



Special Advocate

For Survivors of Institutional Abuse

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2025

Hello from the Special Advocate for Survivors, Patricia Carey



Hello all,

Welcome to the first newsletter from the Special Advocate office.

We will send regular newsletters which will inform and communicate news, key information and updates on all aspects of work and relevant events linked to the Special Advocate.

Over the last nine months I have met and engaged with over seven hundred Survivors and Affected People, all over Ireland and abroad, particularly those living in USA and UK. The key concerns you have raised with me will inform our work in 2025 and the content of this first newsletter.

I am delighted that we are announcing our first community event in the Irish Film Institute on the 5th February- more details within the newsletter.

Creating spaces and events for Survivors and Affected People to meet was a key message I heard during many engagements. This will be the first event for 2025, and I look forward to further events and engagement this year.

Shortly, we will launch our website which will provide a range of information on our work, events and reflect the issues you have raised with me since March 2024.

I want to encourage you to engage with me and the team. We are committed to communicating with you in the best way for you, by phone, by posting you information, online, email and via the website, once launched.

For me and the team, the first nine months have been remarkable, due in no small measure to the broad welcome you have given us. We look forward to continuing to meet, listen and learn from you all.



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 People 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 the full website is due to launch in early 2025

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.



Branding and Logo

Following the establishment of the Special Advocate’s office last year, we began the process of developing the branding and logo. We have recently finalised the design and have started to roll out the design in communications from the office.

The intention of the logo was to create an image that promoted the intentions of the office; to ensure a strong and sustained voice for those affected by institutional abuse and forced family separation, living in Ireland and abroad.

In representing a diverse, broad and worldwide community, it was important to represent the many different backgrounds and experiences within our logo.

The shape chosen was based on the use of megaphones, to portray a strong & powerful voice. The body of the megaphone icon consists of multiple shapes coming together with distinct, overlapping blocks to symbolise the backgrounds and experiences of different Survivors and Affected People.

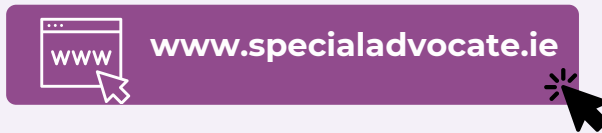
These come together to reflect a single icon, a united and strong image. Areas where the shapes overlap portray the transparency of the office.

We would like to offer our sincere thanks to everyone who assisted and provided their valuable feedback during the design of the new logo.



Website

A website for the Special Advocate is currently in development and the full website is due to launch in early 2025.



We hope this will become a space to share updates on the work of the Special Advocate office, news, and useful resources for Survivors and Affected People.

The website has been designed to meet the highest level of accessibility standards and our thanks to the Big Motive team for all their work on the website to date.

Ahead of the launch of the website, we will undertake further engagement with Survivors and Affected People to ensure the website is as useful and easy to navigate as possible.

Please get in touch if you are interested in taking part in this process. We are very grateful to all who have already provided feedback on the website and have taken part in testing.

If you have any suggestions for relevant content you might find useful or would like to see on the website, we always welcome ideas and suggestions!

Upcoming Events

Last year the office of the Special Advocate was privileged to meet, speak to and connect with over 700 Survivors and Affected People. From these meetings, many expressed a wish for more opportunities to meet and build connections with other Survivors and Affected People and to foster a sense of community.

We are delighted to announce that we will be holding our first community event of 2025 with a private screening of 'Small Things like These' for Survivors and Affected People.

We look forward to many more opportunities for community events in the future and welcome any ideas and suggestions for future events – so please get in touch.

Private Screening of Small Things Like These

Event information:

This film screening will take place on **Wednesday 5th February at 11am** in the Irish Film Institute (IFI). This will be followed by tea & coffee in the IFI cafe.

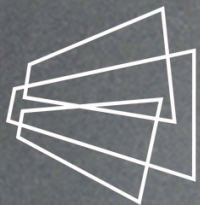
Irish Film Institute
6 Eustace Street
Temple Bar, Dublin 2
D02 PD85

You can read more about the film by [clicking here](#).

How to book tickets:

Tickets are free of charge and will be allocated on a first come basis, with a maximum of two tickets per person.

If you would like to attend, please e-mail info@specialadvocate.ie or call us on **+353 (0) 1 511 7660** and a member of the team will get back to you.



**Special
Advocate**
For Survivors of
Institutional Abuse

SMALL THINGS LIKE THESE

FILM SCREENING WEDNESDAY 5 FEBRUARY 11AM



Irish Film Institute
6 Eustace St, Temple Bar, Dublin 2, D02 PD85



Limited spaces available
Please contact the Special Advocate's office to book your place



Email: info@specialadvocate.ie
Phone: 01 511 7660

National Centre for Research and Remembrance

The National Centre for Research and Remembrance, to be located on Sean MacDermott Street, in Dublin, Ireland, will be a national memorial and site of conscience to honour equally all those who spent time in Industrial Schools, Magdalene Laundries, Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions, Reformatories and related institutions.

