



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM



## Historical Child Abuse connected with faith organisations - school survey

### Background and purpose of this questionnaire

#### What is the project?

The Executive Office has launched a programme to investigate allegations of abuse linked to faith organisations in Northern Ireland that were not covered by previous inquiries, such as the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (HIAI). The HIAI focused on abuse in residential institutions (excluding schools) from 1922 to 1995, leaving other cases outside its scope.

To address this, the Inter-Departmental Working Group (IDWG) has commissioned research to understand the nature, prevalence, and impact of such abuse. This covers all faith organisations, their employees, volunteers, and associates, as well as all forms of child abuse, including cases within schools.

Our team has been tasked with reviewing literature and examining records from faith groups, criminal justice agencies, social services, and schools. We are an experienced research consortium, including Dr. Helga Sneddon, Professor Máiréad Enright, Professor Chérie Armour, and Kat Hinfey.

Our work focuses on alleged child abuse linked to faith organisations in NI between 1922 and 2010 (excluding residential institutions). We have gathered data from faith organisations and are now surveying schools to identify any related records.

'Abuse' in this programme includes neglect, exploitation, and physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse. Since record-keeping has varied over time, the first stage of the project is to assess what information exists and how accessible it is.

Based on this, we will recommend the best approach for gathering further details in Stage 2, starting after June.

#### What are we asking you to do?

You are being asked to complete this questionnaire about the type of information and records held by your school relating to allegations of abuse involving someone from a faith organisation. The questions focus on what type of information has been recorded during a range of time periods and what form these records take, rather than details of any individual cases.

We are not asking you about any allegations of abuse that did not involve someone associated with a faith organisation. We are also not asking you to disclose any information about individual cases.

**Please submit your responses via this online form before 15th April 2025.**

**If you have experienced any distress, support is available from Lifeline. Lifeline counsellors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to listen and help in confidence.** People living in Northern Ireland can call Lifeline on 0808 808 8000. Deaf and hard of hearing Textphone users can call Lifeline on 18001 0808 808 8000. Calls to Lifeline are free to people living in Northern Ireland who are calling from UK landlines and mobiles.

#### How will the information you provide be used?

The information that you provide will be stored securely and individual responses only accessed by our research team. When we write our report, we will summarise the information at an aggregated level by school type (i.e. we will not report the results in a way that means any individual school can be identified).

**How will the information you provide be used?**

The information that you provide will be stored securely and individual responses only accessed by our research team. When we write our report, we will summarise the information at an aggregated level by school type (i.e. we will not report the results in a way that means any individual school can be identified).

In the appendix of the report we will include a list of the names of the settings which have submitted a response. We will use the findings to help develop workable methodologies for the next phase of the project and summarise this in a report.

The report will be shared confidentially with the Inter-Departmental Working group and an expert Advisory group to facilitate discussion and development of the next phase.

**By clicking on the 'Next' button below to progress to the questionnaire, you are agreeing to share your responses with the research team and for these to be used as outlined above.**

**Please contact Dr Helga Sneddon on [helgasneddon@outcomeimps.com](mailto:helgasneddon@outcomeimps.com) or 07894906003 if you have any questions or would like to discuss the project in more detail.**

A dark blue rectangular button with the word "Next" written in white text in the center.

Details about your school

**\* 1. What is the name of the school that you are responding on behalf of?**

**\* 2. What is the address of the school that you are responding on behalf of?**

**\* 3. What type of school is it?**

- Controlled school
- Controlled Integrated
- Maintained school
- Grant Maintained Integrated
- Irish-medium school
- Other maintained school
- Voluntary (grammar)

Please specify the type of school if it is not listed above

**\* 4. What is your name?**

**\* 5. What is your role in this school?**

**\* 6. What is your email address?**

**\* 7. What is your telephone number?**

**8. Has the school's structure changed substantially since 1922? (please select all changes that apply)**

- Nothing has changed
- The school changed its name
- The school merged with another school
- The type of school changed (e.g. in terms of whether it was controlled, maintained, independent etc)
- The school changed its working relationship with a faith organisation
- The school ceased to exist
- Something else substantial changed about the school

If yes, please briefly describe the changes

**\* 9. Was your school active in Northern Ireland during the period 1922 - 2010? (please answer 'yes' if there were any activities during this time period, even if the activities were only for part of that time).**

*If you answer 'no' you will be taken to the end of the questionnaire as your school is not eligible for inclusion in this research.*

- Yes       No

Prev    Next

**8. Has the school's structure changed substantially since 1922? (please select all changes that apply)**

- Nothing changed
- The school changed its name
- The school merged with another school
- The type of school changed (e.g. in terms of whether it was controlled, maintained, independent etc)
- The school changed its working relationship with a faith organisation
- The school ceased to exist
- Something else substantial changed about the school

