

PE1351/U

18th March 2012

Dear Scottish Petitions Committee members,

We appreciate and welcome The Scottish Petitions Committee continued interest and input into these historical abuse issues.

We would like to thank the Scottish Government for recently agreeing to engage and participate in the forthcoming Interaction(s) being proposed by the Scottish Human Rights Commission. We welcome also the Scottish Government's commitment to establish a National Confidential Forum.

Quarriers recent engagement with their victim-survivors has been appreciated and welcomed. FBGA wish to continue further this dialogue of rapprochement and reconciliation in the Interaction(s) with Quarriers in seeking an equitable resolution for those former Quarriers residents we represent.

The proposed SHRC Interaction(s) is a step in the right direction in our view. As this process will hopefully allow stakeholders with a direct interest in the processes and outcomes, a process and format to raise issues and engage directly with all the parties. All the parties and organisations will hopefully take the opportunity to engage with victim-survivors in the Interaction(s) directly affected by these historical abuse issues, past failures and policies. Including those individuals from their own past organisations,

Any National Forum-Inquiry process envisaged has to be wholly independent, have proper foundations, be well structured, equitable, have an effective remit, mandate, balanced, while upholding the **"Rights of All"**.

We sympathise with the frustration of many Scottish victim-survivors in the delays to-date. However it is important that any Forum-Inquiry process that is to include a broader spectrum of Scottish victim-survivors from different institutions and organisations, consults fully a wider range of Stakeholders, including in the Interaction and any further consultation. This should be within a reasonable and appropriate timeframe.

The Forum-Inquiry should then commence promptly thereafter the consultations and avoid further unnecessary delays and be completed and reported on within a reasonable timeframe.

Victims of abuse have already waited a considerably long time for this issue to be given due attention and further unnecessary delay in reaching a successful conclusion of a Forum-Inquiry process would further jeopardize their rights to redress, justice and reparation.

Moreover, many victims are now at an advanced age and an overly long process of inquiry might mean that they never live to see a successful conclusion of that process. Many victims-survivors also have chronic health issues which impact daily on their wellbeing. Sadly many have passed away in the meantime.

The Forum-Inquiry processes envisaged nonetheless should be allowed sufficient time to gather the facts and carry out its functions and investigation(s) thoroughly.

Yours Sincerely

Jennie Bristow
Secretary (FBGA)

Cc: Duncan Wilson, Scottish Human Rights Commission