

Adoption

Adoption is one of the most serious things that a Court can decide about any child. It provides for the adopted child to become part of a new family in which the parental responsibility (the rights, duties and authority) in respect of that child is held only by the adoptive parents. This means that the natural parents lose all their parental responsibility. Once an adoption order is made it is very rare ever to see one discharged.

Adoption can arise in two main ways –

1. In care proceedings taken by the social services department adoption may be one of the ways the social services department and the Court will see as the best future for a child – to live away from its family for the rest of its life and to lose all ties with that family;
2. Private adoptions where step parents or grandparents apply to adopt a child.

Adoption orders are always taken seriously by the Courts. Thus the court will always look at all the other options before deciding on adoption.

There are a number of things that we at 12 College Place can help you with –

- If the social services department want to apply to have a “Placement Order” or adoption order in respect of your child, step child or grandchild then you may wish to object to this happening or present your own solution to where that child should live. For grandparents and other relatives legal aid will not be available for you to go to a solicitor and you would have to pay for any legal costs yourself.
- If you are a parent who has had a child involved in care proceedings you may have received notice of a “placement order” application or you are a parent who has turned things around after the court has made a decision over adoption. In these circumstances you can oppose the plans of the social services department. If you have improved your life since a court order was made you can ask for permission to oppose an adoption or for permission to apply to have the placement order revoked.
- You may wish to have contact with a child who is being adopted e.g. if you are an adult sibling or relative who wishes – despite any adoption order – to remain in touch with the adopted child.
- Step parents can only adopt a child with whom they are living with either the consent of all parents/parental responsibility holders or with the benefit of a Court order.

The points above are examples only. At 12 College Place we can help you with advice and representation through all stages of the adoption process whether you are objecting to an adoption order being made or applying for an adoption order yourself.