

AFTER THE SPOTLIGHT

Submission to Government on supporting Survivors of Institutional Abuse and their families

Published by:



Supported by:

**Irish Women
Survivors**
Support Network



Mission statement:

*Supporting survivors of institutional child abuse and their families on their journey to Truth,
Justice and Healing.*

Right of Place Second Chance is a vision and values driven organisation. We support survivors and their families to access their entitlements and rights and empower those we work with to attain their goals through a culture of trust and respect. We provide practical help and offer a forum for communication, information, validation, peer support and encouragement to all survivors who suffered as children in state run institutions.

Right of Place Second Chance is Ireland's leading survivor support organisation and provides numerous programmes of support to over 1,150 individual survivors of institutional abuse and their family members across Ireland each year.

Vision for the future of survivors and their families

Long-Term vision

The long-term vision of *Right of Place Second Chance* extends beyond the life of the survivor and onto their dependants, who have also suffered gravely as a direct consequence of the inter-generational effect of institutional childhood abuse. However, the general principles informing and underpinning our submissions are focused specifically on the immediate needs of survivors and the ongoing needs of their families.

Survivors are an ageing group, and are widely recognised as being highly disadvantaged members of society, resulting from their institutionalisation and the traumatic physical and emotional abuse suffered as residents in state run institutions. Haase, in his 2015 report, claimed that “the current living conditions of [s]urvivors are highly disadvantaged when compared with the population as a whole”.¹ He further contended that more than 50% of all survivors reside in the most disadvantaged 20% of areas, which would strongly suggest that their experiences

¹ Trutz Haase, “Caranua: socio-economic mapping of place of living of survivors of institutional residential care in Ireland” (August 2015), p. 7., available at http://www.caranua.ie/attachments/CARANUA_SOCIO_ECONOMIC_MAPPING_RPT_150902.pdf

while in institutional residential care in Ireland may have increased, and certainly did not reduce “any baseline risks of poverty, deprivation and social exclusion they may have inherited as a result of their social origins”.² On this basis, we strongly believe that a focus on the basic entitlements and the immediate needs of survivors should be considered as being of paramount importance.

Lastly, there is a duty of care placed on the State towards survivors, as citizens, to provide solutions which will give support to the lifelong effects of institutionalism. This vision of state support will furthermore enhance the lives of survivors and their families, not on an exclusively short-term basis, rather for the remaining years of their lives.

A future where

Right of Place Second Chance envisages a future where:

- There is an equitable healthcare service accessible to institutional abuse survivors and a recognition of the long-term health effects institutional childhood abuse has had on this specific group.
- The impediments affecting survivors’ access to education and the resulting inability to acquire and maintain fulfilling and rewarding employment, is publicly acknowledged through the granting of an automatic entitlement to the State Pension (Contributory) upon reaching pensionable age.
- The housing needs of survivors living in Ireland and those wishing to return to Ireland, are understood and supported.
- Supports for survivors’ dependents are put in place to bring an end to the inter-generational effect of institutional abuse.
- All state agencies receive recognised training in survivors’ historical background, their specific needs and the challenges they face in line with best standards of practice
- Agencies, charitable and otherwise, are adequately funded to provide the supports necessary to meet the specific needs of survivors and their families.
- A comprehensive and independent review of the operation of *Caranua* takes place, including its successes and failures and whether amendments to existing legislation are needed.

² *Id.*

Right of Place Second Chance

Submission to Government on the long-term support for survivors of institutional abuse and their families in Ireland

December 2017

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Foreword

“This submission is about recognizing the inequalities that survivors continue to endure and developing an appropriate framework aimed at redressing this imbalance”

Right of Place Second Chance is the largest charitable organisation in Ireland that provides a range of support services to survivors of institutional child abuse and their families. Support is offered primarily to survivors in Ireland, United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US), in addition to other survivors located around the globe. All support services are delivered efficiently by both our professional staff and fully-trained volunteer team.

The contents of this document are underpinned and informed by the 2014 *Right of Place Second Chance* commissioned piece of research entitled “The Voice of Survivors”, which recorded the views of 106 individual survivors pertaining to their long-term needs. *Right of Place Second Chance* also convened two focus groups with a total of 29 individual survivors to ascertain their specific needs, alongside one consultation meeting with the *Irish Women Survivors Support Network*, who support 550 individual survivors, and the *Coventry Irish Centre*, who offer support to 350 individual survivors. Lastly, in 2016, 1,150 survivors contacted the organisation approximately 4,300 times in search of support. The views of these survivors are incorporated within this document.

Notwithstanding a general recognition, acceptance, and understanding of the adverse effects that institutional childhood abuse has on the lives of survivors, the amount of existing academic literature exploring the survivor specific community remains wholly inadequate. Despite the scarcity of research and resources necessary to conduct a more comprehensive investigative study, this report has been prepared with the utmost diligence. We have relied upon existing information³, in addition to the invaluable insights we, ourselves, have developed through our own work on behalf of survivors and their families, over the last seven years of providing advocacy, outreach and other supports.

³ See reference list for a detailed list of existing information.

One of our key findings, established over these years of offering support services, is the urgent requirement of a robust and fully comprehensive review of the long-term care afforded to survivors of institutional abuse.

The calls to action proposed in this document are supported by the *Irish Woman Survivors Support Network*, based in London and the *Coventry Irish Centre*. We created this document as a joint submission. Our diverse experience gives us a wide-ranging and international understanding of survivor needs.



