

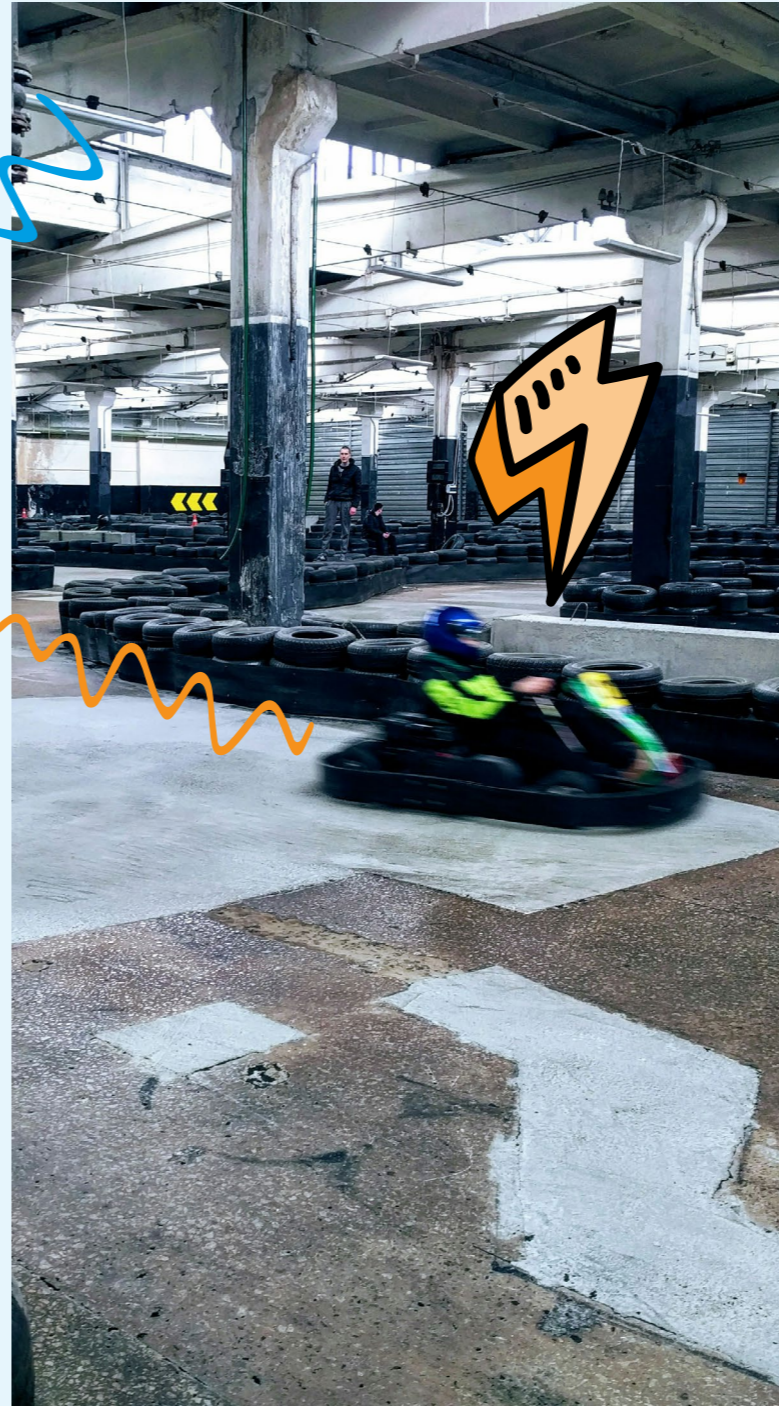
# ADOPT TEENS

MEET FRIENDS. MAKE CHANGE.



Adopteens is a service that was **designed by adopted teenagers** who wanted to meet and connect with other adoptees. It was born out of a desire to feel more **connected** with others who have shared similar **life experiences** and, in their words...

...WHO  
JUST  
GET  
IT!



## Why We're Different

We encourage you to take advantage of any local adoption groups in your area. However, we know options can be limited. That's where we come in!

