

Survivor Supplementary Statement**Date Completed:** 13/07/2026**Survivor Full Name:** George John Bell Hughes**Other known name:** None**DOB:** 04/03/1977**Redress Priority:** Low**Serious Criminal Convictions:** None**Mother's Name:** Agnes Hughes**Father's Name:** Ronald Hughes**Name of Care Home(s):** Longriggend, Polmont**Age in care:** 16 -17**Reason for going into care:** Falsely accused of crime**1.Introduction**

My name is George Hughes. 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

When I was sixteen, I was accused of a crime that I didn't commit. I got taken through the court process and sent to Barlinnie and then moved to Longriggend.

Longriggend

The environment was extremely violent, and what I witnessed has stayed with me ever since. I remember seeing Gary O'Donnell have his wrist broken by staff members. Brian Kelly needed stitches across his face because they beat him so badly that his face bust open. Violence wasn't occasional; it was constant, and it was used as a way to control us. The treatment was similar to the film *Scum*.

The staff opened the gate by using my head like a battering ram. They beat me repeatedly, hitting me with batons, punching me, and kicking me. There were times when they stripped me naked and assaulted me. They would fold my body up and throw me into the "digger," an isolated punishment cell with nothing inside. You could get put in the digger for anything, even minor things like talking back. The digger was underneath A hall, and things would happen under there that nobody else saw. I was sent there multiple times. The staff would strip you naked and then 4 or 5 staff members would beat the life out of you. They would hit you in the genitals. I actually had one staff member try and stick a baton up my bottom. Most of the times they would fold you up with your arms and legs and you couldn't move for a while. You are just lying there and have had the life beaten out of you, so you just lie there in pain waiting for the feeling in your muscles to come back so you can start moving again. Even in the digger even though it was supposed to be isolation, the screws would still come in to mess with you if they wanted. They used to do things like come into the digger and say do you want a roll up Hughes? I would say aye and they

would give me it, but it was just rolled up tea leaves so when I went to light it, it would all crumble. It was just pure psychological abuse. The only thing in the cell was a mattress. They took my mattress away at 7am and didn't return it until 8pm. I don't think there was a toilet in the cell I think you had to get the staff's attention to be allowed to go to the toilet. I remember being kept in that cell for up to three weeks at a time, with no contact with anyone. The isolation was crushing. The only people you could speak to was you could speak up to the people in the first flat in A hall through this piece of plastic. The brutality from the screws was constant. There was no compassion, no humanity. Staff would slam my head off the pool tables and use excessive force for no reason at all.

There was constant conflict with staff, partly because many of them weren't much older than us. There were guys in there from 14 up to 21 and then the screws were like 21 up to 40's so there was already a conflict there. They treated us like enemies, not young people in their care. There was already a struggle there with the older lads in there and the screws. We had no privacy when showering. We were made to line up and shower together while staff stood and watched. There were no curtains or anything like that. It was humiliating and degrading. One of the other inmates who was across the corridor to me hung himself. It was a young screw who had just started who found him. I would have been around 16 at the time and this is something that has stayed with me ever since.

As punishment, staff would refuse to take us to our visits. They used family contact as a tool for control. If they didn't want me to get a family visit, they would just tell my family that he is on a rule and that was that I couldn't see them. When we did get family visits it would be behind a sheet of glass. Other inmates would go into rooms and steal trainers and clothes. They would say, "What size are you? Give me them," and there was nothing you could do. If somebody tried to take my trainers I would fight them. The environment forced me to constantly fight just to protect myself. I was always on the back foot. This was the case with fellow prisoners' and the screws. The staff seemed to take genuine pleasure out of abusing us. Some of them abused their power and were sickening to be honest with you. It was as simple as if you were a cheeky boy then you would get your arse handed to you and I did literally.

