

Chapter 11

Current circumstances

11.01 The Acts allowed the Committee to hear both evidence of child abuse and the continuing effects on the witnesses.¹ This chapter refers to the adult life circumstances of the 413 male and 378 female former residents of the Industrial and Reformatory Schools who reported to the Committee regarding their experiences of childhood abuse. It summarises the information provided by witnesses during their hearings about a range of life experiences including relationships, parenting, family contact, occupational status, accommodation, health status and enduring effects on family and personal life.

Relationships

11.02 Many witnesses stated that their childhood experience of abuse and emotional deprivation inhibited their capacity to form stable, secure and nurturing relationships in adult life. However, despite the emotional difficulties described by both male and female witnesses, a high proportion of them reported being married or in long-term relationships that were described as mostly happy, often enduring despite severe difficulties.

11.03 At the time of their hearing 388 of the 791 witnesses (49%), 203 male and 185 female, reported being married, 343 of those marriages were reported to be of between 20 and 60 years' duration. An additional 70 witnesses, 40 male and 30 female, reported being in stable non-marital relationships, including 10 same-sex partnerships, seven of which were male and three were female. See the following table for details:

Table 44: Status and Duration of Witnesses' Relationship at the Time of Hearing – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools

Duration	0–19 years		20–39 years		40–59 years		Total	%
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females		
Status of relationship								
Married	11	34	144	128	48	23	388	49
Single	16	16	38	24	36	2	132	17
Separated	26	36	9	7	0	0	78	10
Co-habiting	34	27	6	3	0	0	70	9
Divorced	16	25	9	15	0	1	66	8
Widowed	16	32	3	5	0	0	56	7
Unavailable	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	(0)
Total	119	170	209	182	84	27	791	100

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

11.04 When reading the above table it is of note that at the time of their hearing 401 witnesses (51%), 240 male and 161 female, were aged over 60 years, and a further 298 witnesses (38%), 131 male and 167 female, were aged between 50 and 60 years.

¹ Sections 1(1), 4(1)(a) and 16 as amended by sections 3, 4 and 11 of the 2005 Act.

11.05 Many witnesses reported that they got married within five years of being discharged from the School, often to their first boyfriend or girlfriend. Witnesses described their partners providing a sense of connectedness and stability they had not previously experienced and showing them the first real kindness they had ever known. *'I was grateful someone wanted me, no one had before'*. A large number of witnesses talked about their good fortune to have married partners whose families were supportive and kind, including them in a family network for the first time. Many witnesses acknowledged being difficult to live with but that their partners' support and understanding allowed their relationships to be maintained.

11.06 One hundred and eighty two (182) witnesses (23%), 107 male and 75 female, reported being unable to express their feelings to their partner. In addition to the abuse experienced by witnesses, the negative attitudes to normal physical and sexual development experienced during their childhood was described as having a detrimental impact on personal relationships. Some witnesses reported that, not having experienced any demonstrations of affection as children, they were now unable to show affection but had partners who understood or accepted this difficulty.

11.07 Seventy two (72) witnesses, 19 male and 53 female, reported sexual difficulties as a significant problem in their experience of close relationships. Sixteen (16) witnesses, six male and 10 female, stated that their childhood experiences of being sexually abused contributed to confusion about sexual orientation.

11.08 Witnesses were frank in their descriptions of themselves as unprepared for marriage and family life. They reported on their difficulties dealing with emotional demands and the expectations of physical affection and sexual intimacy in the absence of any previous experience of affectionate attachment. Many male witnesses who married described the *'wilderness'* of relationships with others, in particular with their spouse and subsequently with their children and extended families:

The worst thing was not being able to relate to others, not knowing how to give and receive love. I didn't know what love was.

•

When I came out...(discharged)... I was 16, I was really one year old. I couldn't cope, I couldn't handle it. I know where it all went wrong, emotionally I'm a cripple.

11.09 Eighty (80) witnesses, 19 male and 61 female, reported having unhappy or, at times, *'disastrous'* first marriages followed by happier, more stable and complementary partnerships in later years. These witnesses often reported that they married at a young age and acknowledged being too immature to cope with the demands of commitment, family life and intimacy. Many also acknowledged that poor partner choices reflected their immaturity, lack of supportive networks and their overwhelming desire for a companion. A female witness stated: *'I got married for something to call my own.... I knew once you were married they couldn't get you back'*. Many female witnesses said that they married in the context of unplanned pregnancy and ten witnesses reported marrying before they were 20 years old in such circumstances.

11.10 Seventy eight (78) of the 413 male witnesses described being in long-term relationships that were marked by difficulties related to their own behaviour and personality traits such as the need to be alone, difficulty expressing affection, physical and verbal aggression, sexual difficulties, moodiness and an inability to provide materially for their families:

It's a darkness that they gave me. I live alone, my family don't come near me.... My children don't know me. ... I couldn't relate in a normal context to my family. I didn't know when I married my wife that I wasn't capable of being a husband, I was 19. ... I knew I was not good enough.... I was no father at all. I remember asking "why, why did this happen to me?"

●

I have 2 families... (children with 2 partners)...I find it hard to stay in the relationship. That's it, that's the problem. I can't seem to settle down for long, you want to be on your own a lot. Some nights when I'm home I stay in my room a lot, I like to be on my own. I never talk about it I keep it all to myself. I never see anyone from the school, it would remind you too much of it. I do get depressed at times.

11.11 One hundred and forty four (144) witnesses, 60 male and 84 female, reported that their marriages had broken down. Domestic violence, combined with emotional and sexual difficulties, was cited as a precipitating factor in most of these instances. Seventy eight (78) of those witnesses, 35 male and 43 female, were separated and the other 66 witnesses said that their marriages had ended in divorce.

11.12 Violence was reported to be a significant feature in the relationships of both male and female witnesses. Sixty seven (67) male witnesses stated that their relationships were dominated by their physically abusive behaviour towards their partners, and 49 of those witnesses stated that their violent behaviour was associated with alcohol abuse. Thirteen (13) other male witnesses reported that their marriages, either current or previous, had been marked by their violent behaviour but that time and intervening circumstances had facilitated change and that their relationships had improved.

11.13 Sixty four (64) female witnesses reported being in relationships where there were ongoing difficulties related to domestic violence, alcohol abuse, and issues related to control and authority. Some witnesses described their own contribution to these violent relationships through their tendency to be angry, quick-tempered, and verbally and physically aggressive. Thirty (30) female witnesses reported being physically aggressive or violent towards others, including their partners. Others described marrying men who controlled their lives, who taunted them about their background in an institution and perpetuated the type of abusive relationships they had previously experienced. Twenty (20) of the female witnesses who remained in violent relationships said they were accustomed to a level of aggression; as one witness commented: *'You think everyone is going to hit you'*. Many female witnesses reported that they regarded being hit as an unavoidable feature of interpersonal contact. Female witnesses who remained in unhappy marriages reported doing so for many reasons, including a sense of responsibility to provide their children with more stability and security than they themselves had experienced in childhood.

