



Financial Support to Adopters: Guidance for Practitioners

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1. Introduction

Adopt North East will contribute to the reasonable expenses incurred by adopter(s) during the matching and Introductions process in relation to their travel, subsistence and accommodation. Where costs incurred by adopters exceed the maximum amount of contribution stated within this policy, the adopters will be expected to meet any additional costs themselves.

Additionally, the Agency will pay the full cost of the fee charged by the Courts for an application for an Adoption Order.

As the Agency is a publicly funded body, its finances are robustly regulated. Payment to Adopters will only be authorised by the Senior Manager upon proof of expense, usually paper or electronic receipt of payment. The exception will be claims for mileage where miles will be calculated using google maps (or equivalent) and evidence that the journey took place – rather than receipts for petrol etc. – will be sufficient.

Additionally, adopters will be advised that the Local Authority responsible for the child is required to consider whether financial support is required to support the adopters for the specific child, for example the purchase of essential equipment to facilitate placement and care. Every Local Authority has different policies in relation to such funding and Adopt North East will refer prospective adopters to the Local Authority for advice.

2. Financial Support Available

a) Assessment and Approval

Save in wholly exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the Senior Manager, no financial support will be provided to adopters to attend meetings, training

or Adoption Panel as part of the assessment and approval process. Where exceptional funding is agreed, the amounts will be those stated in relation to the Introductions process below.

b) Family Finding – Pre-Linking

Save in wholly exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the Senior Manager, no financial support will be provided for adopters to attend Family Finding Events (Profiling Events or Activity Days) as part of the Family Finding process. Where exceptional funding is agreed, the amounts will be those stated in relation to the Introductions process below.

c) Linking and Matching (Pre-Introductions)

Save in wholly exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the Senior Manager, no financial support will be provided for adopters to attend 'Bumping Into' or 'Chemistry Meetings' as part of the pre-introductions process. Where exceptional funding is agreed, the amounts will be those stated in relation to the Introductions process below.

d) Introductions (All stages of Moving to Adoption)

Adopt North East will contribute to the reasonable expenses incurred by adopter(s) during all stages of the introductions process in relation to their travel, subsistence and accommodation.

i. Subsistence

Adopt North East will provide a maximum contribution towards the overall subsistence costs of the adoptive family being away from home during Introductions.

Adopters will need to provide receipt of payment for food and drink in order for a claim to be paid.

The Agency will pay:

| Subsistence costs | 1 April 2021 – 31 Mar 2023 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Adult | Max. £15.00 per day per person |
| Child (up to 18 years of age) | Max. £10.00 per day per child |

ii. Accommodation

Adopt North East will meet the costs associated with the need for accommodation for an adoptive family if they are required to be away from home for the period of Introductions. This will be done through the Agency selecting, booking and paying for accommodation deemed appropriate to the specific needs of the planned Introductions.

In the alternative, adopters are entitled to select accommodation of their choice. If they choose to do so, the Agency will only pay up to a maximum contribution of £75.00 per night – costs exceeding this amount will need to be met by the adopters themselves. Where adopters select their own accommodation, adopters will need to provide a copy of the receipt of payment by them of the costs of accommodation.

The Agency will pay:

| Accommodation costs | 1 April 2021 – 31 Mar 2023 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Accommodation selected by Agency | Fully paid |
| Accommodation selected by Adopters | Max. £75.00 per night |

iii. Travel

Adopt North East will provide a contribution towards the necessary travel costs incurred by adopters as part of the Introductions process.

Adopters will need to provide receipts/tickets for any parking or public transport costs, and evidence the miles driven (calculated by google maps or equivalent).

Adopt North East will not fund the cost of taxi fares where there is a credible public transport alternative. Where it is proposed that a taxi is necessary for all or part of a journey, this must be agreed in advance by Adopt North East. This is to ensure best value journeys are made whenever possible.

As part of its commitment to the Climate Emergency, Adopt North East will not fund internal flights within the United Kingdom, even where there is evidence of greater convenience to adopters or the child.

The Agency will pay:

| Travel costs | 1 April 2021 – 31 Mar 2023 |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Private Travel by Car | £0.42 pence per mile |
| Parking Fees | Fully paid |
| Tyne Tunnel | Fully paid |
| Public Transport - Metro | Fully paid |
| Public Transport - Bus | Fully paid |

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| Public Transport - Train | Fully paid to Standard Fare only |
| Travel by Taxi | No funding (unless exceptional circs). |
| Flights | No funding |
| Hire Car | No funding (unless exceptional circs.) |

e) Initial Placement Costs

Individual Local Authorities are responsible for considering the financial support required to support adopters for specific children and may support the purchase of essential equipment in exceptional circumstances.

f) Adoption Order

Adopt North East will reimburse adopters the costs of applying to the Court for an Adoption Order.

The Agency will pay:

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|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Court Fees | 1 January 2022 – 31 Mar 2023 |
| Fees for Adoption Order | Fully paid – currently £183.00 |

g) Financial Support

Most adopters are eligible to claim adoption leave pay from their employer and adopters should make enquiries regarding this at an early stage in the adoption process. They may also be eligible to claim child benefit and/or child tax credit and you can find more information about this from gov.uk website.

If an adopter is self-employed they are not entitled to statutory adoption pay however individual Local Authorities have the responsibility to consider the need to support adopters in these circumstances, subject to a financial assessment.

Individual Local Authorities are responsible for considering the financial support required to support adopters for specific children. Dependent on specific circumstances, adopters may receive payments following an assessment of the child's needs and the family's circumstances. There may be a single one-off payment for a specific time limited period or this may be an ongoing payment.

h) Early Permanence Carers

All early permanence carers will be paid an age based fostering allowance during the fostering phase of their placement by the Local Authority for the child. When a child is placed with an EPP carer, arrangements in relation to settling in grants or assistance towards initial setting up costs will need to be discussed with the Fostering Service from the child's local authority. The age based fostering allowance will cease when a child is placed formally for adoption following matching decision. Any ongoing adoption allowances for a child will be assessed based on the child's individual needs and the adopter's financial circumstances and will be subject to agreement by each individual local authority.

3. Review of Policy

Adopt North East will review the amounts it contributes to the reasonable costs incurred by adopter(s) on annual basis, with any change coming into effect from 01 April unless otherwise stated.