

General Election 2024 Pack

A Manifesto for Adoption – briefing (slide 2)

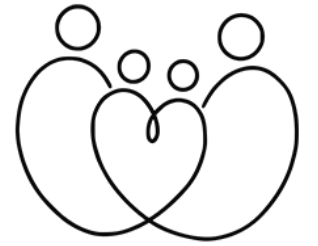
Elevator pitches (slide 8)

Template email (slide 11)

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A Manifesto for Adoption - briefing

Introduction

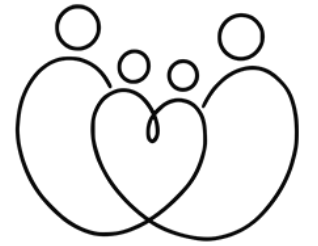


In April 2024, CVAA published [‘A Manifesto for Adoption’](#) which set out our priorities for the next government, and underlined the need for urgent reform across the adoption sector to ensure it better meets the needs of adoptees and their families.

Building on this, this short briefing aims to give members a summary of the key messages and recommendations for VAAs to deploy in their own engagements with local MPs and stakeholders.

This is with the aim of ensuring as a voluntary adoption sector we speak with one voice, amplifying the recommendations and asks that can help deliver meaningful change.

How to use this briefing



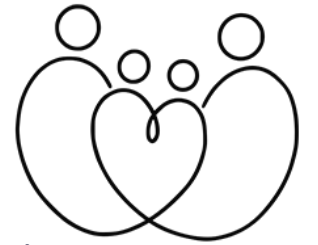
CVAA recognises the challenge of engaging MPs on the issue of adoption given the low profile it has had in recent years, and its absence in the main party's manifestos.

However, it is clear that there is still some opportunity to influence and that the early days of a new government will be key to doing this. We therefore encourage members to be proactive in lobbying new local stakeholders and to share any progress with the CVAA team.

This could include:

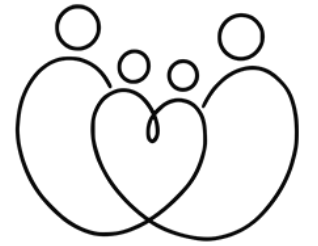
- *Highlighting our Manifesto asks in your pre-election conversations (see **elevator pitches on slide 7**)*
- *Contacting your adopters to encourage them to highlight adoption with future MPs and local politicians and advocate for change (**template email available on slide 10**)*
- *Writing to your local MPs (**CVAA will draft template emails for VAAs after 4th July**)*
- *Emailing local councillors who may not be responsible for local services, but who will have links with their political parties.*
- *Reaching out to local statutory partners on areas where you are aligned.*

Key messages



- The next government must recognise the important role that adoption can play for our most vulnerable children, who cannot live with their birth families, acknowledging it as a valued permanency option along with kinship and long-term foster care.
- Whilst adoption does deliver improved outcomes for children, it can't be ignored that the current system is failing adoptees and their families. Children from the global majority and those with complex needs still wait too long to be found a family and significant reform is also required to ensure adoptees receive timely and ongoing support in recognition of the lifelong impact of the trauma they have experienced.
- The modern adoption system is increasingly trying to recognise the identity need of adoptees and help them maintain relationships with those who are important to them, but the next government must play its part in driving forward further improvements.
- A well-functioning adoption system can play an important role in ensuring that we break down barriers to opportunity for some of the most vulnerable children in our country.
- Reforms to adoption support and schools will have wider benefits for all care-experienced children and could also drive far reaching improvements in how education supports positive mental health and wellbeing.

Key recommendations



Drawing on lived experience of our members, adoptees and their families our Manifesto for Adoption focused on five areas that could help transform adoption services. These were:

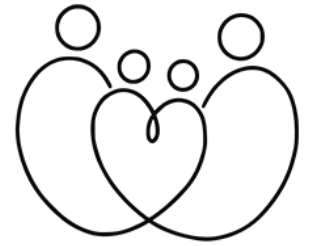
1. **Recognising the value of adoption**
2. **Reducing delay for all children, but particularly those who wait the longest**
3. **Supporting adopted children's identity needs**
4. **Timely support which prioritises early intervention and developing more trauma-informed schools**
5. **Acknowledging the lifelong impact of trauma.**

Key recommendations within this include a commitment to the ongoing funding for the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund beyond March 2025, creating multi-disciplinary support plans (with a duty to deliver them) for every adopted child, supporting schools to be more trauma-informed and ensuring that support continues past 18 to recognise the lifelong nature of adoption and its associated trauma. **A full list of recommendations is available [here](#).**

Why act now?



