

# INTERMEDIARY SERVICES POLICY

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# INDEX

1	This policy arises from.....	3
2	Introduction: Principles and Aims of PAC-UK's Intermediary Services.....	3
3	Objectives.....	3
4	Provision of Intermediary Services.....	4
5	Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of Intermediary Services:.....	5

## **1 This policy arises from**

The Adoption and Children Act 2002, Section 98, Schedule 2 (Access to Birth Record Information), The Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005, Regulations 13, 18-21, and the National Minimum Standards for Adoption, Standards 15, 16; Oct 2014 rules to make provision for intermediary service for 'persons with a prescribed relationship'

## **2 Introduction: Principles and Aims of PAC-UK's Intermediary Services**

- 2.1 As an Adoption Support Agency, PAC-UK is committed to providing skilled, sensitive and safe Intermediary Services that will achieve the best possible outcomes for its users who may include adopted adults, birth relatives and adoptive families.
- 2.2 PAC-UK acknowledges that adoption is an evolving lifelong process for all those involved and that the fundamental issues raised by adoption may reverberate and resurface at different times and stages in an individual's life.
- 2.3 PAC-UK recognises that in the provision of an intermediary service, the views of the adopted adult take precedence.
- 2.4 PAC-UK also recognises that in the provision of an intermediary service the impact on any related adopted sibling under 18 must be taken account of.
- 2.5 PAC-UK affirms it has a duty of care to all parties to the adoption and that intermediary counsellors will consider the implications for everyone involved of decisions made and actions taken in the provision of this service.
- 2.6 PAC-UK will seek to work in partnership with all parties involved, taking into account their views and wishes, as well as issues of safety and well being. Decision making will be compliant with Section 98 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and related legislation, regulations, standards and guidance.

## **3 Objectives**

- 3.1 Staffing: PAC-UK will ensure that all counsellors and social workers providing intermediary services have the appropriate experience, skills, knowledge and training, and are supported by regular supervision. The intermediary service

counsellor has an active role, the overall aim being to establish a channel of communication between the parties.

- 3.2 Careful preparation, skilled mediation of communication, and sensitively provided ongoing support are essential in intermediary work, regardless of the outcome.
- 3.3 Birth Records Information Counselling: Schedule 2 (2002 Act), can only be undertaken by qualified social workers who are experienced in Birth Records Information Counselling. However, subsequent intermediary service work may be carried out by PAC-UK counsellors who are experienced and trained in this area.
- 3.4 Non-Disclosure Agreement: PAC-UK operates a Non-Disclosure Policy that refers to “protected information” obtained from the Appropriate Adoption Agency (AAA) about any of the parties to the adoption, how such information can be shared appropriately, and how it will then be used and safeguarded. PAC-UK will enter into a Non-Disclosure agreement with the AAA.
- 3.5 PAC-UK will enter into a separate agreement with birth relatives with regard to the restriction of access to identifying information about the adopted adult, as laid out in the 2002 Act.
- 3.6 Assessment of need: In order to comply with Regulation 13 (2005), prospective service users must be made aware that they are entitled to request an assessment of their needs for adoption support services from their local authority in accordance with the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and associated Regulation 13.
- 3.7 Any intermediary service work that is undertaken will be informed by the completion of the PAC-UK initial assessment of needs form by the PAC-UK counsellor.

## **4 Provision of Intermediary Services**

- 4.1 User-focused Service: PAC-UK will ensure that its service is client-centred and informed by user feedback and current knowledge of, and research into intermediary service provision.
- 4.2 Service Delivery: PAC-UK is committed to providing a culturally sensitive service which pays due regard to differences in race, gender, age, sexual orientation, and physical and mental capacity. Where users have particular needs or vulnerability, these will be taken into consideration and the intermediary service counsellor will liaise with the subscribing authority, as appropriate, to provide any additional

Intermediary Services Policy

resources required such as transport or specialised support, including interpreter services, to make the provision of intermediary services practicable.

- 4.3 Location: PAC-UK's intermediary services are based at its premises in Kentish Town or at its Outreach Surgeries, which are generally wheelchair accessible.
- 4.4 Feedback: all clients will be given clear information about how to make their views known to PAC-UK regarding its provision of intermediary services. This will include details of PAC-UK's Comments, Compliments, Complaints procedure, and reasons (signed and dated) for deciding not to provide a service after an initial assessment of needs has been undertaken, or at any stage of the process as information becomes available. A copy will be kept on the client's file, and the referring agency also informed if appropriate. Clients will also be advised that they will be asked to complete a feedback form on completion of work.

## **5 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of Intermediary Services:**

- 5.1 PAC-UK's intermediary service provision will be regularly monitored and feedback sought from users and subscribing authorities.
- 5.2 The impact of intermediary service provision will be assessed after an analysis of evaluation returns, and the service reviewed annually to comply with all legal requirements.