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Whistleblower says report fails to hold anyone accountable

CARL O'BRIEN

THE WHISTLEBLOWER who helped bring the abuse of intellectually disabled children to public attention criticised the findings of the Hynes report yesterday.

Margaret Kennedy, a specialist in disability and abuse who conducted training programmes for staff with the Brothers of Charity in the late 1990s, said the report did not make anyone accountable for the eight-year delay.

“It’s clear that health authorities failed in their duty of care, yet no one has been made accountable,” she said. “There doesn’t seem to be any recognition of the upset and frustration caused by this delay to people with learning disabilities and their families.”

Fine Gael TD Alan Shatter, who highlighted the delays in finalising the report on several occasions in the Dáil, said the report was a “damning indictment” of the failure of the Western Health Board and the Government to ensure a proper inquiry was conducted into allegations of sexual abuse of children in Co Galway.

“It is absolutely clear that the necessary detailed investigation into the allegations made did not occur and that the report of the inquiry published in December 2007 did not adequately address the issues raised,” Mr Shatter said.

He said a statutory inquiry was needed to provide a proper inquiry into the Galway case, as well as the recent Roscommon incest case.

Inclusion Ireland, the support group for families of people with disabilities, said abuse detailed in the report could happen again as there was no independent inspection and regulation of services for people with learning disabilities.

The group’s chief executive, Deirdre Carroll, said: “There are still no national standards that services must adhere to and no independent inspection of services for people with a disability. Adults and children with disability remain at risk.”

She said there were nearly 400 children with disabilities living in homes that are not inspected and where there were no national care standards.