



ADOPTER SUPPORT AND TRAINING PROGRAMME

2025



At Adoption@Heart, we know that the adoption journey both for the child and their parents is a lifelong process that will often have many ups, downs, and challenges along the way.

We can provide specialist support for specific adoption issues that you might face whilst your child is growing up. We hope that this leaflet helps you explore where support can be accessed throughout this life-long journey.



Services we provide:

- Monthly Adopter Support Group.
- Let's Get Together Group for adopted young people.
- Regular Newsletter.
- Assessment of Adoption Support Needs.
- Parenting support for adoption issues.
- Therapeutic Parenting Course for parents of adopted children who have experienced attachment difficulties and complex trauma.
- Access to a range of therapeutic interventions including Theraplay, DDP, and Therapeutic Life Story Work.
- Advice and Consultation provided by the Adoption@Heart Therapist.
- Workshops to help you learn about and use therapeutic play techniques.
- Training on adoption issues such as parenting teenagers and talking to your child about adoption.
- Family and Friends Training.
- Support with facilitating contact arrangements and Keep in Touch arrangements.

TRAINING COURSES AND WORKSHOPS

We will send you an email approximately three weeks prior to the course start date and you will be asked to confirm your attendance (a reply is required). We reserve the right, where there are insufficient numbers, to cancel the training/workshops.



Talking to your child about adoption

Adopters are the narrators of their children's life stories, an invaluable and under recognised role that is also complicated and challenging.

Many adopters have questions around how to talk to children about adoption, how to tell difficult stories in a way that supports a child's self-esteem and how to be honest without re-traumatising.

This introductory workshop will encourage adopters to recognise the importance of their own contribution to their child's understanding of themselves and to begin to feel more confident as tellers of life stories.

Who should attend?

Priority will be given to adopters who have adopted a child or children.

This workshop will enable parents/carers to:

- To think about the importance of telling and explaining adoption.
- To consider age-appropriate explanations linked to a child's developmental stage
- To practice telling and explaining.
- To examine some basic principles of child development and identity.
- To appreciate that understanding one's own past history is essential in order to know who you are and in developing a strong sense of identity and positive self-esteem.
- To consider some of the practicalities and potential difficulties involved in undertaking life story work.
- Considering how to discuss additional siblings

The course will be held virtually on:

- 27th February 2025 10am – 2pm
- 16th April 2025 10am – 2pm
- 13th June 2025 10am – 2pm
- 6th August 2025 10am – 2pm
- 17th October 2025 10 – 2pm
- 16th December 2025 10 – 2pm

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553818.

Introduction to using Theraplay® Informed Activities



Children learn and develop best through play!

Theraplay® is an attachment-based therapeutic approach that uses structured play to help parents to enhance attachment, self-esteem, trust in others and joyful engagement. Theraplay® has great value for children who have had difficult or disrupted early life experiences and can also be useful for children with developmental disorders such as autism and ADHD.

Who should attend?

Priority will be given to adopters who have children in place or adopted.

This workshop will enable parents/carers to:

- Gain an understanding of Theraplay® and how you can use it with your child.
- Understand the relationship of Theraplay® to attachment theory and why play is so important; The principles of Theraplay®; Using Theraplay® activities at home.

The sessions will be held virtually on:

- **7th March 2025 10am – 12.30pm**
- **4th June 2025 10am – 12.30pm**
- **7th November 2025 10am – 12.30pm**

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553818.

Friends and Family Training



This short course is designed for the relatives and close friends of Adoption@Heart's adoptive families. The course provides:

- An overview of the backgrounds of children placed for adoption.
- Attachment Theory and how children placed for adoption can form healthy attachments.
- An opportunity to explore ways of supporting adoptive parents and adopted children.

The course is running virtually on the following dates:

- **25th February 2025 10am – 12pm**
- **20th March 2025 10am – 12pm**
- **25th April 2025 10am – 12pm**
- **6th June 2025 10am – 12pm**
- **11th July 2025 10am – 12pm**
- **7th October 2025 10am – 12pm**
- **12th November 2025 10am – 12pm**

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553818.

Foundations for Attachment Therapeutic Parenting Programme



Foundations for Attachment Training Resource is a six-session programme to help parents and carers to nurture attachments with their child. It is designed specifically for those caring for children whose capacity to emotionally connect has been compromised as a result of attachment problems, trauma, and loss or separation. Informed by attachment theory and Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP), it consists of three core modules:

- Understanding Challenges of Parenting
- Therapeutic Parenting
- Looking After Self

The sessions will be held virtually on the following dates (participants must attend all 6 sessions of the programme):

- **4th March and every Tuesday until 8th April 2025 10am – 12pm**
- **15th May and every Thursday until 19th June 2025 4.30pm - 6.30pm**
- **15th September and every Monday until 22nd October 2025 1pm – 3pm**
- **4th November and every Tuesday until 9th December 2025 1pm – 3pm**

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553818.

