

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Nicole Blades
Date of Birth: 19/01/1986
Care Setting: Torrance avenue Childrens Home- Airdree
Dates: 1999
Persons Involved:

Full Statement

I was sent here from the previous place already worried, upset, and scared. When I arrived, I met the manager, Lynne Sheridan, who was the sister of Glasgow MP Tommy Sheridan. She was managing the home at the time. From the very beginning, she was horrible to me. She was vicious, nasty, and made it clear that she didn't care about me or my wellbeing.

During my time here, I had no social worker for two years. My social worker was off sick, and I had no one to turn to, no one to cry out to for help, and no one to protect me. I was completely alone. There was absolutely no support for me whatsoever.

I remember waking up one morning to a staff member arresting me for no reason. I was strip-searched, and it was humiliating, degrading, and deeply upsetting. I was constantly told I was a horrible girl and that I shouldn't be there. I had left home because I was beaten and abused, yet the staff singled me out for this and told me repeatedly that I should be at home. Instead of understanding why I couldn't go back, they bullied me and called me names.

Food wasn't always available. The kitchen was locked, and I had to beg for food. We didn't have a cook for a long time, so we lived on takeaways for months. We had no balanced or healthy diet. The staff would even allow us to drink alcohol. They took us on holiday to a cottage, and one of the male staff members allowed me and another girl to get drunk with him. That same man was recently in court for a brutal relationship with a minor. I don't know what happened when we were blackout drunk, and that uncertainty has haunted me for years. He also allowed us to drink and then drive the minibus.

The staff would beat us as punishment. They restrained us painfully, sitting on us, bending our arms, punching us, grabbing us, and slamming us against walls. They punched us in the stomach. They once restrained me on top of my bed, lifted me up, and dropped me onto the floor. Life there was hell. There was no safe space for me, no trust, no protection.

They held me back in my education. They turned the other children against me and threatened the younger

children with the older ones. They forced me to intimidate younger children, and when I refused, I was beaten. I was constantly punished for trying to do the right thing.

I fell pregnant while living in this care home. When I gave birth, the manager, Lynne Sheridan, came to the hospital to visit me. Instead of offering support, she told me right there and then that I had nowhere to live and that I was not allowed to return to the care home. They left me homeless at 17 with a newborn baby. Again, my social worker was nowhere to be found. The hospital let me stay for five days, but after that, I had to go back to my abusive dad's house.

When I returned home, my dad came in drunk and abused me in front of my baby. He nearly fell on my baby. Once again, I had to escape because I had been failed all over again.

Long-Term Impact on My Mental Health and Life

Everything I went through in Cecil Street has left deep, lifelong scars. I suffer from severe PTSD and anxiety. I struggle to build relationships and trust people because every adult who was supposed to protect me either abused me or abandoned me. I have been let down my whole life.

I often feel like my life was over before it even began. No one ever cared about me. I was treated like a human punch bag and abused throughout my entire childhood. The trauma has shaped every part of my life — my mental health, my relationships, my sense of safety, and my ability to trust the world around me.

I still carry the fear, the shame, and the pain of what happened. I still live with the consequences every single day. I've self-harmed, the staff watched me cut myself and constantly told I was an attention seeker. I've struggled my whole life and I still struggle now. I take antidepressants.