

House of Horrors bunglers have lost our files

WOMEN PLAN PROTEST OVER MISSING RECORDS Abuse survivors blame council

• Sunday Mail (UK) 29 Aug 2021 Gordon Blackstock



MISSION Marion Reid sends a message. Right, Fornethy House and, below, our exclusive story Main picture Victoria Stewart

Abuse survivors at a girls' residential school have accused Scotland's biggest council of losing their records.

More than 170 women have come forward in the last year to claim they were attacked both physically and sexually at Fornethy House, near Kilry, in Angus.

Members of the group are planning a protest outside Glasgow City Council's headquarters next month.

The council ran the home between 1961 and 1993 after being gifted the mansion in 1955.

Thompsons Solicitors has launched a 130-strong legal action against the local authority – believed to be the largest case of its kind. But the victims say official records of their time there have vanished.

Marion Reid, 63, a co-founder of the group Fornethy House Residential School Survivors, said her stay at the home in 1965 doesn't appear in any of her personal records.

She said: "I've not found a single record of my time there. That goes for medical and school records. The whole period has just disappeared from any official document.

"I went there in 1965 but there are other girls who went there in the 1980s and no one can find their school records either.

"It was all organised through our primary schools in Glasgow and there should be records of the stays somewhere. If not, why not?

"It is incredibly frustrating for us and seems to give the council the ability to wriggle away from any responsibility."

Last year, we told how about 40 women had bravely come forward to reveal the abuse they suffered at Fornethy.

Schoolgirls were sent there to recover from illness and given promises it was like a holiday camp.

But in reality they were subjected to brutal beatings and under-age sex attacks by members of staff.

Police officers have said they are working closely with prosecutors on the ongoing criminal investigation into Fornethy House. The police probe is believed to have been hampered by the missing records.

Laura Connor, of Thompsons Solicitors, said: "We're fully behind all of those protesting to be heard.

“Glasgow City Council should take notice of such a large number of survivors of abuse who were harmed while under the council’s care.

“The council’s claims of missing paperwork from the time are not good enough. They must meet us so we can resolve this matter.”

Detective Inspector Mark Lamont said: “We are committed to bringing perpetrators to justice. I’d encourage anybody who has been the victim of abuse, either recently or in the past, to please report the matter to us.”

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service said: “We are working closely with police and they have updated us on their investigations.”

Glasgow City Council said: “The list of claimants has now been passed to social work and they are trying to trace any records for Fornethy House for our claims department.”