to be reunified with their mothers than were unserved children.

Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

Reports

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2008) *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion.*
Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/2315-society-poverty-exclusion.pdf>

This report marks the tenth anniversary of the first edition of *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion*. Built around a set of indicators constructed using the latest official government data, the report assesses the record across a wide range of subjects from low income to exclusion from services. It effectively provides a picture of the state of poverty and social exclusion in the UK just before the onset of the recent economic downturn.

NICCY (2009) *Children's Rights- Rhetoric or Reality: A Review of Children's Rights in Northern Ireland.* NICCY, Belfast.

<http://www.niccy.org/article.aspx?menuId=467>

On the 17th February 2009, NICCY launched their 2nd Rights Review report which determines the state of children's rights in Northern Ireland within the framework of rights outlined within the UNCRC, whilst building on their initial report published in 2004.

NI Human Rights Commission (2008) *A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland- Advice to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.* NIHRC, Belfast

[http://www.nihrc.org/dms/data/NIHRC/attachments/dd/files/71/A_Bill_of_Rights_for_Northern_Ireland_\(December_2008\).pdf](http://www.nihrc.org/dms/data/NIHRC/attachments/dd/files/71/A_Bill_of_Rights_for_Northern_Ireland_(December_2008).pdf)













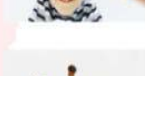
The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission has presented its statutory advice to Paul Goggins Secretary of State on the potential for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.



The advice includes specific children's rights recommendations for inclusion in Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland which will provide supplementary protections to the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights.

Provisions should be drafted to ensure that –

1. For the purpose of benefiting from any of the specific rights of the child in a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years.
2. The rights in a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland must be guaranteed to every child, without discrimination on any of the grounds listed in Recommendation 2 of the Right to Equality and Prohibition on Discrimination, whether the ground of discrimination applies in respect of the child or the child's parents or legal guardians.
3. Public authorities must ensure that, in all actions concerning the child, whether undertaken by public authorities or private institutions, the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration. In adoption, or any other child placement proceedings, the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration.
4. Public authorities must take all appropriate measures to ensure the right of every child to access safe and appropriate play and leisure facilities.
5. Every child who is temporarily, or permanently, deprived of his or her family environment has the right to special protection and assistance for as long as they need it.
6. Public authorities must take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect every child from all forms of violence, maltreatment, neglect, exploitation and harassment.

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
7. Public authorities must take all appropriate measures to ensure the right of every child to be informed of their rights and to have his or her views respected, considered and given due regard in all matters affecting the child, taking into consideration the child's age, level of understanding and evolving capacities.
 8. Public authorities must take all appropriate measures to ensure the right of every child to be protected from direct involvement in any capacity in armed conflicts or civil hostilities including their use as intelligence sources.

Central Government Strategies

DHSSPS (2009) *Families Matter' Strategy: Regional Family and Parenting Strategy*. DHSSPS, Belfast.

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/families_matter_strategy.pdf

This DHSSPS strategy set the strategic vision for improving support and services for families and children with a focus on early intervention and prevention services for children and young people, continuously throughout their lives and not just in testing times.

Key Themes

1. Information for Parents and Service Planners
2. Access to services and Information
3. Supporting Families and Parents
4. Working Together for Families and Communities

Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

DHSSPS (2008) *Regional Hidden Harm Action Plan: Responding to the needs of children born to and living with parental alcohol and drug misuse in Northern Ireland*. DHSSPS: Belfast.

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/regional_hidden_harm_action_plan.pdf

This Action Plan follows the publication of *The New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs 2006-2011* (NSD). This Action Plan combines regional actions with clear direction and guidance for local Health and Social Care commissioners, including Children's Service Planners, to assist them in achieving the Priority for Action (PfA) on Hidden Harm, which is: "*The establishment by March 2009, of a local action plan in each Board area to support the Department's Regional Hidden Harm Action Plan.*"


This is a three year plan, running from October 2008 to March 2011. At the time of publishing this plan, the structures for commissioning and delivering Health and Social Care Services in Northern Ireland were undergoing significant change. Hence, the first year of the plan focuses on the development of relationships, structures, and processes which will promote effective joint working between the Addictions, Children's and Public Health Sectors at all levels, and on embedding these within the emerging policy, commissioning and service delivery arrangements.

