



2023 - 2024

Impact Report

Message from our CEO



Our Impact Report shows a sample of the work that Adoption UK have carried out over the year and the impact that work has had on our community and policy and practice in the UK.

This year we have strengthened our foundations, developed new ways to meet the evolving needs of our community and set a new strategic direction that puts adopted people at the heart of what we do.

We support people both directly and by equipping the professionals who work with them with the information and training they need, so that the services they provide are relevant and effective.

The first port of call for many is our Information and Support Line. Over this year it has received calls on a wide range of issues and provided information, signposting and a listening ear for those experiencing tough times. It is open to everyone living in the UK, irrespective of their connection to adoption.

Connecting people and enabling supportive networks to develop and be sustained is key to combating isolation and encouraging mutual support. That's why we're growing the number of community groups for our members, holding more events open to all and creating opportunities to bring adult adoptees together.

We are centring the voices and needs of adopted people in our membership offers and our campaigns for change and we continue to support adoptive parents and their families: advocating for and supporting them well enables them in turn to support their children to thrive. Our new Adult Adoptee Advisory Group has been established and with our other groups allows us to develop our services with expert voices woven in.

Our new Psychology and Therapy Hub has grown and developed. It offers a range of therapeutic programmes delivered by clinicians whose work is underpinned by the latest research, and by peer support partners who work alongside clinicians. New services have been

rolled out for kinship and long-term foster carers. Plans are in place to support the therapeutic needs of children in school and to offer services for young people and adult adoptees.

Our kinship care services in Scotland have continued to provide much-needed information, advice and advocacy as well as family support and community services. Our FASD Hub UK is a centre of expertise and peer support for all families impacted by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

As well as operating within the world as it is, we continue to strive for a world we'd like to see. Our campaigns for change are informed and driven by our research, which has the experiences and views of our community embedded within it. Our research is valued by and informs policy makers and sector leaders and it allows us to make a strong case for change. We have made gains this year, particularly in the education sector, where there continues to be opportunities to lessen the burden felt by care experienced children and young people and their families.

Thanks to the hard work put in by our trustees, employees, volunteers and supporters, there is much to look back on with a sense of achievement. I regularly attend our community events and am always reminded of the real difference our work can make, as well as some of the hard challenges being faced that we must keep a focus on. I am determined that we will continue to increase our impact and I am looking forward to sharing more of our progress and ambitions with you over the coming months and years.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily".

Emily Frith
CEO, Adoption UK

The year in review

April 2023

Our new **Adult Adoptee Advisory Group** was launched, bringing a wealth of personal and professional expertise to advise our Senior Leadership Team and our board to ensure we put adopted and care experienced people at the heart of what we do. We also facilitate a monthly support group for adult adoptees as part of our Adopted Person Membership.

It has provided validation, support and to feel understood, which is so rare and so needed ... knowing that the support group for adult adoptees is there every month is a lifeline.

Adoption UK continued to campaign for apologies for the **historic forced adoption practices** of the 1950s, 60s and 70s to be made by the devolved and national governments. In April the Welsh government made a formal apology. This followed the apology made by the Scottish government earlier in 2023. We continue to campaign for an apology by the Westminster government.



For the first time schools in England received **Pupil Premium Plus** to support the needs of children adopted internationally, giving them the same rights as their domestically adopted peers. This change followed an Adoption UK campaign to give adopted children the same rights to Pupil Premium Plus, irrespective of where they were adopted from.



The Welsh government provided funding to allow us to **support adult adoptees** to access their records - a project that is the first of its kind in the UK. This should be the first step in building evidence to show the support adult adoptees need and value when they embark on the complex path of accessing information and tracing birth family members.



May 2023

Our fifth annual stocktake of adoption in the UK, the **Adoption Barometer report**, was published. We took the opportunity to look at the changes and trends revealed by the data. The report has informed many important policy and practice changes.



Work got underway on our **Adoption Alliance** project in Wales, giving young people the opportunity to influence the ways education can evolve to better understand and meet the needs of adopted children.

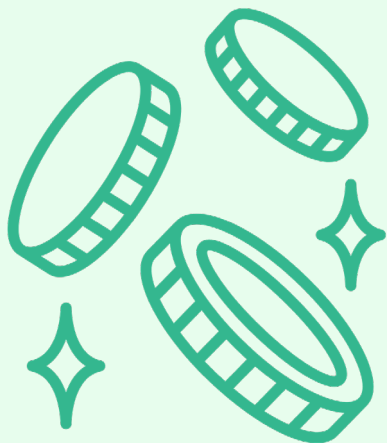


This year data from the report helped us to achieve **two key policy aims**: the development of a new standardised Adoption Support Plan by Adoption England and the continuation of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund by the Department for Education. Both these measures aim to strengthen the support around adopted children, with better support planning in the early stages and access to funding for therapeutic support. Future Adoption Barometer reports will allow the impact of these measures to be monitored.



July 2023

A programme of **summer camps and events** across the UK brought parents and children together, allowing them the time and space to share positive experiences and for lifelong peer support and friendships to be formed.



