

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

STATEMENT TO THE HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE INQUIRY

MODULE 9 – AVAILABILITY OF RELEVANT DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION

15 December 2015

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY**STATEMENT TO THE HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE INQUIRY****DEPARTMENT'S POSITION REGARDING THE AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION RELEVANT TO MODULE 9 – MANOR HOUSE LISBURN**Background

1. This statement has been prepared by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (the Department) in response to the request received by email from the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (the Inquiry) on 26 November 2015 to provide a written statement setting out the Department's position regarding the availability of information relevant to Module 9 – Manor House Lisburn.

Searches

2. The Department has conducted searches of its records repositories for information in respect of Manor House Lisburn. Searches were conducted using the term 'Manor', which located all records with 'Manor' included in the title. A total of 54 paper files were located. Of the total number of paper files identified by way of the search, only 5 were considered relevant to the Inquiry.
3. Each of these files was reviewed in accordance with the records management guidance that applied at the time¹. Three of the files identified were destroyed and one file was transferred to the Public Records Office (PRONI). The remaining file cannot be located.
4. The following files were destroyed:
 - BP/1586/84 Children & Young Persons Act 1968 – voluntary children's homes – Manor House Home Lisburn; destroyed on review on 24 March 2006.

¹ The Department is preparing a comprehensive statement on the discovery of documentation relevant to the Inquiry. Copies of the records management guidance listed will be provided.

"A Guide to Records Management" issued in 1992 and the "Northern Ireland Record Management Standard (NIRMS)" issued in 2002 by PRONI.

"Record Keeping in the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety" issued in 1999 and "Records Management Guidance March 2004" issued by the Department.

"Disposal Schedule for the Social Services Inspectorate" and "Disposal Schedule for Child Care Policy Branch" developed by the Department in April 2003 and October 2005 respectively.

- BC/320/82 Voluntary Homes Manor House Lisburn – inspections; destroyed on review on 11 January 2002.
- BP/1078/79 Children & Young Persons Act (NI) 1968 Voluntary Homes Manor House Home – Lisburn; destroyed on review on 9 November 1999.

The following file was transferred to PRONI:

- BC/1391/85 Evidence of Manor House Home Lisburn to Committee of Inquiry into Children’s homes and Hostels and Transcript of Evidence; transferred to PRONI on 20 August 2014. In an email to the Inquiry dated 17 November 2015, this file was referenced as file BC/1391/95, as a result of a typing error.

The following file cannot be located:

- BC/2040/76 Children and Young Person’s Act (NI) 1968 Voluntary Homes Manor House Home Lisburn.

5. In order to locate file BC/2040/76, two extensive separate search exercises have been conducted. A physical search of the Department’s file store was carried out by staff from Information Management Branch. A second physical search of the file store conducted by Information Management Branch assisted by a member of staff from Child Protection Branch was also carried out. As a result of the file not being found, a further physical search was conducted in all offices occupied by staff within the Family and Children’s Policy Directorate. This included all cabinets, drawers and presses.
6. Despite extensive search exercises in addition to the more general search exercises undertaken by the Department in 2013 in response to the Section 9 Notice dated 5 March 2013, attached at **Annex 1**, the file has not been located.
7. The Department is currently preparing a comprehensive statement on the discovery of documentation relevant to the Inquiry.

Signed:



Eilís McDaniel

Director of Family and Children’s Policy

Date: 15 December 2015

Annex 1

Section 9 Notice dated 5 March 2013 (Trim Ref: DH1/13/147022)



Annex 1 Section 9
Notice dated 5 March :

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 AND 1995

**Chairman's Notice pursuant to Section 9(2) of the
Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act
(Northern Ireland) 2013**

WARNING

If, without reasonable excuse, you fail to comply with the requirements of this Notice you will be committing an offence under section 16 of the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 and may be liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment and/or a fine.

Further, if you fail to comply with the requirements of this Notice, the Chairman of the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse 1922 to 1995 may certify the matter to the High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland under section 17 of the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 where you may be held in Contempt of Court and may be imprisoned, fined or have your assets seized.

TO: Dr. Andrew McCormick Esq.
Permanent Secretary
Department of Health, Social Services, and Public Safety
Room C5.11
Castle Buildings
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3SQ

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THE RECIPIENT

1. This Notice is issued by the Chairman of the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse 1922 to 1995 on foot of the powers given to him by the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.
2. The Notice requires you to do the acts set out in the body of the Notice.
3. You should read this Notice carefully and consult a solicitor as soon as possible about it.
4. You are entitled to ask the Chairman to revoke or vary the Notice in accordance with the terms of section 9(4) of the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.
5. If you disobey the requirements of the Notice it may have very serious consequences for you, including you being fined or imprisoned. For that reason you should treat this Notice with the utmost seriousness.

DOCUMENTS TO BE PRODUCED

TAKE NOTICE that the Chairman of the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse 1922 to 1995 requires you, pursuant to his power under Section 9(2)(b) of the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 (the Act), to produce to the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse 1922 to 1995 (the Inquiry) the documents set out in the Schedule to this Notice by 12 noon on the 26th April, 2013.

APPLICATION TO VARY OR REVOKE THE NOTICE

FURTHER, TAKE NOTICE that you are entitled to make a claim to the Chairman of the Inquiry, under section 9(4) of the Act, on the grounds that that you are unable to comply with the Notice, or that it is not reasonable in all the circumstances to require you to comply with the Notice.

If you wish to make such a claim you should do so in writing to the Chairman of the Inquiry at PO Box 2080, Belfast, BT1 9QA setting out in detail the basis of, and reasons for, your claim by 12 noon on the 28th March, 2013.

Upon receipt of such a claim the Chairman will then determine whether the Notice should be revoked or varied, including having regard to his obligations under section 9(5) of the Act, and you will be notified of his determination.

Dated this 5th day of March, 2013

Signed: *A. L. Hart*

Sir Anthony Hart

Chairman of the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse 1922 to 1995

SCHEDULE

1. Any documents held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department of Health, Social Services, and Public Health (the Department) that it considers relevant to the work of the Inquiry.
2. Any documents held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department recording allegations or complaints of abuse relating to any child resident in any institution within the Inquiry's terms of reference and within the period 1922 to 1995.
3. Any documents held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department documenting what was done (whether by the Department, its predecessors, or others) in relation to allegations or complaints of abuse relating to any child resident in any institution within the Inquiry's terms of reference and within the period 1922 to 1995.
4. Any documents held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department being communications within, and between, and emanating from the Government departments with responsibility for oversight of any institution within the Inquiry's terms of reference, and within the period 1922 to 1995, in connection with abuse within those institutions.
5. Any documents held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department being communications emanating from, or received by, the Board, in respect of any institution within the Inquiry's terms of reference (attached), and within the period 1922 to 1995, in connection with abuse within those institutions.
6. All documents held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department demonstrating the numbers of children in institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.
7. All admission records/books held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department for institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.

8. All punishment records/books held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department for institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.
9. All log books held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department for institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.
10. All inspection reports held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department on each institution within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.
11. All policy or procedure documents held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department that were handed down to institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.
12. All policy or procedure documents held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department that were produced by institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.
13. All documents held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department relating to the feeding, clothing and medical care provided to children in the institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.
14. Any financial accounts held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department for each institution within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.
15. All correspondence received or sent by the Department in relation to individuals or institutions about abuse in institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.
16. All documents relating to any investigations carried out by, on behalf of, or which the Department has access to, into abuse in institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.

17. Any Department minutes, or any other minutes the Department has access to, where the issue of abuse in institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995 was discussed.
18. Any minutes of meetings from, or with, or about, institutions where the issue of abuse in institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995 was discussed.
19. All internal and external reports held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department into abuse in institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.
20. All documents held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department relating to the response to any internal or external reports into abuse in institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.
21. All documents held by, or that can be obtained by, the Department relating to any policies of insurance, and claims made thereunder, in respect of abuse in institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.
22. All documents held by, or which can be obtained by, the Department relating to any criminal or civil proceedings brought in respect of abuse in institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.
23. All documents held by, or which can be obtained by, the Department in relation to communications with other authorities (including agencies such as the police) in respect of abuse in institutions within the Inquiry's terms of reference for the period 1922 to 1995.

NOTE:

"Abuse" includes physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, ill-treatment or neglect.

"Documents" includes a document in whatever form, including an electronic document such as an email.

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR THE SECTION 9 NOTICE

1. The Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse 1922 to 1995 (the Inquiry) was set up under the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 (the Act).
2. These Guidance Notes are not part of the Chairman's Notice served under Section 9 the Act, but are designed to assist those who receive such a Notice.
3. It is very important that a Notice served under Section 9 of the Act is complied with in full; failure to comply has potentially very serious consequences. Failure to comply may result in you being prosecuted and convicted of a criminal offence that may result in you being fined and/or imprisoned, or being certified to the High Court where you may face contempt of court proceedings.
4. You should consult your solicitor, or your organisation's legal advisor, about the Notice as soon as possible. They will be able to assist you as to how to deal with it.
5. If you feel the content of the Notice is somehow unclear, and you wish something to be clarified, you may contact Patrick Butler, Solicitor to the Inquiry, by email at Patrick.Butler@hiainquiry.org who will endeavour to assist with your query, and will discuss it with the Chairman of the Inquiry as necessary.
6. Compliance with the Notice requires you, in the case of producing documents, to have the documents with the Inquiry by the date set out in the Notice.
7. "Document" is defined in section 24 of the Act as information recorded in any form.
8. The Inquiry prefers that documents are received by it in electronic form and would be grateful if you could furnish, wherever possible, the documents required of you in that form. The documents should be sent to inquirydocuments@hiainquiry.org

9. Where it is not possible for you to send documents in electronic form you should engage in dialogue with the Solicitor to the Inquiry to find a suitable solution for provision of the documents to the Inquiry.
10. Documents should be sent to the Inquiry by post or courier to the HIA Inquiry, PO Box 2080, Belfast, BT1 9QA. If there is a need to hand deliver the documents then contact should be made with the Solicitor to the Inquiry to make suitable arrangements.
11. It may be that you consider that some of the documents you are providing to the Inquiry should be redacted in some way for some reason, bearing mind that the Inquiry may decide to publish the documents in due course. If you do feel documents you are providing should be redacted in some way then you should provide the documents to the Inquiry in provisionally redacted form (using strikethrough if possible) but so the proposed redaction can be read by the Inquiry. You should also set out in writing the reasons why you consider the redactions should be made by the Inquiry. The Inquiry will then deal with the material in accordance with its Redaction Protocol.
12. If, for some reason, you wish to make a claim to the Chairman of the Inquiry, under Section 9(4) of the Act, that you are unable to comply with the requirements of the Notice, or that it is not reasonable to require you to comply with the Notice, then that claim should be made in writing and addressed to the Chairman of the Inquiry, HIA Inquiry, PO Box 2080, Belfast, BT1 9QA.
13. The claim should be made as soon as possible after receiving the Notice, and no later than the deadline for making a claim set out in the Notice.
14. The claim should set out the grounds on which it is made, and the reasons why it is said that you cannot, or it is not reasonable, for you to comply. The claim should be as comprehensive and detailed as possible.
15. If you are making a claim for a variation of the Notice in order to give you further time to comply then you should set out why you need more time and indicate a

date when you say you will be able to comply by, and why you say that date will be sufficient.

