

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.

[Leading UK business bosses help prison leavers get work in crime-cutting drive](#)

- top business chiefs to drive thousands of prisoners into work to cut crime
- 91 prisons will benefit from new 'Employment Boards' by next spring
- prison leavers with a job much more likely to go straight – cutting £18 billion cost of reoffending

Leaders from big-name firms such as Lotus Cars and Sodexo will chair new Employment Advisory Boards which are being rolled out across the prison estate following a successful trial.

The boards act as a link between jails and employers, making sure that offenders use their time in prison to gain the skills and links to job

opportunities they need to head straight into stable work upon release.

This is crucial in tackling the £18 billion cost of reoffending, cutting crime and boosting public protection, as ex-offenders in steady jobs within 6 months of leaving prison are nine percentage points less likely to commit further crime.

Employment Advisory Boards have already been established in 20 prisons, and will be up and running in all 91 'resettlement' prisons in England and Wales by April 2023.

Deputy Prime Minister, Justice Secretary and Lord Chancellor Dominic Raab MP, said:

Getting prison leavers into work is a formula that works. It reduces the chance of reoffending – cutting crime and making the public safer.

It's a true win-win, allowing us to boost public protection and save the taxpayer money, while providing the reliable staff businesses need to drive the British economy.

In a survey, 90 per cent of employers who have taken on ex-offenders say they are "motivated, reliable, good at their job and trustworthy".

Employment Advisory Boards are chaired by business experts from companies such as performance car manufacturer Lotus, construction firm Murphy Group and business services provider Sodexo. They work with prisons to ensure they understand what employers want so offenders have the right skills and links to job opportunities on release.

This ensures training programmes and prison workshops are geared to local employment needs and that offenders can access a vibrant business network as they prepare for release.

The Deputy Prime Minister visited HMP Wandsworth this week to meet the prison's deputy governor, Mia Motter, business leaders and prisoners benefitting from the unique initiative.

The prison's employment board launched last May, and is chaired by Rosie Brown, chief executive of award-winning, ready-meal company, COOK. The board is supported by business experts from international real estate and investment group LendLease and prisoner employment charity StandOut.

The board was the brainchild of James Timpson, chief executive of the Timpson Group. HMP Wandsworth launched its Employment Advisory Board in June, 2021 and since then, 98 prisoners have worked with the service, 76 have received job offers and 33 are successfully in a job.

Rosie Brown, chair of HMP Wandsworth's Employment Advisory Board and co-chief executive officer of COOK, said:

I am proud to work for a company that has a long track record of supporting prison leavers into employment and I know from personnel experience that some of our best and most loyal employees have criminal records – that’s not an obstacle to succeeding in life.

Bringing our expertise to HMP Wandsworth has been an excellent experience and I am delighted that Employment Advisory Boards are being rolled out to 91 prisons across the country.

As part of the Prisons White Paper published last December, the Government has committed to investing £200 million per year by 2023 on reducing reoffending, including on prison leaver employment schemes. Initiatives to be funded include the roll out of prison employment leads to all resettlement prisons who will work closely with the specialist employment team in Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service, the [New Futures Network](#).

Notes to editors

- The [Prisons White Paper](#) was published in December 2021 as part of the Government’s strategy for reducing reoffending by increasing employment rates among ex-offenders.
- [Employment reduces](#) the chance of reoffending significantly, by up to nine percentage points.
- An [employer survey](#) revealed that employers believe the ex-offenders they employ are “motivated, reliable, good at their job and trustworthy”.
- [New Futures Network](#) already supports more than 400 businesses to work with prisons and probation staff to match serving and former prisoners with jobs.

[Nightingale Courts extended to support justice recovery](#)

Press release

Thirty Nightingale Court rooms are to be extended until March next year as the government continues in its efforts to tackle the impact of COVID-19 on the justice system and secure speedier justice for victims.



