



Truth Recovery Independent Panel Seeking the Truth

PRIVACY NOTICE

1. About this Privacy Notice

We are committed to protecting your privacy. This Privacy Notice describes how and why the 10-person Truth Recovery Independent Panel (**'Independent Panel'**) and the Executive Office (**'TEO'**) will collect, use and share your personal information. It also outlines safeguards on your personal information.

This Privacy Notice is designed to meet the requirements of the [UK General Data Protection Regulation](#) (**'UKGDPR'**) and the [Data Protection Act 2018](#) (**'DPA 2018'**) (**'Data Protection Legislation'**). It explains your individual rights and how you can exercise them.

2. About this process

In April 2023, **TEO** appointed the Independent Panel. The appointment of the Independent Panel was based on the recommendation for an independent investigation outlined in the ['Truth, Acknowledgement and Accountability: Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses in NI' Report](#) (**'TAA Report'**). The TAA Report recommended the creation of an Integrated Truth Investigation which would be comprised of an Independent Panel and Public Inquiry. The Independent Panel will conclude its work in 2025. The members of the Independent Panel can be found here www.independentpanel.truthrecoveryni.co.uk/members-independent-panel

3. About joint controllers

Collectively, members of the Independent Panel and TEO are joint data controllers, responsible for determining the purpose for collecting your personal information and the way in which it will be processed (collected, used and shared).

However, there are important controls in place to restrict access to an individual's information both within the Independent Panel and TEO. For more information on this, please see Section 9.

4. Why will the Independent Panel process personal information?

The Independent Panel is examining the matters described in its Terms of Reference outlined in the TAA Report (the '**Terms of Reference**') and it needs to process your personal information for the purposes of gathering documentary and other evidence to enable it to carry out its work.

The Independent Panel will use personal information to:

- record testimony through a non-adversarial, disability-aware and trauma-sensitive process, ensuring informed choice in giving testimonies (confidential / in public; oral / written) and how testimonies are used (restricted to the Independent Panel / forwarded to the Public Inquiry / preserved in a permanent independent archive);
- examine and publish findings regarding experiences of individuals and families in Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries, Workhouses;
- secure the maximum possible publication of records and documentary material while protecting human rights, including the publication of personal testimonies with informed consent;
- gather, preserve, catalogue, and digitise relevant records and archives;
- provide archival, genealogical, advocacy, and any other necessary assistance, to victims-survivors and relatives to seek and obtain information

from records and archives relating to the relevant institutions and their practices;

- preserve its archive in full to be deposited in a permanent independent repository, ensuring informed consent for the deposit of witness testimony and compliance with data protection law;
- to facilitate access to, and engagement with, the Independent Panel;
- to communicate and provide updates on the Independent Panel's work.

All personal information supplied to the Independent Panel will be managed in accordance with Data Protection Legislation.

5. How will the Independent Panel collect personal information?

The Independent Panel collects personal information in different ways. Including, but not limited to:

- Administration records:
 - through records or documents obtained from a range of sources;
 - when individuals or organisations contact the Independent Panel by telephone, email or in other correspondence, including through online platforms such as the Independent Panel's website or social media accounts; and
 - when obtaining services in connection with its work.
- Testimony
 - from oral or written testimonies;
- Archival records
 - information from institutions, statutory bodies or other bodies

Most of the personal information that the Independent Panel collects is provided to it by individuals or the institutions / organisations relevant to its work.

6. What type of information will the Independent Panel collect?

The Independent Panel may collect personal information in relation to:

- an individual who was admitted to an institution relevant to its work;
- an individual who was impacted by the matters under examination;
- the staff who work in the institutions relevant to its work, and others who provided a service to the institutions, for example, social workers and counsellors;
- other matters within their Terms of Reference, including information that suggests a potential criminal offence has taken place, and which contains reference to statutory bodies, justice agencies and criminal offences.

Depending on your engagement with the Independent Panel, or your participation in its work, the Independent Panel may collect different types of personal information about you.

This may include your name, address, and contact information. It could also include highly personal and sensitive information such as your date of birth, gender, medical records, adoption records and so forth. Medical records and adoption records are highly personal / sensitive information, so will be identified as 'Special Category' and handled in accordance with Data Protection Legislation.

You are not required by law to provide the Independent Panel with your personal information. If you choose not to provide your personal information to the Independent Panel, it will not be possible for the Independent Panel to include your experience in its evidence-gathering process or to provide you with any other necessary assistance in relation to its work.

7. What is the lawful basis for the Independent Panel collecting personal information?

To comply with UK Data Protection Legislation, the Independent Panel must have a lawful basis for processing any personal information.

The Independent Panel, in processing personal information, relies on the conditions set out in the UKGDPR:

- Article 5(1)(a) – “the data subject has given consent to the processing of his or her personal data for one of more specific purposes”;

In regard to processing ‘Special Category’ person information, the Independent Panel relies on:

- UKGDPR Article 9(2)(a) – “if the data subject has given explicit consent to the processing of those personal data for one or more specified purposes”.

