

Adoption and Children (Northern Ireland) Bill

Life Story Project Submission, 29th September 2021

A formal response of the Life Story Project's views and recommendations of the draft bill was submitted during the consultation process.

In addition to this submission we would like to reiterate our views that-

- The provision of Adoption Support Services should include the duty to provide a Life Story service for children who have been adopted, are in care, leaving care or have left care, where it has been assessed as a need. This would bring our legislation in line with that in other parts of the UK.
- With regards disclosure of information, the Bill refers to adults who have attained the age of 18. It is our view that if the child's welfare is given paramount consideration, children who are in care, leaving care or have left care should have access to their family history and journey through care before the age of 18. Having no access to background information can negatively affect a child's mental health, placement stability and self-esteem. Life Story provision addresses this need in a safe and age-appropriate way, providing support to both young person and parent/ carer.

Sarah Johnston,

Project Coordinator, Life Story Project