



Accord CLG

Recruitment of Executive Director Candidate Information Booklet

August 2026

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Welcome from the President of Accord CLG

Thank you for applying for the position of Executive Director of Accord Catholic Marriage Care Service CLG.

For more than sixty years, Accord has supported couples, individuals, and families through providing programmes of preparation for sacramental marriage, relationship counselling and school's work. Accord's work is deeply rooted in the values and social teaching of the Catholic Church and is delivered with empathy, professionalism, and respect for all who use our services.

Accord holds a very important place in the Irish landscape with thirty centres, the length and breadth of the country. Our counsellors, our facilitators, our centre administrators are the face of Accord, which is the face of compassion, understanding, and acceptance.

I hope that in applying for the role of Executive Director, you will bring Accord into the next chapter of its story.

Denis Nulty

Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin

President, Accord CLG

Welcome from the Chairperson of Accord CLG

The appointment of Accord's next Executive Director comes at an important point in the organisation's development. Following extensive consultation with our Centres, volunteers, staff and stakeholders, the Board has adopted a new five-year Strategic Plan that sets out our ambitions for the years ahead.

Delivering that plan will require strong national leadership, clear priorities, and effective collaboration across the organisation. Central to the role will be developing a renewed partnership between the Board, Central Office, and our network of Centres, while supporting our people and strengthening Accord's capacity to fulfil its mission into the future.

We are seeking an accomplished and values-led leader who can translate strategy into action and bring people with them in doing so. The successful candidate will combine strategic insight with practical delivery, sound governance, and a collaborative leadership style. They will be comfortable leading within a faith-based organisation and engaging constructively with the many people and communities who contribute to Accord's work.

The role offers an opportunity to provide leadership at a significant moment for Accord: building on the organisation's considerable strengths while guiding the change and development necessary to ensure that it remains effective, sustainable, and trusted.

This booklet provides further information about Accord, the Executive Director's role, and the recruitment process. I hope it gives you a clear sense of both the importance of the position and the opportunity it presents.

Matt Walsh

Chairperson, Accord CLG

The Position

Title of position:	Executive Director
Tenure:	Permanent
Employing Authority:	Accord CLG
Location:	Accord Catholic Marriage Care Service CLG, Columba Centre, Maynooth, Co Kildare
Organisation website:	www.accord.ie

About Accord CLG

Accord CLG ("Accord") is the national agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland providing marriage preparation, professional relationship counselling and relationship education services throughout the 25 counties of the Republic of Ireland, excluding Dublin and Northern Ireland.

For over 60 years, Accord has supported couples, individuals and families through a nationwide network of Centres. Services are delivered by a dedicated community of staff, accredited counsellors, trained facilitators, office administrators, clergy and volunteers, supported by Central Office in Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

Accord is governed by an independent Board of Directors and works in partnership with dioceses, statutory agencies and community organisations to promote healthy relationships, strengthen marriage and support family life.

Accord combines a national governance and support structure with local service delivery through its network of Centres. This model is one of Accord's greatest strengths and requires close, respectful and sustained relationships between the Executive Director, Central Office, Centre leadership, dioceses and service practitioners.

During 2025, services provided by Accord across 25 counties (excluding Dublin and Northern Ireland) included:

- Marriage preparation – 239 programmes delivered to 3,612 couples
- Counselling – 4,772 sessions provided to 877 couples and individuals

Mission, ethos and services

Accord's purpose is to care for marriage and relationships by providing high-quality, accessible services that strengthen couples, support individuals and contribute to family and community wellbeing.

Our ethos

Accord is a Catholic organisation. Its services and organisational life are informed by the Christian understanding of the dignity of every person, the importance of loving and committed relationships, and the value of marriage and family life. Services are provided professionally, compassionately and respectfully to those who seek Accord's support.

Core services include the following:

- Marriage preparation programmes for couples preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage.

- Professional counselling for couples and individuals experiencing relationship or personal difficulties.
- Relationship education, information and support.
- Training, supervision and professional development for those who deliver Accord services.

The strategic context

In 2026, the Board adopted a new five-year Strategic Plan following an extensive consultation process involving Centres, volunteers, staff and key stakeholders. The strategy provides the framework for Accord's development and renewal and will be translated into clear annual business plans, beginning with the 2027 plan.

The principal areas of focus include:

- strengthening leadership, governance and organisational accountability
- enhancing the quality, accessibility and responsiveness of services
- building stronger communication, engagement and partnership across the Centre network
- supporting, developing and sustaining Accord's staff, volunteers and professional practitioners
- promoting innovation in service delivery and organisational systems
- ensuring financial resilience, value for money and long-term sustainability

The leadership opportunity

The Executive Director is Accord's most senior executive and is accountable to the Board for the strategic, operational and financial leadership of the organisation. The Board delegates responsibility for day-to-day management to the Executive Director, working with the Executive Management Team and within the strategy, policies and authorities approved by the Board.

The incoming Executive Director will lead implementation of the Strategic Plan, establish disciplined annual planning and reporting, and build shared ownership of change across Accord's national network.

The successful candidate will be expected to:

- provide visible, values-led and collaborative leadership
- convert the Strategic Plan into practical priorities, annual business plans and measurable outcomes
- strengthen relationships and trust across the Board, Central Office, Centres, dioceses and external stakeholders
- build a culture of accountability, inclusion, performance and continuous improvement
- ensure strong governance, safeguarding, risk management and regulatory compliance
- maintain financial sustainability and demonstrate effective stewardship of public and organisational resources
- represent Accord credibly with the Catholic Church, funders, statutory bodies, partners and the wider public

Reporting relationships

Reports to	The Board of Accord CLG, through the Chairperson
Key internal partners	President, Board, Executive Management Team, Central Office, Centre Chairpersons, Priest Directors, counsellors, facilitators, administrators and volunteers
Key external partners	Member Bishops, dioceses, Tusla, the HSE, statutory agencies, professional bodies, community organisations and other Accord organisations on the island of Ireland
Base	Columba Centre, Maynooth, Co. Kildare

Role profile and key responsibilities

The role of Executive Director is a key leadership role within Accord and will be responsible for, but not limited to, the following:

Strategic leadership and delivery

- Lead implementation of Accord's Strategic Plan and prepare annual business plans, priorities, measures and implementation timetables for Board approval.
- Provide the Board with timely, clear and proportionate reporting on performance, risks, finances and strategic delivery.
- Scan the external environment, identify opportunities and challenges, and recommend appropriate strategic responses.
- Promote collaboration and shared purpose across Accord and, where appropriate, with other Accord organisations on the island of Ireland.

Governance, risk and accountability

- Support the Board in fulfilling its governance responsibilities while maintaining a clear distinction between governance and executive management.
- Maintain effective systems of internal control, risk management, safeguarding, data protection, health and safety, and regulatory compliance.
- Ensure that policies, decisions and delegated authorities are implemented consistently across the organisation.
- Protect Accord's reputation and ensure that significant risks and issues are brought promptly to the Board's attention.

People, culture and organisational leadership

- Lead and support the Executive Management Team, establish clear accountability and enable effective delegation.
- Develop a culture characterised by respect, collaboration, high performance, learning and service.
- Ensure effective workforce planning, performance management, succession planning and professional development.
- Recognise and support the distinctive contribution of staff, volunteers, counsellors, facilitators, administrators and clergy.

Centres, services and quality

- Build strong, regular and constructive relationships with Accord Centres and dioceses.
- Ensure services are high quality, accessible, evidence-informed and responsive to changing needs.
- Support consistent standards while respecting the experience and contribution of local Centres.
- Promote innovation, appropriate use of technology and continuous improvement in service delivery and administration.

Financial leadership and sustainability

- Prepare and secure agreement to annual budgets aligned with the Strategic Plan and annual business plan.
- Report clearly to the Board on financial performance, forecasts, reserves, funding and corrective action where required.
- Ensure robust financial management, statutory reporting and external audit arrangements.
- Identify opportunities to improve efficiency, value for money, income, funding and long-term sustainability.

Stakeholder engagement and representation

- Develop trusted relationships with the Board, President, Member Bishops, dioceses, funders and statutory partners.
- Represent Accord externally with credibility, diplomacy and a clear understanding of its Catholic ethos and public-service role.
- Strengthen Accord's profile and communicate its impact, priorities and contribution to relationships and family life.

Person Specification

The Board recognises that strong candidates may bring relevant experience from different sectors. Applications will be assessed against the criteria below and candidates should demonstrate their contribution through clear evidence and examples.

Essential Criteria

The successful candidate will demonstrate evidence of:

- A relevant third-level qualification, or equivalent professional and strategic leadership experience.
- A minimum of 5 years' experience in a senior leadership role in a complex, multi-stakeholder organisation, with clear accountability for delivering results.
- Proven record of translating strategy into operational plans and achieving measurable organisational change.
- Demonstrated experience of working effectively with a Board and operating within robust governance, risk and accountability arrangements.
- Strong financial and commercial acumen, including budgeting, performance reporting, resource allocation and organisational sustainability.
- Demonstrated ability to lead, develop and hold to account a senior management team and to build a positive organisational culture.
- Proven record of building productive relationships with diverse internal and external stakeholders, including funders or public bodies.
- An understanding of, and genuine willingness to work within and promote, the mission and ethos of a Catholic faith-based organisation.

Desirable Criteria

The successful candidate may demonstrate evidence of:

- Senior leadership experience in the charity, not-for-profit, social care, public service or another values-led environment.
- Experience of a federated, networked, membership or volunteer-based organisation.
- Knowledge of counselling, relationship support, education or family services.
- Experience of working with the Catholic Church or another faith-based organisation.
- Experience of leading significant digital, service or organisational transformation.

Key leadership capabilities

The essential and desirable criteria along with key leadership capabilities relating to effective performance will be used in the selection process:

- Strategic judgement – sees the wider context, sets clear priorities and makes sound decisions.
- Delivery and accountability – converts intention into action and follows through on commitments.
- Collaborative leadership – listens, builds trust and creates shared ownership while remaining decisive.
- Communication and influence – communicates complex issues clearly and adapts effectively to different audiences.
- Governance and integrity – demonstrates sound judgement, transparency, discretion and the highest ethical standards.
- Resilience and adaptability – remains constructive and effective through complexity, challenge and change.
- Service and values orientation – keeps Accord’s mission, clients and communities at the centre of decision-making.

Conditions of Service

Tenure

This position of Executive Director will be offered on a permanent contract.

Appointments to all positions within the remit of the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004 are subject to Codes of Practice published by Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA). The codes set out the regulatory framework for such appointment processes and are available on www.cpsa.ie.

Probation

On appointment, the appointee will serve a 6 month probationary period in the post of Executive Director. Prior to the end of this probationary period a decision will be made, contingent on a performance appraisal, on substantive appointment to the grade or an extension of the probationary period by an additional month.

Remuneration

Remuneration for the role of the Executive Director is €90,000 per annum pro rata, plus benefits.

Location

The place of work will be at Accord CLG, Columba Centre, Maynooth, Co. Kildare

Hours of Attendance

Working hours will be in accordance with the standard arrangements for Accord. Additional hours may from time to time be reasonably required to meet the requirements of the position including regular national travel and occasional evening or weekend commitments. No additional payment will be made for extra attendance.

Annual Leave

The annual leave allowance is 25 days. This allowance is based on a five-day week and is exclusive of the usual public holidays.

Other Conditions of Employment

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 appointee.

