

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

BCS

Support person present: No

1. My name is BCS. My date of birth is 1953. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in Dunfermline maternity hospital. My mother was white and my father was a black service man from the United States, who was stationed in Scotland at the time. My understanding is that my mother thought it was going to be a longer term relationship than my father did. My father had no option but to return to the United States.
3. My mother had two previous children, who were white, to two different fathers. They were farmed out to various aunts and uncles and kept within the family. She was somebody who didn't think too much about the long term consequences. She was seen as flighty and a bit irresponsible by the extended family. When she took up with a black man and produced a black baby, the extended family were horrified. She had already had two previous "miscalculations", but that was okay. Those children wouldn't stick out because they were white. They couldn't farm me out.
4. My mother had no option. She was told that this was a step too far and that this black boy was too much of an embarrassment. People would look not only at the mother but at her parents. It was too much for them to handle. Pressure was put onto my mother. She had to get rid of this sore and the sore was me.

5. I was admitted into the care system very shortly after my birth, at the age of three months. I'm not sure whether I was still in the maternity hospital or in the home of my maternal grandparents, who lived in Dunfermline at that time. I remained in care until after the age of twenty one.
6. I was in loco parentis of the Corporation of Edinburgh. They were the local authority that placed me in various care settings. Edinburgh Corporation was a continuing "presence" throughout the 21 years. Periodically, they appeared and disappeared. They had oversight of my care experience from day one. In law, the local authority was my statutory parent rather than Aberlour or my foster parents.
7. I spent fifteen months in a residential nursery in Edinburgh, St. Katherine's. I was taken there as an adult by Ann Black, who helped me to recover my Aberlour records. I have no recollection of being there. My mother was living locally at that time in Pilton. Her continuing contact with me was negligible and that was how it remained for thirty years.
8. It took fifteen months for a three month old child to be placed in a residential setting at Aberlour. It was very early on in the 1950s. Fostering was still not fashionable, although there was some thinking about foster parents. Now that I know the history of that time and have seen my records from Aberlour, I realise that I was an anomaly. Not only was I a child who had been abandoned at the age of three months, my particular status was that I was a black anomaly. Trying to find placements for black babies in the fifties was enormously difficult. Part of the corporation's difficulty was finding a residential establishment that would accept a black child.
9. Aberlour Orphanage, to its credit, accepted me, knowing they were receiving a black child. In the initial record of Aberlour Orphanage, there is sheet of A4 paper with a little outline of your past and your parents. Significantly, right at the top and after my name are the words, "coloured boy". It was highlighted because it was an issue. That was why it was so difficult and I had to wait fifteen months.

**Aberlour Orphanage, Aberlour, Speyside**

10. I went to Aberlour in 1955 when I was about eighteen months old. My records from Aberlour and the care authority, Edinburgh Corporation, indicate that the corporation was in control of major decisions in relation to what was going to happen to me. They decided to place me in Aberlour. Aberlour was seen as a long term residential placement. Children were not expected to leave until they reached the age of majority, which was fifteen at that time. The expectation was that I was going to be there until I reached the age of fifteen, get myself into some sort of employment and that would be it.
11. There's no doubt that Edinburgh Corporation were in charge of me and not Aberlour. Edinburgh Corporation were seen by Aberlour Orphanage as having full control. Not only did they pay the fees to Aberlour, they also determined what would happen to me. They called the shots in terms of placing me there and removing me from there. According to my records, they removed me against the advice of Aberlour Orphanage at the age of eleven.
12. The orphanage wasn't a huge building, but it consisted of a number of large houses interconnected by virtual tunnels. You could walk from one house to the other. These big houses were built around a sort of village green. It was a complex of about fifty to sixty acres, including the farm land. The houses were divided depending on age and gender. The girls had their own separate, large houses. The boys had their own, separate, individual large houses. In the centre was the school. Within this, boys and girls graduated into various large houses depending on age.
13. The children in Spey House were all long term during my time there. If I'd stayed at Aberlour, I'd probably have moved to Gordon or Jupp house a year or so later at the age of twelve. They were houses for older boys. I would have stayed there till the age of fifteen. If you were seen to be academically gifted, like a boy called <sup>AJQ</sup> [REDACTED] you could be entered into the grammar school. You would then be allowed to stay in the orphanage until you were seventeen.

*Wardens at Aberlour*

14. Individual staff members at Aberlour Orphanage weren't there for a short time, they were there for life. Dean Wolfe was there for thirty years. People stayed there for long periods of time. They got to know the children. The children also stayed there for long periods of time. Once you got there, you weren't eligible for leaving. You never left until you reached the age of majority, unless the corporation chose to move you. They chose not to in most instances.
15. Dean Wolfe was the warden until 1958, when he was succeeded by Reverend Leslie. The expectation had been that [REDACTED] BCK [REDACTED] would succeed him. A decision was made that Aberlour was going to close before Dean Wolfe retired. He wouldn't go along with such a proposal. The expectation amongst the staff was that [REDACTED] BCK [REDACTED] would [REDACTED], but [REDACTED] BCK [REDACTED] would not participate in the closure of the orphanage. The governing board was not going to appoint someone who would go against what they had already privately decided. I know from talking to individuals who were involved at the time that there was considerable disappointment that [REDACTED] BCK [REDACTED] did not get the job.
16. [REDACTED] BCK [REDACTED] was the [REDACTED]. He was an assistant [REDACTED]. When Dean Wolfe was touring around, raising funds, [REDACTED] BCK [REDACTED] sat in his office and did the basic things the Dean would do had he been there. I had no dealings with [REDACTED] BCK [REDACTED]. He had been a boy at Aberlour, mixing with kids, playing with them and going to school with them until he was sent off elsewhere. He was well known amongst his peers at the orphanage as just being one of the boys. I was too young to be one of his peers.
17. I understand that Aberlour has given information to the Inquiry about their records. In those records, there is a report from a female member of staff complaining that [REDACTED] BCK [REDACTED] had used excessive force when administering punishment. This complaint was investigated and substantiated. The child had extensive bruising. According to those records, [REDACTED] BCK [REDACTED] received a severe reprimand. A decision was taken not to dismiss him, but to encourage him to pursue parochial work rather than childcare. The



matter was not reported to the police and BCK [REDACTED] resigned in [REDACTED] 1959. That information was not previously known to me and I have been given a different take on his departure by members of the board.

18. Reverend Leslie was a completely different kettle of fish to Dean Wolfe. Reverend Leslie was appointed primarily to close the orphanage. There was no prospect of any closure with Dean Wolfe. He was absolutely wedded to the continuation of the orphanage and its mission, which was the transformation of individual lives for the better, as they saw it. That was based on the mission statement compiled by the founder of Aberlour Orphanage, Canon Charles Jupp, who lived between 1875 and 1911. The mission statement was: "Every child has the ability and indeed the right to grow up and flourish in society, notwithstanding the origins of their birth."<sup>1</sup>
19. Dean Wolfe knew the children and was very involved with them. There were hundreds of children and his memory of them and contact with them was formidable. This is on record. If you look at the narratives [REDACTED] of the care staff and those who were connected with the orphanage, such as the doctors and individual suppliers, they have all said that his memory was simply formidable. He was adored not only by the staff but by the children. He knew all the children and the children knew not only him but also his dogs. He always had his dogs with him and sweets in his pockets. The children used to run up to him like he was the pied piper. He was a constant presence. He walked around the houses.
20. Reverend Leslie had no such interaction with the children. He was completely devoid of social niceties. He was a formidable, hard backed reverend and he saw himself in that light.
21. Dean Wolfe was very child centred. His life revolved around the children of Aberlour Orphanage and around continuing the orphanage. Reverend Leslie's contact with the children was minimal. His priorities were manifestly different to Dean Wolfe's. Reverend Leslie priority was that he was there to do a job, the orphanage was too big,

there were too many children, it needed to close and close it would. That was his mission and that was what he did.

*Staff at Aberlour*

22. The head teacher of the nursery was Miss Heap. She's still alive. She was in total control, along with the nursery nurses. Miss Heap and her assistants were totally dedicated. They saw the children as their own. It was their life's work. The nurses stayed there for years. There wasn't a high turnover. It was an enjoyable place with largely young staff.
23. Miss Heap wasn't much older than the nursery nurses themselves. She had a team of individuals who enjoyed working with each other and with the children. Miss Heap explained how she was recruited. She made the point that a lot of the nursery nurses were very young and said:

[REDACTED]

There was no structured form of training that all the nurses went through when they joined. Part of that would be down to the funding of the orphanage. Staff were being guided by those more senior, in the way the senior member felt it was appropriate for staff to conduct themselves. Similarly, BCK [REDACTED] could not remember any written guidelines for staff working at the orphanage.<sup>3</sup> There were no systems for training or written guidance or instructions for staff.

24. I moved to one of the boys' houses, known as Spey House, when I was six or seven. Aunty AJF [REDACTED] was in charge there. That was what we called her. There was a certain accepted way of addressing staff. It was not a choice. If it was a male member of staff, he would be uncle. That was it, there were no first names. The staff would call us by

our individual first names. Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> was a constant throughout my time at Spey House.

25. Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> ruled Spey House. Nobody could tell her what to do in terms of what happened in her house. There would be discussions with other staff and Dean Wolfe would be a regular visitor, but other staff members wouldn't come in and tell her how to run her house. Essentially, the houses were autonomous. Any consistency between the houses was through discussion between staff members.
26. Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> was our main carer. She was the person we all related to. In the morning, when we got up to do our teeth, Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> would be there. When we went to bed at night, Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> would be there. She was an absolute constant in our lives. It seemed as if she was never away. She had periodic assistance from individuals, one of whom was a house father who was there for a while. I don't remember his name because he didn't register with me. He obviously wasn't a major influence in my life. Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> was. She also had other assistants who came in now and again to help out with dinners or whatever. I can't remember any of their names.
27. The interviewing of staff could be quite short. A lot of the individuals who came in as house parents were ex-service men. Aberlour took from that background some feeling that it had an upright citizen coming in, wanting to do his best for the children. Bear in mind the leaving age at the orphanage pre-war was fourteen and post second world war was fifteen. These children, once they reached the age of majority, had to be reasonably alert, compos mentis, able to read and write. They had to have certain skills in order to be employable.
28. Part of the mission of Aberlour wasn't just to care for the children during their time at the orphanage, it was actually to set them up in work immediately after they'd left. They set up half way houses in between the orphanage and independent living. A number of individuals, including <sup>AJP</sup>, went to hostels. Sometimes they were a distance away, in London or in Liverpool.

29. In order to try and equip those individuals with skills at the point of majority, you needed to import into the staffing structure individuals who carried such skills. BBR had great skill and knowledge in car mechanics. The boys loved all of this stuff. Ron Aitchison learnt about cars and the buying and selling of cars through BBR. That set him up. There was continuing contact between Ron and BBR after Ron left.
30. Ron admired BGX, who was one of the house masters. He'd re-started the scouts. He wasn't Ron's house master, but he kept in continued contact with him after he left Aberlour. Ron was not only attracted to him because of the scouts, he was fun to be with, personable and a wise character. He also travelled extensively and Ron used to go with him after leaving Aberlour.
31. Child care was not part of the interviewing of staff. I would say that the overall need in terms of the male staff would be the skill set that they had. Childcare was not too much of a priority. The wardens would rely on the female side to provide that. The male would be for discipline, skills and keeping order. I think it would be primarily be down to the females to provide the nurturing, caring side. I have a horrible feeling that BBR was on his own in his house. Not every house had a house aunty or a house mother. Cardno was head of Gordon's house. It may well be he was the only house parent at his time.

*Princess Margaret's nursery*

32. Dean Wolfe decided that he wanted to have a nursery building solely for nursery children. It was basically unfair to have infants and babies in a building with much older children. He managed to get the money from donations to get it built. Initially, I was in Princess Margaret's nursery school. It still stands. It is currently the Dowan's Hotel. That was where I lived as a nursery school child.
33. If you look at photographs of the children in the nursery they appear to be, as I was, happy and content. They were definitely well cared for. Aberlour received fees for individual children from placing authorities, but they were minimal. The fees were not

enough to keep the organisation flowing. It was totally dependent on filling the gap between the fee element and what it cost to run the establishment. A huge amount of time was spent on keeping a positive public face because that in turn generated the additional income needed to keep the organisation going on a day to day basis.

34. I can understand the view that an organisation totally reliant on donations might produce lovely images when there is grime and dust behind the scenes. My experience, and what you see in [REDACTED] is that the pictures of the nursery school were how it was. I was very happy in the nursery school. I've only [REDACTED] of the individual children who lived at Aberlour in my time, including children at the nursery. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
35. The resources Miss Heap and her nursery nurses managed to find, through Dean Wolfe, were used to create the surroundings for children which made it quite a joyous place to live. For example, Miss Heap talks about the furniture, which was specially made for children, and the wall paintings, which were painted by hand and were scenes from adventure stories.
36. Huge amounts of effort and dedication went into the nursery, so much so that when the Dowan's Hotel was renovated recently they discovered some of the original paintwork on the under surface of the walls. I was given a couple of copies of the paintwork. It is indescribably beautiful in terms of the care and the dedication that was taken. This is an indication to me, in addition to my own personal experience, of the level of care provided to us. This is not just the experience of BCS [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
37. [REDACTED] is illustrative of what Miss Heap and her team were dedicated to doing with the children who were there. We came from all walks of life. Usually, we were in a very distressed state when we arrived at the nursery in terms of our previous life experience. Miss Heap cared for us individually. She was very interactive. AJP [REDACTED]  
AJP [REDACTED] was in a very poor physical state. He had been

badly injured, deliberately, by his parents as a baby. Miss Heap and her team reared him and cared for him in a way where they could get him physically better. He was there at the same time as me.

38. [REDACTED] AJP fifty years later [REDACTED] we recognised each other. The interesting thing about [REDACTED] AJP experience is that it illustrates time in intensive care. We were all very abused and usually very, very sad. There's a picture of me with Miss Heap shortly after I arrived.<sup>4</sup> It gives an indication that something is not quite right with me. You can see that the work involved in transforming individual children's lives is enormously complex. Miss Heap and her staff really did try.
39. The upper age of the nursery children varied. Some children were not physically or mentally able to go into the school system until later. I was there until between six and seven and then I moved on to Spey House. There were others there of a similar age.

#### **Routine at Spey House, Aberlour**

##### *Mornings and bedtime*

40. Our day started very early. We'd be up getting washed, getting breakfast and doing chores. We didn't see much of what was being done to anybody still in the bedroom, in terms of people getting cleaned up by staff after wetting the bed. I can't recall anything specific being done to children who wet the bed.
41. Doctor Caldwell spoke of staff not handling the issue of bed wetting well.<sup>5</sup> At that time, bed wetting was dealt with by putting a child who wet the bed in a cold bath, but I never witnessed that. I never heard of any children being humiliated with wet sheets for wetting the bed.



*Mealtimes/Food*

42. The meals were cooked in a central kitchen. The meals came on trolleys through the tunnels which connected the houses. We took the food out, along with the carers, and set the tables. Part of the nurturing was table manners. Auntie <sup>AJF</sup> ate with us. She had the same food that we did. We had a time limit for eating because the trolley had to go back with the empty plates.
43. I enjoyed the food and I ate what was put in front of me. If boys didn't like the food in Spey House, it was very simple. There was no such thing as choice. We were given a meal and it was expected that we would eat it. If we didn't want to eat it, it was left but there was no alternative dish to replace it. If Auntie <sup>AJF</sup> was there, she would be concerned and try and encourage us if we didn't eat. She says we never went to bed without being fed. I suspect she tried to create something from what ingredients were on the trolley. I don't think there was a kitchen in Spey House.
44. Not only would Auntie <sup>AJF</sup> try and encourage us to eat, she would also try and find out what may be the problem, bad teeth or whatever. Because of the diet we had, having dodgy teeth was not unusual. Auntie <sup>AJF</sup> would get medical attention if she was concerned. She was acute enough to know the difference between not eating because we didn't want to eat and not eating because we weren't well. She would get us checked out.
45. There was no expectation that the dish would be left for a child to eat at the next meal time. I've seen no evidence for that. It would be out of the ordinary for that to happen. It would jar as something not quite right. I've not heard any stories of that happening in other houses. Some children did talk about feeling hungry. I never felt that because I've always had a small appetite.



*Washing/bathing*

46. There was no restriction on bathing in Aberlour, although we were told when to go. We didn't bath individually. There was a big bath and two or three people would be in the bath at the one time.

