

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LCZ

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is LCZ although I prefer being called . My date of birth is 1953. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

### Background

2. My mother was and my father I am the oldest of eight children. In order of age there is myself, . The two other younger siblings I would rather not mention by name. They were never in care.

### Life before care

3. The family home was the Gorbals in Glasgow. At this time it was me, . My mother couldn't look after us properly so we were put into care. I remember my mum taking us to John Street social work. After we went in I turned round and my mother was away. I was eight years old so this must have been 1961.
4. We were taken to Castlemilk Children's Home, which was like a holding place. We were there no time at all. A big black car arrived and took us to Nazareth House in Kilmarnock.

## Nazareth House, Kilmarnock

5. Nazareth House was an old building run by the Poor Sisters of Nazareth. It was very creepy, like a haunted house. It was in its own grounds, which were very big. At the back of the house was a large playing area. There were also pigs in an area at the back of the house.
6. When we arrived there I think it was Sister Kathleen who met us. Sister Kathleen was fine. We walked through a big hallway and then upstairs. There was a big hall and all the children were there. We had to take off our clothes and put on the clothes that the sisters gave us. They also gave us shoes, some were too big or too small. I think that we were given a bath. The Mother Superior was in overall charge of the convent.
7. As a family we were kept in the same group. There were separate dormitories for the boys and girls
8. Sister **LHZ** replaced Sister Kathleen a couple of weeks after we arrived. Sister **LHZ** was very cruel. She was **[REDACTED]** used to wear. Sister **LHZ** was at Nazareth House until I left.
9. I'm not sure how many children were in Nazareth House. There were some quite young children. I think my age group was the oldest. There were only two groups, the one I was in and the one that Sister **LGO** was in charge of.
10. There were also nuns that stayed in another part of the building. We never saw them other than at mass.

## Routine

### *Mornings and bedtime*

11. There were about fourteen in each of the dormitories. Inside the dormitory it was partitioned off. You also had a locker each. It was all mixed ages in the dormitory. Sister [LHZ] was in charge of our dormitories, boys and girls. Sister [LHZ] had what was called a "Cell" next to the dormitory. This was where she slept.
12. We used to get up at six every morning. We washed and dressed. The older children would help the younger ones to get ready. We went to morning mass and then changed into our school uniform before going for breakfast. This was the same at weekends but instead of going to school we would do our chores.
13. After school we would change out of our uniform. We would do our homework then go for dinner. After dinner we had half an hour recreation when we were allowed to talk. If you spoke any other time you would be given the cane. Sometimes later we would be given hot cocoa with a piece on jam. This would only be if we had been good.
14. At night, before bed, we would take turns to polish all the shoes. Sister [LHZ] would check them. She would always say they weren't done right and batter you over the head. There was about twenty pairs of shoes and you would have to do them again. Sister [LHZ] had to see her face in the shoes before she would say they were done. I think that bedtime was eight thirty every night.
15. Sometimes at the weekends, if we were lucky, someone might bring in a projector and a screen and we would watch a movie. Now and again the staff would walk us to the pictures.

#### *Chores*

16. At the weekend we all had chores to do. The bed sheets were changed and we would make the beds up in the dormitories.

#### *Religion*

17. Every Saturday before lunch we had to go to the church. The priest would drum it into us that we were Catholics. He would say that we had to keep our flesh covered up.
18. At the bottom of the big hall was a Sacred Heart statue. Sister LHZ would make us kneel in front of it in the prayer position. She would say that if we moved then the statue would follow us. I am still terrified of statues to this day. This put the fear of God into me.
19. In the evening we had to say the rosary at the chapel. At Easter it was the station of the cross we went to. There was also a time called "Retreat". During the retreat Sister LHZ wouldn't let us talk. If you did talk you were given a slap or the cane.

#### *Personal hygiene*

20. We had a bath once a week, on a Friday. At bath time you had to line up and wait. You weren't allowed any hot or clean water. The water was always dirty and cold. Now when I have a bath I have to make sure that it is really hot.
21. When you were getting changed you had to wear a sort of cover like the Flintstones. You had to wear this when you were going for a bath. The boys had to wear their underpants.
22. Friday was the only day when you were given a change of underwear. The rest of your clothes were also washed on a Friday. We were given the same clothes back later.

