

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HUP

1. My name is HUP and my date of birth is 1992. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Background

2. I was born in Vale of Leven hospital, Alexandria. I lived in Dumbarton all my life until I went into the first home when I was about twelve years old. I have one sister, she is three years older than me. I had two brothers on who is five years younger than me and another who was eight years younger. My youngest brother sadly died last year.
3. I went to St Peters primary in Dumbarton. I obviously had ADHD then but wasn't diagnosed. I was subsequently diagnosed at about twenty one years old.
4. I think I was okay at school but I do remember attacking a couple of people at primary school. I remember attacking someone for taking the micky out of my name. I got a lot of that when I was younger. I hit somebody for that. Another time I was stood in the front of the dinner queue and a boy came up and stood in front of me. We moved spaces a couple of times, him in front of me, me in front of him. I lost my temper and punched him in the face and pushed him out of the way. That was the start of it all and the first couple of episodes of violence from me. From there it just got worse.
5. I definitely think the ADHD had an effect on me. It was also the people I ran about with and the people who influenced me. These things were the reason I ended up in the care system. I did things and never really thought about the consequences.

6. My memory of dates is not the greatest and I struggle to remember ages and dates. I have been in and out of homes and jail all of my life and it all goes into one. To summarise, from when I was twelve years old I went from living with my mum and dad and brothers and sisters to St Phillips residential home in Airdrie for three weeks. I then went to Hill Park home in Clydebank for about six weeks. Blairvadach in Helensburgh for six months. St Johns, Springboig for the first time for a couple of years. I think that was when I was thirteen years old so 2005/2006. Then to St Phillips again for four to six months. I then went back to St Johns around the start of 2009 and then to St Phillips for 3 months. I appeared at court from St Phillips for sentencing and got sent to jail at Greenock in mid 2009. I have pretty much been in jail ever since with only a period of 40 days out and more recently in 2019, three months out.
7. I went to St Phillips residential home in Airdrie for three weeks on a three week place of safety order. I think I had been taken from the police station to an emergency panel. I had been arrested for being drunk and going mental. That was the last time I felt any emotion. After the first day at the home, I switched off to any emotion. It was my way of coping and adapting and that has continued throughout my life.
8. The panel let me out after the three weeks. One of the reasons I did get out was because my auntie had arranged a holiday in a caravan before me going to the home. The time was coming up for it. The panel were deciding if I should get out and one said I should, another not and the final one asked if I didn't get out would I still get to go on the holiday. When she was told no, she decided to let me out. I was only out for a wee while, I'm not sure for how long. The next thing that happened was my Includem worker asked me if I wanted to go to McDonalds the burger place. They never took me there they took me to a home. I remember we drove about for what seemed like the whole day in the car and it was probably them trying to find a space for me somewhere. That whole MacDonalDs thing annoyed me.
9. I was taken to Hill Park Children's home at Clydebank. I stayed there for about six weeks. Hill Park didn't seem like an appropriate place for me as it was for older

people who were leaving homes and units. That's why I think I was only there a short time.

10. It was one of my Includem workers, who took me to Hill Park. People from Includem came to all of the homes I was in. They had worked with me from before I went into the first home. They would come and take me out for an hour when I was staying at home. They were key workers but not social workers. Includem did reports for recommendations for the panel but I know they didn't put in everything I had said to them. My Includem worker wasn't great, he would meet up with me and ask me what I wanted to do. I would say I didn't know and so he would say 'right, we're going to play golf'. It was a case of us doing what he wanted to do and it ended up being a poor, miserable hour for me. It was pretty irritating for me as we were doing things he wanted to do. When we were out he would also give me lectures. Although I have done things wrong violence wise and stupid things, I've always had a good idea of what's right and wrong. Even at that young age I knew what he was up to and he was manipulating me to do the things he wanted. I knew that was wrong.
11. After Hill Park I was taken to Blairvadach Children's Home in Helensburgh. I was there for six months. In Blairvadach I do think social workers came up for meetings and things but I don't remember. I don't think its they didn't come.
12. I stopped speaking to my dad when I went to Blairvadach. I blamed him for going into the homes in the first place. It wasn't his fault, he did try to do everything for me and he was always at the children's panels. I know that now. He would be the one looking out the window every night waiting on me coming home half expecting a phone call from the police to say I was dead. My dad was the one who did everything for the family. He was the person in the house that made and enforced the rules. He had been through all the same things when he was younger. He could see, right up to where I am today, where I was going and what was happening. He couldn't really stop it. He was involved in a lot of violence and jail when he was young but he has totally changed now. He has done really well coming away from the life he had.

