

Fornethy House: Alleged abuse survivors protest outside Scottish Parliament over exclusion from compensation



By Amie Flett March 3 2022, 6.38pm



Survivors at the protest outside Holyrood on Thursday.

Survivors who say they endured child abuse at an Angus residential school have protested outside the Scottish Parliament after being deemed exempt from compensation.

Over the last two years around 200 women have come forward to say they endured historic child abuse while staying at Fornethy House between the 1960s and 80s.

Girls of primary school age would visit the Angus residential school in Kilry for six to eight weeks at a time, on the pretence they were going on holiday.

Now aged in their 60s and 70s, women have told lawyers they were [sexually abused, beaten, punched and force-fed by staff](#).



MSP Brian Whittle speaks with Fornethy protester Marion Reid at the protest.

The residential home opened in 1961 and was owned by Glasgow Corporation, the city's local authority at the time – now Glasgow City Council.

Police are investigating the claims but nobody has been brought to justice.

On Thursday, the group now known at the [Fornethy House](#) Residential School Survivors protested at Holyrood after victims were told they cannot apply for government compensation in a new taxpayer-funded redress scheme.

What is redress?

The scheme is an alternative to civil court action for survivors of historical child abuse while in care.

It offers compensation or support and an apology from the organisation responsible.

It was created as victims of historic child abuse in Scotland cannot seek civil damages in court if the abuse occurred before September 1964.

But any Fornethy survivor who has applied so far has been told they do not qualify because their visit to the school was a “short-term holiday”.

A [petition was launched](#) by the alleged victims over the decision as they claim the compensation should be open to Fornethy survivors because they allegedly endured abuse while in the care of Glasgow City Council staff.

Women who attended Fornethy before 1964 have now been given no option to find justice as they legally cannot make a civil claim.

Apology

Marion Reid, 64, who was one of the first victims to publicly come forward with [claims of abuse](#) and represents the Fornethy women, said at the protest leading members of the Scottish Government have broken promises.

She said: “Myself along with one other Fornethy girl attended the Scottish Parliament in 2017 with other historic survivors to listen to John Swinney stand up and address us all and say ‘we are sorry and we apologise’.



Marion was one of the first survivors to speak out.

“He said the Scottish Government will now intend to put right the wrongs of the past.

“Well John Swinney and Nicola Sturgeon – you have not fulfilled the promise you made by making Fornethy girls exempt from redress.

“You have taken away our choice as to whether we wish to apply or not.

“It is unjust and wrong and only looks to protect the owners of Fornethy, Glasgow Corporation, who should be held accountable alongside the staff they employed to work there.

“Make redress an option and individual choice for all Fornethy survivors and fulfil the promise made.”



Marion with signs at the protest.

She added: “We had a fantastic response at the protest and we’re all on a high.

“Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Democrat MSPs all came out and spoke to us.

“It couldn’t have gone any better, we’ve waited so long.

“We even had people from the Ukraine protest who wanted to help us.”

A Scottish Government spokesperson said: “The Scottish Government takes the abuse of children in all circumstances very seriously and acknowledges that the abuse of children in all settings is wrong and harmful.

“This should never have happened, regardless of where it occurred.

Ultimately it will be up to Redress Scotland to decide whether or not an applicant is eligible

Scottish Government

“The exclusion of those abused in temporary respite care is in keeping with the core purpose of the redress scheme, which is primarily for those vulnerable children who were in long-term residential care, often isolated with limited or no contact with their families.

“Ultimately it will be up to Redress Scotland to decide whether or not an applicant is eligible.

“They will take into account all of the facts and circumstances in reaching a decision.”

Last month, the first [civil case made by a victim of Fornethy](#) was lodged against Glasgow City Council.

The local authority said it would be inappropriate to comment further due to ongoing police investigations.