

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Statement of Ronald James Hector Culley

Personal and Professional Background

1. My full name is Ronald James Hector Culley. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1977. I became the Chief Executive of Quarriers on 6th April 2020.
2. I have included a copy of my CV at Appendix 1. In terms of qualifications, I have a 1st Class Honours Degree in Politics from the University of Strathclyde (1999). I also have a PhD in Political Theory from the University of Glasgow (2004).
3. After university I worked initially as a case worker for the Scottish Refugee Council (2004-2005). This involved supporting asylum seekers and refugees in their resettlement claims and acting as their advocate.
4. I subsequently worked for a small management consultancy firm called MCM Associates (2005-2006), which focused on social and economic development, primarily supporting organisations in the public and third sectors.
5. I then took up employment with COSLA (2006-2015), the organisation which represents Scottish local government. I initially worked as a policy officer in the area of migration and asylum (2006-2007) and then as a policy manager within the local government employers' function (2007-2008), overseeing collective bargaining arrangements in partnership with the teachers' trades unions. My final role with COSLA was as Chief Officer of Health and Social Care (2008-2015). My responsibilities included sector wide negotiations on the National Care Home Contract and policy development with the Scottish Government (e.g. on Free Personal Care, the Living Wage for care workers, Self-Directed Support, and health and social care integration).
6. I left COSLA in 2015 to take up post as the Chief Officer of the Western Isles Health and Social Care Partnership. I had two primary roles within this post: I was the principal advisor to the Integration Joint Board, which administered a £60m budget for community health and social care services; and I was the Operational Director for these services within Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar and NHS Western Isles (circa 1200 staff). My remit included the transformation of health and social care services to improve outcomes and meet financial and demographic pressures.
7. I left the Western Isles to take up post as the Chief Executive of Quarriers in April 2020.
8. Outside of formal employment, I have volunteered as a counsellor for Childline (2005-06) and as a Board Member of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust (2015).

Quarriers

9. Since starting at Quarriers I have reviewed the testimony of Alice Harper, my predecessor. The written statement that Mrs Harper provided to the Inquiry dated 30th November 2018 contains an overview of Quarriers as an organisation. The organisation has not changed significantly since then. We continue to have an annual turnover of circa £42m, a staff team of around 1,800 employees and 350 volunteers. However, in addition to a change of Chief Executive, the following changes are worth noting:
 - Alan Frizzell was appointed as the new Chair of the Board of Trustees in April 2020, taking over from Tom Scholes, who resigned from the Board having served more than his two terms of office.
 - Professor Michael Greaves was appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees in April 2020, taking over from Sheila Gillies, who resigned from the Board having served more than her two terms of office.
 - A restructuring of the Executive Management Team in March 2020 resulted in the appointment of Alistair Dickson to the post of Director of People and Technology, which covers HR, Learning and Talent Development, Volunteering and IT.
10. Alice Harper submitted a written statement to the Inquiry on 9th April 2020 on the subject of the migration of children from Quarriers' care to Canada and Australia. I have reviewed that statement. I consider the position outlined in that statement to be an accurate account of the migration of children from Quarriers' care, based on the historical records available to us. I adopt the content of that statement as my evidence on behalf of Quarriers.
11. Beyond that, and having been in post now for five months, I have worked hard to familiarise myself with the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry and Quarriers' participation in it. More specifically, I have taken time to discuss with my colleagues our work in relation to the policy of migration, how it was applied and the effect it had on the children involved. I have also discussed the matter with the Quarriers Board of Trustees.
12. I stand by the apology to children migrated through Quarriers and to children who suffered abuse following migration. Having read survivor testimony I recognise that each person had an individual experience and that for some their new home offered opportunity and led to a fulfilled life, but for others this led to physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and stigma. Although the policy of migration was conceived with philanthropic intentions, it was clearly wrong to separate children from their families, communities, and identity.
13. I also believe that Quarriers was too slow in ending its policy of migration and was misguided in recommencing this policy in the early 1960s. While I believe all migration was wrong, the migration of children to Australia in the 1960s is very difficult to understand given changing social expectations and norms, the professionalisation of social work and the time that had elapsed since the pre-war migrations.
14. I think it is also important to re-iterate the following observations in relation to the migration of children from Scotland to Canada and Australia:

- The assessment process was insufficiently robust, with children's suitability for migration not thoroughly assessed and with assessors occasionally disregarding expert advice against migration.
 - Children were not fully informed about what their new lives would bring and Quarriers did not place sufficient emphasis on obtaining informed consent from the children and their parents.
 - There was inadequate assessment of the places to which children were sent, and Quarriers did not take sufficient steps to monitor children once they had been migrated.
15. Finally, as a modern and progressive not-for-profit organisation, Quarriers continues to be fully committed to our policy of supporting people who were migrated, including assisting with the provision of records and information. While there are obvious limits to that work bound by time and resources, we have a strong track record of supporting people to gain information from the historical record in a manner which is sensitive to their personal circumstances.
16. Quarriers remains committed to providing the highest possible standards of care to the thousands of people we support.

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SIGNED

DATED 6th September 2020