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Guidance

Adoption and special guardianship support fund (ASGSF)

Local authorities and regional adoption agencies can apply for therapeutic funding for eligible adoptive, special guardianship order and child arrangement order families.

From:

[Department for Education](#)

Published

10 July 2018

Last updated

9 June 2026 — [See all updates](#)



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The adoption and special guardianship support fund (ASGSF) provides funds to local authorities and regional adoption agencies (RAAs) to pay for essential therapeutic services for eligible adoptive, special guardianship order (SGO) and child arrangement order (CAO) families.

In February 2026, DfE announced £55 million funding for the ASGSF for 2026 to 2027. The ASGSF will continue to offer support into 2027 to 2028.

The ASGSF model is based on the existing statutory framework for the assessment of [adoption support](#), [SGO](#) or CAO support needs and the provision of support services.

This guide is for local authorities and RAAs so they can apply for ASGSF funding.

For more information on support available to families, visit:

- [Adoption England](#) and [Adoption UK](#) for adoptive families
- [Family Rights Group](#) and [Kinship](#) for SGO families about kinship care

Apply to the adoption support fund

Start now >

Contact the ASGSF fund manager or your adoption support service adviser if you:

- need a new account
- need to register someone new on the system

- want to inform the ASGSF of any new staff or other changes

Funding eligibility

To be eligible for funding, local authorities and RAAs must apply to the ASGSF within 3 months of assessing a family's support needs.

The ASGSF is available for children and young people up to and including the age of 21, or 25 with an education, health and care plan, who:

- are living (placed) with a family in England while waiting for adoption
- were adopted from local authority care in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland and live in England
- were adopted from abroad and live in England with a recognised adoption status
- were in care before an SGO was made
- left care under a special guardianship order that was subsequently changed to an adoption order, or vice versa
- are under a residency order or child arrangement order (CAO) and were previously looked after
- were previously looked after but where the adoption, special guardianship, residency or CAO placement has broken down, irrespective of any reconciliation plans

You should make a funding application before therapy starts. We will only consider retrospective applications in exceptional circumstances. This includes:

- the need for an urgent intervention due to the family situation
- an unexpected absence of approving local authority

staff when the funding is commissioned

We will not consider administrative and clerical errors, or delays caused by organisational restructuring, as exceptional.

Further [guidance for local authorities about the different care orders](#) is available.

Maximum funding allocation for each child

Until the end of March 2026, the ASGSF will have a single fair access limit of:

- £3,000 per child per year for therapy

Specialist assessments up to the level of £2,500 per child will be considered, but only within the overall £3,000 fair access limit.

This will maximise the number of children who are able to benefit from the ASGSF.

How families access ASGSF support

The local authority or RAA that places a child with a family is responsible for assessing that family's support needs for 3 years after the order is made. After 3 years, the responsibility lies with the local authority or RAA where the family lives, if they have moved.

Families apply to the relevant local authority or RAA, which will assess their needs.

Local authorities and RAAs will:

- assess the family and consider if therapeutic support is needed
- decide on the type required and if it is eligible for

payments from the ASGSF

- apply directly to the ASGSF
- purchase the support from their own list of approved suppliers when the ASGSF approves funding

Contact

Adoption and special guardianship support fund team

Email asf@mottmac.com

Telephone: 01223 463 517

Complaints

The [ASGSF complaints procedure](#) (PDF, 252 KB, 4 pages) is available.

Published 10 July 2018

Last updated 9 June 2026 —

9 June 2026

Updated to reflect that funding for the adoption and special guardianship support fund (ASGSF) will continue into 2026 to 2027 and support will be offered into 2027 to 2028.

11 September 2025

Updated to confirm adoption and special guardianship support fund (ASGSF) applications can continue into next financial year.

17 July 2025

Updated to reflect that local authorities and regional adoption agencies must apply to the ASGSF within 3 months of assessing a family's support needs to be eligible for funding. And that retrospective applications will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

24 April 2025

Updated to reflect the extension of the adoption and special guardianship support fund until March 2026 and add retrospective funding application guidance.

15 December 2023

Updated to reflect the fund name changing from 'Adoption support fund' (ASF) to 'Adoption and specialist guardian support fund' (ASGSF).

3 February 2023

Added a link to the Kinship charity.

11 July 2022

Added the ASF complaints procedure.

1 April 2022

Updated the funding eligibility criteria.

12 May 2021

Updated as funding for the ASF will continue until 31 March 2022. Added funding eligibility criteria for children who temporarily leave home and have a care plan that includes an intention to return home - please read the guidance for full details.

31 May 2019

Updated funding eligibility information.

24 May 2019

Added funding eligibility information about care arrangement orders, changes in status and retrospective applications.

17 September 2018

Removed line 'The ASF aims to complete a review within 5 working days of receiving an application from an LA or RAA' due to an increase in application processing times.

17 July 2018

Added the link to the adoption support fund service.

13 July 2018

Updated with information about a service migration and when it will be available again.

10 July 2018

First published.

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