

**Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund
(ASGSF) Parent/Carer Survey - Assessing the impact
on families following April 2025 Changes to the Fund**

Summary Survey Report

October 19th 2025

Introduction

On 14th April 2025, following a prolonged period of uncertainty regarding the future of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF), the UK government announced substantial reductions to its funding parameters. This was done without warning, consultation or supporting evidence. The Fair Access Limit (FAL), the maximum amount available for therapy per child each year, was cut from £5,000 to £3,000 per child. In addition, the £2,500 allocation for specialist assessments and the match-funding provision for children with the highest levels of need were both withdrawn entirely.

The announcement was met with immediate and widespread concern from across the adoption and kinship care community. In response, Action Against ASGSF Changes was established the following day. The campaign, supported by organisations across the adoption, kinship and therapeutic sectors, called on the government to reverse the cuts, to commission an independent consultation, and to suspend any further changes until adequate planning and mitigations could be developed to prevent additional harm to vulnerable children and young adults.

In July 2025, Action Against ASGSF Changes launched a national survey of adoptive parents, special guardians, and kinship carers to gather evidence of the impact of these policy changes. The survey was distributed widely through sector networks, including major charities such as Kinship, Adoption UK, and the Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies (CVAA). By its close in September 2025, the survey had received responses from 469 participants, representing 777 children and young people.

The findings are stark. The reduction in funding per child has had an immediate and measurable impact on the wellbeing of children and families who were already vulnerable. As families continue without access to appropriate therapeutic support, these harms are expected to compound over time.

This report presents both quantitative and qualitative findings from the survey. It examines the impact of the April 2025 ASGSF changes and places them in the wider context of post-adoption and special guardianship support in England. The evidence demonstrates that the cuts are not only economically short-sighted but also ethically indefensible, undermining the stability, development and the safety of children for whom the state has a continuing moral and statutory duty of care.

For more information about the Action Against ASGSF Changes campaign, please visit
www.asgsfprotest.com

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Key Finding 1

The New Fair Access Limit of £3,000 is not enough.

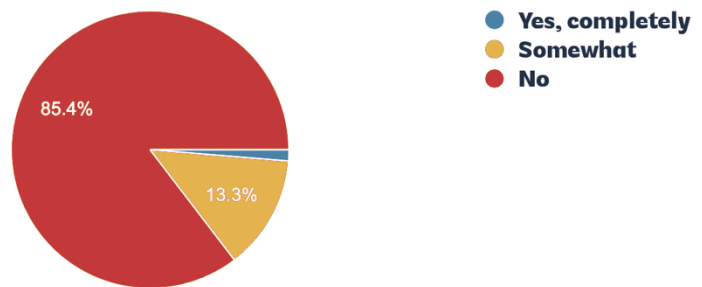
98% of children are being failed by the new Fair Access Limit (FAL).

70% of children have faced greatly reduced support or an absence of support since the cuts to the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) were made.

Of the 777 children covered by this survey only 10 have had their needs met by the new FAL of £3,000.

Parents and carers were asked:

“Is the new Fair Access Limit (FAL) of £3,000 sufficient to meet your child’s needs?”



What families told us:

Alongside the quantitative results, families shared detailed accounts of how the reductions have affected them.

“My daughter will only have 40% of her therapy sessions. This will have a serious impact on her mental health; she has ten ACEs [Adverse Childhood Experiences score].”

“We can now only get half the therapy our children need.”

“We’re currently at four months unsupported. Realistically, nothing will be in place until September.”

“We were told we could apply only for much less than we needed.”

“The reduced ASF funding limit has ripped away the consistent help my child was finally starting to trust. We’ve had to cut therapy short, space sessions too far apart, and go without the specialist input that was helping them feel safe and understood. Now, progress has stalled, old behaviours have crept back, and their anxiety has increased. At home and at school, we’re all feeling the strain, and it’s heartbreaking to watch them lose the support they desperately need because of a funding cap.”

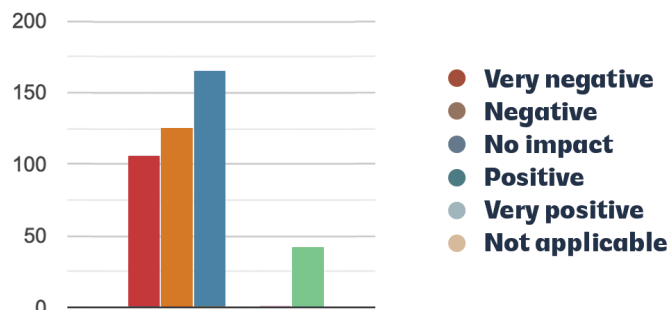
Key Finding 2

There has been an increase in school exclusions and a decrease in school engagement and attendance as a result of the cuts to the ASGSF.

