

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee
Wednesday 11 March 2026
6th Meeting, 2026 (Session 6)

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

Introduction

Petitioner Iris Tinto on behalf of Fornethy Survivors Group

Petition summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to widen access to Scotland's Redress Scheme to allow Fornethy Survivors to seek redress.

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1933>

1. [The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 22 January 2025](#)
At that meeting, the Committee confirmed its decision to seek a chamber debate on this petition. It also agreed to write to the Deputy First Minister and the leader of Glasgow City Council.
2. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
3. The Committee has received new written submissions from the Deputy First Minister, Glasgow City Council and the Petitioner, which are set out in **Annexe C**.
4. The Deputy First Minister has written to the Committee on two occasions since the petition was last considered. The correspondence is set out in **Annexe D**.
5. [Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition's webpage.](#)
6. [Further background information about this petition can be found in the SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.
7. [The Scottish Government gave its initial position on this petition on 24 May 2022.](#)
8. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 436 signatures have been received on this petition.

Action

9. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
March 2026

Annexe A: Summary of petition

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

Petitioner

Iris Tinto on behalf of Fornethy Survivors Group

Date Lodged

19 April 2022

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to widen access to Scotland's Redress Scheme to allow Fornethy Survivors to seek redress.

Previous action

Written to Nicola Sturgeon

The group members have written to their MSPs

Protest in September and new protest due

A great deal of research into the background and looking for records over the last two years including seeking information from Glasgow Council

We did protests in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Background information

Survivors need acknowledgement, closure and compensation. The young girls were "in care" of Glasgow Corporation who provided the in care setting for these vulnerable, helpless and isolated children. The decision to make us exempt from the redress scheme has magnified that suffering. We want to be treated equally to other abuse survivors. Redress is an important part.

Going down the legal route incurs great costs and mental resilience which abused victims will mostly find untenable due to the effects the abuse has had on them. We know that childhood abuse affects many socio-economic factors as well as inter-personal and mental health conditions. Why should they have to? If the government recognises the validity of child abuse and its long term effects, why make them exempt?

Fornethy children were in the care of Glasgow Corporation and they are not being held to account but passing survivors onto agencies to deal with them. Many victims have already spent great sums of money and effort in therapeutic interventions, preparing themselves, being interviewed, giving statements to the Police and the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry . They are now wondering to what purpose given they are not being taken seriously in the Redress scheme. We know there are records in

CPPP/S6/26/6/2

the Mitchell Library but are being met with silence again. We have no access to justice.

Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE1933 on 22 January 2025

The Convener: PE1933, which was lodged by Iris Tinto on behalf of the Fornethy Survivors Group, is on allowing the Fornethy survivors to access Scotland's redress scheme. I think that I detect the petitioner and some supporters in the public gallery. The petition calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to widen access to Scotland's redress scheme to allow Fornethy survivors to seek redress.

Members will know that we have been actively engaged with the petition for some considerable time. It was most recently considered at our meeting on 26 June last year, when we agreed to write to the Deputy First Minister to set out our unanimous view that individuals who experienced abuse in a relevant care setting should be able to access the redress scheme, regardless of the length of their stay or whether there was parental consent for their placement.

The response that we received from the Deputy First Minister in August restated the Scottish Government's position that the existing eligibility criteria reflect the core purpose of the scheme, which was designed primarily for vulnerable children who were in long-term care, often isolated, with limited or no contact with their families, and that it is not minded to change the criteria in either the primary act or secondary legislation.

We have received further information from Redress Scotland on the legislation, regulations and statutory guidance that were referred to during our discussions on 12 June last year. Information has been provided about the decisions to deny redress. The reasons include there being insufficient supporting information and the care setting not being covered by the scheme because the application related to short-term care.

The petitioner has responded by highlighting the evidence that suggests that Fornethy house was a residential school rather than a short-term respite or rehabilitation setting, and has questioned why the onus is on survivors to produce records that were either kept by Glasgow Corporation, or lost or destroyed.

Following receipt of the Deputy First Minister's response, members will recall our work programme discussion on 11 September last year, when we agreed to seek a chamber debate on the substance of the petition. Members might be aware that Alex Rowley has lodged a motion that was marked for members' business; however, I think that he has withdrawn the members' business motion on the basis that the committee is minded to seek a chamber debate on the subject.

Subsequently, we received an update from the Deputy First Minister that provided information on the meeting that she had with the Fornethy Survivors Group. A copy of that update is included in our papers for today's meeting. It sets out a number of action points that the Deputy First Minister committed to taking, such as signposting survivors to emotional support, requesting that the leader of Glasgow City Council meet survivors, providing details of how to contact the Scottish child abuse inquiry

and committing to meeting the group again after the criminal case relating to Fornethy house has been heard.

