

User Guide No. 5

Finding the records of your adoption

Were you adopted? Are you trying to find out about your biological parents? Or was one of your parents or grandparents adopted?

Flintshire County Council aims to give what assistance it can to anyone looking for the adoption records of themselves or a relative. This leaflet is to help you understand how we can help, what the procedures are, and when we might have to refer you to someone else.

THE RECORDS

The Council keeps records of Flintshire adoptions for 120 years. This is to ensure that anyone looking for his or her own adoption records should find that they are safely preserved and have not been lost or destroyed. They are not freely available to the public during this time. At the end of 120 years, when it is certain that the subject of the record will no longer be living, the record will be either destroyed or transferred to the County Record Office for permanent preservation and public access.

As well as the records of the Council's own social services department which dealt with the adoption at the time, there would also have been a record made by the court which granted the adoption order. Either or both of these might now be in the custody of the Council.

WHERE DO I START?

If the adoption you are interested in is **more than** 120 years old, contact the Record Office (contact details can be found at the end of this leaflet). Staff will be able to tell you whether any relevant records are held. However, it is unlikely that they would be able to do this immediately over the 'phone and would ask you to e-mail or write in with your request.

If the records you're looking for are **less than** 120 years old, you will need to consider the following:

Do the records you're looking for relate to your own adoption, or that of a blood relative? If not, are you the legal representative either of the person adopted or of the blood relative?

If the answer to both these questions is "NO", your request would be treated as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act and you should follow the Council's standard procedure for FOI requests. An FOI request may be submitted through the Council website (www.flintshire.gov.uk – look under F in the A-Z of services) or by post to Freedom of Information (Lifelong Learning Directorate), County Hall, Mold, CH7 6NB.

If the answer is “YES”, the procedure will differ according to whether you live in North Wales, elsewhere in the UK, or abroad.

If you live in North Wales you should contact:

North Wales Adoption Service

Tel. 0800 085 0774

Or submit an enquiry via the website: www.northwalesadoption.gov.uk

If you live elsewhere in the UK you should contact your own local Social Services, who will liaise with Flintshire County Council on your behalf.

If you live outside the UK you should contact the Fostering Service of Flintshire County Council (tel. 0044-1352 701084; e-mail Fostering.Admin@flintshire.gov.uk or submit an enquiry to the team via the FCC website by clicking on the “submit an enquiry” button on the home page and entering “adoption” as the enquiry type) who will advise you how to proceed. The correct procedure will differ according to which country you reside in.

ACCESS TO THE RECORDS

If you have contacted the Record Office concerning records more than 120 years old, staff will respond to you letting you know whether any relevant records are held. If they are, you would be invited to visit the Record Office to look at the originals or, if you are not able to do this, copies could be supplied.

If you have contacted the North Wales Adoption Service, your own local council or another agency, concerning records less than 120 years old, the agency concerned will support and guide you through the process from then on.

Before visiting Flintshire Record Office, you are advised to read our ‘Beginner’s Guide to Visiting the Record Office’ (User Guide No. 1). It gives advice on how to prepare in advance for your visit, and what you need to bring with you. We also have a ‘Beginner’s Guide to Using the Search Room’ (User Guide No. 2), which explains what you will need to do when you visit the Record Office for the first time. You will need to make an appointment to view the records as we operate a booking system. Please contact the Record Office if you require further information or to make an appointment: **Tel. 01244 532364**, **e-mail: archives@flintshire.gov.uk** or **write** to Flintshire Record Office, The Old Rectory, Rectory Lane, Hawarden, Flintshire, CH5 3NR. You can also visit our website: www.flintshire.gov.uk/archives.

Mae’r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. Cysylltwch â’r Archifdy i gael fersiwn Gymraeg.

Ffôn: 01244 532364; e-bost: archives@flintshire.gov.uk