



**Appointment of a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Member to the Board of the
Adoption Authority of Ireland**

Closing Date: 15:00 on Friday 28th August 2020

**State Boards Division
Public Appointments Service
Chapter House, 26 – 30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1**

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stateboards.ie operates under the auspices of the Public Appointments Service and is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

The Public Appointments Service (PAS), established under statute in 2004, provides an independent shared service in recruitment, assessment and selection to organisations across the Civil and Public Services. On 30 September 2014, the Government decided that the PAS should also be given responsibility for putting in place an open, accessible, rigorous and transparent system to support Ministers in making appointments to State Boards. Our dedicated website, www.stateboards.ie, is the channel through which the PAS advertises vacancies on State Boards. It is also the means through which accomplished, experienced and qualified people, including people who might not previously have been identified as available for appointment, can then apply to be considered for particular vacancies.

Membership of State Boards

High standards of corporate governance in all State Agencies, whether in the commercial or non-commercial sphere, are critical to ensuring a positive contribution to the State's overall social and economic development.

Members of State Boards are appointed to act on behalf of the citizen to oversee the running of the affairs of state bodies. State bodies must serve the interests of the taxpayer, pursue value for money in their endeavours (including managing risk appropriately), and act transparently as public entities. Members of State Boards, and the relevant management team, are accountable for the proper management of the organisation.

Board members should act on a fully informed basis, in good faith, with due diligence and care, and in the best interest of the State body, subject to the objectives set by Government. In that regard and in accordance with 13.2 of the Guidelines on Appointments to State Boards, "it is advisable that no member of a State Board should serve more than two full terms of appointment or should hold appointments to more than two State Boards."

The [Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016](#) (the Code) provides a framework for the application of best practice in corporate governance by both commercial and non-commercial State bodies.

In order to be an effective contributor on a State Board it is recommended that members should:

- bring independent and objective scrutiny to the oversight of the organisation;
- be prepared to be challenging when necessary while being supportive to the delivery of organisational strategy and objectives;
- be equipped to offer considered advice on the basis of sound judgement and experience;
- be prepared to make a time commitment to their work commensurate with their role.

Appointment of a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Member to the Board of the Adoption Authority of Ireland

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Location: | Dublin |
| Number of Vacancies: | 3 |
| Remuneration: | <p>€56,516 – Chairperson (Due to the Quasi-Judicial nature of the Board, the Chairperson’s stipend has been set at a portion of the rate of pay of a District Court Judge).</p> <p>€7,695 – Deputy Chairperson & Ordinary Member. (It should be noted that in line with the ‘One Person One Salary’ principle, no public servant will be entitled to receive remuneration in the form of board fees, save for situations that are statutorily provided for e.g. Worker Directors). Travel and subsistence is payable at appropriate Civil Service rates.</p> |
| Time Requirements: | <p>Chairperson: 2 days per week.</p> <p>Deputy Chairperson & Ordinary Member: 24 full day meetings per year. Additional time for attendance at committee meetings and preparatory time of approximately 17 days. Total time requirement of 41 days per year.</p> |

Candidates’ attention is also drawn to the provisions of the Code in relation to Audit and Risk Committee membership which can be found [here](#).

1. Background

The Adoption Authority of Ireland (AAI) is an independent body established on 1 November 2010 under the Adoption Act 2010. The Authority has responsibility for the direct operational implementation of legislation and Government policy relating to adoption. It has a quasi-judicial role and is independent in its decision-making functions.

The Authority’s mission statement is: “To ensure the provision of the highest possible standards of adoption related services, throughout the lifelong adoption process, with the best interest of children as the first and paramount objective”

2. Functions of the Board

The main function of the Board of the Authority is to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Adoption Act 2010, the Adoption (Amendment) Act 2017 and the 1993 Hague Convention in effecting adoptions and in providing adoption services.

