



Historical Institutional Abuse
Redress Board

Annual Report 2023-24

This Annual Report is submitted to the Executive Office pursuant to paragraph 11(1) of Schedule 1 of the Historical Institutional Abuse (Northern Ireland) Act 2019. This provision requires the Historical Institutional Abuse Redress Board to report, as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year and send to the Executive Office a report on the exercise of the Redress Board's function during that year.

FOREWORD

In presenting this fourth Annual Report I wish to acknowledge the continuing perseverance and fortitude of victims and survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse to ensure the implementation of all the wider outstanding redress scheme recommendations and services detailed in the Hart Report and in the Historical Institutional Abuse (NI) Act 2019.

In our three previous Annual Reports we have comprehensively reported not only on the discharge of our statutory functions but also highlighted the realities and dependencies in operating our statutory functions.

I would like to recognise the continued commitment of Redress Board panel members, administrative staff, Executive Office (TEO) officials, Department of Justice (DoJ) officials, the Victims & Survivors Service (VSS), the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA), Department of Health (DoH), the Public Records Office NI (PRONI), the institutions, solicitors representing applicants and, most importantly of all, the victims, and survivors.

As of the **31 March 2024**, the Redress Board had received a total of **4,398** applications relating to **7,709** residential placements covering approximately **152** different institutions in Northern Ireland. On average, each application names approximately **1.87** institutions. Effectively, **4,315 (98.2%)** of all applications have been considered by a panel, **77 (1.7%)** are under progress and **6 (0.1%)** remain non-compliant.

As President, I am committed to the effective and efficient discharge of the functions of the Redress Board in accordance with the legislative framework, which governs the operation of the Redress Board, and by which we are bound, and I remain determined to continually improve those services for which the Redress Board is solely accountable.

I remain concerned that full delivery of all the wider redress scheme support services from all the other responsible bodies, as set out in Hart Report and required under legislation, to effectively support applicants to the Redress Board have not yet been fully delivered. However, I also recognise the efforts of TEO during this reporting year to promote all available wider redress support services including financial redress to victims and survivors through several media campaigns.

Conversely, I also observe that the anticipated increase in submitted applications predicted by some stakeholders resulting from the TEO and Commissioner lead publicity campaigns have yet to materialise.

The Redress Board will continue to take the opportunity to promote the statutory role provided by the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse, the Executive Office and the non-statutory support role provided by the Victims & Survivors Service (VSS), as we understand them, in all our communications with unrepresented applicants and solicitors. We have done so to date on the basis that

we have always considered it important to signpost help and assistance where we can.

In this fourth Annual Report we set out our performance measures and data, which I again consider demonstrates our commitment to continuous learning and improvement. As of the 31 March 2024 only **77** applications have yet to be considered by a panel.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all those stakeholders with a genuine interest in our operations that the Redress Board will statutorily cease to receive applications for compensation on 2nd April 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr Justice Fowler', written in a cursive style.

Mr Justice Fowler
President of the Historical Institutional Redress Board

FUNCTIONS OF THE REDRESS BOARD

1. In our previous Annual Reports, we have provided detailed and comprehensive commentaries on the establishment of the Redress Board, the underpinning legislation, the application process, the role of panels, the determination of awards and challenges.

2. For ease of reference the Redress Board responsibilities and functions, within the wider end to end redress scheme, are limited to the receipt and processing of applications, determining applications, issuing instructions to make payments of compensation to victims and survivors and the compelling of evidence where it is considered necessary in the interests of justice to do so.

NON-COMPLIANT APPLICATIONS

3. In previous Annual Reports, we set out our frustration at the number of **non-compliant applications** received, despite **98%** of applicants being represented by solicitors. During this period **27%** of applications were not compliant with Rule 4 statutory requirements, which is **9%** reduction on the previous year. We are encouraged that the time to provide the missing information, and the timely compliance with our more robust Rule 8 & 9 directions since April 2022 has further improved. Once again, we have made this information available to those statutory bodies who have the statutory powers and responsibilities to address this matter.

4. During this period the Redress Board also assisted the Law Society of Northern Ireland in preparing the *Historical Institutional Abuse Redress Process – Best Practice Guidance for Solicitors*. We are grateful to the Law Society for referencing and sign-posting much of the Redress Board's published guidance but more importantly for re-enforcing our key messages in relation to the specific roles and responsibilities of solicitors in advising applicants, assisting them in the submission of thoroughly prepared applications, explaining and adhering to the relevant declarations and their obligation to communicate effectively with their client on the progress of an application and any appeal. The Redress Board once again participated in the third annual Law Society CPD Information Event during which this new guidance was launched, and the Redress Board key messages once again communicated to solicitors.

