

Newsletter

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry



Foreword

by Lady Smith

At the beginning of this year, after careful consideration of all aspects of the public health advice and restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, I reluctantly made the decision to postpone hearings planned for January 2021. I realise that this was disappointing for all those with an interest in the boarding schools case study and I am grateful to you for your patience.

I am, however, pleased that on 16 March, we were able to start hearing evidence relating to the Inquiry's investigations into the abuse of children in boarding schools. Unfortunately, Scottish Government COVID restrictions did not permit members of the public to attend this phase of hearings.

Public hearings in the second phase of the boarding schools case study commenced on 4 May 2021. We have begun by hearing evidence relating to Loretto School in Musselburgh, and Morrison's Academy in Crieff (during the time it was a boarding school). In line with the Scottish Government's easing of some of the COVID restrictions, we are able to permit members of the public to attend these hearings.

Measures are in place in line with Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland guidance to help keep people safe. We consider it to be very important that we take

all the steps we can to reduce the risks of spreading infection. Further information is available in the COVID venue Health & Safety video: [here](#) and I would encourage you to familiarise yourself with the measures outlined in this.

During this latest period of lockdown, the Inquiry has continued to take statements remotely. This has gone well but we know that video or telephone sessions do not work for everyone. I am delighted to say that from the middle of May, we will resume some face-to-face meetings where it is safe to do so, and where applicants and witnesses would like to meet with members of the Inquiry team. In keeping with our trauma informed approach, our Witness Support Team are discussing options with individuals. Our aim is to offer a range of choices, and to let applicants and witnesses decide how they would like to give their statement to the Inquiry.

My findings in relation to the Christian Brothers case study were published on 17 February 2021 and you can read more about these below.

My case study findings in relation to the Benedictines are complete and are being prepared for publication. Further information will be available shortly. Work on my case study findings in relation to the Marists are at an advanced stage and work on my findings in relation to the Scottish Government case study is also well underway; each of these sets of findings will be published as soon as possible.

We have also recently published three research reports on the Inquiry website. These were commissioned by the Inquiry to examine various aspects of our terms of reference. The reports relate to boarding schools, child migration and child protection systems from 1948-1995. You can read more about these in this newsletter.

Meanwhile, the Witness Support Team has continued to operate the *Talk to Us* telephone line and to support applicants and other witnesses throughout this challenging time.

“I am enormously grateful to our dedicated staff”

I am enormously grateful to our dedicated staff for their resilience and flexibility in responding to all of the challenges throughout the pandemic and ensuring that we continue our vitally important work.

The latest period of lockdown has been very difficult for many people but with spring now here and the easing of some restrictions, we can take small steps towards some degree of normality. The Inquiry remains ready to adapt and respond to any other measures that emerge over the coming months and are glad to have the invaluable guidance of our expert trauma psychologist on hand to assist.

TALK TO US


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).


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

Boarding Schools case study

On 16 March 2021 the Inquiry began hearing evidence relating to its investigations into the abuse of children in boarding schools.

The first part of the case study focused on the background and context for boarding schools. Evidence was taken from representatives of inspection and regulatory bodies as well as individual boarding schools, both in person (from witnesses who were able to do so in line with ongoing government restrictions), as well as remotely via video link. This phase of evidence concluded on 31 March 2021.

The second phase of the boarding schools case study commenced on 4 May 2021.

The Inquiry has begun this phase by hearing evidence relating to **Loretto School** in Musselburgh, and **Morrison's Academy** in Crieff, during the time it was a boarding school.

Subject to ongoing public health guidance, hearings are taking place at the Inquiry's hearing venue at Rosebery House in Edinburgh involving a combination of evidence from witnesses in person and remote evidence by video-link.

In line with the Scottish Government's easing of COVID restrictions, we are able to permit members of the public to attend these hearings.

