



North East Lincolnshire Council
Information for Birth Relatives
About Adoption



Advice



Adoption service

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Welcome... to this leaflet about adoption

- Our aim in this leaflet is to provide you with a guide to the nature and effects of adoption.
- We also provide information on the necessary steps to be taken before a child can be adopted
- We give you a summary of your rights if you are willing for your child to be adopted;
- We give a summary of your rights if you do not agree with the plan of adoption;
- We show what you can expect of the local authority when adoption is the plan for a child



Thinking about adoption can be very difficult. You may find you need extra support and help at these times. Some of the people who could help you are listed on the next page...



A solicitor (for legal advice)

If you don't have a solicitor, the Citizen's Advice Bureau can recommend solicitors who specialise in child care law. (The local Citizen's Advice Bureau is at 4 Town Hall Square, Grimsby Tel: 08444 111 444). If you are on a low wage, or on income support or job seekers allowance, you may be able to free legal advice to begin with under the Legal Help Scheme.

Your child's social worker

Your child's social worker is
Tel:

An adoption social worker (from the Adoption Team)

The Adoption Team is based at:
Civic Offices
Knoll Street, Cleethorpes
DN35 8LN
North East Lincolnshire

An independent counsellor (who could be arranged for you by the Adoption team), for example from After Adoption Yorkshire. (See page 30)

The Family Rights Group

The Family Rights group is a national, voluntary, independent agency. Their website is www.frg.org.uk They have an advice line open on Free phone 08088010366. (See page 30)

It is very important you fully understand all the effects of adoption and your rights and those of your child in the adoption process. Please do seek advice and help.

What is adoption?

Adoption is a way of providing a new family for a child.

North East Lincolnshire, as an Adoption Agency, can make arrangements for adoption by finding suitable adoptive families for children but only a Court can make adoption orders.

We list below the main changes an adoption order will make. The wording may seem a little blunt but it is very important that you fully understand how adoption will affect you and your child.

If an adoption order is made by a court:

- Any legal rights (**usually called parental responsibility**) you may have had in respect of your child will be taken away. Only the adoptive parents will have legal rights for your child.
- Your child will become a full legal member of their adoptive family.
- Your child's surname will be changed to that of their adoptive parents.
- Your child will have an adoption certificate to replace their birth certificate.
- Adoption orders are permanent.

Again, if this is unclear or if you have any questions, please contact your solicitor, your child's social worker or an adoption social worker.

Making the decision about adoption

The long-term welfare of any child is the main concern of the local authority.

Every child has the right to grow up in a family. Ideally this will be the child's family by birth.

However, this may not always be possible:

Either: Because the parents request that their child is brought up by someone else;

Or: The local authority does not feel it is in the child's best interests to be brought up by their birth family (and a court agrees).

When it is not possible for a child to be brought up by their birth parents, the local authority must first consider any other members of the birth family who may be able to care for the child for example, grandparents, aunts, uncles.

Within the **first four months** of any child becoming "looked after" (being in the care of the local authority), adoption must be considered as one of the possible long-term plans for the child.

Adoption will only become the local authority's plan for the child if all the other alternatives (for example, extra support to birth parents; assessments of other family members) have been considered and it is not felt to be in the child's best interests to remain within their family of birth.

Making sense of things

It may be helpful at this stage to explain in a little more detail some of the words and phrases you may hear when adoption is the plan for your child:

Adoption agency:

could be a local authority (like North East Lincolnshire) or a voluntary agency.

Adoption:

a way of arranging a new family for a child. The child legally becomes a member of their new family. An adoption agency can arrange a new family for a child but only a court can make an adoption order.

Adoption and children act:

a new law on adoption which finally became law at the end of December 2005. This leaflet highlights some of the major changes caused by the new law.

Adoption order:

an order of the Court (Could be the High Court, County Court or Magistrates Court). Adoption orders are permanent. The order removes the parental responsibility of the birth parents and gives full parental responsibility to the adopters.

