



Services for BIRTH PARENTS and RELATIVES



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 service 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 nearly 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 people involved in adoptions that were arranged through this agency, and they relate to information held on the individual agency file.

- 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 you. 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.
- Information about the two Adoption Contact Registers, and the choices you can make in registering with one or both.
- The facility to leave a letter or letters on file, together with your address and phone number.

You will be asked what you would like to happen in the event that the agency is contacted—either directly by the adopted person or by an intermediary agency. We will ask you to put your wishes in writing so we know exactly what you would like us to do.

- For birth parents, the availability of an Information Package extracted from the agency adoption file. This includes information about you and your “child” up until the time the adoption order was made. This will enable you to see what was written about you, and what information your son/daughter may access in the future. You may add to this or write down your own memories of this period if you feel the information is inaccurate. We are happy to help you do this.

We know that our records prior to 1976 are often quite sparse. It was not anticipated that these records would ever be made available to those about whom they were written, and thus they tend to be more about the process of adoption than the nature of the individuals involved.

The package of information can also include a “pen picture” of the family your son/daughter joined. This will be non-identifying. We are not permitted to release identifying details about the family (names, addresses etc). We cannot tell you whether the family kept the name you gave your child or whether the family chose different names.



Search & Reunion

At this time, we are not able to undertake searches and intermediary work because of limited resources. We can, however, advise you about agencies that are registered to provide these services.

Confidentiality

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

Should you disclose information about past 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.

Donations

We do not receive any grant to enable us to provide these services. Donations towards the cost of maintaining these services are greatly appreciated.

Reading Material:

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

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

“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?” by 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

“Letter to Louise” by Pauline Collins
Published in 1992 by BCA
ISBN CN 9354

The agency has a longer list of books relating to adoption if you would like to read more.

Providing us with Feedback

We welcome your comments so that we can continue to improve the quality and the efficiency of the services we provide. If you have suggestions about how we could improve our services, we want to hear these as well.

If you would like to give us some feedback – please write 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:

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