

Name: Jay Cowie

DOB: 17/10/1962

Name of Care Home/s: Oakbank School, Polmont Bortsal

Reason for going into care: Abusive mother

Age in care: Approximately 12 -13 and approximately 16-17

Personal Statement

The constant abuse by my mother was never taken seriously by social services despite numerous attempts of me telling them that my mother was very abusive. I recall going before a children's panel to explain what was happening to me. I recall being taken away to Liberton an Assessment Centre in Edinburgh for 6 months and got transferred later to Oakbank School.

Oakbank

The staff had no patience. They would ask us to do things, if we never did it quick enough for their liking, they would slap you on the head or kick us on the backside. They would put us on the table. They would take my trousers down and whip me on my bare bum with a cane at least 6 times. They would make sure nobody else saw this. Other boys would be lined up outside the room waiting for the cane and the staff would be shouting at them, telling them to get in line. The pain was bad; I'm amazed I never had any scars left on me. When we were in the boardroom getting the cane, we would be held down by numerous staff members by our arms so we couldn't move.

The things they would say were terrible, they would tell me shut the fuck up. Occasionally I would be locked in cupboards, we were never in them for long. I was used to the dark with my mother doing this to me for years.

I would run away a lot and due to this I would get my family leave taken off me as punishment for three weeks usually but sometimes it was six, it was never fair. The guy that oversaw the unit on the weekends would never let me go to the toilet and I would end up wetting myself. They would pick up the urinated sheets and rub them in my face like I was a dog. The other students would call me pishy bed and humiliate me, it encouraged bullying from them.

The showers were always open, other students and the staff would watch us, so we got no privacy at all. We were standing naked in front of all the other kids.

I helped build a swimming pool in Oakbank, it took about a year, we had to dig it up and build it. Sometimes we would be made to cut the grass on the outside of Oakbank too. I didn't mind because it got me out and I was used to doing heavy-handed work.

The abuse in Oakbank was worse than the young offenders. I would also like to add that if I told the police and the social services about my abusive mother many times, I would still be taken back, which furthered the abuse.

Priortion-polmont-1980. 10 and a half months

In both places I was made to slop out, I would need to empty the bucket the next morning, It was disgusting honestly, the smell was awful. Some guys would do it at nighttime which made the smell worse.

Polmont

The cell had to be spotless, the guards would come in and inspect cells often, they would try provoking you by messing it up before an inspection. The Screws were mental; they were worse in Polmont. They battered me a couple of times and even hit me with a wooden brush on my head. I would tell the guards to stop it, or I would end up fighting with them.

I had a horrific incident that happened to me years ago when I was stabbed and I spoke to someone about my trauma. He told me my trauma wasn't from that incident but from my childhood trauma. I had anger issues for years and still suffer with paranoia. I also get flashbacks of the abuse too. It never left me. I want an apology from social services more than anything, because they failed me. They returned me to an abusive mother repeatedly even though I told them what was happening to me.