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Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

National Centre for Research and Remembrance

Presentation on 13 June 2024



Overview of Presentation

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1. Background and Context

❖ **The Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (The Ryan Report), published on 20 May 2009.**

Commission's Recommendation 1: A memorial should be erected.

❖ **The Report of the Inter-departmental Committee (The McAleese Report) to establish the facts of State involvement with Magdalen Laundries, published in 2013. Followed by the Magdalen Commission Report (The Quirke Report) in June 2013.**

Quirke Report Recommendation 6 includes: The acquisition, maintenance and administration of any garden, museum or other form of memorial.

❖ **The Report of the Commission of Investigation on Mother and Baby Homes, published on 12 January 2021.**

Commission's Recommendations reference a national memorial in line with views of former residents.



1. Background and Context

Apology, Acknowledgement and Memorialisation

- In recommending a memorial, CICA stated that the following words should be inscribed as a permanent public acknowledgment of their experiences:

“On behalf of the State and of all citizens of the State, the Government wishes to make a sincere and long overdue apology to the victims of childhood abuse, for our collective failure to intervene, to detect their pain, to come to their rescue.”- An Taoiseach, May 1999

To confront the dark and shameful reality which is detailed in this report we must acknowledge it as part of our national history....Recognition begins with this apology and will be followed by commitments to national and local memorialisation and commemoration. The views and wishes of former residents will be paramount and all commemoration will be led by them.

- An Taoiseach, January 2021



1. Background and Context

❖ ***Action Plan for Survivors and Former Residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions*** approved and published by Government in November 2021. Plan contains 22 commitments under 8 themes as follows:

	Theme 1: A Survivor-Centred Approach
	Theme 2: Apology
	Theme 3: Access to Personal Information
	Theme 4: Archives and Databases
	Theme 5: Education and Research
	Theme 6: Memorialisation
	Theme 7: Restorative Recognition
	Theme 8: Dignified Burial



1. Background and Context

- ❖ The Action Plan includes a commitment to a National Centre for Research and Remembrance.

“We will develop an all-Ireland memorial in consultation with former residents and other key stakeholders.”

“The Government will work to establish, on a formal national basis, a national memorial and records centre related to institutional trauma during the 20th century. This will build on the commitment to a central repository of institutional records and will include archiving relevant records and witness testimony by victims and survivors as well as presenting the historical and social context. It will be developed at a suitable site and operated in accordance with the highest international standards.”

- ❖ Part of our national story and important that it is recognised as such in a major National Centre developed and operated by our national institutions.



1. Background and Context

Many other Action Plan commitments support, connect to, or lay the foundations for the National Centre. In particular, the following commitments:

- Action 4- Information and Tracing Legislation
- Action 5- GDPR Right of Access to Commission Records
- Action 6- Central Repository of institutional records
- Action 8- Public Access to Original State Files
- Action 9- Expansion of the Database
- Action 10- Appointment of an archivist
- Action 13- Research on Terminology
- Action 14- Further Research on Death Registration Records
- Action 16- Local Memorials





