

THE NATIONAL ADOPTION CONTACT PREFERENCE REGISTER

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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Adoption Rights Alliance
Natural Parents Network of Ireland/Adoption Loss
Adoptive Parents Association of Ireland
Council of Irish Adoption Agencies
Health Service Executive Adoption Services

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ADOPTION AUTHORITY OF IRELAND

The Adoption Authority of Ireland (formerly Adoption Board) regulates adoption in Ireland. It is an independent, quasi-judicial statutory body appointed by the Government and was established by the 1952 Adoption Act, when a legal adoption system was first introduced here.

Their responsibilities include granting adoption orders; issuing declarations of eligibility and suitability to adopt abroad; maintaining the Register of Foreign Adoptions; registering and supervising registered adoption societies; setting down guidelines and standards for the provision of all adoption services; and operating the National Contact Preference Register.

BARNARDOS POST ADOPTION SERVICE

Barnardos Post Adoption Service has offered confidential professional support to all those affected by adoption since 1977. Services now include a confidential helpline; group and individual support to natural/birth parents, adopted people and adoptive families; a counselling service to internationally adopted children and their parents (living in the Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow area funded by HSE Eastern region); and a National Adoption Contact Preference Register mediation service.

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ORIGINS OF THE NATIONAL ADOPTION CONTACT PREFERENCE REGISTER

This booklet is designed to be read in conjunction with the application form for the National Adoption Contact Preference Register.

In the past, adoption was seen as a single event with no need for follow-up once the adopted child had been placed with their adoptive parents. However, it is now widely accepted that many adopted people and their natural/birth families have a need for information about and/or contact with each other.

The **National Adoption Contact Preference Register (NACPR)** was launched by the Adoption Board, now called The Adoption Authority of Ireland, in March 2005 and is the first State provided Adoption Contact Register.

The Register was developed by the Adoption Authority's Information and Tracing Advisory Group. This group, chaired by The Adoption Authority of Ireland, is representative of the Health Service Executive Adoption Services, Registered Adoption Agencies, and client support and stakeholder groups, including groups representing adopted people, natural/birth parents and adoptive parents.

Why was the register set up?

The Register was set up as a central service:

- To make it easier for adopted people and their natural/birth relatives to record their wishes about contact with each other.
- To facilitate contact where both have chosen this option.

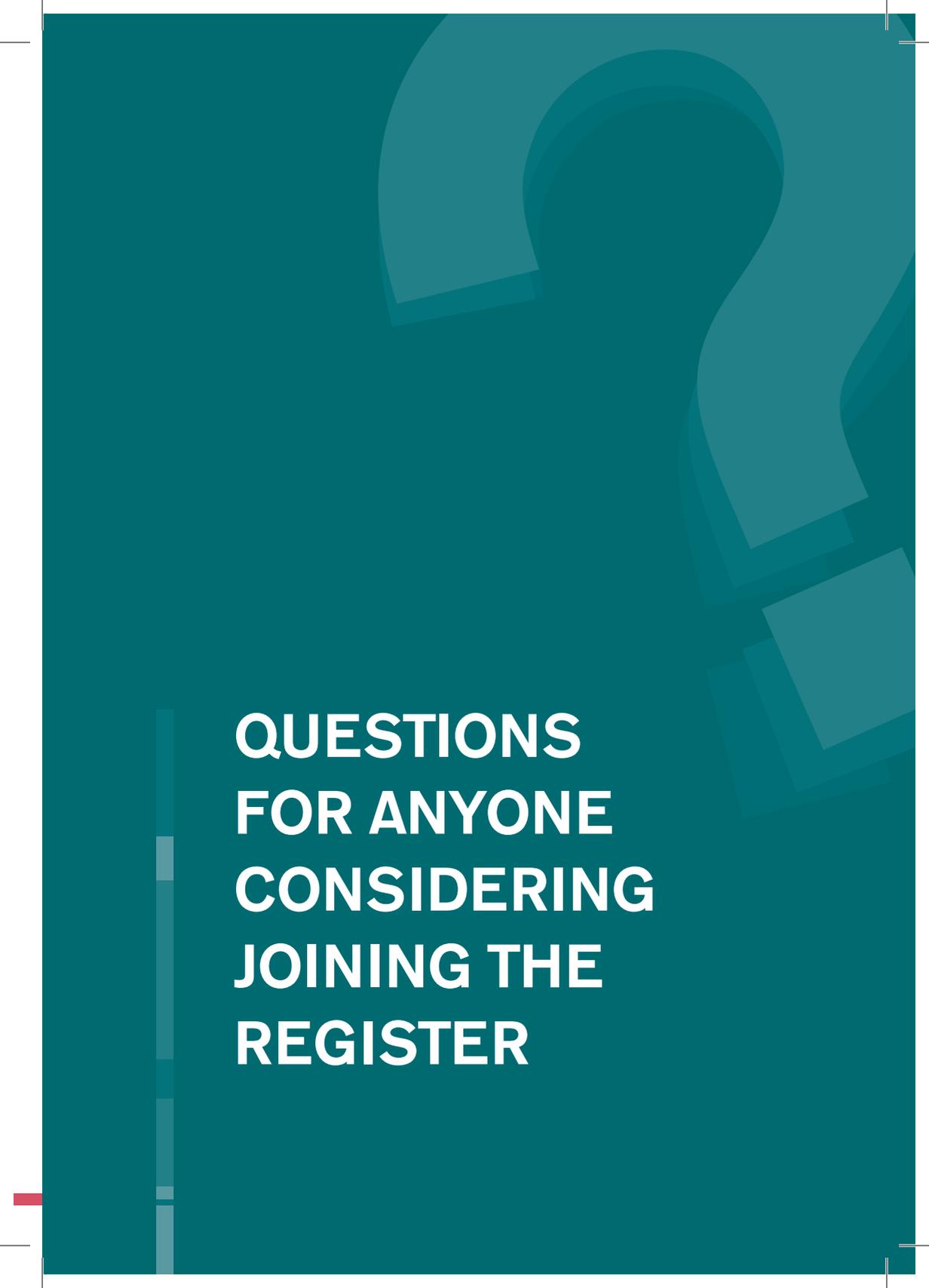
What exactly does the register do?

