

**Name:** Colin Howie

**DOB:** 27/11/1988

**Name of Care Home/s:** Harley Place Children's Home

**Reason for going into care:** Mother and Father struggling

**Age in care:** Approximately 7 or 8 years of age

### **Personal Statement**

Harley Place was an appalling and shocking environment. If you misbehaved or refused to eat, you would either be confined to your room, forced into cupboards, or restrained. You would even be compelled to consume your dinner, which was revolting.

The restraints were quite forceful: the large male staff members would place their feet on your chest to pin you down, while two of them would hold your arms and legs against the floor. Occasionally, they would drag you around and throw you onto the mattress, striking you in the ribs and stomach.

You were too terrified to report the abuse for fear that it would escalate, even if you had visible bruises, which they would also shout in your face. It was horrific. They would tell you that your parents did not want you and could not afford to keep you. Such cruel remarks were common.

At times, they would even strike you with belts or slippers on your back, taking pleasure in your pain. The showers were perpetually cold, devoid of privacy, and they would always monitor you. You were required to stand naked in front of the boys while showering as well.

If I failed to eat my dinner, I would typically be starved for two days as punishment, receiving nothing at all. Sometimes, they would attempt to force the food into my mouth; if I refused to eat, I would be confined to my room for punishment or forced into a cupboard. On several occasions, I was separated from my brother. Despite my pleas to be with him, they simply ignored me. We also slept in different rooms.

I would attempt to escape, but they would always bring me back to Harley Place and beat me as punishment for trying to flee. It was nearly impossible to escape from that place. The night watchmen frequently disturbed my sleep by poking me and provoking me.

There were instances when I would awaken without any covers or clothing, which was quite peculiar. Currently, I am not a very good sleeper; I suspect I may be experiencing insomnia, a condition that

has been exacerbated since I became a parent. It was not uncommon to witness other boys being assaulted.

I even witnessed my own brother being beaten. We often attempted to protect one another and intervened when one of us was being attacked, but we were often separated. Hearing a great deal of screaming during the night, leaving me uncertain about what was occurring, it was quite overwhelming. This situation has profoundly impacted my life.

I have recently lost both my job and my partner as a result of the trauma. I struggle with depression and have been on antidepressants for approximately six months to manage my condition. I attribute all of this to the trauma I experienced. I was on extended sick leave due to the trauma, and it has significantly affected my relationships. It has completely disrupted my life.