*School*

47. The school was the Aberlour Orphanage school, but essentially it was accountable to educational authority. Aberlour Orphanage was overseen by Dean Wolfe, who was a regular visitor to the school. The headmaster of the school was Tommy Robinson. He was also the farmer.
48. Most children were schooled within Aberlour, but there were exceptions. We were taught to read and write and were given a viable education, but that was essentially the expectation. The gifted ones were not catered for. That was recognised by the orphanage and they had to go elsewhere.
49. The gifted children went to the grammar school in the community. <sup>AJQ</sup> [REDACTED] was very gifted and he was seen to be gifted. The education system was simple at Aberlour. If you stood out academically, you were basically streamed and given extra attention by the teachers. <sup>AJQ</sup> [REDACTED] was the first child from Aberlour who got his leaving certificate.
50. I've always enjoyed school and I've always enjoyed learning. I was just so pleased to be at school. I had a good relationship with the teachers

*Visits/Inspections*

51. I never saw a visiting children's officer. I cannot recollect any visiting officer, apart from when I left and Miss Talbott came to collect me. She drove me some distance in her car, possibly all the way to my foster home. She was the Edinburgh Corporation's children's officer with responsibility for children placed by Edinburgh in Aberlour. She

occupied that position throughout my time. No other name of a children's officer is listed on my records. Every visit, not just a statutory visit, is recorded in records at Aberlour. In my case, that is blank. There's nothing in my social work records about Aberlour, apart from entrance and exit, because they were never there.

52. It was a regular occurrence that we would get visitors, sometimes multiple visitors, who were being shown around Aberlour Orphanage. It was all connected to the public profile and the donor circle being increased. The visitors left money, so it was also to do with collecting money on the spot, because the visitors left money.
53. The visits were part of Dean Wolfe's style. He was a great talker and a great communicator. He was very personable and the tour parties enjoyed visitors enjoyed his tour. He was very funny and they liked that. If you look at the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] they give you a flavour of the tour parties and how Dean Wolfe functioned.<sup>6</sup>
54. In addition to the tour parties, there were other organised visits. Part of the donor circle and the communication with external organisations was trying to get organisations that could somehow be seen as being particularly supportive of Aberlour Orphanage. For example, the Timex factory of Dundee forged a link and sent some of their workers up to the orphanage to do things with the children.
55. Aberlour Orphanage was a beautifully structured and manicured physical structure. The gardens were always immaculate. The village green was therefore a lovely place to visit. The tour parties either started there or ended there, if they weren't taking us out somewhere, like the pictures or whatever. The children from various houses would most definitely be involved in those visits in some way or another.
56. Most of us had pen pals that we used to write to and they'd respond. Sometimes they'd give us presents for Christmas. I can't remember what I used to write.

*Family contact*

57. The only period when there was an attempt at contact with my family was in the late fifties when I went to live with my mother. I think I was about seven, possibly between the nursery and Spey House. I was in the early stages of primary school. I don't know how it came about because that isn't stated in either my records from Aberlour or the Edinburgh Corporation. It was very sudden. I can't remember very much about the period when I was with my mother. I do know that it was not a happy time.
58. It appears from records that I was readmitted to Aberlour Orphanage in [REDACTED] 1961 at the age of eight, having been placed with my mother around a year earlier. According to my records, I was returned to Aberlour Orphanage because of neglect by the birth mother. I had been denied the privilege of attending school due to household chores and sundry other activities deemed more important by my birth mother. There were concerns relating to my health, protection and safety in the home of my birth mother.
59. As an adult, I've traced some of my mother's family, going as far as Australia to talk with them. What came out was the clear message that my mother was flighty. It was well known and criticised within the family. A number of family members talked about periodic visits to my mother when I was there during this rehabilitation period. They spoke about how my mother was treating me at the time, which was not positive. I was staying in Pilton. I stayed there for about a year. Somebody must have made a visit and realised that it wasn't working at all and I was removed immediately. I was taken back to Aberlour fairly abruptly.
60. Other than that, I had no contact with my mother, either in Aberlour or in foster care. I had no contact with my father whatsoever. A deliberate decision was taken by my extended family not to have any contact with me. They had a very clear view about blackness within the family. I had already been removed from the family for being a sore and an embarrassment. The very idea of continuing some kind of contact with that soreness was not going to be sanctioned.

61. There was no disincentive orchestrated by the orphanage to dissuade my mother or any of my extended family from visiting me. Had they expressed a desire to visit me, it may not have been welcome but it would have been accommodated. I know that because of the way Aberlour operated when I was there.
62. The view at Aberlour, influenced by Canon Jupp and flowing through various wardens, including Dean Wolfe and Reverend Leslie, was that the children came from impoverished areas. They were "contaminated" by slum life and by the "miasma" of those particular areas. They saw their job at Aberlour as transforming these individuals into "more righteous individuals", clean of those adverse influences that they came from. Although such a perception existed, my extended family did not wish to know me regardless of any philosophy that Aberlour Orphanage adhered to. The orphanage did not encourage family contact, but if my family had made efforts to contact me neither the corporation nor Aberlour would have blocked it.
63. There was never any conversation about where I had come from or my older siblings. I assumed I didn't have any siblings. It would have been disclosed on my application, but I didn't ask because I had no reason to. What I knew was that I was surrounded by family. My family were the other children. That was what I knew. My life revolved around what I knew, which was Auntie <sup>AJF</sup> and Spey House. That was our life and that was what we all concentrated on. We were in a special place, cut off from the world outside. We had nothing else to compare it to. My life began at Aberlour.
64. In my records, in between what I cost and what had been bought for me, there were one or two snippets of information added to my records. There were entries made by the administrator. No information was given to the day to day carers about the background of the children. The circumstances that led to a child entering the orphanage would not be given to the primary carer. There was no information to discuss with children, so the staff were not able to tailor their approach to a particular child based on their background.
65. Essentially, the view of the dean and the board was that each child was a tabula rasa when he or she arrived. It was Aberlour Orphanage's job to imprint on this clean sheet

of paper, this new person that they were going to be moulding, shaping, influencing over the next ten to fifteen years. Most of the children were there for that period of time. It was a conscious decision that the less said to the care staff about the child's background, the better. It was seen as best practice at the time. Aberlour Orphanage was seen as a sort of light for others to follow.

#### *Healthcare*

66. If we weren't well, Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> would make a reference through the Dean's office about a boy needing medical attention. A call would be made to the doctor in Aberlour to have the child examined. There was a small infirmary on site, as well as a nurse. Doctors were called in from outside. Doctor Caldwell was a GP in Aberlour.
67. When I was around eleven years old, I was attacked by another boy in Aberlour House and cut my hand. I don't think the infirmary was operational when that happened. I remember the cut was quite deep and there was blood everywhere. Whether I was taken to the doctor or the doctor was called in, I don't know. There's nothing in my records about that. I don't know whether there were separate medical records, which Doctor Caldwell retained. There is some medical information in my records, such as immunisations.

#### *Running away*

68. I would say that running away happened infrequently. When it did happen, it certainly rang bells right round the orphanage amongst the boys. It was talked about like other things which the boys thought were significant. Ron Aitchison talked about running away and telling everybody that he went to have tea with the Queen. Some children did run away and never came back. They were never found. If that had happened to somebody in Spey House, I would have known all about it but it was general knowledge that this happened.
69. Towards the end of Aberlour, the age ranges of the children tended to alter. During my time, when I first came to Aberlour, the bulk of the children who arrived were very

young. The expectation was that they would be there for the bulk of their childhoods and then exit. Round about the late fifties, when Reverend Leslie took over and an older age range was entering Aberlour. They all had a life before Aberlour. The children I heard about who ran away and the children who ran away [REDACTED] all had a previous life before Aberlour.

70. I was never aware of the reasons why children ran away. From what I've been told, Dean Wolfe used to have a fairly good idea where children might end up. We were dressed a particular way. Our hair was cut in a particular way. We stood out like a sore thumb. Therefore, the locals would know you were an Aberlour Orphanage kid. If you were out at certain times, they would know that something wasn't right. They would either get hold of you themselves or they'd contact the police. It was more likely they would contact the warden and he would go out in his car. Often, the warden would do that and bring the child back himself. Based on my knowledge of Dean Wolfe, I think the response would have been to ask the child why he or she ran away.
71. I didn't run away at any point. Aberlour was my life. I knew nothing else. The individuals I was living with were my family. I knew nobody else. That applied to most of the children in the orphanage at that time. Why would I run away from my home and my life? Where would I go? It was our life and we made the most of it.

*Discipline and corporal punishment*

72. There was no smacking at the nursery school. I can honestly say that I never ever saw any corporal punishment being given by Auntie <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED]. She told me that she never believed in smacking children and I cannot recall an incident of being smacked by Auntie <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED] or any other carer in the house. She may have sent us to bed early, but never without a meal. There may have been some loss of privileges.
73. There was a consistent position in Spey House, but I can't speak about the use of corporal punishment in other houses. I can't recall ever visiting another house, apart from the main area that we saw films in or if there was a Christmas party.

74. Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED] told me:

*"There was no real guidance from management of the orphanage in terms of care of the children. If there was a problem you could approach someone and ask them about it, you know, but you were more or less left to get on with it and that was it."*<sup>7</sup>

She told me how staff managed to deal with diverse issues without specialist help or training. She was under the impression she wasn't allowed to use corporal punishment, but she wouldn't have done so anyway. There wasn't specific guidance or training on that.

75. No-one has interviewed as many former residents of Aberlour Orphanage [REDACTED] [REDACTED] as I have. Those individuals, including members of staff such as Doctor Caldwell and people who supplied various goods to the orphanage, are basically the sole fountains of knowledge left, in terms of how things were done. I think a lot of the day to day operation of the orphanage, in terms of care and discipline, are exactly as Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED] has said. You made it up as well you could and you talked to other staff members.

76. That chimes with the likes of Doctor Caldwell. He talks about some of the staff. I got the impression he was also talking about <sup>BBR</sup> [REDACTED] without naming any names. He talks about the different time period between Dean Wolfe and Reverend Leslie. He felt that Dean Wolfe was a very good leader. In relation to discipline and the conduct of staff, he said the following:

*"The orphanage staff were not very well paid, that was my impression. And there was one or two I felt were sort of ne'er do wells which I wouldn't name, but I have no evidence whatsoever of any suspicious events and I was very close to the police and would have been aware."*<sup>8</sup>



That obviously relied upon the police being involved. He was a local GP so he wasn't always around to hear what was being said by children or staff.

77. I didn't receive any corporal punishment at school, nor did I see it applied to others. If there was bad behaviour in the school, it would be dealt with by a referral straight to the headmaster or the headmaster would be called to come in. I was never called to the headmaster's office, so I can't say what happened there.
78. The headmaster was not somebody to be messed with. He was big. He was the gentleman who took us to see the animals. He was fun. He was somebody we wanted to get along with and learn things from. I was too young to help with the haystacks or pick the potatoes. Ron Aitchison spoke about hunting for rats and beating them to death. I was too frightened of rats to do that. Because Mr Robinson was that kind of character and a nice guy, we didn't want to get into a position where he had to show a different side.
79. <sup>AJP</sup> ██████████ told me about an occasion when he decided to try out a cigarette. He was in one of the little houses, not knowing there was an exit vent. Tommy Robinson was passing by and saw what appeared to be smoke coming out of the vent. He decided to go into the area and discovered <sup>AJP</sup> ██████████. He asked <sup>AJP</sup> ██████████ what he was doing and he said, "Nothing, sir." He was trying to hide the cigarette and hold in the smoke. <sup>AJP</sup> ██████████ was smacked, not for smoking but for lying about it.<sup>9</sup> When <sup>AJP</sup> ██████████ told me about it, he was laughing about it.
80. The last chance saloon was basically you were taken to the warden. That was used as a threat. <sup>BCK</sup> ██████████ talked about how he and one of his friends in the orphanage were misbehaving. He was sent to the Dean, ██████████. He spoke about how ██████████ normally operated in such circumstances. In advance of going to ██████████ office, he and his friend knew what was going to happen so they padded the inside of their trousers and their backsides with paper. They knew they were going to get strapped.<sup>10</sup> He is about ten to fifteen years older than me.

*Deaths of children*

81. One day, we were all visiting one of our favourite play areas, Linn Falls. None of us could swim. At that time, there was no swimming pool in Aberlour, or it may just have been built. The expectation would have been that we didn't go anywhere near the rock face. There were thirty young boys there with one adult in charge.
82. It was a beautiful day. I can see it now. Several boys deviated from the pathway and got onto the cliff. One of the children was climbing up the cliff side overlooking the waterfall. It wasn't very high to an adult, but it was very high to a child. Unfortunately, he slipped and bumped his head against the rocks on the way down before hitting the lower waterfall. He became trapped under the water. Upon hearing the screams of the children, Auntie <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED] tried to go into the water to get to where she thought the boy was. She couldn't swim either. She would have drowned had she not been hauled out by one of the larger boys there.
83. It was tragic. All the boys of Spey House were there, so we were all party to it. I didn't see him fall, but I saw his clothes floating up to the surface. I saw Auntie <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED] try to rescue him and being pulled out of the water by the older boy. Divers had to go in take the boy who died out. He was well under the water.
84. The boy who died was a loved boy. There was something about him. All children are innocent and fun to be with. He had a certain excitement and innocence. He drew you to him. He had siblings at Aberlour, although I think they may have been older because I don't think they were at Spey House. He was much loved by everybody at Spey House. His death had a major impact amongst the boys of Spey House, which has never left us. There is nobody who was at Spey House during my time who would talk of their time at Aberlour without mentioning this boy.
85. I interviewed Doctor Caldwell [REDACTED]. He said that accidents were a big problem and that every other year a child would drown in the Spey or the Linn Falls. I wasn't present when any other deaths occurred, but I was aware of them. That was why I

stayed clear of the water. Even before the boy in my house died, I didn't have the courage and I wasn't that strong.

### **Abuse at Aberlour**

#### *Peer abuse*

86. In Spey House, we created a family so the children stuck together. The exception to the cohesive, family unit was somebody who was particularly vulnerable. A bee line would be made to them. Given that, the children also made up their own ground rules for conduct amongst peers. One of the rules, which certainly applied in Spey House and applied in Ron's house as well, was that bullying was unacceptable.
87. I cannot recall any bullying in Spey House. The only incident I ever had at Spey House was when I was attacked by another boy with a knife. I think it happened shortly before I left Aberlour. I still have the mark to this day. It was deliberately inflicted by a boy who was much bigger than me. His name was **AJK** He may have been a year older as well. It was very deep so I required stitches. I can't remember how Auntie **AJF** dealt with it.

#### *House father at Spey House*

88. There was abuse at Aberlour and there was abuse at Spey House. I know there was a house father at Spey House because I can remember one day when he wasn't there. I think his name was Mr Lee. I did notice these changes, just like I noticed children disappearing around me because the place was closing. I noticed things when they were different. When the house father wasn't there, that set up discussions. The children had created their own family. We lived together, we ate together, we bathed together, we played together, we went to school together, we went to church together. We were constantly in each other's company. Therefore, we were going to talk to each other and there was talk amongst the children about the house father leaving.

89. It came to light at bath time. We were chatting to each other. The boys in the bath were talking from personal experience of certain things that had happened between the house father and one or two of the children. I was present during those conversations. Auntie <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED] overheard boys talking in the bath about the house father. She asked them what it was about. She went straight to the Reverend Leslie. Ultimately, the matter was reported to the police.

[REDACTED]

90. <sup>BBR</sup> [REDACTED] wasn't at Spey House. He may have been in the company of Spey House boys on occasion. When you had certain outings, various houses would come together. For example, to go to the pictures or special celebrations elsewhere. His name was certainly known amongst the boys because we'd created family together and we talked to each other.

91. <sup>BBR</sup> [REDACTED] was very well known. He was quite tall and very distinguished looking. [REDACTED] You couldn't miss him. Leaving aside anything to do with sex, he was very well known. He was a very likable man and he drove fancy, expensive cars. Kids like a bit of fun and excitement. They wanted to know about his fancy cars and maybe touch them or whatever.

92. That was what attracted Ron Aitchison to <sup>BBR</sup> [REDACTED]. He was into cars and always had been. In fact, he spent his professional life selling them. He was already held in high esteem by the boys. He was also high up in credibility stakes by the boys in his house because he changed the tenor of the place. He made it more exciting. There seemed to be an element of protection of some of the weaker boys in the house from some of the stronger boys, who were picking on them.

