



The Centre for Adoption Support

Helping you provide the best support for your adoptive families

A guide for Local Authorities

April 2015





Why choose us?

The Centre for Adoption Support is a unique northwest based service which provides access to an evidence based 'graduated' support model where families are able to access a wide range of services, training and support programmes appropriate to their level of need. At the heart of this service is our highly experienced and professional staff team who provide child-centred assessments and develop a support package tailored to the specific needs of the family. The graduated model is based on the premise that every family situation is different: there is no 'one size' of support that fits all. By understanding the child's needs within the family context, we are able to direct families to the best support options for them and monitor their progress along their journey.

The Centre has received support and endorsement from Edward Timpson MP as an exemplar of adoption support. In a recent statement about the Centre the Children's Minister commented:

"Parents need somebody with a deep understanding, who can train them to develop strategies, and to work therapeutically with their child. That's why experience is so important, and - with a combined 140 years between them - families coming into contact with Caritas and Adoption Matters are in safe hands."

"Yours is a fantastic partnership for this corner of the country, demonstrating that partnership working, combined with the will of local authorities, is the way forward for adoption support".

Evidence based approach

The Centre's work has been the subject of a recent Research Project by the University of Chester which looked at the impacts of the service on a number of the families who have accessed it. The research found that even over the short timeframe of the project, there was evidence of improvement in the majority of the family situations and the service was widely appreciated by families and Local Authorities.

Over our first 2 years, we have worked with over 500 parents, 113 children and delivered support to around 700 social work, health and education professionals.

Our experience shows that by providing adoptive families with access to broad training and support from the early stages we enable them to develop their own strategies for managing the family situation and build their confidence and resilience. This helps prevent situations developing to crisis point and often avoids the need for more costly individual therapeutic intervention. We believe that by accessing our services, Local Authorities will be providing an outstanding and cost-effective support service to their adopters.

About the partners

The Centre for Adoption Support was established in 2013 as a partnership between two long established charities and specialist adoption agencies, Adoption Matters and Caritas Care with support from the Department for Education's National Prospectus Grants Programme. We have developed the Centre and its services in conjunction with four partner Local Authorities: Cheshire West & Cheshire and WWiSH (Warrington, Wigan and St Helens). The two agencies together have over 140 years' experience in working with Local Authorities across the UK to find families for children in care and provide adoption support services.

Both adoption agencies are rated as 'outstanding' by Ofsted and Adoption Matters were named Voluntary Adoption Agency of the year by BAAF in 2012 & 2014.





Pictured left to right:

Susan Swarbrick, Head of Children's Services Caritas Care, Maria Lavelle, Hetty Verhagen both Social Workers at CfAS, Norman Goodwin CBE, Chief Executive Adoption Matters, Delyth Evans, CfAS Project Manager & Amanda Forshaw, Chief Executive Caritas Care.

Who are we

The Centre for Adoption Support is led by two very experienced managers and qualified social workers, Delyth Evans & Anne Fleming.

All staff at CfAS are qualified to provide support to children, parents and professionals, receive regular supervision and have evidenced partnership working.

The skills we share include Theraplay, Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy, Attachment Style Interviews, Child on Parent Violence, The Nurtured Heart Approach and we ensure that information shared within all of our training is regularly updated and informed.

“Working with Centre for Adoption Support has definitely been worthwhile. I have had many families who have benefited from their work. The CFAS staff are very experienced in adoption and have a wealth of knowledge. Feedback from the families has been especially positive, they valued the practical strategies provided by the 'nurtured heart approach' and this has been complemented by theoretical understanding of why adopted children have different needs. There has been especially positive feedback when both school and parents attended the same training together.

I would certainly recommend CfAS. There is a regular varied calendar events with something catering for a wide variety of families needs. ”

***Libby Hardman, Adoption Support Social Worker
Cheshire West & Chester Council***



Our process

We understand that many adopted children can face challenges as a result of early life experiences and sometimes, children, their families, schools and all those around them need help to understand and meet those challenges. Our experienced team will work with you and your families to identify the best support for them at their point of need at whatever age or stage.

Many of our services fall within the remit of the Adoption Support Fund meaning that LAs can apply for Government funding to cover the costs of this support.

