

CoramBAAF progress report 2015

Who are CoramBAAF?

CoramBAAF is the successor to BAAF (British Association for Adoption & Fostering). It is a member organisation dedicated to improving outcomes for children and young people in care by supporting the agencies and professionals who work with them, primarily in the UK but also internationally. CoramBAAF is part of the Coram group, is accountable to its own Board of Directors, and operates independently to support and represent our members, champion best practice, and provide high quality and authoritative information through our services, publications, and training events.

BAAF's expertise and reputation spanned over 40 years and CoramBAAF is safeguarding and building on that rich legacy. Since the transfer of parts of BAAF to CoramBAAF, we have continued to deliver services to all our members. This has been challenging, with members being unsure about what had become of BAAF, what CoramBAAF would be able to offer, which services would continue and which may be withdrawn or replaced by others. We also grappled with some practical challenges and trust that any teething troubles have been resolved.

This brief report summarises our activities and achievements since we became CoramBAAF on 1 August 2015. It clarifies the services we continue to offer and our future plans, and tells you how to contact us.

What do we do?

- Our **Policy, Research and Development team** shapes best practice, organises conferences on cutting-edge topics, and disseminates briefings on the latest advances in the field. Our network of special interest groups and advisory committees disseminates practice knowledge and collects members' views, enabling us to advocate for our members to Government, and ensure that their voices are heard in the development of legislation, policy and practice.
- Our **CPD training and advice team** trains practitioners England-wide in advanced professional skills and offers a varied workshop programme. We also provide bespoke training solutions on subjects as diverse as using the Secure Base model, attachment theory, safer caring, assessing foster carers and chairing panels.
- Our **Publications team** produces over 20 new books per year and a range of information pamphlets, along with four editions of our acclaimed journal, *Adoption & Fostering*. Our books bring you the best in good practice guides, recent research, children's books, guides for parents and carers, and training materials, and provide vital advice and information for all those involved with looked after children.
- Our **Membership team** supports and develops the membership of CoramBAAF and responds to members' queries, deals with membership issues, and ensures that members receive the full range of benefits and services. We have 1,500 individual members and over 400 agency members throughout the UK. The team also produces *CoramBAAF News* to keep members informed of new developments and initiatives at CoramBAAF and also to seek members' views on a range of issues.



The first six months – what we did

Multidisciplinary networks

Our network of special interest groups and advisory committees facilitates discussions about new policy and practice issues and encourages member involvement in changes to the sector. Since August, we have chaired two rounds of meetings of our Social Work, Health, Legal, Research, Black and Minority Ethnic Perspectives, Independent Fostering Provider and Special Guardianship groups. These groups have enabled us to engage with members and respond to key policy and practice developments such as the regionalisation of adoption agencies, developments in adoption support, and the implementation of the new fostering regulations; the latter includes issuing our draft position statement on fostering for consultation.

Representing our members

A key part of CoramBAAF's role is to advocate for our members to the Westminster Government and act as an expert and informed voice for the sector. We provide representation on a range of influential bodies, including the Adoption Leadership Board, the DfE advisory groups on adoption support and special guardianship, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on looked after children and care leavers, and the Rees Centre Advisory Group on fostering and education.

Reviews and special projects

CoramBAAF is regularly commissioned to undertake reviews, develop services for member agencies as well as internationally, and contribute to special projects. Recently, we have completed the following pieces of work.

- We were commissioned to work with the State of Guernsey on adoption law reform.
- John Simmonds attended and contributed to a three-day event in Estonia on adoption, including their first National Adoption Week.
- We undertook work on the development of the cost calculator on adoption (with Loughborough University).

- We drafted guidance on adoption matching for Coram I (for a DfE-funded project).
- We are continuing our work on accessing and providing information to children and young people in care as well as those leaving care, and drafting a Practice Note.

Consultations

Part of our advocacy role involves responding to Government consultations on the future of adoption, fostering and permanence issues. Since August, we have responded to a number of high-level consultations, including one on special guardianship, and the Education Select Committee's Inquiry into the mental health of looked after children.

Conferences

Our conference programme offers our members a chance to listen to experts on a variety of topics and engage in debate. Since August, we have hosted five conferences, including:

- The neuroscience of adoption, with Margot Sunderland, in Leeds;
- The changing landscape of adoption support, including the Adoption Support Fund, in London;
- Adoption matching, in London;
- The virtual world in family placement, in Leeds;
- Attachment in adoptive families, in London.

