

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

AAM

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is AAM My date of birth is 1945. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mum and dad were and I was born in in 1945. I have two brothers and four sisters. They are: AAP and I am the youngest.
3. I have no recollection of my time living at home with my family. My dad died in 1966 and I have been told that my mother couldn't cope with us all, so I was put in care. My mum has since died. Myself and five of my brothers and sisters were put into care. My oldest brother didn't go into care. He joined the army at fifteen. My brother came to Smyllum orphanage with me.

Smyllum Orphanage

4. Smyllum was a self-contained village. There was a laundry, farm, orchard and a dairy. The actual orphanage was divided into three units. The infant unit was for children from two to seven years old. The middle unit was seven years old up to twelve. The older unit was from twelve upwards to about fourteen or fifteen years of age. Each unit had their own dormitories. There were about one hundred beds in

each of the dorms. I reckon there would have been about six hundred children at Smyllum. That was on the boys' side, and it was the same on the girls' side.

5. There was a school within the orphanage. The layout of the building was a bit like a prison camp, like Colditz. I remember there were lots of corridors and short cuts all over the building. It was run by nuns from the Sisters of Charity order. There were two or three nuns who basically ran the place. They made sure you got up, got dressed, fed and got you to your lockers to get your shoes on to go to school.
6. There were other women who weren't nuns who worked there too. I remember Sister EAA at Smyllum. She was the only kind person there.
7. The nuns wore the big black habits and big winged white hats which went under their chins and covered their necks. They wore a big crucifix and black shoes.
8. I was in the infant unit at Smyllum from the age of two years old until I was about seven years old. I then vaguely remember moving to the middle unit when I was about seven years old.

Routine at Smyllum

First day

9. I don't remember who took me to Smyllum, but I assume it was the social services. It definitely wasn't my mother or my father. I remember me and my sister [REDACTED] arriving at Smyllum and meeting the nuns. [REDACTED] was a year older than me.
10. I vaguely remember going into a room where there was a rocking horse and I was put in a cot for ages. There were lots of people talking. I have only vague recollections after that of growing up in Smyllum.

Mornings / bedtime

11. I think we got up at 5 o'clock in the morning to go to school. There was a bell rung to get us up. There were no clocks in there and everything was done to the sounds of the bell. First thing in the morning we got washed in the massive sinks. We brushed our teeth then gathered round our beds and said our prayers. We then went down to get our breakfast. After breakfast, by the time we got back to our dorm, our beds were made for us and our clothes were laid out for us to wear that day.
12. I remember taking a bit of slate and chalk to primary school. We were all marched to school, which was quite a distance away although it was still in the grounds.
13. Bedtime was probably about 9 o'clock. The younger ones would have gone to their beds a bit earlier. You weren't allowed to lie on your side when you were in your bed. You had to lie on your back with your arms outside the covers.

Washing / bathing

14. We had a bath every Saturday. I vaguely remember a stone channel that ran through the bathroom, and it was like a big trough of water. The water was only ankle deep, but there were probably about fifty of us queuing to get washed. The nuns, who were holding our pants, would tell the previous lot to get out and the next lot would get in. We would then sit down and get washed.
15. The nuns would tell us to get out, then pass us our pants. A towel would get passed from boy to boy to get dried. If you were in the bath first you would get dry pants but if you were towards the end, not only would the water be mingling but your pants would be soaking wet. The nuns would watch you doing this, which looking back probably wasn't right.

Food

16. Mealtimes were very regimented. There was no choice of food. You just had to eat what was put in front of you. You weren't allowed to leave any food on your plate otherwise you got a row. The food was very bland and crap, but you still had to eat it. There was no nutritious food.
17. You got three meals: breakfast, dinner and supper. There was a tap outside where you could get a drink of water. If you were caught outside taking a drink they would hit you on the knuckles. You weren't supposed to be outside during the day.

School

18. There were civilian teachers in the school within Smyllum. The teachers weren't really interested in teaching us. We sat about most of the time just twiddling our thumbs. The only thing I did learn at school was fractions and multiplication.
19. I didn't gain any exam certificates when I was there. I did become fluent in Latin though because I was an altar boy. A priest taught me Latin. That was the only reading that I got at Smyllum.

Trips / Excursions

20. In the summer time they would put you in small groups and take you round the farmyard or down to the orchard.
21. I had some good trips with the orphanage when we went to a place near Aberfoyle for a week. I really enjoyed going there. We slept in huts and the food was much better there because it was outside cooks that came in. There was a tuck shop and we got pots of jam on the table. It was a luxury to go there. The nuns came with us to keep an eye on us.

