

# Post adoption contact in borderline cases, and what tips the balance when applying for contact with family members ?

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## What does the research say ?

I shall start with the research around post adoption contact because it helps us with this question.

- This is an area where there has been much recent focus, the President of the Family Division, Sir Andrew Macfarlane, has spoken of it a great deal over recent years and has considered **the research** we will look at what he highlights in due course.
- A good starting point in considering how to approach an argument on post adoption contact is to contextualise it in research advice. This has influenced current thinking and the law so suggest you get to grips with it and use it.
- The evidence shows that when children are separated from their birth families and either adopted or placed in long term alternative care, maintaining contact with the people who are important to them from separation right through their childhood has a significant impact on their well being. [see Iyler et al 2020, Holmes et al, 2020]
- Having contact with birth relatives can help adopted children cope with loss and separation, navigate identity issues, and make sense of the past. It has the potential to sustain direct relationships with their parents, siblings, and extended family members.
- Well facilitated, **good quality contact** [ **managed in emotionally attuned contexts and being adaptive and responsive to the needs of the children and their parents**], is associated with positive well being outcomes for children and young people in both the short and long term.
- The complexity of human relationships means contact can be upsetting for children for a range of reasons. However, research indicates that this may not always have a negative impact on a child's well-being, certainly in the longer term, provided there is support for them and their families in managing this.

## What does the research say? (Continued)

- Where contact cannot take place because it's unsafe or unwanted by the child, there is still a need to support them in understanding their family heritage and identities, and to prepare them to manage complex family connections beyond childhood and into their adult lives. These are important arguments to marshal when arguing for post adoption contact.
- Research undertaken by the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory in 2021 highlighted some of the problems with the current system of post adoption contact.
- It pulls together their own research and that of others, in particular the work of Professor Elsbeth Neil and the Contact After Adoption Team at the University of East Anglia who have carried out important work. This is essential reading to support an argument of how post adoption contact should be approached and how to support it.
- The Nuffield research, highlighted key issues for adoption agencies to explore, there is a focus on adapting letter box contact using new technology offering better digital solutions. They give examples of evolving online platforms and schemes such as Linkmaker and Arcbox
- The Nuffield review identified 6 key issues for planning and supporting contact- 1) focus on the quality of contact, 2)listen to the views of children and young people, 3)recognise the significance of grandparents, siblings, wider family and friends, 4) ensure that all involved are clear about the purpose of contact, 5) ensure that contact plans are tailored to each child and regularly reviewed, 6) ensure that skilled professional support is available.
- Letterbox contact, as is currently set up, is typically used for facilitating contact between birth and adoptive families as a way of maintaining identity needs. It focuses on the exchange of information as its primary purpose, rather than maintaining opportunities for connection. Letter box contact has many challenges and arguably, in our modern times is inadequate in many cases.

## What judicial guidance and commentary is there on post adoption contact ?

- The second piece of advice I would offer is use judicial commentary to support post adoption contact. It sets the scene that post adoption contact is evolving and its is certainly moving forwards.
- Turing now to what the President of the Family Division, Sir Andrew McFarlane, has outlined in recent times,
- he has said there is a “pressing need” for courts and those who advise them to modernise the approach that is taken to supporting young, adopted persons by “enhancing the degree to which they may maintain some form of relationship with their birth family after adoption”.
- In an important speech to Plymouth Law Society(9 **November 2023**), *Adapting Adoption to the Modern World* ([read in full here](#)), the President highlighted a recently published report by the **Public Law Working Group (PLWG) Adoption Sub-Group**, which recommended a “**greater focus**” on the issue of contact with birth families, and for adopted adults to have more straightforward access to their records.
- Sir Andrew noted that following the end of the days of ‘forced adoption’ or ‘relinquished babies’ through reforming legislation in the 1970’s, adoption is now principally used for children who have been protected from child abuse by removing them from the care of their natural family.
- He said: “Such children are likely to require continued protection in the years to come, but, one may ask, how bad must the home circumstances be to justify not merely keeping the child safe during childhood, but legally removing her from her family forever and grafting her permanently into another family for the remainder of her life.
- “The answer to that question, established by a decision of the UK Supreme Court , is that adoption will only be the proportionate remedy when it is necessary to meet the child’s welfare needs throughout their life and ‘**nothing else**’ (meaning no less intrusive arrangement) ‘**will do**’. The court must look at the realistic options for the child’s future care and must, in particular, consider the relationship that she has with any person and the impact of ceasing to be a member of the birth family and becoming an adopted person.”

