

John Swinney meets survivors of child abuse after inquiry resignations



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John Swinney.

The Deputy First Minister has met child abuse survivors after the government inquiry was thrown into crisis by the resignation of its chairman.

Susan O'Brien QC became the second member of a three-strong panel to step down from the Scottish Abuse Inquiry.

Campaign groups for victims said they had lost faith in the inquiry, which was announced in 2014 to investigate historical abuse of children in care.

After meeting survivors in Edinburgh, John Swinney said: "I want to assure survivors that I have heard them today.

“I recognise how important it is for us to build trust and I am absolutely committed to that.

“I am utterly committed to an independent inquiry and I have tried to answer all the questions survivors had.

“I will now take time to consider the issues they have raised, including expanding the remit of the inquiry.”

Both Ms O’Brien and Prof Michael Lamb, who resigned last week, said their work had been subject to unwelcome government interference.

A formal process had been underway to remove Ms O’Brien following allegations she made “offensive” comments during a private training session.

She said they were acceptable in the context in which they were made.

Mr Swinney said he “absolutely rejects any charges of interference”.

He said previously this week there were issues about the use of public money during the inquiry.