

Access to Public Information Response

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In what year was the decision made for local children to be adopted on island?

There was no specific year whereby a decision was made for local children to be adopted on island and these decisions were made on an individual case by case basis. Historically there was a reciprocal arrangement for local babies to be placed in Jersey and vice versa following the introduction of the Adoption (Guernsey) Law, 1960.

During the past few decades there has been a significant decrease in babies being relinquished for adoption (mainly due to changes in societal views) which did not warrant a continued reciprocal arrangement. Now most children are adopted following care proceedings. These children often have complex backgrounds, may have experienced abuse or neglect and are part of a sibling group. Many children who are adopted now are not infants and therefore have their own histories, relationships, memories and knowledge of Guernsey.

The history of adoption shows that it is an evolving process and when The Human Rights (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law 2006, was enacted it highlighted the rights of children which included their right to retain their residency status in Guernsey or Jersey. This impacted on the practice of on island adoptions being implemented by Guernsey and Jersey.

How was the decision made that on island adoption was best for the child, birth family and adopted family?

Adoption practice has changed significantly over the years from closed adoptions – where details of the birth family are kept confidential - to open adoptions where biological and adoptive families have access to varying degrees of each other's personal information and can include options for indirect contact and, for some older children, direct contact with birth family members. The nature of adoption has also changed and today very small numbers of young babies are placed for adoption compared to historically. Children placed for adoption are more often older children who have clear links and relationships within their local community. Evidence has shown over the years that adoptions of children placed on island have very rarely faced challenges despite the proximity of birth family whereas in comparison the UK has a significantly higher rate of adoptive family breakdown and the

practice there is for children to be placed outside of their local authority area. Adoptive families are supported to manage living in close proximity to birth family and provided with ongoing support post adoption through the Reparative Care Team.

Since the year on island adoption began how many children have been placed in adoption?

From our records which date from children placed from 1999 onwards - 64 children who were born in the Bailiwick of Guernsey have been placed for adoption and adopted to date. These figures concern Public Law Adoptions only.

Our service does not keep records of private law arrangements for adoption.

How many children were first fostered then went on to be adopted?

All children have been placed in foster care prior to adoption.

What was the age of the children placed first with foster parents who then went on to adopt them?

Those specific statistics are not kept. The ages of children placed with foster carers who have gone on to adopt children in their care who have a permanence plan of adoption has varied from very young infants to adolescents and up to 17 years of age in some cases.

How many local children adopted have birth parents living on island?

At the time of a child being placed in foster care the majority of birth parents would be living locally. We do not keep statistics on the whereabouts of birth parents following the making of an adoption order but we are aware that the majority of birth parents remain living on island.

How many adopted children have come from local parents who were adopted themselves?

Our service does not keep this statistical data. This may be disclosed to the child social work team by birth parents.