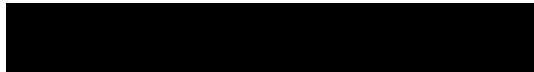




WAVE Trauma Centre Organisational Response to the Statutory Public Inquiry into
Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.

September 2025



Introduction to MBMLW WAVE Project

On the 30th of September 2022, WAVE Trauma Centre together with the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) and Adopt NI, launched a new service dedicated to supporting the health and wellbeing of survivors of Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses. This includes those impacted by related institutions and historical adoption practises.

WAVE offers a wide range of internal specialist services including Casework, Advocacy, Peer Support Events and Workshops, Residentials, Outreach, Welfare Advice, Provision of Disability Aids, Health and Wellbeing, Counselling, Complementary Therapy and Trauma Education Programmes. Additionally, WAVE work in partnership with Adopt NI to signpost survivors for family tracing, DNA, intermediary and specialist therapeutic services.

At present we are supporting approximately 270 clients. These are comprised of individuals who resided within the relevant institutions and other individuals impacted by these pathways and practices. Thus far we have supported clients at several community events, provided support throughout the Public Consultation process and supported clients in giving testimony to the Independent Panel. In addition to this we have facilitated dinners and events, had a minimum of four residentials per year, ran trauma training courses such as Resiliency Training and supporting the Trauma Education department in delivering Developmental Trauma and Intergenerational Trauma Training. As well as this we have run peer support workshops within all six centres focusing on creative approaches by utilising arts and crafts, photography and flower arranging. The varying nature of these support services highlights the different needs that survivors present with.

Further to this our health and wellbeing service allows us to provide support to directly impacted individuals via an Individual Needs Consultation. This provides survivors with access to disability aids, trauma focused physical activity, persistent

pain management, education and training, psychological support and social isolation programmes.

From August 2025 our Advocacy services began. Within this service we can assist with record retrieval of statutory adoption files, social service records, county court files and private institutional records. Additionally, our Advocacy caseworkers have supported survivors throughout the testimony process and public consultation events and will be able to support individuals in completing applications for the upcoming financial redress scheme.

All these services are not only vital for those living in Northern Ireland, but also for those living in the South of Ireland, the UK and those who have left these shores and are living across the world who are equally as impacted by their experiences within these institutions.

WAVE Trauma Centre Recommendations for Amendments to the Inquiry for Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses and Redress Scheme Bill.

After extensive analysis of the Public Inquiry (for Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill, WAVE have developed alongside client engagement a range of recommendations to the following clauses of the bill.

Clause 2

With reference to 'systemic failings by prescribed institutions, public bodies or other persons'

WAVE believes that looking at systemic failings gives the Inquiry some scope to examine what happened. We believe that the Inquiry should look at those key individuals that are still living who can be identified as playing a significant role within these institutions.

This was reinforced by a sample of client responses who felt that some survivors could identify key individuals that were either directly involved in the abuse or indirectly aware of the abuse occurring within these institutions.

Additionally, many clients provided feedback that the issues to be investigated by the Inquiry should be looked at through a 'Human Rights' lens. WAVE as an organisation believe procedural fairness, promptness, accountability, openness to public scrutiny and involvement and support for survivors is paramount. This was reinforced within the client feedback as many felt strongly that these institutions orchestrated clear human rights violations.

Clause 3

'Prescribed institutions'

WAVE feel it is important that this list of prescribed institutions remains open so that additional institutions can be added when there is sufficient evidence to do so. We believe that this is central to ensuring all survivors are included within the Inquiry where appropriate. We believe that it is crucial to include 'other institutions' e.g. private nursing homes.

WAVE believe that the **exclusion of private nursing homes** is of major concern. Survivors were encouraged by the Independent Panel to feed into the testimony process if they were associated with private nursing homes. This was through various advertising means and methods. Each survivor was led to believe that their testimony would feed into the public Inquiry. This led to an influx of individuals from private nursing homes coming forward to avail of WAVE services. We believe that excluding private nursing homes from the Inquiry has been incredibly damaging as individuals report feeling used, and re-traumatised for 'no reason'. Within WAVE our Advocacy and Health and Well-being caseworkers have had to deal with the fallout of this and the subsequent sense of betrayal and abandonment that these individuals feel.

WAVE believe that the Inquiry must consult research completed by the Truth Recovery Independent Panel who produced a list of private nursing homes in their findings. WAVE believe that excluding private nursing homes will have a knock-on effect, as we work with individuals whose mother did not reside in a MBMLW institution, but were sent by others to a private nursing home, forcefully separated from their baby and then placed in a baby home. As it stands, these individuals do not fit into this bill.

Survivors feel that this process should be about finding out the full truth and not about limiting the Inquiry to just those named prescribed institutions in order to enact 'damage control'.

WAVE is of the view that there should be focus on cross-border and overseas transfers to establish the full extent of the institutional pathways and practises. An Inquiry must look to the network of pathways between established Mother and Baby

Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses as well as private nursing homes and children's homes. We are aware of survivors who either themselves or their babies were 'trafficked' across the border whether that was North to South or South to North.

WAVE recognises the significance of the worldwide campaigns to ensure that no one is forgotten and all those eligible receive the support they deserve, irrespective of where they reside.

Clause 4

'Relevant Persons'

WAVE believe that **the exclusion of workhouses** unless the individual was pregnant is damaging. We would argue that this needs to be extended to include all women and girls who were admitted into a Workhouse.

WAVE understand the rationale that this Inquiry is to focus specifically on women and girls, however with reference to the workhouses we find this contentious. WAVE is of the opinion that anybody that occupied a workhouse during the relevant time period, irrespective of gender, age, disability and pregnancy status should be included in the Standardised Payment. The same mistreatment, discrimination and poor conditions existed in the Workhouses for those the Inquiry is focusing on and those that it does not. This could be viewed as unfair and exclusionary, particularly against individuals who had disabilities or who were residing in Workhouses under 'The Poor Reliefs Act NI 1838-1937'. Many survivors reiterated this view that it is 'extremely harmful' to exclude certain survivors and that all affected individuals deserve acknowledgment of suffering. In addition, survivors of Workhouses are elderly now, they deserve financial compensation and acknowledgement as soon as possible.

Once again WAVE ask why is a smaller scope justified for Workhouses when those residing in a Magdalene Laundry did not have to be pregnant to be eligible?

Another point of contention for WAVE is the complete exclusion of the deceased babies, unmarked graves and burials. None of these have been mentioned at all within the bill which is surprisingly considering the research conducted within the Queens Report 2021. This bill as it stands does not acknowledge, the lives of these

individuals and WAVE believe this is wholly inadequate. We ask that the Inquiry investigates this key issue sufficiently.

Clause 9

'Assessors'

WAVE would like some clarification as to who constitutes as having the 'expertise' to make them a suitable person to provide assistance to the Inquiry panel. For example, is the expertise rooted in judicial experience? Or individuals who represent both birth mothers and adopted adults with lived experience? Will these individuals be properly trauma informed and have adoption specific knowledge?

Clause 10

'Advisory Panel'

WAVE acknowledge the benefit of including individuals with lived experience on the Advisory Panel. We believe these individuals are best placed to provide honest and accurate depictions of time spent in Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses. However, we also acknowledge that the inclusion of these individuals could be viewed as tokenism. This is compounded by the fact many individuals came forward and provided testimony to the Truth Recovery Independent Panel with the belief that their testimony would feed into the Public Inquiry. Unfortunately, this has not been the case and throughout the bill there is no reference to the work completed by the Independent Panel and most specifically the testimony team. During the testimony process individuals are asked to consent to their testimony being used for the public Inquiry and asked what they would like the public Inquiry to look at. Unfortunately, any suggestions or feedback provided within the testimonies has not been considered within the bill. Furthermore, any suggestions or feedback provided within the public consultation stage also did not feature. Many survivors feel disappointed, disheartened and as if their voices have not been heard. For many, the testimony process was extremely difficult, and many individuals subjected themselves to this potential re-traumatisation in the belief that this would help shape the Inquiry. Survivors feel this is contradictory to have such an

emphasis on lived experience within the Advisory Panel when there was no consideration to their lived experience in the creation of the bill, prior to this.

