

## **Statement from Council of Irish Adoption Agencies in relation to information and tracing services.**

The Council of Irish Adoption Agencies (CIAA) is a forum incorporating all adoption agencies, both voluntary and statutory, in the Republic of Ireland. Council members advocate on the basis of 'best practice' in relation to all aspects of adoption. While agencies themselves are members of Council, it is usual that it is the practitioners and professionals directly involved in the day-to-day operation of the adoption services, namely Social Workers that represent each agency at Council.

Adoption agencies recognise the most fundamental need of those who search for contact with birth/natural family member/s is to find answers. Council members endeavour to respond in a timely manner to all enquires. While recognising the need of birth/natural parents and birth/natural mothers in particular, to continued privacy concerning the adoption of their child, CIAA advocates on the basis of the adopted person's right to information regarding his or her origins. Therefore, CIAA advocates for legislative reform to enable adopted adults to access their original birth certificate.

As social work professionals, we are committed to responding to all requests from adopted persons and natural family members, should they initiate enquires to search for their relatives. Adoption agencies have been providing tracing services for family members who have been separated for many decades. These tracing services have been available to adopted persons, individuals raised in foster and residential care and birth/natural parents.

Since the introduction by the Adoption Board of the Standardised Framework for the Provision of a National Information and Tracing Service (2007), all adoption agencies actively seek to provide a standardised service for adopted persons and natural families who wish to make contact with each other. The Standardised Framework also makes reference to informal adoptions, false Birth Registrations and private adoptions and states a commitment to assist people affected in this way who wish to enquire about their relatives.

The National Contact Preference Register established by the Adoption Board (2005) can be used by a birth/natural family member, mother, father, sibling or other relative as well as the adopted person.

Anyone wishing to have contact with a birth relative has two options:

1. An adopted adult, a birth/natural mother, father or relative can register on the National Adoption Preference Contact Register available on the Adoption Board website: [www.adoptionboard.ie](http://www.adoptionboard.ie), or by writing to the Adoption Board, Shelbourne House, Shelbourne Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.
2. An adopted adult, birth/natural mother, father or relative can contact the adoption agency that they originally had contact with or the local adoption service in the area in which they reside, if they wish to initiate enquiries about their birth/natural relatives.

The process of a search by an adopted adult or a birth/natural relative can have many outcomes. It may result in:

- a meeting between the parties
- an exchange of information between the parties
- it may not be possible to locate the person being searched for
- the person being searched for may not wish to have contact at this time
- or indeed, sadly, the discovery that the person being searched for has died.

Any contact between parties is initiated and continued by mutual consent. This includes the sharing of identifying information or information that would rightly be considered to belong to another person.

**Contact:**  
[ciadoptionagencies@gmail.com](mailto:ciadoptionagencies@gmail.com)  
**May 2010**