



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

# OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Mother-and-baby Institutions - Donation of  
Bodies for Anatomical Research:  
Victims and Survivors Consultation Forum

19 June 2024



very clear to Queen's University, during virtually 18 months of engagement, that we need some kind of public awareness campaign on this, because the general public will not be aware of this aspect and how it will affect the tracing of people who have disappeared or died and who belonged to certain people.

Queen's has so far pushed back on that and basically said that, because it is now trying to create a digital database, it is better to hold back on that media awareness campaign. Even public disclosure is apparently a bit of a touchy subject as well. Queen's is now taking counsel from the truth recovery process and its own legal advisers as to what can be publicly disclosed. I have tried to talk about the urgency in making the general public aware of the anatomical issues, and Queen's University could potentially be a first port of call for anyone who is trying to find out what happened to their loved ones. That could mitigate the years and decades of trying to search for somebody. That is an ongoing process, and I would like that to be expedited.

Three weeks ago, the Committee took a briefing from the Truth Recovery Independent Panel and the researchers. Sinéad raised the fact that the anatomical issues had not been brought up in the latest interim report. At that briefing, the Committee would not have been aware that Professor Sean O'Connell would not have been permitted to discuss the anatomical issues in front of the Committee because of a conflict of interest that I initially raised at the start of this process. I was told by the Executive Office that, when it came to discussing the anatomical issues, Sean O'Connell would have to step out of the meetings. I find that absolutely laughable, to be honest with you, because, obviously, the minutes of the meetings will be available and Sean will be talking to other people on the panel and will be aware of the anatomical issues. He is an employee of Queen's University, and I said that they might as well bring the PSNI and members of the religious orders into the truth recovery process and the independent panel if that was the way they were going to treat it. At the meeting that I had with Queen's University on 13 May, Queen's said that there is no information on private burials, nor would such information be sought, given the fact that they were, by nature, private burials.

I sent you guys some samples of the data that I received from Queen's University. The extensive data that I was given — bear in mind that we are talking about people — shows that 1,980 remains were used by Queen's University, and 1,824 of those are outstanding, meaning that we do not know what happened to the remains of those people. It is incumbent on us to try to expedite an investigation into that, which the previous Committee called for in the last mandate. I do not think that we should wait for a statutory inquiry into it, because that would take too long. Again, I emphasise the fact that people will be waiting. A lot of people are affected by the anatomical issues who will not even be aware of it yet.

The other thing that I want to bring up, which has not been investigated in the North of Ireland in any processes so far, is drug and vaccine trials. Queen's University's research and Ulster University's research did not investigate them. The commission's report in the South of Ireland listed GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) trials between 1934 and 1973, which were trials of childhood vaccines and milk trials for babies. Again, consent was dispensed with. I made an approach to GSK in 2018 about my own circumstances, to see whether I was subjected to any kind of drug vaccine trial when I was in Marianvale in Newry. They got back to tell me that, because the trials were not published, it was highly unlikely that I had been subjected to a trial. That is completely unacceptable.

I will finish by saying that drug and vaccine trials are a widespread issue in the entire 32 counties of Ireland. GSK was given impunity over what it carried out during an extensive period in the South of Ireland in all those trials. We do not want that to happen up here. When I made my approach to GSK, I was given information that 44 children in an unnamed children's residential institution here were subjected to a drug and vaccine trial in 1962. GSK could not confirm what that institution was. That needs to be investigated, because there are potential long-term, long-standing consequences for anyone who was subjected to a drug and vaccine trial. We need to look into that. The PSNI made the same approach to GSK and was told exactly the same thing. There is no defined children's institution, and we know that that practice had the potential to be rolled out across the mother-and-baby institutions and baby institutions in general.

Can you bear with me, Paula, for another couple of minutes?

**The Chairperson (Ms Bradshaw):** Yes.

**Mr Duffy:** On the last page of the briefing paper, I talked about implicit dispute. If you can bear with me and give me a minute or two, I will read out some extracts from those paragraphs:

*"Throughout the core of institutional issues runs a common thread of impropriety, lack of or no consent, coercion, moral bankruptcy, legal loopholes and enforced situations of disappearances, family separation and hard labour whilst in different stages of pregnancy and a host of other egregious harms and violations on the living and the dead. Rights to humanity and citizenship are enshrined in secular and religious culture and society.*

*Implicit dispute happens when a person dies, their body enters medical research and teaching culture, but, informed consent is 'implied', never documented in full for the bereaved. The unsaid, the unknowing, the non-consent demeans the integrity and dignity of the dead and leaves the potential for infinite unjustified guilt for those left behind to grieve the loss and remember. Once a body enters that body-supply and demand system, it makes it difficult to track and trace what is happening or happened to the parts of our loved ones, recent news tells us that malpractice and immoral treatment of our dead still goes on ... Truth, justice, disclosure, accountability, responsibility, rectification, memorialisation, various forms of redress and reparations are common aims of those affected but with varying priorities. We ask and demand that governments and its officials write a better history and ensure that their individual and collective legacy is something to embolden their own pride and integrity and leave a lasting trail of hope and positive impact on the people in the here and now and generations to come."*

Thank you. I am open to questions.

