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Open adoption

References

AAR: Adoption Agency Regulations 2005
ACA: Adoption and Children Act 2002
ASSR: Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005
CA: Children Act 1989.
FLR: Family Law Reports
APCR: Arrangement for Placement of Children Regulations 1991

Introduction

What is meant by open adoption?

The law does not define open adoption, but in practice the term covers a broad range of circumstances and arrangements, which usually include some kind of contact or links between the birth family and the adoptive family (including the child who is adopted). These arrangements usually fall into one of the following categories:

Direct Contact: this includes face to face or telephone contact between the birth family and the adoptive family (which may, but will not necessarily, include the child).

In some cases this is fully open, with the families knowing each other's identity and making the arrangements directly with each other without adoption agency involvement. These arrangements are usually informal and even unsupervised.

In other cases, the families do not know each other's identity or contact details, so the arrangements are made via the adoption agency and take place on neutral ground. This type of contact is often supervised either by the agency or someone independent.

Indirect Contact: this includes the exchange of letters, cards, gifts, photos and audio or video tapes between the adoptive family (including the child) and the birth family, via a third party address.

Indirect contact may, but does not necessarily, involve the child. It can be one way e.g. adopters sending cards to the birth family or two way where there is a mutual exchange of letters, photos etc. This type of contact is usually mediated or arranged by the adoption agency.

Potential Contact: This involves information or other material being provided by the adoptive or birth families to the adoption agency to be passed on, if requested, in the future. This leaves the way open for the adoptive parents, the child and the birth families to consider whether there should be contact at some future date.

What is an adoption agency?

The term adoption agency is used in this advice sheet. It means the department of the local authority which is responsible for the adoption of children or an authorised independent adoption agency which the local authority has asked to make arrangements about the adoption of a child on its behalf.

A. The legal framework for open adoption

1. Before a child is placed for adoption:

Before a child is placed for adoption, s/he will normally be **looked after** by the local authority beforehand. This will either be:

- by agreement with the parents in which case the child is **accommodated** by the local authority and the parents or others with parental responsibility will have agreed the plan; or
- under a care order in which case the child is **in care**.

Unless or until the local authority have the parents' consent to the placement or a placement order, they must comply with the general duties which apply to all children who are looked after by the local authority. These duties include the following:

- allowing the child **contact** with his/her family unless the court has said they do not need to. Recent case law suggests that the court should only allow the local authority to stop contact where this is in the child's best interests, rather than because it will make it easier for the local authority to find adopters;

s.20 CA

Reg 3 APCR

For further information see advice sheet on planning for looked after children

s.31 CA.

s.19 and s21 ACA.
For further information on this see advice sheet on adoption proceedings

Sched 2, para 15 and s.34 CA. See for example Re: H (Termination of Contact) [2005] 2 FLR 408

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- finding out and giving due consideration to the **wishes and feelings of the birth parent**, those with parental responsibility, the child, and others whom they consider relevant in relation to any decision they make about the child, particularly any decision relating to adoption; and
- finding out if there is anyone else in the family who is willing and able to look after the child before they consider placing him/her with a new family.

s 22(4)&(5) CA

S.23(6) CA; s.1(4)(f)
ACA

This means that unless the court stops contact before then, members of the birth family should be allowed contact with the child up until the point where either the parents formally agree, or the court orders, that the child can be placed for adoption. Where such contact is not agreed, the court has the power to order contact where it considers to be in the child's best interests.

Section 8, or s.34 CA
For further information on how to apply for contact with a looked after child see FRG advice sheets on contact.

Parents, relatives and wider family members should also be involved in any discussions about any plan for the adoption of their child, in order to:

- ensure that there is no-one else in the family who is willing and considered suitable to look after the child; and if this is not possible to
- request an open placement which would allow links/contact with the family to be maintained.

You may want to suggest the local authority arranges a **Family Group Conference** for these issues to be discussed with everyone in your family. However you should also be aware that the local authority does not have to go along with what you want once they have a care order or placement order on your child.

For further information see FRG advice sheet on Family Group Conferences.

