

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

IFM [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes.

1. My name is IFM [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1975. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born and raised in Govan which is on the Southside of Glasgow. My father was [REDACTED] and my mother [REDACTED]. I have a younger sister called [REDACTED], who is five years younger than me and a brother called [REDACTED], who is ten years younger.
3. We moved from the family home in [REDACTED] up to [REDACTED], Glasgow. My dad had started his own business so that was their first mortgage. Life was good and I was a wee spoiled character.
4. My dad was a bit of a womaniser. That was something I held against him for years, due to the hurt I saw he caused my mum. Their marriage failed through that and we moved back to Govan leaving him at [REDACTED]. I was eleven, turning twelve at the time.
5. My dad failed me as a father. I can remember repeatedly standing at a window waiting for him to arrive home and my mother in the background saying he may have been

called to an emergency. She was making excuses for him. He was the one who let us all down. The most vital life lesson my dad taught me was how not to be a dad.

6. I am fortunate that I had a good upbringing and went to a good school, Govan High.
7. The closest person to me growing up was my mum's youngest brother, my uncle [REDACTED]. There were ten years between us but he was like a big brother to me. He came from a very musical family and all my influences came from him. Unfortunately he was one of the first generations to be introduced to heroin and he asphyxiated in my gran's house one New Year. I was thirteen years old at the time and was in my mum's house nearby when it happened. Losing him had a bad effect on me and changed a lot of things. I think I was wired differently after that.
8. I have two younger siblings who came along after I had been sent to prison. They are [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Their dad was a very controlling person, domineering and I realised that quite quickly. Years later, my sister [REDACTED] told me that he used to squeeze her hand if she didn't call him dad in front of people. From a certain age, I didn't want to have anything to do with him, so I stayed with my gran. Even after my Uncle [REDACTED] passed, I stayed with my gran. I was very close to her.
9. I realised years later that my mum had put herself in a position and felt she was trapped. I think she just accepted it and tried to make the best of it. I didn't have any time for him. He passed away recently.
10. I remember catching him one time when he had my mum by the throat. They were in her kitchen and there was hot food in the pan. There were a few physical times between them but he wasn't really that bad to her. Once they did eventually separate, my mum didn't hold her children back. My younger siblings always had access to him if they wanted and there was never any bias towards anybody. My mum was very forgiving.
11. He was a big man. I remember going into my mum's house just before he passed. He was sitting in the dining room. I was probably ready to say something but my

mother gave me that look as if to say don't say a word. I'm glad she did because I could see the look on his face. He was tearing over and trying to say sorry quietly so my mum couldn't hear. I'm not sure if he blamed himself for a lot of the things that happened. Looking at the man, he had blatantly shrunken in ill-health. I shook his hand, it was what it was. He died not long after that. I'm glad I made peace with him because it wasn't nice to see him like that and life's too short. I didn't think I could ever be so forgiving but that did get to me.

12. I held things against my own father too. I could never understand it but I do get it now, human beings are human beings and people fail. It's life lessons. My mum and my gran used to say that I shouldn't fall out with my dad. They could see I had an issue because I never had anything to do with him. Even when I was in Polmont Young Offenders, he came to two visits out of all the years I was in there. I launched into a tirade and told him to stop taking up my visits and never visit me again.
13. It was only as a young adult coming out of prison and my mum and gran still telling me not to ignore my dad that I began to realise. My dad was quite hard to dislike anyway. He is a good character and it was just as a young man I realised human beings do fail. He's been paying for that for most of his days. My mum actually passed away on his birthday.
14. Once my Uncle [REDACTED] died, a wee part of me died for a while and that interfered with my schooling. With my dad not being there I could run about the streets and do things I wanted to do. There weren't really any influences or anyone taking a grip of me, steering me through doing right from wrong.
15. I started going a bit wayward and got caught up in certain situations with friends and got into trouble with the police. I was then put on a supervision order. That meant my mum could come to the police station and take me home with her. That wasn't the greatest idea for somebody like me because it made me think my mum could just get me out of trouble.

Kibble Education and Care Centre, Paisley

16. Because of a more serious police charge I got, the court thought a short sharp shock was in order to teach me a lesson. That was at remand stage surprisingly. Instead of me being out on bail, I was remanded and because I was only fifteen they remanded me to Kibble Education and Care Centre. I was taken straight from court to Kibble. I don't remember who transported me there.
17. There were only boys in Kibble and most of them could go home for the weekends but as I was remanded, I wasn't allowed to leave. I was in there for between four and six months.

