



ADOPTION SUPPORT

Special Guardianship and Adoption Support

A guide to what help is available



Support for Special Guardians and Adopters

Who is eligible for support?

West Sussex has a responsibility to offer a range of support services to those involved in special guardianship and adoption.

We can provide support to:

- Residents of West Sussex who are adopters or special guardians through West Sussex County Council's Special Guardianship Assessment or Adoption Team
- Special guardians or adopters outside West Sussex, if your child was previously looked after and placed by us and it has been no more than three years since the special guardianship or adoption order was granted
- Special guardians or adopters within West Sussex, if your child was placed by another authority and it has been more than three years since the special guardianship or adoption order was granted
- Birth families - providing support with contact arrangements to adoptive families of children placed by us.

If you would like to talk to us about special guardianship or adoption support, please call our duty line on **01403 229700** for an initial discussion. The line is open from 9am to 1pm Monday to Friday.

You can also email **SpecialGuardianshipandAdoption.Support@westsussex.gov.uk**.

Support Services

Our Special Guardianship and Adoption Support team offers these services:

- A special guardianship/adoption support services assessment
- 'Signposting' to suitable services
- Advice and support on special guardianship/adoption issues (**PAC-UK**)
- Special guardianship and adoption support groups
- Workshops and training on special guardianship and adoption related issues
- Financial support (depending on assessment)
- Access to Adoption Support Fund (**First4Adoption**)
- Newsletters three times a year
- Social events and activities
- Expert help and advice on educational issues for adopted/special guardianship children (**SEND Local Offer**)
- Facilitating and supporting contact arrangements for West Sussex children including direct and letterbox contact.

We also collaborate with special guardians and adopters to provide the following:

- Peer led support groups
- Access to support from Bright Futures Charity
- Adopter Big Brunches
- Inaugural Adopter Conference March 2019

Adoption Support Fund

The Adoption Support Fund (ASF) is for children placed for adoption, children with adoption orders and for special guardianship children who have previously been looked after.

The Adoption Support Fund is available to finance certain services and therapies. Where an assessment identifies that therapeutic services would be beneficial to your family, West Sussex County Council will apply to the fund on your behalf, who will then release funding to

the County Council. We will talk to you about who can provide the types of services you need and which provider you would prefer. More details can be found [here](#).

For children subject to Special Guardianship Orders who have not been previously looked after, CAMHS Looked After and Adopted Children (LAAC) can assess your child for a service.

Education

Pupil Premium

All children who have left the care of a local authority in England or Wales are eligible for Pupil Premium Plus worth £2,300 per year. The Pupil Premium is paid directly to schools and is to help schools raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap with their peers.

Early Years

Your child will benefit from the Early Years Pupil Premium which is additional education funding to help meet their needs. More information can be viewed [here](#).

If your child is two years old you can take up the offer of a free early education place. More information can be viewed [here](#).

School Aged Children

Schools are asked to give all children adopted from care or subject to a Special Guardianship Order on leaving care, priority access to schools, which means that your child should be able to attend whichever school you think best meets their needs.



Further guidance:

Click [here](#) for West Sussex Schools Admissions.
The Government guidance can be viewed [here](#).

Virtual School

The **Virtual School** team provides advice and information to support children who were previously looked after but have moved to:

- An Adoption Order
- A Child Arrangements Order
- A Special Guardianship Order

Specialist Primary Teacher

The Special Guardianship and Adoption Support Team has access through the Virtual School to a full time teacher to support schools in their work with adopted and special guardianship children. Referrals are accepted from schools only.

Further guidance:

Please call our duty line on **01403 229700** for more information.
The line is open from 9am-1pm Monday to Friday.

Special Educational Needs

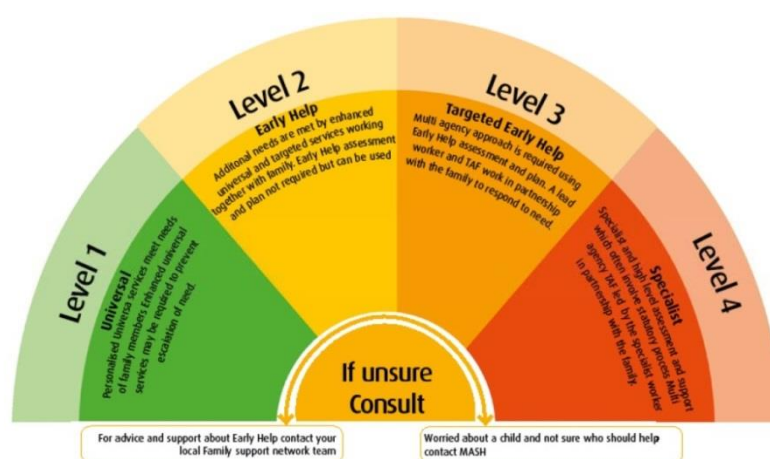
If you think your child may have special educational needs you can ask West Sussex County Council to assess these needs. More information can be found on our **website**.

