

NAPAC submission of 26 August 2022

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

Thank you for your letter dated 6 July 2022, seeking NAPAC's input on various questions from the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee members.

Specifically, Committee Members wanted NAPAC's views on whether the eligibility criteria for Scotland's Redress Scheme should be extended to those who experienced non-recent¹ abuse while in short-term, holiday or respite care. Committee Members also asked whether NAPAC was aware of any other groups affected by this issue and – in the absence of access to the Redress Scheme – our views on other support that could be provided and who should provide it.

NAPAC has been working for over twenty years as a UK-wide charity set up to support adults in recovery from any type of abuse, trauma or neglect in childhood. Since the very start we have been aware that some of the most severe and damaging cruelties against children have been perpetrated by agents of the state.

Our clear view is that **yes, the eligibility criteria for Scotland's Redress Scheme should absolutely be extended to those who experienced non-recent abuse while in short-term, holiday or respite care.** In our experience of hearing the accounts of many hundreds of survivors of abuse in care it does not require a young person to be in any care setting for an extended period of time to experience extremely severe abuse of a physical and/or sexual nature.

Indeed, we have heard that perpetrators often target young people on a short stay because they already confused and even more insecure than most young people who may have had more time to adapt to their surroundings.

Just one incident of such abuse can have a major impact on the emotional and cognitive development of a child. This is even more damaging when it occurs at an early age, as was experienced by these primary school age children. The impact of such abuse on children who are lucky enough to have safe and nurturing caregivers can be mitigated

¹ The Committee's letter originally phrased this as 'historic'. NAPAC strongly advocates instead for the term 'non-recent' as there is nothing historic about the effects of childhood abuse. Survivors deal with the aftermath on a day-to-day basis

by ensuring safety in the future. These young people in question were not so lucky as to have such people around them to buffer the impact of such trauma.

Perhaps one of the most difficult things NAPAC's support team hear about from callers to our telephone support line is survivors expressing the clear wish and intention to end their own lives. We also know of many cases where they have actually killed themselves. Recently we have been hearing about suicidal ideation and intention more frequently than in the past. Many challenges are now coming together all at once in society to make life more difficult for the less well-off, such as rapid inflation and the cost of living. Very often one of the clearest impacts of abuse on children is a compromised ability to get, or hold down, a good job in adulthood.

In response to the Committee Members' first subsidiary question, NAPAC is not aware of specific other groups affected by this issue. We know that Police Scotland are investigating former staff at Fornethy School, formerly run by Glasgow Council. However, that may not necessarily result in convictions since non-recent cases such as these are always hard to prove.

I also understand that Police Scotland are not contesting the accuracy of the accounts of the women represented by the Fornethy Survivors Group. Many individual survivors have also given testimony to the Scottish Child Abuse Enquiry.

Finally, Committee Members asked for NAPAC's views on other support that could be provided and who should provide it, in the absence of access to the Redress Scheme.

Obviously our strong preference is for the Fornethy survivors to be allowed access to the Redress Scheme, for the reasons outlined above. More generally, we are aware that the Scottish Parliament has initiated some very welcome responses to people who suffered in childhood at the hands of the Scottish state or its institutions in the past.

Future Pathways and NHS Scotland Education have both set a good example of high standards for the rest of the UK to follow. Future Pathways is a service open to any survivors of abuse in local authority care in Scotland, so some measures are already in place.

While emotional and psychological support is very helpful and welcome there will always be a need for justice to be delivered concurrently. The

many survivors of abuse in care we have heard from over the years want the truth to be heard as much as they want to receive compensation. For many, the truth is more important.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the Committee's considerations.