Routine at Kibble Education and Care Centre, Paisley

First day

18. I remember first arriving at Kibble, it was a bit intimidating. The building was on one level with lots of windows. There was a reception inside the front door and a large communal area. There was a unit up the far left and one on the far right where I was placed. The office was in the middle.
19. Everybody was normally out of the building during the day for education or work. I can't remember why but the place was heaving with people when I arrived. They were all interested to see who was arriving. Bullies wanted to see if I could be bullied. It was quite intimidating because I had never been to a place like that before.
20. I remember meeting a member of staff called Clark, he was an ex-police officer. I found him to be a nice big guy although I tried to go to him for help at an important time but he wasn't much use to me.
21. Morag was another staff member, she was my key worker. There was a younger member of staff I remember called **IGK**. He was alright with me. They were

nice people. I didn't really have any initial dodgy feelings about anyone. It was like anywhere else though, if someone doesn't like someone they will tell lies about them, especially kids. People would tell me things about people but I would find them to be quite nice.

22. These were the staff that looked after me in my unit. The unit was called Moss View. We had individual bedrooms and I was locked in mine at night. I didn't like that. I had no toilet in the room and had to shout if I needed to use that toilet.
23. I would say there were around forty or fifty boys in each unit. I didn't really see the boys from the other unit though. I think the boys taking education would mix but I went to the workshop so didn't really see them.

Mornings and bedtime

24. I was wakened up around 7:30 - 8:00 am. I would have my breakfast and be in the workshop by 9:00 am. I worked roughly school hours, had a break for lunch and went back in the afternoon. I would be back in my bedroom about 8:00 - 8:30 pm and that would be me until morning.
25. There were two staff on overnight. Because my door was locked I didn't see much of what was happening at night. I always felt like I was a pain in the backside if I had to shout to use the toilet. Most of the times staff were okay about that although a certain individual would hit you with a key if you pissed him off enough.
26. In my room I had a bed, a wardrobe and a desk. It was a bit like a prison cell.

Mealtimes/Food

27. I would have breakfast, lunch and dinner in the unit dining room. I'm struggling to remember the dining room but I'm sure we ate in our units and not together with the other unit. The food was okay and was there in abundance. We were looked after in that way and there were no issues from staff a mealtimes.

Washing/bathing

28. There was a communal toilet with a bath and a couple of showers. The whole toilet area was open plan. Male and female staff could come in. I used to just get in, get washed and get out as quickly as I could. Once or twice I did find myself in some uncomfortable situations in there.
29. We had to ask for a shower or a bath. We were allocated time slots depending on how busy it was. You could ask for a slot as often as you liked.
30. There was a lot of bullying in the toilet, even staff bullying. If they wanted to get somebody or pull you to one side it would be in the toilet. If anybody wanted to settle anything it would be in the toilet.

Clothing/uniform

31. I didn't have a uniform in Kibble. I was just in normal clothes.

Leisure time

32. There wasn't very much to do in the unit. I think there was a pool table that people fought over. There was also a table tennis table in the unit. We could also go over to the gym at night. That was in another part of the building. After dinner we went there to play football most nights. They had a full sized five aside court. There were racks up the walls like an old school gym. There was basketball too, everything was there. For us it was just football constantly. As far as facilities were concerned it was a good place.

Schooling

33. Because I was remanded they gave me the option to go to school and there was an education programme. The education block was in a building that was thirty yards away from the main building. I didn't go there.

34. There was a woodwork shop run by a staff member called Sam and I spent all my time in there. I'm a carpenter to this day. Because I was about to turn sixteen they felt they couldn't force me to take education. I probably thought I was a big man ready to work.

Healthcare/medication

35. I didn't see a doctor when I was in there. Maybe if you had a genuine health issue they would have taken you to see a doctor or a dentist for that matter but I never needed it.

Work

36. I worked in the woodwork area and learned to make furniture. I actually bought some of the things I made and have them to this day, my desk and chairs.

Christmas

37. Now that I think about it I didn't spend Christmas at Kibble. Due to something that happened, I didn't serve my full remand in there. I was sent to Gateside Prison in Greenock so spent Christmas 1990 in Gateside, not Kibble.

Visitors/family contact

38. As far as visits were concerned it would mostly be my lawyer letting me know what to expect, what was happening. Other than that it was family, my mum, younger brother and sister and sometimes my gran would come in. I'm not sure if there were any restrictions on the number of visits but they were up a couple of times a week.
39. I could also phone my family if they paid for a phone card for me. There was always folk fighting to use the phone, it was always busy. I think there was only one phone, maybe one at either end of the building. There were always people outside shouting for you to hurry up and always a staff member in the office listening to what you were saying on the phone.

Running away

40. I never tried to escape. I was quite content to be there until certain things happened. I did steal a moped once. It belonged to the Kibble. They brought these mopeds out for us to ride round a track. I don't know what they were thinking. I made a break for freedom. I was only away for ten minutes, I got to the bottom of the field at the M77 and that was it. They caught up with me and returned me to the Kibble. That meant the other boys didn't get to use the mopeds again.

