

WHAT WILL ADOPTION MEAN TO ME?

A GUIDE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



HILLINGDON
LONDON

young.hillingdon.gov.uk/adoption

This booklet will give you some idea about how adoption happens and what to expect.

What is adoption?

Adoption means belonging to and growing up with a new family when you cannot live with the family you were born into. Adoption gives you a new family where you are safe, loved and cared for.

Why are children adopted?

There are lots of reasons why children sometimes can't live at home. Maybe your parents are unwell or find it hard to look after you properly or to keep you safe.

Your social worker will talk to you about the reasons why you cannot live with your birth family.

What is it like being adopted?

You live in a new place with your new family. You may have new brothers and sisters. You might also get new grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles.

What are adopters like?

Families come in all shapes and sizes, and there are a number of different families waiting for a child. There may be just one parent or there may be two. Sometimes, it will be two women, sometimes two men. Some have other children of their own. Or you may be the only child. They may go out to work or they may not work. Some live in the town; others live in the country.

You're not alone - lots of famous people have been adopted!

Shaun Wright-Phillips – a professional footballer

Nelson Mandela – South Africa's first black President

Moses – a leader in the Bible

David Dickinson – from TV's 'Bargain Hunt'

Halle Berry – actress

Michael Gove – Secretary of Education

And Superman was adopted too!

Who will help me become adopted?

A social worker is someone who helps children and their families when they have problems. They are there to help you, to make sure you are safe and happy, and to help find new families for children who need them. Your social worker will meet different families to find the family who will be best for you.

A Children's Guardian is someone who listens to your feelings about what is going on and makes sure that you are listened to.

Who can I talk to about adoption?

It is the job of your social worker or the Children's Guardian to make sure that you:

- know what is going on all of the time
- have someone to talk to about what is happening
- have contact with your mum and dad (if you want and if it is safe to do so)
- have contact with anyone else who is important to you.

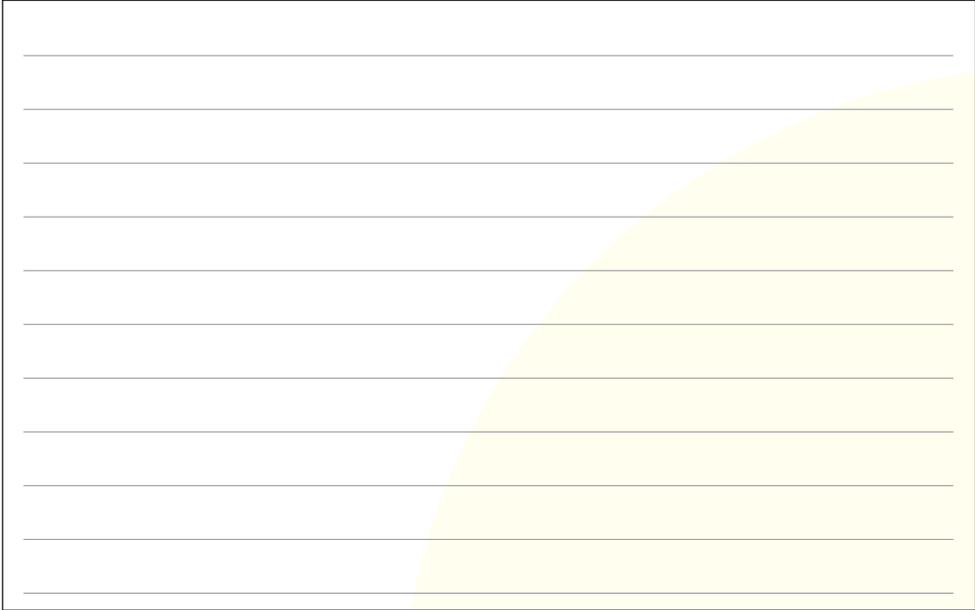
If you would rather talk to someone who does not know all about you and your family, you can talk to an independent person called the Children's Rights Worker. You can call her on 07956 625654.

No one will mind if you ask lots and lots of questions, or if you ask the same questions again and again. Being adopted is a very important part of your life and you will have lots of different feelings – perhaps being scared, upset, excited or angry. Don't hide these feelings; share them with someone you trust.

Who decides I am going to be adopted?

The decision for a child to be adopted is very important. For this reason, lots of people are involved. In court, a judge listens to your parents, your social worker and your Children's Guardian, so that they can decide whether or not you should be adopted.

Use this space to write down any worries or questions you want to discuss with your social worker or Children's Guardian.



A large rectangular box with a black border, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. The box is positioned on the left side of the page, and a yellow decorative shape is visible on the right side, partially overlapping the box.

Who chooses my new family?

Social workers are always looking for people who want to adopt children. Your social worker will talk with you about the type of family you want and they will take great care choosing a family that is right for you.

Will I still be able to stay in touch with people who are special to me?

Your social worker will talk very carefully about this with you.

When you are adopted, it does not mean you forget your birth family. You may have memories of your birth mum/dad/sister/brother/grandparent(s) or foster carer(s) who looked after you.

Your social worker will talk with you about what is important to you. Perhaps your adoptive parents can write a letter every so often to let people from your past know how you are, and they may get a letter in return. This is known as the Letterbox Service.

How do I get adopted by my new family?

When you and your new family are ready, all the information is sent to the court. The judge makes the final decision for you to be adopted by your new family. They will want to make sure that this is the best decision for you.

What do judges look like? Have you seen one on TV?

Could you draw one here?



Stories you could read with your foster carer or social worker

'Finding a family for Tommy' by Rebecca Daniels

'Dennis Duckling' by Barbara Orritt

'Chester and Daisy' move on by Angela Lidster

'Nutmeg gets Adopted' by Judith Foxan

'Nutmeg gets a Letter' by Judith Foxan

'Belonging doesn't mean Forgetting' by BAAF

'Katie Kitten gets Adopted' by Catherine Adair

What if I've got some worries about being adopted?

You should talk to your social worker. They will listen to your reasons and explain the way you feel to the judge.

Who will help if I am not happy?

We will always listen to your wishes and feelings.

If you are unhappy, then it is important to talk to someone who can help sort things out.

If you want to complain about something, ask your social worker for a copy of Hillingdon Council's complaint's leaflet for children.

Or contact our complaint's officer, Ian

 01895 277335

 ianderson@hillingdon.gov.uk

NYAS

NYAS is an advocacy service for children and young people; they can also help you if you want to complain.

 0800 616 101 (freephone)

 www.nyas.net

Children's Commissioner for England

You can also write to the Children's Commissioner for England. Her name is Maggie Atkinson. Her job is to listen to children and young people and speak up for them. She works to make sure that children are kept safe.

 020 7783 8330 (general enquiries)

 www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Later on...

After you have been adopted, there may be times when you have questions or worries. You or your adoptive family can contact our Adoption team to ask for help. This is called adoption support.

 0800 7831298  foster-adopt@hillington.gov.uk

 The Adoption and Permanency Team
London Borough of Hillingdon
4S/06 Civic Centre
High Street
Uxbridge, UB8 1UW

You can also write to OFSTED, or the Children's Rights Director – they both spend a lot of time watching how children are cared for, listening to what children and young people have to say, and telling inspectors and the government what children think about the way they are looked after.

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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Manchester, M2 7LA

 0845 640 4045

 enquiries@dofsted.gov.uk

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