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10th September 2015

Ms Maeve Doherty, Solicitor
Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation
73 Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2

Dear Ms Doherty,

Thank you for your letter of 30th June last. I am writing on behalf of Adoption Rights Alliance (ARA) and Justice for Magdalenes Research (JFMR) and can confirm that ARA and JFMR will be making a joint written submission to the Commission of Investigation.

The purpose of this letter is to inform the Commission that we are working with Hogan Lovells, solicitors, to help those in contact with our organisations to provide comprehensive evidence and statements to the Commission. As part of that exercise, we aim to gather evidence and statistics that we will use to make our submission to the Commission. We hope that this information will be useful to us in preparing our submissions and thereby also to the Commission. If you have any suggestions in this regard we would be happy to receive them as we would like to be as helpful to the Commission as possible.

As outlined in our briefing document to Minister Charlie Flanagan in June 2014, we propose to examine the following issues as they pertain to the lives of children born out of wedlock and their mothers since the foundation of the State in 1922:

- Infant mortality rates
- Adoption practices
- Vaccine trials and medical experimentation
- Forced labour and incarceration of unmarried girls and women who gave birth to babies or were seen to be 'at risk' of becoming mothers

- Conditions in the institutions, including neglect, denial of adequate medical care and cruel punishment of unmarried mothers and their infants and children
- Burials of unmarried mothers and their children and other women who remained in recarceral institutions

As set out in our June 2014 briefing document (copy attached), we believe strongly that the Commission should consider evidence relating to all institutions listed as an Appendix to that document. We are therefore not limiting our research to the 14 institutions currently forming the subject of the Commission's inquiry.

While we are writing, the Commission should be aware that many of the Magdalene survivors, adopted people and natural mothers in touch with ARA and JFMR have contacted us with queries about the Commission's procedures. They are interested in understanding how the Confidential Committee and the Investigation will work and whether the Confidential Committee is a precursor to the Investigation or if they will run in tandem. They have also asked what the procedures for the Confidential Committee and the Investigation will be, including any differences in those procedures. Some of those who are in contact with ARA and JFMR are vulnerable individuals and many find it difficult to trust State institutions. While most individuals known to us are keen to meet with the Commission, some find it traumatic to give their testimony and therefore may want to give evidence only once. With this in mind, we would like to be able to give those in contact with us as much information as possible so that they are engaging with the Commission in an informed and effective manner. We would appreciate any clarifications you could offer on these issues.

We look forward to working with the Commission and are amenable to email contact if this is convenient for you. We would be obliged if you could send all correspondence to both ARA and JFMR email and/or postal addresses.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claire', written in a cursive style.

Claire McGettrick

On behalf of Adoption Rights Alliance and JFM Research