



Haringey Council

Adoption - Frequently Asked Questions

What kinds of children need to be adopted?

Children of all ages and from a wide range of ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds. Brothers and sisters and children with physical disabilities and /or learning difficulties, of both.

Do I have to be a certain age to adopt?

We do not have an upper age limit, but applicants should have the potential to care for a child throughout his or her childhood and offer support for some time beyond.

Do I have to own my own home?

No. It doesn't matter whether you own or rent your home but you will need to have a spare room for your adopted child.

I am not married could I still adopt?

Yes. It is possible for a single person or one partner in unmarried couple-heterosexual, gay or lesbian – to apply to adopt on their own. Our main requirement is that you are able to meet the needs of individual children. Some children will benefit from being adopted by a couple, with or without children of their own. Others may gain more from one-to-one attention of a single person.

The only current legal requirement is that if you want to adopt jointly with another person, you must be married to each other.

Does it matter if I am on a low income?

No, although you will have to show that your income can meet the needs of your adopted child. Once the child has been placed with you for adoption you will be eligible for Child Benefit. Children who are likely to be more expensive to look after, such as brothers and sisters or children with disabilities may be eligible for 'adoption allowance'.

Will the child live with me before I legally adopt him or her?

Yes. You can apply for an adoption order as soon as the child comes to live with you, but your application cannot be guaranteed until the child has lived with you for at least 13 weeks. You can wait longer than this before applying to the court, to give you and child a chance to settle down together. You would need to talk this through with your link social worker, who will help you with your application.

What is an Adoption Order?

An Adoption Order is a legal order granted to you by a court which gives you sole and irreversible responsibilities for your adopted child. Every effort is made to make this a friendly and welcoming process.

Will it be expensive to go to court?



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There is a court fee payable at the time you make your application, which you are expected to pay. In the event of your adoption being contested you will need to get a solicitor and a barrister, but don't be put off by the potential cost of this. You may be able to claim legal aid, or Haringey, as the Local Authority responsible for the child, will pay the legal costs involved in some circumstances.

Can I adopt a child who is from a different culture?

We always try to match adoptive families with the ethnic and cultural background of a child and make sure that they share a child's religion and language. From our experience, a family who reflects a child's background is in the best position to help that child grow up with a positive sense of identity. Only when this is not possible, would we consider families from a different background who were willing and able to promote a child's particular cultural understanding.

What are my chances of adopting a baby?

People thinking about adopting often want to adopt a baby. The number of babies' places for adoption today is quite small so this may not be a possibility. However, numbers do change. We will be able to tell you what the current situation is when you contact us.

What will I need to do once I've applied?

You need to attend a preparation and training group and participate in an assessment. This will give you an opportunity to think through all the implications of going ahead.

What support do I get through the process?

One of our adoption social workers will be allocated to you from the time you decide to make an application to us. This social worker will undertake your assessment and continue to support you through the adoption process.

How long does it take?

The whole assessment process, from receiving your application to presenting the final report to the Adoption Panel, takes six months.

What kind of help can I expect?

We are aware of the challenges facing adoptive parents and the need for support for you and your child/ren as they grow up. Our Post Adoption Service will help you access relevant supports, which might include some form of financial help, contact arrangements, counselling or therapeutic help.

What if my adopted child wants to trace his or her birth mother?

Everyone is curious about who they are. From the age of 18, adopted children have the right to their original birth certificate if they want it. We know from some experience that it is helpful to be open with children from the beginning and to explain their past as honestly and positively as possible. These days most adopters need to be prepared to support a child to understand where they came from and to



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continue to have at least annual letterbox contact with their birth family. Most adopters do see this as positive and believe that it brings them closer to their adopted child in the long run.

Will I receive help with this?

You will receive help with this from the Post Adoption Service and can explore it further in your training and preparation group.

About Checks and References

Haringey Council, of which Haringey Fostering & Adoption is part, has legal responsibilities to ensure that the best possible plans are made for the children in our care. Once you decide that you would like to adopt, you will have to undergo an assessment process. Part of this process involves medical and Criminal Records Bureau checks on you and other members of your household and family. The reason for this is to establish whether there have ever been any criminal convictions for offences of violence or offences against children and to exclude anyone at this stage who may be unsuitable to look after children.

The CRB check is only used for your adoption assessment. Details will not be disclosed to your employer or to authorities dealing with housing or social security benefits.

We will also need to take up references from the following people:

- Two personal references who know you well in different aspects of your life.
- One member of your family
- Your employer, if you currently work or have worked with children.

I am interested what do I do now?

Ring 0208 489 3774 or email fostering.adoption@haringey.gov.uk, giving us your contact details. The Duty social worker will be available to discuss your interest and answer any questions about the adoption process. We will also send you an information pack. If you still wish to proceed and we agree that you meet our criteria, we will arrange for a social worker to visit you at home.

Your assessment as a potential adoptive parent will start once you have completed and returned an Application Form, which you will receive after attending one of our Preparation Groups.

Haringey Adoption Service is committed to placing children and assessing adopters as quickly as possible but we need to be sure that you and the child are properly prepared. The more thorough the preparation the fewer the problems that arise later on. We want to help make the adoption a successful and happy experience for you, your child and your family!