

## Chapter 7

# Record of abuse (male witnesses)

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- 7.01** This chapter describes the nature and extent of abuse reported in evidence to the Committee by 413 male witnesses in relation to 26 Industrial and Reformatory Schools in Ireland. The 413 witnesses made 482 reports of abuse regarding the four types of abuse defined by the Acts.<sup>1</sup> Those four types are physical and sexual abuse, neglect and emotional abuse. Not all 26 Schools were reported for each of the four types of abuse.
- 7.02** The report of abuse by a witness may either refer to descriptions of single episodes or to multiple experiences of being abused in a School. In most instances reports of abuse refer to more than one episode of abuse and more than one type of abuse. One hundred and sixty six (166) witness reports (34%) were of all four types of abuse. Sixty eight (68) witnesses reported abuse in more than one School.
- 7.03** The chapter is divided into five parts, addressing each of the four abuse types and describing what was known about the abuse at the time it occurred. The reports of abuse compiled in this chapter refer to admissions and discharges to Schools between 1922 and 1989. Twenty four (24) of these reports refer to abuse in both Schools and 'Other Institutions'. All the reports of abuse in relation to 'Other Institutions' are referred to elsewhere in the Report.<sup>2 3</sup>
- 7.04** For the purpose of compiling this Report, witness evidence is presented by period of discharge as follows: pre-1960s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Witnesses, who were discharged in one period, may have spent time in out-of-home care in the previous decade(s).<sup>4</sup>
- 7.05** As previously stated a number of witnesses were admitted to more than one School and reported abuse in more than one School. Three hundred and twenty five (325) witnesses made reports about abuse in one School, the other 68 witnesses reported as follows:
- Sixty three (63) witnesses reported abuse in two Schools.
  - One witness reported abuse in three different Schools.
  - Three (3) witnesses reported abuse in two Schools and one 'Other Institution'.
  - One witness reported abuse in two Schools and two 'Other Institutions'.
  - Twenty (20) witnesses reported abuse in one School and one 'Other Institution'.

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<sup>1</sup> A number of witnesses were admitted to more than one School, and made reports of abuse in more than one School, therefore the number of reports are greater than the number of witnesses.

<sup>2</sup> 'Other Institutions' – includes: general, specialist and rehabilitation hospitals, foster homes, national and secondary schools, children's homes, laundries, Noviciates, hostels and special needs schools (both day and residential) that provided care and education for children with intellectual, visual, hearing or speech impairments and others.

<sup>3</sup> See chapters 12-18.

<sup>4</sup> For example: as witness evidence is presented according to the decade of discharge, a witness who spent 12 years in a school and was discharged in 1962 will have been included in the 1960s cohort although the majority of that witness's experience will relate to the 1950s.

**7.06** Four hundred and sixteen (416) or 86% of male abuse reports refer to senior Schools for boys.

## **Physical abuse**

*The wilful, reckless or negligent infliction of physical injury on, or failure to prevent such injury to, the child.<sup>5</sup>*

**7.07** This section describes reports of actual incidents of physical abuse, non-accidental injury and lack of protection from such abuse given in evidence by witnesses to the Committee. The types of physical abuse reported included hitting, punching, kicking, flogging, and bodily assault with implements. The Committee heard disturbing accounts of severe assaults causing injuries that required medical intervention. Witnesses also reported being abused by being immersed in water, being burned, and subjected to what they believed to be deliberate and persistent physical cruelty.

### ***Nature and extent of physical abuse reported***

**7.08** There were 474 reports of physical abuse involving 26 Schools given in evidence by 403 male witnesses (98%), some of whom were admitted to more than one School. While many witnesses reported that the abuse was pervasive, they particularly wished to report extraordinary incidents from their experience. Other witnesses reported multiple episodes of physical abuse. Witnesses reported being physically abused by religious and lay staff and others including: visiting clergy, members of the general public and men in work and holiday placements. Witnesses also reported being physically abused by co-residents.

**7.09** The number of witness reports heard in relation to physical abuse in different Schools varied, as follows:

- Four (4) Schools were collectively the subject of 230 reports.<sup>6</sup>
- Four (4) Schools were the subject of 20-34 reports, totalling 111 reports.
- Eight (8) Schools were the subject of 6-19 reports, totalling 86 reports.
- Ten (10) Schools were the subject of 1-5 reports, totalling 18 reports.

**7.10** The Schools that were the subject of 230 reports accounted for 49% of all physical abuse reports by male witnesses.

**7.11** Physical abuse was reported in combination with the other three types of abuse. There were 166 reports of combinations of all four abuse types reported by the male witnesses. See Table 18:

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<sup>5</sup> Section 1(1)(a).

<sup>6</sup> In order to maintain confidentiality further details regarding the numbers of abuse reports in these Schools cannot be specified.

**Table 18: Physical Abuse Combined with Other Abuse Types – Male Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

<b>Abuse types</b>	<b>Number of reports</b>	<b>%</b>
Physical, emotional, neglect and sexual	166	35
Physical, emotional and neglect	120	25
Physical and neglect	66	14
Physical, neglect and sexual	49	10
Physical	24	5
Physical, emotional and sexual	20	4
Physical and emotional	15	3
Physical and sexual	14	3
<b>Total reports</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>(100)*</b>

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

\*Some rounding up/down was applied

**7.12** In total 249 witness reports of physical abuse (53%) were combined with reports of sexual abuse and 24 reports refer to physical abuse alone.

**7.13** The following table shows the distribution of witness accounts of physical abuse across the decades covered by this Report.

**Table 19: Number of Physical Abuse Reports by Decade of Witnesses' Discharge – Male Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

<b>Decade of discharge</b>	<b>Number of physical abuse reports</b>	<b>%</b>
Pre-1960s	197	42
1960-69	202	43
1970-79	58	12
1980-89	17	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>(100)*</b>

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

\*Some rounding up/down was applied

**7.14** While the largest number of physical abuse reports (202) related to the period of discharge 1960-1969, 77 of those witnesses spent the greatest proportion of their time in the Schools during the preceding decade.

### ***Description of physical abuse***

**7.15** Witnesses described a daily existence that involved the possibility of being hit by a staff member at any time, for any reason or for no reason. Witnesses also reported being physically abused by co-residents. It is notable that witnesses at times described daily, casual and random physical abuse as normal and wished to report only the times when the frequency and severity of the abuse was such that they were injured or in fear for their lives. Three hundred and forty six (346) of the 403 witnesses reported that they were subjected to frequent physical violence;

they described a climate of pervasive fear in the Schools and provided consistent reports of generally not knowing why they were being beaten.

**7.16** The forms of physical abuse reported by witnesses to the Committee included punching, flogging, assault and bodily attacks, hitting with the hand, kicking, ear pulling, hair pulling, head shaving, beating on the soles of the feet, burning, scalding, stabbing, severe beatings with or without clothes, being made to kneel and stand in fixed positions for lengthy periods, made to sleep outside overnight, being forced into cold or excessively hot baths and showers, hosed down with cold water before being beaten, beaten while hanging from hooks on the wall, being set upon by dogs, being restrained in order to be beaten, physical assaults by more than one person, and having objects thrown at them.

**7.17** The locations where physical abuse was reported to have taken place included: classrooms, offices, cloakrooms, dormitories, showers, infirmaries, refectories, the bedrooms of staff members, churches, work areas and trade shops, fields, farmyards, play/sports areas and outdoor sheds.

*I had a hiding in the boot room, you had to take your shirt off, you were completely naked and he ...(Br X)... beat me with a strap and a hurley stick on the behind and the legs and that.*

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*I was beaten up quite a few times for not making the bed right, I had to go to the boot room. We used have long night shirts then you know, he ...(Br X)... dragged it off me, naked and whop, he knocked hell out of me, he knocked the shit out of me ... he hit with a leather strap with coins in it. One Brother ... he used a tyre he did, a bicycle tyre, it used to wrap around your arm. That was for wiping my nose in my sleeve, he didn't like that, it "wasn't a nice thing" he said.*

**7.18** A small number of witnesses stated that Brothers were trained to beat residents and reports were heard of religious Brothers demonstrating the exercise of discipline to trainee Brothers.

*One day it was ...visitor's day... they used to pick about half a dozen lads. You would be called to the hall. I was picked once and they would actually show the ...visiting student Brothers... how to do the hiding. The Brother who was in charge of the playground, mostly Br ...X... or Br ...Y... would show them how it's done, they would give you a hiding to show them and then they would have a go, with the black jack ...(leather)... with loops of lead in it or steel.*

**7.19** Witnesses reported being introduced to a strict regime from the moment of their arrival in the School.

*We were met by Br ...X... he ruled the roost, he told us about the rules, said if we ran away there was severe punishment, the second time our head would be shaved and the third time we would be sent to ...named School.... He then stripped us off, told us to bend over the desk; he hit the desk with a leather strap and said, "Say the Our Father". I could not say it. He hit me across the legs and warned me not to step out of line. He told us to get in the shower, cold water, "to scrub away your sins", with carbolic soap. He then left and came back with clothes, comb ... he hit me with the strap when I had the clothes on because I should be in pyjamas. We went to the dormitory, the boys were asleep, he said, "This will always be your bed unless you wet the bed, then you will end up with the smellies with Mr ...Y...". It was dark, there was no food. I was very upset and frightened. Then that night Mr ...Y... came walking down with his walking stick, he touched my penis with the stick and said, "Don't ever let me catch you". Later I could hear kids crying as he lashed kids with a stick, getting them up for the toilet. That was my first night in ...named School....*

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*The day I arrived there, I was in the yard and there was all these boys, they all seemed like giants. I remember running up to this man and saying "hello Father" he laid into me, he was a very cruel man, I thought he was a priest, he said "don't call me Father". He laid me on the ground, he gave me a few terrible clatters and I was terrified from that moment. He was Br ...X... I was terrified of him, oh Lord! ...distressed... he was just cruel.*

### **Implements of physical abuse**

**7.20** In addition to physical abuse as the result of bodily assault by punching, hitting and kicking, witnesses reported a variety of implements were used to beat and physically abuse residents. The 'leather' was the most commonly reported implement with 381 witness accounts heard of its use in all 26 Schools. Witnesses described the leather strap as strips of leather sewn together, measuring about two inches wide, half an inch thick and about 18 inches long. One end was described by a number of witnesses as shaped for a handgrip. A number of witnesses reported that some of these leather straps contained metal or coins to add weight. Five (5) witnesses provided accounts of either making or seeing these embellished leather straps being made in the bootmaking workshops.

*They used the leather for the least excuse. It was heavy, stitched and with waxed ends. It was very painful, you would scream in pain. As convent boys we didn't have a chance. The other boys, the city kids who were tough, and the Brothers, all picked on us. We stuck together which wasn't a good idea.*

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*Some of the Brothers had different leathers, I know because I made them when I was 14, in the boot room, some of them had little tiny leads in them, some had coins, some were straight. They weren't soft, they were hard.*

**7.21** A witness reported that while he was being beaten the leather split apart and coins fell out. Two (2) others reported being marked by the key sewn into the end of the leather strap. Another witness reported being sent with a new strap from the workshop to a classroom, where the Brother told him to hold out his hand to test it for him. He was struck a number of times on each hand before being told it was satisfactory and that he could return to the workshop.

**7.22** Witnesses described other leather straps of varying dimensions: some were described as leather belts, others as longer, thinner straps referred to as whips. Two (2) witnesses from two different Schools described being beaten with leather straps with leather thongs attached to the ends, one witness discharged in 1950 referred to the strap as a cat-o'-nine-tails.

*I'll never forget the cat-o'-nine-tails, 10 tongs ...(thongs)... it used to have knots across the bottom. Observing other boys stripped and the blood running down as they were being flogged across the body, it was terrible. There must have been a new rule by the Government at some stage because it happened no more.*

**7.23** There were 232 accounts of being hit or beaten with a variety of sticks, including canes, ash plants, blackthorn sticks, hurleys, broom handles, hand brushes, wooden spoons, pointers, batons, chair rungs, yard brushes, hoes, hay forks, pikes and pieces of wood with leather thongs attached. One hundred and eighteen (118) witnesses reported being beaten with canes and 37 with hurleys. Other implements described included bunches of keys, belt buckles, drain rods, rubber pram tyres, golf clubs, tyre rims, electric flexes, fan belts, horse tackle, hammers, metal rulers, butts of rifles, t-squares, gun pellets and hay ropes. Witnesses also reported having objects thrown at them, such as blocks of wood or sliotars.

*I was crying, I wouldn't stop crying. He ...(Br X)... caught me by the hair. I was down in the ground and the first thing he could lay his hand on was a hammer and he hit me and damaged me ... (described and displayed mark to hand)... if you moved out of turn or something you got hit.*

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*Br ...X... flogged me on the bog. We, another fella, were messing laughing and grinning. He ...(Br X)... hadn't got his leather and he walked over to a tree and got a branch and he peeled it and said "take off your trousers". I thought he was only joking, he got ...named co-resident... to hold me and he ...(Br X)... lashed me. He should be in hell now, he lashed me. I was bleeding, I was sent to the nurse.*

**7.24** Thirty four (34) witnesses described being forced into scalding or freezing showers or baths as deliberate punishments, including a number who reported being hosed with cold water before or after a severe beating. One witness reported that his head was held under water in a sink while working in the kitchen, another reported having his head held under water while bathing.

**7.25** Twenty two (22) witnesses described various means by which they were physically abused by burning and scalding; all the incidents reported were isolated and included being burned with matches and cigarettes, having fingers put into electric sockets and having scalding water thrown at them while working in the kitchen. One witness who reported being scalded was so badly burned that he was hidden from sight during a subsequent inspector's visit.

**7.26** There were reports from three Schools of dogs being used by staff members to assault and frighten residents, the dogs were described in some instances as pets. In other instances witnesses reported staff 'patrolling' with large dogs including Alsatians that were believed to be used as a threat against misbehaviour.

*There was this man there he had ... 3 dogs, he was an outsider ...(lay ancillary worker)... I was sent over to the hay barn to stack hay as punishment, the 3 dogs were set on me and the scar is there now where they bit me, you can see the mark on that finger ...(displayed scar to Commissioners)... I asked to go down to the nurse and he said "no". Anyway, the next morning it was gone all septic and I had to go down to ...named hospital... where they put all stitches in it.*

There were also four references by witnesses of being threatened and intimidated by Brothers who had dogs and carried guns for hunting.

**7.27** Witnesses described various styles of physical punishments that were perpetrated by priests, Brothers and lay staff in different Schools over the decades. 'You got to know every Brother's punishment, they all had their different style of hitting.' Witnesses from two Schools reported that particular Brothers put their leather straps into the fridge or outside overnight to freeze them. 'They'd leave the leathers out on the window sill for the night, you know in the frost, to get it hard.' Witnesses also reported a Brother's practice of rubbing salt on the leather strap that he used. Methods of physical punishment were also reported to vary both between staff and Schools. For example, witnesses discharged from three Schools in the 1970s and 1980s described being locked out overnight as a punishment, referred to as 'freezing time'. Being locked out in cold weather and left to sleep outside were reported as alternative punishments to being beaten. Another witness described the following:

*One new lad came and he was covering himself getting dressed. This Brother decided he was going to make a man out of him, so he pulled off his clothes. The young fella started crying and Br ...X... hung him out the window ...(from a height)... by the 2 legs, we all saw it. You were always in fear of that sort of thing. Different Brothers did different things.*

## **Circumstances of physical abuse**

**7.28** In addition to reports of what appeared to be indiscriminate violence, witnesses reported being beaten for other reasons, including: bed-wetting and soiling, inattention in the classroom, left-handedness, stammering, not knowing lessons, disclosing physical and/or sexual abuse, absconding, 'stealing' food, talking in line, delay in obeying an instruction, 'looking the wrong way' at a staff member, attending the infirmary, complaining of feeling unwell, general wear and tear on clothing and footwear, talking at meals or in bed, talking to girls, playing soccer, losing a game against an outside team, perceived sexual thoughts or actions and not being able to carry out work tasks quickly and properly.

*If you turned up late ... he ...(Br X)... used to do an inspection, if there was a speck of dirt, that would trigger it off. He used a leather, hand, cane on the legs, hand, arse or wherever ...(he)... had a temper, you would be black and blue, you would be on the floor. He used to make you take your trousers down and he would give it to you on the behind or wherever, he did it to me a few times. You wouldn't do anything because he had a whistle and he would call other Brothers and they would weigh in, when these guys got going you would do nothing, if they couldn't get you one way they would get you the other, kick, hit, you were knackered.*

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*He ...(Br X)... flogged me one time, I was working in the piggery. I used to be starving, the pigs used to get the Brothers' leftovers and one day there was lovely potatoes and I took some and I took a turnip. Br ...X... caught me and he brought me up to the dormitory, he let down my trousers and he lashed me. He always wore a leather, around 18 inches ...(long)... and it was all stitched with wax, his leather was very thin. It was about an inch and a half, others had leathers about 2 inches. He lashed me, he flogged me.*

**7.29** The Committee heard repeated reports from the 403 witnesses of specific forms of physical punishment, which were described as routinely meted out for particular behaviours. The most commonly reported of these targeted behaviours were bed-wetting, soiling, absconding and schoolwork.

### **Bed-wetting and soiling**

**7.30** Bed-wetting was reported to have been targeted for punishment in all 26 Schools. One hundred and twenty four (124) witnesses reported that they were harshly punished for bed-wetting, 99 of those accounts related to witnesses discharged before 1970. The punishments described ranged from being hit on the hands to being flogged naked in front of others. The persistence of bed-wetting led to physical punishment becoming a daily ritual for many witnesses. With few exceptions, the arrangements for handling bed-wetting were described as inducing fear and terror on a constant basis and, with some variations, followed a similar pattern up to the 1970s.

**7.31** It was frequently reported that residents who wet their bed were made to sleep in either a separate dormitory or in a separate section of the main dormitory. It was also reported that nine of the 26 Schools for boys employed a night watchman who woke habitual bed-wetters during the night to use the toilet. The Committee heard consistent reports of particular practices in relation to the management of bed-wetting, including all bed-wetters being woken, being checked for wet beds, being beaten with a stick while in bed and being forced to wait for lengthy periods in cold bathrooms to use the toilet. Witnesses also reported being hit as they stood waiting; others reported that beds were inspected each morning, followed in some Schools by an immediate beating if the bed was wet.

*I was beaten stark naked for wetting the bed, 2 or 3 different people would beat me. You would be called up after breakfast by Br ...X.... He was evil. He liked beating kids*

*naked, he would put your head between his legs ...(while he beat you)... for wetting the bed, and more bed-wetting boys would be there as well ...(watching)... The night watchman would get you up at night with a stick, every night. He would beat you out of the bed. You'd have to bring the sheets up to be washed to the laundry and a bigger boy would beat you with a stick there, he was the senior in the laundry.*

**7.32** One witness who was transferred from a junior to a senior School when he was eight years old described how he had wet his bed for a long time and was used to it being managed fairly sympathetically. On the first and subsequent morning's inspection in the senior School when his bed was found to be wet, the person in charge recorded his number. He was told to bring his wet sheet to the drying room for use the following night. After breakfast he was sent to join a line of boys outside the office and when his number was called he was sent into the office and given '6 or 12 slaps with the leather on the hands, wrist or backside'. He reported that he did not know why he was being beaten, he had never been punished for bed-wetting before and could not understand what he had done wrong. Nobody explained anything to him. Another witness explained his experience:

*Every night I was beaten for wetting the bed, the first night I said "the nuns didn't beat me for bed-wetting", he ...(Br X)... said "you're here now". Br ...X... would make you kneel down at the bed to pray, he would call out the boys every night ...(who had wet their bed)... he would beat you with the leather, if you pulled away he would get hold of you and hit harder, if you fell to the floor he would pull you up by the chin, twist your ear, pull you by the hair. After the beatings he would play the guitar and sing ...(popular)... songs.*

**7.33** In other Schools the punishment for bed-wetting was reported to have been reserved for bedtime when those who had wet their beds the previous night were lined up to await a beating either on their hands or bare buttocks. Many of the 124 witness reported that they were beaten in the morning and again at night. Other witnesses reported being sent to 'the office' where punishment was meted out, usually in the form of strokes of the leather on the hands or buttocks, described by one witness as follows:

*You had to fold your bed every morning. Anyone who wet the bed had to stand out. It was the fear. You were told to go to the office. Usually it was after school when they bate ...(beat)... us. They never did it before school 'cos you'd be going to school crying. There'd be 20 or 30 lads all waiting to be beaten, lined up outside the office ... it would only be that size ... (indicated small space)... That's where we would get our beatings. You were just so scared; you didn't know who was doing the beatings.... You were better off not looking at the strap, it would frighten you more. It would depend who was on and the form of the Brother how many slaps you'd get. You'd be told to drop your pants and tip your toes. ... The lads, my friends, would try and get me out of bed at night-time to go to the toilet.*

**7.34** Witnesses described trying to stay awake so as not to wet their bed. The rules in some dormitories were said to preclude getting out of bed at night. In other Schools witnesses reported being reluctant to go to the toilet during the night for fear of being followed and abused by the night watchman or older co-residents. There were 43 witness reports of being beaten and sexually abused by night watchmen and older co-residents in this context.

**7.35** Cold showers and baths were described as a punishment for bed-wetting in the latter decades, with six such witness accounts from three Schools in the 1970s and 1980s.

**7.36** Witnesses also reported going to considerable lengths to swap or hide their wet sheets, acknowledging that sometimes others were punished as a result. Other residents jeered those



who wet their bed and some witnesses spoke with regret about their actions as children in this regard.

- 7.37** Soiling was reported less frequently and most often in the context of severe beatings. Fifteen (15) witnesses reported they were either beaten because they soiled themselves or soiled themselves as they were being severely beaten. Witnesses reported being publicly beaten with leather straps and hurleys and humiliated by having their faces pushed into their soiled bedclothes. Seven (7) witnesses specifically described soiling themselves as a response to extreme fear.

*I soiled myself a lot there, it was after a battering in the yard, it started after that, I never done it before that. After I got a hiding in the yard, this Brother came over and caught me by the back of the neck and swung me around.*

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*In the classroom Br ...X... threw me out the window one day because I soiled myself. He was a bully, he hit me with the leather on the hands and he'd fist you as well ...indicated being hit on face....*

### **Absconding – running away**

- 7.38** Running away was a feature of life in the Schools and the majority of witnesses made some reference to either running away, thinking about doing so, or observing what happened to returned absconders. Witnesses consistently reported that residents who absconded or ran away were severely beaten and flogged upon their return to the School. The public nature and severity of the beatings were described as traumatic, and made a lasting impression on those who witnessed them in addition to serving as a caution against absconding. Reports of running away were frequently accompanied by accounts of persistent physical and sexual abuse.

