

Chapter 4:

Working methods, procedures and data protection

Summary:

This Chapter details the working methods and procedures of the Committee, as well as the arrangements adopted to comply with data protection legislation. It also sets out the levels of cooperation provided to the Committee by all parties.

The Committee used a wide range of archives and sources in the course of its work, including:

- *State records including files and records of Government Departments, records of other relevant State bodies and agencies (Probation Service, An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service, the Prison Service, the Health Service Executive, Local Authorities, Ordnance Survey Ireland, the Defence Forces and the Health and Safety Authority) as well as Oireachtas debates, and the Reports of previous inquiries (whether previously published or not);*
- *The archives of the Religious Congregations which operated the Laundries and the archives of each Diocese in which a Magdalen Laundry was located;*
- *Archives of relevant non-governmental bodies and organisations; and*
- *Publicly available sources such as newspaper archives and academic publications.*

The Committee also met with and received input from:

- *Retired civil and public servants, including retired members of An Garda Síochána, retired Probation Officers, retired Factories Inspectors and retired Prison Officers;*
- *The Religious Sisters who operated and worked in the Magdalen Laundries;*
- *The women who were admitted to and worked there;*
- *Representative and Advocacy Groups; and*
- *Historians.*

The challenges in carrying out searches were significant, given the lack of uniform practices for registration or tracking of files across Government Departments or State agencies. Further, even where file tracking systems exist, they generally identify only the file name or title, and not all its contents. Full hand-searches of files the titles of which suggested any possible link to areas of relevance to the Magdalen Laundries were necessary.

Many of the categories of records relevant to the Committee's work contained sensitive personal data relating to identifiable women. Accordingly, it was necessary to make appropriate legal arrangements to permit access to these records by the Committee. An Order was made by the Minister for Justice and Equality under the Data Protection Acts to permit such disclosure to the Committee.

In light of the sensitivity of the topic, the Committee also had regard to broader principles of privacy and confidentiality and decided that no woman who was admitted to a Magdalen Laundry would be named or otherwise identified by the Report, regardless of whether she was living or deceased.

Full cooperation was offered to the Committee by all groups, namely the Religious Congregations who operated the Magdalen Laundries, Government Departments and other State agencies and bodies, non-state agencies and organisations, representative and advocacy groups and the women who were admitted to and worked in the Magdalen Laundries.

A. Working methods and sources

1. The Committee faced significant challenges in its work. Prime among these challenges was the scattered and fragmented nature of relevant official records at the time of commencement of the Committee's work. This Chapter sets out the sources utilised by the Committee in its work, the condition of the records and the extent of searches carried out.

a. Sources

2. A wide range of archives and sources were utilised by the Committee in the course of its work.
3. Each of the four relevant Religious Congregations maintain archives, all of which were opened fully and without restriction to the Committee.
4. The archives of each Diocese in which a Magdalen Laundry was located were also searched in the course of the Committee's work, namely Dublin Diocesan Archive and the Diocesan archives at Limerick, Cork and Ross, Galway, Waterford and Ferns (in respect of the New Ross Laundry).
5. The files of the relevant Government Departments (including historic files deposited with National Archives) were a key source and focus for the Committee's searches. These searches were not confined to the six Departments represented on the Committee, but rather extended to all relevant Departments.
6. All Oireachtas debates were also reviewed, including historic debates on draft legislation, Parliamentary Questions and other debates in both Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann over the full course of the time-frame covered by the Committee.
7. The Committee also reviewed the Reports and findings of Committees and Inquiries, whether they were previously published or not. Some of these Reports are well-known, while others have over time been largely forgotten, but were nonetheless examined in pursuit of any information of value and relevance to the work of the Committee.
8. The records of other relevant State bodies and agencies were also searched, including services such as the Probation Service, An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service, the Prison Service, the Health Service

Executive, Local Authorities, Ordnance Survey Ireland, the Defence Forces Military Archives and the Health and Safety Authority.

