



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# An Action Plan for Survivors and Former Residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions



gov.ie



# Contents

<b>Ministerial Foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Text of State Apology by An Taoiseach</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>List of Acronyms</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Overview of the Action Plan</b>	<b>19</b>
Vision	19
Mission and Scope	19
Values	19
Engagement With Survivors and Former Residents	20
Governance	21
Language and Terminology	21
<b>Actions</b>	<b>23</b>
Theme 1 – A Survivor Centred Approach	24
Theme 2 – Apology	27
Theme 3 - Access to Personal Information	28
Theme 4 – Archives and Databases	34
Theme 5 – Education and Research	42
Theme 6 – Memorialisation	47
Theme 7 – Restorative Recognition	53
Theme 8 – Dignified Burial	59
<b>Summary of Actions</b>	<b>62</b>

## Ministerial Foreword

This Action Plan sets out in detail the full range of Government responses to the publication of the Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation report. In advancing these responses, the Government does so knowing that no act it could undertake could possibly fully reconcile with the scale of cruelty, the decades of failures and the thousands of lives that were blighted by the Mother and Baby Home and County Home Institutions and their legacy. That any person was sent to one of these institutions at all was a profound wrong, for which the Irish State and religious congregations must bear responsibility.


That responsibility requires an enduring response to survivors; one that recognises the scale of the wrongs committed and one which is developed through continued engagement with those affected by the Institutions. I believe this Plan represents another step in our journey of recognising the failures of the past, acknowledging the hurt which continues to be felt by survivors, and seeking to rebuild a relationship of trust between the State and those who have been so gravely wronged.

Since the publication of the Commission report in January 2021, the Government has been steadily moving forward to ensure that the elements contained in the Action Plan are developed and implemented – with a focus on advancing a comprehensive scheme of payments, on completing birth information and tracing legislation, and on bringing forward legislation to allow for exhumation, identification and dignified reburial for the infants at the Tuam burial site. Central to the development of each of these actions has been detailed and sustained engagement with survivors and their families. More work must take place before each of these important elements can be fully completed, but I am aware of the urgency of this work for so many survivors, and it is an absolute priority for the Government.

It is also clear since the publication of the Commission report that elements of the report have not lived up to survivors' most fundamental expectations. We must acknowledge the deep hurt that this has caused. However, as this Plan demonstrates, the Commission's work was only a starting point for tangible action to address the wrongs visited on some of the most vulnerable citizens of our country. Over the lifetime of the Action Plan, there will be opportunities for the actions to evolve in consultation with survivors, and I look forward to continued engagement to that end.

The 22 Actions set out in this document have been developed to respond to the broadest range of needs and wishes which survivors have expressed. Actions have been arranged into central themes which have emerged as fundamental in how the Government responds; i.e. A Survivor Centred Approach, a formal State Apology, Access to Personal Information, Enduring Archive and Database development, Education and Research, Memorialisation, Restorative Recognition and Dignified Burial. In each case, progress on development and implementation of actions is provided.

Most importantly, I would like to acknowledge the great efforts of survivors and their supporters and advocates who have tirelessly campaigned on these issues for many years. I would like to pay particular tribute to those who have given accounts of their experiences, and those who continue to have the courage to contribute to this ongoing journey of healing through their engagement with me and my Department. I have been humbled by the strength and resilience of survivors whom I have met, and it is my commitment, and that of the entire Government, that work on each of these actions will continue with open, sustained engagement with survivors, without undue delays, and in a manner that is transparent and accessible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Roderic O'Gorman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

**Roderic O'Gorman TD**

MINISTER FOR CHILDREN, EQUALITY, DISABILITY, INTEGRATION AND YOUTH

# Text of State Apology by An Taoiseach

**Delivered in Dáil Eireann on the 13 January 2021 following the publication of the Final Report of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes.**

It is the duty of a republic to be willing to hold itself to account. To be willing to confront hard truths – and accept parts of our history which are deeply uncomfortable.

This detailed and highly painful report is a moment for us as a society to recognise a profound failure of empathy, understanding and basic humanity over a very lengthy period. Its production has been possible because of the depth of courage shown by all those who shared their personal experiences with the Commission. The report gives survivors what they have been denied for so long: their voice, their individuality, their right to be acknowledged.

Before going into detail about the report it is important to say that it would not have been possible without the steady determination of the former residents, their advocates and researchers who campaigned with them. I particularly want to acknowledge the critical part played by Catherine Corless whose work at the Tuam Mother and Baby Home site led directly to the establishment of the Commission. On behalf of the government I want to thank the three Commissioners – the Chair, Judge Yvonne Murphy, Professor Mary Daly, and Dr William Duncan – and their team.

Their Report reveals the dominant role of the churches and their moral code and lays bare the failures of the State. They have produced the definitive account of how this country responded to the particular needs of single women and their children at a time when they most needed support and protection. This should have been forthcoming from the fathers of their children, their family and friends, their community and their State, but so often it was not.

The often painful and distressing testimony of many survivors is presented in detail in the report of the confidential committee prepared by the Commission. Reading the Commission's findings and the report of the confidential committee the most striking thing is the shame felt by women who became pregnant outside of marriage and the stigma that was so cruelly attached to their children.

Testimonies from the women speak of the pressure to make sure that no one in their locality would find out about their pregnancy. One speaks of not being allowed to return to school after becoming pregnant because it would bring shame on the school. Extracts from witness accounts shine a light on the attitudes that women encountered:

“I was treated like a second class citizen by my family, society had an obsession with hiding everything”

“Nobody will want you now” said the mother of a witness, 14-years old when it was discovered that she was pregnant.

“Get her put away!” were the words of a father of a 19-year old when told of her pregnancy.

In the earlier decades covered by the report, witness testimony describes how a dearth of sex education often left young women confused and unaware of how and why they had even become pregnant. Some of these pregnancies were as a result of rape and/or incest.

Children born outside of marriage were stigmatised and were treated as outcasts in school and in wider society. Some children who were subsequently boarded-out experienced heartbreaking exploitation, neglect and abuse within the families and communities in which they were placed. This was unforgiveable. The sense of abandonment felt by many of these children is palpable in the witness accounts. The circumstances of their birth, the arrangements for their early care, the stigma they experienced and the continuing lack of birth information, is a terrible burden in their lives.

Many women, children and fathers left these shores to escape this unfair judgement and life-long prejudice and because they thought it was the only way to protect their families’ reputations. While many have built good lives for themselves, many did not overcome the impact which these formative experiences had on their lives and may have suffered and struggled with many serious personal problems.

One of the clearest messages of the testimonies in this report is how this treatment of women and children is something which was the direct result of how the State, and how we as a society acted.

The Report presents us with profound questions. We embraced a perverse religious morality and control, judgementalism and moral certainty, but shunned our daughters. We honoured piety, but failed to show even basic kindness to those who needed it most. We had a completely warped attitude to sexuality and intimacy, and young mothers and their sons and daughters were forced to pay a terrible price for that dysfunction.

To confront the dark and shameful reality which is detailed in this report we must acknowledge it as part of our national history. And for the women and children who were treated so cruelly we must do what we can, to show our deep remorse, understanding and support.

And so, on behalf of the Government, the State and its citizens, I apologise for the profound generational wrong visited upon Irish mothers and their children who ended up in a Mother and Baby Home or a County Home. As the Commission says plainly – “they should not have been there”. I apologise for the shame and stigma which they were subjected to and which, for some, remains a burden to this day.

In apologising, I want to emphasise that each of you were in an institution because of the wrongs of others. Each of you is blameless, each of you did nothing wrong and has nothing to be ashamed of. Each of you deserved so much better. The lack of respect for your fundamental dignity and rights as mothers and children who spent time in these institutions is humbly acknowledged and deeply regretted.

The Irish State, as the main funding authority for the majority of these institutions, had the ultimate ability to exert control over these institutions, in addition to its duty of care to protect citizens with a robust regulatory and inspection regime. This authority was not exerted and the State’s duty of care was not upheld. The State failed you, the mothers and children in these homes.



The report brings a considerable amount of previously unknown information into the public domain. It has exposed the truth, once hidden, to reveal significant failures of the State, the Churches and of society. Women were admitted to Mother and Baby Homes and County Homes because no supports were forthcoming from any other quarter. They were forced to leave home, and seek a place where they could stay without having to pay. Many were destitute.