93. It was generally "known" at the time about <sup>BBR</sup> [REDACTED] not that I knew the details. Boys talked to one another, but if one of the boys from another house mentioned <sup>BBR</sup> [REDACTED] to me, I wouldn't have known who he was. <sup>BBR</sup> [REDACTED] took a photograph of me by the Linn Falls.<sup>11</sup> When I obtained the photograph, I asked who

had taken it and I was gobsmacked to learn it was [BBR] [BBR] was an avid photographer and filmographer at that time. He didn't really go anywhere without his camera or video machine that he used. Now, I think there must have been a reason for that.

94. [AJP] who had been sick in the nursery with me, was still very weak and a bit fragile in the house that [BBR] came into as house father. He was being picked on and somehow [BBR] managed to change the regime in such a way that [AJP] wasn't bullied. I don't know the mechanics of it because I wasn't in that house. He felt a great deal of gratitude to [BBR] as a result.
95. There is a photo of [BBR] with his arm around [AJP] [AJP] entered into a sexual relationship with [BBR] not long after he left Aberlour. It came to my knowledge that they had been having a sexual relationship at Aberlour. I didn't learn that from [AJP]. However, [AJP] made it clear that he was in a sexual relationship with [BBR], although he didn't use those words. He was living with him and he looked after him when he was dying of cancer. [BBR] was more than twice [AJP] age. [AJP] was fifteen when he left Aberlour and [BBR] would have been in his forties.
96. I interviewed [AJP] several times. I'd already heard about the possibility of there being a relationship between him and [BBR]. We chatted about general things before the interview commenced. I asked [AJP] if he had any memories of [BBR] [BBR]. He said he had lots of memories and then he disappeared for a while. He came back and he had reels of film. He said, "Here are some of the memories." I managed to get them digitally rearranged. The reels had been taken by [BBR]. All these memories came back for me from these reels. I mention it because [AJP] has a mine of information about [BBR]. He has a virtual shrine to [BBR] in his room. He never used the words sexual relationship. He just said he looked after him.
97. [AJP] went to Aberlour as a baby. He knew no other way. Aberlour was normal life to him. He had nothing to measure the attentions he got from [BBR] against. He



didn't see it as a basis to raise a complaint. When I interviewed **AJP** he said something key as to why he entered the relationship with **BBR**

*"What kept **AJP** going after he left the orphanage at the age of fifteen, in addition to a sense of humour, perseverance, vision, dreams, was keeping in touch with people who meant a great deal to him. One such person was **AJP** house father, **BBR** **BBR** at the orphanage, who looked after **AJP** from the age of ten to fifteen, "Well, if I couldn't trust a person then, well, who can you trust? He was an anchor man. For that time in your life when things could have gone wrong quite easily, he was a stabilising influence." **AJP** thought that his house father, **BBR** brought "law and order" to the house in which **AJP** was located and **AJP** felt safer as a result. There was also more fun, with parties at Christmas and one during the summer. **AJP** felt the boys were well looked after." <sup>13</sup>*

After **AJP** left the orphanage, they kept in contact. **AJP** went to live with him, probably in his late teens or early twenties. That's where he stayed until **BBR** died.

98. After all the interviews I have carried out, I do feel that some of the staff had a suspicion that something was not quite right in **BBR** house. I don't know why they kept their mouths shut because I didn't know them. The only staff member I knew was Auntie **AJF** who did exactly what I would expect when she became aware of the house father. I've never spoken to her about **BBR** but I'd be very surprised if she hadn't heard that something wasn't quite right in the house he ran. Maybe she didn't do anything about it because it wasn't her house and she didn't know the details, but why nothing was done, I don't know.
99. I do believe that Auntie **AJF** had a strong element of protection over the boys in my house. During my time at Aberlour, I never heard of any boy being placed in a sexually compromised position, apart from the incident with the house father. I think that was largely because individuals knew that Auntie **AJF** wouldn't put up with anything like that. I think she was a major protector. If something was happening to one of her boys, she wouldn't hesitate to do something about it.

100. Following [REDACTED] talking to the aging former residents of Aberlour, I am profoundly appreciative of those members of staff who really put themselves out. AJP was a weakly child. He had been bullied. BBR [REDACTED] was seen as a bit of a saviour. I used the phrase grooming when I spoke to [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] She agreed.

### **Reporting of abuse at Aberlour**

#### *By children*

101. Although a lot of our activities centred around Spey House, we went to school and church with other houses so we met other boys. Periodically, we'd be at various socials with other boys from other houses so we talked to each other about things. The only contact with girls would be in class, when you might be sitting together, and in church. We weren't allowed to speak in church. There would be staff making sure there was minimal contact between boys and girls. It was rigidly segregated. I don't think any of the boys would know what on earth was happening in one of the girls' wings and likewise the girls wouldn't know what was happening to the boys.
102. There was nothing out of bounds in the course of boys' conversations. We talked to each other as peers. Certain boys seemed to have a close relationship with certain members of staff. During my time at Aberlour, there was no doubt that amongst the boys living at Aberlour, it would have been general knowledge who was having a sexual relationship with whom. In my interviews with some individuals who were resident at Aberlour, I keep on asking myself why nothing was done about it when it was so self-evident. It wasn't hidden. It was quite obvious.
103. BBR [REDACTED] always had a parade of boys going to his room in the evening. Staff lived in the same house as the boys. Boys would wake up and see what was going on. They were young and they wouldn't say anything in case they got into trouble. They would try and keep their eyes shut and pretend they didn't see anything. It wasn't



hidden and it was well known amongst the boys that there was a relationship between

AJP and BBR

104. They knew they couldn't say anything. BBR was the head of the house. He was usually the only adult there. He was a big man. The boys wouldn't want to risk getting themselves into trouble and having a harder time in the house than they were already. If AJP wasn't complaining, why would they stir things up? That was how we thought in the orphanage at that time.
105. If Auntie AJF hadn't overheard the boys discussing the house father in the bath, my view is that the boys would not have told anybody about what was happening. I don't think we knew what was normal and what was not. I think the fact that the boys were chatting about it may suggest that it was even out of the ordinary for where we were living. It was unusual and it didn't sound right. We were talking amongst ourselves to get a sense of whether it felt right, checking out with each other.
106. If the boys decided that something didn't seem right, I think it's an even bigger leap to go to somebody who really cares and loves you about what has happened. You've then realised that it's not right. You would then have all these questions about what you had done to cause it. I think there would be an element of trying to protect Auntie AJF because something not right has happened.
107. Things like that weren't talked about. This was a world within a world. It was completely secluded from the world outside Aberlour Orphanage. What was right was created in the atmosphere within Aberlour Orphanage. Therefore, if you're not told something is right or something is wrong, you don't know. You don't create the rightness or wrongness yourself. You're relying upon some indicators from those individuals who are caring for you. I cannot recall at any time being told about sex education or if anybody touched you or whatever, whether together or individually.
108. If boys were to report concerns, they didn't know what the implications might be. If they made an allegation against a member of staff, there was a risk of being moved from a house they liked. That was an element and also a feeling of, "Why should I rock

the boat?" There was a systemic nature to it. A huge amount of responsibility was placed on individuals finding themselves in that position, "Do I say something, do I not? Do I just go with the flow, or do I not? Do I just shut my eyes when this string of boys is going into [BBR] bedroom? What happens if I say something and nothing's done about it? What happens to me?"

109. We are chronologically of a certain age. Experientially, we're ancient. We're much older than our chronological years. Because of that agedness, based on profound levels of life experience within a very contracted age period, we know what to risk and what not to risk. Are we going to risk being reasonably safe? Are we going to risk being reasonably content? Are we going to risk friction with friends? The default position was to put up with whatever came our way. The long game was to survive. I did love the place, but it was survival too. I had to make headway and I couldn't make headway if I as falling apart every five minutes.

*By staff*

110. Although I wasn't present, I subsequently learned that Auntie [AJF] had come in to check on one of the kids in the bath. She overheard part of what was being said by one of the boys about the house father at Spey House. She asked what it was about. The boy, because of the relationship we had with Auntie [AJF] told her. My understanding is that Auntie [AJF] went straight to Reverend Leslie and told him what the boy had said about the house father. She didn't get the response from Reverend Leslie that she anticipated, so she said either something had to be done about it or she would leave. The matter was then reported to the police. I learned subsequently that the house father ended up in prison. The court proceedings were around 1962.
111. Although I wasn't present when Auntie [AJF] heard the boys talking about the house father, I can see how she would have immediately reacted because she was completely devoted to these children. How she reacted would have been no different from how she reacted when the boy fell into the water at Linn Falls.

112. If it wasn't for the stance taken by Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> I don't think it would have come to light. I don't know why there was an apparent reluctance to pursue the matter in the way Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> wanted. My own view is that she wanted particular action, such as immediate removal, and somehow this was not being listened to or acted upon until the ultimatum was given.
113. The core staffing at Aberlour, including the head office, was very small. There was one main carer, an aunt or an uncle, maybe with one junior assistant helping out at mealtimes or going on an outing or whatever. Therefore, it would be unusual if the core staff did not know each other or about each other quite well. They may not have liked each other or interacted with each other, but they certainly knew of each other. Staff members would most definitely know about other staff members through the rumour mill or what they heard from the boys. It would be very easy for staff to hear what was happening in someone else's house. Whether they paid much attention to it or not is another matter.
114. It's important to differentiate between the time of Dean Wolfe and the time of Reverend Leslie. There was a marked difference in how the orphanage was run. Under Reverend Leslie, the orphanage was being prepared for abolition, its destruction, selling and moving the kids on to small homes. That was the priority. The idea of public profile was still significant but it was not important as far as continued funding. There was less of an imperative to watch the public profile.
115. Each warden left their individual mark on the orphanage. This is quite important in terms of the history of Aberlour. It wasn't really addressed by Miss Abrams in her wonderful book, *The Orphan Country*. It's something that really needs to be noted. If you go through the life and works of each of the wardens, you'll see this come to light. The two wardens in my time were Dean Wolfe and the Reverend Leslie, the last warden of Aberlour Orphanage. I was suggesting that each left a very different mark on the orphanage. That mark may well have influenced decisions, such as whether individuals were referred to the police on account of alleged misdemeanours with children at the orphanage.

116. When Reverend Leslie was confronted with the news about possible allegations of sexual abuse in Spey House, his response was not what Auntie <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED] expected to hear. I was asked whether there might be a reason for that reluctance, such as the reputation of the orphanage or looking for alternative ways of easing the situation without public damage. I would suggest that the two wardens I've spoken about would have handled it in a different way. I think Reverend Leslie's reason for disagreeing with whatever Auntie <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED] was saying was not due to the public profile of the orphanage. Although that may have been a factor, the orphanage was already scheduled to be closed. Therefore, continuing support of donors was not a priority.
117. In Dean Wolfe's time, apart from the basic nurture and care of children at the orphanage and getting individuals to come to the orphanage from referral agencies, his primary concern was public profile and the donations which depended on that profile. I would suggest that if Dean Wolfe had been confronted with allegations of sexual or physical assault on children, the primary response would have been to have the alleged offender quietly removed from the orphanage.
118. There was no prospect of Aberlour Orphanage closing during Dean Wolfe's time. It was his life's work. He felt the orphanage was doing a very positive job. Right up until his retirement, a major issue for Dean Wolfe in light of possible negative comment, would be the impact that might have in terms of potential donors and reputation.
119. I think that is a view that would be supported by a significant number of former child residents who have kept in touch with Aberlour Orphanage since leaving and certainly from my interviews with 23 of them. When it was reasonably clear that something was not quite right with a member of staff, based on [REDACTED] talking to people that know rather than my knowledge as an eleven year old, what would have happened and did happen is that there would be a quiet exodus of the individual. The primary idea would obviously be to stop the damage immediately and to quietly remove the instigator of the damage. Public profile and donor contributions were central to the successful operation of the orphanage. It was a factor continuously in Dean Wolfe's mind.

120. Dean Wolfe got involved in a lot of fights with individuals who would decry the orphanage. But in terms of children coming first, in my view he would most definitely have bowed to Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED]. He would have got rid of the problem quietly. Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED] wanted the house father out of the house. She didn't necessarily want the police to be brought in. I don't think Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED] would disagree with my view of how Dean Wolfe would have handled it. I would be surprised if there were a significant number of cases of child abuse at Aberlour in which the police were involved during Dean Wolfe's time. Custom and practice would have been the quiet exodus of staff.

### Leaving Aberlour

121. My records indicate that moving me at the age of eleven was against the wishes of Aberlour Orphanage. There was no information given in advance as to when a child was going to leave and it was very abrupt. For example, Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED] would be given a phone call or note, saying that the child needed to have their things ready as they were leaving the next day. She was given literally hours' notice. She was very upset about that.
122. My records noted exchanges between Aberlour and the local authority. One of the exchanges in my records relates to the abrupt and unacceptably short notice given to Aberlour by the referral agency about my departure to my foster family. It's quite strongly worded. My records don't shed any light on why the decision was taken by the placing authority to remove me from Aberlour. Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED] was just told that I was leaving.
123. Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED] was not involved in my exit, apart from preparing my clothes the day before I left. She would have gone to room nineteen to get me a suitcase. It had some clothes in it. I didn't spend any of my pocket money in Aberlour. I used to change my pocket money into pennies and put them in my piggy bank. The only thing I had in addition to my clothes was my piggy bank and maybe a face flannel.



124. The warden dealt with the exiting, along with the treasurer and his assistant. It took place in his office. I was then taken by the warden to the front of the office. When a child left, there was an expectation that there would be some continuing contact, in terms of making contact with friends and staff. It was "facilitated" by Dean Wolfe, in his child centred way. He was saying, and it was custom and practice during his time, that Aberlour was the child's home, he or she had made family there and that would continue as far as Aberlour could support it. I was too young and too shocked to understand that when I left, but it has been confirmed by the individuals I have interviewed.
125. Aunty **AJF** was very critical of the lack of preparation and advance notice for leaving Aberlour. She saw it as a flaw. She said there was no further formal contact with a child after he or she left, "It was like they disappeared off the face of the earth."<sup>14</sup> I had no contact with Aunty **AJF** immediately after I left. I still had the address of Aberlour Orphanage when I was in the foster home. I wrote to her out with the knowledge of the social worker or the foster parents, saying that I missed the orphanage. She kept my letters.
126. Somehow, some of the children who left did manage to make contact with one or two of their friends who were left in the orphanage or one or two of the house parents, against the system that prevailed at the time. Sometimes, when they wrote those letters, they were responded to. I recall that Aunty **AJF** did reply to my letters.
127. Dean Wolfe made sure that this happened. He wouldn't have had a problem with receiving letters and allowing the house parent to reply. As well as facilitating additional contact between former residents and friends or house parents, he also encouraged visits. In fact, there was a special cottage which he had identified on the grounds of Aberlour where the former residents could stay.
128. Reverend Leslie said all contact ended. And it did, immediately. You could write to Reverend Leslie and he would keep the mail. It wouldn't go to your friend or your house parents. He would formally respond and that was it. The letter was not passed on to

the person the letter was addressed to. <sup>AJP</sup> [REDACTED] said that after he left, he tried to contact a friend at the orphanage. The letter was answered by the warden and the letter was not given to his friend.<sup>15</sup> It stuck in his craw. That was his family. I don't think he ever got back in touch with the person he tried to write to. I think it was the same individual who had saved his life by rescuing him from the Falls when he fell in. Differing tenures tended to result in differing ways of relating not only to donors but also to the child who had been in your care.

**Mr and Mrs** <sup>AJS/AJT</sup> [REDACTED]

129. Miss Talbot took me and my suitcase to Loanhead. I arrived at Loanhead and was met by two rather elderly individuals, Mr and Mrs <sup>AJS/AJT</sup> [REDACTED]. They may have been younger in body than they looked. The foster mother was fairly stout. She had arthritis and she found it hard to move around. When I was in my fifth and sixth year there, she ended up sitting by the window, hardly moving all day, looking out of the window.
130. The house was a council house in a terrace split into upper and lower apartments. Virtually everybody in [REDACTED] was living off the state. It was that sort of neighbourhood. There were other relatives living nearby. Mrs <sup>AJT</sup> [REDACTED] daughter, [REDACTED], lived with her husband and two children, who were younger than me. They were regular visitors. They had an indication as to what was happening within the foster home. Mr and Mrs <sup>AJS/AJT</sup> [REDACTED] had a son, [REDACTED] who lived quite distance away with his wife. He was in the army. He came to visit periodically for a couple of days. They also had a son, [REDACTED] who was younger than [REDACTED]. He lived about three doors up from our house.
131. There was also an adopted black boy, whose name was [REDACTED]. He was a month or two older than me. He was big and very strong and sporty. He was very sociable outside the house. He was absolutely adored by Mr and Mrs <sup>AJS/AJT</sup> [REDACTED].



