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

Petitioner written submission, 26 February 2026

At this, our last opportunity, to submit to you before the cycle of elections begins again – **what can we say but thank you?** We are very aware that you have endeavoured to keep our petition open and have worked hard to keep the interest in our cause alive. We are naturally very disappointed that our petition will probably not now be heard as a debate in Parliament before May, but understand this may be taken forward by the newly formed committee after the May elections. Our fear is that if the new committee decide to close down our petition would there be a right of appeal? If it were closed down, this would obviously be a slap in the face to the Survivors and a convenient way of making the SNP's problem go away. We will endeavour to increase awareness of our plight so that the Fornethy Survivors will not be overlooked by an act of political sleight of hand.

As you meet again for the final time on the 12th March, we wish to make a further plea and recommendation to keep the petition open and, as part of your legacy report, stress the hard work that has taken place since the petition was first published on the 19th April 2022 and beyond that. This will be the 15th submission by the Fornethy Survivors since that time.

We still need formal acknowledgement, closure and compensation. That has not changed despite the wealth of support from yourselves and other interested parties. The ongoing decision to continue to exclude us from the redress scheme still magnifies that suffering and doesn't cease for us but gets worse over time. We are still being treated unfairly compared to other abuse survivors who can access redress for similar abuse. It is so frustrating for us to still be in this situation when there is power and authority to make those changes.

The Petitions Committee have wholeheartedly supported us and we acknowledge that here. Before Christmas 2025, the Committee concluded that a full parliamentary debate should take place in early 2026 to review the Redress Scheme and in particular the Fornethy victims' claims with a view to amending the Scheme accordingly or as a special circumstance. However, the Scottish government's view, represented by the Deputy First Minister Ms Kate Forbes and her predecessor, Mr John Swinney, was that the claims of the victims were:

- non permissible due to each member's failure to provide documentary evidence to support their attendance at the home at the times they claimed

- non qualifying as the home was not a governmental educational establishment

- outside the scope and qualifying criteria of their current redress scheme

Further work and investigation by the Fornethy victims' representatives and the all-party parliamentary review team revealed that:

- despite assertions by the Glasgow City Council that no documentary evidence was available regarding the operations of the Fornethy establishment (since it had been destroyed many years earlier), some evidence of its operation was uncovered in the Council's Mitchell library archives by the victims' own representative. **The Review Team also acknowledged that the government's own representatives had destroyed the very evidence that the government was requesting.**

- the Fornethy establishment was run by the Glasgow City Council and that its primary purpose was as a government funded residential education institution.

- the scope of the current redress scheme was insufficient and needed review since it did not cover cases such as the Fornethy situation where abuse had undoubtedly occurred within a Scottish Government establishment.

May we draw your attention back to this fundamental need when the new committee convenes after May: **that the eligibility criteria of the redress scheme be amended to ensure that Fornethy survivors can seek redress and that the debate is scheduled for an early hearing?** Our struggle does not end here and it is our utmost hope that the newly formed Committee will continue to support us and aim for that much needed debate.

We are mindful of the Post Office Scandal (amongst others) which was known about for years but where it took a television documentary to make the UK Government stand up and do something about it. This seems true for many other crimes against people that go unheard until the survivors take the difficult step of exposing it through the media as a last resort. We hadn't appreciated that, in taking the big and courageous step onto this path of petitioning the Scottish Government, that it would be such a long, drawn out and arduous one. We can appreciate others who also sought justice, closure and finally peace through struggle.

We are also seeking to contact other individuals who were employed at the Fornethy school in the later years and who will may still be alive with their memories. We continue to research in the archives and that provides us with a useful focus and determination to find out the whys of our being sent there and what happened there. We are engaging with the media in the making of podcasts and a documentary film to raise our profile at a wider level. Our suffering has not gone away and the struggle for justice does not go away. We want change for ourselves and for those children suffering now and in the future. Some of us are also in the early stages of providing the Scottish Childhood Abuse Inquiry with witness statements in May and hope that something good will come out of that, difficult as it will be to testify. The DFM stated in her letter to the Committee (11th February 2026) than an apology by the Glasgow Council would be coming to us as part of this inquiry but again this does not go far enough – actions are needed.

Unfortunately, the DFM did not reply to our request to meet with the Petitioners in our December submission (PE1933/II) but did meet again after this with some of the survivors. There was no acknowledgement of us despite our hard work and efforts. This was disappointing.

To the new Committee: Please support us?

“Because if we, the storytellers, don’t do this, then the bad people win” (Christianne Amanpour).

Mutuality and trust are sacred in moving forward. No justice, no peace.