

# Project Infant

*Established 2022*

Project Infant Findings Report

**Glenamaddy Home, County Galway**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## History of the Home

The predecessor to the mother and baby home in Tuam, this home was established in December 1921, shortly after the Anglo-Irish Treaty had been signed. This was due to the Board of Guardians that had administered relief through the form of workhouses had been dissolved and this form of relief had been set up in the form of mother and baby homes. (Higginbotham, n.d.)

This home unlike others was not active for long. It was reported in the Connacht Tribune on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1925, about the poor conditions that had existed in the home:

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*“The building, a ramshackle affair has been condemned as unfit for human habitation...”*

*Connacht Tribune – January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1925*

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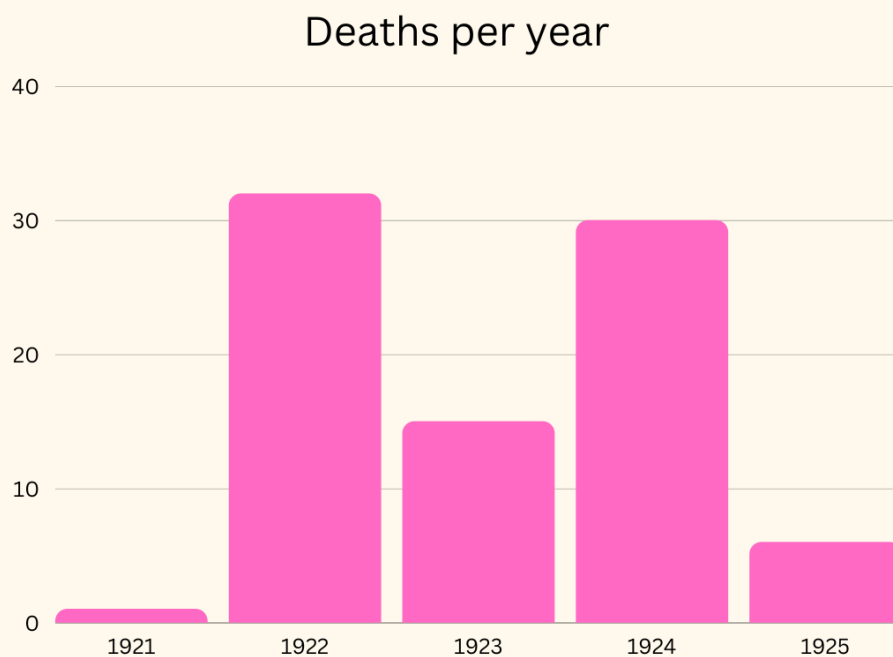
The home would close in 1925, shortly after this article had been published. Its successor, Tuam – would open later that year.

## Victims

### Info

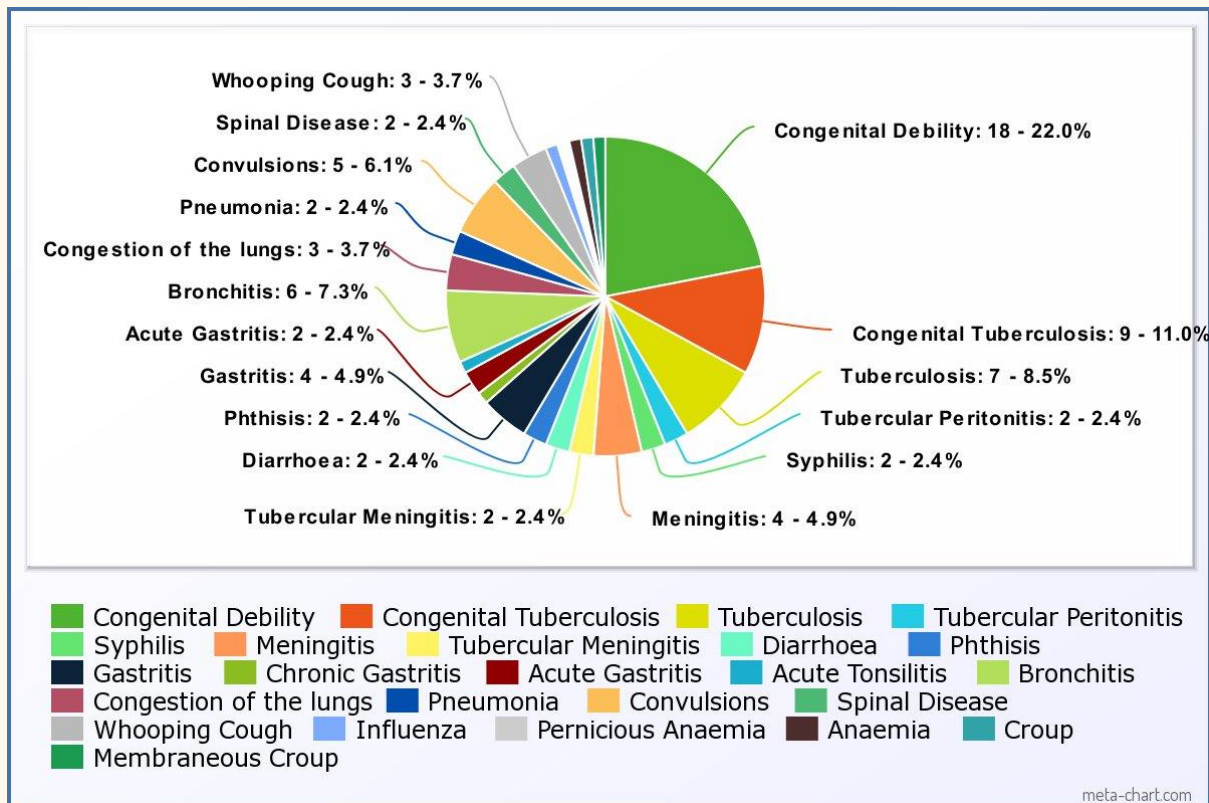
Through its research, Project Infant has discovered the names of 84 infants that died in the Glenamaddy home. No mothers have been found in this home. The full list of names can be found [here](#).