Dates for public hearings relating to the following five schools, also currently under investigation, will be confirmed as soon as possible:

- **Fettes College**, Edinburgh
- **Gordonstoun School**, Elgin
- **Keil School**, Dumbarton
- **Merchiston Castle School**, Edinburgh
- **Queen Victoria School**, Dunblane



HEARINGS

Scottish Government evidence

In November 2020, the Inquiry heard evidence from 16 witnesses, both in person and remotely via video link, examining the actions of Scottish Government in relation to issues arising out of non-recent abuse of children in institutional care.

These hearings explored reasons why calls for a public inquiry throughout the period between August 2002 and December 2014 were turned down and why there was a long delay between those calls first being made and this Inquiry being established. Amongst those who gave evidence were current and former ministers, as well as civil servants and other witnesses.

The drafting of findings in relation to the Scottish Government evidence is at an advanced stage.



Christian Brothers Findings

Lady Smith's findings in relation to the Christian Brothers case study were published on 17 February 2021. These concluded that the regime at St Ninian's Residential Care Home, Falkland, exposed children to risks of sexual, physical, and psychological danger. Between 1953 and 1983, for many children, those risks materialised.

During the case study, the Inquiry considered evidence from 42 witnesses about the nature and extent of abuse of children in care at St Ninian's. The Inquiry also examined the systems, policies and procedures in place, how these were applied and whether the abuse arose from systemic failures.

These findings are the first in a series of three sets of case study findings into residential care provided by male religious orders in Scotland. Applicants and other witnesses can continue to come forward to the Inquiry with relevant evidence about the care provided by the Christian Brothers and this will be considered as part of the continuing process. Lady Smith will take these findings into account when she analyses all the evidence gathered by the Inquiry and decides what recommendations to make in her final report.

The Christian Brothers case study findings can be read in full on the Inquiry website: www.childabuseinquiry.scot.

Resuming Face-to-Face work


TALK
TO US

From mid-May 2021, and subject to the easing of COVID restrictions, the Inquiry is hoping to re-start face-to-face meetings where it is safe to do so, and where applicants and witnesses are comfortable meeting with members of the Inquiry's Witness Support Team.

The Inquiry's aim is to offer a range of choices, and to let applicants and witnesses decide how they would like to give their statement to the Inquiry.

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RESEARCH REPORTS

Student Experience of Scottish Boarding Schools, 1970s-1990s

Professor Lindsay Paterson (Professor of Education Policy, School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh) wrote a report for the Inquiry analysing statistical data from surveys of students who left school between 1976 and 2000 to provide some insights on students' experiences of boarding schools in Scotland in that period.

His work has been conducted as part of a Major Research Fellowship funded by the Leverhulme Trust and the analysis can be found on the Inquiry's [website](#).

Child Abuse and Scottish Children sent Overseas through Child Migration Schemes Report

A report - written by Professors Stephen Constantine (Emeritus Professor of Modern British History, Lancaster University), Marjory Harper (Professor of History, University of Aberdeen) and Gordon Lynch (Michael Ramsey Professor of Modern Theology, University of Kent) - for the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry was published in early March, examining:

- the policy and practice contexts that informed UK child migration schemes between the 1880s and 1960;
- the experiences of Scottish children migrated to Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe); and
- considering the extent to which those responsible for safeguarding the health and wellbeing of children in care, failed in their duty to protect these children both whilst they were in care in Scotland and once they had been migrated

The full report can be read on the Inquiry's [website](#).

The Historic System to Protect and Prevent the Abuse of Children in Care in Scotland, 1948-1995

This report was commissioned by the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry to consider the existence and effectiveness of the systems to protect children in care in Scotland, and to prevent the abuse of those children in the period framed by the Children Act 1948 and the Children Act 1995.

