

## Adoption support for birth relatives

The term birth relative includes parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts or siblings.

### Current adoption

If you are the parent or close relative of a child who is in the care of Kingston or Richmond boroughs, and the plan is adoption, you are entitled to ask for independent counselling and support. The child's social worker will be able to refer you to the adoption support service in Richmond or you could contact the team yourself.

The adoption support worker can also offer you help and support after the adoption. This may be in relation to any contact arrangements that are agreed or by providing you with information on other support services available for birth relatives, including a local monthly support group.

### Past adoption

If you are seeking information, or hope to make contact with a child who was adopted many years ago, we can offer you guidance and advice.

If you live in the Kingston or Richmond boroughs and are a birth relative of an adopted person, even if the adoption took place elsewhere, we can help you. We can also assist you if your family member's adoption was arranged by Kingston or Richmond even if you no longer live in these areas, although in such circumstances we may need to liaise with the adoption support worker in your area.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, we would not normally contact an adopted person under the age of 18 years, but if you would like to make contact with a birth relative who is now over this age, we could offer you counselling and an intermediary service.

There is also a support group for birth parents, run by the South West London Adoption Consortium. This gives birth parents the opportunity to meet each other in a supportive and non-judgmental environment and share experiences.

To find out more about any of these services please contact the duty officer on 020 8547 4620, or see our fact sheets 'A birth parent's guide to adoption' and 'Intermediary services'.