Adoption contact register:

a register which allows adopted adults and their birth relatives to register their details if they would welcome contact or wish to have no contact. (See page 28)

Adoption Panel:

The Adoption Panel meets once a month in North East Lincolnshire. The panel consists of a chairperson, a medical advisor, a legal advisor; a senior manager; social workers; councillors; a senior educational psychologist; an adopter and an adopted person. The panel makes recommendation to North East Lincolnshire Council as to whether a child should be placed for adoption; whether prospective adopters are suitable to adopt; and whether the child should be placed for adoption with particular prospective adopters.

Adoption register:

a register of approved prospective adopters and children waiting for adoption in England and Wales. This can be one way of finding the right adoptive family for a child.

Adoption support services:

adopted children; adoptive parents and birth parents amongst others have a right to apply to the Local Authority for an assessment for adoption support services. Support services could include counselling, advice and information in relation to adoption; mediation services in relation to contact; in some circumstances, financial support.

Authority to place:

an adoption agency (like North East Lincolnshire) has authority to place a child for adoption when:

- The birth parents give their formal consent to the placement of their child for adoption
- Or the court makes a placement order.

Birth family: the child's family of birth

CAFCASS:

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service. CAFCASS is independent of Social Services. Only a member of CAFCASS can witness the consent of a birth parent to their child being placed for adoption.

Child's permanence report:

a report prepared by the adoption agency. This will include information about the child and her/his family; the child's health; wishes and feelings of the child about adoption, contact etc; wishes and feelings of the birth parents about adoption, contact etc; birth family members will be invited to contribute to the report and may see relevant sections.

Children's guardian:

A member of CAFCASS. Children's guardians are appointed by the court to make reports to the court and represent the best interests of the child in court proceedings.

Consent (to a child being (See pages 11-17)) placed for adoption)

Contact: allowing a person contact with the child to be placed for adoption. Contact may be indirect (e.g. letters, cards) or direct (e.g. meetings with the child).

Foster family:

Could be a single person or a couple who have been approved by the local authority to care for children when they cannot live with their birth families. A child in foster care remains a looked after child (that is, in the care of the local authority) unless the foster carers are able to take out a residence order, special guardianship order or adoption order in respect of the child.

Local authority: a council like North East Lincolnshire for example.

Parental responsibility:

all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent has in relation to the child and his/her property. Parental responsibility covers aspects of parenting such as: providing a home for a child; having contact with a child; protecting a child; disciplining a child; arranging a child's health care; arranging education for a child; determining the religion of a child; consenting to a child's medical treatment; naming the child or agreeing to a change of name.

Placement: the placing of a child to live with particular prospective adopters

Placement order: an order made by the court authorising a local authority to place a child for adoption with any prospective adopters who may be chosen by the local authority.

Prospective adopters: a single person or a couple who have applied to adopt but who have not yet adopted a child.

Introduction to adoption procedures and legal implications

The next sections discuss the procedure and some of the legal implications for you and your child in three different circumstances.

Please refer to the section which corresponds to your situation. If you are unsure which section applies to you, please ask for help.

The different sections are:

- If you are willing for your child to be adopted and your child is under six weeks old (*see pages 11-13*)
- If you are willing for your child to be adopted and your child is over six weeks old (*see pages 14 – 17*)
- If you do not agree with the plan of adoption for your child (*see pages 18 – 20*)



If you are willing for your child to be adopted

If your baby is not yet born or is under six weeks old

What is the procedure?

- To begin with, you should contact either the Fostering and Adoption Team (Tel: 01472 – 325545) or the Children's Assessment and Safeguarding Service (Tel: 01472 – 325555) as soon as possible. You can request help and advice before your baby is born.
- Arrangements will then be made for a social worker to see you to have a full discussion about the reasons for your choice, any alternatives to adoption you may not yet have considered and what adoption would mean for you and your baby.
- The social worker should also approach the baby's birth father where this is possible and appropriate to discuss his wishes and feelings.
- If you cannot care for your baby, social workers will need to see if there are other family members who might be able and willing to care for your baby if this is in the best interests of your baby.
- If it is not possible for your baby to be cared for within the family, social workers can make arrangements for your baby to be accommodated and cared for within another family. This is likely to be a foster family.
- Social Workers will have discussions with you to get background information about you and your family. This information will be part of the child's permanence report. As part of this report, you will be asked to give you views about the kind of family you would wish you baby to live with; your wishes about contact and any views you have about your baby's religious and cultural upbringing. You should be able to see the sections of this report which relate to you.
- The social workers will also arrange for your baby to have a health assessment and discuss with you your medical and your family's medical history. ***This will be very important for your child in later life and for your child's adoptive parents.***

