

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Colin James Kerr
Date of Birth: 29/11/1979
Care Setting: foster care
Dates: 1983-1986
Persons Involved:

Full Statement

My memories of being in care are very vague because I was so young, but there is one period of my life that I will never, ever forget.

I was around three years old when my older sister and I were taken away from our mum. We were removed because she had alcohol problems and we were left alone at home. At that age, I didn't understand what was happening. I just remember the confusion, the fear, and suddenly not being with my mum anymore.

We were placed with a foster carer where, for the first time since being taken, I felt some sense of support and routine. My sister and I were together, and although we missed our mum and our home, we were settled. We had a routine, we were looked after, and for almost a year we felt safe. As much as a young child can understand safety, I felt it there. We were happy together.

Then, just before I turned four years old, everything changed again.

I remember having to say goodbye to that foster home. I didn't understand why we were being moved. I remember being in the car with my sister, driving down the motorway. I will never forget seeing the road signs for Falkirk and Edinburgh. That journey is burned into my memory. I didn't know it at the time, but that drive was taking us into the worst period of my childhood.

We were placed with another foster family. From the very first night, it was clear this was different. That first night, I was slapped across the head and sent to bed early. I was a very nervous little boy. I was only three or four years old. I didn't understand why I was being hit.

I suffered from bedwetting. I now understand that this was likely caused by anxiety and fear, but at the time I couldn't control it. Whenever I wet the bed, the male foster parent would beat me severely. I would be beaten black and blue. I was just a small child, terrified and unable to stop what my body was doing.

He would also pull my penis very hard, causing extreme pain, and threaten to pull it off. He would do this in

front of my sister and sometimes in front of his own children. It was humiliating, degrading and terrifying. I remember crying and begging. I remember the pain. I remember the shame. I felt completely powerless. I was only a toddler. There was nothing I could do to protect myself.

Because of the bedwetting and the punishments that followed, I became petrified of going to sleep. Night-time filled me with dread. I would lie awake in fear, knowing that if I wet the bed I would be beaten again. My anxiety became overwhelming even at that young age. I was constantly on edge.

My sister and I were always treated differently from the foster carers' own children. We were singled out. We were never treated like family. We were made to feel like outsiders in that house. They would torment us, and their children joined in. I was regularly called names, especially about my eye. I had a problem with my eye and they would call me "skuinty eyes" daily. It was constant. The name-calling damaged my self-esteem and made me feel ashamed of how I looked.

The male foster carer would insist on assisting me at bath time. He would watch me naked. Even as a very young child, I knew it was wrong. It made me feel deeply uncomfortable and vulnerable. He knew I was scared of him. He could see it. He used that fear to intimidate me. It felt like he got satisfaction from seeing me frightened.

There was no support in that house. No comfort. No protection. My sister and I were frequently beaten as punishment and locked in our rooms. We would cry constantly. We were upset all the time. We were living in fear. I remember feeling petrified, trapped and alone.

There was another foster girl in the home at that time. I believe she was being abused as well. It was a house where abuse was normalised and we had no one to turn to.

We lived in that environment of repeated physical and mental abuse for just over a year. It felt endless. Eventually, our mum managed to win us back and we moved down to London. But even though we left that house, what happened there never left me.

The impact of that abuse has stayed with me throughout my entire life.

I have struggled deeply with my mental health. I suffer from anxiety and PTSD. I experience intrusive memories and emotional distress linked to what I went through. I have ongoing issues with sleep. I still associate night-time with fear and vulnerability.

I have struggled to build and maintain healthy relationships with family and friends. I find it hard to trust people. I often feel on edge and unsafe, even when there is no immediate danger. I carry shame from the humiliation I experienced, especially around the physical abuse and the degrading treatment.

As I got older, I turned to drugs as a way to cope. Substance abuse became my way of blocking out the memories and numbing the pain. I am currently in rehab because of this. The trauma I experienced as a child has directly contributed to my addiction. It was the only way I knew how to manage the overwhelming emotions and flashbacks.

The abuse I suffered in foster care — both physical and psychological — has shaped my life in ways I am still trying to understand and recover from. It damaged my confidence, my sense of safety, my ability to trust, and my self-worth. I was just a very young child who needed protection, love and stability. Instead, I was subjected to violence, humiliation, intimidation and fear.

These experiences have had a lifelong impact on me.