



Archives, Access and Human Rights Symposium

Royal Irish Academy, 13 June 2024

Report and Summaries of Presentations

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Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
Royal Irish Academy

Background and Executive Summary

On 13 June 2024 the Royal Irish Academy hosted a day-long symposium in Archives, Access and Human Rights. The event was initiated by the Historical Studies Committee of the Academy, and organised by a Working Group: Mary O'Dowd, Lisa Godson, Maeve O'Rourke, Ciara Breathnach and Catriona Crowe represented the Academy; Felix Larkin and Kelly Fitzgerald represented the Irish Committee for Historical Sciences. Ciara Breathnach had to leave the Working Group in April. Martha Fitzgerald, Programme Manager in the Academy, was administrator and advisor throughout the process.

Catriona Crowe chaired the Working Group, which set about exploring two issues relating to access to archives:

1. Difficulties with access to records that should be in the National Archives, or that are there and are closed, and access to records held by Local Authority archives which may have been removed or to which there is no access.
2. Lack of access to the records held by the religious congregations that ran Industrial Schools, Magdalene Laundries and Mother and Baby Homes, and to the records of the commissions of inquiry into these institutions.

Funding was received from Boston College, the ARINS Project, the Irish Committee for Historical Sciences, Justice for Magdalenes Research, the Irish Centre for Human Rights at the University of Galway, and the Archives and Records Association of Ireland. The Working Group is grateful to all these organisations and particularly to Boston College, our biggest sponsor.

All sessions were recorded, and verbal presentations fully transcribed. The edited summaries below were approved by the relevant speakers.

A number of recommendations drawing on the remarks by various speakers and by the organising committee are collated in **Appendix A**.

The programme consisted of ten sessions: eight presentations from speakers, chaired by members of the Working Group, and two short question and answer sessions, chaired by Diarmaid Ferriter MRIA, Professor of Modern Irish History at University College Dublin, and Fintan O'Toole MRIA, award-winning journalist and author of *We Don't Know Ourselves* (Head of Zeus, 2021). See programme, **Appendix B**.

The symposium attracted a capacity audience of 120. Amongst the attendees were many individuals directly affected by the topic, including survivors of institutions and family separation. The symposium was featured in an article in the *Irish Times* of 18 June 2024 (<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/2024/06/18/religious-orders-are-sharing-their-records-north-of-the-border-and-concealing-them-in-the-south/>). Please see **Appendix C** for audience details.

Symposium

Opening remarks

At the outset of the symposium, the Chair revealed the sad fact that the National Archives of Ireland had declined to participate in the event. It was naturally the first institution approached, as it has statutory responsibility for government records, and is also responsible for the archival aspect of the proposed Centre for Research and Remembrance on the site of the old Magdalene Laundry at Seán McDermott Street in Dublin. The Chair read out portions of the Director's response to our invitation, which did not fully elucidate why a public body centrally involved in the issues under discussion would refuse to be publicly either transparent or accountable for its statutory responsibilities. Failure to appoint a new National Archives Advisory Council over the past year meant there was no avenue of redress.

However, the Working Group managed to assemble a programme of speakers who shed valuable light on issues of access to records that have importance both for our rights as citizens to know how we have been governed, and for the transgressed human rights of those subjected to incarceration in the various institutions for women and children which have been investigated over the past 20 years. The Chair adverted to recent international examples of how the release of archives contributed directly to the vindication of human rights: the records of the British administration in Kenya during the Mau Mau Rebellion in the 1950s, when many people were incarcerated and tortured, and the Stasi records, the archive of the East German secret police and their many informants. Both of these releases were controversial. Those who perpetrated atrocities in Kenya and those involved in intimate surveillance in the GDR were anxious that they be kept closed.

The release of the Kenyan records allowed elderly victims to sue in the British courts for compensation for their suffering. The release of the Stasi records allowed individuals to see their own files and know who had been spying on them. Both sets of records were important for the vindication of the human rights of those with whom they dealt.

The Chair concluded with a quote from David Fricker, President of the International Council of Archives: "ICA recognises that archives contain the evidence upon which the defence of human rights can be prosecuted. The role of the archivist, therefore, is vital. All archivists should understand how, while acting within legal and regulatory frameworks, we can contribute to the development of societies that are just, inclusive and egalitarian. As archivists, we should ensure that archives exist as authentic evidence of administrative cultural and intellectual activities and, moreover, that this invaluable resource will continue to advance a rights-based society for all."

Links and References

National Archives Act

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1986/act/11/enacted/en/html>

David Fricker, 'Message from the President of the International Council on Archives' in Jens Boel *et al.* (eds), *Archives and Human Rights* (Routledge: 2021), xx–xi, p. xi.

Session 1: Archives, Access and the Role of Advocacy

Niamh Ní Charra, Chair of the Archives and Records Association, Ireland (in absentia)

Niamh Ní Charra was unable to deliver her paper but her notes were conveyed to the audience by the Chair.

Summary

Local Authority archives and archivists are not adequately supported in Ireland, and need stronger advocacy. Valuable comparative data provided evidence related to the working conditions of archivists, and challenges with the funding and recognition of the importance of archives.

Key points

1. Local Authority archives and archivists in Ireland suffer from a lack of resources and status. Archivists are often under-staffed, under-resourced, under-funded, dealing with unlisted material, and constrained by legislation (often out of date).
2. Archivists can experience trauma through dealing with sensitive material and dealing with sensitive issues with users on a cumulative basis; this is often not understood by superiors and no mental health checks are provided.
3. Often there is only one archivist covering a vast amount of material, providing all services in a broader environment in which there is little understanding of the importance of the material and the necessity to provide access to it.
4. The Archives and Records Association and other bodies advocate for improvement. Historians and other archive users who experience difficulty in accessing records should also advocate for better resources.

Concluding remark: "Archive services in Ireland are not only chronically underfunded, they are also chronically undermined by the organisations within which they operate".

Essential statistics and comparisons

- There are 21 qualified Local Authority archivists working across the Republic of Ireland. It has taken approximately 20 years to reach this number, and it has never been surpassed.
- Fewer than 25% of archivists in post are employed at local government grade 7. All others are employed at grade 6 or 5. This is true even when they are heads of services and when they work across several counties. All are required to hold a postgraduate qualification.
- By way of comparison, biodiversity officers are now employed in almost 100% of local authorities. The filling of these roles happened over the course of the last two years. All biodiversity officers are employed at grade 7, and there is no requirement for a postgraduate qualification for this post.
- Only 25% of services have more than one archivist.

