

Multi-million pound boost for new families as adoptions increase

Thousands of vulnerable children in care can find permanent homes faster, through a multi-million pound investment to support new adoptive families settle into their new lives.

Since the launch of the government's [National Adoption Strategy](#) published last summer, figures published today illustrate the impact of transformational reforms to the system, strengthening families across the country. The strategy aimed to tackle how long children wait in care, and figures show adoptions are on the rise and figures with a 23 per cent increase in the number of families approved to adopt, from 1,930 in September 2020 to 2,370 at September 2021.

The government is investing a new £160 million over three years to build on this support, removing remaining barriers and reducing delays for thousands more children still waiting in care, so they can be matched more quickly with the right family.

Adoptive families will also receive additional support including cognitive therapy, family support sessions and activities to help children recover from earlier traumas like abuse or neglect, helping them settle into their new families and homes.

The total investment includes £144 million for the Government's Adoption Support Fund to strengthen support for new and growing adoptive families, which has already helped nearly 40,000 adoptive families since 2015.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

The importance of a loving, stable family cannot be overstated, no matter what shape it takes. Family are crucial in giving children the warmth, background and opportunities they need to succeed in life.

We launched our National Adoption Strategy last summer, and I'm really encouraged to see it is already having a meaningful impact on the adoption system across the country, as waiting times for children in care reduce and they find the loving homes they need.

Whether it's through investing in adoption and our expanded Family Hub network, or looking into the findings from the upcoming Care Review, it is my mission to make sure that family stays at the heart of our policy.

Launched in 2021, the Government's National Adoption Strategy is improving adoption services in England by putting in place better recruitment across

the country and removing any unnecessary delays, through more training for front line staff, improving approval process and funding for targeted recruitment campaigns. It has also resulted in improved working between Regional Adoption Agencies, Virtual School Heads and Designated Teachers, who are using best practice to drive up standards of support across the country.

The new funding includes £19.5 million to strengthen the work of Regional Adoption Agencies, to improve national matching between parents and children, and focus on recruitment of prospective adopters from all communities so make sure they are not deterred from the idea of adoption because of their background.

The Department for Education launched its recruitment campaign to find more adoptive parents in 2019, which includes a focus on prospective parents from Black and Minority Ethnic communities. New data published today shows an increase in the number of approved adopters waiting to be matched to children in care since this campaign started, with over 100 more adopters from Minority Ethnic backgrounds were approved at the end of September 2021: 590 compared to 450 at the end of March 2020 – an increase of more than 30%.

Overall, 3,700 children left care under a permanence order between April-September 2021-22 – either through an adoption or a Special Guardianship Order, where a close relative or family friend takes parental responsibility – an increase of 31% on the same period last year.

The number of children waiting longer than 18 months to be adopted has also dropped, despite the challenges faced by the care sector during the pandemic.

Research published today shows that boys aged 6 to 18 and girls aged 12 to 18 who were adopted into families benefitting from the Adoption Support Fund saw significant improvements in their conduct and aggressive behaviour. The data is made up of responses to two surveys; a baseline conducted between November 2018 and February 2020 and a second wave ending in March 2021.

Sarah Johal, National Adoption Strategic Lead, said:

I welcome the new funding for Regional Adoption Agencies which will help us transform the adoption system by bringing together best practice and testing out new innovative approaches to recruitment; matching; early help and adoption support. Our ambition is to ensure services are delivered to the same high-quality standards across the country.

Dr Krish Kandiah, Chair of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board, said:

I'm delighted that the Government is investing significant new money into adoption. We need to make sure that we all working together to help children get the families they need – loving families who will commit to them for life whatever trauma they have

faced in the past and whatever their futures might hold.

The increase in the Adoption Support Fund will help ensure that adopted children and their families are given every resource they need so they can thrive together.

Dr Carol Homden CBE, Chief Executive of Coram, said:

It is vitally important to children in need of adoption that they find the loving home they need as early as possible and that, no matter where they live, they have an equal chance of accessing high quality support in a timely way to enable them to thrive. This strategic commitment and resourcing gives a welcome boost to this shared aim across the sector and the results will be seen in the lives of children for years to come.

Evaluation reports have also reflected on how post-adoption support, facilitated by the Adoption Support Fund, is helping families. Parents and carers said they most frequently accessed were focused on helping them form attachments as a family ('Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy'), therapeutic 'life story' work aimed at supporting open, honest conversations about a child's history, play therapy for the child, sensory processing therapy for children who have difficulties with change or transitions, or training for parents such as non-violent resistance or in building and nurturing attachments.