

# The Special Guardianship Survey

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# Background Factors

- Workshop process - enabled recognition of need to fine tune and develop our services
- Workshops allowed us to combine resources and ideas on improving practice between boroughs and understand SGs better
- All involved and support workers wanted to improve the services to adoption levels of support
- Also wanted to consider support plans, annual reviews, support groups, children's days, a website and other initiatives
- Feeling that potential support might help diffuse tensions before they got to crisis and counter isolation. A survey to the SGO holders might highlight needs and gaps

# Background factors to survey

- Similarities and differences to adoption: permanence, contact, life story and understanding. Importance of all parties in SGO having a clear understanding of meaning of the order. Two support workers for whole borough and vital importance of clarity about how we can help. Difficulty of reaching birth parents, babysitting and 'right to contact'. Possible future research as often little knowledge of our service. Did not know who our SGs were. Finance Section: a data base. Now know ages of children, how many we have, some email addresses and information is located in SGO support teams.

# Creation of the NLAFC survey

- Diamond 9 prioritisation activity confirmed value of survey for the whole consortium. All boroughs saw the value in survey and pooled ideas. Enfield volunteered to create one. 2009 adoption survey and Islington's recent SG survey used as starting points. Meeting with ML to create draft. Workshops and consultation and feedback from colleagues further evolved it and SGO holders' presence vital in making it relevant for SGs. Meetings with Sandra (SG) to work on wording.

# Considerations in creating the survey

- Online survey abandoned due to confidentiality. Agreed on paper based survey to reach those with no email addresses in data base and asked for contact details, allowing for anonymity. Follow up by phone to increase numbers and Sandra's suggestion of inviting people into Enfield to complete
- Workshops highlighted importance of option of N/A, small number of open ended questions, and option for additional comments. Useful for gathering email addresses which could use in future to communicate about workshops, training, support groups, children's days
- In collating ideas for questions needed to be rigorous about ridding survey of social work jargon and acronyms. Asking for age rather than DOB felt less intrusive but just as informative. Concept of critical friendship used with ML and Sandra as edited questions. Danger of two questions in one and importance of not having too many questions [10-15 agreed as right amount in workshop]. Importance of reassurance as to how information gathered would be used

# What the survey attempted to cover

- Age of children, ethnicity, relationship to SG
- Reasons SGs perceived children to have needed their care
- Whether children's behavior was challenging and why this was so
- Children's understanding of difficult stories that explain their status and whether it was connected to insecurities reported through conversations, feelings and behaviour. Curiosity about life story work and whether undertaken and/or felt to be necessary
- How children were managing school and if there were struggles with learning
- Whether contact went smoothly or if it was source of disturbance for child and tension for SG. How often contact occurred and how it had changed since order
- Whether SGs were pleased to be left alone or whether they expressed desire for telephone support/group support/workshops/respite/newsletters/website
- Was it valuable for them to have named support person and number?