



Children and Young People's Service

Guidance on Adoption Allowances and Support

To be read in conjunction with the Children Services Procedures which can be found at – <http://www.trafford.gov.uk/about-your-council/children-families-and-wellbeing/childrens-services-procedures.aspx>

Ged Crowther.
Head of Service (Children in Care)
19/05/2014

Contents

The Context of Adoption Support Services	page 3
Legal Framework	page 3
Financial Support to Former Foster Carers	page 4
Financial Support to Prospective Adopters not formally Foster Carers	page 4
How payments are calculated	page 5
Types of Payments	page 6
Guidance on Completing the Financial Assessment Form and the Use of the Means Test Model	page 7
Summary of the Adoption Support Process	page 10
The Annual Reviews of the Adoption Financial Support	page 14
Practitioner's Tool Kit & List of Appendices	page 14

The Context of Adoption Support Services

The local authority must make provision for a range of Adoption support services.

Adoption support services are defined as:

- Financial support
- Services to enable children, Adopters and parents to discuss matters relating to the arrangements for the child
- Therapeutic services for the child
- Assistance to ensure continuance of the relationship between the child and the Adopter(s) s, including training to meet any special needs of the child, respite care, and mediation
- Assistance in relation to contact
- Counselling, advice and information

Adoption Support will be subject to the approval of the Joint Director, Children & Young people and Families (Social Care)

Contact details:

Trafford Town Hall, Ground Floor Extension, Talbot Road, Stretford, Manchester, M32
OTH. Tel: 0161 912 5050

Support services should not be seen in isolation from mainstream services and it is important to ensure that families are assisted in accessing mainstream services and are aware of their entitlements to tax credits and social security benefits; as adoption support services are intended to supplement not replace these entitlements.

The looked after the child has support for the first three years after the making of an Adoption Order. Thereafter the local authority where the Adopter(s) lives will be responsible for the provision of any support required, apart from the payment of adoption allowances which remain the responsibility of the placing authority.

Legal Framework

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 provided a major overhaul of adoption legislation by modernising the entire legal framework for domestic and inter country adoption. A key provision of the act was a new regulatory structure for adoption support services which placed a duty on local authorities to assess the need for adoption support services for adoptive families and others. The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005 specify the conditions for providing adoption support services including the provision of financial support.

In summary the provisions for financial support include:

Reg 8 - outlines the circumstances in which financial support can be paid

Reg 9 - limits the arrangements for providing remuneration to foster care placements to only those transitioning to adoptive placements; and for a period of two years.

Reg 10 - specifies the circumstances where an adoption allowance may be paid; and in all other cases by a single payment.

Reg 11 - specifies when financial support arrangements should cease

Reg 12 - specifies the conditions for which the adoptive parent must agree before an adoption allowance is paid.

Reg 15 - specifies the information that must be taken into the account when undertaking an assessment of a persons need for financial support. In particular it stipulates the circumstances where means testing must be undertaken and when it is within the discretion of the Council to decide if means testing is appropriate.

Reg 20 - specifies the arrangements for reviewing an adoption allowance

Please find Statutory Guidance link below –

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/321968/Adoption_Statutory_Guidance_2014.pdf

Financial Support to Former Foster Carers

Specific provision is made in regard to financial provision for Adopter(s) who were formerly foster carers for the specific child or young person. The general principle underpinning this is that financial support should not include any element of remuneration but former foster carers are exempted from this for a period of up to two years. In exceptional circumstances such an element could continue beyond 2 years. In Trafford the decision to continue to pay former foster carers an allowance which is commensurate with fostering payments either for the first 2 years or beyond will be guided by an individual assessment of the child's needs .The decision to approve continued payments will be made by the Joint Director, Children & Young people and Families.

Financial Support to Prospective Applicant Who Were Not Formerly Foster Carers for the Child

The principle underpinning the regulations and guidance is that financial support should be available to ensure that financial aspects are not an obstacle. Regulation 8 outlines the circumstances in which financial support can be paid and the expectation is that Adopter(s) should access the benefits that they are entitled to and that the role of local authorities is to be facilitative in this process. It also stipulates that any financial support made to Adopter(s) under these circumstances should not duplicate any other payment that they receive. The areas that the local authority is required to consider as part of a financial assessment are;

- The financial resources – including investments of the (prospective) Adopter(s)
- Outgoings of the prospective Adopter(s) ;
- Financial needs of the child or young person.

The initial costs of accommodating an adoptive child - for example a 'settling-in grant' that is often paid when the child is first placed with the family. It is not expected that this payment will be means tested, however means testing may be considered on contributions such as an adaptation to the home.

Recurring costs in relation to travel expense for contact - for example, in order to underline the value of and facilitate contact for an adoptive child with a sibling by birth, can be achieved without means tested payments to support this contact.

Payments in relation to introductions between adopters and children and any legal expenses paid in relation to the adoption process are not subject to a means test.

How Payments Are Calculated

In considering the above areas Trafford CYPS will assess the financial circumstances of any Adoption or proposed Adoption using a means test model developed by the Department of Education and Skills. The financial information that is required for the means test should be gathered using the Financial Assessment Form which is attached to this document in the Practitioner's Tool Kit as Appendix 1

The Financial Assessment Form captures information about the Adopter(s) total monthly household and family incoming finance and outgoing expenditure.

