

## Chapter 3

# Social and demographic profile of witnesses – Industrial and Reformatory Schools

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- 3.01** This chapter of the Confidential Committee Report provides an overview of the personal details of 791 witnesses, 413 male and 378 female, who gave evidence to the Committee about the abuse they experienced in Industrial and Reformatory Schools. Industrial and Reformatory Schools were residential institutions that in Ireland were generally owned and managed by religious Congregations and were publicly funded. Industrial Schools admitted neglected, orphaned or abandoned boys and girls who were either sent there by order of the courts or, in exceptional circumstances, could be placed there on a voluntary basis by parents or guardians. Young people were admitted to Reformatory Schools by order of the courts, having committed an offence.
- 3.02** Thirty six (36) of these witnesses, 24 male and 12 female, also reported abuse in ‘Other Institutions’. The information pertaining to witness abuse experiences in ‘Other Institutions’ is referred to elsewhere in this Report.<sup>1</sup>
- 3.03** The reports of abuse refer to 55 certified Schools within the Industrial and Reformatory School system in Ireland between the years 1914 and 1989.<sup>2</sup> The number of abuse reports varied in relation to different Schools and over different decades. The number of reports per School is indicated below:
- Six (6) Schools were the subject of more than 40 reports each, totalling 395 reports altogether.
  - Five (5) Schools were the subject of 21-34 reports, totalling 135 reports.
  - Thirteen (13) Schools were the subject of 11-20 reports, totalling 193 reports.
  - Eleven (11) Schools were the subject of 6-10 reports, totalling 91 reports.
  - Twenty (20) Schools were the subject of 1-5 reports, totalling 57 reports.
- 3.04** There were different points of entry into the School system for witnesses depending on their age, gender, family circumstances and the precipitating factors for their admission. The demographic information compiled in the following chapter was provided by witnesses from their own memory, supplemented at times by information provided to them by relatives and others, in addition to information available through official records. The following sections outline the pre-admission social and family circumstances of the 791 witnesses, reported to the Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> See chapters 12-18.

<sup>2</sup> Of note is the fact that witness reports from ‘Other Institutions’ referred to discharges up to the year 2000.

## Parental marital status

**3.05** Five hundred and thirty six (536) witnesses (68%), 310 male and 226 female, who gave evidence to the Committee reported that their parents were married, separated or widowed, at the time of their birth.<sup>3</sup> The following table represents the information provided by witnesses as it was known to them at the time of their hearings:

**Table 4: Marital Status of Witnesses' Parents at Time of Birth – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

| Marital status of parents  | Males      | %          | Females    | %          | Total witnesses | %          |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| Married                    | 276        | 67         | 188        | 50         | 464             | 59         |
| Single                     | 79         | 19         | 132        | 35         | 211             | 27         |
| Separated                  | 25         | 6          | 27         | 7          | 52              | 7          |
| Extra-marital relationship | 9          | 2          | 9          | 2          | 18              | 2          |
| Co-habiting                | 7          | 2          | 6          | 2          | 13              | 1          |
| Widowed                    | 9          | 2          | 11         | 3          | 20              | 3          |
| Unavailable                | 8          | 2          | 5          | 1          | 13              | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>413</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>378</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>791</b>      | <b>100</b> |

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

**3.06** As shown, there are notable differences in the information provided by male and female witnesses in these categories, for example: 67% of male witnesses reported that their parents were married compared to 50% of female witnesses. Two hundred and twenty nine (229) witnesses (29%) were either non-marital or extra-marital children, 88 of whom were male and 141 were female. One hundred and twenty six (126) of those witnesses reported they had siblings, most, but not all of whom were in out-of-home care. In general, witnesses born of an extra-marital relationship reported being admitted to out-of-home care as infants and had a similar pattern of institutional care as non-marital children.

**3.07** Thirteen (13) witnesses did not provide information or had no knowledge of their parent's marital status.

## Parental occupational status

**3.08** The following table indicates the occupational status or estimated skill level of the witnesses' parents at the time of admission, as reported by the witnesses. In two-parent households the father's occupation was recorded and in other instances the occupational status of the sole parent was recorded.

<sup>3</sup> This percentage is based on a total of 791 witnesses who reported abuse in Industrial and Reformatory Schools.

