

Consultation on the Options and  
Appropriate Courses of Action available  
to Government in relation to the site of  
the former Mother & Baby Home, Tuam,  
Co. Galway

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Acknowledgment</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Context and Background</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Options Outlined by Expert Technical Group (ETG)</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Advertisements for the Consultation process</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Methodology</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Written Submissions</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Preferences indicated from Submissions</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Qualitative Data</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Dialogue with Former Residents and Relatives of Former Residents of Tuam Mother and Baby Home and Supporters</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Local Residents</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>The Tuam Mother and Baby Home Graveyard Committee</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Public Meeting</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Silenced and Unheard Voices</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Appendix 1: Consultation on the Options and Appropriate Courses of Actions available to Government at the site of the former Mother & Baby Home, Tuam, Co. Galway.....	19
Appendix 2: Guidance Template for Submissions.....	19
Appendix 3: Detail of Records held by Galway County Council Archives.....	20
Appendix 4: Figures 1 and 2 Who made submissions?.....	22
Appendix 5: Figures 3 and 4 Preferences of ETG Options by Category.....	23
Appendix 6: Figure 5 Preferences of Former Residents of the Tuam Home.....	24
Appendix 7: Figure 6 Preferences of Relatives of Former Residents of the Tuam Mother and Baby Home.....	25
Appendix 8: Figure 7 Preferences of Local Residents.....	26
Appendix 9: Figure 8 Preferences of Public Submissions.....	27

## Summary

A significant number of infant remains were confirmed on the site of a previous Mother and Baby Home in Tuam, County Galway in March 2017. In order to respond to this, a multidisciplinary Expert Technical Group (ETG)<sup>1</sup> was commissioned to explore feasible options available to the government. Their report<sup>2</sup> was published on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017 by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Katherine Zappone.

Following this, Galway County Council was engaged to conduct a consultation process with stakeholders to include the public in response to the ETG's five noted options<sup>3</sup>. The council invited submissions from interested people and organisations and provided a number of opportunities for dialogue for stakeholders. As stakeholders themselves, Galway County Council engaged two independent facilitators to facilitate and report on all consultations and submissions. This independent report constitutes the final stage in this exercise.

The consultation process has been conducted using both qualitative and quantitative data. It begins with noting the quantitative data. However, the bulk of this report will focus on the in-depth discussions and dialogue that participants engaged in with the facilitators.

In all there were 799 written submissions sent in to Galway County Council. An analysis of the submissions found that there were two options that were clearly favoured by the majority.

- Memorialisation alone (Option One)
- Complete forensic excavation of the site with DNA analysis (Option Five).

All who were asked and a number of submissions, in tandem with the Expert Technical Group's commentary, suggested that memorialisation should occur whichever other course of action was implemented.

Preferences were highly related to the type of stakeholders. Local residents largely wished for memorialisation and non- disturbance of the remains. Former residents of the Tuam Mother and Baby Home along with relatives of former residents of the home overwhelmingly wished for full forensic excavation of the site along with DNA analysis. Preferences from members of the public were almost equally divided between memorialisation alone and some form of forensic excavation and DNA analysis, with the majority in the latter group favouring the most extensive intervention. All participants expressed care and concern for the dignity and respect of the deceased found there.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?Docid=4515&CatID=11&mn=&StartDate=1+January+2017>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/mother\\_and\\_baby\\_homes/20171212MBHExperttechGroupReport.pdf](https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/mother_and_baby_homes/20171212MBHExperttechGroupReport.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/mother\\_and\\_baby\\_homes/20171212TechnicalOptionsTuam.pdf](https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/mother_and_baby_homes/20171212TechnicalOptionsTuam.pdf)

Key Themes that emerged, in commentary on submission forms and during facilitated dialogue events, focused on issues around justice, communication, unheard and silent voices, the media influence, being misrepresented and unmet needs around information, files and support. The missing voices of the Bon Secours Congregation who had run the home were commented on by a variety of individuals.

The brief of this report is to convey the opinions of those who took part in consultation. Those who took part in the consultation process wished other factors to be noted apart from the five options which were presented by the technical group. Therefore, this paper will endeavour to capture the core issues, followed by an analysis of the findings.

## Acknowledgment

We wish to express our gratitude and sincere thanks to all those who took part in the consultation processes for your honest and open contributions and for giving of your time.

Catherine O'Connell and Barbara Walshe

## Context and Background

The Expert Technical Report (ETG)<sup>4</sup> on the Tuam Site<sup>5</sup> was published by the Minister of Children and Youth Affairs, Dr Katherine Zappone in December 2017.

The report was commissioned to give a fuller understanding of the options that might be available following the discovery of significant quantities of infant remains in subsurface chambers on the site of an historic sewage system at the former Mother and Baby Home in Tuam, County Galway. The report was also asked to ensure that the outcomes be realistic and attainable in respect of each course of action and that they could be understood by the public.

A multi-disciplinary team undertook and completed the report which incorporated a range of expertise in Forensic Archaeology, Osteoarchaeology, Forensic anthropology, Forensic science and coronial expertise.

The report identified five possible options for managing the site in response to the discovery of the infant remains. It also drew on research and best practice in transitional justice processes worldwide. The report acknowledged that the situation at the Tuam site was both unprecedented and complex from a technical perspective.

It draws on transitional justice processes which seek to exercise justice and provide a measure of repair in the wake of suffering for victims. It rests on the assumption that a society needs to confront past abuses in order to come to terms with its past.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?Docid=4515&CatID=11&mn=&StartDate=1+January+2017>

<sup>5</sup> The term site refers to an area to the rear of the houses in the Dublin Road Housing estate. It incorporates the playground, the access roads, the memorial garden and the car park.

It focuses where possible on the repairing of relationships. This often involves either some or all of the following: access to government records; a public apology; public memorials; reburial of victims; reparation and compensation; amnesty and testimonials and literary and historical redress where necessary.

The Tuam Site refers to the area to the rear of the houses on the Dublin Road Estate. It incorporates the playground, the access roads, the memorial garden and the car park, a total of 0.4 hectares. The surrounding area has had a painful past. The Tuam Workhouse was located here in 1840 to deal with the poverty, death and famine that followed. In the early years of the twentieth century, it became a British Military Barracks until the foundation of the Irish State. The The Mother and Baby Home was established there in 1925. After the Mother and Baby Home closed in 1961, the site was unoccupied until the early seventies when housing was built by Galway Council. A plaque commemorating men killed as a result of the Civil War also exists at the site.

As an owner and stakeholder in the site, Galway County Council was asked by the Minister to facilitate an independent structured consultation process with all concerned with the Tuam site. While there was some criticism of the 'tick box' nature of the questions on the public consultation form, there were no constraints on other issues that were of concern to participants.

It is intended that the outcome of the facilitated independent consultation will inform an inter-departmental group, led by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to consider and propose a course of action for consideration by the government going forward.

### Options Outlined by Expert Technical Group (ETG)

Five options were outlined by the ETG for consideration. (Memorialisation is seen as an integral part of any or all of the options outlined).

1. Memorialisation No further investigative work would be required and the site would be returned to being managed as a memorial.
2. Exhume and recover the known human remains interred in the chambered structure identified to date and reinter elsewhere.
3. Forensic excavation and recovery of known human remains: complete forensic archaeological excavation, recovery and analysis of human remains from the chambers identified to date.
4. Forensic excavation and recovery, and further evaluation/excavation of other areas of potential burial/ interest. Complete forensic excavation and recovery of all human remains in memorial garden and any other targeted area, following geophysical survey, assessment of witness statements, historical records, etc.
5. Forensic excavation of total available area. Full forensic and archaeological excavation of all available ground formerly occupied by the Mother & Baby Home which constitutes a total of 0.4 hectares, comprising memorial garden, playground, car park etc. (This excludes private built areas; houses and gardens, etc., subsequently built on the former site).