The action plan recognises the considerable task which lies ahead for all those charged with responding to the needs of this group of children, and ensuring that real change can be achieved in their lives. The plan has been compiled by the Health Development Policy Branch within the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland (DHSSPS), with advice from the NSD Hidden Harm Working Group.




DHSSPS (2008) *Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan*. DHSSPS: Belfast.

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/dhssps_sexual_health_plan_front_cvr.pdf





The Sexual Health Promotion Strategy sets out a vision for promoting positive sexual health, especially amongst young people. It focuses on prevention, training, education and access to services.





The strategy notes that young people under 25 years and especially those who are looked after or leaving care are particular vulnerable and require particular action. Some people with a disability or from an ethnic minority community may have particular requirements in accessing information, advice and services and these must be addressed.

Statistics







DHSSPS (2009) Northern Ireland Care Leavers 2007/08. DHSSPS, Belfast.


http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/ni_care_leavers_07-08_final.pdf



This bulletin presents results from the annual OC1 survey of care leavers in Northern Ireland during 2007/08. This survey collects data on the educational achievements and economic activity of young people leaving care, their age, religion, ethnic group, disability, length of time in care, and latest care placement.

Key Facts and Figures

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 245 young people aged 16 & over left care during the year ending 31 March 2008; of which, 135 were boys and 110 were girls.
 - Over two fifths (44%) of care leavers had spent more than five years in care.
 - Over half (53%) of young people left care in 2007/08 because they had reached the age of 18, whilst for others it was to return home (21%) or to move into supported accommodation (8%).
 - More young people left care with five GCSE's A*-C or higher in 2007/08 (12%) than in 2005/06 (9%), whilst a slightly lower proportion had achieved 1-4 GCSE's A*-C in 2007/08 (16%) than in 2005/06 (18%).

- 
- The proportion of care leavers achieving five GCSE's A*-C or higher (12%) was substantially lower than that of all Northern Ireland school leavers, 65% of whom attained these grades.
 - Care leavers were 18 times more likely than school leavers in general to leave without any qualifications. More than half of all young care leavers (53%) left without gaining any qualifications, compared to 3% of all school leavers in Northern Ireland.
 - Young care leavers (41%) were four times more likely to be unemployed or inactive than those of similar age in the general population.

Northern Ireland Office (2008) Experiences of Domestic Violence - Research and Statistical Findings from the 2007/08 Northern Ireland Crime Survey. Northern Ireland Office, Belfast.

http://www.nio.gov.uk/08_northern_ireland_crime_survey.pdf

The focus of this bulletin are the findings from the domestic violence module of the 2007/08 Northern Ireland Crime Survey.

Key Findings

- Approximately 1 in 10 respondents (11%) to the 2007/08 Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS), aged 16-59, were identified as having been a victim of domestic violence at some stage in their lives. The victimisation rate recorded for female respondents (15%) was higher than that recorded for male respondents (8%).
- Twenty-three percent of female victims reported that they had suffered threats and/or force from a partner while they were pregnant.
- Over half of respondents (54%) who reported a 'worst' incident of domestic violence, reported that the perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol at the time of this incident.

Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

- Analysis on repeat victimisation revealed that 60% of all victims reported having experienced domestic violence from the same perpetrator on more than one occasion: 34% reported having been victimised four or more times.
- Almost two thirds of victims (66%) reported that they had suffered injuries as a result of their 'worst' incident. The single most frequently reported type of injury was 'mental or emotional problems' – reported by 35% of victims who experienced a 'worst' incident'.
- Twenty-seven percent of victims believed that their 'worst' incident had been seen and/or heard by children.

OFMDFM (2009) *Lifetime Opportunities - Government's Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland*. OFMDFM: Belfast.

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/antipovertyandsocialinclusion.pdf>

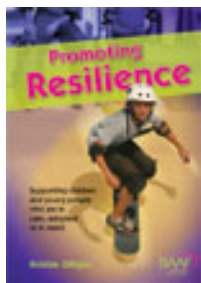
The strategy, *Lifetime Opportunities*, demonstrates the Government's determination to ensure that, by 2020, no one in Northern Ireland is denied the opportunities they are owed.

