

Survivor Supplementary Statement

Date Completed: 25/06/30

Survivor full name: William Chalmers

Other known name: None

DOB: 25/03/1964

Redress Priority: Low

Serious Criminal Convictions: None

Mother's Name: Helen McGhee

Father's Name: John Chalmers

Name of Care Home: St John's Bosco, St Andrew's List D School

Age in care: 12-16

Reason for going into care: Outwith parental control - decided by a children's panel

1.Introduction

My name is William Chalmers. 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 – Overview

I was always getting into trouble as a boy and not going to school. This led to me being in front of a children's panel and I was placed into care. I was initially placed into St Johns Bosco and I was in there for around three years before moving to St Andrews in Helensburgh where I stayed for around a year.

St John Boscoe

My adverse experiences were within St Johns Bosco which was run by priests. I would experience physical violence from them as well as from the teachers. I would be punched, kicked and slapped. I would be spoken to in a horrible manner, mocked and called names. I was whipped with a cane on a regular basis. I can remember my dad going up there to complain because I came home covered in bruises. I would see other boys in there being beaten as well and there were times when the violence could be extreme. Although I never witnessed any sexual abuse, I did see boys being dragged into a side room and I would hear the screams. We all sort of knew it was going on.

I can remember my mouth being washed out with carbolic soap if I ever dared to answer them back. I did wet the bed while I was in there which was likely due to how I was being treated. I would be beaten for this as well as humiliated and called names. I would then be thrown into a freezing cold bath. I can remember occasions when I would even be removed from my bed at night and beaten.

I would be locked in cupboards and left in there for hours or for however long they felt like leaving me. As an adult I struggle to be in smaller spaces.

I did run away from there on a few occasions because I had simply had enough of the place. When I returned, I would be beaten and I would end up losing my leave for four or five weeks.

It made my time in there even harder because I was separated from my family for longer and separated from my sisters. We missed out on so many crucial years of our childhood together.

3.Emotional and Long-Term Impact

My experiences in there have been a contributing factor to the struggles I have had with my mental health throughout my life. They have affected the relationships I have had with others due to a lack of trust. I still have flashbacks and nightmares about my time in there.

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: William Chalmers

Date: 31/07/2026