



ÚDARÁS UCHTÁLA na hÉIREANN  
THE ADOPTION AUTHORITY of IRELAND

# Business Plan 2020

## **Adoption Authority of Ireland**

### **Business Plan 2020**

#### **Introduction**

The Business Plan for 2020 sets out the key actions that enable the Adoption Authority of Ireland to deliver on its strategic objectives for 2020.

The business planning process takes place annually in the Adoption Authority of Ireland. This process enables us to plan and deliver on the strategic objectives set out in our Corporate Plan 2019-2021. Through business planning each unit identifies key actions that as an Authority enables us to deliver on our strategic objectives.

There are currently 29 staff employed by the Adoption Authority, plus two outsourced functions (Legal Advisor and Finance Function).

**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.”*

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Unit/Person(s) responsible</b>	<b>KPIs / Outputs</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One</b>
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 – monthly before each matter comes before the Board and is then reviewed by the Board	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, promptly  Board will be notified 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  Monitor feedback from the children and their families	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 DCYA in finalising this project	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.”*

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Unit/Person(s) responsible</b>	<b>KPIs / Outputs</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One</b>
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 relevant information is provided to the relevant parties in a timely manner	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 promptly. The Board is notified 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
Seek to progress the provision of Legal Aid support for Birth Parents in the adoption process	Continued engagement with Dept of Justice/DCYA/Legal Aid Board	Ongoing	Board/CEO	Birth parents will have service provided to them where required in the adoption process	General	2.2
The Authority’s procedures and policies ensure that all adoption orders incorporate the views of all relevant parties	Respective documentation on file setting out the views of all relevant parties. All cases reviewed before coming before the Board for decision.	Ongoing	Board and Executive	In all cases evidence on file of engagement and or attempts to engage with all relevant parties. Board can make decision in timely manner.	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	All relevant information is provided to all relevant parties directly as part of their hearing application	General	2.4

**Goal 3**

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

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Unit/Person(s) responsible</b>	<b>KPIs / Outputs</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One</b>
To support and oversee the development of comprehensive, high quality and integrated adoption services with our key statutory and non-statutory partners.	<p>Ensure accuracy of documentation and reports received. Review standards of documentation and reports received.</p> <p>Ensure accurate, comprehensive and timely submissions to court.</p>	Ongoing	Board and Executive	Reduced delays in processing of applications and decision making.	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.	<p>Timely scheduling of Meetings</p> <p>Speedy response time to meeting requests</p>	Ongoing	Executive	<p>Adherence to planned schedule of meetings / consultations.</p> <p>Timely response to unscheduled meeting requests.</p>	General	3.2
Ongoing engagement between AAI and Tusla on operational issues, to reflect the Minister's comments.	Prepare Stakeholder Mapping	Q2	Head of Compliance/Corporate Services	Mapping report scoped and produced		3.2.1
	Stakeholder Survey	Q4	Head of Compliance /Corporate Services	Survey designed and pilot testing complete		3.2.4
Maintain active oversight of all accredited agencies, including reaccreditation and registration against approved regulations	<p>Inspections carried out.</p> <p>Regular Reporting to the Board.</p> <p>Regular scheduled engagements with various accredited agencies</p>	Ongoing	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.”*

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Unit/Person(s) responsible</b>	<b>KPIs / Outputs</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One</b>
<p>Make informed and timely decisions regarding:</p> <p>A) the granting of declarations of eligibility and suitability to adopt;            B) the making of adoption orders;            C) the recognition of intercountry adoption orders;            D) Article 17 referrals</p>	<p>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</p>	Ongoing	Board	<p>A) Turnaround time of 6 weeks.            B) Before age 18.            C) Two weeks for routine and 8 weeks for non-routine.            D) One week</p>	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.	<p>Timely updating of all registers.            Timely response to updates and corrections to records.</p>	Ongoing	Executive Q2	Registers are up-to-date and accurate	General	4.3
Develop Integrated Document and Database Management System	Digitise all adoption files	Q3/Q4	Executive	DocuWare rolled out across all units. Migrate all registers and documents to integrated Document Management System		4.3.5
Risk Management Review to RAC - Quarterly	Consult Staff, Executive, RAC and Board	Ongoing	Head of Compliance and Executive	Risk Registers Produced		4.3.6

Tasks	Actions	Date	Unit/Person(s) responsible	KPIs / Outputs	Resources	Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One
<p>Make informed and timely decisions regarding the release of personal sensitive information to adult adoptees and birth parents.</p>	<p>Turnaround time on routine applications. <i>Release of identifying information.</i> Time to bring non-routine applications to Board.</p>	<p>Ongoing  Ongoing</p>	<p>Board and Executive</p>	<p>Routine Applications 1-2 weeks.  Non-routine Applications to next appropriate Board meeting.</p>	<p>General</p>	<p>4.4</p>
<p>Maintain constructive relationships with all partners and develop national and international relationships that promote the highest possible standards in adoption and adoption related services.</p>	<p>Schedule of engagements. Response time to requests. Visit programme and travel plan. Hosting of delegates from sending countries and other Central Authorities.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Executive</p>	<p>Quarterly teleconference with English speaking Central Authorities.  Adherence to visits schedule.</p>	<p>General</p>	<p>4.5</p>

