



Issue 14

Summer 09

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Adoption in Kent this Summer

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Vanessa Glenn Reports

Since I last put pen to paper, I can now see Wind turbines through my window and the landscape has changed - well at least for the next 25 years. So what has happened with the Adoption Service over the last year?

The Service was inspected by OFSTED in September 2008 and received a "Good". This means that we are doing well in meeting the needs of prospective adopters, adopters, children and their families across Kent. But of course there is always room for improvement and one of the main areas we will need to explore over the next few months and years is how we ensure that we are reaching out to all of the diverse sections of our society in Kent. KISKA were also inspected in March of this year and they too received a "Good" from OFSTED. I would like to say thank you to all of you who participated staff, adopters and prospective adopters.

Clearly, we are all faced with challenges in our daily lives. In the Adoption service we have lost, through retirement, some very experienced staff over the last year and this loss has been felt by everyone concerned. Whilst at the same time the Adoption service has been taking part in a process of realignment with the whole of Children' services. This means that we will become three large Teams in stead of five, from the 1st January, 2010. The adoption service will continue to deliver the same services across the county and telephone numbers will remain the same.

Vanessa Glenn Reports

There are some other key developments. The Adoption Support and Special Guardianship team is currently being reviewed. This is part of the overall review of adoption support services, which has arisen as the current service provider KISKA has come to the end of its contract. It is hoped that a new service specification will be tendered for at the end of this year, with a new service in place by the 1st April 2010. You will be advised if there is any change in the current arrangements. But I must underline the fact that Tessa Brown, the acting Team Manager, is very actively building the ASSG Team and I have every confidence that this will be an exciting space to watch!

The new adoption financial support procedure came into being in April 2008 and we are now well into the second year of its operation. It has been successful in ensuring that consistency has been brought to the assessment process through the use of the Department, children, families and schools financial template and the criteria as set out in the adoption support regulations. Overall, the vast majority of families who receive allowances have received an increase.

In the coming year, the challenge for the Adoption Service will be to ensure that the issues that face children and their adoptive families need to be seen within the context of the whole of the Children and Families debate. Adopted children bring not only their desire to be loved and cared for to their new families, but they also bring very real challenges due to their previous parenting experiences. Once they are adopted, these latter issues don't just go away. The key to helping adopters is to ensure that they have good adoption support services around them to advise and assist, even when their beautiful children turn into something they don't recognise when they reach adolescence. Which of course happens to all of us - it's just that we forget? Although I have got the photograph to prove that my hair was four different colours, shaved at the back and glued into some sort of shape.

On this final note, I would invite you to join us on our Adopters' Advisory Group because we want to know what you think about how we could develop our service. To find out more contact Tessa Brown, Acting Team Manager for the Adoption and Special Guardian Support Team at Doubleday Lodge, Glebe Lane, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4JW - 01795 566227 or via email at tessa.brown@gov.uk

Vanessa Glenn
County Adoption Manager

Open Day & Children Who Wait in Kent Events**Adoption Open Day - 9th May 2009**

The Adoption Service hosted an Open Day at the Ramada Hotel near Maidstone, when potential adopters had the opportunity to speak to adopters and social workers from the Adoption Service.

We were very pleased with the number of potential adopters who attended the event and hope to hear from them regarding taking their application to adopt further.

**National Adoption Week
9th-15th November 2009**

We will be holding another Adoption Open Day on Saturday 14th November - 10:30am - 3:30pm at Canterbury Christchurch University, Hall Place Enterprise Centre, Harbeldon near Canterbury CT2 9AG

Word of mouth is the best form of recommendation and people always keen to hear about adoption from those who have actually been through the process.

If you are available to come to the Open Day and speak with potential adopters about your adoption experience, please let Chris Clark, Adoption Recruitment Co-ordinator know either via emailing chris.clark@kent.gov.uk or by phoning 01233 898572.

Children Who Wait in Kent Coffee Morning

We will be holding the next Children Who Wait in Kent Coffee Morning on Wednesday 4th November - 10:00 - 12:30 at Lenham Community Centre, Groom Way, Lenham ME17 2QT

This event is for approved and waiting adopters.
Your Adoption Social Worker will be able to give you further details nearer the date.