Discipline

41. If you misbehaved, anything they knew you liked could be taken away from you at Kibble, like the gym.

Abuse at Kibble Education and Care Centre

42. We thought we were bad kids as we were in the Kibble. Certain things I look back at just weren't right. We would abide by certain treatments because we thought we were bad kids. I felt it was my fault for putting myself in there and I couldn't tell my mum what was happening to me as I knew it would break her heart.
43. The things that happened back in Kibble I would now consider to be assault. We would get hit with a big key. This key had no place in Kibble, it was like a big medieval key. They basically carried it around for hitting people on the head with. I felt that we put ourselves there and that was our punishment. It's only now looking back that I realise that it wasn't right.
44. A staff member called JFL was the one that dealt with everyone. We all hated him and would cower towards him. I never had any issues with him at first and then it just happened one day out the blue. He hit me on the head with that big key. It was really sore.

45. I've actually still got a wee nick on my head from one time he hit me with it. I had to have butterfly stitches put in my head. I think it was Morag who stitched me up. I had my hair cut short once so I know the mark is still there.
46. Some staff members, male and female, would stand and stare when we were in the shower and make me feel very uncomfortable. It just wasn't right. There was no reason for them to be in there. Most staff would walk by and shout at us to hurry up.
47. I don't remember the female staff member's name but IGK [REDACTED] was the main one who did it. That put me off him. People used to say things about him, derogatory names about him being a homosexual. I knew people used to make things up but he was in there all the time. People were very vocal in Kibble so you knew things about staff so things didn't come as a complete surprise when they happened.
48. I did think IGK [REDACTED] was alright but this wasn't him just standing talking to me in the shower. Firstly, there was no reason for him to be in there. He just lingered too long. I would say to him that I was getting washed and try and pull the shower curtain over me. He would have clearly seen I was uncomfortable with the situation but he still wouldn't move.
49. On one occasion it happened it was another staff member who entered and broke his attention on me and caused him to go out. I body swerved him after that. If he was on duty, I wouldn't take a shower. I would switch it and have a shower during the day if he was on at night. I just had to adapt.
50. I was tiny when I was in there, probably around five foot tall but it would have been hard for anyone to control me physically. IFL [REDACTED] actually put me in a cupboard and locked the door on me. This was a cupboard right next to my bedroom. He could have put me in my room but this was to confine me. The cupboard was tiny and there was no light in there. I was stuck in there for a couple of hours one night. I should actually have been in my room. It was claustrophobic and I have an issue with that to this day. There was no sense to it. My room was right there.

51. I wouldn't agree to go into the cupboard. They would physically ragdoll me into there and shut the door on me. I remember lying panting in there when they shut the door.
52. They used to use putting me in the cupboard as a threat. I thought it was a joke at first. All I had probably done was answer back. There was a low tolerance by some of the staff. I think I was put in the cupboard a couple of times.
53. I don't know if they should have been locking my room door at night but they did that. I had resigned myself to thinking that was okay.
54. It all started getting a bit sinister in there. I was actually scared but felt that I couldn't phone home and tell my mum. I don't know why that was but I'm glad I didn't. My mum tortured herself about me even being in prison. As if she had failed in some way.
55. I didn't feel I could speak to Morag my key worker about things. When I felt that I had to speak to someone I actually approached Clark. That's when things got a bit more serious.
56. IFL was the one who approached me in my room. He had his belt undone and he was undoing his trousers with a quiet smile on his face. I don't know if he was doing this in a threatening manner to scare me but I don't think he was taking his belt off to hit me with it. He would use the key if he was going to do that.
57. He was interrupted. It might even have been Morag, I'm not sure. This would have been nightshift staff who had come in to relieve the dayshift. There were only two nightshift staff on so it might have been the other nightshift person who disturbed him.
58. That wasn't going to happen again. Being locked in a cupboard was one thing but once that belt and zipper carry on started, I wasn't willing to see how far that was going.
59. I know IFL had done something similar with someone else. The communal toilet was across the corridor from my room. I heard a boy called telling a member of

staff about [IFL] doing similar things to him as he had to me. The boy was from the Scottish Borders I think.

60. [IFL] would threaten me. He would tell me I was pissing him off and say he would pay me a visit later on. Up until the incident with the belt, I thought he was threatening to come into my room and give me a slap. I've thought about that for years wondering how far he would have gone.
61. After that night I had to think about how I was going to get out of there. I wasn't going to stay there for one more weekend.
62. There was a guy called [redacted] who was at Kibble when I was there. We ended up at Gateside Prison together. He had been forced into the cupboard at Kibble too. He was in the other side of the building, in the other unit. Both sides had cupboards and he had been forced into the cupboard on the other side.

