

MMA

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11th August 2026

Redress Scotland

apply@redress-scheme.scot

**By email/post: Email
Our Ref: 100387
Re: Scottish Redress Application - Miss Stacey Leonard
DOB: 28 April 1988
Application Reference: APP851339**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Covering Letter - Witness Statement and Supporting Evidence

We write in connection with the above Scottish Redress application. Please find enclosed the Witness Statement of Miss Stacey Leonard, together with the application documents and any supporting evidence included within the bundle.

The purpose of the witness statement is to provide Miss Leonard's own account of her childhood care placements, the abuse and neglect she describes experiencing while in care, the reporting and institutional knowledge she recalls, and the impact these experiences have had on her childhood and adult life. The statement is submitted in support of her application to The Scottish Redress Scheme and should be considered alongside the application form and supporting evidence bundle.

The statement explains that Miss Leonard was placed into care in Scotland when she was approximately five or six years old, in or around November 1994. It records her background before care, the circumstances of her entry into care, her separation from her siblings, and the foster placements arranged by Angus Council.

In summary, the statement describes Miss Leonard's account of emotional abuse, isolation and neglect during her placement with Mr and Mrs McConnachie, including being locked in a bedroom and being made to use a bucket as a toilet. She describes a later placement with Irene Claffey as kind, loving and non-abusive, before moving to the home of Sue and Rod Ellis, where she remained until she was 18.

Miss Leonard's statement describes serious sexual abuse during the Ellis placement, including abuse by another child in the household when she was about 14 and by Sue and Rod Ellis's son when she was about 15. She also describes her sister reporting abuse, a police investigation, and circumstances which she believes should have alerted the carers and social work to risks within the placement.

The statement further sets out the lasting impact Miss Leonard attributes to her experiences in care, including difficulties with trust and relationships, poor sleep, anxiety and depression, suicidal thoughts, heightened fear responses, and difficulties sustaining employment. She records receiving support from a psychiatrist, an adult social worker, Women's Aid and counselling services, together with prescribed medication for her mental health and sleep.

Miss Leonard also records that she recently reported matters to the police and that the status and reference for that report should be confirmed. She identifies that relevant care, social work, school, medical, police and counselling records may exist and should be obtained where possible. She also discloses a previous payment of £6,666 in respect of abuse by her grandfather, which concerned abuse before care and is separate from the in-care abuse described in this application.

We respectfully request that Redress Scotland considers the enclosed witness statement, application documents and any supporting evidence available when determining Miss Leonard's application.

Brief overview of enclosed document

Section / document part	Brief contents
Cover Letter	A cover letter from us addressing key issues in support of our client's Scottish Redress application.
Witness statement	Miss Leonard's personal account in support of her Scottish Redress application.
Background and entry into care	Personal background, life before care, entry into care, separation from siblings and placement arrangements.
McConnachie foster placement	Account of the first foster placement, including alleged emotional abuse, isolation, neglect and restrictive punishment.
Irene Claffey placement	Account of a stable and caring placement which Miss Leonard does not describe as abusive.
Sue and Rod Ellis placement	Account of the long-term placement from about age 10 to 18, including household conditions, sibling reunification and alleged sexual abuse.
Reporting and institutional knowledge	Account of disclosures, the sister's complaint, police involvement and the applicant's belief that risks should have been identified.
Impact evidence	Effect on childhood and adult life, including mental health, sleep, relationships, employment and ongoing support/treatment.
Supporting evidence / records	Potential care, social work, school, medical, police and counselling records, where available, together with the recent police report details once confirmed.
Previous payment disclosure	Disclosure of a £6,666 payment relating to pre-care abuse by Miss Leonard's grandfather, distinct from the in-care abuse in this application.

Yours faithfully,

Leah Pearson - Claims Handler

Investigations Team
MMA Legal

WITNESS STATEMENT OF MISS STACEY LEONARD

Application to the Scottish Redress Scheme

Applicant: Miss Stacey Leonard

Date of Birth: 28/04/1988

Application reference number: APP851339

Support Person Present: NO

Background

1. My name is Miss Stacey Leonard
2. My address is 2 Wards Road, Brechin, DD97AS
3. I make this statement in support of my application to the Scottish Redress Scheme
4. The contents of this statement are true to the best of my knowledge and belief
5. Where I cannot remember exact dates, names or details, I have said so.
6. I confirm I have provided as much detail as I am able to recall.
7. I agree that this statement may be submitted to and used by redress scotland in connection to my application.
8. I did not need a support person with me for the telephone interview. I understand that I could pause, take a break, skip a question or ask for a question to be reworded.
9. I understand that this statement will be considered as part of my application, together with my application form and any supporting documents or records provided.
10. I understand the purpose of the statement and agreed to continue.
11. I was placed into care in Scotland while I was a child under the age of 18.
12. The relevant care settings were foster placements arranged by Angus council.

