

## Chapter 2

# Methodology

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**2.01** The following chapter describes the procedures and methods by which the Committee carried out its mandate under the Acts. This includes the procedures for dealing with applications, the arrangement of hearings, the prioritisation of elderly and infirm witnesses and the adjustments made for witnesses in particular circumstances. It also includes details of the procedures employed to protect the confidentiality of the evidence provided and the method by which witness evidence was compiled. Mindful of the statutory requirements of the Committee to hear evidence of abuse, maintain witness confidentiality, and to make proposals and prepare a final report, a method of work was established that:<sup>1</sup>

- Ensured complete confidentiality in relation to information provided to the Committee
- Maintained confidentiality of witnesses in relation to both their identity and their evidence
- Provided an appropriate setting for witnesses to give their evidence in confidence
- Established clear liaison and communication procedures
- Was accessible to witnesses who were unable or did not wish to travel to Dublin
- Allowed for the recording, storing, coding and retrieving of 1,090 files of evidence.

## Personnel

**2.02** Six (6) Commissioners served on the Committee at different times between 2000 and 2008.<sup>2</sup> At any one point there were two Commissioners conducting hearings and for a period there were four Commissioners so occupied. The Committee also employed Witness Support Officers. The role of the Witness Support Officer facilitated communication between the applicant<sup>3</sup> and the Committee, as direct contact between witnesses and the Commissioners was restricted to the hearings. The Witness Support Officer made the arrangements for witnesses to travel to their hearings, either in Ireland, the UK or elsewhere. They arranged accommodation and offered other assistance for witnesses and their companions prior to and following the hearings. In addition, at different times between 2000 and 2008, Administrative and Research Assistants were employed. The Committee engaged various expert services for specific legal advice, database construction and software security, research, data compilation and presentation. The Committee had at all times adequate resources to undertake its work.

## Undertaking of confidentiality

**2.03** The Acts give a commitment of confidentiality in relation to information furnished to the Committee. The Acts require that the Report of the Confidential Committee should not identify or contain information that could lead to the identification of witnesses, or the persons against

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<sup>1</sup> Sections 4(6), 15(1) and 16 as amended.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>3</sup> The term applicant refers to all individuals who applied to be heard by the Confidential Committee, not all of whom proceeded to become witnesses and give evidence.

whom they made allegations, the institutions in which they alleged they were abused or any other person.<sup>4</sup> It is a criminal offence to breach the assurance of confidentiality provided by the Acts to witnesses and to the work of the Committee.<sup>5</sup> The Acts do not permit the Report to contain findings in relation to particular instances of the alleged abuse of children.<sup>6</sup>

**2.04** The provisions of the Acts do not allow any person about whom reports of abuse were made to the Confidential Committee, or others connected with the institutions, to challenge the statements made. The confidential nature of the Committee's work also means that information, documents or evidence provided to the Committee could not or cannot be disclosed to the Investigation Committee of the Commission or elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> Exceptions to this were allowed for in only extremely limited circumstances and these are detailed below.<sup>8</sup>

**2.05** Before attending their hearing witnesses were informed that the hearings of the Committee were entirely confidential and that no information or material from their hearing would be transferred for use in any other forum. This was emphasised before hearings with the Committee. It is believed therefore that there could be no secondary motivation attached to a witness's decision to report to the Committee.

**2.06** The undertaking of confidentiality was converted into a set of rules and protocols that applied to the Commissioners and to all members of the secretarial, administrative, executive and managerial staff of the Committee, technology and other experts, researchers and any other persons in contact with the work of the Committee. The Commission drew up a set of procedures in relation to electronic communications, which covered such matters as use of emails, passwords, storage and the copying of data and restrictions on the electronic transfer of materials. It was emphasised that the duty of confidentiality applied to the period after the termination of employment with the Commission and after dissolution of the Commission. All members of the Confidential Committee subscribed to a protocol on conflict of interest.

**2.07** The location of the staff and materials of the Committee was within a secure office area, access to which was strictly limited. The offices were located in a building occupied by a number of different agencies, which provided an element of anonymity to witnesses.

## Exceptions to confidentiality

**2.08** Witnesses who chose to give their evidence to the Committee were, subject to the following four exceptions, assured complete confidentiality and their allegations were not investigated. The Committee was legally obliged to disclose information obtained by it either where disclosure was necessary to:

- Perform its functions under the Act
- Prevent the continuance of an act or omission constituting a serious offence (by making a report to the Garda Síochána)
- Prevent, reduce or remove a substantial risk to life, or prevent the continued abuse of a child by making a report to designated persons<sup>9</sup> or
- Comply with an order of the High Court.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Sections 4(6), 5(4), 11(2), 15(1), 16(2), 27, 32, 33, and 34 as amended.

<sup>5</sup> Section 27(6).

<sup>6</sup> Section 16(2).

<sup>7</sup> Section 27(1).

<sup>8</sup> Sections 27(2), 27(3).

<sup>9</sup> Section 27(2).

<sup>10</sup> Section 27(3).

## Applicants

- 2.09** One thousand five hundred and forty one (1541) people applied to give evidence to the Committee. Individuals could contact the Commission in person, by telephone, by letter or through the Commission's website. People who contacted the Commission were initially provided with information about both the Investigation and Confidential Committees. Application forms for both Committees were also provided. Individuals indicated which Committee they wished to attend by completing in writing the appropriate application form.<sup>11</sup>
- 2.10** On receipt of an application form, the Confidential Committee sent more detailed information to the applicant about that Committee and the hearing process. The information was provided in the form of an 'information pack'<sup>12</sup> which explained how the Confidential Committee hearings were arranged and conducted. The website and information pack also contained a photograph of an informally furnished room, in which the Commissioners heard the witnesses' evidence.
- 2.11** The following is a summary of the general route to a Confidential Committee hearing:
- Individual heard about the work of the Commission from media reports and notices placed by the Commission, through contact with a social or health service in Ireland or overseas, from meetings held by survivor-oriented organisations in Ireland or overseas, from a friend, family member or persons previously associated with the institutions.
  - Applicant contacted the Commission to request information.
  - Applicant obtained information about the Commission's work and application forms.
  - Applicant selected which of the two Committees he/she wished to attend.
  - Applicant returned a completed application form to the Confidential Committee.
  - The Confidential Committee ascertained whether the applicant fell within the remit of the Acts.
  - Receipt of the application was confirmed and further information about the Committee was sent to the applicant.
  - A Confidential Committee hearing was scheduled for the applicant.
- 2.12** Four hundred and fifty one (451) of the 1,541 applicants did not proceed to give evidence in the following circumstances:
- One hundred and thirty six (136) applicants withdrew from the Confidential Committee process to transfer to the Investigation Committee, as provided for under the Acts.<sup>13</sup>
  - One hundred and twenty one (121) applicants applied to give evidence but later withdrew their application for unspecified reasons.
  - Ninety two (92) applicants were deemed to have withdrawn as they did not respond to any subsequent communication from the Committee.
  - Fifty two (52) applicants withdrew when appointments were made with the Committee, stating they were too distressed or no longer wished to attend a hearing.
  - Eighteen (18) applicants were withdrawn from the process due to death or serious physical or mental illness.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix 3, which includes a copy of the CICA Information Leaflet and the Application Form.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix 4, 4A and 4B, which includes a revised edition of the Information Pack, sample appointment letter and a photograph of the Hearing Room.

<sup>13</sup> Section 19 as amended by section 14 of the 2005 Act.

- Sixteen (16) applicants indicated a wish to attend a scheduled hearing but failed to attend on the day and did not request a rescheduled date.
- Sixteen (16) applicants were withdrawn because they fell outside the remit of the Acts for different reasons, including not having been a child of less than 18 years at the time of the reported abuse.

## Transfers between Committees

**2.13** A number of applicants who had applied to give evidence to the Confidential Committee subsequently applied to transfer to a hearing of the Investigation Committee and vice versa. Such transfers had been envisaged and were provided for in the 2000 Act.<sup>14</sup> Evidence given to the original Committee had to be disregarded by the original Committee once the transfer was effected. Altogether 253 witnesses transferred from the Investigation Committee and 136 witnesses transferred from the Confidential Committee.<sup>15</sup>

## Witnesses

**2.14** The Confidential Committee heard from 1,090 witnesses who applied to give evidence of abuse they experienced as children in Irish institutions. They had been discharged from, or left, the institutions between 1922 and 2000, and were residing in Ireland, the UK and other parts of the world.

