



HIA

Record Recovery Northern Ireland

Contents

Introduction		p.3
1. Institutions:	Local Authority, Religious & State	p.5
2. PRONI & GRONI:	Info. held, Charges & Contact Details	p.10
3. Adoption Records:	Certificates and Adoption Register	p.13
4. Court Records:	Accessing Court Proceedings Transcripts	p.14
5. Medical Records:	Records from GPs and Health Trusts	p.15
6. Medical Records:	For Deceased Family Members	p.17
7. Template letter:	To a Religious Order	p.18
8. Data Protection:	Plus Freedom of Information	p.19

Appendix

1. Contacts	p.20
2. Counselling Services	p.22
3. References	p.22
4. Record Recovery Information Sheet	p.23

Advice NI is a registered charity based in Belfast, with over 60 members [advice providers] across Northern Ireland. We provide a range of services, meaning referrals can be based on the needs of the individual.

All advice provided is free, impartial, non-judgemental and confidential.

Information in this guide is correct as of June 2017. For further information, or details of local advisory services, contact us at:

Advice NI

1 Rushfield Avenue

Belfast BT7 3FP

02890 645919

arfawn@adviceni.net

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Introduction to Recovering Records

Survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse [HIA] are unique; they each seek records for different reasons and from various sources. However there are some issues to bear in mind before you start.

Gather Information: Decide who will carry out the search. This can be a distressing process, so if you do not feel up to contacting the Institutions yourself, ask a trusted relative or an independent advisor¹.

The advisory services listed do not charge for their services, unless clearly stated.

Your advisor should ask you to sign a Form of Authority, to allow them to communicate with the Institutions. You may also choose to pay a solicitor to write on your behalf.

Gather relevant Names, Dates and Locations for the time period in question; you can organise the information using the outline in the appendix.

If you are looking for information for a relative, all known names of the individual are useful, including Maiden and Birth names. Someone can go by a different first name to the one they were christened with, e.g. 'Rachel', when they were actually christened 'Janet Rachel'.

If you know the names of any professionals or Social Workers involved at any time, include this on your application to the relevant Health Trust.

Photo ID is often requested; you can get photocopies of your passport/driving licence from any local library for around 20p/sheet.

Support: If at any point your search is causing you stress or despair, call the following organisations to speak to trained counsellors in confidence.

Northern Ireland: **Lifeline:** 0808 808 8000

Great Britain: **Irish Survivors in Britain:** 02072727906

Eire: **Connect:** 1800 477 477².

Record Type: You can apply to more than one organisation for different records. You do not need to provide a reason; everyone has the right to apply for records held about them.

¹ A link to Independent Advice Services in Northern Ireland: p.18

² Further details of Counselling Services: p.19

Locations: Health Trusts often ask for the address relevant to the time period in question. So if you are looking for Social Care records from 1955-70, try to work out where you were living at that time. If you cannot remember, ask relatives or check your GP's records; these should include your addresses from birth.

An issue in tracking down records can be when the Institution closes or no longer operates on the original site. An example is St Patrick's Training School, Belfast, which was run by brothers of De la Salle.

Usually the Religious Order operating any such Institution should retain (some) records; however in this case, all records are currently being stored by the Youth Justice Agency (YJA).

Refusals can be made, for a variety of reasons. A frequent query is 'Why was I removed from my family?'. An identifiable reason or evidence may not be found, so it is important to manage expectations.

Not all records that are requested are released, and there are a few reasons for this.

- If records contains information that relates to another person
- if it is deemed dangerous to the individual's mental health
- Pre 2000 record maintenance and storage were somewhat arbitrary, so standards vary wildly between organisations.

Issues include:

- Transfer between manual records to computer can involve loss
- Records themselves may be sparse/incomplete
- Records being maliciously/accidentally destroyed
- Records may not be released if deemed dangerous to mental health of the individual
- Homes close/change ownership

Charges: There may be some Administrative charges for copies of records, depending on the organisation and amount/type of records requested.

Complaints: Any public organisation/Authority has to reply within 40 days, starting from the day they receive both the fee and ID. If they do not, contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)³. Call the helpline on 0303 123 1113, or email casework@ico.org.uk. Note: the ICO's authority does not cover any Religious Institution or order. The ICO does not prosecute for failing to provide information, but can investigate the procedures currently used by the organisation in question.

