

ANGER AT £10,000 PAYOUT PLAN FOR ABUSE SURVIVORS

Panel chair in line to earn £200k from inquiry

• Sunday Mail (UK) 22 Aug 2021 Marcello Mega

Survivors of child abuse in Scottish institutions have warned that £400million Government compensation won't be enough.

They say the huge amount of victims means many will receive payments as low as £10,000 or £20,000 – making it meaningless.

One survivor, now in his 60s, said: “It will be remembered as a callous and ineffectual system if people who lost their entire childhood while in care, and are affected by it still, are told their lifetime of suffering is worth £20,000.

“Abuse in childhood, especially sexual abuse and violence and the fear that comes with that, affects your entire life.”

The Scottish Government has set up its Redress Scotland scheme to set levels of compensation, with a maximum award of £ 100,000, and is committed to making payments to all known survivors.

The most likely number of survivors is currently estimated at 8000 but could be as high as 10,400, and half of those compensated are expected to receive just £10,000 or £20,000.

Survivors believe the final figures should be higher if they are to provide meaningful re redress. There is also growing dismay among survivors that those evaluating their suffering will be paid at levels higher than the figures they can pay out.

The chair, retired deputy chief constable of Police Scotland Johnny Gwynne, will be paid £560 a day to sit, while panel members will receive £390 a day.

Redress Scotland's work is expected to last five years.

The chair is expected to work only six days a month for most of that time, yet that will take his earnings to over £200,000, more than twice the highest award for survivors.

This has caused anger and survivors say the pay levels are "an insult" to them when their awards will be capped at £100,000.

Dave Sharp, a survivor and campaigner on child abuse, said: "Six years into the inquiry, the Government appears not to know how many people will receive awards.

"Yet, while the chair and panel members pick up hundreds of thousands of pounds, half of those who suffered will be sent away with £10,000 or £20,000. It's clear they have not thought this through."

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry was established in 2015 and has so far heard of appalling abuse of children at institutions run by charities, religious orders and private schools.

Its running costs are set to reach the £50million mark in a few weeks.

Jamie Greene, Scottish Tory justice spokesman, said: "Survivors must have full confidence in the independence of the awards panel and know that claims will be processed fairly without influence."

A Scottish Government spokesman said: "Survivors can have confidence their applications will be looked at with the care and sensitivity which their circumstances so fully deserve."