

Overview of English Adoption Law

Adoption law in England is governed by the Adoption Act 1976, but is being phased out under the Adoption and Children Act 2002, which received Royal Assent in 2002, and is expected to be fully implemented at the end of 2004.

As in other developed jurisdictions, in England an adoption order results in the adopter(s) and the adopted child assuming the same legal relationship as if the child had been born to the adopter(s) within marriage. The responsibility for making adoption orders is vested in the English courts. Before a final adoption order is made, the child is usually placed temporarily with the future adopter(s) by one of England's Adoption Agencies.

England recognizes intercountry adoption and ratified the European Convention on the Adoption of Children in 1967 as well as the Hague Convention on Protection and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption in 2003.

I. General Acts and Regulations Governing the Adoption Process in England

Domestically, the first modern regulations concerning legal adoption were issued in 1958.¹ Later regulations came into force in 1960, 1964, 1968, and 1975. The Adoption Act 1976 consolidated these laws and was amended in the following years by acts such as the Social Security Act 1986, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990, and the Care Standards Act 2000. On 7 November 2002, the Adoption and Children Act 2002 received Royal Assent.² The full implementation of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 is currently planned for 2004. The Act will replace the outdated Adoption Act 1976 and aims to modernize the existing legal framework for domestic and intercountry adoption. According to the Department of Health, the new Act is "the most radical overhaul of adoption law for 26 years" and will implement the proposals made in the White Paper "Adoption: A New Approach."³ The White Paper called for new primary legislation and supported the Government's aims to improve the performance of the adoption service and to encourage greater use of adoption.

Apart from the Adoption Act 1976, various regulations and orders deal with adoption, *e.g.*, the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003, and the Adoption Support Services (Local Authorities) (England) Regulations 2003.

In February 2003, a first consultation package of draft adoption regulations and guidelines under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 was launched. The draft regulations and guidelines included the Adoption Agency Regulations (concerning the proposed new arrangements for adoptions)

¹ The Acts and Regulations concerning the adoption of children are available online at <http://www.doh.gov.uk/adoption/law.htm> (last visited on 26 April 2004).

² The Adoption and Children Act 2002 is available online at <http://www.legislation.hmsso.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/20020038.htm> (last visited on 12 May 2004).

³ White Paper, presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Health by Command of Her Majesty, available at <http://www.doh.gov.uk/adoption/whitepaper/whitepaper.pdf> (last visited on 26 April 2004).

This memorandum is for general informational purposes only and does not represent our legal advice as to any particular set of facts, nor does this memorandum represent any undertaking to keep recipients advised as to all relevant legal developments.

and the Suitability of Adopters Regulations (concerning the assessment of prospective adopters). Comments on these drafts were to be submitted by 1 May 2004.

Hard copies of any of these Acts and Regulations may be obtained from the Department of Health Publications; PO Box 777; London SE1 6XH (fax no: +44 (0) 1623 724524, e-mail: doh@prolog.uk.com).

From an international perspective, the United Kingdom ratified the European Convention on the Adoption of Children on December 21, 1967, which came into force on April 26, 1968. The United Kingdom also ratified the Hague Convention on Protection and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (the "Hague Convention") on February 27, 2003. The Hague Convention came into force on June 1, 2003. This convention has the purpose of establishing safeguards that ensure that intercountry adoptions take place in the best interest of the child and provide for a system of cooperation among Contracting States to ensure that these safeguards are respected.

II. Substantive Conditions for the Making of an Adoption Order

A. Who may be adopted?

Only children under the age of 18 are eligible for adoption. Additionally, the child's return to his or her birth parents must not be possible. Adoption is excluded in cases where the child is or has been married.

Under English adoption law, the temporary placement of the child with his or her prospective adoptive parents is a precondition to the making of the adoption order. The court making the adoption order has to be convinced that the local authority "has had sufficient opportunities to see the child with the applicants in their home environment."⁴ Accordingly, in cases of an adoption by a parent, a stepparent or a relative of the child, or in which the child was placed with the applicants by an adoption agency, or in pursuance of an order of the High Court, no adoption order shall be made unless the child is at least 19 weeks old and at all times during the preceding 13 weeks had his or her home with one or both of the applicants.⁵ Similarly, in all other cases, the court shall not make any adoption order unless the child is at least 12 months old and at all times during the preceding 12 months had his or her home with one or both of the applicants.⁶

B. Who may adopt?

The relevant adoption acts set forth requirements regarding, among other things, the civil status of the applicants, their age and other characteristics.

