

Scots child abuse charity warns loophole prevents survivors claiming compo

Dave Sharp has demanded the government give more support to young abuse survivors.

Daily Record BY [James Moncur](#) 04:30, 1 FEB 2021



Dave is Scotland's leading child abuse campaigner. (Image: DAILY RECORD)

Charity claims a loophole is preventing Scots' victims claiming government compensation for abuse they suffered as children.

Scotland's leading [child abuse](#) campaigner says dozens of survivors are being put off applying for thousands from the [government's](#) much vaunted Redress Scheme.

Dave Sharp, who runs the charity SAFE - Seek And Find Everyone - has spoken with dozens of survivors who are all having issues claiming money.

They have all been asked to provide records of their time in care and proof they were abused.

But for many, this is an impossible task as many records have been destroyed and allegations were never investigated.

Mr Sharp told us: “There’s a distinct lack of information for survivors seeking access to their records.

“Are we expected to believe that all these institutions are suddenly going to produce the records of the abuse they inflicted over decades on Scotland’s children?”

And he added: “As it stands, the Redress Scheme set up by the Education and Skills Committee, is offering four levels of payments which are £10,000, £20,000, £40,000 and £80,000.

“Applying for a payment will depend on the evidence a survivor can provide to prove what happened to them.

“Survivors are being advised to contact Birthlink for their records but the company can only provide records of entry which, at best, entitles the survivor to the minimum payment of £10,000.

“Unless someone has concrete proof that they were sexually abused - which means they are eligible for the top payment - they may have to accept the basic payment of £10,000 on a ‘take it or leave it’ basis.

“This is the fear of all the survivors I am talking to and it is deterring them from coming forward.”

The claims come as it was revealed the cost of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, in Edinburgh, has now exceeded £40million according to the latest figures.

The Inquiry chair, Lady Smith, is preparing to release her report on the Christian Brothers, despite lockdown restrictions.

Commenting on Mr Sharp’s claim, a Scottish Government spokesperson said: “We understand the hidden nature of abuse and the challenges faced by survivors in obtaining evidence of abuse that happened a long time ago.

“That is why we are listening carefully to the points made by Mr Sharp and others when setting requirements for evidence.

“We are determined that the scheme will be flexible in the evidence that can be considered in support of an application. Our experience in the Advance Payments Scheme shows that survivors can be recognised, responded to and receive redress, by accepting a variety of different types of evidence. We do not rely solely on care records.”