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## FAQs



### **Am I too old or young to apply?**

You must be at least 21 to adopt a child. There is no specific upper age limit, but being able to care for your child throughout their childhood and beyond may impact upon the likelihood of you being matched with a child. Age may also impact upon the likelihood of you being matched with a child, and what is important is that you can meet the needs of the child or children.

### **Do I have to own my own house?**

No. Adopters can come from all walks of life and it doesn't matter what type of house you live in. However, it is important that you have a stable home environment for the children you would like to adopt.

### **Do I have to have a job?**

No. What is important is the person you are and what you can offer in terms of financial security and lifelong commitment.

### **Do I have to be married or in a relationship?**

No, all sorts of people successfully adopt, married people or people in a relationship, couples and single people. If you are applying as a couple we will look for a stable and secure relationship and are both fully committed to adopting a child.

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## **What about health and or disability issues?**

This depends on your condition and or disability and how it may affect you and your child. If there are any issues that you think may affect your application at an early stage. There are many conditions and disabilities that would not prevent you from adopting.

You would undergo a full medical assessment which is undertaken by a medical professional [there is a charge for this which is payable by you]. This information will be shared with the Adoption Adviser for Nugent Adoption who will make a recommendation as to whether you are suitable to adopt.

## **What if I smoke?**

You can adopt if you are a smoker, however, you would not be considered suitable if you are under 5 years.

## **What if I am overweight?**

Prospective adopters have to be able to demonstrate that they have the ability to be able to care for a child throughout childhood to independence. Being overweight is a factor that is considered when determining your medical suitability. Being slightly overweight won't stop you from adopting a child. However, if you are dangerously overweight and your doctor thinks this poses a threat to your health, this is a factor. Being healthy is important when adopting a child as parenting can be very demanding and requires energy, so being in good physical health is important.

## **What if I have a pet?**

Having a pet does not stop you from adopting and this will be taken into account during your assessment. Your Adoption Social Worker will discuss your pet and its care and general behaviour. Nugent Adoption follows Coram/BAAF guidelines. If you have a dog or other animal that is classed as dangerous this would not prevent you from adopting.

## **I have a criminal record, will I be allowed to adopt?**

All prospective adopters will be required to undergo an enhanced criminal record check [Police check] as part of the assessment process. For adoption purposes, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and all convictions, cautions and warnings as spent will be disclosed.

Having a criminal conviction, caution or bind-over is not in itself a barrier to adoption. However, your suitability as an adoptive parent it will be taken into account. Convictions for children or violent offences are likely to prevent you adopting. You will be asked about your criminal record during the very early stages of your adoption process by Nugent Adoption.

Please note that convictions include motoring offences.

You will also need to agree to us requesting checks from Social Services with children, Ofsted. We will also seek a reference from your employer and family references as part of the process.

### **Can I adopt if I already have a child?**

Yes. We will need to take the age and needs of any existing children into account in the assessment and preparation process. We will also need to meet your views age appropriately. If you have adult children we will wish to discuss how they live with you. If you have a child with a previous partner we will discuss this with that person.

### **Can I apply whilst still undergoing fertility treatment?**

We would ask you to be at the stage whereby you have completed fertility treatments before making a formal application to adopt. However, you may wish to make some informal adoption enquiries whilst still undergoing fertility treatments. Each enquiry on its own merits and would discuss this with you in detail.

### **What training and support will I receive?**

Nugent Adoption has a comprehensive preparation training programme that you will attend that covers all areas relevant to adoption. We hold regular workshops throughout the year. We can also link you with other adopters who have experienced a similar situation to yourself.

Your allocated Adoption Social Worker will guide you through the process and provide on-going support right up to the granting of an Adoption Order.

### **How long will it take for me to be approved as an adopter?**

There are two Stages in the initial adoption process. Stage One is to gather references, complete checks and during which you will have a home visit. We aim to complete this stage within 2 months, we are not able to complete this stage if there are any checks outstanding.

Stage Two is the actual assessment stage which will take 4 months. We will meet with you regularly during this stage to gather information for your assessment. At the end of Stage Two you will be invited to attend the Nugent Adoption Panel. The Panel will discuss your application and make their recommendation about whether you should be approved as an adopter.

