



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

**Committee for the Executive Office**

# **Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill – Committee Stage Report**

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2026.

Report: NIA 135/22-27 Committee for the Executive Office.

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# **Powers and Membership**

## **Powers**

The Committee for the Executive Office is a Statutory Departmental Committee established in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of Strand One of the Belfast Agreement and under Assembly Standing Order No 48. The Committee has a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role with respect to the Executive Office and has a role in the initiation of legislation. The Committee has nine members, including a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, and a quorum of five.

The Committee has power to:

- consider and advise on Departmental budgets and Annual Plans in the context of the overall budget allocation;
- approve relevant secondary legislation and take the Committee Stage of relevant primary legislation;
- call for persons and papers;
- initiate enquiries and make reports; and
- consider and advise on matters brought to the Committee by the First Minister, deputy First Minister or junior Ministers.

## **Membership**

The Committee has 9 members, including a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, and a quorum of five members. The membership of the Committee is as follows:

- Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA (Chairperson)
- Mr Stewart Dickson MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
- Mr Timothy Gaston MLA
- Mr Phillip Brett MLA
- Mrs Pam Cameron MLA
- Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

- Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
- Ms Aíne Murphy MLA
- Ms Claire Sugden MLA

1 With effect from 9 September 2024 Mr Timothy Gaston replaced Mr Pádraig Delargy

2 With effect from 8 November 2024 Mr Stewart Dickson replaced Ms Connie Egan

3 With effect from 10 February 2025 Ms Aíne Murphy replaced Emma Sheerin

4 With effect from 23 September 2025 Ms Pam Cameron replaced Harry Harvey

5 With effect from 23 September 2025 Mr Phillip Brett replaced Brian Kingston

# List of Abbreviations and Acronyms used in this Report

Assembly Research and Information Service (RaISe)

Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA)

European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)

Explanatory and Financial Memorandum (EFM)

Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA)

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)

Public Interest Immunity (PII)

Redress Service (the Service)

Terms of Reference (ToRs)

The Executive Office (TEO)

The Public Record Office Northern Ireland (PRONI)

Truth Recovery Design Panel (TRDP)

Truth Recovery Independent Panel (The Panel)

Victim and Survivor Service (VSS)

# Executive Summary

1. This report sets out the scrutiny undertaken by the Committee for the Executive Office on the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill. The Bill gives effect to the Executive's commitment to establish a statutory public Inquiry into the systemic failings associated with Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses between 1922 and 1995, and to create a statutory Redress Scheme for those directly affected.
  
2. The Committee undertook extensive and trauma informed engagement throughout its scrutiny, receiving ninety-one written submissions and received oral evidence from twenty-four organisations, alongside detailed briefings from departmental officials. In addition to formal evidence sessions, the Committee held stakeholder familiarisation events, roundtable discussions across Northern Ireland, and dedicated sessions for victims and survivors, supported by advocacy and wellbeing services.
  
3. Evidence received by the Committee highlighted consistent themes:
  - A strong desire for truth recovery, including comprehensive access to personal and institutional records, early disclosure of information, and a human rights based approach.
  - Calls for a broader scope regarding institutional inclusion, cross-border pathways, workhouse admissions, and historical practices around forced adoption, infant mortality, and burial arrangements.
  - Concerns regarding eligibility for redress, particularly the proposed 29 September 2011 posthumous cut-off date, the exclusion of certain cohorts, and the adequacy of the proposed £10,000 standardised payment.
  - Clear support for survivor participation, including a mandatory advisory panel, multidisciplinary inquiry panel membership, trauma informed processes, and funded legal representation.

- Strong expectations of financial contributions from institutions, with widespread support for statutory mechanisms to pursue such contributions.
  - In relation to the harm-based, individually assessed payment scheme to be brought forward through separate legislation following the conclusion of the Inquiry, and given the factors and timescales involved, preparatory work should be expedited by The Executive Office (TEO).
4. Informed by this evidence, the Committee agreed a series of amendments aimed at strengthening transparency, enhancing survivor involvement, improving accountability, and ensuring robust Assembly oversight. These included:
- Requiring publication of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference within six months and broadening statutory consultation requirements.
  - Amending provisions to ensure explicit inclusion of women who became pregnant while in workhouses.
  - Ensuring multidisciplinary membership of the Inquiry Panel and strengthening requirements around advisory panel consultation.
  - Providing for Assembly scrutiny through draft affirmative procedure for key regulations governing Inquiry and Redress processes.
  - Extending appeal periods, enhancing transparency around restriction orders, and introducing penalties for breaches.
  - Requiring Ministers to publish a post Inquiry scheme for pursuing financial contributions from institutions where systemic failings are identified.
  - Strengthening public access, witness support, and core participant arrangements through amendments to the rules making power.
  - Removal of the posthumous cut-off date of 29 September 2011.
5. During the Clause by Clause scrutiny of the Bill, the Committee agreed to an amendment that removed the posthumous date from the wording of the Bill. Two Members of the Committee opposed the decision. This is reflected further in the Clause by Clause deliberations and decisions by the Committee section

of the Report. Also see Minutes of Proceedings in Appendix 3 and Minutes of Evidence in Appendix 4.

6. At its meeting on 28 January 2026, the Committee considered its Final Report on the Bill, and ordered for it to be published on the Assembly website.
7. Overall, the Committee recognised the significance of this legislation for victims and survivors who have waited decades for recognition, truth, and redress. While supportive of the Bill, the Committee considers that the amendments it has agreed are necessary to ensure the Inquiry and Redress Scheme are credible, trauma informed, transparent, and capable of delivering meaningful justice.

# Introduction

8. In a Written Ministerial Statement on the Executive's Legislative Programme delivered on 9 April 2025, the First Minister and deputy First Minister announced their intention to introduce the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill before summer recess in 2025.
9. The Committee received an 'in-confidence' briefing of the Bill and its policy objectives at its meeting on the 28 May 2025.
10. The purpose of the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill is to establish a Statutory Public Inquiry to determine the facts about these institutions between 1922 and 1995, and to enable TEO to set up a Redress Service to administer a statutory financial redress scheme.
11. TEO confirmed that following the conclusion of this Inquiry and subsequent redress scheme, it is intended that further legislation will be introduced to allow for a harm-based individualised payment scheme to be established.
12. At its meeting of 18 June 2025, the Committee received an oral briefing from Department officials on the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill provisions and the Explanatory Financial Memorandum.
13. Members had a number of follow up queries in relation to Inquiry Expenses, the Posthumous date of 29 September 2011, Access to Public Records, Statements from Religious Orders, Formal Engagement with Religious Orders, Mid-Term Review of the Redress Scheme, Public Interest Immunity, Basis of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA) payments, Comparison with the Republic of Ireland's Redress Scheme, Cost of Processing Redress Applications and Entitlement to a payment.
14. The Bill was then introduced to the Assembly on 16 June 2025 and the Committee formally commenced its scrutiny of the Bill on 25 June 2025.

15. Members agreed at its meeting on 11 June 2025 to extend the Committee Stage until 30 January 2026.
16. The Committee also agreed at the meeting on 25 June 2025, to request legal advice from Assembly Legal Services in terms of the potential to compel religious orders and other relevant institutions to contribute financially to the Redress Scheme and the possibility of consulting external experts if necessary.
17. At its meeting on 2 July 2025, the Committee agreed its stakeholder list for the Bill, and each stakeholder was subsequently written to seeking views and where appropriate, an invite to provide evidence to the Committee on the detail of the Bill.
18. A Call for Evidence was launched on Monday 7 July 2025, remained open for twelve weeks, and closed on Monday 29 September 2025.

## **Recommendations**

### **Part 1 – The Inquiry**

#### **Clause 2: Terms of Reference – Report Recommendation**

19. The Committee recommends that the Inquiry reports on a modular basis, to allow as many institutions to be included in the Redress Scheme.
20. The Committee recommends that TEO communicates clearly to victims and survivors that the institutions to be included in the Redress Scheme can be updated as and when the Inquiry reports on its findings. As outlined above the Committee recommends that the Inquiry should follow a modular approach, to allow for these institutions to be included in the Redress Scheme.
21. The Committee Clerk to communicate to the Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer that the Committee agreed to not amending the clause on the basis that the Department would include in the Terms of Reference the ability for the Redress Scheme eligibility to be updated should evidence demonstrate that such inclusion is required.

22. Given the number of individuals that provided testimony to the Truth Recovery Independent Panel (the Panel), who are tasked with making recommendations to the Inquiry, the Committee recommends greater clarity on the role collected testimonies and the Panel's findings will have on the workings of the Inquiry, and how this will be utilised during the Inquiry process.

### **Clause 3: Prescribed Institutions – Report Recommendation**

23. The Committee recommends that clear criteria and victim and survivor consultations be published in relation to adding institutions to the prescribed list.

### **Clause 4: Relevant Persons – Report Recommendation**

24. The Committee recommends that a definition of “relevant persons” be provided by the Department prior to the commencement of the Inquiry.

### **Clause 5: Inquiry Panel – Report Recommendation**

25. The Committee recommends the inclusion of victims and survivors on the panel.

### **Clause 6: Appointment of Members – Report Recommendation**

26. The Committee recommends a clear set of guidelines and criteria for appointment of Members be published by TEO as soon as practicable.

### **Clause 7: Impartiality – Report Recommendation**

27. The Committee recommends that TEO publish a definition of ‘close association’ prior to the commencement of the Inquiry or Redress Scheme.

### **Clause 8: Duration of Appointment – Report Recommendation**

28. The Committee recommends that independent oversight of the process should be facilitated by TEO.
29. The Committee recommends all efforts are made by TEO to ensure transparency in the process to avoid political interference.

**Clause 9: Assessors – Report Recommendation**

30. The Committee recommends all efforts are made by TEO to ensure transparency over the process to appoint Assessors.

**Clause 10: Advisory Panel – Report Recommendation**

31. The Committee recommends that a clearer definition of the role of the panel, as well as guidance for the full process for appointment, to be published.

**Clause 11: Suspension of Inquiry – Report Recommendation**

32. The Committee recommends the facilitation of stronger Assembly oversight of any suspension.

**Clause 14: Public Access – Report Recommendation**

33. The Committee recommends the production of clear guidelines on admittance and refusal of admittance to Inquiry proceedings (before the Inquiry commences).

**Clause 20: Laying Reports Before Assembly – Report Recommendation**

34. The Committee recommends the publication of clear timelines as soon as possible.

**Clause 22: Inquiry Expenses – Report Recommendation**

35. The Committee recommends that TEO introduces safeguards to ensure sufficient and transparent funding

**Clause 27: Rules – Report Recommendation**

36. The Committee recommends that the Inquiry uses all of its legal powers to compel information from any source.

## **Part 2 – Payment of Redress**

### **Clause 30: The Service – Report Recommendation**

37. The Committee recommends that TEO introduces clear guidelines for the Redress Scheme as soon as practically possible.
38. The Committee recommends that TEO widely communicates and promotes the Redress Scheme to all victims and survivors, including those living overseas.
39. Given the factors and timescales involved, the Committee recommends that TEO expedites the preparatory work for the harm-based, individually assessed payment scheme to follow.

### **Clause 33: Applications for Payment – Report Recommendation**

40. The Committee recommends that further information on the full application process is brought forward prior to the relevant regulations being submitted.

### **Clause 35: Power to require further information or oral evidence – Report Recommendation**

41. The Committee recommends that TEO or the Redress Scheme actively engage with relevant institutions.

## **Preparation Work**

42. The Committee undertook a considerable amount of preparation work before commencing its Committee stage of the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.
43. The Committee tasked RAlSE to examine the processes undertaken by relevant Governments in response to historical institutional abuse in Scotland,

England and Wales, with particular focus on completed, ongoing and proposed measures, including public inquiries and redress schemes. This helped the Committee to identify good practice, draw on lessons learned, and help inform its consideration of the Bill.

