

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GGQ

Support person present: No

1. My name is GGQ. My date of birth is 1993. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mum and dad are and . I was born in Bellshill and lived with my mum in Muirhouse in Glasgow. I have two brothers and one sister. I am the oldest. is five years younger than me. was seven years younger than me but he passed away last year.
3. When I was one year old I fell down the stairs and broke my leg. I was initially sent home from the hospital saying there was nothing the matter with me. Sometimes I wonder if this was early trauma that I experienced and affected me. My mum has always said that I have always been violent and was assaulting my peers so it is possible this had something to do with it.
4. The first time I was told I met my father was when I was three years old. Apparently I was in a pub with him and I threw a pint of beer at someone. He skelped me for doing it and my mum went off her head at him for hitting me because he had no right to do it. After that first time my father was in and out of my life which probably made things worse for me.

5. I went to Muirhouse primary school which I hated and felt like an outsider. I was ashamed and embarrassed because I was the only person in the class who had a single parent who didn't work because she was bringing up three children on her own. When anything was said to me about it my reaction was always to lash out with violence. One time my teacher asked me how I would feel if she lined up everyone I had assaulted and let them assault me. I had no fear at that time and I would have loved that. I was an angry boy full of aggression.

6. I went to school every day when I was supposed to but they started cutting my day to half days. They did this because I was disruptive in the classroom. I ended up sitting in the head teacher's office for five or six hours. I was sent from there in Primary 4 to [REDACTED] which is in [REDACTED], Coatbridge and travelled every day in a taxi as a day pupil. All the staff there were full of love and kindness and were genuine caring people. Some boys would hit their heads off their desks and the staff would sit with them for hours to safeguard them and look after them until it had passed. There were only six boys in each class.

7. My mother suffered from stress and had OCD. She blamed herself that she couldn't provide for her children and give them a good family life. She beat herself up that she didn't have a tight family unit. She never got any help or support and basically brought us up on her own. The only help she got was from her church and they sometimes took me to watch American football, or to the cinema because my mum couldn't afford it. I always felt ashamed at that.

8. The first social worker I am aware of was Clare O'Hara who was great. She was caring and used to take me out for something to eat. She reported back to my mum that I was bright and could hold a conversation but also be aware of everything that was going on around me. I think that was because I was hyper-vigilant. I think I was like this because I saw things that a boy of my age should never have seen in the area where I was brought up. When I was five or six I saw a boy getting out a lift with his face slashed. Another time I saw a guy lying in a pool of blood with gashes all over his head.

9. I started going to children's panels around the age of eleven. I was getting bullied in the scheme where I lived and I didn't have a father. I was hanging around with the drug dealers in the scheme and I looked up to them. I thought that was what I wanted to do so that I could be famous. I had nothing and they had everything. I thought if I could be like them I would be classed as successful in life. Drugs and crime were rife in our scheme. My brother smoked cannabis from the age of four and I partly blame myself for that.
10. I first went to see a child psychologist or psychiatrist when I was about twelve when I was going to [REDACTED] in Uddingston. I was there as a day pupil. She came from outside the school. I saw her a few times over the years and she helped me a lot.
11. At some point it was decided that my mum needed a break from me as it was hard for her to cope with me. I was sent every two weeks to stay overnight for one night with a woman in Harthill. I didn't go with any of my siblings.

Respite care with [REDACTED]

12. [REDACTED] lived at [REDACTED], Harthill. She had a son of her own who was in his twenties. She was a lovely woman and I had a lot of time for her. She even bought me a Christmas present. It wasn't anything big but it showed she cared. There was nothing that happened with her that I want to tell the Inquiry.
13. In my scheme I was breaking into cars to fund my cannabis habit and one time I broke into a shop owners car and stole an iPod. I sold it to pay a debt. The police later came to the house and took me to a police station and put me in a cell. Some time later one of the policemen drove me from there to what I now know to be St John's approved school in Springboig, Glasgow. I didn't go to a children's hearing. I was later told I was there on a twenty-one day place of safety order. I was thirteen when I was sent to St John's.