11.14 A number of male and female witnesses said that they were in long-term relationships but were unable to make a commitment in marriage, fearing they would be *'trapped again'* as they felt they had been in the institution. Witnesses stated that other reasons for avoiding the commitment of marriage were a fear of being exposed as *'illegitimate'* and as having been reared in an institution. Witnesses spoke about being able to maintain a veil of secrecy about their background as a single person, which they feared losing if they married:

I made all kinds of excuses as why I didn't want to get married ... the truth was it meant I would have to show my birth certificate and I was ashamed of that ... anything rather than he find out I was illegitimate, because he was a nice middle class ... (professional)....

11.15 One hundred and thirty nine (139) witnesses, 83 male and 56 female, reported life-long isolation and loneliness, often describing themselves as *'married loners'*, despite being in long-term relationships and having children. The inability to form or sustain intimate, trusting relationships was described as the inevitable result of affectionless and often violent childhoods. The wife of one witness who attended the hearing with her husband said that she lived with a *'stranger'* and

never really knew her husband. Other companions described the isolated lives some witnesses led, for example:

It's the middle of the night he ...(witness)... wakes up with these mad screams. ... He spends the greater part of his life in his room, he comes down and brings his meals up, if he falls asleep the children can hear him scream.

11.16 There were 132 witnesses who were single at the time of their hearing, of whom 72 males and 36 females reported having never married or formed any stable relationships. A number of male witnesses reported outwardly successful lives that they maintained by moving around while avoiding attachments. Others, both male and female, reported living quiet, isolated existences that suited them, having struggled for years to fit into a more mainstream life: *'they locked me up inside myself and threw away the key'*.

11.17 A further 32 male and 26 female witnesses described themselves as having been in relationships for periods of time but were unable to sustain a commitment to their partners. A small number of male witnesses described living a nomadic existence, working on farms and building sites. Some married for a short time but could not sustain the commitment and reported abusing drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism for painful and intrusive memories:

The skills I had honed in ...named School... how to hide and not show feelings, were a disadvantage in adult life outside. I could not sustain relationships, express my feelings. I was closed off.

11.18 Both male and female witnesses reported that the past had been locked away until media publicity in the 1990s forced memories back into awareness. Thirty nine (39) witnesses, 18 male and 21 female, reported that they had never disclosed details of their abuse to their partners or told anyone about their past until their hearing with the Committee. Disclosure to spouses, partners and family members in recent years was reported to have had varying effects on family relationships. Witnesses reported that talking about their traumatic childhoods allowed some of their families to understand their troubled and at times disturbed behaviour. Spouses and adult children who attended hearings as companions often stated that it was easier to cope with aggressive or withdrawn behaviour when they had some understanding of the witness's background. For other witnesses the public reminder of their past increased pressure on already fragile relationships. A number of witnesses stated that the open acknowledgement of their abuse made everyday life more difficult as it reactivated feelings of pain and anger. A number of companions acknowledged a history of disturbed family relationships that had a traumatic effect on their own lives:

He would have terrible violence with the drink. He would always provide for us, we never went without. My dad had a problem with alcohol, my dad beat me and my mum, he was very violent. He loved me but he didn't know how to show it.

Parenting

11.19 The amount of information provided about family life and parenting varied considerably among the male and female witnesses. Many witnesses spoke frankly about their experiences as parents while others did not provide much information about this aspect of their lives. Six hundred and fifty three (653) male and female witnesses (83%) reported having parented and/or reared children. This number included witnesses' own biological children and non-biological children who were reared as their own, including a number of fostered and adopted children.

11.20 Three hundred and nineteen (319) male witnesses (77%) reported having children, with family size varying between one and 11 children. Fifty (50) witnesses reported having six children or more and the average family size reported by male witnesses was four children.

- 11.21** Three hundred and thirty four (334) female witnesses (88%) reported having children. Family size varied between one and 15 children, with 31 witnesses having six children or more. The average family size reported by female witnesses was three children.
- 11.22** The Committee were told that in total, 653 witnesses parented 2,158 children. These include both non-biological children raised by some witnesses and biological children who were raised without the witnesses' support, some of whom were adopted or placed in out-of-home care.
- Forty three (43) female witnesses reported rearing their children as lone parents.
 - Thirty six (36) female witnesses reported placing children for adoption shortly after birth. The witnesses reported that 42 of their children were placed for adoption. Twenty seven (27) of the reported adoptions were of children born to women within three years of their discharge from the School system.
 - Sixteen (16) children of nine female witnesses were reported to have been placed in out-of-home care, either with extended family members or in residential or foster care.
 - Nine (9) female witnesses reported having an unplanned pregnancy between the ages of 14 and 16 years.
- 11.23** Aspects of the parent–child relationship described by 653 male and female witnesses who had children are shown below, in the order of frequency reported:

Table 45: Relationship with Own Children – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools

Relationship with children*	Frequency reported by male witnesses	Frequency reported by female witnesses	Total witness reports	% Total witness
Reported normal	115	106	221	34
Overprotective	63	116	179	27
Unable to show affection	80	92	172	26
Harsh	73	52	125	19
Varied between children	26	49	75	11
Abusive	24	17	41	6
No comment	25	16	41	6

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

n = 653 (319 male and 334 female)

*Witnesses could give more than one answer

- 11.24** Two hundred and twenty one (221) witnesses (34%), 115 male and 106 female, described having 'normal' or good relations with their children. Many witnesses described the pleasure they derived from having children of their own and being able to provide them with the love and security they had not received themselves. Relationships between witnesses and their children were described as influenced by their own childhood experiences, which many said left them ill-prepared for the role of being a parent. *'I worry about them and I'm proud of them but I can't tell them'.*

You forget you have a soft side. It's good to be soft but I don't think I showed it enough to my kids, I regret that now.

- 11.25** One hundred and seventy nine (179) witnesses, 63 male and 116 female, described themselves as overprotective of their children to the point that it created difficulties between themselves and their partners as well as with their children. For some witnesses the fear of their children being harmed or getting into trouble and consequently being placed in out-of-home care was difficult

to tolerate and resulted in excessive vigilance and control. This was described by witnesses as contributing, in some instances, to an authoritarian approach to parenting and to being overprotective. These parent–child relationships were often characterised by overindulgence and separation anxiety. For many female witnesses having their own child was described as a pivotal life experience and as one witness said: *'gave me something of my own for the first time in my life'*.

- 11.26** The inability to be affectionate with their children was reported by 172 witnesses (22%), 80 male and 92 female, as a general feature of the parent–child relationships: *'I can't cuddle my own kids'*. Witnesses reported that having not experienced affection themselves they found it difficult to be physically demonstrative. Sixty five (65) of the witnesses, 29 male and 36 female, who described themselves as harsh or abusive in relation to their children also reported their inability to demonstrate affection as a significant feature of their relationships:

I had no maternal instinct at all. No, I didn't want them when they were babies. I did what I had to do, it was my duty.... My ...husband... would bring them up on his knee, he'd hug them and kiss them. I pushed them away, I wasn't able to do it. I'd eat the face off them. I always said to them "you'll get what I never got". I done my best for them I encouraged them all the way. ... I can do it ...(be more affectionate)... with the grandchildren.

