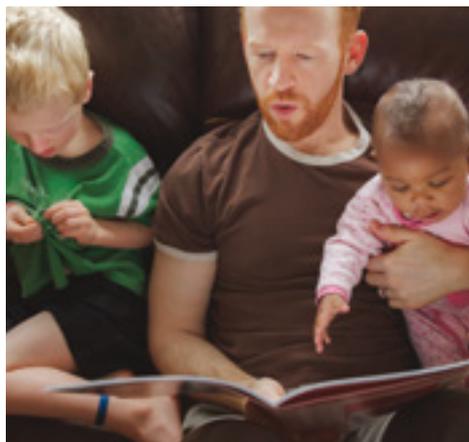




One
Adoption

THE STEP BY STEP ADOPTION PROCESS

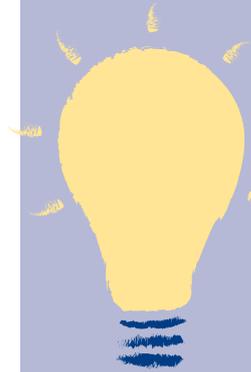
FOR YOUR ADOPTION JOURNEY



THE ADOPTION PROCESS - IN DETAIL

Words
in italics are
explained in the
glossary on the
back page

Initial idea and contact



Your initial interest in adoption might be very definite, or very tentative. It may be that one person in a household is more keen than others.

At this stage you are not committing yourself, and a wide range of emotions is to be expected. You can find out more about adoption via our website:

www.oneadoption.co.uk, or from the National Adoption Gateway:
www.first4adoption.org.uk.

If you want to know more or take the next steps towards adopting with us, you should attend one of our information sessions. The dates are available on our website.

If you have a question about whether something in your life could be a problem for adopting and are not sure whether to attend, you can phone us 0345 305 2576, select your local office and speak to an adoption social worker who will be able to advise.

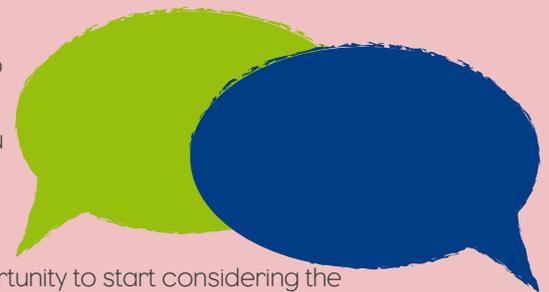
The information session

If you've picked this up at an information session – you're already at step two! Our adoption information sessions are held regularly and offer the opportunity to hear from adoption team managers, *adoption social workers* and experienced adoptive parents who will provide you with lots of information and talk through the process. We also show a film of people connected to adoption talking about their experiences.

Sometimes it is not possible to answer individual questions at the session, but we hope you will contact

us the next day so we can help with any questions you have.

These sessions give you an opportunity to start considering the rewards and challenges of adoption, and ask questions or raise any concerns about your situation.



First home visit



If you wish to find out more, please contact us on **0345 305 2576** and select your local office to speak to an *adoption social worker* who will take some details of your personal circumstances, answer any questions you may have and arrange a home visit appointment with you.

At this first home visit you will be given more information about adoption, your specific circumstances will be discussed in more detail, and a decision will be made with you about whether it is right to proceed. This is a really good opportunity for you to ask questions and consider the potential impact of adoption on you, your family and any children you might adopt, both now and in the future.

Let's go for it!

If both you and the adoption social workers are happy to proceed you should submit a *Registration of Interest (ROI)* form which we send to you following the first home visit. Once this is returned, we will confirm receipt of this in a letter outlining the next stages of the process. Providing your circumstances remain unchanged, you can submit the ROI form up to twelve months after your information meeting. The important thing is to do so when the timing is right for you.

However, if your circumstances do change before submitting the ROI form, please get back in touch with us so that we can discuss the changes with you and arrange a further visit if needed. If the decision from either side is not to proceed, you will be sent a letter confirming this, explaining why, and outlining other options available to you.



STAGE ONE – registration and checks



Stage one of the process begins when we have received your *Registration of Interest* (ROI) form.

By completing and signing the ROI form you are consenting for us to contact references, and undertake statutory checks. These checks will include a *Disclosure and Barring Service* check (checking for

criminal records and convictions), health and address checks. We will also enter into a stage one agreement with you and invite you to attend preparation groups and access further information and training.

We aim to complete stage one within a couple of months. However, there are a number of factors that might not make this possible (not least because we are getting external checks and references). We closely monitor the length of time taken in this stage of the process and we will re-negotiate the stage one agreement with you if needed.

STAGE ONE – preparation and training

Once we start on the statutory checks, you can start your preparation training, some of which is available in e-learning elements on the National Adoption Gateway website www.first4adoption.org.uk.