1. Referral

When you contact the Centre through one central point we will respond to your referral by inviting parents to meet with us for an initial consultation.

2. Assessment

Together with parents CfAS staff will agree on a plan of action which may include further consultations, family work, one to one work with the child with parent present wherever appropriate. We will identify training appropriate to needs from the menu of training available, and if required will add to the existing menu of services to provide additional training.

If it is clear from the outset that the referrer is wishing to access a psychological assessment we will refer onto the Therapy service which works seamlessly within the Graduated Support model.

3. Support Plan

An agreed plan of action is confirmed with the family and referring Local Authority in writing. We will provide you with a full breakdown of the costs involved to support your claim to the Adoption Support Fund.

4. Implementation

All staff within the Centre are qualified to provide support to children, parents and professionals and will ensure that the plan is adhered to.

5. Review

The service provided is regularly reviewed with families, the referring Local Authority and within the service at agreed intervals. We will keep you informed regarding progress and provide you with closing summaries.

What we offer

Our training programme is ever changing to meet the needs and demands of our adoptive families but this brochure will give you an overview of what we currently offer to families.

- Support groups (both peer support and professional led sessions offered)
- Training courses: Nurtured Heart Approach, Dyadic Developmental Therapy, Therapeutic parenting; Non-Violent Resistance, Life story workshops, parenting teenagers etc
- Activity days and events (Rock and River, Stay and Play with Music)
- Online training (iMatter)
- One-to-one counselling and individual support
- Referral (where appropriate) to our Therapy Service led by a Clinical Psychologist
- Support for children in the school setting (specialist services to schools)
- Family support services / buddying
- We are also able to develop and provide bespoke training packages to Local Authorities covering a range of topics including: child development and attachment



Training & Support

We know that learning is an ongoing process for all parents and especially to adoptive parents. We offer support continually to all our adopters with ongoing training on issues that affect their lives and changing needs. All of our training and support sessions listed are led by qualified CfAS staff. We welcome all suggestions on future training so do have a chat with us. Pricing for training and support is available separately: contact the Centre directly for the latest price-list, training dates and venues.

All standard training and support offered by the Centre for Adoption Support is available **free of charge to all Adoption Matters and Caritas Care approved adopters** for specifics please refer to our latest price list.

You and Your Support Network (3 hrs)	Support for extended family and friends to help them understand your new family situation and the factors that lie behind your child's behaviour
Life Story Work & Talking about adoption (3 hrs)	Helping adopters understand their child's background and better prepare them for sharing that information appropriately at different stages
Parenting Teenagers (3 hrs)	Providing Adoptive parents with the opportunity to consider the rewards and challenges of parenting teenagers, where adoption is once again examined by their children. Information about neuro activity will be shared as well as considering strategies.
Therapeutic Parenting (5 hrs)	An interactive day where CfAS staff will share elements of Theraplay, Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy and the Nurtured Heart Approach which can be taken away and tried at home.
Child to Parent Violence (3 hrs)	For families who manage physical and verbal aggression at home, the session will focus on ways of managing, living with and reducing aggression within the home.
Education workshop (3 hrs)	An opportunity for parents and professionals together to hear why adopted children may struggle within school. To consider what strategies assist and how these can be implemented enabling children to enjoy and achieve.
Music stay & play (1.5hrs)	An opportunity for families to bring their children 5 yrs old & under to play alongside each other to music. Music and rhythm can assist with regulation and promote attachments.
Consultations with families	Provided to adoptive families pre & post approval. Consultations are office based and led by a member of the CfAS team. Consultations are held weekly on one day of the week in various locations across the North West in order to provide an accessible service to families.
Education consultations	Held by the Education worker across the region which can be accessed by professionals and families.
Activity Days Rock & River (6hrs) Den Building (6hrs)	Providing an opportunity for children to meet and have fun. The therapeutic value of such days is very valuable to both children and their families.



