

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Housing Liaison Officers for Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools.

Who can access the Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer services?

Local Authority Housing Liaison Officer services are available to all Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools.

These services were introduced following Government commitments to ensure that this group of Survivors is prioritised in respect of social housing waiting lists, where they have a housing need, and to identify dedicated officers within housing teams to act as a liaison.

Each of Ireland's 31 local authorities has now nominated a Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer to provide support to Survivors, that includes information, guidance, signposting, and assistance on how to access local authority housing services.

The service is not limited to people already on a housing list; it also applies to Survivors who need help applying for social housing or understanding what other housing services are available including homeless supports, choice based lettings, rent and loan collection and arrears, maintenance of housing stock, private housing loans and grants, Traveller accommodation.

What paperwork will I be asked to provide to confirm I am a Survivor?

Local authorities aim to confirm eligibility in the most sensitive and compassionate way possible.

You may be asked for existing correspondence from another State body that already recognises you as a Survivor, for example:

- Letters from the Department of Education or Caranua.
- Letters from the Department of Health, the HSE, or confirmation linked to a Survivors medical card.
- Any official record showing you were in an industrial or reformatory school can be used. This may include redress letters, institutional records, correspondence from Caranua or files from State services (such as education, health, or social services).

You will not be asked to describe or relive your experiences.

I don't have records or paperwork to confirm I am a Survivor. Can the Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer help me get those records

If you do not have documentation, the Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer can provide guidance and signpost you to relevant organisations or state bodies that may be able to assist in confirming eligibility.

This process has been developed to avoid placing an unfair burden on Survivors and to ensure that all enquiries are handled discreetly, sensitively and respectfully.

How can I meet or make an appointment with a Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer?

Each local authority has a named Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer.

You can:

- Contact your local authority housing department directly and ask for the Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer
- Be referred to the Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer through Sage Advocacy, who can help you make contact and prepare for the engagement

Local authorities are in the process of publicly advertising contact details for these officers to ensure they are easy to find.

Who are Sage Advocacy and how can they support me?

Sage Advocacy is the national advocacy service for older people and also for survivors of institutional abuse.

In November 2023, the Department of Education requested Sage Advocacy to expand its advocacy service to survivors of institutional abuse.

Sage's nationwide team of advocates support survivors, on a one-to-one basis, to access information about services to which they are entitled and, where necessary, assist with accessing them. The advocacy service is consent and issue based, free of charge and confidential. The advocates act independent of family members, service providers and systems interests, whether church, state or institutional. The range of issues addressed on a one-to-one basis with survivors include financial, legal, housing, medical and social welfare entitlements etc. An independent advocate has no other interest than to promote, support and defend each person's voice and rights and will only take action at the instruction of and with consent from the survivors seeking advocacy support.

Sage also endeavours to address challenges facing survivors on a systemic level.

Sage Advocacy can be contacted at 01 536 7330, or email info@sageadvocacy.ie for further information.

What services will the Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer provide?

The Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer's role is to:

- Act as a point of contact within the local authority
- Provide clear information and guidance on housing services
- Help you to apply for social housing, if needed
- Help the local authority understand your circumstances so that services respond appropriately
- Signpost other specialist housing services within the local authority

It is important to be aware that the Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer does not include any processing or decision-making function in relation to any services that you may wish to access. The liaison officer's role is limited to assisting survivors by providing information and guidance, and to be a point of contact.

Are these services available to Survivors' family members?

Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer services focus on the Survivor, but members of the Survivor's household are included where their needs are part of the overall housing situation.

For example:

- A spouse, partner or dependent family member living with the Survivor
 - Situations where the household's accommodation is unsuitable due to disability, health or welfare needs
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Will the Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer meet me in my own home if I have a disability?

Where needed, alternative arrangements may be considered, in line with normal local authority practice.

Can a third party engage with the Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer on my behalf?

Yes, you may appoint a third party to engage with the local authority's Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer on your behalf. This person should be someone that you trust and you can nominate them to act in the role of your advocate.

You will have to provide the local authority with your explicit consent for a nominated third party to act in this way.

I don't have Wi-Fi or a digital device. How can I find out more about the Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Officer?

You can:

- Contact your local authority by phone or in person at local authority offices
- Seek support from Sage Advocacy, who can provide further information
- Ask a trusted support worker or family member to assist you in making contact

Digital access is not required to use Survivors of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Housing Liaison Of