



South East Wales Adoption Service  
Achieving More Together

Gwasaneth Mabwysiadu Deddwyrain Cymru  
Cyflawni Mwy Gyda'n Gilydd I

**For Children - For Families - For Always**

North Wing, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Block B, Mamhilad House, Mamhilad Park Estate, Pontypool,  
Torfaen. NP4 0HZ. Telephone: (01495) 355766

**If your child's social worker has mentioned Adoption;  
this leaflet will try and help explain what is going on  
and what it means for you.**

The South East Wales  
Adoption Service

---

North Wing, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Block B, Mamhilad House,  
Mamhilad Park Estate, Pontypool NP4 0HZ

## **What is going on?**

Social Services are making plans for your child's long term care. You might have heard of the term **Twin Tracking**. This means Social Services are thinking about more than one plan. Assessments will be done to see if your child can live with you or your family but at the same time if that is not possible they need another option. This is why they will have mentioned **Adoption** to you.

## **What if I don't want my child adopted?**

You need to speak to a solicitor who can explain your options. If you don't have a solicitor Citizens Advice Bureau could give you names of solicitors who deal with family law. You **may** be entitled to legal aid (to pay the solicitor fees) if you have parental responsibility. You need to check this with your solicitor

You should also speak to your child's social worker who will be able to explain why Social Services are making plans for your child.

Social Services have to go to court to get a **Placement Order** before a child can be placed for Adoption.

## **What is Adoption?**

Adoption is a way of giving a child a different family to look after them when they can't live with their birth family. It is different to Foster Care because it is permanent until a child is 18 years old and the child's adopters will have legal rights once an adoption order is made.

Court has to make the decision based on all the information given to them by the social worker, guardian, your solicitor and other professionals.

### **Support for you**

You can speak to an independent social worker who works with parents throughout the process you are going through. They would be able to explain the process to you. Please contact 01495 355766 and someone in the adoption support team will be able to help you with this.

### **What if I want my child adopted?**

Some parents decide it would be best for their child to be adopted. If you decide this then you would give your 'consent' (permission). It is a good idea to speak to a social worker if you are thinking about this.

### **Who might adopt my child?**

Lots of different people choose to adopt a child. They all come from different backgrounds and could be married, single or living together and some may already have children.

All people who apply to adopt are thoroughly checked and assessed to make sure we find out everything about them and how they will bring up a child.

### **How do you find the right adoptive family?**

The child's social worker will make sure the right family is found. There is an adoption consortium and this is a group of 3 local authorities which approves adoptive families. If the right family is not found there then we

look at the Adoption Register which will search the whole of the UK to find the right adopters.

### **Can I be involved in choosing who will adopt my child?**

Although you cannot choose the family yourself you can tell your social worker or independent birth parent worker if there is anything you would like them to think about when choosing a family, for example, a particular religion or culture and any special interests. We can't promise to do as you wish but will take into account your wishes.

### **Can I keep in touch with my child if they are adopted?**

It is usually felt that it is in the best interests of a child to have some form of indirect contact with birth family. This is usually done in the form of '**letterbox**' contact. This means writing letters not seeing them in person.

Letterbox means sending letters or cards and sometimes a photograph once or twice a year. The child's adopters or the child themselves (depending on their age) sends a letter in return to let you know how they are getting on. All the letters are sent to the adoption team to be checked first and copies are kept on file.

Sometimes (but not very often), usually with older children it might be decided that there should be direct face to face contact. The social worker and court will decide this.

Letterbox arrangements are made in agreement between you and the child's adopters and the social workers decide on what can be agreed.

You should talk to your child's social worker about your wishes in terms of contact.

### **If my child is adopted will they know about me?**

All adopters have training and they are encouraged to explain to children about their adoption. Your child will be given a **life story book** which helps explain why they are adopted and their adopters can read this with them.

You can give the social worker information to go in this book. It is really important for children to have information about their birth family as part of their identity. Things about their parents' likes, hobbies, interests and favourite foods are things children like to know about.

Sharing your information will be hard for you but it will really help your child in the future. Giving the social worker information about you and your family does not mean you are agreeing to them being adopted. It means you want to help your child have all the information that can help them in the future even if they can't live with you.

