



ÚDARÁS UCHTÁLA na hÉIREANN
THE ADOPTION AUTHORITY of IRELAND

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER
ADOPTION AUTHORITY OF IRELAND

The Adoption Authority of Ireland is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

ADOPTION AUTHORITY OF IRELAND
SHELBOURNE HOUSE, SHELBOURNE ROAD, DUBLIN 4
WWW.AAI.GOV.IE

TITLE OF POSITION: Principal Social Worker

REPORTING TO: Chief Executive Officer

OFFICE: Adoption Authority of Ireland

LOCATION: Dublin 4

The Adoption Authority is currently based in one location in Ballsbridge. Please note that as a designated essential service all AAI staff are working on site. In due course the Authority, or part of the Authority, may relocate to one or more sites and some staff will be relocated to the new site(s).

The Adoption Authority of Ireland is a statutory body established on 1 November 2010. The relevant legislation underpinning the Authority is the Adoption Act 2010. Further information on the Authority and the legislation is available on the website www.aai.gov.ie. All employees in the Adoption Authority are public servants.

The Authority is responsible for granting all domestic adoption orders and for granting all declarations of eligibility and suitability to prospective adopters in advance of their adopting abroad and in Ireland. The Adoption Authority of Ireland is responsible for registering and supervising all adoption service providers and for maintaining the Register of Accredited Bodies, which is the list of providers accredited by the Authority. The Authority maintains the Register of Intercountry Adoptions, (RICA) and Gender Recognition Register of Intercountry Adoptions (GRICA), in which details of inter-country adoptions are entered. The Authority also maintains the National Adoption Contact Preference Register (NACPR). For more details on the Authority please refer to our website at www.aai.gov.ie

Social workers are employed at the Adoption Authority to fulfil regulatory and research functions, as outlined in the Adoption Act 2010 in relation to domestic and intercountry adoption. Current functions provide opportunities to work in a wide range of areas including:

- Domestic adoption - reviewing all cases in relation to eligibility and suitability, and reviewing all placements made;
- Intercountry adoption - ensuring best practice in relation to the matching of children;
- Information & Tracing - providing information, support and mediation of parties matched through the National Adoption Contact Preference Register;
- Regulatory functions - accreditation, inspection and monitoring of accredited services;
- Research - working in conjunction with a full time researcher to deepen knowledge, promote learning and contribute to best practice;
- Working as part of a multi-disciplinary team including research, administration, legal and medical;
- Child protection duties in line with the Children First Act 2015 and Children First 2017;
- Professional development - professional development of the social work team, hosting of seminars and other fora for other stakeholders engaged in adoption throughout Ireland.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Management Team

The Principal Social Worker is a key member of the Senior Management Team and will be required to develop a strong relationship with the Management Team, clearly understanding their mission, challenges and initiatives. The Principal Social Worker will collaborate regularly with executive and senior level management regarding the development and administration of strategic services and actively contribute to the development and implementation of the Authority's objectives and strategies.

Management of Social Work Team

The Principal Social Worker will be responsible for leading the social work team, the team currently comprises two senior social work practitioners and three professionally qualified social workers. The Principal Social Worker has primary responsibility for the daily management of the work of the social work team which includes, allocation of work, performance management, induction and probationary processes, professional supervision of the team, CPD training, and management of the roster for the duty call line (public/crisis pregnancy queries etc.).

Other duties and responsibilities of the Principal Social Worker include but are not limited to the following:

Duties and responsibilities

- management of the social work services for the Authority including direct team management and ensuring that the social work service complies with relevant HR and other policies and procedures in the Authority;
- as part of the Senior Management Team play a key leadership role in planning, managing and implementation of the Authority's Corporate and Business Plans;
- ensuring that appropriate systems are in place to gather relevant information, providing reports and advice to the Board of the Authority and attending meetings of the Board of the Authority as required;
- keeping updated on current and impending legislation and perceived impact on practice;
- ensuring that the social work service makes the most efficient and effective use of the ICT systems and contributes to the development of ICT;
- leading and reporting on the application and inspection process for accredited agencies;
- reviewing, advising, reporting and making recommendations on social work practice and procedures as it relates to adoption;
- supervise professionally qualified staff and ensure compliance with relevant professional standards and all terms and conditions of employment;
- providing guidance on sensitive and complex cases in domestic and intercountry adoption applications;
- providing guidance on complex cases in the area of information and tracing;
- contributing to research projects and developments and sitting on research sub-committees of the Board;
- ensuring the implementation of Children First guidelines within the AAI;
- undertaking duties as assigned by the Chief Executive Officer.

