

# Looking after your information

What do you think?



**Easy  
Read**



Truth Recovery Independent Panel  
Seeking the Truth

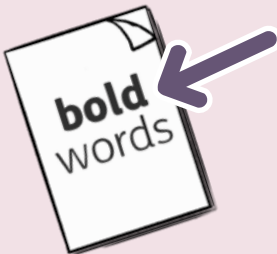
# Easy Read



This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the booklet.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

# What is in this booklet

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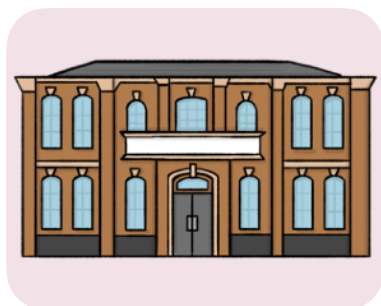
# About this booklet



This booklet was written by the Truth Recovery Independent Panel.



The Truth Recovery Independent Panel was set up to find out the truth about **Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses**.



**Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses** were where some women and girls were sent if they had a baby without being married.



Women and girls were sent there for a long time, up until the late 1990s.

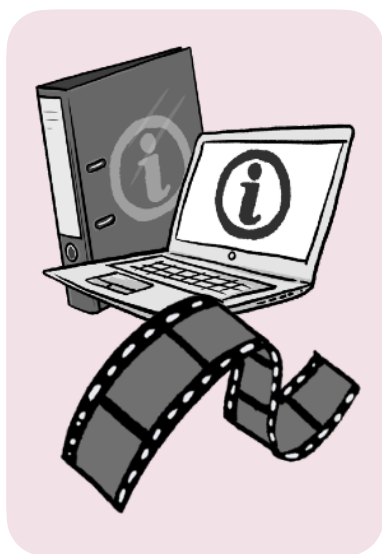


Please answer the questions in this booklet to tell us what you think we should do with all of the records that will be collected.

# What we are doing



The Truth Recovery Independent Panel must help make a new law.



The law will be about making an **archive** called the Truth Recovery Archive.

An **archive** is a collection of documents and **records**.

**Records** contain information that is not available in other places.

The archive will:

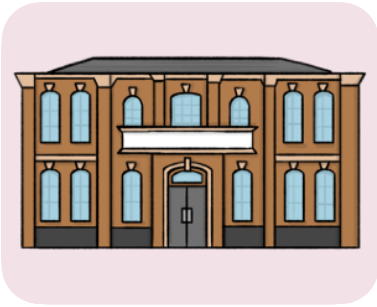


- Look after the records forever.

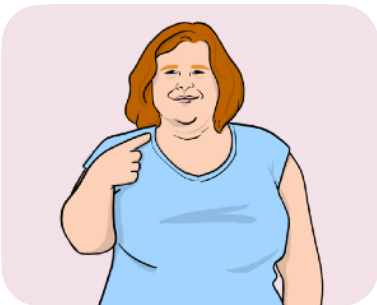


- Make its own decisions.

The archive will safely store records about:



- Places where people were sent to live.



- The people who lived there.



- People who were adopted.



- People who were in institutions or who were fostered.



We have also talked to people who have been affected by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.

# Why records are important



Records are important to help people understand where they were and what happened to them.



If we do not have records or cannot get to them, it can be hard for people to know where they were and what happened to them.



Not having records can also make it hard to understand how places like Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses worked.



We have looked for records about Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries, Workhouses and other places in Northern Ireland.



These records might be kept by government organisations or groups like churches.

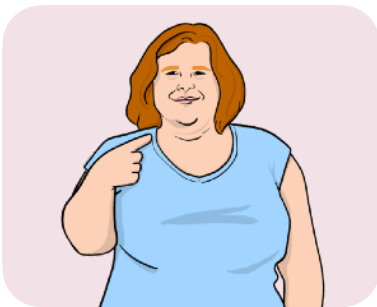




Making a Truth Recovery Archive will mean collecting all the records into one place.