- Approximately 50% are fully responsible for records management, digital preservation, act as data protection officers and deal with all Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. The other 50% are obstructed from decision making regarding records management.
- Approximately one third are managed under corporate services with no connection to public service or libraries. The other two thirds are managed under libraries or in conjunction with heritage and museum services.
- There is no Local Authority archivist working in a purpose-built facility.
- The Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) is the body that supports local government services and sectors. In 2023, funding for library development was over €1.2 million. There is no funding stream for Local Authority archive services from the LGMA.
- In 2023, the LGMA published its public library strategy. In all 456 pages, the word archives is mentioned only once in reference to local studies. There is no clear understanding of the landscape archivists are dealing with.

Session 2: Access to Local Authority Records in Donegal

Speaker Dr Niamh Brennan, Archivist, Donegal County Council
Chair Catriona Crowe MRIA

Summary

Dr Brennan gave a presentation on the development and current characteristics of Local Authority archive services and health records within local authorities. She detailed how County Council archivists attempt to provide access for the public as far as possible. Currently there are 22 Local Authority archivists and they are employed in 17 local authorities. There are several counties without an archivist.

Key points

Working conditions

- There is a lack of consistency in human resources and the built environment across the County Councils.
- Within Donegal, for the past 24 years, the archives have been located upstairs, in a shared office, in an office block with limited access as there is no lift.
- Work on records management varies from Local Authority to Local Authority; Donegal County Archives is also the records management service, and the Archive is part of the Culture Division.
- At the moment, there is no additional administrative, clerical or professional support.
- The position can be quite isolated within the local County Council. Professional guidance can be sought from the Local Authority Archivists and Records Managers Group that gave great mutual support during Covid. This group has developed a policy to standardise access across the archives.

Development of the Archive

When Dr Brennan began she was obliged to go out to all the area offices and find the records that belonged to Donegal County Council and its predecessor bodies. She was required to survey the documents, list them, box them and eventually make them accessible. In time they were microfilmed and those deemed most significant were digitised. The latter are now available online at <<https://www.findmypast.ie>>.

Legislation

Under the Local Government Act, 1925, rural district councils were abolished and some of their responsibilities were transferred to County Councils. Subsequently, their functions were transferred to the county boards of health (1925–1942).

The Local Government Act of 1994 made it the responsibility of Local Authorities to preserve and make accessible their archives and to manage their non-current records. The health records have fallen under the responsibility of a number of bodies: Board of Guardians; Boards of Health; County Councils or City Councils; Health Boards; the HSE; and now Tusla.

The right to access archives is to be balanced with the need to protect the rights of individuals and the confidentiality of organisations but particularly the rights of individuals whose

activities are reflected in the archive. The 30-year rule generally applies with general access to archives in accordance with Section 80 of the Local Government Act 2001. Archivists facilitate access in line with relevant laws and regulations and according to best archival practice. Archives containing personal data are subject to data protection and closures of 100 years. Closed archives in local authorities include health records, hospital records, certain housing and school registers, human resources files and some other records that are under 100 years old. However, records marked as closed are not necessarily inaccessible.

Material relating to health in the Archive (both public and private records)

Archives of the Board of Guardians: notice of meetings of the guardians, admission and discharge and relief registers, debt registers, correspondence, financial records or dietary registers, minutes of meetings of the Board of Health, psychiatric and district hospital records, county and city councils' surviving health records, military records, school records, sanitation, county homes, hospitals, home assistance, fire service, housing and school medical service records.

There are also records on personnel, salaries, staffing, finance, budgets, environmental issues, home assistance, fire service, school services, district and fever hospitals, dispensaries, district nursing, infectious diseases (including TB), derelict sites, slaughterhouses, milk and dairies, burial boards and graveyards, the running of the county home including the boarding out and fostering of children. Individual children are referred to in the minutes and in reports that went into the minutes. The issues reported include situations in foster homes, children changing foster homes, inspections of their situations while fostered or boarded out; particular issues may be related to children being hired out at age at fifteen and onwards. This is not an exhaustive list but gives a sense of the breadth of material available in the Donegal County Council Archive, which has succeeded a number of organisations in acting as custodian for health records.

Current work within the Archive

- The website is currently being updated as there have been a number of initiatives in recent years, including Peace 4 projects, work on the decade of centenaries producing many different exhibitions, residencies, publications, a small book of poems on the subject of mother and baby homes and workhouses, *Ghost Girl*.
- The Archive has contributed to the national famine commemoration in Milford, unique to Donegal, and migration to Scotland. They recently collaborated with the Department of Local Government, Housing and Heritage on a joint exhibition called Celebrating, a publication on celebrating 100 Years of the 1927 Local Elections.
- The Archive has collaborated with the Virtual Record Treasury in Trinity College, the Heritage Council, and the National Archives on the Anglo-Irish Treaty Exhibition.
- It has been collaborating with various public bodies for many years including the HSE and Tusla with regard to identifying and providing access to records in relation to county homes and mother and baby homes.

References and Links

Donegal County Archives

<https://www.donegalcoco.ie/culture/archives/>

Local Government Act, 1925

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1925/act/5/enacted/en/html>

Local Government Act, 1994

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1994/act/8/enacted/en/print.html>

Session 3: Archival sources for the History of the Department of Finance

Speaker Dr Ciarán M. Casey, author of *The Department of Finance, 1959–99* (IPA, 2022)

Chair Felix M. Larkin, FRHistS, former public servant

Summary

Dr Casey's history of the Department of Finance (DoF), 1959–99 was commissioned by the department and overseen by an advisory committee of independent scholars and departmental officials. He was given special access to the files of the department. There are no plans to make these files available to other scholars via the National Archives of Ireland (NAI) or otherwise.

Key Points

Scale

The number of files in the DoF is overwhelming: 100,000 for the period that Dr Casey's history covers. An internal file management team worked closely with Dr Casey, but its focus performance is on meeting the day-to-day needs of the department. Very few files – approximately 5,000 – have actually been transferred to the NAI. Of those, some appear to have been “lost in transition” – notably, important files about the free secondary education scheme introduced in the late 1960s.

Given the scale of the archive, no scholar could have undertaken the work Dr Casey did without adequate time and the necessary funding – in his case, funding by the DoF. Working full-time on the project, it took him three years to complete it.

