



Practice Guidance: The Adoption Support Fund

Document Title	Practice Guidance: The Adoption Support Fund
Version	1.0
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Date Approved	01/01/2023
Date to be Reviewed By	01/01/2025

1. Adopt North East undertakes assessments of need for adoption support at the request of the following:

- i. Children who are adopted and their parents;*
- ii. Persons wishing to adopt a child where a child has been placed with them for adoption;*
- iii. Adopted persons;*

The requirement to assess the need for support is limited to the entitlement to services of the person making the request. See paragraph 4.3.

The Assessment of Need is an opportunity for an Adopt North East Social Worker to meet with you to explore the needs of your family and consider the most appropriate support to meet these needs. This assessment will identify the strengths within your family, your concerns, early life experiences of your child, their health and wellbeing needs, your family network, and any previous support you have accessed. It may be that the Social Worker wishes to speak to your child or the young person whom you are contacting us in respect of to gain their voice and view.

It may be that this assessment recommends that your family would benefit from specialist therapeutic support, and in this instance, we would look to identify the most appropriate intervention and access this using the Adoption Support Fund (ASF).

2. Accessing ASF support

The Adoption Support Fund is available for children living in England up to and including the age of 21 (or 25 with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health & Care Plan).

Adopt North East can support children via the Adoption Support Fund who:

- are adopted and were previously in local authority care in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland
- are adopted from overseas

If the assessment of need identifies that a therapeutic need exists, an application will be completed to the adoption support fund (ASF). The ASF provides funds to regional adoption agencies (RAAs) to pay for essential therapeutic services for eligible adoptive families.

To be eligible for funding, Adopt North East must apply to the ASF within 3 months of assessing a family's support needs.

We are able to submit funding applications to the ASF for children 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 previously looked after but where the adoption has broken down, irrespective of any reconciliation plans

Adopt North East will:

- decide on the type of support required and if it is eligible for payments from the ASF
- apply directly to the ASF
- Upon ASF approval, commission support from approved therapeutic providers.

A funding application will normally be completed before therapy starts. We will only consider retrospective applications in exceptional circumstances. For example, the need for an urgent intervention due to the family situation.

3. Funding allocations for each child

Until the end of March 2025 the ASF will have 2 fair access limits:

- £2,500 per child per year for specialist assessment
- £5,000 per child per year for therapy

The majority of applications to the fund fall within these limits. In exceptional cases, where there is an urgent need for higher cost support, local authorities or Regional Adoption Agency (RAAs) are asked to match-fund applications.

Criteria for match-funding:

- a high risk of adoption breakdown without high-cost support
- local authorities and RAAs dealing with an unusually high number of complex cases that they cannot afford to fund without additional support from the ASF
- additional funding would help to progress hard to place adoptions
- a lack of available, affordable therapeutic support means higher cost provision is required

4. Timescales for Funding Approval

Following submission of the ASF application, it takes 25 working days for the application to be processed. This timescale is subject to change as directed by the ASF. ANE have no influence over the timescales which applications are processed. On occasion, application can be returned to answer queries, and may delay the application further. This is at the discretion of the ASF.

5. Approved list of providers

ANE work with providers registered on the NEPO Portal and are subject to an approved Flexible Framework. This ensures all providers commissioned through the ASF are accredited and have undertaken relevant criteria checks. All providers

commissioned by ANE are required to use Outcome Measure Tools set by the ASF at the start and end of the support. All Providers used by ANE are subject to regulated and formal processes ensuring fair access and regulation of provision for service users.

6. Therapeutic interventions available

The following interventions are within scope of Adoption Support Fund funding:

- Specialist Assessment – The ASF defines that this assessment must identify the attachment and trauma needs of the child and provide a holistic view of the therapy require to meet the assessed need
- Theraplay
- Play Therapy
- Sensory Integration therapy
- Creative therapies
- Dyadic Development Psychotherapy (DDP)
- Filial Therapy
- Psychotherapy
- Eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing
- Extensive Therapeutic Life Story Work
- Non Violence Resistance

Further information about what is and is not in scope can be found at:

- [First for Adoption](#)
- [GOV.UK](#)