

# INFORMATION BOOKLET



**Special  
Advocate**

For Survivors of  
Institutional Abuse

## Advisory Council for the Special Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Abuse

# 2025

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## About the Special Advocate for Survivors

### Who is the Special Advocate for Survivors?

Patricia Carey was appointed to the role of the Special Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Abuse in March 2024.



The role of the Special Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Abuse is to ensure that the views of Survivors and Affected Persons are **central** to the delivery of the State's response to the legacy of institutional trauma and forced family separation.

The Special Advocate is operationally independent of Government.

Since her appointment, her priority as Special Advocate has been to hear people's experiences of institutional and other forms of abuse and injustice. The Special Advocate uses the accounts shared with her to amplify and represent the views of Survivors and Affected Persons to Government.

### Why was the Special Advocate for Survivors appointed?

The position of Special Advocate was established by the Irish Government as part of the Department of Children, Disability, Equality's (DCDE) Action Plan for Survivors and Former Residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions.

The responses of Government to the legacy of these institutions must be directly informed by the voices of those most directly affected.

### Who does the Special Advocate for Survivors engage with?

The aim of the Special Advocate is to ensure a strong and sustained voice for Survivors affected by institutional abuse and forced family separation, both for those living in Ireland and abroad.



The Special Advocate's role covers Survivors and Affected Persons with experience of:

- Industrial School and Reformatory School Institutions
- Magdalene Laundries
- Mother and Baby or County Home Institutions
- Those resident in other institutions related to Ireland's network of mother and baby institutions or affected by forced family separation
- Those Boarded Out or Fostered
- Those whose births were illegally registered
- People living overseas covered under the Special Advocate's remit

## What are the objectives of the Special Advocate for Survivors?



Hearing From and Building Trust with Survivors and Affected Persons and groups, in Ireland and overseas



Raising Collective Issues with government departments, officials and service providers who work with Survivors and Affected Persons



Ensuring that the voices of Survivors and Affected Persons are central in key projects



Reporting on the collective interests, experiences and issues of Survivors and Affected Persons

## About the Advisory Council

### What is the Advisory Council?

Since her appointment as Special Advocate in March 2024, Patricia has spent her time meeting and engaging with Survivors and Affected Persons and various Survivor groups, as well as with partner and support organisations in Ireland and overseas who work directly with those affected by institutional abuse and forced family separation.

Now that the initial round of engagements with Survivors and Affected Persons has concluded, the Special Advocate is seeking to establish an Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council will further ensure that the work of the Special Advocate is informed by the lived experience and needs of those most centrally affected.

### How will the Advisory Council be structured?

The Special Advocate for Survivors will establish **7 pillars** as part of the Advisory Council supporting her work.

Each pillar will represent a specific area of institutional abuse and/or forced family separation.

- **PILLAR 1:** People who spent time in Industrial School and Reformatory Institutions
- **PILLAR 2:** People who spent time in Magdalene Laundries
- **PILLAR 3:** Mothers who spent time in Mother and Baby or County Home Institutions, or who experienced forced family separation through other settings
- **PILLAR 4:** People who were born in or who spent time in Mother and Baby or County Home Institutions and related institutions, or who experienced forced family separation through other settings
- **PILLAR 5:** People who were Boarded Out or Fostered
- **PILLAR 6:** People whose births were illegally registered
- **PILLAR 7:** People living overseas who spent time in an institution covered under the Special Advocate's remit, or who experienced forced family separation

It is important to note that people submitting an Expression of Interest for the Advisory Council may have experience of time spent in many institutions.



## What will the Advisory Council do?

The Advisory Council will explore key themes of collective concern for Survivors and Affected Persons, such as the key issues raised with Patricia in her first year:

- **Records**
- **Redress**
- **Supports and Services for Survivors - Health and Housing**
- **Memorialisation and Dignified Burial**



Each pillar will focus on identifying key concerns and shared issues, hearing updates, and developing recommendations.

It will not be the role of the Advisory Council to discuss or review any individual issues, concerns or individual matters.

Please also note that the work of the Advisory Council and its outputs will be shared publicly, via the Special Advocate office.

## How will the Advisory Council work?

The Advisory Council members will be made up of **people with direct and lived experience** of non-recent institutional abuse and forced family separation, in accordance with the remit of the Special Advocate.

Up to 5 people will be appointed to each pillar. Members of the Advisory Council will be appointed for one year, with an option for an extension of the term.



Each pillar will meet up to three times per year. All pillars will also be invited participate in an in-person meeting of all Advisory Council members once a year.

## Selection Process to the Advisory Council

The Special Advocate for Survivors and another independent person will review Expressions of Interest to the Advisory Council and will select members of the Advisory Council pillars.



## Selection Criteria for the Advisory Council

- It is important that the Special Advocate's Advisory Council has people with **different types of skills and experience**.
- The preference for membership of the Advisory Council will be that people have had **direct and lived experience** of institutional abuse or forced family separation, in accordance with the remit of the Special Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Abuse.
- Successful Applicants will need to **prepare for and participate** in meetings and Advisory Council activities. The meeting schedule will be agreed with the Special Advocate and members.
- Successful Applicants will commit to be **respectful** and **supportive** in their interactions on the Advisory Council, ensuring that every member has an
- **equal opportunity to participate, speak and share their views**.
- The Special Advocate is keen to ensure that **marginalised or under-represented voices** are encouraged to apply.
- The Special Advocate also encourages '**new voices**' who have not had the opportunity to contribute to Survivor consultations in the past, to apply.



## Supports

The Special Advocate office is committed to providing assistance and supports for those who may need additional supports in order to participate in the Advisory Council, where reasonable.

## Questions and Further Information

If you have any questions, need any assistance in completing the Expression of Interest form, or require further information relating to the Advisory Council, please contact the Special Advocate team.

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