

Quarterly Update

Action Plan for Survivors and Former Residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions

A message from Minister Foley

This is the third quarterly update of 2025, following the publication of the annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan in June.

Since then, there have been a number of significant updates which I would like to draw your attention to.

Firstly, following the communication to you on August 5th, I would like to remind you that the closing date to express your interest in one of the survivor representation opportunities is September 19th. This is a chance for you to have your voice heard and I welcome and encourage all applications from relevant people. Further details about this are available on page 2 of this newsletter.

Secondly, you will find an update from the Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam. Following a series of engagement events with family members, survivors and stakeholders in June, the full forensic excavation of the site of the former Mother and Baby Institution, Tuam, Co. Galway began on Monday 14 July 2025. The ODAIT publishes regular updates on its website, and I encourage you to use this resource to stay informed on progress.

Thirdly, in addition to the regular update on the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme, on page 6 and 7 we have highlighted some of the most commonly raised queries by applicants living abroad which we hope people may find useful.

Further updates are included on the National Centre for Remembrance and from the Special Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Abuse, as well as regular updates and useful contacts.

I hope you find this latest newsletter useful, and please do continue to contact the Department with any feedback you may have.

With warm regards and good wishes,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Norma Foley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Norma Foley,

Minister for Children, Equality and Disability

On 5 August, prior to Minister Foley's official announcement, members of our mailing list were notified that applications are invited from survivors and affected persons who are interested in the four positions available on the National Centre for Research and Remembrance steering group to be part of the decision-making process.

This is a direct response to the feedback received from a series of engagement events with survivors that were held in Dublin, Galway, Cork, London and online between October 2024 and February 2025.

There are also opportunities for survivors to join the National Museum of Ireland's Lived Experience expert panels for the National Centre museum so that the vision to honour all survivors equally and authentically in the National Centre is achieved.

In addition, there are up to 35 positions available for survivors and affected persons on the Special Advocate for Survivors Advisory Council. Expressions of interest in these positions are invited from Survivors and Affected Persons of:

- Industrial School Institutions and Reformatory Institutions
- Magdalen Laundries
- Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions
- Boarded out arrangements
- Historic adoption practices and illegal birth registration
- Any of the above who live overseas

Minister Foley is encouraging survivors to consider these opportunities.

Anyone who is interested in these opportunities should complete the **Expression of Interest Form** on the National Centre website [here](#). People can express an interest in more than one position, if they wish to do so.

Applications are still open but will close on **19 September 2025**.



Oifig an Stiúrthóra um Idirghabháil Údaraithe, Tuam **Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam**



The Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam (ODAIT) has made significant progress in implementing the intervention at the Tuam site since the last quarterly update.

Excavation of the site: In preparation for the site excavation, ODAIT successfully recruited an expert Forensic excavation team led by a site co-ordinator. The team includes forensic archaeologists, osteoarchaeologists and forensic anthropologists, as well as a forensic evidence manager and a forensic photographer. They are supported on site by a main contractor and a consultant engineer.

ODAIT held a Community Information Evening in Tuam (6 June 2025) to provide information and answer questions in advance of the commencement of works.

A media briefing was held in Tuam to inform members of the media on details of the excavation, answer questions and take photographs of the site before it was forensically sealed (7 July 2025).

An event was also held for family members and survivors in Tuam (8 July 2025), where they had the opportunity to view the site in person for the last time before the excavation works begin and to meet each other and the ODAIT team.

On Monday 14 July 2025, the full forensic excavation of the site of the former Mother and Baby Institution, Tuam, Co. Galway began. Access to the entire site is now closed off (under forensic control) to the public and it is also concealed from view, with 24-hour security in place. These measures are considered necessary to ensure the site's forensic integrity and to enable ODAIT to carry out the works to the highest international standards.

The forensic excavation is expected to take approximately 24 months to complete.

Identification Programme

ODAIT is continuing its preparation for the Identification Programme and related public information awareness campaign, which are expected to begin shortly. Meanwhile elderly and vulnerable family members can still provide DNA samples under the Department's Administrative Scheme.

Additional Updates

ODAIT continues to update stakeholder groups, including families, survivors, advocates and residents. A Family and Survivor Liaison person joined ODAIT and will play a key role in the Identification Programme.

Website

ODAIT continues to update its website, www.odait.ie, on a regular basis. ODAIT can also be contacted by phone (+353 1 5391777), email (info@odait.ie) or post to Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention Tuam, Customs House, Flood Street, Galway, H91XV2C.

The feedback report from in person engagement events which took place in Dublin, Galway, Cork and London as well as an online event between October 2024 and February 2025 was published in June. The report, with detailed feedback in survivor's own words is arranged into seven key themes and available to view [here](#).

The Steering Group reviewed this report and committed to actions to address each of the seven key themes. Most notably, the Steering Group itself – which is responsible for developing the overall vision of the Centre - will be expanded to include four survivor representatives. These representatives will be full members of the Steering Group, alongside the Special Advocate for Survivors and members from government departments and agencies.