Issues of access

Dr Casey's volume is one of five departmental histories published to date, each funded by the departments in question. None of the files of these departments are on general release in the NAI. There are reasonable objections to such arrangements, as Dr Casey acknowledged. Most obviously, a commissioning department might try to suppress or finesse aspects of its history. More generally, other scholars are not in a position to test the author's conclusions against the sources and must therefore take the conclusions on “blind faith”. Dr Casey's response to this is that he had no sense of being required to whitewash the Department of Finance's record. The department was sensitive about some matters, but he had found them “open to myths being punctured and asking uncomfortable questions”. His recommendation to others who undertake a commissioned history is to satisfy themselves first that the commissioning organisation's objectives are compatible with the author's scholarly principles.

While it is undesirable that the DoF files have been largely retained within the department – and not transferred to the NAI – this actually facilitated Dr Casey's work. If the files had been transferred, the difficulties that face users of the NAI would have made his task impossible.

He referred to the restricted opening hours, the uneven quality of service and the maximum

daily quota of six files per reader. Being able to locate himself within the DoF, with unrestricted access to the files, was essential for Dr Casey's work.

Lensmen Archive

Finally, Dr Casey highlighted the need to preserve the Lensmen photographic archive. Lensmen were commissioned to take official photographs for various government agencies over many years, and these photos are themselves an important historical source. The archive is in private hands and in danger of destruction. It is understood that the owners of the archive would agree to pass it to an appropriate repository such as the National Library of Ireland.

References and Links

Details about Dr Casey's history of the Department of Finance

<https://www.ipa.ie/government-and-politics/the-irish-department-of-finance1959-99.6029.html>

Lensmen Archive

<https://www.lensmen.ie/history-archive-2/>

Session 4: Access to Local Authority, Prison and Mental Health Records

Speaker Maria Luddy, Emeritus Professor of Modern Irish History, University of Warwick
Chair Lisa Godson, cultural historian, NCAD

Summary

Local archivists have undertaken admirable work over the past few decades, but access arrangements can be challenging for researchers. There are inconsistencies, contradictions and difficulties with ascertaining the location and accessing records of contemporary and historic institutions, organisations and state bodies including religious orders, Tusla, HSE and Health boards.

Key Points

Change over the last 30 years

Local archives are more firmly established, and local archivists have saved many records. There has been relatively widespread digitisation of documents, newspapers, maps etc. including some workhouse records via local archives.

Digitisation is not always helpful, for example when researchers are referred to digitised versions of archives rather than original material; this sometimes includes needing to use particular location-specific equipment that can be difficult to book/access.

There are ongoing, or sometimes new difficulties with accessing particular records, for example the Garda archive (no archivist, so no access).

Particular issues with Catholic archives and built/material culture

- These archives are increasingly difficult to access.
- Many religious orders and dioceses don't have archivists.
- Some don't support access (eg Cloyne Diocesan Archives).
- When revisiting the Sources for Women's History database available on the Irish Manuscripts Commission website, some religious orders asked for reference to their records to be removed.
- There are barriers to accessing convent archives which are of great significance to the social, economic and educational histories of local communities in Ireland.
- Convents are closing at quite a scale, and it is unclear what is happening to their records.
- Some convent buildings are being demolished – eg Presentation Sisters Convent in Mitchelstown (2024). This raises questions about whether the architecture has been recorded adequately, and whether the material objects that were in that community have been preserved, and where.
- It is unclear who has custodial authority and who will get to research these records.

Tusla

Professor Luddy queried records they hold relating to mother and baby institutions, and was sent a list of the records they had, including records of c. 100 organizations dealing with

boarding out of children; home assistance; health records; adoption agencies; County Homes. She outlined the following points:

- All the records held by Tusla are closed to researchers.
- The majority have been digitised.
- In response to a query about whether Tusla return the originals once they have digitised the material, they said they will retain both.
- The local authorities handed over the records to Tusla, and they now have a major gap in their own archives, and the integrity of those archives is compromised.
- A whole tranche of records has been removed from publicly funded bodies, and has really been removed also from the historical record. And “how does any historian of welfare in 20th century Ireland write a history of that welfare system without access to these records?”

Health records

Professor Luddy referenced Boards of Health, including home assistance records for various counties around the country. They comprise an extraordinary record of how hospitals were run and managed. They also include (what would have been called under the workhouse system) outdoor relief, people on home assistance who were paid money to get by every week, and their records, who's been given money, who gives out the money.

Lots of information about unmarried mothers, because the local authorities funded a lot of unmarried mothers' stays in county homes, and also in mother and baby homes.

Court records

1930 Affiliations Orders Ireland Act: the first time in Irish history that a woman, an unmarried mother, could sue a putative father for the maintenance of her child. There are hundreds of records relating to this from the 1930s to the 1970s, but they cannot be researched because the records are part of the Family Law system. If someone wants to see records in the family courts, they have to go before a Circuit Court judge with an affidavit to argue their case for the exact record they want to see. And yet the names and details appear in newspapers.

HSE

HSE archives are important, for example, for mental hospital records held under the authority of the Health Service Executive. Professor Luddy contacted hospitals that hold these records under FOI but received deeply unsatisfactory answers. The HSE/individual hospitals were often unaware of the location of these records, or said they were closed to researchers. In one example – case records for St Luke's in Clonmel, from 1897 up to 1937 – the HSE didn't know where the records were. They were located in Clonmel County Council archives which doesn't have an archivist at present.

Land Commission Records

Only search aids are being digitised, not the actual records.

References and Links

Illegitimate Children (Affiliation Orders) Act, 1930

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1930/act/17/enacted/en/print.html>

Freedom of Information Act

<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/42b27-freedom-of-information-foi/>

Sources for Women's History

<https://irishmanuscripts.ie/womenshistorysources/>

HSE Data Retention Policy

<https://www2.healthservice.hse.ie/organisation/national-pppgs/hse-national-records-retention-policy/>

Session 5: Discussion and Questions and Answers

Moderator Diarmaid Ferriter MRIA, Professor of Modern Irish History, UCD

Any substantive outcomes from this session are included in the recommendations in Appendix A.

Session 6: Institutional Archives and Human Rights Implications or Lack of Access to them

Speaker Dr Maeve O'Rourke, Lecturer in Human Rights, Irish Centre for Human Rights, School of Law, University of Galway; co-director of the Clann Project, member of Justice for Magdalenes Research

Chair James Smith, Professor of English & Irish Studies at Boston College, and author of *Ireland's Magdalen Laundries and the Nation's Architecture of Containment* (Notre Dame: 2007).

