

Name: **Robert Letham**

DOB: **10/10/1949**

Social Services/Local authority: **Dunbartonshire Council**

Name(s) of Care Home: **Cardross Park Assessment Centre**

Reason for going into care: **Mother's ill health**

Age in care: **2**

Personal statement

I remember a woman taking me and my little brother John from my house to the home, but I can't remember her name. I remember you would get slapped now and again and I think you got forced to take baths. I remember the piece and jam you got served would always have wasps in it, but when you said that to the cooks you got told to shut up and eat it. Whenever we brought this up to the staff, they would always make cheeky comments like shut up or you will get a slap. We either had to scrap the wasps out ourselves or we would just throw the sandwich away but, in the end, we stopped bringing it up. I got slapped about some nights in the dormitory; this was by the staff. I think it was the women staff that were more brutal with you, but I am not 100% sure. I remember being in my bed and the staff would come in and give you a couple of slaps in the face. At night they would come into the room and slap you about for no reason. I used to say to my brother John, just kid on that you're asleep, so they wouldn't slap us. The slaps were becoming more regular and becoming quite hard. I think it may have been that you got slapped if you refused to take a bath at night, but I can't remember for sure. After a day or two you realised what was going on in the home and it was quite frightening from then onwards. I think there would always be a staff member in the room when you were having bath. It was like a big old hospital ward so there was a lot of us in there with like 20 beds or whatever.

At an age like that you would have thought that the people who made the decision to put you in such a place at such a young age would have come to visit you and check everything was alright, but we never got any of that as far as I can remember. When we got home, I remember bursting out crying and the woman that took us there in the first place brought us back to my house and she stayed for a while. I remember crying because I thought it was safer to do this in my house than at the care home.

After I left it was hard to get it out of your mind, and I didn't like talking to anybody about it back then even the doctor. I kept thinking I would get the belt if I said something to someone because they would say I was making it up and wouldn't believe me. I had a doctor's appointment when I was younger after I came out and I was going to mention it, but I changed my mind. Any time after that when I went to doctor, I was going to mention it, but I always ended up changing my story to something else that was bothering me. You didn't want to mention anything in case you ended up getting blamed for it. In those days if you mentioned anything about something like that to your family you would be hit with a stick.

Later in life I ended up working in a children's unit because I had been through it, so I knew roughly what they were going through and had that experience. I thought it would me if I could help any of the kids in there and stop it if I saw anything bad happening to them.

I have struggled with anxiety and depression which I am medicated for this, during my adult life and have wondered whether it was linked to time in care and I was actually going to talk to my doctor about it but never did, because I didn't want to bring it back up again I just wanted to try and forget about it and move on. The only person I ever confided in was my wife. She suspected over the years there was something the matter and eventually I told her what had happened when I was younger. My wife always used to ask why I needed to leave the light on because I could never be fully in the dark. I still need to leave the light on now. The last couple of years I have been getting a lot of nightmares when I am in bed, I keep seeing people coming over my bed and I wake up in a panic and sometimes I lash out thinking there is someone there. I am not sure if that is related to my time getting slapped about in my dormitory when I was younger.

Method: Taken over phone

Date(s): 02/04/2026, 12/05/2026