50% of children covered within this survey have seen a very negative or negative impact on their school engagement and attendance.

Parents and carers were asked:

What impact has the reduction had on your child's school attendance or engagement?



What families told us about the impact on school engagement:

Families described how reduced or withdrawn therapy has affected their children's education and emotional stability in school. Many reported that their children's progress, behaviour, and attendance deteriorated once therapeutic support ended.

"Sessions ended, child's sense of abandonment was heightened and behaviour in school deteriorated putting his school place in danger"

"Reduced therapy and uncertainty when my daughter was already struggling with GCSE's, the ongoing support was vital"

"A pause to vital therapy. 12-year-old impact on school attendance and resurfacing of self harm"

"They have no therapy so facing school transitions with zero support"

"My son's support stopped just as he was about to sit his GCSE's"

"The support feels like a drop in the ocean now - as my AD's [Adopted Daughter's] issues increase it feels like she is being passed over - with no plan apart from her life story work. I'm not confident this will help reduce violence towards me, control issues, running away from home, self harm and not eating. And don't get me started about all the issues at school since her transition to secondary school. It all feels hopeless and isolating."

What families told us about the impact on school exclusions:

Many families reported that reductions in therapeutic support coincided with a sharp increase in school exclusions and related safeguarding concerns.

“Excluded from school, possible county lines-police involved.”

“My daughter had a break in therapy from March-July. She has had several school exclusions from school and ultimately had to move school during the break period. New risky behaviours emerging.”

“No therapy since March, excluded from school, CPV (Child to Parent Violence and Abuse).”

“In that period of no therapy he has been removed from his secondary school and sent to a SEMH [Social, Emotional, and Mental Health] referral school following a physical altercation with a peer.”

“Excluded from school.”

“My son and our family were benefitting from regular therapy. The delays and cuts have resulted in disrupted therapy. Son is experiencing loss of his therapist and the security of regular therapy which has been so helpful. Since the cuts our son has been suspended from school and his volatile and violent behaviours have significantly increased which has triggered a safeguarding referral to children’s social care. Our family life has been hugely stressful, I myself have sought mental health support because juggling work and family pressures has become overwhelming.”

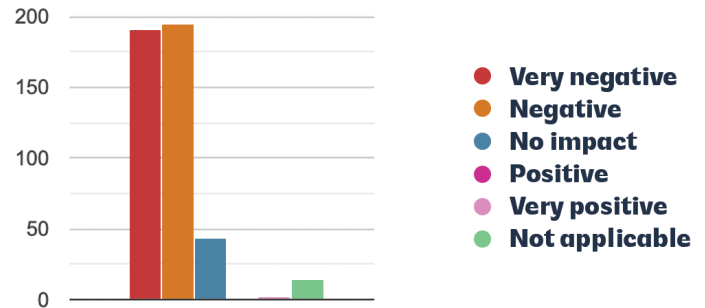
Key Finding 3

Families have seen a deterioration in their children’s mental health.

81% of respondents stated that the cuts to the ASGSF had a very negative or negative impact on their child’s mental health. 85% of respondents stated that the cuts to the ASGSF had a very negative or negative impact on their child’s emotional wellbeing. Children experiencing suicidal ideation have no, or inadequate, support as a result of the cuts.

Parents and carers were asked:

What impact has the reduction had on your child's mental health?



What families told us about the impact on their children's mental health:

The comments below illustrate the severe emotional consequences families are witnessing as a direct result of reduced support.

"My [adopted son] is considered highly likely to die from misadventure and there is a MARM [Multi-Agency Risk Management] in place because of this. We really need an updated assessment and possible high level of therapeutic input, neither of which will be possible now."

"Several months delay to therapy. In this time behaviour at home has deteriorated, we are closer to crisis, child exhibiting unsafe behaviours, physically harming herself and family members."

"Son needs support following suicide attempts but application delayed due to changes."

"Self harm, suicidal Ideation."

"Increase in challenging behaviour...I have given up my job as a teacher."

"Greatly reduced specialist support that has been life-saving for my children. When your child has serious suicidal ideations and their therapy is vital to their wellbeing to have it reduced, interrupted and stopped is criminal. Who will be responsible for the damage that is occurring to all these vulnerable young people as a result of this?"

"Higher violence at home and therapy stopped suddenly with no transition."

"He is grieving the loss of support on top of grieving the loss of his birth family, siblings, foster carer and being terrified of losing me. His separation and general anxiety has increased as a result."

Key Finding 4

Families have been plunged into crisis and put at risk because of the cuts to the ASGSF.