Nathan Born - 5.11.2004

Nathan is white British, has blonde hair and blue eyes. He presents as a charming young boy with a warm and engaging smile. Nathan is average height and build for his age. Prior to being placed in foster care his height and build were below average and since being given the attention and care he needs his development has progressed.

Nathan has a squint in one eye, but at present is reluctant to wear a patch to improve this. Developmentally, Nathan is delayed and is still at a toddler stage. He puts his arms out to balance walking and running as his feet turn in. His speech is improving all the time with his vocabulary growing and he is now putting two words together. He attends a nursery for children with special needs and enjoys being with other children.

Nathan loves to play –a favourite game is still peek-a-boo. He also likes football and trampolining. He likes to be an active child. He interacts well with adults and children in the foster home and thrives on positive attention. He has made lots of progress through their care and stimulation.

Nathan enjoys most foods, but yoghurt and mini cheddars are favourites. As a small child, Nathan experienced neglect and was present when physical abuse was occurring at home. He strongly dislikes people shouting or being very close to his face. Nathan has four brothers and a sister and the plan is for him to have letterbox contact with them, and his birth mother, once a year.

Ideally Nathan will be in a family with two carers and will need to be the only or the youngest child in family by several years.

**For more information, please contact Susan Wilson, Family Finding Social Worker
on 01732 525330 or via email on susan.wilson@kent.gov.uk**

**Or Mary Todd Social Worker in the Children & Families Team
on 01732 225080 or e-mail mary.todd@kent.gov.uk**

David - Born 3.4.2000

David is a white British, artistic child with a vivid imagination. He enjoys drawing and other forms of arts and crafts. More recently David has been involved in Drama groups and performing arts and he has reported that he thoroughly enjoys acting. David also enjoys reading stories and his comprehension skills have significantly improved.

David came into the care of the Local Authority on 21st September 2006 due to poor, neglectful parenting which was partly a result of the birth mother's mild learning difficulties. His father also has learning difficulties. The birth mother also suffers from consistent poor health. David's behaviour was challenging when he first came into foster care, but since being with his current therapeutic carers, this has gradually diminished. He is an active child who enjoys outdoor play which includes riding his bicycle.

David has built a good attachment to his current carers, is always friendly and talkative and enjoys asking questions and telling you about his views. David has settled into a daily routine and at bedtime this includes bath, story and sleep. David needs consistent firm boundaries in order to continue to address some of the challenging behaviour he can still present. He has been responding well to the boundaries set which are based on a reward system. Currently his household consists of two carers who maintain consistency and allow respite for each other. He eats well, has a good appetite, enjoys food and is usually willing to try new foods and drinks.

David enjoys going to school. He is reported to have made good friendships in his school setting and is always eager to try new things. School teachers continue to maintain firm consistent boundaries which are kept consistent in the home and at school. No concerns have been raised by the school and he is reported to be progressing well. David will benefit from a family who are outgoing and proactive. David's family will need to be energetic, affectionate and have a good sense of humour. David would thrive with a family who provide him with lots of love, care, attention and firm and consistent boundaries. David will need to continue to have direct contact with his younger siblings and limited contact with his birth mother. This is an important factor for David as he currently enjoys direct contact with his siblings and he needs to be reassured that his birth mother is also doing well. The current foster carers find caring for David rewarding, fun, loving, affectionate and frequently comical. David enjoys retelling jokes and when he makes adults laugh he appears to enjoy this response which is rewarding in itself.

**For more information, please contact Susan Wilson, Family Finding Social Worker
on 01732 525330 or via email on susan.wilson@kent.gov.uk**

**Or contact Kathy Lewis Social Worker Adoption Resources
on 01233 898616 or email kathy.lewis@kent.gov.uk**

Adoption and Special Guardian Support Team

Those of you with adopted children will regularly receive our newsletter and flyers for our upcoming events and workshops. If you do not receive them, please contact us and we will add you to our mailing list so that we can let you know what is going on.

