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**BIRTH RELATIVE’S SERVICE**

**About the service**

This service is offered to birth parents and birth families where there is a care plan of adoption for the child and is provided by the birth relatives’ worker who works in the regional adoption agency, Adoption South East. The birth relatives’ worker can provide information and advice about adoption, relating to the needs of the birth parents and birth families. Unfortunately, this service is time limited, and the birth relatives’ worker is unable to take on a support role with the birth family.

Birth parents/relatives are usually offered an appointment in their own home, unless this is not possible due to other factors, for example safety concerns. Birth parents and relatives are given verbal and written information and advice about adoption.

The appointment with the birth relatives’ worker will offer the birth parent/relative the opportunity to talk about their experiences of their child being adopted and the enduring impact on them of this decision. As part of these discussions, the birth relatives’ worker will talk about life story work and as appropriate, encourage the birth parent or relative to provide information that will contribute to the child’s life story.

Birth parents and families are treated with respect, fairly, openly and in a non-discriminatory way. The service is confidential although there are some exceptions to confidentiality, including any concerns that the person is a risk to themselves or others and if there are safeguarding concerns. These conditions and restrictions are explained to birth parents and relatives at the appointment.

**Making a referral to the Birth Relatives Service**

Referrals can be made directly by birth parents/relatives, the child’s social worker or other professional known to the birth parent/relative. The birth relatives worker can be contacted via the duty service at Adoption South East on adoption@surreycc.gov.uk.

When a child adoption decision is made and the birth parents are advised of this they are given a leaflet with contact details in order that they can self refer.

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