

ACE young person's Guide to Adoption Support



ACE Children's Guide to Adoption Support

ACE stands for Adoption Central England, we are five areas that have come together to provide a range of support and services for children, young people and their families.

Our areas are Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Coventry and Solihull. We have 2 adoption support teams, a North team that supports our families in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull and a South team who supports our families who live in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

This guide is designed to be used in a number of ways so that it can be relevant for different ages and different levels of understanding.

You can read this with your parent/s or share it with someone that you feel will listen and help you with any questions that you may have. You could also use this information to ask questions when an adoption support worker meets with your family to talk about the support that we can give.

What can I find in this guide?

If you are reading this information, or someone is reading it to you, it is because you are growing up as an adopted young person.

This information is to help you to understand what adoption support is and to answer some of the questions you may have. You can read this with your parent/s or someone that already helps and supports you and ask them about anything you don't understand or tell them about how you feel.



Who is an adoption support worker?

You will have had a children's social worker when you first came into foster care, and they would have continued to be your social worker when you went to live with your adoptive parents and supported you until the adoption order was made.

Our role is very different. An adoption support worker is someone who becomes involved when you or your family ask for advice, or support and they will work alongside you and your family to help to find the most helpful adoption support for your family. Our adoption support workers will try to help you to understand your difficult feelings and why you and your parents might be struggling. We support many adoptive families, just like yours.

We want to hear what you have to say, as this is very important to us, and want to help you and your family think about ideas of what is going to feel most helpful. Sometimes we do not know what will help, but together we can try and work it out. Sometimes your views and what you want or don't want, may be different to those of your parent/s and that is ok too.

What is Adoption Support?

There may be times when you have strong feelings like sadness, anger or excitement and sometimes we don't know where they come from or why and these feelings can feel difficult at home or in school.

Sometimes these feelings are difficult for your parent/s too and it can be difficult to understand how you feel which then can feel tricky for your parent/s to understand how you feel and how to help you and coming to ACE can help find the right support for you as a family.

We all need support at different times in our lives and adoption support workers are here to support you and your parent/s. Support might be an adoption support worker –

- *Talking to your parent/s*
- *Talking and listening to you*
- *Talking to you about adoption and how we can help you*
- *Helping you understand why you were adopted*
- *Helping you talk to people about being adopted*
- *Helping you to meet other young people*

who are adopted

How can we help?

An adoption support worker will talk to your parent/s about your family and what you are all finding difficult, and if you feel ready to talk to us, we will think with you about some ideas about the types of support that could help.

We want to give you the time to share what you feel you need and that this feels comfortable for you. You might not know what support you need or what would be helpful at first, but with your parents and adoption support worker, we can try to work it out together. This could mean an adoption worker talking to you and your family many times so that they can get to know you and help your family to explore what support is going to be most helpful.

As part of what we call an 'Assessment of Need' we will ask lots of questions and it might feel that we are being very nosey which can be difficult and maybe irritating sometimes.....we are very curious and ask these questions because we want to know what it feels like to be in your family and to understand what makes your home or school life feel tricky at times.

You might have questions about your birth family, want to understand why you are adopted, or may need help to understand your feelings...sometimes you might feel angry or sad or just not know how you feel. Some children who are adopted find school very difficult and need extra help

and we might need to help your family to talk to school so that they can help you when times at school feel wobbly.

What would this support look like?

Once we have got to know you and your family, we will explore the different types of support that are available. We work with parents to help them to support their children and understand their feelings or we sometimes ask other specialist workers to become involved.