44. Members and Committee staff undertook Trauma Informed Approach training with the Safeguarding Board. This was delivered over two sessions, the first session was delivered by the Safeguarding Board at its meeting on the 7 May 2025 was titled 'Understanding Trauma.'
45. The session focused on the importance of early experiences and the application of knowledge on brain and child development. It explored the stress response system and how individuals react to stressors, as well as strategies to support regulation using the concept of the 'Window of Tolerance' to understand the range of emotional intensities and experiences. The session also examined experiences of trauma and their impact on the brain and body, the nature of traumatic memory and its significance for individuals telling their stories, the effects of secondary trauma arising from hearing others' trauma experiences, and the concepts of post-traumatic growth and resilience. Finally, the Committee considered how to implement a trauma-informed approach for victims and survivors.
46. The second session took place at its meeting on the 4 June and was titled 'A Trauma Informed Approach in Practice.' The session focused the considerations at the 'before', 'during' and 'after' stages.
47. The Safeguarding Board also outlined the importance of preparation and information sharing to support reflection on ways to create a sense of safety and promote regulation. The session covered the Committee Stage of a Bill, focusing on effective communication and the framing of questions, which can significantly influence the quality of evidence and how it is shared and understood. The Board also discussed approaches to supporting survivors and stakeholders who may experience distress after giving evidence to the Committee, and outlined measures to help prevent secondary trauma among Members and staff dealing with such a sensitive and challenging topic.

48. As part of adopting a trauma-informed approach, the Committee held a number of familiarisation sessions for stakeholders and individuals. The purpose of these sessions was to outline the Committee Stage of the Bill and to explain how the focus would shift to a detailed examination of the Bill's provisions. The familiarisation sessions aimed to help stakeholders understand the legislative process, with particular emphasis on the Committee Stage.
49. The Committee held its first familiarisation session with stakeholders on Monday 7 July 2025 in the Long Gallery. The purpose of the session was to outline how, during the Committee Stage of the Bill, the focus shifts to a detailed examination of its provisions.
50. The Committee also held two additional familiarisation sessions in September following the summer recess period on Tuesday 9 September 2025 at the WAVE Trauma Centre, Belfast, and on Thursday 11 September 2025 online via Microsoft Teams.
51. Committee staff also supported the adoption of a trauma-informed approach by seeking approval from WAVE, Victim and Survivor Service (VSS), and Adopt NI for all consultation materials, including imagery and familiarisation session invitations, to ensure that the language and terminology used were appropriate and non-offensive to victims and survivors. Approved language and terminology was then used throughout official invites to individuals appearing before the Committee, stakeholder roundtable invites and follow up information.
52. When the Committee held oral evidence sessions with the four main advocacy groups on Wednesday 11 September 2025, the Committee team ensured that a support room was available for those groups, including anyone accompanying them. This provided a safe and comfortable space for attendees to watch the proceedings live and to have support available during what could be a distressing or emotional time.
53. The Engagement team assisted with the support room, ensuring that staff were onsite to escort witnesses to the Committee room and to provide support with any queries they may have had. The Committee team also arranged for WAVE

Advocacy support staff to be present in the support room, should those attending wish to access their services or seek support on the day.

54. The Committee also arranged three roundtable stakeholder events in relation to the Bill on 15 October 2025 in the Hill of The O'Neill in Dungannon and the Silverbirch Hotel & Business Centre in Omagh. Then a third session in the Europa Hotel Belfast and online via Microsoft Team's on 22 October 2025.
55. The roundtable discussions provided an opportunity for Members to hear individual views, including those from people not affiliated with any advocacy group, as well as any concerns regarding the impact of the Bill.
56. All three sessions were recorded by Hansard, and an official transcript of the discussions was produced as part of the formal record. This ensured transparency and allowed the Committee to consider individual views as evidence during its examination of the Bill at Committee Stage. Over the course of the three sessions, the Committee hosted more than 90 individuals, demonstrating its commitment to hearing as many views as possible.
57. The Committee worked with colleagues in the Engagement team to include updates on the Bill in their weekly newsletter, helping to keep individuals informed about witness sessions and the Committee's decisions on the Bill.
58. The Committee also worked with colleagues in the Communications team to compile a weekly Media Operational Note for media contacts across Northern Ireland, providing updates on witness sessions and developments related to the Bill.

## **Call for Evidence**

59. The Committee's consideration of the Clauses and schedules of the Bill was informed by the written and oral evidence it received. The Committee received ninety one written submissions in response to its Call for Evidence and heard oral evidence from twenty four organisations.

60. The Committee also had ongoing engagement with Departmental Officials throughout its consideration of the Bill and explored the issues raised in evidence during departmental evidence sessions and by correspondence.
61. A summary of key evidence points on each Clause and the Committee's consideration of the issues raised in this evidence is set out below.

## **Written submissions**

### **Clause 1: The Inquiry**

62. Clause 1 is the introductory clause of the Bill and allows the First Minister and deputy First Minister, acting jointly, to establish a public inquiry to investigate Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses during the time period 1922 to 1995.
63. Many respondents stated that they had felt the scope of the Inquiry was too narrow on a number of fronts. There had been calls to include private nursing homes, private baby homes, and other non-institutional settings. Concerns were also raised about the exclusion of Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA) survivors from the Inquiry, along with questions over whether institutions previously investigated by the HIA Inquiry could be examined again under this Inquiry. In addition, there was a clear desire for a broader, human rights-based framing.

### **Clause 2: Terms of Reference**

64. Clause 2 outlines that the terms of reference of the inquiry (including any amendments to those) will be prepared and published by TEO, after consultation with the chairperson of the Inquiry.
65. It was evident from the submissions that the term "systemic failings" (by institutions) required clearer definition for many people.

66. Members noted that there had been strong support for including all actors; state, religious, and private organisations within the Terms of Reference (ToRs). Submissions had also highlighted potential omissions from the ToRs, namely adoption agencies, private baby homes, and informal networks or pathways.

### **Clause 3: Prescribed Institutions**

67. Clause 3 allows TEO to specify in secondary legislation the Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries, Workhouses and other institutions that it wishes the inquiry to investigate.
68. Submissions demonstrated strong support for flexibility regarding the institutions included.

### **Clause 4: Relevant Persons**

69. Clause 4 provides for the meaning of a 'relevant person' and lists those people on whom the Inquiry will focus on.
70. Submissions indicated that there had been overwhelming support for the groups included within the Bill. However, there were also calls for the specific inclusion of birth fathers, siblings, extended family members, and those affected outside institutions within the Clause. Members sought the Department's rationale for not including these groups in order to inform further deliberations on the matter.
71. Concerns were also raised by some respondents regarding the apparent exclusion of certain adoptees and intergenerational victims and survivors.

### **Clause 5: Inquiry Panel**

72. Clause 5 aims to provide Ministers with the flexibility to appoint an Inquiry Panel that is appropriate to the circumstances under investigation.

73. Submissions indicated a clear preference for a multi-member panel with a range of expertise. The majority of submissions had also expressed a wish for victims and survivors to be consulted on the makeup and composition of the Inquiry Panel.
74. Concerns were raised about impartiality and the lack of legal accountability for the Inquiry Panel; however, these did not reflect the majority of submissions received.

## **Clause 6: Appointment of Members**

75. Clause 6 sets out how each member of the Panel is to be appointed by the First Minister and deputy First Minister acting jointly, in writing.
76. Submissions indicated a strong emphasis on victim and survivor involvement in any appointments to be made. Transparency and independence were identified as priorities by the majority of respondents.

## **Clause 7: Requirement of Impartiality**

77. Clause 7 seeks to ensure the integrity and impartiality of the inquiry panel and aligns with the Inquiries Act 2005.
78. It was evident from submissions that the term “close association” required clearer definition for many people to allow for transparency and confidence in the process.
79. Concerns were also raised regarding religious affiliations and the potential for bias to act as an obstacle to impartiality in the work of the Inquiry.

## **Clause 8: Duration of Appointment**

80. Clause 8 states that panel membership continues until the Inquiry ends, but outlines the circumstances and any conditions that need apply if membership was to end, be suspended or terminated.

81. Submissions demonstrated strong support for the safeguards detailed in this Clause. However, concerns were raised about potential political interference, and there were also calls for independent oversight of the process.

## **Clause 9: Assessors**

82. Clause 9 outlines how assessors may be appointed to provide the Inquiry with expertise in a particular field whose knowledge, where necessary, can provide the Panel with the expertise it needs to fulfil its TORs.
83. Evidence from the submissions demonstrated a clear need for trauma-informed, survivor-sensitive experts to be included in the assessor cohort. Stakeholders also raised the importance of transparency in both the appointment and the role of assessors.

## **Clause 10: Advisory Panel**

84. Clause 10 provides the power to establish an advisory panel.
85. Submissions demonstrated very strong support for a victim and survivor-led advisory panel. There were also calls for roles to be clearly defined and for diverse representation to be assured.

## **Clause 11: Suspension of Inquiry**

86. Clause 11 details the circumstances in which Ministers may, after consulting the chairperson, suspend an Inquiry to allow other proceedings to be completed.
87. Although respondents were mainly supportive of this Clause, some raised concerns about the risk of political misuse in relation to the power to suspend the Inquiry. Submissions had also suggested the introduction of fixed time limits, greater transparency, and Assembly oversight for any suspension.

## **Clause 12: End of Inquiry**

88. Clause 12 provides that the Inquiry ends provided its report has been submitted, its Terms of Reference fulfilled and it is completed within any time period stated in the external Terms of Reference. However, circumstances could arise (unforeseen) in which it is no longer necessary or possible for the Inquiry to continue.
89. Some stakeholders raised concerns about the premature closure of the Inquiry, although this was not a widespread issue. There had also been requests for victim and survivor consultation and Assembly involvement in determining the conclusion of the Inquiry.

### **Clause 13: Evidence and Procedure**

90. Clause 13 provides for the chairperson to be able to administer oaths and take evidence under oath as well the requirement to act fairly throughout the Inquiry.
91. Although this Clause attracted fewer comments, there was general support for trauma-informed and flexible evidence gathering. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of ensuring accessibility and fairness across all procedures.

### **Clause 14: Public Access**

92. Clause 14 makes clear that, subject to any restrictions issued under the clause, the chairperson can take whatever steps they judge as reasonable to ensure that the public (including reporters) can attend the Inquiry or see and hear a transmission of it.
93. Submissions demonstrated support for transparency, while emphasising that survivor privacy protections should be available and applied as required. There were also a number of requests for clear guidelines on the admittance and refusal of admittance to hearings and Inquiry proceedings.

### **Clause 15: Restrictions on Access**

94. Clause 15 sets out the extent to which inquiry proceedings can be held in private, evidence is withheld from the public domain or a person's identity is concealed.
95. Respondents emphasised the need for balance between transparency and protection for victims and survivors on this issue. Concerns around the misuse of this Clause to shield institutions was widespread amongst respondents.

## **Clause 16: Powers to Require Evidence**

96. Clause 16 provides the chairperson powers to compel by notice witnesses and evidence and for these to be supported by appropriate enforcement measures, offences, penalties and sanctions.
97. There was clear and strong support for the Inquiry to have all relevant powers to compel evidence from any public body (or otherwise) where necessary for the Inquiry to complete its investigations and conclusions. Stakeholders also raised the issue of cross-border cooperation and victim and survivor safeguards in relation to this Clause. The issue of cross-border production of evidence was raised by a majority of respondents.

## **Clause 17: Privileged Information**

98. Clause 17 ensures that witnesses before the Inquiry have the same privileges, in relation to requests for information, as witnesses in civil proceedings.
99. Some submissions had raised concerns about the potential misuse of Public Interest Immunity (PII). There were also further requests for greater transparency in relation to evidence; however, this Clause did not attract a significant level of response overall.

## **Clause 18: Submission of Reports**

100. Clause 18 details that the chairperson must deliver the inquiry report (and/or any interim reports, if applicable) to the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

101. There was a widespread view that the reports should be thorough, victim and survivor informed, and capable of leading to meaningful change. Some support was also expressed for the production of interim reports.

## **Clause 19: Publication of Reports**

102. Clause 19 outlines that the chairperson is responsible for publishing the Inquiry's report in full, except for elements which they are required by law to withhold, or which they decide must be withheld in the public interest and to prevent any risk of harm or damage to an individual.

103. Stakeholders were clear and widespread in their view that redactions must be minimal and justified. There was also some concern expressed in relation to potential of any political interference in the Inquiry's work.

## **Clause 20: Laying Reports Before the Assembly**

104. Clause 20 requires that the First Minister and deputy First Minister, acting jointly, to lay any report published under clause 19 before the Assembly when it is published or as soon as possible thereafter.

105. Stakeholders emphasised the need for transparency and therefore welcomed requirements for publications to be laid (the formal process of submitting an official document to the Assembly that becomes part of the official record for Members and the public).

106. There were also some calls for clearer timelines as to when any publications will be laid, including clear communication around any delay in the completion of reports/publications and their availability.