How to Apply

Forvis Mazars have been retained by Accord CLG to assist with the appointment of the Executive Director role. Forvis Mazars, on behalf of Accord CLG invites applications from suitably qualified candidates and will be undertaking a comprehensive recruitment process as part of this recruitment campaign.

Forvis Mazars will be managing all aspects of this recruitment project on behalf of Accord CLG. No enquiries or canvassing should be made directly to the Accord CLG.

Applications should be submitted online and must include:

1. A comprehensive curriculum vitae
2. A cover letter outlining motivation for the role and demonstrating relevant experience

Please note, the use of AI is not permitted in your application documents.

To apply for this role, visit www.forvismazars.com/ie/en/executiverecruitment and search Ref. ACC0126.

Closing date

Deadline for application: 12 noon, Monday, 28th September 2026.

Applications will not be accepted after the closing date/time.

An acknowledgement email will be issued for all applications received. If you do not receive acknowledgement of your application within 24 hours of submission, please contact the Forvis Mazars Executive Recruitment Team by email (execrecruit@mazars.ie) to ensure your application has been received.

Indicative Timetable

The campaign is expected to commence in August / September 2026, with a preferred candidate identified by November and a target commencement date of March 2027. Forvis Mazars and Accord will confirm the final campaign timetable upon request, however please note that dates are purely indicative and are subject to change.

Reasonable accommodations

Accord CLG places a strong emphasis on diversity, inclusion and equality at all levels of the organisation. Any candidate who requires reasonable accommodations at any stage of the selection competition should indicate their requirements. Any queries in relation to any disability or other issue which may be addressed through making such reasonable accommodations, can be addressed to the execrecruit@mazars.ie or telephone to +353 (1) 4494400.

Selection process

The process will be managed by Forvis Mazars on behalf of Accord and overseen by the Executive Director Recruitment and Transition Sub-Committee. It will be conducted in accordance with the principles of fairness, transparency, objectivity, confidentiality and good governance.

1. Application and eligibility review by Forvis Mazars.
2. Executive search, candidate engagement and longlisting.
3. Shortlisting by Accord's Recruitment and Transition Sub-Committee against the agreed criteria.

4. First-stage structured competency-based interview with a panel including two Board members and an external member.
5. Additional assessment, which may include a presentation, case study, role play and/or psychometric assessment.
6. Final leadership assessment with the Chairperson and President of Accord CLG and an external member, focusing on strategic leadership, organisational values, governance, stakeholder engagement, Church ethos and overall suitability.
7. References, qualification and employment verification, conflicts declaration and other appropriate due diligence.
8. Recommendation to, and appointment by, the Board of Accord CLG.

Shortlisting

Accord CLG reserves the right to shortlist applications. The shortlisting process may take the form of a screening call and/or a desktop shortlisting process based on the information contained in the applications submitted.

Normally the number of applications received for a position exceeds that required to fill existing and future vacancies to the position. While a candidate may meet the eligibility requirements of the competition, if the numbers applying for the position are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, Accord CLG may decide that only a subset will be called to interview. In this respect, Accord CLG will use a shortlisting process to select a group for interview who, based on an examination of the application material, appear to be the most suitable for the position. Accord's Recruitment and Transition Sub-Committee will examine the application forms against pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. In addition, screening calls may be utilised. This is not to suggest that other candidates are necessarily unsuitable or incapable of undertaking the job, rather that there are some candidates, who, based on their application, appear to be better qualified and/or have more relevant experience.

Other important information

Accord CLG will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates unless specifically pre-approved.

The admission of a person to a competition, or invitation to attend interview, or a successful result notification, is not to be taken as implying that Accord CLG is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements or is not disqualified by law from holding the position and does not carry a guarantee that your application will receive further consideration. It is important, therefore, for you to note that the onus is on you to ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements for the competition before attending for interview. If you do not meet these essential entry requirements but nevertheless attend for interview, you will be putting yourself to unnecessary expense.

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position, Accord CLG 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.

Should the person recommended for appointment decline or having accepted it, relinquish it or if an additional vacancy arises Accord CLG may, at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment.

Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

Candidates who fail to apply in advance of the application deadline, fail to submit the required application documentation as set out in this document, or do not attend for interview or other test required, will not be considered for the role.

Candidate Obligations

Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify and will result in their exclusion from the process. In addition, candidate must not:

- knowingly or recklessly provide false information
- canvass any person with or without inducements
- interfere with or compromise the process in any way.

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

Any person who contravenes the above provisions or who assists another person in contravening the above provisions is guilty of an offence. A person who is found guilty of an offence is liable to a fine/or imprisonment.

In addition, where a person found guilty of an offence was or is a candidate at a recruitment process, then:

- where they have not been appointed to a post, they will be disqualified as a candidate, and,
- where they have been appointed subsequently to the recruitment process in question, they shall forfeit that appointment.

Confidentiality and data protection

Applications will be treated in confidence and personal information will be processed for recruitment purposes in accordance with applicable data protection requirements.

Equal opportunities

Accord CLG is committed to a fair and inclusive recruitment process. Applications are welcomed from suitably qualified candidates and will be assessed on merit against the requirements of the role. Reasonable accommodations will be considered throughout the selection process.

General Information

Citizenship

Accord CLG has a legal obligation to ensure that all employees are lawfully entitled to work in Ireland. Where applicable and to support an applicant's application, applicants must submit a valid work permit/visa confirming permission to work in Ireland. Failure to submit the required evidence will result in the application and/or contract of employment being rendered void.

Eligible applicants must be:

1. A citizen of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; or
2. A citizen of Switzerland pursuant to the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the free movement of persons; or
3. A non-EEA citizen who is a spouse or child of an EEA or Swiss citizen and has a stamp 4 visa; or
4. A person awarded international protection under the International Protection Act 2015 or any family member entitled to remain in the State as a result of family reunification and has a stamp 4 visa; or
5. A non-EEA citizen who is a parent of a dependent child who is a citizen of, and resident in, an EEA member state or Switzerland and has a stamp 4 visa.

Note in respect of UK citizens: The recently concluded EU/UK Brexit negotiations have confirmed that the longstanding Common Travel Area Agreement between the UK and Ireland remains unchanged post-Brexit. Accordingly, UK citizens remain eligible to work and reside in Ireland without restriction and, as such, to make an application to compete for this competition where they meet all other qualifying eligibility criteria.

Certain Restrictions on Eligibility:

Eligibility to compete may be affected where applicants were formerly employed by a Public Sector body and previously availed of a Public Service Redundancy or Incentivised Retirement Scheme including:

- Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER)
- Department of Health and Children Circular (7/2010)
- Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Circular (Letter LG (P) 06/2013)

- Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to the Public Service

Reference checks

Please note that any offer of employment made to a successful candidate will be subject to satisfactory reference verification and satisfactory verification of academic and professional qualifications.

Security Clearances

Please note that Garda Clearance may be required for this position. Where required, if you have resided / studied in countries outside of the Republic of Ireland for a period of 6 months or more, you must furnish a separate Police Clearance Certificate from each country stating that you have no convictions recorded against you while residing there.

It is your responsibility to seek security clearances in a timely fashion. The successful applicant cannot be appointed without this information being provided and being in order.

Confidentiality

Candidate confidentiality will be respected at all stages of the recruitment process. Applicants should however note that all application material would be made available to those with direct responsibility for the recruitment process within Accord CLG .

Please note information provided by you as part of your application may be used as part of our diversity, equality and inclusion metrics in relation to this campaign.

Legal compliance

Forvis Mazars and Accord CLG are committed to complying with all relevant legislation over the course of this recruitment campaign, including the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018, the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018, and the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997, 2003 and 2014.

GDPR compliance

Forvis Mazars collects, processes and stores personal data, as provided by applicants when applying for the role available. The data provided by applicants is collected, recorded, stored, retained and destroyed in compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018.