

Which social care team supports the child/family?

During the child's time in care, the social worker plays a pivotal role in the PEP process, providing crucial advice on the child's needs. They also handle practical matters such as applying for a school or nursery place and facilitating the transition process. In Hampshire, the children's adoption team is responsible for children awaiting adoption, including those awaiting matching and placement with a foster carer.

When the child is adopted, the social care support is slightly different. Only the parents can access this from [Post Adoption Support Services](#). For the first three years following the adoption order, the placing authority or organisation is responsible for the adoption support needs. After that, it falls to the post adoption support service for the area in which the child is resident.

For instance, if James is placed by the Dorset adoption team with a family residing on the Isle of Wight, he will remain with that local authority (Dorset) for three years after the adoption order (AO) is issued. After that date, James will be the responsibility of Adopt South. If Lacey is placed for adoption by Hampshire and she lives in Winchester with her new family, the supporting authority is Hampshire for the first three years, or as long as they are resident in Hampshire. If the family move to Kent when she is much older and three years post-order, the new supporting authority is Adopt South-East. This is sometimes referred to as the three-year rule.

Which Virtual School do I go to for advice and support?

You always go to the Hampshire Virtual School when the child is LAC in Hampshire. If the child is PLAC, even on the first day of the AO, you go the Virtual School that supports the school. This can be confusing when children live close to a county border and may reside in one county and attend school in the neighbouring county. For example, if Lottie is adopted and lives in Newbury but attends a school in Tadley, you would go to the Hampshire Virtual School. It is different from the three-year social care rule. If in doubt, please contact [Hampshire Virtual School](#), and we will direct you to the correct place.

What is?

Adoption placement

When a looked after child (LAC) is placed for adoption, the child is carefully matched and introduced to their new family. The child remains LAC until an AO is granted by the courts, which can take a long time. When a child is placed for adoption, parental responsibility is shared among the prospective adopters, the birth parents and the local authority (LA).

School applications

The social worker will apply for a new school place, which should only be made to a school rated as "good" or "outstanding" by Ofsted. Good practice would be to hold discussions between the school, social worker and prospective adopters about how the school will be able to best support the child with their care experienced needs and to put a robust transition plan in place. The Virtual School should be alerted to school transfers and applications.



FACT

Statistically, the most common age for a child to be adopted is between one and three years old. However, it is not uncommon for children to be of school age before they move to an adoption placement or for their AO to be finalised.

The adoption process

What might an adoptive family look like?

All families come in varying shapes and sizes, and this is the same for adoption. Children may be placed by themselves or with siblings. Adopters can be single, married, in a partnership, of any ethnic or religious background, heterosexual or LGBTQ+. Adoptive parents will demonstrate to the assessing social workers their ability to make a long-term commitment to the child and provide support throughout their minority and beyond. Providing love, security and consistency as any parent would to their child. Permanency is key. Some adoptive families can go on to adopt subsequent children, sometimes related to their adopted child and sometimes not. Adoptions can be from within the UK and other countries (known as international adoptions).

Support through the Adoption Process

During the adoption placement, two social workers will be involved with the family. One will be a social worker for the child and the other for the adopters. This ensures that the child's and prospective adopters' needs are met. The prospective adopters will have been through a rigorous adoption assessment process. This is so that the adopters are well informed of the Child's needs and they will know how to support them. Adopters receive initial training as part of their assessment process, and they can receive ongoing support from the Post Adoption Support Service if requested after an AO is granted.

How do I know when the child is legally adopted?

When the child's AO has been granted, the children are classed as PLAC, and all parental responsibility is passed to the new adoptive parents. From this point on, the adopters are referred to as the parents. Parents can show you an AO as proof of legal parenthood. It is acceptable to photocopy the AO that shows the child's name and those of the adopters to provide evidence of adoption. **Please do not take a copy of the section that shows the names of the child's birth parents; this is highly confidential, and you would be in breach of GDPR.**

Points to note

Working with Parents

Please be patient with new parents. Having a new child in your family is a big thing, and it will take everyone some time to adapt and become attuned to each other. Include prospective adopters in decision-making processes as you would with any other family. If you need to ask questions, please do so sensitively. Be prepared for prospective adopters who may not immediately have all the necessary information. [PEPs](#) and [EPACS](#) will help you to work together successfully.

What about funding? (see [Virtual School leaflets and information](#)).

Throughout the duration of the adoption placement, the child is eligible for LAC [pupil premium funding](#). When the child becomes PLAC, the PLAC pupil premium can be applied for. [PEPs](#) are required every term, and [EPACS](#) can be a natural continuation once the child has been adopted. Although the EPAC is not a statutory document the Virtual School considers it best practice for schools to undertake one for every PLAC child on their roll. Due to the difference in the legal status of adopted children to those who are currently LAC, this plan may only be initiated with the full consent of the parent(s) of the child.

For **school-aged** children, the PLAC pupil premium is initiated by flagging the child in the January national school census. This triggers the funding, which the school will receive as a retrospective payment in four termly instalments. Please refer to the DFE Conditions of Grant for more information and note that this is available only for children who are adopted from England or Wales.

What happens if the placement doesn't work out?

Sadly, in some rare cases, the adoption placement does not work out, and the child will leave the prospective adopters and return to a foster carer. Decisions will then be taken by social care and the family court regarding the needs of the child and the best plan for their future. This will be a hard decision for all involved.