

Newsletter

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry



Foreword by Lady Smith

Following a pause in hearings of six months due to the COVID pandemic, I am both pleased and relieved that we were able to resume public hearings relating to the Child Migration case study. Evidence was being taken both from witnesses in person at our hearings venue at Rosebery House, as well as remotely via video link.

The Child Migration case study concluded on 21 October with closing submissions from all interested parties. I am grateful to all witnesses especially former child migrants for their patience during this case study.

On 17 November 2020 the Inquiry will begin hearings which will examine the actions of Scottish Government in relation to issues arising out of non-recent abuse of children in institutional care. Subject to ongoing public health guidance, limited seating is available in the Hearings Suite for the public, should you wish to attend. You will notice a number of changes in our Hearings Suite to comply with physical distancing requirements. More details on the measures we have put in place to ensure we keep our witnesses, staff and members of the public attending hearings, safe, can be

found on an informational video available on our [website](#). I would ask that you follow the guidance and advice outlined in the Coronavirus section of this newsletter on page 3, designed to help us all keep safe.

Over the past few months the Inquiry has been harnessing technology to take statements from some applicants remotely. This has gone well but we know that video or telephone sessions will not work for everyone. I am delighted to say that since the beginning of September, we have been able to re-start some face-to-face meetings where it is safe to do so, and where applicants and witnesses would like to meet with members of the Inquiry team. I would like to thank applicants and witnesses for their patience whilst we have been establishing safe methods to continue to take evidence. In keeping with our trauma informed approach, our Witness Support Team are discussing options with individuals. Our aim is to offer a range of choices, and to let applicants and witnesses decide how they would like to give their statement to the Inquiry.

“ I would like to thank applicants and witnesses for their patience ”

My findings in relation to the Christian Brothers case study are complete and are being prepared for publication. Further information will be available shortly. Work in relation to my case study findings in relation to the Benedictines and Marists is also underway and they will be published as soon as possible.

Much work has been involved in preparing our Hearings Suite to meet current guidance, arranging the technology, adapting our approach to face-to-face meetings and sourcing suitable venues. This has occurred alongside

our ongoing investigative work, research and analysis, and preparation for announced case studies. Meanwhile, the Witness Support Team has continued to operate the *Talk to Us* telephone line and to support applicants and other witnesses throughout this challenging time.

I am enormously grateful to our dedicated staff for their resilience and flexibility in responding to all of these challenges and ensuring that we continue our vitally important work.

The period of lockdown has been very difficult for many people. Although restrictions have eased, we are all still living with COVID but the Inquiry is ready to adapt and respond to any other measures that emerge over the coming months. Our expert trauma psychologist continues to provide her usual wide ranging and careful guidance. Her support is invaluable.

TALK
TO US

Updates

Further updates will be provided on the Inquiry's website www.childabuseinquiry.scot and via the Inquiry's Twitter account [@ScottishCAI](https://twitter.com/ScottishCAI).

The *Talk to Us* phone lines remain open, operating **Monday - Friday between 10am and 4pm**.

Contact

Individuals can contact the Inquiry's Witness Support Team

 by phone **0800 0929 300**

 by email
talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot

 British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us direct through online sign language interpreter at **www.contactsotland-bsl.org**

Scottish Government evidence

On 17 November 2020 the Inquiry will begin hearings which will examine the actions of Scottish Government in relation to issues arising out of non-recent abuse of children in institutional care.

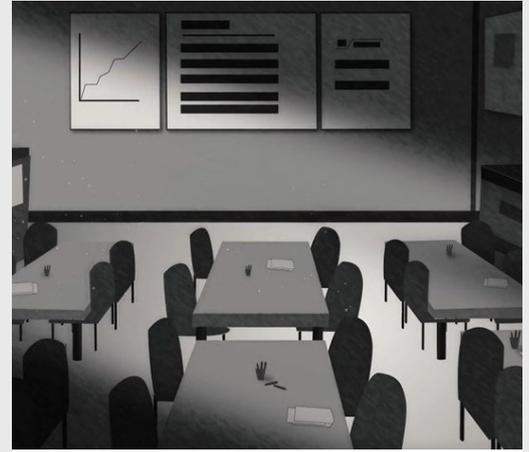
These hearings will explore reasons why calls for a public inquiry throughout the period between August 2002 and December 2014 were turned down by the Scottish Government.