•

I never gave my daughters or my sons a hug. I associate touch with sex, I could not put my arms around them. I am always wary if I bump into someone. I am always saying "sorry, sorry, sorry". ... I feel so dirty, afraid. ... I was very strict with my boys. I'd follow them anywhere. I was terrified they would end up.... I know they were hurt. I was lucky. My wife, I can never stop apologising to her, I put her through hell.... She's like an anchor.

•

I don't know how she ...(wife)... put up with me, not being able to relate to my wife and my children. I can bark orders at them. I bitterly regret that. My wife does the emotional bit because I am not able to do it, I so regret that.

- 11.27** One hundred and twenty five (125) witnesses (19%), 73 male and 52 female, reported themselves as harsh in their treatment of their children, many of whom described carrying a burden of guilt in that regard. Forty one (41) witnesses, 24 male and 17 female, reported abusing their children including episodes of serious harm and neglect to the point where the children were placed in out-of-home care. Some witnesses lost contact with their children in the context of poor relationships in the early years of family life, others were able to overcome the difficulties and reported that relationships with their children improved over time:

They took my kids off me when they were younger because I couldn't cope, they went to fostering, I had a breakdown. After a while I got them back....

•

I was kinda sick parenting them.... My sons didn't have it easy either, I remember thinking ...(of ending own life)... and thinking of the 2 boys that I would bring them with me as well. They got involved in drink and drugs.... One got into treatment ... he's doing fine now.

- 11.28** Six (6) male witnesses described being physically abusive, which resulted in serious injury to their wives and/or children. A number of witnesses reported a sense of guilt about how they may have contributed to their children's difficulties resulting, in some instances, in drug abuse and/or early deaths:

I was very hard on my kids. It got so much that my kids ended up hating me. I always had a problem with drinking that was my downfall and my aggression regarding my kids. I had a good wife and she stood by me and my sons and my daughters, I can go to any of them but I can't live with them. I lost...children through drugs, the drink was my downfall.

11.29 Five (5) female witnesses reported that their partners had sexually abused their children, two of whom were reported to have received custodial sentences.

11.30 Seventy five (75) witnesses, 26 male and 49 female, described having variable relationships with their different children, some finding one or other of their children more difficult to relate to and acknowledged being excessively strict as a result. A number of witnesses described being harsh on their older children and being much closer to their younger children. Other witnesses said that the relationships with their children improved as they got older and they were able to talk to them about their own childhood experiences. A large number of both male and female witnesses reported having more affectionate, close and rewarding bonds with their grandchildren than they had with their own children:

I would love to have said the word "mum". ... When my daughter says it and when I hear my grandchildren say it, it's lovely. ... My joy today is my grandchildren, they're lovely.

•

I stopped it ...(hitting children)... because ... I said it is not the right thing to do. When I had my second child I stopped. My first child thinks terrible of me because I hit her. It does affect them too you know. I used have them cleaning all the time, that's the way I was brought up. I should never have hit them, I feel a lot of guilt in myself for doing this to them. I was a terrible mam, I was. We get on all right now.

11.31 A number of adult children who accompanied witnesses to hearings described the shock they experienced when they first became aware of the abuse and deprivations their parents endured as children. Some stated that learning about their parents' childhood experiences helped them to understand and accept the hardship of their own traumatic childhoods with parents who were excessively punitive and critical or unable to show affection. The daughter of a witness attending as a companion reported:

My father never spoke to us, you got hit. He'd hit me mammy, he'd hit me, he'd hit my brothers. He was aggressive, he was violent, none of the rest of his family are like this. He has mellowed, he is not like that now, we can talk for hours. The difference with the grandchildren.... He was very good to us material wise, he was a good father that way.

11.32 Forty one (41) witnesses, 25 male and 16 female, made no comment about their relationship with their children.

Occupational status

11.33 Since their discharge from the School system 509 witnesses (64%), 279 male and 230 female, spent the majority of their working lives in paid employment. Two hundred and fifty (250) of those witnesses (32%), 151 male and 99 female, reported being in paid employment for more than 30 years. A further 90 female witnesses worked full-time in the home caring for their families for 30 years or longer. The following table shows the witnesses' employment status at the time of their hearing:

Table 46: Witnesses Employment Status at Time of Hearing – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools

Employment status	Males	%	Females	%	Total witnesses	%
Employed	116	28	148	39	264	33
Retired	106	26	71	19	177	22
Disability	87	21	61	16	148	19
Unemployed	61	15	38	10	99	13
Self -employed	31	8	10	3	41	5
Defence Forces	4	1	0	0	4	1
Volunteer	1	0	3	1	4	1
Working at home	7	2	44	12	51	6
Unavailable	0	(0)	3	1	3	(0)
Total	413	(100)*	378	(100)*	791	100

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

*Some rounding up/down was applied

11.34 The above information needs to be considered in the context of the witnesses' age. At the time of their hearing 152 witnesses (19%), 102 male and 50 female, were aged 65 years and over and a further 504 witnesses (64%), 245 male and 259 female, were aged between 50 and 65 years.

11.35 Among the 148 witnesses (19%) who were on disability benefit at the time of their hearing, 27 were aged 60 years or older and 45 were on disability benefit for more than 20 years.

11.36 Female witnesses who were discharged before the mid-1970s reported that their working lives were generally influenced by marriage and parenthood, with 42 of the witnesses who married and had children during that time reporting they did not work outside the home until their children were grown up. Seven (7) male witnesses reported that their partners were the main income earners in the family, a number of those witnesses chose to work at home to avoid the pressure they had previously experienced in the work place. They described this arrangement as providing a feeling of control over their day-to-day circumstances that they could not achieve in open employment situations.

11.37 Self-employment was reported by witnesses to have been a constructive response to managing authority and a desire for independence. Several male and female witnesses described themselves as 'workaholics' some of whom reported building up successful businesses that allowed them to keep busy and take their mind off their traumatic past. Others reported a liking for solitude and self-motivation, which favoured self-employment.

I can't hold a job, I can't focus, I can't work with anyone. I walk off a job when people start to show authority, I walk away. I struggle. I have had ...(many jobs, now works alone)... which I find the best I don't have to answer to anyone.

•

I loved the freedom of being able to do things...(working for self)... and not being chastised...

11.38 Many male and female witnesses described the detrimental effects of a poor education on their work lives. Poor literacy, combined with the stigma of having been in a Reformatory or Industrial School, led to many witnesses 'keeping their heads down' to avoid criticism or the shame of being 'found out' as having been in an institution. They found it difficult to progress beyond unskilled labouring, factory or cleaning work and had poorly provisioned retirements. They

described their working lives as a constant struggle to survive without drawing attention to their perceived shortcomings, both educational and social.

You were put down a lot, if anyone says “where are you from?” Well you have nowhere, have you? If you say Dublin, then they say “where?” and you just can’t say, it’s that stigma. I thought people would judge me badly.

