

HIA REF: _____

NAME (In full): **SND 484**

DATE: 12 November 2013

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF

1. **SND 484**, will say as follows: -

I, **SND 484** worked as a social worker from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] and then as the deputy [REDACTED] until about [REDACTED] I worked as a senior social worker in the [REDACTED] until [REDACTED] when I became team leader of one of the child care teams known as the [REDACTED] This became the [REDACTED] and I continued to be the team leader until I retired in [REDACTED]

During all of this time I was employed by the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and most recently, the [REDACTED] Prior to [REDACTED] my employer was the [REDACTED] I was employed first in [REDACTED] and then after doing 2 years training at the University of Ulster, I was later moved to work in [REDACTED] I went first to the office in the [REDACTED] and had an attachment to [REDACTED] social work team. Following maternity leave at the end of 1976, I was placed in the [REDACTED] based first of all in [REDACTED] and later moved out to the newly built [REDACTED] My team leader was **SND 468** and after he was appointed to APSW, I had **SND 491** and [REDACTED] At time, the work was generic and as such I had a caseload of all kinds and ages of client, older people, disabled people, mental health as well as families and children. This changed around 1980 when our Board reorganised into programmes of care in our District which was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] From this time, I had only involvement with children. Also, because of family commitments and the birth of [REDACTED] children, I worked [REDACTED]

During this time, we were governed by the Children's Young Persons Act 1968 and had policies such as the Boarding Out Regulations of the Adoption Regulations. I don't recall anything in relation to the regulation of Children's Homes. At that time, responsibility for the running of our own children's homes, i.e., Fort James, and the relationship with voluntary or private homes was under the direction of the Principal Social Worker for Residential and Day Care and so once a child was admitted to care, the field social work office had a certain loss of control over what was happening on a day to day basis. A new home, Harberton House was built later as an assessment unit and co-existed with Fort James until about 1992 when Fort James was closed.

When I joined the [REDACTED] as a social worker in [REDACTED] I was given responsibility for a family in St Josephs, Termonbacca, HIA 69 HIA 78 [REDACTED] and SND 309 who had been placed some time previously, they were all primary school age at that time and were also under court orders i.e., FPOs. This was my first experience of being in an institution run by nuns. I was aware that there was many other children there at that time who were not the Boards responsibility and were there in a voluntary capacity, having been placed by family. Under the Children and Young People's Act, it was my job to visit them once per month, and keep records of their well-being and progress and to act towards them as a parent and friend. However, it was not easy to make anything other than a superficial relationship, there was no privacy to chat to them or to spend a lot of time with them. There was no custom or practice of taking children out to get to know them, and in retrospect, this might not have been a wise thing to do.

I remember that HIA 69 was a quiet, clever boy [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I started to go to his parent, teacher meetings, about his progress, as he was embarrassed by the idea of having a nun there. In this way, I think I did develop some Trust with him. I worked hard to try and get long term foster homes for them but with limited success. I don't recall any complaints that the children made about their treatment during their time in Termonbacca. I lost touch with HIA 78 and SND 309 and [REDACTED] who went to foster homes outside our area. Menatime HIA 69 after about a year in a foster home went to Harberton House, as St. Joseph's closed and the children were moved to Nazareth House. I only ever had fleeting contact with the nuns in charge of the children.

Children in foster care were formally reviewed every six months and a Boarded Out review was completed by the child's social worker, detailing their general care, health, well-being and anything of note, such as trouble in the foster home, or running away but in the 1970's I don't remember similar requirements for children in children's homes. Then, we got a new assistant director for children about [REDACTED] at the Board, TL 17 and he put in place a system for reviewing children in residential care with comprehensive forms about all aspects of their care. These reviews took place in the children's home and was attended by the nun in charge of the group and SND 332 the residential social worker, employed by the Sisters of Nazareth. This was the beginning of a proactive approach to an

individual plan for each child. I don't think the children were asked for their input but their interests would have been represented by **SND 332**, who got to know them better than we could.