Once the local authority has checked that there are no suitable placements for your child within the family, and instead proposes that your child should be adopted, there are certain key steps they must take before they can place him/her for adoption. If any arrangements have been made for contact/links between you and your child after placement, they will be considered at each of these stages.

For further information about these steps, see FRG advice sheet on adoption proceedings.

1.1 **Counselling and information:**

The adoption agency is required to provide counselling and information to the child and his/her parent/guardian about the legal procedures and implications of adoption. They must also find out the child's and the **parents' wishes and feelings** about:

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- ❑ the possibility of a placement for adoption,
- ❑ the child's religion and culture and
- ❑ contact arrangements between the child and the parents and/or other members of the family if s/he is placed for adoption or is adopted.

The local authority is required to obtain information about the views of the **child's father** (even if he has no parental responsibility, so far as the agency considers appropriate), his **wider family** and any other person the agency considers relevant, regarding the placement and any contact arrangements after placement.

Reg 14, AAR

If you are a father without parental responsibility the local authority should ask you if you intend to apply for parental responsibility and/or a residence or contact order for your child.

Reg 14 (3) & (4), AAR

All this information must then be sent to, and given consideration by, the Adoption Panel when it decides whether to recommend that a child should be placed for adoption, and when approving a proposed match between a child and prospective adopters. It is therefore important that you tell the adoption agency what you would like in relation to contact when they first start talking to you about a possible adoption placement. See the section on 'tips for negotiation' for some ideas on how to present your views.

Reg 17, AAR

1.2. Adoption Panel

Each adoption agency must set up an adoption panel to give advice on any decisions it makes relating to the adoption of children. This panel is made up of social work and other child care professionals, legal and health advisers and also some independent members.

Before the local authority can decide to pursue a plan for adoption they must prepare a permanence report on the child containing full background information, and send it, together with health reports on the child and his/her parents, to an Adoption Panel convened by the agency. The key functions of the Panel in relation to individual cases is to make recommendations about:

- ❑ whether the child should be placed for adoption ;
- ❑ whether the proposed adopters should be approved as prospective adopters; and

Reg 18 AAR

Reg 26 AAR

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- whether the needs of the child in relation to adoption are matched by the care offered by the proposed adopters.

Reg 32 AAR

One of the factors which the Panel should consider, (both when it considers whether to recommend a child should be placed for adoption, and that a child is matched with prospective adopters), is whether it is important for the child's future well-being to keep in touch with members of their birth family, and whether the proposed adopters are willing and able to support contact arrangements. This may include contact with grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters and sometimes parents.

Further information about the Panel's role can be found in advice sheet on adoption proceedings.

If you are a parent or relative of a child who may be adopted and you want to remain in touch, it is a good idea for you to **write to the Adoption Panel** setting out your views about what contact would be beneficial for the child so that the Panel can consider this before making any recommendations about whether the proposed adopters can meet your child's needs. It is also worthwhile sending a copy of the letter to the local authority.

1.3. The adoption agency decision about an adoption plan:

The Panel makes recommendations regarding a child's adoption and a proposed match between the child and prospective adopters and gives advice about any contact arrangements. The local authority must then take into account those recommendations and advice when deciding whether or not to pursue a plan for the adoption of the child.

Reg 19, AAR

If the agency decides to pursue a plan for the adoption of a child, it must consider any arrangements for contact with the child once s/he is placed for adoption, taking into account:

- the wishes and feelings of the child and the parents
- any recommendations of the Adoption Panel regarding contact and importantly
- the child's future welfare, including his/her existing relationships with family members and friends and the value to the child of these continuing.

