

Written answers

Thursday, 7 October 2010

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Redress Schemes

5:00 pm



Chris Andrews (Dublin South East, Fianna Fail)

Question 130: To ask the Minister for Justice and Law Reform the current position in relation to proposals for a redress scheme as requested by a group (details supplied). [35502/10]



Dermot Ahern (Minister, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform; Louth, Fianna Fail)

The Magdalen Laundries were private, religious run institutions without any legislative or State mandate for their general operation. As I have previously informed the House, the vast majority of females who entered or were placed in Magdalen Laundries did so without any direct involvement of the State. It may be helpful to the Deputy to know that my Department's research indicates that a small proportion of entrants to Magdalen Laundries came through the criminal justice system - women offenders under the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 or a suspended sentence. In addition, one institution was used for a period as a remand centre for young women charged with criminal offences. The detail of the role of the criminal justice system, including the limited records held by my Department and the National Archives, are set out in my reply to Parliamentary Question No. 94 on the 13th May, 2010 and that remains the position.

My Department has met with representatives of Justice for the Magdalenes, has exchanged views and offered every assistance possible to allow access to the limited available records in the normal way. However, there are no plans to introduce a State funded redress scheme. I remain, of course, open to considering any further assistance by, for example, the continued sharing of records that might be provided to the many elderly survivors and/or the families of people who were in these institutions.