#### *Mealtimes*

23. Everyone ate together in the dining room. Each group had its own area dependant on what nun was in charge of you. The areas for each nuns group was partitioned off. Someone had to go in and set all the tables. You had to eat what you were

given. I would rather have eaten prison food. The bread was sometimes stale and the milk could be sour. I used to sometimes spit the food out in my hand and hide it until I went to the toilet where I would flush it away.

24. At mealtimes it didn't matter whether you liked something you were given or not. If you left it Sister [LHZ] would tip your head back and force feed you. If you never ate your food you were given it at the next mealtime until you finished it. It didn't matter that it was cold. You always said grace before any meal. I find it difficult to this day if grace isn't said before a meal.

### *School*

25. One day in class the boy behind me said that my leg was bleeding. I didn't understand what was happening. The teacher came over and must have realised that I had started my period. She asked one of the other girls to take me to the toilet. The school must have phoned Sister [LHZ] When I got back she said to me that I was dirty and that this was the devil coming away from me. One of the other girls had to show me what to do with the Doctor White for my period. Sister [LHZ] gave me the cane because I had let one of the other girls help me. She said I was "dirty".
26. When I was about twelve I had to take the kids from Nazareth House to school at St Columbus. I then had to run back or I would miss my bus for school. I went to a special school as I had learning difficulties. They knew I was from the convent. I went back later to St Columba's and picked the kids up. I took them back to Nazareth House. I was absolutely terrified that I would lose one of the kids.
27. Sister [LHZ] never helped me with my homework. She used to call me "stupid".

### *Bed-wetting*

28. Sister [LHZ] got me up about ten every night. She would make me get the young children up for the toilet. If I didn't watch them and make sure that they had done the

toilet Sister LHZ would slap me. If I did watch the kids doing the toilet she would call me every name under the sun and a “brazen hussy”.

29. Sister LHZ would call anyone who wet the bed, wet bedders. Sister LHZ would get really angry if anyone wet their bed. I know that the wet sheets were put into the laundry. I can't remember if we had to strip the beds and make them up.
30. There was box with toys in it to play with. We didn't have a TV or radio to watch or listen to. Any gifts that you were given were taken from you and put in the box.
31. I used to do the Highland dancing. I was awarded certificates and won medals. One time, at a competition, I kicked the sword when I was dancing by mistake. Sister LHZ gave me the cane later because I had kicked the sword. When I left Nazareth House I asked for my medals. Sister LHZ told me that they weren't mine.

#### *Trips/Holidays*

32. We were taken out once a year by the taxis to Butlin's. I also remember a trip to Saltcoats. We stayed there and slept in camp beds. When we were on trips we were always dressed nicely.

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

33. At Christmas there would sometimes be concerts put on for people coming in. You were given a Christmas dinner. If you were given any gifts at Christmas these were taken off you. They were put into a box so that everyone could play with them. I was given a doll one year. I really liked it but this was taken off me. You were also given an orange with your present. That was it.
34. I remember one Christmas I got a slide viewer that you could see things on. I kept this in my locker. One night I was in bed under the covers watching it. One of the other girls asked what I was doing. When I told her she asked if she could come in my bed and watch it. Out of the blue Sister LHZ came in and caught us. I got the

cane because of this. Again I was called a “brazen wee hussy” and “dirty” for having someone in my bed. It was so silly.

35. At Easter there was a big Easter egg. You had to break a bit off. Whatever size this was you had to take it. It didn't matter if it was only a small bit. I was never given an Easter egg to myself.
36. My birthday was never marked in anyway at the convent.

### *Visits/Inspections*

37. I think visits only ever happened at the weekends.
38. The first time that my mother visited I must have been about thirteen. In the courtyard outside was a bench and there was a woman sitting there with a fur coat on. I had my brothers and sisters by the hand. I was very protective towards them. The woman shouted to me [REDACTED] LCZ [REDACTED] I asked her who she was. The woman said she was my mum. I told her that she wasn't my mum because my mum and dad were dead. This had been drummed into us. Her face just dropped. That was the only time she visited.
39. My dad visited once and I remember holding onto his leg and being dragged along the corridor. I was telling him that they hit us and made us eat food we didn't like. I can't understand why he didn't report this.
40. My Auntie [REDACTED] used to visit us. She would take [REDACTED] out. I think this was because she had boys of her own and that's what she was used to. When she visited she would talk to us all. I remember, after I left the home, my Auntie [REDACTED] telling me that my father had said to the social work, “Bring them home when they are old enough”.
41. I think I had a social worker, Mr Fife. I used to think he was my dad. I remember him speaking to me but I wouldn't tell him anything that had happened to me. You had

the fear of God put into you. When Sister **LHZ** was caning me she would say, "If you open your mouth to anyone they won't believe you". The only time I knew about the social work was when they came to take me from school and told me I was going home.

42. I have trust issues to this day. I don't trust many people. That's because of what has been drummed into me when I was in Nazareth House. I'm always frightened that if I tell people anything they will tell someone else.
43. I can't remember any official inspections at Nazareth House.

*Medical care*

44. I don't remember ever seeing a seeing a doctor or a dentist in the convent. If you were sick you were put to bed.
45. One time I caught nits at school. Sister **LHZ** shaved my hair off. I was then given the cane because of this.

*Running away*

46. Some Saturday's if you had been good you would be given pocket money. When I was given this I would run away. I would try and find my mum and dad. If I made it to their house my mum would take me to an uncle's. The police would then come and take me to Nazareth House. I was terrified about going back.
47. The first time that I ran away Sister **LHZ** caned the back of my knees and feet. I was locked in a room with bread and water and told this was what would happen if I ran away. I still ran away again.

*Other information*

48. When one of the nuns died we were made to line up and give her a kiss. I even had to lift up the young kids and make sure that they gave her a kiss.

### Abuse

49. I remember a time when I was in the park near the cemetery. I was with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] LVX [REDACTED]. There was a guy there with a long coat on. He dropped something and asked if we could pick it up for him. When we went over he wrapped us up in his coat. He tried to put his "bottom bit" in my mouth but I bit it.
50. The police got involved. After they left I got the cane from Sister [REDACTED] LHZ Sister [REDACTED] LGO was there as well and also gave me the cane. Sister [REDACTED] LHZ told me that I was a "brazen hussy". She said that this was why my parents didn't want us and that they were now dead. Sister [REDACTED] LHZ told me that I would end up as a street girl. At that time I didn't know what this meant. She made me feel dirty about what had happened. I feel really dirty even talking about this now. I can't ever forgive Sister [REDACTED] LHZ for this.
51. Sister [REDACTED] LHZ would cane you for anything, talking or answering back. If you cuddled someone when they were upset she would cane you for this. She would say it was dirty to do this. If you were to get the cane Sister [REDACTED] LHZ would drag you by the hair into the toilet area. There was a stone floor in there. I would sometimes get hit six or seven times on the hands. I also saw other children getting the cane from her. I think that she got satisfaction from doing this. We were all terrified of Sister [REDACTED] LHZ. If you cried when you were given the cane you were given it more.
52. I remember one time when I came out the dining room. I saw Sister [REDACTED] LHZ with all of the kids. Sister [REDACTED] LHZ had a hold of a little boy, [REDACTED] who was about 6 or 7 years old. She was holding him by the ears and his feet were dangling. Sister [REDACTED] LHZ pulled me once by the ear but I can't remember what this was for.
53. Every fortnight you went to confession at St Josephs. My brother [REDACTED] and I were there once and we set fire to a cloth on a candle by mistake. The Monsignor came in

and saw us. Before we got back to the house Sister LHZ knew what had happened. [REDACTED] hid in a cupboard and I got the cane for both of us.

54. There was one occasion when I was on my knees and Sister LHZ was about to give me another smack. The Mother Superior walked in and took a hold of her hand to stop her hitting me. She asked Sister LHZ what she was doing. Sometimes I wonder if they knew what was going on but didn't want to do anything.