- All these reports will then be presented to the Adoption Panel. The Adoption Panel can recommend whether or not a child should be placed for adoption.
- If the Adoption Panel does recommend that your baby be placed for adoption, and if a senior manager within the local authority agrees, you should be informed of this decision orally within two working days and in writing within five working days.
- Social Workers will then discuss with you again if you are willing for your baby to be placed with prospective adopters already known to the local authority or with prospective adopters still to be identified. If you are in agreement, you will be asked to sign a form.

It is very important to remember that, before your baby is six weeks old, you cannot be asked to give your legal written consent to your baby being placed for adoption. The form you will be asked to sign before your baby is six weeks old is not legally binding. You will keep all your legal rights at this stage.

- Before your baby is six weeks old, you will keep full parental responsibility for your baby until:
 - You give your consent under Section 19 Adoption and Children Act to the placement of your baby for adoption which you can only do when your child is six weeks or older;
 - A placement order is made;
 - An adoption order is made

Contact with your baby

Your contact with your baby (before she or he is six weeks old) will be by agreement with the local authority or by order of the court.

Can you ask for your baby to be returned to you?

- Before your baby is six weeks old, you can give the Local Authority notice in writing to ask for your baby to be returned to you.



- Where an infant under six weeks has been placed with prospective adopters and remains with the prospective adopters (even after they are six weeks old), if the parent informs the local authority they wish for their child to be returned, the local authority must arrange this within seven days unless any of these court orders have been applied for or have already been made regarding your baby:
 - An emergency protection order
 - A care order
 - A placement order
 - An adoption order

If you are willing for your child to be adopted

If your child is six weeks old or older

What is the procedure?

- To begin with, you should contact either the Fostering and Adoption Team (Tel: 01472 – 325545) or the Children's Assessment and Safeguarding Service (Tel: 01472 – 325555) as soon as possible.
- Arrangements will then be made for a social worker to see you to have a full discussion about the reasons for your choice, any alternatives to adoption you may not yet have considered and what adoption would mean for you and your child. Social workers will need to explain:
 - The procedures for adoption
 - The legal implications for you and your child if you give your consent to your child being placed for adoption under S.19 of the Adoption and Children Act
 - The legal implications for you and your child if you give your consent to the making of a future adoption order under S.20 of the Adoption and Children Act
 - The effects of a placement order
 - The legal effects of adoption
- The social worker should also approach the child's birth father where this is possible and appropriate to discuss his wishes and feelings.
- If you cannot care for your child, social workers will need to see if there are other family members who might be able and willing to care for your child if this is in the best interests of your child.
- If it is not possible for your child to be cared for within the family, social workers can make arrangements for your child to be accommodated and cared for within another family. This is likely to be a foster family.
- Social workers will have discussions with you to get background information about you and your family. This information will be part of the **child's permanence report**. As part of this report, you will be asked to give your views

about the kind of family you would wish your child to live with; your wishes about contact and any views you have about your child's religious and cultural upbringing. You should be able to see the sections of this report which relate to you.

- The social workers will also arrange for your child to have a health assessment. They will need to discuss with you your medical and your family's medical history. **This will be very important for your child in later life and for your child's adoptive parents.**
- All these reports will then be presented to the Adoption Panel. This is a special meeting. The Adoption Panel can recommend whether or not a child should be placed for adoption.
- If the Adoption Panel does recommend that your child be placed for adoption, and if a senior manager within the local authority agrees, you should be informed of this decision orally within two working days and in writing within five working days.
- Social workers will then discuss with you again if you are willing for your child to be placed with prospective adopters already known to the local authority or with prospective adopters still to be identified. If you are still in agreement, social workers will contact the CAFCASS office
- A CAFCASS officer will then arrange to see you. The CAFCASS officer will need to be satisfied that you fully understand the consequences of giving consent to your child being placed for adoption and that you are willing to give your consent unconditionally. If this is the case, then the CAFCASS officer will ask you to formally sign your consent on a special form which they will witness.

