



Oifig an Ard-Rúnaí
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna



Office of the Secretary General
Department of Education and Skills

Ms Margaret Falsey,
Committee Secretariat,
Committee of Public Accounts,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

14 November 2018

Our ref: SG00069-2018
Your ref: PAC32-I-1133

Re: Contributions from religious congregations towards the costs incurred by the State in responding to residential institutional child abuse.

Dear Ms Falsey,

I refer to your letter of 30th October on behalf of the Committee of Public Accounts seeking further information in regard to matters referred to in my letter to the Committee of 17th October.

I noted in earlier correspondence to the Committee that the Minister for Education and Skills may, under section 42 of the Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Act 2012, accept properties for transfer to certain State bodies including the Minister and the Health Service Executive subject to the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. As noted in the update I provided to the Committee on 17th October, the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform has been sought for the acceptance of three properties under section 42. The properties in question are:

- Former primary school at Ballyjamesduff, Co. Cavan (Property 13 on Appendix 2 of 17 October update);
- McAuley Centre, Kells, Co. Meath (Property 14 on Appendix 2 of 17 October update); and
- Former St. Patrick's Primary School, Westport, Co. Mayo (Property 17 on Appendix 2 of 17 October update).

It is hoped that the consent of the Minister will be given shortly.

In regard to the provision of timelines for the transfers, the Department is making every effort to ensure that processes are completed quickly. It will be apparent from the tables attaching to my previous reply, that the transactions have multiple steps. The process of completing property transfers involves a number of different parties, including the receiving State bodies (this Department, the Health Service Executive and a local authority), the various transferring congregations, legal representatives for each party, other State bodies such as the Charities Regulatory Authority, the Property Registration Authority, etc. In the case of the above properties, the next step, once Ministerial consent is obtained, is for the relevant congregations to seek the approval of the Charities Regulatory Authority.

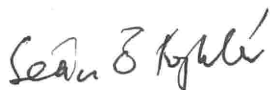
With respect to properties offered to the HSE, I have sought additional information from that organisation. I have been assured also that it is prioritising the completion of all of the outstanding transfers. In relation to the National Rehabilitation Hospital, I am informed that there are significant complexities arising in this case due to the trust-based legal structures involved. I have been assured by the HSE that the matter is being prioritised. I note that the Committee intends to write to the HSE about the matter also.

In the context of the foregoing, it will be apparent that the Department does not have executive powers in respect of many of the matters bearing on the transfers. As such, it is necessary to provide the Committee with our best estimates on completion dates, rather than fixed deadlines.

The Department will continue to liaise proactively with all relevant stakeholders in order to progress the transfers and to identify any particular issues that may be delaying the completions.

I will continue to provide regular updates to the Committee and will apprise the committee in those reports of all matters of significance relating to the transfers.

Yours sincerely,



Seán Ó Foghlú
Secretary General