

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GTR

Support person present: No.

1. My name is GTR. My date of birth is 1969. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Aberdeen. My parent's names are and which is my mum's maiden name. She used that name after my mum and dad divorced. I had one brother who died very recently in 2022. His name was and he would have been 49 on 2022. They don't know what it was as there was nothing medically wrong with him. There is a name for it but I cannot remember but basically he just fell asleep and didn't waken up.
3. From an early age I remember my dad being an alcoholic. My mum was there and she tried her best. My dad was in and out of relationships with other women. When he was drunk I was pretty scared of my dad. I was going to jump over a bannister once as my grandma had been visiting and went to leave. My dad was drunk and I didn't want to stay in the house I wanted to go home with her instead. I ran out into the close, threatened to jump the bannister and my grandma grabbed a hold of me. I wouldn't go back in the house because I was scared and it wasn't just that occasion there were many others like that. My dad was never violent towards me, he never hit me but I just know it was a fear I had when he was drunk. He used to shout and bawl a lot and it was just chaotic to be honest.

4. [REDACTED] stayed with an aunt for the first four years of his life. I don't really know the answer to why he stayed with her but when he was born my mum had a lot of difficulties and was ill. I used to stay with my grandma and used to call her 'my old maw'. It was a pattern of stay with her then back with my mum. My dad would get back and there would be a fight again. I would then be back at my grandma's again. It was just chaotic.
5. My dad used to do garden work and things like that. My mum never worked although she might have had a job here and there. I can't really remember her ever being a worker.
6. I think I was ten or eleven when I first went into care. I went to numerous primary schools before then including Middlefield and Seton. My mum had about one hundred houses, it was always a new start but it never ever worked out. I would be at one school for however long it would be then there would be a big fight and I wouldn't be at school for ages. We would then flit and I would go into another school so it was that kind of pattern. I found the moving about and changing schools difficult. I didn't associate with people, I wasn't a mixer.
7. I think one of the reasons I ended up going into a home was the chaos with school. I also think it was my mum and dad's lifestyle as well. Social work got involved. I remember the social worker coming to my house in [REDACTED], Aberdeen for the first time. His name was ^{MYO} [REDACTED] and he was basically threatening me by telling me I was going into a home. I was upset because he was in the house in the first place and it was a bit of an uproar with how he was behaving and how I reacted. I have no doubt my attitude was shit. He grabbed me by the back of my neck forcing my head into the corner of the couch with him on top of me. I couldn't breathe and my mum ended up having to pull him off the top of me. That is the first memory I have got of a social worker and I was ten or eleven at that time. He didn't stay my social worker as he got transferred because of all of that. I have read about this in my records and he states he was restraining me. It didn't put things off to a great start with how I felt about social workers.

8. I was actually speaking to my mum the other day about what happened after MYO [REDACTED] MYO [REDACTED] was sent away. There was this guy who was a psychologist who went to court and gave this big bad statement about whatever I was doing but he had never seen me. He was speaking up for MYO [REDACTED] at court. My mum said she was there and she said she actually spoke to the Sheriff and asked if he could ask the psychologist if he could pick me out in the court. He couldn't do it and he said he had based all his information on statements he had from MYO [REDACTED]. MYO [REDACTED] must have been charged with assaulting me but I can't remember what happened to him.

9. I think for me everything went wrong when I was about ten when my dad left for another woman and I went into the home. Basically I don't think my mum could cope but I don't know if it was on a voluntary basis I was put into care or not. I had been at many Children's Panels but I can't really remember them to be honest. My mum would have always been there and social workers but I can't remember who they were. I remember a lassie but that is all. They were held up in Queen's Cross, Aberdeen.

10. I would have been in the social work office a few times but I can't really remember. I also remember going to hospital appointments to see people like psychologists. All of this was before I went into care. I don't really know why I went to these appointments. They said I was unruly and they said I had all sorts of behavioural disorders at school and at home. That time is a muddled up thing to me to be honest. I just remember at that stage of my life having to see psychologists up at Foresterhill Hospital at the side of the Sick Children's building. It was a chaotic time of life.

