

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HPB

Support person present: No.

1. My name is HPB. My date of birth is 1970. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in Leith and brought up in Magdalene near Portobello. My mum was and my dad was. My dad was a boilerman at Leith Docks. I was the youngest of five children, I had three older sisters and an older brother. was the oldest, she's 61 now, then who's 59, who's 58 and who's 54.
3. My childhood memories are not good at all. My dad was an alcoholic and my mum suffered from post-natal depression after she had me. My brother was also horrible to me, absolutely horrible. My first memory is of him throwing me into the coal fire. I was only two or three when he did that. My sister was meant to be looking after us and I was sitting in my dad's chair. was pushing at me to get out the chair and he just kept pushing and pushing until he pushed me into the fire. My whole arm went in it and I was taken to a nurse round the corner who treated me. I can't remember if I went to hospital.
4. being horrible and doing horrible things to me was the worst. He just bullied me all the time, he made me drink bleach once and when I had appendicitis and was

in the worst pain I'd ever experienced, he kicked me in my stomach. I was rushed to hospital after that and I had a burst appendix.

5. Dad was always drinking and my mum had to hold down three or four jobs to try and run the house because my dad just drunk all the money. She did anything to bring money in and put food on the table. I know she was a cleaner at the [REDACTED] Hotel, now the [REDACTED], and the [REDACTED] in Portobello High Street.
6. My oldest sister, [REDACTED], was basically the one who looked after us. Basically, I had zero parenting. I did have a relationship with my nana, who lived round the corner from us. My nana adored me but she died when I was seven. I think that's what started my depression. I didn't have any relationship with my dad until later in life, probably about three years before he died. I was my mum's baby boy so I did have a good relationship with her although I was the one who went down a different path in life.
7. I went to Brunstane Primary School which was horrible. I never had any of the best of stuff at school so I was constantly getting tormented for that by other kids, I had the mickey taken out of me all the time at school. I had to either fight or surrender, so I just learnt to fight. It was that or get bullied.
8. I think that if you're at the bottom of the social scale you have to fight to mask what you are or where you are. At the time you don't know any better because you're so young.
9. I don't remember there being any social work involvement with the family until I was older, maybe in my teenage years. That was when I was caught throwing stones at a freightliner train by the railway police. I remember getting absolutely '*sheriffed*', shouted at, by the police for that. I got some beatings from the police as well and at a young age. It was ridiculous what they used to do, twisting my knuckles and some weird stuff for police officers. That was when I was twelve, thirteen, fourteen when we were breaking into cars and stuff. I got caught for everything as well, I was a hopeless criminal.

10. I did go to high school, but because of the ribbings I was getting and the fights I was constantly having, I basically stopped going to school in about second year. Me and a few of my pals just never went to school. I was given letters to take home but I never took them home.
11. It was because I wasn't going to school and then getting into trouble with the police that I ended up going into care. I was trying to steal things and I was hanging about with boys who were a bad influence. I started going in front of Children's Panels.
12. I remember the Children's Panels always had a plumber or a joiner, someone like that, a social worker and usually my mum. I remember telling my mum I didn't want her there after a while. I didn't want any contact with them I just wanted to be cut off from my parents.
13. Those panels were basically deciding my life and they didn't know my life, they didn't ever ask me any questions about how my home life was. I played zero part in that process, I usually just sank underneath the big table and let them talk about what my future was going to be. When I think back now, I can see how wrong that all was but at the time I just didn't care.
14. I do blame the social work department for most of what happened to me. I had the same social worker for the first three or four weeks and then, after that, it was always temporary social workers. I never had a full-time social worker after that first one so I had no one I felt I could speak to, no one that could try and get to know me. Had I had someone then it would at least have given me a chance, instead of zero chance.
15. I only had about two or three panels before I ended up going into care. My behaviour started getting worse and my home life was getting unbearable at that time. My dad would come in drunk and if he found out I'd been in bother with the police he would batter me or whatever. The relationship with my brother was toxic as well so it basically became unbearable at home.

16. ██████ was a lot older than me and had a different perception of how my childhood was at home. She was in her twenties when all the bad stuff was going on. It was ██████ that told her later in life, because I never said anything about my childhood. Me getting into trouble kind of justified to them that it was me that was the problem.
17. It was at my second or third panel that I was told I was uncontrollable and that I was going to Howdenhall Assessment Centre. I didn't care at the time because I thought that being anywhere other than at home would be better for me. I didn't pay attention to anything at the Children's Panels, I would have been sitting with my arms crossed when they told me where I was going.

### **Howdenhall Assessment Centre, Edinburgh**

#### *General*

18. I was about fourteen when I went to Howdenhall. I think I was there for about six weeks. It was an assessment centre and I stayed there for a short time before going to St. Katherine's, which was just next to Howdenhall, they're both on the same bit of land.
19. I've been in prison and because of that, I would say Howdenhall looked like a prison. I can remember going into my room and there was a bed, a cardboard table and a cardboard chair. That's like what you get now in a suicide cell in prison.
20. There was a common room with plastic seats, it was just a really basic 1970's or 1980's institutional setting. There were about thirty or forty boys at Howdenhall, which was really intimidating. There were girls, in a separate wing, but only about twelve or fourteen, it was predominantly boys. The ages ranged from about eleven to seventeen or eighteen.
21. There was a hierarchy there as well, with your bullies, your terrified wee boys and then the in-betweens who would fight the bullies. It was quite a horrific place. There was



also staff who had their favourites as well, you could just tell. I'd say I was in the middle because I would go fighting.

22. I think the children were predominantly from Edinburgh but I didn't know one single person. I don't know why anyone else was there, you didn't have those conversations. I do know they were all more street smart than me at that time and had been in the care system a lot longer than me. It was basically a criminal learning ground, that's how I see it anyway.
23. There was a lot of people showing off and there was violence on a daily basis. I can't remember anything positive at all about the place. I couldn't tell you how many staff were there or one person's name that worked there. The staff were like prison officers, they had keys hanging down, things like that.
24. It was a secure place Howdenhall, you couldn't just leave. You would need to smash a window to get out. I ran away a lot but not from Howdenhall because it was secure.