Reporting of abuse at Kibble Education and Care Centre

63. Most of the time in there people were vocal about injustices and things they felt were wrong. We didn't feel the need to hide things that had been done to us that were wrong.
64. One time [IFL] hit me with the key, I told Morag he had whacked me with it and that my head was bleeding. I remember her taking me into the office and telling me not to say anything to my mum. She said it would just worry her.
65. Big Clark was an ex-constable. He was like a big grandfather type. I went to him the day after [IFL] had been in my room. I approached him in the office and asked if I could speak to him. He put people out and asked me what the matter was. When I told him what had happened with [IFL] he rubbished it. I told him about being locked in the cupboard and [IFL] always hitting me with the key. He told me to 'man the fuck up'.

66. I remember the boy [REDACTED] sobbing in the toilet, breaking his heart talking about IFL [REDACTED] to a member of staff. I could hear a female staff member saying that he shouldn't make up stories about people. It sounded like the boy was being questioned on what he was saying. I could hear he was saying similar things to what had happened to me.

Leaving Kibble Education and Care Centre

67. Because of the incident with IFL [REDACTED] and the response from Clark, I smashed the unit up. I couldn't tell my mum about it. I spoke to one family member about it and that's been the one person I've spoken to about it. I never spoke to the social work or the police either.

68. I hadn't been a problem to anybody in there. Apart from the issues that made me want to leave, I actually had quite liked the place. I blatantly wanted home but I knew I couldn't. I was settled there and knew if I behaved I could make things better for myself. I was enjoying the joinery and doing really well in there. That actually made me go on to become a joiner later in life. I knew if I behaved I could right wrongs and I knew what I was doing to my family. I suppose I had grown up a lot realising I was facing jail time and had adapted to things in the Kibble. It was wake up time. Wrecking the place and being sent to Gateside was not part of my plan.

69. No one asked me why I had changed. Me and another person in there were singled out as the ringleaders. I was fine with that and happy to agree with them. I was willing to go to an actual prison. I actually had a far more comfortable stay in the prison than Kibble, which seems mental to me.

70. I was taken from the Kibble straight to the court and then Gateside Prison.

HMP Gateside, Greenock

71. Gateside prison was nuts but I was safer there than in Kibble. I was in with bank robbers and murderers. It wasn't a young offenders place so I had convicted prisoners and all sorts of older men round about me.
72. The boy [REDACTED] from Kibble was in Gateside too. He wasn't in a cell with me but word got around about the two of us being so young and small. We were basically the babies of the place so folk looked out for us, there was nothing adverse, no one was threatening towards us, nothing like that. We were a novelty to them. They would say look at the size of these wee guys and ask us why we were in there. They weren't bad to us in any way. I don't know if it was because we were so small but the officers would leave our cell doors open. I do often wonder what happened to [REDACTED].

Routine at HMP Gateside, Greenock

First day

73. It was scary arriving at Gateside. It was an old Victorian building, it used to be a female's prison. When I went there the remand prisoners were on the bottom floor. It was like old Victorian gantries, you could look up and see the other levels and cells above you. Any of the prisoners could come down the stairs. Folk congregated wherever they wanted to, there was no order in there.
74. I didn't have a cell to myself. I was actually put in a cell with a murderer. The guy was quite young and didn't want to speak about it so I only actually found out he was in for murder a wee while into my time there. I know his family to this day.
75. There were various characters around the place but no one was a threat. They looked out for us if anything. I was quite fortunate if I'm honest.

76. Back then, prisoners ran the prisons. The prison officers used to open your cell door and let you do whatever you wanted. Or a prisoner would ask an officer to open my cell door so he could give me some snout or tobacco. The officer would open my cell door and just leave it open. Various prisoners would walk by or come in and chat away.

Mealtimes/Food

77. The food was fine. We collected our food and took it back to the cell to eat it. I would eat it along with my cellmate.

Washing/bathing

78. I had no issues showering, no problems like Kibble in there. Because it had been a female prison there were toilet services so we didn't have to slop out.

Visits

79. My mum visited me there, she was worried sick probably that I was in a prison. I also had access to a phone in there. It was a phone card situation again. I would have phoned home but not that often unless there was something I needed. I probably used it once or twice a week.
80. I wasn't in Gateside long. I think I was in there just before [REDACTED] 1990 and left beginning of [REDACTED] 1991.

Leaving HMP Gateside

81. On [REDACTED] 1991, I was taken to the High Court and sentenced to three and a half years. I was to serve that in Polmont Young Offenders. I was taken there straight from court. I remember someone saying to me that I was going to be eaten alive at Polmont, that the first sign of trouble I should pick the biggest boy and make an example of myself.

