



## A message from Minister Roderic O’Gorman TD

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 continue to communicate with survivors in a transparent and accessible way as we work to implement the 22 Actions within it. Developing the Action Plan was an acknowledgment by the State of the enduring and deep impact of past institutional failures on those who spent time in these institutions, and their families. In delivering on these commitments, the Government’s ambition is to address survivors’ needs and concerns and rebuild a relationship of trust between the State and those who have been so profoundly wronged.



This is now our Second Quarterly Update on the implementation of the Action Plan. I am pleased to say that since our last update in February, we have continued to move steadily forward in fulfilling our commitments to you. I have been focused on advancing three substantial pieces of legislation; the Birth Information and Tracing Bill 2022, the Institutional Burials Bill 2022, and the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme Bill. I am committed to seeing these Bills enacted so that you can see the benefits of them as quickly as possible.

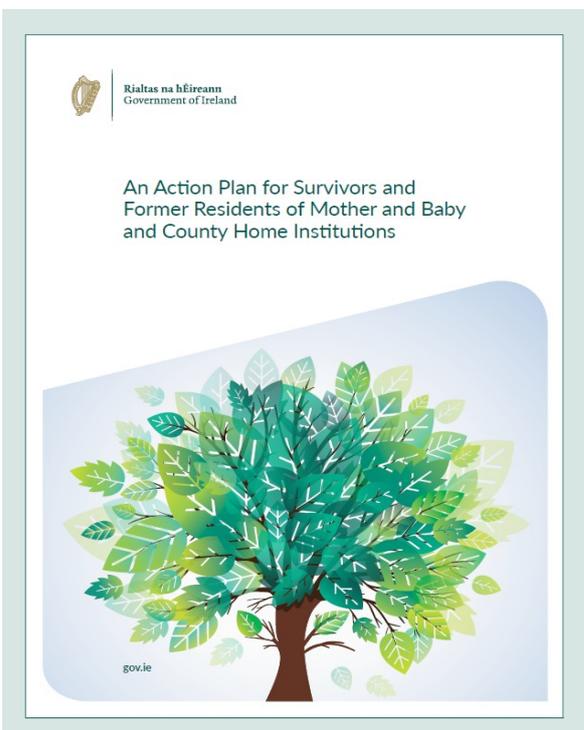
One particularly significant development in the past three months is that Government has now approved proposals for the development of a National Centre for Research and Remembrance. This Centre will stand as a memorial to all those who spent time in Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions, Industrial Schools, and Magdalen Laundries. There will be extensive consultation with survivors on this project, and once further details are available I will update you on how you can contribute.

Central to delivery of all the elements in Government’s Action Plan is sustained engagement with survivors and their families. I have been continuing to meet survivors over the past three months in

relation to aspects of all our ongoing work. As always, I am immensely grateful to all those who continue to give so generously of their time and engage with me on these issues. I hope you find this update useful, and please do contact my Department with any feedback you may have.

Best wishes,

Roderic



**Click here** to read the Action Plan for Survivors and Former Residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions.

If you know anyone who does not have access to email, but would be interested in receiving a copy of this update, please ask them to contact us at the number below and we can arrange to send it to them by post.



**01 6473200**

## In this update

	<b>Page</b>
<a href="#">Update on the Birth Information and Tracing Bill 2022</a>	3
<a href="#">Access to medical information—New Health Regulations</a>	3
<a href="#">Update on the Institutional Burials Bill 2022</a>	4
<a href="#">Update on the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme Bill</a>	5
<a href="#">National Centre for Research and Remembrance</a>	6
<a href="#">Local Memorialisation</a>	8
<a href="#">Making a Subject Access Request</a>	9
<a href="#">Useful Contacts</a>	9

