

Highlights of 2019



A word cloud on a yellow background featuring various terms related to adoption and fostering. The words are in different colors (purple, pink, blue, orange) and sizes. The most prominent words are 'adoption', 'guidance', 'advice', and 'fostering'. Other visible words include 'special', 'guardianship', 'multi-disciplinary', 'training', 'permanence', 'unique', 'learning', 'evidence-based', 'policy', 'research', 'debate', 'assessment', 'specialist', 'consultation', 'kinship', 'information', and 'expertise'. The year '2019' is faintly visible in the background.

special adoption
guardianship multi-disciplinary
training
permanence unique
guidance learning
evidence-based
placement policy research
debate
assessment specialist
consultation
kinship information advice
fostering
expertise

We value your membership

Thank you for your continued membership of CoramBAAF and for being part of the UK-wide network of agencies and individuals with a shared aim – working together to secure the best outcomes for children in care.

Thousands of you engaged with us in 2019, attending our forums and events, learning from the information and publications we sent you, and taking advantage of new and existing membership benefits.

Over 2,000 members contacted our Advice Line with a range of enquiries, including many complex ones. Over 6,000 members received the *Adoption and Fostering Digest*, keeping you up-to-date with key developments UK-wide. Members also received Briefings, Practice Notes, selected Good Practice Guides and our quarterly journal, *Adoption & Fostering*, a platform for innovative ideas and debate on key topics. The members' area of our website, which contains a number of publications available exclusively to members free of charge, was visited more than 23,000 times.

CoramBAAF's Policy, Research and Development Team drives the organisation's programme of projects, consultation responses, Government lobbying, national advisory groups and practice forums, and includes experts in social work, law, health and research. Colleagues represented members' interests in national policy forums, including the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board (ASGLB) and the Kinship Care Alliance, and responded to several consultations. Our consultants provided advice and guidance on complex policy and practice issues and explored topical subjects in our multi-disciplinary committees and practice forums.

Our learning events attracted more than 2,000 people, with over 120 delegates attending a joint conference on special guardianship, and our free conferences for members also attracting significant numbers. Our workshop programme focused on those topics that you value the most, and for the first time we provided some free workshops for members. There was an increase in requests for bespoke training.

We have continued to deliver our core services, representing you and advocating on your behalf, disseminating practice guidance and influencing policy and practice where possible. We've spoken out in the media and have a lively social media presence. We continue to value your membership of CoramBAAF and hope you do the same.

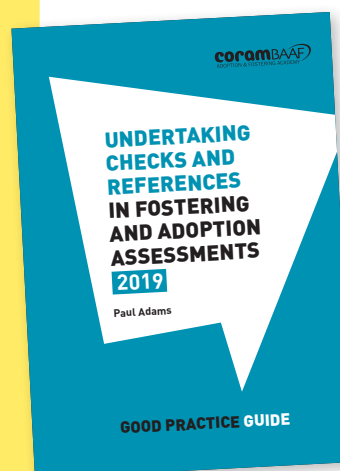
Kevin Lowe, Managing Director

The year

Our vision is for every child to have a safe, secure and loving placement that will help them thrive, achieve their potential, and grow to be the happy and productive citizens of tomorrow.

Informing, educating and influencing

- Members received copies of a range of books for social workers, adopters and foster carers, which provided **easy to read, practical advice**. New guides published during the year explored fostering teenagers, the importance of education for children in care, and the under-researched area of toileting issues in looked after children.
- We revised and disseminated a number of our bestselling guides for social workers, ensuring that members continue to have access to the most **up-to-date information and guidance**. These included updates to *Effective Fostering Panels*, *Undertaking a Connected Person/Family and Friends Assessment*, *Child Care Law England*, and *Undertaking Checks and References in Fostering and Adoption Assessments*.



This book would be useful to any practitioner who is involved in assessing family placements. It should make a welcome addition to any social work library, not just for those working in the field of adoption and fostering.

Review in *Seen and Heard* journal

- Members received **Practice Notes** on fostering decision-makers and fostering panel annual reports, and a **Briefing** on supporting contact after adoption.

