

Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry
Press Release by the Chairman – Sir Anthony Hart
30 November 2012

Sir Anthony Hart, the Chairman of the Inquiry, said today “The Inquiry has now received 140 applications, made up as follows: 104 from Northern Ireland, 10 from the Republic of Ireland, 21 from Great Britain and two others. 3 forms have been returned which were incomplete.

“The majority of applicants (71%) have indicated a preference to meet with both Acknowledgment Forum and the Statutory Inquiry.

“The Acknowledgement Forum has held interviews in both Belfast and Derry since 22 October, and more interviews are being arranged over the next few months.

“The legislation to give powers to the Statutory Inquiry is now at an advanced stage before the Northern Ireland Assembly. Earlier this year I said that the Inquiry would do as much as it could before the legislation was passed, and we have been considering the applications received so far. We have now written to those we believe to be responsible for 30 institutions already identified to us, asking them to agree to co-operate with us voluntarily, and to provide the Inquiry with a wide range of information in advance of the legislation. Until the legislation is passed we have to treat the names of the institutions in confidence, and so we will not release the names at this stage.

“I urge all those who were abused in institutions within our Terms of Reference to contact us, because the Acknowledgement Forum and the Statutory Inquiry want to hear about the experiences of as many people as possible. Application forms can be downloaded from our website www.hiainquiry.org or requested by calling the Inquiry helpline on Freephone 0800 068 4935.”

“Completed applications from within the UK, should be sent to Freepost H I A Inquiry address, for those outside the U.K., completed applications (stamped) should be sent to H I A Inquiry, P O Box 2080, Belfast BT1 9QA.”

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Notes to Editors

1. 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.
2. 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 the panel members for the Acknowledgement Forum.
3. 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>.
4. 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 1945 and 1995 (both years inclusive).
5. 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.
6. Further information on the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Bill can be found on the Northern Ireland Assembly website.
7. The work of the Acknowledgement Forum is not dependent on the passage of the legislation and Panel Members have commenced hearing accounts of the experiences of victims and survivors shortly after completed applications have been received.
8. Applications can be requested on Freephone number 0800 068 4935 or can be downloaded from the Inquiry website.

9. Members of the Inquiry are not available for interview, but any specific request for additional information should be emailed to General.Enquiries@hiainquiry.org