Once the financial Assessment document has been completed it will be passed to a designated financial administrator who will use a spread sheet formula to calculate the recommended level of financial support that will be paid to the special guardian.

The final payment that will be made to Adopter(s) will be the allowance that is defined as an outcome of means test calculation minus any child benefit.

There is no assumption that all Adopter(s) will receive financial support and the decision to provide such support will be dependent on the outcome of the means tested calculation.

Adoption Allowance payments in Trafford are tied to the rate of the basic allowances paid to Trafford foster carers. With regard to these payments Trafford CYPS has a payment structure for fostering allowances consisting of:

- A basic allowance which is paid to foster carers at different rates dependent on the age and needs of the foster child. The basic allowance is reviewed regularly, and is set in accordance with the Fostering Network's minimum recommended allowance.
- An additional payment which is linked to a requirement that foster carers undertake programmes of training and skill development.

Trafford only link Adoption payments to the basic fostering allowances because there is no requirement for Adopter(s) to complete training or skill development activity.

The level of allowance that will be paid to an Adopter(s) will vary according to amount of available income.

The level of allowance that will be paid to an Adopter(s) for each child will be a proportion of foster carer basic allowance minus any child benefit.

The maximum payment that will be made to an Adopter(s) for each child will be the maximum basic allowance minus child benefit

Appendix 9 of this document provides details of the payments that Trafford make to foster carers.

If a family is in receipt of Income Support they will be paid the applicable maximum basic fostering allowance without assessing their income/expenditure in this test.

Types of payment

Adoption allowances

Where the Adoption Support Assessment identifies a support need that requires on-going financial expenditure, consideration will be given to paying the adoptive parent an adoption allowance.

Trafford will use the DCSF Standardised Means Test to determine the level of financial support provided to each applicant where an adoption allowance will be paid.

If there is disagreement between the family and the Head of Service as to the level of adoption allowance to be paid, the case will be referred to the Joint Director Social Care to make the final decision.

Single payments

Single payments of financial support may be provided in cases where the identified need does not require on-going expenditure. Single payments can be one off payments or paid by installments where the Council and adoptive parent agree.

Remuneration for former foster parents

Financial support will be paid to foster carers in the form of 'remuneration' in the following cases:

- Where the decision to include it has been made before the adoption order is made and the support assessment considers it to be necessary
- Where the adoptive parent has been a local authority foster parent to the child and they received remuneration in their foster care payments whilst fostering the child.

The remuneration element of the financial support will end after two years from the adoption order except in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the Assistant Director, Multi-Agency Children Looked After and Corporate Parenting.

Guidance on Completing the Financial Assessment Form and the Use of the Means Test Model

The Guidance below provides specific information on:

- How to complete each section of the financial assessment form
- The means test model and how the level of allowance is calculated

Pay

This section will include basic net monthly pay, before any deductions for saving schemes, social clubs, accommodation/food and loans. However, the incoming figure used will exclude any payments into pension funds.

Where one or both of the Adopter(s) are self-employed, the only income which will be considered is 'drawings' as this is the equivalent of pay for a self-employed person. Any profit from the business which remains in a bank account will be taken into account as capital under other sources of income.

Where one or both of the Adopter(s) receive overtime, fees, bonus/commission and/or gratuities on a regular basis this will be included as part of the monthly payment.

Individual Benefits and Pensions

Where the Adopter(s) receives individual benefits (i.e. those that are not calculated on a household basis) these will be included in this section. If the benefit payments are currently received weekly then these are multiplied by 52 and divide by twelve to give a monthly amount. Benefits to be entered in this section should include:

- Employers sick pay
- Incapacity benefit
- Statutory maternity, paternity or maternity allowance
- Bereavement benefit
- Working tax credit (if paid directly and not as part of pay and excluding any childcare element received)
- All pension payments received
- Any other individual benefits

The Working Tax Credit Award notice held by the carers will provide information needed for this section of the assessment.

Where a childcare element is paid as part of the working tax credit, this should be disregarded for the income section of the test. This type of credit needs to be considered when completing the expenditure section on childcare (see below).

Any other benefits received by the parents, for example help with costs associated with disability or mobility, should be recorded in the 'other benefits' section.

Financial support paid to Adopter(s) under the regulations cannot duplicate (or substitute) any payment to which Adopter(s) would be entitled to under the tax and

benefit system. Only benefits that are currently being paid to the household will be included on the assessment form. If there are other benefits that Trafford believe the household would be entitled this must be pointed out to the Adopter(s) s.

Benefits

Where benefits are received by the family or members of household, as opposed to being paid directly to the parents, they should be recorded in this section. This is primarily for benefits which are calculated on the basis of household composition. Benefits to be included in this section are:

- Income Support
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Child tax credit per household
- Child benefit for each child, excluding the child/children who are the subject of this assessment application

If a member of the household receives Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance, the amount per household should be recorded. (Please note that where the only household income is Income Support, the maximum Adoption basic fostering payment will be paid)

The benefits which should be detailed on the form should include child tax credit received for each child as at the time that the test is applied. All those who received child tax credit should receive an award notice setting out how much they will receive.

Child benefit should be included for each child living in the household, excluding the child/children who are the subject of this assessment application.

Housing benefit will be excluded from this section, as it is disregarded for the purposes of the expenditure section below.

