

Press release: Multi-million fund reaches record number of adoptive families

A fund launched to help struggling families who adopt some of the country's most vulnerable children has reached almost 18,000 homes, providing much-needed emotional support.

Announcing the success of the Adoption Support Fund on Wednesday (2 August), Minister for Children and Families Robert Goodwill also confirmed that a further £5 million will be invested in a number of innovative projects across the country, designed to improve families' experiences of adoption.

It is part of a government drive to deliver the best possible services for vulnerable children.

Robert Goodwill, Minister for Children and Families, said:

Every parent wants their child to grow up feeling loved and understood, and anyone with the commitment and compassion to adopt a child should have the backing of a strong support network. We know that caring for these young people, particularly those with more complex needs, can be a struggle at times.

With the right therapeutic support, children and families will be able to embrace the new life ahead of them, and I'm delighted that the Adoption Support Fund has supported so many thousands of people already, as part of our plan for a fairer society.

The Adoption Support Fund, launched across England in May 2015, pays for care that helps children to settle in with their adoptive families. This support can include:

- cognitive therapy;
- play and music therapy; and
- parenting skills training.

In total, £52 million has been released through the fund so far, reaching 22,000 children and 18,000 families. Many more families stand to benefit, as the government has increased the fund to £28 million in 2017/18.

The announcement comes as an independent report shows that parents believe access to the fund has improved their lives, including through improved child behaviour and mental health.

Lorna Sandbach, along with her family, is one of those to benefit from the fund. When Lorna and her husband adopted siblings, they were 14-months and

two-years-old respectively, and had experienced extreme trauma in their early lives that they still remember clearly. When Lorna's eldest began reception last year he struggled to settle in.

The family found out about the fund and after initial assessments with a child psychiatrist, they began a year of therapy.

Lorna Sandbach, Adoption Support Fund recipient, said:

It has been life-changing. My daughter is letting us love her in a way she never did. At first, she was terrified, and now she trusts that we will come back for her at the end of the school day. Before, my son would not talk because he didn't feel confident – but now that's started to change. He is forming friendships and fitting in.

The 16 projects funded through the Practice and Improvement Fund include three Regional Adoption Agencies, which will develop new Centres of Excellence for adoption support. They will bring together social care, health and education experts to provide a co-ordinated assessment and support offer for families.

These Centres of Excellence will be based in:

- Hertfordshire;
- Stockport; and
- North East Lincolnshire.

The Government is continuing to implement Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs) across the country, to bring about long-term improvement to the adoption system. There are now three RAAs operating in England – One Adoption West Yorkshire, Aspire Adoption and Adoption Counts.

Notes to editors

- Read more about the Adoption Support Fund [here](#).
 - Read more about the Practice and Improvement Fund [here](#).
 - Link to the [Adoption Support Fund evaluation publication](#).
 - In 2016 a fair access limit was introduced to enable the Adoption Support Fund to be distributed more fairly, and allow more families to benefit. In April this year the Government began providing an additional £2,500 to go towards specialist assessments, in addition to the fair access limit of £5,000 for therapy.
 - For more information and interview requests contact the Department for Education on 020 7783 8300.
-

[News story: New and novel healthcare solutions: apply for innovation funding](#)

Up to £12 million is on offer to UK businesses for projects that support the development of healthcare technologies and processes.

Innovate UK and the [Medical Research Council](#) (MRC) are to invest up to £12 million in new and novel healthcare solutions.

There are 2 competitions for UK micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the latest round of the Biomedical Catalyst. These are for feasibility and early stage projects.

What we are looking for

We are looking to support the development of innovative healthcare technologies and processes such as:

- disease prevention and proactive management of health and chronic conditions
- earlier and better detection and diagnosis of disease, leading to better patient outcomes
- tailored treatments that either change the underlying disease or offer potential cures

Feasibility studies

These are for exploring and testing the commercial potential and feasibility of ideas. Up to £2 million is available.

