



# MOVEMENT FOR AN ADOPTION APOLOGY

**Nothing about us without us**

## **Recommended measures for an Apology:**

### **Full Formal Apology**

A formal apology from the UK Government which is properly structured to include the [9 essential ingredients of a true apology](#). The process of composing such an apology must include representatives from MAA and AAM to meet our respective needs.

### **Support measures**

Fully funded, trauma-informed, adoption-specific support for ALL those affected, especially, mothers, adoptees, fathers and immediate family members, such as siblings. An exploration of how effective the various modalities might be and a willingness to adapt should other options be proven effective. This will depend on each situation and requires latitude to assist all who are in distress.

### **Protection of and access to all relevant records**

Historic adoption records are not currently held in one central location. Rather they are held by organisations who were responsible for traumatising many people and would prefer their role was not made public - particularly where they have rebranded as children's charities. Religious and other organisations seem to have suffered a disproportionate number of fires, floods and other mishaps. Damage to irreplaceable historic adoption records must be subject to legal punishment. All such records, from the 1940s to the 1980s must be made available in the first instance. This includes administrative and medical records. Where medical records are not available for any reason, and drugs were, or could have been, administered in homes, hospitals or elsewhere, screening for possible health problems must be provided. A timeframe for all records to be digitised must be agreed with all parties. While this may not be feasible at present, provision must be made for this going forward.

### **Centralisation**

Records currently held by Church and secular organisations and in local council and NHS files must be surrendered to a newly formed independent body intended to serve those affected by historic forced adoption. Records to be held in a central location where they can be searched without impediment. Anyone with health concerns who requires access to family medical information must be able to access the data (anonymised if necessary) to protect their own health and wellbeing.

### **Help with the search process**

We have enormous concern that organisations, institutions, groups and agencies which were formerly involved with historic forced adoption, may be asked to provide support to the very people impacted by their practices. Our preference is for all services to be provided independently, including fully funded assistance with searching and the use of DNA. Efforts must be made to minimise or eliminate the gatekeeping of information that is integral to an individual's identity, experiences and history.

### **Support through the reunion process**

Fully funded intermediary service to assist with making and sustaining contact. Including guidance on initial contact and further support as required, to help ensure these fractured relationships can last.

### **Recognition of family relationships**

- The option of integrated birth certificates, following reunion.
- The right to revocation (to set aside / discharge / revoke adoption orders if required).
- Recognition of and assistance with inheritance / probate issues and the right of a parent to bequeath to a child who would not otherwise be recognised as a family member.



- Should contact be vetoed by either party, certain identifying information must be made available to all adult parties, including descendants. A register must be made available to anyone stipulating 'no contact'. Parameters to be agreed.

### **Assistance and support in the absence of reunion**

In certain circumstances, identities may be withheld, however information as to whether the 'other' is alive or dead, should be made available including essential medical information. Proper parameters to be agreed allowing for such situations without further penalising the individuals involved.

### **Research**

A commitment to funded research to explore and identify the long-term impacts of historic forced family separation and adoption. Including the non-consensual administration of drugs such as Valium, DES and sedation, and non-consensual medical or other processes, including the withholding of pain relief. Such research could inform the provision of appropriate medical screening to ensure that anyone given such medication can access services they need. It will also highlight the intergenerational impact of these historic policies and practices

### **Ongoing support and other measures**

- Peer support and community groups (funded).
- The appointment of a forced surrender / adult adoptee 'Tzar'.
- Oversight and political brief to be maintained by the Under-Secretary of State for Children, or other - as appropriate.

### **Memorialisation**

- A facility for placing a plaque on the site of any former institution.
- One or more memorial-style gardens or hubs to raise public awareness and allow commemoration and public gatherings.
- An annual funded event to mark the anniversary of the Apology to reach those who could not attend or who might have been unaware of the initial event.

### **Consultation**

We must have a seat at the table when policy is being decided and be consulted on all matters prior to implementation of any measures. We reserve the right to veto any measures proposed that water down any services or ignore or minimise the trauma suffered.

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.

### **To clarify specific terms:**

- **Fully-funded:** free to service users at point of delivery - costs covered by the Government.
- **Records:** all documentation and information pertinent to an individual, including administrative financial, medical and adoption records and any other relevant documents or information.