Information service

We continue to deliver our policy, research and legislation current awareness email bulletin. This has been redesigned and renamed *CoramBAAF Adoption & Fostering Digest*, and is issued monthly.

We have also successfully moved our library collection to a new home on the Coram campus and this is available to members on request. We are particularly fortunate in retaining our excellent library service volunteers, continuing to build our resources, and are pleased to welcome visitors to this service.

Advice Service

Our advice service is a much valued member benefit, offering expert advice to members on all aspects of adoption and fostering, including complex practice issues, legal and medical queries. In October, we launched our new advice line; staff in member agencies are welcome to contact us on 0300 222 5775. The Advice Line is available from 9am–1pm, Monday–Friday.

Health and social report forms

CoramBAAF is continuing to operate the forms licence scheme and will continue to revise existing forms as appropriate. We have recently distributed an updated Form C (Connected Persons) for England; new editions of Forms APP and APR, which accompany child adoption and placement reports in England and Wales respectively; a new Form IA across the UK and Crown Dependencies; and a new Child Placement Report (Northern Ireland). Renewal of agencies' forms licences are due shortly; we are holding members' prices for the sixth year running.

Publications

Since August 2015, we have published six books (with a couple currently in press), two Practice Notes, two editions of our journal, *Adoption & Fostering*, and a new catalogue showcasing our titles for adoptive parents.

The importance of our work was confirmed by a *Guardian* article during National Adoption Week, listing ten favourite books on adoption, voted for by adopted children themselves. Of the ten titles, seven were published by BAAF! This clearly illustrates the reputation of our work and the importance of our continuing to publish the best books we can for all those involved in the child care sector – practitioners, parents, carers and, most importantly, the children. To see the *Guardian* book list, visit www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2015/oct/22/top-10-books-about-adoption-chosen-by-adopted-children.

Training: workshops and bespoke learning

We provide a range of high quality training solutions; since August, we have delivered around 40 workshops, and 33 bespoke commissioned learning programmes, to local authorities, VAAs and IFPs; more than 700 participants have attended these. Practitioners can either attend workshops, or engage

our services for bespoke training commissions to enhance their professional development. Our most popular workshops include: completing Form PAR; completing Form F; parent and child fostering arrangements; and fostering panel training.

We provide training on many topics, including child development from birth to teens, using the Secure Base Model in assessment, supervising social workers, communicating with children through life story work, bridging to adoption, and helping carers manage stress.

Our training is available England-wide, with the help of our network of experienced Associate Trainers, ensuring that workers are well informed about new developments in practice and legislative requirements, and have the skills they need.

We also facilitate a number of groups, including adoption regional groups, adoption panel chairs groups, black adopter support groups, and black worker groups, providing our members with information on the latest developments and a forum to share best practice.

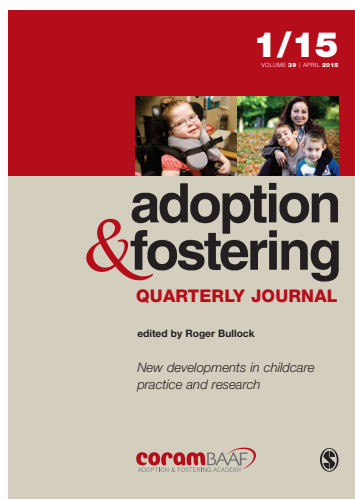
UK-wide services

Most of the services we deliver are applicable UK-wide. Although CoramBAAF does not have a regional/national physical presence throughout the UK, we are hoping to set up collaborative arrangements with other organisations to help deliver more localised and country-specific services. This is already being actively explored. We are also building and working with a network of associate trainers.

We recognise that members, especially those accustomed to a more “local” presence, are concerned about the lack of localised services and we will be engaging in discussions with members about the nature of regional support they may need.

Membership

Membership of CoramBAAF provides a range of services that are increasing all the time. These include six membership mailings per year with our journal, books and training information; access to the members' area of our website with free briefings and online journal access; our monthly *Adoption & Fostering Digest* and *CoramBAAF News*; the opportunity to help shape the future of the sector through our member groups; and significant discounts on our conferences, training, job vacancies advertising and licences for our health and social report forms.



Adoption & Fostering journal

We have published two editions of the journal since our transition, in our new CoramBAAF colours. The October edition, a special issue on foetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD), has been much praised, with a high demand for further copies.

