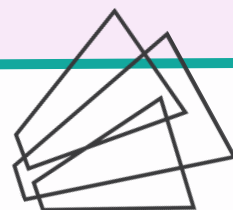


NEWSLETTER

MAY 2025

**Hello from the Special Advocate for Survivors,
Patricia Carey**

Hello all,



As we move into the second year of the Office of the Special Advocate, I want to thank all those who have engaged with myself and the team since March 2024. Without the key inputs from Survivors and Affected Persons we cannot do our work and raise the range of issues and concerns for all Survivors with those in Government.

In our next phase of work, we will enhance our communications with the launch of a website and other communications channels. We want to share up to date, clear and factual information.

We will also begin the process of appointing the Advisory Council over the coming months. I am grateful that many of you have already expressed interest and positive messages about the Advisory Council. All information about the work of the Advisory Council and the process to submit expressions of interest will be shared openly on our website, with our mailing list and via other platforms and networks to ensure this is circulated as widely as possible.

Building on the success of our first community event, we will organise further events through the year, with a focus on events outside Dublin.

Unfortunately, significant concerns remain, specifically related to the continued delay in the enactment of the Survivors Supports Bill for Industrial 'School' Institution Survivors.

We also hear every day about difficulties and exclusions many experience in making an application to the Mother and Baby 'payment' redress scheme.

I very much look forward to continuing to meet with and hear from all Survivors and Affected Persons and encourage all to join our mailing list so you can receive information via email and post.

Contact the Special Advocate office

Patricia and the Special Advocate team of three staff, Alissa, Ruth and Rachel, are committed to ensuring the collective voices of Survivors and Affected Persons are heard.

We encourage people to get in touch with the office to:

- Raise issues of concern
- Share your experiences, if you wish
- Seek further information
- Request a meeting with the Special Advocate for Survivors
- Join our mailing list and hear about updates, events and key information

We will endeavour to assist in any way that we can, and where possible, guide & signpost you to the information you are looking for.

You can contact the Special Advocate team in a number of different ways:



Email: info@specialadvocate.ie

Phone: +353 (0)1 511 7660

Address: Special Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Abuse, First Floor, Holbrook House, Holles Street, Dublin 2, D02 EY84, Ireland

Website: www.specialadvocate.ie

If you no longer wish to receive communications from the Special Advocate office, please email **info@specialadvocate.ie** and you will be removed from our mailing list.

Other updates from the office of the Special Advocate

Annual Report

It has been one year since Patricia was appointed as Special Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Abuse.

Since March 2024, Patricia has met with and spoken to over 1200 Survivors and Affected Persons who have shared their experience and insight and raised important issues with the Special Advocate. These issues have been collated as part of the Annual report for 2024.

This report has now been submitted to Minister Norma Foley and will be published and circulated to our mailing list in the coming weeks.

The Annual Report includes a breakdown of the activities of the office in its first year, covering the establishment of the Special Advocate office in Dublin, a detailed summary of the engagements of the Special Advocate with Survivors and Affected Persons, their families, and other stakeholders.

In presenting her Annual Report, Patricia will highlight the many issues raised with her over the past 12 months, and her recommendations developed in response.

The Annual Report will be shared with the Special Advocate's mailing list. You can request a hard / posted copy by contacting the office.








Email: info@specialadvocate.ie

Phone: +353 (0)1 511 7660

About the Special Advocate





What are the objectives of the Special Advocate?

Patricia continues to act within the objectives of the Special Advocate role. It is our hope that in doing so the Special Advocate will effect real change for Survivors and Affected Persons.