**Table 5: Occupational Status of Witnesses' Parents – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

| Occupational status <sup>4</sup> | Males      | %          | Females    | %             | Total witnesses | %          |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|
| Professional worker              | 3          | 1          | 6          | 2             | 9               | 1          |
| Managerial and technical         | 4          | 1          | 4          | 1             | 8               | 1          |
| Non-manual                       | 14         | 3          | 15         | 4             | 29              | 4          |
| Skilled manual                   | 23         | 6          | 22         | 6             | 45              | 6          |
| Semi-skilled                     | 50         | 12         | 23         | 6             | 73              | 9          |
| Unskilled                        | 277        | 67         | 253        | 67            | 530             | 67         |
| Unknown                          | 42         | 10         | 55         | 15            | 97              | 12         |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>413</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>378</b> | <b>(100)*</b> | <b>791</b>      | <b>100</b> |

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

\*Some rounding up/down was applied

**3.09** Five hundred and thirty (530) witnesses (67%) reported that their parents were unskilled at the time of their admission to out-of-home care and a further 97 reported that their parents' skill levels were unknown to them. There were 5% more female witnesses reporting such lack of information than male witnesses.

## Siblings

**3.10** Six hundred and eighty four (684) of the 791 witnesses (86%) reported that they had brothers and/or sisters, some or all of whom may also have been in out-of-home care. A further 38 witnesses reported not knowing whether or not they had any siblings. For the purpose of this Report, half-brothers and sisters are included as siblings when the witness reported having lived with them as family members. The following table indicates approximate family size reported by witnesses:

**Table 6: Number of Siblings – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

| Number of siblings | Number of witnesses |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 0                  | 69                  |
| 1 – 5              | 405                 |
| 6 – 10             | 209                 |
| 11 – 15            | 64                  |
| 16+                | 6                   |
| Unknown            | 38                  |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>791</b>          |

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

**3.11** Two hundred and seventy nine (279) witnesses (35%) reported having six or more brothers and sisters with 70 of those witnesses being from families of 12 children or more. The average family size reported by the 684 witnesses was 6 children. The other 107 witnesses were deemed to be single children without siblings, having either stated that they knew they had no siblings or that they have never been able to establish the facts in relation to their family of

<sup>4</sup> The categorisation is based on *Census 2002*, Volume 6 Occupations, Appendix 2, Definitions – Labour Force. In two-parent households the father's occupation was recorded and in other instances the occupational status of the sole parent was recorded, insofar as it was known.

origin details. Allowing for families represented by more than one witness to the Committee, the 791 witnesses represent 663 families. There were an estimated 4,139 children in those families.

## Residences prior to admission

3.12 The majority of witnesses reported a relatively settled history in relation to where they resided prior to their admission to a School, as shown in the following table:

**Table 7: Number of Residences Prior to Admission to Industrial and Reformatory – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

| Number of prior residences | Males      | %          | Females    | %             | Total witnesses | %             |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| One                        | 312        | 76         | 261        | 69            | 573             | 72            |
| Two                        | 47         | 11         | 55         | 15            | 102             | 13            |
| Three                      | 8          | 2          | 7          | 2             | 15              | 2             |
| Four                       | 2          | (0)        | 0          | 0             | 2               | (0)           |
| Five                       | 0          | 0          | 2          | 1             | 2               | (0)           |
| Unavailable                | 44         | 11         | 53         | 14            | 97              | 12            |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>413</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>378</b> | <b>(100)*</b> | <b>791</b>      | <b>(100)*</b> |

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

\*Some rounding up/down was applied to percentages

3.13 Five hundred and seventy three (573) witnesses (72%) reported that admission to a School was their first change of residence. Approximately half of these witnesses reported being admitted to a School from their family home in the context of some crisis and consequent intervention. A further 102 witnesses (13%) reported having two changes of residence before they were admitted to the School system, many of which were placements in Children’s Homes from mother and baby homes or foster care prior to being transferred to an Industrial School. The 97 witnesses reported as unknown in this category are a combination of witnesses who did not have any information about their early circumstances or who did not provide information about their residence prior to admission. As may be observed, male witnesses reported somewhat more stability in their place of residence prior to admission to the School system, with 7% more male witnesses reporting only one prior residence.

