



Independent Panel In-Person
Meeting in April 2024, Europa Hotel

Truth Recovery Independent Panel Newsletter

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Seeking the Truth

As Chair of the Communications & Engagement Working Group I am pleased to issue, on behalf of the Panel, the March / April 2024 edition of the Truth Recovery Independent Panel Newsletter.

Alongside me on the Working Group are Panel members, Beverley Clarke and Maria Cogley. We are supported by the Panel's Secretariat and media advisers Brown O'Connor Communications. On behalf of the Working Group, can I take this opportunity to give a brief update on some of the work we have been doing over the last few months.

On the 22 May, we launched our website, which we will continue to develop, particularly around access to records: www.independentpanel.truthrecoveryni.co.uk

Additionally, we have begun scoping outreach engagement plans which will run across key local stakeholder community groups and we are preparing for engagement across Scotland, England and Wales.

Best wishes,
Paul McClarey

Key Milestones

Below are some of our recent and upcoming key milestones.

22 May 2024

Website launched



29 May 2024

Leanne, Sean and Roisin appear at the TEO Committee



22 May 2024

Interim Report published



3 June 2024

Special Edition Newsletter - Interim Report

NEW FEATURE: “Meet the Panel”

Introducing a new feature to our newsletter - “Meet the Panel”.

Upcoming editions of the newsletter will include biographies of individual Panel members outlining their professional and personal background, and expertise in their specific field.

Each Panel member brings their own unique skill set, experience, knowledge and expertise to the overall work of the Panel.

Look out for Panel member biographies in future editions of our newsletter. This edition features the co-chairs, Leanne McCormick and Sean O’Connell.



Leanne McCormick

Independent Panel Co-Chair / Social and Oral History

Leanne grew up in Northern Ireland before going to Cambridge to read History, and after a year teaching in India, returned to complete a PGCE there. She taught History for several years in Edinburgh before returning to Northern Ireland where she completed a PhD at Ulster University.

Along with Professor Sean O'Connell, Leanne was the co-author of the Mother and Baby Homes and Magdalene Laundries in Northern Ireland, 1922-1990 research report, published in 2021. Leanne led on the archives and records aspect of the research for that report. Leanne is the social history specialist on the panel, leading on the archival research for the Independent Panel, working very closely with the Panel's specialist archivist Mark Farrell.

Her research expertise is on women's history, the history of sexuality and medicine in North of Ireland / Northern Ireland and the Irish diaspora in North America. She has published widely in these areas. Leanne is the co-creator of the 'Bad Bridget Project', which looks at Irish women who committed crimes in C19th and early C20th North America. She is also currently working on a project 'Queer Northern Ireland: sexuality before liberation'.



Sean O'Connell

Independent Panel Co-Chair / Social and Oral History

Sean O'Connell was born in Manchester. His parents hailed from Tuam, County Galway and Castletown Geoghegan in County Westmeath. He is Professor of Modern British and Irish history at Queen's University Belfast and has lived in Northern Ireland since 1999.

In January 2021, alongside Professor Leanne McCormick, he published the research report entitled Mother and Baby Homes and Magdalene Laundries in Northern Ireland 1922-1990. Sean took the lead in the collection and analysis of oral testimony that was used in that report. Together with our trauma informed Panel specialist, Beverley Clarke, and our linguistic analysis specialist Patricia Canning, Sean is leading on the Panel's collection and analysis of individual testimonies.

Sean has been an oral historian since 1992 and is an editor of the journal Oral History. He is the founder of Quote Hub, Queen's oral history website, which is home to some of the testimonies on mother and baby institutions, Magdalene laundries and Workhouses that featured in the 2021 research report.

BOX - The Panel's Secure Content Management System

The Independent Panel uses a secure document management system known as Box. This allows the Panel to apply a comprehensive set of security controls and protections to all information that it receives or creates.

Why Use Box?

Protecting personal information is a central concern for the Panel. The security controls in Box allow the Panel to ensure that access to personal information, such as testimonies, is strictly controlled so that the interests and well-being of all individuals is fully protected.



Who Can See Information On Box?

