

PE1933/HH: Allow the Fornethy Survivors to access Scotland's Redress Scheme

Petitioner written submission, 25 June 2025

This submission offers the sincerest of thanks for the immense support that the Petitions Committee and other MSPs gave to the Fornethy Survivors on the 12th June at the cross-party debate at Holyrood. What can we say but we were overwhelmed with your passion for our cause and the sincerest of words expressed, sometimes in pain and frustration. Thank you also to Colin Smyth for organising this debate and for facilitating the very welcome food and drink to sustain us.

During the debate, your words not only spoke to the adult survivors in the gallery but also to our very young inner child selves – words which offered comfort, solace and hope that we were no longer alone; that we were loved, listened to and respected – something our younger selves crave. Words from Alex Cole, Colin Smyth and Maurice Golden:

“The Survivors who are in the public gallery know the love and respect that I have for them, and that Colin Smyth and I will never leave their side as we complete this journey towards justice”.

“Know that we are with them, that we will listen to them and that we will speak up for them”

You spoke directly to the adult and to the child. Thank you.

I would like to echo the words of Maggie Smith when she commends the Committee for ...

“Trauma-informed practice is not enough without trauma-informed policy, and I very much appreciate the Petitions Committee's work on this matter” – here is the finest example of working practice on behalf of the people you serve. Thank you, thank you”.

Amazing!

Monica Lennon – “I also pay tribute to the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee, which I know has taken this cause to its heart. It has listened to the women and to the evidence, and it has made really important recommendations to the Scottish Government. I was surprised to hear that we had not seen the action that everyone is fighting so hard for”

Kate Forbes “bluntly, I am more interested in what survivors have to say and the actions that they want me to take than I necessarily am in their representatives in the Parliament”.

Does the Deputy First Minister not realise that when the MSPs talk up for the Survivors that they are doing this very thing – advocating for our cause? Representatives in Parliament are very much interested in our stories – as Ms Lennon reiterates: “they have listened and they have acted.” Not only did they act but they took the time to go to Fornethy with some of the survivors and see the place for themselves, and the intimidating nature of it.

In response to submission PE1933/GG from Glasgow City Council

Their solicitor acting on their behalf cannot comment due to the live criminal proceedings and we note their response. We look forward to a time when we can meet with the GCC and move forward, particularly with potentially gaining access to our records which we believe may be in locked storage. As noted before, as part of the Government’s Redress Scheme, a full apology has yet to be made and we await this along with the other aspects of the scheme.

We still await a response to our submission published in August 2024, namely, that the Terms and Conditions be looked at and that if survivors placed applications for redress now based on new evidence produced and whether applicants do indeed stand a better chance of success? The “assumption of truth” was allayed to us by the Redress Panel. We look forward to a positive answer and to our request for a full parliamentary debate to bring this to a final conclusion. We appreciate the legalities around the timescales for this.

New Information

Archives - we continue to access information from the Archives, again demonstrating that Fornethy was a residential school and not “a convalescent stay ... or a break in the countryside”. This is now established from all of our evidence.

A Scottish Government publication related to an independent systemic review of historical abuse in residential schools and children's homes in Scotland between 1950 and 1995, aimed to investigate the systems in place to protect children and ensure their safety within these settings during that period. The Summary Findings highlighted issues with the accountability of organisations providing residential care due to poor

record-keeping. We were shocked to discover that along with poor record keeping practices, the Review concluded that:

“some senior people in local authorities ... were guarded and even unwilling to help” and the review likewise learned that “senior people had ordered records to be destroyed”.

Imagine that. What was being covered up?

Media - Fornethy Survivors are also progressing well with their new work with “Women of Scotland” for a series of 6 podcasts and TV documentary, after the civil case. Our story will continue to be told.

Trust is sacred. No justice no peace. The Fornethy survivors have trust in you all.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2007/11/20104729/10>

<https://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2010/health-social-services-public-safety/4210.pdf>