

Useful Numbers

Cheshire West and Chester Adoption Support Team

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The Drummer, Winsford
Cheshire CW7 1AU

Tel No: 01606 275688 / 275679

Cheshire West and Chester work in partnership with an advocacy service for children and young people

The Children's Society in Cheshire
Advocacy Service
Unit 1 Theatre Court
London Road, Northwich
Cheshire CW9 5HB

Freephone: 0800 546 530

TALKadoption is here to listen and help. You can talk to us.

Sometimes you don't want to talk to your parents and can't really talk to your friends. Maybe it doesn't feel right to talk to a teacher or someone at work.

TALKadoption is here to listen about what adoption means to you. You can also email us and even join us and other people on the TALKadoption internet forums anywhere you **have access to the net**.

Free Number: 0808 808 1234

E-Mail: actionline@talkadoption.org.uk

Forms: www.forums.afteradoption.org.uk



Cheshire West and Chester

Cheshire West & Chester Council



Growing up in your Adopted Family

A Young Person's Guide to Adoption Support



Cheshire West and Chester

If you are reading this book or having it read to you, it is because you are growing up as an adopted person.

This book will help you understand what happens after you have been adopted and what some of the people who may come into your life are doing there.

Who should read this book?

Your adoptive family is legally yours for life.

As you are growing up together any one of you might have some more questions about your adoption.

This book tries to help you ask these questions and introduce you to some of the people who may help you answer them.



Talking about adoption

When you were adopted you might have been given a lot of information. This should have answered some of the questions you had at the time. As you get older, you might have more questions that need answering.

These questions might include:

Why was I adopted?

If you were adopted when you were very young, there might have been things that you didn't understand. Sometimes people are not interested in finding out at first but then become interested later on. Sometimes people do not have all the information they want to be able to understand why they were adopted. If you ask your parents they may be able to help you find out more. Your family's Adoption Support Worker may also be able to help.

What happened before I was adopted?

All adopted children have a Life Story Book. This is a book about your life which includes information about why you were adopted. If you don't have one of these books, ask your parents and they can help you to make one or contact the Adoption Support Team who will also be able to help. Sometimes you don't have all the information you need and your Adoption Support Worker may be able to help you to get this information.

What do I tell people at school?

Some people want to tell everyone they meet that they're adopted. Some other people don't want to tell anyone. You can choose to tell who you want. If you don't know who you want to tell then talk to your parents. You can all sit down as a family with the Adoption Support Worker and decide.

How many other children are adopted?

Lots. About 5000 people are adopted every year in England and Wales. There are adopted people in every country and more than 56,000 children have been adopted in the last 10 years in England and Wales.



Yes. You and your family can come to Cheshire West and Chester's Fun Days which are held twice a year in summer and at Christmas. Lots of adopted children and their families come along to meet each other and to enjoy themselves.

There are lots of different activities for different ages – no one gets bored.



Can I meet other adopted children and young people?



We also run a teenage adoption group – known as TAG. This is where you can meet other young adopted people and get involved in various age appropriate activities.

Your Adoption Support Worker can tell you more about these events and activities or you could ask your parents about them.



Helping you and your family

As you are growing up in your family there may be times when you have strong feelings about things. Often when we have strong feelings, like hurt or anger or excitement, we don't know where they come from and they can affect the things we do.

Sometimes these feelings can affect your parents too – if you don't understand how you feel then it's difficult for your parents to understand how you feel and how to help you.

Your Adoption Support Worker can come to meet you and your family to help. They will talk to you and your family and try to help you understand your feelings, and help your parents understand your feelings so you can work things out together.

Your birth family



Why do some adopted children get letters and even meet their birth parents and some don't?

Before you were adopted your social worker went to court and the judge decided whether you would have any further contact with your birth family. He or she made this decision based on what was the best thing for you and will have listened to a lot of information about you from social workers, your birth family and sometimes other people.

Because each situation is different, children and young people are usually able to keep in touch with their birth family through a couple of ways – either indirect contact (letterbox exchange) or direct contact (when you and your birth family actually meet up). However, sometimes there is no further contact as it is felt not to be in your best interest.

What happens if I don't see or hear from my birth family when the judge says I should?

If the judge has agreed that you should get letters or meet with your birth family, but this doesn't happen, your Adoption Support Worker can help. They can try and find out more, and help you understand why your birth family isn't able to send letters or to meet with you. Sometimes they can help your birth family to meet with you or send a letter.

What if I'm having contact and I don't want to?

Sometimes, as children grow up, they want to change how much they see their birth family or whether they get letters from them. You might find it hard to talk about this with your parents. If you want to see more or less of your birth family or just talk about what you feel about them then you can talk to your Adoption Support Worker about it.

They can usually help.



Your Adoption Support Worker

Adoption Support Workers will have some idea of what you are feeling because they work with many children who have been adopted and their families. They may also have worked with birth parents so that they can help you understand what your birth parents may be feeling.

Your Adoption Support Worker will help you and your family if this is what you want.

What will my Adoption Support Worker do?

If you or your family would like to have support about anything to do with adoption, one of the Adoption Support Workers will want to meet you and your family, either at home or somewhere nearby. They can talk to you and your family about anything you want help with.

All in all, the Adoption Support Worker will try to help you and your family to enjoy growing up together.

What can Cheshire West and Chester Adoption Support Team offer you and your family?

They can:

- Help you and your parents talk about adoption
- Help you understand and answer questions about being adopted
- Hold groups for your parents so they can meet other parents who have adopted children, and can learn more about what is important for children and young people who are adopted
- Help your parents understand the strong feelings you might have sometimes and show them how you can all work together to help each other
- Help you talk to your parents about difficult things
- Invite you to groups with other adopted children and young people to meet and talk about issues around adoption and being adopted
- Hold family fun days where you can meet and be together with other adopted people
- Provide a 'Children and Young People' section in our newsletter to update you with all the activities and groups that we are currently offering to young people. This section will also include a chance for you to have your say.



What can I do if I'm not happy with my Adoption Support Worker?

Cheshire West and Chester Council want to know what you think about the work we do. When you've met your Adoption Support Worker a few times, we will check that you are happy with the support you are getting. You might want to say you are not happy with what your Adoption Support Worker has said or done, or you might want to tell someone they have done something very well. You can do this by firstly talking to or emailing your worker, or the Adoption Support Team Manager, at the address on the back of this booklet.

You can also contact OFSTED or the Children's Commissioner

OFSTED

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA
Tel No: 0300 123 4666
Enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Children's Commissioner

33 Greycoat Street
London SW1P 2QF
Tel: No: 020 7783 8330
info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk



If you prefer, you can contact our Customer Care Team:

Comments, compliments and complaints:

Cheshire West and Chester Council
Solutions Team
HQ, 58 Nicholas Street
Chester CH1 2NP
Tel No: 0300 123 8 123

If you make a complaint this will always be answered as soon as possible and you will always be contacted within 10 working days of us receiving your complaint.