

SCOTTISH CHILD ABUSE INQUIRY
RESPONSE TO SECTION 21 NOTICE –
DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL

PART D

ESTABLISHMENT: BELLEVUE, RUTHERGLEN

PART D

Part D – Abuse and Response

The questions in Part D should be answered in respect of abuse or alleged abuse relating to the time frame 1930 to 17 December 2014 only.

5. Abuse

5.1 Nature

- i. What was the nature of abuse and/or alleged abuse of children cared for at the establishment, for example, sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse?

All the alleged abuse claims for Bellevue have been recorded as physical and emotional, and there is one allegation of sexual abuse.

5.2 Extent

- i. What is the organisation/establishment's assessment of the scale and extent of abuse of children cared for at the establishment?

The organisation was unaware of any instances of abuse of children during the existence of the establishment.

Twenty six allegations of abuse were made between 1998 and 2000 after the closure of the establishment and only then did the organisation become aware of these accusations.

The organisation is shocked and saddened at the number and nature of allegations that have been made.

- ii. What is the basis of that assessment?

Please refer to the answer given above in 5.2 i

- iii. Against how many staff have complaints been made in relation to alleged abuse of children cared for at the establishment?

Daughters of Charity	18 Sisters
Lay Staff	5 Lay Staff

- iv. How many staff have been convicted of, or admitted to, abuse of children cared for at the establishment?

None

- v. How many staff have been found by the organisation/establishment to have abused children cared for at the establishment?

None

- vi. In relation to questions iii – v above, what role did/do those members of staff had/have within the organisation/establishment?

18 were members of the Daughters of Charity who were responsible for groups of children with approximately 20 children in each group.

4 females were employed as Childcare assistants or housekeepers.

1 male employed as a Handyman

- vii. To what extent did abuse and/or alleged abuse of children cared for at the establishment take place during off-site activities, trips and holidays?

There is one allegation of sexual assault on a coach trip

- viii. To what extent was abuse and/or alleged abuse of children cared for at the establishment carried out by visitors and/or volunteers to the establishment?

None that the Daughters of Charity are aware of.

- ix. Have there been allegations of peer abuse?

None that the Daughters of Charity are aware of

5.3 Timing of Disclosure/Complaint

- i. When were disclosures and complaints of abuse and/or alleged abuse of children cared for at the establishment made to the organisation or establishment?

All the disclosures and complaints of abuse were made to the Daughters of Charity between 1998 and 2000.

- ii. To what extent were complaints and disclosures made while the abuse or alleged abuse was on-going or recent?

There were no complaints or disclosures made while the abuse or alleged abuse was on-going or recent

- iii. To what extent were/are complaints made many years after the alleged abuse i.e. about non-recent abuse?

All the complaints were made at least **37** years after the alleged abuse is said to have taken place.

- iv. Are there any patterns of note in terms of the timing/disclosure of abuse and/or alleged abuse?

In 1997, a series of newspaper articles about homes run by religious orders, including another establishment run by the Daughters of Charity – Smyllum, Lanark – was published in a Scottish newspaper. A copy of those articles are attached as Appendix 1.

Following those articles an influx of claimants came forward, the vast majority using a Solicitor named Mr Cameron Fyfe of Ross Harper Solicitors.

All sought remuneration via civil court for the effects of the abuse they claim to have suffered.

Of the eighteen civil claims raised regarding Bellevue, none were taken forward to proof.

One civil case involving Smyllum Park was taken forward to preliminary proof. Lord Glennie found that the case was time barred. Shortly thereafter, nearly all other claimants agreed to decree of absolvitor. Those who did not, progressed their claims no further

5.4. External Inspections

- i. What external inspections have been conducted relating to children cared for at establishment which considered issues relating to abuse and/or alleged abuse of children?

None, as Bellevue closed in 1961 prior to receipt of any complaints to the Daughters of Charity.

For each such external inspection please answer the following:

- ii. Who conducted the inspection? N/A
- iii. Why was the inspection conducted? N/A
- iv. When was the inspection conducted? N/A
- v. What was the outcome of the inspection in respect of any issues relating to abuse or alleged abuse of children? N/A
- vi. What was the organisation/establishment's response to the inspection and its outcome? N/A
- vii. Were recommendations made following the inspection? N/A
- viii. If so, what were the recommendations and were they implemented? N/A
- ix. If recommendations were not implemented, why not? N/A

5.5 External Investigations

- i. What external investigations have been conducted relating to children cared for at the establishment which have considered issues relating to abuse and/or alleged abuse of children?

None. Bellevue closed in 1981, 37 years prior to any complaints bring made.

For each such external investigation please answer the following:

- ii. Who conducted the investigation? N/A

- iii. Why was the investigation conducted? N/A
- iv. When was the investigation conducted? N/A
- v. What was the outcome of the investigation in respect of any issues relating to abuse or alleged abuse of children? N/A
- vi. What was the organisation/establishment's response to the investigation and its outcome? N/A
- vii. Were recommendations made following the investigation? N/A
- viii. If so, what were the recommendations and were they implemented? N/A
- ix. If recommendations were not implemented, why not? N/A

5.6 Response to External Inspections/Investigations

- i. What was the organisation's procedure/process for dealing with external inspections and/or investigations relating to abuse, and/or alleged abuse, of children cared for at the establishment?

As the establishment was closed many years prior to any allegations of abuse being made, there were no external inspections relating to abuse.

Please see response to 5.4 and 5.5 above.

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- ii. What was the organisation's procedure/process for responding to the outcomes of such external inspections and/or investigations?

As stated above, no external inspections took place and the establishment was closed many years prior to the first allegation being made.

The Organisation responded to the allegations by instructing its own solicitor to deal with the claims made.

- iii. What was the organisation's procedure/process for implementing recommendations which followed from such external inspections and/or investigations?

There were no external investigations as the establishment closed many years prior to the allegations being made.

5.7 Impact

- i. What is known about the impact of abuse on those children cared for at the establishment who were abused, or alleged to have been abused?

From written statements, several claimants speak of the deep impact it has had on their personal and family life; difficulties in maintaining relationships, lack of emotional connection with others.

The organisation is very conscious of the lifelong impact that abuse has on any child, or person of any age, and the effect that abuse can have on the victims' wellbeing on every level.

- ii. Where does the organisation/establishment's knowledge/assessment of that impact come from?

The effect of abuse on a child/adult has been documented for many years, and in many of its pastoral services throughout the UK, members of the Organisation have encountered people still suffering from abuse inflicted from a variety of sources in early life.

- iii. What is known about the impact of abuse on the families of those children cared for at the establishment who were abused, or alleged to have been abused?

From written statements, several claimants speak of the deep impact it has had on their families; difficulties in maintaining relationships with partners, and the lack of emotional connection with children

- iv. Where does the organisation/establishment's knowledge/assessment of that impact come from?

As stated above, from the claimants written statements and also from pastoral work carried out throughout the UK by members of the Organisation.