

Neillands S (Susan)

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From: Byrne G (Gerald)
Sent: 04 December 2003 12:41
To: Verrall M (Maureen); Neillands S (Susan)
Subject: List D - survivors group

Maureen
 Susan

I met Alan Draper, Chair of the In Care Abuse Survivors Group, in the margins of the STAAF conference yesterday for an informal chat.

He is a retired Director of Social Work who now does some teaching at Dundee University. He took over the Chair on INCAS earlier this year to give the body some structure, and to build up credibility. He is not a survivor himself. (For reference, his contact number is [REDACTED])

He told me the organisation now had a constitution and was looking to build up a profile. For example he is writing to Barnado's and Quarriers looking to meet them. He is also starting to write to MSPs. He is particularly concerned about the Cross Party Group on survivors of childhood sex abuse, which seems to be inactive (you might recall we mentioned this in one of our submissions).

At the moment INCAS is a campaigning group but he sees this changing as they look at what service might be needed. They are currently surveying their members (about 250 at the moment, mostly around 50-60 years old, although one is 91) to see where the organisation should go and what they, the members, want.

We discussed a number of possibilities: they might want justice; or some one to listen to them (a lot feel they are being ignored by the State, which is a form of further abuse); they might need specific medical services; a very few are interested in compensation.

I explained that we were considering the response to the petition asking for an inquiry (which INCAS inspired). We not attracted by a full public inquiry on the Irish model because of the cost and the lack of lessons to learn (he agreed that the money which could be spent on services would go to lawyers); we were also unsure of the truth and reconciliation commission, although we could see that some survivors might benefit from that; we were very unsure about ex gratia compensation as a matter of principle (I mentioned the Hepatitis B cases), although I acknowledged that the State had a general oversight of the system under which these people had suffered. We were most attracted by regarding this as primarily a health service provision issue, although we were also examining what help we might give in the civil legal cases.

We agreed that he would come back to us in the New Year when he had had responses to his survey of members, and look to arrange a meeting in January, just with officials at this stage. We would also be interested in the response they had had from Barnado's et al and the Catholic Church which Mr Draper has worked with on this subject in the past.

Overall, a very constructive chat. He recognises that there is little point in some huge and expensive inquiry, and that there was little to be gained from some sort of media driven campaign on this issue. He and [REDACTED] (of Speak up - [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] seem experienced in this sort of campaigning work and I think we should be able to work with them.

Gerald