

Guide to Adoption Support



Parents And Children Together

About this Guide

This guide can help if you are feeling worried about anything to do with being adopted. It tells you a bit more about PACT and who can help if you would like some support.

Sometimes it can be difficult growing up being adopted. Maybe you have moved around lots and do not have as many photos or memories as you would like. Or, maybe you wish you had some more information about what you used to enjoy doing as a younger child.

You are not alone. There are many ways to create a family and lots of children are adopted each year.



About PACT

Our job at PACT is to find adoptive families for children and young people like you.

We search carefully for the right people and give them special training so they can care for children and keep them safe. Your family have a social worker at PACT who comes to visit and help them. This is like the social worker you have from your local authority who comes to see you.

We may be able to help you by...

- Talking to you about adoption and how we can help;
- Listening to your story;
- Helping you understand why you were adopted;
- Helping you talk to people about being adopted;
- Putting you in touch with other young people who are adopted.



PACT adoption support

We like to make sure that you and your family feel supported.

We arrange activities throughout the year that give you the opportunity to have fun and share your experiences with other children. These include:

- Family fun days – These organised days are a great way of meeting other children and young people who have also been adopted. They are usually at places like the zoo, a farm or outdoor play areas. You also can have a say in where you would like these to go ahead.
- PACT workshops – We also run days where you can make new friends, by doing activities such as playing games and making things.

We are able to offer help to your parents too. Your mum or dad can speak to us about what support they think they need.



Questions you may have



Who should I tell that I am adopted?

Do not be afraid if people ask you about adoption. It is up to you who you tell and what you choose to tell other people about your life. Adoption is not something to be embarrassed by or ashamed of, it is just one way a family can be created.

Your friends might live with one parent, two parents, grandparents or step-parents. You have adoptive parents. You may want to talk to your new family about how you could answer other people's questions.

Are other young people adopted?

Yes, every year, children are adopted from all different places in the world, for all sorts of reasons. There may be other people in your school or college who are also adopted.

There are places where young people who are adopted can meet and spend some time together. Your new mum, dad or PACT social worker might be able to help you find out if there is a group for adopted people in your area.



Questions you may have

What if I am worried about my birth family?

A number of young people can worry about their birth family members, for all sorts of different reasons. This is normal, but it may feel hard to tell anyone.

You might find that you worry more about your birth family on birthdays or at Christmas. Or, sometimes you may feel guilty that you are enjoying your new family, friends and home.

If this happens for you, do tell someone. It feels better when you tell someone instead of storing worries inside of you. This may be your parents, your social worker, a PACT social worker, or a teacher. It is important for these adults to listen to you. They will want to help you manage how you are feeling.



What if I feel really horrible and confused?

All people can feel like this from time to time and it is nothing to be afraid of.

Moving to a new family can feel complicated and confusing and talking to someone may help. Sometimes it feels hard to say that you are missing people or that you are feeling angry.

Sometimes you do not feel anything at all. It is ok to not feel happy or sad, you will get your feelings back soon. All of these are completely understandable emotions. Your new mum or dad may be helpful to talk to. They will try to understand and help make sense of things with you.

Sometimes you may want to talk to another adult outside of your family. Your PACT social worker can help you and your parents understand how you are feeling and why you may be feeling upset.

It can also be really helpful to see a therapist who is an expert in adoption, especially if things feel really tricky. You could ask your forever mum or dad to help arrange this, or talk to PACT yourself. You can do this even if you have been adopted for a long time. It is okay to want to talk to a therapist when you get older.



Someone to talk to...

If you are worried about something big or small, you can talk to someone confidentially. These organisations can be helpful:

Childline:

Tel: 0800 1111 Web: www.childline.org.uk

Childline is a free and safe place for kids to talk about anything that's worrying them. You can call or chat online, and someone will listen and help.

Someone to speak for you...

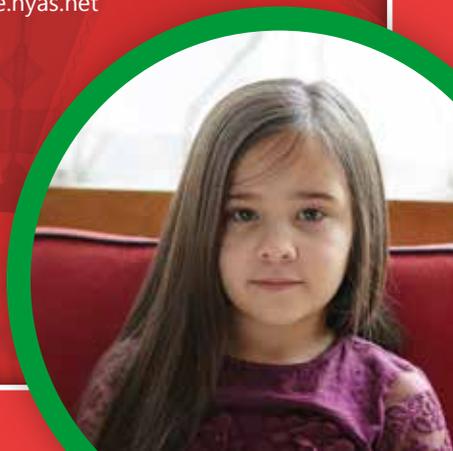
It is important that children and young people have their opinions heard, whatever age they are. This is a human right. An independent advocate is someone who will speak up for you if there are things you feel unhappy about. The organisations below will listen to you and help you find an independent advocate.

Coram Voice - Always Heard service:

Tel: 0808 800 5792 Web: www.coramvoice.org.uk/alwaysheard

National Youth Advocacy Service:

Tel: 0808 808 1001 Web: www.youngpeople.nyas.net



Other useful contact details



You may still have some questions that need answering. Here are some other helpful people you could contact:

The Children's Commissioner for England

If you want to know more about your rights, you can get in touch with The Children's Commissioner. Her name is Dame Rachel de Souza and her job is to make sure adults listen to children's views and respect their rights.

Tel: 020 7783 8330

Web: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

OFSTED

Ofsted checks that PACT is doing things properly. You can get in touch with them if you like.

Tel: 0300 123 1231

Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Your Independent Reviewing Officer

An Independent Reviewing Officer is the person from your Local Authority that makes sure your wishes are heard when decisions are made about you. Your Social Worker from the Local Authority will be able to tell you who this is and how to contact them.

Making a complaint to PACT

Sometimes we make mistakes and things go wrong. If you are not happy with us for any reason, or you want to talk to us about anything, here are our details:

Tel: 0300 456 4800

Email: info@pactcharity.org

Address: Parents And Children Together, 7 Southern Court, South Street, Reading, RG1 4QS

We like to make sure we listen to any of your problems, so they can be sorted quickly for you.



Important notes

This guide belongs to:

My social worker is:

My social worker's phone number is:

My independent reviewing officer is:

My independent reviewing officer's phone number is:

My family's PACT social worker is:

My PACT social worker's phone number is:



**Head office: 7 Southern Court,
South Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 4QS**

Telephone: 0300 456 4800

Email: info@pactcharity.org

Online: www.pactcharity.org



Parents And Children Together



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