



Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

Petition Number: [PE1596](#)

Main Petitioner: Paul Anderson, James McDermott, Chris Daly

Subject: In Care Survivors Service Scotland

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to retain our essential, dedicated In Care Survivor Service Scotland in its current form.

Background

In November 2008, the [Scottish Government](#) announced the development of a national advice and information support service, In Care Survivors Service Scotland (ICSSS). This formed part of the Scottish Government's response to recommendations in a [review of historical abuse in residential care](#) from 1950-1995 led by independent expert Tom Shaw. The review highlighted the necessity for advocacy, mediation and counselling services which were easily accessible and related to appropriate information and advice.

Following an open, competitive process, the service was provided by a partnership led by [Open Secret](#), a registered charity providing confidential support to individuals and families whose lives have been impacted by childhood abuse or trauma.

Open Secret has been funded by the Scottish Government to provide the In Care Survivor Service as part of its overall service offering. This service has [helped over 900 survivors](#) across Scotland since its launch in 2009. Services include:

- Locally based specialist development workers offering support, advocacy and confidential counselling.
- A free, confidential help line
- A one stop service for help to access historical records from childhood care settings, with support from a trained counsellor throughout.
- Assistance in accessing the Criminal Injuries Compensation scheme and support to pursue some legal issues (for example support to attend court)

- Befriending to help gain confidence in dealing with new experiences.
- Groupwork where people can feel supported and share their experience with others.

Open Secret also offers telephone counselling to survivors across Scotland.

The majority of the counsellors have Post Graduate Diploma training and all have substantial experience of counselling, particularly in the field of trauma, working with survivors. Open Secret considers that counselling offers a safe place for survivors to talk about things that may be affecting their lives. Survivors have a choice about what is discussed and are offered as many sessions as they need. During the first appointment decisions are made as to which service would suit each survivor best.

Open Secret has been operating the ICSSS for over seven years and the petitioners feel that the uniqueness of its approach is to offer different services, often through one specialist support worker, who has developed a one-to-one relationship with service users. This ensures that survivors do not have to develop trust with a number of different workers. They also say that focus group results and consultations have evidenced that this is what survivors find particularly beneficial about the service.

Open Secret is the only operator of the ICSSS. However, other organisations may also provide support to in care survivors.

This petition has been lodged as there are proposals to change the way such support services are delivered. These proposals are discussed later in this briefing.

Scottish Government Action

In 2004, the Scottish Executive's First Minister Jack McConnell issued a [comprehensive apology](#) to all adult survivors of in care abuse. In 2005, the Scottish Government launched [SurvivorScotland](#), the National Strategy for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse. This set out a strategic way forward to improve services for survivors who have suffered childhood trauma.

The Shaw historical abuse review mentioned above was published in 2007. The review recommendations led, in 2008, to the formation of the current In Care Survivors Support Service.

In 2009 the Government established [Time To Be Heard: A Pilot Forum](#), which provided a confidential setting where historical concerns of past residents of Quarriers homes could be heard. [Quarriers](#) is one of Scotland's largest social care charities. They provide practical care and support for vulnerable children, adults and families who face extremely challenging circumstances. As a result of this pilot, the Scottish Government created a [National Confidential Forum](#) for all survivors of abuse in care.

In 2010 the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) published a Framework for Justice and Remedies for Historic Abuse of Children in Care. In 2011 Scottish Ministers agreed to implement the recommendations of this work in the SHRC Framework, and in 2013 developed the [Action Plan on Justice for Victims of Historic Abuse of Children in Care](#).

One recommendation of this Action Plan was [reparation for survivors](#). It stated that reparation¹ includes restitution (restoring things that were lost as a result of abuse, such as education or work opportunities), rehabilitation and compensation. The plan highlighted that what adequate reparation is would depend on individual circumstances. However, it should be proportionate to the impact of the harm suffered and the victim/survivor should participate in choosing what is right for them, based on access to reliable information and a range of meaningful choices.

Evidence from the past 10 years demonstrates² the need to address a broader range of health, social, spiritual, educational outcomes and to involve the individual in decisions affecting their own wellbeing. This means that they will require access to a range of services³. These may be delivered through one or more organisations.

The Action Plan also stated that “reparation should invoke a ‘sense of family’, belonging and engender healing” and that the process should be about “helping the person to become a whole human being”.

There was a lot of support for a National Reparation Fund or Survivors Support Fund. A series of [consultation events](#) were conducted following the publication of the Action Plan - these included consideration of how the in care survivor support fund/service should be developed.

In the current [SurvivorScotland Strategic Outcomes and Priorities 2015 – 2017](#), the Scottish Government committed to establishing a dedicated In Care Survivor Support Fund Service with £13.5m to be allocated over five years (2015-20).

As part of their [engagement process](#), the Scottish Government gathered initial views of survivors and stakeholders on the development of a survivor support fund through 2014 and 2015⁴. [Documents](#) from some participative workshops are available online.

¹ See page 8 of [Action Plan on Historic Abuse of Children in Care](#)

² [Measuring mortality and the burden of adult disease associated with adverse childhood experiences in England: a national survey](#)

³ [The Health Care Experiences of Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. A Systematic Review of Evidence on Sensitive Practice.](#)

⁴ Nine regional engagements, seven face to face local meetings, and two national events were undertaken to inform the design requirements for the new service. Personal communication from Scottish Government on 06/01/2015.

The Scottish Government states that it has learned a lot about [what matters to survivors](#) and what services they need. As a result, it is moving from the current service, consisting of three elements delivered through one service provider (informal support, advice, and counselling) towards the new [In Care Survivor Support Fund Service](#). This is a national expanded brokerage, development and commissioning model. The Scottish Government states that it has been designed to meet survivor needs across a wide range of areas which also include psychological, physical, social, education, work and housing requirements. The service will be Scotland-wide, with outreach capabilities⁵. The new [service specification](#), providing full details of the service background and its envisaged delivery, was put to open tender on October 2015. The responses are currently being evaluated by the Scottish Government.

