



## 15 years of National Adoption Week

David Holmes

Welcome to the September edition of *BAAF News*. At BAAF we are now really gearing up for National Adoption Week 2012. It is the 15th anniversary this year and we are encouraging as many adoption agencies as possible across the UK to make the most of the week by organising their own local events to raise awareness of adoption and to encourage prospective adopters to find out more. Adoption continues to have a high political profile across the UK and by working together we can make National Adoption Week bigger and better and really help you with your efforts to recruit families. We will be communicating positive stories about adoption throughout the week, and as ever we will be hoping to find new permanent families for many of the children needing adoption whom we will be featuring in the national media during the week.

On the policy front, there is also much activity to report. There are updates elsewhere in this edition of *BAAF News* about the latest developments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In England, over the summer we needed to respond quickly to short consultations on sibling placement and contact. You can see BAAF's response to those consultations here: [www.baaf.org.uk/res/consultations](http://www.baaf.org.uk/res/consultations). The Westminster Government has also just launched a major consultation exercise on changes to adoption and fostering regulations. The changes include the proposed regulatory framework for the new two-stage adoption assessment process, for referrals to the Adoption Register and new provisions on delegated authority. We will be consulting with our membership on the proposed changes throughout the autumn.

The Westminster Government has also recently announced an Invitation to Tender to provide the new National Gateway for Adoption, and this new national "front door" to adoption is expected to go live by the end of the calendar year or soon after. Also, we continue to expect to see the introduction of a new Children and Families Bill in England early in 2013. This is expected to pick up legislative reforms arising from the Family Justice Review as well as other legislative reform related to adoption and children in care.

As ever, we will ensure that our members are kept up to date with the latest developments, wherever you are.

## Encouraging development and growth

Alan Wood

I thought it would be helpful to give you a brief overview of developments here in the Central England region, and a report on my first nine months at BAAF.

As colleagues from BAAF countries and regions, who have kindly agreed to cover some of the training here in Central England, will know, we remain very busy with commissioned training across the Midlands as a whole. Our ongoing work with Birmingham City Council is particularly busy in relation to our safeguarding and Early Years training. The Central England team has been at the forefront of the development of these "non-traditional" areas of training for BAAF, and we continue to focus on helping social workers and Early Years providers to become more aware of the importance of positive, child-focused and evidence-based interventions and approaches that can both assist in safeguarding children and identify appropriate support for children within their families.

Kanu Patel, former Trainer Consultant in Central England, has taken up his new BAAF-wide role as Training Services Development Co-ordinator and will have a lead co-ordinating role in relation to the growth of the training services BAAF offers across all countries and regions within the UK. This is an excellent opportunity to further develop a co-ordinated and strategic approach in our training. Given the economic climate we are all operating within, we need to continue to both expand and reinforce our core business, whilst remaining flexible enough to meet the variety of needs that organisations have in respect of staff and carer development.

My contact with colleagues from all countries, regions and the range of functions within BAAF has been, without exception, positive. I am particularly keen to develop these links and continue to encourage

## nationaladoptionweek

5 - 11 November 2012

### Stars, Champions and awards

Dan French

To celebrate the 15th anniversary of National Adoption Week, we will be putting the voice of the child at the heart of this year's campaign, which runs from 5-11 November. Adoption social workers have been invited to speak to children waiting for adoption and send us their hopes and wishes about a new family. Our web team are working hard to turn these wishes into stars, each featuring a message from a child awaiting adoption about what they would like from their new adoptive family. The stars will be used throughout the campaign, including on the NAW website at [www.nationaladoptionweek.org.uk](http://www.nationaladoptionweek.org.uk), and on campaign posters.

*The Sun* and ITV's *This Morning* have agreed to be our media partners for the campaign once again. As with previous years, *The Sun* will feature children awaiting adoption on Monday and Tuesday of National Adoption Week, and *This Morning* will feature children across the week. We will also have a BAAF spokesperson on the sofa of *This Morning* on the first day. If you are a social worker and would like to put forward a child/ children to be featured in this year's campaign, please contact [patricia.mcgintry@baaf.org.uk](mailto:patricia.mcgintry@baaf.org.uk).

