



Department  
for Education

## Adoption Support

What you are entitled to if you've adopted a child from care, and the changes the Government is making to ensure that you have the support and information you need to best care for your child.

### Treating you fairly

When a new child joins your family it is vital that you have time to spend and bond with them. That is why from 2015 **adoption leave and pay** from work are being brought in line with maternity leave and pay, by:

- removing a 26 week length-of-service requirement, **making adoption leave a day-one right;**
- enhancing the current rate, **making adoption pay equal to 90% of your normal salary during the first six weeks of leave;**
- allowing **time off work for introductions to the child.**

We are also considering whether any additional provision is necessary for those working adopters who do not meet the qualifying requirements to receive adoption pay.

We understand that your child still faces some of the same challenges they had while they were in care, so we'll make sure they keep appropriate entitlements from their time in care. Changes have already been made to ensure children adopted from care retain their **priority schools access** from 2013 and these children will also be entitled to **free early education from age 2**, from 2014.

And Government guidance now makes clear that **we expect social homes to go to people who genuinely need them, including those who are looking to adopt or foster a child in need of a family.**

### Specialist support for families that need it

You deserve support when it's needed, from professionals who understand your child's needs.

Some adopted children will need specialist support from health services because of their early-life experiences. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence will

produce and distribute new clinical guidance on attachment disorder and new professional learning material on the issues affecting adopted children, **which will help make services more responsive to your child's needs.**

The Government will **improve consistency and practice across the country** through a funded programme of social worker professional development in adoption services.

We will **support specialist providers to offer more and better quality support services.** We are seeking charities with evidenced or innovative plans to improve support, which the Government will fund.

We will be providing **new learning materials** so that you can discover more about common adoption issues and **therapeutic parenting skills and techniques** at your own pace.

## **Being clear about your rights and giving you more control**

As parents you have a right to information about what's available and how to access the support you need. The Government will soon **publish an Adoption Passport that will inform adopters and prospective adopters of all of their current legal entitlements.** We are changing the law to ensure that agencies make you fully aware of these rights.

Local authorities must already, by law, carry out an **assessment of support needs for your child and family**, not only at the point of adoption but again if you need help in future. Local authorities can provide family-specific support to address your needs, which can include, for example, parenting programmes, financial support, and therapeutic services.

We will pilot personal budgets during 2013 and 2014, and we are changing the law to allow us to roll these out on a national basis if the pilots are successful. **Personal budgets will put you in the driving seat** by giving you the right to request control over the budget that your local authority would have spent on adoption support services for your family. This will give you more choice and control over the type of support provided, and the provider of that support.

If you feel that the support you are receiving is not good enough, you can already complain through local complaints procedures. Your ability to get your voice heard is particularly important during this period of change in the adoption system and **the Government is therefore appointing a new Champion to support you.**