

Adoption and Permanent
Families Service





Adoption

The Coram Adoption and Permanent Families Services is one of the UK's leading adoption agencies, specialising in placing children of all races who have suffered physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect. We also place a number of children who are disabled, including those with learning difficulties. We have a wealth of experience and are imaginative and resourceful in seeking appropriate families.

Over the past ten years we have placed over 600 children from our offices in London, Cambridge and the East Midlands. All three offer a placement service to children who are looked after by local authorities throughout the UK.

Fostering Services

We are registered as a fostering agency and recruit carers for:

- The Concurrent Planning Project (see below)
- Other children where the permanent placement of choice is via foster care.

Concurrent Planning

We are one of the first three agencies in the UK to introduce an exciting new programme which aims to speed up the achievement of permanent placements for children whilst care proceedings are undertaken. We recruit specialist foster families who initially work towards children returning to their birth families. If this is not possible, the foster family adopts the child, thus avoiding further damaging moves. Our partners in this project are the London Boroughs of Camden, Islington, Harrow, Hammersmith and Fulham.

Harrow Partnership

Coram and The London Borough of Harrow have a unique partnership whereby Coram provides support to the Children and Family Teams around permanence planning for looked after children. Coram also provides adoptive families for Harrow's children who have a 'best interests' decision. This is an exciting initiative and both partners are delighted with the impact the project has made on the outcomes for the children.

Placement needs of black children

We have a strong commitment to placing children in families from similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds where possible, and believe this is important for the development of a positive identity. We have a rolling programme to recruit African, Caribbean and mixed parentage families. Approximately 35% of children we place are from minority ethnic or mixed heritage backgrounds, placed with families of similar backgrounds. The Leicester based project Ebony Care raises awareness of adoption with the black community and recruits black adopters.

Adopters and Carers

We have a flexible approach to recruitment and look at the strengths of prospective parents alongside their extended family and community supports. Our focus is always on finding parents who can meet the needs of the children who are waiting.

Diversity

We work with a wide range of adopters who come from many different racial, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Our adopters include couples who are married, unmarried, heterosexual, or same sex, as well as single parents.

Openness and Contact

We have taken a lead in the field of openness in adoption, believing that children have the right to information about themselves and their backgrounds at a level they can understand as they grow up.

We believe it is important to work out appropriate plans regarding contact between adopted children and birth relatives on an individual basis, depending on the children's needs. Plans for contact, whether 'letterbox' or direct, should not undermine the stability of the new family and should be flexible to allow for children's changing needs as they grow up. By arrangement with the placing authority we can provide support for ongoing direct contact after adoption.

Preparing children / direct work with children / recruitment of adopters

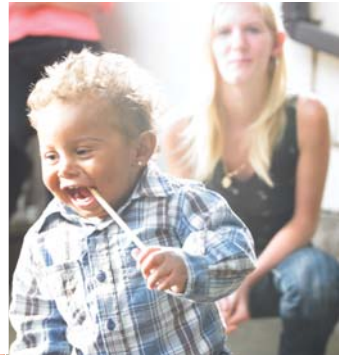
By arrangement with the care authorities; we can prepare children for placement, including life story book work, recruitment and assessment of adopters, supporting children during the period of recruitment and through to placement.

Adoption support and aftercare

Adoption raises issues for adopted people and their families throughout their lives. We believe adopted children, adults and their families have a right to a sensitive and responsive adoption support service. It is a cornerstone of Coram's service that adopted children and their families can call on us for support when the need arises. We offer a range of adoption services for adopters both before and after the adoption order is made. These include study days/evening workshops for adopters, social events for families and children, parenting skills courses for adopters and access to specialist multi-disciplinary assessment and support for children where there are particular concerns. Our East Midlands team runs support groups for adopted children and adolescents.

A counselling service is available for adults and their relatives adopted through Coram and through Adopt Anglia. For former residents of the Foundling Hospital, a confidential birth records counselling service is available.

Adoption Support Services for members of adoptive families where Coram was not involved in making the placement can be commissioned by local authorities.



Assessment and consultation

We have experienced teams of social workers in London, Cambridge and the East Midlands who can undertake assessment of complex childcare cases and advise on care plans.

Training

By arrangement we can design training programmes on adoption and permanent family placement issues to meet the needs of staff in Local Authorities and Adoption Agencies. Training packages can be negotiated on an individual basis.

Attachment Research

We are undertaking a major longitudinal research study exploring how adopted children establish attachments with their new parents. This study is being undertaken jointly with the Anna Freud Centre and Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children. The first stage of this research assessing the development of attachments of children who were placed between 4-8 years has been completed. The research is ongoing and is currently following the children up into their adolescence.

Parenting Skills Programmes

Drawing on the findings of the attachment research and also on experience of running successful parenting skills training courses, Coram has customised a parenting skills course for adopters. This course takes into account the damaging early attachment histories of many adopted children and aims to give adopters the tools to encourage development of healthy attachments. The course is available as a manual and we offer training to group leaders.

Adoption and Fostering Panels

We provide the Independent Chairperson for the Northamptonshire Adoption Panel and Independent member for the Adoption Panel of Family Care, Nottingham.

Fees

We are founder members of the Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies and for interagency placements we charge the rate set by them. For assessment, consultations, training and other packages, fees are negotiable.



Quote from Adoptive Parent:

“Coram has been wonderfully supportive during some really difficult times, we appreciate the support and the ongoing availability of the team.”

For enquiries about our Adoption and Permanent Families Service Contact:

Jeanne Kaniuk

Head of Coram Adoption and Permanent Families Service, 49 Mecklenburgh Square, London WC1N 2QA Phone: 020 7520 0383 Fax: 020 7520 0375 Email: jeanne@coram.org.uk

Eefke Chasteauneuf

Concurrent Planning, 49 Mecklenburgh Square, London WC1N 2QA Phone: 020 7239 0358 Fax: 020 7833 9011 Email: eefke@coram.org.uk

Melanie Atkins

Adoption Manager, Adopt Anglia, 9 Petersfield, Cambridge CB1 1BB Phone: 01223 357397 Fax: 01223 576602 Email: melanie@coram-aap.org.uk

Hellan Timothy James

Manager, Coram/Harrow Adoption Partnership, 49 Mecklenburgh Square, London WC1N 2QA Phone: Coram 020 7520 0383 Phone: Harrow 020 8736 6944 Email: hellan@coram.org.uk

Sue Seabrook

Adoption Manager, Adopt East Midlands, Lacey Court, Charnwood Road, Shepshed, Loughborough LE12 9QY Phone: 01509 600306 Fax: 01509 601191 Email: sue@coram-ema.org.uk

Further information can be found on our website www.coram.org.uk