We are building on the success of last year's NAW film competition and expanding this into the 2012 National Adoption Week Awards. There will be five categories: Adoption Film of the Year, Adoption Champion of the Year, Supporter of the Year, Adoption Social Worker of the Year, and

Adoption Service of the Year. Nicky Campbell, BAAF Patron and TV and radio presenter, will be hosting the awards ceremony for us, which will take place on Tuesday 6 November in London. Winners will be announced live on the night. Find out more on the National Adoption Week website.

We will also be continuing our push to encourage adoption-experienced people to sign up as Adoption Champions. Head to the Adoption Champions section of the website to find out more information. Being a Champion means helping us to spread the word about adoption and encouraging more prospective adopters to come forward. It could be as simple as sending out a tweet about adoption, or talking to friends and colleagues – whatever you feel comfortable with!

#### National Adoption Week in Wales

The BAAF Cymru team is celebrating National Adoption Week in collaboration with other voluntary adoption agencies in Wales by organising an Adoption Walk Wales week from 29 October to 4 November. We are hoping to walk the whole of the fantastic Welsh coastline with groups/individuals/families who have a connection with adoption. You can take on as little or as much of the coastline as you want! Come and join us by signing up at: [www.nationaladoptionweek.org.uk/whatson/wales/adoptionwalkwales](http://www.nationaladoptionweek.org.uk/whatson/wales/adoptionwalkwales).

## Annual Review 2011/12 available

BAAF's Annual Review 2011/12 is now available. The review has been distributed to members in the September mailing, and can also be viewed at [www.baaf.org.uk/about/strategy](http://www.baaf.org.uk/about/strategy). If you would like to receive a copy, request this at the webpage above or email [mail@baaf.org.uk](mailto:mail@baaf.org.uk).

The BAAF Scotland Annual Review 2011/12 is also available, and was distributed to members in Scotland in the September mailing. It can be viewed on our website, or copies can be requested from our Scotland office at [scotland@baaf.org.uk](mailto:scotland@baaf.org.uk).



## Adoption & Fostering journal explores multiculturalism

Miranda Davies

The next edition of *Adoption & Fostering* will be a special double (autumn/winter) edition on multiculturalism, identity and family placement.

The Westminster Government's recent revision of the Adoption Statutory Guidance has reawakened the long-standing and contentious debate on the position of race, ethnicity and culture in the plans that are made and decisions taken about children who cannot be cared for by their birth parents. Recent speeches by politicians questioning if multiculturalism has failed also indicate that this is not just an issue of family placement. The power of adoption to conjure up the image of the colonisation of black children, the denial of the significance of race, ethnicity and culture in the development of a secure personal identity, and the fear that white adopters can never understand the realities of institutional and personal racism set the context for the debate.

Leading experts from Scandinavia, the US and the UK will address questions such as: What impact do theoretical ideas about racialisation and ethnicisation have on thinking about "transracial adoption"? What is the current evidence about ethnic matching in adoption and fostering? Has the concept of mixed ethnicity produced a new set of issues? How does being adopted across borders affect feelings of community connectedness, identity and self-esteem among intercountry adopted people?

The journal, guest-edited by Ann Phoenix and John Simmonds, will be launched at BAAF's London conference, 'Mixed heritage voices', on 29 November.

## Black Workers Practice Group: invitation for new members

Roana Roach

Black practitioners of African, Caribbean and Asian (including South East Asian) descent are invited to attend the Black Workers Practice Group (BWPG). The group provides black practitioners from a wide range of disciplines (local authority and independent adoption and fostering services, and children's services) with a forum to discuss, share and examine practice issues. Members also have the opportunity to develop strategies and initiatives for working with and promoting the placement needs of black and minority ethnic children. Advice and support can be accessed by members on other issues affecting their work via telephone and email.