By attending both Adopteens and local groups, you'll get the best of both worlds! We aim to collaborate with local partners, not compete.

We're the only non-profit created fully by and for teens like you.

**Adopteens is for Anyone who:**

- ✓ Is adopted and aged between 11-17.
- ✓ Lives in Bradford, Calderdale, East Riding, Kirklees, Hull, Kirklees, Leeds, North East Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, Wakefield and York.
- ✓ Has access to the internet either on their phone or computer.

**We give you:**

- ✓ Wicked new adventures.
- ✓ Real friends who simply 'get it'.
- ✓ Our exclusive chat space to connect.
- ✓ Serious fun.
- ✓ We even make videos and meet politicians to improve the system. I know!

**The best bit? We're led by teens for teens. Oh, and did we mention Go Karting?**

# SOCIAL EVENTS

**Our Adopteens events! We meet up for crazy adventures like waterfall hikes, trampolining, cooking and creativity workshops and more.**

They are relaxed, friendly and there is no expectation or pressure to talk about adoption. Come as you are and leave with new friends and great memories.

Many of the young people who attend regularly find it reassuring to hang out with other adopted teens and do something fun. The events are completely free, we just ask that families drop their child off, or the member make their own way to these events.

Previous activities have included:

- ✓ Go Ape, North East Lincolnshire
- ✓ The Deep, Hull
- ✓ Jump Inc, Rotherham
- ✓ Wreath Making Workshop, Batley
- ✓ Chocolate Story, York
- ✓ Waterfall Trail, Ingleton Falls
- ✓ Curry Cooking Workshop, Leeds
- ✓ Theatre Workshop, York
- ✓ Abseiling, Archery and Laser Quest, Doncaster
- ✓ Photography Workshop, Wakefield
- ✓ Snowtubing, Halifax
- ✓ Go Karting, Sheffield

"I'm glad I've made some new friends especially on the chat forum on a Wednesday."

Adopteens member

☺☺

FREE & FUN

NO PRESSURE



# SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

We understand the impact adoption has on you, especially as a teenager. We have tons of experience guiding adoptees. Whenever needed, we've got your back with helpful resources.

## Website

Our website [www.adopteens.org](http://www.adopteens.org) is open to the public and can be accessed by anyone. You can use our website to;

- See upcoming social events and register.
- Access our unique chat forum.
- Learn more about our nationally recognised voice and influence work.
- Access our resources which have all been Co-produced by members of Adopteens.
- Learn about other services for adopted young people.
- Find out about our latest news.

THAT'S COOL!

## Chat forum

The chat forum is open to registered members where they can chat with other adopted teens online. It's nice and easy to use and is a space where they can keep in touch with one another.

We run 'Adopteens Chat' sessions - a space where we;

- Encourage members to come online and share posts about themselves.
- Discuss topics that interest members to create interesting conversation and develop friendships.
- Are supported by Adopteens workers who run the chat to support you.
- Don't have to talk about adoption-related stuff, but we are more than happy to respond with our shared knowledge if they are.



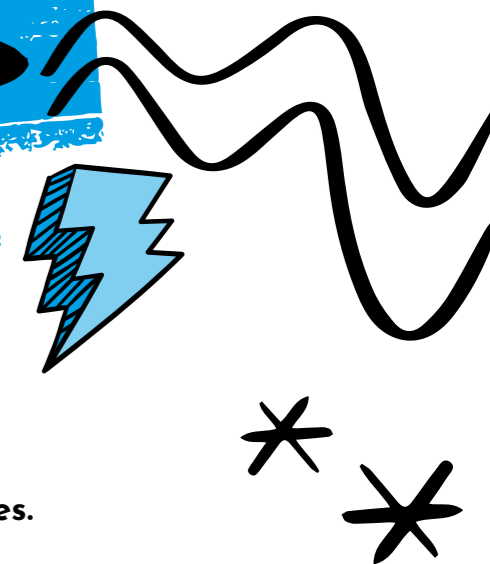
# AMPLIFYING OUR VOICES

Adoptees often go unheard. Not here! We create films, talk on the radio, we even make national news. Our Youth Council makes sure people HEAR us. We're proud of the waves we're making to make life better for adoptees.