Summary

Those affected by Ireland's institutional and family separation system have led the campaign for access to personal records and administrative archives. Human rights law supports affected people's demands. The future National Centre for Research and Remembrance will need to gather all relevant archives related to affected persons and the systems through which they were abused to comply with human rights law including GDPR. While respecting affected people's privacy, new legislation underpinning the Centre will have to undo the blanket 'sealing' of previous inquiries' archives, repeal existing legislative gagging clauses, and facilitate people to put their own accounts and responses to the archive on the public record if they wish.

Key Points

Affected people's concerns

Dr O'Rourke began by acknowledging that people affected by Ireland's institutional and family separation system have led the campaign to achieve disclosure of personal records and administrative archives (in ways that protect the privacy of affected people), so that individuals can piece together their own history and the public can learn from the horrific abuses of the past and their continuing effects. Dr O'Rourke noted some key motivations, quoting Dr Mary Lodato's evidence to the Oireachtas Education Committee in 2019:

There is a problematic power dynamic at the heart of how histories of abuse are told in Ireland. We have already heard the narrative of the professional classes: lawyers, doctors and religious orders. Survivors' voices are locked in the [Redress] Board's files. Ensuring access to survivor testimony would help to correct this imbalance of power... All living survivors should be contacted in advance of this process. Publicly accessible files could be anonymised or redacted with survivors' consent... living survivors should be able to participate in the process of researching and writing our history. There should be an opportunity for survivors to supplement the written record with their oral history.

Dr O'Rourke also highlighted various submissions received in 2021 by Northern Ireland's independent Truth Recovery Design Panel, of which she was a member:

"I want all paperwork pertaining to me and the birth of my daughter. Not the social

workers' or Director's impression of what I wanted to hear. I want the actual transcripts".

"All files must be made available for scrutiny. Public Records, Records held by the Mother and Baby Institutions, any Police Records, Financial Records, Journals Notes, Diaries, Medical Records, Health and Social Care Records and any other relevant documents held by individuals or organisations. Every document from when the decision was taken to place the mother in the Institution through to her departure and to include all relevant information regarding her baby. Parish Records, Baptismal and Death Records. Maternity money was paid to these Institutions – Financial Records should be disclosed by the Institutions and Government Department responsible for these payments".

"I feel strongly that all records which are not subject to legislative protection, namely those held by the religious orders and other non-governmental institutions, should be seized in a timely manner. This is to avoid the potential destruction and misappropriation of the evidence".

Human rights law

Dr O'Rourke contended that Human rights law supports affected people's demands. There is hardly a human right more fundamental than the right to identity. The European Court of Human Rights has established that this right is a core part of the right to respect for private and family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). According to the European Court, states must provide people with information about their family origins and about their treatment as a person in state care. In 2020, the Irish Court of Appeal (in *Habte v Minister for Justice and Equality* [2020] IECA 22) recognized — as an unenumerated Constitutional right — the right to have one's identity correctly recognised by the State. To reach this conclusion, the Court drew on the concept of human dignity which is a founding principle of the Irish Constitution. The Court also referred to European Union (EU) data protection law, which is based on the principle of human dignity in the sense of being treated as an individual in one's own right and equally to all others.

The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which came into force in 2018 and is supreme over any conflicting Irish law or policy, is a crucial tool of justice for people affected by Ireland's institutional and family separation abuses. The GDPR prohibits blanket barriers to accessing one's personal data and was therefore essential to resisting the Retention of Records Bill 2019, and also to challenging the Minister for Children's stated intention in late 2020 to seal entirely the Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation (MBHCOI) archive that he was due to receive. The Department of Children is currently responding to subject access requests for material in the MBHCOI archive; as of June 2024 it had completed 1,066 subject access requests, having received 1,090. The GDPR further prohibits restriction of data subjects' rights in ways that are unnecessary or disproportionate; this principle enabled Dr Claire McGettrick, Dr O'Rourke and fellow advocates to successfully resist the Adoption (Information and Tracing Bill) 2016 which would have made it a condition of receiving one's name at birth that the person would 'undertake' never to attempt to contact their parents.

GDPR rights and obligations apply to all holders of affected people's personal records and

testimony, Dr O'Rourke emphasised. She argued that there is an urgent need for the State to coordinate—through independent guidance, monitoring and practical assistance—the ways that all religious and non-religious bodies, including state- and quasi-state entities and the holders of previous inquiry archives, are (or are not) safeguarding personal data and making people aware of and implementing GDPR rights. The 2022 Birth Information and Tracing Act is an important part of the jigsaw, but it does not cover all holders of institutional and family separation records and mothers (among other family members) are not included in its access rights.

The absolutely core data protection principle that must be respected is that information relating to living people who were institutionalised or adopted or abused in related systems is their personal data. Where other people are mentioned in records, such as people in charge, and this information relates to the survivor or adopted person, this is also the survivor or adopted person's personal data. The Court of Justice of the European Union has been clear that information can relate to more than one person at the same time, and this does not affect its quality as each person's personal data to which the ordinary rights apply (*Nowak v Data Protection Commissioner of Ireland* (Case C-43/16, 20 December 2017)). It is also too frequently forgotten, or ignored, by those who still redact and refuse survivors' and adopted people's records that the deceased do not have GDPR rights that can counteract those of the living.

National Centre for Research and Remembrance

The future National Centre for Research and Remembrance will need to gather all relevant archives from all possible sources (whether original or in copy) in order to vindicate the identity and data protection rights — and thus the dignity and privacy rights—of people affected by the institutional and family separation system. An immediately necessary step is legislation to require preservation and to criminalise destruction of any and all relevant records and archives other than the information held by the survivors themselves about their own lives. More comprehensive legislation will be needed in due course to set out how the National Centre will manage its archive and be sustainably resourced to do so. To comply with the GDPR the Centre will need to ensure data security and it will need to protect living individuals' rights to know and be notified about what personal data is held on them, to have access to their personal data, to rectify inaccuracies and supplement gaps, and to object, and request erasure depending on the circumstances—bearing in mind that the GDPR does allow for archiving in the public interest and for restriction of certain rights, such as the right to object or to erasure, where absolutely necessary in pursuit of that public interest. The legislation should state explicitly that the archive is pursuing the protection of human rights and the remedying of human rights violations. There are comparative examples to follow, including the Stasi Records Archive in Germany.

