



# MOVEMENT FOR AN ADOPTION APOLOGY

## Nothing about us without us

### Recommended measures to accompany an Apology:

- Public formal apology which does not blame 'society' for what happened, the apology must accept full responsibility for the events and trauma and say sorry in an unqualified way.
- We must have a say in the wording of any apology which must avoid any of the contemporary 'non-apology' terms, such as "I'm sorry you feel that way". That is not an apology, rather it seeks to avoid shouldering any blame by placing the blame elsewhere.
- We must have seat at the table when deciding policy and consultation on all matters prior to implementation,
- Fully funded trauma-informed and adoption specific support for **ALL** those affected, mothers, fathers, children and family members.
- Support with searching: optional fully funded assistance with searching, including the use of DNA.
- Optional fully funded intermediary assistance with making and sustaining contact for everyone affected. This must include guidance in relation to initial contact.
- Full access to records for **ALL** affected, including any information which will help with tracing a child or parent; identifying information including proof of status (alive or dead), family medical history for adoptees, and any other data or information which may be deemed appropriate or necessary.
- The option of integrated birth certificates following reunion.
- Adoptees to have the option to set aside/discharge/revoke adoption orders
- The implementation and maintenance of an independent mechanism / database to ensure that parties on both sides of the adoption are informed should their relative become ill, be dying or die. This is particularly important if reunion has not been possible for any reason.
- Recognition of and assistance with issues around inheritance /probate and the right of a parent to bequeath to their child, even though (due to forced adoption) their heir is not legally recognised as a relative.
- All adoption records and related papers to be held in a central, independent location, free from all prior involvement or connection with adoption. A mandate that all historic records, from WW2 up to the 1990s, to be made available by church organisations, secular organisations, and any / all others involved with historic adoption. This measure will ensure that searching precludes contact with any organisation or agency that was responsible for the original trauma and loss; safeguards documents and files, protecting them from being 'accidentally' destroyed in a fire or flood; ensures the ongoing availability of all such records as required - preferably in a digital format to avoid documents or data being further compromised.



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- Full access to be provided to all medical records in light of recent information about the use of DES and the impact on those exposed to the drug. Full medical screening and support to be provided for anyone who may have been exposed to DES, especially those whose medical records have been destroyed or, for any reason, are not available.
- Claims that documents have been 'accidentally' destroyed must be fully investigated in a timely manner. If evidence is found that the records were intentionally damaged or destroyed, the person or persons responsible must be held to account and through due legal process.
- No agency, organisation, group, or institution that is now, or has ever been involved with adoption is to be considered when arranging any support services. This includes the provision of help with searching or support. Contact with, and reliance upon, such organisations can be difficult and re-traumatising when searching or seeking assistance.
- Should full contact not be desired by one party, there must be the right to disclose certain identifying information, specifically medical data and a relative's status (see above). This must be made available to all adult parties, including descendants.  
A register to be available for anyone who stipulates "no contact", for which various parameters need to be considered and agreed, such as:
  - the conditions under which medical information is to be conveyed, particularly for later revisions;
  - whether any 'no contact stipulation' should be subject to a time limit followed by a review; and,
  - whether means of potential contact could be deferred in some way, so that both parties are in agreement.
- Peer support services and community groups (funded), to include opportunities to bring people together.
- One or more memorial style gardens, or similar, to raise public awareness and commemorate the injustices and the apology.
- A funded annual event / day to mark the anniversary of any apology, so that those who did not feel included (or were not aware it took place) can be included subsequently.
- The appointment of a forced surrender / adult adoption Tzar.
- Overarching political brief to be maintained by the Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families, or other, as appropriate.
- A commitment to funded research to identify and detail the impact of adoption on all affected, including intergenerational consequences.

The above list is neither complete nor final. As other issues come to our attention, we reserve the right to include them so that this list reflects all experiences, views and requirements, to the best of our knowledge.