



Consultation response:

National Confidential Forum: a consultation on the creation of a forum for adult survivors of childhood abuse in Residential Care

About the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA) is a membership organisation which promotes, supports and defends Independent Advocacy in Scotland. It aims to ensure that Independent Advocacy is available to any vulnerable person in Scotland.

The right to Independent Advocacy for those with mental disorders or who are potentially at risk is enshrined in Scottish legislation. However, Independent Advocacy can also have a key part to play in supporting other vulnerable groups such as black and minority ethnic groups and children and young people, amongst others.

Independent Advocacy organisations do not provide any services other than advocacy. They are separate organisations in their own right, are financially independent, and as free as possible from any conflicts of interest.

National Confidential Forum: a consultation on the creation of a forum for adult survivors of childhood abuse in Residential Care

Q1. Do you agree or disagree with the purpose of a National Confidential Forum?

Agree Disagree No preference

Q2. Do you agree or disagree that the Forum should operate independently from Government?

Agree Disagree No preference

Q3. Should the Forum

(a) be integrated into another public body ?

Agree Disagree No preference

(b) be a separate unit within another public body?

Agree Disagree No preference

We believe that the work of the Forum needs to be the sole focus of a separate unit within a bigger organisation to ensure that the work is ongoing and meets the needs of service users.

Q4. Do you agree or disagree that all adults who were placed in residential care by the State should be eligible to take part in the National Confidential Forum?

Agree Disagree No preference

Q5. Do you agree or disagree that the process should be the same for all participants, regardless of whether they regard themselves as survivors of abuse in residential childcare?

Agree Disagree No preference

It is essential that all participants are offered the same range of methods by which they can inform the forum of their experiences.

Q6. Do you agree or disagree that people who were in the following types of residential care should be included:

- residential schools and children’s homes
- residential educational provision for children with special needs
- long-stay hospital provision for children with acute medical and/or mental health needs
- secure accommodation

Agree Disagree No preference

If the forum is to fully capture the experiences of all adults who have experienced abuse in residential care then all of the above must be included.

Q7. What other support do you consider that participants would benefit from before, during and after the Forum?

Participants in the forum should have access to experienced sexual abuse counsellors and other forms of therapeutic support, as needed. The individual might also benefit from access to Independent Advocacy.

Consideration should be given to setting up a collective advocacy group for survivors which would allow individuals to meet others with shared experiences. The group might also decide to raise awareness, lobby and campaign to change policy and legislation that would help to prevent future occurrences.

Q8. Do you think that the participants should be protected from legal action in connection with their work for the Forum?

Yes No No preference

We believe this is a complex issue because protection from legal action will allow some people to disclose information but it will also mean that justice is denied to others.

It is also important that people are not pressured to take forward possible legal action if they prefer not to do so.

Q9. Do you think there are any barriers that would prevent people who are eligible to take part in the Forum from participating?

Yes No

There are a number of barriers that may prevent someone from taking part in the Forum, including;

- Perceived stigma
- Trauma
- Blaming themselves
- Lack of help
- Fear of not being believed
- Fear of retribution

Q10. Do you wish to add any additional points about the Forum?

Yes No

We believe that access to independent advocacy, both collective and individual might help some people talk through the value of engaging with the forum, the best way to do this, accessing the right levels of support needed by the individual and helping them to speak up.

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