

1989 No. 253**ADOPTION****The Adoption Agencies Regulations
(Northern Ireland) 1989**

Made 30th June 1989

Coming into operation 1st October 1989

The Department of Health and Social Services, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by Articles 4(1) and 10(1) of the Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987(a) and of all other powers enabling it in that behalf, hereby makes the following regulations:

Citation, commencement and interpretation

1.—(1) These regulations may be cited as the Adoption Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1989 and shall come into operation on 1st October 1989.

(2) In these regulations—

“the Order” means the Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, and reference to an Article by number means the Article so numbered in the Order;

“adoption panel” means a panel established under regulation 5;

“Education and Library Board” means a board established under Article 3 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986(b);

“medical practitioner” has the meaning assigned by Article 2(2) of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972(c);

“prospective adopter” means a person who proposes to adopt a child.

Registration of adoption societies

2. An application to the Department under Article 4 (registration of adoption societies) shall be made in writing on a form supplied by the Department.

Annual reports and information to be provided by registered adoption societies

3. Every registered adoption society shall—

(a) furnish the Department with two copies of the society’s annual report as soon as is reasonably practicable after the issue thereof and with

(a) S.I. 1987/2203 (N.I. 22)

(b) S.I. 1986/594 (N.I. 3)

(c) S.I. 1972/1265 (N.I. 14)

such other information as and when the Department may from time to time require;

- (b) notify the Department in writing of any change in the society's name or in the address of its registered or head office within one month after such change;
- (c) where the society proposes to cease, or expects to cease, to act as an adoption society, so notify the Department in writing, as soon as is reasonably practicable before the date when the society will cease, or expects to cease, so to act; and
- (d) where the society has ceased to act as an adoption society, notify the Department in writing that it has ceased so to act as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable.

Application of regulations to certain adoption agencies

4. Where an adoption agency operates only for the purpose of putting persons into contact with other adoption agencies and for the purpose of putting such agencies into contact with each other, or for either of such purposes,

- (a) regulation 5, and
- (b) regulation 6, to the extent that it requires consultation with the adoption panel and the making of arrangements for the exercise of the panel's functions,

shall not apply to such an agency.

Establishment of adoption panel and appointment of members

5.—(1) An adoption agency shall establish at least one adoption panel and shall appoint the persons referred to in paragraphs (2) and (3) to be members of such a panel, so however that no more than 10 members shall be appointed to a panel and the persons appointed to a panel shall include at least one man and one woman.

(2) The adoption agency shall appoint as chairman of an adoption panel a person who has such experience in adoption work as the agency considers appropriate.

(3) In addition to the chairman the persons to be appointed shall include—

- (a) one social worker in the employment of the adoption agency;
- (b) at least one member of the adoption agency's management committee where the agency is a registered adoption society or, where the agency is a Board, at least one member of that Board;
- (c) the person nominated as the medical adviser to the adoption agency under regulation 6(4) (or one of them if more than one are appointed); and
- (d) at least one other person not being a member or employee of the adoption agency.

(4) A person appointed to an adoption panel shall hold office subject to such conditions as to the period of his membership and otherwise as may be determined by the adoption agency.

(5) An adoption panel shall make the recommendations specified in regulation 10 only when at least three of its members meet as a panel and one of those is a social worker in the employment of the adoption agency.

(6) An adoption panel shall keep a written record of any of the recommendations specified in regulation 10 which it makes.

Adoption agency arrangements for adoption work

6.—(1) An adoption agency shall, in consultation with the adoption panel and to the extent specified in paragraph (5) with the adoption agency's medical adviser, make arrangements which shall be set out in writing to govern the exercise of the agency's and the panel's functions and such arrangements shall be reviewed by the agency not less than once every three years.