The Register checks for connections between the details given by an adopted adult and a natural/birth family member who have both registered their wishes with the Adoption Authority.

Registration is done by filling in several key pieces of information on an application form and sending it to the Authority. This information is put into a secure computer database to check if there is a match/link with all existing applications. If a match is made with another application, both the adopted person and the natural/birth mother or relative are contacted by a social worker in the Adoption Authority.

The application form is available by downloading it from the Adoption Authority of Ireland website www.adoptionboard.ie, or by phoning the Authority at Freephone 1 800 309 300.

The form was originally sent out to most households in the country in April 2005.

The background is a solid teal color. On the right side, there are faint, overlapping silhouettes of people in a meeting or discussion. On the left side, there is a vertical bar composed of several horizontal segments in varying shades of teal and a small red segment at the bottom.

QUESTIONS FOR ANYONE CONSIDERING JOINING THE REGISTER

1. How do I join the register?

To register you must complete the application form and send it, along with the required I.D., to the Adoption Authority of Ireland. The application form is available by downloading it from the Adoption Authority website www.adoptionboard.ie, or by phoning Freephone 1800 309 300. Information about how the register works and details about registration are included on the form. Only those over 18 can register.

It is advisable to take a copy of your application form before sending it in to the Adoption Authority.

2. I do not know what level of contact to choose. Can you advise me?

The application form gives you various options from which to choose. Many people opt to exchange letters as a first step before deciding how far they want the contact to go.

The Adoption Authority and other support services found at the back of this booklet will offer further advice if you are uncertain what level of contact to choose on the form.

3. Can I check to see if anyone is looking for me before I register?

It is not possible for anyone to check what information is held on the Register, apart from a small number of staff at the Adoption Authority, as it is held in a secure database. The Authority will inform you if anyone connected to you has also registered.

4. What happens after I register?

You will get a written acknowledgement that your application has been received by the Authority if you ticked 'yes' to this on the application form.

5. What is a match?

A 'match' usually means that an adopted person has been connected to a natural/birth relative through the register. This happens when an adopted person and a natural/birth relative have both given similar details, for example, date of birth.

Sometimes the Adoption Authority social worker may need to clarify information with one applicant before the other person is contacted to be sure there is a connection.

It is important to note, however, that just because details between an adopted person and a natural/birth relative have been matched, it does not necessarily mean the other person has chosen the same level of contact.

6. Are there many matches made?

The Register has made 125 matches per year on average since its launch in 2005. Most have been between people who want some form of contact, with only a small number who choose no contact.

7. What is the next step if the Adoption Authority informs me that there is a match?

You should clearly note on your application form if you would prefer to get news of a match by letter or by phone so that you can learn this in a way that is most suitable for you.

The Adoption Authority social worker who contacts you will discuss your options with you and you will have the opportunity to talk things over. As it may be some time since you filled in the form, the details on it – or your personal circumstances – may have changed.

The Adoption Authority will suggest that you might consider availing of support and assistance from a professional intermediary.

You can choose to be put directly in contact with your relative, but for this to happen, both of you must choose this option. If you choose to use an intermediary, the Adoption Authority will inform you of the choices available, which may include using the services of:

- The original adoption agency
- A registered agency in your area
- An independent post adoption service

Waiting lists vary – you will be offered an appointment as soon as possible.

8. Who are intermediaries and how can they can they help?

Intermediaries are usually social workers who are experienced in adoption. An intermediary is a 'person in between' who can be involved in some/all of the following stages, depending on how far you decide to go in the process.

- Listening to the personal story of the person who has been matched to help them to decide what the next best step may be.
- Exploring their expectations and concerns.
- Looking at the timing of the match.
- Clarifying the options at this stage and how the process may unfold.
- Helping the person decide what information they wish to be given to the other person.
- Supporting the person in writing a first letter – providing guidelines, sharing tips etc.
- Acting as an initial 'post box' for further letters and photos to be exchanged.
- Preparing the person for their first face-to-face meeting and choosing a venue suitable for both parties.
- Offering follow-up support afterwards and linking with support groups.

I was really nervous when I met my natural/birth mother, more nervous than I have ever felt, but before we knew it, the nerves were gone and five hours had passed and we would have stayed for five more if only we didn't have to go home! I felt like a veil had been lifted and that a void had been filled.