Leisure time

22. Sometimes as a treat on a Saturday, we queued up and the nuns would give us a handful of broken candy rock to eat. Sometimes you might only get one bit. It was like a conveyor belt.
23. We were never allowed outside as a toddler. Even if it was scorching outside. As you got older you were allowed a bit more freedom. Trips outside were always organised. If you wanted to go to the farm in the grounds you would have to go in a group and walk together. We occasionally played football with a local school but that was the only time that we interacted with the locals.
24. There were no books or comics or anything to read. The only reading we got was at school. There was a television in Smyllum, and it depended on your age as to what programmes you could watch and at what times. It was restricted. I remember watching the Queen's coronation when it was on the television. When I got older, maybe twelve or thirteen years old, I was allowed to go out with other older boys to the pictures. Getting out was a real privilege and you only got out if you were good. We had a sports day as well but that was within the grounds

Birthdays and Christmas

25. Couples from the Lanark area would become your adopted "aunt" and "uncle". I never met them but I wrote them letters. At Christmas I would write to them, and in the letter I would tell them what I wanted for Christmas. The nuns would tell you what to write. The couple would send you Christmas presents. If you got toys you would play with them for a while, and then the nuns would take them off you.
26. The only birthday and Christmas cards I ever got were from this adopted aunt and uncle. They would write me letters too but the letters would be opened before they got to me.

27. Birthdays were celebrated in groups. Everyone who had a birthday in a two month period all celebrated their birthday on the same day, and there may have been some fireworks let off. They would just bundle everyone together who, for example, had a birthday in January and February and on one day celebrate their birthday. They didn't celebrate birthdays individually. I was given a toy gun one birthday, but it was too noisy and they took it off me. I never saw it again.

Religion

28. Religion was pounded in to us. We regularly had to go to chapel in the mornings and confession on a Friday evening. At confession I just started making things up because I had to say something.
29. On Saturday night there was benediction mass and then mass on a Sunday. We had to kneel by our beds at night and say our prayers. You had to say your prayers before you went to sleep. If you said a word wrong you had to start again from the beginning.

Clothes

30. There was a uniform and everyone wore the same. It was trousers, grey socks, black shoes, shirt and a jumper. This was all given to us. If at any time you needed new clothes they were given to you.

Running away

31. I never ran away when I was at Smyllum. I think everyone was too frightened to run away. I was too frightened of the consequences. The gates were always open, and I could have walked out, but I didn't.

Personal possessions

32. I never really had any personal possessions that I kept with me at my time at Smyllum. I didn't have any photographs or anything really. They took quite a lot of photographs, but I never got to actually see them. To this day I still don't have a photograph of me in the orphanage.
33. When I left the orphanage I left with nothing. I asked the nuns if I could have some photographs, but they didn't give me any.

Visits/Inspections

34. My dad used to visit me. He sometimes came twice a fortnight, but sometimes he just didn't turn up. When he did visit we walked around the grounds. He walked in front of me with his hands behind his back and he never, ever, spoke to me. He was cold and it was like he didn't even want to be there. I only remember him coming from the age of about six years old. I don't remember him visiting before I was six.
35. I never had any contact with my mum, and she never came to visit me.
36. I never got any visits from a social worker or anybody like that when I was at Smyllum.
37. My sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] came to visit me. I think I only saw them once in a blue moon. They were in a home at Bishopton. Once they tried to take me to the pictures, but I wasn't allowed to go with them.

Sibling contact

38. [REDACTED] my sister was in Smyllum at the same time as me, but I only ever saw her at school. Even at school the boys and girls had different playgrounds. There was a line dividing the two playgrounds and you weren't allowed to cross it. Even if you were

seen standing at the line and just talking you would get told to move away. I told them I was talking to my sister, but that didn't matter to them and we had to move.

39. My sister / AAP was in Smyllum. She sometimes came and took me for a walk. Even this was under the supervision of the nuns. The rest of the time I wasn't allowed to speak to my / AAP
40. My brother [REDACTED] was in Smyllum too. He was a bit older than me. I vaguely remember him looking after me for a while. All of a sudden he left and he had gone to another boys' home called Falkland in Fife. I think I was about eight or nine when he left. He never shared the same dorm as me.

Healthcare

41. I didn't go to the dentist when I was at Smyllum, and a dentist never came in to see me. I vaguely remember when I was a toddler falling off a swing, and I think I burst behind my ear. I am not sure if the nuns helped me, and I don't remember ever going to the hospital because of it.
42. I hit my head once when I slipped in the toilet and hit my head off the ceramic urinal. It split my head open just above my eye but I didn't lose consciousness. The nuns didn't even notice I was cut. I was taken up to a local doctor the following day, and the doctor gave me a couple of stitches and that was it.
43. The only time I do remember a doctor coming out was when I had really bad flu. Even then I don't think I got any medicine.

