

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

BLB

Support person present: No

1. My name is BLB. My date of birth is 1943. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Tyneholme House, Pencaitland, Edinburgh

2. I was six or seven years old when I was sent to Tyneholme House at Pencaitland, Edinburgh, which was by Mr and Mrs . Two of the other boys in there with me were called and BKW.
3. Mr BEB did not like me or . He just did not like me because I wet the bed. I was really frightened of the man and I had a very bad stutter. We were never called by our Christian names, often just by our number. He also used a whistle a lot.
4. In my last year at primary school Mr and Mrs BEB/BEC left and Mr and Mrs took over.

Routine at Tyneholme House

Mornings and bedtime

5. There were three dormitories up the stairs where I was moved to when I became old enough.

Bedwetting

6. I had to go to bed before my age group as a punishment for wetting the bed. In the morning I had to sit in a cold bath. I was often cold at night time and sometimes I was forced to drink a big glass of cold water. It was no wonder I wet my bed. Sleep was an escape.
7. Also as punishment for wetting the bed I had to weed around the roses and gravel paths or stand in the corner at playtime after tea.

Mealtimes/Food

8. We were forced to eat food. It was pushed down [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] BKW mouths. Mealtimes could be distressing, smelling things you didn't like and knowing you had to eat it. Lunch at the weekend was the worst. We were given tripe, or stew with big lumps of fat in it and forced to eat it.
9. Tea was okay, but if you'd been bad you were sent to bed without getting any tea. Even if it was something good, you were not allowed seconds of anything.
10. On a Sunday we had cake, but that was stopped for me. If there was anything extra to be had, Mr [REDACTED] BEB would wave his hand at me and tell me I wasn't getting any.

Washing/bathing

11. After our bath, Mr [REDACTED] BEB would pour a big bowl of cold water over our heads. This gave me a severe headache.

Clothing/uniform

12. We never had underwear and wore wellington boots with no socks.

School

13. I was slow at school and very nervous. I had a stutter and I was told I was lazy.
14. When Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] took over it was a change for us all. During break at school we could mix with the villagers.
15. I was a mess by then and I still wet the bed. I was shy and nervous and my stutter was worse. I had to go to a special school for a year and for once I was top of the class. I felt I had achieved something.
16. After that I was sent to Ross High where I was back at the bottom again. I had to be taught at my own pace. Mr [REDACTED] did try to help me.

Fostering

17. Strangers took me to Edinburgh to stay with them. It was distressing. I had never been by myself or had a bedroom to myself. After a while I was sent back to the home.
18. By the time I returned the one staff member who had been nice to me had left and my friend [REDACTED] had gone to Australia. There was just [REDACTED] left as my close friend.

Abuse at Tyneholme House

19. Mrs [REDACTED] BEC threatened to send me away with no clothes on. I saw that happen. She also threatened us that we would have to 'see sir'.
20. When I returned to the home from primary school Mr [REDACTED] BEB would be at the back door. If I had dirt on my clothes, he would slap me across the face, or he would pass close by me and grind his knuckles on my head.

21. Mr **BEB** would sit on the landing sometimes. If we were talking in the dormitory, he would come in in a rage. We would get under the covers and he would start beating us with the cane. We would also be sent downstairs to the passage where we would have to stand in our pyjamas, freezing cold, and wait for him to finish his supper. When he had finished he would cane our hands.
22. Two of the older boys had sex with me. One was very forceful, the other was friendly. It didn't really bother me. Right or wrong didn't come into it.
23. One evening I was lying on the floor in the big boys' playroom in deep distress. There was no other boy there. I remember a black figure standing over me, thrashing me with a long, wide belt. The image comes and goes, but I recall the figure moved close and opened his trousers while I was crying and I had to hold his penis. He then grabbed my head and thrust his penis into me while I was trying to get away from it.
24. I also have another memory of kneeling on the floor in his bedroom, which was next to my dormitory, masturbating him.
25. I know there is more, but I don't want to go back. I have a black hole in my memory that I can't and don't want to enter.

Leaving Tyneholme House

26. I left Tyneholme House at fifteen. It was a terrible day. I went to stay with people I didn't know and was made to do a job I did not want.

Impact

27. I stuttered and was so nervous and shy that I couldn't even buy sweets. I couldn't spell. I was completely institutionalised. I think the damage was done in Mr and Mrs **BEB/BEC** day.

Other information

- 28. When I was older I paid money for sex. I was so naïve that I didn't know about girls. I had lived with boys all my life and had never mixed with girls. I suppose I did get a comfort from it that I had never had anywhere else.
- 29. Many years later my friend [REDACTED] and I found our friend [BKW] in Australia. He told us Mr [BEB] had sexually abused him as well.
- 30. 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.

[REDACTED] BLB

Signed.. [REDACTED]

Dated..... 20 / 11 / 2018.