Lorraine (adopted person)

9. Will I be told if there is no match and how will I handle this?

You will be contacted only if there *is* a match.

If you do not hear again from the Adoption Authority after your acknowledgement (if you choose to get one) you can take it that no match has been made, but you are always welcome to check this with the Information and Tracing unit at the Adoption Authority.

Remember, another person can register at any stage in the future, sometimes when you least expect it or even at a time when you feel you have a lot of other things going on in your life. Your natural/birth relative's circumstances may change, or they may find a new source of support that encourages them to come forward.

10. Will the Register search for people who have not yet registered?

As it depends on people voluntarily registering, the NACPR will not search for anyone who has not registered.

11. Are there other ways to search if I do not find a match on the NACPR?

Yes. Most adoption agencies and the Adoption Authority operate an information and tracing service. You can write to the Adoption Authority to enquire whether the agency who handled the original adoption offers such a service and, if not or if it is closed, where your information is held and who you should contact.



**QUESTIONS
OF SPECIAL
INTEREST TO
ADOPTED
PEOPLE**

12. Are there services that will help me to prepare for contact with my natural/birth mother or relative?

Yes, your intermediary, if you choose to avail of one, will help to prepare you. You may also wish to go to a support group/meeting to have the opportunity to meet other adopted people who understand your questions and concerns.

A list of counsellors experienced in adoption is also available from various adoption support services (see the back of this booklet).

13. How does it feel to be told that a natural/birth relative wants contact through the register?

Usually a whole range of feelings can arise – joy, excitement, relief – as well as other ones you may not expect like sadness or even anger. You may find your spouse, partner, family and friends are very excited for you and do not understand the mixture of emotions you are experiencing. It is possible they may encourage you to move along more quickly than you are ready for. Take your time and move at a pace that feels right for you.

14. How does it feel to be told your natural/birth mother is not in a position to have contact with you?

It can be very hard to hear this. Some people feel like they have been 'rejected' for a second time. It may also be that you do not know much at all about why you were placed for adoption. You may not understand your natural/birth mother's reasons for not being able for contact with you now. Your intermediary might be able to find out why this is.

It can help to talk to other adopted people who have had a similar outcome to their search. Your intermediary should be able to ensure your natural/birth mother has the support she feels she needs.

15. What happens if another natural/birth relative registers and my natural/birth mother does not?

The Adoption Authority or your intermediary will contact your natural/birth mother (where possible) to inform her and discuss the registration by another natural/birth relative. The Authority may need, for example, to verify the identity of the other relative.

It is the adopted person's decision to reunite with another relative who has registered. However, very occasionally, the Adoption Authority or your intermediary may advise you that there are strong reasons for contact to be avoided if particular information is brought to their attention by the natural/birth mother that you may want to consider. For most people though, contact with other birth relatives is a positive and life enhancing experience.

16. Will I be told if one of my natural/birth parents has died?

If you register, information may emerge through another natural/birth relative going on the register, or a friend informing the Authority, that sadly this has happened.

While this is obviously very difficult information for you to learn, it is possible that you may be able to hear more about your natural/birth parent from family or friends, perhaps see photos or visit a grave. An intermediary should be able to help you with this.

17. What are some possible outcomes?

There are many possibilities and each person will have different views and feelings about the information they discover, but it is worth thinking about some of the possible outcomes in advance.

The following are examples of possible scenarios to consider:

- You may reunite with your natural/birth mother or father and develop a fulfilling relationship.
- You may reunite with your natural/birth mother or father and just exchange phone calls, birthday and Christmas cards.
- You may embark on your journey assuming that you will meet just your natural/birth mother, but discover there are many other natural/birth family members who are delighted to meet you.
- You may find that your natural/birth mother does not want contact and go on to have a positive relationship with your natural/birth father or other natural/birth family members.

Sometimes there are challenging or more unexpected scenarios to deal with, for example:

- Your natural/birth parents may have married and you could have full siblings.
- Your natural/birth mother may have always kept you a secret.
- Your natural/birth mother may have placed several children separately for adoption.
- You may have been born as a result of an extra marital affair.
- Your natural/birth mother may have kept a child born before or after you.
- Your natural/birth mother may have 'blanked out' crucial memories as they were so difficult to deal with.

Meeting my natural/birth father was an amazing, surreal experience, but mostly a happy one. He was thrilled and proud to see the daughter he lost all those years ago and I was stunned to be standing in front of someone who looked so like me.

Abby (adopted person)

I loved meeting my half-sister. As she lives overseas, we had emailed for a long time before we met so we felt like old friends when we did sit face-to-face. We talked and laughed for hours and it felt so natural and easy.

Valerie (adopted person)

18. Can I find out some information about my natural/birth relatives before I meet them?

An intermediary will meet with both you and your natural/birth relative independently. They will help you to decide on information that you are happy for them to share with your relative about your life now and in the past.

It is usually recommended that, at first, the information should not identify you or your family. This means you can take it at your own pace and not be contacted directly until you feel ready.

Once some initial information is shared and you have had time to take it all in, you may feel ready to begin some form of communication with the other person, e.g. by letter.

