

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

IKG

**Support person present : no**

1. My name is IKG My date of birth is 1971. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Background/Qualifications**

2. I left Falkirk High school in 1987 having gained four O'grades. I initially worked in a paint warehouse and then went onto do building trade jobs. I left the building trade in 1999.

### **Recruitment to the Scottish Prison Service**

3. I applied for the prison service when I was seventeen years old but I was told I was too young and told to reapply when I was older. The age limit is now gone and you can join at seventeen.
4. I saw an interview in the paper when I finally did reapply. That, along with the fact in the building trade you don't get paid holidays, a pension and no real job security, I applied again. I had always been interested in the prison service as where I am from there were a few fellas who were in the prison service.
5. The interview for the prison service was a long drawn out process. By the time I did the application there was a gap before I went for a medical in Edinburgh and then another gap before an interview in Glasgow. There was also a psychometric test and that was done at the prison college at Polmont. The final interview was in front of a panel of three governors.

6. I think references were obtained before I was successful but I'm not sure. I also think there were checks done like the PVG of today.

### **Training**

7. I initially did eight weeks residential training at the prison college and then returned to the establishment of Polmont. I did three months at Polmont and then returned to the college for a further two weeks training.
8. The training consisted of control and restraint and prison rules. At that time as well it was very militarised, we did parade every morning where your uniform was inspected. We had to buff our boots. We did have tests as we went through the course and you needed to pass them as you went. It was very intense and there was a lot of emphasis on fitness. I really enjoyed it.
9. The control and restraint training consisted of level 1 and level 3 training. The standard level 1 was for local use at the establishment. Level 3 was national training and you were trained to be able to go into other prisons where control of that prison had been lost. This training was done during the initial eight weeks.
10. You are always taught to try and deal with things at the lowest level. To try and get the willing cooperation of the prisoner. The national stuff is more about putting in teams to regain control of an establishment, like riot training. There is more use of teams of officers in that situation.
11. Over the eight week period there was probably one or two classes per week spent on control and restraint. It was a while ago but that is what I think.
12. To get the cooperation of a prisoner in a situation you would always try to talk the person down first. You gain that experience through seeing how other officer's work. You also see bad practices but that's the same everywhere.
13. I don't recall getting any training to help to be able to identify bullying or coercion it was very much based on instinct and gut feeling.

14. We did receive training on suicide prevention. Back then it was called 'act to care'. It is very similar to what we have now with a different name, 'talk to me'. I found the training useful.
15. The process you follow now is if you suspect someone is suicidal then you case conference them with a mental health nurse and first line manager. A decision is then made as to what level of care the prisoner should get. Back then it was very similar. It is very much drummed into you that if you have any doubts at all about a person with suicidal thoughts then you put them on some kind of 'watch'. It doesn't have to be every fifteen minutes just something you think to keep an eye on them. As a manager I was always of the opinion if you had any doubts at all about a prisoner you put them on some kind of observations. You could always take them off the next day, Its always better to be safe than sorry.
16. If someone has tried to commit suicide, and I did have one many years ago but wasn't successful, a prisoner is put into a safe cell. Within that cell there is a fixed bed on a plinth and they are given special clothing which they cannot rip. Everything is made safe in the cell basically. I guess it can seem like a punishment cell but they are only in there for twenty four hours. Back then the prisoner would be seen by a nurse but nowadays it is much better in that a case conference takes place with professionals and decisions made around support .

### **Career**

17. When I joined I was initially an Operation's officer. There is also another role in the prison as Residential officer. An Operation's officer is supposed to have less contact with the prisoners. You are more likely doing escort duties to family or agent visits, monitoring the visits area, working in the control room and court escorts. At that time the prison service did their own transports to court. You would also do night shifts.
18. Residential officer role is more like living with them. You are getting them up in the morning, getting them fed. Making sure they have everything they need. If they are going to work, getting them up there, getting them back for lunch. Taking them to recreation. It's really about building relationships. Residential officer is a level above operations.