The new delivery model⁶ aims to provide a consistent service for survivors throughout Scotland. The model includes that the initial contact for an individual is made with a communication support worker⁷ (not a counsellor) who determines the survivor's eligibility, provides information about the service and registers them. This support worker will then offer an appointment for a conversation with a personal outcome support co-ordinator trained in personal outcomes approaches⁸. The support co-ordinator⁹ will then work with the survivor to identify their needs, establish personal outcomes and to create a care, treatment and support plan. They will further work with the survivor to broker or commission services to meet these needs.

This model aims to ensure that survivors can have access to existing local services, including those provided by voluntary sector organisations already, and, where appropriate, to have new services developed and commissioned in response to survivor needs.

Innovation and Development Funding of almost £1 million has been allocated for such local survivor services for 2015-16. A [variety of organisations](#) across Scotland have been granted funding in order to deliver the [three outcomes](#) which survivors have said are important to them, namely:

- **A Healthier Life:** Survivors are enabled and supported to enjoy an attainable standard of living, health and family life.
- **Choice and Control:** Survivors are treated with dignity and respect and are empowered and enabled to access the right support.

⁵ Personal written communication from the Scottish Government on 11/01/2015.

⁶ The survivor experience flow diagram is shown on page 18 of the service specification.

⁷ The specification states that: "staff dealing with initial contact [need] to be trauma aware, have good listening skills and be able to have an empathic response to distress with the ability to be assertive and bounded in their communications with survivors". 3.4; p.9.

⁸ Pages 10-11 of service specification.

⁹ "Their role will be to coordinate and broker services to meet survivors' needs. They will not provide the care, treatment or support themselves unless appropriately qualified and authorised to do so". 5.2; p11.

- **Safety and Security:** Survivors have access to resources and services which are trauma informed and have the capacity to recognise and respond to the signs of childhood abuse.

The new service includes a [non-core, discretionary, payment](#) element. This will “not provide compensation payments to survivors, but will make non-recurring funding available for a range of ad hoc requirements to provide pragmatic support in meeting survivors' social needs and personal outcome goals”.

The Survivor Scotland Policy Team has indicated¹⁰ that Open Secret decided not to submit a proposal to deliver the new service but that transition plans were in place to ensure that survivors currently accessing the ICSSS delivered by Open Secret can continue to receive the support that they need. They can choose to do this either though using new services or accessing the existing services provided by Open Secret.

Scottish Parliament Action

The Parliament cross party group [Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse](#) provides a forum for debate, with an agreed specific programme of targets and action, on the issue of childhood sexual abuse and its long term effects on survivors' lives.

In August 2002, petition PE 535 set in motion events which led to the establishment of the above Shaw Review and resulted in the formation of the current survivors support service. In September 2005, PE888 raised concerns about the handling of personal injury cases arising from institutional child abuse¹¹.

Petition [PE1351](#) in August 2010 helped to encourage the establishment of a National Confidential Forum in order to give victims of institutional child abuse the opportunity to relate their experiences.

A letter from the Scottish Government [confirming continued funding for ICSSS](#) from 2012-2015 formed part of the response to [PE1397](#) on the future support of and funding for In Care Survivors Service Scotland.

In April 2013, In Care Survivors Service Scotland submitted written evidence on the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Bill. [This document](#) provides their responses to the Bill and outlines more about their client base and the ways in which survivors find the service valuable.

¹⁰ Personal written communication from Scottish Government on 15/01/2015.

¹¹ The Committee agreed to close consideration of [petitions \[PE535 and PE888\]](#) on the grounds that the petitioner has achieved a considerable amount with an apology in Parliament by the then First Minister, the publication of an independent expert review report recommending changes to legislation and continuing consideration and announcements emanating from the Scottish Government on action to be taken arising from the petitions.

In August 2011 Patrick Harvie asked the Scottish Executive ([S4W-01966](#)) what evaluation it had carried out of the quality and effectiveness of their funded services provided by In Care Survivors Service Scotland. Michael Matheson replied that “as part of the grant conditions, the In Care Survivors Service Scotland (ICSSS) was required to monitor the quality and effectiveness of its service provision and provide quarterly updates to the Scottish Government. Furthermore, ICSSS is also required and has now commissioned an external evaluation.”

On the same day, Patrick Harvie also asked ([S4W-01967](#)) about what alternative means existed to provide the services offered by In Care Survivors Service Scotland in the event that they are withdrawn due to lack of funding. Michael Matheson responded. “The Scottish Government is committed to supporting survivors of childhood abuse. The In Care Survivors Service Scotland (ICSSS) provides a specialist service to a group of people who have suffered trauma of a very specific nature which is tailored to their needs. In particular, the service uniquely offers support accessing records relating to individuals’ care experiences. We have asked Open Secret to submit a renewed business case for further funding, which we will take into consideration in combination with the external evaluation of the service currently being carried out. We therefore do not anticipate the need for alternative arrangements.”

In June 2015, Jackie Baillie asked ([S4W-25979](#)) the Scottish Government whether it would make interim payments to survivors of historical child abuse and, if so, whether it would involve survivors in the discussion of how these should operate. Angela Constance responded that the Scottish Government had announced funding of £13.5 million to develop a dedicated support service for survivors of in care abuse, stating that “We are working with survivors to determine the detail of how this service will operate. It will be for the inquiry to decide how to fulfil its terms of reference and what recommendations it will make”.

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18 January 2016

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