

Transitions: managing introductions and relationships with foster carers

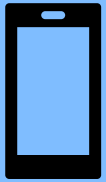
CVAA Practice Workshop

23 January 2020

#CVAAPractice



Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies



Housekeeping

Moving on from CVAA's Practice Excellence Programme, CVAA have designed a series of workshops and events as part of our continued commitment to strengthening evidence based practice, and sharing and promoting best practice across the sector.

CVAA Practice Workshops are intended to be intimate, interactive, network building opportunities, led by your priorities.

CVAA's practice workshops are based upon CVAA's priorities for outcome improvement:

Priority 1: Placement of priority children – To improve equality of outcomes for those groups of children who are less well served by the adoption system than others

Priority 2: Permanency planning – To improve early decision-making about permanency, whatever the right permanent home for a child, and develop new and effective models of permanency planning where appropriate

Priority 3: Adoption support – To improve the effectiveness and availability of excellent, life-long adoption support, to all parties to adoption, including birth families.

We encourage you to continuously reflect on CVAA's Theory of Change Tool, at our events and within your agencies.

Welcome & Introductions

Adoption Assessment: the child as the primary stakeholder

30 January, Adoption Matters, Hale (Manchester)

This workshop will help you to set the task of assessment and preparation within the context of the wider landscape: who are the children for whom we most need to find adoptive families; who are the individuals who are expressing an interest in becoming an adoptive parent? How can we best identify and prepare the range of adopters we need, and how best equip them to parent the children waiting.

Working with Birth Families in Adoption

19 February, Barnardo's, London

The workshop is designed to help you explore with peers the key themes and challenges involved in working with birth families. You will have an opportunity to learn what **Barnardo's** are doing in terms of a specific aspect of this work, whilst at the same time having the opportunity to identify the situations you find most challenging and work in smaller groups to consider various solutions.

To book your place, please visit our website

<https://www.cvaa.org.uk/Pages/Events/Category/events-calendar>

Upcoming
CVAA
Workshops

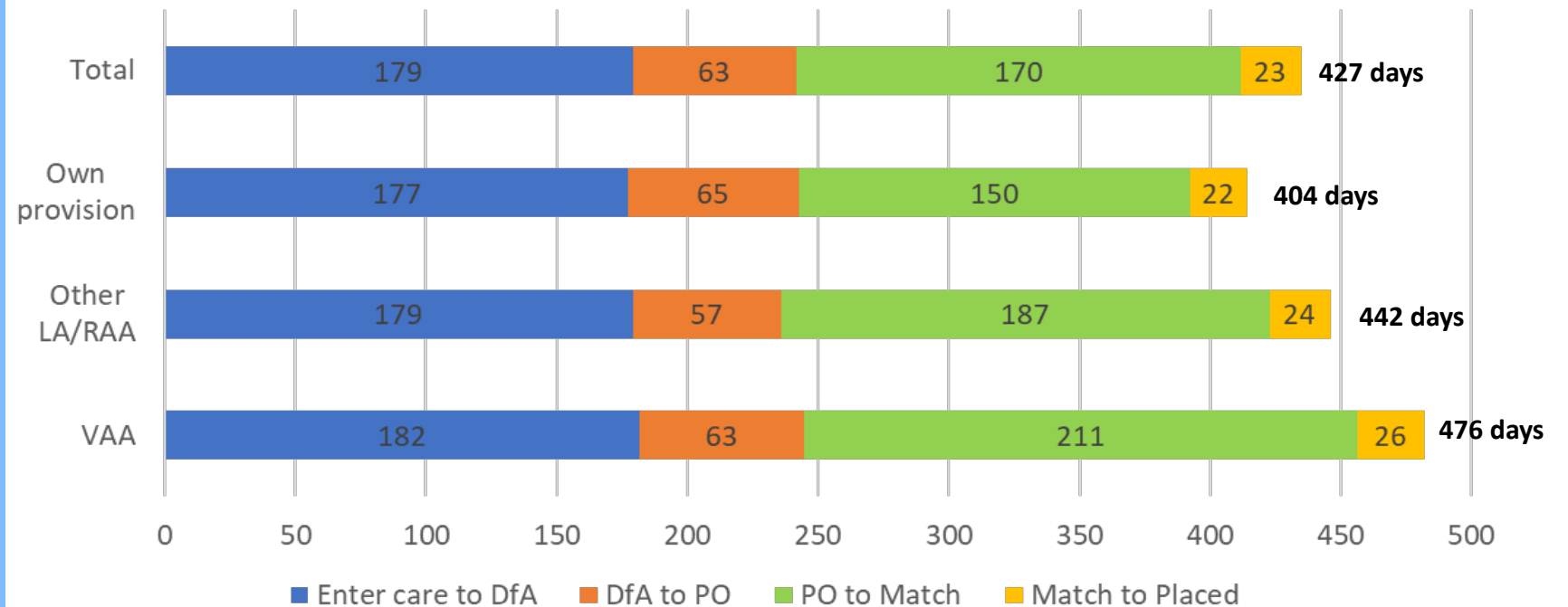
What does the data tell us about children's experiences before they are placed?

