

# FAQ Factsheet on Parenting Subsequent Children

www.birth-ties.org.uk

0800 840 2020

## Frequently Asked Questions

Some parents, when they have lost children to adoption, find it hard when they become a parent again. These are some of the questions that parents ask:

### **I am hoping to have another child, should I let Social Services know?**

Before you get pregnant you could ask social services for pre-conception advice as to what you would need to show had changed in your life in order to keep your child, such as

- you are no longer with a violent/abusive partner
- that you are no longer dependent on drugs/alcohol
- you are able to accept advice and support about being a parent

### **I am pregnant, will I be able to keep my child?**

There may be a possibility you can keep your child. Firstly, it will be in your best interests to tell social services as soon as possible after your pregnancy is confirmed. Ask for a pre-birth assessment.

This process varies depending on the area in which you live. You will be interviewed a number of times by social workers who will want to know what has changed in your life since your previous child was removed. The assessment interviews may take place in your home, or in the office and will include your partner, if you have one. Social Services will also consult other professions e.g. health visitors, psychologists, educationalists, midwives etc. It is very important that you keep appointments but you can ask for these to be convenient for you if, for example, you are working or have contact arrangements with other children. If you cannot attend do let your social worker know.

### **Can someone be with me in the pre-birth assessment?**

Yes, you can have someone with you for support. However, this person will not be allowed to say anything and you need to know that you will have to give very personal information during these sessions.

### **Should I have a solicitor?**

It is advisable to consult a solicitor as quickly as possible. He/she should be an expert in children and family matters. You should ask if they are 'Children Panel Trained' and can work for you under the 'Legal Aid' system.

### **Will Social Services tell me what I need to do?**

They should give you a clear idea about what is expected. They will usually continue the assessment after the birth to see how you care for your child. This can be done in different ways, such as:

- in your home with family and professional support
- in a residential mother and baby unit
- or the baby may go into foster care and you will care for him/her during the day at a family centre
- the Local Authority may take care proceedings and place your child with you
- or they may place the child on the protection register

In addition, you may be asked to attend parenting classes and receive help from a Family Support Worker.

The Local Authority will regularly review the situation until they are satisfied that your child's welfare is being safeguarded and the child's needs are being met. If this is not the case you should be made aware of any concerns before Social Services take action to remove your child.

### **What format will the assessment follow?**

The assessment may be lengthy, based on the 'Lilac Book' or briefer, based on the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). A 'lead professional' will be appointed and information is gathered regarding 3 'dimensions', your ability to care for the child ('Parenting Capacity'), the child's developmental needs (e.g health/education), and family and environmental needs (housing, wider family etc). As before, it is best to co-operate with the assessment and demonstrate how you are able to meet the child's needs.

### **What is the Lilac Book?**

The Lilac Book is a guide used by social workers to assess whether a child is in need, suffering from or likely to suffer significant harm. It also identifies what action must be taken and which services would meet the needs of a particular child and family.

### **Will I be able to see the assessment?**

You can ask to see it. It is good practice for the assessments to be shared with you and/or your solicitor before it is used for any decision-making.

### **What is twin track planning?**

Twin track planning is where the Local Authority is considering two options i.e rehabilitation home with a strictly limited timescale, or adoption outside the family.

### **What is the CPR?**

The Child Permanence Report (CPR) is a report containing background information about the child and his or her family. It is used to help inform the decision about whether the child should be placed for adoption (SHOPA). If the child is adopted, s/he will be able to read this information when

they grow up. You can ask to see what is written in the CPR and have your comments added.

### **Is it all worth it?**

Being assessed is hard and stressful, but at the end of the process you can build on the strengths (which you have identified) to parent your child. Hopefully you will feel able to accept support, if needed, and enjoy being with your child.

**After Adoption workers are able to support you through your pregnancy and after the birth of your child. For further information and/or support contact:**

**BirthTies: 0800 840 2020**

**[www.birth-ties.org.uk](http://www.birth-ties.org.uk)**