

**Client Name:** Alexander McNeil

**Case Ref:** APP529763

**DOB:** 17/10/1956

**Have you ever been known by another name?** In Balgowan I was referred to as No 55

**Mother & Father Name (include Mother's maiden name):** Agnes Russell McNeil & John McNeil

**Address prior to being placed into care:** 2 Queen Street, Fallin

**Siblings:**

Robert McNeil 1957,  
John McNeil 1958,  
Catherine McNeil 1959,  
Mary Helen McNeil 1960,  
James McNeil 1963,  
Charles McNeil 1964,  
Agnes McNeil (unsure of DOB 1976)  
William McNeil (unsure of DOB)

**Name of Social services cared for under:** Stirling Social Services

**Convictions over 5 years –** None

**What year(s) were you placed in care or what was your age at the time(s) -** I was around the age of 12 until the age of 15. Approximately 1968 - 1971

Cardross – age 12-13, approx. 1968 -1969

Bellfield – remand Centre for a few weeks

Balgowan – age13 – 15, approx. 1969 - 1971

**Supplementary Personal Statement**

Reason why you were taken into care? I took a badge from a vehicle, resulting in police involvement. I remember being at school and it was dinner time when the police came in and took me to the local police station. My father and I appeared at local juvenile court and I was charged. The name of the judge was called Mr. Murray

Cardross Assessment Centre

At the age of 12, I was admitted to Cardross Assessment Centre, where I remained for a duration of 3 weeks and sentence to 3 years' probation on condition that I should see a probation officer 1 day per week after school.

Once the 21 days had elapsed, no one arrived to collect me. I was later told by my dad he had gotten his days mixed up when he was to come get me. This was not explained to me, so I made the decision to leave independently. There was a garden with a back entrance and I left. I walked about 13 miles.

However, staff from Cardross intercepted me in a car after I had traversed the Campsie hills. They returned me to the facility, stripped me naked and confined me in the cooler, a stark concrete room furnished with a concrete bed. I spent the night there without any clothing, save for a small cover freezing.

The next day, two members of the staff came and took me, I was escorted to the dining hall, where all the teachers were gathered at a table and all the other children were sat having their meal. I was brought in wrapped in a towel, supported by staff on either side, while another staff member struck me on the backside with a leather belt, leaving me with red welts. I was then escorted back to the cooler room and then sent to wait in my room which was in a dormitory and the other kids came. I was left feeling humiliated. I waited there until my father came and picked me up.

#### Bellfield Remand Centre – 2-3 months

Upon reaching the age of 13, I was transferred to Bellfield Remand Centre in Dumbarton. One day, while out with a friend, we went up to this farmer asking for water he pointed over to where the cows drank water. It was filthy so my friend, he punctured a small hole in an old bathtub situated in a field where cows drank so we could drink from it. The farmer reported our actions to the police, which resulted in my extended stay at Bellfield. I cannot recall the precise length of my stay. There was no mistreatment during my time at Bellfield. I was there for a couple months.

I received a sentence of 1 to 3 years in an approved school because of this incident, while my friend was fined £3, a decision influenced by my previous experience at Cardross.

#### Balgowan – 2 years

Subsequently, I was relocated to Balgowan in Dundee, where I spent a duration of 2 years. My brother Robert was already present there; he often ran away, which resulted in him being placed in a specialized unit referred to as the block. Due to our familial connection, I was also assigned to that unit. I had my own private bedroom. The school was in the same unit. There was no teaching you were left to your own device

Balgowan accommodated 110 boys, and there was a wall that displayed our names alongside assigned numbers. I was designated as number 55. Good behaviour permitted us to ascend the board, and the higher we progressed, the more privileges we obtained.

I was nearing qualification for a home visit, which the wardens were aware of. They would enter my room at night, exposing themselves and demanding that I engage in masturbation for them, threatening to demote me on the board if I refused. I was eager to return home and did not wish to start anew, having exerted considerable effort to enhance my standing on the board. They would also touch me. I was even threatening to lose pocket money if I spoke about it which meant I would not get to go home. Like so many of the boys I felt trapped.

I discerned that it was different wardens due to the distinctiveness of their voices. It was perpetually dark, preventing me from seeing their faces. This transpired approximately 8 or 9 times. When younger boys arrived, the wardens appeared to focus their attention on them. Many of the boys underwent similar experiences. We all discussed it and knew this was happening.

My time in care fostered a sense of defiance within me. I have lost all respect for authority and the police, as a result of the abuse I suffered. I was exploited, mentally, physically and sexually during my childhood. Even now, the mere act of discussing this brings me to tears. The abuse I endured was truly horrific. I withdrew from my family; I suffer from deep depression. Too embarrassed to discuss and get very emotional when I talk about it. This is really the first time I have shared this. I avoid meeting people in any social setting.