



# Guide to adoption

Is becoming an adoptive parent right for you



## Is becoming an adoptive parent right for you?

In Derbyshire there are children of all ages who, for many reasons, are unable to live with their birth families. The best way of making sure these children have a secure future and a loving home is for them to be adopted.

### What is adoption?

Adoption means permanently placing a child with a family who are not their birth parents.

Once the adoption process is complete, adoptive parents have full legal responsibility for that child.

### Who can adopt?

Adoptive parents need to be:

- Aged over 21
- Legally resident in the UK for at least 12 months
- Fit, healthy and energetic enough to provide a child with a home for their childhood and beyond
- Able to provide love, commitment, empathy and understanding
- Be flexible enough to adapt to the needs of a child who may have experienced significant trauma.

There are lots of myths around adopting that may have stopped you from taking the first step but we welcome adoptive parents from every background, relationship status and culture.

- There is no upper age limit
- You can be single or in a relationship, heterosexual or gay
- You may or may not be employed
- You may be on a low income
- You may be a home owner or live in rented property
- You may have some form of disability
- You may have your own children still living at home

We will look at your individual circumstances in order to help you decide if adoption is right for you and your family.

### Who cannot adopt?

Adoption is a huge, life-changing step to take and our decision has to be based on what is best for the child.

For this reason there are several circumstances where people are not allowed to adopt:

- If you are aged under 21, you cannot legally adopt in the UK

# “All our children have potential...”

- UK citizens living abroad cannot adopt from the UK
- If you or a member of your household has a criminal conviction or caution for offences against children or for serious sexual offences you will not be able to adopt
- Other criminal offences will not automatically stop you from adopting but will need to be taken into consideration during the assessment process

Before you make any decisions about whether to adopt or not, it is well worth taking the time to read as much as you can about adoption and what to expect.

The following websites have lots of information and resources available to adoptive parents.

[www.derbyshire.gov.uk/adoptionandfostering](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/adoptionandfostering)

[www.first4adoption.org.uk](http://www.first4adoption.org.uk)

[www.baaf.org.uk](http://www.baaf.org.uk)

[www.adoptionuk.org](http://www.adoptionuk.org)

## Who needs adoption?

There are lots of different children waiting to be adopted in Derbyshire. They range from babies and toddlers to older children and teenagers.

There are also family groups who need to be placed in a loving family home together.

Many of the children who need to be adopted have experienced neglect, trauma or abuse in their short lives.

They could have additional needs that will need to be addressed, either in the short term or for the rest of their lives. Some children may also have physical and learning disabilities.

Regardless of their difficult starts, these are children who need a loving home and a secure family life.

We have profiles of some of the children waiting to be adopted on our website at [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/adoptionprofiles](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/adoptionprofiles)

Please note that these profiles are based on the real needs of children in our care but do not directly represent actual children.

If, having read this short introductory guide, you think that you would like to take the next step to becoming an adoptive parent you can find out more in our booklet “Guide to Adoption. The adoption process in Derbyshire.”





Call Derbyshire for free  
**0800 083 77 44**

[derbyshire.gov.uk/adoptionandfostering](http://derbyshire.gov.uk/adoptionandfostering)