

1. *Please provide a witness statement(s) detailing how Manor House was run and operated; including details of the history; layout and accommodation provided; numbers accommodated and level of staffing; who had responsibility for running the home; and how it was funded.*
2. Manor House Home (MHH) was run and operated by a Management Committee (MHHMC), appointed by the Irish Church Missions (ICM), a mission agency within the Church of Ireland (see paragraphs 12.1 and 12.2 of the Hughes Inquiry report, MNH-10275), whose Patrons and Vice-Presidents up until the closure of the Home in 1984 were the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of Ireland. The home was warmly supported by the Church of Ireland (see para 2, appendix 1) throughout its history.
3. The Home was opened in 1927 and closed in 1984. A Miss Louisa Stannus donated her Manor House estate to ICM to further the care that she had been privately assuming for orphaned and disadvantaged children (MNH-2323). As part of its work, ICM had been working amongst disadvantaged children in 19th century Ireland and subsequently in the 'Free State' and then the Republic of Ireland (MNH-10009); the acquisition of the Home in N. Ireland was therefore a natural extension of its ministry.
4. The aim of the Home was with 'the object of providing a stable home in a Christian atmosphere for orphans or for children from broken homes. To help children to develop spiritually, physically and intellectually to their full potential and thus equip them as far as possible to take their place in society.' (1981 SWAG, MNH-10023)
5. A description of the geography, physical layout and history of building development was provided by the 1984 SWAG report (MNH-10012) and an architect's drawing of the Home (MNH-10227-10229). A picture of MHH can be seen on MNH-2562. On average there were around 22 children in the Home and accommodation was in bedrooms that could hold from 3 to 5 children (MNH-10012). The MHHMC had given consideration to providing smaller 'group-living arrangements for the children, but it was not feasible to adapt the use of the building to this end because of the limitations imposed by the internal design features. The emphasis is on the provision of substitute care based on a living experience which approximates as closely as possible to ordinary family life', according to SWAG (MNH-10012).
6. The 'administering authority' of the Home (MHHMC) ran and oversaw the actual operation of the home through care staff and domestic staff. The MHHMC was composed of men and women from various backgrounds, such as medical doctors and solicitors, as well as clergy and lay people of the Church of Ireland.
7. The MHHMC was elected by the Northern Auxiliary (or Belfast committee) of ICM, who submitted their names to the general (or London Committee) of ICM for approval. The Belfast Committee was composed of lay and clerical representatives of the Church of Ireland, and the London Committee was composed of clergy from both the Church of

Ireland and Church of England (ICM was founded in 1849 when the Church of England and Church of Ireland were one church under the Act of Union in 1800).

8. The MHHMC was responsible for raising funds for the Home. Funds raised were through a mixture of seeking voluntary gifts from the general public, including regular fund raising or 'Flag Days', bequests, maintenance money paid by some parents, and the employment of Fund raisers. The MHHMC also set up a group of Trustees to invest and manage a Fund to help finance the home. Furthermore, a large portion of its income was from Welfare services (MHH registered on 29th June 1950 as a Voluntary Home – see MHN-2314).
9. The care staff numbered around 5 and was directed by 'Matron'. Other staff included domestic staff (see 1981 SWAG report, Appendix 4, MNH-10230 for a list of the types of staff involved in the Home).
10. The MHHMC met once a month (except July and August) to hear reports on the work of the home in the previous month. These reports were usually brought by the Matron of the home, who appeared in person to deliver the reports and take any questions. The Northern Secretary of ICM, who usually acted as Secretary to the MHH also visited the home on a weekly basis to talk to the children to give them an opportunity to chat about any problems. This also was the job of the Matron and care staff of the Home on a daily basis.
11. The MHH closed for a period of four years (1953-57) for refurbishment to bring it up to the standards expected of Voluntary homes at the time. It closed in November 1984. A letter to the Hughes Inquiry from the DHSS confirms that it closed because it was 'no longer financially viable to run with the reduction in the numbers of children requiring long-term residential care' (MNH-10253).

