



1. Records held by GRO

GRO holds the following information:

- **Adopted Children Register:** GRO maintains the Adopted Children Register (ACR). The Register contains the particulars of adoptions authorised by order of a court in England or Wales on or after 1 January 1927. The only information that is available from the Adopted Children Register is a certified copy of an entry, which is the equivalent of a birth certificate for an adopted person.
- **Adoption Contact Register:** GRO administers the Adoption Contact Register on behalf of the Department of Health. The register is a linking mechanism between an adopted person and their birth relatives, where both parties so wish. For further information see [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).
- **Abandoned Children Register:** Since 1977 the births of abandoned babies, within England and Wales, whose parentage is unknown have been recorded in the Abandoned Children Register.
- **Thomas Coram Register:** A list held by GRO of children given into the care of the Foundling Hospital between the years 1853 and 1948.

Adopted adults (at least 18 years of age) can apply for the access to the information relating to their original birth entry. For further information see [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

2. Certificates that can be ordered

A certified copy of an entry in the Adopted Children Register is the equivalent of a birth certificate for a person who has been adopted. An entry in the Adopted Children Register will only contain the adoptive details of a person and has no information that relates back to the corresponding birth entry. Both full and short adoption certificates can be ordered online. After an adoption registration has been made you can apply for a full certificate.

- **Full Certificates:** A full certificate is a copy of ACR entry and includes the date of the order and the name of the court, as well as the particulars of the adoptive parent(s). Their names cannot be shown on the certificates as though they were the natural parents, even if one of the parents is the birth mother or father.
- **Short certificates:** A short certificate contains no reference to the fact of adoption and shows only the adoptive name and surname, sex, date of birth and country or district of birth.

The Adoption Acts have varied in their provisions regarding the inclusion of the country and place of birth in an entry. The following information explains the inclusion of country, district and sub district of birth on a full and short certificate.

- **Adoption Orders made between 1927 and 1949:** Neither the country, district or sub districts are shown on a full certificate, as this information is not included in

the format of the entry. The country of birth will be shown on a short certificate if it recorded on the Court Order.

- **Adoption Orders made between 1950 and March 1959:** The country of birth is recorded on both a full and short certificate.
- **Adoption Orders made since April 1959:** Where a person is born in England or Wales, the country, district and sub district is recorded on a full certificate; the country is not recorded on a short certificate. Where a person is born outside England and Wales, only the country is recorded on both a full and short certificate.

3. Information you will need to apply

- **GRO Index reference not known:** you must supply the full details of the person's adoptive name, date of birth and adoptive parent's name(s). For most records a GRO index reference is available, and an additional administration search fee is payable where a GRO index reference is not provided and is publicly available.
- **GRO Index reference supplied:** if applying for a certificate of a person under the age of 18, you must supply the full details of the person's adoptive name, date of birth and adoptive parent's name(s). If applying for a certificate of a person over 18 the adopted name, date of birth and GRO Index reference needs to be supplied.

4. Q&A

Q1. Can I get an adoption certificate at my local register office?

Local Register Offices do not hold copies of the Adopted Children Register and application must be made to the General Register Office.

Q2. Can I get a certificate from the Abandoned Children Register?

Since 1977 the births of abandoned babies, whose parentage is unknown have been recorded in the Abandoned Children Register. Before this, these births were registered at the register office in the district where the child was found.

Application for certificates can be made in writing to: General Register Office, Adoptions, Trafalgar Road, Southport, PR8 2HH. Tel + 44 (0) 300 123 1837.

Q3. Can I get a certificate from the Thomas Coram Register?

The Thomas Coram Register is a list of children given into the care of the Foundling Hospital between the years 1853 and 1948. All enquiries about children raised in the Foundling Hospital and applications for certificates should be made via the charity: Coram Family, Coram Community Campus, 49 Mecklenburgh Square, London, WC1N 2QA. Tel: +44(0)20 7520 0300.

The charity will organise a copy of the certificate from the General Register Office, this will be a "short" certificate showing the child's details – but will not contain any details of the parents.