



Oifig an Aire Oideachais agus Scileanna
Office of the Minister for Education and Skills

Mr Joe Costello, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

17 June, 2011

Dear Joe,

Further to our meeting on 24th May, 2011 with representatives of the Bethany Survivor's Group, I have reviewed the papers provided by Mr Niall Meehan together with the papers held in my Department, in relation to Bethany Home.

Clearly, the representatives continue to be deeply affected by their experiences, even after all of these years. As promised at our meeting, I have had the papers on the matter reviewed and the material provided by Mr Niall Meehan examined.

The Group perceive that the exclusion of the Bethany Home from the redress scheme was on religious grounds, however the religious ethos of an institution was not a criterion for inclusion within the Residential Institutions Redress Scheme. While catholic religious orders ran the majority of specified institutions, others were either run by organisations having a protestant ethos or run on a non-denominational basis.

The research undertaken revealed that the Home was certified in 1945 as a place of detention under the Children Act, 1908. In this regard, the Department of Justice and Equality has advised that it has not received any allegations of abuse from any female committed to the Home pursuant to the 1908 Act and that it would be happy to deal with any such cases on an individual basis.

As you are aware, the inclusion of the Bethany Home was previously considered and not included within the Redress Scheme, on the basis that it

did not come within the scope of the Scheme as it operated as a mother and baby home.

Following the publication of the Ryan Report, there were a range of requests and demands for the scheme to be extended, including a request for the Bethany Home to be included on the basis that it operated as a children's home. However, the Government of the time decided against the inclusion of any further institutions within the scheme.

The redress scheme was introduced as an exceptional measure to address a very particular circumstance. Specifically, the scheme was designed to deal with abuse in a range of residential institutions for which public bodies had responsibility. The decision not to extend the scheme has meant the exclusion of a range of institutions which could have been considered for inclusion.

I have considered the points made at the meeting and have had the papers submitted reviewed. Having taken all the circumstances into account, I regret that I have found no basis to revisit this decision.

I am conscious that, as a long-term advocate on behalf of the Group, my decision will come as a disappointment to you. I want to assure you that my decision has been based on serious reflection and careful consideration of the issues raised at our meeting.

I have enclosed a copy of my reply to Mr Derek Linster for your information.

Yours sincerely,



Ruairí Quinn, T.D.,

Minister for Education and Skills.