

Tim Losty
Office of the First Minister & Deputy First Minister
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Dear Tim

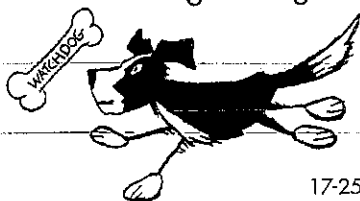
Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry

I am pleased that the Northern Ireland Executive has made a commitment to holding an inquiry into historical institutional abuse and that the interdepartmental taskforce has been established to take this forward. It was helpful to meet with you and Linsey Farrell on 18 March 2011 to discuss the work of the taskforce in detail and I hope you found the information we provided following the meeting useful.

The inquiry is not only of great importance to those who have experienced institutional abuse and their families, but to society across Northern Ireland as a whole. This difficult and distressing issue has been brought to my attention on a number of occasions and I have also had the privilege of hearing directly from victims and survivors.

The inquiry holds particular interest for my Office due to my statutory remit to keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law, practice and services relating to children and young people. As you are aware, my legislation also allows the powers of the Commissioner to apply, where I am of the view that this is appropriate, to an adult in relation to events and actions that took place when they were a child under article 3(7) (a) (b).

My primary concern in relation to historical institutional abuse is that lessons about the failures and weaknesses in the protection of children are learned and rigorously considered in the context of contemporary safeguarding arrangements. I am acutely aware that inquiries of this nature conducted in other jurisdictions, such as the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse in the Republic of Ireland and the Historical Abuse Systemic Review in Scotland have had significant implications for current safeguarding arrangements for children and young people. As discussed during our



meeting, I am of the view that the inquiry must ensure that due regard is given to this group must
learning in order to both effectively address the wrongs of the past and ensure that we make the
protect the children of today and tomorrow.

I would request that I am kept fully informed of developments as the taskforce group must
completes this important work and an inquiry process is established.

Yours sincerely



Patricia Lewsley
Commissioner