



ADOPTION
NORTH LONDON

Adoption Support

Adoption North London



Adoption is Life Changing

It's also for life, and the need for support can occur at different times throughout the lives of people affected by it. The six local authority adoption agencies that form Adoption North London (ANL) - Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey & Islington - work together to provide a range of services for new and existing adoptive families. Drawing on a wealth of experience in assisting families to succeed, we want to ensure that help is available at whatever point it is needed, before, during and after adoption.

The following situations are the kind that adoptive parents routinely ask for help with. You may find that one or two, or even all of these questions affect you and your family at one time or another.

- ▶ How to explain adoption and your child's life with their birth family before they came to live with you.
- ▶ How to support your other children's relationship with their new adopted brother or sister.
- ▶ How best to help your child settle into school when they are not coping very well with leaving you, or if they are struggling in the classroom.
- ▶ How to obtain financial support due to unexpected additional costs, or changes in your own circumstances.
- ▶ How to manage contact between your child and their birth family.
- ▶ How to get help when life with your child is more difficult than you expected it to be.

Adoption Support Assessment

The good news is that because these are very normal difficulties, there are existing services that can help in all of these situations. This means that many requests for advice and support can be dealt with quickly by signposting families to relevant services.

For some children and families their needs are more complex and a more detailed assessment, leading to an Adoption Support Plan, is required.

There is a legal duty for the local authority to undertake an assessment of the need for support when requested by any member of an adoptive family, where there is an adopted child under 18.

There is no automatic entitlement to these services, but all Local Authorities must act reasonably in deciding whether to provide services following an assessment.

“The amount of support we’ve had has been gold standard. I have friends and relatives who have also adopted, who get no support at all, they phone me up to ask what sort of support I would get for the issues they are having, so they have some idea of what to do.”

Who is responsible?

For the first three years following the Adoption Order, the local authority that placed your child with you is responsible for assessment and support. After three years, the Authority where you live becomes responsible - with the exception of previously agreed support with birth family contact and on-going financial support, which remains with the placing Authority.

International adoptive families

If you have adopted a child from overseas, you are entitled to request an adoption support assessment and to receive certain services e.g. therapeutic support and support to avoid adoption breakdown. The Intercountry Adoption Centre provides a range of services on behalf of the Consortium including a Helpline, training, support groups and a full range of assessment services. They can be contacted as follows:

Intercountry Adoption Centre

22 Union Street

Barnet

Hertfordshire

EN5 4HZ

Advice Line Tel: **020 8447 4753**

Relative adoption

People who adopt a child who is related to them are also entitled to counselling, advice and information.

If you would like to find out more about adoption support services and are unsure how to start, please contact the Adoption or Adoption Support Team of the local authority in which you live and they will be pleased to advise you. Contact details for each Consortium borough Adoption Support Team are detailed at the end of this leaflet.

The Adoption Passport (www.first4adoption.org.uk)

This has been introduced by the Government and sets out the detail of services that adoptive parents are entitled to.

For Children

- ▶ Priority school admissions so that your child should be able to attend the school of your choice. Details can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admission-of-children-adopted-from-local-authority-care>
- ▶ Pupil premium plus – a payment made to your child’s school towards meeting the needs of adopted children in school. You will need to let the school know your child is adopted so that the school can claim the pupil premium.
- ▶ The entitlement to early education from the age of two - Details can be

found at: www.gov.uk/free-early-education

- ▶ The entitlement to a Life Story Book to help your child understand their early life. This should include who provides the life story book and what it includes.

For Adoptive parents

- ▶ Priority council housing and Discretionary Housing Payments may be available: www.gov.uk/council-housing
- ▶ If your child needs extra support at school you can request an assessment of your child’s special educational needs.
- ▶ Financial support when eligible. This can include paid adoption leave at similar rates to maternity and paternity leave. Details can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/adoption-pay-leave>
- ▶ You have the right to receive a copy of the child’s permanence report, including a summary of the Medical Adviser’s report on the health of your child, before your child was placed with you.
- ▶ 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 your local authority complaints’ procedure. If you are not satisfied with this, you may be able to refer your complaint to the local government ombudsman www.lgo.org.uk

The Adoption Support Fund

The Adoption Support Fund has been established by the Government, because many families need some kind of therapeutic support following adoption. You can discuss this with your Adoption Support team or find out more on the Adoption UK website. To access the Fund, you will need to have an assessment of your family's adoption support needs by the local authority, who will help identify what therapeutic services would be helpful to your family and can apply to the Fund on your behalf.

Adoption Support services

- ▶ Counselling information and advice for all those affected by adoption.
- ▶ Help with behavioural, attachment and other problems.
- ▶ Finance to help with special care needs or to enable foster carers to adopt.
- ▶ Help with contact between your adopted child and their birth family.
- ▶ Meetings and events to enable groups of adopters and adoptive children to get together.
- ▶ Training to help adoptive parents to meet the needs of their adoptive child.
- ▶ Short breaks for your child with another carer may be available.
- ▶ Help where an adoption may break down.





Adoption North London Services

Some of the services highlighted within the Adoption Passport will be provided by the individual local authority adoption agencies. For example, information and advice is always available from your local authority agency for anyone affected by adoption and these agencies can provide further information about this.

The six member boroughs that make up Adoption North London work in partnership to increase the range of services on offer and to ensure all adoptive families in these boroughs have access to the same services. Here, as an adoptive parent, you may receive services if:

- ▶ you were approved by one of the Adoption North London local authorities
- ▶ your child was placed with you by an Adoption North London local authority
- ▶ you were approved by another agency, but have adopted a child from an Adoption North London local authority
- ▶ you simply live with your adopted child in an Adoption North London borough.

Whatever your connection to Adoption North London, there will be some services available to you, whilst others will be subject to eligibility criteria. The following services are provided by Adoption North London:

1. Adoptive Parent support groups

- ▶ Three separate local support groups for adoptive parents are run by Adoption North London workers in Enfield, Barnet and Islington every two months, usually in the evenings. They provide an opportunity for you to meet with other adoptive families and staff.
- ▶ A monthly group for parents of teenagers on Saturday mornings led by an independent therapeutic social worker and Adoption North London Adoption Support staff.
- ▶ Once a year, we hold a full day long group for 5-11 year olds and their families, focusing on adoption.
- ▶ We have established a link up with 'We are Family', who organise community groups for adoptive parents in Islington and Barnet. These groups are supported, but not organised by Adoption North London, with a weekly play-group and fortnightly support group. For more information, please refer to their website at www.wearefamilyadoption.wordpress.com

- ▶ New Family Social is the UK network for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) adoptive and foster families. All our Consortium boroughs are members of New Family Social, which means you are members as well and can find out about all their services at www.newfamilysocial.org.uk
- ▶ Adoption North London adoptive parents can also have access to a support group run by BAAF for black adoptive parents.

2. Training and Workshops

- ▶ Adoption North London provides an extensive annual training programme for approved adoptive parents.
- ▶ Annual London adoption conference with adoptive parents and staff from other Consortia.
- ▶ Bi-monthly training events for approved adopters on topics such as education, emotional and behavioural difficulties, transitions, contact, telling your child difficult information, social networking and adoption, preparing for placement, therapeutic play and the teenage years.
- ▶ One day for newly approved adoptive parents to prepare for placement.

- ▶ Adoption Changes Parenting Training – a specialist parenting training programme comprising six x weekly sessions, held twice or three times a year.
- ▶ Two days training per year on Education topics for Adoption North London adoptive parents. Training is offered by PAC-UK.
- ▶ Parents who have adopted through Adoption North London will receive mailings throughout the year to let them know about workshops, seminars, groups and other events that may be of interest to them.

3. Therapeutic support

- ▶ Telephone Helpline via PAC-UK – our adoption/permanence support agency.
- ▶ Up to six free counselling sessions via PAC-UK, about pre and post adoption related/parenting issues.
- ▶ Access to parenting and family consultations via PAC-UK.
- ▶ Therapeutic support from recommended therapeutic social workers providing quick response, home-based parenting and relationship support.