Life Before Care

13. Before entering care, I lived with my mother, my grandfather, my brother and my sister.
14. My home life was chaotic. My mother could not look after us properly. She had suffered a great deal of abuse herself and was in poor health. Her health later deteriorated and she was admitted to Sunnyside Hospital.
15. I experienced physical and sexual abuse before entering care. My grandfather was responsible for abuse against me.
16. I was later diagnosed with a personality disorder since around 2002.

17. I did not have a diagnosis when I first entered care. I was described as a difficult child. I believe that description failed to take into account the trauma I had experienced.

Entry into care

18. My mother left us with one of her friends while my mother went to work. That friend contacted social work and reported that my mother was neglecting her children.
19. Two social workers and the police removed us that night. I understand that the decision was made by social work.
20. I was told that my mother could not look after us, but was not given a fuller explanation.
21. I was approximately five or six years old when I entered care in November 1994. I remember feeling relieved because i thought the beatings and sexual abuse would stop, but i was also frightened of being alone.
22. I was separated from my brother and sister because the carers said that they could not manage all three of us together and that I was difficult.

Foster Care Placement with Mr and Mrs McConnachie

23. My placement with Mr and Mrs McConnachie was a foster placement and lasted about seven months. **"EXHIBIT 1"**
24. I described daily life there as a living hell. At bedtime we were locked in our bedroom and were not allowed out to use the toilet. We were given a bucket to use as a toilet.
25. Mrs McConnachie constantly picked on me and blamed me for things that went wrong in the house. There were five children of the carers as well as three traumatised foster children.
31. I was treated differently. For example, if I sat in the front of the car, I was told to get into the back.
32. The usual food was pizza. I told the carers that I hated pizza, but I was not offered an alternative. It felt like I had to eat it or go hungry.
33. There was no settled routine because Mrs McConnachie was erratic. We had arrived with very little, but clothes and basic hygiene items were provided.
34. I was allowed contact with my mother, which I remember as being about once a month. I asked for more contact. My mother often let us down and the carers did not give me the emotional support I needed when that happened.
35. Punishment involved taking away everything we had and locking us in the bedroom. By the end, I felt that I was being punished every day for things I had not done.
36. The harm there was mainly emotional abuse, isolation and neglect of my emotional needs. When I cried, I was told to stop crying, go to bed and be quiet.

37. The older children in the household had little to do with me. I was isolated and did not receive the comfort or understanding I needed.
38. I started wetting the bed during or after this placement.
39. I told a social worker that the carers were horrible to me, punished me for things I had not done, and locked us in the bedroom with a bucket for a toilet. I recall the social worker's name as either Elizabeth Ross or Barbara Cowan, but the name should be checked against the records.
40. I later understood that the McConnachie's were no longer allowed to foster. I believe complaints had accumulated against them, although I do not have the records confirming this.
41. What was different about this placement was the lack of support and understanding. I was made to eat food I disliked and was made to feel that everything was my fault.

Placement with Irene Claffey

42. I was moved to Irene Claffey's foster home in June 1995 because I had been described as a difficult child. **"EXHIBIT 2"**
43. I was devastated and heartbroken to be split from my brother and sister. I was the only foster child at first, but Irene made me feel part of her family.
44. Irene lived in a four-bedroom house and had a teenage daughter.
45. There was a clear and secure routine. I went to bed at about 7.00 pm and got up at about 7.30 am to get ready for school.
46. I was given toast and cereal for breakfast and could choose what I wanted in my packed lunch. Clothing, toiletries and appropriate bathing arrangements were provided.
47. I had to attend church on Saturdays. I disliked that, but I do not consider anything that happened in Irene's care to have been abusive.
48. Contact with my mother was not frequent because my mother's health had deteriorated.
49. Irene later cared for another child. That child and I became good friends before she moved to her permanent home.
50. Irene was kind and loving, treated me like her own child, and did not make me feel different.

Placement with Sue and Rod Ellis

51. I moved to Sue and Rod Ellis when I was about ten and remained there until I was 18. I was reunited with my brother and sister and was told that this would be our forever home. **"EXHIBIT 3"**

52. At first I found the placement horrible. I had lived as an only foster child for about three years and suddenly had to rebuild a relationship with my brother. I had serious trust issues and took a long time to let the Ellises in or open up to them.
53. There was very little routine and we were allowed to run wild. I understand that the carers were reported to social services because the children were out at all hours.
54. The food was generally all right and varied, and I was given choices. Clothing and basic hygiene items were provided.
55. There were many children in the placement. Some were very unwell, used drugs, or behaved violently. I remember threats being made to stab Sue and to cut Rod's head off. I did not feel that the arrangements were safe.
57. One of the other children, Colin Simpson, sexually abused me when I was about 14.
58. One incident occurred in Colin's bedroom. I needed cigarettes. He said that he would get cigarettes for me if I allowed him to rub his genitals between my breasts. He then attempted to have sexual intercourse with me.
59. This did not happen only once. It happened approximately every other week until Colin moved out.
60. I could not sleep or eat. I felt guilt and shame, developed anorexia, and was admitted to Cornhill in Aberdeen.
61. I did not tell anyone at the time. Until recently, the only person I had told was my partner, Steven. I kept silent because of the guilt and shame.
62. I was also sexually abused by Sue and Rod Ellis's son when I was about 15. I have not given further details of that incident in this statement.
63. Shortly before my statement interview, Steven and I reported matters to the police. I did not report the abuse when I was a child.
64. As I grew older, abuse began to seem normal to me because it appeared that everybody in the care environment behaved as if it was normal.

Other Children, Reporting and Institutional Knowledge

65. My sister was also abused while in the Ellis placement. She reported the abuse to the police and there was a police investigation.
66. The Ellises asked me to speak to my sister while they spoke to social work. At that time, I had fallen out with my sister because I thought that she was lying.
67. The Ellises offered me 200 cigarettes to speak to my sister for five minutes.
68. My sister later withdrew her statement after people repeatedly told her that I would never speak to her again, wanted nothing more to do with her, that everybody would hate her, and that she was lying.

69. I now believe my sister was telling the truth. The psychological pressure placed on her was a punishment for making her complaint.
70. I believe the Ellises and social work should have known that children in the placement were at risk. There were many troubled children, unsafe behaviour, my sister's complaint and a police investigation.
71. I was not threatened directly in connection with my own disclosure because I did not make one at the time.

Movement Between Placements and Leaving Care

72. The reasons for moving me between placements were not properly explained. I was told that I was going to live with my brother and sister at a forever home, but I did not have a say.
73. I was made to believe that moves were my fault because I was a difficult child.
74. I repeatedly ran away. Whoever found me, including the police or social workers, returned me to the placement.
75. While I was in care, I tried to take my own life because I did not want to be here any more.
76. I left care at 18 and moved into a flat by myself. My life was chaotic and I was drinking heavily. **"EXHIBIT 4"**
77. I felt that once I was 18 I had to leave because I no longer attracted a payment. The Ellises had been described as my forever family, but it did not feel like a family without conditions.
78. I had my son Declan when I was about 20. That relationship was toxic. I ended it because my partner hit me and shoved me into things.

Impact on My Life

79. The experiences described in this statement have affected me throughout my life.
80. After leaving care, I returned to alcohol after having stopped for a long time. I felt unwanted and that I did not have a place where I belonged.
81. I have difficulty trusting people and maintaining relationships. I struggle to open up and communicate.
82. I do not sleep well and have been prescribed medication to help me sleep.
83. I have been diagnosed with a personality disorder, anxiety and depression and have been prescribed medication for my mental health.
84. I have no close friends. My children are the main people in my life.

85. At the time of my interview, I was preparing to leave another domestic abuse relationship and planned to take my children with me.
86. My mood is unstable. I do not believe that I could keep a job because of my mood and because I want to sleep for much of the day.
87. I have not had paid employment since leaving care.
88. My children are the reason I keep going. I continue to experience suicidal thoughts and feelings that I do not want to be here.
89. High-conflict situations trigger me. I cannot cope with arguments, raised voices, shouting, banging or sudden noises, and I frighten very easily.
90. I need to be able to see and hear what is happening around me at all times. I cannot wear headphones or hats because they interfere with that sense of awareness.
91. If the abuse and neglect had not happened, I might have friends and employment. I want to be happy and have peace, but I do not feel able to achieve that.

