

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Alexis Prowse
Date of Birth: 05/02/1994
Care Setting: Seaton Terrace
Dates: 2004-2008
Persons Involved:

Full Statement

I was around 11 years old when I arrived at what I can only describe as the worst place of my life. I ended up in this children's home, and from the moment I arrived, it was a brutal and traumatic environment. My brother was already there when I first moved in, but shortly after I arrived, they moved him out. This left me feeling even more alone and vulnerable.

When I arrived, there was no empathy or care shown towards me. I was immediately flung into my room and handled roughly. I remember being slung about and not being treated with any kindness or understanding. From early on, I was restrained daily, and these restraints were forceful and painful. Staff would sit on me in a way that took my breath away. I felt physically overpowered and terrified. These experiences changed me as a person. I became more withdrawn, fearful, and emotionally damaged.

The environment in the home was unsafe. We were allowed to leave the care home and mix with people who were involved in dangerous behaviour, including fighting with knives. Staff were aware of this and did nothing to stop it. It made me feel like they did not care about my safety or wellbeing at all.

There was one specific incident where two male staff members sat on my back while restraining me, and another staff member, Jacky, stood watching and even helped them. This caused me severe pain and distress. I felt completely powerless and dehumanised.

Staff would also use punishments to provoke reactions from me. For example, they would remove my TV from my room knowing it would upset me. If we had not eaten by the time the kitchen was closed, we were not given any food. This meant going hungry as a punishment, which added to my distress and sense of neglect.

We were often secluded in our rooms for long periods. Staff regularly called us names and would push us around daily. There was no sense of safety or care. The home itself was overcrowded. It was supposed to be a four-bedroom home, but there were too many children, and at times we had to sleep or stay in the office or living room. This made the environment even more chaotic and unstable.

During my time there, I witnessed sexual assault in various ways involving both children and adults. This was extremely traumatic and something that has stayed with me.

I became associated with another child called Jacky Murdoch. We ended up having a fight, which was my first ever fight. Staff allowed this to happen and did not intervene appropriately. After this incident, my sister was prevented from coming to the home, which caused further strain and isolation for me.

There is one memory in particular that I will never forget — Christmas Day. I was the only child left in the home, as the other children had gone to spend time with their families. I felt completely alone. A staff member called Jacky Hulme arranged for me to go to Jacky Murdoch's home so that I would not be alone on Christmas Day. I was desperate to feel like a normal child and have some sense of belonging, so I agreed and went.

This turned out to be the worst mistake of my life. While I was there, Jacky Murdoch's dad took me upstairs, saying that my presents were there. Once upstairs, he began kissing me and sexually assaulting me. He forced me to do things and told me not to speak about it. This abuse did not just happen once — it continued over time. He would come to the care home to visit Jacky Murdoch and would continue to target me.

He also sent me inappropriate messages, asking me disturbing and sexual questions, including asking what colour underwear I was wearing. I was too scared to speak up about what was happening. I felt trapped, ashamed, and terrified. He would even come to the care home and put money under my door, which made me feel even more confused and manipulated.

A member of staff became aware of this after another child called Leigh saw the messages and reported them. I strongly believe that this situation would never have happened if staff had listened to me, protected me properly, and taken responsibility for my safety. I felt completely failed by the people who were supposed to care for me.

By this point, my mental health had significantly deteriorated. I had been abused in multiple ways — physically, emotionally, and sexually. These experiences have stayed with me for the rest of my life. I have never been the same since.

I now suffer severely from anxiety, PTSD, and depression. I feel that this experience has affected the course of my entire life. I have struggled to feel safe, to trust others, and to build healthy relationships. I feel that since this incident, I have been vulnerable and have continued to experience harm, as though I have been marked by what happened to me.

I remained in this placement until around 2008. By that time, my mental health had deteriorated to such an extent that I felt suicidal. I was eventually moved to be with my sister Laura, but things did not improve. My sister was also struggling, and there was an incident where she attacked me in front of a school teacher. Following this, I was left at school without proper support.

Throughout my life, I feel that I have been passed from place to place without anyone truly caring for me or protecting me. I have been failed repeatedly by the systems that were meant to keep me safe. The abuse I experienced has had a severe and lasting impact on my life, and I continue to suffer the consequences of it every day.