In the personal testimonies of how many women ended up in these institutions, the Priest, the Doctor and the Nun loom large. The sense of oppression, even at this distance, is overwhelming. Women, terrified by the consequences of their pregnancy becoming known to their family and neighbours entered Mother and Baby Homes to protect their secret. And the pressure to maintain this secret added insult to injury and was a large part of the mother's trauma.

Conditions in the homes varied. Before the 1960s living conditions in many private Irish households were generally poor. In the congregated settings of Mother and Baby Homes poor sanitary conditions had much more serious consequences for disease and infection control. County homes as well as Kilrush and Tuam are identified as having appalling conditions. Conditions in other Mother and Baby Homes were better and improved over time.

Many of the women suffered emotional abuse and were often subject to denigration and derogatory remarks from the religious, with little kindness shown, especially when giving birth. The overall picture is of a hard, cold and uncaring environment.

One of the most disquieting features of the report is that up until 1960 Mother and Baby Homes appear to have significantly reduced the prospects of survival of children. The death rate among infants in Mother and Baby Homes was almost twice that of the national average for children born outside of marriage. A total of about 9,000 children died in the institutions under investigation – about 15% of all the children who were in their care.

It is deeply distressing to note that the very high mortality rates were known to local and national authorities at the time and were recorded in official publications. However, there is little or no evidence of State intervention in response to these chilling statistics. In fact, a number of reports actually identifying the problems were not acted on.

I know it will be a disappointment that the report does not answer all the deeply personal questions on the burial arrangements for many of the children who died in these institutions – in many cases the burial location remains unknown. There are no records for a number of the large institutions where significant numbers of infants are known to have died – including Tuam, Bessborough, Castlepollard and Sean Ross. While this is difficult, options for dignified remembrance and memorialisation will be implemented where this is not already the case.

While women may not have been strictly legally forced to enter these homes, the fact is that most had no alternative, especially those who did not have the support of their family or independent financial means. Overall, the Commission concludes that Ireland was a cold and harsh environment for the majority of its residents during the earlier half of the period under investigation.

It was especially cold and harsh for women. All women suffered serious discrimination. Women who gave birth outside marriage were subject to particularly harsh treatment.

Emerging from the survivor stories are the horrific accounts of rape, either perpetrated within families or by someone within a woman's community. This led ultimately to entry into a Mother and Baby Home where the woman bore a social stigma but there was no accountability for the men responsible, and the agencies of the State showed little or no interest in addressing these crimes.

The Commission acknowledges the additional impact which a lack of knowledge and understanding had on the treatment and outcomes of mothers and children with different racial and cultural heritage, those who faced mental health challenges, or those with physical and intellectual disabilities.

Such discriminatory attitudes exacerbated the shame and stigma felt by some of our most vulnerable citizens, especially where opportunities for non-institutional placement of children were restricted by an unjust belief that they were unsuitable for placement with families.

While context is essential to our proper understanding of this chapter of our history, it does not lessen what happened or diminish the responsibility of Church and State for the failures laid bare in what we have learned. For much of the period covered by the Commission, women as a group and regardless of age or class were systematically discriminated against in relation to employment, family law, and social welfare, solely because of their gender.

Children were similarly unequal, and none more so than those who were cruelly labelled “illegitimate”. I share deeply the Commission’s unequivocal view, that the existence of the status of “illegitimacy” until 1987 in this country “was an egregious breach of human rights”. This was a huge injustice and blighted the lives of many.

It is a sad truth that the history of human kind, even to today, has largely been defined by a failure to acknowledge and vindicate the rights and status of women and the labelling of those who failed to conform to social norms. We cannot account for what happened elsewhere, but we can and must do so for what happened in our country.

An apology on its own is not enough. We, collectively in this House, will be judged by our actions. Actions always speak louder than words.

The Government accepts and will respond to all of the recommendations made by the Commission, and this response will centre on four pillars of Recognition, Remembrance, Records and Restorative Recognition. Recognition begins with this apology and will be followed by commitments to national and local memorialisation and commemoration.

The views and wishes of former residents will be paramount and all commemoration will be led by them. A broad suite of memorialisation, educational and research commitments will support national reflection and enduring remembrance. Future generations will learn of Mother and Baby Homes and of the experiences of former residents, particularly as told through their own words.

With regard to records, the Government is committed to introducing information and tracing legislation as a priority. Access to one’s own identity is a basic right. We will also be advancing a range of related actions to support access to personal information and to ensure appropriate and sensitive archiving of institutional records.

Finally, turning to Restorative Recognition. Similar to the Magdalenes, an enhanced medical card will be given to former residents of a Mother and Baby Home or County Home. This is in addition to counselling, which is immediately available to all former residents, and patient liaison support services, which will be available to all former residents. The Government will also design a scheme of Restorative Recognition for former residents and an Interdepartmental Group will report back to Government on this as soon as possible.

All of these commitments will be advanced in a survivor-centred manner, with ongoing communication and engagement as plans are developed and implemented.

As a nation, it is important to understand and accept the failings of our past; important but not sufficient. We must also learn from them. We have adopted national and international laws which oblige us to follow a different, more humane and right-based approach. There is in place and being further developed a wide range of social services completely absent for much of our history.

Under Minister O’Gorman, we have a Government Department dedicated to children, to equality and to working across Government and society to promote and uphold the rights of all people.

The Citizens’ Assembly is examining further measures to address structural inequalities in relation to gender. It is looking in particular at how we can support and respond to the needs of those with caring responsibilities.

Through our laws and policies, our systems, structures and services, our actions and our words, we must always seek to create a more just society, grounded in respect, diversity, tolerance and equality. Continued investment in education, especially for those at the margins and the most vulnerable, is the surest way of making sure that we do not repeat the past.

Similarly, we must learn the lesson that institutionalisation, creates power structures and abuses of power and must never again be an option for our country. Throughout this report former residents talk of a feeling of shame for the situation they found themselves in.

The shame was not theirs – it was ours.

It was our shame that we did not show them the respect and compassion which we as a country owed them. It remains our shame.

I want to reassure survivors, their families and the country, that this Government is determined to act on all the recommendations of the Report and to deliver the legislative change necessary to at least start to heal the wounds that endure.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Micheál Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Micheál Martin TD**

AN TAOISEACH

# List of acronyms

<b>AGO</b>	Office of the Attorney General
<b>DCEDIY</b>	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
<b>DFHERIS</b>	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
<b>DHLGH</b>	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
<b>DPC</b>	Data Protection Commissioner
<b>DTCAGSM</b>	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
<b>GDPR</b>	General Data Protection Regulation
<b>HBU</b>	Historical Burials Unit, DCEDIY
<b>HRB</b>	Health Research Board
<b>HSE</b>	Health Service Executive
<b>IDG</b>	Interdepartmental Group
<b>IMU</b>	Information Management Unit, DCEDIY
<b>IRC</b>	Irish Research Council
<b>JOC CEDYI</b>	Joint Oireachtas Committee on Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
<b>LGARM</b>	Local Government Archivists and Records Managers Group
<b>NAI</b>	National Archives of Ireland
<b>NCCA</b>	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
<b>NUIG</b>	National University of Ireland Galway
<b>PLS</b>	Pre Legislative Scrutiny
<b>RRSU</b>	Restorative Recognition Scheme Unit, DCEDIY
<b>SAR</b>	Subject Access Request

# Glossary

## **COALESCE Research Fund:**

The Collaborative Alliances for Societal Challenges Fund is a programme created by the Irish Research Council to fund research that examines national and global challenges facing society.

## **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):**

A law in place since May 2018 that sets rules for the collection and processing of personal information from people who live in the European Union (EU).

## **General Scheme:**

A draft of legislation that the Government wants to introduce. It outlines the main objectives the Government wants to achieve in the legislation. A parliamentary Committee then examines the draft and can make suggestions about how it could be improved before the final Bill is published. A Bill must pass through five Stages in both the Dáil and Seanad before it can be enacted into law.

## **Interdepartmental Group (IDG):**

A group of officials from various government departments responsible for creating or reviewing policies, procedures or legislation. Different IDGs can be set up for different purposes.

## **Joint Oireachtas Committee on Children, Equality, Integration and Youth:**

This group of Senators and TDs considers, and reports to the Houses of the Oireachtas, on the expenditure, administration and policies of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and the State bodies for which the Department is responsible.

## **Pre-Legislative Scrutiny:**

The process allowing parliament to examine draft legislation (General Schemes) and report back with suggestions to the Minister sponsoring the legislation. The relevant Oireachtas Committee can invite stakeholders to participate by attending meetings to discuss legislation.