## **Clause 21: Witness Expenses**

107. Clause 21 enables the chairperson, with the approval of TEO, to award reasonable amounts to cover witness costs. These include the legal costs of certain witnesses called to the Inquiry.

108. There was widespread support for legal and financial support for witnesses giving evidence to the Inquiry, especially those from a victim and survivor cohort. Many respondents request for clarity and fairness in relation to expenses on offer.

## **Clause 22: Inquiry Expenses**

109. Clause 22 makes provision about payment of various expenses of the Inquiry.

110. There were a number of respondents who raised concerns about TEO withholding funds for the Inquiry, although it was not a widespread view. There were also requests for safeguards and transparency over the issue.

## **Clause 23: Offences**

111. Clause 23 outlines and summarises the offences that apply in relation to the Inquiry, setting out the specific behaviours that constitute an offence.

112. Respondents stated widespread and strong support for penalties against obstruction of the work of the Inquiry.

## **Clause 24: High Court Enforcement**

113. Clause 24 details where a person breaches a restriction order or a notice issued under clause 16, or threatens to do so, the chairperson may refer the matter to the High Court, which can then take steps to enforce the order.

114. Submissions indicated support for enforcement powers which are seen as essential for the accountability of those with access to confidential material.

## **Clause 25: Immunity from Suit**

115. Clause 25 provides immunity for the Inquiry panel, the Inquiry's legal advisers, those appointed to the advisory panel, assessors, staff and anyone else engaged to assist it, from any civil action for anything done or said in the course of carrying out their duty to the Inquiry.

116. This Clause garnered a range of views. Although there was widespread support for the protection of Inquiry staff, there were concerns about a lack of accountability for other participants (such as representatives of institutions) in the process.

## **Clause 26: Judicial Review Time Limit**

117. Clause 26 details the time limit for applying for Judicial Review.

118. It was clear from the submissions that a 14-day timescale was regarded as too short for bringing an application for Judicial Review. Several respondents requested extensions to be available and for trauma-informed flexibility to be applied.

## **Clause 27: Rules**

119. Clause 27 outlines the formal procedural regulations made by TEO to govern how the Inquiry operates.

120. There was widespread and strong support from stakeholders for anonymity for witnesses representing the victim and survivor community. There was also strong support for full access to documentation, alongside additional powers to enhance access to records for victims and survivors.

## **Clause 28: Consequential Amendments**

121. Clause 28 specifies some minor and consequential amendments to other legislation made as a result of this Act.

122. There was support for oversight by the Children's Commissioner where necessary. It should be noted that this Clause is technical in nature and is necessary to allow the Inquiry to examine issues that sit under the domain of other scrutiny and protection bodies.

## **Clause 29: Interpretation**

123. Clause 29 defines key terms used in the Bill.

124. A number of submissions requested broader definitions and the inclusion of all affected persons in relation to this Clause. It was highlighted that not all those with experience of the institutions are included or defined in the Clause.

## **Clause 30: The Redress Service**

125. Clause 30 establishes a Redress Service (the Service) to administer the scheme and outlines that the Service's duty is to determine applications for redress.

126. There was unanimous support among respondents for the establishment of a dedicated Redress Service. Many submissions emphasised the need for a trauma-informed, accessible, and victim and survivor-focused redress process.

127. However, some concerns were raised about potential bureaucracy and the risk of re-traumatisation, although this was not a widespread view. There were also calls for clear guidelines, transparency, and adequate resources for the Service.

## **Clause 31: Entitlement to a Payment**

128. Clause 31 sets out who is entitled to a redress payment.

129. There was widespread and strong opposition to the £10,000 standard payment for women and girls admitted, and children (now adults) born to Mothers in the relevant institution, with many respondents suggesting an alternative range of £12,500–£15,000 or higher. Similar opposition was expressed regarding the proposed £2,000 amount for each eligible relative (spouse and surviving children) under a posthumous claim

130. There was strong criticism of the 29 September 2011 cut-off date for deceased claims.

131. Some submissions called for the inclusion of additional siblings, birth fathers, and individuals affected outside the listed institutions. A small number of submissions had also requested a shift toward harm-based rather than admission-based eligibility in terms of redress payments.

## **Clause 32: Application Timeframe**

132. Clause 32 details the time limit for applications for payment.

133. Submissions indicated mixed views on the proposed three-year window, with many respondents expressing a preference for five years or more. Concerns were also raised regarding elderly victim and survivors, members of the diaspora, and late-discovery adoptees.

134. Some respondents suggested active outreach and greater flexibility in terms of deadlines for individuals who were harder to reach.

## **Clause 33: Applications for Payments**

135. Clause 33 sets out that the Service is to decide the form in which applications are to be made, and that the President must assign an application to a judicial member or a panel of members (one of whom must be a judicial member).

136. There was some criticism from respondents regarding judicial-only panels, alongside a more widespread preference for trauma-informed, multi-disciplinary panels.

137. Many submissions called for a simplified and accessible application process. There was strong emphasis on compassionate handling regarding applications and the importance of maintaining victim and survivor trust throughout the process.

## **Clause 34: Priority of Applications**

138. Clause 34 sets out the circumstances in which certain applications can be prioritised.

139. There was widespread support for the Bill's proposal to prioritise terminally ill applicants. A small number of submissions had also suggested broadening the criteria to include individuals with serious health conditions, mental health needs, and elderly victim and survivors.

## **Clause 35: Power to Require Further Information**

140. Clause 35 gives any judicial member of the Service the power to compel evidence in order to determine an application.

141. There was widespread and strong support for the stated powers to compel evidence from institutions, religious orders, and government bodies.

142. Some respondents placed particular emphasis on the need for privacy safeguards, trauma-informed practices, and appropriate support for victims and survivors.

## **Clause 36: Power to Disclose Information**

143. Clause 36 sets out the circumstances in which the Redress Service can disclose information.

144. Some concerns were raised around privacy, particularly for birth mothers, although this was not a widespread view. There were calls for informed consent, anonymous application options, and strict data-protection measures.

## **Clause 37: Payments**

145. Clause 37 sets out how payments will be made and treated in relation to certain means-tested benefits.

146. There was widespread and strong support among many of those who provided submissions for the use of lump-sum payments. There was unanimous agreement that such payments should not affect benefits, legal aid, or care costs in any jurisdiction.

147. There were additional calls for tax exemptions and for protections to ensure that future payments would not be adversely affected.

## **Clause 38: Right to Appeal**

148. Clause 38 clause sets out arrangements for appealing against a determination.

149. Submissions showed widespread concern that the 30-day appeal window was too short. Suggestions had ranged from extending the period to 60 or 90 days, with additional flexibility to account for trauma, illness, or support needs. Some submissions had also highlighted the need for legal assistance and external review options for individuals seeking an appeal. These included independent advisers able to assist in the appeal process.

## **Clause 39: Advice and Assistance**

150. Clause 39 covers the provision of advice and assistance to applicants.

151. There was considerable support for the provision of financial advice and legal assistance as set out in the drafted Bill. Some stakeholders had also expressed a desire for independent advocates, trauma-informed advisors, and victim and survivor involvement in actions arising from this Clause.

## **Clause 40: Restriction Orders**

152. Clause 40 enables the President of the Service to impose restrictions, by order, on the disclosure or publication of any evidence or documents given, produced or provided to the Service, or on the disclosure of a person's identity.

153. There was support from stakeholders for measures to protect survivor privacy. Some concerns had also been raised about indefinite restrictions and the potential for such provisions to be misused to shield institutions.

## **Clause 41: Advisors**

154. Clause 41 sets out that the Redress Service may appoint any advisors it deems to have relevant expertise.

155. Submissions indicated support for the appointment of advisors with lived experience and specialist knowledge. A small number of respondents also called for clear criteria, transparency, and accountability in the appointment process.

## **Clause 42: Regulations**

156. Clause 42 allows TEO to make regulations in relation to payments and applications.

157. There was recognition of the need for flexibility in relation to this Clause, although a small number of submissions raised concerns about the breadth of the discretion proposed, including the potential imposition on applicants providing further information within set time limits.

158. Stakeholders placed clear emphasis on victim and survivor consultation, clear guidance, and compassionate rules.

## **Clause 43: Applications to the Crown**

159. Clause 43 binds the Crown.

160. A small number of submissions noted concerns about the exemptions for the UK, Scottish, and Welsh governments, although most acknowledged that these exemptions were a legal requirement.

161. There were calls for voluntary cooperation and for improved access to cross-jurisdictional records.

## **Clause 44: Supplementary Provisions**

162. Clause 44 provides power by regulations to make supplementary, transitional, consequential etc provision where necessary.

163. A small number of submissions were received for this Clause; however, while support for flexibility was noted, there was also a clear emphasis on transparency, Assembly oversight, and victim and survivor involvement.

## **Clause 45: General Interpretation**

164. Clause 45 is an interpretation clause for several provisions occurring throughout the Bill.

165. Of those who submitted responses to this Clause, there was support for flexibility as well as a clear emphasis on transparency, Assembly oversight, and victim and survivor involvement.

## **Clause 46: Commencement**

166. Clause 46 details that Parts 1 and 3 of this Act come into operation on the day after Royal Assent, whereas Part 2 (and the Schedules) come into operation on a day appointed by order made by TEO.

167. There was a single submission that raised a concern about potential delays in implementing Part 2 of the Bill. There were also submissions emphasising the need for clear timelines and contingency plans in the event of an Executive collapse.

## **Clause 47: Short Title**

168. Clause 47 states the name of the Bill by which it is generally known and referred to publicly.

169. There were mixed views on the title of the Bill. Many respondents felt it was too narrow, excluding private homes, pathways, and wider systemic practices.

170. There were also some individual suggestions for a more inclusive title reflecting forced family separation and adoption systems.

# Oral evidence

## Evidence Session: 10 September 2025

171. At its meeting on 10 September 2025 the Committee received oral evidence from the First Minister, deputy First Minister, and junior Ministers regarding the Executive Office’s legislative proposals to establish an Inquiry into mother-and-baby institutions, Magdalene laundries, and workhouses, alongside a Redress Scheme. The oral evidence session also covered related policy priorities under the Programme for Government. Specific areas highlighted by the Ministers included:
172. The First Minister confirmed that legislation introduced in June seeks to establish a statutory inquiry and redress scheme for survivors of mother-and-baby institutions, Magdalene laundries, and workhouses.
173. Ministers emphasised the importance of a victim-centred approach, acknowledging the “harrowing stories” of systemic abuse and misogyny endured by women and children.
174. Ministers outlined how they aimed to ensure the Bill is “fit for purpose” and delivers truth, justice, and appropriate reparations.
175. During the oral evidence session, Ministers highlighted significant fiscal challenges, noting that payments will come from the block grant, creating tension with funding for current public services.
176. They explained that engagement with the UK Government is ongoing to secure contributions, given the historical context of direct rule. Ministers also indicated that Institutions responsible for abuse will also be pressed to contribute.
177. Ministers outlined how the approach mirrors lessons from the HIA redress scheme, which processed 5,494 applications and distributed £106 million before its closure in April 2025.

178. Ministers indicated the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA) term will be extended by two years, with consideration of expanding its remit to cover overlapping victim and survivor issues.
179. Members raised concerns about provisions for claims after death; Ministers indicated openness to amendments.
180. The Committee queried mechanisms for securing contributions from culpable organisations; Ministers confirmed this remains a priority.
181. Ministers also expressed scepticism about additional funding but reiterated the case for support.
182. The Committee welcomed the Executive's commitment to co-design and engagement with survivors. Members noted the need for clarity on the timelines for Inquiry establishment, detailed eligibility criteria for redress as well as funding certainty and sustainability.
183. Members indicated how the Committee intended to scrutinise the Bill closely and would propose amendments, particularly on eligibility and institutional liability.
184. The Committee also received a detailed briefing from Assembly Research and Information Service (RaISe) at its meeting on 10 September 2025, on the provisions of the Bill, focusing on three key areas: Inquiry framework and scope; Redress scheme eligibility and payments and the financial implications and cost projections.
185. The briefing highlighted scrutiny points arising from public consultation responses and the Bill's Explanatory and Financial Memorandum (EFM), as follows.
186. Clause 1 establishes a truth recovery public inquiry into systemic failings of institutions and public bodies between 1922–1995, excluding matters already examined by the HIA Inquiry.

