

## Will my children be able to find me after adoption?

From the age of 18 onwards your child, like any other adopted adult, has the right to have a copy of their original birth certificate if they choose to do so. This will show their original name, the name of their birth mother and possibly the name of their birth father, as well as the address where they were living when their birth was registered.

There is an Adoption Contact Register, which helps to put adopted people and their birth family in contact with each other if this is what they both want. You can record your name and a contact address on this register. Then if your adopted adult child chooses to trace you, they can get information about you from the register.

The adoption support service will be able to give you more information about the

## Adoption Support workers will discuss with you what kind of support is needed and how this will be provided

Support could include:

- Assessment for adoption support
- Independent Counselling
- Advice and information around adoption issues
- Support with contact whether direct (face to face) or indirect (letterbox)
- Undertaking an intermediary service – on behalf of an adopted person or a direct birth family member, when an adult is contacted to see whether contact can be initiated.
- Support to birth family members wishing to prevent contact with an adopted adult seeking contact.

Adoption Contact Register, and a leaflet is available from the General Register at the Office of National Statistics – Adoption Section. You can access more information via - The Adoption Contact Register - GOV.UK [www.gov.uk/adoption-records/the-adoption-contact-register](http://www.gov.uk/adoption-records/the-adoption-contact-register)

## How can we help you deal with your child's adoption?

Grief, loss and anger are often felt after huge changes in a person's life, such as adoption. These feelings often appear a long time after the event and it may be difficult for you to understand or cope with such feelings. It may be helpful for you to talk about this with a counsellor or friend. It may also be possible for you to meet other people whose children have been adopted.

To find out more about the Birth Family Support and Information Service please contact:

### Adoption Team

London Borough of Bexley  
Civic Offices, 2 Watling Street,  
Bexleyheath DA6 7AT  
020 8303 7777  
[adoptionandfostering@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:adoptionandfostering@bexley.gov.uk)

**Post adoption contact centre** provides independent advice, counselling and support to anyone affected by adoption.  
5 Torriano Mews, Torriano Avenue,  
London NW5 2RZ.  
Telephone: 020 7284 0555  
[www.postadoptioncentre.org.uk](http://www.postadoptioncentre.org.uk)

**PAC-** First Family Service has its own Action Line that you can call and leave a message requesting a call back or text on 07975 846 249 (if you live in London or the South of England) or 07946 295 322 (if you live in Leeds or the North of England).  
PAC London office Advice Line:  
Tel 020 7284 5879 Monday, Tuesday & Friday 10am-4pm Wednesday & Thursday 2-7.30pm

**After Adoption** offers advice and information to you if we have decided your child should be adopted. They also provide support for parents expecting a baby or bringing up a child where a previous child has been adopted through the care system.

Further information and advice can be found in Bexley's Information for Birth Parents about Adoption, please ask your social worker for a copy.

The organisations listed below will also be able to put you in contact with the most appropriate help.

Telephone – 0800 0568 578 or email - [actionline@afteradoption.org.uk](mailto:actionline@afteradoption.org.uk)  
[www.afteradoption.org.uk/birthparentsupport](http://www.afteradoption.org.uk/birthparentsupport)

**Family Rights Group** offers a free advice line, open from Monday to Friday, between 1:30 - 3:30pm.  
Second Floor, The Print House,  
18 Ashwin Street, London E8 3DL.  
Telephone: 0808 801 0366 or  
Email - [office@frg.org.uk](mailto:office@frg.org.uk)  
[www.frg.org.uk](http://www.frg.org.uk)

**Grandparents' Association** supports grandparents. This service includes an advice, an information line, publications and support groups.  
Moot House, The Stow. Harlow.  
Essex CM20 3AG.  
Grandparents Contact Helpline on 0300 033 7015 Mondays and Fridays only between 2pm and 4pm.  
[www.grandparents-association.org.uk](http://www.grandparents-association.org.uk)  
[info@grandparents-association.org.uk](mailto:info@grandparents-association.org.uk)

### Follow us



If you would like the information in this document in a different format, please call 020 8303 7777 and ask for Communications/Graphics. The reference to quote is: 605339/6.17

# Has adoption been identified as the plan for your child?

This leaflet is for you if your child is going to be adopted.

This may be a very difficult time for you and you may be worried about what adoption means for you and for your child. Please talk to your social worker if there is anything that you don't understand.

## What is adoption?

Adoption is a way of providing a new family for a child when living with their birth family is not possible. As an adoption agency the London Borough of Bexley is legally allowed to arrange adoptions by placing children with suitable families.

However, we cannot make the arrangement legally binding: only a court can do that by making an Adoption Order. This ends the child's legal relationship with their birth family and gives them new legal parents. The child will then become a full member of their adoptive family.