### **Routine at Howdenhall Assessment Centre**

#### *First day*

25. I was taken to Howdenhall by social workers in a car. I was basically locked in my room for the first few nights, maybe even the first week or two. I can't remember if it was locked or unlocked after that. All I had was my bed and the cardboard table and chair I told you about. That was like 'wow' to me, I couldn't believe that.
26. I didn't get any kind of welcome that I remember. I do remember I was absolutely terrified on that first day though. I was fourteen years old, had never been in a place like that and had been taken away from all my friends. It was horrible.
27. I don't remember much about the day to day routine of the place, I just remember going to classes.

*Mornings and bedtime*

28. I remember getting up in the morning at a ridiculous time, like 5:30 am or 6:00 am and going for breakfast. We all came from different wings and I remember going downstairs for breakfast, and for lunch and for tea. I can't remember what time we were put off to bed at, maybe 8:00 pm or 9:00 pm.

*Mealtimes/Food*

29. At mealtimes the set up reminded me of the film 'Oliver' with the staircase at the sides. All the girls came down the stairs at mealtimes and that was the picture in my mind. I don't remember anything about the food we had.

*Washing/bathing*

30. I remember we had toilets but I don't remember anything about the washing or bathing. I think we had showers but I can't remember.

*Leisure time*

31. I remember watching TV in the evening. There was wee yard, like a prison yard outside by a door next to the common room. I'm sure we played football out there. I don't think I was outside other than in that yard in that whole six weeks. We certainly didn't go out on any visits anywhere.

*Visitors / family contact*

32. I don't think we were allowed contact with family. I didn't get any visits or any phone calls. I had zero contact with the outside world when I was in Howdenhall. I think parents were told that contact wasn't allowed because they were assessing the children, I'm not sure. It was an absolute feeling of abandonment again, as I'd already

been abandoned by my parents. I couldn't go to a pal's house like I would when I was at home, I was just on my own.

### *Schooling*

33. I think we went to classes in the morning and then again in the afternoon. I can't remember if they were schooling classes but they probably were as we weren't going to school.

### *Bed Wetting*

34. I wet my bed until I was about seventeen. It wasn't an issue in Howdenhall because I had a single room. I can't remember what the laundry system was but it never came out in Howdenhall. None of the other kids knew and even some of the staff wouldn't have known.

### *Assessment / social work reviews*

35. I can't think of one single thing I got assessed on when I was at Howdenhall. Not one thing. I did see a psychologist or psychiatrist once but I think I just sunk under the table again. I remember doing wooden puzzles of some kind. I probably found it hard to speak to them. I never gave anything away you see, I kept everything in.
36. I never opened to anyone and I never had any trust or built up any trust in anyone. I did start to have a relationship with my first social worker, she was lovely, but she left after a few months and then I was from pillar to post seeing different social workers all the time.
37. I did talk to my social worker when I was at Howdenhall she came and visited me there a couple of times. I can't remember her name but she was from Craigmillar Social Work Department. We were in a wee room on our own and I could speak to her, I probably just told her that I didn't want to go home. I didn't ever like my home situation.

### *Discipline*

38. I would say that I tried to comply as much as I could when I was in Howdenhall. It was all new to me so I did as I was told. If I was told to walk or march somewhere then I just done it. I was just trying to get through every day.
39. There was no care though, it was all very regimental. I would never say it was a care setting. It was more like a borstal or prison setting.

### **Abuse at Howdenhall Assessment Centre**

40. I remember getting slapped on the head a few times and getting told to do what you're told, to go and sit over there or whatever. It was that kind of treatment we all got. We would all get footed up the arse as well, like a kick, all the staff did it and all of us got it, it wasn't hidden or anything like that.
41. I would sum up Howdenhall by calling it was the '*Gateway to Hell*'. We were all just thrown in there and then moved around to wherever they wanted to put us.

### **Reporting of abuse at Howdenhall Assessment Centre**

42. I didn't speak to anyone about how we were slapped and kicked by the staff at Howdenhall.

### **Leaving Howdenhall Assessment Centre**

43. I went back to a Children's Panel from Howdenhall and I do remember saying I didn't want to go home. It was definitely me saying that to the Panel. I don't know what the thought process was behind that. I think it was just the abandonment and being let down again and again when I was at home. I wasn't getting a fair crack at the whip.

44. The Panel then decided to send me to St. Katherine's Children's Home. I didn't even know what St, Katherine's was.

### **St. Katherine's Home, Edinburgh**

#### *General*

45. As I said St. Katherine's was next to Howdenhall, it was a big mansion house, across the road from Mortonhall Cemetery. St Katherine's was open and not secure like Howdenhall. I was the last person to stay in it actually.
46. It was boys and girls at St. Katherine's, I was in a room of four. I had a bed, wardrobe and bedside cabinet. I didn't have many clothes in those days anyway. I can remember having clothing grants from the social work but I'm not sure if that was when I was at St. Katherine's or later on. I definitely had one at Dean House I know that. I think my clothes were just whatever was put in a bag for me from home.
47. The main difference for me, going from Howdenhall to St. Katherine's, was that I was going from a prison, basically, to this big open house. It was great but that only lasted a few hours.
48. I can't remember many of the staff and I don't remember any of their names. I only remember two faces, the woodwork teacher who was a bully and was horrible to me and the one who was nice to me, who stayed in Roslin. I can't picture any of the other staff.

