



# Adoptee Rights UK

Developing a Universal Definition of 'Care Experience, Incorporating the UNCRC and Equality into Adoption

Scottish Adult Adoptee Movement  
2026

WORKING FOR  
THE INCORPORATION  
OF THE  
UNCRC  
AND ADOPTEE EQUALITY

Keep The Promise





. Sometimes Adoption Has To Happen,  
It Does Not Make It Right,  
It Makes It Different.

SAAM Work To Have That Different  
Respected,  
Not Hidden, Silenced, Shamed and  
Disrespected.

Adoptee Rights UK Campaign



Scottish Adult Adoptee Movement



## Why this work is different

Adoption is repeatedly described as a legal process, yet adoption law does not legislate for adoption as a lived, lifelong condition. Once an adoption order is made, the process is treated as concluded and responsibility is reframed as private, despite the intervention being initiated, authorised, and enforced by the state, creating a structural gap in which the law governs the making of orders but not the consequences across identity, equality, safeguarding, health, justice, or adulthood. This work exists because that gap exists: where adoption is treated as private law, public accountability is withdrawn, leaving support, rights, and remedies fragmented or absent, and requiring a scope of work that reflects not overreach, but systemic under-legislation.





# Body of the Submission

## Framing Issues Arising from Care Experience and Adoption

The following issues arise consistently across evidence submitted through the Universal Definition of Care Experience work, Scottish Adult Adoptee Movement recommendations, and UK-wide processes. Together, they demonstrate that adoption cannot be separated from care experience, equality, safeguarding, education, or children's rights frameworks.

Supporting evidence and contextual material are provided in Appendices A-F.

**1. Care experience is lifelong and includes severance and displacement**  
Impact does not end at placement, adoption, or age thresholds

Legal severance and physical displacement are core harms that must be recognised and addressed

Harm frequently emerges later in life, including delayed trauma, bereavement, parenthood, and crisis events

**2. Adoption is part of care experience and must not be treated as an exit from it**  
Adoption arises directly from care intervention

Legal permanence does not end impact, responsibility, or need for recognition

Framing adoption as an “exit” removes safeguards and accountability

**3. Silence is structural, not absence of harm**  
Many children cannot safely disclose while dependent on adopters

Independent advocacy and neutral mental health support are absent

Disclosure is often delayed until adulthood or major life events

**4. “Early intervention” is misapplied to adoption**  
Early intervention must occur before irreversible legal decisions

Adoption represents failure of early intervention, not its success

**5. Support addresses the consequences of care – adoption law creates the barriers**  
Support for the effects of care experience is necessary and appropriate

The core problem lies in adoption’s permanence, irreversibility, and legal restrictions

Limitations on review, remedy, and participation generate lifelong impact

Support cannot compensate for rights removed by law

## 6. Lifelong support and independent advisory provision

Adoption orders are made about children, not with them

Adopted people are not parties to the legal process determining their identity, family, and legal status

Independent advisory provision is essential to address:

**lack of legal standing**

**lack of review**

**lack of remedy**

**Without independent**

## 7. There is no duty to inform adopted people of the legal process carried out in their childhood

No automatic duty exists to inform adopted people:

**that a legal process occurred**

**what decisions were made**

**what evidence was relied upon**

**or what legal consequences flow from the order**

Knowledge is discretionary, inconsistent, and often delayed

This undermines informed participation, equality before the law, and access to remedy