Micheál Walsh

Director of Services – *Right of Place Second Chance*



Phyllis Morgan

Founder - *Irish Women Survivors Support Network*



Simon McCarthy

Manager – *Coventry Irish Centre*

Executive summary

Right of Place Second Chance calls on the Irish Government to implement policy change(s), and to make a genuine commitment to improving the lives of survivors of institutional abuse and their families, through meaningful long-term oriented intervention, as a way of ensuring commitment to the States response to survivors.

“On behalf of the state and all its citizens, the government wishes to make a sincere and long overdue apology to the victims of childhood abuse for our collective failure to intervene, to detect their pain, to come to their rescue... Abuse ruined their childhoods and has been an ever-present part of their adult lives reminding them of a time when they were helpless... we must do all we can now to overcome the lasting effect of their ordeals”

- **An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, 11 May 1999**

We are calling on the Irish Government to:

1. **Provide equality of healthcare to survivors:** The granting of the *HAA Medical* card would recognise the ongoing medical challenges facing survivors today.
2. **Recognise the work performed in Irish institutions by survivors as children:** Offering survivors automatic entitlement to the State Pension (Contributory) upon reaching pensionable age would provide a demonstration of the Government’s recognition of survivors’ contribution to the Irish economy.
3. **Prioritise survivors for social housing & resettlement:** Giving precedence to survivors regarding the allocation of social housing and resettlement supports would recognise the adverse effects of their institutionalisation and abuse as children, which has, in many cases, led to emigration, low levels of home ownership, or homelessness.

Executive Summary – After the Spotlight

4. **Support survivors' families:** Providing access to funding for education, training and associated supports would enable the families of survivors, many of whom are typically from a lower socio-economic background, to break the cycle of poverty, which was in part caused by the institutionalisation and physical and emotional abuse experienced by survivors.
5. **Increase capacity for survivor specific support and establish a national framework for the future:** This must be acted upon and adequately funded, to ensure that all calls to action and recommendations are implemented in an appropriate and effective manner. An adequately funded framework for ongoing support is crucial to ensuring a positive future for survivors and their families. It is important to note that both transparency and accountability must also go hand in hand within such a framework.
6. **Review the Operation of Caranua:** Analysing and evaluating the current operation of *Caranua* to determine whether it is functioning appropriately for survivors. Any recommended changes should then be implemented in a thorough and timely manner.

Introduction

*“People who experienced institutional residential care and remained in the Republic of Ireland are **ten times** more likely to be living in a neighbourhood that forms part of the most disadvantaged decile of areas, than those in the most affluent deciles”*

The above quote comes from a research document, commissioned by the independent state body, *Caranua*, and carried out by social and economic consultant, Trutz Haasse (2015), to determine, on a socio-economic basis, survivors who were successful in their application to the Residential Institutions Redress Board (*RIRB*). This quote provides an illustration of the significant level of disadvantage currently experienced by survivors of institutional abuse in Ireland. The resultant long term negative effects of the abuse persist throughout their lives.

What survivors seek, and deserve, is justice, recognition of their long-standing pain and suffering, and not merely the implementation of wholly ineffective short-term measures. It is also of critical importance to survivors that the lifelong negative impact institutionalisation has had on their lives and the lives of their families is fully recognised. Their healthcare, housing, and pensionable needs are not currently guaranteed for the remainder of their lives. Some of these needs are only secured until a special Government fund is fully depleted in two years' time (2019).

