

# Statement Addendum

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**Client Name:** Stephen Hart  
**Date of Birth:** 11/02/1981  
**Care Setting:** Hillside Care Home  
**Dates:** 1995-1997  
**Persons Involved:**

## Full Statement

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Hillside Care Home (Around Age 14 to 16)

When I was around fourteen, I was moved to Hillside Care Home. Again, nothing was properly explained to me. I was just taken there. I remember nearly being in a serious car accident on the way there. Even that journey felt unsafe and chaotic. I will never forget it.

On the first day I arrived, the atmosphere was frightening. The children were running around in a feral way. My panic mode activated immediately. I recognised the signs — this was going to be the same or worse.

That first night, I had to defend myself again as older boys attacked me. It felt like history repeating itself. No matter where I went, I was victimised. I felt hunted.

The older boys at Hillside were vicious. They would attack me in groups, beating me black and blue, punching and kicking me in the stomach and body. Staff witnessed these assaults and did not intervene properly. At times it felt like entertainment to them. Their inaction made me feel worthless and invisible.

The sexual abuse continued there. I was again targeted and assaulted. I was taken into the hills by other boys and sexually assaulted. There was no escape. I felt completely trapped in a system that was supposed to protect me but instead exposed me to repeated harm.

Weekend visits were stopped again. By this point, I had learned not to speak up. I believed there was no point. I had tried to survive by fighting back when attacked. I was in constant fight-or-flight mode. I never truly won any of these fights, but I refused to completely give up because defending myself was the only control I had.

Staff would physically restrain me. On some occasions, four members of staff would sit on me at once. I could not breathe properly. They would laugh when my breath was taken away. That humiliation and fear — being pinned down, unable to breathe, while adults laughed — confirmed to me that there was no help

coming. The very people responsible for my safety were part of the harm.

I remained there until I turned sixteen and then left to go into a hostel.

### Long-Term Impact on My Mental Health

My entire childhood was shaped by torture, bullying, physical assault and sexual abuse. I did not grow up feeling safe, loved or protected. I grew up in survival mode.

As a result, I suffer from severe PTSD. I am still in fight-or-flight mode to this day. My body reacts to stress as if I am about to be attacked. Loud noises, confrontation, or even normal disagreements can trigger intense anxiety. I struggle with hypervigilance — I am constantly scanning for danger.

I have experienced suicidal thoughts and continue to struggle deeply with my mental health. I find it extremely difficult to trust people. I struggle to form and maintain healthy relationships. I either push people away or feel constantly on edge around them. I have difficulty regulating my emotions. I experience flashbacks, nightmares and intrusive memories of the abuse.

I was bullied to the point that my personality changed permanently. I became guarded, defensive and emotionally numb in many situations. I struggle with feelings of worthlessness and shame that stem from being repeatedly abused and not protected.

Every day is a struggle. The child who had to prepare for impact never really stopped preparing. Even now, as an adult, my nervous system does not switch off. I feel like I am still that seven-year-old boy trying to survive in a hostile environment.

The abuse I experienced at Southhannah Residential School and Hillside Care Home has affected every aspect of my life — my mental health, my relationships, my sense of safety, and my ability to feel at peace.

These experiences were not isolated incidents. They were years of sustained physical, emotional and sexual abuse, combined with neglect and failure of care. The adults who were responsible for my wellbeing did not protect me. In many cases, they allowed the abuse or directly contributed to it.

I continue to live with the consequences of what happened to me as a child.