I subsequently had responsibility for children in Nazareth House, Bishop Street, over a number of years and the nun I had made contact with was **SR 2**. She always impressed me by her kindness and care she seemed to have for the welfare of each child.

As a field social worker in an office sharing with three other social workers, I was aware of some of the families that they had responsibility for. I shared office space with **SND 465** **SND 465** at the time, she admitted the **SND 465** children to care and I remember that because of the young age of the family, who was a similar to my own. I also remember about **HIA 92** because of the tragic incident **SND 465**

It is hard to remember much detail of events which happened so long ago and such a different era; as such my recollections are more like impressions of what it was like at the time. If children had been able to make complaints, I would have found a way to deal with them formally, but I feel that being in an institution like St Joseph's or Nazareth House was a very closed system and that coming in for an hour each month was not sufficient to uncover anything going on. My responsibilities as a field social worker ended in **SND 465** and after the introduction of the Children Order 1993, systems for reviewing children had more rigour.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

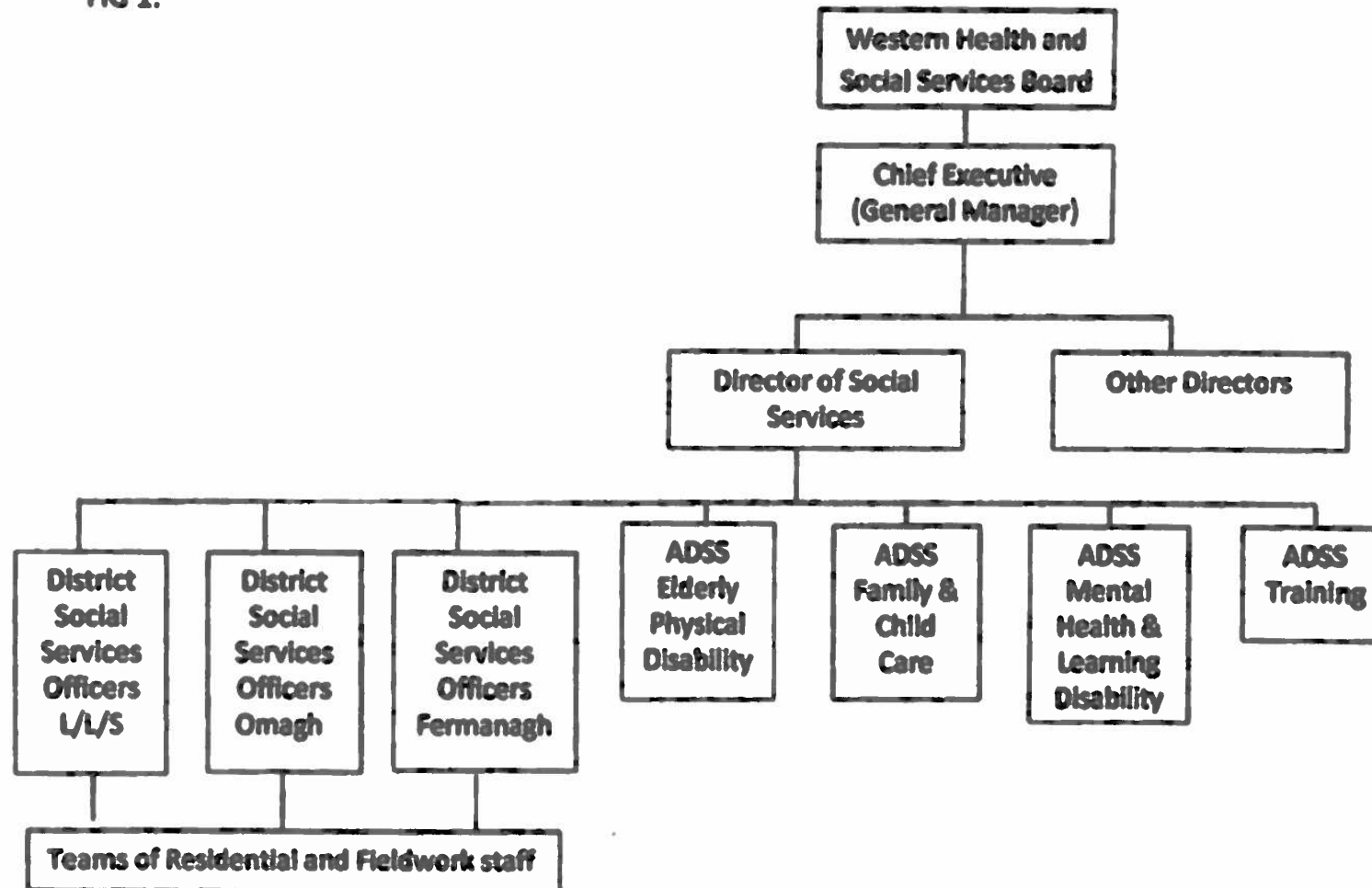
Signed

SND 484

Dated

12/11/13

FIG 1:



Reference _____

20. St. Joseph's Home:- Very institutional, but boys do get out
 Termonbacca, to school, younger ones to Nazareth
 Derry. House, older ones to Christian Brothers.
 (Nazareth Home) Short of staff; short of play equipment.
21. Nazareth House:- Best play equipment of any of the 4
 Derry. Nazareth Homes, at any rate for toddlers.
 Still very institutional.
22. Portadown Babies Home *especially*

The children in these 4 Homes ^{especially} have nothing like a normal upbringing. They must feel unloved as it is just not possible for the number of staff to show affection to such large numbers of children. They can know little or nothing of the world outside, (as with one exception school is on the premises), and must be completely unprepared for it, either in character or knowledge. I find these Homes utterly depressing and it appals me to think that these hundreds of children are being reared in bleak lovelessness. This is not meant entirely as criticism of the staff, but their task is impossible. Some of them have, however, little idea of what a child's life should be. They have got used to their own institutional set-up. For example, when asked about the children going out, one replied "Oh