All processing of personal information carried out by the Independent Panel is a necessity to facilitate its work (as described in the Terms of Reference) in the public interest.

8. Who the Independent Panel may share personal information with?

The Independent Panel may need to share your personal information with other organisations or bodies. However, it will not do this without your written consent.

An exception to the above is that, if you choose to name a specific individual who may have committed a crime, the Independent Panel will be duty-bound to report the information, your name and your contact details to the police or other relevant authorities if:

- (1) we believe there is a current child protection concern (in other words, that children may be suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm),
- (2) we believe that a person is at risk of serious harm, or

- (3) you disclose information about any person who was engaged in a criminal activity that might be expected to attract a custodial sentence of 5 years or more.

In this case, the personal information will be processed in accordance with the provisions set out in Part 3 of the DPA 2018.

As a safeguard, and in compliance with Data Protection Legislation, we will ensure that Data Sharing Agreements are in place with the organisation or body that the information will be shared with.

The Independent Panel may share your information with:

- the Public Inquiry, once established in statute
- the Public Records Office for Northern Ireland (PRONI)
- the Redress Service, once established in statute
- TEO

The Independent Panel (or TEO in the event the Independent Panel has closed) will contact you in writing to seek your written consent before doing so.

9. For how long will the Independent Panel keep personal information?

All personal information supplied to the Independent Panel will be stored on Box - a secure and independent content management system. It will be protected from unauthorised or unlawful processing, and against accidental loss, destruction or damage.

Unless you explicitly consent to your personal data being shared as outlined above, access to personal information supplied to the Independent Panel will be restricted to:

- members of the Independent Panel;
- researchers working on behalf of the Independent Panel;
- support services on behalf of the Independent Panel;
- the Independent Panel Secretariat.

Where further restriction is requested, only those Independent Panel members, researchers and members of the Secretariat who have permission from the individual, will have access.

Unless you explicitly consent to your testimony being shared with the Public Inquiry, PRONI and Redress Service, only the following Independent Panel members will have access to it:

Leanne McCormick
Sean O'Connell
Patricia Canning
Beverley Clarke
Mark Farrell
Colin Smith
Steven Smyrl

Researchers working on behalf of the Independent Panel will also have access to your testimony.

TEO's Data Protection Officer (see below for contact details), may also need access to personal information in specific circumstances, for example, if you raise a concern about how your personal information is being handled.

All personal information will be kept for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which it has been obtained, and in line with TEO's Retention and Disposal Schedule. Our retention and disposal approach is:

- During the period of the Independent Panel, TEO and the Independent Panel are joint data controllers for the duration of the Independent Panel's work but subject to principles outlined above.
- Before completion of the Independent Panel's work, TEO and the Independent Panel will work with PRONI to retain administrative and evidential records based on an agreed retention and disposal schedule.

All personal information will be kept for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which it has been obtained, unless consent is withdrawn.

10. **What are your rights under UK Data Protection Legislation?**

- You have the right to be informed and you can also obtain confirmation that your personal information is being processed. You can find out more [here](#).
- You have the right to access your personal information. You can find out more [here](#).
- You are entitled to have personal information rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete. You can find out more [here](#).
- You have a right to have personal information erased and to prevent processing in specific circumstances. You can find out more [here](#).
- You have the right to restrict processing of personal information in specific circumstances. You can find out more [here](#).
- You have the right to data portability in specific circumstances. You can find out more [here](#).
- You have the right to object to the processing of personal information in specific circumstances. You can find out more [here](#).
- You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time. You can find out more [here](#).
- You have rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling. You can find out more [here](#) but please be advised that **no** personal information supplied by you will be used for the purpose of automated decision making and profiling.

You will not be required to pay a charge for the exercise of any of your rights set out in this Privacy Notice.

11. Alternative Formats / General Enquiries

If you have any queries about this Privacy Notice, need a copy in an alternative format or language, or wish to exercise any of your rights as a Data Subject please contact us at:

Independent Panel Secretariat

4th Floor
Equality House
7-9 Shaftesbury Square
Belfast
BT2 7DB

Email: secretariat@independentpanel.org.uk

You will not be required to pay a charge for this service.

12. Complaints

If you are unhappy with how your personal data is processed by the Independent Panel, you can raise your concerns to the Executive Office's Data Protection Officer:

TEO's Data Protection Officer

David Moore
Room E3.08, Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SR

Tel: 028 9052 6123

Email: DPO@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

You will receive a response within **30 days** of raising it with the Data Protection Officer.

If you are still not happy, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113

Website: <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

13. Changes to this Privacy Notice

This Privacy Notice is kept under regular review and will be revised with any necessary updates.

This Privacy Notice was last updated on 29 April 2025.