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



www.gov.ie/nationalcentre

Survivor and Affected People Engagement

It is critically important that the Steering Group for this major government project, works in partnership with survivors and affected people on the design and development of the Centre.

A series of engagement events are currently being held so that Survivors and Affected People, and their family members and advocates, can find out more about and share their feedback on the development of the National Centre for Research and Remembrance.

In October and November 2024, three engagement sessions took place in Dublin, Galway and Cork. These included presentations from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), Office of Public Works (OPW), National Archives of Ireland and the National Museum of Ireland.

These presentations can be found on the National Centre for Research and Remembrance site.

Further engagement sessions are now scheduled for London and online. More information on these two events and how to register can be found below.



If you have any queries on these events, please contact nationalcentre@equality.gov.ie

Feedback

Once all of the engagement events are finished, all feedback gathered from the events will be compiled and 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.

gov.ie - National Centre – consultation and engagement

National Centre for Research and Remembrance

Engagement Events in London and Online

Online Session

This online session is intended to provide an update and opportunity for feedback from Survivors and Affected People living overseas, as well as those who were unable to take part in the engagement events in Dublin, Cork or Galway.

It will take place on Wednesday 19 February 2025, between 5pm and 8pm GMT via Microsoft Teams.

The event will involve a short presentation with updates from DCEDIY, OPW, National Archives of Ireland and the National Museum of Ireland, followed by in-depth discussion and feedback in breakout rooms.

This is to ensure that every attendee who wishes to give feedback can do so, and to enable all voices to be heard. The breakout rooms will also provide attendees an opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

Please click below to register to attend this event



Register for the online event here

London

An in-person engagement event has been arranged to take place in London to provide an opportunity for UK-based Survivors and Affected People to hear more about the National Centre for Research and Remembrance project and share feedback.

It will take place on Tuesday 25 February 2025, between 12.30 and 5pm GMT in the London Irish Centre, 50-52 Camden Square London NW1 9XB United Kingdom.

The event will involve a short presentation with updates from DCEDIY, OPW, National Archives of Ireland and the National Museum of Ireland, followed by in-depth discussion and feedback at round tables.

Please click below to register to attend this event



Register for the London event here

Advisory Council

Since her appointment at the end of March 2024, Patricia has spent her time meeting and engaging with Survivors and Affected People, various Survivor groups, as well as with partner & support organisations in Ireland and overseas working directly with those affected by institutional abuse and forced family separation.

The work of Special Advocate for Survivors will be supported by an Advisory Council, to ensure the work is informed by the lived experience and needs of those most centrally affected.

Once this initial round of engagements has concluded, the Special Advocate will consider, plan, and publicise how and when the Advisory Council will be established.

Records and Information

People seeking information on how to find and access their records is one of the main issues raised with the Special Advocate office. In this newsletter, we hope to provide some helpful guidance and signposting to support people in finding their personal information.



Legislation to preserve privately-held records relating to Ireland's institutional past

The Special Advocate welcomed the signing into law on 28 October by President Higgins new legislation regarding privately-held records related to Ireland Institutional history.

This legislation makes it a criminal offense to destroy, fail to preserve, remove from the jurisdiction or fail to give the Director of the National Archives of Ireland an account of, privately held records relating to Ireland's institutional and family separation system and the religious and other bodies that operated it. This is a key first step for the State to take in charge all records from both private and religious bodies related to institutional incarceration and forced family separation.

There is an urgent need for access to records and files and many Survivors still do not have access to their own history of early life, education, health and placement for adoption in Ireland and abroad.

[MORE INFO](#)

Accessing your records from the Residential Institutions Redress Board

People who applied for redress to the Residential Institutions Redress Board (RIRB) can apply to the Board for a copy of their original application.

The Redress Board was set up under the Residential Institutions Redress Act 2002 to make fair and reasonable awards to persons who, as children, were abused while resident in industrial schools, reformatories and other institutions subject to state regulation or inspection. This was commonly known as the redress scheme associated with the Ryan Report published in 2009.



Please note that this redress scheme is **no longer open** for applications.

If you applied to this redress scheme and would be interested in seeking a copy of your file, the Special Advocate office has a more detailed document provided by the RIRB, which outlines the process by which people can apply for a copy of their original RIRB application, the steps involved in this, as well as the relevant legislation, sections 28(1) and 28(6) of the Residential Institutions Redress Act 2002, which affects these records.

We would be happy to share this information with anyone who would like to know more. Please email the team at info@specialadvocate.ie if you would like a copy of this information.

Contact Details for the Residential Institutions Redress Board

If you have any queries in relation to your records, please contact the Residential Institutions Redress Board.



