

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.