³ Contact details Chapter 7

Chapter 1

Institutions

Below are institutions investigated by the HIA Inquiry.

Local Authority Homes

Lissue Children's Unit, Lisburn

Kincora Boys' Home, Belfast

Bawnmore Children's Home, Newtownabbey

Fort James and Harberton House, Londonderry (added May 2015)

Juvenile Justice Institutions

St Patrick's Training School, Belfast

Lisnevin Training School, County Down

Rathgael Training School, Bangor

Hydebank Young Offenders' Centre (added May 2015)

Millisle Borstal (added November 2015)

Secular Voluntary Homes

Barnardo's Sharonmore Project, Newtownabbey

Barnardo's Macedon, Newtownabbey

Roman Catholic Voluntary Homes

St Joseph's Home, Termonbacca, Londonderry

Nazareth House Children's Home, Londonderry

Nazareth House Children's Home, Belfast

Nazareth Lodge Children's Home, Belfast

De La Salle Boys' Home, Rubane House, Kircubbin

St Joseph's Training School for Girls, Middletown, Co Armagh (added Nov 2015)

Good Shepherd Convents at Londonderry, Belfast and Newry (added Nov 2015)

Church of Ireland

Manor House, a children's home near Lisburn (added November 2015)

Contacts: Local Authority Homes

Records for these Institutions are held by two different Health Trusts.

See Chapter 4 for contact details and further information on all Health Trusts in Northern Ireland.

Lissue⁴ & Kincora: Records for both held by the Belfast HSC Trust.

Bawnmore: Records held by the Northern HSC Trust.

Contacts: Juvenile Justice Institutions: Youth Justice Agency

Re: St Patrick's Training School, Glen rd, Belfast,

Lisnevin Training School, County Down, and

Rathgael Training School, Bangor.

Information Held:

When you engage with the Inquiry, the YJA passes all associated records to the Inquiry. These should be copies, and the originals should still be available to you.

If you want to retrieve your records, e-mail or write (enclosing photographic ID) to:

YJA Records Management Section

41 Waring Street

Belfast

BT1 2DY

Charges:

There is no charge for making a request.

The YJA will check, copy and forward any information that it holds with regard to the individual.

⁴ There is a flat fee of £30 for records from Lissue

Contacts: Secular Voluntary Homes

Barnardo's Family History Service

Re: Barnardo's Sharonmore Project & Barnardo's Macedon, Newtownabbey

Information held: Barnardo's has an extensive archive of records about the children in its care. The oldest records available date from the 1870's.

Information held includes documents, images of children in their care, and the homes they occupied. From 1867 to today Barnardo's has cared for over 370,000 children in residential and foster care, and roughly 6,500 children in adoptive homes. The 'Making Connections' service holds records for all these children.

Charges: A basic record search costs a non-refundable £15. This will establish if there is any record available. You can complete a form on-line, or download a form that you can post:

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_history/working_with_former_barnardos_children-2013/family_history_service.htm

If Barnardos succeed in finding information, you can purchase different types of records:

Admission Package - £70 / Full History Package - £85

Both of these options should include (where possible), the following:

Admission History – A record compiled when the child first enters care, including details of parents

Precis – This is a summary of admission details, plus any extra information

Record Book – Details of family correspondence

These are just some of the types of records that are available; see Barnardos website for more details.

A Photograph Package can cost up to £20, with extra copies being provided for £5 each. If additional pictures of you or a relative are found, Barnardos will inform you when sending out the records you have requested.

Contacts: Religious Orders

Information Held:

This depends on the individual, and the record-keeping methods of the Order. Records held may include medical or disciplinary records.

It is best to address your request to the highest authority known. Include as much biographical information as you are aware of, e.g. Name, Maiden Name, Date of Birth etc.

You may be asked to provide a form of I.D., either yours or that of the person whose records you are requesting.

The Order may ask to be contacted through their solicitor; this does not mean the applicant [you] is obliged to use a solicitor as well! You can still make a valid request yourself, in writing. You may well receive a letter back, stating that the search may take some time, but do not let this put you off.

Any details of family members/siblings could be redacted.

If the Order does not contact you again, feel free to send them a brief letter repeating your request, and include the original date of your query.

Charges: The Orders should not request payment for the records.