*I ran away a few times. He ...(Br X)... was trying always to put his hand down my leg... (On return to the School)... I was put up on rafters. There was an old shed there, it was a barn, I was tied to the rafters, he ...(Br X)... had the rope over the top, I was like that ...demonstrated spread out facing down... he lashed me with the leather, over the back and down the arms, that happened on 4 or 5 occasions, I ran away again after that.*

- 7.39** There were 95 witness reports from 13 Schools of severe beatings as punishment for absconding throughout the entire period covered by the Report. The most frequent and most severe beatings pertained to the discharge period prior to 1970. The forms of physical abuse reported for absconding included: public beatings partly or fully naked, hair being shaved, deprivation of food and transfers to more distant and what were believed to be more restrictive institutions. In one School there were several reports of returned absconders being forced to wear oversized clogs as a deterrent. ‘They used to give me clogs so that I wouldn’t run away, or boots that were too big you couldn’t get far in them.’ Beatings of returned absconders were not always conducted in view of the other residents but were reported to be regularly within earshot, in the Resident Manager’s office, on the stairwell or in another room routinely used for such purpose.

- 7.40** Thirty (30) witnesses reported that they had their heads shaved as part of the punishment for absconding, six of whom reported having it done more than once. Witnesses reported that head shaving marked them as a returned absconder and therefore subject to further random beatings from both staff and co-residents.

- 7.41** There were 18 witness reports of absconders from three different Schools being beaten and otherwise punished by co-residents following public beatings by religious staff members. It was the reported practice in one School that the returned absconders were placed in the yard and the other residents were encouraged to kick and punch them while staff watched:

*I ran away when I was 12, I was caught and 2 of them ...(Br X and Br Y)... would lay into you and not only the Brothers but the lads as well, especially the monitors. They were told they could not see their film because of me, I got the head shaved, a scissors and the hand clip.*



*One day a gang of us went for a walk into a field, we were told we could. They had farm workers out with dogs looking for us. We were caught and brought back. We were taken onto the yard, they let the dogs go ...(attacking)... and the boys would line up and hit you with whatever they had in their hand, kick you, you had to run through the line. This was a punishment to let the boys know that if it ever happened again this is what would happen. That night you were beaten again, you were thrown over the bed ...crying....*

**7.42** A small number of witnesses described being forced to search for boys who ran away. One witness describes: '(Br X)... forced me to catch lads who were absconding, if you didn't find them you'd get their hidings as well'.

**7.43** Four (4) witnesses from two different Schools reported that they were beaten on the soles of their feet with a cane and leather strap as a punishment for running away. Witnesses from three other Schools reported being made to stand or kneel in the recreation yards following their beatings and were ostracised by their peers. Two (2) witnesses from the latter Schools reported being made to kneel in the yard for several hours in their underpants in winter and were incontinent while kneeling there. The punishment for absconding in a number of Schools was reported to include being put on reduced food and being forbidden to associate with others. Witnesses described being made to walk around the yard alone for several weeks. Others reported being made to kneel in the refectory while they ate bread and water. This punishment was described as continuing for days and up to three weeks in one instance. One witness reported that when he was brought back after running away his head was shaved and he was later taken from his bed, stripped and beaten, punched and kicked by a group of six Brothers in front of other residents.

*Anyway, 3 of us decided that we could not stick it ...(being beaten)... anymore, every time you looked he ...(Br X)... was after you. We could not take it, we ran away. We were out for about a fortnight and we were caught. I did not get flogged at the time but ...named 2 co-residents ...(were told)... "take off your pants" and they got 25 stripes. Now, I didn't because I was 2 years younger and only had been there a while. The 3 of us were put into the refectory, they got 3 mugs and 3 chairs and said "kneel down" and we were like that for a week.... We had to kneel on anthracite coal in the kitchen, my knees were all bleeding.*

**7.44** A further punishment associated with absconding was depriving the other residents of watching the weekly film. This particular punishment was reported to prompt residents to abuse those who had run away in retaliation for missing out on this popular treat, as one witness described:

*I was put outside ...(yard punishment)... for about 3 months. Then after about 3 months they would let you go to the film but they would not let you watch it. You would have to sit with your back to the film and everybody would be watching you. It was just sheer terror really, sheer fear. Fear was the most cruellest part of it.*

**7.45** Five (5) witnesses reported that they were transferred directly to other Schools with harsher regimes as punishment for absconding.

## Classroom education

**7.46** One hundred and fifty seven (157) witnesses reported being physically assaulted in the classroom. Witnesses described the liberal use of the leather, cane and wooden ruler or stick on the face, palms, wrists, tips of the fingers, forearms, legs, backs of the hands, across the shoulders, back and the bottom. Learning was reported to have been dominated by the fear of punishment for various reasons including for not knowing the correct answer, being left handed, being unable to read when called upon and being unable to speak clearly, as described by a witness discharged in the 1960s:

*If he ...(Br X)... asked a question and you put the hand up, you got a beating if you could not ...(give the right answer).... If you were too slow with the answer you got beaten. ... I got to the stage that I didn't answer because I would get a beating. Everything operated on fear. There was one Br ...X... if you done it too slow he hit you, he had 2 leathers, if he appeared on the scene there was fear. No matter what you done, you would always get it wrong. If you frowned or a flinch ... he would hit you.*

**7.47** Witnesses who have struggled with poor literacy all their lives described years of humiliation and abuse in the classroom. In four Schools, witnesses described being bent over desks, forced to remove their trousers and being beaten in front of the entire class. Witnesses described being restrained in different ways including having their heads wedged in a window and in a drawer while they were beaten on the bare bottom. The following is an additional account of abuse in the classroom:

*Br ...X... was a very, very hard man. In each classroom they had a special stool that you stood up on and you got it across the legs or the arse. Everything was done in public. It depended on what was going on, if there was laughing or if you threw something.*

**7.48** Other classroom punishments reported were: ear pulling, being lifted up by the hair or cheeks, beaten on the soles of the feet, having objects thrown at the head or body and being made to stand facing the wall with arms elevated until fatigued, when a beating would ensue. Several witnesses reported having their face slapped or boxed repeatedly while their head was held steady by a tuft of hair. This practice was referred to by witnesses as a 'jaw warmer' or 'rabbit punch'.

*One time in the class, my arms would be black and blue, both arms, because I couldn't read a couple of lines in Irish, he ...(Br X)... beat me.... He'd put you in the corner, your hands would be up like that ...(displayed arms raised)... if you dropped them you'd get the leather. He put me in the back of the class and he'd tell you to run to him, he'd put his fist out like that ...(indicated fist and outstretched arm)... and you'd run into it.... It would be the kick in the shins you would get off him. As soon as you hit the deck he would pull you up by the ears for what we used to call the rabbit punch, you know, like that ...indicated hand movement... with the side of his hand on the neck, he'd chop you, you'd go down on the deck. I was out ...(unconscious)... that day, you'd be reeling ... an 11 year old child.*

**7.49** In addition to the consistently severe forms of physical abuse reported in the context of bed-wetting, running away and the classroom, male witnesses also reported being routinely physically abused in the process of various other everyday activities. Examples of these activities were personal care, recreation and work.

## Personal care

**7.50** Witnesses discharged before 1970 reported the widespread practice of residents being beaten in the dormitories, washrooms and cloakrooms. One hundred and thirty two (132) witnesses described such beatings as punishment for not having washed properly or quickly enough, being last out of the bathroom, having torn or worn clothing or footwear or a missing item of clothing.

Holes in socks, jumpers or footwear and tears in trousers or jackets were also described as a common cause of punishment. Witnesses also reported being beaten when they took their worn or torn clothes to be repaired and hit if they did not have them mended or clean before an inspection.

*In the morning time there would be an inspection, if there was a button missing you'd get whacked. You'd get a smack in the ear with the hand.*

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*I got such a hiding because my pants were soiled. One day I put up my hand, I wanted to go to the toilet but the Brother he wouldn't let me go. I had to wash my underpants and then at the inspection they were dirty, I got a hiding for that.*

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*You'd be hit if your lace was open, if your clothes weren't clean, if your hair wasn't combed. They'd come up at you from behind or from the side and hit you at full force – you wouldn't see it coming.*

- 7.51** Random beatings in bed at night were also described. Night watchmen were reported to have patrolled the dormitories during the night in nine Schools. Both the night watchmen and religious staff are reported to have checked that residents lay in a particular way in their beds, reports of this experience vary over the years and between the different institutions. Witnesses from some Schools consistently reported being beaten if they were found lying with their hands under the bedclothes, others were beaten if they did not have their arms and hands crossed over their chest in a particular way. Witnesses believed the reason for this enforced practice was to avoid what religious staff referred to as the 'sin' of masturbation.

*You couldn't sleep on your back, your ass would be so sore ...(after a beating)... you'd want to sleep on your belly, but they wouldn't let you sleep, you had to sleep in a particular way, on your back.*

- 7.52** Showers were reported as locations of abuse in six institutions. The most commonly reported reasons for being beaten in the showers were not washing properly, ducking out of unbearably hot or cold water or attempting to avoid sexual assault. Religious and some lay staff were reported to supervise the showers, usually alone. Some residents described being checked as they left the shower area and were pulled aside for punishment if not considered to be properly washed, at other times it was reported that they were randomly struck with either a leather strap or a stick as they were showering or as they filed past the supervising staff member. A specific complaint about these beatings was the pain of being beaten on wet skin and the humiliation of being beaten while naked.

*Showers were too cold or scalding.... All the time you had to steel yourself, some of my worst nightmares are of the dormitory and the showers, they were a nightmare. Someone, Br ...X... would turn it ...(water)... on, it was too hot or too cold, you jumped out and suddenly you would see this black figure, and you would see a strap coming at you and you would be leathered, you would hear this series of screams all along the cubicles as another ...(co-resident)... got it. The worst for me was you were trapped, you could not hide in the cubicle. They were the danger times, you couldn't disappear in the shower.*

- 7.53** Witnesses also reported being physically abused when they were sent to the infirmary for treatment of an injury or ailment. Four (4) Brothers who were in charge of the infirmaries in different Schools were identified as beating residents who were sent to the infirmary. One Brother was named by seven witnesses as abusive in this manner. It was reported that some lay nurses were also harsh, including one who was reported by seven witnesses: 'she was

*cruel, vicious, would pour a bottle ...(of iodine)... all over you if she was in a bad mood, in your eyes, burn your scabs'.*

- 7.54** Eight (8) witnesses reported being beaten in the context of religious practice, including the performance of their duties as altar boys, being late, falling asleep or being inattentive at Mass, and forgetting to say prayers in the refectory.

### **Recreation**

- 7.55** One hundred and sixty five (165) witnesses reported being physically abused while involved in recreational activities. Recreation areas including yards, playing fields, gyms, recreation halls and music rooms were described as places where it was necessary to be alert and to avoid staff who took advantage of opportunities to abuse residents. There were reports from a number of Schools of drill in the yard being routine, under the supervision of lay drill masters.

- 7.56** Witnesses from all Schools described being physically abused by religious staff in the course of playing football and hurling. Among the methods of abuse described was a practice of excessive use of force in play by certain priests and Brothers and putting less able residents or those selected for punishment between the goal posts as target practice for hurling and football.

- 7.57** In six Schools witnesses described being beaten for winning a game or a point against a Brother and/or being punished if the team lost a match against an outside team. This threat of punishment was described by one witness as making them *'ferocious opponents with a reputation for being hard'*.

*In the sports Br ...X... was involved in hurling and football, if you weren't up to scratch, particularly hurling, a fist would come out of nowhere and he would hit you. You'd be walloped ...(by Br X)... on the field.*



*Br ...X... and Br ...Y... were like 2 bruisers going around, you wouldn't mind the regular punches and belts as they were passing any day, but Br ...X... beat the shit out of me like I was a punch bag in front of all the others at a football match. ... He picked me up, head butted me, kicked me and left me in a terrible state to show me and all of us who was boss. I got the worst hiding ever ... beaten with the leather and stick. I had cracked ribs, my face was bruised and swollen, I was kicked in the head and stomach.*

- 7.58** Playing soccer was reported as forbidden in a large number of Schools, with 10 witness accounts of being beaten when caught.

*Another time I was caught heading the ball, you were not allowed play soccer you know, by Br ...X.... He said "I warned you". He caught me and brought me around to the toilets. He had this tyre like you'd have at home, off a pram you know ...(witness described being beaten with a rubber tyre)... . He left me ...crying.... God, the fucking swelling that came up ...crying... you'd try and pull away and he'd hit you on top of the head and hit you with his fists.*

- 7.59** Music practice rooms and gymnasiums were also reported as locations for physical abuse in many of the Schools reported to the Committee. These discrete locations were reported to also allow opportunities for boys to be isolated. Twenty five (25) witnesses from a small number of Schools reported severe physical abuse in the context of band activities. These reports were most often connected to the specific staff member in charge of the activity. In general, reports of physical abuse in these locations were routine and frequently associated with sexual abuse.

*It was 7 nights a week practice ...(band)... until you were 16, 7 to 10 at night. The other lads would be playing soccer or watching TV. He Br ...X... he would know straight away*

*who was playing a false note. The first one who played a false note he would clatter with his hand he would just lift you up, catch you by the hair like that and lift you off the chair and clatter you as you were going down.*

- 7.60** A small number of Schools were reported to have had boxing clubs. Nine (9) witnesses reported being abused in the context of boxing activities, including being pitted against older, stronger residents as a punishment. One witness reported that he was ordered by a Brother to join the boxing club, but he refused as he had no interest in boxing. The witness reported that for a week afterwards he was taken from his bed each night and beaten with a strap by the same Brother. He eventually agreed to join the club and was forced to spar with other residents who were more experienced, he was repeatedly beaten in the ring. The witness believed these beatings in the boxing ring stopped when a lay staff member threatened to go to the gardaí. Witnesses also reported being made to box in the ring as a punishment for fighting amongst themselves:

*If you were caught fighting you were made ...(by Br X)... to put on gloves and fight the other boy involved. It could be you were picked on by a bigger boy in the first place, who then got permission to beat you properly.*

- 7.61** Other witness reports regarding boxing included being made to fight regardless of fear, being forced to participate in a boxing competition for the entertainment of visiting Brothers and being forced to fight naked.

### **Work**

- 7.62** One hundred and forty eight (148) witnesses made 197 reports of being physically abused in the context of work, including being hit, kicked, punched and beaten. Farm work, trade shops and kitchens were the most frequently reported areas of work associated with physical abuse, particularly among those discharged before 1980. Witnesses reported that particularly harsh religious and lay staff were in charge of work in these areas in a number of Schools. The conditions under which residents were at times required to work were also reported as abusive in certain Schools. Witnesses stated that the relative seclusion of work areas from the main thoroughfare of activity in the Schools further increased the risk of abuse – for example kitchens and farm sheds where residents were often reported to have worked in isolation with a single staff member.

- 7.63** There were 97 reports of being physically abused while working on the farms, in the farmyards, tending farm animals and in the fields attached to the Schools. There were a further 19 reports of being abused while working on the bogs. Witnesses described physically punishing work such as picking and breaking stones, cutting turf, pulling beet by hand from the ground, turning hay by hand, pulling trees from the ground, cutting timber and manually compacting silage. In addition to being abused while they worked, witnesses also described physically punishing work:

*They used to get the tractor to cut the grass, to save the hay. They used to get a line of us along one end of the field and bend over and physically scrape all the grass with our hands.... Named lay ancillary worker... used to be there with a big stick and if you stood up you got a smack of it across the back of the head or the back. We used to have to pull the trees and the stumps up out of the ground with chains and move big rocks with a chain. Your hands would be blue....*

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*Br ...X... I learned to hate, he was the most evil .... Any dirty job I would get it, he took a dislike to me. I always got the job of staying up when the little piglets would be born, up all night. One day the sow had lain on top of the piglets and some of them were dead. That man he was evil, you'd think I had shot somebody the hiding he gave me. ... I was horse whipped with the leather, beaten to a pulp ... crying and screaming and wet*

*myself ... when he stopped he said “now pull up your trousers and go and feed those pigs”.*

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*I couldn't lift the buckets ...(working on the farm).... He, Br ...X... had a big long stick, he was whipping you across the legs, across the arse like he would a cow. I couldn't lift the buckets.*

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*One time when I was learning how to milk, the cow put her hoof in the bucket and Br ...X... lifted me by the ears, the skin come off under his nails, and threw me on the ground,. He gave me a few digs and boxed me in the ribs, just hit you anywhere he liked. The next morning I fell off the stool and the same thing happened again, my ears were bleeding.*

**7.64** There were 41 reports of being physically abused while working in the kitchens, mainly those attached to the Schools where food for the residents was prepared and served. Eleven (11) reports were from one School and almost all referred to one particular Brother. There were nine reports from a second School where the kitchen was also the domain of a Brother reported to be particularly harsh. Witnesses reported being abused in many ways, including being beaten, having their heads plunged into sinks of water, locked into fridges, and deliberately scalded as punishments for dropping crockery, saucepans of food, taking food, not working quickly enough, and burning food.

*He Br ...X... used to run the kitchen, he had this habit of waving his big leather strap ... and any time he felt like it he would just hit you. You would get a couple of clatters for no particular reason. ... He was wired to the moon.*

**7.65** There were 26 witness reports of physical abuse in the weaving, tailoring, shoemaking, darning and painting workshops. They reported that these areas were under the charge of staff, most of whom were lay ancillary workers, who in some instances punched, kicked and beat and threw objects at residents. Physical abuse in this context was mainly reported to occur in relation to specific work tasks.

**7.66** Many other reports of physical abuse in work contexts included: working in the laundries, infirmaries, making Rosary beads and other religious objects, chopping sticks, carrying turf and coal, emptying latrines, cleaning boots and shoes, scrubbing and polishing floors, building, cleaning toilets and pulling grass.

*My job at one time was to hand out clean laundry to other boys. One day I remember one boy did not get clean underwear for some reason and Br ...X... got 2 boys to hold me across the bed. He pulled down my pants and beat me across the bare backside with his leather strap. I got 10 to 15 lashes from him for this incident.*

**7.67** Three (3) witnesses reported being physically abused when sent out to work for local farmers and others while resident in the Schools.

### ***Specific practices used in physical abuse***

**7.68** In addition to the forms of abuse described above, witnesses reported that staff at times employed certain practices that intensified the experience of being abused. The most frequently reported were flogging, delayed punishment and being beaten by more than one person.

## Severe beatings and flogging

**7.69** The Committee heard evidence from 78 witnesses in relation to 13 Schools that they were stripped, and severely beaten. Forty seven (47) of those witnesses from nine Schools reported being beaten in public. These beatings were most commonly reported to have been with a leather strap, sometimes a cane, and administered by more than one staff member on the naked back and buttocks. The beatings were described as '*fiercely brutal*' and '*unmerciful*' and were frequently referred to as floggings, and were associated with particular staff members. Eleven (11) witnesses from one School reported being beaten naked. In another School, 14 witnesses reported being flogged, 12 of whom were naked or partially clothed. Twelve (12) witnesses from two other Schools gave accounts of being beaten naked themselves or witnessing co-residents being severely beaten while naked.

**7.70** These beatings and floggings were reported to have taken place most often in the recreation yards, the boot rooms, the refectories and the stairwells. Witnesses described at times being made to bend over desks, stairs, benches, vaulting horses or to bend over with their fingers under their toes to be beaten on their bare back and buttocks. Forty eight (48) witnesses reported that they were beaten or kicked to the ground and that the beating frequently continued while they were on the ground. Witnesses commenting on the public floggings said that some residents '*couldn't stand at the end*' and recalled, '*the beating went on until they ... (Brothers)... were exhausted*'.

*They had what they called the public floggings, where you would be brought out in the middle of the ...(yard).... If they wanted to make a real example of you they would have all the other lads there and you would have to kneel down. I was flogged by 4 of them ...(Brothers)... one time. ... I was lashed.... They used to flog you at night time, you would be bruised all over, you would be sore at night, you wet the bed.*

**7.71** Witnesses reported being flogged and severely beaten for many reasons, including: disclosing or reporting abuse, absconding, speaking to visiting girls, riding a visitor's bike, refusing to clear blocked toilets, taking food, fighting, delay in lining up, not washing properly or having torn clothes.

*When I was there 3 blokes ...named co-residents... they ran away and when they were brought back, they were flogged, on one of these vaulting horses. We were all there. Br ...X... said "I'm going to make an example of these boys", and one by one they came out, no trousers on them ... naked from their waist down, each one individually over the vaulting horse, he flogged them. Well you could see their backsides going red blue, red blue, the whole School watching.*

**7.72** Twenty three (23) witnesses described injuries to their genitalia as a result of being kicked or flogged. Eighteen (18) witnesses described being hosed with cold water or having cold water thrown on them prior to, or in the course of a severe beating. A witness gave the following account of a severe beating when he was found in the company of co-residents who had been talking to some girls visiting their brothers in the School:

*Br ...X... met the boys coming up from talking to the girls, he sent them down to the washroom, he told me to go too, but I wasn't with them. He told the 3 of us to get into bathing togs. He went out and got the leather strap, like the cut-throat razor, he came in, took off his coat and his collar and I never in all my life seen anything like what he done. He started beating us, saying we were talking to the girls ... he took off his shirt ... he didn't beat me so much as the others. One of the lads started soiling themselves, he beat them so much, grabbing himself saying, "I'll give ye girls", rubbing himself. One of the lads was in bits, they were in a terrible state.*



**7.73** Witnesses reported being filled with terror as religious staff appeared to lose control when they were administering physical beatings or floggings. It was reported that such beatings frequently resulted in injury or, in 22 reported instances, rendered the resident unconscious. Eight (8) of the 22 witnesses reported that they passed out while being beaten and woke up in bed unable to move. There were 36 accounts of witnesses being unable to sit or lie on their back for some days after being beaten, and a further 28 accounts of being unable to walk following a beating or flogging.

*I remember another boy who would not cry. I remember one day he got 50 slaps on one hand and then 50 on the other and then another 50. This Brother got so mad that he ... (co-resident)... would not cry. He, Br ...X... kicked the legs from under him and kicked him to the ground and kicked him until he went unconscious. He was just lying there with his eyes staring up to the sky.*

**7.74** Eleven (11) witnesses reported that the flogging or beating they received was so severe that they thought they were going to be killed. Five (5) witnesses from two Schools reported that named co-residents were never seen again following a severe beating.

*I remember this one Brother. The boys would be crying in the morning going into class. He'd start with sums, always an awkward division. I remember one boy in the class ... named co-resident.... He was asked a question this time, he made the awful mistake of saying he knew the answer but couldn't get the answer out, and with that this Br ...X... went absolutely berserk.... The brutality of that man, he hit him everywhere, with the leather. He ... (co-resident)... was trying to avoid being hit. I never saw him ... (co-resident)... again. I often did think about him, whether he went blind or not, I don't know. I never saw him again.*

**7.75** Five (5) witnesses reported being locked in a dark room in solitary confinement for a number of days after a severe beating. Witnesses from a number of Schools reported that there were rooms where residents were left for days after severe beatings. A witness reported that he and others dropped bread through the window bars to a co-resident who was locked in that room. Other witnesses reported spending days or weeks in the infirmary following a severe beating or flogging.