•

When I came out ... the lack of education hit me. I was unskilled, I was terrified, I couldn’t put ...(name of School)... on the form. I couldn’t go back into education because, what is education? It is beatings.

•

I go haywire when anyone gives me an application form to fill out...I haven’t got the confidence, I know what my writing is like, I know what my spelling is like...

•

I was in ...named company...for 25 years and they said you’ll have to learn it...(computer)...I was terrified I would show myself up. I can’t go over the boss and say “can I have...?”. I can’t go up and approach him. It’s not because of him, it’s because of me...I’m terrified. Then they...(work colleagues)... say to me “you should go for that”, if they only knew the truth, I don’t want anyone to know my background...instead of moving up in work I’ve moved down. I couldn’t say I want more because I’d be afraid.

11.39 One witness whose life was, like many others, a catalogue of jobs with varying levels of responsibility, always on the move, afraid of being found out as being from an Industrial School and having no family stated:

I had the capacity to find a cosy corner somewhere, settle in and keep to myself and then the day would come when I would feel comfortable and give my opinion about something and they would all wonder where that came from, I’d show myself as someone with a brain. Then I would have to move on again, afraid I’d be discovered ...(to have been in an Industrial School)....

•

I work nightshift, which suits me grand because they leave me alone, nobody bothers me. I can just get on with my work, they know I’m a good worker. I always keep busy myself, that’s how I cope.

11.40 Table 47 below shows the highest education level attended, but not in all instances completed, by both male and female witnesses:

Table 47: Highest Level of Education Attended – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools

Highest level of education	Males	%	Females	%	Total witnesses	%
Primary	327	79	249	66	576	73
Secondary	52	13	83	22	135	17
Third level	34	8	44	12	78	10
No schooling	0	0	2	1	2	(0)
Total	413	100	378	(100)*	791	100

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

*Some rounding up/down was applied

11.41 Two (2) female witnesses reported never having attended any form of classroom education. All other witnesses reported attending class for some period during their childhood, a number of whom reported attending only prior to their admission to the Schools.

11.42 With little or no preparation for open employment and life outside the institution the initial experience of being discharged was described by the majority of witnesses as a shock. As noted previously, aftercare provision and follow-up, with the exception of job placement, was reported as minimal or non-existent for the majority of witnesses and those who had spent most of their lives in an institution and had no family contact reported severe difficulties adjusting to society when they were discharged.

I found it very difficult moving into a different society, I found it very, very hard. I was very shy, felt everybody was looking at me.... When I was 16 I got a job in a ... shop. I could not get used to farthings and 3-halfpence and things like that. They threw me out. ... I felt all the girls were laughing at me.... I was good for nothing at that stage.



Jobs I found very hard. I worked in Dublin for 3 years, the longest job I had. I had to work to pay my rent, when you're not living with family...I used to think everybody was looking at me. I used to get red in the face. Getting a job...(in a public service area)...I was looking and learning and listening to how people behaved and copying them. I wasn't asked questions, I was there on my own...I was in charge...I got confidence.

11.43 The pattern of emigration from Ireland to the UK seeking employment was a feature of witnesses' lives in the period, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. At the time of their hearing, 290 witnesses (37%) were living in the UK. Casual labour, factory and domestic work were commonly reported employment options in the lives of witnesses discharged up to mid-1970s both in Ireland and the UK. The following table shows the occupational status of witnesses on the basis of their main form of employment, as reported at the time of their hearing:

Table 48: Occupational Status of Witnesses – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools

Occupational status	Males	%	Females	%	Total witnesses	%
Semi-skilled or unskilled	298	72	262	69	560	71
Non-manual	29	7	56	15	85	11
Skilled manual	63	15	19	5	82	10
Professional	7	2	22	6	29	4
Managerial/technical	16	4	9	2	25	3
Unavailable	0	0	10	3	10	1
Total	413	100	378	100	791	100

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

11.44 One hundred and seventy (170) of the 791 male and female witnesses (21%) reported being placed directly into live-in jobs, including with farmers, shopkeepers, hotels, hospitals, and members of religious orders, when they were discharged from the School system. Many of those witnesses described being paid a minimal rate, sometimes not regularly or at all and were allowed little more freedom than they had in the School system. The employment placements were generally either in the vicinity of the institution from which they had been discharged or in Dublin. As reported previously, 27 witnesses reported being physically and sexually abused by their employers and by others in the context of their work setting in the years immediately following their discharge. In several instances the abuse was described as continuing over a

long period of time. The witnesses routinely reported that they felt powerless to protect themselves and stop the abuse.

11.45 Thirty eight (38) male witnesses reported being sent to work for farmers when they were discharged from a School. Thirteen (13) male witnesses reported being treated as family members and although they worked hard were happy to do so in exchange for the kindness they experienced. At the time of the hearings four witnesses were still living, or in regular contact, with the family they had been sent to many years previously. Less positive accounts were also heard of witnesses being '*treated like slaves*', made to sleep in out-houses, eat meals separately from the employer's family, sometimes outside the house, and were expected to wash in the yard or out-houses. Witnesses who had spent many years in an institution reported the experience of living and working with a family as alien and that they did not know how to behave or understand what was expected of them. A number reported that they worked hard but did not have an aptitude for farm work; others enjoyed the work to which they had become accustomed while in the Schools.

11.46 Twenty nine (29) male witnesses reported being placed by the School in trades; for seven of the witnesses these work placements developed into ongoing careers. The jobs were reported to draw on the trade skills acquired in the Industrial School. Tailoring was the most frequently reported trade, with 15 witness reports of being placed in jobs in the clothing industry. Nine (9) witnesses reported being placed in the shoemaking industry; five others reported being sent to work as bakers and carpenters.

11.47 Nine (9) male witnesses reported making careers in the music industry following their experience in the School bands. Some of the witnesses became professional musicians; others were music teachers or involved in related careers. Music was reported to be an important part of the lives of most of those witnesses and an acknowledged positive outcome of their experience in the institution.

I done a bit of music and a bit of folk singing in sessions, there was a lot of drink around too, then I done drugs. I overdosed...Then things came right, my head got clear and things came right in the music.

11.48 Seventy one (71) male witnesses joined either the Irish Defence Forces or overseas armies at some time during their life. Many witnesses described the Army as providing security, shelter and a structured regime in addition to career opportunities and the possibility of travel. Twenty-two (22) male witnesses had substantial and positive careers in the Army, 10 of whom spent the majority of their working lives there.

The Army was another way, a lot of the lads joined the Army. It was the same as...named School...but you got paid for it. You had the rules and regulations, you had punishment but you got paid.

11.49 Sixty one (61) male witnesses were unemployed at the time of their hearing, 46 of whom had been unemployed for more than 20 years.

11.50 One hundred and three (103) female witnesses (27%) reported being sent to work for families or religious congregations on a live-in basis when they were discharged from the Schools. Forty six (46) of these witnesses reported being placed in these positions without any prior discussion. As with the male witnesses, female witnesses had routinely never met their new 'employer' before the day they were collected, sent or brought to their new place of employment. Witnesses who were sent to work for religious congregations became live-in housekeepers or cleaners in hospitals, Schools, boarding schools, presbyteries, nursing homes and laundries. The majority of witnesses reported that these work placements were like an extension of their experience in

the Schools, with less abuse. The accounts of such placements were varied. Approximately a third of the witness reports were positive in that the families, nuns and clergy employing them were kind and treated the witnesses well. A number of witnesses reported that their employers encouraged them to socialise and, over time, helped them to pursue further education or training, for example doing commercial courses or nursing training. Fifteen (15) female witnesses reported maintaining contact with these initial employers up to the present day.

- 11.51** Another 163 female witnesses (43%) reported that following their discharge they found themselves jobs in domestic situations for the first couple of years. At least half of the female witnesses who were employed in domestic service in the early years after their discharge remained in similar occupations for the rest of their working lives, either on a live-in basis as priest's housekeepers, hospital domestics, nannies and housekeepers or as cooks, cleaners, laundry workers, seamstresses and care attendants. Many witnesses stated that they were trained primarily to clean and, as a result, have been much in demand as housekeepers and cleaners.
- 11.52** Female witnesses discharged since the 1970s increasingly reported being placed in clerical and other positions, for which some had received secretarial training in the School. Thirty two (32) female witnesses reported having trained as nurses, mainly in the UK. Those female witnesses who were not initially employed in domestic or clerical occupations reported being occupied in a variety of areas including a number who returned home and assisted their mothers in caring for younger brothers and sisters.
- 11.53** One hundred and ninety six (196) witnesses, 102 female and 94 male, described chaotic work lives; many were periodically employed but were unable to stay in the same job for long. The majority of the female witnesses who were casually employed reported working as housekeepers, waitresses, cleaners and factory workers, while the male witnesses in this category worked as construction workers, farm labourers, taxi drivers and factory workers. All cited their lack of education and poor literacy skills as impediments to a more stable work life.
- 11.54** Male and female witnesses also described the difficulty they experienced getting on with work colleagues and dealing with work place authority. Male witnesses reported that the lack of education, the effects of alcohol abuse, aggressive behaviour, lack of trust and poor self-esteem had a negative influence on their work lives. Female witnesses frequently reported that in addition to their lack of education, a fear of authority and of making mistakes led them to avoid positions of responsibility in the work place and deterred them from seeking promotion; a number of male witnesses also reported this experience. Many male and female witnesses said that their experiences in the School system left them with a tendency to be excessively anxious and suspicious, creating subsequent difficulties in both their work and home lives.

When I started work it was tough. If someone came in to the restroom I would run in to the loo and lock myself in, I was terrified in case they spoke to me....I feel so stupid at work,...they do...(record)... minutes and everybody takes turns...I was going to say to them "I'm not good at that" but I thought they'd ask "why?"

•

If anyone annoys me I start a row. I have to be on my own, I can't get on with people. I have done every job under the sun. I've worked hard but move a lot. It's hard to trust anyone and I was unpredictable.

•

In England I would love to have been on the buses ...(working on the buses).... But, I couldn't fill in forms.... Even when you went out with a boyfriend you thought you weren't good enough for him, you weren't good enough for anyone really. You were with friends but they were better than you. ... The girls that you were with you'd always be

afraid you'd let something slip, in case they'd say "oh she came from ...named School...". But in England there was no one watching you, no one knows anything about me. ...(I was)... always told by nuns "you are the rubbish of Ireland". ... In England nobody knows me....

11.55 Thirty one (31) male and female witnesses reported being unable to sustain regular employment as a result of serious mental health difficulties.

11.56 It is of note that 56 female witnesses were in non-manual occupations compared with 29 male witnesses. Twenty two (22) female witnesses and seven male witnesses reported having completed university degrees as mature students and were in different professional occupations. Twenty five (25) witnesses, 16 male and nine female, were employed in senior managerial or skilled technical occupations for which they had received specialised training.

I left here... (Ireland)... because of...(discrimination)...I was frustrated with Ireland. I said "to hell with this, I'm getting out of this country". I went to ...(university abroad)... I have never been unemployed... I put Ireland behind.

11.57 Eleven (11) witnesses, six male and five female, reported that they joined religious communities when they were discharged from the Schools. The majority of these witnesses reported they left the communities before completing their training.

11.58 Reports of long-term unemployment among male witnesses were associated with reports of time spent in prison. Fifty nine (59) male witnesses (14%) reported having spent time in prison in either Ireland or the UK, and a number in both jurisdictions, since their discharge from the School system. In most instances the first period of detention was within five years of being discharged, and this experience established a pattern followed for life for many of the witnesses. Larceny, public order offences, serious assault, grievous harm and other criminal offences were reasons given by a number of witnesses for their prison sentence. Three (3) male witnesses reported being charged with the sexual abuse of minors.

Accommodation

11.59 Most of the 413 male and 378 female witnesses reported stable current accommodation arrangements and almost half the witnesses reported owning their own home. Many witnesses described the importance of having a home to call their own and described the sense of security they felt on achieving this.

I had to work to buy my house, my house comes before everything, that's mine, no-one will take it off me...I will work all the hours until my mortgage is paid. That's what I learned in ...named School.... What I have is mine...I had no home for so long, I had nothing..., I worked a good bit of overtime to buy a house...I have my privacy and I have my independence, no-one will take that off me.

11.60 The accommodation circumstances reported by witnesses at the time of the hearing are shown in Table 49 below:

Table 49: Accommodation of Witnesses at Time of Hearing – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools

Accommodation	Males	%	Females	%	Total witnesses	%
Owner occupiers	163	39	184	49	347	44
Local authority/council housing	153	37	135	36	288	36
Private rented accommodation	41	10	31	8	72	9
With relatives	18	4	4	1	22	3
Sheltered housing	14	3	5	1	19	2
With friends	7	2	6	2	13	2
Hostel	3	1	2	1	5	1
Institution	4	1	0	0	4	1
Information not available	10	2	11	3	21	3
Total	413	100	378	(100)*	791	(100)*

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

*Some rounding up/down was applied

11.61 Accommodation referred to as sheltered housing included group homes and supported facilities in the community provided by social and mental health services. Accommodation described as institutional included psychiatric hospitals and prisons.

11.62 Homelessness was a reported feature in the earlier years following discharge of 22 of the male witnesses and 40 of the female witnesses who spoke to the Committee. A small number of male witnesses reported ongoing periodic homelessness in recent years.

I slept in down and out places where it was really cheap. ... I was thinking would I come back ...(to Ireland)... but you can't come back, you know nobody. I slept rough because I had nowhere to stay, I used to sleep in the park. I met ...named ex co-resident.... I got a job in ...named establishment... where all the boys used go. But, I had nowhere to stay and I used to be standing up nearly falling asleep during work. I got a place in ...named city... but we ...(former co-residents)... got thrown out of that because we couldn't pay. I then got a job as a labourer, it was a job, it was just there, nobody asked questions, you didn't have to fill a form up or anything. I was there for 12 years. ... I felt ashamed, I didn't want people to know who I was.

