

## WHO CAN ADOPT?

Scottish Adoption aims to recruit 44 adoptive parents each year. We welcome applications from:

- Those who live within a 60 mile radius of Edinburgh. This is linked with our commitment to ensuring we can deliver a range of support and after adoption services to families.
- Those who reside permanently in the UK and have a right to remain here.
- Those over 21. While we do not have any upper age limit, older adopters are more likely to be considered for older children, although more important than age is the ability of adopters to provide a loving and secure home for children until adulthood.
- Single people or couples, with or without children. We are particularly keen to recruit LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) adopters and BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) adopters as these groups are under represented as adoptive parents.
- Those in good general physical and emotional health. Adopting a child is a lifelong commitment that requires energy, stamina and physical fitness. We as an agency must consider whether there is anything in an applicant's previous or current medical history which may have implications for a child's future care and security. Examples might include chronic medical conditions or mental health issues.
- A spare bedroom will be required for any single child being placed for adoption. It is accepted that same gender siblings being placed for adoption can share a bedroom, but siblings of different gender will need their own bedrooms by early primary school.

If you are planning to move we would expect you to resolve this before we could progress your enquiry.

## Some Other Factors to consider:

- Couples need to have been in a relationship for at least three years.
- For applicants with birth children the youngest child needs to be four years old. If you have an adopted child he or she needs to be four years old and have been in placement for at least two years.
- Given what is known about the effects of passive smoking on children, we do not place children with adopters who smoke. Infertility investigations and treatments should be completed prior to application.
- Certain pets including some breeds of dog are considered dangerous and we consider them incompatible with the needs of the children we place.

## WHO ARE THE CHILDREN?

Scottish Adoption places around 50 children each year with our adoptive parents. These children for a variety of reasons, can no longer live with their birth families and come from different backgrounds and circumstances. We need adoptive parents for a wide range of children including pre-school children, older children and sibling groups.

Adopted children need to be helped to grow up knowing who they are and why they were adopted. Evidence from research highlights this is how children are best helped to develop a sense of identity and self-esteem.

Whenever possible we support adoptive families and birth families to keep in touch and exchange information about the child as he or she grows up. For some children it will be important to have adoptive parents who can help them have contact with siblings or other birth family members.

For prospective adopters interested in hearing more about the children waiting for adoptive parents, we can share some children's profiles during an initial meeting with you.

## WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

### Making an Enquiry

If once you've browsed our website and have any general queries or would like to ask something specifically about your own circumstances, please contact us by phone or email and we'll respond within 2 working days.

If you would like to progress your interest as far as making an Initial Enquiry, we'd ask you to complete our Initial Enquiry Form. We will then arrange for you to meet with one of our family placement team. This meeting is an opportunity for you to consider whether adoption is right for you, and whether Scottish Adoption is the right Agency for you.

### The Preparation Group

All prospective adopters are required to attend and participate in a series of group meetings designed to provide you with the information and skills needed for adoptive parenting. Although we recognise this can sound a bit daunting, the feedback from prospective adopters has been consistently positive about the experience.

*"The preparation course was so helpful and enjoyable.....meeting experienced adopters really made us think about some of the issues in a new way"*

We can let you have a copy of the Preparation Course content if you would find this helpful.

We run a minimum of 7 Preparation Groups each year, including one group for 2<sup>nd</sup> time adopters. The groups run on different days and times in order to give prospective adopters choice and flexibility. We aim to book prospective adopters onto the next available course, but sometimes our preparation groups fill quickly. When this happens we will look to

organise additional groups, as we do not want unnecessary delays for prospective adopters or the children waiting for adoption.

However, we do sometimes need to prioritise places and will discuss this process with you if it applies.

The available dates for upcoming courses in 2017 are:

**August/September 2017** – 12, 19, 26 August and 2 September (Saturdays)

**October 2017** – 5, 12, 19 and 26 October (Thursdays)

**November/December 2017** – 11, 18, 25 November and 2 December (Saturdays)

\*Please note that many of our prep groups will take place on Fridays and Saturdays due to popular demand.

## The Home Study

Following completion of a Preparation Course at Scottish Adoption, prospective adopters who wish to proceed will be immediately allocated a Senior Practitioner to undertake an assessment of your suitability to adopt. You will be asked to work closely with your worker to prepare a report for presentation at the Scottish Adoption Panel. This report explores issues such as family background, personal values, relationships, experience of children, motivation to adopt, the needs of vulnerable children and consideration of what you feel you could offer an adopted child.

