

PE1933/DD: Allow the Fornethy Survivors to access Scotland's redress scheme

Deputy First Minister written submission, 5 December 2024

Further to my letter dated 16th August 2024, I write to provide the committee with an update on the further action I have taken in respect of this petition.

I met with representatives of the Fornethy survivors group on 10th September to discuss with them my decision not to extend the eligibility criteria of Scotland's Redress Scheme. During the meeting I agreed to take forward a number of actions. I have detailed the agreed actions below and provided an update on each.

Action 1: Emotional support

During our meeting, the survivors told me that they were unsure of what emotional support was available to them. Following our meeting, I wrote to the survivors setting out the range of emotional support which is available to them to support with the ongoing impact of their trauma, this includes 22 third sector organisations funded by [the Survivors of Childhood Abuse Support Fund \(SOCAS\)](#) and a range of support which can be access via the NHS.

Action 2: Meet with the group alongside the leader of Glasgow City Council

At our meeting, I committed to meet with the group along with the leader of Glasgow City Council. I wrote to Councillor Susan Aitken, leader of Glasgow City Council, inviting her to meet with the survivors to hear directly from them about their experiences. Councillor Aitken unfortunately declined to meet with the survivors due to ongoing civil cases and the live criminal case in respect of abuse which took place at Fornethy House.

Action 3: Explore whether an apology could be made to the Fornethy survivors

At our meeting, the survivors were very clear that they wanted Glasgow City Council to apologise and acknowledge the role they played in the abuse the survivors endured during their time at Fornethy House. I am aware that the leader of Glasgow City Council apologised for the abuse which took place in Fornethy House during a council meeting on 12 September. Whilst I am encouraged to see Glasgow City Council provide an apology to the Fornethy survivors it is regrettable that the survivors were not informed or invited to attend the session.

As I noted above, I wrote to the leader of Glasgow City Council inviting her to attend a meeting with myself and the Fornethy Survivors Group to discuss further that apology. Unfortunately, this invitation was declined. You will appreciate that I cannot direct Glasgow City Council and therefore I now consider that this is a matter for Glasgow City Council to resolve.

Action 4: Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

You will be aware of the announcement of Phase 10 of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI) which will focus on children's residential care establishments operated by Local Authorities, including Fornethy House Residential School. The public hearings for Phase 10 of the Inquiry will commence in the second half of 2025 and the Scottish Government will carefully consider any recommendations made by the Inquiry to improve the protection of children in Scotland.

During our meeting, the survivors informed me that they were unsure how to contact SCAI. Following our meeting I wrote to the survivors to provide them with the contact information for SCAI.

Action 5: Meet again with the Fornethy Survivors Group

I agreed to meet with the group again after the criminal case in respect of Fornethy House had been heard. I understand that the case has been postponed until December. I am absolutely committed to further engaging with the Fornethy survivors and have arranged to meet with the group again in January.

I hope that you find this update to be helpful.

Yours sincerely,

KATE FORBES