



### **Retrieving Birth History Files UK:**

There is sometimes confusion between professionals of the rules under the Data Protection Act UK; however, in this case the Adoption Act 2002 UK is very clear as it protects the rights of the adopted parents and child, to receive this level of detail of birth history information.

Making reference to the Adoption Act 2002 section 54 that provides the general regulation making power under section 9 of the Act may be used to oblige agencies in prescribed circumstances to provide prescribed information to adopters. The Act goes on to state how important this is to provide necessary information to support needs, interests, education and health.

Furthermore reference in section 56 para 164 re transferring data and section 57 para 167 re the power can be exercised to oblige to disclose information if not satisfied.

Therefore a request can be made to access adopted children's birth files, to include CPR, police files and any held health records including the health red book (if you have not already had copy to this already) as an adopted parent.

This should not require any contact with the birth family as information would all be kept on files prior to and post adoption; this level of detail would be needed to build a case for the adoption, but would need to be requested. Workers would also be looking for alcohol/drugs found at the scene in the police files linked to finding birth parent/s at a domestic incident.

There is a couple ways to complete this detailed exercise where all information can be requested, where alcohol/drug intake of both birth parents and any epigenetic history of grandparents and other family members looked for by the worker examining the detail, or that all files are copied and sent to you as the adopted parent to be scrutinised accordingly.

Often in building an adoption case the child's social worker will gather the details of biological grandparents where there are patterns of alcohol abuse or addiction or death caused by alcohol; this is also useful evidence for clinicians building a picture for examination of birth history for epigenetics for FASD diagnostic analysis.

For the need to support the request for the detailed background search, it is useful is to make reference to Clinical Psychologist Dr Cassie Jackson who in a recent conference with professionals and parents for Adopt South West supported the importance of early intervention; when it comes to FASD, early diagnosis and appropriate intervention it is strongly associated with better outcomes for children and their families. In turn, this reduces the risk of secondary mental and physical health complications to those affected, and also reduces cost to tertiary services if some of these difficulties are prevented.

### **See below for suggested template:**

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**Suggested template for your email request to your current adoption agency:**

As per the Adoption Act 2002 section 54, under section 9 of the Act, I request retrieval of my adopted child XXXX birth files, date of birth XXXX.

We are requesting FASD Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is considered as part of a Multi-Disciplinary Assessment and therefore information regarding birth family alcohol/drug intake is vital to provide evidence as per the NICE quality Standards for FASD for a possible diagnosis.

We are looking specifically for alcohol in pregnancy but epigenetic history is helpful too. I understand birth parents, birth grandparents and other extended family members may have a relationship with alcohol/drugs and this is likely to be recorded in pre adoption report gathering.

Also, police records for Birth Mother where police or other services including social workers may have attended a scene where she was drunk or alcohol or drugs was on the scene. I would also like to look for details of any substance abuse relating to any domestic incidents. It may be that the childrens social worker had noted alcohol from maternity files of pregnancy and birth.

If this fails to provide any evidence then I request a freedom of information request for Child Care Files.

As discussed by clinical psychologist, Dr Cassie Jackson, intervention and support for FASD strongly improves outcomes for both family and children, and reduces costs as some difficulties can be prevented.

I await your response as soon as possible as we are awaiting an appointment for the MDA.