

# Working with adopted children and families in Scotland

## Introduction

**In Scotland it is the duty of every local authority to provide specialist funding to access counselling and therapy, for children who have been adopted and their families.**

**The local authority is responsible for providing assessment to specify the needs of adoptees and relevant persons, and this is developed into an adoption support plan.**

## Adoption allowance schemes

An adoption allowance is payable to an adoptive parent for the purpose of supporting the placement of the adoptive child and the guidance states that circumstances which an allowance is payable include:

**“Where the child needs special care which requires expenditure of reasons of illness, disability, emotional or behavioural difficulties or the continuing consequences of past abuse or neglect”.**

Regulations allow local authorities to make a single payment or payments by

instalments as opposed to an ongoing periodic allowance, to provide a flexible response.

## Background to the Scottish Government Legislation

Much of the concern about placing support services within a sound legal framework, that is properly recognised and resourced stems from the growing understanding of the needs of looked after children who are then adopted from the care system. Without significant investment in supporting the new adoptive family, adoption on its own cannot repair the damage of earlier neglect, trauma and abuse.

Infants placed comparatively early may bring a legacy of pre-birth damage or injury to the foetus or have genetic or other developmental challenges and all will have experienced separation.

All new parents will need to learn and adapt as their child grows but there is clear evidence that many adoptive parents will meet parenting challenges beyond the range of universal services for children and families.

## Care experienced children

Where 'looked after' or care experienced children are subsequently adopted, they will already have a child's plan, which is an action of [Getting It Right For Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#) policy and is likely to have included carefully negotiated multi-agency working.

There are clear connections between the principles, values, methods and intended outcomes for children outlined by GIRFEC, and the reviewed and updated precision of legislative requirement in adoption, fostering and kinship care.

Just as services need to work together to support vulnerable children before they become looked after, support should continue when children have been adopted.

We recommend that art therapists / art psychotherapists who provide art therapy for children who are adopted, have specialist knowledge of developmental trauma, and have experience of multi-agency working and practice within [GIRFEC guidelines](#).

## Sources and further reading

### Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007

[The Adoption and Children \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#) has its origins in the work of the Adoption Policy Review Group convened by the Scottish Government in 2001, culminating in the publication in 2005 of the report "Adoption: better choices for our children.

### The Adoption Support Services and Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2009

[This guidance](#) has been developed in parallel with the revision of the (Scottish) National Child Protection and Risk Assessment Guidance 2010.

### Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)

[GIRFEC](#) provides Scotland with a consistent framework and shared language for promoting, supporting, and safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people.