Twitter Thread by Siobhán Fenton



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Today is a really significant day in Ireland as the report into the Mother and Baby Homes is finally being published.

It was a cruel system which sought to punish and shame women and girls for the perceived 'sin' of pregnancy outside of 'wedlock'

A quick thread:

(■ : PA)

The ‘homes’ were religious-run institutions supported by the state and wider society, which operated throughout much of the 20th century; effectively imprisoning and punishing women and girls for transgressing strict religious 'morals' by becoming unmarried mothers

They were a consequence of Ireland’s pathological obsession with sex, religious morality and women’s bodies.

When vulnerable women and girls needed support, we as a society decided to shut them away and punish them instead

The ‘homes’ operated in plain sight in Irish society throughout the last century and saw thousands of children ripped apart from their mothers and put up for adoption against their will, as well as being subjected to physical and emotional abuse

Survivors and their families have spoken of the immense long-lasting and ongoing trauma they’ve suffered.

Many children born into the homes still don’t know who their families are, decades on.

Many mothers still don’t know where their children are or what happened to them

Earlier indications from the report suggest that the homes had a much higher infant mortality rate than the general population- around 1 in 7 of the children born in the homes died

Women and girls were taunted during child birth by nuns who also refused to give them pain control or medical care, as they considered a painful birth to be a punishment for their ‘sin’

After birth, many were forced to do unpaid, effectively slave labour, cleaning or doing laundry in religious institutions as a form of 'penance'

The report today will undoubtedly make for hard and harrowing reading but we owe it to survivors to listen to them now and ensure we don’t look away from the reality of this.

Irish society has spent far too long trying to sweep this chapter of recent history under the carpet

Survivors of the homes are still being failed by state and society now.

Many are still struggling to access their own birth records and files from their time inside the homes. They also face barriers accessing housing, support services, therapy and redress

If you’re affected by the report today, specific counselling services for survivors have been put in place and you can find details here:

https://t.co/ll4qZt4DI9