## **Subject Access Request (SAR):**

An important feature of the GDPR which allows people to request and receive a copy of all the personal data that a company or organization has collected about them.

## **Stakeholder:**

A person or group that may be affected by the Government's work in a particular area.

# Introduction

The Final Report of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes ('the Report') was published on 12 January 2021. Publication of the Report was a landmark moment for the Irish State and its citizens and resulted in an immediate State apology, delivered by An Taoiseach, to those who spent time in the institutions.

The publication of the Report was accompanied by a Government commitment to a Strategic Action Plan encompassing a suite of 22 specific measures across eight themes (see figure 1 below). These themes take account of the Commission of Investigation's recommendations, as well as the recommendations of the Collaborative Forum. Crucially, they are intended to respond to the priority needs and concerns of survivors and former residents and their families, as established through engagement with those most affected.



Theme	Action
<b>A Survivor Centred Approach</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development of a Strategic Action Plan and Engagement with Former Residents</li> <li>2. Immediate Counselling Support</li> </ol>
<b>Apology</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Apology by An Taoiseach</li> </ol>
<b>Access to Personal Information</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Information and Tracing Legislation</li> <li>5. GDPR Right of Access to Commission Records</li> <li>6. Central Repository of Institutional Records</li> </ol>
<b>Archives and Databases</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. National Memorial and Records Centre</li> <li>8. Public Access to Original State Files</li> <li>9. Expansion of the Database</li> <li>10. Appointment of an Archivist</li> </ol>
<b>Education and Research</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Second Level Curriculum</li> <li>12. Research Scholarships</li> <li>13. Research on Terminology</li> <li>14. Further Research on Death Registration Records</li> </ol>
<b>Memorialisation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. National Memorial</li> <li>16. Local Memorials</li> <li>17. Survivor-led Annual Commemoration</li> <li>18. Children's Fund</li> </ol>
<b>Restorative Recognition</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19. Health Supports</li> <li>20. Financial Support</li> <li>21. Inheritance Tax</li> </ol>
<b>Dignified Burial</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22. Burials Legislation</li> </ol>

Figure 1: Themes and Actions

Government is conscious of the need to move swiftly to implement the commitments made. As a result, significant progress has already been made in advancing the actions contained within this Plan. While an overview of each action can be found later in this document, there has been a particular priority focus on the following immediate steps:

- Support for survivors and former residents: Counselling support for survivors and former residents has been in place since before the publication of the Commission's report and the service has been strengthened with additional investment and an expanded out of hours support. More generally, there has been extensive engagement with the Collaborative Forum and others on the development of an enhanced model of engagement involving a new Special Advocate for Survivors.
- Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme: An Interdepartmental Group was established and developed detailed proposals for a Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme. Government has approved the development of the scheme, which will provide a financial payment and a form of enhanced medical card to tens of thousands of people who spent time in one of these institutions.
- Access to Personal Information: Draft legislation has been published to provide access to birth certificates and early life information. The General Scheme of the Birth Information and Tracing Bill is currently undergoing Pre-Legislative Scrutiny, which is expected to be completed in Winter 2021. Separately, DCEDIY has taken possession of the archive of the Commission of Investigation, and has established a dedicated Information Management Unit to lead on the management of the Commission's archive, including applications for access to these records. A professional archivist has been appointed to work within the Unit to focus on the preservation of, and public access to, these records.
- Burials Legislation: The draft Certain Institutional Burials (Authorised Interventions) Bill underwent Pre-Legislative Scrutiny in the first half of 2021 and the Joint Oireachtas Committee published its report on 15 July. This proposed legislation, when enacted, will enable intervention at Tuam, as well as any other future institutional sites where there have been manifestly inappropriate burials.

# Overview of the Action Plan

## Vision

The Government is deeply committed to responding to the needs and concerns of those who spent time in Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions. This is with a view to recognising the failings of the past, providing survivor-centred supports, offering opportunities for reconciliation and healing, rebuilding trust, and, at the broadest level, promoting the development of a progressive, respectful and equal society.

## Mission and Scope

Having regard to the above vision, the purpose of this Action Plan is to provide a framework for collaboration between the Government, State and society to drive holistic implementation of the 22 actions announced by Government when publishing the Final Report of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes.

The Government acknowledges that over the lifetime of the Plan there will be potential to refine the actions in consultation with survivors and former residents. It may also be necessary to incorporate additional actions. This Action Plan will be a living document, with scope for measures to evolve and be supplemented on the basis of feedback.

This Action Plan is focused on Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions. However, it is acknowledged that several actions also deal with institutional trauma in other settings.

## Values

This Action Plan is guided by four values which will inform the delivery of each action.

### Human Rights

We recognise the State's obligations under domestic and international human rights law which underpin the actions set out in this Action Plan.

### Participation

We respect the right of survivors and former residents, and their representatives, to be meaningfully involved in the design and implementation of the measures contained in this Action Plan. We acknowledge the fundamental importance of continued commitment to the principle of "nothing about us, without us".

**Accessibility and support**

We will ensure that support mechanisms are a feature of implementation so as to vindicate the right of all survivors and former residents to meaningfully engage, particularly those with special vulnerabilities.

**Communication**

We will communicate proactively with survivors and former residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions.

**Engagement with survivors and former residents**

Central to the Government's response is a recognition of the fundamental importance of meaningful consultation with survivors and former residents, as well as their representative groups. To this end, in January 2021 the Government committed to establishing an enhanced model of engagement, following consultation with the Collaborative Forum.

The need for an enhanced model of engagement has been particularly evident since the publication of the Commission's Report. Since that time, several hundred survivors and former residents based in Ireland and abroad have contacted DCEDIY. Many of these had never made contact with the Department before and are not actively involved with any established advocacy groups.

The increased level of engagement by survivors and former residents is also clear from the very strong response to the consultation process which was established to inform the development of the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme.

We expect this engagement to increase significantly over the coming months. Experience to date highlights that dedicated structures and additional resources are required to support sustainable and inclusive engagement with all those who now wish to be directly involved. To support this broader demand for engagement, DCEDIY has developed an outline proposal for an independent Special Advocate for Survivors. Such an Advocate could provide new opportunities to support and amplify the voices of those who are most affected by these issues. This proposal has been discussed with members of the Collaborative Forum and other stakeholders, including groups based in the UK. The Minister is reflecting on the outcome of these discussions to refine proposals which he will bring to Government shortly.

Alongside the development of this enhanced model of engagement, the Minister has continued to engage intensively with individual stakeholders and advocacy groups.

## **Governance**

### **Oversight**

The implementation of this Action Plan will be overseen by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The Minister will update Government colleagues through his participation on the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Social Affairs and Equality.

### **Reporting**

To support monitoring of this Action Plan, DCEDIY will prepare an annual report on its implementation.

The annual report will be laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas, beginning 12 months from publication of this Action Plan.

Given the importance of providing regular updates to survivors and former residents, annual reporting will be supplemented by quarterly updates directly to this group to outline progress in particular areas. These updates will also be published on the DCEDIY website.

### **Review**

There will be a formal review of this Action Plan after three years, which will be linked to the annual reporting cycle in the fourth year.

## **Language and Terminology**

In preparing this Action Plan, the Government is conscious of the need to use language and terminology in a sensitive, compassionate, and inclusive way. Throughout this document we refer to 'survivors and former residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions.' We hope that the vast majority of those most affected by these issues feel included by this description.

As part of this Action Plan, DCEDIY has commissioned NUIG to conduct research on language, terminology and representation, which will inform future projects and communication in this area.

“The shame was not theirs – it was ours. It was our shame that we did not show them the respect and compassion which we as a country owed them. It remains our shame.”

AN TAOISEACH MICHEÁL MARTIN TD  
JANUARY 2021

# Actions

This section sets out the 22 Actions to which Government committed in January 2021. For each action, it repeats the description of the commitment made in January, identifies key strategic milestones, timelines and lead actors. The information is high-level but will be underpinned in each case by more detailed plans, including financial cost estimates.

Given the breadth and scale of the actions within this Action Plan, it is necessary to implement them in a phased and structured way. While some are already achieved and many are already in progress, others are, of necessity, medium and longer term goals. Some actions are contingent on the completion of others and this is reflected in the timelines provided.

# Theme 1 – A Survivor Centred Approach

Central to the State's response is the fundamental principle that there must be ongoing engagement with survivors and former residents, and their representative groups, in the implementation of all commitments. This engagement will be essential in the design and delivery of the actions over the lifetime of this Plan.