## Commentary continued

- The President notes that “in a world where communication was confined to letters and landline telephones, and a photograph was always a physical thing, **it was possible, indeed easy, to maintain an adopted child in an hermetically sealed environment** of this nature into adulthood unless the adopted person actively sought to trace their original family.
- “He highlighted how, with the explosion of digital communication in the past two decades it is possible for an adopted child, “quietly, alone in their bedroom, without the knowledge of their adopted parents”, to trace and find their family.
- “The temptation to do so, and then to make contact with them, must be almost irresistible. But the dangers of doing so, and the potential for significant emotional harm to result, are easy to contemplate. Unlike the babies taken at birth of yesteryear, today’s adoptees have normally been removed from their family because they have experienced, or were likely to experience, **significant harm there; harm of a nature and degree that justified permanent life-long placement as part of another family.**”
- Sir Andrew continued: “It is, sadly, now a not uncommon experience, despite the best efforts of adopters who have made a full, lifelong and loving commitment to their child, to experience the breakdown of that relationship during the teenage years with, in some cases, the young person moving with their feet and trying to rejoin their birth family. Such attempts often fail, or are a cause of further harm to the child. Fresh child protection procedures may be commenced between local authority social services with the adopters, as the child’s parents.”

## Commentary continued

- The central question from his perspective was to ask whether the law, and the way it is currently applied by the courts, continues to be fit for purpose, or whether it requires adapting to meet the changing needs of adopted children in the modern world.
- He suggested that the term 'contact' was itself unhelpful in this context. "To lawyers, and no doubt to birth parents, it is likely to mean direct communication, and/or meetings, with the child."
- He warned, however, that "such a narrow, or functional, view is unhelpful as it can obscure one of the core features of adoption, namely the severing of the child's relationship with their birth parents and the establishment of a new set of relationships with the adopters.
- "The consequences of the breaking and making of relationships is significant for all those involved including a profound sense of loss for the birth parents, a sense of confusion for the child/adolescent/adult and a source of anxiety for the adoptive parents. Any attempt to re-build these relationships in a meaningful and safe way through contact must take into account the needs of the individuals in a more comprehensive way than that provided by annual 'letterbox' messages."
- He identified a range of factors that would likely be relevant in most cases when developing **a bespoke plan** for contact for an individual adopted child.
- He continued: "I am not alone in considering letter-box contact to be outdated and no longer apt to meet the more sophisticated understanding that now exists of a young adopted person's needs."
- He noted that a "deficit" of letter-box communication is that it is typically only sent to the birth mother, and rarely to the father or any siblings who may be separated from the adopted child

## Commentary continued

- “In addition, the model would seem to be based upon a fear of contact with the natural family destabilising the adoptive placement, when more modern thinking indicates that maintaining some continuing relationship with the natural family can assist the child,” he said.
- A bespoke plan for future contact between a child and their birth family should be developed at an early stage and well before that child moves on to be placed for adoption.
- He noted the PLWG Adoption Sub-Group’s recommendation that there needs to be a greater focus on the issue of contact with the birth family “as long as it is safe”.
- The sub-group also suggested a change in social work practice and training for all involved in the process (including prospective adopters) to give “more focus to contact and the benefits that it can bring for many (although not all) adopted children.”
- Making his own comments on the issue of contact, Sir Andrew said: “Currently, in many cases, when the court makes a placement for adoption order consideration of contact may be confined to the immediate cessation of the current arrangements, with little or no thought being given to the medium and long-term support that can be given to the child prior to, during and after placement for adoption. My own view is that there is a need for a radical departure from that model.
- “It should be the responsibility of the court, at this key stage when it has determined that a child is to be adopted, but before the adoptive placement has been identified, to establish the basis and structure for any continuing relationship with the birth family. This may require looking beyond the birth parents to other members of the child’s wider family to see if there is someone, for example an aunt or a cousin, with whom the child may have an intermittent, safe, but real, relationship down the years.”
- Another key recommendation of the PLWG sub-group was that the full range of contact options (including digital options) should be “actively considered” by professionals and the court during care and placement proceedings rather than being dealt with by an assumption that contact will be via letterbox only.

