

# Newsletter

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry



## Foreword

### by Lady Smith

We are living through extraordinary times. Organisations throughout the UK, and across the world, have had to effect rapid changes to their working practices as we all respond to the coronavirus outbreak and the Inquiry is no different.

In the interests of the well-being of our applicants, witnesses, staff and communities, I made the difficult decision, in March, to postpone planned hearings until further

notice. However, the vital work of the Inquiry continues. I am enormously grateful for the way in which so many staff have risen to the challenges of working remotely. Investigative work, research and analysis, and preparation for announced case studies continue. Whilst we are not able to hold face-to-face meetings, our witness support team continue to operate the Talk to Us phone line and supporting applicants and other witnesses throughout this challenging time.

Since we started remote working in mid-March, we have been investigating how best to harness technology to allow us to continue with taking statements from applicants where appropriate. There has been a great deal to work through before I have been able to take any decision about this. However, I am pleased to advise that, in May, we commenced a small pilot with certain applicants who were agreeable to us taking

their statements remotely. This is a positive step in continuing to move forward with the critical work we do at the Inquiry.

We are also exploring options to enable us to continue hearing case study evidence remotely. Again, much work is involved in this and I am very grateful to those staff who are actively investigating the available technology.

“ *the vital work of the Inquiry continues* ”

While technology that enables us to continue the overall work of the Inquiry is invaluable, I am mindful, as are all Inquiry staff, that our trauma informed approach must remain at the heart of everything we do. Our expert trauma psychologist, Anne McKechnie, continues to provide her usual wide ranging and careful guidance as we grapple with and become accustomed to new ways of working.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Additional Investigations

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry has identified a further 10 institutions, including four Young Offenders Institutions, which we are investigating as part of our ongoing work. The additional investigations include institutions run by a range of care providers, as detailed below:

#### Young Offenders Institution

- Glenochil YOI
- Polmont YOI
- Barlinnie YOI
- Longriggend Detention Centre, Airdrie

#### Local Authority establishments

- Wellington School, Midlothian
- Bellfield Remand Home, West Dunbartonshire
- Langlands Park Secure Unit, Inverclyde (from 1985)

#### Church of Scotland

- Langlands Park (until 1985)

#### St Philip's School, Plains

- St Philip's School, Airdrie

#### Thornly Park School, Renfrewshire

We ask that anyone who has any relevant information about any of these institutions to please get in touch with the Inquiry, regardless of whether a report to the police or to anyone else may have been made. It does not matter whether or not you have been involved in any other investigations. You can still talk to us.

Though it can be difficult and very emotional to talk about experiences in care, our highly experienced witness support team will help and support you throughout the process. We will do all we can to help you feel safe and secure when you speak to us.




### Updates

Further updates will be provided on the Inquiry's website [www.childabuseinquiry.scot](http://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](http://www.contactsotland-bsl.org)

## Materials available

We have 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 material, or hard copies of the Inquiry newsletter (available in A4 and A3 sizes), please contact 3x1 Group by e-mail at [SCAI@3x1.com](mailto:SCAI@3x1.com).

## HEARINGS

### Child Migration case study

Hearings examining the abuse of children whose departure from Scotland was part of the child migration programmes took place between December 2019 until their temporary postponement due to the coronavirus in March 2020.

During December, 4 witnesses from Australia who were unable to travel gave evidence via video-link, followed by evidence in person and via video-link from 13 former child migrants and/or family members from Australia and Canada throughout February and early March. A number of statements were also read as part of the hearing.

Evidence was also heard in person and via video-link from other witnesses, including support organisations. The remaining part of the case study will hear from representatives from organisations involved in child migration, as well as expert witnesses about the history and operation of the child migration programmes.

The Inquiry is considering whether this case study can be concluded via remote hearings. An announcement will be made should this be possible. Work has started to consider and analyse the evidence gathered to date.



Since mid-March when the Inquiry had to put in place plans for working remotely, the child migration hearings had to be postponed. The result of this is that other planned future hearings, such as the boarding schools case study which were scheduled for later in 2020 have also had to be postponed. However, the important investigative work of the Inquiry continues, as well as essential preparations for announced case studies, including boarding schools.

As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, we are exploring options which might enable us to continue hearing case study evidence remotely with our immediate priority to complete the child migration case study. There are a number of factors to consider before Lady Smith can make a final decision, not least of all our commitment to ensuring we take a trauma informed approach to our work. An update on dates for future hearings will be provided as soon as we are able to do so.



## Case Study Findings

### Male Religious Orders

Work on analysing the evidence from the Christian Brothers, Benedictines and Marists case studies is well underway. Lady Smith's findings on each case study will be published as soon as possible.

## UPDATE




### Engaging with the Foster Care case study

The Inquiry is examining the abuse of children in foster care. This includes children who were boarded out as well as children who were placed in foster care.


The Inquiry is recovering a range of documents from all 32 Scottish local authorities and is keen to hear from anyone who was boarded-out or in foster care whose care was arranged by any Scottish authority.

