

3/5/24 - gender identify practice discussion

How can we create an inclusive environment

How do we demonstrate valuing diversity

How do we understand the complexities of diversity and support children and adult differences

Are foster carers or children in their care discriminated against - when applying to foster or having children in their care

What about support networks - are these limited due to foster carers families not supporting difference

How is personal information shared, understood and supported - why would a person applying for fostering or children disclose their struggles - are agencies equipped to work with this information - assess the situation and the individuals and see the challenges they have had or will continue to face

Compassion and respect, a curiosity to know more and consider any impact on fostering

Having access to professional networks, links and additional resources

Members discussion

- Bullying concerns in school
- Support for children who are questioning their sexual identity
- Gender reassignment and the complexities around this for carers and the children they care for
- Example - outcome of a male to a female up and supported so well by the fostering family - was a great role model for the up - the yp behaviour settled down once this was addressed and supported
- Training and development for staff equally important as for carers
- 2 men supporting 2 children doing amazing - no concerns raised by parents - although some talked of this sometimes being a challenge re parents
- Example of a foster carer that had transitioned that was now supporting the agency to build knowledge and to develop their assessment process
- Eg checks and names / identity - and how applicants was very uncomfortable about this
- Important that communication is opened and ask the family to educate you - whilst assessing what we know about fostering and how generally things need to be overcome
- yp placed who questioned their identity - not a problem for foster carers
- Paperwork - removing gender or sexuality or blank boxes so doesn't limit people, not singling out
- Signpost to mermaids - [Mermaids: Homepagemermaidsuk.org.uk](https://mermaidsuk.org.uk)
<https://mermaidsuk.org.uk>
- Pronouns - ok to make mistakes if ask for corrections and correct

- Accountable that we work together
- Up exploring dress sense - make and wanted to wear dresses, not wanting to be a female - how this can be supported
- Pride services - asking for advice and contribution from the community
- New family social will provide support
- Salford SCR - not enough questioning re identity and not explored enough - no challenge "don't want to be offensive" so i wont ask, "will have been subject to being too emotional" don't want to raise - must explore sensitively as need to be robust, resilient in fostering role
- Wakefield SCR - professional anxiety about asking questions - 3 children placed with 2 females - have the same challenges and need to display therapeutic parenting, experience of parenting - and not about sexuality
- Would we say we need to wait after someone transitioned to consider their application to foster - lots to consider here about emotional journey and physical that they will undertake
- Journey of transitions significant - external and internal - mental health
- Stability - no different, important that anyone that applies to foster has stability and support to be a foster carer
- No stipulated time frame for considering applicants
- Polyamorous - how this can be assessed where an applicant is in an intimate relationship with more than one person - example of 3 people who choose to live together in a relationship - would people assess - discussion re stigma of children in foster care and how they struggle to overcome difference and the resilience to belong in this setting - also example of this working well
- Language and the importance of challenge - example given of a carer in training using inappropriate language - older carers, carers for a long time - younger generation has been a little easier (example from an agency)
- Education and a willingness to learn and modify, rather than feeling have to conform or being "brainwashed" which brings different challenges - open mind
- Asking is this ok
- Islamic marriage - has a 2nd wife - however, illegal in this country - contract of how the male is taking care of both partners - Tay to provide the group with more info (thankyou)
- Example of a foster carer that felt unable to support yp to transition - felt unable to support the hormonal process and concerned about the long term permanent issues that they felt this could bring - that they were not expressing concerns about someone transgender or gay
- How people present firstly can be "clumsy" and we need to respond supportively and try and understand and support - use of case studies are helpful to explore in assessments or training and supervision - and advocates and specialist leads are helpful

- Carers who have said “we don't have experience, what if we do harm to the children and feel worried about my impact as i dont have the know” - reassurance and hand holding and vast majority would support yp if they felt supported themselves
- Example - sleeping arrangements - where 2 sibs both female at birth shared a room - and one transitioned to become a male - carer then expressed concerns that their own child was “at risk” as if he was a sexual predator
- Sharing of a room also then became an issue as room sharing over 10's and being of different sex - couldn't provide the room space and ended
- Regulations and bedroom sharing
- Exemptions - risk assessment - nothing was different from the day before when sharing
- Sad to refer to the reg re this and this might not be in the children's interest
- Birth families and their knowledge and support
- <https://www.hrc.org/resources/transgender-children-and-youth-understanding-the-basics>

"FC1 advised SSW1 during the assessment process that he had been estranged from his family for over 30 years, directly because of telling his family he was gay. The Review Team was told there was no attempt to seek out any family member as according to FC1, there had been no contact for such a long time and he did not know where they were living. ...The assessment could also have addressed how homophobia and heterosexism had impinged on their lives; how they dealt with this, what coping devices they used and what impact this could have on their roles as foster carers."

NMS 10.6 (In the foster home, each child over the age of three should have their own bedroom. If this is not possible, the sharing of a bedroom is agreed by each child's responsible authority and each child has their own area within the bedroom. Before seeking agreement for the sharing of a bedroom, the fostering service provider takes into account any potential for bullying, any history of abuse or abusive behaviour, the wishes of the children concerned and all other pertinent facts. The decision making process and outcome of the assessment are recorded in writing where bedroom sharing is agreed)

[Serious Case Review](#)