The Government is also very conscious of the fact that the intense public discourse around these issues has been extremely difficult for many survivors and former residents. This is true for those who have chosen to speak about their experiences publicly or to the Commission of Investigation, but also for those who are dealing with their experience privately. We wish to ensure that support is available for anyone who may need it.

## Action 1 - Development of a Strategic Action Plan and Engagement with Former Residents

### Description

In responding to the Final Report of the Commission of Investigation and to the concerns of former residents, the Government will prepare a Strategic Action Plan encompassing the suite of actions set out below. We will take a survivor-centred approach, characterised by continuous engagement with former residents and their representative groups on the development and implementation of the Strategic Plan and associated policy responses. An enhanced model of engagement will be established, following consultation with the Collaborative Forum.



Milestones	Lead Dept (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<p><b>1.1</b> A Strategic Action Plan published.</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>Q4 2021 Achieved</p>	<p>There will be a published Annual Report and proactive quarterly communication with survivors and former residents.</p>
<p><b>1.2</b> Consultation with Collaborative Forum regarding a proposed enhanced model of engagement.</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>Q2 2021 Achieved</p>	<p>An outline proposal for the appointment of a Special Advocate for Survivors has been prepared and discussed with the Collaborative Forum and other stakeholders, including groups based in the UK. This process has been independently facilitated. Following this consultation, detailed proposals are expected to be finalised shortly for Government approval.</p>
<p><b>1.3</b> Enhanced model of engagement agreed by Government.</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>Q4 2021</p>	<p>Contingent on completion of 1.2.</p>
<p><b>1.4</b> Arrangements for enhanced model of engagement put into place.</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>Q2 2022</p>	<p>Contingent on completion of 1.2 and 1.3.</p>

## Action 2 - Immediate Counselling Support

### Description

Counselling support is available through the National Counselling Service, ensuring that former residents have access to this at the time of publication of the report and thereafter.

Milestones	Lead Dept (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<p><b>2.1</b> Counselling support available for former residents through the National Counselling Service at the time of publication of the Report of the Commission of Investigation.</p>	<p><b>D/Health, HSE</b></p>	<p>Q1 2021 Achieved</p>	<p>Immediate counselling support was available to survivors and former residents at the time of publication.</p>
<p><b>2.2</b> Ongoing counselling support available for former residents.</p>	<p><b>D/Health, HSE</b></p>	<p>Q1 2021 Achieved</p>	<p>The out of hours counselling service has been extended to 7 days a week. It is available free of charge. Survivors and former residents can self-refer or be referred by a medical professional.</p> <p>For those who are hard of hearing, the service is supplemented by Irish sign language support. Additional funding has been provided for this in 2021.</p>

## Theme 2 – Apology

In publishing the Report, the Government recognised that a sincere apology to those who were failed by the State through their experiences in Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions must be made. An Taoiseach delivered this apology on 13 January 2021 in Dáil Éireann. The apology forms the basis for the restorative action contained within this Action Plan.

### Action 3 - Apology

#### Description

An Taoiseach will issue a formal apology on behalf of the State for the hurt experienced by many former residents of Mother and Baby Institutions and County Homes.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<b>3.1</b> An Taoiseach will issue a formal apology on behalf of the State for the hurt experienced by many former residents of Mother and Baby Institutions and County Homes.	<b>D/Taoiseach</b>	Q1 2021 Achieved	An Taoiseach delivered a formal apology on behalf of the Government, the State and its citizens on 13 January. The text of this apology can be found at page 6 of this document.  A number of other public bodies, such as local authorities, have offered separate apologies for their failures to appropriately provide for the mothers and children in their care.

## Theme 3 – Access to Personal Information

A person's right to their identity is an important human right. Accordingly, a key element of the recommendations of the Commission of Investigation was that adopted people should have access to their personal information.

Additionally, the Commission recommended that there should be a central repository for the records of institutions and adoption societies to allow ease of access to that information.

Government commitments under this theme seek to ensure that there is a priority focus on immediate access for individuals to their own information, with a medium term view towards a central repository of records.

### Action 4 - Information and Tracing Legislation

#### Description

We will introduce Information and Tracing Legislation in 2021 in respect of birth and early life information for those who seek it, including adopted and boarded out individuals. To supplement access to historic information contained in records, we will provide a legislative basis to support the exchange of contemporaneous information, on a consent basis, between individuals and their birth families, including in relation to medical information.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<p><b>4.1</b> Draft legislation published to allow for access to birth certificates and early life information.</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>Q2 2021 Achieved</p>	<p>The General Scheme of the Birth Information and Tracing Bill was published in May 2021. The Minister has hosted virtual meetings with interested parties in relation to the proposals.</p> <p>The next step for the draft legislation is Pre-Legislative Scrutiny by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.</p>
<p><b>4.2</b> Pre-Legislative Scrutiny completed.</p>	<p><b>Houses of the Oireachtas, JOC CEDiy</b></p>	<p>Q4 2021 Ongoing</p>	<p>The General Scheme is currently undergoing Pre-Legislative Scrutiny by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Children, Equality, Integration and Youth.</p> <p>Following the completion of the Pre-Legislative Scrutiny process, the final Bill will be drafted and published.</p>

<p><b>4.3</b></p> <p>Bill published and introduced in the Houses of the Oireachtas.</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>Q4 2021</p>	<p>Publication of the Bill is subject to the completion of Pre-legislative Scrutiny by the Joint Committee.</p> <p>In order to progress the legislation as quickly as possible, DCEDIY and the Office of the Attorney General are working ahead on the draft Bill, while awaiting the outcome of the Pre-legislative scrutiny process.</p>
<p><b>4.4</b></p> <p>Legislation enacted and commenced, with services being delivered.</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b></p> <p><b>Partners:</b> <b>Adoption Authority of Ireland; Tusla</b></p>	<p>Q1 2022</p>	<p>Enactment of the legislation is contingent on the completion of 4.2 and 4.3, followed by the passing of the legislation by the Oireachtas and its signing into law by the President.</p> <p>An Implementation Group, chaired by DCEDIY and including the Adoption Authority of Ireland and Tusla, has been established to plan ahead for the implementation of the legislation.</p>

## Action 5 - GDPR Right of Access to Commission Records

### Description

We will ensure that people can access personal information contained with the Commission's records in line with existing legislation. We have already provided for the Commission's database and related records on former residents, to be transferred to Tusla before 28 February 2021. We will also ensure that resources are in place to deal with Subject Access Requests in respect of the records which will be deposited with the Minister on 28 February 2021. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth is engaging with the Office of the Attorney General and the Data Protection Commission on this matter, and is also committed to meeting with independent experts in the area of GDPR.

Milestones	Lead Dept/ Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<b>5.1</b> Commission's archive of records transferred to DCEDIY.	DCEDIY	Q1 2021 Achieved	DCEDIY is in possession of the Commission's archive of records and is now the data controller for all the personal data contained within those records. Tusla also has a copy of the Commission's database and related records.
<b>5.2</b> Information Management Unit (IMU) established within DCEDIY.	DCEDIY	Q1 2021 Achieved	A new Information Management Unit has been established to lead on management of the Commission's archive, as well as management of Departmental records more generally.  This unit is headed by a Principal Officer with legal and data protection expertise and includes the Department's Data Protection Officer, and a newly appointed archivist (see Action 10).  The Department is also engaging external data protection expertise.

