



ÚDARÁS UCHTÁLA na hÉIREANN
THE ADOPTION AUTHORITY of IRELAND

Press release

CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED TO ALERT PEOPLE ADOPTED FROM IRELAND OF NEW LEGAL RIGHT TO LEARN ABOUT THEIR BIRTH INFORMATION

- ***Adoptees and birth parents encouraged to register preference for contact***

Dublin, 1 July 2022: A global campaign has been launched by the Adoption Authority of Ireland (AAI) to raise awareness of landmark legislation which means that people who were adopted in, or from, Ireland are now entitled to know about their birth information.

More than 48,000 children were adopted in Ireland from 1953 to 2021. An additional 2,000+ children were sent from Ireland to other countries – mainly the United States – and adopted in these countries. In addition, an estimated 20,000+ children were ‘boarded out’ – sent to live with foster families at a time before 1953 when there was no legal adoption in Ireland.

The Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022, which took effect on 1 July, provides legal entitlement to full and unrestricted access to birth and early life information for any Irish person who was adopted, boarded out or had their birth information illegally registered, or who otherwise has questions in relation to their origins. This information service will be available from October this year.

The law also establishes a tracing service from October this year to facilitate contact between adoptees and birth parents and other birth relatives according to the preferences they register on the new Contact Preference Register (CPR).

The Register, which is operated by the Adoption Authority of Ireland, is now open for applications. It forms a key part of the public information and awareness campaign which has been launched to inform people around the world of the important services to be provided under the Birth Information and Tracing Act.

The information campaign, which will run for three months, will use Ireland’s embassy network to reach adoptees and birth parents in other countries who are affected by the legislation. People can register at any time but are encouraged to register in the first three months, especially those who wish to record a preference of no contact.

Patricia Carey, CEO of the Adoption Authority of Ireland, said: “Thousands of birth parents left Ireland to rebuild their lives in other countries. We also hope to reach and engage with adult adoptees living abroad, in countries including the UK, US, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia. The Adoption Authority wants to use the next three months trying to reach as many people as possible – at home and abroad – to let them know it is now possible for them to find out about their origins.

“We also want to encourage all those affected by the legislation to record their preferences on the Contact Preference Register in relation to contact with others and the sharing and receiving of information.

“The Birth Information and Tracing Act ensures that everyone is entitled to all their birth information held by the Irish state, however, the Contact Preference Register allows for different levels of contact. It might be that someone is willing to share background information, they might be willing to communicate by email or letter, they might be open to a telephone call, or they might be willing to meet in person. Others may wish no contact at all. It is up to each individual to make that choice.”

In early October 2022, both Information and Tracing services under the legislation will open. Applications for these services can be made to the Adoption Authority of Ireland and Tulsa, the Child and Family Agency. A website, www.birthinfo.ie, has been established for people seeking to make an application or seeking further information.

Ends

For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact Craig McKechnie, craig@4tc.ie +353 (0) 87 621 8839; or Richard Burke, richard@4tc.ie +353 (0) 86 816 7822

NOTES FOR EDITORS

- The Birth Information and Tracing Act ensures, for the first time, that every Irish person who was adopted, boarded out, or had their birth information illegally registered now has full and unrestricted access to any information the State holds relating to their birth and early life. This includes their birth certificate, care information, early life information, and medical information. It means that they will be able to find out their name, birthplace, and date, as well as their parents’ names, dates of birth, and other details.
- People affected by the issues under the legislation are invited to register their contact preference, or complete a new application to update an existing contact preference, on the new Contact Preference Register between July and October. They can still do so after 1 October, but from that date information and tracing services will be live and therefore information will be provided to those seeking it, reflecting the current status of the CPR on the date of application.
- The tracing service can be used by relevant persons – parents, adoptive parents, birth relatives, other genetic relatives, or those who were carers in relation to a relevant person – to enable contact or the sharing or requesting of contemporaneous information.
- Where the relevant person has died, their son or daughter will have the same right to information that relates to their parent, if the relevant person’s parents (i.e. the applicant’s grandparents) are also deceased. A next of kin can also apply for access if the relevant person died while resident as a child in a Mother and Baby or County Home Institution.
- In cases where a birth mother chooses to have no contact, this will not prevent her identity from being shared, but her desire not to be contacted will be respected.

- In cases where a birth mother chooses to have no contact, this will not stop adopted persons meeting or engaging with other family members, such as siblings or half siblings.
- No contact only gives the Authority the remit to advise adoptees of the privacy rights of their birth parents. It does not prohibit other actions under the Act.

ADOPTION AUTHORITY OF IRELAND

The Adoption Authority of Ireland (AAI) is the central authority for adoption in Ireland. Established under the Adoption Act 2010, the Authority operates as an independent body under the aegis of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). The Authority's functions include those of an operational, judicial and quasi-judicial nature in relation to the adoption process as provided for under the Act, but also relating to the Authority's designation as the Central Authority for the 1993 Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption. In addition, the Authority has registration and regulatory functions for all adoption related matters in Ireland.