

CHANGE A CHILD'S LIFE



ABOUT ADOPTION

For information about Adoption please contact any member of the Adoption Team on **01983 823081** who would be happy to speak with you.

Alternatively email: adoption.service@iow.gov.uk

A member of staff will then contact you.



WHAT IS ADOPTION?

Adoption offers permanence to children who need a loving and secure family and who are unable to live with their birth parents. When a child is adopted they legally and permanently become part of the Adopter's family. Adoptions are arranged by an adoption agency that is legally permitted to arrange adoptions - The Isle of Wight Council, as a Local Authority, acts as an adoption agency. The adoption is made legally binding by the court on the making of an Adoption Order. The Adoption Order is permanent and transfers parental responsibility from the birth parents to the Adopter(s).

When children are adopted it is usual for them to take the surname of their new family.

WHY ARE CHILDREN ADOPTED?

If a child's health and wellbeing are at significant risk and their development is being hindered or irreparably damaged the Local Authority will make an informed decision that it is in the best interest of the child to be adopted.

Some parents are unable to care for their children for a number of reasons. These could include domestic abuse, mental ill health, drug misuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Some birth parents have complex family backgrounds which have impacted on their capacity to safely care for their child(ren) and prioritise their needs.

It is essential that the Local Authority makes a child's life safe and secure when it has been identified that there is no possibility of a child returning to his or her family. Adoption gives children stability and security and offers them the benefits of a happy, loving home life with lots of opportunities and positive experiences.

Although children no longer live with their birth families there is often a plan for post-adoption contact with their birth family. This usually takes the form of a letter exchange once or twice a year. In a few situations children may have face-to-face contact with birth family members.

WHY ADOPT?

People choose adoption as a positive choice to build a family and the reasons for this are discussed as part of the assessment process. We welcome contact from people who have children as well as those who do not. Some applicants may have considered or experienced infertility treatment as an initial option before looking to adoption as the way forward. We also have expressions of interest from single applicants and those in a same-sex relationship. Essentially we hear from a range of people who want to have children in their lives and offer them a loving home.

WHAT DO I NEED TO CONSIDER WHEN THINKING ABOUT ADOPTION?

Children who are placed for adoption need to have their own bedroom and if you are considering adopting two children then you should have two available bedrooms, even though it may be appropriate for the children to share a room.

Applicants need to be financially secure to the extent that they can maintain a child without incurring financial hardship. A financial assessment is undertaken as part of the assessment process.

Whilst age is not a barrier to adoption it will be taken into consideration and discussed fully. All applicants have full medical assessments as part of the process.

If applicants are undergoing fertility treatment which proves to be unsuccessful there is usually an expectation that there would be a wait, maybe for 6-12 months before an adoption assessment starts. Individual circumstances do vary and will need thorough discussion. If you or your partner have undergone treatment for infertility, we will need to discuss this with you so that we can understand how you have managed and accepted the loss of not having birth children.

If you or your partner are pregnant or already have children, please note that we would not be looking to place a child with other children that are less than 2 years older than the adopted child. From the point of match being considered, we ask applicants to take positive measures to prevent a pregnancy occurring for an agreed period of time.





IF YOU ARE A SMOKER

We do not place children under the age of five or a child of any age with any health conditions or disabilities with smokers. If you do smoke you will be expected to smoke outside and away from children.

If you are trying to give up smoking we need you to be able to evidence that you have given up for a year before we can approve you as prospective adopters. It is best to see your GP and ask for advice and guidance about giving up smoking.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO ADOPTION

1. Prospective adopters can make enquiries with any Adoption Agency, including Adoption Services within Local Authorities. Information about adoption is also available from helpdesk@first4adoption.org.uk.
2. If your decision is that you would like to be assessed by the Isle of Wight Adoption Service following your initial enquiry, an information leaflet will be sent to you within five days and either a visit from a Social Worker will be arranged within ten days or alternatively a Social Worker will telephone you for further discussion. The purpose of this visit/telephone call is to gather information about your motivation to adopt and to answer any concerns or queries you may have.
3. When you have found an agency that you are comfortable with, you can register your interest to become an adoptive parent and undergo the first round of checks. This is known as Stage One and requires prospective adopters to provide factual information about yourselves and your household, such as income, occupation, health and previous life experiences.
4. You will also be required to provide a number of referees the agency can contact, four of which must not be related to you. You will also be required to undergo a health assessment and a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check (formerly a Criminal Records Bureau check). The agency will need to contact former partners. These former partners do not have veto over your right to adopt.

5. Stage One of the process is led by the prospective adopters with Social Worker support and will last for two months unless you request an extension.
6. You will be invited to a day's training to explore the benefits and challenges of adoption.
7. Based on the information gathered during this period, the agency will make a decision on whether you can continue to Stage Two of the process. If the agency decides that you are unsuitable they must provide a clear explanation of the reasons why. Should you wish to make a complaint about this decision you can make a complaint using the Local Authority's complaints procedure.
8. Stage Two of the process lasts four months and covers the "Home Study". This involves a Social Worker making a series of visits to your home to get to know you and your family. They will also help you to think about what strengths you could bring to your adoptive parenting.
9. Once the assessment process is complete the Social Worker will gather all of the information together into a Prospective Adopters' Report (PAR) which is taken to the Agency's independent Adoption Panel. You will be provided with a copy of this and have five working days to comment on it before it goes to Panel if you wish.
10. Once you have been recommended to adopt by the Adoption Panel and the Agency Decision Maker has ratified this decision, a suitable match with a child/children will be sought.
11. Once this match has been made you will go to the Matching Panel in the child's Local Authority. If the match is agreed a plan will be made for you to have introductions to the child/children. The child/children will then come to live with you. You will continue to have Social Worker visits up until the time that the Adoption Order is granted by the Court, at which time the child/children will legally become part of your family.