<p><b>5.3</b> Information published on how individuals may request access to personal data which is contained within the archive.</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>Q2 2021 Achieved</p>	<p>Following engagement with the AGO, the DPC, and independent experts in the area of GDPR, the Department has published information for individuals including its privacy notice indicating what personal data the Department holds and how it processes it, and a guide on how to request access to personal information. In addition, a phone line provides information for callers on procedures for accessing personal information.</p> <p>Information on the Subject Access Request process will be regularly communicated to survivors and former residents via quarterly updates pursuant to this Action Plan.</p>
<p><b>5.4</b> Ongoing processing of Subject Access Requests (SARs) by the DCEDIY Information Management Unit.</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>As of 15/10/2021, 341 Subject Access Requests have been received, of which 255 have been processed.</p>
<p><b>5.5</b> Introduction of new Regulations to improve GDPR access to personal health data contained within the Commission's archive.</p>	<p><b>D/Health</b></p>	<p>Q4 2021</p>	<p>The Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth is working in conjunction with the Minister for Health, to progress new Regulations as a priority to improve access to health data in the archive.</p>



## Action 6 - Central Repository of Institutional Records

### Description

We will bring together institutional records (or digitised copies of records) relating to Mother and Baby Homes, County Homes and Adoption Societies in a single, central repository to which individuals can apply for their personal information. We will consider expansion of this repository over time to encompass other relevant institutional records. There will be strong engagement with survivors so that there is clarity on how information will be accessed and reassurance regarding the protection of survivors' private information. In recognition of the significant survivor diaspora, the opportunities of a digital repository which can be accessed from anywhere in the world will be explored.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<p><b>6.1</b> Initial legal basis for safeguarding of records established through the Birth Information and Tracing legislation (see Action 4).</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>Timeline contingent upon enactment of the Birth Information and Tracing legislation (see Action 4)</p>	<p>Contingent on Action 4.</p>
<p><b>6.2</b> Further milestones to be developed in the context of work on the National Memorial and Records Centre (see Action 7).</p>	<p><b>The organisations to lead and support delivery of each aspect of the project will be identified as part of the initial scoping process (Action 7.1).</b></p> <p><b>Partners - DTCAGSM, D/Taoiseach, D/Education, DCEDIY, DHLGH (LGARM), NAI</b></p>	<p>Timeline contingent on Action 7</p>	<p>Contingent on Action 7.</p>

## Theme 4 – Archives and Databases

The Commission of Investigation made a number of recommendations with regard to archives and databases including:

- That institutional records should be made available to individuals.
- That Department of Health records should be made available, with appropriate redactions, in the National Archives of Ireland.
- That the Commission’s own database should be expanded to include information collected by the Ryan Commission on industrial schools, records held by the Department of Education on industrial schools, and records held by the Adoption Authority of Ireland.
- That DCEDIY appoint a qualified archivist to draft a guide to the records for those who have a personal or academic interest in these records.

These recommendations are reflected in the Government commitments set out below.

### Action 7 - National Memorial and Records Centre

#### Description

The Government will work to establish, on a formal national basis, a national memorial and records centre related to institutional trauma during the 20th century. This will build on the commitment to a central repository of institutional records and will include archiving relevant records and witness testimony by victims and survivors as well as presenting the historical and social context. It will be developed at a suitable site and operated in accordance with the highest international standards. It will be designed in cooperation with professional archivists and historians, as well as with victims, survivors and their advocates. There will be strong engagement with survivors so that there is clarity on how information will be presented and reassurance regarding the protection of survivors’ private information. In order to progress this commitment, officials will undertake a rapid scoping exercise and, following this, Government will appoint a wide-ranging, cross sectoral group comprising experts and survivors to examine and recommend to Government the most appropriate means of developing and maintaining a national centre.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<p><b>7.1</b> Appropriate groups and structures established.</p>	<p><b>Initial work led by cross-Government Group chaired by the Secretary General to the Government.</b></p> <p><b>Partners – DTCAGSM, D/Taoiseach, D/Education, DCEDIY, DHLGH (LGARM), NAI</b></p>	<p>Q4 2021 Ongoing</p>	<p>The commitment to a National Memorial and Records Centre will be progressed by means of a Group chaired by the Secretary General to the Government.</p> <p>Funding has been secured to support this process, which will develop an overarching vision and proposed approach for the creation of the National Centre and which will be brought to Government for approval.</p>
<p><b>7.2</b> Project Plan drafted.</p>	<p><b>The organisations to lead and support delivery of each aspect of the project will be identified as part of the initial scoping process (Action 7.1).</b></p>	<p>Timeline for Project Plan is contingent upon Government approval of the vision and approach developed by the group.</p>	

<p><b>7.3</b> National Memorial and Records centre established.</p>	<p><b>The organisations to lead and support delivery of each aspect of the project will be identified as part of the initial scoping process (Action 7.1).</b></p>	<p>Timeline contingent upon Actions 7.1 and 7.2</p>	
<p><b>7.4</b> Process established for capturing survivor accounts for publication and for archiving for posterity in the National Memorial and Records Centre.</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>Timeline to be confirmed as part of Project Plan for National Memorial and Records Centre.</p>	<p>Scoping work in respect of this initiative is expected to commence shortly.</p>

## Action 8 - Public Access to Original State Files

### Description

The Government will require that relevant Government Departments and State bodies prioritise ensuring that relevant original files are made publicly available in the National Archives of Ireland (NAI) in accordance with the terms of the National Archives Act 1986. As part of this, it will consider legislation requiring the HSE and other State bodies (including, for example, the Child and Family Agency) to maintain records in broadly the same way as local authorities.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<b>8.1</b> Original D/Health files identified and transferred to DCEDIY.	<b>DCEDIY, D/Health</b>	Ongoing to Q4 2023  Several thousand (approximately 7,000) files require reviewing and transfer from D/Health.	Files will be transferred in tranches. The first transfer was received by DCEDIY in August 2021. Some files have been identified as eligible for transfer to the NAI.  A list of records for a second transfer has been agreed with D/Health.
<b>8.2</b> Original files catalogued by DCEDIY archivist.	<b>DCEDIY</b>	Ongoing to Q4 2024	The first tranche of files received by DCEDIY is being catalogued. This action will repeat.

<p><b>8.3</b> Original files reviewed in the context of relevant legislation such as GDPR and the National Archives Act 1986 by DCEDIY archivist and Certifying Officer.</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>Ongoing to Q4 2024 Subject to relevant preceding actions delivered on schedule.</p>	<p>Files transferred from D/Health are currently being reviewed. This action will repeat.</p>
<p><b>8.4</b> Original files transferred from DCEDIY to the National Archives.</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b> <b>Partner: NAI</b></p>	<p>Q4 2021 - Q1 2025</p>	<p>Files will be transferred to the National Archives in tranches, due to the large volume of files to transfer. The first tranche is due to transfer by 31/12/2021.</p>

## Action 9 - Expansion of the Database

### Description

Government will consider a plan for further expansion of the Commission database through the creation of linked databases on boarded out children and children who transferred from Mother and Baby Homes to industrial schools. This will be with a view to supporting both increased access to personal information and the development of a rich resource for future research on the longer-term outcomes for children born in Mother and Baby Homes.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<b>9.1</b> Options for consolidation of records and expansion of the database scoped.	<b>DCEDIY</b> <b>Partner: D/ Education</b>	2022	Contingent on the creation of a legislative basis for the use of the data for this purpose, the establishment of a central repository of records and, ultimately, a National Records Centre. See Actions 6 – 8 for further detail.

## Action 10 - Appointment of an Archivist

### Description

To lead work on preservation of, and public access to, the records which it holds, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth will appoint a qualified archivist. This appointment will also lead and support work on a plan for further expansion of the Commission database, in consultation with Tusla and others.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<b>10.1</b> Appointment of an archivist.	<b>DCEDIY</b>	Q1 2021 Achieved	An archivist has been appointed and is in post as of February 2021.
<b>10.2</b> Survey completed of digital records in MBHCOI archive to facilitate IMU in responding to Subject Access Requests.	<b>DCEDIY</b>	Q2 2021 Achieved	13,714 digital files (157 GB approx.) were surveyed by the archivist to identify all files that contained personal data, and which were not hosted on a searchable platform in the archive. Files that were identified were then transferred to a searchable platform.



<p><b>10.3</b> Cataloguing of paper and digital records in MBHCOI archive to facilitate eventual transfer to NAI completed.</p>	<p>DCEDIY</p>	<p>Ongoing to Q4 2022</p>	<p>Work will continue in relation to cataloguing, indexing and rehousing files in the archive to the end of 2022.</p> <p>To date, approximately one third of the boxes transferred from the COI have been catalogued.</p> <p>A number of paper files have been catalogued in line with NAI standards. Some paper files containing personal data have been indexed.</p> <p>The archivist is working to create initial high level catalogue descriptions of digital records.</p>
<p><b>10.4</b> Paper records rehoused to ensure preservation.</p>	<p>DCEDIY</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Paper files have been rehoused in line with NAI standards.</p>

## Theme 5 – Education and Research

The Commission of Investigation made a number of recommendations related to education and research. Firstly, the Commission itself created a short video on the experiences of women and children who spent time in the institutions they were investigating, and recommended that this video be made available to students in second level schools.

It recommended the creation of a number of scholarships which would fund further research in memory of the children who died in the institutions.

Additionally, it recommended further research on the death registration records of children born in Mother and Baby Homes who went on to live in the community or other settings, in order to determine some of the long term consequences which may have been experienced by those children.

The Government recognises the importance of education and research in seeking to understand and learn from the experiences of past generations.