The future National Centre will play a fundamental role in addressing further rights, including the rights of relatives of the disappeared to know the fate and burial place of their babies, their mothers, their siblings, their aunts, their uncles and their cousins. Under international law, victims and survivors of gross and systematic human rights violations have a comprehensive right to a remedy including truth, justice, reparation, memorialisation and guarantees of non-recurrence. These are the pillars of Transitional Justice, and none of them is possible without disclosure — not just of people's personal data to them, and not only of their disappeared relative's fate, but crucially also of the administrative archives and other sources of information that reveal the whole system through which they were abused. As one person put

it in to the Northern Ireland Truth Recovery Design Panel: "I think that it is very important that the wider records about the institutions, how they were run and who benefitted, are put into the public domain. Again, the question is: Who turned a blind eye, who benefitted, and who exploited and why?"

Affected people's right to participate fully in truth-telling is paramount in European and international human rights law. As a general matter, the European Court of Human Rights has stated that 'it is an integral part of freedom of expression to seek historical truth'; a state's refusal to allow individual access to original documentary sources for legitimate historical research can thus violate the Article 10 ECHR right to freedom of expression (*Kenedi v Hungary*). According to the European Court, Article 10 ECHR also requires states to create a favourable environment for participation in public debate by all concerned. In the context of state investigations into alleged human rights abuses, the European Court has consistently emphasised victims' entitlement to access and comment on the evidence under consideration.

Human rights law thus challenges the Irish State's prior practice of preventing access by affected people or the public to the archives of abuse inquiries, and of 'gagging' affected people who provided evidence to the Residential Institutions Redress Board or the MBHCOI. Dr O'Rourke argued that human rights law requires the future legislation underpinning the National Centre, as part of gathering and making available all relevant records and archives, to open previously 'sealed' inquiry archives, to repeal gagging clauses in the Residential Institutions Redress Board Act 2002 and Commissions of Investigation Act 2004, and to assist people in putting their own accounts and responses to the archive on the public record if they wish.

References and Links

The Clann Project

www.clannproject.org

Justice for Magdalenes Research

www.jfmresearch.com

Dr Mary Lodato's submission

<http://jfmresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Mary-Lodato-Submission.pdf>

Kenedi v Hungary App no 31475/05 (ECHR, 26 May 2009)

[https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/fre#{%22itemid%22:\[%22001-92663%22\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/fre#{%22itemid%22:[%22001-92663%22]})

Session 7: Archival Aspects of the Northern Ireland Truth Recovery Programme

Speakers Wesley Geddis, Acting Head of Records Management, Cataloguing and Access, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, and Joy Carey, Project Manager, Records of Mother and Baby Institutions, PRONI

Chair Professor Leanne McCormick, Co-Chair of the Northern Ireland Truth Recovery Panel

Summary

Wesley Geddis and Joy Carey of PRONI gave a presentation on how PRONI has collaborated with the Northern Ireland Truth Recovery Programme in relation to the archival records of mother and baby institutions, Magdalene laundries, workhouses and other institutions that are relevant to the work of the Programme.

Key Points

Legislation

The work of the archival team was assisted by two pieces of legislation:

1. The Public Records Act Northern Ireland (1923), which permits the records office to take in private as well as public records. This facilitated the accessing of the records of religious orders, charitable organisations, etc.
2. The Preservation of Documents (Historical Institutions) Act (Northern Ireland) (2022) introduced new statutory obligations on voluntary organisations that provided residential accommodation for women or children and took decisions about them, 1922–1995. The 'relevant institutions' should not destroy, alter or damage the records in their possession or remove them from Northern Ireland jurisdiction. This legislation enabled the PRONI team to approach institutions to assess if they were in compliance with the new requirements for their historical records.

PRONI experience with sensitive records

PRONI has developed considerable experience of working with sensitive personal information, particularly through its work on records related to the Troubles. This informed its approach to record holders and to the victims and survivors affected by their experiences and the practices of the institutions. The presenters stressed the need for meaningful discussions with both groups. The team engaged in face to face meetings rather than contacting people only by official letters. This approach helped to gain the trust and cooperation of all those involved. The meetings included tours of PRONI and its work on conservation and digitisation, and Zoom access to Q and A sessions for those who could not attend in person. The team members were also concerned to demonstrate their awareness of the need for sensitivity in cataloguing the material to avoid adding to the trauma of the victims and survivors.

Four options for record holders

The PRONI team offered record holders four options:

1. Permanent deposit of the physical collection with PRONI;
2. Temporary deposit of the physical collection for digitisation purposes;

3. Digitisation by PRONI at record holder's premises;
4. Digitisation by record holder to PRONI specifications.

The team also purchased a portable digitisation system for use by the PRONI team *in situ* in organisations if that was preferred by a record holder. All of the professional assistance of the PRONI staff (including the provision of digitisation copies) was offered free of charge.

Pilot scheme

The PRONI team conducted a pilot scheme which took the form of an archival survey, which involved liaising with seven institutions. This initial 4-month survey documented the types of record and information held by each institution and revealed over 4,500 documents which were relevant to the work of the Truth Recovery Programme. Four of the seven have deposited their relevant records in PRONI – including two of the religious institutions. While PRONI did note the presence of other historical records which were held by the institutions, these were deemed by PRONI as being not relevant to the work of the TRP and were therefore not included in any further assessment by PRONI.

Access

PRONI has a policy of not refusing Freedom of Information requests. There are difficulties, however, with the current legislation as PRONI can only give access to information that is in documents in its possession. The presenters noted that the records in the pilot scheme would remain closed and any requests for access would be referred back to the record holder. They acknowledged that access for different categories of readers (victims and survivors; academic researchers; journalists; local historians) needs to be clarified. They suggested that a policy on access might be developed in collaboration with colleagues in the Republic.

Future Developments

The presenters stressed that their work was a pilot scheme and focused on a relatively small number of institutions. While their approach has so far been successful, the Truth Recovery Programme has still a lot of work to do.

If the scope of the Truth Recovery Programme is expanded to include adoption records or other public records, it could involve tens of thousands of records and it is not clear how this could be managed by PRONI.

Creation of an Independent Archive

The initial Truth Recovery Design Panel Report (2021) recommended the establishment of an Independent Archive in Northern Ireland for the records of relevant institutions. The Executive Office of Northern Ireland is leading on the discussion on this issue. It is not as yet clear what the role of PRONI would be if an independent archive is established.

References and Links

Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/apni/1923/20/contents>

Preservation of Documents (Historical Institutions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2022/26/contents/enacted>

Truth Recovery Programme

<https://truthrecoverystrategy.com/>

Truth Recovery Design Panel Report

<https://w2w113.n3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/30092021-Truth-Recovery-Executive-Summary-FINAL.pdf>

Session 8: Archival Preparations for the National Centre for Research and Remembrance

Speaker Laura McGarrigle, Assistant Secretary in charge of Adoption, Mother and Baby Homes and Research in the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Chair Catriona Crowe MRIA

Summary

Laura McGarrigle is the senior civil servant overseeing the Centre for Research and Remembrance, to be created on the site of the Magdalene Laundry on Seán McDermott St., Dublin 1. She acknowledged the presence at the symposium of affected people and advocates, and the importance of their experience. Because the information in her presentation is so important, we have quoted directly from it in places.

