

Toby

Toby is a three-year-old boy of dual heritage who was recently made subject of a placement order and care plan for adoption. When she gave birth to him, his mother Leann was 14 years old and accommodated. Leann was supported by mother and baby foster carers Ted and Bev. Toby's paternity is not known (two DNA tests of potential fathers did not reveal an ID).

Leann walked out of the placement after two years and abandoned Toby. This prompted the care proceedings, which Leann contested. Toby remained with Ted and Bev and contact continued in placement once a week without incident or distress for Toby. Ted and Bev support adoption and have moved other children on to adoptive families. Prospective adopters – a same-sex couple called Will and Tom, who reflect Toby's cultural heritage – have been matched at Panel.

Toby

Discussion points

How will the child's social worker, the adoption social worker and the supervising social worker work together to support everyone in achieving the best transition for Toby? Considering the following in your discussions:

- Preparing Toby.
- Any meeting between Leann, Will and Tom.
- The last direct contact between Leann and Toby.
- Supporting Ted and Bev, who have looked after Toby since birth (Bev was present at the birth).
- Supporting Will and Tom.
- Managing introduction planning, review and placement for adoption.
- Contact after placement for adoption.

NB Leann has her own social worker from the leaving care service.

Sereta, Tia and Paulo

Sereta is seven years old and Tia and Paulo are eight-year-old twins. They are black Caribbean from Netherlands Antilles who came to the UK from Netherlands, Europe, where they were born. The children moved to the UK five years ago to join maternal family. They speak English fluently and understand Dutch as a second language. They also have an older sister who is still in the Netherlands and three cousins in long-term foster care following proceedings several years ago. The cousins are in a placement together in the same locality to Sereta, Tia and Paulo.

Sereta, Tia and Paulo came into care following chronic neglect and a trigger incident involving the police who found them late one evening in the family home with their mother, aunt, uncle and others, when all the adults were drunk and brawling. Care orders and plans for long-term fostering have been decided following care proceedings in the Family Drug and Alcohol Court. The guardian supported this plan based on the children remaining in their current foster placement, where they receive a high standard of care and the carers have developed a strong bond. The children were placed with relatively new foster carers, Tim and Annie (white carers) who wish to keep the children long term, although formal matching has not taken place.

The carers have a supportive attitude to contact, although this stops short of facilitating contact at the placement or being directly involved in any supervision. The children remain in the locality of the family home and attend the same school. The children wish to stay in their current placement as they cannot return to their mother, which was their first choice. All the children were developmentally delayed but have responded positively to routines and boundaries. Tia's behaviour is sexualised – rubbing her genitals in public and two incidents of touching the male carer on the buttocks. She also makes comments about seeing her aunt have sex. She sleeps poorly and present most worries for the carers.

Sereta, Tia and Paulo**Discussion points**

- How can the children's social worker and supervising social worker work together to achieve long-term stability for these children? Bear in mind that their mother is developing major health issues due to alcoholism.
- To what extent, and how, will the children's cultural heritage be promoted?
- How can the children's sense of belonging and connection with their birth relatives be considered and promoted where appropriate?
- Where might professionals differ in their opinions – and how can these differences of opinion be explored constructively?
- How can the support needs of Tim and Annie be explored and met?

Rosie

Rosie is a 13-year-old girl of white British heritage recently accommodated under s.20 from her maternal grandmother, Lena, with whom she has lived since she was a baby and who has a residence order. Rosie is placed with Andrea, a single parent foster carer. Rosie has three older maternal half-siblings who live with paternal grandparents (with minimal contact) and an 18-month-old baby half-brother remaining with Lena and also placed in her care.

Rosie's behaviour has recently become out of control. She has been running away and has been picked up by the police in the early hours of the morning. Rosie has been making contact with unknown males on the internet and her text messaging suggests she is vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Lena and the wider family are worried she is heading in the same direction as her mother, who has a history of sex working and substance misuse and has apparently been going to Rosie's school and having contact without agreement.

The care plan is to offer family therapy with a view to rehabilitation. Lena is very upset by these recent events and is attending all meetings and wants to work with professionals.

Rosie

Discussion points

- How can the child's social worker and supervising social worker work together – and with Lena – to support Andrea in keeping Rosie safe and setting and maintaining boundaries around contact and behaviour generally?
- What specific emotional support needs might Lena have? How can these be explored sensitively?

Dillon

Dillon is a nine-year-old black child of Caribbean Jamaican heritage. He is on a care order and placed and matched in long-term foster care, since the original care plan of adoption could not be achieved with no family identified and the placement order discharged.

Dillon has a range of disabilities including global developmental delay, a shunt in his head to prevent fluid on the brain building up, and other medical complications following burns from a house fire. Dillon remains with long-term foster carers Brian and Jennifer where he was initially placed five years earlier. They are a white couple in their 60s who are committed to him but do not want to adopt or seek a special guardianship order.

Dillon's mother Natasha disappeared after the care proceedings but has recently been located by Dillon's new social worker. She lives in a neighbouring borough with her two-year-old daughter. Natasha was surprised to hear that Dillon was not adopted and pleased he was with the same foster carers. Dillon remembers his mother and would like to see her. Brian and Jennifer are very worried that this will upset and disturb Dillon.

Dillon

Discussion points

- How can the social worker and supervising social worker work together to facilitate positive reunion contact?
- What specific support needs might Brian and Jennifer have? How can these be met?