

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LCJ

Support person present: No

1. My name is LCJ. My date of birth is 1956. My contact details are known to the Inquiry. I live with my partner. We have been together for 24 years. We have four children together. I work as a crash barrier repairer.

Life before going into care

2. I lived with my parents, in Wolverhampton until I was about three or four years of age. My parents decided to separate and my mother took me back to Edinburgh to live with her parents. As far as I remember I had been happy living in Wolverhampton with both my parents. My grandparents stayed in a tenement flat on Edinburgh. It was not big enough for all of us, so a decision was made for me to go to Nazareth House, Lasswade. This would have been in about 1960.

Nazareth House, Lasswade

3. I remember one day being out in town with my mum. She took me to this place. I didn't know what was going on. My mum disappeared and I was left there. The place was Nazareth House in Lasswade. I can't remember dates or times.
4. Everything was taken off me. All my personal possessions and my clothes were removed. I was then given clothes to wear. I was then dressed like everyone else.

Routine at Nazareth House, Lasswade

5. Nazareth House was a big bleak place. It was set in big grounds. It was an old house. I think there was more than one building but we were mostly in one building. We were being looked after by nuns. I don't know how many nuns were there, they all looked the same to me. They all wore black habits and black dresses.

Mornings and bedtime

6. I think there were about twenty boys in my dormitory. We slept in our own beds. We were put to bed early. In the winter we were in bed when it was dark so it was very early to bed. I think it was about 6pm.
7. We were woken up in the morning at about 7.30am by a nun shouting at us to get up. I think breakfast was cereal and milk. We were then sent out to school. I think we left for school at about 8.30am.
8. No talking was allowed when the lights went out at night for bed. The nuns would patrol the dormitory. You could hear them walking past as their beads would rattle. If you didn't hear them coming and you were caught talking they would take you out of bed and you would be given a beating.

Food

9. When I was at Nazareth House, they used to feed us bread with cheese for supper at night. I didn't like the cheese and would give it away. I was caught and I received a smack. If you didn't like the food they served, you would be force-fed by the nuns. They would hold your nose and food was forced into your mouth. I was about five or six years old the first time that this happened to me. This happened to me a couple of times.

10. I think we were given cereal for breakfast in the morning. I only really remember the bread and cheese supper. I don't remember what the other meals were. I know that it was not the best of foods. We ate our lunch at school and this used to be a bigger meal.
11. We ate in a dining room in Nazareth House. The age groups were all separated. We did not eat with the older boys.

School

12. I attended Lasswade Primary School. It was not far from the home. We would walk to school. We walked in a group and it was the only time that we didn't see the nuns.
13. I didn't do well at school. I didn't have glasses at school. When I left Nazareth House at ten years of age, I couldn't read or write properly. I think it was because of the fact that I didn't have any glasses. The teachers seemed to concentrate on the kids who were good at school work, who would achieve more. I also think I have dyslexia. I didn't get any help for this at school.
14. Although I didn't do well at school, in a way I enjoyed going. It was time spent away from the nuns. We were also able to mix with other kids from the local area. Sometimes the other kids would say insensitive things to the kids from Nazareth House. They would sometimes call us orphans. I told them that I did have a mum and dad. Some of the other kids didn't have parents.
15. All the other kids knew who the kids were who went to Nazareth House because of the way we were dressed. We all wore shorts, shoes and socks. We wore a jumper and coat in the winter.

Leisure time/Trips

16. Most of the time we were kept busy in the home. If we were not at school, we would help out with the cleaning of the floors. We also had to tidy the dormitories. Occasionally in the summer, if it was still light outside, we were allowed to play outside.
17. There was no TV. There were no toys or card games. We were left on our own and made to read. There were some books but I couldn't see to read. I think there may have been magazines and comics.
18. There was a playground to play in. There was a grass area but we were encouraged not to play on it. Occasionally we were allowed to play football with the other boys. No other sport was organised. I can't remember if there was a swing or a chute in the playground.
19. I think we may have been taken to Portobello beach once. I don't remember going on any other trips or holidays.

Birthdays and Christmas

20. I can't remember anything special being organised for Christmas. I don't think there were any decorations put up.
21. I didn't know when my birthday was. My birthday was nothing special.

