St Andrew's Children's Society

ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE

Thinking of Adopting?

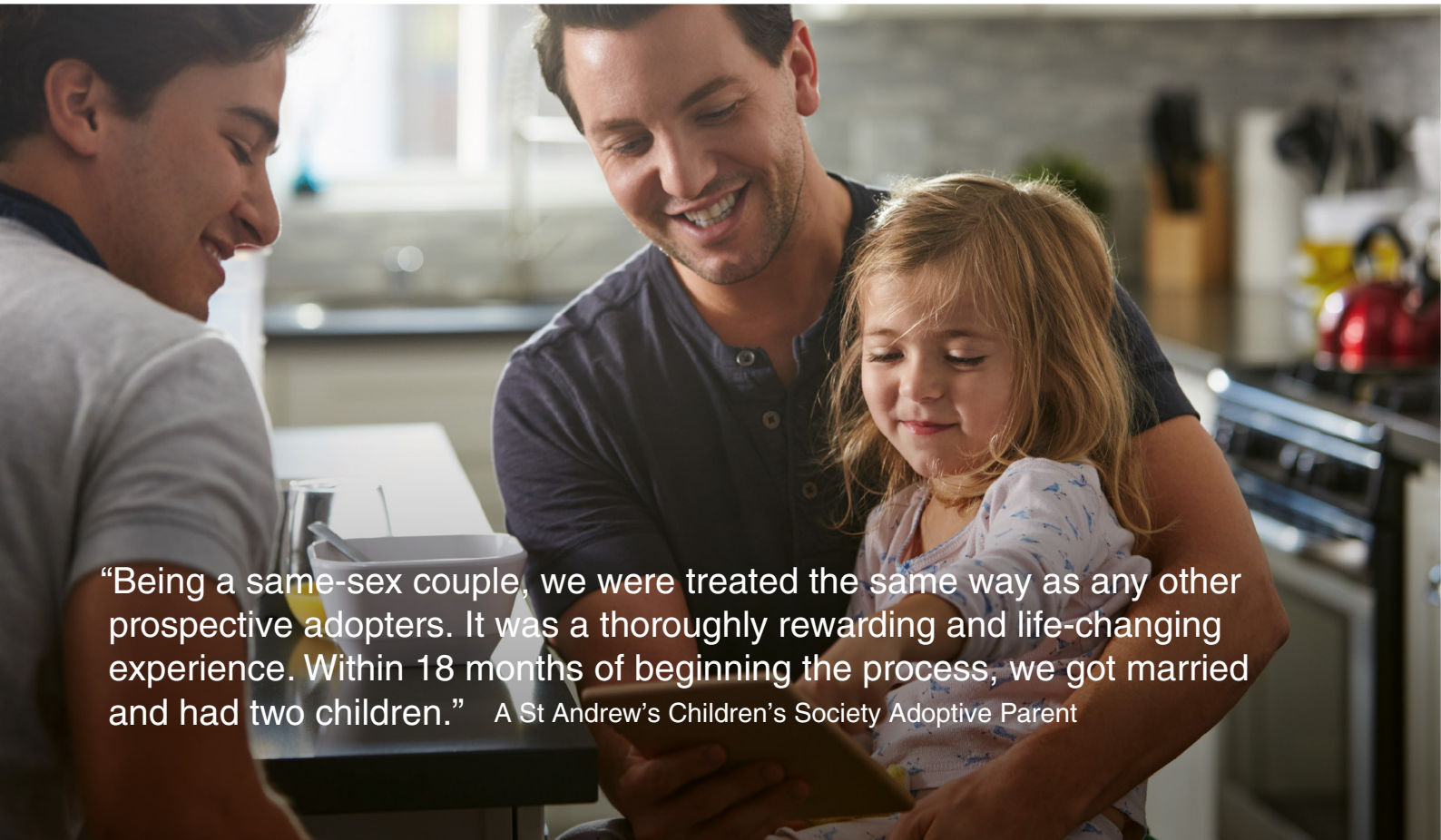
St Andrew's Children's Society is a voluntary adoption and foster care agency with bases in Edinburgh and Aberdeen

St Andrew's Children's Society is an adoption and foster care agency established in Edinburgh in 1922. Successfully opening our Aberdeen office in 2013, we are preparing and supporting adoptive and foster care families throughout the central belt and north-east of Scotland.

Why choose to adopt with St Andrew's Children's Society?