16. The Chairman will determine whether to revoke or vary any Notice. In considering your claim he will take into account, amongst other things, the public interest in the information in question being obtained by the Inquiry, having regard to the likely importance of the information. His decision will be communicated to the person making the claim as soon as is reasonably practicable.
17. A Section 9 Notice, by reason of the matters set out in Section 10 of the Act, cannot require you to give, produce, or provide any evidence or document to the Inquiry if you could not be required to provide them in civil proceedings in Northern Ireland, or the requirement is incompatible with an EU obligation, or the documents are covered by public interest immunity. If you are withholding evidence or documents from the Inquiry for one of these reasons then you should notify the Solicitor to the Inquiry in writing, immediately the decision to withhold is taken, of what the material is that you are withholding and why you are claiming that material is not bound by the Section 9 Notice.
18. Section 14 of the Act does provide the Chairman with power to make awards for expenses, including for legal representation, incurred in complying with requirements imposed by the Inquiry. In determining whether an award should be made the Chairman will have regard to the financial resources of the applicant and whether making any award is in the public interest. If you are affected by the issue you can discuss it with the Solicitor to the Inquiry.
19. Further information about the work of the Inquiry can be found on the Inquiry's website at www.hiainquiry.org

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The NI Executive's Inquiry and Investigation into historical institutional abuse will examine if there were systemic failings by institutions or the state in their duties towards those children in their care between the years of 1922-1995.

For the purposes of this Inquiry "child" means any person under 18 years of age;

"institution" means any body, society or organisation with responsibility for the care, health or welfare of children in Northern Ireland, other than a school (but including a training school or borstal) which, during the relevant period, provided residential accommodation and took decisions about and made provision for the day to day care of children; "relevant period" means the period between 1922 and 1995 (both years inclusive).

The Inquiry and Investigation will conclude within a 2 year 6 month period following the commencement of the legislation establishing its statutory powers.

The Inquiry and Investigation under the guidance of the Panel will make as many preparations as practicable prior to the passing of the relevant legislation, this will include the commencement of the research element. Commencement of the work of the Acknowledgement Forum is not dependent upon the commencement of legislation and will begin its work as soon as practicable.

The Chair of Investigation and Inquiry Panel will provide a report to the Executive within 6 months of the Inquiry conclusion. If additional time is required the Chairman will, with the agreement of the Panel, request an extension from the First Minister and deputy First Minister which will be granted provided it is not unreasonable.

The Inquiry and Investigation will take the form of

- an Acknowledgement Forum,
- a Research and Investigative team and
- an Inquiry and Investigation Panel with a statutory power which will submit a report to the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

The functions of each are as follows:

An Acknowledgment Forum

An Acknowledgment Forum will provide a place where victims and survivors can recount their experiences within institutions. A 4 person panel will be appointed by the First Minister and deputy First Minister to lead this forum. This Forum will provide an opportunity for victims and survivors to recount their experience on a confidential basis. A report will be brought forward by the panel outlining the experiences of the victims and survivors. All records will be destroyed after the Inquiry is concluded. The records will not be used for any other purpose than that for which they were intended. If necessary, the Forum will have the authority to hear accounts from individuals whose experiences fall outside the period 1922 – 1995. The Acknowledgment Forum will operate as a separate body within the Inquiry and Investigation accountable to and under the chairmanship of the Inquiry and Investigation Panel Chair.

A Research and Investigative team

A Research and Investigative team will report to and work under the direction of the Chair of the Inquiry and Investigation. The team will:

- Assemble and provide a report on all information and witness statements provided to the Acknowledgement Forum;
- Provide an analysis of the historical context that pertained at the time the abuse occurred; and
- Provide a report of their findings to the Acknowledgement Forum and to the Chair of the Inquiry and Investigation.

An Investigation and Inquiry Panel

An Inquiry and Investigation Panel will produce a final report taking into consideration the report from the Acknowledgement Forum, the report of the Research and Investigative team and any other evidence it considers necessary.

The Panel will be led by a Chairperson supported by two other members, who will be appointed by the First Minister and deputy First Minister. The Chairperson of the Inquiry and Investigation will also be responsible for the work of the Acknowledgement Forum and for the Research and Investigative Team.

On consideration of all of the relevant evidence, the Chairperson of the Inquiry and Investigation will provide a report to the NI Executive within 6 months of the conclusion of their Inquiry and Investigation. Bearing in mind the need to guard against future abuse, the report will make recommendations and findings on the following matters:

- An apology - by whom and the nature of the apology;
- Findings of institutional or state failings in their duties towards the children in their care and if these failings were systemic;
- Recommendations as to an appropriate memorial or tribute to those who suffered abuse;
- The requirement or desirability for redress to be provided by the institution and/or the Executive to meet the particular needs of victims.

However, the nature or level of any potential redress (financial or the provision of services) is a matter that the Executive will discuss and agree following receipt of the Inquiry and Investigation report.

The Northern Ireland Executive will bring forward legislation at the beginning of this process to give a statutory power to the Inquiry and Investigation to compel the release of documents and require witnesses to give evidence to the Inquiry and Investigation. It is hoped that the legislative power will not be needed, however; the power will be available if required. As far as possible the Inquiry should be inquisitorial in nature rather than adversarial.

A Witness Support Service will be established by to support Victims and Survivors throughout their contact with the Inquiry process. The Office of the First Minister and

deputy First Minister will establish a wider Victims Support Service to provide support and advice to victims before, during and after the inquiry.

18 October 2012

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY
STATEMENT TO THE HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE INQUIRY**

MODULE 9

MANOR HOUSE CHILDREN'S HOME (LISBURN)

18 December 2015

I, [REDACTED] will say as follows:

This statement has been provided on behalf of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (the Department) in response to the Rule 9 request of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (HIAI) dated 13 November 2015. As the Department does not hold any information in relation to the Manor House Home, the statement has been prepared on the basis of such evidence received from the HIAI as it has been possible to review within the required timeframe. If further information becomes available, it may be necessary to provide to the HIAI, revised or supplementary statements.

The questions posed by the HIAI in respect of Manor House include those relating to the standard of care in the home during the early 1950s and the involvement of Ministers in decisions regarding the status and future of the home. In view of the volume and complexity of the evidence in relation to this period, the Department has prepared at Annex A, a detailed factual account and chronology of events from 1950 when the first registration visit by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) took place until the re-opening of the Manor House Home in 1957. With reference to this period, this statement relies on the information presented at Annex A, paragraphs A1 to A58. Annex A also contains the full NMH references citing where the documentation may be found within the Module 9 evidence bundles.

Introduction

By way of background, it is noted that Manor House was opened as a children's home by the Irish Church Missions Society in November 1927¹. The minutes of the management committee indicate that between May 1928 and 1929 the home appears to have run into financial problems which resulted in its closure in or around December 1929, when all the children were moved to Dublin. After concerted efforts by the management committee to raise funding, the home was reopened in May 1932². In accordance with the requirements of the Children and Young Person's Act (NI) 1950 (the 1950 Act), Manor House was registered as a children's home on 29 June 1950³. Following adverse Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) inspection reports⁴, the home closed in 1953 for a period of four years. It reopened in 1958 with a refurnished building and under a newly constituted management committee. Manor House continued to operate as a children's home until 1984 when it finally closed because it *"was no longer financially viable to run with the reduction in the numbers of children requiring long-term residential care"*⁵.

¹ MNH-156

² MNH-2324-2327

³ MNH-2314

⁴ MNH-2904;MNH-2894

⁵ MNH-157

1. HIAI Question 1

How often did the Department inspect Manor House?

- 1.1 This section deals with inspections of the home from 1950. Inspection activity between 1927, when the home opened (See A1) and 1950 is considered in paragraphs 2.1-2.2 below.
- 1.2 It should be noted in relation to inspection activity in the 1950s, the evidence received from the HIAI contains documentation from a MoHA File T.168 on the Manor House Home⁶. This file dates from the early 1950s and includes reports from MoHA Inspectors, namely Miss Forrest and Dr Simpson as well as reports from MoHA architects, also at times referred to as “Inspectors”. Part or all of the contents of File T.168 (also referred to as TC 168) are contained in the HIAI evidence bundle. However, a memorandum within the T.168 documentation dated 3 December 1957 stated: *“An inspection file has now been opened for the Manor House Home accordingly all inspection reports etc. prior to 1st December 1957 are to be found on this file (T.168) and those subsequently produced will appear in the new inspections file (T.546)”*⁷ File T.546 does not appear to be contained within the evidence bundle nor have the Departmental searches been successful in locating this file. Therefore, in the absence of other supporting documentation, such as entries in the Manor House Home’s records, the frequency of inspections between December 1957 and July 1978 cannot be evidenced at this stage.
- 1.3 The 1950 Act and the Children and Young Persons Act (NI) 1968 (the 1968 Act) empowered the MoHA and subsequently the Department of Health, Social Services (DHSS) to *“cause any voluntary home to be inspected”*⁸.

