

## POSTBOX SERVICE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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## **1 These policy and procedures arise 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

## **2 Introduction: Aims and Objectives of Postbox Service for Adopted Adults and Birth Relatives**

- 2.1 PAC-UK aims to offer adopted adults (over 18) and their birth relatives from anywhere in Britain a sensitive and user-focused Postbox Service as part of its Advice Line and Counselling Service.
- 2.2 This service is for adopted adults and their birth relatives from anywhere in Britain who have registered with the National Contact Register of the General Register Office and would like to use PAC-UK as their contact address.
- 2.3 Telephone advice and support for such contact will also be offered by the Advice Line Worker or Adult Counsellor, who may also recommend local adoption support services (including PAC-UK Outreach), if these seem appropriate for the adults involved.
- 2.4 The safety and wellbeing of the adopted person and/or other vulnerable adults will remain PAC-UK's primary consideration at all times during provision of this service.

## **3 Procedures for PAC-UK Postbox Services for Adopted Adults and Birth Relatives**

- 3.1 All Adult Postbox arrangements are managed by the Advice Line and/or Adult Counsellors at the PAC-UK offices at Kentish Town and Leeds.
- 3.2 Either the adopted adult or the birth relative may apply to PAC-UK for this service via the Advice Line. The counsellor on duty will provide information by telephone about how the Letter Box Contact arrangement works. If requested, the counsellor will send the caller the standard explanatory letter and an application form which requires the name, address and relationship of the caller to the person with whom they wish to make contact, and confirmation that the caller has applied to go on the National Contact Register. A one-off administration fee is payable for this service. A blue referral form will be completed in respect of this referral.
- 3.3 When the completed application form is returned to PAC-UK with the administration fee, it will be filed in the 'Blue Referrals' box.

- 3.4 When the National Contact Register of the General Register Office informs PAC-UK that a link has been made with the party for whom the PAC-UK is providing a contact address, that party will be informed and forwarded the contact details as supplied by the National Contact Register.
- 3.5 If no response is received after four weeks from the party for whom PAC-UK is providing a contact address, the National Contact Register will be informed.
- 3.6 Letters can be exchanged between the parties, unopened by PAC-UK, and for a period of time negotiated between the parties. They will also be offered telephone counselling and/or advised to seek it from their local Adoption Support Agency. If either party lives within a local authority that subscribes to PAC-UK's services through contract at levels II or III, they will be offered free face to face counselling sessions at PAC-UK's Kentish Town offices or at an outreach surgery. The number of sessions offered will depend on the services contracted with PAC-UK.

#### **4 User-focused Service**

- 4.1 All clients will be given information about the use of PAC-UK's Comments, Compliments and Complaints leaflet and how to make their views known regarding its Postbox service provision.
- 4.2 All clients will be sent feedback forms as part of PAC-UK's annual service user evaluation procedures and will report annually to the Board of Trustees. The evaluation form has been redesigned to assess the impact of its services.
- 4.3 Where PAC-UK receives cards and/or letters without identifiable names and/or addresses so that they cannot be forwarded to the intended recipient or returned to the sender, these will be stored in a specially labelled box file in a locked cupboard for a maximum period of 5 years from receipt.

#### **5 Review of Postbox Service Provision**

- 5.1 PAC-UK will regularly review its Postbox Services to take into account user feedback and the requirements of prevailing legislation, regulations, guidance, standards and best practice. A report will be issued to the Board of Trustees by the Director of Service Delivery on an annual basis in April.