(2) Subject to regulations 14 and 15, the arrangements referred to in paragraph (1) shall include provision—

- (a) for maintaining the confidentiality and safekeeping of adoption information, case records and the indexes to them;
- (b) for authorising access to such records and indexes or disclosure of information by virtue of regulation 15; and
- (c) for ensuring that those for whom access is provided and to whom disclosure is made by virtue of regulation 15(2)(a) agree in writing before such authorisation is given that such records, indexes and information will remain confidential, so however that a child who is placed for adoption or who has been adopted, and his prospective adopter or adoptive parent shall not be required to give such agreement in respect of that child's adoption.

(3) The adoption agency shall satisfy itself that social work staff employed on the agency's work have had such experience and hold such qualifications as the adoption agency considers appropriate to that work.

(4) The adoption agency shall nominate a medical practitioner to be the agency's medical adviser.

(5) The adoption agency's medical adviser shall be consulted in relation to the arrangements for access to and disclosure of health information which is required or permitted by virtue of regulation 15.

Adoption agency's duties in respect of a child and his parents or guardian

7.—(1) When an adoption agency is considering adoption for a child it shall either—

- (a) in respect of the child, having regard to his age and understanding, and, as the case may be, his parents or guardian, so far as is reasonably practicable—
 - (i) provide a counselling service for them,
 - (ii) explain to them the legal implications of and procedures in relation to adoption and freeing for adoption, and
 - (iii) provide them with written information about the matters referred to in head (ii); or

- (b) satisfy itself that the requirements of sub-paragraph (a) above have been carried out by another adoption agency.
- (2) Where, following the procedure referred to in paragraph (1), an adoption agency is considering adoption for a child, the agency shall—
- (a) set up a case record of the child and place on it any information obtained by virtue of this regulation;
 - (b) obtain, so far as is reasonably practicable, such particulars of the parents or guardian and, having regard to his age and understanding, the child, as are referred to in Parts I and III to V of the Schedule together with any other relevant information which may be requested by the adoption panel;
 - (c) arrange and obtain a written report by a medical practitioner on the child's health which shall deal with the matters specified in Part II of the Schedule, unless such a report has been made within six months before the setting up of the case record under sub-paragraph (a) and is available to the agency;
 - (d) arrange such other examinations and screening procedures of, and tests on, the child and, so far as is reasonably practicable, his parents, as are recommended by the adoption agency's medical adviser, and obtain a copy of the written report of such examinations, screening procedures and tests; and
 - (e) prepare a written report containing the agency's observations on the matters referred to in this regulation, which shall be passed, together with all information obtained by it by virtue of this regulation, to the adoption panel or to another adoption agency.
- (3) Where the identity of the father of an illegitimate child is known to the adoption agency, it shall so far as it considers reasonably practicable and in the interests of the child—
- (a) carry out in respect of the father the requirements of paragraph (1)(a) as if they applied to him unless the agency is satisfied that another adoption agency has so complied with those requirements;
 - (b) obtain the particulars of him referred to in Parts III and IV of the Schedule together with any other relevant information which may be requested by the adoption panel, and arrange and obtain a copy of the written report of such examinations, screening procedures and tests on him as are recommended by the adoption agency's medical adviser; and
 - (c) ascertain so far as possible whether he intends to apply for custody of the child.

Adoption agency's duties in respect of a prospective adopter

8.—(1) When an adoption agency is considering whether a person may be suitable to be an adoptive parent, either—

- (a) it shall—
 - (i) provide a counselling service for him,
 - (ii) explain to him the legal implications of and procedures in relation to adoption, and

- (iii) provide him with written information about the matters referred to in head (ii); or
 - (b) it shall satisfy itself that the requirements of sub-paragraph (a) have been carried out in respect of him by another adoption agency.
- (2) Where, following the procedure referred to in paragraph (1), an adoption agency considers that a person may be suitable to be an adoptive parent, it shall—
- (a) set up a case record in respect of him and place on it any information obtained by virtue of this regulation;
 - (b) obtain such particulars as are referred to in Part VI of the Schedule together with, so far as is reasonably practicable, any other relevant information which may be requested by the adoption panel;
 - (c) obtain a written report by a medical practitioner on the prospective adopter's health which shall deal with the matters specified in Part VII of the Schedule, unless such a report has been made within six months before the setting up of the case record under sub-paragraph (a) and is available to the agency;
 - (d) obtain a written report in respect of any premises which that person intends to use as his home if he adopts a child;
 - (e) obtain written reports of the interviews with two persons nominated by the prospective adopter to provide personal references for him;
 - (f) obtain a written report from the prospective adopter's Board as to whether or not there is any reason to believe that the proposed adoption would be detrimental to the child; and
 - (g) prepare a written report containing the agency's observations on the matters referred to in this regulation, which shall be passed, together with all information obtained by it by virtue of this regulation, to the adoption panel or to another adoption agency.

Adoption agency's duties in respect of proposed placement

9.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2), an adoption agency shall refer its proposal to place a particular child for adoption with a prospective adopter, which it considers may be appropriate, together with a written report containing its observations on the proposal and any information relevant to the proposed placement, to its adoption panel.

(2) An adoption agency shall refer its proposal to place a child for adoption to the adoption panel only if—

- (a) any other adoption agency which has made a decision in accordance with regulation 11(1) that adoption is in the best interests of the child, or that the prospective adopter is suitable to be an adoptive parent, has been consulted concerning the proposal; and
- (b) any Board or voluntary organisation which has parental rights and duties in respect of the child by virtue of Article 17, 18 or 21 (freeing child for adoption with or without parental agreement and transfer of parental rights and duties) or by virtue of section 18(5) or 21 of the Adoption Act 1976(a), or section 18(5) or 21 of the Adoption

(Scotland) Act 1978(a), or in whose care the child is, has been consulted and agrees with the proposal.

(3) An adoption agency which has a proposal to place a particular child for adoption with a prospective adopter shall set up case records in respect of them to the extent that it has not already set up such records and place on the appropriate record any information, reports and decisions in respect of them referred to it by another adoption agency together with any information to be passed to the adoption panel by virtue of this regulation.

(4) An adoption agency shall obtain, so far as is reasonably practicable, any other relevant information which may be requested by the adoption panel in connection with the proposed placement.

Adoption panel functions

10.—(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), an adoption panel shall consider the case of every child, prospective adopter and proposed placement referred to it by the adoption agency and shall make one or more of the recommendations to the agency, as the case may be, as to—

- (a) whether adoption is in the best interests of a child and, if the panel recommends that it is, whether an application under Article 17 or 18 (freeing child for adoption with or without parental agreement) should be made to free the child for adoption;
- (b) whether a prospective adopter is suitable to be an adoptive parent; and
- (c) whether a prospective adopter would be a suitable adoptive parent for a particular child.

(2) An adoption panel may make the recommendations specified in paragraph (1) at the same time or at different times, so however that it shall make the recommendation specified in paragraph (1)(c) in respect of a particular child and prospective adopter only if—

- (a) that recommendation is to be made at the same meeting of the panel at which a recommendation has been made that adoption is in the best interests of the child; or
- (b) an adoption agency decision has been made in accordance with regulation 11(1) that adoption is in the best interests of the child; and
- (c) in either case—
 - (i) the recommendation specified in paragraph (1)(c) is to be made at the same meeting of the panel at which a recommendation has been made that the prospective adopter is suitable to be an adoptive parent, or
 - (ii) an adoption agency decision has been made in accordance with regulation 11(1) that the prospective adopter is suitable to be an adoptive parent.

(3) In considering what recommendations to make the panel shall have regard to the duties imposed upon the adoption agency by Article 9 (duty to promote welfare of child) and shall, as the case may be—

- (a) consider and take into account all the information and reports passed to it by virtue of regulations 7(2)(e), 8(2)(g) and 9(1);

- (b) request the adoption agency to obtain any other relevant information which the panel considers necessary;
- (c) obtain legal advice in relation to each case together with advice on an application for an adoption order or, as the case may be, an application to free a child for adoption.

