

Adopting from China - The initial steps

If you are interested in adopting from China, the link below will provide you with China-specific information on intercountry adoption. Eligibility criteria in China are very strict. Please read the Chinese eligibility criteria carefully. The Chinese authorities will not accept any application which does not meet the criteria.

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/intercountryadoption/countries.shtml>

From this link scroll down to the two word documents called "Information Sheet" and "Information Sheet Annex". Please note that this information may be subject to change.

If you have satisfied yourself that you meet the criteria, then the first step is to contact the fostering and adoption section of your local social services department. They will be able to give you some information about adoption and also give you contact details of local agencies who can assist with intercountry adoption. Once contacted, your chosen agency will then meet with you to discuss your wish to adopt and also your eligibility. If they are happy with the outcome of this interview they will allocate you a social worker to carry out a home study. The home study takes roughly between 6 and 10 weeks and comprises approximately 8 home visits. You will also be required to attend a set number of 'courses' to look at the issues surrounding adoption and intercountry adoption. You will need to have medicals and blood tests to determine your health status. As you go through the process each stage will be discussed with you and you will know what you need to do and when. Once the home study is completed your application will need to be reviewed by a 'panel' who will then make a decision about your eligibility to adopt. If you are successful at panel your paperwork will need to be notarised, go to other governmental departments and then the Department for Education (formerly DCSF) will send it onto China. Please note that this is a very brief overview of the process and the process as a whole is quite complex. If you are of Chinese heritage then you can apply for your application to be expedited which means it might be reviewed (in China) quicker than a normal application and you may receive your referral quicker. However there is no guarantee that any application will be expedited.

Adopting from China is a very lengthy process at the moment and waiting times can vary. Currently for non- expedited applications there are couples waiting in excess of 4.5 years. Expedited applications are now in excess of 3 years. In total the UK side of things can take up to a year and the Chinese side four to five years or more. At present the numbers of healthy infants available for adoption are few and overall numbers are declining.

This information has kindly been supplied by CACH, the support group for families with children adopted from China. www.cach.org.uk.

Other resources for information about intercountry adoption include :

Intercountry Adoption Centre - a charity offering support to intercountry adoptees and prospective and established adopters

www.icacentre.org.uk - helpline 0870 5168742 (Mon/Weds 10.30-13.00, Tues/Thurs 14.30-17.00)

OASIS Overseas Adoption Support and Information Service - Voluntary support group for those interested in adoption from overseas

www.adoptionoverseas.org - helpline 0870 2417069 (please note that this helpline is manned by volunteers so please be patient and wait for a callback if you do not get through straightaway)