There are also opportunities for survivors to join the National Museum of Ireland's Lived Experience expert panels for the National Centre Museum so that the vision to honour all survivors equally and authentically in the National Centre is achieved.

An expression of interest call has now opened for these positions and will remain open until 19th September 2025. More information can be found on page 2 of this newsletter. Some other key commitments from the Steering Group include:

- A central role for survivors in the governance of the National Centre, once it opens.
- The finalisation of a process to allow survivors and affected persons to share their lived experience – and/or physical items - with the National Museum, if they wish to do so.
- The design of a programme to capture and gather survivor's personal statements or records as part of the institutional records of the National Archives or to deposit them as private papers.
- Future engagement with local museums and community spaces, like libraries, and travelling exhibitions to ensure people can access museum content from different locations.
- Ongoing work on the digitisation of records, to allow those who can't visit the National Centre to access their records.

The Steering Group response document is available to view [here](#) as well as a summary of the commitments available [here](#). Further information on the National Centre can be found at www.gov.ie/nationalcentre.



There is a dedicated mailing list for those with an interest in the National Centre project. If you would like your email address to be included to receive future updates related to the National Centre, please send an email to nationalcentre@dcde.gov.ie requesting that your details be included.

Overview

The Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme has been open since 20 March 2024 and we have provided a snapshot of current progress below.

If you are planning on applying to the Scheme, or know someone that is thinking of applying, we have provided some helpful frequently asked questions [here](#).

- The Payment Scheme website can be found [here](#).
- The Portal for online applications can be found [here](#).
- Paper versions of the application form can be found here:

[Payment Scheme - English Form](#) or [Payment Scheme - Irish Form](#)

The Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme - Key Highlights (position as of 31/08/2025)



6,781 Completed applications received



58% Portal applications



42% Postal applications



6,128 Notices of Determination issued



4,797 Payments paid or being processed

90%

Notice of Determinations issued as a % of completed applications received

Information for Applicants Living Abroad

How to apply

If you are living abroad and think that you may be eligible for the Payment Scheme, you can apply in the same way as someone living in Ireland – via the online portal or by post, if you'd prefer to use a paper form. [Further information is available here.](#)

Regardless of where you are living, the financial payments from this scheme are awarded in the same way.

In terms of health support benefits under the scheme, the services available through the medical card cannot be availed of outside of Ireland. So, if you live abroad, you can apply for a Health Support Payment valued at €3,000, instead of the medical card.

In order to apply for the Health Support Payment, you will have to provide proof that you live outside of Ireland with one of the following:

- a copy of your mortgage statement,
- a copy your tenancy/rental agreement,
- a letter from the owner or manager of a nursing home or
- a utility bill in your own name.

This must be dated within the last six months. If you have any issue providing one of these documents as proof of address, please contact the Payment Scheme Office.

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Information for Applicants Living Abroad

Financial Payments

The financial payments made under the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme will be made in euro to your account in a financial institution nominated by you.

The Payment Scheme can make payments to any financial institution that can accept an international funds transfer in euro including banks, building societies, credit unions or post offices.

When providing your financial account details you should ensure that this account can accept a euro funds transfer and that there is no cap on the amount that can be accepted into the account in a once-off transfer. If you have any questions or concerns in relation to how we will pay your award please contact the Payment Scheme Office.

Treatment of Financial Payments

It is important to be aware that the financial award you receive from the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme may affect your means tested benefits or have tax implications in the country where you live. If you have any concerns in relation to this, please contact the Payment Scheme Office.

Supports available for applicants living abroad

Further information on the supports available for applicants living abroad can be found on the Payment Scheme website at

<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-children-disability-and-equality/publications/supports-available-when-applying-to-the-payment-scheme/>

Since the start of the new Birth Information and Tracing services, established under the 2022 Act, over 16,600 applications for birth and early life information have been received by the Adoption Authority of Ireland and the Child and Family Agency Tusla. As of 1 September, over 16,560 of these applications have been completed, with all applications now being processed within the statutory timeframes. 450 matches have been facilitated through the Contact Preference Register, and we continue to encourage all adopted persons and birth parents to make an application to the Register to express their preferences for contact, exchange of information, or for no contact.

The Statutory Review of the Operation of the Act is underway, with a Steering Group established to oversee its delivery. As part of the review process, there will be significant consultation with persons that have availed of the new services under the Act, including those residing outside the State. The consultation phase of the review will take place in early 2026, with details on how to participate to be publicised closer to the time.

16,647

**applications for birth
and early life
information**

450

**matches made from the
Contact Preference
Register**

16,560

**completed requests for
birth and early life
information**

Funding available for survivor-centred events

The Commemorative Grant Scheme provides financial assistance to survivor-centred advocacy groups to support them in organising a social event commemorating those who were resident in Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions. Up to €2,500 (or equivalent) is available per event, and this funding is available to survivor groups both in Ireland and overseas.

The goal is to assist groups to organise the types of events which they believe to be most beneficial to those most centrally affected. Examples of the type of events that have received funding to date include: film screenings; a virtual representation/artistic display; and in-person social occasions which included speakers, poetry, music, and refreshments.