## Commentary continued

- The sub-group went on to recommend that courts should consider how they can use the jurisdiction to make contact orders under **s 26 of ACA 2002** to set out clearly the assessed needs of the child to stay in touch with relevant members of their birth beyond the point of the placement order (where prospective adopters may or may not yet be identified), particularly in cases where it would be detrimental for the child to have contact cut off at this stage.
- “Any such orders end when the adoption order is made, but they may **set the tone** for what the court determines should happen after the adoption order”
- The President did not agree that this **might hinder the task** of finding prospective adopters or compromise the autonomy they are afforded. “The court’s focus is solely on the **best interests of the child**, not on those of **potential future adopters.**”
- He added: “Where, because I have attempted to set out in this lecture, the court considers that there should be continuing contact up to and after adoption **it should establish this by a court order at the time of making a placement order.** The **contact regime will be reviewed** at any subsequent adoption hearing at which the adopters can be heard.”

## Commentary continued

- The sub-group recommended that at that later stage, courts should consider, **in the right case**, the use of section **51A ACA 2002 which contemplates the making of a contact order now or at any time after the making of an adoption order**. “In some cases, that provision may be used to facilitate a review of contact by the court at a suitable time after the making of the adoption order, for example where direct contact is not appropriate at the time of the order but may be indicated at a time in the foreseeable future.”
- The President said the sub-group recognised that **imposing an order on unwilling adopters was a very serious matter**, but they considered that, if the **other recommendations in their report were accepted, there was hope that, with greater support and training for all concerned, decisions about contact were overwhelmingly likely to be made by consent**. “In this regard, they also recommend that consideration should be given in every case to a meeting between the adopters and members of the birth family.”
- The sub-group also recommended that after the **adoption order is made, periodic reviews of contact plans should be offered by the adoption social worker to ensure the plan is still meeting the child’s needs and to consider any changes to the contact or support for contact that might be needed**.

## Continued

To give an indication of the degree of sophistication required in developing **a bespoke** plan for contact for an individual adopted child, it is likely that the **following factors will be relevant in most cases:**

1. Age of the child at removal from the parents.
2. Age of the child at placement with approved adopters.
3. The impact of genetic factors on the child's development.
4. The impact of risks to the child in the womb – Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, or drug use by the mother.
5. The lived experience of the child – domestic abuse, poor feeding and hygiene, comfort, sensitivity, playfulness and relationships
6. Tracking the child's health – weight, growth, sight, hearing.
7. A range of health factors which impact on the child such as a named developmental condition.
8. Parental neglect when evidenced by a significant failure to exercise parental responsibility as set out in law.
9. Significant risk and harm that fall within the experience of abuse – the direct actions of the parents that directly harm the child – physical violence and assaults, sexual abuse.

All of these issues underpin the significance of avoiding any delay in agreeing the plan and solution for the child. We know that what every child **needs throughout their life is a stable, loving family life that is or becomes their secure base. As a part of this, the child's curiosity about their past including their birth family and other people who were important to them such as foster carers must be acknowledged and accommodated. The experience of feeling connected and having a personal narrative that is meaningful to the child/adolescent/adult is a core part of the recovery from an early life that was traumatic.**"

## What does the legislation say about post adoption contact?

Thirdly lets look at the law and whether that helps us;

- **s.26 Adoption and Children Act 2002-** court may make a contact order on the application of certain entitled applicants or of its own initiative
- **s.27(4) Adoption and Children Act 2002-** court must consider arrangements for contact when making a placement order
- **s46(6) Adoption and Children Act 2002-** before making an adoption order, the court must consider whether there should be any arrangements for allowing any person contact with the child

## Continued

- **s51A Adoption and Children Act 2002 (inserted 2014)**
- 51A Post-adoption contact
- (1) This section applies where—
  - (a) an adoption agency has placed or was authorised to place a child for adoption, and
  - (b) the court is making or has made an adoption order in respect of the child.
- (2) **When making the adoption order or at any time afterwards, the court may make an order under this section—**
  - (a) requiring the person in whose favour the adoption order is or has been made to allow the child to visit or stay with the person named in the order under this section, or for the person named in that order and the child otherwise to have contact with each other, or
  - (b) prohibiting the person named in the order under this section from having contact with the child.
- The person who has applied for the adoption order, or in whose favour the order is made and the child may all apply as of right for a contact order. Anyone else may apply, with leave- s51A(4)
- S51(5)- In considering whether to grant leave, the court must consider;
  - (a) any risk that there might be of the proposed application disrupting the child's life to such an extent that he or she would be harmed by it (within the meaning of 1989 Act)
  - (b) Connection with the child
  - (c) Representations made by child or person who has applied for adoption order
- The **Welfare checklist set out at ACA 2002 s1 applies to applications for post-adoption contact**