## Youth Council

Our Adopteens Youth Council aims to gather the voices of teenage adoptees on issues affecting them and use this to influence how people understand and work with adoption. We provide members the opportunity to listen to others' views, express themselves (if and when they want to), be creative, build skills, and gain confidence. We've worked on topics such as;

- Adoption-friendly schools.
- Life story work.
- Safe use of social media.
- What they want from social workers.
- What they want prospective adopters to know.



# YOUR TEAM



**GAIENA**

## Experience

Gaiena has been part of the Adopteen team since 2016. She has a 20 year-year background in youth work, working with care experienced and adopted young people and their families within a local authority post-adoption support team.

## Expertise

Gaiena is a qualified person-centred counsellor with an understanding of issues around adoption from all parties involved.

## Passion

Gaiena feels the most precious part of this work is seeing people grow and move forward in their lives with the right environment and support.



**TANYA**

## Experience

Tanya is a qualified Social Worker since 2014 and an adopted adult who's worked with the Adopteens service since 2015 working with teenagers from all over Yorkshire & Humber with the simple aim of helping young people who are adopted build friendships, and if they want to, have an opportunity to improve the system.

## Values

Tanya thinks it's important to work with all people who are affected by adoption as it gives her the opportunity to hear people's experiences from all sides.

## Passion

Tanya finds the most rewarding part of the work is getting to know people, building relationships and she always learns something new from every person she works with.



**JO**

## Experience

Jo's worked with Adopted young people and their families for over 20 years as both a Child and Family Therapist and Social Worker.

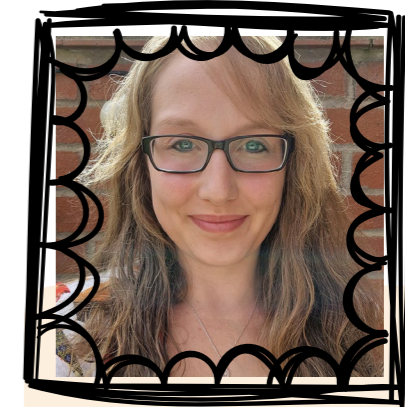
## Expertise

Jo is also from a youth work background having delivered art-based projects to children and young people living in rural communities.

## Passion

Jo's passionate about the work we do with young people as they help us grow and learn both personally and professionally and their voices are crucial in helping us develop and shape our support services.

"We appreciate all the hard work you do, advocating for and supporting adopted teens." A parent



**VIKKI**

## Experience

Vikki graduated with a BA (Hons) in Health and Social Care in 2020 and has a keen interest in post-adoption support work following her own adoption and reunion experiences.

## Expertise

Vikki's dissertation 'An exploration of adult adoptee experiences of adoption through the implementation of a storytelling approach' was published through Bishop Grosseteste University's journal, 'Solertia'.

## Passion

Vikki's dissertation catapulted her desire to further explore the means by which voices in adoption can influence service and policy change.

# YOUR MEMBERSHIP YOUR CHOICE

Signing up doesn't mean you have to participate in everything! Dip into what suits you. We'll collect basic contact details to notify you of events.

Essentially, you'll be added to our mailing list to receive:

- ✓ Invites to all social events
- ✓ Youth Council opportunities
- ✓ Ways to share your voice.

And just so you know you can involve yourself according to your comfort level. We have no minimum requirements! You remain completely in control. If at any point you wish to not be involved, simply contact us and we will pause or end your membership, which ever you prefer.

Adopteens aims to support adopted teens on their own terms. We meet them where they're at.



# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The next section tells you all there is to know about how Adopteens works. From our Social Events, to our Chat Forum, as well as how we will communicate with you and our Membership Expectations.

Read on to discover what we are all about... we think you might like it!

# How our social events work

## General information

We will advertise our events via our website [adopteens.org/events](https://adopteens.org/events) we will also email all members about these events in advance.