Adoption agency decisions and notifications

11.—(1) An adoption agency shall make a decision on a matter referred to in regulation 10(1)(a), (b) or (c) only after taking into account the recommendation of the adoption panel made by virtue of that regulation on such matter.

(2) As soon as possible after making such a decision the adoption agency shall, as the case may be, notify in writing—

- (a) the parents of the child, including the father of an illegitimate child where the agency considers this to be in the child's interests, or the guardian of the child, if their whereabouts are known to the agency, of its decision as to whether it considers adoption to be in the best interests of the child;
- (b) the persons to be notified under sub-paragraph (a), if it considers adoption to be in the best interests of the child, of its decision as to whether an application under Article 17 or 18 (freeing child for adoption with or without parental agreement) should be made to free the child for adoption;
- (c) the prospective adopter of its decision as to whether it considers him to be suitable to be an adoptive parent; and
- (d) the prospective adopter of its decision that he would be suitable as such for a particular child.

Placement for adoption

12.—(1) Where an adoption agency has decided in accordance with regulation 11(1) that a prospective adopter would be a suitable adoptive parent for a particular child it shall provide the prospective adopter with written information about the child, his personal history and background, including his religious and cultural background, his health history and current state of health, together with details of any condition as to religious upbringing of the child under Article 16(1)(b)(i)(ab), if applicable, and the adoption agency's written proposals in respect of the adoption, including proposals as to the date of placement for adoption with the prospective adopter.

(2) If the prospective adopter accepts the adoption agency's proposals the agency shall—

- (a) inform the child of the proposed placement for adoption with the prospective adopter where the child is capable of understanding the proposal;
- (b) send a written report of the child's health history and current state of health to the prospective adopter's medical practitioner, if any, before the proposed placement, together with particulars of the proposed placement;

- (c) notify in writing the Board in whose area the prospective adopter resides, before the placement, with particulars of the proposed placement;
- (d) notify in writing the Education and Library Board in whose area the prospective adopter resides, before the placement, with particulars of the proposed placement if the child is of compulsory school age within the meaning of Article 46 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 or if the adoption agency's medical adviser considers the child to be handicapped;
- (e) place the child with the prospective adopter, so however that where the child already has his home with the prospective adopter, the agency shall notify in writing the prospective adopter of the date the child is regarded as having been placed with him by the agency for adoption;
- (f) notify in writing the parents of the child, including the father of an illegitimate child where the agency considers this to be in the child's interests, or the guardian of the child, if their whereabouts are known to the agency, that the child has been placed for adoption, so however that no notification shall be given to a person who has made a declaration under Article 17(5) or 19(2) (declaration as to no further involvement with child);
- (g) ensure that the child is visited within one week of the placement and on such other occasions as the adoption agency considers necessary in order to supervise the child's well-being;
- (h) ensure that written reports are obtained of such visits;
- (i) provide such advice and assistance to the prospective adopter as the agency considers necessary;
- (j) monitor the child's health during the placement to the extent that the adoption agency's medical adviser considers necessary; and
- (k) review the placement of the child if an application for an adoption order has not been made within three months of the placement, and on such other occasions as the adoption agency considers necessary.

Review of case where no placement made within six months of freeing for adoption

13.—(1) Where a child has been freed for adoption by virtue of an order under Article 17 or 18 (freeing child for adoption with or without parental agreement) or by virtue of an order made under section 18(5) of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 18(5) of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978 and six months have elapsed since the making of that order and the child does not have his home with a prospective adopter, the adoption agency in which parental rights and duties are then vested by virtue of Article 17, 18 or 21 or section 18 or 21 of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 18 or 21 of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978, shall review that child's case to determine why no placement has been made and what action if any should be taken to safeguard and promote his welfare.

