

PE1692/A

Petitioner submission of 4 July 2018

At the Public Petitions Committee meeting on 28 June 2018, Rona McKay wanted to know how many meetings were held where we heard from parents and others about their concerns and direct experiences of the GIRFEC policy.

We have now checked our records and, between August 2014 and June 2016, there were 45 NO2NP roadshows (publicly advertised and open to all) in locations across Scotland with variable attendance (up to 80 in some venues). There were also several open meetings organised by academics and others with invited speakers. The Scottish Government was invited to participate in a Glasgow Declaration Fest debate on the right to privacy in March 2016 and an event at Dundee University in April 2017, but declined to accept either. There was also a conference in Edinburgh in March 2017, at which Aidan O'Neil QC and Jim Sillars were keynote speakers, where Lesley and I were on one of the Q&A panels.

Our request to attend a third sector consultation event at Victoria Quay in December 2016 was declined by the Scottish government. Our respective offers to give oral evidence to the Education & Skills Committee were also turned down, both during the passage of the 2014 Act and at Stage 1 of the current Information Sharing bill.

The 'Families from the Fringe' evidence-gathering exercise was conducted by Tymes Trust and the Scottish Home Education Forum over several weeks in the autumn of 2017 when we invited families to submit summaries of their stories via a dedicated website (www.np-fringe.uk) prior to a consultation event in Edinburgh in November 2017, after which we delivered 90+ postcards to the convener of the Education & Skills Committee and later submitted a briefing to the committee (<https://leahurst66.wordpress.com/postcards-from-the-fringe-briefing/>). The main demand from families was for an independent public inquiry into how unlawful data gathering and sharing had become embedded (and remained) in policy and practice from 2013 without their having had recourse to any satisfactory remedy.

I hope that clarification will be useful for the committee and we look forward to engaging further with members in relation to our petition.