

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GQR

Support person present: No

1. My name is GQR. My date of birth is 1976. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was brought up in Easterhouse, Glasgow with my two older brothers and my mum and dad. My dad worked in Glasgow Royal Infirmary and my mum was a housewife. My oldest brother is fifty years old and the middle brother is forty-nine. My mum's name is and my dad's name was. We stayed in the same two bedroomed house growing up. Me and my brothers shared a room. It was very small.
3. I went to Easthall Primary School and then Bannerman High School. Easthall was in Easterhouse, but Bannerman was just outside Easthouse, in Baillieston. It was a better high school than the one that was right in the middle of our scheme. I was at Bannerman for a year then I left there to go to a place called Lochend Secondary School. I got on alright at school. I did do my standard grade exams. I didn't pass them all but I did do them. I passed physical education and history. I left school when I was sixteen.
4. On leaving school I started a Youth Thinkers Society placement type of thing at a place called Workwise. I was working in a warehouse that supplied a jean shop and a dress shop. It was full time. I was in the army cadets as well. I started the army cadets when

I was eleven and stayed in it until I was imprisoned. It was something I did on a daily basis. It was open all the time. My oldest brother was in it too and I thought he looked cool in his uniform, so I wanted to go. Going into the army would have been my ideal occupation.

5. We did everything at the army cadets. We went on annual camps and did all the Duke of Edinburgh awards. I have all three, bronze, silver and gold. I was seventeen or eighteen when I received my gold medal. We had to do a seven day excursion for it and map out our own routes and things like that. I was awarded my gold when I was in Dumfries prison. I wrote to the Duke of Edinburgh Awards because I was meant to go to Holyrood House to meet Prince Philip to get my award but I was imprisoned. I knew the people who organised it through the army cadets, so they came and presented it to me in Dumfries. I've still got it. It was a good thing. The Prince's Trust is massive.
6. I was involved in a serious incident at seventeen and ended up spending a long time in prison. Life growing up until I was imprisoned was alright. There was no social work involvement in my family and I'd never been in any care facilities growing up. When I went to prison that was the only thing I had ever been in trouble for. I was in Barlinnie prison at first, as a young offender and that wasn't bad. I was only there for one night and then I was sent to Longriggend on remand. In Barlinnie you were just thrown in a room and told not to press the bell unless it was an emergency.

### **Longriggend Young Offenders Institution, North Lanarkshire**

7. Going to Longriggend was a huge shock to the system. I was petrified. It was also a massive shock to my family's system. My mum and dad had to move house when I committed my offence. Obviously that side of stuff gets hidden from me because they didn't want me to worry about it but I did worry about it. None of my family had ever been in trouble with the law before.

## Routine at Longriggend

### *First day*

8. There were other people on the bus when I was being transferred to Longriggend from Barlinnie prison. The first day was the most terrifying thing ever. I'd never been in custody before. There was a lot of shouting. That's how it started, with all the shouting. It was frightening. This period on remand at Longriggend was the worst. I obviously didn't know what was right and what was wrong. I didn't know their way of doing things.
9. I went into the reception area at Longriggend, which wasn't that big a room. Screws were ushering people through. They were wanting their job done quickly. I understand this now but I didn't understand it back then. I was given clothes and marched over to my hall.
10. The guys with the two pips on their shoulder were called '*Chief*' back then. The other screws just had HMP on their shoulders. I was marched into the Chief's room and that's when the rules were explained to me before I was put into a cell. I was also given a basic run down on the things in the hall. Where you were going to get to your cell and things like that. The other rules were, try to keep yourself to yourself, don't get involved in anyone else's nonsense and don't give the staff any problems. To use the Chief's words he said '*we've got the biggest gang*'. The Chief's name was GQS. He was a big, heavy, burly guy. The only thing I can acknowledge about him was when he was physically abusive towards me.
11. Back then officers weren't called by their names. They were called '*boss*' or '*sir*'. If you didn't call them this you were slapped, so I didn't know any of their names. These people never introduced themselves. It was as if two worlds had totally collided for me.
12. Officers in prisons now have tiny radios that they communicate with but back then they had huge radios that they walked about with. It wasn't just their truncheons that were hard, it was the radios as well for hitting you with.

