



## All-Party Parliamentary Group for Adoption and Permanence: Report on Adoption Support Fund Debate on 13 February 2020

On 13 February 2020, Lord Russell of Liverpool (Crossbench) is due to move that “this House takes note of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Adoption and Permanence’s report *Investing in Families: The Adoption Support Fund beyond 2020*, published in July 2019”.

### Summary

- The Adoption Support Fund (ASF) was introduced in May 2015 and is intended to provide funding to adopted children and their families to pay for therapeutic postadoption support.
- The Government has reported that, since its introduction, the ASF has had a positive effect on adopted children and their families. In December 2018, the then Education Secretary, Damian Hinds, announced funding to the scheme would be increased. At the same time, the Government said funding for the scheme would be guaranteed until March 2020.
- In its July 2019 report, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Adoption and Permanence also concluded the ASF was currently having a positive transformative effect. It argued the Government should provide longer-term funding for the scheme after March 2020.
- The APPG made several other recommendations. For example, it argued that some children and families were facing delays in accessing the ASF. In addition, Voluntary Adoption Agencies were unable to apply directly for the funding. The report recommended that improvements should be made to the scheme to address these issues. It also identified administrative burdens on social workers regarding the ASF and recommended that this should be addressed.
- The Consortium of Adoption Support Agencies and the CoramBAAF—a membership organisation for agencies and individuals in family placement services—have both supported the APPG’s recommendation that funding for the ASF be secured after March 2020.
- Members in both Houses have spoken in support of the continuation of the ASF, including members of the APPG. In May 2019, during a debate in the House of Lords on adopted children and schools three members of the APPG—Lord Russell of Liverpool, the Earl of Listowel (Crossbench) and Lord Triesman (Non-affiliated)—spoke in support of the ASF. The Shadow Spokesperson for Education, Lord Watson of Invergowrie, also argued for the fund to be protected after 2020.
- In July 2019, during a debate in the House of Commons on early years family support, Victoria Prentis (Conservative MP for Banbury), similarly called on the Government to safeguard the continuation of the ASF. Ms Prentis is an officer of the APPG.

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- On 15 October 2019, the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, announced the Government would continue to provide funding for the ASF until 2021. The Government has said funding after 2021 will be subject to the spending review, planned for 2020. Gavin Williamson subsequently announced a further £5 million for the ASF would be available during 2020–21.

Edward Scott | 3 February 2020

## Key Information

- All-Party Parliamentary Group for Adoption and Permanence, [Investing in Families: The Adoption Support Fund Beyond 2020](#), July 2019

*Report on the ASF and details of the evidence it received as part of its investigation.*

- CoramBAAF, [New Report from All-Party Parliamentary Group for Adoption and Permanence Calls for Long-term Support for Traumatised Children](#), 16 July 2019; and Consortium of Adoption Support Agencies, [Next Prime Minister Urged to Pledge Long-term Support for Traumatised Children](#), 18 July 2019

*Comment on the APPG's report from organisations representing families who adopt and the agencies supporting them.*

- Department for Education, [Adoption Support Fund](#), 31 May 2019

*Guidance on the ASF, who is eligible to receive it and how it operates.*

- Department for Education, [Thousands More Families to Benefit from the Adoption Support Fund](#), 23 December 2018

*Announcement by the then Education Secretary, Damian Hinds, that funding for the ASF would be increased by £12 million in the coming year.*

- Department for Education, [The Evaluation of the Adoption Support Fund: Long-term Follow-up](#), 21 July 2019, pp 7–8

*Summary of survey findings on the long-term effects on children and families of ASF funded support. The survey found the support provided had helped to improve children and parents' wellbeing and family functioning.*

- Department for Education, [New Government Support for Adoptive Families](#), 15 October 2019; and [More Funding to Boost Adoption Support](#), 22 December 2019

*Press releases announcing the continuation of ASF funding until 2021 and that ASF funding for the period 2020–21 would be increased by £5 million.*

- Adoption UK, '[Call for Long-term Commitment to Lifesaving Support Fund](#)', 15 October 2019; '[Support Fund for Adoptive Families to Receive £5m Increase](#)', 23 December 2019; and Local Government Association, '[LGA Responds to Secretary of State for Education Announcement on Adoption](#)', 16 October 2019

*Responses to the Government's announcement that ASF funding would continue until 2021.*

### **Parliamentary Debate, Statements and Questions**

- House of Commons, '[Written Question: Adoption](#)', 30 April 2019, 247120
- House of Commons, '[Written Question: Adoption: Finance](#)', 23 July 2019, 279068
- House of Commons, '[Written Question: Adoption Support Fund](#)', 21 October 2019, 822
- House of Commons, '[Written Question: Adoption Support Fund](#)', 4 November 2019, 7795
- [Debate on 'Early Years Family Support'](#), *HC Hansard*, 16 July 2019, cols 759–98
- [Debate on 'Schools: Adopted Children'](#), *HL Hansard*, 14 May 2019, cols 1529–46

### **Press Articles and Comment**

- Krish Kandiah, '[We Fell in Love with Our Adopted Daughter—But Didn't Ask Key Questions About Support](#)', *Guardian*, 9 August 2019

### **Further Reading**

- Written questions, asked Lord Russell of Liverpool, regarding the Adoption Support Fund: [HL1135](#); [HL1136](#); [HL1137](#); [HL1138](#) (23 January 2020)

*These had not to receive a response at the time of publication. However, the answer will be available online once they have been responded to.*