



Department for Education

2025-0019171

**Janet Daby MP
Minister for Children and Families**

Adult Adoptee Movement

By email: adultadopteeuk@gmail.com

13 August 2025

Dear colleagues,

Thank you for your correspondence of 23 May, regarding forced adoption practices. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I am grateful for your continued advocacy on behalf of those affected by historical forced adoption practices. I recognise the pain experienced by many individuals and families as a result of these abhorrent practices, practices that should never have taken place. I want to acknowledge the strength and determination it takes to speak out on behalf of so many whose lives have been shaped by these events. Your campaign plays an important role in ensuring that these voices are not forgotten.

I had the privilege of meeting Ms Karen Constantine from the Movement for Adoption Apology and hearing first-hand her experiences and those of others affected by forced adoption. More recently, you will know that departmental officials met with members of the Adult Adoptee Movement, where a range of important issues were raised, including access to therapy and official records. Departmental officials also continue to talk to officials from the Scottish and Welsh governments to assess and learn from their approaches.

We are taking steps to improve support for those affected. The department recently wrote to all regional adoption agencies, voluntary adoption agencies and local authorities, reminding them of their legal obligations to respond to requests for adoption records in a timely manner. On 20 May, Adoption England, funded by the department, published new guidance on access to records titled: "Adoption: Access to Information and Intermediary Services – A Practice Guide".

This guidance aims to support consistent and legally compliant practice across all adoption services. We continue to fund Adoption England to deliver improvements in access to records and intermediary services, and we will continue to work with them to ensure that these efforts lead to tangible service enhancements. The guidance is available in full on the Adoption England website at: tinyurl.com/BDE3PCYR.

In addition, we are proposing to consult on changes to regulations, which would ensure that all adoption case records, for those adopted before 30 December 2025, are retained for at least 100 years. This would align with the requirements for more recent records. Subject to parliamentary clearance, this will be a significant step in protecting individuals' rights to understand their origins.

On mental health, I fully recognise the unique and often complex needs of adult adoptees and birth mothers. NHS talking therapies, including cognitive behavioural therapy, are available to support adults with common mental health conditions. However, I understand that more tailored, trauma-informed support is needed. The government is committed to improving access and outcomes across the full spectrum of mental health needs. We are working to ensure that services are designed and delivered in partnership with those with lived experience. The forthcoming NHS 10-Year Health Plan will set out how we intend to strengthen mental health care, including early intervention and recovery-focused approaches.

I note your comments about representation on groups related to adoption services and policy. I should explain that representation on parliamentary groups, such as the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Adoption and Permanence, is not a matter for me as a minister.

Although it is not a decision-making group, the department's adopter reference group (ARG) has representation from adopters, some of which are social workers or representatives from adopter voice groups including adult adoptees. The remit of the group is to discuss issues affecting adoptive families and to advise how the government can improve adoption. I was very pleased to attend a recent ARG meeting at which a range of important issues was discussed.

The department is committed to evidence-based policy making and regularly reviews its research priorities, guided by our evaluation strategy 2025 to 2029, which focuses on learning and accountability. This strategy can be found on GOV.UK at: [tinyurl.com/2FZ5TSRM](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/814542/evaluation_strategy_2025_to_2029.pdf). We also publish areas of research interest to help shape and stimulate wider research activity across the sector, including work not directly commissioned by the department. These are also available on GOV.UK: [tinyurl.com/MR3X4HD3](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/814542/research_interest_areas.pdf).

As part of our current priorities, we are funding a longitudinal study of young people aged 12 to 25 who left care via adoption or special guardianship orders. This study is the first of its kind and is designed to explore long-term outcomes, including mental health and wellbeing, for both young people and their families. It aims to address key evidence gaps and inform future policy development. More information on this can be found on GOV.UK at: [tinyurl.com/BDFT9EK7](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/814542/longitudinal_study.pdf).

While we are not currently commissioning research into the specific areas you mention (such as mortality rates, addiction, or criminal justice outcomes) we continue to keep our research priorities under review. I appreciate your engagement and for highlighting areas of interest.

Thank you for your kind invitation to meet. My office is aware of your request and will be in touch if I am able to do so in the near future.

Thank you again for writing. I look forward to continuing to work together constructively to help those affected by historic adoption practices.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Janet Daby." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

Janet Daby MP
Minister for Children and Families