## Advertisements for the Consultation process

### **Public Notices in the Print Media: (See Appendix 1)**

Irish Times, Irish Independent and Irish Examiner of Wednesday, 31st January 2018

Tuam Herald of the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018

Connacht/City Tribune and Galway Advertiser of the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2018

The Irish Post and The Irish World (UK) of the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2018

Sunday Independent of Sunday, 25th February 2018

The Tuam Herald of the 28th February

Connacht/City Tribune & Galway Advertiser of the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018.

Irish Times, Irish Examiner and Irish Independent of Saturday, 10th March 2018.

### **Monthly Update on Issues relating to the Mother & Baby Homes – February 2018.**

The Department of Children & Youth Affairs included notice of the consultation process in the February 2018 Monthly Update on Issues relating to the Mother & Baby Homes published on the Department website.

### **Mother & Baby Homes Commission of Investigation**

The Mother & Baby Homes Commission of Investigation facilitated the issuing of notice of the consultation process to those in communication with the Commission.

It was also advertised through a range of networks which included

<http://www.tuamhomesurvivors.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/tuambabiesfamilygroup/> and associated networks.

### **Media**

During the consultation process both local, national and international media reported on the consultation process with statements being issued in response to queries

## Methodology

Two formats for consultation were used. The first was an opportunity to receive information and engage in dialogue on issues of concern. There was also an opportunity to make a submission in writing to Galway County Council.

A template for submissions which outlined the five options proposed by the Expert Technical Group and a comment box for further issues that respondents might also wish to outline was made available at [www.galway.ie/TuamConsultation](http://www.galway.ie/TuamConsultation). Submissions were also invited by email to [TuamConsultation@galwaycoco.ie](mailto:TuamConsultation@galwaycoco.ie) or by post. The written submission entailed filling in a form where individuals are asked to note their name, relationship to the subject matter (local resident, relative of former resident of Mother and Baby Home, member of the public, ex resident of the former Mother and Baby Home), their choice of option and any other comment they would like to make. (See Appendix 2).

A facilitated consultation process occurred with:

- a. Former residents of the Tuam Mother and Baby Home, their relatives, members of the Tuam Home Survivors Network and other supporters (closed session).
- b. A representative of the Tuam Babies Family Group (closed session).
- c. Members of the public (open session).
- d. Local residents surrounding the site (closed session).
- e. Members of the Mother and Baby Home Graveyard Committee (closed session).
- f. A number of individual meetings and telephone conversations with former residents of the Tuam and other Mother and Baby Homes and local residents who were unable to participate at the original meetings.

The meetings were guided by principles of restorative practice which focuses on ensuring all voices are heard and untold stories are listened to. From the outset it was made clear to each group that this was the participant's forum in which they should feel free to discuss their views and whatever issues they wished to air as well as engage specifically with the five options proposed by the Expert Technical Group. Participants were reassured that the only time constraints on the consultations would be those imposed by the participants themselves.

- The ground rules were simple and were aided by the initial use of a talking stone which helped each person to listen and to speak only when holding the talking stone. This enabled the less articulate to be heard. The facilitators asked pertinent questions and enabled an exchange of views and dialogue on the issues that emerged. Notes were taken to ensure all viewpoints would be tracked.
- Observance of the Chatham House Rule was agreed which emphasised the need to give each person the opportunity to talk in a safe space knowing that their words will not be attributed to them outside of the space.

- Participants were asked to initially outline their expectations and hopes for the consultation using the talking stone. A presentation from the Expert Technical Group followed with time for questions, clarifications, answers and facilitated dialogue. Director of Services, Mr Michael Owens, Galway County Council, attended all large group sessions and answered questions which people had regarding Galway County Council's role in the Tuam Site and the Tuam Mother and Baby Home.
- When all information had been given, the talking stone was used to give each person an opportunity to express their views on issues of concern to them and preferences on the options outlined.
- Members of the expert technical group attended four of the consultations, made a presentation on the options, the potential, complexities and the challenges and took time to answer questions and address issues of interest to the participants.

## Written Submissions

There were 799 written submissions sent into Galway County Council as a result of the advertising done and as a result of a large level of media interest in the topic. Most submissions were from Ireland with examples from all around the country. Sixty-three international submissions were sent from the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, Canada and the United States. A large number of submissions were from the public and many of these took time to comment along with noting their views on the options put forward by the Expert Technical Group.

Of the 799 written submissions made, the largest group 568 (71%) were from members of the public. 131 submissions were made by local residents whose homes surround the site of the Tuam Mother and Baby Home.

78 submissions were made by relatives of former residents of the Tuam Mother and Baby Home and 19 of those who made written submissions were former residents of the Mother and Baby Home in Tuam. See Appendix 4 Figures 1 & 2.

Two submissions were made by groups: One, made on behalf of the Tuam Babies Family Group advocated for option five – complete forensic excavation of the site. This submission also commented on alternative methods of DNA analysis other than those proposed by the Expert Technical Group. Another submission was made on behalf of the Tuam Mother and Baby Graveyard Group expressing a preference for memorialisation alone. A third submission was made by an individual who produced a legal argument for the exhumation and forensic analysis and DNA testing of the remains on the grounds of a coroner's obligation to ascertain cause of death.



## Preferences indicated from Submissions

Preferences were strongly divided according to stakeholder type with the biggest divergence in opinion being between former residents & relatives of former residents of the Tuam Mother and Baby Home and Local Residents whose homes surround the site. See Appendix 5 Figures 3 & 4.

Option One (Memorialisation) and Option Five (Forensic Excavation of Total Area) were the most sought after options proposed by the Expert Technical Group. Memorialisation as a preference accounted for 49% of all of the submissions whereas Forensic Action and DNA Analysis (options 3-5) accounted for 48% of all the preferences. Exhumation alone without any form of forensic analysis as an option accounted for less than 1% of all the submissions.

### Former Residents of Tuam Mother and Baby Home

68% of former residents expressed a wish for forensic excavation and DNA analysis. 5% preferred exhumation and burial. 26% of former residents opted for memorialisation. Three out of the five persons who made this choice were also local residents along with being former residents of the Tuam home. See Appendix 6 Figure 5.

### Relatives of Former Residents of Tuam Mother and Baby Home

93% of relatives of former residents wished for forensic excavation and DNA analysis. 89% preferred the most extensive option of forensic analysis of the whole area. Only 1% of relatives of former residents sought the option of memorialisation alone. See Appendix 7 Figure 6.

### Local Residents

87% of local residents who expressed a written preference sought the option of memorialisation alone (option 1). 11% preferred some form of forensic excavation from and DNA analysis that is Options 3-5. See Appendix 8 Figure 7.

### Public Submissions

As noted earlier, the largest number (568) of written submissions were from this category. 50% of this group expressed preferences for forensic excavation of the Tuam Site with DNA analysis where possible. 43% of these wanted the most extensive forensic excavation possible as identified by the ETG. 48% of this group expressed a wish for memorialisation alone. 213 of the 272 people who wished for this option came from the Tuam area. See Appendix 9 Figure 8.

## Qualitative Data

Qualitative data includes both consultation sessions and where relevant, significant commentary noted in written submissions. A number of meetings were held with significant stakeholders as part of this consultation process. The purpose of engaging in this way was to give people the space and time to discuss what mattered to them, for them to receive information from the Expert Technical Group and Galway County Council, and for them to be able to ask questions and receive answers from ETG.

