

Newsletter

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry



Foreword

by Lady Smith

After what has been an extremely busy summer period, the SCAI is making final preparations to move to our new premises at Mint House, 20 West Register Street, just off St Andrew Square. As can be seen from the map on page 2, our new location is in central Edinburgh with excellent transport links and will provide suitable accommodation for both the Inquiry office and hearing suite space. A considerable amount of work has been undertaken to prepare the building to our particular requirements, including the incorporation of COVID precautions which were very much part of our thinking in the design and fit-out.

Details of our new PO Box address are available in this newsletter and I look forward to sharing further information on our new premises, including a video of the hearings suite, in the coming weeks.

I am pleased to say that the hearings suite will be ready in time for us to start the next phase of the boarding schools case study on 6 October 2021 with public hearings relating to the following five schools:

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

In line with the Scottish Government's easing of COVID restrictions, we will be able to permit members of the public to attend these hearings. Further details will be available on the Inquiry's website.

Since the middle of May, we have been able to resume 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. The feedback to date has been very encouraging. In keeping with our trauma informed approach, our Witness Support Team discuss options with individuals. Our aim is to offer a range of choices, and insofar as possible, to let applicants and witnesses decide how they would like to give their statement to the Inquiry.

In addition to the significant preparation for the office move, the Inquiry's work has continued over the summer months, including the taking of statements, ongoing investigative work, preparation for announced case studies, ongoing work on the preparation of case study findings for publication, analysis of evidence and forward planning.

My findings in relation to the Benedictines case study were published on 11 August and you can read more about these below.

My case study findings in relation to the Scottish Government evidence are ready to be published very soon and my case study findings in relation to the Marists are complete and being prepared for publication. Further information will be available shortly.

Meanwhile, the Witness Support Team has continued to operate the Talk to Us telephone line and to support applicants and other witnesses throughout what continues to be a challenging time for many.

As ever, I am enormously grateful to our dedicated staff for their resilience and flexibility.

They have ensured that we continue our vitally important work whilst also undertaking the careful planning and considerable additional work which has been required in preparation for our move.

“*We are in a strong position to progress to the next phase of our work*”

As we start a new chapter of the Inquiry's journey in our new premises, I am confident that we are in a strong position to progress the next phase of our work. However, mindful of the fact that the pandemic remains with us, the Inquiry remains ready to adapt and respond to any other measures that emerge over the coming months and we are glad to have the invaluable guidance of our expert trauma psychologist 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.

New Premises - Hearings Venue

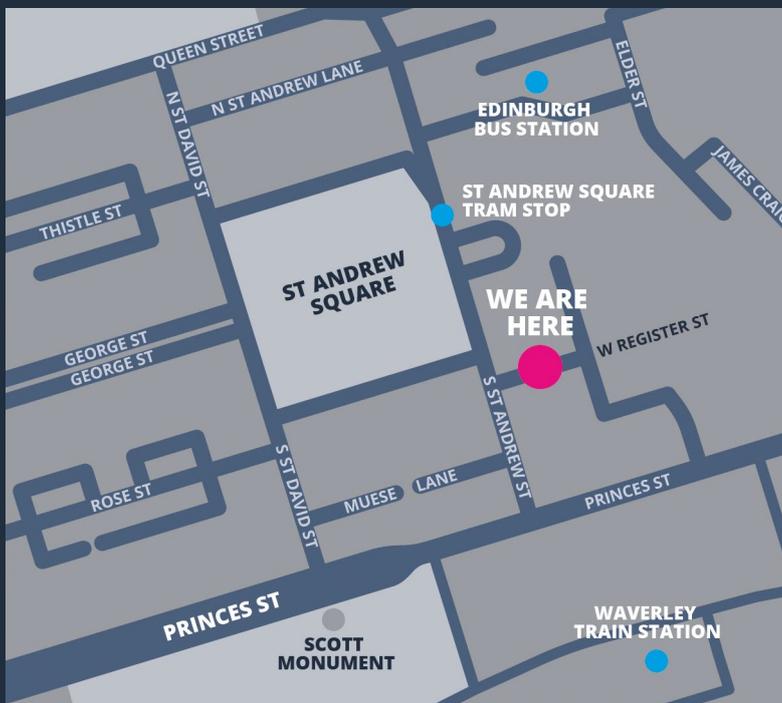
The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry is due to move to a new venue in Edinburgh in late September.

The lease for the current Inquiry premises in Rosebery House is due to expire later this year and whilst every effort was made to extend this, that was not possible because the landlords are planning to redevelop the site, making it necessary for the Inquiry to find new premises and relocate.

The Inquiry has secured new premises at Mint House, 20 West Register Street, which is centrally located in Edinburgh, just off St Andrew Square with excellent transport links. It will provide suitable accommodation for both the Inquiry office and hearing suite space. Further details will be made available soon.

Public hearings have paused for a short period as the Inquiry prepares its new premises but work is well underway and hearings will recommence on 6 October.

In the meantime, the Inquiry's work continues, including the taking of statements, ongoing investigative work, preparation for announced case studies, ongoing work on the preparation of case study findings for publication, analysis of evidence and forward planning.



