

Together Talk



Together for Adoption Newsletter Summer 2024



Welcome!

Hello and welcome to the Summer newsletter! Although I think someone needs to tell the Sun its summertime because it looks like it's still in hibernation 😊. The TFA team are hoping it will be out in all its glory in time for the summer event on Thursday 8th August, so we can make full use of all the space and activities on offer. This week we have sent the formal invite and booking information. From this you can see we have heard your views and have made some big changes this year; there will be no entertainer this year operating a loudspeaker or a microphone, we have a dedicated sensory room, a dedicated area for our teenagers, and a mixture of physical and quiet activities for preschool, juniors and senior children and young people. There is a small all-weather pitch outside, so even in the rain there is space to run around if you're dressed for it.

We are trying a new venue this year. Please explore the venue, you will need to look out for signs directing you to particular areas (because the gym, for example, will be closed to us). The venue is a community building who host other groups regularly, have multiple facilities, and offer club membership. For our event, we have secured exclusive use of the building for TFA. If you are already a member of the club, I understand you also benefit from a 20% discount on drinks in the café too. If you are a non-member but intend to return, there is a little loyalty card available which offers a free hot drink after your 10th brew. We hope you are able to join us, and have a fun, relaxing family day out.

In response to a clear gap in the TFA core offer, TFA have developed a 'Parenting through adolescence' course, which has had a successful pilot run. You might know from previous communication that we have launched it this year, and you will find below a little overview and some feedback from our pilot parents. We hope this will be a welcome and helpful addition to our long term core support offer.

This season's newsletter features; a spotlight on Education which includes some helpful tips and resources, an update on the peer mentoring programme introduced in the last newsletter, a request for your help with a research project, some feedback and highlights from CATCH, and signposting to CEOP in relation to Safer Summer hints and tips for parents of children accessing online activities through the holidays. You will also find information about support resources for young people who are part of the LGBTQ+ community, information about our letterbox service, some

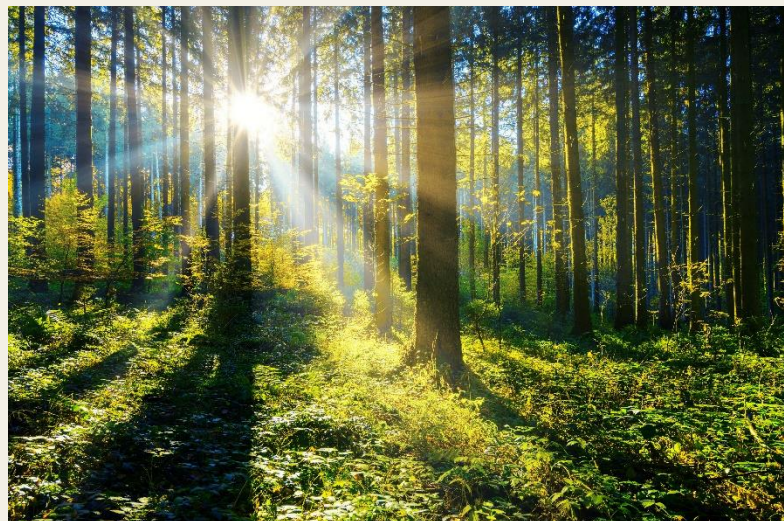
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upcoming TFA calendar events, suggestions for summer activities, and other helpful resources.

We regularly look for useful content for the newsletter to share with you, if you come across anything you think might be useful for other families, please do get in touch via PASAdmin@wigan.gov.uk.

Thank you,
Lisa Dempsey
Adoption Support Principal Manager



Upcoming Parenting Through Adolescence 3-day training event

Next one due 25th/26th September and 3rd October. This is a face-to-face course.

This is a TFA training course to support parents of adopted pre/adolescent young people. The course will cover developmental trauma, adverse childhood experiences (ACE's), what research and lived experience tells us, trauma effects on the brain and coping strategies, and self-care strategies.

This is designed to be a small group environment with a bespoke approach. We will explore how to best support you and your family to understand developmental trauma and the associated needs of your young person. We will consider multiple strategies to help you to differentiate between behaviour linked to trauma and 'expected' types of behaviour linked to their level of development and their emotional age. You will have time to reflect with like-minded parents about how to navigate the unique challenges of parenting young people who have experienced developmental trauma.

The course is **not** designed for families that feel they are in crisis.

