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Will Quince MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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Iain Stewart MP

By email: iain.stewart.mp@parliament.uk

22 November 2021

Dear Iain,

Thank you for your email of 22 October, enclosing correspondence from a number of your constituents, about letterbox contact between adopted children and their birth families. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I am grateful to you for writing to share your constituents' concerns and to your constituents for highlighting Pause's Time to Deliver report, which I read with interest. As your constituents may be aware, local authorities are required to make a range of services available to birth relatives, including counselling, advice, and information and assistance in relation to ongoing contact with the child who was adopted.

Where ongoing contact with an adopted child is to take place, support for birth parents or family members can help to ensure that the contact is a positive experience for the adopted child. Having some contact with birth parents, grandparents and siblings may play an important role in helping children understand their past and identity.

Decisions about contact should always be on a case-by-case basis and in the best interests of the child. Although face-to-face contact between an adopted child and their birth parents has traditionally been rare, we know that some adopters would like more support with face-to-face contact as children enter adolescence and start to raise questions about their birth family or try to find them via social media. Furthermore, in today's society, contact might also happen via social media without the consent of the family or adopted child and where this happens support also needs to be provided.

I hope it will assure your constituents to know that, in our recently published adoption strategy, we committed to working with regional adoption agencies to develop and trial what good practice around contact looks like, with a view to setting national standards in this area.

Thank you for writing about this important matter. I hope that your constituents will find this reply useful.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Will". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a large 'W' and 'i'.

Will Quince MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families