

ADOPTION – HANDOUT 2021

Until 1925 children were the property of their father and could be removed from the care of their mother without any recourse to the law.

Under the 1925 Guardianship of Infants Act parents had equal claims over their children.

Prior to 1926 adoption was unregulated.

Adoption Act 1926

Introduced legal adoption procedures for the first time.

Up to 1930 – Guardians of the Poor did board out children formally. Signed documents do survive including records of children boarded out for gain. You might also find records of children who were sent to places like Canada and Australia.

1939 – Adoption of Children (Regulations) Act

This Act required local authorities to be notified of any informal adoption, by anyone, of any child, under the age of 9. It also made it illegal to advertise children for adoption or adoption for financial reward.

Adoption Act 1949 – tightened the regulations. It required a probationary period of three months to be completed under the supervision of the local authority before an adoption order was granted. It also laid down that a mother could not consent to adoption until her child was at least six weeks old.

Adoption Act 1976 – for the first time allowed adoptees the right to see their original birth certificate and information relating to their biological parents.

Adoption Contact Register

An adoptee or a birth relative of an adopted person, can add themselves to the Adoption Contact Register to express an interest in finding their family. People can also use the Register to say if they don't want to be contacted.

To find birth record

If an adoptee doesn't have their birth records they can apply for them using a form downloadable from the service shown below and it is then sent to the General Register Office. The record will then be made available to them. If adopted before 12 November 1975, they need to have had a meeting with an approved adoption advisor before obtaining the information. If adopted after 12 November 1975 they have the choice whether to see an advisor or not.

If you are a birth relative you will only be able to find people who have added themselves to the Adoption Contact Register. However, you can use an intermediary agency to trace the person and find out if they want contact.

People who don't want to be contacted can put an absolute veto on their record but an agency could still pass on information about hereditary medical conditions or an inheritance.

A qualified veto means you can state who you would want contact with eg you might not want contact with a parent but might want contact with a sibling.

You know your birth details

You can order a copy of your original birth certificate from the [General Register Office](#). For adoptions outside England or Wales you need to contact the General Register Office where you were adopted. **You don't know your birth details**

You need to fill in an application for Birth certificate Information Before Adoption (BIBA) service if you don't know your birth details. Which application form you fill in depends on if you live. Post or email the form to:

adoptions@gro.gov.uk

Adoptions Section
Room C202
General Register Office
Trafalgar Rd
Southport
PR8 2HH

There are comprehensive guides on the Contact Register and all aspects of obtaining original records on the General Register Office website

National Archives

If you search their collections it will tell you whether a particular institution's records still exist and where they are located. Most seem to be in the County Record Offices.

Records are restricted if under 100 years old