9. The Committee did not confine itself to paper searches in that regard – the experience and memories of retired civil and public servants were explored, including through interviews with retired members of An Garda Síochána, Probation Officers, Factories Inspectors, Prison Officers and so on.
10. The archives of non-governmental bodies and organisations were also reviewed, where they were considered to hold potentially relevant records. The historic archives of the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (“ISPCC”¹) were key among these sources, although other organisations were also consulted including the Legion of Mary, the Salvation Army, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and Cúnamh (formerly the “Catholic Protection and Rescue Society”).
11. Publicly available sources were also explored. Newspaper archives, in particular regional and local newspapers, were searched. Academic research and other publications were also reviewed by the Committee.
12. Finally, and with the agreement of the Committee, the Chair also sought out and facilitated the sharing of stories with the Committee by the people directly concerned – the Sisters who operated and worked in the Magdalen Laundries and the women who were admitted to and worked there.

b. Condition of the records of the Religious Congregations

13. The archive of the Good Shepherd Sisters is professionally archived and quite a full collection. It includes separate Registers recording the entry of women to each of the four Magdalen Laundries operated by the Congregation. Registers for the Limerick, Cork and Waterford Laundries in general include the following information: Name; class name; date of entry; age on entry; county of origin; family status (whether parents are living or

¹ Until 1956 called the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (“NSPCC”)

- dead); by whom referred and date of exit. By comparison, the New Ross Register generally includes less detailed information. The archive also includes other ancillary materials, including Annals, financial ledgers, photographs, maps, and a limited amount of correspondence.
14. The archive of the Order of Our Lady of Charity is also quite a complete collection which has been professionally archived. It similarly includes Registers recording entries to both Magdalen Laundries operated by the Congregation. These Registers, for High Park and Sean McDermott Street, in general include details of the girls and women who entered as follows: Name; class name; date of entry; age on entry; county of origin; family status (whether parents are living or dead). The details of route of entry are included in some but not all cases; as is the case for the date of exit. The archive includes many other records, including Annals, financial ledgers, correspondence, photographs, maps, video footage, records relating to laundry machinery, correspondence and so on.
 15. The archive of the Religious Sisters of Charity includes separate Registers for both Magdalen Laundries operated by the Congregation. The Registers for the Laundries at Donnybrook and Peacock Lane, Cork, in general include details as follows: Name; date of entry; age on entry; county of origin; family status (whether parents living or dead) and date and details of exit. The details of routes of referral are included in some but not all cases. The archive includes other records such as Annals; financial ledgers; a number of individual case-files and so on.
 16. The Sisters of Mercy have a professionally organised archive of all surviving information in relation to its operations. However less information is available in relation to the Magdalen Laundries operated by the Congregation. The Committee was informed that the likely explanation for this is that, for much of the relevant time-period, it operated as autonomous houses, where record-keeping was perhaps accorded less priority than in the more hierarchical structures of other Congregations at the time, or alternatively that such records as may have been held in autonomous

houses were not centralised after union of the Congregation. No Register of entries to the Dun Laoghaire Magdalen Laundry (St Patrick's, Crofton Road) survives. A very limited number of entries to the Galway Magdalen Laundry survive in a partial Register. The archive includes other ancillary records in relation to the Magdalen Laundries such as publications, as well as a small number of birth, baptismal or death certificates and so on.

c. Condition of the State records

17. Different challenges were presented by searches of and for State records relevant to the Magdalen Laundries.
18. There is no uniform practice for registration or tracking of files across Government Departments or State agencies. In some cases and to enable tracking of files, a central Registry Section is responsible for issuing and maintaining a central log of all opened files and file reference numbers within the Department. In other cases, no such central management system is maintained to cover the Department as a whole, and instead, each Division or Section within the Department is responsible for management and tracking of its own files.
19. In current times, both these systems can and often are managed by way of electronic lists identifying the names and reference numbers of each active file. However a variety of historic file registration and tracking systems such as index-card systems also still exist side-by-side with those more modern methods.
20. Where index-card systems were in use across a Department as a whole, they generally operated as follows: upon opening of a new file, the file title would be recorded on an individual index card. These index cards were stored in alphabetical order in cabinets. When a particular file was released to a particular official or Section, that would be recorded (in simple date order) in a separate handwritten ledger.