The number of deaths through the years can be seen below.



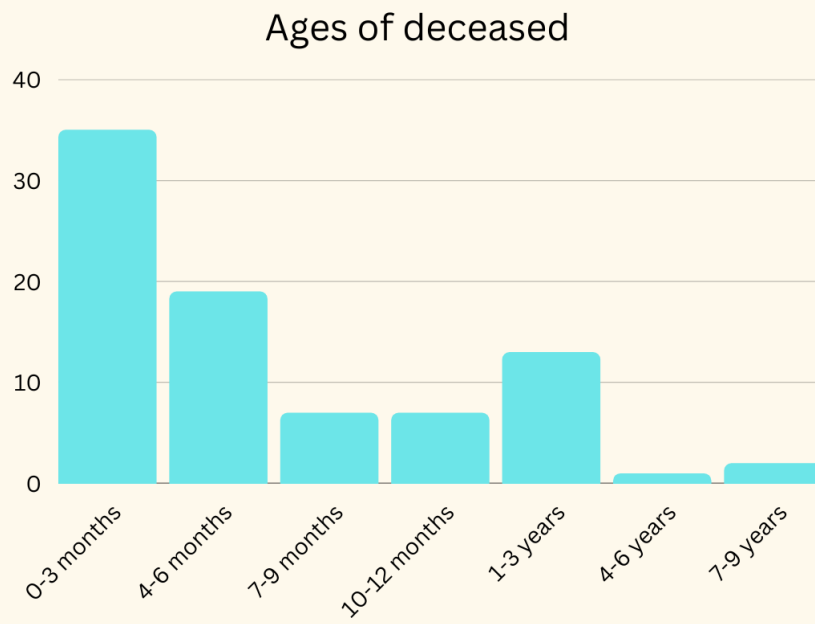
The causes of death can be seen below.

## Causes of Deaths



The leading cause of death is congenital debility with 22.0%. Other causes are mentioned above.

## Ages



Ages	Number
0-3 mths	35
4-6 mths	19
7-9 mths	7
10-12 mths	7
1-3 yrs	13
4-6 yrs	1
7-9 yrs	2

This bar chart shows the age distribution of the infants who died in the Glenamaddy home. 41.6% of the deaths occurred when the infants were between 0-3 months old.

# The Home in the Newspapers

## Article 1:

From the Connacht Tribune on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1924:

### **PORTUMNA OR TUAM?**

The proposal is now on foot to transfer the home either to Portumna which like the central county home in Loughrea is in the Clonfert diocese or to Tuam, which like Glenamaddy, is in this Archdiocese. Tuam is obviously by far the more suitable place. It is near a railway station, forms a convenient county centre within easy reach of the of the main administrative headquarters at Galway and it has convent and Christian Brother's schools. Moreover, it contains a building of adequate size for the accommodation of from 200 to 300 inmates and suitable for the segregation of various classes of cases.

There are features about the children's home in Glenamaddy that need not be touched upon. Sufficient has been said to show that it is vital for the interests of child welfare in the county that certain classes of entrants should be kept apart and be afforded the opportunity of separate treatment. There is probably no phase of work in which more delicate consideration, more wonderful, motherly nuns, who know every child by name. The Bon Secour Order was first established during the persecution of the Church in France when Catholic clergymen found it difficult to make their way to the bedside of sick or dying members of their flock. It is essentially a nursing order, and its members are trained and qualified nurses. The work of the nuns in Glenamaddy is beyond praise; but no one realises as keenly as they do themselves the enormous difficulties under which they perform it.

