

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 23 September 2025**

## **Special Advocate calls for dialogue as Industrial School Survivors commence Hunger Strike**

The Special Advocate is extremely concerned at the Hunger Strike by Survivors of Industrial School and Reformatory Institutions which commenced at midnight on Sunday 21 September.

Ms Carey said her key concern relates to the health and well-being of those planning to take this course of action. She is calling on the Department of Education to continue to engage in dialogue and meet with the five Survivors to ensure a speedy resolution to the issues they have raised.

She said

***“Survivors of institutions should not have to resort to this extreme action in order to receive proper state supports”***

The Special Advocate has been vocal throughout the passage of the Supports for Survivors of Residential Abuse legislation that it is not fit for purpose.

- **All Survivors and Affected Persons who were abused while resident in industrial school or reformatories and other institutions subject to state regulation or inspection should be included in the provision of services and supports under this recently passed legislation. These supports should not be limited to only those who previously received redress under the *Residential Institutions Redress Act*.**
- **Health and Housing supports in the Act are not adequate for the needs of Survivors and Affected Persons. Survivors and Affected Persons can be particularly marginalised and vulnerable in their health and housing status.**
- **The Special Advocate supports Survivors who are calling for the Health Amendment Act (HAA) card which gives people access to more supports and services than the ‘enhanced’ medical card and included this as a recommendation in her first Annual Report, published earlier this year.**
- **Medical supports for Survivors and Affected Persons must include enhanced health and caring supports, especially to ensure they can stay living at home and are not re-institutionalised in later life. The supports for overseas Survivors must also be significantly increased.**
- **The Special Advocate calls for Survivors and Affected Persons to be given additional weighting and enhanced priority for social housing on local authority and housing body waiting lists.**



**Special  
Advocate**  
For Survivors of  
Institutional Abuse

- **The Special Advocate also supports Survivors and Affected Persons who have called for access to a shared Memorialisation fund to allow applications from Survivors and Survivor groups wishing to create local memorials and organise Survivor groups to gather.**

It is unfair and exclusionary to further discriminate against Survivors of Residential Abuse who, through no fault of their own were unable to apply or who were unaware of previous redress schemes. The exclusion of any Survivor from the support provisions outlined in the Act further enforces the lack of justice for all Survivors.

Ms Carey recently met with the Survivor group in Limerick along with Department of Education officials. She is calling for further meetings to explore an agreement to end the hunger strike.

**ENDS**

**For interviews / comment please contact:**

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### **About the Special Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Abuse**

The appointment of a Special Advocate for Survivors fulfils a core commitment in the Government's Action Plan for Survivors and Former Residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions, which contains a number of measures designed to address broader experiences of institutional trauma and forced family separation. This Action Plan recognises that the response of Government to the legacy of these institutions must be directly informed by the voices of those most centrally affected.

The Special Advocate's remit encompasses Mother and Baby Institutions, County Home Institutions, Magdalene Laundries, Industrial and Reformatory School Institutions, and related institutions, and those adopted, boarded out or the subject of an illegal birth registration.

The role of the Special Advocate for Survivors 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 abuse and forced family separation
- promote the collective interests of Survivors and Affected Persons, as expressed by them, and amplify their voices as a central, essential input to Government deliberations on matters which affect them.

The Special Advocate is operationally independent of Government.

### **About Patricia Carey**

Patricia Carey has been in the role as Special Advocate for Survivors since 25 March 2024. Patricia Carey served as the CEO of the Adoption Authority of Ireland from 2014 to 2022, leading the Authority's work on the Birth Information and Tracing Act. Prior to this role she held the position of Director of Services for St Vincent De Paul, and has also held various volunteer leadership roles, including Chairperson of Connect Counselling for Survivors of Institutional Abuse and a founding member of Outhouse resource centre for the LGBT+ community. As an adopted person born in a Mother and Baby Institution, Patricia Carey brings a unique perspective and dedication to her work.