(2) A case to which paragraph (1) applies shall be subject to such a review at intervals of not more than 6 months.

Confidentiality and preservation of case records

14.—(1) Subject to regulation 15, any information obtained or recommendations or decisions made by virtue of these regulations shall be treated by the adoption agency as confidential.

(2) Where a case record has been set up by an adoption agency under regulation 7(2)(a), 8(2)(a) or 9(3) in respect of a child or a prospective adopter, any report, recommendation or decision made by that agency by virtue of these regulations in respect of that child or that prospective adopter shall be placed on the case record relating to that child or, as the case may be, that prospective adopter, and any case records set up by the agency together with the indexes to them shall be kept in a place of special security.

(3) Subject to regulation 16(2) an adoption agency shall preserve the indexes to all its case records and the case records in respect of those cases in which an adoption order is made in a place of special security for at least 75 years and shall preserve other case records in a place of special security for so long as it considers appropriate, so however that any case records and indexes may be so preserved on microfilm or such other system as reproduces the total contents of any such record or index.

Access to case records and disclosure of information

15.—(1) Subject to paragraph (3), an adoption agency shall provide such access to its case records and the indexes to them and disclose such information in its possession, as may be required—

- (a) to those holding an inquiry under Article 69 (inquiries), for the purposes of such an inquiry;
- (b) to the Department;
- (c) subject to the provisions of sections 9(3) and 12(3) of the Commissioner for Complaints Act (Northern Ireland) 1969(a) (evidence on an investigation and provision for secrecy of information) to the Commissioner appointed under section 1 of that Act;
- (d) to the persons and authorities referred to in regulations 11 and 12 to the extent specified in those regulations;
- (e) to a guardian ad litem appointed under rules made pursuant to Article 66 (guardians ad litem) for the purposes of the discharge of his duties in that behalf; and
- (f) to a court having power to make an order under the Order for the purposes of the discharge of its duties in that behalf.

(2) Subject to paragraph (3), an adoption agency may provide such access to its case records and the indexes to them and disclose such information in its possession, as it thinks fit—

- (a) for the purposes of carrying out its functions as an adoption agency; and
- (b) to a person who is authorised in writing by the Department to obtain information for the purposes of research.

(3) A written record shall be kept by an adoption agency of any access provided or disclosure made by virtue of this regulation.

Transfer of case records

16.—(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), an adoption agency may transfer a copy of a case record (or part thereof) to another adoption agency when it considers this to be in the interests of a child or prospective adopter to whom the record relates, and a written record shall be kept of any such transfer.

(2) A registered adoption society which intends to cease to exist or to act as such shall forthwith either transfer its case records to another adoption agency having first obtained the Department's approval for such transfer, or transfer its case records—

(a) to the Board in whose area the society's head office is situated; or

(b) in the case of a society which amalgamates with another registered adoption society to form a new registered adoption society, to the new society.

(3) An adoption agency to which case records are transferred by virtue of paragraph (2)(a) or (b) shall notify the Department in writing of such transfer.

Progress reports under Article 19

17. Where parental rights and duties relating to a child who is in the United Kingdom have been transferred from one adoption agency to another by virtue of an order under Article 21, the agency in which those rights and duties are vested shall provide such information as the agency which obtained the order under Article 17 or 18 or under section 18 of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 18 of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978 considers necessary for it to comply with its duty under Article 19(3) and (4) (progress reports to former parent), or under section 19(3) or (4) of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 19(3) or (4) of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978.

Revocations

18. The Adoption Societies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1969(a) are hereby revoked.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of Health and Social Services on 30th June 1989.

(L.S.)