The key aims of the research were to:

- identify and describe the policies, structures and mechanisms in place at the Scottish Office and Local Authority levels to protect children in the care of the state from abuse and to prevent it occurring;
- assess the effectiveness of these policies, structures, and mechanisms (e.g. oversight of Children's Committees, inspection regimes at national and local authority levels, effectiveness of communications between different authorities); and
- identify and assess the attitudes expressed towards children in care by those responsible for their wellbeing across the period 1948-1995 and to identify change where it exists

The research was carried out by Professor Lynn Abrams (Professor of Modern History, University of Glasgow) and Doctor Linda Fleming (Research Associate, University of Glasgow) and focuses primarily, though not exclusively, on historical records pertaining to Glasgow and the West of Scotland. The report can be found on the Inquiry's [website](#).

FINDINGS REPORTS

Male Religious Orders

Male Religious Orders Findings in relation to the Benedictines case study are complete and are being prepared for publication.

The analysis of evidence and drafting of findings in relation to the Marist Brothers case study is well underway, and will be published as soon as possible.

Child Migration

Analysis of evidence and drafting of findings in relation to the Child Migration case study is well underway. Further information will be available shortly.



Communicating with the Inquiry

Q How can I give my statement to the Inquiry whilst COVID restrictions remain in place?

A Over the last year, the Inquiry has been harnessing technology to offer applicants and witnesses a range of choices, based on what is the best and safest option for individuals. This can involve a virtual private session or statement review, a telephone session, or supporting someone to write a written submission.

From mid-May 2021, and subject to the easing of COVID restrictions, the Inquiry is hoping to re-start face-to-face meetings where it is safe to do so, and where applicants and witnesses are comfortable meeting with members of the Inquiry's Witness Support Team.

The Inquiry will continue to keep these options under review, in line with Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland Guidance. For more information, contact the Witness Support Team by phone on **0800 0929 300** or by email at **talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot**.

Hearings

Q Can I come to Inquiry hearings?

A Due to the government COVID restrictions that were in place at the time, members of the public were not able to attend phase 1 hearings of the boarding schools case study. In line with the Scottish Government's easing of these COVID restrictions, we are now able to permit members of the public to attend these hearings, from May onwards.

Q How can I keep up with Inquiry hearings?

A You can keep up to date with what is happening at the Inquiry on the Inquiry website: **www.childabuseinquiry.scot** and via Twitter, **@ScottishCAI**.

Transcripts of evidence taken during hearings are also available on the website. These are published as soon as possible after each hearing.

Findings

Q Findings in relation to the Christian Brothers case study have already been published – can I still give evidence about the male religious order(s)?

A Your evidence is still important to the Inquiry. Applicants and other witnesses can and have come forward to the SCAI with relevant evidence, after the conclusion of the evidential hearings in the case study. This evidence will be considered by the Inquiry as part of the overall assessment of the nature and extent of abuse of children in residential care.

Homeless Community Outreach

Members of the Inquiry's Witness Support Team have been liaising with homeless organisations throughout Scotland to raise awareness of the Inquiry, its purpose, and its processes, within these communities to encourage people to talk to us.

With presentations and discussions taking place virtually, the Inquiry shared information on the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, Trauma informed approach and the journey of an applicant or witness, and the team has taken forward suggestions on increasing accessibility to the homeless community.

If you would like more information about the Inquiry, or would like to obtain any of the publicity materials available to stakeholders (including 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, please contact **SCAI@3x1.com**.

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry



• Were you abused or cared for a child under 18? Did this abuse happen at any time up to 17 December 2014? • If you have been in care, and are homeless, or have experienced homelessness, are living in temporary accommodation, or are of the fixed abode, you can still talk to us. We would like to hear about your experiences.

GET IN TOUCH:
THE SCOTTISH CHILD ABUSE INQUIRY WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU:
Call: 0800 092 9300 (Freephone)
Email: talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot
Web: www.childabuseinquiry.scot
Post: SCAI, PO Box 2485, Edinburgh, EH7 9EA
For more information and updates, visit the website: www.childabuseinquiry.scot or follow @ScottishCAI on Twitter

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