



Adoption in Merseyside Support



adoptioninmerseyside.co.uk



► Adoption in Merseyside - Support

Adoption in Merseyside (AiM) is the Regional Adoption Agency for Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral.

We recognise that many families may need some extra support, especially children who have experienced early trauma or may have complex needs.

Our adoption support team is made up of social workers and support workers with a wealth of experience of working with families and children. They can identify specific support needs and offer advice, guidance, and resources to address these needs.



► Support Services

► Useful contacts

Families can speak to someone via our dedicated phone line whenever they feel that they need help with adoption specific issues.

Please note we are not an emergency service as we work with our families over a period of time in a planned way. However, we can direct families to the appropriate services once we understand the family's needs. Some of these external services are listed at the end of this leaflet.

During office hours you can contact us on 0151 477 8700 or email

adoptionsupport@adoptioninmerseyside.co.uk

For outside office hours, contact your Local Authority Emergency Duty Team

- Liverpool - 0151 233 3700
- Wirral - 0151 677 6557
- Sefton - 0151 934 3555
- Knowsley - 0151 443 2600

Alder Hey CAMHS 24 Hour Crisis line is also open 7 days a week - 0151 293 3577

► Support Groups

There are monthly online support groups hosted by AiM. These allow adopters to meet each other, and discuss a wide range of topics including

- education
- transitions
- selfcare
- sensory processing

plus many more. You can book a place through a private invite via our newsletter.

▶ Letterbox Service

This is when birth and adoptive parents share news via letter. We coordinate Letterbox for Sefton, Knowsley and Wirral. An independent adoption support agency, PAC UK, coordinate this for Liverpool.

▶ Fun Days and Playgroups

We host fun days for families to attend with any aged children. These usually take place during the summer and winter months. It is a great opportunity for adopters, children and staff to interact and have fun. There is usually activities, craft and much more on the day to keep everyone entertained.

▶ Stay and Play

The Stay and Play groups meet monthly at a soft play centre to provide an opportunity to meet with other adopters and pre-school adopted children, under 5 years. The groups are organised by AiM

and it gives adoptive parents a chance to ask questions and gain support.

There are also adopter led playgroups which are promoted via the newsletter.

▶ Monthly Newsletters

We produce regular newsletters to keep parents updated with the latest developments, training, resources and social events. We promote a range of services within the Merseyside region that are available to our families. You can sign up to our events via the newsletter. Please speak to one of the team if you would like to opt into our newsletter.

▶ Professional Training and Advice

We offer a training programme for social workers to share information and best practice. In addition, we host monthly surgeries for social workers to seek specialist advice, support and guidance on adoption related issues.



▶ Assessment of Need

Every adoptive family is entitled to an assessment of their adoption support needs.

The Local Authority that placed the child is responsible for assessing adoption support needs for three years after the Adoption Order. After three years it becomes the responsibility of the resident local authority where you live (if different). The responsible Local Authority will assess the needs of your family and child/ren and will consider what services could be of help.

The services that can be accessed will depend on the circumstances and we offer a graduated approach to support services. The assessments are completed on behalf of the four Local Authorities which comprise of AiM (Sefton, Wirral, Knowsley and Liverpool).

▶ Targeted Services

▶ Therapeutic Parenting Course

The Therapeutic Parenting Course (TPC) runs twice per year. Each course is 3 days, plus 3 follow up meetings to explore specific identified needs.

The TPC course covers a range of therapeutic parenting approaches including

- PACE
- Nurtured Heart
- Non Violent Resistance
- Theraplay
- Attachment
- Selfcare

It also gives adopters an opportunity to meet with other adoptive parents in a safe, supportive environment.



▶ Non Violent Resistance group for parents

The Non Violent Resistance (NVR) parent group runs twice per year. It introduces parents to the basic principles and tools that can support adopters who may be experiencing child to parent violence.

▶ Families

Social workers and support workers may undertake direct work with families, dependent upon the assessment of support needs. Sessions may focus on therapeutic parenting techniques, talking and telling discussions, specific parenting approaches and emotional space.