187. Clause 2 is the TORs which are Terms of drafted by TEO in consultation with the chairperson. Amendments do not require Assembly approval, unlike the HIA model.
188. The scope of the Bill omits explicit inclusion of financial operations of institutions, despite recommendations in the Truth, Acknowledgement and Accountability report.
189. Human Rights Approach: While central to the inquiry, TEO cautioned against limiting scope solely to human rights issues.
190. Definitions: Prescribed institutions (Clause 3) can be expanded by regulation. Relevant persons (Clause 4) includes those admitted, born in, or whose mothers were under care of an institution. TEO retains power to exclude individuals.
191. Procedural Issues: Evidence via live link (Clause 13) may disadvantage older victims lacking digital access. Chairperson may restrict public access and override confidentiality (Clause 15). Power to compel evidence (Clause 16) engages European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) Article 8 (privacy).
192. Burial Grounds: No new powers for exhumation; Inquiry relies on evidence requests. Concerns raised about underestimated mass graves (e.g., Milltown Cemetery).
193. Participation: Advisory panel of up to eight victims/survivors is permitted (Clause 10), but further measures to maximise participation were recommended Chair Appointment: Suggested to be external to Northern Ireland, with nominations from victims and survivors.
194. Redress Scheme, Eligibility (Clause 31): Covers individuals admitted to or born in listed institutions; excludes private patients and workhouses. Criticism from stakeholders (WAVE Trauma Centre, Women's Policy Group) over exclusions and perceived discrimination.

195. Posthumous Claims: Cut-off date set at 29 September 2011 (the date of HIA inquiry announcement). Majority of consultation respondents opposed any cut-off date.
196. Payments: £10,000 for victims/survivors; £2,000 for eligible relative Single payment per person, even if admitted to multiple institutions Concerns raised that amounts are too low; independent panel suggested £15,000.
197. Human Rights Compliance: Impact assessment noted potential engagement of ECHR Protocol 1 Article 1 (property rights) and Article 14 (non-discrimination).
198. Administration: Independent service headed by judicial members; concerns about quasi-judicial nature and calls for multidisciplinary panels similar to Redress Scotland.
199. Timeframe: Three-year application window, extendable by two years via negative resolution.
200. Financial Implications. Estimated Cost: Inquiry: ~£14 million ( assumes 3-year duration, 11 institutions, 320 witnesses).Redress: £58.2 million (based on 4,500 direct claimants and 6,600 posthumous claims).Administration: £7.8 million (potentially £13 million if extended).Total projected cost: £80 million (excluding future harm-based scheme).
201. Risks: Demand-led nature of redress could significantly increase costs; 10% higher uptake could raise costs to £64 million.
202. Funding: TEO engaging with UK Government for contributions due to direct rule periods; no legal mechanism in Bill to compel institutional contributions.
203. Future Phase: Harm-based scheme post-inquiry may offer better scope for institutional contributions.
204. Members identified a number of areas that the Committee agreed required clarification from the TEO Bill team. These included concerns over clarity of scope, particularly regarding workhouses, foster care, and private homes, the need for transparency on assumptions underpinning cost estimates and

claimant numbers, strong interest in mechanisms for institutional contributions and long-term support services for survivors and Advisory panel provisions to require refinement to ensure meaningful survivor involvement.

205. At its meeting on 17 September 2025 the Committee held four oral evidence sessions with victims and survivors (including those with lived experience). These groups included The Victims' and Survivors' Consultative Forum, Birth Mothers and their Children for Justice, Truth Recovery NI and Birth Mothers and their Children Together. The Minutes of Evidence for this meeting can be found in Appendix 4.
206. Following these oral briefings Members identified a number of areas that the Committee agreed required clarification from the TEO Bill team. These issues included the joint-working of institutions, Legal representation and provision for individuals appearing before the Inquiry, Cross-border movement of children, the ability to compel institutions to make payments to the Redress Scheme, Access to information – powers to compel disclosure, provisions in the next piece of legislation, and the harm-based, individually assessed payment scheme, Terms of Reference and scope of the Inquiry – including the treatment of burial sites and unmarked graves and the need for institutional pathways to include places of burial, Further information on the number of birth mothers who were under 16 at the time when in an institution and Posthumous cases and the standardised payment, including clarification of eligibility.
207. TEO officials then agreed to provide a further briefing to the Committee at its meeting on 24 September 2025 to provide an oral response to Members queries.
208. Representatives of Birth Mothers and their Children for Justice, who welcomed the introduction of the Bill but raised significant concerns and proposed a number of amendments. Their evidence focused on eligibility criteria, payment levels, institutional accountability, access to information, and the scope of the inquiry.

209. Birth Mothers and their Children for Justice expressed strong opposition to the proposed cut-off date of 29 September 2011 for posthumous claims. They argued that excluding earlier cases denies justice to deceased victims and babies who died in institutions.
210. Birth Mothers and their Children for Justice suggested alternative approaches, included aligning with the HIA inquiry precedent of April 1953 or removing the cut-off entirely to reflect the Inquiry's 1922–1995 timeframe. It was emphasised that posthumous claims should respect the deceased's wishes as set out in their will and allow applications by primary beneficiaries or adopted children.
211. The proposed standardised payment of £10,000 was considered inadequate. Birth Mothers and their Children for Justice suggested an increase to £20,000, citing *"that is because, in 2017, the HIA victims and survivors received £10,000, and, with the recent inflation of the cost of living, £10,000 would not be sufficient. Survivors have suffered criminality at serious levels and lives have been ruined, so they should have compensation that recognises the extent of loss and damage. They should not be compensated at the same level as a whiplash claim. That would be a further insult"*.
212. Birth Mothers and their Children for Justice also stated that the £2,000 payment to be awarded to eligible relatives was *" unacceptable and beyond inadequate. How can the Executive Office put a price on anyone's life and their experiences? Those people have gone to their grave without any justice or recognition"*. Concerns were also raised that redress payments should not negatively affect entitlement to benefits.
213. Witnesses from all groups urged that the Inquiry should include all mother-and-baby homes, Magdalene laundries, workhouses, children's homes, and cross-border institutions, including Fahan in Donegal. Concerns were raised that the current list of eleven institutions is too narrow and lacks clarity. Groups called for investigation of systemic failings, forced adoptions, foster care placements, and unmarked graves. It was stressed that babies and mothers who died in institutions must be recognised as "relevant persons."

214. Barriers to accessing personal records were strongly criticised, *with Birth Mothers and their Children for Justice stating “we know a lot of detail, but people are still having trouble in accessing information. It would be helpful to provide relevant information and evidence for the inquiry to victims and survivors. Survivors are being told that their records could traumatise them. However, we feel that it is worse not to know that vital information. Withholding information is in no one's best interests. This is the truth and recovery process: without the truth, we do not have any recovery”*.
215. The groups expressed a strong expectation that victims and survivors would have access to funded legal representation throughout both the Inquiry and redress processes. Legal support was described as essential to ensuring trust and fairness, particularly given that institutions and public bodies will have legal advisers.
216. The need for compulsory financial contributions from religious and other institutions responsible for abuses was emphasised. Truth Recovery NI suggested that securing such contributions could allow for wider eligibility and earlier posthumous claim dates, *“The state and the religious orders were in cahoots, so we cannot say that one is more to blame than the other. Who paid for the girls to be in the institutions?.....Who paid for the babies there? The babies did not pay for themselves; the state paid. The religious order kept them in there, and it treated the women and babies cruelly”*.
217. Concerns were raised about eligibility clarity, particularly the wording in Clause 31 relating to “receipt of shelter or maintenance,” which was considered confusing and in need of clearer definition. It was highlighted that the Bill does not adequately reflect the experiences of children under 18 who were institutionalised. The issue of birth fathers of forcibly adopted children being included as “relevant persons” was raised during the oral evidence, however there was no consensus on their inclusion.
218. Unmarked graves were identified at Milltown, Killeavy, Omagh, and Marianvale, with calls for investigation and respectful treatment of remains. The proposed three-year application timeframe was considered acceptable, provided there is

flexibility for extension, alongside robust outreach through advertising, radio, newspapers, and local roadshows.

219. Members noted compelling evidence on the inadequacy of proposed payment levels and the injustice of restrictive eligibility criteria. The Committee agreed there was strong consensus on the need for wider institutional inclusion and robust mechanisms to secure institutional financial contributions.
220. Members noted that legal representation and access to personal records were critical to survivor confidence and meaningful participation. The Committee noted the urgency of addressing gaps in the Bill relating to children's experiences, fathers' rights, and the investigation of burial sites.
221. The Committee received oral evidence from representatives of Birth Mothers and their Children Together, a group comprising birth mothers, adopted or fostered children now adults, and descendants of deceased birth mothers. They expressed strong dissatisfaction with the Bill, stating that *"the Bill falls well short of our expectations and the recommendations of the 'Truth, Acknowledgement and Accountability' report of October 2021."*
222. The group expressed strong opposition to the proposed cut-off date of 29 September 2011, describing it as arbitrary and linked to the unrelated HIA Inquiry. It was argued that the cut-off excludes a significant number of victims and appears driven by cost considerations rather than justice. Suggested alternatives included full inclusion from 1922, in line with the Inquiry's timeframe, or reference to other significant milestones such as the 1952 regulations.
223. Truth Recovery NI, in relation to the proposed standardised payment, stated *"On redress, the Bill proposes 2011 as the posthumous cut-off date. That is wholly inadequate. The real date should be 1922, which is when the first mother-and-baby institution in Northern Ireland opened. To do anything else denies nearly a century of abuse and systemic neglect."*
224. Witnesses recommended an increase to reflect inflation, rising living costs, and the loss of benefits such as winter fuel payments. It was emphasised that

redress is not solely financial but represents tangible acknowledgement, enabling survivors to afford dignity in later life, including memorials and family support. The Consultative Forum highlighted how *“non-financial means of redress should be added to the Bill. Those are currently available but on a discretionary basis. If those were written into the Bill, they would be made a rights-based provision. It would include DNA testing and support for family reunification. As you can imagine, some of the families are very fractured, and, when you introduce a new member, that reunification can upset the apple cart, and support services may be required.”*

225. Particular urgency was also highlighted for older and terminally ill survivors who may not live long enough to access individually assessed payments.
226. Birth Mothers and their Children Together highlighted the omission of several key institutions, including St Joseph’s Baby Home, Conneywarren Children’s Home, Nazareth House and cross-border facilities such as Fahan and Stamullen. They argued that private nursing homes and baby homes formed part of systemic pathways leading to forced adoption and should be included. The involvement of the North/South Ministerial Council was recommended to address cross-border cases and would support effective data-sharing.
227. Strong objections were raised to the wording in Clause 31 describing institutions as places of “shelter or maintenance,” which was said to misrepresent the reality of coercion, punishment, and degrading treatment. Groups called for clearer, survivor-centred definitions of “relevant persons,” including women who gave birth outside listed institutions but whose children were taken.
228. Legislative measures to compel religious orders and other institutions to make financial contributions to redress and to provide access to records were highlighted as an essential part of the Inquiry process. It was suggested that such contributions should support not only redress payments but also wrap-around care and long-term support for survivors. Concerns were raised that institutions may be liquidating assets or concealing funds, underlining the need for robust enforcement mechanisms.

229. Evidence highlighted the systemic movement of women and babies across the border without oversight, which was contrasted with strict regulatory controls applied to goods. Formal cooperation with the Irish Government to address historical cross-border pathways and ensure accountability was seen as essential.
230. Birth Mothers and their Children Together criticised the lack of recognition for baby homes and for children under five who were excluded from the HIA inquiry. They emphasised that acknowledgement must be tangible, arguing that symbolic measures such as memorial seats or parks are insufficient compared to direct financial recognition.
231. The Committee agreed that witnesses provided compelling evidence on the inadequacy of proposed payment levels, restrictive eligibility criteria, and the failure to include key institutions. Members were clear that there was strong consensus on the need for broader institutional coverage, legislative mechanisms to secure institutional financial contributions, and clearer, survivor-centred language in the Bill.
232. The Committee noted the urgency of addressing the needs of older survivors and the importance of effective cross-border cooperation.

