



Oifig an Stiúrthóra um
Idirghabháil Údaraithe, Tuaim
Office of the Director of
Authorised Intervention, Tuam

Annual Report 2025



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Introduction



Memorial Garden

This is the third Annual Report produced by the Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam (ODAIT), to be submitted to the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality (the Minister) pursuant to Section 23 of the Institutional Burials Act 2022 (the Act).

The report covers the period 1 January to 31 December 2025, and details the activities of the Director and of ODAIT during this period.

Message from the Director



I am pleased to introduce the third Annual Report of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam, for the reporting period 1 January to 31 December 2025.

The Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam (ODAIT) was established under the Institutional Burials Act, 2022 (the Act).

In March 2023 and I was appointed as Tuam Director to perform functions as assigned under the Government Order (S.I. No. 518/2022) for the Tuam site in May 2023. See the maps of the Tuam site at appendix 1 and some of the developments that have taken place in 2025.

In establishing ODAIT, the Government has created the potential for Ireland to deliver a degree of solace to families, survivors and to the wider community for a dark chapter in the State's past, and an opportunity for greater clarity about the fate and whereabouts of children believed to be buried at the Tuam Mother and Baby Institution.

We face significant forensic challenges in this endeavour and are overcoming them as we move through the various phases of the project. Nothing quite like this has been done in Ireland or indeed globally. In our third year, we moved from preparation to delivery by starting the forensic excavation of the Tuam site on 14 July 2025 and recovering the first sets of infant human remains from the site later in the year.

The excavation is a concerted effort involving ODAIT's Forensic Excavation Team (international experts in archaeology, forensic archaeology, osteoarchaeology, forensic anthropology and other disciplines from around the world including Spain, UK, Colombia, Australia, Canada, US and Ireland); the OPW; our construction contractor (Finna Construction); and our structural engineer (TOBIN).

Without the cooperation and welcome received from the residents of the Dublin Road Estate and the wider Tuam community, this work would not be possible. I would like to express my thanks to them all.

OPW began work on fitting out our forensic facility at the HSE campus at Toghermore, Tuam in 2025. ODAIT and Forensic Science Ireland (FSI) deepened our cooperation on DNA testing, and DNA analysis is expected to begin in 2026.

ODAIT continued to engage in research, access various archives and data sets relevant to ODAIT's mandate.

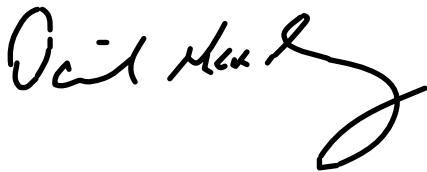
2025 also saw the launch of the Identification Programme, building on the work of the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) who collected 20 samples from elderly and vulnerable people under the Administrative Scheme between 2023 and 2025. The ID Programme team began the process of determining eligibility and collecting DNA samples from all eligible family members in Ireland and abroad.

In compliance with ODAIT's Core Values, we have made every effort to communicate with families, survivors, interested parties and to the media to keep them informed about our work. Demystifying this process is an important part of our commitment to keep families and survivors at the centre of this project. Since the start of the excavation, ODAIT has issued regular [Technical Updates](#) to families, survivors and to the media in order to keep them informed about our work at the site. We also brought families and survivors to the Tuam site on 8 July 2025 to show them the site before the excavation began and to explain the excavation process and methodology. ODAIT has spoken regularly to local, national and international media about its work, including having a press conference and media visit to the Tuam site on 7 July 2025 remaining true to our core values.