Case Study

“I believe the Advisory panel should hold a place for victims and survivors in it. That said it is contradictory – we have been lied to and fed lies that we would be listened to and that this process would be victim centred, and it is not. We did the public consultation last year – this was ignored. We are wasting our precious time completing consultation questionnaires and surveys to be ultimately ignored. I am re-traumatising myself repeatedly and I see no benefit. When will the people listen to us, and show us the respect we deserve?”

Clause 23

‘Distortion, Altering or Withholding of Evidence’

WAVE agree with what the bill has proposed with relation to a person guilty of an offence if they do anything or intend to ‘distort, or otherwise altering any evidence, document or other thing that is given’.

With respect to the section on ‘relevant documents’ WAVE believes this can be considered a grey area. For example, what constitutes a relevant document? A holder of said document may not classify it as ‘relevant’ or alternatively may be aware that the chairperson is unaware of its existence and thus can withhold a relevant document with impunity.

Furthermore, the bill refers to ‘a person guilty of an offence’ but does not specifically target institutions, statutory agencies, courts or public bodies. Perhaps more clarity is necessary?

Within WAVE and our work firsthand with survivors we acknowledge and recognise the significant impact of distortion, altering or withholding evidence. Unfortunately, this has been evident with our survivors where information has been withheld and after multiple attempts more information has become available.

Case Study - This client is an Adult Adoptee and for many years had questions surrounding her adoption. After receiving her original birth certificate and meeting with a Social Worker she learnt that her Birth Mother resided in a Mother & Baby Institution before giving birth to her and resided there for 6 months. This client then set out around 5 years ago to find out more information about her Birth Mother/Father and locate any existing records.

Case Study

"I contacted the relevant person from the institution and requested records, and I received 2 pages of basic information such as the date my mother entered, my date of birth, where and when she returned home. There was no mention of my Birth Father's name on this which I was disappointed about.

I knew that my Birth Mother was there with me for 6 months in the institution so I went back and kept asking questions about why so little information exists if she was there with a newborn baby for 6 months there should be more notes. I questioned other things such who paid the money every week that was mentioned in the document and wanted to know if my Birth Mother had any visitors during her time. They came back with another document to say it was my mother paying every week which I couldn't understand because she wasn't earning any money in there.

I was still not satisfied with the information I received and this year I was planning a trip to England and emailed the same person from the Institution asking could I come to the Head Quarters on my visit to look at the original documents. The person then sent me additional documentation.

One of the documents they sent was the same page that was originally sent to me except this time my Birth Father was named and there was an address. I was also sent an additional document which was a maternity register that I never received before which listed details about my Birth Mother's labour.

I was so upset and hurt by this because the page that I was sent years ago would have had my Birth Father's name on it from the beginning, but this was withheld from me. It was there all along and they made the decision to keep that from me for many years. I think it was only because I offered to come to the Head Quarters that this information was given, which I think is very unfair. Now I am trying to trace my Birth Father after all these years, which could have been 5 years ago when I first tried to access this information. I could have siblings too. I don't know yet if any family members are still alive. The barriers that are put in the way for people trying to access their own records and documents is shocking. It just shows if you keep going back to try or offer to show up in person then more information suddenly shows up”.

Case Study – This client is both an adult adoptee and birth mother who has fought for many years to obtain her records.

Case Study

“Throughout my journey questions and doubts have swirled in my mind, morning, noon and night. The thoughts that have affected my mood, mental health and indeed my ability or lack of ability to form and keep meaningful relationships. I feel that my life has been dominated by hundreds of unanswered questions, and I have tried over decades to find the truth so that I can finally find ME.