When you choose to adopt with us:

- You will receive a warm, positive and speedy response to your initial enquiry.
- You will have experienced social workers supporting and guiding you all the way through the process of adopting your child.
- We will help you to find the right child for you, not just from the local area, but searching throughout the UK. The average age of children placed with our adopters over the past 5 years is 2 years 7 months. Your chances of adopting a baby are increased by participating in our Concurrenct Care scheme.
- You will receive the support you need to be the best adopter you can be for your child. This support is available to you throughout childhood and beyond, for as long as you need it. This reflects what we know about the lifetime nature of adoption for children and their families.
- The average timescale for your homestudy is only 6 months.



"Being a same-sex couple, we were treated the same way as any other prospective adopters. It was a thoroughly rewarding and life-changing experience. Within 18 months of beginning the process, we got married and had two children." A St Andrew's Children's Society Adoptive Parent

The children

The children that we place for adoption are vulnerable. They all come via the care system so will have experienced some level of trauma and/or abuse. We place boys and girls, sibling groups and children of various ages, up to 10 years. **We particularly seek adopters for sibling groups and children with additional support needs**.

Concurrent Care

We are currently running a scheme in West Lothian called Concurrent Care, to recruit carers for a small number of very young children who are at high risk of not being able to return to their birth families after birth. Concurrent carers need to be willing to have a baby or very young children placed with them initially on a fostering basis, while a concentrated effort is made to return the child to the birth parents. This involves a high level of contact with the birth family. Should the time limited assessment show that the child cannot return to the birth family, the child will be adopted by their concurrent carers. This means that the child experiences very little disruption to their care.

If this interests you, please mention this on your enquiry form and, when a social worker visits you, they can tell you more. Potential concurrent carers should live within easy reach of West Lothian.

Who can adopt with St Andrew's Children's Society?

- Single people or couples who are over 25 years of age. There is no legal upper age limit, but we look at the characteristics for a child that might best suit older applicants.
- Couples who have been co-habiting for a minimum of two years, though we expect couples to have been together longer.
- Single people and couples with and without children. If you do have children, they would have to be 3½ years or older before you could begin the adoption process.
- LGBT single people and couples.
- Single people and couples from all ethnic backgrounds.
- Single people and couples from all religious denominations or none.
- Single people and couples in good physical and mental health. If you are unsure whether you would meet this criteria, please contact us and our Duty Social Worker will be happy to explore this further with you.
- Children under 5 years of age will only be placed in non-smoking and non-vaping households.
- Some Local Authorities do not place children of any age in smoking/vaping households.
- To be considered as a non-smoker/non-vaper an applicant has to not have smoked/vaped for at least 12 months.
- A spare bedroom is required.
- You must live within a 60 mile radius of either Edinburgh or Aberdeen.

The costs of adoption

There are some minimal costs associated with adoption:

Registration fee – When you submit an application form to us each applicant will be asked to pay a £25 registration fee to cover the administration costs.

Disclosure check – Each applicant is required to undergo a Disclosure Scotland check at a cost of £25. If you have spent time living abroad you will be required to pay for the costs of Police Checks, which will vary in cost depending on the country you were in.

Adoption petition – Once a child has been placed with you for 13 weeks you can lodge an application to formally adopt the child in your local Sheriff Court. This costs £120 per child.

Curator's fees – These are costs incurred during the court process and we will assist you to recover theses costs from the local authority that places your child.

St Andrew's Children's Society's support

We are committed to offering our adopters ongoing adoption support, both formal and informal. Included in the support we offer is:

- Support groups for adoptive parents
- Support groups for children
- 1-1 intensive support
- Liaison with other agencies, including schools
- SafeBase Parenting Programme
- Ongoing training opportunities
- Parent and toddler Theraplay™ groups
- Summer picnic and story telling events
- Christmas party

Our staff and agency are committed to forming positive and trusting relationships with all our adopters and would encourage you to get back in touch with us at any point in the future for an informal chat, advice and/or support.

"My Peter has embraced family life with both hands, he is funny, smart, kind and adorable... He is now a resilient little boy who loves to snuggle up on the sofa for movie night. He was nearly 3 when he came home to me. He's now 7, and I've had a wonderful 4 years with him."

A St Andrew's Children's Society Adoptive Parent

SafeBase™ Parenting Programme

St Andrew's Children's Society is currently the only agency in Scotland that facilitates the SafeBase Training Programme for adoptive parents. The programme is in three parts::

1. A filmed assessment of parent and child interactions (prior to the training)
2. Feedback to parents of the assessment
3. 4-day training programme covering many aspects of attachment, developmental trauma, brain development, the use of Theraplay and the opportunity to be with other parents.

SafeBase aims to:

- Educate parents about attachment difficulties, relating it directly to their child
- Help parents better understand themselves and their child
- Demonstrate practical Theraplay techniques and empower parents to use these and other tools to change their child's negative behaviour
- Provide parents with the opportunity to meet others in a similar situation to exchange ideas and lessen the feelings of isolation

Life-long impacts are:

- Parents report that they have gained skills and confidence to overcome difficulties and change challenging behaviour
- Techniques learnt are practical and can be applied throughout the child's life
- Parents report that they and their children enjoy a better quality of relationships and family life following SafeBase Training

(top) A SafeBase training day
(bottom) Tea break at a SafeBase support session

Adoption Process

Initial Visit

The social worker will tell you about adoption, the preparation and assessment process, the checks we carry out and about the agency.

You should be as honest as possible with us at this point so that we can be clear with you about what the challenges will be. You will also hear about the kinds of children who need adoptive homes and we will ask you about your motivation and expectations.

Preparation Group

Our job is to give you a lot of information about adoption, including the sorts of children available, who have all come through the care system.

You have a crucial role to play at this time. You are given a chance to take a very honest look at what you want out of adoption and what you can offer a child waiting for adoption (many of whom have experienced trauma and abuse).

Homestudy

This is the assessment process to become adopters and takes around 6 months to complete.

The homestudy looks at: your personal history, relationships, support network, motivation to adopt, parenting capacity, your understanding of adoption, accommodation, finances and your area. It includes a police check, local authority checks, medicals and references from employers and friends.

Approval Panel

The report from your homestudy goes to the agency's independent panel for consideration.

The panel will meet with you and ask you questions. This lasts about 30 minutes. They make a recommendation regarding approval. The Agency Decision Maker then makes a decision based on your report, the information received at panel and the panel's recommendation.

Family Finding

We will help you to register with the Scottish Adoption Register online, which helps you to find out what children are available for adoption.

Once approved, you and your social worker then look for the right child/children for you from across the UK. When you have identified a child/children we will share all the information we have including birth family history, medical history and information from the foster carers.

Linking & Matching

When a potential match has been found, social workers involved will attend a Linking Meeting to explore the potential match and what supports may be needed.

At the end of the meeting a recommendation is made about the suitability of the match. If this is positive you will then attend a matching panel. The matching panel formally matches you and the child/ren. Introductions are then arranged for you to meet the child and for them to move.

Adoption Order

When your adoptive child has successfully settled into your family, you will be able to apply to the Sheriff Court where you live for an adoption order to be made.

You can lodge a petition to adopt a child once they have lived with you for a minimum of 13 weeks. Once the order is made, all rights and responsibilities originally held by the birth parents transfer to you.

Adoption Support

Your social worker will help draw up an after adoption support plan between the agency, the local authority that placed the child, and yourself.

St Andrew's Children's Society offers a wide range of support groups for children and parents as well as life long adoption support. We are the only agency in Scotland to offer the SafeBase Parenting Course which uses Theraplay approaches to support attachment.

Adoption: Initial Enquiry Form

Applicant Information

	Applicant 1	Applicant 2
Full Name		
Address		
City		
Postcode		
Telephone Number		
Email		
Date of Birth		
Ethnicity		
Religion or Religious Status		
Nationality		
Occupation		
Date of Marriage/Civil Partnership [if applicable]		
Length of Relationship [if applicable]		

Accommodation

Brief description of accommodation	
Spare room available for child/ren [please circle]	Y / N

Background Information

Please specify particulars of children by birth, adoption or previous marriages and any other member of your household:

Age	**Relationship**	**Placement Date** [if applicable]	**Adoption Date** [if applicable]

Background Information (continued)

	Applicant 1	Applicant 2
If childless please state reason e.g. infertility, choice		

Medical Information

	Applicant 1	Applicant 2
Do you smoke? [please circle]	Y / N	Y / N
If Yes:	Please state duration and number of cigarettes per day.	Please state duration and number of cigarettes per day.
	Y / N Please also state if you have recently stopped smoking and for how long.	Y / N Please also state if you have recently stopped smoking and for how long.
Do you vape? [please circle]	Y / N	Y / N
	Y / N Please also state if you have recently stopped vaping and for how long.	Y / N Please also state if you have recently stopped vaping and for how long.
Please state any medical conditions (physical or mental health) which are current or you have previously experienced		

Adoption Interests

Have interest in adoption of	☐ Pre-school	☐ 5-10 years
	☐ Additional needs	☐ Siblings
Have an interest in concurrency? [please circle]	Y / N	

03/2024

If there is any other information you would like to share, please put it on a separate piece of paper, and include it with your form submission.

Date completed:

Please complete the details and return the form to:

St Andrew's Children's Society
7 John's Place
Leith
Edinburgh EH6 7EL

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