2. National Centre for Research and Remembrance



Vision

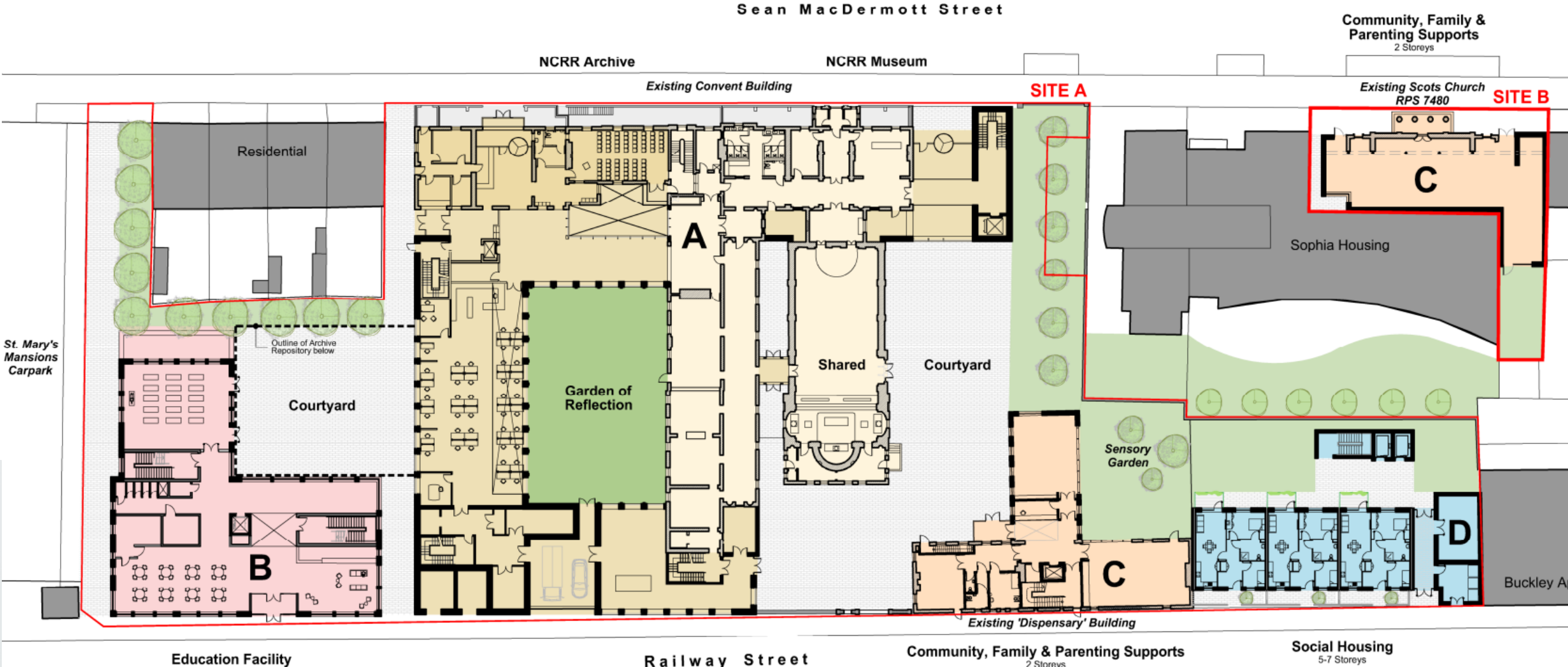
- To establish a national memorial and site of conscience to honour equally all those who were resident in Industrial Schools, Magdalen Laundries, Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions, Reformatories and related institutions, and;
- To make a significant contribution to the long-term social and economic regeneration of Dublin's north east inner city by encompassing social housing, local community and educational facilities on the National Centre campus.

The Centre will be run by our national institutions and comprise:

- A museum and exhibition space operated by the National Museum of Ireland,
- A research centre and repository of records which will form part of the National Archives of Ireland, and
- A garden for reflection and remembrance.



2. National Centre for Research and Remembrance





2. National Centre for Research and Remembrance

Structures and Workstreams

Steering Group

Chaired by Mr Martin Fraser, former Secretary General to the Government and Ambassador to Great Britain, and with membership from the key State stakeholders, including:

- Department of An Taoiseach
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media
- Department of Education
- Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Office of Public Works, including State Architect
- National Museum of Ireland
- National Archives of Ireland
- Dublin City Council
- North East Inner City Initiative
- Special Advocate for Survivors



2. National Centre for Research and Remembrance

Major Workstreams

- ❖ **Construction Workstream-** Comprising Multiple Project Groups and Teams operating under the Capital Works Management Framework
- ❖ **Archives Workstream-** Dedicated workstream led by Director of National Archives
- ❖ **Legal and Legislative Workstream-** Dedicated workstream led by Mr Martin Fraser
- ❖ **Survivor and Stakeholder Engagement Workstream-** Key Workstream to focus on collaboration and co-creation as we move to next phase of initiative



3. Archives Workstream

Role and Purpose

The overall role of this workstream is:

- to provide strategic direction and guidance to the Steering Group on issues relating to the archival development envisaged as part of the National Centre, and
- to drive practical progress on archiving of records.

