

JOINT STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE, THE ARCHBISHOPS OF ARMAGH, THE ASSOCIATION OF LEADERS OF MISSIONARIES AND RELIGIOUS IN IRELAND, AND BARNARDO'S

First Minister Arlene Foster, Junior Minister Declan Kearney, Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop John McDowell, and representatives from Barnardo's and the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI) have met to discuss the remaining Hart recommendations for victims and survivors of historical institutional abuse.

The meeting discussed a range of issues including progress on redress payments and provision of services for victims and survivors, the centrality of the views of victims to an official apology, and the principles to underpin forthcoming discussions on contributions by the Institutions involved in the ownership and governance of children's homes to the costs of redress.

All agreed that acceptance of responsibility and recognition of the harm done were central to the way forward. Historical institutional abuse should never have happened. Trust was breached and significant trauma caused to innocent victims.

Those present committed to work together to address the apology, memorial, and contributions to the costs of redress in a way that will put fairness at its core and will meet the needs of victims and survivors.

It was agreed that a roundtable meeting with relevant Institutions will take place in the coming weeks when the principles underpinning discussions on contributions for all concerned will be addressed before individual discussions with each Institution.

The Executive Office will also continue to engage with the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse and with the Institutions to ensure that a timely and appropriate joint official apology is made to victims and survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The recommendations of the Hart Inquiry are available on the Inquiry's website at www.hiainquiry.org
2. The Archbishops of Armagh participated in the meeting as senior members of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland and the Church of Ireland respectively. AMRI participated as the membership and representative body which promotes active collaboration between religious institutions within the Catholic Church. The provision of the children's homes covered by the terms of reference of the Hart Inquiry was the responsibility of institutions which are independent bodies with their own governance structures, in both the voluntary and public sectors.