

## **Statement from the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy**

20 July 2013

On 26 June last the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy welcomed the publication of the Report of Mr Justice John Quirke on the establishment of an ex gratia scheme for the benefit of those women who were admitted to and worked in the Magdalene Laundries. The Congregation pledged its cooperation with all recommendations of the Report which touched on our involvement in such a scheme. We would like to renew our invitation to anyone who may have spent time in our care, to come and meet with us, if they so wish.

In advance of the announcement by the Government that it will fulfil the recommendations of Mr Justice Quirke, our Congregation had given its commitment to Minister Shatter that it would cooperate in the manner envisaged by Mr Justice Quirke. We clarified that we would not contribute financially to the State Scheme. We reminded Minister Shatter that our Congregation has provided care to women who spent time with us in many different contexts throughout our history and that we will continue to do so in ways that accord with our mission.

As taxpayers who donate their net salaries/pensions to our charitable funds, our Sisters share in the burden of all citizens in responding to women for whom, in past decades, admission to Magdalene Laundries was seen as appropriate refuge.

A national newspaper, on Thursday last, reported incorrectly on the amount that our Congregation has contributed to the Statutory Fund for former residents of child care institutions. Since 2009 our Congregation has contributed in excess of €21.7 million in cash to the State towards the Statutory Fund, a far different sum to that of €1.6 million stated by the newspaper.

The €21.7m cash already paid is part of a larger contribution offered by our Congregation and valued in December 2009 at in excess of €127.5 million. The Congregation has been steadfast in its efforts to bring about the complete implementation of its contribution to the State. We urge Government to ensure that unnecessary delays in the implementation of this contribution are avoided to the greatest extent possible.