Inspections prior to the temporary closure of the home in July 1953

- 1.4 According to the documentation to hand, several inspections or visits by MoHA inspectors took place prior to the children being removed from the Manor House Home in July 1953. The dates of known visits are presented here but full details of the purpose and, where relevant, the findings of each visit are set out in Annex A.
- June 1950: Inspection visit by Miss Forrest and Miss Harrison in connection with the registration of the home (A2-A3);

⁶ MNH 2566

⁷ MNH 2596

⁸ 1950 Act section 102; 1968 Act section 130

- 6 February 1953: Inspection visit by Miss Forrest, Mr Jackson (a MoHA official) and Mr Wright, an architect from the Ministry of Health and Local Government (MHLG) in response to an application for grant aid by the manor House committee (A14-A17);
 - 12 February 1953: Inspection visit by Miss Forrest and Dr Simpson, a MoHA medical officer, as a follow-up to the 6 February visit (A19);
 - 22 May 1953: Inspection visit by Miss Forrest and Mr Dunlop (a MoHA official), to monitor the continuing situation at the home (A26);
 - 3 July 1953: The first of a series of weekly visits that Miss Forrest was instructed by MoHA to carry out *“until either the children are dispersed or the conditions are satisfactory”* (A32-A33);
 - 10 July 1953: The second of Miss Forrest’s weekly visits but she found all of the children had been removed (A34).
- 1.5 After the children had been removed from Manor House, Miss Forrest, MoHA officials and MoHA/MHLG architects continued to carry out site inspection visits to report progress on renovation works (A35; A54-A55).
- 1.6 It is also important to note that during the critical period between the Inspectors’ visit in February 1953 to the end of December 1957 when the home was finally deemed suitable for the care of children (A57) several correspondences and meetings took place between MoHA officials and members of the Manor House Committee. These are detailed in Annex A.

Inspections between 1958 and the closure of the home in 1984

- 1.7 It was noted in paragraph 1.2 above that Departmental searches have been unable to locate a MoHA file containing the reports of inspections after 1957. The only evidence of inspection activity, including visits by inspectors between 1957 and 1978 was found in Manor House diary and committee minutes documentation submitted to the HIAI:
- 1964 (date unknown): Miss Hill, *“Deputy Children’s Officer”(sic), MOHA phoned regarding a Matron’s post vacancy”*. The Chair had explained the difficulty in getting qualified staff in spite of repeated advertising and had expressed the Committee’s satisfaction with and confidence in a chosen applicant;⁹

⁹ MNH-2037

- 12 September 1966: Miss Hill visited (and inspected the home) with the MOHA Minister and other officials¹⁰ ;
 - September 1970: “Miss Hill called and carried out an inspection, bringing with her Dr Bell”¹¹.
- 1.8 On account of the incidents outlined in paragraphs 3.3-3.4 below, the Manor House Home was included within the scope of the Hughes Inquiry¹². The Inquiry found that the frequency of inspections by the Social Work Advisory Group (SWAG) for the period 1978 to 1983 to be “no more than adequate”. According to the Hughes Report, SWAG had inspected the home in July 1978 and September 1981¹³. The report acknowledged that a Social Work Advisor had visited the home in: January and August 1978; July 1979; and that a follow up visit to the 1981 inspection had been made in December 1982. The report did not reference SWAG visits made (probably) in July 1982¹⁴ and (definitely) in September 1982¹⁵. The Hughes report concluded that “in any event, SWAG’s inspections could have had no direct bearing on the prevention of such incidents.”
- 1.9 At present the Department has no further evidence of inspections or visits by Inspectors other than those reported above.

2. HIAI Question 2

2(a) Did the Department carry out any inspections of Manor House prior to 1950. If not, why not?

- 2.1 With regard to children’s institutions that were not reformatories or industrial schools, section 25 of the Children Act 1908 (the 1908 Act)¹⁶ provided that “the Chief Secretary may cause any institution for the reception of poor children or young persons, supported wholly or partly by voluntary contributions and not liable to be inspected by or under the authority of any Government Department, to be visited and inspected from time to time by persons appointed by him for that purpose”.
- 2.2 The Department does not hold any information with reference to the implementation of this provision. The Departmental submission to the Hughes

¹⁰ MNH-2042

¹¹ MNH-2056

¹² The Committee of Inquiry into Children’s Homes and Hostels.

¹³ The 1981 inspection report is contained within the HIAI evidence MNH-

¹⁴ see paragraph 3.3

¹⁵ see paragraph 3.4

¹⁶ As read within section 133(1) of that Act

Inquiry indicated that in and around 1983 not all of the files relating to visits carried out and reported on by Children's inspectors were still in existence, *"due to the normal process of review and destruction of old files"*¹⁷.

Notwithstanding the present lack of documented inspections, there is no reason to believe that MoHA was not carrying out inspections between 1927 and 1950. The inspection process during this period was described to the Hughes Inquiry as being made *"on the basis of short visits...these reports gave the Inspectors overall impression of the home visited and of its occupants and raised any matters on which action might be taken by the Ministry...from the information available, the visits to statutory homes appear to have been less frequent than those to voluntary homes"*¹⁸.

2(b) How did the Department seek to address deficiencies identified by an inspection following the home's application for registration? By whom were the deficiencies addressed and what occurred?

- 2.3 The Department is uncertain whether this question refers to deficiencies noted by Inspectors at the time of the home's registration in 1950 or whether the question is concerned with the more serious deficiencies identified during an inspection visit in 1952 in relation to the home's application for a grant. Both are considered here.
- 2.4 In June 1950 inspectors visited the home in connection with an application it had lodged with MoHA for registration as an adoption agency. The full details of the visit are set out at A2 to A5. It was evident from that visit that:
- the home's management committee was not familiar with the requirements of the new legislation and the requirement to be registered as a children's home;
 - there were signs of financial difficulties;
 - the cooking arrangements seemed inadequate;
 - Miss Forrest had concerns about the home's policy regarding the discharge of children; and
 - The District Medical Officer felt that the children's health was not what it should be.
- 2.5 The committee clearly responded quickly and lodged the proper application seeking information also about a grant. In addition to confirming the registration, the letter of response by MoHA set out the circumstances in which a grant might be obtained. The letter also signalled that regulations would be forthcoming but that the Ministry's power to inspect would be put in

¹⁷ Paragraph 3.58 of the Departmental submission to the Hughes Inquiry.

¹⁸ Paragraphs 3.57 and 3.58 of the Departmental submission to the Hughes Inquiry.

force straight away and the Inspectors would carry out an inspection in the following few weeks (A4-A5). This may have been the standard wording that was sent to all registration applicants.

- 2.6 There is no evidence of MoHA inspections between June 1950 and February 1953 when a visit took place prompted by the home's application for a grant (A9-A13). It is possible that MoHA deemed the June 1950 visit to have fulfilled the need to inspect close to the registration application as a further inspection of Manor House may not have been deemed necessary until February 1953 (A14). With reference to the deficiencies identified, there is no information to show whether any of the issues identified above were pursued beyond information and advice that may have been given during the initial visit. It is also not known how the conditions in Manor House compared to those in other homes seeking to be registered at that time or what the demands on the MoHA Inspectors were in terms of the registration process for a significant cohort of voluntary organisations. Nevertheless it would seem that, the conditions within Manor House deteriorated during the period between the two inspections that are known about, of June 1950 and February 1953, to the extent that consideration was given to the transfer of the children to the care of the Welfare Authority.
- 2.7 Just prior to the next visit to Manor House, MoHA received adverse information from Antrim Welfare Authority in January 1953 about children having been beaten in the home (A13). Although some of this was subsequently discounted, concerns about insufficient food and inadequate staffing remained and were a portent of what was to be discovered. The distressing conditions found by MoHA inspectors when they visited the home in February 1953 are documented at A14-17.
- 2.8 In terms of how these were addressed, it is clear that MoHA, whilst pressing for immediate action, wished to allow the committee some time, albeit limited, to turn things around. Some improvements were made in the next few months (A19; A26) but it was apparent that committee was weak and ineffective (A18), divided in their views (A23); ignorant of statutory requirements and important policy developments (A22); unrealistic in their belief about what they could achieve or in understanding the extent of the problem (A20). They were also in extremely difficult financial straits with regard to ensuring adequate and suitable staffing and the general maintenance of the home. Whilst some of the Committee's requests for grant aid might have been responded to in a more sympathetic manner (A11), nevertheless, MoHA was correct in its view that a grant could not solve the problems that the committee faced.

2.9 While monitoring the situation with the children through Inspectors' visits, MoHA continued to impress on the Committee the seriousness of the situation (A26; A27) and the need for immediate action, perhaps with a view to pushing the Committee towards its own decision to relocate and close, but in the end culminating in MoHA informing the Committee of its intention to withdraw the Certificate of the home as from 1 August 1953 (A29). The children ultimately were transferred to Dublin, with the exception of one child, for whom Fermanagh Welfare Authority was responsible (A34) and the home closed for what was to be a period of almost 4 years.

2(c) Does the Department accept that intervention by the Minister of Home Affairs prevented the recommended de-registration of this home? What more can the Department say about this intervention?

2.10 There were four different Ministers for Home Affairs each from the then Ulster Unionist Party responsible to the Northern Ireland Parliament for their policies and the decisions of their Departments and hence the decision made in respect of the Manor House Home during the period 1952 to 1957:

- Brian Maginess 4 November 1949 - 25 October 1953
- George Hanna 26 October 1953 – 19 April 1956
- Terence O'Neill 20 April 1956 - 22 October 1956
- WWB Topping 23 October 1957 – 14 December 1959

2.11 Officials may advise Ministers but ultimately they are accountable to and required to take instructions from the Minister. The first communication to the Manor House Committee from MoHA warning the committee that the MoHA would "*have no alternative but to withdraw the home from the register*" unless immediate steps were taken to bring the home up to standard, was sent on 8 June 1953 (A27). A further letter sent on 19 June 1953 stated MoHA's intention to withdraw the certificate as from 1 August (A29). By letter dated 29 June, the Committee's Honorary Treasurer confirmed that the home was to close, but asked MoHA to take no further steps regarding withdrawal of registration and the home would "*voluntarily surrender our registration until such time as we are in a position to carry on again*" (A31). Shortly after this a new Manor House Committee was up and running by 9 July 1953 (A34).

2.12 Whether, as a result of the representations of the new committee or solely because of his own concerns, it would appear that it may have been around the late Summer of 1953 that Brian Maginess, the then Minister instructed officials not to withdraw the certificate. MoHA officials, having expressed satisfaction in July 1953 that the Children Act had "*at least cleared out this dump*" (A33) were by November 1953 processing a grant application and

recognising that a strategic decision had to be taken about the future of the home (A35). By this time Brian Maginess had moved on and a new Minister was in post. Various reasons were attributed to the Minister's decision not to withdraw the home's registration by officials writing at later dates including:

- the local committee was a well meaning and kindly body of persons and he did not want to bring scandal on them (A37);
- the home was much too close to his own doorstep to be denied an opportunity of putting its affairs in order and starting a renewed life (A37)¹⁹; and
- there was a possibility of improvements which could enable it to function more effectively (A39).