Health

11.63 Male and female witnesses provided information about their current physical and mental health status and wellbeing, either directly or in the context of discussing their adult life circumstances. Many witnesses reported multiple health concerns, currently and in the past. For the purposes of writing this Report, witnesses' health status was categorised as good, reasonable and poor based on the information witnesses provided either directly or indirectly about their past and current health history in the course of their hearings.

Physical health

11.64 The following table outlines the physical health status described by male and female witnesses at the time of their hearing:

Table 50: Current Physical Health Status – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools

Physical health status	Males	%	Females	%	Total witnesses	%
Good	163	39	131	35	294	37
Reasonable	148	36	170	45	318	40
Poor	101	24	77	20	178	23
Unavailable	1	(0)	0	0	1	(0)
Total	413	(100)*	378	100	791	100

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

*Some rounding up/down was applied

- 11.65** The information provided by 294 witnesses (37%), 163 male and 131 female, indicated that they enjoyed a good level of physical health and well-being, notwithstanding the fact that they may have some health problems currently or in the past. Three hundred and eighteen (318) witnesses (40%), 148 male and 170 female, described having reasonable physical health. The most common feature of this group of witnesses was that they reported having physical health problems either currently or in the past, which continued to have an impact on their lives. They generally regarded their physical health problems as being manageable and often age-related. There were 178 witnesses (23%), 101 male and 77 female, who gave a history of poor physical health. The fact that poor health was reported by 25% of male witnesses compared with 20% of female witnesses may be in part related to the older age profile of the male witnesses.
- 11.66** The most frequently reported physical health complaints for both male and female witnesses were cardio-vascular problems such as heart disease, angina and hypertension. One hundred and forty (140) witnesses (18%), 76 male and 64 female, reported various combinations of these conditions including a number who had suffered strokes or had heart surgery. Eighty nine (89) witnesses, 45 male and 44 female, described having gastric conditions including ulcers and gall bladder problems in addition to kidney and liver disorders. Seventy four (74) witnesses, 49 male and 25 female, reported respiratory problems of various kinds including asthma, emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Sixty seven (67) witnesses, 31 male and 36 female, reported suffering with different forms of arthritis and rheumatism all of which negatively affected their mobility and sense of well-being.
- 11.67** Certain health problems were more frequently reported by either male or female witnesses; for example 17 male witnesses, compared with three female witnesses, reported that their health problems were directly linked to their alcohol abuse. Thirteen (13) female witnesses reported having had hysterectomies and 10 also reported having osteoporosis. Eleven (11) male witnesses reported having hip, knee or other joint replacements and operations compared with four female witnesses. Twenty three (23) witnesses, eight male and 15 female, reported being diagnosed and treated for cancer. Twenty two (22) male witnesses reported being treated for diabetes and gout, compared with seven reports by female witnesses of treatment for diabetes. Eleven (11) witnesses, five male and six female, reported being treated for tuberculosis as adults.
- 11.68** Three (3) male witnesses reported being HIV positive and a further three male witnesses reported having hepatitis.
- 11.69** Finally, the Committee heard 60 reports of multiple health problems from female witnesses compared with 47 similar reports from male witnesses and male witnesses generally reported being less inclined to seek medical advice than female witnesses.

Mental health

- 11.70** The following table provides an overview of the mental health status of the witnesses as described by them, either directly or indirectly, in the course of their hearings. Good mental health was less frequently reported than good physical health:

Table 51: Current Mental Health Status – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools

Mental health status	Males	%	Females	%	Total witnesses	%
Good	117	28	74	20	191	24
Reasonable	183	44	181	48	364	46
Poor	112	27	123	33	235	30
Unavailable	1	(0)	0	0	1	(0)
Total	413	(100)*	378	(100)*	791	100

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

*Some rounding up/down was applied

- 11.71** One hundred and ninety one (191) witnesses (24%), 117 male and 74 female, described good mental health and well-being. These witnesses reported being reasonably happy and did not feel that their personal or social relationships were markedly affected by emotional or psychological difficulties. There was a notably larger proportion of male than female witnesses who reported good mental health, 28% compared with 20%.
- 11.72** Poor mental health was indicated by a constellation of current and debilitating mental health concerns including suicidal thoughts and attempts, depression, alcohol and substance abuse, eating disorders and treatments including psychiatric admission, medication and counselling. One witness gave the following description of the enduring effects of his childhood abuse;
- I used to sleep rough and I'd have to ask a garage "Can I clean your cars?" I tried to get back my dignity that I lost, I can't get it back. They broke me, they did...the problem is still there when you wake up. I'm on tablets for the best part of my life, I'm in and out of hospitals, I took overdoses, I tried to hang myself. All the pressure builds up. I'm kinda seeing psychiatrists all my life. Doctor...named psychiatrist...is very good, I talk to her. Counselling was very disturbing for me. I couldn't take any more of it ...I should not have been on medication all my life. There's times I sat in my bedroom for 2 to 3 days without coming out.*
- 11.73** Substance abuse was reported by 22 witnesses, 12 male and 10 female, who reported poor mental health and 10 other witnesses of this group, four male and six female, reported ongoing eating disorders.
- 11.74** Witnesses described as having reasonable mental health were differentiated from those who were described as having poor mental health by the degree to which they reported their lives to be currently affected by depression, alcohol and substance abuse. Many remarked that memories of past trauma were not easily forgotten and that they abused alcohol at times in their attempts to cope with painful memories and intrusive thoughts. A number of witnesses reported being assisted by mental health and other support services during stressful periods of their lives. Mental health indicators are shown in the following table:

Table 52: Mental Health Indicators in Adult Life – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools

Mental health indicators*	Reports by male witnesses	%	Reports by female witnesses	%	Total witness reports	%
Psychiatric admission	86	21	84	22	170	21
Suicidal thoughts & attempts	197	48	210	56	407	51
Counselling required	204	49	217	57	421	53
Alcohol abuse	217	53	90	24	307	39
Substance abuse	59	14	31	8	90	11

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

*Witnesses could report more than one mental health indicator

Alcohol, substance abuse and self-harm

11.75 Alcohol abuse was reported to be a dominant feature in the lives of 307 witnesses (39%), 217 male and 90 female. One hundred and thirty eight (138) of those witnesses reported a history of alcohol abuse combined with suicidal thoughts and attempts. Of the 86 male witnesses who reported having been admitted to psychiatric hospitals for treatment, 63 also reported a history of alcohol abuse. There were 84 female witnesses who reported having been admitted to psychiatric hospitals for treatment, 35 of whom reported a history of alcohol abuse.

By 17 or 18 I was an alcoholic. It ...(alcohol)... blocked it off for me, the orphanage ... (Industrial School).... I've had 5 operations on my arm and the doctors say it is muscle damage from the beatings, the one with a brush. I have 5 scars ...(scars on arm shown to Commissioners).... I have been in mental hospitals and tried to kill myself. The psychiatrist asked me what am I keeping in my head? I said "I can't tell, you wouldn't believe it". You would be afraid to tell, the fear is still there. I am now in counselling and it took me an awful long time to say it ...(to describe abuse)...., a long time.



