Cultural Competence in Kent

Policy and guidance

January 2013

For more information and best practice guidance on equalities and diversity issues, search for "equalities" on KNet.

Kent County Council
kent.gov.uk

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Foreword

Kent County Council believes and recognises that the diversity of Kent's community and workforce is one of its greatest strengths and assets. The different ideas and perspectives that come from diversity will help the council to deliver better services as well as making Kent a great county in which to live and work.

As a major employer and provider of a wide range of services, KCC is committed to challenging inequality, discrimination and disadvantage for everyone who lives and works in and visits Kent.

Working closely with all its statutory partners, including social enterprise, business and the voluntary sector, KCC is committed to achieving the highest possible standard of service delivery and employment practice.

The council strongly believes that Kent's community and workforce should not face discrimination, or receive less favourable treatment, on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender or sexual orientation.

This guide helps to illustrate our commitment to eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and developing good relations between people of different ethnic groups and those who subscribe to different religions or beliefs. It will help ensure that we develop robust policies and strategies that recognise and respond to the diverse needs of our communities as we work towards achieving our 'Bold Steps' key priorities.

The primary message is that everyone is different, so never assume always ask.

Contents

1. Introduction

Who is this guide for?

This guide is intended to be used by anyone at Kent County Council who works with children in care It will be valuable to you regardless of whether you are:

- Communicating in writing
- Communicating by telephone
- Visiting a member of the public in their own home
- Receiving someone as a guest in your office or at one of your events.

What is this guide for?

Kent is the gateway to Europe through the ports of Dover, Folkestone and Ramsgate. The Channel Tunnel and Manston and Lydd airports make Kent the first British soil which many people coming to the UK step onto.

Kent is made up of many diverse and culturally rich communities, and it is our duty to provide fair and consistently good services to everyone we come across, regardless of their religion, belief or cultural background.

This guide gives quick tips to help staff and their partners to understand the beliefs and cultural backgrounds of the people they serve, and to treat them with dignity and respect. It also shows where to get further, more detailed information, to gain a deeper understanding of some of the cultures, religions and beliefs represented within Kent's population.

Relevant National Minimum Standards

Children's Homes National Minimum Standards 2011

Each child should be valued as an individual and given personalised support in line with their individual needs and background in order to develop their identity, self-confidence and self-worth.

The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account.

Children receive personalised care that promotes all aspects of their individual identity. Each child is treated as an individual rather than a member of a group

Fostering: National Minimum Standards 2011

Each child should be valued as an individual and given personalised support in line with their individual needs and background, to develop their identity, self confidence and self-worth.

The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account.

Children are provided with personalised care that meets their needs and promotes all aspects of their individual identity.

People who are interested in becoming foster carers are treated fairly, without prejudice, openly and with respect

Fostering – The Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care

Foster Carers will: Understand the different types of prejudice and discrimination which can affect children and young people Understand why it is important to provide care which respects and preserves each child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.   Demonstrate how you support and encourage children and young people to develop skills to deal with discrimination, enhance self-worth and make a positive contribution (Standard 1) develop a positive understanding of her/his heritage.

Adoption: National Minimum Standards 2011

A sense of identity is important to a child's well-being. To help children develop this, their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language and sexuality need to be properly recognised and positively valued and promoted.

The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account.

Where a child cannot be cared for in a suitable manner in their own country, inter-country adoption may be considered as an alternative means of providing a permanent family.

People who are interested in becoming adoptive parents, and prospective adopters, are treated fairly, without prejudice, openly and with respect.

Preparation courses should give encouragement to prospective adopters, showing them the positive aspects of parenting a child as well as helping them to understand, for example: the significance of the child's identity, their birth family, the need for openness to help the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and ability; the role of contact, how to manage unauthorised contact, including through online social networks; and the importance of significant memorabilia.
The key parenting skills and parenting capacities they need to care for children who have experienced neglect and abuse and who may be of a different ethnic or cultural background to the applicants; an understanding of the significance of the child's identity, their birth family, the need for openness to help the child to reflect on.

Birth parents and birth families are treated fairly, without prejudice, openly and with respect.

2. The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act came into effect on 1 October 2010. It uses one common language and puts all equality law into one place. The Act aims to give the same rights to fair treatment to people from different groups, with the exception of disabled people who have been given additional protection. By simplifying and streamlining the law, the Act makes it easier to understand, comply with and enforce.

In simple terms, the Equality Act 2010 sets out what organisations and individuals must do to avoid unfair discrimination.

The Act applies to:
- All organisations that provide a service to the public or a section of the public (service providers)
- Anyone who sells goods or provides facilities
- All services, whether or not a charge is made for them.