2.13 A further consideration is that in the 1950s there continued in Northern Ireland to be sensitivity to the desire for children to be placed within same faith institutions. This is evident in the communications of MoHA officials (A39; A42:A47) and an example reflected in statute, is found in section 72 of the 1950 Act which required MoHA or a Court in determining the training school to which a young person was to be sent to ascertain the religious persuasion of the child and to *“select a school for persons of the religious persuasion to which he belongs”*²⁰. If Manor House had closed permanently, the numbers of fully functioning voluntary children's homes in Northern Ireland would have reduced to six Protestant institutions in contrast to eleven Catholic homes (A25). The provision of homes of differing religious persuasion was a relevant consideration. That is not to say a Minister would not also have been mindful of any perceived imbalance in public funding being made available by way of grants to institutions of differing religious persuasion.

2.14 Although the Minister's decision may well have been influenced by all of these factors, the questions are whether the decision not to withdraw the home's registration or demand the return of its certificate was reasonable and whether his decision had any adverse impact on the lives on children within the home. With regard to the first issue, whilst Ministers must have regard to the advice given by officials, it is the Minister who ultimately has to make the decision, taking into account all relevant factors. These factors would include any view expressed by officials. It is evident that MoHA officials were not themselves in agreement about what should happen (A37-A38) although Miss Forrest appeared to have remained neutral throughout. With regard to the second question, it is noted that the children in the home were removed to suitable alternative placements within five months from the inspection visit which had

¹⁹ Brian Maginess was the MP in the NI Parliament for the Iveagh constituency. This bordered the South Antrim constituency which included Lisburn. Mr Maginess also had strong personal Lisburn connections (father was a Lisburn solicitor and he went to school in Lisburn – might well have had his home there).

²⁰ SPT-80025

highlighted the problems. During these months there was close supervision of the home by MoHA and standards improved although, as a result of lack of funds and ineffective management, not sufficiently so to warrant the children remaining there.

- 2.15 It should also be noted that whilst George Hanna, Mr Maginess's replacement as Minister, might have had reservations (A44), successive Ministers, Terence O'Neill and WWB Topping, were content to support in principle the re-establishment of Manor House and the Committee's grant application, with Terence O'Neill taking a personal and supportive interest in the matter (A50). Whilst there were considerations about the Ministry acting ultra vires in relation to its ability to provide grants to a children's home that was not "a *going concern*" (A38), the fact that it technically retained its registration by not returning the certificate enabled the home's grant application to be considered ultimately by MoHA (A40) and then by the Maconachie Committee (A56).
- 2.16 Having approved the eligibility of the home for grant, the Maconachie Committee suggested that anything spent by the Manor House Committee in excess of £10,000 might be regarded as improvements, rather than initial expenditure to provide "a *registerable voluntary home*" (A52). It therefore recommended grant aid of 70% of the approved costs exceeding £10,000 of the expenditure incurred in the modernisation of the home.
- 2.17 The new committee rose to the challenge and against most expectations were able to raise the required funding and recruit suitable and sufficient staff to enable MoHA in December 1957 to authorise the Manor House Committee to reopen the home for the reception of not more than twenty children (A58).

3. HIAI Question 3

- 3.1 **Did the Department receive any complaints from residents or others regarding Manor House? If so, what action was taken?**
- 3.2 To the Department's knowledge MoHA did not receive any complaints from residents of Manor House although some concerns were notified to the Ministry in 1950 (A3) and 1953 (A13) by Welfare Authorities. The DHSS also did not receive complaints directly from residents but was, however, alerted to two situations which are set out below.
- 3.3 In June 1982 allegations made by MH 23, a boy at the home regarding indecent behaviour of a male person towards him were properly reported to the Southern Health and Social Services Board (SHSSB) and the police. The SHSSB's Director of Social Services, Mr R Moore wrote to Mr J

Wilde, the then Chief Social Work Advisor (CSWA) in July 1982²¹ to report allegations made by the boy's mother that her children were not well cared for in the home and that MH 23 been "allowed on three recent occasions to leave Manor House in the company of a man in his late forties". Mr Moore's purpose in writing to the CSWA was that as Manor House was a voluntary home and the DHSS was responsible for it, he had no way of knowing if the allegations made by the boy's mother had "any substance". He did note, however, 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 MH 23 MH 24, MH 25, MH 27 regularly." Dr K McCoy, who had received the above information from the SHSSB's Assistant Director of Social Services had by memorandum²² already advised Mr Wilde of this matter, suggesting that he might consider whether "a supportive visit to Manor House might be appropriate at this time". In view of such advice it is highly likely that such a visit would have been carried out by SWAG, but the Department has no further information on this matter.

- 3.4 A further incident occurred on 2 September 1982 involving the alleged sexual assault of a 10 year old girl resident of Manor House by a 16 year old boy who was also resident in the home. Mr Walker, a SWAG Social Work Advisor (SWA) arranged to see the then Officer in Charge of the home, MH 9 and provided a full account of the incident to the then Assistant Chief SWA. The relevant HSS Board and the police had been informed of the incident.

4. HIAI Question 4

Does the Department acknowledge any systematic failing on its part in respect of Manor House?

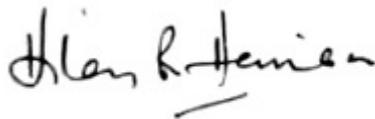
- 4.1 With reference to the period 1927-1950, there is a dearth of evidence upon which any determination might be made in relation to systemic failings by MoHA during this time.
- 4.2 In relation to the issues identified at the time of the home's initial application for registration in 1950, the Department recognises the obvious pressures on MoHA and its inspectors, with the introduction of the new Act requiring *inter alia* the registration of at least 22 homes. Nevertheless the Department accepts that there is no documentation to confirm any inspections or visits from June 1950 until February 1953. By early 1953 the home had deteriorated to such a level that there was a suggestion that consideration should be given

²¹ MNH 2548-2549

²² MNH 2550

to the transfer of the children to the care of the welfare authorities²³.

- 4.3 Following the re-establishment of the Manor House Home, Departmental records are no longer available which would have addressed the period from 1958 to 1978. The MoHA and later the DHSS exercised the statutory power to inspect, albeit the extent of and frequency of the inspections or visits to Manor House Home cannot presently be identified. It is noted (paragraph 1.8 above) that the Hughes inquiry found the frequency of inspections by the Social Work Advisory Group (SWAG) for the period 1978 to 1983 to be “*no more than adequate*” which is, nevertheless, “adequate”. It is likely the Hughes Inquiry had the advantage of contemporaneous records not available to this Inquiry and had the benefit of hearing oral evidence in relation to SWAG inspections during this period²⁴. As the home closed in 1984 the Department does not accept there is evidence of any failure to discharge its powers and responsibilities other than appropriately during this period.



Signed

Date 18 December 2015

²³ Annex 1 Para A17.

²⁴ See MNH-10162 in which [REDACTED] confirms his familiarity with SWAG inspectors prior to the 1981 report. He suggests Miss Forrest was a regular visitor to the home “over the years” who would inter alia engage with [MH 9] and criticise what she found. This would be brought to the attention of the Management Committee.

ANNEX A

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY
ANNEX TO DEPARTMENTAL WITNESS STATEMENT

MODULE 9 – MANOR HOUSE CHILDREN’S HOME, LISBURN

- A1. Manor House was opened as a children’s home by the Society for Irish Church Missions in November 1927¹. The minutes of the management committee indicate that between May 1928 and 1929 the home appears to have run into financial problems which resulted in its closure in or around December 1929, when all the children were moved to Dublin. Due to concerted efforts by the management committee to raise funding, the home was reopened in May 1932².
- A2. No information is available within the evidence received from the HIAI regarding the involvement by MoHA with the home until 30 May 1950 when an application to have Manor House registered as an adoption agency was received by MoHA. Miss Harrison and Miss Forrest (MoHA children’s inspectors) visited the home initially, it would appear, in connection with the application for adoption agency registration. Miss Forrest’s report dated 8 June 1950³ noted that a member of the committee, Mrs Bannister, who met them with the Matron, MH 1, was opposed to the committee of the home becoming an adoption society, they had no ‘outside worker’ who could undertake enquiries and the Matron ‘had her hands full with her own work: 20 children’.
- A3. Miss Forrest listed the staffing in place and reminded MH 1 and Mrs Bannister of the obligation to register as a voluntary home. The inspectors cleared up a misunderstanding on the part of Mrs Bannister that registration as a children’s home was “*tied in with application for a grant*”. Staff said they needed approval of the Superintendent of Irish Church Missions in Dublin or even of “*HQ in London*” before making application⁴. The inspectors were shown over the home which Miss Forrest described as “*very clean but shabby Seemed generally to be run on good lines but handicapped by lack of money*”. She commented on the cooking arrangements in the home, which to her

¹ MNH-156

² MNH-2324-2327

³ MNH-2939

⁴ The statements relating to this information in Miss Forrest’s report were annotated with an ‘X’ by an MoHA official (see paragraph A11).

“seemed inadequate”, but she stated that ‘MH 1’ thought they were quite sufficient”. Miss Forrest referred to one “flaw”, namely “the actual method of reception of children which she noted was usually from a crèche in Dublin at 10 yrs old the boys leave Manor House and return to Dublin”. Miss Forrest’s report stated “It seems very hard that the children should be shunted to and fro in this way”. She noted that the Committee “had it in mind for some time to open a babies’ wing for about 15 children” but found the cost prohibitive. However, she concluded her report by stating that Mr Wilde, the Divisional Welfare Officer for the area later told the inspectors that the “DMO⁵ thought the health of the children who attend school is not up to scratch”.

- A4. Continuing views by some members of the committee that the home should be registered as an adoption society seem to have been overcome by MoHA⁶ and a completed application for registration as a voluntary children’s home was received by MoHA on 22 June 1950⁷. The covering letter also asked MOHA for information on how to apply for a grant. The application form recorded that there were 5 female staff in post to care for a capacity of 22 children. 19 children were accommodated at the time of the application. On 23 June 1950, a MoHA official recommended that the home should be registered⁸ and a registration certificate was granted in June 1950⁹. A letter dated 29 June 1950 was sent to the Committee confirming registration¹⁰. It is noteworthy that the letter stated:

“The Ministry proposes to make regulations for the conduct of voluntary homes and for securing the welfare of the children therein. You will be notified when the regulations have been made. The Ministry’s power to inspect voluntary homes will, however, be put into force straight away and the Inspectors will carry out their first inspection visit within the next few weeks”.

