

# Survivors of child sexual abuse devastated after decision not to prosecute 25 cases

By Eilish O Regan

Independent 19/08/2022

<https://www.independent.ie/news/survivors-of-child-sexual-abuse-devastated-after-decision-not-to-prosecute-25-cases-relating-to-michael-shine-41923452.html>

Survivors of child sexual abuse have said they are devastated after a decision by the DPP not to prosecute the 25 case complaints made to gardai relating to retired medical consultant Michael Shine. Dr Shine (89), who worked in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda, was released from jail earlier this year after serving three years for indecent and sexual assault of young boys.

The Dignity4Patients group which represents the victim said 25 additional cases will not be proceeded with Chief executive Adrienne Reilly said : "Dignity4Patients is deeply concerned about the decision by the Director of Public Prosecutions not to prosecute 25 cases of sexual abuse." "Sixteen of these victim-survivors are supported by Dignity4 Patients.

"This decision was based on the cumulative factors of delay, cognitive and physical health of the accused, age and historical nature of allegations taken together with a decision from the Court of Appeal form last year."

She added: "In law, age, health and time past are no barrier to preventing prosecution in cases like this.

"This decision by the Director of Public Prosecution to rely heavily on the Court of Appeal Judgement, which was about a totally different issue on 'delay' leaves all sexual abuse victims of Michael Shine, and others, vulnerable to never seeing justice being served. "This kind of interpretation is simply unacceptable."

She said compounding this, the lack of trauma informed staff in An Garda Síochána and under sourcing of both the Gardaí and the Director of Public Prosecution has led to wholly unsuitable or delayed communication to victim-survivors.

"One victim said the unexpected call from the Gardaí informing him of the DPP decision as very strange...receiving the call during work with no support and no follow on support offered from them, he immediately had to stop work and lie down and was only able to go home when he had recovered... he stated it was not normal for him to have those kinds of episodes, and it was difficult to go back to work each day after that." She said: "Every victim who comes forward to report sexual abuse is entitled to be listened to and dealt with sensitivity and with dignity."

Another victim said being notified by the Gardai, that the case would not be prosecuted by the DPP was conveyed in a such a manner that he felt like the Guard was "simply cancelling a dinner reservation," and had little understanding of the impact this decision had on him.

Ms Reilly said: "Even though we have spoken to the Gardai and know that none of this was intentional, it should not happen like that, it is not victim-centred at all." "They were very honest and told me they simply don't have the resources to inform people the way they would like to and are not trauma trained."

She said in light of the DPP decision, delays in civil cases for decades, and now seemingly hopes of any prosecutions proceeding being dashed, Dignity4Patients, on behalf of all victims and survivors, is calling on the government and the Minister for Health and Minister for Justice, to immediately establish a Commission of Investigation into sexual abuse of patients in the Irish health service.

"This Inquiry should include claims of abuse stretching back over decades and inadequate safeguarding by institutions and organisations responsible for patient welfare and safety. "

**If you have been affected by any of the issues raised in this article, you can contact Dignity4Patients, whose helpline is open Monday to Thursday 10am to 4pm.**