

together for   
**adoption**

# Adoption Support



We understand that as an adopter, you may have questions or concerns about some of the areas involved in parenting adopted children. Here at Together for Adoption we have a range of support services available and a dedicated team to help you every step of the way.

Adoption Support services are delivered using a tiered approach; Tier 1 – advice, guidance and signposting which is accessed through the adoption support duty service. Tier 2 – our Core Offer, which includes in house resources such as workshops, groups, and parenting programmes. Tier 3 – Assessment of need which could initiate ASF funded services, and/or an allocated worker to support you to manage current adoption specific challenges.

The Adoption Support Team is available from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm Monday to Friday via telephone **(01942 487272)** or email

**(PASupport@wigan.gov.uk).**

Please contact us if you need adoption related support or advice. Some areas we can help are:

- Theraplay
- Attachment and brain development
- Trauma, neglect and abuse
- Grief and loss
- Alternative parenting techniques
- Life story work
- Birth family contact arrangements

We have a regular newsletter which is sent to families who choose to be on our mailing list, which details upcoming events and news about the service. We can also provide help and advice to adopted adults who wish to access their adoption records. Please contact us should you or a family member/ friend require this service.

## Adoption Support Fund

The Adoption Support Fund is intended to help adoptive families work through their child's difficult start in life. Our team can assess each child and family's needs and advise whether an application to the fund is needed. If successful, each adopted child is entitled to £5000 per financial year from the fund. This can be used to buy additional therapeutic services

such as:

- Play therapy
- Family support sessions
- Additional support directed by a clinical psychologist

Contact the adoption support team for further details about the fund.

## Groups and Workshops

We offer the following groups and workshops to all of our adopters and/or their children. Places

are limited, so early booking is advised.

### 1. First time adopters training one day course for prospective adopters to help prepare for placement

#### Course content

- Parenting styles
- Consequences of early neglect
- Understanding behaviour
- Play and development
- Relationships and support



## 2. Nurture groups

- Theraplay is a playful family therapy for enhancing relationships between parents and children.
- The group leader guides the parent and child through fun, games and nurturing activities.
- The act of engaging with each other in this way helps the parent regulate the child's behaviour and helps the child feel secure, cared for, connected and worthy.
- Children from varied backgrounds with a range of issues have benefitted from Theraplay.
- We allow children to 'be themselves' in a Theraplay situation, and provide children with messages of acceptance and encouragement.
- Over time, these positive messages will become part of the child's development and behaviour.

**For more information visit [www.theraplay.org](http://www.theraplay.org)**

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## 3. STARS (Safe, Trust, Adopted, Respect, Support)

### **90 minutes including a short refreshment break**

STARS is a therapeutic group activity for 5 to 11 year olds. Activities include:

- Rhythm and music
- Physical games
- Sensory experiences

- Craft activity
- Nurture activity

At the same time a parent group will be run by a social worker to share a variety of materials and explain the purpose of the STARS activities. At the end of both sessions, there will be a joint activity in a nearby supervised room and feedback will be invited from both parents and children.

## 4. Teenage adoption group (TAG)

TAG is a monthly group aimed at 11 to 16 year olds, and provides young people with a safe and fun environment to meet others who are adopted.

The activities can vary from games and crafts, to sporting activities

and physical challenges.

Parents meet in a separate room where they have the opportunity to chat with each other, and seek advice from a Together for Adoption team member. Refreshments are provided.

## 5. Parenting together

### **10 week programme - 2 hours/ week**

This provides an opportunity for parents to discuss general issues and those related to adoption. Some of the areas discussed will include:

- Praise
- Social and emotional development

- Reward systems
- Logical consequences
- Effective limit setting

Feedback from adopters who have completed the course in the past have included:

"It was great to know that other parents have experienced similar things and small changes have improved my child's behaviour and our relationship".



## 6. Introduction to therapy workshop for adults

### (Approximately 2 hours)

This workshop will provide a basic overview on how Theraplay can be beneficial to your family. Practical techniques will be

explored for building attachment with your child/children. Please wear comfortable clothing and shoes as this is an interactive fun session.