SUPPORTING JUSTICE REVIEW

5. In July 2021, the NI Assembly passed a motion to undertake a review of all the constituent parts of the redress scheme and processes, including the respective roles of TEO, COSICA, VSS, the legal profession and the Redress Board. The First & deputy First Ministers tasked TEO officials to lead on the development of the Terms of Reference with Victims & Survivors groups.

6. During this reporting period, we participated in one key agency meeting, to clarify the statutorily compliant roles and responsibilities in relation to information retrieval of COSICA (supported by VSS) and the Redress Board.

7. As previously reported convention precludes the Redress Board from making any further comments on the Supporting Justice Review Recommendations at this stage other than we wish to re-enforce our position that the recommendations must be statutorily compliant and fully and carefully assessed from both an actual

evidential and legislative foundation. For clarity, the Redress Board will not operate outside its legal framework and expects others to fully discharge their statutory functions.

PROGRESS AGAINST REDRESS BOARD BUSINESS PLAN 2023/24

8. The purpose of the Redress Board Business Plan 2023/24 is to define a challenging set of indicators to ensure the effective discharge of Redress Board functions. These performance standards are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure relevance against known behaviours, compliance rates, and other business priorities as agreed with the Executive Office (TEO).

9. The performance standards reflect the Redress Board's and TEO evidence-based understanding of the realities and challenges of-

- verifying the attendance of applicants at over 100 institutions not investigated during the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry.
- the additional investigatory steps undertaken by the Redress Board to verify attendance in the absence of detailed institutional records through other channels – such as PRONI.
- the number of applicants that have attended multiple institutions.
- the number of incomplete and non-compliant applications.
- the behaviours and rate of compliance of all the various stakeholders with the legislative timescales and underpinning policies and procedures of the Redress Board.

10. The Redress Board Business Plan for 2023-24 set out 17 key business objectives for delivery during the year in support of our four strategic aims, which are to:

- deliver efficient and effective Redress Board services.
- deliver high quality services that support Redress Board Panel members and meet the needs of applicants.
- develop and lead our people to achieve our business objectives; and
- deliver a controlled financial and commercial environment achieving value for money and good corporate governance.

11. As of 31 March 2024, all **17 business objectives were exceeded**. All six of the administrative Performance Standards agreed with the Management Board and Executive Office in respect of service delivery by the Redress Board administration were achieved.

Performance Standard	
90% of applications for compensation received by post will be registered within 4 working days of receipt.	100%
80% of Rule 7 Notices will be issued within five days of an application for compensation having been registered on the Redress Board online application portal.	99%
80% of applications for redress will be listed before a panel within 8 weeks of validation of the application;	92%
90% of Determination Notices will be issued within five working days of receipt of the panel's Summary of Reasons.	98%
90% of Payment of Award Instructions for Final Determinations will be issued to the designated NICS Department within three working days of receipt of the award acceptance slip.	99%
Panel files will be prepared to a sufficient standard to ensure an annual adjournment rate of no greater than 9%	1%

12. The Redress Board has an aspiration to have **compliant applications** listed before a panel within **20 weeks of receipt of the application**. However, this aspiration cannot be categorised a Performance Target due to the complexities of the verification process under Rules 4 & 7 and the compliance with necessary Rule 8 & 9 information requests made by Redress Board during the validation process. These functions are outside the direct operational control of the Redress Board administration. The average time to process a compliant application during 2023-24 was **7.5 weeks**.

STATUS OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

13. As of **31 March 2024**, Redress Board panels have made award determinations totalling **£86,075,750** including Section 14 awards. Following section 13 actuarial adjustments, **£84,956,232** is payable to applicants. **£83,756,232** has been paid directly into the applicant or applicant's solicitor's account on receipt of an Acceptance of Award from the applicant.

14. During the **fourth year of operation** the Redress Board received **787** applications, a reduction of **268** applications on the **1,055** received during the third year of operation. The total number of **non-compliant** applications received during this year was **210** equating to **27%** of the applications, a welcomed **9% further reduction** in the number of **non-compliant applications** received in the third year of operation.