St John's approved school, Springboig

14. St John's was a big intimidating sandstone building. There were about 100 boys there and over 120 staff. Social workers worked in the unit and other teachers came in and supposedly taught in the school. There was a unit for boys over 16 who were ready to move on to independent living. There were 4 other units for boys aged 13 to 15 with 8 boys in each unit. I was in Kelvin unit.
15. The boys I got to know were all put there for various reasons. Some were there because of neglect or because parents couldn't cope with them. Some of their parents were junkies.
16. When I arrived a man I knew as 'Fitzy' was in charge but he left and John McFadden took over from him. Her Majesty's Inspector told Fitzy to resign because of the way he was running St John's. Under them were senior managers and deputy managers in each unit. Everyone had a key worker and mine was GGL

Routine at St John's

First day

17. Nothing at all was explained to me by the police. I was just taken there and left. When I was going up the driveway boys were coming out of one of the units. One of them was [REDACTED] who was autistic.

Mornings and bedtime/ Washing/bathing

18. I had a room to myself with an en-suite bathroom. There was a shower so we were left to shower as and when I wanted.

Mealtimes/Food/Clothing/uniform

19. The food was alright. I am not aware of any issues and never went hungry. There was always plenty food. We got a three monthly clothing grant which the key workers always made sure that we got.

Leisure time

20. Tuesdays and Thursdays were pocket money nights. They took £2 from us every week to cover any damages. If you caused any damage you lost your money. Every other night there were activities. Quite often we would miss our dinner and go driving about Glasgow and went to the chip shop. I think the minibus did about 140,000 miles every year.
21. There was a gymnasium there and there were loads of bicycles but they were never used. None of the staff were interested in taking us out on the bikes.

Pupil Council

22. [REDACTED] pupil council in the school with the help from the charity 'Who Cares? Scotland'. I believe their role is to give children in care a voice. I sat at a big conference table along with senior management, social workers, representatives of 'Who cares? Scotland' and some others. I spoke on behalf of all the boys. Before the meetings I gave out forms to all the boys and asked for suggestions which I took back to these meetings. This was positive for me because I managed to make quite a few changes for the better.
23. One of the things I managed to get changed was the clothing grant. It used to be £90 every three months but I got it increased to £120. I got the bed times changed to later. I also managed to get Friday as a cooking activity night. The staff always wanted an Indian on a Friday but I wanted to cook for all the boys because I enjoyed it. This was allowed to happen. The main kitchen was very old and tired so through the pupil council I got a new £80,000 kitchen installed.

Trips and holidays

24. We were taken to Alton Towers for the day. Around six boys were taken. We left about 5:30 in the morning and got back late at night. There were never any overnight trips or any other holiday's.

Schooling

25. Before I started at school I did an assessment in each class. This was a very basic test suited for someone with an incredibly low IQ or with only a primary school education. The only way you could get an education at school, if you were motivated, was to track your teachers down and make them teach you. When they gave me any work to do it was far too easy. That wasn't what teaching should have been. It wasn't aimed at an individual's ability. I had so much potential but I was never encouraged or allowed to use it. Mr Edgar was the science teacher but there was no facilities or equipment to teach it.
26. Some teachers never tried to teach at all and never had any material to give you. They would just sit you down in front of a computer and you listened to music. The teacher who was supposed to be teaching us building bought a whole lot of building materials but bought it solely so they could teach themselves how to do things like mono-blocking and use the materials at their own houses.
27. There were practical teaching classes for mono-blocking driveways, painting and decorating, bricklaying and joinery.
28. There were classroom support staff who tried to get all the boys into the classrooms but they were here, there and everywhere and even up on the roof or sitting about smoking bongs. The boys were feral.
29. I ended up with quite a few qualifications from St John's but they were all fraudulent. The teachers just said that we had done the work so it justified what they were doing and made it look like they were teaching us.

Drugs education

30. There were drugs counsellors who came in but they just told us what harm the drugs can cause. As a drug user you don't really care about that. They explained what the drugs were doing to us but nobody listened.

Healthcare

31. If you needed anything medical the staff would take you to Easterhouse health centre. I went a few times because I was prone to bad chest infections. The key worker would arrange dental appointments for us. I had injuries from some of the physical abuse I suffered but I just hid it. Some of the staff might have noticed my injuries but they just ignored it. My head was burst open during one incident but I never got any medical treatment.

