

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Elizabeth Hariz
Date of Birth: 21/10/1987
Care Setting: Foster Home East Lothian
Dates: 1999-2004
Persons Involved: Ishbel and David

Full Statement

As I got older, I asked to be placed with my siblings. Eventually, this happened, but it did not bring the comfort or safety I had hoped for. I was moved to Prestonpans, East Lothian, into foster care with Ishbel and David, where my two siblings were already living. By this time, we had been separated for so long that our relationship was not the same. They also had their own three children, Gillian, Mandy, and Emma, and it was very clear from the start that we were treated differently.

This is where the abuse truly began.

From the beginning, me and my sisters were treated as less than their own children. We were mentally and emotionally abused, isolated, and controlled. We were often locked away in our rooms, sometimes for months at a time. We were grounded for long periods, sometimes up to two months, with no explanation that made sense to a child. The only form of entertainment we were allowed was one book, which I was forced to read over and over again.

We were made to eat separately from their children. Mealtimes were humiliating and cruel. We were not allowed to help ourselves to food. Instead, food would be deliberately prepared for us that they knew we did not like, while they and their children ate what they wanted and laughed and smiled while doing so. I was often left hungry. Packed lunches and food were completely controlled, and I had no choice or freedom. Ishbel regularly called me names, including “vermin” and “ferret”, and her children would laugh at me. She would push me around, pull my hair, and humiliate me. The abuse was not just physical—it was psychological. She played mind games and tormented me daily. She controlled what I wore, when I showered, when I ate, and even took my clothes away from me. If I was grounded, she would take everything I owned and leave me isolated with nothing.

I was often thrown outside in the cold, with no care for my safety or wellbeing. Birthdays and special occasions meant nothing. They were treated as normal days. I had to watch their children live normal childhoods, with toys, presents, attention, and love—things I never received. I was denied the chance to be a child.

Family contact was also taken away from us. Visits that were meant to happen with our brothers were stopped. This caused even more emotional damage, as those visits were one of the few things I held onto. At the same time, I was involved in a rape case in court relating to the sexual abuse I had experienced at home before coming into care. I was still a child, deeply traumatised, confused, and scared. I had no

emotional support, no guidance, and no one explaining what was happening to me. Social workers did not listen to me when I tried to speak up. I felt completely failed by the people who were meant to protect me. My mental health deteriorated badly. I began running away, not because I wanted to cause trouble, but because I could not cope anymore. I slept in fields, yet I still went to school in the mornings because I wanted an education and some sense of normality. That shows how desperate and unsupported I was. After I ran away, I was placed temporarily in respite care with Hazel and Jim. I stayed there for a few months. This was the safest I had ever felt in foster care. I felt calm, listened to, and protected for the first time. I wanted to stay there, but despite this, social workers did not allow it. Instead, I was sent back to Ishbel and David, the very place I had tried to escape from.

When I returned, the abuse became worse. Ishbel's behaviour escalated, particularly towards me. David was less abusive and at times listened, but he always followed her lead. She was in complete control. By this point, my sisters were no longer there, and I was completely alone.

She continued pulling my hair, pushing me, calling me names, and deliberately isolating me. I was only allowed one sweet at the weekend. I was regularly excluded, controlled, and punished. The emotional cruelty was relentless and deliberate.

As soon as I turned 16, I left. I had no guidance, no support, and very little education. I was forced into independence far too young, carrying trauma that no child should have to live with.

Impact on My Mental Health

The effects of this abuse have followed me into adulthood. I struggle deeply with relationships, trusting anyone, I feel like my life has been ruined,