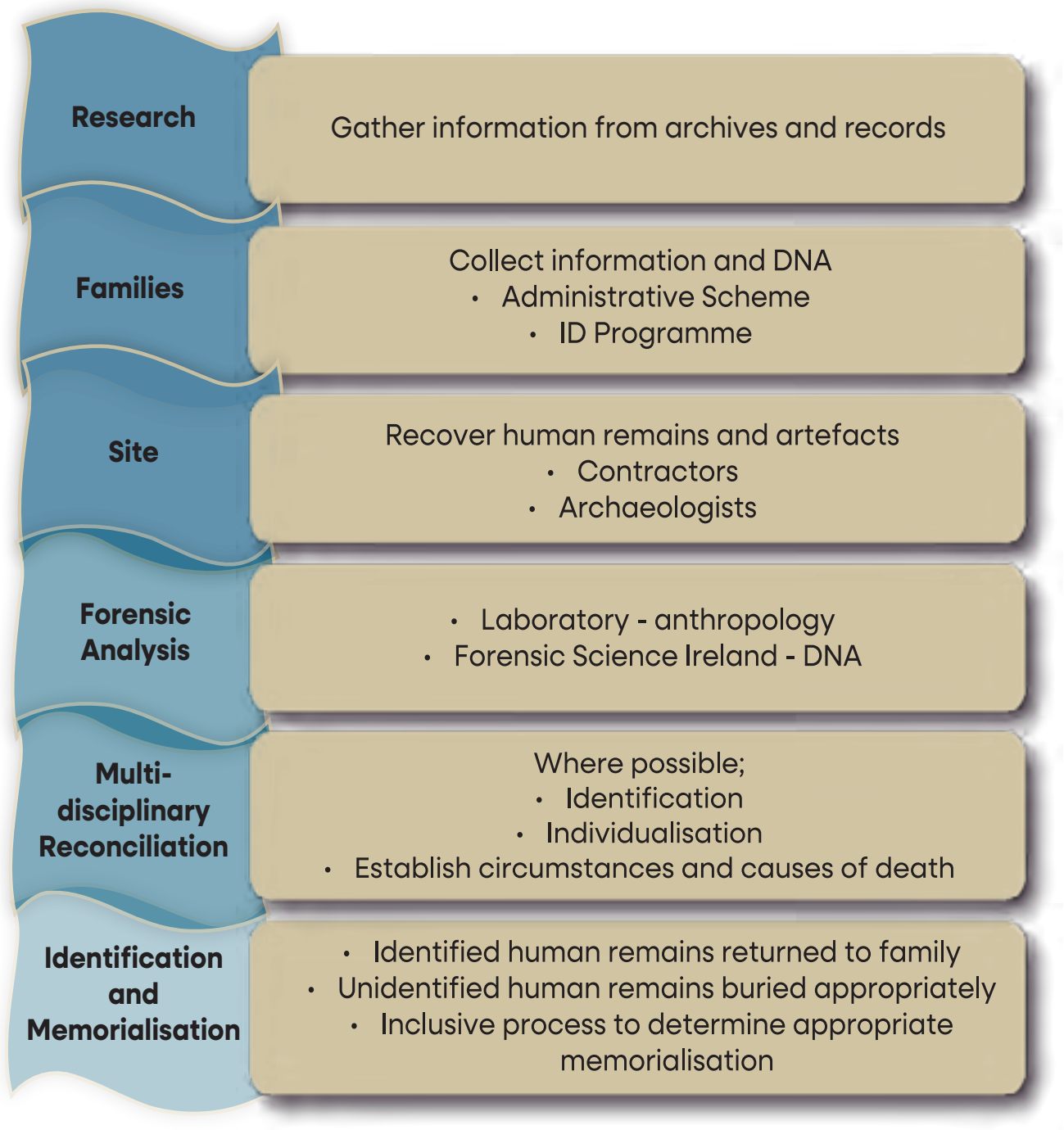
I would also like to note the work of our administrative team in keeping the office efficient, effective and functioning correctly, in compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and thank them for their great work and commitment. I also note and thank DCDE for their assistance in keeping ODAIT moving forward.

I would like to thank the members of the Advisory Board for their ongoing contribution, reflections and advice as the project moves forward.

Finally, I would like to thank the families of those believed to be buried at the Tuam site, survivors of the Tuam Mother and Baby Institution and their advocates for their contribution, advice and support.



Overview



Our Statutory Responsibilities

Following the making of the Institutional Burials Act 2022 (Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam) Order 2022 ([S.I. No. 518/2022](#)), the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality established the Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention Tuam ('the Office of the Director') by Institutional Burials Act 2022 (Establishment of Office of Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam) Order 2023 (S.I. No. 87/223) in accordance with Section 9(1) of the Institutional Burials Act 2022 ("the 2022 Act").

The Government Order ([S.I. No. 518/2022](#)) directed the Minister to establish an independent Office of the Director by order to perform the functions set out in section 10(a)-(k) and additional functions set out in 10(l)ii of the 2022 Act.

Accordingly, the key functions of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam are as follows:

- manage and control generally the staff, administration and business of the Office;
- identify and engage the expertise required to assist him or her in performing his or her functions;
- obtain any necessary consents for the carrying out of necessary works on ancillary land, ancillary burial land or principal burial land for the performance of the Office;
- arrange for the forensic excavation and recovery of human remains buried in a manifestly inappropriate manner on principal burial land;
- arrange for the post-recovery analysis of human remains after forensic excavation and recovery of those remains;
- arrange for the carrying out of remedial works to the land on completion of the recovery of human remains from the land;
- undertake an Identification Programme;
- make final arrangements for human remains recovered from principal burial land;

- provide regular updates to relatives of the deceased, other stakeholders and the public;
- consult with an Advisory Board at regular intervals.



Boundary Map from S.I. No. 518 of 2022 Institutional Burials Act 2022 (Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam) Order 2022

As per the Legislation, the Director's powers include:

- hiring staff and entering into contracts to deliver the objectives;
- accessing land to recover human remains buried in a manifestly inappropriate manner;
- conducting an Identification Programme that will (after the satisfaction of certain legislative preconditions) as part of a multidisciplinary approach, involve taking DNA samples from 'eligible family members';
- carry out works on land;
- cooperate with the Director of Forensic Science Ireland (FSI) to enable the Director of FSI to perform his functions under the Act.

Core Values



Mission Statement

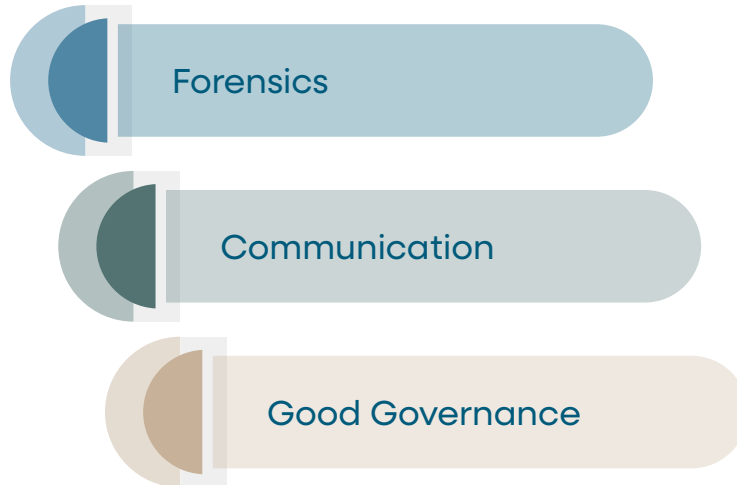
To restore dignity in death and, where possible, an identity to those inappropriately buried between 1925 and 1961 at the site of the former Mother and Baby Institution in Tuam.

Statement of Strategy

Having established the capacity, ODAIT will forensically excavate the Tuam site, recover and analyse human remains in accordance with international forensic standards and best practice. Acknowledging the high complexity and difficulty, ODAIT will endeavour to individualise and identify those human remains and establish the cause and circumstances of death. Identified human remains will be returned to their families, and unidentified human remains will be buried appropriately and with dignity. All will be memorialised after a consultative process informed by ODAIT's core values. We will communicate with families and other stakeholders and respect good governance.

Key Developments

There are three pillars that are fundamental to ODAIT's strategy:



Forensics is the core business of ODAIT, Communication is the key external enabler and Good Governance, the key internal enabler.

