

COMMISSION TO INQUIRE INTO CHILD ABUSE

HELD AT 145-151 CHURCH STREET, DUBLIN
ON WEDNESDAY, 21ST JULY 2004 - DAY 13

BEFORE

MR. JUSTICE SEÁN RYAN

CHAIRPERSON OF THE INQUIRY

ORDINARY MEMBERS:

DR. IMELDA RYAN, Consultant Child and Adolescent
Psychiatrist
MR. FRED LOWE, Principal Child Psychologist

13

I hereby certify the
following to be a true
and accurate transcript
of my shorthand notes in
the above hearing.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION PRESENT

REGISTRAR TO INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE: MR. BRENDAN REIDY

COUNSEL FOR THE COMMISSION: MR. NOEL McMAHON SC
MR. FRANK CLARKE SC
MS. KAREN FERGUS BL

Instructed by: MS. FEENA ROBINSON

FOR MR. MICHAEL O' BRIEN: NO REPRESENTATION

FOR MR. MICK WATERS: MR. E. McCULLOUGH SC

Instructed by: LAVELLE COLEMAN
51-52 FITZWILLIAM SQUARE
DUBLIN 2.

FOR MR. COLM O' GORMAN: NO REPRESENTATION

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THE HEARING RESUMED AS FOLLOWS ON WEDNESDAY, 21 JULY 2004.

CHAIRMAN: Good morning.
MS. FERGUS: Good morning, Chairman.
I would like to call
Michael O'Brien on behalf of the survivor group,
Right to Peace.

CHAIRMAN: Good morning Mr. O'Brien.

A. Good morning.

MR. MICHAEL O'BRIEN, HAVING BEEN SWORN, WAS EXAMINED BY MS. FERGUS, AS FOLLOWS

MS. FERGUS: Good morning, Mr. O'Brien.

A. Good morning.

1 Q. You are here on behalf of your group Right to Peace to give evidence to the Investigation Committee?

A. That's right.

2 Q. Perhaps you might start by telling us a little bit about the formation of your group and how it got started?

A. Cathaoirleach, is mór an áthas orm mar áta me ann ar an maidin seo, maidin speisialta agus stairiúil.



1 It is indeed a special morning and a historic morning
2 that we, survivors of institutional abuse, get a
3 chance to put our case to the people of the State, to
4 a State that I maintain that wronged us in the
5 beginning. Let's hope by the time this Commission is
6 finished that the State will go some way on
7 rectifying the wrongs that it done to us when we were
8 children.

9
10 Sometime back in 1999 there was a meeting called in
11 Hearn's hotel by a lady called Baker, Josephine Baker
12 or Joe Baker as she is known and I was asked to
13 attend. It was for people who were in Ferryhouse.
14 That's an institution run by the Rosminians two miles
15 outside Clonmel. It was there since the 1930's. It
16 is now handed over to the State and it's a place for
17 young offenders.

18
19 During that meeting Joe Baker spoke about
20 institutional abuse and things like that and at the
21 end of the meeting there was about 13 of us from
22 Ferryhouse together so we formed a group. We didn't
23 give it any name at that time, we just formed a
24 group, to see what we could do about the abuse that
25 we suffered while children, sexual, physical,
26 traumatic and verbal abuse in an institution where we
27 were sent to be cared for, in an institution where we
28 were supposed to be taught, cleaned, looked after and
29 fed. As far as I am concerned none of them happened.



1 We were neither fed, properly looked after or
2 educated. I myself didn't even pass the primary,
3 I don't think I even got as far as that. I am not
4 here today to talk just about myself.

5
6 I am here to talk to hundreds of boys and girls that
7 went into institutions in this country which was
8 known then as the Island of Saints and Scholars. If
9 you asked me to name it now I call it the island of
10 rogues and robbers.

11
12 After that meeting I personally went out and looked
13 for a little office so as we could meet, the
14 committee could meet and discuss what we could do and
15 things like that. Everything that was done at that
16 time came from my pocket. Nobody was prepared to
17 give us one cent, not one cent were they prepared to
18 give us because first of all they treated us as
19 liars. We were liars, this never happened, nothing
20 happened, this couldn't happen, wouldn't happen but
21 it did happen, my god it did happen.

22
23 We set out to try and inform other people who were in
24 other institutions about what we were about and
25 I placed an add in the paper and gave a private phone
26 number and after that the phone calls started coming
27 in. I was interviewed on local radio and local press
28 and from that people read about it. Before that
29 people had known that I was in Ferryhouse because of



1 my Late Late Show appearance and my hour with Gay
2 Byrne when I met my brother after 48 years. From
3 that the group grew stronger, stronger, stronger,
4 continued to grow

5 3 Q. How many members does your group have, Mr. O'Brien?

6 A. The group to date have over 300 members. We have
7 members from different institutions including ladies
8 from convents and that. My heart, believe it or
9 believe it not, go out to the ladies who were abused
10 more so than it do funnily enough go out to the boys.
11 It really goes out to what happened some of the
12 misfortunate children, female children, that I have
13 heard.

14
15 What was our aim? Our aim was to get the State to do
16 something about this abuse. Why? That it would
17 never again happen in this country that any child
18 would be abused again in this country. That was our
19 main aim. Every obstacle that you can think of was
20 put in our way, no help from nobody.

21
22 We started meeting with other groups. We travelled
23 here to Dublin and I remember bringing four people
24 here to Dublin with me, three and myself, sorry, and
25 between us we had €22, I had €22. Nobody else had a
26 cent and we were here for the best part of eight
27 hours in the city and we lived on €22 to feed four of
28 us. Did anybody care? Nobody cared just like they
29 didn't care when we were children. This abuse that



1 I talk about was going on for years and nobody gave a
2 heck about it, nobody cared, nobody wanted to care.
3 Even today you see religious orders running to the
4 Supreme Court to slow up procedures that we want to
5 get over and done with because in the long run we
6 have to come to closure, we have to find closure. We
7 have to find happiness. We will never find it, never
8 find it unless the right things are done, unless this
9 Commission (indicating) do the right think by us.

10
11 I am not asking the Chairman of the Commission to
12 come out and come on side with us. I would ask the
13 Commission to be fair to us and be fair to both sides
14 because remember this, and we seen it lately in the
15 papers, no matter what group of people you have there
16 are bad eggs in every group, no matter where you go.
17 We have heard it on the papers there just last week,
18 the week before, about another tribunal that's going
19 on here in the city.

20
21 Don't come along and say that every priest, every
22 brother, every nun or anybody that ever worked in an
23 institution was bad, no they weren't. There were
24 good ones, there were some very good ones, but there
25 were some very, very bad ones and these are the
26 people that we want to see named. These are the
27 people that we want the apology for, not for the
28 people that are there that done nothing, we want the
29 apology for the people that done the deed, the



1 perpetrators of the crimes because I consider them
2 crimes. I don't care what anybody else says, but
3 there is a lot of other people besides priests and
4 brothers and nuns. The judges in this State at that
5 time ran us into institutions without even hearing
6 what we had to say.

7

8 The Gardaí of the day picked some people up off the
9 street and shoved them into institutions. For what?
10 To make up the numbers, to make up the numbers so
11 that institution would get its full whack from the
12 State, from the Department of Education who in turn
13 got it from the Department of Finance.

14

15 The Gardaí, the judges, the ministers for education
16 at that time, if they were alive today that were
17 there in my time I would look for them to be sacked
18 and their pensions taken off of them because they did
19 not do their job right, they failed us completely.
20 Why?

21

22 In the beginning they never sent in inspectors, and
23 you can read it here, they never sent in inspectors
24 and when they did there was letters flowing from
25 inspector to Department, from inspector to
26 Department, from Department to the inspector but
27 nothing was happening, the abuse was going on.
28 What will they say to you today or tomorrow? The
29 people in charge know the abuses done. I personally



1 know the people in charge knew what was going on
2 because I reported it.

3
4 You see we have a problem, particularly those who
5 were sexually abused have a massive problem on their
6 hands because we deal with people who have never been
7 sexually abused, who have never been sexually abused.
8 Thank god, but for those of us who have nobody can
9 come along and tell me what it's like to be sexually
10 abused if you have not been sexually abused. There
11 is nobody in this world can tell you what it's like
12 to be sexually abused if you have not been sexually
13 abused.

14
15 That's why we set up our group to see can we get our
16 rights back, to see can we get redress for what
17 happened for those of us who didn't do so well after
18 coming out. Why didn't we do so well after coming
19 out of institution? Because we weren't educated or
20 trained to be ready to come out of an institution.
21 It's an awful thing to take a child from an
22 institution and bring him out into the country, bring
23 him out into the public. Here he has been locked up
24 for, we will say, from two to eight year, ten years
25 in some cases, 16/15 in some cases, and try and
26 introduce that child into public life again. There
27 is no way you can do it unless you train him while
28 they were in here and prepare him for when they are
29 coming out here. That was never done. I hope it's



1 being done today for young offenders and that and get
2 them ready so that they will not re-offend.

3
4 People will ask why we went for legal teams to
5 represent us. Let me say it here, and it's a pity
6 Charlie McCreevy is not sitting down there, I would
7 say to him only for the legal teams we wouldn't be as
8 far as we are today. It was they helped us on, it
9 was they gave us the courage to continue on because
10 nobody else wanted to talk to us. I went through
11 three solicitors in Clonmel to take my case. No way,
12 wouldn't touch me with a 40 foot pole. Ask them
13 today will they do it, they will. That's their
14 business, I don't care whether they do it or not.

15
16 Why do we need legal representation because we
17 ourselves are not capable enough for
18 ... (INTERJECTION)

19 CHAIRMAN: Mr. O'Brien, there is no
20 problem with legal
21 representation.

22 A. Well, I am just saying how we got through them
23 CHAIRMAN: No, but let me tell you,
24 every single complainant to
25 the Investigation Committee, every single complainant
26 is entitled to full legal representation, every
27 single complainant of the 1700 odd. Not one of them
28 has been refused legal representation. Almost all of
29 them have availed themselves of that. A tiny



1 minority have said they don't want it, they are free
2 to do that, but every single person has been given
3 legal representation.

4 A. A Cathaoirleach, may I tell you something that was
5 not the way in the beginning when this started.

6 CHAIRMAN: I agree with that.

7 A. That was not the way. When we started here, a
8 Cathaoirleach, when we started here we were told
9 I, the Commission, or the Department of Education
10 will employ a group of representatives, legal
11 representatives, to represent you. I stood up at
12 that time and said no way you will not and only for
13 we fought it, it would have happened, we the
14 survivors fought it, it would have happened not
15 anybody else.

16 4 Q. CHAIRMAN: Maybe so. There was a
17 rationale behind that,
18 Mr. O'Brien. It might be right, you may agree with
19 it, you may not agree with it, but the result is we
20 are a lot down river from that bridge. We have
21 travelled a long way since then and everybody has
22 individual legal representation, whether it's a good
23 thing or a bad thing, it doesn't matter what you
24 think or what I think, it's a fact. Could I ask you,
25 the meeting in Hearn's hotel, have you a date for
26 that, you said in 1999?

27 A. I haven't.

28 5 Q. CHAIRMAN: You said in your statement
29 you said it was September,



1 is that about right?

2 A. Yes, September, about September.

3 6 Q. CHAIRMAN: The person who organised
4 that, do you know anything
5 about that, is she still associated with your group?

6 A. No, she is not.

7 7 Q. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The group that came
8 together there, the sort of
9 original 12 or 13 people, arising out of that that
10 expanded to be the present group that you have; is
11 that right?