### **Evidence Session: 17 September 2026**

233. The Committee received oral evidence from officials from TEO in response to twelve key queries on the Bill. The briefing addressed issues relating to institutional networks, legal representation, cross-border matters, institutional financial contributions, access to information, eligibility criteria, scope of the inquiry, and posthumous claims.
234. Officials advised that Clause 2(2) provides for examination of systemic failings and joint working across institutions, including state agencies, clergy, medical professionals, and private nursing homes. The inquiry will consider pathways into and out of institutions, including adoption and fostering practices. Cross-border and cross-jurisdictional movement was highlighted, with records identified for Fahan (Donegal) and Stamullen (Meath). Officials detailed that

engagement is ongoing with Tusla (Child and Family Agency) and the National Archives in the Republic of Ireland, and how data-sharing agreements are being developed. The Inquiry will also include infant mortality and burial practices, with powers to commission geophysical surveys, subject to landowner consent.

235. Officials confirmed that Clause 21(2) provides a power to award expenses for witnesses, including legal costs. Detailed arrangements will be set out in regulations under Clause 27, subject to consultation. Models under consideration include individual legal representation and group representation for victims' organisations. The estimated cost of legal support was described as potentially running to several million pounds. The Committee sought greater clarity and assurance from TEO that victims and survivors would be able to retain trusted solicitors.
236. During the oral evidence session it was confirmed that the Bill contains no provision to compel institutions to make financial contributions. Officials acknowledged strong political and public expectations for mandatory contributions but cited legal challenges, particularly under ECHR Protocol 1, Article 1 (property rights). Other jurisdictions, including the Republic of Ireland and Australia, relied on voluntary contributions, with limited compliance achieved in the Republic of Ireland. While options continue to be explored, officials confirmed there is no precedent for statutory compulsion. The Committee expressed unanimous support for an amendment to compel contributions and indicated that failure to act would result in a Committee-led amendment.
237. Clause 16 was highlighted as providing powers to compel the production of evidence and documents. Concerns were raised by Members that individuals may lack access to the information required for phase two individually assessed payments. Officials acknowledged the risk that the redress service could hold more information than applicants. Proposed mitigations include practice guidance and consideration of legislative options, with an emphasis on maintaining a straightforward process for standardised payments.

238. Officials clarified the distinction between “relevant persons” under Clause 4, who fall within the scope of the Inquiry, and “eligible persons” under Clause 31, who are entitled to redress. The Inquiry will have no age restrictions and will include young birth mothers and deceased infants as relevant persons. Redress eligibility is tied to the admission of the birth mother, with birth fathers excluded from eligibility, although they may give evidence to the inquiry. Foster care will be considered only where it forms part of an institutional pathway, rather than the foster care system as a whole.
239. The proposed cut-off date of 29 September 2011 was confirmed as being based on the expectation of redress arising at that time. Officials acknowledged the sensitivity of the issue and the strong feedback calling for an earlier date. International comparisons were cited, including the Republic of Ireland, which set a posthumous date of January 2021 and excluded children under six months, and Victoria, Australia, which provides a £15,000 payment to birth mothers but does not allow posthumous claims. The Committee reiterated its preference for maximum inclusion and rejected reliance on restrictive models from other jurisdictions.
240. Clause 31(2)(b) was criticised by Members for describing admission to institutions as being for “shelter or maintenance,” which was viewed as sanitising coercion and punishment. Officials indicated openness to revisiting the language, noting the need to avoid setting an unduly high eligibility bar while ensuring inclusive and accurate terminology.
241. Estimated inquiry costs were outlined as between £12 million and £20 million over a three-year period, with a main estimate of £14 million. The Truth Recovery Independent Panel has a budget of £2 million, with an extension to March 2026 to be met within existing resources. Redress scheme costs have not yet been finalised and will be determined through regulations following consultation.
242. Officials advised that regulations governing inquiry and redress rules are expected to be made after Final Stage but before Royal Assent. The Committee pressed for the affirmative procedure to apply, given the

significance of the regulations, rather than the proposed negative resolution. Officials committed to hold a public consultation on the draft regulations.

243. The Committee expressed strong dissatisfaction with the absence of provisions to compel institutional financial contributions. Members raised concerns were raised regarding vague language, limited clarity on legal support, and reliance on regulations developed after the passage of legislation.

244. The Committee emphasised the need for clear victim and survivor visibility within the Bill and robust outreach to support participation. There was consensus that the proposed posthumous cut-off date and aspects of eligibility criteria may require amendment to ensure inclusivity.

#### **Evidence session: 24 September 2025**

245. At its meeting on 24 September 2025, the Committee received oral evidence from Adopt NI, the Victims and Survivors Service, and WAVE Trauma Centre, three organisations providing support to victims and survivors affected by mother-and-baby institutions, Magdalene laundries, and workhouses. The evidence focused on trauma-informed processes, survivor participation, access to records, and practical considerations for implementation of the Bill.

246. Witnesses emphasised that inquiry and redress processes must be grounded in trauma-informed principles, including safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. Drawing on survivors' experiences of previous inquiries, including the HIA inquiry, witnesses cautioned that poor communication and adversarial practices risk re-traumatisation. Familiarisation sessions, clear guidance, and accessible language were highlighted as essential to managing expectations and reducing anxiety.

247. Strong support was expressed for making the advisory panel under Clause 10 mandatory rather than discretionary, with witnesses recommending that the wording be changed from "may appoint" to "shall appoint." Survivor voices and lived experience were viewed as central to the design and delivery of the inquiry. Witnesses also highlighted the need for wrap-around support for

survivors serving on panels to prevent overburdening and to ensure their wellbeing.

248. Access to personal records was identified as a significant and ongoing barrier for survivors and as critical to meaningful participation in both the inquiry and redress processes. Challenges include long waiting lists within health trusts and the complexity of cases involving illegal registrations or foundlings. Witnesses called for urgent investment in record services and strengthened interdepartmental engagement to address resourcing shortfalls. Concerns were also raised that the redress service may have access to information not shared with applicants, potentially undermining fairness in phase-two harm-based payments.
249. The proposed standardised payment of £10,000 was widely regarded as inadequate. Witnesses representing WAVE and Adopt NI recommended an increase to £15,000 to reflect inflation and the rising cost of living. It was noted that many older survivors fear they may not live long enough to access individually assessed payments, and that a higher standardised payment would provide more timely recognition. Clear communication was requested to explain the distinction between admission-based standardised payments and the future harm-based scheme.
250. In their oral evidence to the Committee, WAVE and Adopt NI also suggested indexing payments annually, drawing comparisons with the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme.
251. Strong opposition was expressed to the proposed posthumous cut-off date of 29 September 2011. Witnesses advocated for an earlier date or removal of the cut-off altogether to ensure inclusivity. The emotional impact of exclusion and concerns regarding fairness were emphasised, with the Committee urged to consider amendments.
252. Witnesses outlined the existing needs-based, trauma-informed support model delivered through the VSS and its community partners. Services include health and wellbeing support, talking and complementary therapies, welfare advice,

personal development, and specialist tracing and DNA testing services provided by Adopt NI. It was recommended that services be scaled up in advance of the Inquiry and redress scheme to meet anticipated demand.

253. Adopt NI described the DNA testing service established in response to survivor requests, which complements genealogical tracing work. Witnesses explained that to date, forty three cases have been undertaken, with thirty resulting in successful outcomes, including direct parental or grandparent identification. They went on to say that the service is fully funded, free to users, and has capacity for approximately seventy five cases per year.
254. The need for clear, consistent, and compassionate communication was emphasised by all witnesses to avoid confusion regarding eligibility and processes. Witnesses recommended a coordinated community information campaign and clarity regarding responsibility for promotion of the scheme and associated budgets. Outreach should include targeted engagement with diaspora communities and face-to-face services for rural and isolated areas.
255. There was strong consensus amongst Members on the need for a mandatory advisory panel, increased payment levels, and a review of the posthumous cut-off date.
256. The Committee noted concerns regarding resource constraints within health trusts and the risk of delays in record disclosure. Members placed emphasis on the need for a trauma-informed design and survivor co-production as essential to building trust and credibility in the Inquiry and redress processes.

#### **Evidence session: 1 October 2025**

257. At its meeting on 1 October 2025, the Committee received expert evidence from Dublin City University and Queen's University Belfast on the design and implementation of the Bill. The evidence focused on alignment with human rights standards, inquiry structure, victim and survivor participation, access to records, and redress provisions, drawing on comparative research, stakeholder interviews, and international best practice.

258. Witnesses advised that the Bill does not fully incorporate the recommendations or guiding principles of the Truth Recovery Design Panel (TRDP). Mandatory language was recommended to ensure that the Independent Panel report is integrated into the Inquiry's TORs. A human rights-based approach was advocated, requiring the Inquiry to assess credible information on violations such as coercive adoption, involuntary confinement, and invasion of privacy. It was further recommended that Clause 2 explicitly reference cross-border dimensions, with early political engagement between the Northern Ireland and Irish Governments identified as essential to support timely data-sharing.
259. Limited access to records was identified as a major barrier to survivor engagement. Witnesses highlighted TRDP recommendations for a statutory repository and a permanent, independent archive for institutional and adoption records. Early disclosure of records was described as critical, with a warning that delays experienced during the Hart Inquiry should not be repeated. Victims and Survivors should receive records well in advance of Inquiry hearings or redress applications.
260. Concerns were raised regarding the exclusion of unmarried women and children who were in workhouses prior to 1948, noting that this is a small cohort but equally deserving of recognition and redress. The exclusion of posthumous claims prior to 2011 was described as arbitrary and unjustified, creating harmful hierarchies among victims and survivors. An alternative cut-off date of 15 November 2021, when the Executive accepted the TRDP recommendations, was proposed.
261. Witnesses noted that any expansion of eligibility would require reconsideration of payment levels and the publication of revised cost estimates. Religious institutions were said to have a remedial responsibility to contribute financially, and witnesses encouraged exploration of legal mechanisms to compel or incentivise contributions, including civil litigation reforms adopted in Australia and the Republic of Ireland.
262. Witnesses advocated for a modular Inquiry structure with interim reports to ensure timely findings, particularly for elderly survivors. It was recommended

that the inquiry panel be multidisciplinary rather than solely judge-led, with survivors appointed to the panel and consulted on its composition. The advisory panel provided for under Clause 10 was described as needing to be mandatory, with victim and survivor lived experience informing Inquiry design. Victim and survivor participation should be voluntary and supported by trauma-informed services.

263. A non-adversarial approach to inquiry procedures was recommended to minimise re-traumatisation. Measures suggested included early disclosure of documents, restricted cross-examination, and the use of trauma-informed intermediaries and appropriately trained legal counsel. Witnesses argued that survivors should be granted core participant status and guaranteed access to legal representation.
264. Witnesses emphasised that redress is not solely financial and that acknowledgement and apology are fundamental to justice. An official apology early in the process was recommended, alongside individualised apologies accompanying redress determinations. A meaningful apology was described as requiring acknowledgement of wrongdoing, acceptance of responsibility, expression of remorse, assurance of non-repetition, and an offer of corrective action.
265. The Committee expressed strong support for a human rights-based framing of the Inquiry and mandatory integration of the independent panel report. Members also indicated their support for modular reporting to provide timely updates to victims and survivors and for expanding eligibility to include the workhouse cohort and earlier posthumous claims.
266. The Committee highlighted the need for legal and practical mechanisms to secure institutional financial contributions. Concerns were raised by Members regarding vague language in Clause 31 and the lack of clarity around victim and survivor support arrangements.
267. At its meeting on 1 October 2025, the Committee received evidence from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) on its investigation into mother-and-

baby homes, Magdalene laundries, and workhouses in Northern Ireland between 1922 and 1990. The investigation followed the publication of the independent research report in January 2021 and was formally launched in October 2021.

268. The PSNI outlined that a total of one hundred and seven referrals were received, comprising forty six reports from victims, thirty seven reports from relatives (primarily individuals born in institutions), sixteen reports from researchers, three reports from former employees, and one report from a current statutory employee. The investigation related to sixty six mothers, of whom fourteen were aged 16 or younger at the time of admission. Reporting persons were located across Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, England, the United States, Canada, and Australia. The institutions most frequently cited were Marianvale and Marianville mother-and-baby homes operated by the Good Shepherd Sisters.
269. Witnesses outlined that allegations included rape, incest, child sexual abuse, physical assault, cruelty, adoption irregularities, cross-border movement, and concerns regarding mass burials or unmarked graves.
270. Twenty individuals were named as alleged perpetrators across various institutions, with fourteen positively identified, of whom twelve are deceased. Some suspects were born in the late nineteenth century and died prior to 2000. One suspect was linked to five reports and another to three reports; both were deceased before the investigation commenced.
271. Witnesses confirmed eighteen investigations remain open, while eight nine cases were closed due to evidential difficulties, including deceased suspects, absence of a named suspect, or offences being statute-barred. Two cases are being prepared for referral to the Public Prosecution Service, one of which involves extradition proceedings. Both cases relate to incidents occurring prior to victims' admission to institutions.
272. The PSNI highlighted significant challenges arising from historical record-keeping practices. Institutional records were often incomplete, lacked

standardisation, and varied in format and condition. A distinction was drawn between moral wrongdoing and criminal liability, noting that many practices now considered abusive or unethical did not constitute criminal offences under the law at the time. Examples included general mistreatment, financial exploitation, and restrictions on leaving institutions, which did not meet the legal thresholds for offences such as false imprisonment. Statutory limitations were also highlighted, with adoption-related offences typically statute-barred after six months, preventing prosecution in the majority of cases.

