Relationships Australia
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Post Adoption Support Services

Accessing records and undertaking a search for birth family relatives if you were born and adopted in the UK and now live in Australia

A Post Adoption Support Services Information Sheet

The following information will assist you to access your birth and adoption records from the UK, which you will need if you wish to search for birth family relatives.

The first thing you need to do is apply to the Home Office (previously known as the General Register Office). The initial form you need to complete and send to the Home Office is called 'Application for Access to Birth Records' and is available from Post Adoption Support Services (PASS), or you can access it via the Home Office Website. (See the end of this information sheet for their contact details.)

The Home Office requires you to be supported through an approved adoption related organisation in order to get your birth and adoption records. PASS is one of the organisations in SA that is recognised by the Home Office to do this. Adoption and Family Information Services (AFIS) is also able to act in this capacity. (See the end of this information sheet for their contact details.)

Once the initial form has been sent to the Home Office, they will send back to PASS a pack of information which contains the following:

- a form to complete to get a copy of your pre-adoption birth certificate, which will have your birth mother's name on it.
- an application form for you to go onto the Adoption Contact Register
- details about the court which finalised your adoption
- a form for the adoption services provider (PASS) to complete to confirm that you have been seen by us.

If you wish to locate and access a copy of your adoption file, PASS will need to write to the court which finalised your adoption, to get the name of the adoption agency which handled your adoption.

This step of the process can be quite lengthy, as some adoption agencies are no longer in existence. If this is the case, we need to find out where the records are now stored. However, in order to start searching for your birth family relatives, it is not necessary to have your adoption file first, as you will already have the name of you birth mother on your pre-adoption birth certificate. You will need to do a marriage/change of name searcgh for your birth mother, which can be done via the Home Office.

PASS is able to support you emotionally through your searching journey, and is able to make contact with any found birth family relatives on your behalf; however we are unable to undertake the actual searching process for you.

There are a number of internet sites which you can use to do some searching, and PASS has links with various post adoption support agencies in the UK. These agencies can help out in the searching process from the UK side of things, as well as provide mediation support / counselling for birth relatives who have been located. PASS can assist you with making contact with these agencies, and work with them on your behalf. You can, of course, choose to make contact with these agencies yourself, and PASS can supply you with contact information.

If your search is successful and you are considering making contact with the person, it is important to be aware that the personal circumstances of the 'found' person may make it difficult for them to engage in communication with you. For further information about this, please see the PASS information sheet 'Making Contact'.

PASS run regular support groups for people who have been adopted, as well as various other seminars and workshops. For further information on these and any other enquiries about PASS services, please contact Nikki Hartmann or Sandi Petersen on (08) 8245 8100, or passinfo@rasa.org.au.

PASS is a program area of Relationships Australia (SA) and is located at 49a Orsmond St, Hindmarsh 5007. Relationships Australia (SA) has a library and bookshop which has a wide variety of adoption related books and resources, as well as other many other topics. The library and bookshop can be contacted on (08) 8245 8100.

Other useful contacts

Home Office UK

Smedley Hydro

Trafalgar Road

Southport, Merseyside PR8 2HH

Website: www.gro.gov.uk

Norcap UK

112 Church Road

Wheatley

Oxfordshire OX33 1LU

Email: enquiries@norcap.org.au

Support After Adoption UK

Melrose House

Waverley St

Nottingham NG7 4HF

Email: support.afteradoption@nottscc.gov.uk

Adoption and Family Information Services (AFIS)

Level 1, 45 Wakefield St

Adelaide, 5000

Ph: (08) 8207 0060