Notwithstanding stakeholders' preferences which were very different according to group, an overwhelming finding from these dialogue sessions was that everyone had enormous concern and care for the infants that were buried in the site in question.

Two meetings were held with former residents, relatives of former residents of the Tuam Mother and Baby Home and some supporters of them. Large group meetings were held with local residents living around the Tuam Site and with members of the public. A meeting was held with members of the Tuam Mother and Baby Home Graveyard Committee. A number of individual consultations with former residents and relatives were held.

## Dialogue with Former Residents and Relatives of Former Residents of Tuam Mother and Baby Home and Supporters

The first meeting was on the 5<sup>th</sup> March in Dublin with a second on the 8<sup>th</sup> March in Tuam. At the first meeting, a representative of Tuam Babies Family Group emphasised a number of core issues to be considered. The representative queried the ETG's DNA methodology and suggested that other technologies for DNA testing could overcome some of the challenges outlined in the ETG report.

A full excavation of the Tuam Site with forensic analysis was seen as a right by the group rather than something to be consulted about. The view was also expressed that only those with relatives considered to be buried at the Tuam site should be consulted and have a say on what happens at the site. Former residents, it was felt had other needs like housing, health or counselling support and this should not to be confused with those who potentially had a relative buried there.

Twenty-nine people attended the dialogue and consultation process on 8<sup>th</sup> March and included members of the Tuam Home Survivors Network and other former residents and relatives of the Tuam and other homes. In this meeting there was no distinction made between the rights of former residents and relatives of those who may be buried in the Tuam Site to engage in the consultation process. There was a concern and objections raised about the method of consultation, seen as a vote. The right of the public and others to be engaged in the decision making process was questioned.

The following highlights some of the major concerns of those present.

## Need for Information on Files and Records

The first issue that emerged in the consultation with the Tuam Home Survivors Network and others was lack of access and information to their files and personal histories of themselves and family members who had been in the Tuam Home, most of whom are now deceased. Other issues raised were a lack of information on potential overseas adoptions of family members, information on family members who were 'boarded out', their treatment and the financial arrangements made with those they resided with.

Frustration and confusion was expressed regarding the number of agencies who, they said, had personal information about themselves and their families. There was a lack of clarity as to whether their information lay with Galway County Council, the Bon Secour Congregation, the Health Services Executive, Tusla or the Mother and Baby Home Commission of Investigation.

Many felt that confidentiality needed to be waived in the face of people finding out what they could about their families. One participant stated, "*We need all agencies with access to our files or information about our past to sit together and help us to find our own history and that of our relatives*".

Mr Michael Owens, Director of Services, Galway Council stated that there were no individual case files for residents in the possession of Galway County Council. However, some uncollated information does exist in sets of minutes, managers' orders and other records relating to the Tuam Mother and Baby Home from that time. See Appendix 3 for further information.

## Need for Information on Relatives

Participants expressed passionately and with urgency the importance of knowing where their relatives are, having remains identified and their loved ones being buried respectfully. For some, being buried with 'one's own people' was seen as important in dealing with what happened. For others, knowing they may not be able to bury the complete remains of a family member, due to co-mingling of remains, the age of remains and the possible effects of DNA analysis, was not seen as a deterrent in their quest to know where their relative might be.

For some others, hearing about the challenges in proceeding with forensic excavation and possible DNA analysis, there was a sadness in the recognition that some people may not find loved ones, despite the best efforts of everyone. However, for all involved, there was an overwhelming urgency to start work on finding out where the deceased are and who they are. When asked "*what if you don't manage to find out?*"... one reply was "*I need them to start now; I've been waiting since 1982*".

The need for information about possible adoptions of family members was raised as an issue for relatives of former residents, with many raising their concerns that they lived with a lack of knowledge as to whether their relatives might be alive 'somewhere abroad' or buried at the Tuam Site.

A small number of submissions, some from abroad, used the submission form to request support in finding a relative connected to the Tuam Home.

There was a need expressed to talk to the Bon Secour Congregation who ran the home. Relatives of former residents were anxious to glean any information at all about what happened then and in particular what happened to their relatives.

It was stressed that money should not be the deciding factor in what happens at the Tuam Site. There were some calls for the Bon Secour Congregation along with the State to pay for the forensic excavation of the Tuam Site.

For all those present there was a sense that there was too much ambiguity now around the Tuam Site, regarding who died there, who was buried there, who might have been adopted illegally or not. All those present were adamant that Option Five which entailed a full forensic and archaeological excavation of the total available area with DNA analysis was required.

## Need for Support

A large number of the participants at this meeting expressed disappointment that there had been such little support and care for former residents of the home and their relatives. People spoke of needs for housing, health care, pension requirements and counselling highlighting the needs of older former residents.

## Need for Acknowledgment, Apology and Respect

Participants at this meeting expressed anger and pain at the lack of acknowledgment and respect for former residents and their relatives. One noted that a year ago, they thought they were listened to but that there had been no follow up. The state was seen as neglectful.

The Bon Secour Congregation was seen to be hiding behind a public relations company and a wish for them to communicate in an authentic way with people was expressed. While some were critical of the nuns, others were more aware of the time in Irish history where there was very little support for people in need.

One survivor reflected that *"If they didn't take people in who was going to look after people"*? Another noted that people were evicted from their homes with nowhere to go. It was not a kind country to be pregnant and single in. Someone spoke about the trauma of being 'boarded out' after spending time in the home. When asked if he would like to meet

with a member of the congregation, he said *“I would. .... I’d ask them why they did what they did, I’d like an apology, I’m not looking for any money”*.

A former resident of the Tuam Mother and Baby Home wanted urgent action. *“Why haven’t the nuns come forward? We don’t have the health to wait. I want a full apology to be read out over my mothers grave... to acknowledge that THEY did wrong.... not that she did wrong”*.

A need for respect to be paid to the deceased was expressed. It was stated that when they left Tuam, the nuns exhumed members of their congregation and buried them elsewhere while not ensuring that the same level of care and respect was afforded to the Tuam Home children.

Therefore, the need to know who the dead are and to *“give them their names”* and bury them was seen as important. There was discussion about where one would bury those that did not have relations or could not be identified by anyone.

A discussion ensued with opinion divided on whether they should be buried in consecrated ground or not.

## Local Residents

The facilitators had two meetings with local residents who live around the Tuam Site and who are directly impacted by events to do with the Tuam Site, past and present. There was confusion about the time and who would be present at the first meeting so a second meeting was organised to ensure that anyone who wished to attend could. The facilitators also had a meeting with the Tuam Mother and Baby Home Graveyard Committee, many of whom also live locally. A lot of the sentiments and thoughts below are shared across these two groups.

Local residents stated that this site was recognised as a burial ground for children since the nineteen seventies. Residents had worked together on the newly built estate to create a garden for the children buried there. Some residents expressed frustration and incredulity that this 'Children's Graveyard' was then presented by the media as 'a discovery'.

The graveyard was looked after by the residents, their children and now their grandchildren. Residents emphasised that it was always treated respectfully and known as 'a sacred space'. When they were children they were warned to respect the 'Children's' Graveyard' and they would not allow their own children to play in there.

One, now deceased, local resident became the main caretaker of his own volition and insisted on an 'easy to maintain' garden with grass, rosebushes, plants and a grotto. Residents said it saddens them so much to see the destruction of the garden and the disrespect to the children buried there. They believe they are blamed for the Tuam Site being the way it is now and that their work and efforts to care for and respect the deceased has been lost and unheard. They said "*we minded them for the last forty years*". They want to know when they can look after it again.

Local residents also talked about the media intrusion into their lives. One resident stated that, "*I feel intimidated living here now, there are continuous requests for interviews and cameras in your face and two weeks ago a drone flew overhead the site and I had to call the guards*". A resident spoke of the '*gruesome*' type of tourists who arrive at the site now and that you cannot let the children play in the playground as "*people are driving through*" and "*you don't know who is coming in*".

Local residents stated that they felt very disrespected and isolated by the lack of information before the start and finish of the most recent excavation. They received no notice. All residents stated if further excavations were to be done that it would be crucially important to them that they be informed on the nature and extent of the excavation and the planned time frame from start to finish and any changes to this that might have an impact on them.

Some local residents believe that despite the consultation process, a decision was already made to proceed with further excavation. In the light of the Expert Technical Group's presentation and ensuing discussion, one local resident said "*that's it*", "*once you see 'Best Practice' up there, they will have no choice but to go ahead*".

Some people spoke of how difficult it must be for those who believed they may have relatives buried in this graveyard and that they could understand the drive to try and find them whatever way they could. A resident said *“If I thought that some good would come of it and people would find their relatives, I would be in favour of it but I don’t believe anything like that will be found”*.

Some people were torn between acknowledging the needs of relatives searching for loved ones and a belief that this enormous disruption to them and the children’s graveyard would not meet anyone’s needs.

*“If these babies are removed there will be grief”* a local resident said. Residents said that the children have a place in their hearts. They are worried about what will happen to the remains when removed. They wonder if they will be left in a lab like the famine remains that were found in recent years. *“Why were they (famine remains) not interred somewhere? “Is that the mentality that’s going to be dealing with the babies”?*

Local residents stated that they believe that this graveyard is on consecrated ground. They said that masses were said there every year. Most local residents consulted said that they were in favour of leaving the site as a memorial to the children buried there (Option 1). They wish for the garden to be restored and that a memorial with the names of the children be installed to commemorate their lives.

One resident expressed a view that this historic site could be developed into an Interpretive centre to commemorate the Children, The Mother and Baby Home, the Workhouse, the Famine Victims and the Civil War Executions which all took place on this site, all central parts of Irish history.

## The Tuam Mother and Baby Home Graveyard Committee

The Mother and Baby Home Graveyard Committee was set up in 2013 as a direct response to the research that published the names of 796<sup>6</sup> children who died in the Tuam Mother and Baby Home between 1925 and 1961. The group wished to honour the name of each child who died in the home so they fundraised to pay for a memorial plaque and to pay for the death certificates obtained as part of the research. They also organised a Mass and a memorial service at the Graveyard.

Participants of both the local residents meeting and the M&B Graveyard Committee questioned whether the number of dead identified by death certificate from the home between 1925 and 1961 (796) were all buried at the site or not. They said that some families may have taken the deceased to be buried in family plots in the area. They also thought that possible ‘clandestine’ adoptions may also mean a reduction in that number. Another resident pointed out that at that time death certificates were not issued for stillbirths so along with the possibility of less than 796 remains being found, there also could be a higher number if stillbirths were to be identified.

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<sup>6</sup> In 2014, local historian and researcher Catherine Corless researched and published the names of 796 children who were registered as having died in St Mary’s Mother and Baby Home (1925-1961).

## Public Meeting

This section describes the consultation that took place with thirteen members of the public on the 8<sup>th</sup> March in Tuam and it also includes comments from members of the public's written submissions.

Many of the opinions and issues expressed at this meeting were mirrored in the earlier dialogues with former residents and relatives of former residents of the home and also in the meetings with local residents. This facilitated conversation was the first time that a survivor from a residential home, members of the public and residents of the wider Tuam area sat together and had a discussion on the situation and the issues and options arising.

There were strongly held views from participants and people listened respectfully to each other. A survivor of another home described Tuam as 'ground zero' and expressed the view that what happened at Tuam would inform what happened in other homes around the country. He felt that a full excavation of the site was necessary and expressed the view that even if it benefited just one person it should be done. This view was also reflected in some of the submissions received who stated that *"The matter is bigger than Tuam, it should not be decided in Tuam, it is a national issue"*.

A participant stressed that, *"Irrespective of the cost, the focus need to be on uncovering the full extent of the situation in Tuam and allowing an understanding of the situation with a fact based approach. Should the approach be the minimum (memorialisation) it runs the risk of an unending call to find justice for those families involved (and those unsure of their status) and inevitably will lead to another costly review into the process"*.

Another said, *"There is a need to acknowledge the past not suppress it, we need to learn from it"* and that *"We will be judged by what we do now"*.

Following the presentation by the ETG, a number expressed the view that they understood the issues more fully for the first time and felt that people would need time to digest the information. A few participants expressed the view that they saw things from both sides, saying that they understood the resident's wishes to remember the children as they had always done, while understanding how people might want to find their relatives and felt that they had no right to deprive people of the hope of finding their loved ones. Some participants stressed the challenges of matching DNA of remains with living relatives.

Another stated that he found the events of the last number of days stressful and confusing and *"while I don't believe that you can replay the events of history, I do believe we need to record history correctly"*.

The majority of participants either favoured memorialisation alone or some form of forensic excavation.

Participants noted again the silence in Tuam surrounding this issue and the need to be sensitive to those who may not wish to revisit a very painful and often humiliating time in their lives.



## Silenced and Unheard Voices

One of the most important themes that was expressed across the groups that engaged in dialogue was about Voice. All groups felt unheard. Former residents and relatives of former residents, in particular, said that nobody was listening. *“We had no say, we had no voice. A year ago the minister sat here with us and we thought, at last, we’re being listened to...Since then... nothing”*.

Local residents expressed fear about speaking for fear of being misinterpreted or seen in a bad light. They believe they would be seen as heartless or selfish. *“We’re afraid to say anything. Afraid of the backlash.... Why didn’t you keep your mouth shut...? I’ve a relative who’s a survivor”*.

A local resident who had a relative that died in the home and was on the list of the deceased was shocked to see the name of the deceased in the papers. *“nobody asked our permission, we should have been asked”*.

Other participants spoke of the silent people who may wish to leave the past in the past, who may have had other lives after they spent time in the home and who may not want anyone to know about it. People spoke of the shame that was still attached to being involved with the Mother and Baby Home.

People from the local residents meeting and the Mother and Baby Home Graveyard Committee meeting spoke about the Bon Secour Congregation and how they filled a need at that time when society was a lot harsher than it is today. They believe that they are now taking all the blame.

*“There were families that put them in there.... unmarried mothers who were sent in there...families didn’t want to know”*.

The voices of the Bon Secour Congregation were absent from this consultation. When invited to take part they declined the invitation on the grounds that;

*“the decisions regarding the treatment of the remains on the site in Tuam should be made by the former residents of the home and their relatives and friends and that it would be inappropriate for the Congregation to influence it in any way”*.

## Conclusion

Regardless of the decisions to be taken about the Tuam Site, the voices we heard during the meetings and in the submissions were heartfelt, open, honest, angry, courageous, fearful and hurt.

The voices reflected some of the shame and humiliation experienced from that time and the ensuing silence that followed from that.

It is beyond the scope of this report to make recommendations, however we have noted that relationships have become fractured and opinions polarised on this issue as each constituency seeks to advocate for its own outcome. It was very clear that all those engaged in the consultations cared about the children buried at the site albeit from different perspectives.

Participants expressed the need for justice, truth and accountability and this was consistent throughout the dialogues. Whatever decision is taken regarding the Tuam Site, effective timely communication and liaison between all the relevant parties is crucial to create the conditions for a more restorative and less contentious outcome. This includes Galway County Council, the agencies, (Tusla, HSE, and Commission for the Investigation for the Mother and Baby Homes) the State, the former residents and relatives of the Tuam Home, the local residents and the Bon Secour Congregation.

The stories that we have heard are part of our collective history. They can be uncomfortable to hear, especially for those who have had a part to play such as the State and the Bon Secour Congregation. We have not heard from The Bon Secour Congregation, of what was asked of them and why they acted as they did; as yet an untold story.

In order to address our collective history, any worthwhile response needs to be thoughtful, mindful, thorough and respectful to all concerned.

## Appendix 1: Consultation on the Options and Appropriate Courses of Actions available to Government at the site of the former Mother & Baby Home, Tuam, Co. Galway

### **Consultation on the Options and Appropriate Courses of Actions available to Government at the site of the former Mother & Baby Home, Tuam, Co. Galway**

In March 2017, the Mother and Baby Home Commission of Investigation released a statement conveying the discovery of infant remains, in significant quantities, in subsurface chambers on the site of the former Mother and Baby Home, Tuam, Co. Galway.

In June 2017, the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs commissioned an Expert Technical Group to outline to Government what options are available to provide a response in the context of internationally accepted best practice in such cases. The Expert Technical Group identified five options for responding to the discovery of infant remains at the site.

Galway County Council at the request of the Department of Children & Youth Affairs and on behalf of the Inter-Departmental Group is facilitating an independent consultation process on the five options. The Inter-Departmental Group, which has an oversight role for the project, will then propose a course of action for consideration by the Government.

**Have Your Say:** The report of the Expert Technical Group and the template for submissions is available on [www.galway.ie/TuamConsultation](http://www.galway.ie/TuamConsultation)

Submissions should be made by email to [TuamConsultation@galwaycoco.ie](mailto:TuamConsultation@galwaycoco.ie) or by post to

**Tuam Consultation, C/O Galway County Council, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway, H91 H6KX**

If you would like a paper copy of the report of the Expert Technical Group and the template for submissions sent to you, please avail of the postal or email address above or telephone +353 (0)91 509561.

The process will include independently facilitated consultation events to be held in Dublin and Tuam during the period 5<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018. To register to attend a consultation event, please email [TuamConsultation@galwaycoco.ie](mailto:TuamConsultation@galwaycoco.ie) or telephone +353 (0)91 509561 by **Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018** with your contact details and preferred location.

**Closing Date for Submissions: 4 pm on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2018.**

Please email [TuamConsultation@galwaycoco.ie](mailto:TuamConsultation@galwaycoco.ie) or telephone +353 (0)91 509561 if you have any queries in regard to this public consultation.

#### **Freedom of Information Act 2014**

Responses to this consultation are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2014. If you consider any information you provide to contain confidential or personal information, please indicate so in your submission.

## Appendix 2: Guidance Template for Submissions

[www.galway.ie/en/media/Guidance Template for Submissions.pdf](http://www.galway.ie/en/media/Guidance%20Template%20for%20Submissions.pdf)

## Appendix 3: Detail of Records held by Galway County Council Archives

**Detail of records held by Galway County Council Archives are available on the online catalogue at <http://gccapps.galwaycoco.ie/archives/ais5/>.**

To the best of its knowledge below is a summary of items held by Galway County Council that may include references to the residents of the Tuam Mother & Baby Home.

No individual case files for residents, if indeed they ever existed, are now in the possession of Galway County Council. Where any such reference appears it is generally sporadic in sets of minutes or Manager's Orders.

Galway County Council has always and will continue to assist where possible (within the constraints of limited resources) upon request from individuals for details pertaining to their own personal information held in the records, while being cognizant of Data Protection obligations to other data subjects referenced in them.

Access to the records referred to as open is by prior appointment with Galway County Council's archivist. Email [archivist@galwaycoco.ie](mailto:archivist@galwaycoco.ie)

### **County Galway Board of Health & Public Assistance GC5/:**

- Minutes: Proceedings of meetings, recording attendance, correspondence, reports from various Officers, such as the Medical, Tuberculosis and Sanitary Officers, County Dentist, Auditor, and business transacted, the agenda is also often included. May include sporadic reference to individuals associated with Home. 1922 – 1941. Closed
- Half Yearly Register of Persons admitted into & discharged from Children's Home or any Extern Institution, or liable for repayment of Home Assistance, comprising persons who, or on whose behalf, the persons liable by law to maintain them, have claimed to pay the costs of their maintenance therein, relating to the cost of keeping individuals in an institution or receiving home assistance for their maintenance, 1930-1949 (GC5/21). Closed
- Various financial records such as abstracts; include revenue and expenditure details relating to the Board's various activities, (GC5/22-25, /28-30)<sup>7</sup>. Open access.
- Officer's Returns (GC5/31-32), providing details on employees (staff), submitted by the Board of Health to the Local Government Department, generally signed and dated by the Secretary, 1926-1940. Open.

### **Board of Health & Public Assistance, County Galway Hospital & Dispensaries Committee collection (GC6/):**

- Minutes, recording details of attendance and proceedings, relating to the management of the central hospital, dispensary and nursing services. The management primarily related to staffing issues, such as the payment of salaries and expenses, the control and discipline of staff, the appointment of nurses and dispensary doctors, the maintenance of its three ambulances and a hearse, and also the acceptance of tenders

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<sup>7</sup> GC5/26-27, Home Assistance Application & Report Books, circa 1922-1926. Relate to Home Assistance, and /31 is an Outdoor Relief List, 1922-1931: Closed. Not likely to be pertinent.

for goods and supplies, 1922-42. Sporadic reference to unmarried mothers and the putative fathers. Closed.

- Abstract of accounts; revenue and expenditure details, GC6/24<sup>8</sup> (1922-42). Open.

#### **Galway County Council records:**

- Manager's Orders<sup>9</sup>, (GC/CSO2/). Include details of admissions/discharge from the Home, & boarded out children, 1942-ongoing. Closed.
- Estimate of Expenses (GC/F/1) 1905 - 1967, with gaps. ] Open access.
- Abstract of Accounts (GC/F/2), 1920 - 1975 ] Do not include
- General Ledgers, (GC/F/3), 1947 - 1987 ] personal information.

The records relate to all aspects of the Council's activities.

#### **Tuam Board of Guardians**

Minutes recording details of attendance and proceedings of weekly meetings relating to the maintenance, administration and financing of the workhouse, distribution of out-door relief, and the care of workhouse inmates relating to their accommodation and employment, and to medical, pastoral, educational, and dietary needs. (GPL5/) 1839 – 1926, with gaps. Includes reference to the establishment of the Home in Tuam. Available online at [www.galway.ie/digitalarchives](http://www.galway.ie/digitalarchives).

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<sup>8</sup> A Register of Patients admitted and Discharged from the Hospital, GC6/23 (1930-32). Closed. Not likely to be pertinent.

<sup>9</sup> County Management Act, 1940, states: --(1) Every act or thing done or decision taken by a county manager for the council of his county or an elective body which, if done or taken by such council or elective body would be required by law (other than this Act) to be done or taken by resolution of such council or elective body, shall be done or taken by such county manager by an order in writing signed by him and containing a statement of the time at which it was so signed.

Appendix 4: Figures 1 and 2 Who made submissions?