Other Sources of Income

Where the family receives income from capital, savings and/or investments, this will be assessed in terms of net monthly interest only, as paid. This is the income that is routinely available to the family, and should be clearly shown on statements/similar.

If the family receives income from boarders/lodgers, this should be calculated on a weekly basis (then multiplied by 52 and divided by 12 to give a monthly amount if the test is being completed on a monthly basis). To calculate the weekly income, all weekly payments for board and lodging must be added together, a £20 disregard applied and then 50% of any excess over £20 for each person deducted. This is how income from boarders/lodgers is calculated for income support purposes.

Examples of the approach for income from boarders/lodgers are as follows:

Boarder/lodger 1

Weekly payment	£100.00
Deduct £20 (disregard)	£20.00
	= £80.00
Deduct 50% of remainder	- £40.40
Income from boarder/lodger 1	£40.00

Where the family receives income from rent on an unfurnished property, this should be calculated on the following basis: monthly income received in rent after the deduction of any costs. Deductions can be made for:

- Interest payments on the mortgage (but not mortgage capital payments);
- Repairs;
- Council tax (if paid by the family being assessed)
- Agents' fees; and
- Insurance (buildings)

If income is received from furnished properties, the same calculation applies as above for unfurnished property, but an extra 10% deduction from the monthly rent received can be made as a 'wear and tear allowance'.

If the person who is the subject of the assessment has completed a recent tax return, local authorities may ask to see a copy of this. The tax return should have the information which may assist in the completion of this section of the form

Other income to take into consideration includes maintenance payments received for any child in the household and existing Adoption allowances (including enhancements for special needs) paid for any child. This latter may be paid where, for example, the family has become a Adopter(s) for a child with a different local authority and therefore receives a separate allowance.

Income Relating to the Child/Children Becoming an Adopted Child

This section relates to the child/children becoming an Adopted child only. Any regular interest on capital and/or income in which the child/children has a legal interest and entitlement should be included here. This could be, for example, a savings account, trust fund, property or other legacy.

Payments from Criminal Injuries Compensation Awards should not be included.

Please also consider any other income to which the child/children might be entitled. This section does not record child benefit for the Adopted child, which will be deducted from the final payment resulting from this means test.

Income Calculation

The means test spreadsheet will automatically calculate the household monthly income, and will also apply a 20% disregard to this income figure.

Projected Family Expenditure

Home Expenditure

This section should include mortgage payments, made up of capital and interest, and also including any endowment payments linked to the mortgage. If the family pays rent, the monthly amount actually paid should be recorded here, after any deductions made for housing benefit. The only other outgoing which should be included in this section is

council tax paid; this should be the amount paid after the deduction of any council tax benefit received by the household or discount for single adult households or second homes.

Other Outgoings

Where the family pay regular monthly repayments on loans for housing improvement (e.g. extensions/new kitchens) or transport costs (e.g. new car), these are included in this section.

Other payments which can be included in this section include maintenance payments, payments relating to court orders, private pension contributions and national insurance if self-employed or not working.

The section for 'reasonable' child care costs will be determined by Trafford depending on (a) the circumstances of the family in question (e.g. how many hours the parents work); and (b) local costs for child care services. Costs recorded in this section should be those paid after any childcare element paid as part of the parents' working tax credit. All those who receive working tax credit will receive an award notice which sets out how much they will receive.

Core Regular Family Expenditure

General household expenditure on items such as food, transport, clothes, recreation should be calculated using the Income Support allowance rates, increased by 25%.

Where the family's disposable income is less than £0, the spreadsheet will show the maximum Adoption allowance as being the full pay basic carer payment.

This is because the Adopter(s) has provided evidence via the disposable income calculation that shows they do not have the means to accommodate any further expenditure.

Where the family's disposable income is higher than £0, the spreadsheet will calculate an allowance as a percentage of the maximum basic fostering allowance payment. The further the disposable income figure rises above zero the lower the level of Adoption allowance that is paid.

The amount of financial support that is provided to the Adopter(s) should be detailed on the Adoption Allowance Financial Support Agreement Form which is attached as appendix 2. A copy of this form should be forwarded to the Adopter(s) and a copy maintained on the child's file.

Summary of Financial Support Assessment Process

Once financial support has been requested the social worker will assess the need by completing with the adopters a financial assessment. The assessment will identify:

- The category of need for which financial support is required
- The type of financial support, which would best meet this need, e.g. on-going expenditure or a single payment.
- Whether or not the amount should be means tested

Where a means test is required, the Social Worker will liaise with the Pay Administrator (Adoption) to arrange for a DCSF means test to be sent to the adopter, with a copy of the leaflet outlining benefits available.

The Pay Administrator (Adoption) will provide the results of DCSF means test to the Social Worker who includes the results of the means test and the proposed payment rate in the draft Adoption Support Plan.

The Social Worker completes the draft Adoption Support Plan for interim approval by the Adoption Team Manager and Head of Service and sends the assessment to the adopter for their input. Social Worker

The Social Worker discusses any comments received from the adopter with the Adoption Team Manager. -The Social Worker finalises the Adoption Support Plan for approval. Social Worker, Team Manager

Approving Financial Support

Approval for financial support will be made as part of the Adoption Support Plan approval process.

