



Birthlink Spring Bulletin

Historic Forced Adoption - Scoping Study

After Nicola Sturgeon's apology to those affected by Historic Forced Adoption on 22 March 2023, the Scottish Government commissioned a study from the Lines Between research agency to look at support needs. They published their findings on 14 December 2023. [Historic forced adoption - scoping study: final report - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scoping-study-historic-forced-adoption-service-delivery-paper/)

In this research they talked to key stakeholders and explored the adverse outcomes of historic forced adoption practices. They considered support needs and the barriers to support. Some of the top priority recommendations are:

- Emotional and psychological support
- Support to access and understand records
- Adequate therapeutic interventions
- Increased awareness amongst professionals including GP's, mental health workers, and social workers.

The Lines Between also produced a service delivery paper which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scoping-study-historic-forced-adoption-service-delivery-paper/>

The Scottish Government commissioned peer support service is included in this paper, and a model is considered for a "single front door" service to signpost to other post adoption services. At Birthlink we share the thoughts in this paper that post adoption services need to be delivered by knowledgeable and trained professionals. The issues are too important to settle for anything less. We are committed to continue discussing with the Scottish Government how we will maintain our established model of sharing good practice amongst professionals, including developing new and accessible resources to raise professional awareness of the support needs of birth mothers, birth fathers, birth families, adoptees, and adoptive families. The Scottish Government are planning to meet with people affected by historic forced adoption over the next six months to help them formulate their policy response.

If you would like a confidential discussion about anything raised in the scoping study, please telephone Abbi Jackson, our Interim Chief Executive, directly on 0131 225 6441.

See also: [Scottish Government apology for historic forced adoption](#)
[Sturgeon issues apology over forced adoption - BBC News](#)

Influencing Change for Post-Adoption Support

Sir Andrew McFarlane, president of the Family Division for the High Court gave an influential speech on 'adapting adoption to the modern world'. McFarlane underlines his speech by referencing historical practices that implore us to consider the impact this has had on the birth parents of children subject to forced adoption during the 20th century and on current practices that continue to hinder the 'right to family life' (Article 8 - Human Rights Act 1998). The period of historical adoption impacted birth mothers and fathers and their families the length of the nation and the discussion is a focal point of influencing change. The parameters for adoption in legislation today focuses on the welfare of the child as opposed to the historical model of adoption which focused on 'illegitimate' children being adopted by a married couple. This is highlighted in the testimonies of participants, predominantly birth mothers who took part in the Scottish Governments 'historic forced adoption' ([Scottish Government: Historic Forced Adoption Scoping Study - Final Report.pdf](#)) scoping report. If the legislation and principles of adoption today focus primarily on the welfare of the child and permanence, the question arises around why birth parents and families of the historic forced adoption period are still subject to the limitations imposed by current policy and legislation. Wider accessibility of information for birth parents is urgently needed to help them trace and reconnect with adopted children.

Sir Andrew McFarlane's speech can be found here: <https://www.judiciary.uk/speech-by-sir-andrew-mcfarlane-adapting-adoption-to-the-modern-world/>

Education Support for Adopted Children

Scottish Attachment in Action have received funding from The Promise Partnership, (Corra Foundation) to enhance the support available in education for adopted children. Scottish Attachment in Action state that there is evidence indicating the challenges that adopted children experience in their education, predominantly an increased risk of exclusion and adopted children leaving school with little to no qualifications. Scottish Attachment in Action conducted a research project that mapped out 'attachment-informed trauma-sensitive practice' that identified the need for 'relationship-based approaches' to reduce the barriers for adopted children in education. The funding will be aimed at utilizing the skills of trauma-informed professionals to help staff in education develop a wider understanding of the experiences of adopted children and the trauma that often surrounds the adoptive experience for both the adoptee and adoptive parents. It is positive to hear of such funding being utilised for adopted children as it speaks to the wider issue of the trauma attached to adoption and the child's sense of identity as an adoptee within the school context. These issues raise further questions about how we best support children post-adoption when issues of identity arise.

Scottish Attachment in Action research report can be found here: [Scottish Attachment in Action - Education Research Project.pdf](#)

Social Work Students

Over the past few months Birthlink have been offering placements to Social Work students. All Social Workers in training must undertake placements to fulfil the requirements of their courses. We are able to provide strong

learning opportunities to help them meet the Standards in Social Work Education. The agency has benefited greatly from the learning that each placement brings, and we are proud that these students will go on to raise important awareness of post-adoption issues in their future workplaces, especially the impact and issues around historic forced adoption.

Fundraising

Giving Lottery

During 2023 Birthlink registered with Giving Lottery. Giving Lottery is an exciting weekly lottery that raises money for good causes in the UK. Tickets for the lottery cost just £1 per week, with a top prize of £25,000! From every £1 ticket you buy, 40p will come to Birthlink.

A weekly draw takes place every Saturday night. Match all 6 numbers and you win the JACKPOT!

Your support could provide us with a regular income which will help us to be able to enhance and promote the well-being of so many more adults who have been separated or estranged from family by adoption, the care system, or other circumstances.

You may join by either going directly to our website or scan this QR code.

<https://www.givinglottery.org.uk/support/birthlink>



Edinburgh Kilt Walk

We are excited to be part of the Edinburgh 2024 Kilt walk this year, which is taking place on 15 September. Registration is now open, so do join us for a fun-filled day. Please refer to our website for more information <https://birthlink.org.uk/about-us/support-us/> or alternatively you may use the QR Code.



Should you be unable to join us on the day but still want to support our event, you could still do so by donating on our Just Giving page: <https://justgiving.com/campaign/birthlinkkiltwalk2024>

Thank you.

The Fallen: A New Scottish Musical

“Throughout the 50s, 60s and 70s in Scotland, unmarried mothers were forced to give their babies away for adoption. Our new musical, based on true events, explores the stories of lives that were changed forever.”

Performances:

17th May 7.30pm

18th May 2.30pm

18th May 7.30pm



Thank You