

Mother and Baby Homes Apology

I want to take this opportunity to say something about the recent scandal involving Mother and Baby Homes.

It is a scandal, an outrage and something that we must never forget or try to ignore. The state, the institutions and all those involved did irreparable damage to those who had no choice and were pressured into such homes, those who died in said institutions and those who still live with the scars from having stayed or being born in those institutions. They were abandoned completely. They should have been provided comfort and support. Instead they were locked away and forgotten about.

We did have one of these institutions in our area. Pelletstown on the Navan Road in Dublin 7, or St Patrick's Mother and Baby home as it was also known, was formed prior to the foundation of the state and continued in service until the 1980s. We're currently looking into what involvement we had in it in the City Council. What I can tell you is that the statutory basis for the delivery of services there consistently changed over the course of its long existence. Any and all records which may have been held by Dublin Corporation in relation to involvement in health, including Mother & Baby Homes, were transferred to the Dublin Health Authority when that was established in 1960, and subsequently to the Eastern Health Board which was established in 1970, incorporating the Dublin Health Authority.

We have no record of what material the Corporation held up to 1960 nor any record of the material transferred. Due to Covid restrictions we have been unable as yet to access the printed minutes and reports of Dublin Corporation. But we do have access to the indexes of the printed minutes and reports for the period in question. We have found 4 references to 'Pellettstown', which refer to the sewerage and water supply. We have also discovered a number of references to the Dublin Board of Assistance and the Dublin Health Authority, the majority of which relate to the appointment of nominees to the respective Boards.

Dublin City Council has commissioned research on the involvement of the Corporation, in Pelletstown and in Mother & Baby Homes more generally. The contents of the Corporation minutes and reports will be examined as part of that research.

For years these institutions operated under a cloak of secrecy. But I want to assure the public that we in Dublin City Council will be completely transparent about what the research uncovers.

As Lord Mayor of Dublin, I want to say to all the people affected by this scandal-On behalf of us all we are so very sorry that we let you down and we ask for your forgiveness. We have no excuse. All we can do now is promise to learn from our failings, and work hard to make sure nothing like this ever happens again.

Lord Mayor Hazel Chu