13. I went from Blairvadach to St Johns at Springboig. St Johns is the premises I want to tell the Inquiry about because in there I believe the staff were rotten to the core. There was also nothing that I want to tell the Inquiry that happened in Hill Park, Blairvardach or St Phillips.

**St Johns Boys Approved School, Springboig, Glasgow**

14. St Johns was run by McFadden and Fitzgerald. They were two men, I can't recall their first names. I don't know if they were the top men or actually owned it. The staff unit managers answered to them. The school also had two headmasters who were also answerable to McFadden and Fitzgerald. I think one of the headteachers was for the residential school and the other for the day school. I came into contact with both McFadden and Fitzgerald. I can't remember in what context and I don't know if they ever asked me anything about life in the unit.
15. St Johns was an all boy's school. I think there were about thirty eight boys living there and twenty to thirty going in daily. They were the boys who just got taxis there because it had a school within it. There were five buildings in total and a school. The Clyde unit was the oldest residential unit. There was also Kelvin, Argyle, Buchanan and Mitchell. One of those buildings was an independent living unit to get people ready for living outside. There was a courtyard in the middle with the other buildings around it. There was a six or seven foot fence around the full place. I remember there was a pool room.
16. There were usually two or three staff on duty per residential unit, along with a senior.
17. My opinion is that the staff at St Johns were more or less corrupt. It seemed to me that if you were staff you had to 'toe the party line' there. When a half decent person started working there they would change to fit in with the others and I think that's why the place could never really 'clean up'.
18. A guy called [REDACTED] came in and started to work there . From what I saw it looked to me like he just got bullied out of the place. It was like the staff just didn't

like him because he did it right basically. They would call him [REDACTED]. Other staff would slag him off behind his back. I don't know how they were with him in person. They basically bullied him out. I believe [REDACTED] had kids of his own and did fostering.

## **Routine at St Johns Approved School, Glasgow**

### *Daily routine*

19. I would get up about 7.30 am, shower in my room. We all had our own rooms. I would then get dressed, go downstairs, get breakfast and then go to school. I would return from school for lunch and then go back again. School finished about 4.00 pm. We would then have recreational time or rec as we called it. For rec we would maybe go bowling or go karting. Most of the time though, the staff would say we were going to one of these things, get money from the senior and then they'd get us fags and sweeties and not go bowling. Sometimes we did go.
20. Bed was 10.00 pm. I don't think they actually came up and put lights off. I used to go into my pal's room across the landing.
21. I believe staff checked us early in the morning but I don't remember that happening because I was sleeping .

### *Mealtimes/food*

22. The food wasn't great. Better than in prison though. If it was something you didn't like there would be something else you could get from the cupboard or fridge, maybe a pot noodle.

### *Clothing*

23. I wore my own clothes at the home and the school

### *Schooling*

24. The schooling at St Johns wasn't great. I looked at my qualifications recently and I thought to myself these teachers signed off on those qualifications to make them look good. I don't know if that was the case or not or just a thought I had. I wouldn't put anything past the place.
25. I stayed on at school after sixteen and it was because my key worker had got me to sign paperwork and I thought I was going to get some money for it. I kept going to school but I never heard any more about it. It wouldn't surprise me but I think they may have pocketed the money. That's just a suspicion I have but I never got any money at all. Maybe the paperwork wasn't processed, I don't know.

