



Information for Prospective Adopters



SCOTTISH
*adoption
& fostering*

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Who Can Adopt?

The adoption landscape in Scotland is changing, increasingly we are seeing sibling groups and/or older children looking for adoptive families. We would encourage prospective adopters to consider these children and the positive impact they could bring into your life. We welcome applications from:

- Those who live within a 60-mile radius of Edinburgh. This is to ensure we can deliver a range of support and after adoption services to families in-person.
- Those who reside permanently in the UK and have a right to remain here.
- Those aged 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 underrepresented as adoptive parents.
- Those in good general physical and emotional health. As an agency we will 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.
- A spare bedroom for each child being placed. Placing Local Authorities will usually want there to be a bedroom for each child, it is important that your current home has sufficient bedrooms when making your application.

Some other factors to consider:

- Couples need to have been in a relationship for at least three years.
- We know that it is essential for all adopters to have a robust and local network of support. This is even more important when adopting siblings and older children.
- For applicants with birth children the youngest child needs to be at least 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. We currently accept prospective adopters who vape if this is part of a smoking cessation programme. We would expect anyone who vapes to have given up by the point of approval panel.
- 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?

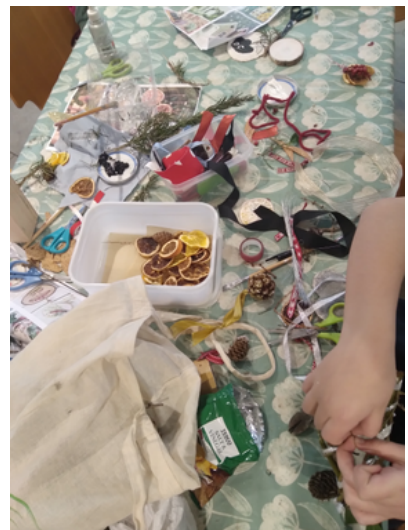
Children are at the forefront of everything we do.

Scottish Adoption and Fostering places around 30 children each year with adoptive parents. These children, for a variety of reasons, can no longer live with their birth families and come from different backgrounds and circumstances.

It is important for adoptive children to know who they are and why they were adopted. Research has shown that empowering children with this information helps them develop a sense of identity and self-esteem.

Whenever possible we support adoptive and birth families to keep in touch and exchange information about the child as he or she grows up. For many 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.



*Pictures from our Crofters Classes

What is the Process?

1

Initial Enquiry

Please contact us via phone or email with any questions you might have. We aim to respond to everyone within two working days.

If you would like to progress your interest and make a more formal initial enquiry, we would 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 and Fostering is the right Agency for you.

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The Prep 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. We recognise this can sound a bit daunting, the feedback from prospective adopters has been consistently positive about the experience.

We run approximately five Preparation Groups each year, including one group for 2nd time adopters. 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.

2024 Prep Group Dates

March 2024 – 2, 9 and 16 (Saturday)

May/June 2024 – 31 May, 7 & 14 June (Friday)

August 2024 – 10, 17, 24 (Saturday)

November 2024 – 2, 9, 16 (Saturday)

What is the Process?

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Home Study

Following completion of a Preparation Course at Scottish Adoption and Fostering, prospective adopters will work alongside members of our team to assess whether adoption is the right route for your family. You will be allocated a Social Worker and they will work alongside you to prepare a report to present 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 several 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 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. The 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 contact 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 you look after.

What is the Process?

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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 and Fostering 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 include adoptive parents, adopted adults, local authority social workers and a medical adviser.

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Matching

Following your approval, we will begin to explore possible matches with you. Our referrals of children for placement come mainly through our links with Local Authorities in Scotland.

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 may 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

Throughout the matching and placement process, Scottish Adoption and Fostering will advise and support you every step of the way. 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 and Fostering placement made.

Finances

Are there any costs involved?

There are no 'charges' made by Scottish Adoption and Fostering 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).

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>)

2. Petition to adopt - 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 £120 per child.

3. Adoption certificates - £25 per child.

Local Authorities pay Scottish Adoption and Fostering 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.

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Our Services:

At Scottish Adoption and Fostering we can support you and your family through the following groups and services:

- **Adoption Preparation Groups**
- **Practical skills for attachment** – this training aims to equip prospective adoptive parents with tools that will allow them to build attachment with the children placed in their care.
- **Individual support for specific issues**
- **Early Days Programme** – 4-6 Theraplay technique sessions which also help to build positive attachment. Run by our Occupation Therapist and Music Therapist where they focus on regulation, sensory experiences, attachment and movement-based activities.
- **Art Therapy** – We have three art therapists who provide individual or family session to help build positive attachments and to encourage self-exploration and self-expression.
- **Music Therapy** – Sessions can be dyadic (child and parent together) or individual for children and young people, with the parent offered support and communication alongside as appropriate. Some parents also undertake their own therapeutic process separately.
- **Adult Counsellors** – Sometimes adopters require their own support. We have two adult counsellors who can provide individual or couples counselling to our parents.
- **Therapeutic Life Story Work**
- **WISE UP Programme** – a workshop that provides adopted and fostered children with the tools to handle comments and questions about their life story.
- **Transition Groups** – for adoptive parents and children to help the transition from nursery to primary school and primary to secondary school.
- **Peer Support** – Individual peer support from an experienced adopter or foster carer.
- **Children's Groups** – We run groups for children aged 7+ years. We believe that group work with our young people has many benefits. For example; increasing social confidence, improving communication skills, reducing stress levels, creating positive peer friendships.
- **Family Fun Days**

Thank you for your interest in our adoption services.

Contact Us

Please reach out to us via phone or email if you have any questions. We would be delighted to help!

To make an initial enquiry about becoming an adopter please visit our website.

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