



Birth Family information and support about adoption

When your child is to be adopted and it is not what you want



Kent County Council is worried about your child's future. An adoption plan has been made because the things we are worried about have not changed.

We understand that this is a difficult time for you and that you might need support. This leaflet explains what will happen and who will offer to support you.

Because we are worried about your child we are going to ask the Court now to decide whether or not we should look for new parents to adopt your child.

If there is a plan for adoption for your child, Kent's Social Services will ask you for information about yourself, your child and your family background. This will be written into a report that helps Kent County Council decide if adoption is the right thing. If your child is eventually adopted the information will be kept safely so they can know about their birth family as they get older.

Support and advice for you about your child's adoption

You may feel you have no one you can talk to about this, and you may feel that you are not coping well. You could want some help to understand about adoption, or to talk to someone about how the adoption plan affects you or other people in your family. Some parents would rather talk to someone who is independent from the Social Services department. In Kent, you can go to an independent worker from Barnardo's, who can give you support. There is no charge for this.

You can make an appointment to talk in confidence with one of the independent Barnardo's workers. One of Barnardo's social workers can offer you a confidential support service where you will be able to talk about your fears, feelings and loss.

You can discuss with the Barnardo's worker the kind of support you need. It can include:

- Understanding the process of what adoption means
- Dealing with being separated from your child
- Understanding Social Services documents/paperwork
- Help with providing information for the child's life story work
- Needing help to cope with the long term consequences of adoption

If the adoption goes through, support with contact after your child is adopted will usually be by exchanging letters (but in some circumstances might be agreed to be face to face). You will get help with writing letters to your child from Barnardo's.

You might want to attend one of Barnardo's birth parent support groups, where you can meet other parents who have had children adopted.

After an adopted child reaches the age of 18, Barnardo's can help with seeing if they want to be contacted through their intermediary service.

Barnardo's will support birth relatives of children who are, or were, in the care of Kent County Council, and there is a plan for adoption, or the child has already been adopted.

Barnardo's, Unit 10 Jubilee Way, Faversham, Kent ME13 8GD

You can phone between 9am and 5pm
Monday to Fridays on **01795 532081**

Your child's adoption and the court

You can go to court to explain the reasons you don't want your child to be adopted. It is important you see a solicitor who can advise you on what to do. Your child's social worker will give you a list of solicitors and you can also download one from the Law Society's website at **www.lawsociety.org.uk** Click on 'Find a solicitor' next to The Law Society logo.

You'll also be visited by a Court-appointed Children's Guardian who will represent your child's best interest independently from Social Services. They will tell the Court what they think is the safest plan for your child both in the short and long term.

If the Court decides that your child should be adopted they will grant a Placement Order which allows Social Services to look for adopters for your child. Social Services will want to tell you what is happening about the adoption plan and what the court has said.

When possible adopters are found a committee of professional and independent people who know about adoption from different angles, called an Adoption Panel will recommend whether the family are right



To discuss this information you can speak to your child's social worker:

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone number _____

Email _____

Team Manager _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

for your child. Following the Adoption Panel meeting, a senior manager in Social Services called the Agency Decision Maker will think about what the Adoption Panel has said, and make a decision about whether your child should go to live with that family.

Over a period of several days your child will get to know the adopters and when the adoption service and your child's social worker feels that they are ready, they will go to live with the new family.

The social worker will continue to visit to make sure everything is okay, and the adopters will have their own adoption social worker who will see things are going well too. The adopters cannot apply to the court for the final Adoption Order until the child has been living with them for at least 10 weeks.

You will be contacted about the Adoption hearing and it is important that you contact your solicitor who can advise you about what to do, and will attend court with you, if you want to go. If the court decides that the Adoption Order should be made, and your child is adopted, they will have a new legal family and your family (the 'birth family') will not have any responsibility on a day to day basis, or in law.



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Team Manager _____

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Email _____

Other support and advice for you

Family Rights Group Confidential advice for parents and family members who are involved with children's social services.

Advice line – freephone **0808 801 0366** between 10am and 3.30pm Monday to Friday

Email: advice@frg.org.uk

Post Adoption Centre Counselling, advice and information for birth relatives by phone on **020 7284 5879**, 10am to 1pm every weekday except Thursday.

Thursday – evening helpline available 5.30 to 7.30pm.

