

The National Adoption Contact Preference Register

What is the National Adoption Contact Preference Register?

The National Adoption Contact Preference Register was set up in 2005 as a way for people affected by adoption to make their wishes known about having contact with their birth family members.

If you are an adopted person, or a member of the birth family of an adopted person, you can choose to put your details on the Register. You can state who you would like to have contact with, or who you would like to share information with. You can select the kind of contact you would like or you can select not to have any contact at all. (See 'What type of contact can I choose?' below.)

When you join the Register, your details are checked against other people on the Register to see if there is a match. In other words, this check will find out if there is someone on the Register who is looking for you, or is willing to share information with you.

Who can access the information on the National Adoption Contact Preference Register?

The Register is held on a computer in the Adoption Authority and only a small number of staff in the Adoption Authority have access to it to add new applications and to check for matches. The Register is subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act. The information you provide will only be used to look for matches on the Register and to contact you about your application.

Who can join the register?

- Adopted people
- Birth parents
- Any birth relative of an adopted person (brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, grandparent, cousin)

To join the Register, you must be 18 years of age or over.

How do I join the Register?

You complete an application form and post it, together with some identification, to:

PO Box 9957,

Dublin 4.

You can also email a copy of your application form and identification to tracing@aai.gov.ie

We accept **copies** of the following forms of identification:

- Passport
- Drivers Licence (including provisional licence)
- Social Welfare Services Card
- Student Card
- Pension Book
- Senior Citizens Travel Pass
- Medical Card

What type of contact can I choose?

There are **five** levels of contact. You should choose the level that you are most comfortable with. You may choose more than one level and you can change your mind at any time.

Willing To Meet:

This means that you are willing to meet the person you are looking for. You would not be expected to meet them without any preparation. A reunion can be a very positive experience, but meetings have to be planned with care and concern for everyone involved. To prepare you for the first meeting, the Adoption Authority has produced a booklet with advice on meeting, which it will send to you. You will also be offered help from an experienced social worker who will work with you and the other person before you actually meet.

Exchange of letters or information, contact by telephone or email:

You should select this level of contact if you would like to build a relationship with someone before deciding if you would be comfortable to meet. You can decide what suits you best – for example, letters, emails or telephone calls.

No Contact, but willing to share medical information:

For adopted people, it is important to have some knowledge of their birth family medical background. We strongly encourage you to choose this option if you do not feel ready for direct contact at the moment.

No Contact, but willing to share background information:

If you do not wish to have direct contact with the other person at the moment, you can provide some personal information about yourself. For an adopted person who has no information about

their birth family member, it can be very helpful for them to know that the other person is alive and getting on with their own life.

No Contact at the moment:

There may be many reasons why it does not suit you to have contact with your relatives at the moment. If the person you are connected to joins the Register and is looking for you, you can state that you would like to be told about this discreetly. You can then decide what you would like to do. If you are told that another person is looking for you, but you still do not want contact at the time, your wishes will be respected.

What happens when I send in my application form?

You will receive a letter acknowledging that your application form has been received. Your details will be entered on to the National Adoption Contact Preference Register. The Register will be checked to see if the person you are looking for has joined the Register. A check is also done to see if there is any other person looking for you.

If we do find a matching application, one of the Adoption Authority's social workers will contact you to discuss this.

Your name stays on the Register permanently unless you request the Adoption Authority to remove it. The request to remove your application must be made in writing, and you must send in your identification with the request.

Can I change my contact details or my preferences?

Yes. If you need to change any of your details, you can write to the Adoption Authority to let us know. You must send identification with the request. The address to send your changes to is PO Box 9957, Dublin 4. You can also email your request and a copy of your identification to tracing@aai.gov.ie

Please remember that if we need to make contact with you, we will use the address, phone number or email you have provided. It is your responsibility to ensure that you update us if there is any change to your contact details.

Can I nominate another person to complete my form or to be contacted on my behalf?

Yes. If you would like another person, a family member or close friend, to assist you with completing the form you may do so. You will need to sign the form or make your mark at the end of the form. On a separate page you should give the name and address of the person who is to help you and say that you are

happy to allow that person to act on your behalf and to be contacted on your behalf. You should sign or make you mark at the end of the letter and get the other person to sign their name too. When you send in the form and the letter you should also send a copy of your identification and some identification for the person you have named.