

First Minister offers apology over historic forced adoptions

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has delivered a formal apology in Holyrood on Wednesday afternoon to those affected by ‘cruel’ historical adoption practices.

Many thousands of women – most of them young and unmarried – were forced to give up their babies for adoption until as late as the 1970s.

The First Minister said the forced adoptions were both “unjust and profoundly wrong”.

Addressing the Scottish Parliament, the First Minister said: “As a Government, and a Parliament, we can set the record straight; we can acknowledge the terrible wrongs that were done, and we can say – with one voice – that we are sorry.

“So today as First Minister, on behalf of the Scottish Government, I say directly:

“To the mothers who had their babies taken away from them; to the sons and the daughters who were separated from their parents; to the fathers who were denied their rights, and to the families who have lived with the legacy;

“For the decades of pain that you have suffered, I offer today a sincere, heartfelt and unreserved apology. We are sorry.

“No words can ever make up for what has happened to you, but I hope this apology will bring you some measure of solace.

“It is the very least that you deserve – and it is long overdue.”

Adoption UK Scotland welcomes First Minister Nicola Sturgeon’s apology to women who were forced to give their babies up for adoption in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, as well as those children who were adopted through this practice and their fathers.

Fiona Aitken, Adoption UK Scotland director, commented: “We’re gratified to see the First Minister acknowledge and formally apologise for the impact that forced adoption had on those involved. We wholeheartedly support the apology for those who had their children removed and are particularly pleased to see this extend to the individuals who were adopted through this practice, whose lifelong needs have gone unacknowledged and unsupported.

“Adoption UK now calls on other UK governments to follow Scotland’s lead in issuing a formal apology to all those who have been affected by forced adoptions, and to meet the needs of all adopted individuals who would benefit from support.”



First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon MSP makes a statement to Parliament apologising for Historical Adoption Practices in Scotland where many young women were forced to give their

babies up for adoption against their will. 22 March 2023 . Pic
– Andrew Cowan/Scottish Parliament