



# Adoption East Midlands

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## Information for people interested in adoption



working together



Adoption  
East Midlands



## Working together to create a family

For most people, finding out about adoption is a leap into unknown territory. Adoption East Midlands Regional Adoption Agency has experienced teams of specialists to work with you throughout the process, including dedicated social workers and support workers to help you every step of the way.

All children need a loving, stable home. They need parents who will stick by them through the good times and the bad. They need support and love to help them overcome their troubled backgrounds, make sense of who they are and grow up to be safe and secure. Children waiting to be adopted often have additional needs or behavioural issues. Our help, support and training will help you to be prepared to handle these.

We have children in care from different backgrounds needing adoptive families, from the very young to older children. We are particularly keen to hear from you if you can take two or more children, as we have many brothers and sisters who really need to stay together. Some children may also have a brother or sister who we would consider placing with them at a later date.

## Who are we?

Adoption East Midlands is a partnership of eight Local Authorities and two Voluntary Adoption Agencies working together to provide adoption services. Derby City, Nottingham City, Derbyshire County and Nottinghamshire County Councils have formed a regional adoption agency as part of Adoption East Midlands and place children for these four Local Authorities. We can accept adopters from across the East Midlands. Find out more at [www.adoptioneastmidlands.org.uk](http://www.adoptioneastmidlands.org.uk).

## Who can adopt?

There are no hard and fast rules about who can adopt.

### You can be any of the following:

- single
- married
- in a same sex relationship
- divorced
- living together
- already a parent
- living with disabilities
- over 21. There is no upper age limit as long as you are reasonably healthy.

However, you don't need to be a homeowner or in work.

*“The whole process went very smoothly... we felt totally at ease.”*



## Our children

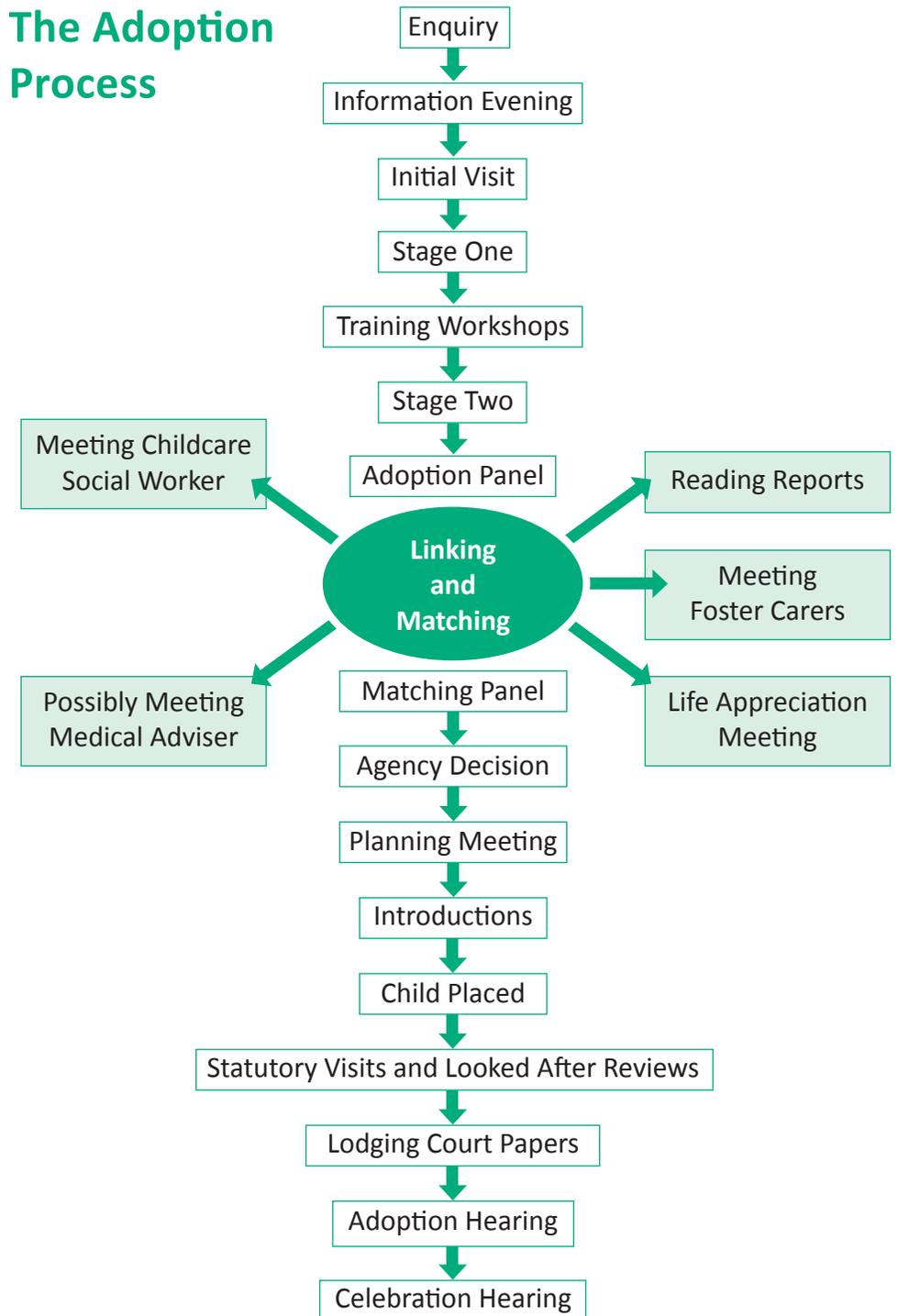
The vast majority of our children waiting to be adopted are aged one to five. Many have brothers and sisters who we would prefer to place together in a family.