The government has committed to that, by 2020, they will:

- ensure that all children fulfil their potential to obtain basic numeracy and literacy levels before they leave school and, ensure that every young person can enter further education, training or employment.
- ensure schools become established centres of the community offering services and learning opportunities before and after the traditional school day, in an environment that provides for regular and consistent contact with others from different community, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.
- ensure the provision of childcare to a professional standard to be available to all, beginning in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

- have substantially improved the educational attainment of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, including looked after children at both primary and post-primary levels.
- support every local authority to identify and address gaps in provision of services for children and young people in rural areas.
- ensure every child and young person will live in decent, warm homes and in a safe environment that provides access to cultural and recreational activities.
- reduce disability and long-term health problems and increase life expectancy by promoting road safety.
- double the percentage of young people who have left care and are in employment, higher or further education or training at age 19.

Books



Gilligan, R. (2009) *Promoting Resilience: A resource guide on working with children in the care system.* BAAF, London.

ISBN 978 1 905664 13 9 £14.95

The concepts of resilience and vulnerability have been in the professional domain for some time, but it is the work of Robbie Gilligan that has been instrumental in clarifying these concepts and applying them to practice. This new edition of *Promoting Resilience* contains yet more inspirational ideas and suggestions for promoting resilience in day-to-day work.

A resilience-led perspective tends to be optimistic and pragmatic. It is based on the belief that change is possible and that this often comes not only through supportive relationships, but also from little things in everyday experience. *Promoting Resilience* challenges the mindset that social work with children in care, adopted or in need is a thankless task, where rewards are few and the successes rare and sets out a positive and hopeful agenda for social work with children in the care system. The guide is predicated on two messages of hope: that the lives of children in care can be

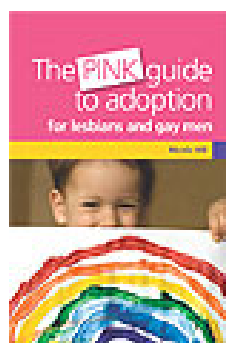
made better; and that what social workers and carers can do – even the little things – *can* make a difference to children's lives and their life chances.

So, what can make that difference? What can be done to build on children's strengths? How can we help young people to develop their interests? How can we enable them to realise their full potential? This updated, extended and redesigned edition of BAAF's bestselling guide contains inspirational ideas and suggestions for promoting resilience in day-to-day work. In very practical ways, Gilligan shows how to build feelings of confidence, self-esteem and effectiveness, which encourage resilience in children, using relationship opportunities in their family and social networks, school and leisure activities.

The guide sustains an impressive focus on the young person and their experience is given voice through extracts from research and from direct quotes. Case studies help to bring the material to life for the reader. In addition, "points to consider" will stimulate reflection and will help social workers and carers translate the ideas into practice.

Hill, N. (2009) *The Pink Guide to Adoption*. BAAF, London.

ISBN 978 1 905664 68 9 £12.95



Can lesbian and gay couples adopt jointly? Is the adoption process any different to that for heterosexual adopters? Is it true that only "hard to place" children get placed with lesbians and gay men? ***The Pink Guide to Adoption*** has the answers to these and many more key questions. This essential step-by-step guide is the first book of its kind published in the UK for lesbians and gay men who are considering adoption.

For both single adopters and same-sex couples wishing to adopt jointly, the first part of the book explores the adoption process and examines how being a prospective lesbian or gay adopter can and does affect every aspect of this. Illustrated throughout with quotations from those who have already experienced, or are currently involved in, the adoption process, the guide also has useful points to consider for those wishing to embark on the adoption journey.

Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

The second part consists of the stories of several lesbians and gay men at various stages of the adoption process. Some have adopted singly, most in couples, and all at are different stages. Informative and inspiring, these stories bring to life the reality of what adoption means. They describe the highs and lows, the welcome they have received and also the prejudices encountered, the difficulties and the rewards. Many reveal how their lives have changed immeasurably since their adopted children moved in.

A must for any lesbian or gay man wishing to adopt, *The Pink Guide to Adoption* will also provide insights for social workers on what lesbian and gay adopters can offer.



Rushton, A. and Monck, E. (2009) *Enhancing Adoptive Parenting*. BAAF, London.

ISBN 978 1 905664 64 1 £12.95

Enhancing Adoptive Parenting is part of the Department for Children, Schools and Families' Adoption Research Initiative, which is examining how the Adoption and Children Act 2002 in England and Wales, and various related policy initiatives are being translated into local policies, procedures and practice. It is also assessing outcomes for children who have recently been placed for adoption or in other permanent placements, and assessing outcomes for their families. *Enhancing Adoptive Parenting* focuses on post-adoption support.