Please email pasupport@wigan.gov.uk to find out more.

Feedback from the parents who attended our Pilot course in March said....

Really liked the enthusiasm and knowledge of the three trainers. Appreciated minimum slides, and not going over info we have all seen before. Diane would do a quick recap of models if anyone needed. Justine, Laura, and Diane are a credit to the department, they made me feel safe to share and I came away with excellent advice, refreshed and ready to continue on our TP journey.


It was perfect I really enjoyed it..having 3 experienced professionals presenting was amazing.

Inspired me to continue incorporating Therapeutic Parenting into our lives. Covered many topics to help navigate the teenage years. Allowed space and time to share information with other adopters and course leaders.

Reminded me of some ideas that I knew already but also gave me some new ideas too. Very practical.

External Research Projects

In recent years there have been a number of surveys, questionnaires and research projects influenced by parent and child participation, conducted by all sorts of organisations who provide services for adoptive families. TFA share them via newsletter or mailshot as the requests for your voice come in, so you can choose if you want to be part of those projects. This week, we have had a request from Lancaster university. Please see below for target group details and information.

Doctorate in
Clinical Psychology | Lancaster
University 

ARE YOU AN ADOPTIVE PARENT WITH AN ADOPTED CHILD AGED 16-25?

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

I am recruiting participants for my research study exploring the experiences of adoptive parents parenting their adopted children through high school.

This will involve taking part in an interview on Microsoft Teams in which you will be asked to talk about your experiences as an adoptive parent during this period of your child's life.

ELIGIBILITY

- ✓ Adoptive Parent
- ✓ Adoptive child is aged 16-25
- ✓ Domestic Adoption

I am interested In:

- Understanding the skills, resources and support you need as an adoptive parent
- Whether there are any key points you remember during your child's time at high school

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TAKE PART PLEASE CONTACT:

Charlotte Higginson
c.higginson@lancaster.ac.uk

A researcher at Lancaster University and as part of the Adopters Advocacy project, aims to highlight voices and needs of adopters during the adoption process and inform policy through research. For more information on the work done by Adopters Advocacy, please visit the website - lancaster.ac.uk/adopters. The university are circulating a survey which aims to gather information about adopters' mental health and support needs. They have sent this information:

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'The survey will accompany the findings of mental health workshops which have previously taken place and is open to anyone who is an adopter (those who have had a child or children placed), aged over 18 years old, understands written English and has had experience of the UK adoption process. The project has full ethical approval from Lancaster University's Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee. It is completely anonymous and should not take longer than 10 minutes to complete. Please be aware that this survey, however, addresses mental health issues and adverse life events that may be triggering to individuals. If you would be happy to take part in the survey, the following link will take individuals to the online platform where more information, the consent procedure and the survey can be found - https://lancasteruni.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3EmqfoGyrnONOK2. If you have any questions about the project, please do feel free to get in touch with the research team at adopters@lancaster.ac.uk'

CATCH – formally The Adopter Hub



We recently had some feedback from CATCH regarding their webinars: **“The in-utero experience and its impact on a child”** was their highest ever attended live webinar. The second most popular in terms of recent content is **“Understanding the impact of neglect”**. Both these webinars are available to watch on CATCH if you missed them the first time.

Upcoming webinar: Thriving, not just surviving – Improving communication and connection with your teenager. Wednesday 17 July 12.30pm-1.30pm

In this webinar, Clinical Psychologist Dr Lauren Topper will explore how to build connection and improve communication with your child/ren to help you enjoy the positives of the teenage years and better navigate the challenges. Lauren will cover attachment styles, the impact of trauma and emotional regulation strategies. This is available for all to watch, you do not need to have signed up to CATCH.

CATCH has also recently added:

Choosing the right school-What school policies can tell us:

Amy Thompson, PACT's Education Lead, discusses how to approach school policies when choosing a school for your child. Amy's advice includes what to look for in behaviour, SEND and Looked After Children policies, and how these can give an insight into a school's ethos and ability to support trauma experienced children. She also talks about the importance of visiting a school to gain a good understanding of whether it is the right fit for your child (45mins).

This links to our Spotlight on Education.

An introduction to developmental delay

In this webinar Clinical Psychologist Dr Matt Woolgar explores developmental delay and related neurodevelopmental conditions. He explains the terminology used to describe the conditions, consider the cause, and impacts of these conditions and the barriers that can arise for families trying to access support (60mins).