HMYOI Polmont

82. Polmont was wild, it was like gladiator school. It was the same type of prison as Gateside in terms of looking like it had been built in the Victorian era. There was a main allocation centre where there were maybe fifty cells on the right and fifty on the left and on three floors. There were wrought iron stairs in the middle of the hall and they would take you up to each floor. It was a bit like Barlinnie with the different flights the whole circle of the building. The allocation centre was called the ally-cally.

Routine at HMYOI Polmont

First day

83. The allocation centre was a mad place, fights everywhere you turned. Every couple of minutes someone would shout for assistance and you would see the officers running towards a brawl somewhere. The hall would get locked up at any given time. I couldn't wait to get out of there.
84. On arriving at Polmont we met a PO, the principal officer. He would wait until all the new arrivals were in. There were buses from Stirling, Glasgow and other places. Once all the new arrivals for the day were in he would sit us down and give us the rules and tell us what we were supposed to do if we needed something. He told us to address all the officers as 'sir'.
85. You were only supposed to be in there for a couple of nights until they decided what hall you were going to. If you were in for a certain amount of time you would be sent to north wing, that was a short stay hall. Some prisoners were serving a short stay but were known to the prison so they went to the west wing. West wing was called the wild west.
86. I was unknown to the prison but because of the length of sentence I was doing I started in west wing. If I behaved I was to be sent to the long stay hall which was east wing.

Not many people lasted in east wing, it was a privileged hall. I was there on and off throughout my sentence.

87. I was quiet as a prisoner. It was just certain things that sparked me off. Officers entering my cell. I still have this issue, I've carried it with me throughout my life.
88. I was so small. I walked about there and for two years I never met anyone as small as me. I think I was taken to solitary confinement before my first couple of days were finished in there.
89. I had come from the High Court and was shell shocked at first. I think coming from the High Court and the light I had shined on myself from Kibble, I was regarded as being unruly and an uncontrollable character.
90. West wing had individual flats, so instead of the big round gantry Victorian style cells, this was different. You went up the stairs and there were four sections in each area. You would stay in your section and settle there. If you behaved you would be there for the duration. Everyone had door cards. If you were Church of Scotland you had a white door card, if you were Catholic you had a green door card. If anyone was sectarian, they could pick you out in a second.

Mornings and bedtime

91. I had my own cell in west wing. It had a bed, a plastic chair and a cardboard table. I was locked in there overnight and had a chamber pot to use as a toilet. There was slopping out back then. I was initially locked in my cell for twenty-three hours a day.
92. We would get up in the morning and make a bed block and officers would come in with a ruler and measure to make sure it was square. If it wasn't they would pull it apart and you would have to start again.
93. The problems with other prisoners came and went. It was really a case of us living on top of each other, just too much of the same people. It wasn't something I had much

of a problem with although I would see problems between prisoners. I would just try to keep my head down and be as quiet as I possibly could be.

Mealtimes/Food

94. In the allocation centre we went downstairs to the main hall where we all ate. In the west wing we did the same but we had our own dining hall in there. We ate our breakfast, lunch and dinner in there.
95. I didn't really have any issues eating in Polmont. I got used to the food although it was a bit grim. I remember getting bread and butter pudding. I didn't even know what such a thing was. We would get stovies, that was just a combination of leftovers. Food was quite grim but if you were in there for any length of time, you were going to get used to it and you would eat it. There was no other option, nothing else. By the time I finished my sentence I thought the food was good.
96. If I was in solitary confinement they would serve the food through the door and you ate it in your cell. You didn't get out of the cell to eat.

Clothing/uniform

97. If you were in Polmont as a remand prisoner you would wear a blue and white pinstripe shirt and jail jeans. Once you are convicted it was a red and white pinstripe shirt with jail jeans.

Leisure time

98. I was out my cell between 7:00 and 8:00 pm. We went down to the recreation hall. That was the same place we ate our dinner. There was a TV in there with some chairs at it. You had to get close to the TV to see it, so if you were at the back you couldn't see.

99. There was a library with a small amount of books. The books were by authors I didn't know but I did get into reading in Polmont.
100. There was also a table tennis table and two pool tables in there. There was no outside area we could go to, it was all inside. PT was indoors too, down in a different area.
101. They actually had a [REDACTED] in Polmont. I got my bronze medallion in there, my [REDACTED] badge. I always liked [REDACTED] and was allowed to use [REDACTED] after a while. There was an ex-army coach in there, Mr ^{GIH}[REDACTED]. He was the [REDACTED] PT. He either liked you or he didn't but he took a wee shine to me. He was a nice guy and whipped you into shape. I became PT orientated and got myself really fit.