The functions of the Board are set out in section 96 of the 2010 Act as follows:

- Ensuring the performance of the functions in relation to adoption assigned to the Board under the Adoption Act 2010 and the Adoption (Amendment) Act 2017;
- Ensuring the Authority discharges its role as a Central Authority under the 1993 Hague Convention;
- Ensuring the provision of general advice to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs about adoption matters;

- Ensuring that research projects and activities relating to adoption services are undertaken;
- Ensuring the Authority compiles statistical and other records as to the proper planning, development and provision of adoption services;
- Ensuring the maintenance of the register of accredited bodies;
- Ensuring the maintenance of the register of intercountry adoptions
- Attending hearings and applications for adoption orders.
- Ensuring appropriate corporate governance of the AAI
- Other duties as required by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs – for example in 2018 the AAI was asked to conduct a review of files as part of a sampling review into illegal birth registrations.

Further details can be found at <https://www.aai.gov.ie/en/>.

Current membership of the Board:

| Name | First Appointed | Reappointed | Expiry Date | Position type | Basis of appointment |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Anne O'Flaherty | 11/09/2013 | 01/11/2015 | 31/10/2020 | Board Member | PAS Process |
| Geoffrey Shannon (Dr.) | 01/11/2010 | 01/11/2015 | 31/10/2020 | Chair | PAS Process |
| Helen Buckley (Dr.) | 01/11/2015 | | 31/10/2020 | Board Member | PAS Process |
| Margo Anglim (Dr.) | 26/10/2017 | | 31/10/2020 | Board Member | PAS Process |
| Orlaith Traynor | 01/11/2015 | | 31/10/2020 | Deputy Chair | PAS Process |
| Patrick McMahon | 01/11/2015 | | 31/10/2020 | Board Member | PAS Process |
| Paul Harrison | 01/11/2015 | | 31/10/2020 | Board Member | PAS Process |

3. Person Specification

The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs¹ invites applications from suitably qualified candidates to fill 3 vacancies on the Board of the Adoption Authority of Ireland.

Candidate's attention is drawn to the general details of the role of Chairperson as set out on page 19 of the Code which can be found [here](#). The Principle states:-

- The Chairperson is responsible for leadership of the Board and ensuring its effectiveness on all aspects of its role.
- The Chairperson should display high standards of integrity and probity and set expectations regarding culture, values, and behaviours for the State body and for the tone of discussions at Board level.

¹ Pending change of Ministerial title.

Statutory Requirements

Per the Adoption Act 2010, section 98:

A person is not eligible for appointment as chairperson or deputy chairperson unless the person:

- (a) is or was, at any time during the 2 years immediately before the appointment, a Judge of the Supreme Court, the High Court, the Circuit Court or the District Court
- or**
- (b) is of not less than 10 years standing as a barrister or solicitor.

Chairperson

In addition to the requirements set out in the Adoption Act 2010 (above) applicants for this role must demonstrate in their application evidence, at an appropriately senior level, of: -

- In depth knowledge and experience in Irish and International Adoption and Child Law
- Strong communications and interpersonal skills, with an ability to work with key stakeholders and develop and maintain a strong relationship between the board and the executive
- Independence of thought, possessing sound judgement
- A strong commitment to public service
- Proven strategic leadership capability and change management experience
- Experience of Chairing a Board or previous Board Membership.

Desirable

- Corporate Governance experience and expertise
- Relevant management experience
- Experience in a relevant regulatory environment
- Media skills/experience
- Risk management experience.

Deputy Chairperson

In addition to the requirements set out in the Adoption Act 2010 (above) applicants for this role must demonstrate in their application evidence, at an appropriately senior level of: -

- In depth knowledge/experience in Irish and International Adoption and Child Law
- Demonstrable experience of challenging opinion where appropriate/necessary
- A strong commitment to public service
- Experience of Board Membership.

Desirable

- Corporate Governance experience and expertise
- Relevant management experience
- Experience in a relevant regulatory environment
- Media skills/experience
- Risk management

Ordinary Member

Candidate's attention is drawn to the provisions of the Code in relation to the role of a Board member, where the principle states: -

- Each State body should be headed by an effective Board which is collectively responsible for the long-term sustainability of the body.
- Non-executive Board members should bring an independent judgement to bear on issues of strategy, performance resources, key appointments and standard of conduct.