We have received a submission from the petitioner that responds to the various action points and draws our attention back to the ask of their petition—namely, that the eligibility criteria of the redress scheme be amended to ensure that Fornethy survivors can seek redress. The survivors also request that the petition be considered for a parliamentary debate.

Do members have any comments or suggestions for action? I am certainly minded that we do not resile from our commitment to take the issue forward for a chamber debate, but, in the light of everything that has been going on ahead of that, is there further action that it would be useful for us to take that would inform that discussion?

Fergus Ewing (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP): I entirely agree that there should be a debate in due course. However, prior to that point, and to inform both the debate and the committee's work, it would be useful to glean more information. We could write to the Deputy First Minister to seek an update on any further action that the Scottish Government is taking in respect of the action points that were mentioned in her correspondence of 5 December 2024. We could also write to the leader of Glasgow City Council to ask that she meet the Fornethy survivors to discuss their continuing request for recognition of and redress for the abuse that they experienced at Fornethy house.

There seems to have been what we might call a tussle as to whether the Scottish Government or Glasgow City Council should pay. That is a pretty unseemly scrap, and it is preferable that it not take place. However, given that the Deputy First Minister seems to be trying to get the council to pay up, I think that we should find out what the council's view is.

In my view, the Government should pay up anyway. If it wants to use its muscle to try to recover from Glasgow City Council, that is fair enough. The Government has the firepower, the lawyers and the taxpayers' money to enable it to get the money back, but the Fornethy survivors do not. Why should they be in the position of begging for what they should have had in the first place? I am sorry, convener—those last remarks were unscripted.

The Convener: I would be interested to get an insight into Glasgow City Council's thinking on the issue. An apology was offered, but it came out, rather than being delivered in a structured way. I would be interested to know the timeline for its consideration of these matters.

As members have no other suggestions, are we content to keep the petition open? We are still minded to seek a debate on the petition, which would probably take place later in the year. We want to clarify some of the other issues so that we can frame a motion as directly as possible when we take it to the chamber.

Members *indicated agreement.*

Annexe C: Written submissions

Deputy First Minister written submission, 7 February 2025

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

Thank you for your letter of 28 January 2025. As I set out in my submission to the Committee on 5 December 2024 all but one of the actions I committed to when I met with the representatives of the Fornethy Survivors Group on 10 September 2024 have been completed.

Unfortunately, the one action I have not been able to complete was to meet with the survivors on 22nd January. Criminal proceedings in respect of Fornethy House are now live and, therefore, it is not appropriate for me to meet with the survivors at this point in time. I remain committed to meeting with the survivors and will do so at an appropriate point in the near future.

I hope you find this update helpful.

Yours sincerely,

KATE FORBES

Glasgow City Council written submission, 26 February 2025

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

I refer to your letter dated 28 January 2025 to Councillor Susan Aitken, Leader of Glasgow City Council, which has been passed to me for response in my role as Solicitor to the Council.

I note from your letter that the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee agreed to write to Councillor Aitken requesting that she meets with the Fornethy House Survivors to discuss their continuing requests for recognition and redress for the abuse they experienced at Fornethy House. However, given that there are now live criminal proceedings in respect of Fornethy House, as well as a case in the civil courts, I have advised Councillor Aitken that it would not be appropriate for her to meet with the survivors at this time. I trust the Committee will appreciate the legal constraints placed on Councillor Aitken and the council in respect of this matter.

In addition to the current court proceedings, the Committee may wish to note that there are also approximately 170 claims relating to Fornethy House being dealt with by the council's claims section. No admissions have been made in these claims and they continue to be assessed by our claims section and legal teams as well as the external solicitors acting for the council's insurers. As more information becomes available, the council may be able to take a different view on the settlement of these claims and the issuing of more specific apologies, as well as giving further consideration to a meeting with the survivors. We will continue to closely monitor all legal proceedings and other developments relating to this matter.

With regard to the apology already given by Councillor Aitken on behalf of the council to any women who, as children, experienced any abuse at Fornethy House, this was done at a meeting of Full Council in order to ensure that it was a matter of public record. I have set out the wording of that apology below. [A webcast extract from the council meeting can be viewed here.](#) The [minute of the meeting is also available here.](#) A copy of the link to the webcast and the wording of the apology was also previously made available to the Fornethy House Survivors through correspondence with the Deputy First Minister's Office.

I trust this information is of further assistance to you and the Committee.

Yours sincerely

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & ADMINISTRATION

Undernote:

There is a live criminal case relating to Fornethy House and it is vitally important that we do nothing to jeopardise that.

Fornethy House was operated by Glasgow Corporation and then Strathclyde Regional Council from 1960 until 1993.

It originally provided short convalescent stays to primary aged girls and later provided accommodation to girls who it was felt would benefit from a break in the countryside.

Since the facility closed a number of women have come forward and recounted experience of abuse when they attended Fornethy House.

I was shocked, and I know we will all have been shocked, to hear those accounts of abuse.