Contact Details:

Religious Orders

Nazareth House St Joseph's, Termonbacca, Derry; Nazareth House Derry, Nazareth House Belfast; Nazareth Lodge, Belfast

First contact the local chapter:	If this yields no results, try the Order Archivist:
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Sister Annette O'Gorman Nazareth House Malahide road, Grace Park Dublin 3	Christine Hughes Sisters of Nazareth Archive Nazareth House 169-175 Hammersmith rd London W6 8DB
--	--

01 8338205/ +353 18338205 [from U.K.]	02087 483549
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St. Joseph's Babies Home, for records write to:

Family Care Society
97 Malone Avenue, Belfast
BT9 6EQ

02890 691133

De La Salle De La Salle Boy's Home, Rubane House, Kircubbin

Brother Pius McCarthy
De La Salle (FSC)
121 Howth road, Dublin 3

01 8331815/
+353 18331815 [from U.K.]

Good Shepherds Belfast, Londonderry, Newry

Sister Ethna McDermott
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
Province Administration
63 Lower Sean McDermott Street
Dublin 1
D01 AH97

+353 18711109
province@rgs.ie

Chapter 2 PRONI: Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

The Public Record Office holds millions of records and files, but do not let this overwhelm you or put you off. PRONI can be an invaluable source of information for anyone seeking records; PRONI staff are there to help and answer any queries. The website also gives comprehensive answers to many queries, from where to start, to how to navigate the various catalogues and systems.

There are also on-line records, guides and leaflets available, all designed to make record searching as straight-forward and stress-free as possible.

Information held: Public ('official') and private ('family') archives, as well as Government Department reports. PRONI explains the type of records held: http://www.proni.gov.uk/index/research_and_records_held/catalogues_guides_indexes_and_leaflets.htm

Examples:

The Reformatory, Industrial and Training School (*RITS/1-16*) archive ranges from 1874–1979. It contains registers for both female and male Protestant and Roman Catholic schools; you could look at dates of entry and exit. Files include Incident & Punishment Registers and Visitor Registers.

Nazareth Lodge Industrial School (*RITS/8*), Ormeau and Ravenhill rds, Belfast [incorporating St Joseph's orphanage]. Records range from 1914-48.

Nazareth Lodge Subscriptions (*D2740/3*) holds annual accounts, including subscriber's names and addresses.

It can be useful to look at the Annual Releases, where files previously closed are now released (either partially or fully), to the public. An example of this is 'Child abuse allegations, the **1984 Committee of Inquiry into Children's Homes and Hostels (including Kincora, Rubane, and the repercussions from the Hughes and Sheridan Reports)**'.

Charges: Advice and guidance are provided about accessing records held are free of charge, but other charges do exist: e.g. For remote copy requests (e.g. those received via post or email), a search fee of £15.50 is also added to the copying/postage costs.

How to Search:

You can visit PRONI or access their catalogue on-line. You can search the archives as well as request info from PRONI as a standard search.

Family & Local History Records include:

Church Records

PRONI holds registers of baptisms, marriages and burials. The Guide to Church Records can help you see what records are available for which parish.

School Records

PRONI holds records for over 1600 schools in N.I., ranging from the 1860s to 1940s. This can prove useful as records can include names, ages and addresses of pupils.

Hospital Records

Patient records for mental hospitals, however hospital records are closed for 100 years after date of the last register entry.

Court Records

The order books for the Petty Sessions' courts record minor incidents, and could prove useful if you are aware that a relative had appeared before the Courts [see Chapter 4 on how to access more recent Court records].

Wills

PRONI holds original wills for the deceased in N.I. from 1900-2004.⁵

PRONI Search Service:

This is limited to requests for specific information in clearly identified archives, e.g. a baptism or marriage in a church record. The aim is to give you a basic starting point for your search, or to uncover a particular piece of information. It is a chargeable service. To request a search, you can contact PRONI by e-mail or letter, or complete a PRONI Enquiry Form online.

Do not send any money in advance. When request is received PRONI will contact you

- if PRONI holds the relevant records needed to proceed with a search
- the search fee payable should you choose to go ahead with the search

If the information you require is currently closed to the public, PRONI will consult with the Responsible Authority who will make a recommendation as to whether or not the information should be released.