It is a good idea to discuss your expectations for after reunion with your intermediary and to be honest about these with your natural/birth relative prior to any meeting.

Naturally, however, such expectations and plans can change after the meeting.

19. When is the right time to register with the NACPR?

Adoption reunion can be both time consuming and emotionally challenging. We recommend that you register at a time when you feel best prepared and always take things at your own pace. During exams or when you're getting married or having a child may not be the best time as you might feel a lot is going on in your life at that stage. However, you should only do what you think is best for you.

20. Should I tell my adoptive parents that I have registered?

Many adopted people will register with the full knowledge, support and encouragement of their parents. However, telling parents is entirely up to the individual.

It is a good idea to talk to your family about going on the Register as you may need their support and secrecy can prove difficult in the long run. However, it is your choice. Some people have good reasons for not telling their parents, for example, if they are elderly or in bad health or if you feel they might be unsupportive.

This decision can sometimes be a complex issue that is worth exploring with an intermediary or counsellor or with other adopted people.

21. What if I change my mind? Can I delete or change my details?

Yes, you should inform the Adoption Authority (in writing) of a new contact address, telephone number or if you are rethinking the level of contact you have chosen previously.

Also you might want to postpone your registration, for example, if you are thinking of going abroad for a year to work or study, or if you experience a bereavement in your family, are getting married or having a child.

22. What is it like to meet your natural/birth mother/relative for the first time?

Adopted people describe the first meeting differently. Most view it as an unique experience to meet someone who is so closely related to you yet is a stranger. Others can feel overwhelmed by joy and emotion. Some may find it awkward and not know what to say or do. You may find yourself taking them all in and listening to their

voice rather than hearing the words. For some, the time goes very fast, for others as is if in slow motion.

It is up to you and your natural/birth relative to decide where the first meeting will take place. It is a good idea to choose a venue that is neutral to you both and to decide in advance the length of the first meeting. Many prefer the privacy of the mediation agency and for the social worker to make a discreet introduction and then leave you alone. Others chose to meet alone somewhere like in a hotel.

It is a good idea not to make too many plans and to go away and think about all that has happened before deciding on the next step.

23. How do reunions work out?

Many people have wonderful and positive experiences of reunion with natural/birth parents and go on to develop lasting relationships. Others have more challenging experiences and the contact can be more limited.

Some people may have a lot of contact initially then one person decides to 'pull back', which can feel like rejection for the other person. It is a delicate balance, and a lot depends on whether you both have similar expectations and are prepared to be flexible and understanding of the other person's viewpoint. It helps to have learnt about what reunion is like for natural/birth mothers before you meet through reading about their experiences and attending support groups.

After the reunion, a lot of mixed emotions may come up. Some people may feel a great sense of loss as the reality of meeting their natural/birth mother faces them with the fact they cannot get back the missing years. Family and friends may have difficulty in understanding where these feelings are coming from. They may also feel left out around the time of the reunion and need to seek support for themselves.



**QUESTIONS FOR
NATURAL /BIRTH
MOTHERS**

24. Is there someone I can talk to before I register as I have some concerns?

Yes there is and you probably have some questions and concerns about what it may mean for you to register. You may be worried about confidentiality or you may not be able to remember certain details of the event. It may even take you some time to fill in the form itself as there are many emotions that can arise.

These are the sort of things that other natural/birth mothers worry about too, so it is important to try to get to talk to someone with experience in this area. The organisations listed at the back of this booklet are there to help and support you.

25. My husband and family don't know I placed a baby for adoption. Will they find out if I register?

Your registration is between you and the Adoption Authority only and they will not be informing your family.

It is possible to give the address of a friend, relative or other person (such as a natural/birth mother support group) rather than your own address and to give a mobile rather than home phone number. However, you need to think about keeping the truth from your family in the future. What if there is a match and you are going to meet your son and daughter? Do you think you could do this without telling them?

If that is your wish, every assistance will be given to ensure your privacy. Again, meeting other women who have coped with this can give you strength and the necessary courage and support.

When they told me there was a match, I was so relieved. I used to worry that he had died or that his adoption hadn't worked out well. And to know that he wanted to meet me too, well, I was overjoyed! He was about to go off on a 'year out' to Australia and wanted the reunion to happen straight away. So, after a few weeks of writing and texting, we met up. And it was wonderful for both of us.

Teresa (natural/birth mother)

26. Are there any other ways of finding my son/daughter if not on the Register?

Yes. You can contact the original adoption agency and talk to a social worker about the possibility of them tracing your son or daughter for you. You should contact the Adoption Authority for advice if any difficulties arise for you in going back to the original adoption agency.

27. If I don't want contact, why would I fill in a form to go on a contact Register?

The whole point of the National Adoption Contact Preference Register is to give people the opportunity to express their preference for contact/no contact.

Even if you do not want contact at this time, you might also consider going on the Register so that you can offer medical, family and other important information via the intermediary to your son/daughter. Some adopted people and their children experience difficulties due to not having a medical history. This can be done with the utmost privacy. You may choose to write a letter to your son/daughter with your mediator's help, so you can explain your situation in your own words.

