



ÚDARÁS UCHTÁLA na hÉIREANN
THE ADOPTION AUTHORITY of IRELAND

Press release: August 4th 2022

ALMOST 900 ADOPTED PERSONS AND BIRTH PARENTS REGISTER CONTACT PREFERENCES UNDER NEW BIRTH INFORMATION & TRACING ACT

A total of 891 adopted persons and relatives applied to the new Contact Preference Register last month following the commencement of the Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022.

The landmark legislation, which was enacted on July 1, provides legal entitlement to full and unrestricted access to birth certificates, birth, early life, care, and medical information for any person who was adopted, boarded out, had their birth illegally registered, or who otherwise has questions in relation to their origins.

The new law also establishes a Contact Preference Register (CPR) to which applications can be made by those wishing to make contact, to request privacy, or to seek or share information with a relative. The Adoption Authority of Ireland operates the CPR.

Of the 891 people who applied to register their preferences in relation to contact, 786 applications were from adoptees, 90 were from birth parents, and 15 were other relatives. There were 820 people who expressed a preference for contact at some level. There were 32 people who expressed a desire for no contact (24 adoptees and 8 relatives) while 39 applicants (30 adoptees and nine relatives) did not want contact but were willing to share information.

As part of a public information campaign around the Birth Information and Tracing Act, a booklet on the important services to be provided under the new legislation is being delivered to every household in Ireland.

Patricia Carey, CEO of the Adoption Authority, said: “We are very encouraged by the number of people who have registered on the Contact Preference Register. These are mostly adoptees – but also birth parents and other relatives – for whom the Birth Information and Tracing Act is a really important piece of legislation.

“Come October, when the free services under the legislation open, adoptees will finally have the right to access all of their birth information held by the State. This wasn’t the case previously, so it is a big deal.

“If they have applied to the Contact Preference Register, the Adoption Authority will also be able to facilitate contact between adoptees and birth parents and other relatives, at a level with which both parties are comfortable.

“The 1.85 million booklets landing on doorsteps throughout the country explain what the new legislation means and how this works. I would urge anyone impacted by the legislation to read and consider the information it contains, and perhaps talk to a trusted friend, before deciding what they want to do.”

The majority of all applications, 786, came from people in Ireland, with 105 applications from those who live overseas. The greatest number of applications from outside Ireland came from the UK, with 50 people registering contact preferences. Next was the US with 17 applications, followed by Australia with four.

The county in Ireland with the most applications in July was Dublin, with 253 people registering preferences, followed by Cork with 118 applications, and Meath with 48. The county with the fewest applications was Leitrim with four.

The oldest applicant to the CPR was 81, while the youngest, aged five, had an application submitted by their adoptive parents. The mean age of both adoptees and relatives was 50.

Of the 786 adoptees who applied to the CPR, 74% of them (580 people) are seeking contact with their birth mother. Almost 17% (130) of applicants stated they wanted to trace their birth father, with 9% (69) seeking contact with a sibling, and 1.3% (10) seeking contact with a grandparent, cousin, aunt, or uncle.

Of the 105 relatives who applied to the CPR, 86% of them (90 people) are seeking contact with their child, just under 5% (five people) said they wanted to contact siblings, and almost 10% (10 people) are seeking contact with a grandparent, cousin, aunt, or uncle.

More than 48,000 children were adopted 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.

Ms Carey added: “Most families in Ireland have been touched by adoption at some stage. The Adoption Authority is determined to reach as many people as possible – to let them know they can find out about their origins and to encourage all those eligible under the legislation to register their preferences on the Contact Preference Register.”

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

– Ends –

For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact Richard Burke, richard@4tc.ie | +353 (0) 86 816 7822 or (01) 531 3532.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Breakdown of applications to the Contact Preference Register in July 2022 by ROI county, country, and category of contact person:

ADOPTees						RELATIVES					
County	No.	Country	No.	Seeking to Contact	No.	County	No.	Country	No.	Seeking to Contact	No.
Carlow	6	Ireland	716	Aunt/Uncle	6	Carlow	0	Ireland	70	Aunt/Uncle	4
Cavan	6	United Kingdom	40	Brother/Sister	69	Cavan	0	United Kingdom	10	Brother/Sister	5
Clare	17	United States	14	Father	130	Clare	2	United States	3	Child	90
Cork	109	Australia	4	First cousin	2	Cork	9	Germany	1	First cousin	3
Donegal	14	Canada	2	Grandparent	2	Donegal	2	Thailand	1	Grandparent	3
Dublin	230	New Zealand	2	Mother	580	Dublin	23				
Galway	26	Netherlands	1			Galway	7				
Kerry	16	France	2			Kerry	2				
Kildare	36	Czech Republic	1			Kildare	7				
Kilkenny	7	Germany	1			Kilkenny	2				
Laois	4	Austria	1			Laois	2				
Leitrim	1	Sweden	1			Leitrim	3				
Limerick	28	Spain	1			Limerick	6				
Longford	5					Longford	2				
Louth	17					Louth	1				
Mayo	16					Mayo	2				
Meath	45					Meath	3				
Monaghan	6					Monaghan	1				
Offaly	10					Offaly	1				
Roscommon	3					Roscommon	3				
Sligo	9					Sligo	2				
Tipperary	18					Tipperary	2				
Waterford	19					Waterford	3				
Westmeath	15					Westmeath	1				
Wexford	22					Wexford	2				
Wicklow	33					Wicklow	2				
TOTAL	716		786		786	TOTAL	70		105		105

- The Birth Information and Tracing Act, 2022 ensures, for the first time, that 'a relevant person' (adopted person, person who was, or suspects they were, boarded out, nursed out or resident in a Mother and Baby Home or County Home, and persons whose birth was illegally registered, or they suspect their birth was illegally registered) can now apply for their birth certificate, birth, early life, care, and medical information. Any items left for the relevant person such as letters, photographs and mementoes can also be applied for.

- This means that adopted people and others will be able to have records that show their name at birth, birthplace, and date, as well as their parents' names, dates of birth and other details. Any records related to their health including details of vaccinations will also be provided.
- 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. If a person is eligible to register a preference, it's important to do so before the Information Service opens for applications in October, 2022. Contact preferences can still be registered after that date. However, when an application for information is received, only preferences recorded on the register at that point in time can be released with the associated information. 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 mother chooses to have no contact, this will not prevent her identity from being shared, but her right and wish not to be contacted will be communicated.
- In cases where a 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.
- A preference for no contact only gives the Authority the remit to communicate the preference and inform relevant persons of their parents wish for privacy. 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.