CATCH continues to offer a forum that provides a safe space to share tips with other adopters and an adopter's webchat service with trained peer support volunteers.

For more information about CATCH (The Adopter Hub), please contact your allocated worker or email PAsupport@wigan.gov.uk.

Peer Mentoring



In the last newsletter we introduced the new partnership between Adoption UK and TFA, with a goal for offering one to one peer mentoring to TFA parents. Following a recruitment campaign, applications have been received and interviews are ongoing. Thank you to those of you who have been able to offer your support to the scheme, you will benefit from specialised training and support, using your lived experiences to support other families facing similar challenges. If you would still like to apply, please contact sarah.evangelou@adoptionuk.org.uk for details.

Once mentor volunteers have been recruited and trained, we will be able to offer this service to TFA families. When we are ready to launch this service, we will release a mailshot with details on how to refer.

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AUK also host the Adopter Voice closed Facebook group for TFA Peer support

[Adopter Voice Together for Adoption | Facebook](#)

Together for Adoption - SOCIAL MEDIA

Have you seen us on social media?

Together for Adoption's focus is finding adoptive families for our children, but we are asking for your help in raising our profile via social media to help us reach more adoptive families.

If anyone is on Facebook or X, could we please ask that you like and share our page and if you are willing to do so, could you please share it with your "community" on Facebook and ask them to also like and share.

Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/TFAAdoption_UK

X - https://twitter.com/TFAAdoption_UK



SPOTLIGHT ON:

Supporting adopted children accessing education: - Some tips and useful resources

Some children may need help with executive functioning skills – it is important to think about processing times for requests and tasks – see number 2 below

Every adopted child is entitled to an enhanced transition plan for high school – please ask your child's school what this looks like for your child – see number 1 below

Remember, if your child is transitioning to high school you have to self-declare that your child is adopted for the school to access Pupil

Your virtual school link can help with advice for you, or they can advise your child's school – see number 3 below - TFA virtual

If you are unclear - you can ask at school how your child's Pupil Premium Plus is being utilised for your child's optimum education

Please make professionals working with your child aware of current suggested reading around PACE in school and connection/relationship-based approaches that help children build trust and widen their window of tolerance to the everyday challenges that attending school can

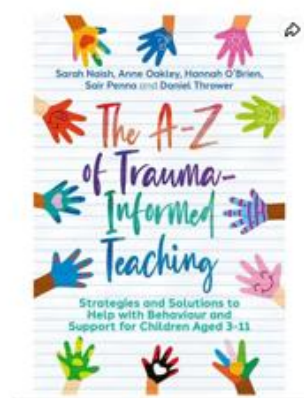
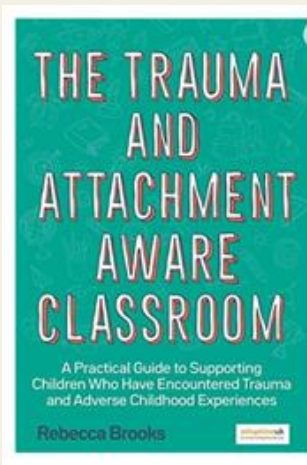


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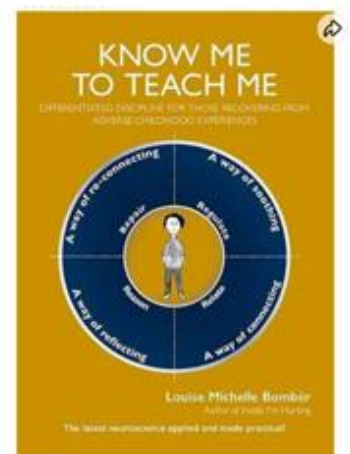
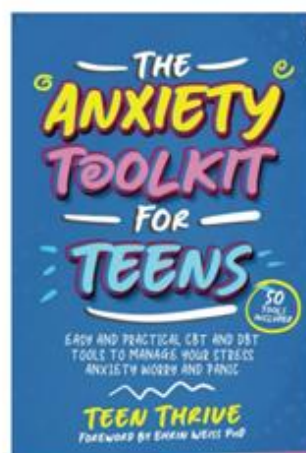
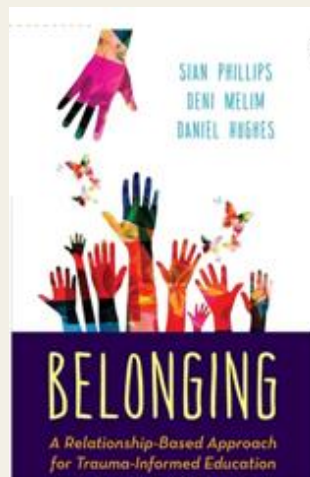
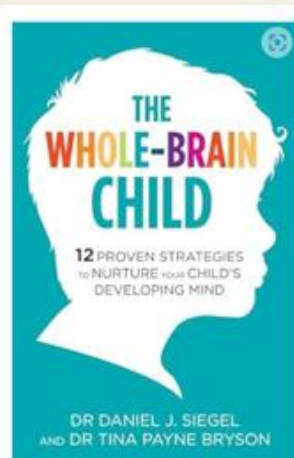