Birthdays and Christmas

32. I don't remember birthdays being celebrated or acknowledged in any way. I went home for Christmas as most of the boys did so we didn't celebrate Christmas there. There was only one boy who didn't go home and it was a real shame because he was left in there on his own.

Personal possessions/work

33. I had a safe in my room which my mum had given me. I kept money and any other valuables in there. There were domestic staff so we didn't have any chores or cleaning to do.

Bed Wetting

34. I never wet the bed but I know some boys did. When they had wet the bed the staff used to ridicule them. They never showed them any compassion or understanding.

Visitors

35. My mum didn't visit me very often because I was getting home regularly. She came a few times and took me to the shops and bought me a tracksuit and things like that.
36. Georgio O'Bleaze who worked for Community Alternatives visited me. He came every couple of weeks. Community Alternatives was something to do with the local authority. He was Greek and was a really good guy. He often took me out for the day and sometimes got me lunch. He helped me get a passport, made sure I got my clothing grant and loads of other things. When I got out he helped me get my flat set up and got me my grant to get all the white goods I needed.

Review of care / detention

37. I regularly went to children's panels and they must have decided at these that I should stay there longer. My key worker was GGL [REDACTED]. At one panel GGL [REDACTED] tried to expose issues at St John's. He told them that boys weren't able to get an education. The panel turned against him and he nearly got the sack because he spoke up.
38. When I was fourteen or fifteen they wanted to send me to a secure unit for not attending school. I did try to learn when I was there but when I did go to school I just got a hard time from the staff.

External Inspections

39. On one of the visits from Her Majesty's Inspectors between 2007 and 2009 I told them what was going on at St John's. I told them it was like a circus. The next time Her Majesty's Inspectors came I was there I was kept out their way and I know the very senior management paid a boy to tell them how good it was and to give a good review. The inspections were supposed to be a surprise but the staff always knew that they were coming. They told us that there was going to be an inspection well in

advance and that we were to behave ourselves. Before they came the staff would go out and buy new furniture and ornaments and do the place up so that it looked good.

40. Her Majesty's inspectors knew what was going on at St John's and didn't do anything about it. Leading up to it closing they blocked new boys from coming in but left us in there at the hands of the staff. People from 'Who Cares? Scotland' came in to have a look around at some point.

Home leave

41. I could probably have gone home nearly every day if I had wanted to. A lot depended on the social worker I had outside St John's. Most of my pals from home were older and were in the jail. There was little for me to go home for. The only reason I really went home was to get some hash and I went straight back. I was given £10.50 to travel whenever I wanted. I usually managed to get home for 55p so I pocketed the rest.

Discipline

42. There was no discipline at St John's. The only way they knew to deal with anything was violence. There wasn't any other way of being punished like a child in normal circumstances would.

Abuse at St John's

HRL

43. One time I approached HRL a social worker and told him that I wanted to stop smoking. He said he would get money from the bursar to buy nicotine patches for me. When he got the money, and it was £37, he pocketed half the money and gave me the other half. He then took me to the chemist and sent me in to steal them. He was one of the staff that used to take us out shoplifting then buy the

stuff from us. With the money he gave us he would then take us in to the east end of Glasgow where we bought the hash. It was a dealer he knew and he would go in and come back with the hash which he gave us. He regularly did this. He had throat cancer so he didn't smoke it himself.

GGK

44. There was a teacher called G GK . He was American, massive, very muscular and was a really fast runner. He was a serial abuser of boys and was very violent. One day five or six boys went in to his classroom to attack him because of the abuse. He threw one of the boys, ██████████, who probably only weighed about six stone, up into the air and his head went through the wall. I never saw him doing it but I heard about it. I can't remember the other boys names who were there. G GK never did anything to me and I never saw him doing anything to any of the other boys. Apparently his visa to live in the UK was revoked because of him battering boys.

