

Chapter 25: Miss Carr's Flatlets

Introduction

- 25.1 Miss Carr's was not a traditional mother and baby home. It provided hostel type accommodation for unmarried mothers and their children. It opened in 1972 and is still in operation. Initially it was at 16 Northbrook Road and it moved to 5 Northbrook Road in 1992. No 5 was renamed 'Ecclesville' at this time. This was to honour Miss Leonie Eccles who was the driving force behind the establishment of the service. The 1989 and subsequent Annual Reports describe the Flatlets as 'Miss Carr's Girls Hostel'. The service is now known as Carr's Child and Family Services.
- 25.2 The total number of women and children who lived in the Flatlets is not known but, based on the evidence as outlined below, it is likely that about 180 women and 200 children lived there in the period 1972 to 1998.

Origins

- 25.3 Miss Carr's (Flatlets) opened in 1972 to house one parent families in need of temporary accommodation. The service was an extension of Miss Carr's Children's Home¹, a Protestant institution, which was located at 5 Northbrook Road. The Protestant Child Care Association and the Eastern Health Board (EHB) were both supportive of this extension of services to single mothers.
- 25.4 The idea for establishing the Flatlets seems to have come from Miss Eccles who was the manager of another children's home but was involved with Miss Carr's Children's Home. She reported that, at an AGM of the Protestant Child Care Association in April 1972, an EHB social worker outlined the urgent need in the community for accommodation for one parent families, so that mothers could be given an opportunity to bring up their children independently and to avoid, if possible, separation of mother and child in the early years. At this time, there were one or two single parent families resident in the children's home (No 5). Miss Eccles suggested that Miss Carr's should buy a house close to the children's home

¹ The Commission is not investigating Miss Carr's Children's Home but it is inextricably intertwined with the Flatlets. It was founded by Miss Lizzie Carr in 1887 and for a time had five houses. It moved to 5 Northbrook Road in 1920. Miss Lizzie Carr died in 1932 and the running of the home was taken over by her cousin Miss Eunice Carr. Miss Eunice Carr died in 1970 so there was never a Miss Carr involved in Miss Carr's Flatlets. Miss Carr's Children's Home closed in 2007. It was one of the institutions covered by the Residential Institutions Redress scheme (see Chapter 2).

to accommodate six or seven families in flatlets. It would be funded by government sources and tenant rents. The aim would be to help these families to reorganise their own lives with a minimum of interference so that in a few years or less they could reintegrate into the community. She argued that a mother with a young baby should be encouraged to stay at home with her baby, the Health Board would pay rent and maintenance. When the children reached school age, No 5 could be their second home until the mother returned from work.

No mother can be expected to understand the full implications of bringing up her own child until she has had the full responsibility of caring for him/her....The mother who cares for her baby entirely unaided will very quickly discover if she is suited to take on full time motherhood...or if the alternative of Adoption would be in the best interests of herself and child.

- 25.5 A special meeting of Miss Carr's Children's Home committee was held in June 1972 to consider the proposal that Miss Carr's Children's Home should extend its activities by making flats and rooms available to unmarried mothers and deserted wives. A memorandum prepared in advance of this meeting noted that the council of the Protestant Child Care Association (PCCA), a body representative of all Protestant organisations concerned with the welfare of children, was agreed that 'the greatest unfulfilled need at the present time is the provision of accommodation for unmarried mothers and their children'. It also noted that the welfare section of the Eastern Health Board (EHB) attached considerable importance to the proposition. 'They have looked to the Protestant Community to give a lead in this matter by establishing a successful model for others.' The memorandum outlined the probable costs involved. It noted that Miss Carr's owned a house worth (say) £40,000, and had investments and cash of perhaps £4,000, out of which about £1,500 would be applied to the fire precautions. A new house, including alterations, might involve an outlay of £30,000. 'We can probably borrow this sum on the security of the two houses we would then own.' The EHB had indicated, unofficially, that it would 'substantially increase' the grants which it gave for children already in Miss Carr's and those who would occupy the new residence and this would provide an additional sum of perhaps £2,500 a year. The memo proposed a once-off appeal for capital funds for the new house and recognised that some mothers would be in a position to pay for accommodation. It also noted that it was 'conceivable that part of the funds of Bethany home (now closed), could be allocated to us by the committee and by the Charitable Commissioners on the basis that work carried out would be similar in nature'.