132. In addition to me, Mrs <sup>AJT</sup> had a number of temporary foster placements. There was a flow of children coming in and out of the home throughout my time there. Sometimes they were there for a couple of weeks and then gone. They were boys and girls of different ages. They were never older than me, but not too much younger than me. I remained in the foster home till I was almost nineteen. Mr and Mrs <sup>AJS/AJT</sup> never suggested I change my surname.

### **Routine at the** <sup>AJS/AJT</sup>

#### *First day*

133. When I arrived, Miss Talbot introduced me to Mr and Mrs <sup>AJS/AJT</sup> I hadn't seen them before. I hadn't been to this place before. Miss Talbot was trying to explain who these strangers were. There had been no preparation at all. We hadn't talked about it on the journey. I was too gobsmacked. I was in a car, which was new to me and very strange. I was being driven somewhere. I wasn't the sort of child to ask questions. I just did as I was told.
134. I was told at some point or I found out that Aberlour Orphanage was going to be closing and this was where I was going to be staying. Nobody explained why Aberlour was closing or whether I was going to be able to see my friends or Auntie <sup>AJF</sup> again. That only came later on and through my own efforts.
135. Miss Talbot was barely there for fifteen minutes and then she was off. It was all very managerial. The first thing the foster parents said was that I could call them mum and dad. That was very strange to me. All I'd known was Auntie <sup>AJF</sup> and Miss Heap. I listened. I was just trying to digest what was going on. They eventually told me where I'd be sleeping.
136. The first thing I did was open my suitcase to show them my piggy bank. I was very proud of my suitcase, my clothes and my piggy bank. They weren't too impressed with

the piggy bank or the clothes, which were fairly minimal. Very early on, it became clear to me that this wasn't what I was used to.

*Mornings and bedtime*

137. [REDACTED] and I may have shared a room initially. It's a little bit confusing, because I ended up having to share a room with my foster father. I had my own little bed and he had a double bed. The foster mother never shared the same room as the foster father. He was dying on his feet with silicosis. He had been a miner in [REDACTED] and it was very frequent for the miners to pick up this lung disease. He ended up having to become a surface miner because his condition was so bad. He was still a surface miner when I arrived at the age of eleven. When that could no longer happen, he ended up bed bound. I think he just gave up.
138. He had a spittoon. He would spit from morning until night, including during the night. He was constantly awake. To this day, I cannot stand the sound of spitting. It makes me physically sick. I had to empty the spittoon routinely. Sometimes he spilled it on the ground.

*Washing/bathing*

139. Using the bath was a major issue. There must have been times when I smelled at school. I liked the bath, but every time I used the bath there was consternation. I wasn't in the bath every day then. It was once a week or once every two weeks. However, it was too costly, even though my foster father received a coal allowance.
140. I didn't know how many times you needed to bath a week. I liked to bath. I was so pleased when I started playing rugby at school because I could use the showers. I remember saying as a teen that when I wrote my first book, I would write about how we need to look after ourselves and bath. I honestly didn't know how many times you needed to wash yourself. Nobody ever told me.

*School*

141. I can't remember whether the foster parents introduced me to the school. It became clear that I would need to catch up with the rest of the children. The Aberlour Orphanage school was slightly different to this school in Loanhead. They had to check what I knew about reading and writing. I was very good at reading and spelling, but you needed more than that, like maths. There was a period of catch up. I was coming up to the eleven plus, which was the following year.
142. The children at the school had never seen a black boy before. I think [REDACTED] either went to a different school or was in a different class. They were fascinated by my hair and kept on touching it. They weren't rude or negative, they were just interested. There was positive engagement with peers early on and very positive engagement with my teachers over the next year. I was happy at school because I made myself happy at school and my teachers were receptive.
143. I had a wonderful teacher at primary school. We had the same teacher for all our subjects. My teacher was Mrs Marchbanks. She was an absolute angel. She realised I was out of my depth in that I'd just arrived. She didn't know about my background at the foster home or Aberlour. I didn't talk about any of that. She just saw this black boy arrive in her class and nobody knew anything about him. She needed to prepare me for the eleven plus, like all her other charges. I have a huge amount of respect and love for her as a teacher. The headmaster was also wonderful. He was very personable and very gentle. The kids loved him.
144. A few months after I arrived, I was seriously ill with pneumonia. I don't know why or how I caught it. I was in hospital for several weeks. I think I was in the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. I was due to sit the eleven plus. I think the teachers may have come to see me and realised I wasn't going to get out before the eleven plus. They decided to make a case for me to get a waiver for the eleven plus, based on the catch up work and the previous period of being in the class room.

145. I managed to get the waiver and was given a passing grade for the eleven plus without having sat it. I ended up at Lasswade High School. I'd never been to Lasswade before. In the meantime, I was still trying to make entry into my foster family home.
146. When I was at secondary school, I was making friends, I was loving it and I had a good relationship with the teachers. My nickname at school was BCS [REDACTED] I also had to make sure that I was able to do the work, sit the exams and get reasonable grades. That demanded a lot of time. Failure was not a practical possibility for me. There was too much at stake. I had to put in extra work and use the library. I enjoyed it too, but there was an essential motivation.
147. I needed to put the work in and get decent grades in order to move to the next level. I was thinking experientially. The end point was to get the necessary grades to get to university and get the hell out of the foster home. I was not prepared to work in a mine, like [REDACTED] did when he left school. He had no qualifications and could barely read or write. The only thing he could do was go down the pit.
148. I was experientially of an age that I could understand that the AJS/AJT [REDACTED] viewed me as a threat. I wasn't happy with it, but I had to live with it and I had to manage it somehow. I managed it through education. I got support and encouragement not from the AJS/AJT [REDACTED] and not from the social workers, but from the teachers who wanted me to do well.
149. There was a time when I was in the corridors of Lasswade High School. I'd found a table and I was doing some work. The headmaster, Mr Webster, came up to me and asked why I was working during the break. I explained to him that I was trying to master something and he tried to encourage me to lighten up, not knowing my background and my circumstances. I couldn't afford to lighten up. If I didn't hit the steps, I would be down the mine. That wasn't going to happen. I had to reach my goal. There was no element of failure. I had to achieve certain things. It wasn't obsessive. It was clear cut and simply necessary. I had always written a diary. I wrote down my plans.

150. The foster placement was grim. It was very unhealthy. I had to endure it. I was extremely unhappy for most of the time in the foster home, but not in the school. School balanced it out. I was successful in school in spite of the foster home. I made sure I was successful with the support, the love and the nurture of my teachers and of my peers. That's what got me through.
151. I have very fond memories of school, so much so that I flew over for a class reunion in February of this year. I was so surprised by the numbers that turned up. It was a wonderful occasion. It was genuine warmth, even after that gap of forty plus years. We did gel. It was a very good year group.

*Leisure time/clubs*

152. After school, I spent a lot of time going to the library or studying at the kitchen table. I had minimal contact with [REDACTED]. He found me to be a complete bore, so there was no interaction with him. Because I was picking up a strong message, it wasn't really worth trying attempt to interact with him. My interaction with the foster parents was dutiful interaction on my part. When I was at home, I tidied up and did the garden and whatever I could do to avoid creating any unnecessary friction. I played it down if I was really upset.
153. Even at the age of twelve or thirteen, I would work on my studies till eight or nine o'clock at night. At the weekends, it was slightly different. I was a great walker. I always loved nature and walking. That came from Aberlour. The Pentland hills were just a few miles from Loanhead. They were an absolute magnet for me when I discovered them. I often used to go there on my own, trekking and doing bits and bobs. Sometimes I was away all day. I would leave early in the morning and come back at night before it got dark. I had friends, but they weren't too interested in walking. This was my private, solitary time where I would think and work things out.
154. My experiential age came with spending time thinking and reflecting. I had to choose the context for that opportunity to arise, therefore I needed space, clarity and a lack of clutter. I got this walking and swimming.

155. I had to have a life in a situation in which I as unhappy. Part of my life was throwing myself into studies and school activities. I had success on both fronts. As well as getting the grades to get into Edinburgh University, I also enjoyed athletics and rugby. I played rugby all the way through high school. I was [REDACTED] the high school rugby club. I was very good. I played full back. I was a great catcher and a great runner because I was very athletic. I was social and I would keep the team together. We enjoyed being together.
156. My rugby was largely down to Peasall, who was the PE teacher. He was well known in the area as a very good rugby coach. He preferred rugby to football, so I have to put it down to his success and motivation to create a very good rugby team in the school. We were so good. We were champions. We weren't just an ordinary rugby team. We were a very good team that won significant numbers of competitions. We routinely played other schools, private schools and state schools, on a Saturday. I continued playing rugby into my forties.
157. My time at the foster home wasn't all doom and gloom because I made it fun. My history master was nicknamed thunder guts because he had a great roar. He was a rugby person as well. Nobody really got in the way of thunder guts. He also used the strap and nobody wanted that. We were playing rugby one day and I was the [REDACTED] Thunder guts was with us. It was an away game. He had given us a reason why he couldn't come back with us because he had some unfinished business to do. We all went to the Laird and Dog pub in Lasswade. When we arrived, thunder guts was there. He quickly moved out when we arrived.

### *Religion*

158. At Aberlour, I was used to going to church on Sunday. It was mandatory. The [REDACTED] AJS/AJT weren't church goers. I decided to go to church myself. I've no idea how I found the church. I used to go to Sunday school. You're not the sole author of your life journey. People, places, circumstances and luck are all part and parcel of it. I remember an elderly gentleman, well into his eighties, who took the Sunday school.



He was absolutely wonderful. Being at Sunday school brought back to me some of the feeling that I had at Aberlour.

*Family contact*

159. My family were quite shameless about the fact that they had no contact with me. There was no expression of regret later on in life. When I was in the foster home, my elder sister, [REDACTED], wanted to see me. She was living with one of the aunts and she wasn't too far away. I was about twelve or thirteen. She was about a year older than me. Somehow, a visit did take place between my sister and myself when I was twelve or thirteen.
160. I looked forward to the visit and enjoyed it. I had somebody I could call family. We went out somewhere. My sister seemed to enjoy the visit. My aunt complained to the social work department. According to my records, my aunt complained because people would think that [REDACTED] had a black boyfriend. As a result, she didn't want any more contact. I had minimal contact with my social worker, but it's noted in my records that I was very upset about it and was asking when I would be able to see [REDACTED]
161. I heard about my eldest sister, [REDACTED] through [REDACTED]. I didn't know about her before [REDACTED] visit.

*Visits/inspections*

162. In the period before I left the foster home, there was very little contact with a social worker. I don't even know who my social worker was. The only time I ever saw chocolate biscuits was when visitors came. It was quite a large family and relatives used to visit. There was one relative in particular who used to visit from England. The [REDACTED] AJS/AJT used to make a fuss of him and there'd be chocolate biscuits and cakes. I never saw such treats unless somebody "special" was visiting.
163. One such special visitor was the social worker. One discussion sticks out in my mind. I knew somebody special was visiting because I saw the biscuits. I wasn't told who

was coming. I remember on this occasion the social worker was sitting in the living room. She was having a chat with me in front of the foster mother. The foster father was never really involved. He was in his bed. She was asking me how things were going. I never discussed school with the social worker. I wasn't going to say it was hell in front of the foster mother. There may have been one or two complaints from the foster mother. It was all very sort of standard stuff, "Thank you, BCS It's good to see you're doing well." That was it. It was very brief.

164. It did have an impact on me. I was beginning to think it would be nice to work with people. I said to myself that I'd do a damn sight better job than this social worker. It gave me a very strong feeling that this person was supposed to be looking after me, nurturing me and she had no idea what was happening.
165. I remember another visit from a different social worker. It was after my aunt had complained to the social work department about my sister's visit. The social worker talked to me about it. When she came to visit, I asked when I was going to see my sister. I had enjoyed the visit. I was told words to the effect that I wasn't. There was no explanation as to why. It was all very matter of fact. It's noted in my social work records that I was upset or distressed, so I must have showed my emotion at that point.
166. There was no difference in the way my case was handled in the course of my time in foster care. My records don't change either. It was all very minimal. The feeling that came across to me is that it appeared to the social workers that things were okay. I wasn't causing any problems, I wasn't fighting and I was doing reasonably well at school. My school records were passed directly by the school straight to the social workers, so the social workers knew that I was doing okay. Although the foster parents weren't happy with me and I was there under duress, they couldn't find any reason to fault me and complain to the social work. Basically, it was a success as far as they were concerned.
167. The social work department was happy to let the arrangement continue. I was causing no grief in the foster home. The foster parents complained about me using too much electricity, so I used candles for years. They complained I used too much hot water for

the bath, even though my foster father got a coal allowance and it was free. Those were the two things that really stirred them up. There was nothing else they could point the finger at.

*Relationship with foster parents*

168. I found it very difficult to call my foster parents mum and dad. I think I did eventually call them mum and dad, but there was no feeling or affection. Basically, what came across very early on was that I was a paying guest. There was very little change, despite my efforts to try and be part of the family. The term paying guest was never used, but it became crystal clear that I was there on sufferance. They needed me and the other foster children to pay bills and whatever.
169. There was no affection. There was no effort to try and look after me in a nurturing, caring, loving way. I can't remember ever being kissed by my foster mother, or indeed my foster father. There was no affection whatsoever. It was very, very cold.
170. It became apparent during my first year that what they wanted was a sort of play mate for their adopted son, [REDACTED]. The trouble was that [REDACTED] interests were qualitatively different to mine. He was into football and I wasn't. He was interested in running around with his mates and I wasn't. He wasn't interested in anything like reading or writing. Even at that age, I was into reading and went to the library. Very early on after arriving, I was introduced to the library and I loved it. That was encouraged by the teachers at the primary school.
171. The <sup>AJS/AJT</sup>[REDACTED] didn't expect me to do all the housework, but that's what I did. At Aberlour, we had certain chores. We had to do them to a certain standard. It was ingrained in me that my surroundings had to be tidy and clean and I had a responsibility to make sure that was the case. I carried that into the foster home. I wasn't told to do the dishes or whatever, but that was what I did automatically.
172. The foster mother was fat. She had chronic arthritis so she found it difficult to move around. Part of my wishing to be involved with the family meant that I would try and

find her a stool for her feet. I would also spend increasing amounts of time cleaning up and tidying the house, sweeping and so forth. I was the one who did the garden. There was no chance of [REDACTED] doing any of those things because he was too busy having a good time with his friends and playing football. He wasn't expected to do anything.

173. I also did these things because I really wanted them to see that I was appreciative of what they were doing and that I was trying to be helpful. I was also saying, very clearly, that it would be nice to be treated differently. I wanted them to treat me with a bit of warmth and a bit of love, but that didn't happen. Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> [REDACTED] would give the children of Spey House hugs and kisses. She would console us if we were upset. I had that to compare Mr and Mrs <sup>AJS/AJT</sup> [REDACTED] to. I wasn't treated in the same way and I didn't enjoy it.
174. It was quite obvious that the foster parents didn't want me, but they needed me because they needed the income from the placing agency. Mr and Mrs <sup>AJS/AJT</sup> [REDACTED] did display warmth and affection to [REDACTED]. There was a difference between the way they treated [REDACTED] and the way they treated me. Even the foster parents own daughter, [REDACTED] noticed that there was a difference there.
175. I never asked why my foster parents were unable to form a relationship with me in the way they had with [REDACTED]. I didn't realise he was adopted until close to the time when I came to leave. I think [REDACTED] may have told me at one point. I didn't realise his status was any different to mine. I never discovered what [REDACTED] circumstances were before he was adopted. When it came to the stage when I realised I wasn't going to have a relationship with [REDACTED] or the <sup>AJS/AJT</sup> [REDACTED] I just didn't have the energy or the inclination to find out any more. I just wanted to get through it and get out. I saw education as my escape route.
176. Because of my life experience and what had happened from three months until the age of eleven, because of leaving Aberlour Orphanage and having the foster home placement begin, I was an old man at the age of eleven. Chronologically, I was eleven, but experientially, I was an adult. I understood that I wasn't receiving what I'd had at Aberlour. I knew Aberlour was closing so I knew I could never go back. There was no

use complaining or talking to the social worker because I couldn't go back. In terms of placements, it was better the devil you knew. I didn't want to create a ruckus and then get moved somewhere even worse. I wasn't prepared to take the risk because I was damaged enough.

177. Eventually, and it took several years in the foster home, I began to work towards getting out. I made a decision to make the best of what I had. School became increasingly more important than trying to invest time and energy into trying to make the family respond in a loving and nurturing way towards me. Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] never struck me, but they made life very difficult for me.

178. I was trying to study. There was somebody dying in my bedroom, spitting all the time. I had a foster mother who was not wildly disposed towards me. Her daughter, [REDACTED] sensed that things were not quite working but there was nothing she could do. I remember talking to her about this at one stage and she said words to the effect that there was nothing she could do because I wasn't living in her house. She didn't want to interfere. The foster mother was a matriarch. She ran the household because the foster father was out of it most of the time.

179. The foster parents indicated their displeasure that my path might be different from [REDACTED]. I got a complaint from the foster mother that I was using too much electricity. I studied at the kitchen table. I was trying to do the best I could. I was doing reasonably well, but I worked really hard. She came in one day and shut the lights out. I started to use candles. She couldn't complain about that because I was buying them. I remember my school books were spattered with candle wax.

180. I was directly threatening to the [REDACTED] because I was challenging their way of life. They hadn't been to university and were living in fairly poor circumstances. They were saying to me, and it came out in a number of comments during exchanges, "You think you're better than us because you're studying." My interests were seen as directly threatening and somehow critical of them. My presence was increasingly seen as an indictment of what they had achieved and who they were.

181. No matter what I did, and I can see myself trying very hard to allay these suspicions at times, they found me threatening. I never, ever boasted. I didn't tell my parents how well I was doing at school. They never asked anyway. I knew that whatever I said, they'd find it threatening in some way. They would think I was trying to put them down. That never happened. They came to that themselves and made it clear in their day to day interaction with me.

*Death*

182. Other than the boy who died at Linn Falls, my first experience of death was when I was at Loanhead primary school. One of my peers was playing in a building site. He found a bulldozer on the site. He went in and started the engine. He took off and it crashed. He was very seriously injured and he later died.
183. My foster father died when I was in my last year at school. I was just about to go to university. He had given up several years before. We barely spoke during my entire time in the foster home. That was just the way he was. My foster father was lying in state in an open coffin in the living room. I had never touched a dead person. He was clammy and grey and looked very different to when he was alive.
184. We went to the graveyard and a handle of individuals turned up. It was a very important moment in my life. I was coming up for eighteen and I was saying to myself, "Is this what you get when you die?" I honestly expected things to shut and crowds to come out and say goodbye. I was taught a very valuable lesson by my foster father's death and his funeral. I still pay Mr and Mrs AJS/AJT my respects and visit the graveyard at Loanhead.

*Running away*

185. There were a couple of occasions when I did decide to run off. That was never a possibility at Aberlour. It never crossed my mind there. Mr and Mrs AJS/AJT son, [REDACTED] used to visit periodically. There was no real relationship between him and me. It was very infrequent contact. [REDACTED] must have been informed by the foster mother



that I wasn't easy to look after. I was in the kitchen and [REDACTED] came in and tried to be the dutiful son. He had limited social skills. He was fairly typical of that period, a very army, sergeant major type. He said I was upsetting his mother. He was going on and on and on. I had a pan in my hand. There was nothing in it. I threw it down and decided to leave the house.

186. The AJS/AJT [REDACTED] were very startled. They'd never seen me angry. I'd already worked out the consequences of getting angry and not to go there, but on that occasion I just blew it. I just felt I'd had enough. I took off. I left the house just with the clothes I was wearing and disappeared. I disappeared on my way to the Pentland Hills. I knew the AJS/AJT [REDACTED] would be trying to come after me. I kept on walking.
187. Several hours later, I realised they'd follow me. I thought I recognised [REDACTED] profile. He hadn't seen me yet, so I hid under a hedge. It was [REDACTED] Eventually, I made myself clear in his sight and I was basically dragged back to the foster home. They wanted an explanation. With myself, I was extremely clear. I felt that I was in the right, so I didn't need to explain myself. What was done was done. It wasn't going to have any impact or change the way they related to me. I decided I wasn't going to bother. Eventually, I ended up in bed and tried to get some sleep. In the morning, I was back at school.
188. There was no discussion with them about why I'd ran away. We had no relationship at all. I was there under duress on their part. I was a source of income. In their minds, there'd be no need for any discussion. I think [REDACTED] understood what had caused the upset and was surprised it hadn't happened before.

#### Abuse at the AJS/AJT [REDACTED]

189. I can't recall ever being struck in the foster home. I do remembering being in the room that I shared with the foster father. On this occasion, the foster father would have been sleeping. I remember being in bed one day when I was fourteen or fifteen. I've always been a light sleeper. I felt a hand on my privates. I think it happened late at night. I

suddenly got up. I wondered what it was. My foster mother was beside the bed with her hand under the covers. I didn't complain. I think I asked what was wrong with the bed or whether she was tidying up the bed clothes. It wasn't accidental contact. Her hand was underneath my pyjamas, directly on my penis.

190. There was clearly an element of sexuality there. That's the only occasion I can recall that happening. At the time, I was just surprised. I didn't see it as sexual. It was only after years and years of social work and hearing various stories that I realised it wasn't right. I never spoke to the foster mother about it. I never told a social worker. I looked back and saw it in a different light.

### Leaving foster care

191. In my final year at school, I was accepted for university and for halls of residence. I was so pleased I got the grades necessary for entry to a new chapter in my life. I was in [REDACTED] in the Pollok Halls of Residence. I stayed in halls of residence all year round throughout my time at university. I never stayed in Loanhead overnight again.
192. Between the ages of 18 and 21, there was always something which was called subvention. Legally, I may have hit the age where Edinburgh Corporation was no longer involved. I didn't have a social worker from the age of eighteen or any visits. From my extensive archive, it is interesting to discover one or two notes that were sent to me at various points. It was a partial allowance from the Edinburgh Corporation to help keep my body and soul together. I was at the University of Edinburgh at the time. They held a continuing financial responsibility for me. They gave me a regular sum, either every quarter or every six weeks. They sent it to me to assist in my well-being. It was like a continuing "care allowance". I wasn't in care, but it was part of their responsibility until such time as I had finished what I was doing.
193. One of the individuals who I interviewed [REDACTED] was <sup>AJQ</sup> [REDACTED]. He was quite an academic at Aberlour. He stayed there right up until his late teens. He was also

provided with an allowance from his local authority to assist him in further training and education. The local authority at that time had the power so to provide for children who had been in the care system in the recent past. I think there was a statutory basis for it.

### **Life after being in care**

#### *Further education*

194. When I was still at school, I'd spent a summer vacation at [REDACTED] Mental hospital, near Edinburgh. It intrigued me and I found it fascinating. I was particularly interested in the psychiatric administration side of it, as well as working with individuals who had a mental health issue. One of the reasons for pursuing a social science degree was to spend some time thinking about some of these issues, to see if this was an area I would eventually end up in.
195. I arrived at university in 1972. I was nineteen. I was studying for a collective social sciences degree. There were sections on social anthropology, social history, criminology and administration on nursing. I did very well at criminology, but I was doing equally well in social anthropology. I was being invited to seriously consider doing social anthropology.
196. During my time at Edinburgh University, as I was doing the programme, I lost interest in the thought of entering into psychiatric nursing administration. I would have to do the general nursing side first, which would take all the time on the programme, plus an extra professional qualification. Only then could I begin to be able to explore the psychiatric side. My initial interest in the administration of psychiatric nursing started to change. The subjects I took prepared me for entry into social work.
197. I spent some time at [REDACTED] towards the end of my time at university. By then, I'd already decided to move into social work. My understanding of social work at the age of 21 was that it could be a source of social change, not only

for individuals but for wider societal benefit. I really saw social work as a vehicle for possible social justice change.

198. My knowledge of the detail of changes to the social work profession was minimal at that stage. I was concentrating on getting through my individual subjects of the degree programme. I was reading the papers, reading about the proposed changes and reading about the possible impact of the proposed changes to the existing service. There was that sort of background noise about the changes, but I was unaware of the detail.
199. I graduated in 1976. Before I graduated, I'd made up my mind that I wanted to do social work. I went to Moray House College of Education, which was one of the largest social work training programmes in Scotland at that time. I did my professional qualification and training there between 1976 and 1978. I obtained a diploma in social work, which at that time it was called the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work. I graduated with distinction and was jointly top of the class.
200. About ten years later after leaving Moray House, I embarked upon trying to develop managerial qualifications. I went to Aston University to do a masters in public service management. I was working at the same time, so that took two years. I then went to the London School of Economics to study for a masters in housing management, with a professional qualification. That was another two year part-time course.

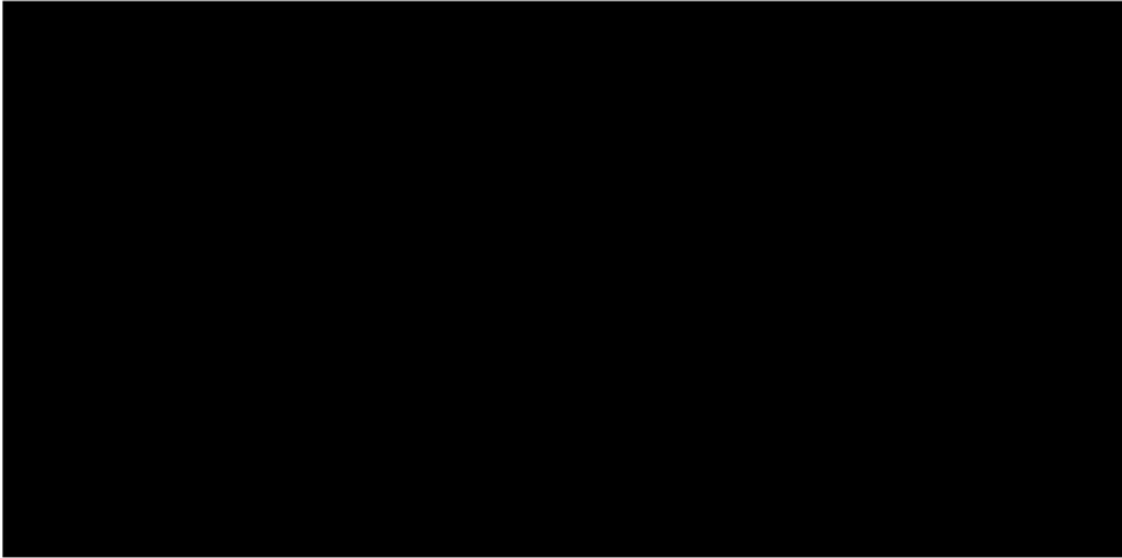
#### *Professional experience*

201. When I qualified in 1978, I went to London and worked in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. I was there for about five years. I was then promoted to a specialist post, senior practitioner in childcare. I was in fostering and adoption, still working for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. I did that for about a year.
202. I then moved to the London Borough of Hackney, having been appointed as a senior social worker. I was in charge of a team of about twelve staff. I was there for about three years. I was promoted to principal of social work in the same borough. At that

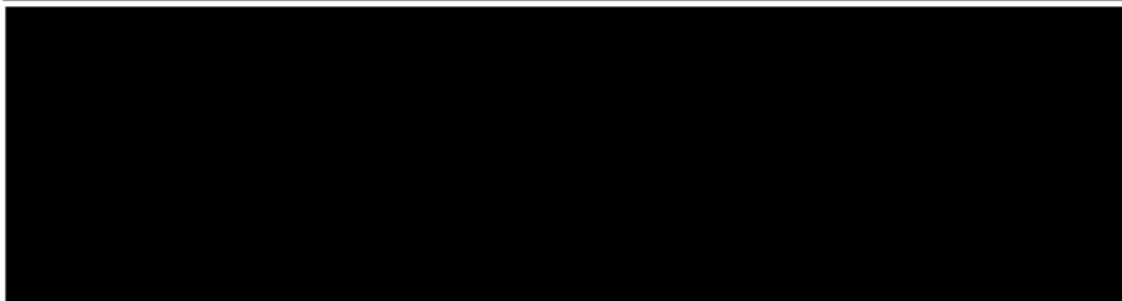
time, the principal social worker managed about thirty plus staff members, serving about a quarter of the population of the borough. I had senior managerial, policy and strategic responsibilities. I was working directly with head office and the director of social work for the London Borough of Hackney.

203. Visiting homes on a day to day basis stopped when I became a senior social worker. However, even as a senior, if a very complicated case came to the team and the team couldn't handle it, you would sometimes pair with social worker in order to check that things weren't falling apart. As a senior and a principal social worker, there was always an element of being involved. You weren't so much involved on a day to day basis, but you would be involved in periodic case reviews. You'd give your views and you might even be chairing these case conferences. There really wasn't a time when you could say you had no day to day involvement with the front line, either with the staff or with individual cases. You certainly weren't managing the cases, but you were commenting on them at reviews or case conferences.

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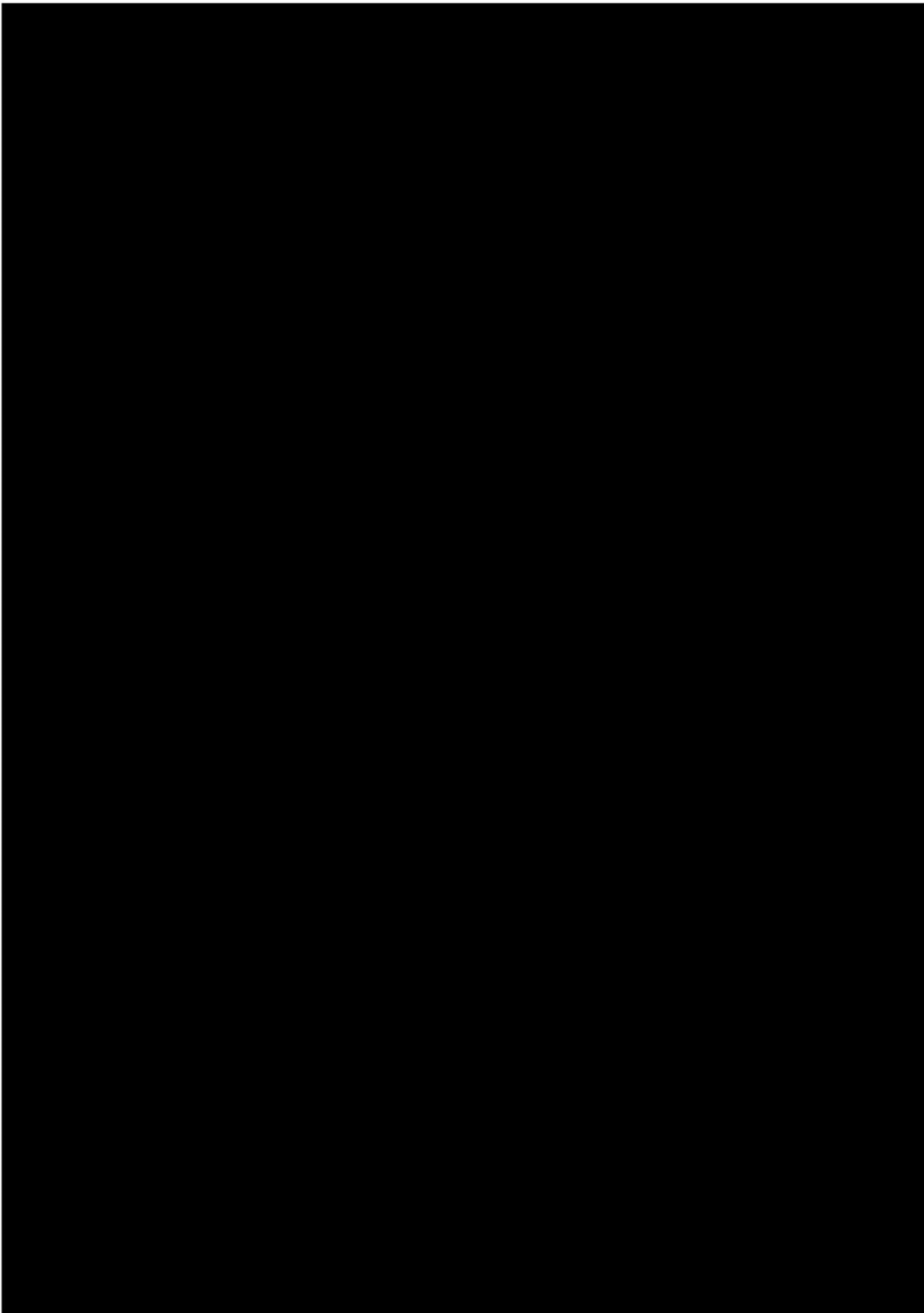


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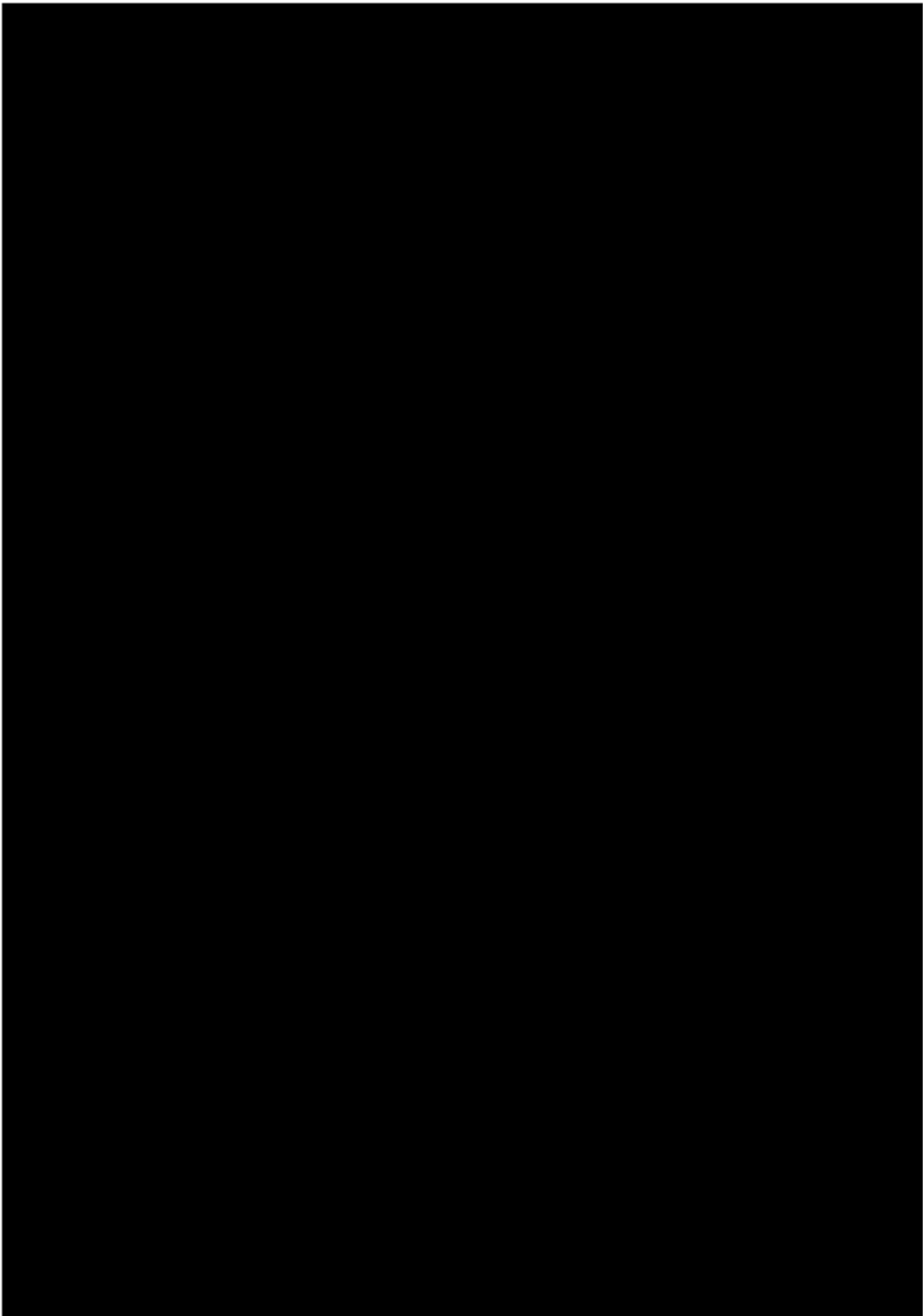
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219. I was then very surprised to be contacted by the regulatory body that covers all social work education and training in the UK. It was not just the training but the practice of

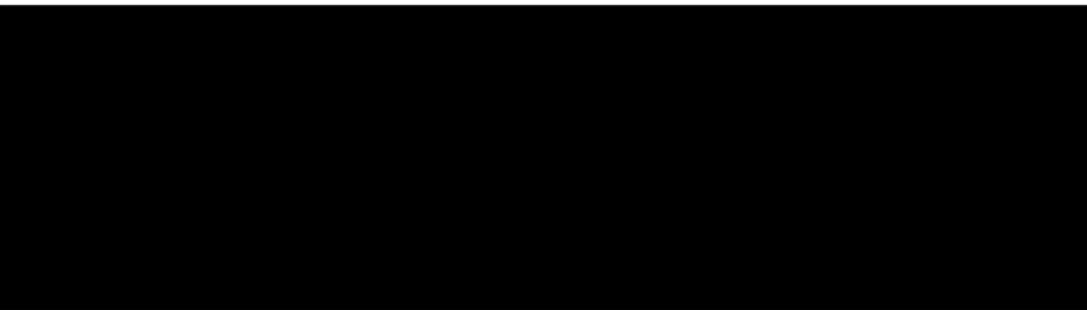
social work across the UK, including Scotland. We had our own office in Edinburgh. It was called the [REDACTED] known as the [REDACTED]. They contacted me about what was happening in [REDACTED]. They asked if I would be interested in applying for a post as assistant [REDACTED] position in the regulatory and publications division.

220. I was one of three assistant [REDACTED]. One was for finance, one was for education and I was involved in training, new publications and new developments. We all worked as a very close team under [REDACTED], who was then the director. I enjoyed it thoroughly. I had responsibilities for [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It was quite a formidable post and I was travelling quite a bit. It was all about the regulation of social work education and training. I had to assess the programmes that provided the training and see if they were up to scratch against standards approved by government. We were directly working to government. It was a government, arm's length organisation. It was the organisation responsible for all education and training of social workers in the UK at that time.

221. I did that until about 1993. I'd been at the top of my profession for a while by then. I'd worked with huge numbers of people and achieved various things. I decided to work for myself. I set up my own consultancy in social work, community well-being and housing. By that time, I'd done my masters in housing at LSE and had my professional qualification. I would do some social work by invitation for inquiries.

222.



223. I continued my consultancy, which was very successful, until the end of 2003. I was headhunted for my professorship in Canada. That is what led me to Canada in 2004. I have been very successful there and I have reached the top in my area. I started at

the top actually. I now have my own business in life-coaching in Canada. I continue to do doctoral work.

*Professional observations on social work practice and placing children*

224. Nobody asked me how I felt about moving to the foster home. Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> didn't know. She wasn't even there when I left. Aberlour wouldn't ask the question. They were receiving a fee. They had been told by the placing agency. They had no authority to question the decision. I was really quite surprised to see the note in my records about Aberlour's concern. Ultimately, the decision was made. If somebody had sat down with me and asked what I wanted, there's no doubt that I would have said I wanted to stay at Aberlour. I would have said that had the question been asked.
225. In my professional experience, if a child stated at a conference that he didn't want to be moved from a residential setting into foster care, if the conference is one which has the best interests of the child and puts the child at the core of decision making, you would listen very carefully to what the child is saying and secondly, explore gently the child's meaning in terms of the decision. You would ask what it is about the residential setting that makes him want to stay. You're not questioning or coming across in an inquisitorial way. You're trying to explore the meaning the child has about wishing to stay where he is. You wouldn't do that with a whole lot of people sitting around, gaping. Once you've explored that, you'd go back to the team. It's a collective team decision. The team would then have to decide whether in the light of their decision, they can seek to accommodate the child's wishes.
226. I've seen in practice situations where a child is wedded to a particular setting, for one reason or another. That setting may not be seen as being as helpful to the child, according to the professionals working with that child. It's about exploring with the child what's causing this weddedness and then working out if it's damaging in any way how that could be managed in a way that alleviates the feelings of concerns amongst professional.

227. If the professionals don't want to go down that route at all and they feel that the first decision needs to happen, regardless of the child's views, they have to be very clear about why. It then needs to be argued out and it could be argued out in court. I've been involved in such settings, where there has been a major dispute between the individual child and the social workers about what is best. The child is saying one thing and the "experts" are saying another and then the court is asked to make a determination.
228. When I was working as a senior manager in social work, I would make the child a ward of court in situations where there was a possibility of moving a child without discussion or exploration or there was a dispute. At that time in England, if a child was a ward of court, nobody moved anywhere. It stopped it in its tracks and maintained the status quo. It meant that the child was brought under the direct supervision of the court. Although the child was already in care, making the child a ward of court was an additional step. It wasn't seen in this way, but what you were actually doing was a protection of the child against the system itself by placing the responsibility for the final decision with the court.
229. In those situations, it wasn't just the judge deciding the matter for him or herself. An independent professional was also appointed, a guardian ad litem. The guardian ad litem would see the child, see the family, meet all these individuals with varying views and come to a view and recommend that view to the court. Based on the guardian ad litem's report, a decision would be made by the judge, either going along with the recommendation or not.
230. I, and others like me, used wardship several times in order to gain the advice and expertise of the court. You had to present your case for going for wardship, as it wasn't automatic. The decision to apply for wardship fell to the senior manager. If the senior manager didn't want to invoke that process, then it didn't happen. The fate of the child and the child's views rested heavily on the judgement of the senior social worker. I remember having a number of discussions when I had to explain going down that particular route. The point is, the focus has to be to address what the child's wishes, as far as possible. Mine always was, and I was noted for it.

231. It's very difficult, particularly in situations where there is an element of risk. Some options are preferred by staff because there is less risk of things going wrong. Our high quality work is always risky. You can never predict what's going to happen. You can lessen the risk with your knowledge and expertise, with support and by asking for advice and guidance. However, at the end of the day no social worker, especially now with their increasingly numerous and complex case load, can actually say, hand on heart, "I've got no risk with case A, B and C that I have on my case load." I'm still in touch with social workers and some of my family members are fairly senior social workers in London. The reality is there's always risk and we prefer to minimise that risk because then we can sleep better at night.
232. When I worked in Hackney, I remember an occasion where there was a dispute about a decision I'd made. I wanted wardship to be engaged and I was having to make the case before a more senior member of staff. In this case, it would have been about additional expense. It went up to the assistant director or the director. It basically comes back to what you think is important and what you do the job for. I said, "If you don't want to back me on this, I will give you the file." I took the children's file, went to the director's office, placed it on the desk and said, "Here's the file." Needless to say, the file came back with me because I meant business.
233. You've made a decision based on your professional judgement and the professional judgement of others. Therefore, you have to ask yourself whether you are going to be able to live with yourself if it doesn't go in that particular direction. If you feel, hand on heart, that you can't live with it then you place the responsibility where it lies, and that's with your senior. If the director had disagreed with me, that would have been fine. I would have left the file on his desk because I would have no responsibility for it.
234. It's about whether you are confident enough and able enough to live with your principles, which have been drummed into you over your period of training and subsequently in practice and confirmed by further learning and education and your peers, who you respect highly. You've got to ask yourself whether you can live with a decision or not and if you can't then you've got to be explicit.



235. Senior managers may not have liked some of my stances and positions, but they were always backed up with evidence. It was always clear because I had to do my homework very well. That went back to my earlier days. They may not have liked me all the time, but they did respect me. That's been the story of my working life. I'm pleased with that because the object is not to be the most liked person in the universe. The object is to be somebody who is reasonably competent, principled, admits when he is wrong and moves forward.
236. I honestly believed then, as I believe now, that there are excellent residential establishments for children. Some children do need a residential placement for a whole variety of reasons. They might need specialist skills provided within a multi professional context. Some children cannot stand the prospect of going back into a "family-type" setting, simply because they've had such a grim experience in their birth family. It would be too damaging for them to go into a similar type family structure. Those children have to be placed within a residential setting. I still believe residential care has a major role in helping to solve certain situations for certain children.
237. Generally speaking, fostering and putting children back into a normative family setting, if they cannot live in their family of origin, is no doubt the best way forward. What we have to address is the nature of those family settings and not necessarily talking about a nuclear family setting, which was the norm at that time. Families come in a whole variety of positions and structures. We need to be cognisant of that variety and diversity when it comes to children. My own personal experience of foster parents was a disaster, but in terms of contrasting preference between residential and foster care, it depends on the identified needs of a particular child and children. At some points, another family setting is absolutely right. At other points, the residential placement may be the best. It's not just any residential placement, it's specialist residential placement.

*Contact with foster family*

238. Even after I left foster care, I decided to continue to visit the family. My foster mother had chronic arthritis. She could move about, but only just. [REDACTED] is a long road. When I used to go and visit, I'd see her in the window as I walked up the road.

She'd sit and watch everything going on. She knew everything that was going on in the neighbourhood. They weren't long visits. We'd have a conversation and then I'd go back to university.

239. One day, I went off to visit my foster mother. On this occasion, I was stopped by a neighbour. She asked how I was doing and what I was doing. I told her I was there to see my mum. She looked a bit startled. She said, "Did nobody tell you? She's dead. She's been dead for some time."
240. This gives you an indication of the relationship between myself and the family. They didn't need to tell a foster child that had been there for more than eight years that his "carer", his "mother" had died. They knew where I was because I'd left them all the details. They could have phoned or [REDACTED] husband could have driven to the halls of residence. Basically, I didn't have to know because I really wasn't part of the set up.
241. After I found out my foster mother was dead, I didn't have much more contact with my foster family. I think I may have visited [REDACTED] once. [REDACTED] worked in the mine at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for a while. He then went off to Kenya in his twenties and worked in the mines there. He got out and got married and had several children. I met up with them when I was in London. It was the mid-eighties because I'd had my first child. He had managed to get in contact with me. I met his wife for the first time and the two or three children he had at the time. That was the last contact we had.

*Contact with birth family*

242. In 1983, I was engaged to my future wife. I was thirty. My fiancée said I'd met her family and asked where mine was. I said I didn't really have any family. She said I must have a mother and a father. I told her I didn't know my father's whereabouts and I didn't even know his name. I told her my mum was still alive but I hadn't seen her for a long time. She suggested I make contact through my sister, [REDACTED]. My sisters had been farmed out to relatives and had regular contact with my mother, unbeknown to me. I'd put it off long enough. I contacted my sister and asked her if I could arrange a meeting with my mother.

243. My sister was a bit anxious. I hadn't seen my mum for a long time and my sister knew I was not wildly happy about her. She was very protective of my mum. In spite of all of that, eventually a meeting was arranged. I went down to my sister's home in Manchester to see my mother. I went into the garden with my fiancée and I could see that my mum was looking at a photograph. I introduced my wife and reintroduced myself. She was completely silent. That's how it remained. She didn't say anything. She just sat there and kept periodically raising her head, looking at me.
244. My sister tried to make things work. She tried to get [REDACTED] my fiancée, to chat to my mum. She was completely anxious and didn't know what to do with her son, who she hadn't seen for more than thirty years. I decided not to push it so that's how I left it. I made my farewells and went back to London.
245. The second meeting was in Manchester, arranged through my sister. It was five or six years later. This time, I had my two sons and daughter. This time, we were in the living room. My mother was sitting on the settee by herself. I walked in with my wife and three children. My mother looked up and didn't say anything. I said hello and introduced the children. She wasn't really too interested. I waited for ten minutes. I then said, "Hell, no. I am not going to have my children treated the same way as I was." I picked up each of my children and placed them next to my mother. I took a picture of them.
246. That was the last time I saw my mother before she died. She lived quite a lot longer and died in her seventies. She moved to Ireland with a boyfriend. It was never disclosed to me where she lived before that. A few years later, I got the news that she died. The funeral had taken place and she'd been buried. My sister, [REDACTED] told me. She was a bit apologetic that I hadn't been invited. No explanation was given. They obviously didn't want me there.
247. In 2014 or 2015, I decided to go and find where she was buried. I flew over from Canada with my two sons. I had great difficulty moving at the time as a result of injuries I sustained in an accident in 2007. I had a walking stick so my sons wanted to keep me safe. Eventually, we found the church and the graveyard on the border of Northern

and Southern Ireland. We didn't know where the grave was. We had to go up and down this hill, looking at all these graves to find my mother. In the second last line that we looked at, we saw a photograph of my mother. I had a copy of that photograph in my archive, so I knew that was her grave.

248. The crunch was that I was looking at the names of all the children on my mother's grave. There was no sign of me. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were there, but additionally there was a list of six other children who I didn't know existed. I took a photograph of it. I didn't mention it to [REDACTED] but I did tell her I'd been there with my two sons. Here was my mother, leading a new life in Ireland with a whole set of new children that I knew nothing about. I was excluded from the list of her children. I was not part of the family because I'd been removed.
249. Over the next couple of years, I managed to make contact with a number of individuals related to my mother, her sisters, various other relative and also two or three of the children listed on the gravestone. The children were living in the Midlands and I went to see them. They'd heard my name, but they didn't know who I was either. They were talking about what a wonderful mother she was, a mother I didn't know about.
250. I never met my father, but I found his grave. It was in Spartanburg, Union County, South Carolina. I was almost killed in an accident in 2007. I was on the sidewalk and a car lost control because the driver wasn't paying attention. I was in hospital for several months, on death's door. The driver had to provide compensation through the insurance company. I didn't know how long I had to go, because of the serious damage that had been caused. With that money, I decided that I would make sure that I would find my parents so I could finish that story for my children and they had some closure.
251. I employed international private detectives to see if they could trace my father. A company in France took it on. In my Aberlour records, there was a putative father's name, [REDACTED] I knew he had been in the American Air Force. I knew that he was based in Scotland round about a certain time. That was all the private detectives could go on. I thought he might still be alive. They found his grave and his family within a

month. His wife had died a few months earlier, so I missed being able to meet my step mother.

252. The private detectives discovered that there was a host of family members, children of [REDACTED]. They were all over the United States. I now have direct contact with and have visited several times my birth family on my father's side. I have not had enough time or money to visit as much as I should, but now I have a new found family. When I went there the first time, I got DNA testing through the eldest son. It confirmed with 99.9 percent certainty that this was my family.
253. I've met four of my sisters and a couple of brothers. They had a photograph beforehand and one of the sisters said they knew right away that I was part of the [REDACTED] family. My mouth and facial features looked very like my father's. When they saw me in person, there was just no debate. There was immediate warmth, immediate resounding pleasure that a long lost brother had arrived. I've visited several times since and hope to go later this year.
254. My father remained in the Air Force. It was the height of segregation when my father was in the Air Force. I think he was in his late seventies, early eighties when he died. He was quite senior for a black Air Force man. He wasn't an officer because black people couldn't become officers at that time, but he was the top rank before an officer. He had very senior Air Force men at his funeral. He was married and had children before he was stationed in Scotland. Most of the time, he was away from the family on Air Force business. His wife suspected that he was probably up to no good when he was travelling and she was absolutely right.
255. I have thought, "What if my father had owned me?" He disowned me at the hospital. He was asked by the social worker at the hospital, as I was arriving, whether I was his. Obviously, I was his because I was a black baby and he was the only black person there. He denied it. There was never any formal acknowledgement that I was his son. In the Aberlour Orphanage records, they had to ask the name of the father and it stated, [REDACTED] putative father."

256. My life has really been one of rejection, abandonment and trying to manage that in terms of moving forward with my own life, essentially under my own direction. And then I discovered in my thirties, forties and fifties further evidence of that rejection from my birth family, having already had it from my foster family. Throughout my chronological childhood, Aberlour Orphanage was the only place where I ever felt wanted, loved and cared for. It never happened elsewhere, until I got married and created my own family. I now three wonderful children, all doing very well, and six grandchildren. We love each other and spend a lot of time together.

### **Impact**

257. Aberlour was linked to the Episcopalian church. I'm not Episcopalian, but I still have a strong Christian faith. I'm a regular church goer and I was a church elder right up until I left the UK. I believe you're either a follower of Christ or you're not. How you go about your worship and your Christian mission is essentially down to you. You try and seek out whichever structure best fits your interpretation of your mission. It's very personal. No matter where I go in the world, I'm always in church. It's not always a Christian church. I can go to a mosque or a synagogue. I'm absolutely fascinated by them. I get a feeling from these religious institutions.

258. At present, I go to three churches. I go to a Baptist church in Nova Scotia, where the congregation is largely black. I go to a much smaller church, where I know the pastors and the pastors know me and my family. I also go to an almost exclusively white church. I make a point of visiting these various churches. All of them fit in very well with my interpretation of my mission in terms of trying to be as Christ like as I can be in today's world. All of that started at Aberlour. My faith started in Aberlour.

259. When I left Aberlour, there was a gradual realisation that it's basically down to you. You have people who come in and out and who are very important. There are circumstances and structures that are also important. You can see how my life had to be driven by myself. There's no such thing as a soul author of your life story. People,

circumstances, luck, time come in and out of your life. At the end of it, you have to make sense of it, you have to drive it on and that's what I did.

260. The surroundings of Aberlour Orphanage were beautiful and always gave me that wonderful feeling of nature, which I've carried throughout my life. I love beautiful buildings, particularly old buildings. I visit them whenever I travel around the world, particularly religious institutions. I've got a particular fascination with individuals who are professedly, authoritatively good in certain positions, in terms of pastors and people who try and act in a godly way. I'm drawn to people like that, in terms of where they live and congregate. Until the age of eleven, I had people in my life who I saw as authoritative rather than authoritarian. That moulded the way I look at people now.
261. When I was at Aberlour, I behaved in a way that didn't aggravate the staff. They liked being around me, which you can see in some of the photographs. I liked being around the staff because I was being loved and cared for and if somebody was reaching out to me, I would automatically reach out to them. If somebody smiles at me, it is automatic that I will smile back. If you greet me, I am going to return your greeting. I am never rude. No matter how dreadful you are towards me, I will never be offensive towards you. These are traits from Aberlour.
262. All of my life, I've been involved with Aberlour Orphanage and the Aberlour Family Childcare Trust, post the orphanage being bulldozed in the 1970s. I thought Aberlour Family Childcare Trust would have established some sort of vehicle where former residents could make contact and find out something about themselves. That was never done. I don't know why. Former residents of Aberlour have always been at the forefront of this and done it themselves. That follows on from our experiences at Aberlour where we created family out of nothing. Most of us were abandoned, dumped, somehow discarded. The creation of that family was essentially those children we were living with. Some of that connection has remained for decades and will continue till we die.
263. The attempt to silence the past was a major flaw in terms of the function of Aberlour Orphanage. It is still my home. I still love it. I owe my life to what they taught me in



terms of hard work and in terms of having a mission for myself. I am not taking any of that away, but the major flaw is that it destroyed my past. As a result, it took 45 years plus to try and make these connections. Some of the connections I couldn't make. So much water has passed under the bridge, my birth family didn't want to know in contrast to the birth family on my father's side.

264. The damage to me as a child revolved around the sudden removal from my family and my home at Aberlour. It was also the cessation of childhood. My childhood stopped at the age of eleven when I went into foster care. The assumption of adult responsibilities didn't take place in Aberlour. Things naturally flowed there and I did things as "a child". There was nothing I needed to think about and manage the consequences. At the foster home, I had to be adult very early on in terms of being managerial and thinking about the consequences. I was into the business of calculating what was in my best interests. I began to see that at the end of the day, young as I was chronologically, it was down to me to make the best of the mess.
265. Not being told that my foster mother had died reflected the entire period of my life in foster care. I tried to be part of the family, I wanted to be part of the family and did my very best, using what knowledge I'd gained from Aberlour and the practical skills, trying to be helpful. I tried every which way to be part of the family, but it was quite clear I wasn't wanted. I created alternatives, in school and church, and I moved on.
266. My strong belief, and this is reflected in my experiential life, is that we are here for purpose. The purpose is not ordained. I believe we have a huge amount of self-interpretation and hard work to do along the way. It's down to you to make the most of the various steps that are outlined along the way. You might attain the eventual outcome or you might not. It's down to you to do what you can. That is very much my strong belief. I also believe you have to be as decent as you can be to other people and live as decent a life as you can. There's a strong element of societal contribution, trying to do your best and be as decent person as you can be. I credit Aberlour with instilling those beliefs in me.

267. I never had a childhood. That agedness was brought home to my children when I was rearing them. When my children were in their early years and in their teenage years, they actually taught me what it was like to be young. They showed me what children do, what they get pleasure from and it was really insightful. I remember taking them to France with my wife. We went up the Eiffel Tower. My kids, being kids, wanted to run up and run down the steps. I was this sort of safe, sensible adult, but of course I joined them and ran up and ran down. I felt wonderfully excited, I felt childlike and we enjoyed it so much we did it again.
268. That is an example of <sup>BCS</sup> [REDACTED] as an adult male, a family man, with children, discovering what it is like from his children to be young, because I was never young before. That developed into lovely holidays where we had fun altogether and I discovered more and more what it is like to be youthful. I never was that as a child and the parental agency is culpable for that tragic loss. I recovered it and I have great fun with my grandchildren, all six of them. They are very young, all under seven and so it is exciting. But when I am with my grandchildren and also with my own children, Aberlour is never far away. I am drawn back to my chronological childhood and my chronological youth and there was no youth there, I was always old. I don't criticise that and I am not pining for it or crying at night because of it, but it is a fact. It has made me very successful and that is why I've reach the top.
269. After several years in the foster home, I decided that I wanted to get out on my own terms and that was through education. Everybody on my street was either on benefits or working in the mine. That became fairly clear to me over the first couple of years in Loanhead. I did not want to go anywhere near the mine. I had my foster father's spittoon, the spitting and somebody dying in bed over a lengthy period of time to remind me. And so I said to myself that it wasn't for me. Therefore, school became even more of a priority. It was an exit for me. It was an opportunity for me to try and get the grades that I needed to ease my way out of the foster home.
270. My own experience of social work service as somebody in care was simply appalling. That did have an impact on me. It prompted me in the direction of social work as a career. I felt that I could do a much better job, drawing upon my experiences.

271. My own experiences in care didn't influence me when it came to making choices for to place children. My personal inclinations, based on my lived experience, most demonstrably had an impact upon my practice as a social worker. I would argue with anybody who says that it doesn't have an impact, no matter how much training you've had to drill that out of you. That lived experience and it's possible impact upon your decision making needs to be highlighted so that the individuals you are working with, in terms of the joint decision making regarding children's futures, are clear. With that clarity, individuals round the table can actually, knowing what the preferences are and the reasons for those preferences, can basically manage that with their knowledge, expertise and current learning and can actually see what is best. You have to be clear.
272. I have been very successful and I can see myself in the history books in terms of the work I have done. I can see myself in the building named after me. I can see myself in books and in learning articles. I don't have to justify my existence to anybody. I never do. I am accepted as an international authority in the areas that I work in. All of that was put on to major jeopardy [REDACTED]. I recovered and that resilience comes from Aberlour.

## **Records**

### *Aberlour*

273. I didn't have any difficulty getting records from Aberlour Orphanage. There was an individual there called Miss Black, who I used to call the archivist. She was the go to person for former residents of Aberlour. She still has an association with Aberlour Children's Trust, but she's not seen as the archivist. I've not had any dealings with that archivist whatsoever. Ann Black was hugely helpful and provided my records in a timely fashion.

274. Miss Black has been a central figure not only for myself but for other former residents of Aberlour Orphanage. She is the go to person. She's a wonderful person and a mine field of information. She had a background in social work and used to work for the Edinburgh Corporation. When it comes to detailed knowledge about the history of Aberlour Orphanage and individuals now aged between their late fifties to nineties, nobody is more knowledgeable about those individuals and their records than Ann Black.
275. Ann Black was able to facilitate access to my records and enabled me to obtain copies of them. I've had those records for 20 to 25 years. Those records were held in locked basement vaults in Stirling. I'm assuming Ann Black had a set of keys for those vaults, but they were held very securely. I wasn't allowed access to the vaults, but I saw them from the outside. The Aberlour records were meticulously catalogued. Over six thousand children have passed through the corridors of Aberlour in its 92 year history. Every one of those individuals is catalogued in the system, even if he or she was only there for a day.
276. My records from Aberlour were handwritten records. Type writers weren't a common thing, even in the sixties. They were legible and beautifully written. There were individuals at Aberlour Orphanage who had specific responsibilities for the record keeping. Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> would have been consulted about my records, because you can see all the information is coming from her. She would be talking to somebody and that person would write it down. She may well have written something and passed it to the person and then that person wrote it up in the records. I've not seen Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> handwriting. There may well be bits in the records where it is her handwriting, but I don't recognise it.
277. You can see a trail of similar handwriting throughout my records. In my case, the warden Dean Wolfe was there throughout my time and would have been doing all the writing. He was hugely influential and he did quite a lot of the record keeping at the time.

278. Dean Wolfe was popular and mixed with the children and was very social and played with the children. He wrote about the children from his own experience, not just from what he'd heard from a staff member. He was succeeded by Reverend Leslie. The quality of my contact with Reverend Leslie was different to my contact with Dean Wolfe. This had major implications for writing. Reverend Leslie wasn't there to interact with the children and be nice to them. That was not his job. Reverend Leslie was not noted for writing about individual children. He didn't know them. Dean Wolfe knew them and the children went to see him directly. He wasn't relying upon anybody else. Post Dean Wolfe, the writing for any child would be minimal in terms of content about progress and development.
279. A variety of individuals took photographs of the children at Aberlour. The first time I saw a photograph of myself in Aberlour was when I was in my fifties. None of the photographs were known to us as children. We didn't really know that photographs were being taken. Some of the pictures were taken by the staff, trying to get a picture of Dean Wolfe with the children. Some were staged. One such picture is a photograph of me with Dean Wolfe and another child.<sup>17</sup> The reason I say it is more staged is that it is a staff photograph for a purpose. This was contributing to a message that everybody was accepted at Aberlour, regardless of colour. Aberlour produced a brochure periodically for promotional purposes. It was mainly text, but there were some photographs.
280. Some photographs were individually kept by staff and passed on to the children. I probably have the largest archive of photographs outside Aberlour Childcare Family Trust. [REDACTED] I was in contact with a significant number of individuals periodically, asking them whether they might have any photographs that might be about Aberlour Orphanage and, if so, whether they'd be willing to share them.
281. There was no place we could go to in order to obtain photographs. There is no archive of photographs. Others did the same as me as adults. We would contact each other,

if we still had contact details, and ask each other if we had anything that would give a clearer picture of our stay in the orphanage between certain dates.

282. I went to the village of Aberlour on the two hundredth anniversary of the village. Usually, I would meet somebody with a connection to the orphanage in Aberlour. Some of the nursery staff still live there. On that occasion, Miss Legge introduced herself to me and told me that she had some photographs. She brought out these marvellous pictures and I was in them. It was absolutely wonderful. I got them copied and sent the originals back.
283. I knew these pictures were not for any kind of photo shop for the organisation. They were taken out of love for the children in an effort to capture some sort of image of that wonder. They did, very successfully. The expectation was not that they were going to hand them over to the children some time later. They didn't expect to see the nursery children after they left. Now and again, somebody came into their circuit, as I did. I've been in very high powered jobs throughout my life. I've been sent photographs by former members of staff. It was very nice.
284. If, as a child, you have no picture of yourself and somebody sends you a picture forty years later and says that it's you at eighteen months, you have no idea whether it's you. They say it's you, they worked at the nursery so you hope it's you, you want it to be you. You have to do your own detective work, so you go to people who knew you at that age. I took them to Aunty <sup>AJF</sup> because we managed to keep in sporadic contact. I showed her a couple of photographs that had been sent to me and she confirmed that it was me. Miss Heap did the same. Without that external validation, you do not know it's you. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
285. I have seen the records of other former residents in the course of my research. Their records are similar to my own in terms of the sort of areas that are covered. Some are more voluminous than mine. My records are really quite scant because I didn't cause any trouble. I don't think punishments were recorded. What a child was doing wrong was recorded, rather than how he or she was dealt with. The nearest you'd get to a



record of discipline would be reference to a child being sent to the warden. Some children had quite severe medical conditions, so there would be more entries in their records.

286. At certain points in my records from Aberlour, there are some glimpses of who I am as a child and how I was as a child. For example, they talk about me being affectionate and that I was a bit of a "pet". You can see a limited picture of me emerging in the Aberlour records, but you would want more. There was nothing recorded from the child's perspective about the child's view of Aberlour, other than the odd comment about me appearing to be happy and content.

*Edinburgh Corporation*

287. In my view, the contrast between Edinburgh Corporation and Aberlour was stark in terms of records. Edinburgh Corporation kept providing obstacle after obstacle for a period of twenty years. Edinburgh Corporation demonstrated a lack of interest and a lack of responsiveness. It was almost as if it was a task too much for them and they had much more important matters to deal with. I'm not the sort of person that would be treated in that way. I wasn't going to lie under a log and remain there, I was going to get my records.
288. It was twenty years after my initial request that I received my care records from Edinburgh Corporation. First of all, they said that they had lost them. They then said they had been destroyed by a flood in the basement, along with hordes of other children's records. I never believed that and I took it up with various parties. Needless to say, they were not destroyed.
289. I think they might have had them all the time, but they were only released after I applied a great deal of pressure. They were there and they were eventually found with external assistance. I have microfiche copies of my records. I received them in the mid to late 90s. You would get no feel for who I was as a child from reading my social work records.



## Final thoughts on Aberlour Orphanage

### *Observations on former residents of Aberlour*

290. There has been, amongst the former residents of Aberlour, an attempt to set up some sort of social media circuit where we can make it more formal as opposed to individuals doing their own thing. An example of this was [REDACTED] who was a former resident, and [REDACTED], who was her husband. They tried to set up a circuit whereby individual former residents could contact them and send them whatever information they had about their stay at Aberlour. They pulled together hundreds of photographs relating to the children, youth, buildings and surrounding countryside of Aberlour Orphanage. They organised these into a publication of booklets before circulating them amongst individuals. They kept that going for a period of time, but regrettably publication ceased a number of years ago.
291. To my knowledge, the only website currently operating designed for former child residents of Aberlour Orphanage is of very recent origin, titled 'ex Aberlour Orphanage', set up by a former child resident of the Orphanage, <sup>BCU</sup> [REDACTED]. It is on Facebook. I am a member of this website. It's about a page of text from former residents of Aberlour talking about their experience or possibly sharing a photograph. In the last couple of weeks, there was a post asking if anybody could remember the names of the individual large houses around the village green. There was some confusion about what the names were and then it was sorted out. That is essentially how it's been done, primarily by individuals with one or two attempts to make it a little bit more "systematic".
292. In addition, there is occasionally direct contact between former child residents of Aberlour Orphanage and Aberlour Child Care Trust, primarily facilitated through Anne Black. There is also direct contact between some of us as former child residents with others in our circles of friends and family. I have an extensive network due to decades of research on Aberlour Orphanage and of those of us who lived and worked there.

293. In my talking with Ann Black and staff members of Aberlour Childcare Trust, which is the successor body to Aberlour Orphanage, I think it was felt by the organisation that it wasn't within their purview to create an official vehicle for former residents of Aberlour to make contact and find out something about themselves. That completely surprised me so I said to myself that before I died I would make sure that I had something on record, shared by as many former residents that I could make contact with, so that our experiences weren't lost.
294. An example of why that is so important is <sup>AJQ</sup> [REDACTED] He was knocking on his late eighties when he died a couple of years ago. He was a very successful man. After his experience at Aberlour, he became a journalist. He then started a law degree in his thirties. He became a top circuit lawyer and public prosecutor in Australia. He and I met in Australia when I was doing research. He said to me that Aberlour was his life and it made him the success that he was, with the support that he got.
295. <sup>AJQ</sup> [REDACTED] told me that when he died, he was going to be cremated and his ashes would be placed in St. Margaret's Church. So said, he died and his ashes are in St. Margaret's Church. We don't do things like that without a reason. What he was saying to me and what he was saying by his ashes being in St. Margaret's graveyard was, "Aberlour was so important to me, as was this church, that I want my ashes to rest there on my death. My ashes are going to be partly in the graveyard at St. Margaret's and partly thrown into the River Spey by my three children." It was in his will.
296. This was the significance of place and of Aberlour. These individuals are aging. The youngest would be about my age. There's not much time to get these stories out. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I interviewed a number of former residents, some who were there at the same time as me, and other people who had connections to the Orphanage. I selected some of those interviewed [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The interviews are all recorded and I still have them archived. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] That's what they told me in 2012 when I interviewed them.

297. I chose six former residents who were in Aberlour at the same time as me, but they weren't all in Spey House. I chose those six because some of them were in the nursery with me and some in Spey House. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] how the institution saw itself, how it ran and how we, as individuals living in it managed to survive and make of it what we did. [REDACTED]

298. I don't think I'm sanitising the experience of the children of Aberlour [REDACTED] I will have about thirty different interviews of individuals after I have interviewed a further six later this year. Even although there are individuals who have had negative experiences, whether it be abuse, bullying or a lack of adequate care, the overriding message is positive about their experience of Aberlour. It wasn't systematic in terms of the negativity that they experienced from time to time. Their overriding message was overall a positive, that it was their home, it was all they knew, it was all they had and those were the individuals they had created family with. That is not to say that there were times when bad things happened when you were upset, you were in tears and you were unhappy. That overriding message coincides with my own is that it was a positive experience and one that I look back on with unabashed positivity.

*Observations on the board and governance of Aberlour*

299. Looking at the childcare references, there were certain institutions in Europe, including Aberlour Orphanage, that were go to places for visits by professionals to see how they functioned. It's very important in terms of looking at things through a differing time lens. At the time, Aberlour Orphanage was rated quite well in comparison to other orphanages around the world. Quarriers and Barnardos, apart from their own writings, which were hugely positive and wonderful to read, were not viewed in the same league as Aberlour Orphanage. They didn't have the same donors and royalty.

300. At the time, those who visited and compared it favourably to other places. The separation of boys and girls, separation of siblings, discipline and punishment, the exit strategy, not telling the staff the child's background, taking them as far away from where they came from as possible and keeping them there for a long time and discouraging visits from parents were nowhere to be found in writing. The only thing to be found in writing was in the mission statement and literature written by the church around this time, which was that Aberlour was rescuing children, who were very damaged, and was going to transform them.
301. If the day to day practice of caring for children in the orphanage was not written down, what did people rely upon? They relied upon what was said by authoritative people, like the royal family, like Walkers shortbread, like Angus Findlay and his family, like Doctor Caldwell, who also came from a distinguished family. They told people that there might be a couple of things they'd like to sort out, but basically Aberlour was doing a wonderful job. They influence other mover and shakers, including legislature. That is how impressions were made and that is why individuals from other countries came to visit and see what was happening at Aberlour.
302. Aberlour's publications were also tailored towards to specific audiences. That added to this fire of positivity. It added to the impression that Aberlour was idyllic and the best model that could be devised. It added to the impression that they were nurturing and caring for abandoned children and producing good, upright, Christian, active workers who were contributing to society.
303. The wardens of Aberlour were hugely significant. They canvassed the entire country in person, giving sermons at various churches. Not only that, they had films made by television of what they were doing. This is how those institutions lasted for as long as they did, in spite of government deciding to close it with vivid outlines of neglect, abuse and criminality taking place in them.
304. In Aberlour Orphanage, there was a board. If the Inquiry is going to "stand up" in terms of authoritatively speaking about Aberlour, it has to gain access to the board records. There are various universities that have bits of information. The board consisted of

very illustrious and very well off individuals. The good and the great of the Highlands were regular patrons of Aberlour and a number of those individuals sat on the board. Individually, some more than others, will have held onto board papers which are not in the universities and nobody else has them. Aberlour was demolished including a huge amount of infrastructure and documentation.

305. One of the difficulties with this documentation is that there was a huge flare up regarding the decision close Aberlour Orphanage within the board. That flare up was not only about the fact that Aberlour Orphanage was actually doing a good job in terms of the children, according to some of the board members, but it was also a major source of employment and continuing income generation for the village of Aberlour. It as a significant player in the village. Not only would its closure have an effect on the children and the staff, but also the community economy of Aberlour. There was a huge investment in the orphanage on the part of a significant number of individuals in Aberlour and the surrounding areas. A decision to close the orphanage caused major concern on a whole variety of fronts and individual board members took up positions.
306. Finding out the intricacies of decision making relating to the closure of Aberlour Orphanage and the resources it had, and the resources were significant, was also a major concern of some of the key players. The records will include some of the decision making and how they made the decisions and where the resources went. When it comes to records, there is an element of protection amongst the board members and their families. Therefore, accessing the records from the families can be extremely difficult.
307. For example, if you look at the major international company of Walkers Shortbread, the family of James Walker were inter-generational members of the board of Aberlour. His mother was a teacher at the orphanage. She was also on the board and was aghast at the prospect of Aberlour Orphanage being closed. I've had personal discussions with James and have visited him on a couple of occasions. The family was hugely influential in the operation of Aberlour Orphanage. The founder of Walkers Shortbread produced the bread and rolls for the orphanage. James is protecting his

mother and father in terms of decisions. If the Inquiry approaches to look for board records, it will not be easy and will have to be handled with extreme delicacy.

308. I had a meeting with James Walker's mother in 2013. She had a beautiful home in the Highlands. I also met Angus Findlay. Both of them were on the Aberlour board. Angus' parents and grandparents were huge patrons of Aberlour. Angus is protecting his family, but there's no doubt that there are records there. These are hugely influential families in the Highlands.
309. I have no doubt that papers held by individuals may shed light on any abuse that took place at Aberlour. Aberlour might have minutes of board meetings themselves, but quite a lot of these things wouldn't be in board minutes. They'd be dealt with outside in private discussions and probably personal correspondence between the individual board members. Aberlour Orphanage was in the public eye. It was patronised by royalty. Therefore, it had to be extremely careful in terms of how it was seen publicly.
310. When it came to records, they had to make sure that nothing in the records suggested anything different to the "party line". Official minutes from board meetings will not tell you a great deal. What will tell you a great deal more is having the connection and relationship with individual board members who are still alive and can take you through some of the records that they have. They may include personal discussions amongst board members, discussions that took place over dinner.

#### **Lessons to be learned**

311. I do hold certain people responsible for my personal experience and what went wrong. In terms of my experience of Aberlour Orphanage, I believe that period was the only period where I felt loved, accepted and acknowledged for who I was. [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

312. The mission statement of Aberlour was to take children from their background and essentially recreate them. Their backgrounds were seen as stigmatic and not healthy. That resulted in you basically losing the past and you had to think and focus on the future. I think that was a major flaw because the children who arrived did have a past, even me at three months. We did have connections. There was no attempt made to try and keep some of these connections alive or, at least, let us know what the connections were so that we could perhaps draw on them later on when we left Aberlour. I think that, over time, this flaw was realised after the closure and destruction of Aberlour Orphanage.
313. The second comment I'd like to make in terms of culpability relates to Edinburgh Corporation, the agency acting in loco parentis. I see it as culpable and liable for the foster placement. I succeeded in the foster placement in spite of my parental agency, which was duty bound to keep an eye on me and make sure that I was ok. They did not. That was palpable in terms of what occurred. I do believe that, successful as I am and old as I am at 65, I am due a level of acknowledgement for the harm that they have inflicted on me during that period. I see it as neglect, I see it as an incompetence and I actually see it as a lack of care.
314. Moving on from there in terms of the care system, what flows from all of that was, of course, the destruction of my childhood. I was never young. I was always old from the age of eleven. The parental agency, Edinburgh Corporation, is responsible for that loss. I am due acknowledgement of that gross neglect.
315. I have run both organisations with a staff force of three thousand and multi-million pound budgets to organisations with a handful of staff. I've got a formidable level of experience. When it comes to working with staff, the critical ingredient is to have a safe space in which to work, particularly when you're working with vulnerable people. The safe space is not just solely related to the children or the vulnerable individuals that are being cared for one way or another. The critical space, the safe space is also for staff. You have allow staff to own how they function, their feelings, their ways of seeing things. You've got to somehow provide a safe enough space for that to emerge without sanction, without a slap down.



316. I think if that atmosphere is facilitated to emerge, you are then much more able to address some of these issues that create some of these incidents that are the subject of the Inquiry. If there are certain things that are off the list for discussion, maybe your sexuality, maybe your race because you are in a group different to you and there is not an atmosphere where you can talk openly about these issues, you are not going to get anywhere. No matter how good your structures are, how good your regimes are, how good your protocols are, it will not work. That will form a major part of my [REDACTED] and a major part of my discussions with Fiona Morgan of the Independent Care Review, who I am meeting in October.
317. To create these spaces, you have to start with the core of what leads to other things. The core is the manager. If staff can't talk openly about difficulties they are having working with children because they fear their manager will accuse them of being incompetent, it is a complete recipe for disaster. Things will definitely go wrong. It is very simple stuff. I've tried to operate as a manager for forty plus years in a way that is very open. Staff could come to me, slag me off for what I have not done or what I should have done. I am open to that and I don't mind being criticised. I don't mind being pulled apart. Because I operate in that way, I am giving the staff permission to do likewise.
318. It is notorious in social work. I still work with colleagues in social work and a lot of my family members are social workers in London. If you don't have that ability to be yourself and that permission to be yourself, you're not going to let yourself open up to say you can't do something or you are in difficulty on a particular occasion. You're not going to admit it because you are going to be sanctioned. So you write in a way where no one can pick faults in what you say. You operate in ways with other colleagues so that they don't get any sense that you are really out of your depth. Individuals have got to be able to be open. It all comes from the top.
319. It goes back to what I've said about the wardens at Aberlour Orphanage. It starts with the top. I remember an incident when I had just arrived as a senior social worker in

Hackney. A very young social worker, who had not yet qualified, was talking about a child care case. I said I would go with him for this particular case. It was a serious issue. There had been a call that had come into the office about possible child neglect. The staff member was young and inexperienced and therefore he had to go with a more senior member of staff. Before leaving the office, he was praying.


320. We were on the way to the family and he stopped and prayed again. We got to the family's house and he was about to start praying again. I said to him very gently words to the effect, "Who are we going to visit? This child could be dead. I need you to stop praying and we need to get into this house and find out what the hell is going." We went into the house and we did what we needed to do. It was a very serious case and the child was removed.
321. We got back to the office. I didn't start slagging the young social worker off for praying or wasting my time. I discovered that he was a very prayerful soul, which I didn't know before. He was asking for guidance. I suggested to him that in addition to that guidance, I would like him to come to me or another senior member of staff. He and I ended up having a very good working relationship. I did not slag him off, I did not put him down. I said that there are other factors that needed to be involved in his working life. It is therefore about allowing people to express themselves. It is then about suggesting alternative level of education and training.
322. The key to encouraging children to speak up is, in my view, to actually acknowledge their presence. We have all these children that we are working with, but do we actually acknowledge their presence. What I am trying to say is that you have got to actually accept an individual child as him or herself. You have got to know the child. You have got to allow time for that. Even although you may only be around for a few months because of the changing swirl of staff appointments and changing caseloads, you have got to actually get a system where individual workers are with specific clients for reasonable periods of time.
323. This is where Aberlour Orphanage had a huge advantage. The staff actually were a constant in your life. They were there today, tomorrow and next year. This constancy

is critical because then you get the opportunity of actually establishing relationships with each individual and for the individual to get to know you. My picture of Miss Heap with me when I first arrived at Aberlour is a classic example.<sup>18</sup> I am out of my depth, I am very tearful, I am obviously not happy and what she is trying to do is to say, BCS look, I know it is difficult, I know it is very sad and all the rest of it, but I'm here for you." There were other children, but I didn't know that. She was there for me.

324. Somehow we have got to convey this message to the children: "I am here for you so therefore what you think, what you know, what you like, what you would wish to do with your life is critically important to me. Because of my relationship with you now, we try and sort of develop this." This takes time. Therefore we have got to somehow structurally manage these caseloads in such a way that we have individuals working with other individuals for sufficient periods of time for them to establish these relationships.
325. Getting to know a child is, in fact, very easy, no matter how difficult the child is. I have never met a child that I have not been able to communicate with. Some gave me a hard time. Some called me a black bastard and god knows what else. I wouldn't even embarrass you all by saying some of the things that I have been called by children and youths, but what comes across is that they respect you because you hang on in there.
326. You can see why that is so important with the numbers of ex former residents of Aberlour, elderly now, who trek thousands of miles from the various countries where they live to Aberlour. It is not cheap, but they travel regularly to go to St Margaret's church, to the graveyard, across the blue bridge that goes over the river Spey and all the rest of it. Our ashes are going to St Margaret's graveyard or thrown into the river Spey because it is a very important part of our lives. Presence and just being there is really so important.
327. You don't need to be chatting constantly with the children and the youth. You don't need to do any of that. You just need to give a sufficient message of, "Look, I am here for you." That can simply be just being there without saying anything. I have seen this

and so I am talking from profound experience. You've got to have time for that. I look at my family members who are social workers and doing lots of excellent work and I think, "Where is the time?" They have got no time.

328. 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..... *18/11/2018* .....