

## President hits out at silence on child abuse

By Colm Kelpie

Child abusers depend on people's silence to get away with their evil crimes, President Mary McAleese warned.

Even though the President did not mention the House of Horrors Roscommon incest case directly, she said society was occasionally reminded of its own failures and the dangers facing children.

"Every so often a dreadful case reveals to us a realm of failure and of progress still to be made, and importantly a realm of suffering still being endured by children," the President said.

Ms McAleese, who met staff at the Children's Law Centre in Belfast, said children relied on others to protect and defend them.

"On the days when we read of the failures of families, of parents, of carers, of communities, of child care and child protection services -- on days when we acknowledge that children, who depended on us to look out for them, slipped through visible gaps -- we are brought close to despair," the President said.

"Giving into despair is not an option.

### Advocates

"It does not change one with the reality that children, though they do not always know it, are depending on us to be their champions, their advocates, their voices, their defenders."

President McAleese claimed society must have the proper legal and administrative supports to ensure communities intervene at the first sign of abuse.

- Colm Kelpie