

Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
1 Horse Guards Road
Westminster
London
SW1A 2HQ

Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education
20 Great Smith St
London
SW1P 3BT

Rt Hon Janet Daby MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
(Minister for Children and Families)

03/06/2025

Dear Ministers,

We are writing following the recent debate in Westminster Hall regarding the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) to provide you with further information about the children who are being impacted by your devastating decision to cut match funding and lower the Fair Access Limit.

Family Futures is a specialist Adoption Support Agency (and Voluntary Adoption Agency) based in North London. We support adoptive and special guardianship families from across the UK through our [research informed](#) Neuro-Physiological Psychotherapy Model. We are highly specialised and have worked with children with the highest levels of need for the past 27 years. Family Futures is a renowned national service, rated Ofsted Outstanding. Children are often referred to Family Futures when local providers are unable to support them due to the high level of risk and complexity involved.

Family Futures currently provides therapy for 111 children and young people through the ASGSF. 73 of these children previously accessed the Fair Access Limit and 27 are high risk and require high levels of match funding. Sadly, almost all of these children are still waiting for their therapy to begin this financial year and have had a setback in their healing journey due to the recent funding cuts.

Only 11 children at Family Futures were able to access the 'split funding option' that the government informed providers in late March was an option for all families. The majority were not eligible for the split year funding and many Regional Adoption Agencies would not submit applications after February 2025.

£3,000 is not enough to help these children heal or go on to thrive and contribute positively to society.

We would like to share with you a story of a child who you are denying the right to heal, to be safe and to thrive.

Beth – Special Guardianship

Background

Beth was referred to Family Futures as she was suffering from developmental delay, particularly in the domains of social and emotional development and speech development. She was held back a year academically as she was well behind her peers at school. Beth has sleeping problems and can become highly emotionally dysregulated. She presented as a child with an ambivalent attachment to her carer. She was also described as having a deep fear of abandonment.

Beth was the fourth child born to her birth mother, the older children having been previously removed. Beth's birth mother was in an abusive relationship and experienced homelessness while pregnant. When Beth was born she was addicted to heroin and methadone and there are records that her birth mother drank throughout pregnancy. Beth remained in hospital for six weeks due to Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome. She was later discharged into a rehabilitation unit while her birth parents engaged in a methadone programme. Three months later, her birth parents left the unit, and Beth was placed in foster care.

After six months in foster care, Beth was placed with a family member and their birth daughter Sophia who was five years old.

Beth experienced 5 out of 10 Adverse Childhood Experiences including: **Emotional Neglect, Parental Separation, Substance Abuse, Physical Neglect and Domestic Violence.**

At the time of assessment, it was flagged that Beth was cruel to animals, harmed herself and others, heard things that were not there, would run away and set fires.

Therapeutic Provision

Beth's Guardian fought for therapy for seven years and only after a number of child protection concerns and a complaint process, were they able to access vital support.

Beth has been receiving therapy at Family Futures for three years. During this time, she has engaged in Sensory Integration therapy to support her regulation as well as being supported with her attachment to her carer and understanding her life story.

Beth still requires a lot of support to reduce her violence and support her to feel safe.

Original Package of support	Current Package of support
£35,992 total £5,000 ASGSF £15,496 LA £15,496 ASGSF Match Funding	£24,660 total £3,000 ASGSF Still to be agreed: £10,930 from the LA The final £10,830 is being funded via Family Futures through a range of sources including a limited private donation fund.

This is just one of thousands of stories from across England.

These are children, not statistics.

In her speech in the recent debate, Janet Daby MP spoke of 'other avenues to funding' to replace the match funding. This is not our experience. Our team are having daily conversations with social workers in

Local Authorities and Regional Adoption Agencies and being told repeatedly that there is no money for therapy. Where there is funding available, it is at a fraction of what we were previously able to access.

Family Futures have been fundraising for children who are left desperate for therapeutic support and we have been fortunate to receive a private donation that has allowed us to continue providing some therapy for our most vulnerable children to prevent deaths by suicide, placement breakdowns and significant harm to children and parents. This should not have had to happen. As a country, we should not be reliant on the private wealth of philanthropists to provide public services to children who are at significant risk.

As a starting point, a consultation with those most affected is needed to safeguard the rights of our society's most vulnerable children - the right to recover from trauma and abuse, being supported to access education and go on to lead fulfilling lives. We urge you to:

- Reverse the decision to reduce the ASGSF 'Fair Access Limit'.
- Ensure adequate funding for the ASGSF to meet the needs of all eligible children and families by restoring match funding for children at the highest risk.
- Restore the 'Fair Access Limit' for specialist assessments.

Hold a sector wide consultation over the next 12 months to consider how to ensure good quality therapy is provided for care experienced children in a timely manner. These are shocking, drastic cuts for some of the most traumatised, vulnerable children in our society who deserve more, not less support to survive and thrive. The cuts will actively undermine the long-term success of adoptions and special guardianships by stripping away essential therapeutic support.