## **Routine at St. Katherine's**

### *First day*

49. At first, I went into St. Katherine's quite optimistic until we went out in the minibus. They had a minibus we would go out in and drive around Edinburgh city centre. I was having a carry-on in the minibus and when we got back the staff member who was driving the minibus got a hold of me and pinned me against the wall. No one else would have seen that.
50. He told me not to try and be the smart-arse hard man when I was there. That was on my first night. He took the woodwork classes but I can't remember his name. He was bald and was in his fifties. After that I was away from there, I ran away basically at every opportunity.
51. I also wet my bed on that first night and remember I was in a room with three other people. When I came up the stairs from breakfast that morning my mattress was standing on end, so everybody in the place knew I'd wet my bed. That was the staff that did that and that was the end of anything positive or constructive for me. After that I got constant ribbing and bullying from all the other kids and from some staff. That one guy, that took woodwork, he was absolutely horrible to me after that. That was so humiliating.

### *Daily activities*

52. If I didn't run away, I would just play pool or table tennis or hanging about at St. Katherine's. We could go outside and play football if we wanted.
53. We did have some organised classes as I remember making a wee stool in the woodwork class. There was a wee joinery workshop. I think that was more like a hobby than an actual class, maybe something for us to do if we weren't going to school.

### *Schooling*

54. When I'd been at St. Katherine's for a good few months, I got a letter from Portobello High School saying that if I wasn't back at school in the next day or two I would be excluded for good. I don't think I'd been to school for about six months as I'd been in the Children's Homes and they weren't sending me to school. I found that very strange.
55. I don't know how Portobello School knew I was at St. Katherine's, and I've always found it strange, that I should get that letter from them when I was in care. It was bizarre. Nobody was ever telling me I had to go to school when I was at St. Katherine's or Howdenhall, there was nothing like that and you'd think there should have been if I was supposed to be going to school.

### *Bed Wetting*

56. I told you about my first morning and the staff outing my mattress on its end. I was just humiliated and bullied all the time after that. It was constant, "*here he comes, pissy bed*" it really was constant and I never stopped. I wet the bed about five out of seven nights, all the time I was at St. Katherine's and not a thing was ever done about it. Not one person spoke to me about it, not once.
57. There was no after care no concerns shown and nothing done to try and help me. I did get clean sheets and I think I got a plastic mattress but that was it.

### *Culture*

58. There was definitely a bullying culture, you just have to look at what happened to me when I wet the bed.
59. Smoking was allowed at St. Katherine's but only if you were over fourteen and a half. You also had to have signed permission from a parent. You got one cigarette at breakfast, one at lunch, one at tea then one at night, so four a day. I think it was a legal government thing, that was my understanding anyway. My mum did come in and

sign my consent form. The care home supplied the cigarettes, I don't think we paid for them ourselves, I can't remember if we even got pocket money.

### *Family Contact*

60. I remember my mum and dad visiting me one night at St. Katherine's. My social worker was there and someone from the home and I told them both that I didn't want them visiting me anymore. My dad just got up and stormed out. My mum came and signed my smoking form about six weeks later but I never saw him for a long time after that.
61. It wasn't as if they were coming to see me or phoning to see how I was or writing or anything like that. There was no care whatsoever from my family. I was abandoned and alone so I was striking out at them.

### *Running away*

62. I ran away constantly from St. Katherine's. It started after just a couple of days, after the woodwork teacher pinned me against the wall. I don't know how frequent it was at the beginning as it was terrifying living on the streets, to start with anyway. It did become an everyday occurrence but not at St. Katherine's.
63. I was a Mod and I would run away and hang about the city centre in those days. I was accepted by those people, the ones that hung about like that and they would feed me and accept me. I felt I belonged somewhere when I was with them but I wouldn't say I felt safe with them, there are predators everywhere when you're on the streets.
64. When I was running away, I was on the street, I was breaking into parking meters to get money and I was breaking onto cars. I got into trouble with the police all the time but they would just take me back to St. Katherine's, I would go in front of a Panel and because I was a minor the charges would just get wiped. Nothing was ever done so it basically gave you a licence to be even worse.



65. When I was taken back to St. Katherine's by the police the staff didn't seem that bothered. They would say things like "*Oh here he is, the Scarlett Pimpernel, he's been off again*" those kinds of comments. No one asked where you'd been or if you'd been safe or anything like that. You were basically in isolation, nobody cared for you although they called it a care home.
66. It was about then that I started taking drugs as well, so I was running away and then taking drugs. I was taking Temgesics, Valium, Dihydrocodeine, basically anything I could get my hands on. I didn't drink so much, maybe some Merrydown cider if I was at a house party or a Mod disco at Madhatters in the Royal Mile, but drinking wasn't my thing. There was glue sniffers, drinkers and drug takers so I was a drug taker I didn't drink much and I never sniffed glue.

*Review of care/support*

67. There were no reviews of how I was getting on nothing like that and there was no support or assistance given in any shape or form, none whatsoever.

**Abuse at St. Katherine's**

68. I've told you about the woodwork teacher on the first night, and he never stopped humiliating and bullying me. The staff never had anything good to say about anyone, it was always throwaway comments and snide remarks, they were always belittling you and getting to you, it was more a mental torture thing than a physical one.
69. I think the treatment was worse at St. Katherine's because I spent more time there, I wasn't at Howdenhall long enough to have a relationship with anyone and it was all new to me.
70. I was also hit with a plank of wood by the same woodwork teacher. That was in the joinery workshop. I might have been cheeky but he swung it at me and hit me across my shoulder, it was like a foot up the arse type thing but with a stick. I wasn't injured

and if it hurt, I wouldn't have shown that as I had cut off to pain well before then. I would never have shown the pain even if it did hurt, I would have shrugged it off as I wouldn't want him thinking he was winning, that kind of thing.