Details on the role of Board Members can be found in Section 3 of the Code which can be found [here](#).

Essential

Per the Section 98 of the Adoption Act 2010, applicants for this role must demonstrate in their application evidence, at an appropriately senior level of appropriate training in psychology, and:-

- Knowledge and experience of child protection and child welfare issues
- Relevant management/professional experience.

Desirable

- Knowledge/experience of Irish and intercountry adoption
- Corporate governance
- Experience of board membership
- Experience in a relevant regulatory environment
- Risk management
- Experience of psychology in practice

The Minister shall have regard to the desirability for gender balance on the Board as the Minister considers appropriate and determines from time to time when making appointments.

All those appointed as members of the Adoption Authority will be garda vetted.

In order to qualify for appointment a person must not have any legal impediment or conflicts of interest likely to interfere with his/her ability to assume the role of Chairperson of the Board. Please give careful consideration to the possibility of any potential conflict of interest that may exist and address this in your cover letter. The Assessment Panel may decide, based on the perceived level of conflict, not to forward your name for consideration.

Restrictions on Eligibility

[Section 99 of the Adoption Act 2010](#), sets out where a person is not eligible for appointment as a member of the board or a committee of the Authority:

- 99.(1) A person is not eligible for appointment as a member of the Authority or of a committee of the Authority, if the person is:
- (a) a member of either House of the Oireachtas or of the European Parliament,
 - (b) regarded, pursuant to section 19 of the European Parliament Elections Act 1997, as having been elected to the European Parliament to fill a vacancy, or
 - (c) a member of a local authority.
- (2) An appointed member of the Authority or a member of a committee of the Authority immediately ceases to hold office on:
- (a) being nominated as a member of Seanad Éireann,
 - (b) being elected as a member of either House of the Oireachtas or of the European Parliament,
 - (c) being regarded, pursuant to section 19 of the European Parliament Elections Act 1997, as having been elected to the European Parliament to fill a vacancy, or
 - (d) becoming a member of a local authority.

4. Term of Appointment

Appointments to the Board will be for an initial period of 5 years with an option to extend the term of engagement for a second term subject to:

- The membership of any member of the Board may be terminated by the Minister at any time, on the basis of reasons to be stated by the Minister.
- A member of the Board may resign his or her membership of the Board by notice in writing sent or given to the Minister, and the resignation shall take effect on the day on which the Minister receives the notice.
- Members of the Board shall, subject to the provisions of this Schedule, hold office upon such terms and conditions as the Minister may, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, from time to time determine.
- The roles and responsibilities of Board Members are described in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 which is available here [Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies](#).
- A board member shall cease to be a member of the board if he or she is nominated as a member of Seanad Éireann, is elected as a member of either House of the Oireachtas or as a representative in the European Parliament, elected to the European Parliament, or becomes a member of a local authority.

5. Submitting your Application

Before submitting your application, please review the self-assessment questionnaire which can be found [here](#). This questionnaire is designed to help you in considering whether to submit an application- you are not required to submit the questionnaire as part of the application process.

Having considered the general suitability criteria for membership of a State Board, you should consider carefully how your background and experience fits with the specific appointment criteria set out in the Person Specification section in this booklet.

Your application should be made via the following link www.stateboards.ie together with your **Curriculum Vitae** and a **cover letter** (see Appendix 1 of this booklet for help with the online process).

IMPORTANT NOTE

Please take care when submitting your application. As the Assessment Panel will generally make its recommendation(s) based on consideration of the documentation which you submit, it is most important that you do the following:

1. *Ensure your Cover Letter (and supporting CV) clearly specifies how your particular background and experience meets the requirements of the Authority position(s) specified in this booklet, and*
2. *That you fully answer any supplementary questions which are presented to you as part of our online application process.*

This will help ensure that the Assessment Panel is as informed as possible as to the basis for your candidature and why you believe you are a person who could potentially be appointed to this State Board. **Please only include information that is directly relevant to the particular role for which you are applying.**

If you have any questions regarding the application process please email info@stateboards.ie.

