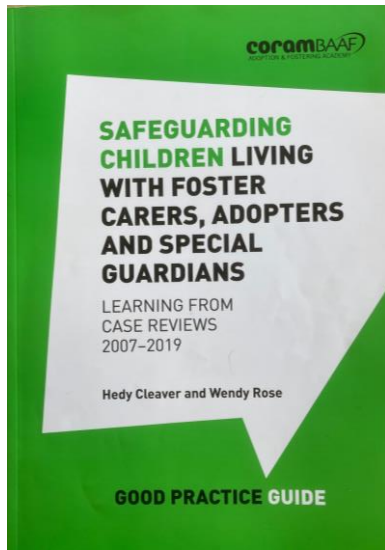
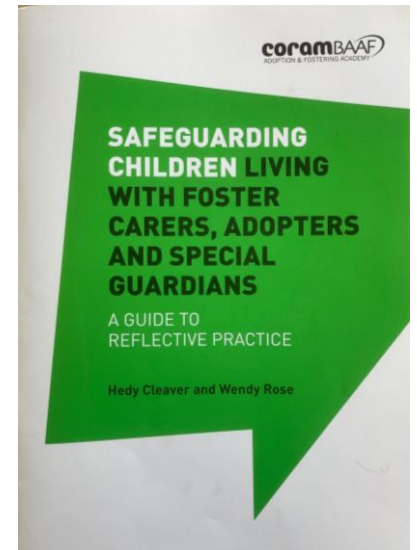


# Safeguarding children living with foster carers, adopters and special guardians



## A guide to reflective practice



Hedy Cleaver and Wendy Rose  
15 November 2022

# A guide to reflective practice

The framework of the guide:

- Assessing and selecting carers
- Ensuring children's welfare, safety and nurture
- Supporting carers
- Maintaining respectful uncertainty
- Collaborating in the interests of the child

# Assessing and selecting carers: gathering information and evidence

Ask yourself:

- Is the information given clear, consistent and coherent?
- Do I understand the implications of what the applicant has told me?
- Have I cross-checked what I have been told, with other sources of information, including references?
- Have I carried out relevant police checks?
- Are there any gaps in the chronology; or are the applicants' accounts contradictory?
- Have I provided all the relevant information to the potential carers?

# Assessing and selecting carers: understanding prospective carers' motivation

Ask yourself:

- Do I have a clear understanding of the motivation driving the applicants to offer a vulnerable child a home?
- Have I had time to talk to each applicant on their own?
- Am I satisfied that financial gain is not the predominant motive?

# Assessing and selecting carers: exploring sensitive issues

Ask yourself:

- Have I considered all the potentially sensitive issues?
- Have I sufficient information about attitudes and beliefs and their impact on a child?
- Am I aware of my own prejudices and how these may affect my judgement?
- Am I fearful of being seen to be discriminatory? If so, is this holding me back from probing further?
- Do I need to seek supervision and additional time for reflection?
- As a manager, am I providing sufficient training to empower my staff to explore sensitive issues with prospective carers?

# Assessing and selecting carers: scrutiny by panels

As a panel member, ask yourself:

- Am I satisfied that information has been triangulated and verified?
- Has the panel applied sufficient scrutiny to the application and the assessment?
- Am I satisfied with the potential carers' motivation?
- Does the report to the panel assure me of the carers' commitment to meeting training, support and development standards (2012)?

# Ensuring children's welfare, safety and nurture: improving placement planning and preparation

Ask yourself:

- Have I heard and taken into account the child's wishes and feelings? Have I all the information about the child?
- Am I fully informed about the prospective carers and others in the household? Will the placement meet the child's needs?
- Have I made a comprehensive placement plan?
- Are placement introductions child-focused and evaluated?
- Is this child adequately prepared for the forthcoming move?
- Are arrangements made to accompany and support this child through their move?
- Does the child understand that moving is not their fault?

# Ensuring children's welfare, safety and nurture: listening to the child

Ask yourself:

- Can I and my manager ensure I have time and space to form a relationship with the child?
- How can I facilitate the development of the child's trust and confidence in me?
- Can I identify someone the child feels safe to talk to and who will take appropriate action on their behalf, such as an Independent Visitor?
- Have I enabled a child with disabilities to have the expert help they need for their voice to be heard?



