

Adoption Support 2023/24



The adoption team at Harrow provide a range of adoption and post-adoption services such as:

- family finding for children who have a plan of adoption
- advice, guidance and signposting to local and regional resources for adoptive families
- access to various types of therapeutic support via the Adoption Support Fund (subject to assessment of need)
- adoptive parenting guidance and support
- networking with other professionals providing a service to the adoptive family
- mediation of contact between adoptive and birth families
- managing letterbox contact for birth families and adopters, and providing support with letter writing
- services for adopted adults, including access to birth records
- referrals to counselling provided by [PAC-UK](#) for birth parents affected by the adoption of their child, and
- additional services offered by Coram Ambitious for Adoption, including training, support groups and newsletters.

Eligibility

You are able to use our adoption support services if:

- you adopted a child from Harrow and you live in the borough;
- you adopted a child from Harrow but live outside of the borough and it is less than 3 years since the adoption order was made (after 3 years, the local authority/regional adoption agency where you live will provide adoption support); or

- you live in Harrow and adopted through another local authority and it is more than 3 years since the adoption order was granted (before that, the local authority that placed the child will be responsible for providing adoption support).

Letterbox Contact Support

This service is offered to all children and young people adopted from Harrow, regardless of whether they live in the borough or elsewhere. We can continue letterbox contact support until the adopted person reaches 21 years of age, if requested. For letterbox enquiries and contact support, email letterbox@harrow.gov.uk.

Access to Records

We provide support to adopted adults currently living in Harrow who wish to apply to access their birth records. Your social worker will guide you through the process, which differs depending on when the adoption took place. We don't offer an intermediary service to support contact with birth relatives; however we can signpost you to services that can help, such as those provided by [PAC-UK](#).

Contact Us

To find out more about our services or to request support, email us at adoption.team@harrow.gov.uk.



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HARROW



Adoption Support Fund

The Adoption Support Fund (ASF) provides funds to local authorities and regional adoption agencies to pay for essential therapeutic services for eligible adoptive families. It was established because many families need some kind of therapeutic support following adoption and too many families have struggled to get the help they need in the past. The Fund enables Coram families to access the therapeutic services they need more easily. To discuss access to ASF funding, email adoption.team@harrow.gov.uk.

Who is eligible for ASF?

The Fund is available for children living in England up to and including the age of 21 or 25 for children with an education, health & care (EHC) plan who:

- are adopted and were previously in local authority care in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- are adopted from overseas.
- are under a Child Arrangement Order (CAO) to enable the assessment of a potential special guardian, while the CAO is in force.
- are subject to a Special Guardianship Order and were previously in care.

How can I access ASF?

To access the Fund, you will need to have an assessment of your family's adoption support needs. The local authority that placed the child with you is responsible for assessing your adoption support needs for three years after the adoption order. After three years, it becomes the responsibility of the local authority or regional adoption agency where you live (if different).

Where the assessment identifies that therapeutic services would be beneficial to your family, the local authority will apply to the Fund on your behalf, who will then release funding to the local authority. The local authority social worker will talk to you about who can provide the types of service that you need and which provider you would prefer.

Who provides services for ASF?

Local authorities, independent providers and NHS providers, for example child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) may all provide services through the ASF.

What support will I get through ASF?

The Fund will provide money to the local authority to fund a range of therapeutic services. The amount per child per year is capped at £5,000 for therapy, as well as a separate amount of up to £2,500 per child if specialist assessments are needed. Therapy and assessment above this amount and up to a limit of £30,000 require match funding by the local authority.

The therapies funded are those identified to help achieve certain positive outcomes for you and your child, including improving your child's key relationships and their confidence and ability to enjoy a positive family life. To achieve such outcomes the Fund will pay for therapeutic support and services including but not restricted to: therapeutic parenting training, therapy, creative therapies, psychotherapy, extensive life story work and more.

You can find out more about ASF on the [First4Adoption website](#) and on the government's dedicated [ASF webpage](#).



Local Services

CAMHS

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) provided by the NHS assess and treat young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties. For advice and support from the Duty Clinician, call 020 8869 4500. Alternatively email ashtreeclinic@nhs.net or visit the [website](#).