12. (Question 1 HIA letter 13/11/15). *It is clear from material that the inquiry has seen that a major issue regarding the operation of this voluntary children's home arose in the early 1950s. The Inquiry wishes to know what you can say about this:*
 - *Why did it seek to register as an Adoption Agency, rather than a Voluntary Children's Home?*
 - *Inspection by the Ministry of Home Affairs highlighted a number of deficiencies- what steps were taken to remedy these?*
 - *By whom?*
 - *What occurred?*
13. The deficiencies of the Home in the early 1950's and how these were remedied are documented on pp. MNH-2570-2954. These pages show that a new management committee, appointed by the Belfast committee of ICM, set about a system of fund raising to meet the necessary costs of repair to the home, renovating it to the approved standards required by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
14. The MHHMC endeavoured to meet the recommendations of the welfare services in regard to staffing levels in the home as well as continuing on-going repair work as needed. Indeed, subsequent Welfare inspections commended the improvements and even thought the home had too many as opposed to few staff employed (Para 14. Appendix 1).
15. In regard to registering as an Adoption Agency in 1950, there seems to be no minute recording a discussion of this. In the April 1950 meeting, the home received notice of a bequest which left money for orphan children (Para 15 Appendix 1). There was a further application to register as an adoption society in 1962, which may give some more information as to why the committee would want to register as an adoption society. The Belfast Committee of ICM in March 1962 requested the MHHMC to consider doing this as a way of furthering ICM's work amongst destitute children (Para. 15 Appendix 2). The MHHMC took a few months to fully consider this before final agreement at its committee meeting in May of the same year (See Para 15. Appendix 3).

16. (Question 2, HIA letter 13/11/15). *What was the background of the children placed in the home, ie. Were they placed there voluntarily or by welfare authorities and social services?*
17. The only extant records of the admission and discharge of children into and from MHH are from November 1957 to December 1978. The overwhelming majority of the children in the Home during this period were placed there by the Welfare authorities and social services.
18. The Admission and Discharge entries show that the children were placed there by the authorities for a wide variety of reasons, mainly to do with neglect by parents, death of parents, incapacity due to illness of parents, violence of parents, desertion by parents – to name but a small sample of the extant material.
19. In the early period of the home up to the temporary closure in 1953, children were mainly privately placed by parents or guardians for a variety of reasons, e.g. births outside marriage, death of a parent or both parents, destitute children, broken homes of mixed (Protestant/Roman Catholic) marriages where the parents or guardians wanted a Protestant Home for their children.

20. (Question 3, HIA letter 13/11/15) *What interaction was there between the home and welfare authorities or social services regarding the care of those children resident in the home?*
21. There was regular interaction between the MHH and the welfare authorities. Welfare and social workers regularly visited the home both to inspect the home and to meet with children. For example, the Social Work Advisory Group (SWAG) remarks that social workers generally visited the home once a month to take their respective charges for an outing (MNH-10219)
22. The same report also shows six monthly reviews on the children either in the appropriate district office of the Health and Social Services Board, or in the home itself (see para 9.5 on MNH-10217)
23. The home worked in compliance with the rules and regulations of Welfare and Social authorities on issues such as fostering or adoption of children from the home.
24. The home complied with the directions of Welfare and social service reports following their routine visits to the home (MNH-10192-10193).

25. (Question 4 HIA letter 13/11/15) *What complaints or allegations of abuse were received from children resident in the home, how were these investigated? Please provide all documentary evidence relating to the investigation of complaints.*
26. The MHHMC took seriously any complaints or allegations of abuse received from children resident in the home. In August 1946, a complaint was made against the Assistant Matron for excessive force in administering corporal punishment. The MHHMC investigated immediately calling in a doctor to examine the children. The MHHMC investigated the Assistant Matron accepting her version of events because of the evidence supplied by the doctor (Para 26 Appendix 1).
27. At the committee meeting of September 1962, the Matron reported that she had received a complaint from the mother of some of the children in the home that they had been beaten by a member of staff, MH 65 MH 65 had been a resident of the home before being made a member of staff. The Matron reported that the children had said that MH 65 had beaten them before she became a member of staff. However Matron reported to the committee that MH 65 behaviour towards the children was unsatisfactory and that MH 65 had announced she was leaving (see Para. 27 Appendix 1). In fact she resigned on the day of the September meeting according to a subsequent minute in the October meeting (See Para 27 Appendix 2).
28. The Admissions and Discharge book of the home shows that MH 65 was followed up of the Belfast welfare (Para 28 Appendix 1) and that the mother of the children, called to the home to see them (Para 28 Appendix 2).
29. At the 18th March 1963 committee meeting, the MC acted to dismiss a junior member of staff because her 'behaviour amongst the children was not satisfactory' (Para 29. Appendix 1). Though the nature of her unsatisfactory behaviour towards the children is not detailed, it is evident from the minutes that the MHHMC treated extremely seriously any kind of alleged mistreatment by staff of the children under their care.

30. (Question 5 HIA letter 13/11/15) *The Inquiry has received complaints of abuse by visitors to the home. Please advise:*

- *Who was permitted to visit children in the home?*
- *Were visitors permitted to access all areas of the home?*
- *The Inquiry has heard that the home operated a system of "uncles" – what was this, how did it operate, and what role did "uncles" play in the home?*
- *What was the level of supervision for "uncles" or other visitors?*
- *What, if any procedure, was in place for the vetting of visitors?*

31. The home encouraged the general public, particularly through its 'Open Days' to take an active interest in the work of the home and the children. It encouraged such sympathetic visitors and supporters, but the records also show that not everyone who called to visit or volunteer help with the children were accepted (Para 31 Appendix 1). Volunteers to help out with work in the home, especially in staff holiday periods, were also welcome. Evidence from the Home to the Hughes Enquiry shows that there was a desk diary to record visitors (MNH-10147). Whilst extant records do not contain a written down procedure for visits, the minutes of the Home indicate that there was such a procedure for vetting of visitors. Permission had to be given by staff in consultation with the Secretary if visitors were to get to know the children (Para 31 Appendix 2)

32. Staff did indeed supervise such visits to the home. The minutes indicate that visits to any particular child were with the staff in attendance (Para 32 Appendix 1). All such visits were then reported to the MHHMC on a monthly basis so that the committee was constantly informed of visitors to the children.

33. There is nothing whatsoever in the extant minutes of the Home to indicate operation of 'a system of uncles.'

34. The minutes of the Home indicate that the only people who had permission to access all areas of the Home apart from the staff were workmen employed from time to time to renovate or refurbish the bedrooms, playrooms, and other rooms of the house. The 1981 SWAG report shows that even parents were not allowed access beyond a public hallway area (MNH-10028) and their recommendation of a more suitable environment for visiting relatives and friends (para 22 MNH-10039) was implemented by the Home by the provision of a sitting-room (MNH-10176). It should also be noted from [REDACTED] Secretary to the Home when it closed in 1984 in his witness to the Hughes Commission (section D MNH-10140) that members of the management committee could visit the home and that he himself did so weekly to talk with, play with, watch tv with, and join in board games with the children (section H MNH-10140 and section A MNH-10141).

35. (Question 6 HIA letter 13/11/15) *The Inquiry has received complaints regarding the physical ill-treatment of children. Please advise:*

- *What was the system of discipline which operated in the home?*
- *What punishments were imposed, and by whom?*
- *If this changed throughout the period that the home operated please advise how and when changes occurred?*

36. See paragraphs 26 to 29 above

37. The Home complied with the Welfare regulations governing corporal punishment (Children and Young Persons' Act 1968), making quarterly returns as required by this (MNH-2540-2543). PRONI records indicate that corporal punishment was rarely used in the Home. On the three occasions in the records, it was administered by the Matron and sometimes with another member of staff present (MNH-2543). The SWAG report of 1981 criticises the last recorded entry of the Home and reminded the Home in this one instance to operate a more strict observance of Regulation 13 of the Act (para 21 MNH-10039).

38. The more usual approach by the Home to the discipline of children when there was serious misbehaviour was to address it in ways other than corporal punishment, particularly in asking children to take responsibility for their actions (see extract from the committee minutes of June 1970 in Para 38 Appendix 1). Indeed, the SWAG report of 1981 remarked that due to the good work and influence of the staff, 'organisational controls' were seldom needed (see para 7.2 MNH-10023 and especially para. 8.9 MNH-10027).