- 30 Nightingale Court rooms extended
- It builds on raft of measures to speed up justice for victims after the unprecedented impact of the pandemic
- Backlog already beginning to drop in the Crown Court as a result of efforts so far

During the pandemic, sports arenas, hotels, and conference centres were rapidly transformed into court rooms to provide more space for jury trials when social distancing was in place. The continued use of some of these Nightingale Courts in areas such as the South East, London and the Midlands will help drive court recovery and reduce delays.

Justice Minister, James Cartlidge, said:

Nightingale Courts continue to be a valuable weapon in the fight against the pandemic's unprecedented impact on our courts providing temporary extra capacity.

Combined with other measures – such as removing the cap on Crown Court sitting days, more use of remote hearings, and increasing magistrate sentencing powers – we are beginning to see the backlog drop so victims can get the speedier justice they deserve.

Today's (3 March 2022) announcement builds on the significant action taken since the start of the pandemic to drive court recovery including:

- Legislating to double the sentencing powers available to magistrates from 6 months to a year to free up an estimated 2,000 extra days of Crown Court sitting time each year.
- Investing a quarter of a billion pounds to support recovery in the courts in the last financial year – plus over £50 million for victims and support services.
- Ensuring there is no limit on the number of sitting days in the Crown Court this year.
- Creating 2 'super courtrooms' which can accommodate up to 12 defendants; increasing capacity for large trials.
- Opening 3,265 Cloud Video Platform virtual court rooms across all jurisdictions. These currently hold around 13,600 hearings per week using audio and/or video hearings.

The impact of these measures, alongside the re-opening of 60 Crown courtrooms since the peak of the virus, is already being seen. The latest figures show that in December 2021 the crown court backlog dropped to under 59,000. This is a fall of over 2,000 since its peak in June 2021. Meanwhile, in the magistrates' courts, the outstanding criminal caseload has dropped by almost 70,000 cases since its peak in July 2021.

In places such as the North West where the number of outstanding cases has dropped significantly in recent months, the majority of the temporary courts are no longer needed and will wind down at the end of March 2021.

Following the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, courtroom capacity has returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Notes to editors

- The sites will remain open until March next year. The locations are as follows:
 - Prospero House, London (three Crown court rooms)
 - Barbican, London (two Crown court rooms)
 - Croydon Jurys Inn, London (two Crown court rooms)
 - Mercure Hotel, Maidstone (two Crown court rooms)
 - Former court, Chichester (two Crown court rooms)
 - Former county court, Telford (three civil and family court rooms)
 - Park Hall Hotel, Wolverhampton (two Crown court rooms)
 - Maple House, Birmingham (two Crown court rooms and two civil family and/or tribunal court rooms)
 - Former Magistrates court, Fleetwood (two civil and family court rooms)
 - Cloth Hall court, Leeds (three Crown court rooms)
 - Civic Centre, Swansea (one Crown court room)
 - Former Magistrates' court, Cirencester (one Crown court room, one Magistrates rooms)
 - Negotiations to secure a new two-courtroom venue in London to replace the Nightingale at Monument are ongoing
- The sites which are closing as planned are not needed because HMCTS has reopened existing hearing rooms as social distancing measures have eased. We now have sufficient rooms in these areas for all the available Crown Court judges. We are hiring 1,100 new judges this year to further boost our efforts to increase capacity and tackle the backlog.
 - 102 Petty France, London (four family court rooms)
 - Monument, London (two Crown court rooms)
 - Jury's Inn Hotel, Middlesbrough (two civil and family court rooms)
 - Knights' chamber and visitor Centre, Peterborough (one Crown court room)
 - Mercure Hotel, Nottingham (two Crown court rooms)
 - M40 J15 Warwick Hotel, Warwick (two Crown court rooms)
 - Hilton Hotel, Manchester (two Crown court rooms)
 - Hilton Hotel, Liverpool (one Crown court room)
 - University of Bolton Stadium, Bolton (one Crown court room)
 - Crowne Plaza, Chester (two Crown court rooms)
 - The Guildhall, Winchester (three civil family and/or tribunal court

rooms)

- 470 existing courtrooms are now open
- Our latest backlog stats are available on GOV.UK:
www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/hmcts-management-information-december-2021
- More information on the increase in magistrate sentencing powers is available on GOV.UK:
www.gov.uk/government/news/magistrates-courts-given-more-power-to-tackle-backlog

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[Reinforcing our support for the rights and freedoms of all Afghans](#)

Thank you Madam President. Let me join others in wishing you and your team all the best for your Presidency. And let me thank SRSG Lyons and Mariam Safi for their powerful and sobering briefings.

The situation in Afghanistan remains of deep concern. Afghanistan is facing the world's most severe food security crisis and more than half the population is in need of emergency assistance. The risks of a humanitarian catastrophe remain real and urgent action is needed to avert economic collapse.

So, the work of UNAMA and UN leadership in leading an adequately resourced, prioritised and coordinated international response remains absolutely crucial.

The United Kingdom remains one of the foremost supporters of the humanitarian response.

UK aid to Afghanistan has already doubled this year to \$381 million. The UK has also agreed to co-host a Pledging Conference on 31 March to raise funds for the UN's Humanitarian Response Plan. I urge all member states to step up their support.

However, humanitarian assistance can only go so far. We welcome the UN's Transitional Engagement Framework, a whole of UN system approach to the provision of life saving assistance and support for basic human needs. The international community must act quickly to find creative solutions to

address the liquidity crisis and to establish principles and mechanisms for providing assistance beyond basic humanitarian aid.

For its part, the Taliban needs to address the international community's concerns, as we set out in Security Council Resolution 2596.

We are particularly concerned by reports of increased reprisals against former security forces and government officials, as well as attacks against minority groups and detentions of civil society representatives.

The recent arrests of female activists, and members of their families, for protesting peacefully in support of women's rights were especially worrying, as were announcements that appear to further restrict women's ability to travel.

In the last few weeks in certain provinces, some women have been able to return to university, and the Taliban has made important public commitments that all girls will be able to return to secondary school at the end of March when schools reopen following winter break.

Educating healthy women and girls will contribute to peace, stability and development, and we will be watching closely to see that the Taliban meets their commitments

Madam President, it is vital that we in this Council continue to speak with one voice in support of the UN's work in the months ahead, and we look forward to discussions on the upcoming UNAMA mandate renewal.

The United Kingdom fully supports an empowered and effective UN Mission responsible for delivery of the humanitarian response; monitoring and advocating for the freedoms and rights of all Afghans; and promoting stability. We hope all members of the Security Council unite behind this in support of the people of Afghanistan.

Thank you.

International pressure will not relent until every Russian soldier is out of Ukraine

Thank you, Mr President, Colleagues,

The United Nations spoke clearly this morning.

141 countries voted in favour of this resolution and against Russian aggression in Ukraine.

It is a clear message:

that we condemn President Putin's war;

that we support the Ukrainian people;

that we uphold the principles of the Charter.

Russia's international isolation is clear for all to see.

The Russian people did not want this isolation. They did not want this war.

President Putin's decision to start this war has made Russia a global pariah.

We will ensure President Putin's war of choice comes at a heavy cost.

International pressure and isolation will not relent until every Russian soldier is out of Ukraine.

The free world stands with the people of Ukraine.

Our votes today are for the brave Ukrainians who are suffering the barbaric shelling of their cities and are besieged by Russian forces.

We must support the Ukrainian people with the diplomatic, economic, humanitarian and defensive military assistance they so desperately need.

And our votes today are for the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of every state.

We have stood up against those who seek to redraw the world's borders by threat or use of force.

For if President Putin's aggression against Ukraine goes unchecked, which country could be next?

Today we have shown that we will defend together the Charter and the rules we built together.

I thank you, Mr President.