

Support for Adopted Adults and their Birth Relatives

“Adoption is more than a one-off event. It is an evolving life-long process for all those involved” (DFE Guidance)

Services for Adopted Adults

Many adopted adults decide, at some point in their lives, to try and find out more about their birth family and the circumstances surrounding their adoption.

Somerset County Council’s Adoption Team will offer support and counselling to adopted adults over the age of 18 who live in Somerset and who wish to access their records. We can also act as intermediaries between you and any birth relatives you want to contact.

At the age of 18 adopted people have the legal right to apply for a copy of their original birth certificate from the General Register Office (GRO). If you wish to do this you should write to:

General Register Office
Adoptions Section
Smedley Hydro
Trafalgar Road
Southport
PR8 2HH
Telephone: 0151 471 4830
www.gro.gov.uk

Or phone Somerset Direct on 0845 345 9122

If you were adopted before 12 November 1975 you will need to attend a counselling interview with an adoption social worker who will then release the information you need to obtain your birth certificate. This is called Schedule 2 Counselling and will be offered to you locally. You are able to take someone with you for support.

If you were adopted after 12 November 1975 you do not need to go through the interview process in order to obtain the information, but many people find it beneficial.

Once you have obtained your original birth certificate an adoption social worker can help you track down further information about your adoption and birth family, by tracing records held by local authorities, adoption charities and relevant courts. This process can take some time and records cannot always be traced, but it is a service that is free to Somerset residents.

Your social worker will then have further meetings with you to share the information and deal with any issues arising.

You may wish to try and trace the birth relatives you have found out about and, whilst we cannot do this for you, we may be able to offer support and guidance.

Once you have traced a relative, you can ask your adoption social worker to act as an intermediary in making contact. They will offer support throughout the process, up to the point of reunion and beyond.

As an adopted person, you may have been contacted by a post adoption worker on behalf of a birth relative wishing to make contact. If you wish to talk this through with someone to help you decide how you wish to respond, you can contact us for support.

If, as an adopted adult, you have decided that you do not wish to receive any contact from a birth family member, you can contact us in order to place a 'veto' on your records. An adoption social worker will talk through with you the implications of this and help you decide if there are any circumstances under which you would like to be contacted, i.e. in the case of any medical information coming to light.

For further information on any of the above services, please contact Somerset Direct on 0845 345 9122.

Services for Birth Relatives

Somerset County Council offers support, advice and intermediary services to the birth relatives of adopted adults who were placed for adoption through Somerset County Council and to current residents of Somerset.

As a birth relative of an adopted adult, you may apply to Somerset County Council for an intermediary service to make contact with that person. You will need to apply in writing and attend a counselling interview to discuss the process and the implications of making contact for yourself, the adopted adult and the adoptive family. There may be a delay in taking up your application, due to demand, but we will prioritise on the basis of age or ill health.

The worker responsible for intermediary services for birth relatives in Somerset is Lynne Mockridge and you can obtain more information and an application form by contacting Somerset Direct on 0845 345 9122.

If you are the birth relative of an adopted person and live in Somerset and you have been contacted by an adopted adult, or an intermediary, you can ask Somerset County Council's Adoption Team for support and guidance in dealing with the approach.

Useful contacts

BAAF – Adoption Search and Reunion website:

www.adoptionsearchreunion.org.uk

Norcap – a national group supporting adults affected by adoption

112 Church Road

Wheatley

Oxfordshire

OX33 1LU

Telephone: 01865 875000

www.norcap.org.uk

Adoption UK

Telephone helpline: 0870 7700450

www.adoptionuk.org.uk

Post Adoption Centre

5 Torriano Mews

Torriano Avenue

London

NW5 2R7

Advice line: 020 7284 5879

www.postadoptioncentre.org.uk