**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.”*

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Unit/Person(s) responsible</b>	<b>KPIs / Outputs</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One</b>
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. Update website to ensure timely release of all new information	Website reviewed regularly. Produce Activity Reports.	Ongoing	Executive	Positive feedback Monthly monitoring report to Board	General	5.2 5.2.1
Undertake and promote research opportunities and research capacity	Develop research strategy Meetings of Research Advisory Committee	Q1 Q1/Q2/ Q3/Q4	Research Officer/Board and Executive	Research published	General	5.3
Support Government Departments in the development of adoption related policy and legislation Promote informed and considered analysis and debate on adoption issues	Speedy turnaround time to Department requests Hold briefings and seminars and forums. Respond to media requests	Ongoing Ongoing	Board and Executive Board and Executive	Timely response to all requests. 3 Seminars 4 Social work Fora 1 Annual conference	General General	5.4 5.5

**Goal 6**

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

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Unit/Person(s) responsible</b>	<b>KPIs / Outputs</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One</b>
<p>To plan and implement the changes required in organisation (including transfer of functions) and operational procedures in line with the proposed Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NACPR on statutory basis</li> <li>• Safeguarding of records</li> <li>• Tracing for purpose of reunion/contact</li> </ul>	<p>Development of project plan (inc. proposed records working group).</p> <p>Development of Project plan to include ICT infrastructure, staffing, operational policies and procedures</p> <p>Continued communication with DCYA to inform the legislation</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing and subject to finalisation of legislation</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Board and Executive</p> <p>Board and Executive</p>	<p>Effective implementation of project plan</p> <p>Effective implementation of project plan</p>	<p>General</p>	<p>6.1</p>
<p>Be prepared to adapt to a) DAHR and Surrogacy legislation b) any other relevant legislation</p>	<p>Develop and action an implementation plan</p> <p>Cases stated on surrogacy</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Executive</p>	<p>Effective roll-out of implementation plan contingent on legislation.</p>	<p>General</p>	<p>6.2</p>

**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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial Statements</li> <li>Annual Report</li> <li>Compliance Check</li> <li>External evaluation</li> </ul>	Ongoing Q2	Board and Executive	Ensuring full Compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies External evaluation Report	General	7.1
Collaborate with OPW in obtaining fit-for-purpose accommodation for the Adoption Authority	Relocation Plan	Ongoing	Executive	Relocation with minimal disruptions to services. Compliance with plan	General	7.2
Maintain robust Risk Management Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk Register Review on a quarterly basis</li> <li>3-year Internal Audit Plan produced</li> <li>Review Risk and Audit Committee ToRs</li> <li>Internal Audit Reports</li> <li>External Risk Evaluation</li> </ul>	Ongoing Q1 Q2 Q1 & Q3 Q2	Executive	4 meetings per annum for RAC External evaluation report No open recommendations from Internal Audit Reports	General	7.3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7.3.1</li> <li>7.3.2</li> <li>7.3.3</li> <li>7.3.4</li> <li>7.3.5</li> </ul>
Maintain highest standards in data confidentiality and data integrity and compliance with GDPR	<p>Ensure all appropriate policies are reviewed and in place</p> <p>IT policy to be drafted, agreed and implemented</p> <p>Data Protection Policy and Breach Reporting Policy</p>	Ongoing	Board and Executive  Data Protection Officer	Dates for review of each policy  Dates for publication of outstanding policies	General	7.4

Tasks	Actions	Date	Unit/Person(s) responsible	KPIs / Outputs	Resources	Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One
Authority to maintain a learning environment where competencies and training requirements are fully met	<p>Ensure Personal Performance Plans are completed</p> <p>Training needs report drafted based on PPP and strategy</p> <p>Training programme in place</p> <p>Interim and annual reviews carried out</p>	<p>Q1</p> <p>Q1</p> <p>Q1</p> <p>Q2 &amp; Q4</p>	Head of HR/ Senior Management Team	Competency and skill gaps are met.	General	7.5
Maintain Board and Executive Succession Plan	<p>Anticipate Board vacancies and provide competency requirements to Dept.</p> <p>Prepare Board Induction Plan</p> <p>Staff strategy plan for succession and expansion (as required).</p>	<p>Jan</p> <p>Q2/Q3</p> <p>Q1</p>	<p>Board and Executive</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>Head of HR/ Senior Management Team</p>	<p>No gaps in membership/ no competency gaps</p> <p>No delays in functioning of new Board in Nov</p> <p>No extended vacancies and no loss of corporate knowledge</p> <p>Staff complement meets needs of changing organisation</p>	General	7.6
The implementation of an electronic-based system for the publication and distribution of the Board and Sub-Committee Pack material to AAI Board Members	Implement electronic Board paper system	Q3/Q4	Executive/Corporate Services	Fully functioning electronic system to enable seamless processing of documents	General	
Ensure full value for money in discharge of allocated resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Audits</li> <li>• Variance Analysis Reports sent to Department monthly</li> <li>• Procurement and relevant financial and HR policies</li> <li>• Budget plan and report to Board</li> <li>• Procurement plan</li> <li>• Contracts register</li> </ul>	<p>Q1 &amp; Q3</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Q1</p>	Board and Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with DPER guidelines</li> <li>• Adherence to procurement and financial policies</li> <li>• Operating within budget</li> <li>• Procurement Plan Produced</li> <li>• Contract Register produced and updated</li> </ul>	General	7.7

Tasks	Actions	Date	Unit/Person(s) responsible	KPIs / Outputs	Resources	Corporate Plan Reference – Appendix One
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.	Ongoing	Board and Executive	Corporate Plan implemented in full, in line with agreed objectives  Business Plan fully aligned to Corporate Plan	General	7.8