Most of the training though is done face-to-face in groups. At One Adoption we organise specially designed preparation training programmes regularly, and you will be required to attend one of these during the process, usually in stage one. The preparation training groups take place over three days and it is essential that you attend the full programme, and if you apply in a partnership, you will both need to attend the full course together.

Our preparation groups receive very positive feedback and those who are initially anxious about attending find them very interesting, informative and enjoyable. They also

provide the opportunity to meet other prospective adoptive parents at a similar stage in the process, and we are often told that lasting friendships are made at the preparation groups.

Other people have also said that the three-day course gives them a

much deeper understanding of adoption issues and what adoption will mean for them as a family.

We will let you know at the end of stage one if you may be suitable to adopt and whether you can proceed to a full assessment in stage two. You will need to let us know within six months of this decision, whether you wish to proceed to stage two. You can take a break of up to six months between stage one and two, if you so wish.



STAGE TWO – full assessment

At the first full assessment visit to you at home, your adoption social worker will enter into a stage two assessment plan or agreement with you, detailing the process, dates for meetings and the date of the adoption panel that you are all aiming for.

During this process you will work in partnership with your social worker. They will share more information, knowledge and experience with you, and discuss adoption and its life-long impact on everyone involved in more detail. You will also be given more information about the children who need to be adopted.

The assessment time helps you to consider carefully and honestly what you want from adoption and what you can offer a child. Many of our children have had difficult life experiences and

come from complex backgrounds. You will have time to think carefully about their needs and how you can meet them.

While helping you to learn about adoption, we will begin to assess your suitability and prepare a profile of you. We will ask you lots of detailed questions about your family background, your childhood and adult experiences, relationships, and your present circumstances. If you are part of a couple, your social worker will want to see you both together and individually.

The assessment process is demanding, it can feel intrusive and will take around four months to complete. There are very good reasons why everything is explored in depth with you in this way. Adoption is for life, and we must be sure you are right for the role. Just as importantly, you must be as certain as you can be that adoption is right for you and that you can make the lifetime commitment required.



STAGE TWO – the prospective adopters report

As the assessment reaches its final stages your *adoption social worker* will start to put together your *prospective adopters report (PAR)*.

This report details your potential as an adoptive parent along with the results of your medical, police and authority checks and personal references.

It is important that your report clearly describes the sort of children you feel you could adopt.

We will ask you to check your report and you will have the opportunity to make written comments on it. These comments form part of the completed document.



STAGE TWO – the adoption panel and approval to adopt

The *adoption panel* is made up of an independent chair, social workers, other professionals and independent people, including an adoptive parent and sometimes someone who has been adopted. A minimum of six members are required to be present for the panel to be large enough to make a decision. Panel members

consider your prospective adopters report and consider if you should be approved to adopt. You will be invited to come to the panel meeting, and they will make their recommendation on your suitability to adopt.

The full minutes from the adoption panel meeting, your prospective adopters report and any associated paperwork will then be sent to the *agency decision maker (ADM)* for One Adoption, a senior manager, and they will formally decide whether to approve you to adopt, based on the above paperwork and the recommendation from the adoption panel.



STAGE THREE – matching you with children that are right for you

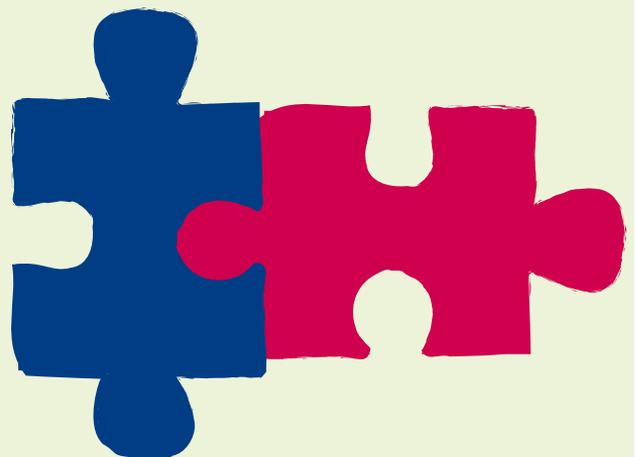
Time to celebrate – you are now approved to adopt a child with One Adoption!

Your *adoption social worker* will visit you to draw up a *post approval plan*. This agreement will outline how we will go about finding the right match for you and your family.

We will look at whether there are children waiting for adoption locally who might be a suitable match for you. If no local children are identified as potential matches, we will look with you at children across a wider area via Linkmaker.