### *Leisure time*

26. I wasn't allowed to go out on my own while I was at St Johns I would have to go out with a member of staff. I also didn't get to go home much on home leave. Most of the time it would be taken off me for running away.

### *Personal possessions*

27. I did have my own things in the home. I had a Nintendo Wii.

### *Trips and holidays*

28. I support Celtic and I did get to go to a few Celtic games. Some of the staff were season ticket holders and would take me along with them.
29. I was supposed to go with a member of staff to the Celtic against AC Milan game in 2008. The senior that was on that night wouldn't let him take me, saying they were short of staff. That was nonsense because I ended up sitting watching the game in

the unit and it didn't seem to me they were short staffed. I think it was politics in the unit.

30. They did day trips to places like Alton Towers or Blackpool but they never took us on holidays as such.

#### *Healthcare*

31. I was never really ill in St Johns. I did stand on a nail once. It was pretty sore. It was a nail that had been sticking out of a piece of wood. I don't know if it was rusty or what. I was never taken to the hospital or for a tetanus shot. They asked me if it was alright, I said aye and they said 'alright, see you later'. I don't know if they recorded it.

#### *Christmas and birthdays*

32. They didn't celebrate your birthday. I think we had a Christmas tree but you didn't get presents and it wasn't really celebrated. There might have been a grant you got at Christmas but I'm not sure .

#### *Visits/inspections*

33. The inspectorate came in at one point . We would be asked to help get the place in order for the visits to take place. Everything was made to look good for them coming. I'm sure if you looked at their budgets you would see money getting spent around the time the inspectors were due in.
34. This isn't based on fact, it's what one of the residents told me. I was told they were paid by the staff to give a good report to the inspectors when they came in. I believe this happened just before the place was shut down.
35. My social worker who was called **ESK** was hopeless. I don't think she knew what she was doing. She didn't visit me but I do remember she called this big

emergency meeting at one point. I've no idea why. Nothing had happened. My dad was there, my key worker Ed and she walked in and said, 'right who wants to start'. No one knew why it was being called. I don't know what the outcome was of that particular meeting. I heard staff from the unit mimicking her after it.

#### *Visitors*

36. My dad would come and visit me at all of the homes I was at. He could come at any time. We would often go and play snooker. My mum maybe came and visited once or twice at St Johns.

#### *Siblings*

37. I never had much contact with my sister or brothers when I was in any of the homes. I was sort of cut off from everyone. None of my them ended up in care.

#### *Running away*

38. I ran away a lot at St Johns, probably up to one hundred times over the two times I was there. The reason I ran away was because I wanted to be somewhere else rather than the home. I wanted to be with my pals and wanted to drink alcohol. I would be away sometimes for a few days, away on a bender. I'd be away until the police got me. If the Police found me on a Thursday and returned me I'd just get showered, change my clothes and have something to eat and be away again.
39. I never went home to my parents when I ran away. I couldn't, because the police would go to the door. If I was handing myself in I would generally go to my dad's then because he would phone the home and the police and they would come and get me.
40. I don't remember any punishment from the staff for running away but I know it affected my home leave.



41. Sometimes I wouldn't run away for a while. I'd maybe be trying to do a bit better in the home and trying to get my home leaves back. The problem was that the review to get the home leave back took ages.

### *Discipline*

42. It would depend on which staff member was on duty and who the resident was, as to what discipline was handed out. If you dropped something you would maybe have your pocket money docked or they might stop rec time.