Forensics

Forensic Excavation of Tuam Site

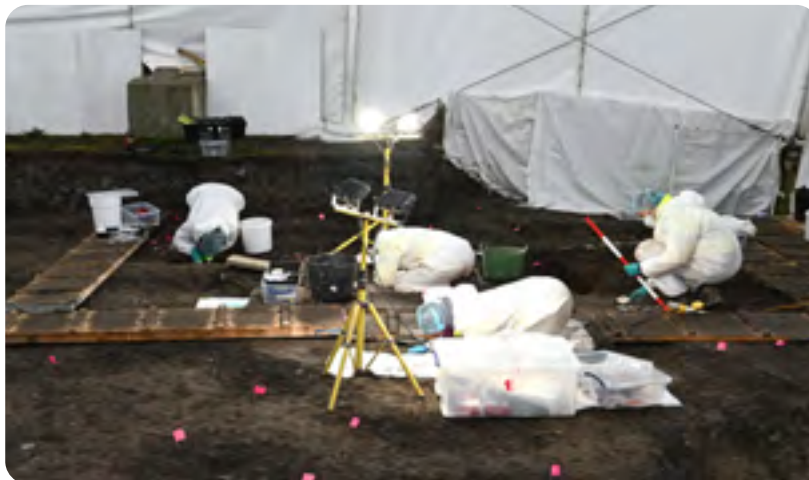
In January 2025, preliminary surveys continued in preparation for the tender process to appoint the construction contractor. In April/May 2025, Finna Construction was appointed to this role following a tender process.

In preparation for the site excavation, ODAIT commenced recruitment in early 2025 to secure the services of a number of specialists including: Site Coordinator; Supervisor Forensic Archaeologist/Supervisor Archaeologist, Senior Osteoarchaeologist/Senior Forensic Anthropologist, Forensic Archaeologist/Archaeologist, Osteoarchaeologist/Forensic Anthropologist, Evidence Manager and Forensic Photographer.

On 16 June 2025, ODAIT took forensic control of the Tuam site, erecting hoarding and excluding the public from the site.

On 14 July 2025, the full forensic excavation of the site of the former Mother and Baby Institution, Tuam, Co Galway, commenced.

By the end of 2025, 33 sets of human remains were recovered from the period of operation of the Mother and Baby Institution (1925-61), all were infants that were buried in coffins. Seven sets of human remains from the Workhouse era were also recovered.



Members of the Forensic Excavation Team on site

Collection of DNA Samples

DNA samples continued to be taken as part of the Administrative Scheme (for eligible individuals) who are elderly and/or vulnerable.

The full Identification Programme commenced in November 2025:

- in accordance with s.46(6) of the Institutional Burials Act 2022 after the Director consulted the Advisory Board,
- in accordance with s.46(7) of the Institutional Burials Act 2022 when the Director notified the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality, and the Director of Forensic Science Ireland, and

- in accordance with s.66 of the Institutional Burials Act 2022 when the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality received the prior consent of the Minister for Justice after the Minister for Justice consulted the DNA Database System Oversight Committee

This allowed ODAIT to engage with all potential DNA donors, not only those who were elderly and/or vulnerable. ODAIT assisted applicants through the determination process and began to take DNA samples from those deemed to be 'eligible family members'.

By the end of 2025, DNA samples were taken from 20 people, and the team engaged with a further 174 people.

Forensic Facility and Mortuary

ODAIT worked with the OPW regarding a temporary forensic facility in Headford. A new site was identified in Toghermore on a HSE campus, close to the excavation site. Construction started in late 2025, and the forensic facility and mortuary will be ready for use in Summer 2026.

Human remains recovered from the site were washed and stabilised, ready for the full analysis that will begin when ODAIT enters the Toghermore forensic facility.

Data, DNA and Research

ODAIT forensic staff developed a general system of work (protocols and procedures) and a data management system. These systems were ready for the start of the excavation in July 2025.

Clear systems of cooperation and engagement have been developed with FSI, the office responsible for the DNA aspects of the Tuam intervention.