Petition PE535 called for “the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to (a) make an inquiry into past institutional child abuse, in particular for those children who were in the care of the State under the supervision of religious orders and (b) make unreserved apology for said State bodies and to urge the religious orders to apologise unconditionally.”

The Inquiry will consider the actions of Scottish Government between the lodging of Petition PE535 with the Public Petitions Committee of the Scottish Parliament in August 2002, and the announcement by Scottish Ministers in December 2014 of a public inquiry.

Subject to ongoing public health guidance and physical distancing measures, it is expected that the hearings will take place at the Inquiry’s hearings venue in Rosebery House.

Evidence is likely to be taken both from witnesses in person, as well as remotely via video link. Further details will be provided as soon as we are able to do so. This phase of evidence is expected to conclude in early December.



Boarding Schools case study

Hearings postponed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are being rescheduled. A case study examining the abuse of children in Boarding Schools is expected to start in late January 2021.

Further details will be provided as soon as we are able to do so.

Male Religious Orders



Findings in relation to the Christian Brothers case study are complete and will be published shortly. Work is also underway on reviewing and analysing all the evidence in relation to the Benedictines and Marists case studies, and findings will be published as soon as possible.

Child Migration Schemes

Professors Stephen Constantine (Emeritus Professor of Modern British History, Lancaster University), Marjory Harper (Professor of History, University of Aberdeen) and Gordon Lynch (Michael Ramsey Professor of Modern Theology, University of Kent) wrote a report for the Inquiry examining:

- the policy and practice contexts that informed UK child migration schemes between the 1880s and 1960s;
- the experiences of Scottish children migrated to Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe);
- and considering the extent to which those responsible for safeguarding the health and wellbeing of children in care failed in their duty to protect these children both whilst they were in care in Scotland and once they had been migrated.

The Executive Summary provides an overview of key findings from their analysis and can be found on the Inquiry’s [website](#).

TALK
TO US

Contact

We urge anyone with relevant information to get in touch with us.

by phone **0800 0929 300**
Talk to Us phone lines operate from 10.00am – 4.00pm, Monday to Friday.

by email
talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot

British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us direct through online sign language interpreter at **www.contactsotland-bsl.org**

CORONAVIRUS

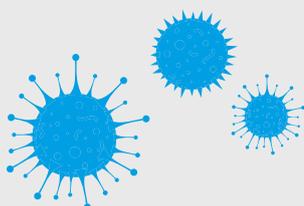


Hearing Suite Health & Safety

To help everyone attending the Inquiry's hearings keep safe, we have put various measures in place around the venue and within the Hearings Suite, in line with public health guidance. This includes:

- Signposted navigation throughout the venue;
- Physically distanced seating within the Hearings Suite;
- Hand sanitiser available around the venue;
- A requirement to wear face coverings whilst moving around venue; and
- Compliance with the NHS Test and Protect service.

We appreciate this is an uncertain time and so we have put together a video explaining the changes we have implemented so you have a better idea of what to expect. This can be viewed on the Inquiry's [YouTube](#) channel or website at www.childabuseinquiry.scot. A link will also be available on the Inquiry's Twitter [@ScottishCAI](#).



Wellbeing Advice

Anne McKechnie, the Consultant Clinical Psychologist who advises the Inquiry describes the COVID pandemic as a traumatic experience, which has affected us all. She has some helpful tips for all of us about how to build resilience – so we can learn to 'bend and not break':

ACCEPTANCE

- Accept that there will be tough times, that these are a part of life and make sure we give ourselves permission to feel sad, anxious, irritable, or bored.
- Accept that negative emotions are as necessary and important as positive ones and that these feelings need to be given room, albeit only temporarily.
- Accept what is beyond our control and focus on things you can influence, even if they are small. Do not try to predict the future; allow yourself limited worry time but focus on the things over which you have control.
- Focus on the positives - a sense of optimism is key to building resilience.