REQUIREMENTS

Character

Each candidate must be of good character.

Health

Each candidate shall be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service.

Essential Attributes

The candidate shall:

- have a minimum of five year's relevant post qualification experience;
- Experience of team management. In your application, please outline role title(s), length of time in role and number of staff you were responsible for managing;
- on or before the closing date hold a recognised professional qualification in social work and be registered with CORU, registration with CORU must be maintained throughout the period of employment with the Adoption Authority;
- have formal experience of supervision of social work practice for at least three years;
- have experience of management in adoption, child and family or similar social service provision;
- have a demonstrably high level of report writing and presentation skills;
- have excellent management and leadership skills;
- have experience in service development and service delivery;
- have skills in the management of resources.

Desirable Attributes

The ideal candidate will also have

- knowledge/experience of research/audit in social services;
- demonstrable knowledge of Irish and international adoption legislation and best practice in adoption and child protection;
- familiarity with General Data Protection Regulations and Freedom of Information requests;
- demonstrable commitment to and promotion of continuous professional development of self and staff;
- the ability to present information clearly, concisely and confidently when speaking and in writing;
- high levels of broad Public Sector knowledge relevant to his/her area of work;
- a clean full driving licence and have the use of a car.

Note: The functions and responsibilities assigned to this position are based on the current stated role and may be changed from time to time. This description has been designed to indicate the general nature of and the criteria required to perform this function. It will be subject to regular review with the post holder and his/her Manager. The person appointed requires the flexibility to fulfil other roles and responsibilities at a similar level within the Authority.

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

Appointment to the post at Principal Social Worker level in the public service will be subject to the usual conditions governing such appointments.

Remuneration:

The payscale applicable to the position is the Principal Social Worker scale as follows (rates effective 01 October 2020).

Personal pension contribution (PPC) rate. This salary is payable to an individual who is required to make a personal pension contribution (PPC) to their main pension (in general those persons whose initial appointment to the Public Service is on or after 6th April 1995).

Salary Scale: €68,695: €70,673: €73,661: €76,649: €79,637: €82,629.

Important Note:

- Entry will be at the minimum point of the scale and will not be subject to negotiation;
- The rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.
- Subject to satisfactory performance increments may be payable in line with current Government Policy;
- If immediately prior to appointment the appointee is already a serving Civil Servant or Public Servant and is on a pay scale which is the equivalent of the pay scale advertised, consideration may be given to entry at their existing point on the scale.

The rate of pay offered will be payable weekly in arrears by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) into a bank account of your choice. Payment cannot be made until you supply an IBAN and IBIC number to the HR Unit.

Statutory deductions from salary will be made as appropriate.

You will agree that any overpayment of salary or of travel and subsistence may be deducted from future salary payments due to you in accordance with the Payment of Wages Act 1991. You will be advised in writing of the amount and details of any such overpayment and you will be given at least one week's notice of the deduction to take place, which will be deducted at an amount fair and reasonable having regards to all the circumstances.

Annual Leave 30 days per annum. This leave is on the basis of a five-day week and is exclusive of the usual public holidays.

Contract: Permanent Full Time.

Tenure: The appointment is to a permanent position upon successful completion of probation period of 12 months.

During the period of probation, the appointee's performance will be subject to review by the Chief Executive Officer to determine whether they:

- (i) have performed in a satisfactory manner,
- (ii) have been satisfactory in general conduct, and
- (iii) are suitable from the point of view of health and particular regard to sick leave.

Hours of Attendance: Hours of attendance will be as fixed from time to time but will amount to not less than 43.25 gross hours per week (37 net hours per week).

Outside Employment: The position will be whole time and the appointee may not engage in private practice or be connected with any outside business, which conflicts in any way with his/her official duties, impairs performance or compromises his/her integrity.

Sick Leave: Pay during properly certified sick absence, provided there is no evidence of permanent disability for service, will apply on a pro-rata basis, in accordance with the provisions of the sick leave circulars for the public service.

Officers who will be paying Class A rate of PRSI will be required to sign a mandate authorising the Department of Social Protection to pay any benefits due under the Social Welfare Acts directly to the Adoption Authority of Ireland. Payment during illness will be subject to the officer making the necessary claims for social insurance benefit to the Department of Social Protection within the required time limits.

