

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

First Minister written submission, 29 May 2024

As you are aware, in my previous role as Deputy First Minister I had portfolio responsibility for Scotland's Redress Scheme, and you have set out in your letter some of the previous involvement I have had in respect of the petition the Committee are currently considering.

The circumstances which children were placed in Fornethy House were unclear and, as I set out in my letter to the Committee on 6 February 2023, I instructed 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. The former Deputy First Minister instructed the appointment of an independent researcher to undertake those enquiries. The independent research concluded that such records as exist suggest that children were placed in Fornethy House, with the agreement of their parents, to convalesce after an illness and / or so that they might benefit from a recuperative holiday. These circumstances fall within the scope of the Exceptions to Eligibility SSI as previously approved by the Parliament.

I appreciate that this outcome will be disappointing to the survivors however it was recognised during passage of the legislation that eligibility had to be aligned with the purpose of the redress scheme. This is in no way intended to diminish the experiences of the survivors or to suggest that the parents of these children were in any way responsible for the experiences they endured during their time at Fornethy House. This position was supported by the majority of respondents to the public consultation.

Kate Forbes, in her capacity as Deputy First Minister, now has portfolio responsibility for Scotland's Redress Scheme. Any further correspondence in respect of the redress scheme should be directed to her.

JOHN SWINNEY