

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Ruth Smith
Date of Birth: 08/08/1974
Care Setting: Rimpleton House- Glenrothes
Dates: 1986-1990
Persons Involved:

Full Statement

I was taken away from my parents when I was 13 years old because I was skipping school. Instead of being supported or helped to understand why I was struggling, I was removed from my family and placed into the care system at Rimpleton House in Glenrothes. I remained there for around a year during my first placement.

Being taken away from my family was devastating. I was completely heartbroken. I was confused, terrified and hysterical with grief. I did not understand why this was happening to me. I remember crying uncontrollably — my face would be red raw from sobbing. I felt abandoned and alone. The adults around me could see how distressed I was, but instead of comforting me or explaining anything properly, I was treated as a problem.

On my arrival, I was shown very little care or compassion. When I became upset, which was understandable given the trauma of being removed from my home, I was sent to my room and left there alone until I “calmed myself down.” I was effectively secluded while in a highly distressed state. There was no emotional support, no reassurance, and no attempt to comfort a 13-year-old child who had just been taken from her parents. I felt punished for being upset.

During my time there, I did make a few friends with other children. However, I quickly realised that we were all shells of ourselves. We were withdrawn, frightened and emotionally damaged. It became clear why. Certain staff members would call us nasty names, belittle us and physically push us along the corridors. We were constantly on edge. We did as we were told because we were too scared not to. Even when we behaved, they would still find reasons to single us out.

I was frequently singled out and bullied in front of the other children. This was humiliating and degrading. Staff members would call me disgusting names and speak to me in a way that stripped me of my dignity. The name-calling was relentless. Over time, I began to internalise what they were saying. I started to believe I was what they called me. I felt ashamed of myself. I felt dirty, worthless and small. No child should ever be made to feel that way by the adults responsible for their care.

After around a year, I returned home for a few months. However, I was then placed back into care again for skipping school. This second placement was even worse. The mental and physical abuse escalated.

There was a female staff member in particular who targeted me. She would push me around and, on occasions, pull my hair. These were not accidents — they were deliberate acts of aggression meant to intimidate and control me. She constantly singled me out, mocked me and laughed at me for no reason. She repeatedly called me “dirty” and other degrading names in front of other children, deliberately humiliating me.

She would sometimes prevent me from having showers, then use that as a reason to call me dirty. This was cruel and degrading. On other occasions, when she decided I was to shower, she would physically drag me to the showers. I felt completely powerless. I had no control over my own body or basic hygiene. It was deeply humiliating and emotionally damaging.

I was frequently secluded and isolated. I tried to keep to myself to avoid further bullying and punishment, but that did not protect me. The isolation severely affected my mental health. I felt trapped, hopeless and alone. I had no one to turn to. I was separated from my siblings and had no family support around me. I felt completely cut off from the people who loved me.

The school was located on the same grounds, which meant I had no freedom whatsoever. I felt institutionalised. I was academically ahead of what they were teaching, but instead of being supported or challenged appropriately, I was left unstimulated and disengaged. Over time, I began falling behind. I started to feel stupid and incapable. My confidence in my intelligence was destroyed.

Physical restraint was also used frequently. Staff would use force to restrain us. These restraints were painful and frightening. Being held down by adults when you are a child is terrifying. It made me feel criminalised rather than cared for. There was nothing we could do about it. We had no voice and no protection.

The overall environment was one of fear, intimidation and control rather than care. I was bullied by those who were meant to protect me. I was emotionally abused, physically handled aggressively, humiliated and neglected. I was denied compassion at a time in my life when I needed it most.

The long-term impact of this has been severe. I feel that I never had a proper start in life. The trauma I experienced in care has followed me into adulthood. I have been a very anxious person ever since. I struggle deeply with trust. I find it hard to believe that people have good intentions. My self-esteem was shattered at a young age, and I have carried that damage with me throughout my life.

The abuse and neglect I experienced in care did not just hurt me at the time — it has shaped my entire life. It has affected my mental health, my relationships and my ability to feel safe in the world. I was a vulnerable child who needed understanding and support. Instead, I was bullied, degraded and physically mistreated by the very people entrusted with my care.

I believe the treatment I received was abusive, neglectful and deeply harmful, and it has had lifelong consequences for me.