Name: Linda Carroll Dick

DOB: 06/02/1963

Name of Care Home: Beechwood Assessment Centre, Tollcross, Snowdon List D in Stirling, Pine Park Edinburgh.

Reason for going into care: Abusive Father

Age in care: Approximately 10-16 years of age

Personal Statement

Beechwood Assessment Centre, Tollcross

At the age of 10/11, I was sent to Beechwood Assessment Centre in Tollcross. My father was sexually abusing me, and I had stopped attending school. The abuse began when I was 8 years old, and by 10, he was raping me. I spent several months at Beechwood. During my time there, I endured mental abuse. I was diagnosed with epilepsy later, but at that time, I had no idea what was wrong with me. I experienced seizures, and they would confine me in what resembled a jail cell with barbed wire. It was an empty room without any furniture. I was left there for hours, banging my head against the wall, with no one coming to my aid. I was confused and received no medical care; I had never seen a doctor. I was left alone during my seizures, completely unaware of my condition. This happened frequently since I wasn't on any medication. At night, I was locked in my bedroom, with all the doors secured. When I had a seizure, no one checked on me; I was left alone and terrified, not understanding what was happening. I began to receive home leaves, which I dreaded. I expressed my fear but didn't explain why. They still forced me to go home. Every weekend, I was raped by my father, and I was too frightened to speak out. Part of me believed it was normal, thinking that all fathers acted this way. I suspect my mother was aware but chose to do nothing. As punishment for what they considered misbehaviour, I was often subjected to cold baths, which would trigger a seizure. My nerves contributed to the episodes as well, and I feared being sent to the cell. I received no education during my stay. The only learning I encountered was material I had already covered in Primary School. I either repeated old work or was permitted to paint. I did not receive any education during my time there.

Tyne Park in Edinburgh.

At the age of 12/13, I moved to Tyne Park in Edinburgh. It was very strict there, and I spent three months in that environment. I was never provided with my epilepsy medication during my time there, which led to more frequent fits. Once again, I was left alone when I had a fit. They assumed I was just throwing a tantrum. I ended up wetting myself during these fits, which is why I was subjected to cold baths. Even after my diagnosis, when they understood my condition, I continued to be treated this way. They warned me that if I ran away twice, they wouldn't take me back. I did run away twice and was taken to my mother's house, but I was left there. My mother never took me in, so I had to go live with a friend.

Snowden List D school

Subsequently, approx. age 13, I was transferred to Snowden List D School, where I spent a year. I slept in a dormitory divided into cubicles. If I had a fit, I was placed in my cubicle and left there. I experienced fits four to five times a week. Each time, I was thrown into the cubicle and left with the door locked. On one occasion, I had a severe fit and was taken to the hospital, where I was diagnosed with epilepsy. I was prescribed medication, which helped reduce the frequency of the fits but did not eliminate them. Even after my diagnosis, I was still isolated in the cubicle during fits, with no staff members to sit with me or help. I also endured cold baths there. Staff members would yell at me and throw me into the bath if I had a fit. The only individuals who seemed to care were the other children. I often missed meals because I was locked in my cubicle for most of the time. I refused to return home due to my father's actions, but they forcibly put me in a van and dropped me off at the station. I attempted to run away but was consistently brought back by the police. I would be grounded, and my pocket money would be confiscated. I received no education at all during that time. I was taken to class, but it was only primary school material, and I would often walk out. When it was time for baths, I had to share with another girl. The cold baths were a punishment for the fits I experienced, and I had to endure them alone.

My experience in care has had a profound impact on me. I struggle with severe depression and have suicidal thoughts. I often have flashbacks of being confined and thrown into cold baths. I now feel uncomfortable in rooms with closed doors. I avoid locking my doors because it makes me feel trapped. Over the years, I have reached out to the Samaritans countless times due to my suicidal thoughts. I have attempted suicide several times. For many years, I believed the treatment I received was normal, but I now realise this was abuse. I've been medicated for a long time for PTSD and depression.