Email: info@rirb.ie

Phone: +353 (0)1 268 0600

Address: The Residential Institutions Redress Board
3rd Floor, St Stephens Green House, Earlsfort Terrace,
Dublin 2, D02 PH42, Ireland



Below we have highlighted information on current redress schemes

Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme





Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme

As we approach the one year anniversary of the launch of the Mother and Baby Institutions payment scheme, feedback on the Mother and Baby Institutions payment scheme has been a major theme of communications received from those contacting the Special Advocate and her office. We welcome ongoing feedback from people on the scheme & their experiences in applying.

The Mother and Baby Institution payment scheme opened in March 2024 and is open for five years. We encourage people living in Ireland and abroad to apply to this redress scheme.

The Payment Scheme website includes information on eligibility, 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
www.paymentscheme.ie


You can contact the Payment Scheme office by:




Address: PO Box 13668, Waterford, Ireland,
Phone: +353 1 522 9992

or

Through the **online portal**, if you applied online.
Email: for general queries info@paymentscheme.ie

Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme - Medical Card

More information on the medical card provided under the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme and some answers to frequently asked questions have been developed by the Payment Scheme office and can be found on the website [here](#):

 **About: Medical Card from The Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme**

Following feedback to the Payment Scheme office, Medical cards are now sent out with a leaflet issued by the Health Service Executive (HSE) to explain its function.

The text of the leaflet contains the following information:-

The medical card provided from the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme is a life-long, non-means tested card which provides an entitlement to the following:

- General Practitioner (GP) services
- Approved prescribed drugs, medicines, aids and appliances
- All inpatient public hospital services in a public ward (including consultant services)
- All outpatient public hospital services in a public ward (including consultant services)
- Maternity and infant care services
- Certain dental/ophthalmic and aural services – contact your local HSE office
- No prescription charges for the person named on this card only
- A lifelong card - We will automatically issue a new card to you in 10 years.
- Home nursing
- Home support
- Counselling
- Chiropody/podiatry
- Physiotherapy



Magdalene Scheme ex-gratia payment

The Magdalene Scheme ex-gratia payment is still open to receive applications and we encourage anyone who might be eligible for this redress scheme to find out more information and apply.

What is the Magdalene Commission Scheme?

The Magdalene Commission Scheme was set up because of The Magdalen Commission Report of Mr Justice John Quirke 2013.



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 Magdalene laundries.

How to apply

More information on the scheme and application forms can be found on the Government website here: gov.ie - Magdalen Commission Scheme .

Contact details for information on the Magdalene Restorative Justice Ex-Gratia Scheme



Email: MRJScheme@equality.gov.ie

Phone: 087 1433235 / 087 1656460

Address: Restorative Justice Scheme, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth (DCEDIY), Block 1, Miesian Plaza, 50 – 58 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2, D02 XW14



Justice for Magdelenes Research (JFMR) have developed resources for Survivors about the scheme on their website Resources for Survivors & Families

[Visit jfmresearch.com](http://Visit.jfmresearch.com)



Below we have highlighted information, supports and services available

Sage Advocacy

People who spent time in a State-run Institution can contact Sage Advocacy for information, support, safeguarding support and individual advocacy services.

Sage was approached by the Department of Education in late 2023 to extend its services to meet the needs of survivors of institutional abuse – ensuring that they benefit from all supports, whether public, private or voluntary, which relate to their welfare.

More information on the services provided by Sage Advocacy can be found on their website: sageadvocacy.ie



Information, support and advocacy services for survivors of institutional abuse - Sage Advocacy

The service is free of charge and confidential. Sage Advocacy will act on the person's behalf, independent of family members, service providers and systems interests; whether church, State or corporate.

How to contact Sage Advocacy

Survivors and people affected by institutional abuse can contact Sage Advocacy in the following ways:



Email: info@sageadvocacy.ie

Phone: +353 (0)1 5367330

Address: 24-26 Upper Ormond Quay, Dublin D07 DAV9



Below we have highlighted information, supports and services available

National Counselling Service

If you are a former resident of a Mother and Baby Home Institution, or have experienced abuse in childhood, including those resident in other Institutions and settings, and feel you would benefit from counselling to address the impact of your experiences, help is available from the HSE National Counselling Service.

Counselling is available face to face, by telephone or online through secure video. This service is available to adults living in Ireland.

How you can access this service

Access to the National Counselling Service may be made by direct self-referral. You can do this by referring yourself to the service that is nearest to you. The team will also accept written referrals from health care professionals such as GPs.

More information can be found on the NCS website:



Below we have highlighted information, supports and services available

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

The Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam (ODAIT) is an independent body established to oversee a staged approach to the recovery of human remains from the site of the former Mother and Baby Home Institution in Tuam, Co. Galway.

Daniel MacSweeney was appointed by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, as the Director of the Office of Authorised Intervention, Tuam in May 2023.

A new website has been developed to provide more information on the work in Tuam and can be found on their website.

Contact details for the Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam



Email: info@dait.ie

Phone: +353 (0)1 539 1777

Address: Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam, Custom House, Flood Street, Galway City H91XV2C



Click to visit the website for The Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam
odait.ie