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is child abuse and presents significant risks to children and young people's physical, emotional and psychological health and wellbeing. Help and support is available on the Harrow Safeguarding Children Partnership [webpage](#) and via [PACE](#).

Virtual School

Virtual Schools provide support to adoptive parents. They also monitor and review the quality of provision in schools to ensure that adopted children have equal access to educational opportunities. Email virtualschool@harrow.gov.uk

Education Factsheets

Coram has developed a range of factsheets to share with adoptive families that can help support traumatised children in school. They include information and advice around various topics. For copies of the factsheets, email adoptionssupportVAA@coram.org.uk.



Harrow Offering Parents Encouragement (HOPE)

HOPE is an independent, not-for-profit organisation with charitable status who deliver specialised parenting support programmes to meet the needs of families in Harrow. They offer parenting courses and workshops, and one to one parenting support. Call 020 8863 7319, email info@hopeharrow.org.uk or visit the [website](#).

Early Support

A range of services and activities are available to Harrow's children, young people and families through community-based Early Support Hubs. Visit the local authority [webpage](#) for information on the support available in your area and to find your nearest Hub.

Children with Disabilities

Children and Young Adults Disabilities Service

The Children and Young Adults Disabilities Service (known as [CYADS](#)) is for children and young people from 0-25 years who have a moderate, severe or profound disability. Call 020 8051 8381 or email childrenwithdisabilities.childrenwithdisabilities@harrow.gov.uk.

Harrow SEND Local Offer

Information about support services for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities and their families. Visit the SEND Local Offer [webpage](#) to find out more about what you can expect from a range of local services and how to access them.

National Help and Support

[Caudwell Children](#) [The Challenging Behaviour Foundation](#) [Sheffkids: One Page Profiles](#)

National Resources

Adoption UK

Adoption UK is a national charity that will support you, connect you with others and campaign for what matters most to you and your family. There are a range of membership options. Find out more on the [website](#).

Child Accident Prevention Trust

CAPT is the UK's leading charity working to reduce the number of children and young people killed, disabled or seriously injured in accidents. They offer free safety advice and educational resources. Visit the [website](#).

Childline

Confidential support for children and young people via email, phone and online counselling. Visit the [website](#).

CoramBAAF Bookshop

A range of publications for adopters, including children's books that address themes of adoption. Visit the [website](#).

Kooth

Free, safe and anonymous support and counselling for young people. Visit the [website](#).

National Association of Therapeutic Parents

NATP is a supportive community dedicated to empowering parents of children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences or whose children present with neurodivergent characteristics. Their mission is to provide the tools and resources necessary to promote better outcomes for these children. Find out more on the [website](#).

New Family Social

New Family Social is a UK charity led by LGBTQ+ adopters that support LGBTQ+ families that adopt. There are a range of membership options depending on your support needs. Find out more on the [website](#).

PAC-UK

PAC-UK is the country's largest independent Adoption Support Agency offering a range of key services, including specialist therapy, advice, support, counselling and training for all those affected by adoption and permanency. Find out more on the [website](#).

The Mix

Information and support for under 25s. Visit the [website](#).

The POTATO Group

The Parents of Traumatized Adopted Teens Organisation are a UK based group of parents who adopted children from the care system in the last 20+ years. For an annual membership fee of £15, you will benefit from peer to peer support as well as a private Facebook page. Find out more on the [website](#).

We are Family

We are Family is a peer support community by adopters, for adopters. It supports parents through the adoption journey offering mutual support, information and inspiration to adopters and those considering adoption, including family activities and a podcast. Find out more on the [website](#).



Coram Training Courses



Life Story Work

A workshop designed to help you develop the confidence and skills to talk to your child about their adoption, including how to promote and respond to the child's questions and practical examples of words and phrases to use. Life story work is about engaging in conversation with your child about their adoption journey, therefore we recommend that you attend this workshop every couple of years as your child grows and develops.

Strengthening Attachment Through Play

A workshop that explores the benefits and challenges of child and parent play, including evidence-based approaches to play that promote and strengthen attachment. This workshop is for approved prospective adopters and adoptive parents of children aged 0-8 years with all levels of play experience.

