

SHAMING OF ABUSE PROBE FATCATS

Fury as officials who'll rule on historic sex abuse compensation payouts will receive MORE cash than the victims

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**VICTIMS: AS LITTLE AS 20K
COMPENSATION AND MANY WILL
HAVE TO RELIVE TRAUMA TO GET**



**CHAIRMAN PAID 560 POUNDS
A DAY 'UNTIL 2027'. PLUS
ANOTHER 11 PANEL MEMBERS**

**Johnny Gwynne stands to earn
thousands of pounds from the
process**

Stark proof-if ever it were needed-of the excesses of the SNP's bloated profligate, tone-deaf bureaucracy

Fatcats deciding sex abuse payouts will be paid more than the VICTIMS

OFFICIALS who will rule on compensation payouts to thousands of Scotland's child abuse survivors will be paid more than the victims.

A 12-strong panel chaired by a former police officer will assess what level of payout – between £20,000 and £100,000 – each victim of 'horrific' historic abuse should receive. But, in a move that has sparked a furious row, panel members will be paid hundreds of pounds per day.

They will quickly rack up fees far higher than the payments they will hand out to 8,000 Scots whose lives have been ruined by childhood abuse. The panel, set up by Deputy First Minister John Swinney, is to be chaired by retired senior police officer Johnny Gwynne, who will be paid £560 a day. The panel is likely to sit for months or even years.

Last night, victims of abuse said it was ‘insulting’ that ‘fatcat’ members of the new Redress Panel would end up receiving more cash than the survivors.

One victim, now in his 60s, said: ‘The chair and the majority, if not all panel members, will be public sector fatcats, already rich on excessive public pay, and more than comfortable on their goldplated public pensions.

‘It is especially sickening to have a retired police officer as chair of this body that is supposed to offer us redress.

‘Like many others who grew up in care, I knew no kindness from police officers. I was first slapped in the head by one when I was seven. I was brutally beaten up several times when I was in my teens.

‘On top of that gross abuse, when some of us tried to make complaints about past abuse, the police dismissed us. They didn’t want to know; they covered up the sins of the past.

‘Now we are asked to put our trust in an organisation chaired by a retired senior police officer. It’s an insult and a scandal.’

Many victims have already repeatedly given accounts of their experiences to police, to courtrooms and to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry.

The judge-led probe, which has already cost taxpayers more than £40 million, has heard of horrific child abuse spanning decades in institutions run by charities, religious orders and, most recently, private schools.

Lady Smith said youngsters had been physically, emotionally and sexually abused at Barnardo’s – the UK’s largest children’s charity – Quarriers and Aberlour Child Care Trust.

In 2019, she reported that Nazareth Houses were ‘places of fear, hostility and confusion’ where children were victims of ‘brutal’ abuse and were ‘degraded with impunity’ by nuns. Earlier this year there were apologies from prestigious private schools, including Fettes in Edinburgh, and Prince Charles’s alma mater, Gordonstoun, near Elgin, Moray, for failing to protect pupils from abuse.

Now victims once more face recounting the appalling hurt they suffered, this time before the new panel. Currently, at least 12 members are being sought by Redress Scotland. They will each earn £390 a day. The posts will not be full time, but the scheme could last until 2027.

Chairman Johnny Gwynne, retired Deputy Chief Constable of Police Scotland, was appointed in June and will be paid £560 a day in his new role.

Survivors who opt not to tell their story to the inquiry can apply for a fixed rate award of £10,000.

Those who apply to go before the panel could be awarded sums ranging from £20,000 to £100,000.

Eileen Munro, 58, who survived repeated abuse while in care, and who has been diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder as a result, warned that she and others now face being traumatised again.

She said: 'I am totally devastated by this. This has been sprung on us when many of us dared to hope we might already have told our story for the last time.'

'Like many others, I've made statements to the police on two occasions and made further statements to the inquiry team. That has involved days and days of reliving the worst times in my life on three different occasions over the last three decades.'

'How much do they think we can take? How many times do we have to tell our stories of being raped and abused?'

'Do the Scottish Ministers and the advisors who have helped make this decision not realise that we are retraumatized every time?'

Jamie Greene, Scottish Conservative justice spokesman, said: 'Child abuse survivors who have bravely come forward to tell their horrific stories should always be the top priority for this panel. It seems misguided and inappropriate that SNP Ministers signed off a daily rate which in some cases might outweigh the compensation victims receive.'

'They covered up the sins of the past'

VICTIMS: AS LITTLE AS £20K COMPENSATION ... AND MANY WILL HAVE TO RELIVE TRAUMA TO GET CASH

'It seems misguided and inappropriate'

A spokesman for the Scottish Government said that not all applicants would have to give oral evidence but acknowledged that the application process 'may be distressing'.

He added: 'Mr Gwynne is committed to building the type of independent and transparent organisation which is capable of delivering justice for survivors.'

Mr Gwynne has vowed to 'strive to earn the trust of survivors'.

He said: 'I trust when you look back you will know your circumstances have been fully considered and most importantly you have been treated with compassion, respect and dignity.'

The Redress Panel has been set up in the wake of the ongoing Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, chaired by High Court judge Lady Smith.

Figures in May showed that the inquiry, which began in 2015, has so far cost £43.8 million.

Costs totalled £2,909,832 in the first three months of this year – which equates to £32,331.46 a day.