

Name: Kevin Paterson

DOB: 08/05/1969

Known by any other name? No

Priority status: Low

Serious convictions: None

Name of Care Home(s): Closeburn Assessment Centre – for around 1 year

Age in care: 15 – 16

Reason for entering care: Being abused by mother's boyfriend

Personal Statement

At age 15, I was placed in the care of Closeburn Children's Assessment Unit after I was removed from the care of my mother, Rosie Paterson. I was placed in care due to my mother entering a new relationship with a man who was physically abusive towards me. The Police were involved in this. I went to school with bruises, so the police took me to Dumfries Police station and took pictures and everything. From there I got put straight into care.

Closeburn Assessment Centre

At Closeburn, I experienced physical and mental abuse from staff who cared for me. I recall one incident where a male staff member who weighed approximately 30 stone sat on me, restricting my breathing to the point I was unconscious to restrain and prevent me from absconding. There was also a staff member by name of Mr Maxwell who would put me in headlocks. He did this to "calm me down," when I was being "rowdy." This happened approximately once a week. If you didn't do exactly what the staff said then they would turn around and tell you, you're not getting your leave or you're not getting out of here. Some of the staff were kind to us. If you didn't like the food, you were told to eat it or starve because they weren't going to make anything different for you. Some of the other residents would come up to you and try to start a fight with you, so you either fought them or told them to get lost but 9 times out of 10 you were fighting. The staff were aware that this was going on but they would just ignore it and stay in their office. In fact, there were occasions where residents would be fighting and staff would haul you out of the way to get to them, having no concern for your safety or if you were hurt in the crossfire. Staff also took residents to a gym, put them in a boxing ring and made them fight if there were ever any fall outs between them. This happened to me several times, resulting in my getting bloody noses, black eyes and sore ribs on several occasions. I was also hit with objects like shoes if I didn't do what I was told. I also recall

being placed in the “pokey,” which is a room where staff put you if you were being destructive. It was essentially a cell that didn’t have a door handle on the inside it only had one on the outside. I was locked in here for two days with no bed or pillows but a blanket. There was no bed, there was just a raised bit on the floor which was a kind of thin mattress. I had no access to anybody else, so you were completely isolated in there. I also had no access to the toilet, as when I pressed the buzzer to get out you could be left for hours, meaning I had been forced to urinate on the floor. How long you ended up in there depending on what you had done, for example if you were fighting with fellow residents, you might only get a day or so but if you were arguing with staff, you could get two days in there. There was no privacy when I wanted to shower to tend to my personal care as a staff member would be present and the door would be left open. Some of the residents were friendly with the staff and these people would get away with things. The staff clearly had favourites.

If you weren’t misbehaving then you were able to go to visit family on some weekends, and upon my return I would be subject to a physical search by staff. There were times I felt this was overly personal and invasive as staff would check to ensure I didn’t have anything hidden down my trousers. Sometimes if I was argumentative with staff or answered back, my privileges would be revoked – e.g. money, cigarettes, going outside and family visits. I tried to abscond on several occasions, one time making it two miles away from the building. However, staff found me, threw me in the car and took me back. They then removed my shoes and jacket, and I was put in the “pokey.” When I would go home on family visits, I told my mother about what was happening, but she would just say that there was nothing she could do about it and I just had to do what I was told. When I turned 16, they tried to force me to stay in school, but I said I am 16 so, I am leaving.

How being in care impacted me

I became a much angrier person while I was in care and by the time I left care even the slightest wee thing somebody would say to me I would be wanting to fight them. In the years following, I was very angry and at times police were involved and had to calm me down. I was never arrested nor convicted of any crimes, and my experiences with police during times of distress have been positive. I drank alcohol in excess in the years since leaving care and experienced PTSD like symptoms i.e. flashbacks. Today I no longer drink and flashbacks are minimal.

Date: 02/07/2026

Method: Taken over phone