



SERVICES FOR ADOPTED PERSONS BIRTH RECORDS COUNSELLING AND ACCESS TO ADOPTION INFORMATION

The Reparative Care Team is part of Children and Family Community Services, The Committee *for* Health and Social Care. It delivers post adoption support services on behalf of the Committee and will allocate an experienced adoption social worker to undertake Birth Records Counselling services for adopted persons who are 18 years or older. This service is available to adopted persons seeking access to adoption information who are resident in Guernsey or Alderney where The Committee for Health and Social Care or its predecessors acted as the placing agency.

Adoption is an evolving lifelong process for all those involved and the fundamental issues raised by adoption may reverberate and resurface at different times and stages in an individual's life. Providing birth record counselling and access to information enables adopted persons to understand the circumstances of their adoption and enhance understanding of their family of origin.

The Reparative Care Team recognises that the welfare of the adopted person is to be fully considered in its Birth Records Counselling service is. Nonetheless the team also recognises it has a duty of care to all parties to the adoption, and that, in provision of this service, its adoption social workers will consider the implications for everyone involved concerning sharing of information and intermediary work.

Please also refer to the Reparative Care Team Fair Processing Privacy Notice which is available to access via www.gov.gg/rct

The Adoption (Amendment) (Guernsey) Law, 2000 gives an adopted person over the age of 18, who was born in Guernsey or Alderney, the right to apply to the Registrar at the Guernsey Greffe for a copy of their original birth certificate.

The Registrar can only supply the applicant with a copy of their birth certificate once the adopted person has attended a meeting called Birth Records Counselling, with an adoption support social worker based in the Reparative Care Team.

Once the meeting has taken place the adoption social worker will advise the Registrar at the Greffe that the Birth Certificate can be provided.

Please note the Greffe charges a fee to issue certificates. Details of cost and payment methods can be found on the Greffe website.

www.guernseyroyalcourt.gg Telephone: +44 (0) 1481 726161.

What is Birth Records Counselling?

The purpose of the interview, also referred to as Birth Records Counselling is to enable the adoption social worker to understand the adopted adults particular request and needs, so this can be responded to in a particular way. The Adoption social worker will also explain that they have knowledge and understanding of the life –long issues of adoption. It also provides an opportunity for the adopted adult to explore their hopes, fears and expectations. The adoption social worker will also provide advice and support regarding access to court records and adoption files.

Issues covered in the Birth Records Counselling Interview.

- The reason for the enquiry.
- The adopted person's current circumstances including information about their family situation such as partner, children and occupation.
- Their experience and knowledge of their adoption and the sources of that information.
- Whether they were adopted transracially.
- Whether their adopted family is aware of their application and if they are their attitude and feelings about this.
- Their support systems.
- Their hopes fears and expectations.
- What information is being sought?
- Whether contact with birth family members is being sought.
- The role of the Adoption Contact Register.
- Genetic Sexual Attraction.
- The importance of accessing intermediary services as opposed to progressing with tracing and searching independently.
- Welfare considerations pertaining to the adopted adult receiving information.

The Adoption Contact Register.

The Adoption Contact Register is maintained at the Greffe by the Registrar. The register contains two parts. Under part I of the register an adopted person, aged 18 years or over, who was born in Guernsey, may apply to the Registrar to record their wishes for contact or otherwise with their birth relatives. The adopted person should complete Form B available at the Greffe. Once completed the form should be sent to the Greffe together with payment. Please see details of cost and payment methods via the Greffe website.

Under Part II of the register a relative of an adopted person who was born in Guernsey, Alderney and Sark who is eighteen years or over, can apply to the Registrar to record their wishes for contact or otherwise with the adopted person by completing Form C available at the Greffe. Once complete the form should be sent to the Greffe together with payment of the applicable fee. Form D provides an opportunity for either an adopted person or their birth relatives to amend or remove an entry in either Part I or Part II of the Adoption Contact Register. This form is also available from the Registrar at the Greffe and applications should be accompanied by the applicable fee

Adopted persons born in Jersey and adopted in Guernsey.

The Adoption (Jersey) Law 1961 Revised Edition/01.01.19 allows an adopted person over the age of 18, who was born in Jersey to apply to the Superintendent Registrar at States Greffe Jersey for a copy of their original Birth Certificate.

The Registrar will only supply this information via an adoption social worker who will write to the Superintendent Registrar to request the birth certificate and confirm the applicant has received a birth records counselling interview by an adoption social worker.

Where the applicant wishes to access information held on their adoption file in Jersey, the adoption social worker will contact The Adoption Team in Jersey and request an adoption summary. This will be shared by the post adoption social worker with the applicant.

Adopted persons born and adopted in the UK and resident in Guernsey.

The Children Act 1975 (sections 26 & 28) gave adopted people the right to apply a copy of their original birth certificate from the **General Register Office (GRO)** www.gro.gov.uk



Adopted Person's adopted after the 12th November 1975 can access their original birth certificate from the GRO without having to attend an appointment with a post adoption social worker (Birth Records Counselling) However the adopted person is entitled to receive support and advice regarding accessing adoption records and adoption issues.

