

Children in Scottish charity homes did suffer from abuse, inquiry rules

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Youngsters were physically, emotionally and sexually assaulted while at institutions run by three care providers, according to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry.

The third phase of the investigation looked at the nature and extent of any abuse of children at establishments operated by Quarriers, Aberlour Child Care Trust and Barnardo's (QAB) between 1921 and 1991.

The 43-day case study took place between 23 October 2018 and 12 February last year, during which time the inquiry heard evidence from 110 witnesses.

It also examined any systems, policies and procedures in place at these institutions and how these were applied.

Inquiry chairwoman, judge Lady Smith, said: "Children were physically abused, emotionally abused and sexually abused in harsh, rigid regimes.

"Many children did not find the warmth, care and compassionate comfort they needed.

Scant regard was paid to their dignity." She added: "The previous lives of the children who came into the care of the QAB providers had all been blighted in some way, whether by being abused in the family home, the death of one or more parents, parental illness,

families who could not cope with caring for them, abandonment or by other similar circumstances.”

Lady Smith will use the findings when deciding what recommendations are to be made in her final report.

David Whelan, spokesman for Former Boys and Girls Abused in Quarriers (FBGA), thanked the chairwoman for how the inquiry had been handled and said her findings “vindicate” their campaign for a public investigation into the abuse.

He said former management of Quarriers had failed in their duty of care, but accepted the organisation was now “very different”.

Mr Whelan said: “Lady Smith’s findings are unequivocal in their condemnation of the past Quarriers organisation and the effects of this abuse and its impact on those who suffered such abuse in Quarriers’ past care

“The extent and nature of the abuse which Lady Smith has found to have occurred in Quarriers is truly shocking.”

Alice Harper, chief executive of Quarriers, said: “We repeat our unreserved apology to those who suffered abuse while in our care and acknowledge that children were subjected to physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

The inquiry allowed us to meet with a number of former residents.

This helped us to learn that abuse impacts each person differently and that this requires an individualised approach.

“We understand it may be difficult for former residents and survivors to make contact and our door remains open for anyone who wishes to speak to us and share their experiences, both good and bad.”

Aberlour chief executive Sallyann Kelly said: “We welcome today’s interim findings from Lady Smith and wish to again reiterate our

unreserved apology to those who suffered abuse while in the care of Aberlour.

“We recognise the value and importance of this inquiry and have co-operated fully throughout in the hope that in doing so, it will bring some degree of closure to those who have never been afforded the opportunity to tell their story.”

Martin Crewe, director of Barnardo’s Scotland, said: “We accept, regrettably, that some children were abused while they were in the care of the charity.

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“It is a matter of deep regret to the charity that we failed to protect any particular children, at any particular time and in any particular homes. We apologise to those children who suffered abuse while they were in the care of Barnardo’s.”