

## **Ground Rules for adoption debate**

**27<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

We are delighted that so many people from so many different backgrounds and disciplines will be attending this debate. Our intention is to hold an open and public debate on this issue which is of great importance and we welcome contributions to the debate from across the whole spectrum of opinions.

A large amount of work has gone into the preparation of this event. For it to be successful it is essential that there are some ground rules and that it takes place without disruption. The issues that will be debated are complex and emotionally charged. Please can we ask for the co-operation of everyone attending to ensure that the event is a success and occurs without disruption; if it were to be disrupted it is unlikely that we would be able to hold similar events in the future.

**Ground rules** - Therefore these are the ground rules that we have put together to ensure that the debate is a constructive experience for all involved. Please take a look at them before you come. We will make the ground rules available on the day.

1. Respect the law regarding the confidentiality of care proceedings (the organizers will interpret this law with caution and their interpretation will be final for the purpose of the conference rules). We cannot, and will not, discuss specific cases so please don't ask us to do so.
2. Allow speakers to speak without interruption;
3. Raise any questions / make any points when the chair has opened the debate to the floor;
4. Allow the chair / facilitator to decide who should speak and when, and to impose reasonable limits on the length and topic of individual contributions. No question or contribution from the floor should exceed one minute in any event.
5. Participate in any discussions with courtesy and respect for one another's views; robust criticism is fine but abusive or personal remarks are, of course, not.
6. Recordings or photographs should not be made of the conference. We hope to audio record the panel discussion (subject to consent of the panel members) and to publish a transcript of it in due course (we may need to edit this for legal reasons, in particular in order to ensure that no breach of confidentiality occurs).
7. Participants may identify themselves by full or first name if they wish, but if they prefer may simply identify their role in the child protection system;

8. In the event that any other person breaches confidentiality or attempts to give inappropriate details of their own case in a way which offends these rules please do not tweet or publish those details.

**Exclusion** - We don't plan to exclude anyone from the debate based on their views; or their actions outside this event, even if we may disagree with some of those views or actions.

However, we will exclude anyone who doesn't follow the ground rules of the conference or intend to. This is to protect other participants, enable a wide range of voices without any dominating, and to ensure the conference isn't disrupted or its aims distorted.

**Confidentiality** - We want people to be able to write about this conference publicly and we want to publish talks and papers and records of discussion wherever possible. To ensure we can do this it is important that the privacy of individuals is maintained and in particular that the anonymity of children is maintained. This means we can't allow you to identify yourself or someone else as a parent of a child involved in a family court case; or to name the child involved in a court case; or to discuss the details of what has gone on in court in individual cases (unless the information is contained in a published judgment or a judge has specifically given permission). We ask that anyone wishing to discuss a case, in which they have been involved, should do so with regard to both the feelings of all involved and bearing in mind the law about protecting children involved in court cases. If any participant is unsure what they can discuss, they may ask the chair who will attempt to assist. The chair cannot give legal advice and will not express opinions of his own.

Although the debate aims to share views and experiences of the current system, it is not and cannot be an inquiry into or an appeal from individual cases.