J. R. Kearney

Assistant Secretary

Regulations 7(2)(b) and (c)
and (3)(b) and 8(2)(b) and (c)

SCHEDULE

PART I

PARTICULARS RELATING TO THE CHILD

1. Name, sex, date and place of birth and address.
2. Whether legitimate or illegitimate at birth and, if illegitimate whether subsequently legitimated.
3. Nationality.
4. Physical description.
5. Personality and social development.
6. Religion, including details of baptism, confirmation or equivalent ceremonies.
7. Details of any wardship proceedings and of any court orders relating to the parental rights and duties in respect of the child or to his custody and maintenance.
8. Details of any brothers and sisters, including dates of birth, arrangements in respect of care and custody and whether any brother or sister is also being considered for adoption.
9. Extent of access to members of the child's natural family and, if the child is illegitimate, his father, and in each case the nature of the relationship enjoyed.
10. If the child has been in the care of a Board or voluntary organisation details (including dates) of any placements with foster parents, or other arrangements in respect of the care of the child, including particulars of the persons with whom the child has had his home and observations on the care provided.
11. Names, addresses and types of schools attended, with dates and educational attainments.
12. Any special needs in relation to the child's health (whether physical or mental) and his emotional and behavioural development and whether he is subject to a statement under the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986(a).
13. What, if any, rights to or interest in property or any claim to damages, under the Fatal Accidents (Northern Ireland) Order 1977(b) or otherwise, the child stands to retain or lose if adopted.
14. Wishes and feelings in relation to adoption and, as the case may be, an application under Article 17 or 18 including any wishes in respect of religious and cultural upbringing.
15. Any other relevant information which the agency considers may assist the panel.

PART II

MATTERS TO BE COVERED IN REPORT ON THE CHILD'S HEALTH

1. Name, date of birth, sex, weight and height.
2. A neo-natal report on the child, including—
 - (a) details of the birth, and any complications;
 - (b) results of a physical examination and screening tests;

(a) S.I. 1986/594 (N.I. 3)
(b) S.I. 1977/1251 (N.I. 18)

- (c) details of any treatment given;
 - (d) details of any problem in management and feeding;
 - (e) any other relevant information which may assist the panel;
 - (f) the name and address of any medical practitioner who may be able to provide further information about any of the above matters.
3. A full health history and examination of the child, including—
- (a) details of any serious illness, disability, accident, hospital admission or attendance at an out-patient department, and in each case any treatment given;
 - (b) details and dates of immunisations;
 - (c) a physical and developmental assessment according to age, including an assessment of vision and hearing and of neurological, speech and language development and any evidence of emotional disorder;
 - (d) for a child over five years of age, the school health history (if available);
 - (e) any other relevant information which may assist the panel.
4. The signature, name, address and qualifications of the medical practitioner who prepared the report, the date of the report and of the examinations carried out together with the name and address of any medical practitioner (if different) who may be able to provide further information about any of the above matters.

PART III

PARTICULARS RELATING TO EACH NATURAL PARENT, INCLUDING WHERE APPROPRIATE THE FATHER OF AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD

1. Name, date and place of birth and address.
2. Marital status and date and place of marriage (if any).
3. Past and present relationship (if any) with the other natural parent, including comments on its stability.
4. Physical description.
5. Personality.
6. Religion.
7. Educational attainments.
8. Past and present occupations and interests.
9. Names and brief details of the personal circumstances of the parents and any brothers and sisters of the natural parent, with their ages or ages at death.
10. Wishes and feelings in relation to adoption and, as the case may be, an application under Article 17 or 18 including any wishes in respect of the child's religious and cultural upbringing.
11. Any other relevant information which the agency considers may assist the panel.

PART IV

PARTICULARS RELATING TO THE HEALTH OF EACH NATURAL PARENT, INCLUDING WHERE APPROPRIATE THE FATHER OF AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD

1. Name, date of birth, sex, weight and height.
2. A family health history, covering the parents, the brothers and sisters (if any) and the other children (if any) of the natural parent with details of any serious physical or mental illness and inherited and congenital disease.

