

Press Release

‘Talk to us - we’ll listen’ appeal rolled out across Northern Ireland

Issued: 1st March 2013 For immediate use

Please see Notes for Editors for details of the photographs and poster image issued with this release. Details of towns included in the promotional campaign are below and overleaf.

An appeal by the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry for victims and survivors to come forward is being rolled out across Northern Ireland.

The inquiry has launched a promotional campaign using bus shelter advertising posters at 80 locations in a total of 31 towns and cities throughout Northern Ireland.

The posters carry a simple message – ‘Talk to Us – We’ll Listen’ - in an effort to raise awareness of the Inquiry among victims and survivors, and to encourage them to make contact with the Inquiry.

The bus shelter advertising campaign is being run in the following towns, cities and townlands (number of bus shelter locations in brackets):

- **County Antrim** (excluding Belfast and suburbs): Antrim Town (4), Ballycastle (2), Ballymena (2), Ballymoney (2), Carrickfergus (2), Larne (4), Lisburn (4), Newtownabbey (4)
- **Belfast and suburbs**: city centre (7), east Belfast (5), north Belfast (7), south Belfast (4), west Belfast (6), Castlereagh (3), Dundonald (1), Dunmurry (2), Glengormley (2)
- **County Armagh**: Armagh City (1), Lurgan (1), Portadown (1) Magheralin (1 – from 11th March)
- **County Down**: Bangor (2), Banbridge (1), Downpatrick (1), Holywood (1), Newry (2), Newtownards (2), Warrenpoint (1)
- **County Fermanagh**: Enniskillen (2)

HIA Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry

HIA INQUIRY, PO BOX 2080, BELFAST, BT1 9QA, NORTHERN IRELAND

W: WWW.HIAINQUIRY.ORG

- **County Derry/Londonderry:** Coleraine (1), Magherafelt (1), Derry/Londonderry (6), Dungiven (1), Limavady (1), Magherafelt (1)
- **County Tyrone:** Cookstown (2), Dungannon (2) Omagh (2), Strabane (1)

The Inquiry is also distributing outreach posters and literature to relevant organisations throughout Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain, and to libraries, police stations and GP surgeries in Northern Ireland.

Launching the promotional campaign, the Inquiry's Chairman, Sir Anthony Hart, said:

"We are determined to do as much as we reasonably can to make our existence known to those who may have been abused as children in the institutions which fall within our terms of reference.

This is because we want as many people as possible who can help the work of the Inquiry to come forward, and to come forward now, not to wait."

The Inquiry is tasked with investigating historical childhood abuse which took place at residential institutions in Northern Ireland which fall within the Inquiry's terms of reference. So far, 35 different sites have been identified as ones which may potentially be the subject of the Inquiry's investigation. The Inquiry is keen to hear from victims and survivors, and other potential witnesses, whether they are living in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland or elsewhere.

To date, 193 potential witnesses have submitted applications to testify to the Inquiry and/or its Acknowledgement Forum.

Victims and survivors have the option of recounting their experiences to the Inquiry's Acknowledgement Forum Panel. While the Inquiry Panel is holding the statutory inquiry into historical institutional abuse in Northern Ireland, the Forum is designed to provide a reassuring environment where victims and survivors can recount their experiences in a more relaxed setting than a statutory Inquiry chamber. Victims and survivors can opt to apply to testify to either or both the Acknowledgement Forum and/or the statutory Inquiry Panel.

The Inquiry has put in place a number of steps to help victims and survivors with practical and emotional support. An Inquiry spokesperson said:

"The Inquiry is well aware that, for many victims and survivors, the process of recounting relevant events can be traumatic for some of the individuals involved.

"Every effort has been made to ensure that sufficient emotional support is available for victims and survivors while they recount their experiences to the Acknowledgement Forum or give evidence to the Inquiry.

"The Inquiry has its own Witness Support Service with dedicated Witness Support Officers who provide this role."

CHAIRMAN: SIR ANTHONY HART SECRETARY: ANDREW BROWNE

HIA Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry

HIA INQUIRY, PO BOX 2080, BELFAST, BT1 9QA, NORTHERN IRELAND

W: WWW.HIAINQUIRY.ORG

The Inquiry will also reimburse all reasonable travel expenses incurred by witnesses. Where witnesses cannot easily travel to the Inquiry's offices to be interviewed by the Forum Panel or by the Inquiry, arrangements can be made for Forum Panel members to travel to see them at a suitable location.

Application forms can be downloaded from the website www.hiainquiry.org or requested by calling the Inquiry helpline on Freephone 0800 068 4935. **[The Inquiry would be grateful if the media could print and broadcast this contact information where feasible].**

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. We have issued the following, together with this press release: photographs of a woman looking at the bus shelter advertisement and a pdf image of the poster.
2. The bus shelter advertising campaign commenced on Monday, 25th February and will run for four weeks. Some locations will be changed after the initial two weeks. All locations listed in the press release were correct at the time of issue of this release.
3. Following an inter-departmental task force report, the Northern Ireland Executive, on 29th September 2011, announced there would be an Investigation and Inquiry into historical institutional abuse.
4. On 31st 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.
5. 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 18th October 2012. See <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news-ofmdfm-191012-ministers-widen-historical>
6. For the purposes of this Inquiry "child" means any person under 18 years of age; "institution" means 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" means the period between 1922 and 1995 (both years inclusive).
7. The Inquiry will be chaired by Sir Anthony Hart, assisted by Panel members Geraldine Doherty and David Lane. Acknowledgement Forum Panel members are: Beverley Clarke, Norah Gibbons, Dave Marshall QPM and Tom Shaw CBE. Biographical details are available on the Inquiry website: www.hiainquiry.org
8. The Inquiry is formally established under The Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 which became law on 19th January 2013.
9. **All requests for further information should be directed to the Inquiry's Press Officer, Liz Fawcett, on 028 9020 0811 or 0771 943 5662, or at liz@lizfawcettconsulting.com** A more detailed background briefing note for the media has also been issued with this release.

CHAIRMAN: SIR ANTHONY HART SECRETARY: ANDREW BROWNE