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

### Themes and 22 Actions

<b>A Survivor-Centred Approach</b>	1. Development of a Strategic Action Plan and Engagement with Former Residents 2. Immediate Counselling Support
<b>Apology</b>	3. Apology by An Taoiseach
<b>Access to Personal Information</b>	4. Information and Tracing Legislation 5. GDPR Right of Access to Commission Records 6. Central Repository of Institutional Records
<b>Archives and Databases</b>	7. National Memorial and Records Centre 8. Public Access to Original State Files 9. Expansion of the Database 10. Appointment of an Archivist
<b>Education and Research</b>	11. Second Level Curriculum 12. Research Scholarships 13. Research on Terminology 14. Further Research on Death Registration Records
<b>Memorialisation</b>	15. National Memorial 16. Local Memorials 17. Survivor-led Annual Commemoration 18. Children’s Fund
<b>Restorative Recognition</b>	19. Health Supports 20. Financial Support 21. Inheritance Tax
<b>Dignified Burial</b>	22. Burials Legislation

### Birth Information and Tracing Bill 2022

The [Birth Information and Tracing Bill 2022](#) was published on 12 January and is currently being debated in the Houses of the Oireachtas. Since we published our last update in February, the Bill has passed all stages in Dáil Éireann and progressed to 3rd stage in Seanad Éireann. You can find more information about the legislative process, and what happens at the different stages, [here](#).

This legislation has been long awaited by many. For the first time, there will be a full and clear right of access to birth certificates, birth and early life information for anyone who was adopted, boarded out, the subject of an illegal birth registration or who otherwise has questions in relation to their origins. The Bill also provides for a robust tracing service and a Contact Preference Register, as well as a range of new bespoke measures to address issues arising for people affected by illegal birth registration.

We hope that the Bill will be enacted this summer, allowing submissions to the **Contact Preference Register to open in July**, with **applications for information beginning in October 2022**.

#### Access to medical information: New Health Regulations

We are pleased to be able to update you on access to medical information contained in the Commission of Investigation's archive of records. We know that difficulties in accessing this information had been causing distress to some survivors.

Until recently, if a person requested access to their personal information from the archive, it was mandatory for the Department, as data controller, to consult the person's health practitioner before releasing any medical information to them. Government's Action Plan contained a commitment to change this.

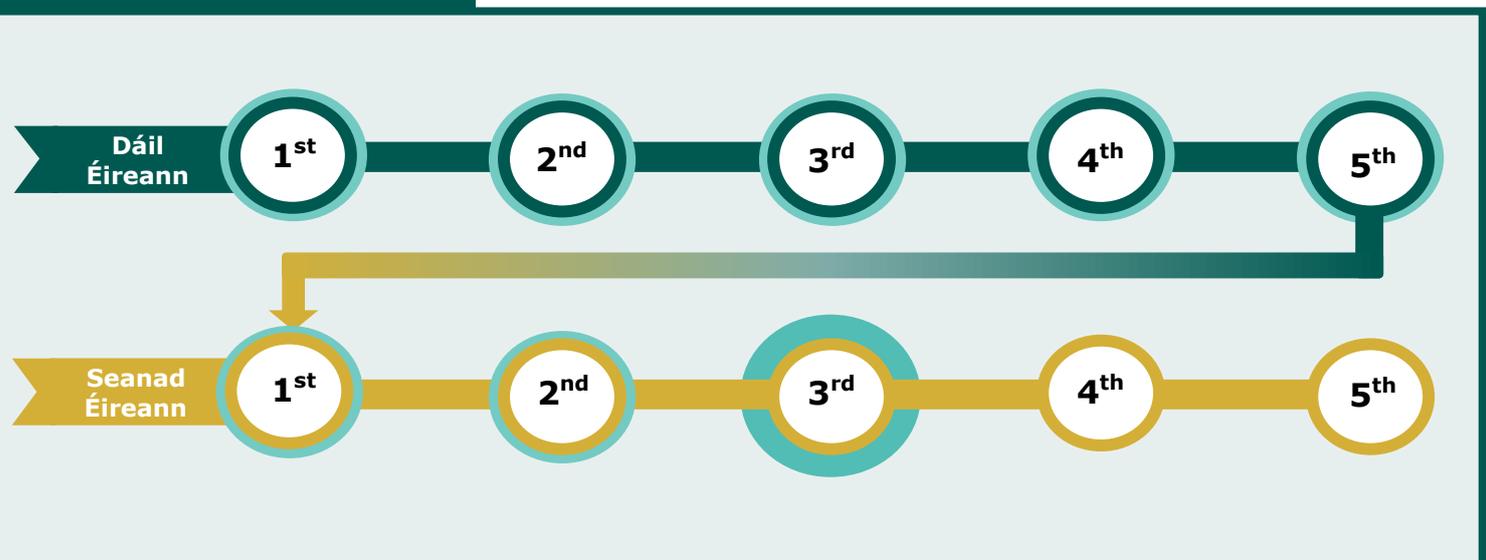
On the 10 March 2022, the Minister for Health signed the new *Data Protection Act 2018 (Access Modifications) (Health) Regulations 2022* and that requirement has now been removed.