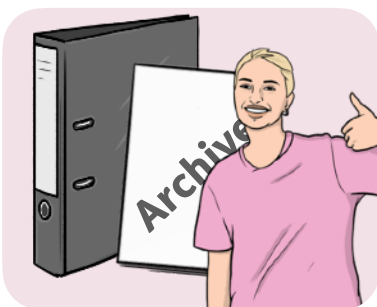
The archive will keep the records safe and make sure they are easy to find.



People who were affected will be able to see their own records.

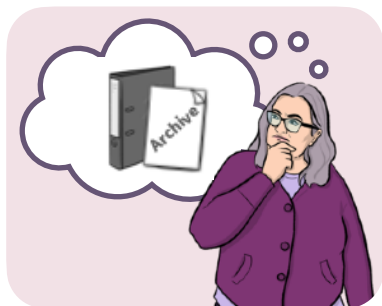


Other people will be able to see some of the records, for example, for research and education.



Victims-survivors will help to run the archive and make sure the records are looked after properly.

# Asking what you think



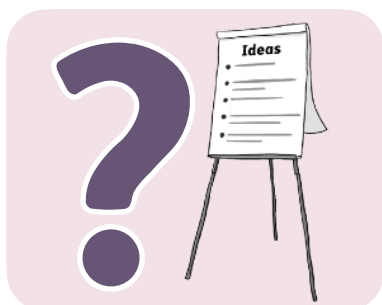
We have some ideas about what the archive should be like.



There will need to be a new law in the Northern Ireland Assembly to set up the archive and make sure records are looked after properly.



We want to know what you think about the ideas we have for the archive.



Our ideas and some questions about them are in this booklet.



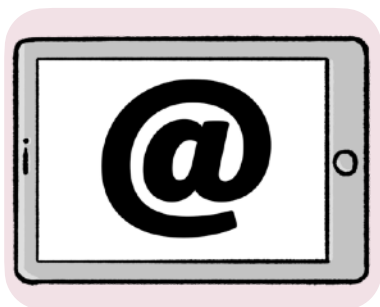
We will also hold events where you can ask questions.

# How to tell us what you think

If you want to tell us what you think, you can:



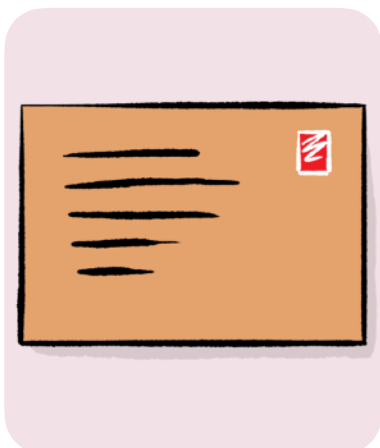
- Go to the online meeting, or meet with us in person.



- Send an email with your thoughts to:  
[secretariat@independentpanel.org.uk](mailto:secretariat@independentpanel.org.uk)



- Fill out a form online:  
<https://shorturl.at/Y7u0d>



- Fill in this booklet and send it back to us:

Truth Recovery Independent Panel  
4th Floor  
Equality House  
7-9 Shaftesbury Square  
BT2 7DB



You can send us your thoughts even if you do not go to a meeting.



You need to send your thoughts by 5.00pm on Thursday, 20 March 2025.

# About the words we use



This booklet is about difficult and sensitive topics. We know that the words we use are important.



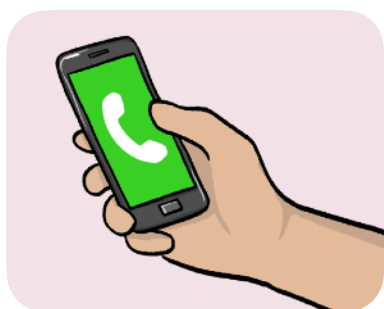
We try to use words that show respect for all people and their families who were affected by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries, and Workhouses.