Abuse at Smyllum

44. I don't recall being abused before I was seven years old. It all started when I moved into the middle unit of Smyllum. The first person I saw when I moved into the older section was [REDACTED] HAV [REDACTED] He was standing there and he asked me who I was.

45. Nuns at Smyllum never, at any time, mentioned my parents to me. They never referred to me by my name. It was always by my number. I still remember it; Number [REDACTED] It was just like having an army number. We weren't allowed to call each other by name in front of the nuns. We had to use each other's number. There was a nun in charge of each dorm and she slept in a nearby room. When you were saying your prayers she would come into the dorm. If you weren't saying them she would hit you on the back of the head or hit you on the knuckles. I can't remember her name.
46. Sometimes a batch of sandals would get delivered to the orphanage. We would stand in a queue waiting to get a pair. When it was my turn the nun asked me what size my feet were. I told her I didn't know, and she kept going on about me being stupid because I didn't know my shoe size. She got a ruler out and measured my feet. That was how she worked out what size to give me.
47. If anyone did something wrong, we would all be put in the main hall in rows of three. This was if something happened and no-one admitted to it. We would be made to put our hands on our head and just stand there quietly. The nuns would then patrol between the lines. If you moved, laughed or made a noise the nuns would come up behind you and whack you on the knuckles with a ruler. We were made to stand there sometimes for up to two hours. I would regularly get accused of doing things that I hadn't done.
48. [REDACTED] HAV [REDACTED] as far as I know worked at Smyllum, but I have no idea what his role was. [REDACTED] was in the same dorm as me. When I was seven [REDACTED] HAV [REDACTED] would have been about fifteen. I think he had a room to himself. He abused me.
49. I remember the first time something happened. [REDACTED] HAV [REDACTED] trapped me in the dormitory. He started talking to me, and then asked me if I wanted to touch him. He started exposing himself to me, and he was aroused. I was terrified. I refused to do it. He grabbed my hand and tried to get me to masturbate him. He always managed to get me when I was on my own. I would maybe get sent to go and clean somewhere or

do something, and he would know all the shortcuts to get there. When I got there he was waiting for me. Most often it would happen in the dorm.

50. This happened quite regularly with him over a two or three year period. There were a few spells when nothing happened. It wasn't every day but more periodic, maybe once or twice a month. This went on from the age of seven until I was maybe ten years old.
51. Sometimes I tried to avoid him, and sometimes used to pretend I was sleeping or ill so he would leave me alone. It almost always happened in the dorm. I would regularly see him standing at the door when I went into the chapel. I couldn't look at him. As soon as I saw him I was filled with fear.
52. The nuns must have known what he was doing, but they didn't do anything about it. Most of the incidents with **HAV** happened at lunchtimes or in the afternoon after school. He would appear when I was doing some chores, or other times the nuns would actually tell me to go with **HAV** and help him clean a certain place. **HAV** must have approached the nuns and asked for me specifically.
53. I started wetting the bed when I was at Smyllum. When this happened the nuns treated me with disdain. They asked me why I did it, but I didn't really know then. I didn't get any sympathy from them. The nuns announced to all the other children if I wet my bed, so that the other children would ridicule me. They ridiculed me at school and everywhere. I was forced to change the sheets on my bed too. That was the only time I made my bed.
54. Once **HAV** left Smyllum I just felt a great sense of relief because I believed I was safe. After that life was almost normal. I was still a little bit on edge because I still had the fear that he was going to return. I remember being asked to clean the stairs which was a big spiral staircase and there were lots of funny noises. It was an eerie area and there were creaks and doors moving in the wind, and there was an echo. I refused to do it.

55. After HAV left Smyllum the abuse from the nuns continued, in fact it seemed to get worse. I seemed to get picked on by them more and more. It was like I had done something wrong and they were being harder on me. They were hitting me for no reason, and they were hitting me harder and more often than before. We used to roller-skate in the corridors, but if the nuns saw me they would tell me to stop. Others were still doing it, and I was the only one who was made to stop and I wasn't allowed to do it. No-one would explain to me why.
56. Apart from the nuns hitting other boys on the knuckles or head I didn't really see any other abuse in Smyllum. There was a story in the paper a while ago from a female who claimed that her brother had got killed in Smyllum. I never ever saw any of the nuns lashing out like that. I never saw a nun kicking another boy. I don't actually think it possible for a nun to kick a child in the head because the habit is just too heavy. I think it is a virtual impossibility.

