

New timeline for two Mother and Baby Home Reports will not delay Government response to Commission findings

Government decision clears way for large number of witnesses to be accommodated

Statement by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr Katherine Zappone

At its meeting today (27/07/2016) the Government agreed to a request from the Mothers and Baby Homes Commission to extend the time frame for the publication of two of the three reports it is preparing.

The Commission remains committed to completing its investigations within the three year time-frame provided in the Terms of Reference. All Reports will now be completed by February 2018. The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr Katherine Zappone says the extension will not delay any Government response to the findings of the Commission.

The extension is to accommodate the large number of witnesses coming forward and to ensure that all new information discovered is accurately recorded to give a full understanding of the social history involved.

As the Interim Report being published today (see Note to Editors) focuses exclusively on the request for the extension of time, the Government has asked the Commission to identify any additional matters outside of its scope which may be critical to reaching conclusions on the matters central to its remit and report back by September.

Announcing the Government decision the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr Katherine Zappone said:

“Following today’s Government decision I am publishing by way of Interim Report the reasoning behind the request from the Mother and Baby Homes Commission for an extended time frame for the publication of two reports, namely the Report of the Confidential Committee on witness hearings and the Report of the Academic Social History.

The case put forward for the extension was convincing. The Commission points out that the number of confidential hearings with witnesses is expected to reach 500 with 150 witnesses already meeting with the Confidential Committee to date.

The Commission has also identified a large volume of new information which is relevant to the Social History Report.

Allowing the additional time requested to conclude this research will significantly enhance our understanding of how society treated vulnerable mothers and children in these homes, and how attitudes, policy and legislation changed over the period.

I accept that the extension will cause disappointment, and I have asked that representative groups are fully informed not just about the decision but the background on which it was made. I will make arrangements to meet representative groups in September”

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. The Interim Report of the Commission of Investigation (Mother and Baby Homes and certain related Matters) dated 12 July 2016 is attached [here](#)
2. [Frequently Asked Questions](#) - Government approves additional time for the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes to complete the Confidential Committee and Social History Reports
3. The Terms of Reference for the Commission of Investigation (Mother and Baby Homes and certain related Matters) are available [here](#) as a Schedule to Statutory Instrument No. 57 of 2015.

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