



Department
for Education

The adopters' guide to entitlements and services

For children adopted from care through an adoption agency in England

For your child...

Children adopted from care have priority access to state-funded schools which means that you may be able to select the most appropriate school for your child (see [here](#)). From September 2014, they will also be entitled to free early education from the age of two (see [here](#)).

If your child needs support, or their needs change, you should ask your local authority to assess their needs for adoption support services (see overleaf). If you think your child has special educational needs you should ask the local authority where you live to assess these needs (see [here](#)).

For you as an adopter...

Adopters must be given *reasonable preference* for social housing (see [here](#)) and, if they have a spare bedroom and are claiming Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, they can apply for Discretionary Housing Payments while waiting for their child to move in with them. They may be entitled to adoption leave and pay from work when their child is placed with them (see [here](#)). Through proposed changes to the law this entitlement will become more similar to maternity leave and pay, and will include the right to take time off work for introductions to the child. The partner of an adopter may also be entitled to paternity leave and pay when the child is placed.

Adopters are entitled to a summary of the medical assessment of the child they are adopting, and to a life-story book to help the child understand his or her early life. They are also entitled to an assessment of their own, and their child's, needs for adoption support services.

Adoption support services include:

- counselling, information and advice;
- help with behavioural, attachment and other problems;
- money e.g. to help with special care needs or for former foster parents;
- help with contact between an adopted child and their birth family;
- meetings and other events to enable groups of adopters and adoptive children to get together;
- training to help adopters to meet the needs of their adoptive child;
- short breaks for an adopted child with another carer; and help where an adoption breaks down.

Local authorities can provide these services, or ask a voluntary adoption agency or adoption support agency to provide them. Local authorities do not have to provide, or ask an agency to provide, support in response to an assessment; they will need to consider the circumstances of each case.

However, if you feel that you need support at any time, no matter how long after the adoption, please ask your local authority for an assessment.

Each local authority must have an Adoption Support Services Adviser to give information about adoption support services and specialist services, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. Their details should be available on the local authority's website. Proposed changes to the law will mean that local authorities must tell adopters about adoption support services, including their right to an assessment, and give those to whom they provide support a choice about whether to have a 'personal budget' to pay for it.

If you adopt a child from another local authority area, or if you move to a new area, the local authority that places the child with you continues to be responsible for assessments for three years after the adoption, at which point it becomes the responsibility of the local authority in whose area you are then living.

If you are unhappy with the support provided by your local authority, or with the time taken to carry out an assessment, you can complain under the Local Authority Complaints Procedure and you may be able to refer your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

You can also contact an organisation, such as the British Association for Adoption and Fostering or Adoption UK, for advice.