We know the problems many adopters face in parenting older children placed with them from the care system. But we need better evidence about effective post-placement help. This adoption support study describes the setting up of the first rigorous test in the UK to discover whether the addition of one-on-one parenting advice sessions made a difference compared with a comparison group receiving routine support services.

The study reports on the adopters' perception of the preparation they received to manage the broad range of difficulties the children were presenting. It covers the

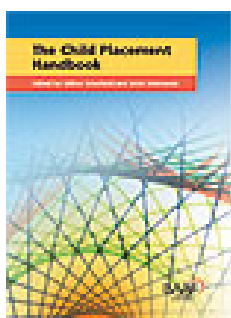
Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

rationale and content of the two specially devised parenting advice programmes employed in the research and we learn both what the adopters thought of the parenting advice and what the parent advisers thought about delivering the programmes.

The heart of the book presents a comparison of the intervention and control group outcomes for the adopters and their children. It describes how the parenting approaches and behaviour of adopters changed in the intervention groups and what happened to the children's behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

This study presents a bold attempt to evaluate systematically the outcomes of well-defined adoption support by using a randomised controlled trial. Conducting a trial in the "real world" of children's services and adoptive families proved complex for the researchers. Many lessons can be learnt from their account of some of the challenges they faced. Much can also be learnt from the study's findings for the development of future adoption policy and practice. These findings should be of interest to all those who are working to improve the outcomes for, and well-being of, adopted children and to those involved in providing support to adoptive families.



Schofield, G. and Simmonds, J. (Eds) (2009) *The Child Placement Handbook: Research, policy and practice*. BAAF, London.

ISBN 978 1 905664 46 7 £24.95

The last 30 years have seen a significant investment by successive governments in providing a research evidence base for child placement and in making connections between research, policy and practice. This authoritative collection is designed to capture something of this wealth of knowledge and wisdom across diverse child placement issues.

Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

Research in child placement can play an essential role in aiding understanding of the complex relationships between systems, professional practice and child outcomes, by describing, analysing and suggesting links between them. It also plays an important part in informing and supporting the complex roles and difficult decisions of social workers, thus increasing the likelihood that professional judgements will lead to better outcomes for children and families.

This challenging task is clearly recognised in every chapter of this collection, as authors from research and practice set out and evaluate the evidence; its strengths, its limitations, and implications for future policy and practice. The first section sets the scene in relation to the role of research in child placement, child placement policy in an international context, the developmental consequences of abuse and neglect and a key issue for all practice in child placement – listening to children and young people. The second section covers not only a range of placement options, but also some key issues relating to each, such as contact after adoption and fostering adolescents, which extend and complement the core chapters. The final section looks at placement issues in relation to meeting the specific needs of children, such as health and education; in relation to certain groups of children, such as disabled children and unaccompanied asylum seeking children; and in relation to specific issues, such as leaving care and access to information.

This is an invaluable compilation of reviews of key aspects of child placement, written by renowned and leading academics and practitioners. It will provide qualifying, post-qualifying and experienced social workers and social work managers with a book that brings together expertise from a wide range of specialist research which will inform child placement practice.

List of contributors David Berridge, Nina Biehal, Sarah Borthwick, Roger Bullock, Jennifer Cousins, Elaine Farmer, Julia Feast, Catherine Hill, Malcolm Hill, David Howe, Joan Hunt, Jenifer Lord, Elsbeth Neil, Alan Rushton, Hilary Saunders, Gillian Schofield, Peter Selman, Julie Selwyn, John Simmonds, Ian Sinclair, Mike Stein, Olive Stevenson, June Thoburn, Nigel Thomas, Jim Wade, Dinithi Wijedasa, Kate Wilson, Julie Young.

Medicine and Psychology

(Compiled by Fionnuala Leddy)

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

Avery, R. J., Freundlich, M. (2009) "You're all grown up now": Termination of foster care support at age 18. *Journal of Adolescence* 32:247-257

This article considers the repercussions of discharging youth from foster care at age 18 based on recent research demonstrating that youth at this age are not developmentally prepared to live independently, and have a continued need for strong social scaffolding during emerging adulthood. Drawing upon recent research findings, we make recommendations for changes to state and federal policy that provide youth transitioning from foster care an extension of federal/state financial and social support into the third decade of life. We argue for a re-conceptualisation of "independent living" as interdependent living," and recommend that policymakers require a permanent committed adult be identified for each youth prior to discharge from foster care.