### **Abuse at St Johns**

43. The staff would single kids out for abuse. There was a guy at the school called [REDACTED] who had learning difficulties and who wet the bed. The staff would call him 'pishy'. He also had a name that rhymed with something but I can't remember what now. I probably had a laugh at it at the time but it was really nasty of the staff. It must have been horrible for him to have the micky taken out of him by staff and to not have anybody on the outside. I would imagine that kind of stuff would have affected him for the rest of his life.
44. Staff were always happy to send residents into shops to steal for them. Staff would tell the kids what they wanted, things like DVD's and razors. The kids would steal it and they would get money for the item from the staff. One member of staff would take us to the shops. It would depend on who was around the unit, kid wise, as to who would go. We would go to the shops in a big van that belonged to the unit. The staff member would keep a distance from us in the shop. You would then get cash for the goods that were stolen. It would just be handed to you by that staff member. With the money I would make I would go and buy something at the shops myself. Sometimes kids would have stolen stuff that they sold on to staff which hadn't been 'ordered'.
45. There were a few episodes of violence towards me but I do struggle with dates so I don't know the order of them. I came back from a Celtic game one night and had a tri

colour wrapped around my shoulders. One of the staff just started shouting and bawling ' you think you're fuckin hard'. I do think Celtic had maybe won that night and he was bitter about that. He came right up to my face and was shouting in my face and then for no reason head butted me. It was basically for wearing a tri colour. A couple of days later he came up to me and apologised and put his arm around me and said something about his family being unwell. I was really angry at him for headbutting me in the first place. He only assaulted me that once.

46. A couple of times I was strangled in the unit. That was basically for me being a pest or annoying. One of the times was by a teacher. He had me with my back on the desk and he had his hands round my throat strangling me. He was squeezing my neck. I don't remember struggling to breathe that time or even what I'd done wrong.
47. Another time, I tapped a member of staff on the head. I probably shouldn't have. He jumped up. We were both standing and he put his hands around my neck and was squeezing my neck. I got a fright and was struggling to breathe and I think my face would have been going red.
48. I also got stabbed in the leg by another teacher with a pen or pencil. It happened in the science class. I get and used to get, really bad anxiety. I have this habit where I have to touch my chest or place my arm over my chest and tuck my hand under my armpit near my heart. I also do it when I'm sleeping. There were things in the science books that made me think a lot about my heart and made my anxiety worse. This meant I didn't want to do the work. I was handed a workbook and was told to open it at a certain page. I knew that it was to do with the body and the heart and so my anxiety became heightened. I was too embarrassed to say why I didn't want to open the book so I tried to leave the classroom but the door was locked. This was usual that the classrooms were locked. The teacher started to make fun of my name. I kept refusing to do my work and he then started to use restraints on me. He grabbed my arms and twisted them. He was still verbally abusing me. He then stabbed me in the leg at my thigh, with a pen or pencil. I left the classroom after that and never wanted to go back. I didn't want to go back to that class with him and also the type of work

we were doing in it. I did smash the classroom window and I also threw eggs and stuff on his car for doing that to me.

49. I had a conversation with the headteacher and I told him what had happened. He replied, 'no he never'. I told him again what happened and tried to show him my leg but he wouldn't look and continued to deny that the teacher had done it. He said something along the lines of 'I don't want to hear this stuff'. I didn't have obvious marks on my leg but I think there was something.
50. For me that behaviour from the head teacher was just another example of how staff protected each other in a closed ranks type of way.
51. I was having an argument with a teacher another time and he told me to go into the gym hall to say it to him. I don't even know what it was or what it was about. I think it was something I had been told to do and I told him no. When we went in he grabbed me and kicked me about a bit. He got me on the floor and held me there and said something along the lines of 'you're never going to achieve anything', it was certainly something nasty and spiteful.
52. There was another time I swiped a pool ball off the pool table. This prison officer who was working in the home that day, grabbed me and said, 'You're going down' and he then flattened me onto the ground . I wasn't expecting it all. I think he did it because he was in a bad mood. That restraint was an adult restraint more like they would do in the jail, not a child's one.
53. The same guy also sent me on an errand up to Kilmarnock jail one day to pick something up or drop something off. It was for a Dave Marsh. He took me, I pressed the buzzer and asked for the parcel. The guy said 'don't use that word in here' I didn't get it at the time but I get it now, the word parcel being drugs. I don't know if it was some sort of joke between the two of them.