Work

102. We were locked up twenty-three hours a day unless we took a job. Doing the length of time I was doing, I was encouraged to take one. They told us what was on offer and it was your luck if you got what you wanted. I was quite fortunate and did get what I asked for, which was joinery. I probably started working about four months after I arrived there.
103. I worked in the joinery unit, they were called the inside joiners. I soon realised it was a business they were running. They were making things like huts and garden benches for B&Q. That was the main joinery work but if you were any good and enjoyed it, there was also vocational joinery training, they were called VT joiners. I ended up in there because I had enough time to take it further and get some qualifications.
104. I ended up a time served joiner. My qualification was from Falkirk College. The staff from the college would come in to Polmont and assess our work. I actually went on to do advanced joinery and started making guitars and things like that. I still do things like that to this day, it's a hobby now.

Healthcare/medication

105. There wasn't a doctor in Polmont but there was a medical nurse who would come in. If you had anything serious you would get taken somewhere. There were horror stories about the dentist. I never went near them.

Birthdays and Christmas

106. Polmont did recognise Christmas and they put on a Christmas dinner in the hall. It was prison after all but they did try and do something.

Visitors

107. There was a visiting committee, the VC, it was laughable. They would come and see you when you were lying beaten half to death in solitary confinement. The door would open and they would ask you if you were alright. Whether you said aye or no, they would say okay and the door would shut. That was it. It was an outside visiting committee, nothing to do with the prison apparently. I think they were just collecting wages for doing it.

Family Visits

108. We were allowed two visits per month. That was more than enough for people travelling to Falkirk from Glasgow. My mum visited me. My dad also visited me but I wasn't about to converse with him.
109. By the second time my dad came to visit I had realised that even if I didn't speak to him he was using up my visits. I told him that and gave him abuse about it. I remember asking him why he was even there.

Discipline

110. If you made mistakes, you got reprimanded quickly and you could lose your privileges. A lot of the officers in there were ex-army and it felt a bit like army camp. We were making bed blocks in the mornings and were not allowed to sit on our beds. If our bed block wasn't square they would pull it apart and you would have to start again. They would do that once a week but you were never allowed to sit on your bed. You had to have it made to a decent standard every day. If you lost privileges, they could take away your recreation, PT, your TV, phone, your canteen money, they could take all these things off you.

Abuse at HMYOI Polmont

111. I hated anyone coming into my cell. If authorities were to linger in my cell, I felt as if someone was encroaching on my space. I think that went back to the carry on in the Kibble. It was something I had never thought of before that. It happened quite a lot in Polmont and my issue was probably unknown to some of the prison officers. They must have wondered what was up with me when I was starting to freak out. I would feel under pressure and start reacting to them being in my cell. Not that I wanted to share but I think it may have been better if I had shared a cell with someone. He could have calmed me down if I started freaking out and being unreasonable.
112. Staff were very physical back in those days. If I was cheeky to one prison officer, they would press a button and the whole lot would come. One would say locks on and they would put the locks on, pressure point locks. Your arms would be put up your back and they had a lock they would put on your legs. When your arms were twisted in a certain way and put up your back, they only had to touch your thumb and you got a jolt, a pain through your whole body. It was grim. They called it getting 'carted'.
113. Even as an adult I've heard grown men scream when getting these locks put on. I never heard anyone being carted who wasn't wailing. They obviously passed the technique on to each other.

114. Polmont was bad and if you were in west wing you were furthest away from solitary so you would get carried down a mile long corridor with those locks on. Sometimes they would stop and take a break to readjust the locks. It's crazy what a human being can endure and get used to. It toughened us up but it went way beyond that.

Abuse in Solitary Confinement

115. They would take me to solitary confinement, they called it 'the digger'. Being in solitary confinement for more than three months was supposed to be against your human rights. You were put in there for three months at a time and you were in your cell twenty-four hours a day. There was nothing in the cell and it had a concrete floor. You had your mattress brought in to sleep on at night. They didn't want you lying on the mattress during the day so they would come in and take it off you. You would get battered off it if you were acting as if you didn't want to give it up.
116. The visiting committee would come to see if you were all right but as I've said they would have a quick look in the door and that was it. Your eye could be swollen it wouldn't matter.
117. One time I was actually in there for a nine months stretch. They would come in on a regular basis at night and beat the shit out of me.
118. I didn't communicate with anyone else in solitary, no one else could hear me or see me in there. I wasn't going to speak to the guards about what was happening because they were the ones doing it to me. They were the last people I was going to communicate with.
119. Leaving solitary after a couple of months, you had no voice. Every time I tried to speak my voice box dried up. I had to sit with a big glass of water. Everything was fast and loud and it took a while to get used to things again. It really messed with your head.
120. If I was in solitary confinement and had visible injuries, my mum would be told I was refusing visits. My mum knew something was up. She knew I wouldn't refuse a visit

from her. She would be putting money in my account but there was nothing she could do to see me.

