

1. Formal Submission Format

Submission on the Bill

Clause 1, Part 6

1. It must be recognised that individuals fostered from institutions under the HIA remit did not receive redress for the time they spent in foster care.

Evidence I will bring with me on the day.

2. This creates an unjust gap in compensation and fails to acknowledge the suffering endured.

Clause 2, Part 1

3. The Terms of Reference (TORs) must include direct involvement of victims and survivors.

4. In 2021, assurances were given that the inquiry would be victim- and survivor-led. The current process excludes this commitment and undermines confidence in the inquiry.

Clause 3, Part 1(d)

5. The bill places victims and survivors at the discretion of the independent panel to select pathways and practices.

6. The report explicitly refers to all pathways and practices. To apply them selectively creates risk of inconsistency and exclusion.

Clause 7

7. The requirement of impartiality prevents victims and survivors from sitting on the inquiry panel.

8. Excluding lived experience in this way strips the process of accountability and weakens public trust.

Redress

9. The bill proposes 2011 as the posthumous cut-off date, linked to the first official report. This is insufficient.

10. The correct date is 1922, the year when the first Mother and Baby institutions in Northern Ireland opened.

11. To set the date at 2011 ignores almost a century of systemic neglect and abuse.

12. Historical context is essential:

The first Magdalene Laundry in Belfast opened in 1839.

The first workhouse in Derry opened in 1840.

13. Many women and girls entered institutions due to unmarried motherhood, illegitimacy, sexual abuse, incest, domestic abuse, disability, or mental illness.

14. Regardless of how they entered, the State had obligations:

To prevent detention against their will.

To refrain from benefiting from forced labour.

To ensure safe working conditions, access to social benefits, and education for girls of school age.

15. These obligations were not met. This failure represents an undeniable breach of human rights.

Posthumous Claims

16. Current proposals restrict posthumous claims to the spouses and children of deceased mothers.

17. This excludes claims on behalf of deceased children, many of whom died too young to have spouses or children.

18. Their lives and suffering must not be disregarded. Excluding them erases their existence from the process of justice.