

**Life Work**

**Transferring**

Life Work and Future Proofing

**Transferring the Life Book to the Adoptive Family**

Sandwell Children’s Trust’s policy is that the life book one should be available when the child is placed for adoption. The ideal time to transfer the book to the prospective adopters is during the period of introductions. The responsible social worker will need to liaise with Adoption@heart or the relevant adoption agency.

The Team Manager must ensure cases are not closed until after the Later Life Letter and Life Books are completed and provided.

When the life book has been completed in draft, the child’s social worker should share this with the prospective adopters’ worker. A joint visit should then be arranged to go through the book with the prospective adopters. This is important to ensure that they are aware of the information it contains and the style of presentation. They should be invited to comment on this so that when the final book is produced they are fully committed to using it with their adopted child and allowing the child free access to it.

Once this is available, the child’s worker should deliver the book to the adoptive family and go through it with the child and prospective adopters together, where the child is of an appropriate age to do so. This ensures that the child knows that the book is available, where it will be kept and how it can be accessed. It also means that the child is aware that the prospective adopters know about the child’s past and there are no secrets.

Within 10 days (or as soon as possible) of the Adoption Celebration Hearing, the case record of the child should be closed.

## Sources of Future information

Preparation for adoption is a time-specific aspect of direct work with children, but life work is an ongoing process which precedes this phase and also continues after placement for adoption. The life book has the effect of freezing time, and adoptive parents will find it necessary to re-interpret the child’s past as the child grows older, more questioning and more able to understand the circumstances of their adoption. The tools available to adopters to assist in this process are:

* Child’s Permanence Report - prepared at the stage of identifying adoption as the preferred option for permanence. Given to the prospective adopters when considering the placement;
* Later Life Letter - prepared at the stage of placement. Given to the prospective adopters at the point of the adoption order.

When completing the above reports consideration should be made as to the impact the information may have in the future as one of the functions of such reports is to act as “a source of important information for the adopted adult about their life hi and heritage”.

Child’s Permanency Reports and [Later Life Letters](https://www.proceduresonline.com/sandwell/cs/contents.html) need to be child-centred.