Paradis, A.D., Reinherz, H.Z. Giaconia, R.M., Beardslee, W.R., Ward, K., Fitzmaurice, G.M. (2009) Long-Term Impact of Family Arguments and Physical Violence on Adult Functioning at Age 30 Years: Findings From the Simmons Longitudinal Study. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. 48(3): 290-298.

Objective: To prospectively examine the extent to which an increase in family arguments by age 15 years and the occurrence of family physical violence by age 18 years are related to deficits in key domains of adult functioning at age 30 years.

Method: The 346 participants were part of a single-age cohort from a predominately white working-class community whose psychosocial development has been traced since age 5 years. Family arguments and violence were assessed through self-reports

during adolescence. Developmentally relevant areas of current adult functioning were measured by self-reports, structured diagnostic interviews, and clinical interviewer ratings.

Results: Both family arguments and physical violence were significantly related to compromised functioning across multiple areas of adult functioning. Although many associations were somewhat attenuated after controlling for sex, other early family adversities, and family history of disorder, most relations retained statistical significance. Both risk factors were linked with later mental health problems and deficits in psychological and occupational/career functioning. Family violence was also linked to poorer physical health at age 30 years.

Conclusions: Findings underscore the potential long-term impact of troubled family interactions and highlight the critical importance of early intervention programs for youths experiencing either verbal conflict or physical violence in the home.

Trinder, L. , Kellet, J. and Swift, L. (2008) The Relationship Between Contact and Child Adjustment in High Conflict Cases After Divorce or Separation. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*. 13(4): 181-187.

Background: The study explored the relationship between contact and child adjustment where parents are in legal dispute over contact following divorce.

Method: The sample consisted of 156, 129 and 108 parents at three different time points. Resident and contact parents reported on child and parent wellbeing, contact, decision-making and concerns about their former partner's parenting.

Results: Children, particularly boys, had above average behaviour problems. Parent wellbeing and concerns about their ex-partner's parenting were associated with child adjustment. Contact and child adjustment were not related. **Conclusions:** Parenting education and therapeutic interventions are required to help parents focus on their children's needs.

Key Practitioner Message:



- Poor adjustment was reported in children, especially boys, where parents were involved in legal disputes over child contact following parental separation or divorce, compared to community norms.
- There was no relationship between children's adjustment and the amount of contact children had with the non-resident parent.
- The most positive adjustment was amongst children where the reporting parent was under less strain and had fewer concerns about the parenting capacity of the other parent.
- Interventions should focus on helping parents to focus on the needs of children post-separation, enhancing parenting capacity and building a parental alliance.

Van Meurs, I., Reef, J., Verhulst, F.C. and Van Der Ende, J. (2009) Intergenerational Transmission of Child Problem Behaviors: A Longitudinal, Population-Based Study. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. 48(2): 138-145.

Objective: From a developmental perspective, it is important to know to what extent childhood problem behaviors are transmitted across generations. In a longitudinal community study, we compared child behavior of parents with the behavior of their offspring. Intergenerational transmission was investigated for a broad range of problem behaviors, including internalizing problems and externalizing behavior. Sex differences were investigated as well.

Method: We compared Child Behavior Checklist scores of 4- to 16-year-old children ($N = 271$) from a community sample assessed in 1983 with Child Behavior Checklist scores of their 6- to 18-year-old offspring ($N = 424$) who were assessed in 2007. Multilevel modeling was used to test intergenerational associations.

Results: Most forms of problem behavior in children were predicted by the behavior of their parents as children. Parents' Internalizing, Externalizing, and Total Problem scores in childhood all predicted similar problems in their children. Sex differences were found for Delinquent Behavior: continuity was stronger in mothers than it was in fathers, and it was also stronger in sons than in daughters.

Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

Conclusions: The finding that child behavior continues across generations poses challenges in finding ways to prevent problems from being transmitted across generations.

Zinzow, H. M., Ruggiero, K.J. , Resnick, H., Hanson, R., Smith, D., Saunders, B. and Kilpatrick, D. (2009) Prevalence and Mental health Correlates of Witnessed Parental and Community Violence in a National Sample of Adolescents. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 50(4):441-450.