- 25.6 The proposal was agreed and, with remarkable speed - two days later - No 16 Northbrook Road was bought. It was converted into nine flatlets. The first residents arrived in October 1972.

Sources

Carr's Child and Family Services

- 25.7 Carr's Child and Family Services provided the Commission with photocopies of the relevant records which it holds. These records are the main source of information available to the Commission. The main records involved are:

Admission Records: The Admission Records cover the period from October 1972 to March 1987. There are entries for 111 mothers with a total of 120 children. A range of information is recorded for each mother including date of admission, age group, number of children, referring body, reasons for referral, length of stay, subsequent accommodation, training/job and use of nursery. The person in charge of Miss Carr's from its opening to 1987 was Miss Leonie Eccles. It seems that her thorough record keeping was not continued by her successor. (The Commission recognises that detailed records are not as important in a context where tracing does not arise.)

Minutes of House Committee Meetings: The house committee dealt with Miss Carr's Children's Home, the nursery and the Flatlets. The available minutes of its meetings cover some of the period from 1972 until the sale of No 16 in February 1992. The period from January 1974 to March 1987 is not covered with the exception of a document in 1977 outlining the pros and cons of moving the day nursery to Wesley House. There are a number of additional documents within the minutes relating to the foundation of Miss Carr's (Flatlets) and outlining the aims and organisational structure. The meeting minutes contain short reports from the case committee and the nursery committee (see below). The case committee reported on interviews for admissions, places offered and occasionally on other issues concerning individual residents. The remainder of the minutes are largely concerned with financial, administrative and building maintenance matters.

Annual Reports (1972-1998): The published annual reports of Miss Carr's Children's Home included a section each year on No 16 and, after 1992, on Ecclesville. The tenor of the reports is in general very positive and there is an

emphasis throughout on the importance of keeping mothers and babies together. The annual reports from 1972 to 1983 cover the 12 months from October to October. The 1984 report covers 14 months from October 1983 to December 1984. All subsequent reports cover the calendar year. The reports generally note the number of families living in No 16 in a given year and whether those who left during the year went on to private or public accommodation. Occasional rent increases and house renovations are also documented. There is a continuing, and understandable, lament about the lack of social housing, rising rents in the private sector together with the unwillingness of landlords to accept young children. Donations of gifts and money are recorded as well as fundraising initiatives such as an annual sponsored cycle, Christmas parties, sales and coffee mornings. Holidays to Rush were also organised.² Occasionally the reports document specific details in relation to an individual mother or her child.

Evidence

- 25.8 The Commission heard evidence from the current CEO of Carr's Child and Family Services and from Miss Nan Dwyer who was the manager of the Miss Carr's Children's Home from 1969 to 2000.

Department of Health files

- 25.9 There are a small number of references to the Flatlets in the Department of Health files. They are mainly concerned with financing. The main files used for this chapter are:

INACT/INA/0/454197

CCP/IMP/0/45687

Funding

- 25.10 The cost of the house (No 16) and its refurbishment was £30,000 which Miss Carr's Children's Home borrowed. While there clearly had been sympathetic noises, and indeed expressions of enthusiasm, from the EHB, there were no prior commitments to provide additional funding. The EHB applied to the Department of Health in January 1973 for approval to cover half the costs involved - the proposal was to give the Flatlets a Section 65 grant of £15,000.³

² These were mainly organised for Miss Carr's Children's Home but the finances of the children's home and the Flatlets were intertwined and, effectively, the children's home fundraising subsidised the Flatlets.

³ Section 65 of the *Health Act 1953* allowed health authorities to provide money to various bodies which provided services similar or ancillary to the services directly provided by the health authority. It was the legal basis for practically all health authority payments to voluntary organisations until 2005.

- 25.11 Initially, the Department of Health was reluctant to agree to the EHB's proposal to part fund the Flatlets. In March 1973, the argument was made that this was a housing issue rather than a health issue and the department drew the EHB's attention to the existence of various Department of Local Government grants for housing.
- 25.12 A Department of Health memorandum dealing with the application for funding stated that the Flatlets would be non-denominational. The argument was made that the provision of housing accommodation for unsupported mothers and their children was in line with the Social Recommendations published by the Council of Europe in 1970. It also pointed out that there was a growing feeling that unmarried mothers should, if they wished, be helped to keep their children rather than have them adopted or placed in health board care.
- It is clear that this type of accommodation with some degree of benevolent supervision and protection for the children would be more desirable especially for unmarried mothers, than flats in privately owned homes. Miss Carr's Home is to be commended for embarking upon such a project without any private funds or securities at their back.
- 25.13 The grant was approved by the Department of Health in October 1973. The Department of Local Government calculated that it could pay £583 a year for five years as a subsidy to the loan charged on the remaining £15,000. It is not clear if this actually happened.
- 25.14 In 1977, the bank loan for the purchase of the house was paid off: 'Early in the year we realised that our biggest financial burden had been lifted from our shoulders...'
- 25.15 The children's home was financed mainly from private sources and there were a small number of children resident there who were being paid for on a capitation basis by the health authorities. The evidence available suggests that the Flatlets were subsidised by the children's home through its fundraising activities and access to some trust funds.

- 25.16 As had been hoped, some of the proceeds of the sale of Bethany home were allocated to Miss Carr's Children's Home. The High Court ordered that the Commissioners for Charitable Donations and Bequests retain the capital and pay 85% of the income from it to Denny House and 15% to Miss Carr's Children's Home.⁴
- 25.17 The plan was that the residents would support themselves and, if unable to do so, would get Home Assistance (see Chapter 1). The Unmarried Mother's Allowance was introduced in 1973 and many of the residents would have qualified for this. Home Assistance was replaced by the Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme in 1977. This scheme included provisions for the payment of Rent Supplement in appropriate cases (see Chapter 1).
- 25.18 The heating and lighting costs were the responsibility of each resident, apart from the general areas (sitting-room, bathroom) and they paid a small rent. Individual electricity meters were installed in each flatlet in 1985 but the Annual Report notes that hot water was still 'on the house' and there was a fire in the sitting room each evening. A charitable trust contributed to the cost of the metering.
- 25.19 In 1976 a laundry room was installed at the back of the house.

The Nursery

- 25.20 Initially, the residents of the Flatlets could avail of the nursery free of charge but in 1987 it was decided that new entrants to the Flatlets would pay £3 a week if using the nursery. The Nursery was not used exclusively by residents of the Flatlets. It was used by local residents and when women left the Flatlets they sometimes continued to use the nursery for day care.
- 25.21 The importance of day care was emphasised in the 1983 Annual Report:
- If we wish to continue our policy of helping families to become self-supporting we have to persuade the authorities that subsidising nursery care for working mothers is money well spent in the long term. Our own experience to date has been that by and large, mothers who do not have the stimulus of even part-time work become very depressed and their children then need nursery care to counteract this unhappy state of affairs.

⁴ *Irish Independent*, 13 November 1974; see also Chapter 23.

Charitable donations

25.22 The Annual Reports show that the Flatlets received charitable donations and contributions by way of voluntary work. In 1972, the year of its opening, it is recorded that gifts were received of bedding, furniture, electric cookers, kitchen equipment and furnishings. Other examples reported in the Annual Reports include:

- In 1975, the Mothers' Union of the Diocese included No 16 in their centenary project and raised €900 which was spent on a laundry, curtains and carpet. The North Strand Church provided Christmas hampers for each resident family.
- In 1976, there were gifts of additional furniture and a spin-dryer
- In 1990, a new shed, washing machine, freezer and night light at the back of the house were gifted; the living room was given a 'face lift' with new curtains and paint colour and the roof was insulated.

25.23 In 1984, the Annual Report noted that No 16 and the nursery day centre had to receive a healthy injection of funding from No 5 to survive. The rent was increased in July in an effort to make No 16 self-financing:

The increased rent this entails poses a problem for some of the people we feel can benefit most from what we have to offer. Mothers not working can avail of Supplementary Benefits to help pay both rent and fuel bills, but full time students, who cannot count on help from parents, are not at present entitled to any benefit other than the unmarried mother's allowance. - a strange anomaly when one realizes that, hopefully, these families would only need State Benefits for a limited period.

