



Adoption East Midlands Matching Guide

This is a brief guide for prospective adopters who have been linked with a child from within the Adoption East Midlands region to help prepare for what to expect during the linking and matching stage of the adoption process. We recognise that every child has their own individual needs, and therefore requires a tailored and child specific matching and transition plan. This guide should help provide further general information to prospective adopters through this stage of the adoption journey.

Adoption East Midlands has a commitment to helping all families who adopt a child via our agency to have empathy for the lived experiences of our children and an understanding of the impact of developmental trauma on the brain and on a child's internal working model.

It is our expectation that families in matches with a child from our region will have had some form of training on the impact of developmental trauma and in therapeutic parenting techniques. In turn Adoption East Midlands and our Local Authority Partners will provide a trauma informed pathway for all children and families in the matching process (please see further information below).

At Adoption East Midlands we follow the University of East Anglia (UEA) model with regards to transitions. The UEA Moving to Adoption model is a social work practice framework for supporting children's moves from foster care to adoption. The UAE model outlines three stages to the transition process.

Stage 1: Getting to know each other.

Stage 2: Making the move.

Stage 3: Supporting relationships after the move.

You can find more detailed information regarding this framework at [Moving to Adoption – The UEA Moving to Adoption model](#)



Link to Match Panel

Who will we meet?

Once it has been agreed that an identified link for a child is going to progress to matching panel, the next stage is to ensure the adoptive family are provided with all the information they need to help develop a real understanding of the child's previous experience, current needs, and potential future needs. This stage will involve meeting a variety of people that are either currently or have previously been involved with the child and / or their birth family. This may include: -

- The child's current foster carers
- Staff from the child's current school / nursery
- Consideration may be given to meet with Medical Professionals with specific involvement with the child, if they have complex health needs.

There may also be an opportunity to speak with the medical advisor from the local authority responsible for the child. This is usually in those cases where there are particular complexities around the child's current medical needs, or potential needs. This will be discussed with you and your Social Worker to assess whether or not such a meeting / discussion is required.

Further meetings to attend during this stage:

There are a variety of meetings that will take place during this stage of the adoption process. These may be face to face or virtual meetings, and they may not take place in the same order as outlined below:-

Adoption Support Meeting

An Adoption Support Meeting is held for all Adoption East Midlands children. For children linked with Adopters from outside of AEM, the meeting is usually chaired by the Team Manager from the Children's Permanence Team. Invited to attend this meeting is usually the identified adopter/s and their Social Worker, the child's Social Worker, the child's Foster Carer and their Supervising Social Worker. The purpose of this meeting is for those involved with the child to start to think carefully about the child's experiences and how this may impact on their future needs. This information is drawn together in order to start to think about how you as adoptive parent for that child can be supported in meeting the child's potential needs. You will be provided with a written copy of the discussions from this meeting, and the discussions from this meeting will support with the development of the child's individual therapeutic parenting plan. Further information about this meeting and the therapeutic parenting plan can be found ([link to web site / hub](#))



Life Appreciation Meeting

All children from Adoption East Midlands will have a Life Appreciation Meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to bring together all those professionals that have been involved in the child's journey, in order to share their experiences with the identified adopters for the child. This could include previous foster carers, previous social workers, contact staff, nursery / school staff, family support workers, health visitors, midwives etc. The hope is that bringing together a wide range of workers who have been involved, the adopters will gain a much more personal and first-hand insight into the child's experiences. You will be provided with minutes from this meeting as a record of the information shared.

Observe and play sessions

At Adoption East Midlands we encourage adopters to have the opportunity to meet and spend time with the child they are linked with, prior to the match being considered at Adoption Panel. How this takes place will very much depend on the child's age, understanding, and needs. This will be discussed with you and your social worker during the linking and matching stage and will be carefully planned and considered.

Linking with the child's foster carer and Social Worker

In order to help facilitate lines of communication during the transition period. The child's Social Worker will, with permission of all those involved, create a 'WhatsApp' group to include the child's foster carer, the child's prospective adopter/s and the child's Social Worker. This can then be used by the foster carer and prospective adopter/s to communicate directly during the transition process.

Birth parent meeting

At Adoption East Midlands we encourage all prospective adopters to meet with a child's birth parents, and potentially other birth family members, unless it has been assessed as being unsafe to do so. Both adopters and birth family members are fully prepared and supported when meeting, and a record of discussions will be made and shared with you after the meeting.



Following Match Panel

Following a successful matching panel, the next stage is to plan in more detail how the transition process will continue. It is likely that you will have already had lots of discussions with the child's Social Worker and your Social Worker in order to have in mind a possible plan and timescales for the child to transition from their current foster family to their adoptive family.

Planning Meeting

The planning meeting is an opportunity to put together a clear plan regarding how the next stage of the transition process will proceed. This meeting involves the prospective adopter/s, the child's current foster carers, the adopters Social Worker, the foster carers supervising Social Worker, and the meeting is usually chaired by a team manager from the Child's Permanence Team. You will be provided with a clear plan regarding how the next stage of the transition process will take place, who is responsible for supporting the transition plan and contact details for all those involved.

Review of transitions

Part of the plan will be a clear point in which the transitions will be reviewed, in order to assess how the plan is progressing and whether any changes to the plan are required. This meeting will involve the child's social worker, the prospective adopter/s and their social worker, the child's foster carer, the foster carers Supervising Social Worker and the meeting is usually chaired by the team manager from the Child's Permanence Team.

After a Child has moved to your care

Moving in and beyond

Once the child has moved to your care, you will have regular visits from their Social Worker. These visits will be weekly until the first Looked After Review. Following the first LAC review these visits may reduce but will continue until the child is adopted.

It is expected that the child will maintain a level of contact with their foster carers, and the frequency of this, and how this happens, will be discussed with you prior to the transitions stage.

Lodging

The decision that a family is ready to lodge for an adoption order for a child is a joint one and is normally agreed at one of the child's subsequent Looked After Review meetings. Once it is agreed by the adopters and the involved professionals, adopters will be supported to complete the paperwork and submit to court. Reports from the Social Workers involved will then be requested by the court, and a court hearing date set.



Adoption Support

You will be provided with information regarding support that you are eligible to access through Adoption East Midlands from our Adoption Support Team, prior to an Adoption Order being granted. The Adoption Support Team are also responsible for coordinating any indirect 'keeping in touch' plans that involve letterbox. Adoption East Midlands will remain responsible with regards to specific Adoption Support needs for three years following the making of an Adoption Order. *Further information about the AEM adoption support service can be found ([link to web page](#))*