yes, they go to the Circus at Christmas". If this is their sole contact with the world they must have a distorted idea of it! Even their "god-parent" scheme is unreal, as instead of getting ordinary folk somewhere near the children's own level to be "uncles and aunts" they have looked for business men who will give the boys jobs on leaving - regardless of whether the business is likely to suit the boy!

In short, I think we must press for complete overhaul of the whole set-up of these Homes, *and assist them in every way possible*

28th April, 1953.

WESTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD
LONDONDERRY LITAVADY AND STRAFANE DISTRICT

CASE — REPORT

Namefamily.....Case Category
 Address

DATE	CASE DETAILS-Visitors, Reports etc.,
18.2.78	Took HIA 69 to see his mother as HIA 352 was sick. SND 484
2.3.78	Called with to arrange for a visit from HIA 352 on her own to compensate for the time she was sick. SND 484
4.3.78	HIA 352 left for day's visit - appeared to be very happy with this. SND 484
15.3.78	<p>SND 332 contacted re. HIA 69 running away last Friday. Called at mother's - HIA 69 there but very unhappy at idea of going back to Temonbacca. Has been getting on badly with SR 6 - culminating in an incident where he alleges she caught him by the throat. However eventually agreed to go accompanied by We talked to SR 6 who said that she understood that HIA 69 was unhappy but that she felt he was quite insolent to her and that she had lost her temper with him. agreed that we should try to find a placement for him in the family.</p> <p>Called with feel they have enough to be contending with DL 70 - would not be interested in having HIA 69. Called with his aunt has five children and expecting a baby soon so could not do it either. However, she seemed a very sensible woman who said that we needed to be wary of as she was capable of using HIA 69 to meet her own needs and that contact with her might not be the best thing for him. SND 484</p>
17.3.78	HIA 69 and HIA 352 spent the whole day with their mother. SND 484
22.3.78	Saw HIA 69 and HIA 352 at Temonbacca to let them know I would be on leave over Easter. SND 484
24.3.78	<p>3.4.78 Annual leave. DL 70 was home on holiday during this period. SND 484</p>
3.4.78	Talked to SR 6 about HIA 69 - feels she still cannot make any kind of relationship with him and that he is still defying her authority, although not overtly. SND 484
11.4.78	<p>Called with thinks the visits are going alright. Asked her why she never called to see all the children at Temonbacca - she said that she did not feel welcome and that the nuns made her feel guilty.</p> <p>Same date - saw all four children. SND 484</p>