# If you need help

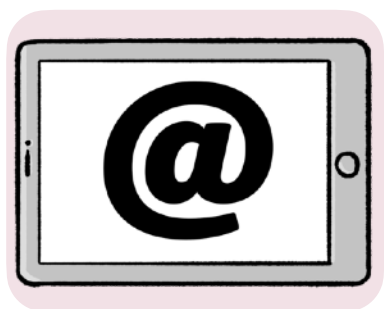


If you have been affected by what we talk about in this booklet, you can get help from the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS).

To find out more, you can contact VSS by:



- Phone:  
028 9027 9100



- Email:  
[enquiries@vssni.org](mailto:enquiries@vssni.org)

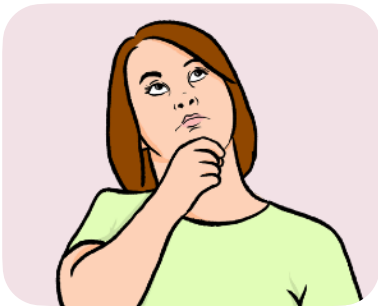


They are open from 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

# Our ideas and questions

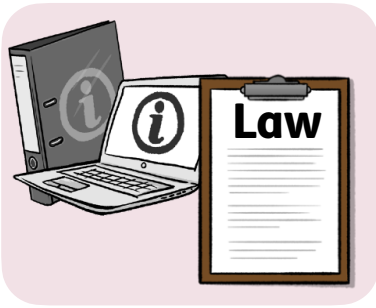


This part of the booklet tells you about our ideas about setting up and running the Truth Recovery Archive.



There are 8 ideas in this part. We will explain them and ask you what you think about them.

# Idea 1



The new law should say what kind of records the archive should keep.

The law should say that the archive should keep:



- All records about Mother and Baby Homes, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses, even if they are owned by people or private groups.

There is already a law about this, called the Preservation of Documents (Historical Institutions) Act 2022.

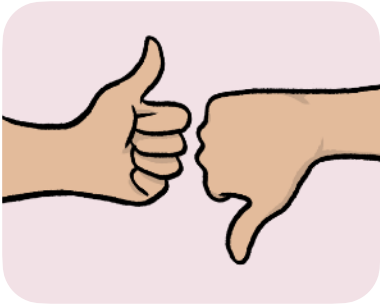


- All records about adoption and care in Northern Ireland, including documents from the Government.



- Other records that people may find in the future that are connected to our work.



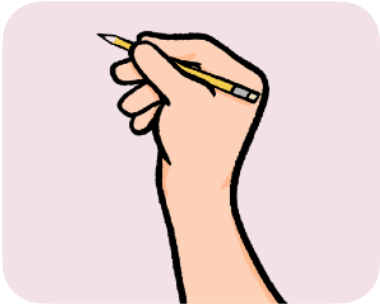


**Question 1a:** Do you agree with this list of records that the archive should keep?

Yes.

No.

I do not know.



**Question 1b:** If you think there are other records the archive should keep, please tell us in the box below.

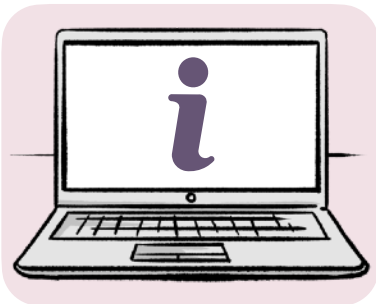
## Idea 2



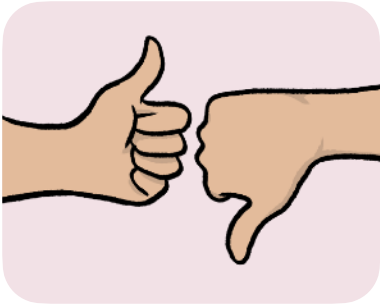
We think that records owned by institutions should be moved to the archive.



This includes all records that are mentioned in the Law called Preservation of Documents (Historical Institutions) Act 2022.



If records are kept outside Northern Ireland, the archive should be able to get copies of them on computer.



**Question 2a:** Do you agree that private records should be moved to the archive?

Yes.

