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www.adoptionsearchreunion.co.uk



Services for adults adopted before 30th December 2005

Faith in Families, 7 Colwick Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5FR

For more information on the work of Faith in Families and details on how you can support our work:

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Registered company number: 461813 Registered charity number: 213692

What service do we offer?

Faith in Families provides adoption support services for adopted adults and their families, adopted children and young people, and birth relatives.

This leaflet contains information for adopted people about how to access their adoption information and how to apply for an Intermediary Service.

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 came into force on the 30th December 2005. The Act has provided for additional services to be provided to adopted people:

- Access to Information – As an adopted adult who has reached the age of 18 or over, you are legally entitled to have access to your birth information. This is the information held about your birth history on case records by the agency who dealt with your adoption.

The Act has upheld this as your right, which was originally granted in 1975. When you access information from this Agency, you are given a summary report of all information held on our files, known as a “Background Information Report” as well as copies of certain documents from your adoption file.

The social worker will be on-hand to answer your questions and explain anything that you are uncertain about.

- Intermediary Services – This is a new provision for adopted people and birth relatives specified within the Act.

An intermediary is an individual, a person or an organisation that acts as a go-between for two or more people.

In relation to adoption, an intermediary service usually means the role played by an agency when a request is received from an adopted person or their birth relative to approach the other party. This can be with a view to passing on or requesting information, and may lead to indirect or direct contact. When it is the birth relative of an adopted person who is requesting an intermediary service, the Intermediary Agency is not allowed to give the birth relative any information that will or might identify the adopted person, but the Intermediary Agency can use the information to locate the adopted person and make an approach to establish if the adopted person is willing to agree to the relative having any information or to be put in contact with the relative

Will I have to pay?

As someone who has been adopted through the Agency, you will not be required to pay for gaining access to your adoption information. However you may wish to make a donation if you feel this is appropriate.

The Intermediary Service and tracing aspect of our work we provide does usually incur costs and we will ask that you make a contribution towards these costs in these cases. Please ask your social worker for more information.

What if I am not happy about the service I receive?

Faith in Families is committed to providing a high standard of service, but recognises that sometimes the users of the Agency may not be happy with the way the services have been provided, or may have a suggestion on how to improve them. The Agency has, therefore, established procedures to provide a forum for people having complaints or suggestions.

A separate leaflet outlining the procedures for making a complaint or suggestion about the Agency's services is available upon request.

If you would like information about how to apply for your original birth certificate, please contact:

General Registrar Office
Trafalgar Road
Southport
PR8 2HH
Tel: 0151 471 4755
Adoptions@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Does using the intermediary services mean I must meet my birth relatives?

The adoption agency social worker will act as the “third party” or “go between” when an Intermediary Service is requested.

You may choose only to exchange information with your birth relative through the agency or you may decide to be reunited with your birth relative. It is a good idea to discuss your options with the social worker.

What if I change my mind about having contact with my birth family?

It is important that you keep your social worker fully informed about your wishes and feelings throughout the process as you will need to determine the pace at which you wish to proceed.

At any point if you feel you would like to withdraw from the service or take a break, please inform your social worker.

Will I have access to counselling?

Yes. The Agency will provide counselling to an adopted person or birth relative upon request.

All of the social workers providing Adoption Support Services on behalf of this Agency are fully qualified social workers who are trained and experienced in this type of work and have a thorough understanding of the issues involved.

Counselling is defined as the act of “giving information, advice and support”.

What rights do I have?

Apart from the two services described above, you have a right to apply for your original birth certificate when you reach 18. You can do this by applying to the Registrar General office (address given at the end of this leaflet) You need to include your date of birth and adopted name and any other brief details you may have.

If you do not have these details, you may wish to seek Access to Information (information held on your case records) in order to find them out.

If I want Access to Information - what do I do now?

You need to contact the Agency and request access to your information. A duty social worker is available from Monday to Friday between 9:30 – 5:00. You will be sent some information as well as an application form which you will need to complete and return to the Agency. A social worker will then be allocated to work with you (according to our current waiting times) and will make an appointment for you to come to the Society's offices. Your social worker will be available to assist you with all aspects of the process.

You will need to bring along photographic evidence of yourself and any relevant papers you may have concerning your adoption. Examples of photographic evidence include a passport, driving licence with photo or student ID card.

If I want access to an intermediary service - what do I do now?

If you have already accessed your information held on file, which we strongly recommend, then you will be offered an appointment to make an application for an intermediary service. Again you will be asked to fill out an application form and meet with a social worker to talk through the implications of the journey you are about to embark on.

You will need to bring along photographic evidence of yourself and any relevant papers you may have concerning your adoption.

Can I be refused access to my adoption information?

You have the legal right to obtain the information necessary to apply for your original birth certificate (see above). As an agency we believe strongly in providing an adopted adult access to all of the historical information we hold on file relating to yourself and your birth family.

Can I be refused an intermediary service?

Only in very rare cases. There is no obligation on an intermediary agency to provide a service. Sometimes an agency that has taken up your application may decide not to continue if they learn that to do so may put the birth relative or their family at risk or if information is discovered that indicates it would be unwise to contact the birth relative. The agency has clear procedures in place that the social worker will follow in these circumstances.

Your social worker will make you fully aware of these procedures should the agency be minded not to proceed with an Intermediary Service on your behalf.

Do I have to come to Faith in Families for these services?

As the Adoption Agency that dealt with your adoption, we would recommend that where possible you receive these services from us. However, you may also choose to approach the Local Authority in which you live for assistance with accessing your birth records information and they will request details from our records and provide these to you on our behalf.

You can also approach a registered Adoption Support Agency (ASA) for an intermediary service but please note that these agencies usually will charge a fee.

Does the Agency have an equal opportunities policy?

Yes. The Agency works to the policy that it makes no distinction on the grounds of race, ethnic or national origin or on the grounds of religion, gender, age, marital status, or physical disability.

If you require services to meet your specific needs, please approach your social worker who will be happy to make the appropriate arrangements.

How long will it take?

This is dependent on the service you are requesting. For Access to Information, the social worker will require time to review your file and prepare a report based on its contents. The social worker will endeavour to do this as quickly as possible.

If you are applying for an Intermediary Service, it is not possible to determine how long it will take to make contact with your birth relative due to the length of time that has elapsed since your adoption. It also will be dependent on how much information is available on your adoption record.

Does having access to my records mean that I can trace birth relatives?

Accessing information from your file can be seen as the first step to tracing your family or you may choose only to receive information and go no further. The choice is yours and your social worker will be able to help you to make the right decision.