

THE HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE INQUIRY

MODULE 11

**SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

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Index

1. Introduction	Page 2
2. The Relationship between the NIO and the DHSS	Pages 3-6
3. Inspection Regime	Pages 7-17
4. Other issues	Pages 18-19
5. Conclusion	Pages 20-21

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This eleventh module has considered St Joseph's Training School, Middletown, "St Joseph's". There is considerable evidential, legislative and contextual overlap with this module and the training schools examined within module seven. This closing submission should be read in conjunction with the module seven closing submission.
- 1.2. The joint statements made in module seven by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the "DHSSPS", and the Department of Justice, the "DOJ" set out the legislative framework within which St Joseph's operated. Essentially the Ministry of Home Affairs, "MoHA", exercised both statutory powers and duties in relation to industrial and reformatory schools and later training schools. In 1972, following the prorogation of the Stormont Parliament, responsibility for the training schools transferred to the Northern Ireland Office, "NIO", for whom the DOJ is a successor Department. It is worthy of note that it was the Board of Management of each training school, rather than the NIO, which had immediate responsibility for the oversight of the training school. The Training School Rules (Northern Ireland), 1952 prescribed the method by which they should exercise such responsibility¹. In particular, Rule 10 outlined the duties of the Board of Management.
- 1.3. This submission will deal with the relationship between the NIO/DOJ and the former Department for Health and Social Services ("DHSS"), the inspection regime in relation to St Joseph's and some issues identified within the evidence.

¹ For a discussion of Rule 10 see the SSI: Residential Child Care in Northern Ireland the Training Schools Report of October 1989 at SPT-16298.

2. The Relationship between the NIO and the DHSS

2.1. As in Module 7, the relationship between the NIO and DHSS is explained by Mr. Nick Perry² of the DOJ. He confirmed that in 1972:

“...the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) was established and assumed many of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Home Affairs, including those covering training schools. A Training School Branch was set up to provide direction and funding for training schools...An informal arrangement was made with the Department of Health and Social Services’ Social Welfare³ Advisory Group (replaced by the Social Services Inspectorate in the mid-1980s) to conduct inspections of training schools”⁴.

2.2. Dr. McCoy, who ultimately became the Chief Inspector, SSI, confirms he is not aware whether this informal arrangement was the subject of a formal written Departmental agreement⁵, however the manner in which the arrangement was operated is clear from the evidence. Mr. Donnell in his statement describes being “seconded”⁶ to the NIO to “provide social work advice to that Department in relation to training schools and miscellaneous services in other parts of the Criminal Justice system...”.

2.3. Essentially, the NIO established a Training Schools Branch to take responsibility for the training schools, with the role of the Social Work Advisory Group, “SWAG”, which later became the Social Services Inspectorate, “SSI”, limited to providing staff to the NIO to inspect and provide policy and professional practice advice. This is confirmed within the 1987 SSI report on St Josephs:

² SPT-1592 to 1604.

³ The correct title is the ‘Social Work Advisory Group’.

⁴ Paragraphs 18 to 21, SPT-1596 and 1597.

⁵ Paragraph 7, SPT-2000.

⁶ Paragraph 4, SPT-2000.

“Senior personnel from the Northern Ireland Office Training Schools’ Branch visit the school regularly to discuss policy and administrative matters. Support and advice on matters of professional practice pertaining to the school and on problems arising in difficult cases are given by an Inspector from the Social Services Inspectorate.”⁷

- 2.4. Initially the provision of staff to the NIO entailed the services of at least one member of staff and Dr. McCoy confirms that a transfer of financial resources to fund the posts probably accompanied the transfer of professional staff⁸. Regular information on the operation of the training schools was mainly provided by one dedicated Inspector, Mr Donnell, who was a regular visitor to the training schools⁹.
- 2.5. Dr. McCoy suggests that at some point in the later 1980s the NIO asked SSI to take on additional responsibilities, including inspection and advice in relation to the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. This resulted in the NIO funding an additional Inspector post and part funding an Assistant Chief Inspector post. Mr. Shannon, in correspondence from July 1998¹⁰, confirmed Mr Donnell’s suggestion of the Inspector having been ‘seconded’ to the NIO.
- 2.6. Dr. Harrison confirmed in her oral evidence in module seven¹¹ that there appears to have been a quasi-contractual or secondment arrangement between the Departments. Some members of staff from SWAG and later SSI were essentially performing an inspectorial and professional advisory function for NIO in relation to the training schools.

⁷ SJM-1541, at paragraph 14.1.

⁸ Paragraph 15, SPT-2002.

⁹ Mr. Victor McElfattrick at SPT-2006.

¹⁰ SPT 100882.

¹¹ Day 163 Page 65.

- 2.7. Despite secondment to the NIO, Inspectors appear to have valued the concept of professional inspectorial independence as is evidenced in the McElfrick memorandum¹². The evidence suggests that SWAG and SSI sought to ensure that NIO and the training schools were apprised of and engaged in seeking to improve standards of professional practice in line with contemporary thinking. Recommendations were given in reports which had implications for both the training schools and NIO, one example being in relation to improvement of physical accommodation and in the encouragement of training for staff, as evidenced by Mr Donnell, who from the 1970s was a strong advocate of staff obtaining appropriate training and qualifications. He describes that he was “pushing on an open door” in encouraging the training schools to have staff trained and the NIO to fund the training¹³.
- 2.8. When asked to advise on practice issues Mr. Donnell drew not only upon his own experience but the emerging practice in Great Britain. In relation to the development of secure units, he considered the Home Office policy on youth treatment programmes, and the experiences in the Youth Treatment Centres at Brentwood and Birmingham, both positive and negative¹⁴. Mr. Donnell not only advised on practice but also was involved with its implementation within St Joseph’s, as is evident from the requirement that if it were envisaged a girl would be kept within the Intensive Care Unit for more than 24 hours he would be immediately informed and would attend a multi disciplinary meeting in relation to the placement¹⁵.
- 2.9. Together with the Heads of the training schools and NIO representatives, Mr. Donnell attended the annual conference for the

¹² SPT-12712.

¹³ Paragraph 6, SPT-3005.

¹⁴ Paragraph 10, SPT-3005 to SPT-3006.

¹⁵ SJM-3530.

Heads of the then approved schools in England. He drew upon his contacts with leading practitioners in Great Britain to introduce current thinking and practice to the training schools. Evidence within this module, not previously available to the Inquiry, provides an example of this. A 1987 seminar organised by the SSI in relation to “Policy and Practice with Seriously Disordered Adolescents”¹⁶. Mr. Donnell both chaired and spoke at this seminar, which along with SSI speakers¹⁷ brought together educational, psychological, psychiatric and probation perspectives. Speakers included Dr. Hoghughi who was the Principal at Aycliffe School, Darlington¹⁸. It is of note that the list of attendees shows that inter alia members of staff of all of the training schools were in attendance, along with staff from the Probation Board, the Trusts, APRU, NIO, a Senior Psychologist from Trinity House School in Dublin and social workers¹⁹.

¹⁶ SJM-27728.

¹⁷ Mr. Donnell and Dr. McCoy, SJM-27731.

¹⁸ SJM-27731

¹⁹ List of attendees to be found at SJM-27774 to SJM-27777.

3. Inspection Regime

1922 to the early 1950s.

- 3.1. The Children Act 1908 imposed a duty to inspect certified reformatory and industrial schools at least once a year. St Joseph's predecessor institution, the Middletown Industrial School, operated as an industrial school²⁰. In Module Seven in the absence of confirmatory documentation the Department postulated there was no reason to suppose these inspections did not occur. This has been confirmed by evidence within this module, to include the punishment book, which indicates St Joseph's was inspected at least annually from 1922 to 1954²¹.
- 3.2. An early example of an inspection carried out in December 1922²² identifies the Inspector, Mr. Lawson, considering the health and general well being of the children, the physical accommodation standards, personal hygiene and examining the statutory books, to include the punishment book. Confirmation of this examination is found within the punishment book, signed and dated by the inspector contemporaneously²³. The evidence suggests that the reports were sent to St Joseph's²⁴.

1950 to the early 1970s.

- 3.3. The Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1950, the "1950 Act", and its successor, the Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1968, the "1968 Act", provided for a power rather

²⁰ See statement of Dr Harrison at SJM-29275.

²¹ See statement of Dr Harrison at SJM-29276.

²² SJM-1484.

²³ SJM-27579.

²⁴ SJM-1487 is an example of a report being sent to St Josephs in 1926.

than a duty upon the MoHA (and subsequently, the NIO) to inspect training schools²⁵.