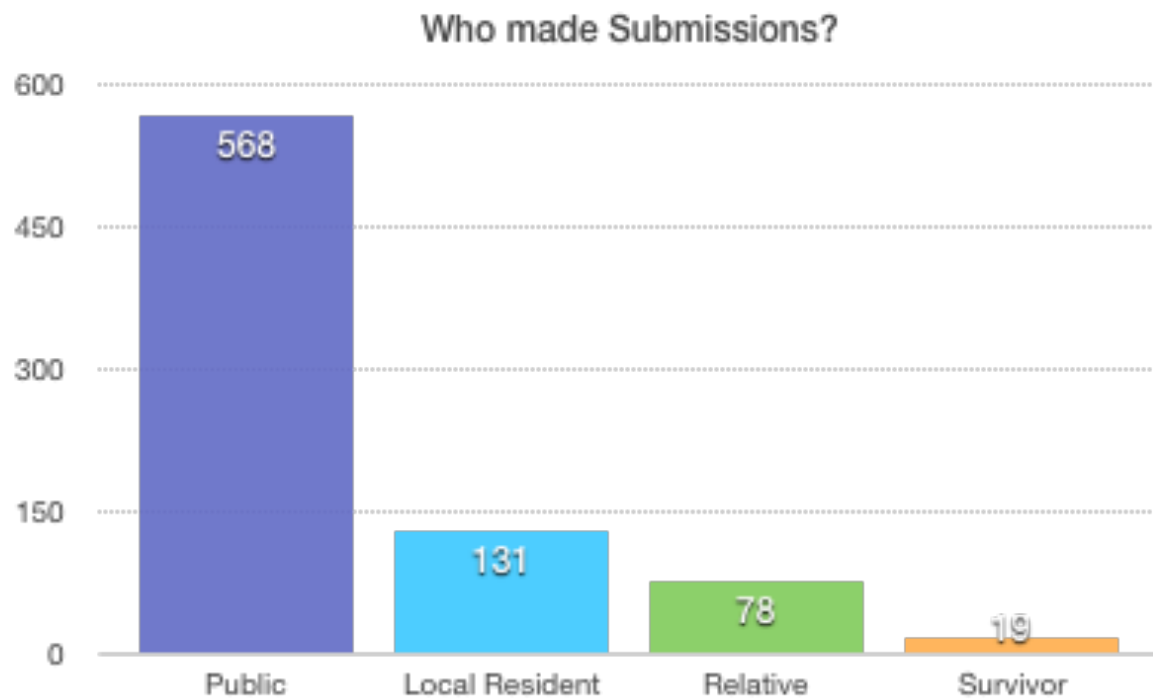


Figure 1. Number of written Submissions

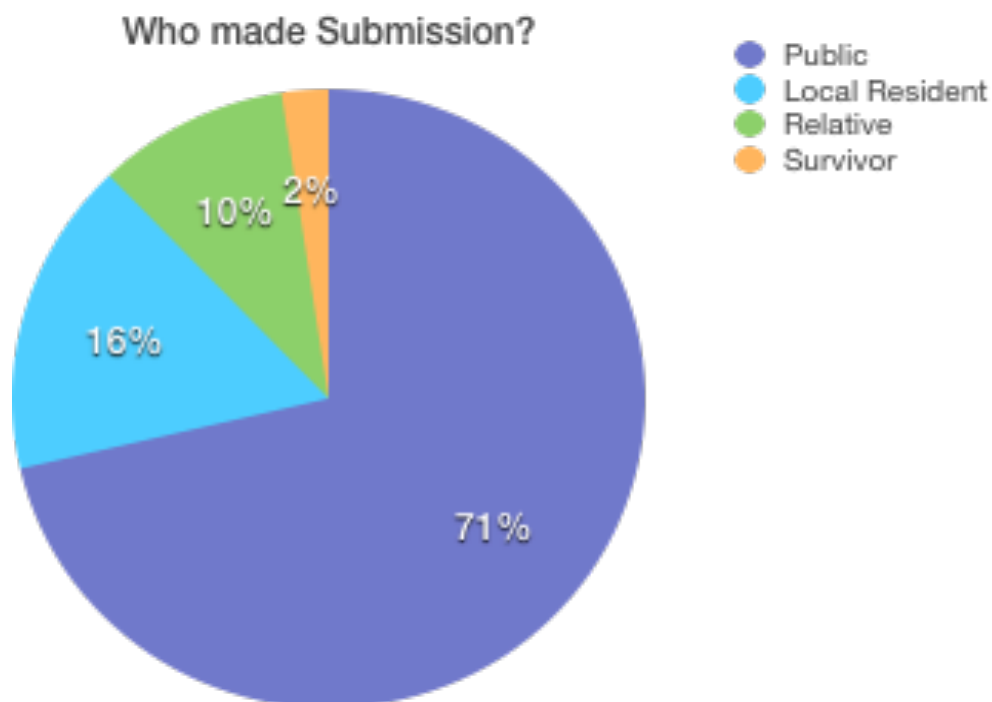


Figure 2. Percentage of submissions by category

## Appendix 5: Figures 3 and 4 Preferences of ETG Options by Category

	Public	Local Residents	Former Residents of Home	Relatives of former residents of home	Unknown	Total
Total Submissions	568	131	19	78	3	799
Memorialisation	272	114	5	1	0	392
Exhumation and Burial	4	1	1	1	0	7
Forensic Excavation of known Area	13	5	0	1	0	19
Expanded Forensic Excavation	28	2	1	2	0	33
Forensic Excavation of Total Area	242	6	12	68	0	328
None of the Above	9	3	0	3	3	20