- A5. The letter also stated the Ministry’s willingness to consider an application for grant aid towards the improvement of premises or equipment or “securing that the home is better provided with qualified staff, with reference to the granting of financial assistance to voluntary homes under section 118 of the 1950 Act”. It noted however: “it is not intended that the grant should weaken voluntary effort and financial assistance will not be available towards the construction or acquisition

⁵ Possibly District Medical Officer

⁶ MNH 2937

⁷ MNH 2933

⁸ MNH 2931

⁹ Full date not visible MNH 2930

¹⁰ MNH 2927.

of new premises or towards the ordinary maintenance or general management of a home”.

A6. Further MoHA correspondence relating to Manor House Home is not available until 11 August 1952 when a letter of the same date¹¹ was sent by the then Chair of the Committee, Mrs Bannister to the then MoHA Minister, Brian Maginess, seeking a grant for improvements, particularly with regard to the report of a Fire Authority inspection received “*some time ago*” (made at the request of MoHA)¹². Mrs Bannister regretted a reply had not been sent before, thus suggesting that earlier correspondence had taken place between MoHA and the Committee. The letter referred to the home not having the money to carry out the required fire improvements and its financially embarrassed state due to having completed other necessary repairs to the building. Mrs Bannister referred to the Committee doing “*their utmost to bring happiness to these destitute children*” and having been “*successful in placing many in good hands*”.

A7. Mrs Bannister received a response from MoHA dated 12 August 1952¹³ which stated:

“I am making inquiries to find out if a Government grant is possible to the Manor House Home. My first impression would be that it is not, as the Government is precluded by the Government of Ireland Act from making contributions to any religious body, and it would seem to me that the Manor House would come under this prohibition. However, I am making enquiries and will write you further”.

A8. This dilemma appears to have been quickly resolved. By letter dated the following day (13 August 1952)¹⁴, MoHA wrote to Mrs Bannister stating that it was possible “*in certain circumstances*” for the Ministry to make grants to voluntary homes such as the Manor House Home under the 1950 Act and enclosed a memorandum setting out the conditions for grant aid.

A9. On 18 November 1952, the Manor House Committee submitted to MoHA, an application¹⁵ together with supporting documentation for a

¹¹ MNH 2925

¹² MNH-2917

¹³ MNH-2924

¹⁴ MNH 2923

¹⁵ MNH 2918

grant of £1000 towards the costs of the Fire Authority requirements; a new sewer; and a playground for the children.

- A10. An internal MoHA minute dated 25 November 1952¹⁶ with reference to the purpose of the home stated that it was *“to provide for illegitimate, destitute, ill-treated or neglected children and to bring them up in the Church of Ireland faith”*. The minute noted the Committee’s inability to pay for extensive fire protection improvements required as the result of a Fire Authority inspection that had been carried out at the request of the MoHA. The minute acknowledged the amount of £1,000 already paid by the Committee and that it was currently in debt of £600. It concluded:

“There seems no doubt that this is the type of case S.118 (1) was designed to help, but we have to decide whether we would be justified in giving the whole £1,000 the Committee ask for. It looks as if, once the idea occurred to them of getting us to pay for their fire protection work, they cast around for some other things it would be nice to have and which would bring their application up to a nice round figure”.

- A11. A handwritten annotation to this minute referred to the section marked ‘X’ in Miss Forrest’s 1950 report (see paragraph A11 footnote 4) which cited an Irish Church Missions Branch in Dublin as well as headquarters in London. The minute suggested that under the terms of the guidance on grants, MoHA *“would require to have information about the resources of the organisation before a grant can be considered”*.

- A12. This was followed up by a letter dated 2 December 1952¹⁷ from MoHA seeking a meeting with representatives of the Manor House Committee at Stormont. This was subsequently arranged for 7 January 1953¹⁸. A MoHA official at the meeting, at which Miss Forrest was also present, noted afterwards by minute¹⁹ that Miss Forrest had explained that grants could not be given towards the general management or normal maintenance of a home, a grant could not therefore be given for a new sewer, but that the Ministry was prepared to consider the application for the fire prevention proposals and the new playground. However, the official had formed the opinion during the discussion that the premises

¹⁶ MNH-2917

¹⁷ MNH 2916

¹⁸ MNH 2912.

¹⁹ MNH-2910

“were very old and that extensive repairs, for which they [i.e. the Committee] have not the money are necessary”. The official wondered whether the local committee would be able to face up to the expenditure and determined that the opinion of an architect should be sought before making a grant.

A13. A note to the MoHA file dated 13 January 1953²⁰ indicated that Antrim Welfare Authority had received an adverse report on the home. The file note stated *“we will defer inspection on the home until we see what they have to say”*. Miss Forrest spoke to a welfare authority officer on 4 February 1953²¹. He intimated that there had been a rumour about children being beaten, but the children’s mother subsequently denied this and denied having started the rumour. Miss Forrest noted *“the children did find the food dull and insufficient in quantity. This is believed to have improved since. Miss Bannister²² is aware of all of this, I believe. The other complaint is of insufficient staff”*. She noted that the welfare officer, on one visit, had found only a senior girl in charge.

A14. On 6 February 1953, Mr Jackson, a MoHA official visited Manor House in the company of Miss Forrest and an architect from the Ministry of Health and Local Government to *“survey the premises and take stock of the general situation with regard to the children in the home and how they fared, so as to form an idea whether or not the Ministry would be justified in making a grant”*. The reports²³ of the visit by Miss Forrest and Mr Jackson present the most bleak, Dickensian image of the “care” of children, the physical and material standards and the atmosphere within the home. In summary:

- Insufficient and unsuitable staffing, untrained and inexperienced staff and committee members;
- little evidence of any standard of child care;
- poor staff relationships;
- musty odour, dirtiness and untidiness of rooms and rooms in need of renovation;
- rooms inadequately heated, whole house cold apart from the kitchen;
- children seated at old school desks in the playroom supervised by a senior girl, no toys or playthings evident, although in a basement

²⁰ MNH- 2908

²¹ Annotation to the aforementioned note MNH-2908

²² The then Chair of the Management Committee

²³ MNH-2904; MNH-2894

room toys of all kinds were piled in large heap and in others, dilapidated children's books were stacked in shelves; no staff were with the children;

- plain wooden tables, like carpenters tables in the dining room;
- children, though not unhappy seemed dull and unresponsive and not so much ill-mannered as unmannered;
- young girl in bed in an icily cold dormitory, face flushed and obvious high temperature;
- bedrooms cold, bleak and drab and uncomfortable looking beds;
- 3 members of staff in the kitchen, averted eyes, avoided Inspectors;
- the only washing facility for the children was a large sink used for cleaning vegetables;
- broken sewer;
- no toilets, basins or baths for the children on the first floor where the bedrooms were;
- toilets used by the children were furthest from them, and needed replacing – also in an extremely cold area;
- Mrs Bannister seemed not to have heard of the regulations, the register was not up to date and there was no other record book.

A15. The architect's report²⁴ written on 9 February 1953 stated:

- the building was very dilapidated with painting and decorating necessary internally and externally;
- walls and ceilings needed replastering and the rendering outside was starting to break away in large sections;
- the wooden fire escape appeared very insecure and highly dangerous;
- the heating stoves were old and inefficient;
- the outbuildings were in a bad state of repair; and
- there were drainage leaks.

A16. Amongst the very few positive comments in these various reports were:

- the Assistant Matron was said to be "*good with children*";
- the children attended outside organisations and had appropriate uniforms;
- although some clothing seen in the cloakroom was a bit shabby, their clothing was generally comfortable and sensible;
- the bedwetters who previously had been sleeping in "*an awful little room in the basement quite away from everyone*" had been brought back to sleep with the others "after we protested to Mrs Bannister when she visited Stormont;

²⁴ MNH-2897

- the children did not look cold and seemed content to sit at the desks;
- there was a good vegetable garden which looked well kept and the home was *“able to sell vegetables and tomatoes, as well as supplying all the needs of the home”*;
- the Medical Officer did examine the children and gave attention to the general condition of the home and had reported to the Committee that it was dirty;
- structurally, the home appeared to be in a fair state of repair; and
- the roof, walls and floors were generally sound and weatherproof.

A17. Mr Jackson concluded his report:

“So, far from recommending a Government grant in this case, I would suggest that we should seriously consider the transfer of the children to the care of the Welfare Authority if the Irish Church Missions cannot rise to the occasion within a reasonable time”.

A18. Following a report in the Northern Whig on 10 February 1953 regarding the seeking of more funds by the Irish Church Missions (ICM) which made reference to the attendance of the ICM Superintendent, Rev T H Horan as a speaker, Miss Forrest contacted Mrs Bannister²⁵. The reason for the contact appears to have been one of checking that the Committee had alerted Rev Horan to the situation. Mrs Bannister had had some general conversation with the Superintendent *“but apparently did not tell him particularly about our visit or the criticisms”*. She informed Miss Forrest that there had been a Committee meeting and that all the members were confident that they *“can or should carry on the home and that they can bring it up to scratch”*. The Matron was leaving the following day and the Assistant Matron was to carry on with an additional daily domestic to help her. Mrs Bannister also said that she herself would assist. She hoped to get two missionaries from England who were about to retire to run the home and had written to HQ about this in the previous week. By 19 February, however, it was confirmed that these expected personnel were not coming²⁶.

A19. Dr Simpson visited the home on 12 February 1953 with Miss Forrest²⁷. The home had been thoroughly cleaned since the Inspectors' last visit and acknowledged that a considerable attempt had been made to improve things but despite the personal effort of Mrs Bannister, it was impossible to run a children's home *“along these lines”*, the main lack

²⁵ MNH-2898

²⁶ MNH-2826

²⁷ MNH-2877

being a considerable sum of money. He concluded, however: *“Given money and additional staff it would be possible to convert the premises into a satisfactory children’s home”*²⁸.