*Despite my best efforts and multiple letters my truth is still shrouded in mystery as answers are not forthcoming. It is hard to still be resilient when so many doors are banged closed. My history may always remain a mystery, but I know there are those who **can and should** end my misery.*

The authorities in charge of adoptions have been at best unhelpful, but in truth have been downright obstructive.

*In December 1989 I made my first application for access to birth records – **36 years ago!** As I was born before December 1987, I was required to attend an interview with a counsellor before being allowed to obtain information on my original birth record.*

In May 1990 (almost 6 months after my first request and only after I rang to chase social services) I met with a social worker. This social worker gave me incorrect information on where my birth mother resided.

In 2014 I made a second request under the Freedom of Information Act to the Local Health and Social Services Trust – seeking my Adoption File and In Care File. Eventually, I met with a social worker in March 2014 – she was unhelpful and dismissive. She ‘reviewed my file’ and provided me with a ‘summary’. I had also requested a copy of my baptismal records.

In 2022 I made my third request for my adoption details and time in care from social services under both GDPR and FOI and I was asked to attend a social service office to be given the response. I was excited to at last find out more, but my hopes were dashed.

I received 3 sheets of paper from Family Care Adoption Services relating to my birth mothers time in Marianville in Belfast. There were in total just 9 very short sentences in the register detailing her time there and alluding to where I would go when born.

I also requested my court file for my adoption; I was denied access to this. I then pleaded to be given access to the page that outlined whether my birth mother signed for my adoption. I was granted this one page – but at a cost of £14. This felt cruel to have to pay for MY OWN information.

In November 2023 I made a fourth request for access to my records – a response was provided in January 2024 which provided a copy of my records in full. The file contained redactions but provided a better understanding of what happened.

*Inconsistences and unanswered questions remain. I will continue to request these details until these are resolved to my satisfaction. The practise guidance on access to records issued by DoH is still not being followed. **This needs to be codified in statute.**”*

Case Study – This client is an adult adoptee and for many years has attempted to access their own records.

Case Study

“I have been relentlessly chasing my records for over 20 years, the toil this has taken on me has been massive. Only last year, after I put in another request for my records did I find out that I had been adopted before my ‘successful’ adoption and was returned to an institution. This information was monumental to me! Who adopted me? Why did it fall through? Why am I only finding out this information now? I feel as if I ask questions and people tell me as little as possible. This is wrong. I have become frustrated, cynical and angry. I now believe people are deliberately withholding my information. People do not understand how hard it is to not know YOUR own truth. The suffering is prolonged. Every time I go back, I get more information. It is demoralising, as if I am begging for scraps. I, and hundreds like me deserve better. When I do get the information why is it so heavily redacted? Who are we protecting? It feels like the perpetrators are being protected at our expense. Why is it that people get to decide what I know about myself? If I was given answers two decades ago when I first started looking, I would have stood a better chance of meeting and connecting with individuals, but this opportunity was not afforded to me. In my eyes this is a clear human rights violation.”

Clause 31

With respect to ‘eligible persons’ WAVE are in agreement that the bill should provide for individuals who resided in these institutions as an adult or as a child. WAVE acknowledge the significance of including under 18-year-olds even if unaccompanied by an adult.

Throughout the bill WAVE have noticed a discrepancy between who qualifies as a relevant person and who qualifies as an ‘eligible person’. We believe that this will lead to confusion within this survivor group, especially with reference to posthumous claims.

One of our concerns, are the individuals who do not have an ‘eligible person’ who can claim redress on their behalf (as a posthumous claim). Within our survivor group

there are many individuals who have neither a surviving spouse, co-habiting partner or children. This is not uncommon for people living with trauma, we know that individuals can struggle to form and maintain relationships, build trust or have intimate relations. WAVE see these parameters as a barrier. We believe this must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and some discretion should be applied. For example, a sibling or a close friend. We recognise that this may have some implications with wills and next of kin, but we believe the Inquiry must look at the 'eligible persons' in more detail.