25.24 In April 1992, No 16 was sold at auction for £192,000.

Governance

25.25 Miss Carr's Flatlets was a purely private institution which was not subject to any State inspection. Miss Carr's Children's Home had a general committee and it agreed that a specially appointed committee of management would be established to deal with all matters relating specifically to the Flatlets. This was initially appointed by the general committee but later was able to appoint its own members who were then ratified by the general committee. Financial matters and staff appointments were dealt with jointly.

- 25.26 A case committee was also established with people experienced in this work. Two members of the case committee were also on the Flatlets Committee for liaison purposes. The case committee was completely responsible for the choice of residents, within the principles laid down by the general committee:
- The sole criterion for admission should be 'need'
 - Not more than three units of accommodation were to be used for families with older children
- 25.27 The case committee was also required to review the tenancies⁵ regularly, together with the resident and her social worker or other interested body, so that the future could be thought about.
- 25.28 For administrative purposes the day nursery and the Flatlets were incorporated into a company called Miss Carr's Housing Association Limited in July 1992.

Living conditions

- 25.29 No 16 was a large Edwardian house in a residential area which, as already stated, was divided into nine flatlets. Each flatlet housed one mother and her child(ren). There was no indication from the outside that the house was used for accommodating mothers and children. Its location was convenient to shops and places of employment.
- 25.30 In 1973, Miss Eccles visited a number of similar establishments in England; she described the basic structure of No 16 as being in line with the 'more forward thinking English units'.

Nature of the service

- 25.31 The residents of Miss Carr's had sheltered housing at a reduced rent in what appears to have been a supportive environment. The intention was to enable mothers and their children to move on to independent living. The average stay was around one year with the aim of making the family self-sufficient.
- 25.32 The aims of Miss Carr's Flatlets were:

⁵ The terms 'tenant' and 'tenancies' are used frequently in the various records but it seems that there was not a standard landlord and tenant relationship; it was more akin to a licence arrangement.

- to supply temporary accommodation for one parent families in need (applications to be made through social agencies or voluntary body).
- to allow a family to work through a particularly traumatic experience with the help of a social worker.
- to enable a mother to establish a work pattern suited to herself and her child, actively seeking training if appropriate.
- to give a mother time to assess what mothering is all about and either to accept this role or the fact that adoption may be the most loving thing she can do for her child: 'A terribly difficult choice and one that, in the child's best interest cannot be kept on the long finger'.

25.33 It was accepted that long stay accommodation in No 16 was not in the best interest of a family. Ideally, by the time a family moved on, the mother would know how to manage a home, to budget and to cope with household problems and if necessary have acquired sufficient furniture. It was envisaged that mothers would stay for between six and 18 months and then move into private or public accommodation.

25.34 The 1972 Annual Report outlined the options facing unmarried mothers

As regard the question of returning to work, in the interest of both the mother and the child this must vary with the individual. It may be that a young mother on finding herself coping single-handed with a baby, and observing the problems facing mothers with older children, may realise that adoption may be the most loving thing she can plan for her child's future. We hope that we can help her to feel that an irrevocable step like this can be as much, if not more of a sacrifice than keeping her child with her.

Conversely, if a mother decides to keep her child we hope to be able to find a family who will give her the supportive help so necessary, especially when she leaves our more sheltered surroundings... we have to work on the proper balance between demanding more of these families than they are ready to cope with, and cushioning them too much so that they may not be able to survive in ordinary society later on. On the one hand we must be realistic, and yet the problem of coping with a minute amount of money could well deter a mother who would in other ways be ideally suited to care for her child. One does not want her to think of marriage just as a meal ticket for the two of them, but we would rather like her to feel able to cope independently and

then, if marriage comes later, there will be a greater chance of happiness for all concerned.

