

Concurrent Planning Service

Believe in
children



Barnardo's

North East

A new fostering and
adoption service for
children under two
years old



“If the child returned to the natural parents, that was a risk for us. But the positive aspects of that were explained to us. OK, while we might be bereaved, disappointed, upset, we would also, hopefully, feel we had taken part in a positive process and that if the child did go back to the parents that was the best thing. I think we both knew that concurrency was the better route. Perhaps not for us, but for the child, yes.”

Adoption & Fostering 22:4, pp 30-40, Winter 1998/99



What is concurrent planning?

Concurrent planning is a form of fostering and adoption for babies and toddlers in care who are likely to need adoption but who still have a chance of being reunited with their birth family.

How does concurrent planning work?

Children aged 0-2 years are placed at the earliest opportunity with specially-trained foster carers, known as concurrent carers, who are also approved to adopt. The child remains with the concurrent carers while their birth parent(s) and extended families, who are likely to have severe difficulties and issues in their lives, are rigorously and intensely assessed to see whether the child can be returned to them.

If the court decides that adoption is in the child's best interest, the child will remain in placement and will be adopted by the concurrent carers. The carers will have the advantage of having cared for the child from a very young age and they will also be in the unique position of knowing the child's birth parents and understanding their difficulties.

If, however, the court decides that the birth parents are able to meet the needs of the child, the concurrent carers will be involved in helping the child to return to their birth family.

This can, of course, be sad and upsetting for the carers but they can take solace from the fact that they gave the child the love and security that they needed in a critical time in their development as well as helped them to settle back with their family. The concurrent carers will then continue to receive support and may go on to care for another child from Barnardo's.



Why is concurrent planning important?

Concurrent planning is a better option for the child as it prevents them from being placed with temporary foster carers before moving to a permanent placement with an adoptive family. Living with their concurrent carers as early as possible means the child has a greater chance of stability and of forming secure relationships and attachments even though there is uncertainty about their future.

What does it involve for the Barnardo's concurrent carer?

As a Barnardo's concurrent carer you will be approved for both fostering and adoption and will receive tailored training and support for this particular role. We will discuss with you your motivation, resilience, support networks and ability to manage this specialist task. You will receive guidance and support from your social worker throughout the process and you will also be entitled to a fostering allowance until the child is adopted or returned to the birth family.

Concurrent carers will be involved in taking the child for contact with their birth family on a regular basis (at least three times a week) while decisions about the child's future are being made. You will need to be willing to work co-operatively with a team of professionals and with the child's family. If the child is returned to their birth family it can be distressing for the carer, so as a person you must be able to put the child's needs first, be emotionally resilient and be able to live with and manage uncertainty.





“ We felt we would benefit even if the baby did not stay with us. We thought that once the child was with us, and we were getting to know him it would be very difficult to give him up. But, it would give us an understanding of what birth parents go through a little bit, and that would be a helpful thing to go through – not nice – but helpful. And we felt sort of, well, if it happens we just cope somehow. It would be terrible and we can’t imagine what it would feel like, but we would just have to deal with it. ”

Monck, Reynolds & Wigfall (2003) *The Role of Concurrent Planning: Making permanent placements for young children*. London: BAAF, p127.

Contact us

If you are interested in becoming a concurrent carer or finding out a bit more about the process, please contact us for an informal discussion.

Barnardo's Concurrent Planning Service

Tel: **0191 492 9000**

Web: **www.barnardos.org.uk/concurrent_planning_service**

**Believe in
children**



Barnardo's

North East

www.barnardos.org.uk

Orchard House
Buston Terrace, Jesmond
Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 2JL
Tel: 0191 240 4800

Barnardo's Registered Charity
Nos. 216250 and SC037605