- 3.4. The evidence available within the St Patrick's Training School module suggested the power to inspect was regularly exercised, at least biannually and perhaps annually²⁶ from 1950. File W74, which covers a period from 1923 until the file was closed in 1954²⁷, confirms annual inspections of St Joseph's during this period. Most of the annual inspection reports are available, this includes the annual inspection reports from 1950 to 1954.
- 3.5. An inspection report from December 1950²⁸ identifies the Inspectors considering the general health of the pupils, their diet, the standard of the buildings and equipment and the statutory books. The Inquiry will by now be familiar with the names of the inspectors, Miss K Forrest and Dr. N Simpson, which appear on the report. This was more than a perfunctory inspection and the inspectors considered amongst other things [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]²⁹. Miss Forrest visited the children at Glenariff during the summer during their fortnight holiday³⁰. The impression gained by the inspectors was of

"The Sister in charge and her staff are obviously devoted to the children in their care and there is a happy relationship between staff and children. All the Children looked happy and contented...In

²⁵ See S. 136 of the 1950 Act and S. 168(2) of the 1968 Act. There was however a duty to inspect Remand Homes pursuant to Sections 104(4) of the 1950 Act and S. 132(4) of the 1968 Act.

²⁶ Statement of Dr Harrison Paragraph 15, SPT-1688.

²⁷ SJM-1263.

²⁸ SJM-1301.

²⁹ SJM-22937.

³⁰ SJM-1302.

*general, an excellent impression of conditions in this school was formed.*³¹

- 3.6. The 1951 inspection of St Joseph's was notable in that in addition to the type of matters considered by the 1950 inspection, the inspectors visited a child who was 'boarded-out' from the school³².
- 3.7. The 1952 report suggested the inspectors "*had been much impressed on our visits...*" and suggested Miss Forrest was impressed during a previous visit by a percussion band.
- 3.8. Viewed against the standards of today these inspections may not seem to have been sufficiently thorough, adhering mainly to considering aspects of the Training School Rules and general impressions of the wellbeing of the children. It is submitted, however, that the inspections were consistent with the practice of the time. It is of note the 1950 report refers to a recommendation made in relation to St Patrick's Training School and it is clear that a corresponding inspection report on St Patrick's was undertaken, albeit with the passage of time no longer available³³.
- 3.9. Whilst the MoHA continuation file for W74 is no longer available³⁴ there is no reason to suppose there were not annual inspections for St Joseph's from the mid 1950s and throughout the 1960s. The evidence from the records kept by St Joseph's during this period, including the visitors' book, daily diary, minute book and punishment book suggests MoHA inspectors were in the school annually from 1955 to 1968³⁵. It is clear St Joseph's regarded at least some of these visits as 'inspection' visits, a note from 28th April 1968 suggesting,

³¹ SJM-1302.

³² SJM-1300.

³³ See the last sentence of the second paragraph at SJM-1301.

³⁴ The only file available being "W74" dealing with the period 1923 to 1954; SJM-1263.

³⁵ SJM-29277.

“Miss Forrest and Dr. Simpson came and did inspection of the school today. 11.20am-4.30pm.”³⁶

3.10. The visits of MoHA inspectors may not always have been referred to as inspections. Handwritten daily diaries from 1963 to 1969 are available within the evidence³⁷ (continuation diaries are not available). Whilst these are not comprehensive they allow observation of some of the types of interaction, in addition to an inspection function, occurring between MoHA inspectors and St Joseph’s. Taking the 1965 diary entries as an example: -

3.10.1. *“February 16th Dr. Simpson here in connection with...”³⁸.*

3.10.2. *“February 18th Dr. Simpson and Miss Hill arrived at 1pm. They remained for a couple of hours”³⁹.*

3.10.3. *“July 11th Miss Forrest rang re...”⁴⁰.*

3.10.4. *“September 17th ...Miss Forrest and SJM 22 are supposed to be gone (sic) to England to collect her and take her back to the school.”⁴¹*

3.11. Some evidence of inspection is available from the applicants to the Inquiry: -

³⁶ SJM-26722.

³⁷ SJM-26598 to SJM-26751.

³⁸ SJM-26641.

³⁹ SJM-26641.

⁴⁰ SJM-26648.

⁴¹ SJM-26651.

