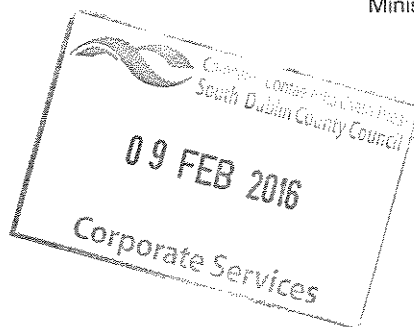




An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of
Children and Youth Affairs

Oifig an Aire
Office of the
Minister



5 February 2016

Mr Tom O'Neill
Meeting Administrator
South Dublin County Council
County Hall
Tallaght
Dublin 24

Dear Mr O'Neill

Thank you for your letter concerning the motion agreed at the meeting of South Dublin County held on the 11th January, 2016.

Following receipt and consideration of the Report of the Joint Committee for Health and Children on the Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill the Minister approved a revised scheme amending the previous suite of measures that were put in place to balance the right to identity of the adopted person with the right of the birth parent to privacy. In December 2015 the Government approved the drafting of this Bill and the Office of Parliamentary Counsel has been requested to draft a Bill. The Bill will be progressed as quickly as possible.

The Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes and certain related matters was formally established by Government on the 17th February 2015.

The approach taken in establishing this Commission of Investigation was to provide a clear and deliberate emphasis on the experiences of women and children who spent time in Mother and Baby Homes over the period 1922-1998 as these institutions had not been the central focus of any previous investigations. Clear criteria were used to identify Mother and Baby Homes for the purpose of the investigation, including having the main function of providing sheltered and supervised ante and post-natal facilities to mothers and their children. However, the Commissions Terms of Reference were explicitly formulated with a view to also allow for the examination of the much wider network of organisations and institutions that were often closely connected with these Mother and Baby Homes.

In addition, mechanisms within the terms of reference are designed to take maximum advantage of the investigative powers, resources and expertise of the Commission to ensure that any additional matter which the Commission may deem to warrant further investigation can be brought to the attention of Government.

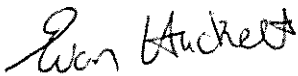
This independent Commission of Investigation must now be given the opportunity to advance its investigations to establish the facts of what happened and it would be entirely inappropriate for the Minister to interfere with this process at this stage.

I enclose for your reference a copy of the Statutory Instrument setting up the Commission of Investigation and would draw your attention to Section 6 of the Schedule of the Terms of Reference which allows for it to make any recommendations to the Minister which it considers appropriate.

The Commission has publicised its contact details and its intentions with regard to arrangements for gathering evidence (see www.mbhcoi.ie) and you may wish to consider contacting the Commission directly with a view to informing them of the Motion referred to in your letter.

I hope that this information is helpful to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Evan Hackett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Evan Hackett
Private Secretary to Minister James Reilly