11. I don't remember the name of the guy who was the psychologist at the hospital but I also remember having to go and see another psychologist in King Street, Aberdeen once a week. They tried to put me on medication a few times as I am sure I have read that in my files but I cannot remember that.

Westburn House Children's Home, Aberdeen

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Westburn House Children's Home, Aberdeen

45. **Secondary Institutions - to be published later**
Secondary Institutions - to be published later I think my mum may have just come and took us out. I know I just ended up back home. Over the next four years or so I was just between home and my grandmas. I just wandered about and I did what I wanted to do. I didn't have any rules to follow. I wasn't attending school. I was really just raking about the streets and I would say everything was just chaotic. I started stealing and getting charged by the police.
46. I was drinking and used to rake about houses with my dad drunk. I started on softer drugs and ended up with a heroin addiction. I didn't know who I was and I didn't like myself. I had no structure in my life. I have always had thoughts I don't want to have and the drink and drugs helped block them out. Having a heroin addiction meant I had to finance that which led to me getting in trouble with the police.
47. I have been in all the young offenders units at some point. The first one was Friarton Detention Centre and then Polmont when I was seventeen or eighteen years old. I have spent my life in institutions.

Friarton Detention Centre, Perth

48. I think I was sentenced at sixteen years old in the adult court in Aberdeen for stealing copper. I got a four month detention in Friarton. This was the first institution I went to after Westburn. I remember feeling scared going to this place. It was away from home and Aberdeen and it was a strange place to me. It was the first time I was in a place like a prison.

49. I found the place just like what it must be like to be in the army. You had to be on your toes at all times
50. There were anything between 30-50 boys who were aged between 16-18 years old. They were from all over Scotland. I don't remember any of their names but I remember their faces.
51. The only members of staff whose names I can remember were Mr **GTT** and Mr Wilson. They were all the same though.
52. I hated my time in Friarton, it was the longest four months of my life.

Routine at Friarton Detention Centre, Perth

First day

53. When you arrive there is a reception and they check your name and number. You have to call them 'sir'. They take all your property and clothes and they give you their clothes and a bed pack. You are given other kit such as shoes and boots and they tell you that you have to bull them. They called us by our second name.
54. The first time you go into the cell there is a guy called a 'passman' who would come in and make a bed block and take it apart again. That was it you need to pick it up from that.

Mornings and bedtime

55. First thing in the morning a big bell rang and the noise of it at six in the morning was deafening. You had to have a pair of their shorts and trainers on. We had to line up and there were inspections. It was all that sort of carry on. They would come in and inspect the bed blocks and throw them around the cell if they thought it wasn't right.

Washing/bathing

56. You had to have a shave every morning whether you had a hair on your face or not. There was fighting every single day in the showers and that is where it mostly happened between the boys. It wasn't like single showers it was just a big room kind of thing.

Culture

57. The boys stuck in cliques with other boys from wherever they came from. I was the only boy in there from Aberdeen and I was picked on because of that. There was a bullying culture amongst the boys and the staff knew about it and let it go on.
58. It was hellish in there, just really bad. There was no-one to speak to and anyway if you came across as weak you were picked on. It was really hard being there.

Family Contact

59. I got a couple of visits from my mum but I never told her what it was like in there. I suppose I didn't want to put pressure on her and it is not the thing to do is tell your mum you are getting bullied.

Abuse at Friarton Detention Centre, Perth

60. It was horrible because the screws were horrible. They were very abusive. I remember getting hit in the face with a pair of boots by Mr **GTT** who was a screw. You had to bull your boots and shoes and you went for grades. I think it was blue grade first then yellow grade and red grade. I never got any of the grades. A boy from Aberdeen got out and I got his boots, shoes and all that. The screw came in and he knew I had got the guys stuff. He was holding the boots saying that they weren't mine and I said they were. He just smacked me right in the face with the boots. He took the boots and shoes away.