**2.15** A small number of third-party witnesses applied to give evidence and the Commission decided that they could be heard by the Confidential Committee for the potential beneficial effect it may provide. Sixteen (16) hearings were attended by third-party witnesses who came to report abuse on behalf of their deceased family members or spoke of their own children who had been abused in institutions and who did not seek to give direct evidence themselves. The emphasis of the evidence given by third-party witnesses was on the impact on them of their relatives' abuse. While the evidence of adults other than persons who suffered abuse as children in institutions could not be included as evidence of abuse, the testimony of third-parties was included in consideration for the overall proposals.

**2.16** Additionally, it was not possible to establish prior to their hearings that the evidence of 60 of the 1,090 witnesses would fall outside the remit of the Acts, for one or more of the following reasons:

- They were not less than 18 years at the time the alleged abuse occurred.
- The abuse described did not fall within the meaning of the Acts.
- The abuse described did not take place in an institution as described within the meaning of the Acts.<sup>16</sup>
- They were unable to give a sufficiently coherent account of their evidence to meet the criteria of the Acts.

**2.17** The direct evidence of 1,014 of the 1,090 witnesses that fell within the remit of the Acts is presented in the following chapters. Fifty one (51) of the 1,014 witnesses reported abuse in more than one institution, 36 of those reported abuse in Industrial and/or Reformatory Schools and 'Other' Institutions. As a result there is some unavoidable overlap in the evidence reported in certain sections of this report.

<sup>14</sup> Section 19 as amended by section 14 of the 2005 Act.

<sup>15</sup> These figures do not include all dual applicants.

<sup>16</sup> Section 1(1).

## Prioritisation of witnesses

- 2.18** When scheduling hearings the Committee took into account the age, state of health and any other relevant facts brought to its attention in relation to persons wishing to give evidence. Priority was given to elderly witnesses and those in poor health. The evidence of prioritised witnesses was heard in the earlier period of the Committee's hearings, between 2000 and 2003. Where necessary the Committee scheduled hearings overseas and travelled to hear evidence from elderly witnesses and those in poor health who were unable to travel to Dublin.

## Hearings

- 2.19** A Witness Support Officer co-ordinated the hearing appointments and associated arrangements. The first witnesses to the Committee were heard in September 2000. The Committee heard its final witness in March 2006. The timing of hearings were scheduled in order to maintain witness confidentiality and anonymity.
- 2.20** The majority of hearings were held in the Commission offices in Dublin. One hundred and sixty six (166) of the 1,090 hearings were held in other locations in Ireland and in locations overseas. Witnesses who were house-bound through illness or disability who wished to be heard in their home or place of residence were facilitated. A number of hearings were conducted in hotels in provincial centres to facilitate witnesses who had particular difficulty travelling to Dublin, and the evidence of three witnesses was heard in Irish prisons. Witnesses who lived overseas and wished to give their evidence in Ireland were facilitated by assistance with travel and accommodation arrangements within guidelines established by the Department of Education and Science. A number of witnesses had not been back to Ireland for a substantial length of time. Some had never returned since their departure as young people and the Committee hearing was the occasion of their first return visit. See Table 1 for details of hearing locations:

**Table 1: Location of Hearings – Male and Female Witnesses**

Location of hearing	Males	Females	Total witnesses
<b>CICA offices</b>	501	423	924
<b>USA</b>	2	0	2
<b>Ireland</b>	57	30	87
<b>UK</b>	31	44	75
<b>Mainland Europe</b>	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>1090</b>

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

## Process of hearings

- 2.21** The hearing of witnesses' evidence took place over a six-year period between 2000 and 2006. Over 2,000 hours of evidence was recorded. All Confidential Committee hearings were conducted by two Commissioners except in circumstances when only one Commissioner was available; this occurred infrequently. The hearings were audio recorded where the witness consented to it; where consent was not given no audio record was made and the Commissioners present made a contemporaneous written record as required by the Acts.<sup>17</sup> In a small number of instances the recording was subsequently discovered to be blank or incomplete

<sup>17</sup> Section 7.

due to either a technical fault or human error. In these circumstances contemporaneous notes were retained. The evidence of witnesses was recorded in the following way:

- The audio recording discs were individually numbered and archived.
- The archive was managed in a secure and systematic fashion.
- Anonymous extracts from the hearings were entered into a database using a large number of pre-formulated headings (fields) that permitted observations to be made in general terms on matters specified in the Acts.<sup>18</sup>
- The amalgamated evidence and the conclusions are presented in this Report.