### **Moving from St. Katherine's back to Howdenhall Children's Home**

71. Eventually they started to close down St. Katherine's and it got to just two of us left there me and a girl. We were both then moved to the staff houses there, which were next to Howdenhall Assessment Centre. We stayed there for about six or eight weeks but that couldn't last because it was costing them too much having to use three or four staff to watch us.
72. The girl then moved out and as they weren't paying for all those staff for just one person, I was moved back to stay in Howdenhall Assessment Centre again. It had changed its name by then to Howdenhall Children's Home. I stayed at Howdenhall for about two or three months that second time.
73. I was constantly at Children's Panels when I was at Howdenhall. It was more about deciding what they were going to do with me if I'd been in trouble with the police. The only way I was going back to the home was if I'd been in trouble and got arrested, so that's what was getting talked about. I did have social workers turning up at the panels, never family I never saw any of them, but the social workers were usually different. I never had a dedicated social worker after the first woman.
74. When I was in the staff houses and back at Howdenhall I was constantly running away because it was horrific there. I would be brought back by the police, get something to eat, have a shower, clean clothes and I'd be off out the door again. All within ten minutes. I'd get caught breaking into parking meters or whatever, the police would bring me back and then I'd be gone again. It just went on and on until they basically threw me out. The police brought me back one afternoon and my suitcase was at the front door. A social worker came to get me then, and I might have gone to my sisters for a bit, but that was when they put me to Wellington School.

75. I don't know who would have been responsible for making the decision about me leaving Howdenhall. I've never seen any records so I wouldn't know. I think it was just a case of me using the place like a hotel and them just not wanting me there. There was zero care anyway, so there was no reason for me wanting to be there.

#### **Abuse at Howdenhall (second time)**

76. I was raped when I was on the run from Howdenhall the second time I was there. That happened twice to me, once at Howdenhall and then again when I was at Wellington School. The first time I'm sure I was drugged as I don't have a good memory of it but I have flashbacks of the things that were getting done to me. I can see them happening and have this feeling that I have zero power and can't do anything to stop it. I remember I woke up in the morning after the first time and I was naked and in absolute agony. I got flashbacks then of a man doing things to me. I just went straight back to the care home after that.
77. I didn't speak to any staff at Howdenhall or to the police about that rape. You just wouldn't, not if you don't trust any of them in the first place.
78. I don't think I was at Howdenhall very much at all that second time. I was running away, more than I was there. I was maybe there about two or three weeks out of a three or four month period, because I was away every opportunity I got. I don't remember much about the staff, I can't say there was any abuse or anything like that, the only thing was the drugging and what I believe was a man raping me which happened one of the times I ran away.

#### **Calder Grove Children's Home, Edinburgh**

79. I'm sure I was moved to Calder Grove for about four or five nights when I was staying at Howdenhall Assessment Centre the second time. It was because I'd run away from

Howdenhall. I just can't remember when it was exactly but I was definitely there. It was either during the time I was at Howdenhall or perhaps in between Howdenhall and Wellington. I would have been coming up for fifteen when I was there.

80. [Redacted]

81. [Redacted]

82. [Redacted]

Secondary Institutions - to be pu I think it was probably the only place the council could put me short term until they had worked out what they were going to do with me. I'm sure I went on to Wellington School from there and I did know it was a temporary thing when I was at Calder Grove.

### **Wellington Farm School, Penicuik**

#### *General*

83. I think I went to a Children's Panel to have things approved before I actually went to Wellington Farm School. I was there for about seven or eight months and I know I was there over one Christmas. I was never told how long I'd be there but I always knew it was until the end of my schooling. I knew it would be until the end of fourth year for me, so sixteen.

84. It was a List D school and I already knew that it's something you talk about at these places and it was known as 'Welly Farm'. There was three of them, St. Joseph's. Welly Farm and another that I can't remember. I didn't know exactly what a List D was, I'd

heard them being talked about but that was probably just rumours about the bad things that went on, I'm not sure.

85. I think what made it worse was that there were more west coast people there than Edinburgh people.
86. It was all boys at Welly farm, about 80 to 120 but a lot were day boys who were shipped in every day in minibuses. There were maybe two or three residential wings with about twenty boys in each one, so maybe sixty residential and sixty-day pupils. I started off in a shared room, there was four of us in that room. The age range was about eleven or twelve up to about sixteen.
87. The staff at Welly Farm were horrible, I only remember two members of staff who were really nice to me, HMM and a female teacher, I forget her name. She taught me more in my time at Wellington Farm School than I learnt in the whole of my time in high school. I think HMM was gay, he was a senior care staff member and came from somewhere near Dalkeith. He was really good at table tennis. He was a decent person, he treated me like I was a human, he talked to me and was one of the only adults to do that.
88. The female teacher made me the editor of what was called the 'Welly weekly' and most of the stories in were about me running away.
89. The staff were the worst thing, for me, at Welly Farm. You expect a group of teenagers to verbally abuse one another and give each other ribbings and that kind of thing. You don't expect grown men who are staff and whose job is to take care of you to be the exact same, and some of them were. Some of them were just horrible.
90. I had the impression most of the staff hated HMM because he actually cared about people. Some staff treated him horribly. Maybe it's just me but I only remember the positive ones and I've blocked out the rest.

### *Leisure time / trips*

91. The only thing we ever did was drive into town in the minibus. We would go to Brattisani's for chips or ice cream or something.
92. I remember once going on a trip to Loch Doon and we stayed in a wee cottage. We did fishing and stuff like that, which I hated. It wasn't a good trip because we had bunk beds and I wet the bed so there was nothing enjoyable about it at all.

### *Schooling*

93. When I went to Wellington School I would say I was definitely uneducated and I know wasn't able to articulate anything. After first year I never really went to school.
94. I couldn't read and write properly, I still can't really write, my writing is like a five-year-olds. I can't sign my name twice the same. I am self-educated, I read lots now but I couldn't when I was in the care homes.
95. Maths and arithmetic were my thing and still are, I was really good at them. In those days they had what they called the 'dunce table' I wasn't at that table I could learn I'd just never had a proper opportunity. It was my behaviour that caused all the problems. I wasn't beating people up or anything I just couldn't abide by the rules and they couldn't keep me there.
96. The thing is the education wasn't bad. It was about four people to one teacher at Welly Farm, and it can be over thirty children to one teacher at Portobello High School. That was a good thing and I got the first qualifications I ever had in that classroom. I passed about four national certificates which was one of the proudest moments of my childhood considering my limited schooling. That was the only enjoyable time for me.