19. I was Operation's Officer for about twelve years then promoted to Residential officer and moved to Low Moss prison for a year and a half. I then returned to Polmont where I was Residential officer there for about eight years. Within that Residential role I did different roles during those eight years.
20. I did Programmes officer. That involves taking the prisoners in small groups to address their offending. It's quite an intense thing as you take them back to the day they committed the crime. Taking them back to what led up to it that day and how they got there. I was trained for that through an internal programme. There were three parts to the course for Programme's officer. Courses on 'youth justice for young people', 'Ultimate self' for females and 'Stop' programme for sex offenders. Some of that training was at the college, Barlinnie or Polmont. It was taught by psychologists and other prison staff. There is no qualification. It was really good training as you get to see some of the traumatic upbringings that prisoners have had and how they have ended up where they are. It helps you to guide them on the right road. Those courses themselves didn't necessarily change anything about the way in which I viewed prisoners. I think coming in from the building trade and having two boys myself it made me really think about the life of a prisoner. I couldn't imagine them being locked up every day with lack of family contact.
21. I do think the 'bullet in the brain' for me was when the governor put out courses for staff to deliver. One of them was trauma and bereavement and I wanted to deliver that. I wasn't chosen. She then asked me if I wanted to do learning difficulties and disabilities. It wasn't something I had previously thought about, but I agreed. It was a professor from Wales who delivered it and I then went on to deliver it to our staff at the college. I really got into it and enjoyed it so much. It then made me understand and see why some prisoners were acting the way they were acting because they maybe had something undiagnosed. That got into my head and gave me a different perspective on my job.
22. I won an award after that training as I made a change to the establishment. It was a small thing. It was based around time keeping and clocks. If you think of the youth of today, they are never off their phones. In the prison a lot of things are done to quite strict timings. Say gym at ten o'clock, lunch at twelve o'clock and if they don't have

their phone they need to rely on a clock. Then, we only had analogue clocks and so they weren't seeing the time in the format they were used to like 12:00, so many of them couldn't tell the time. As a result of my work all of the analogue clocks in the jail were removed and replaced with digital clocks.

23. We also started putting pictures on timetables instead of words. So, if it was gym there would be a picture of dumbbells. This was to make it easier for those who couldn't read.
24. It was through this delivery of training and recognising the needs of the prisoners that I was able to identify a gap. The Professor, when he was doing his teaching, had always said that it can be the small changes that can make a big difference to somebody's life. I got an award for it and I remember going to a conference to give a talk on it. I think it was about ten years ago when this happened.
25. During my role as Programme's officer, we did small groups with whichever programme was relevant to the prisoners and I would write up reports on them for say their parole hearing.
26. I also did inclusion, working with prisoners who were disengaged who maybe wouldn't come out of their cells. I was trying to get them back into a routine in the jail. I did that for a year. I didn't get training for that I used my interpersonal skills to engage with them. I found a lot of the time it's about giving them praise. A lot of these individuals have never had that before. Its about giving them confidence.
27. I then got acted up to first line manager and I did that for four and a half years. This involved being in charge of a group of officers. It meant I wasn't working as closely with prisoners. I was telling officers what to do. I was front of house manager in charge of visits, security, the control room, front desk and family contact. It was a good role, really rewarding.
28. I kept trying to get my first line manager full time as I was only acting up and it took me several attempts. I eventually got it and then I moved onto PLR, Prison Liaison Representative which is a federation representative. This involves a number of different things. I could be supporting an officer going through a grievance, I could be

in management meetings where things such as regime changes are being discussed, safety of staff and establishment. I have been in the role since May 2023.

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

29. Polmont Young Offenders Institution is for people aged from sixteen to twenty five years. We refer to them as prisoners when we are talking amongst staff or by their name if we know it. It's a bit more difficult for me now as I am not around the prisoners myself as much nowadays. Sometimes we refer to them as young people or people in our care. There is various terminology used.
30. Most of the prisoners who come to the establishment have come through the court system. That said there were occasions in the past that we took young people straight from secure establishments like St Marys. That depended if the premises couldn't cope with them and they would be sent to us.
31. Sentences for prisoners at Polmont varies. Some are lifers. If a prisoner is on a life sentence and depending on how they are getting on in Polmont and if say they are on courses. Then we will keep them until they are twenty five years old. If, however they are being unruly then they would go to an adult prison, perhaps a bit before twenty five.
32. Generally, in the past we would have moved them onto an adult prison at twenty one.
33. When I started all of the prisoners were together. I don't think it was until around 2001 where they built a hall for people under eighteen. Blair house was opened around 2003 I think.
34. The female wing was introduced about twelve years ago. Prior to that it was all boys.
35. There are about three hundred and twenty five prisoners in Polmont just now. When I joined there were about seven hundred and eighty. It's a good thing that numbers have dropped. I know it's down to alternatives to custody being implemented. What

that means is we have more serious criminals inside and I see more connections between prisoners nowadays through serious and organised crime through drugs, guns, turf war and gangs. That makes it difficult for us to keep them apart and manage.