1. Civil status requirements

Under English law, a married couple can adopt but only if both spouses adopt jointly.⁷ In contrast, unmarried couples are not able to adopt jointly under current law. However, when

⁴ See CLARKE HALL & MORRISON ON CHILDREN, 10th ed. (June 2003), at note 73.

⁵ See Section 13 (1) of the Adoption Act 1976.

⁶ See Section 13 (2) of the Adoption Act 1976.

⁷ See Section 14 of the Adoption Act 1976.

implemented, the Adoption and Children Act 2002 will allow unmarried couples to adopt jointly.⁸ Currently, one partner in an unmarried couple could adopt while the other could apply for a “residence order.”⁹ A “residence order” is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom a child is to live.¹⁰ This residence order will expire when the child has reached the age of 16, while adoption is for life.

It is easier for relatives to adopt a child. That is because Section 11(1) of the Adoption Act allows them to make arrangements for adoption of a child without the intervention of an adoption agency. A relative, for the purpose of this provision, means a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt, whether of full blood or half blood.

Under certain specified circumstances, the Adoption Act 1976 entitles single adults to adopt.¹¹ Furthermore, one’s sexuality will not prevent anyone from being considered as an adoptive parent. In *In re W (a minor)*, the court stated that the Adoption Act neither expressly nor impliedly prohibits adoption by homosexuals and that any other conclusion would be “illogical, arbitrary and inappropriately discriminatory” as the court’s duty is to give “first consideration to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.”¹²

2. Age requirements

As a general rule, adoptive parents must be at least 21 years of age.¹³ However, an adoption order can also be made on the application of a married couple if either the husband or the wife is the parent of the child and is at least 18 years old, provided that the other spouse is at least 21 years old.¹⁴

The law does not set forth upper age limits for adopters. In practice, however, the age of the applicant(s) is a very significant factor when assessing a couple’s or an individual adopter’s suitability to adopt. Adoption agencies are expected to find parents who are – with respect to their health and vigor – able to meet the various demands of growing children and be available for them into adulthood.¹⁵

3. Religious / racial / other requirements

When adoption agencies are looking for a child’s most appropriate placement, the child’s ethnic origin, culture, language, and religion are taken into account, as well as the child’s previous family experience and any wishes of the child’s parents as to the religious upbringing of the child.¹⁶ Even if it is not the decisive factor, the Department of Health has stated that placing the children with

⁸ See Adoption and Children Act 2002, at Sections 49 and 144(4).

⁹ See CLARKE *et al.*, *supra* note 4, at note 76.

¹⁰ See Children Act 1989, at Section 8.

¹¹ See Adoption Act 1976, at Section 15.

¹² *In re W (a minor)*, [1997] 3 All ER 620, 627.

¹³ See Adoption Act 1976, at Sections 14 and 15.

¹⁴ See Adoption Act 1976, at Section 14.

¹⁵ See the website of the Department of Health, available at <http://www.children.doh.gov.uk/adoption/faq.htm#c1> (last visited on 12 May 2004).

¹⁶ See Adoption Act 1976, at Section 7.

a family of similar ethnic origin and religion is most likely to effectively safeguard their welfare and to meet their needs as fully as possible.¹⁷

In the case where no family is available which closely matches the child's cultural heritage and ethnic origin, the adoption agency is supposed to find an alternative suitable family within realistic time limits. Moreover, the Government has clearly stated that a child must not be denied loving adoptive parents solely because they do not share the same racial or cultural background.¹⁸

In general, the law does not allow adoption where neither of the adoptive parents are domiciled in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man.¹⁹ Domicile is defined as "the legal, and normally also the factual, relationship between a person and a territorial area subject to one system of law, which arises from his residence with the intention of making it his permanent home."²⁰ In a case where the adoptive parent wishes to adopt through the English system but is working or living overseas, he or she must return to England on a regular basis to make the home study assessment possible.