Support can look like lots of different things –

- *We might think that support for your parent/s and family is needed first and we will find some training for them which will help them to understand your feelings and how they can help you.*
- *We might offer for someone to talk to your parent/s more about themselves, their struggles and how they can support you.*
- *Sometimes we offer family support, where you would talk to someone with your parent/s, and the worker would help you all to understand each other a little better.*
- *Sometimes we might feel that it would be helpful for you to have time on your own with a worker to talk about your feelings, and they will try and help you.*

Children and young people don't always find it easy to talk but that is ok as we have lots of ways to help you explore your feelings....this could be through playing, using art or music, or drama to find a way that feels helpful in enabling you to share your feelings. If after talking with you and your family and we are still not sure what support is right, then we might consider an assessment and would talk to you about what this would look and feel like and help you and your family to make a decision about this.

There are lots of ways to support families and once we have got to know you and your parent/s, we will be able to decide what is going to be most helpful. We often say, it is ok not to be ok, and we understand that feelings can be scary and messy sometimes, but with our help we hope that we can find the help that you need.



A place for your thoughts and questions!

My thoughts on what's happening

- These next pages are for you, to say any of the things that you want to say. You can say what you think about the support that your family need.

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What I would like people to know about me –

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My questions about adoption support –

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My thoughts on what support looks like for me –

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ACE support

Adoption support workers work with adopted children and young people and their families, so you or your parent/s can contact the Adoption Support Team in ACE to help answer any questions about support and what we can offer.

If you would like to talk to someone about adoption support, you can contact us directly or ask your parents to contact us for you – please call our **Adoption Support Team on 0300 369 0556** or email us on ***enquiries@aceadoption.com***

If you are not happy with the adoption support you are receiving from ACE, or think that there are things we could improve on, you can contact the Operations Manager for Adoption Support in ACE who is **Louise Hathaway on *louisehathaway@aceadoption.com***

We also like to know if you are happy with the support that you are receiving so please let us know what is working well or if someone is helping you and you would like to give us some feedback!



Who else can support you and other helpful information?

The following organisations are independent. They will help to make sure that your views are heard, if you don't think that you are being listened to.

- **Coram's Children's Legal Centre**

Telephone: **020 7713 0089**

Address: **1 Brunswick Square, London WC1N 1AZ**

Website: **www.childrenslegalcentre.com**

Coram Children's Legal Centre, part of the Coram group of charities, promotes and protects the rights of children in the UK and internationally in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- **Coram Voice:** *an advocacy service*

0808 800 5792

www.coramvoice.org.uk/alwaysheard

this is an advocacy service.

- **National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS):**

Telephone: **0808 808 1001**

Website: **www.youngpeople.nyas.net**

The NYAS advocacy service gives children and young people information about their rights. They can help you make complaints if you are not happy and they can also help you to have a voice and be heard when decisions are made about you.

- **Children - be heard and find out about your rights.**

Office of the Children's Commissioner Telephone: **0800 528 0731**

*Email: **advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk***

*Address: **The Office of the Children's Commissioner, Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.** Website: **www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk***

The Children's Commissioner's role is to protect the rights of all children in England, and to make sure that children and young people have a say and are listened to when adults are making big decisions about things that affect them. The Children's Commissioner for England listens to what children and young people have to say about how they are looked after.

- **ChildLine:** Freephone: **0800 1111** Website: **www.childline.co.uk**
ChildLine counsellors are trained staff and volunteers who all have experience of listening and talking to children and young people about their worries or problems.
- **CAFCASS:** Cafcass stands for Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service, but we use Cafcass because it is much shorter and easier to say. They work with children and young people in family court cases and make sure that children's voices are heard and decisions are taken in your best interests. A useful website about adoption and your rights: **www.cafcass.gov.uk**
- **Ofsted:** Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They inspect and regulate services that are provided for children and young people. They can be contacted via email at **enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk** or by telephone on **0300 123 123**
- **Kooth** is a safe online wellbeing service offering professional support, information and forums for young people 11-25 years. Access to counsellors 365 days a year available from 12 noon- 10pm, Monday-Friday; 6pm - 1pm Saturday and Sunday; Go to **www.kooth.com** their advice and

counselling service is free, anonymous and confidential.