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| **Does it matter whether I own my own home or live in rented accommodation?** |
| No, it does not matter. What matters is that whatever living situation you have that there is some evidence of security in terms of a reasonable tenancy on the property that you live in and that you have the means to access another property should the tenancy end. If you have a mortgage what is important is that you can afford the repayments. |

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| **Can I adopt if I do not have a spare bedroom?** |
| It will be up to you to think about what space you have available for a child to join your family. For some children they will need their own bedroom space but do discuss this with your local agency. |

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| **Can I adopt if my extended family live with me?** |
| There can be many advantages to living with extended family, but we will need to discuss adoption with all the members of your family and understand the advantages and challenges for a child of coming into a large extended family network. |

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| **What if my UK residence status is uncertain? What if my UK residence status is uncertain?** |
| We welcome enquiries from people who are UK residents, or who are domiciled in Britain. To adopt in England, you must be a legal resident in the UK, the Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man, and have been so for at least 12 months. UK citizens living abroad cannot adopt a child from the UK. EU nationals can consider adopting a child in the UK so long you or your partner have a fixed and permanent home in the UK and that you (and your partner if you have one) have lived in the UK for at least 1 year. If you are unsure, then do ask your local agency for advice. |

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| **Can I adopt if I have pets?** |
| Yes, you can but we will need to discuss and identify any specific issues there are for your pets and any adjustment that you might need to make when a child has been identified for placement with you. |

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| **Can I adopt if I have birth children or before considering having birth children?** |
| Yes, you can. The most important consideration is that you and your family have the physical and emotional space to settle an adopted child into your family and then adjust as your understanding of the child grows and their understanding of you grows. That can be enhanced by the presence of birth children or that be challenging. |

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| **Does it matter what my marital status?** |
| Prospective adopters are welcome whether they are single, married or in a long-term live-in relationship. We would expect that if you were in a live in relationship that you have lived together for at least 1 year at point of application and for there to be evidence that it was a stable and enduring relationship. Adopted children have often experienced considerable disruption in their lives and ensuring that your situation is stable is an important part of the assessment. A child moving in with their family can challenge any relationship so there would need to be evidence that you have managed a variety of situations together. We also welcome applications from single people who have support from family, friends, or communities. We understand that people have a variety of different types of relationships and if you are unsure what that means for you then do contact one of the Adoption Agencies and discuss your own particular situation. |

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| **Do I need to be fluent in English?** |
| We welcome people who speak more than one language at home and this can be very positive for children but it is advisable for adoptive parents to be reasonably fluent in English so that they can advocate for a child and so that the concepts of adopting a child can be fully understood. We would recommend that you attend one of the readily available English courses prior to enquiring about adoption if you think this may be an issue for you. If you are unsure then contact your adoption agency and ask for advice. |

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| **Will my sexuality or gender affect my chances of adopting?** |
| LGBTQ+ people are welcome to adopt.  In fact, about 1 in 5 adopters are LGBTQ+.  Many of the life experiences LGBTQ+ people have had has uniquely helped them to parent adopted children.  Trans and non-binary people can bring particular strengths to adoption so adoption agencies are keen to hear from adopters of all genders.  For people in a relationship, who are applying to adopt together, adoption agencies will want to know the relationship is stable and enduring.  Being in a non-traditional relationship (such as a consensually non-monogamous relationship) isn’t a barrier to adoption. |

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| **Can I adopt if I have debts?** |
| Adopters may have debts and as long as these are understood, and repayments can be managed alongside living expenses then this should not be a problem. We would also encourage adopters to have considered how they will manage financially whilst taking time off work. |

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| **Is it possible to adopt and be in receipt of unemployment benefits or other benefits or have some other concerns about my finances?** |
| The emphasis would be on financial stability and in some circumstances financial support may be available from the adoption agency. There would need to be evidence of a stable lifestyle and the ability to manage on the income coming into the household. Openness and honesty about financial pressures is encouraged right from the outset of your application. |

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| **How long will I need to be off work after adopting a child?** |
| We recommend that at least one adopter has time off work following a child moving in with their family. A child will need time to build a relationship with their new family and it will take time for them to feel safe and secure. It is difficult to say how long this will take but 12 months is not unusual. If an older child is moving in with their family and attends school, then after a period of settling in it may be possible to work and still be there for the child at either end of the school day.  On occasions a child may need a parent to be off work longer and financial support may be available from the adoption agency in such circumstances. For people who are self-employed and not entitled to adoption leave allowances then we would need to discuss how to balance the need for work and offering a child the stability that they need early on. |