12 A. That's right.

13 8 Q. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Could you tell us
14 something about your
15 activities, what you are doing? I mean I appreciate
16 a lot of the history, a lot of what you are telling
17 us I think is relevant at a different stage of this,
18 you know what I mean. You appreciate that we are
19 conscious that we don't want other people to be
20 coming in saying Mr. O'Brien is blaming us for this,
21 that and the other and we want an opportunity of
22 responding to that. There will be a time obviously
23 when that process has to happen as you appreciate
24 perfectly well, nobody better I am sure, but anyway
25 can you tell us what you have been doing and what the
26 group has been doing, has it been doing anything
27 about counselling or what's it been doing about that?

28 A. When we started first there was no touch thing as
29 counselling, there was no counselling whatsoever.



1 Faoiseamh then started up. That's run by the
2 Catholic church. Then I got in contact with the
3 health board in the area, the South Eastern Health
4 Board, and told them that we had people who needed
5 counselling and all that. At that stage they were
6 referring them to a place called Coolgraney House in
7 Clonmel and they weren't happy there. I appreciated
8 that they weren't happy because this abuse thing was
9 beginning to circulate. They then formed in our area
10 a group called Cohar, it's a branch of the South
11 Eastern Health Board. It's run by the South Eastern
12 Health Board, it's financed by the South Eastern
13 Health Board and we have set up a place in Clonmel
14 where people can go, a place in Carrick, a place in
15 Tipperary, a place in Waterford, Wexford, there is
16 many places that Cohar can do in the south eastern
17 region. There is other counselling areas belonging
18 to the Health Boards in different areas as well.

19
20 We also advise people to seek legal advice. We also
21 advise people to go to their local TD. You see
22 nothing was happening at that stage. There had been
23 nothing about setting up of the Laffoy Commission at
24 that time. There was nothing at all about the
25 setting up of the Redress Board at that time so we
26 started pushing for something to be done and that was
27 done.

28
29 We hold meetings every now and again just to inform



1 people of what's happening, where things are going,
2 that so many have gone through the Redress Board from
3 the group, that the Commission is starting up and
4 whatever is happening we inform them of what's
5 happening.

6
7 What are we doing today? Today we are trying to seek
8 an apology, that is our main aim at the present
9 moment, to seek an apology. That's very important to
10 us, it's the most important thing. You can forget
11 about your Redress Boards, you can forget about your
12 Commission, we need an apology for what happened.
13 The Taoiseach's apology was okay, that was for what
14 State didn't do. Personally when I speak, I speak of
15 the one institution, we need the apology from the
16 people who ran that institution.

17
18 I would suggest that all institutions apologise for
19 what happened in their institutions, particularly if
20 it's proven that it did happen. Personally I say
21 that the dogs on the street know it happened.

22
23 When will we finish? I would say we will finish when
24 we get the apology. I will be prepared to walk away
25 from it when we get the apology. I think that is
26 what I call closure.

27
28 You see maybe if people weren't involved in groups
29 and there were individuals and that, maybe they would



1 find closure after the Redress, maybe they would find
2 closure after the Commission, but I suppose when you
3 are involved in it you are never going to find
4 closure until you get that apology. The apology is
5 of the utmost importance to each and every one of us.
6 We must have it, we must have the apology. I think
7 it's the way of saying it's over. It will never be
8 over for us of course, never, I still wake up in the
9 middle of the night, so will Paddy McGrath or
10 whatever the name, Josephine Tuohy or whatever the
11 names are will still wake up in the middle of the
12 night from a dream of what happened or from a sudden
13 fear there is someone standing at the end of their
14 beds or something like that ready to take them out of
15 their beds and things like that. That will always be
16 there, but at least when we have the Commission out
17 of the way, the Redress out of the way and the
18 apology we can say then that everything is done that
19 we can do. That's all we can do. We can't do
20 anymore. We have come up against what we call "the
21 wall" and that's it, we can't go any further than
22 that. That would be my wish and my aim as Chairman
23 of a group that we would go that way and try and get
24 that done.

25
26 Personally I would hope that the Commission will
27 finish in two to three years because if you drag it
28 out, if you drag it out, even though I am finished
29 with the Commission, after appearing with the



1 Commission I am finished in a certain way, I am still
2 in contact with you because I am Chairman of a group
3 and that. I still read about it, I hear about it,
4 it's on the papers, it's on the television,
5 everything about it and it brings it all back to you,
6 it brings the whole thing back to you.

7
8 I will just to give you an instance, I didn't sleep
9 last night, I am awake all night preparing for this.
10 It's all back to you again and that sort of thing.
11 That's what we have come to. It's when each group
12 agrees that their apology is the right apology and it
13 has to be unequivocal, there is no other answer to
14 it, there is no other word for it, unequivocal
15 apology for what happened to children when they were
16 young and a guarantee by these institutions if they
17 still run institutions that it will never happen
18 again in their institutions, and an agreement by the
19 State and the Church that they will do everything in
20 their power to make sure that no child in this State,
21 whether it be an immigrant or a member of the State,
22 will ever be abused again in this State. If we got
23 that, if we got that guarantee it would be a massive
24 step forward, a massive step forward. It would be
25 the pinnacle of everything that we have tried for
26 today.

27
28 Cathaoirleach, I came here this morning and I said
29 I wasn't going to get angry and thanks be to god



1 I didn't get angry, but I do get angry, I do get
2 angry. It's only a couple of days ago, a couple of
3 weeks ago that a certain religious order admitted to
4 the abuse that went on in the institution that I was
5 in. They admitted to it, we have it on paper, and
6 I think they are on the road to an apology. I am
7 nearly 100% certain that will come, well done.
8 I will be the first person to shake their hand on
9 that day and say, thank you and well done because the
10 people who are apologising probably never ever abused
11 anyone, but they are apologising for those that did
12 in the horrible places that this State set up.

13
14 Maybe the State was right when they thought of
15 setting them up in the beginning and saying boys and
16 girls will be looked after. That's what we were sent
17 in there for. Taken out of your home, big burning
18 red fire, baked bread on the table, the spuds on the
19 fire, and you were taken away from this and dumped
20 into this massive big place with four big walls and
21 these fellows with white collars and big long women's
22 cloaks on them looking after you and every chance
23 they got they bet the lard out of you.

24 CHAIRMAN: Mr. O'Brien, you are going
25 to give me a problem now
26 because you know and I know there are things we are
27 simply not allowed do in public, the Act says that,
28 the law binds me to that.

29 A. I appreciate that.



1 CHAIRMAN: There are other things,
2 there are other areas that
3 are the matter for a different hearing, for a
4 different occasion. We both know that. We have met
5 before, we have explained this to you, I understand
6 you get worked up, but rules are rules, I have to
7 impose them.

8 A. I appreciate that. I have no problem with you
9 imposing rules.

10 CHAIRMAN: I don't want you getting
11 annoyed.

12 A. Sorry

13 CHAIRMAN: I don't want you getting
14 annoyed.

15 A. I promise you I won't get annoyed.

16 CHAIRMAN: I understand.

17 A. You will understand --

18 CHAIRMAN: I do understand.

19 A. -- why we get annoyed because we have been looked
20 down on all our lives.

21 CHAIRMAN: You are not being looked
22 down on here, Mr. O'Brien,
23 as you know.

24 A. No, I am not saying that, I am not saying that. I am
25 saying we were looked down on.

26 CHAIRMAN: I understand that.

27 A. We still are by some. Let's call a spade a spade.

28 CHAIRMAN: If I go back to what you
29 said earlier, and



1 I couldn't agree with you more and I think my
2 colleagues would agree entirely, that it's a very
3 fair and reasonable way of putting it to say, yes,
4 you want us to achieve justice, but you are equally
5 conscious of the need to be fair all around to each
6 side. We couldn't have put it more clearly or better
7 as our mission as to what we have to do. I think you
8 have put it in precisely the words that echo with us.

9 A. That is probably the politician coming out in me.

10 CHAIRMAN: No, I think it's very fair.
11 I appreciate that. I do
12 want to put a little break if you don't mind.
13 I don't want you getting too worked up or I don't
14 want you saying things that in all fairness we will
15 have to be putting out of our minds, do you know what
16 I mean? We are going to have complaints.

17 A. What you are saying is I shouldn't have said we were
18 bet up?

19 CHAIRMAN: Correct. It's not a
20 criticism, it's just an
21 acknowledgment of fact. There are things I can do
22 and things I can't do.

23 A. Instead of using that we will say we were abused.

24 CHAIRMAN: I understand that. Listen,
25 thank you very much, I am
26 appreciative, we are very appreciative. If there is
27 something else you wanted to tell us about your group
28 please do so. If Ms. Fergus wants to?

29 9 Q. MS. FERGUS: I have one question about



1 how your group is funded?

2 A. The group is funded by the Department of Education
3 and very miserly may I say. When I set up this group
4 we had nothing as I told you. I have just counted
5 before I came up, I paid three ESB bills which were
6 not mine. I paid two rents, I paid transport for
7 people up and down here out of my own pocket and
8 I begged and craved for the State to give me a few
9 pounds, a few euros, and didn't get it. That should
10 not have been, not if you are supplying one group
11 with one thing, you treat every human being as equal
12 and do your best to make sure that they all have
13 equal amounts of what they should have in that line,
14 not to pile everything into one group -- I have my
15 own reasons for that, I think I said it to you at
16 another meeting we had -- because I don't want
17 anything off anybody, personally I don't want
18 anything off anybody, but these people who come out
19 of institutions are destitute some of them. Let's be
20 honest about it, they are destitute. There are
21 broken families, some of them don't see their
22 children because they took a drink and rows started
23 in the home and all this and I just try and keep them
24 together.

25
26 I am sorry that I wasn't able to bring some of the
27 Commission or some of the Redress Board down and make
28 them sit in and listen to what goes on at a meeting,
29 listen to what I would have to put up with and what



1 their stories were of their own particular thing,
2 what happened them. They got no jobs, nobody wanted
3 them, nobody wanted them. I don't understand.

4
5 There are some of us went out with brass necks and
6 big mouths, that's why he is telling me stay quiet,
7 and that's how I got on. I fought for everything
8 I have and I am not afraid to say it. I said I will
9 get you back however I will get you back, I am going
10 to get there, that's how I done it. There is a lot
11 of misfortunates out there. I would probably say
12 today because it's not dole day, tomorrow they
13 probably will, but they will not have a bit of meat
14 or a spud on their table and most of us that are here
15 now will dine in a restaurant this evening.

16
17 When you stop and think for a few minutes about that,
18 be honest about it, stop and think, they are out
19 there and they are only out there because they were
20 in institutions and they just could not make it when
21 they got out. They got married thinking they were
22 doing a great job and the next thing the marriage
23 broke up and what happened? There were little
24 children left then with nothing.

25
26 You see this thing just don't stop with abuse in an
27 institution. There was tags put on it that went way
28 down along the line afterwards. That's what we have
29 to get into our minds. I as one of them have to do



1 it just the same as everybody else, get into our
2 minds that these things are out there. They are
3 poor, they are poverished. They are waiting for the
4 Vincent de Paul man to come on a Wednesday or
5 Thursday evening whenever he calls with a few bob.
6 That's not right, not now, not when you had the tiger
7 or the lion or whatever they call it, but it's still
8 there today, still there today here in this country,
9 supposed to be one of the best European countries
10 financially and it is still there today. Why?
11 Because they were in an institution, no other reason.

12 CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much,
13 Mr. O'Brien. I think
14 Mr. Lowe would like to ask you some questions.

15 10 Q. MR. LOWE: Two questions. First of
16 all, did you learn anything
17 when you started meeting as a group which you didn't
18 know already? Secondly, do you think the group will
19 still have a function when you have closure and an
20 apology?