28. I'm a natural/birth mother. What happens if another natural/birth relative registers and I don't?

Before putting another natural/birth relative and your son/daughter in any kind of contact, the Adoption Authority will inform you about this registration and you will have the opportunity to discuss this. Some mothers may be happy for the contact to go ahead but just not want to get involved themselves at the moment for a variety of reasons. Others may have concerns about the contact which they will have the opportunity to talk over with a social worker.

It is important to remember that the NACPR provides an opportunity for a range of natural/birth relatives to be put in contact with an adopted relative, according to the wishes of both.

29. How does it feel to learn a son/daughter wants contact?

A whole mixture of feelings can emerge along the way – delight, excitement, relief and anxiety are just a few. This is really where talking to others who have been through this experience themselves can help both other natural/birth mothers and adopted people.

Your family and friends may be very excited for you and want everything to go well for you. However, they may not be able to understand all the emotions that are coming up for you. You may also find you are thinking about your son or daughter most of the time and seem to talk about nothing else, and others can sometimes feel left out and may need support for themselves.

30. If my son/daughter has not registered how will I know if something has happened to them or if they have died?

Many natural/birth parents worry about this over the years – what if something awful has happened to them, will I be told? The agency or Adoption Authority would not usually be aware of how an adopted person's life has fared since, unless the person or the adoptive family tell them. If you have concerns you should ask an adoption agency to make enquiries for you.

I knew there wasn't a lot of hope. The adoption wasn't a 'regular' one and I think she doesn't know she's adopted at all. So she wouldn't be putting her name on the Register. I hope that someday she'll find out and we can be put in contact. But at least there's the chance that she'll discover in the future that I always loved her and have been looking to meet her again for a very long time.

Jean (natural/birth mother)

31. I associate such sadness with the adoption agency because of my loss and would find it hard to go back there. Can I go anywhere else?

Yes, you can discuss this with the Adoption Authority who will find you an alternative agency as they do understand how hard this can be.

However, adoption agencies have a lot of experience in helping natural/birth parents who wish to search. You have the right to expect a professional and understanding service.

If you have a difficulty with the service offered by any agency you should bring this to the attention of the Adoption Authority.

32. How can I best prepare for contact?

You may need time to go over the difficult experiences surrounding the time of parting from your child with a counsellor, social worker or intermediary. Many women have blocked out a lot and may need further help. Feelings can arise about the natural/birth mother's own parents, family members or the natural/birth father that can range from anger, sadness and grief to guilt and shame.

You may want to obtain information from the adoption agency of the events at the time as you might have very little factual information. It might also be helpful to obtain a copy of your child's birth certificate, which you can get from the General Registers Office (www.groireland.ie, LoCall: 1890 252076).

You may need to look at how to tell important people in your life about your son or daughter before you go any further.

33. How does it feel to meet?

Meeting can be an overwhelming and emotional experience for many women. The memory you hold of your son or daughter may be as a tiny baby. It is often very hard to believe that the adult who greets you is the same person. Sometimes the person can look very like their father, which might be welcome or bring up painful memories.

Some natural/birth mothers have expressed surprise to find they have a lot in common with their son or daughter, while others found it difficult to relate to each other as they are so different. It takes time to build up a relationship and it is important to keep expectations realistic.

34. What happens after reunion?

As mentioned above, many reunited people go on to enjoy happy and lasting relationships. However, occasionally the first meeting is the only meeting as one or other person decides they do not want to go any further. That is why it is so important to have built some foundation before you meet, via letter or email.

Some natural/birth mothers experience intense feelings of loss after reunion as they become acutely aware that the missing years can never be regained.

Whether or not the adoptive family or the natural/birth mother's family are aware of the reunion can make a big difference as to how things move along after that. It is often easier to develop a relationship when there are no secrets.



**QUESTIONS
FOR OTHER
NATURAL/BIRTH
FAMILY MEMBERS**

35. I think my mother had a baby adopted before she married my father but I'm reluctant to ask her. Can I register anyway?

Yes, you can register. You could put as much information as you have on the form, for example, your mother's maiden name and approximate year of birth of the child. The Authority may be able to make a connection if an adopted adult has already registered giving similar information.

However, it would be better to try to talk to your mother about this first if you can as she will be informed of your registration should a match occur.

36. My girlfriend had a baby when we were both 18. I heard the baby was adopted. How can I find out?

Natural/birth fathers are very welcome to register and many have done so. It can be a little more complex as father's names were not always recorded on adoption files. The Adoption Authority and the intermediary will do as much as possible to help and support you.

You may not have told your partner and family about your adopted son/daughter and this can be stressful and worrying. A support group for natural/birth parents or individual counselling can be helpful.

37. My sister died last year and I know she had a son who was adopted so I am his aunt. I have lots of photos and information that I could give him if he wants. What should I do?

As a close relative of the natural/birth mother you can register. Obviously it will come as a shock to your nephew, if he registers, to learn that his mother has passed away. In many cases like this the adopted person is still very open to contact and lasting relationships are often formed with the other members of the natural/birth family.