Coming up this autumn

"Telling" Workshop

This workshop will provide opportunities to discuss 'hows' and 'whys' of talking to your child about adoption.

There will be time to talk to other adopters and consider how much to tell and when, and a brief look at some theory regarding how children understand adoption at different ages and stages.

THIS WORKSHOP IS FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS

Making the most of Life Story Books

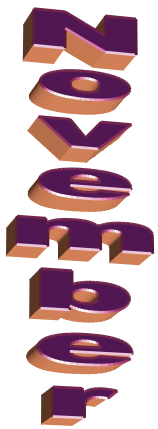
This workshop is to help you make and use life story books with your children.

There will be an opportunity to try out some of the ideas and is very much a 'hands on' workshop.

THIS WORKSHOP IS FOR ADULTS ONLY



Adoption and Special Guardian Support Team



It's Winter Party time!

Once again the Team are excited to invite you all along to an afternoon of fun and games.

The Musical Clown will be there to provide the entertainment and "Sparkle" the Winter Fairy will be flying in to visit again.

We will be running another new and re-vamped 'Parenting adopted children' set of workshops for those of you with school age children at some point early in the new year. We will be running a Theraplay® group next year and we hope to kick start a few other projects.

We have a book/website list available on the website

http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/children/carers_guidance.cfm

with some very interesting and relevant reading. Our latest recommendations include two Nick Luxmore books 'Feeling like C**p' and 'Working with anger and young people' (ISBN Number 9781 84310 682 1). These books will really help you understand what makes young people tick and why they have the difficulties that they do. He quotes a fairy tale by Terry Jones (1981)

'Little Molly, on her way home one night, is caught in a thunderstorm and forced to shelter in an isolated hut. Unfortunately, there's a monster in there as well who scares Molly with his noise and size and threats. In the end, Molly decides that, as he's probably going to eat her anyway, she might as well stand up to him. So she biffs the monster on the nose whereupon he capitulates, changing colour and shrinking until a frightened rabbit hops out from inside the monster's shell and runs away.'

He suggests that sometimes, working with the anger that young people present does need some bravery.

We also love Kim Golding's 'Nurturing Attachments'. (ISBN number 978 1 84310 614 2)

We look forward to seeing you all soon at our events and workshops

*Best wishes from us all
at the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support team.*

Adoption and Special Guardian Support Team

Doubleday Lodge, Glebe Lane, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4JW 01795 566227

Training and Development Opportunities

Once adopters are approved at Panel, and before they have children placed with them, there is the opportunity to attend a number of training courses alongside approved foster carers. The courses cover a range of topics including attachment, child development, positive behaviour management and working with sexually abused children and give the opportunity to develop your knowledge and skills. Most courses run from 9.30-2.30pm and held at a variety of venues across the county.

To find out more information about the training opportunities available please contact your adoption worker.

Resource Library

We also have a Resource Library containing books, resources and DVDs that can be borrowed

A Child's Journey through Placement
Attachment for foster care and adoption
Attachments handbook for foster car and adoption
Contact in adoption and permanent foster care
First Steps in Parenting the Child who Hurts
Health of LAC and Young People
Helping Adolescents and Adults to Build Self-Esteem
Helping children to Build Self-Esteem
Preparing Children for permanence
Taking about adoption to your adopted child
Attachment for foster care and adoption (DVD)

To borrow any of the above titles and many more please ask your Social Worker to contact Sue Douglas on sue.douglas@kent.gov.uk or 01732 525344

E-safety

We have recently ran some workshops on e-safety – here is a link to a document with e-Safety Advice for Parents and Carers that you may find useful

http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/UserFiles/CW/File/Childrens_Services/childrens_carers/E-safety_Advice_for_Parents_Carers.pdf

www.kent.gov.uk/adoption and www.kent.gov.uk/fostering

A small Project Group has been established to look at the adoption and fostering website pages www.kent.gov.uk/adoption and www.kent.gov.uk/fostering and are having their first meeting at the beginning of August.