### **Delayed punishment**

**7.76** Witnesses from six Schools reported an extensive practice of the delayed administration of physical punishment, which was described as 'a double punishment, waiting to be beaten and the beating itself'. Experiences of delayed punishments described by witnesses were: kneeling on the floor in the classrooms, refectories or in the yards and standing in their nightshirts at night for long periods in the dormitories, waiting to be taken to the boot rooms, washrooms or stairwells to be flogged. Witnesses who wet their beds described the misery of waiting to be beaten each morning or evening in a routine fashion, in dormitories, offices or elsewhere. Returned absconders and others who had infringed a rule reported a component of the punishment was waiting to be beaten. They described being unable to sleep at night in anticipation of being taken out of bed for physical punishment. Witnesses also described being taken out of bed unexpectedly to be beaten for unknown reasons, making the possibility of being beaten a constant threat.

*You did not know when it was going to happen, they ... (Brothers)... would leave you until you were nice and snug, you'd think you were safe. I don't remember their names. One of their favourite habits was to wait until you nearly fall asleep, and then they would bring you down the marble stairs. You would be in ... like a grandfather's nightshirt, with nothing else underneath, and they would lift that up, and have you bent over the stairs. They would whip you then with this strap.*

**7.77** Witnesses described the psychological distress and physical pain of being made to stand facing a wall for lengthy periods, with arms raised waiting for a beating. They stated that they were hit if they moved or dropped their arms and were terrified as they waited, not knowing what form the physical punishment would take or when it would happen:

*The worst abuse was being put ...(standing)... and you would be there for about 3 hours and you would be waiting. Then they would send you to the boot room and give you a hiding. Sometimes they wouldn't give you a hiding that evening but the next day and you would have all that day to think about it and stuff, it would do your head in. ...The wall was the length of the dormitory and your toes would have to toe the wall, tight to the wall, and if you moved there were monitors, they used to watch you and they would report you to the Brother. ... You stood with your hands behind your back, your nose, your head on to the wall. ...You'd have to stay there until the lights were dimmed and then you would be taken to the boot room for the hiding. I think that was the worst thing of all.*

**7.78** The practice of lining residents up to await punishment was described as a punishment in itself as witnesses believed it was intended that they hear the cries of their co-residents in advance of their own punishment.

*Br ...X... was an awful man, he was in charge of ...(recreation)... I got a lot of hidings off him. He had a strap about 2 inches thick and he would take down your pants and sometimes he'd say "come down to my office after" and there would be about 6 or 7 fellows there queuing up. You could hear the fellow inside. There would be crying and they would be shouting and you would be terrified outside. You'd be next in then, you'd be frightened, very, very frightened, the screaming, it was awful. The hidings was for everyday carrying on, you know kids like. We were all afraid.*

### **Abuse by more than one person**

**7.79** Fifty nine (59) witnesses reported episodes of being physically abused by more than one person simultaneously. Of those reports there were 42 witness accounts of two or more religious staff coming to the dormitories at night and removing residents from their beds. Witnesses reported being brought to either cloakrooms, boot rooms, showers and bathrooms or the rooms of religious staff members where they were stripped and placed across a table, bed or chair and beaten by more than one priest or Brother. The Committee also heard reports of residents being held down by co-residents under the instruction of a Brother. A small number of witnesses reported being held with their head between the thighs of one of the priests or Brothers while another priest or Brother beat them on the bare bottom with a leather strap. Witnesses also reported being severely beaten as part of a group for various reasons, for example when no one admitted to talking during silent periods or when a staff member wanted a resident to admit to a misdemeanour. Many witnesses described the involvement of more than one religious staff in the episodes of severe beating or flogging, and the assault being so severe that they sustained an injury.

*You would get it ...(the leather)... on the back of the leg, on the arms, on the back on the head, anywhere. This guy ...(Br X)... had a temper he had a severe temper, like a horse. You could end up down ...(on the ground)... kicked, hit, leathered, you'd be black and blue I was hit to the floor, you would be black and blue, bleeding. I got quite a few with my trousers down and leather. ... He had a whistle and there were religious staff near by, they would weigh in, 3 or 4 of them, you daren't react to these people. If they were physically abusing someone else you daren't do anything or you would be for the high jump yourself.*



*One fella ...(co-resident)... called my mother a bastard. I hit him a box. ... They ...(Brothers)... told me to get into my togs and go up to the shower. After the cold shower the 2 of them ...(Brothers)... got 2 sally rods and they beat me, God did they beat me. You would feel the welts on your legs, I mean real dents on your skin.*

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*Named School... ruined my life. Night-times were the worst; if you weren't taken out of bed and beaten you were listening to it happening to someone else. You could hear the screams all over the whole building at night it was so quiet. Up to 4 Brothers would come and take a boy out of bed on some pretext and give him a hammering, make you take off your nightshirt, they would do what they wanted. They were like a pack of hunting animals.*

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*At night-time you'd be in your nightshirt, 2 of them would hold you down, you could be asleep or on the mark of going asleep, it was always at night time. Three of them would come in. Two of them and the third one would do the beating. The strap ... (standing up demonstrating hitting)... it was done in frenzy, like they did not want to be caught...*

**7.80** There were five accounts of boys being tied down before being beaten; in one circumstance a witness described being tied to a bench and beaten. Another witness reported that a Brother sent him to the office, where he was told to take his clothes off, two Brothers took turns beating him on his body and hands until '*I thought I was going to be killed*'. The witness further reported his legs were swollen with open lacerations.

**7.81** A witness, who reported he was wrongly accused of stealing from another resident, described being told by the Resident Manager '*to take your punishment like a man*'. He was then taken to the office and beaten by two Brothers, on the face, buttocks, hands, wrist and arm until the witness confessed to something he had not done. In a number of Schools the Resident Manager was reported by witnesses to be involved directly in the physical punishment of residents along with other religious staff and in other Schools there were reports of the Resident Manager being called on to agree a punishment.

### ***Injuries***

**7.82** Witnesses reported a catalogue of injuries to themselves and co-residents as a result of physical abuse by religious and lay staff members in the 26 Schools reported to the Committee. Two hundred and twenty four (224) reports were heard of injuries including: breaks to ribs, noses, wrists, arms and legs, injuries to head, genitalia, back, mouth, eye, ear, hand, jaw, face and kidney. Sixty four (64) witnesses reported being left unable to walk, sit, stand or lie down as a result of those injuries. Other injuries included burns, dog bites, lacerations, broken teeth, dislocated shoulders, injuries to the soles of feet, and burst chilblains. Chilblains were a common ailment in the pre-1970s period and male witnesses reported experiencing severe pain after being struck on hands and legs with chilblains. Witnesses reported that at times they were beaten until their chilblains burst and bled.

*I suffered from chilblains. I had poor circulation, really festering sores, your fingers as white as sheets, I had to dress my own. I couldn't get my feet into shoes. One morning after very heavy rain the ground was water-logged, I didn't want to go over and get my feet wet and aggravate the condition ...(chilblains).... He ...(Fr X)... caught me up in his arm and took me across the yard, walked me across ... on sore feet on the wet ground ... and dropped me in the hall. ... He took his revenge out on me, he walloped me with his stick, he walloped me for a full quarter of an hour or more.*

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*He ...(Br X)... went around all the beds, you had the clothes, blankets and stuff rolled back and if you made one mistake, whack right across the legs. If you couldn't get the right answer or recite the Our Father or Hail Mary, all in Irish, he would whack you across the soles of the feet with a bamboo cane. I saw boys there who couldn't walk the next day. You were supposed to learn while you were in bed and recite it for him.*

**7.83** Many witnesses reported more than one injury, which included the following:

- One hundred and eighty six (186) witnesses reported being marked, bruised or swollen with welts.
- Seventy one (71) witnesses reported blood being drawn.
- Sixty (60) witnesses reported eye and/or ear injuries.
- Forty four (44) witnesses reported head lacerations.
- Thirty two (32) witnesses reported injuries to their hand, three of whom reported permanent damage.
- Twenty eight (28) witness reported broken ribs, arms or legs.
- Twenty three (23) witnesses reported injury to their genitalia.
- Twenty two (22) witnesses reported receiving injuries that left them unconscious.
- Twenty two (22) witnesses reported being scalded or burned.
- Twenty (20) witnesses reported broken noses.
- Twenty (20) witnesses reported split lips or broken teeth.
- Seventeen (17) witnesses reported injuries to their face or jaw.
- Thirteen (13) witnesses reported injuries to their feet.
- Eight (8) witnesses reported injuries to their back.
- Four (4) witnesses reported suffering kidney damage.
- Three (3) witnesses reported being stabbed with farm and kitchen implements.

**7.84** There were multiple injuries reported in relation to particular Schools and staff members, for instance 126 witnesses from three Schools reported injuries including broken bones, fractured limbs, head injuries, broken teeth and being left bleeding and bruised. Six (6) witnesses from one School named a particular Brother as the perpetrator of severe injuries, including broken noses and facial injuries:

*I lost my 2 front teeth because of a whack like that ...demonstrated strike of the hand... out in the yard. If you got too near him...(Br X)... he would just whack you, he'd flatten you. ... A few days later I was sent to the doctor because my mouth was all up. ... He sent me on to the dentist in ...named town...*

**7.85** Twenty five (25) witnesses reported being hospitalised for different non-accidental injuries, as described above. Six (6) of these reports referred to one particular School. Others described co-residents being hospitalised for treatment of their injuries following physical assault by a religious or lay staff member.

*Fr ...X... laid me out cold for talking; he walloped me so fast I couldn't see it coming. He broke my nose, I had to go to hospital. He knocked me clean out. I had 2 big black eyes and the nurse sent me to the hospital.*

•

*The 2 years I had there I did not get over it for many, many years. I was shattered. ... I suffered fierce violence there. I saw one boy ...named co-resident... battered on the bog,*

*he got such a beating from Br ...X... that his back was broken and he was shifted off to hospital in ...named town....*

- 7.86** Witnesses reported that in a number of Schools a member of the religious staff or an older resident accompanied them to the hospital and in most cases spoke to the hospital staff on their behalf. Witnesses reported being warned by the person who had beaten them and by other staff to tell the doctor the injuries were caused accidentally.

*One day I was on the farm and we were messing, me and ...named co-resident... squirting milk at each other. There was a Mr ...X (named lay ancillary worker)... there and he told Br ...Y.... He ...(Br Y)... came over and dug his nails into the back of my ears and then he hit me with his clenched fists on the jaw and of course I went down. I was in the infirmary myself for 6 or 7 weeks after that because they smashed my jaw, my gum was all gone, inside of my face was all ripped. Br ...Y... took me to ...named hospital... he done all the talking and he said "if anyone asks you, you have an abscess on your gum". I was back in the infirmary, the treatment I was getting was hot salty water. It started getting a bit easier for me after that.*

- 7.87** Nineteen (19) witnesses reported being treated by a nurse in the School for injuries, including broken bones and lacerations following physical abuse. There were 12 further reports of non-accidental injuries being treated by a visiting doctor and another 10 reports of witnesses spending lengthy periods of time in the infirmary while they recovered. Witnesses at times reported such treatments were abusive in themselves.

*My bed was near the medicine cabinet, there was this thing called horse iodine that they put on cuts the pain of it was unbelievable. ... I saw these 3 boys lining up and Br ...X... he painted their backside and legs with this stuff. I will never forget them jumping around and screaming in pain, it was just terrifying.*

•

*Mr ...X..., lay worker, he was staying there ...(in the School).... He'd stay for a few days and then he'd come back. He hit with something like half a board and a cane, beaten all over. He used a board on the soles of my feet and I couldn't walk after it. I had to drag my feet and try to walk, it was that sore.*

### **Reported abusers**

- 7.88** The 474 reports of physical abuse heard by the Committee identified 556 individuals by name as physically abusive, 110 of whom were also reported as sexually abusive.<sup>7</sup> Witnesses reported being physically abused by a variety of personnel including religious and lay staff who were in positions including Resident Managers, teachers, and care and ancillary staff. It should be noted that Resident Managers or their designated deputies were authorised as Disciplinary, as regulated. Witnesses also reported being physically abused by older co-residents. Seven (7) witnesses reported being physically abused by members of the public including visitors to the Schools and the employers on work placements.

- 7.89** In addition to those named by witnesses there were 30 reports of physical abuse by religious and lay staff and co-residents who were not identified by name. A number of witnesses who made reports of physical abuse to the Committee stated that they either did not wish to name the person who abused them or had no memory of the name of that person.

*He ...(Brother)... gave me a hiding. I don't remember who that was, I didn't know his name. It's only the ones that really hurt you are the ones that stuck in your memory.*

<sup>7</sup> A number of witnesses reported being abused by more than one abuser, therefore, the number of reported abusers is greater than either the number of witnesses or the reports of abuse.

**7.90** For the purpose of this Report the term ‘care staff’ is used to describe religious and lay staff whose main contact with the witnesses was in the context of their everyday care. Those described in the table below as care staff were reported to have been in charge of the dormitories and most activities of daily living such as personal hygiene, bathing, dressing, meals and recreation. Witnesses reported the increasing presence of trained childcare workers from the 1970s onwards in a number of Schools. The main distinction made between care and ancillary staff was that those described as care staff had a supervisory function while the ancillary workers were reported to have had designated tasks such as night watchman, working in the laundry, kitchen or on the farm. The following table shows the positions reported to be held by named physical abusers in, or associated with, the Schools:

**Table 20: Position and Number of Reported and Named Physical Abusers – Male Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

<b>Reported position held by named abusers</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
<b>Religious</b>		
- Authority figure including Resident Manager	65	9
- Care staff	227	21
- Teacher	49	7
- Ancillary worker	53	2
- External priest	5	0
<b>Lay</b>		
- Care staff	6	7
- Ancillary worker	42	5
- Teacher	27	8
<b>Work placement provider</b>	3	0
<b>General public</b>	4	0
<b>Co-resident</b>	15	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>60</b>

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

**7.91** As may be seen in the above table, 394 of those named by witnesses as physically abusive (71%) were male religious staff within the Schools, a further 39 named abusers were religious Sisters. Ninety five (95) lay staff, 75 male and 20 female, were named by witnesses as perpetrators of physical abuse.

### **Religious (staff and others)**

**7.92** Witnesses identified 399 male religious, 378 Brothers and 21 priests by name as physically abusive. As well as staff of the School, these included five priests who provided a pastoral service to the residents, members of a religious order on holiday and visiting religious staff who assisted with sport, recreation and other activities. The number of reports of physical abuse in relation to particular religious staff varied considerably, as follows:

- Two hundred and eight (208) male religious were named once each by single witnesses.
- One hundred and thirty four (134) male religious were each reported as physically abusive by between two and nine witnesses.

**7.93** Sixteen (16) Brothers in four particular schools were identified by name as physically abusive in 244 witness reports and a further 53 male religious were identified in multiple reports by witnesses from those Schools.

**7.94** The religious staff identified as physically abusive were reported to have been engaged in all areas of the Schools, including the classrooms, dormitories, kitchens, workshops, farms and recreation areas.

*Br ...X... he went over and got an ordinary leather ... and he started beating me. I was so frightened, he had the door locked, it was inside in the refectory. He beat me for a long, long time. ... I had marks on my legs, marks on my back. I was terrified with the beating I got. ... Another young fellow ...named co-resident... I seen the same Brother one day in the kitchen picking up a big iron poker and giving him a ferocious belt across the head.*

**7.95** Sixty-five (65) of the named male religious staff reported as physically abusive were identified by witnesses as being in positions of authority, including Resident Managers within the Schools. The remaining 329 Brothers and priests named by witnesses were reported to be care, teaching and ancillary staff within the Schools. Witnesses described some of the religious staff having different roles within the School and at times were not clear whether the ascribed role was in fact the individual's dominant function within the institution. For example, witnesses referred to religious staff in authority as the Superior, Reverend Mother, School Master, Officer in Charge, Head Brother or Sister, and Brother or Priest in Charge.

*He ...(Br X)... reported me to Br ...Y (Resident Manager).... He used deal out the punishment for the running away or any trouble in the yard. Br ...Y... he told me to get into ...named location in School... that was where all the punishment was dished out. I was made face the wall in there for maybe half an hour or that. He made me sit down, there was a school bench.... Br ...X... came in and the other one ...(Br Y)... got the other side and he grabbed me arms, made me put me arms over the bench so you couldn't get your legs out. They pulled me trousers down, he had ... they used to call it a black jack, it was like the rim of a pram that was broke, the rubber rim, they used get that behind on you, they used hit you with that. The pain off that was unbelievable that day ...distressed.... I got about 10 of them that day. Then I was put back on the wall, they came back after about an hour and they done it again, no Br ...X... did it, but the 2 of them was there.*

**7.96** There were 39 religious Sisters named as physically abusive by witnesses. The reports of abuse by Sisters refer to five junior and mixed gender Schools. Nine (9) Sisters were identified as Resident Managers, one of whom was named by five witnesses.

*I was messing around ... and this nun Sr ...X... was her name she got a hurley, a plastic hurley, she lashed me out of it with this hurley. There was another Sr ...Y... she was teaching me the clock and she used to hit me on the face when I didn't understand it.*

**7.97** Ninety four (94) Brothers and five priests were named as both physically and sexually abusive by witnesses.

### **Lay care and ancillary staff**

**7.98** There were 95 lay staff, 75 male and 20 female, identified by name as physically abusive by male witnesses. A further 34 lay staff were identified by their position, but not by name, by male witnesses.

**7.99** Forty two (42) of the lay staff who were reported as physically abusive were ancillary staff employed as night watchmen, drill masters, farm workers, maintenance and trade workers.

Witnesses reported that contact with lay ancillary staff was mainly in the dormitories, showers or in the context of work activity on the farm, in the kitchens or in trade shops where they were in constant contact with the staff who abused them.

*They had a large shower area. We had one shower per week. The showers were back to back. The person in charge of the baths, he was a lay person, if he wasn't happy he used to examine boys. To his reckoning if the boys weren't clean enough, he'd examine you, he would poke and hit you with a stick. I was walloped ... quite a few times, you'd cower in the shower, he would wallop you, in the genital area and on the posterior.*

**7.100** Three (3) particular lay staff were identified by name in the evidence of 35 witnesses and a further 13 lay staff were identified by name by between five and nine witnesses who gave evidence to the Committee.

*He was cruel ...named lay ancillary worker.... He was an animal, he was a giant of a man. We were only kids. If you done something out of line you would get a toe in the arse, or a whack of a stick, whatever he had in his hand. You'd be out in the field, you would think you would be running around playing, no such thing, you were there to work.*

**7.101** Twelve (12) watchmen were identified by 30 witnesses as physically abusive. The night watchmen were employed to supervise the dormitories during the night and were reported to attend to residents who wet their bed. The main reports of physical abuse by night watchmen occurred in that context.

*This man had the job of walking up and down the dormitory all night. One night I woke up and this torch was shining in my face. ... He told me to get up and he took the walking stick and he gave me 10 whacks on one hand and then he gave me 10 more. He left me standing there while he did his rounds and then he came back and he gave me 10 more, I was shaking. I wet myself ...distressed.... He went around again and he came back again, at this time I don't know what to do, I am shaking. I wet the floor, he gave me 10 more on each hand. I got 60 whacks of a cane, a little boy for waking up when a torch was shone on his face. Then he said "go back to bed". I didn't know what to do, I cried, totally bemused at this savagery. That was the start of 4 years, night after night after night he would walk around, I would pray "don't stop, O God please don't stop. If I'm seen to be awake what will I get?" I saw him hit many boys. One time when he was walking around the dormitory, I could hear him and I ...(soiled)... myself, now how frightened can you get?*

**7.102** Twenty seven (27) male lay staff reported as physically abusive were classroom and other teachers employed in the Schools. They were generally described as harsh disciplinarians who dispensed punishments for schoolwork and perceived misbehaviour.

*The PE teacher beat us with his fists and boots for coming last in the race, for smiling at the wrong time.*

•

*There were lay teachers, I don't know about qualification or anything like that. One of them was alright, he tried to help us. Mr ...X... was sadistic, he took his belt off to me once and took my trousers down, oh it makes my heart run faster when I talk about him. It was terrible, terrible ...distressed.... He was the one who would use whatever he got hold of and he used put you over a chair and he also would cane the soles of your feet.*

•

*One of the school masters ...(lay teacher)... during the first year I was there, the first year, was a very sick man. ... One winter's morning we were all lined up and told "say the Our Father", not in English but in Irish. We started off and said ... we just knew the*



*opening and the first 2 words. We couldn't get any farther, how could we? We were not taught it and because we could not get any farther we got ...demonstrated being hit... on our hands with a strap. A strap with rivets in it because it was held together with little nails.*

- 7.103** The 20 female lay staff who were reported as abusers included teachers, care and ancillary workers. Five (5) infirmiry nurses were among the female lay staff reported by witnesses as abusive. Witness reported being abused by beatings and by the harsh treatments they applied.

*Named lay ancillary worker... she was a lay care worker, when she was away on holidays I never wet the bed, but when she was there I got hammered for wetting the bed. If she spotted you ... taking bit of bread from another lad ... she would tell you you were going to get hammered the following morning. You didn't get it there and then, you would be worried about it and you would get it the next morning. ... But she ...named lay ancillary worker... was unreal.... You got up at half 6 or 7 o'clock and you would have to hold on to the iron bed with one hand and holding up the nightshirt with the other, and she would get one of the prefects to hold you ... she would hit you with a hurley or whatever she could lay her hands on, a broom handle, it could be 10 to 20 strikes. You would be polishing floors after that on your knees and you could get it again, you would not be able to sit down.*



*Nurse ...X... enjoyed hurting kids, she had no sympathy. You would rather put up with pain than go to her. All the boys were afraid of her; she was very brutal.*

- 7.104** Eleven (11) male lay staff who were reported as physical abusers were also the subject of sexual abuse reports.

### **Co-residents**

- 7.105** Thirty eight (38) witnesses reported that pervasive bullying was associated with physical abuse by older co-residents in the Schools. There were 16 reports of co-residents identified by name as physically abusing witnesses and 22 other accounts that referred to groups of unnamed older residents as physically abusive. Witnesses reported that in some Schools older residents were appointed by religious staff as monitors and it was said that they used the opportunity to exert their authority in various ways, including beating younger co-residents.

*I will never forget the brutality that went on in that place. ... I have got to tell someone before I depart this earth. We were constantly beaten with ash wood sticks by the senior boys left in charge of the playground. This amounted to extreme cruelty as little boys, only 6 or 7 years old.... They were allowed to carry sticks and they could do what they liked. ... In the yard they would be in charge, no one ever supervised that and they could do what they liked. I could never understand that. They were in charge of the dormitories, and the way they got you up with the stick, like, it was unbelievable.*

- 7.106** Evidence was also heard of residents being directed by religious staff to attack, kick and beat their co-residents. Witnesses reported it was their belief that certain older residents were known to be favoured by those in charge and therefore had the freedom to behave as they wished without fear of reproach.

*I answered back in a sort of a cheeky way, and he ...(Br X)... said "wait a few minutes" and went out. I didn't know what he had in mind, he came back with a couple of older boys and he said something like "teach him a lesson". You see you have to remember in ...named School... at the time each of the Brothers had their own little flock, he had his own little pets. In later time I learned these boys used to work on the farm. Anyway Br ...X... he urged these lads on, they started punching and kicking me, I was in ... a*

*corner trying to hide my face from the kicks. Well I was left with blood coming from my eye, from my lip and from my eyebrow.*

- 7.107** Physical assaults by older residents were sometimes reported to have occurred in the context of sexual abuse and witnesses reported being physically intimidated by older boys in this way as a warning against reporting sexual abuse.

### **Other reported abusers**

- 7.108** Witnesses reported being physically abused by named individuals who were neither staff nor residents in the School. Three (3) witnesses reported being physically abused when they were in external placements for work or holidays that had been arranged by the School. Two (2) other witnesses reported being physically abused by male lay members of the public and an additional two witnesses reported being abused by ex-residents who they remarked had the freedom to return to the School and associate with residents unsupervised.

## **Sexual abuse**

*The use of the child by a person for sexual arousal or sexual gratification of that person or another person.<sup>8</sup>*

- 7.109** This section summarises the evidence provided by witnesses of sexual abuse ranging from contact sexual abuse including rape and associated physical violence to non-contact abuse such as enforced nakedness and voyeurism. Witnesses were generally distressed when describing their experiences of sexual abuse. They spoke in as much or as little detail as they wished. Some witnesses provided detailed and disturbing accounts of sexual abuse, other accounts were sufficient to clarify the acute or chronic nature of both contact and non-contact sexual abuse.

*A priest sexually abused me. ... It's not very easy to talk about it... There is things there but I don't know how to get them out. I'd love to be able to come out with them, but I just can't... There's no easy way of saying things like that.*

### **Nature and extent of sexual abuse reported**

- 7.110** Two hundred and forty two (242) male witnesses (59%) made 253 reports of sexual abuse in relation to 20 Schools.<sup>9</sup> Eleven (11) witnesses reported sexual abuse in relation to two separate Schools. Witnesses described their experience of sexual abuse as either acute incidents or multiple episodes that, for some, occurred throughout their entire admission in the School. Witnesses reported being sexually abused by religious and lay staff in addition to other adults, most of whom had some association with the Schools. Witnesses also reported being sexually abused by co-residents.

- 7.111** The frequency of sexual abuse reports varied widely between Schools:

- Four (4) Schools were collectively the subject 156 reports.<sup>10</sup>
- Five (5) Schools were the subject 10-17 reports, totalling 67 reports.
- Eleven (11) Schools were the subject of 1-6, totalling 30 reports.

- 7.112** One School was the subject of 29% of all sexual abuse reports heard by the Committee.

<sup>8</sup> Section 1(1)(b).

<sup>9</sup> A number of witnesses were admitted to more than one School, and made reports of abuse in more than one School, therefore the number of reports are greater than the number of witnesses.

<sup>10</sup> In order to maintain confidentiality further details regarding the numbers of abuse reports in these Schools cannot be specified.

**7.113** Sexual abuse was reported to occur in combination with other types of abuse as shown in the following table:

**Table 21: Sexual Abuse Combined with Other Abuse Types – Male Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

<b>Abuse types</b>	<b>Number of reports</b>	<b>%</b>
Sexual, emotional, neglect and physical	166	66
Sexual, neglect and physical	49	19
Sexual, emotional and physical	20	8
Sexual and physical	14	6
Sexual, emotional and neglect	2	1
Sexual and neglect	1	(0)
Sexual	1	(0)
<b>Total reports</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

**7.114** One hundred and sixty six (166) reports were of all four types of abuse and constituted 66% of the sexual abuse reports. In 249 instances (98%) witnesses reported both sexual abuse and physical abuse.

**7.115** As with the other abuse types, sexual abuse was most often reported by witnesses who were discharged during the 1960s. The following table shows the distribution of witness accounts of sexual abuse across the decades covered by this Report:<sup>11</sup>

**Table 22: Number of Sexual Abuse Reports by Decade of Witnesses' Discharge – Male Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

<b>Decade of discharge</b>	<b>Number of sexual abuse reports</b>	<b>%</b>
Pre-1960s	88	35
1960-69	119	47
1970-79	37	15
1980-89	9	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>(100)*</b>

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

\*Some rounding up/down was applied

**7.116** There are some proportional differences between the sexual abuse reports and the combined abuse reports for each discharge period. For example, there were 203 reports of abuse from 177 witnesses discharged prior to 1960, and 43% of those reports were of sexual abuse. By contrast, there were 60 reports of abuse from 50 witnesses discharged in the 1970s of which 62% were reports of sexual abuse.

<sup>11</sup> For example: as witness evidence is presented according to the decade of discharge, a witness who spent 12 years in a school and was discharged in 1962 will have been included in the 1960s cohort although the majority of that witness's experience will relate to the 1950s.

## Description of sexual abuse

**7.117** Witnesses described contact sexual abuse including: inspection of genitalia, kissing, fondling of genitalia, forced masturbation of, and by, an abuser, digital penetration, penetration by objects, oral and anal rape and attempted rape, by individuals and groups. Witnesses also reported several forms of non-contact sexual abuse including detailed interrogation about sexual activity, indecent exposure, inappropriate sexual talk, voyeurism, and forced public nudity. Some witnesses gave accounts of isolated incidents of sexual abuse and others reported being sexually abused on many occasions, over a period of months or years. The Committee developed a classification of the different forms of sexual abuse described by witnesses, which are shown in the following table:

**Table 23: Forms and Frequency of Sexual Abuse Reported – Male Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

Forms of sexual abuse	Frequency reported	%
Inappropriate fondling and contact	183	32
Forced masturbation of abuser by child	89	16
Use of violence	88	16
Anal rape	68	12
Masturbation of child by abuser	50	9
Oral/genital contact	30	5
Non-contact abuse including voyeurism	25	4
Attempted rape	14	2
Kissing	12	2
Digital penetration	6	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>565*</b>	<b>(100)**</b>

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

\*Witnesses reported more than one form of sexual abuse

\*\*Some rounding up/down was applied

**7.118** The most frequently described form of sexual abuse was inappropriate fondling of which there were 183 reports. In 50 instances inappropriate fondling was combined with reports of masturbation of the witness by the abuser. Forced masturbation of the abuser by the witness was reported by 89 witnesses, 30 of whom reported being coerced and physically assaulted while being subjected to masturbation and oral/genital contact.

**7.119** Sixty eight (68) witnesses reported being anally raped. There were a further 14 reports of attempted rape and six reports of digital penetration. Many of these reports were associated with violence, of which there were 88 reports in total, including 23 reports of injuries to genitalia by beating with a leather and kicking.

**7.120** Reports of non-contact sexual abuse included 15 accounts of witnesses being questioned and interrogated about their sexual activity and knowledge and 10 reports of voyeurism and indecent exposure.

**7.121** The secretive and isolated nature of sexual abuse was frequently described. Many witnesses reported that the fear of severe punishment and the threat of either them or their siblings being sent to a more restrictive institution inhibited them in both resisting and disclosing sexual abuse. Witnesses further reported that the culture of obeying orders without question, the authority of

the abuser and the experience of not being believed and being severely beaten after they reported abuse, rendered them powerless to stop the abuse.

### **Circumstances of sexual abuse**

**7.122** Sexual abuse was reported to have occurred mainly in private and occasionally in the company of other residents and staff members. Witnesses reported being sexually abused in many locations, including: dormitories, sleeping quarters and offices of staff members, cloakrooms, churches, sacristies, classrooms, workshops, kitchens, infirmaries, showers, toilets, outside sheds and farm buildings, fields, recreation areas, motor vehicles, private homes, commercial premises, and other off-site locations. Witnesses stated that particular areas of activity such as kitchens, farmyards, infirmaries and music rooms provided opportunities for staff members to isolate residents without fear of disturbance.

**7.123** Sexual abuse was also reported to occur off-site when residents were taken out of the institution for holidays, outings or work placements, by individuals who sexually abused them. Witnesses reported that sexual abuse was often preceded by physical violence that they believed was intended as an intimidating threat. Others described receiving special attention and experiencing friendly encounters over periods of time that they welcomed, as many of them experienced no other kindness or affection, an example of which is described below:

*One night I was lying in bed and I was woke up by ...(Br X)... he said "I'm not going to harm you or anything, don't be afraid". At that time I thought he just wanted to chat, I thought it was a normal thing. The next thing he sat on my bed, he said "don't be afraid, I'm not going to hit you". The next thing he took hold of my hand, put my hand on his privates, I took my hand away and with that he slapped me, he slapped me quite a few times and I was crying and he left. He came back later, he opened his trousers and took my hand and put it on his privates, out of total fear I obeyed. He instructed me in what to do and that amounted to masturbation and that continued over the time I was there.*

**7.124** Witnesses repeatedly stated that co-residents who had no family contact were the most common victims of sexual abuse. They referred to these co-residents as orphans and 'conventers' and many witnesses remarked that they considered themselves lucky not to be selected for sexual abuse.

*There were 2 different types of boys, the outsiders who had parents and the orphans. The orphans were always on the lookout for danger, learning to survive. They had no one to look out for them. It was a constant struggle to survive, you would make no eye contact, you would keep your eyes down in order to avoid punishment. You were thinking "there's no way out". You blamed yourself.*

•

*Anytime he got the opportunity he got access, he ...(Br X)... used to masturbate himself over me and make me do the same to him. It started when I was 10 and a half or 11 and it went on 'til I was 14. He used to swamp me with gifts, sweets, money. He said it was our secret. He stopped me going to my godparents, he was afraid I would tell. It was mainly the orphans who were abused bad, they had no one to turn to. I had no one. I was 2 years there before I ever went out. There was no one to tell.*

### **Violence**

**7.125** There were 88 witness reports of sexual abuse and associated physical violence, 15 of these reports related to one School. Many of the reports heard were of witnesses being beaten while their abusers masturbated, or of the witnesses being beaten on their bare buttocks while they were held against the abusers' genitals. Witnesses described physical abuse perpetrated in the context of sexual abuse as serving to both enforce compliance with the sexual assault and as a

means of securing the silence of the witness concerned. Witnesses who reported being sexually abused, including being anally raped, named Brothers about whom the Committee heard a number of reports of sexual abuse:

*He was a very bad man, a very dirty man, he used to keep me back after school and do things to me, not very nice things. He used to lock the doors and put books up against the window, tell me to take off my clothes. He touched me, made me touch him, then beat me so that I wouldn't tell anyone. He made me clean up after him. He hurt me very badly, forced himself on me. Then, when you'd go to school next day you'd wonder who is it going to be today? ... Other boys were kept back too.*

•

*Br ...X... came and pulled me from my bed into his bedroom, he turned his wireless up to full volume and said "take that nightshirt off, you can scream now as much as you like, you little bastard". He masturbated himself with his left hand while he was hitting me with his strap.... He just brought the strap down on me and kicked me with his boots on, that is all he was wearing.... He threatened that if I told anyone the same would happen again.*

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*One particular morning he ...(Br X)... put me up against the wall because I was left handed, he put me hands up against the wall like that ...indicated arms stretched above head... he started flogging me with the leather strap. This particular session I lost all control and soiled myself, he took me by the ear straight out, around to the showers. He wanted me to strip off and get into the shower, the water was freezing. ... It's very hard for me to tell this ... but I want to tell it anyway ... I was crouched down in the corner, he grabbed me by the hair into the cubicle, dragged me up off the floor, on the lats you know, lats for the seats and he buggered me again, and told me to shut up, I was screaming, I was in sheer pain you know. He had done it before in my bed and he made me bleed, he tore the skin you know. It could be once a week and then he mightn't come near you for a month. It lasted for all the years I was there.*

**7.126** Sexual abuse associated with violence was also reported to be accompanied at times by serious threats of physical harm, including risk to life, for the perceived purpose of instilling fear and enforcing compliance. For example, witnesses reported being threatened that if they ever told anyone what happened to them they would be 'drowned in the slurry pit', 'sent to a worse place', 'killed' or in one instance, 'cut up and buried in a bag in the bog'. This latter threat was issued by a lay ancillary worker who the witness reported challenged him with a knife.

**7.127** Witnesses reported being beaten or exposed to harsh treatment by co-residents in advance of sexual abuse episodes and made frequent reports of severe beatings culminating in a violent sexual assault.

*The damage that they, boys, done to boys was unbelievable, what was going on. They ...(co-residents)... were after beating them so much ... they were beaten and beaten until they done it ...(sexual abuse).... They were beaten into submission.*

### **Abuse by more than one person**

**7.128** There were 16 witness accounts of sexual abuse being perpetrated by more than one religious staff simultaneously, generally in association with physical assault. Witnesses described being sexually abused over a period of time by a number of Brothers who also severely physically abused. Some witnesses believed that they were subsequently abused by other Brothers who became aware that they were the victims of ongoing abuse. The reports refer to six separate Schools, with 11 witness reports made in relation to two of those Schools. Sexual abuse associated with severe physical violence involving more than one staff member was generally

reported as having occurred at night. Witnesses reported being taken from their beds and brought to staff members' bedrooms, bathrooms or other areas, where they were abused by two or more Brothers and/or priests.

- 7.129** In relation to one School, four witnesses gave detailed accounts of sexual abuse, including rape in all instances, by two or more Brothers and on one occasion along with an older resident. A witness from the second School, from which there were several reports, described being raped by three Brothers: *'I was brought to the infirmary...they held me over the bed, they were animals....They penetrated me, I was bleeding'*. Another witness reported he was abused twice weekly on particular days by two Brothers in the toilets off the dormitory:

*One Brother kept watch while the other abused me ...(sexually)... then they changed over. Every time it ended with a severe beating. When I told the priest in Confession, he called me a liar. I never spoke about it again.*

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*I would have to go into his ...(Br X's)... room every time he wanted. You'd get a hiding if you didn't, and he'd make me do it ...(masturbate)... to him. One night I didn't ...(masturbate him)... and there was another Brother there who held me down and they hit me with a hurley and they burst my fingers ...displayed scar....*

### **Grooming and inducements**

- 7.130** Witnesses reported that sexual abuse was frequently preceded by the abuser's attempts to win their trust by expressing concern for their welfare or giving them small treats such as comic books, extra blankets, chocolates or fruit. *'On your birthday you got a bottle of orange but you would have to ... you had to go up to the Brother and sit on their lap....'* Witnesses also reported being taken away from the School for outings and being sexually abused while they were out.

*This Brother used to follow the band around, Br ...X... introduced me to him. He wasn't from our School, he was a fully fledged Brother from another School. He got friendly with me, over friendly you know, he used to take me out. He took me to ...named town... he told them ...(Brothers)... he was going to stay with his sister. He booked us into a hotel, and he touched me and things, rubbing and kissing me, he assaulted me, he did not have anal sex. I did not know anything about sex. I felt I had done something wrong. ... I went to Confession about it and the priest said "don't worry about it" and he gave me a prayer to say as penance. I thought he would do something about it, you know, that he would put a stop to it, but nothing happened.*

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*Br ...X... he had a kind way with him and you would be kinda looked after, if other Brothers were at you he would have a go at them. ... One day he called me into this little room ... he was saying to me "you are doing very well here, you are really coming along very well". After a while he said "you are such a good looking boy you know, I have plans for you, we are going on a trip...".. I thought "Well, he was just being nice". ... Well after a while he took my hand and he placed it on his private parts you know, so he said to me "don't be afraid", things like that and at the same time I was shaking, and as he was talking he kept on rubbing my hand up and down his privates. The next thing was, he was opening his buttons, his trousers, you know ... and he told me to ...crying... take down my trousers ...crying...witness described anal rape....*

- 7.131** A number of witnesses reported being sexually abused while working in the kitchens where access to extra food served as an inducement, prior to being sexually abused. The kitchen was identified as a location for sexual abuse due to its relative isolation from the rest of the School. As previously reported the kitchens in some Schools were described as the domain of a particular Brother with few intrusions by either staff or residents.

*I was sexually abused by a Brother, he used to fondle me, he used to masturbate himself over me, it happened mainly when I was helping in the kitchen, in a room at the back. The sexual abuse always happened outside the sight of everybody.*

- 7.132** Staff whose sleeping quarters were adjacent to the dormitories were reported to employ various excuses for having residents in their rooms. Witnesses reported being sent to the priests' or Brothers' rooms to light fires, make beds, tidy up or clean the rooms. At times witnesses reported being invited to listen to the radio or music in a Brother or priest's bedroom as a special treat. At other times, witnesses remarked that their expressed interest in some topic or sport provided the Brother or priest with the opportunity to engage them on an individual basis, as a prelude to inappropriate sexual contact.

*I was playing basketball one day and Br ...X... came over to me and said to me, says he "I have some sweets for you upstairs..." ... (He told me)... to come up to his room. I genuinely thought I was going to get some sweets. He went into his room and came out naked, he told me take off my clothes, he rubbed some oil on me and he buggered me, I was in a bad way after that. He took me into his room and locked the door, and it was oral sex and all of that. ... I don't like talking about it.*

- 7.133** Witnesses reported that in some Schools residents who were selected for sexual abuse by religious staff at times received special treatment. A number of witnesses who were sexually abused described being known as 'specials' of a staff member and reported that being selected as 'special' protected them from physical abuse, to some extent. They described the associated disadvantages attached to this position, particularly being isolated from their peer group whom they believed did not understand the price they were paying for perceived privileges. A small number of witnesses in such circumstances acknowledged having conflicted feelings about being sexually abused, especially in situations where the sexual abuse was not associated with violence.

*Br ...X... he was brutal, he was a pig. ... They would call him a paedophile nowadays, he had his favourites, we called them "oh that's so and so's ...(pet)..." He ...(Br X)... would be holding this little fella's hand and that kinda thing. I was not sexually abused, I'd be telling a lie if I said I was, but I saw them.*

### **Voyeurism and other non-contact abuse**

- 7.134** Witnesses described as sexually abusive the manner in which certain staff members supervised the areas of personal care. The practice of communal showering and bathing was reported as commonplace and not in itself abusive. However witnesses reported lone male staff staring at residents as they showered and subjecting them to intrusive examinations of their genitalia and other body parts. Reports of such violations of personal privacy were frequently accompanied by reports of physical abuse and subsequent sexual assault, including rape, in the shower areas.

- 7.135** Three (3) witnesses reported being watched by a Brother as he masturbated while they showered. Other witnesses described Brothers examining their bodies with particular attention to their genital area on the pretext of inspecting if they had washed thoroughly in the shower. A further form of voyeurism was reported by three witnesses who were forced to spar naked in the boxing ring while being watched by a number of Brothers and visiting clergy.

- 7.136** Fifteen (15) witnesses reported being questioned and interrogated in different ways about their sexual activity and awareness of sexual matters. Witnesses from two Schools reported that these interrogations were conducted in a methodical manner and focused on sexual activity between residents. Residents and witnesses were subsequently punished as a result of what was told. Witnesses from two Schools also described being required to keep a diary of their sexual thoughts that they had to give one of the Brothers to read and that they were then



questioned about. Witnesses described being distressed by the interventions and that 'you never knew what they wanted'. Other witnesses reported being questioned about their contact with girls or boys prior to admission or during holidays that they believed was, at times, a means of determining how susceptible they may be to allowing sexually inappropriate behaviour. Such interrogations were also described as opportunities for inappropriate sexual talk.

*He ...(Br X)... came into the recreation hall one night and said "come here a minute" and brought me up to his room. He started talking about something and then he started on sex, he started talking about sex. He asked me "have you ever had sex with a girl?" I said "no", he kept at me and at me saying "you did, you did, come on tell me the truth...". He threatened and he said "I'll bring up Br ...Y...". He was real evil ... sometimes you couldn't sit down you, would be so sore after a beating. So I said to myself I'll have to say yes. So I said "yes", and he said "how do you do it?" and I haven't a clue....*

### **Reported abusers**

**7.137** Two hundred and forty six (246) lay and religious staff and others were reported as sexual abusers by male witnesses. One or more reports of sexual abuse were made against each of those identified as sexual abusers. Witnesses identified 186 perpetrators of sexual abuse by name, 110 of whom were also named by witnesses as physically abusive. A further 60 unnamed perpetrators were identified by their position or occupation. It is possible that there is some overlap between those identified by name and those who were not named. The abusers' identity was often protected by the reported practice of abusing residents at night when 'you only saw the cloak'. Witnesses gave accounts of being warned not to turn around as they were being raped, which they believed was to preclude them from identifying the abuser.

*He told me to lean over the desk and pull my pants down. I didn't know what he was going to do ...crying.... I felt something rubbing up and down against my backside. I tried to look around but the way he had me pinned down on the desk I couldn't move, and the next thing I felt this sharp pain ... it was so severe. I never felt anything like it.... After he finished he told me "you be a good boy now go out and play with the other boys" and after that I decide that I had to get out of here, and I absconded and I was brought back and I got another beating.*

**7.138** Those reported to the Committee as sexual abusers included male and, to a much lesser extent, female religious staff who were in positions of care and authority including Resident Managers, teachers and ancillary workers. Lay care and ancillary workers, teachers, visiting professionals, volunteer care givers providing holiday and work placements, adult friends and relatives of staff and volunteers, ex-residents and co-residents were all identified as perpetrators of sexual abuse. The Committee heard evidence of sexual abuse by religious staff from 15 of the 20 Schools where witnesses reported being sexually abused. Evidence was heard of sexual abuse by lay staff and others from all 20 Schools. The following table shows the positions understood by witnesses to be those held in or in association with the institutions by reported sexual abusers:

**Table 24: Position and Number of Reported Sexual Abusers – Male Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

<b>Position of reported sexual abusers</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
<b>Religious</b>		
- Authority figure including Resident Manager	23	1
- Care staff	87	3
- Teacher	24	0
- Ancillary worker	17	0
- External priest, Brother or other clergy	8	0
- Clerical student	1	0
<b>Lay</b>		
- Care staff	6	6
- Teacher	2	0
- Ancillary worker	11	0
<b>Weekend or holiday placement carer</b>	1	0
<b>Work placement provider</b>	1	0
<b>Visitor and volunteer workers</b>	9	0
<b>Local workmen, general public or others</b>	6	0
<b>Ex-resident</b>	1	0
<b>Co-resident</b>	37	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>12</b>

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

**7.139** As indicated, the majority of sexual abuse reported was perpetrated within the Schools by religious staff with 151 (65%) of all those identified as sexually abusive being male religious staff, 139 Brothers and 12 priests. Altogether 180 religious and lay staff within the Schools were identified as sexually abusive.

### **Religious (staff and others)**

**7.140** Witnesses reported being sexually abused by 151 male and four female religious staff in 15 Schools where sexual abuse was reported. Five (5) witnesses also reported that they were sexually abused by external clergy and Brothers who were visiting the Schools or others to whom witnesses were sent to work. As previously stated external clergy included priests and others of higher rank. These visiting religious were described as either friendly with religious staff or visiting the School in a pastoral role. There were also four reports of sexual abuse by either a clerical student or visiting members of the congregation in relation to four other Schools. In all but one instance sexual abuse by external clergy and Brothers were described as isolated occurrences. The forms of sexual abuse reported included anal rape, oral/genital contact, masturbation, kissing, inappropriate fondling, indecent exposure and voyeurism.

*I always thought there was someone coming for me. It's only when I think back now they ...(Brothers)... were so clever. I don't know if you get what I'm saying to you, with regards paedophilia if you know what I mean, they had a knack of it. ...The sexual abuse or the physical abuse wouldn't start straight away, but don't forget you're 11 years of age, you're lonely, you have nobody. The next thing the Brother would put his arms around you or he would be nice to you. It was somebody to hold on to, then after*

*a while the sexual abuse would start. ... To this day it kills me, I tried to please them. I tried to please them for a hug, somebody to put their arms around you. You were constantly told "nobody wants you, you're not wanted".... He'd bring you into a room and put the arm around you and giving you a sweet and then hands would drop down and eventually he would bugger you. I thought I was a bad boy and that ...(sexual abuse)... was your punishment. When they'd get fed up with you they would start hitting you. After the sexual act you would get a box in the mouth off him.... It started after 2 weeks there, new comers were like new meat.*

- 7.141** Six (6) Brothers were each reported by between 10 and 21 witnesses as having sexually abused them. These six Brothers were identified by a total of 89 witnesses and came from two particular Schools. These Schools had both the largest number of staff reported as sexually abusive and the most reports of sexual abuse made about particular staff members.

*Br ...X... sent for me, I had to go to his room and he said "kneel down and close your eyes". ... He put his penis in my mouth ...crying and distressed... and I opened my eyes and he boxed me in the eyes. You couldn't do anything if they came to abuse you, they would hit you a box or anything like that.*

- 7.142** Among the religious Sisters, Brothers and priests who were reported as sexual abusers 24 were believed by witnesses to be Resident Managers or officers in charge of the Schools. Ninety (90) religious staff, including three religious Sisters and three priests, identified as abusers were in care roles and 24 were in teaching roles. Seventeen (17) religious staff identified as sexual abusers were occupied in an ancillary capacity on farms, in kitchens, laundries and infirmaries. Religious ancillary staff were described as having control over their area of work, particularly kitchens, farmyards, and infirmaries, where they were identified as sexually abusing many witnesses.

*The first job I had was in the laundry, after a few weeks he ...(Br X)... called me in to the office and said "if you ever have any problems don't hesitate to come to me". He had his arm around me at this stage, he put his other hand down inside my trousers.... I pulled away and wouldn't allow him to do it, he hit me a box in my face with his fist and told me to get out of his office. ... Twice I had to masturbate him ...(Br X)... in the hospital ...(infirmary).... The hospital was the place where they would give the boys medication. ... He'd bring you in and he'd pull across the curtains. ... He'd ...(Br X)... have his Cassock up underneath the band, the belt, and he'd get me to rub him.*

•

*While working in the kitchen I was kissed by Br ...X... regularly and the boys who witnessed it ridiculed me. ... Br ...Y... made me fondle him and rubbed himself up against me.*

- 7.143** The four religious Sisters identified as sexually abusing male witnesses were attached to different Schools and were each the subject of single witness reports. In three instances they were described as inappropriately fondling and exposing themselves to the witnesses in the context of personal care activities. In the other instance a witness reported that a religious Sister sexually abused him by fondling and masturbation in the company of both male and female lay care staff.

- 7.144** As previously reported, 94 Brothers and five priests were named as both physically and sexually abusive by witnesses.

## Lay care and ancillary staff

- 7.145** Witnesses identified 19 male and six female lay staff as sexually abusive. The main occupational group identified were lay ancillary staff of whom 11 were named by 21 witnesses. These staff were mainly night watchmen and farm workers employed by the Schools. The most frequently reported form of sexual abuse perpetrated by male ancillary staff was anal rape and masturbation. Two (2) lay teachers and trade instructors were reported by a small number of witnesses as sexually abusive. The other lay staff who were identified as sexually abusive were both male and female care staff. Reports of sexual abuse in relation to these staff refer mostly to those discharged in the 1970s and 1980s and the forms of abuse generally reported were inappropriate fondling and masturbation.

*There was a number of lads in the dormitory ...who wet the bed. ... I was one of those. I never wet the bed before going to ...named School.... ...Named lay ancillary worker... knew exactly who to take out ...(to the toilet).... There was this night watchman who got the boys out of the bed.... One particular night I was told to stay back when the other boys went back in. The first instance I had I was in the cubicle and I was told to take my pyjamas down and he fondled my privates and he told me to do the same to him. This went on for a couple of nights, then one particular night.... Same again, I was the last one back in and the same again, and then it got worse. ... The next time it was totally different ...witness described anal rape.... I screamed but he put his hand over my mouth, I don't know how long it went on for and was told to go back to the bed and say nothing. I got back in to bed, wrapped myself up in a ball as small as could be. It was different, I was crying. The next thing I woke up and the sheets were destroyed with blood.*

- 7.146** One witness, discharged in the 1970s, reported that he was repeatedly sexually abused by a male lay care staff member under the pretence of being physically abused or punished, which the witness believed a female religious staff member condoned. The witness described the abuser warning him that he could avoid further beatings if he co-operated with the abuser's sexual demands. The witness reported that he saw other residents beaten in public for complaining about sexual abuse by this particular lay care worker.
- 7.147** As reported elsewhere, 11 male lay staff who were reported as sexual abusers were also the subject of physical abuse reports.

## Co-residents

- 7.148** There were 39 reports from witnesses of being sexually abused by co-residents in all the Schools referred to by witnesses and across all decades about which reports were made. 'It was the older boys. Basically they would drag your trousers down and masturbate you.' Seven (7) co-residents were identified by name. The largest number of reports of sexual abuse by co-residents related to four of the Schools identified. Included in the 39 reports were two reports of sexual abuse by fondling and inappropriate contact by female co-residents in two different Schools during the 1980s. Reports of sexual abuse by older co-residents were most often associated with physical abuse and reports of bullying.

*There was an older boy there he was the teacher's pet, his name was ...X.... He sexually abused me and most of the boys in the School. He was a right bully.*

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*(On admission)... I was taken into the washroom ...(by)... the Brother and a young fella, he was about 16 years old. First they got me the clothes, the School clothes. They were taking me to be washed. I had to strip off in front of the young fella, the Brother went off. The young fella washed me and then when he was drying me he started to interfere with me, I knew what he was doing. I started to scream. The Brother came back in and*

*said "what's happening?" ...(The)... young fella said "he won't let me wash him". ...(I said)... "he gave me a slap on the face". ...(Brother said)... "I'm not asking you." I was only in the School for an hour.*

**7.149** The Committee heard 19 witness reports of sexual abuse by older residents in a number of Schools. In most instances the reports of sexual abuse by co-residents were of aggressive assaults by more than one co-resident resulting in masturbation or anal rape. Witnesses reported being waylaid by older co-residents in the toilets, yards and corridors where there was little supervision. Some witnesses stated that being sexually abused by older co-residents offered them a measure of protection from physical abuse by other residents and that at times the experience of such sexual activity was consensual. Seven (7) witnesses reported that they sexually abused younger residents or engaged in consensual sexual activity with a co-resident.

*There was things ...(sexual abuse)... going on, between the lads, and I was absorbed into it. The way we behaved with one another, it was all based on fear. The physical violence ... it was the way the whole thing was held together. ... You had the strongest to the weakest boys, the strongest can pick on anybody, the strongest do it to the weakest boys and the darkness is handed out back along.*

**7.150** In a small number of Schools, witnesses reported being sexually abused by older residents who had a disciplinary role and were known as monitors. There were six reports from four different Schools of sexual abuse by co-residents being observed by religious staff and another 19 reports from witnesses who believed that such behaviour was either condoned or actively encouraged by the religious staff.

*Some of the senior boys were rapists themselves. My way of looking at it now was they were institutionalised themselves because the School was mixed, you had juvenile offenders, you had kids from broken homes, you had orphan kids, they never saw a woman around the place. All you seen was guys. I was ...(sexually)... abused by a lot of these older boys. Within the first 3 months I was there, the older boy who was on my table, he was in charge ... he seemed to get on very well with the Brothers. He was always well treated by the Brothers. He abused me in a garden shed with another boy and a Brother. ... They subjected me to being raped, and I was threatened that I would be thrown in the slurry pit. The Brother, Br ...X... raped me in front of the boy.... That was the only time where there was a boy and a Brother together.*

### **Visitors and volunteer workers**

**7.151** There were 11 reports of sexual abuse perpetrated by nine male individuals who were described as visitors and volunteer workers visiting the Schools. These reports referred to five Schools. In most instances the individuals were identified by name and were described as having some link with the School through individual members of the religious staff. The sexual abuse reported in relation to these male visitors and volunteer helpers included fondling, masturbation, kissing, and anal rape.

**7.152** The Committee heard reports of sexual abuse by visitors and volunteer workers from seven witnesses in relation to one specific School. These men were members of the general public, each of whom was believed to be known to religious staff. The witnesses described being collected by car and taken to men's homes, the cinema or on trips to the seaside or country. Four (4) witnesses reported being taken with co-residents on a regular basis, one by a group of men overnight and the other three witnesses by a man in a van who bought them sweets and ice-cream and sexually abused them by fondling or masturbation, either in the van or in his home. Four of the 11 witnesses reported being taken alone for overnight excursions where they shared rooms and beds with identified abusers in their homes, guesthouses or other accommodation. Witnesses described these outings as apparently spontaneous.

*The man who took you out on your own, I don't know how it happened, I don't know how you were chosen, the Brother came out in the yard and would say "who wants to go?" If I had been street wise I could have avoided this, I didn't know "bent" or "gay". The School band had been up and down the country for engagements, one Sunday we were in ...named town... this guy arrives up ... I was called to the office, the next I know is, "Mr ...X... is going to take you out for the day". The next thing I knew was this guy was getting me into the car ... and I knew this was different because we were driving out to the country, I knew by the signs. I knew ... we would not get back for 9 o'clock.... We drove to a country town, it was a quiet town. ... There was no stopping for tea or chips or anything like that. The next thing we were in his house, and it was straight into the bedroom. I see this framed photograph of myself on the mantelpiece. He shows me the bedroom and says "this is where we are going to sleep". ... But I had no pyjamas, no overnight things or anything, and he says "we are going to bed" and I thinks to myself, "where is my bed?" and the next thing he takes off his clothes and is naked. I had never seen a man completely naked before. I think to myself "well, I'll keep my jocks on, I'll keep my socks on". ... My mind is completely racing, I don't know what to think, I think "what will I keep on?" ... I have a memory of him trying to muster some words "it's a bit of fun" or something ... "I'm not going to hurt you". He was physically trying to touch me, the rest is a blank, I don't remember anymore.*

**7.153** One witness reported that having told the priest in Confession that he had been sexually abused by a male visitor, he believed the priest informed a Brother who subsequently beat him for '*...taking the good name of a decent man who is sacrificing his home for the sake of a guttersnipe like you*'.

**7.154** A small number of witnesses from two Schools reported having extended contact with visitors and volunteer workers who they remarked were friendly with the female religious Resident Managers and appeared to have free access to the Schools. These visitors helped residents in various ways, including with their homework and took them on outings and for holidays. A witness reported that he was sexually abused over a three-year period by one such visitor. Another witness gave the following account of being sexually abused and raped by a male visitor:

*She ...(Sr X)... introduced a personal friend of hers called ...named male visitor.... He was not employed by the Sisters or the Health Board. He started to come once a week, maybe twice a week, and then it was building up. He was there a lot of the days in the evenings after work ... and most of the weekend. Now ...named male visitor... was the person who sexually abused me while I was in ...named School.... He was very close to Sr ...X.... He took an interest in me. I thought it was brilliant because for the first time someone was taking an interest in me. ... He came in to say good night to us. He went around to everybody and said goodnight ... and then he came and sat on my bed and told me he loved me and I was a great boy and he started tiddling ...(tickling)... me. This was all very gradually. He started putting his hands in my pyjamas, very touchy, now I didn't mind and it was our secret and that sort of thing. Then he got permission to bring me to his house ... and he would abuse me there and he brought me away for a weekend sometimes and he abused me.*

### **Work, weekend and holiday placement providers and others**

**7.155** Five (5) witnesses gave evidence to the Committee that they were sexually abused in external placements while still a resident of the Schools. The witnesses were abused while placed with families either for holidays, weekends or to work. Two (2) witnesses reported being sexually abused by male members of the general public while they were on leave from the School. One of those witness stated that he was sexually harassed and raped over a period of months by three local men who he stated knew he was from an Industrial School and took advantage of his

circumstances to intimidate and abuse him. The witness reported being afraid of the repercussions of telling anyone what was happening to him. The second witness was raped by two men he encountered in the vicinity of the School as he was returning from a visit. Another witness reported that he was sexually abused by the male relative of a family he went to for holidays. One witness reported being sexually abused during admission to a local hospital from the School and another witness reported being molested by the man he was sent to on licence for work.<sup>12</sup>

## Neglect

*Failure to care for the child which results, or could reasonably be expected to result, in serious impairment of the physical or mental health or development of the child or serious adverse effects on his or her behaviour or welfare.*<sup>13</sup>

**7.156** This section summarises witness accounts of general neglect. Descriptions of neglect refer to all aspects of the physical, social and emotional care and welfare of the witnesses, impacting on their health and development. Neglect refers to both actions and inactions by religious and lay staff and others who had responsibility and a duty of care for the residents in their charge. It also describes other forms of neglect that are regarded as having a negative impact on the individuals' emotional health and development, for example a failure to protect from harm and failure to educate. As the reports of neglect refer to systemic practices, this section of the Report does not identify individual abusers.

### *Nature and extent of neglect reported*

**7.157** Three hundred and sixty seven (367) male witnesses (89%) made 408 reports concerning the neglect of their care and welfare in 22 Schools.<sup>14</sup> The frequency of neglect reports by witnesses in relation to individual Schools varied, as with the other types of abuse.

- Five (5) Schools were collectively the subject of 260 reports.<sup>15</sup>
- Six (6) Schools were the subject of 10-26 reports respectively, totalling 106 reports.
- Eleven (11) Schools were the subject of 1-9 reports, totalling 42.

**7.158** Five (5) Schools were the subject of 64% of all neglect reports to the Committee.

**7.159** As with the other types of abuse neglect was reported in combination with all four types of abuse in 166 instances.

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<sup>12</sup> See sections 67 and 70 of the 1908 Act which allowed for residents to be placed for employment outside the School, under an extension of their court order.

<sup>13</sup> Section 1(1)(c), as amended by section 3 of the 2005 Act.

<sup>14</sup> Note – a number of witnesses were admitted to more than one School, and made reports of abuse in more than one School, therefore the number of reports are greater than the number of witnesses.

<sup>15</sup> In order to maintain confidentiality further details regarding the numbers of abuse reports in these Schools cannot be specified.

**Table 25: Neglect Combined with Other Abuse Types – Male Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

<b>Abuse types</b>	<b>Number of reports</b>	<b>%</b>
Neglect, emotional, physical and sexual	166	41
Neglect, emotional and physical	120	29
Neglect and physical	66	16
Neglect, physical and sexual	49	12
Neglect and emotional	3	1
Neglect, emotional and sexual	2	(0)
Neglect and sexual	1	(0)
Neglect	1	(0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>(100)*</b>

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

\*Some rounding up/down was applied

**7.160** As shown, 401 reports of neglect were combined with physical abuse.

**7.161** As with the other types of abuse the extent of neglect reports varied according to the relevant discharge period. Table 26 shows the distribution of witness accounts of neglect across the decades covered by this Report:<sup>16</sup>

**Table 26: Number of Neglect Reports by Decade of Witnesses' Discharge – Male Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

<b>Decade of discharge</b>	<b>Number of neglect reports</b>	<b>%</b>
Pre-1960s	178	44
1960-69	172	42
1970-79	47	12
1980-89	10	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

### ***Areas of neglect***

**7.162** This Report categorises neglect of care under the headings of food, clothing, heat, hygiene, bedding, healthcare, education, supervision and preparation for discharge that were referred to by witnesses with varying levels of detail. There was inevitable overlap between the different categories of neglect and other types of abuse, as outlined in other sections of the Report. Witnesses described the impact that the neglect they endured had on their social and emotional welfare, including effects on later life.

<sup>16</sup> For example: as witness evidence is presented according to the decade of discharge, a witness who spent 12 years in a school and was discharged in 1962 will have been included in the 1960s cohort although the majority of that witness's experience will relate to the 1950s.



## Food

- 7.163** There were 379 witness reports of food provided to residents being inadequate in both quality and sufficiency. The reports referred to 21 Schools. Three hundred and forty nine (349) reports of poor and inadequate food were made by witnesses who were discharged before 1970. Some witnesses reported having so little to eat that at times they were starving. The Committee heard many reports from witnesses of attempts to satisfy their hunger by 'raiding' the garden, orchard and kitchens for extra food, eating grasses, dandelion, hawthorn, sorrel leaves and wild berries found while out on walks and while working in the fields. Witnesses also reported taking food from slop buckets, potatoes and other feed prepared for pigs, skimmed milk for calves and dried animal feed in the farmyards. Bread dipped in dripping and shell cocoa described by one witness as '*unsweetened sludge*' was a standard part of the diet recounted by witnesses discharged in the years before the 1960s.

*In the morning you got 2 cuts of bread and dripping, the dripping was put on the night before. The food was terrible there, you were hungry, it was rationed even though the place was self-sufficient. They had their own tomatoes and orchard too, but we never got them.*

•

*Hunger was extreme, we stole cattle nuts and mangels and the hosts from the altar because we were so hungry.*

•

*You were hungry all the time, all the bloody time. We got bread and dripping, it would be rock hard by the time you got it. ... I was always hungry, there was never enough. ... I worked in the kitchen and you stole for your friends, if you were caught, you were terrified.*

- 7.164** Throughout all decades reported to the Committee witnesses noted differences between the quality and quantity of food available to them and that which was provided for the religious staff, as observed by witnesses who worked in kitchens preparing and serving food for both residents and staff.

*I had to serve breakfast for the Brothers, as you got older you used to serve breakfast. I couldn't believe the breakfast they had.... I can't believe what we get and what they get. One day I nicked an orange, they get a whole orange! There was a woman there. She cooked breakfast for them.*

- 7.165** Many witnesses said that although there were large farms attached to their Schools the produce from the farms was generally not provided for the residents. Witnesses from six Schools described preparing potatoes and other vegetables for sale and being involved in the distribution of various types of farm produce for sale outside the School. Witnesses who were prescribed special diets or extra milk and eggs reported that the recommended food was not always provided for them although they stated that in some Schools it was available for sale.

*The food was poor and scarce, I was always hungry, the boys harvested the produce from the farm but it was not provided to them, the Brothers' kitchen was separate and their food was much better.*

•

*We used to go to the farm and rob spuds, they used to cultivate the farm in fields out the back ... the veg they grew they used to make money, string beans and all ... used to be sold, I used to see them.*

- 7.166** In addition to reports about the inadequate amounts of food provided to residents, witnesses also reported that the lack of supervision in the refectories meant that in several Schools the

youngest or most recently arrived residents were dependant on older residents leaving enough food for them to eat in the rush for what was provided. Witnesses reported being frequently left without any food:

*I was always cold and hungry, smaller and weaker boys missed out in the general grab for food which was not supervised or was supervised and condoned by the Brothers ... and in the refectory it meant older boys ate most of the food.*

●

*You had a loaf of bread between 4, and you would have a tin saucer, you would put a cross on it and you'd spin the knife ...(to see who got the largest share)... it was never even.*

**7.167** Witnesses said that extra food was at times provided for favoured residents or for those who did labouring work for the School:

*The food was very poor. We were always hungry but when we were working building ... (new buildings) ... the work crew got a fry up breakfast, for extra strength.*

**7.168** Witnesses reported improvements in both the quantity and variety of food provided in most Schools during the 1970s and 1980s. There were, however, seven reports of inadequate provision of food from witnesses who were discharged in the 1980s. These reports referred to Schools that had consistently been the subject of reports of dietary neglect during the preceding decades. Improvements in dietary provision during the 1970s and 1980s were often reported to be related to the presence of certain staff members:

*The food was terrible, we never had enough. Lumpy porridge, glue and lumpy potatoes, stew sometimes, bread and cocoa. The boys traded for food. We were told to tell the ...inspector... that we got better food than we actually did. Everything improved after Br ...X ... (Resident Manager)... left.*

**7.169** Lack of access to drinking water was also described and deprivation of any form of liquid from mid-afternoon was reported as a standard method of addressing bed-wetting.

### **Clothing**

**7.170** There were 275 witness reports of inadequate provision of clothing and footwear in relation to 19 Schools. Two hundred and thirty six (236) of those reports (86%) refer to witnesses discharged from 16 Schools before 1970. The most common reports made were of poor quality and ill-fitting clothes and shoes. Witnesses who were discharged during the 1940s and 1950s reported that their clothing and boots were most often made in the School. Shoes and boots were described as ill fitting, often mended and re-mended and uncomfortable.

*Misfits clothes, like hand me down clothes, and the boots clattering, they were too big, we would be like the German army.*

●

*We had no underwear, that changed in the 70s. You were in ...pants and ... shirt, they were all made in the School too, shoes, boots the lot, they were all made there. Anyone who had a hole in their sock at the inspections got a beating for that too, the boots were too big or too small.*

**7.171** It was generally reported that witnesses' own clothes were removed when they were admitted, to be replaced with what were at times inferior quality clothing. Skin irritation and abrasions caused by rough material rubbing on bare skin, referred to by witnesses as 'ire', was frequently reported. 'You wore this tweed, you got a red mark on your leg, it would itch, it was sore' and 'The clothes were very bad, particularly the trousers, very bad. Whatever the material it was

*something like bulls wool, it irritated the skin...'*. This problem was considerably worse for those witnesses who wet or soiled themselves, as replacement clothes were frequently unavailable. Many witnesses who wet their beds were not given clean or dry clothing. In addition to the discomfort this practice caused, the resulting malodour led to witnesses being shunned by other residents.

**7.172** Witnesses also commented on the lack of warm and adequate clothing for cold and inclement weather. The lack of an outdoor coat or jacket was commonly reported and witnesses who worked on the farm or on the bogs had no provision made for suitable protection for either the weather or work conditions.

**7.173** The lack of underwear and the humiliation of being seen poorly dressed in public was consistently described:

*The clothes were brutal I wore short pants and no underwear until I was 14, even while attending the local secondary school. The clothes came from a general ...(communal)... pool and marked us out as from the orphanage ...(Industrial School)....*

**7.174** Witnesses reported being forced to spend periods of time out in the recreation yards in all weathers or sheltering in sheds during wet weather, without coats or suitable clothes. Witnesses described the '*absolute misery*' of being routinely compelled to stay outdoors in cold weather and being too cold to play or move around:

*We were in a big shed with seats all around, it was cold, there was nothing in it, you wouldn't put a cow in it.*

**7.175** Special clothing, often described as 'best clothes', was available when inspectors and others visited. In some Schools good clothes and shoes were also provided for Sunday walks and special occasions. By contrast to the usual clothing provided, witnesses who were members of School bands reported that the clothes provided for public performances were of a high quality and well maintained.

**7.176** A further concern for witnesses regarding their clothing was the expectation that their clothes and footwear be maintained without defect. Weekly inspections were conducted and reported to arouse fear in anticipation of a beating, for worn, torn or missing items of clothing.

### **Heating**

**7.177** The lack of adequate heating was reported by 265 witnesses from 11 Schools that were the subject of neglect reports. Two hundred and thirty five (235) reports of inadequate heat and warmth relate to witnesses discharged before 1970. The 30 reports of inadequate heating from witnesses discharged since 1970 represented 39% of all neglect reports for that period.

**7.178** The system of heating most commonly described in Schools prior to 1970 was of a solid fuel-fired boiler that supplied hot water for washing and for radiators that were located around the School. In a number of Schools witnesses reported that prior to the 1960s there was no heating in the dormitories, which were generally described as large rooms with high ceilings, bare windows and no floor covering. Chilblains were commonplace during winter months and were reported to be a cause of constant pain and discomfort. In the earlier decades many Schools had open fires in the classrooms, which were generally described as warmer than other parts of the School.

### **Hygiene**

**7.179** Two hundred and seventeen (217) witnesses discharged before 1970 reported poor hygiene practices in relation to 16 Schools, and varied throughout the years reported on. Witnesses

discharged before 1960 reported that bath and lavatory facilities were of a basic standard with many reports of dry toilets, no toilet paper and no facility for hand washing.

*We were on straw mattresses on the floor, the rats would go for you if you had any food.... They were as hungry as we were. I got bitten on the ear, another fellow got bitten on the mouth. ... There were dry toilets, the boys cleaned them out. I never did myself, I avoided it. ... The clothes were very, very rarely washed. You'd have to go for a swim to wash.*

•

*The toilet situation was abominable, there were old toilets with no doors and you could not sit down on them, nobody cleaned them. You would prefer to go out to the field if you got a chance.*

- 7.180** Daily personal hygiene practices were not often recounted by male witnesses, but accounts were heard of queuing up for face and hand washing and teeth-brushing at communal sinks. The sharing of wet towels or sheets to dry off after a shower or bath was commented on by many witnesses. Most Schools had regular baths or communal showers, with the exception of a small number of Schools that were described as having communal baths like swimming pools. The routine for bathing varied from School to School over the decades, witness reports ranged from weekly to seldom.

*There was a big trough, you got into that with a togs on you to wash, that was the bath. You took off the togs then and gave it to the next guy, the water was never changed for the whole lot of the lads.*

- 7.181** Witnesses from Schools with shower facilities reported that the water was most often scalding hot or freezing cold. Strict and severe discipline was imposed if residents attempted to avoid the discomfort of extreme water temperatures. *'In the shower if the water was too hot or too cold and you pulled out you were hit with the leather by Br ...X.... He lined you up and leathered you naked.'*

- 7.182** Provision for toileting at night was reported as basic in a number of Schools for witnesses discharged before the 1960s. Evidence was heard of chamber pots or buckets being shared between many residents and that emptying chamber pots was regarded as a punishment. Washing facilities were inadequate, especially in the period before 1970 and residents who wet and soiled themselves were easily identified by their odour. Witnesses reported that mattresses were not replaced and sheets and nightshirts were dried without being washed and witnesses consistently described the overwhelming odour of urine in the dormitories.

- 7.183** Those witnesses discharged between the 1970s and 1990 reported improved hygiene practices, with toilet blocks built in many Schools and communal showers converted into shower cubicles. However, the inadequate provision of clean, dry sheets and bedding for witnesses who wet and soiled their beds, and of appropriate washing facilities, was reported to the Committee by witnesses in relation to all decades.

- 7.184** Despite the inadequate provision of hygiene facilities, witnesses reported that they were expected to be clean and tidy at all times. The daily or weekly personal inspections were feared events, leading to a beating if the required standard was not met.

### **Education**

- 7.185** The neglect of education was reported by many witnesses who referred to the lack of adequate teaching and support for learning. Witnesses consistently reported that the fear of abuse, having to work for the institution and lack of attention to their learning difficulties contributed to the overall neglect of their education.

**7.186** Sixty nine (69) witnesses reported being illiterate when they were discharged from the Schools and many others acknowledged that poor literacy and numeracy skills had been a serious impediment in their subsequent lives. Two hundred and sixty three (263) witnesses (64%) reported that they were discharged from the School system without sitting for their Primary Certificate.

**7.187** The Committee heard evidence from witnesses that their education was neglected as a result of having to undertake work that they believed contributed to the functioning and productivity of the particular School. Fifty three (53) witnesses were taken out of class to work on farms and in trade workshops without any further education when they were 13 years old. Another 31 witnesses were removed from the classroom to work full-time between the ages of eight and 12 years old, two of these witnesses were placed working full-time before they were 10 years old. Witnesses reported working both within the School and at times being sent out to work for local farmers and others who they understood had some association with the priests and Brothers in charge of the Schools.

**7.188** Witnesses also reported being deprived of education due to a lack of protection in the classroom; 79 witnesses described their time in the classroom being dominated by fear and the anticipation of being either physically or sexually abused, resulting in them being unable to learn.

**7.189** Witnesses with learning difficulties and speech impediments reported being the target of sustained abuse and criticism in the classroom. *'In school I was picked out and made stand out in front of class with a dunce's cap on my head. "You're a dunce" was wrote on my cap.'* The Committee heard 17 reports of witnesses being ridiculed and constantly punished as a result of their difficulties.

*He'd say, "You're an imbecile, an idiot, that's what you are.... What are you? What are you?" I'd have to say "I'm an imbecile, Brother" or he wouldn't stop. ... I didn't even know what an imbecile was.*

### **Bedding**

**7.190** Witnesses discharged before 1970 made 156 reports of poor bedding in relation to 16 Schools. The main neglect reports about bedding concerned the poor quality and lack of adequate blankets and clean bedding provided to the residents. In particular, witnesses who wet their beds frequently reported that their mattresses and bedclothes were neglected and constantly smelled of urine.

**7.191** Witnesses from one School, where all aspects of care were reported as neglected, described the beds as *'filthy'*. Mattresses were described as rotten from urine, sheets were rarely changed, blankets were thin and lice infested and bedding was changed infrequently, in advance of inspections. Witnesses discharged from three other Schools before 1960 reported that the mattresses were lice and flea infested and that checking blankets for fleas was a regular task. Witnesses from these Schools had to make their own mattresses, filled with straw, cocoa fibre or dried husks.

**7.192** Witnesses from three Schools who wet their beds reported having to sleep directly on rubber sheets. Witnesses from two Schools reported that co-residents who soiled their beds were forced to sleep on straw mattresses that were placed directly on the floor. Others described mattresses that were made of hessian sacks filled with straw. Canvas *'stretcher beds'* were reported from another School in the 1950s and 1960s, and iron beds with metal springs in most Schools for all periods. Improvements were reported in the 1970s and 1980s.

## Healthcare

**7.193** Sixty six (66) witnesses gave accounts of inadequate medical attention including being ignored, punished or ridiculed when they complained of being unwell or injured. Accidental injuries and childhood illnesses were reported by many witnesses to have been left untreated. Witnesses in a number of Schools reported never seeing a doctor or that the doctor was only ever called to see someone who was *'really ill'*. One witness who reported his finger and thumb were broken when he fell off a cart in a farm accident, had to continue working and received no subsequent treatment, *'it mended by itself'*. The Committee heard reports from three Schools of weekly and/or monthly visits by the local doctor. In one School a local doctor's regular visits were described to be like *'troop inspections'*, where he walked past rows of residents and asked if everyone was *'alright'*.

**7.194** The area of neglect in healthcare most frequently reported by witnesses was the absence of investigation into the cause of non-accidental injury to residents. Witnesses reported being attended by visiting doctors and nurses attached to the Schools' infirmary, as well as attending doctors' surgeries and local hospitals with injuries received as a result of abuse. In the majority of instances witnesses stated that the doctors and nurses who treated these injuries failed to make inquiries as to the cause of the injuries and most witnesses reported being returned to abusive environments without investigation or an assessment of risk. The Committee heard reports of various 'treatments' including 'splints' and bandages being applied, as well as ointment, iodine and caustic soda being administered to the residents by the infirmary nurse following physical abuse or injury.

**7.195** Most Schools were reported to have had an infirmary, some of which had a nurse in attendance. The infirmaries in four Schools about which there were many reports of abuse to the Committee were described by witnesses as places to be avoided due to the fear of abuse by members of religious and nursing staff in charge. Nurses were generally remembered as non-committal about non-accidental and other injuries. Repeated wounds from beatings were reported to have elicited no query from most nurses as to their cause, while some were sympathetic but unable to intervene on the residents' behalf: *'what could she do, they employed her'*. One witness stated that in recent years he met a School nurse who had treated his injuries following a particularly severe beating. She remembered the incident and told him she *'could do nothing about it'*, as she had been sworn to secrecy. In one School witnesses were attended by a nurse who *'did not want to know what happened when boys turned up badly beaten'*.

**7.196** A number of witnesses reported that their parents brought them to hospital while they were at home on leave, two of whom had their broken arms examined and treated. Their injuries were sustained as a result of physical assault in the School by religious staff. Both witnesses said they had not received any treatment at the time of the initial injury in the School. Another witness was hospitalised while on weekend leave for treatment of abscesses that had been neglected in the School.

**7.197** Three (3) witnesses reported the death of boys who they described were ignored or neglected when they complained of being sick. One witness reported his belief that a co-resident died as a result of eating poisonous berries. Two (2) witnesses reported being hospitalised following suicide attempts in the context of abuse episodes. They were transferred back to the institution without psychological assessment or treatment.

## Supervision

**7.198** Witness accounts of inadequate supervision and lack of appropriate care and protection were heard in relation to all decades. Witnesses described supervision ranging from 'patrolling' yards with sticks and the regimented use of a whistle, to young children being left in the care of older residents without any supervising adult staff. *'If the babies were crying some boys would be*

*designated to get up and have a look, I remember turning them around or moving them. What were they doing letting an 8 year old boy do that?' Large numbers of residents were routinely under the supervision of a single staff member or other co-residents in areas including classrooms, trade shops, farms, bogs, dormitories, refectories and yards. 'I recall only 2 Brothers being in charge of 200 boys; the bullies were given a free rein.'*

**7.199** One hundred and thirty eight (138) witnesses reported that the lack of supervision of religious and lay staff by managers facilitated opportunities for physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

*I was in there for 4 years, Fr ...X (Resident Manager)... was in charge. I only saw him 5 or 6 times in the 4 years.... Lack of supervision by priests who were in charge meant that prefects had a free hand and when I reported ...(the abuse)... to Fr ...X... he wouldn't hear of it.*

**7.200** Similarly, witnesses reported that the lack of supervision of older residents provided opportunities for bullying and abuse among co-residents. Forty (40) witnesses from 10 Schools stated that the absence of supervision led to bullying of younger or more vulnerable residents by co-residents. *'Bullying thrived in the absence of supervision ... and was condoned by religious staff.'*

**7.201** Night watchmen were reported to have been employed by nine of the Schools referred to by witnesses. There were 43 separate reports of physical and sexual abuse by these men, who had responsibility for residents in the dormitories during the night. Three (3) night watchmen were consistently described as drunk while on duty, patrolling with a stick that they used freely both to waken witnesses to use the toilet during the night and to punish them if they had wet their beds.

**7.202** Staffing levels were commonly reported by witnesses to have been inadequate over substantial periods of time. The Committee heard a small number of accounts where former residents remained on as staff. It was believed they had no contact with their own family, were not trained, and were engaged as live-in staff. These staff were involved in supervising residents and were frequently described as emphasising order and discipline in a harsh and abusive manner.

**7.203** The Committee also heard reports from witnesses that changes of staff and Resident Managers could have a noticeable impact on the atmosphere in the School, increasing or decreasing the risk of further abuse for residents: *'The peaceful life of the School was shattered when this Brother came. He was brutal and went berserk. He enjoyed beating us and took every chance to do it.'*

**7.204** The lack of adequate supervision and follow-up was reported by witnesses who were placed by the Schools with 'foster' and 'holiday' families or on work placements while still under the age of 16 years. A witness who had been placed with a farming couple without follow-up or supervision when he was 10 years old had to work hard from the day he arrived and being told by the 'foster' father:

*We gave the nuns £10 and a box of chocolates for you, if we had bought a pair of suck calves they would be worth more to us now.*

He was never paid, but had been *'fed well and not been beaten'*. This witness also reported being sexually abused by local men who he believed were aware he had come from an Industrial School.

## **Preparation for discharge**

**7.205** One hundred and ninety seven (197) witnesses (48%) reported that there was no planning or arrangements made for their discharge or aftercare. Witnesses consistently stated that they were not adequately prepared for independent living, felt they belonged nowhere and to nobody, and that the transition to the outside world was traumatic. These reports referred to discharges in all decades. The areas of neglect most frequently reported in relation to preparation for discharge by male witnesses were the following:

- Lack of acknowledgement regarding separation and loss
- Lack of preparation and training in basic life skills
- Lack of assessment, supervision and follow-up of placements
- Lack of opportunity to develop social and relationship skills.

**7.206** The most common report regarding discharge was of residents being given a day's notice that they were leaving the School and given the fare either home or to other destinations. For many witnesses who had been reared in institutional care since birth and who had no known family, no knowledge of or links with the outside world, this lack of preparation and opportunity to say goodbye to siblings, co-residents and staff was often catastrophic. In these circumstances a number of witnesses stated that they were subsequently imprisoned, homeless or in emotional turmoil in the immediate years after their discharge from Schools.

*There was no aftercare; I got long pants for the first time and let go ... I was lost, I wanted to go back.*

•

*When I left on my sixteenth birthday, I got nothing, no job, no advice, nobody said goodbye. I walked down ... to get the bus and it was the loneliest day of my life.*

•

*There were some of them ...(co-residents)... who didn't even get the correct fare for where they were going to, it was just "welcome to the world". They got nothing.*

**7.207** The institutional regime, the abrupt nature of their discharge and the lack of any training in basic life skills such as handling money, budgeting, using public transport or of participating in any social network left witnesses and residents unprepared for integration with the outside world. Many witnesses reported not being given any advice or assistance to help them cope with everyday living away from the institutional life to which they had been accustomed.

**7.208** Sixty eight (68) witnesses described discharge arrangements ranging from being given a name and address on a piece of paper and the train or bus fare, to being sent directly as live-in workers to farmers and shop owners whom they had never met before. Witnesses reported that in their opinion the lack of assessment of these placements and follow-up supervision of the care provided led to a number of those witnesses being abused physically and sexually when placed by the School. Thirteen (13) witnesses were sexually and/or physically abused by their employers and others in work placements following discharge.

**7.209** One hundred and twenty five (125) witnesses (30%) reported that they were discharged home to their families. Many arrived at their family home to find that their parents had not been notified of their return, or that they no longer lived there.

*The day before my sixteenth birthday I was dropped in the city centre with 10 shillings by Br ...X... I did not know where the family was – they had been re-housed.*

**7.210** A number reported being unable to settle at home, that they felt misunderstood and out of place. They could not talk about what had happened to them while they were in the Schools and



many witnesses reported having no idea how to relate to others, including their own families, without being either frightened or aggressive.

- 7.211** A number of witnesses reported having no experience of trusting relationships prior to their discharge. They said that the culture and fear of abuse to which they had become accustomed was such that following their discharge they were unable to form any attachments and had little idea about how to cope with relationships.
- 7.212** Twenty one (21) witnesses discharged during the 1970s and 1980s reported that preparation for their transition to independent living was inadequate and that they received no aftercare or support from the Schools or other health or welfare services when they were discharged. Others reported improved planning and aftercare arrangements during this period.

## **Emotional abuse**

*Any other act or omission towards the child which results, or could reasonably be expected to result, in serious impairment of the physical or mental health or development of the child or serious adverse effects on his or her behaviour or welfare.<sup>17</sup>*

- 7.213** This section describes witness evidence of emotional abuse by deprivation of family contact, personal identity, secure relationships, affection, approval and a lack of safety and protection. These deprivations impaired the social, emotional and physical functioning and development of witnesses and were identified by them as generally disturbing both at the time and in the subsequent course of their lives.
- 7.214** Emotional abuse described by witnesses frequently referred to practices that were part of the Schools' routine and that failed to recognise the individual needs of children and provide adequate care. Practices such as the separation of siblings, regimented routines and enforced isolation were reported as part of the culture of the institutions. A further component of emotional abuse described by witnesses referred to the constant physical and sexual abuse that engendered an atmosphere of fear. Emotional abuse was described as pervasive and systemic and was generally not ascribed to individual staff members. For this reason the following section does not include a list of reported abusers as has been outlined in previous sections.

### ***Nature and extent of emotional abuse reported***

- 7.215** The Committee heard 327 reports of emotional abuse from 293 witnesses (71%) in relation to 23 Schools.<sup>18</sup> Thirty four (34) witnesses reported emotional abuse in more than one School. The frequency of reports of emotional abuse varied between Schools.
- Three (3) Schools were collectively the subject of 155 reports.<sup>19</sup>
  - Five (5) Schools were collectively the subject of 101 reports.
  - Fifteen (15) Schools were the subject of 1-11 reports, totalling 71 reports.

- 7.216** Three (3) Schools were the subject of 47% of all emotional abuse reports and, by contrast, 15 other Schools were together the subject of 22% of reports.

- 7.217** Emotional abuse was reported to occur in combination with other types of abuse as shown in the following table:

<sup>17</sup> Section 1(1)(d), as amended by the section 3 of the 2005 Act.

<sup>18</sup> A number of witnesses were admitted to more than one School, and made reports of abuse in more than one School, therefore the number of reports are greater than the number of witnesses.

<sup>19</sup> In order to maintain confidentiality further details regarding the numbers of abuse reports in these Schools cannot be specified.

**Table 27: Emotional Abuse Combined with Other Abuse Types –Male Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

<b>Abuse types</b>	<b>Number of reports</b>	<b>%</b>
Emotional, neglect, physical and sexual	166	51
Emotional, neglect and physical	120	37
Emotional, physical and sexual	20	6
Emotional and physical	15	5
Emotional and neglect	3	1
Emotional, neglect and sexual	2	1
Emotional	1	(0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>(100)*</b>

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

\*Some rounding up/down was applied

**7.218** As previously shown, 166 abuse reports were of all four types combined. In all but six instances (98%), witnesses reported emotional abuse in conjunction with physical abuse and in 291 instances (89%) witnesses reported both emotional abuse and neglect. There was some inevitable overlap between the reports of emotional abuse and the other three abuse types given in evidence.

**7.219** The following table shows the distribution of witness accounts of emotional abuse across the decades covered by this Report:<sup>20</sup>

**Table 28: Number of Emotional Abuse Reports by Decade of Witnesses’ Discharge – Male Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

<b>Decade of discharge</b>	<b>Number of emotional abuse reports</b>	<b>%</b>
Pre-1960s	134	41
1960-69	137	42
1970-79	45	14
1980-89	11	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

**7.220** As noted with other abuse reports almost 45% of the reports relating to those discharged in the 1960s refer to witnesses who spent the majority of their time in the Schools during the 1950s.

***Description of emotional abuse***

**7.221** Witnesses reported a daily existence in the Schools that was dominated by fear, humiliation, loneliness, and the absence of affection. Fear was strongly associated with the daily threat of being physically and otherwise abused and seeing co-residents being abused. Constant apprehension about the next abuse to which they would be subjected was also a feature.

<sup>20</sup> For example: as witness evidence is presented according to the decade of discharge, a witness who spent 12 years in a school and was discharged in 1962 will have been included in the 1960s cohort although the majority of that witness’s experience will relate to the 1950s.

Witnesses reported being humiliated and denigrated in many ways, both deliberately in the presence of others and, less directly, in the way they were spoken to and treated. The rejection, hostility and criticism of staff was consistently described by witnesses as a cause of great distress. The isolation of witnesses from their parents and other family members was traumatic. The most frequently reported areas of emotional abuse are summarised and include: deprivation of affection, personal ridicule, deprivation of family contact, the denial of identity, being given false and/or inaccurate information regarding their background, and witnessing others being abused, the associated guilt and constant apprehension.

*Even when I was in the dormitory you used to hear the frock, the thing they ... (Brothers)... used wear. I'd hear them walking down and you'd be hoping they would not stop at you. I remember in the bed praying to God they would take somebody else instead of you, and then would say "thanks God for saving me". You'd feel guilty about that.... The screams of the fellas being abused, everyone could hear it.... I was actually terrified.*

### **Deprivation of affection**

- 7.222** One hundred and ninety four (194) witnesses described the lack of physical and verbal affection shown to them throughout their time in the School system. They reported receiving minimal emotional support, encouragement or comfort in the course of their childhood in institutional care. 'There was a belief that you were on your own as a child or young person with no one to talk to about worries, fears, abuse or family.' The rigid and harsh structure of institutional life excluded the development of affectionate attachment or any close relationships. Demonstrations of physical affection were described as specifically discouraged by staff.

*I remember the loneliness. You'd be in bed at night and you would be wondering, why didn't mam come or why didn't dad come? There was no one to hug you. I was not physically harmed there. It was emotional, nobody would come to you, it was just an emptiness, nothing to latch onto. I don't understand how they didn't see it. You're lonely, unloved, unwanted.*

- 7.223** As the circumstances of admission for many witnesses involved separation from their parents and siblings, witnesses described the subsequent deprivation of affection as a particularly serious and traumatic loss. News about their parents and family members was cherished information that a number of witnesses reported was routinely withheld for various reasons. One witness said that following his mother's death a Brother whom he had beaten in a game on the playing pitch said: 'Well here's one game you're not going to win, your mother died 3 weeks ago'.