What does it mean if you give consent under S.19 of the adoption and children Act?

This means that you give your consent to your child being placed for adoption either with prospective adopters already identified by the local authority or with any prospective adopters who may be chosen by the local authority.

What does it mean if you give consent under S.20 of the adoption and children act?

This means that you if you have given your consent under S.19 (described above) you can, if you wish also give your consent in advance to your child being adopted.

You may also, if you wish, inform the local authority at this time that you do not wish to be informed when an application is made to the court for an adoption order in respect of your child.

What are the implications of giving your consent to your child being placed for adoption under S.19?

- The local authority is given parental responsibility for your child. If you have parental responsibility, you will not lose it at this stage but the local authority can impose restrictions on how you use your parental responsibility.
- Any arrangements made for contact under the Children Act 1989 no longer apply. The local authority can take into account your wishes and feelings about contact and the wishes and feelings of your child but the local authority no longer has the responsibility to promote contact between you and your child. Contact arrangements will be organised around the needs of your child.
- Parents and others may apply to the court for a contact order.
- No one other than the local authority may remove the child
- No one is permitted without the written consent of each person with parental responsibility or by permission of the court to:
 - Change the child's surname
 - Remove the child from the United Kingdom (for a period of a month or more).
- You may withdraw your consent at any time up until an application for an adoption order has been made with the court. Once the adoption order application has been lodged with the court, withdrawal of consent is ineffective.
- **Where a child has not yet been placed with prospective adopters** but the birth parent has given consent to the child being placed for adoption under S.19, the birth parent may ask the local authority for the child to be returned to their care. The local authority must arrange this **within seven days** unless the local authority has applied for a placement order.

- **Where a child has been placed with prospective adopters** and the birth parent has given consent to the child being placed for adoption under S.19, if the birth parent withdraws that consent and asks for the child to be returned to their care, the local authority must arrange this **within 14 days** unless an application for a placement order has been or is made.
- Once the child has been placed for adoption (that is, living with a prospective adoptive family) a parent or guardian may not apply for a residence order (except with the permission of the court at the time the application for the adoption order is considered by the court).
- A parent who has given their consent under S.19 is not permitted to oppose the making of an adoption order unless the court gives permission. The court may only give permission if it is satisfied that there has been a change of circumstances for the parent since the parent gave their consent.

Please do remember there are many people and organisations who can give you help and advice. If you would like to talk to someone independent of the local authority, the adoption team can arrange this.



If you do not agree with the plan of adoption for your child

First things first – get help and advice

- If you do not agree with the plan of adoption for your child, it is **very important you get legal advice as soon as possible**. (Please see page four for suggestions on how to arrange for legal help).
- It will be very important for you to have full information about the procedure and what the implications of adoption would be for yourself and your child. Your child's social worker, a social worker from the adoption team, or, if you prefer, an independent worker, can all give you help and advice.

What happens next?

- Social workers will have discussions with you to get background information about you and your family. This information will be part of the **child's permanence report**. As part of this report, you will be asked if you wish to give your views about the kind of family you would wish your child to live with; your wishes about contact and any views you have about your child's religious and cultural upbringing. You should be able to see the sections of this report which relate to you. **Giving this information to social workers does not compromise you legally in any way and does not weaken your opposition to the plan of adoption.**
- The social workers will also arrange for your child to have a health assessment. They will need to discuss with you your medical and your family's medical history. **This will be very important for your child in later life if your child is adopted.**
- All these reports will then be presented to the agency decision maker, a senior officer in the council. The agency decision maker can recommend whether or not a child should be placed for adoption.
- If the agency decision maker does recommend that your child be placed for adoption, you should be informed of this decision orally within two working days and in writing within five working days.