## **Cultural change**

- **Contact**

- As we have seen there has been a culture against making contact orders in public law proceedings, even though the ACA 2002 requires that contact with birth families must be considered and proposed arrangements set out in the placement plan.
- It remains rare to have contact orders- either because opposed by adopters, and the case law is against imposing contact orders, or because there is a measure of agreement, in which case no order is necessary.
- S51A allows for contact to be applied for (with leave) after the Adoption order has been made.

## Does recent case law help us to advance post adoption contact ?

### SECTION 51A case

#### **B (A CHILD: POST-ADOPTION CONTACT) [2019] EWCA CIV 29, THE PRESIDENT, PARAGRAPH 57**

- First time CA considered when an order should be made following introduction of s51A in 2014.
- Foster to adopt placement. Adopters knew the birth parents, who have learning disabilities and were therefore going to find letterbox contact particularly difficult.
- The Adopters suggested that face to face meetings between the adults would allow for information to be shared and provide an opportunity for a relationship to develop between the adopters and the birth parents so that future meetings might include the child once a trusting relationship had been established.
- The birth parents sought an order for direct contact twice a year.
- The final care and placement orders had been made in 2017 and the final care plans did not envisage direct contact, but the Recorder giving judgment invited further discussion post-judgment as to whether there was some possibility of direct contact.
- An application for a post-adoption contact order was refused when the Adoption order was made in September 2018.
- The judgment contains a full summary of pre ACA 2002 authorities.
- It confirms that the introduction of s51A has not indicated that there should be any variation in the approach to be taken to the imposition of an order for contact upon adopters who are unwilling to accept it. The law as set out in Re R [2005] continues to apply. The President goes on to state;
- **57. What I have said thus far is sufficient to determine this appeal, which must, as a consequence, be dismissed. It would, however, be wrong, or at least unhelpful, to leave matters there without offering some further guidance as we have been requested to do.**

## Continued

- 58. ACA 2002, s 51A has been brought into force at a time when there is research and debate amongst social work and adoption professionals which may be moving towards **the concept of greater ‘openness’** in terms of post-adoption contact arrangements, both between an adopted child and **natural parents and, more particularly, between siblings**. For the reasons that I have given, the juxtaposition in timing between the new provisions and the wider debate does not indicate that the two are linked. The impact of new research and the debate is likely to be reflected in evidence adduced in court **in particular cases**. It may also surface in terms of **advice and counselling to prospective adopters and birth families when considering** what arrangements for contact may be the best in any particular case. But any development or change from previous practice and expectations as to post-adoption **initiatives will be a matter that may be reflected in welfare decisions that are made by adopters, or by a court, contact that may arise from these current on a case by case basis**. These are matters of **‘welfare’ and not of ‘law’**. The law remains, as I have stated it, namely that it will only be in an extremely unusual case that a court will make an order stipulating contact arrangement to which the adopters do not agree.
- 59. Although, for my part, I would not challenge the soundness of each of the suggested requirements that Mr Goodwin has helpfully set out in his skeleton argument, and which are listed at paragraph 50 above, these are very largely matters of social work practice, rather than law; I do not consider that it is appropriate for this court to raise any of the listed matters to the status of being something which the Court of Appeal has stated should now be required in every case. That said, **it must be a given that any social worker, children’s guardian or expert who is required to advise the court on the issue of contact, will ensure that they are fully aware of any current research and its potential impact upon the welfare issues in each particular case**. Equally, it is already a requirement that courts should give adequate and clear reasons for any orders that are made following contested proceedings.