Work is led by Director of the National Archives of Ireland with representation from:

- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Justice
- Department of Finance
- Department of Social Protection
- Tusla, Child and Family Agency
- Adoption Authority of Ireland
- Health Services Executive
- Local Authority Archivists





3. Archives Workstream

Current Status of Work

- A scoping exercise, conducted with Departments, Agencies and Local Authorities in possession of relevant records relating to institutional abuse in the twentieth century, identified the scale and classes of relevant records in the possession or under the power of each of these bodies – currently estimated that the number of records that will be encompassed by the repository will be between five and seven million (in paper, born digital and digitised formats).
- A dynamic project plan, which includes an individualised plan for each Department/Agency, has been developed.
- Emphasis has been placed initially on records that are over thirty years old and subject to the National Archives Act 1986. Relevant records beyond the scope of the Act will be informed by the legal and legislative workstream.
- Additional archivists, digital archivists, conservators and administration staff have been recruited. Archivists are working on site in Departments/Agencies to facilitate the preparation of records for transfer to the National Centre.
- Digitisation guidance has been developed to provide practical advice to Departments/Agencies in relation to the digitisation of records intended for inclusion in the National Centre.



4. Legal and Legislative Workstream

Role and Purpose

The overall role of this workstream is to develop detailed policy and legislative proposals on the management of, and access to, records which will form part of the repository within the National Centre. The proposals will span:

- the overarching policies and principles which should govern management of, and access to, the repository;
- the approach to future retention of each class or category of records and the lawful basis for same;
- the lawful basis for access to records by data subjects;
- the lawful basis for access to records by researchers; and
- the use of records by the National Centre as part of museum exhibits, published material or a programme of outreach and education.

Work is led by Martin Fraser and involves Office of the Attorney General, National Archives of Ireland, Department of Education, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media



4. Legal and Legislative Workstream

Current Status of Work

- ❖ A mapping exercise is underway to document the current legal framework which applies in respect of each class of records anticipated for inclusion in the central repository, including in relation to ownership, retention, access and the requirement to deposit under the National Archives Act where applicable.
- ❖ This will support the development of draft policy options and proposals for future retention in the proposed central repository which will form part of the National Archives of Ireland and applicable access arrangements.
- ❖ Important that there is strong engagement and consultation in relation to these draft proposals, with survivor views central to the work.



5. Birth Information and Tracing



- ❖ **30th June 2022** - Enactment of the Birth Information and Tracing Act
- ❖ **1st July 2022** - Minister brought a number of provisions into force including:
 - Part 6 - Contact Preference Register
 - Section 60 - Providing the legislative basis for the public information campaign
 - Section 63 and 69- Counselling assistance and support
- ❖ **October 2022** – Commencement of the rest of the Act, which falls within the remit of the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Opening of birth information and tracing services.
- ❖ **June 2024**- Over 12,900 applications for information completed. Services delivered in line with statutory timeframes.



5. Birth Information and Tracing- Safeguarding of Records

- ❖ Part 7 of the Act provides for the safeguarding of records. It provides for immediate safeguarding on commencement, and also enables the transfer of records to the Adoption Authority of Ireland, under a direction of the Authority.
- ❖ To achieve the safeguarding of records, the Act introduces the concept of an *Information Source*. An information source is a person, body or organisation who holds relevant records and is obliged to safeguard those records. Section 46 provides a similar obligation on any other person holding a relevant record.
- ❖ Any record which falls under the definition of “relevant record” must be safeguarded and the Authority may direct its transfer. This applies whether it is held by an Information Source or any other person. The definition of “relevant record” is **only** applicable to this part on safeguarding. It **does not** apply to information requests. Information requests generally cover **all** records held by a *recipient body* in relation to a relevant person.
- ❖ Under this legislation the Authority is empowered to enter, and inspect a place where it has reasonable grounds to believe there are relevant records held, for the purposes of safeguarding those records under this legislation. While the Act provides a legislative basis for transfer of records to the Authority, it also allows seizure of records where the Authorised Officer believes this to be necessary for preserving or preventing interference with such records.



5. Birth Information and Tracing- Safeguarding of Records

- ❖ October 2022- DCEDIY wrote to Information Sources to advise of obligations under the Act.
- ❖ To date, the Authority has issued 3 directions to Information Sources under Section 48 of the Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022 for the transfer of relevant records, and three directions to persons, other than an Information Source, who are in possession of relevant records.
- ❖ AAI creating new dedicated archives function.
- ❖ Major digitisation project underway of over 100,000 files dating back to 1877.
- ❖ Renovation work complete on new records storage space.