Furthermore, no one formerly convicted for offences against a child is allowed to adopt. This applies equally if anyone in the applicant's household is convicted of such offenses.²¹

C. Adoption authorities

Under the Adoption Act 1976, it is the duty of local authorities to provide, or arrange for the provision of, an adoption service. Adoption agencies are local councils or voluntary adoption agencies, which the Secretary of State for Health has approved. Adoption agencies are responsible for approving the prospective adoptive parents.²² In conjunction with adoption agencies, "adoption panels" play a critically important role in the adoption process in England. Adoption panels consist of social workers, other professionals and independent members. Their membership should represent the local community and include people experienced with adoption. Members of the panel are the chairman, social workers employed by the adoption agency, at least one management representative,²³ and a medical adviser. At least three members of the panel must be independent of the adoption agency and should be people with a special contribution to make to the panel's work. This can be achieved through panel members being a representative of an ethnic minority group, an adopted person, an educational psychologist, or a probation officer. On the panel, there must be at least one woman and at least one man.²⁴

¹⁷ See the website of the Department of Health, available at <http://www.children.doh.gov.uk/adoption/faq.htm#c1> (last visited on 12 May 2004).

¹⁸ See the website of the Department of Health, at <http://www.children.doh.gov.uk/adoption/faq.htm#c1> (last visited on 30 April 2004).

¹⁹ See Adoption Act 1976, Sections 14(2) and 15(2).

²⁰ See CLARKE *et al.*, supra note 4, at note 79.

²¹ See the website of the Department of Health, available at <http://www.children.doh.gov.uk/adoption/faq.htm#c1> (last visited on 12 May 2004).

²² See Adoption Act 1976, at Section 1. See also CLARKE *et al.*, supra note 4, note 11. National Adoption Standards provide the standards to be met by adoption services.

²³ This management representative shall be either a member of the management committee in case of an adoption agency, or a member of the social services committee in case of a council.

²⁴ See the website of the Department of Health, at <http://www.children.doh.gov.uk/adoption/faq.htm#panel> (last visited on 30 April 2004).

The adoption panels are responsible for considering whether a child in the care of the council should be made available for adoption, whether prospective adopters should be approved, and whether particular adopters are suitable for a particular child.²⁵ They then make a recommendation to the appointed Decision Maker. The Decision Maker is a senior agency official responsible for considering the panel's recommendation and making a decision on behalf of the adoption agency.

If the Decision Maker does not approve a person as suitable to be an adoptive parent, he will give him or her the reasons why and a copy of the adoption panel's recommendation if it differs from his or her view. The prospective adoptive parent may then make a representation to the Decision Maker within 28 days. Without any such representation, the Decision Maker will make his or her final decision. If a representation is made, the Decision Maker has several possibilities as to how to proceed. He or she may refer the case to the adoption panel for further consideration, which can make a fresh recommendation or confirm its original one; or the Decision Maker can refer the case to another adoption panel for its recommendation. After considering the panel's recommendation, the Decision Maker makes his or her final decision, against which there is no right of appeal or any right to make further representations.²⁶

D. Standard applied before making an adoption order

Under Section 6 of the Adoption Act 1976, the first consideration must be given to the "need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child throughout his or her childhood." The court or the adoption agency shall, as far as possible, accommodate the child's wishes and feelings with respect to the decision. Section 6 requires consideration of all the circumstances relevant to the child's welfare. Among other things, these circumstances include the right of abode in England due to the adoption and being able to finish the child's education in England.²⁷ The interests of the biological parents are not a decisive factor, except with respect to the religious upbringing of the child.²⁸

III. Adoption Procedure

A. Who makes the adoption order?

While the adoption agencies approve the prospective parents, accept children for adoption, and place them with prospective adopters, an authorized court makes the legally relevant adoption orders. If the child is in England or Wales when the application for an adoption order is made, an authorized court is the High Court, any other county court or a magistrates' court.²⁹ The courts making adoption orders are called adoption centers and employ special adoption officers and circuit judges (adoption judges) who are responsible for adoption at those courts. The adoption officers at adoption centers should arrange for all adoption and directions hearings to be listed before an adoption judge. Although

²⁵ For more information on adoption panels see CLARKE *et al.*, *supra* note 4, at notes 18 *et seq.*

²⁶ See the website of the Department of Health, available at <http://www.children.doh.gov.uk/adoption/faq.htm#panel> (last visited on 30 April 2004).

²⁷ *In re B (a minor)*, [1999] 2 All E.R. 576, 580.

²⁸ See Adoption Act 1976, at Section 7 ("An adoption agency shall in placing a child for adoption have regard (so far as is practicable) to any wishes of a child's parents and guardians as to the religious upbringing of the child.")

