



SEPARATED SISTERS AND BROTHERS: ADOPTED ADULTS' THOUGHTS ABOUT THEIR BIRTH SIBLINGS.

Information Sheet for Adopted Adults

Hello

My name is Sue Austin and I am a researcher at the **University of Bristol**. I am also a social worker, working in Children Services. As a social worker, I know we try to get things right for children but also know this doesn't always happen. As a researcher I would like to understand more about the experiences of adopted adults and their relationships with their birth siblings. The voices of adults who have been adopted are very important because we don't often hear how people feel about their experiences of adoption.

This research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and ethical approval has been granted by the Ethics Committee, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol.

The aims of the research

Young people who are adopted are often **brought up in different families to their birth siblings**. Social workers and adoptive parents may make plans for these **brothers and sisters to keep in contact**, even when they live in different families. Sometimes this contact is by a letter and sometimes by meeting together. Very little research has been done to find out what people who are adopted think about being **separated from their birth siblings** and how these **relationships develop into adult life**.

I would like to understand more about the experiences of people who were adopted as children and how they think and feel about their birth siblings as they grow up. I know that some adopted people are happy to have contact with their birth siblings, but also that sometimes these letters and meetings can be difficult. At times it may be hard to get the right help or support. Some of the questions I hope to answer are:

- How do people who are adopted feel about living in a different family to their birth siblings?
- Do people who are adopted keep in contact with their birth siblings as they grow up, and how do these relationships develop in adult life?
- Did people who were adopted talk about their birth siblings as they were growing up and make choices about keeping in contact?

I hope to help **improve things for children who are adopted**. Learning about your experiences may help social workers understand what it is like to be a young person who is separated from their birth siblings. From your experiences, social workers might be able to learn how best to help children who are adopted.

Please continue to next page.

What will happen if I decide to take part?

If you decide to take part, then I will contact you, to arrange a suitable time for us to carry out an **interview by phone or by remote video link** (such as Zoom or Skype, we can just use sound, if you would prefer not to use the camera). I will not use the camera to record our interview. Before we begin the interview, I will explain what the interview involves. You will be able to ask me any questions you may have about the interview and I will read out questions asking if you agree to take part in the research.

During the interview, I will ask you **questions about your experiences of adoption** and your birth siblings. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to and you can stop the interview at any time. The interview will take about an hour and we can take breaks if we need to. If you agree, I will **make a sound recording** of our interview and take some notes, so I can remember everything you tell me.

The **interview will be confidential** unless you tell me something that might mean a person is at risk of being hurt. If this happens, I will need to break the confidentiality of our interview and talk to my supervisors, Dr Heather Ottaway and Dr Paul Willis. I will discuss this with you if it happens. It may be necessary to let someone else know to make sure people are safe.

Your involvement is voluntary. You can decide not to take part in the study at any time by contacting me at sue.austin@bristol.ac.uk I will then destroy any information you have provided, that has not already been anonymised and used in any reports. You do not need to give a reason.

What will happen to the information I provide?

The sound recording will be transcribed by a confidential transcription service. The recording will then be destroyed. The typed information from our interview will be given a different name to **protect your identity**. All information about you will be kept on a University of Bristol secure computer server or in a locked cabinet.

When I have talked to all the people who take part, I will **write a report** about what I have found and this report will be **published**. If you agree, I may use parts of our interview in my report, and in future reports, but **your name and other identifying details will never be used**. I hope the information you provide will help develop **better services for children** who are adopted and a better understanding of their wishes and feelings about their birth siblings.

How to take part

If you think you might like to take part in this research, or would like to ask any questions, I will be very pleased to hear from you. To find out more or to take part, **please contact Sue Austin at the University of Bristol**, email sue.austin@bristol.ac.uk phone or text **07888 402942**
Thank you for your time.

This study is being supervised by Dr Heather Ottaway (heather.ottaway@bristol.ac.uk) and Dr Paul Willis (paul.willis@bristol.ac.uk) at the **School for Policy Studies, 8 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TZ**