

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

GIH

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is GIH My date of birth is 1938. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Background/Qualifications**

2. I was the youngest of a family of ten. My mother had been married twice and already had three sons when she met my father.
3. My father was a miner. He died when I was eleven year's old. Over the years I've lost my brothers and my sisters and I'm now the last one standing out of the family. I remember a lot of music in my family home. My father was a lovely tenor singer and my sister was a good singer too. If someone started singing in our house, people would start harmonising. My house on a Friday night was a joy to be in.
4. I attended St Patrick's School, which was a Catholic school in Denny. I left there and went to St Modan's High School in Stirling. In terms of qualifications, I left school at fifteen years old with a general certificate of education. I never saw myself as highly intelligent.
5. I then got a job with who was a Haulage Contractor. I worked with them as a second man on a transport vehicle and did that for around nine months. I remember we drove into Kings Docks in Glasgow. I remember the policemen on duty outside the docks.

6. I thought that I needed to do something better than that. Denny and around the Falkirk area were full of foundries so I thought it would be good to learn a trade which I could use within the foundries. I started as an apprentice pattern moulder at Smith and Wellstood in Bonnybridge. That was a type of job you were dealing in hot metal, pouring molten metal into a mould.
7. I had been bothered in my younger years with asthma and thought working there probably wasn't the best place for me. I stayed for maybe three or four years before I got the opportunity to leave.
8. National service was looming for me at that time. I had joined the cadets and wanted to see if I could earn a bit more money.
9. From working as a pattern moulder, I went on to do a job called metal piecework which gave me a bit more money. I did that for around nine months before I started in the mechanised plant which paid more again.
10. During my time in there, the man I worked with used to talk about his time in the forces. He would say it wouldn't be long until I started my national service and recommended I joined the regular army. If it was the Parachute Regiment and Airbourne Forces, I could earn an extra £2. I wasn't enjoying the job I was doing, so I talked it over with my mother. Maybe it was a rush of blood to the head but I decided to join the Parachute Regiment and Airbourne Forces. I was there for nine years.
11. On joining the Parachute Regiment, I became a full Sergeant in just over three years having made my way up through the ranks. I trained young recruits at Maida Barracks, Aldershot. I also worked with trained soldiers in 'one para' and also worked with the Sultan of Oman Armed Forces and the Malaysian Armed Forces training recruits whilst on secondment there. I eventually went on operational active service at the Thia Border and Borneo.
12. My whole army life involved being separated from my wife and daughter so I made up my mind to leave the forces as I didn't see it as a life for a married couple.

13. When you left the forces back then, one of the rules were that you were allowed a month cooling off period. There were two options I thought would suit me. One was the police and the other was the prison service. Sadly because of my height the only forces who would take me were Perth and Kinross and Lancashire Police.
14. I remember thinking that I could still be transferred anywhere within the police areas and felt that I had done my bit of being away from home. So, I thought I would try the prison service. I successfully applied and ended up staying within the prison service for twenty-seven and a half years.
15. I took my prison pension at age fifty-five. The rules were once you took your pension you could only work another two and a half years in the prison service. That didn't quite work out for me due to pension changes. I left just under two years later in 1995.

#### **Polmont Borstal/Young Offenders Institution**

16. I served my entire prison service within Polmont.
17. Polmont is in a village called Brightons. It's on the main road coming out from Falkirk and is probably two and a half miles from Falkirk Town Centre. When I joined, Polmont's purpose was for borstal sentences. A borstal sentence was two years. Everybody went into Polmont on a two-year sentence but that could be reduced if the boy behaved himself.
18. When I worked in discipline at Polmont, staff had monthly meetings where both shifts would have a chance to give their assessment on any individual inmate. People were allowed to say exactly what they thought. The individual himself would not be part of the meeting. Both shifts would be present at the meeting along with the principal officers, the matrons, the house masters and everybody was allowed to have their views. These views could be positive or negative. A lot of the lads did get out early due to positive comments. If an inmate "*screwed the nut*" they were out in nine months, no doubt about that.

19. My impression of Polmont over my first year was that it wasn't for me. I thought that I had made a mistake. What was probably helpful to me at that time was that there were lots of ex-servicemen working in there. They helped me get through that bad patch. Within twelve months of leaving the military, I could have gone back in at the same rank. After twelve months I would have been demoted so it was a big decision at the time. I had to tell myself the military chapter in my life had ended and that this was a new chapter.
20. I think Polmont as a borstal was a disciplined set up. It wasn't regimented, there wasn't any marching or anything like that. There were many establishments throughout the borstal service where things were done differently to Polmont.
21. Polmont was an open institution. There was no perimeter fencing or boundary walls. They added walls when it turned into a young offenders' institution. It had open playing fields and these were very relaxed times. The borstal officer didn't wear a uniform, we were all in civvies.
22. We had workshops including textile, a mechanics shop, an engineer's shop, painters' shop. It was an institution that was full of all different trades. When I first started at Polmont, these workshops were run by older staff that kept tight control of things. Gradually a new generation took over, including myself and other officers of my age. That made for a more relaxed atmosphere in Polmont.
23. The whole tone of Polmont from then until borstal ended was very relaxed. For an example, we had lads sitting out the back of these workshops along with an officer with hatchets. They were chipping out wood from pallets. All the chipped wood was tied together in bundles and taken round all the old people in the village for kindling. I would describe the attitude of staff towards the inmates at that time as relaxed.

#### **Time working at Polmont**

24. After deciding to stay at Polmont, I completed my one year probationary period in April 1969. During my second year, I worked in discipline. I became involved in the Duke

of Edinburgh Awards. I took inmates on trips up to Iona Abbey. I also got involved in doing some work in children's homes. That was all because of the governor at the time, Mr Hills. He was ridiculed in many circles for his forward views on how an establishment like Polmont should operate. He was a wonderful governor. Being able to do those extra things kept me entertained and I thoroughly enjoyed doing them. That probably took me through my second year at Polmont.

25. During my second year, I heard a rumour that there was possibly a vacancy coming up in [REDACTED]. I had no [REDACTED] qualifications whatsoever so I registered for life saving and first aid courses and received certificates for both. That was all done under my own expense.
26. I think during my third year, I got a trial as a relief [REDACTED] officer. Eventually the main job came up. I applied and was successful in getting the job. It was an eight to five post. I had been earning overtime in discipline, so I took a drop in salary by taking the job [REDACTED]. I ended up staying there for the rest of my service. That would be for around twenty-four years in [REDACTED] and twenty-seven and a half years in total. Early on, whilst in charge [REDACTED], I went on a [REDACTED] training course in Edinburgh. I was then classed as a member of the [REDACTED] staff.
27. Prior to starting at Polmont, I had seen an advert in a newspaper for a job at Polmont. I was interviewed by a member of the department. I didn't require any references as I recall, although I did have a reference from the forces.
28. My probation lasted for twelve months. That included six weeks initial training at Low Moss Prison in Bishopbriggs. That was where the training college for prison staff was based. Once out of my probation, I was classed as a permanent member of staff. My boss at that time would probably have been the principal officer in charge of the wing. Once working in [REDACTED], my line manager was the industrial manager. The [REDACTED] at that time was under the auspices of the governor, who was in charge of all the workshops. So the [REDACTED] was classed as being in the workshop area.

## **Structure and recruitment of staff**

29. There was a Governor in charge of Polmont when it was a borstal and also when it became a young offenders' institution. There was also a Deputy Governor. Assistant wing governors came in around the time it became a young offenders' institution, prior to that, they were known as house masters. If we move down from the governor grades, there were chief officers, then control officers who were of principal officer's rank, the chief officer being a higher rank. We had a senior officer in charge of all the office staff and ordering materials.
30. Principal officers were in charge of halls. Their deputies would be the senior officer in the hall. After that it was basic grade officers. I don't think there was a senior officer grade when I started. It was the senior basic grade officer, decided by length of service, who would report to the principal officer. The senior grade was introduced at some point though.
31. I was never involved in the recruitment of staff.
32. We did have volunteers working in Polmont. We had people coming in from the church. They came in and gave talks and assisted during the church services held every Sunday. The church still hands in cards and chocolate bars at Christmas and Easter eggs and cards at Easter for every boy. I also had people coming in to assist during [REDACTED] galas. People from the amateur [REDACTED] association came in and gave up their time.
33. In those days, if things went wrong or you did something stupid, management weren't long in telling you about it. That would have been the case throughout my service. If things went well though, you would also be told about it.

## **Training**

34. I was involved in training of staff when a training system called 'control and restraint' came in. I was a member of the [REDACTED] staff and we all got involved in that training because the powers at be thought we were best placed to carry it out. The training involved teams of three members of staff, a number one, a number two and a number three. The number two and three were positioned tight in behind the number one, who had the shield. This system was used when it was necessary to enter a cell and remove an inmate safely. All the staff had to come and learn how to use this restraint technique. I was part of the initial training staff. By this point I had been at Polmont for between ten and fifteen years. I think we were trained by a [REDACTED] officer from Glen Ochil.
35. The [REDACTED] staff didn't carry out the training for long because the discipline staff got jealous. Rightly so, the powers that be thought that because we were all involved in training, [REDACTED] weren't being used. I think I agreed with them. The training was handed over to the discipline staff. How they carried out the training, I don't know because I was never part of it.
36. In terms of my role [REDACTED], my relief came from other [REDACTED] staff. Towards the end of my service, I had a permanent relief. I was also in charge of the [REDACTED] room and my relief had to have an understanding of how that worked in case I was off sick. I also had an inmate assisting me. He was called a passman and would be with me at all times and help me carry out my daily tasks. I had many inmates over the years.

## **Supervision / appraisal / evaluation**

37. I was never involved in supervision of other staff or staff appraisals.

## **Policy**

38. I was never involved in deciding policy at Polmont.

## **Strategic planning**

39. I was never involved in any strategic planning at Polmont.

## **Inmates at Polmont**

40. I don't really know how boys came to be placed at Polmont. I imagine through the court system and because of the offence they were accused of. Perhaps because of their previous offences, they ended up doing borstal sentences at Polmont. I don't know for sure. Borstal sentences were always for a period of two years at that time. That changed in 1982 or 1983, when the Thatcher Government did away with borstals. I believe that to have been a mistake. I think borstal training back then was the best thing for those lads.
41. Polmont took lads between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. There were examples of younger lads coming in due to the seriousness of the crime they had committed but generally it was sixteen to eighteen. There was a wing opened up called Carrick House. That catered for individuals who needed a bit more protection. I remember a lad coming in who was only fourteen years old.
42. There were probably somewhere around three hundred to three hundred and forty inmates at Polmont. I had around two hundred and eighty coming through [REDACTED] [REDACTED] on a weekly basis. Polmont was a boys only institution.
43. In a prison hall, there were seventy inmates with a principal officer, a senior officer, two basic officers and a matron. The matron was responsible for preparing and serving meals, sorting out the laundry, issuing clean clothes. She would do all this assisted by three or four inmates called hotplate lads. These were trusted inmates



who were selected to assist the matron carrying out these tasks. For me, she was the most important person in the hall.

44. The food was fine. The food I saw being dished out, I would eat without question. I don't know what would happen if an inmate didn't like the food or refused to eat it.
45. If memory serves me right, Friday night was laundry night and shower night. There were no showering facilities on the galleries, although there were ablutions so they could wash their faces in the morning. Inmates had to be brought downstairs to the shower area on the bottom flat. I'm not sure really, I never actually worked in the halls.
46. I wouldn't attend the halls to collect the inmates. An officer would bring [REDACTED] down [REDACTED] for their session. I would be waiting at the [REDACTED] door for them arriving. At that point the officer would pass on the number of inmates he had brought down to me. I would double check the number on their arrival. The officer would stay with the inmates and watch the session. He would thereafter take the inmates back to the hall. I would remain at [REDACTED].
47. Downstairs on the righthand side of the assessment centre, there was a room for four inmates. There was another one for four inmates on the lefthand side. Those eight inmates were always accessible first thing in the morning. Their role was to prepare the breakfast, so their doors were the first to be opened in the morning.
48. There was another section down in the bottom lefthand corner of the assessment centre. I think that was called the annexe. That area had eight or more inmates in it. These inmates had been graded and would progress into the two four block rooms next.
49. In the general hall area upstairs known as the gallery, there was one inmate per room.
50. On the hall floor during leisure time the inmates had a television, a snooker table and a pool table. In the assessment centre, those things were kept in a separate room but in the main halls they were on the hall floor.

51. Outwith the assessment centre, I went on trips to Iona Abbey with the inmates. We would go up by bus and there were around twelve to eighteen of us. We were involved in building a path down to the Abbey itself and were up there for one week at a time. The only staff would be myself and a matron from a children's home. There would be children from children's homes and from Polmont on these trips. The children and young offenders would stay in dormitories.
52. I was also involved in the Duke of Edinburgh awards. The Duke of Edinburgh actually visited Polmont to present some of the lads with their achievement certificates.
53. There was a school within Polmont. That consisted of a civilian headmaster along with a senior officer and three teaching staff. When I joined, the school they had wasn't fit for purpose. They built a new one around 1976 or 1977 and that is probably the school I remember most.
54. There was a lot of manual work. When the inmates were out with the industrial officers they were involved in manual work. The work staff were all qualified plumbers, electricians etc. In the workshops the lads were involved in textile work, mechanics, brick laying, plumbing, electrics. There was lots of training going on in these areas. We had gardeners where a lot of the inmates were working outside. Polmont at that time was open plan. There were three football fields, no fences and no walls.
55. When the staff bought their houses, we were allowed to take inmates out to help do work around the house. The lad I had was out every Saturday helping me to dig drains, put foundations in for the garage. That was happening throughout the institution. The lad would sit down with me and my wife and have a meal before I took him back to Polmont. That type of work was voluntary for the inmates, they didn't have to do it.
56. Inmates could have parents visiting on a Saturday. The parents weren't allowed to take the boys out of Polmont but they could visit them.
57. There was also a social work department based in Polmont. The social workers would see the boys and sort out any problems they had. We also had our own nursing staff

and psychologists. They were all based in Polmont. These medical staff were not involved in the inmates' general reviews held at the end of every month. These reviews were when the officers came together to discuss inmate's liberation dates.

58. The inmates aged between sixteen and eighteen could be sentenced to a maximum of two years at borstal. No more to my knowledge. From eighteen to twenty-one years they would likely go to a young offenders, which at that time would be Glenochil.
59. I don't know if there was anything in place to support the inmates prior to or after their release. I don't have any knowledge of that. I think when they left Polmont they were given a bus pass or a train ticket that would take them home but what happened after that, I have no knowledge.

#### **Living arrangements**

60. There was no staff living in Polmont itself. Most of the staff stayed in married quarters which surrounded the institution.
61. There were night shift officers who would be on duty overnight but they were the only staff on the premises out with normal working hours. When I worked nightshift in discipline, it used to be one member of staff to each wing and you had to patrol your area with a time clock and check into certain areas. You would also check on the inmates through the hatch on their room doors and make sure everybody was okay. Occasionally on the nightshift, a governor or assistant governor would come into the halls to ensure everything was okay.
62. Every morning the early shift principal officer, who was in charge of the early shift, had a master key which allowed him to open the double locking system used at Polmont. Once he did that all other staff could open doors by using their own key. For example, if I wanted to go into a hall to collect inmates [REDACTED], I would be able to access the area once the principal officer had undone the double lock. When the double lock was on, the whole place was locked down and only the principal officers had those master keys.

## **Discipline and punishment**

63. When Polmont was a borstal, inmates breaching the rules would be put on report and have to go in front of the governor. Depending on the offence, they would either get three to five nights without recreation or they would be put downstairs to the cells in solitary confinement. I didn't see a policy or anything written down about that. All the years I worked at Polmont Borstal, that was how it operated. The inmates would be told verbally on entry that this was what would happen if they broke the rules and were put on report.
64. As for when Polmont switched from a borstal to a young offenders institution, I don't know if that was still the case. That part of my service was limited to [REDACTED] area.
65. The type of behaviour that would lead to an inmate being put on report would perhaps be him having a set to with a member of staff, a skirmish between two inmates or a fight breaking out in the hall during recreation time. It could be a multitude of things. If inmates were doing something they shouldn't have been doing and staff thought it warranted a report, then they were put on report. They would probably be locked in their room until such time as they saw the governor.
66. The governor would read out the charge and the inmate either agreed or disagreed. Sentence would then be decided by the governor and the inmate would be told what it was there and then. That would be it. If it was an assault or other serious matter, I have no recollection of the police ever being called in. The governor decided. I assume there would be a record kept of all reports and governor's decisions but whether there was, I don't know. That was above my pay grade.
67. To my knowledge there was never any physical punishment. There was no belt or anything like that.

## Restraint

68. Restraint would be used if there was a danger to staff entering a cell. That would be when they used the three-man team with a shield. I spoke about that earlier when I was referring to training. The decision to implement the three-man team would be made by the principal officer in charge of that particular hall.
69. The trained staff would form up and the cell door would be opened up. The officers would have the protection of the shield against whoever was coming towards them. When that occurred the number one was the person who was in charge of the restraint.
70. Once the team commenced the removal of the person from the cell, no one could interfere with the team. It didn't matter whether it was a principal officer or whoever, once the extraction had commenced, nobody could interfere. The team were responsible for their own safety and equally responsible for the safety of the inmate. Safety was paramount. The control and restraint was done in such a way that it prevented injury.
71. As part of the restraint technique, holds were used. When I was carrying out the training, we used to practice the holds on each other. I used to go home at the end of the day and my wrists were all swollen up.
72. Operationally, the first thing was to secure any weapon in possession of the inmate. That weapon could be anything, a knife from the engineering shop or part of the furniture which had been broken off.
73. If a skirmish broke out in the hall, then an officer would try, in a safe manner, to get in between the inmates, separate them and try and calm the situation down. The inmates would be taken away. Probably holds wouldn't be used in that situation. An officer wouldn't use a technique like that in that type of situation. If an officer finished up rolling around the floor with an inmate, where would we go from there? I've never seen a prison officer on a hall ending up on the floor whilst trying to restrain an inmate. That's never happened in [REDACTED] either.

74. I've never been involved in restraining an inmate in a live situation, only in training. I've never seen an officer being excessive in a control and restraint situation. On two or three occasions I did witness officers carry out live control and restraint. I think on one occasion I was passing North Wing and saw a three man team taking an inmate down the stairs. It was good to see that our training was working because what the officers were doing was correct. Another occasion I recall there was a noise in the main corridor. An inmate was being removed from one of the workshops. He was in the main corridor when I saw him. Again the officers were carrying out the control and restraint correctly. On both these occasions, the officers did not have a shield. They wouldn't have had because the prisoner was under control by the time I saw them. They may have had initially if the prisoner was armed, but not at the time I saw them.

#### **Concerns about the institution**

75. In my time at Polmont there was never any concern raised by staff in Polmont or other external body, agency or person because of the way inmates were being treated.

#### **Reporting of complaints/concerns**

76. If an incident took place, either in a workshop or in my area [REDACTED], the inmate was open to report it to his workshop staff. If he didn't want to report it there, he could report it to his gallery officer or to the matron. He could also ask to speak in private to a senior officer or a principal officer. From there on in, whatever the complaint was, those members of staff, especially a principal officer, was dutybound to take that complaint to the control staff. The control staff would be morally bound to take it upstairs to the governor. If there was a situation where a staff member had done something wrong, action would be taken against that person. That was cast in stone. That was the method. It was also the method if a staff member had a complaint about someone.
77. I've never seen anything written down in terms of a policy, any rule book or anything like that. I was probably verbally informed of that process by the principal officer in the hall when I worked in discipline.

78. Throughout all my years working in Polmont, I never had a complaint made against me that resulted in me having to go before the governor, to be suspended or to lose my career. The first one was when I received the letter from the Inquiry.
79. I never heard any inmate complain about another inmate. The time I worked in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were some of the happiest days of my life. We used to have such a laugh at the Glasgow banter. I've witnessed the Edinburgh, Glasgow divide, gangs coming into the prison but at [REDACTED], it was just banter and laughter. In all my time at Polmont, I never heard an inmate decry a fellow inmate or a staff member over their ethnic background. I've never heard a staff member decry an inmate over their ethnic background either. I had great empathy for the inmates at Polmont. They were a pleasure to work with as far as I was concerned.
80. I never had an inmate come to me wanting to make a complaint about somebody else.

### **Abuse**

81. I was never given any information advising me what was classed as abuse within Polmont. I've heard what I would call 'verbals', swearing, but nothing I would define as verbal abuse. None of the inmates ever reported abuse to me. Verbals would be prisoners going eyeball to eyeball and shouting and swearing at each other. I wouldn't class that as abuse.
82. I think abuse would have come to light if it was being freely discussed amongst staff. I would have come across that during my working day. That would be the only time I would have come across anything like that.
83. I think abuse could have occurred and gone undetected in certain areas. I have no control over that but I suppose it could have occurred.

## **Child protection arrangements**

84. In terms of any guidance provided on how inmates in Polmont should be treated, cared for and protected against abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate behaviour, all I can say is that I was never informed of anything like that either verbally or in black and white. There were no guidelines ever handed to me or, I believe, to other members of staff. That never happened as far as I am aware.
85. There was never any guidance handed to me which informed me on how to handle or respond to reports of abuse or ill-treatment of inmates by staff, other adults or other inmates. I certainly wasn't aware of any child protection arrangements that were in place to reduce the likelihood of abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate behaviour from staff, other adults or inmates. I certainly wasn't taken to one side and told what I had to do.
86. I had a multitude of people in [REDACTED], school children from different primary schools, from different backgrounds. I was never asked questions about that. It was by the goodness of the governor that allowed me to expand what was happening in [REDACTED]. I wasn't graded and no one ever took me aside and said that I needed to have any particular certificates. I don't think those precautions existed in those days.
87. I always had an inmate who assisted me [REDACTED]. They were known as passmen although I never saw my inmate as a passman. Sometimes he was handpicked by me and other times handpicked by the governor. I never knew nor asked any inmate coming [REDACTED], what they were in Polmont for. That was none of my business and I wasn't interested in that. Sometimes the governor would ask to see me and tell me about an individual who had been causing problems in the workshops. He would ask me if I was willing to take him under my wing [REDACTED].
88. There had to be complete trust between me and the inmate who was delegated to me [REDACTED]. The inmate would help me with [REDACTED], help me [REDACTED].



██████████, make sure ██████████, clean any ██████████ and a multitude of other tasks we had.

89. I also gave the lad a little knowledge on how to teach youngsters ██████████. I would ask the staff coming in to Polmont with local primary school children if they had any objections to the inmate assisting me in teaching the children ██████████.

### **External monitoring**

90. Polmont was visited by the inspector of prisons. Periodically, staff came down from headquarters. They would have been serving officers within the prison service at that time. I believe that job was later passed onto a civilian. Whilst it was in the hands of the Scottish Prison Service, I remember one of the chief officers at Polmont climbed the ranks and became the Inspectorate of the Prison Service.
91. I remember him inspecting Polmont and visiting all the halls. He came in to inspect at the ██████████.
92. To my knowledge the inspector would also have a conversation with the inmates. I couldn't say if they ever spoke to the inmates alone. I've never seen that happen.
93. Over my twenty-seven and a half years working at Polmont, I would say I was aware of an inspector of prisons visiting around four times. I would lean towards more than that but I know of at least four inspections of the ██████████ area when I was there. That's not to say, the inspector bypassed ██████████ on other occasions or came in when I was on holiday or off sick. I think four inspections over my time would be a very conservative figure.

### **Record-Keeping**

94. There was no record-keeping when I started at ██████████. The only records I kept were numbers of how many inmates were using ██████████ on a weekly

basis. Whether or not that happened in the workshops or anywhere else, I don't know. If the governor asked me for the number of people using [REDACTED] on any particular week, I would have been able to tell him. The governor occasionally checked up on numbers just to make sure everybody was getting a chance to use [REDACTED].

95. I also had a small notebook where I kept a record of when the health inspectors came into [REDACTED], especially when three local primary schools started using it. Our [REDACTED] had to be in the same condition and quality as a standard [REDACTED].

96. I learned about [REDACTED] by visiting local [REDACTED] and people in charge of [REDACTED] down at Grangemouth and Falkirk [REDACTED]. I found out about treating [REDACTED]. I researched [REDACTED] and found out what was going to be [REDACTED]. That was all self-taught although nobody said to me that I had to have a knowledge of [REDACTED].

97. Other than my notes on weekly numbers using the [REDACTED] and dates health inspectors came in, there were no records at [REDACTED]. I have no knowledge as to whether there was a policy on record-keeping.

#### **Investigations into abuse – personal involvement**

98. I was never involved in any investigation on behalf of Polmont, into allegations of abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate behaviour by staff or others towards inmates at Polmont.

#### **Reports of abuse and civil claims**

99. I was never involved in the handling of reports to Polmont, or civil claims made against Polmont by former inmates, concerning historical abuse.

### **Police investigations / criminal proceedings**

100. During my time at Polmont, I was never made aware of any police investigations into alleged abuse at Polmont. I was never asked to provide a statement to the police about alleged abuse of inmates and have never given evidence at a trial concerning alleged abuse of inmates at Polmont.

### **Convicted abusers**

101. During my time at Polmont, I was never aware of any staff member being convicted of the abuse of an inmate or inmates at Polmont.

### **Knowledge of specific named alleged abusers**

102. I have been informed that the following names are of staff members who worked at Polmont and that they have been named as alleged abusers by inmates at Polmont. I have been asked if I know these people and if so what I know about them.

Mr GIB [REDACTED]

103. I have no recollection of a member of staff called GIB [REDACTED] at Polmont.

GIL [REDACTED]

104. That could be a principal officer that came to Polmont around the same time as me. The person I am referring to is a Mr GIL [REDACTED] and not GIL [REDACTED]. No one has ever been referred to me as, GIL [REDACTED]. The Mr GIL [REDACTED] I am referring to probably retired seven or eight years before me, at a guess. He would have been between fifty-five and sixty when he retired.

105. The person I am talking about was a principal officer in charge of the assessment centre. Mr GIL [REDACTED] was the equivalent to a company sergeant major or a regimental

sergeant major in the Royal Marines. He was a very well-dressed gentleman. He had expert handling, not only of the staff that worked under him but of the inmates in his domain. In my view, he was superb at his job. I actually taught his daughter [REDACTED].

106. The only time I would see him with the inmates was when I was required to uplift a group of inmates from the assessment centre. He worked in the assessment centre and I would have witnessed him informing inmates of the rules at Polmont and him directing boys to carry out various tasks. I never saw him abuse any of the inmates.

Mr IOM [REDACTED]

107. I've never come across that name. I cannot remember anyone with that name working at Polmont.

#### **Alleged Abuser**

108. I have been informed that I have been named as an alleged abuser by the following inmates.

GHY [REDACTED]

109. GHY [REDACTED] has provided a statement to the Inquiry and has referred to me as Mr GIH [REDACTED]. That was the name I was known by at the time.

110. At paragraph 179 of his statement, GHY [REDACTED] says, "*You were allowed down to the big room to watch the telly. We were also allowed to go swimming in the pool within Polmont. The [REDACTED] teacher, Mr GIH [REDACTED] was a nasty piece of work. We weren't allowed to play football or anything.*"

111. At paragraph 188 of his statement, GHY [REDACTED] says, "*Mr GIH [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] teacher, would line the boys up to inspect their toenails. He would be carrying a big scoop that he used to get water out of the pool, which was a long stick with a scoop on the end. If a boy had dirty toenails, he would put the stick end of the scoop on the*

*offending toenail and say, "Thy toenail offends thee" and put his whole weight on the stick. He would do that to make sure that when boys came to [REDACTED] pool their feet were clean."*

112. I don't remember a [REDACTED] GHY [REDACTED]. The accusation that was made that there was a scoop and a pole used for taking water out of the swimming pool and that I went along the line and jumped up and down on people's toes with it, no, I didn't do that. I didn't do anything with a scoop and a pole and press it down on this gentleman's toes at Polmont.

113. I have no understanding of why this has been said. I don't think the passage of time has affected my memory. If a boy was treated as described, I probably would accept that was abuse. I think it would be.

[REDACTED] GQI [REDACTED]

114. [REDACTED] GQI [REDACTED] has also provided a statement to the Inquiry and has referred to me as [REDACTED] GIH [REDACTED]. At paragraph 175 of his statement, he says, "*The abuse at Polmont was just getting weighed in a few times by some of the characters. The main one was [REDACTED] GIH [REDACTED] he was a guard but he was also the [REDACTED] teacher and was in charge of [REDACTED]. He proper weighed me in a few times. He was the worst and was an absolute swine of a man.*"

115. At paragraph 177 of his statement, [REDACTED] GQI [REDACTED] says, "[REDACTED] GIH [REDACTED] and the PTI were both bad and then there was XXX, he was another screw. They would all proper beat up boys, punching, kicking, all sorts. A lot of it was in the gym area or, for me, when I was down in the 'Digger'."

116. At paragraph 183 of his statement, [REDACTED] GQI [REDACTED] says, "*Whenever we [REDACTED] [REDACTED] GIH [REDACTED] used to give it out to me. I think a lot of it with me was because he hadn't liked my brother. My brother had been in Polmont and there was bad blood between them so he took it out on me.*"

117. At paragraph 184 of his statement, [GQI] says, "He hit me and other people, he would just bang you with his fist. Everyone saw it, I saw him do it to others. We could be in the changing rooms and he would come up to you and lay into you. It could be one punch or half a dozen punches and it would often be for no reason at all. That's just what he did all the time."
118. I don't remember a [GQI]. I don't remember any of the inmates named [REDACTED]. I can honestly say I have no recollection of anyone with that name. If he is talking about bad blood between me and an older brother as referred to in this statement, I would not have been working in [REDACTED] at the time his older brother was at Polmont.
119. Did I ever treat anybody like that in [REDACTED] or anywhere else in Polmont? The answer to that is no. A definite no. The passage of time has not affected my memory whatsoever. If an inmate was treated in such a way that certainly would be abuse.
120. It never happened. It couldn't happen. I would never do that to any human being.
121. This person is saying that I was an individual that went about like that in the swimming pool. I wasn't an individual in the swimming pool. [REDACTED] a discipline officer in that swimming pool [REDACTED]. The reason [REDACTED] a discipline officer with me was because the swimming pool was an insecure building and would be the first place someone would go to break out of Polmont. The discipline officer was placed in there long before I was.
122. Discipline officers would have never tolerated being put in a situation where an inmate asked for the police. If that happens careers are going up in the air. My career is going up in the air. My pension is going up in the air. My standing in the prison service was going up in the air. I'm not stupid enough to lay myself open to accusations. My fellow discipline officer wouldn't be stupid enough either. So he's not talking about one person here, he's talking about two people.

123. What we're being led to believe here, is that I went into the middle of a changing room, with whatever party these two inmates were in. I'm going to kick and punch an individual with some of his pals sitting nearby. I would need to be mental to do something like that. That didn't happen, it couldn't happen because I'm not daft enough to go into a changing room when inmates are undressing, are naked, are soaking wet. I've never kicked, punched anybody in any way shape or form in the lifetime I spent in the service.

IOJ

124. IOJ has provided a statement to the Inquiry where he has referred to me as GIH. At paragraph 126 of his statement, he says, *"We got swimming once a week in the pool near to the north wing. GIH was He was a small stocky guy with no neck. You had to have short nails and be clean before you entered the pool. He would inspect your hands and nails before you got in. He would also watch us in the shower beforehand and make comment about our private parts, about the size of our privates."*

125. At paragraph 134 of his statement, IOJ says, *"The next day they shouted for the work parties and I sat on my chair in my room. I got sent to the digger for three or four days because of it. It was a wee brute who was in charge of the digger. GIH the same guy from They would take turns about supervising the digger. He would get a dig in every now and again, I mean a slap or a punch while I was down there."*

126. At paragraph 152 of his statement, IOJ says, *"One day at the swimming pool my nails were checked and GIH said they were too long. It was a twenty-five metre pool with four lanes and this day I was sent to the furthest away lane. I'm not a swimmer at all but what he made me do was swim the length of the pool, get out the other end, he was at the other end and he made me run down the side of the pool and jump in again and repeat it. I had to do it for the full thirty-minute session. He was watching and I think he would have jumped in if something had happened but it was*

*frightening for me. I was just doing the doggy paddle. I swallowed that much water during it, I ended up being sick."*

127. At paragraph 153 of his statement, [IOJ] say, "There was an incident with another prisoner on a different day, a guy XXX in the swimming pool. [GIH] slapped him and the prisoner grabbed him and pushed him in the swimming pool. He was dragged down to the digger and I believe he got a real doing from the prisoner officers."
128. At paragraph 154 of his statement, he says, "If [GIH] caught you diving into the swimming pool you would get a slap off him as you had to jump in and not dive. [GIH] was an animal and no one liked him."
129. I do not know this person and that did not happen. I did not abuse or punish anyone in the swimming pool. The routine in place was that inmates undressed in the changing room and showered before entering the swimming pool. They showered before and after entering the swimming pool with their costumes on. This system was in place before [REDACTED]
130. All inmates were lined up before they entered the pool. [REDACTED]. It allowed me to have control of the inmates before they entered the pool. The comment about me watching them in the shower did not happen.
131. He says I worked in the digger. I never once worked in the digger in all my time at Polmont, so this could not have happened.
132. The pool at Polmont was not twenty-five metres long and was not four lanes in width either. He says I made him swim lengths and he couldn't swim. That did not happen.
133. He says an inmate pushed me into the swimming pool. Again, this did not happen.
134. He says inmates diving into the pool would get a slap. This did not happen. Inmates were not allowed to dive across the pool because of the narrowness of the pool and dangers that were involved in doing so.



135. IOJ [REDACTED] was born in 1954 so again he would have been in Polmont between 1970 until 1972. I was not in the swimming pool at this time. In paragraph 158 of his statement, he says he left Polmont in 1972. As I have said, I did not start working in the swimming pool until 1973 or 1974.
136. The passage of time has not affected my memory. I have no idea why this has been said. If these incidents did happen, they would be abuse.
137. There was a discipline officer with me at all times. He was there to protect me from allegations, especially during undressing, showering and re-dressing. He was also there because the swimming pool was an insecure building.

KDO [REDACTED]

138. KDO [REDACTED] has provided a statement to the Inquiry within which he refers to me as "a [REDACTED] instructor called GIH [REDACTED]" At paragraph 66 of his statement, he says, *"Towards the end of my sentence, I was working on building Corton Vale prison. We got a bus there every day. One day, I decided I'd had enough so I tried to run away. I was caught within a couple of hours and taken back to Polmont. One of the staff, a [REDACTED] instructor called GIH [REDACTED] jumped on my back. I didn't think about running away again. It added another two or three months onto my sentence."*
139. I don't know that name and what he alleges just did not happen. I didn't abuse or punish him or anyone else. Between 1970 and 1972, I don't think any inmates went to help build Corton Vale. KDO [REDACTED] was born in 1954 which would mean he would be in Polmont between 1970 and 1972, aged sixteen to eighteen years old.
140. The passage of time has not affected my memory. This did not happen. I have no idea why he would say that. If this did happen this would be abuse.

141. GIM has provided a statement to the Inquiry within which he refers me as the "one who taught swimming." At paragraph 140 of his statement, he says, "*Another of the officers who caused some issues was one who taught swimming. He would ask if there was anyone who could not swim and then ask them to line up at the edge of the pool. He then walked along the line and pushed them in. I was okay as I had learned as a youngster to swim at a local pool and in the Clyde as a youngster.*"
142. I don't know this person. What he alleges never happened. GIM was born in 1953, which would make him sixteen year's old in 1969. I didn't start working within the swimming pool until 1973 or 1974 so wouldn't have been working within the swimming pool when this person was at Polmont.
143. I also notice that GIM does not name me in the allegation.
144. The passage of time has not affected my memory. If this did happen, this would be abuse and would have been dangerous as well.
145. There was a discipline officer at all times. He was there to protect from allegations. He was also there because of the lack of security of the swimming pool building.

### **Criminal Convictions**

146. I have no criminal convictions.

### **Further comments**

147. I had a system in place where the inmates were told they would have their toenails inspected. Nails and feet, as far as I am concerned, had to be looked after. If an inmate had thick toenails, I would tell him to have a word with his gallery officer and

get his toenails cut. If the lad came back in the following week and they still weren't done, I would tell him to stand at my office door. I had a set of clippers and I would ask him if he was quite happy to clip his toenails.

148. What was wrong was the inmates weren't being given the help in having their nails looked at. That could have been the fault of staff being busy but the biggest fault was the system. It wasn't just their toenails, it was the state of their feet. They were being fitted with ill-fitting shoes within the prison service. I have seen some terrible feet on young lads that came into [REDACTED]. I actually went and spoke to the nursing staff but they didn't help. I started getting tools for the inmates to cut their own toenails. I got a file for them to file their nails. Inmates would come to me to say they had an ingrowing toenail. I had inmates coming back to me as young offenders and asking me if I still had my toenail clippers.
149. I have seen lads coming into the penal system and their nails were underneath their toes. Staff should have paid attention to those nails. I am a military guy at heart, I have walked for hundreds of miles in the forces and I know the importance of feet. To see young lads with feet like that, shows an appalling system that the prison service needs to look at.
150. There were more than three Borstals in Scotland. Noranside, Castle Huntly, Friarton, Glen Ochil, Corton Vale, Polmont, Dumfries, South Inch and Long Riggend. All these borstals changed to young offenders in 1982 or 1983.
151. On leaving the forces I had an exemplary record. On leaving the prison service, I was awarded the Imperial Service Medal.

### **Life after Polmont**

152. After Polmont I finished up driving a bus with handicap children. That was with the [REDACTED]. I also worked with a veterinary drugs firm who were looking for a relief driver. For five years I drove around the Borders delivering veterinary drugs. I then

passed my advanced driving course and began teaching people advanced driving. I did that until I was sixty-seven.

**Lessons to be learned**

- 153. I feel young people need to find themselves. In every establishment that deals with young people, there needs to be a section that takes the kids into the hills to test them in different ways. Similar to what we were doing with the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. The best thing staff can do at any institution for adults or young offenders, is to treat inmates with respect.
  
- 154. There also needs to be a medical situation where all inmates in a penal system, have an area where there is podiatry in place. Where they can look after adults and young people who have problems with their feet. They need to be listened to and have their feet inspected. If they are coming into institutions for the first time, one of the most important inspections to take place is that of their feet and their fingers.

**Other information**

- 155. Regardless of what has been said about me, I have empathy with these individuals. I don't feel any anger or malice towards these young guys.
  
- 156. 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.....  
GIH

Dated..... 20<sup>TH</sup> NOV 2023 ,