- 7.224** Thirty (30) witnesses specifically reported on the unavailability of any person to confide in, which led to the belief that there was nobody who cared for or about them: 'the worst thing was having no one to talk to, no one said a nice word to you. It was clear no one cared if you lived or died'. 'Orphans' and other witnesses who had been in care since early childhood, were particularly affected by the deprivation of any affectionate attachment or emotional bond.

*He, Br ...X... told to get my clothes on me ...(following public beating)... told to get out and head back down to the yard. You tried to get yourself together, tried to sit down. I was marked, I was cut.... There was this bench along by the wall.... I don't think I ever heard anybody ever asked ...(ask)... "were you alright?" The other kids come around you, laughing at you, jeering, they were just saying "glad it wasn't me". You looked after yourself.*

## Personal ridicule and public humiliation

**7.225** One hundred and sixty nine (169) witnesses reported that they were personally ridiculed and denigrated on a regular basis during their time in the Schools. Being verbally abused by staff was reported as a feature of everyday life in the dormitories, classrooms, refectories and other areas. Verbal abuse was frequently described as associated with physical abuse and part of the daily pattern of communication: *'we were made to feel constantly ashamed'*. Ridicule in class was described as a routine experience by 21 witnesses who had learning or associated difficulties. Nine (9) witnesses described being ridiculed in class because they had a stammer and of being repeatedly told there was no point in educating them.

*I had a very bad stammer when I was there, didn't have it before. Had to go to ...named hospital... to get it remedied. ... I suffered quite a lot because of that, in the classroom and so on. I was not able to get an answer out in the class. If I put my hand up, you'd get a beating for that. Most of my life there operated on fear, of beatings and adults. It got to a stage with the stammer that I just didn't answer questions, that was quite frightening. Some of the Brothers were quite sadistic.*

**7.226** As previously reported, witnesses were routinely humiliated by the methods used to punish residents for bed-wetting. Fifty two (52) witnesses described the humiliation associated with having to wear wet sheets on their head and in other ways endure public embarrassment. Twenty three (23) witnesses said that they were constantly ridiculed when called offensive names by staff, such as *'slasher'* and *'smelly'*.

**7.227** Other witnesses reported being forced to carry out certain tasks intended to punish and humiliate both themselves and other residents. Examples of such tasks were being made to watch steps for three hours *'so as to be sure they were still there'*, kneel in their underpants in the yard for hours, being forced to run into a wall and injure themselves in front of co-residents and to repeatedly shift a load of potatoes from one side of a shed to the other over an entire day. Another witness described a co-resident's punishment for giving him extra bread:

*He ...(co-resident)... had to carry the food down to the turkeys and then he had to kneel in with the turkeys and have his bread and water in there. That was his punishment for 3 weeks.*

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*If you did a job like bring in the coal, there might be some extra food. You'd stand with your plate at the end of the table ...(in the refectory)... and waiting to be called. There would only be a few pieces of food and you wanted to make sure you got a bit. He'd ...(lay ancillary worker)... call you up and then when you were half way up he'd say "false alarm" and you'd have to go back with nothing. They do that to small children. ... These are the things that stay in you, it happened so many times.*

**7.228** Four (4) witnesses reported that as native Irish speakers they were ridiculed about their poor spoken English. Others with speech impediments reported being made to read aloud in front of others and were both ridiculed and punished for their lack of fluency. Witnesses who had a disability described being subjected to additional ridicule; for example a witness who had a physical deformity described being made the target of ridicule by staff during communal bath time. Witnesses remarked that while children in day schools may have suffered similar ridicule, those in the Schools lived with it all the time.

## Exposure to fearful situations

**7.229** One hundred and twenty (120) witnesses reported being constantly afraid. They described a range of circumstances in which they were in fear for their own and others' safety. In a number of different Schools witnesses described their experience as a *'living hell'*, *'pure terror'*, and

'mental torture' referring to being beaten, the anticipation of being beaten and the sight of others being beaten. Eleven (11) witnesses reported the fear and threat of harm being so extreme that they feared for both their own lives and for the safety of their co-residents. Five (5) witnesses reported co-residents were never seen again following particularly severe beatings. All five believed that these residents, three of whom were from the same School, may have died.

*There were some Brothers there who were A1. ... Then there was ...crying... ...Br ...X..., nasty bastard. The man doesn't deserve to be called Brother. I was only 5 feet away the day it happened ...crying.... He had a habit, every day ... he'd walk up and down the refectory, that was his ritual. If he walked in everyone was on edge.... I'm not sure why but this evening he Br ...X... walked straight down the passage way and he dragged ...named co-resident... out of his chair ...crying... and he gave him an unmerciful beating, an unmerciful beating. I'm telling ye he did not stop with that leather strap. Now all the Brothers used to carry the leather strap, but I'm telling ye, you wouldn't beat an animal the way he beat ...named co-resident.... To this day it haunts me, the whole place was full and he was left lying. Br ...X... cleared the place out, you all had to get out of the refectory, I was even told to get out of the kitchen. That was the last time, the very last time, I seen ...named co-resident.... I think it was 3 days afterwards I heard he was dead.... It has haunted me. After that Br...X... quietened down for awhile. I think he knew anyway....*

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*You were in constant fear, you were terrified all the time. There would be a sudden explosion of punishment as the poor souls were thrashed or whacked. In class I would be so fearful I would be shaking as the Brother passed, who might hit you for no reason. ... In the first 4 years ... I was filled with fear and terror, for yourself and for the next one to you. I would shut myself down and make myself invisible, I must not be seen or heard. You could be punished for anything at anytime and for nothing at anytime.... I resented someone exploding and beating someone senseless just because they were in a bad mood.*

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*Fear is what we were ruled by and every day you lived in fear, as those so called Brothers, lay staff and older boys, either appointed or self-appointed head boys, could do what they liked to you for even the slightest wrong and you had no one to turn to. You just had to try and keep your head down and get on with it.*

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*Everything operated on fear, you suffered, and you suffered big time, some physical, some mental. You could be put facing the wall for 2 hours, you would have your nose touching the wall, and if you moved at all, you'd suffer, it was mental suffering as well. You also had to put your fingers touching the wall, whoever ...(Br X)... was on rec...(supervisory duty in recreation area)... would watch you and if you moved you'd have to go to his office later and be leathered ... it was an inhuman way of treating people.*

**7.230** A cause of considerable fear that was recounted by 59 witnesses from nine Schools was the prospect of being stripped to be beaten or having to watch co-residents being beaten without their clothes. Such beatings were frequently in front of co-residents and staff and in public areas such as the dormitories, refectories and recreation yards.

*One boy tried to abscond, it was Br ...X's... class. There was an incident and he ...(Br X)... got the whole class to come to the classroom, there were 2 other Brothers there too. This Br ...X... took his tunic off, and he had a striped shirt with, not a collar but a half collar on it and he had braces on. I will never forget, I can see it to this day. They took this boy's pants off and put him over a form, a type of stool, you know a long stool,*

*and he beat the living daylight out of him. He got the biggest hiding of his life with a leather strap with coins in it, you could see the track of them on his skin. Br ...X... threw water on him. A lot of the boys watching got sick, listening to the screaming like that, no pants on, you know, it was like watching Mutiny on the Bounty. That boy was not able to walk for a month.*

- 7.231** Witnesses described the staff and others who abused them as creating an atmosphere of fear to augment control that they reported was reinforced in many Schools by the use of military-like regimentation. Examples of regimentation included: marching in formation, using whistles in place of verbal commands, public punishments, placing boys on a 'charge' for misbehaving and patrolling the yards and dormitories with sticks.

*Br ...X... he was brutality personified. The moment he came out into a yard of 150 boys playing, cheering, laughing there was silence. When you just saw him in his long soutane, silence, he marched in, blew the whistle and you would automatically line up in your lines of 12. If he ...(Br X)... blew the whistle, within 10 seconds you would not hear a sound, 150 boys were in line within ten seconds or otherwise you knew you were in for punishment. ... When he was in charge the life of every boy went into a depression, he was that cruel. Every day at 4 o' clock on the dot we were lined up in the yard and the punishment names were called out, those boys would have to line up in front of the others, roll up their sleeves and get their beating for bed-wetting.*

- 7.232** Witnesses reported being particularly fearful at night as they listened to residents screaming in cloakrooms, dormitories or in a staff member's bedroom while they were being abused. Witnesses were conscious that co-residents whom they described as orphans had a particularly difficult time:

*The orphan children, they had it bad. I knew ...(who they were)... by the size of them, I'd ask them and they'd say they come from ...named institution.... They were there from an early age. You'd hear the screams from the room where Br ...X... would be abusing them.*



*There was one night, I wasn't long there and I seen one of the Brothers on the bed with one of the young boys ... and I heard the young lad screaming crying and Br ...X... said to me "if you don't mind your own business you'll get the same". ... I heard kids screaming and you know they are getting abused and that's a nightmare in anybody's mind. You are going to try and break out. ... So there was no way I was going to let that happen to me.... I remember one boy and he was bleeding from the back passage and I made up my mind, there was no way it ...(anal rape)... was going to happen to me. ... That used to play on my mind.*

- 7.233** In addition to the constant fear of being beaten or watching others being beaten, 15 witnesses reported that following a severe beating they were left with the threat that the beating would continue at a later time. Anticipating further abuse and the dread associated with the uncertainty was described by witnesses as particularly distressing.

*You are standing up against the wall for hours and then you are told to come back the next night and the following night and you knew damn well you were going to get the hiding of your life.*

- 7.234** Five (5) witnesses from two Schools described the terror they experienced when threatened with guns by staff. As previously reported, seven witnesses from three Schools reported being set upon and injured by dogs handled by religious and lay staff, some of whom also handled or threatened them with guns. One witness described a gun being discharged by a religious staff

member who was pursuing him across a field. Another witness who had been previously assaulted was further terrified when his abuser carried a gun;

*Once, I had been there about 3 months, it was the autumn, and Br ...X... who assaulted me when I first arrived. He called me and he had a shot gun, he gave me an axe. He took me off to the woods and he made me take my trousers down, he took out his penis and he tried to rape me but I ran away and found my way back to the School. Later I met him and he gave me a half crown.*

- 7.235** The allocation of age-inappropriate tasks on farms, operating machinery and tending livestock were reported at times as exposing the witnesses to frightening situations, as this work was often performed by them on their own, unsupervised or under the direction of particularly harsh staff.

### **Denigration of family of origin**

- 7.236** Twenty eight (28) witnesses reported being subjected to ridicule about their parents and families, most often in public in the course of being abused. The sons of lone mothers, 'orphans' or 'conventers' were reported as particular targets for such abuse, being told that their mothers were 'sinners', 'slags' and 'old whores' who did not want them or could not care for them. Others reported hearing their families described as 'scum', 'tramps' and 'from the gutter'. Witnesses admitted to institutions in the context of family difficulties reported being subjected to the constant denigration of their parents. Witnesses recalled being constantly told their parents were 'alcoholics', 'prostitutes', 'mad' and 'no good'. Seven (7) witnesses reported being verbally abused and ridiculed about their Traveller and mixed race backgrounds. 'Br ...X... called me a knacker and said my parents didn't want me, I felt worthless and degraded.'

*It was a very tough place for me, one nun locked me in a closet, beat the hell out of me with a leather strap. She didn't like blacks, she called me Baluba, every time the Irish soldiers were attacked in the Congo she attacked me.*

### **Deprivation of contact with siblings and family**

- 7.237** Sixty seven (67) witnesses reported being deprived of contact with their parents, brothers and sisters while they were in the Schools. They also reported being actively denied information about their parents and siblings. Some witnesses commented that they were too young when they were first admitted to know who their brothers or sisters were and were never told. The deprivation and loss of contact with parents and siblings was reported to be a matter of deep distress, grief and anger that led to the fragmentation and loss of family networks by the time many witnesses were discharged from the Schools:

*We were all split up and we still are, 5 of us were in 4 different Schools. One brother, I did not know of his existence until I was 13 ...(years old)....*



*I found out after 50 plus years that I had a brother, my brother was looking for me for 20 years and he couldn't find me. He was fostered out, he had a better life. He knew he had a brother. I was never sure but he was younger than me. It made an awful difference to me to meet him, it is brilliant like, it's a great thing. Why, why did they break us all up? Why didn't they leave the 2 of us together? They didn't have to break us up. They should have told us about each other.*

- 7.238** Forty four (44) witnesses described how contact with their siblings was actively discouraged or denied. They reported being separated from their sisters and brothers while in the Schools and being denied contact with them. Witnesses also reported being punished if found attempting to communicate with their siblings who were in other sections of the same School. Some witnesses reported that their brothers were transferred or discharged from the School without

them being told or having an opportunity to say goodbye and as one witness remarked: '*in time I forgot I had brothers*'. Twelve (12) witnesses reported learning as adults that they had spent several years in the same place with a brother without ever knowing he existed, and others spoke of their loss of contact with sisters who were in nearby Schools. A witness, whose sisters were in the local girls Industrial School reported:

*I was absolutely devastated, when I discovered my sisters were down the road in ...named School.... I know them now, but I don't know them, we never were meshed, we have occasional contact. I never met them while I was in ...named School.... At 13 years I met my sisters, someone said "they are your sisters". I didn't know what a sister was.*

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*I remember talking to a boy in ...named School... who asked me my name and said he thought we were brothers, he then left. I now know it was my brother, and I have discovered not long ago that I have 3 other brothers and sisters.*

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*I didn't find out I had 3 sisters until I was 21 years of age. ... I didn't know if my father was alive or not, I didn't know my mother. I ended up in a place I didn't know, I was 4 years ...(there).... I met my grandmother and she said to me "it wasn't for the want of trying" ...(that contact was not maintained).... She told me none of my family were allowed to have any information about where anyone of us were. I had 2 brothers, they were there with me. I have no family recollection. ...(When discharged)... I left for England and never wanted to come back.*

**7.239** A small number of witnesses reported that personal and family information was deliberately denied and withheld by failure to inform residents of their family details. Eighteen (18) witnesses reported being told that their parent or parents were dead or that they had no family and learned as adults that this was not the case.

*They told me that my mother was dead and that it was no wonder as I was a bad boy, that it was my fault. I grew up thinking I had killed her somehow. Recently I discovered that she only died ...(a few years previously)... and that for most of our lives we lived quite near each other.*

**7.240** The Committee heard reports from four witnesses of their siblings being adopted while they were in the Schools. Witnesses from a small number of Schools described being lined up and viewed by visiting couples who they believed selected a child for adoption. A small number of witnesses reported that their siblings '*disappeared*' and they discovered later they had been adopted. Witnesses consistently reported that they got no further information and there was no further contact once their sibling left. One witness reported he was the only member of his family who remained in the School:

*One day he ...(witness's brother)... was there, the next day he was gone. It was like a slave market, you were all lined up, people walking up and down, they picked him out and left me. ... The family were separated forever on the day we went into care.*

**7.241** A small number of witnesses reported not being told when parents or close family members died and of not being allowed to attend their funerals. They commented that they were often given this information some time after the event. A witness who represented his School in boxing competitions reported that the news of his mother's death was withheld for three months '*so as not to take my mind off boxing*', hesitated: '*they tried to break your spirit there*'.

**7.242** Twenty three (23) witnesses reported being denied visits home for holidays and that letters were withheld as punishment.



*The morning the boys were going home it was a nightmare ...(for those deprived of home visits as punishment).... They would get up, have their cup of tea, then they would be down in the hall with their little suitcases or whatever. We would be up in the dormitory looking out the window at them going up... to the bus. I never heard so many children screaming in all my life ...distressed.... I lost my privileges once, I was caught smoking. My mother tried to intervene with the Minister for Education, but he said no you have to do it according to the rules or whatever. I lost my holidays over it.*

- 7.243** Circumstances surrounding the denial of contact with parents, withholding family information and the provision of false information about parents were reported by witnesses to be the cause of profound and unresolved upset and anger.

*What kills me to this day is why they did not give me my belongings when I left ...named School.... My things, who my mum was and where I was born and where she was from. I felt hurt, I had to wait 50 odd years to see an ad in ...English newspaper.... Why the Brothers did not give me that ...information... who my mum was ...crying .... I talk to her friend now and she ...(mother)... always tried to find me. She used to look at the kids going up to school and she used be always talking about what age she thought I ought to be. She always spoke about me when she seen the kids and she wondered whether I was alive or whether I was dead. Why was I not given that information? Why was I not told? I made inquiries, but I had nothing to go on.*

### **Bullying**

- 7.244** There were 99 witness reports of bullying by co-residents from 16 Schools. The practice of bullying in this section refers mainly to the intimidating and aggressive behaviour reported by witnesses in relation to co-residents. Threats of physical violence, intimidation and bullying by religious and lay staff while also referred to is described in more detail in the context of physical, sexual and emotional abuse reports. Explicit and implicit threats of physical harm were the most frequently described demonstrations of bullying by male staff. Witnesses reported being forced to behave as they were instructed by the threat of punishment or physical abuse.

- 7.245** Bullying by co-residents with the perceived permission and encouragement of the School staff was reported to be a regular feature in eight Schools. The playgrounds and yards, in particular, were described as frightening places by many witnesses who were exposed to bullying by older residents. Witnesses reported a practice of staff punishing individual residents by sending them out to the yard to be 'charged', kicked and otherwise assaulted by their peers or set up to fight them in the boxing ring. 'He ...(Br X)... would get 2 older lads to bully you, they would get cigarettes from him.'

- 7.246** Physical and sexual abuse were core components of the bullying reported by witnesses. Older residents were reported to congregate in unsupervised gangs in particular Schools where bullying was most frequently reported. The gangs fought amongst themselves and were also reported to target certain residents for bullying and sexual abuse. 'Orphans', new residents and others who did not have visitors or older brothers to protect them were described as particularly vulnerable to being bullied in these circumstances. Witnesses further reported that residents who were sexually abused by religious staff were at times identified as 'Brothers' pets' and targeted by co-residents for bullying.

*I wasn't a hard man. I came from a convent, I was an orphan. It was terrible for us, we got a terrible time, we got bullied by the kids as well. They would take your food off you, you wouldn't dare tell on them, they would batter you.*



*It was a very, very cruel place, there was no sense in it or need for it, it was especially bad for the orphans, we were treated differently. ... The Brothers promoted bullying*

*especially of the orphans. I done a lot of crying when I was in ...named School... I wouldn't let anyone see me but I would curl up at night in bed and cry.*

**7.247** Witnesses who gave evidence to the Committee were of the opinion that bullying by older residents was used to maintain control in some Schools with the knowledge and support of those in charge. In other Schools witnesses described poor supervision and staffing, with consequent bullying by older residents who were assigned the task of maintaining order.

*Bullying, you would see other boys crying, you'd know what had happened. But to go to the Brother, the bullying would only get worse and nothing was going to get done about it. I was fearful every place, the whole environment will haunt me for evermore.*

**7.248** In five Schools older residents were described as monitors in positions of delegated authority. Reports were heard from three Schools of monitors patrolling the recreation yards, sometimes with sticks, and the apparent authority to beat co-residents at will, as described:

*Supervision by Fr ...X... and his successor was non existent. ... Monitors and bullies had a free rein with younger boys and were abusive. The ...(priests and Brothers)... knew what was happening and turned a blind eye.*

### **Witnessing the abuse of others**

**7.249** Witnessing the abuse of co-residents was reported as disturbing at the time and as contributing to life-long distress. Fifty eight (58) witnesses from nine Schools reported they saw co-residents beaten and flogged; some of these witnesses were forced to hold down co-residents. Those who witnessed public beatings described the experience as distressing and traumatic and many were distressed as they gave their evidence of such beatings. They reported that seeing others being beaten and hearing their screams was often worse than being beaten themselves. This experience was particularly disturbing when they had to watch their own sibling being beaten. Witnesses reported that screaming did not lessen the beating and believed that the screams were intended to be heard as a warning to others.

*You'd hear the echo. ... You could hear the cries. ... It would sort of echo through the building. You'd hear the boys crying when they'd be getting a beating, and then they would come back into their bed and they would be crying. You couldn't go near their bed to comfort them, you'd be wanting to, but you couldn't because you would get it yourself.*

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*You could not hear or talk of the pain ...(to other residents)... when they were beating you. If you did you might feel it too and you couldn't carry that extra burden, each one had to carry his own pain alone.*

**7.250** A number of witnesses described being made to watch as co-residents were beaten or flogged to the point of severe injury or unconsciousness.

*We were marched up to a room ... we were put sitting around the gymnastic table, we called it ... the horse, we were put sitting around, from the youngest to the oldest boy. We watched 4 Brothers walk in with 3 boys ...named co-residents.... I know one of them, within a year of leaving he had hung himself ... they were stripped naked while the Brothers held their hands and their legs and this Br ...X... removing his soutane and his collar dramatically began to flog these guys within an inch of their life. Observing excrement coming out of the boys' behind and blood flowing down their legs, I literally trembled and I know kids all around us trembled in silence, some were crying for the poor boys. Their screams for mercy were seared into your very brain.*

**7.251** A large number of witnesses reported the continuing traumatic impact for them of being gathered together to watch co-residents being beaten:

*A Brother beat this kid for a half hour. We were all crying. His brother was crying, he was in bits. Mr ...X (lay ancillary worker)... stood there and watched that and never lifted a finger. Them things stay on your mind ...(the memory of it).... You don't have to think about it, it's there, you'd be lying in bed and it would come to you.*

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*(Named co-resident)... was a lovely lad. He used to sing and we would sit around listening, he always knew all the words. He and another boy decided to run away, we were all punished, there were no films and we all went to bed early, we cursed them. They were gone for a week and eventually brought back. We were all lined up and they were battered, then 4 Brothers took them into a room, with hurling sticks and leathers, we could hear them screaming, when they came out they were unrecognisable, purple ears, totally closed up eyes, backside totally out of shape, I'll never forget it. You heal, but it takes months and you're never the same again after it. I never heard him singing after that.*

### **Isolation**

**7.252** Thirty two (32) witnesses reported being ostracised by their peers or were otherwise isolated while resident in the Schools. This was a practice for punishing returned absconders in a number of Schools. Witnesses also reported being physically isolated in the infirmaries following a severe beating while their bruises and injuries healed. They reported being confined to bed for days or weeks without contact with their peers or co-residents. A small number of witnesses reported being locked in animal sheds and outhouses as punishment for perceived misdemeanours.

