

Glasgow City Council submission of 15 July 2022

PE1933/C: Allow Fornethy Survivors to Access Scotland's Redress Scheme

I refer to your letter of 6 July 2022 and the above mentioned petition.

Glasgow City Council ("GCC") has received 163 claims for compensation concerning events said to have occurred at Fornethy House during the Glasgow Corporation and Strathclyde Regional Council eras. There is also a case in court based on events said to have occurred at Fornethy House. It is not possible for GCC to comment in any detail about the facts and circumstances connected to the claims or the case which is being litigated. This will limit the scope of my response.

You ask what GCC has done to assist Fornethy House residents. As I have said above, there are a number of claims now sitting with GCC's claims sections and a case being litigated. In respect of the claims, it is GCC's duty to consider the evidence available and to decide on offering compensation based on that evidence. This may mean making offers of compensation. However, in other cases it may mean having to reject a claim and defend any consequent court action. While there remains a possibility of being on the opposite sides of litigation there is a limit to the assistance GCC can offer.

I note what the petitioner says in the petition document and submissions about seeking information from GCC and feel I must respond to the following statement:

"That the GCC are collusive in keeping us silenced once more in not helping and enabling us access to our records, vital to our case. We appear to have gone un-noticed as the GCC remain indifferent in investigating the matter properly."

Whilst the petitioner is correct to say that there have been requests for records and information by people who attended Fornethy House, GCC has made significant efforts to assist by looking for the records and information requested. This included having archivists at the Mitchell Library search for Fornethy House records. Any records found have

been provided to those requesting the information. Unfortunately, very little information and few records have been found and what has been found is not particularly detailed. We have been open and transparent about this.

I accept that the results of the searches will have been disappointing to those requesting the information, but I would reaffirm that GCC did make significant efforts to find the requested information.

It may be helpful to summarise the information found. Fornethy House appears to have been gifted to Glasgow Corporation. It was used by Glasgow Corporation and later by Strathclyde Regional Council. It does not appear to have been registered as a residential school although it is referred to as such in some of the documents. The documents that have been found indicate that it was used for convalescent purposes by the Education Department. Attendance at Fornethy House appears to have been arranged through the children's school and attendance appears to have been agreed with parents. There is no indication that the children who attended were placed at Fornethy House under social work legislation. At some point the purpose of Fornethy House appears to have developed from a place for convalescing children to a place where short holidays were offered. I'm afraid the information available is rather limited.

The purpose of the petition is to extend eligibility for the Redress Scheme to include persons who attended Fornethy House on a short stay basis. Whether or not to extend the Redress Scheme is ultimately a matter for the Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Parliament. However, I can say that GCC would not be opposed in principle to extending the scheme to allow those who attended Fornethy House to make applications to the Redress Scheme. That said, I do note that extending the Scheme may have wider implications for the application of the Redress Scheme across Scotland and would want to have more information on the reasons why the current eligibility rules were put in place before expressing a final view.