

A Family for Life: Rethinking Our Approach to Older Children in Care

Friday, 14th May 2021

Participants



Kriss Akabusi, MBE

Kriss Akabusi MBE is a three-time Olympic medallist, World, European and Commonwealth Champion, British record holder and media personality.

Kriss will always be remembered for helping Britain clinch the Gold and beating the Americans in the World Championships 4 x 400 metre relay in Tokyo in 1991 and in 1992 was awarded an MBE by Her Majesty The Queen in recognition of his services to the country through athletics.

Since his stellar athletics career, Kriss has gone on to have a very successful television career and is a qualified life coach, having earned his Masters degree in Existential Coaching.



Jo and Jeremy Bray

Jeremy and Joanna Bray are church and community centre leaders based in Henley-on-Thames. Over the years they have had other jobs alongside their church/community roles including medical writing, office management and the police force. They were foster carers with Oxfordshire and Warwickshire Social Services Departments (short-term, long-term and respite care) for nearly 30 years. In 2017 they adopted their 15-year old foster daughter who had arrived in their home aged 8 as a long-term placement. She is now in her first year at Reading University. They are currently having a (temporary?) break from being foster carers!



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Tania Bright

Tania Bright is the CEO of the national fostering and adoption charity, Home for Good, the vision is to find a home for every child who needs one. Previously Tarn (as affectionately known) was interim CEO at CapitalMass compiling the next ten-year strategy for Social Action across the Diocese of London. Tarn is a seasoned public speaker, author and executive coach and has 20 years of ministerial experience as well as a background working in FTSE100 companies. Tarn shares her wealth of business knowledge and leadership acumen serving on a variety of Boards:- Essential Christian, Restored and Kyria as well as being on the National Leadership Team of Edge Ministries. Tarn is also an adoptive Mum to two incredible boys. They live by the river in central London and enjoy mudlarking and supporting their inner city farm.



Geraldine Chacón V

With a background in Law and Human Rights, Geraldine has worked as a researcher across sectors, including central banking and international organisations such as the World Organization Against Torture. Having worked with educational programmes in Latin America, she brings an interdisciplinary background in social impact and strategic thinking.



Lucy Colman

Lucy is currently studying a Masters in Systematic Theology at St Mellitus College. Alongside her role at Theos she works as a policy consultant with a specialism in political advocacy and issues of modern slavery. From 2010 – 2016 she worked at the Centre for Social Justice, authoring the policy report 'It Happens Here: Equipping the UK to fight modern slavery', and subsequently acting as Specialist Adviser to the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee for the Modern Slavery Act, which was passed in 2015.



Paul Funnell

Enterprise Cube, Adoptive Parent



La Tika Jeffery

La Tika Jeffery, a Foster Care Alumni, advocate and most recently 2020's Adoption Excellence Award Honoree. La Tika Jeffery has worked to improve the foster care experience for current, future and former youth. She is continuously cultivating and increasing youths' opportunities to achieve permanency all while improving self-appreciation.

For the past seven years, La Tika has openly shared her foster care, adoption and kinship experiences, in order to be the change, she seeks within the child welfare system. She does this with great courage and vulnerability which allows her to impact her audiences.

Outside of advocacy and mentoring current youth, La Tika Jeffery also offers consulting and public speaking. She has participated in a variety of media interviews, conferences (national, local and international), webinars, Facebook Lives, panels, webinars, campaigns and so much more in support of the child welfare system.



Sarah Johal

Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire and Chair of RAA Leads



Luke Johns

Adoption Policy Advisor, Department for Education



Maggie Jones

Maggie joined CVAA in November 2018. Formally Chief Executive of Foundation a charity supporting vulnerable young people and adult across the North of England and Children England, the umbrella body for children's charities, Maggie has over 25 years experience within the statutory and voluntary sectors including posts with Save the Children, leading work on children's rights and participation in England; establishing the Leeds Health For All (Healthy City) Partnership to tackle poverty, environmental and health inequalities, and working for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation leading research and practice development work on governance, children and young people's

services and the future of the voluntary sector. Maggie is Vice Chair of the England Committee for the National Lottery Community fund and Chair of the Youth Association; Growing Yorkshire's Future.

Maggie has represented the voluntary sector in a number of central and local government forums including the Social Work Reform Board, the DfE National Voluntary Sector Forum and she currently represents the voluntary sector on the Local Government Delivery Council.

Maggie leads CVAA, the membership organisation for all non-statutory adoption agencies in the UK, dedicated to building a child centred, inclusive adoption system, which provides forever, loving homes for all the children who need them and where all those affected by adoption receive the support they need to build positive futures. Voluntary adoption agencies provide a quarter of placements across the UK and have a long history of successfully finding families for children who wait the longest.



Dr Krish Kandiah

Dr Kandiah is a social entrepreneur with a vision to help solve some of society's seemingly intractable problems through building partnerships across civil society, faith communities, government and philanthropy.

He is the chair of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board where he brings strategic leadership to the finding of permanent loving families for children in the care system working across the sector and advising the English government. www.krishk.com



Elijah Kirby

Elijah Kirby is married to Jo and has 4 children. He is the Founder and CEO of NorthPoint Care. His personal experience as someone who grew up in foster care has shaped the vision and values of the organisation. Elijah has spent the last 15 years pioneering social enterprise initiatives in communities across England, with a particular focus on children, young people and families. Within his role of leading organisations, Elijah has successfully led across multi-agency partnerships between local government, education and the charity sector. His contribution to "working with young people" saw him nominated and selected to run with the Olympic Torch in 2012.