Reg 46, AAR and Chapter 7, Guidance

s.1(2) & 1(4) ACA

2. When a child is placed for adoption:

Even if the Panel recommends that a child should be placed for adoption s/he can only be placed with prospective adopters if the adoption agency is authorised to place the child for adoption. This can be achieved if either:

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- each of the parents with parental responsibility gives formal consent to the placement. Their consent must be witnessed by a CAFCASS officer for it to be valid; or s.19 ACA
- the court makes a placement order. s.21 ACA

Once an adoption agency is authorised to place a child for adoption:

- any existing contact order under the Children Act 1989 ceases to have effect; s.26(1) ACA
- there is no duty on the local authority to allow contact between the child and members of their birth family; and
- there is no presumption in favour of contact continuing during placement although the adoption agency should always consider whether it should be arranged, before the placement is made. Reg 45 AAR and chapter 7.20 Guidance
s.27(4) ACA – see below

Arrangements for contact during the placement will be made only if this will promote the child's future welfare, as set out in the statutory checklist on page 8. s. s.1(2) & 1(4) ACA and chapter 7 Guidance

What about contact when a child is placed with the parents' consent?

If a child is placed for adoption with the consent of the parents, contact arrangements (if any) should be discussed with the adoption agency, and agreed, before the placement.

Therefore, if you are thinking of consenting to your child being placed for adoption, you may want to think about what contact or links you may want to have with your child and then discuss these with the local authority or adoption agency before you give your agreement to the placement. It is also important that you consider taking independent legal advice about the consequences of consenting to placement for adoption and also about what steps you can take to try to secure any agreement you make with the local authority about contact.

To find a solicitor specialising in child care law and adoption, see end of advice sheet.

What about contact when a child is placed under a placement order?

Before making a placement order, the court must consider the arrangements which the adoption agency has made for contact, and must invite anyone involved in those contact arrangements s.27(4) ACA

and the adoption agency to comment on those arrangements, before making a placement order.

It is usually better for everyone if contact arrangements can be agreed so that the child is not exposed to avoidable tensions. If you want contact with your child who is being placed for adoption, it is therefore best to approach the adoption agency to tell them what you want. If you feel able to, you could ask them to arrange for you to meet with the prospective adopters to discuss your wishes and concerns. You could ask the agency to arrange for/fund an independent family mediator to facilitate this meeting.

To find an independent family mediator see end of advice sheet.

This may be particularly relevant in a 'concurrent planning' situation i.e. where the local authority plan is that the child lives with foster carers who support a plan for the child to return home if at all possible, and will only adopt the child if a return home is ultimately not possible.

How are the arrangements for contact during placement agreed with the prospective adopters?

If/when the agency is authorised to place a child for adoption, any arrangements for contact must be included in the adoption placement plan. The adopters will therefore know about it and will have had a chance to express their views about the arrangements beforehand. These arrangements will be reviewed from time to time by the agency, taking account of the views of everyone involved, whilst the child remains placed for adoption.

Reg 46(7) AAR

What happens when contact arrangements are not agreed or there are difficulties?

If contact arrangements during the placement for adoption are problematic, the local authority may be able to help resolve the difficulties by providing support services for the child, the adopters and birth family members. These can include:

- family mediation services so that the adopters and birth family members can explore, in a legally privileged (private) meeting what is going wrong and what might be possible to make things easier;
- financial support for contact arrangements – this is not means tested.

Reg 3 ASSR

For further information on how to access support services, see

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section C on page 10-11.

However if the contact remains difficult or is not agreed at all, the court can make an order for contact during the placement for adoption.

Who can apply for contact during placement?

The following people have a right to apply for a contact order during the placement of a child for adoption:

- the child,
- the adoption agency,
- the parents, guardians, relatives, and
- anyone who had a previous contact order or residence order before placement.

s.26(2)(b) ACA

Anyone else can only apply if the court gives permission (known as “leave”). In addition, the court can make a contact order within placement order proceedings even if it has not been applied for.

s.26(3) ACA

How will the court decide whether to make a contact order during placement?

When the court decides whether or not to make a contact order during placement it will apply the ‘welfare principle’ set out in the Adoption and Children Act 2002. This states that:

- the welfare of the child **throughout his/her life** is the paramount consideration, and
- the court must consider a checklist of factors including:
 - any harm or risk of harm to the child;
 - the child’s wishes and feelings;
 - the relationships the child has with relatives and any other person whom the adoption agency considers relevant;
 - the likelihood of such relationships continuing and the benefit to the child of them doing so;
 - the ability and willingness of the child’s relatives/other person to provide a secure environment in which the child can develop and otherwise meet the child’s needs; and
 - the wishes and feelings of the child’s relatives/other person.

s.1(2) ACA

s.1(4) ACA

It may also attach conditions to the contact order for example about how often and where it may happen.

s.27(5) ACA

3. When the child is adopted:

Before the court considers making an adoption order, it is under a duty to consider whether there should be any arrangement for the child to have contact with any person after the adoption order is made and it must invite the parties to comment on the proposed arrangements. This does *not* mean that there is a presumption in favour of contact when a child is adopted.

s.46(6) ACA

On the making of an adoption order, any order for contact during the placement for adoption ceases to have effect because the child is no longer placed for adoption.

s.27(1) ACA

However the court has the power to make a new contact order, under the Children Act 1989, at the same time as the adoption order, although whether or not it will make such an order will depend on whether it considers this to be in the child's interests.

s.8 CA and s.26(5) ACA

Who can apply for a contact order at the adoption hearing?

A birth parent has a right to apply to court for contact at the adoption hearing because at that stage they are still the legal parents. However, once the child has been adopted, the birth parent will need the court's permission (known as "leave") to be able to make an application for a contact order.

s. 10 CA

Other birth relatives may also apply for a contact order, but they will almost **always** need the leave of the court to make this application, even before the child is adopted.

For further advice on this contact your solicitor or FRG advice service

When considering an application for *leave* to apply for contact the court must take into account several factors including the disruption which the *application* for contact may cause to the child's life.

s. 10(9) CA

How will the court decide about contact arrangements after the adoption order has been made?

The court will apply the welfare principle set out in the Children Act 1989, which includes:

- the welfare of the child as the paramount consideration of the court including looking at a list of factors about the child's welfare; and
- that the court must not make an order unless it considers that

Section 1 (1) CA

Section 1 (3) CA

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doing so will be better for the child than not doing so.

Section 1 (5) CA

However, in adoption cases, case law has established that the court will not impose a contact order on adopters against their wishes. Therefore it is very unlikely to make a contact order if the adopters do not agree. But in one case it was established that when it is noted in the preamble (introduction) to the adoption order that contact has been agreed between the parents and the adopters, and the adopters later refuse contact, they will be expected to explain their change of heart and its impact on the child's welfare if the matter goes back to court. You should therefore need to work with the adoption agency to try to agree contact arrangements and make sure these are noted on the adoption order. For further advice on this see section D.

Re: T (Adoption: Contact)
[1995] 2 FLR 251 ;
Re R (Adoption: Contact) [2005]
EWCA Civ 1128;
[2006] FLR
(forthcoming)

Re: T (Adopted Children: Contact)
1995 2FLR 92

B. Help with contact arrangements

The local authority has a general duty to provide adoption support services but whether or not these are available in a specific case will depend on the result of an assessment of the person's need for support.

s.3 ACA

An **assessment of the need** for adoption support services must be carried out by the local authority at the request of, amongst others, a birth parent or relative or other person with a significant relationship with the adopted child.

s.4 ACA

This includes an assessment of the need for assistance in relation to arrangements for contact. Typically the services they might provide to help with contact include:

Reg 3(1)&(3) ASSR

- arranging for/funding professional mediation services to address difficulties for example, between the adopters and a birth parent or relative.
- financial support with transport for the contact arrangements.

Reg 18 ASSR.

Following the conclusion of an assessment of your need for support, the agency must decide whether to provide services to meet the needs identified, but **there is no duty to provide services as such**. The local authority must also communicate its decision and give reasons.

Although there is no duty on the local authority to provide services they must be reasonable when reaching a decision about service provision, and must take account of the circumstances in each individual case and the resources

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available locally.

If you are refused an assessment of your need for services or you have been assessed but the local authority refuses to provide you with services, you may want to seek advice as to whether this refusal can be challenged.

Contact Family Rights Group Advice line - details at the end of advice sheet.

