



Guidance regarding “advertising” specific children through Social Media or other platforms

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It is considered appropriate that on occasions where a child is subject to Family Finding, a specific child (who may be considered “hard to place”) may be “advertised” on a number of platforms, including Social Media. The purpose of such “advertising” would be to reach a wider cohort of those seeking to adopt who may consider themselves appropriate to be matched with the specific child.

In regard to the ability to advertise a specific child, the Agency is not prevented from doing so by the Adoption and Children Act 2001 (s.123 does not apply to adoption agencies). Consent of parents to advertise is not required when a child is subject to a Placement Order; parental consent for placement to adopt has been dispensed with and the advertisement is part of the placement process.

However, it is considered good practice that parents should be notified of the agencies intention to advertise the child. A reasonable time period to object should be given. It is appropriate for such notice to be given as it enables further discussion if birth parents have objections and/or queries in a productive manner. A parent being faced with seeing their child “advertised” without prior knowledge may understandably be distressed and this could cause further identification of the child (for example if the parent were to respond to the advert) as well as complaints to the agency.

The notice to parents should include the following information:

- The platform on which the advert is to be posted
- The date that the advert will be posted and the duration of the advert
- That information will be anonymised

Parents should be kept informed as to the success of any advert in regard to finding a suitable placement for the child.

The above guidance is based on the principles as set out in *Re K (Adoption: Permission to advertise)* [2007] EWHC 544 Fam. Whilst this case can be distinguished

as the Local Authority were seeking permission to advertise prior to disposal of the initial care proceedings, the Judgment considers the circumstances as to when it is appropriate to advertise and DfES guidance in this regard.