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Abuse Claims Mount at Controversial Red House Children's Home in Norfolk

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More than 60 people have now come forward alleging harrowing abuse at a now-defunct children's home in Norfolk, which was operated by a controversial Danish organisation widely described as a cult.

The Red House, near Buxton, was run by the Tvind School Cooperative, a group founded in Denmark in the late 1960s. Over the years, 62 former residents have reported experiencing severe physical, emotional, and sexual abuse during their time at the home.

Colin, whose name has been changed to protect his identity, is among the most recent to share his experience following a *Sky News investigation*. He described arriving at The Red House, aged 15, already traumatised from past sexual exploitation. Rather than finding safety, he says his vulnerability was weaponised. “A couple of the lads grabbed hold of me,” he told Sky News. “They’d been told that I was a rent boy before I got there. They wanted to knock me into shape. I contemplated killing myself. I’d never experienced that humiliation.”

Accounts like Colin’s are echoed by others who claim to have been violently assaulted by staff, locked in rooms with guard dogs, and sexually abused by other residents. Several said they were sent to the Norfolk home from across the UK by local councils, with little or no follow-up visits from social workers. One victim recalled: “Red House was this black hole where they could just dump people and not worry about them.”

Originally set up to run radical schools for disadvantaged youth, Tivind eventually expanded into England with two facilities, one of which was The Small School at Red House.

Missed Warnings

Documents from Norfolk County Council reveal that authorities were aware of issues long before the home was finally shut down in 1998. A 1990 letter from the Social Services Inspectorate, a government watchdog responsible for overseeing care standards, warned local authorities against placing children at the Red House. A later inspection in 1994 cited allegations of both sexual and physical abuse involving 20 children. Despite this, records show that children continued to be placed there as late as 1997.

Legal proceedings are now underway against Norfolk County Council and other authorities that placed children at the home. Daniel Lemberger Cooper, a solicitor with Imran Khan and Partners representing several claimants, has called for accountability. “We urge Norfolk Council, the centre of this and whose geographic area Red House was based in, to tell the truth. They were aware very early on about abuse and allegations of abuse, and they failed to act,” he said.

The Shirley Oaks Survivors Association, a support group for victims of institutional abuse, is working alongside survivors and encouraging others who may have experienced abuse at the Red House to come forward. The group can be contacted via their dedicated site: www.smallschoolredhouse.co.uk.

Despite two previous investigations by Norfolk Police into abuse allegations, no charges have been brought. Norfolk County Council has said it continues to respond to legal claims through proper legal channels and cannot comment further due to ongoing proceedings. “Our thoughts are with all survivors of abuse,” a spokesperson said.

Tvind's current representatives in Denmark have denied any association with the original cooperative that operated the home.