

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Michael Keown
Date of Birth: 01/12/1955
Care Setting: rutherglen nunnery children's homes Glasgow 1960.
Dates: 1960
Persons Involved:

Full Statement

I was very young when I was placed in Rutherglen Nunnery Children's Homes in Glasgow in 1960. From the very beginning, I remember feeling frightened and unsafe. One of the nuns I remember clearly was Sister Theresa. She had the same name as my mum, but there was nothing comforting about her. She would walk around carrying a thimble on one finger and a 12-inch wooden ruler, and these were used as tools to hurt us.

She would constantly beat us with the ruler. I remember her striking my legs repeatedly until I was screaming in pain. The thimble she wore was metal, and she would dig it into us and hit us with it as well. She showed no kindness or patience. She was not polite and treated us with cruelty. I never once felt safe there. I was beaten regularly and was also badly bullied. There was no care, no empathy, and no sense of protection. I hated being there.

The place itself was not safe, and the impact on me and my brothers was severe. It was not a place any child should have been. The nuns were horrible and treated us like animals. I was often secluded and isolated. There were areas that felt like torture chambers. We would be locked in cupboards as punishment, and we were frequently locked in bedrooms for long periods of time.

I remember one specific incident where I stood with my feet together, heel to heel, leaning on the sides of my shoes. For this, I was locked in a cupboard and beaten. This was not a one-off incident. It happened repeatedly. The abuse I experienced was both mental and physical, and it was constant.

To this day, I suffer because of this. I have a deep fear of enclosed spaces and experience panic attacks, which I directly link to being locked in cupboards as a child. These memories have never left me. They continue to affect my daily life and my mental wellbeing.

The staff would also use cold showers as punishment. I remember being forced into them, which was distressing and humiliating. There were also times when staff would apply cream to my body and say they had to do it, but it made me feel extremely uncomfortable and confused. I did not understand why this was happening, and it added to my distress and sense of vulnerability.

The other children in the home were feral. There was constant bullying between children, and the staff allowed it to happen. There was no supervision or protection. It felt like a place of chaos and fear, like a

torture chamber. It was not safe in any way.

I do not remember receiving any proper education while I was there. We were completely neglected in that sense. Family visits were stopped, which meant I had no way to ask for help or tell anyone what was happening to me. I felt completely cut off and alone.

I witnessed the same treatment being inflicted on my brothers. They were called Franko, who was the oldest, then Gerard, Colin, and Michael. We were all deeply affected by what happened in that place. When we first arrived, we were separated from each other, even though we were each other's only comfort. That separation caused further distress and made us feel even more alone and vulnerable.

I remember being cold, beaten, and hungry most of the time. Food was used as a punishment. We learned quickly not to ask for food, because if we did, we would be punished with the ruler or the thimble. Hunger became a constant part of life, and it added to the suffering we were already enduring.

This experience has impacted my entire life, as well as the lives of my siblings. I have always struggled with trust and have found it extremely difficult to build or maintain relationships. I feel claustrophobic and cannot tolerate enclosed spaces. I have lived with PTSD, anxiety, and depression for many years as a direct result of what I went through. I have often tried to block these memories out, but they resurface unexpectedly and affect me very badly when they do.

The trauma I experienced there has never left me. It has stayed with me throughout my entire life and has shaped who I am today. It has affected my mental health, my relationships, and my ability to feel safe in the world.

Now, all of my siblings have passed away apart from Gerard. We have never received justice for what happened to us. We were never given the opportunity to properly speak about it or receive the help we needed. What we went through has ruined our lives, and the effects of that abuse continue to this