After a lengthy evaluation process, *Adoption & Fostering* has been accepted for inclusion in Scopus, the world's largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature. As well as enhancing the journal's reputation, this will significantly extend its global outreach. In the words of one reviewer: *'There is a great deal to admire in this journal...the papers are interesting and well done, and the citation profile is strong.'*

The transition to CoramBAAF has not halted the flow of journal submissions, and for the first time we are planning content as far ahead as the end of 2016. In addition to the UK, future submissions come from India, New Zealand, The Netherlands, the USA, Sweden, Norway, Ireland and Canada.

We enjoy a fruitful relationship with our co-publisher, Sage Publications, who publish around 850 journals and 800 books per year. Our association has undoubtedly increased *A&F's* outreach, and a rise in royalty income is predicted for 2016. Members receive copies of the journal, in print and online, and have online access to the entire backfile.

Websites

Our website www.corambaaf.org.uk contains information for all those involved with adopted and looked after children, while our members' area provides free guidance, briefings and publications. Our Adoption Search Reunion website contains comprehensive advice and search facilities for those looking for birth family members. A programme is now underway to provide new functionality and additional resources for members and the public.



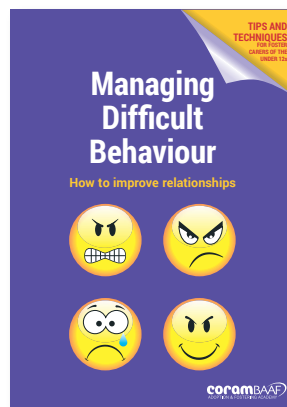
Recent CoramBAAF books



Contact after Adoption: A longitudinal study of post-adoption contact arrangements

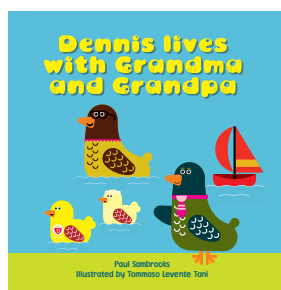
Elsbeth Neil *et al*

The findings of a research study which followed a group of adopted children, their adoptive parents and birth relatives from preschool to late adolescence, studying the impact of contact.



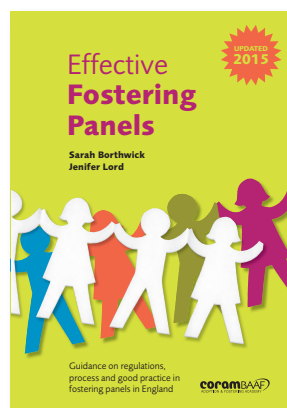
Managing Difficult Behaviour (new edition) revised by Eileen Fursland

An updated and revised edition of our popular guide for foster carers. Based on cognitive behavioural techniques from the Fostering Changes programme, this guide helps foster carers to manage children's behaviour and improve relationships.



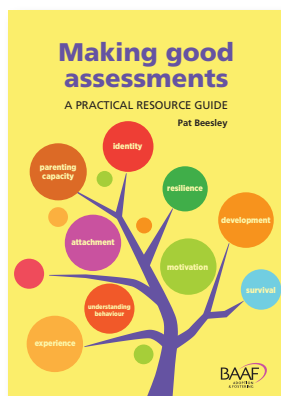
Dennis lives with Grandma and Grandpa Paul Sambrooks

This latest addition to the Dennis Duckling series explores kinship care, as Dennis and his sister leave their birth parents and, after a family meeting, go to live with their grandparents.



Effective Fostering Panels (new edition) Sarah Borthwick and Jenifer Lord

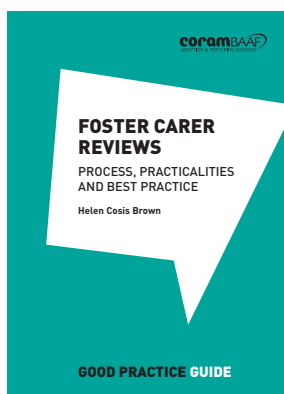
This popular guide has been thoroughly revised and updated to take account of recent legislative changes.



Making Good Assessments

(new edition) revised by
Mary Lucking

A new edition of our bestselling guide to assessments, fully revised and updated to reflect legislative and practice changes.



Foster Carer Reviews (new edition) Helen Cosis Brown

An updated and revised edition of this practice guide, which sets out the process and practicalities for reviews and makes recommendations for practice.

