

## Mark asks Minister about Adoption Action plan

In the first Minister's questions following the recess, Mark stood in the House of Commons to ask the Secretary of State for Education about the progress of the Adoption Action Plan.

The Action Plan, which was published in March, aims to cut delays in the adoption process, making it easier for couples and individuals to adopt one of the 4,000 children in care.

Tim Loughton, Children's Minister, responded by stating that the Action Plan aims to 'prevent local authorities from spending too much time seeking a perfect adoptive match... and make it easier for children to be fostered by their likely eventual adopters.'

Mark commended the government for their action, but went on to convey the worry expressed by local adoption agencies and adopters regarding the lack of post-adoption support available.

Currently, it is not statutory for adopters to receive any kind of post-adoption support. This is despite the fact that 68% of children, who have been looked after for over 12 months, are considered to have a learning disability.

Local Milton Keynes adoption charity St Francis' Children's Society, offer a promise of life-long adoption support. If a family encounters difficulties, they are able to access the advice and services they need, even years after the adoption has taken place.

Loughton recognised that this type of post-adoption support is important, both in terms of the financial savings made through an effective support package, and more importantly, the future well-being of that child.

Mark said. 'I am calling for the government to recognise that although the changes to adoption will help more children find loving families, it is just as important that their needs aren't forgotten about once they are in placement. A commitment to statutory support will lead to improved life chances for thousands of adopted children.'