54. Each of these incidents, except the last two are different people doing them. I don't want to name those responsible. The incidents themselves weren't surprising to me as it was common.
55. Another thing the staff would do would be to single kids out and get other kids to bully them too. Turn kids against others. They also did it with the member of staff [REDACTED], the staff turned some of the kids against him.
56. There was other stuff going on in the unit with money. There were clothing grants for about eight people in the unit that they couldn't find the cash. The grant money was supposed to go in the safe. When grant money went missing, the staff knew they could claim it back and get replacement money. I think staff stole it. I don't know who was at it but it would two or three people on a shift and it could be anyone of them.
57. In the night shift most of the time the staff would sleep. I'm not sure they were supposed to or not. One of the staff members would also bring in his X box and play it.
58. I do want to say however there were people who were really decent and did their jobs in St Johns. Ones that never took part in corruption, bullying or physical abuse but also never did anything about it either. I think they didn't try to stop it because they would have been fearful of any sort of reprisals. I also would say there were staff who started off as nice and decent. A bit like in prison, because they are decent people. Cons push them and push them and the staff then sort of push back and before you know it there's a bitter divide between the two. That's what it was like in the unit. I think people change to fit the circumstances. These decent people need to work there and speak to the others.
59. St Johns just seemed to be really bad. I don't know if it was the management or what.

#### **Reporting of abuse whilst at St Johns**

60. Even if I wanted to tell anyone what was going on in the unit, there wasn't anyone I could tell. I suspect if I had, there wouldn't have been a physical response from staff. I imagine they would turn other residents against me. I saw that happen there. Staff manipulating boys and turning them against others including me.
61. It was also a feeling I had about hypocrisy. I lived a life where no one told on anyone and if you did you were a grass. That's probably another reason for me not saying anything to anyone. I think it would be cheeky for me to tell on others. Had I not gone down a road of homes I still think the hypocrisy idea would still be there. If I wasn't committing crime though it would be different. It all stems from committing crime and not telling on each other.
62. There is a part of me that wants to say the names of people who assaulted me but I say to myself St Johns is shut down now and they will all be working across different places. They will go into these different places, those places will not be run badly so they will fall into line. I hope that's what's happened.
63. I have since told my dad about what went on in St Johns, but that's only been fairly recently. He told me he didn't know. He told me I should have told him at the time as he may have been able to do something about it then.

### **Leaving St Johns**

64. I left St Johns for the last time around early 2009, that was my second stint there. I went from there to St Phillips for three months and then appeared for sentence. I got a custodial sentence of fourteen months for crimes of violence and got sent to Greenock Prison. I was sixteen years old.
65. From sixteen to twenty one I spent the full time in jail except for forty days. I was out for three times. A stretch of two weeks, one of two days and then one of twenty four days.

## **Greenock Prison, Greenock**

66. I wasn't in Greenock long, when you're that age you're just a lodger, you're just waiting on a bus to take you to Polmont.
67. A few days in at Greenock jail and I was intrigued, I had never been to jail before. I would say it was inevitable in terms of the life I had lived up to that point that that's where I was going. A lot of my pals had ended up in jail too. I didn't like it at first. It took me right out of my normal routine. It was definitely different.
68. It made me angry and I was a bit bitter about being sent to jail as I was already in secure at St Phillips before the jail. They held me in jail when I was already sixteen on a panel order. I was trying to argue that they couldn't hold me any longer as I was sixteen. They told me I was still under social work care. They wanted to treat me like a child in the children's system but I went to court and they gave me a sentence. I didn't understand why I was suddenly being treated like an adult.
69. About two days in I ended up in a fight with three boys. One of them thought I had been staring at him. I have this habit where I sometimes stare at things and I didn't mean to be staring at him. He asked me what I was staring at and I ended up fighting on the landing with three boys. Staff came in and said I'd snapped, they took me down to an observation cell where they left me for a bit. They then came in as a group, at least four of them. They started saying stuff like I wasn't in a secure unit now. I'm not very good with facial expressions and I kind of smiled when the member of staff said that. I got slapped across the face by one of the staff members. I was then restrained by them. I wasn't injured from that. I remember my wrists were sore for about a week after it.
70. After you got restrained you would see a nurse after it so anytime they inflict pain on you they know how to do it without injuring.
71. After the fight I was taken to the segregation unit for three days. I was searched and put in a cell. The cell was absolutely disgusting it was covered in puddles and the

walls were wet with condensation. It had sweetie papers and rubbish all over it. They threw my bedding at me and it landed on the floor.