No.

I do not know.



**Question 2b:** If you want to tell us anything else about what we should do about private records, please write it in the box below:

## Idea 3



The new law about the archive should say exactly what kind of things the archive must do.

The law should say that the archive must:



- Continue to get and look after important records from public and private places.



- Make sure that records are cared for to the highest standards.



- Support people who use the archive.

The law should also say that the archive must:



- Let people see as much information as possible while still keeping privacy.



- Help people to use the records and to do research.



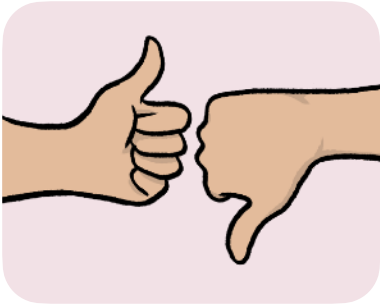
- Make connections with archives in other countries.



- Write a report every year for the Government about what has been done.



- Hold public events about its work.



**Question 3a:** Do you agree with our ideas about what the archive should do?

Yes.

No.

I do not know.



**Question 3b:** If you want to tell us anything else about what the archive should do, please write it in the box below:



## Idea 4



The law should say who should be allowed to look at the information in the archive.

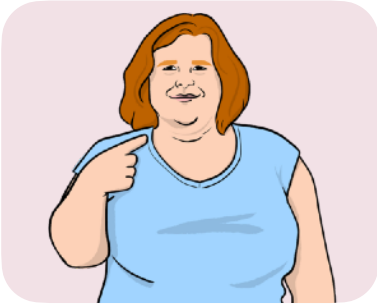


Some information is personal and needs to be kept private.



The law should say that people can add or correct information about themselves if they think it is wrong.

The law should say how people can look at the information, like:



- People looking at their own information.



- People looking at information about someone in their family.



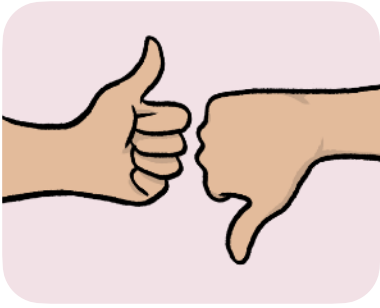
- Lawyers who are helping people look for information.



- People who are doing research.



- Journalists or other people working for newspapers or television.

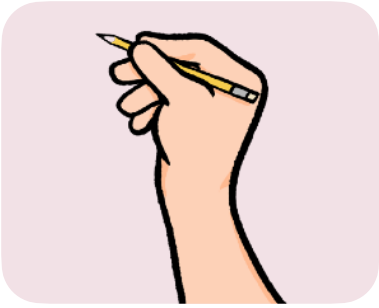


**Question 4a:** Do you agree with our ideas about looking at the information in the archive?

Yes.

No.

I do not know.



**Question 4b:** If you want to tell us anything else about looking at the information in the archive, please write it in the box below:

## Idea 5



The archive should work under the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI).

We think the archive should be part of PRONI because:



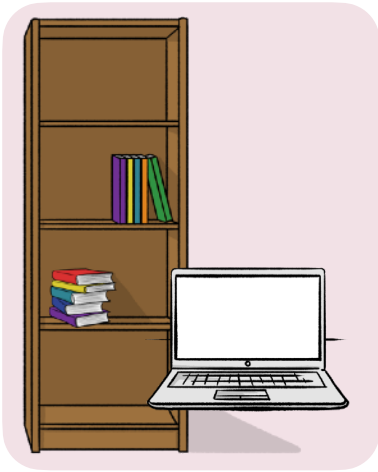
- PRONI is a good and trusted place to keep important information.



- The law already says that PRONI has to look after the sort of information that will be in the archive.

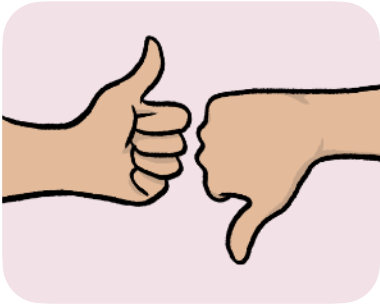


- PRONI is already working well with the private groups that have important records.