In some cases the Adoption Team Manager may authorise the following expenditure as a care package prior to the adoption support plan being authorised:

- Reasonable amount as a settling in grant to enable the purchase of essential items of equipment which the family could not necessarily be expected to have or afford to purchase, for example safety gates, push chair etc. (NOT: beds, bedding or replacement clothing).
- Reasonable expenses necessarily incurred by the prospective adoptive parent during introductions to the child, for example the cost of overnight accommodation, mileage or transport fares to visit the child etc.
- Reasonable legal fees necessary to advance the process of adoption, in consultation with Trafford Legal Services, subject to the eligibility for Public Legal Funding of the prospective adopters.

- All other payments, for example requests for vehicles or major housing works, will be considered using Adoption Support Services approval process.

Following approval of the Adoption Support Plan, the social worker will send a letter Notification of Adoption Financial Support payment letter and acknowledgement) to the applicant requesting that they sign the letter, accepting the terms and conditions of the offer. The letter must contain the following information:

- the method used to determine the amount of the allowance
- the amount of the allowance
- the date of the first payment of the allowance
- the method of payment of the allowance and frequency with which and the period for which payment will be made
- the arrangements and procedures for review, variation and termination of the allowance, see paragraphs below
- the criteria which would cause the payment to cease automatically and the prospective adopters responsibility to notify the authority should one of those criteria arise. It should also be indicated that any avoidable over payment made as a consequence of the adopters failing to notify the authority of such changes will be reclaimed
- an acknowledgement slip for the prospective adopters to sign stating they accept the terms and conditions of the offer of financial support.

Review of the Adoption Allowance

The annual review of each adoption allowance will be carried out by the Allowances Administrator (Adoption). If the Review results in a recommendation for the adoption allowance to be increased, decreased, suspended or terminated, it must be referred to the Adoption Team Manager for consideration as to whether or not a visit to the adoptive family is required; before referring to the Head of Service to make a final decision.

If the decision about the prevailing rate, or change of rate, is difficult to make, a report will be requested from another professional, e.g. a consultant paediatrician, a psychologist, a person seeing a child on a regular bases.

Once an adoption allowance is agreed the family circumstances can be reviewed at a time other than at the annual review. This is in recognition that from time to time, there may be a major change either in the needs of the child or family circumstances which would have a significant impact on their ability to continue to adequately meet the needs of the child. This provision is not intended to be used solely to supplement a change in income of the adoptive family. For example when a child reaches the age of 13, the rates for calculating the allowance will increase, prompting a review.

If there is disagreement between the family as to the level of adoption allowance to be paid, following the review, the case will be referred to the Head of Service.

The Adoption Panel will receive an annual report of all cases that have been reviewed. A record of all adoption allowances will be kept by the Pay Administrator (Adoption) together with a report of any medical or psychological condition.

Discontinuation of Allowances

An allowance will be discontinued if:

- The child ceases to have a home with the adoptive parent,
- The child ceases full-time education and commences employment,
- The child qualifies for income support or jobseeker's allowance in his own right, or
- The child reaches the age of 18, unless he remains in full-time education or training, when it may continue until the end of the course or training he is then undertaking.
- The child marries
- The review determines that the allowance should be terminated
- The child dies

Suspension of Allowances

Suspension of an allowance is the most appropriate decision, where the adopters have not provided an annual review statement. In the first instance, suspension will be decided by the Head of Service up to a maximum of 3 months. Unresolved suspensions beyond the 3 month period will be referred to the Joint Director Social Care.

Where an adoptive parent does not provide an annual statement the Council will not suspend the allowance until:

- The Council have sent the adoptive parent a written reminder of the need to provide an annual statement, and
- 28 days have expired since the date on which the notice was sent.

Conditions

Where an allowance is to be paid to an adoptive parent/sit will not be paid until each has agreed to inform the local authority immediately if:

- the adoptive parent changes their address
- the child dies

- any of the changes mentioned under discontinuation of allowances
- there is a change in the adoptive parent/s financial circumstances or the financial needs or resources of the child which may affect the amount of financial support payable to him.

The adoptive parent/s must confirm this information in writing within 7 days of providing it verbally.

The Annual Reviews of the Adoption Financial Support

An early review may be initiated if:

- The Local Authority becomes aware of any significant changes in the circumstances of the family
- The Adopter(s) notifies the Local Authority of any significant changes or requests an early review because of a change in financial circumstances.

Otherwise the level of allowance that Adopter(s) receive will be reviewed annually just before the end of the financial year (once an allowance has been received for a full year) and each year adopters will be required to re-complete the financial assessment document.

Any changes to the financial circumstances of the Adopter(s) household are likely to result in a change in the level of allowance that is awarded.

Adopter(s) are required to inform Trafford Council of any changes to their financial circumstances. These changes will trigger a review of the payments that are made and the level of payment may change as a consequence of this review.

If Adopter(s) fail to inform the council of any changes to their financial circumstances; the Council reserves the right to seek a reimbursement of payments made to them, in circumstance where the change in financial circumstance would have resulted in a reduction in the level of financial support .

Practitioner's Tool Kit

The following documents should be used to assist practitioners in their management of Adoption cases.