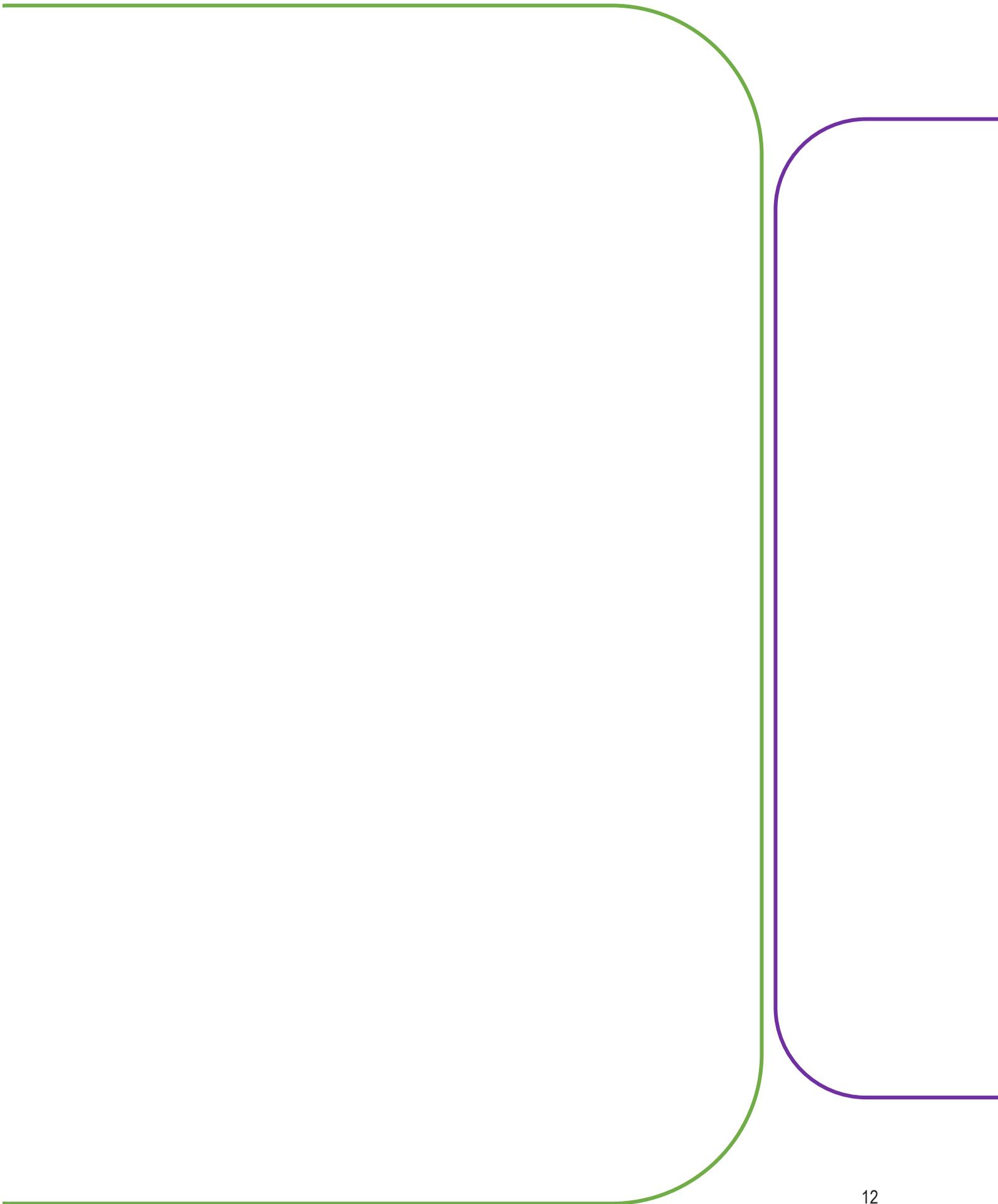
The Government's adopted process of recognising the varying ways in which survivors are disadvantaged, and attempting to address this disadvantage through the implementation of short-sighted, strictly temporary measures have clearly been wholly ineffective, as a direct consequence of such measures being distinctly short term in nature.

Until we arrive at such a time when the Government of Ireland can acknowledge that, they cannot change what happened in survivors' childhoods, but they can help to change what survivors' futures look like, survivors will continue to feel that their needs are being rejected, their sufferings misunderstood, and therefore their healing cannot be completed.

We are therefore calling on the Government to introduce the lifelong measures set forth in this document, as a final way of affirming the recognition of the wrongs committed against survivors and displaying a truly genuine commitment to justice and healing.

“Sometimes I feel like everything we have gone through will soon be forgotten..... [it] will soon be ignored and I don’t want that to happen.”

- **Survivor, *Right of Place Second Chance* commissioned research**



1. Equitable access to enhanced medical health care services currently afforded to other similar groups

One of the overarching objectives of this report is to ensure that survivors of institutional child abuse are granted equality of access to a high level of healthcare currently being provided, or recommended to be provided, to other groups. Those persons infected with Hepatitis C, transmitted as result of the State's negligence are entitled to enhanced medical care. Additionally, it has been recommended to be provided to Magdalen Laundry survivors.

The *Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse* ("CICA") Report, or *Ryan Report*, published in 2009,⁴ uncovered a hidden Ireland, exposing its abhorrent treatment of children in care within the State. The *CICA Report* is a factually based account of what happened in residential institutions in Ireland. It provides a graphic illustration of the harrowing experiences of survivors of institutional childhood abuse. The *CICA Report* concluded that:

*"physical and emotional abuse and neglect were features of the institutions. Sexual abuse occurred in many of them, particularly boys' institutions".*⁵

The *CICA Report* found that most witnesses "reported long-lasting negative effects and damaging physical, psychological, and social consequences of childhood abuse in schools".⁶

When assessing the psychological adjustment of institutional abuse survivors, Carr discovered that:

*"the overall rates of psychological disorders among survivors of institutional living in the present study, were far higher and, in most cases, double those found in normal community populations".*⁷

This piece of research highlights that approximately 30% of survivors have suffered, or continue to suffer from, severe mental health illnesses and disorders (as against the national average of 11%).⁸

⁴ Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, *Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse* (2009), available at <http://www.childabusecommission.ie/rpt/pdfs/> (hereinafter *CICA Report*).

⁵ *Id.*, Vol IV, para. 6.01.

⁶ *Id.*, Vol III, para. 11.80.

⁷ *Id.*, Vol V, para. 3.353.

⁸ Mary Higgins, "Developing a Socio-Economic Profile of Survivors of Abuse in Irish Religious Institutions", Stephen's Green Trust (2012), available at http://www.ssgt.ie/files/developing_a_socio_economic_profile_of_survivors_o.pdf (hereinafter *2012 Higgins Report*).

Similar groups, who have had their lives affected due to state negligence, within Irish society, such as those who contracted Hepatitis C, due to the failure in the administration within the State relating to the provision of contaminated blood and blood products have received enhanced medical care. Magdalen Laundry Survivors have also been in receipt of considerable state support, or been recommended that state support in the form of enhanced medical provisions be provided, due to the State's negligence in their care.

