

Time to be Heard

‘The greatest thing you can give a survivor is acknowledgement, not sympathy, but acknowledgement.’

TTBH participant 2010

The purpose of the Pilot Forum

To Test the effectiveness of an independent confidential forum as a means of:

- Acknowledging the wrongs of the past
- Providing an opportunity for participants to:
 - progress towards closure
 - realise possible therapeutic benefits and
- Offering advice and guidance on further action

Issues faced in setting up TTBH

- The need to be independent of Government
- The emphasis on acknowledgement and the lack of focus on accountability
- The restriction on participation to former residents of one institution

What TTBH is - and is not

TTBH was a test of a way of acknowledging wrongs of the past; it was a test in a Scottish context of a model that had been developed elsewhere.

It was not:

- An inquiry
- An inspection
- A review
- A research exercise

Publicising TTBH

- Web postings eg SurvivorScotland and Quarriers
- Advertising in national newspapers
- Letters to some 500 former residents of Quarriers

The participants in TTBH

- 116 applications of which 2 were ineligible
- 98 people were heard
- Participants ranged in age from 83 to 38
- There were 47 men and 51 women
- 48 had spent more than 10 years living in Quarriers
- 69% live in Scotland, 18% in England and Wales and 13% live outside the UK

Where participants were heard

- 82 were heard in the TTBH premises in Glasgow
- 1 was heard at home, 1 was heard in the workplace and 1 was heard in a health facility
- 5 were heard in Canada in hotels (3 in Toronto, 1 in Vancouver and 1 in Victoria)
- 6 were heard through teleconference with written submissions
- 2 participated solely through written submissions

What we heard

Three themes became apparent:

- poor communication,
- lack of respect and
- inadequate preparation for leaving care

Issues related to those themes were expressed through references to physical assault, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and leaving care; lack of affection was a common concern. What we heard forms Part 2 of the report.

The participants' response

- This was very positive both at the time of the hearings, in subsequent contact with TTBH and in response to the Process Review.
- Participants said they felt acknowledged, affirmed, more confident, able to move on; many said they felt better.

TTBH demonstrated that a confidential forum offers worthwhile acknowledgement and the opportunity for gains in health and well-being.

Quarriers response to TTBH

Quarriers took a positive and open approach to TTBH

- Supporting and facilitating - advertising and contacting
- Engaging with the Restorative Justice Pilot project
- Co-operating with TTBH eg in providing information

Observations for Government 1

- The pilot forum - TTBH - was highly effective
 - in meeting participants' needs for acknowledgement
 - in re-assuring and affirming and helping towards closure

Overall TTBH indicated that an opportunity to be heard in a non-judgmental confidential setting can benefit health and well-being

Observations for Government 2

- Legal provision is needed to ensure
 - Confidentiality for hearings, administration and any associated records
 - Protection for the personal liability of the Chair and Commissioners, for employment and contractual issues and for ownership of any records

Observations for Government 3

- TTBH was open only to those who were resident in a children's home;
- The TTBH model had many strengths and worked well in the Scottish context

Observations for service providers

Key messages

- The importance of communication
- The centrality of respect
- The significance of preparation for leaving care

Recommendations 1

For Government

- An independent national confidential forum should be established
- Protective legislation should be introduced to ensure confidentiality
- The national confidential forum should engage with survivors from the outset
- The Chair, Commissioners and staff should be in post well in advance of the commencement of hearings

Recommendations 2

For Government

- The form and operation of a national confidential forum should be based on TTBH
- The forum should be open to all who were in care as children

Recommendations 3

For Government

Monitoring and Research should be undertaken into:

- The impact of a history of child care on attitudes to residential care for older people
- Resilience to the effects of abuse
- The incidence of suicide and suicidal ideation amongst care leavers

Recommendations 4

For Service Providers

- Support for young people leaving care should be an unqualified priority
- Observations drawn from TTBH should be used in ongoing review of provision and practice

Recommendations 5

Also for Service Providers:

- Communicating complaints processes
- The need to protect independent advocacy
- The importance of record keeping, records management planning and responsive arrangements for access
- The need for photographic archives

Final observations

- Acknowledging good work in the past and the present
- The shared intention of participants: to support all who are involved in residential child care today and help to make it all that it can be.
- The importance of high quality residential child care to those for whom it is the best option.

Time to be Heard

We believe that the opportunity to be heard should now be given to all.

TTBH 23:02:2011