

**Adopted people are entitled to access their birth records after they have reached the age of eighteen**

### Who can ask us for information about their birth records?

- Adopted adults resident in Southwark
- Adopted adults placed for adoption by Southwark
- Adopted adults about whom a file may be held in Southwark's Adoption Archive

### Southwark Residents

#### You are just beginning to think about looking for your birth records

You can talk to us on the phone and we can give you advice about how to begin and send you leaflets and information about the contact registers. It is always a good idea to discuss your plans with someone independent. Other people can be very excited by and curious about adoption stories and don't always understand the impact on you.

#### You have decided you definitely want to access your birth records.

There are three sets of regulations – the route to your birth records depends on when your adoption order was made .

**You were adopted before 12 November 1975** In order to obtain a copy of your original birth certificate you need to contact the General Register Office at Smedley Hydro. They will also let you know where the court records are held so you can find out which agency was involved with your adoption. You can ask for your counselling interview to be provided by the Southwark Adoption Support Service.

**You were adopted after 12th November 1975 and before 30<sup>th</sup> December 2005** You do not have to have a counselling interview before receiving a copy of your birth certificate, but if you choose to do so the Southwark Adoption Support will provide the service. It is always a good idea to talk to someone independent.

**You were adopted after December 30<sup>th</sup> 2005** The only way to get a copy of your original birth certificate is through the agency that placed you for adoption. We can write to them on your behalf.

In the first instance you should write in giving your adopted name, your date of birth, and if known, your birth name, the date of your adoption, and the adoption agency involved in

placing you for adoption. As you are asking to access confidential records you will need to provide both proof of your identity and your residence in Southwark - an original bank statement with your address, utility bill or photo copy of a driving licence, or photocopy of your passport. You will need to produce the original documents when you come in to the office.

There is likely to be a waiting list for this service, and there may be additional delays depending on the pressure of work at the other agency. The agency who holds an adoption file about you has to prepare it in accordance with specific regulations. These are complex and depend on when you were adopted. They will be explained to you when you see the Adoption Support worker.

### Intermediary Service

If you have already traced your birth relatives and are wondering how to approach them we are able to offer an intermediary service. Research shows that approaches made to adopted people and birth parents alike are much more successful if made through an intermediary. Requests for intermediary services will be given priority.

### Support Group for Adopted Adults

This meets once every two months. We can provide you with information about this group.

### Tracing your birth relatives

We are unable to help with the actual details of tracing, but we have information about websites and agencies that can help such as Adults Affected by Adoption – Norcap (AAA-Norcap), and the Family Records Centre. Information will be sent out within ten working days of a phone call to the Adoption Support Service.

**Your adoption was arranged by Southwark or Southwark Adoption Archive holds a file about your adoption and you are NOT resident in Southwark.**

- You should contact your own local adoption support service (every local authority is required to provide an Adoption Support Service as do other agencies such as AAA-Norcap, After Adoption etc ). If you have problems we can help you find out who you should contact in your own locality. We will check our archive to find out whether or not we hold any files concerned with your adoption.
- You will need to provide evidence of your identity and residence for your local service.

- When we have had a request in writing from your Adoption Support Agency we will prepare the file that we hold and send a copy to your local adoption support service.
- Adopted adults may request an independent review of the decisions an agency makes about disclosing or withholding information.
- There is usually a waiting list for this service and you should expect some delay. If you feel strongly that you want your service to come directly from Southwark we can discuss this.
- If we hold a file concerned with your adoption and you are a Southwark resident we provide the whole service.

#### You are under the age of eighteen

- If you want access to your birth records we normally suggest that you discuss this with your adoptive parents who should have quite a lot of information about your family of origin. When you are eighteen you will be entitled to access to the file about you in the normal way.
- You are entitled to ask for an Adoption Support Needs Assessment. This might happen if you were dissatisfied about contact arrangements, had difficulties with your adoptive family or wanted to access a particular service.
- The South London Adoption Consortium, of which Southwark is a member, holds regular workshops for young people interested in meeting other adopted young people and talking about the issues that affect them.

**Contact Point for all enquiries:  
Southwark Adoption Support Service Advisor  
Southwark Adoption Support Service  
47b East Dulwich Road  
SE22 9BZ 020 7525 4420**

# Adoption Support Services for Adopted Adults