61. I think the staff bullied everyone not just me. It was easy for them because they wouldn't get any retaliation. The screws were just handy with their hands and feet slapping and kicking you. It was just really bad right from the get go. You had to do very little or nothing to be hit. If they thought the bed block wasn't to standard you could get kicked up the arse.
62. The first time I was in the gym I had no idea what they were talking about when they spoke of 'murder ball'. It was just basically physical fighting like punching and kicking to get the ball. I didn't know this at the time as I had never heard of it and this guy banged me right in the eye the first time. I ended up with a big black eye. It was like one ball and everyone had to go for it. Lots of the boys would get injuries being hit by others. It was supervised by the PTIs who would be having a laugh about it.
63. The physical bullying from the staff and other boys was a daily thing.

Leaving Friarton Detention Centre, Perth

64. I left Friarton at the end of my sentence and it wasn't long before I was in trouble again and sentenced for theft and sent to Polmont YOI. I would have been 17-18 years old and got a 6-8 month sentence.

Polmont Young Offenders Institution

65. Polmont was just the same as Friarton, it was just as horrible.
66. The screws were horrible. I remember a big 'screw' as he was notorious and was called GTU. He had a name like GTU or GTU. It wasn't those names but something along those lines. He was the main man in the 'digger'. He was just a pure animal. I met who I believe was his son a few years later when I was in Perth Prison. His name was Mr [REDACTED] which I probably remember because I thought it was a girls' name. Mr [REDACTED] also worked in Polmont as well when I was there but I didn't

know who he was at that time. He was a landing PO. I also remember Mr ITD who was a senior officer and Mr Robertson and Danny who were POs which I understand means they are principal officers. Danny, Mr ITD and Mr Robertson all worked in 'alley cally' which was what the accommodation block was known as.

Routine

67. You didn't get to sit on your bed or anything during the day. You had to have your kit out on the bed and sit on a chair. It was all marching and drill kind of stuff we did during the day which was just the same as Friarton. I think Polmont had been a borstal at the beginning but it turned into a YOI. The borstal side of things was the same idea as Friarton with the bed blocks and marching carry on. When it changed into a YOI the mentality of the borstal continued. I didn't experience Polmont as a borstal. I would say although Polmont was really bad Friarton was worse.

Abuse at Polmont Young Offenders Institution

68. If you were on report they took you to a room and there would be one screw on either side of you. They would open the door and then throw you into the room. You basically landed at the table and had to give your name and number. Once I was sent to the cells in the segregation unit although I cannot remember now what it was for. I was taken down and it was down under north wing. It was dungeons and there were pipes along the back of the cell. They used to come in and take your mattress away first thing in the morning and give you it back at five o'clock. You were left lying on the ground and it was that cold because it was a stone floor. I huddled up against the two pipes and my knee got stuck between them. They were shouting all this stuff about getting the Fire Brigade and all that. A nurse came down, I remember he was a black kid, and put all of this stuff over my knee but to cut a long story short I managed to get my knee out. I got a battering for that from two screws. It was GTU and another wee guy. They grabbed me by the hair and punched and kicked me repeatedly. I just curled into a ball to protect myself.

69. Polmont was exactly the same as Friarton with the bullying and violence from the 'screws'. It wasn't just me everyone got it and it was on a daily basis.

Leaving Polmont Young Offenders Institution

70. After Polmont I went to Greenock YOI when I was about nineteen and afterwards I was sent to Jessiefield YOI in Dumfries. Greenock was okay and it was more relaxed.

