

17 October 2025

To: All solicitors with outstanding applications before the HIA Redress Board.

Applications with outstanding Rule 4 (2) proofs pertaining to Grants of Probate or Letters of Administration.

Practice Management Direction No. 3

The Redress Board recognises the important role that legal practitioners undertake in advising applicants in the preparation and submission of their applications, and in the efficient progression of those applications towards a final determination by a Redress Board panel, through the timely provision of evidence and statutory proofs defined under Rule 4 (1) & (2).

As President of the Historical Institutional Abuse Redress Board and under the provisions of Schedule 1(6) of the Act, I have a responsibility for ensuring the efficient and effective discharge of the Board's functions. It is therefore incumbent upon me to review and when necessary, revise the current procedures and processes adopted by the Redress Board, ensuring they continue to be proactive and effectual in the timely management of applications submitted to it.

You will be aware the Redress Board ceased receiving new applications from the 2 April 2025. To facilitate applicants and their legal representatives submit applications before that deadline I directed that incomplete applications, those that were not accompanied by all of the relevant statutory Rule 4 proofs, should be provided with a proportionate and reasonably flexible extension of time to secure and submit them to the Redress Board.

The Redress Board received a significant increase in new applications leading up to the closure of the scheme on 2 April 2025 but has performed extremely efficiently in the management of those applications to the effect that less than one hundred applications remain to be placed before a panel for determination. I have noted that a considerable proportion of these applications have been submitted on behalf of a deceased person, and which cannot be listed due to outstanding Grants of Probate or Letters of Administration which are required under Rule 4 (2). These applications therefore remain incomplete and currently have not been progressed to a panel for determination.

The Redress Board fully appreciates the complexities that can arise in matters of probate and that additional instruction from applicants and liaison with third parties is sometimes necessary, extending the time taken to secure the required documentation and ultimately the completion of an application to the Board. This concerns me from two perspectives: one is the impact upon the applicant, who expects and deserves to have their application progress through the redress process as swiftly as possible, particularly because of the challenging nature of the basis of their application but also the risk of re-traumatisation to them. The Board and its Secretariat are very aware of this risk, and our procedures are designed to be trauma aware and to negate any risk to the applicant where possible: the second is the impact upon the public purse which I have a duty to consider in my role as President of the Redress Board and its contribution to and demands upon the wider Redress Scheme.

As stated, the Board has processed the majority of the applications submitted to it over a five year period in an extremely efficient manner and I would wish to see, and indeed have a duty to ensure, that the small finite number of applications before the Redress Board are also determined in a responsible and proportionate period of time. Thereby facilitating the timely closure of the Redress Board as its statutory function will soon cease to exist.

The Redress Board is eager to assist the legal profession in their efforts to manage these incomplete applications in a timelier manner and more importantly to provide some comfort to applicants in knowing their application is moving towards a final determination while the absence of statutory proofs is addressed.

I am therefore directing the following:

1. Applications which remain incomplete by absence of a Grant of Probate or Letter of Administration will proceed to be listed before a panel. Listing will commence four weeks after the issue date of this correspondence.
2. The panel can opt to refuse an application on the basis that it remains incomplete, however, if the panel make a final determination and **an award is made**, the Secretariat will issue the Determination Notice to the legal representative which will contain a caveat that **no funds will be released until all Rule 4 requirements have been met**.
3. This direction is a **final notice of listing**, and you must notify the Redress Board in writing within **seven days of the issue date of this letter** if you intend to provide any further information or evidence in support of your client's application. You should do this by completing the **Request to Provide Further Evidence Form** which is attached at Annex A for your convenience. You must provide a date for the submission of this further evidence which I, as President, will subsequently consider and provide a case management direction under the provisions of Rule 8(1).

I would remind you that applications fitting the criteria above will now proceed to listing after four weeks from the date of this direction and it remains your responsibility to ensure the Board is notified of any further evidence you or your client wishes to submit for consideration by a panel and to submit that evidence within a reasonable timeframe to facilitate listing as directed above.

I would also remind you that any subsequent appeal of a panel's decision, under section 16(6) of the above Act, will be by way of a **reconsideration of the information** considered by the **panel**, other than in exceptional circumstances as determined by the single judicial member on appeal. The Redress Board policy, in respect of appeals is set out in guidance that can be accessed via the following link: [Appeals - Procedural Guidance - Time Extension, Fresh Evidence, Oral Hearings | HIA Redress Board \(hiaredressni.uk\)](https://hiaredressni.uk/guidance/appeals-procedural-guidance-time-extension-fresh-evidence-oral-hearings).

I have also noted in correspondence sent to the Redress Board that a number of applicants appear to have chosen or been directed to take carriage of the application for probate or letters of administration pertaining to their application. I would point out that as the legal representative on record for applications before the Redress Board it is your responsibility to assist your client in their endeavours to ensure all statutory proofs are provided to construct a complete application in a timely manner. It is also essential to advise clients that the Redress Board will meet the costs of obtaining these proofs on foot of the required receipts as set out in Rule (17).

This direction relates solely to incomplete applications due to the absence of Grants of Probate and Letters of Administration. Its purpose is to assist you and client in your pursuit of a final determination on their application for redress by allowing the application to progress in a timelier manner and reducing the risk of further trauma to the applicant.

I am acutely aware of a number of incomplete applications before the Redress Board pertaining to the absence of expert medical reports and medical records. On foot of the same principles set out above I will, in the next few weeks, consider what further directions may assist legal representatives and applicants in those particular applications to secure progress without any further delay.

I continue to be grateful for the critical work the legal profession has undertaken in supporting applicants to the Redress Board. It is a specialised area and one that requires sensitivity and also focus to ensure applicants can navigate what can be a challenging process, swiftly and without further distress.

I would be grateful if you would update your client accordingly on the content of this directive correspondence and assure them of the continuing commitment of the Redress Board to assist all applicants, within the powers of the enacting legislation, as best we can.

Mr Justice Fowler
President of the HIA Redress Board



Annex A

Request to Provide Further Evidence Form

Applicant Name:

Application Ref: RB

I understand that **ONLY BY** properly completing this Form and returning it to the Redress Board within **SEVEN DAYS** of the **ISSUE DATE** set out in the letter to which this FORM is attached will this application be postponed from final consideration by a panel.

Under Rule 8 the Redress Board will consider the appropriateness of this request and will advise you of the panel chair's direction.

Q1. What is the precise nature of the outstanding information you intend to provide?

Response:

Q2. Outline what attempts have been made to secure and provide the outstanding information that you intend to provide.

Response:

Q3. Provide a committed date by which this outstanding information you intend to provide will be submitted.

Response:

Q4 If applicable, advise why information or statutory proofs requested by the Redress Board have not been provided.

Response:

Q5. If applicable, provide a committed date by which any outstanding information or statutory proofs requested by the Redress Board will be provided.

Response:

Dated: