

Becoming an adopter: step by step

Finding out if adoption is right for you can be difficult so we've prepared the following guide to help you make those first steps. We will show you how to choose an adoption agency and give you ideas on what questions you might want to ask to help you make the right decisions along the way.

Am I eligible?



Take our interactive test to find out

Many more people can apply to adopt a child than you might realise. If you are single; unmarried; aged over 40; gay or straight; actively practising religion; unemployed; renting your home; married or in a civil partnership; or if you have a disability. You can adopt a child from a different ethnic background to you own. Take the test (www.first4adoption.org.uk/first-steps-intro) or call the First4Adoption information line (0300 222 0022) to find out if you can apply.

Is Adoption Right For Me?

This can be the hardest thing to decide and to help you reach this decision we've compiled the following checklist.



Talk to people

You'd be surprised how many people have adoption stories to share



Read about Adopters real life experiences

It's a good idea to [read widely \(bit.ly/13Cogrl\)](https://bit.ly/13Cogrl) about adoption, especially about other people's experiences (www.first4adoption.org.uk/who-can-adopt/success-stories), when starting to think about whether adoption is the right option for you. Many adopters blog about their day to day experiences sharing the ups and downs of being a parent and this can help you envisage how your situation might be.



Find agencies in your area and attend information sessions

Agencies run adoption information sessions and we recommend that you attend a few. Find out which agencies operate in your area by calling us (0300 222 0022) or search our [online database \(www.first4adoption.org.uk/find-an-agency\)](http://www.first4adoption.org.uk/find-an-agency).

These events are friendly, informal events that are usually planned group sessions (but you can arrange a 1:1 with an agency if you wish). These sessions provide a great opportunity to find out more about how the agency operates and will begin to give you an idea of whether it's the type of agency for you. In addition you will probably get the chance to speak to adopters. Prospective adopters often find contact with people that have been through the process extremely valuable so we recommend that you prepare some questions in advance to help you build your own personal adoption picture and give you an idea of what to expect. Questions may include:

- What made you want to adopt?
- Did you know what age child you wanted to adopt?
- What made you think of adopting siblings/ Did you consider adopting siblings?
- What support have you needed? (wider family, friends, professional)
- What contact have you had with the birth family? Was this difficult?



Find out about the children

You may want to find out more about the children that need adopting. More details about their backgrounds and statistics on the children in care can be found here (www.first4adoption.org.uk/being-an-adoptive-parent/about-the-children).

Adoption is right for me. What do I do next?



Choose an agency

You gathered all the information you can and you're convinced that adoption is still the right option for you. Attending adoption sessions help you get an idea of which agency you think you could work with. It is really important to find an adoption agency that is right for you. You can choose to be assessed to be an adoptive parent by a voluntary adoption agency or a Local Authority adoption agency. Choosing an agency may depend on many factors:

- How easy is it to reach?
- Are they recruiting?
- How welcoming are they?
- What services and support do they offer?



Meet the agency

More important than the practical considerations above is the personal relationship and rapport you build with the agency staff. Adoption is an emotional journey and much of this will be made with your agency. Finding people you are comfortable with is therefore vitally important.

This will help you decide if you want to start the adoption journey, and help you to prepare for being assessed (www.first4adoption.org.uk/the-adoption-process) to be approved as an adoptive parent.



Get In Touch

If you have any questions about adopting, give the friendly First4Adoption information line advisors a call now on 0300 222 0022. We're open Monday-Friday 10am-6pm. You can also follow us for the latest adoption news on Twitter [@First4Adoption](https://twitter.com/First4Adoption) or on Facebook www.facebook.com/First4Adoption.

