



## **ADCS response to Policy Exchange report on fostering**

24<sup>th</sup> January 2012

Responding to the Policy Exchange report "Fostering Aspirations, Reforming the foster care system in England and Wales", **Matt Dunkley, President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services** said:

"Foster carers are a key part of the system for looking after vulnerable children who cannot live with their families. They provide a family environment where adoption is not an option for the particular child and we know that fostering offers some of the best outcomes for children in care and should be celebrated. As such they should be treated with respect, involved in the planning of care for the foster children wherever possible and allowed the freedom to build a welcoming and nurturing environment for the children they care for. This requires social workers to have sufficient professional discretion and time with foster families to understand the challenges they face and the support that they need.

He continued:

"We know that the extent to which this happens in practice is variable in different local authorities and indeed from case to case but there are many outstanding examples of good practice where foster carers feel valued and supported in this important task. Local authorities seek to learn from each other and this is increasingly supported by the Children's Improvement Board's work in this area and this sharing of good practice is more likely to improve the quality of the service that additional bureaucratic burdens such as national data collections and increased guidance. Passing these responsibilities to an external organization does not necessarily improve the quality of the service offered and can hinder an integrated approach to supporting these families, though many independent fostering organisations do have strong relationships with their local authority and are commissioned where their service is the most appropriate means of securing a foster family for a particular child – based on quality, not cost."

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- 1) The Association of Directors of Children's Services Ltd (ADCS) is the professional leadership organization for Directors of Children's Services and their senior managers in local authorities.