

Guidance for Referring Professionals

This document is written as guidance for professionals who identify an adoption support need and are seeking to refer to Together for Adoption (TFA). Within the document is an explanation of the remit, structure, referral process, and timescales that govern a family's accessibility to post adoption support. Often TFA are part of the wider plan for a child, and we support the ethos of a multi-disciplinary team approach to supporting adoptive families.

The remit of adoption support service is determined and underpinned by legislation including the Adoption Support Service Regulations 2005 and National Minimum Standard 15. Fundamentally, adoption support services are designed to meet the assessed **adoption specific** needs of children, young people and families, where adoption is a feature in their story.

Adoption specific needs include (but not limited to):

- Identity and Life Story work
- Therapeutic parenting strategies
- Development of parent and child attachment/relationships
- Early life trauma, separation and loss
- Birth family contact
- Emotional and behavioural challenges linked to adverse childhood experiences

Adoption support is delivered on a tiered framework.

Tier 1: available to families, professionals and all those with adoption in their story

Advice, guidance and signposting via a dedicated adoption support duty process; Regular newsletters and information mailshots for those on the mailing list; Membership to TFA commissioned adoption groups and resources. (All contacts are recorded as Tier 1, some lead to formal request for adoption support referral). Outcome will be Tier 1, 2 or 3 at this stage.

Tier 2: provided following specific request and/or assessment

Pre Order professional consultation process; Access to TFA training workshops, children's groups and parenting programmes; Bi annual social events for adoptive families; management of post adoption contact service (known as 'letterbox'); Referrals to a commissioned independent counselling service for birth relatives.

Tier 3: available following duty and management triage

Access to birth records for adopted adults including Schedule 2 counselling; Assessment of Need (AON) including updated/new Adoption Support Plan; access to ASGSF commissioned services where appropriate; in house allocation of one-to-one casework (usually a high level MDT approach).

For under 18's, families and professionals submit referrals via our Duty service. Professionals who refer will be asked to obtain written consent from the family, TFA will supply the template. Young adults aged 18 and over, are required to self refer, and can be supported by the professional working with them.

Information to enable the duty officer to undertake an initial triage assessment and formulate a recommendation will be gathered, and a referral created.

All referrals are then screened by a manager who will either validate the duty officers recommendation, or will provide a written summary that will be shared with the referrer explaining the outcome of management screening.

Referrals that meet the threshold for a Tier 3 service are RAG rated to prioritise allocation on a needs-based system. When TFA are holding a waiting list, red referrals are prioritised.

At the point of allocation of a Tier 3 assessment of adoption support needs (AoN), the allocated worker will make contact with the family within 5 working days. The AoN will be completed within 30 working days from the point of contact with the family.

If the AoN recommends a therapeutic intervention that cannot be met by TFA, and this therapy is **"In Scope"** of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF), an application to the ASGSF can be made to fund this intervention. Please be aware that the current timescales for a decision from the ASGSF is 28 working days.

For a list of therapies that are “In Scope” can be found on First4adoption.org.uk, or in our TFA ASGSF guide which can be supplied on request via PAsupport@wigan.gov.uk