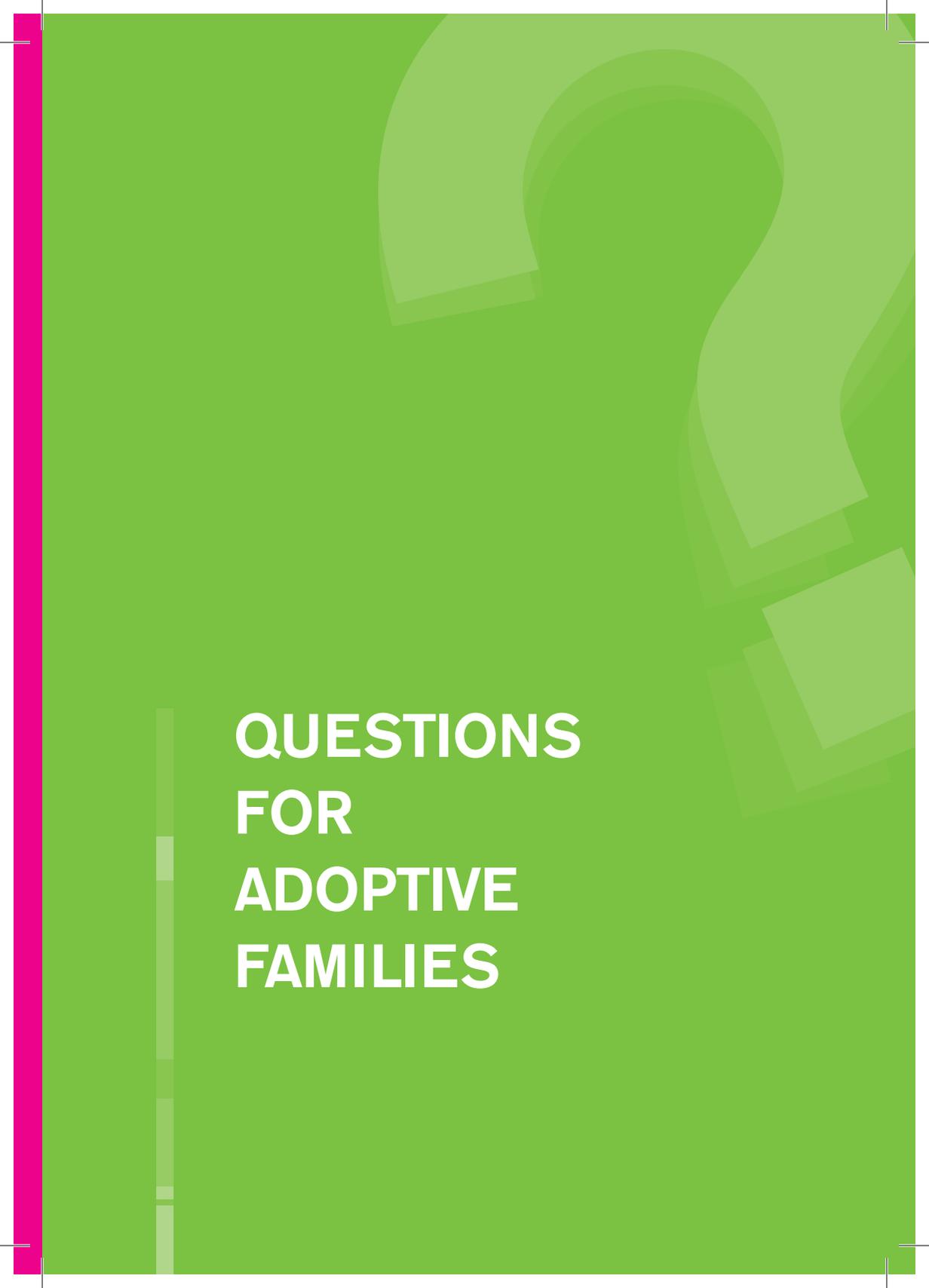
38. Our daughter placed a child for adoption 21 years ago and she plans to go on the Register. Should we also go on it as we would love to meet our grand-daughter and we are getting on in years?

Birth relatives can register and many adopted people are delighted to learn that their grandparents have done so.

If your daughter is matched with your grand-daughter on the register, your grand-daughter may not feel ready to meet too many people at once. You may need to wait until they have had a chance to get to know each other first.

I never thought I had much chance of finding out about her. Didn't think I had the right, really. It's usually mothers who have reunions. So when I found out that she was open to contact from me, I was up to high doh and very anxious. But it's worked out well. And I'm pleased too that I have a good friendly relationship with her adoptive father. We go for a pint from time to time.

John (natural/birth father)



**QUESTIONS
FOR
ADOPTIVE
FAMILIES**

39. Our daughter is only 15 and too young to go on the Register but wants to know about her background. What can we do?

Adoptive parents or other adoptive family members cannot put their names on the register or do so on their son/daughter's behalf. However, they can inform the Adoption Authority or their agency if they have important information about them, for example regarding health or other personal issues.

Adoptive parents are always welcome to contact the original adoption agency to seek background information on a young person under 18, or your son/daughter should be supported in doing so themselves if they feel they wish to do so.

40. My 18-year-old son wants to register. Is he too young?

Once an adopted person reaches 18, they can opt to register. Counselling and support are particularly important for a young adopted person who decides to register.

41. Can I find out if my son/daughter has registered?

A person's application to register is confidential. If you have any particular concerns (perhaps if your son/daughter is particularly vulnerable in some way, for example has addiction or mental health issues), you can contact the Authority who may pass these on to the relevant agency if a match is made.