21. Regardless of which registration or tracking system is or was used now or historically in Departments, these systems identify only the *file name* or *title*, and not all its contents.
22. File naming practices vary considerably across Departments and, in practice, also vary from Section to Section or from official to official. Typically, the title given to a file is simply decided by the official who first opens and records that file. Inevitably, the system is open to the possibility of idiosyncratic or individual filing practices by officials, in the past or present.
23. The general approach to file maintenance also varies, that is, whether material is recorded and maintained in thematic, general or administrative files; or in more focused individual case or event files.
24. Accordingly, to identify records with potential relevance to State involvement with the Magdalen Laundries, it was necessary to find and hand-search all files, the titles of which suggested any possibility of a link to the Magdalen Laundries. For example, key material was found in files named as broadly as “Public Assistance” or “Criminal Justice Act 1914”, as well as case-files including only the name of the relevant person and so on. As an illustration of the scale of the challenge, it may be noted that in all the searches conducted and in review of all the substantial information and documentation identified by the Committee, only one file included in its title the words “Magdalen Laundry”.
25. The possibility of mis-filed or unfiled records can also be added to these challenges. More detailed information on the file management practices of the relevant Departments follows.

Department of Education and Skills

26. The Department of Education and Skills, as a result of the Laffoy Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, engaged a professional records management company to catalogue Departmental files. Other than active

files (responsibility for which rests with individual units within the Department), a central database now contains details of files held in off-site storage, amounting to over 435,000 files dating back to the early 1800s.²

27. The records of the Department relating to Industrial and Reformatory schools consist of approximately 500,000 records including:

- individual pupil files (approximately 14,000);
- General files, including medical files;
- Journals and registers detailing admissions to Industrial and Reformatory Schools, applications for discharge and payment of monies by parents of children committed to those schools;
- Kardex cards (which give brief details of the children's parents, address, school attended and so on).³

28. These files have been scanned to a specific document management system ('File Magic') to ensure their security and ongoing availability. On the basis of all the above records, a database of approximately 41,000 children admitted to Industrial or Reformatory Schools through the Courts is maintained by the Department.⁴

29. It is known that some files are missing from the Department's collections. This issue was considered by the Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse ("Ryan Commission").⁵ The Ryan Report found that individual pupil files were held relating to:

"only 14,000 pupils, therefore 27,000 pupil files are missing. Of these 27,000 files, 18,000 relate to children who were admitted to institutions from 1936 onwards. From 1960 onwards the Department is in possession of virtually 100% of pupil records. Matthias Kelly

² Letter dated 16 September 2011 from the Department of Education and Skills to the Chair of the Inter-Departmental Committee

³ Id

⁴ Id

⁵ Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse Part 9, Chapter 1, Volume IV (paragraphs 1.187 to 1.224)

concluded that these files were thrown out in the Department's 'general clear out'.⁶

Department of Justice and Equality

30. The active files of the Department of Justice and Equality are tracked by a central Registry Head Office. All new files are registered with this Unit and recorded on the Department's Electronic File Tracking System. Further, the file titles recorded on the manual Registry Transit Books dating to the 1950s have also been entered into this electronic tracking system. An Index – Card system is retained for some earlier file series.⁷
31. These systems do not extend to the full Department- some units maintain and record their own files, as follows:
- Crime 3 Division maintains a separate records management system for security reasons;
 - The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service was established as an independent Executive Office within the Department and accordingly maintains its own files;
 - The Refugee Integration Agency similarly was established as an independent Executive Office within the Department and maintains its own files;
 - The Divisions of the Department responsible for Equality issues were originally based in another Department. When the function transferred to the Department of Justice, the records management and filing system in operation by the Division moved and were retained by them;
 - The Financial Shared Services Division has, since its decentralisation, maintained its own files given that file management from Dublin was no longer feasible. That Division has also been issued certificates under section 7 of the National Archives Act 1986 to destroy accounting or