Persons infected with the Hepatitis C Virus

Persons infected with the Hepatitis C virus through blood or blood products provided by the Irish State, for instance, are statutorily entitled to access to a wide range of enhanced medical care services by virtue of the *Health (Amendment Act) Card (HAA Card)*,⁹ issued by the Health Service Executive (HSE), to help them deal with the long-term effects of state negligence. The *HAA Card* is not the same as a medical card, a GP visit card or a Drug Payment Scheme card. The *HAA Card* gives entitlements to additional services, on more flexible terms and conditions than the medical card. The *HAA Card* and the entitlements attached to it are guaranteed for the lifetime of the individual cardholder.

Former Magdalen Laundry women

Justice Quirke recommended former Magdalen Laundry residents receive a wide range of free of charge healthcare services. Following the adoption of the *Redress for Women Resident in Certain Institutions Act of 2015* (*RWRCI* card) in 2015 the services these survivors are eligible for under the *RWRCI* card include:

- ✓ a general practitioner, medical and surgical service
- ✓ the home help (nursing) service
- ✓ drugs, medicines and medical and surgical appliances
- ✓ dental, ophthalmic and aural services
- ✓ a counselling, chiropody, and physiotherapy service
- ✓ other services as prescribed by the Minister

⁹ Irish Statute Book, *Health Amendment Act Card Act of 1996*.

The Government's granting of enhanced healthcare services to these people demonstrates a clear acknowledgement that state negligence in the care of its citizens, particularly in institutional settings, demands wrap around care to include their long-term health needs. It also outlines the areas where survivors, from the *RIRB* process are facing disadvantage.

Survivors of institutional childhood abuse

The State is currently supporting a system of enhanced medical health care for survivors through the introduction of legislation, entitled the Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Act of 2012. This statute recognises the need for enhanced medical care, however the provision of this enhanced medical care is only until the Residential Institutions Statutory Fund (*RISF*) of €110 million is fully depleted.¹⁰ The scope and reach of the *RISF*'s enhanced support mechanism is comparable to that of the *HAA Card*. However, guaranteed entitlement of access to enhanced medical care services for the duration of the cardholder's life under *RISF* has *not* yet been placed on a statutory footing, unlike the *HAA Card*. It is of great importance to survivors that they have appropriate access to enhanced medical health care for their lifetime, enabling them to progress into the latter years of their lives with a feeling of confidence and security.

Required Governmental Action

We call upon the Government to offer survivors of institutional abuse medical care commensurate to that afforded to other groups of similar backgrounds. It is recommended that the *HAA* card be afforded to all survivors of institutional abuse, due to the clearly observable magnitude of the abuse suffered, and its wide-ranging, long-lasting repercussions. This would recognise the lifelong effects of institutional childhood abuse and afford survivors the opportunity to live their remaining years with some dignity, respect and support, particularly considering their age profile.

¹⁰ Irish Statute Book, *Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Act of 2012*.

2. Automatic State Pension (Contributory) entitlement for eligible survivors

Mr. Justice John Quirke's *Magdalen Commission Report (2013)* compiled a list of recommendations in relation to providing justice for Magdalen Laundry survivors. The second recommendation outlined the need to grant Magdalen Laundry survivors an automatic entitlement, upon pensionable age, to the State Pension (Contributory).¹¹ The author noted that the granting of the State Pension (Contributory) entitlement was to "[...] acknowledge the fact that the Magdalen women [had] worked within (and, arguably to an extent for), the State for a period of time. They are entitled to recognition of that fact".¹²

This entitlement should be extended to survivors of institutional abuse. The 2009 *CICA Report*, or *Ryan Report* contained testimony from survivors who described work as being "a central feature of daily life in the schools from a young age."¹³ The institutions only hired a small number of domestic employees and residents completed the often heavy, manual work required to run the institutions "to the exclusion of education or play".¹⁴

Institutional abuse survivors were responsible not only for the work within their institutions, which included such jobs as cleaning, childcare, kitchen duties, farm work and laundry work. They were also often compelled to carry out work for other institutions related to their own one, such as performing cleaning or completing laundry duties for an affiliated boarding school, hospital or nursing home.¹⁵ The *CICA Report* documented that no payment was ever received for this work.¹⁶ Moreover, commercial contract activity has been described as being a significant activity in some schools (e.g., the making of rosary beads or knitting) and most survivors stated that they received no monetary payment for this work.¹⁷ On this basis, the Government should provide a clear acknowledgement that the survivors of institutional abuse, just like the Magdalene women, were also "employed within (and, arguably, to an extent for), the State for a period of time."

¹¹ Mr. Justice John Quirke, *The Magdalen Commission Report* (May 2013), p. 8 (hereinafter *The Quirke Report*).

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *CICA Report*, *supra* note 4, Vol. III, para. 6.09.

¹⁴ *Id.*, para. 8.07.

¹⁵ *Id.*, Vol III, para. 8.08-8.09.

¹⁶ *Id.*, Vol III, para. 8.07.

¹⁷ *Id.*, Vol III, para. 8.14.

Moreover, survivors' ability to gain more permanent, financially rewarding employment in later life was severely restricted by their experience in the institutions, where the level of education was extremely poor. In addition, most children had completed their education by the age of fourteen.¹⁸ Consequently, over 70% of witnesses to the *CICA* spent their lives in manual, casual, and other forms of low-paid employment.¹⁹ For example, between 1940 and 1966, 89% of boys discharged from *Glin Industrial School* entered the unskilled labour force.²⁰ This educational disadvantage ensured that many survivors were unable to accumulate the contributions necessary to qualify for the State Pension (Contributory).