If yes, please briefly describe the changes

**\* 9. Was your school active in Northern Ireland during the period 1922 - 2010? (please answer 'yes' if there were any activities during this time period, even if the activities were only for part of that time).**

*If you answer 'no' you will be taken to the end of the questionnaire as your school is not eligible for inclusion in this research.*

- Yes       No

[Prev](#)   [Next](#)

If you select 'no' to Question 9, you will automatically be taken to the end of the questionnaire

**What does this questionnaire focus on?**

We are interested in what records exist relating to allegations of abuse involving someone who was associated with a faith organisation. This could involve someone who was employed by a faith organisation or volunteered with them, or who was able to engage with children and young people through the links between the faith organisation and the school. There may also be allegations which have not involved the school directly but have come to the school's attention because the child or another person has disclosed about the abuse to someone in the school and records have been kept on that basis.

We are not interested in knowing about any allegations that have not involved a faith organisation.

**We are not asking for details about any individual cases, so please do not describe any individual cases at any stage throughout the questionnaire.**

**It is important to note that the time periods relate to when any child abuse is alleged to have occurred.** We know that some allegations may be made many years after an actual incident. So for example, if someone made an allegation in 2015 that they had been abused in the year 2000, you would include that in your return to this questionnaire.

If you have any questions about the survey or are unsure of what to do at any point please contact Helga on [helgasneddon@outcomeimps.com](mailto:helgasneddon@outcomeimps.com).

Prev

Next

Links between your school and faith organisation(s)

*Our discussions with faith organisations have highlighted the variation and richness of the different types of work that faith organisations do and some of this work has involved local schools. The next questions aim to give us a better insight into the type of work and collaborations that happened during this time period.*

**\* 10. Were your students likely to have participated in any of the following types of activity between 1922-2010 involving the school in any way?**

	Yes	No	We don't know
Church or faith meetings and services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth trips or exchanges involving a faith organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cross-community initiatives involving a faith organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hosting a faith organisation to do some other type of activities with the young people, e.g. run youth groups or holiday camps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sports training involving someone from a faith organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Choir and music involving someone from a faith organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing altar servers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drama or debating with someone from a faith organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Events or assemblies with visiting religious speakers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chaplaincy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tutoring with someone from a faith organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Missionary groups to other locations outside NI	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use this space if you would like provide more information about any of these

**\* 11. Was a faith organisation involved in the management or administration of your school at any stage between 1922-2010?**

Yes  No  We don't know

If 'yes', please briefly provide some more details. Please do not describe specific allegations

**\* 12. Was your school residential at any stage between 1922-2010?**

Yes  No  Don't know

If 'yes', please provide any other information you think would be helpful for us to know. Please do not describe specific allegations

Links between your school and faith organisation(s)

*Our discussions with faith organisations have highlighted the variation and richness of the different types of work that faith organisations do and some of this work has involved local schools. The next questions aim to give us a better insight into the type of work and collaborations that happened during this time period.*

**\* 10. Were your students likely to have participated in any of the following types of activity between 1922-2010 involving the school in any way?**

	Yes	No	We don't know
Church or faith meetings and services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth trips or exchanges involving a faith organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cross-community initiatives involving a faith organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hosting a faith organisation to do some other type of activities with the young people, e.g. run youth groups or holiday camps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sports training involving someone from a faith organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Choir and music involving someone from a faith organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing altar servers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drama or debating with someone from a faith organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Events or assemblies with visiting religious speakers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chaplaincy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tutoring with someone from a faith organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Missionary groups to other locations outside NI	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use this space if you would like provide more information about any of these

**\* 11. Was a faith organisation involved in the management or administration of your school at any stage between 1922-2010?**

- Yes       No       We don't know

If 'yes', please briefly provide some more details. Please do not describe specific allegations

**\* 12. Was your school residential at any stage between 1922-2010?**

- Yes       No       Don't know

If 'yes', please provide any other information you think would be helpful for us to know. Please do not describe specific allegations



**13. Our piece of work is excluding any residential institutions already covered by the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry. Were any records relating to 1922-2010 from your school already included in the previous Inquiry?**

- Yes, they were included in the previous Inquiry     No, they were not included in the previous Inquiry     We don't know     Not applicable (we did not have any involvement in a residential institution)

Please use this space to provide any other information that would be helpful for us to know. Please do not describe specific allegations

**\* 14. Do any records exist (either at a local level or stored elsewhere such as regional level, or computerised) in terms of allegations of child abuse that involved someone from a faith organisation?**