Visits/Inspections

22. I think relatives coming to visit was discouraged by the nuns. My mum came to visit me once, and my aunts came to visit me a couple of times. I was never given prior warning when I was getting a visit. A family member would just turn up. They would ring the doorbell and someone would come and fetch me. They would take me out of Nazareth House for a couple of hours. If anything was given to me when I was out, it would be taken from me when I returned. I remember one of my mum's sisters coming to visit, and I was taken to a park with swings near the home.

23. The visits stopped. I found out later that there was a period of time when no-one in my family knew I was still in care. My father was supposed to come and get me and take me back to Wolverhampton. This did not happen, so no-one else came to visit me as they thought I was no longer in care.
24. I have no recollection of any official visits. I don't remember being visited by a social worker or an inspector.

Healthcare

25. If you were ill, the nuns would look after you. I don't remember seeing a doctor or a dentist when I was in Nazareth House.

Religion

26. Religion was a big part of our lives at Nazareth House. The nuns and priests did not live up to their supposed values and morals. We went to church every Sunday and sometimes during the week for religious festivals. I think we were also encouraged to pray at any time. I think we had to say evening prayers.

Abuse at Nazareth House

27. We were physically abused on a daily basis by the nuns. They wouldn't let us do anything. We were not allowed any close associations with any of the other orphans. I remember we had to be quiet all the time inside the building. We were not allowed to talk to each other.
28. The nuns would walk round with belts and if you were disobedient, the nuns would hit you. They would hit you with their hands and if they felt like it, they hit you with the belts. If you were caught talking or if you didn't eat your food, the nuns would give you a beating. They used their hands and they used the belts to hit you.

29. The nuns would not hit you with the belt when you were younger. It seemed that before the age of five they would use their hands. The slaps they gave you though were adult slaps, they did not hold back. When you were hit with their hands, they hit you on the face or the bottom. Some people would get hit anywhere on their body.
30. The nuns also made us stand and watch as they gave other kids a beating. This was used as a deterrent. I was hit by the nuns a number of times over the years as I tended to answer back a lot. It wasn't just one particular nun that hit us, they would all hit us. I saw it happen to the other kids.
31. I wet the bed a few times. When I did wet the bed, I would be hit with a belt by a nun. Sometimes I was told to stand in the corner with the wet sheet over my head. I had to stand there until the nuns thought that I had had enough, or until the sheet had dried. I could be standing there for hours. A couple of times I was made to sit in a cold water bath by a nun. This happened in the summer and winter. I had to sit there for hours.
32. I think this first happened to me when I was about four years of age. I didn't see anyone else sitting in a cold bath, but I did see others standing with the sheet over their heads. I think I wet the bed because I felt insecure. I had just been separated from my mother and I was thrown into this strange place that I didn't know. I was probably still not properly toilet trained at that age.
33. I think I stopped wetting the bed when I was about seven years old. I remember we were not allowed out of our beds if we needed the toilet. It was a "no win" situation. You would get hit for wetting the bed, and you would get hit for getting out the bed to go to the toilet. Looking back, I don't think the nuns understood how children work.
34. The belt was used when a nun felt like using it. The nun could be in a bad mood. There were no hard and fast rules about when it would be used. If a nun wanted to make a point she would use the belt for punishment. You would be hit with the belt

on your back or on your bottom. They would hit you four to six times on any one occasion. You would be hit over your clothes. When I was hit at night for wetting the bed, I would be hit over my nightie. I was never hit with the belt under my clothes

35. For some reason, I remember we were made to kneel in the corridors and told to face the wall. When a nun walked past, you would get a slap on the head. I think we were made to kneel when the nuns were away doing their rosary. This would happen at weekends when we were not in school during the day. There was a long corridor between the main house and the chapel. The nuns would make all of us kneel on the floor, and we had to look at the wall. It would last a couple of hours. This happened every week.
36. We were also made to clean the floors. It was wiping the floors. If a nun thought you had missed a bit then you would get a slap for that. You would get slapped for anything. If you talked, you would get a slap. If you missed a bit during your chores, you would get a slap. You also got a slap if you accidentally put on someone else's coat or clothes.
37. At bath time the nuns would wash us, and I think their touching of my private parts was inappropriate. I don't know if this touching was intentionally sexual, but there was no need to wash our privates so thoroughly. We were capable of washing ourselves by that age. This happened at every bath time, twice a week, right up until I left when I was ten years of age. I question now why they kept washing me at that age.
38. The older boys abused me sexually. They made me do things that I didn't want to do. I was made to suck older boys' penises. I don't know if it was done to them when they were younger. I didn't think it was natural at the time. This happened to me once or twice a week.
39. It happened to me the first time when I was about seven years of age. The older boys would come into the room and drag me into another room. There would be the

boy who wanted his penis sucked and a couple of other boys who would make you do it. It wouldn't be the same boy every time.

