From: Mark Vincent Healy <markvincenthealy@gmail.com>
Date: Wednesday 8 March 2023 at 02:58
To: Emma O'Kelly RTÉ, Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD, "Newcombe, Derek"
Cc: An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar TD, Tánaiste, Micheal Martin TD, "Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment", Eamon Ryan TD, Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee TD, Minister for Children & Youth Affairs, Roderic O'Gorman TD, Minister for Finance, Pascal Donohoe TD, Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD, Simon Coveney TD, "President Michael D. Higgins", Michael McGrath TD, Members of the Oireachtas, Barry Andrews MEP, Ciarán Cuffe MEP Clare Daly MEP, Frances Fitzgerald MEP, Luke 'Ming' Flanagan MEP, Chris MacManus MEP, Mairead McGuinness MEP, Maria Walsh MEP, Deirdre Clune MEP, Billy Kelleher MEP, Seán Kelly MEP, Grace O'Sullivan MEP, Mick Wallace MEP, Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo - Papal Nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Eamon Martin Office - President IEC, Archbishop Dermot Farrell - Vice-President IEC, Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly - Episcopal Secretary IEC, Bishop John Fleming - Finance Secretary IEC, "Fr Martin Kelly, Provincial CSSp - AMRI Chair", Archbishop Diarmuid Martin
Subject: 230307 - Minister announces scoping inquiry into historical abuse in schools - https://bit.ly/3F7oodA

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Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD, Reference: DOT-TM-14827-2022
Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD, Reference: DES-CU-04237-2022
Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee TD, Reference: DJE-MO-10586-2022

230305 - Commission to Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in Primary and Post-Primary Schools in Ireland - https://bit.ly/3yd7shL
230306 - Commission to Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in Primary and Post-Primary Schools in Ireland - https://bit.ly/3lVloSz

Wednesday, 8 March 2023

Dear Emma, Minister for Education, Taoiseach and Tánaiste, and all addressed,

I hope you are well, Emma. It's been a while since I last met you in a protest I supported which was taken by the Creagh Lane lads at the gates of Leinster House where they met with the Minister for Education, Ms Norma Foley TD.

Here's a photo reminder taken by me on 9th September 2020 of the lads. Like the Creagh Lane lads my two abusers were first time abusers with no possibility of proving a 'prior complaint', only the Creagh Lane lads received state acknowledgement and reparation established in the Louise O'Keeffe case at the European Court of Human Rights, I did not, despite also having a proven criminal conviction of one of my abusers.



Minister Norma Foley and Creagh Lane Action Group at Dáil Eireann | Photo: Mark Vincent Healy

Call for a National Inquiry

The call for the national inquiry which I issued on national television on the 8th November 2022, RTÉ Prime Time: https://bit.ly/3UH8dsQ, will hopefully delve into the 'culture' which allowed the appallingly high level of systemic child sexual abuse in our schooling system by the religious in Ireland. The State played its part too in this, having failed to implement any child welfare policy to address the known level of child sexual abuse before 1991 in primary schools covering children from the age of 7 to 11, and before 1992 in post-primary schools covering children aged 11 to 17 prior to beginning third level or university.

It is regrettable that RTÉ never engaged with me on my work and success in this on behalf of countless survivors in work spanning two decades nearly.

This announcement today is painful. It's very, very painful.

I note all the ministerial and public press statement by the department where not word of it was written or authored by survivors.

There is a big disconnect with calling this 'scoping inquiry' and process 'survivor-led'. It is in very bad English calling it a 'scoping inquiry'. It's a 'scoping exercise' largely convened to assuage the fears of the department of education's exposure to reparations and support needed for survivors.

The 'terms of reference' announced today are for the 'scoping exercise' but are jumbled with people's expectation and misread in a way where they might be thought of as the national inquiry's 'terms of reference'. They are not. The national inquiry's 'terms of reference' are to come after the 'scoping exercise' with all the dangers not highlighted in carrying it out. It's a muddle and it is dangerous. It is apparently inducing a sense of hope where in fact it is a major delay and clear indication that the Department of Education, which failed so many children over the first seven decades of the state, 1922 to 1992, now gets to run the show into its own 'inquiry'. The obvious conflict of interests could not be more glaring, and there is not so much as an intelligent observation or comment of it. But no one asks those of us who do know.

News - Minister announces scoping inquiry into historical abuse in schools - https://bit.ly/3F7oodA

This government could not move any slower which intensifies the suffering of the victims of child sexual abuse in schools in Ireland. I think the terminology used is well crafted to misrepresent and mislead.