Non-Violence Resistance Parenting Programme

Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) is an approach specifically designed to target violent, destructive, and controlling behaviours in children, adolescents, and young adults. A recent outcome study has shown that NVR is very effective in improving the behaviour of a large percentage of young people. It also demonstrated that NVR reduces parents' or carers' feelings of helplessness, raises their confidence, and can improve parental mental health.

We will be delivering programmes virtually on the following dates to adopters with children placed (participants must attend all 6 sessions of the programme, as well as accessing the support phone calls that will take place in the weeks in between the group sessions):

Cohort 1

06/03/2025 10am – 12pm

20/03/2025 10am – 12pm

03/04/2025 10am – 12pm

10/04/2025 10am – 12pm

01/05/2025 10am – 12pm

15/05/2025 10am – 12pm

Cohort 2

11/09/2025 5.30 – 7.30pm

25/09/2025 5.30 – 7.30pm

09/10/2025 5.30 – 7.30pm

20/10/2025 5.30 – 7.30pm

06/11/2025 5.30 – 7.30pm

20/11/2025 5.30 – 7.30pm

A Parent Self-Help group is also set up for participants to join following the parenting programme.

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553818.

Post Placement Adoption Support Group

We hold monthly support groups for approved adoptive parents. They provide an opportunity for you to meet with other adoptive families and staff. The groups offer a confidential, inclusive, and non-judgmental environment where parents can discuss all aspects of adoption, share valuable experiences, build connections, and support each other. Most groups are run on an informal basis but guest speakers who specialise in child development, PACE or topical issues are periodically invited.

Sessions will be held virtually every second Tuesday in the month, from 6pm – 8pm. if you are interested you can register your interest by emailing info@adoptionatheart.org.uk.

We look forward to welcoming you. The group is open to all adopters living in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton and any adopters assessed by one of these agencies previously.

11th February 2025

11th March 2025

8th April 2025

13th May 2025

10th June 2025

8th July 2025

12th August 2025

9th September 2025

14th October 2025

11th November 2025

9th December 2025

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553818.

Let's Get Together Group

The group is for adopted young people who live in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, and Wolverhampton. We support young people to come together and feel safe to talk about the things that are important to them, with others that might have similar experiences. The groups offer a confidential, inclusive, and non-judgmental environment where young people can discuss and share valuable experiences, build connections, and support each other. It is for young people aged between 11-18; we hope to develop two groups with a group for younger children.

We hope to meet up in person 3 – 4 times annually for fun activities such as bowling, so please come along and join other adopted young people.

We are keen to ensure that the voice of young people is at the centre of decision making within the Adoption Service and so we will on occasion consult with the group about developments to the service.

It is hoped that participants will run the group (with the support of workers) to develop services that they feel meet their needs.

For more information about the Let's Get Together Group, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553 818.

Additional Services for Adoption@Heart Adopters

Newsletter

Parents who have adopted or are adopting through Adoption@Heart will receive mailings throughout the year to let them know about news, interesting articles, workshops, seminars, groups, and other events that may be of interest.

Assessment of Need

The Adoption Support Services Regulations of 2005 require Regional Adoption Agencies to conduct assessments of adoption support needs when requested by an adopted child, their adoptive parents, birth parents, or former guardians.

The Assessment of Need will take account of the adoption context and consider all the developmental needs of the child including health, education, emotional needs, and contact issues. The allocated Social Worker may need to liaise with other services or non-resident parents to gather further information.

Where the completed Assessment of Need recommends therapeutic intervention, the Social Worker will discuss a range of therapeutic services and providers with you. In the first instance Adoption@Heart therapeutic support services will be considered.

Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund

The Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) is funded by the Government and may provide specialist assessments and a range of therapeutic interventions for adopted children and families following an Assessment of Need. The Fund awards £2500 per year per child for specialist assessments and £5000 per year per child to fund therapeutic intervention. Assessments and therapy must meet the ASGSF criteria to be approved.

The ASGSF makes a decision within 27 working days. However, this may take longer if further information is required.

A of therapy will take place periodically to consider whether the therapy continues to meet the needs of the family, if further therapy is not required, consideration will be given to how the therapy will come to an end.

If you would like to request an Assessment of Need, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 55818 (please note there is currently a waiting list for Assessment).