- 25.35 As already stated, a nursery was operated initially in No 16 and from 1977 onwards in nearby Wesley House. This gave mothers access to child care which enabled them to go back to work or study. Mothers who stayed in the area could continue to avail of the nursery after they had moved out of the Flatlets.
- 25.36 In April 1980 a part-time social worker was appointed.
- 25.37 The minutes of the meetings of the house committee show that the committee was mainly concerned with practical aspects of repairs and maintenance and acquiring equipment. In the early years, there are numerous references to painting and decorating, installation of heating, problems with the water supply, general maintenance and repairs and trying to get a telephone connection. As is described above, sometimes voluntary workers were used to carry out works.
- 25.38 The minutes give an indication of the issues which arose specifically for the Flatlets. For example, in 1972, the case committee had to consider whether or not a child with an infectious disease could be allowed return.
- 25.39 In 1973, the residents request to run a coffee evening was granted. The house must have had more than one TV as the committee considered whether or not they needed another TV licence. It was noted that Home Assistance was providing the rent for one mother.
- 25.40 The Annual Report for 1976 notes that the Flatlets were now 'a much more accepted part of the community'. A coffee evening organised by the residents was supported by the local residents association.
- 25.41 In 1987 the case committee considered the visiting rights of a father with a history of psychiatric illness. It was agreed that he could visit once a week at a mutually agreeable time.
- 25.42 In 1988, there was a resident who had a drug problem and there was concern that she might have been peddling drugs. This person left soon afterwards. The

washing machine was giving trouble and it was suggested that they get a commercial machine. However, the hire company would accept only a householder as guarantor and not Miss Carr's!

- 25.43 In 1989, the case committee noted that there had been few suitable applicants recently and a review of the aims might be needed. It was noted that there were problems with one resident who had been followed by a 'criminal element' whom she had known. Items had been stolen from the house.
- 25.44 The case committee considered how long they should keep a room for a resident who had been in hospital with psychiatric problems for eight weeks. It was felt that, as no applicants were waiting, the room should be held for the time being. Another recently arrived resident was a serious problem because she had a very low IQ and was not coping at all. It was agreed that they could not offer this girl the supervision and training in baby care that she would need if she was ever to cope independently. They decided to look into alternative placement. In 1990, the case committee reported that the resident who had been in the psychiatric hospital had gone home and the resident with the low IQ had gone to Denny House. In June 1990, it is recorded that all the residents were working and there was one vacant room.
- 25.45 The move to No 5 was being planned in 1991. There were concerns about the co-existence of the two different services and the effect of noise from the children's time out room on the Flatlets. The move took place in June 1992. It was agreed to draw up a new tenancy agreement to be used from the time of the move. This was to cover the eventuality of someone refusing to move out. The 1992 Annual Report noted:
- The house is beautifully decorated, it is bright, cheerful and spacious...we no longer have the headache of broken cookers or fridges. The laundry is also within the house, this is a major improvement on our previous facilities.
- 25.46 In 1992, there was an information evening on family planning and sexually transmitted diseases held in the house.
- 25.47 In 1993 and 1994, the Annual Reports note that the residence at No 5 was now well established. The difficulties facing new residents were described:

The first month is usually the hardest, as it involves endless visits to Social Welfare, in order to arrange for payments and rent allowance. In all it takes at least 6 weeks before a young mother will get her full allowance. This can be a trying time, as a shortage of cash, on top of a major move with a baby can be somewhat overwhelming for a young girl.

Holidays

- 25.48 Miss Dwyer told the Commission that Miss Eccles had a holiday home in the west of Ireland and she sometimes brought mothers and babies there. From 1977 to 1983 Miss Carr's had the use of a holiday home in Rush and there were annual holidays for the mothers and children. The 1978 Report refers to one carload of parents commuting to work each day from Rush. From 1983 onwards there were still annual holidays at mobile homes and caravans.

Mothers

- 25.49 The admission records have entries for a total of 111 mothers between October 1972 and March 1987. The Annual Reports provide figures for the number of families who were in the Flatlets in the years in question but do not provide information on how many new families entered. Based on the pattern from 1972 to 1987, it is likely that there was an average of six to eight new entrants each year. The following analysis is based on the 111 mothers for whom admission records are available.
- 25.50 The individual age of the mother is not recorded but their age group is entered as 1, 2, 3 or 4. It has not been possible to establish what exactly the age ranges were but it appears from the evidence of Miss Dwyer that 1 was the youngest age group. There were 46 mothers in age group 1; 45 in age group 2; 19 in age group 3 and one in age group 4.⁶

Entry Pathways

- 25.51 The admission records include a heading 'Referred by'. Sometimes more than one referral agency is recorded. The main referral agencies for the 111 mothers were as follows: Cherish (17); Denny House (13); EHB (13); Dr Barnardos's (ten); Church of Ireland Social Services (nine) the Coombe (nine); CPRSI (six); Protestant Adoption Society (four) Mid-Western Health Board (three).