GGP

45. The painting and decorating teacher was G GP . He was about forty. He was as strong as an ox and the other teachers called him G GP . He had a plastic cannabis plant in his room. The classroom was spilt into three sections. In one section he would have rolls on sausage, cans of juice, chocolate, crisps and cigarettes. He sold us them.
46. We had to keep kicking his classroom door to get in. He would come and answer it holding a clipboard. He would then look at the clipboard which was a tick list for money that he was owed for things he had previously supplied you with. He then grabbed you firmly by the arm and drag you into his class. He then shouted really loudly in your ear that you owed him money. He would then go back to the next boy waiting to enter the classroom and do the same with him.
47. On one of his walls he had photographs of former pupils. He often went along the wall saying which ones were now dead, which ones were junkies and those who

were in prison and why. He had a big bunch of keys and sometimes he would launch them at you. He threw them at me once and I think they hit me on the shoulder. We ended up rolling about on the ground but weren't really fighting, just wrestling each other. After that whenever he opened the classroom door to me he swore at me and called me a "Cunt".

48. GGP [REDACTED] took us into the back of his class and locked us in so we could smoke our bongs and not get caught. In this room there was a dado rail along the wall. He gave us pens and we could write things above the rail but if you wrote anything below it he went ballistic. He would shout at us to find out who did it then he would launch his keys at whoever it was.

49. There was a young boy called [REDACTED] who used to go up most evenings to GGP [REDACTED]'s classroom and he was there for hours. There was no need for him to go up there and they would have been alone. We all believed there was something going on between them.

50. GGP [REDACTED] used to take boys on hillwalking trips but he never took me with him. I am sure things happened on these trips. I never heard any stories but I think he liked seeing the boys wearing shorts. I don't think he asked me because he knew I was on to him and I was too outspoken. There were other members of staff on these trips but I don't know who they were.

GGO [REDACTED]

51. GGO [REDACTED] was an animal. He was a nightshift worker. If ever you came out of your room through the night you got battered. I was very small as a child. One time he was searching me in front of the other nightshift workers. I can't remember why but he was searching me. He was rubbing me up and down outside my clothes then when he got to my feet he grabbed my ankles and pulled them towards him violently. He took my feet away and I flipped backwards and my back hit the ground. Everyone was laughing at me. I was winded and petrified. I was only thirteen and they all thought it was hilarious. He only did that to me once.

IJV

52. IJV was nightshift in the Kelvin unit. He often put you into wrestling holds. One time he grabbed me round the neck and carried me upstairs. He stood in front of me and put one forearm under my chin then pulled my head forward. I was on my tiptoes and couldn't breathe. It felt like he was going to snap my neck. I hadn't done anything for him to do this to me.

GGN

53. GGN was a great big guy and probably weighed about 25 stone. He was known as GGN and was nightshift. One time he knocked my friend out cold. I didn't see it happen but told me about it.

GGL

54. GGL was a social worker and stuck up for me at some of my children's panel. One time I went into the staff office and I thought I saw a bag with Tom Toms in it that the nightshift staff had taken from me when I had been out breaking into cars. I grabbed the bag and tried to pass it out of the window. GGL came running over and punched me on the side of the head and my head hit the window. It turns out I was mistaken and all that was in the bag were flowers. My head burst open and he jumped on top me screaming in my face. He was a big bodybuilder and he could have killed me. I think he is still working in or

GGJ

55. The social worker called GGJ, who we called GGJ, regularly took us out shoplifting. He often took us out in the minibus and he drove it recklessly. He put all our lives in danger. On some of the back roads the minibus was nearly on two wheels and close to tipping over. The seatbelts never worked so we could have been

killed if we had crashed. One time he drove under a bridge and took the roof off a van. I wasn't in it when this happened.

GGH

56. I used to keep my stash of cannabis in my boxer shorts. One time I had a quarter of hash and a gram of cannabis resin in there. GGH knew that I kept hash down there and he searched me. In front of lots of other staff he searched me and he put his hands down my boxer shorts. He took out the gram of resin and was winking at me as if to say he was doing me a favour leaving me with my hash. I didn't think anything about it at the time but looking back I consider this to be a sexual assault. He should never have put his hands down a child's trousers. There was an English teacher there and would have seen this happening. His name was David D'Arcy. There were other members of staff there too.

John Sharples

57. There was a guy came in to work who was a foster carer. He was a lovely caring guy. He made the rest of the staff look really bad. The staff bullied him so much that he left. It was a real shame. He always had the boys best interests at heart.