at a glance

- We launched the *In the Spotlight* series of documents written by members, for members. This series provides a platform to help members showcase and share innovations in practice across the sector. So far, three documents have explored the couple relationship in adoption, placing children with connected carers overseas, and a specialised life story work service.
- Members had **access online** to our growing library of over 30 books and guides free of charge, along with several Advice Notes and all Practice Notes, Briefings and *In the Spotlight* documents, in the members' area of our website. We also started to offer members a special price for new Good Practice Guides, and many took advantage of this. Our sales further indicated that members continue to need and value our assessment guides, legal guides such as *Fostering Now*, and the *Carer-Held Health Record*.
- 2019 saw an unprecedented rise in the number of downloads of **Adoption & Fostering** articles – from 43,000 to 54,500. A significant stimulus was the publication in October of our bumper special edition on the impact of neurobiological sciences on family placement policy and practice, which has already attracted nearly 2,000 downloads. Other notable and popular content included papers on the relation between adult adoptees' feelings about relinquishment, adoption and their satisfaction with life, and the needs of carers. Topics varied greatly across the year, the number of articles on fostering and other aspects of caring for children separated from birth parents increasing, alongside those on adoption.
- The reach of our monthly information bulletin, CoramBAAF's **Adoption & Fostering Digest**, increased by a quarter last year – it was emailed free of charge to over 7,000 CoramBAAF members, including individual staff in full member agencies. The *Digest* is a unique monthly UK-wide briefing for everyone working in adoption, fostering and child welfare, with coverage of the latest developments in legislation, parliamentary activity, policy, consultations, research, statistics and online sources. If you don't already receive it, sign up by contacting infodesk@corambaaf.org.uk.



Identifying priorities

Our unique mix of multi-disciplinary advisory committees, special interest groups and practice forums enabled members to engage with one another and inform the priorities of our **policy work**. The committees cover issues related to social work practice, health, law, BME perspectives and research. Key topics explored included:

- RAA developments
- Adoption Barometer report (Adoption UK)
- Closure of the National Adoption Register
- Contact in adoption
- Training for adoption competency (TAC)
- Fostering Better Outcomes report (DfE)
- Community-based approaches to family finding for BME children
- Muslim children in care
- CoramBAAF's survey of medical advisers
- Adult health assessments
- Challenges in relation to kinship care and special guardianship
- Long-term foster care research
- A Blueprint for Children's Social Care report (Frontline)
- National Adoption Week and the associated recruitment campaign
- Evaluation of the Bright Spots surveys in local authorities

The current **special interest groups** focus on special guardianship (two groups, North and South) and the perspectives of independent fostering providers.

Our consultants facilitated and led **regional adoption and fostering practice forums** in London, Newcastle, Leeds, Taunton and Greater Manchester. There were also meetings of the two black workers' groups, adoption and fostering panel chairs, and panel advisers.

Dr John Simmonds also represented **members' perspectives** on the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board (ASGLB), the North West Regional Adoption Board, the Kinship Care Alliance (as Chair), the UK Trauma Council, the Family Justice Board and the Public Law Working Group. CoramBAAF consultants chaired meetings of the South East Post-Adoption Network (SEPAN), responded to consultations and spoke out in the media.

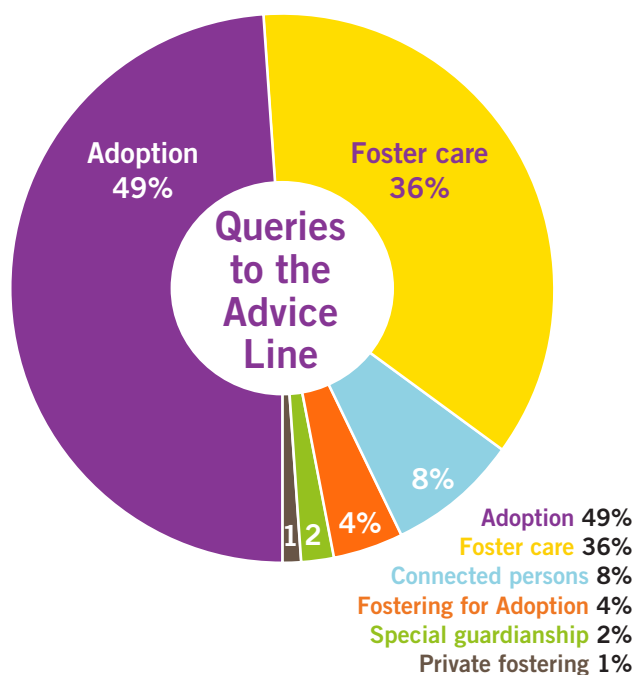
Our agency members

143/155 local authorities and Crown dependencies in England
22/22 local authorities in Wales
5/5 health and social care trusts in Northern Ireland
32/32 local authorities in Scotland (membership held by AFA Scotland)
AND 102 independent fostering providers
26 voluntary adoption agencies, **52** associate members

Achievements in this period include:

- Carrying out the **Special Guardianship Rapid Evidence Review** with Lancaster University on behalf of the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory. This was then followed by two conferences.
- Leading on the development of a training programme and supporting resources for foster carers looking after unaccompanied migrant children in six European countries as part of the EU-funded project, **Fostering Across Borders** (FAB). The project was managed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
- Joining the **National Adopter Recruitment Steering Group** and actively contributing to the design of the campaign and ensuring its positive impact.
- Creating new good practice guides, forms and practice notes and assisting external authors.
- Making presentations at over 20 conferences.