⁶ It seems likely, but is not established, that No 1 were aged under 20, no 2 aged between 20 and 30 and so on.

25.52 Other referral agencies include organisations for unmarried mothers, social workers and doctors. Sometimes more than one referral agency is named.

Circumstances and Arrangements for Entry

25.53 The 'Reasons for Referral' are recorded for each entry and the majority of entries are some variant on the following reasons:

- supporting the mother to cope alone;
- giving the mother space to make decisions and plan future;
- enabling the mother to establish work patterns, continue education or training;
- use of the nursery to facilitate work, education or training.

25.54 The following are some examples of the entries:

- To enable mother and child to live together while making decision re keeping him or otherwise. Also to have time to stabilise job prospects
- Time to care for baby alone - to develop self-confidence - to establish work pattern, & plan the future.
- To allow mother opportunity to complete course in U.C.D. and to establish relations at home.
- Needing time to care for her baby/develop skills/make decisions for future

25.55 There are four entries classifying the mother as homeless prior to her arrival. Occasionally there are unusual entries, for example,

- Broken marriage. Temporary emergency to allow Social Worker to assess and make future plans.
- Accommodation urgently needed when mother decided against adoption
- Baby considered to be in physical danger at home.
- Mother needed time to recover from shock of [baby's] father's death, before planning future.
- Mother deaf, needing support from other mothers, and opportunity to train through N.R.B.⁷

⁷ NRB was the National Rehabilitation Board which provided training for people with disabilities. Its training functions were transferred to FÁS in 2000.

Length of Stay

- 25.56 The average length of stay for mothers was approximately 428 days or 1.17 years.⁸

Exit Pathways

- 25.57 The entries record the 'Accommodation Found' for each mother on leaving Miss Carr's Flatlets. About half (55) found private accommodation; 36 got public housing; 12 went home; one emigrated; one went to a hostel; one went to Denny House and the exit pathway is not specified in five cases.
- 25.58 Many entries contain further details such as the address of subsequent accommodation, whether the mother was sharing and with whom. There are a few notes documenting financial assistance from families and one mother is recorded as having purchased her own home. There are two entries relating to foreign mothers, who returned home; one to an African country and one to a European country.
- 25.59 The Annual Report for 1974 reports on a happily re-settled family:
 mother in a good steady job, and with more than ample baby minding services. Fears of 'what the neighbours might think' proved unnecessary. Undoubtedly the fact that the mother had proved herself to be loving and unselfish, very well able to cope on her own...has contributed largely to this happy state of affairs.

Difficulties in finding alternative accommodation

- 25.60 The difficulty of finding alternative accommodation for the mothers and children is a constant theme of the Annual Reports. The 1976 Annual Report noted that there were again difficulties in finding suitable accommodation; only one family was given public housing during the year. 'In private accommodation it would appear that children were welcomed in accordance with the height of the rent charged'.
- 25.61 The Annual Report for 1975 noted that the No 16 committee was actively involved with the relevant authorities in efforts to find alternative accommodation. A friend 'let' a house to Miss Carr's to sub-let to one-parent families on a temporary basis and two families were housed there.

⁸ The 1st of the month was used in those cases where the month only was recorded. The average is based on 109 entries as there were no dates recorded for the other two.

- 25.62 The 1977 Annual Report noted that housing remained a problem: 'Little by little it is becoming easier in the public housing sector but high rents in the private sector means shared accommodation is the only option.'
- 25.63 The availability of public housing improved in the 1980s but then declined about 1987/88. The 1990 Annual Report records that it was nearly two years since a resident from No 16 was housed by Dublin Corporation. The problem was intensified for a young mother as the majority of landlords would not accept young children. The demand for places in Miss Carr's was increasing.
- 25.64 A staff member from the Flatlets visited former residents when they moved into other accommodation. 'On Wednesday morning [a staff member] dispenses 'coffee and comforts' to former tenants who may be feeling lonely in their new surroundings'.