Appendix 1

- Financial Assessment Form

Appendix 2

- Financial Support Agreement Form

Appendix 3

- Adoption Order Court Report

Appendix 4

- Adoption Assessment of Support Services and Support Plan

Appendix 5

- Letter to Adopter(s) s

Appendix 6

- Letter to Parents re Adoption

Appendix 7

- Notice of Outcome of Assessment for Adoption Support Services

Appendix 8

- Flowchart of Adoption Financial Support Requests



Appendix 1

Financial Assessment Form

Name(s):	
Address:	
Pay	
Please provide details of your basic monthly pay, before any deductions (please provide photocopy of recent pay slip(s))	
Applicant 1	Applicant 2
Are you (either of you) self employed YES / NO If yes please provide details of income including any profit from the business	
Do you receive overtime, fees, bonus, commission or gratuities on a regular basis?	
Applicant 1 YES / NO	Applicant 2 YES / NO
If yes please provide details	

Benefits and Pensions

Do you receive any of these benefits:

Employers sick pay	yes / no
Incapacity Benefit	yes / no
Statutory maternity, paternity or maternity allowance	yes / no
Bereavement Benefit	yes / no
Working tax credit if paid directly and not part of your pay	yes / no
Pension payments	yes / no
Other benefit	yes / no

If you have answered yes to any of the above please provide details of the weekly amount received and to whom this amount is paid

Please photocopy and attach your Working Tax Credit Award Notice to this form

Do you receive a childcare element as part of your working tax credit?

Benefits (children/family)

Are you in receipt of any of the following benefits:

Income Support	yes / no
Jobseekers Allowance	yes / no
Child Tax credit	yes / no
Child benefit (not including the child subject to special guardianship)	yes / no

If you have answered yes please give details of the weekly amount received:

Other Sources of Income

Please provide details of all other sources of income including capital, savings, investments

Please provide details of any income from boarders

Do you receive any income from rent on a property?

Yes / No

Is the property rented as furnished or unfurnished?

Furnished/Unfurnished

If yes please provide details of the monthly income received in the rent after the deduction of any costs (deductions can be made for interest payments on a mortgage, repairs, council tax, agent fees, insurance(building))

Have you completed a recent Tax return?

Yes / No

If yes could you please supply a copy

Do you receive any maintenance payments for any child living in the household or existing Adoption Allowance allowances paid for any child?

Yes / No

If yes please provide details of all amounts paid weekly

Income relating to the child/children becoming an adopted child

Does the child have any savings, trust fund, property or legacy or any other form of income or saving? Yes / No

If yes please provide details

Family Expenditure

Home Expenditure

Please provide details of all home expenditure:

Mortgage Payments-----

Endowment Payments-----

Rent minus any deduction for (housing benefit)-----

Council Tax-----

Other Outgoings

Please provide details of :

Regular Monthly Loan repayments-----

Please provide details of what the loan was for: (e.g. home improvement, transport)

Maintenance Payments-----

Payments relating to any Court Orders-----

Private Pension contributions-----

National Insurance (if self-employed or not working)-----

Please provide any other details of any income/expenditure not mentioned above, please do not provide details of payments for food, fuel etc.

Appendix 2

Children and Young People's Service

Adopter(s) s Financial Support Agreement Form

Section A

Name(s) Adopter(s) s

For Child(ren):date of birth

.....date of birth

.....date of birth

Living at:

(Address)

.....

.....

Contact details: Tel number: email:

.....

The level of payment agreed for each child is as follows:

Start up costs agreed are:

Legal costs agreed are:

On-going allowance of

The first payment will be paid on:

The payment method will be by BACS system to account

Name: Sort Code:

Account Number:

Payments will be paid (State frequency)

The Adoption Order Allowance will be reviewed:

(a) Annually in April. The first review will take place in April Year OR

(b) When there is a change in financial circumstances or the financial needs of the child which may affect the amount of financial support payable

Signed:

(Director of Services for Children Young People and Families)

Date:

This form was sent out on:

Section B (to be completed by Applicant(s)/Adopter(s))

Adoption Regulations 2005 require you to agree to the following:

(a) Complete and supply Trafford Borough Council with an annual statement regarding:

- Your financial circumstances
- The financial needs and resources of the child
- Your address and whether the child still has a home with you

(A form will be sent to you each year to complete)

(b) Notify Trafford Borough Council immediately if

- You change address
- The child dies
- The child ceases to have a home with you
- The child ceases full time education or training and commences employment
- The child qualifies for Income Support or Jobseeker’s Allowance in his or her own right
- The child attains the age of 18 unless she or he continues in full-time education or training, when the payments may continue until the end of the course or training that she/he is then undertaking.

I / We

Of

(Address)

.....

Received the Adoption Financial Support Agreement on

I/we agree with the Adoption Financial Support Agreement*

I/we do not agree with the Adoption Financial Support Agreement*

(*Delete as applicable)

I agree to notify Trafford MBC of any changes in circumstances, as detailed above, and to provide an annual financial statement.

Signed: Date:

Signed: Date:

Payments cannot commence until form is signed, dated and returned.

Please complete both forms and retain one copy for your records and return the other copy in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

Thank you.

Appendix 3

Children and Young People's Service

In the Matter of the Children Act 1989 s14A

And

In the Matter of: (DOB)

Adoption Order Report

Report Prepared By:

Tel:

REPORT TO THE COURT WHERE THERE HAS BEEN AN APPLICATION FOR AN ADOPTION. ORDER

Section A: The Report and Matters for the Proceedings

Section B: The Child and the Birth Family

Section C: The Prospective Adopter(s) (s) of the Child

Section D: The Placement

Section E: Welfare Checklist and Recommendations

SECTION A: THE REPORT AND MATTERS FOR THE PROCEEDINGS

Part 1

The Report

For each of the principal author/s of the report:

- (i) name;
- (ii) local authority and address
- (iii) role in relation to this case;
- (iv) qualifications and experience;

Part 2

Matters for the Proceedings

- a) Whether the local authority considers that any other person should be made a respondent or a party to the proceedings, including the child.
- b) Whether any of the respondents is under the age of 18.
- c) Whether a respondent is a person who, by reason of mental disorder within the meaning of the Mental Health Act 1983, is incapable of managing and administering his or her property and affairs. If so, medical evidence should be provided with particular regard to the effect on that person's ability to make decisions in the proceedings.

SECTION B: THE CHILD AND THE BIRTH FAMILY

Part 1 - Information

(i) The Child

- a) Name, sex, date and place of birth and address including local authority area.
NB – address of the child and local authority area will be supplied to the court on a separate document with the application.
- b) Photograph and physical description.
- c) Nationality (and immigration status where appropriate).
- d) Racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.

- e) Religious persuasion (including details of baptism, confirmation or equivalent ceremonies).
- f) Details of any siblings, half-siblings and step-siblings, including dates of birth.
- g) The extent of the child's contact with his relatives and any other person the local authority consider relevant.
- h) Whether the child is, or has been, looked after by a local authority or is or has been provided with accommodation by a voluntary organization and details (including dates) of placements by the authority or organization.
NB – if this information needs to remain confidential addresses etc should be supplied to the court on a separate document that is not to be disclosed to the parties
- i) Whether the prospective Adopter(s) is a local authority foster parent of the child.
- j) The child's personality and social development, including emotional and behavioral development and any related needs.
- k) Details of interests, likes and dislikes.
- l) A health history and a description of the state of the child's health which shall include any treatment the child is receiving.
- m) Any known learning difficulties or known general medical or mental health factors which are likely to have, or may have, genetic implications.
- n) Names, addresses and types of nurseries or schools attended, with dates.
- o) Educational attainments.
- p) Any special needs in relation to the child (whether physical, learning, behavioral or any other) and his emotional and behavioral development.
- q) Whether the child is subject to a statement under the Education Act 1996.
- r) Previous orders concerning the child:
 - i. the name of the court;
 - ii. the order made; and
 - iii. the date of the order.
- s) Any other relevant information which might assist the court.

(ii) Each Parent of the Child

- a) Name, date and place of birth and address (date on which last address was confirmed current) including local authority area.
- b) Photograph, if available and physical description.
- c) Nationality (and immigration status where appropriate).
- d) Racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.
- e) Whether the mother and father were married to each other at the time of the child's birth or have subsequently married and whether they are divorced or separated.

- f) Where the parent has been previously married or entered into a civil partnership, dates of those marriages or civil partnerships.
- g) Where the mother and father are not married, whether the father has parental responsibility and, if so, how it was acquired.
- h) If the identity or whereabouts of the father are not known, the information about him that has been ascertained and from whom, and the steps that have been taken to establish paternity.
- i) Past and present relationship with the other parent.
- j) Other information about the parent, where available:
 - i. health, including any known learning difficulties or known general medical or mental health factors which are likely to have, or may have, genetic implications;
 - ii. religious persuasion;
 - iii. educational history;
 - iv. employment history; and
 - v. personality and interests.
- k) In respect of the child's siblings under the age of 18:
 - i. The person with whom the sibling is living (*if confidential provide this in a separate document for the court*)
 - ii. Whether the sibling is looked after by a local authority or provided with accommodation by a voluntary organization and
 - iii. Details of any court order made with respect to the sibling under the Act including the name of the court, the order made and the date on which the order was made
- l) Any other relevant information which might assist the court

Part 2

Relationships, contact arrangements and views.

(i) The Child

- a) The child's wishes and feelings (considered in the light of the child's age and understanding) about
 - i. Adoption ,
 - ii. religious and cultural upbringing
 - iii. contact with relatives and any other person the local authority consider relevant
- b) Date when the child's views were last ascertained.

(ii) The Child's Parents (or guardian) and relatives

- a) Each parent's wishes and feelings regarding:
 - (i) Adoption
 - (ii) the child's religious and cultural upbringing
- b) Each parent's wishes and feelings in relation to contact.
- c) Date/s when the views of each parent or guardian were last ascertained.

- d) Arrangements concerning any siblings, including half-siblings and step-siblings, and whether any are the subject of a parallel application or have been the subject of any orders. If so, for each case give:
 - (i) the name of the court;
 - (ii) the order made, or (if proceedings are pending) the order applied for; and
 - (iii) the date of order, or date of next hearing if proceedings are pending.
- e) Extent of contact with the child's mother and father and, in each case, the nature of the relationship enjoyed.
- f) The relationship which the child has with relatives, and with any other person considered relevant, including:
 - (i) the likelihood of any such relationship continuing and the value to the child of its doing so; and
 - (ii) the ability and willingness of any of the child's relatives, or of any such person, to provide the child with a secure environment in which the child can develop, and otherwise to meet the child's needs.
- g) The wishes and feelings of any of the child's relatives, or of any such person, regarding the child and the dates on which those wishes and feelings were last ascertained.