We have a number of training modules that can be delivered one to one with adopters or extended families on a range of subjects including

- Attachment
- Developmental Trauma
- Sensory Processing
- Race and Identity
- PACE
- Self Esteem
- Lifestory
- Nurtured Heart

▶ **Adoption Support Fund (ASF)**

Following an assessment by one of our team, an application may be made to secure funding for a specialist therapeutic service from the Adoption Support Fund (ASF).

Applications can only be made after the completion of an assessment of adoption specific needs. We are required by law to monitor and review all ASF funded services. Please visit www.gov.uk for more information

▶ **Specialist Services**

▶ **Enhanced specialist assessments**

These assessments are commissioned with Clinical Psychologists to explore strengths and difficulties within families and are only used to formulate specific therapeutic support plans. They are not available for Occupational Therapy, Educational or Medical assessment purposes, such as FASD or ADHD as these do not meet the scope of the ASF.

▶ **Theraplay**

Theraplay is a child and family therapy for building and enhancing attachment, self-esteem and trust in others through the medium of play.

▶ **Sensory Processing / Sensory Modulation**

Children with sensory processing issues may experience too much or too little stimulation through these senses. They may also have difficulty integrating sensory signals.



▶ Diadic Developmental Practice

The fundamental principles of Diadic Developmental Practice (DDP) informed parenting are Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy, summarised by the acronym PACE.

▶ Filial Therapy

Filial Therapy combines family and Play Therapy principles and techniques and is structured to enhance the parent child relationship.

▶ Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (CBT / DBT) are both approaches that help to manage unhelpful thought patterns and behaviours, with DBT focussing additionally on emotional and social aspects of thinking and feeling.

▶ Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing

Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a therapy that helps to process and recover from past experiences that have caused trauma and stress.

▶ Therapeutic Life story work

Therapeutic Life Story Work offers children the opportunity to explore, question and understand past events in their lives. It's important to ensure children can embrace their history and can grow up knowing who they are.

▶ Reducing Anxiety Management Plans – Education

A Reducing Anxiety Management plan (RAMP) is a tool to help schools to support children who find it difficult to self-regulate. This is for children that are 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.

▶ Direct work with children and young people

Direct work may include anger management, anxiety management, lifework, sessions on issues such as racial identity, sexuality and gender identity, self-esteem, resilience, trauma, abuse and attachment difficulties.

In addition, it can include the use of narrative therapy and creative therapies.' Creative therapies utilise an approach to work with a child, such as art, drama, music, sand play.



► Services to adopted adults and birth parents

Accessing adoption records

We provide a service via a commissioned agency, for adopted adults who live in the Merseyside region to help access their adoption records.

► Tracing and intermediary services

After seeing the adoption records an individual may wish to try and trace birth family members. AiM don't offer this service, however there a number of intermediary agencies that can provide assistance for this and there will be a cost attached.

If you were adopted in Merseyside but no longer live in the region, you should seek advice from the local authority in the area where you live about their tracing and intermediary services.

► Support and counselling

Birth Relative Support is an independent support and counselling service which provides support for adults affected by the adoption of a child. This support is offered by PAC UK.

If a plan for adoption is being considered for a child, birth relatives will be eligible for a range of services including:

- Counselling
- Written information about adoption and what it means
- Access to an independent birth relative support worker



▶ Useful Links

▶ Kooth

Online mental health and wellbeing community for young people

www.kooth.com

▶ Qwell

Free, safe and anonymous mental wellbeing support for adults across the UK

www.qwell.io

▶ National Association of Therapeutic Parenting (NATP)

To provide support, education, and resources for Therapeutic Parents and supporting professionals relating to therapeutic parenting, effective interventions, compassion fatigue and the effects of early life trauma.

www.natp.com

▶ The Centre for International Adoption

IAC is a charity, not-for-profit and an accredited, legally registered adoption agency. They deal with overseas adoptions from across the world.

www.icacentre.org.uk

▶ Adoption UK

Adoption UK is the leading charity providing support, community and advocacy for all those whose lives involve adoption

www.adoptionuk.org

▶ PAC-UK

Offering therapy, advice, support, counselling and training for all affected by adoption

www.pac-uk.org

▶ CoramBAAF

Supports agencies and professionals who work with children and young people in adoption and fostering

www.corambaaf.org.uk

▶ New Family Social

(LGBTQ+ adoptive and foster families)

www.newfamilysocial.org.uk

adoptioninmerseyside.co.uk
0151 477 8700

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