As part of this assessment you will be asked to have a Medical Examination, carried out by your own GP. This is similar to those needed for life insurance purposes. Its aim is to give a general indication that applicants have a reasonably normal life expectancy and that there are no serious medical factors, which need to be considered.

We are also required to undertake a number of checks and references:

- **Police Check (PVG certificate).** A PVG check is carried out to ascertain if there are any serious criminal offences, which may rule out the placement of children. The PVG check will show any convictions, spent or otherwise. You will be asked to provide all previous addresses.
- **Local Authority.** This is a check by the local authority where you live, or have lived, as required by Adoption Agency Regulations, to establish that there are no known reasons why a child may not be placed with you. This check applies to all members of your household who are aged 16 or over.
- **References.** We ask you to give us the names of six referees, usually close friends and relatives, who know you well and are willing to support your application.

Referees will be asked to provide a written reference. Your worker will make contact with at least three of these referees.

In addition we would request a written reference from your current employer. For applicants with nursery or school age children we would also require a written reference from the child's school or nursery.

- **Employment and Finance.** The Agency will wish to be sure that we have adequate information on your career history and current financial situation (including mortgage details or rental agreement) to ensure appropriate security for any child placed.

*Our aim is to work openly and in partnership with applicants and to share information, wherever possible. However, we may not be able to share third party information received from your referees or your GP if such information is given to us in confidence.*

## The Panel

At the beginning of your Homestudy, we will have agreed with you a date for Panel. Your completed assessment report will be presented to our Adoption Panel which you, along with your worker will be invited to attend. The Panel will consider the report and make a recommendation about your suitability to be an adoptive parent. Scottish Adoption will consider the recommendation and make a decision about approval. If we don't approve you, there is a right of appeal.

Our Panel members (you will meet 4 or 5 of them on the day) include adoptive parents, adopted adults, local authority social workers and a medical adviser. You will see photos and profiles of the panel members involved in your Panel prior to meeting the Panel.

## Matching you with a child

Following your approval, we will begin to explore with you possible placements. Our referrals of children for placement come mainly through our links with Local Authorities in Scotland and Scotland's Adoption Register [www.scotlandsadoptionregister.org.uk](http://www.scotlandsadoptionregister.org.uk)

We also place a number of children from other areas in the U.K.

As the processes for matching and legally securing adoption for the child vary from local authority to local authority, we will provide you with general information throughout your preparation course and assessment and supply specific information in relation to the process applicable for the child being considered.

## Support Commitment

Through the matching and placement process, we will advise and support you every step of the way.

As you will see from browsing the other sections of the website, we offer a range of after adoption services which we will encourage your family to participate in. We make a lifelong support commitment for every Scottish Adoption placement.

## Are there any costs involved?

It is important to be clear that there are no 'charges' made by Scottish Adoption to yourselves at any stage of the application or placement process.

However, as we are a charity we do ask applicants to meet 3 costs:-

1. PVG check - £59.00 per applicant (£18.00 if you are already a PVG member).
2. If you have lived abroad for periods of time you will be asked to undertake police checks/provide evidence yourself in relation to the countries you have lived in There may be a cost involved and some countries insist on fingerprint evidence too. A useful website for establishing criteria and costs for different countries is: <http://www.cpni.gov.uk/advice/personnel-security1/overseas-criminal-record-checks> (If fingerprints are required you can contact <http://www.fingerprintservice.co.uk>)
3. The petition to adopt is lodged at a sheriff court, usually the one nearest to your home. The current fee charged by The Scottish Court Service is £96 per child.
4. Adoption certificates - £25 per child.

Local Authorities pay Scottish Adoption a fee for each child placed and we use part of this to fund our after adoption services. Local Authorities will also usually pay for any legal expenses and in some circumstances will pay a settling in grant and/or adoption allowance.

We will provide you with information on any allowances you may be entitled to.

## Working in Partnership with You

If you choose Scottish Adoption as your agency, we guarantee you a service that is personal, responsive, highly professional and tailored to meet your individual needs. Scottish Adoption staff will guide and support you through each stage of your adoption journey from your initial contact through to your adoptive placement and beyond.

We offer a range of After Adoption Services and are available to offer on going advice and support. If you are interested in making an enquiry please fill in the Initial Enquiry Form.

We look forward to hearing from you!