

Sent: Tuesday, April 03, 2012 11:54 AM
To: James Smith
Subject: Reply to your email correspondence: JFM

To: Mr. James Smith
JFM Advisory Committee

3 April, 2012

Dear Mr. Smith,

I am directed by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, Mr. Alan Shatter TD, to refer to your most recent e-mail dated 29 February, 2012 regarding the progress of the Government's investigation into Magdalen Laundries.

The Minister has explained recently in the Dáil that the Government considered the circumstances of women and girls who resided in the Laundries at its meeting on 14 June, 2011 and decided that it was essential as a first step to fully establish the true facts and circumstances relating to the Magdalen Laundries. A number of actions were agreed.

This included the setting up of an Inter-Departmental Committee to establish the facts of State involvement with the Magdalen Laundries, to clarify any State interaction, and to produce a narrative detailing such interaction. The Committee, under the independent chairmanship of Senator Martin McAleese, has submitted an interim progress report and their final report is expected mid year.

In addition, the Government also decided that the Minister and the Minister of State with responsibility for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People, Kathleen Lynch T.D. should meet with the religious congregations and groups representing former residents of the Magdalen Laundries to discuss among other things:

- the question of availability of records,
- those still in the care of the religious congregations, and
- facilitating a restorative and reconciliation process.

Meetings with all concerned have taken place. Progress has been made on the various issues including the question of a restorative and reconciliation process between individuals who had been in such institutions and the orders which ran the institutions in question. Matters have not yet been finalised but the Minister hopes to be in a position to make an announcement in the near future.

While some issues can and are being progressed, there are other issues which are dependent on the outcome of the work of Interdepartmental Committee. The Minister is conscious of the need to progress matters as quickly as possible. However, it is important to emphasise that we are in a process which is seeking to fully establish the facts and it is still too early at this stage to predict what the outcomes might be.

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In relation to those still in the care of the religious congregations and the concern you raised in your correspondence of 8 June last, the Minister would like you to set out those particular concerns in writing. Your correspondence should include details of the number of women with whom you have direct contact and should be addressed to Minister Kathleen Lynch, the Minister with responsibility for older people, who will consider the matter.

Yours sincerely,

Damien Brennan
Private Secretary to the Minister for Justice and Equality

Is le haghaidh an duine nó an eintitis ar a bhfuil sí dírithe, agus le haghaidh an duine nó an eintitis sin amháin, a bheartaítear an fhaisnéis a tarchuireadh agus féadfaidh sé go bhfuil ábhar faoi rún agus/nó faoi phribhléid inti. Toirmisctear aon athbhreithniú, atarchur nó leathadh a dhéanamh ar an bhfaisnéis seo, aon úsáid eile a bhaint aisti nó aon ghníomh a dhéanamh ar a hiontaoibh, ag daoine nó ag eintitis seachas an t-úrthoimhir beartaithe. Má fuair tú é seo trí dhearmad, téigh i dteagmháil leis an seoltóir, le do thoil, agus scrios an t-ábhar as aon ríomhaire. Is é beartas na Roinne Dlí agus Cirt agus Comhionannais, na nOifigí agus na nGníomhaireachtaí a úsáideann seirbhísí TF na Roinne seoladh ábhair cholúil a dhícheadú. Más rud é go measann tú gur ábhar colúil atá san ábhar atá sa teachtaireacht seo is ceart duit dul i dteagmháil leis an seoltóir láithreach agus le mailminder@justice.ie chomh maith.

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