

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

KCV

Support person present: No

1. My name is KCV. My date of birth is 1966. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Bathgate and brought up with my family in Denny. My dad was from Paisley and my mum was originally from Dublin and had moved to Edinburgh. Both my parents are from the Travelling Community. Dad's side of the family spent their life living in caravans and mum's family stayed in camp sites. Mum had moved into Edinburgh prior to meeting my dad.
3. I have two brothers and three sisters. None of them has ever spent a day in prison or ever been in trouble with the law. They are all working in good jobs. I get on well with my siblings but they know that in the most part I am good but when the drugs take effect then we have fall outs. They don't know or understand why I have turned to drugs.
4. We were always travelling around as a family from Coatbridge to Ayrshire. We did not have any long term education. We worked for many farmers picking potatoes and berries, but we were never short of money.
5. We used to get up early in the morning and would put fliers through people's door in certain areas. My mother has a hawkers licence and it meant we would be looking to collect and buy antiques, clothing or anything else from the house that would then sell

on. We would post the fliers in the morning and collect any items in the afternoon. They would be gathered until we had enough to take to the dealers and then sell what we had. We also helped with berry picking in Blairgowrie. Other times we would be involved in picking whelks in Vale of Fort William and Kinlochleven. The other thing we might do in the winter would be picking potatoes and other vegetables all to provide money.

6. When I was about fourteen we had moved into a house in Denny. I was going to Broxburn Academy at that time. I did learn to read but did not go there all the time. My mother worked with some at the traveller's children's home and helped out with them. There was a place in Tillicoultry where she also worked.
7. When I was about fifteen years of age I was at the local chip shop getting some food for the family and had only been in the shop for a few minutes. I was joined by a pal and he had a bag full of cassettes. The police stopped us and they said they were stolen. We were arrested and ended up in court as a result. I tried to protest that I was not involved but no one would listen to me. I even asked the man from the shop to prove to the police I had not been with my pal but he refused to speak up. That was the start of my life with the prison system.

Young Offenders Unit, Longriggend

8. I was sent to Longriggend on remand. After being in Longriggend I ended up spending most of my adult life in one prison or another. Most of my juvenile time was spent in the Scottish prison system and the majority of my adult time was in England. I have always accepted that if I did wrong then I would do time.
9. When I arrived at Longriggend I soon found out some of the harsh rules there. As I was walking into reception with my bag I happened to put it onto a table. The next thing I knew I was getting a kicking from the staff.

10. There were issues with some of the other inmates who would challenge me to fight and call me "Pikey **KCV**". They would come into my cell and fight me there. If the staff found out they would punish me and I would be locked up early that night.
11. After being on remand for about eight weeks I was sent to Glenochil to serve my sentence and spent the next three months there.

HMP Glenochil, Alloa

12. Glenochil was mainly for teenagers in the system. I think during my time at Glenochil there would have been about one hundred and thirty boys there. I think there were about twenty members of staff on duty at each time.

Routine at HMP Glenochil, Alloa

13. When I was in Glenochil they treated everyone in a military style. I think they got the idea of looking after prisoners from America, where they used a boot camp system. They believed that the best way to treat everybody was a short, sharp regime. The staff had no idea about how to deal with prisoners and were never trained in any military techniques. They got all their training from having watched television programmes. Everything had to be done in a set order and if you did not fall into their way of doing things they would physically punish you.

Mornings and bedtime

14. Any time we were being spoken to by the staff we had to stand to attention. In the mornings we had to make sure the bed was made in a strict bed block fashion. When the staff lifted the mattress the bed block would have to remain solid. If it opened, apart from it having to be re-done, you were punished by being told to do extra chores.

15. On our beds we had to lay our possessions and pyjamas out in a certain manner and each item had to be lined up and kept a certain distance apart from each other. While the staff carried out their examinations of the beds we had to stand to attention. Again if not in the right order we were punished.
16. We still did slopping out at that time. We could use the bucket for a number two but if anyone used it for a number one then they were in big trouble. You had to make sure you used the toilets before lights out.
17. I remember one morning, before going for our breakfast, we were told as usual to come out of the cell and just stand at the door. When I came out of my cell I could see into the cell opposite. When I looked over I could see that the guy in there had hung himself and was still there as they opened the door. They just left the door like that and left me standing for about fifteen minutes having to look at him.

Mealtimes/Food

18. There was a limited menu for your meals and if you chose something from it you had to make sure you finished every bit of the meal. When you were seated at the table you had to make sure you were sitting straight. If you slouched or were not straight in any way you would get a slap from one of the staff.