21 A. First one I will take first. Did I learn anything?
22 I learned an awful lot. When you are sexually abused
23 you think you are the only person in the whole world
24 that has been sexually abused because you know and
25 I know these people who sexually abuse you never do
26 it publically or otherwise. They do it privately to
27 you in a place where they won't be seen and they
28 always do it, as far as I am concerned, they always
29 done it to me where there was an escape. The escape



1 where it was done to me was out through a skylight, a
2 hole in the roof and I pushed up there if someone
3 came to the door of the laundry. Sorry, your second
4 question.

5 11 Q. MR. LOWE: Sorry, I understood your
6 answer to that one the
7 extent of sexually abuse was something that
8 ... (INTERJECTION)

9 A. Unbelievable.

10 12 Q. MR. LOWE: The second question. Do
11 you think the groups will
12 still have a function after an apology and closure?

13 A. Personally, I will just answer personally, I have a
14 life to carry on. I have a wife here with me this
15 morning, I have a family and I have grandchildren.
16 I want to go back to them and go back to the things
17 we used to do together, go off for a spin, take a few
18 days off here and there, I want to go back to that.
19 Just after taking up this, I lost my seat in
20 politics, people say, we don't want you anymore and
21 you lose your seat, simple at that. I was saying to
22 myself this is a chance now I am finished with
23 politics, but this thing started. I didn't think it
24 would balloon as far as it ballooned but it did.

25
26 If you ask me what did I learn about it? I learned
27 that we should never turn anyone away with a story,
28 we should check it out first and maybe if it had been
29 done in the early stages this Commission would not be



1 hearing it today, it would not have to be here today.
2 If we were believed, that word "believed", if we were
3 believed that it happened, but they denied it from
4 the word go, this did not happen, Catholic Ireland,
5 couldn't happen, no way. You heard what happened
6 here in Dublin, that's their business, I am not going
7 to go into that, I have my own business problems down
8 in Clonmel, they would not believe us. They told me
9 to my face across a table it never happened. That is
10 the most hurtful thing you can do knowing in your
11 heart and soul it happened.

12
13 I have two brothers who, if you ask me today quietly
14 in a corner, my answer would be question, yes, they
15 were, but I never seen the act so I cannot say it,
16 legally I cannot say it but I know they were. One of
17 them took it to his grave.

18
19 Why? Because if we said it in that time, just
20 supposing that I, Michael O'Brien, went into the
21 parish priest of Peter and Paul's in Clonmel, we will
22 say, and said, father, I want to tell you a story
23 that happened me. "Get out, where do you think you
24 are, get out, there is no such thing that went on,
25 who the hell are you talking to, get out of here,"
26 that was the answer you got. When I went to the
27 person when I had a big black eye, "go away or you
28 will have one on the other side."

29 MR. LOWE: Thank you



1 A. Your second question?

2 MR. LOWE: No, you really answered
3 both, thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much,
5 Mr. O'Brien, for the most
6 eloquent presentation and a pleasure to see you
7 again. Thank you very much.

8

9

10 THE WITNESS THEN WITHDREW

11

12 CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. McMahon?

13 MR. McMAHON: I would like now to call
14 Mr. Mick Waters who is the
15 Chairman and Coordinator of SOCA UK.

16 CHAIRMAN: Certainly. Good morning,
17 Mr. Waters.

18 A. Good morning.

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1 MR. MICK WATERS, HAVING BEEN AFFIRMED, WAS EXAMINED
2 BY MR. McMAHON, AS FOLLOWS

3
4
5 CHAIRMAN: Sit down there, Mr. Waters,
6 and make yourself
7 comfortable.

8 13 Q. MR. McMAHON: Mr. Waters, you are a
9 member of a group called
10 SOCA UK?

11 A. That's correct.

12 14 Q. Can you tell the Committee your position in that
13 group?

14 A. I am the Chairperson for SOCA UK.

15 15 Q. Would you like to tell the Committee about the
16 background of that group and then perhaps go on and
17 deal with the emergence of childhood abuse as an
18 issue insofar as it touches on that group?

19 A. In the early 90's there was intense media pressure
20 regarding abuses, alleged abuses, that had taken
21 place in the institutes in Ireland.

22 16 Q. Yes.

23 A. There was a case of some Christian Brothers that had
24 been charged with abuse of children in their care.
25 It was published in the Irish papers and it was also
26 picked up mainstream in the UK in the papers as well.

27 17 Q. Approximately when was that?

28 A. That would have been about 1996/1997 and I think it
29 led on, I believe, from -- well, I know -- from three



1 people, two I know that are present in this room
2 today who actually stood up to a television programme
3 and brought it mainstream

4 18 Q. Yes. You have lived in the United Kingdom for some
5 length of time now?

6 A. I have, yes.

7 19 Q. Can you tell the Committee how you have become
8 involved in a group of people coming together and how
9 the issue of abuse has come to the fore with that
10 group?

11 A. Well, I goes back a long time to when myself and a
12 couple of lads met for just a social occasion, two of
13 the lads that had been in Artane with me.

14 20 Q. Yes. How far back was that ... (INTERJECTION)

15 A. We were just talking about things and it was mostly
16 social first and then at some stage we would talk
17 about the school and talk about what happened and how
18 they ended up in England and why they left Ireland to
19 come to England and how they come to London.

20 21 Q. Yes.

21 A. We were meeting on a regular basis and we became
22 actually firm friends, albeit they were in the school
23 at different times.

24 22 Q. For how far back have you been meeting with these
25 friends?

26 A. Since 1965 it actually started when we met as two or
27 three people.

28 23 Q. Yes.

29 A. Over a period of time more or less through word of



1 mouth the information got around and people were
2 saying, I was in Artane and I was talking to a couple
3 of guys who I met in a certain place. It sort of
4 went from there. It was over a period of a few
5 months, say six/seven months, then there was more
6 people coming, Artane boys mainly. It sort of went
7 like that up to ... (INTERJECTION)

8 24 Q. What sort of a grouping or get-together was organised
9 by these people?

10 A. It was very informal at first. It was more on a
11 social thing because what must be realised is a lot
12 of the men and the women, in this case we are talking
13 about the men from Artane, a lot of them lads, their
14 family was the friends in Artane and when they became
15 16 years of age and they were sent out into the
16 world, they had no family, they had no connection out
17 there albeit there was hostels and various things
18 like that, but they felt alienated and stigmatised
19 when they would try and get any sort of a decent job.
20 They would get, where was your education, where did
21 you go to school? In their innocence or honesty or
22 naivety, whatever you want to call it, they would put
23 down CBS Artane Dublin. Of course it was recognised
24 straight away and because of the fact that the kids
25 were in there they were stigmatised as being bad
26 people, so to speak, and not wanted in that type of
27 employment so that's what led to quite a lot of the
28 people actually going to the UK and further afield.

29 25 Q. Yes.



1 A. That was the first sort of serious knock-back that
2 they met in their lifetime, the fact that they
3 weren't welcome into Irish society, they were
4 outcasts of Irish society.

5 26 Q. Some of the moved to the United Kingdom?

6 A. So they went over to the UK. Because of moving over
7 to the UK they had now left Ireland completely so
8 they had no connections, no familiar connections,
9 whatsoever. They were now in an alien place. The
10 fact that they knew that there was one or two people
11 that was in any institute, in this case being in
12 Artane, it sort of brought that bond back together,
13 that thing that we had, we are together, we are the
14 same. I don't have to explain to you, it's just that
15 bond that was in the school that it bonded back up
16 again. They felt some sort of real people, "I am a
17 person", and feel a bit more good about themselves.

18 27 Q. Back in the beginning how did these people get to
19 come in contact with one another, did they travel
20 from Ireland to the UK together or did they meet one
21 another in the UK, how did they get to come together
22 and come to meet up?

23 A. A lot of the people, when they left they went to
24 different parts of the UK. Again it wasn't a thing,
25 it wasn't a badge that you would wear, telling
26 everyone that you were in an institute, it was just
27 something that because of what happened to you in
28 Ireland that you didn't want to talk about the fact
29 that you were in an institute, you wanted to leave



1 that behind in Ireland when you went to this new
2 country, so to speak. Therefore you were again get
3 alienating yourself, you were in a country where you
4 didn't know anybody, you couldn't talk about --
5 people talk about school days, what you done in
6 school, what sport, you hadn't got that in common, it
7 wasn't there because you couldn't converse it to
8 people, you couldn't talk about your school so
9 therefore there was nothing there even to start a
10 conversation.

11 28 Q. You have spoken of times back in 1965 and onwards and
12 you have described what seems to be a sort of a
13 social occasion, a get-together, would that be
14 correct?

15 A. Yes.

16 29 Q. Did that social get-together require a more formal --
17 was a more formal arrangement reached as the years
18 went by or how did it develop?

19 A. Well, I suppose basically speaking the people felt as
20 one, they felt as one. Sharing a trust and sharing
21 experiences, just general life experiences, I am not
22 talking about delving into the times in the
23 institutes, just the experiences of having to leave
24 and coming over here, it was building up a trust
25 because even though we were in the institutes at
26 different times, one of the first things that you
27 lose is trust and even when you meet with someone,
28 even in your own time in the institute it's the trust
29 thing.



1 30 Q. Yes.

2 A. It just sort of the social gathering, getting to know

3 each other again, getting to trust each other. Then

4 once that was established that there was a trust

5 there, then there was, shall we say, a format for a

6 group to form where instead of just individual people

7 then you could be together as a group which was then

8 named as the Artane Old Boys School.

9 31 Q. Yes. What was the focus of this group, was the focus

10 of this group a continuation of the social side of

11 things or did it extend beyond that?

12 A. Well as time went by -- yes, the social side was

13 always there, that was always a big part because the

14 people were able to relax with each other after the

15 strains and stresses of the week or the month or

16 whatever the case may be, but it became apparent and

17 a general feeling that people wanted to do something,

18 they just couldn't ... (INTERJECTION)

19 32 Q. Do something about what?

20 A. To do something -- they felt, look, these things

21 happened and we are all over here and we are feeling

22 bad because we had to leave Ireland, why did we have

23 to leave Ireland and they said well why are we in

24 this situation? People will now be saying who can we

25 contact, is there anyone we can contact as a small

26 group to try and bring some focus on to what happened

27 to us in the institutes.

28 33 Q. Yes. You said that it emerged that these things

29 happened. At that time who were the things that



1 ... (INTERJECTION)

2 A. In what respect?

3 34 Q. You said that it became apparent that these things

4 happened, what things are you referring to?

5 A. Well, most of the stuff that people would talk about

6 was the beatings, the physical abuse.

7 35 Q. Yes.

8 A. They would also talk about the general neglect, they

9 would talk about the education.

10 36 Q. Yes.

11 A. They would talk about the general things that helped

12 to run the school and how it was run and how it was

13 orchestrated by the religious in charge in the

14 various things that children had to do, things that

15 as children they were forced to do and the very

16 undignified acts that some of them was made to go

17 through.

18 37 Q. Yes. As this awareness began to emerge, were things

19 done by the group in relation to it?

20 A. Well, you must remember that we were people that were

21 acting in the sense that we had been there and we had

22 been hurt and we needed to know why this was allowed

23 to happen basically speaking, that was the question,

24 why were these things allowed to happen to us and who

25 was responsible

26 38 Q. Yes.

27 A. We were sort of educating ourselves because we hadn't

28 got a clue how to handle a situation like this, we

29 knew what had gone wrong but how to address it



1 because we were educated people by a long shot.

2 39 Q. Yes.

3 A. So we sat down and it was just a sort of a melting

4 pot of ideas of what we could do. It was then

5 decided that we would take up the pen as they say and

6 we would start writing letters to various people to

7 try to bring focus, bring some attention on to what

8 had happened to us and may I say what was still

9 happening in the institutes.

10 40 Q. You decided to take up the pen and do something, to

11 write to people. Can you give an indication to the

12 Committee about what time, about when in terms of

13 years are you talking about at this stage?

