

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Isabella Mccready
Date of Birth: 13/09/1967
Care Setting: Eunbernkuld children's department
Dates: 1980-1985
Persons Involved: Staff

Full Statement

-I was around 13 years old when social services became involved in my life. At that age, I was vulnerable, confused, and emotionally immature. I had become involved with an older man, believing it was love, but I did not have the maturity, guidance, or understanding to recognise the risks or consequences of that relationship. I was described as an "unruly child," but in reality I was a child who lacked structure, support, protection, and clear boundaries. I did not have anyone properly guiding me or teaching me right from wrong.

One day I was told we were going "on a run." I did not understand what that meant. I did not realise that I was being taken to a residential assessment centre. I ended up at Cardross Assessment Centre. I remember the gates closing behind me. That moment has stayed with me all my life. I felt completely confused, frightened, emotional, and abandoned. No one properly explained to me what was happening, why I was there, how long I would be there, or what was going to happen next. I was just left.

From the day I arrived, I felt isolated and alone. There were shared dormitories, but I was placed in a single room on my own. Instead of feeling safe, I felt secluded and cut off. I had no emotional support, no comfort, and no reassurance. I was there for approximately eight months, and during that time I felt completely unsupported.

The staff spoke to us in a degrading and aggressive manner. They would scream and shout down the corridors, speaking to us as if we were animals rather than children in need of care. I was pushed along corridors. On occasions, my hair was pulled. I was physically handled in ways that were painful and humiliating. Physical punishment was used. Staff would hit us as a form of discipline. I lived in constant fear. I never knew when someone would shout at me, push me, or strike me. I was a child who felt constantly threatened.

We were allowed cigarettes, and I was given four a day. This created conflict among the children. There were times when we were effectively made to fight over cigarettes. Instead of being protected, we were placed in situations that increased aggression and tension. It felt like we were being set against each other

rather than cared for.

Food was provided, but it was poor quality. Supper was often withheld as punishment. Being locked in my room hungry was a regular experience. I remember lying awake with hunger pains, feeling unwanted and unworthy. Being denied food as punishment made me feel like I was less than human.

The verbal abuse was constant. Staff called me nasty names and belittled me. Some male members of staff made inappropriate, rude, and sexual comments towards me. This made me feel extremely uncomfortable, ashamed, and unsafe. As a young teenage girl, I did not understand how to process this behaviour. I only knew that it made me feel small and dirty. There was no one I could report this to, and I did not feel safe enough to speak up.

The showers were degrading. Depending on which staff were on shift, they would stand and watch with the doors open while we showered. I felt exposed, humiliated, and stripped of all dignity. I was a child who deserved privacy and protection, yet I was treated in a way that felt violating.

I was constantly scared. Many of us were too frightened to leave our rooms because of how we were treated. The atmosphere was hostile and intimidating. Instead of care, I experienced fear and control.

After approximately eight months, I was moved to Bloomhill Care Home in Cardross. I remained there until I turned 16. When I first arrived, I immediately noticed that the environment felt unclean and unpleasant. It did not feel like a home. It felt institutional and cold.

From the beginning, staff shouted at me and sent me straight to my room. Being locked in my room was a common punishment there as well. This deeply affected me emotionally. I felt isolated, rejected, and worthless. I struggled with my education during this time because I was emotionally overwhelmed and constantly anxious. There was no proper emotional or educational support provided to me.

The staff would call us names and belittle us. We were expected to do chores to gain approval and avoid punishment. Food was again used as control. Although there was a kitchen where we could usually access food, dinner would be taken away as punishment. I would be locked in my room hungry. This repeated pattern reinforced feelings of neglect and deprivation.

There were occasions where we were physically dragged to our bedrooms by the scruff of our necks or pulled by our ears, causing pain. While Bloomhill may have been less physically violent than the assessment centre, it was deeply mentally draining. Being ignored, isolated, and locked away repeatedly had a severe emotional impact on me. The emotional neglect was overwhelming.

There was no meaningful guidance or support. No one sat me down and explained healthy relationships, personal safety, boundaries, or consequences. I did not understand right from wrong because no one took the time to teach me. I was still involved with an older man, and weekend visits were allowed. The care home permitted me to go and stay with him. I did not understand that this was inappropriate or potentially exploitative. I believed it was normal because no adult in a position of responsibility told me otherwise.

When my mother discovered this, she tried to intervene and sought to have me moved through a panel process because she wanted to stop the relationship. I was aware that I might be moved. In my fear of losing the only relationship I believed I had, I made a life-altering decision. On the day I turned 16, I married this older man so that I could not be moved and could leave care. I was still a child in many ways. I did not fully understand the seriousness or long-term consequences of that decision. I was acting from fear, confusion, and lack of guidance.

Throughout my entire time in care, I felt neglected. I felt that I was not protected from harm. I was not taught right from wrong. I was not given emotional support, counselling, or stability. I was shouted at, physically hurt, humiliated, deprived of food, and exposed to inappropriate sexual comments. I was isolated and made to feel like I was a problem rather than a child in need of care.

The long-term impact on my mental health has been profound. I suffer from severe anxiety. I struggle to trust people and have difficulty building and maintaining relationships. I constantly fear abandonment and rejection. I experience symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress, including intrusive memories, emotional distress when reminded of my time in care, and hypervigilance. I am always on edge, expecting something bad to happen.

I have low self-worth and long-standing feelings of shame. I often question my own judgement because I was never properly guided. I was failed by the very system that was supposed to protect me. The neglect and abuse I experienced during those formative years shaped my understanding of relationships, safety, and self-worth in deeply damaging ways.

To this day, I carry the emotional scars of being treated as less than human. I will never forget how neglected, frightened, and alone I felt throughout my time in care. I believe I was failed in every sense — emotionally, physically, and morally — and the consequences of that failure have affected me for my entire adult life.