Members can register their interest for a social event via our website, or by contacting an Adopteens worker.

We usually offer 16 places for face-to-face activities as we have worked out over the years this is the optimum number of young people.

When events have a lot of interest we will try to run two events on the same day to meet demand.

## Who supports the events?

Events are supported by a minimum of 4 consistent workers who all have a wealth of experience working with young adopted people. The event will not go ahead if staffing is limited as the safety of your young person is paramount.

Zoom events however can allow for more members to participate so the numbers are not capped.

Unfortunately, we are unable to provide any one-to-one support during social events as the events are staffed according to the number of members taking part.

Many workers who support social events are volunteers.

## What do parents do during our events?

Our events are set up so that parents drop off and pick up but do not stay with their child. We often suggest local places for parents to go whilst young people are at the event so that parents can be close by. If anyone feels anxious about attending without their parents, please speak to an Adopteens worker and we can look at how we can support this.

## Cancellations

We appreciate that for many reasons cancellations happen... and sometimes these are due to circumstances outside of your control and last minute! All we ask is for as much notice as possible so we can try to fill the space by offering it to members who are on our waiting list.

# Chat forum

## Our Chat Forum is open 24/7 - but not monitored all the time.

Our Adopteens workers will check the Chat Forum most weekdays and will generate discussion topics, join in conversations and offer support where appropriate.

## Keeping you safe

If we are concerned about anyone's safety on the chat forum the Adopteens workers will discuss this with the member first. If we remain concerned then we will contact parents. Certain behaviours that are felt to be unsafe may lead to suspension or removal from the site and further referrals for additional support may be sought. Please refer to membership expectations for more details on this.



# Youth Council

## Interested in joining the youth council (Ages 13-17)

Members usually attend some of our social events first to get a feel for Adopteens. If they like the vibe and want to get more involved then joining our Youth Council is a good next step.

We are always on the look out for new fresh faces to join our small but mighty Youth Council so keep an eye out for one of our regular emails about this opportunity.

We hold information sessions for anyone interested in joining to see if they are comfortable sharing their ideas and chatting about adoption issues, and also to see if they are willing to attend 4 - 7 meetings a year. Youth Council meetings are usually held in Leeds on Sundays. We ask members to arrange their own way to and from meetings.

## Benefits of Joining

- Paid £5 per hour in vouchers.
- Meet a diverse mix of people who have shared experience.
- Gain lots of skills; teamwork, presentation, public speaking, creative skills, listening skills, and much more.
- Influence policy and practice around adoption.
- Lunch provided - chosen by our Youth Council members.
- Make your CV stand out with this unique experience
- Celebration event at the end of the year.

# Membership expectations

Our priority in Adopteens is to give everyone a safe and welcoming environment be that at in person events, online events or on our unique chat forum. In order to do this we ask have laid out the following expectations.

These expectations outline what members can expect from Adopteens workers and what workers expect from anyone who attends any of our events. Being clear and explicit from the beginning helps everyone's understanding.

## What you can expect from us;

- We will treat everyone with respect and kindness.
- We will aim to be open, honest and approachable.
- We will communicate clearly with everyone and in a way that works for the individual.
- We will always aim to provide a fun, safe place for people to be themselves and make friends with other Adopteens members.
- We will do our best to help people develop their skills using gentle guidance and support within a group setting.
- We will try to resolve fairly any problems, grievances and difficulties anyone may come across at our events.
- If we have concerns about an issue that has happened, or anyone's safety, we may need to contact parent/s to discuss this.
- If the problem is still unresolved, we will offer an opportunity to discuss the issues in line with our complaints policy.

## What we expect from you;

Please read these carefully. We will send these out again before events on the consent forms for both members and parents to sign and agree to.