CONFIDENTIAL

W.C./10/10

WESTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS ACT (N.I.) 1968****REVIEW OF CHILD IN RESIDENTIAL CARE**

NOTE In accordance with the Board's policy in relation to Child Care Practice reviews must be made in respect of all children in residential care:

- (a) Within one month of the child's admission to a Residential Unit
- (b) Thereafter, as often as is expedient, but not less often than once in every three months

The Bristol Social Adjustment Guides are useful aids in compiling Review Reports

A. Child

1. Surname: **HIA 69** 2. Forename(s): **HIA 69**

3. D.o.B.: **[REDACTED]** 4. Sex (M/F): **M**

5. Home Address: **[REDACTED]**

6. Name and Address of Residential Unit: **St. Joseph's, Termonbacca.**

7. Section of Act under which Child is in Care: **Section 91, F.P.O.**

8. Date of Child's Admission to Unit: **[REDACTED]**

9. Date of First Review: **29th March, 1977**

10. Date of Last Review: **April, 1979**

11. Dates of Social Worker's visits and interviews since last Review to/with:

(a) Child: **5/4/79 17/5/79 31/5/79 15/6/79 10/10/79**

(b) Parent(s) and/or other Relatives: **11/5/79 18/5/79 22/5/79 22/7/79 19/8/79**

(c) Please comment on any notable developments recorded:

April - **HIA 69** said he did not want to be fostered

May - **SR 1** having problems with him regarding the younger children and particularly one of the little girls

June - **HIA 69** worried about lack of contact with mother

July - **HIA 69** went to **[REDACTED]** with Holiday Projects

B. Health of Child

1. Details of any accident, illness or referral to Child Guidance Clinic since last Review:

Has good health

HIA 69

staff are forwarded by the DSSO to the Director of Social Services. Initially these reports were made available to the Personal Social Services Committee but this was discontinued following the changes in the 1975 Directions. Instead, the Director Social services brought any matters of concern to the attention of the Committee. **See**

Appendix Three for an example of a monthly Monitoring Report of a Statutory Unit.

- 3.7** In respect of Voluntary Homes and under Regulation 4[2] of the Children and Young Persons[Voluntary Homes] Regulations 1975, the administering authority was charged with making arrangements for the Home to be visited at least once per month and this would have included seeing the children placed there by the Area Boards . In 1973, the number of children placed in Voluntary Homes by the Boards was 406 while those placed privately totalled 189. The numbers placed privately had decreased to 19 by 1983. It would appear that these children placed privately did have the additional safeguard of having a Board Social Worker visiting regularly.
- 3.8** In terms of the climate of understanding and knowledge in the 1970's, the Northern Ireland Government established in 1976 a group under the chairmanship of Sir Harold Black to review arrangements for children. The Report published in 1979 recognised that children's behaviour is affected by the environment in which they live and that many children experience serious deprivation and poverty which has an effect on their pattern of social behaviour. There was also a recognition of the effect of the ongoing political violence in Northern Ireland and that so many children grow up in a society never knowing alternatives to violent and socially aggressive behaviour.
- 3.9** In the 1980s revelations appeared not just in Northern Ireland but across Great Britain and Ireland as to how paedophiles had used the residential child care system to gain access to children. This became evident during the Hughes Inquiry (1986) into Kincora Boys Home. The media publicity following the revelation of abuse of boys by staff in a number of Homes and Hostels caused the Black Report (1979) to lose some momentum in the light of a lengthy legal inquiry.
- 3.10** Prior to the 1980's there was a lack of awareness about the sexual abuse of children. Child protection had, until the Hughes Inquiry, been focussed on physical and emotional abuse and neglect following the deaths of children in England. No guidance had been issued by the DHSS to the Boards on sexual abuse and at the beginning of the 1980's there were no cases of sexual abuse on the Child Abuse Register. The Hughes Inquiry

acted as a catalyst for change and improvements in the residential care system as well as improvements in child protection.