13. They took me to the hall where they keep people that were in for capital offences. The other halls were for people that were in for housebreaking and things like that. I was shown to my cell. It was a single cell. Back then they didn't let capital crime prisoners share with anyone else. A prison cell wasn't like the cells you have now. It had nothing in it. It had a piss pot in the corner and the furniture was made out of cardboard.
14. There were about eighty to a hundred boys in my hall, all with single cells. There were three floors, with twenty-five to thirty prisoners on each floor and two to three screws on each landing at any one time. There was one chief per hall. There were day shift and back shift officers. I was on the second floor.
15. There was an annexe coming off the hall for people who self-harmed. Those cells were always full. They weren't allowed any objects in their cells at all. They would get a paper plate with their dinner and stuff like that. They had a suicide mattresses, quilt and pillows. I think there were five or six of those cells. The age range was from school boys, from about fourteen or fifteen I think, up to twenty-one year olds. I had just turned seventeen.
16. You didn't have plug sockets. Your family had to send you a pro-forma for your batteries for your radio every couple of weeks. All your batteries and your razor blades would be kept in an ice-cream tub inside the Chief's office. There would be an ice-cream tub for every single prisoner on his wall. You had to go to him if you wanted a shave or wanted to change your batteries.
17. There was one officer that I saw years later, after they shut down Longriggend. They moved him into one of my halls. His name was IKV [REDACTED]. I found him to be alright initially. But he was the type of person who used to stand at the canteen queue and he would smash up your biscuits if you didn't buy him one. I don't remember any other names.

*Mornings and bedtime*

18. We got up about seven in the morning. You would be woken up by the screw opening the door and slamming it. I was one of the lucky few prisoners that didn't have a piss pot. I had a thing that was called a porta-potty, you get them in caravans. You had a basin and you were allowed to go out and fill that up with water in the morning to wash yourself and clean your teeth. We would go down for breakfast about seven thirty after they done the checks on our cells. Somebody sat in the kitchen and made hundreds of bits of toast and by the time you got it, it just flaked into nothing. The tea bags were as big as a purse. You get a continental breakfast now in the jail, which is a roll and jam.
19. After breakfast you would be locked up back in your cell. The PTI would come into the hall and shout down the sections asking if anybody wanted to go the gym. If you did, you went. At lunch time and dinner time everybody went to the dining hall again. Family visits were about one o'clock in the afternoon.
20. You could maybe get 'rec' for about forty-five minutes or so. This consisted of table tennis or pool for an hour after tea time. It was from about six o'clock until half past seven in the evening. After that you'd be back behind your door for the rest of the night. The only other time you were out your room was going for family visits or going to the gym.
21. If you got a good screw the lights would go off about ten o'clock at night. If you got a bad one it would be midnight or one o'clock in the morning before they would turn your lights off, just to annoy you. You didn't have a switch inside your cell to turn the light off yourself so you would shout on a screw to turn it off. If he didn't like you he would just leave it on. Normally he would go around at ten o'clock and switch everybody's off so that he wasn't running backwards and forwards with people shouting on him.

### *Mealtimes / Food*

22. The whole hall got fed together in a big dining hall. You went up and picked your food. There were tables of four people. You could sit where you wanted. Sometimes you got the occasional bit of bother from other prisoners that were at different tables.
23. Because we didn't have kettles the screws would come around about eight o'clock at night with a big 'dixie'. It was like a big urn and had a thing in it that all the prisoners would call diesel. You would get your cup of tea from that. It didn't look great but when you were sitting in your cell with nothing, not even a bottle of water, you took what you got.

### *Clothing / Uniform*

24. The uniform consisted of a pair of jeans and a blue and white striped shirt. That was prison issue. You got one of each. You wore it every day until you asked them to get you clean ones. You had your pants, vest and socks changed daily.

### *School*

25. I didn't get any education while I was at Longriggend. I'm not aware of anyone getting any education.

### *Leisure time*

26. You got outside for an hour of exercise a day. That's the same in every jail. It could be at different times. You just walked around in circles. Normally it would be everybody in your hall that was outside. They wouldn't mix the halls. There would be four or five officers in the yard at exercise.
27. There was a television in the recreational room. They would normally put a film on. The staff on duty in the hall would supervise this.