- Placement disruption alongside judicial review
- Connected person assessment where a birth parent is also living in the household



Responding to your enquiries

The Advice Line is a popular membership benefit and responds to over 2,000 enquiries per year from CoramBAAF members. A key feature of the service is our access to in-house Legal and Health Consultants and specialists in fostering, adoption, special guardianship and other areas of children's social care. Advice is also supported by up-to-date research, resources and statistics provided by our Information Service.

There is no 'typical' enquiry and on any given day we could be asked questions on a variety of topics from BMI and obesity, confidentiality of references and DBS checks, to panel arrangements within RAAs, genetic health conditions or placing children overseas.

Examples of recent complex enquiries include:

- Managing transitional arrangements on the closure of agencies

I have found this service to be invaluable, worthy, knowledgeable, easily accessible and reliable. It is good to know there is someone at the end of a phone or an email that is able to answer your adoption-related questions. If ever they do not know the answers to my questions I feel secure in the knowledge that someone will get back to me with an answer, which I can depend on. Brilliant service.

Suzanne Strachan, Adoption Manager,
St Francis' Children's Society

Annual Members' Reception



The presenters at our members' reception. From left to right: Alexandra Conroy Harris (Legal Consultant, CB), John Simmonds (Director, Policy, Research and Development Team, CB), Isabelle Trowler (Chief Social Worker), Paul Curran (Chair, CB Board of Directors), Dr Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor (Assistant Professor in Faith and Peaceful Relations, Coventry University) and Kevin Lowe (Managing Director, CB).

Photographer: Kerrie Portman, Coram Voice Creatives Team

In September, our reception for members was held for the first time in the newly opened Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre on the Coram Campus. Members travelled from agencies and local authorities across the country to hear presentations from Isabelle Trowler, the Government's Chief Social Worker, on the increase in care proceedings in

England, and from Dr Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor, Assistant Professor in Faith and Peaceful Relations, Coventry University, on her work on highlighting Muslim children's experiences in the care system and on assisting 60 leading Islamic scholars to create new Islamic guidance on adoption and fostering in the UK.

Learning events

Over 2,000 of you attended the training events we delivered in different parts of the country. More than 1,500 people benefited from the 75 customised training events we provided to over 40 different agencies. Popular topics covered included: making good assessments; permanency planning; panels; and the role of supervising social workers.

Our workshop programme included over 30 events, delivered nationwide, with more free workshops than ever, and many of you took advantage of these. Popular topics were: making good fostering assessments; an introduction to the Secure Base model; life story work; understanding sibling assessments; and the role and responsibilities of panel advisers.

Last year we added free masterclasses on Learning from the Law to the programme, and next year we will deliver this popular event at more locations and also add new topics, including learning from Serious Case Reviews. We will also open up attendance at our research seminars to all our members and add webinars to our programme for the first time.

Very positive training – interactive, informative and focused. Good use of legislation, research and ADP [anti-discriminatory practice].

Child Permanency Reports training feedback

My experience of CoramBAAF training has always been positive, thought-provoking, challenging and enjoyable.

Quality Assurance workshop feedback

Conferences

Our varied conference programme continued to deliver insightful and thought-provoking events across the UK.


Our conference on contact and the impact of technological developments – Contact in adoption in the digital age – where do we go from here? – generated significant discussions about the growing use of social media and the developing consensus about a need for change in approach. Delegates heard the thoughts of Lord Justice Andrew McFarlane, President of the Family Division, who gave the keynote address, and Professor Beth Neil, who presented the findings of her Contact after Adoption research study.

During the year, other events, including several that were free for members to attend, focused on the use and outcomes of special guardianship, supporting the mental health of looked after and adopted children, the impact of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and how health professionals can use outcomes-based practice and interventions to make a difference to the lives of children and young people.


Reaching out

Our reach and coverage expanded, in print, broadcast and social media, enabling us to comment on matters of topical importance. We gained coverage on national TV and radio programmes, including Sky News, BBC Radio 4 and Voice of Islam UK.