Figures also show that 38% of survivors that accessed the *RIRB* were residing outside of Ireland and are unable to access the State Pension (non-Contributory) due to their inability to comply with the habitual residency conditions. As a result, the only way to secure recognition for the work performed by survivors while residing in institutions, is by granting them access to the State Pension (Contributory).²¹

Required Governmental Action

We urge the Government to recognise the invaluable and inestimable contribution of survivors of institutional abuse, and grant them access to the State Pension (Contributory), as a basic entitlement and right, upon reaching pensionable age. This should be afforded to all survivors, in all countries of residence, in accordance with the domestic laws of each respective country and, if necessary, through an agreed treaty between Ireland and the countries where survivors live.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *2012 Higgins Report, supra note 8, p. 2.*

²⁰ *CICA Report, supra note 4, Vol I, para. 11.169.*

²¹ Residential Institutions Redress Board, *Residential Institutions Redress Board Annual Report (2014)*, available at <http://www.rirb.ie/annualReport.asp>

3. Granting survivors priority access to social housing and priority in their resettlement needs

Social Housing Needs and Associated Supports

Of the survivors who presented testimony to the CICA, 36% were local authority tenants, a worrying 20% could be loosely defined as either being “hidden homeless” or living in sheltered hostels and homeless accommodation, while 9% were living in the private rented sector. Higgins points out that the number of those who were local authority tenants or homeless was much higher than that of their counterparts in the general population.²² Such a high degree of disparity is typically indicative of low income earners, unable to purchase their own homes. As described previously, the low income of survivors is arguably linked to their experiences of institutionalisation, abuse and consequent educational disadvantage.

Furthermore, according to *Right of Place Second Chance* commissioned research, 70% of survivors rated their elderly care including the fear of entering nursing homes as an area that most worries them for the future. Additionally, 62% of survivors were most worried about their housing provisions as they enter their elderly years.²³

The housing inequality experienced by survivors and the worry of further institutionalisation and housing provisions must therefore be recognised and they should be given comprehensive support to attain equality of access to appropriate accommodation.

Resettlement Needs

The RIRB, which closed for late applications in 2013, has released ‘resettlement needs’ data indicating that approximately 38% of survivors are living outside of Ireland.²⁴ The gathering of information directly from Survivors during the course of *Right of Place Second Chance*’s advocacy work, has indicated that a sizeable minority of this group emigrated from Ireland to escape the abuse to which they were subjected, and to extricate themselves from the stigma attached to their abusive experiences. While many others, sadly, emigrated because

²² 2012 Higgins Report, *supra* note 8, p. 11.

²³ Quality Matters, *The Voice of Survivors* (2014), available at <http://www.rightofplace.com/includes/TheVoiceofSurvivors.pdf>

²⁴ Resettlement needs data from the RIRB, which closed for late applications in 2013, indicates that approximately 38% of Survivors are living outside of Ireland.

they were told they had no remaining family members living in Ireland, as was common practice in many institutions.

Many of these survivors hold the feeling that their personal journey will remain forever incomplete until such a time that they can repatriate back to Ireland to face the past, reunite with lost family members and to live their lives in their country of birth. It is therefore crucially important that all necessary steps are taken to support those returning who were, oftentimes, forced to leave Ireland to cope with past abuses.

Required Governmental Action

We ask the Government to recognise:

- The circumstances giving rise to the mass exodus of survivors from Ireland.
- The disparity between the percentage of home ownership among survivors, as compared to other members of the general population
- The high levels of those homeless or in hidden homelessness.

It is worth noting that *section 22(7b)* of the *Act of 2009* already contains an explicit provision permitting local authorities to grant priority access to social housing to individuals in certain limited situations, such as those deemed as possessing “*exceptional medical or compassionate*” grounds.

We call upon the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, to issue a circular directing the relevant department(s) that survivors should be, where possible, given priority access in relation to social housing, and associated supports, having regard for the *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 2009, Section 22* (“Allocation of dwellings”). According to *section 22(17) (a)* of the *Act of 2009*, “*the Minister may issue directions to a housing authority regarding the operation of an allocation scheme and the housing authority shall comply with any such direction in operating the scheme*”, having regard for *section 22(17) (b)*, which expressly states that “*nothing in paragraph (a) shall be construed or operate to enable the Minister to direct the allocation of a dwelling to a specific household*”.

4. Educational support services for survivors and their dependents

According to one of the *CICA Report's* key recommendations, “[counselling, mental health and educational] services have a significant [and essential] role in alleviating the effects of childhood abuse and its legacy on following generations”, and “the disadvantages experienced by children in care”.²⁵ It is for those reasons that the *Report* recommended the “continued provision of these services to ex-residents and their families”.²⁶ However, full support for this recommendation came to an end in 2011 when the Government ceased operation of the *Education (Former Residents of Certain Institutions for Children) Finance Board* (“*EFB*”), a scheme set up to support the educational needs of survivors and their families. The functions of the *EFB* were transferred to *Caranua*, but this new organisation does not provide support for survivors’ families. The last *EFB* annual report, which was published in 2011,²⁷ shows that between 2006 and 2011, dependents submitted 73.2% of the successful applications for educational related grants.²⁸ This demonstrates a high uptake for educational development for survivors’ children and grandchildren.