Superannuation:

Superannuation and Retirement: The successful candidate will be offered the appropriate superannuation terms and conditions as prevailing in the Adoption Authority Ireland, at the time of being offered an appointment. In general, and except for candidates who have worked in a pensionable (non-single scheme terms) public service job in the 26 weeks prior to appointment (see paragraph d below), this means being offered appointment based on membership of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme ("Single Scheme").

a. Pensionable Age

The minimum age at which pension is payable is 66 (rising to 67 and 68) in line with State Pension age changes.

b. Retirement Age Scheme members must retire at the age of 70.

c. Pension Abatement

If the appointee was previously employed in the Civil Service and is in receipt of a pension from the Civil Service normal abatement rules will apply. However, if the appointee was previously employed in the Civil Service and awarded a pension under voluntary early retirement arrangements (other than the Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement (ISER) or the Department of Health Circular 7/2010 VER/VRS which, as indicated above, renders a person ineligible for the competition) the entitlement to that pension will cease with effect from the date of reappointment. Special arrangements will, however be made for the reckoning of previous service given by the appointee for the purpose of any future superannuation award for which the appointee may be eligible. If the appointee was previously employed in the Civil Service or in the Public Service please note that the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 includes a provision which extends abatement of pension for all Civil and Public Servants who are re-employed where a Public Service pension is in payment. This provision to apply abatement across the wider public service came into effect on 1 November 2012. This

may have pension implications for any person appointed to this position who is currently in receipt of a Civil or Public Service pension or has a preserved Civil or Public Service pension which will come into payment during his/her employment in this position.

Department of Education and Skills Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers Circular 102/2007

The Department of Education and Skills introduced an Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers. It is a condition of the Early Retirement Scheme that with the exception of the situations set out in paragraphs 10.2 and 10.3 of the relevant circular documentation, and with those exceptions only, if a teacher accepts early retirement under Strands 1, 2 or 3 of this scheme and is subsequently employed in any capacity in any area of the public sector, payment of pension to that person under the scheme will immediately cease. Pension payments will, however, be resumed on the ceasing of such employment or on the persons 60th birthday, whichever is the later, but on resumption, the pension will be based on the persons actual reckonable service as a teacher (i.e. the added years previously granted will not be taken into account in the calculation of the pension payment).

Ill-Health-Retirement

Please note that where an individual has retired from a Civil/Public Service body on the grounds of ill-health his/her pension from that employment may be subject to review in accordance with the rules of ill-health retirement within the pension scheme of that employment.

d. Prior Public Servants

While the default pension terms, as set out in the preceding paragraphs, consist of Single Scheme membership, this may not apply to certain appointees. Full details of the conditions governing whether or not a public servant is a Single Scheme member are given in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and other Provisions) Act 2012. However the key exception case (in the context of this competition and generally) is that a successful candidate who has worked in a pensionable (non-single scheme terms) capacity in the public service within 26 weeks of taking up appointment, would in general not become a member of the Single Scheme. In this case such a candidate would instead be offered membership of the pension scheme for non-established civil servants ("Non-Established State Employee Scheme"). This would mean that the abatement provisions at (c) above would apply, and in addition there are implications in respect of pension accrual as outlined below:

e. Pension Accrual

A 40-year limit on total service that can be counted towards pension where a person has been a member of more than one existing public service pension scheme would apply. This 40-year limit, which is provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and other Provisions) Act 2012 came into effect on 28 July 2012. This may have implications for any appointee who has acquired pension rights in a previous public service employment.

f. Pension-Related Deduction

This appointment is subject to the pension-related deduction in accordance with the Financial Emergency Measure in the Public Interest Act 2009.

For further information in relation to the Single Public Service Pension Scheme for Public Servants please see the following website: <http://www.per.gov.ie/pensions> .

Important notice:

The above represents the principal conditions of service and is not intended to be the comprehensive list of all terms and conditions of employment which will be set out in the employment contract to be agreed with the successful candidate.

Eligibility to Compete

Candidates should note that eligibility to compete is open to citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union along with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Swiss citizens under EU agreements may also apply.

A candidate who is in doubt with regard to their eligibility to compete should consult the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation.

Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER):

It is a condition of the Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER) as set out in Department of Finance Circular 12/09 that retirees, under that Scheme, are debarred from applying for another position in the same employment or the same sector. Therefore, such retirees may not apply for this position.

Collective Agreement - Redundancy Payments to Public Servants:

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform letter dated 28th June 2012 to Personnel Officers introduced, with effect from 1st June 2012, a Collective Agreement which had been reached between the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Public Services Committee of the ICTU in relation to ex-gratia Redundancy Payments to Public Servants. It is a condition of the Collective Agreement that persons availing of the agreement will not be eligible for re-employment in the public service by any public service body (as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011) for a period of 2 years from termination of the employment. Thereafter the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform will be required prior to re-employment. People who availed of this scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility) and the Minister's consent will have to be secured prior to employment by any public service body.

