

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Leon Gratton
Date of Birth: 17/03/1975
Care Setting: Comiston Children's Home, Oxscounds,
Dates: 1989-1990
Persons Involved: Jimmy Kearns, Lovatt Frazier, Andrew McCade, and Coral

Full Statement

Broken home and behaviour issues

I was placed into care at the age of 14. My first placement was Comiston Children's Home, Oxscounds, where I stayed for approximately four to five months. From the very beginning, I was scared and nervous. I had been taken from my family home, and although I had been abused there, it was all I had ever known. Being removed from everything familiar left me frightened and vulnerable.

As soon as I arrived at Comiston, I realised I was not safe. It was a mixed children's home, and there was constant chaos. Some of the girls were extremely distressed, acting erratically, being aggressive, and self-harming by cutting their wrists. What terrified me most was that members of staff did not protect us. Instead, they encouraged this behaviour, telling the girls to "do it properly." Witnessing this at such a young age had a severe impact on me and made me realise that no one was there to keep us safe.

I clearly remember members of staff Jimmy Kearns, Lovatt Frazier, Andrew McCade, and Coral, who was a female staff member. All of them were aware of what was happening and did nothing to stop it.

The punishments at Comiston were cruel and abusive. I was locked in my room as punishment. Coral would physically restrain me, leaning her body weight onto me and pressing on my arms. She would also touch me inappropriately. At the time, I was very young and did not fully understand what was happening, but I now recognise that this was sexual abuse. Coral was also the staff member who told the girls to cut themselves properly. She would hit us as well.

I witnessed Andrew McCade throw a radio into the bath while another girl was inside it. This was extremely traumatic. When I spoke about what I had seen, I was beaten for it.

Food was also used as punishment. If we were late for dinner, we were sent to bed hungry with no food. I was also kept away from weekend social activities as a form of control and punishment. During this period, I was experiencing severe mental and physical abuse on a daily basis. I lived in constant fear.

After I spoke up about some of the abuse and was also caught smoking, I was moved to Moredun Adolescent Unit, where I stayed for around four months. When I first arrived at Moredun, I realised that it was not as mentally or physically abusive as Comiston. However, this placement was still deeply damaging in different ways.

At Moredun, staff allowed and sometimes provided drugs and alcohol, including cannabis. There were no real boundaries or punishments, and I was told I could go to my mum's whenever I wanted, despite the fact

that I was being abused there. I was left without protection, guidance, or care.

The staff at Moredun had no time for me and spoke to us like animals, stripping us of dignity. Another young person, Donna Clarke, had also been in the previous care home and was then placed in the adolescent unit with me. She was struggling badly. We both witnessed distressing and traumatic events.

The other children were left completely to their own devices. Violence was common. I was pushed, attacked, and forced to fight back to survive. When help was needed, staff were nowhere to be seen. Every single day I lived in survival mode, constantly alert and afraid.

Over time, I felt completely failed by the care system. I endured ongoing mental abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and the trauma of witnessing extreme violence and neglect. There was no support, no protection, and no one advocating for me.

As a result of what I experienced in care, my life has been permanently damaged. I now suffer from schizophrenia, PTSD, severe anxiety, and chronic nightmares. These experiences have ruined my life. I have had no support or guidance since childhood, and I have struggled every day just to survive. The impact of what happened to me in care has followed me into adulthood and continues to affect every aspect of my life.