RELATIONSHIPS

- Continue to maintain strong relationships – having good supportive relationships is important.
- Limit time spent with people who make you feel incompetent or unhappy.
- Be assertive about what you need – if someone is too close to you, tell them this politely, calmly and firmly.

PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- We have all overcome adversity in the past; practice resilience by thinking back to hard times and remembering how you overcame previous hardships.
- Look for things for which you can feel grateful.
- Reframe difficulties as opportunities e.g. I may not be able to go on holiday, but I can save up for a better one next year.

CHALLENGES

- Make and carry out realistic plans.
- Leave your comfort zone and set small challenges and carry them out – accept that you may fail or find them difficult. If you fail, allow recovery time.
- Reward effort rather than success.
- Don't avoid failure but see it as an opportunity to learn and a necessary part of human existence.

At some point, this trauma will be in the past and we will be able to look back not just on how hard it was, but how we coped with adversity. We can see this period as an opportunity to build resilience and strengthen our mental health.

FAQs

Attending Inquiry Hearings

Q Can I come to Inquiry hearings?

A Yes, we have arranged the seating to ensure that there is as much capacity as possible within the Hearings Room for members of the public, however, due to physical distancing requirements, there is a limited number of seats available. Seating is allocated on a first come, first serve, basis. You cannot book seats in advance.

Due to the COVID pandemic you may feel anxious about attending hearings. Our Witness Support Team and other members of staff will be available to help you feel comfortable.

Q What COVID safety measures will be in place at Inquiry hearings

A We've put measures in place in line with Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland guidance to ensure everyone's safety. When at hearings you will see: signposted navigation throughout the venue; physically distanced seating within the hearing room; hand sanitiser stations; and, you will be asked to provide your details for the NHS Test and Protect service.

It is very important that we take all of the steps we can to reduce the risks of spreading infection. We ask that you do not attend hearings if you have COVID symptoms (a temperature of 37.8 degrees or above; a new, continuous cough; or, loss or change to your sense of smell or taste). We also ask that you stay at home if you have been asked to self-isolate, or, if you have recently returned from a country where you are required to quarantine for 14 days.

Q Do I need to wear a face covering?

A You will need to wear a face covering when moving around communal areas of Rosebery House and until you are seated in the public gallery. Once seated, you are not required to wear a face covering for the duration of the hearing, but you can continue to wear one throughout if you wish to do so.

If you have forgotten a face covering, Inquiry staff can provide you with one. Please just ask a member of staff at reception.

Q If I do not wish to attend, how else can I follow the hearings?

A You can keep up with what is happening at hearings by visiting our website. You can also read the transcripts of evidence which are published on the website as soon as possible after each hearing.

Meeting the Inquiry

Q What will a face-to-face private session with the Inquiry look like i.e. what safety measures will be in place?

A Our Witness Support Team is discussing options with individuals who wish to give a statement to the Inquiry. Our aim is to offer a range of choices, and to let applicants and witnesses decide how they would like to give their statement to the Inquiry.

This may mean that we are able to meet you face-to-face, provided it is safe to do so and that COVID safety measures are in place. Currently, this means the wearing of face coverings (unless an exemption applies), physical distancing and strict hygiene measures.

The Inquiry will continue to keep face-to-face meetings under review, always having regard to Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland Guidance.

Q What other options are there for meeting with the Inquiry, apart from face-to-face?

A Over the past few months the Inquiry has been harnessing technology offer applicants and witnesses a range of choices, based on what is the best and safest option for individuals.

This may mean looking at other options, aside from face-to-face meetings, and could involve a virtual private session or statement review, a telephone session, or supporting someone to write a written submission.

Ongoing Inquiry Work

The Inquiry has been able to adapt and continue its work throughout the pandemic.

We have continued our investigations, have progressed case study findings, and our teams have continued with evidence gathering. The Inquiry also continues to operate the *Talk to Us* phone line and support applicants and other witnesses.

Individuals can contact the Inquiry's Witness Support Team, please see front cover for details.