

A presentation from David Holmes, Chief Executive, BAAF

# Neil Stewart Associates Conference The Future of Adoption

10<sup>th</sup> July 2012

## Adoption - Challenges and Opportunities

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# Current context for adoption reform

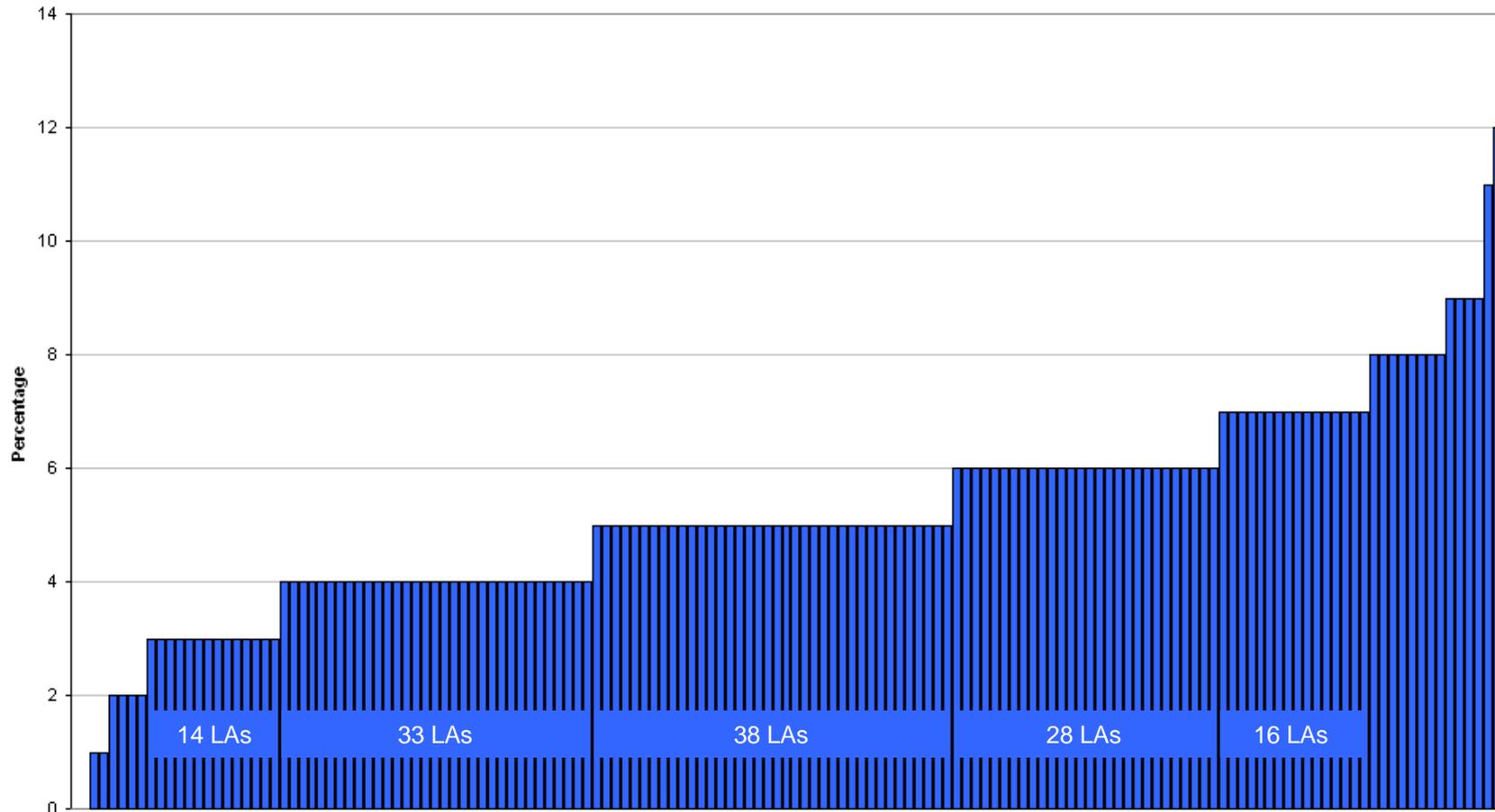
- Political interest
- Media interest
- Significant pressures on care system and family courts
- Significant financial challenges in children's services
- Family Justice Review
- Munro Review of Child Protection
- Social Work Reform Programme
- Other recent reforms:
  - Care Planning, new NMS, guidance etc
- Changes to Ofsted framework for inspection
- Children and Families Bill

# Opportunities

- A welcome focus on adoption
- Reducing delay
- Improving consistency
- Encouraging innovation – Social Impact Bond, early permanence, family finding
- Reducing variation in use of adoption

Nationally adopted children are 5% of looked after children but locally this varies from 1% to 12%.