121. You could get beaten anywhere in the prison but in solitary the officers were called the 'mufti mob', they were the riot squad. They would come in and kick the utter shit out of you.
122. I met one of them at a later date, Mr IGL. He told me he wasn't proud of himself. He was honest and quite likable but he hated Catholics and was really biased, he wouldn't even speak to Catholics. My best friend in there was a Catholic and when Mr IGL found that out he opened my cell door and said that he had thought I was alright until he found this out. He actually got to like my friend in the end.
123. Mr IGL used to be solitary staff. He opened up to me and told me that he used to ask specifically for nightshift work. He told me that he used to come into work drunk and walk about solitary looking for Catholics. He never actually assaulted me.
124. I could be lying on my bed in solitary and my cell door would open and I would get booted up and down the cell. Sometimes I used to think I was going to die. It was systematic, they would strip me naked, take everything out the cell and leave me lying on a concrete floor for thirty minutes before they came back. I would rather they kicked me between the legs there and then and not have to wait for them to return. After a few times I knew what their plan was, I knew what was coming.
125. They would come in with the shields as well. Three of them would pile in the cell door and spread out. You knew one of them was going to pull their shield back and whack you with their truncheon. Either that or they would corral you into the corner with the shields and press you down. Then you would get battered.
126. One time they broke a bone in my elbow. I lay overnight and I knew something was wrong, I just knew I had a broken bone. I wasn't one to complain normally so they knew something was wrong. I got to see a nurse and she put a cast on it. That was all done in solitary confinement, I wasn't getting out of there. The nurse absolutely

knew what was happening. They were part of the same team. I wasn't getting to go anywhere and nothing was ever written down. Every time I was carted after that my elbow went.

127. Even though you could be taken down to solitary and smashed about the place you still lost time off your sentence for being in solitary.
128. One of the officers who used to assault me was a Mr HJX. They called him HJX. He was a big six foot blonde haired guy. He was well built and apparently a Scottish Champion kickboxer. He loved to hit us. He was always trying to goad people into hitting him but no one could get near him before he reacted and put you in a hold and physically beat you. I don't remember his first name, it could be HJX but I'm not sure.
129. I could name a few of them and have come across some of them outside. I argued with some of them in Barlinnie years later and said that some of the things they did to us I wouldn't do to an animal.
130. I don't know why I can speak about these things so easily. I think I became used to being treated like that from day dot. I didn't know any other way and transitioned into it and think that's why I can talk about it. I've spoken to some people about the things that happened to me in that place and they look at each other in disbelief.
131. If time passed in Polmont and you hadn't had any issues, you could get some of your remission time back. I did lose quite a lot of remission in there.

Leaving HMYOI Polmont

132. Polmont had a Governor who looked a bit like my mum. She was the only Governor who I could deal with on a respectful basis. That was because the rest of them didn't ever give you any respect. I remember her saying to me, what are we going to do with

you? She knew I had been locked up from when I was fifteen. There was no training for freedom and nothing I was going to get that would help me.

133. She asked if I could stay out of trouble for even a week. I told her of course I could. She said that if I stayed out of trouble she would write a report which would allow me to go down to Castle Huntly in Dundee for the remainder of my sentence. That was an open prison. I think she recognised that I needed some training for freedom before I went out onto the street. To give her her due, she got me into Castle Huntly. That was decent of her and she didn't need to do it.

Castle Huntly, Dundee

134. I was a bit shell shocked with the easier conditions at Castle Huntly. You could literally walk out the door and walk around the grounds. I didn't actually do that for a wee while. I thought the staff were just waiting for me to go outside.
135. There was no getting beaten up and if you had an issue with anyone you could hold them to it. There were people you could complain to. It was run the way prisons should have been run.
136. I had access to phones night and day and to a whole lot more people I could speak to. By that time I realised there were people out there I could contact if I had a problem. People I could ask my family to contact if necessary, even just a lawyer. In Polmont there was a complaint's form but it never reached outside the prison.
137. By then I was just looking at getting out of prison. I didn't do any joinery work at Castle Huntly, I was only there for the last couple of months of my sentence. I had been told my release date before going to Castle Huntly, so I knew when I was being released.
138. All the staff were decent. I think most of them were approaching retirement age so they were looking for a quiet life.