**By 'records' we mean written information or documentation**

- Yes     No     We don't know

Please use this space to explain your answer if you do not know whether records exist

Prev

Next

If you select 'no' or 'don't know' to Question 14, you will automatically be taken to the end of the questionnaire

*In this scoping study, it would be very helpful to know the amount of records that exist in each location, and approximately how many allegations have been made in a particular time period. We appreciate that it may not be possible to provide exact figures at this stage so estimates will be sufficient.*

*These estimates will be used to help inform the design of the next stage and what resources might be needed for any data collection.*

**\* 15. Where are the records currently located? (please select all that apply)**

- In hard copy at the location stated in Question 7
- Stored electronically by your school
- In hard copy in faith organisation office (please provide more details below)
- Stored by another organisation (please specify below)
- Archived in PRONI
- Other (please specify below)

Please use this space to provide more information about where records are located

**16. Which of the following time periods (if any) are there likely to be records relating to allegations of abuse involving someone from a faith organisation? (please select all that apply)**

- Not applicable - no records of allegations exist for 1922-2010
- Records exist but we cannot tell at this stage which time periods these relate to
- Records exist for allegations relating to 1922-1944
- Records exist for allegations relating to 1945-68
- Records exist for allegations relating to 1969-2001
- Records exist for allegations relating to 2002-2010

Prev

Next

**\* 17. What format are any records relating to allegations of abuse involving a faith organisation currently in?**

	Yes	No
Hard copy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Electronic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use this space if you would like to tell us more about your answer

**\* 18. What condition are the records likely to be in? (by 'condition' we are interested in whether there are likely to be any problems with legibility, torn or physically damaged pages etc)**

- Most will be in poor condition (e.g. illegible)
- Mix of poor condition and more legible documents
- Most will be in good condition (easily legible)
- We don't know

Please use this space if you would like to provide more information

**\* 19. In terms of volume, approximately how much material is held relating to allegations of abuse involving faith organisation between 1922-2010?**

*For reference, an A4 box file contains approximately a ream or 250 sheets of A4 paper, a drawer in a filing cabinet contains approximately 4 box files, and a filing cabinet contains 4 drawers.*

- No information
- Less than 1 box file of information
- 1-3 box files of information
- 1 filing cabinet drawer (4 box files)
- 2-4 filing cabinet drawers
- 2 filing cabinets
- 3-5 filing cabinets
- 6-10 filing cabinets
- 11-20 filing cabinets
- More than 20 filing cabinets

Please use this space to provide any more information

These next questions ask for estimates of how many allegations may be contained within any records held. This information will help us scope out how much work is likely to be required for data collection in the next phase of the research. **The information will not be reported in any way which allows any individual school to be identified.**

**\* 20. Based on your records, approximately how many people associated with a faith organisation had allegations made against them relating to the abuse of children under the age of 18?**

If you are not able to estimate how many there are, please use this space to help us understand why

**\* 21. Based on your records, approximately how many people made a recorded allegation that they had been abused by someone associated with a faith organisation before they turned 18?**

If you are not able to provide an estimate, please use this space to help us understand why

**These next questions help us to understand how much is likely to be recorded about what happened after an allegation was made. For example, was someone else within your school or the faith organisation notified, or were the police or social services informed?**

**\* 22. Based on your records, approximately how many allegations were notified to someone more senior within your school?**

If you are not able to provide an estimate, please use this space to help us understand why

**\* 23. Based on your records, approximately how many allegations were notified to someone in the faith organisation?**

If you are not able to provide an estimate, please use this space to help us understand why

**\* 24. Based on your records, approximately how many allegations resulted in the initiation of investigation by social services, police or other legal proceedings?**

If you are not able to provide an estimate, please use this space to help us understand why

**\* 25. Is it possible that abuses may have been disclosed to your organisation but not documented in your records?**

- Yes (please describe below)       No       We don't know

If you answered 'yes', please explain

**\* 26. What kinds of relevant records are likely to exist for this period? (please select likelihood for each).  
By 'correspondence' we mean letters or documentation about discussions**

	Very likely to exist	Possibly exist	Not at all likely to exist	We don't know
Correspondence with claimants, accused people or people writing on their behalf	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Correspondence with the school's legal advisors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Correspondence with a faith organisation's legal advisors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Correspondence with a faith organisation's insurers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Minutes of relevant meetings and hearings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accused individuals' personnel files	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Records of the faith organisation's internal courts or dispute resolution processes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Correspondence with police	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Correspondence with welfare organisations or social services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Correspondence with court officials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Correspondence with government departments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Correspondence with the faith organisation's local, regional or national authorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Correspondence with the faith organisation's authorities abroad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use this space to explain your answer or provide information about any other kinds of relevant records.  
Please do not provide details about specific allegations