⁶ Id, at paragraph 1.194

⁷ Letter dated 22 July 2011 from the Secretary General of the Department of Justice and Equality to the Chair of the Inter Departmental Committee

financial records such as invoices, payment system reports and so on after a period of 7 years.⁸

Department of Health

32. Records of the Department of Health are held on a Central Records and File Tracking System (“CRAFTS”). This system is divided into two separate databases:

- CRAFTS active
- CRAFTS inactive and National Archives.⁹

33. This system allows the Department to record the file title of all files throughout the Department and to track their location. The database includes approximately 290,000 listed files, the oldest of which date back to the early 1920s. Approximately 75% of these total file numbers are classified as inactive including some which, in light of their age, are lodged with National Archives.¹⁰ This database does not, however, include operational files of the historic health authorities, namely:

- local health authorities under the auspices of the Department of Local Government and Health from 1922 to 1947;
- local health authorities under the auspices of the Department of Health from 1947 until establishment of the Health Boards in 1970;
- the records of the Health Boards 1970 to 2005; or
- HSE records from 2005 onwards.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs

34. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs was established in June 2011. Historic records relating to child welfare and protection are stored and maintained jointly with the Department of Health.¹¹

⁸ Id

⁹ Letter dated 28 July 2011 from the Secretary General of the Department of Health to the Chair of the Inter Departmental Committee

¹⁰ Id

¹¹ Information Note dated 29 August 2011 from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to the Inter Departmental Committee

Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government

35. The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government does not have a central File Registry. Since the 1960s, each Division or Section within the Department is responsible for maintenance, registration and tracking of its own files.¹²
36. Each Section is identified by a prefix (e.g. PD for Planning and Development Section, LSS for Local Services Section and so on). Differing file numbering and registration systems were developed thereafter by each Section. The separate indexes to files, if any, are retained in each Section and there is to date no standardised system for maintenance of these indexes – some Sections utilise simple Word document lists of file names, others use electronic databases or spreadsheets.
37. A substantial number of files have, over time, been transferred from the Department to National Archives. Unfortunately, lists of the files so transferred have not been found within the Department or National Archives. The number of files involved is not clear, but the overall volume of materials may be gauged from the fact that there are approximately 5,000 uncatalogued boxes held in National Archives which originated in the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.¹³ These materials are not cross-referenced to any index and it is not known what files or papers might be contained therein.¹⁴ National Archives has begun a box-level catalogue of these materials, but a full assessment of what may be contained in the boxes will take some time.

¹² Information Note on file tracking within the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, issued to the Inter Departmental Committee in the Department's Rolling Report of 13 July 2012

¹³ Report of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government to the Inter-Departmental Committee

¹⁴ Report of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government to the Chair of the Inter-Departmental Committee

38. The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government considers it unlikely that any files relevant to the Magdalen Laundries are contained within these uncatalogued materials, for the following reason: on the establishment of the Department of Health in 1947, responsibility for health policy and the health function transferred to that Department. Following enquiries, the Department of Environment understands that all files relevant to the health function were transferred to the new Department of Health at that time.¹⁵ Accordingly, historic health-related files created by or under the Department of Local Government and Health would not form part of the holdings of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.
39. Files relating to other (non-health) issues relevant to the Magdalen Laundries which fall within the auspices of the Department, including the question of exhumations, were identified.

d. Attempts to fill gaps in available information

40. As is clear from the above sketch of sources, there are gaps in the information which was available to the Committee. In respect of the records of the Religious Congregations, there are gaps both:
- in terms of coverage, that is, the population of the Magdalen Laundries at Dun Laoghaire and Galway; and
 - some unknowns in respect of entries to other Magdalen Laundries, for example including routes of referral or dates of departure and so on.
- Conscious of this, efforts were made, wherever possible, to fill these gaps with alternative sources of information.
41. First, it was possible in some cases to identify women who lived and worked in the Dun Laoghaire and Galway Laundries from the records of the other Magdalen Laundries. This was the case where a woman was recorded, in the records of the other Congregations, as having entered from

¹⁵ Letter dated 23 September 2011 from the Secretary General of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government to the Chair of the Inter Departmental Committee.

either of the Sisters of Mercy-operated Laundries, or as having transferred to one of these Laundries.