²⁹ See Adoption Act 1976, at Section 62 (2).

district judges cannot make a final adoption order, they may handle directions hearings under arrangements made by the local circuit judge in charge of adoption.³⁰

B. Consents required for making of adoption order

Under Section 16(1)(b) of the Adoption Act 1976, no adoption order shall be made unless each parent or guardian of a child freely, and with full understanding of what is involved, agrees unconditionally to the making of an adoption order, regardless of whether he knows the applicant's identity or not. However, this agreement is ineffective if given by the mother less than six weeks after the child's birth.³¹

The English adoption acts do not set forth any formal requirements with respect to the consent of the biological mother or parents. In *In re T (a minor)*,³² the court dealt with Section 29 of the Children Act 1975 which stated that, where a parent of the child has agreed to the making of the adoption order, "the parent or guardian ... is not entitled to remove the child from the custody of [the prospective adopter] except with the leave of the court." The court found that "the words 'has agreed' do not necessarily contemplate a written agreement."³³ Accordingly, the consent to the adoption order does not require a certain form.

1. Circumstances in which consent is not required

Under certain circumstances, the consent normally required for making the final adoption order can be dispensed with. The authorized court, which makes the order declaring the child free for adoption, has jurisdiction to dispense with the parental consent on grounds specified in Section 16(2) of the Adoption Act 1976.³⁴ These grounds include circumstances in which neither of the parents can be found or both are incapable of giving consent. Additionally, consent may be dispensed with in cases where the parent unreasonably withholds his or her consent; has persistently failed to discharge his or her parental responsibility for the child without reasonable cause; has abandoned or neglected the child; or has persistently or seriously mistreated the child.³⁵ However, Section 16(5) states that in a case of serious mistreatment of the child, the consent of the parent may not be dispensed with unless the rehabilitation of the child within the household of the parent or guardian is unlikely.

If a child is freed for adoption by a court order, the former parent can, under certain circumstances, apply to the court for a further order revoking the adoption order because he wishes to resume parental responsibility. The preconditions are that no final adoption order has yet been made and that the child does not have his or her home with a person with whom he has been placed for adoption. The annulment of a freeing order under Section 18 has several consequences. It extinguishes the parental responsibility given to the adoption agency under the Section 18 order, gives parental responsibility for the child to the child's previous mother and – in case his or her parents were married to each other at the child's birth – to his or her father. It also revives any parental

³⁰ See the website of the Court service, at http://www.courtservice.gov.uk/you_courts/divrfam/adoption/approach/courts.htm (last visited on 30 April 2004).

³¹ See Adoption Act 1976, Section 16 (4).

³² *In re T (a minor)*, [1986] 1 All E.R. 817.

³³ *In re T (a minor)*, [1986] 1 All E.R. 817, 831. See also Clarke et al., *supra* note 4, at notes 186 et seq.

³⁴ See Adoption Act 1976, at Section 18 (1). As explained above, an authorised court is the High Court, any county court or a magistrates' court. See also Adoption Act 1976, at Section 62 (2).

³⁵ For more information see CLARKE et al., *supra* note 4, at notes 211 et seq.

responsibility agreement under Section 4(1) of the Children Act 1989. However, in *In re G (a minor)*, the court stated that it is not bound to revoke a freeing order just because the conditions required for making the original freeing order no longer stand.³⁶

C. Interim orders

The court responsible for making the adoption order may postpone the determination of the application and make an interim order. This order gives the parental responsibility for the child to the applicants for a probationary period of up to two years upon such terms as the court imposes.³⁷

D. Secrecy and anonymity of adoption procedure; possibility of origin tracing

In the event that an applicant for an adoption order wants to remain anonymous, the court will issue the applicant a “serial number” which will appear on any official documents related to the adoption in place of their personal details. Where parents, a guardian of the child, and applicant have to attend the same court hearing, the court will make arrangements to ensure that the applicant’s identity remains unknown.

In *In re X (a minor)*, the court held that in cases of real risk to the child, the court would order that “during the minority of the child the Registrar General should not disclose to any person without the leave of the court the details of the adoption entered in the Adopted Children Register.”³⁸

For adopted children attaining the age of 18 years, Section 51 (1) of the Adoption Act 1976 allows the disclosure of their birth records. The Registrar General is responsible for supplying the information necessary to enable the child to obtain a certified copy of the record of his or her birth.³⁹ In case the adopted child has not attained the age of 18 years but intends to be married, the Registrar General shall inform him or her whether the marriage may be prohibited under the Marriage Act 1949 (due to the adopted child’s family tree).