Seminars and discussions are regularly held, providing an enabling and learning environment, recognised and supported by

BAAF, and members continue to be supported by their managers to attend the group. Recent discussion topics explored by the group include legislative change, changes to Ofsted inspections, and intergenerational attachment. The thriving group meets bi-monthly in London, and has over 200 members.

For further information regarding the BWPG covering London and the South of England, please contact me on 020 7421 2656 or 0784 335 9704, or at [roana.roach@baaf.org.uk](mailto:roana.roach@baaf.org.uk).

For further information regarding the BWPG covering Central and Northern England, please contact Savita de Sousa on 020 7421 2653, or at [savita.desousa@baaf.org.uk](mailto:savita.desousa@baaf.org.uk).

connections between us all within BAAF. Working in a small but highly influential organisation comes with its own challenges and opportunities, and I look forward to continuing to assist in the growth of the organisation alongside my colleagues, and working in partnership with the wide range of external agencies we have contact with.

If any agency within the West or East Midlands wishes to discuss their training needs, please contact a member of the Central England Region Team on 0121 753 2001 – we are happy to assist wherever we can.

## News from BAAF UK-wide

### CYMRU

Adoption reform in Wales is high on the agenda for the Welsh Government. This forms part of a wider context of reform over a five-year period on integrated services for children. The adoption reform agenda will take account of the recommendations from recent enquiries on adoption services in Wales, as well as findings from the consultation on the draft Social Services (Wales) Bill. Analysis of the Bill is due to be published in September, with an expectation that it will be introduced into the National Assembly for Wales in 2013 and receive Royal Assent in 2014.

Alongside key stakeholders, BAAF Cymru is a member of the Expert Advisory Group; work from this group will be considered by the Welsh Government when making decisions on the future of adoption in Wales. The Welsh Government is keen to ensure that delays within systems are minimised and, within this context, a draft revised Form PAR, produced by BAAF, is being piloted in Wales by four adoption services (two local authorities in South Wales, the North Wales Adoption Service – comprising six local authorities – and a voluntary adoption agency). This new form will be available in Wales in 2013.

The Adoption Agencies (Wales) Amendments Regulations 2012, issued in Wales on 18 July and effective from 1 September, remove the requirement that a local authority adoption panel should consider the suitability for adoption of a child whose case is before the court. BAAF Cymru practice guidance is now being written following the publication of Statutory Guidance on 27 August. This practice guidance will be further refined following two briefing sessions to be held in South and North Wales for agency decision makers and advisers.

**Annual conference: Working together through change**  
Adoption is everybody's business, and the BAAF Cymru Annual Conference, to be held on 13 March 2013 in Cardiff, will explore the challenges and opportunities for multi-agency professionals working through this agenda.

### SCOTLAND

#### A Scotland for children

Over the summer, the Scottish Government has sought responses to a consultation on the forthcoming Children and Young People Bill. This brings together proposals on a wide range of issues, including an increase in the entitlement to free child care; extending the remit of Scotland's Children's Commissioner; developing the framework for joint agency working; the sharing of information; and a proposed new order available to prospective kinship carers. Of particular interest to BAAF members are proposals to introduce maximum placement limits for fostering households and a nationally agreed fostering allowance. A Register for approved foster carers is proposed as the first step to professional recognition. Strengthening the use of Scotland's Adoption Register by placing a duty on agencies to register children and families is also up for discussion. The consultation can be found at [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/07/7181](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/07/7181).

#### Major Scottish research initiative

BAAF has received a major bequest specifically for the purpose of undertaking a Scotland-based research study. Speaking about the bequest, Barbara Hudson, Director, BAAF Scotland, said 'There is little contemporary research in Scotland on children who are being separated from birth families at an early age and placed within new permanent families. There has been research into how long the decision-making and planning process can take, but nothing about the outcomes for children. One of the current concerns is the number of children who are born affected by maternal drug or alcohol misuse and it would be immensely valuable to know more about the lives of these children once they joined new families.'

In order to agree on the scope of the research, a stakeholder's meeting has been convened at BAAF's Edinburgh office on 12 October. Following this, a research brief will be developed in order to provide a basis for tenders to work in partnership with BAAF on this exciting project.

