

Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry
Press Release by the Chairman – Sir Anthony Hart
29 January 2013

Sir Anthony Hart, the Chairman of the Inquiry, said today “I am delighted to announce that The Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 has received the Royal Assent and became law on Saturday 19 January. This means that the Inquiry now has the legal authority to proceed to the next stage of its work, and all that is required to complete the legal framework is for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to make rules under the Act.

The Inquiry intends to move forward as quickly as it can. We have already asked several institutions to voluntarily produce documents to us, and a number have said that they are gathering the documents we have requested, and we expect to receive these soon.

As of today, Tuesday 29 January 2013, 165 individuals have sent applications to the Inquiry, and 61 of them have described their experiences to the Acknowledgement Forum. The Inquiry wants to hear from as many people as possible, particularly those who experienced abuse. I urge all those who want to help the Inquiry’s work to contact us, whether they experienced abuse themselves, or saw others being abused. We also want to hear from anyone who can give first hand evidence of abuse in residential institutions, such as staff or others who came in contact with children, even if those people were not abused themselves.

“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.”

ENDS

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