

Information for Birth Relatives

www.afteradoption.org.uk

0800 0 568 578

The Law and You

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 came into force in both England and Wales on 30th December 2005. Adopted adults and adult birth relatives have a right to apply for an intermediary service. This means that a birth relative can ask an Intermediary Agency to trace and establish whether contact would be welcome by an adult adopted person.

Effect of The Adoption and Children Act 2002

If the person you are seeking was adopted before 20th December 2005, this Act brought in the following changes;

- You can request a regulated intermediary service
- Adopted people can make it known on their adoption file or on the Adoption Contact Register whether or not they wish to be contacted
- Intermediary Agencies cannot disclose identifying information about an adopted adult without first getting their consent
- Adoption Support Agencies and Adoption Agencies may charge you for the service and for any costs incurred
- You may be responsible for the costs of counselling for the adopted adult who is contacted on your behalf
- The courts and Registrar General have to give the information they hold relating to a child's adoption to the Intermediary Agency
- Priority will be given to cases involving adoptions that took place before 12th November 1975

What is an Intermediary Agency?

An Intermediary Agency is an organisation that helps you get in touch with other people. They can do this by acting as a 'go between' so that you and the person you are looking for can choose whether and how to go ahead. It can be:

- an Adoption Support Agency
- a Voluntary Adoption Agency
- a Local Authority

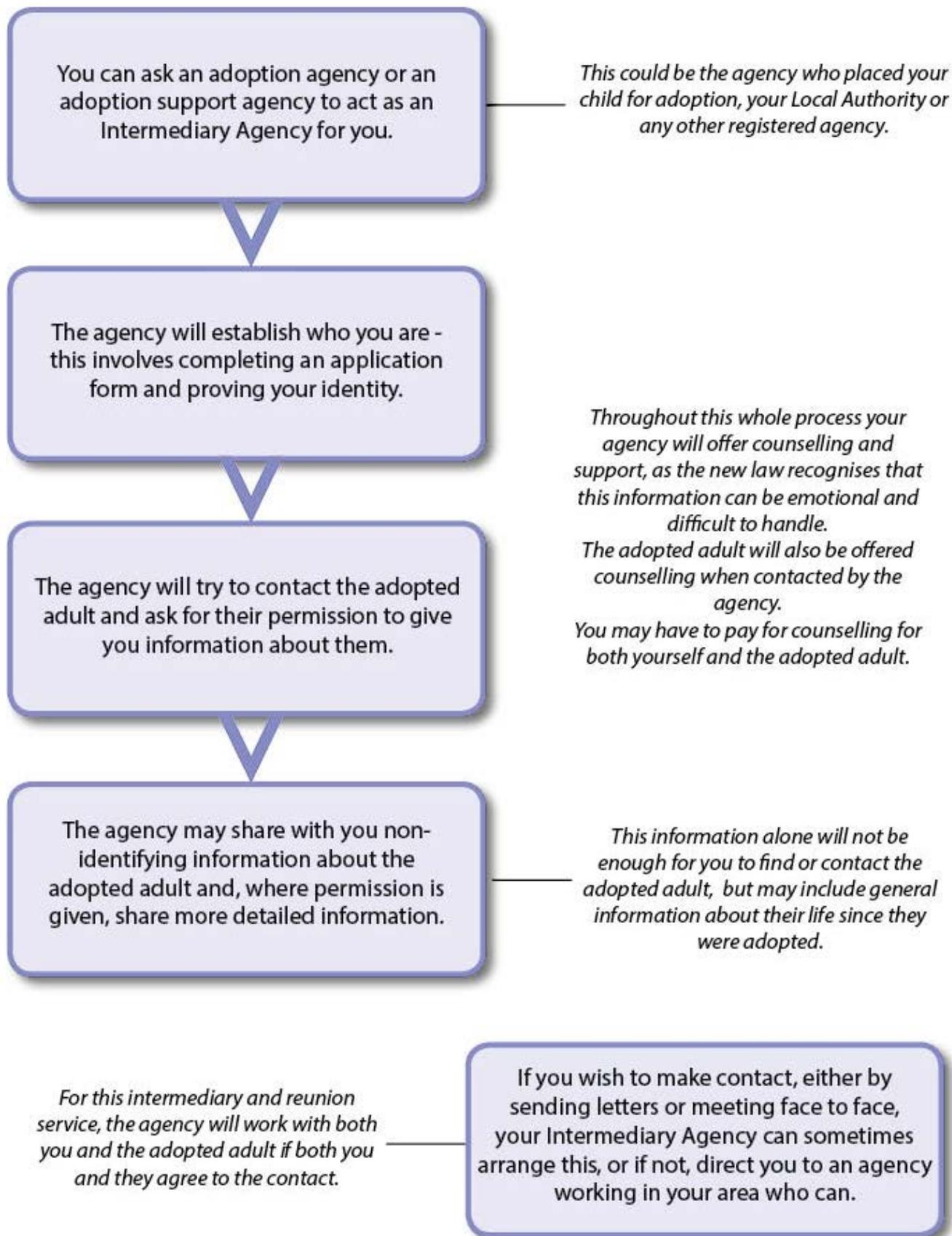
If your Local Authority does not offer an intermediary service, they can refer to you to a registered Agency

