



Information on Counselling in Search of Origins: For People Who Were Adopted

Information about counselling and information for people who were adopted.

Social Services provides a Counselling in Search of Origins service for people who were adopted and therefore separated from their families at birth or in their early years. An increasing number of such people are seeking to find out more about their backgrounds, usually to satisfy a natural curiosity about who they could not be brought up in their own families.

Records

Where You Adopted?

If you were adopted in Scotland you can obtain a copy of your original birth certificate (if you are 16 years or over) from the Registrar General's Office in Edinburgh by writing to:

The Adoption Unit
General Register office
New Register House
Edinburgh EH1 3YT
Tel: 0131 334 0380

Or you can see your birth entry by calling at New Register House. You will be asked to provide proof of identity such as a driving licence, your adoption certificate or some other official document and if you are a married woman, your marriage certificate will also be required. New Register House may also make a small charge for searching for your information or providing a copy of

your certificate. You should contact them beforehand to find out what these charges are.

If you were adopted in England, the procedure is a little different. If you were adopted prior to 12th November 1975 and are 18 years or over, to obtain your birth certificate you will be required to receive counselling before your birth certificate will be made available to you. If you were adopted on or after 12th November 1975, you may choose whether or not you would like to see a counsellor.

The purpose of counselling is to give adopted people basic information about their adoption and to help them understand some of the possible effects of their enquiries; and to tell adopted people about some of the complex regulations and procedures concerning adoption.

You should initially write to: The General Register Office (CA Section), Titchfield, Fareham, Hants, PQ15 5RR. They will send an application form for access to birth records. When the Registrar General receives your application he will write to you about the next step.

Other Information Sources

Court Records:

All adoptees, whether adopted in England or Scotland, have the right of access to the records on their adoption held by the court, which granted their adoption order. People adopted in Scotland can apply directly to the appropriate court to view the record and for those adopted in England, access will be granted following counselling.

Agency Records:

If your adoption was arranged by an adoption agency, records giving background information and the reasons for your having been placed with an adoptive family may be available. If you do not know if an agency was involved, the local authority for the area where you were placed may have records of your placement.

Any information that may be available often needs explanation and interpretation and it is of value to have the assistance of an adoption counsellor to help you understand it and put into context what happened in the past.

Updating and Tracing

If you wish to try to up-date the information about your background and birth family, counselling staff are able to advise you on the sources to use. They will also help you to try to trace any members of your birth family if you are sure that this is what you want to do.

This can be a time of anxiety and confusion and you will need someone to talk to, to discuss the implications (both for yourself and for them) of what you are

doing and especially of finding and perhaps meeting members of your birth family.

This step should only be taken after careful consideration and the assistance of a counsellor is invaluable, particularly if you wish to meet a member of your birth family whom you have been able to trace

You may not wish to proceed as far as actually contacting birth family members at this time but only want the information about your background and the reasons for your adoption explained. Many people are satisfied with this but at a later stage, sometimes several years later may then wish to trace birth family members.

If you feel that you would like to talk to someone about your adoption or wish to find out more information about your background, please contact:

North Ayrshire Council
Social Services
Children & Families Services
47 West Road
Irvine
KA12 8RE

(Monday – Thursday 0900-1645, Friday 0900-1630)

If writing in, please give details about yourself and any information you know about your adoption and any background information you may have.

All enquires for Counselling in Search of Origins will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. Only people you give permission to contact will be involved.

Other agencies which can also be of assistance for adoptees.

BIRTHLINK
21 Castle Street
Edinburgh
EH2 3DN
Telephone: 0131 225 6441
Fax: 07070 780579

Birthlink maintains a confidential computerised Adoption Contact Register for Scotland. The purpose of the register is to put adopted people and their birth parents, or other birth relatives, in touch with each other when both parties want this to happen.

On contact, Birthlink will answer your questions and send you a registration form. There is a fee to register. On registering your information is entered into the Adoption Contract Register for Scotland. It will be cross referenced against all existing entries and also against future registrations. If a match is

made they will contact you and act as a go-between to arrange a meeting or exchange news. If you want to call a halt or pause the process at any time the decision is yours.

Who can register?

- Adopted people over the age of 16 years, whose birth or adoption took place in Scotland.
- Birth mothers, birth fathers and any other birth relatives, where the adopted person's birth and/or adoption took place in Scotland.
- Adoptive parents on behalf of a child under the age of 15 years, where the child birth and/or adoption took place in Scotland.

SCOTTISH ADOPTION ADVICE SERVICE

Barnardo's
16 Sandyford Place
Glasgow
G3 7NB
Telephone 0141-339 0772

They are a voluntary agency funded by Barnardo's and are specialised in the field of adoption counselling and post adoption support.

They can help:

- Adoptees – with counselling and searching for birth relatives,
- Adoptive parents – with advice and counselling about the adoption process and post adoption support to assist parents in dealing with difficult or challenging behaviour or with issues about “telling” children about their adoption or coping with their own feelings.
- Birth parents and relatives – who may grieve for many years for the child who has been placed for adoption. Counselling is offered as well as guidance to make it as easy as possible for the child to know their birth parents or relatives are interested in contact.
- Adults – who may have grown up “in care” and step parents enquiring about adoption.

They do not charge a fee but accept donations.