

## Bluebird Project

**Are you a birth parent living in Edinburgh or the Lothians who has had a child permanently removed from your care? If so, the Bluebird Project might be for you**

Scottish Adoption is connected to over 100 birth parents who we support mainly through letterbox contact but also some who have direct contact with their children and with counselling support. Often the birth parents we support have told us that they felt judged and alone at the point that they have had a child removed from their care and beyond. Our birth parents have told us that they want a safe space to talk about their experiences where they won't feel judged, where they can express their feelings and have these validated.

*“There was absolutely nothing or no one that I could turn to when the decision was made for my child to be adopted. I was on my own and just a kid myself... The only help was from my GP and that was only pills. 100%, access to counselling for a deeper look at the hard stuff would have helped. Talking to folk who had been through the same as me would also really have helped as I felt I was the only one” (birth mum)*

We have set up a range of support services that meets birth parents where they are at and that places an emphasis on nurture and connection.

### **First Step & Support Service**

Our **First Step and Support Service** understands that that whilst many birth parents may really want a safe space in which to tell their story, this can also be a very daunting process to engage in. Building trust takes time so our workers will reach out and go at a pace that works for you.

Our aim is to offer a service where you feel safe and not judged, where you are actively listened to and heard. We can also offer 1-1 support with adoption related tasks such as gathering life story information and support with farewell contacts.

### **Bespoke counselling service**

We also offer a **bespoke counselling service** with trained counsellors. Research and our own experience tell us that the service needs to be flexible in its approach with the number of sessions being left open ended depending on your individual needs. If you need a break in the counselling process this will be actively supported and encouraged. Going at your pace is vital in building a safe, empathic, and non-judgmental space just for you. We will hold you in mind during these breaks and agree a checking in time to see where they are at on your journey. This way of working offers a flexibility not often found in other counselling services.

Our birth parents have told us that for lots of reasons, building a trusting working relationship can be a very difficult thing for them to do. We hope that by offering you a safe space at a pace that fits with your needs this process might be made slightly easier. We can meet with you face to face at our office in Leith, via WhatsApp or Zoom or over the telephone. You can choose which would be best for you, meeting in person might feel too difficult, but the anonymity of speaking with one of our trained counsellors over the telephone allows for a space that may feel less scary.

### **Birth Parent Community**

Our birth parents have told us they often feel isolated and that they would like the opportunity to connect with others who have been through similar experiences. With this in mind we have a range of options from regular monthly meet up's to a more structured group experience which will run in conjunction with Scottish Book Trust. ***What Matters to Me*** uses traditional Scottish story telling methods to help participants to explore life events and then make a short 5 minute digital story. Your story belongs to you and there is no pressure to share this outside of the group, but we hope that by being part of this project, we can give a much-needed voice to birth parents within adoption services.

If you would like to hear more about the kinds of supports we can offer we have birth parents who we have worked with for a long time who would be happy to speak to you on a one to one basis about the support they have had over the years.

**For further information about the Bluebird Project please call 0131 553 5060 or you can email us [info@scottishadoption.org](mailto:info@scottishadoption.org)**

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