The Act also includes provisions which build on public bodies' previous duties, combining these into one overarching equality duty which covers age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership is also a 'protected characteristic' for the purposes of the duty to eliminate discrimination.

The Act requires public bodies to assess the impact of their decisions on people from different backgrounds and to consider ways to promote equality and good relations between them.

3. What do we mean by 'ethnic/ race diversity'?

It is easy to think of the UK as a white society, but in truth, the population is made up of people from many different countries and cultural background. Regardless of their culture or country of origin, each and every person who comes into contact with Kent County Council is entitled to the same high standard of service, and to be treated with respect and dignity.

The largest ethnic group in Kent is White[1], and the proportion of residents who are of black, minority and ethnic origin (BME) in the KCC area is lower than the national and regional average. According to the 2011 Census 93.7% of all Kent residents are of white ethnic origin, which is equivalent to just over 1.37 million people. 6.3% of residents in the KCC area were of BME origin compared to the England average of 14.6% and the South East average of 9.3%.

The 2011 census shows that 17.2% of the population of Gravesham were of BME origin making it the borough with the highest BME population. Gravesham's

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[1] White covers- White British, White Irish and White Other- this includes people from EU accession states Gypsy Roma Irish Traveller

neighbour – Dartford, has the second highest proportion of BME residents at 12.6%. Together, Dartford and Gravesham account for over 32% of the county's BME population. Canterbury has the HIRD largest BME population among Kent districts, at 7.0%.

Dover has the smallest population of BME origin at 4.1%. However, the area near Dover and Folkestone is home to a diverse community of asylum seekers. Information about Kent's BME population will be updated periodically as and when fresh data becomes available, so it will be worth checking the online version of this document for updates from time to time. You can also find more detailed information on Kent's BME population on our [2011 Census](#) pages.

Ethnic origin guidelines

Below are terms frequently used to describe ethnic origin:

African

This is often used to describe people from Africa, but, individuals often prefer to identify with their country of origin and will use Nigerian, Somali, etc.

African Caribbean

This is often used as a general term to describe people from the Caribbean, and should be discouraged. 'West Indian' is a historical term formerly used in Britain to describe first-generation settlers from the Caribbean. In most contexts, it is inappropriate and may be offensive.

Asian

This is a general term, and although not unacceptable, it is very imprecise. It is far more acceptable to the people concerned to be identified in terms of their national origin, Indian, Pakistani, Mauritian, or their region of origin, for example, Bengali.

Black

'Black' has more than one meaning, a literal meaning relating to skin colour but also a broader political meaning e.g. 'Black Politics'. Some people will define themselves as 'black' even though others may not perceive them to be. Not everyone finds the term acceptable.

Black British

This is often seen on official documentation.

British

The term 'British' relates to characteristics of Great Britain or its people or culture. Nearly everyone born in Britain has British citizenship, regardless of colour or ethnicity and the term should not be used as another word for 'white'.

Coloured

This is not acceptable. Many people find it offensive.

Non-White

Many people may find this term deeply offensive, as its origins relate to apartheid. The term should be avoided.

Half Caste

The use of the term half-caste was widely used until recent times. It is now regarded as offensive by many people due to its origins within the Hindu Caste System, in which being half-caste could mean social exclusion for the individual concerned.

Mixed Race

This is generally accepted, but can sometimes have negative connotations. An alternative is 'mixed parentage' or 'dual parentage'. The term 'multi-racial' may also be used, for example as in reference to a 'multi-racial household'. 'Mixed cultural heritage' is increasingly used in educational circles.

Self-classification of ethnic origin

When dealing with people from any community their own self-classification of ethnic origin is important and should be recorded in line with their wishes. Where the self-classification may be perceived by others as derogatory, particularly in written statements, it is recommended that clarification is added in brackets e.g. Half-caste (mixed race/ parentage) or coloured (black).

Minority ethnic communities/minority ethnic

These terms are widely used and generally accepted in the broadest term to encompass all those groups who see themselves as distinct from the majority of the population in terms of cultural or ethnic identity and not just 'black' or 'visible' minorities. 'Ethnics' as a term on its own is not acceptable. Neither should a term such as 'immigrants' be used generally, unless in its strict technical sense. It is also important to note here that the term 'communities' should be used. A 'community' in its singular sense refers to one homogeneous group, which minority ethnic communities living in one area rarely are.

Further information on the ethnic profile of Kent residents can be found at:

4. What do we mean by 'religious diversity'?

Traditionally, the UK is often thought of as a Christian country. In truth, the population is made up of people who subscribe to a wide range of religions and other beliefs. Regardless of religion or belief, each and every person who comes into contact with Kent County Council deserves and is entitled to the same high standard of service, and to be treated with respect and understanding by our staff. Religious diversity is the range of religions and beliefs we need to understand, to ensure that everyone gets a suitable service, no matter what their religion or belief may be.

