

# MONTHLY UPDATE ON ISSUES RELATING TO MOTHER AND BABY HOMES - AUGUST 2017



An Roinn Leanaí  
agus Gnóthaí Óige  
Department of  
Children and Youth Affairs

## Expert Technical Group continues its work in relation to the Tuam site

The Expert Technical Group established by Minister Katherine Zappone is making progress in its work.

An extensive geophysical survey was undertaken on site at Tuam in July. This consisted of data collection through a variety of non-invasive techniques, over the course of 5 days. The team would like to thank local residents and the Gardaí at Tuam for their support and co-operation while this work was carried out. The results of the survey will be processed over the coming weeks and the information generated will be used to inform the exploration of options for the site.

Scientific issues relating to DNA analysis, and related issues of extraction and preservation of DNA, are among the key issues being considered by the Group. Government agencies continue to facilitate the Expert Technical Group. In July, the Group liaised with the Coroner for North Galway, An Garda Síochána, the National Monuments Services and Forensic Science Ireland. Internationally, advice has been sought and received from the International Committee for the Red Cross and other agencies have been consulted for specialist individual advice.

The first stage Report identifying the range of options is available [here](#)



**Tuam Mother and Baby Home**



**Bessborough Campus , Blackrock, Co. Cork**

## **Update on facilitated consultations process**

The facilitators' draft report of the meeting held in Dublin on the 30th June has been circulated to participants for comment and will be submitted to the Minister following a short period to allow for such responses to be made.

A second session is being planned so that more people will have an opportunity to have their say on issues of concern to them. The focus of this further facilitated session will mirror that of the first meeting and the design and planning of the event will take account of the feedback from the initial event where possible.

Arrangements for the next session will be finalised shortly and included in next month's update. If you know of any former residents who may be interested please advise them to refer to the mother and baby homes section of Department's website ([www.dcy.gov.ie](http://www.dcy.gov.ie)) for further information.

Travel expense claims for the first meeting are being finalised and participants are reminded to return any outstanding information to facilitate the completion of their claim. Please contact the Department's helpline at 01-6473200 should you have any queries in relation to a claim or if you did not receive a copy of the draft report.

## **Plans for the sale of Bessborough**

Recent media reports have suggested that the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary are considering plans to sell the Bessborough Campus in Blackrock, Cork. Indications are that the sale could take some years to complete although it will not include the cemetery and remembrance site areas. Concerns have been expressed that this sale could impact on the Commission's work and access to the cemetery and remembrance site areas in the longer term.

The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs has notified the Commission of the concerns raised with her Department in relation to this news. In terms of the Commission's work, it is important to clarify that a change in the ownership of this site, or any other location which formerly accommodated a mother and baby home, will not affect the powers available to the Commission to facilitate its investigations. The legal obligation on a person in possession of relevant information to preserve such information until the Commission concludes its work is also relevant. This requirement is intended to preserve evidence available in any format so that it can be considered by the Commission.

The Commission will decide on the investigations it deems necessary to address the important questions relating to the deaths and burial arrangements for former residents of this institution.

In addition, the broader concerns in relation to the impact of redevelopment, whether by its current owners or any new owners, could be considered in the context of the required planning process for any development. This process would need to engage with the heritage considerations of the site.



## United Nations Convention Against Torture (UNCAT)

Ireland's second report to UNCAT, a United Nations Expert Committee, was examined on the 26th and 27th of July in Geneva, Switzerland. The Irish delegation was led by David Stanton TD, Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality. The Irish delegation updated the Committee on a wide range of issues including matters relating to the establishment of the independent Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes. The Committee was briefed on the scope of the on-going investigation into what happened in these institutions.

The Committee was told that the investigation is a vital step on the path we have commenced to establish the truth of what happened in these institutions. The Irish delegation advised the Committee on the published interim reports and the measures being taken by the Government in response to the issues which have emerged from the investigations to date. The committee was further advised that the Commission is expected to complete its work in 2018.

The presence of a large representation from civil society groups, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and the State was indicative of Ireland's commitment to addressing human rights concerns.

The Committee will publish its response to Ireland's report in the coming weeks.

### Adoption (Amendment) Act 2016 passed into law

On Wednesday 19th July the Adoption (Amendment) Act 2016 was signed into law by President Michael D Higgins.

The Act, which passed through the Oireachtas earlier in July, provides for a number of changes in adoption practices.

Minister Zappone said "I welcome the signing of this important child-centred Bill into law by the President. I hope to be in a position to commence the provisions of this Bill as soon as possible. Adoption is a hugely significant event in the life of a child. As Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, I am conscious of the importance of providing for an adoption process that is fully inclusive of everyone involved, and where children's best interests are always at the heart of decisions involving them."

More information [here](#)

## Useful Contacts

### **Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes and certain related Matters**

[www.mbhcoi.ie](http://www.mbhcoi.ie)

Confidential Freephone (ROI only): 1800 80-66-88

Confidential Freephone Outside ROI: +353-1-6445088

Email: [info@mbhcoi.ie](mailto:info@mbhcoi.ie)

### **HSE information line**

There is a telephone line available for people seeking details of support available to those affected by these issues. Those seeking such information may telephone the HSE National Information Line;

Low Call Telephone 1850 24 1850

### **Mother and Baby Home Unit – Department of Children and Youth Affairs**

[www.dcy.gov.ie](http://www.dcy.gov.ie)

Phone: 01-6473200

Monday to Friday 9.30am to 5pm

Email: [motherandbabyhomes@dcya.gov.ie](mailto:motherandbabyhomes@dcya.gov.ie)

Address: Department of Children and Youth Affairs,  
43-49 Mespil Rd, Dublin 4. D04 YP52  
FREEPOST F5055

### **Galway County Council**

[www.galway.ie](http://www.galway.ie)

Phone: +353 (0)91 509000

Email: [customerservices@galwaycoco.ie](mailto:customerservices@galwaycoco.ie)

Address: Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway

Any person seeking adoption information and tracing information may wish to contact the following agencies:

### **TUSLA (the Child and Family Agency) -**

[www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

Phone: 01 7718500

Email: [info@tusla.ie](mailto:info@tusla.ie)

Address: Tusla – Child and Family Agency,  
The Brunel Building,  
Heuston South Quarter,  
Saint John's Road West,  
Dublin 8.

### **The Adoption Authority of Ireland -**

[www.aai.gov.ie](http://www.aai.gov.ie)

Phone: 353 1 2309 300

Address: The Adoption Authority of Ireland  
Shelbourne House  
Ballsbridge  
Dublin 4