-  Engaging with Survivors and Affected Persons
-  Reporting on the collective interests, experiences and issues of Survivors and Affected Persons
-  Providing opportunities for Survivors and Affected Persons to meet and share their own lived experiences and views
-  Ensuring Survivors and Affected Person's voices are central in key projects such as the National Centre for Research and Remembrance
-  Establishing and working with an Advisory Council of Survivors and Affected Persons

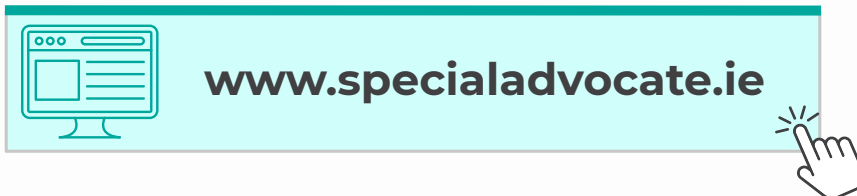
The Limits of the Role of The Special Advocate

There are certain actions are outside the scope of the role of the Special Advocate, these are:

-  Providing services or advocating on behalf of individuals.
-  Investigating the institutional experiences of individuals or complaints about services or providers.
-  Inspecting or regulating the quality or delivery of services.
-  Providing legal advice on individual cases

Special Advocate Website

We are delighted to advise that the homepage of the Special Advocate website is now live

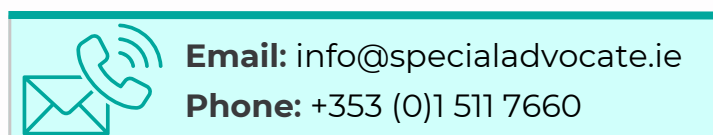


Phase two of the website with more detailed information and content is currently under development and is planned to launch in June. The team building the website have ensured that it has been designed to meet the highest level of accessibility standards.

The website will function as an informative and easy-to-access space to locate up-to-date information, to find out about the work of the Special Advocate for Survivors, and relevant updates, upcoming events and useful resources.

If you have ideas or suggestions of content and information you would find helpful to see on the website, we would be grateful for your ideas.

Please contact the Special Advocate team:

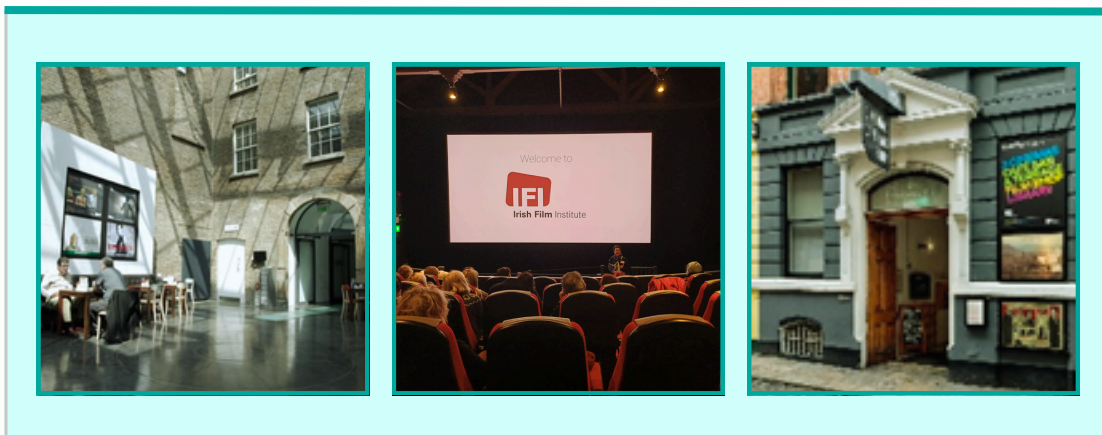


Other updates from the office of the Special Advocate

Survivor Community Events

The Special Advocate's office held our first community event of 2025. On the 5 February we were joined in the Irish Film Institute (IFI) in Dublin for a private screening of 'Small Things like These' for Survivors and Affected Persons.

Patricia and the team were delighted to have a chance to meet and build connections with those who attended and look forward to future events.



Thank you to all who attended, we look forward to organising further events in the future outside Dublin.



If you have any ideas for further community events, please get in touch, we would love to hear from you.

Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022

The Birth Information & Tracing Act (BITA) was passed in 2022 by the Irish Government. It confirms the right of a person to know their origins.

The Department of Children, Disability and Equality has the lead responsibility for the Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022. Support and assistance, is available through the Adoption Authority of Ireland and the Child and Family Agency, Tusla.

People who were adopted, boarded out, the subject of an illegal birth registration or born in a Mother and Baby or County Home Institution, will have clear and guaranteed access to information and records about their birth and early life, where this information is available.

Unfortunately, in some cases the information applied for may not exist or be recorded. But all material that does exist will be made available, along with a copy of the underlying records.

By applying to access your information through BITA, you are entitled to access your birth certificate, birth, early life, care, and medical information, and where applicable information relating to an illegal birth registration.

**BIRTH
INFORMATION
& TRACING**

Contact Preference Register

Under the Act, a Contact Preference Register has been established and this is open for applications. The register enables adopted persons, parents or other genetic relatives to register their preference in relation to contact with each other.

The Contact Preference Register is a way to enable people to register their preference in relation to contact with an adopted person or genetic relative, as well as allowing them lodge personal communications or contemporary information, including medical details. More information on who is eligible to register a contact preference and how to do so is available at birthinfo.ie.

Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022

Tracing Service

The Birth Information and Tracing Act also provides for a Statutory Tracing Service. This enables people to actively trace family members for consensual contact or sharing of information, including for instance, vital medical information. Persons adopted, boarded out or with an illegal birth registration, their parents and their genetic relatives can apply for the service.

Review of the Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022

Under the Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022 legislation, there is a requirement for a review of the Act after 2 years. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth has established a Working Group to manage the review process. Patricia, in her role as Special Advocate, has been invited to sit on the Working Group.

As this progresses, information and updates will be shared on the Special Advocate website, newsletter and with our mailing list.

Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022

Contact Information

For further information, support or assistance relating to Birth Information and Tracing, please contact:

Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022

More details on who is eligible to apply for a tracing service is available at www.birthinfo.ie.



www.birthinfo.ie



TUSLA



Email: BITCounselling@tusla.ie
Phone: +353 818 44 55 00



www.tusla.ie



Adoption Authority of Ireland



Email: records@aai.gov.ie
Phone: +353 1 230 9300



www.aai.gov.ie



Illegal Birth Registration

If you suspect or were subject to an illegal birth registration and would like to have your Birth Certificate amended or for further information, please contact the General Registrar Office (GRO).

The GRO team have a new dedicated email address which people affected by illegal birth registrations and their families can use to contact with any questions or queries they may have.



BITA@welfare.ie



The Magdalen Restorative Justice Ex-Gratia Scheme

The Magdelene Scheme ex-gratia payment remains open for new applications.

We encourage anyone who might be eligible for this redress scheme to find out more information and apply.

Women who applied to this redress scheme and were successful were given ex-gratia (non-taxed) payments based on the length of time they spent in the Magdelene laundries.

More information on the scheme and application forms can be found on the Government website



gov.ie - Magdalen Commission Scheme



Contact details for any questions about this redress can be found below.



Email: MRJScheme@equality.gov.ie

Phone: 087 143 3235 and 087 165 6460

Address for post:

Magdalen Restorative Justice Ex-Gratia Scheme

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth (DCEDIY), Block 1, Miesian Plaza,

50 – 58 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2 D02 XW14

Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme

The Special Advocate meets with the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme Executive Office on a regular and ongoing basis. During these meetings, Patricia has the opportunity to raise the issues experienced by Survivors and Affected Persons who are applying for the scheme. We acknowledge the exclusions in the scheme, and Patricia continues to raise all of the exclusions with the Department.

The Mother and Baby Institution payment scheme opened in March 2024 and is open for five years.

The Special Advocate encourages all those currently eligible for the scheme to apply.

It is important that those currently eligible are aware of the scheme and can apply if they choose to. The Special Advocate Office welcome any feedback on how we can to share information about the Mother and Baby Institution payment scheme.

The Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme website includes information on eligibility for this redress scheme, how to apply for the scheme, commonly asked questions and key steps in the payment process along with other areas of interest



Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme

Contact details for queries and feedback on the scheme to the Payment Scheme Office.



Email: info@paymentscheme.ie

Phone: +353 (0)1 522 9992

Address for post: PO Box 13668, Waterford, Ireland
Or, through the online portal if you applied online.

Supports for Survivors of Residential Institutional Abuse Bill 2024

The main purpose of the Supports for Survivors of Residential Institutional Abuse Bill 2024 is to provide health and education supports for Survivors of Residential Institutional Abuse, and to provide for the dissolution of the Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Board (also known as Caranua).

The Special Advocate has raised concerns at the continued delays in the enactment of this legislation and the exclusion of those who did not receive redress as part of the previous Residential Institutions Redress Scheme.

This bill should refer to: Any person who was resident in an Institution specified in the schedule to the Residential Institutions Redress Act 2002

As of February 2025, the bill is currently before Dáil Éireann, Fourth Stage (report stage).

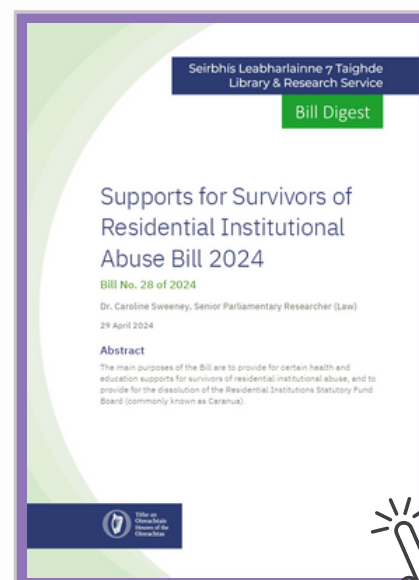
What is the Fourth Stage, also known as Report Stage?

The Fourth Stage or Report Stage is the last opportunity where Members can make amendments to the text of a Bill. They may not bring forward any new amendments but any that were raised during the previous stage are considered.

When all the amendments have been dealt with, the Bill is received for final consideration (Fifth Stage) and the Bill is passed by the House.



Click to read the Bill Digest →



Report on Negotiations with Religious Organisations associated with Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme

Earlier this month, Minister Norma Foley published the 'Report on Negotiations with Religious Organisations associated with Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme.'

Sheila Nunan was tasked with leading a process of negotiation with eight religious organisations who have historical involvement in Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions. This engagement took place with a view to securing a 'voluntary financial contribution' from religious organisations towards the cost of the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme.

The report shows that just two of the eight organisations offered a contribution towards the cost of the Payment Scheme and a third offered a 'charitable contribution' of 75,000 euro.



[Read the report here](#)



The Special Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Abuse is deeply disappointed by the completely inadequate contributions that have been offered by religious orders towards redress for Survivors of Mother and Baby Institutions.

You can request a copy of the press release issued by Special Advocate on this by contacting the office.

Philomena's Law

Philomena's Law was introduced by Liam Conlon MP on the 12 March 2025. It seeks to address the issues experienced by Survivors and Affected Persons living in the UK.

Currently applicants from the UK who receive means-tested benefits or supports for social care costs can lose their entitlement upon receipt of the payment and receiving the payment can also impact their future claims.

This proposed Bill will exclude payments, such as the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme from calculations of a person's eligibility for means-tested benefits or financial support for social care.

Philomena's Law has been introduced but is not yet law. The Special Advocate supports a speedy enactment of this law.

The Special Advocate met with Liam Conlon MP

The Special Advocate was delighted to welcome Liam Conlon, Member of Parliament of the United Kingdom, to the office in April for a meeting with the Special Advocate and Survivors and Affected Persons.