- 1) Website [Transition from Primary to Secondary School | Adoption UK Charity](#) and [Adoption and schools | The Good Schools Guide](#)
- 2) Clip [Activities Guide: Enhancing & Practicing Executive Function Skills \(harvard.edu\)](#)
- 3) Virtual School Contacts for PLAC:
Wigan – Andrea Hurst andrea.hurst@wigan.gov.uk
Warrington – Liz McEntee emcentee@warrington.gov.uk
Halton – Dave Bradshaw David.Bradshaw@halton.gov.uk
CWAC – Alison Ismail alison.ismail@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
St Helens – Les Moon Les completes the virtual school role on Monday's and Wednesday's LesleyMoon@sthelens.gov.uk

Suggested reading and Beacon House link to their resources



Publish date 21st August 2023



Beacon House

Becoming a Trauma sensitive school- Resource Bank

[Schools Resources List 2022 \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](https://www.beaconhouse.org.uk)

#SaferSummerTogether – CEOP Education

From 15th July, CEOP Education will be launching #SaferSummerTogether on social media. Six weeks of tips and activities helping parents and carers to keep their children safer online this summer and beyond.

Look out for our **Tip Tuesday** and **Family Friday** posts focused on these weekly themes:

- Week 1: online gaming
- Week 2: socialising online
- Week 3: sharing pictures and videos
- Week 4: protecting personal privacy
- Week 5: harmful content online
- Week 6: getting help

Look out for the CEOP Education posts on Facebook [Facebook](#) and X/Twitter [X](#) (@CEOPEducation).



Letterbox

The 3 letterbox coordinators manage over a whopping **3,000** agreements, providing services to over **1,000** children across TFA!

Please:

- Try to send your letters in the agreed month.
- Update us if your contact details change.
- Sign letters with your first names.
- Include your child's birth name and placing authority in all communications with us.
- Get in touch if you've got any questions!
-

If you'd like to learn more about letterbox contact and its important role in children's identity development, why not sign up to our **Keeping Connections** workshop?

You could write about...

- Personality/appearance
- Education
- Activities
- Food
- Events
- Favourite things
- Interests / hobbies

Remember to...

- Use names
- Be descriptive
- Ask questions
- Be creative - hand prints, length of ribbon, drawings, 'All about Me' lists
- Non identifying photos

Please send your letters to: TfALetterbox@wigan.gov.uk

Or post to:

**Together for Adoption
Letterbox Service
Warrington Town Hall
Sankey Street
Warrington
WA1 1UH**

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Please mark all correspondence for the attention of the relevant coordinator.

Cheshire West & Chester and Halton – Sue Prince: 07900980669

Warrington – Sarah Harris: 07385969752

Wigan and St Helens – Liz Sherriff: 07843218060



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

If you are interested in any of our events / training etc or would like more details, please contact Adoption Support Duty on 01942 4872727 or pasupport@wigan.gov.uk.

Details will also be sent out prior to each date by the facilitator.

Please remember that if you book onto a workshop and you are unable to make it, can you please email us and cancel your place. This allows the place to be offered to someone else on our waiting list.

July	Intro to Theraplay	16th July 6:30 – 8:30pm
August	Summer Fun Day	8th August
September	JAG TAG Talking to your child about adoption (secondary) Attuned Parenting First Time Parenting Parenting Through Adolescence Talking to your child about adoption (primary)	4th Sept 4:15-5:45pm 4th Sept 6-7:30pm 11th Sept 6:30-8:30pm 12th Sept – 28th Nov 10am – 12pm 24th Sept 9:30am – 2:30pm 25th, 26th Sept & 3rd Oct 26th Sept 7-9pm
October	JAG TAG Adoption and Contact: Keeping Connections	2nd Oct 4:15-5:45pm 2nd Oct 6-7:30pm 10th Oct 7-9pm

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THINGS TO DO IN SUMMER

Homemade Playdough – A perfect family activity for those rainy summer days!