I went to England, I think I was about 34, not working, just drifting. I had a job on building sites but lost that through the drinking. I went to a lot of places for the drink, drying out, I'm still attending group therapy. I'm not working at all, I'm on disability because of health problems. I just drink away the day...The doctor says it has to do with what happened...(childhood abuse).

11.76 Substance abuse was a less common feature, with 90 witnesses (11%), 59 male and 31 female, reporting that either they were using or had used illegal substances or abused over-the-counter or prescription medication. Reports of substance abuse, both legal and illegal, were strongly associated with reports of alcohol abuse, in 47 instances for male witnesses and 22 instances among female witnesses.

11.77 Four hundred and seven (407) witnesses (51%) spoke about their own suicidal thoughts and/or attempts and the death by suicide of their friends and siblings. Forty three (43) of the 407 witnesses who reported a history of suicidal thoughts also reported having made one or more suicide attempts. 'I tried to commit suicide a few times ... terrible depressed, no one knows about it.' A further five witnesses, three male and two female, reported episodes of ongoing self-harm. One witness stated that 17 of the 39 co-residents in his class photograph had committed suicide over the years since they were discharged. Many others said they were prompted to speak to the Committee on behalf of a sibling or friend who had died by suicide and who shared the witnesses' childhood experience of abuse in institutions.

Impairments

11.78 Fifty one (51) witnesses, 29 male and 22 female, who gave evidence of abuse in Schools reported having disabilities that affected their overall health and impaired their functioning as follows:

- Thirty one (31) witnesses, 15 male and 16 female, were hearing impaired.
- Twelve (12) witnesses, seven male and five female, were physically impaired.
- Nine (9) witnesses, six male and three female, were visually impaired.

11.79 Many of the witnesses with impairments stated that their respective difficulties were the result of either illnesses or injuries in childhood that were neglected while residents in the Schools. Reported physical impairments included partial limb amputation, kidney damage and back injuries that, in one instance, necessitated the use of a wheelchair. Seven witnesses presented medical reports at their hearing that suggested their physical impairments were the result of childhood trauma. Other witnesses gave accounts of receiving medical treatments since they were discharged, including surgery, for conditions that they believed were associated with childhood abuse.

I was an outcast because I couldn't read or write, I couldn't read because I couldn't see the blackboard. I was always put back to the back of the class. I could never understand why they did not pick up that I had very bad sight. When I went to ...named city... I asked for my eyes to be tested I went to the eye and ear hospital... and the doctor said to me "where were you until now?" and I told him and he said "they have an awful lot to answer for".

•

I have discovered ... from the files, from a year old the ear was weeping ... no treatment. I have a perforated eardrum. When I was an adult it started weeping. They brought me into hospital and they have tried to dry it up, they brought me down to theatre but the doctor said the wall is broken down and surgery could cause more damage. It is constantly at me. ... It drives me scatty ... things annoy me. I don't know where that came from, whether it is from being slapped all the time.

Effects on adult life

11.80 Most witnesses reported life-long negative effects and damaging physical, psychological, and social consequences of childhood abuse in Schools. The legacy of alcohol abuse, depression, physical and verbal aggression, anger, lack of trust, and social isolation was evident in the accounts provided by many witnesses about their adult lives.

11.81 The negative effects reported are not mutually exclusive and were not prioritised by witnesses, who could report more than one effect. Table 53 lists the difficulties experienced by the 413 male and 378 female witnesses in their adult lives, in order of frequency reported.

Table 53: Reported Effects on Adult Life – Male and Female Witnesses Industrial and Reformatory Schools

Male witnesses			Female witnesses		
Effects on adult life*	Number of reports	% of male witnesses	Effects on adult life*	Number of reports	% of female witnesses
Lack of trust	233	56	Lack of self-worth	250	66
Loner	224	54	Lack of trust	242	64
Alcohol abuse	213	52	Counselling required	217	57
Anger	207	50	Suicidal feelings or attempt	210	56
Counselling required	191	46	Abuse not easily forgotten	180	48
Lack of self-worth	157	38	Anxious and fearful	172	46
Abuse not easily forgotten	155	38	Feeling isolated	171	45
Depression	152	37	Loner	159	42
Suicidal feelings or attempt	151	37	Depression	140	37
Feeling isolated	145	35	Anger	136	36
Aggressive behaviour – Physical	126	31	Feeling different to others	135	36
Nightmares	121	29	Nightmares	121	32
Aggressive behaviour – Verbal	116	28	Tearfulness	120	32
Withdrawal	116	28	Withdrawal	118	31
Unable to show feelings to partner	107	26	Overprotective of children	117	31
Feeling different to others	102	25	Post-traumatic effect	116	31
Unable to settle	102	25	Sleep disturbance	101	27
Post-traumatic effect	93	23	Unable to show feelings to children	92	24
Sleep disturbance	84	20	Alcohol abuse	90	24
Unable to show feelings to children	83	20	Feelings related to being a victim	81	21
Feelings related to being a victim	75	18	Unable to show feelings to partner	75	20

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

n = 413 men and 378 women

*Witnesses could report more than one effect. Answers under 18% not shown

11.82 The majority of witnesses reported multiple effects, as Table 53 indicates. A high percentage of both male (56%) and female (64%) witnesses reported being unable to trust others. There were some gender differences between the negative effects most frequently reported. For instance 50% or more male witnesses reported abusing alcohol, feeling angry, and being a loner. By contrast 56% or more female witnesses reported experiencing lack of self-worth and

contemplating or attempting suicide and 24% reported abusing alcohol. In addition to the above-mentioned negative effects on their health and personality, 408 witnesses (52%) reported that they attended counselling either currently or in the past, and many commented on the beneficial effects they had experienced. A large number of these witnesses reported attending counselling through the National Counselling Service, which was established by the Government in 2000. The service was committed to working with adults who had been abused as children in Irish institutions.

I won't even go into the house some days. I was a right bastard ...(as a husband).... She'd ...(witness's spouse)... find me facing the wall, she'd wake up in the morning and find me standing facing the wall ...crying.... It's smashing to talk about it and the counselling is free.

•

I've had a stable life, but male pride stops me from saying I'm depressed. I get down, am a loner, don't mix, have been on the drink in the past, but counselling has helped.

•

You can knock the walls down but can't ease it from ...distressed.... I carried it in the pit of my stomach all my life.

11.83 Three hundred and twenty seven (327) witnesses (41%) gave evidence that the memories of the abuse they experienced remain with them to the present day.

I wish I could get rid of all this, it's in my head all the time. I used to have terrible nightmares, the only one I could see was this nun who used to hit me all the time. I did take an overdose, I did try to end my life. I was very confused. I never knew who I was.

•

He ...(Br X)... haunts me, I can smell him, I can see his gait ... not a week goes by, but I think of him.

•

The sexual abuse ... that's irreversible. It's the sexual behaviour that separates me from my family. I can't work, I can't go out, I'm nothing. Every day I want to kill myself.