42. Second, all available historic Electoral Registers for each of the 10 Magdalen Laundries were sourced and examined. These Electoral Registers were used to identify women who were admitted to and worked in the Dun Laoghaire and Galway Magdalen Laundries. The Electoral Registers were also consulted in respect of the other eight Laundries, to identify, where possible, when women ceased to live there.
43. Internal maps, schematics, photographs and video-footage held by the Religious Congregations were all studied. To complement these sources, historic maps of Ordnance Survey Ireland (“OSI”) were identified to establish with certainty the layout and extent of each site. The materials underpinning the OSI maps, including the original sketches made by surveyors and the so-called Name Books, in which owners or occupiers were required to sign and verify the names and nature of buildings or land, were also reviewed.
44. Despite these and others efforts described in this Report, it is probable that there are some gaps in information relating to the Magdalen Laundries which will never be bridged. This is, perhaps, to be expected in light of the span of time concerned and also having regard to the fact that in individual cases, some underlying or background information would not typically be recorded. This may be particularly true of cases involving informal referrals of girls and women to the Magdalen Laundries by their families. However, the Committee has taken great care to attempt to track down and review all possible source materials to minimise any such gaps, insofar as possible.

B. Verification and analysis of records

45. As is clear from the above, the work of the Committee included review of historical materials and analysis of a large set of data from a variety of sources. To ensure that appropriate procedures were used in the analysis

of the data taken from these records, the Committee consulted at an early point with the Central Statistics Office (“the CSO”).

46. The CSO provided expert assistance to the Committee in relation to the appropriate verification of the records of the Religious Congregations and the appropriate analysis of the data gathered in relation to the women who entered and worked in the Magdalen Laundries. The assessment and verification methods used by the Committee, under the guidance of the CSO, are set out more fully in Part II (Statistical analysis).

C. Data protection and confidentiality

Data protection

47. It was clear from the outset that many of the categories of records which would be relevant to the Committee’s work would be likely to contain sensitive personal data relating to identifiable women. This consideration applied not alone to the records of the Religious Congregations, but also to various records held by Departments and State agencies as well as documents held by a range of private organisations and archives.
48. It was accordingly necessary to consider and make appropriate legal arrangements to permit access to these records by the Committee, while respecting the legal obligations of relevant data controllers and the rights of the women concerned.
49. In relation to disclosure of personal data to the Committee, it is considered that the Committee is performing a function of a public nature in the public interest, that such disclosure and processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued and that it is not unwarranted by reason of prejudice to the fundamental rights and freedoms or legitimate interests of the data subjects.
50. Further, an Order was made by the Minister for Justice and Equality under section 2B(1)(xi) of the Data Protection Acts to authorise the disclosure of

sensitive personal data to and processing of such data by the Committee.¹⁶ The Data Protection Act 1988 (Section 2B) Regulations 2011 were made for reasons of substantial public interest, namely to ensure that the facts of State involvement in the Magdalen Laundries were established.

51. As a result of these legal arrangements, it was possible for data controllers to share records containing personal data or sensitive personal data with the Committee and for the Committee to process that data.
52. In performance of its functions, the Committee also operated in accordance with the requirements of the relevant Acts and Regulations. Data was stored securely and was processed only for the purposes of and insofar as necessary for the performance of the Committee's functions.

