

**MODERNISING PERMANENCE****An open letter from Andrew Christie, Chair of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board to the Adoption and Special Guardianship community**

Dear colleagues,

In January this year we commissioned a piece of work to look at the long-term trends affecting adoption and special guardianship. We wanted to understand the challenges that social and demographic trends, and advances in our understanding of neuroscience, psychology, and technology, pose to the adoption and special guardianship system; what this means for the way the state supports those that come forwards to care for its most vulnerable children, and for their birth families.

Hannah Smith and Hugh Thornbery, on behalf of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board, consulted with a range of experts and academics. They convened groups of practitioners from the voluntary and statutory sectors; consulted with regional adoption agencies and VAAs; talked to adopters and to special guardians. The result of this work is the attached report, amended following consideration by the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board.

The report identifies a range of questions and suggestions for further work – to take forwards my objective of **modernising permanence**. I am committed to taking these forwards and will do so with the help and support of a steering group consisting of some of the key partners from the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board: ADCS (represented by Carolyn Fair); the Kinship Care Alliance (represented by its Chair, John Simmonds); CVAA (represented by its Vice-Chair, Lynn Charlton); the Department for Education; and facilitated and advised by Hugh Thornbery, one of the authors of the report.

In taking this work forwards we will be thinking about short-term priorities, where changes could make a difference in the near future, and also big and difficult questions which we need to consider over a longer period in order to reach a consensus and move forwards. We are operating in a climate of constrained resources and with limited opportunity for legislative change. But there is an urgency to the challenges we need to overcome, and I believe that through a coordinated effort, and by sharing the best of what we know and can do, we can still make a difference to outcomes for children and families.

My aim is to produce an **Action Plan for Modernising Permanence** in the Spring. There will be opportunities for you to contribute; if you have views on priorities for this work, or would like to be involved in next steps, please get in touch with me by emailing [ASGLB@cva.org.uk](mailto:ASGLB@cva.org.uk)

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Christie

Chair of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Board