

## **TRNI Statement**

We, TRNI Steering Group, speak on behalf of birth mothers, children now adults, and survivors of Northern Ireland's mother and baby institutions, Magdalene laundries, workhouses, and their pathways and practices in response to the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill introduced on 16 June 2025.

While we welcome the Truth Recovery Public Inquiry and Redress Service, alongside a survivor-led advisory panel, we wish to express our disappointment caused by omissions from the bill. Birth mothers and children now adults are not fully included in the Redress Bill and this exclusion causes repeated harm and compounds lifelong trauma. We have been let down once more by a system that fails to acknowledge the pain and suffering the state and institutions have subjected us to.

The Truth Recovery Public Inquiry covers the period from 1922 to 1995 (inclusive of both those years) as set out in Clause 1(4)).

However, the Redress Service eligibility requirements for those deceased prior to 29<sup>th</sup> September 2011, as outlined in Clause 31(5), excludes many of those impacted, including loved ones of victims and survivors.

The relevant institutions and relevant years for each of these is outlined in Schedule 2 which informs Clause 31 with regards to eligibility. We recognise that the list in Schedule 2 is not finite and welcome the inclusion of clauses to amend this table where needed. The eligibility date stated in (Clause 31(5)), of, on or after 29 September 2011 for posthumous claims, restricts eligibility to relatives of those who died on or before this date (Clause 31(5)), inflicting fresh pain.

While we welcome the next of kin approach not being used for eligibility for redress as this may cause issue for adopted people legally now not recognised as part of their birth family, the current system outlined by the bill does not fully cater for deceased adopted people, deceased children and babies, and birth mothers.

The bill states a partner, or children of the deceased, are eligible to claim redress as descendants but regardless of the posthumous date there is no provision for siblings of deceased adopted adults to claim redress in situations such as growing up alongside an affected now deceased adopted sibling or for a sibling who was separately from his or her birth sibling after their birth.

Birth mothers are unable, under the current proposed redress eligibility criteria, to apply for redress for a child they gave birth to who is now deceased. These restrictions are cruel, unjust and do not consider the full range of those affected by the institutions and pathways used and practices employed.

The Independent Panel recommended in its submission to the Inquiry and redress consultation that, in lieu of the next of kin approach, a system of standardised payments for the immediate families of deceased victims should be considered. The Independent Panel suggested that these symbolic payments are made in the deceased's name to recognise both what happened to them, and the effect this had

on their family. These eligibility requirements, made in error or oversight, need to be addressed and rectified at the committee stage.

We are also gravely concerned and disappointed about the exclusion of those who gave birth in workhouses from a standardised payment.

In terms of the scope of the Standardised Payment Scheme the Independent Panel suggested that women who gave birth in workhouses and were separated from their children should be included, as should the children separated from their mothers. There was no less pain and trauma due to a family separation of a mother and her baby in a workhouse infirmary than there was in a mother and baby Institution.

The TRNI Steering Groups calls on our elected representatives to listen to our collective voices. It is our intention that ALL means ALL, those still alive and those who sadly are no longer with us, and who suffered the same harms, as cited in the recommendation within the Truth, Acknowledgement and Accountability report, Recommendation 5: Redress, Repartition and Compensation:

*The scheme should include **all** women who spent time or gave birth in a mother and baby Institution, Magdalene laundry, workhouse or other related institutions such as private nursing homes, and **all** those born to girls and women while institutionalised.*