Adoption means the child gets a new family. As this is such an important thing to happen in a child's life, the law requires adoption agencies and courts to put the child's long-term welfare first. The court will also want to know what your wishes and feelings are as the birth parent. If your child is adopted, you will no longer have any legal rights (parental responsibility) over them. So you need to think very carefully about the idea of your child being adopted. If you have any worries, doubts or questions, we are ready to help. You are entitled to receive counselling from a worker, who will be different to your child's social worker, and you may find it helpful to talk things over with your family and friends too. You should also seek legal advice.

## The adoption process

The decision to place your child for adoption will only be recommended after we have assessed you and your family and

considered all other options. You will be invited to attend meetings about the future of your child.

If we decide it is best for your child to be adopted, your child's social worker will write a report about your child and your family. This is called a Child Permanence Report.

The information you give to your social worker about your child's history will be included in the report. You can help us by telling us as much about yourself, your child's other birth parent, any siblings and your family background. It is important for us to know about any health issues in your family as this may have implications for your child's future health.

It is also important that we include your views and wishes in this report for consideration. Please tell your social worker if there is anything special you would like us to consider when choosing a family for your child. You might, for example, want your child to have a particular religious or cultural upbringing or you might be anxious that your child should not be the only child in their new family, or that they have the opportunity to develop any special interests, such as a talent for singing.

When the local authority is considering a plan for adoption it will involve a decision by the Agency Decision maker. The Agency Decision maker is normally a named senior manager; they will review the reports submitted, and have advice from legal, medical advisor and the adoption service, before they decide whether

to agree a plan for adoption. The Child Permanence Report is just one of the reports considered by the Agency Decision maker when considering the plan for adoption.

## Adoption by foster carers

Perhaps your child has been looked after for a while by foster carers and they would now like to adopt them. This does not make any difference to our task – we still have to make the same thorough enquiries about the foster carers as we would about any other prospective adopters. We also have to be certain that it would be best for your child to be adopted by that family before we can support the idea. Alternatively when your child first became looked after they could have been placed with Foster to adopt carers. These are specialist carers who are approved as adopters and as foster carers. These carers are willing to offer permanence to a child through adoption should that become the plan. This helps by providing the continuity and stability of just one placement.

## Support and advice for you

If you are unhappy about the idea of your child being adopted, it is important for you to have legal advice about what you can do as soon as possible.

Do please consult a solicitor. Your local Citizens Advice Bureau may know the names of solicitors who specialise in childcare cases or you can find one through

the Community Legal Advice line  
0845 345 4 345

You may be able to get free legal advice and representation in court. A solicitor will be able to advise you about this. When adoption is identified as the plan for your child you are entitled to an independent support worker, separate to the child's social worker.

## What happens after the Adoption Order is made?

When a child is adopted this ends all legal ties with their birth family and they will usually keep their first name and take their adoptive family's surname.

Adoptive parents are always encouraged to bring the child up knowing they are adopted and knowing about their origins. It is understandable that adopted people wish to know something about their birth family and that some may wish to trace their family or origins when they are old enough to do so (18 years of age).

This is why it is important we know as much about you as possible and why you may be asked to provide photographs or other information.

You may get the opportunity to meet the adoptive family when they have been chosen. This can help you imagine your child with them. It will also make you a real person to the adopters, which will make it easier for them to talk about you to your child as they grow up.

When the court makes an Adoption Order, the adopters get an Adoption Certificate from the General Register at the Office of National Statistics. This will only show the child's new name and list the adopters as the child's parents. This takes the place of their original birth certificate for all legal purposes. When the children go to live with them, the adoptive parents are also given a copy of the child's original birth certificate.

## Can I keep in contact with my child after adoption?

In the past there was a lot of secrecy surrounding adoptions. This has changed and today it is considered more beneficial for the child to grow up knowing their origins and for adoptive parents to encourage this.

All adopters have training in the importance of talking with an adopted child about their origins and supporting contact with their birth family if this has been organised.

Many adopted children have clear, valuable memories of their birth families, previous carers and relatives. Contact with these people may help the adoption be more successful.

As part of arranging an adoption we have to consider what contact, if any, will take place between the child and their birth family. These arrangements vary, depending on what we consider to be in the child's best interest. We cannot promise to do as

you wish, but will certainly consider your point of view.

Sometimes we arrange direct contact, which involves face-to-face meetings between birth families and adoptive families, this is normally organised by the Local Authority. Birth families and adoptive families continue to share information this way.

This form of contact, known as direct contact between the child and their birth parents after adoption is very rare. However this will be explored if we believe this to be in the best interest of your child.

Indirect contact involves birth families and adoptive families sharing information by letter, being sent at agreed intervals. In Bexley this managed by a Letterbox service co coordinator. A social worker from the adoption support service will give you advice about how it works and you will have the opportunity to meet with the letter box coordinator who will introduce themselves to you. It can be really helpful for your child to receive information about their birth family as they grow up

Any plans for ongoing contact after the adoption will be written down in an agreement. You and the adoptive parents will both have a copy. Arrangements are always made to meet the child's needs and may change over time. You will be offered support with contact, the letterbox coordinator will meet with you to decide what level of support you require, this could be support in writing your contact letter.