

# PRONI records relating to Mother and Baby Institutions



PRONI holds little in the way of records transferring directly from Mother and Baby Institutions (also known as Mother and Baby Homes). The only comprehensive admissions register for a specific Home is that for the Belfast Midnight Mission, Malone Place (HOS/4/3/1/1). The majority of records relating to the Institutions will be found in official files and relate to the operation and governance of the Home and correspondence with the relevant authority of the period.

The following is an example of records that relate to Mother and Baby Institutions. This is not a definitive list but gives an overview of some of the main archives within which you may find information and examples of the information you may find.

## PRIVATE RECORDS

### PRONI Ref: D2072 Belfast Midnight Mission

D2072/1-4: 4 documents. Minute book of the Belfast Midnight Mission, Malone Place, Belfast, 1934-1949; 2 letters to Mrs. Agnes Robertson, Hon. Sec. of the Belfast Midnight Mission concerning the Mission in relation to the proposed N.I. Hospitals Authority, 1947; copy letter from Mrs. M. Paulin, Belfast, to Deputy Keeper of the Records, Belfast, concerning the Belfast Midnight Mission documents above 1966. **Open.**

PRONI Ref: D1326 Papers of L'Estrange & Brett, Solicitors, Belfast  
D1326/26/18: Bundle of Correspondence, Church of Ireland Rescue League Annual Report 1924-1925, Extract from Will of Mrs G.A.E. Dunbar-Buller, Lady Kennedy, Craigavad, Co. Down. **Open.**

## **OFFICIAL RECORDS**

PRONI Ref: BG 'Board of Guardian Records'

The records of the 27 former Boards of Guardians and their administration of the workhouses. The archive contains indoor and outdoor relief admission and discharge books, lists, registers (including Nurses and Infants), abstracts and classified return, returns of births and deaths, correspondence, various committee minute books (including Boarding-out Committee), contracts and tenders, financial records, report books of visiting Committees and the Masters' journals and return books.

Examples:

BG/1/A/59 Antrim Board of Guardians: Minute Books. Minute book 9 January 1915-30 December 1915. **Open.**

BG/7/G/115 Belfast Board of Guardians: Indoor Registers (Workhouse Registers). Indoor register May 1916 - September 1916. **Open.**

BG/7/ID/1 Belfast Board of Guardians: Register of persons receiving reward under the Children's Act, 1908 - 1909. **Open.**

BG/25/I/1 Newtownards Board of Guardians: Registers of Nurses and Infants (1908) Act. June 1916 - September 1933. **Closed.**

BG/26/JB/1 Omagh Board of Guardians: Register of cases attended by midwife. 1910 - 1948. **Closed.**

BG/24/K/1 Newry Board of Guardians: Return of Births. Index to register of births. July 1892 - December 1899. **Open.**

## PRONI Ref: CAB 'Cabinet Secretariat'

The Cabinet considered the various issues of a security, financial or economic nature relating to Northern Ireland. The Cabinet Secretariat provided policy coordination and administrative support, liaising with NI Departments and counterparts in London.

### **CAB/4 Cabinet Conclusion Files**

CAB/4/548 Topics discussed: 1. Accommodation for unmarried mothers and their children. 1943. **Open.**

### **CAB/9B Ministry of Home Affairs 'B' Files**

CAB/9/B/53/1 Maternity and child welfare schemes in Northern Ireland: procedure and funding; includes Midwives and Nursing Home (Northern Ireland) Act 1929 with the question of the exemption of Christian Science homes; Mexican and Brazilian embassies inquiries into child welfare in the United Kingdom. 1927-1950. **Open.**

CAB/9/B/259/1 Request for financial assistance for the provision of accommodation for unmarried mothers and their children 1943. **Open.**

## PRONI Ref: HSS 'Department for Health and Social Services'

**HSS/11** This sub-series as a whole deals with the Ministry's registered and general case files. The files that are available cover the years 1924 to 1970, and they deal with registered files on a range of general and case files across a wide range of subjects.