If you have any comments/suggestions please contact Carol Ansell
On 01233 652172 or via email at carol.ansell@kent.gov.uk

Summer Reading Challenge 2009

connect

with Libraries & Archives



The Summer Reading Challenge in libraries

**Quest Seekers - Join the Summer Reading Challenge 2009
from 11 July at any Kent Library**

Whether your child is just beginning to pick up books, or an avid reader already, the Summer Reading Challenge 2009 will fire up their imagination.

Just sign up at your local Kent library (it's free!) and your children will receive a 'moving image' membership card and a poster to keep track of their quest.

As a Quest Seeker, your child can take part in three tasks:
Firebird Rising, Mountain Mission and Dragon's Lair.

Each task involves reading two books – they can be any books at all and if they finish all three tasks they retrieve the golden book, and their quest is complete!

The Summer Reading Challenge is great fun for everyone
but it also gives kids a real sense of achievement.

Ask at your local Kent Library for more information

**Libraries & Archives**

Adoption UK

**adoption uk**

Supporting adoptive families before, during and after adoption

www.adoptionuk.com

Helpline 0844 848 7900

Diary Dates

**Details may change at short notice
please phone a Group Coordinator for full details
and to confirm your attendance.**

20 August Thursday - Picnic in the Park

Our annual fun day, held jointly with Bexley's Adoption team.

The park's attractions include playgrounds, sand pits, paddling pool, miniature railway, boating lake, usually some small fairground rides and lots of open space.

Don't forget a picnic, rug, towel and paddling clothes etc. Bring all the family.

For further details of times and meeting place, please email
or telephone one of the Group Coordinators

Janet Walker (Tel: 01322 525091) Email: janetwalker00@hotmail.com

or

Janet Jones (Tel: 020 8301 1297) Email: janet.jones.1@talktalk.net

Under 5's Gang

Meet on the FIRST FRIDAY of each month

Please phone Janet (J) for more details; (Tel No: 020 8301 1297)

Useful contacts

Mid/East Kent Adoption

Kroner House
Eurogate Business Park
Ashford
Kent TN24 8XU
Tel: 01233 898630/1/2/3
adoption@kent.gov.uk

**Central Adoption Team
(Adoption Panel & Resources
Non-Agency & Inter-country)**

(Kroner House—address as above)
01233 652315

**Adoption and Special Guardian Support Team
(ASGS)**

Doubleday Lodge, Glebe Lane,
Sittingbourne, Kent. ME10 4JW
01795 566227

**Action for Children - Kent Independent Support
for Kinship & Adoption (K.I.S.K.A.)**

3rd Floor, Westbrook House,
18-20 Albion Place, Maidstone, ME14 5DZ
01622 693692—This is an advice line which is open
to general enquiries 10 am - 1 pm each working day.
kiska@nch.org.uk

West Kent Adoption

17 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent ME19 4UL
Tel: 01732 525323
adoption@kent.gov.uk

**British Agencies for Adoption
and Fostering (BAAF)**

Tel: 0207 593 2000

Adoption UK Tel: 01295 660121

Advice and help line Tel: 0870 7700 450
(Mon-Fri 11am-4pm)
admin@adoptionuk.org.uk

Post Adoption Centre (PAC)

Tel: 020 7284 0555
Confidential advice line Tel: 0870 777
2197
(Advice Line Open Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri 10
am-1pm Thursdays 5.30pm-7.30pm)
advice@postadoptioncentre.org.uk

If you know of anyone who is interested in finding out more about Adoption with Kent County Council, please ask them to contact the Initial Enquiries Team for an Information Pack on 0845 330 2968 or via email adoption@kent.gov.uk

We would love your feedback and contributions for the Newsletter

- Are we getting this newsletter right?
- Do you find it useful?
- What else would you like to see included?
- Could you share your adoption experience?
- Any children's activities or puzzles to share?
- Feedback on the website?
- An adoption book to recommend?

**Please send any ideas/articles to
Chris Clark
Kent Adoption Service
Kroner House,
Eurogate Business Park,
Ashford,
Kent TN24 8XU
Email chris.clark@kent.gov.uk**