Dr Derek Kirton

Derek Kirton is an Emeritus Reader in Social Policy and Social Work at the University of Kent. He is a former child and family social worker and has served as an adoption panel member. He has taught, researched and written extensively on child welfare issues, with particular interests in adoption, foster care, access to records for care experienced adults and issues of diversity and identity. Derek has held editorial roles with relevant journals, serves as a member of the Economic and Social Research Council's Grant Assessment Panel and is current chair of CoramBaaf's Research Advisory Group.



Josh MacAlister

Josh is the Chair for the Independent Review of Children's Social Care which will take a bold and broad look across the whole of the children's social care system in England. Prior to this Josh founded the social work charity Frontline.



Rachael Maskell MP

Chair of the APPG for Adoption and Permanence



Gary McKeone

Gary McKeone was Literature Director at Arts Council England from 1995-2006. Before that he worked with Field Day Theatre Company in Ireland and at the Royal Festival Hall on London's South Bank. Originally from Derry, N.Ireland, he was educated at St Columb's College and Trinity College Dublin



Siobhan McShane

Siobhan was an intern at St George's House from 2018-19. She has now returned to university at King's College London to study a Master's in The Classical World and its Reception. At King's she has taken the opportunity to join the student network of King's Policy Institute, which gives her access to lectures on a wide range of social and political issues. Alongside her studies, she volunteers for the South London Refugee Association and enjoys dancing and reading for pleasure.



Natalie Mills

Natalie has been advocating on behalf of vulnerable children in and around the care system for over three years and has co-authored a number of reports during that time which have focused on the Adoption Support Fund, the prolific use of unregulated settings and supported lodgings. She is passionate about enabling all members of our society to play their part in championing and supporting vulnerable young people and is committed to finding solutions to some of the biggest challenges faced by children in care



Rebecca Patterson

Rebecca Patterson is the Research and Policy Officer at Home for Good, working within political advocacy. Her particular areas of interest include teenagers in care, inequalities in child welfare, child-centred social care practices and systems, and global care reform.



Seth Pinnock

Head of African and Caribbean Engagement, Tearfund



Rachel Poulton

Rachel trained initially as a paediatric nurse and spent several years in refugee relief work in Asia, Africa and Europe. She also has a Masters in Social Work and whilst working for her Local Authority established an advocacy service for children and young people in care. Rachel and her family care for newly arrived UASCs. Fifteen young refugees have stayed in their home in recent years. Rachel enjoys helping them through the initial stages of adjusting to life in the UK as well as giving longer term support to many. Currently three teenage refugees are living with her family.



Dr Julie Selwyn, CBE

Julie Selwyn is Professor of Education and Adoption at the Rees Centre, Department of Education, University of Oxford. She is a qualified social worker who worked in residential, child protection, fostering and adoption teams before becoming an academic. She is the academic adviser to the National Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board, acts as an expert witness in the family courts, and has advised governments in the US, Canada, Australia, and the Netherlands on permanence policy and research. She was awarded a CBE for services to adopted children and children in care in 2015. Julie has authored seven books, 43 peer reviewed journal articles, 10 chapters and completed 34 research studies. Her recent work has focused on understanding the subjective wellbeing of children in care and care leavers. Working collaboratively with Coram Voice (a children's rights charity) online surveys have been completed by more than 15,000 care experienced young people (age 4 to 25 years) giving a unique insight into their lives and what really matters.



Dr John Simmonds, OBE

John Simmonds is Director of Policy, Research and Development at CoramBAAF, formerly the British Association for Adoption and Fostering. Before starting at BAAF in 2000, John was head of the social work programmes at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He is a qualified social worker and has substantial experience in child protection and family placement. He is currently responsible for CoramBAAF's contribution to the development of policy and practice in social work, health, the law and research.

John sits on the Department for Education's Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board

John is the adoptive father of two children, now adults. He was awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours list 2015 and awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award at the National Adoption Week awards.



Rita Soronen

For more than 30 years, Rita Soronen has worked on behalf of abused, neglected and vulnerable children, providing leadership for local, state and national efforts working to improve the juvenile justice and child welfare systems, while striving to assure safe and permanent homes for North America's children.

Leading the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, a national nonprofit public charity, since 2001 and the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption-Canada since 2004, Ms. Soronen works to find adoptive families for the more than 150,000 waiting children in North America's foster care systems. Under her leadership, the Foundation has significantly increased its grant-making while developing strategic, evidence-based initiatives that act on the urgency of the issue. In 2020, the Foundation dedicated more than \$32.6 million to grants and award-winning programs, such as Wendy's Wonderful Kids®, Adoption-Friendly Workplace™ and the 100 Best Adoption-Friendly Workplaces list and National Adoption Day



Patrick Spencer

Senior policy adviser to the Secretary of State for Education. Previously Patrick was a Head of Work and Welfare Policy at the Centre for Social Justice.



Edward Timpson MP

Edward Timpson was born in 1973 in Cheshire to John and Alex Timpson and has maintained a keen interest in children's policy for the entirety of his political career. His parents fostered 87 children over a period 30 years. After leaving university, Edward practised as a family law barrister in local courts specialising in the cases of vulnerable children, until he was first elected as MP for Crewe and Nantwich in 2008. During his first spell in Parliament, Edward served as a member of the Joint Committee on Human Rights and latterly as Minister for Children and Families. Between 2017 and 2019, he was the Chair of Cafcass and the National Child Safeguarding Panel prior to his return to Parliament as the member for Eddisbury at the 2019 election.



Kevin Woods

Kevin Woods, is an Assistant Director for Adoption at the Department for Education. A career civil servant he currently leads on adoption policy.