With regard to the latter, the most important was the Joint Investigation Protocol which was developed by the Boards and Police and provided a formal system for close collaboration when dealing with allegations of sexual abuse. In addition a system for checking criminal convictions was developed by the DHSS in collaboration with the Boards and Police. This now extends to anyone working with children.

With regard to residential care the most important was the professionalization of the service, which the Boards developed in collaboration with staff organisations and has been referred to earlier in this statement. This enabled residential care staff to become professionally qualified and participate fully in the 'primary / key worker' system for children in residential care which had been introduced by the Boards prior to the Hughes Inquiry.

All of the Hughes Inquiry recommendations were accepted apart from the suggestion that when Personal Social Services received an allegation of sexual abuse against a member of staff, they should carry out a preliminary investigation. The Police would not accept this as it could prejudice their investigation.

While the recommendations were accepted, it was not possible to implement some of them because of legal and practical considerations, for example, the possibility of excluding homosexuals from employment in residential child care.

In addition a number of their recommendations were already part of the Boards' procedures and practice. The Sheridan Report [Homes and Hostels for Children and Young People] June 1982 was commissioned by the Secretary of State for Social Services in the U.K. Government.

The most important recommendation in this Report was to establish a formal complaints procedure for children in residential care and their parents.

- 3.11** In 1973, the specialisms which had existed in the Children's Department within the Welfare Authority ceased to exist, as the new structure for personal social services was based on a generalist model for Social Workers and their Managers. This meant that each District had a Principal or an Assistant Principal Officer responsible for Fieldwork services for all client groups and a similar grade of officer responsible for all Residential & Day Care Services for all client groups. This immediately introduced problems in collaboration if the child or family needed more than one Service. In the previous structure, everything came to the Children's Department.

PART VII
—cont.
General
duty of
welfare
authority.

113.—(1) Where a child is in the care of a welfare authority, it shall be the duty of that authority to exercise their powers with respect to him so as to further his best interests, and to afford him opportunity for the proper development of his character and abilities.

(2) In providing for a child in their care a welfare authority shall make use of facilities and services available for children in the care of their own parents and, in particular, shall ensure that no child in their care is deprived of the utmost benefits available under the enactments relating to health, education and employment services.

c. 35.

(3) For the purposes of their functions under this Act or under the Adoption Act (Northern Ireland) 1967, a welfare authority shall, in accordance with any prescribed provisions as to experience, qualifications and conditions of service, appoint an officer to be known as the children's officer.

(4) A welfare authority shall not make an appointment under subsection (3) except after consultation with the Ministry, and for the purposes of such consultation an authority proposing to make such an appointment shall submit to the Ministry particulars showing the names, previous experience and qualifications of the persons from whom they propose to make a selection; and if the Ministry considers that any person whose name is so submitted to it is not a fit person to be the children's officer of the authority, the Ministry may give directions prohibiting his appointment.

(5) Where the Ministry is satisfied that the same person can efficiently discharge the functions of children's officer for two or more welfare authorities, the Ministry may approve the appointment of the one person as the children's officer by each of the authorities.

(6) The children's officer shall not, except with the approval of the Ministry, be employed by the welfare authority in any other capacity.

Mode of
provision
of accom-
modation
and main-
tenance.

114.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this section, a welfare authority shall discharge their duty to provide accommodation and maintenance for a child in their care—

- (a) by boarding him out on such terms (whether as to payment by the authority or otherwise) as the authority may, subject to the provisions of this Act and regulations thereunder, determine; or
- (b) where it is not practicable or desirable for the time being to make arrangements for boarding-out, by maintaining the