Leaving Smyllum

57. My dad first said when I was about twelve years of age that he was going to take me out of Smyllum and take me home with him to Coatbridge. I had no idea where Coatbridge was.
58. He came to take me away from Smyllum when I was thirteen years old. I am not sure if Smyllum had told him that I had been abused. I presume they would have had an obligation to tell my parents when I told the priest. That might have been why he wanted to take me home. I don't really know. My sister [REDACTED] came with us as well. I left with absolutely nothing, no possessions.

Reporting of abuse at Smyllum

59. Although my brother [REDACTED] was older than me and looked after me for a while in Smyllum I couldn't tell him about the abuse from [REDACTED] HAV [REDACTED] I just felt I couldn't put the pressure onto him.
60. I think the first time I told anyone at Smyllum what [REDACTED] HAV [REDACTED] was doing to me was at confession. Something just triggered in my head that I had to tell someone, so I told the priest in the confession box. I told the priest what [REDACTED] HAV [REDACTED] had done to me. I can't remember who the priest was.
61. After I had told him, the priest, whose face was in complete shock, just walked out and left me sitting there. I was there for about an hour, maybe more. The priest didn't even come back and see me again that night.
62. After that there was calm and I didn't see [REDACTED] HAV [REDACTED] again. He just disappeared. I saw [REDACTED] because he was in the same dorm as me, and he made some comment to me about [REDACTED] HAV [REDACTED]. He said something like "What did you do to [REDACTED] HAV [REDACTED]?". He made me feel awkward. I just felt so calm after that. No-one ever came back and talked to me about what I had said.
63. A while after I told the priest what [REDACTED] HAV [REDACTED] had done to me, maybe a week later, I remember lying in my bed at night and I just had a feeling that someone was beside me. I was half asleep and too frightened to move or see who it was. I just lay there. All of a sudden the lights came on, and the nuns were running about and screaming. There was a lot of commotion. The police were called but I never spoke to them. The nuns later told me that [REDACTED] HAV [REDACTED] had been in our dorm and had been taken away by the police. I never actually saw [REDACTED] HAV [REDACTED] but I am sure it must have been him that was beside my bed.
64. A few years ago, maybe around 2007, I decided to contact the police. I had been thinking about doing it for a while. I got put through to the police in Lanark and I told them what I wanted to report. They said they would pass it on to the police at

██████████ and that someone would get back in touch with me, but they never did. I phoned back, and this time when I got put through the police said that they knew all about ████ HAV ██████ and that I wasn't the only one. No-one ever came to take a statement from me.

Life after being in care

65. I left Smyllum at thirteen and went home with ██████ to live with my dad. My other sisters ████ AAP ██████ and ██████ were already at home. My dad didn't have a partner at that time.
66. When I was living with my dad I went to the local secondary school in Coatbridge. I went for about six months, but yet again I never learned anything. The orphanage apparently put my wrong date of birth on the form. They had it recorded as ██████ rather than ██████ so I went to a primary school first for a few weeks. I then went to secondary school for about six months.
67. I was only fourteen and a half when I left school. School leaving age was fifteen then but they were happy to get rid of me. I worked on a baker's van for a while at the age of fifteen. That only lasted a couple of weeks because it was too far away.
68. After I got home from the hospital someone came to the house to say they were trying to get me adopted. My father told me that he would change and I was left there. I suffered it until I was eighteen.
69. I joined the army in 1964 when I was eighteen. My reason for joining the army was to get away from my father. Army life was easy for me because I had been regimented and learned discipline when I had been at Smyllum. It was an easy transition for me to make, and it was all second nature to me. I came out the army in 1983. I was going through a bad time in my life.

Impact

70. Because of what HAV did to me in Smyllum I started wetting the bed. I also developed a really bad stammer. I remember one time standing in a queue of about fifty other children. When you got to the front you had to say your number. All the time when I was waiting I was saying my number to myself in my head. When it was my turn I couldn't speak and it wouldn't come out. The nun kept saying "What is wrong with you?". She said I was to hurry up because I was holding up the queue. I was sent to the back of the line. At no time was it suggested that I see anybody to find out what was wrong. I had my stammer until I was 27 years of age.
71. When I was in the army I had some issues because my stammer gets worse when I am under pressure. I learned breathing techniques to try and control it. Every time before I spoke I would do my breathing exercises. It was embarrassing sometimes especially if you were issuing commands over the radio.
72. I still feel a sense of rejection because of what happened to me at Smyllum. After HAV left and the nuns were picking on me I felt isolated and was being treated differently by them. I constantly felt that it was me that had done something wrong.
73. I was living back at home with my dad when I took an overdose and ended up in hospital. I took an overdose because of what had happened to me at the orphanage and what was happening at home with my dad. I was fourteen years old at the time. My dad was lifting his hands to me and I would have hit him back but out of respect I didn't. No one at the hospital asked me why I had taken an overdose. They saw the bruises on my back because I was wearing a gown. They said they were going to contact the police and they took photographs of me.
74. I don't like people touching me. I just don't like it, and it takes me back to Smyllum. It is the same having a shower. In the army and even at school I was very wary of who was watching especially the PT instructor. I was paranoid about it. When I was at my dad's and I went to the local swimming pool I refused to have a shower afterwards. I