The announcement is a 'scoping exercise' announced as a 'scoping inquiry'. It's the 'scoping' part of the 'inquiry' announced last November and December by the Taoiseach and Tánaiste.

Basically, the government is saying that they need to know the 'numbers'.

This fear of the government to know the 'numbers' could have started as an assessment in November last, rather than take four months since this recent resurgent scandal broke, with an estimated eight months required to get the answer following today's announcement.

Any and all engagement with survivors is not something to pursue iteratively to assuage the government's fear of 'numbers'. An engagement process is fraught with hurt, pain, suffering, retriggering trauma, despair, anxiety and a call for expediency that must reduce the extreme distress invariably experienced by survivors. There has been no consultation with survivors in the designing and defining of any of this. It's a facsimile of an earlier attempt by the department to establish numbers in a redress consultation process which was a cause of enormous distrust and distress. No details have been worked out with survivors with the knowledge and experience required in engaging with survivors. Evidently, nothing has been learnt and I am appalled by the cavalier attitude taken with the lives of survivors in a process that requires far more sensitive planning and execution.

You want a survivor-led imprimatur on this then include survivor input at every stage in every aspect of what you wish to do. Otherwise stop using the term to describe an inquiry or any part, phase, step or strand of it as a 'survivor-led' inquiry. Clearly and evidently, it is no such thing, and the pretence must stop now, at the get-go.

It will take one draining year to assuage the government's panic and fear of the scale of child sexual abuse, to just assess the scale of this problem, before actually starting an 'inquiry' and issuing the 'terms of reference' for it.

This is an appalling announcement to establish 'numbers', where survivors will wake up to what's actually in play and begin to get mightily angry about it, where time is just not on their side.

This pathway will make this a very protracted process, and drive many a survivor insane. Survivors would never define and design an inquiry this way, and it is injurious and insulting to therefore label it a 'survivor-led' process.

Aged 84, 82 and 74, there is little time to delay a year to get some 'ballpark on numbers' with no tangible benefit announced.

The two-year window on the second Ex Gratia Payment Scheme (https://bit.ly/3Yv4MH3) is closing on 20 July 2023 and any hope of further reparations possibly closed for the duration of this 'inquiry', defined and designed by the Department of Education which is supposed to be scrutinised by said 'inquiry'. They will hardly encourage any 'terms of reference' in such an inquiry that survivors would want included.

I am preparing a third letter following those of 5 and 6 March 2023 directly to the Minister for Education, Ms Norma Foley. I must send it to you when it's done. I was to have it finished on the 7 March but events clearly have taken over where I have been working through a timeline on yesterday, wondering how I was only made aware of the 'scoping exercise' announcement at the very last minute on the RTÉ News on One at 13:15 or so. Apparently, other survivors knew and were actually engaged for comment but I knew nothing. I'm a 63 year old carer of the elderly, and have to take my time in my want and need to engage on behalf of survivors of child sexual abuse for nearly two decades now. My campaigning and dedication to survivors is well known and I have become an authority, particularly where the Spiritans are involved. Interestingly, I was only advising a survivor of the Presentation Brothers this afternoon in my full time work for survivors.

A final point, the announcement by RTÉ shows that the minister appears to restrict the proposed inquiry by the Department of Education on the Department of Education to focus on the Catholic religious only. Is this yet again another discriminatory act by the government to exclude children abuse in other faith schools or secular schools? I object to any semblance of the government by the government to deny or discriminate regarding justice to all children failed by the Irish State through its enforced schooling system established under the School Attendance Act, 1926 and all its subsequent iterations.

I trust you and yours are all well Emma.

Yours sincerely,

Mark-Vincent Healy



Mark-Vincent Healy - Marc Uinseann ÓhÉalaighthe
Survivor Campaigner seeking 'Rescue Services' and 'Safe Space Provisioning' for survivors of clerical child sexual abuse
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CCSA Report on C.S.Sp. by Mark Vincent Healy - https://bit.ly/2Oobdhi - published 4th September 2012
Here are some of my media involvements during the Pope's Visit in August 2018 – CNN | Al Jazeera | Washington Post | BBC | ABC Australia | CTA Canada | NCR | Deutche Welle | Irish Independent | Irish Times | Irish Examiner | BishopsAccountability.org |Rete L'Abuso Italy | etc