

Support

Which Social Care Team supports the child /family?

All the time that the child is LAC the social worker will be involved with the PEP process, and be able to advise on the needs of the child etc. The Social Worker will apply for a school or nursery place, and be a crucial part of the transition process. In Hampshire the Children's Adoption Team 'hold' the children who are 'placed for adoption'. They will also have some children who are awaiting matching and will be placed 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 example, if James was placed by the Dorset Adoption Team to a family resident on the Isle of Wight then he remains with that LA (Dorset) for 3 years after the AO is issued. After that date he is then the responsibility of Adopt South. Or, if Lacey was placed for Adoption by Hampshire and she lives in Winchester with her new family the supporting authority is Hampshire for the first three years, and for as long as they are resident in Hampshire. If the family move to Kent when she is much older, and three years post order, then 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?

When the child is LAC to Hampshire then you always come to the Hampshire Virtual School. When they are Post LAC, even the first day of the Adoption Order, you go the Virtual School that supports the school. This can be confusing when children live very 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 to the social care three year rule. If in doubt, please contact [Hampshire Virtual School](#) and we will direct you to the correct place.

Any further questions?

virtualschool@hants.gov.uk

What is?

Adoption placement

This is when a Looked After Child is 'placed for adoption'. The child will have been carefully matched to their new family, and they will have been gradually introduced to them. The child remains Looked After until an Adoption Order is granted by the courts, it can take a long time for this to happen. When a child is 'placed for adoption' the parental responsibility is shared three ways between the prospective adopters, the birth parents and the Local Authority.

School applications

An application for a LAC child for a new school place is made by the social worker and should only be made to a school that is rated by OFSTED as "Good" or "Outstanding". Good practice would be for there to be discussions with the school, social worker and prospective adopters around how the school will be able to best support the child with their care experienced needs, and to then put a robust transition plan in place. The Virtual School should be alerted to school transfers and applications and the [Best Provision Protocol](#) followed



FACT

Statistically the most common age for a child to be adopted is between 1 and 3 years old, however it is not uncommon for children to be of school age before they move to an Adoption Placement or for their Adoption Orders to be finalised.

The adoption process?

What might an adoptive family look like?

As with all families, they 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, any colour, ethnicity, of faith or none, heterosexual or LGBTQ+ etc. Adopters will have shown to the assessing social workers that they are able provide a commitment to the ongoing long term needs of the child and be able to support them until and beyond their minority. Providing love, security and consistency as any parent would to their child. Permanency is key. Some adoptive families can go onto adopt subsequent children, sometimes related to their adopted child and sometimes not. Adoptions can be from within the UK and from other countries (known as international adoptions).

Support through the Adoption Process

During the time of adoption placement there will be two Social Workers involved with the family. One will be a Social Worker for the child and the other for the Adopters. This ensures that both the child and prospective adopters needs are being met. The prospective adopters will have been through a rigorous adoption assessment process, this is so that the adopters are well informed of the needs that their child may have, 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 Adoption Order is granted.

How do I know when the child is legally Adopted?

When the child's **Adoption order** has been granted the children are classed as Post LAC, and all parental responsibility is passed to the new adoptive parents. From this point the adopters are referred to as the parents. There will be an Adoption Order that the parents can show you to prove that they are the legal parents. For the purpose of providing evidence of Adoption it is acceptable to photocopy the part of the Adoption Order that shows the child's name and those of the adopters. **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! To have a new child arrive in your family is a big thing, and it will take everyone some time to adapt and to 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 the prospective adopters to not always know all of the information instantly. [PEPs](#) and [EPACS](#) will help you to work together successfully.

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

During the duration of the Adoption Placement, the child is eligible for LAC [Pupil Premium funding](#). When the child becomes Post LAC then the Post LAC 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 Post LAC child on their roll. Due to the difference in 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 Post LAC Pupil Premium is triggered by flagging the child in the January National School Census. The school will receive the funding as a retrospective payment in four termly instalments. Please refer to the DFE Conditions of Grant for more detail 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 so 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 around the needs of the child and the best plan for their future. This will be a hard decision for all involved.