14 A. Well, it was over a period of time because it was

15 composing one letter to one person and then another

16 person you would write to would probably be a

17 politician, and then another person may be working

18 for a newspaper. We were learning to get the letters

19 together and how to address the person in the correct

20 manner so over a period of time we learned those

21 skills so basically speaking it was writing to

22 everyone, every man and his dog, so to speak, that we

23 thought might listen.

24 41 Q. Here you are writing to people about the experience

25 that people had gone through. Are you talking about

26 the late 1990's which you have described earlier at

27 this point in time or are you talking about an

28 earlier period in time?

29 A. No, it was not long after, probably around the 60's,



1 '67 when we started. We started off with the odd
2 letter and it was then in 1967 because of my wife's
3 mother took seriously ill, she had come to live in
4 Coventry and we were going up and down to Coventry so
5 we decided that we would move up to Coventry. We
6 moved to Coventry then. We still had to keep this
7 link with the group in the London area and the
8 surrounding areas.

9 42 Q. Yes. You previously had been living in London?
10 A. Yes.

11 43 Q. I did not make that clear.
12 A. Then I moved to Coventry. That created a problem in
13 itself because of the fact that it's getting up and
14 down the country to meetings and from the financial
15 point of view.

16 44 Q. Yes.
17 A. We actually based the All Artane Boys in Coventry
18 itself so therefore we would go down to London and
19 then we would meet with different people, little
20 pockets of people.

21 45 Q. You referred to meetings, can you talk to us about
22 the meetings which you were having, were they regular
23 meetings or were they ad hoc meetings, was it once a
24 year, a number of time a year?
25 A. In the early days it would probably be somewhere
26 between three times a year to four times a year that
27 we would meet.

28 46 Q. Yes.
29 A. Again as a financial restriction, you know.



1 47 Q. Yes.
2 A. At the time then there wasn't the phone. You would
3 be sort of looked on as very posh if you had a phone
4 in your home in them days.
5 48 Q. Yes. The letters you have spoken of, who was writing
6 the letters?
7 A. Well, ... (INTERJECTION)
8 49 Q. Had you different people to write them or did the
9 burden fall mainly on a few?
10 A. No, no, because we felt that we wanted to empower
11 each other, that we all wanted to be involved, that
12 it wouldn't be down to sort of one person.
13 50 Q. Yes.
14 A. Of course different people had got different
15 approaches about expressing themselves and we felt
16 that it was very important, among ourselves, that the
17 person or persons should write that letter. Of
18 course we would see what had been written, but write
19 it in their own way rather than in any ...
20 51 Q. What type of people did you write letters?
21 A. As I say we wrote to everybody and anybody that we
22 thought might be able to help. There wasn't, to be
23 perfectly honest, there wasn't a great lot of
24 response or a great lot of encouragement in that
25 respect. Looking back on hindsight we can all see
26 the reason as for why. It's like it wasn't ready, it
27 wasn't ready to come to fruition. There was too many
28 weeds there, there was much darkness there for the
29 actual thing to survive itself. It was only later on



1 in life as I say with the people that sat in this
2 room that actually stood up and done that, that
3 brought it out. It had come to a natural fruition
4 then. Once it actually come to its own natural
5 fruition man or beast or God was never going to stop
6 it because it was of a natural doing, it came out
7 there and that was it, it was the timing.

8 52 Q. Yes. Can I bring you forward in time then to the
9 mid-90's and you have described I think certain
10 incidents coming to the public eye during that time,
11 did that affect what was happening in your group and
12 if so how?

13 A. It certainly did because in the mid-60's the
14 programme come out, "Dear Daughter" it's got to be
15 said that this was actually ... (INTERJECTION)

16 CHAIRMAN: I think you mean the
17 mid-90's.

18 A. In the mid-90's, I beg your pardon, in the mid-90's.
19 This without doubt was ground breaking stuff.

20 MR. McMAHON: Yes.

21 A. This was the flagship overall, this was the one that
22 now had brought it all mainstream

23 53 Q. Yes. Did it have an effect on the ground so to speak
24 amongst your members?

25 A. It certainly did because although we were supporting
26 each other and coming up into the mid-90's now you
27 had a mixed group of people. It was no longer a sort
28 of -- although it still had a title until into the
29 mid-90's, the Artane Old Boys, but that was really



1 redundant, that was defunct as such because there was
2 women that was involved as well that had been in the
3 institutes.

4 54 Q. Yes.

5 A. Of course no matter what anybody says what men went
6 through in the institutes and what women went through
7 in the institutes, it's a different -- and
8 I am not trying to say any one was less than the
9 other, it was very, very severe but the women seemed
10 to be better addressing it amongst the females rather
11 than with the male, if you understand what I mean.
12 Really you had the female members of the organisation
13 and you had the male members of the organisation.

14 55 Q. Yes.

15 A. The fact of the two to three people standing up and
16 the three ladies concerned and bringing this
17 mainstream was such a huge boost to the people and
18 particularly to the female people that was in the
19 group that had been in the institute. Really it gave
20 such a huge confidence to the women. Of course
21 within the group itself once confidence is flowing
22 the confidence touches everybody so it created an
23 absolute brilliant confident surge with the people in
24 general.

25 56 Q. What difference did that make?

26 A. Confidence, it gave them confidence. Confidence is a
27 great thing because the thing with us being in the
28 institute is we always had a feeling that it was only
29 happening to us, that it wasn't a collective thing.



1 So when this happened then it comes out and you say,
2 (indicating), it didn't just happen to me. It
3 happened to other people as well. That in itself is
4 a great relief. It lets off so much of this stress
5 and this built-in frustration that people have been
6 carrying around, including myself, carrying around
7 like that, that it just only happened to me.

8 57 Q. You have spoken already about stories of beatings and
9 of the general way in which the institutions were run
10 as being what was discussed at your earlier meetings,
11 was there a change in the type of stories which were
12 emerging around this time, around the time this
13 confidence was developing?

14 A. It's a very, very difficult thing for any of the
15 people that was in the institutes to talk about.
16 Perhaps one of the most serious and damaging type of
17 abuse is the sexual abuse.

18 58 Q. Yes.

19 A. From a male's point of view it was not the done thing
20 to discuss that, you just couldn't talk about it, you
21 just didn't want to talk about it because you didn't
22 quite understand it all in your head. As a man thing
23 you just thought well, I don't want to talk about
24 that, it's better if I don't. From the female's
25 point of view no doubt it was the same.

26 59 Q. Yes.

27 A. But with the guys it was a huge thing. When it came
28 out about the various religious being charged with
29 the sexual abuse in the certain institutions, that



1 actually was such a relief to the people because
2 although we would talk and we had confidence amongst
3 each other and we were now doing work for awareness
4 and to bring attention and some focus and spotlight
5 on to what was happening, in the background all the
6 time the most serious one of all was the sexual
7 abuse.

8 60 Q. Yes.

9 A. So now that came on board. That was another major
10 change around that time to what was sort of, shall we
11 say, happening down through the years.

12 MR. McMAHON: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN: We will stop there for a
14 moment, the stenographers
15 wish to swap.

16 61 Q. Around this time was there a change in your
17 organisation or changes in the way it began to
18 operate? Perhaps is it wrong to call it
19 organisation?

20 A. No. As I say, there was a transitional period where
21 it wasn't appropriate. As I said before, the actual
22 name of Artane Old Boys was defunct because the group
23 have moved into a different area. It was a changing
24 of the name from the Artane Old Boys over into a name
25 that would represent all the institutes because that
26 was the request that was coming through. We haven't
27 got an organisation as such, named as such, with an
28 infrastructure to deal with all the institutes.

29 62 Q. Around this time, first of all what were you doing.



1 If you can tell the committee what you were doing,
2 or were you doing anything, in view of the changes
3 which you have described, in view of the occurrence
4 of the changes which you have described?
5 A. Well, I was calling meetings.
6 63 Q. Can you tell the committee about that?
7 A. It became quite apparent that the amount of people
8 that were now prepared, shall we say, to come
9 forward, to explain and to say how they were feeling
10 about their experiences; that it was no longer
11 possible just to contain it, shall we say, in one
12 area. We had to set things up around the length and
13 breadth of the UK. So the time was spent -- again we
14 were working in the background -- trying to bring
15 this where we could have support all around the
16 country. We could have meetings all around the
17 country.
18 64 Q. How did you start that process off and when was that?
19 A. First we had a big meeting in Coventry.
20 65 Q. When was that?
21 A. That was in 1998 I think. Yes, it was 1998.
22 66 Q. Do you know when in 1998?
23 A. It was in September 1998. There was quite a
24 considerable amount of people who actually turned up
25 at that meeting.
26 67 Q. Was it a meeting which you publicised the existence
27 of?
28 A. Yes.
29 68 Q. How did you go about calling that meeting?



1 A. We decided that there was maybe a couple of lads
2 living in the Manchester area, one living in Scotland
3 and, say, one living in Wales and scattered around,
4 and we would tell them that we were going to have
5 this meeting. We would say 'We are going to have
6 this meeting. What do you think, where should we
7 hold it?' If we go too far up to Scotland it is
8 going to be too far from London and if we go too far
9 south it is going to be too far. So we decided that
10 Coventry being in the midlands was the best place
11 actually to hold this meeting so the people could
12 actually get there. And all the amenities were there
13 with the travelling and the trains and that.
14 So that is what actually happened at that first
15 meeting.

16 69 Q. How did people hear about the fact that the meeting
17 was being organised?

18 A. I beg your pardon?

19 70 Q. How did people hear about it?

20 A. That is how it came about. We advertised in the
21 Irish Post, which is a big Irish paper over there.
22 I want to make a correction. When I say advertised,
23 we approached the Irish Post. They actually put an
24 article in the Irish Post. They came along to my
25 home and they asked me the background of it.
26 There was another couple of our people there on the
27 day. They asked could they take a photograph and I
28 said yes. So they took the photograph and they put a
29 story in the Irish Post on the front page.



1 And of course that, without doubt, went a long way to
2 the story of the meeting taking place. Because the
3 people told me afterwards that they knew about stuff
4 that was happening, but to actually see in in print
5 helped a great deal because it had been brought
6 mainstream. But they did tell me as well that they
7 found it more sort of trustworthy, if you want to use
8 that word, or more bona fide; that the photograph of
9 the person was actually there that they could
10 identify with.

11 71 Q. How well was the meeting attended?

12 A. Well, at that meeting I think there were about
13 100 people.

14 72 Q. How did it go?

15 A. It went very well. People again were surprised to
16 see that there were so many people at that one.
17 It was a general sort of a good feeling that we are
18 here together to talk about things and 'What has been
19 happening' and 'How long have you been coming to the
20 meetings' and 'What is happening for you' and that
21 sort of general... (INTERJECTION).

22 73 Q. How did things progress from that?

23 A. It lead on to -- well, we had another meeting
24 following that. Then there were more people coming
25 forward. And then we knew that what we are going to
26 have to do is we are going to get the information as
27 much as we possibly can out there in the public
28 domain. Whether it be word of mouth, whether it be
29 telephone or whatever way to let the people know that



1 there was meetings going on regarding the time people
2 spent in the institutes. That meeting lead on then
3 to a meeting in Birmingham. At the last meeting in
4 Coventry is when I say they were talking about a
5 group being formed that would represent the whole of
6 the people, all of the institutes. When we
7 eventually went to the Birmingham meeting there were
8 about 500 or 600 people there. It was crowded there
9 anyway that day. The general question was asked
10 'Have you worked out how we are going to form a group
11 and what we are going to do' and all the rest. So it
12 was loosely spoken about then and what we were
13 proposing to do. Which lead on then to the meeting
14 in London on 19th June at which SOCA itself was
15 launched. Unfortunately we couldn't get the
16 constitution finished on time because there were one
17 or two legal things that had to be sorted. So we
18 followed that up then with our constitution on
19 27th June.