**The Chairperson (Ms Bradshaw):** Thank you so much, Eunan; I really appreciate that. I will kick off with some questions. It sounds as though you have been engaging until recent months with Queen's University. I should have said that Queen's was invited to today's meeting, but no one was available; we will come back to that. Queen's is in my constituency, and I am particularly keen to find out about your engagement with it and about any progress that you feel you are making in that space.

**Mr Duffy:** The engagement has covered a range of issues. I have impressed upon Queen's, given the data that I have received, the number of people whom it used from 1927, when its records apparently started, until 1989, when I shut down my FOI requests. A massive aspect is what happened to the anatomical remains of the people who were used — adults, children and babies — some of whose remains came from mother-and-baby institutions, specifically Thorndale House, a mother-and-baby institution and industrial school that was run by the Salvation Army. As I have said, I have impressed upon Queen's the need for the general public to know that, if they are affected now or potentially affected in the future, Queen's University is the first port of call for a lot of people to approach, even by a system of elimination, saying "Was my relative used by the university for any kind of anatomical research or teaching?" Queen's is pushing back on that; I would like it to be expedited ASAP.

We have talked about memorialisation. Last year, Queen's said that it hoped to have something more concrete and to have pushed the process along by the end of this term. That has not really happened. There will be memorialisation on the grounds of Queen's University, paid for by Queen's University, and potentially at Belfast City Cemetery and Roselawn Cemetery as well. Queen's has confirmed that those two cemeteries, which belong to the council, are the only two cemeteries at which it established and owned graves and plots. I have said that that does not help the case for the defence, because over 1,800 people have effectively disappeared and are missing. Queen's has told me that there is a "deficit" — its word — in the records, as there will always be. I said, "That is a pretty big deficit that you guys have to try to close". For 1,980 people, there are very few graves and plots in Belfast City Cemetery and Roselawn that they effectively own and use.

As you will have seen in the briefing, there are many unanswered questions here. How many remains or body parts are there? Excuse me; some people might find it disturbing to talk about this unpalatable subject, but unfortunately it is a reality and a truth that we have to deal with. There may be numerous body parts — whatever they may be; it happened on a massive scale — in a single coffin. Queen's has confirmed, without any documented evidence, that only one individual's remains are in each coffin. I asked, "Are we talking about inquests and exhumations to establish how many people or how many body parts might be in each coffin?" Of 1,980 people, Queen's can stand over only 1,824. That is a massive gap.

**The Chairperson (Ms Bradshaw):** OK. Queen's representatives are not here today, so we will pick this stuff up with them, especially the public awareness campaign that you mentioned.

You have talked about the lack of information about private burials and called for an investigation, and you said that it could not wait for the inquiry. When the departmental officials were here a few weeks

ago — you were at one of the meetings — I said that they had been talking about a public inquiry for 10, 12 or 14 years. The public inquiry would be the vehicle through which there would be the requirement for people to come forward. I am concerned that the like of Queen's, and others, would not be as forthcoming if it was an inquisitorial inquiry as opposed to a statutory public inquiry. Why would you want to push for something that would not have the same teeth or the same force, when the public inquiry is forthcoming anyway?

**Mr Duffy:** I totally understand that, Paula. If Queen's has nothing to hide, why does it need to wait? That is the basic premise, if you are being fully transparent and open and there is integrity. I said to Queen's at the start that I was never there to attack the integrity of a body donation scheme — we all know how important biomedical science is, etc — but if we wait for a public inquiry, how many people will be affected in the here and now? How many people are looking for people now, and potentially have been doing so for decades? Do we keep pushing them back? We have not even drawn up legislation for that public inquiry. How long is that going to take? Following that, how long will the public inquiry take? How long will it take to get round to investigating the issues around Queen's University? I say to people that it seems a bit of a shame, and that it is not a good case for the defence, when the religious orders, Queen's University — all of these institutions — are being forced by statutory compulsion to come to the witness box, defend themselves and provide access to information. That seems to be the case, unfortunately, so far, for too many of the organisations that are under charge and scrutiny.

**Ms Egan:** Thank you so much for coming in today, Eunan. As you said, it is not a nice subject. It is not palatable, but it is really important. I appreciate you and the work that you have done to shine a light on the issue. I would like to hear more about the impact that this is having. With your group, Truth Recovery NI, how many affected families and individuals do you engage with? Will you talk a bit more about the scale of this and the lasting impact that it is having on those families, and the distress that it is causing, to give us the human element?

**Mr Duffy:** Thanks, Connie. With all of these institutional issues, one thing that I have tried to impress on the independent panel and its work, and for the future inquiry, is the need for awareness around psychological trauma and intergenerational trauma on every level. That trauma has affected tens of thousands — hundreds of thousands — of people up and down the length and breadth of this island, North and South. Imagine the distress for people. When I first brought up this issue at the consultation forum meeting, people said that they could not believe that this was yet another layer to the situation — anatomical issues and the potential around the non-consensual use of dead bodies for anatomical research and teaching. You will see in your briefing paper that even a highly, widely criticised commission in the South of Ireland brought a lot of this to the fore. It says a lot when the 2019 interim report was not even included in the full commission's report in 2021. That shows that a lot of people want to sweep this under the carpet. That is unacceptable.

It has a massive effect on people when I bring in anatomical issues and the fact that we had all of these enforced disappearances; coercion; lots of people missing; unmarked graves; many people — living and dead — who cannot be traced; and the numbers of babies and children who were trafficked to various countries around the world, and the impact that that is having on people. There is also the long-lasting impact on a child and a mother — two sides of the party — who were separated from birth. Sometimes the baby adoptions and fosterings were premeditated, and women and girls were put under immense pressure to forcibly give up their babies. Sometimes they were blackmailed and told that if they did not give up their baby for adoption, they would be thrown into, and incarcerated in, one of the many pathways and practices that were called psychiatric and mental asylums — something else that has never been investigated, up and down the length and breadth of Ireland, in the Twenty-six Counties or the Six Counties. Those things have a massive impact on everybody. Unless you are affected by not knowing what happened to a loved one — maybe your mother or a sibling — it is hard to understand what such people are going through in terms of what they do not know, regardless of how much empathy or compassion you have. How it impacts an adopted person in relation to their medical history and what might have been passed down the line in their genetics and all the history and culture around that is hard to understand. The issues are highly complicated, with many nuances, and unfortunately we have to live with it. I am a victim/survivor, and while it is the prerogative of any victim/survivor or person affected by such issues to decide what they call themselves, the victims who are dead do not get to choose.

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Eunan, thank you for coming to the Committee. It is not easy. The briefing paper was very detailed, and reading it all was, as you said, distressing. We appreciate the detail that you provided.

My questions relate to a point that I raised at the end of May about public records. What is your experience of trying to get access to information on someone who has died? In your briefing paper, you provided examples of what age people were, how they died and all the rest of it. For any victim/survivor who is trying to trace what happened to either a sibling or a parent, what would you say has been your experience of trying to get access to information from, for example, the Public Record Office NI (PRONI) or from religious orders?

**Mr Duffy:** Thanks, Carál. That is, unfortunately, an ongoing issue that has not been resolved in many ways. The anatomical issues are much like the rest of the issues, but people do not realise that the deceased have little to no rights when it comes to privacy and confidentiality under GDPR and data protection. I have been constantly stonewalled by that, even when I made my approaches to Roselawn Cemetery to try to establish which graves and plots at Roselawn belonged to Queen's University. I was immediately told by an ordinary member of staff, "We cannot disclose that information because of GDPR". I said, "Actually, you can. GDPR is not a barrier to access here, so I want the information". It is a ridiculous situation; if, for example, you were to walk around Belfast City Cemetery or Roselawn, you would see some graves and plots that are attached to Queen's University. There is not a big highlighted memorial or anything like that, which is, again, something that I have brought up, because, if you look at some of the plots and graves, you will not see any information about the attachment between Queen's University, the dead people who are there and what that means.

The data samples that I provided in the briefing paper show dates, ages and when a person died and when Queen's University accessed their remains. Queen's stated in its replies to the Executive Committee and to me that it has complied with all the conditions in the Anatomy Act 1832, but do you know what? It did not. There were obligations in the Anatomy Act regarding some of the information that we require, yet Queen's cannot provide that information. It has failed in its duty to all those people who were used, and now it is failing in its duties to people like me when it comes to disclosure and discovery.

