

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Kym Anderson
Date of Birth: 25/01/1986
Care Setting: RTHFIELD YTC YOUNG PERSON UNIT – NORTHFIELD – EDIGNBURGH
Dates: 1990-1993
Persons Involved:

Full Statement

I was taken away from my home at a very young age. I remember feeling completely unwanted, discarded and confused. My brother and I were removed from our other siblings, separated from the only sense of familiarity we had, and placed into Northfield YTC Young Person Unit in Edinburgh.

I was very young, vulnerable and emotional. I did not understand why I had been chosen to be taken away. No one sat me down. No one explained what was happening. No one comforted me. I was left feeling frightened, abandoned and completely alone. From the moment I arrived, I felt terrified.

The abuse started almost immediately.

I was verbally abused and physically abused by staff members. I remember a staff member called Anne Jay – she had long curly hair. There was also an older man called Danny. He was vicious and aggressive. He would call us over and restrain us violently. I remember my arms being bent painfully up behind my back. I remember being dragged down corridors to my room. I remember being thrown in, attacked, and the door being locked behind me.

We were locked in our rooms for long periods of time. I was locked in my room so often that it became a prison within a prison. I remember one time everything was taken from my room. All I was left with was a mattress. No belongings. No comfort. No distraction. Just walls and silence. I was locked in there all day with nothing. I felt stripped not only of possessions but of dignity and identity.

Family visits were often stopped. I later understood this was because I was covered in bruises. Instead of protecting me, they isolated me further. I was denied the comfort of seeing my family because of the visible evidence of what they were doing to me. That made me feel even more voiceless and powerless.

There was clear favouritism among the children. Some were singled out for mistreatment while others were treated as favourites. I was not a favourite. I was a victim.

Two girls, Laura and Robin, were allowed to bully and physically assault me. They beat me up. They pushed me. They called me names. They spent my pocket money. The unit allowed them to do this. Staff stood by and did nothing. I felt humiliated and degraded. I felt worthless, as though I deserved it.

We were controlled in every possible way. Food was restricted. The kitchen was locked, and we were not allowed to access food ourselves. We were given two meals a day. If we did not eat at those times, we went to bed hungry. There was no supper. Hunger became normal. It was another way of controlling us.

The staff supervised me while I showered. They stood there watching. It was degrading and humiliating. I

felt ashamed, exposed and powerless.

I was forced to buy my own laundry products out of my pocket money. Because other children were allowed to spend my money and because I had to use what little I had on essentials, I never had any money to take part in activities or feel included. I was locked away most of the time anyway. Access to common areas like the sitting room was often blocked. I was secluded, isolated and emotionally breaking down.

The restraints were violent. Staff would hold you up by your hands and legs. I remember the pain in my arms and shoulders. I remember feeling like I had no control over my own body. One time it was so unbearable that I kicked a hole in the wall of my bedroom in desperation, trying to get out. I remember that room clearly. I remember the hole. I believe it would still be there now. I was locked away for days.

Staff would take us to the post office and garage at the top of the street to get cigarettes. They provided cigarettes and used them as tools of manipulation. They played children against each other, buying cigarettes for favourites, creating jealousy and division which led to more fighting. It was toxic and intentional.

When children came from respite placements, we were beaten and warned to be on our best behaviour. We were told not to say what was happening inside. We were silenced. We were threatened. We were controlled through fear.

I remember a little boy who wet the bed. Instead of helping him, they beat him and humiliated him. They embarrassed him in front of others. This kind of cruelty was a daily occurrence. Staff would laugh at us, mock us, belittle us. They would encourage other children they favoured to join in. I was constantly singled out. Constantly picked on. Constantly made to feel small.

By the time I was older, I was a shell of a person. I stayed there until I was 16 years old. I left not healed, not supported, not prepared for life — but broken.

The long-term impact of what I experienced at Northfield YTC has been devastating.

I have suffered from eating disorders. Food was used as control in that unit, and my relationship with food has never been normal since. I have experienced suicidal thoughts in the past. I have lived with chronic anxiety that affects my daily functioning. I have been diagnosed with PTSD and Bipolar Type 1. I experience flashbacks, intrusive memories, emotional instability and overwhelming fear responses.

I struggle to build relationships. I do not trust people. Authority figures trigger fear in me. I expect betrayal. I expect harm. I struggle with intimacy and emotional safety. I am hypervigilant. I am easily overwhelmed. My nervous system feels permanently on edge.

The abuse I endured — the physical violence, the humiliation, the starvation, the isolation, the emotional cruelty — has ruined parts of my life. It has shaped my identity, my mental health, my self-worth and my ability to feel safe in the world.

I was a child who needed protection. Instead, I was terrorised, controlled and degraded.

The impact of what happened to me in Northfield YTC has stayed with me for life.