

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 September 2025 23:14
To: +Comm Executive Public Email <Committee.Executive@niassembly.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Mother and Baby Home Inquiry

Dear committee members

My Name is [REDACTED], and I was born in Thorndale House in Belfast in [REDACTED]. I wanted to submit my own views to the committee for consideration.

I wanted to use the opportunity to place on record my thanks to Professor Marie Breen-Smyth and Dr Danny Taggart for their commitment to the Forum and their efforts to try to pull some commonality out of what has proved to be a vastly differing set of experiences and opinions. I am also grateful to Paula Bradshaw MLA for her tireless support and time, and the incredible speeches by her and her colleagues in the chamber during the second reading. This is an incredible milestone, and it would be wrong not to highlight how important the cross-party support is to us all.

It is with this in mind that I remark on our concerns that experience tells us such unanimity is not always present or guaranteed and ask the committee does all it can to ensure that sufficient protections are in place to protect the smooth running of the inquiry to its conclusion, no matter what the landscape of the wider political world during its running.

Another point I wanted to raise was the issue of access to records and I wanted to thank Wave Trauma NI for the incredible support they are providing to us. Many of our survivors know a lot of detail but are having trouble accessing the information that would be helpful to provide evidence. Others, like me and more will follow, are not even sure of the questions, let alone the answers. Our exposure to this chapter of our lives is overwhelming at best so to be faced with difficulties in compiling our information or being faced with the prospect that our records have been lost or that we never mattered enough to have records kept in the first place. There is also the aspect of these record holders such as they are being trauma informed in their approach. Examples exist of where records are requested and we're sent articles that read like a sales pitch, extolling how virtuous they and the services they provided were a real nest of comfort.

Having watched the committee's sitting on 17/09/25, I wanted to add some context to some of what was talked about. With regards to the HIA, whilst I agree that it would do no good for the inquiry to duplicate its work, it should be noted how much this particular element failed many women and girls by their insistence of categorising those taking part and excluding those who were pregnant. My own mother was [REDACTED] when she entered the system, having been placed in Coneywarren in

Omagh before being transferred to Thorndale House at [REDACTED] Had anyone cared to see her as both a child and a mother and not used one aspect to preclude her inclusion from the other, she and many like her would have had some sense of justice and not be where they are today.

This leads on to the issue of language, knowledge, and the ability to navigate this and other workstreams. It has been discussed widely with the forum members that many feel ill equipped to understand the language of the legislation, harder still to interpret it and struggle to come to any kind of conclusion as to what to say for the best without derailing the entire process. Many of the women and girls come from backgrounds and demographics where deprivation levels are high and lack the educational experience to grasp the nuances of the documents they are being asked about. Others who are more comfortable end up doing a lot of the talking in groups and we end up losing people from the forum and the entire process. There is also the aspect of testimonial evidence already given and what is being done with this. My mother has spoken with so many people and given her testimony so many times and yet nothing to date has happened with the information she has given over. In fact, it was only during a conversation with [REDACTED] in June when I was home in Omagh, that she became aware that the HIA had concluded. There is poor communication with those outside of the forum to keep them up to date with deadlines or outcomes.

Whilst I know that there are many that think the entire adoption and fostering system should be investigated, this is a huge subject with very specific protections that may need a separate bill of its own to address its issues.

I think its important to look purely at the mother and baby homes and any pathways extending from them.

I agree with the points raised by [REDACTED] on issues such as redress, preservation of graves, posthumous dates and seeking contributions from the organisations involved.

My biggest concern in all of this would be the amount of time that has already elapsed since these conversations began in Northern Ireland and would ask that the committee consider the age of those involved. Some forum members are in their 80s and so many of these women have not only faced the horrendous experience of the institutions but also given so many years to this cause. These girls, some of whom faced extreme deprivation levels like my mother, who's opportunities were reduced also face poorer health outcomes. My mother is 69 on Monday, she's had no childhood, she's lived her whole life with this shame and little to no justice. Time is off the essence for her and many more like her.

I wish the committee every success in its work and thank the chair and all members for the work they have done so far and the empathy they've shown.

Kind Regards

A solid black rectangular box used to redact a signature.