

Role of the child's Social Worker in introductions to adopters

Ensure the child is fully prepared for the move in ways appropriate to their developmental stage and experiences, including helping them develop a language to express their feelings.

Ensure the child is kept in mind at all times.

The child's Social Worker holds a pivotal place in this process and must plan their availability accordingly. The child needs to be able to depend on their Social Worker to make sure everything is done with their needs at the forefront.

Before the first planning meeting, the child's SW will confirm whether the adopters will meet the child before or after the meeting, and why. They may have already "met" via a chemistry meeting. The Social Worker will be present for this meeting.

The SW will liaise with the SWs for the adopters and foster carers regarding their availability and link this with the child's needs to produce a draft plan of introduction.

10 days prior to the first planning meeting the Social Worker will have completed a draft copy of the Adoption Placement Planning Meeting form, draft calendar of introductions, and collated all necessary documentation (including consent to medical treatment during introductions and at placement) and shared this with the adopters and relevant professionals.

The child's Social Worker is the central point of contact during introductions and the decision maker for any proposed changes to the plan which do not need to go back into the formal meeting process.

The child's Social Worker will ensure the plan includes rest days for the child to reduce the risk of them being physically and emotionally over tired. He/she will make changes to the plan to address this if it becomes apparent more time is needed.

The child's Social Worker will see the child with and without the adopters during the introductions, as well as talking to the adults, to assess how the introductions are going and whether the format and purpose meets the child's needs. This will include working with the child to ascertain their views and encourage expression of their feelings. It would be expected that a child will be anxious and uncertain about a move if they have built a secure attachment with their carers.

At the review meeting the child's SW will explain how things are going for the child and ensure next stages are planned according to the child's needs.

When a move day is agreed, the child's SW will decide how best this will take place, and be present for the child. He/she may need to remind the adults that they can access support from their own workers to express and manage their feelings while ensuring the child is well supported.

The child's Social Worker will ensure they hand over all key documents to the adopters in advance of the move day and send out all statutory notifications on the day of the move.

He/she will arrange with the adopters the date for their first visit, within a week of the move.