**2.22** In the course of the hearings, witnesses recounted their experiences in their own way and the majority of witnesses were able to give a clear account of their experiences. Witnesses with communication disabilities were assisted as necessary. Some had prepared for the hearing and brought written statements and supporting documentation to assist them. Others came to their hearings prepared to speak unaided. A small number of witnesses requested that their written statement be read into the record. Others requested that their companion at the hearing speak on their behalf. The witness was required to verify the account given in these circumstances and witnesses could add to the verbal account as they wished. In accordance with the Acts, witnesses were not permitted to take notes during their hearing or otherwise record their hearing. The witnesses were not provided with a copy of the mini-disk recording of their hearing.<sup>19</sup> The summarised report of the witnesses' evidence with details of the abuse history was entered into the database following the hearing. This record was confirmed and agreed by the Commissioners who attended the hearing. Witnesses were offered the opportunity to come back and listen to the recording of their hearing if they wished.<sup>20</sup>

**2.23** Witnesses could speak as briefly or in as much detail as they wished at a hearing. Most hearings lasted between one and two hours. The Commissioners listened to and recorded the evidence provided. Witnesses were asked if they wished to make a self-directed statement or to be assisted by general questions, for example '*Can you tell us about your family?*' or '*What was your first memory of ...named School...?*' or '*What do you want to tell the Commission about what happened to you?*' Many witnesses asked for initial assistance in the form of questions from the Commissioners. A number of witnesses reported that they had never disclosed their experiences to anyone before, either to their parents, spouse, partner, their own children, their siblings or others. In accordance with the Acts, the witnesses were provided with a sympathetic forum in which to present their evidence, unchallenged.<sup>21</sup> Witnesses who became distressed while recounting their experiences were given time to continue their account. During the hearings Commissioners sought clarification of certain points made by witnesses where necessary, in order to fully understand the information provided. There was no requirement or provision under the Acts for legal representation at hearings of the Confidential Committee.

**2.24** There was no contact between Commissioners and witnesses outside the hearings. All contact was directed through the Witness Support Officers. These contacts arose in replying to letters, phone calls, forwarding information packs, arranging appointments for hearings, reimbursing expenses, liaising with counsellors and arranging for witnesses to return to listen back to their audio-recorded evidence.

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<sup>18</sup> Section 4(1)(b), as amended by section 4 of the 2005 Act.

<sup>19</sup> Section 27(1).

<sup>20</sup> Statement delivered at the First Public Sitting, 29th June 2000, 3rd Interim Report page 240.

<sup>21</sup> Section 4(6)(a) and (b) as amended by section 4 of the 2005 Act. See also paragraph 2.43 below.

## Companions at hearing

2.25 Witnesses could be accompanied to the hearings by a companion if they so wished. It was the witness's choice whether the accompanying person attended the hearing or waited in a nearby waiting room for the duration of the hearing. Confidentiality bound the accompanying person. Those who wished to be accompanied by a sign language interpreter or other professional person were facilitated to do so. There was no requirement or provision under the Acts for witnesses to have legal representation at Confidential Committee hearings. The number of witnesses who chose to attend hearings with and without a companion is shown below:

**Table 2: Companions at Hearings – Male and Female Witnesses**

Companions	Males	%	Females	%	Total witnesses	%
Accompanied, at hearing	205	35	194	39	399	37
Accompanied, not at hearing	179	30	215	43	394	36
Unaccompanied	208	35	89	18	297	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,090</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

2.26 Almost three quarters of the witnesses (73%) were accompanied to the Commission. Half of these witnesses were accompanied by their companion throughout their hearing with the Committee and the other half requested that their companions remained in the waiting room while they were giving their evidence to the Committee. A noticeably larger proportion of male witnesses were unaccompanied when they attended for their hearing.

## Compilation of evidence

2.27 The Committee hearings generated three types of witness information from which this Report is compiled:

- The oral evidence of witnesses recorded at the hearings
- Points of clarification sought by Commissioners on particular matters
- Documents, statements, letters, certificates or photographs shown to and provided by witnesses to the Commissioners.