Support and Treatment

92. I have received help from a psychiatrist, an adult social worker and counselling services.
93. I see my adult social worker approximately once a week.
94. I receive support from Women's Aid approximately once a week. Those sessions allow me to talk and release what I am feeling.
95. I am also receiving counselling through a service recorded in "**EXHIBIT 4**" as TCA in connection with gambling addiction.
96. I take prescribed medication for my mental health, anxiety, depression and sleep. The exact names and doses should be confirmed from my medical records before being relied upon. "**EXHIBIT 5**"

Supporting Evidence and Previous Payments

97. I did not identify specific care, social work, school, medical, police or counselling records during the interview, but relevant records may exist and should be obtained where possible.
98. I did not identify another person who could provide a supporting statement.
99. Apart from the matters explained below, I have not previously made a civil claim, criminal injuries claim or Redress application about the abuse described in this statement.
100. I previously received a payment of £6,666 in respect of abuse by my grandfather. That payment concerned abuse before care and not the in-care abuse described in this statement.

101. As stated above, shortly before this statement interview my partner Steven and I reported matters to the police. The status and reference for that report should be confirmed.

Difficulties with Memory and Gaps in Evidence

102. The events described happened many years ago. Some dates, names and details are difficult for me to remember.

103. Where I have used approximate dates or descriptions, I have done so honestly and to the best of my recollection.

104. I have not intentionally exaggerated or included anything that I do not believe to be true.

Why I Am Applying to The Scottish Redress Scheme

105. I am applying because I experienced abuse and neglect while I was a child in care in Scotland.

106. I want to be heard and believed.

107. Acknowledgement would mean the world to me. It would mean everything.

108. I want Redress Scotland to understand that the harm I suffered has left me with suicidal thoughts and feelings that I do not want to be here. I do not believe it is fair that I have had to live with this harm.

Final Statement

109. I have tried to provide a full and honest account of my experiences, to the best of my knowledge and recollection.

110. I ask Redress Scotland to consider this statement, my application form, and any supporting evidence submitted when determining my application.

111. At the end of the interview, I confirmed that the important matters had been covered, that I felt safe to end the call, and that I had someone I could contact for support.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Name: Miss Stacey Leonard

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

EXHIBIT 1

11/10/94	[REDACTED] Stacey [REDACTED] in care, c/o Jack and Sue Harr Hospital.
11/10/94	[REDACTED]
12/10/94	[REDACTED]
03/11/94	[REDACTED]
03/11/94	[REDACTED]
07/11/94	[REDACTED]
19/11/94	[REDACTED]
22/11/94	Children transferred to Anne McConnachie's.

EXHIBIT 2

05/06/95	Stacey moves from the McConnachie's to Irene Claffey's.
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EXHIBIT 3

REVIEW OF THE CARE PLAN											
Part 6											
Minute of the Review Meeting											
Name of child/young person				Stacey LEONARD				dob		20/04/88	
Date of Review				Day		30		Month		05	
				Year		2000					
Home Address:											
Placement Address:											
Date of reception into Accommodation:				24 November 1994				Number of months Accommodated:			
								66			
Date and Type of Placement:				16 July 1998 - permanence							

EXHIBIT 4



Registered Charity SC006511

Subject Access Request Information

Document prepared for MMA Legal by

Fiona Stewart, Business Information Manager, on behalf of Tayside Council on Alcohol

Client – Stacey Leonard, 2 Wards Road, Brechin DD9 7AS dob 28/04/1988

Background

SL was put into care as a child aged 4 due to ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and labelled as a bad child. Abused by grandfather who was charged but committed suicide while in prison. Was reunited with the siblings age 10 yrs old then put in care home until 18 yrs old but felt abandoned.

EXHIBIT 5

Medicine / Form		6	
FLUOXETINE		8	
Dose & Freq.	Route	12	
20mg	ORAL	14	
Signature	Start Date	18	
KLW	8/10/2020	22	
Further information			
Medicine / Form		6	
QUETIAPINE		8	
Dose & Freq.	Route	12	
100mg	ORAL	14	
Signature	Start Date	18	
KLW	8/10/2020	22	
Further information			

