



**ADOPTED ADULTS AND ADULT BIRTH
RELATIVES:**

TRACING AND CONTACTING

ADOPTION TEAM

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

2013

Introduction

Although there has been adoption legislation in the UK since 1926, it was not until 1975 that adopted adults were given the right to apply for their original birth certificate – giving those adopted the chance to find out more about their birth family and reasons for adoption.

Birth Mothers until recently were NOT even able to find out if a child they had relinquished for adoption was alive and well.

Adopted Adults – Finding out about your Birth Family

Many adopted people want to find out more about their family history and early life. Adopted children, who were adopted before **30 December 2005** and are now **aged 18 and over**, may:

- Apply to the **General Register Office (GRO)** for the information required to enable them to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate. The GRO will also provide the name of the court that made the adoption order and, if held, the name of the adoption agency that arranged the adoption. Those individuals that were adopted prior to **12 November 1975** and who do not know their original name will have to attend an interview with an adoption worker before the GRO can disclose the information they need to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate. Attending an interview with an adoption worker for those adopted after 1975 is optional, (but recommended),

For those adopted prior to **12 November 1975** who already have their birth certificate or the information required to obtain one or those adopted on or after **12 November 1975** but prior to **30 December 2005** can:-

- Apply to the **adoption agency** that arranged the adoption; if known (or holds the adoption file, if different) for access to their adoption records. The adoption agency has discretion to disclose information;
- Ask the **Local Authority** in the area where the adoption took place whether they have any details about the adoption, if the adoption agency is not known, even if they did not arrange the adoption, the Local Authority may hold some information about adoptions that took place in their area;

- Ask The Local Authority for advice re- applying to the **court** that made the adoption order (if known) for any details about the adoption. You will need to have a certified copy of your entry to the register of adopted children and take this physically to the relevant court before they will disclose any records.

Intermediary Services – Adopted Adults and Adult Birth Relatives

Intermediary services are available to adults who were adopted before **30 December 2005**, and also to their adult birth relatives. Intermediary services can be provided by an approved adoption agency. Those agencies which do provide intermediary services are referred to as an ‘**intermediary agency**’

Birth relatives can ask an intermediary to help trace and facilitate contact with an adopted adult. Similarly, adopted adults can ask an intermediary agency to help trace and facilitate contact with their birth relatives.

Some adopted adults prefer to undertake their own research to establish the identity and location of adult birth relatives. Once identity is established and verified the intermediary agency can make the initial contact for you.

When applying for intermediary services please be aware that there is **priority** placed on applications regarding adoptions that took place prior to **12 November 1975**. In addition, agencies may choose to give priority of their services to those who are in poor health or elderly.

An intermediary agency must consider the welfare of the adopted adult, the birth relative and any other person who may be affected. If the agency accepts the application, information may be gathered from;

- the person asking for the service;
- the adoption agency involved and;
- from the GRO and also;
- the court that made the adoption order.

The agency will consider all information and the circumstances of the case before making a decision on how to proceed. If the agency decides **not** to proceed and feels doing so would be inappropriate the decision would then be explained to the person requesting their services.

Intermediary services operate with appropriate safeguarding measures to protect all concerned.

It is important to be aware of the impact an approach by an intermediary agency may have on an adopted adult or birth relative as;

- Adopted adults may not know they were adopted;
- Some birth relatives, especially younger siblings, may be unaware of the adopted adult's existence.

They may need time to think about how to respond. Even if they decide that they do not want contact now– **it may be that the time of contact is not the right time for them.** They may change their mind in the future.

The Adoption Contact Register

In 1991 the creation of the **Adoption Contact Register** was the first opportunity for adopted adults and their adult birth relatives (blood, marriage or civil partnership relatives) formally to register their interest for contact with each other.

In the UK the registrar general runs the Adoption Contact Register, which puts adopted adults and their adult birth relatives in touch with each other – if this is how both parties wish to proceed. The process of registration is as follows:

- Adopted adults register on **Part 1** of the register;
- Birth relatives register on **Part 2**
- If an adopted adult and a birth relative have both registered a wish for contact **an automatic link is made;**
- The Registrar General then sends the birth relative's name and address, with details of the relationship, to the adopted adult;
- The birth relative is told that this has been done;
- It is for the adopted adult to decide whether they want to make contact with the birth relative.