While this guide may be a useful source of information, it should be remembered that every person varies widely in their religious orthodoxy in respect of the customs associated with their beliefs. It is worth noting that customs and cultural traditions sometimes become intertwined with religious observance.

According to the 2011 census, Christians account for the highest percentage of the population of Kent at 62.5%. This is higher than the percentage for England (59.4%(, and the South-east region ((59.7%). Islam is the second most prevalent religion in the county, at 1%. This is lower than the percentage for England, which is 5%, and the percentage for South-East England, which is recorded as 2.3%. 26.8% of the Kent population identify as having no religion, compared to 24.7% of the population of England and 27.7% of the population of the South-East region.

Sevenoaks has the highest recorded proportion of Christians at 65.4%. In Gravesend, 60.8% of the population identify as Christian, 7.6% as Sikh, and 1.9% as Muslim. This means that among Kent's districts, Gravesend has the highest proportion of Sikhs and of Muslims.

You can find more detailed information on the religion profile of Kent's population at:

Please remember that children and adults alike will have their own religious identities. These will influence the way they view services, therefore we need to take into account a person's religious identity when engaging with them and making decisions that affect them.

Religions of the world

For detailed information about different religions, refer to the KCC Religion, Belief and Culture guide at:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/adult_social_services/leaflets_and_brochures/race,_faith_and_culture.aspx. It contains in-depth explanations of those religions listed in the 2011 census, and a quick facts section which includes a much wider range of beliefs. If in doubt, ask the individual to clarify how they observe their own faith or religion.

Festivals and celebrations

Some religious festivals take place on the same date every year, while others vary from year to year, as they are set by the lunar calendar. To look up the dates of specific festivals, please see the interfaith calendar on the BBC website:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar/

5. Cross-cultural understanding in the care setting

The following are just some areas that need to be considered in caring for adults and children. More information on community profiles, religion and belief is given in the leaflet on Faith, Race and Culture, at:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/adult_social_services/leaflets_and_brochures/race,_faith_and_culture.aspx

Some general factors to consider:

- Migration - and how it affects life, family relationships and lifestyles
- Social isolation, marginalization and alienation - may mean certain communities become neglected by service providers and therefore more vulnerable
- A lack of appropriate, accessible and culturally sensitive services may result in confinement in the home. This can place additional strain on families
- Changes in family structures, breakdown in relationships, smaller family units can have a significant effect on care provided within the family.

Mental health can be affected by:

- Feelings of guilt, or fear of being a 'burden'
- Abandonment
- Isolation or the fear of isolation
- Frustration
- Stigma

- Homesickness or prolonged separation from loved ones.

Health issues and certain illnesses are more prevalent within black and minority ethnic communities. For more information visit the Centre for Evidence in Ethnicity, Health and Diversity (CEEHD) at:

www.ethnic-health.org.uk

Customs and etiquette

What is considered to be 'good' hygiene varies among individuals and cultures. It is therefore important to check out the individual's needs and wishes.

For example:

- Individuals may have specific dietary needs resulting from their religious beliefs
- Individuals may have different preferences for the way they eat, which may be determined by their cultural background or the religion or belief they subscribe to
- People must be given a choice in how they dress. Everyone has different preferences for what is comfortable and appropriate to them
- In some cultures, males and females may prefer separate facilities
- It may be expected that children will remain at home and be cared for by family. This can cause tensions when changing family circumstances, roles and responsibilities mean that this is no longer possible and perceived duties are not undertaken
- The concept of adoption by strangers is considered alien in some cultures
- Some people whom we may consider to be children may have the status of adults in their own communities
- Family relationships and concepts of family may also vary across cultures. For instance, within traditional extended families terms like 'uncle', 'aunt', 'cousin' may be used to describe relationships with 'unrelated' people
- Use of gestures, body language, eye contact, gaze, touch, smell, appearance and dress can all be used to give messages. It is important to be aware of how perceptions and understanding of certain things can be different across cultures.

More detailed information about the customs and etiquette associated with different religions, beliefs and cultures can be found in The KCC Faith, Race and Culture guide:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/adult_social_services/leaflets_and_brochures/race,_faith_and_culture.aspx

Cross-cultural communication

Cross-cultural communication or inter-cultural communication relates to establishing and understanding how people from differing cultural backgrounds communicate with each other. Understanding and respecting cultural differences promotes clearer communication, breaks down barriers, builds trust and strengthens relationships with diverse communities.