## Action 11 - Second Level Curriculum

### Description

We will ask the NCCA to consider how the Commission's short video on the experiences of women and children who spent time in the institutions can be incorporated into the second-level curriculum.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<p><b>11.1</b> Request sent by D/Education to NCCA asking that it consider the Commission's video and supplementary materials for inclusion in the second-level curriculum.</p>	<p><b>D/Education</b></p>	<p>Q3 2021 Achieved</p>	<p>The Department of Education has requested the NCCA to consider the Commission's short video and supplementary materials, to support schools in enabling students in second level to learn about and understand this important and sensitive aspect of Ireland's recent history.</p>
<p><b>11.2</b> Matter brought to council of NCCA for its consideration and decision on approach and next steps.</p>	<p><b>D/Education, NCCA</b></p>	<p>Q4 2021</p>	<p>Next steps contingent upon decision by NCCA.</p>

## Action 12 - Research Scholarships

### Description

We will create and fund a number of scholarships in memory of all the children who died in institutions. The scholarships will cover research in the area of childhood disadvantage.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<b>12.1</b> Postgraduate scholarship established in partnership with the Irish Research Council.	<b>DCEDIY</b> <b>Partners:</b> <b>DFHERIS,</b> <b>IRC</b>	Q3 2021 Achieved	A Postgraduate Scholarship in Childhood Disadvantage opened for applications through the Irish Research Council in September 2021.
<b>12.2</b> Review of postgraduate scholarship.	<b>DCEDIY</b>	2027	Review of postgraduate scholarship to take place in Year 5.

## Action 13 - Research on Terminology

### Description

We will advance the Research on Terminology, Representation and Mis-representation with NUIG and will ensure that this informs projects in the areas of memorialisation and the development of archives.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<b>13.1</b> Steering committee established.	DCEDIY	Q1 2021 Achieved	The Project Steering Committee began its work in March 2021. It includes four members of the Collaborative Forum.
<b>13.2</b> Research project commenced.	DCEDIY	Q2 2021 Achieved	A research project funded under the COALESCE Research Fund was announced on 17 May 2021. The research will be conducted by a team based in NUI Galway.  The aim of this project is to highlight the stigmatising and labelling language that has been used in the past and to provide guidance as to how to address this issue.  Public consultations commenced in September 2021.

<b>13.3</b> Research completed and report submitted to Department.	<b>DCEDIY</b>	Q4 2021	
<b>13.4</b> Outcomes of research disseminated.	<b>DCEDIY</b>	Q1 2022	

## Action 14 - Further Research on Death Registration Records

### Description

Government will commission further research on the death registration records of the children who were born in Mother and Baby Homes in the 1920s and 1930s and who subsequently lived in the community or in institutions with a view to establishing their age at death and causes of death.

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)</b>	<b>Timeline and status</b>	<b>Progress and next steps</b>
<b>14.1</b> Options for further research scoped.	<b>DCEDIY</b>	2022	DCEDIY to explore this commitment in the context of the expansion and future use of the database, including the legislative basis for same.

## Theme 6 – Memorialisation

Throughout DCEDIY's extensive engagement with survivors and former residents, memorialisation has repeatedly been raised as an issue of profound importance. It was again highlighted by those who engaged with the consultation on a proposed Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme.

It was clear from the responses to that consultation that memorialisation was considered to be a very important part of the healing process for those affected, and that the State should establish appropriate memorials to honour those who suffered due to their experiences in these institutions. The Government also acknowledges that memorialisation plays a role in helping to remove the stigma and shame which has deeply affected so many.

Memorialisation means different things to many different people, and so it is key that the design and establishment of memorials should be led by survivors and former residents. This was a point raised by both the Collaborative Forum and the Commission of Investigation, which recommended that ultimately it should be a matter for survivors and former residents to determine the form memorialisation may take.

### Action 15 - National Memorial

#### Description

We will develop an all-Ireland memorial in consultation with former residents and other key stakeholders. Please see Action 7 above in relation to the commitment to establishing a National Memorial and Records Centre.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<p><b>15.1</b> Appropriate groups and structures established.</p>	<p><b>Initial work led by cross-Government Group chaired by the Secretary General to the Government.</b></p> <p><b>Partners – DTCAGSM, D/Taoiseach, D/Education, DCEDIY, DHLGH (LGARM), NAI</b></p>	<p>Q4 2021 Ongoing</p>	<p>The commitment to a National Memorial and Records Centre will be progressed by means of a Group chaired by the Secretary General to the Government.</p> <p>Funding has been secured to support this process, which will develop an overarching vision and proposed approach for the creation of the National Centre and which will be brought to Government for approval.</p>
<p><b>15.2</b> Project Plan drafted.</p>	<p><b>The organisations to lead and support delivery of each aspect of the project will be identified as part of the initial scoping process (Action 7.1).</b></p>	<p>Timeline for Project Plan is contingent upon Government approval of the vision and approach developed by the group.</p>	



<p><b>15.3</b> National Memorial and Records Centre established.</p>	<p><b>The organisations to lead and support delivery of each aspect of the project will be identified as part of the initial scoping process (Action 7.1).</b></p>	<p>Timeline contingent upon Actions 7.1 and 7.2</p>	
<p><b>15.4</b> Process established for capturing survivor accounts for publication and for archiving for posterity in the National Memorial and Records Centre.</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>Timeline to be confirmed as part of Project Plan for National Memorial and Records Centre.</p>	

## Action 16 - Local Memorials

### Description

We will support local memorialisation projects, funded by local authorities, in line with the wishes of former residents.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<p><b>16.1</b> Working Group established to progress this commitment.</p>	<p><b>Local Authorities</b> <b>Partners:</b> <b>DHLGH,</b> <b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>Q3 2021 Achieved</p>	<p>A number of Local Authorities have publicly indicated their support for local memorialisation in the context of their individual responses to the findings of the Commission of Investigation.</p> <p>The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage has established a Working Group of Departmental and Local Authority officials to advance this commitment.</p>
<p><b>16.2</b> Guidance and support available to survivors and former residents in accessing local authority services.</p>	<p><b>Local Authorities</b> <b>Partners:</b> <b>DHLGH,</b> <b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>Q1 2022</p>	<p>The Working Group will also examine the wider role for Local Authorities in addressing the needs of survivors and former residents.</p>
<p><b>16.3</b> An assessment of any gaps in the provision of local authority services completed.</p>	<p><b>Local Authorities</b> <b>Partners:</b> <b>DHLGH,</b> <b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>Q1 2022</p>	<p>The Working Group will also examine the wider role for Local Authorities in addressing the needs of survivors and former residents.</p>

## Action 17 - Survivor-led Annual Commemoration

### Description

We will continue the Commemoration Grant Scheme established in December 2019 to support survivor centred advocacy organisations in commemorating their experiences in a manner of their choosing which fits their own specific needs and wants.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<b>17.1</b> Review of the Commemorative Grant Scheme undertaken to explore events in a Covid-19 context, and amended scheme in place.	<b>DCEDIY</b>	Q2 2021 Achieved	The scheme is in place and open to applications. Terms and conditions have been reviewed to ensure the scheme supports and encourages virtual or other Covid-compliant forms of commemorative events.  As a next step, we will ensure that we further promote the scheme to enhance awareness and encourage applications.

## Action 18 - Children's Fund

### Description

We will honour the memory of the children who died in Mother and Baby Homes through the creation of a specific fund which supports children who experience disadvantage in the present day.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<b>18.1</b> Design and development of funding scheme.	DCEDIY	Q1 2022 Ongoing	<p>Agreement has been secured for a multi-annual fund. Targets and parameters of the scheme will be developed to directly support the outcomes of children experiencing multiple disadvantage.</p> <p>The development of the Children's Fund will be informed by learning on the impact of existing programmes, and needs emerging from implementation of the EU Child Guarantee, recommendations of the UNCRC, and direct consultation with children.</p>
<b>18.2</b> Launch of Children's Fund.	DCEDIY	Q2 2022	A targeted multi-tiered Children's Fund will be launched and a call will be initiated for applications across a range of themes to support disadvantaged children.
<b>18.3</b> Disbursement of funding to grantees.	DCEDIY	Q3 2023	A full suite of funding grants will be activated with grantees in contract and operational.

## Theme 7 – Restorative Recognition

This theme encompasses specific restorative measures in the dual spheres of health supports and financial supports.

A centrepiece of the Government's response to the recommendations of the Commission is the commitment to develop a Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme. This scheme is a way for the State to both recognise and acknowledge the harms suffered by the mothers and children who were resident in Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions.

