

Education (Former Residents of Certain Institutions for Children) Finance Board

Annual Report 2006

1. Introduction

Section 32 (1) of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (Amendment) Act 2005 provides that the Education (Former Residents of Certain Institutions for Children) Finance Board, hereinafter referred to as the Board, shall not later than 31 March in each year prepare and publish in such form and manner as it considers appropriate, a report of its activities and proceedings during the preceding year.

2. Establishment of Board

The Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin TD, as provided for in Section 23 of the Commission to Inquire Into Child Abuse (Amendment) Act 2005, signed an order establishing the Education (Former Residents of Certain Institutions for Children) Finance Board on a statutory basis with effect from 17 February 2006.

The following were appointed by the Minister to membership of the Board for a period of three years from the establishment date,

- Richard Langford, Chairperson
- Inez Bailey
- John Brennan
- Christine Buckley
- Jacqui Kavanagh
- Brian Mooney
- Michael O'Brien
- Jacinta Stewart
- Patrick Walsh

At its meeting 06 March 2006 the Board agreed that Patrick Walsh would be appointed as its initial Deputy Chairperson.

3. Functions of Board

The principal functions of the Board laid down in the 2005 Act are

- To pay grants to former residents in institutions and their relatives to assist the former residents or relatives to avail of such educational services as the Board may determine.
- To determine and publish the criteria by reference to which it will make decisions on applications to the Board for the payment of such grants.
- To make available to former residents and their relatives information in relation to the educational services in respect of which such grants are payable.

4. Finance

Section 26 (2) of the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse (Amendment) Act provides that the National Treasury Management Agency shall establish an investment account into which the amount paid to it under Section 26(1) shall be deposited.

The history of that account to 31 December 2006 is as follows:

Contribution of Religious Congregations under the terms of the Deed of 05 June 2002	€12,700,000
Accrued Interest (second relevant amount - Section 26(7) of Act)	€240,000
Amount arisen by accretion (third relevant amount – Section 26 (7) of Act)	<u>€10,000</u>
	€13,450,000
Drawdown for expenditure incurred under an ad hoc scheme which operated from 2003 prior to the establishment of the Board on 17 February 2006.	
	<u>€2,498,002</u>
Transfer to NTMA (August and December 2005)	€10,951,998
Accrued Interest from August 2005 to 31 December 2006	<u>€92,375</u>
	€11,344,373
Drawdown by Board from 17 February 2006 to 31 December 2006	<u>€1,410,000</u>
Balance in NTMA Account at 31 December 2006	<u>€9,934,373</u>

Section 31 of the 2005 Act provides for the submission of accounts kept in pursuance of this section to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit not later than 3 months after the end of the accounting period to which they relate. The accounts for the period from

the establishment of the Board on 17 February 2006 to 31 December 2006 have been prepared and submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit. Immediately after the audit, a copy of such of the accounts as the Minister directs, together with the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon, shall be presented by the Board to the Minister. The Minister shall cause copies of the accounts to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas not later than three months after his or her receipt of them.

5. Criteria for Payment of Grants

Prior to the establishment of the Board grants were paid to eligible applicants under an administrative scheme operated under the aegis of the Minister for Education and Science. The criteria by reference to which decisions were made on applications for the payment of such grants were determined by an ad hoc committee set up to operate the administrative scheme. The total expenditure on grants under the administrative scheme amounted to €2484992.

As it did not wish to disrupt the momentum generated under the administrative scheme the Board on its establishment decided, pending the determination of revised criteria, to continue on an interim basis with the criteria used by its predecessor ad hoc committee subject to one minor amendment which it made to have regard to the detail of the legislation.

During the period from 17 February to 31 December 2006 the Board held 11 meetings. Detailed consideration was given to reviewing the previous and interim criteria with a view to determining revised criteria which would build on experience to date of the ad hoc committee and of the Board itself. Arising from this review the Board determined revised criteria which it has published for implementation in the case of grant applications received on or after 17 November 2006. These revised criteria, which are detailed in the attached appendix, have been communicated directly in consultation meetings with representatives of a number of the former residents support groups. It is the Board's intention to make arrangements for an extensive information campaign during 2007 and beyond to make information about the available opportunities widely known to eligible applicants.

During the period from 17 February 2006 to 31 December 2006 the Board approved applications for grants in respect of 892 applications. The overall value of such grants is €1007214.28.

The distribution of the 891 approved applications is as follows

Former Residents	236	(26.5%)
Children	598	(67.0%)
Spouses	56	(6.3%)

Grandchild	01	(0.01%)
Group	01	(0.01%)

The current locations of the 892 approved applications is as follows

Ireland	646	(72.4%)
UK	202	(22.7%)
Other	44	(4.9%)

Other (Australia 14; USA 21; Sweden 3; France 3; Spain 1; Canada 1; Portugal 1)

6. Board Operations

On its establishment the Board was faced with the task of putting in place the necessary arrangements and infrastructure to enable it to discharge its functions effectively and efficiently within the terms of the legislation and in the interests of the former residents and their relatives.

