

Name: William Larkin

DOB: 08/09/1974

Name of Care Home/s: Geilsland Residential School

Reason for going into care: Unruly child

Age in care: Approximately 15-16 years of age

Personal Statement

Around the age of fifteen, I was placed in Geilsland School for being described as “unruly” and outwith parental control. - this decision was made by a children's panel. I was never taken to an assessment centre beforehand. On my first night, I was put in a room that was wet and damp. It had a musky smell, and the window and carpets were soaked. It was not a habitable place to sleep. As I walked past the other rooms, I could see that they were warm, colourful, and nothing like mine.

In frustration at being treated differently, I put a chair through the window. Staff responded by physically assaulting me. I remember a huge staff member, over twenty stone, possibly named Mick or John. He picked me up, slapped me repeatedly with open hands, and slammed me against the walls and the floor like a rag doll. He sat on me with such force that I could not breathe, crushing my airways, while others stood by and watched without intervening. Afterwards, they gave me a board and made me fix the window I had broken. - made me repaint my whole room. That night, I cried in my bed. When the nightshift staff came on, one of them came into my room and sat on my bed. He put his hand on my knee, then my leg, and patted upwards towards my private area. I told him to leave, and he walked out – I think the incident that had occurred earlier gave him an excuse to come into my room. I was forced to eat green beans even though I hated them. If I didn't, I wasn't allowed dessert, and it never felt like I had a choice. They threatened to remove my £5 weekly clothing allowance and my home leave if I misbehaved. Sometimes I didn't get home for weeks or even months. I absconded on a trip once and was taken straight to my room and isolated for hours. After smoking on the outskirts of the grounds, I would return and a staff member possibly named Archie would punch me without warning this was a regular occurrence to get beaten for no reason. Someone kept stealing my clothes from the laundry. One day, while playing basketball, the boy who had been taking them was there. We argued, and Archie saw this. He came over and aggressively grabbed my testicles and squeezed them. We were restrained to the ground regularly for misbehaving. The bullying was horrific among the staff and residents. I was often isolated and given separate tasks made to be different from everyone else. While everyone else worked in the shed, I was made to go around the school alone, filling cracks in walls and painting in the cold for weeks. I received no education while I was there, there was no lessons or teaching just bullying. Castlehead High School tried to get me back, but it never happened. I left with only an SVQ in painting and decorating. They just gave me that to justify that it as education, but it was absolutely no education involved whatsoever it was me alone walking around with a bucket of paint. It suited them to keep me isolated because I had anger issues and couldn't be bribed with money or clothes. Every day was so monotonous and the same just painting on my own. It wore me down and made me constantly want to run away. Every time I ran away, I would come home not be going out to discos, I was only going running home to my house, but my mum would call the police to take me back. This made me stop trusting my mother who was the one person I did

trust in the world. When I got taken to Geilsland, my mother's sister and brother moved into our house and took my room, so I never had a room to go to back at my house. **“From 1991-1992 I was routinely abused at HMYOI Polmont. I was routinely abused by staff for not addressing by Sir or mam, during this time” - added 23/04/26**

I feel extremely let down. I couldn't join the army due to lack of education, and I didn't have the standard education needed to move forward in life. I had no education. My family and my school eventually got me work experience in tiling, and that is the only reason I managed to get anywhere because Geilsland did nothing to help me. My mental health was never managed properly while I was there. We were made to see somebody, but it had no impact whatsoever and I can hardly remember it. They are supposed to keep you until you are ready to leave and have a house and job, but they didn't do that with, me that made me leave as soon as I turned 16. I don't trust anybody now.

Added 26/07/2026 - "On the night I smashed my room after lights out and prior to me smashing up I was threatened with a knife to my neck and physically raped by a resident who was in my room. I only know that he was from the Ayrshire area. I have struggled with this for years now and wish to put it behind me.