Below is links to the application form for inclusion in the Adoption Contact Register;

Link to download form: CR Part 1 to find birth relatives if you were adopted – Entry in Adoption Contact Register – adopted people (A fee of £15.00 is payable to register)

http://www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/documents/digitalasset/dg_202580.pdf

Link to download form: CR Part 2 – Find someone who was adopted if you're a birth relative – Entry in Adoption Contact Register – Birth relatives (A fee of £30.00 is payable to register)

http://www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/documents/digitalasset/dg_202582.pdf

What you can do if you have no wish for contact

Adopted adults and their adult birth relatives can register a wish for **no contact** on the Adoption Contact Register, and adopted adults can also register a wish for no contact with a specific adult birth relative.

Since **30 December 2005** adopted adults and their adult birth relatives have been able to formally register a wish for **no contact**. Adoptive adults have also been able to formally register their wish for contact with or no contact with specific birth adult relatives.

A wish for contact or no contact can be changed at any time by notifying the contact register. (Please note that a fee will apply to register and amend registration)

In addition, those who do not wish to be approached by an intermediary agency can, if they know the adoption agency that arranged the adoption (or that holds the adoption file, if different) contact the agency and register for a **Veto**. This will prevent an intermediary agency from approaching them. An adopted adult can register an **'absolute'** or a **'qualified'** veto with the adoption agency.

An **'absolute'** veto means that an intermediary agency **cannot** approach an adopted adult **in any circumstances**. Registering an **'absolute'** veto could have major consequences for both the adopted adult and their adult birth relatives, the adoption agency will wish to talk this through with the adopted adult to ensure they fully understand the implications of their decision.

An **'absolute'** veto would mean that the intermediary agency could not contact the adopted adult for example;

- On behalf of a terminally ill birth relation (including Brother or Sister the adopted adult may not even know about);
- To pass information about a possible hereditary medical condition;
- To advise that they have been left money by a birth relative.

An **'absolute'** veto would not prevent the adoption agency that arranged the adoption (or that holds the adoption file, if different) from contacting the adopted adult when it considers it necessary to do so.

Adopted adult can register a **'qualified'** veto with the adoption agency; meaning they can specify the circumstances in which they would not mind or agree to being approached by an intermediary agency. In registering a **'qualified'** veto, the adopted adult could specify, for example;

- That an approach on behalf of a birth parent would not be acceptable but an approach on behalf of another relative (such as a sibling) would be welcome or;
- An approach **would not** be acceptable unless it was for important hereditary medical reasons.

Both **'absolute'** and **'qualified'** veto remains in place until the adopted adult decides to amend or withdraw their decision if they so wish.

Cost of an Intermediary Service

An Intermediary agency may charge a fee to the applicant for providing counselling or for any costs incurred in processing an application.

Southend Adoption Team offer this service to residents of this Borough Council and do not charge a fee, however, there still may be costs involved, eg paying for birth, death and marriage certificates from the GRO.

Please note that while we endeavour to support you with locating your relatives, we are not a tracing agency.

What Next?

If you require further information on these services you can contact the adoption team at Southend-on-Sea by phone 01702 212938 or email adoption@southend.gov.uk

If you do not have information relating to your birth, firstly you will need to complete the application which can be found on the link below and send this to the GRO,

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/229790/Access_Application_Form_living_in_E_and_W.doc_Aug_13.pdf

If you put FAO Jo Hines, Southend Adoption Agency, Floor 7, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend, Essex, SS2 6ER – in Section A of the form then the information will be sent directly to us.

You will need to Post or email the form to - adoptions@gro.gsi.gov.uk.

Address

Adoptions Section

Room C202

General Register Office

Trafalgar Rd

Southport

PR8 2HH

Once we receive this we will then contact you again.

The following websites may also be useful in obtaining further information;

The adoption Search Reunion:

www.adoptionsearchreunion.org.uk

After Adoption:

www.afteradoption.org.uk

The Post Adoption Centre:

www.pac.org.uk

Information and application forms for access to Adoption Contact Register can be found at for England & Wales:

www.gro.gov.uk/adoption-records/the-adoption-contact-register

You can also contact the Adoption Section by email at:

adoption@ips.gsi.gov.uk or;

By Phone on: 0300 123 1837 or;

Post:

P.O. Box 2

Southport

Merseyside

PR8 2JD

For Information regarding adoption in Scotland Please Visit:

www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/regscot/adoption/html

You can also contact the Adoption Section by email at:

adoptions@nas.gov.uk or;

by phone on: 0131 535 1355, 1383 or 1376 or;

Post:

The National Records of Scotland Adoption Unit,

Room 3,

General Registrar House

2 Princes Street

Edinburgh
EH1 3 YY

For Information regarding Adoption in Northern Ireland Please Visit:

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/parents/adoption-fostering-and-children-in-care/adoption/tracing-and-contacting-birth-relatives-and-adopted-adults.htm>

Another useful site is The National Archives:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/looking-for-person/adoption.htm>

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