ODAIT's research work, accessing records to understand the history of the Tuam site and those believed to be buried at the Tuam site continued.

Communication

In 2025, ODAIT continued its communications strategy engaging regularly with families, survivors, residents and the media. For the first half of 2025, communications activity focused on preparing stakeholders for the upcoming works, providing transparency on the approach and reassurance for any questions.

ODAIT's Community Liaison regularly communicates with residents, particularly those adjoining the site to keep them updated on the works, answers their queries and brings any issues to the site team for resolution. She liaises with them via email, phone and home visits.

In April 2025, ODAIT updated families, survivors, advocates and media on the excavation timeline. ODAIT also appointed its Family and Survivors Liaison who is available to answer questions, explain ODAIT's work and assist applicants through the Identification Programme process.

On 6 June 2025, ODAIT held a Community Information Evening in Tuam to provide information, and answer questions in advance of the commencement of preparatory and excavation works.

In advance of the excavation beginning, ODAIT wanted to provide family members, survivors and media with information on its work and the opportunity to see the site being set up for the excavation before it was forensically sealed. ODAIT achieved this by hosting a media briefing in Tuam on 7 July to outline the forensic approach being taken, to provide the opportunity to take pictures and videos of the site layout, and to have their questions answered.



ODAIT held an event for family members and survivors in Tuam on 8 July 2025, where they had the opportunity to meet the ODAIT team, ask questions and view the site in person for the last time before the excavation works began.

To maintain transparency and keep stakeholders up to date, ODAIT issues regular technical updates. These are shared with family members, survivors and advocates first, before being sent to media and interested parties. The first monthly update on the progress of the forensic excavation was issued on 29 August 2025, and these continued for the rest of the year. As part of these, ODAIT also provides information on other aspects of its work including the Identification Programme. ODAIT Director, Daniel MacSweeney also participates in media interviews to outline ODAIT's progress and answer questions. These updates are also available on our website.

Good Governance

ODAIT is an independent public body under the auspices of DCDE.

The operation of the Office is governed by the Institutional Burials Act 2022 and the general law. Under the Act, the Director is accountable to the Public Accounts Committee and other Oireachtas committees. The Director is also accountable to the Minister for Children, Equality and Disability.

ODAIT's Director and senior management team are responsible for the day-to-day management and control of the Office.

Good Governance is one of the Office's key strategic pillars, containing the necessary elements to run the Office in accordance with the relevant administrative, legal and governance standards in line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016:

ODAIT adheres to the independent Code of Standards and Behaviour, which sets out a clear framework within which the Office must work. The Code has been designed to provide a framework so that all employees can be seen to act solely in the public interest and within the law and thus uphold public confidence in ODAIT.

ODAIT has established policies and procedures covering a wide range of work activities, human resources-related functions, financial processes, and audit procedures.

In addition to a system of internal controls used to ensure adherence to its policies and procedures, the Office underwent annual audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG) in 2025.

ODAITs annual financial statements and annual report are publicly available on our website www.odait.ie.

An Oversight Agreement is in place between ODAIT and DCDE, which is underpinned by regular governance meetings.

Continuous professional development is a core principle of our governance functions, applying learnings from the Office's internal monitoring and audit outcomes, and from the shared experiences of other similar sized state agencies.

Developing Capacity in our Team

Throughout 2025 we focused on further strengthening administrative organisational structure to enable us to fully deliver on the mission of the Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam (ODAIT).

We recruited through a variety of means, including secondment calls, and direct hiring to further build on our dedicated team who are committed to restoring dignity in death to those believed to be buried at Tuam.

During 2025, we expanded our administrative team through secondment and direct hires, including the appointment of Family and Survivors Liaison in April 2025.

Services Procurement

ODAIT engaged in quality procurement solutions that align with national procurement guidelines ensuring transparency, fairness, competition, and value-for-money while meeting the needs and delivering the objectives of the Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam within its budget constraints.