C. What does research say about open adoption?

Can contact with birth relatives help adopted children?

Here is a summary of some of the main messages from research about the different ways in which contact with birth relatives can help adopted children. You will find the full research references at the end of this advice sheet.

- **Sustained contact is regarded positively:** In general when contact has been sustained over a number of years, it is viewed positively, especially where there is face to face contact as this provides an opportunity for trust to develop between those involved. Indirect contact can also work well but it can be regarded as a difficult way to communicate.
- **The type of contact does not affect children's emotional and behavioural development:** the evidence to date suggests that other factors such as children's early experiences are more likely to have an effect on children's development than contact.
- **Maintaining established relationships.** Most children who know and remember their birth family feel very unhappy about losing these relationships. They would prefer to stay in touch with these important people, especially people with whom they have had a good relationship.
- **Staying in touch with important people from the past can help children settle in their new families.** Some adopted children worry about what is happening to members of their birth family, especially their siblings and parents, and keeping in contact can reassure children that their birth relatives are managing OK.
- **Helping children understand their roots.** For both older adopted children who remember their birth family, and children adopted very young who have no memories, contact

Neil and Young 2007

Neil and Young 2007

Thomas et al, 1999;
Macaskill, 2002

Fratter, 1996; Thoburn,
2004

Fratter, 1996; Wrobel
et al, 2003

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with birth relatives can help children to understand their own history and roots. This is important because most adopted people ask questions such as ‘who am I?’, ‘where do I come from?’ and ‘why was I adopted?’ If birth relatives can provide the adopted child and/or the adoptive parents with information about their past and current lives this helps adopted children to answer these important questions, giving them a better sense of identity.

- **Contact with birth relatives can help children feel that although their birth family couldn’t care for them, they still care about them.** This is very important, as some adopted children can feel rejected or unloved.

- **Helping children feel positive about their background.** It is important for adopted children’s feelings about themselves, that they have a balanced and realistic view of their birth family. When adoptive parents and the adopted child don’t have much information about the birth family, or when they are only given a one sided view, sometimes they can get a negative or an unrealistic picture in their minds. Having contact with birth family members can help both adopted children and adoptive parents know the birth family as real people with positive aspects to them.

- **Helping adoptive parents.** Adopted children have to manage issues of loss and identity and it is important that adoptive parents understand and can support children with these issues. Contact with birth family members can help adoptive parents support the child in a number of ways. It can:
 - help adopters to understand and empathise with the birth family, enabling them to answer children’s questions sensitively;
 - help them to feel OK about taking over the parenting role and reduce their feelings of anxiety about the birth family;
 - give them access to important information about the child’s development, including the family medical history; and
 - help them to keep an open communication with their child about adoption.

Thoburn, 2004

Neil, 2003a

*Neil, 2003a; 2004a;
2004b*

Neil, 2003b

Research findings about whether or not contact is good for adopted children are mixed. Contact will only benefit children in the ways described above if it is good quality contact.

What are the factors associated with contact that works?

- **There is no one type of contact that is best for every child** – each child’s situation should be considered individually. However the difficulty of face to face contact should not be overestimated, particularly as indirect contact is not always the easy option. *Neil and Young 2007*
- **Support:** Support is needed for both direct and indirect contact according to the needs of the parties which can change over time. *Neil and Young 2007*
- **Adoptive parents’ attitudes.** Contact works best when adoptive parents have an open and respectful view of the birth family, and a commitment to maintaining contact. *e.g. Fratter, 1996; Sykes, 2000; Neil and Young 2007*
- **Birth relatives’ attitudes.** Contact works best when birth relatives accept and support the child’s place in the adoptive family (even if they didn’t want or agree to the adoption), when they accept the adoptive parents as the child’s new parents and can work co-operatively with the adoptive parents. It is important for the child that birth relatives let them know that they still care about them but that they are OK about them having and loving a new family, otherwise children can feel very torn and unable to settle. *Smith and Logan, 2004; Neil 2003c*
Lowe, et al, 1999; Fratter, 1996
- **Adults working together.** Post-adoption contact is most likely to be a positive experience for the child when adult parties can work together with give and take, and when conflict between people is low. Research has highlighted the importance of flexibility, as the needs of all parties change as time goes by. *Grotevant et al, 1999; Macaskill, 2002*
Wrobel et al, 2003; Neil, 2002a
Neil, 2004a, 2004b; Wrobel et al, 2003; Macaskill, 2002
- **Keeping up contact over time.** Post adoption contact plans are not always kept up over time and when contact stops this can be very upsetting for children, birth relatives and adopters. Some people, especially birth relatives, may need help to be able to keep up contact as it can be a painful as well as a good experience. *Young and Neil, 2004; Logan, 1999*
- **A safe and pleasant experience for the child.** Several studies have found that contact can be a mixed experience for children because their relationships with birth relatives can be tense or difficult. It is important that children feel, and are, safe *e.g. Macaskill, 2002*
Neil et al, 2003
Neil, 2002b