"Posthumous Cut Off"

WAVE have concerns regarding the posthumous eligibility cut-off date of the 29th of September 2011. WAVE believe this is not reflective of official acknowledgement, apology or announcement and believe that the posthumous claims should include all women and girls impacted by MBMLW at any time and not just those that died after the 29th of September 2011. This is echoed through a wide range of survivors who expressed that this cut off is 'cruel', 'insulting' and 'discriminatory'. They believe this is putting out a message that any family members that passed prior to this date 'do not matter and are not recognised'. The first institution opened in 1922 so of course there will be women and girls that were impacted by this that have passed many years before 2011, and their experience is of equal significance to living impacted survivors. We acknowledge that there are undoubtedly financial constraints, and this may have been the rationale for this date. However, if this scheme is meant to be an acknowledgement of societal wrongdoing, surely it should support all who were wronged?

Throughout the HIA project within WAVE it was apparent that many living individuals of deceased family members felt it was of value and cathartic to tell their family members' story. Those that are deceased cannot use their voice to tell their own experiences and so family members feel obligated and empowered to do this on their behalf. This facilitates some form of truth acknowledgement, accountability and respect. Providing this posthumous cut-off date severely limits the opportunities of these family members to have this experience.

Case Study – This client's mother resided in a Mother & Baby Institution (Marianville) where she gave birth to a baby that was adopted. This client's mother is

excluded from financial redress because they passed away before the Posthumous cut-off date.

Case Study

“Our mummy was a woman who gave everything to her children. Unfortunately, after battling cancer twice, her life was cut short in 1992, aged 43. In June 2024, we learned about the daughter that was taken from her when mummy was 18. This discovery took an enormous emotional toll on both me, my sister, and my two brothers. Imagining the pain, humiliation and the isolation she went through hurt us so deeply. To say it was a shock doesn’t even come close, but we welcomed her daughter with the grace and love our mummy would have shown her, had she lived long enough to meet her daughter.

Now even in death, mummy faces yet another injustice. This bill excludes everyone who died before September 2011. It says they don’t matter and what they suffered is irrelevant. Shame on Stormont! My mummy’s story and the stories of so many others like her needs heard. Their pain needs to be recognised. They deserve to be included in this bill. Give them back their dignity.”

With reference to the specific date of the 29th of September 2011 WAVE raise many questions about how this date was decided upon. The 29th of September 2011 was when the NI Executive first announced the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse and WAVE fail to recognise how this is a relevant date to the MBMLW Inquiry. The MBMLW Inquiry should stand to recognise abuse and survivors in their own right and WAVE believe that the dates should have been kept separate from the HIA Inquiry.

“The Amount”

WAVE feel that the amount proposed for the standardised payment of £10,000 is lower than anticipated by many survivors. Although monetary compensation is only a small part of recognition of the trauma that these individuals experienced, it still does not equate to the many years of suffering in silence for truth and justice. When speaking with survivors, many felt that the Inquiry is based off previous redress schemes from several years ago. Hence, this is not reflective of the current economic times with the cost of living and rising inflation rates. WAVE suggests a

higher standardised payment of £15,000 to support especially elderly individuals who might not have the time to go through the proposed second stage of the Financial Redress Scheme of individually assessed payments. Furthermore, many survivors have expressed concerns as to whether they would complete an individually assessed payment process due to the likely nature of re-traumatisation.

With regards to the £2,000 for all eligible persons of posthumous claims WAVE believe this amount to be significantly lower than appropriate. Many survivors feel that the proposed amount does not reflect the real experiences of their deceased relatives, nor does it hold any value for the trauma that they had experienced. Again, WAVE believe that the award of £10,00 for living impacted individuals and £2,000 for deceased individuals is insufficient and must be re-assessed with an added appreciation for the cost of living and inflation.

The particular issue of the £2,000 posthumous amount has left a lot of unanswered questions and led to confusion.

For example, a WAVE client stated:

“I would like clarification - can each qualifying relative apply for redress or is it only one claim which can be divided between each qualifying relative. If this is the case what happens if relatives are estranged, or do not know about each other and each try to make their own separate application – I do not believe this has been thought through, this must be totally revamped.”

From our working experience survivors have indicated that they believed the £2,000 was one amount on behalf of each deceased person and therefore if there were multiple eligible persons this £2,000 would be divided. We believe it is crucial that this confusion is addressed and that efforts are made to make this clearer.

Through engagement with survivors, it has been noted that deceased babies are excluded from posthumous redress claims. Survivors believe that these babies and their relatives have been left behind and failed once more.

Additionally, WAVE believe it is paramount that the Financial Redress Scheme commences as quickly as possible given that many survivors are of an aging population. WAVE is in support of the service having a “particular regard to the age or health of each applicant” as per Clause 32 (4).

Through engagement with survivors, there have been disagreements over ‘standardising’ a payment. Some of the survivors we work with are both Birth Mothers and Adopted Adults and they believe that they should be compensated for each admission.

Case Study

“My admission into Mater Dei Belfast as an adopted child and as a birth mother in Marianvale are entirely different. These traumas come up every day in my life, but they come up differently. I believe it is not fair that I am compensated with one standardised payment when I fall into both camps – birth mother and adopted adult. Nothing that happened was ever a choice; I did not consent to either admission. I also ask the question, why can individuals avail of the HIA scheme and the MBMLW scheme, but I can only avail once?”

We understand that redress applications are rooted in the mother’s admission, but this has led to some further questions.

For example, if an individual was a birth mother and an adopted adult surely that represents two different people’s admissions. When an individual is an adopted adult, they are eligible for redress through their mother’s admission and when they go on to become a birth mother themselves surely, they would then become eligible for redress through their own admission? We believe this requires immediate clarification.

Within WAVE we work with several individuals who fall under both categories – birth mother and adopted adult.

We believe this will only become more contentious when an adopted adult can claim £10,000 for themselves and £2,000 for their deceased birth mother. This totals £12,000. Is this ethical?

WAVE also believe that the Inquiry should provide individuals with an opportunity to decide how they want to acknowledge and memorialise their own experiences. It is important when dealing with disenfranchised individuals to give them the choice and agency to decide how best to address non-financial redress. Whether this is in the form of a symbolic action such as a statute, bench, art or book writing or an official apology. This should be looked at both individually and collaboratively and must be victim-led.

“If they feel compelled to do something, they must consult us. Perhaps a bursary, or a mural in Belfast/Derry/Newry or a community garden. Certainly, no statute in Stormont. As for an official apology, it all feels too little too late. Almost as if the government is trying to clear their conscious or perhaps, they are under pressure to do so. It is insincere, these individuals were not there – it was the people within the four walls with us who should have apologised.”

Clause 31 2 (6)

With regards to this clause WAVE have concerns surrounding the language used. We do not deem the words ‘shelter’ and ‘maintenance’ to be trauma-informed or sensitive to our survivors. Many of our survivors did not deem their time spent within these institutions as either shelter or maintenance and thus they find this to be deeply offensive. The NI Executive should look closer at the language used.

Clause 32

“Application Time Frame”

Regarding the 3-year window to apply for the standardised payment WAVE agree that this is appropriate provided that the Executive Office have provisions to extend this period if necessary. For example, if there is a large influx of late applicants there

should be the possibility of an extension to this time frame as this would relieve survivor and resource / staff pressures. From our experience of the HIA redress scheme, there was a large influx of survivors who came forward at the end of the scheme – it was crucial that all individuals wishing to avail of this service had the same time, respect and resources irrespective of whether they put their application in on the first day of the scheme or the last.

It is of paramount importance that all individuals who are eligible and have a desire to apply for this payment are afforded the opportunity to do so.

WAVE suggest that the standardised payment remains open and runs concurrently with the proposed stage 2 for individualised payments. This would give people more time and an opportunity to avail of both. It is important to acknowledge the shame and secrecy that is so prevalent within this survivor group and this undoubtedly will delay applications.