The mortality has been low, four of the older children died from whooping cough but the death rate among the infants has been much higher than it ought to have been because of the difficulties of rearing motherless babies. Whenever possible, mothers should be sent with their charges. It is the negation of justice that nameless little ones should be sent to a home whilst the parents go free of responsibility.

Delicacy precludes one from dealing with more intimate details but enough has been said to show the necessity for a bigger and brighter home and to make out a case for removal to Tuam without a moment's unnecessary delay. Tuam workhouse is at the moment occupied by about a score soldiers. It should be possible to place these in a detached wing of the building quite apart from the main body, or to accommodate them elsewhere in order that a place might be found for one of the most noble, charitable and important works in the social life and welfare of County Galway.

### **"I'M KING OF THE CASTLE."- A DELIGHTFUL SNAPSHOT OF CHILDREN AT PLAY IN THE FIELDS SURROUNDING GLENAMADDY CHILDREN'S HOME. NOTE THE LITTLE TOT PEEPING OUT AT THE "TRIBUNE" MAN WITH THE CAMERA**

#### **A RAMSHACKLE HABITAT.**

The Glenamaddy Children's Home is the third institution in the now County Galway scheme of public health. It was opened in December of 1921 and placed under the control of the Bon Secours nuns, four of whom now manage the institution, assisted by a staff of paid helpers. There are 130 in the house. These include 57 children from infants in arms to little boys and girls of nine, and 26 mothers. The nuns have achieved marvels in the old ramshackle house into which they were thrown without preparation. Yet the place remains a blight and a scandal upon county administration, and the sooner this repository of all the orphaned and the helpless in the county is shifted to a more suitable centre, the better for the credit of those who control our public health.

There are six dormitories in the old workhouse buildings, with highly-placed and gloomy windows. The rooms are small and altogether inadequate to accommodate the little occupants who are too helpless to understand or realise their surroundings. It is in the nature of a grimly ironical comment to read upon a "Child Welfare Chart" hung upon the walls that the sisters should "let in all the light and sunshine and fresh air you can". There is little light or sunshine within the gloomy portals of Glenamaddy workhouse.

There are walls which reek with damp in winter, that have not seen the mason's trowel or run. For instance, if £2 2s. per ton is paid for coal in Dublin, it costs 25s 9d for carriage and cartage before it is delivered at the home. Need I add that a considerable amount of fuel is necessary in a gaunt and damp building such as that in which nuns and children are now housed? The nuns are compelled to pay 10s per ton cartage from Glenamaddy to the nearest railway station. Recently they tried to get coal from Galway and found it cost £6 alone for transport of four tons.

The images for these articles can be seen either in this [tweet](#) or this [Facebook post](#).

## Article 2:

From the Connacht Tribune on January 31<sup>st</sup> 1925:

### **L.G.D. CRITICISED**

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### **SARCASTIC REFERENCES AT HEALTH BOARD MEETING.**

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### **THE CHILDREN'S HOME.**

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The members of the Galway County Board of Health waxed sarcastic at the expense of the Local Government department in the course of a discussion dealing with the County Home, Glenamaddy. The building, a ramshackle affair, has been condemned as unfit for human habitation, and the Board of Health are anxious to transfer the inmates to more comfortable quarters, but they are getting very little assistance from the Local Government Department.

The secretary (Mr. Gallagher) stated that at the last meeting a month ago he wrote to the Local Government Department in reference to the removal of the inmates of the home from Glenamaddy. He pointed out that the board had made an order that owing to the condition of the building, the inmates should not be allowed to remain in the home any longer and should be transferred to Tuam, Portumna or the vacant branch hospital in Galway, if the two former were not available. He had no reply from the Local Government Ministry.

Mr Jordan said it was a disgraceful thing that a responsible body like the Local Government Department should fail to reply. Chairman (Dr. Walsh): "Send them a telegram. If those people in Dublin were not in existence at all we would attend to all these things ourselves more cheaply and more efficiently."

Mr. Ruane: "They have an idea in Dublin in that we could not get on without them." – Chairman: "We got on much better before we saw them, and we would be much better off if we never saw them". – Mr Jordan: "They are hindering us in our work". – Chairman: "I think we ought to suggest the appointment of a commissioner over them" (laughter)

The secretary was directed to send a telegram to the Local Government Department asking them for instructions in the matter of the Children's Home.

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