

Chapter 9: Long-term planning for children

This chapter is concerned with long term planning for children. Long term or permanent plans for children which settle the arrangements for their care should be the goal of all social work intervention in families, whether that is achieved by supporting birth families so that children remain where they are or providing substitute families that are equally permanent. Permanence is about relational permanence rather than about legal orders. So, a child can experience permanent supportive relationships in at home with their birth parents, with a relative, in foster care or via adoption. Empirical research has something to say about all of these in respect of the conditions necessary for permanence to occur.

The chapter does explore the adoption process in some detail and the Children and Adoption Act 2002 in detail. This is a specialist area of law and of practice and the majority of social workers will have no opportunity to practice in this field. However, social workers working with children will need to understand the processes involved in adoption.

We have retained discussion of the law in respect of transnational adoptions, although we are unable to say specifically what the implications of Brexit will be on adoption law.

Regional adoption agencies are now up and running. The changes implied from RAAs are largely organisational. The promised improved outcomes for children are still not fully evident.