Abuse in General

58. The routine for my day was best described as waking up in the morning, smoking three bongos of hash, breakfast, sat about at school, back at half past ten at break time, had three more bongos, back to school, three more bongos after school, then sleep or go out on home leave and get more hash. There was no education and no structure to keep us entertained. The staff knew what was going on but no one did anything to try and stop it, in fact they all encouraged it.
59. There were all sorts of levels of corruption at St John's. It went from the senior management all the way down. There are some members of staff that I am not going to name, for personal reasons. Some teachers would take you out shoplifting and

buy you cigarettes. Other members of staff would take you out to shopping centres and give you a list of things that they wanted. We used to travel the length and breadth of the country stopping at every service station on the way filling our rucksacks full of stolen sweets. When we got back they would buy the stuff from us then phone their hash dealer and go and buy cannabis for us. There was no pressure put on us to do it because as children we thought it was great. We never really got into any trouble for doing it because we never got caught.

60. Some would take us to a store in Shettleston every night and bought a bottle of wine for £4.50. Every night the social workers would be driving about and the boys were in the back of the minibus drinking wine. I never drank alcohol so it didn't affect me. I stole a box set of Soprano DVD's for one teacher and he gave me two skunk plants because I gave him 3 grams of cocaine on a Monday morning when he was feeling rough.
61. During the night there was one nightshift member of staff for every eight boys. They were supposed to be up all night but they would come in do the first night check make sure we had fallen asleep then they would go downstairs and sleep the rest of the night.
62. Another member of staff, a social worker, whose name I can't remember, nearly killed a boy. The member of staff, who was about forty and worked in the Mitchell unit, had a really thick muscly neck and did a martial art [REDACTED]. He ran at the boy with his head down and hit him in the chest with his head then flipped him up in the air and they both landed on the ground.
63. There was one member of staff who I don't want to name as he was related to one of the biggest gangsters in Glasgow. He would order all sorts of building materials for his class. He then came in at the weekend and when we saw him we were delighted because he gave us good quality cannabis. I know that he would 'trip' the security camera so it took a still picture and it would be like that for three minutes. He would then rush round and get us to help him load the stuff into the van and take it down to

his house because he was building a garage. Sometimes he took us to his house where we sat drinking beer.

64. Another time he ordered twenty grow lights for the horticulture teacher. He then got us to steal them and stash them further away in an industrial estate. He picked them up later and took them to wherever he was growing his cannabis.
65. The horticulture teacher used his class as a smother to provide us with cannabis. The senior management knew it was going on. I know that because of the way that the teachers spoke about things.
66. I used to hear about some of the sexual abuse that was going on in St John's and I was ready for it if any member of staff tried it on with me. I had a knife down my boxers ready to use if they did.
67. One member of staff, whose name I can't remember punched me one time and my head hit off the wall in my bedroom. The walls were made of brick with plaster on them and were solid so boys couldn't damage them. I had been cheeky to him. Another member of staff Cath was standing at my door and she saw it and she was shocked because she mustn't have seen this before or knew it went on. She was new to St John's and she was a lovely woman.
68. Once it was announced that there would be no new admissions and St John's was going to close, the staff reacted badly and everything got ten times worse. The staff were taking us out to steal almost every night.
69. The staff had no consideration for the children. All they cared about was themselves. They stole what they could out the safe and took advantage in every other way to get what they could for nothing. There was never any care or compassion shown. Nobody ever sat down and gave me a hug. I don't think they were allowed to display anything like this.

Abuse by police

70. From the age of twelve, when I was caught by the police when I was missing, they took me to a police station where I got strip searched. It happened to me at Baird Street police station and Motherwell police station umpteen times. They made me bend over naked and part my bum cheeks. They made me pull back my foreskin. I was terrified and it was embarrassing because I was just a young boy. It happened before I went to St John's and it continued when I was there. I presume it was because I had previously been caught with a bit cannabis that the desk sergeant would tell the officers to search me every time.

