

Survivor Supplementary Statement

Date completed: **02/07/2026**

Survivor Full Name: **Karen McMaster**

DOB: **04/08/1967**

Mother's Name: **Margaret McMaster (Maiden name was also McMaster)**

Father's Name: **Thomas McMaster**

Siblings Names/DOB: **No siblings**

Placed in Cecil Street Children's Home from 1981-1984 aged approx 14

1. Introduction

My name is Karen McMaster. I am making this statement to share my experiences of being in care as a child and the impact these experiences have had on my life. Some of the details are difficult for me to talk about, and some memories are clearer than others, but I will describe what I remember to the best of my ability.

I understand that my records from the time are limited or incomplete, and I want to explain my experiences in my own words.

I was taken away from my mother, Margaret McMaster, when I was around 14 years old. I think there had been social work involvement before this, but the event that led to my placement in care was when my mother, who had a diagnosis of Schizophrenia, became very ill and stabbed me in my right buttock over my refusal to eat dinner. My mum patched the wound up afterwards then I went to my grandmother's house. It was my grandmother who called the police to report what had happened. I recall going to a children's panel with the Social Services on Albion Street, so this was probably to discuss the incident with my mother and to place me into care.

2. My Time in Care – Overview

I was involved with Social Work Services in the Glasgow area. My social worker at the time was **Mhari Miller**, who worked for **Glasgow, Easterhouse Social Services**. I believe this involvement began around the time my grandmother reported my mother stabbing me.

I was then placed in Cecil Street Residential Children's Home, where I suffered sexual and psychological abuse from both staff and visitors. One staff member whose name I think was Helena or Elaine, would bring her husband to work during her overnight shifts and he would come straight over to my room. I always had the door to my room open for light as I was scared of the dark. This man frequently came over to my room and exposed himself to me.

I remember the first incident clearly; I was in bed at night when he entered my room, exposed himself, and began to masturbate. It made me feel very uncomfortable. I left the room to inform one of the other night staff about what had occurred, but they dismissed my claims, insisting it was just a dream. I think it was a lady called Anna I spoke with. I think she was an older lady. The abuse escalated to inappropriate touching, such as brushing against me in ways that made me uncomfortable.

This happened multiple times during my stay, but after being disbelieved the first time, I chose not to report it again. I didn't tell his wife or anyone else about it. Helena/Elaine, was a horrible woman and treated me cruelly, constantly making me feel worthless and unvalued, saying things like, "You're here because you've been bad." Another staff member, Eileen Pender, would also tell me, "You're here because your family doesn't want you."

I recall that staff often denied me many things; for instance, I was not allowed to eat outside of mealtimes, no matter how hungry I felt. I was also barred from visiting my family whenever I wished, without any clear explanation. Consequently, I sometimes ran away from the home to my grandmother's house in Bailieston because I felt safe there. They would always find me, sometimes involving the police, and upon my return to the home, I was prohibited from going out again.

During my time in the home, I experienced bullying, humiliation, and degradation from the staff. One incident stands out; when I was 14, I had my period overnight and stained my underwear. I tried to conceal them between the mattress and bedframe, but when I returned from school, a staff member held them up in front of me, questioning why I did that, with two other staff members present. I felt extremely embarrassed, and this memory still lingers with me today.

I also observed staff discussing confidential details about other residents. For instance, I overheard them talking about a boy around my age. They were discussing his sexual development and behaviours, including specific details about how he would masturbate. I felt bad for him as I think he had some kind of learning difficulty. Additionally, staff would openly share how residents came into care; for example, I learned that a girl named Alice was placed in care because her father had "penetrated" her. It horrified me at the time hearing that about her. She was only around 8 years old.

3. Emotional and Long-Term Impact

My experiences in care have profoundly impacted my life and shaped my life in ways that continue to affect me today. I have been diagnosed with depression, anxiety, and CPTSD, and I am on medication for these conditions. Recently, I switched from Mirtazapine to Sertraline then to another medication, Venlafaxine, to better manage my anxiety. I also have a history of psychiatric treatment.

Although I work full-time as a Home Carer, these past experiences affect my daily life. There are times when I need to take extended sick leave, and I can become so overwhelmed and stressed that I forget how to perform basic tasks, like driving, without any clear trigger. It took me a while to complete the application form, which led to a decline in my mental health.

4. Missing or Incomplete Records

I understand that some of the institutions involved may be unable to provide full records of my time in care. This has been difficult, but I know that my memories and experiences are valid. I am sharing what I remember because these events had a significant impact on my life.

5. Closing Statement

I am making this statement to help Redress Scotland understand what happened to me and how it has affected me. I am doing this in the hope that my experiences will be acknowledged and that I can continue to move forward in my life.

Thank you for taking the time to read my statement.

Signed: Karen McMaster

Date: 02/07/2026