40. I told the nuns and the priests about the abuse from the older boys. I was told that I was lying, that the abuse did not happen. When I told the nuns that I was being bullied and made to do things that I didn't want to do, I was smacked and told to go away. I was told to stop telling lies. I gave up trying to tell anyone after the first couple of smacks. The abuse continued until I was about ten years of age.
41. I also tried to tell a visiting priest during confession about the abuse. I remember telling him about the abuse by the boys and the beatings from the nuns. I was told to stop lying. I gave up telling anyone.
42. I never got to know individual priests. It was a different priest every Sunday for confession. A few times during confession, the priest would touch me and I was made to suck his penis. I was also made to touch the priests' penises. This happened to me a good few times over the years. The first time this happened to me, I was about six years of age. I think the abuse from the priests happened not long after I complained about the abuse from the older boys.
43. If a priest found you wandering about, they would take you into a room in the home and they would sexually abuse you. It was the same type of abuse I received from the older boys. The older boys would also grab you when they were passing by and take you into rooms within the home.
44. Sometimes the abuse by the priest would happen in the confessional box. There would be other people waiting outside to do confession. They would be standing out in the church area.
45. I don't think it was just me that the priests and older boys were abusing. I heard things at the time, but I didn't put two and two together at that age. I heard other boys say that the priest had touched them in the confessional box. I never saw it happen to anyone else.

46. The abuse from the priests continued until I was ten years of age when my dad turned up and took me down to Wolverhampton.
47. There were care assistants who helped out at the home. They would visit and I ended up having the same problem with them. They would visit and help to care for us at the weekend. They would help out at bath time. They would make you do things, and they also touched you in a sexual manner.
48. The nuns also mentally abused us. They isolated us, and they would get the kids to turn against each other. If you did anything naughty at school, the nuns would give you a beating and you were made to stand in a corner for a couple of hours. They would tell the other kids that you had been naughty.
49. I was isolated from the other kids in the playground. If the nuns thought you had been naughty, they would not let you associate with the other kids at playtime to do things that you enjoyed. It could be three or four kids at a time being punished. We were put in separate corners of the playground and told to keep quiet. We had to kneel, stand or sit if there was a chair. I remember a time when a bike turned up in the playground and everyone was having a ride on it. I wasn't allowed to. I remember another time it had been snowing and I wasn't allowed to sledge. They punished everyone in this way.

Leaving Nazareth House

50. I left Nazareth House when I was ten years of age. Someone turned up. I was told it was my dad. I had not seen him for seven years. I had not been told that I was leaving. My dad took me on a train back to Wolverhampton.

Reporting of abuse

51. I told the nuns about the abuse by the older boys. I was told I was lying and was beaten. When I told a priest about the beatings and the abuse from the older boys, the priest sexually abused me.
52. I gave up telling anyone about the abuse. What was the point telling them? Every time I tried to tell them I was getting abused, I was given a beating for telling them. I learned not to bother reporting again. I realised it wasn't worth trying to tell anyone as I was getting a smack or a beating for saying something that they thought was a lie.
53. I haven't reported my abuse to the police. I do not remember any of the names of my abusers.

Life after being in care

54. When I arrived back in Wolverhampton, I found it hard to socialise with the other children at my new school. It took me a while to get used to the freedom. My biggest problem was being able to make friends easily. I was a loner, and that's why I probably became a lorry driver later in life. I found it easier to drive lorries. I found it easier than being part of a team. I didn't need to rely on other people.
55. When I went home, I was living with my father and my older siblings. I spent the rest of my childhood with my dad. I went to my local school. My reading and writing difficulties were picked up at my new school. I like reading now. I can make out the words as I have glasses now.
56. I left school when I was fifteen years of age. I didn't pass any exams. I got in some bother with the police so I was sent to an institution called Turner's Court. It is a place where you learned skills. I found it hard there as I felt institutionalised again. They helped me get in touch with my family in Scotland. I had lost contact with my relatives in Scotland until I was eighteen years old.