⁵ <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/family-and-local-history-records>

GRONI: General Registry Office of Northern Ireland

The General Registry Office is a separate organisation to the Public Record Office, and holds different records.

Information held:

- Births, deaths and marriages registered in Northern Ireland from 1 January 1864
- Registration Index of adoptions recorded in the Adopted Children's Register N.I. from 1 January 1931⁶.

GRONI also maintains the Adoption Contact Register, whereby an adopted person (or a relative) may register their interest in tracing family members. Further details on this are in Chapter 3.

Charges:

Assisted Search: £35/hour for a general search of records, assisted by GRONI staff. This covers any period of years and any number of entries.

Index Search: Computerised indexes are available for searching at a cost of £14.00 for up to six hours on the day of the booking. This cost includes two verifications of entries by staff, with the option of further verifications at £4.00 each.

An index search is when you can see the index only: if verification is requested a member of staff will look up the register and read the entry to you. Certificates relating to any entries traced may be purchased at a cost of £8.00 each but cannot be provided immediately. The certificates can either be collected from the GRONI or posted to you.

Public Search Room:

Here you can find computerised indexes. The index provides the name, date and place of event. Pay £7 for a seat to search records; there is no charge for seeing basic information, while 'enhanced data' costs 40p. You can write down any information you need instead of paying for a certificate.

More details can be found at

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/leisure-home-and-community/history-heritage-and-museums/research-family-history-at-the-general-register-office-ni-groni/research-at-grino-where-to-start.htm>

⁶ <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/introduction-groni-and-its-records>

Chapter 3

Adoption/Placement

If you are adopted in Northern Ireland, you have the right to get a copy of your original birth certificate, once you reach 18.

Anyone adopted before 18 December 1987 in Northern Ireland, and doesn't know their Birth Name, must have a meeting with a social worker in the adoption team of an HSC Trust or adoption agency.

Charges: Pre-adoption Birth Certificate: £15

http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/birth_certificate_application_of_adopted_children_n.i..pdf

There is a search fee of £8 if you do not state Adoption entry number on application form [this is found on any certificate issued from the Adopted Child Register].

Adoption Contact Register

GRONI operates an Adoption Contact Register. This enables adopted adults and birth relatives to be put in touch with each other.

The names and the address of the person adopted [adoptee] are held in Part 1, and the names and addresses of the birth mother and relatives are held on Part 2.

Should any relative apply for entry to Part 2 of the Register, it is the adoptee who will be informed of the relatives contact details. The adoptees personal information is not given out to the relatives.

Charges: It costs £9.50 to be listed on Part 1 of the Register.

Adopt NI

Adopt NI is an independent, regional support service for all those involved with the adoption and looked-after communities.

Family Care Society

Family Care Society is the largest specialist Adoption Agency in Northern Ireland. It provides pre and post adoption support, as well as other services.

Chapter 4

Court proceedings: Transcripts

Transcript requests should be made in writing to the Central Office, Royal Courts of Justice⁷. Proceedings transcripts are available from the Court of Judicature, Crown courts and family care centres.

Either a CD recording or a transcript is provided, and there are charges for each, depending on the amount of content.

If you want the CD, it needs to be you personally that submits the request. This is because the signee (you) is the only person permitted to listen to the recording.

If you prefer a written script, then an advisor can request this on your behalf, but in this case they need to provide 'exceptional circumstances'. It is reasonable to argue that participating in the Inquiry is indeed exceptional circumstances.

When making a request, include the following:

1. Full details of the case, including names of the parties, dates of hearings, the presiding judge and the Court venue

If you don't have all this information, send in request with what you do know.

2. Detailed reasons for making the request, including the purpose for which the material is required

It is up to you as to what you choose to inform the Court Service about this request; an example could be

'I was removed from my family at aged 10 in 1980, and placed in St Patrick's Training School. I would like to establish the reasons and circumstances behind this decision. I also want to establish the individuals and Agencies involved in this case'.

3. State whether you want a record of the entire proceedings, or just part.

If a request is approved prescribed fees will be applied. You need to pay this, as well as signing the undertaking in advance.

A response is usually issued in under 10 working days. Note that for cases heard before 2004, the court reporter's notes may no longer be available⁸.

⁷ Contact Details: p.19

Chapter 5

Northern Ireland Health Trusts

Health Records are generally kept in all the places where you receive care.