Do:

- Remember that attitudes affect behaviour and will affect the attitude and behaviour of others
- Check what individuals mean when they use the term 'cousin', 'uncle', 'aunt' etc. They may have a different meaning
- Be careful using gestures or body language. These may be interpreted as offensive by some members of the community
- Avoid colloquialisms or terms of endearment, such as luv, dear, etc
- Seek advice, where possible, from colleagues with different cultural backgrounds, about how to communicate effectively
- Be aware that within some communities, some women may not feel comfortable being alone in a room with a man who is not a relative
- Be patient and reassuring when accents, or language hinder communication
- Remember that some acts of physical contact, such as hand-shaking, may cause embarrassment or offence
- Remember that many people remove shoes before entering some rooms at home, as well as at a place of worship. If in doubt, ask
- Ask for 'first and last name', rather than for a 'Christian' name.

Don't

- Use family members, especially children, as interpreters – always use the professional interpreting service
- Assume that a response to a question in English means that the individual fully understands what they have been asked
- Assume references to day or time have the same meaning
- Assume lack of eye contact during a conversation is a sign of dishonesty or disrespect, in some communities it means the opposite
- Allow personal stereotypes, assumptions and prejudices to affect attitude and behaviour towards others
- Make generalisations about groups or individuals
- Assume an individual's language is the same as that of their country of origin
- Assume that all individuals from a particular country have identical cultural backgrounds or beliefs
- Assume just because an individual is raising their voice they are losing control or becoming aggressive
- Under estimate how one cultural background may affect perception and behaviour towards others

- Enter a room unless invited to do so. It may be a prayer room where important customs should be respected.

6. Guidance - prompts for people responsible for the care of children

Introduction

The key message is NEVER MAKE ASSUMPTIONS – ALWAYS ASK IF UNSURE

Taking a lifelong view of the cultural needs of the child may seem a daunting task to practitioners and carers, who may be faced with traumatised and displaced children, or a lack of information for other reasons. We cannot address every issue here, but the aim is to be thought provoking and, by providing a series of prompts for each stage of the process of a child's journey through care, to trigger imaginative responses.

Practitioners will constantly be working cross-culturally. Children and young people were consulted about the prompts, and their thoughts and views are reflected throughout the text.

Notes on available resources and background information are provided to sign post carers and practitioners to specialised services, but it is acknowledged that culture is not static, and information needs to be regularly reviewed and updated. Therefore readers are advised to refer to the electronic version of this guidance for the latest updates and also to refer to the electronic version of the Religion, Belief and Culture document. This gives guidance on issues related to Religion and belief for staff providing all services across Kent County Council.

Key points:

- Ethnicity may be "hidden" such as Romany Gypsies, or families of Eastern European origin, may not present as being from a physically obvious Minority Ethnic background.
- Practice in a way that is sensitive to differing family patterns and lifestyles that vary across different racial, ethnic and cultural groups.
- It is important to question your own perceptions of family, and remind yourself that others may not see the world as you do.
- Take the child's religion, racial, cultural, disability, class, developing sexuality, political and linguistic background into account when making any decisions. Take care to ensure you distinguish between myth, misconceptions and reality.
- Take responsibility for your own learning about diversity.
- Understand it is your responsibility to engage children and young people to influence decision-making processes, which affect them. Access learning on participative engagement of children and young people.

- Ensure you are up to date on the nine protected characteristics. These are Disability, Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief, Pregnancy & Maternity, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership and Age.
- Ensure you find out about the cultural needs of service users you are working with through available resources.
- Ensure you are clear about what communication support is available and how to access it.
- Always consider accessibility of venues.

Don't make assumptions – if you don't know then ask.

Guidance – Prompts for Practitioners

Contact, Referral and Assessment

Good Practice requires:

- Listening to the individual's own use of English and trying to use the words within their vocabulary.
- Understanding that the experience of separation, loss, and displacement, may reinforce communication problems.
- Offering assistance in completing forms.
- Informing service users, including children and young people, what communication support is available and supporting them to access it.
- Ensuring that children are not used as interpreters.
- Monitoring that children and young people understand the interpreter and are not sidelined from the process.
- Checking that children and young people understand the services available to them are engaged in and understand the process and what it means to them. Thinking carefully about checking their understanding
- Asking family and/or other professionals (such as teachers) about the child's level of understanding.
- Keeping the child/young person up to date on the process.
- Clarifying the relationship between immigration and Specialist Children's Services to unaccompanied minors.
- Clarifying the individual's perceptions and expectations of the service and understanding how these are affected by religious, cultural, sexuality and linguistic needs.
- Recognising that the experience of racism, bullying, homophobia or hate crime is likely to affect the responses of the child and family to assessment and enquiry processes. This can complicate efforts to protect children from other forms of significant harm. (Working Together 2010).
- Ensuring that gender appropriate support is offered where necessary.
- Identifying resources that are available in an age appropriate format or meeting the child's level of understanding.
- Understanding that cultural and religious factors should not be acceptable grounds for inaction when a child is at risk of significant harm. Explaining this to the child or young person.