just said I would shower when I got home. There are some toilets that I hate and just can't go to. If the urinals are really busy I will just turn round and walk out.

75. I still have flashbacks. I had one this morning. I still see the priest sitting there although I have locked it all away from my mind. I think that is the reason I don't like toilet and shower cubicles.
76. What happened to me at Smyllum has affected my religious faith. I no longer go to church. I don't remember the last time I went to chapel. I went back for a while briefly to get my son baptised but I have broken away from it completely now. I feel that God has let me down. The priest and the nuns knew what was going on and have covered it all up.
77. In 1997 they said that they thought I had post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) but I said I was fine and carried on. In 2007 I was finally diagnosed with PTSD. Some of this related to my time in Smyllum and some related to my time in the army. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
78. Because I was in care I didn't have a proper relationship with my mother and father, or my brothers and sisters. I have been left with a feeling of anger at my parents because I ended up in Smyllum. I am angry at what my mum did. I am angry about what my dad should have done. Another part of my anger is about what the nuns did and what they didn't do. They must have known what was going on with [REDACTED] HAV [REDACTED] HAV I think the priest knew what was going on, but he was just waiting for someone to say something.

Treatment / support

79. I was sent to a psychiatrist in [REDACTED] for a while. It ended up that he was telling me his problems so I stopped going. I went to the [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] for treatment of my PTSD. It took a while to actually get it. The guy

that was doing it was in the armed forces but had never had PTSD, so didn't really know what he was talking about and I stopped going.

80. I have had a community psychiatric nurse for a couple of years now to help me with my PTSD. He is aware that I was in a home, but I have not gone into any details with him about the abuse I suffered there.
81. In 2008 I was in great pain and couldn't understand what was happening. I thought I had cancer. It was only in 2010 I was diagnosed with fibromyalgia. This was making me more and more stressed and angry.

Lessons to be learned

82. The nuns at Smyllum just weren't human. They had no feelings and showed no compassion or love. They are robots. They have never admitted they were wrong and they still don't admit it.
83. What really made me angry was that I couldn't understand how we were all put into care and then my mum had two further children and she was allowed to look after them. To this day I still don't understand the logic in why she was allowed to look after two children after the rest of us had all been put into care.

Hopes for the Inquiry

84. My main hopes for the Inquiry are to make people aware that the abuse has been going on and to stop it from happening to other children in the future. I know it has happened although lots of people don't believe it. It is still happening so it must be stopped.
85. I also hope that the Catholic Church can hold their hands up and admit that abuse did take place and apologise.

Records

86. A couple of weeks after I spoke to the police at Lanark I phoned Lanark council to try and arrange a meeting but they weren't interested. I told them that they must hold records for what went on back then, but they just said they couldn't help me. They must have known what was going on at Smyllum. I have never obtained any of my records.

Other information

87. Around 1964 when I was in the forces I was stationed in [REDACTED] I visited Smyllum orphanage because I felt I had to. I didn't see any of the nuns but I saw a woman who worked in the cookhouse and the [REDACTED] man called [REDACTED] BAC I think. I spoke to them. It brought back memories to me.

88. My sister [REDACTED] AAP told me when I was about twenty years old that my mother wanted to meet me. This was in 1966, at the time when my father died. I didn't even know my mum's first name. I thought about it for a while, and then I did go and see her in [REDACTED] She was a stranger. There was no connection and no feelings between us.

89. My sister [REDACTED] AAP has told me that [REDACTED] my brother, was abused when he went to the boys' home in Falkland. Apparently he was abused by two brothers within the home. They were both [REDACTED] and they used to batter [REDACTED] I was really upset when I heard this. I was devastated because it brought it all back to me.

90. I wish to remain anonymous for the purposes of this Inquiry. I am happy for my information to be shared as necessary to help the Inquiry. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed... [REDACTED] AAM
Dated... 29th Aug 2017