- 3.11.1. HIA 249 was a resident in St Joseph's from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED]⁴². She recalls an inspector visiting the home and speaking to her⁴³.
- 3.11.2. HIA 203 who was in St Joseph's from November [REDACTED] to January [REDACTED] recalls inspections occurring⁴⁴. Her statement suggests there was an expectation within St Joseph's that the inspectors would directly engage with the girls, speak to them and ask them questions⁴⁵.
- 3.11.3. HIA 178 who was resident from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] recalls the inspectors carrying out inspections of St Joseph's⁴⁶, albeit she did not have the opportunity to speak to them privately.
- 3.12. With reference to the potential of the inspection regime to identify the vulnerability of children to abuse, inspectors may from the early years have been alert to the possibility of physical abuse in homes. The Training School Rules (NI) 1952 dealt specifically with unacceptable corporal punishment and the Inspectors reviewed the homes' records of corporal punishment. During this period there is little if any evidence of knowledge in Northern Ireland in relation to the potential for sexual abuse by peers or staff working with the children, in particular systematic abuse.

The 1970s to the early 1980s

- 3.13. In 1973 the NIO took over responsibility for the training schools, setting up a Training School Branch and continuing to exercise the

⁴² Day 184, page 105.

⁴³ SJM-071, at paragraph 17.

⁴⁴ Day 184, page 48

⁴⁵ SJM-056 at paragraph 13.

⁴⁶ Day 184, page 83.

power to inspect pursuant to S.168 (2) of the 1968 Act. Inspectors from SWAG and later SSI, who were seconded to NIO, undertook the inspections on its behalf.

3.14. The nature of the inspections that took place in the 1970s and early 1980s appear to have been heavily influenced by the thinking of the Seebohm Report⁴⁷ on local authority and allied social services in England. Seebohm suggested that a new model of inspection was required which concentrated less on regulatory functions of central Government Departments and more on advisory, consultative and supportive engagement with service providers. This model, which appears to have been promoted and implemented throughout the UK, was very much of its time⁴⁸. It is accepted by the DHSSPS that it was not without inadequacies, some of which were identified by the Hughes Inquiry. However, the information regarding the possible influence of Seebohm on the role of SWAG does not appear to have been made available to the Hughes Inquiry⁴⁹. Notwithstanding its inadequacies, the model adopted was intended to reflect a positive policy of engagement on the part of Government rather than a diminution of the level of scrutiny implied by a formal inspection programme.

3.15. The lead Social Work Advisor in relation to training schools during the 1970s period was Mr Wesley Donnell. During module seven a significant amount of oral evidence was heard which confirmed the assertion by Mr Donnell that he visited the training schools approximately once a month and, on occasions, more frequently when required⁵⁰. Whilst he confirms he did not carry out what now would be recognised as formal inspections, his purpose was to provide advice

⁴⁷ Report on the Committee of Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services HMSO London 1968.

⁴⁸ DHSSPS Module 4 statement dated 22 April 2015 paragraphs 51-56 (SNB-9566 to SNB-9569).

⁴⁹ DHSSPS Module 4 statement dated 22 April 2015 paragraph 58 (SNB-9569).

⁵⁰ Paragraph 8, SPT-3005.

and assistance⁵¹ and where appropriate comment on the need for change or improvement.

- 3.16. By virtue of the absence of or destruction of confirmatory records, which would have been available at the time, the Inquiry does not have the advantage of current access to documentation that confirmed the frequency of inspections and visits to St Joseph's. The Inquiry does, however, have the advantage of oral evidence to confirm Mr. Donnell's assertion he was in frequent attendance.
- 3.17. Sister Canice Durkan gave evidence that she knew Mr. Donnell, he came on a regular basis and made unannounced visits⁵². Mr. McElfatrick, a former SSI Assistant Chief Inspector, confirmed Mr. Donnell was a regular visitor to the training schools⁵³. SR 240, [REDACTED] and from whom the best primary evidence might have been obtained, was unable to attend to give evidence or to provide additional statements⁵⁴. BR26 in module seven confirmed Mr. Donnell's assertion that he visited St Patrick's Training School at random unannounced times and during the evening and weekend⁵⁵, this is likely to have occurred at St Joseph's. He further confirmed that these visits varied between the more formal inspection role and less formal contact visits.

The post-Kincora era, 1980s to 1990s

- 3.18. Mr. Donnell identifies a change of practice developing in Great Britain in the early 1980s, describing the emergence of an "inspection culture"⁵⁶. At the same time with the disclosure of a number of allegations of child abuse at Kincora, the DHSS policy in relation to

⁵¹ Paragraph 16, SPT-3005.

⁵² Day 187, page 149.

⁵³ SPT-2005.

⁵⁴ Day 187, pages 118 and 119.

⁵⁵ Day 157 Page 107.

⁵⁶ Paragraph 14, SPT-3006.

inspection shifted to a more formal regulatory inspection regime. Dr. Harrison suggests the allegations within Kincora and consequential focus on improved scrutiny by SWAG, resulted in Northern Ireland being “ahead of the curve” in relation to this change in practice⁵⁷. A change in nomenclature from SWAG to SSI occurred in 1986 and witnesses confirm a perception that by this stage the name change reflected the change in prevailing policy to a more formal regulatory inspection⁵⁸.

- 3.19. Following the Sheridan report all children’s residential homes were inspected, as were the training schools in 1987 and 1988. These were clearly robust inspections. Given the SSI inspectors had been involved in inspecting the children’s homes it is likely that account was taken of the *SWAG/7/86 Standard for Monitoring and Inspection of Residential Child Care*⁵⁹. Wesley Donnell suggests that the model of formal inspection used in children’s homes was accepted for use within the training school system⁶⁰. An overview inspection report on all of the training schools, including St Joseph’s was produced in 1989⁶¹.

The 1987 Inspection

- 3.20. There is no evidence to suggest that the inspection of St Joseph’s in 1987 was carried out other than in accordance with the policy in place at the time or that this policy was contrary to the prevailing practice in the United Kingdom. Further, the evidence suggests that the inspections were carried out in a robust professional manner.
- 3.21. During the 1987 inspection the inspectors spent 101 hours in the school covering all times of the day, including weekends, over a 14-day

⁵⁷ Day 163 Pages 70-71.

⁵⁸ Day 161 Page 33.

⁵⁹ This document was submitted to the Inquiry.

⁶⁰ Paragraph 14, SPT 3007

⁶¹ SPT16222.

period⁶². They met most of the girls during their stay in St Joseph's both informally and by invitation of the young people to come to their 'home' for a meal or evening entertainment⁶³. This report produced 9 recommendations in relation to St Joseph's, a significantly smaller amount of recommendations that were made in relation to any of the other three training schools, in what was a robust and professional inspection process. The conclusion of the report illuminates the reason for this: -

*"The Inspectors conclude that St Joseph's must be seen, in child care terms, as a centre of excellence. The practice of residential care throughout the Province has much to learn from St Joseph's..."*⁶⁴

- 3.22. It is of note the 1987 report recommended a review of the policy and practice in relation to young people smoking and give consideration to introducing incentives for non-smoking⁶⁵.
- 3.23. The NIO and SSI continued to consider and refine the inspection process with an agreement in 1992⁶⁶ that there would be an in-depth general inspection of each training school every four years, with regulatory inspections annually in the intervening years.

The 1992 Regulatory Inspection

- 3.24. Mr. Donnell carried out a Regulatory Inspection in July 1992. Again this involved informal discussions with the young people who were aware who he was and that they had a right to see him privately to raise any issues or concerns they had⁶⁷. He concluded that:

⁶² SJM-1495.

⁶³ SJM-1503 at paragraph 2.7.

⁶⁴ SJM-1547 at paragraph 17.12.

⁶⁵ SJM-1524.

⁶⁶ SPT-12727.

⁶⁷ SJM-2257 at paragraph 22.

*“...the usual high standards of care observed in previous inspections and regular visits to the school continues.”*⁶⁸

The 1993 General Inspection

- 3.25. A team of 3 inspectors carried out a General Inspection over a nine-day period, to include evenings, in June and July 1993⁶⁹. The inspectors carried out informal interviews with the young people who, along with their parents and guardians, were asked to complete questionnaires and who were offered the opportunity to speak with the inspectors on any matters that were causing them concern⁷⁰. They concluded that:

“...St Joseph’s has continued to provide child care of a very high quality and the Inspectors are pleased to note the maintenance of such standards.”

- 3.26. A follow up report from the 1992 and 1993 inspections was produced in April 1994⁷¹, it concluded the *“director has tackled the recommendations in the reports with vigour...”*.

The 1994 Regulatory Inspection

- 3.27. The 1994 Regulatory Inspection was carried out in December 1994 by Mr. Walker of SSI. As this was his first visit he *“spent longer in the school talking to the staff and girls than would be normal in order to acquaint himself with its ethos and practice.”*⁷² He concludes that whilst he had known St Joseph’s for fifteen years and had been aware of its reputation for *“work with difficult and disturbed teenage girls...It*

⁶⁸ SJM-2258 at paragraph 23.

⁶⁹ SJM-2261.

⁷⁰ SJM-2264 at paragraphs 3.3 to 3.5.

⁷¹ SJM-1598.

⁷² SJM-2296.

*was pleasing to be able to note that at least many of the many positive things he had heard were confirmed.*⁷³

- 3.28. Mr. Donnell made at least two unannounced visits in February and May 1994 and his conclusions provided to the Board of Management⁷⁴.

⁷³ SJM-2308.

⁷⁴ SJM-1255 and SJM-1262.

4. Other Issues.

- 4.1. Further evidence of MoHA's scrutiny of and involvement with St Joseph's in the 1960s can be seen from its engagement with Cardinal Conway from 1964 to 1966.
- 4.2. In September 1964 a meeting took place between MoHA and Cardinal Conway at which MoHA raised a proposal received from the Good Shepherd Order to establish a training school in Belfast and concerns the Ministry had about St Joseph's. These concerns included that it was lagging behind in current developments, MoHA were having difficulty persuading the manager to be more progressive and the Board of Management was playing little role in the welfare of the girls⁷⁵.
- 4.3. Further correspondence by MoHA resulted in the Cardinal meeting with the managers of St Joseph's and an agreement in relation to sending staff for training, new members of the Board of Management being appointed, and a re-appraisal of the methods being employed following visits to appropriate establishments in Great Britain⁷⁶. It is clear that MoHA felt change was essential in St. Joseph's notwithstanding they recognised the Sisters' *"kindness, devotion and spiritual influence can produce excellent results despite their lack of up-to-date facilities, professional training and expertise"*⁷⁷.
- 4.4. Having failed to persuade the manager of St Joseph's to be more progressive, MoHA successfully escalated the matter to the Cardinal. Whilst the full costs of training schools was met by public funds, legislation provided that these could be administered by voluntary bodies and provision must be made for children of different religious

⁷⁵ SJM-28224.

⁷⁶ SJM-28229.

⁷⁷ SJM-28230.

persuasions⁷⁸. The approach of MoHA was appropriate given the strategic issue in relation to the total provision of training school places for Roman Catholic girls, and it was successful in bringing positive change to St Joseph's.

- 4.5. An allegation of abuse made to the police relating to the mid 1970s period was brought to the attention of SSI in September 1998 by [REDACTED], SR 240⁷⁹. The allegation was against a member of staff who worked by that stage as a care worker in the children's home, which was subject to regulation and inspection by the Southern Health and Social Services Board's Regulation and Inspection Unit. The employee was suspended and the relevant authorities informed. Whilst the employee was no longer working in a training school, nonetheless Mr. Walker, the then NIO liaison SSI, discussed the situation regarding the suspension with SR 240 in October 1998⁸⁰.

⁷⁸ SJM-28228.

⁷⁹ SJM-29282.

⁸⁰ SJM-29284.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The Inquiry has now heard the evidence in relation to this module. The DHSSPS has not sought to directly challenge any complainant in relation to abuse. Whilst the Inquiry will undoubtedly turn a forensic eye to each allegation, the DHSSPS regrets any abuse that did occur and condemns both the perpetrators and any others who by act or omission allowed abuse to take place.
- 5.2. The system of inspection and engagement with St Joseph's in place in the 1970s and early 1980s was in accordance with the practice and policy of the day. If viewed by the standards of today, together with the findings of the Hughes Inquiry, this policy and practice might be criticised as not being sufficiently robust or adequate. However, the practice was very much reflective of the prevailing state of knowledge and the policy was in accordance with what was considered to be appropriate, taking account of the ethos promoted by the Seebohm Report. These factors must weigh heavily in any consideration of whether proper steps were taken at any particular time.
- 5.3. There is no credible evidence within this module to suggest that SWAG and SSI acted in a manner other than was appropriate in terms of contemporaneous practice and policy. Further, when the adequacy of the prevailing policy and practice was called into question, SWAG/SSI and the NIO took immediate steps to address the issue in an effective manner. SSI continued until its inspection remit for children's institutions eventually ceased, to develop increasingly robust forms of scrutiny, which sought to promote continuous improvement in the institutional care of children and in the prevention, detection and disclosure of abuse within such settings.

Dated this 7th day of April 2016.

Andrew McGuinness
Bar Library