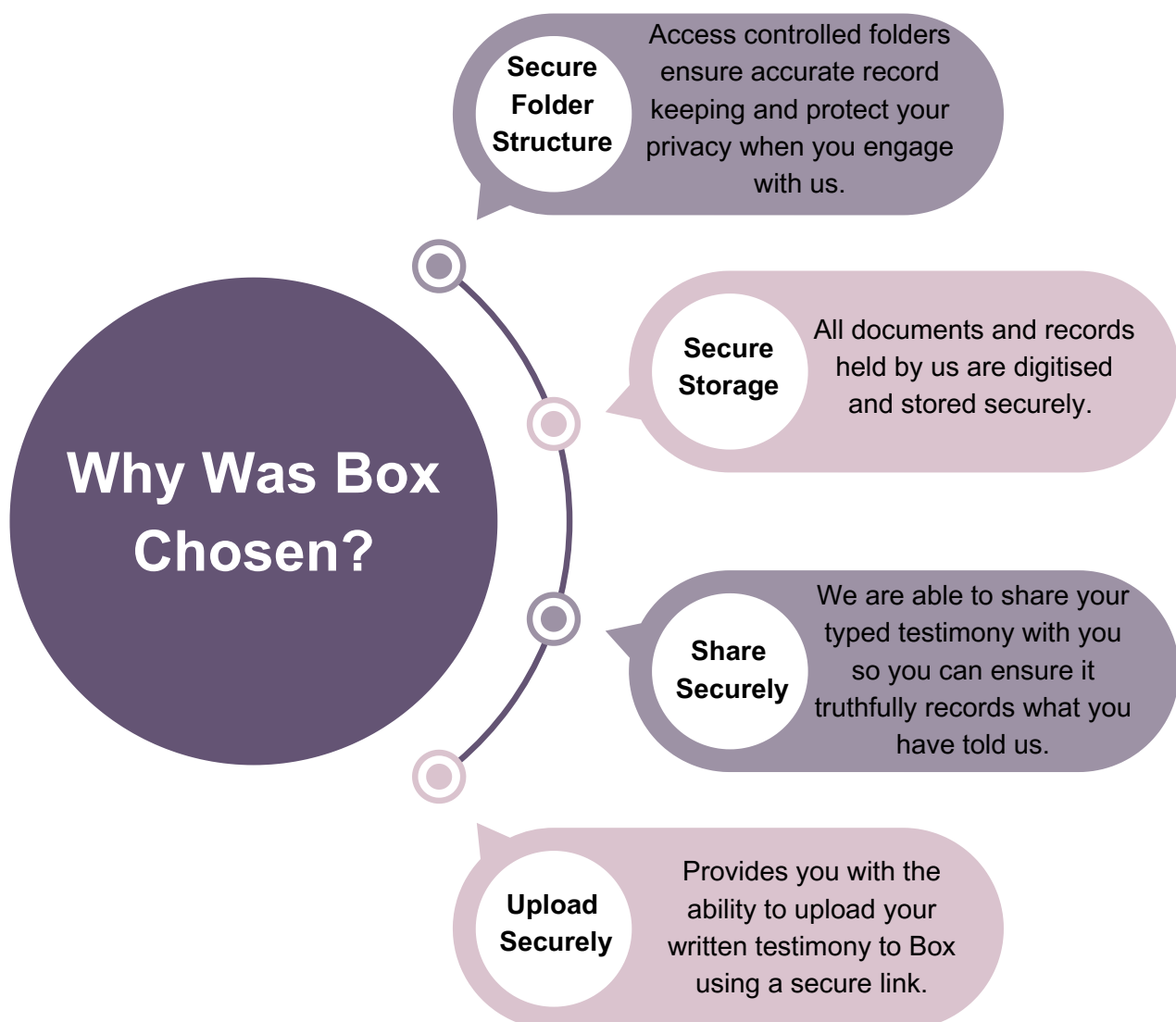
Information on the Panel's Box system can be seen only by the 10 members of the Panel, by the small number of researchers or testimony facilitators working for the Panel and by members of the Secretariat who provide administrative support to the Panel. There is restricted access to the testimony section on Box. Unrestricted access to

testimonies is given only to the members of the Testimony Team who are Sean O'Connell, Patricia Canning, Beverley Clarke, Testimony Facilitators and Testimony Administrators.

How is Personal Information Protected?

Information is saved into folders on Box. Anyone using Box can only see folders which they have permission to access. For example, testimony recordings and transcripts can be viewed only by some users, as detailed in the Participant Information Sheet.

Your testimony can only be accessed by other Panel members if you give specific permission for this to happen. The Box system tracks all actions and creates a full audit trail of what files have been accessed and by whom.



How Long Is This Information Kept?

The Panel has developed a Records and Disposal Retention Schedule. This is a policy which states how long information will be kept. It ensures that information is retained only as long as necessary, and in line with the consent given by individuals who come forward to give testimony. At the end of the Panel's work, information will be retained and transferred to PRONI if individuals have given their consent for that to happen.

Victims and Survivors Service (VSS)



**Mother and Baby Institutions,
Magdalene Laundries
and Workhouses**

On the 30 September 2022, the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) launched a new service dedicated to supporting the health and wellbeing of victims and survivors impacted by Mother & Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.

This includes those impacted by related institutions and historical adoption practices associated with related institutions.

VSS work in partnership with WAVE Trauma Centre and Adopt NI to deliver a range of support and services regionally across NI.

VSS will also ensure that victims living outside of NI have access to the support and services that they need. This includes dedicated health wellbeing caseworkers, counselling, complementary therapies, information recovery & family tracing, disability aids, persistent pain and a range of other social and welfare support.

For more information, you can contact VSS by:

Telephone: 028 9031 1678 (9am to 5pm Monday to Friday)

Email: support@vssni.org

Or visit their website: www.victimsservice.org

**KNOW SOMEONE ELSE WHO WOULD
LIKE TO RECEIVE UPDATES?**

If you are aware of anyone else who would like to receive updates on our progress and receive further newsletters, please ask them to register their interest and be added to our mailing list by emailing:

secretariat@independentpanel.org.uk