Healthcare

19. With all the treatment you received from the staff and all the fighting among prisoners it was quite often that people were seriously hurt. If it was more than a cut or bloody nose that would be treated within the jail. If it was more serious, for instance a broken bone, then you would be transferred to the local hospital for treatment. When you went to the hospital you just had to say the injuries were caused when you slipped. The escorting staff never left your side, so you never had the chance to tell the truth.

Religious instruction

20. On a Sunday a priest would arrive and we would all have to go to Sunday school.

Work

21. A chore we had to do was to strip old telephone wires. We would gather the copper and place it into a pile. The prison had a contract with merchants who would buy the scrap which included the copper, aluminium and brass. Each month the scrap would be picked up and the prison would be paid. There were maybe ten of us locked in a room stripping the wires and we would be in there all day, Monday to Friday.

Family contact

22. My mum would come and visit me very regularly. We were allowed two visits a month and she always took up the allocation.

Running away

23. You could not run away from Glenochil as there were high fences all around the grounds.

Discipline

24. One of the punishments could mean that we would have to polish boots. In there it was not just straight forward polishing, you had to buff them like in the army, and bring them up to a shiny finish.
25. There were other times they would make us stand on parade, just like in the army. We were made to stand to attention, then stand at ease. This standing on parade could be for several hours.

Bed Wetting

26. Bed wetting was not something I had an issue with but there were some boys who it did affect. If anyone was caught wetting the bed the staff would be really brutal and would kick the particular boy up and down the hall. There was never anything done to help the boys or find out the reasons for them wetting the bed. Some of the boys reacted badly and they would self-harm.
27. There was never any help given to them when the boys self-harmed. It is only in the modern prisons that they take it more serious and try to help the boys out with their mental health issues.

Abuse at HMP Glenochil, Alloa

28. At Glenochil we picked our tray of food and had to call out "Thank you sir" before taking it back to the table. When you went back to the table to eat your food you had to make sure you did not have your hands on the table. If you did one of the staff would come from the side and slap you on the side of the head.
29. If you had soup as a meal you were not allowed to dip the bread into the bowl. Again if you did, you would receive a slap in the face from the staff. They never hid it as it happened in front of the other inmates and staff.
30. Some of the staff were particularly brutal. They had a cricket bat which they named "Fred". We had to do different physical training and when we were doing some distance runs you always had to make improvements on your previous time. If you did not make any improvement they would beat you with the bat. It was used by them on a regular basis so they could demonstrate to other inmates what would happen if you did not make those improvements. They would shout me over calling me a gypsy. I then had to lower my trousers and underwear and bend over. As I was bent over they would hit me several times on the bare backside with "Fred". This was done in front of the other inmates.

31. Another punishment was that they made you stand in a corner and face the wall. You had to stand at attention while you faced the wall and were made to stand like that for hours at a time.
32. Another form of abuse at Glenochil was polishing the different coloured tiles on the floor. We were given a large bucket of water, hand brush and a block of soap. The officers would shout out a command "Bucket" and you would dip the brush into the bucket of water. The next command "Ready" meant you had to scrub the tile continually for about a minute and a half. There were different coloured tiles, red and black and each of the inmates would be allocated a particular square. Once you had finished the scrubbing then you had to lacquer each tile until they were all like a mirror. If the staff were not happy then they would walk all over the tiles not done properly with their big black boots. You would have to start from scratch.
33. In 1982 when I was at Glenochil, I would be doing some extra chores. When I was there ██████████'s son, ██████████, was working beside me. He had been told by some of the officers to fight me. If he did not fight me he would be beaten by the staff. This became a regular thing by the staff members. Prior to this I did not even know how to fight but you soon learned as this became a regular thing with the staff. As far as the staff were concerned they were doing this just for their own fun.
34. One of the prison staff stayed in Stirling and there were some travellers who camped near to where he stayed. He took exception to this and when he came into work at Glenochil he had some of the inmates beat me as some form of revenge. What did the other Travellers have to do with me?
35. My whole time at Glenochil was like living in total hell. Every day and all day you were scared of what the staff would do to you next.

Reporting of abuse at HMP Glenochil, Alloa

36. You could never report any of the staff for the abuse they were handing out. For a start none of the senior staff would believe you. Then when you were back in the hall everyone knew if you had reported someone so the staff on duty would again give you a battering.

Leaving HMP Glenochil, Alloa

37. When I was sixteen my mum was staying in Fort William. When I was staying with her I was arrested and sent to Barlinnie on remand. When I was sentenced I was transferred to Noranside Borstal where I spent the next thirteen months.

HMP Noranside, Forfar

38. When I arrived at Noranside I found there were about a hundred boys there all about my age, fifteen or sixteen and no older than nineteen.
39. Noranside was an open prison and the regime there was much more relaxed. This relaxed atmosphere was good for me for most of the time. It also meant with the relaxed routines, one of the staff was able to abuse the boys. In the closed prisons there was a much stricter atmosphere and also less opportunity for this sort of abuse to take place as the staff worked in pairs most of the time.

Routine at Noranside, Forfar

Mornings and bedtime

40. When I was at Noranside we would be woken about half past two or three o'clock in the morning. We would then make our way to the local farm where we would be used to carry out work there.
41. One of the jobs on the farm was to clean the underside of the cows to make sure the udders were all clean before they could be milked. We would be at the farm until about six thirty, maybe seven o'clock. Other jobs we did would be chop up the wood for fires, cleaning out the pig sties and picking potatoes from the fields.
42. After being in the farm we were back inside the borstal for breakfast. We then had to be ready for any work in the borstal for about eight and that would be us up until lunch time at twelve o'clock. After lunch it was back on the work details until about four o'clock.
43. It would be about eight o'clock at night when I had to go to my bed because of getting up so early each morning.

Mealtimes/Food

44. For all our meals we would be sat at tables within the large dining hall. There wasn't the same stress about table manners and the atmosphere at meal times was much more relaxed. We would just get our food and head over to our tables. I don't remember much about the food, but with working so hard all day, you ate everything that was available.

Clothing/uniform

45. The uniform we all had to wear there was a blue pair of shorts, a shirt, jumper and maybe a jacket. Even in the middle of winter when we were at the farm we would still

be wearing the shorts. It was absolutely freezing chopping the heads off of the turnips in the cold, dressed as we were.

Leisure time

46. In the early part of the evening, once a week, we would all be sat in a big room and get to watch some television.

Work

47. One of the jobs we did in the borstal was to make sure there was enough coal in the furnaces in the borstal. We did all the work within the borstal. The only thing the staff did was supervise us. We also worked on the local farm. Each work party would be allocated a task and would be supervised by a set member of staff. Initially the member of staff I was allocated to was the person who was trying to abuse me.

Family contact

48. Even when I was in Noranside my mum came to see me. As in the other prisons it was two visits per month.

Running away

49. I did manage to run away from Noranside a couple of times. I was easily caught as the prison was in the middle of nowhere. When I got out there was nowhere to run to. In any direction it was nearly twenty miles to the nearest town or village. I would end up being caught as I walked along the long stretches of road.

Discipline

50. Although the discipline may have been more relaxed there were still some staff who did not like travellers. Again if they did not like you then if there were extra chores to be done, like cleaning up the pots in the kitchen, then we would be told to do it. And if

there were travellers in the local community and had done anything wrong then if the staff were made aware they would take it out on me and some others.

51. If the staff were disciplining you for anything you did wrong in their eyes, then they might lock you away in your cell for a few hours. If it was something serious you might find yourself getting a slap from them or even be kicked.

Abuse at Noranside, Forfar

52. At Noranside there was a prison officer who was a pervert. He was always saying he wanted to have sex with a gypsy. He tried several times when I was on his work duty to try and sexually assault me.
53. He was a heavy built guy, quite small but stocky, almost like the dart player Jocky Wilson. I think he would have been about thirty to thirty five years old and between five foot eight and five foot nine. He wore overalls, with only a pair of shorts underneath. If there were no other members of staff around then the shorts were removed, and you could see everything whenever he bent over.
54. One of those occasions, when I was about sixteen, was when he was in the barn at the farm. When I went inside he was just standing there masturbating. He turned to the side and made a comment "Oh you've caught me". He tried a couple of times in that barn to get me into the horse stables to have sex with me. I was able to fight him off each time.
55. This same member of staff would also try to come into my room at night. He would come to my room about four in the morning, when I would be getting up to work on the farm. He was trying on different nights to have sex with me, but again I was able to fight him off. I found a way to use things in my room to act as a door jam, which stopped him coming in.
56. Eventually I was moved to a different work party and the abuse stopped.

57. Although I never saw him abusing any of the other boys, I have no doubt that he would have replaced me with another boy. I have no doubt I was not the first boy he abused. It was not something that was talked about among the boys. I know if I was not as fit as I was then he would have raped me.

Reporting of abuse at Noranside, Forfar

58. The staff member who was attempting to have sex with me knew that I would be too scared to report anything. If I did try to report it, he would have made sure the other prisoners would be aware I was a grass. If the other members of staff found out I reported anything about a colleague then I would end up with a beating. There was already so much prejudice against me because I was a traveller and this meant there was no one I could go to and he knew that.

Leaving Noranside, Forfar

59. At the end of my ten month sentence I was released from Noranside and until recently that was the last time I was in custody in Scotland.
60. After being released from Noranside I was staying with mum and dad. That was when I took the courage to tell my dad about the sexual abuse I suffered. He did not react the way I hoped and his response to me was that I should never have let anyone touch me and should have been able to fight them off. I did not get any support from him.
61. Dad would not help me or accept what happened to me. My relationship with my dad from that moment on was almost non-existent. We were all keen on hunting and fishing. But after that day whenever my dad went out fishing he would take my brothers, but I was never allowed to go with him. I could never speak to him about anything from that time on.

62. There were times when we were in the house and he would argue with my mum saying that I was a "Mummy's boy". If I tried to get between them he would bring up my issues at Noranside saying that I let boys there touch me.
63. Mum said the only way I would be looked after properly was if I moved down to Norwich and stay with an uncle. I moved there but I never told my uncle what happened to me.

Life after being in care

64. I knew I could not stay with dad or be near the other travelling community that I knew. I moved down south and stayed with my uncle and other members of the family.
65. I was seventeen when I went to England, first Bradford then Norwich. From then on I just felt like I was always running away from the abuse.
66. When I lived in Norwich I was about nineteen. I was also travelling to London where I met my wife at a dance I was at, with fellow travellers. We married when I was twenty one and we have three sons, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. We are still married to this day. I have not even told my wife about the abuse as I am not sure how she will react to it.
67. When I was with my wife and the memories were having an effect on me I would walk out of the house and be away for six or seven weeks. The problem was I would then have no one I could trust to talk to or be with and would associate with the people involved in the drug scene and the bad cycle would start all over again.
68. I am currently serving a sentence at HMP Addiewell and the atmosphere here is just like my other placements in the prison system. I am hoping that this is the last time I will spend in jail. If I can control the memories I know I have a chance. I have my family and a good business when I get out.

69. Until recently I have not been able to receive any visits from my family in my current prison. My family have asked to visit and have made arrangements but the staff would come in and say they were sorry but I had been in close contact with someone with Covid and as a result they would cancel the visit. Covid was found on the wing and I was classed as a close contact. It was hard enough on my sons as it was expensive travelling from England and having to stay in hotels, just so they could see me. I have many months of my sentence to complete and I should be able to get visits from them because there are less blocks being put in place. The visits should be allowed as I have received both my Covid vaccinations.
70. Our meal in the afternoon is given to us about four thirty. This is during the hour we have out of our cells and during the hour we can carry out any exercise. You either cut your exercise time, or work out for the hour and have your food cold.
71. There is also a large turnaround of staff in Addiewell and this does not help me or any other prisoner with the atmosphere.
72. Until recently I have not seen a doctor or a dentist for over eighteen months. Some months ago I was moved from a single cell to a double. I slept in the top bunk of that cell, even when the other inmate was transferred out I was left in their own my own. There was one night I fell out of the top bunk and smashed my teeth. As a result I lost a couple of my teeth but was able to see a dentist.
73. Things have got a bit better recently as the staff allowed us to have phones in the cell and we can speak with family on them. The staff have to programme numbers into the phone and only those numbers in your phone are permitted calls.
74. Over the last eighteen months I have not even been allowed to attend the courses for bricklaying and painting and decorating or to visit the gym as much as I wanted. I have also been doing a course on business management while I have been in this prison. This too has been paused because of Covid. I check each day to see if they have started it again but each day I find it is not on. Although I can't go on the course

my door is not locked during the time I would be on the course. I can watch some television but it is only showing stuff suited for twelve year olds.

75. At the moment the block is opened about seven thirty but we are not allowed out of our cells. I have to stay in the cell twenty three hours a day and the one hour is for us to have minimum exercise. My sons when they see me on the phone keep asking what is going wrong with me as they know I always keep myself fit, but they think I am losing so much weight.
76. If I have a letter delivered to me in the prison it is always sent for security to check. Even when the security passed it another member of staff could come along prior to you receiving it and take it away. They would claim they suspect the paper had drugs soaked in it and therefore we are not getting any mail.
77. There is a guy who I am friendly with in here and he has suffered abuse in the past, although his abuse was suffered when he was in children's homes as opposed to the prison system. There is no staff that I can approach to speak to confidentially.
78. Throughout my time in prisons I would always be called names, "Gypsy KCV", "Pikey" and anything else they could find to try and annoy me. This was prison staff as well as the inmates. I just treated it as them being ignorant and have always tried to ignore them. If I was to fight every person in the system that called me names I would be fighting every minute of every day.
79. I have a target for when I get out about working with my middle son [REDACTED]. He is working hard each day and I will join him when I am released.
80. If I could finish my current sentence within the English prison system that would help me on my release. In England, when I would be released I would be on licence and that would assist with giving me some sort of structure to my life on the outside. Along with working with my son the probation time would help prevent me going back to my old ways and getting involved with drugs.

81. The big issue I have about any application to transfer down south is my sister has terminal cancer and while I am in Addiewell I am nearer her. I have applied for a visit to see her before she passes away and this has recently been granted. Both she and I are hoping that a further request is going to be granted by the staff here.

Impact

82. If I had not been arrested for that offence when I was sixteen I believe I would have had a life similar to the rest of my family. They have never been in trouble and have always worked for their living.
83. To hide from the memories I turned to taking drugs and that led me into trouble with the law and spent time in most prisons throughout England. There is hardly a year over the past forty years when I have not been in one or other prison. I have been in a constant cycle of getting out of jail working hard for a while, but spending my money buying drugs. Eventually the drug taking would take over, I would get into trouble and back into jail again.
84. When I was at Glenochil there was another prisoner called ██████ that I got on well with. One morning I said to staff I was going to go to see ██████ for a cuppa. The member of staff told me that I couldn't as ██████ had died. When I asked what had happened I was told he had committed suicide. ██████ obviously had issues that he could not talk about or cope with. I knew that I was having dark thoughts but ██████'s death forced me to stop thinking those things and try and sort what damage the memories were doing to me.
85. Over that last couple of years I have been trying to work out why I kept getting into trouble and realised that if I could get rid of the memories then I would stand a chance of staying out of prison. I have asked the prison system for help with my mental health but they have not offered me any assistance.

86. I have suffered from flashbacks and triggers which bring all the memories back again. I can be watching something on television and it may show someone having suffered from abuse and suddenly that triggers memories of Glenochil and Noranside.
87. It is difficult inside prison to control my previous issues with drugs. Recently there was a bad batch of drugs. Four prisoners ended up in hospital and a further ten were put on observation. As a result we were all on lockdown for four days. We were not allowed out and all our food was given to us in our cells. They are carrying out an inquiry to find out where the drugs came from. I keep trying to find ways to avoid going back to drugs.
88. I think that the time we are able to spend within the gym and taking part in the different courses within the prison all help to take my mind off the memories I have. Being locked up for twenty three hours a day affects my mental well being as there is so much time where your mind drifts to those memories.
89. I have a trust issue with people and until I really get to know anyone I cannot feel safe with them. Even coming to the Inquiry it has taken a lot for me build up the trust with the staff there. I feel easier in being able to tell my story to what are in effect some strangers rather than being able to tell my family. By coming to the Inquiry I know I am not being judged, where after the reaction with my father, I have the fear of my family looking at me differently if they knew of my experiences. When the time is right I might be in a good place and perhaps be able to speak with Future Pathways.

Reporting of Abuse

90. Other than disclosing to my father when I was just out of Glenochil I have not told anyone of the experiences I suffered, until I have come to the Inquiry. I have not reported any of this to the police or other authority.

Records

- 91. I have applied for a transfer to be in a prison in England to be nearer my sons. A big issue with the prison is that their records have me as having been arrested in Aberdeen and of no fixed address. But my address is in Essex and has been since 2008. This issue is one reason for them not transferring me.

Lessons to be learned

- 92. I think there should be more scrutiny of the staff in the open prison systems and there should have been more scrutiny of staff in the borstal system. There should have been more rules in place in relation to staff having one to one contact with prisoners, all with a view to prevent any abuse of the prisoners.
- 93. During my lifetime in jail I do think there have been some improvements made in the current prison systems.

Other information

- 94. I came forward to the Inquiry to give my story and it is with the hope that what I am able to tell the Inquiry will stop someone being abused within the prison and care system. I am reluctant to report any of the sexual abuse as I do not want that man's family being affected by something he did forty years ago. He will live with what he was like but they should not be hurt by those things.
- 95. 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..... ^{KCV} 

Dated... 18-2-22