2.28 The Committee engaged a research consultant to design a detailed database template for archiving witness evidence. This database was used by the Commissioners to record the accounts of witnesses in such a manner that the information obtained could be analysed and a comprehensive report, with conclusions of a general nature, produced. Assessments were made of some information to facilitate classification of data. Examples of this are the information on parental occupation status<sup>22</sup> and the classification of different forms of abuse as provided for in the Acts.

2.29 The Committee made a decision to present the evidence reported by witnesses in a gender-differentiated way. The rationale for this was that boys and girls were segregated in the majority of institutions that were managed by different religious Congregations and Orders, State agencies and voluntary sector organisations. Further, there were some differences in the recounting of individual experiences by male and female witnesses that the Committee considered should be treated separately.

<sup>22</sup> This is based on *Census 2002*, Volume 6 Occupations, Appendix 2, Definitions – Labour Force. In two-parent households the father's occupation was recorded and in other instances the occupational status of the sole parent was recorded, in so far as it was known.

- 2.30** In most instances information is presented in the order of frequency reported except where data for male and female witnesses is presented conjointly. In those instances the male data is presented first, as male witnesses formed the largest overall cohort.
- 2.31** Witness evidence in relation to Industrial and Reformatory Schools and ‘Other’ Institutions covered an 86 year period, from the earliest admission date of 1914 to the latest discharge date of 2000. Thirteen (13) witness reports referred to admissions between 1914 and 1930, and 10 of the witness reports related to discharges after 1990. It was decided to arrange the evidence in four time periods to facilitate sorting. The chosen time periods were: pre-1960s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and later. Occasionally throughout the report references are made to specific decades within these time periods to reflect witness evidence. The year of final discharge was designated as the determining factor for allocation to a time period. Therefore, where reference is made to evidence pertaining to one time period the segment of evidence will include some matters that relate to a previous decade or time period.<sup>23</sup>
- 2.32** Each witness provided evidence in their own way and each witness’s experience was unique, therefore, it is not possible to present complete and comparable data for all witnesses. For instance many witnesses reported that they had no memory of their own treatment as very young children in institutions. Reports of abuse to babies and younger children are almost exclusively confined to what witnesses reported they observed. The Report is largely silent on the abuse perpetrated on children who were too young to accurately recall their own experiences. Some witnesses also acknowledged gaps in both their specific and general recall of events, with many clearly stating that they wished to report what they actually remembered, even if it was incomplete.
- 2.33** The Report is a summarised compilation of the evidence provided. In this context, the Report provides no further analysis beyond what was necessary to report as required by the legislation. The evidence was recorded within a fixed database and, as a result, some elements of the data presented are necessarily incomplete. In some instances aspects of the same information are presented under different headings due to unavoidable overlap between categories of abuse.
- 2.34** It is anticipated that this Report may be read by people from a wide range of backgrounds in terms of age, belief and ethnicity and for that reason there are footnotes throughout the text clarifying the meaning of certain terms used.
- 2.35** Readers will note that some coincidences of numbers occur throughout the Report. Where the same number appears in different contexts it should be noted that they have been checked by the Committee and are correct.
- 2.36** In the interest of clarity, Industrial and Reformatory Schools, religious Brothers and Sisters and Children’s Homes are referred to by upper case designations to distinguish them from primary and second-level schools, children’s family homes and sibling brothers and sisters.
- 2.37** For the purpose of compiling this volume of the Report persons referred to by the witnesses as being in charge in management positions are described as authority figures and may include Resident Managers, Reverend Mothers, Brother Superiors and school Principals.

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<sup>23</sup> For example: as witness evidence is presented according to the decade of discharge, a witness who spent 12 years in a school and was discharged in 1962 will have been included in the 1960s cohort although the majority of that witness’s experience will relate to the 1950s.