Boarding Schools case study

On 4 May, the Inquiry heard evidence relating to **Loretto School** in Musselburgh, and **Morrison's Academy** in Crieff (during the time it was a boarding school), as part of its investigation into the abuse of children at boarding schools. Evidence was taken from applicants, school representatives and teachers past and present, both in person at the Inquiry's current hearing venue at Rosebery House in Edinburgh, as well as remotely via video link. Closing submissions from both schools were heard on 27 May.

The next phase of the boarding schools case study is set to start on 6 October with public hearings relating to the following five schools:

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

These hearings will take place at the Inquiry's new premises. More information about these hearings will be confirmed as soon as possible.

Foster Care case study

It is hoped that the case study into the abuse of children in foster care will start in spring 2022. This includes children who were boarded out, as well as children who were placed in foster care by a Scottish local authority.

Many people have already come forward but we would encourage anyone with relevant evidence to get in touch with the Inquiry's witness support team. We are particularly keen to hear from anyone with more recent experience of foster care.

Contact

Individuals can contact the Inquiry's Witness Support Team



 **by phone** on **0800 0929 300**
Talk to Us phone lines operate from 10.00am - 4.00pm, Monday to Friday.

 **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**

Return of face to face private sessions

Over the last year, the Inquiry has harnessed technology to offer applicants and witnesses a range of choices, based on what is the best and safest option for that individual. This has involved virtual private sessions or statement reviews, telephone sessions, or supporting written submissions. The Inquiry, however, acknowledges that these virtual options may not be right for everyone.

From May 2021, due to the easing of Coronavirus restrictions across the UK, the Inquiry was able to resume some face to face sessions.

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 is now able to continue to offer applicants the option of a face to face session. 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.

These options will be kept 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

PO Box update

Due to the Inquiry's change of premises, unfortunately the current PO Box address cannot be retained following the move. The new PO Box address is: **PO Box 24202, Edinburgh EH3 1JN**. A redirection notice is in place but please use the new PO Box address where possible.

New materials, including leaflets, posters and social media graphics with the updated PO Box address are also available and are being distributed to existing stakeholders as required.

If you would like more information about the Inquiry, or would like to obtain any of the publicity materials to raise public awareness about what the Inquiry does and ensure that those who may have information to share know how to get in touch with the Inquiry, please contact SCAI@3x1.com

Male Religious orders

Benedictine's Findings

On 11 August, Lady Smith published her findings into residential care institutions run by the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey between 1948 and 1991. She concluded that children in their care suffered sexual, physical, and emotional abuse.

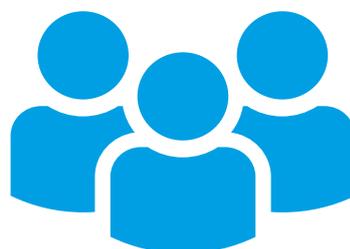
During the case study hearings which took place between 18 June 2019 and 1 October 2019, the Inquiry heard evidence from 43 witnesses about children having been abused when in the care of Benedictine monks at both Carlekemp Priory School, North Berwick, and Fort Augustus Abbey School, Inverness-shire. The Inquiry also examined the systems, policies, and procedures in place, how these were applied, and whether systemic failures enabled abuse to happen.

The findings from the Benedictine case study can be read in full on the Inquiry website: <https://www.childabuseinquiry.scot/case-study-findings/case-study-findings-pdf-version/case-study-findings-benedictines/>

These findings are the second in a series of three sets of case study findings in relation to the provision of residential care for children by male religious orders in Scotland. The findings in relation to the Marists Brothers case study are complete and are being prepared for publication. Further information will be available shortly.

Scottish Government Findings

The findings in relation to the Scottish Government evidence are complete and ready for publication. Further information will be available shortly.



Q What will happen if I send my correspondence to the old PO Box address? Will my evidence be picked up?

A A mail redirection order is in place and so post sent to the old PO Box will still reach the Inquiry, however it is recommended applicants use the new PO Box details where possible. The new PO Box address is: PO Box 24202, Edinburgh EH3 1JN.

Q Will I be able to attend hearings at the Inquiry's new premises

A Yes. The Inquiry's new premises will provide suitable accommodation for both the Inquiry office and hearing suite space.

In line with the Scottish Government's continued easing of COVID restrictions, the Inquiry will be able to permit members of the public to attend these hearings as normal.

More details will be made available as soon as possible.

Q How can I give my evidence to the Inquiry while it is moving offices?

A The Inquiry's work will continue as normal during this transition period, including the taking of statements, ongoing investigative work, preparation for announced case studies, ongoing work on the preparation of case study findings for publication, analysis of evidence and forward planning.

Applicants have a range of choices, based on what is the best and safest option for that individual including face to face sessions, virtual sessions, telephone sessions or support with a written submission.

Contact the Witness Support Team for more information on the options available to you.

Q Can I still give evidence once case study findings have been published?

A Your evidence is still important to the Inquiry. Applicants and any other witnesses with relevant evidence to offer should contact the Inquiry; their evidence will still be considered as part of the continuing process.



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