

Survivors in 3-yr wait for abuse nuns compensation

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A CATHOLIC order which admitted three years ago its nuns abused children has said ministers have not yet asked it to compensate survivors.

The Sisters of Nazareth revealed its participation in a redress scheme to pay victims had 'not yet been agreed' and the Scottish Government had not asked for any cash.

This is despite ministers claiming in April this year that financial contributions from bodies which admitted abuse were 'being sought'.

The Scottish Government has set up a redress initiative with survivors eligible for up to £100,000 – and hopes organisations which have admitted abuse will contribute so that taxpayers do not shoulder the overall bill.

One abuse victim told the Mail a representative of a religious order had advised them victims should sue if they want cash, a claim the order strongly denied.

The latest revelations will fuel concern that some elderly victims of historical abuse will die without receiving payouts funded by the orders which have admitted the worst abuse.

Helen Holland, of In Care Abuse Survivors, said: 'We know that the Sisters of Nazareth have yet to contribute in Scotland or Ireland, and this is something that the organisations concerned must pay towards.'

Survivors want that to happen, it shouldn't be for taxpayers to pay the full amount.'

Kevin Barnes, chief executive of the Sisters of Nazareth, said: 'We repeat the apology that was given at the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI) and subsequently.'

We remain in dialogue with the Scottish and Irish governments, about their redress schemes, neither of who has yet asked for a contribution so our participation has not yet been agreed, or refused.'

In 2018 the Sisters of Nazareth accepted 'retrospectively' that children in its care were abused.

A judge ruled in 2019 that children at orphanages run by the order were subjected to the 'utmost depravity' at the hands of nuns and their helpers.

In a damning 140-page report, Lady Smith, chairman of the £47million SCAI, said the Nazareth Houses were 'places of fear, hostility and confusion' where children were victims of 'brutal' abuse and were 'degraded with impunity'.

She said 'boys and girls were sexually abused in various ways by staff, volunteers, visitors, priests and sisters'.

Her 140-page report found a boy had told Archbishop Mario Conti about sexual abuse he had suffered, but 'nothing happened'. Archbishop Conti was said to be 'unavailable for comment' when the report was published in May 2019.

The legislation paving the way for the Redress Scotland payments body received royal assent in April, when the Scottish Government said: 'Financial contributions are being sought by the Scottish Government from those involved in the care of the children at the time they were abused.'

Last night, Scottish Tory justice spokesman Jamie Greene said: 'Victims deserve nothing less than a well-run scheme which has full participation from those who need to right the wrongs of the past.'

A Scottish Government spokesman said: 'We have had extensive contact with a wide range of organisations on the issue of redress, including the Sisters of Nazareth.

'This contact has included discussions on participation and the making of financial contributions to the scheme.'