

Name: James McCracken

DOB: 27/08/1978

Name of Care Homes: Weedingshall Childrens Home. Foster Parents

Reason for going into care: Mother placed into care

Age in care: 13- 14

Personal Statement

Weedingshall Childrens Home - Age 13 2/3 months

We never got fed properly in there, it was awful. You were treated terribly. They would come into your room at two or three in the morning, throw buckets of cold water over you, drag you out of bed, and strip you naked. You'd be left sitting there with no clothes on until you were finally given a towel. There was no reason for it, they were just horrible people. It was a really bad experience. Ever since then, I've struggled with significant sleep issues, and I believe it all started there. I wasn't a bad kid, I never ran away or caused trouble, but I was still treated like dirt. They used to hit me with the tie from my dressing gown, striking me across my body. They would call me a bastard and tell me I'd never go home. They said nobody loved me and nobody wanted me, and that's why I was in care. It was psychological abuse, and I've blocked a lot of it out. If I misbehaved, I'd be locked in a cupboard, sometimes for about an hour. It was completely dark, and I'd be left with no food or water. There was no privacy at all. Staff would watch you while you showered, and I remember feeling extremely uncomfortable. They had no sense of boundaries. At night, I'd hear screaming and often saw other boys being beaten. It was common, we were all treated like that, even the ones who behaved.

Foster Parents Age 13-14 4/5 Months Elizabeth Alexander and Trevor Callender

Living with them was like Weedingshall. They would often starve me or deprive me of food for long periods. I'd be locked in cupboards for what felt like forever, and I'd often have to go to school in dirty clothes. The school never asked me about it and never protected me either. I've blocked out a lot of those memories. I started using cannabis to cope with the trauma at 14, it's been my way of dealing with everything. I don't think I've fully realised how much it's affected me. I still struggle with sleep and memory, and I suffer from anxiety. I know a lot of that stems from what happened to me in care.

I have problems with alcohol abuse and still smoke cannabis; I'm trying to block things out. My mental health hasn't been great since starting the Redress application. I have depression and low mood, which affects my relationships.