



ÚDARÁS UCHTÁLA na hÉIREANN
THE ADOPTION AUTHORITY of IRELAND

Business Plan 2019

**Adoption Authority of Ireland
Business Plan 2019**

Introduction

The Business Plan for 2019 sets out the key actions that enable the Adoption Authority of Ireland to deliver on its strategic objectives for 2019-2021.

The Annual Business Plans are designed to focus on the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan by identifying tasks to be completed throughout the year. The business plan is reviewed periodically and updated as required. Business Plan reviews and updates are submitted to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs on a quarterly basis in compliance with the AAI's Performance Delivery Agreement with the Department.

**Patricia Carey
Chief Executive Officer**

Strategic Goals set out in the Adoption Authority Corporate Plan 2019 – 2021

Goal 1

“To ensure that the best interests of the child are paramount and the voice of the child is heard and responded to in a meaningful manner throughout the adoption process.”

Goal 2

“To ensure all relevant parties to the adoption process are heard and their respective rights are balanced appropriately.”

Goal 3

“To achieve the highest standard in the regulation and operation of adoption services in Ireland.”

Goal 4

“To apply informed and balanced decision-making in adoption services, in accordance with national and international law and evidence-based best practice.”

Goal 5

“To inform adoption policy and service delivery by reason of a practical understanding of the operations of the legislation through the provision of a comprehensive information, research and communications framework.”

Goal 6

“To plan and implement the changes required in organisation policies and operational procedures in line with emerging legislative changes.”

Goal 7

“To be proactive and responsive to change and maintain an efficient, competent, accountable and learning organisation.”

Goal 1:

“To ensure that the best interests of the child are paramount and the voice of the child is heard and responded to in a meaningful manner throughout the adoption process.”

Tasks	Actions	Date	Unit/Person(s) responsible	KPIs / Outputs	Resources	Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One
The Authority’s procedures and policies ensure that all adoption orders incorporate the views of the child giving due weight having regard to the age and maturity of the child	All Applications will include a written report detailing the consultation undertaken with the child	Ongoing	Board and Executive	All applications that proceed to adoption order have a report of child consultation	General	1.1
The Authority will facilitate all requests from a child to be heard by the Board during the adoption process	All requests by the Child to be heard by the Board will be acknowledged, notified to the Board and the hearing will be scheduled for the next sitting of the Board	As required	Board and Executive	All requests for a hearing before the Board are facilitated	General	1.2
To ensure the Authority provides sufficient and appropriate information to enable the child to make a free and informed decision regarding the adoption.	Ensure all relevant information is provided to the child and any correspondence is responded to in a timely fashion	As required	Board and Executive	All relevant information is provided to children and families directly as part of their adoption application.	General	1.3
Liaise with Tusla and other relevant public bodies in ensuring consistency in practice when hearing the voice of the child.	Ensure ongoing and meaningful engagement with Tusla and relevant public bodies	Ongoing	Board and Executive	Consistent high standards are maintained in hearing the voice of the child	General	1.4

Tasks	Actions	Date	Unit/Person(s) responsible	KPIs / Outputs	Resources	Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One
Ongoing engagement with the Department and Minister in ensuring the voice of the child is given sufficient consideration in all adoption proceedings.	Support the development of any regulations made under Section 19 of the Adoption (Amendment) Act 2017	Ongoing	Board and CEO	Full compliance with Section 19 of the Adoption (Amendment) Act 2017	General	1.5

Goal 2

“To ensure all relevant parties to the adoption process are heard and their respective rights are balanced appropriately.”

Tasks	Actions	Date	Unit/Person(s) responsible	KPIs / Outputs	Resources	Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One
Ensure that all relevant parties (the child; applicants; mother of the child; father of the child; relevant non-guardians; guardians; person having charge or control over the child) are fully informed of their right to be heard.	Confirmation received from Tusla that all parties have been offered a hearing	Ongoing	Executive	All parties are aware of their right to be heard before the Board	General	2.1
Facilitate requests to be heard from any of the above relevant parties.	All requests to be heard by the Board will be acknowledged, notified to the Board and the hearing will be scheduled for the next sitting of the Board	As required	Board and Executive	All requests for a hearing before the Board are facilitated and scheduled	General	2.2
The Authority’s procedures and policies ensure that all adoption orders incorporate the views of all relevant parties.	Documentation on file setting out the views of all relevant parties	Ongoing	Board and Executive	All relevant parties views are considered and recorded.	General	2.3
Ensure the Authority provides sufficient and clear information to enable all relevant parties to make a free and informed decision to engage in the adoption process.	Receive feedback from relevant parties as to whether they felt they were adequately informed to enable them to make decisions	Ongoing	Board and Executive	Consistent high standards are maintained in hearing the voice of the child	General	2.4

Goal 3

“To achieve the highest standard in the regulation and operation of adoption services in Ireland.”

