

Newsletter

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry



Foreword

by Lady Smith

SCAI has had a busy start to 2023 as we prepare for what will be an intensive year ahead.

We concluded hearings in our Foster Care case study on 1 December 2022. Lasting over 7 months, this was a substantial case study. I heard evidence from over 250 witnesses; many of them were sharing their experiences for the first time. You can read further information about it in this newsletter.

The valuable evidence gathered in the Foster Care case study is now being carefully analysed and the drafting of my findings is underway.

Volume 1 of my findings in relation to the Child Migration case study is about to be published; Volume 2 is complete and is currently being prepared for publication.

The first in the set of my findings in relation to the Boarding Schools case study – my findings in relation to Loretto School – is complete and will also be published shortly.

We are preparing for our case study into the abuse of children in residential accommodation for young offenders and children and young persons in need of care and protection. Hearings are due to commence later in 2023. The first part of the case study will feature evidence from relevant experts, regulatory bodies and inspectorates, and also evidence from providers. The Inquiry will then hear evidence in relation to a number of particular establishments. This will include evidence from individuals who experienced abuse and a range of other witnesses. The case study is a substantial one and hearings are likely to run for several months.

In this edition of the newsletter, you can also read about steps we are taking to make it easier for those people who require additional support to engage with SCAI. This includes ongoing work to improve our website and I hope to be able to share more information on this shortly. Meanwhile, anyone who requires additional support to give evidence to the Inquiry should get in touch with our Witness Support Team who will be able to assist.

As I reflect back on the achievements of last year, I remain grateful to counsel and to our dedicated staff for their resilience and flexibility in ensuring that we remain focused on our important task. We have a demanding schedule ahead over the coming months but I know that I can rely upon them to continue to progress the next phase of our work.

FINDINGS

Roundtable Event

In July 2022, Lady Smith published her findings following a two-day roundtable event in the spring that examined ‘the psychology of individuals who abuse children’.

A panel of eight experts, including forensic clinical psychologists and others experienced in child protection, discussed the characteristics, motivation and techniques of those who abuse children in care. The experts’ knowledge and experience was drawn principally, but not exclusively, from cases involving the sexual abuse of children in residential care and also of children living in other circumstances.

Drawing together expert knowledge and experience to examine areas of commonality, divergence, and any gaps that may need further consideration, key findings included:

- some who sexually abuse children are completely driven to do so and will design their lives accordingly, but others act in response to opportunities presented to them, rather than created by them;
- the presence or absence of secure attachment, ideally established in early childhood, was highly relevant when considering both those who abuse children and the children they abuse or may seek to abuse; and,
- participants were clear that the culture of an institution is highly influential; those within it conform to its norms.

The learning will better inform Lady Smith’s recommendations to help prevent and diminish the risks of children in care being abused. The full findings report can be read here: childabuseinquiry.scot/resource-centre/roundtable-findings-no1/

Updates

Regular updates will be provided on the Inquiry’s website www.childabuseinquiry.scot and via the Inquiry’s Twitter account @ScottishCAI.



Foster Care case study

On 1 December 2022, public hearings examining the abuse of children in foster care and of children who were boarded out concluded.

Over 7 months, evidence was given by over 250 witnesses, with many sharing their experiences for the first time.

In excess of 40,000 relevant documents were recovered, with evidence from experts, local authorities, independent fostering agencies, foster carers, family members and social workers also being heard.

Counsel to the Inquiry, Ruth Innes KC, said: "The evidence which has been gathered and heard in this case study has sadly demonstrated that over the period from 1930 to 2014, children have suffered abuse in boarding out and foster care.

"That is not restricted in geographical scope – no area of Scotland is immune. We heard of physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation."

The Inquiry was able to confirm over 50 convictions in respect of offences against children in foster care, but that record is incomplete. There was also evidence of deaths in foster care not being properly investigated by the authorities, and that fatalities were accepted as accidents.


Lady Smith will now consider all the evidence and issue her findings as soon as practicable.




TALK
TO US


Contact

Individuals can contact the Inquiry's Witness Support Team

 **by phone** on **0800 0929 300**

 **by post** at **PO Box 24202, Edinburgh EH3 1JN**

 **by email** at **talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot**

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

Residential accommodation for young offenders and children and young persons in need of care and protection

In July 2022, the Inquiry announced a new case study into the abuse of children in residential accommodation for young offenders and children and young persons in need of care and protection.

