

Justice for Magdalenes

Crocknahattina, Bailieborough
Co. Cavan, Ireland

Web: www.magdalenelaundries.com
Email: info@magdalenelaundries.com



Nuala Ní Mhuircheartaigh
Inter-Departmental Committee
to establish the facts of state involvement with the Magdalen Laundries
Montague Court
Montague Street
Dublin 2

8th February 2013

Dear Nuala,

Thank you for your email regarding a meeting between Magdalene survivors and An Taoiseach. As you know, Justice for Magdalenes (JFM) is a survivor advocacy group and while we are in contact with survivors, we do not represent them; rather we seek to open the door to justice for all women who were incarcerated against their will in Magdalene Laundries.

That said, if any survivor in contact with JFM wishes to meet An Taoiseach, we would like to be in a position to help facilitate this, but it must be done in an ethical, fair, open and transparent manner.

In this context, we are deeply concerned about how the December 6th meeting between the survivors and Dr McAleese was handled. The survivors and JFM were not made aware of the format of the meeting beforehand and therefore none of the women participated in an informed capacity. Ethically, JFM has significant concerns with this, particularly as the women were brought into private consultations with you and Dr McAleese, and even more particularly because the women's responses appear to have been used in the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee to cast doubt on their accounts of what they endured in the Magdalene Laundries.

If An Taoiseach wishes to meet Magdalene survivors who are in touch with JFM, before contacting them we would need to ensure that they are making their decision in an adequately informed capacity. Therefore we would need the following:

- A formal letter (via email is acceptable) from An Taoiseach's office inviting the survivors to the meeting. We request that they are not referred to as "former residents" in this correspondence as the ladies find it offensive.
- Within this letter we would need to know:
 - The purpose of the meeting
 - The format of the meeting
 - The agenda for the meeting
 - Who will be present

- Is it being made open to all survivors who wish to attend?
- If not, why not?
- What guarantees can be given that the survivors will be protected from the media?

Please also note that we have spoken to all survivors in contact with us today and they have requested not to be contacted directly.

We look forward to hearing from An Taoiseach's office.

Yours sincerely,

Claire McGettrick
James Smith
Mari Steed
Katherine O'Donnell
Maeve O'Rourke

c.c. An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD; An Tánaiste, Eamon Gilmore TD; Minister for Justice, Alan Shatter TD; Minister for Older People, Kathleen Lynch TD; Mary Lou McDonald TD; Maureen O'Sullivan TD; Dara Calleary TD