

Galway Abuse Report initiated 7 years ago – Standards still not in Place

- **National Standards & Inspection of Residential Centres still not introduced**
- **In 2007 nearly 400 children with disabilities living in residential settings that are not inspected**
- **Government must ensure implementation of Standards is a priority**

Inclusion Ireland and its members are deeply saddened and angry reading the contents of the report published last night by the HSE on the abuse of children and adults in Brothers of Charity Services in Galway for 33 years - some of the cases as recent as 1998.

Inclusion Ireland CEO Deirdre Carroll said:

“We are saddened because vulnerable young children and adults with an intellectual disability were placed in voluntary services by the state for their care and protection, and were abandoned with no one taking responsibility to ensure that they were living in a safe and caring place. Neither the voices of the children, or their families were heard.

“We are angry because as an organisation we have been calling for the introduction of national standards and inspection of residential centres and community homes for children and adults with disabilities since the mid-1990s and nothing has been done. There are currently nearly 400 children with disabilities living in residential settings, whose homes are not inspected and where there are no national care standards applicable. These children are among the most vulnerable in society, yet we offer them less protection than other children at risk. For example, children in care have their homes independently inspected against national standards under the Children’s Acts. Children with an intellectual disability have no such protection.

“We are told that that ‘guidance standards’ (which are voluntary) have now been prepared for both children and adults by the HSE and that the Health and Information Authority is working on standards, which should be ready at the end of 2008 - but they will then have to be approved and so on. This is not acceptable. The Department of Health and Children, and Disability Minister Jimmy Devins must take responsibility for this and ensure it is an urgent priority. Standards have been prepared since 2004 by the National Disability Authority but have not been implemented. A pilot survey of these standards in 2003 showed the poor level of services available at that time.

“The Comptroller and Auditor General raised the issue in 2005 of non for profit organisations in the disability sector being accountable and transparent for the large sums of public money they are now receiving. For example in 2006/2007, the Brothers of Charity Services received in the region of €60million. We are told services agreements will be put in place, but we have no information as to how many voluntary services have signed such agreements to date.

“We are told all large congregated settings will be closed down and people will be moved to the community. Abuse can occur in the community as well as in residential services and there is a need for independent inspection and standards in community houses also. Standard and regulation will not prevent abuse but at least the State can say it has put a system in place to protect vulnerable people.”

For further information contact:

Siobhán Kane
Communications & Information Officer
Tel: 01-8559891

Note to Editors:

Inclusion Ireland is the National Association for People with an Intellectual Disability. Representing 28,000 people with an intellectual disability in Ireland, Inclusion Ireland is the largest national organisation working to promote the rights of people with an intellectual disability. Our vision is that of people with an intellectual disability living and participating in their community with equal rights as citizens to live the life of their choice to their fullest potential.



INCLUSION IRELAND

National Association for People with an Intellectual Disability