Figure 3: Preferences by Category

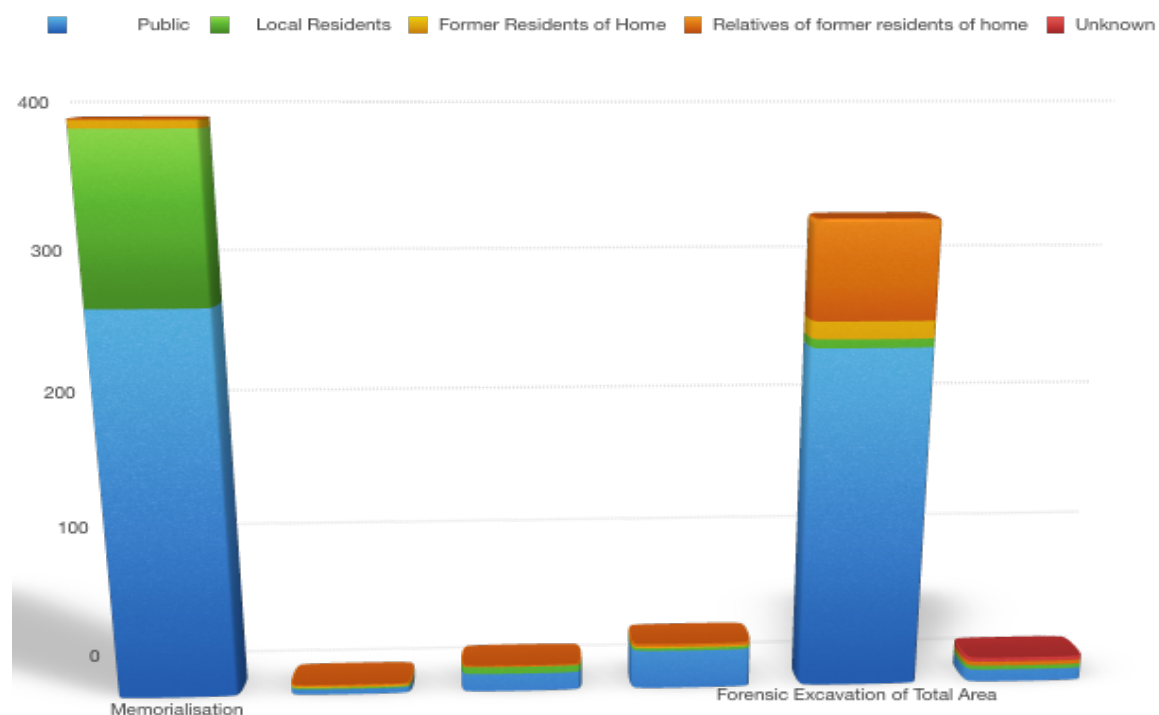
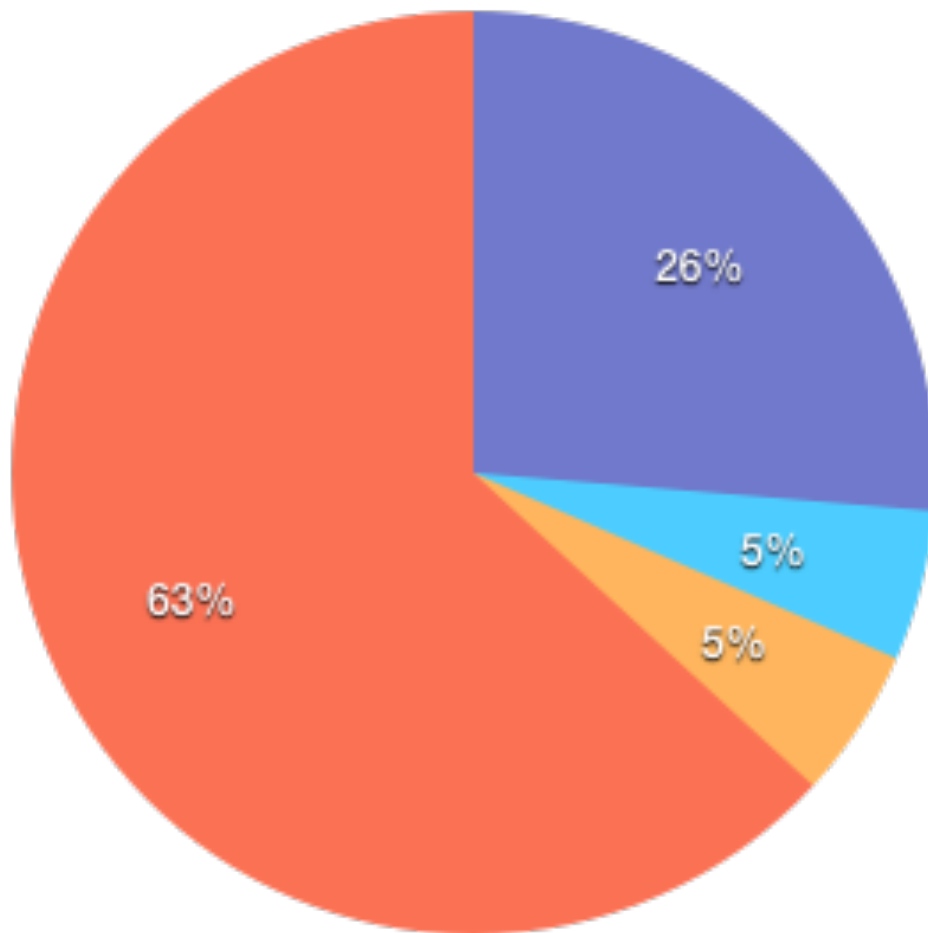


Figure 4: Preference by Category:

Appendix 6: Figure 5 Preferences of Former Residents of the Tuam Home

Preferences of Former Residents of the Tuam  
Mother and Baby Home



- Memorialisation
- Forensic Excavation of known Area
- Forensic Excavation of Total Area
- Exhumation and Burial
- Expanded Forensic Excavation

Figure 5; Preferences of Former Residents of The Tuam Mother and Baby Home



Appendix 7: Figure 6 Preferences of Relatives of Former Residents of the Tuam Mother and Baby Home

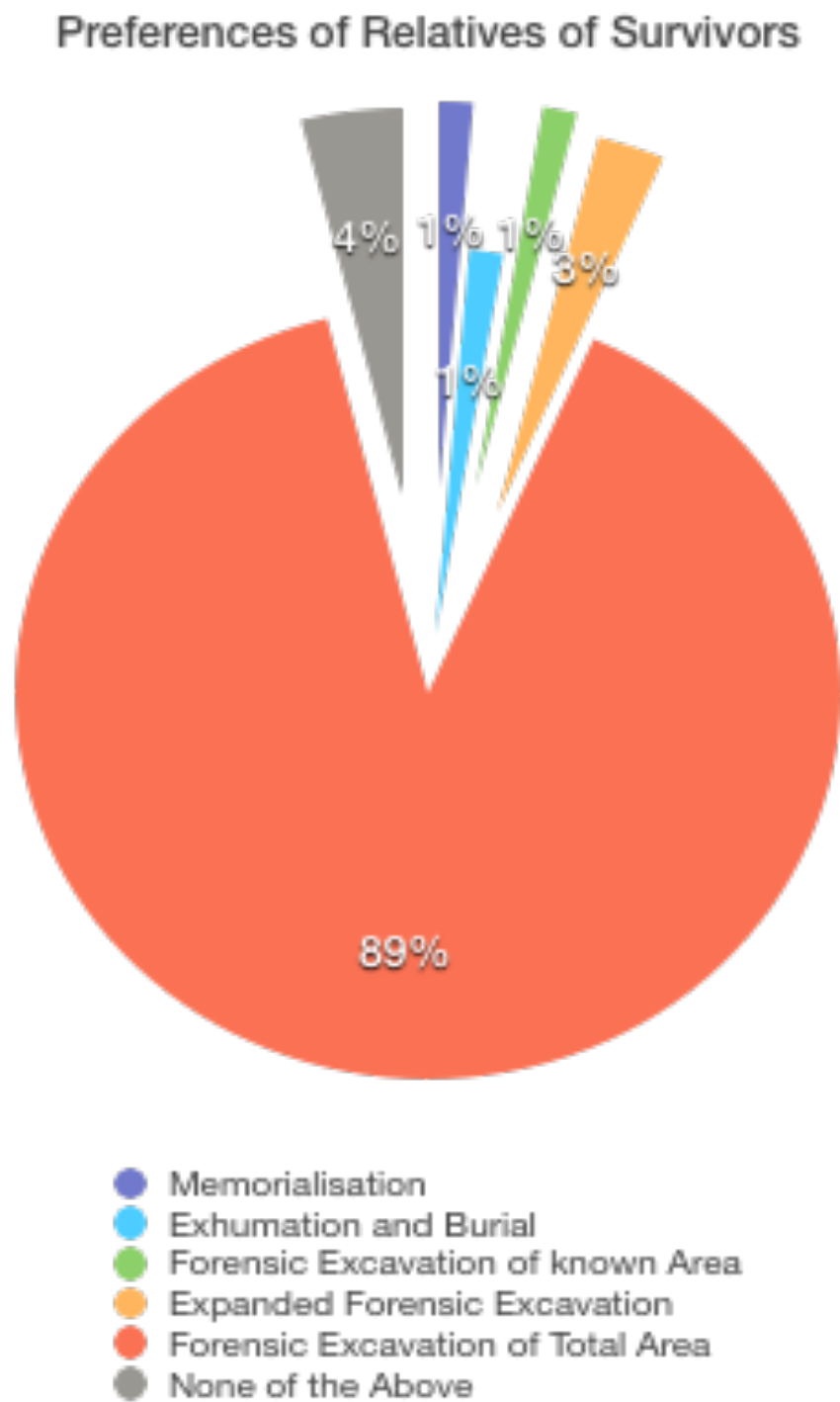


Figure 6: Preferences of Relatives of Former Residents of the Tuam Mother and Baby Home

