

Guide to adoption

So contact us...

The Adoption Contact Register

Some people really want to get back in touch with children, parents or relatives from before the time of adoption, whilst others never do.

The Adoption Contact Register records the wishes of people over 18 who have been adopted and birth relatives of children who have been adopted people who have consented to their children being adopted. If both you and your adult child have registered that you would like to be contacted, then your personal information will be forwarded on. The final say belongs to the adult child, as to whether they decide to proceed and make contact.

You can also speak to us, if we arranged the adoption, about accessing information or we can still put you in touch with the agency that did if you prefer. If you wish to discuss any matter raised in this leaflet, please contact the Adoption Support Team.


By Phone:

By Post:

By Email:

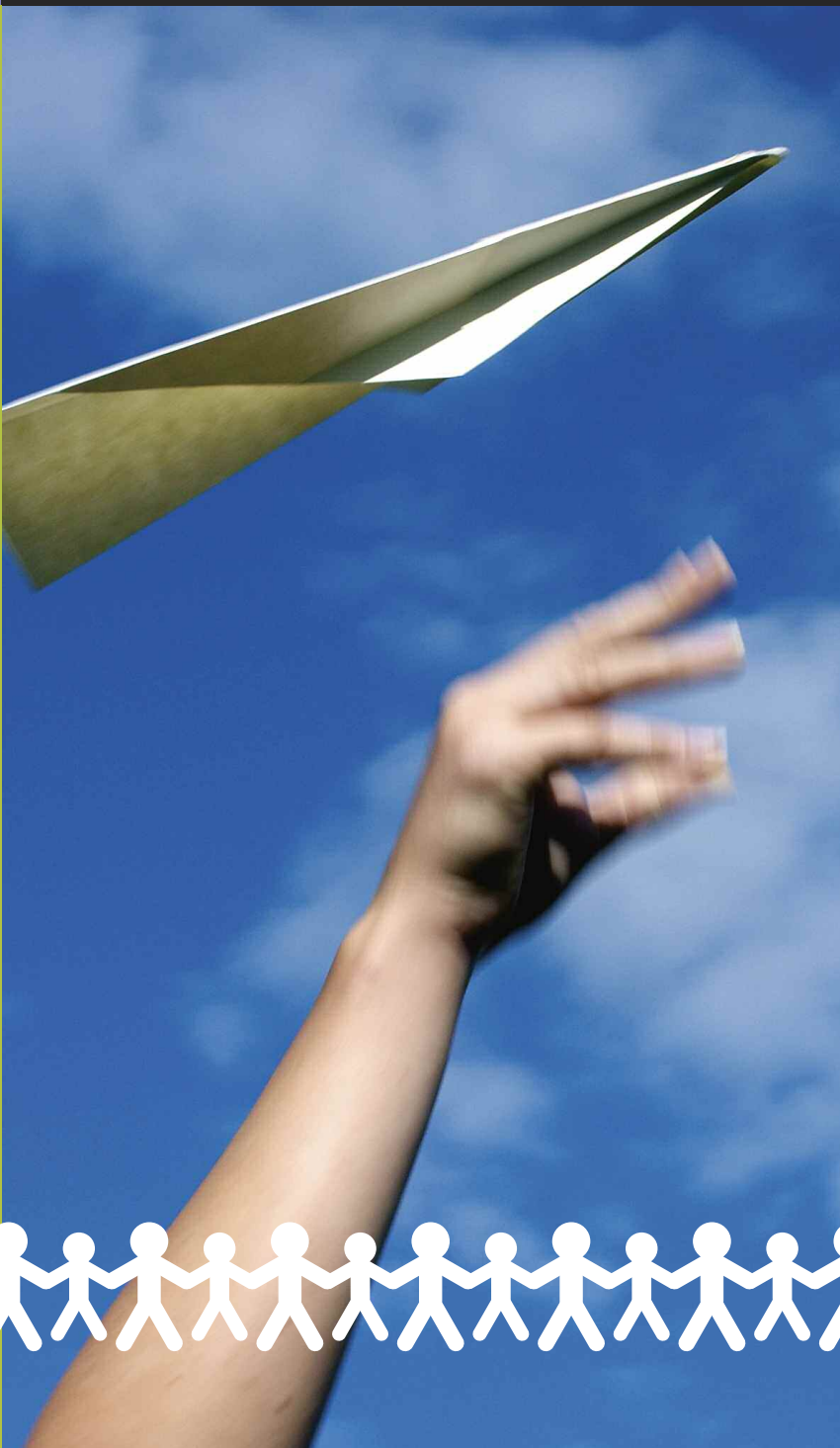
Information for birth parents of adopted children



 **DERBYSHIRE**
County Council
Improving life for local people

Derbyshire Adoption Service





A guide to adoption, for the parents of adopted children

This guide gives information to you as the parents of children who have been, or are about to be, adopted. It explains how adoptions work, what you can expect to happen, your rights and where you can get help and support

Under the Children Act 1989 and the Children and Adoption Act of 2002, the welfare of the child comes before anything else, when it comes to decisions being made about their future. Whether it concerns a child being placed for adoption or keeping in touch with their birth parents, it is the child's interests which must come before the needs and wishes of adults.

What is adoption?

For some children who are unable to live with their birth parents, adoption is the best way to give them the chance to live permanently, as part of a loving, stable family.

A child is only adopted when a court makes an Adoption Order. Once an order has been made, responsibility for the child is transferred from their birth parents to their adoptive parents. This means that, legally, an adopted child has the same rights and status as if they had been born to their adoptive parents.

The court will look at every aspect of the child's and the child's family's circumstances, before deciding that a child should be placed for adoption. The court will also examine the child's needs and how those needs are best met by their prospective adoptive parents.

Before an Adoption Order can be made, a number of steps have to be completed first. Adoption is final – it is one of the most significant events that will happen in a child's life and for that reason, there is a procedure to ensure everything is done correctly.



Derbyshire County Council, like all adoption agencies, has a duty to follow guidelines, laid down by the government, before it can consider a child being placed for adoption. If it is felt that adoption is the best decision, we must consider, above all else, the views of the child and then those of their parents and adults who have a part in their upbringing, such as relatives or foster carers.

Children can be placed for adoption with or without the agreement of their birth parent. If you choose to place your child for adoption, you may change your mind at any point up to the time that the adoptive parents apply for an adoption order.

If you don't feel that adoption is right for your child, you should seek the advice of a solicitor as soon as possible. Whether you are consenting or not, we will offer you the support, advice and assistance of an independent support worker. They will explain the process to you and support you throughout the process, if should you want it.



Your contribution

Before a child can be placed for adoption, we need to know as much about them and their family as possible. We will ask you all about you and your child's background and circumstances – whatever information you give us will be only be given to people who are directly involved in the adoption process.

We need this information, to allow us to make an informed decision about the welfare and future of your child – for example, if you have a history of illness in your family, this may have implications for your child in future life.

Adoption panel

The child's social worker will complete a detailed report about your child's background and current circumstances, called a 'child's permanence report'. This is presented to the 'Adoption Panel' who is a group of people with specialist knowledge or experience in adoption; in some cases, they might have adopted themselves or have been adopted as children. They will recommend whether or not a child should be placed for adoption. Within seven working days of the panel, a decision will be made, based on the panel's recommendation. You will be informed of that decision within two working days.

We cannot place any child for adoption unless you have signed consent for adoption or a court has made a 'Placement Order'. Once this is done, we can proceed with placing the child for adoption. Please be aware that, once this happens the amount of responsibility you have for your child will be limited.



Contact

During the planning for adoption we will discuss with you the possibility of contact with your child, whether through letters and cards or, in some cases, actual meetings. Wherever possible, we will try and arrange for letters to be sent to you from the child, so you know how they are settling in and getting on. However, if the child's circumstances change, staying in contact will not always be possible or advisable. Please remember that we must make all decisions on the basis of what is best for the child.

You may wish to get advice from your solicitor about applying for a 'Contact Order'. These are set up by the court to decide who can and cannot have contact with the child, and the amount of contact they are allowed to have. Again, the court's first consideration is what is best for the child.

Placement orders

If you do not agree to your child being placed for adoption and the Adoption Panel thinks they should be, then the council will apply to the court for a Placement Order. A Placement Order is an Order from the court that says a judge has agreed that your child should be adopted. Your child's social worker will then start the process of preparing your child for adoption and looking for a family for them. You are advised to seek legal advice.

Finding the right family

Once it has been agreed that your child should be adopted, their social worker will start to look for the best family for them. Your views are valued and you should tell the social worker what you want for your child e.g. in relation to their religion, cultural heritage, other children in the family etc.



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Prospective adopters

Great care is taken to identify the right family for your child and their details are presented to the Adoption Panel. Again, the panel makes a recommendation about whether or not this is the right family which the agency decision maker will endorse.

When prospective adopters are identified

If this is the right family for your child, they will be introduced to them over a period of time. Social workers will visit them and the child and their prospective adopters, to see how they are progressing. After the child has lived with the prospective adopters for ten weeks, they can apply for an Adoption Order and start planning for the child to live with them permanently.

You are entitled to ask Derbyshire County Council about the welfare of your child in their new home.

How we can help you

Derbyshire County Council is aware that this is a difficult process for you. We have a responsibility to provide support to any parent or family of a child who is being adopted.

We offer counselling and advice, explaining how adoption works and how it will affect your life and the life of your child and listen to any concerns and worries you may have. This is provided by your child's social worker and/or your independent support worker.



We will, wherever possible, help you with contact with the child.

We will advise you on how to get in touch with support groups in your area, of people who are in a similar situation to yourself and continue to offer support both now and in the future, if you would find it helpful.

Access to information

The law allows you to request information from Derbyshire County Council about your child, if they have been adopted once they are over the age of 18. This also means that your child can request information about you and other members of their birth family. The information the child can have will identify you but you cannot have information that will identify them.

Derbyshire County Council has to be careful about revealing information too, and will consider very carefully any applications for contacting adopted children. Before any information can be disclosed, it must be in agreement with the person whose identity will be revealed, whether they are adopted or whether they are the parents of a child who has been adopted.