#### Contact

The Inquiry wants to ensure that all available evidence is gathered. If you have any relevant information, please contact our witness support team as soon as possible:

 by phone **0800 0929 300**

 by email **talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot**

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## RESEARCH

### Published Research

The Inquiry has published three reports prepared by Professor Lynn Abrams and Dr Linda Fleming, both at the University of Glasgow. The Inquiry commissioned Professor Abrams and Dr Fleming to review historical documents recovered by the Inquiry in the course of its investigations in relation to Aberlour Child Care Trust, Barnardo's and Quarriers. The review focused on identifying material that could tell us more about several aspects of how these services operated between the 1930s and 1990s, including practices around the recruitment and training of staff, procedures for reporting and investigating complaints, and internal policies and practice with regards discipline and punishment of children.



## FAQs

- Q Can I still contact the Inquiry during this period of lockdown and ongoing restrictions?**
- A** Yes, the Inquiry's witness support team are working remotely and continue to operate the Talk to Us phone line. You can contact them by phone on 0800 0929 300 Monday-Friday 10am - 4pm or by email at **talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot**.
- Q I was due to meet a member of the Inquiry team for a private session. What happens now?**
- A** The Inquiry's witness support team have been contacting applicants and other witnesses to postpone their private sessions and will be keeping regular touch with them.
- Q Can I give a statement to the Inquiry remotely?**
- A** The Inquiry will be carrying out a pilot with certain applicants who are agreeable to us taking their statements remotely. If this is something that you would be interested in, please let our witness support team know.
- Q When will hearings resume?**
- A** To protect everyone's health, Lady Smith made the difficult decision, in March, to postpone planned hearings until further notice. Further updates on planned hearings will be given as soon as possible.
- Q Will the Inquiry have virtual hearings?**
- A** The Inquiry is exploring possible options to continue hearing case study evidence remotely using appropriate technology. A lot of work is involved in investigating this and an update will be given as soon as possible.

## UPDATE

### Communications Campaign

#### Former Boarding School Pupils and Staff

At the beginning of the year, Lady Smith released a video appealing for former pupils and staff from Scottish boarding schools to share their experiences.

The video appeal appeared on regional news platforms across the UK and on BBC's Reporting Scotland, with further messaging appearing in national and local newspapers' print editions and broadcast segments. Adverts were also placed in national newspapers and on social media.

This call for evidence comes ahead of the Phase 6 case study which will investigate the abuse of children in boarding schools. Hearings have been postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak and more information on timetabling will be available as soon as practicable.

If you have experienced any kind of abuse or have any information about abuse in any boarding school in Scotland, please get in touch with the Inquiry's witness support team today.

Evening Standard



#### THE SCOTTISH CHILD ABUSE INQUIRY WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU IF:

- You experienced any type of abuse whilst at a Scottish boarding school
- You have information about children being abused in boarding schools in Scotland
- The abuse happened at any time up to 17 December 2014

Please contact our witness support team as soon as possible

**Call: 0800 092 9300**

**Email:** [talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot](mailto:talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot)

**Visit:** [www.childabuseinquiry.scot](http://www.childabuseinquiry.scot)

**Post:** SCAI, PO Box 24085, Edinburgh, EH7 9EA

### 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 on Mondays and Fridays, and 8.30am – 5.30pm on Tuesdays to Thursdays*

by email **[talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot](mailto:talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot)**

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### Updates

Updates will be provided on the Inquiry's website and via the Inquiry's social channels.

[www.childabuseinquiry.scot](http://www.childabuseinquiry.scot)

[@ScottishCAI](https://twitter.com/ScottishCAI)

YouTube: Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

### Trauma

#### Well-being Advice from Trauma Psychologist

Anne McKechnie, the Inquiry's Trauma Psychologist, has shared some advice for staying resilient during this period of lockdown and ongoing restrictions:

- Keep to your normal routine as far as possible i.e. when you get up, when you eat, etc
- Helping others is very important in maintaining mood. Many communities have set up support groups for the vulnerable; engaging in such groups or even letting a vulnerable neighbour know to contact you if they require shopping etc. will help build that sense of community
- Reach out to those people who are important to you. Just because you can't physically see your loved ones doesn't mean you can't stay in touch with them
- Vary the activities in which you engage – eg a variety of online activities and watching TV, alongside non-internet interests ie reading, jigsaw puzzles etc
- In any spare time consider doing a new or, up to now, delayed chore or activity
- Do as much exercise as possible – whether that be going for a walk, cycle or some gentle exercise at home
- There is a temptation to constantly listen for advice on updates on the current crisis. While it is important to remain up to date, we have to limit how often we read or listen to information. Limit your reading or listening to mornings and early evening. And ensure you receive information from reliable sources
- Eat a balanced diet and keep hydrated to keep your immune system strong
- Try relaxation techniques such as mindfulness and focus on the things that make you happy and content