



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

You, Your Child and Adoption

Information for Birth Parents

manchester.gov.uk

Important

These notes will be discussed with you and your social worker but you should not hesitate to contact your social worker again if you wish to discuss them further.

Your social worker is _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Introduction

This leaflet is meant for birth parents, guardians and other people with parental responsibility where adoption is being considered for their child.

It is intended to give some general information about adoption which should be considered carefully, but it cannot describe fully all that is involved in adoption. For this reason your social worker will want to discuss adoption with you and ensure that you have every opportunity of thinking how adoption applies to your particular circumstances. Your child may not be born, may be very young or may be considerably older. What ever your circumstances your social worker will want to give you all the information they can to enable you to reach the best decision for you and your child.

Manchester Children's Services (the Agency) is an approved adoption agency. This means that we recruit and assess families that want to adopt and we match them with children who need adoptive placements.

At all times the Agency needs to be sure that you understand what is involved in having your child adopted and when you receive this booklet, your social worker will want to read it and discuss it with you. They will ask you to sign a form to confirm you have read and understand it.

Manchester Children's Services hope you will find these notes helpful.

What is Adoption

Adoption is a way of providing a new family for a child when living with their own birth family is not possible. Adoption agencies are allowed to place children with suitable families but cannot make the arrangement legally binding. This can only be done by a court making an adoption order. This ends the child's legal relationship with their birth family and gives the child new legal parents. The child becomes a full member of the adoptive family just as if they were born to the adopters.

Adoption means changing parents permanently. Because this is such an important decision in a child's life, the law requires adoption agencies and courts to put the child's welfare above all other considerations.

If your child is adopted you will no longer have any legal responsibilities, duties or rights over them. You will not be able to claim your child back, but there may be the opportunity to keep in touch.

There may be many things about adoption that you feel unclear about and your social worker will be ready to try to help you in anyway possible. Don't hesitate to raise any doubts or concerns you feel with your social worker either directly yourself or with the help of a friend or supporter. You may also find it helpful to talk things over with your family and friend or ask the advice of your solicitor or doctor or a religious advisor or an independent counsellor from another adoption agency such as After Adoption.

Knowing about you

Before an adoption can be arranged we need to ask for a lot of information about you and your child. This is so that we have a full picture of your child and family background in order to make the best decision about the child's future.

This information is very personal and the law says we must treat it as confidential though some information will need to be passed on to other people for your child's sake. You can help by telling the Agency about yourself and your family and by understanding why we ask for your permission to ask your doctor about your family's health and the birth details of your child. This can be very important as your child grows up. Adoptive parents also need to know about the background of the child placed with them especially for later in life when adopted children themselves often want to know more about their origins. The Agency hopes you will provide us with photographs and information that will help the child understand about their birth family. The Agency hopes you will understand why we need to ask for information from you. We also ask for a lot of information from the people who may adopt your child.

Choosing a family

The law says adoption agencies must make very thorough enquiries about adopters. The Agency asks them for a lot of detailed information about themselves and their background and we try to make sure we understand what kind of upbringing they would offer your child. A great deal of thought goes into choosing the right family.

The Agency has to be certain that the family will be able to meet your child's needs and we are not allowed to place your child for adoption without first considering whether adoption by a particular family will be in your child's long term best interest.

Please tell your social worker if there is anything special you would like us to bear in mind when choosing a family for your child. You might want your son or daughter to have a particular religious or cultural upbringing. Alternatively you might want your child not to be the only child in the new family or you might want to ask that your child has the chance to follow a special interest or talent. We cannot promise to do exactly as you wish because we must put the child's interests first when choosing an adoptive family but we will take your wishes seriously and do our very best to meet your requests.

The Agency is also required by law to find out what your child's wishes and feelings are about adoption (if they are old enough to be able to say what they want). This is not always easy but even quite young children can understand and express their feelings about adoption and we are bound to take these very seriously along with your own wishes.

