

Safeguarding in Family Placement Work

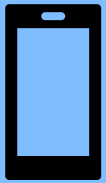
CVAA Practice Workshop

03 December 2019

#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

Making Good Adoption Assessments with CoramBAAF

4-5 February, Reading

This training will help you to explore best practice in the completion of the Prospective Adopter's Report (PAR), to practice and develop an integration of critical assessment tools and techniques within adoption assessments and current best practice, to explore ways to consider prospective adopters in terms of their capacity to look after children in a safe and responsible way that meets the child's needs, to apply learning in the context of the legal framework, to develop critical thinking and reflective practice in the completion of adoption assessments, to consider ways of identifying prospective adopter's competencies and strengths and areas they have or will need to develop

Adoption Assessment: the child as the primary stakeholder

30 January, Adoption Matters, Chester

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. You will have an opportunity to learn what Adoption Matters is 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

According to the DfE's Children in Need stats, there were **201,200 section 47 enquiries in 2018/19.**

In contrast to section 47 enquiries, the number of initial stage child protection conferences which took place decreased compared to last year; reversing the upward trend seen from 2013 to 2018. There were **77,400 initial stage child protection conferences in 2018-19**, down by 3% from a year earlier.

The percentage of **section 47 enquiries** which lead to an initial child protection conference has been steadily decreasing over time; from **47% in 2013, to 40% last year and 38% this year.**

"If the local authority identifies there is reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, it will carry out an assessment under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 to determine if it needs to take steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. If concerns are substantiated and the child is judged to be at continuing risk of harm then an initial child protection conference should be convened within 15 working days"