- The local authority may have already begun court proceedings in respect of your child in which the local authority may be asking the court to make a care order on your child.
- If this is the case, or if your child is already the subject of a care order, the local authority must then apply to the court for a **placement order** if you do not agree with the plan of adoption.
- The court will appoint a CAFCASS officer to represent the best interests of the child.

What is a placement order?

- A placement order is a court order which gives the local authority permission to place a child for adoption with any prospective adopters who may be chosen by the local authority.
- You will have the right to oppose this at court.

When can a placement order be made?

- When a child is subject to a care order;
- When the court is satisfied that the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and that this is caused by the care being given to her/him or likely to be given to her/him, or that the child is beyond parental control.
- When the child has no parent or guardian

How long does a placement order last?

A placement order will continue until

- It is revoked (taken off by the court);
- An adoption order is made;
- The child marries or forms a civil partnership
- The child reaches 18.



How can a placement order be revoked?

- A placement order can be revoked by an application from the child or the local authority.
- Anyone else would need the leave (permission) of the court and this would only be if the child had not yet been placed for adoption.
- To grant leave, the court would need to be satisfied that there has been a change in circumstances for the better of the person applying since the placement order was granted.

What happens if a placement order is revoked?

- Where a court revokes a placement order, the local authority must return the child to the parents at a time determined by the court.
- The exception would be if the child were also subject to a care order. When the placement order was revoked, the care order would automatically come into force.

What are the effects of a placement order?

- If a placement order is made and the child is not yet placed with prospective adopters, parental responsibility is shared between the local authority and the birth parents. The local authority can determine how much parental responsibility the birth parents can exercise
- The local authority will now have the authority to place the child for adoption
- No one other than the local authority may remove the child from her/his current placement
- If the child is subject to a care order, the care order is "suspended" but will come into force again if the placement order is revoked.
- Before making a placement order, the court must consider arrangements made or proposed for contact and invite all the parties to comment on the arrangements.
- Parents and others may apply to the court for a contact order.
- Any existing residence order or supervision order cease to have effect.

- There are restrictions on applying for other orders. A prohibited steps order, specific issues order, child assessment order or residence order may not be applied for in respect of the child.

When your child is placed with prospective adopters

- A local authority can arrange for a child to move to live with prospective adopters if the local authority has "authority to place". As described earlier in this leaflet, the local authority only has "authority to place" if:
 - A parent has signed consent under S.19 of the Adoption and Children Act; or
 - The local authority has a placement order in respect of the child.

Your wishes

- You may wish to be kept fully informed of the child's placement with prospective adopters or you may have informed the local authority that you wish for no further involvement.

Timescales

- A proposed placement with suitable adopters should have been identified and approved by the Adoption Panel within 6 months of the local authority deciding that the child should be placed for adoption.
- Where a parent has requested a child under 6 months be placed for adoption, a proposed placement with suitable adopters should be identified and approved by the Adoption Panel within 3 months of the local authority deciding that the child should be placed for adoption.
- When the Adoption Panel has recommended that a child should be placed with specific adopters and the local authority has agreed with this recommendation, the child's parents should be informed orally within two working days and written confirmation should be sent within five working days.

What happens about parental responsibility?

- Once your child has been placed for adoption, parental responsibility is shared between the birth parents, the local authority and the prospective adopters. The local authority will determine how much parental responsibility each party will exercise.

Withdrawing consent

- If a birth parent has given their consent under S.19 the Adoption and Children Act, to the child being placed for adoption, this consent may be withdrawn at any point until the prospective adopters apply for an adoption order.
- If a birth parent notifies the local authority that their consent is withdrawn, the local authority then has to review its decision to place the child for adoption.
- If the local authority decides that adoption is still the plan for the child, the local authority may decide to apply for a placement order.
- Where the local authority decides to apply for a placement order the birth parents will be notified as soon as possible.

Reviews

- Any child placed for adoption has to have their health, education, development and progress reviewed regularly. There will be a review within the first four weeks of the child joining their adoptive family; then within the next three months; then at least every six months before an adoption order is made.
- If appropriate, birth parents may be consulted for their views for these reviews.