Key Points

Opening remarks

"I'll begin by looking briefly at the background and the context for the whole of government initiative that is the National Centre for Research and Remembrance.

Then I'll give you an overview of the initiative itself, before looking more in-depth at two specific work streams, the archives and the legal and legislative work streams.

I'll then look briefly at some of the other work underway which is foundational in terms of the archival aspects of the National Centre, specifically the work enabled by the Birth Information and Tracing Act and the management of the Mother and Baby Homes Commissions of Investigation Archive.

I'll conclude by briefly looking ahead at our commitment to future consultation and co-creation as we advance the National Centre initiative".

Background to memorial

Ms McGarrigle referenced the fact that the Ryan Report of 2009, the Quirk Report of 2013, the Report of the Commission of Investigation on Mother and Baby Homes of 2021, and the Report of the Collaborative Forum of Residents of Mother and Baby Homes of 2019 had all recommended a memorial or monument to "commemorate, honour and respect" the people who were held in industrial schools, Magdalene laundries, mother and baby homes and related institutions.

She quoted from the State apology delivered by the Taoiseach in 2021: "The views and wishes of former residents will be paramount and all commemoration will be led by them". She continued: "We're very aware that this is what the National Centre must do. Recognise what happened as part of our national story, as preserved and presented by our national cultural institutions, the National Archives of Ireland and the National Museum of Ireland, and it must represent a concrete commitment to non-recurrence".

Action Plan (2021)

The Action Plan for Survivors and Former Residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions, published by government in November 2021, lays out 22 commitments under

eight themes, with a strong focus on access to information, archives, education, research and memorialisation. "Government will work to establish, on a formal national basis, a national memorial and records centre related to institutional trauma during the 20th century. This will build on the commitment to a central repository of institutional records, and will include archiving relevant records and witness testimony by victims and survivors, as well as presenting the historical and social context. It will be developed at a suitable site and operated in accordance with the highest international standards".

Approval of proposal

In March 2022, government approved high-level proposals for a National Centre for Research and Remembrance to be located at Seán McDermott St. "The centre will stand as a site of conscience to honour equally all those who spent time in industrial schools, Magdalene Laundries, mother and baby and county home institutions, reformatories and related institutions". Dublin's north-east inner city will benefit through the provision of social housing units, further and higher educational facilities and facilities for family and parenting supports.

Plan

The Centre will comprise a museum and exhibition space, the development of which will be led by the National Museum of Ireland in collaboration with survivors, a research centre and repository of records related to institutional trauma in the 20th century, which will form part of the National Archives and which will house an estimated 7 million records, and a garden space for reflection and remembrance. Elements of the National Centre will be accessible in other parts of Ireland and abroad, both through the provision of digital access and through collaboration with local museums, to enable survivors to have access to the materials held in the Centre.

Ms McGarrigle went through slides representing the proposed physical aspects of the Centre. She listed the names of the members of the Steering Group, chaired by the former Secretary General to the Government and the current Ambassador of Ireland to Great Britain, Martin Fraser. They are all representatives of government departments and agencies, with the recent addition of Patricia Carey, Special Advocate for Survivors.

Archival work

Next, Ms McGarrigle described the archival work stream being carried out for the Centre: "The National Archives is leading the work and it's engaging with a large range of bodies as it does so... It has conducted a scoping exercise with departments, agencies and local authorities and this has identified the scale and classes of relevant records in the possession of each of these bodies which... is significant and is estimated to be between five and seven million [records] in paper, born digital and digitised formats".

"A dynamic project plan which includes an individualised plan for each department or agency has been developed. Additional archivists, digital archivists, conservators and administrative staff have been recruited and archivists are working on-site in the departments or agencies to facilitate the preparation of records for transfer to the National Centre... And digitisation guidance has also been developed to provide practical advice to departments and agencies in relation to the digitisation of records intended for inclusion in the National Centre".

"The initial emphasis in all of this work is on records that are already over 30 years old. Relevant records beyond the scope of that Act will be informed by the legal and legislative

work stream... In terms of records which may be privately held... the National Archives has identified organisations and institutions that might hold relevant records”.

“It's written to the bodies responsible for the operation of county homes, mother and baby homes, industrial schools, orphanages and Magdalene laundries which may hold relevant files including of an administrative and operational nature and has met with many of them and continues to engage with them”.

“The intention is that the National Centre repository will house the historical records of state oversight of relevant institutions, records relating to children who were nursed out and boarded out, inspection reports of institutions or of nursed out placements and in addition it will also house the records of various inquiries including the McAleese Committee, the Mother and Baby Homes Archive, the Commission of Investigation for Mother and Baby Homes, the Archive of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse and the Archive of the Residential Institutions Redress Board”.

“The role of the legislative and legal work stream is to develop detailed policy and legislative proposals on the future management of records which will form part of the repository within the National Centre; these proposals will span the approach to future retention of each class of records, the lawful basis for that, access to records by data subjects, access to records by researchers and the use of records by the National Centre as part of museum exhibits, published material or a programme of outreach or education. A mapping exercise is currently underway to document the current legal framework which applies in respect of each class of records anticipated for inclusion, including in relation to ownership, retention, access and the requirement to deposit under the National Archives Act where applicable and that will support the development of detailed policy options and proposals for future retention”.

Ms McGarrigle went on to discuss the Birth Information and Tracing Act (2022), which is supposed to ensure “immediate access to identity information for those who were adopted, nursed out, boarded out, the subject of an illegal birth registration, who had been born in a mother and baby or county home institution or who otherwise have questions on their origins and identity”. Part 7 of the Act refers to safeguarding of records, and enables the transfer of records to the Adoption Authority of Ireland (AAI).

The Act provides a legislative basis for transfer of records to the Authority and also allows seizure of records where the AAI believes this to be necessary for preserving or preventing interference with such records. To date the Adoption Authority of Ireland has issued three directions to information sources and three directions to other persons under Section 48 of the Act mandating the transfer of records. The bodies to whom it has issued the directions include religious, charity and statutory bodies such as the HSE”.

