

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

**James Murray HADDOW**

Support person present: No.

1. My name is James Murray Haddow. I prefer to be called by my middle name, Murray. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1925. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Employment history**

#### *1950 to 1964 experience in England*

2. The only qualification for child care that I have is a certificate for social studies. This was a course run by Glasgow University. It involved both practical work and academic studies. At that time this was the only available social work course. I became very interested in children's residential care. This remained the case throughout my career.
3. I started work in 1950 as a child care officer in the Wolverhampton area. This was until 1952. I then became a children's officer in the same area until 1959.
4. I recall an occasion when I removed three teenage boys from a Roman Catholic (RC) establishment in Liverpool. I moved the boys to a residential home that was closer to their families in Wolverhampton. There were no allegations of mistreatment or abuse at the RC establishment but I just felt that they were not being cared for as they should have been. The atmosphere I felt wasn't suitable to bring up young boys.

It was all priests with no female staff. I think that this showed I could identify issues with the care of children and I was prepared to take action where I had concerns.

5. In 1959 I started my first role within children's residential care. This was at the Mear Children's Home, Starbridge, Worcestershire. I remained there until 1964.

*1964 to retirement, experience in Scotland*

6. In 1964 I moved to the Ross and Cromarty area. This was as a children's officer and I was based in Dingwall. During my time there the new social work units started to be created. As a result of this the children's departments were absorbed into these newly created units. I worked in the role of children's officer at Dingwall until 1969.
7. I moved to Wigtonshire in 1969 and was appointed as the director of social work. I remained there until 1971.
8. In 1971 I was contacted by a colleague, Bob Winter. Bob knew me through my various roles in the social work. Bob asked if I wanted to move to Greenock and work as the assistant director of social work. I accepted this offer and stayed there until 1974.
9. I became the Divisional Organiser for the Clyde region in 1974. I remained there until I retired. Whilst I was there Bob Winter seconded me to Glasgow. Bob asked me to look at improving the standard of child care in Glasgow. At that time Glasgow had a recognised practice of placing children from that area to foster homes in the north of Scotland.
10. I produced a report with a series of recommendations. I also organised a series of courses which involved both residential and field staff.

**Inspections/visits**

*Inspections*

11. My experience of inspections whilst I was involved with the social work was that they were always very detailed. You were always aware that the inspectorate were around. The Scottish Inspectorate were quite high powered people. It was always difficult to know what they were looking for.
12. I can't remember if there were regular inspections of residential care establishments. I don't know if an inspection took place whether this would be planned or unannounced.

*Visits*

13. When I worked with the social work there was a statutory requirement to visit a child in care regularly. I think it was at least every three or possibly six months. My understanding is that this would have been the same throughout Scotland. All visits would have to be recorded in the child's case file. The social workers supervisor would be required to ensure that their case load was up to date and that visits took place.

**Smyllum Orphanage, Lanark**

14. Whilst I was based at Greenock between 1971 and 1974 I was in charge of a number of child care officers. One of these officers was off on long term sick and I noticed an overdue visit for a child in Smyllum. I can't remember when this was, only that it was during the time I was at Greenock. I had to make an appointment for the visit. This was always the case for any RC establishment. You couldn't just turn up it had to be by arrangement. I don't remember how far in advance of a visit this appointment would have to be made.
15. The first thing I noticed when I arrived was that it was a large daunting building. I was met at the door by a nun. The nun didn't introduce herself to me. There was very

little conversation. I was taken to a large room, like their assembly hall. There were two chairs in the middle of the room. I sat at one of the chairs and the nun left.

16. The nun returned with this poor girl. I felt sorry for her as it must have been so bewildering for her not knowing why I was there to meet her. The girl sat beside me in the other chair. I can't remember if I was introduced to the girl. The nun took up a position on a chair within hearing distance of us. This caused me a lot of alarm that a child should be in this setting where the staff took that sort of attitude with the children in their care.
17. I tried to explain the reason for my visit but I don't think she took any of it in. The normal reason for such a visit would be to try and establish details of the child's family and build a relationship with the child. I got the impression that at Smyllum no outsider was going to be given the opportunity to build up a relationship with one of the children in their care.
18. I recall that at that time all the catholic establishments had the same reputation. They felt that you were intruding. It was their job and they didn't want you interfering. The sad thing was that this was accepted by the social work department that they were different from other residential homes.
19. I would have recorded the visit in the child's case notes. This visit was nothing exceptional for visits to catholic homes. I would probably not have highlighted any concerns in the report. I would just have recorded my contact with the girl.

[REDACTED]

20.

[REDACTED]

**Knowledge of other care establishments**

21. I visited numerous other children’s care homes whilst I worked with the social work in Scotland. Many of these establishments were very good. As a matter of courtesy you would contact them to inform them of a visit. Other times you could turn up unannounced. The social work and the home worked together to ensure the best care for the children. I thought that this was how a child in care should be looked after.

**Reporting of abuse**

22. When I worked at Greenock I ran a pretty tight ship. I was the boss. I never had to highlight any concerns or report these to the authorities.

**Other information**

23. When I have read the media coverage of the Inquiry it didn’t come as any surprise to me that abuse had been reported in children’s homes.

24. I would hope that the Inquiry will ensure that there will be no further reports of abuse within children’s care homes. I do have concerns how effective the Inquiry will be if it takes too long.

25. 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..... 19 / 12 / 17 .....