- A20. In the meantime, in February 1953, the MOHA received from the headquarters of the Society for Irish Church Missions, their income and expenditure accounts²⁹. A MoHA official concluded the accounts showed that there was little prospect of financial assistance being made available to the home from this source³⁰. His view was that MoHA should have a *“heart to heart talk with the Committee at an early date and endeavour to make the members realise that its not a Government grant they need so much as a series of schemes which would secure the home a much larger income”*.
- A21. In March 1953 the Manor House Committee sent a report³¹ to the Irish Church Missions London Office outlining the home’s financial needs in respect of the premises, equipment, laundry, food, clothing and staff. It concluded that it *“was absolutely impossible for the Committee to obtain from voluntary subscriptions or by its own efforts the money required to continue the work of the Manor House Home”*.
- A22. In April 1953, the Committee wrote to MoHA enquiring about their grant application³². This prompted MoHA to ask for a further meeting with the Committee³³. This took place on 17 April 1953³⁴ when a MoHA official emphasised to the Committee that before making any grant, the Ministry would *“have to be satisfied that the finances of the organisation were such as would enable it to carry on its functions as regards general maintenance and management”*. The regulations and the Home Office memo on the conduct of children’s homes were discussed at the meeting. It was alleged by one member that she and other Committee members were *“completely in the dark about the regulations”*. The Committee appeared to be considering appointing an architect to prepare estimates with a view to making a renewed grant application.

²⁸ MNH-2877

²⁹ MNH-2878

³⁰ MNH-2875

³¹ MNH-2856

³² MNH-2871

³³ MNH-2870

³⁴ MNH-2865

A23. At the request of three members of the Committee, a further meeting was held in MoHA on 22 April 1953³⁵ without the knowledge of the remaining Committee members. Divisions amongst the Committee members regarding the future of the home were made evident, with each of the three members present favouring a transfer of the premises to Antrim Welfare Authority but others in the Committee were reported to believe the home to be *“quite satisfactory”*. Ultimately, it was agreed that extracts from the Inspectors’ reports should be sent to the Committee with *“a stiff warning letter intimating that the registration of the home would have to be withdrawn if the conditions were not made right within a reasonable period”*. Copies of the correspondence were to be sent to the London headquarters and Miss Forrest was to pay a further visit to the home and furnish another report on *“the present state of affairs”*.

A24. In her overview report dated 28 April 1953³⁶ of the state of voluntary homes in Northern Ireland and with reference to Manor House, Miss Forrest stated:

“Has been both poverty stricken in money and ideas for some time past. Insufficient staff of poor quality in recent times. Equipment and maintenance very poor. Some improvement in recent weeks but needs a large amount of money spent on e.g. floor-coverings, heating, beds, tables, chairs and play equipment. Attend outside schools”.

A25. Nevertheless, Manor House was not in the four homes that, in her estimation ranked worst in standards of care. It is noted that of 22 homes considered in the report and obviously visited in connection with their registration, there were:

- 9 Protestant children’s homes, including a mother and baby unit which took in unaccompanied children and teenagers and one home run by the Quakers that was about to *“wind up”*;
- 2 Protestant mother and baby homes only registered in case they needed to take children temporarily; and
- 11 Roman Catholic children’s homes.

A26. Miss Forrest visited the home again on 22 May 1953 with a MoHA official, Mr Dunlop³⁷. She again reported extensively on the physical

³⁵ MNH-2855

³⁶ HIA-1462

aspects of rooms and the material standards in the home. Although some improvements had been made, *“the state of disorder and untidiness was appalling”* and from her description, Spartan conditions prevailed in the children’s quarters. She reported, however, that *“the children looked well and healthy. They seem quite happy, perhaps because they are left very much to their own devices”*. However, *“they were untidy in their clothes, buttons off and jersey frayed and worn ... the eldest girl, [REDACTED] who is about 13, sees to the younger ones as regards washing and dressing”*. A report on the visit made by Mr Dunlop³⁸ endorsed Miss Forrest’s report but stated *“in my opinion the home should be closed until it is put in order by the present organisation or taken over by some responsible body”*.

- A27. A letter dated 8 June 1953 from Mr O’Neill, an Assistant Secretary in MoHA, to the Honorary Treasurer of the Manor House Committee ensued³⁹. A more senior MoHA official⁴⁰ (perhaps the Permanent Secretary) had significantly amended the draft, suggesting *“a more lengthy and sympathetic letter”*. The letter, which attached extracts from Inspectors’ reports and recounted the communications of MoHA with the Committee concluded by stating *“Unless the Committee can assure the Ministry that immediate steps will be taken to bring the home up to the necessary standard, I am afraid the Ministry will have no alternative but to withdraw the home from the register”*. A copy of the letter was sent to the ICM headquarters⁴¹.
- A28. A response dated 10 June 1953 was received from the Honorary Treasurer⁴² indicating that he was *“one of the members who feel that we are not able to provide adequately for the children in our care from the funds at our disposal”*. A letter of the same date⁴³ was sent to MoHA by the London ICM headquarters confirming that the Society’s headquarters could not offer any financial help to the local committee. However, this was followed up by a further letter from London dated 18 June to MoHA, indicating that the HQ was *“considering the possibility of reconstituting the Trust”*. MoHA responded⁴⁴ outlining its concerns and its intentions to give notice to the Committee that the Certificate of Registration was to be withdrawn. The letter noted, however, *“If, of*

³⁷ MNH-2852

³⁸ MNH-2848

³⁹ MNH-2837

⁴⁰ MNH- 2843 (signature indecipherable)

⁴¹ MNH-2833

⁴² MNH-2831

⁴³ MNH-2830

⁴⁴ MNH 2824

course, subsequently the Committee is in a position to convince the Ministry that it is able to run the home satisfactorily and in accordance with the regulations, the Ministry will be only too pleased to renew the Certificate of Registration”.

- A29. A special meeting of the Manor House Committee was to be held on 19 June 1953 but was cancelled, prompting a letter dated 22 June 1953⁴⁵ from MoHA to the Committee which stated: *“The Ministry views the position of the home as extremely serious, for not only is the home on very great need of redecoration and reconstruction but the staff is totally inadequate to deal with the children. Your committee does not seem to realise that there is only one adult person resident in the home at night. I must therefore request you to convene a meeting of your committee immediately as the Ministry cannot continue to permit of (sic) any children being accommodated in a home under such unsatisfactory conditions”.* The correspondence also intimated that a copy of the letter had been sent to London, *“stating the present intention of this Ministry to withdraw the Certificate of the home as from 1st August”.*
- A30. Subsequently, the Committee’s Hon Treasurer, Mr Gurd, confirmed in a telephone call to a MoHA official⁴⁶ (handwritten note, incomplete and no date visible) that arrangements had been made for two responsible people to sleep in the home until the end of July. Mr Gurd also informed the official that the Dublin branch had *“agreed that the only thing to do was to close the home immediately but that the certificate should be retained”*. The MoHA official *“pointed out that it would be more satisfactory if the certificate were returned and this would avoid any chance of the home being reopened before they were in a position financially”*⁴⁷. A further note to file (or possibly a continuation of the same) by the same MoHA official dated 24 June 1953 indicated that he had *“phoned Mr Gurd I also told him that the Committee might like to consider asking the Ministry not to take any action in relation to its letter and that the committee would arrange to disperse the children, promise not to admit any more and to hold the Certificate until the Chairman returns when they could then consider what action they should take”.*

⁴⁵ MNH-2826

⁴⁶ MNH-2820

⁴⁷ handwritten note incomplete

- A31. On 26 July 1953, Miss Forrest was instructed by memorandum⁴⁸ to *“make a point of inspecting the home at least once a week until either the children are dispersed or the conditions are satisfactory”*. A letter dated 29 June 1953⁴⁹ from Mr Gurd confirmed that the Committee had resolved to close the home as soon as satisfactory arrangements could be made to receive the children elsewhere. No further children were to be admitted, but a request was made to MoHA to *“take no further steps regarding withdrawal of registration as after these arrangements have been made, we will ask you to accept a voluntary surrender of our registration until such time as we are in a position to carry on again.”*
- A32. Miss Forrest made the first of her weekly visits to the home on 3 July 1953 to report on progress⁵⁰. She also carried out an inspection of the premises and reported that the proposal was to send all of the children to Dublin. Miss Forrest further stated *“the children looked well and healthy with the exception of one girl who was not very robust looking. They certainly do not seem repressed, but are no good at taking to strangers with the exception of one boy of 10, a bolder spirit. They were tidier and better dressed”*.
- A33. A letter dated 2 July 1953⁵¹ from the London HQ to MoHA confirmed the Society’s intention to have the children transferred to **MH 43** Homes, Dublin. The letter stated *“my Committee hopes within the next few months that it may be found possible to reconstitute the Manor House Home on a basis satisfactory to the Ministry”*. In a handwritten annotation to this letter, a MoHA official commented *“... If our Children Act has done nothing else it has at least cleared out this dump!”*.
- A34. By 9 July 1953, the Manor House Home Committee had been replaced by a new body comprising seven clergymen and some members of the original committee⁵². Miss Forrest visited the home on 10 July 1953 to find that all the children had gone to Dublin that morning⁵³. Eleven children had been transferred to Dublin and one remaining child had been found an alternative placement by Fermanagh Welfare Authority⁵⁴.

⁴⁸ MNH- 2818

⁴⁹ MNH-2817

⁵⁰ MNH-2813

⁵¹ MNH-2811

⁵² MNH-2810

⁵³ MNH-2808 (report incomplete)

⁵⁴ MNH-2792

A35. In November 1953, MoHA received a letter from an architect acting on behalf of the Manor House committee which enclosed plans and proposals for alterations and renovations to Manor House⁵⁵. A MoHA architect, [REDACTED], inspected the home with Miss Forrest and Dr Simpson on 17 December 1953⁵⁶. Miss Forrest's and Dr Simpson's report dated 23 December 1953 commented that in view of [REDACTED] opinion about the structure and cost of future upkeep "*it would seem advisable that general policy as to the future of this home should be considered first without going into detail about alterations*"⁵⁷. The plans were, however, considered by Miss Forrest and Dr Simpson against the 1948 Home Office Proposed Standards for Children's Accommodation⁵⁸. On receiving the inspectors' reports, A MoHA official noted that the committee would no doubt expect a substantial grant and a meeting was arranged to discuss the situation with the home⁵⁹. It was explained *inter alia* at the meeting that "*the home would be inspected periodically and that a reasonable standard would have to be maintained*"; that grant, if payable, "*would not be paid for maintenance of the children*". Attention was also drawn to "*the rule providing for the bringing up of each child in the religious persuasion to which he belongs*".⁶⁰ There followed from early January 1954 a series of meetings, discussions and correspondence between the architect for the home, the MoHA architect, Miss Forrest, Dr Simpson and MoHA officials to ensure that the renovations were to a standard approved by MoHA⁶¹. These continued. However, in or around June 1954, a MoHA minute (date not visible)⁶² dealing with grants to voluntary homes noted in respect of Manor House stated:

"This Ministry is in rather a peculiar position in regard to this voluntary home. When I visited it last year with other Ministry officials and had discussions with the committee of the home we came to the conclusion that very drastic alterations would have to be made before we could continue to recognise it as a home fit for children. The majority of the committee agreed with us and expressed their willingness to remove the children temporarily from the home until the necessary alterations had been effected. On the Minister's⁶³ instructions we did not cancel the registration of the home so that to all intents and purposes it is an

⁵⁵ MNH-2800

⁵⁶ MNH-2798

⁵⁷ MNH-2795

⁵⁸ MNH-2527

⁵⁹ MNH-2790

⁶⁰ MNH-2784

⁶¹ MNH-2780

⁶² MNH-2771

⁶³ Brian Magennis

existing voluntary home and can, of course be given a grant. Before, however any grant can be given we must be satisfied that the new committee ... will be able to run the voluntary home”.

