

# Statement Addendum

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**Client Name:** Frances Mcgowan  
**Date of Birth:** 19/01/1969  
**Care Setting:** Nazareth House, Kilmarnock  
**Dates:** 1975-1975  
**Persons Involved:** Mrs Gordon

## Full Statement

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My first memories are of being extremely scared and confused. I did not understand why I was being taken away. A social worker had been coming to our home and keeping an eye on my mum. One day, a woman called Mrs Gordon came to the house and pretended she was taking us for a walk. Instead, she took us away to Nazareth House. I remember my older sister asking to stay with me because I was so young, upset, and frightened. When we arrived, it was very dark, and we

were left there overnight on our own. The next day, we were all split up. I was taken to Nazareth House in Kilmarnock with my brother. From the moment I arrived, I had no support and felt completely out of place, like a fish out of water. I was an emotional wreck from being suddenly separated from my mum and my siblings. My trust was broken immediately because I had been lied to and told we were just going for a walk. I had no idea what was happening to me.

I remember my brother being very distressed and angry because we had been tricked and split apart. We had always been together, and suddenly everything familiar was gone. From the very beginning, I felt threatened. The staff would not allow me to cry and would pick on me for being emotional. I was a young, frightened child, but I was treated with no kindness or understanding.

My mum tried to contact me by phone, but the staff would stop the calls and put the phone down. This made me feel abandoned and helpless. I was a bed wetter because I was scared and anxious. When this happened, I was punished. I would be woken around 6am and forced into a freezing cold bath. These cold baths were extremely traumatic. I was left sitting in freezing water for long periods while staff were angry with me and humiliated me in front of the other children.

Hair washing days were also traumatic. I would be put on a stool, and staff would pull my hair aggressively while washing it. I would be screaming in pain, and they would laugh at me while doing it. None of the staff spoke to me with care or treated me like a young child. I was deeply emotional and distressed, yet I was shown no compassion.

I was often left alone in my bedroom and told, "You've been taken away, deal with it."

I was physically restrained by staff, held down very hard, and I was also forced to watch my brother being restrained and suffering. This was extremely distressing and frightening. The nuns were cruel to me on a daily basis.

There were a lot of children there. Some of the older children tried to look out for me.

There was one tall girl with dark hair and glasses who was the only person who ever made me feel safe. Food was another form of control. Breakfast was often a dry bowl of Alpen. When I refused to eat it, I was sent to school and told I would eat it when I got home. They then forced me to eat it for dinner. If you didn't like the food, you didn't eat at all.

I was bullied and humiliated for things I couldn't do, like tying my shoelaces. Staff would laugh at me and send me to school

without shoes, or with my shoes on the wrong feet or laces untied. I remember seeing other children punished with a belt. The screaming and fear terrified me so much that I learned to obey immediately. I never stepped out of line because I was so scared.

I remember being badly blistered from the sun and receiving no care or treatment.

There was no comfort, no protection, and no aftercare. We were expected to raise ourselves. We had no toys, no treats, and no proper clothes. Our childhood was completely stripped away from us.

Staff also used my toileting issues to control me mentally. They put pressure on me and said if I didn't wet myself for a few days, they would "treat" me. I remember trying desperately to hold it in just to please them, even though I didn't fully understand what was happening. I could

not understand why I had been taken from my family, lied to, separated from my siblings, and then treated so cruelly.

Visits from parents were rare and always supervised, which meant I could never speak up about what was happening.

Phone calls to my mum were stopped, and communication was deliberately cut off.

This added to my fear, confusion, and emotional pain.

The abuse I experienced has had lasting effects on me. Even now, I struggle to relive these memories. I suffer from anxiety, constant worry, and poor mental health.

What I went through, and knowing what my siblings also endured, weighs heavily on me. I believe my mental health was repeatedly damaged by the way I was treated. I have needed antidepressants, and these experiences have affected me throughout my life. I suffer with anxiety, PTSD, I'm on anti depressants this has

ruined my life

I feel deep sadness and loss for the

childhood I never had. The mental and

physical abuse I endured has stayed with

me, shaping how I feel, think, and cope to

this day.