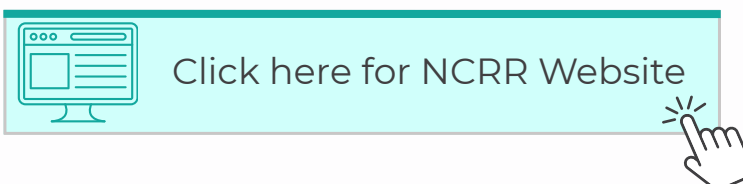
The Special Advocate welcomed the opportunity to discuss Philomena's Law, and other key issues and supports for Survivors and Affected Persons living in the UK.

Memorialisation

National Centre for Research and Remembrance

The National Centre for Research and Remembrance (NCRR) will stand as a site of conscience to honour equally all those who were resident in Industrial Schools, Magdalene Laundries, Mother and Baby Institutions, Reformatories, and related institutions.

More information about the National Centre for Research and Remembrance project can be found on the dedicated website:



As of February 2025, planning permission has been granted to the Office of Public Works (OPW) for the National Centre for Research and Remembrance.

Images From The OPW Masterplan of the NCRR



Survivor and Affected Persons Engagement

A series of engagement sessions for Survivors and Affected Persons took place between October 2024 and February 2025. In-person events took place in Dublin, Galway, Cork and London, as well as an online session for those who could not attend the events in-person. An engagement event also took place with the North East Inner City

The feedback gathered from the Survivor engagement events is currently being compiled and will be published on the National Centre for Research and Remembrance website. This feedback will help to inform the ongoing work on the National Centre, and future engagements.



For all updates relating to the National Centre for Research and Remembrance, you can join the mailing list by sending an email to **nationalcentre@equality.ie**

museum
National Museum of Ireland
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

National Museum of Ireland

The National Museum of Ireland

The National Museum of Ireland wishes to engage with survivors and affected people as part of their work to co- design and co-create a museum and exhibition space to form part of the National Centre for Research and Remembrance. This museum will focus on the history and ongoing impact of forced family separation and Mother and Baby Institutions, Industrial Schools, Reformatories, Magdalene Laundries and related institutions.

Museum staff are engaging with survivors and affected people who wish for their knowledge and experiences to be represented in the national collection and in the National Centre for Research and Remembrance. As your National Museum, we are working on an ongoing basis to collect objects and oral histories and to connect and collaborate with survivors and affected people.

How to Contact the National Museum

If you would like to have your experience represented, or if you would like to contribute to our work to develop the museum element of the National Centre, we welcome you to contact us using the below information:



Email: ncrr@museum.ie

Phone: +353 (0)1 648 6400

WhatsApp: +353 (0)87 428 1737

Address: Donna Rose, East Annex, National Museum of Ireland,
Benburb Street, Collins Barracks, Dublin 7



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

The Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam (ODAIT)

Below is an extract of a recent press release issued by Daniel MacSweeney, Director of Authorised Intervention for Tuam on 29 April 2025:

Daniel MacSweeney, Director of Authorised Intervention for Tuam, has confirmed that, pending the appointment of the excavation contractor, work at the Tuam site will get underway in the second half of June this year.

The Director was appointed in 2023 to oversee and manage the excavation, recovery, analysis, identification (if possible) and dignified reburial of the children's remains at the Tuam site. Since his appointment, the Director has worked to establish the core administrative and staffing structures of the Office, has engaged extensively with relatives, survivors and former residents of the institution and has developed a detailed design of excavation and construction works. In late 2024, he completed preliminary groundworks at the site in preparation for the excavation to begin in 2025.

The confirmation of the start date for the next phase of work at the site is a significant milestone in the journey to provide dignity to the children who have been so inappropriately interred there for so long. It is recognised that this will be a difficult time for survivors and family members. In this regard, it is important to note that the Director has confirmed that visits to the site for survivors and family members will be facilitated at the start of the works.

**The full press release can be found on the ODAIT
website here: [Press Release - Odait](#)**



Barnardos Origins

Origins Tracing Service is for people who spent all or part of their childhood in an Irish Industrial School and are interested in tracing information about their parents, siblings or other relatives. The service is available to people in Ireland and abroad.