Ms McGarrigle then told us about the crucial records held by the AAI (over 100,000 files created either by itself, by its predecessor bodies or by associated adoption agencies, and dating back to the late 19th century) and the fact that it is now subject to the National Archives Act. The Authority is currently engaged in a mass digitisation project and the creation of new record storage facilities.

The records of the McAleese Committee and the mother and baby homes commission (including the recovered tapes from the Confidential Committee) are now in the possession

of the Dept. of Children. On receipt of the records of the commission in 2021, a new information management unit was established, to lead on the management of the Commission's archive as well as the management of departmental records more generally. It's headed up by a principal officer with legal and data protection expertise and it includes an archivist and the department's data protection officer. The unit has been cataloguing the mother and baby home Commission records. "All of the institutional records relating to individuals... have now been catalogued and the remaining records... relate to the administrative records of the Commission. That residual cataloguing is expected to be completed by year end".

Survivor Involvement

Ms McGarrigle finished by emphasising the importance of survivor involvement in all aspects of the planning, development, management and operation of the National Centre. "The other key themes that came up in the recent open consultation and the key commitments that were made by the steering group in response to those key themes were the need for equal and inclusive memorialisation; an engaging, authentic and professional museum experience; truth, healing and support; the sensitive treatment of records; and a calm and reflective garden space".

A Master Plan for the Centre was approved in July 2023, and the next step is to seek planning permission.

References and Links

Action Plan for Survivors and Former Residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions

<https://assets.gov.ie/251762/6aac5e53-4ac3-4223-8be5-02c0d41f12c5.pdf>

Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2022/act/14/enacted/en/html>

National Centre for Research and Remembrance

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/0319a-national-centre-for-research-and-remembrance/>

Session 9: The Archival Preservation of Survivor Testimony

Speaker Dr Claire McGettrick, born Lorraine Hughes, adopted person and Co-Founder, Clann Project

Chair Patricia Carey, Special Advocate for Survivors

Summary

Dr Claire McGettrick, born Lorraine Hughes, advocated for a non-exclusionary approach to archiving as current proposals do not address the range of ways families were separated in the past. She also advocated for more inclusionary language regarding those affected, and identified shortcomings in access to records and discussed ethical issues relating to gathering and preserving testimony.

Key Points

The need for a non-exclusionary approach to archiving

The Government's commitment to establishing an Annex of the National Archives of Ireland (NAI) at Seán McDermott Street includes a promise to preserve personal testimonies of abuse survivors in the repository. Dr McGettrick welcomed the inclusion of affected people's testimonies, and she offered key ethical guidelines. She argued that including affected people's personal knowledge and perspectives should be "standard practice [and] shouldn't be seen as this unique, innovative thing." Dr McGettrick cautioned that "there is a gatekeeping" in the Government's apparent stance on the future scope of the Seán McDermott Street archive—that is, a focus on institutions only, rather than Ireland's forced family separation system. The Government has stated its intention "to honour equally all those who were resident in Industrial Schools, Magdalene Laundries, Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions, Reformatories, and related institutions." Emphasising the need to "leave nobody behind", Dr McGettrick pointed out that "parents and children were separated from each other in myriad ways" beyond those listed institutions, including through the adoption system—and 'people were incarcerated only because there were legislative frameworks to do it, only because there were discourses, the way people were talked about and seen, only because there was an absence of choice and rights and people were seen differently".

A sole focus on institutions, to the exclusion of all who suffered forced family separation in other ways, "represents an exacerbation of past injustices, but it's also another injustice in and of itself, because we're being excluded from the record, from access to our own records and from redress". Dr McGettrick argued that "the state has traditionally taken a compartmentalised approach, focusing only ever on certain institutions, whereas we in the Clann Project are aware of at least 183 agencies, institutions and individuals who were involved with unmarried mothers and their children".

Terminology and inclusion

Dr McGettrick advocated use of the term "affected people" in an effort to be as inclusive as possible. She argued that the "restrictive terms of reference" of the Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation (MBHCOI) "reinforced this narrative that abuses were solely

institutional” — and, as such, using only the term “survivor” risks excluding those who experienced forced family separation through other means. Affected people are “not a homogenous group” and “experiences vary even within cohorts; there are many ways to be an adopted person, survivor... a mother”. The key point, Dr McGettrick argued, is that: “No matter what way you identify, it shouldn't be used to minimise the human rights abuses that were perpetrated against you. You have the right to have what happened to you acknowledged”.

Dr McGettrick welcomed the recent appointment of Patricia Carey as Special Advocate for Survivors and — despite some reservations about the Government’s limitation of Ms Carey’s powers — encouraged broad engagement by affected people including survivors of institutions, adopted people, mothers, and all others affected by the institutional and family separation system. Dr McGettrick commended the Royal Irish Academy event organisers for including affected people centrally in the event.

Access to records

Dr McGettrick argued that it is impossible for people to compile their witness statements without access to all records — meaning that comprehensive information disclosure must be a central and preliminary function of the future National Archives Annex, and should be ensured immediately. While acknowledging “some positive outcomes” of the Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022, Dr McGettrick pointed out the legislation’s exclusion of mothers from its information access rights, and she argued that it discriminates against adopted people by treating them as though they do not understand privacy and therefore need an “information session” from a social worker in certain circumstances. Dr McGettrick further contended that the definition of “relevant record” in the 2022 legislation “does not actually mean all records”. She argued that the records which affected people require in order to know and testify to the full extent of what happened to them include “personal records, administrative records, state records, and private records in the hands of adoption brokers and others”.

Ethics of gathering and preserving testimony

Dr McGettrick emphasised that one of the key concerns of many affected people is privacy, and making sure that nobody's private life is going to be exposed publicly within the National Centre for Research and Remembrance (NCRR). Therefore, the overriding priority is to, first, do no harm. Affected people have to be at the centre of the process, which cannot just be lip service but must mean actually, meaningfully being at the centre. The deposit of testimony has to be voluntary; people need to hear that they will not be forced to hand over their testimonies. Equally, it should not be an exclusionary process: if people want to have their testimony included, they should not be turned away. Furthermore, respecting privacy does not mean imposing secrecy: affected people must be comprehensively consulted about the redaction policy that the Centre will pursue.

Affected people must have a meaningful seat at the table of power, Dr McGettrick argued. They “should not be managed and curated”. Dr McGettrick welcomed as “a hugely positive move” that Patricia Carey, Special Advocate for Survivors, is on the NCRR Steering Committee, and she requested “more of this, please”, contending that the Steering Committee is “very civil servant-heavy”.