Tasks	Actions	Date	Unit/Person(s) responsible	KPIs / Outputs	Resources	Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One
To support and oversee the development of comprehensive, high quality and integrated adoption services with our key statutory and non-statutory partners.	Ensure the highest standards of documentation, reports and engagement with Applicants	Month 1-12	Board and Executive	Adoption Orders made in a timely manner	General	3.1
To engage effectively with service users and their advocates, service providers, policy makers and government to bring about continuous quality improvements in our adoption services.	Timely scheduling of Meetings Speedy response time to meeting requests	Month 1-12	Executive	Adherence to planned schedule of meetings / consultations. Timely response to unscheduled meeting requests.	General	3.2
Maintain active oversight of all accredited agencies, including reaccreditation and registration against approved regulations	Number of inspections carried out. Regular Reporting to the Board. Regular scheduled engagements with various accredited agencies	Month 1-12	Board and Executive	Statutory Reports filed on time	General	3.3

Goal 4

“To apply informed and balanced decision-making in adoption services, in accordance with national and international law and evidence-based best practice.”

Tasks	Actions	Date	Unit/Person(s) responsible	KPIs / Outputs	Resources	Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One
Make informed and timely decisions regarding: A) the granting of declarations of eligibility and suitability to adopt; B) granting of adoption orders; C) the recognition of intercountry adoption orders and Gender Recognition orders; D) Article 17 referrals	A) Speedy turnaround times from application to decision. B) All adoption applications processed fully before age 18. C) Routine and non-routine processing of applications. D) Timely Processing of referrals	Ongoing	Board	A) Turnaround time of 6 weeks. B) Before age 18. C) Two weeks for routine and 8 weeks for non-routine. D) One week	General	4.1
Ongoing engagement with the Department and Minister on all adoption related matters.	Timely response to Departmental requests.	Ongoing	Board and CEO	Full and constructive engagement with Dept. and Minister on all relevant matters	General	4.2
Maintain all statutory and non-statutory Registers in line with agreed requirements.	Timely updating of all registers. Timely response to updates and corrections to records.	Ongoing	Executive	Registers are up-to-date and accurate	General	4.3
Make informed and timely decisions regarding the release of personal sensitive information to adult adoptees and birth parents	Turnaround time on routine applications.	Ongoing	Board and Executive	Non-routine Applications to next appropriate Board	General	4.4

Tasks	Actions	Date	Unit/Person(s) responsible	KPIs / Outputs	Resources	Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One
	<i>Release of identifying information.</i> Time to bring non-routine applications to Board.	Ongoing		meeting. Routine Applications 1-2 weeks.		
Maintain constructive relationships with all partners and develop national and international relationships that promote the highest possible standards in adoption and adoption related services.	Schedule of engagements. Response time to requests. Visit programme and travel plan. Hosting of delegates from sending countries and other Central Authorities.	Months 1 - 12	Executive	Quarterly teleconference with English speaking Central Authorities. Adherence to visits schedule.	Budget Allocation of €62,000 for International Travel and Subsistence and hosting of delegates visiting Ireland where required	4.5

Goal 5

“To inform adoption policy and service delivery by reason of a practical understanding of the operations of the legislation through the provision of a comprehensive information, research and communications framework.”

