

Together for Children Adoption Sunderland Adoption Passport: a support guide for adoptive parents

We recognise that children who have been looked after and adopted can have ongoing needs. You and your child may benefit from additional support at some time in the future. These are some of the ways we can help together with the entitlements of adopters in England.

For your child

Your adopted child has priority access to schools, which means that your child should be able to attend whichever school you think best meets their needs - www.gov.uk/schoolsadmissions

Since September 2014, they have been entitled to free early education from the age of 2 years – www.tinyurl.com/first4early

If your child needs extra support, you can ask us to assess their needs for adoption support services, if this has not already been addressed in the adoption support plan.

For you

You are entitled to adoption leave and pay when your child is placed with you www.gov.uk/adoption-pay-leave

The law is changing to make this similar to maternity and paternity leave pay, and will include the right to time off when you are meeting your child during introductions. Also, there is now the option for adoptive parents to share the adoption leave.

Adopters may have priority for council housing: www.gov.uk/council-housing

If you are living in Local Authority provided housing and claiming Housing Benefit or Universal Credit while waiting for a child to move in, you can also apply for funding (Discretionary Housing Payments) so that you are not penalised financially while you have an empty spare room.

You are also entitled to a summary of your child's health from our Medical Adviser before he or she is placed with you (we offer direct meetings with our medical adviser).

You will have a life-story book to help your child understand their early life and the decisions leading to adoption. Your child will receive a later life letter for when they are in their teenage years, which will give them additional life-story information, appropriate to this age range. If the child is aged over three years, you will be invited to attend a Child Appreciation Day, where you will hear the child's journey from the professionals involved in their life. It is an opportunity to hear information directly from significant individuals.

Adoption Support Services

The adoption workers in Together for Children Adoption Sunderland are a dedicated team of experienced workers, who specialise in after adoption support services.

These support services can include:

- financial assistance to cover costs of introductions and court application
- counselling, information and advice
- help with behavioural, attachment and life story issues
- assistance in accessing specialist services such as Children and Young People's Services and therapeutic intervention which meets the individual needs of your child
- financial help with special care needs
- support with contact between an adopted child and his or her birth family (including direct contact with birth siblings)
- help with post-box contact
- meetings and events to enable groups of adopters and adoptive children to get together
- a support group where mutual support from other adopters can develop and where up to date information about adoption issues is shared
- access to a therapeutic parenting programme, facilitated by therapists with both personal and professional experience of adoption and fostering
- training to help adopters to meet the needs of their adoptive child
- advice and guidance to your adopted child when they are adults and may wish to access their records
- help where an is at risk of breaking down

You can ask for a support assessment **at any time**, no matter how long after the adoption. The Local Authority which places the child with you is responsible for assessing your adoption support needs for three years after the adoption. After three years, it becomes the responsibility of the Local Authority where you live (if different).

You can also contact one of the many adoption support organisations, such as Adoption UK www.adoptionuk.org.uk or CoramBAAF www.coramBAAF.org.uk or First4Adoption www.first4adoption.org.uk

Comments and complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you receive or have any comment that you wish to make, you can contact the social worker involved or their team manager. If you wish to make a formal complaint you can contact our Complaints and Feedback Section on 0191 561 7997 or by e-mail to complaints.children@togetherforchildren.org.uk