

Dromore Redress Scheme Archive

Please note that the redress scheme is now closed and this content is provided for information only. For any enquiries please contact Dromore Diocesan Office, Bishop's House, Armagh Road, Newry, Co. Down BT35 6PN or email via bishop@dromorediocese.org

About the Redress Scheme

Redress Scheme for victims of child sexual abuse perpetrated by members of the clergy and church representatives acting under the authority of the Diocese of Dromore

The Diocese of Dromore is committed to bring healing to the survivors of clerical sexual abuse, and to all those affected by these egregious crimes. The Diocese apologises unreservedly for the hurt and damage caused to victims and survivors of any priest or church representative acting under its authority. The Diocese of Dromore finds such behaviour towards children and vulnerable people abhorrent, inexcusable and indefensible.

The Diocese of Dromore is committed to a journey of justice, truth, healing and abuse prevention. The legacy of abuse is not time limited. The impact on victims and survivors is deeply personal and is carried differently by each one. The Diocese seeks not to lose sight of the individuals involved, nor their personal journey, nor the hurt felt by those close to them, when referring to non-recent abuse.

By this Scheme, it seeks to put in place a process which can resolve the on-going concerns of victims and survivors of abuse within the Diocese. It will endeavour to ensure the process is victim-centred and place the needs of the victims and survivors to the fore; it will be open to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse suffered at the hands of representatives of the Diocese; and it will seek to be comprehensive, practical and successful in achieving the healing that victims and survivors need.

Having listened to victims and survivors, the Diocese is keen to reduce the trauma and stress caused by participation in an adversarial legal process, and is also keen to ensure its limited resources are directed mainly towards the victims and survivors. It proposes a redress scheme that is less stressful, moves more quickly and prioritises payments to the victims.

The Scheme was be open to receive applications from 29th September 2021 until 29th September 2023. To enable all those who were abused to apply to the Scheme the Diocese extended the Scheme by 6 months enabling others to make applications up to 29th March 2024.

Key aspects of the scheme

This Scheme is a means by which those who suffered child sexual abuse perpetrated by members of the clergy and other church representatives acting under the Diocese's authority are able to obtain recognition and reasonable compensation without the need for lengthy investigation and litigation.

The Scheme will respond to applications where there are allegations of sexual abuse (including sexual grooming), which may or may not have been accompanied by physical and/or emotional abuse, and which occurred when the Applicant was under age 18.

Participation in the scheme protects an Applicant from legal arguments about limitation periods and delay in seeking compensation (in accordance with the relevant legislation) being raised as a defence by the Diocese during the period of the Applicant's participation in the Scheme.

If an Applicant has an ongoing claim against the Diocese relating to the same matters referred to in his or her Scheme Claim Form then for the time during which an application is made and considered that claim and any associated proceedings will be stayed.

All applications will be assessed by an independent Panel. In assessing all applications, the Panels will have regard to all the available information and make their decision on the balance of probabilities and on a majority basis.

Panel members have been appointed via an independent process managed by a third party organisation. The Diocese has had no involvement in the appointment of Panel members.

Scheme Administrators will be appointed to administer the Scheme, to check the applications and associated evidence, to make requests for missing information, to provide information to and act as secretariat to the Decision and Appeal Panels, to liaise with applicants and their legal advisors.

Settlement of an application under the scheme is on the basis of there being no admission of liability. Settlement offers are made in accordance with guidance based on previous awards made by judicial determination, previous settlements in similar cases and awards made in comparable redress schemes. They reflect the personal injury and consequences caused by the Abuse. Awards of up to £80,000 will be made.

Agreement to settlement pursuant to the Scheme will be in full and final settlement of the claim made against the Diocese including all legal entities identified above. By accepting a settlement an Applicant waives his or her right to pursue a claim against the Diocese for damages arising out of the circumstances identified in their Application. In the event of an applicant having ongoing proceedings against the Diocese they will be discontinued upon settlement.

To enable all those who were abused to apply to the Scheme the Diocese extended the Scheme by 6 months enabling others to make applications up to 29th March 2024.

Method of application (For information only. Scheme has now closed)

The criteria for making an application to the Scheme are as follows:

- a. The Applicant was sexually abused and or the subject of sexual grooming
- b. Such sexual abuse/grooming occurred prior to the Applicant's 18th birthday
- c. The Abuse was perpetrated by a member of the clergy who at the time of the Abuse held clerical office within the Diocese or by a representative of the Diocese who at the time of the abuse was acting under the authority of the Diocese and someone for whom the Diocese would be vicariously liable.
- d. The Abuse occurred during the period 1 January 1950-31 December 2010.

In the event of an Applicant who would otherwise have fulfilled the criteria noted above, and who had disclosed abuse to the Diocese dying without having made an application to the Scheme then his or her Estate can submit an application prior to 29 September 2023. If an Applicant dies without his or her application being concluded it may be continued by his or her Estate.

Once an Applicant has given notice of an intention to participate in the Scheme

a. He or she will

o not issue proceedings during the time of their participation in the Scheme;

OR

o if proceedings have already been issued will agree to a stay of those proceedings.

AND

b. An automatic limitation moratorium will be effective until such time as the Applicant is no longer part of the Scheme, which will arise if they have accepted an offer or left the Scheme.

Documents

To participate in the Scheme an Applicant will complete and submit the Scheme Claim Form and provide such relevant accompanying documentation as is available. The scheme has now closed. For any enquiries please contact bishop@dromorediocese.org

The decision process

Scheme Administrators will be appointed to administer the Scheme, to check the applications and associated evidence, to make requests for missing information, to provide information to and act as secretariat to the Decision and Appeal Panels, to liaise with applicants and their legal advisors.

All applications will be considered on up to three occasions as follows

- i. The Initial Decision
- ii. The Review Decision
- iii. The Appeal Decision

Initial and Review Decisions will be made by members of an appointed Decision Panel which will comprise three panel members.

Any appeals will be heard by members of an appointed Appeal Panel which will comprise three panel members. Any Appeal Panel will not involve a member from the Decision Panel who has considered the application which is the subject of the Appeal.

All panel decisions will be determined by reference to written information only.

Applicants whose claims are agreed pursuant to the Scheme are entitled to payment of legal costs in accordance with specified banding.

Applicants who have prior to 1 July 2021 already begun proceedings against the Diocese will be entitled to recover the costs incurred on a specified basis.

Time Scales

One of the purposes of the Scheme is to provide swift redress to Applicants. Examples of the maximum time period for a claim progressing are detailed below.

Example 1 – Application made and resolved following the initial panel review

Application submitted 1 October 2021
Initial Decision by 12 November 2021
Acceptance of offer by 12 December 2021
Payment of redress by 26 December 2021

Example 2 – Application made and resolved following a review and appeal

Application submitted 1 October 2021
Initial Decision by 12 November 2021
Counter-offer or review request by 12 December 2021
Review Decision by 11 January 2022
Appeal submitted by 22 February 2022
Appeal Decision by 5 April 2022
Acceptance of offer by 5 May 2022
Payment of redress by 19 May 2022