



Services for ADOPTED ADULTS



Who are we?

DFW Adoption has been operating as an adoption agency since 1926 when the first Adoption Act was introduced. Initially, this was an extension of the work already being undertaken with society's poorer families. From World War II onwards, it became more common for illegitimate infants to be placed for adoption and this became the focus of the agency's work. Adoption reached a peak in the mid 1960s and then began to decline, reflecting a gradual change in attitudes towards illegitimacy. In 1976, local authority Social Services Departments became registered as adoption agencies in their own right, and DFW Adoption, along with all the other voluntary adoption agencies, experienced a further reduction in demand for its adoption services.

DFW Adoption holds around 10,000 records of adoptions made during the last 80 years.

Since 1992 the agency has provided a specialist adoption service to adopted adults, birth parents and each of their families. This work is undertaken by experienced post adoption workers.

As an agency, we strongly believe that for anyone touched by adoption, the experience has a life-long impact, intertwined with all other relationships. This effect becomes more prominent at various points throughout each individual's life. It is at these critical times that services need to be available to individuals and families.

Services we provide as an Adoption Agency

The following services are provided for adopted adults whose adoptions were arranged through this agency, and they relate to information held on the individual records. There is no charge for these services:

- An initial session with one of our social workers, giving time for you to talk about what has brought you to this point, and what you would like from us. This also allows us to assess how best we can help. This session may be either by telephone or, preferably, in a face to face meeting.
- Additional sessions may be arranged to enable you to talk about the impact of adoption on you personally and on the relationships with those closest to you.
- Provided you already know your original name, you will be offered access to the information held by the agency relating to your adoption. This will be made up into an information package for you to keep; it will include photocopies of documents. It will exclude your adoptive parents' original application, which is confidential to them. You will be offered any original forms signed by either of your birth parents at the time, and letters written (usually to the agency) by either parent.
- If a birth relative has contacted the agency since your adoption was legalised, we will tell you about that, and of any wishes that were recorded.

Our records prior to 1976 are often very sparse. It was not anticipated that these records would ever be made available to those about whom they were written; they tend to be more about the process of adoption than about the individuals involved. However, they often contain more information than was given to your adoptive parents.

If you do not know your original name, we can advise how you apply to the General Register Office for a copy of your original Birth Certificate.

- Information about the two Adoption Contact Registers, and choices you can make in registering.
- The facility to leave a letter on file, together with your address and phone number.
- You will be asked what you would like to happen in the event that we are contacted directly by a birth relative or by an intermediary agency on his/her behalf.
- The facility to record a **veto** this may be an **absolute or a partial veto** stating that no contact is wanted with all or some of your birth relatives. A partial veto enables you to specify the conditions under which you will accept contact, e.g. to be informed of health issues.



Confidentiality

All discussions with your adoption worker remain confidential within the agency, with the following exception:

Should you disclose information about past or present abuse where the abuser could still be a danger to children, we will need to report this. We will discuss with you how best this can be done, and will encourage and support you towards taking that initial step yourself. However, it is important that we protect vulnerable children from possible abuse.

Search & Reunion

At present, this Agency is not able to provide Search & Intermediary Services, due to limited resources, but we can advise you about agencies that are registered to provide these services.

Donations

We do not receive grants and so donations towards the cost of this work are greatly appreciated.

Providing us with Feedback

We welcome your comments so that we can continue to improve the quality and efficiency of the services that we provide. If you have any suggestions about how we could improve our services, we would like to hear from you.

If you would like to give us some feedback – please write to or email your adoption social worker or the Director.

The Complaints Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with an aspect of the service you have received, and you want to make a complaint, you have a choice:

Talk to your adoption social worker. In many cases, the worker will be able to resolve the problem directly with you.

Talk to the Director who will try to negotiate a solution to the problem.

Write to the Chair of Trustees to lodge a formal complaint

A full copy of the Complaints Procedure is available by contacting:

**DFW Adoption
Agriculture House
Stonebridge
Durham Dh1 3RY**

Phone: 0191 3863719

Reading Material

If you would like to do some reading around adoption, we would suggest the following:

“The Primal Wound – Understanding The Adopted Child” by Nancy Newton Verrier
Published in 1991 by Gateway Press, Baltimore.
ISBN 0-9636480-0-4

“Coming Home to Self – The Adopted Child Grows Up” also by Nancy Newton Verrier
Published in 2003 by Gateway Press, Baltimore.
ISBN 0-9636480-1-2

“Preparing for Reunion” by Julia Feast et al
Published in 1998 by The Children's Society
ISBN 1-899783-09-1

“The Adoption Reunion Handbook” by Liz Trinder, Julia Feast and David Howe
Published in 2004 by John Wiley and Sons
ISBN 0-470-09422-2

“Still Screaming – Birth Parents Compulsorily Separated From Their Children” by Lyn Charlton et al
Published in 1998 by After Adoption
ISBN 1-953257-40-1

“Within Me, Without Me – Adoption: An Open and Shut Case?” – Sue Wells
Published in 1994 by Scarlet Press
ISBN 1-85727-042-8

“Blue-Eyed Son” by Nicky Campbell
Published in 2004 by Macmillan
ISBN 1-4050-4718-6



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