IV. Legal Effect of an Adoption

Where an adoption order is made, the adopted child becomes the legitimate child of his or her adoptive parents. The adoption severs all legal ties with the child’s birth family and awards the parental responsibilities and rights to the adoptive parents. The child assumes the same rights and privileges, including the right of inheritance, as if he or she had been born to the adoptive family.⁴⁰ The order also extinguishes any parental responsibility any other person had for the child before the making of the order. Also, the child’s surname is normally changed to that of the adoptive parents.⁴¹

The citizenship of the adopted child depends on the child’s original citizenship and that of his or her adoptive parents. An English adoption order automatically grants British Citizenship to the

³⁶ *In re G (a minor)*, [1997] 3 All E.R. 539, 534.

³⁷ See Adoption Act 1976, at Section 25.

³⁸ *In re X (a minor)*, [1994] 3 All E.R. 372, 379.

³⁹ However, if the disclosure of information could be dangerous to a birth parent, this right may be ignored. See CLARKE *et al.*, *supra* note 4, at note 91.

⁴⁰ See Adoption Act 1976, Section 39.

⁴¹ See CLARKE *et al.*, *supra* note 4, at note 92.

child provided that either his or her adoptive father or mother is a British citizen at the time the adoption order is made.⁴²

Because adoption is considered irrevocable and a “permanent transplant of a child into a new family,”⁴³ the revocation of adoption orders is possible only in certain specific cases. For example, if a child has been adopted by one of his or her unmarried biological parents, and then the parents marry, legally “legitimizing” the child and making the adoption unnecessary, the adoption order can be revoked.⁴⁴ Further, the High Court may order that an overseas adoption shall cease to be valid in Great Britain in cases where the adoption order is contrary to public policy.⁴⁵

Moreover, a court may set aside a legal adoption order in case of “a breach of natural justice.”⁴⁶ Such breach of natural justice may be the failure to effect proper service of the adoption proceedings or ignorance of the biological parent of the existence of the adoption proceedings.⁴⁷ However, the court stated in *In re B*, where a child with a Muslim father was adopted by a Jewish couple without his birth mother knowing that his adoptive parents were Jewish, the failure to disclose did not suffice to set aside an adoption order which had been rightly made. It further stated that allowing “such considerations to invalidate an otherwise properly made adoption order would undermine the whole basis on which adoption orders were made.” Other circumstances under which the order could be set aside by a court would include cases in which the “natural parent who might have wished to challenge the adoption had never been told it was going to happen, or where the order had been obtained by fraud.”⁴⁸

V. Recognition of Foreign Adoptions

As mentioned above, the UK ratified the Hague Convention on Protection and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption on February 27, 2003.⁴⁹ There are specific procedures with respect to adoptions under the Hague Convention. Authorities in the UK and in the other country will receive an application for adoption and will then decide whether or not to accept it. Upon acceptance, the child is placed with the prospective adopters. The adoption order is then made in a UK court.

The UK automatically recognizes an adoption order made in any of the countries named on the Designated List. Countries on the Designated List include, for example, Australia, Botswana, Malta, Nigeria, Austria, Germany, Norway, Turkey and the United States of America. Adoption from

⁴² See Section 1 (5) British Nationality Act 1981. See also the Department of Health web site, at <http://www.doh.gov.uk/adoption/intercountry/faq.htm#citizen> (last visited on 30 April 2004). See also CLARKE *et al.*, *supra* note 4, at notes 93 *et seq.*

⁴³ See CLARKE *et al.*, *supra* note 4, at note 102.

⁴⁴ See Adoption Act 1976, at Section 52(1) (“Where any person adopted by his father or mother alone has subsequently become a legitimated person on the marriage of his father and mother, the court by which the adoption order was made may, on the application of any of the parties concerned, revoke that order.”).

⁴⁵ See Adoption Act 1976, at Section 53.

⁴⁶ *In re B*, [1995] 3 All E.R. 333, 338.

⁴⁷ *In re B*, [1995] 3 All E.R. 333, 337.