Life after being in care

71. I had a kid who was born when I was in Greenock and his date of birth is [REDACTED] 1988. My partner had a daughter and I was her stepdad.
72. When I was about eighteen years old I was assaulted by the police. I was out drinking in Aberdeen and got lifted. I tried to run from the coppers but they caught me and battered me. I was battered badly and ended up in the hospital. I had a massive blood clot and spent nine hours 45 minutes in theatre. Lawyers and all that got involved and it ended up getting settled out of court but nothing happened to the police. The day before it was meant to go to court I went to see a lawyer and a QC guy. They said I could take this claim into court and it wouldn't be a problem winning it but money wise I wouldn't get much more than they were offering me at the time. I took the money and it was a no publicity case. By that time I had a heroin habit which definitely influenced my decision.
73. I was left with a brain injury and it has been a pretty big thing in my life. I can remember things when I was a kid but my short-term memory has been affected. I have cognitive difficulties. I can get things mixed up but I find it difficult to explain just how it really limits me every day. Sometimes I find it difficult to find the words to express myself or I lose concentration easily. I don't think my brain works the same way it did before and that is difficult to cope with. I am told that it is getting worse as I get older.

74. I ended up back in Friarton years after my first sentence when I was over eighteen. It had changed by then. It was an adult prison and I think it was much better, I think it was the staff because as I mentioned the first time it was basically like an army camp but the second time it was more relaxed. I think the YOIs were all about trying to drum things into the younger prisoners' heads to maybe try and make them not come back but I don't know.
75. I have not worked as my drug habit didn't stop so I was basically feeding it with anything I could.
76. I have now served twenty years of a life sentence for murder and have spent the last six years in HMP Grampian. I was sentenced in 2003 because I murdered a man. There were a lot of things I could have brought out in court but I didn't. I don't know if it would have made any difference or not. This guy raped my auntie and he actually sexually assaulted me when I was 13-14. My dad was drinking and I was running about with him. I ended up drinking in the house of an old guy called [REDACTED] and there were heaps of people in the house. I got drunk on a couple of tins of beer and spewed so I went into the back room for a lie down. I woke up and this same guy was lying next to me with his hand right down my trousers. His name was [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. His abuse triggered bad memories for me and took me right back but I couldn't say anything. I have never shared this information before and I don't find it easy to talk about it.
77. The murder was later and followed a separate incident in my grandma's house. I had been drinking and so had he. I experienced a lot of emotions during that incident like everything bursting in my head.
78. My two kids are using drugs outside and it is all 'to fuck' to be honest. I blame myself for that. I should have been there for them. I speak to my family on the phone but I see them very rarely. I got a visit that I wasn't expecting from my mum and niece. I knew there was something wrong right away. That was when they told me about my brother's death. That was only a few months ago and I just couldn't take it in.

Impact

79. I always feel I should have done more for my brother and I blame myself for what happened to him. He turned gay Secondary Institutions - to be published later if he was gay anyway. I felt responsible for him when we went into the home like in a kind of protective or parental kind of way.
80. I am twenty years into a life sentence and yet thinking about my time in care still upsets me now. I have got upset speaking about some of the things I remember when meeting with the Inquiry so that shows the level of impact that time has on my life.
81. I feel it also contributed to me becoming addicted to alcohol and drugs as they made me forget all the memories, the stuff that is dark in my head. They made me feel better. That in turn led to me getting involved with the police, mainly for theft, to fund my habit. Everything is so closely linked like one thing just leads to another. I still struggle with drugs now.
82. I really don't like myself and that is how I have felt through most of my childhood and adult life. I feel I don't know who I am, like I don't have an identity.
83. I don't like the thoughts in my head and they are always there. These relate to the sexual abuse mainly but also the batterings I got. I always try to block them and that's how the drugs and booze help.
84. I have a habit that I pick my skin. I don't even realise I do it. I don't know if it is part of the self-loathing or something that I do because I am anxious or upset. Even though I [REDACTED] I can't stop it. My body is [REDACTED] because of what I do to my skin.
85. I still feel ashamed and embarrassed about the sexual abuse. I have not found that easy to talk about and even then I struggled using the words. I didn't think there was any point coming to speak to the Inquiry and not telling them everything but it nearly made me not bother. This is the first time I have told anyone.