We recognise that no financial award or health service provision can take back the hurt, loss and distress that has been experienced. Rather, the Scheme represents a measure that the State is taking to recognise that suffering, provide a degree of support and seek to rebuild trust with persons who were failed as mothers and children in the context of these institutions.

### Action 19 - Health Supports

#### Description

We are committed to a suite of supports as outlined below.

- We will provide all former residents with access to counselling support through the National Counselling Service in the HSE. This will include telephone and face-to-face counselling through an established nationwide network of counselling locations. Additional resources will be made available to the National Counselling Service to support this commitment (see Action 2 above).
- All former residents will also have access to a Patient Advocacy Liaison Support service. Delivered via an expansion of HSE Live, this service will help ensure that individuals can have an appropriate point of contact within the health system and can be signposted and supported to access necessary health services.
- A targeted programme of health research is being undertaken to assist and inform the development of future service provision for former residents. Significant preparatory work on this research study has already commenced.
- In addition, through the restorative recognition scheme, a form of enhanced medical card will be provided to all former residents of Mother and Baby Homes and County Homes (where they were resident for a period of more than six months).

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<p><b>19.1</b> Staff recruited to deliver Patient Advocacy Liaison Support service (PALS).</p>	<p><b>D/Health</b> <b>Partner: HSE</b></p>	<p>Q3 2021 Ongoing</p>	<p>HSELive will add the PALS service to the existing HSE Mother and Baby Home Helpline (Tel: 1800 817 517) to provide bespoke information, signposting and support to former residents through a dedicated team.</p> <p>Recruitment Plan is being progressed by HSE. It is expected that recruitment will take approximately 6 months to complete.</p>
<p><b>19.2</b> Access provided for survivors and former residents to a Patient Advocacy Liaison Support service.</p>	<p><b>D/Health</b> <b>Partner: HSE</b></p>	<p>Q1 2022</p>	<p>Service delivery is expected to commence in February 2022.</p>

<p><b>19.3</b> Awareness raising campaign for counselling and PALS services.</p>	<p><b>D/Health</b> <b>Partner: HSE</b></p>	<p>Q1 2022</p>	<p>HSE to deliver an awareness raising campaign to ensure survivors and former residents are informed of the new service and encouraged to avail of the Counselling and PALS services as needed.</p>
<p><b>19.4</b> An enhanced medical card provided to all former residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions (where they were resident for a period of more than six months).</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b> <b>Partner: D/Health</b></p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>Work on the enhanced medical card is being progressed through the IDG on the development of the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme.</p>

<p><b>19.5</b> Health research commissioned on the future needs of former residents.</p>	<p><b>D/Health</b> <b>Partner: HRB</b></p>	<p>Q4 2022 Ongoing</p>	<p>A detailed proposal to conduct a research programme to assist the development of measurable health indicators to inform health and well-being policy for former residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions was reviewed by an international scientific panel.</p> <p>Further to panel feedback about feasible and appropriate strategies to access and recruit participants (consent-based) to the study, preparatory work is underway for publicising and recruiting potential participants aligned with the publicity campaign and activation of the Payment Scheme.</p> <p>Planning is also underway to establish a mechanism for the study team to engage with former residents to inform study design/activities and to optimise knowledge sharing from the project.</p>
<p><b>19.6</b> Review of demand and capacity of counselling service to inform allocation of resources.</p>	<p><b>HSE</b></p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>Review to be completed by the HSE in 2022.</p>



## Action 20 - Financial Support

### Description

Government is committed to providing a bespoke ex-gratia scheme to provide financial recognition to specific groups identified by the Commission of Investigation. An Inter Departmental Group will design proposals to be brought back to Government.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<b>20.1</b> Inter Departmental Group established to design proposals for scheme.	DCEDIY	Q1 2021 Achieved	The Interdepartmental Group (IDG) was established and tasked with the development of detailed and costed proposals for a scheme. The IDG met on six occasions.
<b>20.2</b> National consultation on the Scheme completed.	DCEDIY	Q2 – Q3 2021 Achieved	An independently facilitated public consultation was undertaken during March and April 2021. Almost 450 written submissions were received and there were 17 online meetings with 159 participants.
<b>20.3</b> IDG Report approved by Government.	DCEDIY	Q4 2021 Achieved	Proposals published.
<b>20.4</b> Legislation underpinning the scheme published and enacted.	DCEDIY	2022	
<b>20.5</b> Scheme open for applications.	DCEDIY	2022	

## Action 21 - Inheritance Tax

### Description

The Commission has noted that some children who were boarded out inherited farms from their foster parents but had to pay taxes for which birth and adopted children are not liable. It raises the possibility of an ex-gratia payment to compensate for this. The Department of Finance will engage directly with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to explore the issues raised and consider the recommendation of the Commission.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<b>21.1</b> Development of ex-gratia repayment scheme including application process and evidence requirements.	<b>DCEDIY; D/Finance</b>  <b>Partners: Revenue</b>	Q1 2022	Establish an interdepartmental working group to undertake further scoping work and develop a Project Plan.
<b>21.2</b> Government approval of proposals.	<b>DCEDIY; D/Finance</b>	Contingent upon Action 21.1	
<b>21.3</b> Legislative amendments to ensure that CAT is not applied to payments.	<b>D/Finance</b>	Contingent upon Action 21.1	

# Theme 8 – Dignified Burial

## Action 22 - Burials Legislation

### Description

We will advance burials legislation to support the excavation, exhumation and, where possible, identification of remains, and their dignified reburial. This legislation will support intervention at the Tuam site and any other site where intervention is reasonably required by virtue of the manifestly inappropriate nature of the interments. Separately, we will engage with former residents and their advocacy groups on the question of appropriate, dignified local memorialisation of known or agreed burial sites where this is not already the case.

Milestones	Lead Dept / Agency (and Partners if applicable)	Timeline and status	Progress and next steps
<b>22.1</b> Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of draft legislation completed.	DCEDIY	Q3 2021 Achieved	The General Scheme was referred to the Joint Oireachtas Committee in mid-January 2021. It underwent Pre-Legislative Scrutiny in the first half of 2021 with the Joint Oireachtas Committee publishing its final report on 15 July.
<b>22.2</b> Bill published and introduced in the Houses of the Oireachtas.	DCEDIY	Q4 2021	Drafting of the Bill continues and it is intended that the Bill should be published and introduced into the Oireachtas this term.

<p><b>22.3</b> Agency established.</p>	<p><b>DCEDIY</b></p>	<p>2022</p>	
<p><b>22.4</b> Schedule of works initiated at the Tuam site.</p>		<p>2022</p>	
<p><b>22.5</b> Plans in place for dignified local memorialisation of known or agreed burial sites.</p>	<p><b>Local Authorities</b> <b>Partner: DHLGH</b></p>	<p>Contingent upon 16.1 Ongoing</p>	<p>The Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth is liaising with the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in relation to encouraging Local Authorities to provide specific protections within their Development Plan process for any burial sites in their functional area which may be linked to former Mother and Baby Homes or County Homes.</p> <p>The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage has established a Working Group of Departmental and Local Authority officials to advance the commitment to local memorialisation.</p>

<p><b>22.6</b></p> <p>Circular issued to advise planning authorities of the precautionary approach to be taken in their Statutory Development Plan to the proper safeguarding of burial sites from potentially harmful development.</p>	<p><b>DHLGH</b></p>	<p>Q4 2021 Ongoing</p>	<p>Circular being drafted by DHLGH.</p>
---	---------------------	----------------------------	---

# Summary of Actions

Milestone	Description	Timeline	Status
<b>Theme 1 – A Survivor Centred Approach</b>			
<b>Action 1 – Development of a Strategic Action Plan and Engagement with Former Residents</b>			
1.1	A Strategic Action Plan published.	Q4 2021	Achieved
1.2	Consultation with Collaborative Forum regarding a proposed enhanced model of engagement.	Q2 2021	Achieved
1.3	Enhanced model of engagement agreed by Government.	Q4 2021	Contingent on completion of 1.2
1.4	Arrangements for enhanced model of engagement put into place.	Q2 2022	Contingent on completion of 1.2 and 1.3
<b>Action 2 – Immediate Counselling Support</b>			
2.1	Counselling support available for former residents through the National Counselling Service at the time of publication of the Report of the Commission of Investigation.	Q1 2021	Achieved
2.2	Ongoing counselling support available for former residents.	Q1 2021	Achieved
<b>Theme 2 - Apology</b>			
<b>Action 3 - Apology</b>			
3.1	An Taoiseach will issue a formal apology on behalf of the State for the hurt experienced by many former residents of Mother and Baby Institutions and County Homes.	Q1 2021	Achieved

