

Press Release

HIA Inquiry urges party leaders in Northern Ireland to implement the recommendations of its Report

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All media requests for information should be directed to the Inquiry Secretary Stephen Magee on 02890 720628 or at stephen.magee@hiainquiry.org.

“Sir Anthony Hart, Chairman of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry, has written on behalf of his Inquiry panel colleagues and himself to the leaders of each of the political parties with members elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly reminding them that in a debate on the HIA Inquiry Report on 23 January 2017 in the last Assembly all the speakers welcomed the Inquiry Report and called for the speedy implementation of its recommendations. In his letters Sir Anthony said:

‘Now that the General Election has taken place we understand that talks will resume between the Northern Ireland political parties in a further attempt to reach an agreement that will enable the appointment of a First Minister and deputy First Minister and the formation of an Executive. It is in that context and in light of the support given to our recommendations by the then Assembly in the debate of 23 January that my inquiry panel colleagues and I feel justified at this time in taking the highly unusual step of writing to the leaders of each of the political parties in the Northern Ireland Assembly. We urge you and colleagues to ensure that if an Executive is formed that the Inquiry's recommendations are implemented in full by it as a matter of urgency.

Should an Executive not be formed, then it will be for HM Government to carry out all the functions of government in Northern Ireland. Should that happen, we ask all the political parties in Northern Ireland to publicly call upon the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to recognise the welcome for our Report expressed by all the parties in the Assembly debate of 23 January 2017 and to implement the Inquiry's recommendations in full as a matter of urgency.

The implementation of our recommendations is urgent because so many of those who waited many years for their voices to be heard, and who anxiously await the implementation of our recommendations, are now advancing in years and/or in poor health, and for them the prospect of more delay adds to the burden so many have carried for so long.”

ENDS

HIA Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Report is the culmination of four years' work by the Inquiry. It is 2,300 pages long and comprises 10 volumes. It includes the report of the Acknowledgement Forum.
2. The Report was delivered to the First Minister and deputy First Minister as required by the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 on 6th January 2017. A copy was also delivered on the same date to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, as the Inquiry had been asked to investigate the actions of non-devolved departments and agencies in respect of Kincora.
3. The Inquiry published its Report and recommendations on 20 January 2017.
4. A debate was held on the Report and its recommendations by the Northern Ireland Assembly on Monday 23 January 2017. A report of the debate can be found at <http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-23-01-2017.pdf> Pages 103 to 115.
5. There were 223 days of public hearings, which formally opened on 13 January 2014 and concluded on Friday 8 July 2016. During the course of the public evidence sessions the Inquiry heard from 527 witnesses. Of these 246 were applicants who gave evidence in person and a further 87 applicants' statements were read into the record.
6. In total 526 individuals made a formal application to speak to the Inquiry and/or its Acknowledgement Forum. Most of the applications (330) were from individuals residing in Northern Ireland. The Inquiry's Acknowledgement Forum heard from 428 of those applicants.
7. Following an inter-departmental task force report, the Northern Ireland Executive, on 29 September 2011, announced there would be an Investigation and Inquiry into historical institutional abuse.
8. On 31 May 2012, the First Minister and deputy First Minister announced the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry, and advised the Assembly of the Chair of the Inquiry and of the Panel Members for the Acknowledgement Forum.
9. An amended Terms of Reference to widen the scope of the Inquiry from 1922 - 1995 was announced by the First Minister and deputy First Minister on 18 October 2012. See <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news-ofmdfm-191012-ministers-widen-historical>
10. On 12 June 2012, the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Bill and the associated Explanatory and Financial Memorandum were laid before the Assembly. The Bill passed through a number of stages and, on 11 December 2012, the 'Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Bill' was passed by the Assembly. Following Royal Assent, the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 became law on 19 January 2013. The Inquiry is formally established under this Act.
11. Sir Anthony met with Ministers in the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in April 2014 to seek an extension of one year to the date by which the Inquiry must submit its report. This was subsequently granted in January 2015 and, therefore, under its amended Terms of Reference, the Inquiry was required to complete its hearings and all investigative work by mid-summer 2016, and to submit its report to the Northern Ireland Executive within 6 months.

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12. The Inquiry had a remit to investigate physical, emotional and sexual childhood abuse, and childhood neglect which occurred in residential institutions in Northern Ireland over a 73-year period up to 1995.
13. For the purposes of the Inquiry “child” meant any person under 18 years of age; “institution” meant anybody, 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” meant the period between 1922 and 1995 (both years inclusive).
14. It should be noted that the Inquiry was tasked with examining whether there were institutional failings in respect of historical abuse and neglect. The Inquiry had no legal power to make findings of civil or criminal liability.
15. The Inquiry’s Chairman, Sir Anthony Hart, is a retired senior High Court judge who practised in Northern Ireland. The other members of the Inquiry panel are Geraldine Doherty, who was formerly the Head of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work in Scotland, and David Lane CBE, who was formerly Director of Social Services in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, England.
16. Acknowledgement Forum Panel members are: Beverley Clarke, Norah Gibbons, Dave Marshall QPM and Tom Shaw CBE. Biographical details for these individuals, Senior and Junior Counsel to the Inquiry, and other members of the Inquiry team are available on the Inquiry website: www.hiainquiry.org
17. The Chairman announced on 4 November 2015 that the Inquiry would be investigating an additional 6 homes or institutions in relation to alleged historical institutional abuse and/or neglect. The full list of homes/institutions is as follows:

Local Authority Homes

- Lissue Hospital, Lisburn
- Kincora Boys’ Home, Belfast
- Bawnmore Children’s Home, Newtownabbey
- Fort James and Harberton House, Londonderry (added May 2015)

Juvenile Justice Institutions

- St Patrick’s Training School, Belfast
- Lisnevin Training School, County Down
- Rathgael Training School, Bangor
- Hydebank Young Offenders’ Centre (added May 2015)
- Millisle Borstal (added November 2015)

Secular Voluntary Homes

- Barnardo’s Sharonmore Project, Newtownabbey
- Barnardo’s Macedon, Newtownabbey

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Roman Catholic Voluntary Homes

- St Joseph's Home, Termonbacca, Londonderry
- Nazareth House Children's Home, Londonderry
- Nazareth House Children's Home, Belfast
- Nazareth Lodge Children's Home, Belfast
- De La Salle Boys' Home, Rubane House, Kircubbin
- St Joseph's Training School for Girls, Middletown, Co Armagh (added November 2015)
- Institutions run by the Good Shepherd Sisters in Derry/Londonderry, Belfast and Newry (added November 2015)

Church of Ireland

- Manor House, a children's home near Lisburn (added November 2015)

The Inquiry also conducted public hearings into two other matters that were relevant to the way children were treated in the residential children's homes in Northern Ireland that fall within the Terms of Reference.

- The first considered the practice of child migration, where children were sent from Roman Catholic, Protestant and local authority homes in Northern Ireland to homes in Australia.
- The second related to Fr Brendan Smyth, a member of the Norbertine Order, who was convicted of offences relating to children in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and who was alleged to have abused children within a number of children's homes within Northern Ireland.

In total therefore the Inquiry investigated 22 homes during its public hearings, and conducted targeted investigations into six others. It also conducted two additional hearings into related matters.

18. The full text of the Inquiry Report, and the text of the Chairman's remarks at the publication of the Report are available on the Inquiry's website www.hiainquiry.org

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