6. DCEDIY- Inquiry Archives and Departmental Records

- ❖ **McAleese Report**- records now held by Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- ❖ **Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes and related institutions**-records deposited with Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- ❖ Recovered Tapes from **Confidential Committee**- held by Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- ❖ **New Information Management Unit** established in 2021 to lead on management of the Commission's archive, as well as management of Departmental records more generally. This unit is headed by a Principal Officer with legal and data protection expertise and includes the Department's Data Protection Officer, and an archivist.
- ❖ Cataloguing of Commission records by IMU, alongside work on preservation and transfer of digital records to searchable platforms where necessary.
- ❖ Significant work by IMU on transfer of departmental records from D/Health to D/CEEDIY, followed by review, certification and transfer to NAI.



7. Consultation, co-creation and next steps

- ❖ Initial, open consultation on the National Centre ran from July to September 2023.
- ❖ Almost 220 responses received and an independent research company analysed these and prepared a detailed report.
- ❖ The strongest message from survivors was on involvement in decision-making.
- ❖ The Steering Group recognises the importance of working in partnership with survivors and former residents, and its commitments include that:
 - the Special Advocate for Survivors has joined the Steering Group;
 - there will be ongoing engagement and collaboration with survivors on co-creation of the exhibits in the Centre;
 - survivors will have a central role in the ongoing governance of the Centre; and
 - starting later this summer, the National Museum and National Archives will run in-person events so interested people can hear about, and feed back on, international research and work to date.



7. Consultation, co-creation and next steps

Steering Group commitments



Survivor-centred decision-making and co-creation

The Special Advocate for Survivors has joined the National Centre Steering Group. Survivors will have a central role in the ongoing governance of the Centre.



Equal and Inclusive Memorialisation

We will work with survivors of different institutions to ensure that the Centre honours all survivors equally. The voices of survivors will be at the heart of the Centre.



An Engaging, Authentic and Professional Museum Experience

The National Museum of Ireland will work with survivors to ensure that the Centre is authentic, engaging and grounded in real life experience. Survivors will be fully involved in the co-creation of museum exhibitions.



Truth, healing and support

The Centre will be a trauma-informed environment, with supportive staff and dedicated times where the Centre is only open to survivors. There will be outreach through local museums, travelling exhibitions and online access.

The Commemorative Grant Scheme will be expanded to provide dedicated grants to support survivors in other parts of Ireland and overseas to visit the Centre.



Treatment of records

The repository in the National Centre will be part of the National Archives. National Archives staff will ensure a sensitive and caring environment for those accessing their records. While supporting access, the privacy rights of survivors will be paramount.



A calm and reflective garden space

The Chief State Architect, who is overseeing the design of the Centre, will ensure the garden is a calm space with sheltered seating for private reflection.



7. Consultation, co-creation and next steps

Timeline to date

Mar 2022	Government commitment to a National Centre for Research and Remembrance	✓
July 2022	Dublin City Council vote to transfer the Sean McDermott Street site to the Office of Public Works for development of the National Centre	✓
Oct 2022	Office of Public Works start initial surveys and works to make the site safe	✓
July 2023	Government approval of masterplan for the National Centre campus	✓
July 2023	Launch of initial, open consultation	✓
July 2023	Launch of National Centre website and mailing list	✓
May 2024	Consultation report published, with Steering Group commitments	✓



7. Consultation, co-creation and next steps

Next steps

May - June 2024	Completion of Planning Permission application for submission	→
July - Sept 2024 (and ongoing)	Dedicated face-to-face feedback sessions on National Museum and National Archive elements of the Centre	→
Jan - Mar 2025	Tender documents published, subject to Government approval	→
July - Sept 2025	Construction to start on site	→
May - Oct 2027	Fit out of National Centre	→



Thank You!

Thank you for listening.

To stay up to date on the initiative, visit the dedicated National Centre website available at www.gov.ie/nationalcentre, and join our contact list by emailing nationalcentre@equality.gov.ie