***In our discussions with other agencies who hold records about allegations of abuse, they have highlighted that these can only be retrieved if certain information is provided. The next questions relate to some of these pieces of information and will help us understand the level of detail that might be contained in any records that are held by your organisation.***

**\* 27. Are records kept of the each of the following?**

	Yes - in every case	Sometimes but not always	Not likely to have been recorded	We don't know
The name of the person who said they were abused	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The date of birth of the person who said they were abused	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The name of the person accused of perpetrating abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The date of birth of the person accused of perpetrating abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Whether the person accused of perpetrating abuse is living or deceased	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use this space if you would like to explain any of your answers in more detail

**\* 28. Is the role of the alleged perpetrator likely to be recorded in the records (e.g. whether they were paid staff within the faith organisation, a volunteer, or someone operating in another capacity such as visiting the faith organisation or running a joint event)?**

- Yes - this was usually recorded in the records for this time period
- It may sometimes be recorded for this time period but probably not in every case
- No - it is unlikely to be recorded for this time period
- We don't know

Please use this space if you want to explain your answer

*Sometimes when we look at historical records, the information is not necessarily described using the language that we use today, or recorded using clear forms or templates. The next questions will help us to understand how much work is likely to be involved in identifying the nature of any allegation.*

**\* 29. How likely is it that the type of abuse could be easily categorised from the description in the records (e.g. whether it involved neglect, exploitation, physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse)?**

- Yes - the type of abuse is likely to be clearly categorised in the record
- Yes - this information may be detailed in a written description rather than clearly categorised
- No - this is unlikely to be recorded for this time period
- We don't know

Please use this space if you want to explain your answer

**\* 30. How likely is it that your records describe the outcome of each allegation (please provide an answer for each)?**

	Not likely to be recorded very often	May be recorded for some records but not for all	Likely to be recorded for most cases	We don't know
Whether an internal investigation took place	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Decision made by any internal investigation (eg whether allegation was upheld)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allegation withdrawn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Apology made to the victim	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial payment to the alleged victim with or without civil proceedings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disciplinary actions for accused	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Actions to mitigate risk such as treatment or training for the accused	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Civil proceedings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Criminal proceedings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Policy or practice changes within the faith organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Some other action taken by the faith organisation to mitigate any future risk from the accused (please describe)

**Thank you for answering the questions about this time period. Please click on the 'Next' button below to be taken to final section**

Prev

Next

*These last questions provide you with an opportunity to highlight any information that you feel would be useful for us to know around data storage policy or changes in record keeping over time in your school. If you feel you do not have enough information to answer these, please skip to the final question on the page.*

31. Does your school use the DE standard policy on record keeping (<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-202007-child-protection-record-keeping-schools>)?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

32. Please describe any important factors that may have affected the creation, sharing and keeping of records relevant to allegations involving faith organisations by your school

33. Please describe what process would need to be followed in order to access records relating to any allegations of abuse involving someone from a faith organisation

*We are keen to make best use of everyone's insights into what is available and your ideas on how to make this project as straightforward and useful as possible for everyone. This will help us to develop a methodology for collecting data in Stage 2 that is fair, robust and workable.*

*The final question below provides you with an opportunity to highlight any challenges you can foresee with this project and suggestions for how it can be taken forward.*

34. Please use the space below to describe any concerns you have about this work, or barriers to engagement with the data collection in Stage 2 that you can anticipate, and your suggestions or recommendations for how this work can be undertaken.

Prev

Next



**Thank you for answering our questions. We greatly appreciate the time and effort that it will have taken to compile your answers. If you are ready to submit your answers, please click on the 'Done' button below and your responses will be sent back to the research team.**

**Or if you have made an error or wish to amend any of your answers, click on the 'Prev' button and you will be able to change your responses.**

Once you hit 'Done' you should see a thank you window to show they have been submitted successfully. You do not have to create any SurveyMonkey account and you can just close your browser window.

If you would like to receive a copy of your answers, please email [hcca@outcomeimps.com](mailto:hcca@outcomeimps.com) and we will send you a copy.

**If you have experienced any distress, support is available from Lifeline. Lifeline counsellors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to listen and help in confidence.** People living in Northern Ireland can call Lifeline on 0808 808 8000. Deaf and hard of hearing Textphone users can call Lifeline on 18001 0808 808 8000. Calls to Lifeline are free to people living in Northern Ireland who are calling from UK landlines and mobiles.

Prev

Done