4. Educational support via PAC-UK

- ▶ Education advice and consultation Helpline
- ▶ Monthly education support group for adoptive parents
- ▶ Education training for adoptive parents, teaching staff and social workers.

5. Life story work

A dedicated ‘life story work’ website has been developed by an Enfield adopter and an Adoption Support Worker to help adopters who are doing life story work with their adopted child. It includes a step-by-step guide on how to make a life story book and also provides you with a number of templates and examples. Please visit www.lifestoryworks.org to find out more.

“ It has really helped me to understand the impact on trauma that my son experienced in his early years, particularly the way it affected brain development as well as to understand how his behaviour relates to attachment. I think this supports me in being a more skilled parent in relation to having an adopted child. ”

6. The NLAC Adoption Support Handbook

This is an invaluable tool, packed with resources, information and ideas to support you and your family. It includes detailed information about the adoption support services available in Adoption North London and can be downloaded from your own local authority adoption website. A hard copy is also available to all Adoption North London adoptive parents from your own local authority adoption support service.

7. For Adopted Adults

There is a welcoming and friendly group for adopted adults to meet up every other month in North London. It is run by adopted adults for adopted adults. A range of speakers are invited and each meeting usually has a topic for discussion. Your son or daughter will be able to join this group at 18, if they wish. Please contact your local Adoption Support Team for further information.

8. Links

Adoption North London

www.adoptionnorthlondon.co.uk

PAC Advice Line is on **0207 284 5879**.

www.pac-uk.org

Intercountry Adoption Centre

22 Union Street, Barnet

Hertfordshire, EN5 4HZ

Advice Line Tel: **020 8447 4753**

Email: info@icacentre.org.uk

Website: www.icacentre.org.uk

We Are Family www.wearefamilyadoption.wordpress.com

Adoption UK www.adoptionuk.org.uk

British Association for Adoption and Fostering www.baaf.org.uk

New Family Social is the UK network for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) adoptive and foster families. All six ANL agencies are members of New Family Social, which means our adoptive families are members as well www.newfamilysocial.org.uk

first4adoption is the web-based information service which provides information about adoption www.first4adoption.org.uk

North London Adoption Support Contacts

London Borough of Barnet:

Judith Ellis and Liz Segal, Adoption Team, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP

Tel: **(020) 8359 5705**

Email: judith.ellis2@barnet.gov.uk

liz.segal@barnet.gov.uk

London Borough of Camden:

Valerie Forrest, Adoption and Permanence Team, 1st Floor, Crowndale Centre, 218 Eversholt Street, London NW1 1BD

Tel: **(020) 7974 6165**

Email: Valerie.Forrest@camden.gov.uk

London Borough of Enfield:

Morris Linton, Natalie Salaman and Nita Patel, Adoption and Permanence Team, Triangle House, 305-313 Green Lanes, Palmers Green, London N13 4YB

Tel: **(020) 8379 8490**

Email: adoption@enfield.gov.uk

London Borough of Haringey:

Edna Thomas and Marlene Joseph, Social Workers, Adoption Team, First Floor, River Park House, 225 High Road, Wood Green, London N22 8HQ

Tel: **(020) 8489 3706**

Email: Edna.Thomas@haringey.gov.uk

Marlene.Joseph@haringey.gov.uk

London Borough of Hackney:

Vicky West, Adoption Services, Hackney Service Centre, 1 Hillman Street E8 1DY

Tel: **08000 730 418**

Email: Vicky.West@hackney.gov.uk

London Borough of Islington:

Jo Gordon, Daisy Stone and Jo Mendel, Islington Adoption Services, 3 Elwood Street, London N5 1EB

Tel: **(020) 7527 4400**

Email: adoption@islington.gov.uk



 **Email: info@adoptionnorthlondon.co.uk**

 **Visit: www.adoptionnorthlondon.co.uk**

 **Freephone: 0800 694 0101**