If you want to view your health records, you may not need to make a formal application. Nothing in the law prevents healthcare professionals from informally showing you your own records; it depends on the individual practice.

You can make an informal request during a consultation, or by phoning the surgery to arrange a time to see your records. Note that information released may be restricted, if deemed harmful to the applicant's mental health.

Information Held: If you want to make a formal request to see your health records under the Data Protection Act (1998), apply in writing to the holder(s) of the records:

- If you want to see your GP records, write to your GP or Practice manager.
- If you want to see your hospital/Social Care records, write to your local Health Trust.
- For any In-Patient Medical Records, write to the Medical Records department in the relevant hospital: all addresses on Trust website.

Hospital records can include a wide variety of information. This can include:

- Social Care Services Notes & Records
- Full Medical/Health Care Records
- X-rays/Images/Scans
- Consultant reports

All the Trusts have Information Application forms on their websites, which you can either complete on-line or download and print.

If you are unsure which Health Trust to apply to, refer to the Table in this chapter; it shows what areas each Trust covers, as well as contact details.

Charges:

NI Health trusts should always inform you first as to the charges, before sending out information requested.

Amount charged depends on the Trust and the amount/type of information requested; this can range from £10 to £50.

Be sure to include contact details so that the Trust can contact you if they need more information.

⁸ <http://www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/Services/recordings-of-proceedings>

Contact Details:**N.I. Health Trusts**

Health Trust	Area Covered	Address	E-mail
Belfast	Belfast Area, as well as Regional Services. For Knockbracken & Muckamore Hospital, as well as Social Care records.	Data Protection Manager Belfast Health & Social Care Trust 2nd Floor, Administration Building Knockbracken Healthcare Park Saintfield Road Belfast, BT8 8BH	info@belfasttrust.hscni.net
Southern	Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon, Dungannon, Newry and Mourne council areas.	Information Governance Ferndale, Bannvale House 10 Moyallen rd Gilford BT63 5JY	corporate.hq@southerntrust.hscni.net
South-Eastern	Newtownards, Down, North Down and Lisburn	Information Governance Department Lough House Ards Hospital Church Street Newtownards Co Down BT23 4AS	public.relations@setrust.hscni.net
Western	Fermanagh, Strabane, Omagh and Londonderry	Information Governance Office Main Building, Tyrone & Fermanagh Hospital 1 Donaghanie rd, Omagh County Tyrone, BT79 ONS	www.westerntrust.hscni.net/contact/1092.htm
Northern	Antrim, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Carrickfergus, Coleraine, Cookstown, Larne, Magherafelt, Moyle & Newtownabbey	Information Governance Office Northern HSC Trust Causeway House 8e Coleraine Road Ballymoney County Antrim BT53 6BP	info@northerntrust.hscni.net

Chapter 6 Accessing records of the deceased

When a person dies in Northern Ireland, their GP records should be passed to their local Health Trust. If you are not sure where this is, you can check N.I. Health Trust websites [details on previous page], or ask the surgery.

Records of the deceased are usually held for 10 years; the Data Protection Act 1998 prohibits the storage of personal data for longer than is deemed necessary.

You can view the records of a deceased family member, under the Access to Health Records (Northern Ireland) Order 1993, regarding records created after May 1993.⁹

It may be more difficult to retrieve records stored before this date.

Information held:

Application is restricted to those family members who are a personal representative of the deceased, or an executor of the will. It is important to note that certain circumstances can restrict the information released:

- If the deceased specified they did not want their information disclosed
- If disclosure is deemed to cause physical/mental harm to any person
- If disclosure identifies a third party

For these reasons, a medical professional may be obliged to screen the records before release.

Application Process

Contact the relevant Health Trust, who will supply you with the relevant application form. Complete and return form; you may be asked to include ID and any fee.

Charges:

No fee is usually charged if the records have been made, amended or added to within 40 days of the application being made. For historic records, the charge is usually £10, and the Trust will inform you if any charges are applicable.¹⁰

⁹ <https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help>

¹⁰ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/access-health-records-northern-ireland-order-1993>

Chapter 7

Template Letters

Below is a template you can use when writing to a religious Institution for your records. You do not need to include your contact telephone number. While this can be distressing, try to keep the wording as brief and business-like as possible.