Pack a picnic – Eat in the park, at the beach in the woods or even in the garden!



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Back yard camping - Set up the tent and have a family sleep over in the back garden and star gaze too!



Family bike ride – ride near your house or the park or even do a bike trail!



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Decorate rocks - Paint in vivid colour designs and brighten up the garden!



Make a bird feeder using a pinecone, peanut butter and a seed mix – Invite summertime birds to your can and see how many you can identify!



LGBT+ groups for young people

Phoenix – Cheshire West and Chester Council

The Proud Trust run a weekly group for LGBT+ young people and those questioning their gender or sexuality aged 13-19 (and up to 25 with additional needs) who live or spend time in Ellesmere Port.

Currently meeting online, or at a venue in Ellesmere Port, Chester, Northwich or Winsford 6.00-7-30pm, first and third Tuesdays.

For more information: email youthgroups@theproudtrust.org

GLOW – Halton Council

A youth group for LGBTQ+ young people. Meeting every Tuesday @KRMZ Kingsway, Widnes

11-15 years 5-6.30pm and 16-24 years 7-9pm.

For more information: call 01928 240406 or email haltonadmin@addaction.org.uk

Over The Rainbow – St Helens Council

Over the Rainbow is part social group, part support group for young people aged 13-25 years who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans or are questioning their sexuality or gender identity. It is a closed confidential youth group run by the Health Improvement team in St Helens.

For more information: call 01744 457 243 or email shealth.improvement@sthknhs.uk

TAGS Teenagers, Gender and Sexuality – Warrington Council

TAGS is a safe place that young people aged 13-24 who identify as LGBTQ+ to meet and find peer support advice and acceptance. There are two groups based in a town centre location.

For more information contact:

TAGS 11-16yrs Jaime Graham Jaime.graham@warrington.gov.uk 07775 024897

TAGS 17-24yrs Sharon Johnson Sharon.johnson@warrington.gov.uk 07717 815859

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BYOU Project – Wigan Council

This is a local youth group run by Wigan Council. The group offers a safe space where local young people from the LGBTQ+ community can meet new friends, get support from youth workers and peers, get involved in new projects, have your say on issues that are important to you, and campaign for positive change.

The group meets once a week, usually in a central Wigan venue and there is also an option to join the meetings online.

For more information: email b.youproject@wigan.gov.uk

USEFUL LINKS

<https://adoptionengland.co.uk/> - there are lots of resources and materials to use and current information about modern adoption.

<https://www.kooth.com/> is an online mental wellbeing community.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/> is committed to improving children's wellbeing and mental health. Offers information, advice and support for young people affected by mental health.

www.mind.org.uk when you're experiencing a mental health problem, supportive and reliable information can change your life. Mind empower people to understand their mental health and the choices available to them.

<https://www.internetmatters.org> – information and support about keeping children and young people safe online.

www.mindful.org – mindfulness for kids – when we teach mindfulness to children, we equip them with tools to build self-esteem, manage stress, and skilfully approach challenges. Explore this site to learn how to introduce mindfulness and meditation to you children at any age.

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Positive Parenting Solutions is a Facebook page offering lots of interesting articles on parenting toddlers to teens.

Trauma Informed Parent is a Facebook page offering information, resources and perspective for parents and caregivers of children, teens and young adults who have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences.

National Association of Therapeutic Parents – Public Facebook page offering information on early life trauma.

Hand in Hand Parenting (Facebook page) – is an approach with five interlocking tools that used together, will help you decode your children's challenging behaviours.

Sarah Naish – Author & Therapeutic Parent (Facebook page) – Sarah Naish is the guru on therapeutic parenting.

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Together Talk is your newsletter! Do you have any ideas for future newsletters, activities, events, workshops? Then please email us at PASAdmin@wigan.gov.uk We always appreciate feedback.

As always, please contact the team on 01942 487272 if you require advice or adoption support.

#YouCanAdopt www.togetherforadoption.co.uk | 01942 487272