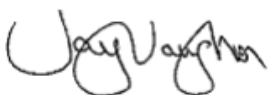
Finally, we urge you to meet with parents and carers affected by these cuts. We urge you to meet with parents and carers whose adoptions/SGO placements have broken down and their children returned to care or dangerous living situations with their birth family. Most importantly we urge you to meet with children and young people who have been through so much and whose biggest wish is to feel safe, loved and to have a future.

All of this is put best by eight year old Sophie: [Watch Here.](#)

They urgently need care not cuts.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Jay Vaughan MBE CEO & Registered Manager

(Dramatherapist, Theraplay Practitioner & Supervisor, Somatic Experience Practitioner & Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapist)

Children's names have been changed to protect identity

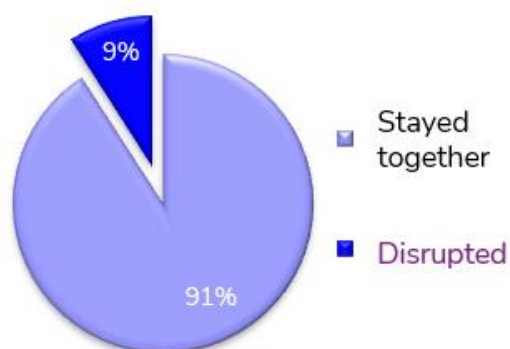
About Family Futures

Family Futures is a specialist Adoption Support Agency (and Voluntary Adoption Agency) based in North London, who support Adoption and Special Guardianship families from across the UK through our [research informed](#) Neuro-Physiological Psychotherapy Model¹. The children supported by Family Futures are among the UK's most vulnerable having experienced profound abuse, neglect and violence while living in their birth families – often for a prolonged period. Many of these children were let down consistently by their Local Authority and support was not given to them in enough time, leading to their late placement in Adoptive or Special Guardianship families. Adoption UK have highlighted that on average, an adopted child will have spent 15 months in care², and will have moved between several foster families, which in turn can have a lifelong impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

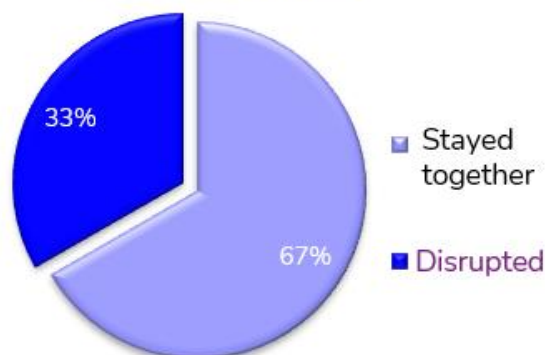
Key Information from Family Futures Research

Placement Disruption

Treatment Group



Control Group

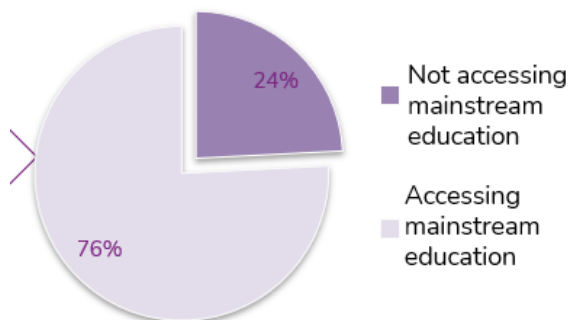


¹ <https://www.familyfutures.co.uk/ourapproach/>

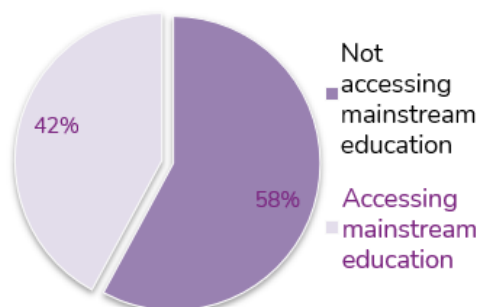
² <https://www.adoptionuk.org/News/thousands-of-families-left-in-the-dark-as-they-wait-for-news-of-vital-therapy-for-their-children>

Accessing Mainstream Education

Treatment Group

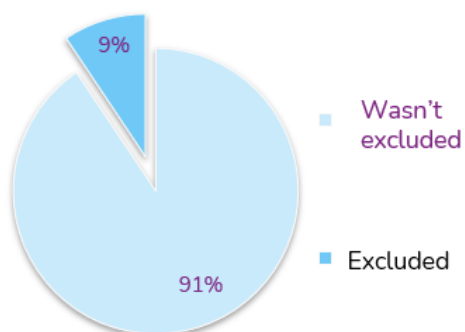


Control Group

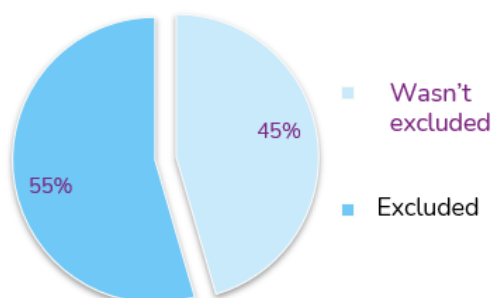


Excluded from School

Treatment Group



Control Group



Involvement with the Criminal Justice System

Treatment Group



Control Group