15. Of the **4,392 compliant applications** received as of 31 March 2024, **4,315** have been considered by a panel. The outcomes of those considerations are detailed in Table 1 below: -

Table 1 - Panel Consideration Outcomes

Redress Board Panel	
Section 14 Initial Payment Order made and still in place	4
Adjourned by panel for further information	1
Final Determination	3,390
Final Determination - Appeal Outstanding	9
Withdrawn before a panel	311
Total	4,315

16. The position with the remaining **77 compliant applications** is set out in Table 2 below: -

Table 2 - Status of Current Applications

Redress Board Administration	
Received yet to be processed	1
Waiting for information - Rule 7 response	42
Rule 7 response requires further investigatory steps	2
Rule 9 – Outstanding Panel requests	8
Validated - to be allocated for listing review	4
Validated - Scheduled for listing in April	20
Overall Total	77

17. There are **6** non-compliant applications as set out in Table below, which are being managed in accordance with Rules 8 & 9.

Table 3 - Current Number of Incomplete Applications – Unable to Progress

Solicitor/Applicant	
Incomplete applications	6

18. A detailed breakdown of the performance of the Redress Board during our fourth year of operations is provided at paragraphs 19-31.

FUNCTIONS OVERVIEW

Applications Received

19. Table 4 provides a quarterly breakdown of applications received by Quarter and Table 5 provides a breakdown of Priority Applications received by Quarter. It is noted that there was an **25% reduction** in the number of applications received during the reporting year in comparison to 2022-23 reporting year. This is the second operational year in row where there has been a significant reduction in the number of applications submitted to the Redress Board.

Table 4 – Applications Received by Quarter

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Applications Received 2020-21	245	334	380	314	1,273
Applications Received 2021-22	368	365	261	289	1,283
Applications Received 2022-23	369	266	180	240	1,055
Applications Received 2023-24	237	201	173	176	787
Total Applications Received					4,398*

** 28 of these applications did not comply with the Rule 4 statutory requirements and remain incomplete and cannot be progressed until the outstanding information is provided.*

Table 5 – Priority Applications Received by Quarter

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Priority applications 2020/21	58	64	79	35	236 (19%)
Priority applications 2021/22	38	32	31	28	129 (10%)
Priority applications 2022/23	30	21	23	23	97 (9%)
Priority applications 2023/24	20	24	19	23	86 (11%)

Age and jurisdiction of applicants

20. The average age of applicants continues to reduce and now stands at **57.8** for this reporting year. This is in comparison to **58.58** in 2021-22 and **61.38** in 2020-21. The number of applications received outside the jurisdiction during 2023-24 was **97** compared to **92** in 2022-23, **136** in 2021-22 and **266** in 2020-21.

Payments Summary

21. As of **31 March 2024**, Redress Board panels have made award determinations totalling **£86,075,750** including Section 14 awards. Following section 13 actuarial adjustments, **£84,956,232** is payable to applicants.

22. The sum of **£83,756,232** has been paid directly into the applicant or applicant's solicitor's account on receipt of an Acceptance of Award from the applicant. The annual quarterly breakdown of payments made is set out in the Table 5 below. The value of payments by Quarter in 2023 -24 is directly linked to the **25%** in the number of applications received during 2023-24.

Table 6 – Payments by Quarter

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Payments 2020-21	429,500	2,120,987	3,209,970	4,706,548	10,467,005
Payments 2021-22	6,189,035	7,453,637	6,438,078	6,700,474	26,781,225
Payments 2022-23	6,157,093	5,943,250	7,359,073	6,986,000	26,445,416
Payments 2023-24	5,978,916	4,969,500	4,539,410	4,574,760	20,062,586
Total Payments					

Panel Sessions Summary

23. Redress Board panels have met on **1,247** occasions considering. Table 7 below, details the number of panel sessions each quarter, which has increased or decreased in line with the number of **compliant and validated** applications that are ready to proceed for consideration before a panel. The Redress Board regularly reviews the number of panel sessions to ensure that there are sufficient panels to match the number of **compliant and validated applications** in order that it can flex up or down the number of required panel sessions. In this reporting year the number of panel sessions reduced by **41%** as a consequence of the **25% reduction in the number of applications received** during this reporting period. This is the second operational year in row where there has been a significant reduction in the number of panel sessions.

Table 7 –Number of panel sessions by Quarter

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Number of panel sessions 2020-21	15	37	61	82	195
Number of panel sessions 2021-22	95	109	113	122	439
Number of panel sessions 2022-23	111	103	93	80	387
Number of panel sessions 2023-24	66	59	50	51	226
Total Panel sessions					1,247

Panel Outcome Summary

24. Table 8 below shows the breakdown of **881 applications** considered at sessions each quarter. In this reporting year the number of applications considered reduced by **43%** as a consequence of the **25% reduction in the number of applications received** during this reporting period. It should be noted that the same application may have been before a panel more than once during this period.