## 8. Equality failures affecting adopted people

Adopted people lack parity with other care-experienced groups

“As if born to” is applied selectively and collapses when harm occurs

Safeguarding and accountability fall away once permanence is asserted

## **9. Adoption severance is an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)**

**Infant and early separation is a primary trauma**

**Causes pre-verbal, developmental, and lifelong harm**

**Intergenerational impact affects adoptees' children and families**

## **10. Delayed and suppressed trauma is not accounted for in policy**

**Trauma is often unrecognised in childhood**

**Systems rely on immediate disclosure and short-term outcomes**

**Education, mental health, justice, and crisis services encounter harm later**

## **11. Identity change and legal fiction create ongoing rights violations**

**Forced change of name and legal identity causes lasting harm**

**No automatic right to restore birth identity, hold dual identity, or revoke adoption**

**"As if born to" operates as legal fiction rather than lived reality**

## **12. Absence of grievance, redress, and remedy mechanisms**

**No effective route to challenge adoption decisions**

**No independent review or redress**

**Support is substituted for justice**

## **13. Records, data control, and information loss are systemic harms**

**Fragmented, withheld, or destroyed records perpetuate trauma**

**Lack of centralised, independent record-holding**

**Direct impact on identity, health, and family life**

## **14. Medical discrimination against adopted people**

**Lack of access to family medical history**

**Inadequate systems for adoptee-specific health risk**

**Health inequality created by state decisions**

**15. Reconnection is a rights issue, not a private matter**  
Reconnection is complex, traumatic, and lifelong

**Lack of state-supported mediation and support**

**Financial, geographic, and emotional barriers persist**

**16. International and cross-border adoption compounds harm**  
**Additional identity, cultural, and citizenship losses**

**Barriers to nationality, travel, and reconnection**

**Risks akin to trafficking practices**

**17. Lifelong data, research, and visibility are absent**  
**No consistent identification of adoptee status across systems**

**Poor data on adult outcomes**

**Policy proceeds without evidence of lifelong impact**

**18. UNCRC incorporation exposes a structural contradiction in Scotland**  
**Rights are incorporated in principle**

**Adoption remains excluded from enforcement**

**Identity, participation, and remedy rights remain inaccessible**

**19. Adoption is routinely set aside in care reform**  
**Adoption excluded from implementation of care reform commitments**

**Devolved competence cited while responsibility is avoided**

**The most extreme care intervention remains untouched**

## 20. Evidence of harm is consistent across processes

Universal Care Definition work

CPA submissions

JCHR submissions

SAAM historic adoption recommendations

Adoption law remains outwith scope despite relevance

## 21. Position at time of submission

This framing reflects evidence submitted at the time

Subsequent developments and responses will be addressed separately

**Cumulative Issue (arising from the above)**

**Denial of effective remedy and legal standing for adopted people, resulting from adoption being treated as a concluded private matter rather than a public act with lifelong consequences for education, wellbeing, identity, and equality.**

# Appendix A – Universal Definition of Care Experience (UCD): Views Submitted to Government

## Purpose of this appendix

This appendix sets out relevant extracts and themes from the Universal Definition of Care Experience (UCD) submission, structured using the Scottish Government's own consultation questions. It demonstrates how adoption, severance, delayed impact, and exclusion were already raised within a care-experience framework, using language and concepts directly invited by government.

This appendix is provided as evidence of views already submitted, not as new analysis.

### Consultation Question 1

**Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for a universal definition to describe 'care experience'?**

**View submitted:**

The UCD submission agreed that a universal definition is necessary, specifically to ensure that care experience is understood as lifelong, rather than ending at placement, adoption, or age thresholds. The submission highlighted that many impacts of care and adoption emerge later in life, often outside existing service frameworks.

**Relevance to this submission:**

Supports the framing that care experience does not end at adoption

Demonstrates that lifelong impact was identified at consultation stage

(Links to body points 1, 2, 9)

### Consultation Question 2

**What are your views on the potential advantages of developing a universal definition of 'care experience'?**

**View submitted:**

The submission identified advantages including improved recognition of: delayed trauma and later-life impact

individuals whose care experience is obscured by legal permanence

those excluded from services and recognition post-adoption

It emphasised that a universal definition could prevent adoption being treated as an “exit” from care, where impact and need continue.

**Relevance to this submission:**

Demonstrates early identification of adoption exclusion

Grounds the argument that recognition must extend beyond childhood

(Links to body points 1, 2, 5)

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### **Consultation Question 3**

**What are your views on the potential disadvantages of developing a universal definition of ‘care experience’?**

**View submitted:**

The submission cautioned that a universal definition would be ineffective if:  
adoption continued to be treated as resolved or private

legal severance was ignored

lived experience was overridden by administrative status

It warned that definitions without structural change risk becoming symbolic rather than protective.