Adoption by Foster Carers

Perhaps your child has been looked after for a while by foster parents and they would now like to adopt them. This does not make any difference to our task and we still have to make the same thorough enquiries as with any other adopters. We have to be quite sure that it is in your child's best long term interest to be adopted by the family before we can support the arrangement.

How Adoption is Organised

A child can only be placed for Adoption with their parents consent or if they are subject to a placement order.

Parental Consent

If you have asked for your child to be adopted your social worker will inform an organisation called CAFCASS. They will arrange for a CAFCASS officer (who is an independent social worker) to be appointed by the Court. The CAFCASS officer will arrange to visit you and discuss the adoption. They will need to be sure that you are willing to agree to your child's adoption freely and without conditions. If they are satisfied about this you will be asked to sign a formal document giving your agreement to adoption.

A parent can change their mind at any stage and cannot give their formal consent to adoption until the baby is 6 weeks old.

When you give your consent to the CAFCASS Officer, Manchester Children's Services will acquire Parental responsibility for your child and share it with you from that date.

Placement Orders

If your child is subject to Care Proceedings and it is Manchester Children's Services plan that your child should be placed for adoption, the Agency will apply to the Court for a Placement order. This will allow the Agency to place your child with an adoptive family. If you do not agree with this it is important that you discuss this with your solicitor. When a Placement order is granted you will still have some parental responsibility for your child and this will be shared with Manchester Children's Services and the adoptive parents once your child is placed there.

When will my child be placed with an adoptive family?

Only after you have given your consent or a placement order is made can your child move to a new family. If your child is to be adopted by their current foster carers the Agency will still need to get your consent or obtain a placement order.

When a family has been chosen for your child you may want to know something about them. It may be possible for you to meet the adoptive family or we will try and give you as much information as we can but adoption arrangements are confidential.

Either way your social worker will notify you when your child moves to their new family.

After your child has been placed with the new family for 10 weeks, they will make an application to the Court for an Adoption Order. If the Court makes an Adoption Order your parental responsibility and the Agency's will transfer to the new parents.

You will be informed by the Court when the Adoption Hearing takes place and have the right to attend.

Keeping in touch

You may be able to keep in touch with your adopted child through the letterbox service. Your social worker will discuss this with you and provide you with the leaflet: *Post Adoption Letterbox Service – a guide for birth relatives.*

When your child grows up

When a child is adopted they take their adoptive family's surname. Adoptive parents are encouraged to keep the name you gave them although they may choose to keep it as a middle name. Older children usually keep their first name.

When the adoption order is made the adopters get an adoption certificate from the Registrar General which only shows the child's new names and shows the adopters as the child's parents. This takes the place of the birth certificate for all legal purposes.

When an adopted person reached 18, it is possible to get a copy of their original birth certificate showing their original name and your name and address at the time the birth was registered. Adoptive parents are encouraged to bring the child up to know they are adopted and to know about their origins. It is very understandable that adopted people wish to know about their birth family and that some may trace their family of origin when they are adults.

Post Adoption Contact

The Registrar General operates the Adoption Contact Register which puts adopted people and their birth relatives in touch with each other, if that is what they both wish.

The Register is in two parts. Part 1 for registering adopted persons over 18 and Part 2 for registering the relatives of adoptive people.

If an adopted person chooses to register themselves on the Adoption Contact Register and a birth relative also registers giving their name and address or that of an intermediary their information will be forwarded by the Contact Register to the adopted person. The relative will be notified that this has been done but they will not receive any identifying information about the adopted person who will retain the right to decide whether or not to make contact.

More information about the Adoption Contact Register and form ACR 108 (to apply to go on the register) is available from www.direct.gov.uk or Adoptions Service, Room C202, General Register Office, Trafalgar Road, Southport, PR8 2HH.

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CERTIFICATE

To Manchester Children's Services

I certify that I have received from you 'You, Your Child and Adoption, Information for Birth Parents'

By signing this certificate of acknowledgement, I agree that I have read this leaflet and understand it.

Signature _____

Address _____

Date _____