A36. This is the first mention on the MoHA file of Ministerial involvement. Whilst no information is given at that stage about the reason for the then Minister’s instructions, a later submission dated 1 September 1954⁶⁴ to the next Minister for Home Affairs referred to the former Minister’s feeling that the local committee was *“a well-meaning and kindly body of persons ... and that their failings were due to utter ineptitude rather than lack of good intentions”* and *“he instructed the Division not to withdraw the certificate in any way that would bring scandal upon them”*. A further reference on file dated 23 November 1956⁶⁵ referred to the same Minister feeling that *“the Institution was much too close to his own doorstep”*⁶⁶ to be denied an opportunity of putting its affairs in order and perhaps starting a lease of renewed and more perfect life”.

A37. A minute dated 30 July 1954⁶⁷ from a MoHA senior official to a colleague or subordinate officer set out the views of the senior official with reference to the question of grant aid to the home:

“ I suggest that despite the fact that by delaying indefinitely the carrying out of their undertaking to surrender voluntarily the certificate, the committee have managed, ultimately ,to hang on to their reputation, the Manor House home does not in fact exist as a going concern and is therefore not eligible for grant. If you can prove me wrong, go ahead and do so and I shall make my recommendations accordingly.

The second point on which I am going to take a lot of convincing is about the Committee’s financial ability to run a home even if they had one to run”. The minute elaborates further on the senior officer’s concerns but expresses willingness to *“be open to a convincing argument”*.

A38. The officer to whom the above communication was addressed responded by minute dated 2 August 1954⁶⁸. He commented:

⁶⁴ MNH-2730

⁶⁵ MNH-2661

⁶⁶ Brian Maginess was the member of the NI Parliament for the Iveagh Ni constituency. This bordered the South Antrim NI constituency, which included Lisburn.

⁶⁷ MNH-2745

⁶⁸ MNH-2724

“When the rumpus about Manor House, Lisburn was at its height, it was undoubtedly the Ministry’s intention to withdraw the certificate of registration failing surrender of the document by the Management Committee. But neither of these events developed mainly because of intervention by the Minister at that time, who, it is understood, directed that the home should not be completely closed down in view of the possibility of necessary improvements which would enable it to function again on a more satisfactory level.

This, as far as I know, was the reason why the home continued to be registered as a voluntary home and the fact that it is so registered is sufficient in my opinion to entitle it to xxx⁶⁹ for grant .

As far as the new Committee’s ability to run the home I feel very strongly that given an energetic and capable committee, prepared not only to give their own services, but also to enlist the aid of prominent local persons such as has been done successfully at “Glendhu”⁷⁰ and so organise matters that the right approach is made to the Protestant community for support, there would be sufficient money forthcoming by way of charitable contributions to make this home for 20 children a model equal, if not superior to “Macedon” where the standards are exceptionally high. The onus is on the committee, however, and it is up to them to satisfy us of their ability to do the job in the way it ought to be done”.

- A39. The new Manor House committee began a fund-raising and media awareness campaign almost immediately⁷¹.
- A40. A further MoHA paper dated 24 August 1954⁷² set out the history of the home and reflected much of the views and sentiments expressed in the 30 July minute. Of note is the fact that the Manor House committee had by then applied for a grant of 50% towards the cost of re-modelling and re-equipping the home. With reference to past events, the minute stated:

“The then Minister of Home Affairs intervened to prevent the Ministry from cancelling the registration and the committee did not carry out their expressed intention of voluntarily handing the license back until they could re-organise and improve the home, so that, technically it is held to be eligible to receive a grant under section 118 ... ”.

- A41. The author of the minute expressed trenchant criticism of the credentials and motives of the Society and concluded:

⁶⁹ word not clearly legible

⁷⁰ a voluntary children’s home on the outskirts of East Belfast

⁷¹ MNH-2740-2743

⁷² MNH-2738

“It is extremely desirable that there should be a good Protestant Voluntary Home. Manor House, as premises offers a site with good possibilities. But whether we should by financial support encourage the redevelopment of the Home by its present sponsors is a different question. Personally, I don’t think we should. But if the Society would be prepared to rid itself of its obligation towards the home and, assuming that any necessary Court permissions could be obtained, would hand the premises over either to a welfare authority or to some, preferably non-sectarian Protestant committee of energetic and experienced persons, then I think we should help from public funds to the level the Act permits”.

A42. It should be noted that throughout this and other documents on file, concern was also being expressed about accountability for public funds and the impact on Welfare Authorities, who had to pay 50% of all grant payments to voluntary sector homes in their area and whom we know were already complaining about grant aid decisions made by MoHA without prior reference to the relevant Welfare Authority.

A43. A lengthy submission dated 1 September 1954⁷³ was made to the then Minister, informing him of the history of events. The author’s opinion was that grant should not be paid. However, he stated:

“whether assuming that the Committee could raise funds sufficient to put the place in reasonable (if not satisfactory) structural and decorative order and to run the place in that condition, employing a reasonably satisfactory (if not really adequate) staff, we could then re-register the home and pay grant towards improvements, would depend in practice, on the extent to which Local Authorities maintain their present critical attitude. Even at that, it would be somewhat sharp practice on our part vis-à-vis the Local Authorities and a considerable straining of our powers under the Act. We might, however, be able to do something for them. But unless and until the Committee accomplish the foregoing and show us that they have a reasonable prospect of being able to meet normal running costs, without that no question of a grant could be considered and the time has now come when they must be told that”.

A44. The Minister’s response is not known. However, in a minute to file dated 7 September⁷⁴ a MoHA official (or the Minister?) recorded his dissatisfaction with the matter and the fact that *“the Ministry did not act”* when the home failed to keep its promise. He was critical of the fact that MoHA seemed to have *“condoned the whole business”* because

⁷³ MNH-2732

⁷⁴ MNH-2728

the Government architect had become involved. He regretted that he could not direct the recall of the registration, but appeared to concede⁷⁵ that the committee should be given the opportunity to see if they could find the financing without borrowing and assure the future necessary income. In the record of a subsequent meeting with MoHA⁷⁶ which a member of the management committee, [MH 7] was asked to attend, the same official stated:

[MH 7] seemed very optimistic about future financial prospects and there seems a definite possibility that the Committee will aim at what I hailed as an ideal course, namely getting going again to our satisfaction and not coming to us for several years until, having proved themselves they can put an improvement proposition to us.

I promised that we should in any event, give them all the technical advice and assistance they wanted as far as we could

I hope this means we shortly put the Manor House Home Grant file away for some years rest".

A45. The hopes of this particular official were not realised. He appeared to have underestimated the energy, persistence and perhaps influence of the new committee. By the end of October 1954, the MoHA informed Welfare Authorities of a proposed MoHA grant of £5,200 to Manor House to assist towards the cost of improving the premises and securing the provision of qualified staff⁷⁷.

A46. Negotiations continued between MoHA officials and inspectors and the Ministry of Health architect with the committee and the architect for the planned renovations to Manor House over the next year. On 4 May 1956, [MH 7], the chair of the Manor House committee and other representatives sought a meeting with the Minister⁷⁸ but agreed to have a preliminary meeting with MoHA officials. Following a meeting on 10 May with officials, [MH 7] appeared to have been invited to submit a claim for grant towards the expenditure incurred on renovation work together with supporting documentation⁷⁹. By letter dated 25 May 1956, the detailed information required by MoHA was

⁷⁵ minute incomplete and writing illegible

⁷⁶ MNH-2725

⁷⁷ MNH-2723

⁷⁸ MNH 2714 This was Captain Terence O'Neill who was Minister for Home Affairs from April 1956 to October 1956

⁷⁹ MNH-2699

provided by the Manor House Committee⁸⁰. The content of a MoHA minute dated 6 June 1956⁸¹ suggests that MoHA had by then accepted the financial viability of the home due to the Committee's income raising abilities demonstrated over the previous few years and the organising abilities of the new Committee. The minute concluded by suggesting that the application for grant would require to be referred to the Children's Homes and Training Schools Committee for consideration⁸². A note on file to the Minister dated 13 June 1956 stated:

"Minister, a Protestant home at last! I take it we can act as Mr Duff suggests".

- A47. The Minister passed the case to the Maconachie committee for consideration and a recommendation⁸³. The Committee visited the home and by letter dated 30 October 1956, Miss Maconachie informed the Minister⁸⁴ that the home's statements of accounts had been scrutinised and that the Committee had visited Manor House and considered that *"the premises are now quite suitable for the reception and accommodation of 19 or 20 children plus staff and that the Management Committee is a responsible and conscientious body of persons"*. Accordingly, the Committee recommended Government grant aid amounting to 70% of the approved cost exceeding £10,000 of the expenditure incurred in the modernisation of the home.
- A48. On 15 October 1957 a letter from MoHA⁸⁵ was sent to the Manor House Committee confirming that a grant had been approved in principle on approved expenditure *"in excess of £10,000"* in connection with the modernisation and re-equipment of the home and confirming that advance grant of £2000 had been paid on 6 Feb 1957. MoHA sought information about the present position in order that the *"Ministry's inspectors"* might *"have an opportunity to inspect and report on the general suitability of the premises before the home is reopened"*.

