

Action Against Adoption & Special Guardianship Support Fund Changes

Parliamentary Briefing, May 2025

Summary

The Government has significantly reduced available funding for therapeutic support for children who are adopted and living in kinship care. The Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) is a **lifeline** for these children and young adults who have experienced early-life trauma and adversity.

- £2,500 previously ring fenced for assessment has been abolished.
- £5,000 fair access limit has been cut by 40% to £3,000 per child/per year.
- £30,000 per child/year available through match funding with the local authority for children with the greatest need has been scrapped completely, leaving these families with nowhere to turn to.

Overall, this represents **40% – 90% cuts** in the previous limits available per child. These reductions have already had **serious consequences**. Therapeutic support for many children has been **suddenly and without warning** curtailed or stopped entirely, undermining their wellbeing and long-term outcomes. **This move is in direct conflict** with the Government’s manifesto commitment to “support children in care, including through kinship, foster care, and adoption” and **must be urgently reversed in the upcoming Spending Review**.

Background

Children who are adopted or live in kinship arrangements often face complex emotional, behavioural, and psychological challenges arising **from early trauma, neglect, or abuse**. The Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund was established to address these challenges by providing families with access to specialist assessments and high-quality therapeutic support.

Adoption and kinship not only provide safety, stability and a loving home to thousands of children, but they are **the most cost-effective** interventions available for children who cannot safely remain with their birth families.

- Kinship care **saves the Government** approximately £4.3 billion each year
- Adoption **saves approximately** £4.2 billion each year (£3.6 billion to local authorities, £541 million to broader economy, £34 million to NHS).
- In addition to these figures Adoption **generates a value** of at least £1.3 million per child adopted for children, families and society at large over a lifetime.

Labour’s manifesto duly recognised this value, committing to “support children in care, including through kinship, foster care, and adoption.”

The current situation

While the Fund will continue from April 2025 with the same £50 million budget, all per child limits have been drastically cut, as above. These changes were **made without consultation** with the sector and **without an evidence base** for the new limits.

In response to a letter from Adoption UK, the Government claims “local authorities and regional adoption agencies can use their own funding to increase the amount of therapy if this is needed.” **There is no evidence** that cash-strapped local authorities will be able to fund the shortfall created by changes to the ASGSF.

The impact

The need for therapy for children who are adopted is well established. Evidence shows that 33% of adoptions in one sample broke down (‘disrupted’) without the right therapeutic support, compared to just 9% of those that were supportedⁱ. **Disruption**, where a child returns to local authority care, **is a traumatic and costly outcome**, with the average cost of a residential home placement standing at £6,108 per weekⁱⁱ.

There is no evidence that other services will be able to meet these children's needs. In England only 1% of adoptive parents and 3% of adult adoptees completely agree that statutory services have a good understanding of the needs of care experienced people.

Adoptive families were **struggling even before these changes**, and their **challenges have increased** in recent years. In 2023, 38% of adoptive families described themselves as facing severe challenges or reaching crisis point, compared to 30% in 2022ⁱⁱⁱ. 75% of adoptive families agreed that it felt like a **continual battle** to get the help and support their child and their family needed.

The solution

Children's entitlement to therapeutic support through The Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund **must be increased** to **prevent adverse outcomes** and to **better support** the families raising children who have had some of the worst starts in life. We are calling on the Government to:

1. **Immediately reverse** the changes to the ASGSF announced for the 2025/26 financial year.
2. **Commit sufficient resources** in the forthcoming Spending Review to restore funding to at least 2024/25 levels.
3. **Make the fund permanent.**
4. **Conduct a sector-wide consultation** within the next 12 months to identify how to provide timely, high-quality therapy to care-experienced children and suspend any further changes to the ASGSF until a clear, evidence-based plan is in place to avoid further harm to children and the services that support them.

Action you can take

1. Ask a written or oral Parliamentary question (suggested questions provided below). The next Department for Education Oral Questions are on 16 June. **The deadline for tabling questions is 12.30 on 10 June.**
2. Write to the Secretary of State for Education, and the Minister for Children and Families calling for the restoration of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund in the Spending Review.

Parliamentary questions

- What assessment has the Secretary of State made of the impacts of the recent decision to cap the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund, reducing each child's entitlement by 40%-90%?
- What assessment has the Secretary of State made of the ability of other services, such as CAMHS, to support adopted and kinship children, following the decision to cap the Adoption and Special Guardian Support Fund, reducing each child's entitlement by 40%-90%?
- Will the Secretary of State commit to restoring the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund to the level upheld by the previous Government in the forthcoming Spending Review?
- What organisations were consulted by the Department for Education in making its decision to reduce the allocation of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund for each child by 40%-90%?

Supplementary briefing and questions are available on request.

For more information, contact Action Against ASGSF Changes: actionagainstasgsfchanges2025@gmail.com

About us

Action Against ASGSF Changes (Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund) is a group of adoptive and kinship care families supported by leading adoption charities and therapeutic support agencies. **asgsfprotest.com**

ⁱ [Research findings | Family Futures, 2019](#)

ⁱⁱ [Hundreds of children's care places are costing councils more than £10,000 a week per child | The Independent](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [Adoption UK, Adoption Barometer, A stocktake of adoption in England, May 2024](#)

Campaign supporters: Adoption Matters, Adoption UK, Beacon House, The Belay Foundation, Blossoming Minds, Body & Soul, BUSS Model, Consortium of Adoption Agencies, Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies, Chrysalis Associates, The Child Psychology Service, Coram, Creating Adoption Networks, Daddy & Dadda, DDP Connects UK, DDPI, Eden House Wellbeing, Equipt Therapy Services, Eden House Wellbeing, Family Futures, The Family Place, Gateway Psychology, Institute of Recovery from Childhood Trauma, It Takes a Village, Kinship, Nurture Psychology, PAC-UK, PATCH, The Potato Group, PsyCAF, Psychology Associates, Sensory Smart Child Therapies, Terapia, Theraplay, Touchbase, We Are Family, Whole Step, Your Space Therapies.