•

I was not able to go to ...(children's)... parent-teacher meeting because I didn't feel I could talk ...crying.... I didn't think I was able to speak like another ...(parent).... I wasn't like another because of the way I was reared. I often cried when they were at school and he ...(husband)... at work.... I was afraid that if I told people, I was afraid I'd be locked up. I was afraid they would send me away. I always feel sad.

•

The other thing is, not being able to read and write was my downfall.... I didn't tell my family until about 2 years ago. ... It can be very lonely ... even at Christmas time with my family there. I get lonely like remembering all the times I was on my own. I do have to go out for walks, I have to be on my own.

•

Thinking about it after I often wondered had we a right to complain, but we had no one to complain to.

•

Loss is the most significant word in my life. I lost my mother ... my childhood, my education and nothing will ever get them back.

- 11.84** Two hundred and nine (209) witnesses (26%) reported suffering from the effects of trauma and described themselves as constantly vigilant and anxious, having disrupted sleep and nightmares with little respite.

I was going to take my own life, one of the other girls did, she took her own life. You are suspicious ... all the time, it's always there, it will be there 'til the day I die.... You can't put the clock back.... I'd like to have a childhood but I never knew what a childhood was.... That will be a nightmare 'til the day I die, I will bring that to the grave with me.

•

I hate anyone standing behind me, I still feel as if someone is going to go for me because I was beaten around the head a lot.

•

I was terrified with the beating I got. My old mind went a bit that day I'd say. To me, I was never the same young fellow after that, I wasn't the same young fella that went home. I wasn't mental but when I went home I'd be looking under the bed and like that. I couldn't be happy for years and years. I was squeamish and frightened everywhere I went.

- 11.85** One hundred and eight two (182) witnesses (23%) described themselves as having difficulty expressing affection or emotion to their partner and 175 witnesses (22%) stated that they had difficulty showing feelings to their children.

- 11.86** There were distinct differences between the reports of male and female witnesses regarding aggressive behaviour. One hundred and twenty six (126) male witnesses (31%) reported being physically aggressive compared with 30 female witnesses (8%) who reported being physically aggressive to others.

I can be very aggressive, my children seen it, I should never have been a father. I can't hug or show affection or anything.

•

I used to smack them ...(own children)... as kids, thinking it was the right thing to do, we were beaten all the time. I was bringing my kids up the way I was brought up. I was hit all the time.

- 11.87** Two hundred and thirty four (234) witnesses (30%) described themselves as withdrawn and also stated that they had difficulty relating socially and felt different to others. Many described feeling isolated, frequently moving home, and feeling generally disconnected.

You had to survive on your own, always on your own. There was nobody to back you up. It's been like that and I will die like that because I can't change what happened. I can't change my personality and the way I am. It's been like somebody put you in a prison and you are expected to change when you come out. Unless there are services there to help you, and there's nothing, you are not going to change. You are still going to have the mentality of being a loner and keeping people at a distance and being very anti-establishment.

•

I never had the equipment to survive any type of close relationship. I never had the ability to survive any close relationship, I couldn't give enough of myself.

- 11.88** Two hundred and forty two (242) witnesses (31%) reported experiencing nightmares and associated sleep disturbance.

It stays with you, it sticks in my mind. You still have the nightmares, they still go on, they haven't left me yet, I still wake up in the middle of the night... You went to bed at night you couldn't move or couldn't breathe ...(not knowing when)... you would be hit with the hand brush.

11.89 Sixty seven (67) witnesses, 42 male and 25 female, reported problems with substance abuse. Thirty nine (39) witnesses, 10 male and 29 female, reported having eating disorders.

11.90 There were a range of other adverse effects reported in smaller numbers, by both male and female witnesses. For example, between 75 and 150 male and female witnesses reported significant difficulties with parenting, sexual relationships, and feelings of being powerless and disadvantaged.

When I went home I couldn't communicate with anyone. I couldn't sit at the table with the family. I used to eat with the chickens out the back, I did not know how to get on with people, I didn't know what to do.... I only knew beatings. I went off to England, they told me they didn't want me either, never to come back. I ended up inside ...(in prison)... many times, and tried to hang myself.

11.91 A small number of witnesses, both male and female, reported having difficulties as adults establishing their personal and family identity. The evidence reported to the Committee included accounts of having no official record of their birth place or birth certificate, names on birth certificates were found to have been changed by School staff, and requests for clarification of personal and family identity were withheld by religious and State authorities. The witnesses presented correspondence at their hearing that they reported having obtained under the Freedom of Information legislation in relation to these matters. Witnesses reported that they experienced difficulties when applying for passports or pensions in later life and when seeking to trace their parents or family of origin.

I had been searching for her ...(mother)... and searching for her, it was my one wish in life to find her. I have done so much trying to search for my family. I had been trying to trace her, that was the sad part ... there was a brick wall every time. I have no certificate, this is what really got me.

11.92 A small number of witnesses described being contacted by representatives of the Schools or religious organisations by telephone, personal visits, and through arranged meetings in recent years. Some witnesses reported feeling threatened and intimidated by such contact that they described as being for the purpose of character references for forthcoming court proceedings, offers of compensation and apologies for past abuse. One male witness described a chance encounter in the following account:

I met Br ...X.... I saw this man and he said "I know you", he said "I remember you, you were a Mass server, you were quite good in school", and he said "I gave you a terrible time in school. I am so sorry, I gave you an awful time and I'm sorry for all the times I hit you, I beat you around the place". ...distressed and crying... I could have killed him, I felt like killing him, he said "I am so sorry. If it's any consolation to you, I am sorry for what the School done". I said nothing to him.

11.93 Thirty eight (38) witnesses, 28 male and 10 female, described being thankful for the good lives they have now. Nineteen (19) witnesses, 15 male and four female, reported they experienced no long-term negative effects as a result of their childhood experiences in Schools. Many of these witnesses described their good fortune to have met people who helped them when they left the Schools. Others described the abuse they experienced as an isolated component of their time in institutional care, aspects of which had been positive.

Religion now practised

- 11.94** Two hundred and ninety three (293) witnesses (37%), 156 male and 137 female, stated that they are practising Catholics and 11 others are practising members of different religious denominations.
- 11.95** Many witnesses described themselves as 'lapsed Catholics' who had disengaged from the Church, but whose belief in God was unchanged. Witnesses described the continuing anxiety associated with encountering members of religious congregations. *'I cannot serve a nun now where I work they ...(colleagues)... call it "nun alert".'* Others reported they avoided entering buildings associated with religious congregations, such as churches and schools, for fear of reactivating memories of their abusive experiences.
- 11.96** One hundred and twenty (120) witnesses (15%), 62 male and 58 female, described themselves as having completely rejected the idea of religion. Sixty three (63) witnesses did not comment on their religious practise.
- 11.97** The following chapters present the evidence of 259 witnesses who reported abuse in 'Other Institutions' including 36 witnesses who also reported abuse in Industrial and Reformatory Schools.

