

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Iris Stein
Date of Birth: 17/06/1957
Care Setting: Craig Lee Home, Springbank
Dates: 1967-77
Persons Involved:

Full Statement

Craig Lee Home, Springbank – Around 10/11 Years Old

At around 10 or 11 years old, I was taken from home again, for reasons that were never properly explained to me, and placed in Craig Lee Home in Springbank. This was where the abuse became significantly worse.

My sister and I arrived together. From the moment we entered, the staff made us feel uncomfortable and afraid. They shouted at us and physically pushed us around. We were placed together in a dormitory that was meant to hold five children, but it was just the two of us. Instead of this feeling comforting, it felt isolating. We were often kept secluded in that room, especially at night.

The older children in the home were aggressive and there was constant fighting and shouting. We were frightened of them. There was no sense of safety anywhere.

The most traumatic experiences happened at night. Staff members would enter our bedroom and take both me and my sister out of the home to a man's house. I remember watching my sister being raped. I was a child witnessing something I could not understand but knew was terribly wrong. I tried to intervene and stop what was happening to her. For doing that, I was beaten. I was physically assaulted for trying to protect my sister.

The sexual abuse, and witnessing the rape of my sister, has haunted me my entire life. I carry immense guilt that I could not stop it, even though I was just a child myself. I have flashbacks, nightmares, and intrusive thoughts about those nights.

The abuse in Craig Lee was not only sexual and physical — it was deeply psychological.

I was a picky eater and did not like milk. Staff would force me to drink milk even when it had gone sour and curdled. They would stand over me until I drank it, and they would laugh at me while I struggled. They would deliberately give me food they knew I would not eat and then force me to sit with the same cold, stale meals

for days until I gave in. This felt like torture. I was constantly hungry.

My sister and I would sneak into the kitchen whenever we could. We were so starving that we resorted to eating green tea bags. That is how desperate we were. When we were caught, we were painfully restrained and pushed around. I remember the physical force used on us, but what hurt more was the humiliation and degradation.

There was constant name-calling and bullying by staff. I was degraded regularly. I was not provided with clothes that fit me. My trousers were far too big and the staff made me tie string around my waist to hold them up. This was done in front of other children. I was laughed at and made to feel like a joke. It destroyed what little confidence I had.

Shower times were terrifying. All the children were forced to shower together, naked. This was deeply embarrassing and distressing. There were fights in the showers, and there was no privacy or dignity. I felt exposed and ashamed.

I attended a Catholic school while staying there and travelled by bus. The bus journeys were the only moments of peace I had. It was the only time I felt slightly normal and away from the constant fear inside the home.

We were told not to speak about what was happening. I knew instinctively that I could not tell anyone. During the month I spent in Craig Lee, I only had one visit. I was told that my mum and dad did not want to see me. I believed that at the time. It made me feel abandoned and unwanted. I felt completely alone.

There was no escape.

I became extremely quiet and withdrawn. I hardly spoke. I lived in constant fear — fear of being beaten, fear of being humiliated, fear of what would happen at night. My relationship with my sister was affected too. We both changed. We were no longer carefree children.

Long-Term Impact on My Mental Health

The abuse I experienced — physical, sexual, and emotional — has had lifelong consequences.

I have suffered from PTSD and severe anxiety for most of my life. I experience:

Flashbacks of the beatings and the sexual abuse

Nightmares about Craig Lee and Limewire

Intrusive memories, especially of my sister being raped

Hypervigilance — always feeling on edge

Panic attacks

Deep feelings of shame and worthlessness

I struggle to trust people. Authority figures in particular trigger fear in me. I find it extremely difficult to build and maintain relationships. I push people away because I expect to be hurt or betrayed. I have always felt different from other people, like I carry something dark inside me that no one else can see.

The humiliation I experienced around food, clothing, and being made to soil myself has left lasting issues around self-worth and body image. I still feel embarrassment very deeply and I am overly sensitive to criticism.

My sister also struggled deeply with what happened to us. She turned to alcohol as a coping mechanism. A few years ago, she died. I believe the trauma we endured played a significant role in her struggles and ultimately her death. Losing her has compounded my trauma and grief. It has brought everything back to the surface.

We never had anyone to speak up for us. No one protected us. We were failed by the very systems that were meant to keep us safe.

Even now, as an adult, I carry the fear, anxiety, and trauma from those years. I feel that my childhood was stolen from me. The abuse has affected my confidence, my relationships, my mental stability, and my overall quality of life.

The impact is lifelong. It has shaped who I am and how I see the world. I continue to live with the consequences of what was done to me as a child.