- **Respecting others** - This service works with a diverse range of people in terms of age, race, gender, neurodiversity, and physical ability. We expect all members to treat others with respect, respecting differences in others. We will not tolerate bully, discrimination, or abuse in any form.
- **Physical contact** - It is very important to respect others' personal space. Everybody has a different view on touch and personal space. We want to ensure everyone feels safe and respected at our events and therefore we ask that there is no physical contact.
- **Phones** - We ask that all phones are turned on silent and put away for the duration of the event.
- **Confidentiality** - People may choose to share personal details about themselves at our events, please remember that this is their information and is not to be shared with others.
- **Social media** - Please do not share our event details on social media - we do not do this prior to events due to their confidential nature.
- **Photographs** - Please do not take pictures of other members without their permission. Also, we ask people not to share pictures of others on social media, again for privacy and confidentiality reasons.





# Membership expectations

- **Smoking and Vaping** - We do not allow any smoking or vaping at any of our events.
- **Energy drinks** - We do not allow energy drinks at our events.
- **Zoom** - We request that anyone attending a Zoom event has their cameras on at all times - this is for reasons of confidentiality.
- **Issues with other members** - If an issue with another member of Adopteens happens, and it can not be resolved, we ask that this is raised with the Adopteens workers. We ask that people do not seek support from other members/ friends, as this can put other people in a difficult position.
- **Drugs and Alcohol** - We cannot work with anyone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If anyone arrives at any of our events and we are concerned they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, we will contact parent/s immediately to collect them.
- **Arriving and leaving** - When arriving at one of our events please check in with a worker. When leaving an event workers need to know who is collecting that member. We do a short handover with parents to ensure we know that member has left safely. If anyone is making their own way home, parents need to confirm this with us first in writing. Please do not leave an event without letting a worker know.
- **Medication** - If anyone takes prescribed medication, where possible take this before an event. If medication needs to be taken during an event it is important that the parent writes this on the consent form associated with the event, and that consent is given for staff to administer this, with clear instructions on how to do so.
- **Appropriate clothing** - It is important that people are appropriately dressed for activities. We will offer guidance as to what is expected for specific activities. If we feel people do not have suitable clothes on this may prevent them from being able to take part in the event.
- **Safety Concerns** - If anyone is concerned about another young persons safety please tell an appropriate adult ( Adopteens worker or parent). Please do not discuss safety concerns with other members or post on about it on social media groups.

# Membership expectations

In circumstances where behavior poses a high level of risk to others or to the person themselves, we will follow safeguarding procedures and review whether it is safe for that member and others to continue being a part of the service.

This includes members being respectful and confidential in their exchanges with one another, whether this is; in person, online, phone calls or messaging.

We are mindful of the role social media plays in the lives of young people and this is an important means of communication for many people. Whilst we cannot impose any requirements on your activity outside of your membership with Adopteens or at one of our activity events we do take seriously exchanges on social media platforms that impact any of our members negatively.



# Consent

In order to run our events we will require a parent/guardian to complete a consent form which will be sent out prior to the event. The consent form will ask for up-to-date information about specific needs, allergies, and emergency contact details. We take this information to build a risk assessment for the event and to staff it accordingly.

The consent form must be completed prior to the event or that person will not be able to attend.

We get fresh consent forms for every event so our information is up to date as we know things change with people over time.