- Understanding that disabled children may communicate the experience of abuse through changes in behaviour.
- Ensuring that disabled children are heard, listened to, believed and influence decision-making processes that affect them.
- Allowing any child with communication difficulties additional time.
- Recognising the possible effect that displacement and trauma may have upon the assessment process, especially when working with Asylum Seekers and Refugees. Analysing with the child/young person in the context of separation and loss.
- Checking with children and young people about their perceptions of family structures
- Transferring information accurately and quickly between teams, and between new workers.

Core Assessments Good Practice

Core Assessments Good Practice requires:

- Accepting that being "in care" and the role of the social worker and social care staff has different connotations across cultures. Helping the child and family understand the concept of fostering.
- Clarifying the individual's perceptions and expectations of the service and acknowledging how these are influenced by religious, cultural, sexuality and linguistic needs.
- Ensuring children and young people understand the services available to them, and regularly reviewing their understanding.
- Ensuring service users with English as an Additional Language, or who are disabled, are not excluded during discussions and during meetings. Avoid professional jargon and acronyms.
- Planning use of interpreters (not family members) in advance.
- Asking the family, with sensitivity, what the ethnic, national and religious background is, and what their views are on ethnicity, nationality and religion.
- Exploring concepts of kinship and family within the culture.
- The impact of assessments on carers of disabled children, and the level of assessments already carried out.
- Considering disabling barriers faced by children, and their parents, and how to overcome these barriers, in consultation with the service users.
- Acknowledging differences between cultures, but also within cultures. Ask for clarification rather than making assumptions
- Researching and understanding specific health problems affecting particular communities.
- Adapting approaches so that they are relevant to children, families and their parents from different cultures and backgrounds, without compromising protection of the children.

Care Planning

Kent Children's Pledge:" We will ensure that you are able to communicate your wishes, feelings and interest— taking into account any disabilities you have told us

about. Listen to your wishes and feelings before making decisions that affect you and support you if you need help to do this. Work with you and your family to make sure that plans for your care are up to date and meet your educational, health and care needs."

Good Practice requires:

- Planning which involves children and their families, with explanations why particular options are chosen.
- Involving the child in care planning, and offering support to enable this to happen. Are their views listened to and taken into account, and do they influence the decision making process?
- Tracking what a child or young person has said and how it has influenced decision-making.
- Giving feedback to the child or young person.
- Taking into account the child or young person's views of the birth family and explaining what can, and what cannot, happen. Similarly, discussing the child's present care situation in the context of long term plans.
- Ensuring the language and tone used is appropriate for the child/young person and checking understanding on an ongoing basis with them.
- Understanding how there may be cultural differences in coping with disabilities, including mental health problems.
- Disabling barriers faced by children, and their parents, and how to overcome these barriers, in consultation with members of the family.
- Arranging Mentors or Independent Visitors to provide positive and culturally appropriate role models.
- Identifying and incorporating the potentially vital role of informal and other community-based forms of support, which may vary across cultures.
- Developing understanding of the similarities and differences between the developmental needs of children and families from different ethnic backgrounds and cultures (Assessment Framework). Consulting the child or young person about this.
- Using other KCC staff as a resource. That is, network with staff, and staff groups who may be able to provide insight and advice on specific cultural, religious, racial, sexuality, disability needs.
- Ensuring that initial assessments and care plans include information about culture, heritage, identity, developing sexuality, language and faith, and the child's opinion, and that plans meet any special needs which may arise.
- Facilitating multi-agency meetings so the child/young person can be involved in a suitable way without forcing them to conform to adult structures.
- Planning that takes into account safeguarding minority ethnic children from abuse, including racial abuse.
- Planning to eliminate harassment of disabled children.
- Avoiding the danger of double discrimination where the child may be a member of several communities, for example, due to attitudes to race and disability.
- Handling transitions to adult services so that information is shared accurately about the child, and about ways of working with the child.

- Whether an interpreter is required so the child could have conversations in their own language.
- Whether written information needs to be provided for the child or young person in another format or language.
- Sensitivity around medical interventions which may be perceived as invasive, disturbing or completely beyond the experience of the child/young person. Explaining the procedure to the child/young person and gaining their consent to the procedure where competent.
- Considering any religious or cultural requirements regarding the gender of any health professionals.
- Ensuring checks are in place for young people who may wish to access faiths that may not be safe
- Recognising and planning to meet the child's mental health needs including those related to the trauma of loss and separation

Life Story Work

We will help you build a photo album of key people in your life and places you have been to while in care.