72. They also strip you when you are restrained. The first time that happened I found it quite degrading. I was only a young boy and I didn't expect that kind of behaviour. The first time it happened was after the fight. I was stripped and one of the staff told me that if I moved a muscle and he would stand on my balls. When you're lying stripped on the floor that's not very nice.
73. Another thing they did during restraint was they put their knuckles in your ribs while your arms were behind your back. It was all psychological abuse. When the staff are altogether and say you're being restrained it seemed to stir them all on. I've been restrained loads of time in homes but in jail, in Greenock, it was definitely different. I hated the restraints it was the loss of control. It was the things they said though. Really nasty things, things to get at you.
74. To me, the staff at Greenock were over the top. Like their reaction to the fight incident. They saw me as the new young offender and thought I was trouble.
75. I have since heard that the segregation cell I was in that time has been closed down as it was not fit for purpose.
76. While I was in segregation at Greenock I got transferred to Polmont YOI. This was three days into a fourteen month sentence.

### **Polmont Young Offenders Institution, Brightons Polmont**

77. There is nothing that I wish to tell the Inquiry about what went on in Polmont. It was mostly psychological there.

### **Life after Polmont**

78. After Polmont I went for a short time to Saughton and then on to Addiewell prison. I was eighteen by then. When I arrived at Addiewell I was strip searched and one of the staff put my boxer shorts in the toilet and soaked them. Although I tried not to, I still let it get to my head. I do think it's their protocol and part of their search, to strip you, but it's the humiliation.
79. I then went to Low Moss and then got out of there in [REDACTED] 2019 but I was only out for three months. Prior to getting out they were making plans for me coming out of jail without consulting me. My feeling is that they didn't really take into account that I had been diagnosed with ADHD and ASD. For instance, the plan was to have two SACRO workers living with me when I got out for twenty four hours. They explained to me that it would be reduced to two staff for twelve hours but I told them I couldn't live like that. Being with two people I didn't know, twelve hours a day was worse than being in jail and so I told them I wanted to go back to jail. They then did reduce it to seven hours for about two months. I did end up going back to offending.
80. Whilst I was out that time I got myself a painting trial. When I told my social worker about it she was of the opinion that I should be getting employment skills instead. She basically said I wasn't allowed to and so I couldn't start it.
81. I am now in Low Moss and when I came in here I wrote about St Johns and they said it would go in my dossier. I've never seen it and I don't know what they did with the information. I knew I wasn't getting parole but I wanted the parole board to know everything so that my sentence could be managed properly and I would get the support through it. I am due to start training soon so I hope someone has seen what I wrote.

### **Reporting abuse**

82. I have spoken to one person in the system about what went on when I was in care. It was a psychologist I spoke to. She more or less just listened. I felt comfortable speaking to her unlike when I spoke to social workers. I always had the feeling they thought what I had to say was irrelevant. Or that they didn't believe me, I'm not sure



what was going through their heads. I certainly got the feeling they didn't want to hear.

