

Information About Contact

www.afteradoption.org.uk

0800 0 568 578

The Adoption & Children Act 2002

Under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 issues of contact must be considered at each stage of the adoption process for each child where there is a plan for permanence.

Direct Contact

Direct contact, also known as face-to-face contact, is the form of contact that many prospective families initially seem to shy away from, feeling it will be too confusing and too demanding emotionally. However, social workers are often there to facilitate the meetings, which usually take place in neutral venue, and although children can sometimes find them upsetting, they also provide them with valuable understanding and a sense of continuity.

Indirect Contact/Letterbox

Indirect contact is sometimes viewed as an 'easy' option, but in our experience of managing arrangements on behalf of Local Authorities it can pose dilemmas for all parties. Prior to a child being placed for adoption, discussions will have taken place with the prospective adopters and birth family about how often information can be exchanged, by whom and what can be exchanged. Information is exchanged via a third party and may include letters, cards, school reports, photographs and vouchers. Sometimes information may be on CD or DVD. This will all have been agreed prior to the Adoption Order.

The social worker with responsibility for the child, will have all information regarding decisions made about direct and indirect contact including venues and exact arrangements for the handling of Letterbox items.

In our experience, where there is good post adoption support, both forms of contact can be supported in such a way that concerns/anxieties are minimised to allow for smooth running of the arrangements. This in turn can assist children to maintain links with their past which assists in their emotional well-being. Where support is maintained and on-going arrangements are in place, any need for change in contact arrangements can be negotiated with all parties to maintain ongoing links.

Further Information

If you require any further information, After Adoption can offer a range of support regarding contact issues including assistance with letter writing, preparation for direct contact and the opportunity for all parties involved to discuss contact issues.

You can contact us via our free national ActionLine on 0800 0 568 578 or visit our website www.afteradoption.org.uk for more information.