Impact

57. I try to put my time at Nazareth House to the back of my mind but I can never do it. It was not the best part of my life. Something pops up in life and I can't help but think back to what happened to me as a child.
58. When my dad came to get me, being told this is your dad and going away and living in England was a big upset in my life. I didn't know anyone. To be honest, I hated my childhood, not having a mother, my dad saying she was dead, I went through years thinking that, to find out later in life that she wasn't dead. When we met we were strangers.
59. I still resent the years I spent in that place with those people. I often wonder why, why me? What had I done wrong? What did I do wrong for this to happen to me? I still can't cope with stress. I can't deal with problems, with people, with conflict. I have trouble relating to people, with showing love to my family, as I never had any family. I can't cope with abuse from people even now. There have been times when I think I would be better dead.
60. I can't commit to a relationship even though I have been in a relationship for 25 years [REDACTED]. I'm so insecure in my life and there are things I can't commit to. Even work is hard and I have to push myself to continue to go. I have never stopped looking for something else. Every day is a battle with life, debts, family, work and health.
61. When child abuse is mentioned in the media, like the Jimmy Saville and Rolf Harris cases, it is still something I can relate to. I can't understand why it is still allowed to happen. When there was the case of the Muslim men grooming the young girls, it made my blood boil. The girls were not believed when they made complaints. The authorities' attitudes have to change.

62. When I hear of child abuse, it takes me back to my time at Nazareth House and I sink into myself and retreat.
63. Over the last ten years I have been thinking about my time in Nazareth House more. When I was young I didn't think about it, but now I'm older I do think about it. I think why it happened to me, and why not to someone else. Then I realise it did happen to others, it wasn't just me. I can never make it better. I think of the perpetrators and I wonder why they did it. The nuns and priests were religious people. I wonder if they got into this kind of work specifically to do this kind of thing. Did they think they could get away with it forever? I can't understand why it was allowed to happen.
64. I sometimes think that it might help if I could come face to face with my abusers. Then I think about whether it would be worth punishing them now. I don't think punishing them now would make a difference.
65. I once assaulted someone who tried to kiss my daughter. My daughter was only eight at the time. I thought no one is going to get away with what happened to me. I received a caution from the police for that.
66. My time in Nazareth House has affected my mental health. I've been on antidepressants for fifteen years. In 2014, my mental health deteriorated. I had severe depression for eleven months and was off work. There were a lot of triggers at that time. I thought about ending it all. Everything was getting to me. I was also reflecting on what had happened to me in my childhood. I was wondering what would have happened in my life if I hadn't been abused.
67. I had not received any treatment or support. I had never been able to speak to anyone about the abuse. In 2014, I received cognitive behavioural therapy. I went to see a counsellor for one-to-one therapy and talked about what happened in my past. I spoke for the first time about my time in Nazareth House. I had put my time there to the back of my mind. I told her what I have told the Inquiry. I've not told anyone else.

68. I am still on antidepressants. I try to keep myself busy. I work. I do karate and I like to swim.
69. My aunt [REDACTED] is aware of some of the abuse I received in Nazareth House. She remembers the nuns walking about with their belts. She is unaware of the sexual abuse. She is the one that sent me the information about the Inquiry and encouraged me to get in touch. My aunt [REDACTED] still lives in Edinburgh and I try and visit once a year.
70. My time at Nazareth House affected my ability to make relationships. I never found it easy to form relationships, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. I have problems getting close to people.
71. [REDACTED]
72. I never settled down until I was 36 years of age. [REDACTED] and I have been together for 24 years and never married. Perhaps that is something else that I'm frightened of doing, making a commitment. I have never discussed my abuse with my partner.

Records

73. I have never tried to recover my records. I will speak to Future Pathways about recovering my records. They are something I am interested in.

Lessons to be learned

74. I think that adults need to start listening to children instead of brushing what they say off. Religious and professional people get up to things and the authorities turn a blind eye.

- 75. People should start listening to children and vulnerable people. If abuse is happening then they should do something about it. People in care must be listened to. I think that children and young persons should be taken seriously.

- 76. 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  LCJ

Dated 31/10/2017