

*A Message from Minister Roderic O’Gorman*

*To survivors, former residents, their families and advocates*

*I published Government’s Action Plan for Survivors and Former Residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions in November 2021. At that time, I promised that we would communicate with you in a transparent and accessible way, and keep you updated on the work to implement the 22 actions set out in the plan. I also committed to publishing a larger report annually on implementation of the Action Plan. I am pleased to let you know that today I am publishing the first of these annual reports.*

*You will find the first Annual Report on my Department’s website here. (To follow the link to the report, tap/click the bold text.) Later today I will also lay the Report before both Houses of the Oireachtas.*

*This report covers the period from the Action Plan’s publication in November 2021 to date. It sets out the progress made in that time on crucial issues like access to information, safeguarding of records, dignified burial, and memorialisation. In the year ahead, we will work intensively to further progress these, and other, important actions. In particular, we will continue to work towards establishing the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme as soon as possible. This work is an absolute priority for me and for the Government.*

*Some of the significant progress which has been made since November 2021 includes:*

- We have enacted landmark information and tracing legislation in the form of the Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022. This legislation is now fully operational and both the Adoption Authority of Ireland and Tusla are working hard to respond to the requests for information which have been submitted. Over 2,000 requests have now been completed with more people receiving their information every day.*
- We enacted the Institutional Burials Act 2022 which will allow us to begin the important work at Tuam. Work is underway to recruit the independent Director who will oversee this crucial intervention.*
- Legislation to establish the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme was published and is making its way through the Houses of the Oireachtas. In the meantime, my Department is working to put in place all the necessary arrangements for administering a Scheme of this scale.*
- Government approved proposals for National Centre for Research and Remembrance which will stand as a national memorial and site of conscience to honour all those who spent time in Industrial Schools, Magdalen Laundries, Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions, Reformatories and related institutions, as well as those who were boarded out.*
- In November 2022, Government approved my proposals to appoint a Special Advocate for Survivors. The role of the Special Advocate will be to represent the collective interests of those with lived experience of the institutions.*

*As always, I would like to convey my gratitude to those who continue to engage with me, and my Department, as we work to respond to the legacy of these institutions.*

*With kind regards and best wishes*

*Roderic O’Gorman, T.D.,*

*Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth*