



What is Contact in adoption?

Most children who are adopted today have some form of ongoing contact with their birth family. The contact is planned before a child is placed for adoption.

Contact must always be beneficial to the child, and the amount and type of contact will be tailored to the individual needs of each child. Contact can range from a letter once a year to face-to-face meetings

Will our family's whereabouts remain confidential?

When contact via letters is agreed, these are always exchanged via the Adoption Support Team in order to maintain confidentiality.

Adopters and birth families are both asked not to put their addresses or any other identifying information to these letters. A member of the Adoption Support Team will check the letters to make sure that no identifying information from either side is accidentally passed on.

If the plan is for direct contact with any of the child's birth family this will be carefully planned with all parties beforehand. Such contact usually takes place at a neutral venue. At least one member of the Adoption Support Team will be present throughout the contact to support all parties.

They are experienced in making sure that the contact is fun for the child, while keeping everyone's personal information safe.

Why keep in touch with the birth family once the child is with their adoptive family?

Children who are adopted often build up unreal pictures in their minds of what their birth families are like,

It is important that adopted children grow up with a true understanding of their birth family so that they can have a good sense of their own identity. Contact can help a child to grow up with this accurate understanding, and it will also help the birth family if they can know about the child's well-being and major achievements as they grow up.

Will we have a say in what contact our family can manage with our new child?

When a plan is made for a child to be placed for adoption with your family, contact will be discussed with you from the outset

Before the match with your family can be agreed, detailed arrangements for all adoption support will be discussed with you. Contact is an integral part of this adoption support plan.

Make sure that the implications of contact arrangements are fully discussed with you before you agree to them. If there are arrangements that you do not feel comfortable with, then be honest at this early stage. Sometimes arrangements can be adjusted if your family is ideal for the child in other ways. In other situations it is vital that contact goes ahead as planned and agreed: it is not fair on the child or yourselves if you agree to something that you will struggle to see through.

How will we know when and what to write?

As part of the adoption support plan the time of year, and frequency of letterbox contact will be discussed with you. You will be guided in the sorts of things to write about in your letter, how to address the birth family, and how to sign yourselves.

We advise that the letters are written from adult to adult and we will ask the birth family to write to you, rather than your child. We can give advice about how to share the letters with your child.



The adoption support workers are always willing to help with letterbox contact. A member of the team reads all contact letters and therefore advice regarding adjustments can be made before the letter is sent to the birth family.

Can the plan for contact be changed over the years?

Yes. The plans for contact are made in the best interests of the child at the time they are placed with you. Over the years these needs may change, and the contact plans may also have to change to reflect this. It is important to recognize that the child may sometimes need more contact than originally planned.

As your child becomes older their views will become more important in determining the level of contact.

Remember...

The Adoption Support Team is here to ensure that all parties are supported throughout the process, and to help make contact work for the best interest of your child.