

Victoria Sebastian: Commemorative Statement in respect of Elise Sebastian

Date of Birth: 24 May 2004

Date of Death: 19 April 2021

Elise was my beautiful baby girl, and despite being mother and daughter, we were like two peas in a pod. She was always very clingy to me and her belongings. She always had a backpack with her full of her favourite toys she would take them everywhere. Elise was always shy as a little girl and found it difficult to be around people she didn't know but she had a fantastic relationship with her brother and sisters.

Elise was particularly close to her sister Kelsey. They were always together and loved each other very much. They were like twins with only a 20 month age gap between them and so they didn't know life without each other. Watching Kelsey and Elise grow up together was always such a joy to me. They would go from phase to phase as children do growing up. I recall Elise and Kelsey going through a monster high phase to being massive fans of the pop group "*One direction*". I recall how much we would enjoy going for a drive with me and the girls singing One Direction songs really loudly and probably very badly! We sang our hearts out and we laughed so much.

Elise was also close with her other siblings. I remember how she would watch the "*Marvel*" films with her brother Zachary and he would tell her about the superheroes.

I loved watching and being part of the extremely close bond my family shared. Life with my family made me so happy. My family means everything to me.

As a family we went to lots of shows in the West End we took them to lots of concerts.

At school Elise excelled in her schoolwork and wanted to work with animals as she loved them so much. Elise was a very caring and loving girl.

I knew that Elise was different from my other children as she was always socially awkward and often found it difficult to understand other people's behaviour i.e. she couldn't tell if they were joking or if they meant what they was saying.

Elise was very sensitive and took everything to heart. When she was at secondary school and she couldn't talk about toys or Harry Potter with her peers she was lost and felt different.

I saw how she would sometime try and take on other people's traits to fit in with the group. She struggled with her sexuality, her appearance and was a massive over thinker.

It was very hard as her mother to watch her struggle. I tried to help her understand other people's behaviour and to deal with her emotions and responses. For example if she felt her best friend ^[personal/sensi] was angry at her I would read the messages and then explain that [he] probably hadn't meant it as she had read it. Or when she first had feelings for someone and felt she couldn't cope I would explain how powerful feelings could be and how they could make you feel.

When Elise was accepted at Writtle college to do a course in animal management she was so excited.

When Elise was in hospital I would make sure that no matter how hard my shift at work that day had been or how far away she was to visit her every day to tell her I loved her and get my cuddle. There was no better feeling than being with my baby girl. I wanted so much for her to be with me and have my baby back, it was unbelievably difficult to be separated from her as she was my beautiful baby and best friend. When she was alive I spent all my time with her and was always so happy to be with her.

Losing Elise has shattered my life. My family is shattered. The loss is so heart-breaking and painful that I can't begin to describe it in words.

I had been to see her that day in the unit as always and she had been so happy as always to see me. We chatted for ages and she gave me the most beautiful cuddle. I can't tell you how frightened I was when her dad (Glen) called me to say that my beautiful girl had been rushed into hospital and unresponsive. I recall that he was so broken up that he could barely speak. The unit didn't give any information and we didn't even know where she was. It was as though we had entered into some kind of nightmare.

I drove to Colchester hospital blindly hoping that that was where I would find her. I left the car outside A.E. I went in and recall saying:

"You're going to tell me my baby is dead aren't you?". I could not feel my hand or my legs and breathing seemed impossible. The hospital staff seemed to know who I was, and took me to a children's waiting area. A female staff member was there and told me that Elise was on a "one to one". A nurse then came out and told me that Elise was having a CT scan and I knew

straight away what that meant. I recall saying to the nurse *"You're trying to see what damage is done to her brain"*.

The nurse took the female staff member for a walk and I didn't see her again.

Glen arrived shaking and crying asking me if Elise was going to be ok. I told him that she was having a CT scan and I didn't think it sounded good.

A nurse then came and took us to a children's ward where Elise was laying there with all these tubes and monitors attached to her. I knew as soon as I looked at her that she was gone from me there was no light in her eyes she looked like she was gone. The doctor came and told us that Elise was brain severely damaged as she had been without oxygen for 20 minutes or more. He told us that if she did wake up she would not be able to anything anymore. They said they would monitor her brain activity over a few days and at any time she could go into cardiac arrest. We sat by her bed holding her hands for days. Her hands were so cold and her eyes were open the whole time. It is an image that is stuck in my head and one that I don't think will ever leave.

On the Monday after some doctors came into the room and did some tests on her brain activity and told us that nothing had changed. They did this again a few hours later and then told us there was nothing more that could be done. My already broken heart shattered some more. They then took her off her life support and Elise was gone. I cannot begin to tell you how painful it was to leave my baby on that bed knowing I would never see her beautiful face again. Leaving her felt like I was somehow abandoning her and is something that haunts me every minute of every day.

I struggle to get through the day. I have since been diagnosed with PTSD and trauma based ADHD.

I know that Elise's dad, brother and sisters are all also suffering as much in their own way as Elise was loved so much by us all.

Kelsey was at university in her doing her law degree and never thought that she would have to come home and never see her baby sister again. [personal/sensitive]

Kelsey told me that she couldn't cope with the loss of Elise and was

struggling significantly, and so I went and collected her. [personal/sensitive]

I am now really worried about her and am scared after seeing how badly Elise was let down by the system that I may lose another child because of failing in the mental health system.

My entire family are struggling and the pain is too much to bear.

I have attached some more pictures of Elise with her family.

Please find attached to my statement pictures of Elise I would like to submit to the Inquiry.



Victoria Sebastian -
Commemorative Exh