Part 3

SECTION C: THE PROSPECTIVE ADOPTER OF THE CHILD

Part 1

Information about the Prospective Adopter(s) (s), including suitability to care

- a) Name, date and place of birth and address (date on which last address was confirmed current) including local authority area.
- b) Photograph and physical description.
- c) Nationality (and immigration status where appropriate)
- d) Racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.
- e) Marital status or civil partnership status, date and place of most recent marriage (if any) or civil partnership (if any) or details of current relationship.
- f) Details of any previous marriage, civil partnership, or relationship
- g) Where the prospective Adopter(s) wish to apply jointly, the nature of their relationship and an assessment of the stability of that relationship.
- h) If the prospective Adopter(s) is a member of a couple and is applying alone for an Adoption order, the reasons for this.
- i) Whether the prospective Adopter(s) is a relative of the child.
- j) Relationship (if any) to the child.

- k) A health history of the prospective Adopter(s) including details of any serious physical or mental illness, any hereditary disease or disorder or disability.
- l) Description of how the prospective Adopter(s) relates to adults and children.
- m) Previous experience of caring for children
- n) Parenting capacity, including an assessment of the prospective special guardian's ability and suitability to bring up the child throughout their childhood.
- o) Where there have been any past assessments as a prospective Adopter(s), foster parent or special guardian, relevant details as appropriate.
- p) Details of income and expenditure.
- q) Information and comments on the living standards of the household with particulars of the home and living conditions (and particulars of any home where the prospective Adopter(s) proposes to live with the child, if different) and the neighbourhood in which he lives.
- r) Details of other members of the household, including any children of the prospective Adopter(s) even if not resident in the household.
- s) Details of the parents and any siblings of the prospective Adopter(s) with their ages or ages at death.
- t) Other information about the prospective special guardian:
 - i. religious persuasion;
 - ii. educational history;
 - iii. employment history; and
 - iv. Personality and interests.
- u) Details of any previous family court proceedings in which the prospective special guardian has been involved (which have not been referred to elsewhere in this report.)
- v) A report of each of the interviews with the three persons nominated by the prospective special guardian to provide personal references for him.
- w) Any other relevant information that might assist the court.

Part 2

Wishes, views and contact arrangements

Prospective Adopter(s)

- a) Whether the prospective Adopter(s) is willing to follow any wishes of the child or his parents in respect of the child's religious and cultural upbringing.
- b) The views of other members of the prospective Adopter(s) 's household and wider family in relation to the proposed Adoption order.
- c) An assessment of the child's current and future relationship with the family of the prospective Adopter(s) s

- d) Reasons for applying for an Adoption order and the extent of understanding of the nature and effect of Adoption and whether the prospective Adopter(s) (s) has discussed Adoption with the child.
- e) Any hopes and expectations the prospective Adopter(s) (s) has for the child's future.
- f) The prospective Adopter(s) (s) wishes and feelings in relation to contact between the child and his relatives or any other person the local authority considers relevant.

Section D: THE PLACEMENT

- a) Details of any past involvement of the local authority with the prospective ,Adopter(s) (s) including any past preparation for that person(s) to be a local authority foster parent or adoptive parent
- b) Where section 14A(7)(a) of the Act applies (*i.e. where a child is being looked after by a local authority and that authority is therefore preparing the report*) and the prospective Adopter(s) (s) lives in the area of another local authority, details of the local authority's enquiries of that other local authority about the prospective Adopter(s) (s)
- c) A summary of any Adoption support services provided by the authority for the Adopter(s) (s), the child or the child's parent and the period for which those services are to be provided.
- d) Where the local authority has decided not to provide Adoption support services, the reason why
- e) A summary prepared by the medical professional providing information about the child and the prospective Adoption.
- f) The implications of the making of a Adoption order for:
 - i. The child
 - ii. The child's parents
 - iii. The prospective special guardian and their family
 - iv. Any other person the local authority considers relevant
- g) Any other relevant information that might assist the court.

Section E: WELFARE CHECKLIST AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(i) Welfare Checklist

- (a) the child's ascertainable wishes and feelings (considered in the light of the child's age and understanding)
- (b) the child's particular physical, emotional and educational needs
- (c) the likely effect on the child of any change in his circumstances
- (d) the child's age, sex, background and any of the child's characteristics which the court or local authority considers relevant,

- (e) any harm (within the meaning of the Children Act 1989 (c. 41)) which the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering,
- (f) how capable each of the child's parents, and any other person in relation to whom the court or the local authority considers the question to be relevant, is of meeting the child's needs
- (g) the range of powers available to the court

(ii) Recommendations

- a) The relative merits of Adoption and other orders which may be made under the Children Act 1989 or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 with an assessment of whether the child's long term interests would be best met by an Adoption order.
- b) A recommendation as to whether or not the Adoption order sought should be made in respect of the child and, if not, any alternative proposal in respect of the child.
- c) A recommendation as to what arrangements there should be for contact between the child and his relatives or any person the local authority consider relevant.

Signed

Name
Job title
Date

Appendix 4

Children and Young People's Service

**Adoption Assessment of Support Services
and Support Plan**

Name of Child:

Date of Birth:

Name of Proposed Adopter(s) (s):

1. Child's Background information

- Relationship with proposed Adopter(s)

- Update on child's current situation:

2. Legal situation (including considerations)

3. Current and Future Contact Arrangements

4. Child's Needs including ethnicity, culture, religion, language, educational, emotional, behavioural, locality. Also must include the wishes and feelings of the child and what the child's understanding is of the situation.