Applications for the scheme for 2025 are open until 10 November. If you have any questions about the scheme you can email commemorativegrantscheme@dcde.gov.ie or call +353 1 6473200 (Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm GMT) .

Further details on the scheme, including the application form, can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.ie/commemorativegrantscheme/>



**Special
Advocate**

For Survivors of
Institutional Abuse

Special Advocate Website and Facebook Page

We are excited to announce that the Special Advocate Website and Facebook Page are now officially live!

The website will function as a space to share updates from the Special Advocate about her work, provide details on upcoming events and useful resources. We want this to serve as an informative and easy-to-navigate space to locate up-to-date information for Survivors, their families and other stakeholders. Find out more on www.specialadvocate.ie

As an additional platform, we have created an information sharing Facebook page for sharing news and updates from the Special Advocate's office. Follow us to stay connected and informed. Find out more on [Special Advocate Facebook Page](#)

We look forward to engaging with you through these new platforms!

Advisory council

Since her appointment as Special Advocate in March 2024, Patricia has spent her time meeting and engaging with Survivors and Affected Persons and various Survivor groups, as well as with partner and support organisations in Ireland and overseas who work directly with those affected by institutional abuse and forced family separation.

Now that the initial round of engagements with Survivors and Affected Persons has concluded, the Special Advocate is seeking to establish an Advisory Council.

The Special Advocate for Survivors will establish **7 pillars** as part of the Advisory Council supporting her work. Each pillar will represent a specific area of institutional abuse and/or forced family separation.

More information about the Advisory Council and how to submit an Expression of Interest can be found in the [Advisory Council Information Booklet](#) and on our [website](#).

Email info@specialadvocate.ie Phone +353 (0)1 511 7660

Address Special Advocate's Office, Holbrook House, Holles Street, Dublin 2 D02 EY84, Ireland

If you have any questions, need any assistance in completing the Expression of Interest form, or require further information relating to the Advisory Council, please contact the Special Advocate team. Closing date for Expressions of Interest is **19 September 2025**.

Email: advisorycouncil@specialadvocate.ie

Phone: +353 (0)1 511 7660

Postal Address:

Special Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Abuse,

First Floor, Holbrook House, Holles Street, Dublin 2,

D02 EY84, Ireland

Irish Passport Queries

Over the last number of months, the Special Advocate has been working with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Adoption Policy Unit in the Department of Children, Disability and Equality to establish a clear contact for those affected by illegal birth registrations (IBR) who may have complex adoption passport issues.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and the Irish Passport Office has established a dedicated mailbox for Survivors and Affected Persons who are applying for passports and have any questions.

email: ppomadoptionqueries@dfa.ie



**Special
Advocate**
For Survivors of
Institutional Abuse

Email info@specialadvocate.ie Phone +353 (0)1 511 7660

Address Special Advocate's Office, Holbrook House, Holles Street, Dublin 2 D02 EY84, Ireland

Payment Scheme Office Helpline

The Payment Scheme Office operate a Helpline on **+353 (0)1 522 9992**. This Helpline is open between 9am and 6pm GMT, Monday to Friday or email info@paymentscheme.ie

For more information on the Payment Scheme, please visit the website <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/2938d-the-mother-and-baby-institutions-payment-scheme/>

DCEDIY mailing list

The Department maintains a mailing list for people with an interest in these issues. If you would like your email address to be added to this list to receive future updates, please email motherandbabyhomes@dcde.gov.ie requesting that your details be included.

Special Advocate for Survivors

The primary role of the Special Advocate is to amplify the voices of survivors as a central, essential input to Government deliberations on matters which affect them. To contact the Special Advocate's Office, please email:

info@specialadvocate.ie or call:

+353 (0)1 511 7660

Counselling Support

If you feel that you need to talk to a counsellor, you can contact the HSE National Counselling Service. If you decide to call, please identify yourself as a survivor of the institutions and you will be prioritised for the next available counselling place. Information about the service and contact details can be found on the HSE

website, or by calling **1800 817 517** (Monday to Friday 8am – 8pm, Saturday 9am – 5pm).

Outside of these hours, you can also contact the CONNECT free telephone counselling and support service at **1800 477 477** (6pm – 10pm Monday to Sunday).

For more support options, including phone, text or online, visit yourmentalhealth.ie or call **1800 111 888**.

The Adoption Authority of Ireland

The Adoption Authority of Ireland can be reached by phone at **+353 (0)1 230 9300**, or by post to Shelbourne House, Shelbourne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, D04 H6F6. Further information is available at www.aai.gov.ie.

Tusla – The Child and Family Agency

Tusla - Child and Family Agency can be reached by phone at **+353 (0)1 771 8500**, or by post to The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Saint John's Road West, Dublin 8, D08 X01F. Further information is available at www.tusla.ie

Birth Information and Tracing Services

If you want to make an application for access to information, for tracing services or to register preferences to the contact preference register, this can be done on birthinfo.ie This website also contains more information on the Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022 and the services it established.