

LAUNCH OF COUNCIL OF IRISH SOCIAL WORKERS IN ADOPTION (ICSWA) ON 28TH SEPTEMBER 2022

This was a very successful event that was well attended by social workers from the various Tusla areas and social work managers, along with retired social workers who had been associated with the organisation in the past. The Aisling Hotel proved to be a very pleasant venue and despite technical hitches we had a very good experience and an excellent lunch.

The launch was an opportunity to explain to those in attendance about the transition of the organisation as it goes forward into the future and takes on a new identity while still carrying its legacy from the past. This has been represented in our new logo which is intended to symbolise movement and the colours carefully chosen, blue for strength and stability, pink for care and compassion and yellow for warmth, expectation and hope for the future. It was acknowledged that it was important that we did not move on into a new era without acknowledging our roots in the past which was one of the reasons why the word 'Council' continues to be kept in our name. The launch took place just before the establishment of the new Information and Tracing Act and was also an extremely important time for social workers to have a forum to reflect on the pending shift in their practice and the change in expectations and outcomes.

The day was not without its hiccups and trauma. As you will see from the original notification of our programme, our morning speaker was to be Deborah McNamara who was to share her research on the Therapeutic outcomes of the Search and Reunion process for Birth Mothers but she had to cancel at extremely short notice. We shall be forever grateful to Anne Marie Shier, Lecturer, Department of Social Sciences, in TU Dublin, who saved the day by making a presentation from her research into the part that Social Media now can play in the Search process. This proved to be a fascinating study where new dynamics emerged for consideration that were never originally part of the adoption reunion journey.

We were also privileged to have Julia Feast back with us to share at the afternoon session from her wealth of experience on the impact of accessing adoption information on adopted adults and their decision to search. She provided videos and case studies, which never date, to illustrate the variety of reactions from those who have engaged in this process and the circumstances of people's lives that are impacted and need to be supported and hopefully resolved. Julia Feast has been working for many years as an independent Consultant, specialising in the life-long issues of being adopted and is an experienced social worker, trainer and researcher and has publications about the identity and information rights and needs of adopted people, adult care leavers and donor conceived people.

Thanks go to our Executive Committee who all contributed to the organisation and running of this event. Endless hours were put collectively

to ensure it ran smoothly and that invitations were extended to anyone who had contributed to our work in the past. Thanks also to all those who joined us for the day for their continuing support and recognition of the importance of the contribution that our organisation still make to ensure best adoption practice.

Hazel Douglas,

Chairperson.

ICSWA

17th October 2022