**Relevance to this submission:**

Supports the argument that policy language alone is insufficient

Reinforces concern about adoption being set aside in reform

(Links to body points 5, 18, 19)

### **Consultation Question 4**

**Do you have any views on the definition ‘Care Leaver’ as set out in the consultation paper?**

**View submitted:**

The submission expressed concern that “care leaver” framing excludes:  
adopted people

those whose care experience is legally obscured

individuals whose impact emerges later in adulthood

It emphasised that adoption does not remove the effects of care, and exclusion from care-experienced status creates inequality.

**Relevance to this submission:**

Demonstrates early identification of equality gaps

Supports inclusion of adoptees within care experience

(Links to body points 2, 8)

### **Consultation Question 5**

**Do you have any views on the statutory definition of ‘Looked After’ as set out in the consultation paper?**

**View submitted:**

**The submission highlighted that statutory definitions focused on legal status fail to capture:**

**severance**

**displacement**

**loss of identity**

**lifelong impact**

**It noted that once an adoption order is made, individuals disappear from statutory recognition despite continued consequences.**

**Relevance to this submission:**

**Supports arguments on severance and displacement**

**Demonstrates structural invisibility post-adoption**

**(Links to body points 1, 2, 11)**

### **Consultation Question 6**

**Do you have any other comments about a proposed universal definition of ‘care experience’?**

**View submitted:**

**The submission stressed that any universal definition must:**  
**recognise adoption as part of care experience**

**acknowledge delayed and suppressed trauma**

**avoid framing permanence as resolution**

**It emphasised that definitions must align with lived reality, not legal fiction.**

**Relevance to this submission:**

**Directly supports the core framing of this body**

**Shows consistency of argument across processes**

**(Links to body points 3, 9, 11)**

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### Consultation Question 7

Do you have any comments on the existing language of care?

View submitted:

The submission critiqued language that:  
implies closure (“forever”, “resolved”)

masks severance and loss

discourages disclosure

It highlighted how language shapes policy assumptions and service withdrawal.

Relevance to this submission:

Supports arguments on silence and delayed disclosure

Demonstrates how language contributes to exclusion

(Links to body points 3, 10)

### Consultation Question 8

Are you aware of good practice to change and improve the language of care?

View submitted:

The submission called for language that:  
reflects lifelong impact

avoids erasing adoption experience

centres lived experience over legal status

It emphasised the importance of language in education, health, and safeguarding contexts.

Relevance to this submission:

Reinforces education-relevant impact

Supports inclusive, rights-aware policy framing

(Links to body points 1, 17)

## Summary of Appendix A relevance

Appendix A demonstrates that:

Adoption was raised within care-experience consultation

Lifelong impact, severance, silence, and exclusion were identified early

The issues set out in the main body are not new, but consistently articulated

This appendix evidences that the concerns raised in the submission arise directly from engagement with government processes, using the government’s own questions and frameworks.

## Appendix B – Adoption Barometer Evidence (UK)

### Purpose of this appendix

This appendix draws on findings from the Adoption UK Adoption Barometer (UK) to provide quantitative and qualitative evidence of post-adoption experience. It demonstrates that adoption does not resolve need or vulnerability, and that significant impacts persist across childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood. This appendix is included as contextual evidence, not as endorsement of adoption policy or frameworks.

#### Nature of the evidence

The Adoption Barometer is a large-scale UK survey drawing on responses from adoptive families and adopted people. It is routinely cited by government and sector bodies as evidence of post-adoption experience and service demand. While the Barometer is framed around support needs, its findings consistently indicate structural issues rather than isolated or exceptional cases.

#### Key findings relevant to this submission

Ongoing mental health and wellbeing needs

Barometer findings repeatedly highlight:

high levels of emotional and mental distress among adopted children

significant demand for mental health support

difficulty accessing timely, appropriate provision

These findings support the position that adoption does not end vulnerability, and that needs often intensify during adolescence and transition points relevant to education.