⁴⁸ *In re B*, [1995] 3 All E.R. 333, 334.

⁴⁹ The full text of the Hague Convention, including a complete overview of the status of signatures and ratifications, is available on the website of the Hague Conference on Private International Law, at <http://www.hcch.net/> (last visited on 12 May 2004).

countries that have not ratified the Hague Convention and are not on the Designated List is possible, but the adoptive parents must “re-adopt” the child in a UK court.

For humanitarian reasons, the British Government allows intercountry adoption in cases where the adopter has been assessed as eligible and suitable to adopt from overseas by an adoption agency, the child cannot be cared for in any suitable manner in his or her own country, and the adoption would be in the best interests of the child and the child’s fundamental rights as recognized under international law. Furthermore, the British Government does not impose any restrictions on which country the adoptive child may come from.⁵⁰

For adoptive parents adopting from abroad, the relevant procedures are identical to those for adopting a child in England. However, a British citizen adopting from abroad must also comply with the laws of the country in which the child lives.⁵¹

VI. Resources

For more information on English adoption law, please see the website of the Department of Health, at <http://www.children.doh.gov.uk/adoption/>.

For a comprehensive study of the English adoption law, please see CLARKE HALL & MORRISON ON CHILDREN, (10th ed. 2003).

For a list of UK government departments and administration as well as of adoption agencies, please see Appendices 1-3 to this memorandum.

⁵⁰ See the website of the Department of Health, at www.children.doh.gov.uk/adoption/intercountry/faq.htm (last visited on 30 April 2004).

⁵¹ See the website of the Department of Health, at <http://www.children.doh.gov.uk/adoption/intercountry/citizens> (last visited on 12 May 2004).

Government Departments and Administration

- England - Department of Education & Skills, Margaret Hodge MP, Minister of State for Children and Young People, Department for Education & Skills, Placement, Permanence & Child Protection Branch, Wellington House, 133-55 Waterloo Road, London, SE1 8UG, Telephone: (+20) 7972 4014, Fax: (+20) 7972 4179
Email: info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk
- Placement, Permanence & Child Protection Branch, (Intercountry Section), Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London, SE1 8UG, Telephone: (+20) 7972 4014, Fax: (+20) 7972 4179
Email: info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk
- Children and family Court Advisory and Support Services for England and Wales (CAFCASS), CAFCASS HQ, 13th & 14th Floors, Archway Tower, 2 Junction Road, London, N19 5HQ, Telephone: (+20) 7 210 4400, Fax: (+20) 7210 4422
<http://www.cafcass.gov.uk>
Email: cafcass@cafcass.gov.uk
- The Court Service, Southside, 105 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QT, Telephone: (+20) 7210 2266
<http://www.courtservice.gov.uk>
Email: cust.ser.cs@tinet.gov.uk
- The Family Records Centre, 1 Myddleton Street, London, EC1R 1UW, Telephone: (+20) 7045 6924
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk>
- Foreign & Commonwealth Office - Legalisation Office, Old Admiralty Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2LG, Telephone: (+20) 7008 1111
<http://www.fco.gov.uk/legalisation>
- General Register Office (GRO), Trafalgar Road, Southport, PR8 2HH, Telephone: (+151) 471 4830
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/nsbase/registration/adoptions.asp>
Email: adoption@ons.gov.uk
- General Register Office for Northern Ireland, Oxford House, 49/55 Chichester Street, Belfast, BT1 4HL, Telephone: (+28) 90 252000
<http://www.groni.gov.uk/index.htm>
E-mail: groreg.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk
- Birth Link, 21 Castle Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3DN, Telephone: (+131) 225 6441, Fax: (+131) 225 6478
<http://www.birthlink.org.uk/>
E-mail: mail@birthlink.org.uk