**7.253** Isolation from the 'outside world' was frequently described by witnesses, especially those who had lived at home and been part of a community, attending school, playing and having the freedom to associate with others. Many commented on the fact that the Schools themselves were so isolated that they rarely ever saw anyone apart from their co-residents and staff members. A large number of witnesses emphasised the painful experience of loneliness as a result of both the physical isolation and the regime in the Schools, which kept residents silent for long periods, frowned on the normal rough and tumble of play and forbade or discouraged friendships and contact between siblings.

**7.254** The Committee heard evidence that residents were regularly reminded of the possibility of further isolation by being sent away to a more restrictive institution as punishment. They understood that there were harsher and less physically accessible Schools where boys were sent when they got into trouble. The disappearance of co-residents who had been severely beaten contributed to the sense of fear reported by witnesses in this regard.

*One afternoon we were all sitting at our desks and about 6 Brothers came in, they pulled out this boy and they beat him, kicked him, punched him and they used to have big straps at him.... They carried him off somewhere.... This little boy was as hard as nails, he couldn't cry we knew that, he had no tears, you wouldn't go against him, he would flatten you. I never did know what happened to that boy, he just vanished poor devil. I never saw him again. You see in School you don't say nothing, you mind your own business, you don't even look, like that, you use your eyes, nothing else.*

**7.255** Eight (8) witnesses reported that they themselves were transferred to other institutions when they were returned after running away or following altercations with staff. Six (6) of these transfers occurred without prior notice and, in three instances reported to the Committee, witnesses believed they occurred without the appropriate legal arrangements being made or

parents notified. One witness reported being severely beaten by a nun on a daily basis, and was threatened that if he told anyone about being abused he would be beaten more severely and separated from his peers, a threat that was ultimately carried out: *'I used get so angry with the beatings I got from her, I broke a ... bottle and she ...(Sr X)... sent me to ...(the)... psychiatric hospital.*

*As punishment for running away Br ...X... used to have me kneeling on my knees on concrete until we went to bed at night. ... I had a hard time there, the physical abuse was brutal. Every chance I got I ran away I would be brought back and I would get a hiding from Br ...X.... We ...ran away.... We were brought back and I got a hiding off Br ...X.... We were brought into Court in ...named town... the next day. We were remanded and we were brought back to ...named School.... The following week then we went into Court and I was sent to ...another named School....*

### **Deprivation of identity**

**7.256** Witnesses reported that the experience of living in the regimented School system contributed to a sense of having no individual identity. The use of an allocated number instead of a name was reported by 25 witnesses and many others stated that they were either not spoken to individually or were only ever referred to by their surname. Ordinary daily activities were ordered by bells and whistles, and for witnesses discharged prior to the 1970s most of those activities were conducted in large groups. Witnesses who had spent most of their childhood in institutions and/or had no family contact described an accompanying sense of being 'nobody'. Additional components of the deprivation of identity were a lack of recognition of witnesses' birthdays and the denial of sibling relationship, even when brothers or sisters were in the same School. Witnesses reported being discharged without any information regarding their date and place of birth and that the subsequent search for this information was not always fruitful. Two (2) witnesses who spent their entire childhoods in institutions reported being unable to apply for passports because they have never been able to establish a birth record or obtain a birth certificate.

*You had your number on the clothes. You were called by number or they would say "you, you". Some of them would call you by name.*

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*We came to Ireland...(to get passport)...because we wanted to go to Spain, but my birth was not registered so I could not get it.*

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*You never remember anybody there because you never knew anybody by names, you were just there as a number....*

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*I got some bits of paper off the Department of Education that gave me some idea, because before that I hadn't got a clue. I just thought I was born and got put away.*

### **Knowledge of abuse**

**7.257** Due to the generally public and frequent nature of the physical and emotional abuse inflicted on residents, witnesses stated that staff and co-residents were unavoidably aware of its occurrence. Witnesses also reported disclosing abuse to their parents, relatives and people in authority, both within the institution and outside, including to gardaí and other professionals. The Committee also heard and was presented with documentary evidence of correspondence between parents and the Department of Education regarding complaints of abuse. Witnesses stated that the response to their disclosures of abuse ranged from being punished and further abused, being ignored or to being protected from harm. In a small number of instances

witnesses stated that they were aware that some investigation took place following disclosures of abuse.

### ***Abuse observed by others***

**7.258** Witnesses reported that the abuse they experienced and the injuries they sustained in the course of being abused were observed by others within the School on a daily basis and on occasion by the general public. The following is a list of religious and lay staff identified by witnesses as having observed residents being abused:

- Care staff 250 reports
- Authority figures 133 reports
- Ancillary staff 93 reports
- Teaching staff 87 reports
- Resident Managers 61 reports.

**7.259** Those described as care staff and ancillary workers were both lay and religious. The 133 reports that refer to authority figures relate to religious persons described as 'in charge' without reference to their particular role, such as Superior, Reverend Mother, or Sister, Brother or Priest in Charge. The experience of observing others being abused and the frequent failure of staff to intervene in these circumstances was reported by witnesses to be a cause of distress and is described in more detail elsewhere. '*You'd be black and blue and the teachers would never ask you ... (what had happened)....*'

**7.260** The Committee heard reports that on occasion Brothers had to physically restrain other religious staff who were thought to be in danger of seriously harming a resident. There were occasional accounts heard of staff intervening to terminate an incident of abuse or to rescue a resident from assault by another staff member and move them to safety.

*He started beating me. I was so frightened, he had the door locked, it was inside in the refectory. He beat me for a long, long time. There was another Brother, an old man, and he tried to get in. He started shouting out in the hall. I had marks on my legs, marks on my back.*

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*He ...(Br X)... caught me ... and he threw me into the piggery.... I was told to stay there, it was locked from the outside. Another Brother came along and he got me out.*

**7.261** Witnesses stated that their abuse was at times evident to members of the public and external professionals who observed them on walks and other activities in the community or who may have tended their injuries when they were brought to local hospitals and surgeries. A number of witnesses reported being treated sympathetically by members of the public on occasion and believed it was in response to awareness of their abuse.

### ***Disclosing abuse***

**7.262** One hundred and forty six (146) of the 413 witnesses (35%) reported that they told an adult they were being physically or sexually abused, 42 of them reported disclosing abuse to more than one person. The disclosures were to adults in positions of perceived trust and authority both within and external to the Schools. The following table lists the positions witnesses understood were held by the adults to whom they disclosed their abuse while still resident:

**Table 29: To Whom Abuse Disclosed while Resident – Male Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

To whom disclosed abuse while resident	Number of reports
<b>Parents or relatives</b>	62
<b>Religious</b>	
- Staff	32
- Resident Manager	26
- Non-staff	13
<b>Lay</b>	
- Staff	20
<b>External professionals</b>	
- Medical staff	19
- Garda Síochána	14
- Social workers	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

**7.263** As can be seen, the largest number of disclosures was made to parents or relatives. Collectively, there were 78 reports of disclosure to religious and lay staff including care, teaching and ancillary staff. Those described as religious non-staff were priests in the Confessional and other religious Brothers, clergy and nuns who were not members of the School staff, but were associated with the Schools either by their proximity or some visiting arrangement.

**7.264** Witness accounts of disclosing abuse to external professionals refer to medical staff seen while attending hospitals for the treatment of injuries, doctors who attended the Schools to treat injuries and social workers. Many witnesses expressed enduring anger about the inaction of people they perceived to have the necessary authority to intervene and protect them.

*I remember Dr ...X... from the town stitched me up once when I had my lip split open by Br ...Y.... But I was warned to tell the doctor I had fallen or he ...(Br Y)... would get me.*

**7.265** A number of witnesses reported being threatened that if they told anyone about the abuse they had experienced there would be more severe repercussions. Five witnesses stated that members of the religious staff visited them or their parents at home to reinforce their warning not to report or disclose their abuse.

*One time I had to go to hospital ...following severe beating.... Fr ...X... came down to my mother's house, and he begged my mother, on his knees on the floor in my mother's house for forgiveness for what they done. They beat me so bad they got worried. My mother forgave them, he wouldn't go out of the house until she did. She told me this in later years.*

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*Br ...X... followed me up to ...home town... and went up to my mother's house, and he brought me over to a guest house and ...described sexual abuse.... At that time he threatened me that if I opened my mouth I would go back and do the time ...(remaining period of Court Order)... even in years to come, and at that time we were used to being told these things.*

**7.266** Disclosing abuse to Gardaí was reported to have occurred generally in the context of being returned to the School after absconding or when parents accompanied witnesses who were on

leave to the Garda station to make a formal complaint. In a small number of instances witnesses reported their own abuse to Gardaí. In separate instances, four witnesses who absconded told the Gardaí who was returning them to the School that they expected to be badly beaten by the Brothers. The witnesses believed the Gardaí made some inquiries about this and as a result they escaped the usual beating meted out to returned absconders. Another witness reported that his mother told the Resident Manager she intended reporting the fact that he was being abused to the Gardaí; he stated his mother was pressurised into not contacting the Gardaí and subsequently the abuse stopped.

*I was marked ...(following beating)... after I ran away.... I wasn't let out for 3 month after that, all the black and blue marks were gone there were just orange marks left .... When I went home I told me mother about the hidings and she took me down to ...named... police station. When I told the police he said "what School are you in?" and I said ...named School... and he said "what are you there for?" I said "not going to school" and he said "come on are you joking me or what?" I said "I'm there for not going to school" and he started laughing. My mother got a bit annoyed at him laughing at us, and they more or less kicked us out of the police station. After that I never told anyone, you wouldn't trust anyone after that.*

### **Outcome of disclosure**

**7.267** Witnesses reported that disclosing abuse elicited varying responses including being ignored, punished and not believed, in addition to having the reported abuse investigated and abusers being dismissed or transferred from the School. Witnesses stated that the strict regime within the Schools, together with the harsh enforcement of rules and the constant threat of physical abuse left them feeling powerless and unprotected.

*Two fellas went to Confession and told the priests what was happening about the beating. The next day we were all brought up and they were beaten, severely beaten and we were told "whatever happens in here stays here".*

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*We ran away, made it to ...named town.... The police car stopped us and asked us where we were going, and where we had come from ... and he said "why are you running away?" My brother told him about the beatings ... we didn't want to say anything about the sexual.... He ...(garda)... brought us back to ...named School... and told the nun what we were saying. They really tortured us after that. There was a man ...named lay care staff... and there was another woman and there was Sr ...X.... They beat us with whatever come to hand. That time you couldn't say anything against nuns or priests or anything like that...*

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*Afterwards I met Br ...X... going down the stairs, he beat the crap out of me. "You know to keep your mouth shut" he'd say "you know what you'll get if you don't keep your mouth shut".... It was complete fear, I couldn't tell anyone, the fear you know.*

**7.268** Fifty seven (57) witnesses reported that when they disclosed abuse or it was evident by their injuries that they were being abused they were ignored and the abuse continued, leading them to believe that aggression and violence was part of the culture of the School. A number of witnesses stated that it was their belief that both religious and lay staff knew that residents were being abused and were at times sympathetic but were powerless or unwilling to change anything.

*He ...(Br X)... tried to rape me every chance he got.... He nearly killed me in the hay barn, he got me up this ladder sitting on top of the hay, he was mucking about with me, at first I thought it was just horse play, he was trying to get my trousers down....I screamed and he put his hand over my mouth. Mr ...Y (lay ancillary worker)... heard the*

*scream and he came in, he was only there for a few seconds, he saw that Br ...X... had his hands over my mouth. I threw myself down the bottom, I was lucky it was 12 or 14 foot down, and I ran out and said to him "don't you ever touch me again". He said he would kill me if I ever opened my mouth, he never touched me again after that.*

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*He ...(Br X)... beat me up, my lip was busted, my eye was swollen and all my face was red. Nobody asked me what happened. None of the other Brothers said anything.... No Brother entered the domain of another without knocking and getting permission first.*

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*The ...(Resident Manager)... knew what was happening. They ...(Brothers)... were sadists, they were evil and cruel. Of course they knew what was happening ... to say they didn't is like saying you were standing by a motorway and saw no traffic.*

- 7.269** Many witnesses reported that the risk of being deprived of family visits or being prevented from going home on leave deterred them from disclosing abuse. Others reported that when they did tell someone they were being abused they were either ignored or not believed and as a result they learned to remain silent, believing that nobody would listen to them. A witness who told a priest in Confession about being sexually abused reported that he was told to 'keep your thoughts to yourself as you could hurt so many people'. Another witness who told his parents that he had been sexually abused reported that:

*My mother and my father came up to visit me and I told them what had happened ...(sexual abuse)... they confronted Br ...X.... He had a story, told them I was sick and I was hallucinating and they believed him.*

- 7.270** Forty four (44) witnesses reported being severely beaten in the context of disclosing both physical and sexual abuse and that the prospect of further beatings was generally sufficient to maintain silence. Witnesses reported being beaten when they told others including staff members, priests in Confession, police and visitors or their parents or relatives that they had been beaten or otherwise abused. Witnesses described an atmosphere of fear that prevented talking about being abused due to the risk of further abuse, as witnesses described:

*Br ...X... punched a boy in front of all the staff ... to make him retract his story of sexual abuse against Br ...Y... and to make the boy tell everyone he had engaged in sexual activity with another resident. You learned that talking only led one way ... to a beating.*

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*He ...(Br X)... asked me what had happened, and there was a rule in ...named School... that you did not tell on another Brother because he would beat you up. So I could not tell him and he kept me in the dormitory for a few days and the same thing happened again ...(the sexual abuse continued)....*

- 7.271** A witness who disclosed being sexually abused by a Brother while on an outing reported the consequence for him:

*The next morning I told ...co-resident (about physical and sexual abuse)... and he took me to Br ...X (Resident Manager)... and he said I was talking "badness". I told him exactly what had happened, and he gave me a hiding, he punched and kicked me. He used a short stick, blackjacks we used to call them. He used to bend you over the bench, sometimes a monitor used to hold you or sometimes another Brother. But this time he took me to the hall to give me the hiding.*

- 7.272** Thirteen (13) witnesses who disclosed their experiences of abuse to their parents reported being discharged home or granted early release following representations to the Department of



Education and other authorities. In some instances these representations were made directly to the Minister, also through local politicians, and by writing to the Department. In most reported instances the representations were made by the witnesses' parents. There were three reports of early release being facilitated by external professionals. There were six further reports of representations being made to external authorities for the witnesses' early release that were denied. One witness reported that his mother attempted to obtain the services of a solicitor, without success, in her effort to report abusive behaviour and obtain early release. Another witness reported being offered early release in return for his silence:

*After I was raped and got a terrible beating by 2 men, they beat the shit out of me. Their faces were distorted. I couldn't see who they were. I barely crawled to the door, the nurse sent me to ...named... hospital. ... After I came out of the hospital Fr ...X... he was director at that time, he called me in and said ... "if you say you weren't beaten up we will let you out of here in a few days". I was just trying to get home, like, so I said I wasn't beaten. He called all the Brothers in, there was a garda there and everything. He ...(Fr X)... said "now ... tell them what you told me". So I said I wasn't beaten. All I wanted to do was get home, so I got home.*

**7.273** A number of witnesses reported positive responses to disclosure, including 20 reports of the abuser being removed or transferred and 17 accounts of the abuser being reprimanded in some way. These witnesses reported being most often aware of positive outcomes of their disclosure by a cessation of abuse and a belief that their abuser was disciplined. Such outcomes followed eight reports to Resident Managers or others in charge, by the witnesses or their parents.

**7.274** There were isolated accounts heard of positive outcomes as a result of the assertive intervention of parents, relatives, professionals and members of the public following disclosures of abuse by witnesses. For example a witness reported that when he absconded following a beating he was given a lift by a member of the public to whom he disclosed details of his abuse. This person treated him kindly and convinced him to return to the School where he spoke to the person in charge regarding the alleged abuse. The witness reported that he was not subsequently punished or beaten and that the person returned some time later to check on his welfare.

**7.275** The Committee heard isolated reports of lay staff members being dismissed. In one situation a lay teacher was reported to the Resident Manager by a group of residents after an incident of sexual abuse. Other witnesses reported being moved to a different dormitory as protection from the negative attentions of a night watchman. Less frequent beatings from a care worker followed an intervention by one witness's grandfather.

**7.276** Witnesses recalled that Brothers '*disappeared*' from time to time and it was assumed there had been complaints about them. The Committee heard a small number of accounts of Brothers leaving in the wake of a particular incident of abuse. Most often the reports were of a Brother's absence noticed in the belief he had been '*sent away*' as a witness described:

*...he was evil, you would never know when he would come up behind you. He was taken out the back way one afternoon and he was never seen again, thanks be to God.*

**7.277** While 25 witnesses reported that disclosing abuse to their parents resulted in a positive outcome where the abuse ceased and they were either protected or released, 12 witnesses reported that their parents were unable or unwilling to believe that religious staff were abusive. Some parents were reported to regard the witnesses' abuse as justified punishment for misconduct, believing '*the Brothers could do no wrong*'.

*I told my father what was going on ...(sexual abuse).... I told him what Br ...X... was doing to me, and the father thumped me and said "how dare you say anything like*

that?" There was nothing physical for him there to see, if I had cuts or bruises he would have believed me.

## Witnesses response to abuse

**7.278** Three hundred and eight (308) witnesses reported that fear was their predominant response to the abuse they both observed and experienced and that on occasion they feared for their own and others' lives. Eleven (11) witnesses reported fearing that they would be killed. Witnesses also described harming or attempting to harm themselves in the context of being abused. They reported wishing that the physical or sexual abuse they were subjected to would cease and being unable to trust that anyone would help or believe them if they disclosed what was happening.

*We never told anyone what was happening. We thought they had the right to do what they were doing, to beat us. Why would we tell anyone when they would only beat us more? We were terrified of those men in long trousers, we were just little fellas in short trousers. The worst part for me was the dormitory and the bed-wetting ...(and the beatings).... I still wet the bed and hate going away anywhere because I am so embarrassed about it. I tried to kill myself there.*

**7.279** Ninety five (95) witnesses reported absconding and another 28 reported that they tried to run away in order to escape the environment of fear and repeated physical and sexual abuse, including flogging. Resisting sexual abuse was reported to generally result in physical violence and further sexual abuse. There were 14 witness accounts of sexual abuse ceasing following gestures of resistance and avoidance. In a number of instances these witness reported subsequently becoming the target of routine physical abuse.

*One day in the laundry he ...(Br X)... was coming up behind me, I knew what he wanted ...(sexual abuse)... and I just freaked. I picked up the first thing that came into my hand, I hit him and knocked his glasses off. He kicked me up the arse and that was it, I was out of the laundry ...(where witness had been working).... He was always at me after that, every chance he'd get he would have me down on my knees in the yard as punishment for something.*

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*He, Fr...X..., would take out 6 or 7 for walks and would sexually abuse you, you know. If you protested well then he would not bring you the next time ...(out for walks).... I got punished when I protested, I got punished after that for no reason.*

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*The farmers ...(residents who worked on farm)... were always the last in to the showers. It ...(sexual abuse)... only happened when you were clean. Other times you would stink and they wouldn't touch you, so I used let myself really stink.*

**7.280** Two hundred and eight (208) witnesses described not knowing what to do in response to being abused. They reported feeling helpless and defenceless and under constant threat of further abuse.

*Very seldom, boys did fight back, they had great courage. ... God did they have courage those who fought back. I always regret I didn't fight back ...crying.... You knew from the day you arrived no one was going to help you, there was no one.*

**7.281** One hundred and forty six (146) witnesses who had been threatened or punished following disclosure of abuse reported that they subsequently withdrew emotionally and isolated themselves as they felt powerless and did not trust that any protection was available. Other responses included screaming, crying, suppressing anger, bed-wetting and soiling. Of those

who reported a history of bed-wetting while in the School a large number reported that they did not wet their bed prior to admission. *'I became a very bad bed-wetter I had never been a bed-wetter before. ... Every night I was there for 5 years there was a list called out of those who had wet the bed.'*

*I lived in terror and fear. I started wetting the bed, I never did it before. You would stand at the end of the bed for the punishment ... slaps with a leather strap all over. ... I tried not to sleep I'd try and hide the stain, so as not to be punished. It became a way of life. Some boys could take a hundred slaps and would not cry, others would be screaming for mercy.*

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*But even when you weren't being hit, you could hear this echo, in this big dormitory like a hall, and you could hear the crushing sound, and the blow, and the screams, night after night after night. I used to do this ...demonstrated rocking motion... to take me away from it, the beatings and the screaming and the fear. I wanted to stop it, I would dream about getting a gun and shooting them to stop it.*

**7.282** Eighteen (18) witnesses reported that they attempted to commit suicide and actively harmed themselves during their time in the Schools, most frequently in the context of being sexually abused or being consistently physically abused. Attempts at self-harm included throwing themselves from heights, ingesting objects, overdosing on veterinary medication, self-mutilation, attempted drowning and self-inflicted burns. Others described having suicidal thoughts or a wish to die or hurt themselves.

*I cut myself, overdosed, swallowed pins. I was ashamed and embarrassed. ... I ripped myself apart, cut myself, legs, arms. I mean seriously, I was admitted to hospital....*

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*I tried to kill myself in the time I was there. I locked myself in the bathroom and I was running against the wall trying to injure my head on the wall. I think there was an awful lot of fellas who did commit suicide. You had nobody, absolutely nobody. You couldn't turn to anybody, you never felt safe, the kitchen, the dormitories, the farmyard. I used to go into a cupboard and cry.*

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*I went down and got a piece of glass and cut my hand. I didn't care what happened, I just wanted to get out of the School. I just thought that by cutting my hand I'd be taken up to the hospital and could tell someone there. The nurse saw my hand cut and asked me what happened and I told her ...(about being severely beaten by Br X).... I was terrified they ...(Brothers)... would know I'd told her, she created murder and told Fr ...Y.... But he did nothing.*

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*When I was in bed I used to cry and wish I'd die. I'd think "I don't want to wake up". Whenever you were in the dormitory you knew there was something going to happen to you. You'd want to be dead instead of waking up.*

**7.283** In addition to the witnesses who reported harming themselves, a number also reported that they contemplated harming lay and religious staff who were abusive and in five instances described actively doing so.

**7.284** In summary, this chapter has provided an overview of abuse reported to the Committee by 413 male witnesses in relation to Industrial and Reformatory Schools. The reported abuse was differentiated by type: physical and sexual abuse, neglect and emotional abuse presented accordingly. Where possible, the chapter sections have been illustrated with direct quotes from

witnesses, some of whom were recounting their experiences for the first time to a third party. While describing their experiences witnesses also gave accounts of the circumstances in which the abuse occurred and the traumatic impact of their experiences both at the time and as they are recalled. In addition, the information provided about the position and occupations of those who were reported abusers is included with witness accounts of who they told, and what they believe was known about the abuse they experienced at the time.

**7.285** The following two chapters will provide similarly detailed information about the general conditions and everyday life experiences in the girls Schools together with reported abuse experiences of 378 female witnesses.