We have a couple of application forms ready to be filled in whenever she is ready to do it. We won't put any pressure on her. She knows she has our support whatever she decides.

Darren (adoptive father)

When our younger son became a father three years ago, he began to think about his own first mother's hard choice 27 years ago. He decided to send in the form to go on the Contact Register. It must have been telepathy, as she had recently sent in a form too and the match was made.

They were in touch by phone and email for a good while before they met. It has gone well – they took it slowly and carefully. It is enough at the moment for them to get to know each other without introducing anyone else.

Marie (adoptive mother)

42. I want to support my son/daughter as best I can with the registration. How can I do this?

It is really good that your son/daughter has told you they are thinking of registering, as your support is really important. They may seek your advice from the start so even if you have reservations it would be best to discuss these with a third party.

You should allow your son/daughter to determine the level of your involvement in the registration and reunion process as it is very much their journey.

43. How can an intermediary help us?

Adoptive parents are very welcome to discuss questions and concerns with the intermediary with the permission of an adult son/daughter. An intermediary will offer your son/daughter someone else to confide in and explore their feelings and concerns.

44. How do adoptive parents feel when their son or daughter wants to find natural/birth parents?

Some parents have always encouraged their son/daughter to search. Maybe you met their natural/birth mother or father at the time and have your own memories of this experience. It is still understandable to feel protective of them, however, no matter what age they are!

Many adoptive parents were told little about the natural/birth parents. Some parents can feel threatened and fear losing their son/daughter back to the natural/birth family.

It is important to remember that the desire for information and contact with natural/birth family is an entirely normal feeling experienced by many adopted people but that they may also feel disloyal and even guilty.

45. How do we stand as grandparents of our adopted son/daughter's children if our son/daughter finds their natural/birth parents?

People will have new members added to their family in different ways throughout their lives. There is no change in your position as grandparents. Families, whether adoption is involved or not, change all the time and as things change, families adapt.

We know from children whose parents have separated and meet new partners that they can grow up happily knowing several sets of grandparents. What is more important is that everyone knows what is happening, feels loved by all family members and there is as little secrecy as possible.

46. Will I get the chance to meet my son/daughter's natural/birth mother?

Sometimes the relationship moves on to include wider family such as partners, children and parents. When this happens it can often feel like the adoption has moved 'full circle' and can be very satisfying.

Many adoptive parents and natural/birth parents would like to meet each other after the reunion but this decision really rests with the adopted person and their natural/birth mother. Some adopted people prefer to keep their 'two families' separate.

47. Do adopted people remain close to their adoptive parents after they meet their natural/birth parents?

People meet new friends all the time and many gain new family members through marriage. This does not mean that the existing people in their lives are pushed away.

At first your son/daughter may be very preoccupied with the newly found natural/birth relative. Adopted people very often experience intense emotions and it can take some time to figure where everything and everyone 'slots in'. It is not always easy for the adopted person and they can feel pulled in different directions, wanting to get to know the new family and yet not wanting to be disloyal to the adoptive family. Your calm support and encouragement is vital.

48. Is there somewhere I can go to discuss my concerns and worries?

A list of support services is available at the back of this booklet. A helpline is often useful if you do not wish to identify yourself and there are several available.

RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

ADOPTION AUTHORITY OF IRELAND

Shelbourne House, Shelbourne Road
Dublin 4
Main Switchboard:
Tel: (01) 2309300
Information & Tracing Unit:
1800 309 300

Duty Social Worker:
Tel: (01) 2309306
Email: adoptioninfo@healthirlgov.ie
Web: www.adoptionboard.ie

BARNARDOS

Post Adoption Service, Hyde Square
654 South Circular Road, Dublin 8
Tel: (01) 4530355
Fax: (01) 4530300
Helpline: (01) 4546388
(Tues & Thurs 10am to 1pm)
Email: adoption@barnardos.ie
Web: www.barnardos.ie

Professional, independent service offering counselling and group support to birth/natural families, adopted people and adoptive families. Barnardos offers a mediation service to people linked through the NACPR.

ADOPTION LOSS / NATURAL PARENTS' NETWORK OF IRELAND

Secretary, NPNI, P.O. Box 6714,
Dublin 4
Helpline: 1890 200 046
Email: info@adoptionloss.ie
Web: www.adoptionloss.ie

LoCall Helpline staffed by volunteers who share the experience of losing a child to adoption. Information about support meetings. Discussion list on Yahoo groups. Information and advice about Search and Reunion services. Proposals on legislative reform on adoption.

ADOPTION RIGHTS ALLIANCE

Mill House, Millview Road, Malahide,
Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 8456431 / 086 8163024
Email: info@adoptionrightsalliance.com
Web: www.adoptionrightsalliance.com

Provides information and advice to those affected by adoption, as well as to professionals, and also advice and advocacy to those who experience difficulties.

ADOPTION SUPPORT NETWORK OF IRELAND (ASNI)

c/o 39 Bourne View, Ashbourne,
Co. Meath
Email: info@adoption.ie
Web: www.adoption.ie

ASNI provides a peer support network for adopted people. Membership also includes adoptive and natural families.

ADOPTIVE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

Roundwood, Bray, Co. Wicklow
Tel: (0404) 45184
Email: apai@eircom.net

Offers confidential support and advice to adoptive families and others.

