

Thinking about
accessing your
birth records or
contacting your
birth family?

Adoption
Support

**Advice for
people who
were adopted
through
Cumbria
County Council**



**Adoption
Support**

Many people who have been adopted feel, at some time in their lives, that they would like to find out more about their birth family. Some decide they would like to meet up with their birth parents or other relatives.

If you are over 18 you are legally entitled to have a copy of your original birth certificate. You are also entitled to access your birth records and it is often a good idea to do this prior to making decisions about contacting your birth family. You are also able to ask any agency, which provides Intermediary Services such as ourselves, to approach adult birth relatives on your behalf to see if they would like to have contact with you.

You may also find it helpful to receive information from our records about the circumstances of your adoption.

Cumbria County Council are a registered Intermediary service. If you live in Cumbria you are welcome to apply for a service.

What if a birth relative wants to contact me?

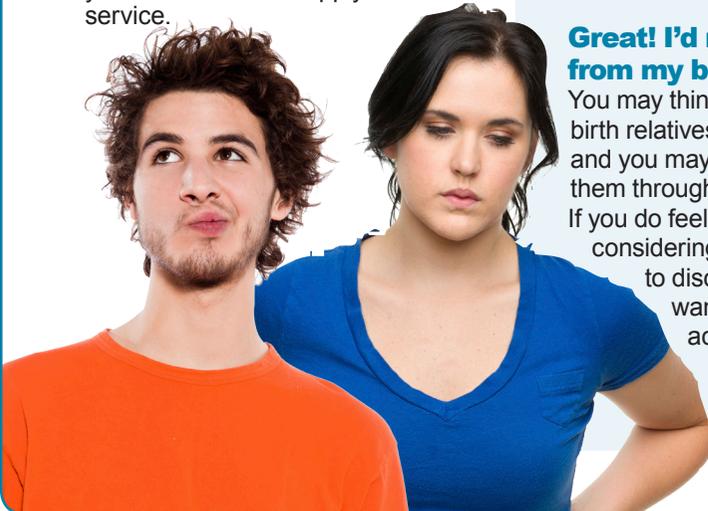
Adults who have a relative who was adopted may ask an Intermediary Agency to help them.

This means there is a possibility that once you are 18, you may receive an approach from Cumbria County Council or another agency acting on behalf of one or more of your birth relatives, to ask you how you would feel about having contact with them.

Your birth relatives cannot be given your adopted name. The legislation was set up to ensure they could only ask an Intermediary Agency to approach you on their behalf, so that your privacy would be protected. It would then be up to you to decide how much, if any, information you wished to give them about yourself. However, the use of Social networking sites, such as Facebook, is changing this. Increasingly people are contacting us to say they have been found through Facebook.

Great! I'd really like to hear from my birth family...

You may think it's really good that your birth relatives can apply for this service and you may be hoping to hear from them through an Intermediary Agency. If you do feel that way it may be worth considering getting in touch with us to discuss this. In fact you may want to consider asking us to act as an intermediary on your behalf.



Oh no! I really don't feel ready to hear from my birth family.

If, on the other hand, you don't want an Intermediary agency to approach you about possible contact with a birth relative, you are legally entitled to block any such approach. You do this by registering a veto. All adopted adults are entitled to register a veto.

What is a veto?

There are two kinds of veto:

An Absolute Veto. This says that in no circumstances do you wish to be approached by an Intermediary Agency.

A Qualified Veto. This says there are circumstances, set out by yourself, in which you would or would not want an Intermediary Agency to contact you. For example, you could say that you would want to be contacted only if there were some important medical information that someone needed to pass on to you; or you could say that you would not want to be contacted until, for example you have finished University, or your children have all started school.

How to register a veto

If we arranged your adoption and you would like to talk to us about the possibility of registering a veto, please don't hesitate to get in touch with:

**The Manager, Adoption Support Team
Cumbria House 117 Botchergate Carlisle CA1 1RD**

Tel: **01228 227043**

How Vetoes work

If you want to register a veto you have to do it with the Adoption Agency through which you were adopted. Although your birth relatives can ask any Intermediary agency to approach you on their behalf, the law forbids that Intermediary agency from contacting you without first getting in touch with your Adoption Agency. If your Adoption Agency informs them that you have registered an Absolute Veto the Intermediary agency is not allowed, in any circumstances to approach you. If you have registered a Qualified Veto they will be allowed to contact you only in the circumstances you have set out.

You can always register an Absolute or Qualified veto and then change it later. However if you have agreed to go forward and be put in touch with someone, the expectation is you follow that through. Our workers have a right of responsibility to all parties in a contact situation to be kept safe and have their needs met if at all possible. Assessments and careful and paced progress with time for reflection allows for safe practice to be followed at all times.

Facebook advice

If you are concerned about being contacted through Facebook:

- Keep safe, NEVER give out personal information.
- Keep your profile information hidden.
- Don't Publish the fact that you are adopted.
- If someone contacts you and says they are a member of your birth family tell your parent or contact the Adoption Support Team for advice and guidance.

Is there anything else I can do to make my wishes clear?

The General Register Office (GRO) runs an Adoption Contact Register. Adopted people and birth relatives over the age of 18 can use this to register whether they wish or do not wish to have contact with each other. We are happy to give you further information about this, or for more information you can contact us at:

General Register Office
Adoptions Section
Room C202, General Register Office
Trafalgar Road, Southport PR8 2HH
01514 714830

I'm not sure what I want...

If you would like to have an opportunity to consider all the options and their implications, you are very welcome to contact our Post Adoption Team on the number below. In fact we would welcome hearing from you if you would like to talk over anything to do with your adoption.

Find out more

Write to: The Manager, Adoption Support Team, Cumbria House
117 Botchergate, Carlisle CA1 1RD



03033 331216

Email: adoptionsupportteam@cumbria.gov.uk

If you require this document in another format (eg CD, audio cassette, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone **03033 331216**

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে **03033 331216** নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

如果您希望通过母语了解此信息，请致电 **03033 331216**

Jeigu norétumėte gauti šią informaciją savo kalba, skambinkite telefonu **03033 331216**

W celu uzyskania informacji w Państwa języku proszę zatelefonować pod numer **03033 331216**

Se quiser aceder a esta informação na sua língua, telefone para o **03033 331216**

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde görmek istiyorsanız lütfen **03033 331216** numaralı telefonu arayınız