



Office of the Chief Secretary

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Helen Hayes MP
Chair of Education Select Committee – Historic Forced Adoptions Enquiry
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Chair,

I wanted to thank you again for extending an invitation to The Salvation Army to contribute to this important piece of work by the Education Select Committee on Historical Forced Adoption.

Upon reflecting further on my evidence, I recognise that I did not clearly acknowledge that The Salvation Army recognises the hurt caused by the practices and systems in place during this period. We recognise that for many mothers, consent for adoptions were not meaningfully given, and we understand more broadly that some adoptions would have been arranged against the wishes of the mother.

We have unreservedly apologised to everyone affected by their time in our mother and baby homes. We are deeply sorry for the pain and loss experienced by mothers, children and families, and for the lifelong impact this has had. I also wanted to say sorry for the words I used that caused offence or distress both to members of the Committee and to those with lived experience who were present or watching online. In reaching for facts and figures to answer the Committee's questions, I failed to make clear that each of those facts and figures represents a person and a painful history. I also acknowledge that many mothers, children and their loved ones have fought for decades to have their experiences recognised, and I am sorry that my words contributed in any way to their pain.

We are committed to listening and learning from the testimonies of those who did not receive the care they needed from our mother and baby homes and invite anyone directly affected by our mother and baby homes to make contact with our Safeguarding Team (Safeguarding@salvationarmy.org.uk). While our historical records are not complete, we will share what we can.

On the specific points raised during the session which I did not have the information to hand for, we would respectfully ask for more time to provide this information, as well as providing a response to the subsequent letter you sent.

Thank you again for the invitation to contribute to the valuable work of this Committee and once again, I am very sorry for the distress my evidence caused.

Yours sincerely,

Colonel Peter Forrest
CHIEF SECRETARY