To be honest, I do not want to be here discussing this issue, but, being the type of activist, advocate and campaigner that I am, I felt the need, the want and an obligation to find out what happened up here as well as in the South of Ireland. I was a member of the recent access to adoption records group, which was a government initiative that was set up more than two years ago to establish new statutory guidelines and practice for all of the social workers in the five health trusts here. The Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 is so antiquated and outdated in terms of practice that it was suggested that, as part of the truth recovery process, we should look at that. I was part of that process. Unfortunately, it did not end with the best possible outcome. In more than two years of that process ongoing — it started off as a three-month process — we had seven months without a meeting. I have never been part of any group, initiative or committee at any time in my life that did not meet for seven months.

One of the outcomes is that third-party, mixed-data information is still an outlier. It is still a highly controversial and contentious issue that the trusts and the Government here are not prepared to tackle. For victims and survivors, adoptees and requesters of that information, what we need to get access to, and what we have human rights access to, remains outstanding. We have been, and are still being, discriminated against. People who are not adopted have rightful access to that information, but we do not.

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** We all appreciate how traumatic this is. We are trying to do the best we can. There is consensus across the Committee that all of that needs to be dealt with via a trauma-informed approach. Paula, I suggest that, as part of gathering evidence, we bring back the Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission on the issue of access to records. I am not content that some, if not all, people have to pay to get access to their records. What compellability does an inquiry have if the religious orders and others put covenants on that information? I am respectfully asking that the Human Rights Commission, in particular, be brought back to the Committee. I see that we will have the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ). It is certainly something that we need to ask for before we seek any legal advice.

Thank you, Eunan.

**The Chairperson (Ms Bradshaw):** Thank you, Carál. We will certainly take that on as an action.

**Mr Harvey:** Thank you, Eunan, for coming in today. You have answered this question somewhat, but Queen's University seems to have a lot of information. Would you say that it has more that it is not being very forthcoming with? Would you say that it is very open with its information, or is it cagey with it?

**Mr Duffy:** I am ultra sceptical, to be honest, Harry. I have been involved in trying to extract information from different sources since 2016. It is problematic, at best. We know about the legislation that was brought in to preserve historical records etc, but, at the end of the day, you are at the mercy, or lack of mercy, of the people who hold those records. People like me know the types of records that are available and what you can, and should, get access to. However, the religious orders, the charitable organisations, institutions such as Queen's University, and the state — I emphasise that, in all of this, the state is also under scrutiny and under charge. The workhouses were run by local government. There is a convenience around the fact — it is not a coincidence — that a lot of the workhouse records have been, effectively, disappeared, like a lot of the people have been disappeared. That is what we are finding. The wholesale redaction of information that occurs is wholly unacceptable.

In all of this, the Government have to realise that, when you dismiss and neglect, that is classified as emotional abuse. When you do not act, do not hold people to account and do not find out who is responsible, you are, effectively, compounding and reinforcing the trauma, and that has long-term effects for people. A number of people — brilliant people — who I know, contacts I have made in the past eight years, mothers and adopted people affected, have died or taken their own lives. The people who would contact the likes of me in the wee, dark hours of the night, people who have a propensity to addiction, people who are wrestling with the dilemma of, "Should I look for my biological mother? Should I look for my siblings? Should I look for my child?", and cannot come to any reconciliation with that, go to their grave with that dilemma.

With regard to access to information from the trusts, around even court records, for example, there are no criteria for an adopted person to get access to their court records. When you apply to social services in the trusts to get a record of your adoption file, the social workers normally go to the court, for example, and they will look at your file, and they then decide, based on their experience and how they are trained, what you should know. They interpret what you should know and put that on your summary.

The trusts did not tell me — they still do not tell people — but I took it upon myself to say, "You know what, I'm going to apply to the local court myself to see if I can get access to my adoption file that is held in the court records". Lo and behold, I was given permission to see my record at Armagh courthouse, and I could make notes on it and walk away from it, but that was all at the discretion of a judge. There are no criteria for that. One person could ask a different judge for the same information and be denied. Somebody tell me if that is right or wrong.

Access to information is being denied, and there are redactions in summaries, and the Government do that to information as well. There is one thing, Paula, that you touched on a few minutes ago. I sent an FOI request to the Executive Office, more than three years ago, asking what the scoping exercises were that were apparently conducted in 2016 by the Executive. Through a whole series of pages, many of which were completely blacked out — emails between the offices of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, emails that were redacted and conversations that took place — I found out that a Magdalene laundry scoping exercise was carried out and reported on on 28 June 2013. That is 11 years ago, Paula.

I do not know what happened to that. Maybe you guys — I do not want to send in any more FOI requests. It took the Executive two years to fulfil that freedom of information request. That breaks all the rules and regulations from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICA). I was sent from pillar to post, and that information was sent from pillar to post, to the Historical Institutional Abuse Redress Board and round the houses, until it eventually got to me, and a lot of that material is completely redacted — blacked out.