### **Impact**

83. I don't see that my time in St Johns has any effect on me. It's more a bitterness I have towards the system. I made the mistakes I made during my life but social work let me down and never really did a good job.
84. Nor do I think I can blame St Johns or the staff for where I ended up as it was what was doing and where I was going that landed me up in there in the first place. If I hadn't been in that system and things had been different I think I would have had better chances.
85. I never really did any school after P7. I couldn't tell you one thing that I learned. There were different subjects taught in St Johns like roofing, art, bricklaying and horticulture. There were also a couple of decent teachers but most of them just weren't right for there. It definitely affected my education.
86. Me being in care has meant there isn't any relationship with my siblings. I do have a relationship with my dad and I'm quite close to him. After we fell out I think he accepted who I was and realised it was all out of his hands. He then stopped telling me what to do and started to ask me to do things. It was getting told what to do that made me go down the other path. My siblings occasionally visit me in the jail. My sister is really busy. My dad visits a lot though.
87. I drunk alcohol a lot. I also used to take ecstasy and other drugs. These things though I already took before I went into the homes. I stopped taking ecstasy when I was fifteen. I took drugs because of boredom. When I was in the homes I could still buy drugs. I'd get out of the home, walk up the road to buy it and return. St Johns was nearest to two of the worst schemes in Glasgow. The staff knew, they would sometimes give me a search and would say 'do it on the next shift'. There was one time I was using a bucket which is a bottle within a bottle that you can use for

smoking cannabis. I was in my room and a member of staff came in. He was saying 'stop fuckin about on my shift, wait till I'm away'. I definitely know some of the staff were taking drugs, mostly weed.

88. I do think about my time at St Johns at times, not flashbacks as such. I do feel angry and wonder what those staff are doing now and wonder if they are still doing the things that they did then. It became normal what happened to me and I think I was going where I was going anyway but that kind of behaviour could affect others in a different way.
89. It probably has affected me in some ways that I don't realise or have noticed. I do have a rebellious personality and that started when my dad grounded me but I'm not sure if I can say my time in care has made me even more rebellious, I don't know.
90. I got diagnosed with ADHD at twenty one, I do wonder why it took so long. I am on medication for that and the medication chills me out.

### **Records**

91. I signed up with education here in the jail and they got me to sign some forms. It was them that managed to get a certificate which showed what qualifications I had.
92. I tried to get subject access request through my social worker but I never heard anything and I don't think she would have done it anyway.
93. My dad might have panel reports but I'm not sure.

### **Lessons to be learned**

94. St Johns as a place was a failure for me. Having that many people in a home together was not a good thing. There was no structure for people learning things. There were only a few select things taught. Most people in homes have problems with attention and don't want to go to school or do projects that get offered in the

school at the home. There should be some effort made to send them out of the home to learn more about a subject that interests that child. Or something that child chooses themselves. If someone tries to teach me something I'm not interested in it goes in one ear and out of the other.

95. The other thing as well is that when you're all put together in classes, you all know each other and in my opinion it doesn't work. Each person is an influence on another. It is limited what they can do I know that.
96. I think people who find themselves needing to go into care and haven't been in trouble before they should go into foster system rather than into an environment where they are introduced into violence. There were people, who because they were stuck for beds or spaces were flung into St Johns. There were kids in St Johns simply because they never had anyone else to look after them. Not because they had committed crime. Instead of making their lives better it makes it ten times worse.
97. In my opinion homes need to have cameras. You can't have cameras in people's rooms but there should be a system where when the door to their room is opened it triggers camera in the corridor. I think that would prevent staff from being able to do things to kids.
98. In residential schools there are too many staff in there to influence others. I noticed in my time that the smaller the homes are the straighter it seemed. They were a lot less corrupt.
99. There's no point in changing the vetting process because I know when someone goes for an interview they probably seem really decent but it's not until they are in a place that they can change.
100. What I did notice in St Johns was that there is a certain way that staff were supposed to restrain children which is different from adults. What I think happened was that staff from prisons, who deal with adults and adult restraints, would go to children's home for overtime or for jobs and they would use the restraints they know on the

children. I'm not sure they are the most appropriate people to be working in children's homes and I hope that still doesn't go on.

**Hopes for the Inquiry**

101. I want things to be better for people coming through. I don't want them to be getting assaulted by staff. That's the main thing and it's not a lot to ask.

102. 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... 08.02.23 .....