



True or False? - 10 things you may have heard about adoption

1. Only people who are married can adopt. False.

You don't have to be married to adopt. In fact in England and Wales, anyone can apply to adopt including married people, single people, unmarried couples, and same sex couples.

2. I need to own my house to be able to adopt. False.

However, you shouldn't be on a tenancy or lease that is about to expire. If you rent your home then you should inform your landlord that you are going to adopt a child. Also, agencies will want to be assured that you are not at risk of losing your home through defaulting on rent or mortgage payments.

3. People with a low income are still able to adopt. True.

If you are deemed the right match for a child, agencies will do all they can to ensure that the child is successfully adopted. Just like any other parents, you will be expected to meet the general costs of caring for a child but, if you are assessed as needing some help, many agencies will provide a settling in grant and possible regular means-tested financial support.

4. I can't adopt if I have a criminal record. False.

A criminal record does not necessarily rule you out from being an adopter, but there are certain defined offences that will disqualify you, such as any offences against children or adults of a sexual or violent nature. The nature of your offence and how long ago you committed it will also be important in deciding whether to accept your application. It is essential that you are honest and tell the agency about your offence, however trivial or distant. All convictions will be reported upon when you complete your Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) or police check with the agency.

5. People over 40 are too old to adopt. False.

Most agencies will consider up to a 45 year age gap between an adopters and a child, but decisions are based upon what is in the best interests of the child – some children may need a younger parent. Agencies have a responsibility to ensure that, as far as possible, adopters are likely to have the health and energy to care for a child until adulthood. All prospective adopters are required to have a medical examination for this purpose.

6. I can adopt if I have a disability. True.

Many disabled people have been approved to adopt, who have shown that they have the appropriate abilities to care for a child and meet his or her needs. This is determined through a medical carried out during the assessment process. Disabled carers may have experiences that have given them transferable qualities ideal for parenting, such as strength and determination.

7. Most children are adopted because they have been given up by their birth family. False.

While it used to be the case that many children waiting for adoption were relinquished by their birth family, these days the most common reason is because they have been removed due to the risk of abuse or neglect at home.

8. Children over the age of seven wait the longest for a family. True.

Although it is also true that children from ethnic minority groups, children of mixed ethnicity, children with disabilities and sibling groups can equally wait a long time. Families who can adopt children from these groups are urgently needed in the UK, and there is a particular shortage of black, mixed ethnicity and minority ethnicity families.

9. The adoption process always takes longer than a year. False.

The adoption process can take over a year, but this is not always the case. The average length of time from your formal application to be assessed, to your approval at the adoption panel meeting is approximately eight months. Once you are approved we can then start the matching process. This can be a difficult time because you are excited about your approval, but perhaps also apprehensive about the length of time it may take until a child moves in with you. Please remember that the most important thing at this time is that we find a suitable child for you and that the 'match' is right for both you and the child.

10. Adopted children may have contact with their birth family. True.

Research has shown that for many children, some form of contact after adoption between the children and their birth parents, siblings and other relatives and significant others can be beneficial. When proposing any arrangements for contact, the first consideration will always be what is in the best interests of the child. The most common form of contact is letterbox contact where letters or cards are exchanged perhaps twice a year via the adoption agency.

