



**ADOPT
LONDON
NORTH**

Adoption Support

Adopt London North (ALN) is a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) covering six London boroughs; **Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Islington** working in partnership to recruit adoptive parents and support adoptive families.

This leaflet will provide support information to adopters and children living in, assessed by or adopted from care by one of the ALN boroughs. This will give you an understanding of the range of support that we cover and what might be needed after your child comes to live with you. Some support is available to families who have adopted from abroad, as well as through the Intercountry Adoption Centre.

If you need support or further information on anything listed in this booklet, please contact us.

adoptionsupportduty@islington.gov.uk

020 7527 4777 (select option 2)

Or visit the [Adopt London North webpage](#)

Adoption is life changing

It is also for life, and the need for support can occur at any time. ALN provides a range of services for new and existing adoptive families. Drawing on a wealth of experience in assisting families to succeed, we want to ensure that help is available at whatever point it is needed after your child comes to live with you.

We have highlighted common themes adoptive families approach us about;

- How to explain adoption and your child's early life with their birth family before they came to live with you.
- How best to help your child settle in school when they are struggling in the classroom.
- How to manage face-to-face contact between your child and their birth family.
- How to get help when you are struggling with your child's behaviour

Adoption Support

As a result of their early life experience, many adopted children have complex needs that may not have been fully recognised at the point of adoption. The adoption support team will complete an adoption support assessment as requested by any member of an adoptive family. There are support services available for adopted adults who want to think about their records and contacting birth family, and for birth family to help with their letters and think about contact with their adopted adult son or daughter.

Who will provide the support?

For the first three years following the Adoption Order, and if your child was adopted from one of the six north London boroughs: Camden, Islington, Haringey, Barnet, Enfield and Hackney, ALN will be responsible for the assessment and support. After three years, the borough or the RAA where you live becomes responsible. ALN will work with you and the local authority where you live to provide an adoption service following an assessment. This is not guaranteed, but we will endeavour to get the best outcome for you and your child. All previously agreed support with birth family contact and on-going financial support, remains with the placing authority.

Support available from Adopt London North

- Support and advice around emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Access to therapeutic interventions
- A regular eNewsletter is sent to families with training, events and how to access support.
- Training and workshops

Letterbox contact

Most adoptions will have a letterbox arrangement with the birth family, and sometimes these letters can be challenging to write. Our social workers can support you with this process along with written guidance to help both adopters and birth families. We run a confidential service where each family is allocated a unique reference number to represent their letterbox arrangement. The vast majority of letters are now electronically managed and we have business support workers who make sure this is as seamless as possible. If you wish to discuss letterbox, please email - ALNLetterBox@islington.gov.uk

Parents with teenagers group

Parenting teenagers can be fun but it has its challenges. This monthly group is established, running for over ten years and well attended. It offers parents of teenagers a therapeutic space to share their experiences. There's also time to have lunch and have a more social session. Email the duty team if you'd like to join.

Adopted adults group

There is a welcoming and friendly group for adopted adults to meet up every other month in North London. A range of speakers are invited and each meeting usually has a topic for discussion. Your son or daughter will be able to join this group when they reach 18 years old. Contact our duty team to find out more.



Education

Children adopted from care are entitled to free early education from the age of two - you can find details on the [GOV.UK website](#) and search 'free early education'. Adopted children are entitled to priority school admissions. This means your child should be able to attend the state funded school of your choice. For more information, about selecting a primary or secondary school, you can also visit the [GOV.UK website](#) and search for 'school admissions'.

If your child needs extra support at school, you can request an assessment of your child's special educational needs. This will be jointly managed by your child's school and the local educational authority to assess and complete an Education Health and Care Plan if applicable.

Pupil Premium Plus is a payment made to your child's state school and goes towards meeting the needs of adopted children, emotionally and socially in that school. The school has flexibility on how the money is spent. You will need to let the school know your child is adopted so the school can claim the funding.



For all your educational needs, you can contact our partner PAC-UK. They host an Education helpline giving you an opportunity to speak to a member of PAC-UK's Education Service about any issues with meeting the educational needs of your child. You can talk through any school or educational concerns and receive advice and support.

Please contact PAC-UK directly [Thursdays 12.00pm–2.00pm \(during school term times only\)](#).



PAC-UK London Education Advice Line: Tel 020 7284 5879

Email education@pac-uk.org

The Adoption Support Fund

The Adoption Support Fund (ASF) was established because many families needed some kind of therapeutic support once their child was placed to live with them. The Adoption Support Fund is helping families support children therapeutically. The fund can provide money to pay for a range of services, including supporting your child with:

- their behaviour and settling into the family home
- making relationships
- expressing their feelings
- worrying behaviour like clinginess, anger or self-harm.

The support is either directly for your child, or with supporting you to help them. To access the fund, you will need to have an assessment of your family's adoption support needs by ALN, who will help identify what therapeutic services would be helpful to your family. A social worker will then apply to the fund on your behalf. You can find more details on the [AdoptionUK](#) website.