## Use of quotations

- 2.38** Most chapters in this Report quote extensively from witnesses' direct evidence to the Committee. The purpose of the use of quotations is to provide a representative account of the witnesses' experiences in their own words, including colloquialisms and informal terminology, for example, many witnesses referred to Industrial Schools as orphanages.
- 2.39** The italicised words used in the quotations are the actual words used by the witnesses at their hearing. All names and identifying details are deleted to preserve anonymity and are substituted by ellipses, a set of three dots, and anonymous references, for example X or Y. Further, for the purposes of clarification explanatory comments are included in brackets in some quotations. The choice of quotations intends to represent the range of experiences described, including those concerning family circumstances and subsequent effects on adult life.
- 2.40** In order to preserve confidentiality, no person or place can be identified in this Report or elsewhere.<sup>24</sup> The source of each quotation used is anonymised and, where necessary and appropriate, the Committee has made use of neutral characters and words, for example: X, Y and Z or 'named city'.

## Documentation

- 2.41** Witnesses were invited to bring supporting documentation to their hearing, if they wished, and a number brought copies of documents relating to their admission that they had acquired under the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 and 2003, and other searches. Included among the documents provided by witnesses to the Commissioners were:
- Admission records
  - Documents from institutional centres
  - Medical records
  - Birth certificates
  - Letters from the Department of Education and Science<sup>25</sup>
  - Court orders
  - Correspondence between their families, the institutions and relevant authorities
  - Letters from the gardaí and others seeking payments from parents
  - General correspondence
  - Newspaper cuttings relating to their admission
  - Personal photographs from their time in the institution.

## Emergency counselling and medical services

- 2.42** Some witnesses reported that they found attending their hearing with the Committee a daunting prospect. The National Counselling Service (NCS) in Ireland provided for a counsellor to be available on call during the time all hearings were scheduled. The Witness Support Officers liaised with the NCS and the health service at a local medical clinic in anticipation of the possible need for emergency assistance arising from the hearing. Counselling services were available through the Immigrant Counselling and Psychotherapy (ICAP) service in the UK to facilitate witnesses resident in the UK. Witnesses who had not previously availed of a

<sup>24</sup> Section 16(2)(a).

<sup>25</sup> Formerly the Department of Education.

counselling service were provided with the necessary information regarding either their local NCS office or ICAP, if they so requested.

## Returning to hear evidence

**2.43** For a period of three months after the Committee concluded its hearings, witnesses were able, if they so wished, to listen back to their evidence that had been audio-recorded by the Committee. The listening did not constitute a hearing and witnesses could not alter, add in, or take away any written record of their evidence. The opportunity to listen to the recording of their hearing was offered for the potential beneficial effect it would provide.<sup>26</sup> Seventy four (74) witnesses returned to listen to some or all of their recorded evidence.

## Reasons given for attending the Confidential Committee

**2.44** The witnesses reported different reasons for applying to be heard by the Committee, which are categorised in Table 3 below. The most frequently cited reasons were a wish to have the abuse they experienced officially recorded and a desire to tell their story. The protection of children and the prevention of future abuse were other reasons frequently given for providing evidence. Witnesses stated their hope that, by reporting their own experiences and having them placed on public record the need for greater vigilance and protection for children in out-of-home care would be recognised in future.

**Table 3: Witnesses' Reason(s) for Giving Evidence to the Confidential Committee – Male and Female Witnesses**

Reasons for giving evidence	Males	%	Females	%	Total witnesses	%
To record abuse	174	29	114	23	288	26
To tell their story	84	14	88	18	172	16
Prevent abuse in the future	111	19	97	19	208	19
Therapeutic benefit	98	17	85	17	183	17
Encouraged by others	61	10	67	13	128	12
Sense of obligation	23	4	11	2	34	3
Other reasons	31	5	31	6	62	6
Not stated	10	2	5	1	15	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>(100)*</b>	<b>1,090</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

\*Some rounding up/down was applied

**2.45** One hundred and twenty eight (128) witnesses reported being encouraged by a range of people, including family members, other survivors, counsellors and solicitors to apply to the Committee. They expressed the hope that attending the Committee would help them put painful memories of the past behind them and achieve 'closure'. A small number of witnesses reported that they had been encouraged to attend by former staff of the institutions.

**2.46** Witnesses also reported that there were positive aspects to their treatment in institutions that they wished to have acknowledged.

**2.47** Those who reported attending the Committee out of a sense of obligation often commented that they came forward to support others, especially in relation to institutions where they believed abuse was less often acknowledged.

<sup>26</sup> Section 4(6).