during contact meetings and in some cases this means they will need their adoptive parents or another adult that they know and trust to stay with them. Birth relatives may need help to be able to get on better with the child.

D. Tips for Negotiation

- If the local authority is discussing plans, or has decided, that your child should be adopted, make it clear from the outset that you would like to be involved in selecting and meeting the adopters, and ask the local authority to look for adopters who will agree to continuing direct or indirect contact.
- However much you may oppose the adoption, you will need to find a way to deal with your feelings of hostility to the plan, so as to ensure that they do not interfere with any open relationship you may develop with the prospective adopters. If you can establish a good relationship with them, you will have a much better chance of maintaining a link with your child.
- Any plan for the adoption of your child should be based on what the professionals and the court consider is best for his/her welfare. So, if you want to maintain direct or indirect contact, think about what you feel would be best for your child, given his/her new circumstances with the adoptive family, then write to the adoption agency asking for this contact to be arranged, giving your reasons.
- Ask the adoption agency to seek adopters who understand why it is important for your child to retain contact with you, and then arrange a meeting for you to discuss it with the adopters directly. If you need help writing the letter, contact a solicitor or Family Rights Group's advice line or an Adoption Support Agency.
- When you meet the adopters, try to understand how they feel and give them reassurance that you will not undermine your child's placement with them. If you can do this, you will have a far better chance of maintaining links with your child.
- If the adopters find the idea of continuing contact hard to accept, gently suggest that they might benefit from speaking to other adopters whose children have contact with birth relatives. An organisation called **Adoption UK** has many members whose children have contact with their birth families. They may be a good source of support to your child's

FRG and adoption support agency contact details are at the end of this advice sheet

Adoption UK provides support to prospective and established adopters. Their Helpline number is: 0844 848 7900 (10am to 4pm)

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adopters. There are also helpful videos/DVDs about contact in adoption.

- If the adopters feel threatened by your request for links to be maintained, you could suggest that letters are exchanged by way of a letter box system, and that any direct visits could be on neutral ground so that you do not need to know their address.
- If the local authority/adopters turn down your request for continuing direct or indirect contact, you could refer them and your solicitor to the research findings outlined on page 11-12.
- If your requests are turned down by the local authority and/or the adopters, you could make an application to the court for contact. You should seek further advice about this. However you should also be aware that your application is unlikely to be successful unless the adopters agree, because the Court of Appeal has ruled that the courts will not impose a contact order on adopters against their wishes. Your best chance of achieving continuing contact is, therefore, by reaching an agreement about it with the adopters.

*Re: T (Adoption:
Contact)
(1995) 2 FLR 251*

If you do reach such an agreement on contact, it is a good idea to have it recorded in the preamble (introduction) to the adoption order, not least because then it is clear to all parties what has been agreed and the basis on which the order was made. For further advice about this, speak to your solicitor or call Family Rights Group's advice line.

*Re: T (Adopted
Children: Contact)
(1995)*

E. Where can I get further help?

If you would like information, advice and/or support about the adoption process and any dispute which may arise, you can:

Contact a **solicitor** who specialises in representing families in adoption cases or call community legal services solicitors directory. Ask your local Citizens Advice Bureau to recommend one or search on <http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/>

If you are on a low income or on income support or family credit, you might be able to get free advice through the public funding system run by the Legal Services Commission.

- Contact **Family Rights Group** (FRG) which offers specialist advice to any family member or friend who is involved with social care agencies about the welfare and/or protection of their child. This includes birth parents and relatives of a child who is being adopted. We can discuss with you the specific details of your case, and can also send you written advice information including the other advice sheets referred to above.

Family Rights Group's advice line is open on Freephone 0808 801 0366 Monday to Friday 10am-3:30pm or email: advice@frg.org.uk, or

write to: The Print House, 18 Ashwin Street, London, E8 3DL

- Contact a **family mediator** who may be able to help you resolve any dispute which arises over contact arrangements when your child is placed for adoption or even after the adoption order is made provided you and the adopters are both willing to participate. Although it may be unusual for mediators to work in the field of post adoption contact, you can ask if your local mediation service is able to help you with this. To find a mediator, you can contact:
 - Your local National Family Mediation (NFM) service in your area. A list of services can be found at the following weblink; <http://www.nfm.org.uk> or you can also call NFM on 01392 271610 - open 9.00am - 5.00pm (Monday - Friday) or email: general@nfm.org.uk; or
 - The Ministry of Justice's Family Mediation Helpline (on 0845 602 6627) who can refer you to a mediator from their joint register. www.familymediationcouncil.org.uk
Email: info@familymediationcouncil.org.uk
Address: Family Mediation Council, PO Box 593, Exeter, EX1 9HG

- Contact **British Association for Adoption & Fostering** (BAAF) provides information and advice for everyone concerned with adoption, fostering and child care issues through its website, extensive list of publications and advice lines.

Head Office Tel: 020 7421 2600

Saffron House, 6-10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS or find details of your local BAAF office via the website

www.baaf.org.uk.

BAAF also provides information about searching for birth and adopted relatives and maintains a database of agencies

providing adoption support and intermediary services on the Adoption Search Reunion website
www.adoptionsearchreunion.org.uk.

Adoption Support: If you would like support to help you explore your feelings about the adoption of your child you can contact:

- **After Adoption** helps anyone affected by adoption. They offer counselling, advice and information
Action line: 0800 0 586 57 Mon – Friday 9 am – 6 pm.
12-14 Chapel Street, Manchester, M3 7NH.
Tel: 0161 839 4932 or
email: information@afteradoption.org.uk
- **Consortium of Adoption Support Agencies (CASA)** is a group of independent Adoption Support Agencies (ASAs) who are registered under the Adoption and Children Act 2002. They provide support services to all parties affected by adoption or long-term fostering throughout the UK. To find out more information you can email: casa@adoptionuk.org.uk or visit www.casa-uk.org.
- **Natural parents network (NPN)** is a UK-based, self-help organisation which offers non-judgmental, confidential and independent support to people affected by adoption.

You can call their Help Line: 0845 4565031 which is open Monday – Friday: 09:30am - 11:30am. Please note that an answering/fax service is provided outside the above times:
Email: administrator@n-p-n.co.uk or
write to the Secretary at: 41 The Lindens, Friern Park, North Finchley, London N12 9DL
See also <http://www.n-p-n.co.uk>

- Contact the **Post-Adoption Centre** which supports birth relatives. They offer counselling, advice and information via the Advice Line 020 7284 5879 Mon, Tues, Wed & Fri 10.00am – 1.00pm and Thurs evening 5.30pm – 7.30pm. They also offer:
 - individual counselling at PAC and various outreach clinics,
 - a birth parent support group on Monday afternoons every fortnight, assistance with contact arrangements (direct/indirect) and
 - a project which offers services for women in prison who have had contact with their children curtailed.

5 Torriano Mews, Torriano Avenue, London NW5 2RZ, Tel:
020 7284 0555
Email: Advice@postadoptioncentre.org.uk

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