Privacy and confidentiality

53. Data protection law applies only to living persons. However in light of the sensitivity of the materials, the Committee also had regard to broader principles of privacy and confidentiality.
54. All materials disclosed to the Committee by the Religious Congregations were disclosed on the basis of a mutual understanding of confidence.
55. The Committee operated on a confidential basis and determined from the outset that no woman who entered and worked in a Magdalen Laundry would be named or otherwise identified by the Report, regardless of whether she was living or deceased.
56. Two considerations guided this decision to voluntarily apply the same principles to the living and the dead. The first and primary reason was a practical one - the Committee could not tell from the face of the records whether the data subjects were living or deceased. Further, given the particular nature of the records, it would be impracticable to attempt to

¹⁶ Data Protection Act 1988 (Section 2B) Regulations 2011, S.I. No. 486 of 2011

identify, through other means, which data subjects are living and which are deceased (absence of up-to-date information on location, possibility of name changes, and so on). In these circumstances, the policy of applying the same protections to the data, regardless of whether the subjects were living or deceased, was agreed as the appropriate approach in all cases.

57. Second and more generally, it was considered appropriate to adopt this position in light of the sensitivities of the topic. The fact of or the reason for a woman's presence in a Magdalen Laundry may in some cases be deeply personal and sensitive to more than that woman alone. The approach adopted by the Committee was intended to ensure respect for the privacy and dignity of these women, while in no way interfering with or impeding the work of the Committee and fulfilment of its mandate.

D. Cooperation offered to the Committee

58. An overriding principle throughout the entirety of the Committee's work was the desire to work positively with all those who might hold information of interest or assistance. Accordingly, the Committee approached its functions in a spirit of cooperation with all interested parties, in order to establish the full facts and their broader context.
59. Although cooperation with it was voluntary, the Committee received the highest levels of cooperation and assistance from a large number of groups, organisations and individuals. This fact contributed greatly to the present Report.

i. Religious Congregations

60. The four relevant Religious Congregations – the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity; the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy; the Religious Sisters of Charity and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd – offered full and generous assistance to the Committee, despite being under no legal obligation to do so.

61. Arrangements were required to respect the legal responsibilities of the Congregations as data controllers and their commitment to the privacy of the women who passed through their doors and their families. In light of the data protection arrangements set out in this Chapter, all four of the Religious Congregations agreed to give the Committee full and unrestricted access to their archives.
62. Access to the records of the Religious Congregations was a critical factor in the success of the Committee's work. Although full and extensive searches were carried out on the State side, no other information source could have provided an equivalent overview on the overall size of the populations in question, the routes of entry to the institutions, and the relative patterns of stay of the women of the Magdalen Laundries.
63. In addition, access to the records of the Religious Congregations provided valuable leads which greatly facilitated the investigations of the Committee into records on the State side, including in relation to financial subventions and so on.
64. The work of the Committee was greatly enhanced by this assistance - indeed its task would, perhaps, not have been possible other than with this voluntary cooperation of the Religious Congregations. The Committee accordingly wishes to acknowledge and thank the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, the Religious Sisters of Charity and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd for their assistance and cooperation.

ii. Government Departments and other State bodies, agencies or entities

65. The Government Departments represented on the Committee devoted significant time and resources to this task. Laborious hand-searches of catalogued and uncatalogued materials were conducted to ensure that, in addition to formally archived materials, other records which might not have been appropriately filed could be identified. Committee members and their

Departmental colleagues searched in all possible locations, including basements of buildings formerly occupied by Sections of their Departments, to reduce the risk of relevant material remaining undiscovered.