Adoption Agencies

- **London Borough of Barking and Dagenham**, 512a Heathway, Dagenham, Essex RM10 7SL, Telephone: (+20) 8227 5818
- **London Borough of Barnet**, Adoption Team, Barnet House, 1255 High Road, London N20 0EJ, Telephone: (+20) 8359 5704, Fax: (+20) 8359 5754
Email: adoption@barnet.gov.uk
- **Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council**, Social Services Department, Wellington House, 36 Wellington Street, Barnsley, Yorkshire S70 1WA, Telephone: (+1226) 775476
- **Bedfordshire County Council, Social Services Department, Houghton Close, Ampthill MK45 2TG**, Telephone: (+1525) 631043, Fax: (+1525) 840551
- **Bexley Council, Children's Placement Service, Howbury Centre, Slade Green Road, Erith, Kent DA8 2HX**, Telephone: (+20) 8303 7777
Email: adoption&fostering@bexley.gov.uk
- **Birmingham City Council, Adoption Recruitment, 203 Corporation Street, Birmingham B4 6SE**, Telephone: (+121) 3037575
Website: www.birmingham.gov.uk/adoptionandfostering
Email: A&FRecruit@birmingham.gov.uk
- **Blackburn with Darwen Council, Social Services Department, Jubilee House, Jubilee Street, Blackburn BB1 1ET**, Telephone: (+1254) 587862
- **Blackpool Borough Council, Housing & Social Services Department, Progress House, Clifton Road, Blackpool FY4 4US**, Telephone: (+1253) 477641
Email: Fosteringandadoption@blackpool.gov.uk
- **Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council, Social Services Department, Woodlands, Manchester Road, Bolton BL3 2PQ**, Telephone: (+1204) 337480, Fax: (+1204) 337489
- **Bournemouth Borough Council, The Family Placement Team, Maxwell Road Depot, Maxwell Road, Winton, Bournemouth BH9 1DL**, Telephone: (+1202) 535909
www.bournemouth.gov.uk
Email: adoption@bournemouth.gov.uk
- **Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Bracknell Family Placement Team, Time Square, Market Street, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1JD**, Telephone: (+1344) 351557, Fax: (+1344) 351 521
www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk
Email: susan.williams@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

- **The Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service, York House, Sheet Street, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 1DD, Telephone: (+1628) 683760, Fax: (+1628) 683760**
- **Bradford City Council, Social Services Department Adoption Team, Aire Building, 35 Saltaire Road, Shipley, West Yorkshire BD18 3HH, Service Advice line : (+1274) 437343, Recruitment Hotline: (+1274) 434331
www.bradfordadoptionfostering.org.uk**
- **London Borough of Brent, Chesterfield House, 9 Park Lane, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 7RW, Telephone: (+800) 731 5353**
- **Brighton Council, Permanence and Concurrency Team, 253 Preston Road, Brighton BN1 6SE, Telephone: (+1273) 295444, Fax: (+1273) 295445
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk
E-mail: permanence.team@brighton-hove.gov.uk**
- **Hove Council, King's House, Grand Avenue, Hove BN3 2LS, Telephone: (+1273) 295031
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk
E-mail: permanence.team@brighton-hove.gov.uk**
- **Bristol City Council, Social Services Department, Family Placement Team (Recruitment), Social Services and Health, Avonvale Road, Redfield, Bristol BS5 9RJ, Telephone: (+117) 954 8545, Fax: (+117) 941 2103
www.bristol-city.gov.uk**
- **London Borough of Bromley, Bromley Social Services & Housing, Joseph Lancaster Hall, Civic Centre, Bromley, Kent BR1 3UH, Telephone: (+20) 8313 4193, Fax: (+20) 8313 4086
www.bromley.gov.uk
Email: fostering&adoption@bromley.gov.uk**
- **Buckinghamshire County Council, Adoption & Permanence Team, Social Services Department, Council Offices, King George V Road, Amersham, Bucks HP6 5BN, Telephone: (+1494) 732134, Fax: (+1494) 732749
www.buckscc.gov.uk/fostering/index.stm
Email: enquiries@buckscc.gov.uk**
- **Bury Metropolitan Borough Council, Personal and Community Services, Social Services Department, Accommodation Services, 18/20 St Mary's Place, Bury BL9 0DZ, Telephone: (+161) 253 5457, Fax: (+161) 253 5466
Email: FosteringandAdoption@bury.gov.uk
Web Site: www.bury.gov.uk**
- **Metropolitan Borough of Calderdale, Adoption & Permanence Team, Calderdale Social Services, Ovenden Hall, Ovenden Road, Halifax HX3 5QG, Telephone: (+1422) 353279
Email: Ceile.haversham@calderdale.gov.uk**