(Links to body points 3, 9, 10, 14)

#### Reliance on support systems after adoption

The Barometer shows:

sustained reliance on post-adoption support

unmet need despite support mechanisms

variability in access depending on geography and resources

This evidences that support is required because of structural gaps, not as a short-term adjustment measure.

(Links to body points 5, 6)

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## **Impact on education and daily functioning**

**Findings indicate:**

**challenges with school attendance, behaviour, and engagement**

**strain on families navigating education systems without adequate understanding of adoption-related trauma**

**links between emotional distress and educational disruption**

**This directly engages the Education Committee's remit.**

**(Links to body points 1, 3, 10)**

**Stress and instability within adoptive households**

**The Barometer documents:**

**high levels of stress within adoptive families**

**pressures associated with managing trauma, identity issues, and lack of external understanding**

**risk factors associated with placement strain and breakdown**

**These findings underline that permanence does not equate to stability or safety.**

**(Links to body points 2, 5, 8)**

**Limitations of the Barometer (important context)**

**While the Adoption Barometer provides valuable evidence, it:**  
**is framed within an adoption-support model**

**does not address legal identity, standing, or remedy**

**cannot capture experiences of those who disengage from services or disclose later in life**

**These limitations reinforce the submission's argument that support evidence alone cannot account for the full impact of adoption.**

**Relevance to the main submission**

**Appendix B demonstrates that:**

**adoption-related need persists and often escalates**

**education, mental health, and wellbeing impacts are ongoing**

**reliance on support evidences systemic gaps rather than individual failure**

**The Barometer findings therefore support, rather than contradict, the submission's position that adoption must be included within care experience and education frameworks, and not treated as a concluded or private matter.**

# Appendix C – Child Protection Authority (CPA) Submission

## Purpose of this appendix

This appendix includes material from the submission made to the Child Protection Authority to demonstrate that adoption-related safeguarding, accountability, and rights issues are already being raised within child protection and justice contexts. It evidences that adoption is repeatedly set aside, even where harm, vulnerability, or exploitation is under examination.

This appendix is included to show cross-system consistency, not to expand the scope of the present submission.

**Why this evidence is relevant to the Education Committee**

**The Education Committee's remit includes:**

**safeguarding of children and young people**

**coherence across care, education, and protection systems**

**outcomes across childhood and transition to adulthood**

**The CPA submission demonstrates that adoption creates systemic blind spots which later surface in education, mental health, safeguarding, and justice settings.**

**Key issues raised in the CPA submission**

**Adoption as a safeguarding blind spot**

**The CPA submission highlighted that:**

**safeguarding frameworks often treat adoption as a resolved outcome**

**risks and harms arising within adoption are therefore under-identified**

**once an adoption order is made, statutory oversight is significantly reduced**

**This mirrors the core argument of the main submission: that adoption is treated as an endpoint rather than a continuing condition with implications for safety and wellbeing.**

**(Links to body points 2, 7, 19)**

**Exclusion of adoptees as autonomous rights-holders**

**The CPA submission raised concerns that:**

**adopted people are not treated as autonomous rights-holders in safeguarding processes**

**harm arising from decisions made in childhood is difficult to raise or evidence later**

**adoptees lack standing comparable to other care-experienced groups**

**This exclusion has direct implications for education, where early harm may only become visible years later. (Links to body points 6, 7, 8)**

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**Absence of effective remedy or accountability**

**The CPA submission noted that:**

**there is no clear route for adoptees to seek redress where harm occurs**

**complaints mechanisms are fragmented or inappropriate**

**responsibility is diffused between bodies once adoption is framed as private**

**This reinforces the submission's position that support is often substituted for accountability.**

**(Links to body points 12, 20)**

**Pattern of exclusion across statutory processes**

**The CPA submission demonstrates that:**

**adoption is repeatedly excluded from inquiry scopes**

**safeguarding reviews focus on care up to adoption, not beyond it**

**adoptee experience is marginalised despite relevance**

**This pattern supports the argument that adoption is structurally set aside across systems, not simply within education policy.**

