

## **Eligibility Criteria for Adoption**

Birmingham's Adoption Service is committed to people who are interested in becoming adopters. We will treat you fairly, openly and with respect.

You must meet the following legal eligibility criteria:

- The prospective adopter(s) is single, married, in a civil partnership or are an unmarried couple (same sex or opposite sex) and at least 21 years old;
- The prospective adopter or one of the prospective adopters is domiciled in the British Islands and have been habitually resident in the British Islands for at least a year before they apply to the court for an adoption order; and
- Neither prospective adopter(s) nor an adult member of their household has been convicted or cautioned in respect of a specified offence.

Birmingham also has other criteria you will need to meet:

### **Targeting**

Birmingham will prioritise recruitment of adopters that meet the needs of Birmingham's children. As the profile of the children who need adoption change, we will be open with applicants about the range and needs of children who need adoptive placements. Recruitment will prioritise the needs of these children first.

### **Age**

We welcome enquirers who are over the age of 21 years of age who can demonstrate that they are emotionally mature and stable. There is no upper age limit to adopt, but older enquirers will need to consider how they will be able to cope with the demands of parenting a child through to adulthood.

### **Accommodation**

Prospective adopters must have adequate space in their home, including a spare bedroom, to accommodate an adopted child. A shared bedroom for an adopted child is only acceptable in very specific circumstances.

### **Adult Relationships**

We welcome those who are single, married, co-habiting or in a civil partnership. If you are applying as a couple, you must have been living together for at least 2 years before we can consider your enquiry, and you will need to demonstrate that your relationship is stable. If you are in a long-term relationship, we would normally expect that you to apply as a couple.

If you have separated from a long-term partner, we would normally expect you to wait about 2 years before you enquire about adoption. However we acknowledge that all situations are individual to applicants and would take this into account.

### **Fertility Treatment/Miscarriage**

If you have undergone any fertility treatment or have had a miscarriage, we would normally expect you to wait at least six months before starting the adoption process.

### **If you already have children**

Adopted children tend to do best when they are the youngest in the family by at least 2 years. As children under the age of 1 year are rarely placed for adoption, this means that we would normally expect that your youngest child is at least 3 years old before we can accept your enquiry to adopt.

### **Support Networks**

A good support network of family and/or close friends is essential for all parents, and especially adoptive parents. If you are a single applicant, this will be particularly important as you will need to demonstrate how you will meet the demands of single parenthood.

### **Adoption Leave**

There is an expectation that you, or one of you, will take sufficient adoption leave from work, ideally a year.

### **Financial Stability**

Applicants need to be able to demonstrate financial security. You will need to consider the impact of taking adoption leave on your financial situation.

### **Health**

Prospective adopters must be physically and mentally fit for being a parent, and you will be required to undertake a medical. If you have any serious health issues, then these will need to be taken into consideration.

### **Smoking**

We have a responsibility to protect children from exposure to second hand smoke and if you smoke, this may restrict the age and type of children who could be placed with you.

## **Pets**

All pets should be well cared for and well trained. Vet assessments may be required for most dogs and exotic pets.