Early-stage projects

These are for testing a well-developed concept and showing its effectiveness in a relevant environment. Up to £10 million is available.

About the Biomedical Catalyst

The Biomedical Catalyst is a partnership between Innovate UK and the MRC. It aims to support the most innovative life sciences opportunities regardless of the scientific approach. It also wants to de-risk academia and industry being able to take forward innovative scientific ideas.

Competition information

- the competitions are open, and the deadline is midday on Wednesday 11 October 2017

- you could get up to £200,000 for feasibility studies lasting up to 1 year
 - you could get between £250,000 and £4 million for early-stage projects lasting between 1 and 3 years
 - you can work alone or in collaboration with other businesses or research organisations, but to lead a project you must be a UK-based SME
 - you can [watch the recording of the briefing event](#) to help with your application
-

Notice: Skanska UK PLC: application made to abstract water

The Environment Agency consult the public on certain applications for the abstraction and impoundment of water.

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
 - which Environment Agency offices you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
 - when you need to comment by
-

Consultation outcome: Water supply and sewerage licensing: updating security and emergency measures directions

Updated: Summary of responses including government response added.

We want to know what you think about our proposals to update the wording used in the Security and Emergency Measures (Water Undertakers) Direction 2006. We propose changing 'licensed water supplier' to 'water supply licensee' to take into account changes to the water industry as part of the WSSL regime.

We're also seeking views on our proposal to issue a new general direction which would apply to all water supply licensees meeting certain conditions. This general direction would replace specific directions that have previously been issued to individual companies.

These directions set out how we expect water suppliers to respond to an emergency.

[Press release: Welsh Secretary to mark 35 year anniversary of Japan-Wales business club](#)

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will underline the strong cultural bonds between Wales and Japan at a dinner to mark a milestone anniversary for a Tokyo based business forum.

Clwb Hiraeth was founded in 1982 by senior executives of Japanese corporations who had worked and lived in Wales and had since returned to Japan. The aim was to champion business ties between the two nations.

35 years on and the club has helped to maintain and strengthen not only the business bonds, but the social links between those who formed close friendships in Wales.

Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns is in Japan visiting leading international companies to discuss the great potential for further inward investment in the United Kingdom.

He will mark Clwb Hiraeth's anniversary at a dinner in Tokyo where he will address the members and reiterate the importance of preserving the business ties between the nations to help secure the future prosperity of both countries.

Speaking ahead of the event Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Japanese companies have given Wales a lasting legacy, not just industrially, but culturally as well.

Japan has never underestimated Wales. It is one of the best places to do business and I know that Clwb Hiraeth has worked tirelessly to ensure other business leaders, universities and communities throughout this country understand just how much Wales has to offer.

I congratulate the club on its 35 years of important service to Japan and Wales. I wish it every success in the years to come as we continue to strengthen the bonds between us.

The first chairman of Clwb Hiraeth was Mr Yamaguchi of Takiron – the first Japanese company to invest in Wales.

Over its 35 year history, members of the club have acted as unofficial ambassadors for Wales. They meet regularly, hold a number of social events, celebrate St David's Day, and endorse Wales to other potential investors and business people.

Japan's business ambitions have also been matched by the ambition of its sportsmen on the rugby pitch. Like Wales 20 years before it, the country is readying itself to host the 2019 Rugby World Cup. And while the two countries may often face one another as adversaries on the field of play, Alun Cairns will highlight the affinity each nation has with the game as another key catalyst for many more years of mutually beneficial business.

Mr Cairns added:

The strong cultural and sporting links between our two great nations have provided a strong backdrop for a successful and lucrative trade and investment partnership.

Rugby has the ability to define us as a nation and we know that success for the Welsh rugby team has a measurable economic impact. We look forward to seeing the world gather in Japan in 2019 and seeing our sporting, trading and cultural partnerships take deeper root over the years to come.