

Justice for Magdalenes

Crocknahattina, Bailieborough
Co. Cavan, Ireland

Web: www.magdalenelaundries.com
Email: info@magdalenelaundries.com



Questionnaire for Survivor Testimony

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Introduction

1. Please give your full name.
2. Consent to participate: Before starting the interview, I would like to ask you to confirm that you agree to participate in this interview voluntarily and that you are familiar with the consent forms that I previously provided to you.

Early Life - Childhood Recollections

3. When and where were you born?
4. Who raised you?
5. Did you have any brothers or sisters?
6. Where did you go to school?
7. Did you hear about Magdalene Institutions when you were young? – What did you hear?

Entry into the laundry

8. In which laundry were you?
9. Between which dates?
10. Why did you go there? Please can you give as many details as you can as to how you came to be in the laundry?
11. What was your reaction immediately on your arrival?
12. Were you made aware of your rights?
13. Were you told how long you would be there?
14. Were you told that you were free to leave?
15. Were you told you could leave on a certain date?
16. Do you know why any of the other women in the laundry were there? Please give as many details as you can.
17. Were there mostly older women or young girls in the laundry?
18. Did you move from one institution to another? (Please provide dates for each if known.)

Living Conditions in the laundry

19. How did you feel at the time about being in the Magdalene?
20. Did you have a “house name” or number at the Magdalene Laundry? If so, would you like to share it?
21. What were your living conditions like?
22. Where did you sleep?
23. What did you wear?
24. What food did you receive?
25. What (if any) opportunities for recreation or exercise were there?
26. What (if any) opportunities for education were there?

Relationships

27. Were you allowed to make friends?
28. How would you describe your relationships with the women who worked in the institution?
29. Were friends or relatives able to visit you?
30. Were there any other visitors to the Magdalene?
31. What (if any) other contact with the world outside the laundry did you have (e.g. newspapers or radio; trips outside the laundry)?
32. How would you describe your relationships with the Religious Sisters?
33. Did you have any relationship with friends or family outside the institution?
34. Did you have any relationship with visitors to the institution?

Working Conditions in the laundry

35. What work did you do?
36. Were you paid?
37. Were you given pocket money?
38. How many days per week did you work?

39. What hours did you work?
40. Was every day the same, or were there any special events or holidays?
41. What were working conditions in the laundry like?
42. Were there any accidents in the laundry? What happened?
43. What happened if you did not want to or could not work?
44. Were you ever ill? What treatment did you receive? Can you recall what happened to others who were ill?
45. Can you remember whether any government officials or employees ever visited the laundry – factory inspectors, Gardaí, doctors? If so, what parts of the laundry did they visit? Did they talk to anyone?
46. [If you entered the laundry, from the Industrial School system or on remand/probation/being given a suspended sentence from the Courts or by being referred by the Gardaí/welfare officers/social workers]

Did anyone from the relevant Government department/agency visit you in the laundry to check how you were? If so, how often? And what did you say to them?

The type of work in the Laundry

47. Was it possible to tell where the items of clothing which were being laundered or repaired came from?
48. Were any of the items which you laundered recognisable as uniforms or work clothes? If so, can you remember which organisations they came from?
49. Did you ever have any contact with or talk to the people delivering the clothes to the laundry? If so, what did you say to them?
50. Were you aware of regular contracts – did the laundry regularly come from particular clients?

Possibility of Escape

51. Were you allowed to leave?
52. Did you try to leave or escape?
53. If so, what happened to you? Did someone bring you back? If so, who?
54. If you did not try to escape, were there any reasons why you decided not to try?

55. Did anyone else at the laundry try to escape whilst you were there? If so, what did the nuns/auxiliaries do when they discovered this? What happened to the person who escaped? Did they return to the laundry? Who brought them back?
56. How did people leave the Magdalene?
57. Did you ever ask the nuns when you would be able to leave the laundry? What was the reply?
58. Were the doors to the laundry locked?
59. From the inside or the outside?
60. What were the windows like? Were they locked? Could you reach them? Could you see outside?
61. How did you manage to leave the laundry?
62. Why did you leave?
63. How did you leave? Where did you go?
64. Were you released to a position of employment? Was it a religious run institution?

End of life issues

65. Do you recall what happened when women died at the Magdalene?
66. Do you know if the women were buried in coffins?
67. Were other Magdalenes allowed to attend the funerals?
68. Was there a funeral mass? Did a priest attend the burial?

Complaints

69. Was there a process to make a formal complaint?
70. Did you complain to anyone while you were in the laundry?
71. Have you ever made a complaint to the nuns about your treatment?
72. Have you complained to anyone else (Ministers, IHRC, Gardaí)?

Records

73. Did you apply to the nuns for your records?

74. How were you treated?

75. Did you get your records immediately? What was the process?

76. Did the nuns deny that you were in the laundry?

77. Did you apply for any state records? If so to what department? Were you successful?

Redress Board

78. Did you make an application to the Redress Board?

79. What happened? Were you successful?

80. Were you allowed to speak about the Magdalene Laundries?

81. If you received a payment, do you feel your time in the laundry has been acknowledged?

Post-Magdalene Institution Experiences

82. Did you speak about the Magdalene Institutions after you left? Who did you speak with? What did you say?

83. How do you now feel about your time in the Magdalene?

84. What would an apology mean to you?

85. Has your time in the laundry affected you since you left? If so, please give details?

86. Do you ever visit any of the women who are still institutionalised?