39. (Question 7 HIA letter 13/11/15) *How did the home treat those children who wet the bed?*
40. The Welfare report of the visit to the home in February 1953 criticised the Home's policy then in segregating 'bedwetters' from the other children and particularly the poor condition of the basement room in which they were placed. At their recommendation the Home subsequently moved the 'bedwetters' to sleep with the other children (MNH-2893).
41. The new committee that oversaw the refurbishment of the Home in 1953-57 included two doctors, Dr. McCann and Dr. Burns, both of whom kept abreast of new developments regarding bed-wetting. In November 1960, Dr. Burns proposed (and Dr. McCann seconded) a new electronic warning device to alert the children when bed-wetting occurred (Para 41 Appendix 1). In April 1961, Dr. McCann also advocated to the Matron the new plans being developed in the City Hospital in regard to bed-wetting (Para 42 Appendix 2).
42. In 1981, though social workers in the SWAG report recommended that children should not be woken up from sleep to prevent bed-wetting (MNH-10038), the staff and committee (under a medical doctor's chairmanship – Dr. McCann), after much deliberation decided not to change this arrangement as the children *were usually unaware that they had been taken to the toilet* (para 16 MNH-10175).
43. There is no indication either in the Welfare report on the Home in 1953 or in the SWAG report on the Home in 1981 that children were punished for bed-wetting. The issue was always how best to overcome the problem and the minutes show that this was discussed whenever this was a problem for children.

44. (Question 8 HIA letter 13/11/15) *The Inquiry has received a complaint of physical and sexual abuse against a MH 9. Please provide all documents relating to her employment and advise:*
- *When was MH 9 employed in the home?*
 - *In what capacity?*
 - *Did the home receive any complaints from residents about her?*
 - *Was she ever subject to any disciplinary procedures?*
45. MH 9 was the Matron of the Home from October 1969 until her death in April 1983 (see obituary by Dr. McCann on MNH-2565). The obituary shows that she had extensive experience in working with children in the Homes supported by ICM in the Republic of Ireland and as a Matron in managing the ICM House in Dublin.
46. There are no extant documents relating to the employment of MH 9 in 1969. Rather the minutes indicate that she was invited to come to Lisburn in 1966 to look after the Home initially for a while when the Matron, MH 3, due to illness, was unable to manage the Home. MH 3 gave a positive review to the management committee in April 1966 of MH 9 emergency cover (see Para 46 Appendix 1).
47. When MH 3 was again too ill to resume duties in 1969, MH 9 was offered the post of Matron on a permanent basis in October 1969 by a committee that felt she was fully qualified for the job (See Para 47 Appendix 1).
48. There are no records of any complaint from children or others about MH 9 nor is there any record in the minutes of her having been subject to any disciplinary procedure.
49. On the contrary, the Assistant director of Social Services in a report in 1982 remarks about the home under MH 9 that *the social workers from Dungannon, some of them very experienced and normally not slow to complain, have never complained about the quality of child care in Manor House and they have visited the Wallace children regularly (MNH-2549).*
50. Furthermore, a social worker's report in the same year reports on the warm and close relationship of MH 9 with the children: *the children are also very concerned about MH 9 who has recently been admitted to hospital....Ralph would appear to be missing her from Manor House as he has always had a very close relationship with MH 9. I do not feel that he relates as well to any other member of staff (MNH-10102).*
51. The SWAG report notes that indeed she was quite protective of the children (see para.5.5 MNH-10017).

52. (Question 9 HIA letter 13/11/15) *Did the home ever receive any complaints by residents about other members of staff? If so, please provide all details including details of when that member of staff was employed and in what capacity, how such complaints were dealt with and whether any disciplinary proceedings were taken. Please provide all relevant documentary material.*
53. See above paragraphs 26-29 for an overview of allegations either by children against staff or by other staff against staff.
54. There are no other documents relating to this in the Manor House Home documentation except what is contained in the minutes.

55. (Question 10 HIA letter 13/11/15) *How was staff recruited?*

56. Staff was recruited through a variety of means, including drawing on suitably experienced staff who had previous contact with the home (as in the case of MH 9 — see above paragraphs 45-47).

57. Sometimes when a member of staff was need, members of the committee were often either privately contacted by clergy colleagues about a suitable candidate or knew of suitable candidates (see Para 57 Appendix 1 for candidates proposed by clergy). These were also always medically examined as to their fitness for the work. However, informal recruiting in this way was criticised in the 1981 SWAG report (see para 6.3 MNH-10018).

58. Posts were advertised in newspapers (see para 58. Appendix 1).

59. The MHHMC also recruited staff through specialist childcare agencies (Para 59 Appendix 1) as agreed by a minute in the November 1962 management meeting.

60. MH also directly advertised to students in the [REDACTED] College being trained in child care as well as directly approaching previous interviewees for new posts (see excerpt from Feb 1970 minutes, Para 60 Appendix 1).

61. (Question 11 HIA letter 13/11/15) *What training was provided to staff?*
62. The MHHMC committed itself to further training of the staff. In September 1964, it agreed to a day release course for staff (see Para 62 Appendix 1).
63. The MHHMC encouraged and put forward staff for other new initiatives by the Ministry of Home Affairs in March 1966 for child care workers to take a year out to be trained (Para 63 Appendix 1). The committee were eager to receive back such trained staff (Para 63 Appendix 2).
64. From a minute of the committee meeting in November 1968, the Secretary of the MHH along with junior members of the care staff took the opportunity to attend child care lectures (Para 64 Appendix 1).
65. Senior staff also took opportunity for refresher courses in child care (see excerpts from committee meeting in Feb 1964, Para 65 Appendix 1 and Para 65 Appendix 2).
66. A 1982 report by the Health Services on childcare service in N.Ireland mentions that from the late 1950s to the 1970s *numbers of staff with training and long experience in child care were low* (see para. 22 MNH-2117). In contrast to this picture, the SWAG report of 1981 on MHH reports that *we were most impressed by the Management's commitment to staff training*, and goes on to note the encouragement to the present staff for further training by the management (para 6.7 MNH-10020).

67. (Question 12 HIA letter 13/11/15) *What was the home's position with regard to siblings? Were siblings separated, whether according to gender, age or otherwise?*
68. From the admission and discharge books, Welfare authorities often placed siblings in MHH. From time to time, such sibling groups made up the greatest proportion of children in the home.
69. There was no policy or attempt at segregation of siblings and in fact was a complete impossibility in one building and with an average of 20-22 children. Siblings freely interacted within the home.

70. (Question 13 HIA letter 13/11/15) *The Inquiry has received a complaint that a child was physically dragged to church. What was the position regarding Church attendance and religious observance?*
71. The SWAG report commends the Home for its clear sighted purpose in its aim to *provide a stable home in a Christian atmosphere for orphans or children from broken homes. To help children to develop spiritually, physically and intellectually to their full potential and thus equip them as far as is possible to take their place in society* (MNH-10023). Bringing up children in the Christian faith was a key component of the Home's care.
72. The SWAG report concluded that the Home was achieving its goals (para 7.2 MNH-10023) and praised the character of the children: *indeed it was a pleasure to meet children whose good manners would have done credit to many adults.*
73. In carrying out its goals, the SWAG report, shows that the Home actively encouraged the children to participate in a wide range of social and physical activities, including attendance at the local church and involvement in its organisations, such as Girl Guides, Church Lads Brigade and Brownies (para 11 MNH-10034). Going to the local church on Sunday was a natural and normal part of the Home's care in pursuance of its aims.

74. (Question 14 HIA letter 13/11/15) *What procedures were in place to ensure that children were safe when they were released on home leave?*
75. The Home and the Social Welfare services worked together on this (see report of Social worker on discussion with Manor House staff on the home leave of Wallace children on page MNH-10102).
76. The Secretary of the Home actively visited the parents and home to which children might be going on leave and discussed the suitability of this with the Welfare services (Para 76 Appendix 1). Also the home laid down the rule in January 1965 (Para 76 Appendix 2) that *no child to be allowed out overnight except in the care of their parents and guardians in approved circumstances.*
77. The physical condition of the children following such home leave visits were noted and brought to the attention of the committee (Para 77 Appendix 1). These children were under the care of the Tyrone welfare with whom the home worked and would have reported to as with other Welfare authorities.