Table 8 –Number of applications considered by panel by Quarter.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Number of cases considered in 2020-21	47	149	198	319	713
Number of cases considered in 2021-22	378	457	421	406	1,662
Number of cases considered in 2022-23	372	451	402	327	1,552
Number of cases considered in 2023-24	282	227	201	171	881
Total number of cases considered					

25. Table 9 below shows a breakdown of the outcomes of the **881 applications** considered at panel sessions. It should be noted that the same application may have been before a panel more than once during this period. Applications are withdrawn in the circumstances where an applicant has been identified as being over the age of 17, resident in an institution after 1995 or on the applicant’s own volition.

Table 9 – Panel outcomes by year

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total
Adjourned by panel	110	143	64	13	330
Section 14 Order	76	48	30	8	162
Withdrawn	22	72	147	76	311
Full Determination – no award	39	304	266	118	727
Full Determination - award	466	1,095	1,045	666	3,272
Total	713	1,662	1,552	881	4,808

26. Table 10 shows the breakdown of no award reasons.

Table 10 – No Award Reasons by year.

No Award Reason	Number	Percentage
Contradictory Evidence	13	1.8%
No Jurisdiction	94	12.9%
Threshold Not Met	620	85.3%
Total	727	100

27. Table 11 below sets out the total number of applications which fall within each band as set out in the Redress Board Banding Guidance. Please note that this will include the Panel Determination for any pending appeals and will show the Appeal Determination for any resulted appeals.

Table 11 – Breakdown of all Determination Awards by Band

Award Band	No. of Final Determinations By Band (Does not include S14's pending FD)	
	Number	Percentage
£10,000	499	14.7%
£10,001 - £29,999	1,733	51.4%
£30,000 - £49,999	724	21.4%
£50,000 - £69,999	321	9.5%
£70,000 - £80,000	102	3%
Total	3,379	100

Appeal Summary

28. A single judicial member has sat on 73 days during this reporting period dealing with the work associated with appeals.

Table 12 – Appeal Sitting Days by Quarter

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Appeal sitting days 2020-21	0	0	13	22	35
Appeal sitting days 2021-22	28	33	41	47	149
Appeal sitting days 2022-23	50	44	46	39	179
Appeal sitting days 2023-24	23	19	19	12	73
Total Appeal sitting days.					436

29. As at 31 March 2024, the Redress Board has received a total of **677** Notices of Appeal over 4 years of which **649** appeals have been considered. Of these **649** reconsidered appeals by a single judicial member, **202 were upheld**, and **447 dismissed** confirming the panel decision. The remaining **19 were withdrawn** and **9** appeals are currently being processed.

Summary of average processing timescale

30. The Redress Board has an aspiration to have **compliant applications** listed before a panel within **20 weeks of receipt of the application**. However, this cannot be a Performance Target due to the complexities of the Rule 7 verification process and the compliance with necessary Rule 8 & 9 information requests made by Redress Board during the validation process, which are outside the operational control of the Redress Board administration. The average processing time achieved for a **compliant application for 2023/24 was 7.5 weeks as 66% improvement on last year's performance of 17 weeks**.

31. The Redress Board has an aspiration to have **applications for redress listed before a panel within 8 weeks of validation of the application**. For clarity an application is recoded as validated when the applicant or solicitor has provided all the relevant Rule 4 statutory required documents, all the evidence they wish a panel

to consider, and that the attendance as reported by an applicant at an institution(s) has been sufficiently verified in accordance with the legislation. **The average listing time achieved for validated applications for 2022/24 was 3 weeks a 25% improvement on last year's performance of 4 weeks.**

32. The reconsideration of appeals, which do not raise preliminary matters, took on average **5 weeks** in 2023/24 compared to **5.5 weeks** in 2022/23. However, there were several appeals in which the solicitor sought to introduce fresh evidence or request an oral hearing. In many of these "*preliminary matter appeals*" the instructing solicitor had failed to detail the exceptional circumstances as part of the Notice of Appeal which delays the progression of the appeal by up to eight weeks due to delay in responding to the provisions of Rule 9. On average "*preliminary matter appeals*" took **9 weeks** to progress in 2023/24 compared to **14 weeks** in 2022/23.

GOVERNANCE

33. The Redress Board is a body corporate and operates independently and at arms' length from the Executive Office under a Partnership Agreement, which explains the overall governance framework within which the Redress Board operates and provides the necessary governance assurances. The partnership is based on a mutual understanding of strategic aims and objectives, clear accountability, and a recognition of the distinct roles each party plays.