Reporting of abuse at St John's

71. On the occasion that the member of nightshift staff, whose name I can't remember, punched me and my head hit the wall this was reported to the management. Cath, the new member of staff who was there when it happened must have told somebody. I was interviewed about it by the senior management who told me that I was in danger and I needed to be honest with them. Georgio O'Bleaze who worked for Community Alternatives knew about it all and he asked me too. They wanted me to tell them what happened and at least corroborate what Cath must have told them. I wouldn't tell them at the time because I saw this as 'grassing'. I denied that he had touched me. I was fourteen or fifteen when this happened. The member of staff that hit me was suspended because of this incident.
72. GGL [REDACTED], my key worker wasn't interested in how I was getting on. I didn't have a good enough relationship with him or trust him enough that I would tell him if I had any issues, which I obviously did have.
73. I never told my mum what was going on because I didn't want to worry her. When I did eventually tell her after I had left care she said she regretted that I had never told her. I told her that I didn't want to worry her but I also felt that I didn't need to. A lot of

the things we did there at the time I thought was brilliant and it is only looking back now that I realise how wrong it all was.

Leaving St John's

74. They spent £400,000 on St John's just before it shut down. This was just a big show for Her Majesty's inspectors. When I was there Her Majesty's Inspectors stopped all new admissions to St John's and the number of boys dwindled so Kelvin unit was shut down and I was moved to the Buchanan unit.
75. Towards the end of my time at St John's I was getting bullied by another boy and he kept stealing things out of my room. I got fed up with him and I stabbed him. The police were involved and I was arrested. I had just turned sixteen and was given police bail from the police station that I wasn't allowed to go back to St John's. I didn't go to court at that time. I went back to stay with my mum. I had been at St John's for around three years and I was over sixteen when I left in 2009.

Life after St John's

76. I stayed with my mum when I left St John's then I got my own flat. I got lots of help and support from North Lanarkshire council. Georgio O'Blease from Community Alternatives, Barnardo's and others were there to help me and through them I got my own flat. Because my head wasn't in the right place at the time I probably didn't utilise all the support that was made available to me.
77. Unfortunately some local heavy drugs guys started using my flat. I asked them to move out but they wouldn't and they didn't even pay me for using my flat. I moved back to my mum's after a while then one day I went back to visit my flat. When I was there the police raided it and they found a kilo of heroin. I got the blame for it because it was my flat. When I appeared in court I told them I was getting paid in drugs but I wasn't. I was too embarrassed to say I was letting them use the flat for

nothing. The court didn't understand that I was just out of care and there was no way I could have afforded sixty thousand pounds worth of drugs. I asked my lawyer if he could recommend that I get psychiatrically assessed but he refused. I only had that flat for four months when I was sentenced and sent to Addiewell Prison. My sentence was for four years for the drugs and six months for the stabbing back at St John's.

HMP Addiewell

78. I was sent first to Addiewell prison for about four weeks. I don't think there was anywhere else I could go at that time. When I was in my cell I was told I was a protection case but then another prisoner told me that if I smashed up my cell I would get out. I know now that he just said that for a laugh and so I would get put in solitary confinement. I smashed up my cell and I was put straight into the digger which was the isolation cell. This was the normal protocol. There was nothing in particular about Addiewell that I want to tell the Inquiry. It was prison. I was subsequently transferred to Polmont.

Polmont YOI

79. I was seventeen when I was moved to Polmont young offenders institution. I was released from there in 2013. One thing that I want to say about Polmont is that prisoners were kept in their cells far too long. I only ever got out my cell for recreation once every two days for an hour and a half. The rest of the time I was locked up in my cell apart from getting out to get showered or for meals. It was brutal. There was a television in the cell but it was on a loop so it was the same programmes repeated over and over. Food was disgusting too.
80. The prison officers were okay with me apart from when I kicked off which was usually at meal times. When I did they were brutal in the way that they restrained me in wrist locks. They would bend my fingers and thumb over into what was called a

'turkey'. It felt like they snapped my wrists. My tendons were and still are overstretched. I heard that some boys did have their wrists and arms broken and they were left lying for days in the 'digger'.

81. I was in solitary confinement for six and a half weeks at one point. There were no curtains in there and it was summer so sleep was impossible because it was so bright in the cell. By law they can't release you from prison from solitary confinement so for my last night they moved me back to the hall just for that one night then the next day I was liberated.
82. Polmont was worse than St John's in a way because at St John's you weren't locked in a cell and there were activities or things you could do. Polmont was definitely a punishment.