78. (Question 15 HIA letter 13/11/15) *Was the home aware of any complaints about physical or sexual abuse of residents by other children? If so, what was done?*

79. The minutes show two cases of sexual abuse of children by other children, the first in 1966 and the second in 1982.

80. In 1966, the minutes of the March meeting show that the vice-chairman Dr. McCann reported the homosexual behaviour of a mentally disturbed 8 year old boy, called MH 59

MH 59 [redacted] This child was attending [redacted] Special School and Dr. McCann told the committee that this child's mental health had actually deteriorated since he started attending the school. The committee took action, asking Dr. Burns, medical advisor to the home, to follow this up. Whilst Dr. Burns was following this up, the committee instructed MH 9 [redacted] the Matron 'to keep a strict watch' on the boy, which MH 9 [redacted] said was already being done (Para 80 Appendix 1).

81. In the meantime, as shown in the minutes of the 25th April meeting (Para 81 Appendix 1), Dr. Burns had been busy contacting the Welfare authorities to get them to agree which authority, Antrim or Down to take responsibility for the boy. As no agreement had been reached by the Welfare authorities at that time, Dr. McCann proposed that if the Welfare authorities took no action, the boy would be returned to the mother, a single parent, on 6th May.

82. The Admissions and Discharge book shows that the Welfare authorities removed the child on May 2nd. The note read MH 59 [redacted] taken by Special Care to [redacted] Training School temporarily-short of accommodation in Muckamore Abbey. (Para 82 Appendix 1). This was after the Secretary of the home had been in contact with the Eastern Special Care committee, who took charge of the boy. The action was approved by the child's mother (See Para 82 Appendix 2).

83. From the minutes, the Home acted immediately and decisively. The matter was not ignored but action was taken in the Home and outside with the Welfare authorities to protect the children.

84. The details of the 1982 case concerns a sexual incident between a male resident, a boy of 16 and a 10 year old girl (MNH-2551).

85. Paragraph 12.10 (MNH-10276) of the Hughes Commission report summarizes the incident and is worth quoting here in full: *on 4th September 1982 a member of staff had a conversation with a resident of the home which led her to suspect that a boy resident had been guilty of sexual assault on A5's sister. A5's sister was then nine years of age and was also in the statutory care of the Southern Board. The staff contacted the boy's social worker on Monday 6th September and A5's sister was interviewed on the same day by MH 28*

MH 28 [redacted] a senior Houseparent in the home. The girl confirmed the sexual assault by the boy and MH 28 [redacted] contacted the girl's Senior Social Worker and the Chairman of the home's management committee on 7 September. The boy admitted the assault to his Social Worker

on 7 September and the police were notified of the incident on that day. The boy concerned was moved to another home on 8 September.

86. Paragraph 12.12 of the report commended the home on the way they handled the issue – it reads: *we take the view that this incident could not have been foreseen and prevented by the residential staff or the Southern Board's Social Workers. There is no evidence that there was a lack of supervision on the date the incident occurred. The home's and the Board's staff acted promptly and correctly in interviewing the boy and A5's sister in order to establish whether misconduct might have occurred and the police were informed at an early stage.* (MNH-10276)
87. Once again, the Home acted immediately and decisively. The matter was not ignored. Rather, as the Hughes report concludes, prompt and proper action was taken by the Home to inform the relevant authorities.

Furthermore, allegations made by a number of men to police (MNH-6001-6187) about sexual abuse by some older boys on some younger boys in the home from 1975-80 were not reported to the staff nor did they make allegations of sexual abuse by the staff. From the above evidence in the preceding paragraphs, such allegations would have been taken extremely seriously by the management committee and immediate action taken with the proper authorities involved.