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## 7. Promoting therapeutic attachments, trauma and change

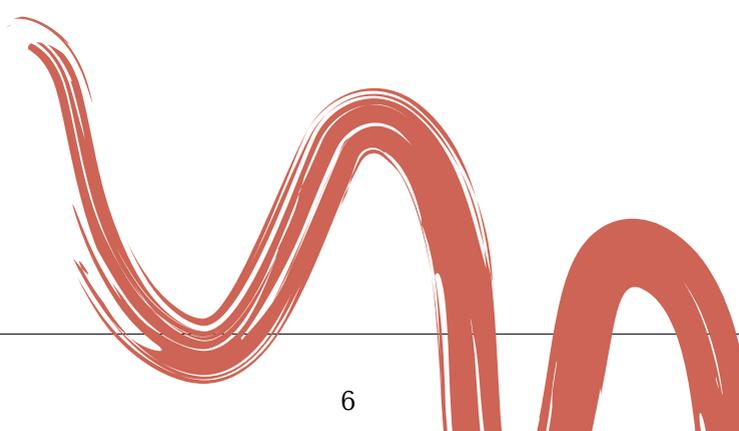
### (6 hours)

#### Course overview:

- A broad awareness of different styles of attachment
- To explore the impact of trauma, insecure attachments and how abuse and neglect

impacts on the developing brain.

- Social, emotional and behavioural problems associated with attachment difficulties.
- What can help? Key skills/strategies.



## 8. Talking to your child about adoption and using life story books

### (Parents of under 8's)

- This workshop is for families with children aged 0 - 8 years and explores how to use a life story book effectively to look at where your child is now, reflect on the past, and to bring them back to the present.
- The aim is to promote confidence in parents to be able to share their child's story with them in an open, honest and sensitive way, and to discuss outcomes from research and why adopted children need to know their story.

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## 9. Talking to your child about adoption and using later life letters

### (Parents of over 8's)

- This workshop is for parents with children over 8 years of age. It will explore how to talk about a child's story using child centred ideas, along with their life story book and later life letters.
- Time will be spent discussing how to dispel the secrecy, fear and myths about a child's story.
- We will look at how children's identities change as they grow and develop into teenagers, and how adoption adds to this.
- We hope to promote confidence in parents to be able to share and add more information to their child's story in an age appropriate, open, honest and sensitive way.

## 10. Managing the virtual world workshop

### (2.5 hour session)

This workshop will cover general issues relating to children and social networking. These include:

- Apps children and young people use
- Privacy settings
- The risks children face online
- Particular issues faced by adopted children e.g. unplanned contact, damage limitation and top tips.



## Other Adoption Support Services

### Pre approval training

As part of the pre approval preparation training, several members of the Adoption Support team deliver a full day training which explores the following

areas; attachment, preparing children to move on, lifestory work, later life letters, and access to records.



## Letterbox communication

- The post adoption contact scheme (PACS) is a service for receiving, exchanging and storing information on behalf of adopted children.
- The information exchange scheme enables adopted children to keep in touch with their birth families in an indirect way.
- The scheme is a confidential and safe way to exchange information, such as letters, cards and/or photographs.
- It provides the means for significant people in the child's life to be kept informed of their progress and provides the child and their adoptive family with updates and information about their birth family.
- The co-ordinators who manage the post adoption scheme can also offer support and guidance with any aspect of the process, including help with writing letters.

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## Access to records

Together for Adoption offers a range of services to adopted adults and birth relatives including access to birth records, support and guidance with tracing and reunions.

- We are not able to offer a full Intermediary Service, but will provide advice about where these services can be accessed.
- We offer these services to adopted adults who live in Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, St Helens, Warrington or Wigan, regardless of which agency arranged their adoption.
- Applicants must be aged 18 years or over. Applications for access to adoption records should be made to the team, in writing, including as much information about your adoption as possible or by contacting us by telephone.

**For birth parents:** Together for Adoption via PAC UK provides independent support to birth parents and relatives to help them deal with a child's adoption.

**Professional training:** A rolling training programme for professionals, with a view to sharing relevant information to support working together.

**Activity days:** Adoption support periodically organises an activity day aimed at specific groups

of children. These days will be communicated via email as and when they are arranged.

**Christmas party:** The Christmas Party is well attended by families past and present, and gives the children the opportunity to mix with other adopted children. The party includes light refreshments, a children's entertainer and a visit from Father Christmas!

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We hope you find your experience with our Adoption Support Service a positive one, and we welcome any comments or suggestions you may have to improve service delivery.

Together for Adoption is a regional adoption agency provided by Cheshire West and Chester Council, Halton Council,

St Helens Council, Warrington Borough Council and Wigan Council.

Together for Adoption was established in September 2017 and is a registered adoption agency providing a wide range of services to children, birth families, adopted adults and adoptive families.



**Together for Adoption**

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