# Ensuring children's welfare, safety and nurture: the role of the IRO

Ask yourself, as an IRO:

- Have I all the information I need? Have I heard what the child has to say without influence from their carers?
- Have I formed a clear view of what is important to the child before the LAC review?
- Have the child's wishes and feelings been taken into account in decisions made at the LAC review? Does the child need an independent advocate?
- Have the reasons for the decisions of the review been clearly explained to the child and to contributing professionals?
- What action shall I take and to whom shall I report, if the child's well-being is not being given priority and consideration?

# Supporting carers

Ask yourself:

- Have I developed a comprehensive support plan agreed with the carers, taking into account both carers and child's needs?
- Is there an adequate level of financial support in the plan?
- Have all relevant agencies been informed of the child's change of status?
- Have I sufficient knowledge of the family history and am I able to provide the support they need?
- Are the carers really coping or just reluctant to ask for help?
- Have the carers engaged with available training and support, do they need assistance to do so?
- Is there an assumption the child is thriving? Have any incidents or injuries been recorded and explored?

# Maintaining professional uncertainty: seeing carers as heroes

Ask yourself:

- Am I assuming that because children have been placed, they are safe?
- Am I being duped into a false sense of security?
- Do I feel intimidated or badgered by the carers?
- Am I reluctant to challenge them?
- Have I discussed my concerns with my manager and other agencies working with the child?
- Have I recently seen the child without the carers present? Are they likely to trust me enough to reveal any abuse or neglect?

# Collaborating in the interests of the child: sharing information

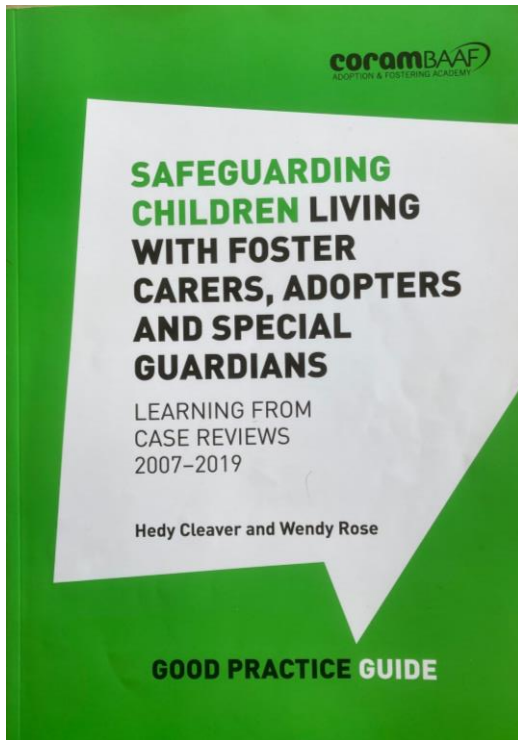
Ask yourself:

- Do I know which professionals are working with the family?
- Do I know the formal processes for sharing and recording information?
- Do I have regular communication with the relevant professional?
- When a child has changed status or location, have I passed on all relevant information?

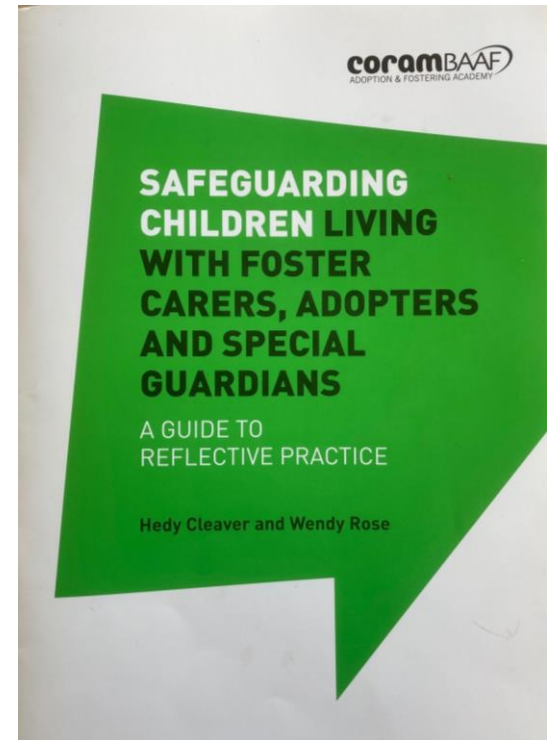
# Collaborating in the interests of the child: escalating concerns

Ask yourself:

- Do I know how to progress my concerns if I initially receive a poor or negative response from either my own or other relevant agencies?
- Whom should I consult, whom should I inform?
- As a manager do I feel confident that I can achieve resolution of any professional differences in order to safeguard a child?



# Thank you



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