

8 things to know about: ADOPTION



Run by and for LGBT+ parents/carers, their children and those considering parenthood living in Greater Manchester.



THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE ADOPTING



1

You will compete a lot of paperwork.

Be prepared to provide details about your background, past relationships, family, employment and finances. You'll also need to include information about your childhood, parenting style and beliefs. They are looking to see what you have experienced in your life, have you reflected and moved on. Learning from our experiences and reflecting on them allows us to support others in similar situations.

2

You'll need to have a medical by your GP.

As part of your adoption requirements, you'll need a clean bill of health. You can start by taking good care of yourself now and ensuring any health issues are addressed. This does not mean if you have any have medical conditions you can't adopt, the adoption agency want to see it is well managed, so you can concentrate on supporting a child in your care.

3

It's important to work with a good, reputable adoption agency.

An open and comfortable working relationship is key when going through the adoption process. Ensuring you have an agency that will fit your needs, is essential. You can adopt through your local authority or voluntary adoption agency. Most local authorities have come together with neighbouring authorities to form what is known as a regional adoption agency. This enables adoption teams to pool resources and work more efficiently particularly during the matching stage of the adoption process.

Proud 2 b Parents would encourage you to contact several agencies at this stage because it is very important that you feel comfortable with the agency you go forward with. As well as knowing clearly what age group you want to parent from the start. There is a variety of different adoption routes available now, so having an agency that can help you negotiate them will support and guide you.

Adoption routes.

4

Adoption – is the classic route through adoption agencies, where the legal process by which a child or a group of siblings who cannot be brought up within their birth family become full, permanent and legal members of their new family. Adopters become the child's legal parents with the same rights and responsibilities as if the child was born to them.

Foster for adoption - A Fostering for Adoption placement will only be made where there is clear evidence to the Local Authority that there is little likelihood that the birth parents can resolve their problems or that other family members known to the Local Authority can care for the child. You will need to attend additional information sessions about this route, to understand the process and impact if a child is reunited with their birth family.

Concurrent Planning is for babies and young children under two in care who are likely to need adoption, but who still have a chance of being reunited with their birth family. Concurrent carers are approved as both foster parents and adoptive parents and perform the role of foster carers while the courts decide whether or not a child can return to their birth family. During this time the children will need to see their birth parents regularly in supervised contact centres and the concurrent carers will need to support the birth family's efforts to regain the care for their child. If the courts decide that the birth parents have shown they can be reliable and loving parents, the child/ren will be returned to their care. Occasionally another member of the birth family who was previously unknown to the agency will come forward at a late stage and can offer a permanent home for the child. You would then need to work together with the Local Authority, to manage this in the most sensitive way for the child/ren.

5

Stage 2 assessment process.

A social worker will set up a series of visits in your home to be sure you can provide a safe, loving environment for a child. Although this may sound intimidating, it's actually a great opportunity to learn more about the adoption process and what to expect. Your social worker is not there to judge or scrutinise, but rather to educate you and prepare you for your adoption journey. They will also answer any questions or concerns you may have.





The adoption process is unpredictable and the wait can be long.

There is really no way of knowing when you'll adopt or what situations you'll encounter. Depending on the area you live, or the age of child/ren you want will all be a factor. Many LGBT+ parents have adopted before you, and the LGBT+ community brings a variety of vital experiences and understanding that support adopted child/ren. No matter what type of adoption you're pursuing, expect the unexpected. Bring plenty of patience and try to be flexible whenever possible.



Some days you will feel like giving up.

The adoption process is an up-and-down emotional roller coaster. Failed matches, a long wait, and unexpected obstacles can leave you feeling sad and discouraged. You may wonder if you'll ever become a parent and, on your worst days, you may even consider giving up on adopting. This is all part of the journey. Hang in there and know that most people who pursue adoption are eventually successful.

It's good to be mindful now that some prospective adopters can suffer symptoms of depression in the early placement period and at significant other times after an adoption. Post-adoption depression symptoms can typically appear about a month after placement, and research indicates that it shares characteristics with post-natal depression and minor to moderate depression, whilst also having some unique characteristics. Please see our resource – Post Adoption Depression for more information.



The day you bring your child home will be a day you never forget.

Holding your child in your arms for the first time and bringing them home will fill you with a mixture of overwhelming love and fear. Your life will never be the same. But that's a good thing. All the struggles previously have led you to your precious child. You are a parent —and now the journey really begins.

Before bringing your child home, it is good to be mindful of the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) which has been established because many families may need some kind of therapeutic support following adoption and too many have struggled to get the help they need in the past. The ASF will enable them to access the services they need more easily in future. You can access this through either your child's placement agency or after three years your local authority adoption agencies.



OTHER THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ADOPTION

STATUTORY ADOPTION LEAVE

Adopters who are employed (or one of a couple) may be entitled to up to 52 weeks of statutory adoption leave (you may have enhanced benefits through your employer) . Adoption leave can start either:

- From the day a child starts to live with the adopter, or
- Up to 14 days before the child starts living with them

Adoption leave is a 'day one' right, which means there is no qualifying period in employment. Employers need proof of adoption; this is usually the matching certificate which must be from a UK adoption agency, or the written notification of a fostering for adoption placement.

CHILDCARE FUNDING

From the term after your child turns two, you will be able to claim 15 hours a week early education and childcare up to a maximum of 570 hours per year, funded by the government. This 2 year old free childcare is for children who -

- have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order

EARLY YEARS PUPIL PREMIUM

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) is additional funding for early years pre-school settings to improve the education they provide for disadvantaged 3 and 4 year-olds including, but not restricted to, those adopted from care. Funding equates to £302 per child per year (pro-rata for children who access less than the full free early years entitlement) and early years providers can choose how they use the money to improve the quality of provision they offer.

PUPIL PREMIUM

The Pupil Premium provides extra funding to state-funded schools to help their staff give extra support to disadvantaged pupils including, but not restricted to, those adopted from care. From April 2018, funding was increased to £24100 per pupil and to include all children adopted from care not just those adopted after 30th December 2005 as previously was the case. It is paid to schools so that they can invest in specific support measures to address the issues that may be preventing them from reaching their potential.

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Priority School admissions - In May 2014, new guidance was issued to school admission authorities asking them to give the highest priority to all children who were previously looked after children but who ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a special guardianship order or child arrangements order (formally known as a residence order). A new School Admissions Code came into force on 19th December 2014 which now makes it a statutory requirement for school admission authorities to give the highest priority to these children. To be eligible, the child must have been in care in either England or Wales and now living in England.

If you have any further questions regarding adoption please get in contact with [Proud 2 b Parents](https://www.proud2bparents.co.uk) or attend one of our Parent 2 b workshops. We look forward to seeing you and your family at some of our meet-ups soon.