

Q1/2026

# Quarterly Update

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

## A message from Minister Foley

This is your first quarterly update of 2026, following the last update in December '25 and I am pleased to share news of progress since then.

Firstly, following an Expression of Interest process, from 1 January 2026 survivor members were appointed to the National Centre for Research and Remembrance Steering Group. This is part of our ongoing commitment to involve survivors in matters which affect them. I would like to also highlight two upcoming surveys in which we will be inviting survivors to participate. On page 7, you will find information inviting people to express an interest in participating in an upcoming survey on Birth Information and Tracing Services. On page 6, you will find information about an upcoming survey in relation to the Payments Scheme. I encourage you to consider participating in these surveys if relevant to you.



Secondly, I would like to highlight a series of podcasts with survivors recently published by the Special Advocate for Survivors. The podcasts hear from survivors speaking about their history, their stories, the events that shaped their lives as well as their hopes for the future. You can find out more about these on page 8 of this newsletter.

Finally, further updates are included on the Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention in Tuam, 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 style with a horizontal line underneath.

Norma Foley,

Minister for Children, Equality and Disability



## Oifig an Stiúirthóra um Idirghabháil Údaraithe, Tuaim Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam



### **Forensic excavation of the Tuam site is continuing.**

ODAIT published its fifth technical update on its work on 6 February. The report covers the period from the end of November 2025 to the end of January 2026. It confirmed the recovery of further sets of coffined infant remains from an area of the site labelled as a burial ground in historical documents. The evidence is consistent with this being a burial ground from the time of the operation of the Mother and Baby institution.

The next update is due to be published in April.

### **Identification Programme**

ODAIT is undertaking an identification programme as part of its work in Tuam. If you are interested in providing a DNA sample or if you would like more information on the programme, please see [www.odait.ie](http://www.odait.ie), email [info@dait.ie](mailto:info@dait.ie) or call +353 (0)1 539 1777.

Further information on the Identification Programme is available here [ODAIT ID Programme - Odait](#).

### **Contact**

ODAIT website, [www.odait.ie](http://www.odait.ie). ODAIT can be contacted by phone (+353 1 5391777), email ([info@dait.ie](mailto:info@dait.ie)) or post to Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention Tuam, Customs House, Flood Street, Galway, H91XV2C.

On 1 January 2026 survivor members were appointed to the National Centre Steering Group following an expression of interest process that ran during August and September 2025. The survivor members are full members of the Steering Group, alongside the Special Advocate for Survivors and members from Government departments and agencies.

Enabling works are continuing on the National Centre site on Seán MacDermott Street. These works are to make safe and stabilise the existing historic buildings to facilitate the future National Centre construction works.

Updates on the development are published on the National Centre website at [www.gov.ie/nationalcentre](http://www.gov.ie/nationalcentre).



There is also 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](mailto:nationalcentre@dcde.gov.ie) requesting that your details be included.

#### **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.

The 2026 Scheme is currently open for applications. If you have any questions about the scheme, you can email [commemorativegrantscheme@dcde.gov.ie](mailto:commemorativegrantscheme@dcde.gov.ie) or call +353 1 6473200 (Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm)

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

### Overview

The Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme has been open since 20 March 2024. 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 15/03/2026)



7,101 Completed applications received



58% Portal applications



42% Postal applications



6,481 Notices of Determination issued



5,247 Payments paid or being processed

91.3%

Notice of Determinations issued as a % of completed applications received

## **Request Posters and Leaflets on the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme**

Organisations, community groups, and individuals can request printed materials to help increase awareness of the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme. Available resources include A3 and A4 posters and informational leaflets outlining key details of the scheme. These resources are intended to support wider communication and help ensure information about the scheme reaches those who may benefit from it.

To request materials, please contact: [MBIPS.Communications@dcde.gov.ie](mailto:MBIPS.Communications@dcde.gov.ie)

## **Payment Scheme Survey**

Your feedback is extremely important and will help the Payment Scheme Office understand what it is like to apply for the Scheme and how we can improve the information we provide to make it easier for others. Our goal is to learn from your feedback to provide better information and support future applicants to the Scheme.

The Payment Scheme Office will be commencing a survey soon, if you would like to participate in the survey please email [paymentschemesurvey@dcde.gov.ie](mailto:paymentschemesurvey@dcde.gov.ie)

### Update on applications made to the Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022

Thousands of people have now received their information under the Act. Since October 2022 over 17,600 applications have been made for birth and early life information. As of the end of February 2026, over 17,500 of these applications have been completed.

483 matches of relatives have been made using through the Contact Preference Register. We encourage all adopted persons and birth parents to apply to the Register to express their preferences for contact, exchange of information, or for no contact.