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| **Can I adopt if I have health problems?** |
| Many people who adopt have medical conditions. Medical advice will be sought in relation to all medical conditions and the focus of discussion will relate to how well you are able to care for a child throughout childhood, the sort of support you have from a partner or other close family members or friends if you are unwell and consideration about the long term prognosis of your condition. The focus will be on considering how you can consistently meet the needs of a child throughout their childhood. |

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| **Can I adopt if I have a disability?** |
| Many disabled people adopt a child successfully. The early part of the process of becoming an adopter will involve all adopters having a medical and the adoption agency would rely on that medical advice alongside consideration of your personal circumstances in determining your ability to consistently and safely parent an adopted child throughout their childhood. |

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| **Can I adopt if I am overweight?** |
| There are no hard and fast rules about this The core issue for adoption agency is the stability of the adoption placement for the child over time and the capacity of the adopter to be sufficiently healthy to ensure this. A medical is sought on all prospective adopters and this will include a prediction about future health and wellbeing. |

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| **Am I too old to adopt?** |
| The only restriction on age is a lower age limit in that you must be at least 21 to adopt. Other than that, the consideration will be your ability to parent a child into adulthood based on your health and the health of a partner if you have one. |

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| **Can I adopt if I have a mental health condition?** |
| Many people have short periods of stress, depression, or anxiety in their lives and whilst there would need to be discussion about how this has been managed this is unlikely to prevent you adopting a child. Some people have longer term mental health conditions which are well controlled with medication. There would need to be discussion about this and a medical would provide the agency with medical advice in relation to your ability to adopt a child. The main considerations will relate to the frequency with which you are unwell, how that manifests itself and who is there to offer support at such times. The focus for the adoption agency will always be to assess your ability to meet a child’s needs in a consistent way and to consider how the stress of adopting a child will affect your mental health. There may be times when the agency feels that some one’s mental health is not stable enough to parent an adopted child but that would be considered early on in the process with the input of medical professionals and the people who know you well. |

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| **Do I need to have finished infertility treatment to start my adoption journey?** |
| People adopt for many different reasons, and it is not essential to have explored having a birth child prior to adopting however for those who have embarked on fertility treatment first then the following advice is given. It is important that if you have had fertility treatment that it has come to an end before starting your adoption journey. Adopting a child needs to be your priority and that will require you to have finally accepted that having a birth child is no longer an option. Many people who come to adoption due to infertility have accessed counselling following fertility treatments and this is viewed positively. Once treatment has ended, we recommend that you take some time to come to terms with the fact that it has not resulted in a birth child. Some people can be ready to adopt within a few months and for others it will take longer. We would encourage you to discuss this with your adoption agency who will advise you on this depending on your personal circumstances. |

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| **Can I adopt if I have a faith or religion?** |
| Yes, you can. Adopters can be of all faiths and none. Research has shown that faith and its inherent altruism and care for the vulnerable, can be a great motivator for people to adopt. Children who need to be placed for adoption come from many different cultures, backgrounds and religions and it is good if the family they are placed with reflects that. That means that adopters are welcomed if they have a faith or are from a variety of cultural and / or religious backgrounds. Children needing families from certain cultural backgrounds wait longer than others for adoptive families and we would encourage adopters to consider adopting a child from an ethnicity, culture, or religion other than their own. |

**Do adopters we need to stay in touch with the child’s birth family?**

The vast majority of children will remain in touch with their birth families. This could be sending and receiving letters on a regular basis once or twice a year, engaging in a virtual way on a virtual communication platform or for some children it will be ‘in person’ arrangements. Research has shown that adopted children need to stay in touch to have a healthy sense of their identity and that it does in fact strengthen the relationship with the adopters. All adopters need to be open to some type of arrangements for staying in touch with people from the child’s past. That could be birth parents, siblings living elsewhere or other relatives. These arrangements will change over time as the child grows and you will be supported in these arrangements by the adoption agency. More direct forms of staying in touch will only be recommended if it is deemed safe for the child.