If writing to a nun, address her as 'Sr', whatever position she holds; 'Reverend Mother' is no longer used. You may well receive a reply from the Order Archivist, instead of the individual you write to.

Name & Address

Date

Address of Religious Order

To Whom It May Concern/Named Contact

I attended the Boys/Girls Home @ Location. I request all records relating to me that exists on file. My details are as follows:

Name

DOB [or estimate]

Parents' names plus any MAIDEN names

Dates of attendance

Further details re: teachers/priests/nuns/locations known

I appreciate your assistance.

Yours faithfully, (if writing to an organisation/unknown individual) **OR**

Yours sincerely (if writing to a named individual)

Sign here, and print your name below

Chapter 8 Freedom of Information & Data Protection

Freedom of Information (FOI) is the Act that is well-known; however when you are accessing your own personal records it is **Data Protection** that you will be applying under; the Institution should treat this as a **Subject Access Request (SAR)**.

FOI provides information on other individuals/the organisation itself.

Below is a template letter which you can use to request personal information.

Your address

Data Protection Officer/Manager

Date

Name and address of Organisation

To Whom it May Concern,

This is a request under the Data Protection Act (1988).

Could you please supply me with X (*what records you want*).

Please include copies of material which you hold in the form of paper and electronic records.

If I can help to clarify this request please contact me by email at (*your email address*).

Yours faithfully

(Your name)

APPENDIX: CONTACTS

Independent Advisory Services: Northern Ireland:

<http://www.adviceni.net/advice/index.cfm>

Alternatively, contact Advice NI with your postcode, for details of your local Advice Centre.

Independent Advisory Services: UK

AdviceUK,

PO Box 70716, London EC1P 1GQ

Tel: 0300 777 0107 or 0300 777 0108

PRONI: Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

2 Titanic Boulevard

Titanic Quarter

Belfast BT3 9HQ

<http://www.proni.gov.uk>

Email PRONI at pronidcalni.gov.uk

Telephone: (+44) 028 90 534800

GRONI: General Registry Office of Northern Ireland

Oxford House

49-55 Chichester Street

Belfast BT1 4HL

0300 200 7890

02891 513101 [if calling from outside Northern Ireland]

gro.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk

Barnardo's Northern Ireland

Director: Lynda Wilson

Telephone: 02890 672 366

Lynda.wilson@barnardos.co.uk

542-544 Upper Newtownards road

Belfast BT4 3HE

Barnardo's Family History Service

Service Manager: Kate Roach

Telephone: 020 8552 1004

Email: makingconnections@barnardos.org.uk **or**

familyhistoryservice@barnardos.org.uk

Making Connections

140 Balaam St

Plaistow, London

E13 8RD

Adopt NI

Unit 2, 18 Heron rd

Belfast, BT3 9LE

02890 454222

info@adoptni.com

Family Care Society

97 Malone Avenue

Belfast

BT9 6EQ

02890 691133

F.C. Soc Derry Office:

1a Miller Street

Derry/Londonderry

BT48 6SU

02871 368592

Royal Courts of Justice

Central Office, Chichester St

Belfast

BT1 3JF

centraloffice@courtsni.net

Counselling Services

Northern Ireland Lifeline: 0808 808 8000. Deaf and hard of hearing Textphone users can call on 18001 0808 808 8000. Available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.

<http://www.lifelinehelpline.info>

Great Britain¹¹: Irish Survivors in Britain.

Immigrant Counselling and Psychotherapy Service (ICAP) - Provides a free counselling service for Irish Survivors and their families in Britain. ICAP has bases in Birmingham and London and a UK network of counsellors.

Tel: 02072727906 Mon – Thursday, 8am – 8pm.

www.icap.org.uk

Fire Connect: 1800 477 477, Wed – Sun 6pm – 10pm

www.connectcounselling.ie

References

www.nidirect.gov.uk

www.proni.gov.uk

www.hscni.net

www.ico.org.uk

www.barnardos.org.uk

Irish Catholic Directory, 2014

¹¹ England, Wales, Scotland

RECORD RECOVERY INFORMATION

Christian Name

Middle Name

Surname

Maiden Name

Parents' Names

Institution Name & Location (s)

Dates Attended

Records wanted:

GP records/Medical Records/Social Care Records

Birth/Marriage/Death Certificates

Court Records

Adoption Information

Notes:

