

Name: Norma Inglis

DOB: 12/01/1967

Name of Care Home/s: Foster Care Selkirk, Selkirk Children's Home, Liberton Assessment Centre, Tyne Park List D School.

Reason for going into care: Neglect.

Age in care: Approximately 11 – 16 years of age

Personal Statement

I was taken from my mother house by a social worker with my sister, in the middle of the night, by a social worker. I don't remember a children's panel. We were left alone and neglected.

I was placed in foster care in Selkirk, Scotland, along with my sister. The family had children of their own, and although I did not suffer any abuse while there and the family were generally okay, moving school was difficult. I remember being moved around a lot in the beginning. I was then placed in foster care in Jedburgh, again with my sister, and I did not experience abuse there either. Afterward, we were fostered to an aunt and uncle in Hawick for a while. My sister Susan was eventually allowed to return home, but I was given no explanation as to why I was not, and I was split up from her and sent to a children's home.

I stayed in Selkirk Children's Home for about a year. I believe we had individual rooms, and I attended Selkirk High School, walking there each morning. I remember being fed adequately, and the staff were generally okay, and we had privacy to use the showers and bath. It was not a bad place, but it was very difficult because I had been separated from my sister. I often ran away to try to see my family, as I could not understand why I was not allowed home. As a punishment, I never received weekend leave for visits, and we were locked in all the time, unable to go outside freely. I missed my sister terribly.

I was then sent to Liberton Assessment Centre for about six weeks because I had started running away again. I think I had a single room there, but it was constantly locked, and we were not allowed outside. The showers were communal, so there was no privacy. We were forced to line up naked, and we were watched whilst showered, it felt very uncomfortable. I received no education while there; we simply sat in a room during the day, and girls who smoked were allowed to sit at a table outside. At night we went into a hall for recreation, with boys on one side and girls on the other. The staff were not too bad, and I think my mother visited once or twice, which were the only times I remember seeing my family.

I was then moved to Tyne Park, Harrington List D School, where I stayed until my fifth year of school, around 4 years. We had shared rooms, with four of us in the room I was in. All education was done in-house, but it was nothing like mainstream schooling and was not taken seriously. It was very basic. I was often forced to eat food I did not like, and if I refused, it was taken away and I was given nothing else. I often went hungry and they often tried to force feed me.

The showers were private here, but Mr. Dunton, a staff member, bullied me almost daily. He pushed me into rooms, locked me in cupboards, punched me, and squeezed my face, which was very painful as I was just a child. I witnessed him doing the same to another girl. He made horrible comments, often telling me "no wonder your family don't want you." Weekend leave was sometimes granted but often denied. The environment was hostile and frightening, and I felt constantly targeted. I had trouble sleeping with heightened anxiety, that would make me tremble at every loud bang and noise in the night.

Eventually I returned to live with my mother and stepfather for a short time, but the experiences I had in care had already left a huge impact on my mental health. I suffered badly with depression, nightmares, and flashbacks of the trauma I endured. I never received closure about why I was separated from my sister, and I cannot even remember attending a children's panel. The lack of explanation and the separation left me with severe trust issues that have affected me throughout my entire life.