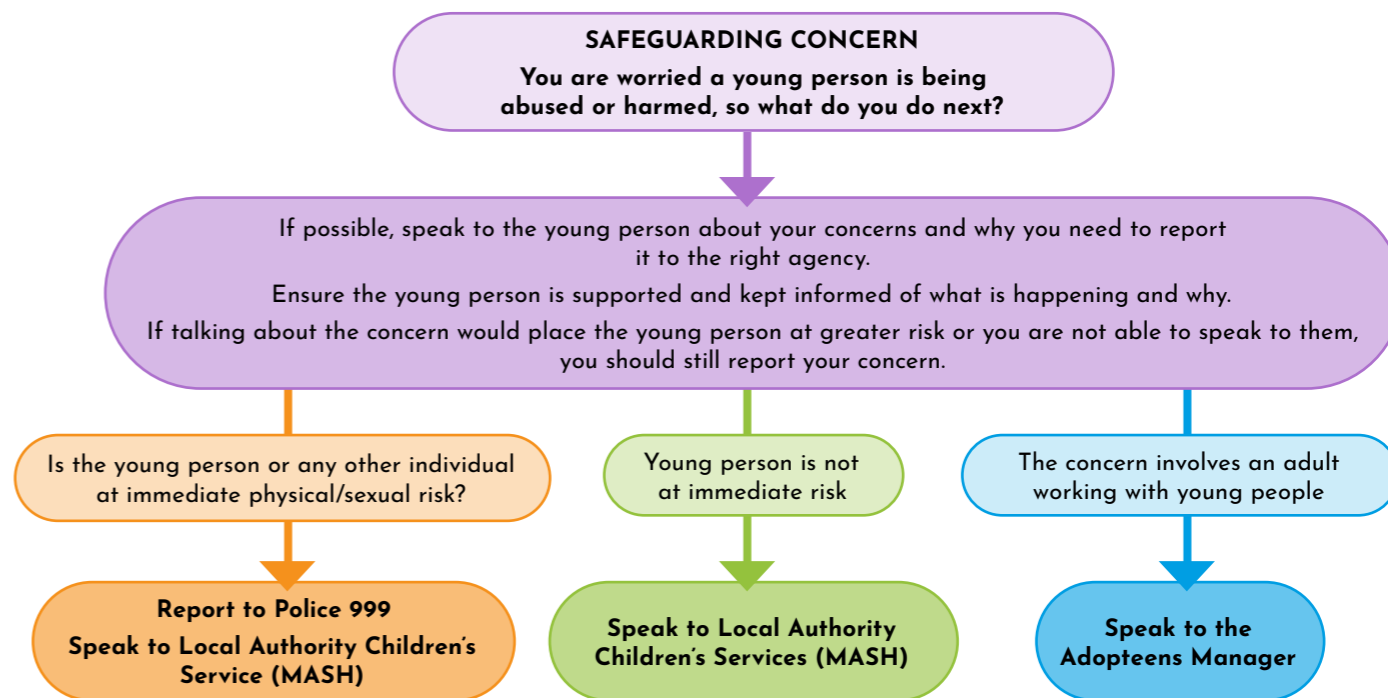
# Safeguarding

If there is a safeguarding issue (it is felt that a child is a danger to themselves, or others, or they feel that someone else may harm them, or is abusing a status of trust) this will be dealt with appropriately and raised with all necessary people, in adherence to our Family Action Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure.

We will, where possible, try and talk to the person involved to explain why we have to share information and discuss who we will share this with. The same applies to members' parents.

Adopteens Project Workers also like to work with families to ensure that members feel safe and supported, and if issues are raised we will always try and explore these, work out if we can offer the right support, and if not, we will check out other options for support. Our service is not a crisis service and we cannot provide one-to-one support for young people.

If we feel Adopteens is not suitable for anyone we retain the right to refuse a service and this will be discussed. We work with families to be inclusive but we are not always a suitable service for all young people.



# Communication

## When will we contact you

- We will contact members about all upcoming social events. We will also advertise these via our website where members can register their interest for these.
- If members have signed up to our Adopteens Chat Forum then we will send regular reminders about our chat sessions.
- Members of the Youth Council will be contacted about these sessions and the work we will be doing.
- We will send out feedback forms following our events - feedback is crucial for our service to continue.
- We are often contacted by researchers, and professionals wanting to run focus groups with young people with lived experience of adoption. We may contact members about these opportunities to see if they would like to be involved.
- We may also be approached by other agencies providing services that may be of interest to members and we regularly share these.
- For communication that we need a response to we will mark our communication as 'ACTION REQUIRED'.
- At any point members can contact an Adopteens worker and ask to be removed from the service.

## Turning 18

Our service can work with young people up until their 18th birthday. Two months prior to this we will send members a leaving pack with information in it that is relevant and a small parting gift from us to say thank you for being part of Adopteens.

## Keeping in Touch

We hope that this service is well used by adopted teenagers. If you know other families that may benefit from this service, please spread the word, as we hope this project can grow to support as many teenagers as possible as part of the recognised need for further post-adoption support.

