

To all Clergy, Chaplaincies, Licensed Lay Ministers,
Focal Ministers, and Parish Safeguarding Coordinators



****Please note: The contents of this letter and associated pages include references to historical adoption practices, including the separation of mothers and babies, stigma, and experiences of trauma and lasting emotional harm****

Date: Friday 19th June 2026

Our ref: MJS/jrp-bp6287

Dear Sisters and Brothers

I am sorry to be writing again so soon after my recent letter sharing details of our safeguarding audit (www.leicester.anglican.org/audit). However, I wanted to draw your attention to the apology issued yesterday regarding the Church of England's role in historical adoption practices.

Historical Adoption Practices

As you may be aware, a number of mother and baby homes, or similar, were overseen by diocesan moral welfare councils as part of a wider network of provision for unmarried mothers and babies, particularly in the years between 1949 and 1976. There has been growing awareness in recent years of practices within these homes and their outcomes for mothers and their babies.

Further information on the research and apology, and support, is available here: www.churchofengland.org/adoption

The Church of England played a significant role as part of a wider system shaped by social attitudes and legislation which often stigmatised unmarried mothers. The apology reflects the deep sorrow felt by senior church leaders for the pain, trauma and stigma experienced - and still carried - by many people affected. Whilst the policy of the Church of England's Moral Welfare Council was to encourage mothers and babies to be kept together where possible, we recognise that this guidance was not always upheld in practice within individual homes. Some mothers have described harsh and unkind treatment whilst resident in Church of England-affiliated homes, while others were not given a meaningful choice about whether to keep their baby.

We are not aware that the Diocese of Leicester operated any homes during this time, and the national church's findings did not uncover anything either, but nevertheless *some people in your congregations and parishes may have been affected in some way* - as mothers, adoptees, or perhaps as those who were employed in the homes.

I recognise the impact this may have on people living in your community, now and in the future. While the number of those affected is unknown, for some, there may be a wish to

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tell their stories and be heard by their clergy or church family. For others, there may be a need for more specialist support.



We encourage you to signpost people to the support services included at the bottom of this letter, or, where appropriate, to our diocesan safeguarding team if you need help for this.

I also recognise that this is a complex and wide-ranging history, with very different experiences, and the apology does not seek to make a blanket judgement on everyone involved or the motivations of those who worked and cared for others at the time, including those who worked in the homes and adoptive families.

Thank you for your support in this matter – and with the INEQE safeguarding audit.

With prayers and best wishes,

Martyn
Bishop of Leicester

Finding support

If you have been affected by this news or would like to speak to someone, a range of options are listed below. This includes specialist agencies and charities, and how to contact the Church of England, including our diocesan safeguarding team, who will listen and help where appropriate.

Government resources

The Adoption Contact Register

The Adoption Contact Register enables adopted adults and birth relatives to register their wish to make contact with one another. Where both parties have registered and consented, the service can help facilitate contact and reconnect family members separated by adoption.

Website: gov.uk/adoption-records/the-adoption-contact-register

Phone: 0300 123 1837

Specialist advice

National PAC-UK Advice Line

The National PAC-UK Advice Line provides independent, confidential advice and information for people affected by adoption, special guardianship and other forms of permanent care. The service is staffed by qualified and experienced PAC-UK counsellors and social workers with specialist expertise in these areas.

Website: family-action.org.uk/pac-uk Email: advice@pac-uk.org Phone: 0300 1800 090

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FamilyConnect Advice Line

Delivered by Family Action's adoption support agency PAC-UK, FamilyConnect provides information, support and guidance on tracing and reconnecting with family members, the services available, and whether you may be eligible for funding.

Website: familyconnect.org.uk

Email: familyconnect@pac-uk.org

Phone: 0300 1800 205

Adoption UK

Practical suggestions, information and encouragement with signposting to specialist help.

Website: adoptionuk.org/information-and-support-service

Information and support service. Phone: 0300 666 0006

Email: informationsupport@adoptionuk.org.uk

Additional services

Barnardo's Adoption Support

Support for adoptees, birth families, and adoptive families

Website: barnardos.org.uk/adopt/link-adoption-support-service

Email: link.referralhub@barnardos.org.uk

Samaritans

24/7 emotional support for anyone in distress

Website: samaritans.org

Phone: 116 123

Church of England support

You can find out your local parish details by visiting

[A Church Near You](#).

Safe Spaces provides a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused by someone in the Church.

www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk

Helpline: 0300 303 1056

Alternatively, you may wish to contact our diocesan safeguarding team, details of which you can find here. [Diocesan Safeguarding Team](#).

Or the National Safeguarding Team at safeguarding@churchofengland.org.

You can find more information on the webpage: www.churchofengland.org/adoption

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