PRONI already has the right places, skills and equipment to keep and look after the records.

This means we do not need to find new places to store and manage the records.

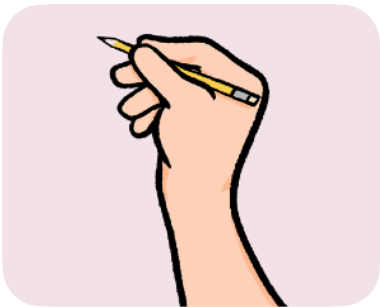


**Question 5a:** Do you agree that the archive should be part of PRONI?

Yes.

No.

I do not know.



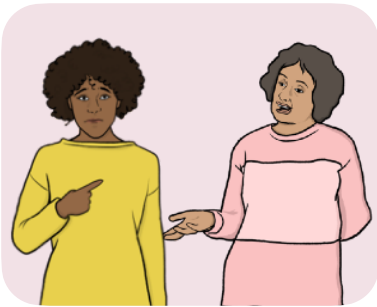
**Question 5b:** If you want to tell us anything else about the archive being part of PRONI, please write it in the box below:

## Idea 6



The archive should be run by a group of people called an **Executive Council**.

The Executive Council should include:



- Victims-survivors and people who speak up for them.



- People who know about looking after archives.



The law should say:



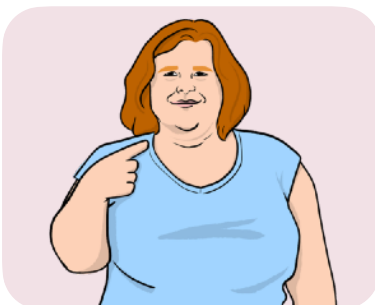
- How many people should be on the Executive Council.



- How the people on the Executive Council should be chosen.



- How long people should be on the Executive Council.



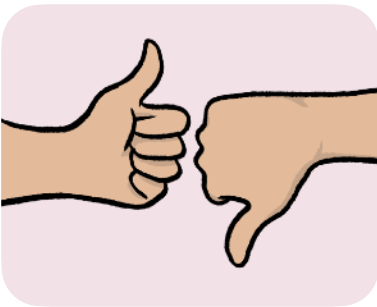
- How many people on the Executive Council must be victims-survivors or people who speak on behalf of them.



- How many people on the Executive Council must work at PRONI.



The law should also say that other people with useful skills and experience can be on the Executive Council.



**Question 6a:** Do you think that the archive should be managed by an Executive Council like this?

Yes.

No.

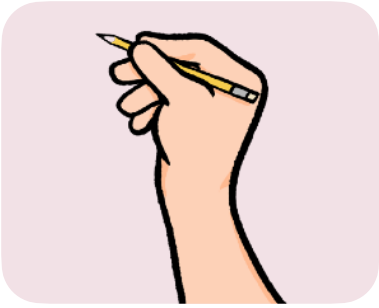
I do not know.



**Question 6b:** Do you have any thoughts about:



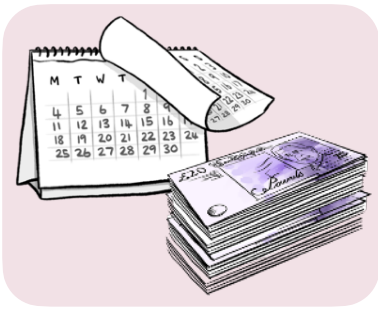
- Who should be on the Executive Council.
- How they should be chosen.
- How long they should be on the Executive Council.
- What skills they should have.



If you want to tell us anything about the Executive Council, please write it in the box below:

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## Idea 7



The archive needs its own staff and enough time, space and money to do its job.