**(Links to body points 18, 19, 20)**

**Relevance to the main submission**

**Appendix C shows that:**

**the issues raised are not isolated to one policy area**

**adoption exclusion appears consistently across protection, justice, and care frameworks**

**education services encounter the consequences of these exclusions downstream**

**This evidence supports the submission's position that adoption must be considered within care experience and safeguarding discussions, rather than treated as outwith them.**

### **Summary of Appendix C relevance**

**Appendix C evidences that:**

**safeguarding concerns relating to adoption are already being raised elsewhere**

**adoptees are excluded as rights-holders across statutory processes**

**the same structural gap identified in the main submission recurs across systems**

**This appendix reinforces that the present submission reflects systemic patterns, not isolated concerns.**

## Appendix D – Adoption Law and Lived Consequences: Evidence from a UK Lay Survey (Paul Tovey)

### Purpose of this appendix

This appendix draws on UK work by Paul Tovey, including findings from a UK lay survey, to provide indicative evidence of lived experience arising from adoption as a legal process. It is included to illustrate patterns of impact and exclusion that are not routinely captured in official data, rather than to assert population prevalence.

### Nature and limitations of the evidence

The survey referenced in this appendix is a lay, self-selecting UK survey. It is not statistically representative of all adopted people. However:  
adoptees are not routinely identified in national datasets

there is no comprehensive longitudinal data on adoptee outcomes across adulthood

lay surveys therefore provide important insight into experiences otherwise invisible to the state

The value of this evidence lies in the consistency of reported experiences, particularly where these mirror findings from:

the Universal Definition of Care Experience (Appendix A)

the Adoption Barometer (Appendix B)

safeguarding and justice processes (Appendix C)

### Key indicative findings from Tovey's UK survey

Lack of knowledge of the legal process

A substantial proportion of respondents reported that they were:

not informed in childhood that a legal adoption process had taken place

unaware of the legal meaning or consequences of their adoption

uncertain what decisions were made, by whom, or on what basis

This supports the submission's position that there is no effective duty to inform adopted people of legal processes carried out in their name.

(Supports body points 6 and 7)

Identity-related distress and confusion

A large proportion of respondents reported:

distress relating to loss or alteration of legal identity

confusion about name, family status, or legal history

identity difficulties emerging or intensifying in adolescence or adulthood

These findings illustrate the gap between legal fiction ("as if born to") and lived reality.  
(Supports body points 1, 8, 11)

**Delayed emergence of trauma**

**Many respondents indicated that:**

**significant emotional or psychological impact did not emerge in early childhood**

**distress became apparent later, often triggered by:**

**adolescence**

**parenthood**

**bereavement**

**contact with records or birth family information**

**This mirrors evidence from education, mental health, and justice services encountering harm long after adoption is treated as concluded.**

**(Supports body points 3, 9, 10)**

**Barriers to accessing records and information**

**A high proportion of respondents reported:**  
**difficulty accessing adoption records**

**incomplete, redacted, or fragmented information**

**lack of guidance or advisory support when seeking records**

**These barriers were commonly described as distressing and destabilising, particularly where individuals lacked independent advice.**

**(Supports body points 7, 13)**

**Absence of remedy or route to challenge**

**Respondents frequently reported:**

**no clear route to question or challenge decisions made in childhood**

**confusion about legal standing as adults**

**reliance on discretionary support rather than rights or review**

**This reinforces the submission's argument that support is routinely substituted for accountability.**

**(Supports body points 6, 12)**

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**Relevance to education, care, and safeguarding policy**

**The patterns identified in Tovey's survey help explain why:  
adopted children and adults present later to education-adjacent services**

**schools and colleges encounter complex trauma without systemic context**

**mental health and wellbeing needs emerge outside early-years frameworks**

**These outcomes are not anomalous; they are predictable consequences of a  
system that legislates for adoption orders but not for their lifelong effects.**

**Relationship to other evidence in this submission**

**Although not statistically representative, the survey findings:  
align closely with Adoption Barometer evidence of ongoing need**

