

Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings. Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

CC: Janet Daby MP, Minister for Children and Families

22nd July 2025

Open Letter

Dear Secretary of State,

Further to our letter dated 17 April, we write to request an **urgent review of the changes made to the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF)** in April of this year, in order to address the shortfalls in provision impacting children now, and to ensure that lessons are learned as the future of the Fund is shaped. In addition, the adoption and kinship communities urgently need **confirmation of funding beyond March 2026**. We also request **confirmation that any future reform will be made only following a full and proper consultation** with the adoption and kinship communities, providers and the sector.

In the absence of direct consultation with families to date, Adoption UK and Action Against Changes to the ASGSF put out calls for testimony from families about their experiences of the changes. Hundreds responded. We have heard from families who are in complete crisis because of the abrupt changes that have taken place to their therapeutic support, including families who have sadly been torn apart.

A recent survey found that almost all of those families who have responded so far (204) have had their therapeutic support interrupted or significantly altered (91%). There is strong evidence of delays to the delivery of support (50%), and 31% have been told to choose between a specialist assessment or therapy. The Minister for Children and Families has previously suggested that local authorities or agencies would be able to cover shortfalls in funding, but families have told us this is not the reality. We have heard from providers who have had to close as a result of changes, and many say they are now unable to meet the needs of the child under the new Fair Access Limit.

Further evidence is appended to this letter. We continue to gather additional evidence, including through Kinship's 2025 annual survey of kinship carers, and

Adoption UK's annual survey of adoptees and adopters and will share this with you in due course.

The thousands of adopted children and eligible children cared for under special guardianship or child arrangements orders, including kinship care, affected by delays and cuts to the Fund have faced unimaginable barriers in their first years of life. They are almost all care experienced and share a childhood characterised by trauma, loss and disruption. These are children who need more from their government, not less.

In your vision for Children's Social Care, 'Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive' published in November last year, you committed to ensure all new homes found for children would be 'secure, high-quality and designed with children's interests in mind'. You said you would do this by 'investing in and promoting the use of' the ASGSF so that eligible children can access therapeutic support where they have experienced trauma. Yet, in reducing the amount available per child, and in making changes with no warning or consultation, you have done the opposite.

There are both moral and economic reasons to review the cuts to the ASGSF.

In our previous letter ahead of the Spending Review, we set out why the decision to cut therapeutic support for adopted children and other eligible children would end up costing the Treasury, and the taxpayer, more. Levels of adoption disruption have increased in recent years, to 7% in 2024¹, with many of the affected children having to return to the care system. Last year, more than 1 in 8 kinship carers said they were concerned about their ability to continue caring for their kinship children, with three-quarters of this group highlighting challenges managing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.²

We have heard from a number of families who were receiving crisis support via the ASGSF before funding levels were cut who have now been pushed into disruption because of changes to their support. This seems deeply disappointing by a government who made a commitment to adoption in its party manifesto.

The abrupt and short-sighted changes to the ASGSF have created the perception within the adoption and kinship care communities that this government is failing adoptees and those in kinship care. This is already affecting applications from prospective adopters and will likely affect family members from offering care too. In light of the damaging evidence so far, we urge you to act now and announce a full review and public consultation on the future of the Fund and an independent review of all adoption support. This would go some way to rebuilding the trust that has been lost.

¹ Adoption Barometer Report (2024), Adoption UK

<https://www.adoptionuk.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=88cf796d-c179-4fe1-8f9a-8f0ec0c47301>

² Make or Break Report (2024), Kinship <https://kinship.org.uk/our-work-and-impact/policy-and-influencing/reports-and-publications/make-or-break-report/>

Yours sincerely,



Emily Frith
Chief Executive Officer, Adoption UK



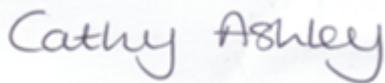
Dr Carol Homden CBE
Chief Executive, Coram



Satwinder Sandhu
Chief Executive Officer, CVAA



Rhiannon Clapperton
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Cathy Ashley
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