Contact

- When a child is placed for adoption, birth family members will receive proposals in writing regarding contact. These proposals will come from the adoption team after discussion with the prospective adopters, birth family members and, depending on the age of the child, the child themselves.
- The welfare of the child will be the first consideration. Any contact arrangements must meet the needs of the child.

- Birth parents retain the right to apply for a contact order.

Help and support

- If you have not done so already, at any stage you can request help and support. Your child's social worker, an adoption social worker, or, if you wish, an independent worker can all offer you help and support.

Making the Adoption Order application

- If the child has been placed for adoption by an adoption agency, the child must have lived with the prospective adopters for at least ten weeks before an application to adopt is made.
- Once the application for an adoption order has been lodged at court, a birth parent who has given their consent to their child being placed for adoption under S.19 of the adoption and children act, cannot withdraw their consent.
- A birth parent who has consented to a child being placed for adoption under S.19 is not permitted to oppose the granting of an adoption order unless the court gives them leave (permission). The court will only grant leave if the court is satisfied that there has been a change of circumstances since the consent was given.
- If a child is subject to a placement order, if a birth parent has been granted leave of the court to oppose the making of an adoption order, the birth parent could also challenge any restrictions imposed on how they exercise their parental responsibility at the adoption hearing.
- With the leave of the court, a birth parent (and others) may apply for a residence order within the adoption application.
- Unless the birth parent has indicated that they do not wish to be informed of any adoption hearing, the birth parent will be notified of the date, time and venue for the adoption hearing.
- With the leave of the court, a birth parent can make an application for a contact order after the adoption order has been granted.

Knowing about you

First things first – get help and advice

The local authority is required by law to ask for lots of information about you and your child. All this information is needed to get the fullest possible picture of your child and their family background so that the best decisions can be made about their future.

- You will be asked if you are willing to contribute to:
 - The child's permanence report (the very full report which is considered by the Adoption Panel);
 - The child's life story book (a special book of photos, memories, stories which explain to the child their birth family; where they have lived and why adoption is their plan)
- You may also be invited to compose a letter for your child for later in life
- You will be invited to think about any information you would like the local authority or the adopters to keep safe for your child for later in life.

What might you be asked about?

- Factual information, for example who's who in your family
- Your family and your childhood
- Your family's health history
- Your interests, talents, hobbies
- Your child's life with you
- Your child's health and development
- Your views on the plan of adoption
- Your views about your child's future either with you or with an adoptive family
- Your views on your child's religious and cultural upbringing
- Your views on contact

Keeping you informed

Unless you have notified the local authority otherwise, the local authority has a duty to keep you informed of the adoption process.

Wherever possible and appropriate, your child's social worker will keep you informed at each stage. This will include:

- Explaining the alternatives to adoption;
- Explaining the adoption process
- Providing you with written information about adoption
- Ascertaining your wishes and feelings about adoption; about your child; about contact
- Informing you if the local authority has agreed that your child should be placed for adoption
- Informing you if suitable adopters have been found for your child
- Informing you when your child has been placed with prospective adopters
- Informing you when the adoption hearing will be
- Helping you contribute to your child's permanence report; to their life story book
- Helping you with contact arrangements



As your child grows up

- Many children will take information and photographs of their birth family to their new adoptive home. This is usually in the form of a life story book.
- As previously suggested, you may be invited to contribute to the life story book by sharing photographs or talking about your child when they were younger. Other family members may also be asked to contribute.
- Adopters are encouraged to keep these books in a safe place but where the children can look at them and talk about them when they wish.
- Adopters are expected to raise children in the knowledge that they are adopted.
- After an adoption order is made, the adopters are sent an adoption certificate, which shows the child's new name only, and the adopters as their parents. This certificate replaces the birth certificate.
- Although adopters have the right to change their child's first name, this does not often happen except occasionally in the case of the adoption of young babies.
- When child reaches 18, they are legally entitled to get a copy of their original birth certificate. This will give their original name, your name and the address you were living at the time of the child's birth. (These details may also be in the child's life story book). It is very likely that by the time they are 18, an adopted child will have a reasonably clear picture of their birth family and an understanding of how they came to be adopted.
- It is not uncommon for adopted adults to seek to trace their birth families. Adoption team social workers and independent workers are available to offer continuing advice and support to everyone involved.

