



Press Release: 13 March 2026

Special Advocate for Survivors welcomes the historic introduction of Philomena's Law, noting its importance for Survivors of Ireland's Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions, living in Britain

In her role as the Special Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Abuse appointed by the Irish Government, Patricia Carey welcomes the important announcement by Taoiseach Micheál Martin and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer at the UK-Ireland Summit today in Cork regarding Philomena's Law and the **overdue introduction of an 'indefinite capital disregard' for redress payments made to Survivors of Ireland's Mother and Baby Institutions living in Britain.**

Patricia Carey said:

"I am acutely aware of how critical this historic disregard will be for Survivors living in Britain who spent time in Ireland's Mother and Baby Institutions. It is testament to Philomena Lee and her courage that this important Law is named after her."

The Special Advocate is extremely concerned at the low take up for the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme by Survivors living in Britain and hopes that this announcement will provide assurance to Survivors living in Britain who feared applying to this redress scheme **due to being penalised by having their essential benefits cut.** She strongly encourages all eligible Survivors living in Britain to apply for redress they may be entitled under the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme.

Patricia Carey said:

"It is unconscionable that redress for mothers and people born in Ireland's Mother and Baby Institutions would cause further harm and financial hardship for Survivors. I am aware from engaging directly with Survivors living in Britain, that this situation has resulted in a lot of fear and anxiety for people, who are understandably concerned about the impact of accepting redress on their means-tested social benefits. As a direct result, some Survivors decided not to apply for the redress they are entitled to or declined to accept their compensation of because of these valid fears."



**Special
Advocate**
For Survivors of
Institutional Abuse

The Special Advocate commends Liam Conlon MP and his team for bringing forward this important, timely and much needed legislation. The ongoing invaluable work being undertaken by Irish in Britain, London Irish Centre, Frea - Renewing Roots, ICAP, Coventry Irish Society and other survivor support organisations in Britain in relation to the Philomena's Law campaign must also be acknowledged.

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 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.