Training/Job

- 25.65 There is a heading entitled 'Training/Job' for each entry. There is no information under this heading in 24 cases; 61 were recorded as working with the majority in secretarial or domestic work. There was a wide variety of other occupations recorded, for example, laboratory technician, teacher, actress. There were 22 women on training courses including secretarial courses, university courses, teaching qualifications and AnCo courses. There were a few women engaged in very unusual work or training. The Commission has decided not to mention these as it might serve to identify the women.

Use of Nursery

- 25.66 The records have a field for each entry entitled 'Use of Nursery'. Many mothers working, looking for work or studying availed of the nursery facilities; 53 were regular users and 20 used it on an occasional basis; only ten are recorded as not having used the nursery and there is no entry for the remaining 28 mothers.

Mortality

- 25.67 There are no records of any maternal deaths.

Possible discrimination

- 25.68 As already stated, the Flatlets were intended to be non-denominational from the start and the only criterion for entry was need. The records make no reference to the religion of the mothers with the exception of one mother who is recorded as giving up work to study a particular religion. Miss Carr's childrens home had originally been a Protestant institution but by the 1970s it was admitting Catholics and Protestant children were soon in the minority. Twenty two of the 111 women whose records are available were referred by either Church of Ireland Social Services or Denny House. However, mothers were also referred by CPRSI and the Eastern Health Board. It is unclear from the records to what extent, if any, Miss Carr's (Flatlets) discriminated in favour of Church of Ireland applicants.
- 25.69 Two mothers are recorded as being deaf and one as 'handicapped'. There is no evidence of any discrimination on the grounds of disability.

Children

- 25.70 There were a total of 120 children in the institution during the period covered by the admissions register; 103 mothers had one child; 7 mothers had 2 children and one mother had 3 children. The age of the children on entry ranged from six days to nine years. The approximate average age of a child on entry was 316 days. If the eight families with multiple children are excluded this average drops to 231 days. All values relating to the children's ages are approximate as the entries for the children's dates of birth are incomplete and 01 has been entered where the day or month field is missing.
- 25.71 Three of the entries record a child's date of birth as after the commencement of the mother's residence. In two of these cases, the mother had one child on entering and the second child appears to have been born subsequently. The remaining entry records the baby's date of birth as approximately 8½ months after the mother entered and the mother had no other children in Miss Carr's.

Exit Pathways

- 25.72 The majority of children appear to have remained with their mother on leaving Miss Carr's flatlets. A small number went to grandparents, ten went into care and only one is recorded as being adopted. It is not explicitly stated in the records that the mother and child remained together on leaving. However, the entries under

'Subsequent Accommodation' specifically mention the child only in situations where the child did not remain with the mother. The implication appears to be that in all other cases the mother and child remained together after leaving. This conclusion is also supported by the Annual Reports.

- 25.73 The 1988 Annual Report notes: 'One mother decided that adoption would be the most loving option for her child, and perhaps you would remember this family especially in your prayers as despite other difficulties this mother had been devoted to her babies.' There is no further detail in the report and no discussion of the practice and procedures regarding consent or placement of children. The 1979 Annual Report states that one child returned home to live with his grandparents. The mother is not mentioned and it is unclear whether he remained in her care or was sent on his own.

Entry of children when their mother was not also resident

- 25.74 There are no records of any children being resident in Miss Carr's (Flatlets) when their mother was not also resident.

Mortality

- 25.75 There are three infant deaths recorded; these all occurred within an 18 month period between September 1979 and February 1981. The first infant death recorded is a cot death. There is no entry for the day or month of birth but Miss Carr's Annual Reports state that the baby was 3½ months old at the time of death. There is an entry under the heading 'Social Work Support' indicating that the social work support was very good. The mother appears to have stayed on for three months after her child's death before finding accommodation in the private sector.
- 25.76 A second cot-death is also recorded. The baby was 62 days old at the date of death. The records note that the social work support was good and the mother availed of the No. 16 social worker. After her baby's death the mother moved to rented accommodation in the private sector.
- 25.77 A third baby died from viral pneumonia. The mother went to live with friends after the baby's death. The records state that she availed of the No.16 social worker.