## Place of birth

3.14 Witnesses who gave evidence to the Committee reported that they were born in 25 of the 26 counties in the Republic of Ireland and in two of the Northern Ireland counties, in addition to England, Scotland and Wales. See the following table for details:

**Table 8: Place of Birth, by County or Other Location – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

| <b>County – place of birth</b> | <b>Males</b> | <b>Females</b> | <b>Total witnesses</b> |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Carlow                         | 4            | 5              | 9                      |
| Cavan                          | 2            | 3              | 5                      |
| Clare                          | 7            | 16             | 23                     |
| Cork                           | 64           | 37             | 101                    |
| Donegal                        | 2            | 0              | 2                      |
| Dublin                         | 188          | 140            | 328                    |
| Galway                         | 13           | 20             | 33                     |
| Kerry                          | 6            | 12             | 18                     |
| Kildare                        | 3            | 8              | 11                     |
| Kilkenny                       | 6            | 5              | 11                     |
| Laois                          | 5            | 8              | 13                     |
| Limerick                       | 33           | 22             | 55                     |
| Longford                       | 3            | 0              | 3                      |
| Louth                          | 5            | 13             | 18                     |
| Mayo                           | 5            | 3              | 8                      |
| Meath                          | 3            | 1              | 4                      |
| Monaghan                       | 2            | 1              | 3                      |
| Offaly                         | 5            | 9              | 14                     |
| Roscommon                      | 1            | 7              | 8                      |
| Sligo                          | 2            | 3              | 5                      |
| Tipperary                      | 16           | 15             | 31                     |
| Waterford                      | 10           | 11             | 21                     |
| Westmeath                      | 5            | 7              | 12                     |
| Wexford                        | 6            | 8              | 14                     |
| Wicklow                        | 2            | 4              | 6                      |
| Northern Ireland: Derry        | 0            | 1              | 1                      |
| Northern Ireland: Tyrone       | 0            | 1              | 1                      |
| England/Scotland/Wales         | 14           | 18             | 32                     |
| Unknown                        | 1            | 0              | 1                      |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>413</b>   | <b>378</b>     | <b>791</b>             |

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

**3.15** Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Tipperary were the birth counties of 314 male witnesses (76%) and 234 female witnesses (62%).

**3.16** A small number of witnesses were of Irish Traveller or mixed-race backgrounds and to maintain anonymity no further information can be provided.

## Current country of residence

- 3.17 As previously stated and show in the following table, many witnesses who gave evidence to the Committee were residing outside Ireland at the time of their hearing:

**Table 9: Country of Residence of Witnesses at Time of Hearing – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

| Country of residence  | Males      | %             | Females    | %          | Total witnesses | %             |
|-----------------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Ireland               | 279        | 68            | 182        | 48         | 461             | 58            |
| UK                    | 118        | 29            | 172        | 46         | 290             | 37            |
| USA/Canada            | 8          | 2             | 13         | 3          | 21              | 3             |
| Australia/New Zealand | 5          | 1             | 7          | 2          | 12              | 2             |
| Mainland Europe       | 3          | 1             | 4          | 1          | 7               | 1             |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>413</b> | <b>(100)*</b> | <b>378</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>791</b>      | <b>(100)*</b> |

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

\*Some rounding up/down was applied to percentages

- 3.18 As indicated, there was a significant difference between the numbers of male and female witnesses living in Ireland and in the UK. Sixty eight percent (68%) of male witnesses were living in Ireland at the time of their hearing compared with 48% of female witnesses. Most of the witnesses living in the UK reported being there since they were discharged from the Schools or shortly thereafter. Many commented on the considerable help and assistance they received, both at a personal and professional level, from health and welfare services in the UK.

## Age at time of hearing

- 3.19 At the time of their hearings 656 of the 791 witnesses (83%) were over 49 years of age, with 57 of those witnesses aged over 70 years. See Table 10 for more complete details:

**Table 10: Age Range of Witnesses at Time of Hearing – Male and Female Industrial and Reformatory Schools**

| Age range     | Males      | %          | Females    | %             | Total witnesses | %          |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|
| 30 – 39 years | 12         | 3          | 6          | 2             | 18              | 2          |
| 40 – 49 years | 54         | 13         | 63         | 17            | 117             | 15         |
| 50 – 59 years | 186        | 45         | 193        | 51            | 379             | 48         |
| 60 – 69 years | 119        | 29         | 101        | 27            | 220             | 28         |
| 70 + years    | 42         | 10         | 15         | 4             | 57              | 7          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>413</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>378</b> | <b>(100)*</b> | <b>791</b>      | <b>100</b> |

Source: Confidential Committee of CICA, 2009

\*Some rounding down was applied to percentages

- 3.20 As the table demonstrates, 76% of the total number of witnesses who gave evidence in relation to Schools were aged between 50 and 70 years at the time of the hearing. There were some differences between the ages of the male and female witnesses, with 74% of male witnesses aged between 50 and 70 compared with 78% of female witnesses. In addition, 6% more male witnesses were aged over 70 years.

- 3.21 Chapter 4 provides information on the reported circumstances that led to these witnesses being placed in out-of-home care as children.