5. Health: - include any health issues, details of other professionals/agencies involved

6. Wishes of the Birth Parents

7. Summary of Child's Needs

8. Proposed Adopter(s)

<p>Name:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Family Composition:</p> <p>Ethnicity:</p> <p>Religion:</p> <p>Culture:</p> <p>Language</p>

9. Relationship/attitude with the child's birth parents

--

10. How will the proposed Adopter(s) meet the needs of the child?

--

11. Please comment on the parenting capacity of the Adopter(s)

12. Contact Arrangements- what has been planned, who is responsible for transport, frequency, who has contact etc.

13. Are there any areas where the child's needs cannot be met by the Adopter(s)?

14. Identified areas which will need support and how these could be met

15. What preparation work will be undertaken with the child and Adopter(s) and who will be responsible to undertake this work?

16. Decision

It has been agreed that Adoption Support Services, as detailed in the attached plan, will be provided for the following reasons:

It has been agreed that Adoption Support Services will not be provided for the following reasons:

ADOPTION SUPPORT PLAN

ISSUE	CURRENT NEED/FUTURE NEED	SERVICE PROVIDED OR SERVICE REQUIRED	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	PERSON RESPONSIBLE AND TIMESCALE
Health				
Education				
Emotional and Behavioural development				
Identity				

Self Care Skills				
Social presentation				
Practical- Equipment , housing				
Financial- one off payment SG payments				
Signature(s):				
Applicant(s)/Adopter(s) (s):				
Date:				

Signature:	
Social Worker:	(Responsible for Monitoring Support Plan)
Date:	
Signature:	
Team Manager:	
Date:	
Signature:	
Director:	
Date:	

Appendix 5

When calling or telephoning on this matter please ask for:

Telephone:

Fax:

Date:

Dear

I acknowledge receipt of your letter notifying us of your intention to apply for a Adoption Order in respect of *[enter name of child(ren) and DOB]* .

The Department will now arrange for an assessment to be undertaken and it is anticipated that the report should be completed within 12 weeks. Within this timescale the local authority must produce a report to the court on the child/children *[delete as appropriate]*, the birth family, contact arrangements, the prospective special guardian(s) and a recommendation as to whether or not an order should be made. The recommendations of the report will be shared with yourself.

The assessment and preparation of the report will be undertaken by *[insert name of Social Worker]* who will be in contact with you to arrange to visit.

Trafford CYPS require an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service in order to make a recommendation to the court. I am enclosing the appropriate documents together with an applicants guide to completing the form(s). I would be grateful if you could have the documentation to hand for when *[insert name of Social Worker]* visits.

Furthermore it will be necessary to take up three personal references and I would be grateful if you could give this matter some thought and be able to provide names and addresses of three individuals, one of whom may be a family member. I also enclose information leaflets for yourself and the child(ren).

Yours sincerely

Team Manager

Appendix 6

When calling or telephoning on this matter please ask for:

Telephone:

Fax:

Date:

Dear

I have received notification from [*insert name of prospective Adopter s*] of his/her/their [*delete as appropriate*] intention to apply for a Adoption Order in respect of your son/daughter, [*insert name of children & d.o.b.*]

The Department will now arrange for an assessment to be undertaken and it is anticipated that the report should be completed within 12 weeks. Within this timescale the local authority must produce a report to the court on the child/children [*delete as appropriate*], the birth family, contact arrangements, the prospective Adopter(s) and a recommendation as to whether or not an order should be made. The recommendations of the report will be shared with yourself.

The assessment and preparation of the report will be undertaken by [*insert name of Social Worker*] who will be in contact with you to arrange to visit.

Yours sincerely

Team Manager

Appendix 7

Children and Young People's Service

**Notice of Outcome of Assessment for Adoption Support Services/
Notice of Variation or Termination of a Adoption Support Service following a Review**

Name of child

Name of Adopter(s)

I attach the outcome of the assessment of your need for an Adoption Support Service. If you have requested financial support, this has been assessed taking into account the child's needs in relation to your resources. If financial support is agreed, you will receive a written notice confirming these details.

I attach a draft plan for you to consider, where appropriate. Please complete the reply slip below to indicate acceptance of the proposed support as outlined in the draft plan. Please return this reply slip within ten days of receipt.

Name of Social Worker who sent this notice:
Address:
Contact number:
Email:

Cut here-----

Reply slip to:

Notice of Outcome of Assessment for Adoption Support Service(s)
Notice of Variation or Termination of an Adoption Support Service(s) following a Review

Name of child:
Name of Adopter:

We/I * accept the revised plan of proposed support.
We/I * do not accept the revised plan of the proposed support.
We/I * would like to make representations and will be in contact within the next 28 days.
*delete as appropriate

Signed:		Date:
Address:		

Appendix 8

Schedule of Basic Adoption Allowance

The following payments are with effect from 1st April 2014

Band 1

<u>Age (years)</u>	<u>Basic Allowance & Total</u>
0 – 1	£119.00
2 – 3	£122.00
4 – 7	£135.00
8 – 10	£135.00
11 – 12	£155.00
13 – 15	£155.00
16 – 17	£179.00

Appendix 9

FLOWCHART OF ADOPTION FINANCIAL SUPPORT REQUESTS