Online Safeguarding

A workshop that will explore practical ways of keeping your child safe online; the potential risks (and indicators of these risks) and specific vulnerabilities for adopted children, including online contact with their birth family. Learn how to use parental controls and family agreements, how to report concerns and access help and support.

Nurturing Attachments

Informed by Kim S. Golding's work, this course will give you the opportunity to explore and discuss how you nurture attachment with your child; to think about how you remain connected with your child during challenging times; to develop your understanding of what makes situations challenging; to think about how you look after yourself and how you remain open to responding to your child's needs therapeutically.

Parenting Therapeutically

This course draws on the wisdom of parents and carers to provide support and practical guidance

to parent therapeutically. You will explore ways of remaining open and compassionate (including identifying your own 'triggers') so that you can respond to your child's needs rather than react to their behaviour.

Nurturing Yourself and Your Relationships

The focus of this course is self-care. You will have the opportunity to think about your hopes and wishes as a parent and how these influence your expectations of yourself and other family members.

Understanding Yours and Your Child's Behaviour: the Dance of Relationships

This course considers attachment behaviours that will help you understand feelings and reactions, especially when stressed. When we are stressed, we can't support our children through their stress. You will learn how to look after yourself so you are more able to remain regulated when your child is unable to regulate themselves.

When Children Grieve

This course considers the losses adopted children experience and looks at the myths that surround grief and what you as an adoptive parent can do to help your child grieve.

Understanding Transitions and Triggers

This course will consider the many changes your child has and will continue to experience and will provide you with helpful strategies from other adoptive parents so that you can support your child to manage change.

Building Children's Self-Esteem

This course will explore the concept of resilience and how you can support your child to cope more effectively with stress and pressure. We will identify parenting strategies that contribute to raising a resilient child.

Why Don't my Children Get Along?

Sibling rivalry exists in all families but relationships can be particularly intense for adopted children who have often had to fight for small amounts of parental attention. This course will identify causes of sibling rivalry and positive ways to manage sibling relationships. You will have the opportunity to think about how your expectation of being a parent to siblings influences your feelings and the ways you respond to your children. Together we will explore what works well, what the challenges are and how you can get through these.

To book Coram workshops and courses, please speak to your adoption social worker at Harrow or email adoption.team@harrow.gov.uk.

Children and Trauma Community Hub (CATCH)

All Coram adopters have membership to CATCH, which is an online community of information and support for adopters. It offers eLearning, webinars, resources and more that compliment adopter training and explore key issues for parents supporting children who have experienced trauma. You can find out more about the Hub by visiting the [website](#) or by booking on to a CATCH workshop by emailing adoption.supportVAA@coram.org.uk.

Coram Support Groups

Support Group for Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage, Minority Ethnic Families

We know that adoptive families from Black, Asian or mixed heritage backgrounds have to consider different types of challenges. This group was formed as a response to some of the recurring issues that adoptive families have experienced around, for example, education or transition to independence. These are complex areas for all parents of adopted children but helping children to manage additional issues around identity and racism within these contexts requires further thinking and support. Coram's senior adoption social workers facilitate this program for up to 12 families once a year over a six weekly evening meetings online. To register your interest, please email adoption.supportVAA@coram.org.uk.

Muslim Adoption Support Group

This support group is open to all Coram adopters of Muslim-heritage children. We welcome Muslim adopters, non-Muslim adopters of Muslim children, and prospective Muslim adopters who have been approved and are waiting for a child to be placed with them.

The group meets monthly online and offers a safe space in which to share experiences and explore issues affecting Muslim adopted children and their families, including faith-related matters, cultural attitudes, child development, identity and mental health issues, and other topics of interest to attendees.

The support group is facilitated by Dr Rachel Abedi, Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist (ACP). Rachel has several years experience working in the NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and in schools, and has a particular interest in supporting Muslim children and families to access services. She is also a Muslim and a Coram adopter.

Support group meetings take place monthly on Mondays from 12.30-2pm via Zoom. You are welcome to stay for the whole meeting or drop in for as long as you can. To book, please email adoption.supportVAA@coram.org.uk.