273. The PSNI confirmed that allegations of mass burials at Marianvale had been investigated, with no evidence identified to date. Awareness of concerns relating to Milltown Cemetery was noted, and PSNI indicated its willingness to investigate additional burial sites identified through the public inquiry.
274. It was noted that institutions and statutory agencies were generally cooperative when records were requested. PSNI stated there was no evidence of deliberate withholding of records, with gaps attributed to historical practices rather than obstruction. A memorandum of understanding with An Garda Síochána facilitated information sharing, and no significant cross-border challenges were reported. PSNI confirmed readiness to reopen closed cases or commence new investigations should the inquiry uncover fresh evidence.
275. The PSNI described extensive outreach efforts, including media and social media campaigns targeting audiences across Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Approximately 1,500 leaflets and 250 posters were distributed across policing districts, alongside engagement with community organisations such as Age NI. Victims were offered face-to-face meetings, closure letters explaining investigative decisions, and signposting to appropriate support services.
276. The Committee commended PSNI for its sensitive handling of cases and transparency in reporting investigative outcomes. Members noted significant evidential challenges, arising from the passage of time, the death of suspects, and historical legal limitations.

277. The Committee emphasised the importance of robust referral mechanisms between the Inquiry and PSNI to ensure new evidence can be acted upon. The Committee also highlighted the need to address gaps in access to records and to ensure thorough investigation of burial sites.

#### **Evidence session: 9 October 2025**

278. At its meeting on 9 October 2025, the Committee received oral evidence from KRW Law, the Law Society of Northern Ireland, and Phoenix Law on the Bill's provisions relating to the Inquiry and redress scheme. The evidence focused on survivor rights, legal representation, compensation, and institutional accountability, drawing on lessons learned from the HIA Inquiry and emphasising the need for a victim-centred approach.

279. Witnesses emphasised that victims and survivors should be granted core participant status from the outset of the Inquiry. This would enable access to Inquiry materials, the ability to ask questions, make submissions, and participate fully in proceedings. Legal representation was described as essential to ensure equality of arms with institutions, which will be legally represented throughout. Reference was made to the HIA Inquiry, where the absence of core participant status left victims exposed and re-traumatised, a position subsequently confirmed by High Court challenge.

280. Witnesses argued that there should be a statutory obligation to consult victims and survivors on the Inquiry's TORs and any subsequent amendments under Clause 2. The advisory panel provided for under Clause 10 was described as needing to be mandatory rather than discretionary and to remain in place for the duration of the Inquiry. It was further suggested that the panel should incorporate multidisciplinary expertise, including trauma and health specialists, alongside judicial leadership, to reflect survivors' complex needs.

281. Witnesses expressed strong opposition to the proposed cut-off date of 29 September 2011, which was described as arbitrary, cruel, and driven by cost considerations. Witnesses recommended that both the Inquiry and redress scheme extend back to 1922, reflecting the historical nature of the abuses and

elevated infant mortality rates during the 1920s to 1950s. Eligibility for posthumous claims should extend beyond partners and children to include primary beneficiaries named in wills and individuals who can demonstrate a connection on the balance of probabilities. To address the risk of family disputes, witnesses suggested mechanisms such as paired applications or proportional awards where there are multiple applicants.

282. Witnesses described the proposed £10,000 standardised payment was as inadequate and outdated, being based on the HIA scheme. Victims and survivors were reported as advocating for a minimum payment of £20,000, with an inflation-adjusted figure of approximately £14,000 still considered insufficient. Witnesses recommended that standardised payments and individually assessed payments should run in parallel to avoid unnecessary delays and to ensure that older survivors receive full redress. Concerns were raised that some victim and survivors may die before accessing harm-based payments, leaving the standardised payment as their only compensation.
283. Witnesses called for a legal mechanism to compel institutions to contribute financially to redress. The current voluntary approach was viewed as ineffective, with some religious orders remaining reluctant to engage. Suggested options included placing a statutory obligation on the Executive to recover funds following the inquiry, or adopting a “carrot-and-stick” approach whereby institutions making voluntary contributions would receive limited protection from future litigation. Financial accountability was described as a core element of restorative justice.
284. Witnesses highlighted that victim and survivors have experienced decades of denied access to family history and personal records. The Inquiry should prioritise early disclosure of records and provide legal assistance to help survivors interpret complex documentation. Concerns were raised regarding resource constraints within health trusts, with urgent investment required for digitisation and retrieval of records. PII provisions were criticised as inappropriate in this context, with witnesses arguing that transparency should be maximised and closed sessions used only sparingly and on application.

285. Clause 26, which sets a 14-day limit for judicial review, was described by witnesses as a significant departure from usual practice. Witnesses recommended a three-month timeframe, consistent with the Court of Judicature rules. It was argued that the proposed 14-day limit risks excluding victims who require time to seek advice and access legal aid.
286. Witnesses raised concerns were about Clause 14, which places restrictions on recording and broadcasting at the discretion of the inquiry chair. Witnesses advocated for live-streaming controlled by the Inquiry to promote transparency while protecting victim anonymity. Lessons were drawn from the COVID-19 period and other inquiries, such as the Post Office inquiry, where online hearings enhanced accessibility and public confidence.
287. Witnesses highlighted that many victim and survivors live outside Northern Ireland and that outreach must therefore extend beyond the jurisdiction. Recommended measures included advertising campaigns, engagement with diaspora groups and legal societies in Great Britain, and partnerships with Irish organisations in major UK cities. It was emphasised that digital-only campaigns would be insufficient for older cohorts, and that traditional media and community engagement remain essential.
288. There was consensus amongst Members on the need for mandatory victim and survivor consultation, a mandatory advisory panel, expanded eligibility for posthumous claims, increased payment levels, and parallel processing of standardised and individually assessed payments. The Committee expressed support for legal compulsion of institutional financial contributions and for granting survivors core participant status with funded legal representation.
289. The Committee noted concerns regarding the short judicial review timeframe and restrictive provisions on broadcasting. Members emphasised transparency, victim and survivor dignity, and the importance of trauma-informed processes throughout the Inquiry and redress scheme.
290. During this meeting, the Committee also received evidence from the Truth Recovery Independent Panel (The Panel) which has been central to gathering

testimonies and shaping recommendations for the inquiry and redress scheme. The Panel commended the Bill as broadly strong but highlighted areas for improvement to ensure it meets the needs of victims and survivors.

291. The Panel considered the Bill's framework (Clause 3) sufficiently broad to allow regulations to include all relevant institutions without creating a hierarchy. Flexibility through regulations was preferred over listing institutions in primary legislation. Participation measures should include a mandatory advisory panel comprising victims and survivors.
292. Witnesses also recommended consideration of survivor inclusion on the Inquiry panel itself, as advised by the design panel. Rules under Clause 27 were suggested to incorporate trauma-informed practices and protections for vulnerable witnesses, drawing on best practice from inquiries such as the Muckamore Abbey Hospital investigation.
293. The panel strongly opposed the exclusion of women who gave birth in workhouses, noting they experienced similar discrimination to those in mother-and-baby homes. Inclusion would not contravene anti-discrimination provisions under the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The current posthumous cut-off date of 2011 was described as illogical and harmful; eligibility should extend back to 1922, the foundation of Northern Ireland.
294. Witnesses highlighted that payments are currently the only form of acknowledgement, which risks compounding historical harms. They suggested empowering the redress service to provide non-financial acknowledgment, such as letters of apology, alongside or instead of payments.
295. Witnesses stated that the Inquiry should fully incorporate testimonies gathered by the panel to avoid adversarial processes and re-traumatisation. Most participants consented to share their testimonies, and analysis and thematic findings are ready for integration. A modular approach for Inquiry hearings was recommended, prioritising institutions with older survivor cohorts.
296. Witnesses emphasised the importance of a state apology early in the process, given the age and health of many victim and survivors. Apologies could be

staggered, beginning with an initial apology based on known facts, followed by further apologies after panel and Inquiry reports.

297. The Panel noted that the Bill does not provide mechanisms to compel institutional contributions. Legal challenges exist, but international models offer alternatives, including reforms to statutes of limitations and class action rules to incentivise contributions. Pressure points and civil procedure reforms were suggested as possible avenues.
298. The panel observed that delays in record access, often up to a year, posed risks for both Inquiry and redress. While guidance has improved redaction practices, resource constraints remain. Recommendations included increased administrative support for trusts and the creation of an independent, permanent archive for institutional and adoption records to ensure preservation and accessibility. The Public Record Office Northern Ireland (PRONI) reports highlighted poor storage conditions (e.g., mould, pest damage) and lack of digitisation, particularly in the Western Trust.
299. Witnesses noted that testimonies revealed extensive cross-border transfers of babies and mothers, frequently involving Nazareth House in Fahan. Thousands of cases were identified, and these movements were routine, unaffected by jurisdictional boundaries. Inquiry and redress arrangements must reflect these patterns and ensure cooperation with Republic of Ireland authorities.
300. The Committee noted strong alignment with previous evidence on the need for a mandatory advisory panel and victim and survivor inclusion. Support was reaffirmed by Members for the expansion of eligibility to include workhouse births and earlier posthumous claims.
301. The Committee endorsed measures for non-financial acknowledgement and early apologies. Urgent action was recommended by Members to improve access to records and archival preservation. Concerns were raised regarding resource constraints and potential delays in implementing trauma-informed practices.

302. On 28 November 2025, the Committee received an update from Junior Ministers on the Bill's progress, potential amendments under consideration, and broader policy issues. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to a victim-centred, trauma-informed approach while acknowledging financial constraints and legal complexities.
303. Ministers outlined a number of potential amendments to the Bill under consideration. These included:
304. Clause 5: Ministers suggested a multidisciplinary inquiry panel (chair plus at least one member) with expertise in trauma and health.
305. Clause 15: Ministers suggested an obligation on inquiry chair to consider lack of prior access to personal information when imposing restriction orders.
306. Clause 38: Minister outlined their intention to extend the redress appeal period from 30 to 90 days.
307. Clause 39: Ministers wished to clarify that the Executive Office, not the redress service, facilitates access to advice and assistance.
308. Schedule 1: Ministers suggested a change to put an explicit duty on redress service to promote the scheme, funded by Executive Office.
309. Clause 4: Ministers wished to strengthen wording to explicitly include women who became pregnant while in an institution.
310. Clause 31: Ministers wished to clarify eligibility for children of women admitted for shelter/maintenance, excluding cases admitted solely for medical care.
311. Clause 33: Ministers outlined they were exploring administrative handling of straightforward applications to accelerate processing.
312. Clause 2: Ministers wished to enhance prominence of cross-border movement in inquiry terms of reference.
313. Clause 18: Ministers wished to enable a modular inquiry approach with interim reports.

314. Clause 32(3): Ministers confirmed a change to Assembly procedure for extending redress scheme from negative resolution to draft affirmative.
315. Clause 40: Ministers would align penalties for breaching redress restriction orders with those for inquiry restriction orders (Clause 23).
316. Clause 26: Current 14-day limit mirrors Inquiries Act 2005; Ministers open to review but stress need for timeliness.
317. Clause 27: Ministers wished to retain the Negative resolution procedure for administrative rules; debate possible if prayed against.
318. Ministers also highlighted a number of issues in relation to the Redress Scheme. Ministers re-iterated it was an admission-based standardised payment avoids re-traumatising statements, payments will not affect social security or require waivers and that a harm-based individually assessed payment would follow in future legislation, with no cap proposed.
319. Ministers highlighted current financial constraints and confirmed that £80 million from the Northern Ireland block grant has been allocated for this legislation; Ministers confirmed there was no UK Government contribution to date.
320. Ministers noted that extending posthumous date to 1922 would add an estimated £27 million to the overall costs and that broader changes (such as changes to the amounts to be awarded) could increase costs by £70 million.
321. Ministers committed to pursuing contributions but acknowledged legal and practical challenges. They confirmed ongoing engagement with Scotland and the Republic of Ireland to learn from their schemes as well as exploring options such as garnishee orders and civil procedure reforms.
322. Ministers re-iterated their commitment to cross-border cooperation. They informed Members of a draft MOU in progress for record-sharing with Republic of Ireland. They also stated that PRONI are in the process of digitising Fahan records and seeking access to Stamullen archives. Ministers committed to

engaging with the Health Minister and acknowledged delays and poor storage conditions.