Section 23 (5)(b) of the Institutional Burials Act 2022 requires the Director to name in the annual report each person that the Director has entered into contracts or arrangements with, and any person appointed as a consultant or adviser.

During 2025, we successfully secured the services of:

- Dr Ros Ó Maoldúin is the Site Coordinator, he plans and oversees the excavation, recovery and documentation of human remains from the Tuam Site in accordance with the Institutional Burials Act, 2022 and international best practices.
- Alice PR provides the provision of public relations and media relations to support ODAIT's operational needs.
- Forensic Human Identification Global Services Pty Ltd is the Forensic Geneticist for the project. They provide advice and guidance in the area of forensic genetics as it applies to forensic human identification of human remains recovered from the Tuam Site in accordance with the Institutional Burials Act 2022, and in line with forensic best practice.
- Archaeology Plan provide the services of a Supervisor Archaeologist who supervises the work of the archaeologists on site.
- Curran Forensic Solutions provides the services of an Evidence Manager to document and manage all evidence and artefacts recovered during the Tuam site excavations.
- Conway Photographic Services provides the services of a Forensic Photographer to document all human remains during the recovery from the Tuam site.

- AMS Cultural Heritage Consultancy Ltd provides the services of Senior Osteoarchaeologist/ Forensic Archaeologist/Archaeologists/ Osteoarchaeologists/Forensic Anthropologists in the recovery of human remains from the Tuam site.
- Enrique Jose Campo provides the services of an Osteoarchaeologist in the recovery of human remains from the Tuam site.
- J Murphy Osteological Services provides the services of an Osteoarchaeologist in the recovery of human remains from the Tuam site.
- Dr Allysha P Winburn is the Forensic Laboratory Coordinator. She will manage a laboratory team and work transversally with a multidisciplinary team.
- Finna Construction Limited provides the Civil Engineering Works associated with the Forensic Investigation of the Tuam Site.
- Diana Perez Soruco provides the services of a Forensic Archaeologist in the recovery of human remains from the Tuam site.
- Timeline Research Ltd provides the research expertise to assist the undertaking of the intervention at the Tuam site.
- Eir provides Wi-Fi service in our temporary facility.
- Korec provides hire of the GPS/GNSS unit and associated equipment for the site.
- Tuam Stars GAA provide parking spaces to members of ODAIT.
- West Clean provides cleaning services.
- Secure All provide key holder security services.
- Owen McDonough & Associates Ltd provides accountancy services for the financial statements.
- Stericycle provides expert medical waste disposal.
- Eir Evo provides line connections to Government networks.
- Argot Consulting provides project management advice, support and training.

Governance

Financial Information

The budget for ODAIT is allocated through Vote 40, Subhead CO8 of the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE). The Minister secured an allocation of €9.4m for ODAIT in 2025.

ODAIT is funded up to the approved level of allocation or expenditure, whichever is the lesser. The expenditure in 2025 was just over €4.6m. Higher expenditure is expected in 2026 as the forensic excavation proceeds, supported by a detailed budget proposal.

As set out under s.22 of the Institutional Burials Act 2022, there is a requirement for ODAIT to prepare and submit annual accounts. The Financial Statements for year end 31 December 2025 have been prepared in accordance with the financial reporting standard FRS102, the financial reporting standard applicable in Ireland and the UK issued by the Financial Reporting Council. The Financial Statements were submitted to the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG).

Following the establishment of the Office, an arrangement was put in place whereby payroll processing for the Office is carried out by the National Shared Services Office via DCDE. In addition, considering the time-bound nature of the Office, a special arrangement was put in place regarding payment of suppliers through the Department's Finance Unit with ODAIT mirroring the DCDE accountability structures. Procedures for all key financial control processes are in place and are reviewed and updated in compliance with the Public Spending Code.

Owen McDonough & Associates Ltd. partnered with ODAIT in the preparation of the financial statement and reports for 2025.

Data Protection

ODAIT is committed to protecting the rights and privacy of individuals in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. The Data Protection and Data Privacy policies have been agreed and implemented since the establishment of the Office and are available on our website. Any concerns on how we process personal data or any additional information in respect to any of our data protection policies, can be forwarded to our Data Protection Officer (DPO) at dpo@dait.ie.

