

Adoption

Support for Adoptive Families



Introduction

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets is an Adoption Agency and under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 has a duty to provide a range of support services to people affected by adoption including children and adults who are adopted, birth relatives and adoptive families. The Adoption Passport sets out additional changes to adoption support for adopters and children.

What is Adoption Support?

Adoption Support covers a wide range of services available through social services, education, health and other related services within health and social care. Support can also include social activities for both children and adopters. It is important that children can meet with other adopted children and for adopters to also meet and share experiences. Adoptive families are entitled to the following support:

- Therapeutic services for adopted children.
- Help for children with behavioural or attachment problems.
- Counselling, information and advice.
- Mediation services.
- Support to prevent the disruption of an adoption.
- Groups and social events for adopters and children.
- Training for adopters in order to meet the needs of a child.
- Respite care or short break with another carer if this is considered to be in the child's interest.
- Help and support to the child and parents where an adoption breaks down.

- Financial support to help with special care needs, or therapeutic services.
- Support with housing.

Support with Education

Children adopted from care have priority access to schools. Your child should be able to attend whichever school you think best meets their needs. Our adoption support social workers with the help of our School Admissions Service or the Virtual School Team can support you with this.

If your child has special educational needs, you can ask for an assessment of their support needs. Schools are now paid a Pupil Premium that can be used to provide additional services for a child who has been looked after.

If you are caring for a very young child; from September 2014 they will be entitled to free early year's education from the age of two.

Support When Adopting

Currently many adopters are entitled to adoption leave and pay when a child is placed with them. There are likely to be changes to this to bring this in line with maternity and paternity pay and leave. Adopters are also entitled to the following:

- A summary of the child's health from the Tower Hamlets Medical Adviser before the child is placed.
- A Life-story Book to help the child to understand their early life and how they came to be adopted.

Step-Parent and Intercountry Adopters

In step parent adoptions the services provided are limited to the provision of counselling, advice and information and in exceptional circumstances services can be provided to Intercountry Adopters.

Adoption Support Services Adviser (ASSA)

All Adoption Support Agencies have an Adoption Support Services Adviser (ASSA) who is the central point of contact providing information and advice about adoption matters. The ASSA is responsible for liaising with other local authorities and adoption support agencies. In Tower Hamlets, the responsibility for Adoption Support is held by the Head of Children's Services.

Who will provide your Adoption Support?

No matter where you live, if you have adopted children through Tower Hamlets within the past three years LBTH may be able to offer you a service. After that time your support needs become the responsibility of the local authority in which you live.

If you live in the borough and adopted children through another agency more than three years ago you can ask us to provide you and your family with support. The exception to this is the provision of financial support agreed before the order was made. We will continue to pay and review periodically for the duration of the agreed term.

We recognise that some families may wish to use an independent service. Where this is the case, we will make a referral to the Post Adoption Centre who provide an advice and counselling service to adopters in Tower Hamlets.



How can I access Adoption Support Services from Tower Hamlets?

You can write, phone our duty number or make contact with us via email. Once we receive your enquiry, a social worker will be allocated to work with you and will carry out an assessment of your support needs if that is your request. An assessment takes into account your family's individual circumstances, identifies your needs, looks at the resources needed to meet them and determines which are available locally.

Following the assessment a written report will be compiled for the agency. You would be advised of the outcome in writing.

Every adopter is entitled to an assessment of their adoption support needs but as an agency we do not have to provide support following an assessment.

The Adoption and Children's Act makes it clear that local authorities must act reasonably in deciding whether to provide adoption support services following an assessment.

You or your child may have other support needs. You may want additional information to help your child or support with contact or managing particular behaviours. We can provide you with support refer you to services for children or direct you to other sources of support.

Who can request an Adoption Support Assessment?

- Adopted children, their parents or guardians
- Anyone wanting to adopt a child
- Birth relatives of an adopted child
- Brothers and sisters of an adopted child
- Other children of adoptive parents.

What if I disagree with my assessment?

You should talk to the social worker who carried out your assessment to try to resolve the difficulties. If you are not satisfied you can contact the Permanency, Adoption and Support Team Manager who will work with you to try to resolve the matter. If you are still unhappy you can take your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Can you help me manage my child's contact arrangements?

Tower Hamlets has a duty to promote contact between adopted children and their birth families. The contact arrangements will have been agreed with you in advance and forms part of the Support Plan for the child.

You may have a letterbox arrangement or face to face contact which we will help you to manage and review. See our leaflet on Contact for more details.

How can I contact Adoption Support?

You can write telephone or email us at:

Permanence and Adoption Support Team

4th Floor Mulberry Place

5 Clove Crescent

London, E14 2BG

Tel: 020 7364 5431

Email: adoptionFPS@towerhamlets.gov.uk

www.fosteringandadoption.co.uk

Useful Contacts for Adoption

CoramBAAF

www.corambaaf.org.uk

Adoption UK

www.adoptionuk.org.uk

First4Adoption

first4adoption.org.uk



TOWER HAMLETS

Tower Hamlets Fostering & Adoption Service

For more information:
call us on **0800 279 9850**
or email us at
adoption@towerhamlets.gov.uk
www.fosteringandadoption.co.uk