### **Will I get financial help?**

You do not have to pay to be assessed and approved to adopt a child. Once a child is placed with you, you will, of course, be expected to meet the child's needs as a parent. However, in some circumstances you may be able to get financial help which will be means tested by the local authority who places the child. This is the case if a child has additional needs or in the case of large sibling groups.

You will be entitled to Child Benefit from when a child is placed with you.

Adopters are generally entitled to adoption leave and pay; you will need to check your employer's adoption policy for more detailed information about your place of work. For more information on Government website <https://www.gov.uk/adoption-pay-leave/overview>

### **What information will I be given about the child?**

At Nugent Adoption we believe that knowing as much information as possible is essential to understanding and meeting the child's needs. We will gather information from the Local Authority about their background, birth family, their experiences and preferences, any medical needs as well as their likes and dislikes, routines and personality.

Each child will have their own Life Story Book which is completed by the Local Authority. This is essential for the child so that they can understand their origins and relationships with their birth family.

### **Can I be considered for a child of a different ethnicity to me?**

Wherever possible, Local Authorities will attempt to place children with families whose culture reflects as many aspects of the child's culture, language, religion and beliefs as possible to help the child to have a positive sense of their own identity and feelings. This is not always possible and a family may be sought who can value and respect the child's sense of ethnic and cultural identity, even though they may be different to their own.

### **How long after my approval will I wait for a child to be placed with me?**

We cannot give a definitive answer to this as each adopter has some different circumstances. Some adopters will be 'matched' with a child very quickly within the first few weeks while others may wait for much longer.

Nugent Adoption will do everything possible to ensure that a suitable child is found for you. We work closely with Local Authorities across the country and further afield, in order to ensure that suitable adoptive families are found. We also refer you to 'Adoption Match' (the National Adoption Register) which is a database of approved adopters and children waiting for families and 'Linkmaker' an online adoption matching service.

You will be invited to attend regular Adoption Information Exchange meetings to hear more about specific children who are waiting for a family.

We take very a proactive approach to 'family finding', your Social Worker will identify a child who you could be just the right family for. They will also keep you updated and support you throughout this process.

### **What about support after I have adopted?**

An Adoption Support Plan will be written for every child being placed with you.

clear about what support is available and where you can access it. Following placement it is the responsibility of the Local Authority where the child is placed to meet post adoption support needs. Following this period the responsibility for meeting post adoption support needs will be transferred to the Local Authority where you live. Nugent Adoption will be available to point you in the right direction. Support is available as well as offering advice and emotional support to you.

At Nugent Adoption we are committed to offering our adopters support and advice throughout their experience. Once you adopt through Nugent, you are our adopter for life. We offer ongoing assistance or support. If you experience any difficulties in the future or have any questions, you can contact us and one of our experienced Adoption Workers will offer you help.

### **Can I adopt my step-child?**

It may be possible for you to adopt your step-child; however, Nugent Adoption can only do this work when commissioned to do so by the Local Authority. In order to do this you must contact your Local Authority Adoption Service and get their advice.

### **Once I've adopted will I have to have any contact with my child's birth family?**

There are many different ways that a child can maintain contact with their birth family. The plan for each child is different and as an adoptive parent you will be involved in developing a contact plan. The most common form of contact with birth family is 'Open Adoption' or 'Contact' this is an exchange of letters once or twice each year. Some children have contact with their birth family members; this is often with their siblings and grandparents. Occasionally there is no contact arrangement for the child.

### **Are there any costs related to adoption?**

If you are adopting a child from the UK Care system there is no charge for adoption. The only cost you will pay for your own medicals to be completed.

For more information on adoption please call us on 01744 613 040 or contact your Adoption Worker directly. We also hold a number of information drop-in events. Further information can be found on our website and through our social media.

### **How can I find out specific information about adopting from another country?**

Nugent Adoption is in working partnership with the IAC – The Centre for Adoption Specialists in the area of Intercountry Adoption. If you wish to adopt from another country you should contact IAC – The Centre for Adoption in the first instance.

IAC Advice Line: 0208 447 4753.

The Advice Line is open to members of the general public wherever they live who are interested in intercountry adoption. The Advice Line is open every weekday from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Callbacks made by Advisors up until 4.00 p.m.

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*"From day one, our experience with Nugent has been amazing and we cannot thank them enough for helping us through this process."*

Ayesha and John



## Giving a home to siblings

An account of adopting siblings. I'm Tim and I'm the adoptive parent. It's been amazing...



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