

Press Release

Inquiry to focus on the (former) Nazareth House and Nazareth Lodge, Belfast run by the Sisters of Nazareth

Issued: 17 December 2014. Embargoed until 17 December 2014, 11.00 hours.

All media requests for information should be directed to the Inquiry's Press Officer, Liz Fawcett, on 028 9020 0811 or 0771 943 5662, or at liz@lizfawcettconsulting.com

The Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry will commence its fourth thematic module of public hearings with an Opening Hearing at **10.00 hours, 5 January 2015 at Banbridge Courthouse, Banbridge, Co. Down, Northern Ireland.**

Module 4 will focus on the former Nazareth House and Nazareth Lodge in Belfast run by the Sisters of Nazareth and will continue until Easter 2015.

The proceedings will commence with a brief opening address from the Inquiry's Chairman, Sir Anthony Hart. After this, Senior Counsel to the Inquiry, Christine Smith QC, will give a general overview of events at the former Sisters of Nazareth House and Lodge, Ormeau Road, Belfast.

The Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry was formally established in January 2013 by the Northern Ireland Executive. It has a remit to investigate child abuse which occurred in residential institutions in Northern Ireland over a 73-year period up to 1995.

In total, the Inquiry is expected to hear from more than 300 witnesses during the course of the public evidence sessions.

Under the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, the Inquiry is required to complete its hearings and all investigative work by mid-summer 2015, and has to submit its report to the Northern Ireland Executive by 18 January 2016.

However, on 18 June 2014, Sir Anthony Hart, Chairman, met with Ministers in the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to seek an extension of one year to the date by which the Inquiry must submit its report. If granted, this would mean that the report would be submitted by January 2017.

Applications to participate in the Statutory Inquiry and Acknowledgement Forum are now closed. To date, 524 individuals (excluding duplicate applications) have made a formal application to speak to the Inquiry and/or its Acknowledgement Forum. Most of the applications (330) have come from individuals residing in Northern Ireland. The Inquiry's Acknowledgement Forum has now completed their interviews and met with 428 applicants.

A total of 13 institutions in Northern Ireland are currently under investigation by the Inquiry in relation to allegations of historical institutional abuse and/or neglect. In due course, the Inquiry may decide to investigate other institutions.

The Inquiry's Chairman, Sir Anthony Hart, is a retired High Court judge in Northern Ireland. The other members of the Inquiry are Geraldine Doherty, who was formerly the Head of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work in Scotland, and David Lane, who was formerly Director of Social Services in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, England.

The Inquiry's hearings are open to the public. Details of forthcoming proceedings will be posted regularly on the Inquiry's website: www.hiainquiry.org

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