



Welcome to the first Adopter Voice Newsletter

What is Adopter Voice?

Adopter Voice is a service provided by Adoption UK, the country's largest adopter led community. Established to work with local authorities and regional adoption agencies, we contribute to and influence local change; as well as informing regional and national adoption leadership boards, and the Department for Education on policy improvements.

By bringing the experiences of adopters together we can form a stronger alliance that is able to inform decision and policy makers creating a better life for adopted children and their families.

*Message from Anita **Adopter Voice started at the same time the development of Regional Adoption Agencies were taking shape; I am very proud that the core service of creating Adopter Advisory Boards started in the Midlands and has grown other partnerships across England. Adopter Voice is the independent engagement tool for RAA's to really hear and value the views of their adopters and shape their services with them in mind. We aim to influence at a local level as well as national through the Adopter Reference Group; identify what support adopters are asking for in the services they receive and connect families with others as their RAA to share their voice.***

Where is Adopter Voice?

Adopter Voice is currently active in the following Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA)

- Adoption@Heart
- Adopt East Alliance
- Adoption South West
- Adoption Counts
- Together For Adoption
- Adoption West
- Family Adoption Links
- Together4Children
- Adoption East Midlands

For further information please contact
adoptervoice@adoptionuk.org.uk



What themes have been discussed through Adopter Voice?

Adopter Voice uses Champions to seek the lived experience of adopters, to share their views with local authorities & regional adoption agencies. This can take place in a variety of ways through Open Forums, Adopter Advisory Boards and Champions reaching out to their networks.

Themes :

- Letter Box and Contact– Moving to Digital approach and how to support Adopters
- Transitions, Identity and Life Story– Considering the support needed to ensure families to help their children
- Therapy, Education and training support reviews– Consulting on adopters preference and needs
- Communication– Supporting RAA and Adopters to develop supportive relationships, peer support events and newsletter/website reviews
- Universal Adoption support Offer– What should be included from a families point of view
- The Adoption Journey– Collecting views on what Adopter's wish they had know and how RAAs can plan to ensure this is place for other adopters starting their Journey

How can Adopters get involved?

Become a Volunteer Champion. Regardless of how much time you feel you can give to Adopter Voice, we would love to hear from you. We depend on a valued pool of volunteers to be able to deliver our Adopter Voice service in each region.

Please email AdopterVoice@adoptionUK.org.uk to express your interest or register for Adopter Voice news and up dates.

Attend Online forums and events lead by champions in your area to seek views.

Keep in touch via social media www.twitter.com/AUKAdopterVoice and www.facebook.com/AdopterVoice

Michelle Nelson Adopter Voice Chairperson



RAA Family Adoption Links

How long have you been a volunteer for AUK? 7 years

The reason I volunteered is because I feel that adopters need to be raised up and our

voices should be heard. We are not only advocates for our children, but for future adoptive families too. I love helping to drive change for my family and others who are in the same boat.

Sometimes it feels like Adopter's are unheard. Since the regionalisation, Adopter Voice has a bigger role to play to share the needs of local adopters with the professionals that support them. Your voice helps to do just that!

Margaret McGregor Adopter Voice Chairperson for Together4Children



Started in December 2020

I am passionate about ensuring adoptive families have the right support in place so that they can thrive as a family.

We have benefitted over the years since we adopted from making friends who have also adopted and we got to know some of them through the Adoption UK message boards.

If you want to learn more as an adopter and also help other adopters- become a AUK volunteer, you won't regret it.



Meet some of our Adopter Voice Champions

Gaer Buchanan-Parkin Adoption Voice Champion for Adoption Counts

From February 2020

Since adopting our first son, I have wanted to get more involved in adoption.



I want to meet other adopters, knowing that we have a shared understanding. I want to help, in any small way I can, to make the lives of our children better and to raise awareness of the issues that they and their family's encounter.

Unfortunately, due to Covid 19, I haven't been able to get stuck in as much as I would have liked. But fingers crossed, we can all start to meet up soon and arrange events.

If you feel you can spare a few hours per month to get involved in something that you are passionate about, then go for it.



Richard Orchard-Rowe, Adopter Voice Chairperson for Adopt East Since March 2021

I love the idea of being involved further in the adoption community and the idea that we can stand together to make a change for the better.



Have you ever struggled and wished someone could do something? Now imagine being that person that does something for someone! You may not know them, you may never know how you helped them, but there is true pleasure in working for an organisation that can make that difference to someone who has been on your journey too.

Aimée Cooper, Adopter Voice Champion, For Adoption@Heart Since March 2021

I have been a member of Adoption UK for the past 3 years and very recently joined the volunteer team.



Being involved in the adoption community helps me to feel less alone as an adopter. I am passionate when it comes to improving quality and any avenue in which I can do this.

I want to feel heard, safe and respected as a volunteer so can't think of a better organisation to be involved with and to meet other adopters at the same time.

Clare Gratton Adopter Voice Chairperson

For Adoption East Midlands Since January 2021

I have volunteered for Adoption UK for only six months but in that time have learned so much about the adoption journey and the families that live it.



Volunteering is a great way to meet other adopter and influence change. The people involved make the role interesting, enjoyable and rewarding.

Message from Annaleigh Rowlands

Adopter Voice Contract Liaison &

Adopter Voice Champion Together4Children



Five years ago I began volunteering as an Adopter Voice Champion. Now I work for Adoption UK to oversee the Adopter Voice contracts and support our wonderful volunteers to seek the views of adopters across England.

I am passionate about Adopter Voice. It is important that RAAs tailor support and policies meet the needs of families and being able to share how life "really is" for Adopters and our children, to influence change is empowering.