The journey to adopt a child – A pilot mixed methods study of aspiring parents’ perceptions of the adoption process

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Abstract

This research is part of a larger mixed methods study that aims to analyse adoptive parents’ perceptions of the adoption process. The larger study seeks to follow a sample of adoptive families on their journey to adopt, from the point of their application to adopt being accepted by an adoption agency and up to a year of a child being placed with them. The findings of this study are based on a pilot study carried out in 2012. The study considered prospective adoptive families’ (whose application to adopt had been formally accepted) motivation to adopt, their willingness to consider children with some typical needs of ‘Looked After Children’ and their perceptions of the assessment and preparation process in the early stages of their application. The data for this study was gathered from one statutory adoption agency and consisted of ten prospective adoptive families. Each prospective adoptive couple or single adopter completed a semi structured questionnaire. The main themes emerging from the survey indicated preferred sources of information that prospective adopters use before making their application, some of their anxieties before they come into contact with adoption agencies and the characteristics of the type of child they wish to adopt.