



OCTOBER 2025 UPDATE ON ADDRESSING SPIRITAN CHILD ABUSE

“Let’s make sure no Spiritan child (now adult) who suffered sexual abuse is left behind.”

VICTIMS VOICES

A partner of a now deceased victim of Spiritan sexual abuse

“They just deny and try and shame you and try and gaslight you and scapegoat you and make you seem like you’re the problem. What little boy asked for that sort of stuff to be done to him? What little girl asked for what happened to me? Yeah. Yeah. I understand the people are getting tired of hearing about abuse, but it has huge, huge ripple effects and trauma post PTSD. I mean, that is real. That is real. Yeah, that is real. I mean, panic attacks and anxiety, they’re real. They’re real. They really fuck with your life.”

A former student at a Spiritan school and victim of sexual abuse

“Well the first thing I’d say, don’t be afraid. There’s nothing to be afraid of. And the most important thing you have done no wrong. The most you’ve done no wrong at all. In fact, the wrong has been done to you completely. And if you feel guilt, it’s terrible because there’s help out there. And as I said, if there’s people like that listening out there now who haven’t come forward, remember as I said, you’ve done no wrong. You’re perfectly right. And if it’s difficult to come out, I understand that it might be, but there’s so much help out there and people will give you the greatest of support.”

JUSTICE DELAYED IS JUSTICE DENIED, SO WHY ARE WE WAITING?

In June the Spiritan Order made a public statement about making plans to commence a Redress Scheme for victims/ survivors of abuse suffered at Spiritan schools saying they hoped to have an update by “the end of the Summer”. The Spiritans still have not made any statement. Since the end of the summer Restore Together has been seeking a meeting with the Spiritans to discuss urgently progressing the agreed Restorative Programme, but to no avail.

Daily harm and hurt from abuses decades old

The lack of urgency is seen and felt as a further abuse of victims/ survivors, one of control, by the order that abused them sexually decades ago. The Spiritans have had more than enough time to properly address it. Victims/ survivors and their families continue to suffer trauma daily. “Justice delayed is justice denied”. So, why are we waiting for that update and most of all for the Spiritans to urgently commence a Redress Scheme and Truth Telling? These are key elements of the Restorative Process Framework they have publicly committed to.

Lack of urgency not acceptable

The ongoing lack of urgency in delivering the Restorative Process Framework is not acceptable to victims/survivors, their families and friends or Restore Together. The full programme the Spiritans have signed up to must be delivered in a timely way or its benefit will be diluted or even lost if people are made to wait too long and fight for every element of it. It is over four years since Restore Together first engaged with the Spiritans on this, it is two years since we launched the Restorative Process Framework with them. Most of the victims/survivors are 60 or older and have carried this burden for decades - so we are deep into overtime.

The Spiritans own statement last June sums the situation up....

'I am reminded constantly by those who suffered that words and apologies are of little value without concrete action. We realise that for those awaiting announcement of a redress scheme that time is of the essence. We acknowledge that the pace of putting in place the necessary framework for overhauling and restructuring the assets of the Province, has been slow.

It is my sincere hope that I will be in a position by the end of the Summer to provide a further, more detailed update of the progress we are making in forging new paths to create a just redress scheme.'

SO, WHY ARE WE WAITING?

TO VICTIMS/ SURVIVORS, FAMILY & FRIENDS OF ABUSE SUFFERED AT SPIRITAN SCHOOLS

YOU ARE NOT ALONE, YOU WERE NOT RESPONSIBLE, HELP IS AVAILABLE.

REACH OUT IN CONFIDENCE FOR FREE SUPPORT TO ONE OF THE GROUPS BELOW

Restorative Justice Team (chosen by Restore Together)

Contact: Tim Chapman, **email:** timchapman@rjteam.net

Towards Healing

www.towardshealing.ie **email:** info@towardshealing.ie

Freephone: 1800 303 416 (Rep. of Ireland) // **Freephone:** 0800 0963315 (Northern Ireland and UK)

One in Four

www.oneinfour.ie // **email:** info@oneinfour.ie // **Phone:** 01 66 24070

Rape Crisis Centre

www.drcc.ie/services/counselling-therapy // **Phone:** 1800 77 88 88

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT VICTIMS/ SURVIVORS OF ABUSE AT SPIRITAN SCHOOLS?

Tell anyone you know who is, or may be, suffering as a result of sexual abuse while under the care of Spiritans that there is professional support available to them through a non-litigious, Restorative Programme. It is free of charge including therapy/ counselling and redress (see contact details above).

Write to or call the Provincial of the Spiritan Order in Ireland, Fr Brendan Carr, asking him to urgently implement the full Restorative Programme, including a redress scheme:

Fr. Brendan Carr C.S.Sp., Congregation of the Holy Spirit, Spiritan Provincialate, Kimmage Manor, Dublin 12, D12 P5YP. Telephone: 01 – 4125 228 // Email: hello@spiritan.ie

Contact your Past Pupils' Union asking them to represent your views to the Spiritans:

- **Blackrock College Union** — unionoffice@rock.ie
- **Rockwell College Union** — president@rockwellcollegeunion.com
- **St Mary's College Union** — www.stmarysppu.com/contact
- **St Michael's College Union** — info@smcu.ie
- **Templeogue College Union** — info@templeoguecollege.ie

Spread the word to past pupils of Spiritan schools that there is professional support for victims/ survivors of sexual/abuse and encourage them to get involved in calling on the Spiritans to urgently implement their publicly stated commitments.