- [The Children's Commissioner's Stability Index](#) tells us that **1 in 10 children in care experienced 2 or more home moves during 2017/18**, and 52% of children in care experience at least one home move over a 3-year period.
- ASGLB data shows that in 2018/19, the average time between a child entering care and moving into an adoptive placement was 433 days, or about 14.4 months.

What does the data tell us about the types of children VAAs are placing?

Of all children placed in 2017/18, children placed by VAAs were in care the longest – 72 days longer than children placed by their own LA/RAA.

Average number of days by stage - variance by placement agency



Imagine you
are a child...

- You recently lost your home, your family or main parent figure, your friends, your nursery or school, your pet and the outside world you are familiar with. This happened all at once.
- This has probably happened to you before, so don't trust anyone.

Imagine you
are a foster
carer...

- You have just lost a child who you have looked after for many months. She came to you traumatised, but she now trusts you. Thanks to all your hard work she is making excellent progress.
- You considered whether she could stay with you permanently. You know that your other children will be very sad to see her go.
- You wonder whether you will ever see her again once she has moved to her adoptive family? What will they be like? Will they know how best to look after her?

Imagine you
are a birth
parent,
grandparent,
brother or
sister...

- Now she is really going to be separated from you, for a very long time at the least.
- Will you meet her new family? What if you don't like them? Will they let you know how she's getting on? You wonder how much they will really tell you about her.

Imagine you
are an
adoptive
parent...

- You have wanted this for so long. You have read about this child and talked about this child so much but you've still not met her.
- Will you like her? What if you don't? Will you still be able to look after her? Will the foster carer help you? What if the foster carer doesn't like you? Your whole life is going to change... overnight.

Imagine you
are the social
worker for this
child...

- What knowledge and experience do you have to inform this child's move from foster home to adoptive family?
- What do we know about the procedures in the Local Authority whose care she is in?
- What are your own agency's expectations?
- How does all of this differ for early permanence placements?
- What experiences do we have in moving children after a disruption?

The theoretical and research underpinning

- Separation , Loss and attachment theory – Bowlby and Rutter, early 1970's.
- Attachment and neurodevelopment theory – Vera Fahlberg, Dan Hughes, Bruce Perry, Kim Golding.
- Secure base attachment model - Schofield and Beek, Selwyn.
- Importance of the foster carer role- Boswell and Cudmore.

Models of transition – variations on a theme

- Various 'pre-meets' and extended introductions: Adoption Activity Days, 'bump into' meetings, a series of play dates
- The detail: what is the child told; does the approach vary with age; how is the model adjusted in the case of placements at a distance?
- Reference: CoramBAAF Practice Note 64.

More variations on a theme...

UEA Practice Programme; 'Moving to Adoption: A three stage framework for thinking about a child's move to adoption'. This is underpinned by the secure base model, currently being piloted with Norfolk CC and another LA.

- From placement in foster care to a link being identified
- From link to 4 month post placement review
- From 4 month review onwards

And more...

Fostering Devon and Devon Adoption ['Good practice in supporting a fostered child's transition to their new adoptive family'](#). This is a 7 stage model:

- Adopter training, assessment and approval
- Decision making for the child
- Adopters matched with child
- Continuing the child's story
- Child's transition to adoptive placement
- The nesting period
- Moving on, whilst maintaining contact with significant carers

Let us hear
from you

What can you share about your own experiences?

What would you particularly like to explore in more detail today?

Hear from The Fostering Network and Emma Simpson from CCS, about her agency's approach to transitions.