323. Ministers confirmed that a formal apology to victims and survivors will be given, and that a form of memorialisation is planned. Minister placed emphasis on preserving testimonies and creating a permanent historical record. Ministers reiterated their commitment to wrap-around support for health and well-being during and after the Inquiry.
324. The Committee heard consistent evidence from both departmental officials and Ministers on the financial implications and risks involved in seeking to move or remove the posthumous date in Clause 31(5)(b). Ministers informed the Committee that the budgetary implications of removing the date could increase the costs of the Redress Scheme by up to £27 million. Ministers made it clear that this would have a direct impact on an already strained departmental budget. Officials from the Department also advised the Committee that with the scheme being admission based, an amendment to Clause 31(5)(b) could result in an unknown increase in applications.
325. The Committee reiterated strong opposition to the proposed 2011 cut-off; in response, Ministers cited fairness, precedent, and cost implications. Members reflected the calls for higher standardised payment. In response, Ministers stressed deliverability within the current and limited budget.
326. The Committee sought assurances in its involvement in scrutinising and agreeing regulations flowing from the Bill; Ministers agreed to explore options to allow Committee early sight of drafted regulations.
327. The Committee pressed for stronger mechanisms for financial contributions from institutions. In response, Ministers confirmed all options were under consideration but warned against risking legislative competence.
328. Members welcomed the proposed amendments on the advisory panel, modular Inquiry, and the extension to the appeal period. However, some Members expressed dissatisfaction with lack of advance papers and concerns over narrow scope and financial limitations of the Bill as drafted.

329. Members stressed the urgency of addressing record access, institutional contributions, and survivor engagement. Members also highlighted the need for transparency and the early delivery of non-financial redress, such as memorialisation.

## **Summary of Roundtable Engagement Events**

330. As part of its scrutiny and engagement plan, the Committee e held a series of roundtable engagement events to ensure that the views of victims, survivors, and wider stakeholders were directly heard and reflected in its deliberations. These events formed a central element of the Committee's trauma informed approach and were designed to provide an accessible, safe, and supportive environment for individuals to share their experiences and perspectives.
331. Participants identified a number of recurring themes, many of which echoed concerns raised in written submissions and formal oral evidence. A key issue that was raised was the Inquiry Scope and Institutional Inclusion. Attendees expressed strong views that the Inquiry must be broad in its scope, capturing the full range of mother and baby institutions, Magdalene laundries, workhouses, private maternity homes, and cross border pathways. Concerns were raised regarding omissions from the current list of prescribed institutions and the need for recognition of systemic involvement across both religious and state actors.
332. Participants highlighted ongoing barriers in accessing personal, medical, and adoption related records. Many emphasised that the right to truth and access to one's own information is fundamental to both the Inquiry and the Redress Scheme. Delays in disclosure, poor record management, and discrepancies in historical documentation were raised as areas requiring urgent action.
333. Strong concerns were expressed about the proposed eligibility criteria, particularly the exclusion of certain cohorts and the 29 September 2011 posthumous cutoff date. Many described the cut off as unfair and insensitive,

emphasising that deceased mothers and infants were integral to the history of these institutions and must be recognised within the Redress Scheme.

334. Participants widely viewed the proposed £10,000 standardised payment as insufficient to reflect the harm experienced. Suggestions included aligning payment levels with inflation, recognising cumulative trauma, and ensuring that older survivors receive meaningful redress within their lifetime.
335. Many attendees stressed the necessity of funded legal representation throughout both the Inquiry and Redress Scheme processes, citing complexity, vulnerability, and inequalities in access to legal advice compared with institutions. Wrap around emotional and psychological support was also highlighted as essential.
336. Participants articulated strong expectations that religious orders, state bodies, and other responsible institutions should contribute financially to redress. There was consistent frustration that the Bill, as introduced, contains no mechanism to compel contributions.
337. Individuals shared concerns over unmarked graves, burial practices, and the need for sensitive and thorough investigation of known and suspected sites. Participants emphasised the need for respectful treatment of remains and transparency in any findings.
338. Across all the events, victims and survivors and family members spoke of long standing trauma, stigma, and the impact of institutional practices on identity, health, and family relationships. The Committee heard repeated calls for a process that is survivor centred, transparent, and grounded in dignity and respect. Participants also welcomed the Committee's trauma informed approach, including familiarisation sessions, safe space arrangements, and the presence of advocacy and wellbeing staff at all engagements.
339. The Committee carefully considered all evidence gathered during the roundtable sessions. The themes and concerns raised directly informed the Committee's clause by clause deliberations and the amendments it subsequently agreed, particularly those relating to transparency, victim and

survivor participation, access to records, eligibility criteria, institutional accountability, and Inquiry procedures.

## **Other Issues Considered by the Committee**

### **Engagement with other Statutory Committees**

340. As part of its scrutiny process, the Committee wrote to all other Assembly Statutory Committees seeking their views on the Bill.
341. The Committee for Finance responded by suggested that the Committee should consider those who may wish to give evidence but who have left Northern Ireland and live elsewhere in the world, such as the USA, Canda, Australia and New Zealand.
342. Members of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs agreed that this was a very important piece of legislation and indicated that Members of that Committee would provide their positions in the plenary debates on the Bill.
343. The Committee for Justice requested clarification on whether clerical abuse is covered by the provisions in this Bill or if it will form a strand of the Inquiry, particularly given the clerical aspect of many of the institutions within its scope. The Committee sought clarification on this query with TEO and replied clarifying that Clerical Abuse was not included specifically in the Bill, or the Inquiry.

### **Financial Contributions from Religious Institutions**

344. Throughout its scrutiny of the Bill, the Committee raised with TEO the importance of seeking contributions from religious orders as part of the Redress Scheme. During the Committee meeting on 18 June 2025, TEO indicated that *“The commitment to getting contributions from institutions or other responsible bodies is very clear, and that includes the state's role. In the EFM, we reference the engagement in the period post 1973 and during direct rule by the NIO and*

*the Treasury. There has been no agreement about that, but it is being pursued.”*

345. The Committee concluded that any institution, following the Inquiry, is found to have committed systemic failings, that TEO should use every avenue possible to seek and obtain financial contributions from those institutions.

### **Cross Border Element**

346. Throughout the written and oral evidence considered by the Committee, the issue of cross border pathways was frequently raised. The Committee highlighted that TEO should ensure that the implementation of all responsibilities and cooperate with the Government in the Republic of Ireland to maximise access to information regarding cross border practices.

347. During oral evidence to the Committee at its meeting on 28 November 2025 junior Ministers confirmed that *“At some point, we hope to have the like of MOU or some type of agreement between both jurisdictions. We are working towards that. There has been that engagement.”*

348. While officials indicated that the Committee could have sight of a draft MOU, the Committee has yet to receive this and will continue to raise this issue with the Department.

### **Engagement with Health Trusts**

349. In May 2025 and in preparation for its scrutiny of the Bill, the Committee wrote to all Northern Ireland Health Trusts, seeking details of specific actions that Trust were taking to accelerate access to records for victims and survivors. The Committee also sought an understanding of the preparations being made by the Trusts to facilitate the inevitable increase in requests following the introduction of the legislation.

350. In their responses, all Trusts expressed support for the aims of the Bill. They recognised the importance of timely access to personal records for victims and

survivors as well as the value of a human-rights-based approach and the significance of access to personal records as a form of redress.

351. Trusts cited three main legislative bases that guide their disclosure of records. These are (i) The UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 which governs access to personal data for living individuals, The Access to Health Records (NI) Order 1993 which governs access to health records of deceased individuals and various pieces of adoption legislation, which are especially relevant where adoption and birth records are concerned.
352. The Trusts also described a number of limitations to facilitating access to records. These included no automatic right of access to third-party information (Data Protection Act 2018), also that Next of Kin status alone does not grant access to a deceased person's health records (The Access to Health Records (NI) Order 1993). Furthermore, the Trusts cited how Social care records of deceased persons are not covered by legislation and require professional judgement.
353. Trusts outlined their current timeframes for responding to requests. All Trusts cited that standard subject access requests should take up to one month, or up to three months for complex cases.
354. Trusts described how access to deceased patients' health records should be completed in forty days (twenty one days if recent entries).
355. Trusts confirmed that Adoption-related access (under 2024 Department of Health Guidance) for minimally redacted files should be achieved within thirty to ninety days, however letters of information are often provided earlier.
356. Trusts highlighted several pressures in relation to records. These included the volume and sensitivity of social care and mental health records, and that extensive third-party content requiring careful redaction by staff.
357. The Trusts also detailed the several practical measures they have in place.

358. The Belfast Trust has adopted the 2024 Department of Health practice guidance and have hired a Band 4 staff member to assist with redaction. The Trust has also procured specialised redaction software to assist in releases records and operates the only specialist Post-Adoption Service for adults in this jurisdiction.
359. The Northern Trust provides “life story” and interpretative counselling support for those seeking to access records. It maintains a dedicated team to liaise with applicants, including phased release of large files.
360. The Western Trust emphasised how they use a case-by-case assessment model due to legislative complexity. The Trust also points applicants to complaint routes where concerns arise.
361. The Southern Trust detailed how they are dealing with heavy resourcing pressures and large volumes of complex records. The Trust advocates for dedicated funding to support anticipated increases in requests.
362. The South Eastern Trust have identified and catalogued historical adoption records (over 1,200 files and six adoption registers). The Trust notes the registers have been assessed as fragile. The Trust also highlighted that digitisation is underway in cooperation with PRONI and the Truth Recovery Programme team and how they have developed a Data Sharing Agreement with PRONI.
363. Overall, the Trusts indicated strong support for the Truth Recovery process. They also noted that how the current system is legally complex and resource-intensive, which can cause delays.
364. Trusts outlined that they are taking active steps but need additional, ring-fenced resources to meet the expected demand. The Trusts were also keen to point out that access to records is treated not merely as administrative, but as part of meaningful redress for victims and survivors.
365. In correspondence to the Committee, Trusts provided information regarding the condition of records held. The Committee noted its concern in relation to the

Western Trust where it was cited that “*the records were in an old asylum workhouse building where there was a lot of damp and mould*”.

## **Legal Advice Considered by the Committee**

366. During its scrutiny and deliberations, the Committee requested several pieces of legal advice to assist it in its consideration of particular clauses within the Bill.
367. At its meeting on 24 September 2025, the Committee received advice from the Assembly’s Examiner of Statutory Rules on the Bill. In particular, the Committee heard advice on the use of Negative Resolution and Draft Affirmative Resolution models for the Delegated Legislation flowing from the Bill.
368. At its meeting on 1 October 2025, the Committee received advice by officials from the Assembly’s Legal Services, specifically on (i) financial contributions in relation to the Bill and (ii) regards Public Interest Immunity provisions in the Bill.
369. At its meeting on 12 November 2025, the Committee also received advice by officials from the Assembly’s Legal Services, specifically on (i) Witness protection Measures in relation to the Bill and (ii) Clause 27 of the Bill and Core Participants.

## **Clause by Clause deliberations and decisions by the Committee**

370. Having considered the written and oral evidence received on the Bill, the Committee undertook its formal Clause-by-Clause consideration at its meeting on 19 January 2026 – see Minutes of Proceedings in Appendix 3 and Minutes of Evidence in Appendix 4.

### **Part 1 – The Inquiry**

#### **Clause 1: The Inquiry**

371. The Committee was content with this clause as drafted.

## **Clause 2: Terms of Reference**

372. The Committee considered its proposed amendments to Clause 2(1) and Clause 2(6)

*Clause 2, Page 2, Line 4*

*At end insert—‘(1A) The terms of reference must be published no later than six months after the coming into operation of this Part.*

and

*Clause 2, Page 2, Line 30*

*At end insert—*

*‘(6) In subsection (2), ‘other persons’ includes but is not limited to private hospitals, private maternity homes and private nursing homes; general practitioners; social workers; clergy; and private businesses.’*

373. The Committee agreed that it was content with the amendments as drafted.

374. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 2 as amended.

