

## Intermediary services

The Achieving for Children (AfC) Adoption Team offers a service to birth relatives who want to make an enquiry about family members over 18 years of age who have been adopted. We aim to provide a sympathetic and open approach to birth relatives making enquires and provide them with a positive, supportive service. The welfare, safety, needs and wishes of everyone concerned will be our first consideration.

### How do I make an enquiry about an adopted birth relative?

You should contact the Adoption Team in writing, giving as much information as possible and including documentation confirming your relationship with the adopted adult (such as a birth certificate or marriage certificate). The adopted person must be at least 18 years of age before we will make any enquiries. If the adopted person is between the ages of 18 and 21, we may contact the adoptive parents.

You will be invited to attend a counselling interview with a social worker in the team. If you do not live in the Kingston or Richmond boroughs, you could arrange to see a counsellor at your local adoption support agency. The counsellor will discuss with you some of the implications of making contact with your birth relative and the many complex feelings that can be aroused for you and your relative. The counsellor will also be able to help you talk about your expectations in contacting the adopted person and what you hope to gain from the contact.

### Services we can provide

- If you know the details of the agency that arranged the adoption, we can contact that agency on your behalf.
- If you do not have this information, we can approach the General Register Office (GRO) and the Court to get this information (there will be a fee of about £30 for these services).
- We will also contact the appropriate adoption agency to find out if the adopted person has placed a veto on the records saying that they do not wish to be contacted. If such a veto were in place it would be unlawful for us to attempt to make contact with the adopted adult.

### Contacting the adopted adult

We can undertake limited tracing and can attempt to contact the adopted person on your behalf through their last known address, which may be the address of their adoptive parents.

If we are unsuccessful we will refer you to organisations that may be able to help. These organisations will charge a fee for this service. If the Kingston or Richmond boroughs arranged the adoption, we will place details of your enquiry on the adopted person's file. These details will be available if the adopted person makes contact with us in the future.

Some adopted adults reply immediately to requests for contact. Others do not feel ready and may need time to consider how they wish to respond. Some are clear from the outset that they do not want to have any form of contact.

We always respect the views of the adopted person and it is up to them whether they wish to accept the approach for contact from the birth relative.

## **Contact arrangements**

The adopted adult will have the opportunity to talk with a counsellor about the type of contact they would like to have. Often, letters and photographs are exchanged to allow the parties to gain more information about one another before they meet. A counsellor will act as an intermediary until people feel ready to exchange names and addresses.

For more information please contact the AfC Adoption Team direct on 020 8547 4620, or one of the following organisations that may also be able to offer you advice.

### **NPN Registered Charity**

A: 41 The Lindens, Friern Park, North Finchley, London N12 9DL

T: 0845 4565031

W: [www.n-p-n.co.uk](http://www.n-p-n.co.uk)

### **Post Adoption Centre**

A: 5 Torriano Mews, Torriano Avenue, London NW5 2RZ

T: 0870 777 2197

W: [www.postadoptioncentre.org.uk](http://www.postadoptioncentre.org.uk)