66. This commitment to uncovering the facts of State involvement was matched in other Departments, not represented on the Committee, which also carried out searches at the request of the Committee.
67. State bodies and agencies also provided considerable assistance to the Committee. Particular and extensive assistance was provided by National Archives, the National Library, the staff of the Oireachtas Library and in particular the Central Statistics Office. The professionalism and expertise of the officials in these offices was a considerable asset to the Committee and their importance to the successful conclusion of this process cannot be overstated.
68. The Committee also cooperated with and received valuable guidance throughout the process from the Irish Human Rights Commission.
69. Full cooperation was also provided by An Garda Síochána, the Probation Service, the Prison Service, the Defence Forces Military Archives, the Health Service Executive and the Dublin City Coroner. Assistance was also freely provided in this process by Local Authorities, and in particular Local Authority Archivists and Librarians, throughout the State.

iii. Representative and advocacy groups

70. From the outset, the Committee also fully engaged with a number of groups organised for the women who had spent time in the Magdalen Laundries, in particular the Representative Groups
- Irish Women Survivors Network (UK) and
 - Magdalene Survivors Together;
- and the Advocacy Group
- Justice for Magdalenes.

71. These three groups differ in their organisation, purpose and membership, but all contributed constructively to the work of the Committee. All three committed significant time and effort to their cooperation with the Committee, including by sharing their research and by facilitating access by the Committee to the direct experience of women who had, in their earlier lives, been admitted to the Magdalen Laundries. Each group made a valuable contribution to the Committee's work.

72. The Committee also cooperated with and received assistance from a number of other relevant groups. Some of these are focused on broader issues such as industrial schools; while others were informal groupings or associations of women who, in their earlier years, lived and worked in a Magdalen Laundry.

iv. The women who lived and worked in the Magdalen Laundries

73. As set out elsewhere in this Report, the Committee did not have a mandate to consider or decide on individual complaints, recommend an apology or to recommend or provide redress in individual cases. However, the voice and experience of the women who lived and worked in the Magdalen Laundries was of crucial importance to the preparation of this Report.

74. The Committee received the highest level of cooperation and assistance from these women. Submissions were received and meetings were held with all such women who came forward and wished to share their story and experience, including:

- women still in the care of the Religious Congregations, living in nursing homes;
- women forming part of the membership of Representative Groups or associations; and
- women who came forward on an individual basis and made direct contact with the Committee or with the Chair.

75. All information shared in this way was held in the strictest confidence and used only for the purpose of the Committee's investigations. The information provided in this way added significantly to the outcome of this process and the Committee wishes to acknowledge and thank these women for their generosity and courage.

v. *Non-state agencies, bodies and archives*

76. A variety of other organisations and archives also made valuable contributions to the work of the Committee. These include the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ("ISPCC"), the Legion of Mary, the Salvation Army, the St. Vincent de Paul, the Dublin Lions Club, and the Diocesan Archives of Dublin, Cork and Ross, Waterford, Limerick, Ferns and Galway.

77. The assistance provided by the Dublin Diocesan Archive and the ISPCC was particularly helpful to the Committee and added significantly to the outcome of the Committee's work.

78. A number of private professionals, in particular accountants and doctors, also supplied valuable assistance to the Committee, on a voluntary basis.

vi. *Historians and academics*

79. The Committee also had the benefit of presentations by or other input from a number of historians and academics with expertise in this area. These included in particular:

- Dr Diarmaid Ferriter, University College Dublin, author of publications including "Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland";
- Dr Frances Finnegan, author of "Do Penance or Perish: A study of Magdalen Asylums in Ireland" and historical consultant to the Channel 4 Documentary "Sex in a Cold Climate";

- Dr Maria Luddy, University of Warwick, author of publications including “Prostitution and Irish Society 1800-1940”;
 - Dr Moira Maguire, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, author of “Precarious Childhood in Post-Independence Ireland”;
 - Dr Eoin O’Sullivan, Trinity College Dublin, author of publications including “Coercive Confinement in Post-Independence Ireland”; and
 - Dr Jacinta Prunty, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, author of the forthcoming publication “From Magdalen Laundries to Family Group Homes: the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland, 1853 to 1970”.
80. The Committee is very grateful to each for their willingness to share their expertise and insights. Great generosity was shown by each of these and all made a contribution in assisting the Committee to understand more fully the operation and context of the Magdalen Laundries.