On behalf of the council, I want to say sorry for any abuse suffered by children who attended Fornethy House.

Petitioner written submission, 25 June 2025

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

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>

Petitioner written submission, 17 November 2025

PE1933/II: Allow the Fornethy Survivors to access Scotland’s Redress Scheme

Fornethy Survivors ongoing Petition for Redress – equality and choice for all

We would, once again, wish to sincerely thank members of the Committee for your ongoing support of the Fornethy ladies in seeking Redress. It really is greatly appreciated.

Now that the trial of one of the perpetrators is over and found guilty of no less than 18 charges, this is a key time for us in progressing with our cause. Some of our survivors will be just happy that the perpetrator has been found guilty (and have said so); some will seek compensation through the Civil Courts and then there are those, who without any record of their existence at Fornethy, will seek the avenue of Redress which is a far kinder approach. It is about the choice and the equality of choice.

We are keen to know when the promised Parliamentary debate will take place? We understand that there will be an upcoming election and therefore MSPs will be focussed and busy with that. However, we do not want this going into the long grass. With the departure of the Kate Forbes when her term of office comes to an end, I am concerned that we would be in a position of starting again. We want a resolution to this.

The Deputy First Minister met with some of the Fornethy Survivors at the end of November. However, this is just one group of Survivors and didn't include those who are researching and doing the submissions. We feel it is only fair for all survivors to get representation. We are proposing, therefore, that when the hoped Parliamentary Debate does happen, that a second meeting with the DFM can be held either before or after to hear the Petitioners views.

We also hope that the proposed meeting with Councillor Aitken, Glasgow City Council, be progressed as per their February 2025 submission which stated they couldn't meet until the live criminal proceedings were over. This meeting was at the request of the DFM.

This petition was started on 24th May 2022. This is three and a half years now where we have continuously sent in submissions and will continue to. It is frustrating and arduous mentally and emotionally.

May we remind you of a quotation by Billhar Singh Uppal, a lead claimant lawyer in North Wales litigation, which we quoted in our very first submission which says:

“the civil litigation process is not really fit for this particular purpose – there are too many hurdles; too many ways that claims can be defeated on technicalities that victims and survivors do not understand”

We know that the civil route will not be suitable for all and some may not be able to tolerate such an ordeal. His experience with redress schemes, however is:

“they have a better experience ... victims have emerged from the process less bruised; wholler; their trust in society restored – not totally restored, but you've got to start somewhere”.

Court processes can be contentious, drawn out and vicariously harming which is really hard for victims – the redress scheme has been designed to be a timelier and kinder process that we no longer want to be denied. We are now believed in the eyes of the law and that the Scottish Government also believe us, that we as, once more, that this damaging legacy of 30 years of abuse is taken forward and brought to a timely conclusion which brings justice and peace! The moral duty is the equal delivery of justice.

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

Petitioner written submission, 26 February 2026

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

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).

CPPP/S6/26/6/2

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

Annexe D: Correspondence from the Deputy First Minister

17 December 2025

Dear Convener,

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

Further to my letters dated 5 December 2024 and 7 February 2025, I write to provide the Committee with a further update in respect of this petition.

As criminal proceedings have now concluded I have had the opportunity to meet again with the Fornethy survivors group. I remain very grateful to the survivors for sharing their experiences with me and commend their bravery and courage in doing so.

The survivors continue to make clear to me that, for many of them, the priority is to meet with representatives of Glasgow City Council. I have again written to the leader of Glasgow City Council on 24 November 2025 to invite her to meet with the survivors.

On Wednesday 10 December 2025, the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry began to hear opening submissions in relation to Phase 10 of its' investigations. This phase will consider the provision of residential care for children and young people in establishments run by Local Authorities and establishments run by voluntary providers used by Local Authorities and others for care placements.

Twenty establishments, including Fornethy House, have been confirmed as part of this investigative phase with the period covered being from within living memory until 2014. Evidence will begin in January with hearings expected to conclude in May with Fornethy House.

I hope you find this update helpful. I look forward to discussing this matter further with you on 8 January 2026.

Yours sincerely,

KATE FORBES

11 February 2026

Dear Convener,

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

Further to my letter dated 17 December 2025 and our meeting on 8 January 2026, I write to provide you with an update.

CPPP/S6/26/6/2

As I set out in my previous letter, I wrote to Susan Aitken, leader of Glasgow City Council on 24 November 2025 to invite her to meet with the survivors. I have now received a response from Ms Aitken who has declined to meet with the survivors directly due to ongoing litigation. However, she has advised that the Chief Executive intends to apologise for abuse which took place at Fornethy House when she appears to give evidence to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry in May. An apology was made on behalf of Glasgow City Council in their opening statement for Phase 10 of the inquiry and I understand this will be reiterated in their closing statement.

I hope that you find this update to be helpful.

Yours sincerely,

KATE FORBES