Information after adoption

- As previously mentioned in this leaflet, it is not unusual in many adoptions for there to be some form of contact between the adoptive family and the birth family.
- In many adoptions there is an agreement for the adoptive family to send birth family members a progress report on the child each year.
- This information is sent to the adoption team who then forward it to birth family members. Birth family members are asked to contact the Adoption team each year to confirm their address. The adoption team will hold any information until such confirmation is received.
- In some cases, an exchange of information or the sending of cards and photographs may be considered if this is felt to be in the child's best interests.
- Sometimes it is possible to arrange a one-off meeting between the birth parents and the adoptive parents. Everyone is very carefully prepared for such a meeting. These meetings are supervised by social workers and are held at a neutral venue.
- The majority of these arrangements are voluntary, that is, they are not covered by a court order.
- As time goes by, these arrangements may need to be changed in line with the child's changing needs and views. If this happens, the adoption team will be available to discuss this with you.

The adoption contact register

- Since May 1991, it has been possible for birth families and adopted adults to register their names and a contact address (on payment of a fee) with the contact register. If the adopted person has indicated that they would welcome news about their birth family, they would be notified that their birth family have registered their details.
- Your social worker or the adoption team can give you more information about the adoption contact register.

A reminder about advice and support

- It may be very hard to talk about what is happening to you and your child and how you feel about this. You may feel confused or angry or upset about the plan.

A solicitor

- Do seek legal advice. If you have not got a solicitor see page 4 for tips on arranging a solicitor.

Your child's social worker

- Your child's social worker should be the first person you contact for detailed information about the plan for your child or the progress of the plan for adoption.

The Adoption Service

- It may help to talk things through with someone who has not been directly involved with you or your child.
- The Adoption team offers advice and support to birth families both before, during and after adoption and at any time in the future.
- You may find that painful memories return from time to time after the adoption. You can contact the Adoption Team at any time.
- Local Authorities have a responsibility to assess any requests from birth relatives for adoption support services.
- You can contact the Adoption Service at the following address:

The Fostering and Adoption Service
Civic Offices
Knoll Street, Cleethorpes
DN35 8LN
North East Lincolnshire
Tel: 01472 325545

After Adoption Yorkshire

- If you feel that you would prefer to talk to someone who is independent, then the Adoption team can put you in touch with a worker from After Adoption Yorkshire who now have an office in Grimsby.
- After Adoption Yorkshire are an independent support service for people involved in adoption. They are a registered charity.
- The services After Adoption Yorkshire offer to birth relatives include:
 - Befriending by other birth parents and relatives
 - Individual counselling
 - Support groups for birth parents
 - Negotiation with adoption agencies about access to records
 - Intermediary services
 - Negotiation and re-negotiation of contact arrangements
 - Independent support to non-consenting birth parents.

Contacting After Adoption Yorkshire

You can contact After Adoption Yorkshire either:

- Via the Adoption Team in North East Lincolnshire
- By letter to After Adoption Yorkshire; Hollyshaw House, 2 Hollyshaw Lane, Leeds, LS15 7BD
- Ring their advice line on 0113 230 2100 (open Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 10.00am – 1.00pm; Weds 4.00pm – 7.00pm)
- Email: info@aay.org.uk
- Or visit their website: www.afteradoptionyorkshire.org.uk

Family Rights Group

- The Family Rights Group (based in London) can also provide advice. The Family Rights Group are a Registered Charity. The family Rights group exists to provide advice and support to families whose children are involved with Social Services.
- You can contact the Family Rights Group by their advice line on Freephone 0808 801 0366. The advice line is available 10.00am – 12.00 noon and 1.30pm – 3.30pm Monday to Friday.
- The Family Rights Group also has a website: www.frg.org.uk



CERTIFICATE OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To:

The Fostering and Adoption Service
Civic Offices
Knoll Street, Cleethorpes
DN35 8LN
North East Lincolnshire
Telephone: 01472 325545

I certify that I have received the "Information for Birth Relatives about Adoption" booklet from North East Lincolnshire Council

Signed:

Address:

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Date:



