

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LCM

Support person present: [REDACTED] Future Pathways

1. My name is [REDACTED] LCM. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1951. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I lived with my parents in a tenement flat on [REDACTED] in Greenock. I had an older sister, [REDACTED] and an older brother, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was five years older and [REDACTED] was two years older than me. I had a younger sister [REDACTED] who passed away while we were living there.
3. It was an underground flat. There were no windows. I remember it being cold. My brother, sister and I would sleep under an old army coat to keep us warm. We had no food. I remember empty milk bottles lying about. They had been lying about for months. The flat stank of soured milk.
4. My sister [REDACTED] tried to look after [REDACTED] and me. When I was four and a half, I used to watch the drunk men out on the street. They would drop coins and the coins would end up down the drains. I would then go out and collect the coins from the drains. I would do this to try and help pay for food.
5. My mum was an alcoholic. My dad worked away from home. He worked as a marine engineer at sea. She had a lot of men visiting the flat when my dad was

away. My mum would go out drinking and bring drunk men back to the flat. She ran off to Blackpool with a man and left us. My gran, my mum's mum, looked after us but then she decided to put [REDACTED] and me into care.

6. Ron Clayton was our children's officer. He initially took me to Ravenscraig Children's Home in Greenock. It was good there. I was only there for six months. My brother [REDACTED] had been taken to Nazareth House in Aberdeen. I was then taken to Nazareth House in Aberdeen after Ravenscraig. Before I went to Nazareth House, Ron took me to a large department store in Greenock, Prentices. He bought me a full wardrobe of clothes. He bought me two of everything including shoes and toiletries. This was for my move to Nazareth House. I never received them or saw them again. At Nazareth House all I got were cast offs. My sister [REDACTED] stayed with my gran. She used to work in my aunt's fruit shop when she was at school. When she came home one day, [REDACTED] and I were gone. She didn't know where we were. She tried to get us back.

Nazareth House, Aberdeen

7. I was five years old when I was taken to Nazareth House in Aberdeen. Ron Clayton, my children's officer, took me. He was a nice fella. He was from London.
8. I don't know why I was taken to Nazareth House. My dad was a Protestant, and my mother was a Catholic. My mother brought me up as a catholic, however my dad wished me to be protestant and in my mind and my beliefs I was a protestant as my dad wanted me to be. I was a Protestant so I didn't understand why I was taken to a Catholic institution. I was treated differently because I was a Protestant.
9. I remember arriving at Nazareth House. Ron Clayton and I were met at the main door of the place by Sister [REDACTED] LDR. She was nice to me when Ron was there. Ron left and Sister [REDACTED] LDR took me to a dormitory. There were about eighteen to twenty beds in the room. I was given a bed. It had one sheet and one blanket. It was a thin mattress on the bed. I was given a stripey pillow. All the beds were occupied.

There was a curtained off bit to the dormitory where the nun slept. There was a big picture of Jesus on the wall. You were made to sleep with your back with your hands by your sides all times. You weren't allowed to move.

10. The nuns provided me with clothes. I was given short trousers and a random grey jumper. I was also given a pair of girl's shoes to wear. They were too small for my feet. My little toes are still curled under because I wore shoes that were too tight the whole time I was there. A lot of the boys wore these shoes. We were just given them. Sister [REDACTED] LDR told me that I had a job to do. I had to polish the floors. I had to use a tool called a "thumper".

Routine at Nazareth House

Mornings and bedtime

11. We were woken up at 6am every morning. We had to sleep on our backs in our beds. The nuns would do checks at night so you couldn't turn in your bed. The nun that was sleeping in the curtained off area would wake us up in the morning. We then got washed and brushed our teeth. Then we were made to go to chapel to do the stations of the cross in the chapel. This lasted for about an hour. We also had to go to chapel after breakfast. Then I had to get my thumper out and do my job.
12. If anyone had wet the bed, they were made to stand in the corner with their wet sheets. When we took our sheets to get washed, the nuns would hit us with what looked like industrial dry rods. We were hit on the legs with these rods. We were called filthy urchins. We were degraded. If I wet the bed at 6pm the night before, I was made to lie in my own urine till the next morning. I was told to lie in my own "piss". That's the word they would use. The nuns would check the beds in the middle of the night.

13. We would have to go to mass again after dinner. When we returned from mass, we had to shower and then get our pyjamas on. We were in bed every night by 6pm, even in the summer.
14. We were segregated from the older boys. The only time we were together was in the shower area. The older boys would bully the younger boys in the showers. I don't remember seeing a nun watching over us in the showers. The older boys would flick the younger boys with their towels, and they would push us out the way. There was no privacy anywhere in Nazareth House. The showers were not curtained off. It was four blocks of shower bases. There was a nun who stood at the door at all times. Sister LHJ and Sister LHK I was taken to the showers after wetting the bed early on at Nazareth House to be placed in a freezing cold bath. Five people tried to force me in using physical violence but I refused and they didn't get me in. They didn't try that again. I could hear lads screaming and crying.
15. It was just boys in the dorm. The boys in my dorm were aged between five and eleven.

Food

16. The food was not great. We used to get very little to eat. At breakfast we were given burnt bacon and lumpy porridge. The food was inedible, but I was always starving so I ate it. I used to steal food. I saw men delivering food to the part of Nazareth House where the elderly residents lived. I saw them delivering pies and cakes. I would crawl along the concrete pipe, chase into the gantry and steal some food. The pipe was fifteen foot high and four foot wide. I would crawl back along the pipe and eat it. I didn't share my food with anyone as I was always starving. I think I was the only one that did that.
17. There was a song we used to sing about the food in Nazareth House. We would sing "There is a dirty place far far away, where you get pig's delight three times a day. Ham and eggs you never smell, Burnt bacon made in hell. If you want to call on me, come to Nazzie House". I remember the song well.

18. The food was not sustainable. We used to get ill quite a lot, as we were under-nourished. We would get eye, ear and nose infections. There were no vitamins in the food to keep us healthy. I used to see food going elsewhere. The nuns would also look after elderly people, and they seemed to get the better food.
19. The dining room was a big room with big long tables. We sat on benches with the other boys from my dorm. We were not allowed to talk to the other boys. If you did talk, you were hit with a stick. You were then made to stand up and you didn't get any breakfast. I always ate my food. I did see other boys not eating. They would be force fed or hit with a stick. I was never force fed, I just ate it.

School/chores

20. I spent very little time at school. I was supposed to go to school, but I got ringworms and I wasn't allowed to go near anybody. The nuns put iodine on my arm to treat the ringworms. I never received any medical care from a doctor or nurse. Then I had an abscess on my heel. The nuns poured boiling water with keoline poultice on it straight out the kettle, and burned a hole in my foot. The abscess was caused by my shoes being too small. I had difficulty walking so I could not go to school. I still had to clean the floors. They didn't send for a doctor.
21. I mainly cleaned and polished the floors the whole time I was there. I was expected to start at the main doors and go up and down the corridors till lunchtime using this thumper. I was only five when I first started this job. I wasn't very strong. The thumper was a big heavy device but I just had to manage it. It was awkward to move. It was on a pivot and as you pushed it, it would fall back on you. I'm not sure what the other boys would have to do. It was only me polishing the floors. I did it all day, every day. When I was about seven years old, I decided that I had had enough of the way the nuns treated me and the constant floor cleaning. I would run away and hide in big dustbins on the grounds.

22. I didn't get an education at Nazareth House. Later on in life at another home, I got a private tutor and I was educated.

Holidays/trips

23. Due to my physical appearance caused by being hit by the sticks and my general state of health, ringworms and bruises, I was deprived from going to the swimming baths.
24. I remember the local newspaper ran a competition. They had buried £10 notes on the beach at Aberdeen. We were taken down by the nuns and we looked for the money. No one found any £10 notes.
25. I was also sent back every so often to Ravenscraig Home in Greenock to stay for about four to six weeks. This was during the school holidays as I had nowhere to go, I was sent to Ravenscraig. The staff in Ravenscraig were really good. It felt like a family home. We were allowed to wander about freely. When I went there, I would see my sister regularly. My brother [REDACTED] was sent to my aunts instead.

Birthdays and Christmas

26. The religious side of Christmas was celebrated. We would go to mass and celebrate there. We did not receive any presents or cards. Birthdays were not celebrated at all.

Visits/Inspections

27. I did not receive any social work visits the whole time I was there. I do not remember anyone coming in to inspect the place.

Religion

28. Our everyday routine was organised round our attendance at chapel. We had to attend chapel before breakfast and after breakfast. We also had to attend mass after lunch and dinner. It was a constant brainwashing. The nuns would take mass every day. I think a priest would come in once a week and take mass on a Sunday.
29. When I was at Nazareth House, three nuns died. A bishop came in and took the mass for their funeral. I remember we all had to stand in line and kiss the dead nuns' hands as they were lying in their coffins.
30. Nazareth House was like a religious factory. It was constant religious instruction. There was no time for playing. They were brainwashing us.
31. The thing that hurts me now is that my brother [REDACTED] is dead, he took up the Catholic religion. In later life we became estranged because of religion. He was married in a Catholic church. I refused to go into the chapel because I felt so strongly against the Catholic religion. I sat on the wall outside. At Nazareth House he accepted the faith and studied the catechism, the rules and laws of the Catholic Church. He could speak Latin.

Medical care

32. We did not receive any medical care. The nuns would treat us. We also never got any check-ups. I never went to see a dentist when I was there. I used to get earache. My ears were bad for ear wax. The nuns would just wash out my ears.
33. All vaccinations were given by a nun. These nuns I think came from outside the home. They wore a grey uniform. I think they may have been medically trained. We did not receive any check-ups or medical care from medical practitioners. If we had received a check-up, then they would have seen the injuries on us all.

Contact with my brother

34. I never really got to see my brother [REDACTED]. We were kept apart. He had arrived at Nazareth House before me and he had become an altar boy. He appeared to enjoy all the religious education. He was better accepted by the nuns

Abuse at Nazareth House

35. Sister [LDQ] and Sister [LDR] were the nuns that mostly looked after me. They were animals. They hit all the boys with the dry rod industrial sticks.
36. When I was about seven, I started to rebel. I decided I had had enough of doing what I was told and the nuns started to lock me in the boiler room. Mr [LDS] was [REDACTED] for the home. He would come and find me and tell me that the nuns had told him that I was to be locked in the boiler room. This happened regularly over a two year period when the others were at mass. It was a dark room with no light. Every so often a flame would appear from the boiler. I would be scared. Mr [LDS] would then come back for me. He used to say that he had been told to give me a spanking. He would take my pants down and spank me over his knee. He would sometimes fondle me. I just remember him touching me and that he had a dirty old blanket.
37. Sometimes when I would see Mr [LDS] he would give me a two bob bit. I used to ask him what it was for. He told me he gave it to me because I had been a good boy. This happened quite a few times. I would buy sweets with the money.
38. The nuns would make us stand in a line, and they would hand out pocket money. I was always put to the back of the line. This was the only time I would see my brother [REDACTED]. I would only see him, we were not allowed to talk to each other. By the time I got to the front of the queue I was always told that I wasn't to get any pocket money. The whole time I was there, I was put to the back of the line. I was told, "none for you, [REDACTED]. The boys all had to buy their own shampoo and soap with their pocket money. I never got any pocket money so I had to steal shampoo and soap. I would also use the money Mr [LDS] gave me to buy shampoo and soap.

39. I remember seeing a lot of marks on the other boys' legs. I had marks on my legs from where the nuns hit me with the wooden rod sticks. They would hit you below the knee. I still have scarring on my legs from where the wounds would be from the assaults with the sticks.
40. I remember Sister [REDACTED] LTX [REDACTED]. She was a bully and a cruel woman. Thinking back now, I think she must have had a lot of personal problems. She was not the full shilling. She appeared to take pleasure in hitting the boys. I think she was quite young, maybe in her twenties. Sister [REDACTED] LTX [REDACTED] was an evil person. She would call you a dirty brat, and make you lie in your own urine when you wet the bed. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
41. I was singled out for abuse because I was a Protestant. I would not accept the Catholic faith. I did not fit in. My brother [REDACTED] did all the religious practice, and he still was hit. He was not hit to the extent that I was. I was informed by my sister that he had been hit as she had seen the extent of his injuries.
42. The abuse we received was degrading. There was not one isolated incident. Being hit by the nuns was constant. It was constant cruelty. The nuns spoke to us like we were animals. We were not human beings to them. They took pleasure in hurting us. They enjoyed hitting us with the sticks and walloping us with their ropes. The nuns didn't need a reason to hit us, they just hit us. It was constant. They also liked to grab us by our ears and pull them hard. They did this if they heard you laughing. I laughed a lot to annoy them.
43. I feel like the nuns' sole outlook on life was to cause misery. They were all evil, they were not women. There was no one to check up on them. I couldn't understand why there were no regulators. They got away with what they liked. In my opinion, the Catholic Church has not changed, they'll deny that. I watched a programme about the Spanish Inquisition. I feel like the methods used then were not very different to the treatment we received from the nuns.

44. There were a couple of nuns that were nice. They wore a light blue uniform. I think they were trainee nuns. They were young, and they were nicer to us than the older nuns.

Reporting of abuse

45. I told my sister [REDACTED] about the abuse at Nazareth House. I told her when I would see her when I was staying at Ravenscraig Children's Home. She would see the marks on my legs and my back. I also told Rosalind Nicol. She worked at Ravenscraig Children's Home. I don't think anyone believed me.
46. I think the local people knew what was going on in Nazareth House. There was no one to police the nuns. No one went in and checked on the place. None of my children's officers checked what was going on. I thought the abuse was my fault because I had rebelled against their religion. My brother took to the religion, and he also was abused.

Leaving Nazareth House

47. Nazareth House had had enough of me. I was supposed to be sent to Fort Augustus Abbey school in the Highlands. Ron Clayton, my children's officer, told me that he was going to try his damndest to not have me sent to another religious place. I think he knew what was going on there. He said he had heard stories from other boys about Fort Augustus Abbey school.
48. Two days before I left Nazareth House, I went into the boiler room and I bent back the steam pipe. I had hoped that it would blow the place up. I was about ten years of age when I did this. Unfortunately it didn't work.

Other care institutions

49. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED]
 50. [REDACTED]
 51. [REDACTED]

52. I remember being taken down to the harbour and being told I was going to be working on a boat. I could only see a big boat out on the water, and I assumed that was the boat I was going to be working on. It was only when we got closer to the harbour wall that I saw the boat I was going to be working on. I had a small bag with me. A guy called John McInnes gave me oil skins and wellington boots. I arrived unprepared. I worked on the "puffers" on and off for twenty years after that.

Life after being in care

53. There was a lot of drink involved when I worked on the puffers. I used to get sacked from one company and then the next day get another job with another company. I remember once getting sacked for racing lobsters [REDACTED].

54. I've had some good jobs in my life. I've worked on the puffers, trawlers and fishing boats out on the North Sea. I've also worked at the Queen Mother's Lodge in Great Windsor Park. [REDACTED] I also worked at the Duke of Cumberland's Lodge. It was a great place to work.

55. I met my first wife when I was seventeen. We were both working in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Braemar. I was stoned out my head. I was taking uppers and

downers and drinking on top of that. She was just my girlfriend when we worked together. Then we got married.

56. We had two daughters. I was drinking all the time. I was not a good husband. When I was away at sea, she started seeing other men. She left me. I tried to look after my daughters. I looked after my daughters for a year and a half. I didn't drink during that period and the social worker said they had been excellently looked after. [REDACTED] was a year and a half old, and [REDACTED] was nine months. I went to citizen's advice bureau in relation to getting custody of them. I was told by them I wouldn't get custody of my children as it was governed by English law. I went and bought them clothes and toys. I took them to my friend's girlfriend's house and I left them. I felt that I had no choice. I felt I couldn't give them a life. It was hard, it's still hard when I think about it. I never saw them again. That was 44 years ago.
57. I went to see my mum when I was eighteen. I knocked on her door and she fainted. I had three step sisters that lived in Blackpool. I still keep in touch with them. When my dad died my mum asked [REDACTED] and me to sign over my dad's pension to her. He had been receiving a substantial civil defence pension. We signed it over to her and she drank it all away.
58. I still see my sister [REDACTED]. She started the [REDACTED] Society and she ran it for 37 years. She used to give out [REDACTED]. She's a lovely woman.

Impact

59. My brother [REDACTED] ended up an alcoholic and homeless. He is dead now. I believe his time in care had a huge impact on his life. He wasn't as strong as me, he couldn't handle it. His time in care affected him more. When he was fourteen, my dad's friend adopted him. Later in life, [REDACTED] worked as a [REDACTED]. He died of cerebral malaria.

60. I turned to drink and drugs but I eventually just stopped taking them. After I gave up my daughters, I hit the drink. One night, I got a knife and I slit my wrists. I wouldn't get in the ambulance. They had to wait till I had passed out before they could get me into the ambulance. The wounds were stitched up.
61. I met my second wife. We worked together in private service. We worked for the [REDACTED] She was their housekeeper and I was their chauffeur and handyman. [REDACTED] We also worked for a [REDACTED] in London. We stayed in a flat under the main residence in London. He used to stay for three months of the year on his estate in [REDACTED] and we went there with him. He used to do all his entertaining there. I enjoyed working for him. I met some lovely people.
62. My wife and I are now separated, but she still looks after me. We split up after her father died. She took his death hard and we split up. We didn't have any kids. She still comes in everyday and looks after me.
63. I feel like I can't get close to anyone now. I have no feelings. When someone dies, I feel no grief. This all stems back to my time in Nazareth House. My time there devastated me. I still think back to my time in Nazareth House. I wake up in cold sweats. I wake up angry and agitated.

Records

64. I don't have my records. I was told that there was a fire, and all my records were destroyed in the fire.

Hopes for the Inquiry

- 65. I would hope and wish that what happened to me and my brother [REDACTED] does not happen to anyone else. That someone else's life is not bugged up. The abuse and its effect on me cost me my brother, my wives and my daughters.

- 66. I was shown no love and no affection by the nuns. These nuns should not have been dealing with children. They treated us like they were dealing with vermin.

- 67. I would like there to be something put in place that checks up on these places. I would hope it doesn't happen anymore. What makes it worse in my mind is that it was women that were abusing us.

- 68. 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. 16/8/17