Abuse in Castle Huntly

139. I remember this incident happened in a dormitory. The prisoners were all about to get out on five days home leave over Christmas. There were five prisoners in the dorm at the time it happened. A prisoner who had come from Jessiefield Prison in Dumfries raped another male prisoner in the dorm. The other three males in the dorm watched on. It was astonishing. The boy who did it was hospitalised that very night. I think he ended up in intensive care after other prisoner's belted him with metal ashtrays in socks. He was lucky he escaped with his life. The boys who watched on were all set about by prisoners for doing nothing about it. That was Christmas 1994. I remember the name of one of the boys who watched on, [REDACTED] He was the one who came down and told us what had happened. The boy who did it was convicted.

Life after being in care

140. I left Castle Huntly and went back home to my mums. It was a bit strange for a while. I did relapse and ended up in prison again, not for some time but it did happen. I've done a few remands since leaving. I would have been approaching twenty-one at that time. There were a few stints of remand but I must have been really lucky not to get sentenced for one reason or another. I would have been locked up until I went to court but either the case fell apart or they were rubbish charges and I shouldn't have been there in the first place. Maybe I had been in the wrong place at the wrong time and it sorted itself out at court. All these times were in Barlinnie Prison.
141. Then my first kid was born and that made me see a different picture. That's when I started getting my act together. Then I had years without any issues but it was a bumpy start.
142. I separated from my partner a few years ago. The two of us lost our mums in the same year and she had some issues but she's coming back to her old self. We're still close. She's someone I've known since I was eleven years of age. I have a son and a daughter and my fourth grandchild is on the way.

143. I also had a partner who died. She was twenty-five, fit as a fiddle, didn't drink, didn't smoke. She passed in the night. They put it down to sudden death syndrome, her heart stopped and they don't know why. She had a one-year-old daughter at the time. I brought her up as my own. She is approaching twenty now.
144. Other than joinery, I worked with the council parks department for a wee while. I've had a couple of businesses, a car wash and I bought a beauty salon for my misses.

Impact

145. The years in Polmont turned me into an animal and I don't think I would have made it on the outside if it hadn't been for the input from my mum. I was volatile when I came out the jail, a pure lunatic, really bad.
146. I remember my mum coming into my room at home and saying, "IFM [REDACTED] you're home son." I must have been segregating myself away from my family. I wasn't even aware of it. I wasn't venturing out. In prison, canteen day was on a Wednesday and I wasn't going out to the shops unless it was a Wednesday. It must have taken me months before I settled back into family life.
147. That was sorted in months and I got better gradually. Other things took me years. I remember hearing myself say stupid things as if I missed being in prison.
148. My mental health goes up and down and I've been in touch with Breathing Space. I've been quite fortunate with my physical health. My elbow is still a bit dodgy and anything can make it go but other than that, I don't have any physical issues.
149. I do still have issues with people coming into my room. I'm forty-seven and it still bothers me. In certain situations, something just triggers and I get aggressive.

150. I was always spoken to in a very derogatory manner while I was in prison, as if I was nothing, as if I was a dog. If I'm spoken to in a similar way out here I find myself reacting in an adverse way. I'm not that wee guy anymore.
151. I don't have any issues in terms of friendships. I know who my friends are and I treat them accordingly. I don't consider anyone a friend who hasn't been a lifelong friend. I'm a good judge of character and I'll give anyone the time of day but friend is a word I don't use lightly.

Treatment/support

152. I have spoken to a few different people for support. I contacted Breathing Space and they did help me. They were decent, compassionate and not biased in any way. I can phone them anytime I want. I was having a bad time last year and I contacted them. I have to get my head in the right place to look after my family. That's paramount to me. Even before my own wellbeing I'm thinking about my family but my head needs to be in the right place if I'm going to be able to do anything for them.

Reporting of Abuse

153. I could never tell my mum about the abuse. She carried the guilt around with her every day I was in prison thinking it was her fault. She used to ask me about my time in there and if anything ever happened but I wouldn't tell her. I'm so glad I never did.
154. I never told police or any authority about the abuse, there was never really anybody to speak to about things like that.

Records

155. I don't have any of my records and they're not something I would be interested in reading.

Lessons to be Learned

156. I think complaints should be listened to. I think people should be held accountable and staff need to be keeping an eye on other staff. They can't be operating like a gang, able to do what they want. I would hate things I have experienced to be repeated and hope that people can now be held accountable.

157. I have watched things online and on TV showing these things are still happening but I would like to think things have progressed since my day. I would hate to think people are still going through the same sort of issues. That's my whole point of going through this today, to make sure history doesn't repeat itself. It's not just the things I'm pointing out, there must be so many different things happened. When all that is looked at as a whole surely there must be a plan of putting things into operation to prevent these things being repeated.

Other information

158. 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... IFM [Redacted Signature]

Dated... 13/1/23