### *Christmas / Family contact*

97. I remember I was at Wellington over Christmas because I was the only one there on Christmas Day. I remember the staff were absolutely infuriated that they had to come in on Christmas Day and look after me. Looking back, that was hilarious for me but just for the fact that the staff were so infuriated at having to come in and look after just me. The staff took me out in the van at night, there was two of them and me and we just drove about Princes Street or whatever.
98. I remember getting a couple of Christmas presents but there wasn't a dinner or anything like that. I'm sure I got a book and socks or something. I got nothing from my family, I remember that, I was pretty upset about that.
99. I'd totally broken off from my mum and dad when I was at St. Katherine's so I had nowhere to go. I did have my sister [REDACTED] and she would sometimes take me for a weekend. I'd be taken to her house and dropped off and I think I got picked up in the town centre after a few days. That happened for a few months after Christmas but it fragmented pretty quickly because she was in a really toxic relationship with her husband who was beating her up.

### *Bed Wetting*

100. I was still bed wetting at Welly Farm, and they made you take your own sheets down the stairs in the morning so everyone then knew. I managed about four weeks but eventually I wet the bed so it got out. The first time I did it a member of staff held up the wet sheets so all the other boys saw that. It was on a certain day during the week that all the boys took their bedding down the stairs handed it all over and got clean stuff to take up to your room. I handed mine over and this staff member held mine up for all the boys to see. It was a male staff member but I don't remember who.
101. I did get put in a single room after I started wetting the bed but the horse had already bolted so that didn't matter. I'm sure it was [REDACTED] who wangled that for me. I got a

lot of ribbings for that. I was called 'pissie pants' and things like that, which just made me not want to comply in any way, shape or form.

102. I used to stay awake for as long as I possibly could every night so as not to wet the bed. I did find that I wet the bed just before I woke up, so it would be about six or seven in the morning. I don't know how that all works but it was always very embarrassing and traumatic for me.

#### *Culture*

103. I cleaned the pool tables every day and I would get ten cigarettes for that. Smoking wasn't a problem, you could also buy cigarettes at the canteen they had. There were drugs available and I did do some drugs when I was at Welly Farm.
104. When you ran away you could get drugs but some people who stayed there would also bring them in. I never injected or took heroin or anything like that but I did take tablets.

#### *Running away*

105. Welly Farm wasn't secure so you could walk out or runaway and I did, probably about twenty times or so. It was in the middle of nowhere, about five or six miles from Penicuik so sometimes there was snow and it was cold when I was running away. It was a harder place to run away from, and when the staff phoned the police, it was easier for the police to find you. I did get caught a few times on the road between Welly Farm and Edinburgh.
106. I was still going into Edinburgh and meeting up with the Mod group, I could be away for a week or sometimes two weeks. I was mainly just living on the street, bus and train stations, just anywhere where there was a bit of heat.
107. I remember I once got as far as Derby, skipping on the train, I don't know why Derby, but it was the first time I ran away after I was raped the second time. I was just wanting



to get away. I remember when they did get me, I was taken back in a plane. That was my first time in a plane.

### **Abuse at Wellington Farm**

108. I told you I was raped for a second time when I was at Wellington Farm School. I remember going back to Wellington afterwards and saying I didn't want to go to class the next day. I remember clear as day the staff member holding my door open and getting everyone to say 'aw, what a shame' as they passed my bedroom door. That was about thirty boys. It was so patronising and it really hurt me but I suppose he didn't know what had happened to me.
109. There were constant fights at Welly Farm, not with staff, more with other boys that were staying there. The staff weren't so much physical I think they were very clever, they would entice or encourage the boys to do things.
110. I think there was physical abuse but I can't remember any actual instances like I remember getting pinned to the wall and hit with the plank of wood at St. Katherine's. I know I wasn't physically abused but others were, I just don't remember it very well. I would say it was more mental than physical.
111. If you were trying to run away or if you absolutely lost it then the staff did restrain you but I don't remember that being that bad, not something you would call abuse.
112. Staff did have their favourites but they were verbally and mentally abusive. They even told other youngsters, their favourites, to bully the ones that wouldn't conform to what they wanted people to be. You would get shot down and then you would just stop, it's hard to explain how they were. I still compare them to prison officers, that's how I see them to this day, and they are the worst people on this planet. About three or four of the staff at Wellington School were the closest I've seen to prison officers, just absolute bullies.

113. The way those staff behaved really blootered your self-esteem and that's happened to me for my whole life.

### **Leaving Wellington Farm**

114. I left Wellington Farm because I was leaving school, I think I was fifteen and a half. I can't remember time scales very well, things like when I left places and what age I was.

115. I was driven to three different places, Dean House, Ferniehill and another place, I can't remember its name. I then got to choose which one I wanted to go to. I chose Dean House in Ravelston because of the setting, it was a beautiful house, it had a climbing net in the garden and was absolutely stunning compared to Ferniehill which was in a housing estate. I also knew one of the girls that was there when I visited so that also helped me make my mind up.

### **Dean House Children's Home**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

and

they took me to somewhere in Haddington.

### **Children's Home in Haddington area**

129.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

130.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

131.

132.

133.

### **Southhouse Close Support Unit, Edinburgh**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Leaving Southhouse**

140. I left Southhouse when I was about sixteen and a half so I was there for about a year or thereabouts. I just left the place and got myself a bedsit or flat to live in, that was it. I was by myself after that, there was no back up or aftercare or support, nothing like that. One day I was there and the next I was told I was leaving, that was it.
141. I had no help in getting accommodation, or income support or finding a job, nothing like that, I just had to make it up as I went along.
142. I was an adult then and I was taking drugs so if I got my benefits on a Thursday they were all spent by the Friday. The only thing I knew was crime and I was the worst criminal in history. I think I got caught for about 75% of all I did.

