



adopt
Coast to Coast
Sunderland office



POST ADOPTION SUPPORT



Post Adoption Support

We recognise that adoption is a life-long continuing event for all of those who are affected by it. We provide support for anyone affected by adoption who lives in Sunderland or for anyone whose adoption was dealt with by our adoption agency.

If it is over three years since the Adoption Order was made and you live in a different area, your own local authority would provide this support to you.

We recognise that adoption affects everyone differently and so any plan will be individualised to your child and family.

How to access Post Adoption Support

In order to access support from the team, a referral will need to be made.

You can start a referral by:



0191 561 2221



adoption@togetherforchildren.org.uk

A social worker is on duty:

Monday to Thursday 8.30am – 5.15pm,

Friday 8.30am to 4.45pm

Referrals from professionals will only be accepted with confirmation of permission from the family to contact the adoption team.

What happens after referral?

The social worker on duty will take all relevant information, and a social worker will be allocated to your enquiry.

This social worker will contact you to arrange a visit where they will gather more information, offer advice and discuss next steps.

They will also want to meet your child(ren) to gather their views and what they think needs to happen too.

The adoption team have a statutory duty to carry out an assessment of support needs. However, there is no statutory duty to provide support if it is not deemed necessary.

If support can be provided by other agencies, the family will be signposted to the appropriate agency.

Emergency and out of hours support

The adoption team do not provide emergency support. If there are significant worries or concerns around your child's safety and wellbeing, you must contact the Integrated Contact and Referral Team.

 0191 561 7007

 safeguarding.Children@togetherforchildren.org.uk

Our office hours are:

Monday – Thursday 8:30am – 5:15pm

Friday 8:30am–4:45pm

You can contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0191 520 5560 outside of these hours.



What support is available to adoptive families

There are three tiers of support that adoptive families can access. The social worker will advise which tier is best for your family's needs.

Universal

- Telephone consultation with social worker
- Local authority Early Help and Social Care
- Sunderland Family Hubs offer services and support for local families. For more information you can visit the family hubs' webpage www.mybestlife.org.uk/Sunderland-Family-Hubs
- Support groups – We run bi-monthly online support groups and these focus on a range of topics that impact our families such as school transitions, FASD and life story work. We also have guest speakers who attend that specialise in these areas and can offer further advice and support.
- Voluntary and charitable organisations – There are many organisations we can sign post you to who offer advice, guidance and support to families in different areas.





Specialist

- Post adoption support assessment – Sometimes, a parent(s) will contact us to ask for help. When this happens, we complete a post adoption support assessment. A social worker from the team will come out and meet with you and your child to look at what has been happening. They will complete the assessment which looks at what you are worried about as well as things that are going well. The social worker will then develop a support plan and may make referrals to relevant services. It might be decided at this point that you do not need any more support from our team, and you might be signposted elsewhere (maybe to one of the universal services listed above).
- Birth records counselling is available to adopted adults who are looking for information about their birth family, even if they don't intend to get in touch.
- Referral to a psychotherapeutic counsellor.
- Access to a year's subscription with The National Association of Therapeutic Parenting.



I'm a psychotherapeutic counsellor who supports adults in adoption services. I work confidentially with individuals and couples and create a safe environment for them to explore their needs in a neutral space.



Felicity Cousins

Targeted

- Virtual school – The virtual school offer information, advice, and signposting for adoptive parents on many aspects of your child's education. You can contact the Virtual School by email: virtualschool@togetherforchildren.org.uk
- Seasonal parties and events – fun events for adopted children and their families.
- Krafty Kids – an arts and crafts group run by social workers for adopted children.
- Stay and Play – a group for younger children (within one year of matching) at a local soft play.
- Support with keeping in touch – this is adapted for each family. It may be support with sending letters or keeping in touch with birth family face to face.
- Adoptshine – a space for young people aged 7+ to connect and share ideas that could help to shape the future of adoption services.
- New Family Social membership – New Family Social is the UK charity dedicated to supporting LGBTQ+ families in becoming adopters or foster carers. They provide support and information to LGBTQ+ families who are currently looking after children.
- Access to consultations with a Principal Clinical Psychologist.



I am a Principal Clinical Psychologist, and I have been working with children who have experienced trauma and adversity, and their caregivers since 2010.

Specialist clinical psychology consultations can be offered to adoptive parents regarding how to prepare for a child to join their family and to develop a greater understanding of the child they are adopting/have adopted. Consultations with adoptive parents often involve thinking together about the impact of trauma on their children and the difficulties children can experience because of this.

Guidance is offered around repairing trauma, promoting recovery and implementing therapeutic parenting to help children develop good emotional health and psychological well-being.



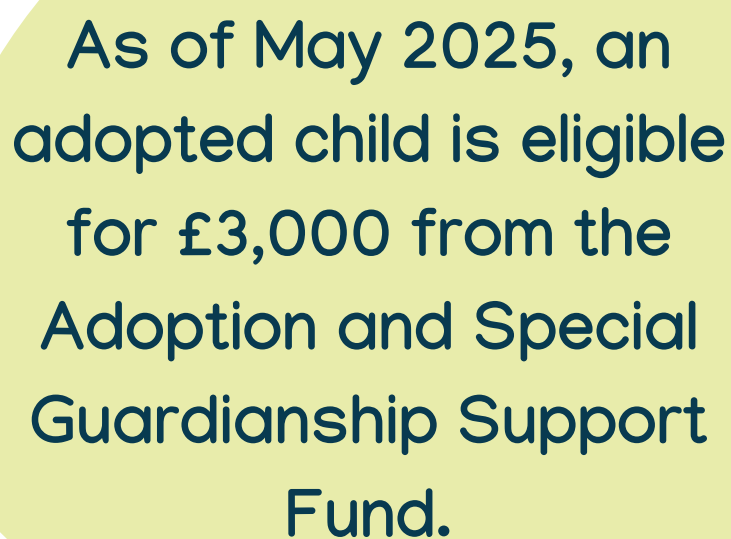
Dr Louise Harrison

Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund

The local authority has access to the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund. This means we can apply for funds to be used to support your child. There is a limit to this amount and your social worker can talk this through with you.

Through this fund your child may have a specialist psychological assessment; this allows parents and professionals to gain a better understanding of their children.

Your child may also access therapy; there are lots of different types of therapy and this will be individual to your child.



As of May 2025, an adopted child is eligible for £3,000 from the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund.



Adoption team specialisms

Within the team we have staff trained in:

- Principles of Theraplay level 1
- DDP level 1
- DDP level 2
- Therapeutic life story work

This means that our team can use their knowledge to support your family.

Keeping in Touch

The adoption team can also offer support with keeping in touch. This can include support to draft updates, review arrangements and meetings with birth parents if appropriate. The team knows that keeping in touch can be tricky and we are there to support wherever possible.

Multi Disciplinary Adoption Support Service (MDASS)

MDASS aims to provide timely and quality, evidence-based support to adopted children and their families, where they are experiencing challenges.

MDASS offers support where a multi-disciplinary need is identified; offering a holistic approach, rather than linear assessment and response, thereby reducing the time it may take for a family to understand their child's needs

Life Story

Life story work can help children understand their journey including their past, present and future life events.

Life story work can help children to ultimately understand why they were adopted and could answer any questions that they may have about their identity.

The team can offer support when it comes to sharing your child's life story with them.



Group Training

Group training – Through links with the adoption support fund we can refer parents for group training sessions on topics such as; attachment, life story work and child on parent violence to provide support for specific issues being experienced.