To ensure the service continues to meet the needs of adopted young people aged 11 - 17 feedback is crucial. We ask that members provide ongoing feedback to help inform ongoing service development and sustainability.

For more information about Adopteens please visit [www.adopteens.org](http://www.adopteens.org) or email [adopteens@pac-uk.org](mailto:adopteens@pac-uk.org) to request a call back from one of our Adopteens Workers.

If you have an account please follow and show us support in the Twitter community. Our Twitter handle is [@Adoptedteens\\_ID](https://twitter.com/Adoptedteens_ID).

## Complaints

Please see here for our Compliments, comments and complaints [family-action.org.uk/contact-us](http://family-action.org.uk/contact-us)

# About us

PAC-UK is the largest independent adoption support agency in the country and merged with Family Action on 1st December 2018.

Family Action is an award-winning national charity working from the heart of local communities across England and Wales. We've been supporting people through change, challenge and crisis for over 150 years.

We believe family is the key to positive futures, for individuals and communities. We believe there's no right way to be a family, it's relationships that matter.

We know first-hand that our early experiences of family stay with us, for better or worse

PAC-UK was rated Outstanding for the fourth consecutive time by Ofsted in 2022 and was selected as the overall winner in the King's Fund/GSK Impact Awards 2017, for 'Supporting Excellence in Community Health Care'.



# How to support Adoptees

There are so many ways for you to fundraise - the list is virtually endless. Here are a few brilliant ideas to get you started.

## Fundraise

Rally your community! Organise a bake sale, hold a charity car wash, or host a quiz. Every pound raised will make a significant difference.

## Challenge Events

Push your limits and inspire others! Participate in a marathon, climb a mountain, or host a gaming marathon. Announce your challenge and encourage friends and family to sponsor you.

## Grants

Grant opportunities from trusts and foundations can provide substantial resources for specific programs.

## Get your company involved

Looking for a meaningful cause-related marketing opportunity? Partner with us to create a win-win situation. Increase brand awareness while making a real difference in the lives of adopted teens.

## Leave a gift in your Will

You can pass on something wonderful to less fortunate families and support them to nurture the same relationships you value. By leaving a gift in your Will to Family Action, you'll help all those affected by adoption, Special Guardianship and other forms of permanent care are supported. Your gift will give them the strength to raise a safe, healthy and happy family.

Every contribution, big or small, will make a significant difference.

## Contact Us

To learn more about specific donation options or discuss a partnership, please contact our Fundraising Team by emailing [fundraising@family-action.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@family-action.org.uk)

Together, we can build a brighter future for all those affected by adoption.



**MAKE A DONATION AND HELP CHANGE A FAMILIES LIFE**

Donate online, with a one-time or recurring donation, by visiting [support.family-action.org.uk](https://support.family-action.org.uk) or [justgiving.com/campaign/PAC-UK](https://justgiving.com/campaign/PAC-UK)

If you are interested in our service and you think Adopteens is something the young people in your area would benefit from we would love to talk to you about setting your own service up and how you can commission Adopteens to be developed in your area.

Having seen the success and growth of Adopteens over the last 10 years and the positive impact it has had on members, as well as its influence on professionals and their practice, our passion is to create a national network of regional Adopteens services bringing together a powerful, diverse, inclusive and connected voice please contact us at [Adopteens@pac-uk.org](mailto:Adopteens@pac-uk.org)

# ADOPTTEENS



**PAC-UK**  
Adoption and Permanency Support

We'd love to hear from you



@Adoptedteens\_ID



[adopteens.org](http://adopteens.org)



[adopteens@pac-uk.org](mailto:adopteens@pac-uk.org)

Supported by

---



**One**  
Adoption



---

Registered Office Address: Family Action Head Office, 34 Wharf Road, London, N1 7GR

Family Action is registered as a Charity in England and Wales no. 264713. Registered as a Charity in the Isle of Man no. 1206. Registered Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales no. 01068186. PAC-UK Ofsted reg. no. SC066981.

Design by Creative Switch. Cover image by Maike und Björn Bröskamp from Pixabay.