Adopted person's adopted before 12th November 1975 who do not know their birth name, are required to meet with a post adoption social worker (Birth Records Counselling)

How to apply for a copy of an original birth certificate from the General Register Office (GRO)

Contact **GOV.UK Adoption Records** and complete **The Application for Birth Records Certificate Information Before Adoption Form. (BIBBA)**

Section 2 of the form requires the applicant to select where a meeting with an adoption support advisor will take place. Applicants need to tick the Local Authority Box. Further on in **section 7** of the form the applicant is required to provide details of the agency as follows:

**The Post Adoption Senior Social Worker.
Reparative Care Team
Swissville
Rohais
Guernsey.
GY1 1FB.**

The GRO will send the paperwork containing the applicant's birth name, name of birth mother/ father if known, to the Post Adoption Senior Social Worker in the Reparative Care Team who will make contact to arrange a meeting. (Birth Records Counselling)

At the interview the adoption social worker will require proof of ID in the form of a passport or driving licence and evidence of the applicants address before sharing information provided by The General Registrar Office.

The adoption social worker will share the information provided by the GRO and the relevant forms to enable the adoptee to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate.

Where issues of concern have arisen at the counselling interview, for example in relation to the adopted person's instability the adoption social worker should alert

the GRO. The adopted person should also be advised about the Adoption Contact Register.

The information provided by the GRO will usually identify the court in the UK where the adoption took place and the adoption social worker can apply for court records pertaining to the adoption and request the name of the Local Authority where the adoption file is held. The adoption social worker can also apply to the named Local Authority to request information they may hold. Please be advised this can be a lengthy process due to the high volume of requests.

Tracing and Intermediary Services.

Many adopted adults, having found out about their birth family, and the reasons they were adopted, express a wish to trace and subsequently make contact with birth family members. The Reparative Care Team is not able to provide this service, but we are able to signpost to independent tracing and intermediary agencies who can undertake this work. Please note agencies charge for this service.

We strongly recommend that adoptees use these services as it's important to also consider the impact contact and possible reunion may have on birth family members.

The adoption social worker will continue to offer support and advice to the adopted person throughout the process and can provide advice about accessing other support services.

Birth relatives who wish to seek information about adopted adults.

The law in the UK changed in December 2005 to enable birth relatives of adopted persons born and adopted in the UK the right to trace and contact an adoptee through an intermediary service once the adoptee is eighteen years of age. However no contact details are provided to birth family members without the consent of the adoptee.

The law in Guernsey and Alderney currently only allow for an adopted person via a tracing & intermediary agency to make contact with birth relatives. However, Birth relatives can register a wish for contact and this will be given to the adopted adult if they seek information about their adoption.

How to register a wish for contact.

Register a wish for contact on the Adoption Contact Register held by the Greffe in Guernsey or Jersey.



The Adoption Contact Register UK

You can add yourself to the Adoption Contact Register at the General Register Office to:

- find a birth relative or an adopted person
- say you don't want to be contacted

Please note, this is not a tracing service - for a connection to be made between people, you must both be on the Adoption Contact Register.

In the first instance please arrange an appointment with a post adoption social worker in Guernsey or Jersey. The post adoption social worker can provide advice and arrange for a letter expressing a wish for contact to be placed on the adoptees file.

Referral process

A referral form to request access to adoption records can be obtained from:

Swissville Admin Team
Tel: 01481 723182

swissvilleadmin@gov.gg

Reparative Care Team website -

www.reparative.careteam@gov.gg

The Guernsey Greffe
Tel: 01481 725277

www.guernseyroyalcourt.gg

Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Team

C&FCSInformationRequests@gov.gg

Once the completed application form with a copy of photographic ID has been returned to the (Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Service) it will be forwarded to the Reparative Care Team. The request is then allocated to an adoption social worker who will contact the enquirer and arrange an interview.

If you already hold relevant information regarding the adoption it is helpful to bring it to the appointment.

Often at this initial appointment with the adoption social worker the adopted person may not know if they want to contact birth family member(s). Some may know immediately they want to search, others need additional time with the adoption social worker before they know what they want to do next. It is



important to receive birth history/background information first, reflect on it before moving forward.

Preparation and sharing information held in adoption files.

In line with the Data Protection (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2017 the adoption social worker has a duty to carefully consider the information held on third parties. However careful consideration also needs to be given to the nature of the information, the relevance and benefits to the adopted person of knowing the information and the likely effect on him/ her of receiving it.

What record of information can I expect?

Adopted adults born in Guernsey, Alderney and Jersey can only be provided with an adoption summary, and not original copies of adoption records. (This is currently under review within The Adoption and Children (Guernsey and Alderney) Law, 2020.

Adopted adults born or adopted in the UK may receive original documents regarding their adoption.

In the event an adopted adult is dissatisfied with the information provided, the adoption social worker will seek further advice and guidance.

Signposting to other agencies

Due to the sensitive nature of receiving adoption records related information, the adoption social worker will inform the enquirer of supportive services to assist, for example assistance with a referral to Philippi Counselling Service or signposting to relevant support services in the resident area.

Applications by children

Requests cannot be received from children under the age of 18 years however it may be appropriate for life story work to take place by an experienced worker in the Reparative Care Team.

Application on behalf of a deceased person

Where a request is received for adoption information of someone who has died, the person making the application should explain their relationship to the deceased person, what information is needed and why.



Access by birth relatives to adoption records and intermediary services

Birth relatives at numerous points in their lives have a desire to find out more information and or meet the adopted person. These, requests need to be considered on an individual basis.

Birth relatives can meet with the adoption social worker in the Reparative Care Team who will provide advice regarding their options; however it is important to be aware that in most cases information can only be provided if the adopted person has expressed a wish to receive information about their adoption. Where the legislation allows, intermediary services can be accessed to approach adopted persons (who have attained the age of 18 years) however this can be costly and if the adopted adult does not wish to receive contact from a birth family member it is their right to do so.