The principal operational issues dealt with by the Board to date include the following

Staffing

The initial core staffing consists of a Secretary/ Manager and an administrative assistant with other staffing being appointed as required on a temporary basis to deal with the processing of applications as they arise.

As the only funds available to the Board towards expenditure in the performance of its functions are those in the investment account established under the provisions of Section 26 (3) of the 2005 Act, the Board has been particularly concerned to utilise those funds to the maximum extent possible in paying grants to former residents and their relatives. Accordingly the Board has been careful to minimise expenditure for other purposes. However, the Board will keep the staffing numbers under review with a view to ensuring that they are sufficient to sustain an efficient level of services to its client base.

The appointment of the Secretary/ Manager was made through a competition conducted by the Public Appointments Service and Eithne Doherty took up duty in the post in September.

The City of Dublin VEC has agreed to continue to provide a payments service and the Board is grateful to the Chairman, members and CEO of the VEC for this assistance. The Board also greatly appreciates the assistance received during its establishment and as requested thereafter from the staffs of the Residential Institutions Redress and Legal

Services Units and the Personnel Section of the Department of Education and Science and from the Department's Professional Accountant.

Accommodation and Related Issues

With the assistance of the Department of Education and Science suitable office accommodation for the Board's staff was acquired at 3rd Floor Frederick Court, 24/27 North Frederick Street, Dublin 1.

Procurement of independent information and communications technology facilities for the Board was undertaken and these are now in place. The contact arrangements are

Telephones 00353 (1)8745708 Lo Call (Ireland) 1890 742 742

Fax 00353 (1)8745709

e-mail info@educationfinanceboard.com

Website www.educationfinanceboard.com

While the Lo Call facility is available only to callers within Ireland, staff will call back clients telephoning from outside Ireland.

7. Reporting Arrangements

Work is ongoing on amending and further refining the existing data base to provide additional key information to the Board to assist it in discharging its functions and to provide for the publication in the future of more comprehensive information in relation to the Board's activities and proceedings both in future annual reports and in information notes to be issued from time to time to update key stakeholders.

Appendix: Criteria for Awarding Grants by the Education Finance Board

Criteria
for
Awarding Grants
by the
Education Finance Board

The Education (Former Residents of Certain Institutions for Children) Finance Board

Under the terms of the Indemnity Agreement between the Irish State and 18 religious congregations, dated the 5th June 2002, a fund of €12.7 million is to be used for former residents and their relatives to facilitate them in accessing education programmes.

On 17th February 2006, Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin TD, set up a statutory body, the Education Finance Board/An Bord Airgeadais Oideachais, under the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (Amendment) Act 2005, to administer the fund. The Education Finance Board has replaced the Ad Hoc Committee that managed the fund until the legislation was in place.

The functions of the Board are as follows:

- to determine and publish the criteria for the payment of such grants
- to pay grants to former residents of institutions and their relatives to assist them in the availing of educational services
- to provide information in relation to educational services for which grants are payable

This booklet sets out the Board's criteria for awarding grants. The criteria may be revised from time to time and will be reviewed by the Board not later than September 2007.

The Board's full-time staff will handle applications for grants from former residents and their relatives. The Board welcomes all queries and applications. Should you have any queries or should you wish to make a grant application, please use the contact information in this booklet to speak to a member of staff.

Criteria under which applications for funding are approved by the Board

1. Introduction

The Board intends that the grants to be paid from funds available under Section 26 of the 2005 Act will help applicants use the educational services decided by the Board. The Board will have particular regard to the needs of former residents as well as those of any of their relatives with identifiable gaps in their education which arose as a result of residence in one of the specified institutions.

2. Who may apply for grants

The grants are open to all former residents of the institutions listed in the Residential Institutions Redress Act, 2002 and to their spouse, their sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters, stepsons and stepdaughters (relatives).

3. Proof of residency

The relevant laws do not define the term 'resident', but it normally means living and sleeping in a place for some time. In general, the Board will consider whether the institution in question may be regarded as the applicant's home at the time.

Anyone who applies must supply satisfactory written and other appropriate evidence of identity and confirmation of residence in an institution. Relatives must also provide written evidence of their relationship to a former resident. The application form outlines the evidence required.

4. Approved courses and programmes

The Board offers funding to eligible people for a range of approved courses.

Post-school, undergraduate and post-graduate courses

Approved courses should:

- be available in the country where the applicant normally lives,
- last at least one academic year, and
- ideally, be provided by a publicly-funded institution.

If a suitable course is not available in a publicly-funded institution, the Board may consider applications for suitable courses offered by private bodies.

Approved courses must lead to qualifications that are recognised by a state-approved framework, whether in Ireland or another country.

In Ireland, the qualification must be placed at level 3 or higher in the National Framework of Qualifications.

An arrangement exists to align qualifications in Ireland and the UK. This will inform decisions on appropriate recognition for qualifications from UK courses.

The Board will consider courses not covered by this arrangement individually, to decide if an appropriate recognition for the qualifications can be made.

Approval for other courses may include the following:

Personal development and lifestyle courses

Courses must be provided by a recognised provider or an accredited trainer of the nationally-recognised body.

Driving Lessons (up to 10 hours)

To apply for funding for up to 10 hours' driving lessons, all applicants must include a legally verified copy of a valid provisional driving licence or the original of a valid provisional driving licence with their application form. A former resident who completes the initial 10 hours may be approved for up to another 10 hours if they provide a letter of recommendation from their driving instructor saying how many hours' tuition they would need to pass the driving test.

Literacy and One-to-One Tuition

The Board will consider these courses according to each applicant's needs and will need regular reports from the tutor to decide if further one-to-one tuition is needed.

Primary, post-primary school support programmes

Extra tuition (normally one hour a week for each child)

This covers extra tuition at primary school and up to Junior Certificate in post-primary schools by qualified teachers if the school endorses it. The applicant must provide appropriate documents, i.e. a copy of the relevant teacher's qualifications; the teacher's PPS Number (RSI or National Insurance number in the UK) and the cost for each session.

After-school activities

These might include activities such as music lessons, swimming and so on. The Board will normally only fund one activity a year for each applicant.

Summer courses

These must be formal education programmes and available within the country where the applicant normally lives. Examples include Gaeltacht trips or other summer language courses. The Board will normally only fund one of these courses each year for each applicant.

5. Grants

Grants to former residents and / or their relatives may be paid under two headings as outlined below:

Tuition fees and related charges

These grants are a contribution towards the cost of tuition fees and / or related student service charges such as registration, examination or professional association fees.

Education assistance

These grants help applicants to continue with their participation in approved post-school, undergraduate and post-graduate courses.

Points to note:

- ❖ **Payment of all grants is subject to the availability of funds to the Board**
- ❖ **The Board can only pay grants to applicants that meet all the criteria of the grant scheme.**
- ❖ **The Board will only support a single course at a particular level. For example, if you receive a grant towards the fees or related charges of a primary degree, you cannot later apply for funding for a second primary degree.**
- ❖ **The Board will only pay grants for the current year of study. Applications relating to courses or course modules that have been completed in a previous academic year will not be eligible for grants or assistance.**
- ❖ **There are limits on the amounts the Board may pay to a former resident and /or their relatives. They are as follows:**
 - **A total of €12,500 to a former resident.**
 - **A total of €12,500 to all relatives of a former resident.**
 - **€4,000 to an individual relative of a former resident.**

These amounts cover grants towards fees, related student charges and educational assistance and include any grants already made to the same applicant(s) under the Education Finance Board's Interim Criteria.

6. Schedule of grants towards tuition fees, related charges and educational assistance

The maximum amount a former resident and / or their relatives may get for suitable courses under this scheme are outlined below.

The maximum amounts relate to the 'nett charge' for a course. This charge is the amount an applicant must personally pay for the course after receiving other grants. It is not the full cost of the course.

Fees for approved post-school and undergraduate courses

Former residents

A maximum of €5,000 a year towards the nett charge.

Relatives

- A maximum of €900 a year where the nett charge is €1,800 or less each year.
- Half the nett charge, up to a maximum of €1,500 a year, where the nett charge is more than €1,800 a year.

Fees for approved post-graduate courses

Former residents

A maximum of €5,000 towards the nett charge for the normal length of the course

Relatives

- A maximum of €900 a year where the nett charge is €1,800 or less each year
- Half the nett charge, up to a maximum of €4,000, where the nett charge is more than €1,800 for the normal length of the course

Educational assistance

Full-time study: two payments of €700 a year (total €1,400)

Part-time study: two payments of €250 a year (total €500)

Applicants must provide written evidence that they are still taking part in the course to receive their second payment of the year.

Grants for other approved courses

Personal development and lifestyle courses

A maximum of €1,000 for each applicant each year

Driving lessons

Car – a maximum of €30 per lesson plus test fee

Truck or minibus – a maximum of €600 plus test fee

Coach – a maximum of €900 plus test fee

Driving instructor – a maximum of €1,400 in Ireland and an appropriate contribution for a similar course overseas.

Extra tuition, after-school programmes and summer courses

The Board has set aside a suggested budget of €75,000 for 2006/2007.

Extra tuition and after-school programmes – a maximum of €25 an hour and €800 a year

Summer courses – a maximum of €800 a year

7. Special cases

If the Board believes that special circumstances apply, especially to a former resident, the Board has discretion to change the Criteria.

8. Reviewing decisions

If an applicant is not satisfied with a decision relating to their application, they may ask the Board to review it.

If the applicant is dissatisfied with the Board's review, they may refer the matter to the Ombudsman.

9. Effective date

These rules take effect from the 21st November 2006, and replace the Interim Criteria decided by the Board when it was established on the 17th February 2006.

If funding has been approved for courses lasting a number of years under the Pre-establishment Administrative Scheme Criteria or under the Interim Criteria, the Board may decide to change the maximum grant levels detailed in Sections 5 and 6 to take into account what the Board regards as an applicant's reasonable expectations.

These Criteria are subject to review and may be changed without notice.