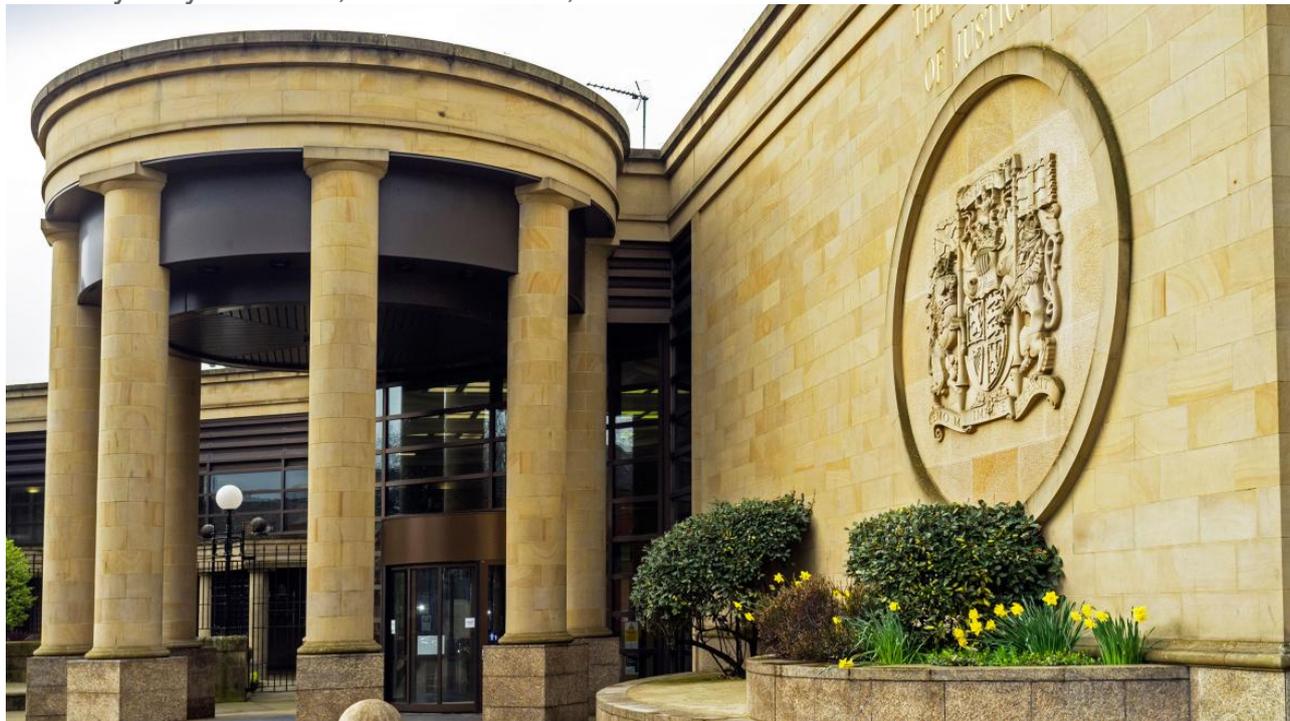


Child abuse inquiry costs soar amid row over fees

[Marc Horne](#)

Monday July 26 2021, 12.01am BST, The Times



The inquiry has spent nearly £50 million so far

ALAMY

The cost of the Scottish child abuse inquiry has risen to more than £33,000 a day with the total approaching £50 million, it has emerged.

The inquiry cost more than £3 million between April 1 and June 30, [despite not sitting](#) since May 27, making the average daily spend £33,159.66.

The latest totals were unveiled after it emerged officials who will rule on compensation payments are in line to be paid more than some survivors of sexual abuse.

The inquiry, which is investigating the sexual and physical abuse of children and teenagers in care, publishes updates on its running costs.

Figures on its website show that the bill for the first three months of 2021 was £2.9 million.

The latest quarterly total was even higher, with the overall spend for the inquiry rising to £46.8 million.

The investigation has heard of child abuse spanning decades in institutions run by charities, religious orders and, most recently, private schools.

Lady Smith, the chairwoman of the inquiry,

said children had been physically, emotionally and sexually abused at [Barnardo's](#) — the UK's largest children's charity — Quarriers social care homes and Aberlour Child Care Trust.

Two years ago she reported that Nazareth Houses, residential homes overseen by the Catholic church, were places of “fear, hostility and confusion” where vulnerable young people were beaten and “degraded with impunity” by nuns.

Earlier this year a number of prestigious independent schools including [Gordonstoun](#), the alma mater of the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince Charles, and Fettes College in Edinburgh, whose alumni include Tony Blair, issued apologies for failing to protect pupils from historic abuse.

A panel led by Johnny Gwynne, a former deputy chief constable of Police Scotland, will assess what level of compensation each survivor of abuse will receive. It has emerged that Gwynne, a past director of the UK National Crime Agency, will be paid £560 a day, with the panel expected to sit for years.

At least 12 members are being sought by Redress Scotland. They will earn £390 a day and although the posts are not full time their services may be required until 2027.

Jamie Greene, the Scottish Conservative justice spokesman, claimed the payment levels were “inappropriate”.

He said: “Child abuse survivors who have bravely come forward to tell their horrific stories should always be the top priority for this panel.

It seems misguided and inappropriate that SNP ministers signed off a daily rate which, in some cases, might outweigh the compensation victims receive.”

One survivor, now in his sixties, told The Mail on Sunday:

“The chair and the majority, if not all panel members, will be public sector fat cats, already rich on excessive public pay and more than comfortable on their gold plated public pensions. It is an insult and a scandal.”

A Scottish government spokesman said: “Mr Gwynne is committed to building the type of independent and transparent organisation which is capable of delivering justice for survivors.”

The inquiry team has stressed that work has been continuing on investigations, analysis, planning and the preparation of case study findings when the hearings have not been actively sitting.

Its witness support team operate a “Talk to Us” phone line and offer support and advice to survivors and witnesses.