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The Special Advocate for Survivors supports additional survivor redress measures committed to by the Government

For interviews / comment please contact:

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- The Special Advocate welcomes the positive commitments made by Government in relation to additional Survivor redress measures for eligible Survivors of Industrial School and Reformatory Institutions.
- The urgent need for supports relating to health and housing has been consistently raised by Survivors with the Special Advocate since the establishment of the office in March 2024.
- The Special Advocate fully supports all progress in ensuring that the Irish State provides fair and equal redress for all Survivors of Institutional Abuse.
- The Special Advocate for Survivors is extremely concerned that these additional services and supports are only available to approximately 9,000 Survivors of Industrial School and Reformatory Institutions who have previously received redress under the Residential Institutions Redress Scheme and Caranua Scheme.
- A Human Rights – based approach is required to ensure equal access to redress, supports and services for all Survivors. The principle of ‘Leaving No One Behind’, equality, and fairness should underpin all redress measures including financial redress.
- The Special Advocate for Survivors welcomes the end of the hunger strike and sleep out undertaken by four Survivors of Industrial School and Reformatory Institutions last year. Survivors of institutions should not have had to resort to this extreme action in order to receive proper state supports.

The measures announced include a range of further supports for survivors of residential institutional abuse. These build on provisions in the legislation provided for in the Supports for Survivors of Residential Institutional Abuse Act 2025, which was signed into law in July 2025 by President Higgins.

The Supports for Survivors of Residential Institutional Abuse Act 2025 enables

- the establishment of a new scheme for payments to eligible survivors who wish to engage in formal education and learning activities
- the provision of a Medical Card for those eligible and resident in Ireland. Eligible survivors living abroad will be able to avail of a payment of €3,000 in lieu of this medical card to support their health needs.

Following the conclusion of a mediation process with four Industrial School and Reformatory Institution survivors who undertook a hunger strike and sleep out protest for 51 days last year, further supports will now be made available to eligible survivors.

The Special Advocate understands that these additional supports include:

- Payments to eligible survivors to support informal learning, self-development and wellbeing
- Some further health supports for eligible survivors relating to counselling and physiotherapy



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- The Appointment of dedicated Health Liaison officers
- The Special Advocate also understands that the Minister for Housing has written to Local Authorities to request that they use their powers to prioritise social housing support on compassionate grounds to survivors of industrial and reformatory schools.

The Special Advocate understands that these supports will be administered by the Department of Education and Youth. Details of all supports available under the 2025 Act are being finalised and will be published shortly by the Department of Education.

Concerns about exclusions

The Special Advocate for Survivors is extremely concerned that these additional services and supports are only available to approximately 9,000 Survivors of Industrial School and Reformatory Institutions who have previously received redress under the Residential Institutions Redress Scheme and Caranua Scheme.

Patricia Carey said

“In my role as Special Advocate, I continue to engage with Survivors, living in Ireland and overseas, who were not aware of previous redress schemes or were unable to apply for redress at that time.

Given the aging Survivor population, it is unfair and exclusionary to further discriminate against those who through no fault of their own were unable to or unaware of previous redress schemes.

A Human Rights – based approach is required to ensure equal access to redress, supports and services for all Survivors. The principle of ‘Leaving No One Behind’, equality, and fairness should underpin all redress measures for Survivors, including financial redress.

The Special Advocate office continues to receive a significant amount of queries every week from Survivors and Affected Persons seeking updates and information on the Supports for Survivors of Residential Institutional Abuse Act and related supports.

We are aware of the urgent need for transparency and for clear, accurate, up to date information and practical guidance from relevant Departments for Survivors and Affected Persons on how to access these redress measures.

For queries from Survivors in relation to these supports measures can be directed to the Department of Education.

- Email: survivorsupports@education.gov.ie
- Phone: (090) 648 3625
- A Department website will be launched shortly which will have further information and updates as the supports are implemented.

Patricia Carey
Special Advocate for Survivors

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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 Special Advocate is operationally independent of Government.

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.

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.