

Information on Adoption and Fostering

For a variety of reasons, some children and young people can't live with their parents. When parents aren't able to look after a child, the local authority has a legal responsibility to do so by finding somewhere for the young person to live and someone to look after them. When this happens, the child is said to be 'in care'. There are two main types of being in care. A child or young person may:

1. Be voluntarily living in a home run by a local authority or charity or a foster home, where the child's parents agree to the child being looked after.
2. Have been legally removed from the child's family without the parents' consent when a court feels that a child could be damaged by living at home and issues a Care Order. About three out of five children in care are under a Care Order.

According to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the vast majority of children have been removed from home because of problems their parents have. Most often, their parents have been physically or mentally unable to care for them or have been neglecting them. Many young people go back to live with their families once things have been sorted out although some of these will find themselves in care again.

www.childline.org.uk/pdfs/childrenincare.pdf

Taken from the British Association for Adoption and Fostering Website

www.baaf.org.uk

- 60,330 children were in the care of local authorities on 31st March 2006. Of these 55% (33,400) were boys and 45% (26,900) were girls.
- 5% (2,900) of children looked after were under 1 year old, 14% (8,500) were aged 1 - 4 years, 19% (11,500) were aged 5 - 9 years, 43% (26,100) were aged 10 - 15 years, 19% (11,300) were aged 16 and over.
- 70% (42,000) were living with foster carers, 11% (8,600) were living in children's homes (includes secure units, homes, hostels but excluding residential schools), 9% (5,300) were living with their parents, 5% (2,900) were placed for adoption, 6% (3,600) were in other accommodation.
- 3,700 children were adopted from care during the year ending 31st March 2006. Of these 55% (1,900) were boys and 45% (1,800) were girls.
- The average age at adoption was 4 years 1 month - 5% (190) of children adopted were under 1 year old, 64% (2,300) were aged 1 - 4 years, 26% (900) were aged 5 - 9 years, 5% (180) were aged 10 - 15 years, 0% (20) were aged 16 and over.

Taken from the After Adoption Website

www.afteradoption.org.uk

- 1 in 4 people in the UK have an adoption connection – adoption is part of the fabric of modern family life.
- People who have been in care are 66 times more likely to have their own children taken into care.

Taken from Society Guardian November 8th 2006

www.societyguardian.co.uk

- Many children waiting to be adopted have had troubled early lives and some have been abused or neglected. Charity BAAF said that of the 1,732 children who were referred to the adoption register between October 1 2005 and September 30 2006, 40% have experienced neglect, 23% have lived with parents with a history of drug or alcohol misuse and 14% have experienced physical violence.
- Fewer than 400 children are believed to be adopted to the UK from overseas each year.

Catholic Children's Society on Adoption and Fostering

- The Catholic Children's Society's foster care service provides quality care for children who either require a medium term placement prior to a longer term placement (e.g. adoption) or a long term foster placement (for example, they're too old to be adopted).
- They provide high quality placements for children / young people who are no older than 13 when placed; a commitment to a child-focused approach; ongoing training to support foster care development and learning; a commitment to ensuring that staff are regularly supervised and undertake training to develop and enhance their skills; a commitment to the recruitment of foster carers from diverse backgrounds; placements where children / young people will be able to develop their potential in an understanding, accepting, nurturing and stable environment; and they work together with local authorities and others concerned with the care of children to ensure best outcomes.
- The Catholic Children's Society generally place children above the age of 3 for adoption. Often these children have suffered severe trauma and disruption of relationships before being placed with their adoptive families.
- Although the actual adoption assessment will take between six and nine months; the whole process from application to being matched with a child frequently takes more than 18 months. The final adoption order, granted through a court order, can take between 6 months and 2 years after placement.
- In 2006 31 children looked after in public care were placed with the Catholic Children's Society adopters, while 29 adoption orders were granted by the Courts in respect of children previously placed.
- Adoption however is a life long experience, not only for adoptive families but also for birth relatives who have had to deal with separation and loss. The Catholic Children's Society also has a Post Adoption and Care Service which each year receives several hundred enquiries from adopted adults, former residents of care homes and from adoptive families enquiring about their adoptive children's background in order to help them make sense of their lives.

This information was compiled by the Catholic Children's Society (Arundel & Brighton, Portsmouth & Southwark)

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