

Initial Survivor Supplementary Statement**Date Completed: 17/07/2026****Survivor's full name:** James Reid Whitelaw**Other known name:** N/A**DOB:** 05/10/1969**Redress Priority:** Low**Serious Criminal Convictions:** None**Mother's Name:** Forbs Mavis Reid Whitelaw**Father's Name:** John Nichols**Name of Care Home:** Kerelaw**Age in care:** 13-16**Reason for going into care:** Committed car theft**1.Introduction**

My name is James Whitelaw. 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**Kerelaw**

My time in Kerelaw Young Offenders was violent, frightening, and deeply traumatic. I was only 13 years old, and instead of being protected, I was repeatedly abused by the very people who were meant to care for us.

I suffered physical abuse I was slapped, kicked, and punched regularly. This happened constantly. Staff, especially the day-shift, hit me with their fists, knuckles, belts, and even a cane. I was kicked in the back and punched in the head. They shouted at me day and night. Most of the staff were intimidating older men, and they laughed at me while they beat me. They called me names like "wanker" and "dickhead" every day. There was one man, George McQueen, a large bodybuilder, who treated us well, but he was the only one.

Bullying was constant, and staff did nothing to stop it. I was locked in my room frequently. There was no privacy at all; we had to line up naked for showers in front of each other. I tried to run away once, and when I was caught, I was taken to the closed block. Two staff members kicked me around and "leathered" me as punishment.

I was made to work, cutting cables out of telephones and scrubbing floors and toilets on my hands and knees with toothbrushes for long hours until staff were satisfied. We were forced to play “games” where Matt George would beat us. These were not games; they were organised assaults.

Some staff behaved sexually inappropriately towards me. At the time, I didn’t fully understand how wrong it was, but I knew it made me uncomfortable and unsafe. No one touched me directly, but the behaviour was still inappropriate and frightening.

I saw staff beating other boys regularly. I heard about boys having their mouths washed out with washing-up liquid. In the early 1980s, some boys took their own lives because of the sexual abuse happening inside. These deaths were spoken about quietly, but everyone knew why they happened.

3. Emotional and Long-Term Impact

I was separated from all my siblings for three years. I was denied leave several times, which meant I never got to see anyone from my family. There was no emotional support from staff, none at all. I received no proper education.

Everything I went through in Kerelaw has had a lasting impact on my mental health. It has damaged my ability to form relationships, and it contributed to the breakdown of my marriage. I suffer from flashbacks and nightmares, and the trauma still affects me today.

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: James Whitelaw

Date: 17/07/2026