

Adoption Post-Box service: Information for parties involved

Introduction

The Post Box service is intended to coordinate arrangements made for periodic exchange of information between the adoptive family and the birth family following the placement of a child for adoption.

This may take the form of letters, photos, school reports, etc and the arrangement is overseen and reviewed by the Post Box coordinator.

A record is kept of all Post Box arrangements and the aim is to ensure that exchange of information remains a positive experience for adopted children, their adoptive parents and their birth families throughout the duration of the arrangement.

The process

- Prior to adoption, the person responsible (usually the child's social worker) will come to an agreement with the parties involved about specific Post Box arrangements.
- An adoption Post Box agreement sheet will be completed and signed by all parties and passed to the Post Box coordinator and a Post Box file will be opened.
- You will receive a letter from the Post Box coordinator clarifying the agreed arrangements.
- The arrangement will be clear about where and when to send/deliver and how the information will be passed on. This will also be explained in the letter for you to keep.
- Unfortunately, it is not possible to accept parcels, cash or cheques, but gift tokens and postal orders are acceptable.
- The Post Box coordinator will open and read all information received to ensure that the contents are in the child's best interests.
- Where information received is not considered to be in the child's best interests by either the Coordinator or either party, then the sender will be informed and offered advice about how to make the communication more appropriate.
- When items are sent that are not part of the agreement the sender needs to be aware that they will be returned to them.
- If you are unsure about what to write in a letter or how to sign yourself/yourselves the Post Box Coordinator or a member of the Adoption Support Team will be willing to advise you on this matter and may have some examples of suitable letters.

The process

- Please send your letters at least two weeks before if you want them to be delivered by a certain date (preferably at least three weeks before Christmas).
- Before sending information on, the Coordinator will keep a copy of any written communication to ensure that important information is not lost. This will be kept on the Post Box file and ultimately placed on adoption file which is stored in the adoption archive. The child (adopted person then has the right to apply to have access to his/her adoption file after age of 18 and will see all of the information kept on the file.
- In most cases the Post Box arrangement will end at 18, except where a new arrangement is agreed prior to the young person's 18th birthday. A decision to do this will be made at the annual review in the year of the young person's 17th birthday.
- It is very important that all parties to the Post Box arrangement keep the Coordinator informed of any changes of name and address or of changes in family circumstances e.g. birth of a sibling; identification of a serious health issue.
- Where there has been a lapse in exchange of information, the Coordinator will make every attempt, if requested and in the child's best interests, to re-establish contact, but this may not be possible if parties have not advised the Coordinator of changes.
- The arrangements for Post Box contact will be reviewed annually by letter. All parties' views on the working of the arrangements are sought and the Post Box Coordinator has a responsibility to ensure that the arrangements always remain in the child's best interests.

Further information

You can contact us in the following ways:

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County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
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Tel: 01225 716510

Fax: 01225 755196

Email: adoption@wiltshire.gov.uk

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