**reflect issues raised in the UCD submission using government frameworks**

**mirror safeguarding gaps identified in the CPA submission**

**This triangulation strengthens the evidential weight of the findings.**

## **Summary of Appendix D relevance**

### **Appendix D demonstrates that:**

**adoption-related impact is frequently delayed, suppressed, or unrecognised**

**lack of information, identity disruption, and absence of remedy are common  
themes**

**these experiences arise from structural features of adoption law, not individual  
failure**

**This appendix supports the submission's conclusion that adoption must be  
considered within care experience, education, and safeguarding frameworks,  
rather than treated as a concluded private matter.**

# Appendix E – Scotland: Care Reform, Rights Incorporation, and the Continued Exclusion of Adoption

## Purpose of this appendix

This appendix sets out Scottish-specific context demonstrating how adoption is consistently excluded from care reform, rights incorporation, and children's planning frameworks, despite devolved competence. It focuses on policy architecture, not legal reform, to explain why education, care, and safeguarding systems continue to encounter unresolved harm linked to adoption.

1.

### The Promised the Independent Care Review

The Independent Care Review acknowledged historic and ongoing harm within the care system and committed Scotland to redesigning care around relationships, rights, and lifelong support. However:

adopted people were not included as autonomous rights-holders

adoption was treated as:

settled

resolved

or outwith the scope of reform

lifelong consequences of adoption were not integrated into implementation

This exclusion persists despite adoption being one of the most extreme and permanent care interventions.

Relevance to the main submission:

Demonstrates structural exclusion of adoption from care reform

Supports the argument that adoption is set aside despite lifelong impact

(Supports body points 18 and 19)

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## 2. UNCRC incorporation in Scotland

Scotland has incorporated the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into domestic law in principle. However:  
incorporated rights are not meaningfully applied to adoption

adopted people lack enforceable rights in relation to:

identity

participation

access to information

remedy for decisions made in childhood

incorporation has not altered adoption's treatment as a concluded private matter

This creates a contradiction where children's rights are recognised in policy but disappliied in adoption.

Relevance to the main submission:

Reinforces the gap between rights in principle and rights in practice

Explains why education and care services inherit unresolved harm

(Supports body points 7, 11, 18)

## 3.

### Supreme Court of the United Kingdom

context (Scotland)

The Supreme Court has clarified that while incorporation has constitutional limits, children remain rights-holders, and public authorities retain duties to act compatibly with UNCRC rights.

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**In contrast, adoption outcomes demonstrate that:  
decisions made in childhood are insulated from later challenge**

**adopted people have no effective standing to realise rights retrospectively  
harm arising from childhood decisions is managed through services, not rights**

**This contrast highlights why education, health, and safeguarding systems  
encounter rights deficits downstream.**

**Relevance to the main submission:**

**Explains lack of remedy and accountability**

**Reinforces need for advisory and recognition across the life course**

**(Supports body points 6, 7, 12)**

## **4. Sibling relationships and the “sibling will”**

**Recent developments in Scotland have sought to strengthen recognition**

**of sibling relationships within care planning. However:  
sibling rights initiatives do not extend meaningfully into adoption**

**legal severance through adoption continues to:**

**fragment sibling relationships**

**remove enforceable duties to maintain contact**

**there is no mechanism for adopted people to later assert sibling rights  
lost through childhood decisions**

**This reinforces the submission’s position that severance and displacement are not  
remedied by policy intent alone.**

**Relevance to the main submission:**

**Highlights ongoing displacement and relational loss**

**Connects care planning failures to later-life impact**

**(Supports body points 1, 2, 15)**

## 5. The Children (Scotland) Reform and Planning Bill

Recent children's planning legislation and guidance emphasise:  
early intervention

planning

wellbeing

participation

However:  
adoption outcomes remain largely unchanged

there is no new duty addressing:

lifelong impact of adoption

post-adoption rights

adult standing or review

adoption continues to be treated as an endpoint within planning frameworks

This demonstrates that new planning duties do not correct the structural gap identified in the main submission.

Relevance to the main submission:

Shows that reform activity does not translate into adoption change

Supports the argument that adoption is repeatedly set aside

(Supports body points 4, 5, 19)

### Summary of Appendix E relevance

Appendix E demonstrates that, in Scotland:  
adoption is consistently excluded from care reform

rights incorporation has not altered adoption outcomes

sibling and planning reforms do not remedy severance

education and care systems inherit unresolved consequences

This appendix supports the submission's conclusion that adoption must be considered within care experience, education, and safeguarding frameworks, rather than treated as settled or private.