SUPPORT YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

UPDATE ON STATUS OF THE RESTORATIVE PROGRAMME'S 6 ELEMENTS

1. **Apology, recognition and contrition [this is active and ongoing]:** The Spiritans continue to meet Victims/Survivors to discuss available information, provide support and offer in-person apologies. So far over 50 Restorative Meetings have been held. Most have been facilitated and moderated by one of the expert Restorative Justice Team members, chosen by Restore Together.
2. **Therapy/Counselling [this is active and ongoing]:** The Spiritans continue to provide financial support for counselling. This can be from the professional of your choice for as long as you need. The sole requirement is that the support provider is a registered counsellor. To avail of this please contact the head of the Restorative Justice team, Tim Chapman, in complete confidence, at timchapman@rjteam.net
3. **Restorative Justice Programme [this is active and ongoing]:** The work of *Restore Together* is guided by the Restorative Justice model. This involves confronting the sources and addressing traumas in a holistic, collaborative and non-adversarial manner, to understand what happened and to rebalance the power between victim and perpetrator. The Restorative Justice approach includes addressing how the harm can be repaired and justice achieved.

In practice this work has led to c.50 individual Restorative Justice meetings to-date, where those impacted by abuse have met face-to-face with those currently responsible for the institutions where the abuse happened (Spiritan Provincial, School Principals etc), to discuss openly and forthrightly the, now mostly dead, perpetrators and the culture of abuse. These meetings allow any questions and concerns that victim/survivors have to be raised in an honest and safe environment.

Approximately 200 people have made contact with a view to engaging in the Restorative Justice process.

If you would like to discuss the Restorative Justice program or to consider setting up a Restorative Justice meeting, please contact Tim Chapman timchapman@rjteam.net
Tim is supported by a team of expert Restorative Justice Practitioners with a range of skills and experience, who among other supports have been providing three month long Healing Circle programs and shorter and less formal Restorative Justice Circles.

4. **Redress Scheme [inactive, lack of urgency continues]:** The Restore Together team has put massive effort and expertise into developing and proposing a comprehensive, full-value, victim-led, trauma-informed programme where significant financial acknowledgement of the impact on the lives of those impacted by abuse is recognised. The Spiritans have expressed their support for such a scheme, but to date have not fully committed to the structure proposed, haven't established the funding, or put the structures in place to implement the proposed redress programme. The Spiritans have advised that they are putting the processes in place to create a fund from the assets they hold.
5. **Testimony Gathering Project [only agreed in principle, unsatisfactory unilateral approach currently being adopted]:** The Spiritans have committed to a Testimony Gathering project so that victims/survivors have the opportunity for their voice to be heard and their story told. It will also create a permanent record of what happened. This will help, the Spiritans and Irish society to learn from the abuse scandal and how to prevent a recurrence.

All available information will be gathered, collated and compiled into a usable form. This will comprise testimonies of all the stakeholders affected by the abuse in Spiritan schools (victims/survivors, families and friends, witnesses, past pupils, past and present staff and teachers, clergy). We hope the Spiritans will participate fully in the project including providing all files, records and written documents relating to the abuse.

Restore Together has put proposals to the Spiritans as to how this project needs to be undertaken collaboratively, professionally, transparently and independently in order to ensure the work is trusted and its safeguarding potential maximised]. As of yet the Spiritans have not agreed on the structure, parameters, funding and commencement date of Testimony Gathering although Restore Together has been advised by the Spiritans that they have started work on their side.

6. **Memorialisation [planning underway, won't be activated until all other Restorative elements are active]:** A plan has been proposed by Restore Together to memorialise physically and in other ways the dark history of abuse by Spiritans on the Blackrock College and Willow Park campus. A key feature is the development of a contemplation space. This proposal is awaiting approval based on funding from the Spiritans becoming available. It will be the first of what are hoped will be diverse initiatives in each of the Spiritan schools to help those impacted move on from the trauma of childhood abuse and also to prepare the current children to learn and avoid the risks of sexual predators.

This work will not be implemented until adequate progress has been made in the other strands of the Restorative Process.

WHAT IS RESTORE TOGETHER?

Restore Together is a voluntary support group for victims/survivors of sexual abuse in Spiritan schools (Blackrock College, Willow Park School, Rockwell College, St. Mary's College, St. Michael's College & Templeogue College). It is made up of victim/survivors and non-victims. Together we advocate for the provision of structures to aid healing from the trauma of abuse. www.restoretogether.ie

Restore Together's objectives for all victim/survivors are:

TRUTH – JUSTICE – PEACE – RECONCILIATION – HEALING.

Restore Together Committee; Gearóidín Charlton, John Coulter, Corry McMahon, Philip Feddis, Eoin MacNeill, Conor McDonnell, Eugene Harrington, Brendan O'Connor, James White, Conor Dempsey, Andrew Doyle.