### *Family contact*

28. Obviously my family were wanting to see me so they started coming up regularly. It was on a daily basis. One day it would be my gran and grandpa, the next it would be my mum and dad. One of my brothers had just passed his driving test back then so he was driving everyone through to see me. It was in Lanarkshire so it didn't take them too long from Glasgow. They got an hour visit with me. It was held in a big, massive visiting room. There were chairs around a very low table, not much higher than off the floor. I don't know why that was, probably to stop people passing drugs under it.
29. There were hundreds of cameras in the visiting room and hundreds of officers supervising it. In Longriggend it was like the staff were on a stage so they would look down on you. As well as this there were people walking between the tables. My family would bring me up newspapers and magazines, things like that.
30. While I was at Longriggend the relationship with my family was quite strained after what I had done. They wanted to show love and affection to their little boy who had just went to jail for the first time ever but my relationship with them started to take a dip. I could tell there was something wrong. Their lives had just been uprooted too. I didn't really ask that many questions about it but I could feel it.
31. Your family put money in for you on a weekly basis. You were only allowed to spend a certain amount in a week. You were allowed to spend two pounds fifty pence per week. It's recently went up to twenty pounds now. You could buy a cup of coffee and a bar of chocolate at visits, things like that. In the hall where your cell was you would use your money for tobacco and toiletries. For two pounds fifty I could get tobacco, toiletries, juice and a chocolate bar back then.

### *Healthcare*



32. If you had an injury or an illness you would have to fill out a form for the health centre. You would put it in and wait to get an appointment with the nurse. You could get one that day but it usually took weeks. It was ok. If I needed to use the doctor I did.
33. You could see a dentist on a regular basis. They were quite sharp with that. Even now they are. They don't use the drill or things like that. It's just for little fillings and check-ups.

#### *Religious instruction*

34. There was no religious instruction as such. They did have a chaplain. He was a guy that I got friendly with. He was from Prison Christian Ministries. His name was Colin Cuthbert. He done the prison fellowship. He went into different prisons at different times. He came from the outside and did a bible class. His bible class was voluntary. There were always people that went but I didn't go. I told him what happened to me at Longriggend. Way back then I didn't tell anyone else except him. I don't think he done anything about it. There was nothing he could do. I saw him later at Dumfries prison and he said it should never have happened to me and I should never have been treated like that.

#### *Discipline*

35. You would be silly to annoy the guards. You would get segregated for reports if you did. It could be for a multitude of things like threatening and abusive language, assaults, being caught with an article you shouldn't have like a knife or drugs. You would be locked up in your room for twenty three hours with only a mattress and a piss pot and the mattress would be taken off you in the morning so you couldn't sit down. I was in the segregation unit for two weeks after the assault I suffered at Longriggend. That was a harrowing experience. I had not been put in there for anything else while there. It is just not me. It is not something that I do on a daily basis when speaking to people.



### **Abuse at Longriggend**

36. The main incident that happened to me was in the visiting room at Longriggend. A young boy was sitting with his feet on the table at a visit. An officer went over and asked him to remove his feet from the table. He wouldn't do it so the officer grabbed his feet and pushed them off the table. The boy then jumped up and assaulted the officer. At that point the riot bell was pressed.
37. Everyone else in the room was ushered up to the side wall and because I was the very first person at the front of that queue, as soon as the door opened up, all the officers coming in trampled straight over the top of me and dragged me on to the floor. It was a rubbery floor. There were easily forty to fifty officers. I can't say for sure as I was lying face down after that but when a riot bell is pressed every officer comes and they lock up all of the prisoners.
38. They got everyone else out of the room, families and prisoners, until it was only me and the boy who initially assaulted the prison officer left. I had never met this boy before. I now know his name is [REDACTED] and he had just turned sixteen at the time.
39. It was my mum and my brother that were visiting me that day. The visitors didn't see anything as they were out the door when it started. My gran and my brother came to see me the next day and didn't recognise me.
40. Me and this boy [REDACTED] were then kept in that visiting room for six hours while officers took repeated shots doing whatever they wanted to do to us. The prison officer who was assaulted by [REDACTED] was still there as well. He obviously was concentrating on [REDACTED] and didn't say that I hadn't done anything.