We also reached:

 **15,150** Facebook users on average each month

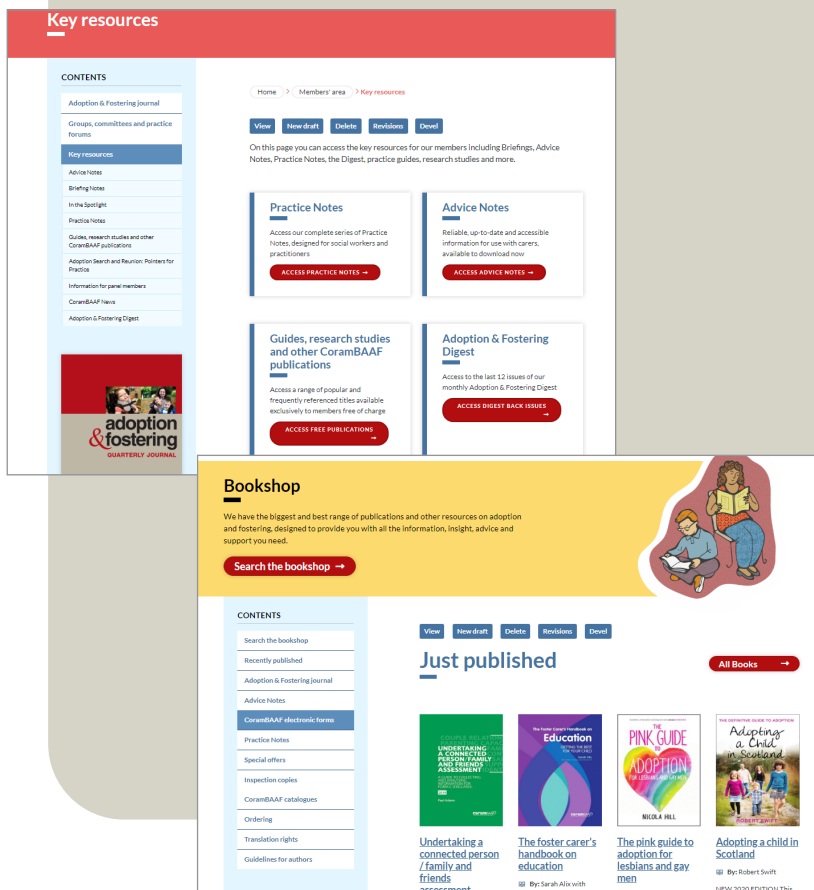
180,000 readers through articles in print media

Over **20 million** users through coverage on **9** different websites and had **14,000** Twitter followers 

Online benefits

Members have made good use of the opportunities available online to book events, gain access to the Advice Line, buy membership, and of course buy books. We added a significant amount of content to the members' area of the website including Practice Notes, Advice Notes, Briefings and our new series *In the Spotlight* which provides an opportunity for members to showcase and share innovations in practice, new projects, approaches and other interventions.

During 2019, more than 168,000 individuals visited the website and accounted for more than 752,000 page views. The bookshop and learning events pages continue to be extremely popular, and there is significant and growing interest in the job vacancies we advertise and the information we offer. The members' area of our website was visited more than 23,000 times and contains a rich resource of materials, many of which can be downloaded to share with colleagues as well as service users.



Key resources

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- Adoption & Fostering Journal
- Groups, committees and practice forums
- Key resources
- Advice Notes
- Briefing Notes
- In the Spotlight
- Practice Notes
- Guides, research studies and other CoramBAAF publications
- Adoption Search and Reunion Pointers for Practice
- Information for panel members
- CoramBAAF News
- Adoption & Fostering Digest

Home > Members' area > Key resources

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On this page you can access the key resources for our members including Briefings, Advice Notes, Practice Notes, the Digest, practice guides, research studies and more.

Practice Notes
Access our complete series of Practice Notes, designed for social workers and practitioners
[ACCESS PRACTICE NOTES](#)

Advice Notes
Reliable, up-to-date and accessible information for use with carers, available to download now
[ACCESS ADVICE NOTES](#)

Guides, research studies and other CoramBAAF publications
Access a range of popular and frequently referenced titles available exclusively to members free of charge
[ACCESS FREE PUBLICATIONS](#)

Adoption & Fostering Digest
Access to the last 12 issues of our monthly Adoption & Fostering Digest
[ACCESS DIGEST BACK ISSUES](#)

Bookshop

We have the biggest and best range of publications and other resources on adoption and fostering, designed to provide you with all the information, insight, advice and support you need.

[Search the bookshop](#)

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Just published [All Books](#)

Undertaking a connected person / family and friends assessment
By Sarah-Alla with Elaine England and...

The foster carer's handbook on education

The pink guide to adoption for lesbians and gay men
By Nicola Hill

Adopting a child in Scotland
By Robert Swift
NEW 2020 EDITION This

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