Adopted children as a percentage of all looked after children by Local Authority - 2008 to 2011



Source: Westminster Government

Figures for 2 local authorities are suppressed due to small numbers and one is omitted as it had no looked after children in 2008-11.

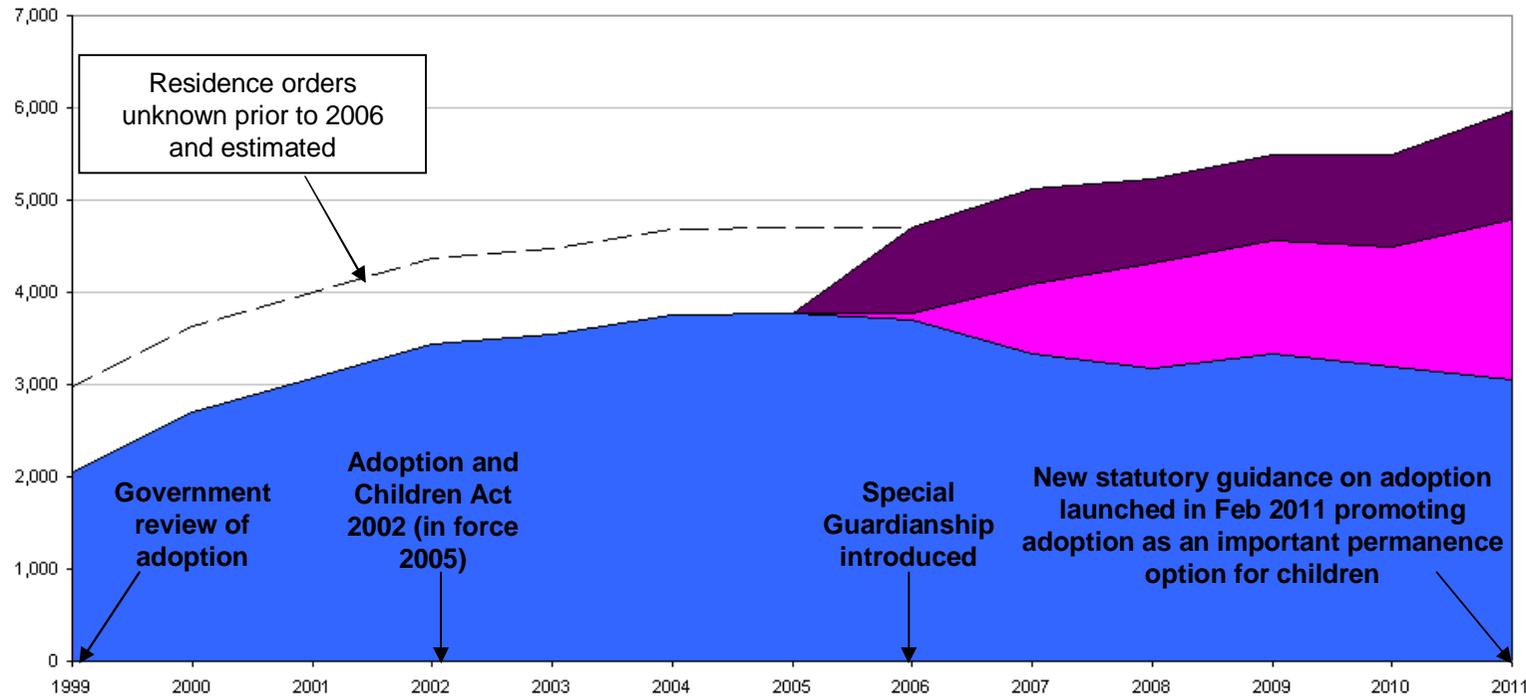


# Challenges

- The pace of announcements vs the pace of change
- Some 150 adoption systems, not one
- Demand and supply in adoption
- Addressing the biggest issues -
  - Recruitment, workforce, adoption support, interface with the courts
- Financial consequences of reform
- Keeping a perspective on permanence

Since 1999 the number of children adopted from care has increased. But adoption numbers have fallen in recent years. Since the introduction of special guardianship and residence orders, the combined numbers leaving care for adoption, special guardianship and residence orders are currently at their highest ever level.

Children who ceased to be looked after through adoption<sup>1</sup>, special guardianship<sup>2</sup> and residence orders<sup>3</sup> - 1999 to 2011



1. Only the last occasion in which a child ceased to be looked after is counted.  
 2. Special guardianship orders were introduced for the first time in 2005-06.  
 3. Residence orders were introduced in 1989 but collected for the first time in 2005-06.

■ Adopted ■ Special Guardianship ■ Residence orders □

Source:  
Westminster  
Government

The number of children placed for adoption fell from 2,500 to 2,450 between 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2011.