Background: Although research suggests that witnessed violence is linked to adverse mental health outcomes among adolescents, little is know about its prevalence or its significance in predicting psychiatric symptoms beyond the contribution of co-occurring risk factors. The purpose of this study was to identify the national prevalence of witnessed parental and community violence, and to examine these life stressors as independent risk factors for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and major depressive episode (MDE) among adolescents. A secondary aim was to determine which characteristics of witnessed violence were associated with mental health outcomes. **Method:** Participants were 3,614 adolescents recruited from a 2005 US national household probability sample who completed structured telephone interviews assessing witnessed violence and *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – IV (DSM-IV)* criteria for PTSD and MDE. **Results:** National prevalence of witnessed parental violence and witnessed community violence was estimated to be 9% and 38%, respectively. Both forms of witnessed violence predicted PTSD and MDE beyond variance accounted for by age, gender, race/ethnicity, income, and other traumatic event history. Perceptions of threat, repeated violence exposure, location of the violence, and relationship to the victim were associated with psychiatric diagnoses. **Conclusions:** Findings suggest that witnessed violence represents a significant public health burden with implications for psychological assessment and prevention efforts.



Youth Justice

(compiled by John Devaney)

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

Baker, K. (2008) Risk, Uncertainty and Public Protection: Assessment of Young People Who Offend. *British Journal of Social Work* 38(8): 1463-1480.

The intense media and political scrutiny that has long been associated with decisions made by social workers about child protection is now increasingly being seen in the criminal justice arena with regard to assessment of offenders who may present a risk of serious harm to other people. However, there has so far been little academic consideration of the decisions made by youth justice workers concerning young people who may pose a risk to others. This paper presents analysis of data collected from youth offending teams relating to such assessments and, in particular, looks at the extent and range of hypotheses that practitioners use. It is argued that, as in the child protection field, progress in collecting relevant information for assessments has not been matched by improvements in analysis and that practitioners may not be coping very well with the challenge of undertaking complex assessments. Consideration is then given to the question of whether assessment frameworks and organizational systems can take account of the interesting theoretical concept of 'respectful uncertainty' whilst continuing to address the practical priority of making clear decisions at specific points in time about interventions with young people who offend.

Crawford, A. (2009) Criminalizing Sociability through Anti-social Behaviour Legislation: Dispersal Powers, Young People and the Police. *Youth Justice* 9(1): 5-26.

This article explores the impact of dispersal powers introduced as part of the government's drive to tackle anti-social behaviour. It focuses especially on the experiences and views of young people affected by dispersal orders. It highlights the importance of experiences of respect and procedural justice for the manner in which

they respond to directions to disperse. It considers the ways in which dispersal powers can increase police—youth antagonism; bring young people to police attention on the basis of the company they keep; render young people more vulnerable; and reinforce a perception of young people as *a risk* to others rather than as *at risk* themselves. It reflects on broader conceptions of youth and public space apparent within the anti-social behaviour agenda.

Reports

Independent Monitoring Board (2008) *Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and Prison*. Independent Monitoring Board: Belfast.

<http://www.imb-ni.org.uk/publications/HYDEBANK0708.pdf>

This report presents the findings of the IMB's inspection of the Hyde bank Wood Young Offenders' Centre and Prison for the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008.

Summary of recommendations

- A stand-alone, purpose built women's prison should be provided in Northern Ireland.
- The implementation of female specific policies and procedures at Hydebank Wood should be completed.
- The Northern Ireland Office should take steps to establish a totally separate unit at Hydebank Wood for boys under age 18, ideally a stand-alone facility, with staff recruited and trained on the same lines as juvenile justice centre personnel.
- Girls under the age of 18 years should not be accommodated along with adult women prisoners at Hydebank Wood.
- Women prisoners should always be transported separately from young male prisoners.

Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

- Prison officers at Hydebank Wood should proactively engage with the prisoners in their care at all times, and managers should 'walk the job' to ensure that proper engagement is taking place in practice.
- An effective personal officer scheme should be introduced at Hydebank Wood, with each prisoner having a named personal officer
- The Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety should develop a therapeutic approach as an alternative to the use of observation cells and 'safe' clothing for prisoners at Hydebank Wood deemed to be at risk of suicide or self-harm.
- A permanent comprehensive equity monitoring system should be introduced, that distinguishes between male and female inmates, is able to identify areas of over and under-representation and produces transparent results that can be acted upon by management.
- The Northern Ireland Prison Service should formulate a disability policy and a learning disability policy in respect of prisoners.
- The advocacy service at Hydebank Wood for young prisoners under the age of 18 years should be made available to those prisoners aged 18 and above who clearly would not have the mental capacity to represent themselves at disciplinary hearings, or to submit a complaint or request.
- More meaningful child protection safeguards should be established at Hydebank Wood.
- All staff and agency workers who have contact with child prisoners at Hydebank Wood should receive child protection training.
- All outstanding POCVA checks should be undertaken as a matter of urgency in respect of prison grade staff and agency workers who have contact with children and/or vulnerable adults.
- A mental health needs assessment should be undertaken in respect of Hydebank Wood's prisoner population, and services should be reviewed to ensure that there are sufficient and appropriate resources to meet the assessed

needs of the women, young men and children imprisoned there. The needs assessment and services review should encompass personality disordered prisoners.

- A dedicated secure unit should be provided in Northern Ireland for treating young prisoners with severe personality disorders.
- The Northern Ireland Prison Service should give serious consideration to outsourcing all education and vocational training to a mainstream educational institution.
- A concentrated effort should be made at Hydebank Wood to address below-par literacy and numeracy.
- The Northern Ireland Prison Service should devise a fresh strategy for addressing prisoners' negative behaviour at Hydebank Wood, as an alternative to the current punitive measures.
- A proper resettlement team should be established at Hydebank Wood.
- Alcohol addiction treatment should be provided at Hydebank Wood, including a high level of support for the prisoners concerned.
- The major focus of the drugs steering committee at Hydebank Wood should be directed to drugs and alcohol counselling, therapeutic intervention, detoxification and rehabilitation, rather than to security measures.

Tate, S. and O'Loan, C. (2009) *Northern Ireland Youth Re-offending: Results from the 2006 Cohort*. NIO, Belfast.

This bulletin documents the results from the 2006 cohort on Youth Re-offending in Northern Ireland.

Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

Youth Justice Board (2009) *Girls and Offending - Patterns, Perceptions and Interventions.*

The relatively low number of young women engaged in offending has meant that most research and expertise has been developed in response to male offending. Nonetheless, there is a growing concern about the rising number of females involved in offending. Theories seeking to explain this suggest that as females become more emancipated they behave more similarly to men, or that netwidening is taking place, with females being prosecuted for offences that would not previously have been pursued. However, the real numbers of females in the criminal justice system are low, which makes them susceptible to what appear to be dramatic changes in percentage terms.

This research provides information about girls who offend, and draws on information from a variety of sources to inform current policy and practice.

Summary available at:

<http://www.yjb.gov.uk/publications/Scripts/prodView.asp?idproduct=439&eP=>

Full report available at:

<http://www.yjb.gov.uk/publications/Scripts/prodView.asp?idProduct=440&eP=>

Forthcoming Events

Conferences

Children and the Law: International approaches to children and their vulnerabilities

Date: 7-10 September 2009

Organisers: Monash University

Venue: Prato, Italy

This international conference aims to examine the vulnerabilities of children and young people and how the systems responding to those at risk of harm must be reshaped to better protect their rights and best interests.

The conference will give particular attention to the following themes:

- The protection of children under the law
- Family law and its impact on children.
- Children as citizens: the vulnerability of indigenous children, the global movement of children, child trafficking, the impact of war and trauma on children
- Youth justice
- Health and mental health impacts on children and their intersection with legal processes.

Further Details: <http://www.med.monash.edu.au/socialwork/conference09/>

Children Order Advisory Committee's Multi-Disciplinary Newsletter

Issue 9 Summer 2009

20 years of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Date: 26 January 2010

Organisers: Child Care in Practice

Venue: Belfast

This international conference aims to mark twenty years of the passing of the UNCRC and to examine its impact in promoting children's rights. The conference will coincide with the launch of a special edition of the *Child Care in Practice* journal and will explore the Convention's core themes of provision of services, participation and protection.

The conference is aimed at professionals working in the areas of law, social work, youth justice, children's rights, education and health.

Further Details: childcareinpractice@qub.ac.uk