34. The President has established a Management Board to provide effective leadership and strategic direction of the Redress Board, and to ensure that the policies and priorities set by the President and the Executive Office Ministers are implemented. The Management Board is responsible for ensuring that effective and proportionate governance arrangements are in place and that there is an internal control framework, which allow risks to be effectively identified and managed. The Management Board also sets the culture and values of the Redress Board and reviews business performance against the Redress Board Annual Business Plan and Risk Register.

35. The Redress Board also operates a Panel Members' Training & Insight Committee to meet the training needs of panel members – particularly important given the complexities and sensitivities involved, as well as the continuous aspiration towards quality and consistency. It should be noted that panel members are wholly independent in the performance of their decision-making duties.

36. As a public authority the Redress Board is committed to reviewing its practices to reflect high quality input and identify where improvements can be made. The quality assessment practices and controls that we implement are designed to test standards in operational procedures and panel member decision-making. The Redress Board Quality Assurance & Continuous Improvement Guide provides an overarching whole system approach, where standards are set, monitored, and communicated collaboratively to make sure quality is delivered in our procedures and decision-making.

37. TEO has established an Accountability & Liaison Group, attended by senior Executive Office and Redress Board officials where key governance and operational

matters are discussed in accordance with the Partnership Agreement and Financial Services Level Agreement. DoJ officials are also invited to attend for particular agenda items.

38. The Redress Board wishes to acknowledge the support provided by TEO and DoJ in providing services to the Redress Board in accordance with the Partnership Agreement and under Schedule 1 of the Act.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

39. Tables 12 to 15 provide a breakdown of the **£23,784k** Redress Board expenditure for 2023-24 financial year. **Please note as these figures are provisional subject to NIAO audit of TEO accounts.**

40. Table 13 below details the value of awards accepted by applicants during the period and paid directly into an appropriate bank account.

Table 13

Redress payments made	Amount (£k)
Redress Payments made	20,083

41. Table 14 details the amount of legal cost paid by the Redress Board to legal representatives during the period in accordance with the Table of Costs detailed in the Historical Institutional Abuse Redress Board (applications & Appeals) Rules (NI) 2019 and expenses in connection with obtaining expert reports.

Table 14

Application Legal Costs & Outlay	Amount (£)
Total	717

42. Table 14 details the amount of panel fees paid to panel members during the period.

Table 15

Panel Fees	Amount (£)
Total	1,164

43. Table 15 provided a breakdown of the administrative and operational running costs of the Redress Board during the period.

Table 16

Administration costs	Amount (£)
Staffing	1,436
Accommodation	145
IT Costs	114
Miscellaneous	40
NICTS Management Fee	85
Total	1,820

COMPLAINTS

44. The Redress Board is committed to providing a high-quality service. One of the key aspects of demonstrating this commitment is a robust and effective complaints procedure, which addresses any customer dissatisfaction fairly, comprehensively and with a view to early resolution.

45. The complaints procedure allows customers to report when they are unhappy with the quality of service provided and receive resolution where appropriate. The policy is available on the Redress Board website at <https://www.hiaredressni.uk/publications/complaints-procedure>.

46. The Redress Board complaints policy is reviewed annually, with the next review to be undertaken in March 2024. The Complaints Procedure reflects the NI Civil Service approach to managing complaints and is a two-stage process. Initial complaints are dealt with by the Deputy Secretary to the Redress Board with any complaints escalated to stage two overseen by the Secretary of to the Redress Board. Should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the response following this second stage, they can raise the complaint with the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

47. The Management Board monitors the progress of all complaints to ensure compliance with procedures, including adherence to the timescales contained within the policy, potential improvements to service and to ensure the Redress Board operates a transparent and consistent complaints system, with all complaints being treated fairly.

48. Table 17 below sets out the number of complaints received by the Redress Board since it was established and the outcomes. The Redress Board has responded to all complaints within the timescales set out in our Complaints Procedure.

Table 17

Year	Number of Complaints received by type	Outcome of Complaints
2020-21	Delay – 2 Communications – 1 Total - 3	Delay – 2 dismissed Communications – 1 dismissed
2021-22	0	0
2022-23	Delay - 2 Outcome -2 Total - 4	Delay – 2 dismissed Outcome – 2 outside scope of Complaints Procedure
2023-24	Outcome -3 Total - 3	Outcome – 2 outside scope of Complaints Procedure. 1 - Partially upheld.