



Nottinghamshire
County Council

Nottinghamshire Archives

Adoption – tracing birth parents and immediate relatives

The Adoption of Children Act of 1926 came into effect in 1927. Prior to that date a child could only be fostered or placed with a guardian. Informal fostering was very common. There was not usually any record of these private arrangements. Occasionally references to boarded out children can be found in the Board of Guardians Poor Law records (SO/PUB-PUN).

From 1927 all adoptions made by courts in England and Wales are entered in the Adopted Children Register. The register is held by the General Register Office and indexes to them are available at the Family Records Centre. The registers are not open to the public but you can apply for information from them. The index is arranged by the surname of the adopting parents and date of adoption. It does not give the birth name of the child prior to adoption.

Until the 1970s adoptions could be arranged by an adoption society or agency, local authorities or privately by a doctor, solicitor, and priest or by the mother. New adoption regulations were implemented in 1984 and it became illegal for individuals to act in this capacity.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland an adopted person is legally entitled to apply for access to their birth records when they reach the age of 18. In Scotland the age is 16.

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 came into effect in England and Wales on 30th December 2005. Adopted adults and their adult birth relatives now have the right to apply to an intermediary service for help in tracing

relatives. In Scotland, although there is no equivalent legal right, birth relatives can ask for similar help.

Intermediary services can be provided by a local authority, voluntary adoption agency or registered adoption support agency. A list of intermediary service providers can be found at www.adoptionsearchreunion.org.uk

How to Find Out More About Your Birth Family

1. Contact the adoption agency that arranged your adoption

This may be the local authority or a voluntary adoption agency. The agency may be able to provide some information from your adoption records and can provide the information you need to get a copy of your original birth certificate.

2. Obtain Your Birth Certificate

Since 1975, adopted people have had the right to apply for a copy of their original birth certificate. Certificates can be obtained from the General Register Office.

If you were adopted before 12 November 1975 you will have to attend a meeting with an adoption counsellor before you can be given your birth certificate. If you were adopted after 12 November 1975 you do not have to see a counsellor but this will be offered to you and it is strongly recommended that you seek advice and support.

On your original birth certificate you should find out –

- When and where you were born
- The name you were given at birth
- Your mother's name
- Your father's name (if given)

The following sources available at Nottinghamshire Archives may help you further once you have the details from your birth certificate.

- Electoral Registers for Nottinghamshire
- General Register Office Indexes of Births, Marriages and Deaths for England and Wales
- Local Telephone Directories
- Probate Indexes for England and Wales

Contact Registers

Adopted people and birth relatives wishing to make contact with each other can register on the following contact registers.

www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/adoptions

Adoption Contact Register for England and Wales

www.birthlink.org.uk

Scotland's Adoption Contact Register

www.groni.gov.uk

Adoption Contact Register for Northern Ireland

www.norcap.org.uk

The National Association for Counselling Adoptees and their Parents.

National Sources of Information

www.adoptionsearchreunion.org.uk

Advice for anyone thinking about searching for or making contact with birth and adopted relatives.

British Association for Adoption and Fostering.
BAAF

Skyline House
200 Union Street
London
SE1 0LX
Tel. 020 7593 2000
www.baaf.org.uk

The Family Records Centre
1 Myddleton Street
London

EC1R 1UW

Tel: 0845 6037788

www.familyrecords.govuk

The General Register Office for England and Wales.

Adoptions Section
Room C201
General Register Office
Trafalgar Road
Southport
PR8 2HH
Tel. 0151 471 4830
www.gro.gov.uk

The General Register Office for Scotland.

GRO Edinburgh
The Registrar General
New Register House
3 West Register Street
Edinburgh
EH1 3YT
Tel. 0131 334 0380
www.gro-scotland.gov.uk

The General Register Office for Northern Ireland.

GRO Belfast
The Registrar General
Oxford House
49-55 Chichester Street
Belfast
BT1 4HL
Tel. 028 9025 2000
www.groni.gov.uk

The General Register Office for the Irish Republic (Eire)

GRO Dublin
Registrar General
Joyce House
8-11 Lombard Street East
Dublin 2
www.groireland.ie

The National Organisation for Counselling Adoptees and Their Parents

NORCAP
112 Church Road
Wheatley
Oxford
OX33 1LU
Tel. 01865 875 000
www.norcap.org.uk

Local Sources of Information

Nottinghamshire Social Services Department
Support After Adoption Team

Melrose House
Waverley Street
Nottingham
NG7 4HF

e-mail: support.afteradoption@nottscc.gov.uk

Telephone: 0115 978 7376

Nottingham City Council

Post Adoption Team

2nd Floor

York House

Mansfield Road

Nottingham

NG5 3NS

Telephone: 0115 915 0321

Catholic Children's Society

Families are Best

7 Colwick Road

West Bridgford

Nottingham

NG2 5FR

Telephone: 0115 955 8822

Southwell Diocesan Council for Family Care

Warren House

2 Pelham Court

Pelham road

Nottingham

NG5 1AP

Telephone: 0115 9608374