

SUBMISSION TO THE OIREACHTAS REGARDING THE REDRESS SCHEME FOR MOTHER AND BABY INSTITUTIONS.

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I wish to make a personal submission but to include every mother and baby who had the unfortunate experience of setting foot inside the doors of these so called homes and cannot use their voices yet due to the stigma and shame hailed upon them. My experienced is lived experience due to being a mother who had a coerced adoption and as a child had grown up through the care system.

1. Redress Scheme should never have been based on time spent within these institutions it should have been based on the trauma endured.
2. No child who went through the doors of these institutions should be excluded from redress.
3. The pathways and practices should be taken into consideration to include boarding out/fostering and the children and mother brought back from England know as thePFI's (pregnant for Ireland)
4. The families who have lost their love ones, whether buried in cesspits, unmarked graves or in the grounds of any institution should not suffer anymore.
5. A repatriation scheme should be set in place for any child now adult who wishes to reclaim their heritage.

All reasoning why will follow on next page

The following is my reasoning for my submissions on page 2.

1. The reason redress should never have been done by time limits is that trauma can happen in one day and stay with you for life. Length of time: does not mean someone

who stayed for 3 months has less trauma than a person who stayed for 3 years people react differently to the same situation, I am going to use myself here as example: I was in St Patricks Mother and Baby institution from the 16th of January to the 6th of April which is a total of 80 days having just turned 18 in the November before this, my trauma has left me with very little memory of the home except a room full of typewriters and a nun telling me I wasn't allowed to hug my baby as he was not mine anymore and no memory at all of the birth of my son. I hear stories of other natural mothers in these institutions and they can tell me what the running of the place was like, what food we ate, even what I was like in there myself and they can remember the birth of their first born and I feel robbed of that is my trauma worse than the other mothers with some of these mothers having stayed a lot longer time than myself ??

Having attended psychologists throughout my life they have said I suffer from complex post traumatic stress disorder and that's why I have blocked certain things out of my life. Mother's put into private homes and gave birth in them should also be included along with the babies born in the same places as it was still coerced adoption through stigma and shame. When Dr Phil Scrathen said "this is Ireland's biggest scandal" he was right and until it has been acknowledged as such and everyone involved has been given a decent kind of redress it will continue to be that as you seen of late more mothers and children are coming forward to tell their stories.

2. The children we gave birth to were under stress from the moment we found out we were pregnant through the stigma and shame that was hailed upon us as young unwed mothers. Dr Hobel (director of maternal –fetal medicine stated “Stress is a silent disease”, stress in pregnancy can cause the babies damage in later life, no one can understand the stress unless you have walked in our shoes for even one day, you are there praying for some way out of this situation, how can anyone think its easy to hand a baby over that was part of you for 9 months/40 weeks that's nearly a year and the baby only knows you as its protector, its lifeline it feels your heart beat it eats the same food as you and you are connected together by the cord. The separation of mother and child is well written about The Primal Wound by Nancy Verner states that this separation is traumatic both the mother and the child. We as the mothers go through years of wondering where they are, are they being looked after, some mothers having to do it silently with no one to talk to due to the stigma attached to it, and the years of then searching and coming up against brick walls and being blocked by the powers above to finding the child. The child suffers from abandonment issues feels rejected not knowing that we never wanted to give them away. The searches the children have to go through just to find out who they really are, their heritage which is everyones human rights to know is being withheld how does people not see this as traumatic ?? How can it be said that children who were in the homes less than under 6 months should not be entitled to redress because they have no memories ?? Most babies would have left the mother and babies homes before 6 months as the adopted parents usually had them before the paperwork was signed which if you look it up had to be within 6 months so because of this law these children are not allowed redress how is that even fair ?? The wrong doings that was done to them was not their fault !!!

3. Pathways and practices of these insitutions need looked into as well as not all babies were adopted, some ended up in childrens homes and were then boarded or fostered out as well. Children who went into these homes from family circumstances including death of one of the parents, mental health issues of the parents and the cruelty man who maintained children were

getting neglected from their parents suffered horrific lives by people who were suppose to be protectors of vunerable children why should they be left out ??, Some of the mothers were sent to private nursing homes to that were connected to the adoption agencies who also were connected to the state run homes...to your point in the IDG report page 22 1.17 that fostered/boarded out children could be done on a case to case basis the word could should be changed to would and added on to the redress scheme.

3. The families whose mothers or children/siblings who are now deceased should be given redress too as it is intergenerational trauma when a mother is that traumatized by the coerced adoption of their baby it affects the further children too. Especially mothers who were denied the right to bury their dead babies and never told where they were buried. Every family that has a child or sibling in the grounds of these so call homes should be entitled to their right of finding out exactly were they are the grounds need to be excavated and DNA given to the families to find their loved ones and if they wish for them to give them a proper burial with dignity.

3. For those children sent out abroad in exchange for money (donations) there should be a repatriation scheme for those who wish to reclaim their heritage.

3. Conclusion Paragraph : the state and church as much as they want to deny it were always in cahoots with these institutions as one run the institutions and the other paid for the mother and babies to stay within the walls of them. I personally would like one person to be brave and strong enough to stand up and say their predecessors were wrong and that the now successors of these people (because its still the same political parties still running today) would say they should be held accountable for the horrific treatment bestowed on these mothers and babies and not try to short cut things by leaving people out who deserve the recognition of their suffering. As stated in your Interdepartmental Report on page 21 1.16 The state was directly responsible for establishing a number of this institutions !! As for it being difficult to add people to the Redress Scheme would it not be better to add people on rather than another full inquiry which would be asked for next if refusal is still forth coming ?? Victims and survivors should not be the ones on trial here the institutions should be asked to prove the victims and survivors wrong that way the records would soon be found anything to do with the care system records are suppose to be kept for 75 years so let the onus be on the institutions. How can anyone destroy records belonging to another human being ? How would they ever tell them who they were and were their lives started ?? Personally I have just fought the system for 30 years for records that I was told was burnt in a fire 30 years ago to have risen from the ashes to reappear as a file just a few weeks ago. The last statement in 1.16 on page 22 has really upset me when you talk about the scale and scope of the scheme likely to be extremely significant in terms of cost and operational complexity noone was saying that when these institutions were making their money on the back of women and children no amount of money could ever give us back the years lost between mother and babies. The amount you have put on recent redress scheme is a insult to both mother's and babies. How did you even come to these figures ?? You need to be chasing the religious orders involved to pay I would say at least half of not more compensation because they are just as guilty if not more (because they were doing their wrongs in sheep clothing) as the state.