As mentioned earlier, survivors experienced considerable educational disadvantage during their time in institutions, for a variety of reasons. For instance, work in the institutions was prioritised, the provision of education was quite limited, and experiences of abuse prevented survivors from directing the necessary attention to their educational requirements. During his work with a group of witnesses to the *CICA*, Carr discovered that the vast majority of survivors attained an extremely low level of educational achievements. Most notably, “only 3.2 per cent attained at least a bachelor’s level university degree”.²⁹

We know that adequate access to education remains a crucial preventative factor in breaking the cycle of social welfare dependency and socio-economic related disadvantages in a person’s life.³⁰ Recently conducted research demonstrated that over 60% of survivors regarded education as being important to them, while 76%

²⁵ *CICA Report*, *supra* note, 4, Vol. IV, para. 7.04.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ Education (Former Residents of Certain Institutions for Children) Finance Board, *Annual Report 2011*, available at <http://www.educationfinanceboard.ie/download/1/AnnualReport2011colc.pdf>

²⁸ *Id.*, para. 8.

²⁹ *CICA Report*, *supra* note 4, Vol V, para. 3.121.

³⁰ Eimear Smyth and Selina McCoy, “Investing in Education: Combating Educational Disadvantage”, Research Series No. 6 (May 2009), *The Economic and Social Research Institute*, available at <https://www.esri.ie/pubs/RS006.pdf>

held that it was important that their dependents were granted equal access to education.³¹ Removing a support mechanism that was being accessed, and was functioning for survivors' families, not only ignores the recommendation of the *CICA Report*, it is also wholly inconsistent with the spirit of that report.

As noted in his speaking notes at the 2013 inaugural meeting of the Board of the *Residential Institutions Statutory Fund*,³² the then Minister for Education also made a commitment to reviewing the eligibility of the *Caranua Fund* to potentially include dependents. The review process was due to begin two years after the fund's commencement date, which would have been in March 2015. As of November 2017, however, it has still not been finalised.

Required Governmental Action

We call on the Government to introduce a new system of supports, similar to that of the *EFB*, to grant survivors, and particularly their families, the opportunity to avail of educational and career enhancement opportunities, with appropriate support. This can help bring healing to many survivors, and prevent the occurrence of future problems associated with the effects of the past experiences of survivors, including problems that might affect their families.

“One of the saddest things is seeing the talent my father has and listening to him talk about how he wasn’t given the opportunity to develop it”

- ***Child of a Survivor, Right of Place Second Chance commissioned research***

³¹ Quality Matters, *The Voice of Survivors*, *supra* note 23, para. 6.7

³² Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Board, “Inaugural Meeting on March 27th, 2013: Minister’s Speaking Points” (March 2013), available at <http://www.educationfinanceboard.ie/download/1/Inaugural%20Meeting%20of%20RISF.pdf>

5. National framework & survivor specific supports

A National Framework for the future

Despite the clearly observable disadvantages and trauma suffered by survivors and their families, we still do not have a clear pathway to facilitate the mending of the long-term effects of institutional abuse. Moreover, the *Implementation Plan* Progress Reports that followed on from the findings of the *CICA Report* ended in 2014, despite the *CICA Report* Monitoring Group itself raising concerns that 5 of the 99 actions recommended in the *Report* were yet to be implemented.³³ It is for this reason that the Government should undertake a public commitment to supporting the development of a *National Survivor Strategy* aimed at enhancing the quality of the lives of survivors. We believe that this should include much of what has already been listed in this document, with relevant Government representatives adding greater substance to the strategies/proposals. This report recommends the establishment of a survivor forum that would convene on a yearly basis, and involve all stakeholders. Its role would be to ensure full implementation of ongoing developments. It is imperative that such an initiative would be a fully transparent and accountable body.

Continued survivor specific support services

We believe that the current situation, which grants survivors access to mainstream services, many of which are often unsympathetic and/or lack the necessary understanding of survivors' past sufferings, is untenable and therefore cannot be allowed to continue.

Social support is considered a protective factor. It protects against suicidal thoughts and behaviours in adult survivors of institutional abuse, resulting from abuse-related stress,³⁴ and yet limited social programmes for survivors are supported by the state. Research commissioned by *Right of Place Second Chance* in 2014 suggests

³³ The five actions yet to be implemented pertain to: (1) the erection of a memorial to the survivors of institutional abuse; (2) a longitudinal study of children in care; (3) the maintenance of records of children in care; (4) the development of an archive for maintenance of records of children in care; (5) research into best practice in family law court processes. See The Fourth and Final Monitoring Report of the Ryan Implementation Group, available at <https://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/publications/20150324RyanRepFourthProgressDec2014.pdf>

³⁴ Martina O'Riordan and Dr. Ella Arensman, "Institutional Child Sexual Abuse and Suicidal Behaviour: Outcomes of a Literature Review, Consultation Meetings and a Qualitative Study (2007), available at http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/Mental_Health_Services/NOSP/Research/childsexualabuse.pdf

that more than 60% of survivors of institutional abuse recognise the need for ongoing social support with an organisation that feels comfortable and specific to them. The same research highlighted that 72% of survivors felt much more comfortable accessing a service that was created exclusively for their cohort.