86. I think about the abuse every day and I struggle to sleep. I can also get flashbacks and have bad dreams. I also get panic attacks.
87. I have felt suicidal and have made attempts to take my own life. I still have the scars from an attempt I made in Craiginches Prison. It is all trauma and when I go there it is a dark place. It is a horrible thing to have inside you. It is very dark.
88. I do have a problem with people in authority. My social worker assaulted me and the police nearly killed me. I find it very hard to build trust. The police are meant to be there to help you. I think after what happened with my social worker and then I was put into a home and institutions where they hurt you has definitely made me untrusting of authority. I kind of blamed myself sometimes but I don't know why.
89. I had a horrible childhood and when I think back now about the service I got as a kid from the social work it was terrible. I didn't feel I could speak to them or trust them. To this day I am like that, it takes me a long time to trust anybody. It has taken a while to build any trust with Linda Todd the psychologist at the prison.
90. I think I have been diagnosed with a personality disorder, cognitive function disorder and depression. I am on medication including Pregavin and amitriptyline. I get stuff to treat my high blood pressure but I can't remember the name of it. I am diabetic and I also have a vitamin deficiency and get an injection of what I think is B12 every month.
91. I just feel that my time in care has affected my whole life and still does.

Treatment/support

92. I have worked with a psychologist every week for the last two years. I have not shared anything about any of the sexual abuse I experienced but I think I probably should now that I have talked about it. Her name is Linda Todd and we work on the trauma I have gone through. I find seeing the psychologist does help me. I got this support because

'lifers' go to what they call 'top end' and I came back from that because I failed a drug test. It will maybe take me another year to get back to 'top end'. To be honest I was feeling suicidal and was very close to taking my own life. I don't know if I was trying to kill myself or not but I took a lot of drugs anyway and I woke up in hospital. This wasn't so long ago and I remember feeling disappointed that I woke up. I had just had enough and felt I couldn't go on. I was taking panic attacks and she kind of took me out of feeling like that. I am waiting to go back for progression and what they say is it will maybe take another year or eighteen months to get back and then you have got to do whatever they say there. I have been in twenty years and we are talking about another four or five years. I have been doing alright and they are putting me back to the Progression Board possibly in November 2022. There is a wee bit of light.

Reporting of Abuse

93. I have not reported any of the abuse to the police at any time in my life after leaving the care system.


Records

94. I got my social work records with the help of a lassie in Future Pathways. They came from Grampian Regional Council. She actually came and visited me, told me she would take my case and help me get all my stuff. I don't know how I ended up with all my social work forms. I think they got in touch with me and asked where I wanted them to go. I got them but I wished to god I never. If you look at them you will see it is just crazy. Looking at them I can see where everything went wrong. I saw so many psychiatrists and psychologists letters, this, that and the next thing. It was heavy stuff. To be honest I haven't read them all. There are five files. I read some and then I get to the stage I can't read anymore as I get upset. I have them in prison and keep them in my cell with me. I think I might just get them destroyed.

Lessons to be Learned

95. What happened to me, my brother and the other kids just shouldn't have happened and I don't know how they got away with it to be honest. Secondary Institutions - to be published

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



96. I would like to think that children's homes and places like that have the proper people in them. Things like I experienced shouldn't be happening to kids. I don't know how they get these jobs but surely they should be making sure whoever works in these places are the proper people. It was all the wrong people who were looking after me.

97. Secondary Institutions - to be published later



Other information

98. I wouldn't have come and spoken to the Inquiry if I wasn't going to speak about all of the abuse, what would be the point? It has been really difficult and I have become upset at times. It is not part of my nature or culture to speak about these types of things. I don't know if this will put closure to this but I hope it will.

99. 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..... GTR

Dated..... 1.12.22