

# Adopting through Coram



## About us

Coram's Adoption and Permanent Families Service is one of the largest voluntary adoption agencies in the UK working in and around London, East Anglia and the East Midlands.

We pride ourselves on offering a sensitive and professional service to adopters and children. Our work includes:

- finding loving homes for babies and children
- providing ongoing support at times of need to our families and adopted children
- advising and supporting local authorities across the country with their adoption services
- aiming to speed up the adoption process for babies and children under two through our Concurrent Planning scheme.

Our teams are staffed by experienced adoption workers and administrative staff. We are very familiar with the difficulties of children who have been in care, and are experienced in helping new adoptive families adjust. As adoption is our priority we can devote time and attention to the families and children we work with.

## Equal opportunities

Coram has a positive policy to value diversity and promote equal opportunities and is opposed to all forms of racism and other discriminatory practices. Our aim is to place children in families which reflect and/or support children's racial, religious and cultural heritage where possible. However, we are open to discussing what individual families have to offer children of different backgrounds, so that children can be placed with loving families without delay.

## Children and babies

Children needing adoption will have had unsettled lives and need parents who can offer them love and reliable care to help them rebuild their trust in adults.

The children who need families include:

- babies, pre-school children and school age children
- brothers and sisters who need to remain together
- children of all ages who have special needs, such as developmental delay or disabilities.

## Adoptive parents

We need a variety of adoptive parents who can offer a child love and support throughout childhood and beyond. You can apply to become an adoptive parent regardless of your marital status, sexuality or residential status.

### We welcome applications from:

- a wide range of cultures, races and religions
- single people
- couples in stable and committed long term relationships
- those who currently have no children, as well as those who are parents already.

### And those who are:

- employed or on benefits
- homeowners or those in rented accommodation
- over 21 years of age (we do not have an upper age limit but you should have the potential to care for a child throughout their childhood and offer support for some years beyond)
- normally resident in the UK
- without any criminal conviction against children.

### We are looking for people who live:

- within a 40 mile radius of Central London
- within a 50 mile radius of Stanmore in North London
- within one hour's travelling time of our East Midlands office in Shepshed, near junction 23 on the M1
- within a reasonable travelling distance from Cambridge.

## Finance

Financial assistance for adopters may include:

- statutory adoption leave (see [www.gov.uk/adoption-pay-leave](http://www.gov.uk/adoption-pay-leave) for details)
- child benefit
- tax credits (see [www.gov.uk/claim-tax-credits](http://www.gov.uk/claim-tax-credits) for details)
- additional financial support from local authorities may be available for some children with special needs or for those adopting sibling groups
- settling in grant
- benefits for children with disabilities (see [www.gov.uk/help-for-disabled-child](http://www.gov.uk/help-for-disabled-child) for details).



# Steps to adoption

Adoption is a big decision, affecting the whole future lives of the children and parents we work with. We aim to be prompt, informative and courteous in our responses to all enquirers. We work within the statutory framework put in place by the Government and are committed to providing a high standard of service for children and families.

You can contact us by phone or email. A social worker will then speak to you on the phone, answer any questions you have and give you information about adopting through Coram. All enquirers receive an invitation to meet with a social worker within 10 days, to discuss what is involved face-to-face before proceeding.

We also offer information meetings with other prospective adopters, where you can find out more and hear from an adopter about their experiences. You can attend these meetings at any stage in the process.

All prospective adopters are assessed using the Government's two stage adopter assessment process. Prospective adopters will have a social worker to work with you who will spend time getting to know you and what your strengths as an adoptive parent are likely to be. You will be invited to a series of preparation groups which will help you explore various aspects of adoption and the challenges and joys of being an adoptive parent.

Once the assessment is completed the social worker will write a report for the Adoption Panel. You will have the opportunity to see and comment on the panel report and will be invited to attend the panel meeting.

If you are approved to adopt, the next step is to find a child who is a good match. Information about children needing families will be shared with you and you will have the opportunity to discuss this with your social worker, and the child's social worker before decisions are made.

Before children join their new family, there is time for the parent/s and children to get to know each other through a programme of visits. There is also a period after the child comes to live with you when Coram and the local authority will visit you and support everyone until the time feels right to apply to court for an adoption order which legally completes the adoption process.



## Adoption support

Coram recognises that adoptive families and their children may need support of different kinds as their children grow. Adoptive families, parents and children alike, are always welcome to contact us. Coram offers a range of support services including parenting skills groups soon after your child is placed. There are also social events for adoptive families, such as a picnic in the summer and support groups for adopters. In the East Midlands and Cambridge there are also support groups for adopted children. Coram is always interested to hear from families and will try to help with any difficulties. We aim to ensure that children adopted through Coram and their new parents are secure in the knowledge that support is available if needed.

We are also helpful in referring parents and children to supportive, appropriate resources in the community.

## Making sense of the past

After adoption the child becomes the legal responsibility of their new parent/s. Adopted children need to know about their roots and to understand their story. Photos and a life story book are provided to help them remember the important people from their past and make sense of what has happened. Adoptive parents are helped to learn how best to talk to their children about the past. Older children often want to be able to keep in touch with a birth relative (possibly a sibling or a grandparent) and we hope to find families who can encourage this.

Adopters are usually asked to send letters and sometimes photographs to the birth family through a confidential address on an annual basis. What is right for the individual child varies and a contact plan is made for each child which also takes account of the adopter's views.

After adopted children turn 18, they may wish to contact birth relatives and, if so, there are services to provide advice and support through this process. Birth relatives may only seek to contact adopted people after they turn 18, and through an officially approved intermediary, who will respect the adopted person's wishes about whether he or she wants any form of contact or not.

## Contact details

### **Coram Adoption and Permanent Families Service, London**

020 7520 0343 [Adoption@coram.org.uk](mailto:Adoption@coram.org.uk)

### **Coram Adoption South London**

020 7326 8855 [SouthLondonAdoption@coram.org.uk](mailto:SouthLondonAdoption@coram.org.uk)

### **Coram Adoption North London**

020 8371 1913 [NorthLondonAdoption@coram.org.uk](mailto:NorthLondonAdoption@coram.org.uk)

### **Coram Adoption East Midlands**

01509 600 306 [AdoptEastMids@coram.org.uk](mailto:AdoptEastMids@coram.org.uk)

### **Managing Director, Coram Adoption and Permanent Families Service**

Jeanne Kaniuk, 020 7520 0383 [Adoption@coram.org.uk](mailto:Adoption@coram.org.uk)

### **Managing Director, Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption**

Sarah Byatt, 0300 123 1093 [Enquiries@coramcambridgeshire.org.uk](mailto:Enquiries@coramcambridgeshire.org.uk)

## Coram, 275 years of better chances for children

Coram is the UK children's charity that has been helping vulnerable children for 275 years, and is still finding new ways to help children. We now help a million children and young people every year.

Our vision is that every child has the best possible chance in life, and our mission is to develop, deliver and promote best practice in the support of children and young people.

We help children and young people develop their skills and emotional health, we find adoptive parents and we uphold children's rights, creating a change that lasts a lifetime.

Find out more at [www.coram.org.uk](http://www.coram.org.uk)

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