

# Statement Addendum

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**Client Name:** Margaret Byrne  
**Date of Birth:** 01/02/1970  
**Care Setting:** Smiling Malvern Children's Care Home in Stirling  
**Dates:** 1978  
**Persons Involved:** The Staff and Children

## Full Statement

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One of the places I was placed in as a child was Smiling Malvern Children's Care Home in Stirling. I believe this was around 1978, when I was about eight years old. My memories from that time are still very clear to me, even though many years have passed.

Being taken away from my parents was one of the most frightening and confusing experiences of my life. I was only a young child and I did not understand why I was being removed from my home. No one sat down with me to explain what was happening. I was given no support, no guidance, and no reassurance. I remember feeling completely alone and terrified. At that age I desperately needed an adult to comfort me and tell me everything would be okay, but that never happened.

When I first arrived at the home, the environment felt chaotic and frightening. I remember children running around wildly with very little supervision. It felt out of control, and it scared me straight away. The staff were shouting at the children at the top of their lungs. I remember hearing constant screaming from staff members directed at the children. The atmosphere felt aggressive and hostile, and from the moment I arrived I felt panic and fear.

I remember being secluded and locked away for long periods of time. I felt isolated from the other children and cut off from any kind of support. Instead of being protected, I became a target. The other children would pick on me and bully me, and the staff would often stand by and watch it happen without stepping in to help. I felt helpless because there was nobody to protect me.

Food was often used as a punishment. I remember being deprived of meals and going to bed hungry. As a young child, that feeling of hunger was very distressing. I remember lying in bed at night with my stomach hurting because I had not been given food. Water was also withheld from us. There were times when we were so thirsty that we would drink water from the toilet because the staff would refuse to give us anything to drink. This is something that still shocks and upsets me when I think about it now.

The staff were also very physical towards the children. I remember them hitting us on our bottoms and on our hands. These punishments were painful and frightening. I also remember staff restraining children, including me. They would sit on us, push us, and shove us along the corridors. Being physically overpowered like that as a small child was terrifying and humiliating.

We were made to feel that we could not ask for help. I remember that visits from family at weekends were stopped, which made me feel even more cut off from the outside world. It felt like there was nobody I could

tell about what was happening to me.

There were also punishments that felt degrading. If we said something the staff did not like, they would force soap into our mouths and wash our mouths out. I remember crying and refusing, but we had no choice. We were often forced to do things we did not want to do, and the staff sometimes turned children against each other, which created even more bullying and fear among us.

I was frequently targeted and bullied by other children, and instead of helping me, the staff would isolate me even further. I remember being locked away and secluded for long periods. During this time I also received very little education. Instead of being supported to learn and develop like other children my age, I was left to suffer in an environment where I felt constantly frightened and alone.

I believe I was in this home for around six months, but it felt much longer to me as a child. It was one of the worst and most traumatic periods of my life. Every day felt like something to survive rather than a safe place to grow up.

The experiences I had during that time have stayed with me for the rest of my life. Even now, I suffer from severe anxiety and symptoms of Post traumatic stress disorder. I struggle to trust people because of what I went through in care. As a child, the adults who were supposed to protect me instead frightened, hurt, and neglected me. That has left a lasting impact on how I see the world and the people in it.

Even many years later, the memories still affect me. I often think about what happened in that home and how wrong it was. I carry those experiences with me every day. The fear, the hunger, the humiliation, and the physical punishment have never fully left me.

What happened to me should never have happened to any child. Children in care are meant to be protected, supported, and given the chance to feel safe. Instead, during my time at Smiling Malvern Children's Home in Stirling, I experienced abuse, neglect, and isolation.

These experiences have had a lifelong impact on my mental health and my ability to trust others. I will never forget what I went through there.