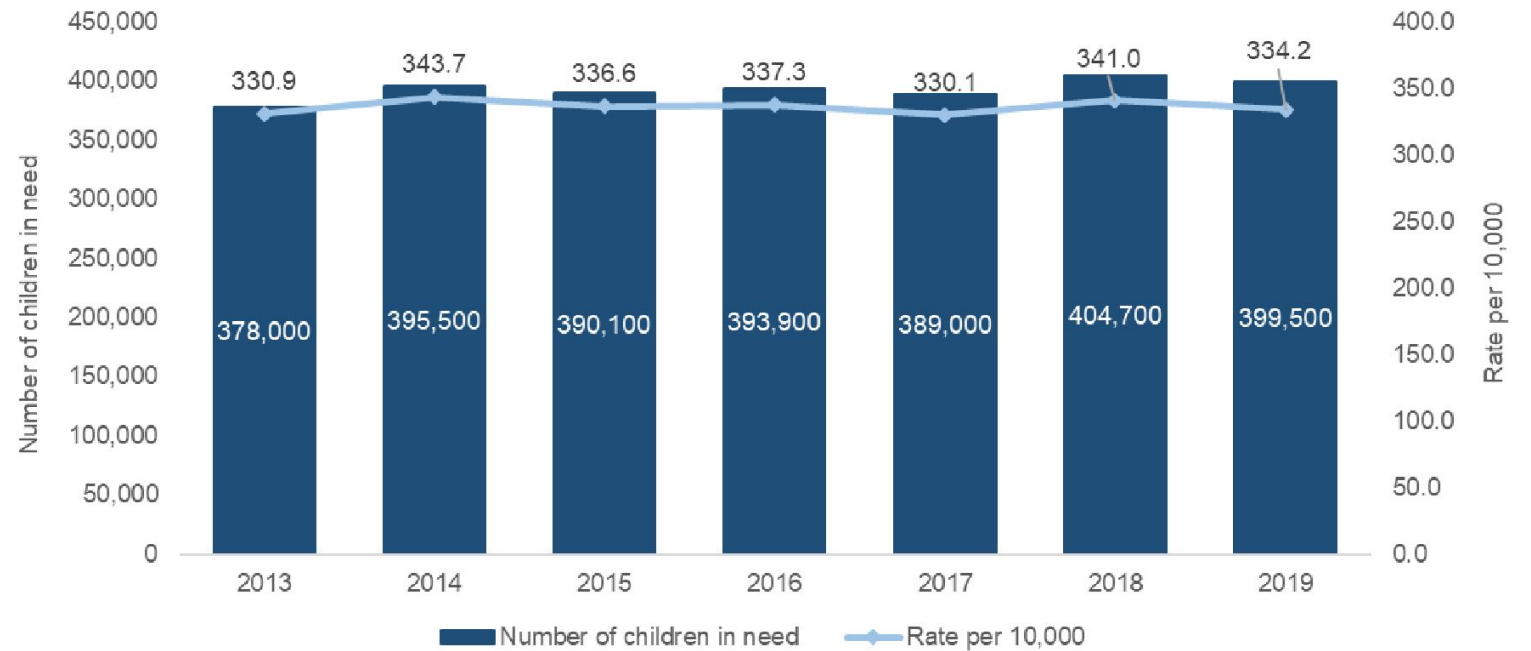
Statistics

Rate per 10,000 children

There were **399,500** children in need at **31st March 2019**, a slight decrease of 1% from 2018. The rate of children in need per 10,000 of the population of children under 18 also decreased slightly, down to 334.2 in 2019 from 341.0 last year.

Both the number and rate of children in need at 31st March have fluctuated over the last seven years, with no long term increasing or decreasing trend.

Figure C: Number of children in need at 31st March and rate per 10,000 children aged under 18
England, 2013 to 2019



It is crucial that safeguarding is a priority from the moment prospective adopters express their interest in adopting a child.

Lessons need to be learnt from the lack of robust preparation of adopters which was an evident factor in the findings of a number of critical case reviews where children have been seriously harmed or died in their adoptive family.

The
Children

Leslie, A. (2001) Report of the Part 8 Review on the Care and Protection of JAS. Brighton and Hove Area Child Protection Committee

The critical case review into the death of John Smith in 1999 in Brighton and Hove at the hands of his adoptive parents.

The review suggested that social workers must '**always be thinking the unthinkable**', and a key finding was that John's voice was rarely, if ever, heard directly (Leslie 2001 p 7). Leslie recommended that a more thorough, objective and evidenced assessment of John's adoptive parents would have stopped the couple from getting into the system in the first instance.

The recommendations of the Part 8 report completed by Alyson Leslie significantly influenced and changed the way in which assessments are completed for prospective adopters.

Recommendations included agencies getting more basic information from prospective adopters including birth certificates, employment status, driving licence, next of kin and addresses for the prior 10 years.

What the
research tells
US

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Board, Serious Case Review (2011)

Within this SCR, as highlighted by Garboden (2011), social workers and other practitioners were intimidated by a couple who adopted three children and then abused them both physically, emotionally and verbally over 10 years.

The review highlighted:-

"In this case, many professionals struggled to maintain a child focus when faced with [the adoptive parents'] aggressive behaviour and their disguised compliance, and their approach was affected by perceptions and assumptions made regarding the parents' social class, professional status and high academic qualifications,"

What the
research tells
US

Harris, P. (2014) "I started to feel not ashamed of who I was":
Transracially Adopted Adults and Adoption Support,
research.gold.ac.uk

Significantly, four out of five transracial adoptees who attended the LGB focus group and one transracial adoptee who was interviewed, volunteered information about sexual, physical or emotional abuse or neglect experienced within their adoptive family.

Their disclosures included: physical abuse by one or both adoptive parents (3), physical and sexual abuse by adopters and sexual abuse by male adoptive siblings (1), and physical and emotional abuse and neglect by adoptive parents (1). In addition, another transracially adopted adult who was interviewed appeared to suggest sexual abuse by her adoptive father.

"...I can identify in terms of [my] own parents – white, middle class, university graduates – and they could do nothing wrong because they [social services] couldn't see past this white thing in the first place, and then a white family adopting a Black child sometimes gets them ten tickets to heaven...so then the abuse going on in terms of physical and sexual abuse I experienced...there's just not a hope in hell that it is going to be seen..." – Roz, adopted adult

What the
research tells
US

Cardiff Regional Safeguarding Children Board, Extended Child Practice Review (2016)

An independent review has revealed, that chances were missed to protect an 18-month-old girl murdered by her father less than a fortnight after he and his husband adopted her. The report says that doctors and social workers failed to spot or log injuries to the toddler.

The healthcare professionals may have failed to connect the dots because Elsie's NHS number changed after she was adopted. They therefore might have missed things that were on her pre-adoption NHS record that, if connected to things that happened after she was adopted, would have more clearly revealed a pattern of child abuse.

[Guardian article](#)

What the
research tells
US

Petra.jodlova@cvaaa.org.uk



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