Of All Respondents:

- 60% have seen a very negative or negative impact on risky behaviours
- 70% have seen a very negative or negative impact on stability at home.
- 75% have found the cuts have had a very negative or negative impact on family relationships
- 76% have seen a very negative or negative impact on their child's behaviour.
- 85% of parents and carers have found that the cuts have had a very negative or negative impact on their ability to meet their child's needs.
- 88% of parents and carers said the cuts had a very negative or negative impact on their own mental health.

What families told us:

Parents described how the withdrawal of therapeutic support has placed families under immense strain, with several reporting that their placements are now at risk

"Therapy stopped abruptly in March, this caused horrific regression in AD [Adopted Daughter] with behaviours not seen for over 4 years."

"Significant delays in restarting crisis intervention work has resulted in us feeling unable to cope and overwhelmed by our child's challenging behaviour"

"(Placement)Disruption is very close, I think the therapists are working additional hours without charging"

"We are in the middle of vital therapy and we were seeing breakthrough the uncertainty around funding was frustrating and terrifying. Without this therapy it is likely that our Adopted child would be on a S20 [Children Act 1989, Section 20]."

"Currently at 4 months unsupported, realistically nothing will be in place until September. Relationship with one child is hanging by a thread."

"Increase in challenging behaviour...I have given up my job as a teacher."

"This puts our family at risk of disruption."

"We are looking at adoption breakdown"

Key Finding 5

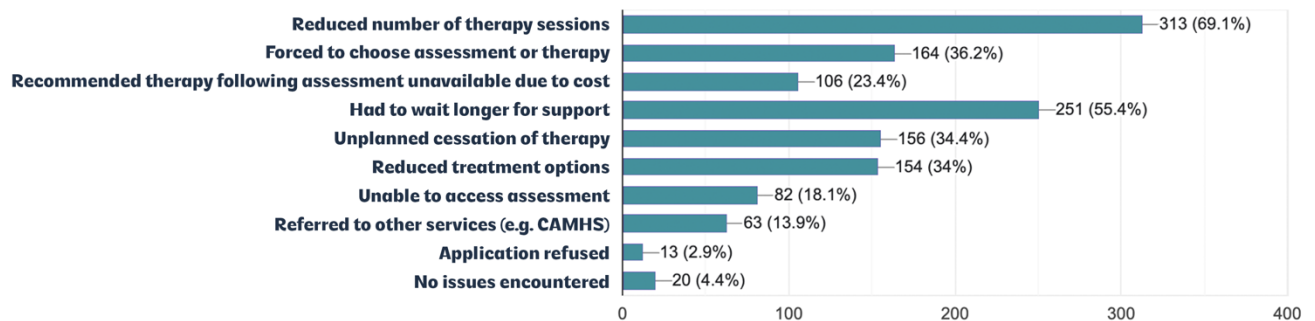
Families have been faced with an impossible choice: whether to choose assessment or therapy, as the reduced Fair Access Limit is, in many cases, insufficient to fund both.

The average multi-disciplinary assessment costs around £2,500. As a result, many families are finding that the fund does not provide enough to cover both a specialist assessment and the therapy it recommends. This has left families without vital help and placed therapeutic providers in an ethically and morally impossible position.

36% of families have been forced to choose between assessment or therapy.

Parents and carers were asked:

Since the changes, have you experienced any of the following?



What families told us:

Parents highlighted the impossible trade-off created by the funding cuts: choosing between understanding their child's needs through assessment or meeting those needs through therapy.

"We were applying for assessment and therapy and now can't have both."

"Can't get any support because we need a full Neurodevelopmental assessment to know what therapy is required but we can't get one due to funding cuts. Child no longer attends school due to their needs but we can't get any help."

"We had to prioritise a needs assessment for one of our children, meaning that there was no funding left for therapy."

"We have had to have a psychological assessment rather than the multi disciplinary assessment originally planned, the fund will only cover a couple of therapy sessions."

“She has still not been able to access any support due to the delays and the new funding limit means that although she’ll hopefully get an assessment soon, there’s no funding for the support that she’ll definitely need.”

“ASGSF money spent on having a multi-disciplinary assessment. Now, we have to decide what therapies we can afford for our children. We were promised that we would have help every step of the way by the adoption agency. We have been let down by the RAA and the government. We would not recommend adopting to new parents as it is so hard and such a hard fight.”

“Everything ended in February. We had a set of assessments in April, however, the changes to the funding model mean we have little left to cover the recommendations. As a result we are delayed further as we look at what we can scale back, self fund and fund from elsewhere.”

“My son had a specialist assessment under the old rules, making several therapeutic recommendations that now cannot be followed up.”

To view the results of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) Parent/Carer Survey – Assessing the impact on families following April 2025 Changes to the Fund in full, please follow this link:

www.asgsfprotest.com/pcsurveyapril2025

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