Milestone	Description	Timeline	Status
<b>Theme 3 – Access to Personal Information</b>			
<b>Action 4 – Information and Tracing Legislation</b>			
4.1	Draft legislation published to allow for access to birth certificates and early life information.	Q2 2021	Achieved
4.2	Pre-Legislative Scrutiny completed.	Q4 2021	Ongoing
4.3	Bill published and introduced in the Houses of the Oireachtas.	Q4 2021	Contingent on completion of 4.2.
4.4	Legislation enacted and commenced, with services being delivered.	Q1 2022	Contingent on completion of 4.2 and 4.3
<b>Action 5 – GDPR Right of Access to Commission Records</b>			
5.1	Commission’s archive of records transferred to DCEDIY.	Q1 2021	Achieved
5.2	Information Management Unit (IMU) established within DCEDIY.	Q1 2021	Achieved
5.3	Information published on how individuals may request access to personal data which is contained within the archive.	Q2 2021	Achieved
5.4	Ongoing processing of Subject Access Requests (SARs) by the DCEDIY Information Management Unit.	Ongoing	Ongoing
5.5	Introduction of new Regulations to improve GDPR access to personal health data contained within the Commission’s archive.	Q4 2021	

Milestone	Description	Timeline	Status
<b>Action 6 – Central repository of institutional records</b>			
6.1	Initial legal basis for safeguarding of records established through the Birth Information and Tracing legislation (see Action 4).	Timeline contingent upon enactment of the Birth Information and Tracing legislation (see Action 4)	Contingent on Action 4
6.2	Further milestones to be developed in the context of work on the National Memorial and Records Centre (see Action 7).	Timeline contingent on Action 7	Contingent on Action 7
<b>Theme 4 – Archives and Databases</b>			
<b>Action 7 – National Memorial and Records Centre</b>			
7.1	Appropriate groups and structures established.	Q4 2021	Ongoing
7.2	Project Plan drafted.	Timeline for Project Plan is contingent upon Government approval of the vision and approach developed by the group.	
7.3	National Memorial and Records Centre established.	Timeline contingent upon 7.1 and 7.2.	
7.4	Process established for capturing survivor accounts for publication and for archiving for posterity in the National Memorial and Records Centre.	Timeline to be confirmed as part of Project Plan for National Memorial and Records Centre.	Scoping work in respect of this initiative is expected to commence shortly.



Milestone	Description	Timeline	Status
<b>Action 8 – Public Access to Original State Files</b>			
8.1	Original D/Health files identified and transferred to DCEDIY.	Q4 2023	Ongoing
8.2	Original files catalogued by DCEDIY archivist.	Q4 2024	Ongoing
8.3	Original files reviewed in the context of relevant legislation such as GDPR and the National Archives Act 1986 by DCEDIY archivist and Certifying Officer.	Q4 2024	Ongoing
8.4	Original files transferred from DCEDIY to the National Archives.	Q4 2021 – Q1 2025	First tranche of files to transfer by 31/12/2021.
<b>Action 9 – Expansion of the database</b>			
9.1	Options for consolidation of records scoped.	2022	
<b>Action 10 – Appointment of an archivist</b>			
10.1	Appointment of an archivist.	Q1 2021	Achieved
10.2	Survey completed of digital records in MBHCOI archive to facilitate IMU in responding to Subject Access Requests.	Q2 2021	Achieved
10.3	Cataloguing of paper and digital records in MBHCOI archive to facilitate eventual transfer to NAI completed.	Q4 2022	Ongoing
10.4	Paper records rehoused to ensure preservation.	Ongoing	Ongoing

Milestone	Description	Timeline	Status
<b>Theme 5 – Education and Research</b>			
<b>Action 11 – Second Level Curriculum</b>			
11.1	Request sent by D/Education to NCCA asking that it consider the Commission’s video and supplementary materials for inclusion in the second-level curriculum.	Q3 2021	Achieved
11.2	Matter brought to council of NCCA for its consideration.	Q4 2021	
<b>Action 12 – Research Scholarships</b>			
12.1	Postgraduate scholarship established in partnership with the Irish Research Council.	Q3 2021	Achieved
12.2	Review of postgraduate scholarship.	2027	
<b>Action 13 – Research on Terminology</b>			
13.1	Steering committee established.	Q1 2021	Achieved
13.2	Research project commenced.	Q2 2021	Achieved
13.3	Research completed and report submitted to DCEDIY.	Q4 2021	
13.4	Outcomes of research disseminated.	Q1 2022	

Milestone	Description	Timeline	Status
<b>Action 14 - Further Research on Death Registration Records</b>			
14.1	Options for further research scoped.	2022	
<b>Theme 6 - Memorialisation</b>			
<b>Action 15 - National Memorial</b>			
15.1	Appropriate groups and structures established.	Q4 2021	Ongoing
15.2	Project Plan drafted.	Timeline contingent upon Action 7.1	
15.3	National Memorial and Records Centre established.	Timeline contingent upon Actions 7.1 and 7.2	
15.4	Process established for capturing survivor accounts for publication and for archiving for posterity in the National Memorial and Records Centre.	Timeline to be confirmed as part of Project Plan for National Memorial and Records Centre.	Scoping work in respect of this initiative is expected to commence shortly.
<b>Action 16 - Local Memorials</b>			
16.1	Working group established to progress this commitments.	Q3 2021	Ongoing
16.2	Guidance and support available to survivors and former residents in accessing local authority services.	Q1 2022	
16.3	An assessment of any gaps in the provision of local authority services completed.	Q1 2022	

Milestone	Description	Timeline	Status
<b>Action 17 – Survivor-led Annual Commemoration</b>			
17.1	Review of Commemorative Grant Scheme undertaken to explore events in a Covid-19 context, and amended scheme in place.	Q2 2021	Achieved
<b>Action 18 – Children’s Fund</b>			
18.1	Design and development of funding scheme.	Q1 2022	Ongoing
18.2	Launch of Children’s Fund.	Q2 2022	
18.3	Disbursement of funding to grantees.	Q3 2023	
<b>Theme 7 - Restorative Recognition</b>			
<b>Action 19 – Health Supports</b>			
19.1	Staff recruited to deliver Patient Advocacy Liaison Support service (PALS).	Q3 2021 Ongoing	Ongoing
19.2	Access provided for survivors and former residents to a Patient Advocacy Liaison Support service.	Q1 2022	
19.3	Awareness raising campaign for counselling and PALS services.	Q1 2022	
19.4	An enhanced medical card provided to all former residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions (where they were resident for a period of more than six months).	2022	
19.5	Health research commissioned on the future needs of former residents.	Q4 2022	Ongoing
19.6	Review of demand and capacity of counselling service to inform allocation of resources.	2022	

Milestone	Description	Timeline	Status
<b>Action 20 – Financial Support</b>			
20.1	Inter Departmental Group established to design proposals for scheme.	Q1 2021	Achieved
20.2	National consultation on the Scheme completed.	Q2-Q3 2021	Achieved
20.3	IDG Report approved by Government.	Q4 2021	Achieved
20.4	Legislation underpinning the scheme published and enacted.	2022	Contingent on Action 20.3
20.5	Scheme open for applications.	2022	Contingent on Action 20.4
<b>Action 21 – Inheritance Tax</b>			
21.1	Development of ex-gratia repayment scheme including application process and evidence requirements.	Q1 2022	
21.2	Government approval of proposals.	Contingent upon Action 21.1	
21.3	Legislative amendments to ensure that CAT is not applied to payments.	Contingent upon Action 21.1	

Milestone	Description	Timeline	Status
<b>Theme 8 - Dignified Burial</b>			
<b>Action 22 – Burials Legislation</b>			
22.1	Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of draft legislation completed.	Q3 2021	Achieved
22.2	Bill published and introduced in the Houses of the Oireachtas.	Q4 2021	Contingent on Action 22.1
22.3	Agency established.	2022	Contingent on Action 22.2
22.4	Schedule of works initiated at the Tuam site.	2022	Contingent on Action 22.3
22.5	Plans in place for dignified local memorialisation of known or agreed burial sites.	Contingent upon Action 16.1	Ongoing
22.6	Circular issued to advise planning authorities of the precautionary approach to be taken in their Statutory Development Plan to the proper safeguarding of burial sites from potentially harmful development.	Q4 2021	Ongoing





**An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,  
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige**  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth