

Post adoption services – Northern Ireland

The law around adoption in Northern Ireland is currently being revised, and at present there is no equivalent to the England and Wales regulations requiring local authority adoption agencies to undertake an assessment of the support needs of individual adoptive families.

However, under Article 3 and Article 54 of the Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order as amended by paragraph 158 (2) of Schedule 9 to The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, each adoption agency should have a clear post adoption strategy for working with and supporting children, birth families and adoptive families. The post adoption service recognises the lifelong implications of adoption and maintaining the child's heritage.

The post adoption service includes:

- Ongoing support for adopted children and their adoptive parents.
- Adoption allowances.
- The Adoption Contact Register.
- Counselling of the adopted child.
- Counselling of adopted adults who wish to obtain their original birth records.
- Counselling of adoptive parents.
- Counselling of birth parents and siblings.
- A recognition by agencies of the need to offer ongoing support and training to adoptive families, due to the trauma adoptees have suffered in their early years.
- Families being advised of local support groups.
- Families being offered parenting support programmes and courses.
- Planned access to the full range of multidisciplinary services, when necessary, in order to maintain the child in the care of his adoptive parents.
- Administration of a postbox service for contact.

For further information please contact the Adoption UK Northern Ireland office on 028 9446 9493 or northernireland@adoptionuk.org.uk. You can also use the Northern Ireland evening helpline (0844 848 7900), available Monday to Thursday, 8pm–10pm.