Protected Disclosures

Under Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, ODAIT is obliged to prepare and publish, no later than 30 June in each year, a report detailing the number of protected disclosures made during the preceding year and the action (if any) taken in response to those protected disclosures. Pursuant to this requirement, no protected disclosures were received in 2025 and the annual report on protected disclosures has been submitted to our parent Department and are published on our website.

Premises

The Office of the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam operates from Custom House, Flood Street, Galway. This office space was provided by the Office of Public Works. The Director worked with OPW to secure a forensic facility and mortuary premises in Toghermore, and work continues in order to have this functioning by Q2 2026.

An additional office and temporary laboratory space is situated in Headford until the new facility in Tuam is ready for use.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board was appointed by the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to provide advice and guidance to the Director in the performance of his or her functions.

The Board met four times over the course of the year including a visit to the site in July in advance of the start of the excavation. Minutes of all the advisory board meetings are available on gov.ie.

S.13 of the Institutional Burials Act 2022 requires that the Board will be chaired by a former coroner or someone with coronial expertise and will include scientific experts, former residents and/or family members.

We consult with the Advisory Board at regular intervals, and present information to them on key developments in the intervention, for their advice and contribution.

The Advisory Board members are:

- Chairperson: Dr Brian Farrell, Dublin District Coroner emeritus and past President of the Coroner's Society of Ireland
- Scientific Expert: Dr Barra Ó'Donnabháin, Department of Archaeology, University College Cork
- Scientific Expert: Dr Denise Keating, Consultant Osteo-archaeologist
- County Council Representative: Eileen Ruane, Director of Services, Galway County Council (until August 2025); Michael Owens, Director of Services, Galway County Council (from August 2025)
- Former Resident: Peter Mulryan
- Family Member: Annette McKay



First meeting of the Advisory Board to the Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam

Sitting (L-R): Laura McGarrigle, DCDE; Daniel MacSweeney; Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam; Annette McKay, member of Tuam Advisory Board; Dr Denise Keating, member of Tuam Advisory Board

Standing: Peter Szlovak, DCDE; Gráinne Morrissey, DCDE; Selina Brogan, Office of the Director, Tuam; Oran Finegan, Office of the Director; Dr Niamh McCullagh, Forensic Archaeologist; Bláithín Kennedy, Office of the Director; Peter Mulryan, member of the Tuam Advisory Board; Dr. Brian Farrell, Chairperson of the Tuam Advisory Board.

On the screen: Dr Barra Ó Donnabháin, member of the Tuam Advisory Board.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Historic Map Overlaid on Site