### NORTHERN IRELAND

While there has been much discussion about adoption and reform in many UK countries recently, in Northern Ireland adoption practice continues to be governed by legislation which is now almost 25 years old. Despite proposals by the Department of Health and Social Services to introduce new adoption legislation, as outlined in the report, *Adopting the Future* (2006), this has not yet been implemented by the Northern Ireland Assembly. Adoptive families and practitioners in Northern Ireland welcome the promise by the Minister for Health to introduce legislative reform in 2013.

While the legal process of adoption can be lengthy, most children in Northern Ireland are placed with their prospective adoptive parents in advance of their being available for adoption legally through the granting of Freeing Orders (Article 18, Adoption (NI) Order 1987). Adoption agencies in Northern Ireland have developed practice in recruiting adoptive parents who are also approved as foster carers to enable children to be placed as early as possible in the legal process, initially on a foster care basis and subsequently adopted. The Prime Minister has urged adoption agencies in England and Wales to develop similar practice, with the recruitment of "foster to adopt" families. In Northern Ireland, the availability of what are known locally as "dual-approved" carers has helped to reduce the number of moves children experience by enabling them to be placed with their prospective adopters as soon as their care plan has been agreed.

## Placement Plan form and guidance now available

Elaine Dibben

At the request of a number of local authority fostering managers and independent fostering providers, BAAF, along with a working group of fostering managers, has developed a Placement Plan form for fostering placements, with a short accompanying guide. The Placement Plan forms part of the Care Plan and is key in ensuring that good communication is established at the start of the placement, encouraging participation from children, young people and their carers in agreeing expectations of the placement, and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the workers involved. We hope the accompanying guide will assist childcare social workers in understanding the benefits of a placement planning meeting and what is needed in a Placement Plan. The guide may also be useful for social workers completing their own agency's Placement Plan formats.

The Placement Plan form is available from BAAF as a Word template and also through the BAAF Forms Licence Scheme to be used by local authorities and independent fostering providers in their electronic systems. The form is designed to facilitate pre-population of existing information already on the child/young person's electronic file.

Copies of the Placement Plan form, the guide, titled *Devising a Placement Plan*, and information on the licence scheme arrangements have been circulated to members in the September mailing. *Devising*



*a Placement Plan* is also available to purchase from BAAF Publications (priced £3.95 with £1 postage + packing) – see [www.baaf.org.uk](http://www.baaf.org.uk) or contact Publications Sales at [pubs.sales@baaf.org.uk](mailto:pubs.sales@baaf.org.uk) or on 020 7421 2604 to purchase copies.

If you have any queries about this piece of work, please contact me at [elaine.dibben@baaf.org.uk](mailto:elaine.dibben@baaf.org.uk). If you have any queries about the licence scheme, please contact Publications Sales at [pubs.sales@baaf.org.uk](mailto:pubs.sales@baaf.org.uk), or on 020 7421 2604.

## Adoption Register: what's new?

Andy Stott

The Adoption Register continues to be very busy, with high numbers of children being referred. Details of referrals and the Register operation in general over the past 12 months can be found in our recently published Annual Report 2011/12, which can be found on our website at [www.adoptionregister.org.uk](http://www.adoptionregister.org.uk). At the start of this year, we completed the Maximising the Adoption Register pilot project, and a report on this is also available on our website.

This year, we have altered the way in which we will host National Exchange Days, and are focusing on accommodating the large number of agencies which wish to be

involved and improving the experience for prospective adopters. Our next events will be in Cardiff on 25 September and London on 15 November. In the new year, we will be running Exchange Days in Birmingham and Manchester.