Training & Support

<p>Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (3hrs)</p>	<p>To consider the effects of alcohol on the unborn infant as well as the longer term impact on various aspects of child development. Living with a child on the FAS spectrum requires an increased understanding of the daily challenges. Tried & tested strategies will be shared.</p>
<p>Nurtured Heart Day 1 (6 hrs)</p>	<p>The workshop is designed for parents and professionals who wish to learn about the Nurtured Heart Approach at an entry level. The workshop will help all successfully transform challenging and intense behaviour while putting the adult back in control.</p>
<p>Nurtured Heart practice group (2hrs)</p>	<p>For those who have attended the Nurtured Heart Day 1 and wish to meet with others practising the approach.</p>
<p>New Parent & Child Support Group (monthly for 2 hrs)</p>	<p>An opportunity for newly formed families to meet for a coffee and a place for their children to play.</p>
<p>Training for Schools (1.5 – 2hrs)</p>	<p>Training provided for school staff within their own schools. This service is usually provided at the end of the school day, or during inset days and can be delivered across the region. This enables the whole staff group to access the training in situ and provides information about Attachment and the Impact of Early trauma. This training is often followed up with the completion of an individual plan for the child. This training is chargeable directly to schools.</p>
<p>Nurtured Heart in schools</p>	<p>Education professionals who have attended the Nurtured Heart training have seen that the benefits of the approach work well within the education setting. We have a programme that can be delivered specifically for schools who wish to embrace the approach within the culture of their school. <i>“Educators have had astounding results in greatly increased test scores, attendance, and teacher satisfaction, as well as reduced bullying,</i></p>
<p>RAMP Reducing Anxiety Management Plan</p>	<p>Reducing Anxiety Management Plan. The RAMP is a tool to help schools to support children who find it more difficult to self-regulate, possibly struggling with peer relationships and who may be emotionally and behaviourally younger than their chronological age, as a result of early experiences of trauma and abuse. We have found that it is a useful tool for the adopted children and their families who access our service, the Centre for Adoption Support. The main purpose for completing a RAMP is often to capture all the understanding and knowledge that parents and school staff have developed about a child’s different levels of anxiety, as well as the different strategies they have found useful in helping them to calm down when anxious, and to share all this understanding with others in the school. An added bonus of the RAMP is that it tends to improve or strengthen the relationships between home and school.</p>
<p>RAMP review</p>	<p>Following the completion of a RAMP we would review its effectiveness after a couple of months and where appropriate make the necessary adjustments continuing to engage with school and family. This is a briefer exercise that the construction of the original document which by this stage has become a useful tool when implementing the agreed strategies.</p>



Training & Support

One to one work with child	Therapeutic Lifestory work up to 6 sessions
One to one family work	Family sessions undertaken by CfAS staff and number of sessions to be agreed by the referring service, family and CfAS. Regular reviews, and timely reports.

Therapy Service

For the most complex cases, CfAS may recommend that Local Authorities access support from the well established Therapeutic Service.

Parenting some children placed for adoption can also present challenges and require significant emotional resilience. In order to support and facilitate change, the therapy service provides evidence based interventions that best meet the needs of adopted children and their families. Each family has different strengths and needs. Our Therapy Service therefore provides a personalised therapeutic intervention based on a structured assessment. There are a number of options available for families:

Standard Assessment	An assessment of need can be completed by the social worker and a member of the Centre for Adoption Support. The assessment would identify clear recommendations which would help shape the support plan.
Enhanced Assessment	This is conducted by a clinical psychologist and will cover all domains of a child's life. This will include sessions with the adopters, the child, school and other professionals as appropriate. The assessment will provide clear recommendations regarding a way forward. Any therapeutic goals could be delivered by the psychologist completing the report. <i>Both assessments can include a risk assessment.</i>

Therapeutic Intervention

Our Therapy Service can provide a wide range of therapists located in the North West. The therapists have specialist skills and experience of working with adopted children and their families. Approaches include Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy, Theraplay, Child psychotherapy, Filial play therapy, Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR), I Matter. Approaches incorporate developments in neuropsychology, brain development and sensory integration.

Therapists are registered to practice and have ongoing clinical supervision.

Therapeutic interventions are informed by an assessment, have clearly defined goals with regular reviews as agreed. Work is evaluated so that progress and effectiveness can be monitored.

The cost of therapy will be determined by the duration and frequency of intervention. In order to provide an indication of costs, examples of interventions are listed in our separate pricing sheet.

If there is an area of support or training that you don't feel is listed in our brochure, please contact the Centre direct on 01925 534 118 or email us at: adoption.support@adoptionmatters.org



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