

Access to Birth and Early Life Information is changing

birthinfo.ie

**BIRTH
INFORMATION
& TRACING**



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



ÚDARÁS UCHTÁLA na hÉIREANN
THE ADOPTION AUTHORITY of IRELAND

TÚSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

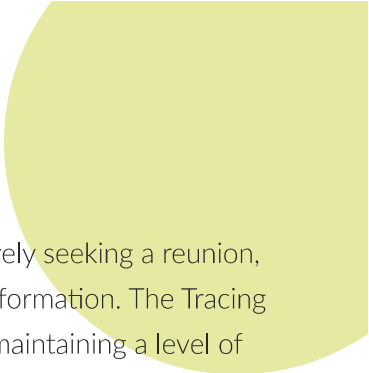
The Birth Information and Tracing Act is now here.

It confirms the right of a person to know their origins. People who were adopted, boarded out, the subject of an illegal birth registration or born in a Mother and Baby or County Home Institution, will have clear and guaranteed access to information and records about their birth and early life.

From October, people will be able to apply under the Act for their information. A dedicated website—**birthinfo.ie**—has been set up to advise and assist those applying for birth information.

Under the Act, a **Contact Preference Register** has been established and this is now open for applications. **The register will enable adopted persons, parents or other genetic relatives to register their preference in relation to contact with each other.** Importantly, it will allow parents to register a ‘no contact’ preference prior to their information being released as part of a person’s birth and early life information. This ensures that the parent’s right to privacy and wish for privacy will be communicated when releasing their information. It is important to be aware that information will always be released, even where a ‘no contact’ preference has been registered.

If you are 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.



A **Tracing Service** is also being created for people actively seeking a reunion, wishing to make contact, or looking to share or seek information. The Tracing Service can facilitate the sharing of information while maintaining a level of contact (if any) that both parties are comfortable with. Reunion or contact through the Tracing Service will be based on the consent of both parties.

More information on the new rights and services under the Act, such as how to apply for identity information, registering your contact preference or how to use the Tracing Service, can be found at **birthinfo.ie**

Who can apply to access information?

Any **relevant person** can apply. This means any person who is 16 years or over and was:

- adopted
- the subject of an illegal birth registration or think they were
- nursed out or boarded out or think they were
- resident as a child in a Mother and Baby or County Home Institution

In addition, in certain circumstances where the relevant person has died, a next of kin can apply for birth and early life information relating to the relevant person. See **birthinfo.ie** for more detail.

The application process opens in October 2022.

How do you apply?

A dedicated website—**birthinfo.ie**—has been set up with directions on how to go about applying for birth and early life information and records.

Support and assistance, is available through the Adoption Authority of Ireland and the Child and Family Agency, Tusla. Counselling is available through the Child and Family Agency, Tusla, the HSE National Counselling Service as well as overseas counselling support. Contact details are provided at the end of this booklet.

What information can be accessed?

This legislation ensures that people have the right to their birth and early life information where it exists on a file, record or database. For some, there may be a lot of detailed records. Unfortunately, for others there may be little or no information available. This legislation guarantees you will get all of the following information, where available:

Birth Information relating to the person at the time of their birth, such as their name, birthplace and date, as well as their parents' names, dates of birth and other details.

Care Information where the person was under care of the State, or in care arranged by the State, such as who arranged it, where and when it took place.

Early Life Information relating to a relevant person's life before they reached the age of 18. For example, duration and location of care, information about their health, physical or emotional development, any religious events such as baptisms, or details around adoption arrangements.

Medical Information such as an applicant's own medical history and important genetic family medical history where it exists on files. An applicant's own medical information will be released directly to them, and the medical information of a genetic relative is released in a non-identifying way and with appropriate safeguards.

Illegal Birth Registration Information such as information about the circumstances under which a birth was illegally or incorrectly registered.

Provided Item may be any item held by the Adoption Authority or Tusla for the purpose of being made available on request, for instance a letter, photograph or other document.

Unfortunately, in some cases the information applied for may not exist or be recorded. But all material that does exist will be made available, along with a copy of the underlying records.

For further details on the type of information that can be accessed, visit **birthinfo.ie**



What is the Contact Preference Register?

The **Contact Preference Register** is a way for people to register their preference in relation to contact with an adopted person or genetic relative, as well as allowing them lodge personal communications or contemporary information, including medical details.

