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To: +TEO Consultation Public Email <[cteotrconsultation@niassembly.gov.uk](mailto:cteotrconsultation@niassembly.gov.uk)>

Cc: Truth Recovery [REDACTED] Independent Panel

[REDACTED]  
Subject: Evidence on Exclusion of Workhouse Mothers from Redress

Dear Committee members

I would like to draw your attention to the evidence given to the Executive Committee by Dr James Gallen, Associate Professor at Dublin City University, regarding the exclusion of unmarried women and their children who were placed in workhouses before 1948. Dr Gallen stated:

*"But we share the Independent panel's concern regarding the exclusion of unmarried women and their now adult children in workhouses before 1948. This cohort is foreseeably small, elderly, but equally deserving of recognition and justice. A commitment to investigate through the inquiry a particular cohort of non-recent abuse raises a legitimate expectation on the part of survivors of their equal treatment for the purposes of redress.*

*Redress for unmarried women and girls does not result in an arbitrary difference in treatment for the purposes of the Northern Ireland Act in section 75 and extensive research to in our view affirms that unmarried women were historically subject to discrimination, exclusion and hardship across a range of institutions and outside of residential care. and we see this in the O'Connell and McCormack report in 2021 that affirms that women and girls were subject to stigma in workhouses. And so we would respectfully disagree with the approach taken in the equality impact assessment that explicitly gendered institutionalization is required for redress."*

This evidence directly challenges the reasoning in the Equality Impact Assessment, and affirms what many survivors and advocates have consistently raised: that unmarried mothers in workhouses were subjected to specific, gendered stigma and injustice, comparable to those in other institutions now included in the redress scheme.

I would ask the Committee, the Executive Office, and the Independent Panel to take this authoritative intervention into account to ensure equal recognition and justice for all unmarried mothers and their now adult children affected, regardless of the type of institution in which they were placed.

Yours sincerely,

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