### **Reporting of abuse**

55. I went to a victim support group in Kirkintilloch. The woman there, Kathy, said that we would have to go and report what had happened to me to the police. We went to Baird Street police station. I gave a statement to a police officer called Harry. I told him that I thought he didn't believe me. Harry said that he believed me one hundred percent. After I spoke with the police I never heard anything else from them.
56. I also reported what had happened to me to the Procurator Fiscal in Kilmarnock. They also told me that they believed me.
57. After I had went to the police I spoke with Ross Harper solicitors. It was a woman called Fiona Taylor. She told me that she had heard the same story from other people as well.
58. Around this time my brother [REDACTED] told me that four boys had raped him when he was in the convent. I didn't know about this before. I was angry that he hadn't told me. [REDACTED] said that he had reported this to the police in Easterhouse.

### **Leaving Nazareth House**

59. I was about 15 when I left Nazareth House. A social worker came and told me I was to go home. Believe it or not I didn't want to go home. I was too used to being

locked up and didn't want to leave. I had to change out of the clothes I was wearing into other clothes that were given to me. I gave my sister [REDACTED] a cuddle and told her I would come and visit her. Sister LHZ dragged me by the arm and held me up against the door. She told me that under no circumstances was I to come back and see [REDACTED]. She said that I was a bad influence on her. The door was then shut in my face. I never saw [REDACTED] again for years.

### Life after Nazareth House

60. When I left the convent I didn't know I had a younger brother and sister. I saw them in the house and asked my mum who the young kids were. She said that was my brother and sister, [REDACTED]. I asked my mother and father if they loved them more than me. They didn't answer. I had a real hatred for a long time against [REDACTED]. I am okay now it was just at that time. I'm quite close to them now.
61. When I left Nazareth House I went to St Osbourne's school in Cathcart. This was also a school for special needs children. I left school when I was sixteen.
62. I used to run away from home as I wasn't used to a family life. I think it was the police that put me into care at Bishopton because of this.

### Bishopton Children's Home, Glasgow

63. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

64. [REDACTED]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

65.

### **Life after Bishopton**

66. After leaving Bishopton I started a job as a cleaner, living in at Nazareth House, Cardonald.
67. My dad used to send my mother to collect my wages from me. The Mother Superior would ask me why I had no money. After I told her the Mother Superior said she would keep my wages for me. My mother was told that she wouldn't get my wages as I didn't stay with her. At this time I was still under the care of the social work.
68. I left the care of the social work when I was about eighteen. [REDACTED]

### **Impact**

69. After being in care I suffered from panic attacks, depression and nightmares. I have been on anti-depressants before but I'm not using them just now. I like to be on my own and don't like to get involved with things. I need to do things in my own time.

Sometimes I just need to be by myself. I'm even like that with [REDACTED] I always mistook someone giving me attention as liking me.

70. I don't like being around a lot of people. I don't have much confidence. I always feel I have to be home for a certain time. I think this is due to always having a fear of being late back at Nazareth House. I get angry with myself if I can't get home when I want to. I feel stupid because this was what Sister [REDACTED] LHZ had said to me. To this day I am terrified of nuns. If I see one I have to cross the road. When I have seen a nun I have felt sick. I can't be near them.
71. I had a flashback recently where someone got into my house and was punching me. They said Sister [REDACTED] LHZ was saying that I better not speak about what happened to me.
72. How I was treated at Nazareth House impacted on me as a parent. If my kids were late in I would make them stand on one leg in the corner of the room. This is what I was made to do at Nazareth House.
73. I think about what happened to me every day. If I'm not doing anything my mind goes into overdrive thinking about Nazareth House.
74. It was very difficult for me to get in touch with the Inquiry. I put it off for long enough before deciding to go ahead with it. I have a fear that no one will believe me. I feel a lot of guilt for not speaking up more when I saw what was happening at Nazareth House.

### **Records**

75. I have never seen any records from my time in care. I asked Cameron Fyfe, the lawyer, about this but he never had any information.

**Other information**

76. I am not sure how, but I found out that Sister [LHZ] died around 2007.

*Counselling*

77. I have been going to a counsellor that was recommended by INCAS. I have went every Friday for the last two years. She is really helpful. I did go to another counsellor once before but I didn't feel they were any good.

78. I am a member of INCAS. I go to the meetings once a month. This has really helped me. I don't say much. I just listen to what the other people say.

**Lessons learned**

79. I think that if nuns or priests are going to work with children they should make sure a disclosure check is carried out.

80. 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] LCZ .....

Dated 14-2-18 .....