**If you would like any further information or would like to attend one of our events, please contact us at [mail@adoptionregister.org.uk](mailto:mail@adoptionregister.org.uk) or on 0845 450 3931.**

## Lasting gifts

Sophie Fanning-Tichborne

We are delighted to report that we have recently received a legacy of £120,000! Legacies enable us to plan for the long-term needs of children who cannot live with their birth families. Whatever the size of a gift, it

**You do not need to inform us if you plan to leave a donation to BAAF in your will, but if you want to know more about how you can support us in this way, please do get in touch at [marta.montague@baaf.org.uk](mailto:marta.montague@baaf.org.uk), or on 020 7421 2030.**

can help to transform a child's life. It is thanks to our supporters that we can continue to secure better futures for children and young people who are in need of a loving and permanent home.

## Perspectives on adoption activity days

Kay Mirza

The BAAF-managed project, Adoption Activity Days, is an innovative pilot initiative working in partnership with statutory and voluntary adoption agencies in the East Midlands Consortium. It has proved successful in finding adoptive families for children who have been traditionally regarded as "hard to place" and who have complex needs. In a relatively short space of time, the project has gained much interest nationally from a wide range of adoption agencies.

This BAAF conference, 'Perspectives on adoption activity days', will be held on 28 February 2013 in Birmingham. It will provide delegates with an opportunity to hear directly from agencies, including the

perspectives of prospective adopters, foster carers and social workers who have attended an adoption activity day. Speakers will consider the benefits and potential risks for all involved and explore the opportunities these events have created for matching children with prospective families. The conference will also consider how adoption activity days can be taken forward in mainstream practice to enhance opportunities for creative family finding for children needing adoption.

For more information or to book, visit [www.baaf.org.uk/training/conferences](http://www.baaf.org.uk/training/conferences) or contact the BAAF Conference team at [conferences@baaf.org.uk](mailto:conferences@baaf.org.uk) or on 020 7421 2636/7.

## Update for Effective Adoption Panels

Jo Francis

Due to legislative changes that came into force on 1 September in England, an update has been prepared for the book *Effective Adoption Panels*, which sets out how the changes affect the information in the book. Copies of this update have been sent to all purchasers of the book, and it is available on the BAAF website – see the bookshop page devoted to the book, and also the members' area. Copies of the update can also be requested from BAAF Publications, at [pubs.sales@baaf.org.uk](mailto:pubs.sales@baaf.org.uk) or on 020 7421 2604.

## New from BAAF

### Parenting a Child with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

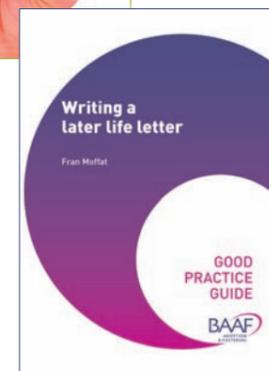
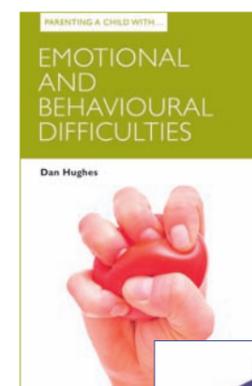
Dan Hughes

**£7.95 plus £2 postage + packing**

### Writing a Later Life Letter

Fran Moffat

**£9.95 plus £2 postage + packing**



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## Staff News

### Goodbye to

Chris Blythe, Regional Administrator, Central England  
Emma Hosier, Administrator, Adoption Register  
Ruth Hutchinson, Sales and Marketing Assistant, Publications, Head Office  
Helen Watkinson, Social Worker, Adoption Register  
Craig Wilkinson, Trainer Consultant, BAAF Cymru

### A warm welcome to

Tara Arnold, Fundraising Officer, Head Office  
Helen Baker, Administrator, Finance & Support Services, Head Office  
Emli Bendixen, Administrator, Publications, Head Office  
Mariateresa Bortoluzzi, Editorial Production Officer, Head Office  
Naseem Hanif, Sales and Marketing Assistant, Publications, Head Office  
Anna Ignatowicz, CRM Database Manager, Head Office  
Sarah Johnston, Child Placement Consultant, ARIS, Northern Ireland  
Ailsa McConnell, Assistant HR Manager, Head Office  
Marta Montague, Fundraising Officer, Head Office