



ÚDARÁS UCHTÁLA na hÉIREANN
THE ADOPTION AUTHORITY of IRELAND

Research/family origins following a private/illegal adoption

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Historical Context

Adoption in Ireland

- ▶ 1952 – first Adoption Act in Ireland
- ▶ 48,000 domestic adoptions since 1952
- ▶ Pre-1952
 - Informal placements
 - Boarded out
- ▶ 1940s–1970s – children sent to another country for adoption



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Historical Context

Adoption in Ireland

- ▶ Legacy of Mother & Baby Homes.
- ▶ Tuam discovery – 796 babies' bodies at old site of Mother & Baby Home.
- ▶ Commission of Inquiry due to report in 2020.
- ▶ No legislative basis for State to provide information to parties to adoption.
 - Ireland has a non-legislative provision of Information & Tracing
- ▶ Constitutional protection of right to privacy.



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▶ Illegal birth registration

- Child's birth is falsely registered to a family not biologically related to the child and no Adoption Order is sought or required as the child has an original birth certificate showing him as the birth child of the 'adopters'.

▶ Incorrect birth registration

- Child's birth is correctly registered but the birth mother's name is incorrect; or occasionally an incorrect father's name is on the certificate. The original birth certificate exists for the child albeit with incorrect names by the birth mother.

▶ Private/irregular placement

- Birth mother personally placed her child directly with prospective adopters, without the involvement of an agency.



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Search

- Who searches
- Methods

Trace

- Social Work trace
- Own private tracing

Information

- Identifying information
- Non-identifying information

Reunion

- Risks – nervous shock
- Successes
- Use of DNA



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- ▶ National Adoption Contact Preference Register (NACPR)
 - 14,000 applicants since 2015
 - 70% adoptees
 - 30% birth relatives
- ▶ General Registry Office (births/marriages/deaths)
- ▶ Newspapers – specific ads/general appeals
- ▶ Through Government Welfare Payment Dept.
- ▶ Land Registry
- ▶ Church-based records
- ▶ Probate and wills
- ▶ Court services records
- ▶ Social media



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Challenges

No legislation
Privacy in Constitution
Secrecy surrounding adoption in Ireland (historical)

Opportunities

Draft Information & Tracing legislation in Irish parliament
New openness in Irish society for rights to identity

New Initiatives

DNA
Use of social media
Linking to Irish diaspora



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The future/ considerations

- ▶ Reflection on new ways to search through adoption agencies and State providers
- ▶ Looking at ways to search for intercountry adopted children's origins
- ▶ Identity rights v nervous shock caused by informing persons they were adopted
- ▶ Research on tracing and outcomes

▶ *Thank you*