

April 2012

## **Request for practice examples for children in Public Care including Adoption, Permanency planning and Fostering**

### **Context**

The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services has been commissioned by the Children's Improvement Board (CIB), to identify examples of local practice that could be validated in relation to children and young people in the public care system. Since its inception, C4EO has been collecting examples of effective local practice and putting these through its robust process of validation – publishing only those examples which provide clear evidence of making a difference to children, young people and families.

In the context of recent published reports, namely from Martin Narey the Adoption Czar and the Ofsted Chief Inspector, we are seeking local practice which improves the wellbeing and life chances of children in care, with a focus on adoption, permanency planning and corporate parenting. This could include local authorities working with partners in the public, voluntary and/or private sector. In particular, we would like to identify practice which demonstrates:

- Effective corporate parenting leading to good social, health and education outcomes for looked after children and young people;
- An increase in the number of and the speed with which children are appropriately placed for adoption or fostering where this is in their best interest;
- Effective methods of recruiting, training and assessing prospective adopters;
- The effective use of permanency planning options, such as:
  - long term fostering;
  - Residence Orders
  - Special Guardianship Orders
  - Extended family members permanently caring for the child
- A reduction in delays in the adoption or fostering system for specific 'hard to place' groups of children and young people (particularly black and ethnic minority children and older children);

- Speeding up the time it takes to place children with families once a decision has been made, ensuring the focus remains on the child whilst issues are resolved; this might involve the rights and wellbeing of the birth parents;
- Encouraging potential adopters or foster carers to enter the system;
- Improving the quality of adoption or fostering support; this could include managing continued contact and relationships between siblings placed separately;
- Encouraging stronger collaboration between local authorities, voluntary adoption agencies and the courts.

### **Why use validated local practice examples?**

C4EO believes that there is invaluable evidence based in experience and practice in local authorities and in their partner organisations working in the children and young people's sector. Moreover, local knowledge and practice on 'what works' is often ahead of that contained in research reports. We wish to mobilise and share this valuable local resource and use it to complement and extend the formal research evidence available to the sector.

We need, however, to ensure that the local examples of what works used by C4EO can demonstrate the achievements (outcomes; results) of effective practice. This is where 'validation' comes in. It is a two-stage process:

- The self-validation stage, when local areas set out their examples in a consistent format.
- The external validation stage, when practice examples are received and evaluated by C4EO, before moving on to a panel of C4EO sector specialists who assess that sufficient and appropriate detail is provided by the practice account.

To be validated, practice examples need to be supported by some evidence which shows the outcomes and changes that have been achieved for children and young people.

### **How do I submit an example of effective practice?**

Either by:

- Completing the online submission form on the C4EO website
- Downloading a submission form from the C4EO website and emailing it to [C4EOteam@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:C4EOteam@nfer.ac.uk)

Forms are available [online](#) and are designed to enable you to describe your practice and tell us why you believe it is successful. We really want examples where there is good evidence and some documentation on how and why the practice has worked to improve outcomes, so the more that you can tell us about this, the better. Also, if you have it, do send us any other substantiating evidence such as an internal or external review, assessment or evaluation report. We do not, however, need lots of detailed paperwork. Please do not be put off if you do not have this; just complete the form as fully as possible.

Guidance on completing your submission is also available on the above web page but, if you have any queries or need support in completing the form, please do not hesitate to contact the C4EO Team at NFER on 01753 637178 or [C4EOteam@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:C4EOteam@nfer.ac.uk)

This is an ongoing call for practice, but if you would like more information about submission timelines, please contact Monica Hetherington at NFER or Helen Goody at C4EO on 0207 843 6358.

We look forward to receiving your practice example.

**Christine Davies, CBE**  
**Chief Executive, C4EO**