I've seen my son's confidence grow as a result of regularly meeting up with similarly aged children. He's deepening his understanding of adoption, developing friendships and realising he is not alone.

Funding was awarded from the National Lottery Community Fund to allow us to provide support for LGBTQ+ adopters and their families in Northern Ireland.



September 2023

Adoption UK worked with **BBC Teach** to produce information for educators about the struggles that adopted and other care experienced children face in school. The videos and information packs provide resources and strategies to empower teachers to improve the experiences and outcomes of this group of children.



The **FASD Hub in Scotland** had a peak of activity as they led a month of awareness raising, information sharing and support, funded by the Scottish government. The hub provides year-long support and information to those impacted by pre-birth exposure to alcohol and to their families and many of their services are accessible by those living across the UK. As public and professional awareness of FASD remains low and there remains a serious lack of services to support individuals and families, the work of the FASD Hub is crucial.

It's wonderful to be in a support group with people who just 'get it' – no explanation needed.



Our **Education Advisory Group** was launched, with a membership of educators and school leaders with experience of and a passion for radical improvements in the education of adopted and other care experienced children. Their advice will help to shape our education campaigns and services as we continue to tackle the barriers faced by these children.

I now have a network of support and forever friends.

Funding was awarded by the National Lottery allowing us to hold free community events across England. The programme includes two events for adult adoptees, that will provide opportunities to adoptees to come together, share experiences and information and find mutual support. These events will form the basis of the future growth in Adoption UK's services for adult adoptees and the continuing development of the membership offer.

October 2023

With funding from The Promise in Scotland we launched our **Education Pathway**, giving children, their families and their schools enhanced support to enable care experienced children to access and succeed in school. And in Wales, BBC Children in Need funding was awarded that will help children and young people to build friendships and support and to develop skills.



Our **Bridge project** got underway, bringing adopted young people together in Yorkshire and Humber, to develop employability skills and support their transition from school into college, training and employment.



“Family life is much more settled now. We can't thank the service enough for everything they've done.”

January 2024

A new campaign, **Break the Barriers** to School Attendance, was launched in Parliament with the publication of new research and a strong call for government to do more to support care experienced children to access education and thrive in school.

“You've helped us so much as a school in upskilling staff. It's made a huge difference in the support we've been able to offer.”

February 2024

As part of our family membership, a new **virtual community group for adoptive dads** was launched. With some men reporting that services for families are not always inclusive of dads, this new group will give an important space to share experiences and offer mutual support.



Our **Break the Barriers** research was shared with sector leaders and policy makers at an event in Edinburgh. And in Westminster a group of adopted young people met the Children's Minister, each sharing their experiences of education and adoption support.

March 2024

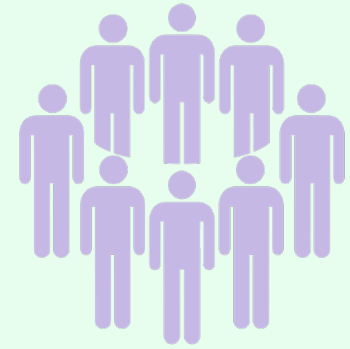
Our kinship care service in Scotland KCASS ran a series of events during **Kinship Care Week** and shared new resources to help kinship carers help the children they care for understand their life story.



It's one of the best training sessions I've ever attended and it will make a difference in my professional life as well as in my life as an adoptive parent.

A new series of accessible, **pre-recorded training** modules was launched. These include topics such as managing transitions, sleep and sensory integration – all areas that we know families may need some extra help with.

Throughout the year...



We have a membership of **6,000** from across the adoption community.

Community

There were **5,700** attendances at our community groups and events across the UK providing peer support for families and children.

2,000 hours of activities and support were delivered through our youth programmes which provided peer support and taught new skills.

Of those who came to a community event, **83%** said they felt less isolated.

Fundraising

We received over **£1.5m** in commissions, grants and funding allowing us to support more children, families and adults across the UK.



Services and support

2,800 people attended training on a broad range of topics including education and specialist parenting.

828 people were supported through our specialist therapeutic programmes.

Our Information and Support Line took **1,500** calls and emails, giving support and advice to both members and non-members.

93% of those who accessed a service said they felt listened to and understood.



Influencing

The Adoption Barometer Report has informed **two** changes in adoption policy and practice this year and **17** since the first Adoption Barometer in 2018.

3,800 respondents added their voice to the Adoption Barometer Report which was taken to politicians and policy makers as part of our campaigning work.



Thank you for your support

We wish to thank every individual and organisation who has contributed in any way to our work this year. The impact that Adoption UK is able to achieve would not be possible without the generosity of our supporters. This year you have supported us in so many different ways including taking on sponsored challenges, donating money, running community events, contributing to our campaigning work and through your membership. Everything you do helps us to make a difference.

*Adoption UK, Bloxham Mill, Barford Road, Bloxham, Banbury, OX15 4FF. Registered Charity No. 1160647 (England & Wales)
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