### Reminder: Statutory Review of Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022 Services

The Department of Children, Disability and Equality is reviewing Birth Information and Tracing services to look at what is working well and what can be improved, as required by the act.

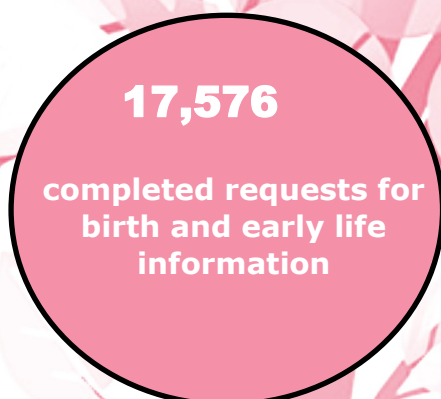
An independent body called Quality Matters will carry out this review. Their aim is to help services work better for the people who use them.

The first step is a survey of anyone who has used these services. After that, some of those who filled in the survey and said they would like to be interviewed will be asked for an interview. To get the full story, this will include people who had good experiences and people who did not.

If you want to hear when the survey is ready, so you can share your experiences and ideas on the birth information and tracing services, you can email the address below to register your interest.

[birth-info-review@qualitymatters.ie](mailto:birth-info-review@qualitymatters.ie)

Your details will be kept private by the Quality Matters team and will only be used for this review. It is important that people who have used birth information and tracing services take part in the review - to make sure that the services are as good as they can be.





**Special  
Advocate**  
For Survivors of  
Institutional Abuse



### ***Voices of Courage- Stories that break silence***

#### **A podcast initiative by the Special Advocate for Survivors**

The Voices of Courage podcast is an initiative of the Special Advocate for Survivors. It gives fearless, honest and at times harrowing accounts by four people who spent time in some of Ireland's Institutions.

Family separation, the lifelong impact of institutional abuse, and access to records are key themes explored by Special Advocate Patricia Carey with four very different podcast guests.

**Episode 1** - Anne shares her journey from infancy and time spent in multiple institutions, through her adoption to emigrating to Canada and searching for the truth about her early life. With honesty and warmth, Anne reflects on uncovering her family story and reconnecting after decades abroad.

**Episode 2** - James shares his powerful story of being boarded out as a child in Ireland-separated from his brothers and forced into years of exploitation & abuse on a Kerry farm. After rebuilding his life and becoming a criminal lawyer, James has become a leading advocate for the thousands of boarded out children.



**Episode 3** - Jude- Dubliner, master tailor, anti-racism pioneer, and survivor of Ireland's institutional system. Jude was born in a Mother and Baby Home and spent time in five institutions. Jude went on to build a remarkable life of sport, music, community activism, and decades of campaigning for equality.

**Episode 4** - Katie, a survivor of Ireland's Industrial Schools and Magdalene Laundries. Taken into institutional care at four years old, Katie has very clear and distinct memories of her 14 years spent in institutions. Today, she leads the Survivors Integrated Service at the London Irish Centre, supporting survivors across the UK.

Their voices are ultimately ones of huge courage and hope, calling those in power to account.

Patricia Carey said

*'I hope these Voices of Courage will shine a light on the experiences of those who are still seeking access to records, redress, supports and apology for their childhood abuse and separation from their families'*

**Listen to Voices of Courage here:** [Podcast page - Special Advocate](#)

## How to get in touch with the Special Advocate Office

To keep up to date with news and information from the Special Advocate office you can join our newsletter on the below link.

Additionally, if you have any questions, you can get in touch with contact the Special Advocate team in the following ways:

**Email:** [info@specialadvocate.ie](mailto:info@specialadvocate.ie)

**Phone:** +353 1 511 7660

**Website:** [www.specialadvocate.ie](http://www.specialadvocate.ie)

**Facebook:** [Special Advocate Facebook Page](#)

**Our Newsletter:** [Our Newsletter - Special Advocate](#)

**To Join our Mailing List:** [Newsletter Sign Up - Special Advocate](#)



**Special Advocate**  
For Survivors of Institutional Abuse

Email [info@specialadvocate.ie](mailto:info@specialadvocate.ie) Phone +353 (0)1 511 7660

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

### Mother and Baby Homes Action Plan Unit

The Department operates a dedicated telephone information line available for further information on Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions. Telephone **+353 (0)1 647 3200** from Monday to Friday 9.30am to 5.30pm or email [motherandbabyhomes@dcde.gov.ie](mailto:motherandbabyhomes@dcde.gov.ie)

### DCDE 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](mailto:motherandbabyhomes@dcde.gov.ie) requesting that your details be included.

### 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](mailto:info@paymentscheme.ie) For more information on the Payment Scheme, please visit the website [here](#).

### 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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://birthinfo.ie) This website also contains more information on the Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022 and the services it established.