Life after being in care

83. After being released from Polmont after my four and a half year sentence of which I served two thirds I was recalled to prison. A woman alleged I assaulted her when she was carrying a child. I deliberately stayed fifteen feet away from her and I never assaulted her. The judge at Hamilton Sheriff court believed me because her child was actually sixteen but I still got recalled to prison for three months.
84. When I was released in 2019 I felt positive about my future. It was the best I had ever felt in my life. I got a job. I had been told from very a young age that no one would ever want to employ me. It was instilled in me that I was a criminal, bad, and no one would want me. I believed it and I became exactly what they said.
85. I had been released about four months when I got a nine year sentence. I could not cope with life outside prison. I tried to hit someone with a meat cleaver and he fell and cut his hand on glass. They said I was trying to kill him but basically I just wanted to be sent back to prison because that was where I felt safe.

Impact

86. I was basically taught at St John's to steal and I became a kleptomaniac. I continued to steal until I was 16. I only stopped after being caught three times in a row. When I was put out of St John's I felt suicidal for a while.
87. When ^{GGL} [REDACTED] punched me and my head hit off the window my head was burst open and I didn't get any medical attention. Ever since then that side of my head has been numb and I can't feel it when I touch my scalp.
88. When I was put out of St John's I wasn't given any preparation for living outside care. I was just discarded. I felt suicidal and attempted to end my life. I have been aggressive and violent most of my life. I put that down to the fact that when I was growing up violence was the answer to everything. I learned at St John's to respond to violence with violence. It is only now that I know the right way is to treat people the same way that they treat you.
89. After I had been at St John's for three years then Polmont for four years I was institutionalised. All this achieved was make me more of a risk to the public. I have never hurt an innocent member of the public. If I hurt someone it was a perpetrator who came on to me and I have defended myself.
90. After I came out at the age of twenty-one having served four and a half years at Polmont I had changed. I used to have a heart and cared about people but after that I didn't care. I had a dream about someone hanging out a window. I tried to throw that person out but they managed to get back in. I had lost all compassion for people. I used to bother about the people I was hurting but by then I didn't care. I was homicidal and wanted to murder someone. If someone told me they were suicidal I would have helped them to do it.
91. If I hadn't been criminalised and taught to commit crime at St John's my life would have been completely different. I have managed to turn my life around now and am still working on it. It had a major effect on me and it has only been since I started

going to church that I have begun to heal. I know that I saw a lot of things that traumatised me before I went into care but St John's only made it worse by what I saw, the way I was treated and how they expected me to behave.

92. I have good relationships with my family but my time in care has affected it. It has only been recently that it has started to heal. I don't have any friends or at least anyone that I could call a friend.
93. Some of the members of my family have been very successful and have good jobs. I knew that was never going to be attainable for me. I was told I was never going to get a job never mind a good job or be successful. I don't trust anyone in authority. I can usually read a person and can tell if someone is a genuine caring person.
94. I have never been a drinker of alcohol but I was introduced to drugs in St John's and they have caused me a lot of issues. St John's not only allowed us to take drugs they facilitated it. It was madness. The drugs counsellors there did nothing to stop it.
95. About four or five years ago I was diagnosed with dissocial personality disorder. I sought this diagnosis myself as I wanted to know why I am the way that I am. I got this diagnosis from a doctor when I was in Glenochil. This can be caused by early childhood adverse trauma. I believe I must have this disorder. It probably started when I was a child before I went into care but then continued into St John's.
96. I have now found the church and I have been transformed through the power of the holy spirit. I have meditated a lot over the wisdom of the bible. I am lucky to be alive right now and I believe I have a guardian angel looking out for me.

Treatment/support

97. I have tried to get medication whilst I have been in prison to help me sleep. The doctors are very limited as to what they can give you. They want to give me anti-psychotic drugs but I am not psychotic. They refuse to give me other medication to

help me come off my drugs. By the end when you are released into society you are worse than when you went in.

98. I am currently doing a course within prison called the violence offending programme. I already had all the wisdom before it started but it is a box ticking exercise for me. I can't move on to Castle Huntly open prison or get parole until I have successfully completed this course.
99. I have undergone other psychiatric reports when in prison but they use what they say against you because they report back to the governor. They also make things up and put things in these reports that you didn't actually say.