143. The first time I was caught I was still sixteen and a half and I got three months for that. I was sent to Polmont for those three months and I'd say that by the time I went back there for the second time, when I was still only about seventeen, I was institutionalised already.

### **Polmont Young Offenders Institute**

#### *General*

144. All the times I was in Polmont I was a young offender. That was about three or four times by the time I was twenty. The first time was for three months.
145. My first impression of prison life was going through the gates at Saughton Prison in Edinburgh. I was taken from the court in Edinburgh to Saughton before going on to Polmont. I always remember going through those gates, it was the first time I ever cried, as I knew it was the real deal then.
146. I didn't know the rules, or the unwritten rules, and I nearly got battered up and down on the first night because some guy set me up.
147. Going on into Polmont was different because I knew some of the people and they knew me. I'd been in Wellington School or other places with some of them. It was actually a wee bit easier for me to adjust but it was still a horrible place.
148. It was the prisoners and the staff that made it horrible and I was always in fights. You had to fight though, there was no option. It was basically a west coast jail and I was from the east coast. There were gangs, or mobs, from Glasgow, Paisley, Fife and Edinburgh and the biggest and worst gang was the prison officers. They had the power and they liked to wield it.
149. We called the prison officers '*sir*' and they called us by our number. We had a four digit number, I can't remember any of mine.

150. I was put in the 'Ally Cally' the first time, the Allocation Wing and you went to work every day. I was in a single cell, we had a slopping out pot and we did get to have showers every day if we wanted.

*Clothing*

151. I think we got a pink and white striped shirt and these really bad denims. They were all made in-house, it was a really badly fitting denim jacket thing and jeans. The shoes were like 1970's work shoes, like what they wore in 'Porridge'.

*Meals*

152. I think we were on a steam diet, so we had potatoes, steam pudding and fresh bread which was baked. We did have breakfast lunch and tea, it was alright but you always knew what you were having, I think that's all part of being institutionalised.

*Leisure*

153. We did get an hour of physical training every day, so we would get to play football, that was okay.

*Work*

154. I sat and bent wire every day, so it was up, work, locked up then up, work, locked up the same every day. The days went quickly because it was the same day in day out.
155. I was made a category 'C' prisoner and got moved to a job in the gardens. Polmont never had a fence back then so I was out in the fields picking farmers vegetables and working away in what was like an open prison setting. I was sent to Castle Huntly for sentences later on which was an open prison.



## Abuse at Polmont YOI

156. I must have been in about seven fights when I was in Polmont but I was only caught and punished for about four of them. The punishment was getting put in the digger. It was group of about ten cells in a separate building and you were put in one of those cells. You had a mattress and some bedding but they took all that away from you at about 6:00 am and you didn't get it back until about 10:00 pm. You were in a concrete room with a piss pot and that was it, you had nothing. You would be stuck in the digger for three or four days as a punishment.
157. The prison officers were horrible, the worst human beings. They spat on us, beat us up, one member of staff gave me a beating once and broke my ribs. I was in a fight and the prison officer told me to get off the guy but before I could move he started kicking me in the ribs. I was then stuck in the digger for two days with no mattress or nothing just a concrete slab. I didnt get to see a doctor because it had been prison officers that had done it.
158. The beatings were full force punches, no trying to hide marks or anything like that, they just steam right in and beat the living shit out of you. It would happen in front of other prisoners, no one cared, it was just part of the system, it's still part of the system by all accounts. Other prison officers would even hold you down.
159. The beating of prisoners happened all the time, hourly, not just daily. I saw some horrendous things happen in Polmont. The officers did a lot of laughing at you and ridiculing and humiliating you as well.
160. If you gave them cheek or whatever the prison officers would march you with your thumbs behind your back, it was really horrible and painful, it was called '*carting*'. They would twist your wrists behind your back, hold you by the thumbs, push your head down and march you forwards.

161. I remember I refused to shut my door which pissed off the prison officers. I had that attitude which didn't help, and whenever I did that they would just set about me, punching and kicking.
162. A lot of it was about control as well. They would have you standing facing into the corner of a room or a door or wall, that kind of thing. It was quite a military type of regime. I've been raped and I would still class some of those prison officers, who were absolute animals, as being worse than anything I've experienced in my life. I really do have a hatred for those prison officers but I can't tell you any of their names, just that they were in the north wing, the Ally Cally and the south wing at Polmont.
163. It's bad enough young people getting sent to prison but young people being sent to prison to be treated like that is just beyond me.
164. They weren't all the same I suppose there were a few that were alright but they're never going to dob each other in, just like the police, I've seen them lie in court about things. It might be easier nowadays but in those days they didn't have cameras so it was easier for prison officers to abuse you.
165. There's nothing positive I can say about my time at Polmont, there's nothing positive about being in prison. I don't know how they're run now and I've not been in one for over thirty years, but in those days it was very regimental, you were constantly getting smacked about and being told to do what you're told. They were constantly at you.
166. There was no one I could have gone to, to speak to about anything. There was no support or counselling no appointed officers that you could talk to, it was just the prison officers and us.
167. I can honestly say that when I was in Polmont, Longriggend and Castle Huntly, so between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one, I came across at least fifty people that I was in care with. It was like a merry-go-round, going into care and then going into prison. There would have been many more as that was just people who were in care in some of the places in Edinburgh at the same time as me.

## **Leaving Polmont YOI**

168. There was no preparation or rehabilitation given to me, to anyone, for leaving prison and going into the outside world, moving on in life. I did get a grant when I left, then they took me to the train station and that was it.