ALN social workers can offer:

- counselling information and advice for all those affected by adoption.
- advice and guidance with your child's behaviour, attachment and other concerns.
- support to manage contact between your adopted child and their birth family.
- help where there is a risk that the child may have to leave the family home permanently.

Life Story Work

ALN provide advice and guidance in the form of access to regular workshops for adopters, as well as a Life Story advice line for adopters to talk one to one with a life story practice manager. Their aim is to further develop this area so families can access the support they need. You will find [session dates](#) and more information here, or you can email natalie.salaman@islington.gov.uk to book your place.



Every child is entitled to a **Life Story Book** and a **Later Life Letter** from the social workers who were involved in your child's care before they came to live with you. The book is a representation of their background and birth family (if this information is known) and some of the things we think the children would like to know and that might be important to them. We'll encourage you to build on the Life Story Book yourself and with the help of your child.

A Life Story Guide for Adopters is provided by ALN. This guide provides access to many resources and insights related to this vital aspect of adoption. Please email Natalie on the email address above to request your copy.







When your child reaches 18

When your child reaches 18 years old they can request access to their birth and adoption records. It will be their decision in discussion with others as to how they want to head in relation to contact with birth families and whether they want to pause or stop contact. The letterbox system finishes at 18 years in terms of being administrated by ALN.

If your child is 17 (or 18 and have not been contacted), please email the team to find out more on adoptionssupportduty@islington.gov.uk

Adoption support from independent organisations

Adopt London North is proud to work with independent organisations to bring the most relevant support for our children and their families. You are welcome to contact any of these organisations directly.

	<p>We Are Family (WAF) adoption is a peer to peer support community by adopters, for adopters. They support families with on and offline parents' groups, events, resources and talks offering mutual support, information and inspiration to adopters and those considering adoption. By coming together, sharing experience and understanding, adopters can help each other to thrive. As an adoptive parent, you can sign up for free membership and access to: evening webinars – WAF Talks and regular podcasts hosted by We Are Family adoption with Eddie Edwards. You can find out more by visiting the We Are Family page on the Adopt London website.</p>
	<p>Our partnership with PAC-UK means we can draw on their expertise to offer independent training and support to our adoptive families, and really enable children to live their lives to the fullest. Their service is independent and confidential with families benefiting from free counselling sessions related parenting issues, access to parenting and family consultations and support from recommended therapeutic social workers providing quick response, home-based parenting and relationship support. For enquiries, please call the Advice Line – Tel 020 7284 5879 (Monday, Tuesday & Friday 10.00am-4.00pm and Wednesday & Thursday 2.00pm-7.30pm).</p>
	<p>National Association of Therapeutic Parenting (NAoTP) provide support, education, and resources for adoptive parents relating to therapeutic parenting, effective interventions, compassion fatigue and the effects on children of early life trauma. Training, listening circles, support, free online resources and a helpline are all part of their membership. As an Adopt London parent, you can receive a free membership for a limited period, just email membership@naotp.com and quote: Adopt London.</p>
	<p>New Family Social This is the UK network for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) adoptive and foster families. They are an energetic and positive organisation that support each other. Children of LGBT parents can make new friends and who also have LGBT parents – giving them confidence and resilience. The members-only events calendar is packed with day trips, camping and meet ups around the country. Sign up today: it's a great way to make new friends.</p>
	<p>The Adopter Hub is An online community of information and support for adopters providing online forums, eLearning courses, webchats and lots more.</p>
	<p>The Intercountry Adoption Centre work to place a support children and families from around the world. They offer adopters and adoptees support with counselling and support, and offer a range of workshops, from talking to your child about adoption to creating Life Story workbooks. There may be costs for these workshops.</p>

Additional support

Adoption Shared

[Adoption Shared](#) is a regular podcast series hosted by Eddie Elliott for We Are Family and Adopt London. Eddie meets adopters and professionals who share their insight and experiences of the adoption journey from a variety of perspectives. Adoptive dad Eddie says, *'It's important as a community of adopters to share ideas, experiences and things we've learnt I've met some amazing people and learnt some wonderful things ...'*

Adopt London Choir

The Adopt London Choir meet virtually every Tuesday evening. It is a group of adopters and staff who come together for support and singing to boost their well-being. Find out about the [benefits of singing together](#) and sign up directly with Choirmaster Megan Tanner hellomegantanner@gmail.com

Adoption UK

You can also sign up for a paid membership with [AdoptionUK](#)—UK charity for adopters run by adopters. This is one of the leading charities providing support, awareness and understanding for those parenting or supporting children who cannot live with their birth parents. It provides a strong, supportive community and the largest voice of adopters in the UK.

CoramBaaf

A national charity/member organisation providing help, support and advice on adoption, for families and professionals. They have an extensive range of [books and other resources](#) for children and young people.

First4Adoption

This is a government backed national information service for people with an interest in adoption, and lists the support available for families in England. They provide clear and impartial information about [the support available](#).

Please follow Adopt London on social media for up to date news and information [@adoptlondonuk](#)