**2.48** Sixty two (62) witnesses gave other reasons for attending, including some who hoped to gain a better understanding of their admission to an institution and many who, in addition to recounting the history of their own abuse, also came to speak for siblings and co-residents who had died in tragic circumstances.

**2.49** The following quotations illustrate the reasons stated by witnesses for giving evidence to the Committee:

*I think I wanted someone to listen to me, nobody ever listened to us, nobody ever asked us how we were feeling. When our mother died we were never spoken to, we cried for a reason, nobody ever asked why, nobody ever said "if you have a problem come to me". We did not know how to post a letter or buy a loaf of bread ...(after discharge)... I wanted to be heard really.*

•

*They all said "that couldn't have happened" but they can't say that to 5000 of us when we all have a similar story to tell.*

•

*For all the children who died in care and cannot speak for themselves. Listening to fellows being flogged ... I just wanted to forget them but I couldn't forget them ... fellows were being told not to tell their parents. I'm not interested in any compensation but there should be some official record of what happened. The most important thing is that disabled children would be educated without abuse being done to them.*

•

*Lots of others would love to come to tell their story but they can't because their lives are destroyed with drink and drugs and everything. My story is their story too.*

•

*I know many of the others are not around to tell. To protect kids, give a double look at the guy you think is such a great guy, who offers to do things with kids, who is supposed to be a lover of kids or whatever, where you think he seems to be a sports man ... look again, because, once a kid is sent down the wrong way it seems to live with them for ever. There is a ... wall of silence that no one knows unless you are within the School. You need to bring things in to protect the kids.*

•

*I blame the Government, they gave the religious orders the power, they should have come and checked you, if it was monitored they wouldn't have the power to do what they did.... Is anyone ever going to listen? I had to prove myself, everyone is entitled to have their say and now ... after today ... I will just burn it ...(supporting documents)... in front of me, I'll finish it.*

•

*I knew 7 people who in a space of 6 months after leaving ...named School... committed suicide. ... I know an awful lot of people who just cannot come forward to this day, an awful lot are dead.*

•

*I wanted to see if there is something good that can come from it, that what happened will be made public in print. When I started there was nothing about money, nothing at all about money, it's not money. All I want is justice. ... What could you do with money?*

•

*I am here today because I am not a number, I am a human being.*

•

*Why ...(come forward)...? How come I am feeling this 50 or 60 years on? How come someone didn't come and ... do something about it, say "are you alright?" I grew up so emotionally bruised and battered, psychologically I couldn't do anything. I wanted someone to tell me why it happened. From 0 till 18 I was a figure under section something ...(Children Act, 1908).... Initially I wanted to confront somebody from that bloody School and say "why did you do that to me?"*

•

*So that there will be a report which will advise social workers to monitor children in care more closely.*

•

*To record abuse, perhaps it will go some way towards stopping the belief that children won't remember.*

•

*I want people to know it was not safe for children in those Schools.... It was a School from hell, they were dangerous people. I will never forgive them, there were people in charge they done nothing about it, you were under lock and key, you got the life kicked out of you and no one does anything about it.*

•

*It's a must ... you were allotted to listen to me, it's going to close a chapter in my life and I'm happy to release it all.*

•

*No one was prepared to stand-up, the government allowed the religious institutions to care for children, it was out of their hands. The religious just did not know how to cope, they had no background whatsoever in childcare.*

•

*We have been quiet long enough.*

•

*It's a report for social workers, to monitor more carefully, there should have been monitoring. If there had been more outsiders coming into the School, you know you would have got to know them. Letting the children know that they have someone to talk to, if they have a problem and ... someone you could trust outside, they would have to be outside, a separate thing from the School. If I had someone to talk to, separate, that I could trust ... it would have helped me. It has been a great help to talk about it.*

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*I feel that nobody listened to us as children, and thank God someone is listening to us now.*

**2.50** Chapter 3 provides information on the demographic profile of the 791 witnesses whose evidence was included in the abuse reports in relation to Industrial and Reformatory Schools (Schools). Evidence provided by the 259 witnesses who reported abuse in 'Other Institutions' is covered in Chapters 12–18 of this Report. Thirty six (36) of the witnesses reported abuse in both Schools and 'Other Institutions'. Their evidence is recorded as it relates to either the Schools or the designated 'Other' Institutions.