Tasks	Actions	Date	Unit/Person(s) responsible	KPIs / Outputs	Resources	Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One
Engage proactively and communicate effectively with all stakeholders	Regular scheduling of meetings with stakeholders. Continuing Intelligence gathering and reporting.	Ongoing	Executive	Regular engagements with stakeholders. Timely response to stakeholder issues.	General	5.1
Website to be the prime source of information for all stakeholders and the public at large.	Regularity of website review. Monitoring of number of website visits. Activity Reports.	To be completed by month 6	Executive	Quarterly reviews of website. Positive feedback	€17,000 allocated for the translation of website content into Irish and €20,000 allocated for the upgrade and development of the website in Q1 & Q2	5.2
Undertake and promote research opportunities and research capacity.	Development of Research strategy.	Months 1 - 6	Board and Executive	Research Officer in place. Research strategy identified and operational.	Salary at AP Level in the payroll budget for 2019 €20,000 budgeted for initial set up of Research Strategy and function	5.3
Support Government Departments in the development of adoption related policy and legislation.	Positive engagement with the Department in the development of Adoption Policy and Legislation	Ongoing	Board and Executive	Timely response to all requests.	General	5.4

Tasks	Actions	Date	Unit/Person(s) responsible	KPIs / Outputs	Resources	Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One
Promote informed and considered analysis and debate on adoption issues	Hold a number of briefings, seminars and forums.	Q4	Board and Executive	3 Seminars and 4 fora per annum	€28,000 budgeted for the year to provide for conferences/seminars and fora	5.5

Goal 6

“To plan and implement the changes required in organisation policies and operational procedures in line with emerging legislative changes.”

Tasks	Actions	Date	Unit/Person(s) responsible	KPIs / Outputs	Resources	Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One
To plan and implement the changes required in organisation (including transfer of functions) and operational procedures in line with the Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill 2016	Development of project plan.	Awaiting Legislation	Board and Executive	Effective implementation of project plan	€330,000 set aside in budget for implementation of plans subject to progress of legislation	6.1
Be prepared to adapt to a) DAHR and Surrogacy legislation b) any other relevant legislation	Implementation Plan	Awaiting Legislation	Executive	Effective roll-out of implementation plan.	General	6.2

Goal 7

“To be proactive and responsive to change and maintain an efficient, competent, accountable and learning organisation.”

Tasks	Actions	Date	Unit/Person(s) responsible	KPIs / Outputs	Resources	Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One
Ensure full compliance with the 2016 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies	Financial Statements Annual Report Compliance Check External evaluation	Month 6	Board and Executive	Ensuring full Compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies	General	7.1
Collaborate with OPW in obtaining fit-for-purpose accommodation for the Adoption Authority.	Relocation Plan – The Adoption Authority must relocate by February 2021	Ongoing	Executive	Identification of a fit for purpose premises	General	7.2
Maintain robust Risk Management Framework.	Risk Register Review. Risk and Audit Committee ToR. RAC number of meetings. Risk Heat Map. Internal Audit Reports. External Risk Evaluation.	Month 6	Executive	4 meetings per annum for RAC. External evaluation once every 3 years. No open recommendations from Internal Audit Reports.	General	7.3
Maintain highest standards in data confidentiality and data integrity and compliance with GDPR.	Data Protection Policy. Breach Reporting Policy.	Ongoing	Board and Executive	Strict compliance with all Data policies.	General	7.4
Authority to maintain a learning environment where competencies and training requirements are fully met.	Training needs reports. PMDS.	Ongoing	Board and Executive	Competency and skill gaps are met. Adherence to training policy.	€40,000 is set aside for Training and Development costs and CPD Fees	7.5
Maintain Board and Executive	HR staff strategy plan for	Ongoing	Board and		General	7.6

Tasks	Actions	Date	Unit/Person(s) responsible	KPIs / Outputs	Resources	Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One
Succession Plan	succession and expansion (as required). Anticipate Board vacancies and provide competency requirements to Dept.		Executive	No gaps between staff leaving and new appointments. Ensure there are no competency gaps.		
Ensure full value for money in discharge of allocated resources	Internal Audits. Procurement and relevant financial and HR policies. Budget Plan and report to Board	Month 7	Board and Executive	Compliance with DPER guidelines. Adherence to procurement and financial policies. Operating within budget.	General	7.7
Full implementation of Corporate Plan	Report to Department on Corporate Plan and annual Business Plan. Report to Board on quarterly basis. Oversight Agreement. Task Planner and % level of achievement against each objective.	Quarterly	Board and Executive	Corporate Plan implemented in full, in line with agreed objectives. Business Plan fully aligned to Corporate Plan.	General	7.8