

A close-up, high-angle portrait of a young Black child with a thoughtful expression. The child's eyes are looking upwards and to the right. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of their skin and the details of their facial features. They are wearing a blue and white striped shirt. The background is plain white.

www.hackneykids.org.uk

Adoption in Hackney

Adoption gives a child a permanent home and family

Are you thinking about adoption?

If you have ever thought about adoption we can help you consider whether it would be right for you and whether our team can assist you.

The population of Hackney is one of the most diverse in London. It is made up of more than 23 ethnic groups with over 100 different languages spoken. This diversity is reflected in the children we seek families for.

What is adoption?

Adoption is a life long decision, in which a child becomes part of your family. Adoption transfers the legal rights of birth parents to adoptive parents.

Adoption means a permanent home for a child

Adoption enables a child to have a permanent home and family. A child gains stability, security and love. To share your life with an adopted child is hugely rewarding. For childless individuals or couples you will be able to be a parent and enjoy all the joys of parenthood.

What kind of children and young people need families?

There are all kinds of reasons why children cannot stay with their birth families. Some children have come from complex family backgrounds. Their parents may have abused alcohol or drugs or may be suffering from mental health problems.

When there is no possibility of children returning to their families, it is important to make their lives as secure as possible. This is best achieved through adoption. It means they become the children of the adopters as if they had been born to them and they can take their name. However it can be very beneficial for children to maintain links with their birth families where possible and we need people who can respect that a child has a past and are open with him/her about their birth family.

Making your first enquiry

When you make your first enquiry about Adoption we will need to take some details from you

- Your name/s and age/s
- The names and ages of those in your household

- Brief details of your accommodation
- If you are undergoing, or have undergone, any medical treatment for childlessness
- The number, sex and age-range of children who you may be interested in adopting

If it seems possible that we could consider you as a prospective adopter a Social Worker will make arrangements to visit you. This visit is mainly to advise you further about the process of adoption, to check that there are no issues that we need to be aware of at an early stage, and to give you the chance to find out more about adoption in Hackney.

After you have had an initial visit, and your application has been given consideration by the adoption team, an assessment will usually begin. During this time you will have been invited to attend one of our preparation groups. As it is not possible under UK law to be approved as an adopter by more than one agency you will have to agree that you will not accept any other offer from another authority or agency.

The assessment

The assessment mainly consists of a series of home visits by a Social Worker from the Adoption Team. This Social Worker who we refer to as your 'Link Worker' is responsible for compiling a report on your family circumstances. This report is commonly known as a Form F, and we will usually visit you and your family several times over a few weeks.

The prospect of starting an assessment may seem slightly forbidding, however it enables you and the Link Worker to build a partnership, and for you to start to think about and prepare yourself for the process of adopting a child. It is important for us to get to know you well and so help us find the most suitable family for every child. Part of the process is to ensure, from the point of view of the child's welfare, that every adopter who we recommend for approval is suitable.

As part of the assessment, as for any 'work' involved with children, your GP will be asked to provide medical reports, and checks will be taken up with your Local authority (if you live outside Hackney), the Department of Health, the Police, and the Probation Service. We will also need to visit three personal referees, nominated by you.

It is vital that adopters notify us as soon as possible beforehand of any issues such as police convictions that may arise as a result of these checks. We do not

turn down applicants for minor or insignificant matters. However, if an adopter deliberately withholds significant information which comes to light, question marks are then raised as to the applicant's honesty.

Preparing you for adoption

We run a number of preparation groups for prospective adopters throughout the year. You will be invited to attend one of these while you are being assessed. The form the group takes and the content of the courses are designed in such a way to give you as much information as possible about adoption and look at particular issues. The course takes place over three consecutive days and around fifteen people are invited.

The meetings cover a wide range of issues including

- Preparing for an adopted child
- Adjusting to life as an adoptive family
- Meeting the needs of children through adoption
- Understanding the child's past
- How to cope with difficult behaviour

We usually invite guest speakers and try to include those who have been adopted, adoptive parents, and those who have fostered. We try to ensure that you are given as much information from as many viewpoints as possible in order for you to consider if adoption is the right choice for you and your family.

Being approved as an adoptive parent

When the assessment is completed the Link Worker will present the Form 'F' to the Adoption Panel. This panel can consist of Elected Councillors, foster carers, adoptive parents, Social workers, independent members such as teachers, a legal and a medical advisor. It is the Adoption Panel who will make the final approval to recommend you as an adoptive parent. In certain circumstances the panel will also decide if an adoption allowance is given.

Once a family or individual is approved they become part of our pool of prospective approved adopters – sometimes called the 'Active Waiting List'. This means you may have to wait until the most suitable placement is found for the child and for you. This process is called matching. When a match is found you would be given full details about the child and able to ask any questions.

If after much consideration all parties are happy with the match The Adoption Panel will approve or recommend that the adoption take place. The next step is to plan an introduction to the child and planning up to placement. The length of

time introductions usually take is not scientific and is geared towards the child's needs and capacity for change.

Who can adopt?

You don't have to:

- **Be a parent or be married**
You can be gay or straight, single, separated, divorced or living with a partner. But if you have a relationship it must be a stable one. Adopted children need security.
- **Be under 40**
You may think that because you are in your 40s and 50s you are too old to adopt. This is simply not true – we look at applications individually to see what you have to offer.
- **Own a home**
You do not need to own your own home as long as you are settled.
- **Give up your job**
It may not matter if you go out to work, so long as you have enough space in your life for your adopted child and you can be there when they need you.
- **Be wealthy**
Depending on individual children's needs, adoption allowances are available.

You need

- **A real interest in children**
- **Strong commitment**
- **Patience, tolerance and a sense of humour**
- **Time energy and space to share your life with a child**
- **Support from your family and friends**

We offer

- **Information and training workshops to prepare you for adoption.**
- **Help and advice and support are available to adoptive parents and their children whenever needed.**
- **A Post Adoption service: advice and support for anyone involved in adoption.**

Adoption Approval Process



1. Telephone Contact: **08000 730 418**

2. Information sent out about adoption

2a. You choose not to proceed

3. Return the form confirming your interest

4. You will be offered a home visit to explain the process of adoption and find out what adopting a child means to you and what your motivations are.

5. Decision that we can proceed with your enquiry

5a. Decision that we cannot proceed

6. We will start your formal adoption application. You will also be asked to give your consent for statutory checks i.e. Police checks, medical(s), and references, to be started. (This procedure is standard for all 'work' with children.)

7. You will be invited to attend an Adoption Preparation Group involving a group of other applicants interested in adoption. You will also meet people who have adopted already and people whom have been adopted themselves. The group will be held over 3 consecutive days and will include training on issues affecting adopted children and 'preparation' for home study assessment.

8. Home study assessment involves a series of interviews with an assigned adoption social worker. The assessment enables us to find out more about you and what you could offer an adopted child. We also visit your close friends and relatives (referees) to get their views and to see what support they could offer you as a new adoptive parent.

9. All the information provided is collated into a report, which you will be able to see and make comments about it in writing. This report, or form 'F', will be sent to Hackney's Adoption Panel, which makes a recommendation to our agency decision-maker for a final decision of approval. From the start of your adoption application to being approved as an adoptive parent can take between 4-6 months.

10. Once you are approved your adoption social worker will identify and match you to a suitable child who has a placement order. The social worker will also support your adoption application with the court and offer you any support you may need.

Hackney Adoption Team aims to work in partnership and provide a high quality service.