Reporting of Abuse

100. I have never reported any of the abuse I suffered to the police. The only person I have told was recently to the chaplain in the prison and one of the prison officers. The chaplain put me in touch with the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry.

Records

101. I have never tried to get any of my records and to be honest I am not sure if I am interested. I think it would just open up old wounds.

Lessons to be Learned

102. Respite care with [REDACTED] was good for my mum because it meant she got a break from my behaviour. I suppose it was good for me too because it got me away from the scheme where all the things were that got me into trouble.

103. As far as I can see the local authority were just paying for me to become a thief and a drug dealer. They never tried to educate me or sort out any issues I had or prepare me for life after care. Staff from St John's took me out shoplifting, often with a list of things they wanted, they supplied me and others with drugs.
104. Local authorities, when they are housing boys who have been in care, should be more careful where they put them. If they are placed in schemes which are full of junkies and criminals, the boys are going to turn out just like them. They should be given a chance and housed where there is less crime and more opportunity to do well.

Hopes for the Inquiry

105. If there were going to be surprise inspections they should have been a surprise and not given a couple of weeks warning to get the place looking good. Rather than having supposed surprise inspections at St John's they should have had an undercover HMI officer going in as a trainee social worker and they would see first-hand how the place is being run.
106. Residential homes and secure units should be abolished. Boys are put in there together and they all learn how to commit crime from each other. St John's was like a college where you learned how to commit crime. The next natural step for them leaving was to be sent to Polmont.
107. Young boys shouldn't be given long term prison sentences unless there is no other alternative. A long sentence when you are between sixteen and eighteen seems like a lifetime at that age. You end up surrounded by other criminals and just come out worse. Boys just become institutionalised. Prison doesn't reform people. The only thing that works is genuinely caring people. They want to help people.
108. I believe that prisons shouldn't dwell on things that you have done in the past. Programmes are set up for you to sit in groups and talk about what you had done to

be in prison. How is that a help to anyone? It brings up all your old mental scars and it is really depressing. When you go up for parole they open your dossier. They then start talking about how much a failure you have been all your life and that you are a danger to the public. I found this to be really depressing and makes me angry at myself. It reduces me and takes me back to what I used to be rather than be positive and look forward to what I could be.

109. Instead, more emphasis should be put on training inmates by giving them teaching in practical apprenticeships and given realistic trade skills which will be of use when they are liberated.
110. I hope that children are safeguarded in the future from the type of abuse that I suffered and from these types of people.

Other information

111. I got involved with a charity called Corra and a lot of money they put went into St John's but it was all wasted. Key workers were able to get money from the bursar every single day and no questions would be asked. The staff would steal the money from the safe.
112. There was a teacher at St John's called [REDACTED] and he later became an MP. He saw the abuse and everything that was going on when he was there. Since then he has become an MP and has never tried to expose what was going on at St John's. It just shows there was corruption at the highest level. I never had any issues with him when he was there.
113. There was a boy that got stabbed in the smoking room at the back of [REDACTED] GGP's class. I don't want to name who was involved in that incident but the senior management brushed it all under the carpet. There was bad publicity at the time and they all knew their jobs were at stake and in jeopardy.

114. After I had left St John's I would still have been sixteen when I met GGQ who worked at St John's. It was just outside my flat and he was in the taxi that he drove. I was standing on the wee step at the side door and I was chatting to him. He thought that I had told the senior management about the nightshift member of staff hitting me and that it was my fault he got suspended. He pulled away in the taxi and sped up to about thirty miles an hour. I was still standing on the step, holding on to the frame and was screaming at him to stop. He then did a handbrake turn and I went flying off the side of the taxi. I hurt my elbow and my head.
115. Because of Covid prisoners have been given mobile phones to use. The phones are supposed to be locked so that they can only be used at certain times to certain numbers. It is so easy to tamper with these phones and put different sim cards and by these means are allowing more and more drugs to be brought in to the prison and increased the amount of violence and crime outside.
116. The reason I have come forward is because I care about the children of the future. No child should go through what I did.
117. 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. GGQ

Dated. 17/1/22