Now that the new regulations are in place, the Department is reviewing all requests where medical information was withheld and is working to provide that information to the person as quickly as possible.

If you are awaiting the release of your health information, **you do not need to do anything**. We will be in contact with you as soon as we can.

## Bill Tracker

### Birth Information and Tracing Bill 2022



### Update on the Institutional Burials Bill 2022

The Institutional Burials Bill 2022 was published on 22 February. This Bill seeks to ensure that the remains of those who died in residential institutions and who were buried in a clearly inappropriate way can be recovered, identified and returned to their family members if possible.

The immediate need for this legislation is to allow for an intervention at the site of the former Mother and Baby Institution at Tuam, Co. Galway.

When you received our last Quarterly Update in February, the Bill was just about to begin Second Stage debate in Dáil Éireann. It completed Second Stage on 3 March and Committee Stage on 3 May. As you can see in the diagram below, the Bill is currently at Fourth Stage in Dáil Éireann. Once the Bill

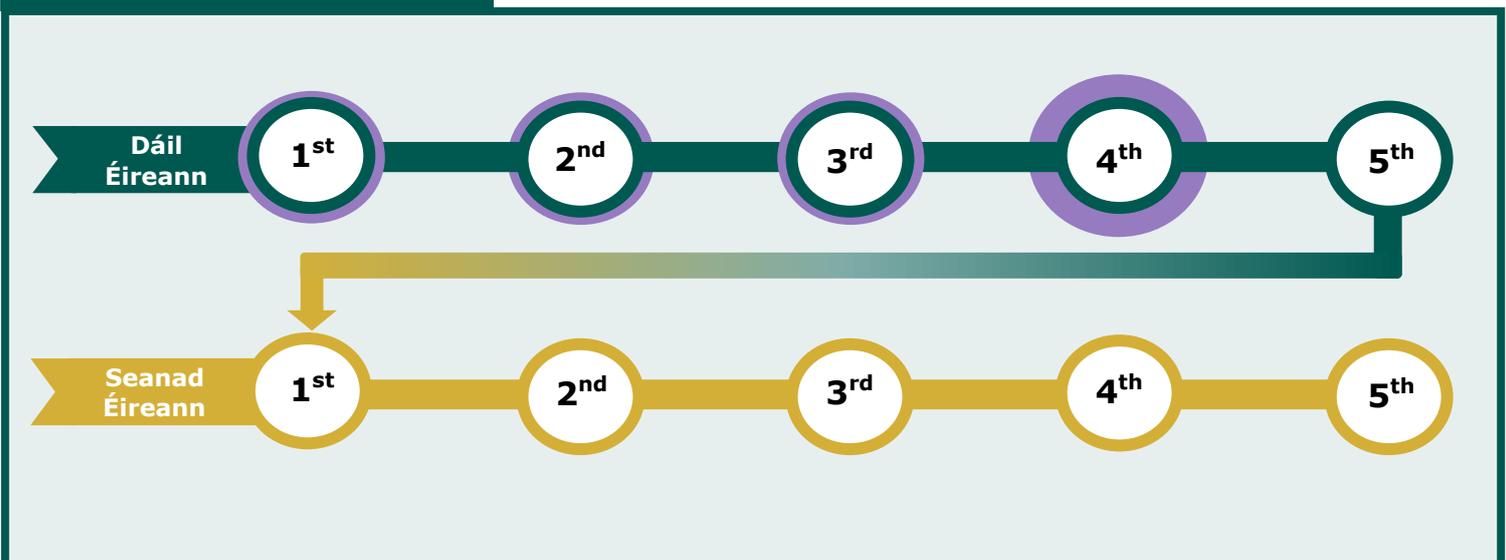
completes all five stages in Dáil Éireann, it will be sent to Seanad Éireann for consideration by that House.

