

# Deputy First Minister submission of 6 February 2023

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

Thank you for your letter dated 10 January 2023. I am grateful to the Committee for its careful consideration of the issues raised by the Fornethy survivors.

As I hope the Committee recognises, I acknowledge the suffering endured by many of those who spent time at Fornethy and the seriousness of the issues raised in this Petition. I am anxious to satisfactorily address these concerns.

Scotland's Redress Scheme was designed primarily for those vulnerable children who were in long-term care, often isolated with limited or no contact with their families. Whilst the reason for the stay in a relevant care setting may be a relevant consideration for Redress Scotland when making an assessment on eligibility, the duration of abuse is not.

As I stated during my recent appearance before the Education, Children and Young People Committee, I do not believe that Fornethy survivors are precluded from applying for redress under the current eligibility criteria. The decision as to whether a redress payment is made is quite rightly a matter for Redress Scotland as the independent decision makers. In making a decision, and as further reinforced in the scheme guidance, Redress Scotland take into account the individual facts and circumstances of each application.

However, I want to be absolutely satisfied the existing eligibility criteria operate in this way and would be grateful if the Committee would allow me some more time to complete this analysis. I have instructed my officials to conduct further enquiries with Glasgow City Council to establish the circumstances in which children came to be placed in Fornethy House and to investigate the limited records and information relating to Fornethy House. I also want to test further the existing eligibility criteria and the guidance in relation to Fornethy. These enquiries are central to enabling me to fully address the issues raised in the Petition.

I hope the Committee will understand the necessity for this additional work to be undertaken and I will provide the Committee with a further update once these enquiries have concluded.

Should the Committee wish me to appear to give evidence on the steps I am taking to consider the Petition, I would, of course, be very happy to do so.

I hope that you find this response to be helpful.