

TRANSITION and MIXED CHILD-ADULT PLACEMENTS

NAAPS Practice Guidance

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 NAAPS recognizes the benefits of intergenerational practice. It is our view that intergenerational placements are of benefit to all parties. This practice guide is underpinned by this belief.
- 1.2 There are many instances in which Adult Placement Carers (AP Carers) may find themselves assisting with the transition of young people from children's to adult services. There are also instances where they may provide accommodation and support to both children placed through the Fostering Service and adults under Adult Placement. There are a number of different ways in which transitional and mixed child-adult placements arise:
 - Foster carers who wish to become AP carers in order to facilitate a continuation of support into adult life
 - Foster-carers who are supporting siblings and wish to continue to support the siblings after the age of 18. Schemes will become involved when the oldest sibling reaches 18 but fostering will remain involved with the younger siblings.
 - Foster carers who wish to accommodate siblings but where one or more are 18+
 - Short breaks carers approved to support both adults and children.
 - Schemes that have developed a service for 16 – 18 year olds in response to transition issues for this age group.
 - Schemes that offer parent and baby placements
 - Young people moving from other children's services to adult services e.g. residential care
 - Shared Care arrangements running into adult life
- 1.3 Where the term '**carer**' is used on its own in this document it refers to a person who is intending to work or is working as both an AP carer and a foster carer
- 1.4 This guidance only relates to England and to mixed child adult placements where children are placed under fostering regulations.
- 1.5 The following NAAPS practice guidance represents what we consider to be best practice advice for such transition and mixed child-adult placements.
- 1.6 In order that transition from child to adult placement takes place effectively and for mixed child-adult placements to be a positive experience for all parties NAAPS believes that there should be jointly agreed protocols and procedures between children's and adult services. In order to create a national consistency to this approach it is felt that these should be agreed to at a national level between key stakeholder organisations.

1.7 Mixed child-adult placements require particularly careful planning to take account of:

- the different legal status of children and adults
- the difference between the children and adults legislative frameworks
- the fact that separation between children's services and adult services can cause significant communication difficulties

By planning carefully we can achieve stability of placements, a seamless transition into adulthood and clarity of information about payments.

2 PRACTICE GUIDANCE

2.1 Principles of good practice:

- The wishes and requirements of the individuals placed are central
- Good information must be provided to carers about AP and fostering requirements
- Carers working for fostering and AP services will need support to be clear about their role with each person that they support
- There is a need for clear protocols governing the way in which the fostering and the adult placement services work together
- There is a need to avoid unnecessary duplication of processes and paperwork
- Good risk assessment and risk management is essential

2.2 Protocol for Transition from Foster Care to Adult Placement

2.2.1 Schemes will need to consider a number of factors when supporting Foster Carers who wish to continue to care for the young people placed with them once they reach 18:

- Information about Adult Placement should be available for children's teams and foster carers so that it can be considered alongside other long term options such as direct payments or discharge from care to continue to live with the foster carers without support or funding
- The need for a continued service into adult life should be formally identified as early as possible but certainly by the age of 16
- Adult Placement teams should be involved at an early stage in transition planning
- Information sharing between agencies should be given a high priority (e.g.: Transfer of information from the fostering agency to the AP Scheme; Information sharing between agencies when making a new placement): resolving any confidentiality issues which may make inhibit comprehensive information sharing.
- AP is subject to different Regulations to foster care. Whilst currently both are regulated by CSCI as services they are rooted in differing legislative bases.
- The issue of care management support for the young person must be addressed
- The different legal responsibilities which the AP Carer and the foster carer have to the people placed with them. Ensuring that this change in

responsibilities is explained carefully to the foster carer moving into the Adult Placement Scheme.

- The AP Scheme will need to assess the suitability of the foster carer to be an AP Carer. This will involve careful communication between the fostering agency and the AP Scheme. The AP Scheme assessment should take into account the foster carer assessment
- Considering the relative knowledge skills and qualification requirements of foster carers and adult placement carers. Ensuring that the foster carer is able to provide evidence that they have the skills and knowledge to support adults.
- Level of respite support for AP carers and foster carers may differ and any discrepancies will need to be recognized and wherever possible equalized.
- The scope of any existing Carer Public Liability Insurance will need to be looked at and fresh or amended cover obtained as appropriate.
- Any implications related to CRB checks both for service users and members of the household
- Impact of building regulations (if there are more than 6 people in the house then the foster carer may need to apply for change of use of the premises). Refer to separate guidance on Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Who will fund the placement of the young person once they reach 18? Also consider the implications of any differential fee level and impact of benefits entitlement.
- The Benefits impact when the young person turns 18 needs to be considered both in terms of the impact on charges and on the foster family/adult placement family
- Any continued or joint use of any adaptations or special equipment to be considered

2.3 Protocol for joint working between the Fostering/Share Care Agency and the AP Scheme

2.3.1 This agreement is vital to the success of any mixed child-adult placement. It sets down the way in which the agencies will work together. A working protocol should be drawn up which includes agreement on:

- the identification of a lead agency
- being clear that approval as a foster carer does not automatically make someone suitable as an adult placement carer and visa versa
- the way AP Carers should be assessed:
 - if the carer is an approved foster carer then the AP Scheme should be able to use the assessment of the fostering agency as a basis for their own assessment;
 - if the AP Carer wishes to support someone under 18 with personal care needs then the fostering agency should be able to use the AP assessment as a basis of the foster carer assessment;
 - if the carer has applied to work with both adults and children then the assessment should be carried out jointly by the agencies;
- agency involvement in Carer training. Both agencies should be involved in training where the carer has applied to support both adults and children.
- health and safety issues and particularly around risk assessment
- how, if the carer has applied to work with both adults and children then the assessment report should be presented separately to the fostering and the AP Panels

- situations where the AP Carer wishes to provide support to 16-18 year olds without personal care needs and that their AP assessment should be presented to the fostering panel as required by the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.
- the need for consultation between the agencies before making a decision to place anyone into the household. Matching decisions should be agreed by all agencies involved after comprehensive information sharing. All agencies should be involved in the placement agreement meeting and the detail of the service user plan.
- support visits: there must be an agreement between the agencies about the frequency and timing of support visits to avoid unnecessary burden on the carer.
- joint investigation of complaints by all agencies involved.
- the way in which the placements are monitored. Clear identification of a lead agency for each placement and agreement about where joint placement reviews would be appropriate.
- how carer reviews will be conducted and agreement about when it would be appropriate for these to be held jointly.
- post approval training:
 - each carer should have a common learning and development plan agreed with the carer by both agencies;
 - the plan should clarify which agency is responsible for delivering which parts of the plan and how the carer should be supported to enable them to take part in learning opportunities.
- CRB checks:
 - agencies must be clear about the frequency of CRB checks required, who is checked and which agency is responsible for carrying them out;
 - the CRB check must be the 'children and adults' check.
- the shared responsibility for POVA and POCA procedures particularly around relative reporting and information sharing responsibilities.

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