Minister O’Gorman wants to bring the Bill through the legislative process as quickly as possible to allow excavation of the site to begin later this year or very early next year. You can find more information about the legislative process, and what happens at the different stages, [here](#).

If you would like to read the Bill, or any of the material published with it, you can find it [here](#).

## Bill Tracker

### Institutional Burials Bill 2022



## Restorative Recognition

On 29 March, we published a draft (called a 'General Scheme') of the **Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme Bill**. This draft legislation was referred to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for pre-legislative scrutiny.

In April, the Joint Oireachtas Committee undertook a public consultation process on the draft legislation. The Department has engaged with the Joint Oireachtas Committee as part of the pre-legislative scrutiny process.

When the pre-legislative process is finished, the next stage will be to bring the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme Bill back to Government for approval. Once the Bill is approved by Government it will then be initiated in either the Dáil or Seanad and will move through both Houses to be debated until it is passed and signed into law.

At the same time as working on the legislation needed to set up the scheme, we are also working on the administrative arrangements needed to operate the scheme and deal with applications. An Executive Office within the Department will administer the scheme and the work to set up that office is progressing.

Once the legislation has been passed by the Oireachtas, and the Executive Office is in place, then the Scheme will be able to open for applications.

For now, **there is nothing you need to do** if you think you are eligible for the Scheme. We will provide you with all of the information and support you need to apply when the Scheme is open for applications. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact us at: [MBIpaymentscheme@equality.gov.ie](mailto:MBIpaymentscheme@equality.gov.ie) or at 01-6473200.

### Pre-Legislative Scrutiny

**1 General Scheme published**

A draft Bill, called a General Scheme will be written by the Department and, if Government approves, it will be published.

**2 General Scheme sent to Joint Committee**

The General Scheme will be sent to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

**3 Committee conducts Pre-Legislative Scrutiny**

The Committee can conduct Pre-Legislative Scrutiny (PLS). It will decide whether to hold hearings and/or invite submissions from the public.

**4 Committee reports**

The Committee may prepare a report, possibly with recommendations, and send it to the Minister.

**5 Minister considers report**

The Minister will consider any recommendations the Committee has made, and will arrange for the Bill to be drafted.

**6 Bill published and introduced**

Once drafted, the Bill will be published. The Minister will then introduce it in the Dáil or Seanad. It must pass 5 stages in each House.

## National Centre for Research and Remembrance

On 29 March 2022, the Government approved high-level proposals for a National Centre for Research and Remembrance. The National Centre will be a site of conscience and will be designed as an enduring memorial to honour equally all those who were resident in Mother & Baby and County Home Institutions, Industrial Schools, Magdalen Laundries and related institutions.

The Centre will be located on the site of the former Magdalen Laundry in Sean MacDermott Street in Dublin city centre. This location was chosen for a number of reasons, including: the large size of the site; it is close to public transport hubs like Busáras, Connolly Station, Luas lines and both Dublin Airport and Port; and the fact that it is already owned by the State.

While the site is historically associated with having been a Magdalen Laundry, the design of the Centre will ensure that it stands as a national memorial to honour the lived experiences and dignity of all those who endured institutional trauma. The Centre will fulfil commitments made by Government, both past and present, to establishing a national memorial in response to recommendations made by State inquiries including:

- the Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (*The Ryan Report*),
- the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes, and
- the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee to establish the facts of State involvement with the Magdalen Laundries (*The McAleese Report*).



Sean MacDermott St.—Photo courtesy of Dublin City Council

## → Continued

**What will be in the National Centre?**

The Centre will contain a number of distinct but related areas. First, it will include a **museum and exhibition space**. This space will be developed by the National Museum of Ireland.

A **research centre** and **central repository of records** related to institutional trauma in the 20th century will sit at the heart of the Centre. The central repository will form part of the National Archives of Ireland. Legislation will be needed to underpin this element of the Centre.

One unique aspect of the central repository will be the inclusion of the **personal testimonies of survivors**, allowing the lived experiences of survivors to be formally accepted as part of the official record. Recognising the sensitivity of this work and the importance of respecting

data protection and privacy rights, the processes for preserving and accessing records will be progressed in conjunction with survivors and relevant experts. The Centre will also contain a **dedicated place for solemn reflection and remembrance**.