With many competing priorities for the next government, a challenging fiscal environment and investment needed across a wide range of public services, it is important that messaging to political stakeholders has a clear rationale for action.



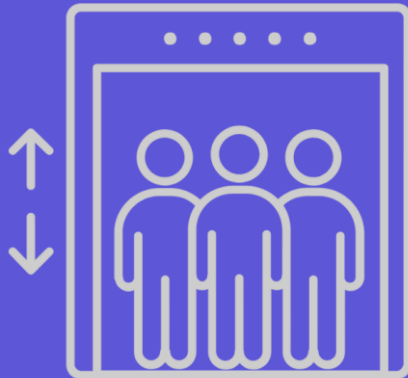
Below are some key points to support this dialogue:

- CVAA/VAA recognises the financial challenges facing local authorities and the wider children's social care sector, However, this short-term increase in funds will not only improve adoptees life chances and outcomes, but will also deliver significant savings for the public purse.
- This includes reducing Local Authorities spending on foster carers and the longer-term savings generated by lower interaction with mental health and criminal justice services and higher rates of employment.
- Most importantly, it should not be forgotten that our adoption system serves some of the most vulnerable people in our society. Three quarters of adopted people will have experienced abuse and neglect or violence.

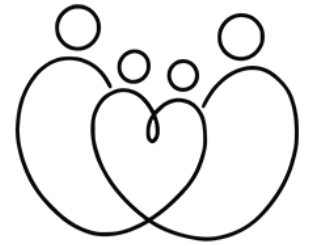
There is therefore a moral, as well as economic case for any Government to introduce reforms that will give all children an equal opportunity to succeed regardless of their background or experiences.

Elevator pitches

For that time when the one politician/stakeholder you have been waiting months to speak to steps into the lift with you...

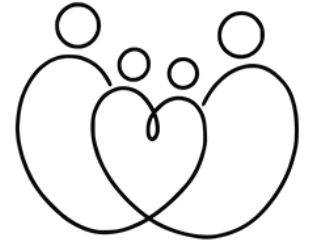


CVAA elevator pitch example – value of adoption



- ✓ Hello XXX, I'm glad to have a second to speak to you.
- ✓ **(Problem)** We are very concerned that adoption numbers have almost halved since 2015 while there are 15,000 more children in care. While adoption is only right for a small number of children, it is alarming that fewer children are benefitting from the better outcomes that adoption, especially when more children are in need of safe homes.
- ✓ **(Solution)** With more investment in supporting adopted children's lifelong relationships, we can restore confidence in adoption, which saves local authorities over £1m per every child adopted – in addition to the better outcomes for children compared with other forms of care.
- ✓ **(Ask)** Please could you support our proposal for an online hub to support children's lifelong relationships and identities and consider this as an area for funding?

CVAA elevator pitch example - ASGSF



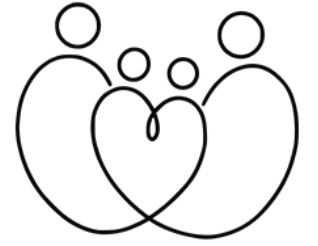
- ✓ Hello XXX, I'm glad to have a second to speak to you.
- ✓ **(Problem)** We are very concerned that the ASGSF, set up to support the most vulnerable children in our society, is beset with delays, duplication of work and unnecessary administrative, causing huge distress to families. Families who are receiving support are also faced with uncertainty around funding for therapy beyond March.
- ✓ **(Solution)** Giving all adoption agencies equal access to the fund would be transformational in getting the best from it. It would deliver cost savings too, from reduced administrative burdens and preventing families from reaching crisis point.
- ✓ **(Ask)** Please could you push for a continuation of the fund beyond March 2025 with this vital but relatively easy change to access? The continuation of the fund is essential to ensuring children's permanence and stability in their adoptive families.

Template emails

The next few weeks present a golden opportunity for people around the country to speak directly with future MPs, tell them what they care about and what needs to change.

Many adopters and adoptees in your communities will be having conversations with local politicians and will want to raise adoption in these conversations. CVAA has therefore drafted an email sharing VAA sector priorities for the next government, in case they want to echo and amplify the same points.

Template email



CVAA's template email for VAAs to send to their adopter networks can be accessed here:

[Use our Manifesto for Adoption with your future MP.docx](#)

It highlights:

- ✓ The rare opportunity the General Election provides to put adoption on the agenda of future MPs and local politicians
- ✓ The power of adopter communities speaking with a single voice
- ✓ Our asks around timely adoption support which prioritises early intervention
- ✓ Links back to CVAA's Manifesto for Adoption.

Alice is happy to answer any questions or provide further support: alice.talbot@cva.org.uk