As you said, Paula, it is the length of time that this has been going on and the length of time that the Government have known about it. Hansard has reported on this. There have been debates in the Northern Ireland Assembly about what happened in Tuam, for example, and the revelations in 2013. Dr Sean Lucey, of Queen's University, carried out a scoping exercise in 2014. It took more scoping exercises in 2016. Dr Sean Lucey, at that point, provided five options, the same options that we were provided with by the reference group in 2020 under Judith Gillespie.

**The Chairperson (Ms Bradshaw):** I am conscious that we need to keep it within the confines of the Executive Office. I know that you have a lot to say. Go ahead, Harry, with a follow-up question.

**Mr Duffy:** Does that help, Harry?

**Mr Harvey:** Yes, that was very good. You mentioned GlaxoSmithKline. Do you think that it possibly has information that it is not willing to share, or does it not have information? What is your gut feeling on that?

**Mr Duffy:** My gut feeling? I am an eternal sceptic, which is probably partly due to my adoption as a child and the mistrust of my lived experience ever since, in trying to chase down government and everything that has happened in the meantime. A lot of what came out of GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) was disclosed in the South of Ireland with regard to what it did in a lot of the institutions in the likes of Bessborough, Tuam and Roscrea. Of course I have asked the question about what it did up here. I do not know how its records show an unnamed institution. How is it possible that a highly professional organisation such as it, which you would think would be across all of the detail, records an unnamed institution for the 44 children who were subjected to a drug-and-vaccine trial here in Northern Ireland in 1962? I do not believe it, not for one minute.

Unfortunately, the Irish Government have given GSK complete and utter impunity when it comes to how, effectively, it is treated on the issue of redress. It has not been asked to make any contributions to the redress scheme in the South of Ireland. I do not want that to happen up here either, and I think that it is absolutely abhorrent that we allow these organisations to carry out all of this stuff without any kind of accountability. I asked Queen's University for details because I made a submission to GSK about my circumstances, and GSK sent me details of trials that were carried out here in Northern Ireland between 1963 and 1969. I asked for details because all over it were Queen's University researchers, who had apparently carried out these trials. Queen's says that that was not done with its permission. So, the research's credibility comes from Queen's University, but, on the matter of standing over it and the questions of who monitored it, who supervised it and what were the after-effects, Queen's University is washing its hands of it.

**Ms McLaughlin:** Thank you, Eunan, for all the work that you are doing on this and for all the advocacy that you have been giving over the years. It is tough for us to listen to, but it is tough work for you, and I am sure that it has had an impact on your family as well. It is unbelievable work, and you are shining a light where there was no light before you engaged in that work. Thank you.

**Mr Duffy:** Thank you.

**Ms McLaughlin:** What actions do you believe Queen's University needs to take for us to be satisfied that it has given full disclosure? I am not just talking about the factual release of information. Can it make any amends for the work that it carried out on remains that were literally taken from workhouses and Magdalene laundries without really having permission? It, maybe, had permission from religious institutions and that, but not from parents or families or anything. It is saying that it followed the law of the time, but the law of today does not bear —. The procedures that it followed are seen as inhumane now, on looking back at them. What amends can it make today for what it did in the past? What do you think would be appropriate?

**Mr Duffy:** You are absolutely right: disclosure and information recovery is imperative. It is unacceptable for Queen's to tell me and tell you that, when we are trying to plug the gap of the 1,800-odd missing people, it cannot give any kind of location for them or say how they were used or what their final resting place is. At the end of the day, some of the sample information that I gave you shows comparison with the other institutions, for example, private remains that came from residential addresses. The numbers are minimal. I refer to the psychiatric institutions and the workhouses mainly. Those remains were off the scale.

In the briefing, I referred to what was, effectively, an opt-out scheme at the time. In the workhouse regime, for example, families were separated and segregated when they went into the workhouse. Disease, such as tuberculosis, was rife in those days. It is unimaginable that somebody actually went to the family of a child or a man, a wife or a husband, and said, "Look, your relative has just died. We need your consent — informed consent on top of that — as to whether we can now use this person for anatomical research and teaching". It is not beyond the imagination to think that it just did not happen. The commission's report talked about how legislation was in place and the theory was there, but, in practice, things just did not work out that way.



Queen's must do its very best to try to establish that. It tries to tell us that it does not have a paper trail on private burials — the return of all those people to their loved ones privately — and how they were all used. To me, it would have had some kind of exit documentation to say, "This person was used in this circumstance and then went on to be cremated or buried", and "This person was sent back to their family". To me, that makes all sorts of logistical and professional sense — anything that you can think of — and it has not done that. It looks like some of my suspicions with regard to what the commission's report in the South of Ireland said. How many people and their body parts were, effectively, crammed into one coffin to mitigate the costs of graves and timber for coffins? Has Queen's done the same? Is the burden of proof on Queen's University, or is the burden of proof on people like you and me to say, "Listen: there are massive anomalies here. What have you got to say about that?". Think about the proportion and ratio in the data; there were 1,980 people, of whom 1,824 are, effectively, disappeared. Queen's needs to do better.

Unfortunately, Sinéad, it is a widespread issue with regard to what we are investigating. It is the same with the religious orders and charitable organisations with regard to the anomalies between death records and burial records, and admission pathways and exit pathways. It is just off the scale.

**Ms McLaughlin:** Eunan, do you believe that records exist but have not been turned over, or do you believe that they have actually been destroyed?

**Mr Duffy:** Well, a lot of arsonists used to run around this country for 100 years, but none of them ever did time. They seem to turn up conveniently at Queen's University and at social workers' offices. In the past number of years of campaigning, we have seen that victims and survivors, for example, cannot get access to their information. They are told by social workers, "Oh, we have no file on this; we have no file on that", then you do a bit of media, and, suddenly, the next day, a victim or survivor gets a call to say, "We have found your file". That is widespread now. It has happened far too often.

In places like Belgium and South Africa, the police were given judicial powers to go in and search and seize all sorts of records and files from people. That is where we need to be, because this carrot-and-stick stuff and trying to appease and be accommodating towards the religious orders etc does not work. As I said, you are bound by what they want to give you. Unless people like me pull up records and the academic researchers know what type of files, records and documents are available, it is up to the religious orders, Queen's University etc to hand those over. It is convenient to say, "Oh, there was a fire in 1963", "We lost those files because we moved department", or "We moved into a new building". How convenient is all that stuff?

**Mr Delargy:** Eunan, thank you for your presentation. It is a really difficult area to discuss. I really appreciate the detail that you have given us on that.

What you said about intergenerational trauma is key. The fundamental issue is about being denied access to the information that you need and are entitled to have. You have spoken about genetics. You have spoken about all those issues. It is just unspeakable that people cannot get the answers and the information that they need. It must be extremely difficult to talk about this and to have done a lot of this work.

A lot of the stuff that I had questions about has been covered, but one of the things is — I may have picked this up wrongly — around the memorialisation. You spoke about Queen's. I am curious to know about that process and how it is being conducted. Do you have any idea who — we can maybe find this out, Chair — is being consulted on that? I would like a bit more information on that, because we are talking about intergenerational trauma and about people being denied the right to access information. I am curious as to how that process is going.

**The Chairperson (Ms Bradshaw):** I was going to come in at the end and ask you about good practice at other universities, because I do not think that Queen's is very far down the road in this space. We are very keen to get Queen's in front of the Committee so that the process is victim-centred and so that victims have a voice. My understanding is that Queen's has not gone very far down that road, but we need to make sure that, whatever the process is, it is in line with good practice. Do you want to comment, Eunan?

**Mr Duffy:** That is right, Paula, yes. Thanks, Pádraig. The memorialisation is a massive part of this, as it will be for all the institutional issues, whether it is historical institutional abuse (HIA) or whatever. I have asked Queen's about what that process will look like, and it has talked to me about consulting different stakeholders, including its own department in the university and even the medical students in

the university. Queen's is at the stage of thinking about closing the anatomy department because everything is now going digital, with 3D practice and all that sort of stuff. Obviously, that has no bearing on what we do, going forward, but, yes, I have asked about memorialisation. I said to the people from Queen's, "Listen, I should not be in the position of having to constantly chase you guys". As victims and survivors, we far too often find ourselves in circumstances where we have to keep pushing people, and Queen's University is no different. I said, "Listen, it is about time that you guys presented yourselves to the truth recovery consultation forum. You talked about this, and that is part of the awareness around this". Unfortunately, as distasteful as it is, it has to be done. We cannot shirk our responsibilities just because this is something that a lot of people do not talk about, and we cannot think that it is too distressing for a lot of people to talk about. I found that at the consultation forum as well.

The memorialisation process is absolutely key. It is about how that will be done, what the text will look like and whether it will be on plaques or will be an eternal flame. My sense so far is that, every time I have asked the question, they have been a bit political in their answers; they skirt round the issue, circumvent and do not really give a straight answer. That can happen sometimes. What I am getting from them makes me think that they will not make a direct reference on any of the memorials to the people who were used from institutional sources, and I do not think that that is acceptable. There needs to be a particular reference to separate them from people in the body donation bequest scheme and to say how they acquired all those bodies and how people were used in that institutional setting.

