

Justice for Magdalenes

Crocknahattina, Bailieborough
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28 May 2012

Senator Martin McAleese
Independent Chairperson
Inter-Departmental Committee

to establish the facts of state involvement with the Magdalen Laundries

Montague Court
Montague Street
Dublin 2

Dear Senator McAleese,

Please find enclosed copies of the survivor testimony that Justice for Magdalenes (JFM) has collected over the past few months. In total, there are thirteen separate testimonies comprising 519 pages of text including copies of original documents that the survivors have asked us to include as supporting evidence. We have also included eight testimonies gathered by Evelyn Glynn as part of her research, all of which are submitted with full permission from Evelyn and those she interviewed. Please note that two of the testimonies gathered by Evelyn come from people who have also given testimony to JFM ([REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]).

Please note: These testimonies are intended to inform the work of the Inter-departmental Committee and consent has not been given for distribution beyond the individual members of the Committee. To clarify, JFM is submitting these testimonies on the condition that they are not distributed outside the Committee to government departments.

Once more, we apologise that this process has taken longer than any of us anticipated. That said, and consistent with our ethos, we as an organisation set out to ensure that the women's testimony was collected in an ethical manner that conformed to the highest human-subject research standards. This involved sitting with the women to go through the consent form and allowing them time to ask questions before signing it. We also wanted to ensure they understood precisely how JFM intends to use the material, both in the short term to facilitate your work and/or to inform JFM Reports, but also in the longer term as feeding into an Oral History Project, as part of an effort to

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avoid unnecessary trauma for survivors who would like to participate in the Project but who should not have to endure the ordeal of telling their story twice. Finally we wanted to help them understand that while the testimony was being presented to you to aid the work of the Inter-departmental Committee, that neither you nor the Committee have been charged with issuing an apology or determining redress. We will continue to underscore this fact in the lead up to the arranged meeting with the women on 6th June next. All those who have been interviewed have had a chance to review and revise their testimony.

Please note that amongst the supporting documentation included with the testimonies, is a separate document which contains psychiatric hospital records for [REDACTED]. As the information contained therein is of a particularly sensitive nature, we are requesting that this document is destroyed once the Committee has completed its work.

Please also note that three testimonies are offered under pseudonyms, as per the survivors' wishes. This is noted on the first page of each of the relevant documents.

We will get in touch with Nuala after we ascertain from survivors themselves as to whether the acknowledgement letter from you (discussed at our last meeting with Nuala) should be delivered via JFM.

Likewise, in the case of redacted copies of original documents submitted in support of testimony and that are to be retained in the archive, JFM reserves the right to inspect the copies to ensure that they have been sufficiently anonymised. We hope that you will help facilitate any future redaction of documents at the direction of survivors.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions and/or require additional information.

Yours Sincerely,

Claire McGettrick (on behalf of JFM Coordinating and Advisory Committees)
PRO, Justice for Magdalenes

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