Some children may have come into care at birth, but many of our children waiting to be adopted have had a difficult background which may have caused some delays in their development. They might have been abused or neglected and subsequently developed certain coping mechanisms and behaviour that means they can find it difficult to form relationships. Restoring their faith in adults is often the main challenge that adopters face.

Some of our children also have special needs or disabilities and we will always welcome people looking to adopt these children. Children of all abilities and all ethnic backgrounds need adoptive parents and we welcome applicants from a wide range of ethnicities and social backgrounds.

However complicated their backgrounds, like all children, adopted children need the love and security of a family where they feel they belong and where they can put down roots, grow and blossom. Whatever the children's circumstances, Adoption East Midlands Regional Adoption Agency offers excellent support to adoptive parents.

## The Adoption Process



## Adoption process – what to expect

We work closely with adoptive parents to help and support you in the fulfilling and sometimes challenging role you are taking on. Adoption is for life and to be successful we consider it important to meet both the child's needs and yours.

We have a two-stage approval process which allows you to learn more about adoption, then move quickly through the assessment and approval process.

## When you make an enquiry

If you want to take your enquiry further we will invite you to attend an information event. This will be followed by a visit from a social worker. They will discuss the types of children we currently need families for, explain the adoption process, answer any of your questions and help you decide if you want to go ahead with adoption. If you decide to continue you will complete a formal 'Registration of Interest' which will give the agency information about you and your household members.

We will always be open and honest in our dealings with you. Confidentiality is important for you and for the children involved and we will respect this throughout the process.

*"We adopted two children aged four and six and the whole experience has been wonderful. After getting married, it's the best thing we've ever done."*



## Stage one (should be completed in two months)

Stage one begins when we accept your 'Registration of Interest'. During this stage you will be supported in exploring your interest and your capacity to adopt. An adoption social worker will meet with you and you will be invited to attend preparation group sessions with other prospective adoptive parents (those with partners will be expected to attend all sessions together) where everyone discusses the issues involved and learns from existing adoptive parents' experiences. This is often the part of the process that people find the most interesting and helpful. At the same time we will carry out the required statutory checks for adoption including:

- three personal references
- a medical examination with your GP
- a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Your social worker will talk to you about any other checks we might want to take up. Based on the information gathered during this period, the agency will make a decision as to whether you can continue to stage two (the assessment). If it is decided that you are unsuitable to adopt through us, we will provide a clear explanation of the reasons why.

