

Press Release issued on behalf of Brendan McAllister, HIA Interim Advocate.

Date: Thursday October 29, 2020

For Immediate Release

A new support service for victims and survivors of historical institutional childhood abuse in Northern Ireland will be up and running by December, the HIA Interim Advocate Brendan McAllister said today.

He said: “It is another important part of the infrastructure that the HIA victims need.”

The HIA Support Service will operate under the auspices of the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) which looks after victims of the troubles. The new Support Service will respond to individual requests for assistance such as welfare advice, health and well-being, social support and information.

The new permanent HIA Commissioner, Fiona Ryan, will take up her post on December 14. The Commissioner is required by law to convene an Advisory Panel of HIA victims/survivors.

The HIA Support Service which will be based in Belfast and covering all parts of Northern Ireland, is being launched on December 1 2020.

Mr McAllister, who is due step down as Interim Advocate in December, said: “The establishment of the Support Service is a very significant step on the road to providing help to individuals who were abused or neglected in institutions as children.

“I wish to congratulate the Victims and Survivors Service, civil servants at the Executive Office, my own staff and members of the victims groups who worked together on the design of this new support service.

“It will be an important source of help in the years ahead.”

Since the opening of the HIA office in August last year, Mr McAllister’s staff has dealt with almost 1,300 enquiries, including 400 relating to the scheme set up compensate victims.

The Redress Board headed by the the High Court judge, Adrian Colton, which oversees the compensation scheme, has so far received 647 applications and made 180 final determinations.

A total of £5.1m has so far been paid out in compensation.

Mr McAllister added: “It is gratifying to see the whole HIA infrastructure coming into operation. The Redress Board, the Support Service, the Commissioner’s office and the Advisory Panel will all complement each other. This is nothing less than victims/survivors deserve.”

NOTE TO EDITORS:

For further information please contact: Deric Henderson, Media Advisor to Brendan McAllister. Mobile: 07802175350. Email: Deric@DericHendersonMedia.com