5. Assessment Process

An Assessment Panel (the "Panel") will be convened by PAS to consider and assess the applications received by PAS. The Panel will:

- review and discuss the applications received against the specific appointment criteria for the role, as advertised in this Information Booklet;
- assess potential candidates further once they meet the specified appointment criteria by undertaking any or all of the following steps:
 - Consideration of the written applications; and/or
 - Meeting/conference call; and/or
 - Referee checks; and/or
 - Any other selection or verification method deemed appropriate (this may include PAS requiring statutory declarations from shortlisted applicants as to the bona fides of the qualifications and experience contained in their applications).
- arrive at a shortlist of the most suitably qualified candidates (based on the information provided by the candidate) to be sent forward for consideration by the Minister.

Please note that the Public Appointments Service will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by candidates as part of our selection process.

6. Confidentiality

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts, 2014, applications will be treated in strict confidence. All enquires, applications and all aspects of the proceedings are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside those directly involved in that aspect of the process.

Certain items of information, not specific to any individual, are extracted from computer records for general statistical purposes.

7. Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 2018 provides that the processing of personal data shall be lawful where such processing is necessary for the performance of a statutory function of a controller. PAS is mandated by statute under the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act, 2004 to act as the centralised assessment and selection body for the civil service and to carry out all the procedures necessary to undertake the recruitment, assessment and selection of suitable candidates for appointment. By submitting your personal data (including your name, address, contact details and details of your education and work history contained in your curriculum vitae and cover letter) via publicjobs.ie, you acknowledge that such data may be used by the Public Appointments Service and disclosed to and used by client departments, in connection with its statutory roles to assist and advise relevant Ministers in relation to appointments to the boards of State bodies. The information contained in your publicjobs profile is yours to manage, amend, update or delete as appropriate. For more detailed information on our Data Protection Policy, please see our [Code of Practice for the Protection of Personal Data in the Public Appointments Service](#).

If your application is assessed and you are considered to be suitable for appointment your c.v. and cover letter (and any additional supplementary information requested as part of the application process), will be forwarded to the State Board Liaison Officer in the relevant Department. Once it obtains your personal data, the Department will act as data controller of such data and will retain it for up to one year following the appointment/s. Unless you request the withdrawal of your application such data may be used in considering your suitability for other similar vacancies/roles that arise for a period of up to one year for this Board.

APPENDIX 1

Submitting your application:

In order to submit your application, you should take the following steps:

1. Go to www.stateboards.ie.
2. On the bar at the top of the page click on "Available Appointments".
3. This brings you to a page with all our advertised vacancies. Select whichever position you would like to apply for (you are welcome to apply for more than one position if you wish).
4. On the relevant page please click on the "apply for position" button at the bottom of the page
5. This will bring you to a page on www.publicjobs.ie and, if you already have a publicjobs.ie account, will prompt you for your username and password. If you do not have an account you will be asked to create one.
6. Once you input your details you will be brought to a page where there is a prompt in the middle of the page which says "apply here". Click on the link to the online application form beside it.
7. A form will appear on your screen, some of the text boxes will be populated with information from your publicjobs.ie profile (Name, address etc.). You will need to complete the rest of the fields and enter your name and the date at the bottom of the form. Click on "continue".
8. You will then be brought to a screen where you should upload your CV and Cover Letter. These are required documents and your application cannot be processed without them. Once you have selected these and uploaded them, please click on the "submit" button at the bottom of the page.
9. You will receive an e-mail confirmation (to the address listed in your publicjobs.ie profile) to confirm that your application has been submitted.

You must confirm that you do not have any conflicts of interest or legal impediment which would be likely to interfere with your ability to play a full part on the Board. You must also confirm that you can make yourself available to attend meetings and to carry out the duties of a Board member.