41. I was held on the floor. I had an officer on each arm and each leg. They took repeated shots at kicking me between the legs until my testicles nearly burst. I had done absolutely nothing wrong. It was never acknowledged that I'd done nothing wrong. I know a lot of this sounds hard to believe, but during that period of time, I was put in lock restraints and assaulted for hours. I could hear the chief <sup>GOS</sup> urging them all on to take a shot. He must have been the first one that booted me between the legs. Once one had kicked me between the legs instead of just walking away they walked right across my back and stamped their boots into the side of my face. I was screaming in agony. They didn't say anything else to me.
42. I was bleeding from every orifice on my body afterwards. My ears, both nostrils, my mouth, the end of my penis and my back end. Blood was running down the backs of my legs.
43. The stuff that they did to me that day was just unbelievable. It happened about three weeks into my remand. There had been no incidents of abuse before this happened. Maybe a couple of little niggly things, like the stuff at the canteen with the biscuits but we couldn't do anything about that. If you fronted up to them you got burst.
44. These officers were the type of people that would come in to your cell during lock up time. When the doors aren't meant to be opened. They would come in and practice their fighting techniques on boys. I haven't experienced things like this in a long time now but the period of time that I was in Longriggend, I know that it happened.
45. ■■■ was in the visiting room with me for at least six hours when we were assaulted. I was aware that similar incidents had happened to other people too. After it happened I was told that it was for the benefit of the other prisoners. So that the rest could hear this is what happened to you if you stepped out of line.
46. I was moved from the visiting room in the restraint position to my cell after the assault. I was still in the locked restraint position. Every step I took I had to go down to my knees and lie out flat and then I had to get back up on my feet again. They had to keep wiping the floor because I was sweating and bleeding. This is the thing that took the

most time to get eighty feet walking like that. It took at least three hours. All my clothes were ripped from body. I was naked.

47. I was put in front of a nurse in my cell after the assault but she didn't do anything. I was covered in blood and she could clearly see that I was in all sorts of distress. I think she was scared too. She didn't examine me. I don't know how many times she's had to see something like that. It was as if she wanted to help me but was too scared. Probably scared of the officers and any retaliation from them.
48. After the nurse left they put me back to the floor into another lock restraint that means only one officer has to be in the cell with you at one time. They put your arms up your back and cross your legs over behind your back. Then they use your body as a spring to spring out the cell door. You are face down the whole time.
49. I was then easily lying on the cell floor for ninety minutes trying to get some feeling back into my body. I was totally naked and an officer threw a pair of boxers in to me to take me to see some police officers. I was still screaming in agony.
50. The screws took me to the Chief's office for a police interview. I struggled to walk and I still only had my boxers on with dried in blood all over my body. To rub salt in the wound the police then charged me with assaulting an officer. They did not ask about my injuries. I went to speak when I was in the office with them and got dragged off the chair and slapped to the side of the face by the screws. I was put back on the floor and the whole rigmarole started again with kicks being thrown at me. I saw black shoes and brown shoes this time. The brown shoes must have been the police officer's. There were about ten to fifteen officers there again. It was just as severe as the first time as they used their truncheons this time. They were like a pack of wolves.
51. I was then taken to the segregation block. There was a chemical that they used to break down all the stuff in the porta potty, it was called Aquachem. When they came around that night with the stuff we called diesel the Aquachem had ended up in it. It was given to all the people in the segregation unit. I put it down as soon as I tasted it and started screaming. I just spat it out and didn't swallow any.

52. The morning after I was taken back to the governor's office. The governor checked on everyone in segregation every day. I was still only in my boxer shorts and caked in dry blood. The governor gave me three days wages and I was taken back to my cell in the segregation unit.
53. I had a visit with my gran and brother that day but they still wouldn't let me shower so I was not allowed in the main visiting room. Officers gave me some clothes and I saw my family in a closed visit. My gran and brother walked straight past the window of the room I was sitting in and I had to bang on the window to tell them it was me. My brother cracked up about the state of me. My gran was distraught. I told my brother [REDACTED] a bit of what happened then but I didn't want to tell my gran and upset her. I was trying to calm my brother down as well. [REDACTED] did speak to the officers about it and he was told to calm down, it was an incident that was contained now and I was ok.
54. I was in segregation for maybe two weeks and I was assaulted a few times in there. It was just slaps. I never saw [REDACTED] but I could hear him in there too. I shouted on him the first night but he said he could hardly stand up and would talk to me the next day. I don't know what his injuries were. I did speak with him the next day and we were telling each other what had been done to us. I actually thought he deserved it at the time as he had head-butted the officer.
55. I was not allowed to get cleaned up for six or seven days and I was not allowed to see a nurse. I was in some discomfort. My wrists were killing me for weeks. My testicle hadn't started to get big at this point. I had surface grazes from being dragged about the floor and it hurt everywhere but the main injury was between my legs. No one checked on me to see if I was ok.
56. I got out for one hour a day for exercise when I was in segregation and I still got my daily visits. I did not see anyone else when I was out for exercise. After segregation I was put back to my own cell and although there was no more violence like that assault the officers knew what they had done to me and would put it on me verbally still. They would say things like I better keep quiet so I don't end up like that again.