Clause 35

Judicial Members and Application Determinations”

WAVE agrees that judicial members may have to issue a notice in writing which requires a person to provide ‘specified records, documents, objects or other items of evidence... or to attend a hearing and give oral evidence on oath’ if this will support an individual in successfully applying for redress. However, there is potential for individuals to a) be unable to provide said documents because they do not possess them or for many other external factors or b) because due to their physical and/or mental health they would be unable to safely attend a hearing or provide oral evidence. It is important to acknowledge that this topic is unfortunately clouded by secrecy and shame and therefore individuals may not feel comfortable or safe to comply with these notices.

From the perspective of many survivors, they feel that throughout this lengthy process they have already given sufficient evidence and oral testimony and therefore should not be compelled to do this once again.

In WAVE we pride ourselves on the highest standard of confidential protocol and practises and thus we agree with the suggestion that if an individual is required to provide records or documents which disclose information pertaining to another

person which is irrelevant to the determination of the application then it must be appropriately redacted. This is crucial in keeping every individual safe.

WAVE believe that if individuals are being compelled to provide additional records or documents to support their own application then organisations and institutions should be compelled in that same way. Thus, it is crucial that this is set out within the Inquiry and there are ramifications for non-compliance. This leads on to raising the question of whether institutions will be compelled to pay into the Financial Redress Scheme and if so, how?

“Protected monies”

WAVE agree that any financial redress award must be protected under the legislation and therefore should not impact any means-tested social security benefits or entitlements. This must also include the assessment for a person’s financial resources under legal Aid (Legal Aid Advice and Assistance Northern Ireland Order 1981) or the provision of their residential care costs (Health and Personal Social Services Northern Ireland Order 1972). This Financial Redress Scheme has been introduced by the NI Assembly under the government and therefore we do not believe it can be used to pay for the above provisions.

Clause 38

“Appeals”

WAVE have concerns regarding the 30-day window for appeal against a decision to refuse an application. This is due to nature of record retrieval. For example, if an individual is being compelled to provide additional records or documents to support the appeal of their determination how would this be possible in 30 days? Especially if you must rely on other entities such as the institutions themselves, the court system or the Health and Social Care Trusts. In our working experience within our Advocacy service, it is taking substantially longer than 30 days to obtain records, and, in some cases, record requests have taken more than 170 days. Therefore, we do not believe that the 30-day window is suitable.

WAVE agree with the suggestion that an extension may be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Clause 39

“Advice and Assistance for Applicants”

WAVE agree it is crucial that the bill makes ‘arrangements for facilitating access to advice and assistance for any person who is making an application or considering whether to make an application’.

From our working perspective impacted individuals can find these processes triggering, confusing and overwhelming. Hence, we believe that trauma informed specialist support services are essential.

Here in WAVE, we provide holistic wrap around support for all survivors impacted by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses from 1922 to 1995. As well as those impacted by related institutions and historical adoption practises. WAVE offers a wide range of specialist services which are victim-centred, readily accessible and trauma-informed. These include Individual Casework, Advocacy, Peer Group Support, Complementary Therapy, Counselling, Psychotherapy, Health & Wellbeing, Outreach Support, Welfare Advice, Trauma Education Programmes and the provision of Individual Needs Assessments to request specialised funding for much needed disability aids, trauma focused physical activities, programmes/activities to reduce social isolation and much more.

We believe this places WAVE at the centre of providing support, advice and assistance to survivors who wish to apply.

Conclusive Statement

Throughout this response to the Public Inquiry for the Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses and Redress Scheme Bill we have sought to share our views with respect to our experience working alongside survivors of Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses. We have offered recommendations which underline the importance of ensuring victim-centred processes in a trauma-informed lens.

All recommendations included within this response are offered in an open and constructive manner. If there is any part of this response that requires further clarification or conversation, please do not hesitate to contact us.