St Andrew's Children's Society

ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE

Concurrent Care

With St Andrew's Children's Society

St Andrew's Children's Society is an adoption and foster care agency established in Edinburgh in 1922. Successfully opening our Aberdeen office in 2013, we are preparing and supporting adoptive and foster care families throughout the central belt and north-east of Scotland.

What is Concurrent Care?

Concurrent Care describes a particular type of foster care/ adoption which thoroughly explores the possibility of a baby or very young child being returned to his or her birth parents before adoption can become the plan for that child. During the period of assessment of the birth family situation, the baby will be placed with concurrent carers, on a fostering basis. If the child cannot return home to live, these concurrent carers will then become the prospective adopters and the plan for adoption is progressed.

The main benefit of Concurrent Care is that a young child experiences a close emotional relationship with only one primary caregiver in the early days of their life. The child is given the opportunity to build significant emotional relationships with their birth parents if this is in his or her best interests but if this cannot be achieved they remain with their Concurrent Carers and therefore do not have any disruption to their care.

Why is Concurrent Care needed?

In most situations Concurrent Care would be considered for a child when their birth parents are leading chaotic lives that potentially prevent them from meeting all the child's emotional and care needs. It is common for these parents to have misused alcohol and drugs and often domestic abuse can be a factor. Previous children born to these parents may already have been removed to local authority care.

The family will have come to the attention of social work services following ante-natal visits. Concerns about the well-being of an unborn/new baby will have been identified and social workers will have assessed the family ability and willingness to work with a concurrent care plan.

What does Concurrent Care acheive?

- The needs of the baby or young child are kept central to the whole process, and the aim is to minimise disruption in their early lives.
- Birth parents will have the chance to have positive parenting experiences with their children. During the assessment period, contact takes place at a dedicated contact centre under social worker supervision. This contact is typically at a high level, 2–3 times per week.
- Support to the birth parents to make the required changes to their lives to enable their child to return to them. If the decision of the court is to return the baby to the birth family, this support would be continued and prolonged.
- If contact leading to rehabilitation with the birth family is unsuccessful then an adoption plan would be progressed. The concurrent carers become the prospective adoptive parents, with no impact on the child that a change of family circumstances would have had.

Becoming a Concurrent Carer – is it for me?

This route to adoption is not for everyone, it puts the child's needs at the centre of the plan and can play a vital role in ensuring the best possible outcomes for babies or very young children who are at risk of not being able to remain with the families of their birth.

In order to become a Concurrent Carer, you need to:

- Live within one hour's drive of the designated contact centre.
- Have the ability to be child-centred and put the needs of very young children to live in the right family for them before your own needs to become a parent through adoption.
- Have the ability to respect and work with birth families, through actively supporting contact with the child.
- Have the ability to cope with stress and live with uncertainty.
- Have a strong support network through family and friends.
- Be able to give up work at relatively short notice when a child has been identified for you.
- Have a spare room.
- Be a non-smoker and a non-vaper.
- To be considered as a non-smoker/non-vaper an applicant has to not have smoked/vaped for at least 12 months.

Becoming a Concurrent Carer: what can St Andrew's Children's Society offer you?

St Andrew's Children's Society will be alongside you every step of the way through the process of concurrent care – and beyond. Carers will receive in-depth preparation training in their role as concurrent carers and then adopters.

Full support will be given during the period of fostering to cope with arranged contact with the birth parents. This includes financial support in the form of foster care allowances to meet the care needs of a child and a foster care fee which is a payment to you to offset some of the costs of loss of employment income.

You will be supported throughout the legal process if adoption becomes the plan for you and the child.

The full range of post-adoption support services will be available.

Further information

If you would like to know more, then please contact us via the enquiry form on our website **sacsadopt.scot** or phone our offices in Edinburgh (0131 454 3370) or Aberdeen (01224 878158).

Please mention when making contact, that you are interested in adopting a baby or young child, and would consider a concurrency care plan as an option.

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