

My guide to adoption



This book belongs to

**It tells you all about adoption and
how a family will be found for you**



What is adoption?

Adoption is when you join another family forever and by law.

Why am I being adopted?

There are two main reasons why you might be adopted.

Either:

a) The parents that you were born to decide that they will not be able to bring you up the way they would like to and so they ask an adoption officer to arrange for you to be adopted;

Or

b) A court decides that the parents you were born to (your birth parents) are unable to bring you up safely and agree that you should be adopted.

Who will help me to become adopted?

There are two main people who will help you.

Your social worker is a person trained to work with children and their families.

An adoption officer is someone trained to work with people and families who want to adopt a child.

They will work together to find the right family for you.

When you are adopted you are not alone. There are thousands of children who are adopted every year. Being adopted can mean you have extra things to think about. It is good to talk to someone about how you are feeling.

Some children need to talk to people who know about being adopted. Other children do not need to talk to anyone other than their adoptive family and friends.

You may want to do either or both.

Also there are adoption officers who you can see to discuss things. You and your adoptive family will be told about this.





Who adopts?

People who adopt want to add to their family.

Sometimes it is one parent, sometimes two.

Sometimes it will be two women, sometimes two men.

They may have disabilities.

They may go out to work or they may not work.

Adoptive parents come in all shapes, sizes, colours and cultures. Cultures are people's religions, traditions and backgrounds.

Adopters are people who take time to find out about adoption.

They need to understand everything about looking after a child who has been born to different parents.

They have to tell an adoption social worker all about themselves and then they have to be passed as suitable to adopt.

What about ...

... my choices?

You will be able to say what sort of family you want. Your social worker will listen to you and talk to you about this. Your adoption officer, social worker and foster carer need to take time to think very carefully about which family is best for you. They can't do it just like that but they will do their best. They will try to find a family for you within six months from when the court decides you should be adopted.

... my colour and background?

We always try to make sure you are matched with parents who share your skin colour and background. If we cannot find parents who exactly match, we think about what else we can do.

It could be that there are cousins or other relations in the family, or that there are friends and neighbours living nearby who have similar skin or hair colour and are from the same background as you.

... my foster carer?

Your foster carer will help to prepare you for your new family. Foster carers often stay in touch with the children they have looked after.





... my new family?

Adopters may have children already, who may be born to them or they may be adopted by them. Some adopters have no children and would like to become a bigger family. But sometimes it is a mum or a dad on their own.

All adopters have thought about things really hard and know that they want to have a child or another child in their family.

You will be able to meet your new family first and be able to get to know each other slowly.

... other people important to me?

Your social worker will talk with you very carefully about seeing people who are important to you. You may have memories of your birth mum, dad, sisters, brothers, grandparents and other relations, or foster carers who looked after you.

If it is important to you to know how these people are as you grow up, then your social worker and your adoptive parents will talk about how this could happen.

Perhaps your adoptive parents can write a letter every so often to let people from your past know how you are, and they may receive a letter in return. Sometimes it may also be possible to exchange photographs if every one agrees.

What about...

... letting people know if I am OK?

You can talk to your social worker about how you are settling into your new family. You can make sure your views are heard by getting them written down for your review (your foster carer, adopter, teacher or your social worker can help you to do this) and by being at the review meeting if you want to.

... being adopted by my new family?

You have to live with your adoptive family for at least ten weeks, but it is more likely to be longer than that—sometimes a year or so before you can be adopted.

When you and your new family are ready, all the information about you both is sent to court.

Someone who knows a lot about adoption—a magistrate or a judge—looks carefully at this information.

Then you and your new family go together to the court for the adoption order to be made.

You will be asked if you would like to be adopted and, if it is agreed, then it will be time to celebrate your adoption day. Everyone who is adopted gets a certificate just like a birth certificate.





About Leeds Adoption Service

We look after children who cannot be with their families and do the best we can to keep them safe, healthy and doing well at school. We do this by finding people who want to adopt and give children a permanent home. A permanent home is whatever a child needs most: it can be permanent fostering or adoption.

We can do this for all the children we look after if they need a permanent home, no matter what. It doesn't matter if they are a boy or girl or what their religious views are.

Children go to the right kind of adoptive family to suit their needs.

There are written down rules that we have to follow to make sure you are looked after properly and we are checked by inspectors to make sure we are doing this properly. It is important for you to talk about what you think and feel about what is happening to you. Remember that you can talk to your carers or adoptive parents about anything that may be worrying you.

If you have any worries about your carers or your adoptive parents you can discuss them with your social worker or your teacher. You could also ring our complaints section on 0113 2478627.

Important numbers

Leeds City Council Adoption Service

Telephone: 0113 247 4747

Fax: 0113 247 8695

Email: ss.fostering.and.adoption@leeds.gov.uk

Typetalk: deaf to hearing: 18001 0113 2474747

hearing to deaf: 18002 0113 2474747

Talk Adoption (a national helpline)

Telephone: 0808 808 1234

Email: helpline@talkadoption.org.uk

Leeds Children's Rights Service

Telephone: 0113 239 5570

or free phone for young people only 0800652 7212

Email: leeds.childrensrightsservice@barnardos.org.uk

Childline

Telephone: 0800 1111

Textphone: 0800 400 222 9.30am-9.30pm weekdays,
9.30am-8pm weekends

Web: www.childline.org.uk

Ofsted

Inspect to check if a service for children and young people is as good as it can be.

Telephone: 08456 40 40 40

Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk





Books about adoption

There are lots of books you can read that talk about adoption.

If you want some help to think more about adoption there are some books specially written for children about adoption.

For example:

Nutmeg gets adopted - Judith Foxon (Author)

Two birthdays for Beth - Gay Lynn Cronin (Author)

Chester and Daisy move on - Angela Lidster (Author)

Horace - Holly Keller (Author)

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This information can be provided in large print, Braille, audio or a community language, please telephone 0113 247 8730.

For general information about Children and Young People's Social Care, call: 0113 222 4403.