- Ensure that life story work begins as soon as possible, and follows the child through the system, so that crucial information about the child's cultural background is not lost.
- Ensure that the child or young person feels ownership of the process.
- Explore a range of life story techniques that may work for a particular child such as audio or video as well as traditional methods.
- Select the best communicator for the child such as a worker from the same racial background.
- Help the child to understand about their country of origin using maps and other sources (unaccompanied children, and children adopted from overseas).
- Enable birth parents and birth families to contribute to the maintenance of their child's heritage and their spiritual development.
- Obtain clear information from birth families about themselves and their life before the child is placed permanently.
- Ensure that the child is taken to visit local mosques/ temples/churches where relevant.
- Consider a "Life Appreciation Day" for children or young people where life story work has not been followed through. This will inform both the work and the future planning for the child.

Children in Care Reviews

Kent Children's Pledge: "When making decisions we will take into account your age, background and beliefs, including your ethnic and cultural needs, and needs that may be a result of a disability, especially communication. We will make sure you are consulted about key decisions being made in your life. If you have a disability we will

make sure you have your own 'communication passport' that tells others how you communicate and how they can communicate with you. Ensure that your transition to adult services, if you require them, is as smooth as possible".

Good Practice requires:

- That meetings are held in appropriate formats to engage the child/young person's views and opinions without expecting them to work within adult structures.
- Respecting the views of the child/young person, and that they can influence the decision making process in a meaningful way.
- Recognising the impact of your own values and status in the meeting.
- Thinking about gender relationships and how this may impact on the meeting.
- Planning when the meeting is to be held and ensuring it does not interfere with the child's other activities based on an awareness of the child's activities.
- Booking an interpreter well in advance, who is appropriate to the child's culture and language. Using a regular interpreter when appropriate.
- Presenting consultation forms to the child in an accessible format. Is account is taken of language, disability, and level of functioning?
- Considering the use of symbols, not only for disabled children, but also for any child.
- Checking the child's level of understanding through explanations and preparation before the review.
- Ensuring the child can participate in the meeting. Asking participants to formally signal when they wish to speak will be more empowering than a fast moving discussion, particularly when English is not the first language, or there is any hearing, visual or speech disability.
- Making arrangements so that families and the child/young person are notified of the outcome of reviews in an accessible format.
- Taking the child's opinions, religion, and racial, cultural, disability, developing sexuality, political and linguistic background into account when making any decisions. Distinguishing between myth, misconception and reality.
- The use of signs, symbols or appropriate demonstration may be useful and where necessary an interpreter, speech therapist or a teacher who is skilled in communicating with the particular child should be involved.
- Attention should be given to ensuring that the child/young person understands the context of short breaks away from home and his/her right to dignity, privacy, respect and safety.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that the child/young person is able to make a complaint effectively if he/ she needs to.
- Identifying and planning independent living skills for young people.

Guidance – Prompts for Fostering & Adoption Practitioners

Matching & Placement

Kent Children's Pledge: "We will be sure to take account of your views, and where appropriate, your parent's' views of the type of carers that you would want when choosing your placement and respite care"

Good Practice requires:

- Consideration of own value base when considering possible families.
- Reflecting, recognising and addressing needs of children in terms of ethnic origin, class, cultural background, religion, sexuality, gender, disability and language.
- Availability of information about the ethnic, cultural and religious background of children needing care being made available to prospective carers and adopters.
- Providing additional training, support and information where not all the child's needs may be met by one family.
- Supporting the carer to read or research the child's culture, disability, religion or race when they have a specific child in mind, and particularly if they are from a different background.
- Finding carers to support the child's spiritual development and develop a positive understanding of her/his heritage.
- Using black and minority ethnic or LGBT press, radio stations and websites to find.
- Considering the child or young person's views in matching.
- Looking at resources in the local community that a child will have access to.
- Looking at the profile of the local community and schools that a child will attend.
- Ensuring that foster carers are aware of how the child communicates, and have the information about the child's behaviour and history to communicate effectively with the child/young person
- Where there are a range of needs, offering additional training, support and advice to the carer, and taking the child's/young person's views into account.
- Checking the child/young person's view of family, and ensuring the carer understands differing roles, hierarchy, obligations and taboos.
- Ensuring the carer knows the child's name and how to pronounce it correctly.
- Providing as much information to the carer as possible about the child's background and culture, and updating the carer whenever new information becomes available.
- Ensuring requirements regarding appropriate clothing, diet and toiletries are passed to the carer
- Informing the carer about the child's hobbies and interests

Carer Recruitment

Good Practice requires:

- Understanding the cultural values and possible misconceptions about substitute care, such as fostering, adoption or respite care, within the community from which you are seeking to recruit.
- Making use of publications and programmes relevant to communities where carers are needed from, such as Asian radio stations, newspapers and websites for Black and Minority Ethnic Communities.
- Mapping out communities, and faith group leaders.
- Ensuring you are well briefed on traditions and beliefs.
- Ensuring culturally sensitive venues are used.
- Avoiding clashes with sacred/holy days or festivals when organising recruitment campaigns (see standard issue work diaries for Religious Festival Dates and Special Days for the year. Also available on KNet).
- Avoiding sacred/holy days or major festivals when organising follow up meetings, although festivals may be good recruitment venues.
- Offering prospective carers assistance in completing application forms.
- Assessing needs for support where some family members may not have spoken English as a First Language.
- Involving children and young people in the recruitment of carers.
- Asking children and young people, and their families, what they require from a prospective carer.

Guidance – Prompts for residential managers

Training and Preparation of Carers

Good Practice requires:

- Training of every carer to provide care, which respects and preserves each child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background, and understands disability and developing sexuality.
- Engaging carers to support children and young people in understanding and influencing decision-making processes, which affect them.
- Ensuring the carer understands the importance of seeking and listening to the child or young person's views.
- Ensuring the carer has specific training to meet the needs of the child, for example training in communication, such as signing, or training in manual moving and handling, puberty and sexuality.
- Ensuring that the carer attends training offered.
- Taking advice on use of community or faith leaders, particularly seeking the views of parents, where available.
- Supporting networking with carers of other children with similar backgrounds or needs.
- Discussing the carer's own values, attitudes and perceptions with them in supervision or preparation/support groups.

- Helping the carer to think about the impact of the child's needs and behaviours on their values; for instance, a child with attachment difficulties may not show respect for the carer in a way that is seen as culturally acceptable.
- Signposting to good resources and background information regarding the child's particular culture.

Assessment of Carers

Good Practice requires:

- Considering own values, and being aware of power dynamics in assessment, considering the impact of race, gender, sexuality, class and disability on the process.
- Requesting support where they are not familiar with the applicant's culture.
- Researching the applicant's culture and views of fostering and adoption within their faith or ethnic community
- Using the ethnicity categories in the KCC 'about you' questionnaire with the applicant to discuss how they define themselves.
- Ensuring specialist advice on preparation courses for carers is available where necessary.
- Assessing the applicant's communication skills. Will they undertake training in signing?
- Assessing openness to learn about a child's culture.
- Thoroughly questioning the applicant with a 'no difference' approach, and ensuring further work is done.
- Behaviour management in the applicant's family, and the impact on a child from a different culture.
- How the applicant deals with discrimination.
- Including the child or young person's views and opinions when assessing the carer.
- Involving children and young people at the point of decision making.
- All factors which contribute to their identity such as personal, class, racial and ethnic, gender, sexual, cultural, language and spiritual.
- Values and beliefs within the family of origin

Assuring the quality of Care Good practice requires:
- Identifying if the child's immediate cultural needs have been adequately researched and addressed when first making a placement.
- Ensuring the carer accesses with the child/young person, information to help support the child and to provide appropriate care, particularly for trans-racial or trans-religious placements.
- How does the carer help the child to deal with racism, bullying or other forms of discrimination? Are they helping the child develop awareness of self-protection?

- Recognising the needs of children from diverse backgrounds when discussion of sex, sexuality & relationships takes place.
- Ensuring the child is recognised and treated in ways appropriate to his or her age and stage of development.
- Confirming that children are provided with nutritious and appropriate food with regard to their cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds and dietary needs and choices.
- Discussing and observing the choice of clothes or personal requisites promoted with regard to cultural, racial, ethnic or religious expectations. Ensure the child is helped to lead on these decisions.
- Expecting children to be encouraged and given opportunities to take part in activities and leisure interests which take account of their race, culture, language, religion, interests, abilities and disabilities.
- Ensuring the carer is committed to supporting the child's spiritual needs.
- Ensuring the carer has registered the child with the G.P., dentist, optician etc.
- Ensuring that birthdays, name days, cultural and religious festivals are celebrated where appropriate, and children can participate with carers in planning the events together.
- Checking that the child's name is used and pronounced correctly.
- Ensuring that the child is taken to visit local mosques/temples/churches where relevant. Responding to the child's wishes.
- Guiding the carer to encourage the child to reflect on and understand her/his history according to age and keep appropriate memorabilia.
- Supporting carers to ensure children and young people are positively engaged to influence decision-making processes which affect them.
- Identifying if the carer allows room for the child or young person to express their thoughts, opinions and voices and these are listened to, and responded to, explaining what can and cannot happen.