Appendix 8: Figure 7 Preferences of Local Residents

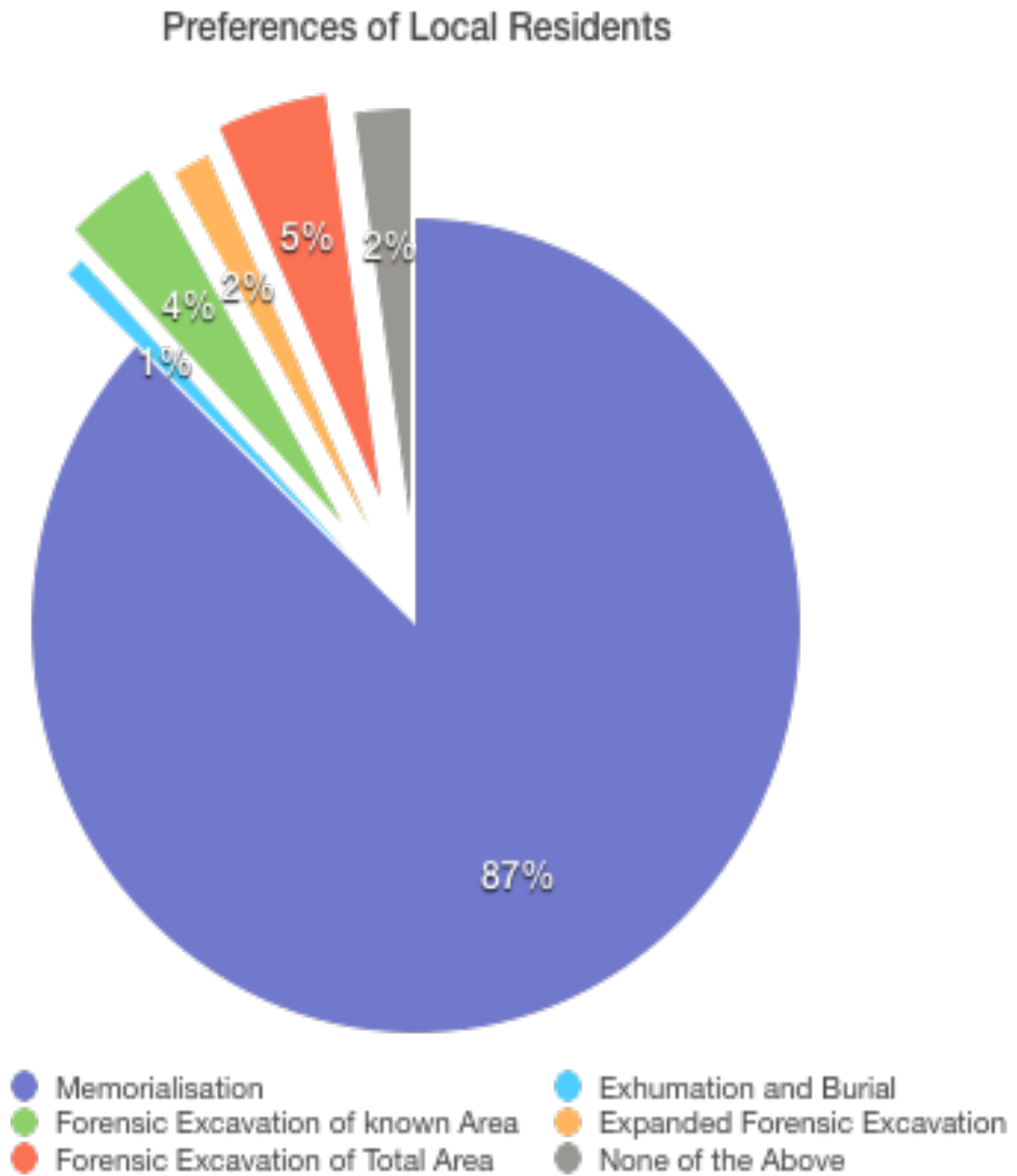


Figure 7: Preferences of Local Resident

Appendix 9: Figure 8 Preferences of Public Submissions

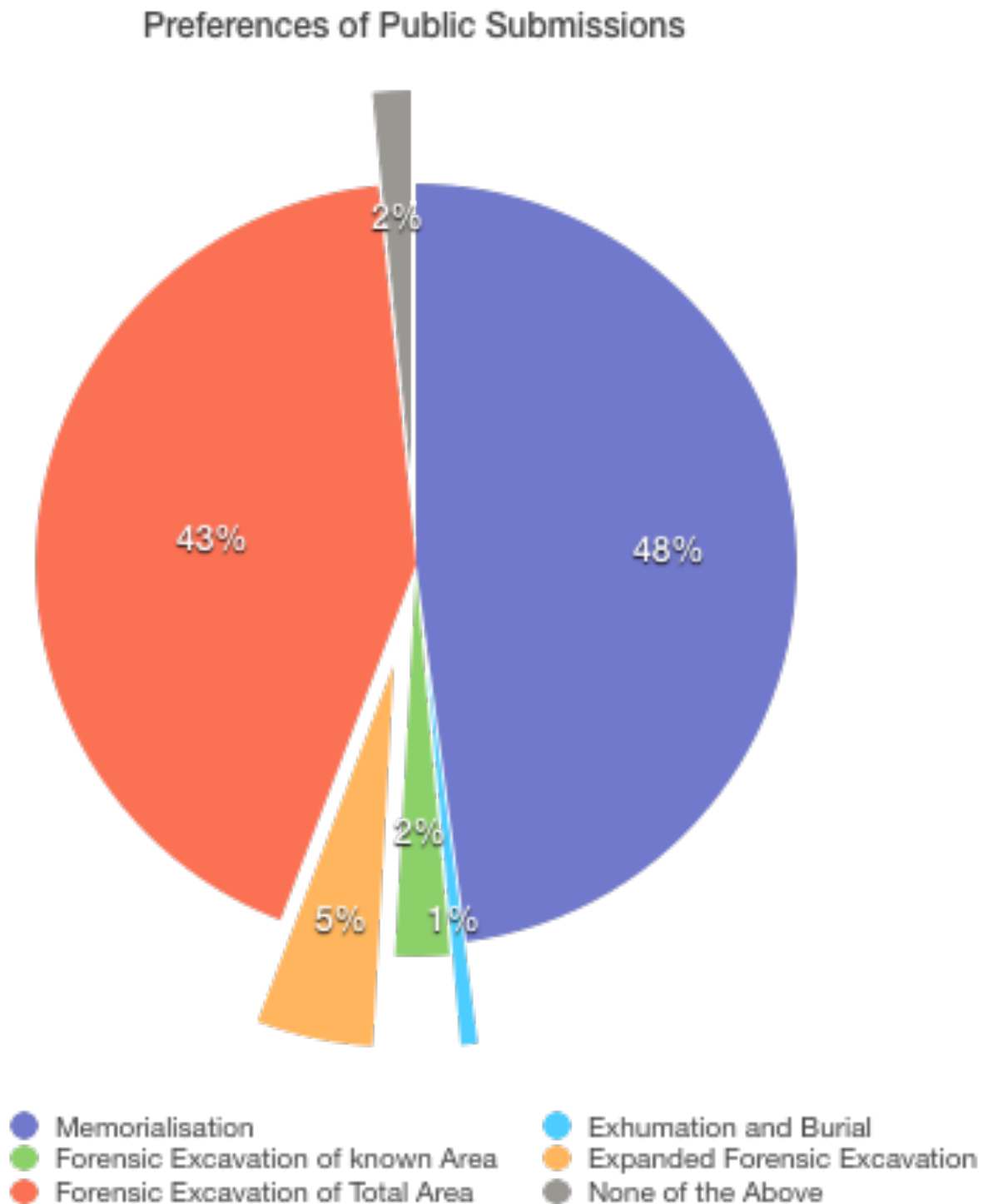


Figure 9: Preferences of Public Submissions