

Contact details

For enquiries about study days, training and consultation please contact our Team Administrator on 020 8938 2500, or the Team Leader Sara Barratt on 020 8938 2280.

For further information on clinical referrals and intake please contact our Intake Co-ordinator on 020 8938 2241 or write to:

Intake Co-ordinator
Child and Family Department
The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust
120 Belsize Lane
London
NW3 5BA

Fostering, Adoption and Kinship Care

Information for
Professionals



Who is this service for?

We offer a range of services for professionals and families working with and caring for children and young people who are fostered, adopted or in kinship care. These services consist of:

- Assessment
- Consultation
- Therapeutic work
- Training and Continuing Professional Development

The service is staffed by professionals from a variety of disciplines and includes:

- Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists
- Family Therapists
- Social Workers
- Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists
- Clinical Psychologists

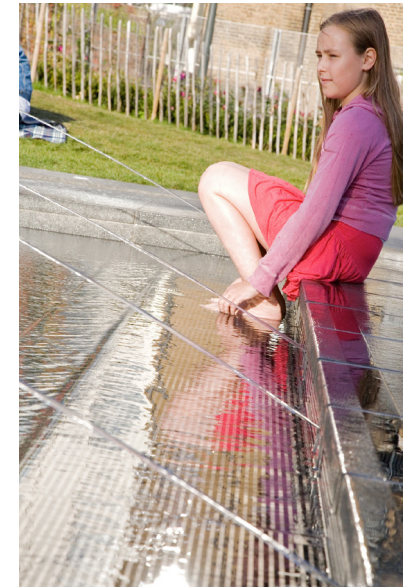


The programme uses group discussion, videotape clips, modelling and role-play. Parents/carers bring examples from family life to work on in the group and are supported by phone contact between sessions. We have found that it is especially helpful for parents/carers to talk with others with similar experiences. The group work provides an opportunity for parents/carers to experience success in their relationships with their children, which leads to better functioning in the children and to parents/carers feeling more optimistic.

Training and continuing professional development

Alongside clinical work, the service offers professionals a number of opportunities for continuing professional development:

- Individual supervision or discussion groups.
- Short courses
- Longer trainings for different professional groups
- Membership of a specialist workshop
- Conference and study days.
- Specialist training for foster carers
- Occasional seminars for adoptive parents, foster and kinship carers on topics of interest.



Treatment packages will be offered in blocks of sessions of face-to-face work, including a review meeting. Further blocks may be negotiated as appropriate. For individual child and adolescent psychotherapy the normal expectation would be a minimum of once per week for 1 year alongside work with parents/carers at a negotiated frequency.

Post-adoption service

Therapeutic sessions are offered to parents and children following adoption. After assessment, interventions offered include:

- Individual psychotherapy
- Family therapy
- Monthly support group for adoptive parents and long-term carers. This group provides the opportunity to share experiences and gain support in parenting

Training group for adoptive parents, foster & kinship carers

This is a 12 week group based on the 'Incredible Years' training programme, developed by Caroline Webster-Stratton, to help parents and carers with children aged from 2-10 years of age. There is good evidence to show that parents who participate in these groups experience significant and sustained benefits with their children, particularly those who are managing very challenging behaviour. We offer this package alongside other assessment and/or therapeutic work.

Assessment

Assessments are provided for Social Service teams and adoptive, foster or kinship families. Assessments are important when placements are particularly complex or problematic. For example:

- In the planning stage, where the child or young person may have earlier experience of disruption, trauma, abuse or neglect
- Where there are questions around the separation of sibling groups and/or contact with members of the birth family
- Where children are in transition and permanent placements prove difficult to find.
- Where problems emerge post placement or post adoption including emotional/behavioural problems at home and at school
- Where there are serious mental health concerns.
- Planning for leaving care

Multidisciplinary assessments will vary in the number of sessions according to the complexity of the case and the information required.

Moving to permanence

This package offers consultation to prospective adopters, long term foster carers and kinship carers in the matching and introductions stage. Consultations are focused on:

- Developing an understanding of a child's history, experiences and relationships with their birth family
- The likely impact of the child's history on development, behaviour and future relationships

Children in transition

We have developed a specialised therapeutic service for looked after children, who because of emotional or behavioural problems, are hard to place or for whom plans are difficult to formulate. Their problems may have impacted on and threaten future placement security. By providing an opportunity for children to explore their experiences and feelings in a more thoughtful way within the therapeutic setting, some of these risks may be reduced.

Following assessment, this package consists of:

- Consultations to Social Services in planning for children
- Ongoing consultation with foster and residential carers
- Psychotherapeutic work with children and young people that can be individual or with carers as appropriate

The timing and duration of this work has to be flexible. In the first instance a series of up to ten meetings and a review is scheduled.

Treatment

Our therapeutic work is informed by multiple theoretical models including attachment theory, psychodynamic, systemic, cognitive-behavioural and biological; drawing on a growing evidence base.

Families who care for looked after children are often in need of specialist services. Families frequently struggle with severe and sometimes undiagnosed problems that children can bring with them. We aim to produce a secure base for families over time, enabling them to develop attachments whilst addressing experiences of trauma and loss. The following interventions may be offered singly or in combination after an initial assessment and exploration with families and professionals:

- Family therapy
- Individual therapeutic work with children/ young people, alongside work with parents and carers
- Work with siblings
- Parenting groups
- Work with kinship carers and children
- Liason with schools, education departments and Social Services
- Medication

