

## Project Summary

### ***Adoption Reform: A multi-agency city-wide adoption support strategy for Brighton & Hove City Council***

#### **Policy, practice/research content**

Whereas adoption was once about placing relinquished newborn babies in new homes, adoptive parenting is now better understood being about developmental recovery since the vast majority of adopted children have experienced maltreatment. Services that work with adopted children – whether as an identifiable client group or a group with particular needs within universal services – need to recognise their elevated risk of emotional, cognitive, educational, behavioural, health and social problems and to be aware of the particular dynamics and issues involved in adoption itself.

The Coalition Government launched a new adoption reform programme in 2012 with a focus on increasing the numbers of children adopted from care and reducing delays, and with a number of measures to improve the provision of adoption support services. A new 'Adoption Passport' provides adoptive parents with information about their rights including to ask for help, there is funding for implementation of a set of therapeutic support services, resources are being developed to support professionals to understand the issues raised by adoption, and adoption support is being given a higher priority in statutory guidance on planning and commissioning integrated services.

#### **Background to the project**

In light of this, Brighton & Hove wanted to develop and implement a multi-agency city-wide strategy for post-adoption support and commissioned The Colebrooke Centre to carry out work to support their strategy development. The objectives of the project were to map existing provision, identify gaps, and advise on issues to address in service and strategy development.

#### **Project design**

The project began in early 2013 and the final report was provided in August 2013.

- The first stage involved a review of recent research; review of key policy and planning documents; and interviews with 26 professionals from services across social care, health and educational support. The interviews explored the nature and scope of current provision that might be used by adoptive families, the extent to which they were identifiable as part of the service user population, perceptions about the adequacy and appropriateness of current provision for adoptive families, and views about gaps and ways in which what is available could be strengthened
- The second stage involved with 14 adoptive parents to explore their experiences of help-seeking and their views about how post-adoption support can be strengthened

Together the two stages identified a number of issues to be taken forward by Brighton & Hove in the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy for adoption support.

### **Publications and outputs**

The report will be circulated widely within Brighton & Hove but will not be publicly available.

### **Contact**

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