
Recruitment Strategy Adoption East Midlands Regional Adoption Agency Updated: April 2025

Overall Objective

Adoption East Midlands seeks to meet the need to place the children of Derby, Nottingham, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire who have an adoption plan with adoptive families, who can meet their needs throughout childhood, including the additional needs of children who have suffered childhood trauma. The aspiration for Adoption East Midlands is that we place at least 80% of our children with Adoption East Midlands adopters. We aim to have choice for children via a pool of adopters.

Numbers of Children

Adoption East Midlands expects to be asked to find adoptive families for approximately 160 children a year. Adoption East Midlands also expects to support these children and their families, throughout childhood and into adulthood, as needed.

Adoption East Midlands where possible will seek to place children within the geographical boundary of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.



Adoption East Midlands feels confident there is a robust support offer within the region.

Sufficiency

It is expected that Adoption East Midlands will not provide enough adoptive families for all the children, and that for some children, the right match may not be available within Adoption East Midlands families. Then AEM will work with partner RAAs across the Midlands, and nationally, and with VAAs to place children.

Adoption East Midlands aims to recruit at least 90 families per annum, which would meet 80% sufficiency and leave approximately 30 children who would be placed by other agencies.

However, where there are large numbers of single children within the 160, more families are needed, in 24/25 there were 94 single children.

A small number of AEM families will take placements of children from other RAAs in the Midlands, or nationally, if the right match is not available to them within AEM.

Currently AEM do not have enough adopters and are only able to place around 60% of the children with AEM adopters.

One third of the children AEM place, are in sibling groups,

Two thirds are single children, under the age of two,

One sixth are aged over 5 years old.

One fifth are not white British, and of these, most children have a mixed ethnicity.

Methods used to identify matches:

- Linkmaker
- Homefinding meetings, inviting regional RAA partners.
- Regional Profile exchange with Regional Adoption Agencies; and VAAs
- Local profile events organised by Adoption East Midlands.
- Adoption Activity Days.
- Possible use of Local activity events e.g., stay and play.
- Tracking of children to ensure sufficiency of adopters and identify any significant themes.

All Adoption East Midlands adopters are placed on Link Maker under Adoption East Midlands parameters. During assessment of adopters there is a strong and consistent message re the benefits of Adoption East Midlands adopters

adopting Adoption East Midlands children, there are 150- 160 children needing adoptive homes in any one year.

Currently AEM needs more adopters, all applicants are taken through the preparation process, as quickly as is possible.

If Adoption East Midlands has adopters waiting 3 months after approval, or a family wishes to consider children from other areas, Adoption East Midlands will support families to identify children. A family finding member of staff may be asked to support adopters with this.

Adoption East Midlands Adopter Recruitment

- National Adopter recruitment campaign
- Annual recruitment activity plan
- Website.
- Local publicity campaigns.
- Regional publicity campaigns. (Midlands)
- Tweets, Instagram and Facebook posts.
- Media statements.
- Staff at local community events such as PRIDE, Carnival, county show
- Staff at local places, such as supermarkets, and shopping centres
- Staff at local community groups, such as Churches, when invited.
- Experienced adopters also at events, and information events, and plans to include a peer role, to keep in touch with prospective adopters.
- Develop the peer network, to act as adoption ambassadors.

Recruitment Principles

Adoption East Midlands will accept applications from:

- Single people, and couples, same sex or mixed.
- There is no upper age limit, but adopters must be over 21.
- Homeowners, or tenants.
- People who already have children – we will discuss the recommended age gap with you.
- People living within the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Boundary.
- People outside this boundary where that meets the needs of waiting children.
- People in employment or unemployment.
- People with disabilities.

Adoption East Midlands will particularly welcome applicants who can consider:

- Black Children, and mixed heritage children.
- Brothers and sisters
- Older children.
- Children with complex health needs.
- Children with uncertainty, or developmental delay.

Early Permanence

Once applicants are approved as adopters, it is possible to place children as fostered children, thus enabling children to be placed much earlier, and have less changes of carers. AEM encourage all adopters to consider this and wish to increase the number of children placed this way, last year 22 placements were made this way.

Preparation

Adoption East Midlands offers a comprehensive preparation offer during Stage One. In addition, to support the needs of children, seminars regarding early permanence (foster for adoption), caring for brothers and sisters and therapeutic parenting are offered. We use Virtual Reality headsets as an additional resource to assist understanding of attachment and trauma and for applicants who wish to adopt siblings.

We have a welcome to adoption support seminar before you have an adoption order which is co-delivered by the service and an experienced adopter.

We also offer a year's membership to **CATCH - Children and Trauma Community Hub**.

In addition, we have our 'Peers4Peers' network; a regional community of experienced adopters, led by experienced adopters in post, who support preparation training as well as providing the opportunity for local and regional community networking and 1:1 mentoring.

Children currently waiting for placements are, brothers and sisters, single children over the age of four, children of mixed ethnicity, and children with developmental uncertainty or additional needs.

Approved adopters are usually linked with children very quickly.

Adoption Support:

AEM provide a range of services for adoptive families, adopted adults and birth families, designed to offer the right level of support at the right time throughout their individual adoption journey.

Many adopted children need help to navigate different points in their life, whether in their

early years, at adolescence or as young adults. Adoptive Parents may also find that at times some guidance and support is needed throughout their child's development.

At AEM we want to make sure that families can access the right support at the right time whether that be during preparation to become adoptive parents, in the early days of becoming an adoptive parent or at key points during a child's development as they come to terms with what it means to be adopted. Our aim therefore, is to:

- Work in co-production with adopters and adoptees to understand their lived experience, what support can make a difference and the ongoing development of our regional support offer
- provide informed and timely support for adoptive families from the start of their adoption journey and through all stages of development post order which is focused on early intervention and improved outcomes
- deliver excellent customer service which is proportionate to the level of need and with the aim of empowering families and improving outcomes for all
- support adopted adults and birth relatives with a clear service pathway

At AEM we believe that co-production with experts by experience helps develop more equal partnerships between families who use our services and professionals, and can help make the best use of resources, deliver better outcomes for adoptive families and build stronger relationships and communities across our region. We now have a number of co-production groups who meet regularly to review and develop our support offer including:

- Complex trauma group
- Parenting Teenagers group
- Education group
- Adopted Adults group

In addition, we continue to expand and develop our Voices of Adoption consultation and participation group which as well as informing the development of services, represents the youth voice both regionally and nationally on behalf of AEM.

Through co-production work, AEM aim to ensure the right support is provided in a number of ways:

- Providing Information, resources and guidance ([Adopters' Support Hub Nottinghamshire County Council](#))
- Signposting to relevant and helpful groups and organisations
- Providing regular & relevant training seminars and access to peer support
- Providing an easily accessible early support offer from our multi-disciplinary reflecting team (see below) which includes specialist consultation
- Access to and delivery of therapeutic services and support programmes (group and 1:1) utilising the Adoption Support Fund where necessary
- Adoption Support needs assessments, including multi-disciplinary specialist assessments and support

- Delivering packages of therapeutic / parenting support to families using our in-house therapists (including DDP, Systemic Family Practice, Theraplay and Therapeutic Life Story Work)
- Helping families keep in touch with people who are important to their child, and restricting links at the adoptive families request where possible
- Providing Birth Family Support to enable more effective and better supported keeping in touch arrangements

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working together

