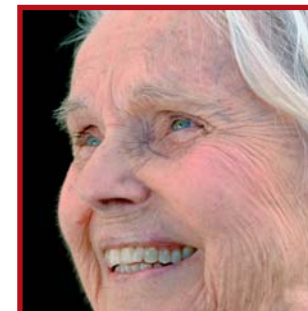
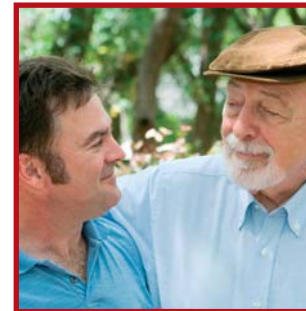


If you would like more information about the services offered by the General Register's office, please contact them directly:

**General Register Office  
Adoption Contact Register  
Trafalgar Road  
Southport  
PR8 2HH  
Tel: 0151 471 4755  
adoptions@ons.gsi.gov.uk**



This leaflet has been produced by Faith in Families, using some information with the kind permission of BAAF, from the following website:  
[www.adoptionsearchreunion.co.uk](http://www.adoptionsearchreunion.co.uk)

**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:

T 0115 955 8811 F 0115 955 8822 E [enquiries@faithinfamilies.org](mailto:enquiries@faithinfamilies.org)

**[www.faithinfamilies.org](http://www.faithinfamilies.org)**

Registered company number: 461813 Registered charity number: 213692

# Services provided to birth relatives

## What service do we offer?

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

This leaflet contains information for birth relatives who wish to apply for an intermediary service which may help to establish contact with an adopted adult.

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 provides birth relatives of an adopted adult, and adopted people themselves, with the legal right to ask an Adoption Agency or Adoption Support Agency that has registered as an Intermediary Agency, to provide a service to let the adopted relative or birth relative know of their wish for contact.

This new law came into effect on 30th December 2005.

## What is an Intermediary Service?

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.

## Who can apply for an Intermediary Service?

All birth relatives of adopted adults over the age of 18. In the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the definition of a birth relative is any person who is related to the adopted person by blood, including half blood or marriage.

## Will I have to pay?

A charge will be made for the tracing aspect of the service in order to cover costs. Please ask your social worker for more details.

## What if I am not happy with the service I receive?

Faith in Families is committed to providing a high standard of service, but recognises that sometimes 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 I want access to an Intermediary Service - what do I do now?

You should contact the Agency and ask to speak to a duty social worker if you haven't already done so. A duty social worker is available each day between 9:30 – 5:00. The social worker will take all of your details so that we can confirm that we are the appropriate adoption agency. An appointment will then be made (according to current waiting times) for you to see a fully qualified social worker who has experience in adoption, searching and reunions. 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 the adoption to the application interview. Examples of photographic evidence include; a passport, driving licence with photo or student ID card.

At your application interview, you will be asked to write a letter of introduction to the adopted person which gives some up-to-date information about yourself and your reasons for wanting contact.

The social worker will use the information from the application interview to make an assessment and decision about whether to proceed with an intermediary service if you are requesting contact be made with an adopted relative.

## What if I change my mind about having contact with my relative?

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.

## What can I do if my relative does not want to have contact with me?

If your relative is located, their consent will be sought to share up-to-date information about themselves with you and they will be asked if they wish to have contact. If they refuse, it can be very distressing particularly if you have been longing for contact for many years.

Your social worker is there to help you to understand the various reasons why they may have come to this decision.

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## 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".

## Who can provide an Intermediary Service?

Intermediary services may be provided by Local Authorities, Adoption Agencies and Adoption Support Agencies. If you are approaching an agency other than this one, it is important to ask the service you approach if it is registered as an Adoption Support Agency and able to provide an intermediary service. It will be important to establish what you will be charged for the services they provide.

## How do I choose an Agency?

Some people prefer to contact the agency that arranged the adoption, particularly as they should still hold the records and often these are very helpful for getting in touch with the adopted person. It is also possible that an adopted person may have recorded their views about contact with a birth relative on that Agency's file.

However, for some people, this is not always possible. For example:

- you would prefer not to be back in touch with the agency that arranged the adoption;
- you may live a long way from the agency.

If either of these situations apply to you, then there are a number of organisations that can advise and help you. For example, you could contact the Adoption Support Agency that is closest to where you live. The Local Authority in which you live will also be able to advise on the availability of services, even if they were not involved in the adoption and are unable to provide a service themselves.

## What are my options when accessing an Intermediary Service?

- The opportunity to discuss your situation with a qualified and experienced social worker and to explore the various potential outcomes of renewed contact with the adopted person.
- Non-identifying information – the intermediary agency is allowed to provide information from the records which would not identify the adoptive family but would help to answer some of the questions you may have.
- The opportunity to find out if the adopted person has registered a qualified or absolute veto with this Agency (see over).

- The opportunity for you to provide information to be kept on the adoption file to be passed on if and when the adopted person contacts the agency.
- The opportunity to apply for a search to be made for the adopted person. A charge will apply for this part of the service in order to cover costs.
- If the search is successful in locating the adopted person you will then be able to ask the Agency to make an approach to the adopted adult.
- Support and advice following contact and reunion for all those involved.

## How long will it take?

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

## Could I be refused an Intermediary Service?

Yes. 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 adopted person or their family at risk or if information is discovered that indicates it would be unwise to contact the adopted person.

In cases where your social worker felt they were unable to proceed, they would have to prepare a report and present this to the Agency's Adoption Panel, which would then make a recommendation about whether or not to proceed with the provision of an Intermediary Service. The Panel's recommendation would then be given to the Agency Decision Maker, who in this case is the Agency's Chief Executive. The Chief Executive would then make a final decision and you would be informed of this decision in writing.

## 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.

## Can the adopted person always be found?

Not always. Sometimes it may be impossible to find somebody. The agency will tell you if they cannot take the search any further and may in some cases suggest another agency with additional resources that might be able to make further enquiries. It is important to appreciate that whenever a search is made it may result in you learning that the adopted person has died or is very unwell. Your social worker will discuss such possibilities with you.

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

## What is a veto?

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 provides adopted adults with a new right to register a Veto with the Agency that placed them for adoption. This is in recognition of the fact that an adopted adult may not wish to be contacted on behalf of a birth relative.

There are two types of Vetos available to an adopted person in the event that they do not wish to be contacted on behalf of a birth relative.

An absolute veto means that the adopted person does not want to be contacted under ANY circumstances on behalf of any of his/her birth relatives.

Once in place, the absolute veto prohibits the adoption agency from making contact with the adoptee on behalf of his/her birth family for any reason.

A qualified veto means that the adopted person can specify the only circumstances they wish to be contacted for. For example he / she may wish to receive up to date medical information regarding a birth relative.

The adopted person can also specify if there is a particular person they would welcome contact from.

**Birth relatives have not been given the same right to register a Veto, but can express a wish for 'no contact' to be registered on the Adoption Contact Register, with the General Register Office.**

**If you would like more information about the services offered by the General Registrar's office, please contact them directly:**

**General Register Office  
Adoption Contact Register  
Trafalgar Road  
Southport, PR8 2HH  
Tel: 0151 471 4755  
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