## Continued

- 61. Post-adoption contact is an important issue which should be given full consideration in every case [ACA 2002, s 46(6)]. Whilst there may not have been a change in the law insofar as the imposition of a contact regime against the wishes of prospective adopters is concerned, there is now a joined-up regime contained within the ACA 2002 for the consideration of contact both at the placement for adoption stage and later at the hearing of an adoption application. Further, and in contrast to the situation prior to 2014 where the issue of contact on adoption was determined under s 8 by applying the CA 1989, s 1 welfare provisions, issues under both s 26 and s 51A of the ACA 2002 will be determined by applying the bespoke adoption welfare provisions in **ACA 2002, s 1, where the focus is not just upon the welfare of the subject of the application during childhood but throughout their life.**
- 62. A placement for adoption hearing has the potential for having an important influence upon the development of any subsequent long-term contact arrangements. **As required by ACA 2002, s 27(4), the court must consider the issue of contact and any plans for contact before making a placement for adoption order. The court's order may well, therefore, set the tone for future contact, but the court must be plain that, as the law stands, whilst there may be justification in considering some form of direct contact, the ultimate decision as to what contact is to take place is for the adopters and that the court will be 'extremely unusual' for the court to impose a contrary arrangement against the wishes of adopters.** Although Mr Recorder Norton was plainly most careful in his choice of words when speaking of contact at the time of the placement order in the present case, and I would not criticise him for anything that he said on that occasion, it is of note that his words were interpreted by the adopters as, in some way, flagging up that direct contact would be ordered at the final adoption hearing and that, as a result, the final adoption process has been delayed for a year and the adopters have felt less than fully settled in taking up the care of B as a result. At the placement order stage courts should therefore be careful to stress that, if there is any future issue as to contact, the law, as stated in *Re R*, will apply and, save for there being extremely unusual circumstances, no order will be made to compel adopters to accept contact arrangements with which they do not agree.

## LC [2020] EWCA CIV 787

- **LC [2020] EWCA CIV 787, LORD JUSTICE BAKER, PARAGRAPH 46**
- “It follows that before severing the relationship between the child and the birth family, a judge must look very carefully, amongst other things, at the quality of those relationships, the likelihood of those relationships continuing, and the value to the children of their doing so.”
- **Notes:**
- **This case helps to underscore that there is a responsibility on LA’s under section 1 of the ACA 2002 and to ensure that there is proper scrutiny of its plans for a child particularly when seeking placement orders. A similar responsibility falls on those advising LA’s in care proceedings.**
- **We sometimes hear LA announcing in care proceedings, that its policy is to seek a placement order for a child under 5, if they can’t go home or be placed with a connected person.**
- **Arguably, such policies if they exist, are likely to be unlawful and fettering the discretion afforded by section 1 of the ACA 002 and are an abrogation of the duty to consider the enhanced welfare checklist.**

## RE T AND R [2021] EWCA CIV 71

Helps with the importance of sibling contact

- **RE T AND R [2021] EWCA CIV 71, LORD JUSTICE BAKER, PARAGRAPH 38**
- IN THE LIGHT OF THOSE OBSERVATIONS, I CONSIDER THAT THE JUDGE'S CONCLUSION AS TO THE DIFFICULTY IN GUARANTEEING THAT POST-ADOPTION CONTACT WOULD TAKE PLACE WAS ONE HE WAS ENTITLED TO REACH IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THIS CASE. THERE WAS PLAINLY A RISK THAT SIBLING CONTACT WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE AFTER ADOPTION. GIVEN THE FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO SUCH CONTACT BY DR. HUNNISETT AND THE OTHER PROFESSIONAL WITNESSES, THE JUDGE WAS ENTITLED TO CONCLUDE IN THE INTERESTS OF T AND R THAT THE RISK WAS ONE WHICH SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN'.
- **Notes:**
- **This is case is a helpful recent decision of the court supporting the first instance judge in rejecting a plan of adoption for the 2 youngest children of a sibling group of 6 children. The children had a real sense of belonging to their family and their cultural identity was important to them.**
- **It underscores the importance of post adoption sibling contact as well.**
- **The judge attached importance to the children's cultural identity and heritage [ this was a traveller family] and continued contact between T and R and their parents. The CA upheld this decision and confirmed that the judge's reasoning in rejecting the professional recommendation for adoption and the guardian's support was soundly based.**

