



## **Guide for people doing media interviews about ASGSF changes**

**April 2025**

**Ask the journalist who they're doing the interview for – which paper/radio programme/tv programme.** There might be some you'd be happier talking to than others – it's entirely up to you.

Remember that once an article/film/photo is out there, it's there permanently. **You can ask to remain anonymous.** That could include:

- not using your name (or using a pseudonym);
- not using your children's names (or using pseudonyms)
- not revealing where you live (or being vague about it)
- not having photos or film taken of you/your children

Every family is different – just make the decisions that are right for you.

**Some interviews are 'pre-recorded'. Others are 'live'.**

**Pre-records:** These are interviews done in advance. For these, you can ask about the questions in advance if you'd like to, and you can ask to rephrase any of your answers if you're not happy with them.

**Lives:** These are tv/radio interviews that are broadcast at the same time as you do them.

**Below is a briefing about the issues.**

### **What is the ASGSF?**

The Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund is a vital pot of government money that pays for adopted children/young adults in England – and those with Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement Orders - to access specialist therapeutic support. People up to the age of 21 can benefit (or up to age 25 if they have an Education & Health Care Plan). We're lucky to have it in England – there is no equivalent in the other nations.

Since its start in 2015 the Government have invested more than £429m in the Fund and nearly 52,000 adoptive families have benefitted, according to Dept for Education (DfE) figures (DfE are responsible for adoption/SGOs).

### **Why is it needed?**

Around 80% of adopted children have suffered abuse, neglect, or violence before adoption. They also spend an average of 15 months in care, often moving through several foster families, losing everything that is familiar to them along the way. After such a traumatic early start in life, the need for lifelong support is common.

The ASGSF was established in recognition of the fact that early therapeutic intervention can be transformative and is less costly than dealing with complex problems further down the line.

From our Adoption Barometer data, 82% of families agree that ASGSF-funded support has had a positive impact on their family.

### **What's happened this year?**

The Fund is currently tied to government spending rounds and competing demands on government finances, leaving children and young people on a 'cliff edge', not knowing if their support will continue. This year the Fund was not confirmed until April 1<sup>st</sup>, and only in response to a deluge of complaints from MPs, prompted by constituents who are adopters/kinship carers.

The Children's Minister Janet Daby confirmed that the Fund would continue at the current level of funding (£50m per year) for 2025-6. This was a great relief, but the Fund was still not processing applications. A backlog had been building up for several months – the Fund is usually confirmed 6-8 weeks before the start of the new financial year.

On 14<sup>th</sup> April the DfE announced that the Fund would start processing applications, but that there would be significant changes to the Fund, as follows:

- The 'Fair Access Limit' has been reduced from £5,000 to £3,000 per child per year.
- The £2,500 per child per year set aside for specialist assessments has been dropped altogether.
- Finally, the ASGSF will no longer match fund support for children with an exceptional level of need. Until now it provided up to 50% of the funding for up to £30,000 per child, with the rest provided by the local authority.

The decisions are as a result of belt tightening across government, rather than a specific targeting of this sector. But obviously that's little comfort.

### **What is Adoption UK asking for?**

- The Secretary of State Bridget Phillipson to reconsider this decision, made following no consultation with sector organisations or adoptive and kinship families, including her Department's own national reference groups for adoptive parents and kinship carers.
- The Secretary of State to take immediate action to convene organisations like ours to start to work through these challenges together and establish a long-term plan for the future of the ASGSF beyond this year.
- A permanent Fund, to prevent the annual cliff edge, which causes so much distress.

**For interviews with AUK or for more info contact Alison Woodhead: 07773 386671**