57. I had to go into hospital and get my testicle drained later on when I was in Dumfries prison. I never got any help or medical attention when I was in Longriggend. I was showing the nurses but they just kept saying I would have to get an appointment at the hospital and it never happened. It was well over a year before I got any medical attention. I was walking funny and everything. My testicle had a big bag of fluid attached to it and it had to be cut off. It genuinely looked as if it was going to explode. I was put to sleep and operated on for that at the hospital. For a couple of weeks after I had to walk about with a wee onion bag on but I was in a lot less pain.
58. I was also taken to court from Dumfries prison and admonished for the assault on the officer in Longriggend. [REDACTED] was also there and at a different jail by this point. He was found guilty and fined.

#### **Reporting of abuse at Longriggend**

59. I told my family what had happened to me in Longriggend. My dad just told me I better keep my head down as I had a long sentence to do. My mum was in bits about it.

#### **Leaving Longriggend**

60. I was in Longriggend for a hundred and ten days and the only change to the routine was when I was seriously assaulted that day. I was taken back to court for sentencing for my initial crime and sentence to Dumfries prison. I spent a few nights in Polmont prison before being taken down to Dumfries jail. I was not abused in any other prisons.

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

61. I spent fourteen years in custody for my initial offence. I got out on licence and then was recalled after six months. I then did two and a half years in custody and was out

for eighteen months before I was recalled again and given four and a half years in custody. I was then released again for eight months and have been back inside again for three years now. My latest sentence is for twelve months. I have to work towards offending related course work and then I can be moved to an open prison.

62. When on licence it is the social services that deal with you. You don't get to move on. If you miss appointments or blank them on the phone they can report you for that but the main thing you would come to their attention for is for criminal offences. If you commit offences in certain areas they just ban you from that area when you get back out. That meant that I was banned from where my support network was, my family. I couldn't see my mum regularly when I was at liberty. My mum has poor mobility and couldn't come to me. Hopefully something can be worked out next time I get out to make it easier.
63. When I was at liberty I did work. I worked as a [REDACTED] for Carillion on the Airdrie to Bathgate railway line. I also worked on Motherwell Civic Centre refurbishment.

### **Impact**

64. I have searched for reasons over the years as to why a bunch of grown men would want to break someone like that, in that way. I know what happened to me then should never have happened to anybody. Even if I had done something wrong it would still have been extreme. This assault has impacted on me massively. The fear is still there and uncontrollable at times. I can't stand being in close proximity to any officer. I can't trust an officer. I look at them now and think it was as good as them assaulting me but I know it's not really. I still feel like I can't complain about it. I've always just felt I had to keep my head down and get on with it. If you start putting complaint forms in they just go missing.
65. I find it hard to build up relationships with people. I can still hear people screaming in prison when they are getting put into restraints and that brings it all back. I get night terrors from the incident and flashbacks but not regularly.

66. My relationship with my family was strained when I got out of prison. I was the impact on them. I had turned to drugs when I was inside. I was looking for a way out. A different coping strategy. I know it wasn't the right one.

### **Treatment / Support**

67. I speak with a mental health nurse called Blessing in prison. She is a good outlet. Since being recalled every time I am in custody I access the mental health team. Before that I had nothing. I have been seeing Blessing for the last year and I find it helpful. I also see a psychologist called Kate Gudeon. I have told them both about the assault at Longriggend. They just listen to me.
68. I am on medication for night terrors and sleeping tablets. I have been on them for two and a half years now. I don't think I could sleep without them.

### **Reporting of abuse after care**

69. I have not reported the assaulted on me to the police but I have thought about it. I would love nothing better to get one up on those officers but as they said they have the biggest gang on the planet. I couldn't even give the police any names if I did report it. I also don't want to rock the boat as I am still in custody and still need to live here.
70. I didn't report what happened to me to social services as I never got to see them after I was sentenced for my initial crime. I only saw them when I was getting out. I did think about doing it but just didn't know how.

### **Records**

71. I have never tried to get my records. I did not know I could do that.



**Lessons to be Learned**

- 72. I can't see anything positive from what happened to me. The only positive thing was Longriggend shutting down as it has broken a lot of young boys. We are still struggling years later and I am testament to that. My dad was only fifty four when he died and I am now forty six. I know this is the last time I will be in prison. This time inside has been worse for some reason.

**Hopes for the Inquiry**

- 73. Honestly I don't even know what my hopes are for this Inquiry. Hopefully better practices will be put in place. I know the ones in place now are better anyway. Back then it was different. We were brought up differently as well.

**Other information**

- 74. 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.

GQR  


Signed.....

Dated... 13.09.22 .....