

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery
John Swinney MSP

To;
Stephen Kerr MSP
Convener
Education, Children and Young People Committee
08 March 2022
Dear Stephen,
Scotland's Redress Scheme

Following my announcement of the launch of Scotland's Redress Scheme for survivors of child abuse in care, I would like to provide you with an update on delivery of the Scheme since its opening on the 08 December 2021.

The redress scheme offers financial redress to survivors of historical child abuse in relevant care settings in Scotland, and, in some circumstances, their next of kin. Survivors will also have access to some non-financial elements of redress such as acknowledgement, apology and emotional support.

This scheme represents an important milestone in what I know has been a long and difficult journey for many survivors of in-care abuse, and I am committed to ensuring its operation is survivor-focused and trauma-informed.

The scheme has now been running for twelve weeks, and is supporting eligible applicants to apply to receive the redress they deserve.

The independent decision making body Redress Scotland, has now started to receive completed redress applications, and regular panel sittings to consider applications, make decisions and offer redress payments are underway.

The number of completed applications, determinations and payments made has not yet reached a level to enable disclosure of information without potential compromise to survivors' data privacy – however, information will be available in due course, and in line with the reporting responsibilities, included in the legislation.

Since the scheme opened, over 3000 calls have been made to the phone lines. The team handling these calls have received extensive training in order to work in a trauma-

informed way and are working sensitively with applicants at every stage of the process, including support with accessing records.

In addition, I am happy to share that more than 800 redress applications have been received to date, made up of around 750 survivor redress applications and around 50 next of kin applications.

The number of applications received in the first twelve weeks of the scheme has exceeded forecasts. It was projected that around 30% of the total number of applications expected over the five years of the scheme, would be received in the first year. Within twelve weeks of the scheme opening, 9% of the expected five-year total of survivor applications have been received. In response to the high number of applications already received, a further ten redress caseworkers are being recruited, almost doubling the number of caseworkers available. Recruitment will take time but the process is now underway.

The modelling for the scheme anticipated that many survivors would choose to engage with caseworkers for pre-application support assistance with accessing care records and supporting information, before submitting their application. Many survivors have however chosen to submit their application at the earliest opportunity and then benefit from the caseworker support to access the information they need to have the application progress to Redress Scotland. The profile of the applications received to date is therefore different to what was anticipated in the early weeks, with many applications still being mostly incomplete upon receipt.

When a survivor or applicant submits an application for redress, they will receive acknowledgment of their application being received. Following this they can expect to receive initial contact from the Scottish Government within a six-week period. The team are working to allocate a caseworker to each survivor or applicant as soon as possible after initial contact. Allocation is being prioritised for those applications received from survivors who are terminally ill and those who are aged 68 or older.

Due to the high volume of applications received in the opening weeks following scheme launch, there is a waiting period for caseworker allocation. The waiting period is currently in the region of around eight weeks for those applications that do not fall under the terminal illness or 68 and older priority categories. The team are working hard to reduce this waiting period. I would like to give my personal assurance that every effort is being made to reduce this waiting period.

Whilst survivors are awaiting caseworker allocation they can still speak with the caseworker team via the scheme helplines and can also access any additional support via the new Redress Support Service.

The Redress Support Service is a bespoke service that the Scottish Government have commissioned via the In-Care Survivors Alliance. It offers practical as well as emotional support to applicants, along with support to access relevant records.

There is no eligibility criteria for support from the Redress Support Service, except that the person must be making, or thinking about making, an application for redress and be referred by one of the caseworker team.

Staff are working hard to minimise waiting times and remain available to help. We continue to encourage people to contact the team for assistance if they are considering applying to the scheme

Application forms and further information can be found at: www.mygov.scot/redress. Survivor applicants can contact a case worker by calling 0808 175 0808 between 10am and 4pm Monday to Thursday or leave a message outside those hours. If a survivor is calling from abroad they should call +44 131 297 6500. Survivors can also email apply@redress-scheme@gov.scot if they are considering applying or want further information.

Next of kin applicants can contact a case worker by calling 0808 281 7777 between 10am and 4pm Monday to Thursday, or leave a message outside those hours. If a next of kin is calling from abroad they should call +44 131 244 2542. Any email enquiries regarding next of kin applications should be sent to nextofkinteam@gov.scot. British Sign Language users can ContactScotland-BSL service to contact a case worker through <https://contactscotland-bsl.org/>.

I understand that applying for redress may bring up difficult feelings for applicants, and they may wish to speak to someone about this. Applicants can call the Redress Emotional Support Helpline on 0800 211 8403 between 10am and 1pm Monday to Friday. Applicants do not need to go through their case worker to access the helpline, which is in addition to other emotional support available.

As a reminder, funding for legal advice is also available to all applicants applying to the scheme. I strongly encourage all applicants to obtain legal advice, particularly in relation to signing the waiver. It should be noted that any decision on the legal assistance required, and the choice of solicitor, is entirely up to the applicant. Case workers will not be able to advise applicants on this matter. Needs will vary from person to person, but the redress scheme acknowledges the importance of independent legal advice, as it will help applicants make fully-informed decisions about redress.

If an applicant requires advice on obtaining a solicitor, we would encourage them to get in touch with The Law Society. They can do this by calling them on 0131 226 7411 or by visiting their Frequently Asked Questions page on their website: [Frequently asked questions | Law Society of Scotland \(lawscot.org.uk\)](#)

We will soon be providing more information on the Survivor Forum and how people applying to the scheme can be involved. The purpose of the Forum is to ensure that applicants have a mechanism through which to provide feedback, and to make recommendations for improvements to the delivery of the Redress Scheme.

We are proposing an inclusive approach, in that everyone who applies to the Redress Scheme can become a member of the Survivor Forum if they wish and will be given an opportunity to advise how/if they would like to be involved.

I trust this update is helpful, and I have copied this to all Members of the Scottish Parliament, to assist colleagues in dealing with enquiries from constituents. I will provide further information in due course.

Yours Sincerely,
John Swinney