## **Clause 3: Prescribed Institutions**

375. The Committee agreed it was content with this Clause as drafted.

## **Clause 4: Relevant Persons**

376. The Committee considered a departmental amendment to Clause 4(1)

*Clause 4, Page 3, Line 16*

*At end insert— ‘(i(a) a woman or girl who had become pregnant while she was under the care of the workhouse;’*

377. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 4(1)

378. The Committee considered its proposed amendments to Clause 4(2),

*Clause 4, Page 3, Line 25*

*After 'Office', insert ', having consulted the chairperson,'*

379. The Committee agreed that it was content with the amendments as drafted.

380. The Committee agreed with Clause 4 as amended.

#### **Clause 5: Inquiry Panel**

381. The Committee considered a departmental amendment to Clause 5(1)

*Clause 5, Page 3, Line 35*

*Leave out from 'either' to end of line 37 and insert 'a chairperson with one or more other members.'*

382. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 5(1).

383. The Committee agreed with Clause 5 as amended.

#### **Clause 6: Appointment of Members**

384. The Committee agreed it was content with the Clause as drafted.

#### **Clause 7: Impartiality**

385. The Committee agreed it was content with the Clause as drafted.

#### **Clause 8: Duration of Appointment**

365. The Committee agreed it was content with the Clause as drafted.

#### **Clause 9: Assessors**

366. The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 9

*Clause 9, Page 6, Line 8*

*Leave out 'assessors' and insert 'expert advisers'*

*Clause 9, Page 6, Line 10*

*Leave out 'assessor' and insert 'expert adviser'*

*Clause 9, Page 6, Line 14*

*Leave out 'assessor' and insert 'expert adviser'*

367. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 9.

368. The Committee agreed was Clause 9 as amended.

### **Clause 10: Advisory Panel**

369. The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 10(1)

*Clause 10, Page 6, Line 16*

*After 'chairperson', insert ', having consulted the other members of the inquiry panel,'*

370. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 10.

371. The Committee agreed with Clause 10 as amended.

### **Clause 11: Suspension of Inquiry**

372. The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 11(6)

*Clause 11, Page 7, Line 13*

*Leave out subsection (6) and insert –*

*'(6) Where the First Minister and deputy First Minister give a notice under subsection (1), they must make an oral statement to the Assembly on the next sitting day.*

*(6A) In subsection (6), "sitting day" means a day on which the Assembly sits in plenary.'*

373. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 11.

374. The Committee agreed to Clause 11 as amended.

## **Clause 12: End of Inquiry**

375. The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 12

*After Clause 12 insert—*

*‘Contributions to redress payments*

*12A.—(1) As soon as is reasonably practicable following the date on which the inquiry comes to an end, the First Minister and deputy First Minister acting jointly shall publish a report on a scheme to pursue financial contributions from prescribed institutions.*

*(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), ‘financial contributions’ include contributions to the cost of the Truth Recovery Redress Service established in Part 2 of this Act, and any future redress schemes arising from the inquiry.*

*(3) The report set out in subsection (1) must—*

*(a) set out the process through which any scheme would be brought into operation,*

*(b) specify that contributions will only be sought from a prescribed institution where the inquiry has found systemic failings at that institution,*

*(c) be laid before the Assembly.’*

376. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 12.

377. The Committee agreed with Clause 12 as amended.

## **Clause 13: Evidence and Procedure**

378. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 13 as drafted.

## **Clause 14: Public Access**

379. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 14 as drafted.

### **Clause 15: Restrictions on Access**

380. The Committee considered a departmental amendment to Clause 15(4)

*Clause 15, Page 9, Line 18*

*At end insert—*

*‘(e) the extent to which any restrictions might impede the participation of relevant persons in the inquiry.’*

381. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 15.

382. The Committee agreed to Clause 15 as amended.

### **Clause 16: Powers to Require Evidence**

383. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 16 as drafted.

### **Clause 17: Privileged Information**

384. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 17 as drafted.

### **Clause 18: Submission of Reports**

385. The Committee considered a departmental amendment to Clause 18(3)

*Clause 18, Page 11, Line 18*

*Leave out ‘a report’ and insert ‘one or more reports’*

386. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 18.

387. The Committee agreed to Clause 18 as amended.

### **Clause 19: Publication of Reports**

388. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 19 as drafted.

### **Clause 20: Laying Reports Before Assembly**

389. The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 20

*Clause 20, Page 12, Line 8*

*Leave out from 'either' to end of line 9*

390. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 20.

391. The Committee agreed to Clause 20 as amended.

**Clause 21: Witness Expenses**

392. The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 21(1)

*Clause 21, Page 12, Line 12*

*Leave out 'with the approval of' and insert 'having consulted with'*

393. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 21.

394. The Committee agreed to Clause 21 as amended.

**Clause 22: Inquiry Expenses**

395. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 22 as drafted.

**Clause 23: Offences**

396. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 23 as drafted.

**Clause 24: High Court Enforcement**

397. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 24 as drafted.

**Clause 25: Immunity from Suit**

398. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 25 as drafted.

**Clause 26: Judicial Review Time Limit**

399. The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 26(1)

*Clause 26, Page 15, Line 3*

*Leave out '14' and insert '21'*

400. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 26.

401. The Committee agreed to Clause 26 as amended.

### **Clause 27: Rules**

402. The Committee considered its proposed amendments to Clause 27(2A) and Clause 27(5)

*Clause 27, Page 15, Line 23*

*At end insert—*

*' (2A) Rules under subsection (1)(a) must in particular make provision for the designation of persons as core participants, and for consequent arrangements, similar to provision in the Inquiry Rules 2006.'*

and

*Clause 27, Page 15, Line 36*

*Leave out subsection (5) and insert—'(5) Rules under this section may not be made unless a draft of the regulations has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, the Assembly.'*

403. The Committee agreed with the amendments to Clause 27.

404. Committee agreed to Clause 27 as amended.

### **Clause 28: Consequential Amendments**

405. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 28 as drafted.

### **Clause 29: Interpretation**

406. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 29 as drafted.

### **Part 2 – Payment of Redress**

### **Clause 30: The Service**

407. Committee is content with Clause as drafted.

### **Clause 31: Entitlement to a payment**

408. The Committee considered an amendment to Clause 31(4).

Clause 31, Page 17, Line 23

After '(2)' add 'and (4)'

Clause 31, Page 17, Line 30

Leave out 'under the care of' and insert 'receiving shelter or maintenance (or both) from'

Clause 31, Page 17, Line 32

Leave out 'under the care of' and insert 'receiving shelter or maintenance (or both) from'

409. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 31(4).

410. The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 31(5)

Clause 31, Page 18, Line 1

Leave out paragraph (b)

**Agreed:** Following division, the Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 31(5)

The Committee divided: Ayes 6; Noes 2; Abstain 0

*Ayes: Paula Bradshaw; Stewart Dickson; Sinéad McLaughlin; Carál Ní Chuilín; Áine Murphy and Timothy Gaston*

*Noes: Phillip Brett and Pam Cameron*

411. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 31 (5).

386. Phillip Brett and Pam Cameron opposed the amendment to Clause 31 (5).

**Clause 32: Time limit for applications for a payment**

387. The Committee considered Clause 32 and an amendment proposed by the Department to amend Clause 32(3).

***Clause 32, Page 18, Line 26***

*Leave out subsection (3) and insert—*

*'(3) Regulations under subsection (2) may not be made unless a draft of the regulations has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, the Assembly.'*

388. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 32 (3).

**Clause 33: Applications for Payment**

389. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 33 as drafted.

**Clause 34: Priority for Applications**

414. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 34 as drafted.

**Clause 35: Power to require further information or oral evidence**

415. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 35 as drafted.

**Clause 36: Power to disclose information**

416. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 36 as drafted.

**Clause 37: Payments**

417. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 37 as drafted.

**Clause 38: Right to appeal**

418. The Committee considered a departmental amendment to Clause 38(2)

*Clause 38, Page 21, Line 18*

*Leave out '30' and insert '90'*

419. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 38(2).

The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 38

*Before Clause 39 insert—*

*'Promotion of Truth Recovery Redress Service*

*38A.—(1) The Service must take reasonable steps to promote awareness of the Service.*

*(2) The Executive Office shall provide such amounts as it may determine to the Service, to enable any steps taken under subsection (1).'*

420. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 38 (2).

421. The Committee agreed to Clause 38 as amended.

**Clause 39: Advice and assistance**

433. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 39 as drafted.

**Clause 40: Orders restricting disclosure of information**

434. The Committee considered its amendment to Clause 40

*Clause 40, Page 22, Line 34*

*At end insert—*

*'(6) A person is guilty of an offence if the person, without reasonable excuse, contravenes a restriction order imposed under subsection (1).*

*(7) Only the President may institute proceedings for an offence under subsection (6).*

*(8) A person who is guilty of an offence under subsection (6) is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or to both.'*

435. The Committee agreed with the amendment to Clause 40.

436. The Committee agreed to Clause 40 as amended.

**Clause 41: Advisers**

437. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 41 as drafted.

**Clause 42: Regulations**

438. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 42 as drafted.

**Part 3 General**

**Clause 43: Application to the Crown**

439. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 35 as drafted.

**Clause 44: Power to make supplementary, etc. provision**

440. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 35 as drafted.

**Clause 45: General Interpretation**

441. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 35 as drafted.

**Clause 46: Commencement**

442. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 35 as drafted.

**Clause 47: Short Title**

443. The Committee agreed it was content with Clause 35 as drafted

**Schedules**

**Schedule 1**

444. The Committee agreed it was content with Schedule 1 as drafted.

**Schedule 2**

445. The Committee agreed it was content with Schedule 2 as drafted.

**Schedule 3**

446. The Committee agreed it was content with Schedule 3 as drafted.

**Schedule 4**

447. The Committee agreed it was content with Schedule 4 as drafted.

# Links to Appendices

## **Appendix 1: Memoranda and Papers from the Executive Office**

[View Memoranda and Papers supplied to the Committee by the Department](#)

## **Appendix 2: Memoranda and Papers from other individuals or organisations**

[View Memoranda and Papers supplied to the Committee by other individuals or organisations](#)

## **Appendix 3: Minutes of Proceedings**

[View Minutes of Proceedings of Committee meetings related to the Bill](#)

## **Appendix 4: Minutes of Evidence**

[View Minutes of Evidence from evidence sessions related to the Bill](#)

## **Appendix 5: Research Papers**

[View Research Papers produced by RaISe in relation to the Bill](#)

## **Appendix 6: Written Submissions**

[View the Written Submissions in relation to the Bill](#)

## **Appendix 7: Citizen Space Submission Summary Report**

[View the Citizen Space Submissions Summary Report in relation to the Bill](#)

## **Appendix 8: List of Witnesses that gave evidence to the Committee**

Marie Breen-Smyth, Interim Chair, Victims' & Survivors' Consultative Forum

Oonagh McAleer, Birth Mothers and their Children for Justice

Mechelle Dillon, Birth Mothers and their Children for Justice

Maria Arbuckle, Truth Recovery NI

Paul McClarey, Truth Recovery NI

Adele Johnstone, Birth Mothers and their Children Together

Barbara McCann, Birth Mothers and their Children Together

Andrew Walker, CEO, VSS

Sandra Peake, CEO, WAVE Trauma Centre

Ciara Scully, CEO, Adopt NI

Professor Anne-Marie McAlinden, Professor School of Law, Queen's University Belfast

Dr James Gallen, Associate Professor, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University

Jordan Piper, Detective Superintendent, PSNI

Zoë McKee, Detective Chief Superintendent, Head of Public Protection Branch, PSNI

Peter O'Brien, Deputy Chief Executive of the Society, Law Society NI

Gary Duffy, Associate Solicitor KRW Law

Claire McKeegan, Partner, Head of Litigation, Healthcare & Abuse, Phoenix Law

Professor Leanne McCormick, Independent Panel Co-Chair, Truth Recovery  
Independent Panel

Professor Sean O'Connell, Independent Panel Co-Chair, Truth Recovery  
Independent Panel

Mr Colin Smith SC, Human Rights Barrister

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