I actually caught scabies in Longriggend, and I had to get hosed down and wasn't like to socialise with any of the other inmates. I actually remember somebody saying to me back then that I should put a claim in, but I didn't really think anything of it. To be honest I didn't really appreciate how wrong it was back then it is only as I have gotten older, I have realised how wrong it was the way we were treated. It was completely traumatising. Some of the staff were okay and some of the staff were animals. There was a staff member there called Mr Montgomery and he was a nice guy and he actually ended up leaving there after a few months because of the brutality there. There was a wee baldy guy who was a stocky guy and he was an animal. We used to call some of the staff the dog squad and the alright the squad. The alright squad would be okay and sometimes put music on for us when we were having our dinner and things like that. The dog squad thought they were tough guys who would just challenge you on everything and they wouldn't think twice about hitting you. There was a guy there called Mr McTavis I think he was called and if you walked by him and you didn't have your shirt tucked in then he would

just volley you and batter you, he was an animal. I think one of the inmates, Joe bananas actually ended up slashing him because of the way he was treating us.

Polmont

At seventeen, I was sent to Polmont for four months. The environment there was hostile, with fights breaking out depending on what area you were from. There were different camps depending on where you were from. Some of the were alright and decent people and some of the screws were heavy-handed and aggressive. There was a staff member known as "Ninja," a tall man with blond hair, who regularly kicked us and used brutal force. I was locked up for twenty-three hours a day and only allowed out for dinner. Sometimes we were allowed rec, but it depended on whether your section got rec, if your section didn't get rec then you didn't get out all day apart from dinner. A lot of the time it depended on whether the screws could be bothered. The isolation and violence took a huge toll on me, especially the isolation.

I had a porter potty in my room that I had to empty every three days by myself. You had to go to the end of the wing and then go down 3 or 4 flights of stairs and carry your porter potty. They gave us no gloves, no masks, nothing. It would be unacceptable to do that in this day and age you could easily catch something from it. The prisoners were more brutal in Polmont than they were in Longriggend but the screws were more brutal in Longriggend than Polmont.

During my time in Longriggend and Polmont I changed a hell of a lot. My anxiety went through the roof, and it is still through the roof to this day. The isolation really messed with your head, especially after you had been brutalised down in the digger by the screws and just left there to lie. The isolation really was terrible.

3.Emotional and Long-Term Impact

During my time in Longriggend and Polmont I changed a hell of a lot. My anxiety went through the roof, and it is still through the roof to this day. The isolation really messed with your head, especially after you had been brutalised down in the digger by the screws and just left there to lie. The isolation really was terrible.

After I left, everything I had been through led me down a path of violence, drug abuse, and reoffending. I became angry, defensive, and numb. I became very cold as a person as a way to protect myself. I became quite scary and I am not proud of that bit it was a mentality of survival. I used drugs to block out the past because I didn't know how else to cope. I was trying to block everything out. My time in care didn't just affect me — it changed the entire course of my life. It messed up my trust ultimately because the people I was meant to trust took me into a cell and mistreated me. After that I didn't know how to trust. I will be honest talking about this the last couple of days has made me really emotional and I have cried a few times and I don't know why. That is not like me at all I am from a generation where men don't cry. I think it's because now I am looking back on it as an older man and thinking about what if my nephew had to go through something like that and was treated like that. I never claimed to be an angel but one thing I do know is that what happened to me was wrong.

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: George Hughes

Date; 13/06/2026

Added via phone call 14/06/2026: In the digger in the punishment cell a lot of people were left battered, bruised and bleeding and you are lying there and it is terrifying. You have got 5 guys battering you and hitting you in the genitals and then one of them shoved a baton up my arse bum and there was nothing you could do because your being held there by the others. It was terrifying. It would be terrifying now as a man let alone back then as a 17-year-old kid. It happened to me every time I was in the digger. It was a terrifying thing being down there because nobody else was around and nobody could hear your screams. I have had a hard life because of all that and I was innocent as well, they knew it was a lassie they were looking for and I got still got brought in. I should have never been there. We actually did a sit in to protest about the violence and brutality that was happening to us by the staff. 5 of us were doing the sit in, in the food hall. We did the sit in because of what happened to Brian Kelly, one of the inmates who got his face cut open by the screws. One of the boys on our wing that took his own life got a baton shoved up his bum. He got taken to the digger and when he came back, he wasn't the same anymore he was changed.