The following persons, where they have attained the age of 18 years, may apply to have an entry made in the register:

- a) a person who is a relevant person, as outlined above;
- b) a parent or relative of a relevant person;
- c) a person who was a relevant guardian or provided care to a relevant person;
- d) the adoptive parent of an adopted child, whether the child is living or deceased;
- e) the adoptive parent of an adopted person, where the adopted person is deceased;
- f) a person who was a friend of a deceased parent and who may be able to provide a relevant person with information on their origins

We will help you to make contact where this is what both parties want. The Adoption Authority of Ireland will maintain this Register.

More information on who is eligible to register a contact preference and how to do so is available at **birthinfo.ie**

What is the Tracing Service?

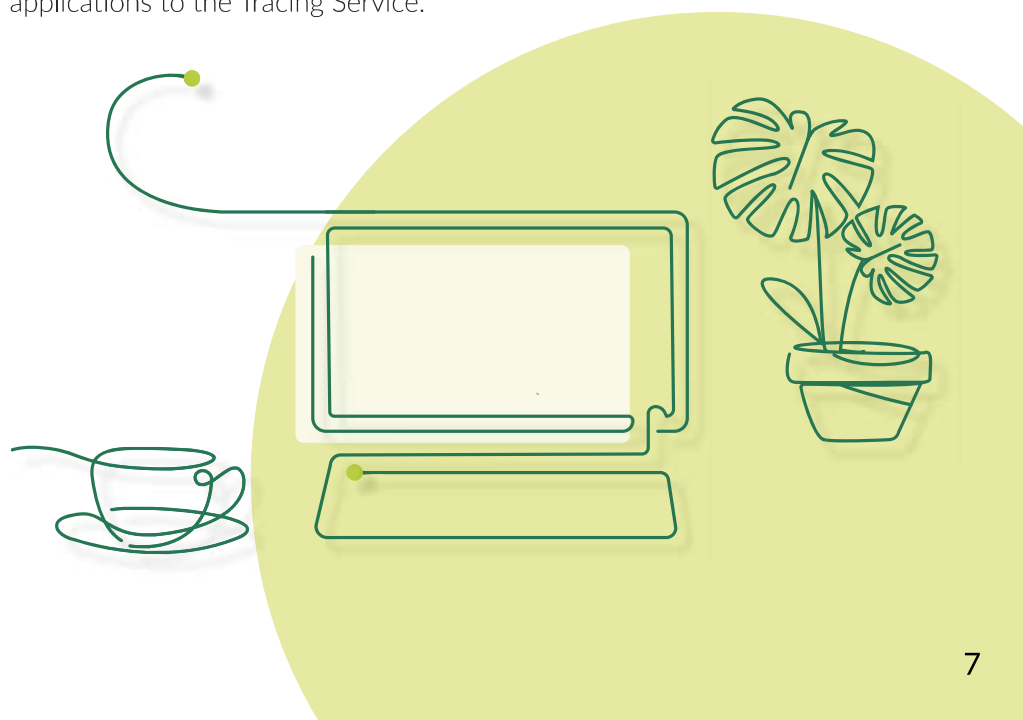
The legislation provides for a statutory **Tracing Service**. This will enable people to actively trace family members for consensual contact or sharing of information, including for instance, vital medical information.

Persons adopted, boarded out or with an illegal birth registration, their parents and their genetic relatives can apply for the service. More details on who is eligible to apply for a tracing service is available at **birthinfo.ie**

Information on the Contact Preference Register may be used as part of a Tracing Service search. But it's important to note that the two are separate and distinct services and need to be applied to separately.

The Tracing Service opens for applications in October, 2022.

The Child and Family Agency, Tusla, has responsibility for managing applications to the Tracing Service.



IMPORTANT: This booklet is only a summary

This booklet outlines the key changes and services brought about by the Birth Information and Tracing Act. To learn more and engage with the process in any way, please visit **birthinfo.ie** or call the phone numbers listed below.

For further support or assistance, please contact:

Adoption Authority of Ireland

+353 1 230 9300 | www.aai.gov.ie | records@aai.gov.ie

TUSLA

+353 818 44 55 00 | www.tusla.ie | BITCounselling@tusla.ie

NCS National Counselling Service / HSE

www.hse.ie/ncs | BITCounselling@barnardos.ie

Information on Overseas Support

www.gov.ie/MBHCounselling

birthinfo.ie

This is an initiative of the Government of Ireland. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth has lead responsibility for the Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022.