## **Life after being in care**

169. Basically, I was back to square one and I was homeless again. It was just like my life was revolving and revolving.
170. I was at Polmont two more times after that first sentence. I also served sentences in Longriggend, Castle Huntly and Saughton before I stopped getting in trouble. That went on until I was about twenty-two. I wasn't in prison again after Saughton.
171. I met my wife about three or four months after I got out and within a year we had my daughter. It was when my daughter was born that everything changed. As soon as I held her that was it done.
172. My sister gave me some money and we moved from Edinburgh to Fife because I knew I had to get away from the influences that I had in Edinburgh. I stopped taking drugs, with no help from anyone, I did that all on my own and I stopped committing crime and got a full-time job. I had worked but just short term, a month here and three weeks there, or whatever.
173. We had four children and it wasn't until my dad took not well that I moved back to Edinburgh. He'd been given four hours to live and actually lived for another two years and it was in those two years that I actually had any relationship with my dad.
174. I was looking after my dad during the day while my mum was at work and working nightshifts as a chef [REDACTED] in Livingston. We became really close actually before

he died, which was about fifteen years ago. We never spoke about certain things but he did say he'd been an arsehole with my brother.

175. The relationship with my mum was different as I was her baby boy. We were always very close although I would say that before my first daughter was born, I was always ashamed, as I was in and out of prison. After I met my wife and settled, things were much better though. My mum died about two years after my dad.
176. When my kids were getting older, I knew I needed to earn better money. I didn't want my four kids to go through what I went through and have nothing. I started a removal business first of all but I had problems with my business partner and ended up selling my vans. I then used that money on courses learning about Non-Destructive Test Engineering. The first job I got was in Holland and was well paid.
177. I went from earning very little to earning a huge amount of money and it was life changing for our whole family. Life was very good for about four years but when the oil market crashed in 2015, as a contractor I was the first out the door.
178. When I got back home, I discovered my wife had a drug habit and our relationship ended in 2016. Life went downhill quite quickly then, I was living on my nephew's floor and working in a restaurant. I did come and go at the family home and I had a good relationship with my kids. I even moved back in for a while but we weren't together I was living in the living room all the time. My wife never stopped taking pills and was in and out of hospital and at times wasn't well at all.
179. I did get my job back in Holland but it wasn't the same experience second time around. I got depressed, I started smoking a lot of weed and then the depression just got deeper and deeper. When I got back home, I discovered one of my pals had been seeing my wife, and all the time I was sending her money, so that was another knock.
180. I saw no way out then and I have tried to kill myself three times since then. That was all in the last few years, since I came back from Holland. I did get referred to a psychiatrist after that but I found that very difficult. I don't like to see doctors, dentists,

optician's anyone like that. I just steer clear of anyone resembling any kind of authority. I just feel I'm better on my own.

181. At the moment I am still on my own and working as a chef wherever I can get the work. I would say I'm content at the moment.

### **Impact**

182. There are lots of different things that have affected me in different ways. It's not until you start thinking and talking about it that you realise that. That you realise who you are.
183. The impact is everywhere and it started right away when I was a boy. I kept everything quiet and didn't speak out because it was bad enough the bed wetting getting out. However, if it got out that I had been getting sexually abused and raped or whatever that's a stigma, no matter what anyone says. People point at you and say things and that can have a massive impact on you, especially as a child.
184. I have a lack of trust in humans. I've spoken about my distrust of people in authority, but it's everyone really, just people in general. Every relationship I've had, no matter how nice I've been, no matter what friend it is, I've always been let down. Every single time. I just think people use me and then let me down, I'm always wondering what they're after if they're nice to me.
185. I think I've been manic depressive since I was about sixteen or seventeen, maybe even earlier than that. That was never picked up when I was a child, in fact it was only ever picked up when I was about forty-nine. I refuse to go to doctors, dentists, opticians, I'll not do any of that because I just don't trust anything like that.
186. My self-hygiene at times is affected. That's why I have really bad teeth, I can't put a toothbrush in my mouth that just triggers things I only use mouthwash.

187. I've said that I think it was my nana dying that started my depression. I was seven and it's very young to be having suicidal thoughts so I'm not sure if I did then, but I can remember thinking I'd rather be dead when I was young. I didn't know what to do with the depressing thoughts I had, that was the problem. I still think about committing suicide a lot of the time. Every week I'll have thoughts, but I don't go as far as I used to, when I would plan it all out.
188. I don't sleep well, sometimes I can go for seven days or longer without sleeping. I drive myself absolutely insane thinking about where I've gone wrong, what I've done and all the people that have abandoned or left me. I think about how to fix things and then I don't want to fix things, it's like a safety thing, I feel what's the point in letting people in if all they're going to do is hurt you.
189. I have not a bit of motivation and I think I've probably wasted about ten years of my life just sitting about on the sofa doing nothing.
190. I have zero self-esteem. I do think that I saw a lot of the treatment I received as being normal. It was what I was used to so I didn't know any different. As a child I was physically and mentally abused by my brother, my father and my mother so it was normalised. It wouldn't have been until I was older, in my early twenties that I actually realised so much of it was abusive.
191. I even questioned my sexuality when I was young. I had been raped twice and then  
Secondary Institutions - to be published later I was thinking I must be gay and I know I'm 100% heterosexual but at the time I was questioning my sexuality.
192. Secondary Institutions - to be published later  
Secondary Institutions - to be published later I don't know if I can say the abuse made me more violent but it definitely made me angry. I felt anger and shame, but more shame than anything else. I would say I felt a violent frustration that probably describes how I felt.