After Adoption's Intermediary Service

After Adoption has a well established intermediary service operating in areas where this work is funded by the Local Authority.

Additionally, After Adoption run a national self-funding Intermediary Service for anyone wishing to trace and attempt to make contact with adult adopted relatives. The service will be available to birth relatives and adopted adults irrespective of whether or not there is an After Adoption service running in their area. People applying for the service will be asked to meet a worker at one of our offices to discuss the work that will be done and to prove their identity and demonstrate the link between themselves and the person being sought. Service users may need to travel to this first meeting, though this can happen at any of our regional offices and subsequent work will be mainly conducted over the phone and/or by email. We have built on our experience of providing intermediary work over the past 20 years. As well as the specialist adoption support worker, we have a team of dedicated and experienced family researchers, some paid, some voluntary, who undertake the searching for lost relatives.

How Can I Find Out Information About an Adopted Adult?



The Adoption Contact Register (ACR)

Since 1976, changes in adoption legislation have enabled people who have been adopted to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate when they reach 18 years of age. From the certificate they can learn their original names and some details of their birth parents. This information usually consists of their birth mother's name, her address at the time of the birth and, in some cases her occupation. Following receipt of this information some adopted people decide to try to trace their birth families. Adoption legislation does not allow birth family members to obtain the name of the adoptive family so that they can undertake a similar search.

However, the GRO holds an Adoption Contact Register (ACR) to match up birth relatives and adopted people who would welcome contact with each other.

If you do not want a proactive service to try and establish contact with an adopted adult relative but simply want to make it easy for the adopted person to find you, you can place your details on:

- The Adoption Contact Register (ACR) held by the Registrar General and/or on
- The adoption file of your relative

The Adoption File

When trying to trace relatives it is possible that an adopted person will first obtain information from the agency which arranged the adoption. If the adoption was handled through a voluntary agency or a Local Authority Social Services Department you can write and have your up to date address and details placed on your relative's adoption file. This will enable someone searching for you to make that contact. You may discover that the agency has changed its name or no longer exists. If you experience difficulties trying to trace the agency you can visit www.adoptionsearchreunion.org.uk which records the movement of adoption agencies over the years. After Adoption can assist you with this.

Adoption Contact Register in Southport

You need to write to the Registrar General and obtain a form ACR 108, which you will need to complete, as well as providing certificates proving your relationship to the adopted adult.

The full address is: General Register Office
 Certificate Services Section
 PO BOX 2
 Southport
 Merseyside
 PR8 2JD

Alternatively, you can download the form from www.gov.uk. The current fee to register as a birth relative is £30.

Counselling

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 came into force in both England and Wales on 30th December 2005. The Act provides clear pathways for both adopted people and birth relatives to seek certain information about the adoption and people involved. In the Act there is a provision for people involved in the adoption to receive counselling. This is to support them during the process of sharing or receiving information.

If you are a birth relative and are seeking information about an adopted person you may be responsible for the costs of your own counselling and possibly the costs of the adopted person. Where you are responsible for the costs of another person's counselling you will be given full information about this.

Further Information

If you wish to talk to anyone about the information outlined in this leaflet then you can call our ActionLine on 0800 0 568 578. You can also visit www.afteradoption.org.uk.

The following sources of information may also be of use:

- Registrar General (IPS)
www.gov.uk
- Care Quality Commission
www.cqc.gov.uk
- Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales
www.csiw.wales.gov.uk

- OFSTED
www.ofsted.gov.uk
- British Association for Adoption and Fostering
www.baaf.org.uk
or visit www.adoptionsearchreunion.org.uk
for their adoption search and reunion page