20 74 Q. What year are you talking about?

21 A. 1999.

22 75 Q. Were you conscious of what was happening in the
23 meantime in Ireland?

24 A. Yes, very much so. We were well aware of what was
25 happening. We had actually heard at the end of 1998
26 that there was some sort of a discussion taking place
27 within the Education Department to do with the
28 problems in the industrial schools and such.
29 But we didn't know any more than that. We knew there



1 was something being spoken about. There were some
2 government officials actually talking about it.
3 And then it was in the turn of the year into 1999
4 that we knew -- albeit if you want to call it through
5 a leak or whatever the case may be -- but the
6 information came back that something was going to
7 happen. That the government had decided to --
8 I didn't know how and neither did anyone else know
9 how it was going to be addressed as such because to
10 be perfectly honest, I think all the survivors of the
11 institutes would have to say they were a little bit
12 numb and shocked at the time to realise that
13 something was actually happening. You know, from the
14 times when we were children back on the playground,
15 shall we say, of these institutes to where we were
16 at the early part of 1999, that something was
17 actually going to go mainstream to address what
18 happened to us as children in the institutes.

19 76 Q. Was that something which was discussed at the
20 meetings which you have described?

21 A. We spoke about it. We spoke about it because the
22 whole idea of SOCA's policy is to go and seek
23 information, to get as much information pertaining to
24 survivors and get that information to them and as
25 soon as possible. There is no censorship or no-one
26 plays God with the information. You get it as it is
27 [as to] exactly what has happened.

28 77 Q. You described the meeting in June 1999.

29 A. Yes.



1 78 Q. And a constitution emerging after that meeting?
2 A. Yes.

3 79 Q. What did this enable the group to do?
4 A. A committee was formed at the suggestion of the
5 people themselves. Those who wanted to participate
6 in a committee and felt that they wanted to do
7 something, they felt that they had been empowered now
8 and they wanted to do something. They wanted to have
9 a hands-on in this now. So that resulted actually in
10 a committee being formed as such. So we now had a
11 committee for SOCA and we also had our constitution.
12 We also had the information coming through about
13 something was about to happen. That was before any
14 apologies.

15 80 Q. The apology I think was May 1999?
16 A. Yes, 11th May 1999. So you had that sort of
17 background.

18 81 Q. I think you said the constitution was June 1999?
19 A. That's right. So you had this lead-up. When we had
20 our meeting then, we had our constitution drawn up on
21 27th June. But prior to that the groundwork was
22 actually laid down for it as such. It was just
23 getting it down into print and getting it agreed.
24 It was agreed in principle but actually getting it
25 down and agreed with people exactly how we would move
26 forward.

27 82 Q. Were you on the committee at that time?
28 A. Yes, we still had the small group of the Artane Boys.
29 One or two extra had joined the committee then.



1 When we decided that this was going to happen, then
2 we had to discard Artane as such and then it went
3 into SOCA, Survivors of Child Abuse.

4 83 Q. Can you say how SOCA progressed after that. What
5 kind of things did it do and what kind of things did
6 it try to do?

7 A. Basically it was the concerns. You now had a
8 massive, a lot of people who had come forward who had
9 many concerns and they needed answers to these
10 concerns. The job of SOCA was - when something was
11 coming on-stream, then as a group, as a support
12 group, we would discuss things, how we see that and
13 in what way we would like to see our input into
14 whatever was coming on-stream at the time, which lead
15 up to submissions and meeting with various people.
16 So that was what happened at the early part of it.
17 But beyond anyone's expectations, the way and the
18 pace that it moved at was just beyond belief because
19 there was so many things happening, so many things
20 going on. We again wrote to many people in Dail
21 Eireann and various other organisations. We then
22 come up to the time when we had the Taoiseach's the
23 apology on 11th May. That was a great day for all of
24 us, the people that had been in the institutes.
25 To actually have a leader of a country stand up and
26 turn around and give that apology was something.
27 It has never been done before and I don't know if it
28 will ever be done again. But for the person
29 concerned, the Taoiseach, to stand up and issue that



1 apology was a momentous step. It was absolutely, it
2 was just something unbelievable.

3
4 Again, I refer back to the days in the playground.
5 Who would ever have thought? And in the early days
6 when people were putting in the work and in the
7 latter days when people and groups were putting in
8 "monumentous" amounts of work, did we think that we
9 would have a day as good as that day? Because that
10 was without a doubt a benchmark for all the people
11 that had been in the institutes.

12
13 Again, that gave people hope. That encouraged
14 people. They were now at the stage of their lives --
15 and many of them very elderly, old, ill -- when they
16 could turn and say 'We have been believed. It has
17 happened. The Taoiseach's apology for the failure of
18 not coming to the rescue of those children that were
19 in the institutes and coming to help them out and
20 listen to their cries and listening to their calls.'

21 84 Q. After the Taoiseach's apology was given in May
22 1999...

23 A. 11th May, yes.

24 85 Q. ...how did your group react or respond to that and
25 how did things progress from there?

26 A. In the vast majority of the people, of survivors
27 themselves that had been in the institutes, it was
28 very, very well received. It was like a whole new
29 world opened up to us. It was like being in the



1 darkness and then all of a sudden you just walk out
2 through this sort of a wood and there it is, that is
3 the sun shining and you've arrived at the time when
4 you have now been believed. And an apology was
5 issued. It helped the people a great deal because
6 for a lot of the people it was being believed,
7 believed that this happened. That is what it was.
8 That itself was absolutely fantastic; to know that we
9 were being believed. It encouraged people. There
10 was a great feel-good factor. It done a great lot of
11 raising of people's confidence to their life in
12 general to know that they had been believed, and it
13 was a great relief for the people. You could
14 actually see it physically. You could see it in
15 their faces. You could see it in their demeanour.
16 You could see it in their manner. You could see it
17 in the general walk of their life in every way how
18 much the apology meant to the people that had been in
19 these institutes.

20
21 But like everything else, when I use the term
22 "the walk of life" you will also get those people who
23 [say] it would not be enough for them. But all that
24 means really is not to be angry with those people who
25 feel that way because they are suffering a hurt and
26 that is not suffice for them that a person should
27 apologise. So basically from the group's point of
28 view it is more working with that person or persons
29 and more understanding of that person and listening



1 to their anger and try and help them understand what
2 is happening, to take it on board.

3 86 Q. I should have perhaps asked you at an earlier stage
4 to tell the committee about the extent of your
5 membership and where your membership comes from?

6 A. The membership -- of course speaking really in
7 hindsight we would have probably said it would have
8 been better not to use the word "membership".
9 But that is the way it was.

10 87 Q. Have you a way of measuring the number of people with
11 whom you are in contact, put it that way?

12 A. Many of the people asked for a form, the form that we
13 had made up. They could put their name on it. They
14 could put their address on it. They could put as
15 much or as little as they want. If people just want
16 to put a phone number on it, they put a phone number
17 on it. If they want to put a name or an address, it
18 is up to them. A contact. And it is fair to say
19 that in the vast majority of people in the early days
20 there was no addresses or stuff like that. And we
21 felt it is better that you don't force people into
22 that. Just to stick up an organisation and say
23 'Here is the address' and all of that. Although it
24 is fair to say that when some people filled the form
25 in, they did put all their details on it. And then
26 there are some who put little and there are some who
27 put none. But over the period of time, up to about
28 now I could safely say there are 2100 people that we
29 communicate with and they communicate with us at this



1 present time. There are also a few names that we
2 have on one side, whether it be Mick or Tony from
3 Luton or John from Edinburgh or Anthony from Cornwall
4 or something like that, and they don't give any
5 further information than that. So the only way that
6 we can actually correspond with those people is if I
7 am meeting them in the area or there is a phone call
8 to someone. But with the other people it is done
9 through meetings going around the country and through
10 phone calls. There is a line in my own home.
11 We haven't got an office. It is SOCA. It is a line
12 dedicated to survivors, SOCA UK. It is for anybody
13 that needs to ring up regarding their time in the
14 institutes or any information that they want to find
15 out. That is 24 hours a day, seven days a week,
16 52 weeks of the year.

17 88 Q. Is this the only office that SOCA UK operates from?

18 A. It is not actually, it is my own home as such.

19 89 Q. It is your home?

20 A. Yes, that is the place where we actually operate
21 from. Although our committee as such - their phone
22 numbers are there as well and people contact them not
23 only just as a contact at 18, King Edward Road where
24 I live, but they also contact the committee itself.
25 The committee itself do their outreach work in areas
26 as well.

27 90 Q. We will come back and deal with the various things
28 which the group does. But perhaps in relation to the
29 extent to which there is contact between those who



1 have given their name to SOCA and your home - can you
2 talk a little bit more about that?

3 A. If we take the telephone, I would say that a
4 conservative estimate would be approximately
5 80 telephone calls a day.

6 91 Q. That is the current situation?

7 A. Yes.

8 92 Q. What staffing levels do you have to handle that or
9 who handles those telephone calls?

10 A. There is my wife. There is a Kirsty Allen. She does
11 some secretarial work for us. That is basically it.
12 And when I am there.

13 93 Q. When you are there?

14 A. Yes.

15 94 Q. What does SOCA do now. Can you describe its current
16 activities?

17 A. Well, as time progressed other things came on-stream
18 which were very much needed. There was counselling
19 that had been put on-stream by Faoiseamh by the
20 religious orders. And then the Irish Government had
21 put on ICAP, a counselling service in London. A lot
22 of the people had problems with it. They had
23 problems with Faoiseamh. And by the way, this is not
24 a personal point of view. This is just reflecting
25 how the people felt themselves. They felt that
26 Faoiseamh was too close to comfort because it was
27 being financed by the religious orders.

28 95 Q. Well, if you wouldn't go into the actual problems.
29 You described a range of areas where counselling was



1 available?

2 A. Yes.

3 96 Q. And your group was aware of that?

4 A. Yes. The reason why I had to sort of touch on that

5 is because the two organisations didn't sit well with

6 survivors. So they needed what they felt was an

7 independent counselling service that had no sort of

8 connection with religious orders whom they felt they

9 could speak with. So again, not only myself but the

10 other groups who are present in this room this

11 morning, they also worked hard to achieve this aim as

12 well for this independent counselling service.

13 Just in the counselling service area alone, that is

14 the sort of work that has been put in for the people.

15 97 Q. So you worked with others to set up some form of an

16 independent counselling service?

17 A. Yes.

18 98 Q. And was that done?

19 A. Yes, that was done. There is a counselling service

20 here in Ireland. And in England they haven't got the

21 counselling service set up as such as a particular

22 body. You can approach a bona fide counsellor,

23 psychiatrist or psychologist and give him or her the

24 form to fill in, which they fill in and send back to

25 the health department. They give the go-ahead for

26 that. So you have that in England. Here you have

27 different types of counselling. The north, the east

28 and south health boards and that type of thing.

29 You haven't got that situation in the UK. Therefore,



1 you have three types of counselling in the UK at the
2 moment from three different areas. We felt that is
3 what the people wanted and that is what we all
4 negotiated for. And it is fair to say that the
5 groups here in Ireland could have just said
6 'We are not really interested in the UK.' That
7 didn't happen. They were very much interested and
8 interested in survivors in general. They have been a
9 great help to each other to get these sort of things
10 happening.

11 99 Q. You have referred to meetings. Do the meetings
12 continue to happen or do meetings continue to happen?

13 A. We still have regular meetings every month on a set
14 day, the first Saturday of every month in London.
15 I travel around the country. It depends on the
16 month. There are probably about 14 meetings in the
17 course of a month, going around to the different
18 areas and different places, which takes in prisons as
19 well.

20 100 Q. On a monthly basis a meeting in London and
21 approximately 14 other regional parts of England,
22 some of which include prisons?

23 A. Yes.

24 101 Q. To what extent are those meetings attended on an
25 ongoing basis?

26 A. I don't know, probably about 70 to 80 turn up.
27 But you don't always get the same 70 or 80 people
28 turning up when you come. Some of them might want to
29 come along to find out about the redress board or



1 what is happening at the Commission. Although they
2 get some information from the web site and some from
3 various other sources, from other offices and places
4 like that, there is still stuff there that they don't
5 quite understand and they like the face-to-face.
6 They like to ask me the question about what is going
7 on. When you have that meeting, that person will
8 come along or persons to ask about the Commission and
9 what they are concerned about to do with the
10 Commission that day. And you might not see that
11 person for a couple of months and then another person
12 will coming wanting to know about the redress board.
13 Then other groups of people come in looking to know
14 what is happening about the education programme.
15 Then you get other people coming in wanting to know
16 what is happening about this family tracing. So you
17 have a turnover. So in the area there is a fair
18 amount of people up and down the length and breadth
19 of the country. But you do not always see the same
20 people at the same time. You know, they come and go.
21 But you would probably see the same person about five
22 or six times a year. But there is always 70 or 80
23 people.

24 102 Q. So you conduct these meetings on a regular basis?

25 A. Yes.

26 103 Q. Issues are brought up at these meetings which you
27 have described. How do you deal with the issues
28 which are brought up at these meetings?

29 A. Well, during the course of the month, besides



1 everything else my other main task is "Information
2 finder general" as they would say. I've got every
3 bit of information that is going out there and what
4 is being said where and who said what. If the
5 Commission said this or the Redress said that or
6 this, that and the other. It is just getting all the
7 up-to-date information over that month since the last
8 time that we met.

9
10 Also you get a situation where I am not a legally
11 trained person so I don't know the answer to legal
12 questions and things that would involve that. So I
13 would say to them 'Why don't you ring your
14 solicitor.' Then they say 'All right, fine.'
15 'I will try and find out for you.'

16 I say to the people 'I don't know the answer.'
17 I tell them quite up-front 'I don't know the answer
18 to the question that you are asking me but I will
19 write the question down. I will go away and I will
20 approach the appropriate person or persons to get
21 this answer and then I will get back to you.'

22 104 Q. How do you get back to the person who asked the
23 question initially?

24 A. I would either get back to him by phone or we get
25 back to him by E-mail. I would get back to him by
26 letter. Perhaps some people say 'I will wait until
27 the next time you come up.' If it is urgent, then as
28 soon as I get the answer in a couple of days, I get
29 them the answer whichever way I can, whichever way is



1 available to me to get the answer for them

2 105 Q. Does your contact with people at these meetings
3 involve referrals?

4 A. Referrals can cover numerous things. They may need
5 referrals for family tracing. They want one about
6 education, counselling. A lot of the stuff that
7 comes in is personal problems. And then there are
8 also people who say 'I was at your meeting the other
9 day. I haven't done anything about my case so how do
10 I go about this?' We have a list of 14 --
11 We approached many solicitors in the early days in
12 Dublin to try and help us with the situation over in
13 the UK. Now we have a list of 14 names of different
14 firms of solicitors which we let the people have.
15 We always say to them quite clearly 'This is just a
16 list of names of people that we know are prepared to
17 help on the legal side and after that, whatever
18 happens between now and your solicitor is totally
19 between yourselves.' So therefore, you know, there
20 is a choice there. They may not want to take
21 advantage of that list. It is just a starting point.
22 They may want to say for instance 'Well, I was in
23 Golden Bridge and I know this is listed in the Golden
24 Bridge area in Inchicore that is dealing with the
25 girls that were in there and I think I would like to
26 speak to that person because he or she knows more
27 because the institute was in their area so to speak.'
28 So that is fine. They say to me 'Do you happen to
29 know the name and the address of that solicitor.'



1 I will open up the book and I find the name and the
2 address and the phone number the fax number and the
3 E-mail and pass it on to the people and that is
4 basically how that works.

5 106 Q. Is the legal sphere the only area in which you make
6 referrals or do you also make referrals in other
7 areas where expertise is required?

8 A. Expertise in areas. Well, counselling is a very,
9 very important. It is important that you get the
10 right type of counselling for people because one size
11 doesn't fit all. What is very important as well is
12 that we work alongside the people that are doing the
13 counselling. Although we never ever discuss private
14 details, that is strictly confidential, we keep in
15 touch with the counsellors as such to see how things
16 are going. Once we get that counselling service
17 started and the person is happy, that is grand
18 because we know then that this is a major part in
19 life as well to help with the healing. That the
20 counselling is very, very important. But we do get
21 programmes where people don't like the counselling or
22 whatever the case is and they want to change to
23 somewhere else. So, yes, that is another part of
24 referrals in a sense.

25 107 Q. Apart from those areas of work which you have
26 described, are there other areas of work that you are
27 also involved in in relation to advancing the
28 objectives of your group?

29 A. Well, there are other things there. Another big



1 problem for survivors is family tracing. Without
2 going too far into the history of it, it is the fact
3 that the children were put in or the families were
4 put into these places and they were split up and they
5 went to different institutes. The older ones would
6 probably remember that he or she had a brother or
7 sister but the younger ones wouldn't remember. But
8 obviously they had family and they need to know.
9 Very much part of their journey now is family
10 tracing. 'Who am I?' It is only three little words:
11 'Who am I?' That as I say is a major part in
12 survivors' lives as well. So that is another very
13 important part that had to be put together for
14 survivors. It is all about helping the people to
15 know what happened to them and why it happened the
16 family and all the bundle of things. It is very much
17 a mixed bag. But it is a very, very important part
18 with the family tracing.

19 108 Q. You made reference to the impact which the
20 Taoiseach's apology had on individual members of your
21 group. Have you been involved as a group in running
22 with the proposals which were being put up by the
23 Government in terms of the legislative responses that
24 were introduced subsequent to those?

25 A. Yes, the Government and the various departments that
26 had anything to do with dealing with the child abuse
27 issue have always involved the groups and asked for
28 the groups opinion and asked for groups submissions
29 and how they feel about things. A term that was used



1 is 'It is all new ground to us in the Government and
2 we need your input. We need for you to tell us how
3 we can put this together.' This is to do with the
4 Commission and the Redress Board.

5 109 Q. What involvement has your group had?
6 A. We met with Mrs. Justice Mary Laffoy prior to the
7 launch of her Commission at the time and raising our
8 concerns and asking what could be done for survivors
9 in this Commission and was she as the chairperson
10 prepared to listen and to take on board how survivors
11 felt and what they wanted addressing in the
12 Commission.

13 110 Q. So you made representations at a non-statutory stage?
14 A. That's right.

15 111 Q. Did you make representations elsewhere also?
16 A. With the Commission we were invited to give
17 submissions on how -- the word at the time that was
18 used was a Compensation Tribunal, which we objected
19 to very strongly. Because it is a fact that
20 Tribunals' names are just bouncing all around
21 Ireland. There is a tribunal for this and a tribunal
22 for that. It was interpreted as, shall we say, dark
23 deals going on. I am not saying there were dark
24 deals but that is the way it was interpreted by the
25 survivors. They didn't want to have a name that
26 would even link them any way remotely to any sort of
27 a tribunal as such. We did ask the people concerned,
28 like Tom Boland, that we would like to see a new
29 title created. I think all the groups when they met



1 were in favour of this as well. The word "tribunal"
2 I don't think sat well with any of them. But
3 speaking from our own point of view, we asked if we
4 could find a unique title, a title that would be
5 identified as an individual thing away from what was
6 happening in tribunals and all the rest. And that
7 came up with the title of the Redress Board. There
8 were many titles put in the hat but eventually the
9 name came up as The Redress Board. It has to be said
10 that the departments as such were always welcome and
11 open for advice and input from the groups. They were
12 concerned at the voice of the survivors who it was
13 all about. And I have found that with all the
14 various people that I have met on this journey.

15
16 But getting back to what we were saying about the
17 thing - that was really how the input into the
18 Redress Board came about from the submissions and the
19 Commission and that sort of thing.

20 112 Q. I think you have been involved in making submissions
21 at a more recent stage too?

22 A. Yes. We have had submissions to the Commission
23 recently, which you are aware of and which we
24 presented. Again, I don't think it is really to be
25 discussed here. But you are well aware of how the
26 group felt about things.

27 113 Q. Yes.

28 A. And that was selected from the groups' point of view.

29 114 Q. Again, preparing for the meetings you have described,



1 preparing for the submissions which you described,
2 can you tell the committee, does that take a lot of
3 work, does that take up a lot of time?
4 A. It certainly does because there are so many voices
5 and there are so many people and there are so many
6 ideas. It is not a situation where you would sit
7 down and say 'I am not listening to this' or 'I am
8 not listening to that' or 'We are not listening.'
9 It is the fact of travelling around the country and
10 speaking to the groups of people and getting a
11 general feeling about things. Say, if I was
12 approached out there by a newspaper, I wouldn't be
13 able to make that comment of something that happened
14 in here or something that happened at a Redress
15 Board. That would have to go back to the committee
16 in general. It was the feeling that 'Well, okay,
17 what we will do at our next meeting is send out the
18 information as such and get a feedback on it.'
19 Do you understand?
20 115 Q. Yes. How is the group funded?
21 A. The group is funded by the Education Department.
22 116 Q. The Department of Education in Dublin?
23 A. Yes. We are funded by the Department as such.
24 I don't think figures are relevant here this morning
25 but they are in the public domain and they are being
26 brought into the public domain for everybody to see.
27 Basically speaking that is about it.
28 117 Q. Is there a way in which you would summarise the work
29 of your organisation as you currently see it, the



1 main thrust of the work of the organisation?
2 A. The main thrust is to empower people, to empower
3 survivors to get the knowledge, to get the
4 information and keep them up-to-speed about what is
5 happening. Because I feel myself from a personal
6 point of view that if you start telling somebody
7 something and you cut off in mid-stream and say
8 'I will come back tomorrow and you can tell me the
9 rest' it loses everything and the person thinks
10 'What is happening here. Why can't they tell me?'
11 I think it is important that before we address any
12 subject or anything that is happening pertaining to
13 survivors, that we gather all the information.
14 And that is basically what it is. It is just
15 bringing the information, bringing answers to people,
16 and generally just helping each other to, I can never
17 say come to terms because I could only speak from a
18 personal point of view. I couldn't speak
19 collectively because each person has suffered their
20 own pain and suffering. They have their own wounds
21 and therefore I couldn't just say it is all about
22 closure and all that type of thing because that is up
23 to the individual person. But basically speaking it
24 is a total commitment. Just like the other support
25 groups, it is total commitment. It is not done for
26 financial gain. It is not done to stroke-up anyone's
27 ego to say 'The good person that I am.' It is not
28 that. It has just turned into a complete vocation.
29 It is a job that you are committed to do, that you



1 want to do, that the group wants to do to help the
2 people to move forward. And that basically would
3 bring us up-to-date about SOCA UK.

4 118 Q. Thank you very much, Mr. Waters.

5 MR. LOWE: Mrs. Waters, just one
6 question. You said
7 earlier: "We were outcasts in Ireland the Artane Old
8 Boys Group gave us a bond. We treated each other
9 like real people." Do you feel after all the
10 publicity and the apologies that Ireland treats you
11 any differently?

12 A. Again, with respect, I couldn't answer that question
13 collectively. I could speak on an individual basis.
14 The stuff that has happened has without doubt done a
15 lot for me personally. I feel that such brave,
16 courageous steps have been taken in this country to
17 address a very, very dark time. Now, collectively
18 speaking I can only explain it to you this way.
19 It is like going to a bank. You put all the
20 niceties, you put everything on the table that is
21 available at that moment in time. It is for each
22 person to take from that table which would make them
23 happier in a way. Some people might say 'Look, this
24 is never about money. I am not even going to go to
25 the Redress Board.' Or some might say 'That
26 Commission is so-and- so/so-and-so.' Or some might
27 say 'That education is a load of this and that.'
28 But each one will be responding in different ways,
29 negative/positive, to the thing that is actually put



1 in there for the people to take from the table.
2 And hopefully -- and all we can do is hope -- it will
3 go some way to help heal, to make them feel more
4 human about things, feel more 'I am a person.'
5 So basically speaking I hope that answers your
6 question?

7 MR. LOWE: It does. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much indeed,
9 Mr. Waters.

10
11 THE WITNESS THEN WITHDREW

12
13 THE HEARING WAS THEN ADJOURNED FOR LUNCH

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1 THE HEARING CONTINUED AS FOLLOWS AFTER THE LUNCHEON
2 ADJOURNMENT:

3
4 MR. McMAHON: I will call Mr. Colm
5 O' Gorman please.
6

7 MR. COLM O' GORMAN, HAVING BEEN SWORN, WAS EXAMINED AS
8 FOLLOWS BY MR. McMAHON:
9

10 MR. McMAHON: Mr. Gorman, you are
11 involved in "One in Four."
12 Can you tell the committee what that organisation is
13 and what your position in it is?

14 A. First of all, I am director of One in Four. One in
15 Four is essentially a service-based, not-for-profit
16 organisation and a registered charity that works to
17 support woman and men who have experienced sexual
18 violence or sexual abuse.

19 119 Q. Can you tell the committee how One in Four was
20 formed?

21 A. The charity was originally founded in the UK in 1999.
22 I was working as a therapist in private practice and
23 myself and some colleagues began to recognise that a
24 high number of our clients were disclosing issues
25 around sexual violence. And we didn't have a service
26 that we could refer such clients to for some of the
27 other support systems that were necessary. Equally I
28 think we felt that we would like to work together as
29 part of a larger team rather than in individual



1 private practice. And with that aim in mind we
2 established the organisation in the UK in 1999.
3 It became a registered charity in the year 2000 and
4 it launched its services then.

5
6 In Ireland I had been personally involved in the
7 making of a documentary with BBC television in
8 relation to clerical sexual abuse. When that
9 documentary aired we found that our office in London
10 was being inundated with calls from Irish people,
11 people both living in Ireland and in the UK, talking
12 about their own experiences of sexual violence.
13 This was in very broad contexts: Institutional
14 abuse, clerical abuse, familial, extra-familial, the
15 whole breadth of the experience. We found that about
16 75% of all the contacts coming into the office were
17 coming from Ireland and people were increasingly
18 asking would we consider establishing an office here.
19 So we decided to explore that idea and also to
20 establish a web site that would provide some level of
21 contact for people here in Ireland who might want to
22 engage with the service in the UK. I think in the
23 first 24 hours that that web site was up and running
24 we had about 6000 hits on our message boards alone.
25 So we began to recognise that there was a scale of a
26 response that we could begin to develop.

27
28 We had been talking to the Department of Health and
29 Children initially in relation to the establishment



1 of a Non-statutory Inquiry into clerical sexual abuse
2 in the diocese of Ferns but also looking at what
3 support mechanisms might be around for people
4 accessing that Inquiry. And that evolved into a
5 discussion about the idea of establishing an Irish
6 arm of the organisation.

7

8 We subsequently in late April 2002 had a meeting with
9 officials of the Department of An Taoiseach.

10 As a result of that meeting we felt very encouraged
11 to perhaps proceed more speedily than we had first
12 anticipated towards the establishment of an
13 organisation. We submitted proposals to Government
14 and were told to go ahead with the establishment of
15 the Irish organisation. We secured offices in
16 November 2002 and started to see the first clients of
17 the service in about February 2003.

18 120 Q. How do people come access the organisation?

19 A. Through a variety of the means really. A number of
20 people will contact us through self-referral.
21 They would engage with the service via E-mail,
22 through our web site, by telephone or increasingly
23 through referral from other agencies both statutory
24 and non-statutory. So we would have referrals
25 through health and social care agencies, child
26 protection agencies, social workers, psychiatrists,
27 GPs, An Garda Siochana. Then non-statutory agencies
28 like CARI, Children at Risk in Ireland, another NGO,
29 the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, the Ferns Inquiry, the



1 Dublin Arch-diocese. Through a variety of means
2 really.

3 121 Q. Can you tell the Committee what sort of work the
4 organisation does and has been doing since it was
5 founded?

6 A. As I said, we are essentially a service-based
7 organisation. There are a couple of main strands to
8 that service. They would be psychotherapy and
9 advocacy. We employ a staff of 17, eight on a
10 full-time basis and nine of whom are part-time.
11 Our psychotherapy programme provides about 100
12 psychotherapy sessions, up to 90 of which would be
13 individual one-to-one psychotherapy sessions per week
14 and then another 20 odd spaces in group
15 psychotherapy. The advocacy programme provides for
16 other practical supports that people might need.
17 Everything from referral on to other agencies like
18 An Garda Siochana or the health boards; access to
19 legal services; advice on information; access to the
20 Commission itself perhaps; the residential
21 institutions; the Redress Board; access to
22 appropriate medical services; education; housing
23 needs. Really anything that can support a person in
24 addressing and working through what their individual
25 needs might be, but also working with other agencies
26 to ensure that where reporting is a possibility that
27 happens. In making sure that people have the kind of
28 information that they need to take their own
29 individual cases forward. The advocacy programme at



1 any one time I suppose would have about 150 active
2 cases and that really is only constrained by the
3 resources that the organisation has to deliver that
4 programme. The programme apart from providing
5 indepth one-to-one support, face-to-face with people,
6 a lot of support may happen by telephone. Our
7 offices are based in Dublin and we don't have the
8 resources for outreach, so a lot of contact can
9 happen by telephone. Over a period of months our
10 advocacy coordinator can be involved in assisting
11 people, in liaising with agencies or engaging in
12 other processes. We also then would through that
13 programme be involved in wider client work.

14 122 Q. Such as?

15 A. Such as liaising with either government departments
16 or other agencies towards the development of services
17 or resources for people. So we would often undertake
18 consultation or make submissions in relation to State
19 Inquiries like the Ferns Inquiry or indeed like this
20 Commission; the development of legislation that could
21 allow for the beginning of other inquiries such as
22 the up-and-coming Inquiry into the Arch-diocese of
23 Dublin; feeding into the legislative process for
24 instance in relation to the Freedom of Information
25 Act amendments that were made last year; preparing
26 reports and delivering reports to international
27 agencies like the UN Committee on Contemporary Forms
28 of Slavery. We delivered reports around the Irish
29 experience of sexual and economic exploitation of



1 children to that agency.

2

3 Essentially when a client engages with the service we
4 first of all seek to respond to their individual
5 needs, and then very often we see that there is a
6 theme or an area that needs particular attention and
7 that wider advocacy work develops directly out of
8 that.

9 123 Q. What would you see as your principal type of work at
10 this stage?

11 A. Well, as I said, we are essentially a service-based
12 organisation so the work is continuously informed
13 by the people who access the service directly.
14 The first contact that somebody will have -- very
15 often the first meeting is about establishing what
16 that need might be and how we can respond to that
17 need directly and whether or not we need to refer on
18 to another agency. So as I said, our core work is
19 both psychotherapy and then advocacy. It is the
20 one-to-one direct client work that the bulk of our
21 work happens in.

22 CHAIRMAN: If somebody comes into you
23 first, Mr. O'Gorman, the
24 first thing is what are the individual needs?

25 A. Yes.

26 CHAIRMAN: Am I understanding
27 that invariably that would
28 mean therapy of some kind. Or it is highly likely
29 that that will be the immediate issue for that



1 particular person?

2 A. I think it can be, Chairman. But it is worth
3 acknowledging that when the organisation came to
4 Ireland we already had, particularly I suppose in the
5 area of institutional abuse, the establishment of the
6 National Counselling Service. So there was a
7 programme there that people were at least engaging
8 with. Clearly there was a resource issue but people
9 were engaging with that. It is interesting to look
10 at the difference between the client groups who
11 access the two different strands of service.
12 Within our advocacy programme about 34% of the
13 clients who access that programme are speaking
14 directly of an experience of institutional abuse
15 whereas in 2003 in psychotherapy they only accounted
16 for about 7% of clients accessing the service. That
17 is changing this year. We are seeing increasing
18 numbers coming forward to that programme. So it is
19 not always necessarily psychotherapy or therapy that
20 people might first engage with. A lot of the work in
21 terms of institutional abuse is around information,
22 assistance with engaging in a particular process.
23 It is not uncommon for us to have a first meeting
24 with somebody coming forward who perhaps has had an
25 experience within an institution who has been engaged
26 within a number of years in a couple of different
27 legal processes. For instance, criminal justice,
28 this Commission, the Residential Institutions Redress
29 Board or a civil action, but where there isn't an



1 understanding for the individual of what those
2 processes involve. So we will do a lot of work
3 talking them through what their expectations might
4 be, liaising with the professionals, handling those
5 cases on their behalf and ensuring that they have the
6 information necessary to make appropriate decisions
7 for themselves to best meet their individual needs.

8 CHAIRMAN: Would you call that therapy
9 or would that be something
10 different?

11 A. That is advocacy not therapy.

12 CHAIRMAN: That is what I would have
13 thought. It would be quite
14 specific and you would be understanding it obviously
15 from your own expertise in that restricted and
16 specific sense?

17 A. Absolutely. The psychotherapy programme is a highly
18 professional programme within the organisation. All
19 of our therapists are fully qualified and accredited
20 and experienced therapists. So absolutely, the
21 boundary between those two areas is held very clear.

22 CHAIRMAN: The picture I was wondering
23 about was this, and I think
24 you have largely answered that: I was saying that
25 somebody would come first for therapy and move on to
26 the advocacy area. But it is not like that; it could
27 come the other way or somebody could come for a
28 therapy, never go on to advocacy or the other way
29 around. It just happens depending on who the person



1 is and what their experience was?
2 A. Absolutely. And I suppose we are a bit young to
3 identify those trends even though we are beginning
4 to. But I think in relation particularly to historic
5 child abuse, so often people know that they need
6 something but there is not a clarity perhaps around
7 what might be available and what they might need.
8 So often people focus on something like a criminal
9 justice response or some level of justice response
10 without perhaps always identifying that personal
11 need. So very often you are quite right, Chairman,
12 the movement can go from first of all engaging in a
13 process around advocacy and then eventually engaging
14 in therapy. Our hope would be that eventually people
15 would engage around the personal peace and get that
16 level of support in the systems.

17 CHAIRMAN: The figures you were giving
18 interested me,

19 Mr. O'Gorman. Would you mind going over those a
20 little more slowly. When it started as I understand,
21 the referrals for therapy came to a small extent and
22 a small percentage from institutions. But those
23 figures have been changing. Could you run through
24 them briefly if you wouldn't mind?

25 A. We are in the midst of preparing our first annual
26 report so I can give you some reasonably up-to-date
27 ones. I know when we looked at the context within
28 which the abuse of sexual violence happened within
29 the therapeutic programme in 2003, the institutional



1 experience accounted for 7% of all psychotherapy
2 clients. Whereas when we looked at the advocacy
3 programme, the institutional experience accounted to
4 for 34% of our clients. So there was a marked
5 difference. People were I suppose engaging much more
6 around advocacy than they were around therapy.
7 But I think in some ways that demonstrates where
8 there was perhaps a gap in service provision as much
9 as anything else.