Practice Note 59, The Provision of Information to Fostering for Adoption Carers

Rosemary Wolfson with
Alexandra Conroy Harris

Considers what information should and legally can be given to Fostering for Adoption carers, along with questions of confidentiality.

Practice Note 60, Undertaking Overseas Checks in Fostering and Adoption Assessments Paul Adams

Explores the benefits and challenges of undertaking overseas checks, what information is likely to be forthcoming, and policy and practice considerations.

You can order these and other publications from www.corambaaf.org.uk/bookshop

Forthcoming CoramBAAF work

Forthcoming work by the Policy, Research and Development team includes:

- The launch of a series of free briefings for members.
- Materials to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in foster care.
- Practice guidance on checks and references in adoption and fostering assessments.
- Viability assessments of kinship carers.
- Home safety assessments.

Forthcoming conferences include:

- *The future of special guardianship*, London, May
- *Out of place: Recognising, understanding and responding to the health needs of looked after refugee and trafficked children and young people*, Birmingham, June
- *The neuroscience of fostering and adoption: A day with Margot Sunderland*, Birmingham, October

Forthcoming publications include:

- *Key Changes in Family Justice*, which details the impact of recent changes such as the Family Justice Review and Children and Families Act 2014.
- *Parenting a Child Affected by Sexual Abuse*, which considers how sexual abuse may affect a child and their behaviour, coupled with moving accounts from parents illustrating day-to-day life with an affected child.
- A good practice guide to preparing, assessing and supporting foster carers adopting children in their care.
- A new edition of *Life Story Work*, updated and expanded to include information on current practice, including the use of technology and online tools.
- A guide exploring adoption support therapies – what different therapies entail and how they can help.

New and revised forms include:

- An updated Prospective Adopter's Report for England to fully integrate concurrent planning and Fostering for Adoption.
- We will continue our rolling programme to update all our health report forms.

Forthcoming training and workshops include:

- A range of workshops on subjects including: managing the digital world with looked after children; making good fostering assessments; chairing panels with confidence; learning from disruption; and supervising and supporting foster carers.
- Our exciting new course, called T4, piloted with Barnet, is available for agencies in 2016. The course fulfils the NICE 2015 draft guidance recommendation of extra training on attachment difficulties for workers and carers. Using the Secure Base Model, the course is designed for foster carers through their assessment, in the first year of placement and onwards, utilising practical tools and techniques to enhance relationships and reinforce placement stability.

Added membership benefits in 2016/17 include:

- A 10% reduction in membership fees if invoices are settled by 30 April 2016.
- A free annual conference for members.
- Specialist briefings on issues of topical interest affecting children in care.
- An enhanced online members' area, with free access to all our Practice Notes and a number of Advice Notes and other information pamphlets (which formerly attracted a charge).
- Our newsletters, *Adoption & Fostering Digest* and *CoramBAAF News*, now produced monthly rather than bi-monthly, providing updates on news in the sector.



Board of Directors

CoramBAAF is governed by an independent Board of Directors selected through an interview and application process.

Paul Curran

Chair, former Director of Children's Services for the London Borough of Islington

Alison Lowton

Former Borough Solicitor for the London Borough of Camden

Geraldine Macdonald

Professor of Social Work at the University of Bristol

Jonathan Portes

Director of the National Institute for Economic and Social Research

Dr Carolyn Sampeys

Community Paediatrician, Cardiff & Vale NHS Trust

Judith Matthews

Fostering Manager, Leeds City Council

Jennifer Ginger

Adopter, fostering panel member and management consultant

Maswood Ahmed

Team Manager, Children Looked After Central Team, London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Treasurer: recruitment/selection in progress

CoramBAAF will hold an Annual Meeting in the spring at which members will be able to meet with staff as well as members of the Board. Details about this will be available in *CoramBAAF News*.

Contact us

CoramBAAF

41 Brunswick Square

London WC1N 1AZ

www.corambaaf.org.uk

Advice line

Tel: 0300 222 5775

9am–1pm, Mon–Fri

advice@corambaaf.org.uk

Conference enquiries

Tel: 020 7520 7520

conferences@corambaaf.org.uk

Publications sales

Tel: 020 7520 7517

pubs.sales@corambaaf.org.uk

Membership enquiries

Tel: 020 7520 7514

membership@corambaaf.org.uk

Training enquiries

Tel: 020 7841 0521

training@corambaaf.org.uk

Workshop enquiries

Tel: 020 7841 0523/20

workshops@corambaaf.org.uk