193. When I was watching the Queens funeral on the tv, the procession went up the Royal Mile and it went past the first house I was raped in. That triggered things for me and I actually try and stay away from the Royal Mile now. I stay away from Ravelston as well.
194. I've never been back to any of the places I stayed as a child. I did once visit the Modern Art Museum and that was a bit eerie. I shouldn't have gone it was a bad idea.
195. I get flashbacks all the time especially from the first time I was raped. I know I was drugged and I must have woken up a few times. I get flashbacks from that. The mental torture as well, someone can say something or I can see something and I'm right back there as a child again. I don't really have nightmares as I'm never in a deep enough sleep. If I've taken my medication then I do have a deep sleep and that's when I have vivid dreams and terrifying nightmares.
196. As far as education goes, I have had to teach myself really. I read now and I love politics but when it comes to writing, I don't know where a comma goes and I don't write emails in paragraphs or anything like that it's just one single box.
197. I would say there has been a massive impact with my relationship with my kids. I don't slag my wife off when I speak to my children, I would never do that, but she sits and slags me off when she speaks to them. I don't know if they're maybe ashamed of me because I've tried to commit suicide. I've lied to them all my life, I've hidden everything I was and tried to give them the most normal upbringing. They never knew I was in prison or in care until they were in their late teens and that was only through my wife telling them. I was ashamed of that and kept it away from them. I knew education was key for my kids, having never had one, and they all did fifth and sixth year and went on to college or university.
198. As far as the relationships with my family, I'd say it's strained with my brother, we've not spoken in about two years. With my sisters, I've never been that close to [REDACTED].



I've never had a problem with [REDACTED] but with [REDACTED] I think because she's the oldest, and perhaps has a bit of guilt about my childhood, she's been really distant.

199. There was nothing positive happened to me from any of my time in care. There was one teacher at Wellington School who was really good with me but other than that I had nothing positive at all. I think that's why everything is so chaotic because I was always either on the run or there for a day or two and then running away. If things are ever going too good for me, I feel that it's wrong and it's bound to fail.

### **Treatment/support**

200. I have been diagnosed with acute depression and PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) and I've been prescribed medication for that. I take an anti-psychotic, and fluoxetine which is an anti-depressant. I don't take all the medication all the time, I used to take them when I felt an episode coming on, just to stop the thoughts but now when I feel anything I get up and out and do something which stops me thinking about it.
201. I have been trying to get myself counselling and further treatment but every time I feel I'm getting somewhere, something goes wrong. I was getting counselling over the phone but it was so difficult to keep the appointments because I was always working. I've also been trying to get counselling through Future Pathways but that's still ongoing, it's taking a long time and it's hard work.
202. I just seem to get more rejection, I feel I'm still getting let down now and all I'm trying to do is better my life. I've just not been getting the support I feel I need.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

203. I didn't speak to people about any of the physical or sexual abuse that happened to me. Not at home or when I was in care. I didn't speak to staff at any of the places I



stayed, or to social workers or police, nobody at all. I might have told social workers about my brother physically abusing me, so that might be on record, bit nothing else.

## **Records**

204. I've never applied for any of my records. I did think about it after I had started speaking with Future Pathways. They told me they could help with that if I wanted to try and get them but I've not heard anything more about that since I first contacted them.

## **Lessons to be Learned**

205. I think that if you had professional people like a psychologist, a psychiatrist and a doctor at Children's Panels that would be a good start. It would be better than having joiners and plumbers like I had. These people could explain to the children exactly what's happening and could tell them they are there to help them. They should be finding out what the problems are with the children instead of just putting them in a system where they just rotate.
206. That's what happened to me and I know now that it just doesn't work, or it didn't work for me. I've read that there's still abuse going on now, at the secure unit at Howdenhall, so something needs to be done if it's still happening.
207. It just needs people to take some time and to sit down and talk to the children. They should maybe try and get some background information about the children's life rather than saying here's someone, look after them. Everyone's got a story and I think delving a bit deeper and talking to the children could get that story and help the children.
208. It was like a kangaroo court when I was in front of some of my panels. There were people who were absolutely out of their depth making life changing decisions about people they know nothing about. They only know these kids have been in trouble with the police or they've not been going to school, or they've been fighting or stealing or

whatever. They don't know or don't ask why the child is being like that. It was basically just handing out a punishment instead of trying to remedy that person's life.

209. I know a lot of children's homes nowadays have been through many fundamental changes and I don't even know if they still have Children's Panels but that's my view on what could have helped me when I was going into care.
210. I think the social work department let me down the most. I think that if I'd had a stable social worker they would have seen, over time, that my behaviour was deteriorating and they could then speak to me about the reasons that was happening. I never had that though, the social workers I had were just getting notes and making big decisions because they were at your panel that day. I think that's a dereliction of duty to be honest.
211. There should be someone, not necessarily a social worker, it could be a counsellor or a life coach or somebody, but it needs to be someone who actually cares. I don't think children misbehave without there being a reason for it. It could be attention seeking or whatever but I think the right people could make a difference rather than just writing people off at an early stage. I think that's what happened to me, I was let down by the whole system.
212. There were obviously not enough communications between my school and the care homes I was in as well. I should never have had that letter from the school warning me I would be excluded if I didn't come to school. If I'm in a care home surely, it's the responsibility of that care home to make sure I go to school.
213. There were never any reviews of my time in care either. No one ever sat down with me and asked me how I was doing or gave me any kind of help. There were no conduct sheets or checklists or any structure about anything to do with my time in care. There was some at Wellington Farm but that was a school.
214. I was just a problem that was getting passed around. My parents couldn't handle me so I was passed over to the social workers, I don't know what they then did but I ended

up in care and then I ended up in prison. Then there was absolutely no after care and there was no support during any of that.

**Hopes for the Inquiry**

215. I would like to see an admission about what was going on in those places from those places. I'd like for them to say they now know they got it wrong. I'd also like to see an admission and an apology from the social work because I see them as the ones who fundamentally let me down.

216. I don't care about whether I'm believed or not, this is all about the lasting damage that's been done. Not to me personally but the damage it's done to my relationships with my kids, my wife, my parents, my brother and sisters and with friends.

**Other information**

217. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed.. .....

Dated.. 03 - 02 - 2023.....