- **Fostering & Adoption Services (Cambridge, South & East Cambs), 18 - 20 Signet Court, Swann's Road, Cambridge CB5 8LA, Telephone: (+800) 052 0078, (+1223) 718388, Fax: (+1223) 718656**
- **Fostering & Adoption Services (Huntingdon & Fenland), Buttsgrove Centre, 38 Buttsgrove Way, Huntingdon, Cambs PE29 1LY, Telephone: (+800) 052 0078; (+1480) 376404, Fax: (+1480) 376409**
- **London Borough of Camden, The Permanent Placements Team, 115 Wellesley Road London, NW5 4PA, Telephone: (+20) 7974 6165, Fax: (+20) 7974 6799
E-mail: ppt@camden.gov.uk**
- **Cheshire County Council, Cheshire County Council, Family Placement Service, FREEPOST NATE1105, Chester CH1 1ZZ, Telephone: (+1244) 602222
www.adoptionincheshire.co.uk
Email: adoption@cheshire.gov.uk**
- **Corporation of London, Corporation of London, Community Services Department, PO Box 270, Guildhall, London EC2P 2EJ, Telephone: (+20) 7332 1224
www.cityoflondon.gov.uk**
- **Cornwall County Council, Adoption and Family Finding Unit, 13 Treyew Road, Truro TR1 2BY, Telephone: (+1872) 270251, Fax: (+1872) 260557
www.cornwall.gov.uk
Email: enquiries@social.cornwall.gov.uk**
- **Coventry City Council, Coventry City Council, Family Placement Service, Stoke House, Lloyd Crescent, Wyken, Coventry CV2 5NY, Telephone: (+24) 76 659009, Fax: (+24) 76 659004
E-mail: familyplacementservice@coventry.gov.uk**
- **London Borough of Croydon, Social Services Department, Taberner House, Park Lane, Croydon CR9 2BA, Telephone: (+20) 8660 4844**
- **Cumbria County Council, 3 Victoria Place, Carlisle CA1 1EH, Telephone: (+1228) 607138**
- **Darlington Borough Council, Adoption Team, Central House, Gladstone Street, Social Services Department, Town Hall, Darlington, Co Durham DL31 6JX5QT, Telephone: (+1325) 3462270191 386 3719, Fax: (+1325) 346474**
- **Derby City Council, Adoption Team, Social Services, Perth Street Office, Derby DE21 6XX, Telephone: (+1332) 718000**
- **Derbyshire County Council, Social Services Department, County Hall, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3AG, Telephone: (+1629) 580000**

- **South Hams and Teignbridge districts, Devon Social Services, Foxhole, Dartington, Totnes, Devon TQ9 6EB, Telephone: (+1392) 386638, Fax: (+1392) 386609
Email: sgalvin@devon.gov.uk**
- **Exeter, East Devon, Mid Devon districts, Devon Social Services, Ivybank, 45 St David's Hill, Exeter, EX4 4DN, Telephone: (+1392) 384979**
- **North Devon, Torrridge and West Devon districts, Devon Social Services, 20 St Georges Road, Barnstaple, EX32 7AU, Telephone: (+1271) 388069, Fax: (+1271) 388079**
- **Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Social Services Department, PO Box 251, The Council House, College Road, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN1 3DA, Telephone: (+1302) 737777, Fax: (+1302) 737778
Email: social.services@doncaster.gov.uk**
- **Dorset County Council, Princes House, Princes Street, Dorchester, Dorset, Telephone: (+1305) 251414
E-mail: socialservices@dorset-cc.gov.uk**
- **Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Social Services Department, Ednam House, 1 St James Road, Dudley, West Midlands, DY1 3JJ, Telephone: (+1384) 815891**
- **Durham County Council, Social Services Department, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UG, Telephone: (+191) 383 1010**

Intercountry Adoption Agencies

- **Association for Families who have Adopted Abroad (AFAA), 30 Bradgate, Cuffley, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 4RL, Telephone/Fax: (+1707 878793)
Email: information.afaam@ntlworld.com**
- **Overseas Adoption Helpline, 64-66 High Street, Barnet, Herts EN 5 5SJ, Telephone: (+870) 5168742, Fax: (+20) 84405675
Website: www.oah.org.uk
Email: info@oah.org.uk**
- **Intercountry Adoption, 18 - 20 Signet Court, Swann's Road, Cambridge CB5 8LA,
Telephone: (+1223) 718417
E-mail: Stephanie.Bishop@socserv.camcnty.gov.uk
E-mail: Sue.Gunns@socserv.camcnty.gov.uk**