

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Laura Prowse
Date of Birth: 01/09/1987
Care Setting: DREGHORN CHILDRENS HOME
Dates: 1998
Persons Involved:

Full Statement

I arrived here at around 10 years old. I was extremely nervous, scared, and completely overwhelmed. This was in the January after my 10th birthday, and I will never forget it. The date is something that has stayed with me for the rest of my life — 28th January 1998. I remember this day like it was yesterday. It is fixed in my memory because of how frightening and traumatic it was for me. From the very beginning, there was no empathy shown towards me or my siblings. I felt scared, emotional, confused, and completely out of my depth.

As the eldest sibling, I felt a huge responsibility. Even though I was just a child myself, I went straight into a protective mode. I could see my siblings were worried and frightened, and I felt I had to be brave for them, even though inside I was struggling deeply. That pressure has stayed with me ever since and has had a lasting impact on how I deal with stress and responsibility in my adult life.

When we arrived, the staff members greeted us in a very harsh and unwelcoming way. There was no kindness, no reassurance, and no effort to make us feel safe. The environment itself was chaotic. There were children running around in a feral way, screaming and out of control. Coming from what was already a broken home, this was not a place of safety — it felt like entering another unsafe and unpredictable environment. Instead of feeling protected, I felt like I had to stay on guard at all times.

The staff were often boisterous, aggressive, and would shout at us regularly. I remember specifically Ann Bathgate, as well as another lady who was on a temporary placement. These two staff members made our lives extremely difficult. They targeted me and my siblings in particular. They would call us names, belittle us, and deliberately embarrass us in front of others. This had a deep impact on my self-esteem and sense of worth, especially at such a young and vulnerable age.

We were forced to do chores and tasks that we did not want to do, and if we refused or questioned anything, we would be punished. There was no understanding or fairness — it felt like constant control and intimidation. We were also excluded from activities. We were not allowed to join in on most entertainment days or events, which made us feel isolated and different from the other children. This exclusion added to my feelings of loneliness and rejection.

As the eldest, I began to rebel against this treatment because I could see how unfairly we were being

treated. However, this only resulted in further punishment. Staff would sanction me and, in turn, my siblings would also suffer because of this. Family and friend visits were stopped, cutting us off from any form of outside support or comfort. I was denied a proper education and any real free time. I was often secluded and locked in my bedroom while other children were outside playing. I missed out on what should have been a normal childhood. This isolation has had a long-term effect on my ability to socialise and trust others.

There were also incidents of physical restraint. I was restrained with force, which caused me significant pain. I remember one specific incident very clearly. I had just turned 11 and had come home late from school. I was told I was not allowed to socialise with my friends. When I questioned this, I was dragged from the front door across the floor into my bedroom. This caused me both physical pain and emotional trauma. Experiences like this have stayed with me and have contributed to ongoing mental health issues, including anxiety, fear of authority, and difficulty feeling safe.

During my time living there, I was suffering badly, both mentally and physically. There was no support offered, and no one showed any interest in my mental health or wellbeing. I felt invisible, unheard, and completely alone. The only sense of freedom I had was the short walk to the bus stop to go to school.

Even at school, I was not safe. I was labelled as a “child in care,” and because of this, I was bullied and tormented. This treatment followed me everywhere. The stigma attached to my upbringing has stayed with me throughout my life and has had a severe and lasting impact on my mental health, my confidence, and how I see myself.

I believe I was there for around a year, although my memory of time during that period is unclear due to the trauma. The only positive aspect I can identify is that my siblings were kept together. This allowed me to continue trying to look after them as best as I could, despite everything I was going through myself.

By the end of my time there, I was deeply affected. I was suffering emotionally, mentally, and physically. Eventually, I was moved to a foster family, but the damage from this period of my life has stayed with me. It continues to affect my mental health, my relationships, and my overall wellbeing to this day.