## **ADOPTION UK –SURVEY – MAY 2023 - THE ADOPTION BAROMETER**

### **What is the direction of travel on post adoption contact ?**

- **It recommend you read this, it provides useful on the ground information about what is happening in the field of adoption annually.**
- **In 2021, the proportion of adoptive families with direct contact had risen to 31% compared to 23% in 2018. However, only half felt confident their agency could provide effective support with contact.**
- **There have been improvements since 2018 in the policies and practice around core support and most adopters value the core support their agency offers. However, they are less satisfied with the quality and range of enhanced adoption support, including support for contact. RECOMMENDATION: Training and peer support to be made available for all adopters when their children reach 13, with a specific focus on parenting adopted teens, to include online safety, navigating contact, managing challenging behaviour and helping school to support your child.**

# STATISTICS

- 97% of new adopters were willing to meet their child/children's birth family members
- 98% had at least one agreement for indirect contact with a birth relative
- 42% had at least one agreement for direct contact with a birth relative
- 88% agreed that the frequency of contact and the number of birth relatives involved in contact arrangements was 'about right'
- direct contact in the future: only 23% said that they did not currently have any direct contact and would be unlikely to consider it.
- **This year, among respondents whose children had siblings living outside the adoptive home but did not have direct contact with them, 71% said they would consider establishing direct contact.**
- **The overwhelming majority of new adoptive parents indicated that they had been willing to meet members of their child/children's birth family either prior to or after their child was placed with them. Only 32% met their child's birth mother, 15% met the birth father and 16% met members of the wider birth family including siblings.**

## **PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC LAW WORKING GROUP, ADOPTION SUB-GROUP SEPTEMBER 2023**

- **Because this is such an important report, I have returned to it before I draw things to a close to urge you to consider the key recommendations and use them to remind your tribunal of the change in approach that is occurring;**
- **Key recommendations:**
- They identify that there **needs to be a sea change in the approach to the question of face-to-face contact between the adopted child and the birth family or other significant individuals.** Greater consideration needs to be given, throughout the child's minority, as to whether they should have face to face contact with those who were significant to them before they were adopted. It is recognised that this will not be safe for all adopted children, but the current system whereby face-to-face contact is the exception rather than the rule is outdated
- There should be consistent **training for prospective adopters** throughout England and Wales.
- There should be on-going **training for social work practitioners and lawyers as to the benefits of open adoption**
- Birth parents **should be signposted to independent support which can provide support workers to enable birth parents to understand how they can continue to be involved in their child's life through different types of contact as soon as adoption is identified as a possible outcome.**

## Continued

- Care proceedings: The Adoption Agencies (Wales) Regulations 2005: Part 3: duties of adoption agency where the agency is considering adoption for a child. The regulations include a requirement to provide counselling and information for, and ascertain the wishes and feelings of, the parent or guardian of the child and others. The regulations include a requirement to provide counselling and information for, and ascertain the wishes and feelings of, the parent or guardian of the child and others
- Consideration should be given to a **best practice guidance which deals specifically with the approach of practitioners to post adoption contact and encompasses the recommendations set out below**

# Additional recommendations

- Adoptive parents should, as a matter of course, **write a settling-in letter to the birth family**
- Consideration should be **given in every case to a meeting between the adopters and members of the birth family.**
- **Later life letters from the birth family** (in addition to the one prepared by the social worker) to the adopted child should be considered and timetabled (subject to the view of the child at the stage when the letter

# Additional recommendations

- **Life story books should be available by the time the adoption order is made and should include reference to all those people who have been identified as important to the child**
- **EXAMPLES OF POST ADOPTION AGREEMENTS AND FUTURE CONTACT PLANS SHOULD BE DRAWN UP AND CIRCULATED NATIONALLY AT THIS STAGE. THEY SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO EACH ADOPTION AGENCY/LOCAL AUTHORITY AS A FLEXIBLE PRO FORMA WHICH CAN BE TAILORED TO THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF THE CASE.**
- **There should be a continued line of communication between the adoption social worker and the birth parents so that the adoption social worker can reassess the ability of a relative/other to have contact post proceedings**

## **Tipping the balance in favour of post adoption contact ?**

- **Use the following to argue your case and tip the balance;**
- **The research – and importance for the child’s long term development**
- **The President’s speech and guidance in re B 2019**
- **The recommendations of the PLWG adoption sub- committee.**
- **Ensure there is proper application of ACA002 section 1 checklist**
- **Provided it is safe and in the best interest of the child, challenge the LA on out-moded thinking on adoption issues with a standardised letter box contact plan.**
- **There needs to be individualised approach which is tailor made to post adoption contact**