What does Origins Tracing Service do?

Experienced professional staff offer advice, support and mediation in your search for your family of origin. Approximately 50% of the cases dealt with by the Origins Tracing Service have led to a reunion with their family of origin. Many of these cases involved reuniting sisters and brothers who were separated as children.

The service is completely confidential.

For further information about Origins Tracing Service, you can get in touch by telephone, email or letter. You will be sent an application and consent form to complete



Email: origins@barnardos.ie

Phone: (+353 1) 813 4100

Address: 23-24 Lower Buckingham St. Dublin 1, Ireland



Visit: www.barnardos.ie/our-services/origins-service

Barnardos Birth History Service

Barnardos has provided a service to adopted people, birth families and adoptive families since 1977.

This service has been extended to include therapeutic support services to adults who were subject of an illegal birth registration and to individuals who were boarded out, fostered or nursed out as children in Ireland pre-1991. We offer a free, confidential and professional service for,

- Individual support and advice
- Group support
- A confidential helpline

We offer free Individual therapeutic sessions for,

- Birth Mothers
- Birth Fathers
- Adopted Adults
- Individuals subject of an illegal birth registration
- Individuals who were 'boarded out', 'nursed out' or fostered prior to the 1991 Child Care Act

Barnardos run a series of Birth History Events that take place both in person and online. There is variety of one-off events as well as events that run over several weeks. You can find out more about upcoming events as well as how to register on the Barnardos website.

www.barnardos.ie



TÚSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Barnardos
Because childhood lasts a lifetime

Barnardos Birth History Service

Therapeutic service for birth mothers, birth families, adopted adults, individuals subject of an illegal birth registration, or people with experience of being boarded out



Barnardos

Barnardos new service, the **Boarded Out Practical Support Service for Adults**, is open to people who were boarded out as children up until the introduction of the 1991 Child Care Act.

If you have experience of being boarded out and would like to avail of practical support, you can contact Barnardos Boarded Out Practical Support Service for Adults.

Barnardos provide a free and confidential service offering a wide range of practical supports including:

- ▶ Support to access to health, community and social services
- ▶ Support with isolation and loneliness
- ▶ Assistance in filling out forms and grant applications
- ▶ Advocacy, information and signposting
- ▶ Referral to Barnardos therapeutic supports

Dublin



Phone: (+353 1) 813 4100

Address: 4 Christchurch Square, Dublin 8 D08 DT63
and 23/24 Buckingham Street Lower, Dublin 1

Cork



Phone: (021) 203 8005

Address: Blackmore House, Meade Street, Cork

Galway



Phone: (091) 454489

Address: The Sanctuary, 27 Chois Chlair, Claregalway

Christine Buckley Centre



The Christine Buckley Centre is a warm and welcoming support and education Centre for Survivors of institutions.

“We offer a variety of groups, activities, and trips throughout the year designed to promote social connection, wellbeing, and learning.”

If you would like to take part, please register with the Christine Buckley Centre in the following ways:



Email: info@christineb.ie

Phone: 01 872 5771



www.christineb.ie



Get in touch

Contact Us

Contact the Special Advocate office

We Would Like To Keep In Touch:

We are committed to ensuring the collective voices of Survivors and Affected People are heard.

We will endeavour to assist in any way that we can, and where possible, guide & signpost you to the information and services you are looking for.

You can contact the Special Advocate team in different ways:

Email: info@specialadvocate.ie

Phone: +353 (0)1 511 7660

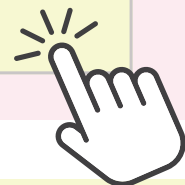
Address: Special Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Abuse, First Floor, Holbrook House, Holles Street, Dublin 2, D02 EY84, Ireland



Visit the Special Advocate's Website



Visit: www.specialadvocate.ie



If you no longer wish to receive communications from the Special Advocate office, please email info@specialadvocate.ie and you will be removed from our mailing list.