

Survivor Supplementary Statement**Date Completed:** 12/08/2026**Survivor's full name:** Alistair Keith**Other known name:** N/A**DOB:** 18/02/1959 **Redress Priority:** Low**Serious Criminal Convictions:** None**Mother's Name:** Mary Cunningham**Father's Name:** William Keith**Name of Care Home(s):** Polmont, Noranside**Age in care:** 16-17**Reason for going into care:** Committed car theft**1.Introduction**

My name is Alistair Keith. I am making this statement to share my experiences of being in care as a child and the impact these experiences have had on my life. Some of the details are difficult for me to talk about, and some memories are clearer than others, but I will describe what I remember to the best of my ability. I understand that my records from the time are limited or incomplete, and I want to explain my experiences in my own words.

2. My time in Care

I was initially placed into care for car theft. I was sentenced to two years at Polmont borstal.

Polmont – 2-3 weeks

We were initially placed into the allocation wing or Ally pally as it was known by the inmates. It was a big building and everybody that was new was sent to this wing. They held us in here while they made a decision on whether to keep us at Polmont closed borstal or send us somewhere else. They decided to send me to an open borstal up north which I believe was Noranside Borstal.

Noranside – a few weeks

This place was worse than Polmont. The prison officers here were sadistic. They took pleasure in beating us. Rooms had to be spotless and everything in the place was controlled and driven by the fear of being hit for even the slightest thing. There was one

particular officer here who made my life hell. There were things going on here that I would basically class as sexual abuse. I asked to get transferred back to the closed Borstal in Polmont because this particular officer was making my life hell, but they refused. I decided to abscond because I knew this would force them to transfer me back to Polmont, so I ran away. I only ran into the woods; I wasn't trying to escape I was just forcing them to transfer me. This worked and I got transferred back to Polmont closed Borstal.

Polmont – 9 months

Polmont was a place of constant abuse but not as bad as Noranside because at least I was away from that particular officer and the abuse in Polmont was mental and physical not sexual. I remember being punched and slapped on my first day by staff members. They would accuse me of doing things I was not doing just so they had an excuse to hit me. They hit me daily for nothing. I remember that if the meter on the chair made a noise when we were leaving the table, they would slap and hit us for it.

There was a bully in there who picked on me for a long time. When I eventually stood up for myself, staff jumped on top of me and tackled me to the ground. At one point, there were around six of them on me, crushing me.

I remember being taken to a place called “the Mile”, which was a long corridor we had to clean excessively with a scrubbing brush and a pail of water. If I missed a spot, or if staff were having a bad day, they would kick or knee us in the ribs and often slap us. They were verbally abusive, constantly swearing, shouting, and reminding us how “useless” we were.

I was locked in a punishment cell with only a wooden chair and a Bible, kept in there for 23 hours at a time. Once, I was kept in for three days. We were not allowed to socialise during this, and it was horrific.

There was no privacy in the showers, as everything was open and monitored. In the mornings, they would open all the doors, and we had to make a bed block with our sheets and blankets in a perfect square. If it was not accurate to the millimetre, they would slap us, kick off, throw the bedding around the room, and make us start again. Our rooms had to be immaculate with no dust. If they found even one speck, they would hit us and scream at us. Everything was controlled, and any deviation resulted in physical violence. They made us jump out of our rooms in the morning. They would knock on the door and make us get dressed, clean our rooms and then stand under the light facing the door. The officers would then shout something and everyone had to jump at the same time out of their rooms, turn round and face back into their rooms with your hands behind your back. They would then make us all march down the stairs

without making a sound – bearing in mind this was around 50 lads. They would march us down to the hall which had a big marble floor, and they would make us lift the metal chairs and tables without making a sound and if anybody made a sound, they would make us all do it again from the start. If you were the culprit who made a noise you would get slapped and punched when you got back to your room.

Everything was monitored, and it felt like we could not do anything right. They controlled everything we did. We had to shout “attention”, march everywhere in a line, and stay as quiet as possible. We had to stop out every morning. They gave you a plastic potty thing, but nobody would really crap in that because it would stink your room out so you would have to hold it in until you could go to the toilet, even if your stomach was in agony, you would hold it in. If you did do a crap in the potty, you would get slapped or punched that is another reason why everybody tried to hold it in. Some lads would do it and then flung it out of the windows which was absolutely disgusting.

I knew that to be able to get out after 10 months I just needed to keep my head down and do as I was told and try and stay out of trouble and that is what I did. This was still hard to do because everything had to be done perfectly and it is hard to do everything perfectly. You could never do everything right, if they thought your room wasn't tidy enough or you made a noise when moving your chair then they would still hit you or scream at you.

3. Emotional and Long-Term Impact

After I left, I developed a severe dislike for authority, and I was not a pleasant person. I struggled a lot after my time there, and it impacted my life for many years.

4. Closing Statement

I am making this statement to help Redress Scotland understand what happened to me and how it has affected me. I am doing this in the hope that my experiences will be acknowledged and that I can continue to move forward in my life.

Thank you for taking the time to read my statement.

Signed: Alistair Keith

Date: 12/08/2026