10 124 Q. MR. McMAHON: If I may bring you back to
11 the advocacy programme that
12 you speak about. Is the advocacy programme a
13 programme that encompasses a wide range of referrals
14 and is it involved in advising clients who come to
15 you in relation to those services. What is the
16 approach that is adopted?

17 A. Again, it depends very much upon the individual need.
18 The purpose of the advocacy programme really is to
19 inform, advise and I suppose empower people to both
20 make their own decisions and take whatever steps are
21 necessary. Our advocacy workers are not meant to do
22 all the work for people. Instead they are meant to
23 equip people to make their own decisions about how
24 they move forward. So it depends very much from case
25 to case. It is going to depend both I suppose on
26 where that individual might be; how empowered or able
27 they feel to take issues forward; and I suppose at
28 what stage in their own process they are, if you know
29 what I mean. So it can mean everything from talking



1 somebody through the process of making a complaint
2 for instance to An Garda Siochana or making a
3 complaint to child protection services in relation to
4 an experience and what the implications of that will
5 be; how though processes work; providing them with
6 the numbers or perhaps named individuals within those
7 services that they could contact; or indeed making or
8 establishing that contact on their behalf and
9 arranging with them to meet those services; to assist
10 them through any processes that arise out of that.
11 So if somebody gets involved then in a criminal
12 justice process leading to a criminal trial,
13 supporting them through that very long process
14 towards the trial and then looking at their needs
15 beyond. It can be around issues to do with civil
16 loss similarly, advising people on what can be
17 achieved and perhaps trying to give the kind of
18 information that can inform people's expectations as
19 to the outcome of a civil law process.

20
21 Very often we have found that when people come
22 forward looking at engaging in a civil process, it is
23 because perhaps the criminal justice system has been
24 unable to prosecute in their case or a decision has
25 been made not to prosecute. So often we have people
26 feeling that civil justice is a direct replacement
27 for criminal justice. That if they go down the civil
28 justice route they will end up with a trial where
29 they will face their accuser, or their alleged



1 abuser, and they will prosecute their abuser.
2 It is often significantly, we feel, important to
3 alert them to the difference between the two systems.

4 125 Q. When you say that you seek to empower your clients as
5 to the services which are available, what role do you
6 take in leading them to the services which are
7 available?

8 A. Again, it very much depends on what that client
9 needs. If somebody simply needs to be given a name,
10 a number and a point of information or a point of
11 contact, then it stops there. But so often it is
12 much more significant than that. In the last year,
13 both in terms of assisting in reporting to statutory
14 agencies or to other agencies, there are cases where
15 our advocacy coordinator would have accompanied
16 people to support them when they went to make
17 statements to the Gardai or indeed to any other
18 agency; to assist them in the preparation of
19 information that they might need to present for the
20 Residential Institutions Redress Board; accompany
21 them to hearings at the Residential Institutions
22 Redress Board; sourcing lawyers if that is what they
23 need to do in those situations; or alerting child
24 protection services in particular to concerns that
25 there might be about information that the
26 organisation has received as part of that work.

27 126 Q. You have described work which I think involves direct
28 contact with the individuals who are seeking help.
29 Are you also involved in work on a wider sphere?



1 A. Again, our offices are based in Dublin and we don't
2 have the resources to have outreach around the
3 country. So a lot of that work can also happen by
4 telephone. So within the advocacy programme both
5 telephone and E-mail have become important tools.
6 And I suppose equally just looking at Ireland, we
7 would have had contact with a significant number of
8 people over the last year-and-a-half and two years
9 who are now living abroad looking for information or
10 ways of accessing services here in Ireland around
11 those kinds of systems. And to the best of our
12 abilities, and I suppose within the constraints of
13 those technologies, we offer as much support as we
14 can.

15 127 Q. How is the organisation funded, Mr. O'Gorman?

16 A. Through a variety of means. In our first year we
17 were predominantly funded by grants from the
18 Department of Health and Children. That was in 2003,
19 our first year of operation. I should say that in
20 2002 the organisation in the UK received a grant of
21 €60,000 from the Department of Health and Children to
22 resource the initial response to the Irish issues
23 from the UK. In November we received a grant from
24 the Department of Health and Children of €148,000 to
25 secure and refurbish offices in Dublin and to recruit
26 staff. Then in the financial year 2003 we received
27 grant funding totally €504,000 from the Department of
28 Health and Children. We then ourselves raised just
29 over €89,000 through fund raising and service



1 provision. In 2004 we signed a service agreement
2 with the Department of Health and Children. That
3 gave us a grant of €383,000 for this financial year.
4 This year we have had to focus a lot more on fund
5 raising to resource the service and also looking at
6 other areas where we can recover service costs.

7 128 Q. You mentioned earlier on that you have 17 members of
8 staff?

9 A. Yes.

10 129 Q. Where are they based? Are they based in Ireland only
11 or are they between the UK and Ireland?

12 A. No, the organisation in Ireland now is a distinct
13 entity separate from the UK organisation, though
14 clearly there are cross-referrals between the two
15 organisations. The 17 staff that I referred to,
16 eight full-time staff and nine part-time, are all
17 based in our offices in Holles Street here in Dublin.

18 130 Q. Is the UK office totally separate from the Irish
19 office?

20 A. It is a separate legal entity, yes, even though we do
21 cross-refer. For instance, in relation to work
22 around the Ferns Inquiry, a number of witnesses to
23 the inquiry have both sought and got support through
24 our London offices.

25 131 Q. And they have separate staffing?

26 A. But they have separate staffing and separate funding
27 and they are entirely separate structures.

28 MR. McMAHON: Thank you very much,
29 Mr. O'Gorman.



1 DR. RYAN: There are three things on
2 your statement that
3 particularly interested me which I would welcome
4 clarification on. In terms of describing your staff
5 compliment you make reference to placement
6 psychotherapists. Could you talk a little bit more
7 about the job of a placement psychotherapist?

8 A. Sure. Our psychotherapy programmes, as we say, is
9 staffed by professionally and accredited therapists,
10 qualified and accredited therapists. Within that
11 programmes we also have a commitment towards the
12 development of the service. So within that we would
13 have at anytime a number of therapists who were in
14 the late stages of training who undertake part of
15 their training within the organisation.

16 CHAIRMAN: That is the placement?

17 A. So that is the placement.

18 DR. RYAN: Another thing that
19 particularly interested me
20 was your statement that you are conducting in-house
21 research. Could you talk a little further about that
22 in terms of what are you researching and what
23 particular areas are you looking at?

24 A. Certainly. As I outlined, the work of the
25 organisation is really informed by the individual
26 work that arrives through our clients. But often we
27 will identify areas of concern that we feel demand
28 particular attention. For instance, issues around
29 the criminal justice system relating to how informed



1 people might be throughout the process of the
2 investigation of or prosecution of a case.
3 The liaison or lack of liaison, for instance, with
4 the DPP's office in relation to some of these cases.
5 Those would be specific areas at the moment that the
6 organisation continues to do research into and to try
7 to work towards the development of policy.
8 I mentioned earlier on that we delivered a couple of
9 reports to the UN Committee on Contemporary Forms of
10 Slavery. Those reports were quite detailed and they
11 tended to present a picture of the history of both
12 the sexual exploitation of children and the economic
13 exploitation of children within the institution or
14 care system. To that end there was a considerable
15 amount of research to be undertaken.
16
17 Equally, as we work towards both the establishment of
18 a State Inquiry into the arch-diocese of Dublin but
19 also the ongoing inquiry in the diocese of Ferns, we
20 continue to do significant research into the historic
21 awareness or systems in place within the Catholic
22 Church to respond to clerical sexual crime in
23 particular. And that has become a significant area
24 of research for us, liaising quite a lot with
25 organisations and academics in the US for instance.
26 DR. RYAN: Are you doing any research
27 in terms of the long-term
28 sequelae of child sexual abuse?
29 A. I think we would absolutely love to, but I have to



1 say that at the moment we are 18 months into the
2 launch of our service and we continue to work with
3 what is coming through the door. It is certainly an
4 area that the organisation intends to develop.
5 We would very much like to see us having an education
6 and research department but it is perhaps one of the
7 more difficult areas to resource and fund. So not at
8 this moment, no.

9 DR. RYAN: Your allies group that you
10 make reference to where you
11 provide support for people who have been supporting
12 victims of sexual abuse. Who constitutes the allies?

13 A. The ally?

14 DR. RYAN: Yes?

15 A. One of the things that I had experienced personally
16 as a therapist when I was working in the office in
17 London, but which we also started to see very early
18 on here, is that when somebody comes forward perhaps
19 and first discloses an experience of historic child
20 sexual abuse, the impacts that that can have on that
21 person's life are pretty drastic and pretty broad.
22 In particular in relation to intimate relationships:
23 Marriage, family, children, those kinds of issues.
24 It became very clear that both in terms of supporting
25 that individual, we also needed to look at the
26 support structures that might be necessary for that
27 individual in a wider sense but also the support
28 structures that might be necessary for family
29 members, friends, allies. So "allies" really refers



1 to partners, spouses, adult children, or close allies
2 of people who have been impacted upon that disclosure
3 in another way.

4 DR. RYAN: And lastly. The service
5 agreement you have with the
6 Department of Health and Children for the current
7 year - is that money ring fenced to treat a
8 particular cohort of client group?

9 A. The funding is part-funding of the service.
10 It is specifically for six salaried posts and the
11 rent for our offices. It is limited completely to
12 that and it specifically excludes the psychotherapy
13 service. So the psychotherapy service is entirely
14 unfunded by the State.

15 CHAIRMAN: There is one little thing,
16 Mr. O'Gorman, if I may.
17 When you gave us the figures, did you indicate that
18 that may be changing. Was that my sense of what you
19 were saying. I appreciate you gave us the full
20 year's figures, but your impression was somewhat that
21 that was changing?

22 A. Yes. Certainly in relation to the psychotherapy
23 programme we are seeing -- Well, I suppose first of
24 all, the figures are changing because as we work to
25 further resource the service, we are able to offer
26 more service. The reality is that the agency always
27 has more work than it can resource and manage.
28 So like most other agencies we have waiting lists
29 particularly for psychotherapy all the time.



1 But certainly we have seen -- and I had a good look
2 at it today before I left the office -- that in
3 relation to people engaging in psychotherapy
4 disclosing experiences of institutional abuse, that
5 number has increased as a proportion of the client
6 group significantly this year. And I think that may
7 well be because of a crossover from those who engaged
8 in advocacy last year.

9 CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much indeed,
10 Mr. O'Gorman.

11 A. If I could, Chairman, just raise one further issue?

12 CHAIRMAN: Yes.

13 A. If I could respectfully suggest as part of this
14 process of having hearings into the emergence of
15 child abuse, particularly within the Irish context
16 - I would say that it would be particularly important
17 that the Commission perhaps look at the emergence of
18 the knowledge of, the awareness of and of the policy
19 and systems developed to respond to child abuse
20 within the Catholic Church. Certainly some of the
21 research that we have seen or that we have been party
22 to would demonstrate that there perhaps may have been
23 a different level of awareness or even that there may
24 have been policies in place to respond to that
25 phenomenon at a time when they didn't exist in the
26 State.

27 CHAIRMAN: What I would suggest is
28 that Ms. Robinson or
29 Mr. McMahon will be in contact with your office and



1 if there are materials or references or whatever,
2 I am sure they will be happy to consider them.
3 And if it is legitimately within our remit we will be
4 happy to look at that and consider it and see if we
5 can do it.

6 A. Thank you.

7 MR. McMAHON: Thank you very much,
8 Mr. O'Gorman.

9
10 THE WITNESS THEN WITHDREW

11
12 CHAIRMAN: Mr. McMahon, tomorrow
13 morning?

14 MR. McMAHON: Yes.

15
16 THE HEARING WAS THEN ADJOURNED TO THURSDAY,
17 22ND JULY 2004

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