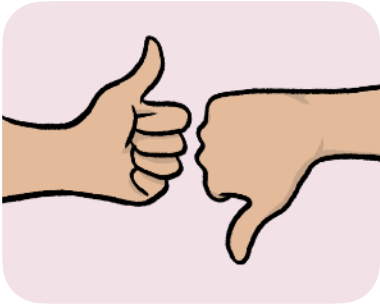
The staff should have the right skills and experience for the job.



The staff should also know how to help people who use the archive.



The space and money for the archive should not be used for anything else.



**Question 7a:** Do you agree that the archive needs its own staff, space and money?

Yes.

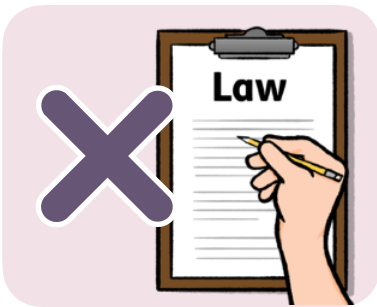
No.

I do not know.



**Question 7b:** If you have any ideas about what else the archive needs to do its job, please write it in the box below:

## Other suggestions



We have other suggestions about the archive that do not need to be in the law.

We are making these suggestions so that the people who run the archive will:



- Help everyone find and look at the information they want.



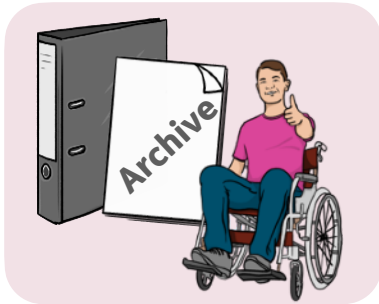
- Understand how **traumatic** this can be for victims-survivors.

**Traumatic** means a very upsetting or scary experience that can make someone feel sad or worried.

We think that the archive should:



- Be somewhere near the centre of Belfast.



- Be easy for people to get to and get around in.



- Have exhibitions and events in other places to tell people about the archive.



- Give as much information as possible online.



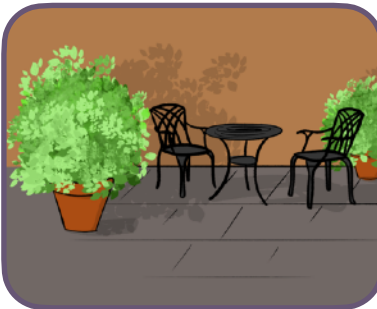
- Find more records to collect.



We also think that the archive should:



- Have spaces for people to look at their own records and get support in private.



- Have outdoor space where people can think and remember.



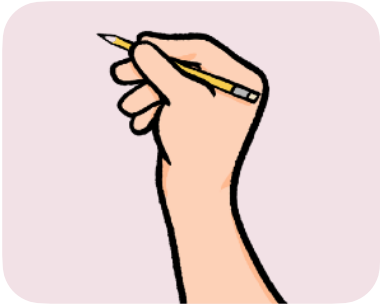
- Work with other organisations to help more people understand what happened.



We also think that everyone who works in the archive should have training about working with people who have been hurt by what happened.



**Question 8a:** If you want to tell us anything else about our suggestions, please write it in the box below:

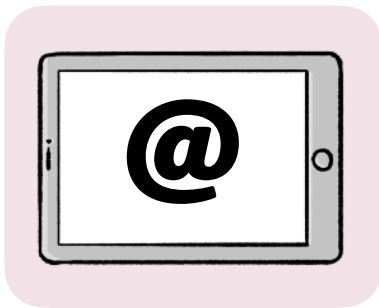


**Question 8b:** If you have anything else you want to tell us about the archive, please write it in the box below.

# Find out more



You can look at our website here:  
[www.independentpanel.  
truthrecoveryni.co.uk](http://www.independentpanel.truthrecoveryni.co.uk)



You can contact us by:

- Email:  
[secretariat@independentpanel.org.uk](mailto:secretariat@independentpanel.org.uk)



- Post:  
Truth Recovery Independent Panel  
4th Floor, Equality House,  
7-9 Shaftesbury Square  
Belfast  
BT2 7DB

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