

PRESS RELEASE

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Therapists Express Urgent Concerns as Funding for Thousands of Adopted and Special Guardianship Children Remains Uncertain

With no government announcement on vital funding, at least 19,495 adopted and special guardianship children are now facing delays to critical therapy and assessments. This situation, as one adopter described it, has the potential to cause “serious harm.”

Thursday 6 March 2025 - ENGLAND - Specialist psychological services across England are raising urgent concerns over delays in confirming the future of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF). With no funding secured beyond March 2025, thousands of vulnerable children risk losing access to vital therapy.

Since 2015, the ASGSF has been a lifeline for children in adoption and special guardianship placements, delivering £49 million in support in the last year alone.

One adopted young person said, “The Adoption Support Fund [sic] has been a crucial lifeline for me since I started therapy at the age of 14. The financial assistance allowed me to attend regular sessions, where I’ve been able to work through my feelings, build coping strategies, and gain a better understanding of my experiences with a professional.”

Another adopted young person asked their therapist, “will I see you again after March?”

At present, there is no further funding available for children and young people after 31 March 2025.

The ASGSF has been crucial in helping children recover from trauma, neglect, and abuse. Ongoing uncertainty over its future now threatens the vital support families depend on.

Specialist services are urging the government to urgently confirm plans for the Fund to protect essential therapy for vulnerable children nationwide. This is particularly important in light of the government’s commitment to new funding for kinship carers and children’s social care reform in the Autumn 2024 budget.

Dr Vivien Norris, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and CEO of The Family Place said, “This group of children and young people is among the most traumatised in the country. Everyone agrees that specialist support is needed to give them the best chance of recovery and continuity of therapy support is key. Not knowing what is going to happen next is highly damaging.”

Dr Meryl Forse, Clinical Psychologist and Clinical Director/Founder of Gateway Psychology in Stoke-on-Trent added, “The ongoing uncertainty surrounding the Fund’s future threatens to disrupt the vital support system in place, jeopardising the well-being and progress of countless children and families who rely on these services for recovery and stability.”

Dr Shoshanah Lyons, Clinical Psychologist and Clinical Director of Beacon House also said, “Families are approaching us highly distressed about the impact of not knowing if the Fund will continue. The children the Fund is here to support are very sensitive to stress and loss

due to their trauma, and this delay in a government announcement is only adding to their trauma.”

Louise Michelle Bombèr, Founding Director of TouchBase added, “Trauma recovery work is all about facilitating safety, security and stability. We are being prevented from providing this with breaks in therapy now expected. The families we work with are committed to their children but gravely concerned about the impact this break will have upon mental health and well-being.”

Jay Vaughan MBE, CEO and Co-Founder of Family Futures went on to add, “The continued uncertainty surrounding the ASGSF announcement is deeply worrying. Our experience demonstrates that delays in therapy have a direct and detrimental impact on the safety and stability of Adoptive and Special Guardianship placements, placing the children we support at significant risk. The emotional toll of this uncertainty is immense. Our families are experiencing a significant and unnecessary increase in stress and worry, exacerbating their already stressful home lives which will have long-lasting consequences for their wellbeing.”

A devastating impact on the health and wellbeing of care-experienced children and young people

Clare, an adoptive parent, stressed the urgency and impact of this delay for her family, “What our family needs – specialist therapy – exists, and it works exceptionally well, but our access to it relies on ASGSF funding and that is out of our control. The government are failing care experienced children and will cause them serious harm. For children who have already experienced trauma and significant harm, who have already been disadvantaged, who have already had many relationships abruptly ended, who have had little control over their own fate, that is unforgivable. Anyone who understands the needs of this group of children would not allow situations like this to continue.”

An urgent call to action

Beacon House, Family Futures, The Family Place, Gateway Psychology, and TouchBase are urgently calling on the government to confirm the future of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) without further delay.

Key Statistics:

- 19,495 applications for adoption support were processed in the 2023-2024 financial year
- £49,191,908 total funding for adoption support applications in the 2023-2024 financial year

Further information:

Beacon House (West Sussex), Family Futures (London), The Family Place (Midlands and Devon), Gateway Psychology (Staffordshire), and TouchBase (East Sussex) are independent providers of therapeutic support for children, young people and families.

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