

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Helen Martin
Date of Birth: 31/10/1990
Care Setting: Mary Culbert- Galoway - Foster Family
Dates: 2001-2002
Persons Involved:

Full Statement

I felt that I was failed again by the system due to what was happening to me, including being assaulted and the issues I was experiencing at the time. I was not in that placement for long before I was moved to a new foster home with a foster parent called Mary Culbert. She was aware of my past and everything I had already been through, but I did not feel that she cared.

From the beginning, I was made to feel isolated. I was often sent to my room and left there, feeling secluded, suicidal, and struggling badly with my mental health. No one took the time to check on me properly or ask what was going on. I felt completely alone and unsupported at a time when I needed care the most.

At the same time, I was still being groomed and sexually abused by a man called James. I felt blindsided and manipulated by him, and I did not fully understand what was happening to me. Despite this, I was allowed to go straight back out to meet him, including after school on my way home. No one properly questioned where I was going or who I was with. It felt as though everyone knew what was happening, yet nothing was done to stop it.

Staff and carers would see me being picked up and brought home in his car, but there was no meaningful intervention. I was not given guidance, and no one explained to me that what was happening was wrong or unacceptable. Although I was sometimes questioned, I was never asked if I was okay, and no one took the time to protect me or put safeguards in place.

I believe they were aware of serious concerns about him, including that he had been charged with kidnapping, yet I was still allowed to have contact with him. This made me feel like everything was being ignored and that I was being let down repeatedly. There was no proper safeguarding, and no one even attempted to speak to him or intervene when he was bringing me home.

There are social work reports that show what was happening at the time, and I feel strongly that I was failed by the safeguarding systems that were supposed to protect me.

From my experience with Mary Culbert, I felt that she was very abrupt and dismissive towards me. She made me feel like she did not care about me at all. All I wanted during that time was to feel loved, safe, and cared for, but instead I felt rejected and unsupported.

I remained in this situation, struggling significantly with my mental health, until I was around 15 years old. The relationship and abuse continued throughout that time. Years later, around six years ago, I saw a picture of him on social media with a child sitting on his lap. This made me feel physically sick and extremely worried that he was doing the same thing to other children.

I spoke to a friend, who disclosed that he had done similar things to her. Together, we made the decision to go to the police and report what had happened. I went on to file complaints against him, including charges of assault, rape, and grooming. He has since been convicted and sent to prison.

Although there has been some justice, the damage caused to me had already been done. I was failed by both foster placements and by the systems around them that were meant to safeguard me.

As a result of everything I experienced, my mental health has been severely affected over the years. I have been diagnosed with ongoing mental health conditions and have been on medication for a long time. I have made multiple suicide attempts and have struggled with significant self-harm, which has left lasting marks.

I have been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder, and I continue to suffer from severe anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These conditions affect every aspect of my life,