Crucially, one of survivors' greatest fears, as they enter the latter stages of their lives, was that of isolation and loneliness; experienced by over 74% of participants. Of the many users of Right of Place Second Chance's drop-in centre and services, some 91% considered this aspect of growing older a grave concern to them.³⁵

These are among the most marginalised of survivors. Many are socially isolated, and possess very poor social skills. Consequently, all protective programmes need to be fully supported by the Government to enable survivors to live more equitable and enriched social lives.

Required Governmental Action

We invite the Government to work with specifically targeted survivor services to support and then adequately fund:

Social support programmes

A consultative forum for survivors

A national survivor strategy to be reviewed yearly.

This should be carried out in a measured manner, thus ensuring that there is appropriate oversight and ongoing benefit to survivors, and their family members.

³⁵ Quality Matters, *The Voice of Survivors*, *supra* note 23, para. 6.7.

6. Caranua service review

We strongly believe that *Caranua*, in its current form, while successfully satisfying the needs of some survivors, is more broadly failing to meet the complex needs of individual survivors of institutional abuse. Recent figures released by *The Department of Education* independent appeals officers illustrate that the number of appeals against *Caranua*'s decisions has almost doubled.³⁶ There has also been significant controversy over the level and types of support needed, and some survivors feel that the fund itself is, in fact, "re-abusing" survivors of institutional abuse.³⁷ Despite the findings of existing academic research pertaining to the specific needs of survivors, *Caranua* is currently failing in its endeavours to fulfil those needs, particularly for the most marginalised and the most vulnerable of its clients.

Required Governmental Action

We call upon the Government to review the services provided by *Caranua*, and its implementation of the policies falling within its remit, to determine whether it has succeeded in its goal of improving the lives of survivors. This review procedure needs to be carried out in the context of the implementation of policies contained within this document, so that *Caranua*'s remit may then be extended to attach significantly greater value to the immediate needs of survivors and support for existing specialist services.

"No words of mine, or anybody else in the House can undo the damage, harm or hurt caused to and which continues for those people [survivors]. However, the actions that we take can make some redress to them, their children and their children's children."

– **Minister for Education, Dáil Éireann, 2009**

³⁶ Caranua, *Annual Report 2015 of the Appeals Offices Appointed Under the Residential Institutions Statutory Fund 2012* (2016), available at http://www.caranua.ie/attachments/Annual_Report_2015_of_the_Appeals_Officer.pdf

³⁷ Kitty Holland, "Survivors Tell of Re-Abuse By State Redress Group *Caranua*", *Irish Times* (Mar. 20, 2017), available at <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/survivors-tell-of-re-abuse-by-state-redress-group-caranua-1.3016525> (accessed: Oct. 10, 2017).

Conclusion

It is no longer acceptable to merely acknowledge the relevant research findings, which show that survivors have suffered significant disadvantages and they continue to endure. Meaningful leadership, meaningful action, and appropriate accountability needs to take place for the future care of survivors, and this needs to extend to the end of their lives.

It is now of paramount importance that meaningful long-term care and support is offered to survivors of institutional child abuse. Moreover, survivors deserve a future that is free from fear and uncertainty and is instead one that recognises and addresses disadvantages and offers priority access in relation to housing, health, income and education.

Both the persistent inequalities and sustained suffering of institutional abuse survivors cannot be allowed to continue any longer. What is therefore required, and must be prioritised, is a long-term approach to the care of survivors, accompanied by a strong commitment to ensuring these measures offer both tangible and positive differences to the lives of survivors.

We believe that this document is the beginning of a dialogue aimed at improving the often impoverished and disadvantaged lives of survivors. We call on the Government to initiate a clear and concise plan to ensure that our organisation's calls to action are implemented accordingly.

In addition to offering survivors basic entitlements and rights, in a fair and equitable manner, Ireland can become the world leader in relation to the long-term care we provide to survivors of institutional abuse. These calls to action are essential to begin redressing the wrongs and ensuring that the most vulnerable of survivors achieve justice. This sense of justice would mean that the needs of survivors and their families are recognised. It means their needs are discussed openly and there is an acknowledgement of lifelong suffering because of a childhood lost.

We no longer consider it acceptable to only speak of the future challenges facing survivors and their families. The time has come to actively consolidate support services for their futures.

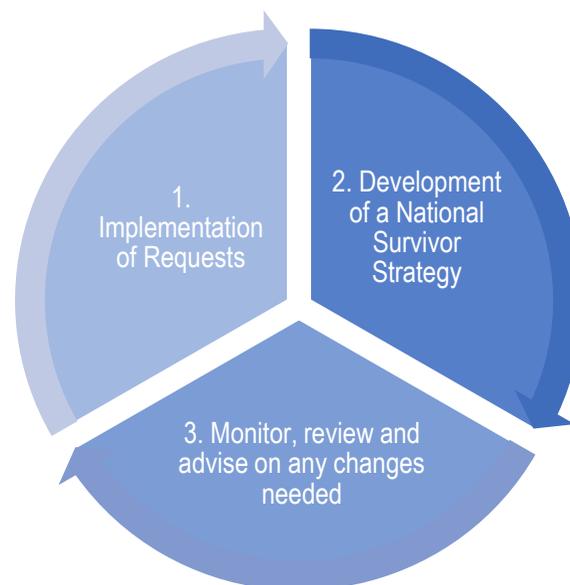
Priority actions for governmental departments

The table below summarises the priority actions for each relevant Government department, which should be included in any national framework on supporting survivors of institutional abuse into the future.

<i>Department of Health</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Introduce the <i>Health Amendment Act (HAA) Card</i> application process for survivors of institutional abuse.▪ Review funding for survivor specific services, having regard for the unique expertise in the area of both Irish and UK based services.
<i>Department of Social Protection</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Inform relevant departments that survivors are automatically entitled to the State Pension (Contributory) upon reaching pensionable age.
<i>Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Send a circular to all housing agencies in Ireland to explain that survivors should be given priority in access to housing and associated supports.
<i>Department of Education</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Reinstate and appropriately fund a trust to be accessed by the dependents of survivors so that they can avail of education and training opportunities into the future.▪ Commit to reviewing Caranua services, inform stakeholders of this review, and recommend any legislative amendments deemed necessary.

Monitoring, review and development

Right of Place Second Chance recommends the swift development of a *National Survivor Strategy*, in line with the recommendations set forth in this document, to create a pro-active and long-term approach to truly recognising and supporting survivors and their families during the remaining years of their lives. The implementation plan for the *National Survivor Strategy* should include an expressly stated commitment to actively involve survivors and their dependents and funded survivor specific support services in the monitoring and review of the plan. It is also imperative that the mechanism monitoring the implementation of the potential *National Survivor Strategy* be transparent, inclusive of survivors, and address not only the progress achieved, but also review and re-focus the plan's contents as a means of ensuring its continuous long-term benefit. We believe this should be devised and maintained by already funded survivor support organisations, which the state should use to create systems to access the requested recommendations.



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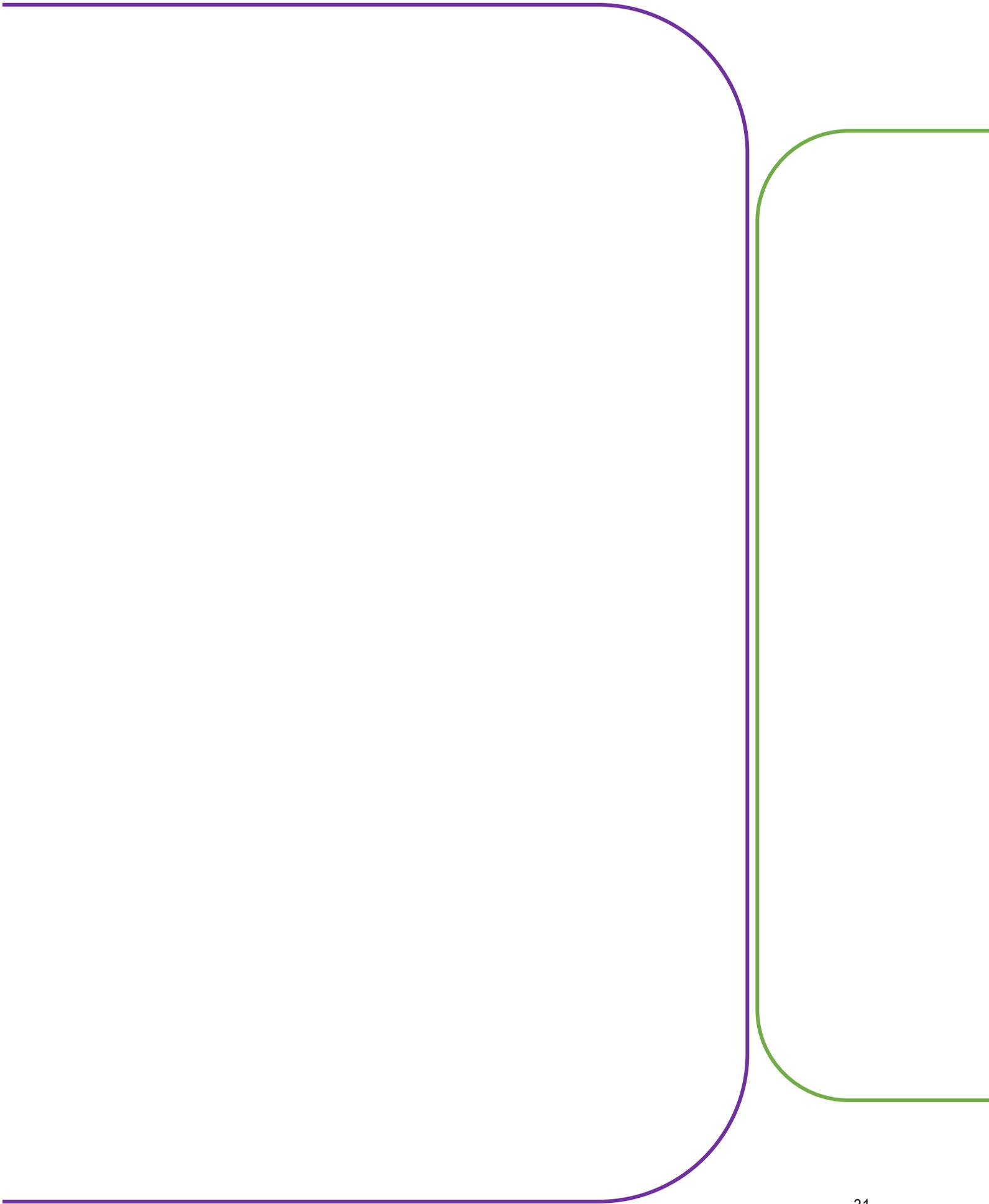
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