## Stage two (should be completed in four months)

This is the intensive training and assessment part of the adoption process and has two functions:

- to confirm that you are the right kind of person to adopt
- to give you the additional skills you need to be an adoptive parent.

The main part of the assessment is a series of visits made by a social worker to talk to you in your home. During this time the social worker gets to know you and your family and spends time helping you think about what strengths you could bring to adoptive parenting. The social worker will have conversations with you (and your partner) about your childhood and your experiences of growing up. They will ask you about how you have dealt with past experiences, how you feel about your family and what sort of parent(s) you want to be.

When the assessment and training is complete, your application will be considered by the Adoption Panel. You will be invited to comment on the assessment report before it goes to panel. You can also attend the panel if you wish.

There may be occasions when the process takes longer, for example if a reference is delayed or you decide you want more time.

*“It’s hard work as I’m sure bringing up birth children is, but it really is fantastic.”*

## Foster to adopt

You may also want to consider ‘foster to adopt’ - where prospective adopters are also approved as foster carers. Children can then move in before there is a Placement Order. You would be an approved foster carer, but if it was agreed the child could be adopted, then you would move straight on to become prospective adoptive parents.

There is an element of risk in this but it means fewer moves for children and the potential to be settled with their permanent family as soon as possible. You can find out about foster to adopt by attending our training sessions.

## Matching - finding the right child or children for you

Once your application has been approved we will begin the process of matching you with a child, or children, waiting for an adoptive family. If we don’t have the right child for your family we will release your details, with your permission, to other adoption agencies.

The more flexible you are regarding the children you wish to adopt, the more likely it will be that the process can be shortened. For example, if you told us that you wanted one child, preferably a girl, aged under three, and without any difficulties, you would be restricting the number of children that could be matched with you. If you broaden your criteria, the matching process becomes much easier.

We will offer you full information about every child you consider, including their health and education, and give you access to any specialists who are involved. There will be the opportunity to meet the children and get to know them before they move to live with you permanently.

## Once a child is placed with you

Until the child is legally adopted you will work in partnership with us to ensure all the child's needs are met. You will have the support of the child's social worker and your adoption social worker, both of whom will visit you regularly.

We will provide you with a placement agreement which details any support or help that has been agreed. Financial assistance may be available, to meet the particular needs of a child. This is usually only available for older children or children with a disability.

You will be fully involved in discussions and reviews involving the child, including the decision to lodge an adoption application with the court, to complete the process.

When the Adoption Order is granted it transfers the child's legal status to you as parents and you gain all the parental responsibility that you would have if the child had been born to you. You can ask for help with adoption issues at any point in your child's life from our Adoption Support Service.

## Returning adopters and foster carers

If you have previously adopted, or are a foster carer wanting to adopt a child you are looking after, you will still go through an assessment process because we need to ensure that bringing another child or children into your existing family will be the best thing for everyone. However we aim to fast-track your application and complete the process within four months.

*"After all my boy has been through it's great when he cuddles me because he never used to trust women."*



## Adoption support

Our dedicated adoption support teams have experienced staff offering tailor made packages of support. We offer support to adoptive families who adopt through Adoption East Midlands and who have adopted a child from the region throughout the journey, right into adulthood.

We can talk to you about any issues or concerns you have regarding adoption and may offer you an adoption support assessment and link you with services that can help, including in education and health.

All adopters can be on our mailing list for invitations to our training opportunities and children's activities. We will send you our newsletter packed with articles about our services and encourage you to stay in touch.

We also provide a dedicated website for our adopters, with access to the latest research and a range of informative articles.

*"It's the best thing I have done in my life."*



## Contact us

**W** [www.adoptoneastmidlands.org.uk](http://www.adoptoneastmidlands.org.uk)

**E** [enquiries@adoptoneastmidlands.nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@adoptoneastmidlands.nottscc.gov.uk)

**T** 0115 804 4567



Derby City Council



Nottingham

City Council



Nottinghamshire  
County Council