

# Press release: Multi-million fund reaches record number of adoptive families

A fund launched to help struggling families who adopt some of the country's most vulnerable children has reached almost 18,000 homes, providing much-needed emotional support.

Announcing the success of the Adoption Support Fund on Wednesday (2 August), Minister for Children and Families Robert Goodwill also confirmed that a further £5 million will be invested in a number of innovative projects across the country, designed to improve families' experiences of adoption.

It is part of a government drive to deliver the best possible services for vulnerable children.

Robert Goodwill, Minister for Children and Families, said:

Every parent wants their child to grow up feeling loved and understood, and anyone with the commitment and compassion to adopt a child should have the backing of a strong support network. We know that caring for these young people, particularly those with more complex needs, can be a struggle at times.

With the right therapeutic support, children and families will be able to embrace the new life ahead of them, and I'm delighted that the Adoption Support Fund has supported so many thousands of people already, as part of our plan for a fairer society.

The Adoption Support Fund, launched across England in May 2015, pays for care that helps children to settle in with their adoptive families. This support can include:

- cognitive therapy;
- play and music therapy; and
- parenting skills training.

In total, £52 million has been released through the fund so far, reaching 22,000 children and 18,000 families. Many more families stand to benefit, as the government has increased the fund to £28 million in 2017/18.

The announcement comes as an independent report shows that parents believe access to the fund has improved their lives, including through improved child behaviour and mental health.

Lorna Sandbach, along with her family, is one of those to benefit from the fund. When Lorna and her husband adopted siblings, they were 14-months and

two-years-old respectively, and had experienced extreme trauma in their early lives that they still remember clearly. When Lorna's eldest began reception last year he struggled to settle in.

The family found out about the fund and after initial assessments with a child psychiatrist, they began a year of therapy.

Lorna Sandbach, Adoption Support Fund recipient, said:

It has been life-changing. My daughter is letting us love her in a way she never did. At first, she was terrified, and now she trusts that we will come back for her at the end of the school day. Before, my son would not talk because he didn't feel confident – but now that's started to change. He is forming friendships and fitting in.

The 16 projects funded through the Practice and Improvement Fund include three Regional Adoption Agencies, which will develop new Centres of Excellence for adoption support. They will bring together social care, health and education experts to provide a co-ordinated assessment and support offer for families.

These Centres of Excellence will be based in:

- Hertfordshire;
- Stockport; and
- North East Lincolnshire.

The Government is continuing to implement Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs) across the country, to bring about long-term improvement to the adoption system. There are now three RAAs operating in England – One Adoption West Yorkshire, Aspire Adoption and Adoption Counts.

Notes to editors

- Read more about the Adoption Support Fund [here](#).
  - Read more about the Practice and Improvement Fund [here](#).
  - Link to the [Adoption Support Fund evaluation publication](#).
  - In 2016 a fair access limit was introduced to enable the Adoption Support Fund to be distributed more fairly, and allow more families to benefit. In April this year the Government began providing an additional £2,500 to go towards specialist assessments, in addition to the fair access limit of £5,000 for therapy.
  - For more information and interview requests contact the Department for Education on 020 7783 8300.
-

# [News story: New and novel healthcare solutions: apply for innovation funding](#)

Up to £12 million is on offer to UK businesses for projects that support the development of healthcare technologies and processes.

Innovate UK and the [Medical Research Council](#) (MRC) are to invest up to £12 million in new and novel healthcare solutions.

There are 2 competitions for UK micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the latest round of the Biomedical Catalyst. These are for feasibility and early stage projects.

## **What we are looking for**

We are looking to support the development of innovative healthcare technologies and processes such as:

- disease prevention and proactive management of health and chronic conditions
- earlier and better detection and diagnosis of disease, leading to better patient outcomes
- tailored treatments that either change the underlying disease or offer potential cures

## **Feasibility studies**

These are for exploring and testing the commercial potential and feasibility of ideas. Up to £2 million is available.

## **Early-stage projects**

These are for testing a well-developed concept and showing its effectiveness in a relevant environment. Up to £10 million is available.

## **About the Biomedical Catalyst**

The Biomedical Catalyst is a partnership between Innovate UK and the MRC. It aims to support the most innovative life sciences opportunities regardless of the scientific approach. It also wants to de-risk academia and industry being able to take forward innovative scientific ideas.

## **Competition information**

- the competitions are open, and the deadline is midday on Wednesday 11 October 2017

- you could get up to £200,000 for feasibility studies lasting up to 1 year
  - you could get between £250,000 and £4 million for early-stage projects lasting between 1 and 3 years
  - you can work alone or in collaboration with other businesses or research organisations, but to lead a project you must be a UK-based SME
  - you can [watch the recording of the briefing event](#) to help with your application
- 

## [Press release: Welsh Secretary to mark 35 year anniversary of Japan-Wales business club](#)

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will underline the strong cultural bonds between Wales and Japan at a dinner to mark a milestone anniversary for a Tokyo based business forum.

Clwb Hiraeth was founded in 1982 by senior executives of Japanese corporations who had worked and lived in Wales and had since returned to Japan. The aim was to champion business ties between the two nations.

35 years on and the club has helped to maintain and strengthen not only the business bonds, but the social links between those who formed close friendships in Wales.

Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns is in Japan visiting leading international companies to discuss the great potential for further inward investment in the United Kingdom.

He will mark Clwb Hiraeth's anniversary at a dinner in Tokyo where he will address the members and reiterate the importance of preserving the business ties between the nations to help secure the future prosperity of both countries.

### **Speaking ahead of the event Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:**

Japanese companies have given Wales a lasting legacy, not just industrially, but culturally as well.

Japan has never underestimated Wales. It is one of the best places to do business and I know that Clwb Hiraeth has worked tirelessly to ensure other business leaders, universities and communities throughout this country understand just how much Wales has to

offer.

I congratulate the club on its 35 years of important service to Japan and Wales. I wish it every success in the years to come as we continue to strengthen the bonds between us.

The first chairman of Clwb Hiraeth was Mr Yamaguchi of Takiron – the first Japanese company to invest in Wales.

Over its 35 year history, members of the club have acted as unofficial ambassadors for Wales. They meet regularly, hold a number of social events, celebrate St David's Day, and endorse Wales to other potential investors and business people.

Japan's business ambitions have also been matched by the ambition of its sportsmen on the rugby pitch. Like Wales 20 years before it, the country is readying itself to host the 2019 Rugby World Cup. And while the two countries may often face one another as adversaries on the field of play, Alun Cairns will highlight the affinity each nation has with the game as another key catalyst for many more years of mutually beneficial business.

#### **Mr Cairns added:**

The strong cultural and sporting links between our two great nations have provided a strong backdrop for a successful and lucrative trade and investment partnership.

Rugby has the ability to define us as a nation and we know that success for the Welsh rugby team has a measurable economic impact. We look forward to seeing the world gather in Japan in 2019 and seeing our sporting, trading and cultural partnerships take deeper root over the years to come.

---

## **[News story: Home Secretary Amber Rudd calls for united stand against online terror](#)**

Speaking at the Forum, held in San Francisco, Amber Rudd welcomed the willingness of internet service providers to develop a coordinated industry response to the global threat.

It is encouraging to see so many organisations here today willing to take a

stand on this vital agenda. I want to thank the companies I have met while here for the strides they are taking in making the internet a hostile place for terrorists to operate.

But we need to do more to help keep our communities safe. The scale of the threat we face is not something any one of us can tackle alone and only through collective action across governments, civil society and industry can we seek to defeat it. I welcome the commitment of the Forum to take this work forward.

There is no doubt that the challenge is complex. But it is important to remember that behind these discussions about technology lies our determination to protect people – from being radicalised and from being the victims of a terrorist attack.

Our enemy is trying to weaponise vulnerable people in their homes. It is a war where the front line can be a screen in a young person's bedroom or the mobile phone in their pocket.

We must be united in our resolve to purge the internet of this poisonous and pernicious material. Today has been a significant step towards achieving that goal but there is more to do. Let's work together to take terrorism offline.

---

## **[Press release: £174m M3 upgrade opens to traffic](#)**

Cutting-edge technology installed on a 13.4 mile section of the motorway between the M25 and Farnborough sets the speed limit to match conditions, helps spot any queuing traffic, incidents or broken down vehicles, and informs drivers about conditions ahead.

The hard shoulder has been converted to a new fourth traffic lane in each direction, boosting capacity by a third on the vital route between London and the South West.

Since it was created in April 2015, Highways England has completed 16 major improvements, with a further 15 upgrades due to be started or open by spring 2018.

The new style emergency area on the M3 smart motorway

Drivers in this morning's peak period were the first to benefit from the fully upgraded road. Main construction on the project was completed overnight on 30 June, when the fourth lane was available for use with a 50mph speed restriction remaining in place, whilst testing of the smart motorway technology was finalised. Now, the full four lanes are open at 70mph, with

the smart motorway technology detecting incidents, actively managing traffic and giving drivers information.

Shaun Pidcock, Director of Highways England's smart motorway programme said:

This is a significant upgrade for the M3 and will deliver real benefits for the 130,000 drivers who use it every day. We've added 26.8 miles of new lanes to this busy section of the M3 and completely overhauled the technology to give drivers better information to help with their journeys.

Smart motorways create vital extra capacity, improve journey times and maintain our high levels of safety across the network. New technology will make the road more resilient to disruption, improving journeys by using variable speed limits that will help tackle frustrating stop-start traffic and giving drivers better information on conditions ahead.

As well as the smart motorway upgrade, we have also been carrying out the most extensive maintenance on the M3 since it was first built in 1971, fully resurfacing the motorway and its slip roads and restoring it to an 'as new' condition.

I would like to thank drivers for their co-operation and understanding while we've been building this new improved road and hope they enjoy the improved journeys between London and the south coast.

[Smart motorways](#) have been designed to be intuitive to drive on. Normal motorway rules apply: keep left unless overtaking, drive within the speed limit and never drive in a lane closed by a Red X. Even without a hard shoulder, there are safe places to stop every 75 seconds of driving on average.

Work on the smart motorway upgrade started in November 2014. Major maintenance being carried out alongside the project is also substantially complete, but some activities – including the rebuilding of the Woodlands Lane bridge over the M3 near Windlesham – will continue until later in the year. None of this maintenance will require any permanent traffic restrictions on the M3.

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.