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## **Appendix F – Background Reading, Evidence, and Engagement Considered**

### **Purpose of this appendix**

This appendix provides a non-exhaustive record of key reading, submissions, consultations, route plans, research, and engagement work that informed this submission. It is included to demonstrate the breadth, seriousness, and good-faith engagement underpinning the issues raised. Inclusion of a source does not imply endorsement of all conclusions reached within that material.

This appendix is provided for transparency and traceability, not for detailed review.

#### **1. Scottish Care Reform, Route Plans, and Implementation Material**

**Independent Care Review (Scotland) – Final Report**

**The Promise (Scotland's Care Reform Programme)**

**Care reform route maps, delivery plans, and implementation updates led by Fiona Duncan**

**Scottish Government care planning and implementation guidance**

#### **Relevance:**

These materials define Scotland's stated direction of travel on care reform. Their inclusion demonstrates that adoption is consistently positioned as settled, legacy, or outwith reform, despite being a permanent care intervention with lifelong consequences.

#### **2. Parliamentary, Committee, and Statutory Submissions**

**Universal Definition of Care Experience (UCD) submission**

**Submissions and correspondence to the Joint Committee on Human Rights**

**Evidence and correspondence relating to children's rights, safeguarding, and equality**

**Child Protection Authority (CPA) submission**

#### **Relevance:**

These materials show that adoption-related concerns—identity, standing, safeguarding, and lack of remedy—have been raised consistently across statutory and parliamentary processes, yet adoption remains excluded from effective rights-based scrutiny.

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### 3. Children's Rights and Equality Frameworks

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act and associated guidance

Equality Act 2010 and related equality guidance

#### Relevance:

These frameworks establish children and adults as rights-holders, including rights to identity, participation, non-discrimination, and effective remedy. Their inclusion highlights the gap between rights in principle and their application to adoption in practice.

### 4. Sector, Participation, and Engagement-Based Work

Adoption UK Scotland

Participation and engagement work relating to adoption, support, and care experience

Involvement in discussions connected to the Universal Definition of Care Experience

AFKA Scotland

Engagement and consultative work involving adoptees and care-experienced people

Contributions to sector discussions on care experience and adoption

#### Relevance:

These processes demonstrate that adoptee perspectives were present in sector-led engagement, even where final outputs did not meaningfully address adoption's legal or lifelong consequences.

### 5. Care-Experienced Organisations and Findings

Who Cares? Scotland

Research, participation findings, and advocacy on care experience, identity, relationships, and lifelong impact

#### Relevance:

Who Cares? Scotland's findings are widely relied upon in policy contexts. Their inclusion demonstrates alignment between care-experienced advocacy and concerns raised in this submission, particularly around lifelong impact and exclusion.

## 6. Adoption Support and Consultation Work

PAC-UK

Large-scale consultation and engagement exercises on adoption support and lived experience

**Relevance:**

PAC-UK's consultation work evidences ongoing complexity and delayed impact, reinforcing that reliance on support reflects systemic gaps rather than resolution.

## 7. Sector and Third-Sector Research

Adoption UK – Adoption Barometer (UK editions)

Sector briefings on post-adoption outcomes, support, and wellbeing

Research on adoption, trauma, and identity across the life course

## 9. Academic, Lived-Experience, and Survey Research

Research on adoption as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)

Studies on delayed trauma, identity development, and intergenerational impact

Lived-experience surveys where official data is absent

## 8. Legal and Policy Analysis

Paul Tovey – UK adoption law and rights analysis

Commentary on adoption as private family law and public intervention

Analysis of legal identity change, records access, and adult standing

## 10. International and Comparative Material

International children's rights commentary relevant to adoption and identity

Comparative perspectives on post-adoption rights and recognition

### Closing note on sources

This list is indicative rather than exhaustive. The absence of a source does not imply irrelevance, and additional material can be provided if requested by the Committee.

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