

# Children's Social Care

# Step Parent Adoption

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**adoption**

with somerset county council



## Will I have to go to court?

Yes, both applicants and child/children will have to attend the court hearing.

## Would the other birth parent have to be contacted?

Yes the views of the other parent would need to be sought and also to gather information for court report.

## Are there alternatives to Step Parent Adoption?

Yes, there are several alternatives.

Residence Order, change name by deed pole, secures future of child in case of death of parent by writing will.

## Is there a cost?

Somerset Children's Social Care do not charge for undertaking assessment or preparing court report.

A fee of £120 per child is payable to the court when you make the adoption application which is non-returnable if you decide not to proceed.

## Will I need to speak to a social worker?

A social worker will need to make appointments with you in order to gather information/your views for their report. These appointments are likely to take place at your home.

## Eligibility

At present you can only adopt a stepchild if you are married to one of the birth parents.

## Legal requirements

There is a legal requirement that Children's Social Care undertake certain checks into the suitability of people wishing to adopt for the protection of the child.

A Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check will need to be completed.

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## The Criminal Records Bureau

This agency provides an information service about people's criminal records and uses the Police National Computer. In addition, they undertake checks with the departments of:

Health and Education. Each of these keeps a list of people who are considered unsuitable to work with children even when there may be no criminal conviction.

The Criminal Records Bureau form will be sent to you. The form comes with guidance notes and the worker who interviews you can help you complete it, as well as check the supporting documents. The result of this check is known as a disclosure. Both you and the Children's Social Care will be sent a copy of the disclosure when the check has been completed.

## Making an application

If you are considering Step Parent Adoption you should first contact Somerset Direct on 0845 345 9122 who will take your details and send you further information. If, having read the information, you are still keen to pursue the adoption, you should contact your local Children's Social Care team (contact information will be included in the information sent to you by Somerset Direct) and discuss the matter with a duty worker who will be able to provide you with more information prior to making a decision to apply to court. You are entitled to make an adoption application to court and have it considered whatever your circumstances. When you make an application, you should tell your Children's Social Care team as it has to carry out an investigation and make a report to the court. The court may not grant an Adoption Order but may wish to consider a Residence Order or Special Guardianship. Please ensure you inform social services before making your application to the court.

## What is the normal action time?

The process takes approximately four to six months depending on court dates and availability of those involved.

## What documents are required?

You will be required to show your birth certificates, marriages certificates and the birth certificate of the child as proof of identification.

## Working together for equalities

Somerset County Council positively values diversity, and celebrates cultural and social differences. Our equal opportunities promise is that we will provide all services of equal quality which meet your needs and fulfil your rights.

You can expect:

- The same good quality of service as everyone else, in the same amount of time, with the same amount of care and consideration.
- To be treated fairly, with respect, dignity and understanding whoever you are and whatever your background.
- Any unfairness or unfair discrimination to be investigated and put right wherever possible.