NATURAL PARENTS SUPPORT GROUP

Tel: 086 7368715

Small group based in Cork who offer support to natural parents of adopted children through monthly meetings and one to one support. Please email or phone for information about meetings or to talk to someone.

Email: npsgcork@gmail.com

KNOW MY OWN

Brú Columbanus, Cardinal Way,
Wilton, Cork.
Email: knowmyown@gmail.com

Cork based group offering support to adopted people, natural and adoptive families and anyone affected by adoption. Meetings are held on the first Monday of every month (second Monday if Bank Holiday).

ADOPT (NORTHERN IRELAND)

Adopt Ltd., 7 University Street,
Belfast BT7 1FY
Tel: 028 90319500
Email: adoptni@aol.com
Web: www.adoptni.org.uk

Independent Northern Ireland charity offering support for adults from the adoption and looked after population.

ENGLAND, WALES

www.adoptionsearchreunion.org.uk

Provides comprehensive information on all post-adoption services and the current whereabouts of adoption records in the U.K.

SCOTTISH ADOPTION ADVICE SERVICE (BARNARDOS)

Suite 5/3, Skypark SP5,
45 Finnieston Street, Glasgow, G3 8JU
Tel: 0141 248 7530
Email: saas@barnardos.org.uk
Web: www.barnardos.org.uk/saas.htm

Post Adoption Service offering confidential advice, support and counselling to all affected by adoption. Staffed by experienced social workers.

AGENCIES/ADOPTION SOCIETIES HOLDING RECORDS

CUNAMH

(formerly The Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland)
30 South Anne Street, Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 6779664
Email: info@cunamh.com
Web: www.cunamh.com
NATIONAL MATERNITY HOSPITAL
Holles Street, Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 6373100

PACT

(formerly Protestant Adoption Society)
Arabella House, 18D Nutgrove Office Park, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14
Tel: (01) 2962200
Fax: (01) 2964049
Email: info@pact.ie
Web: www.pact.ie

RGAS

(formerly Rotunda Girls Aid Society)
Health Service Executive
Principal Social Worker, Information & Tracing Service, 1st Floor, Park House, North Circular Road, Dublin 7
Tel: (01) 8387122

ST. BRIGID'S ADOPTION SOCIETY

Holy Faith Convent, The Coombe, Dublin 8
Tel: (01) 4540244 / (01) 4542917
Email: myramcdonagh@hotmail.com

ST. LOUISE'S ADOPTION SOCIETY

Health Service Executive
1st Floor, Park House,
North Circular Road, Dublin 7
Tel: (01) 8387122

ST. PATRICK'S GUILD

203 Merrion Road, Dublin 4
Tel: (01) 2196551
Email: sr@stpatricksguild.ie

SACRED HEART ADOPTION SOCIETY
Blackrock, Cork, Co. Cork
Tel: (021) 4358854

*Records due to be transferred to HSE
South Adoption Service (Cork) in 2010*

ST. ATTRACTA'S ADOPTION SOCIETY
St. Mary's, Sligo, Co. Sligo
Tel: (071) 9143058
Email: stattractas@gmail.com

ST. CATHERINE'S ADOPTION SOCIETY
Clarecare, Harmony Row, Ennis,
Co. Clare
Tel: (065) 6828178
Email: adoption@clarecare.ie
Web: www.clarecare.ie

ST. MURA'S ADOPTION SOCIETY
Pastoral Centre, Monastery Avenue,
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Tel: (074) 9122047
Email: stmuras@eircom.net

**[HEALTH SERVICE EXECUTIVE
INFORMATION AND TRACING
SERVICES](#)**

HSE – EAST
Child Care Services, Park House,
North Circular Road, Dublin 7
Tel: (01) 8387122
*(See also details for St. Louise's
Adoption Society)*

HSE – NORTH EAST
Regional Adoption Service,
Child & Family Centre,
St. Mary's Hospital, Dublin Road,
Drogheda, Co. Louth
Tel: (041) 9832963

HSE – MID LEINSTER
Adoption Department, ACC Building,
Harbour Street, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
Tel: (057) 9328036

Adoption Department, Tivoli House,
Dublin Road, Longford
Tel: (043) 3350584

HSE – SOUTH
Adoption Service, 2 St. Andrew's
Terrace, Newtown, Waterford
Tel: (051) 860048

Regional Adoption Service,
Pairc na gCrann, St. Stephen's
Hospital, Sarsfield Court,
Glanmire, Co. Cork
Tel: (021) 4858650

Adoption Department, Kerry
Community
Services, Rathass, Tralee,
Co. Kerry
Tel: (066) 7154628

HSE – WEST
Clann Adoption Service, Regional
Adoption Service, West City Centre,
Seamus Quirke Road, Galway
Tel: (091) 548430

Adoption Services Department, St. Mary's
Headquarters, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Tel: (094) 9022333

Regional Adoption Service,
Custom House, 2 The Quays, Sligo
Tel: (071) 9136550

Adoption Department, Parkbeg House,
2 Elm Drive, Caherdavin, Co. Limerick
Tel: (061) 206840

*See www.hse.ie for further details on
adoption information and tracing
services and a list of former agency
records each one holds.*