### **Will my child's name be changed?**

When an adoption order is made your child's last name (surname) will be changed to be the same as their adopters. Adopters are encouraged not to change a child's first name. Once an adoption order is granted by court the final decision is made by the child's adopters.

### **When will I be able to see my child again if they are adopted?**

Once an adopted child reaches the age of 18 the law allows birth family to ask an intermediary agency to contact the adopted person on their

behalf. The intermediary agency have to decide if it's OK to meet the adopted person and no details can be given to you without the adopted person's permission. Your local adoption agency can help you with this. When an adopted child turns 18 they are legally entitled to have access to their original birth certificate. With information from this they may be able to trace their birth parents if they wish to. They can also ask their local adoption team to help them contact a birth family member. Not all adopted adults want to trace their birth family straight away, sometimes they want to wait until later in adulthood and some choose not to trace their birth family at all.

There is also something called a 'national adoption contact register'. Adopted adults and their birth family can put their names on and register their wish to get in touch. The contact details for this are at the end of this leaflet.

### **Coping after the adoption**

Birth parents experience deep and painful feelings at the loss of their child to adoption. Feeling sad and angry is normal. There is support available to you at any time you need it. For some people it is at the time



it is happening and for others it could be some time later. You can access support at any time by contacting South East Wales Adoption Service 01495 355766 or you can speak to your child's

social worker who can speak to them for you.

# Stages towards adoption

## **1<sup>st</sup> Stage – Adoption Report (CARA)**

The social worker must write an adoption report about you, your family and your child. This is called the Child's Assessment Report for Adoption (CARA).

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Stage – Agency Decision Maker**

The child's CARA must then be sent to the Local Authority's Agency Decision Maker. The agency decision maker will read the CARA and then make a recommendation on whether your child should be placed for adoption. The agency decision maker is usually the head of children's services.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Stage – applying for a 'Placement Order'**

If the decision is that your child should be placed for adoption Social Services will need to apply to Court for a Placement Order. Your solicitor will give you more advice at this stage as you will be able to give your views to the Court and you can contest the application if you wish. The Court will make a legal decision whether or not Social Services can place your child for adoption. At this point your contact with your child is likely to be reduced.

## **4<sup>th</sup> Stage – Finding adopters for your child**

If the Court grants a Placement Order then Social Services will begin to arrange for your child to be placed with an adoptive family. If your child is being adopted by the foster carers then the placement will change from a fostering placement to an adoptive placement. The prospective adoptive family that Social Services has found for your child will be presented to the Adoption Panel for recommendation and then approval for the adopters to be matched with a child. At this point a final contact is likely to be arranged for you with your child.

## **5<sup>th</sup> Stage – The child is placed for adoption**

Following introductions and time spent getting to know one another; your child will go to live with the new prospective adoptive family.

## **6<sup>th</sup> Stage – Adoption Order**

Once your child has lived with the prospective adoptive family for 6 weeks the prospective adopters can apply to the Court for an Adoption Order.

You will be notified when this happens unless you have said you do not want to be.

The Judge will consider how well your child has settled with his or her new family and then in the vast majority of cases will make an Adoption Order. The Adoption Order is final and makes the adoptive family the new legal parents of the child and removes the legal rights from you.

# Useful Contacts

## Independent Birth parent Support:

S.E.W.A.S  
North Wing  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Block B  
Mamhilad House  
Mamhilad Park Estate  
Pontypool  
Torfaen, NP4 0HZ  
Tel: 01495 355766  
[adoption@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:adoption@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)

## Adoption Contact Registers:

The Adoption Contact Register  
Smedley Hydro  
Trafalgar Road  
Southport, PR8 2HH  
Tel: 0870 243 7788  
[www.gro.gov.uk](http://www.gro.gov.uk)



## Self-Help Organisations:

REFLECT  
114 Lower Dock Street  
Newport  
NP20 2AF  
01633 251192  
[reflect@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:reflect@barnardos.org.uk)

Natural Parents' Network (NPN)  
18 Bishops Way  
Stradbroke, Eye  
Suffolk IP21 5JR  
Tel: 0845 456 5031  
[www.n-p-n.co.uk](http://www.n-p-n.co.uk)