Map courtesy of Tailte Eireann - Surveying © CYAL50512876

Appendix 2 - Aerial Images



Aerial image of site before commencement of excavation in July 2025

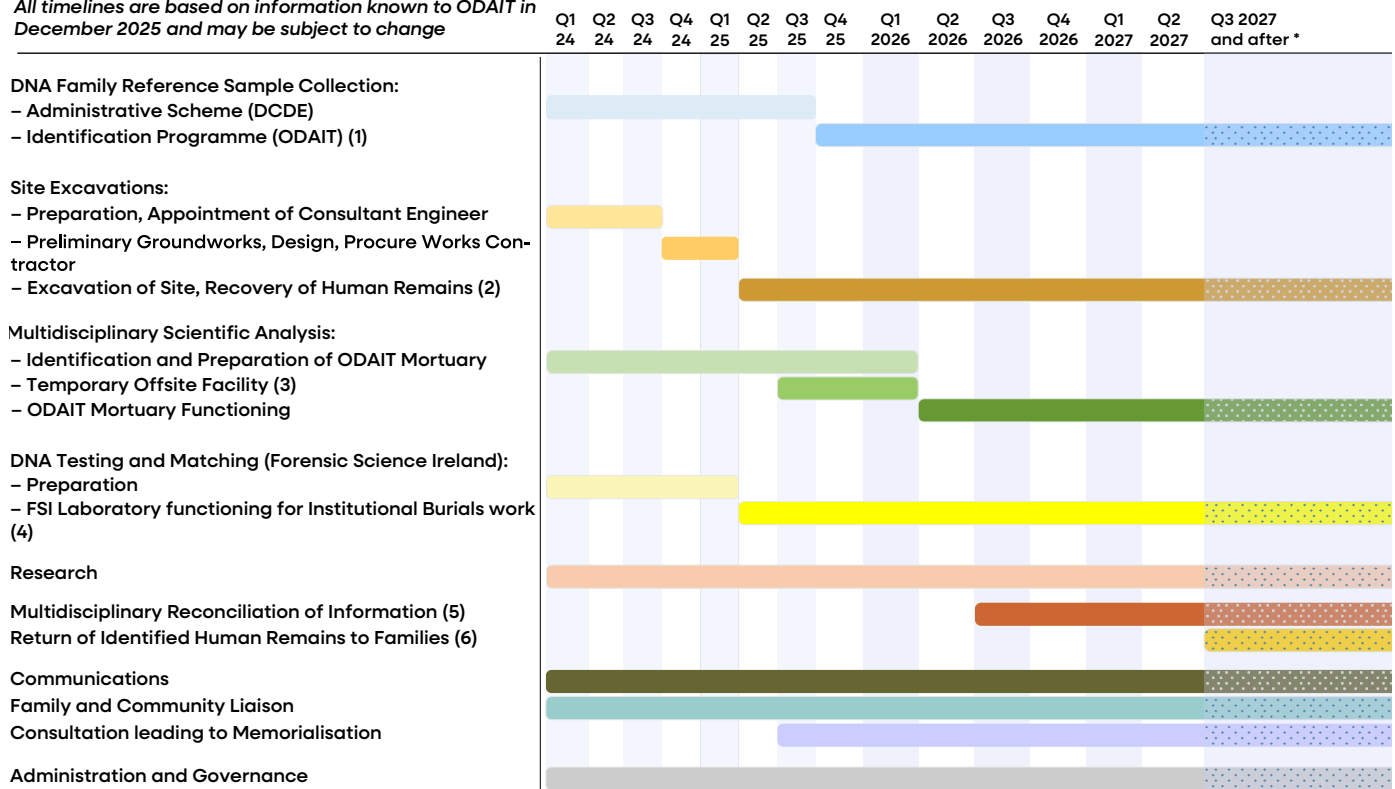


Aerial image of site in December 2025

Appendix 3 - Overview of Project

WORKSTREAM

All timelines are based on information known to ODAIT in December 2025 and may be subject to change



* ODAIT has been established to operate until 30 June 2027. Continuation of work beyond Q2 2027 is a matter for government. Relevant scientific factors include the volume and complexity of human remains found during the excavation of the site

(1) Transition from Administrative Scheme to Identification Programme took place in Q4 2025. The Administrative Scheme is now at an end

(2) ODAIT estimates excavation of the site will take approximately 24 months, but the final duration will be dictated by factors that will be revealed by the excavation

(3) ODAIT uses a temporary offsite facility for initial processing and storage of human remains and minimal forensic analysis. Work will transition to the ODAIT Mortuary when it is ready (Q2 2026)

(4) Depends on validation of equipment and methodology

(5) Depends on comparison of analysis of data from three sources (research, families and site)

(6) Depends on when identification of human remains occurs (if any)

Appendix 4 - Glossary of Terms

DAIT	Director of Authorised Intervention, Tuam
ODAIT	Office of the Directory of Authorised Intervention, Tuam
DCDE	Department of Children, Disability and Equality
HR	Human Resources
OPW	Office of Public Works
ETG	Expert Technical Group
MBHCOI	Mother and Baby Home Commission of Investigation
FSI	Forensic Science Ireland
OCAG	Office of Comptroller and Auditor General



Oifig an Stiúrthóra um Idirghabháil Údaraithe, Tuaim

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