

Supporting you during coronavirus

Covid 19 is having a massive impact on all our lives, at Adoption@Heart and alongside our Special Guardianship colleagues In Dudley, Walsall, Sandwell and Wolverhampton, we are following the Government's guidance and have adapted the way we provide our services to ensure that those interested in becoming adoptive parents and Special Guardians are still able to proceed, and that our support services to existing adopters and SGO carers can continue.

We do however recognise that many Adoptive families and Special Guardianship families are going through a particularly difficult time and will continue to do so within the next weeks and the months ahead and together we are looking at how we can creatively offer you additional support.

We are pleased to announce that we have been provided with funding from the Government, through the Adoption Support Fund to secure support and additional services to help our families and children through these unprecedented times. The services are available for any Adopter or Special Guardian who live in any of the following boroughs or have a child who has been placed with you from these boroughs; Dudley, Sandwell, Wolverhampton and Walsall.

Additional services include:

- Peer Support for Adopters and Special Guardians
- Therapeutic Couples Counselling for Adopters and Special Guardians
- Support with your child's transition back to school for Adopters
- Family Support, remote individual sessions with Therapist for Adopters and Special Guardians
- Virtual Support groups for Adopters and Special Guardians.
- Membership and subscription services for Adopters and Special Guardians.
- Helpline-type support or provision.
- Webinars and other helpful resources related to parenting during the Covid 19 crisis.

Adoption@Heart is working hard to make these arrangements with voluntary adoption agencies and special guardianship support providers so they can start as soon as possible.

Some of these services will run for a short period of time until the end of September 2020 and will be publicised here as soon as they are open.

In the meantime, we have put together some helpful resources, please see our website for further information.

National Association of Therapeutic Parents

You are invited to join the National Association of Therapeutic Parents (NATP) for free.

If you are an Adopter or a Special Guardian looking after children who have suffered early life trauma through pre-natal stress, neglect or other abuse, NATP can support you and offers a range of fantastic benefits including specific support to help families through this difficult time including;

- Parents Space – This is a virtual support group that is run every evening for members to take part in to gain support, advice and to vent about any difficulties you are facing at present, coronavirus related or not
- Kids Space – Daily videos of activities children are getting involved in, hopefully to provide inspiration and ideas for things members can do at home with their own children
- Weekly webinars running on a variety of subjects to help support our members through this tough time. Topics include home schooling, maintaining PACE in a crisis, compassion fatigue and many more
- Opportunity for 1-2-1 support calls for members

Adoption@Heart have purchased 500 Memberships for Adoptive families and Special Guardians.

To request access email NotificationForm@adoptionatheart.org.uk or call 0800 073 0597.

Special Guardians in Walsall: ConnectedcarersSGODutyTeam@Walsall.gov.uk

Special Guardians in Wolverhampton: Special.Guardianship@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Special Guardians in Sandwell: SGO_Support@sandwell.gov.uk

Special Guardians in Dudley: fostering.cs@dudley.gov.uk



The Adopter Hub

Hub.

The Hub offer includes;

- Regular live themed webinars delivered by sector experts to support you
- Home schooling resources and activities
- 12 module introduction to attachment e-learning programme
- Confidential one-to-one adopter peer e-learning programme
- Confidential one-to-one adopter peer support web chat
- Adopter members only online forum
- Useful resources – such as what to ask your school, school transitions, FAQs and signposting
- Ask the expert every evening
- Ask the Team forum

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Adoption UK

Adoption UK peer remote support services are delivered by adoptive parents who truly understand the issues adopters face. All peer support workers are fully trained and experienced in working with families parenting children with complex behaviours.

Adopters will be provided with up to 6 sessions (50 minutes in duration) of telephone/video support covering range of issues: guidance on therapeutic parenting, managing children's stress/anxiety, managing challenging behaviour, providing emotional support to parents, self-care for parents to build family resilience, routine and structure, and accessing further support.

Adoptive Families will be able apply to request access to 1-1 peer support service through a referral route to Adoption@Heart.

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adoptionuk
for every adoptive family

Family Action

We are pleased to announce that we are working with Family Action, National Special Guardianship Support Service to provide every special guardianship carer with access to the following support:

- A dedicated website with comprehensive, up-to-date information and guidance, downloadable resources including Covid 19 specific resources.
- Free helpline, online chat, text and email support offering support from trained professionals 9am-9pm Monday to Friday
- Crisis text support service available outside of these hours (24 hour)
- Option for telephone befriending
- Specialist short term counselling
- Emergency Hardship grants
- Discounts on upcoming training events and consultancy services

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Barnardo's - Link 2020 Family Support Service

In response to the Covid 19 pandemic Barnardo's has developed a specialist 2020 Family Support Service for Adopters and SGO carers, which is delivered by qualified therapists over the telephone. The therapists will be able to acknowledge and explore how the Covid-19 pandemic is impacting on family life. The therapist will respond to the family's individual needs with acceptance, understanding and empathy.

Therapists will be matched with the adopter or SGO carer based on the needs presented. The service consists of an introductory session followed by 6 half-hour sessions with the therapist with the aims of;

- Help reduce feelings of isolation
- Encourage communication between family members
- Explore any fears, anxieties, difficulty or distress
- Help with conflict and conflict resolution skills
- Gain insight, explore strategies to improve their situation
- Find practical solutions to the daily challenges.

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Barnardo's remote therapeutic couple's support for adoptive parents and SGO carers

We are pleased to announce that we have teamed up with Barnardo's who are offering our adopters and SGO carers a therapeutic package of support to help couples address how the Covid 19 situation is impacting upon the couple relationship, their children and the family wellbeing.

The service will support adoptive and SGO couples who are facing new and increasing challenges due to isolation, stress and anxiety, lack of routines, lack of support network while parenting children who have experienced trauma and may be displaying challenging behaviour, regression and anxiety.

Adopters and SGO carers will be offered 6 weekly sessions, each session will be for one hour.

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Adoption UK - STEPP (Supported Transitions Education Parent Partnership)

Worried about how your child will cope with school after lockdown? Adoption UK can help.

The service supports adoptive families with their child's return to school after lockdown as well as support with other transitions that children are increasingly anxious about such as reintegration into peer and friendship networks, and physical and mental health issues.

It links adopters with a parent partner for one-to-one personalised support. The parent partners are all experienced adoptive parents as well as being qualified education professionals. They will work with adoptive families to both plan for transition and offer support along the way.

The service will be provided remotely, either online or over the phone, over six, 50-minute sessions.

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We hope all of our adoptive and special guardianship families are staying safe and well at this time. We'd also like to remind you that, although many of our events have been cancelled for the time being and staff are now working from home, we are still available to answer your calls and offer support wherever we can.