

Press Release — Cost of Child Abuse Inquiry and Redress

The Comptroller and Auditor General's special report on the cost of the child abuse inquiry and redress has been presented to the Houses of the Oireachtas today, 9 March 2017.

Main Findings

The work of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse and of the Redress Board is largely complete. Costs to the end of 2015 of the child abuse inquiry and redress are an estimated €1.5 billion. Both the cost to the State and the time required to bring the process to a conclusion have hugely exceeded original estimates.

Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse

The Commission's work cost an estimated €82 million – the Department of Education and Skills initially forecast the cost at €2.5 million.

The final report of the Commission, often referred to as the Ryan report, was published in May 2009.

Redress Scheme

The redress scheme accounts for the largest element of the costs, at an estimated €1.25 billion. The original forecast cost of the scheme was €250 million.

By the end of 2015, awards totalling €970 million had been made to 15,579 claimants – an average award of €62,250. 85% of the awards were at or below a level of €100,000 per person. The highest award made was €300,000.

By 31 December 2015, the Redress Board had approved legal cost payments of €192.9 million to 991 legal firms in respect of 15,345 applications. 17 legal firms were paid between €1 million and €5 million each and seven firms were paid amounts between €5 million and €19 million each.

Other Supports

Outside of the redress scheme, other supports have been put in place to assist the former residents of the institutions. The overall spend on health, housing, educational and counselling services is estimated at €176 million. Since 2013, the Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Board, better known as Caranua, provides support services to survivors from cash contributed by the religious congregations following the publication of the Ryan report in 2009.

Contributions from Religious Congregations

Government policy was to pursue the sharing of the cost of redress on a 50:50 basis with the religious congregations. This would require the congregations to contribute €760 million. To date, the congregations have offered the equivalent to about 23% of the overall cost. Contributions received from the congregations up to the end of 2015 represent about 13% of the cost.

An indemnity agreement was signed in 2002 between the State and 18 religious congregations, who agreed to contribute to the costs of redress by transferring property, cash and other resources totalling €128 million, of which €21 million remains to be transferred to the State at the end of 2015.

Following the publication of the Ryan Report in 2009, the congregations offered additional cash and property valued at €353 million. This combined offer was revised to €226 million in September 2015. Six years after the publication of the Ryan report, only €85 million (38%) of the €226 million offer has been received by the State.

Redress Outcomes and Lessons Learned

A look-back evaluation of the redress scheme has not occurred and no provision was made in legislation for such a review to be undertaken by the Redress Board.

As the redress scheme and Commission draw to a close, an evaluation of both would be useful. This should identify lessons learned and improvements which can be applied to any future redress schemes and/or commissions of inquiry.

Notes for Editors

The full text of the Comptroller and Auditor General's report is available [here](#).

The report was finalised on 16 December 2016 and sent to the Minister for Education and Skills on 9 January 2017. The Minister is required to ensure that the report is laid before Dáil Éireann within three months of receiving it.

The Comptroller and Auditor General is an independent constitutional officer with responsibility for the audit of public funds. He reports to Dáil Éireann.

Enquiries about the report should be directed to Maureen Mulligan at (01) 863 8665 or at Maureen_Mulligan@audgen.irlgov.ie.