Example:

HSS/11/60/11A: Hopedene Hostel Protestant Hostel between Holywood and Belmont Road – Report on the home both the number of inhabitants and number of children, staff, general condition. Building condition report, plan of the building. References the closing of the home and grant/funds/committees etc. Accompanied and unaccompanied children. 1981-1985. **Open** part of file.

HSS/11/67/8A: The Catholic Family Welfare Adoption Society. 1988-1989. **Open** part of file.

HSS/11/67/69A: Adoption (NI) Order 1987 Congregation of the Poor Sisters of Nazareth Adoption Society, 164 Bishop Street, Londonderry. 1988-1989. **Open** part of file.

### **HSS/13**

This sub-series discuss Ministry of Health and Social Services policies from 1948 until 1970, including those on health, employment, national insurance and training.

Examples:

HSS/13/33/10 Mount Oriel Home for unmarried mothers 1976. **Open**.

HSS/13/40/32 Mayflower Home of the Salvation Army Belfast – de-registration as a childrens home – no unaccompanied children- refers to Thorndale House. **Open**.

**HSS/32 ‘S’ and SCD’ Secret Files** (de-classified) This sub series contains files that were originally classified as secret.

Example:

HSS/32/1/27/4A Sisters of Nazareth Adoption Society 1991-1991. **Open** part of file.

### **HSS/34 TC Files: Children and Young Persons Act (NI) 1950**

Example:

HSS/34/4 Armagh Welfare Committee: Craigavon Hostel for Girls, Brownlow. 1971-1979. **Open**.

### [PRONI ref: HA ‘Ministry of Home Affairs’](#)

The Ministry of Home Affairs was responsible for the administration of health and welfare until 1944 when the Ministry of Health and Local Government was created

### **HA/13 Ministry of Home Affairs: Child Care Files**

This class deals with children and child care, and begins in 1943 and continues until 1977.

Many of the files in this class deal with the Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1950 that introduced mandatory protection for children into Northern Ireland and was parity legislation to the Westminster Children and Young Persons Act 1933.

Example:

HA/13/94 Children and Young Persons' Act (NI) 1950: plans, etc, St Joseph's babies home at Nazareth Lodge, Ravenhill Road, Belfast. **Open.**

HA/13/202 Ministry of Home Affairs. Childcare Files: Children and Young Persons' Act (NI) 1950: voluntary homes - Good Shepherd Home, Newry, Co. Down (includes Marian Vale, mother's and babies home) – fire reports. **Closed.**

[PRONI ref: HOS 'Hospital Records](#)

Examples:

HOS/1/1/3 Transfer of Hospital Rescue Maternity Home. 1948-1949.

**Open.**

HOS/4A The South Belfast Hospital Management Committee was responsible for Belfast City Hospital; Musgrave Park Hospital; and Malone Place Hospital. 1947-1973. **Open** part of file

HOS/4/3/1/1 Malone Place Admission Register 1901-1944. **Closed.**

[PRONI ref: LA Local Authority](#)

LA Local Authority records Series: 28 Welfare Committee comprises minute books which contain some details of children in care such as medical treatment, changes of circumstances, and costs of care.

Examples:

LA/1/28/AA/5 Local Authority records: Antrim County Council. Welfare Committee minutes: Antrim County Welfare Committee Minute Book, April 1955 – March 1957. **Closed.**

LA/1/28/AA/8 Local Authority records: Antrim County Council. Welfare Committee: Antrim County Welfare Committee Minutes, Children Sub-Committee minutes and Homes' and General Purposes Committee minutes, January 1960 - May 1961. **Closed.**

PRONI ref: FIN Ministry of Finance

Example:

FIN/18/23/208 Treasury Division 'A' Registry files. Unmarried Mothers: Hopedene Hostel Accommodation for unmarried mothers and their children 1943-1945. **Open.**

### **Accessing records about Mother and Baby Institutions**

Some records, particularly those that contain sensitive, personal information are closed to the public. If you wish to request access to a closed record under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Data Protection Act 2018 you can email [access@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:access@communities-ni.gov.uk) and we will consult with the relevant authorities on your behalf.