88. (Question 16 HIA letter 13/11/15) Please provide all details relating to former residents MH 18 and MH 13. The Inquiry believes they were resident there in the 1960s. Did the home ever receive any complaints from other residents or staff about either brother's behaviour? If so, what steps were taken?
89. Admittance and Discharge book shows that MH 18 was admitted to the home on 17/2/64 along with his brother MH 13 and was later joined by another brother MH 5 on 11/11/65 (Para 89 Appendix 1).
90. Minutes of the management committee in January 1965 show that MH 18 left the home to attend Special School, returning to the home on weekends and for holiday periods (Para 90 Appendix 1).
91. Matron reported in the February 1965 minutes that MH 18 was coming back to the home every second weekend and all the children were well (Para 91 Appendix 1).
92. In May 1965, Acting Matron reported that MH 5, MH 13, MH 18 had returned from a home leave visit rather upset and with evidence of burns (Para 92 Appendix 1).
93. Matron reported to the November 1966 committee meeting that MH 18 had two front teeth missing due to an accident in Special school (Para 93 Appendix 1).
94. Further mentions of MH 18, MH 13 are contained in the following appendices; MH 18 - January 1965, foot deformity (Para 94 Appendix 1); consent for the operation on his feet (Para 94 Appendix 2); operation had gone well (Para 94 Appendix 3); convalescing in the home post operation (Para 94 Appendix 4); now allowed to stay in the home every weekend (Para 94 Appendix 5); second foot operation (Para 94 Appendix 6); no longer staying in the home (Para 94 Appendix 7); MH 13, MH 5 94 Appendix 8; MH 13 invited to a school trip to Ostend (Para 94 Appendix 9); school assistance MH 13 school trip (Para 94 Appendix 10); further help with school trip (Para 94 Appendix 11); MH 13 visiting clinic and dentist (Para 94 Appendix 12); John rewarded for doing odd jobs (Para 94 Appendix 13); MH 13 appreciated being allowed to go on school trip (Para 94 Appendix 14).
95. From the minutes and the Admissions and discharge books there are no reports of any complaints from residents about MH 18, MH 13 behaviour. If there had been reported incidents with them, the home would have moved to do take the same steps that had been taken with their contemporary MH 59 (see paragraphs 80-83).

96. (Question 17 HIA letter 13/11/15) *When did the home first become aware of the sexual abuse of children as an issue, and what steps were taken to protect children?*

97. There is no indication in the minutes that sexual abuse of children was an issue in the home.

98. The only known recorded cases are as stated in paragraph 79 above, which took place in 1966 and 1982 respectively. No other incidents of sexual abuse of children within the home are mentioned.

99. Steps taken to protect the children in those two isolated incidents are as recorded in paragraphs 80-86.

100. (Question 18 HIA letter 13/11/15) *How did the home treat those children who tried to abscond?*

101. There are no extant records that indicate children tried to abscond.

102. {Question 19 HIA letter 13/11/15} *What records were kept, if these still exist please provide the same.*
103. Extant records include Minutes of the MHHMC 1931-44, 1945-56, 1960-64, and 1964-70; and 2 copies of Admittance and Discharge/casebooks.
104. Mr. Johnston, Secretary to the home, gave testimony to the Hughes commission that the "acting officer in charge of the closing of the home destroyed all information, all diaries, etc.. except for one..." (MNH-10147).

105. (Request from Inquiry) '...the Inquiry wishes you to set out any systemic failing that you acknowledge occurred in respect to this institution on your part.'

106. The closure of the home for refurbishment in the period 1953-57 was as a result of the inability of the home in the early 1950s to provide adequate living accommodation for the children.

107. The reports from the Welfare officers at the time indicate that they thought the home should either move rapidly to urgently address these conditions or face imminent closure. The reports indicate that 'there seemed little evidence of any standard of child care...' (MNH-2904)

108. It seems clear from the letters to the Ministry of Home affairs to seek a grant, wherein the home made the frank admission of being in a financially perilous situation (MNH-2919 and MNH-2925-2926), and from the subsequent inspection reports, that there was systemic failing in providing proper care for the children.

109. Whilst the home was criticised for this and told to address the matter urgently or face closure, it should be noted that none of the reports suggest physical or sexual abuse of the children and indeed, [REDACTED] on his follow-up visit to the home 12th February in company with the Ministry's Children Inspector, [REDACTED] remarked that 'the children were all well-nourished, and I thought happy and active' (MNH-2877)

110. However, it is clear that there was systemic failure to care for the children by the regulations then in force in the 1950s. It should be noted that the Belfast committee of ICM worked energetically to redress this, successfully establishing a new committee and raising the necessary funds to re-open the home.

111. From 1957 to its closure in 1984, the home sought constantly to meet all subsequent standards for child care and we believe that systemic care was provided by the home during this period.

Mrian Courtney
Chairman of Trustees, ICM

cc Edder Alt
Signed 9/12/15