Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

ESV [redacted]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is ESV [redacted]. My date of birth is [redacted] 1972. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Rotten Row Hospital, Glasgow. I thought I was a happy lad as I grew up and would get into the usual trouble that any other young child would.

3. I was initially raised in the Easterhouse area of Glasgow. My father was named [redacted] and my mother was [redacted]. I have four siblings, the oldest being [redacted], then [redacted], [redacted] and [redacted] being the youngest.

4. After my dad died, there was a time mum had us staying at my gran's. Mum would then go out and she met [redacted], who was just out after having served a term in prison. [redacted] went on to become my stepfather. I would have been about six years old then.

5. I was abused by my stepfather, [redacted], with physical violence but never any sexual abuse. I received a broken leg had black eyes. When I was about four he tried to drown me in the bath. I began wetting the bed because of the fear I felt living with him. He was threatening me that he would get me up during the night, saying make sure you don't pee the bed.

6. During this period if there was any time mum was going out I would make as much a nuisance as I could to try and make her stay in the house, but it never worked.

7. Anne Marie was the woman who was the social worker for our family. She dealt with me from when I was about four years old right up until I was about twenty-one. She would check out on me when I was at the different homes to see how I was getting on. Even when I was supposed to be finished with the social work she helped me get a house and organise my benefits when I was about twenty-one. Anne Marie was always there to help me. I just had to phone and she would be at the home the next day.

8. The first time I was placed into care it was for some respite for my mother just after my dad died. That was when I was sent to Dunclutha in Dunoon, which was supposed to be just for a few weeks. It was me, [redacted] and [redacted] who went to Dunclutha. [redacted] was just a wee baby and stayed with mum. I was about four or five when we went there for the first time. Some of memories for this time and at Inver House might be mixed up a little, just with the passage of time.

Dunclutha Children's Home, Dunoon

9. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

10. [redacted]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

21. [redacted]

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23. [redacted]

Leaving Dunclutha Children's Home, Dunoon

24. When the respite period was supposed to be finished my siblings were all taken home, but my mum left me to stay a bit longer in Dunclutha. I think the reason was that my stepfather had been released from prison and she was concerned I might be the subject of his abuse.

25. At the end of my time in Dunclutha my mother came to take me home. She told me that my stepfather [redacted] had just got out of prison and wanted me back home.

26. Things were not good at the house and again the social work were involved and I was once more placed into care. I was then sent to Inver House Children's Home, Glasgow.

Inver House Children's Home, Glasgow

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Inver House Children's Home, Glasgow

35. I am not sure of how my time at Inver House came to an end but I was back with mum at the house.

36. There was a day when my brother made a comment about a disabled woman and was calling the boy a spastic. My stepfather, who was drunk at the time, was looking out the window and saw me. He thought that it was me that made the comment and I tried to tell him it was not me. He then threw his dinner plate towards me, missing me and smashing against the wall. One of the pieces of plate broke off and hit my mum and cut her face. I ran and tried to hide under the bed. He then grabbed my mum by the hair and dragged her up the hallway.

37. He found me and got hold of me. He used a sponge and soap and washed my mouth out telling me stop lying. He was wearing his work boots at that time and as I lay on the ground he stamped on me and broke my leg. My sister managed to get out of the house and went to the police station. The police arrived at the house and asked my mum if she wanted to press charges. She said no and asked them to get a taxi. Then we went to stay with my dad's sister for about a week in Carntyne.

38. My step father would shout at my mum saying she was having sex with me, her son, which was absolute nonsense.

39. Again the social work were involved and I was once more placed into care. This time I was sent Gryffe Children's Home in Bridge of Weir.

Gryffe Children's Home, Bridge of Weir

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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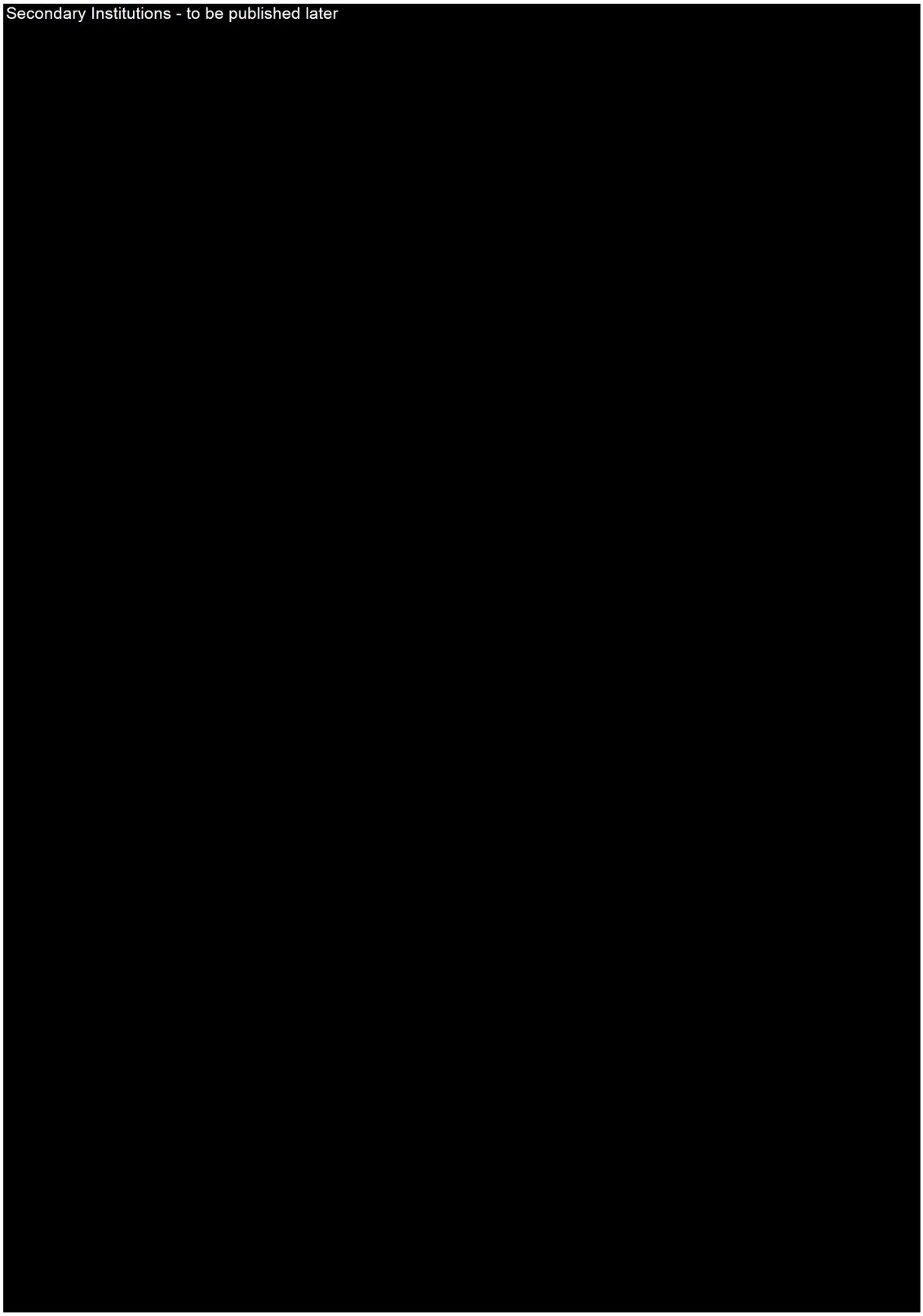

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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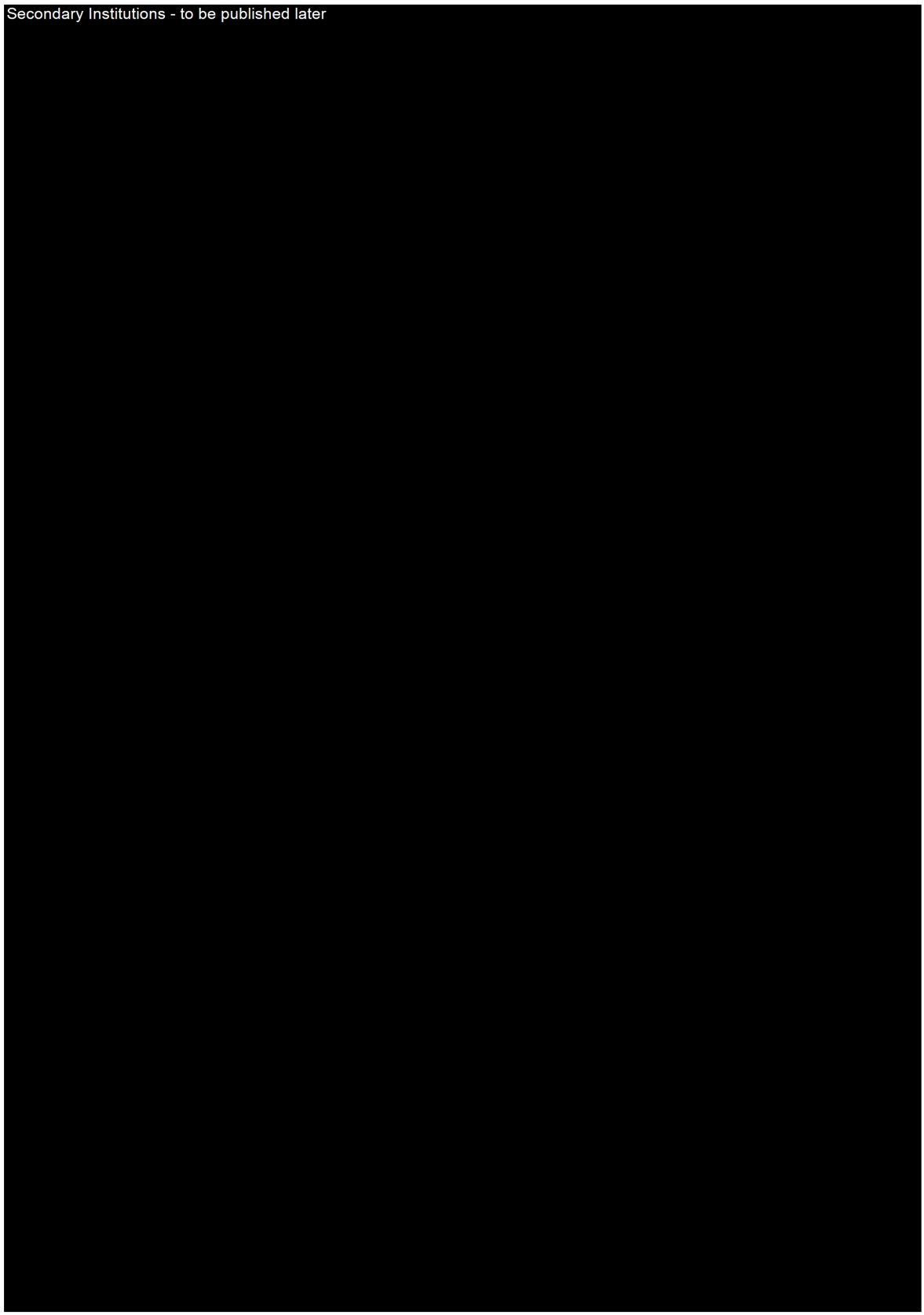

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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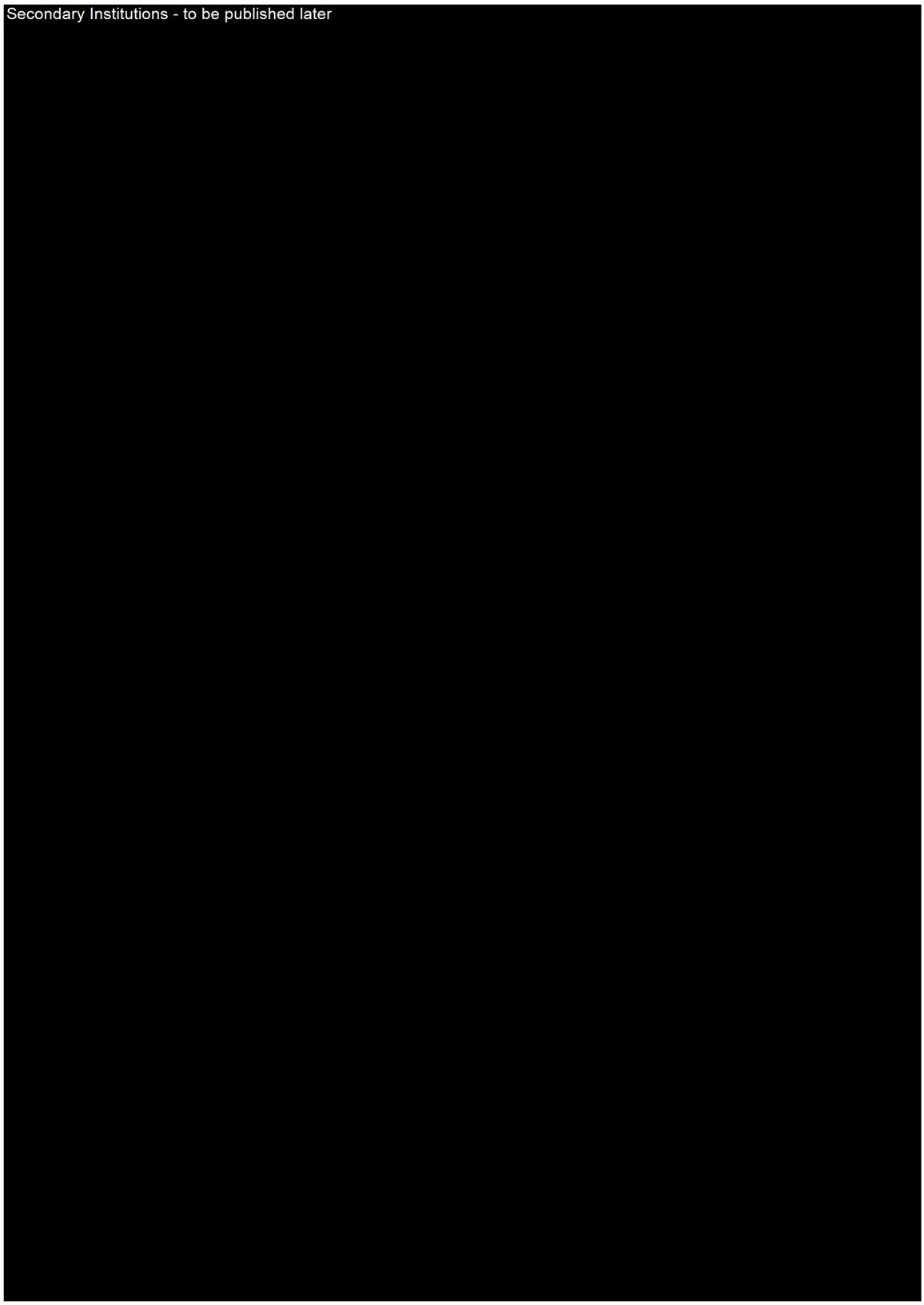

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Larchgrove Assessment Centre, Glasgow

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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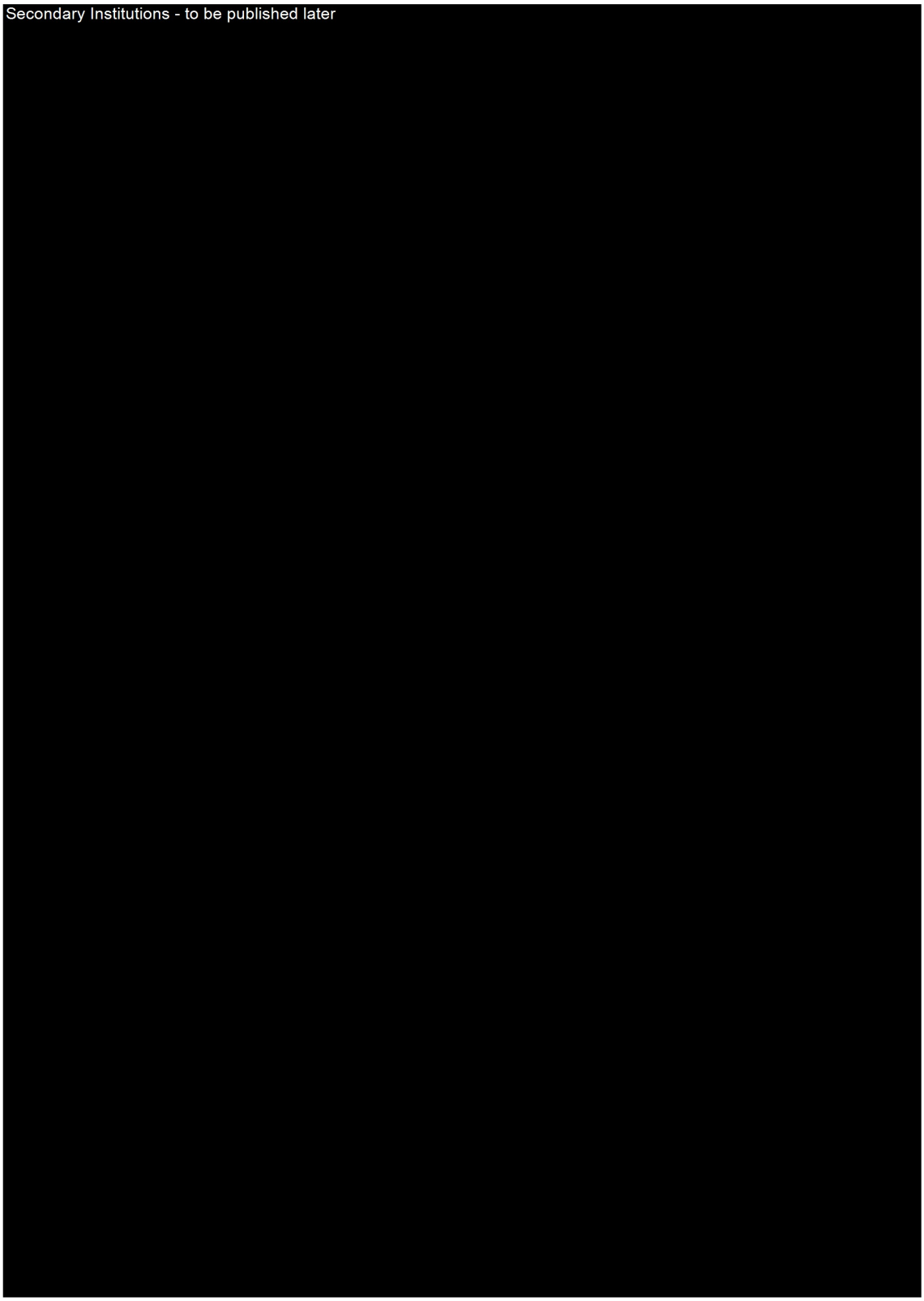

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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109. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Larchgrove Assessment Centre, Glasgow

112. After the assessment period I was back at the Panel and my mother was also there. Near the end of the hearing I was asked to step outside as they wanted to have a discussion with my mother. After about fifteen to twenty minutes I was back in and that was when it must have been finalised that she was signing all parental controls to the social work. As I had already been attending the school within Quarrier's they decided that South Annan would be the ideal placement for me.

113. From the letter I have, after appearing at the Panel from South Annan I must have left Larchgrove on [redacted] 1983.

South Annan Children's Home (Quarrier's)

114. I have recently received a letter from one of the Safeguarders at Quarrier's and they have confirmed that I was in attendance there from [redacted] 1983 until [redacted] 1986.

115. I can remember one the staff who was [redacted] at South Annan was a man called [redacted] PBQ with the surname either [redacted] PBQ, I am not sure. I was told his name by staff at Quarrier's later in my life. [redacted] PBQ lived with his wife in a house outside the grounds. [redacted] PBQ and his wife had two daughters.

116. [redacted] George, his surname was Campbell, and he was my key worker. If I needed any clothes or anything he would get the grant for me.

117. There was the minibus driver who would take us to the swimming pool. He was only there for a short time before he was taken on as a full time member of care staff.

Routine at South Annan Children's Home (Quarrier's)

118. At South Annan it was a mix of both boys and girls. They were all aged between five or six right up to about seventeen or eighteen. Most of the kids there, were in the home because they had been abused. There were not many who were referred there after being caught up in the criminal system.

119. I remember that when I was getting shown round by one of the older boys, on the first day, that when the others were playing pool some of them were using broom handles. I later found out that most of the cues had been broken.

Mealtimes/Food

120. When it came to mealtimes you had to be in the front of the queue for dishing up the food. The older boys were usually at the front and would take as much as they wanted. That meant the further down the queue you were, then there was a lot less available.

121. I can remember the chef was called Tom and I think he suffered from Parkinson's or similar as he always had the shakes. I think his wife helped him out. We were given

menus three weeks in advance and we would select from the three choices for each meal.

Washing/bathing

122. South Annan had baths and there might have been a separate area where there were two or three showers. We would have our bath about 7:00 pm or 8:00 pm and that would be maybe twice during the week and on a Sunday night. There was plenty of privacy given when you were having your bath.

Clothing/uniform

123. The clothes I was given were all supplied by the home, but they were not new clothes. All the clothes were usually stored in a cupboard.

School

124. At South Annan there were two porta cabins joined together. One class was for reading and writing. The other side was for woodwork and the other metal work. In the woodwork I made a rocking horse which I gave it to the local charity shop.

Healthcare

125. I did have to go hospital when I was at South Annan. I was playing kick the can in the grounds. I climbed up onto the wall, which was about twelve feet tall and was then supposed to grab the branch of a tree to help me get down. I was distracted, missed the tree and fell from the wall. I ended by breaking my arm and was taken to Greenock Hospital where I needed an operation to get plates put in to strengthen my arm.

126. There were times when I was at South Annan when I was sent to the hospital at the top of the hill. I was taking some funny turns and at the hospital they put all the different

leads onto my head testing to see if I had Epilepsy. It was PBQ, staff member that took me up to the hospital.

Leisure

127. There were times when PBQ was taking me out and I think he was using that time to groom me. He would ask me to accompany him when he was taking some files or records to the Quarrier's offices. He also took me to Largs where he would buy me ice cream at Nardini's.

128. There were other times we were taken to the sea shore where we would hang around the old piers. When we were on the piers we would jump into the sea. Sometimes if we were at Largs we would have some long walks by the golf courses there.

Visits/Inspections

129. Anne Marie would come to see me when I was at South Annan. She would sit and talk to me and checking if I was doing okay. She would know from having read the daily sheets if I had been anything wrong. She might even have given me a row. I might have argued back but it was never anything serious.

Family contact

130. My mum must have come to see me when I was at South Annan because I can remember young [redacted], one of the residents, saying he liked her and wished he could stay with her.

Trips and holidays

131. Whenever normal schools were having their summer or other holidays then we would have the same. Although we did not go home we were taken out on different occasions.

132. I can recall being taken to Butlin's in Ayr for a holiday. We also visited Rothesay where they would rent the home we stayed in for the week. The house was built similar to the stanedyke walls you see on farms. There was no electricity or gas or anything. I can remember when we went there we would light a camp fire and sing songs at night.

Running away

133. We were that scared that we were going to be abused at night that as soon as the staff had finished their checks at night we would try to run away. We never got very far and were soon back to at the home.

Discipline

134. Some of the times when the staff deemed we were doing things wrong it ended up in arguments between me and the particular staff member at the time. That argument would end up with them restraining me.

135. When we were being restrained, Secondary Institutions - to be published later you would have members of staff sitting on top of you and possibly one other holding on to your legs. Sometimes you would be getting slapped in the face and on other times you would be pushing their knuckles into your chest. They sat on you until you had calmed down, which might take about an hour depending how upset I was.

Bed Wetting

136. There was a time I was suffering from bed wetting at South Annan. There were no issues as far as the staff were concerned. They helped me get cleaned up and arrange for my sheets to be changed. They would try to get us to go to the toilets at night before we went to bed. I was issued with a rubber sheet, but that made me feel more pressure as you were always aware of it. During my time at South Annan it did gradually get better until it eventually stopped.

Discipline

137. Discipline in the home was mainly around being sent to your room. But when they took some of the boys to their room, the boys would just say they were not staying there and go back to what they were doing.

Abuse at South Annan Children's Home (Quarrier's)

138. One of the older boys, I don't know his name, would come and tell me to go to his room. He made me get into bed with him and try to have sex with me. Sometimes staff would be doing a walk around and check the rooms. There were times they saw me in his bed with my pants down and he was the same. They just told me to go back to my own room. They never asked why, being a younger boy, I was in the older boy's bed. I don't know the names of those staff.

139. There was one day when we had been taken to the pictures one afternoon. When we were being transported back to the home in the minibus I was playing up a little with some of the other boys. The driver kept saying he could not see out the rear windows properly because we were mucking about. I told him we were only having a little bit of fun. I called him a name. He stopped the bus and dragged me by hair and put me off the bus. This was witnessed by some of the other members of staff and he was sacked. I can't remember his name. I don't think they could have carried out the proper checks on him. He had no experience looking after kids other than driving a minibus.

140. There were times when some staff members were taking me to my room upstairs to calm down. Sometimes they would drag me to the room by pulling me by the hair.

141. PBQ, either PBQ or PBQ, would come home from the pub at night and he would give me dry roasted peanuts and maybe a bottle of juice. One time he came home he got me stand on the bed and gave me a cuddle. I was told by him not to tell anyone he was giving me those presents.

142. There was another occasion PBQ had me sit on his lap. When he did this I could feel that he had an erection. I wasn't the only one who was made to sit on his knee, it happened to many other boys.

143. One time I was suffering from a rash on my scrotum. I told PBQ and he asked to have a look. I thought he was going to help me. Instead of having a nurse check me out he was asking me to lift my penis out of the way and he did the checks. He would not let me do it. He did all the touching during that examination and it was done in a room where there was no one else about.

144. It was common knowledge that PBQ was always having me alone. The other kids would be saying they knew he was abusing me. If it was common knowledge among all the kids, the staff must have known something was going on.

145. There was a young boy at South Annan, I think his name was [redacted] who was about five years old. There were a husband and wife who both worked at South Annan, who had a son who stayed with them. They lived outside the home. I was told there were times that [redacted] was taken to their house and he was subjected to abuse by the parents and their son. He was not the only kid taken there, as some others were similarly being abused. I am not sure whether it was just physical or whether there were sexual assaults involved.

146. There were times when the older boys were picking on [redacted]. There used to feed goats nearby and they thought it would be funny if they could make him eat their poo, which was shaped like raisins.

147. Sometimes I would try to stick up for a younger boy who might be getting bullied or abused. I had to stop it as the day after I would have stood up for someone they were being friends with the people who was bullying them.

Reporting abuse at South Annan Children's Home (Quarrier's)

148. The only person I told about some of the abuse by the older boys was with PBQ. I soon found out that was the wrong person to be telling anything to.

Leaving South Annan Children's Home (Quarrier's)

149. When I was coming to the end of my time in South Annan the social work decided that it might be better for me to be placed into a foster family environment. That was when I was moved to the [redacted] family in Bo'Ness.

150. I came back to South Annan one day and my case was all packed with clothes all neatly folded inside. I was told by the staff that it was time for me to go to the [redacted].

Foster care – Mr and Mrs [redacted], Bo'Ness

151. I can remember that the [redacted]'s came to see me at South Annan. Mr [redacted] drove a Skoda. His name was [redacted], the mother was [redacted] and they had two children [redacted] and [redacted]. [redacted] was an electrician to trade.

152. The first time the whole family came to see me they took me out for the day and we went to Largs for something to eat. On the first visit Anne Marie was with us for my support. The next time I saw them I was taken to their home for the day. I can remember when I was there that I played pool with [redacted] in his room. I remember staying for a meal and then went back to the home. There were another couple of similar day visits until we were all happy with the arrangements being made.

153. The [redacted] house was a very large bought house. There were four bedrooms in the house and I was given my own room. There were two toilets in the house, the second one having been built by Mr [redacted].

154. I stayed with them for about eighteen months, until I was about fifteen years old. Mrs [redacted] wanted to have more children but Mr [redacted] suffered from diabetes and did not want to pass this on to any children. This was one of the main reasons I was fostered by them.

155. The [redacted] had a daughter [redacted] and she would have been about twenty-two years old when I was there. They also had a son [redacted]. [redacted] always got more leeway than me. There were lots of times at the house that he would bully me.

156. The [redacted] would buy me new brogue shoes each year and they were to be worn when I was going to school. I would hide my trainers in the bushes and would swap them over before I went to school.

157. When I stayed with the [redacted] I went to the local school. I was enrolled with the local secondary Bo'Ness Academy. I found this really difficult as I had never been in a school for any length of time. Suddenly I am wearing a uniform and told I am going to the school.

158. I was still having problems with my arithmetic. They helped me by buying me a calculator. But if I used it without telling them it was obvious from the long division sums that I had used it. If the father caught me he would give me another sum to do by hand.

159. I was having difficulty adapting to the school authority and telling me what I should be doing.

160. Anne Marie visited when I stayed here. She was just checking to see that I was still happy and that the family were still happy with me being there.

161. I did have phone contact with my mum while I stayed at the [redacted] Mum would keep telling me that I was going to be able to visit her but it never happened.

162. There were times when I would get a slap in the face from the son [redacted]. He would also punch me in the face and pull at my hair. He would sit on top of me and slap me. I told him I did not want to fight but he said he was doing this to toughen me up. I knew in myself that there other ways to protect myself and I always preferred to talk my way out of trouble.

Leaving Foster care – Mr and Mrs [redacted], Bo'Ness

163. I was a handful for the [redacted] as I had no experience dealing with a family environment. Mr [redacted] was quite ill and when I started getting into trouble at school he was getting more stressed and his health worsened.

164. One night I was in the hallway and I was aware the family were having a conversation in the living room. I could hear some of that conversation and they were having a vote about whether they should continue to foster me or to let me go back to the social work. I was really upset by this. I felt I was once more let down by adults. I told them I had overheard what they were talking about. I told them they were cowards and not telling me about any issues to my face. I then got them to telephone Anne Marie, my social worker, and the next morning she came and got me out of the house.

Foster care – Mr and Mrs [redacted] Kirkcaldy

165. I was moved from the [redacted] family to the [redacted] family in Kirkcaldy. I stayed with them for nearly a year. When I stayed with them there was another kid being fostered by them. Later in life and with what happened there I came to the conclusion they were only doing the fostering for the money and not to care for anyone.

166. After what happened with the [redacted] I did not let the PBR-SPO get too close to me. The father was a long distance lorry driver and looked in his sixties. Hs wife was of a similar age.

Routine at Foster care – Mr and Mrs PBR-SPO, Kirkcaldy

167. Mr PBR was an aggressive man. When he came in from his work and after he finished his dinner he would not allow us to be in the living room.

168. He was not a very patient man. When I would sit and talk about what I had done that day he would tell me I had already spoken about it.

169. Apart from the clothes I had when I arrived, the PBR-SPO never provided me with any by themselves. They would tell Anne Marie or the other social workers that I was needing some new clothes or shoes. Only when money arrived in for it would I be taken out for whatever I needed. The problem was not all the money was spent on me, some of the money was used to buy their son, ETD new clothes. I think he was about twenty-one or twenty-two at the time.

170. In the evening after our evening meal we were not allowed to sit with the parents in the living room to watch TV with them. That was their time. We had a small black and white portable television in our room which we watched. Even their own kids were not allowed in the living room.

171. During any period when we had some leisure time the PBR-SPO they did not like us watching the television in our room and would have us involved in various activities. This would sometimes involve gymnastics and swimming or out on the bikes. They always wanted us to be active. I would also go to the ice skating to watch the Fife Flyers Ice Hockey Team. [redacted]

172. Sometimes I would take the dog for a walk and I would meet Mr PBR when he was driving his lorry. I wasn't allowed to go to his actual depot but he would take me

in his lorry for a short journey. I can remember going over the Erskine Bridge and being bought ice cream.

173. When I had pocket money I would go to the local shops and buy myself some ice cream.

174. When I was with this family I got a job in a mushroom factory at the weekend to give me some extra money. It was when I was riding my bike home to my foster family and when I got back I saw the former minibus driver, from South Annan, working in his garden. He started to talk to me and he seemed to have forgotten all the bad things he did. I was good at football and he said he wanted me to play for the football team. I told him he had to check with my foster parents. They met him and agreed for me to play in the football team.

175. When I stayed with the PBR-SPO I did get enrolled at Viewforth High School and did try to go a lot more regularly.

Abuse at Foster care – Mr and Mrs PBR-SPO, Kirkcaldy

176. One day I had an argument with the football coach, the former minibus driver, and slammed the door. He went to my foster house and told Mr PBR that I was the reason he got sacked from the school. He made it out to them that he had done nothing wrong and that it was all my fault he was sacked. I could hear what he was saying that I had alleged the incident about the dragging by the hair. I went into the living room and told them that it was the staff that saw what he did to me and it was them that sacked him. They were taking his side and there was an argument and Mr PBR started slapping me. His son, ETD joined in and he also started hitting me.

177. Mr PBR was a very angry man. I am not sure if it was because he was older or whether he was like that before I arrived.

Leaving Foster care – Mr and Mrs [redacted], Kirkcaldy

178. After what happened with Mr [redacted] and his son I phoned Anne Marie and she came to the house about an hour later.

Dunclutha Children's Home, Dunoon

179. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

183. [redacted]

184. [redacted]

185. [redacted]

186. [redacted]

187. [redacted]

188. [redacted]

Leaving Dunclutha Children's Home, Dunoon

189. When I left Dunclutha this time I got myself into trouble with the police and ended up being sent to prison.

HMP Longriggend, Airdrie and HMP Polmont

190. For the trouble I was in I was sentenced to six months in prison. I spent the first two and a half months on remand within Longriggend and was then moved to Polmont to complete the rest of my sentence.

Routine at HMP Longriggend, Airdrie and HMP Polmont

191. I found I could settle into the life within the prison system is that they are very regimented and had strict routines. I was used to that as I was institutionalised from a young age from all the different homes I stayed in.

192. There were no issues with any abuse while I was in prison. It was not easy and a very regimental environment. Again other than being a strict regime there I did not suffer anything that I considered to be abuse.

Life after being in care

193. When I left the prison system I initially moved in with my aunt in Easterhouse. Anne Marie then helped me get my own flat. She also arranged for me to apply for some grants for furniture and some clothes. When I was settled Anne Marie became less and less involved as my social worker. For a short period there some renovations needing to be done to the flat. My landlord put me up in a hotel in Millport while the work was carried out. She said just to use the money I was supposed to pay her. She

even gave me ten pounds and checked if that was enough for food. No one had ever done something nice for me like that before.

194. I have a surgical scar over the top of my skull but I can't remember why I needed that operation. This must have happened during my time in care.

195. Secondary Institutions - to be published later [redacted]

196. I have also visited South Annan Children's Home with my daughter and my brother to see what the place was like now. I met a woman who was staying there now and got talking to her. I was explaining to her what the place was like when I stayed there as a child.

197. I did have thoughts about wanting to visit the [redacted] in Bo'Ness as an adult. I went to Bo'Ness but did not go to their door. I could remember them very clearly but I was too afraid they would not remember me.

198. As an adult I learned that the ETD [redacted], the son of the family I stayed with in Kirkcaldy, was convicted along with his friend of sexually abusing two boys within the family home.

199. When I was referred for a Drug Treatment Order I found that to be a safe place. I have now spoken with Sarah and Anne from there and we built a good relationship where I was relaxed enough to be able to tell them some of my experiences as a child. They made me feel safe to tell them and I know that has helped me get over my issues with drugs.

200. I am currently taking antidepressants to control my depression. I am also prescribed Pregabalin for nerve damage. I am also on a drug rehabilitation programme. I think I used drugs as a result of my time in care and they helped me forget some of the bad memories of that time.

201. In 1991 I was in a relationship and my first daughter was born in 1995. I later had another daughter in a separate relationship. I now have two lovely grandchildren that I see quite often.

Impact

202. When I was released from my first prison sentence I felt strange being in the outside world as I had never been shown what I should be doing there. Having gone there very soon after leaving care. I was always being looked after by someone whether it was staff in the care homes or by the staff in the prison system. Having been released from prison I had no one to show me what to do.

203. I was last sentenced to prison in 2003 and released in 2006. I am trying with help, to keep myself away from the wrong environment to make sure I don't end up back there. I am not sure in myself that my time in prison is linked to my time in care and would not like to blame my time in care for being in jail.

204. I think I was institutionalised from a very young age, not just from the prison system. During all my time in care I had someone look after me and helped me with the cleaning and cooking etc. This was the same when I got into trouble and ended up in jail. I was never taught how to look after myself, especially as an adult.

205. I think that the lack of education being provided at most of the homes I stayed in resulted me in having issues with reading and writing throughout my adult life. I am able to read and write but it was never part of any formal curriculum during my time in care and I was never asked to sit any exams.

Reporting of Abuse

206. I have been in contact with the police. They wanted to speak to me about abuse in South Annan. They told me that my name kept coming up with their other enquiries with other people who were in the same places as me. This was in 2021 when they came to my house and I have given them a statement. I am not aware of the current progress of their investigations.

Records

207. The staff at South Annan like many of the other places I stayed in kept daily logs for each child. But it would appear that when I was applying for social work records all the punishment books have been lost. The normal routine for those placements was that the staff would have meetings and discussions carried out about each child in the respective home. They would record the movements of the children when they were coming in and out of the homes and anything they kids were involved in during the day.

208. I am also looking for help to see if I can get my social work records. I need them to help confirm the dates I was in the various homes throughout my childhood.

Lessons to be learned

209. I think there should always be someone independent for children in care to be able to speak to about anything. They need to be trained to relate to the kids, so the kids can feel free to tell what bad things are happening to them.

210. I know from my time in the different homes that there are people, like Anne Marie, who are not in that job just to get a wage, they are in it because they care.

211. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be pu If the staff were better trained and they maybe sat me down to talk and try to find out what was wrong, I would not have been so angry and would

have been in a position to build up trust between us. They could also perhaps stand away from me and make themselves available to me when things calmed down and I would be able to tell them what was setting me off.

212. I was never taught anything to help show me what life would be like away from the care system. One of the few times I was ever shown anything was if I visited at the house of the football coach and his wife might have taught me how to make spaghetti.

Other information

213. I am hoping when I get started with Future Pathways that I might be able to get additional counselling on top of what Sarah from the Drug Treatment Team are doing.

214. I am hoping that by coming to the Inquiry that people can learn from my experiences and the abuse that happened. Hopefully it will stop someone from being abused at the hands of a carer.

215. 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……..

Dated…….