3. Past health history, including details of any serious physical or mental illness, disability, accident, hospital admission or attendance at an out-patient department, and in each case any treatment given.

4. A full obstetric history of the mother, including any problems in the antenatal, labour and postnatal periods, with the results of any tests carried out during or immediately after pregnancy.

5. Details of any present illness, including treatment and prognosis.

6. Any other relevant information which the agency considers may assist the panel.

7. The signature, name, address and qualifications of any medical practitioner who supplied any of the information in this Part together with the name and address of any medical practitioner (if different) who may be able to provide further information about any of the above matters.

PART V

PARTICULARS RELATING TO A GUARDIAN

1. Particulars referred to in paragraphs 1, 6, 10 and 11 of Part III.

PART VI

PARTICULARS RELATING TO THE PROSPECTIVE ADOPTER

1. Name, date and place of birth and address.

2. Domicile.

3. Marital status, date and place of marriage (if any) and comments on stability of relationship.

4. Details of any previous marriage.

5. If a married person proposes to adopt a child alone, the reasons for this.

6. Physical description.

7. Personality.

8. Religion, and whether willing to follow any wishes of a child or his natural parents or guardian in respect of the child's religious and cultural upbringing.

9. Educational attainments.

10. Past and present occupations and interests.

11. Details of income and comments on the living standards of the household.

12. Details of other members of the prospective adopter's household (including any children of the prospective adopter even if not resident in the household).

13. Details of the parents and any brothers or sisters of the prospective adopter, with their ages or ages at death.

14. Attitudes to adoption of such other members of the prospective adopter's household and family as the agency considers appropriate.

15. Previous experience of caring for children as step-parent, foster parent, childminder or prospective adopter and assessment of ability in this respect, together, where appropriate, with assessment of ability in bringing up the prospective adopter's own children.

16. Reasons for wishing to adopt a child and extent of understanding of the nature and effect of adoption.

17. Assessment of ability to bring up an adopted child throughout his childhood.
18. Details of any adoption allowance payable.
19. Names and addresses of two referees who will give personal references on the prospective adopter.
20. Name and address of the prospective adopter's medical practitioner, if any.
21. Any other relevant information which the agency considers may assist the panel.

PART VII

MATTERS TO BE COVERED IN REPORT ON HEALTH OF THE PROSPECTIVE ADOPTER

1. Name, date of birth, sex, weight and height.
2. A family health history, covering the parents, the brothers and sisters (if any) and the children (if any) of the prospective adopter, with details of any serious physical or mental illness and inherited and congenital disease.
3. Marital history, including (if applicable) reasons for inability to have children.
4. Past health history, including details of any serious physical or mental illness, disability, accident, hospital admission or attendance at an out-patient department, and in each case any treatment given.
5. Obstetric history (if applicable).
6. Details of any present illness, including treatment and prognosis.
7. A full medical examination.
8. Details of any daily consumption of alcohol, tobacco and habit-forming drugs.
9. Any other relevant information which the agency considers may assist the panel.
10. The signature, name, address and qualifications of the medical practitioner who prepared the report, the date of the report and of the examinations carried out together with the name and address of any medical practitioner (if different) who may be able to provide further information about any of the above matters.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations.)

These Regulations replace the Adoption Societies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1969. They make provision for the registration of adoption societies and for annual reports and information to be provided by such societies (regulations 2 and 3). They provide for the establishment of adoption panels by adoption agencies and for arrangements to be made by agencies in relation to their adoption work (regulations 4, 5 and 6). They specify the procedures to be followed before and after a child is placed for adoption (regulations 7-13). They make provision for the confidentiality and preservation of case records and for access to case records and disclosure of information (regulations 14 and 15). They also make provision in respect of the transfer of case records between adoption agencies and progress reports to former parents of children who have been freed for adoption (regulations 16 and 17).