Local Offer

At whatever stage you are as a parent of a child/young person with additional needs we welcome you to our Local Offer. **Our Local Offer** aims to enable you to find a supportive group for coffee and a chat, activities and events for you and your family or give you the information you may need. You can also find the Local Offer on **Facebook** and **Twitter**.

IPEH Services

IPEH (Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help) provides community based resources for children, young people and their families. The support available can be accessed at various levels. This means some services are open to all children and families, while other elements of the offer are more targeted and specialist.



- For **ages 0 to 2**; level 1, level 2, level 3 and level 4 support is available
- For **ages 3 to 4**; level 1, level 2, level 3 and level 4 support is available
- For **ages 5 to 11**; level 1, level 2, level 3 and level 4 support is available
- For **ages 11 to 16**; level 1, level 2, level 3 and level 4 support is available
- For **ages 16 to 25**; level 1, level 2, level 3 and level 4 support is available

YES (Youth Emotional Support) Service is also available for young people aged 11 to 18 who have issues that are affecting their wellbeing. You can view their leaflet **online**.

Further guidance:

You can contact the YES Hubs directly:

Chichester - **ChichesterHUB@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk**

Arun - **ArunHUB@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk**

Worthing & Adur - **AdurWorthingHUB@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk**

Horsham – **HorshamHUB@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk**

Crawley – **CrawleyHUB@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk**

Mid Sussex – **MidSussexHUB@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk**

View the locations of the Find It Out Centres **here**.

Employment

Adopters are entitled to adoption leave when your child is placed with you. This is equal to maternity and paternity leave provisions and you should ask your employer for their adoption leave policy. You may also be entitled to **statutory adoption pay**.

You are entitled to time off from employment to meet your child and during introductions before they are placed with you. You may also be entitled to **Shared Parental Leave**.

There is no statutory obligation for employers to provide leave to special guardians. It may be possible for you as special guardians to negotiate special leave with your employers.

Assessment

You are entitled to a Special Guardianship or Adoption Support needs assessment if:

- You live in West Sussex and adopted/have a previously looked after a child now subject to a Special Guardianship Order within the past three years
- You live in West Sussex and have adopted a child/have a previously looked after child now subject to a Special Guardianship Order from another authority more than three years ago
- You live outside West Sussex but your child was placed by this authority and the Adoption Order/Special Guardianship Order for a previously looked after child was made less than three years ago

For children who are subject to Special Guardianship Orders who have not previously been looked after, you should approach the local authority where you and the child currently reside.

How the Special Guardianship & Adoption Support Team can help you

We can undertake an assessment of your family's support needs in order to agree a plan tailored to those needs.

The support we can provide includes helping you understand and support your child with:

- How their needs relate to their history.
- The impact of early trauma
- Understanding their life story
- Parenting therapeutically
- Contact with birth family (direct and indirect)
- Education

We also offer:

- Emotional support to adopters/ special guardians
- Therapeutic parenting advice
- Workshops and training for adopters/ special guardians
- Summer and New Year parties
- Activity events for children throughout the year
- Newsletters three times a year
- Support, guidance and mediation around contact
- Links to community and specialist resources

- Any other special guardianship/adoption related topic
- Financial assessments and support
- Referral to CAMHS Looked After and Adopted Children Service (for special guardianship children who have not been previously looked after)
- Referrals to Adoption Support Fund for therapeutic services

After a discussion with the duty worker, you will be offered an appointment for a consultation with a social worker at our office in either Horsham or Worthing.

Special Guardianship/ Adoption Support Plan

A support plan is a written plan, agreed with you, that sets out the services you will be offered, and the outcomes we hope to achieve in working together over an agreed period of time.

Allocated Social Worker



After a Special Guardianship/Adoption Support Assessment, you *may* be allocated a social worker from the Special Guardianship/Adoption team to work with you and your family. This may be to provide attachment - based parent consultations, parenting support, support with life story work or complex contact issues, or any other special guardianship or adoption related issues.

You and your social worker will plan the work together with agreed reviews. We aim for all work to be time-limited but each piece of work is

approached flexibly; decisions will be made by you and the social worker together about the length of our involvement.

Comments, Compliments and Complaints

We welcome your feedback to improve and develop our service.

Written information about what to do if you would like to offer feedback on our service will be given to you at consultation. For more information please click [here](#).

Helpful Links

- **PAC-UK**
- **First for Adoption**
- **Coram BAAF**
- **National Association of Therapeutic Parents**
- **CAMHS LAAC**
- **Adoption UK**
- **Family Rights Group**
- **Citizen's Advice Bureau**
- **Grandparents Plus**
- **Family Mediation Council**
- **Children's Legal Centre**

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