In addition, as part of the development of the site, **social housing units, local community facilities and an educational and early learning facility** will be constructed. The inclusion of these facilities will make a valuable contribution to the social and economic development of Dublin's North East Inner City.

While the Centre will be a national institution, it will be designed to facilitate access to digital records and exhibits for all survivors, whether in other parts of Ireland or across the world.

**Current position and next steps**

Work is underway to progress the initial planning and development stages of the project. This is being driven by a Steering Group, chaired by the former Secretary General to the Government and Ambassador-Designate to the United Kingdom, Mr. Martin Fraser.

This Steering Group will work alongside a number of working groups with particular focus areas. This includes technical and survivor reference groups, as well as the local community in Dublin's North East Inner City. This will ensure that the development of the Centre is directly informed by those most centrally involved, their families and representatives. We anticipate that a consultation process with survivor advocacy/representative groups will start in the coming months.

### Local Memorialisation

As part of an overall programme of memorialisation, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) has established a working group to develop guidance to help Local Authorities facilitate local memorialisation initiatives in line with the wishes of survivors.

The Working Group has met regularly since September 2021 and includes representatives from DHLGH, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and representatives from County and City Councils.

Consultation with survivors is integral to the operation of this working group. A consultative process, led by independent facilitators, will start in the coming weeks and survivor advocacy/representative groups have been invited to participate. We will keep you updated on this process in these Quarterly Updates.



#### Is your group organising a commemorative event?

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth funds a **Commemorative Grant Scheme**. The aim of the Scheme is to help survivor-centred advocacy groups to organise commemorative events. These events might have a focus on remembering or commemorating experiences in Mother and Baby Institutions, or they might focus on honouring those who are alive today.

If you are part of a group which wants to organise this type of event, it may be eligible for funding under the Scheme. You can find more information on the Scheme and how to apply [here](#).

If you have any questions, or would like some help with your application, please contact us:

 01 6473200

 [commemorativegrantscheme@dcya.gov.ie](mailto:commemorativegrantscheme@dcya.gov.ie)

 Block 12, Miesian Plaza  
50-58 Baggot Street Lower  
Dublin 2, D02 XWI4  
Freepost F5055

## Would you like to know if there is information about you in the Commission's archive?

When the Commission of Investigation ended its work, it gave all the records it had collected to the Department. You can make a request to get a copy of any information about you that might be in those records. This is called a **Subject Access Request (SAR)**.

So far, we have received **627 SARs** for information from the archive, and **we have issued replies to 559** of these requests, with the remainder in progress.

## How do I make a Subject Access Request?

If you would like to make a Subject Access Request, you can fill out an application form and send it to [sar@equality.gov.ie](mailto:sar@equality.gov.ie). This will help us to process your request more efficiently.

You can find the application form by clicking on [this link](#). If you have any questions about this process, please get in touch with us and we can help:



[sar@equality.gov.ie](mailto:sar@equality.gov.ie)



01-2376001 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

## Useful contacts

### HSE Information Line

The HSE operates a dedicated Freephone information line for former residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions.



**1800 817 517**

### 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 former resident of the institutions and you will be prioritised for the next available counselling place. Information about the service and contact details are available on the HSE website [here](#). You can also call:



**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 Mon-Sun). For more support options, including phone, text or online, visit [yourmentalhealth.ie](http://yourmentalhealth.ie) or call 1800 111 888.



### Join our 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 send an email to [motherandbabyhomes@equality.gov.ie](mailto:motherandbabyhomes@equality.gov.ie) requesting that your details be included.

### The Adoption Authority of Ireland



Adoption Authority of Ireland,  
Shelbourne House. Shelbourne  
Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 ,D04



01 230 9300  
+353 (0)1 230 9300



[SW@aai.gov.ie](mailto:SW@aai.gov.ie)



[aai.gov.ie](http://aai.gov.ie)

### Tusla—The Child and Family Agency



Tusla—Child and Family Agency,  
The Brunel Building, Heuston South  
Quarter, Saint John's Road West,  
Dublin 8, D08 X01F



01 771 8500  
+353 (0)1 771 8500



[info@tusla.ie](mailto:info@tusla.ie)



[www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)