

**Subject:** Request for information regarding access to the Adoption Services at NRS.

**FOI reference:** 202100201111

**Date received:** 12 May 2021

**Date responded:** 7 June 2021

**Information requested:**

You asked for access to your birth records and to be issued with the form that you have to complete to request this information

**NRS Response:**

Our Adoptions Services at NRS are currently limited due to the impact of the COVID-19 public health restrictions which are in place however we do have some limited access to our buildings for essential staff from our adoptions team to process urgent requests.

I note that you have also asked why have academic needs been prioritised over your urgent need to have access to your birth records. NRS have worked to deliver a number of our critical services throughout the period of COVID-19 restrictions. However there are strict limits to the number of essential staff who can be on site at any time, in order to ensure the health and wellbeing of our staff. This means that each of our small essential staff teams are working to deliver a limited range of critical services in their area. For our Historical Search Room teams they are focusing on supporting limited access for academic researchers who need access to complete their funded research, and equally our essential staff team for the Adoptions Service, are focusing on the processing of Adoption Orders received from the Courts Service and, more recently, any urgent requests for details of original birth entries. For our Adoptions Service, these tasks can only be undertaken on site as access is required to physical records which we hold so whilst the staff are working flexibly to try to identify any urgent requests, there are limitations to the number of requests which can be processed at this time, due to the reduced numbers of essential staff who are able to attend on site.

A member of the team has now provided you with a RAC 9 form on 3 June 2021 and a covering letter to explain what you need to provide in order for us to process your request. When we have received by return a completed RAC 9 form and relevant ID/Certified copies, a member of the team will contact you with details of your original birth entry and advise of options for you to obtain a copy. You will understand that we take the security of records associated with adoptions very seriously and in that regard identification checks need to be undertaken prior to any details of original birth entries being provided. There are also only a limited number of staff who can access the physical records which are required to confirm the details of your original birth entry.