⁸⁰ MNH-2683

⁸¹ MNH-2681

⁸² This Committee, chaired by Miss Bessie Maconachie (Unionist Member of the Northern Ireland Parliament, elected by QUB) was established under the 1950 Act to review and make recommendations on all grant applications for voluntary children's homes and training schools. It was normally referred to as 'the Maconachy Committee'

⁸³ MNH-2676

⁸⁴ MNH- 2671 Mr WWB Topping was Minister for Home Affairs from 23 October 1956 to December 1959.

⁸⁵ MNH-2605

A49. A record on file⁸⁶ (written by a Mr Duff, a MoHA official), dated 23 November 1956 indicates that a particular interest was taken in the home by Terence O'Neill, the Minister who had been in post until from April 1956 to 23 October 1956 and who had been impressed by the representations to him by a Dr McCann, a member of the home's management committee. This interest continued for a short time after Capt O'Neill had moved to a different post. A handwritten annotation to Mr Duff's minute noted that "*Manor House home will be an asset as there are all too few Protestant homes available*".

A50. A minute to Minister Topping dated 27 November 1956⁸⁷ informed him of two applications for grants for voluntary children's homes, both of which were recommended by the Maconachie Committee:

"one is a Catholic home and the other is a Protestant home which are comforting considerations. The uncomfortable features about them are that they are both a little off-colour in one way or another". The MoHA official suggests in the minute that the Minister "*would probably like to see both cases before making up his mind with regard to either*".

A51. With reference to Manor House, in summary, the minute made the following points:

- strictly speaking the MoHA could only pay grants in respect of "*improving premises in which voluntary homes are being carried on*"⁸⁸ ;
- *on the other hand the MoHA's argument to the Welfare Authorities was "that the purpose of these grants is to prevent a home which was running at the time of the passing of the Act closing up with the consequence that the Welfare Authority would have to provide another home in place of it";*
- when it came up for inspection the condition of the home was such that MoHA couldn't possibly approve it and in the ordinary sense would have refused it a certificate. However "*as it was on the doorstep of the then Minister for Home Affairs , that wasn't a feasible course and accordingly MoHA let them send the children away to a home in Dublin until such time as they were able to improve the amenities of the home here*";
- whilst the official writing to the Minister could not "*see that there was anything illegal in this course*" a "*flavour of illegality*" arose in MoHA being asked to pay grants in respect of the money expended in putting the home in order, because MoHA were "*clearly not*

⁸⁶ MNH-2663

⁸⁷ MNH-2695

⁸⁸ 1950 Act section 118

entitled to pay grants to enable bodies to set up an approvable home, but only to improve a home”;

- the official suggested that if the proceeding was to have been kept within the letter of the law the committee should have done barely enough work to secure that the home would be registered, brought the children back in and then proceeded to carry out improvements in respect of which they could have applied for and been given a grant. He doubted, however, *“whether there was very much to choose from the point of view of strict legality between such a course and the more straightforward one which has been taken”;*
- the Maconachie Committee suggested that anything spent by the Manor House Committee in excess of £10,000 might be regarded as improvements, rather than initial expenditure to provide a registerable voluntary home.

A52. The MoHA official recommended to the Minister the following steps:

- the home to be inspected and if MoHA was satisfied, the Committee could start using it as a home and MoHA would approve it;
- MoHA architects should inspect the home and satisfy themselves that the money spent was properly and economically used and assess what expenditure over £10,000 had been made. Having arrived at this sum, MOHA grant should be paid on it.

A53. The Minister approved the application but indicated that he wished to see the papers again before payment was fully authorised⁸⁹. On 15 January 1957 MoHA was notified of the Ministry of Finance’s approval for a grant not to exceed £7000 without the specific approval of the Ministry⁹⁰.

A54. [REDACTED] Dr Simpson and Miss Forrest carried out an inspection of the home on 25 January 1957⁹¹. The purpose of the inspection was⁹²:

- a) to enable the Ministry to be informed about the present condition of the home and its suitability for the number of children and members of staff to be accommodated there; and
- b) to enable the Ministry’s architect to examine the premises; satisfy himself that the money spent on the renovations has been properly and economically laid out and advise the Ministry of the amount which should be regarded as the expenditure in excess of £10,000.

⁸⁹ MNH-2660

⁹⁰ MNH-2653

⁹¹ MNH 2635

⁹² MNH 2642

- A55. MoHA inspectors continued to visit the home periodically to report on progress⁹³. The remainder of the approved grant was paid to the home (exact date not presently able to be determined) and the home was deemed ready to receive children by December 1957. At the suggestion by a MoHA official that a further inspection should be undertaken prior to MoHA formally acknowledging its suitability, Miss Forrest, who together with Dr Simpson and the architect had visited on 8 November 1957⁹⁴ and submitted a report stating that the home was still being refurbished⁹⁵ responded: *"I don't think there is any necessity for a further inspection. The equipping of the home seemed to be going well on the right lines"*. Miss Forrest further commented favourably on the Committee's intended candidate for the position of Matron in the home, in terms of the person having had experience in Marmion⁹⁶ and on her return there after a training course having had *"a big share in starting the group system in that home"*. Miss Forrest concluded: *"I think there is no reason why the home should not go ahead now with receiving children"*⁹⁷.
- A56. By letter dated 24 December 1957⁹⁸ to the **MH 7** with reference to the home *"the use of which had been discontinued temporarily in July 1953 until such time as its affairs had been reorganised and the home brought up to modern standards"* confirmed that *"the Ministry now approves of the home as being suitable for the accommodation of children, subject, therefore to adequate staffing arrangements being made, your Committee is authorised to reopen the home for the reception of not more than twenty children"*.
- A57. A letter dated 24 December 1957 was also sent by MoHA to welfare authorities making reference to the Ministry's previous correspondence of 23 July 1953 indicating that the use of Manor House Home *"had been discontinued temporarily as a voluntary home for children until further notice"*. The December 1957 letter stated *"..... the home, having been completely renovated and provided with appropriate staff, is now reported by the Ministry's inspectors to be suitable for the accommodation of children"*.

⁹³ eg MNH-2602

⁹⁴ MNH-2602

⁹⁵ MNH 2635

⁹⁶ a welfare authority home in Holywood

⁹⁷ MNH-2597

⁹⁸ MNH- 2580

presented financial statement which showed extraordinary expenditure amounting to £125 and a consequent adverse balance of £145. It was stated that the Herald Office had been offered the printing of the Annual reports at the figure for which the Standard had done the job last year. If they did not agree estimates to be obtained. A quotation from the Northern Publishing Co for printing 200 books of receipt of 100 each was considered. It came to about £9.15. Their previous quotation four years ago was 6d per book. After consideration in view of the improbability of getting work done for any less sum locally and urgency of the matter **MH 44** requiring receipts immediately it was agreed to accept the price quoted.

It was reported that the boys had broken several windows and it was decided that if this occurred again they should be brought before the Committee. A request for lantern slides to illustrate work of Home was received from Organising Sec. of I.C.M. in S. England. It appeared that work in N. Ireland was followed with interest in England. It was decided that **MH 1** should see about this matter. *Rev E. H. M. was 19 Sylvan St. London N 22*

MH 1 said the children were prepared for the Annual Meetings on Feb 11 and that Miss Martin Head Office I.C.M. had visited the Home recently and was well pleased with what she saw on her visit. In view of the very cold weather **MH 1** had tea ready for the Committee at the outset of the Meeting which was much appreciated.

Signed

Feb. 23rd '45

[Redacted signature]

A meeting of Committee was held on the 23rd February 1945. Canon J.S. Taylor presided. Pres Rev H.O. Connor. Messrs R.C. Bannister. J. Doran. R. Gurd and J. Forsythe. The proceedings were opened and closed with prayer. The minutes of last meeting were read and adopted.

It was reported that Rev R.J. Coates had visited the Home together with Rev Gordon Hill of London and had inspected the site of the proposed Nursery Creche of which they approved. It was agreed that Rev R.J. Coates should communicate with Rev H.O. Connor about seeing the Prime Minister with a view to obtaining the necessary materials for the new building. **MH 44** had prepared a Bill of quantities from which it appeared that 22 sq. of flooring would be required. This item seemed the one likely to cause any difficulty.

MH 44 mentioned that he had written to Mr B. Maginess who had promised to further the application but as he had now left the Ministry of Commerce his help would not be available. Rev H.O. Connor agreed to see the new Minister of Commerce and push the matter forward as far as possible.

It was decided that **MH 44** and her proposed assistant should attend the next meeting of committee.

An application re adoption of **MH 1** child at present boarded out with **MH 1** Chapel Hill was considered it appeared that the home of **MH 1** was not ideal and that the child would have little religious or moral training there. The Committee felt they could not recommend the adoption of the child by **MH 1** it was decided that **MH 1** should see **MH 1** and arrange for the child to be brought into the Home for six months so that the matter could be further considered.

Rev H.O. Connor was very congratulated **MH 1** on the excellence of the children's performance at the Annual Meeting. They had won the plaudits of the many.

The members of the Committee inspected the proposed site of the new Nursery creche and generally approved of it. It was reported that **MH 1** had improved in his work.

Signed

March 23rd '45

[Redacted signature]

~~House House~~

716



Have suggested a more
friendly and sympathetic
letter which I would like
to discuss with you



6-5-53

T.168

I am not happy about this matter.

Following reports wanting the closing of the home
("wanting" is perhaps too mild) an arrangement was
made of a face-saving nature, under which
arrangement the registration was to be surrendered. This
promise was not kept - the Ministry did not act!
Instead of insisting when the bargain being kept, the
Ministry seems to have condoned the whole business
because our architect entered into consultations with the
Committee's architect regarding re-modelling. In my
view these consultations commit us to the course
of re-establishing this home unless we can find some
change of circumstances, or other reason for saying "No."
Two possibilities occur to me. In the

and with the limits of my liability is fixed, the balance of my income capital is (with borrowing) and the future necessary income is accordingly secured. 7.9.5

light of present information regarding Civil Defence matters it seems to be very short sighted to foster a Children's Home inside the area of probable irreparable damage. In the event of war the "Home" + all associated therewith would have to be evacuated. Again the Home Office cannot contribute to capital expenditure unless and until satisfied that (a) the remaining monies required are presently available; and (b) the funds required for reasonable annual expenditure are or certainly will be available.

I am not greatly enamoured of the purpose of this home and regret that I cannot direct the recall of the registration. My hands have been effectively tied in this respect. On the other hand I cannot allow my lack of approval of the "object" to have