When a possible match is identified the social worker will share a detailed report about this child or children with you. If, after reading this report and thinking about it carefully, you feel you could meet the child or children's

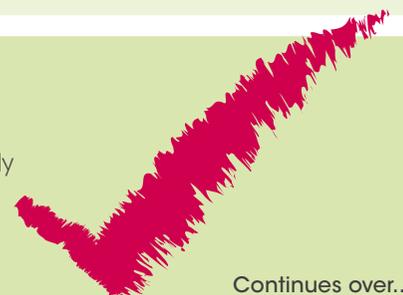
needs and wish to proceed, you will be introduced to the child's social workers, foster carers, nursery or school staff, and health professional who will all share with you more detailed information about the child or children.



STAGE THREE – the adoption matching panel

If you and the social workers decide it is a good match and agree to go ahead, a report will be written and the match will be presented to the *adoption matching panel*. The panel will make a recommendation and then the

agency decision maker (ADM) will formally decide whether the match can go ahead.



Continues over...

STAGE THREE - introductions and placement

Congratulations – your new family has now been approved!

Now you, your social worker, the child's social worker, your child's foster carers and their social worker will meet to plan. You will discuss and agree all the planning needed to make sure you have everything you need, and the child is as prepared as possible for the move to your care. At this meeting a very detailed introduction plan will be agreed to set out how best to introduce the child to you and vice versa. Introductions last anything from two to four weeks

depending on the age and needs of the children.

To begin with, these introductions will take place in the child's current foster home. Then the introduction meetings will gradually move to your home, and finally moving day arrives! Your new child or children will move in to live with you as full and equal members of your family.



STAGE THREE - post placement support

This is the start of your life together – but definitely isn't the end of our involvement. The early days and weeks of placement are life-changing and can be very exciting. However they can also be exhausting and anxiety-provoking.

We are very committed to providing adoptive parents with high-quality support. You and your child or children will receive regular visits from us to talk through how everything is going and make sure that you are receiving good support, and you can always call us for help and advice.



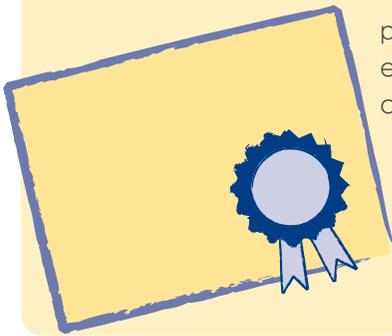
We have specialist adoption support social workers. They run activities such as soft play and support groups and, if necessary, can provide additional one-to-one support. The team also works with other professionals and organisations in One Adoption to get you whatever help you need.

Our offer of support is on-going and you can come back to us at any point in the future if you require assistance.

STAGE FOUR - making it permanent

Following a period of post-placement support and when everyone is satisfied that your child or children have settled successfully into your family, a discussion will be had at a childcare review meeting about when to apply for an **adoption order**.

With the assistance of your **adoption social worker**, you will then need to complete an adoption application form and submit it to the court, who will then request an adoption report from the agency. A hearing date will be set and once the adoption order is granted, all rights and responsibilities originally held by the birth parents will transfer to you and you will legally become the child or children's legal parents. Your child can now take your surname.



On-going post adoption support

At One Adoption we like to stay in touch with all our adoptive parents in various ways including through our newsletter and ongoing events. Our adoption support team can advise and assist you and signpost you to other services if required.

This whole process will seem daunting when you read it through in one go, but our dedicated staff will take you through it one step at a time. It may take many months, and will sometimes seem like nothing is happening, but you can always get an update from your **adoption social worker** if you need one.



Glossary:

Adoption matching panel – the group of people who recommend whether you and a particular child/children are a good match.

Adoption order – the legal process in court that means that the child/children placed with you for adoption are completely and legally yours.

Adoption panel – the group of people who decide whether you are suitable to adopt a child/children.

Adoption social worker – a social worker who works for One Adoption who specialises in adoption. You will have one allocated to you, to guide you through the process.

Agency decision maker – a senior manager in One Adoption or a child's local authority who has the legal responsibility to decide and sign off adoptive parents and matches.

Birth child/children – a child or children who have been born into your family, to yourself or your partner.

Birth parents – the parent(s) that a child is born to.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) – this used to be called a CRB check (Criminal Records Bureau). This searches police records to see if someone has a criminal record.

Post approval plan – an agreement made between you and your adoption social worker which describes how a match for you will be found.

Plan for adoption – a child who is known to One Adoption and for whom the decision is that they should be adopted. If the court agrees this plan they make a 'Placement Order'.

Prospective adopters report (PAR) – the report that is written from all the detailed information from the full assessment. This is the report that will go to the adoption panel.

Registration of interest form (ROI) – a form to fill in once you've decided adoption might be for you. This generates the start of stage one – including medical, criminal record and other checks.



One
Adoption
Agency
NORTH & HUMBER

We are five councils in the northern Yorkshire and Humber area – City of York, East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull, North East Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire County Councils – working together to deliver a single regional adoption service at a local level.

0345 305 2576
www.oneadoption.co.uk