**Mr Delargy:** You have raised key points there. I am a bit concerned about the role of Queen's in this and its being a lead partner in the memorialisation as well. To me, that is quite concerning. What is your opinion on that?

**Mr Duffy:** It is concerning for me too, to be honest with you. As part of the truth recovery process and its outworkings, we have asked to be part of a co-design process that includes co-decision-making. That is not always present. At times, it can look as though it is, from the optics, but, in terms of how that works out, it is not always the case. I looked at minutes from a meeting of the consultation forum recently, and those minutes talked about legislation being drawn up for the redress scheme and for the public inquiry. People at the forum were told, "This is not really a co-decision aspect because it is complicated". Victims and survivors find it absolutely offensive and insulting to hear that this will not be subject to co-decision because it does not suit us and because it is complicated; that the capabilities of victims and survivors are not really up to a co-decision process.

**Mr Delargy:** From a Committee point of view, it is really useful that Queen's will, hopefully, come and have that discussion. To me, that is critical, and having the voice of victims and survivors at the centre of this is critical as well. We have a lot more work to do on it in the time ahead.

**Mr Kingston:** Thank you, Eunan, for attending today and for the work that you have been doing on this. You are shining a light into a matter that a lot of people do not want light shone into. A lot of it relates to different times, when there were approaches that were inappropriate and disrespectful — disrespectful to the dead, to life and to people.

I am aware of the research that you have done and the papers that you sent us. How much more can be found out? From what you have told us, I wonder whether any records will exist. The papers mention a time when that was common practice. It was part of the inappropriate actions taken by the state, the Roman Catholic Church and education institutions. There was disrespect for people who had died, and, we are told, it was common practice throughout the UK and Ireland until the mid-1960s that unclaimed deceased residents of institutions such as workhouses and psychiatric hospitals could be used for anatomical study. Do you have any realistic expectation of how much can be found out? Secondly, on the Truth Recovery Independent Panel that we heard from on mother-and-baby institutions, do the anatomical issues form part of its work, or is that a separate body of work?

**Mr Duffy:** To answer the second part of your question, we could be forgiven for thinking that it was not part of the panel's work, particularly because, as Sinéad flagged, it was not included in the interim report. I can assure you that the independent panel is absolutely aware of the anatomical issues, because I first brought them up in the consultation forum as part of the truth recovery process, when I was going through all the freedom of information requests. Phil Scraton and the others all knew about it.

It concerns me as well that that was not brought up as part of the interim report. The answer that the Committee received from the independent panel on the day was that it was a question of timing and

that it was an ongoing investigation. I am still trying to get my head around that, because all the issues that we are talking about are ongoing investigations. None of them has come to any kind of conclusion. They talked about "timing"; I do not know what that means, but I can tell you what it means in that the process is ongoing.

I doubt that I will have much more engagement with Queen's University. I would like to hand this over, not only to the Committee but to the truth recovery consultation forum, because, as far as I am concerned, I have done my bit in trying to raise awareness of the issue. I would like the pressure to be applied to the forum to say, "OK, we need some kind of public awareness campaign here". The Committee talked about looking at the issues through a historical lens, but if it wants to stipulate that approach — "We weren't around at the time" — we will not accept that, because there is no such thing as historical abuse when the abuse is ongoing. It has never come to an end. I could tell you about recent unsavoury events. At Cork University Hospital, for example, two years ago, a man and a woman had the unfortunate situation where their baby died and they were not asked for any kind of consent, informed or otherwise, for their baby to have a post-mortem and have its brain removed and not be buried with the baby's body but, instead, be sent to Antwerp in Belgium and disposed of along with other clinical waste, so they did not know. That was two years ago.

When I talk about the issues, I ask people. You will see the articles that I included in reference to Queen's University's form on what it has done recently with regard to the retention of organs etc and about the microscopic tissue samples that turned up at a public auction, when Queen's said, "We have no idea how that happened". There is a lot of convenience here that does not point towards accountability and discovery or responsibility around that, Brian.

The access to information is, again, an ongoing and burning issue. Despite what we did with the access to adoption working group, that has no statutory basis to it. Reform of the 1987 Order began in 2004, but it has been a prolonged process. Legislation was drawn up for a new adoption and children's order, but that is still stagnant. My latest information was that we could still be working on an adoption and children's order, but the potential around access to information and getting that on a statutory basis would take up to 2027. That is not good enough.

**Mr Kingston:** How does that tie in with this work, or does it? Is that a separate matter?

**Mr Duffy:** Well, it is all about access to information. It is about how we are still being discriminated against and how people are stonewalled in trying to get to the truth. I always remind people that, even when you get documented information from an official source, there will always be concerns around the authenticity of that information, due to the large-scale falsification of certificates, including birth certificates and death certificates and all those sorts of information. We have to take a lot of our information with a pinch of salt. When legislation, for example, at a given time, might have said that a child cannot be taken for adoption until the mother had been asked for consent after the six weeks, as per the legislation, in actual fact, in practice, that baby was with its adoptive parents within a matter of days or weeks. The only way to push back against that is by having the living testimony of all the people involved to say that that is not what happened.

**Mr Kingston:** Briefly, just to clarify, on the specific issue of body parts or remains being used for anatomical research, apart from, if you like, private research that is being done, is that a part of any statutory process that is under way?

**Mr Duffy:** No, it is not; not so far. The academics have not looked into it, and I find that strange, nor have they looked into the drug and vaccine trials. In all this, it is important to remember that it is a process, and the process is as important as the outcome for us. I feel that the Executive Committee needs to push Queen's University on what it now decides to do and to try to get this expedited. So far, it has not come up with a lot of answers. We need those answers. I go back to what Paula said earlier about waiting for the statutory inquiry. Queen's University told us that there had been no malpractice. Again, in the briefing, I have shown you how it has said that it has complied with the anatomy legislation. It has not, because it has told us that its records only start in 1927, for example. It has said that its consent records go back to 1922. There are a lot of anomalies that Queen's University, apparently, cannot stand over, and we need answers.

**Mr Kingston:** OK, thank you.

**Ms Sugden:** I apologise for missing your opening remarks, Eunan. Having listened to the conversation, I want to pick up on the last point around policy. A process is the minimum that we

should expect from all this. The fact that that is not happening is really disappointing. Listening to your example from two years ago, it feels like they have not learned anything. I really am horrified by that experience, and, you know, wow.

There are two things that come to mind, and other members have talked about them. The first is the trauma-informed approach. It feels like a new phrase that we are using. I know that it is of interest to this Committee, but, given the nature of this work, we should have been doing that anyway, because of the victims and survivors who are involved. It is disappointing to hear that that has not happened because of how they have conducted themselves.

The other thing — maybe it is not the right phrase — is the duty of candour to give that information and to recognise it. I would expect that, in much of this, it is about acknowledgement. When you acknowledge that something has happened and that it was wrong — as you said yourself, it is not a nice issue — then people need to be sorry for it having happened. The next step in that is to provide the information in order to give people answers and to at least follow through on that. It feels like it all has not really been taken in by those who were responsible. I do not know whether that is because time is passing and it feels like there is not as much pressure on them. Those are comments rather than questions, I suppose, but what pressure can we put on people to bring them back to why it was wrong and what we need to do to address it somehow?

**Mr Duffy:** That is important, Claire. Thank you. Unfortunately, we are in a position where a lot of it is about self-preservation and, more than anything else, reputation when it comes to the concerns, grievances, complaints and the harms and violations — if you want to call them "potential violations", that is absolutely OK as well — that were carried out.

I have tried to say to those guys, "I have a lot of concerns about a lot of things, and, as far as I am concerned, they are all justified on every level. We need you guys to step up. If you do not want to accept responsibility for what happened in the past and for your staff members etc, that is absolutely OK, but we still deserve some kind of truth, justice, accountability, discovery, closure and redress for this". It is part of redress. It is essentially what we need.

I am not trying to scare anybody by any means, but I could say to people in this room or to the general public on a wider scale, "You may not be interested in this now, but if you were to find out that you were affected by such institutional issues in six weeks, six months or six years, how much difference would it make to you then? By then, however, it might be too late". It is important that people take that sort of perspective on it, because, in 1950, 1% of the entire population of Ireland was incarcerated, making Ireland second only to Russia in that respect at the time. We now reckon that 1 in 3 or maybe 4 people in the entire population of Ireland are affected by these issues. You may think that you are not affected by it today, but you might be affected by it tomorrow.

**The Chairperson (Ms Bradshaw):** I have no other indications of members wishing to ask questions. Thank you, Eunan. We look forward to representatives from Queen's coming to us. We will go back over your written and verbal testimony and make sure that we put those questions to the representatives from Queen's when they come before us. No doubt, we will be back in contact with you, because the public inquiry's terms of reference and background will be out soon. We will be keen to hear your opinion on that and how we could change the legislation.

**Mr Duffy:** Thank you very much for your time.