Department of Health and Children Circular (7/2010):

The Department of Health Circular 7/2010 dated 1 November 2010 introduced a Targeted Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Scheme and Voluntary Redundancy Schemes (VRS). It is a condition of the VER scheme that persons availing of the scheme will not be eligible for re-employment in the public health sector or in the wider public service or in a body wholly or mainly funded from public moneys. The same prohibition on re-employment applies under the VRS, except that the prohibition is for a period of 7 years, after which time any re-employment will require the approval of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. People who availed of either of these schemes are not eligible to compete in this competition.

Department of Environment, Community & Local Government (Circular Letter LG(P) 06/2013) The Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Circular Letter LG(P) 06/2013 introduced a Voluntary Redundancy Scheme for Local Authorities. In accordance with the terms of the Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants dated 28 June 2012 as detailed above, it is a specific condition of that VER Scheme that persons will not be eligible for reemployment in any Public Service body [as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011 and the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012] for a period of 2 years from their date of departure under this Scheme. Thereafter, the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform will be required prior to re-employment. These conditions also apply in the case of engagement/employment on a contract for service basis (either as a contractor or as an employee of a contractor).

Declaration:

Applicants will be required to declare whether they have previously availed of a public service scheme of incentivised early retirement. Applicants will also be required to declare any entitlements to a Public Service pension benefit (in payment or preserved) from any other Public Service employment and/or where they have received a payment-in-lieu in respect of service in any Public Service employment.

SELECTION PROCESS

How to Apply

Please submit the 3 documents as set out below to, HR@aai.gov.ie

- Certificate of Registration with CORU;
- A fully completed Application Form;
- A cover letter/ personal statement outlining why you wish to be considered for the post and where you believe your skills and experience meet the requirements for the role of Principal Social Worker.

Please note that all documents must be typed and that the omission of any one or part of the 3 requested documents, as set out above, will render the application incomplete. Incomplete applications will not be considered for the next stage of the selection process.

Closing Date

The closing date and time for applications is 12 noon on Friday 19th March 2021.

Applications not received in the Inbox of HR@aai.gov.ie at the specified deadline will not be accepted.

If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your application within 2 working days of applying, please email fiona_monaghan@aai.gov.ie or call 01 2309 347.

Selection Methods

The Adoption Authority will convene an expert board to carry out the competitive stages of the selection process to the highest standards of best practice. The approach employed may include:

- Shortlisting of candidates on the basis of the information contained in their application;
- A competitive preliminary interview;
- A second interview which will include the candidate making a presentation to the panel.

Interview

It is anticipated that interviews will take place during the week after Easter (week beginning 5 April 2021). Candidates will be notified in due course of the exact date, time and venue for the interview(s).

Dates for a second interview/presentation if required will be notified to the candidates.

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position the Authority will make all such enquiries that are deemed necessary to determine the suitability of that candidate. Until all stages of the recruitment process have been fully completed a final determination cannot be made nor can it be deemed or inferred that such a determination has been made.

Please Note: You may be required to undertake a medical should you come under consideration for appointment.

References

We would appreciate it if you would start considering names of people who you feel would be suitable referees that we might consult (2 - 3 names and contact details). The referees listed do not have to include your current employer, but should be in a position to provide a reference for you. Please be assured that we will only collect the details and contact referees should you come under consideration at interview stage.

The admission of a person to a competition, or invitation to attend interview, or a successful result letter, is not to be taken as implying that the Authority is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements or is not disqualified by law from holding the position.

Should the person recommended for appointment decline, or having accepted it, relinquish it, the Authority may at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment on the results of this selection process.

Candidates should make themselves available on the date(s) specified by the Authority. The Authority will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates.

Panel

Normally the number of applications received for a position exceeds that required to fill existing vacancies. A panel may be established on foot of the results of the final interview process and this panel may be used to fill future vacancies which may arise. This panel, if created, will remain in place for up to 18 months.

SECURITY CLEARANCES

Please Note: You will be required to complete and return a Garda vetting form should you come under consideration for appointment. This form will be forwarded to An Garda Síochána for security checks on all Irish and Northern Irish addresses at which you resided. If you are not successful, this information will be destroyed by the Authority. If you do, therefore, subsequently come under consideration for another position, you may be required to supply this information again.

Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

Candidates who do not attend for interview or other test when and where required by the Authority, or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence, as the Authority require in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.