With hearings due to commence in the second half of 2023, the focus of this case study will be residential accommodation (other than children's homes) used by the state between 1930 and 2014 to accommodate (a) young offenders under the age of 18 (and children and young persons under 18 before trial) and (b) children and young persons under 18 in need of care and protection.

SCAI's investigations into this area of residential care have been ongoing throughout the life of the Inquiry. This case study will look at:

- residential establishments in Scotland used as approved schools, List D schools, secure accommodation (for young offenders and others), remand homes, and assessment centres; and,
- borstal institutions, remand institutions, detention centres and young offenders' institutions run by the Prison Service.

Thirty-nine establishments have now been confirmed as being included in the case study. These establishments were run by a range of providers including local authorities, religious bodies, non-religious voluntary bodies, and the Prison Service.

The case study will consider the nature and extent of abuse, including violence and other abuse by children and young people towards their peers.

The impact of abuse, reporting of it, as well as the use of restraint, segregation and corporal punishment will also form part of SCAI's investigations.

Evidence will also be taken relating to staff recruitment, training and culture.

Many people have already come forward, but the Inquiry would encourage anyone with relevant evidence to get in touch with the Inquiry's witness support team as soon as possible.

A full list of the establishments which have been confirmed as being included in this case study can be found here: childabuseinquiry.scot/news/phase-8-residential-accommodation-for-young-offenders-and-children-and-young-persons-in-need-of-care-and-protection-announcement/

Accessibility

If you require additional support to give your evidence, the Inquiry's Witness Support Team are here to help. The Witness Support Team will work with you to ensure you can make contact with, and give your statement to, the Inquiry.



The Inquiry has taken evidence from applicants with additional needs, including applicants who use British Sign Language (BSL). The Witness Support Team will support you to engage with the Inquiry and to give your statement. We understand that some people may need an interpreter to support them to contact the Inquiry, not just with giving their statement.




We also know that many of those who wish to share their experiences with the Inquiry may find reading and writing difficult. In these situations, the Witness Support Team can provide information in 'easy-read', talk over the phone and work alongside applicants to ensure that they are ready and supported to give evidence to the Inquiry. There are options for reviewing statements, which include reading a statement out to someone. You do not need to read or write to give a statement to the Inquiry.



We would encourage anyone who may need additional support to give evidence to the Inquiry to get in touch with the Witness Support Team. The team are experienced and ready to work with individuals to support them to give evidence.

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The Inquiry is also working on improving its website so that it is much more accessible.

Video content signed by a BSL interpreter will soon be available which will explain the process of giving evidence.

The updated website will make finding out information about the Inquiry's work easier and will be much more accessible and user friendly.

Updates

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

- Q Can the Inquiry award compensation to a person who has been abused?**

A The Chair has no power to award compensation nor has she any power to award or be involved in administering, deciding on or making redress payments.

- Q Does the Inquiry operate the redress scheme?**

A The Inquiry does not administer or operate Scotland’s redress scheme. The administration of the scheme is run by Scottish Government and Redress Scotland is responsible for making determinations in connection with applications to the redress scheme and advising Scottish Ministers of their determinations once made.

Further information is available at [Apply for Scotland’s Redress Scheme - mygov.scot](#) and Redress Scotland.

- Q Does the Inquiry have a say in who gets redress as part of the government scheme?**

A The Inquiries Act 2005 expressly prohibits the Chair from ruling on or awarding compensation and, likewise, she has no power to award or be involved in the administration, decision making, or giving of advice in relation to redress payments.

- Q Does the Inquiry work with the Scottish Government on the redress scheme?**

A The Inquiry is independent of both Scottish Government and Redress Scotland.

- Q Can the Inquiry share my statement with Redress Scotland?**

A Individual claims for redress do not fall within the Inquiry’s Terms of Reference. This means that Lady Smith cannot share Inquiry evidence that is not available on SCAI’s website, for redress purposes. She cannot share such evidence with Scottish Government or with Redress Scotland. This includes Inquiry statements.

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE



Materials available

The Inquiry has created a series of leaflets and posters, as well as social media graphics, to raise public awareness about what the Inquiry does and ensure that those who may have information they wish to share know how to get in touch with the Inquiry.

The Inquiry team is regularly in touch with local authorities and stakeholders throughout Scotland and beyond to further extend the visibility of the Inquiry. Work to ensure these materials and this information is widely available is ongoing to help ensure all available evidence is gathered, and as many people as possible can contribute to the important work of the Inquiry.

If you would like to obtain any of the publicity materials, or hard copies of the Inquiry newsletter (available in A4 and A3 sizes), please contact 3x1 Group by e-mail at SCAI@3x1.com.



Contact

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