Guidance – Prompts for Managers

Service Monitoring Good practice requires:

- Analysing information about the needs, and backgrounds, of children requiring foster care or adoption to plan recruitment.
- Engaging children and young people to evaluate the services on an ongoing basis. Giving feedback to the children/young people about how their views have assisted with service development.
- Knowing the profile of carers. That is, ethnic origins, languages spoken, religion, disabilities, etc.
- Ensuring that leaflets, posters, adverts and the website are culturally diverse and available in different languages and can be made available in different formats.
- Checking that initial information and the application form are jargon free and clear to use. Consulting different communities and service users about the content, format and distribution of appropriate information.

- Enabling carers to make personal statements in their first language, and provision of workers with specialist knowledge of the language and culture to interpret and assess.
- Co-opting staff with specific language skills or knowledge of particular faiths for recruitment events.
- Using staff with specialist skills and diverse backgrounds as mentors for colleagues.
- Involving children and young people in the recruitment of carers.
- Ensuring material is available in a child-friendly format. Writing with children and young people to ensure the language is correct.
- Checking that children and young people understand the services available to them, and are given information about the complaints procedure in the age appropriate format.
- Monitoring the processes of the Fostering and Adoption Panels regarding qualities, competencies and aptitudes in relation to religion and racial, cultural or linguistic issues.
- Ensuring information about services is reaching all communities.
- Monitoring whether social services facilities visited by the public carry leaflets and posters in appropriate languages and formats.
- Monitoring whether children and their families from different cultures and backgrounds perceive services as available and relevant to them.

7. Glossary

Agnosticism- is derived from the Greek word "a" meaning without and "gnosis" meaning knowledge. The definition of agnosticism is therefore "without knowledge". Agnosticism is not a religion but a belief related to the existence or nonexistence of God. A "weak agnostic" is unsure whether God exists whereas a "strong agnostic" believes it is impossible to know whether God exists.

Animism- Animism is considered to be the original human religion and can be defined as the belief in the existence of spiritual beings. It is the earliest form of religious belief and can be practiced by anyone who believes in spirituality but does not follow any specific organised religion.

Atheism- Atheism can be defined differently in two broad ways:

- The absence of belief in the existence of a god or gods or
- The belief that there are no gods, the denial of the existence of a god or gods.

Community Cohesion - A cohesive community is a community that is in a state of well-being, harmony and stability. It is about respecting one another, valuing diversity and celebrating differences of age, religion, faith, ability, culture and other

differences. Cohesive communities are where all members feel a sense of place and belonging.

Culture - Culture can be defined as a set of beliefs, values, behaviours, habits, attitudes, traditions, customs, skills, arts, rituals and material objects that constitute or characterise a peoples' way of life.

Ethnicity - Ethnic is derived from the Greek word "ethnos" meaning people or nation and an ethnic group can be described as a community of people who share a common culture, language, values, religion, history and ancestry. Ethnicity is, therefore, a word which represents groups with a shared history, sense of identity, geography and cultural roots.

Ethnocentrism - Ethnocentrism can be defined as the tendency to look at the world from the perspective of one's own ethnic culture. Ethnocentrism is common among all cultures and sometimes involves the belief that one's own race or ethnic group is more important than or superior to those of other groups. Sometimes ethnocentrism is unwitting or unintended and often involves ethnic stereotypes.

Faith - The term faith has many meanings. Faith can mean a strong belief in something as true without using reason.

Humanism - Humanism is the belief that people can live good lives without religious beliefs. Humanists make sense of the world using reason, experience and shared human values. They seek to make the best of one life by creating meaning and purpose for themselves. They take responsibility for their actions and work with others for the common good.

Islamophobia - Islamaphobia is the irrational fear and/or hatred of Islam. This manifests as prejudice towards, or discrimination against, Islam or Muslims.

Religion - Religion can be defined as a group of beliefs concerning the supernatural, sacred, or divine and the moral codes, practices, values, institutions and rituals associated with such belief.

Secularism - Secularism is the idea that religion should not interfere with or be integrated into the public affairs of a society.

Xenophobia - Xenophobia is derived from the Greek words "xenos" meaning foreigner, stranger and phobos meaning fear. It is the irrational fear and/or hatred of other countries/cultures and the people from those countries/cultures.

8. Useful Websites

- Government Equalities Office
  http://homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/

- Equality and Human Rights Commission
  www.equalityhumanrights.com

- Ethnic Health (gives information on ethnicity and health)
  www.ethnic-health.org.uk

- Muslims In Britain – a guide for non-Muslims
  www.muslimsinbritain.org

- UK Inter-faith Network, promoting good interfaith relations
  www.interfaith.org

- Romany Pages on BBC Kent website
  www.bbc.co.uk/kent/romany_roots