The importance of confidentiality

The Adoption Authority of Ireland may use third party recruitment specialists to manage all or part of the recruitment process on our behalf. We would like to assure you that protecting confidentiality is our number one priority. You can expect, and we guarantee, that all enquiries, 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.

The Adoption Authority of Ireland recognises its responsibilities under the Data Protection Acts 1988, 2003 & 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

Review of Decisions

There are formal procedures set down where a candidate seeks a review of a decision taken in relation to their application. These procedures are set out in the **Code of Practice Appointments to Positions in the Civil and Public Service. A full version of the document is available on the website of the Commission for Public Service Appointments www.cpsa.ie**

Section 7 Review

A request for review may be taken by a candidate should they be dissatisfied with an action or decision taken by the Adoption Authority of Ireland (AAI). The AAI will consider requests for review in accordance with the provisions of **Section 7** of the Code of Practice *Appointments to Positions in the Civil and Public Service* published by the Commission for Public Service Appointments (Commission). When making a request for a review, the candidate must support their request by outlining the facts they believe show that the action taken or decision reached was wrong. A request for review may be refused if the candidate cannot support their request.

The Commission recommends that, subject to the agreement of the candidate, where the office holder (in this instance the Chief Executive Officer of AAI) considers the matter could be resolved they should first seek to engage on an informal basis, before making use of the formal review procedure.

Procedure for Informal Review

- A request for Informal Review must be made within 5 working days of notification of the decision, and should normally take place between the candidate and a representative of the AAI who had played a key role in the selection process.
- Where the decision being conveyed relates to an interim stage of a selection process, the request for informal review must be received within 2 working days of the date of receipt of the decision.
- Where a candidate remains dissatisfied following any such informal discussion, he/she may adopt the formal procedures set out below.
- If the candidate wishes the matter to be dealt with by way of a formal review, he/she must do so within 2 working days of the notification of the outcome of the informal review.

Procedure for Formal Review of Selection Process

- The candidate must address his/her concerns in relation to the process in writing to the Chief Executive, outlining the facts that they believe show an action taken or decision reached was wrong.
- A request for review must be made within 10 working days of the notification of the selection decision. Where the decision relates to an interim stage of a selection process, the request for review must be received within 4 working days.
- Any extension of these time limits will only be granted in the most exceptional of circumstances and will be at the sole discretion of the Chief Executive.
- The outcome must generally be notified to the candidate within 25 working days of receipt of the request for review.

Complaints Process

A candidate may believe there was a breach of the Commission's Code of Practice by AAI that may have compromised the integrity of the decision reached in the appointment process. The complaints process enables candidates (or potential candidates) to make a complaint under **Section 8** to the Chief Executive Officer of AAI in the first instance, and to the Commission for Public Service Appointments subsequently on appeal if they remain dissatisfied.

Allegations of a breach of the Code of Practice should be addressed in writing, and within a reasonable timeframe, to the Chief Executive Officer in the first instance. The complainant must outline the facts that they believe show that the process followed was wrong. The complainant must also identify the aspect of the Code they believe has been infringed and enclose any relevant documentation that may support the allegation. A complaint may be dismissed if they the complainant cannot support their allegations by setting out how the Adoption Authority of Ireland has fallen short of the principles of this Code.

On receipt of a complaint AAI may determine to engage with the complainant on an informal basis.

Procedure for Formal Review of Selection Process

- The candidate must address his/her concerns in relation to the process in writing to the Chief Executive, outlining the facts that they believe show an action taken or decision reached was wrong.
- A request for review must be made within 10 working days of the notification of the selection decision. Where the decision relates to an interim stage of a selection process, the request for review must be received within 4 working days.

- Any extension of these time limits will only be granted in the most exceptional of circumstances and will be at the sole discretion of the Chief Executive.
- The outcome must generally be notified to the candidate within 25 working days of receipt of the request for review.

There is no obligation on the AAI to suspend an appointment process while it considers a request for a review. Please note that where a formal review of a recruitment and selection process has taken place under Section 7 of this Code of Practice, a complainant may not seek a further review of the same process under Section 8, other than in the most exceptional circumstances that will be determined by the Commission at its sole discretion.

Candidates' Obligations

Candidates must not:

- knowingly or recklessly provide false information
- canvass any person with or without inducements
- personate a candidate at any stage of the process
- interfere with or compromise the process in any way

It is important to remember that this is a competitive process for a role where integrity is paramount. Sharing information on the selection process, for example through social media or any other means, may result in you being disqualified from the competition.

A third party must not impersonate a candidate at any stage of the process

AAI is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of gender, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, marital status, family status, sexual orientation or disability