

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Sabrina Mercer
Date of Birth: 09/03/1979
Care Setting: Helen and Bill Tweedy - Grangemouth
Dates: 1984-
Persons Involved:

Full Statement

After I had already gone through what felt like the worst experience of my life with the previous foster family, I was moved and placed with a new foster family. At first, when I arrived, they seemed kind and welcoming. For a short time I believed that things might finally be different for me. I hoped that this new placement would mean safety, care, and some sense of belonging after everything I had already endured. Unfortunately, that hope did not last very long.

Very quickly, the way they treated me began to change. The abuse I experienced there was not as extreme as what I had gone through in the previous foster placement, but it still deeply affected me. Almost immediately they started calling me names. They would prod at me, pull at me physically, and push me around. I remember feeling constantly uncomfortable and on edge because I never knew when they might start again. Even small moments in the house felt tense. I felt like I was always being targeted.

They often treated me horribly and then would say things like "how do you like it?" as if what they were doing was some kind of lesson or punishment. I never understood why this was happening to me. I had done nothing to deserve being treated this way, and yet it felt like I was constantly being blamed or singled out. Being spoken to like that made me feel small, confused, and powerless.

There were times when I would be locked in my room, isolated from everyone else in the house. Other times I would be called names repeatedly or have people prod at me or push me around. These experiences might not have left visible physical injuries, but they caused a lot of mental and emotional pain. At that time I was already struggling with the trauma and distress from what had happened to me previously, but no one seemed to care about how I was coping or how deeply it had affected me.

Inside, I felt completely alone. I did not feel safe enough to speak openly about what I was experiencing, and I felt like there was no one who would truly listen or believe me anyway. Because of that, I began to withdraw more and more into myself. I kept to myself as much as possible. My daily routine became very small and isolated: I would go to school, return to the house, and then spend most of my time alone in my room until I was old enough to leave.

Emotionally, everything hurt me very deeply. My feelings were constantly being hurt, and over time I began to believe that I did not matter. I never experienced the kind of love, care, or support that a child needs in order to feel safe and valued. Instead, I felt rejected and unwanted.

One of the things that confused and hurt me the most was how different they were when I first arrived. In the beginning they had been kind and welcoming, which gave me hope. But suddenly their behaviour changed, and it felt like the kindness had disappeared overnight. I never understood why. That sudden shift made it even harder for me to trust people, because it showed me that someone could appear caring at first and then turn against me.

They also made up lies about me. One example that still stands out clearly in my memory is when they accused me of courting people for cigarettes. That accusation was completely untrue, and hearing people say things like that about me was humiliating and upsetting. I felt like my character was constantly being misrepresented. It seemed as though everyone around me was determined to portray me as someone I was not.

Over time, these repeated accusations and the way people spoke about me started to affect how I saw myself. When you are constantly told negative things about yourself, it becomes difficult not to internalise some of that pain. I felt like my personality was being slowly damaged. My confidence disappeared, and the person I might have grown into under different circumstances felt like it was being taken away from me.

These experiences had a long-lasting impact on my mental health. Living in an environment where I was mocked, isolated, and falsely accused created deep feelings of sadness, anxiety, and mistrust. I often felt emotionally numb, as though I had to shut down my feelings just to cope with daily life. I also developed a strong sense of hyper-vigilance, always anticipating criticism or conflict even in situations where it might not actually be present.

Even now, the memories from that time still affect me. They have shaped how I see other people and how safe I feel in relationships. Trust is something I still struggle with because so many of my early experiences with people who were supposed to care for me ended in betrayal or mistreatment. The lack of love and support during those formative years has had lasting consequences for my mental health and my overall sense of security in the world.

Looking back, I realise that as a child I was trying to survive in an environment where I felt completely unsupported. I coped by staying quiet, keeping to myself, and focusing on getting through each day until I was finally old enough to leave. But the emotional wounds from that time did not simply disappear when I left that house. They remain part of my story and continue to influence my life today.

What hurts the most is knowing that I was made out to be someone I was not. I was a child who needed understanding, protection, and kindness. Instead, I was treated as though I was a problem. That experience damaged my faith in people and in humanity more broadly, and rebuilding that trust has been one of the hardest challenges I have faced.