Dr McGettrick highlighted the importance of informed consent, meaning making very clear the uses and the possible uses of the testimony and ensuring that individuals’ wishes are respected. Some people might want to wait until after they are deceased to deposit a testimony, or to have their testimony released, and this should be facilitated. Regarding

records access—which is essential to people’s ability to testify to their experience — affected people should be prioritised in the hierarchy of access, above everyone else. Dr McGettrick also emphasised that there should be no closing date for the deposit of testimonies, noting: “People are ready when they are ready”. Further ethical requirements, according to Dr McGettrick, are that people should have “the right to clarify, amend or add to [their] testimony” over time, including as they obtain more information about their circumstances; and that people should have “the right to withdraw your testimony if you change your mind”.

Appendix A

Recommendations arising from the Symposium

1. Researchers and learned bodies should join with archivists in advocating more strongly for Local Authority archivists and archives. Issues are manifold and include: funding, policy, working conditions (including pay) of archivists, access and opening hours.
2. Archivists should aim to develop consistent guidelines on the implementation of freedom of information and data protection legislation for the records in their care.
3. If the National Archives cannot accession some departmental or other records due to space issues, they should ensure that those records are safe and if possible, accessible in their current locations.
4. If records are withdrawn from state repositories, like the National Archives or Local Authority archives, for scrutiny by various commissions of inquiry, they should be returned to their repositories when the work of those commissions is over.
5. The membership of the National Archives Advisory Council should be urgently renewed so that the Council can fulfil its statutory duty of advising the Minister “on all matters affecting archives and their use by the public” (See Section 20, National Archives Act).
6. Any state organisation that has not yet outlined its policy on all archives for which it is responsible should be encouraged to do so as a matter of urgency.
7. Due to their historical importance and precarity, all 20th century records — both personal and administrative — dealing with psychiatric hospitals need to be made safe and accessible as a matter of urgency, pursuant to a dedicated policy in accordance with the “archiving in the public interest” provisions of European Union and Irish data protection law.
8. The proposed National Centre for Research and Remembrance needs to have a human rights focus in all of its preparations and operations. Affected people should be appointed to the Steering Group, as is the case with the Northern Ireland Truth Recovery Programme. The Centre’s remit must be inclusive of all affected by Ireland’s 20th century institutional and family separation system.
9. Legislation should be passed that prohibits the destruction of any records that originate from or relate to relevant institutions and the family separation system, following the example of Northern Ireland.
10. The Steering Group for the Centre and its representatives need to be absolutely transparent about what archives are to be deposited in the Centre. These archives should include, at a minimum:
 - i. All records created by or about the institutional and family separation system, both personal and administrative, currently held by any religious or private body

- or individual;
- ii. All records created by or about the institutional and family separation system, both personal and administrative, currently held by the state including records of state involvement in and inspection of relevant institutions;
 - iii. All categories of records, including: personal files and correspondence, management and staff files and correspondence, entry and exit registers, financial records and accounts, unpublished histories and house annals, customer lists and files, governance records, burial records, photographs, adoption files and correspondence, architectural drawings and building plans, inspection records and reports, correspondences, and treatment or care records;
 - iv. The complete archives of previous commissions of inquiry and of any other official investigations or research into the relevant institutions or family separation system;
 - v. Additional testimonies and other material voluntarily produced;
11. When relevant institutions or agencies, or their representative congregations or personnel, close or withdraw from Ireland, a clear plan should be in place for the preservation of their archives, including access arrangements.
 12. If relevant institutional buildings are being sold or demolished, the architecture and material culture should be fully recorded.
 13. The language used and processes designed to respond to those affected by the injustices of family separation should be more inclusive, for example by not being solely focused on people who experienced institutional care/abuse. Many experienced forced family separation outside an institutional setting.

Appendix B

Programme of the Archives, Access and Human Rights Symposium convened at the Royal Irish Academy, 13 June 2024

Programme

Morning sessions: Public Records in Ireland and Access to them

1. Welcome & Introduction – Catriona Crowe MRIA

2. Access to Local Authority Records in Donegal

Niamh Brennan, Archivist, Donegal County Council

Chair: Catriona Crowe MRIA

3. Archival Sources for the History of the Department of Finance

Ciaran M. Casey, author of *The Irish Department of Finance, 1959–1999*

Chair: Felix M. Larkin, FRHistS, former public servant

4. Access to Local Authority, Prison and Mental Health Records

Maria Luddy, Emeritus Professor, University of Warwick

Chair: Lisa Godson, cultural historian, NCAD

5. Discussion and Q+A with speakers

Moderator: Diarmaid Ferriter MRIA, Professor of Modern Irish History, UCD

Afternoon sessions: Records of Inquiries into Industrial Schools, Magdalene Laundries and Mother and Baby Homes

6. Institutional Archives and Human Rights Implications of Lack of Access to them

Maeve O'Rourke MYAI, Clann Project and Irish Centre for Human Rights, University of Galway

Chair: James Smith, Professor of English & Irish Studies at Boston College, and author of *Ireland's Magdalen Laundries and the Nation's Architecture of Containment*

7. Archival Aspects of the Northern Ireland Truth Recovery Programme

Joy Carey, Project Manager, Records of Mother and Baby Institutions, PRONI

Wesley Geddis, Acting Head of Records Management, Cataloguing and Access, PRONI

Chair: Professor Leanne McCormick, Co-Chair of the Northern Ireland Truth Recovery Panel

8. Archival Preparations for the National Centre for Research and Remembrance

Laura McGarrigle, Assistant Secretary, Adoption, Mother and Baby Homes and Research Division in the Dept. of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Chair: Catriona Crowe MRIA

9. The Archival Preservation of Survivor Testimony

Claire McGettrick, born Lorraine Hughes, Adopted Person and Co-Founder, Clann Project

Chair: Patricia Carey, Special Advocate for Survivors

10. Discussion and Q+A with speakers

Moderator: Fintan O'Toole MRIA, *Irish Times* journalist and author of *We Don't Know Ourselves*

Appendix C

Audience analysis and feedback

The symposium was booked out, with 147 bookings and 120 attendees. The committee endeavoured to invite people affected by the issues addressed in the programme, although this was a challenge due to the existence of many different groups and individuals who were hard to reach.

Thirty-two attendees offered feedback on the symposium, through a survey carried out by the RIA. In general, the response to the day was very positive.

Average scores (scored out of 5):

- How would you rate the event overall? 4.65
- How would you rate the venue and facilities? 4.53

In addition to the feedback survey, individuals sent emails to the RIA, the majority of which were very positive.