36. When they opened up the under eighteens hall it was probably the most violent place. I say that because when they were all mixed together the older ones would maybe take the younger ones under their wing and it wasn't as bad. When all the young ones were together it was as if they had something to prove to each other and hence it was very violent. There was always an alarm going off there. A positive, was the fact that Blair house was the first hall at Polmont that had showers in the rooms therefore it made it one of the cleanest halls. When the young people went to the showers previously they would drop sachets from the showers.
37. As the years go on and as prisoners go through the system they come in unruly and mature as they go through the system.

### **My time at Polmont Young Offenders institution**

*Layout 1999 to approx 2014*

38. When I started we only had north, south, east and west wings. North wing was for a mix of convicted prisoners.
39. South wing was protected prisoners. East wing was long term convicted and then went to younger people, sixteen to eighteen. East was also allocation. It depended on certain things how long a prisoner was in allocation. It would depend on if they were on remand or convicted. It also depended on length of sentence so a prisoner could be there for a year or two. If their sentence was longer they would go to north wing and any sentence over four years they would go up to east wing. It was also known as the 'ally cally'. West wing was protections. Protections are sex offenders or those prisoners who couldn't be kept in mainstream prison for their own protection. Protection prisoners could be self-referred or intelligence led, depending on where in Scotland they were from and what other prisoners were in at the same time.

40. These wings were not fit for purpose then. They had no glass in the windows, there was nothing. It was because the prisoners had smashed them as at that time there was slopping out and the prisoners would just throw the stuff out the window. There was no electricity in the cells. The light switches were outside the cells and controlled by us. There were no televisions in the rooms and I'm sure when I started it was lights out at ten thirty. People were bored and so there were fires and smash ups of cells often.

*Layout present day*

41. At present we have three halls, Munro hall which houses sex offenders and protection prisoners on level 4. Level three is mainstream, level two on one side is admissions and the east side is under eighteens and level one is mainstream.
42. Iona hall has three levels. The top level on the east side houses top end, well behaved prisoners. West side top end, protections. Level two is empty and level one is empty. They are empty as we are waiting on a new population coming in, probably adult males.
43. Blair house holds the females, all adult women over twenty and has three levels. Segregation for adult females is in this building as well.

*Routine 1999 - 2014*

44. The prisoners were checked in the morning at half past six, this was to check they were all well. This was quite daunting as the last thing you wanted to see was someone who may have harmed themselves.
45. I have thankfully never gone into a cell and found someone has taken their life. One of the girls I worked with in the females wing when I got my act up did commit suicide, she was only nineteen years old. It is a fairly high profile case of which the Inquiry is being heard soon. This girl had made a stupid mistake, she wasn't a criminal. It was tragic hearing she had died.



46. You would then go back round with a trolley and give them their breakfast the back of seven. They didn't shower in the morning as prisoner's got their shower after recreation during the day. They would then get themselves ready.
47. There was an ablutions centre in the middle of the hall and the officers would go out with their block containing the numbered razors. The prisoners would wash and shave and empty out their potties.
48. The ones who were working would be sent down to their work parties. The ones left would get the chance of a shower or to get anything else they needed.
49. Work parties would come back about eleven thirtyish and then they would go for their lunch. If they weren't working they would be locked back up in their cell.
50. The work parties then came back after four o'clock and would go for their dinner. At five o'clock they would get locked back up in their cell while staff had their breaks. This lasted an hour and a member of Ops staff would cover on patrol while the staff had a break.
51. At half past six the prisoners would be let out of their cells for recreation for two hours. Back then they would all go out of their cells unless they had committed an act of violence in the hall or to protect them from others. During recreation they could use one of two pool tables, darts or table tennis. There was also one television. There would be eighty prisoners out during recreation and there would be six prison officers to supervise them.
52. After recreation they would get locked back up and that would be it for the night. Staff, before they went off shift, would go back round and check the prisoners and check they were okay and if they needed things like toilet roll.

*Food 1999 - 2014*

53. Then, it was a choice of three things for dinner but everything had chips with it. A lot of the stuff was like mince. It was prisoners who dished it out to other prisoners. The favourites would get a bit more and the weaker ones less. That's changed now with supervisors keeping an eye.

*Food present*

54. In terms of food nowadays, it is a menu system. Monday to Friday for their breakfast they get cereal and milk and bread and jam. Lunch time they will get soup and two options. For instance, pie and beans, a baguette and there will be a vegetarian option. For dinner they will get two options for a main course and a pudding. At the weekend they get a brunch instead of breakfast and lunch. Brunch is generally a Scottish breakfast and they get that both days. They then get dinner at night which has a choice of two again.
55. I do think the food has got better over the years and nutritionally better as there is generally a bit of green. There aren't as many chips nowadays. They also have theme nights it could be a Chinese or Spanish night. Could it be better? Yes I think it could.
56. In terms of religious beliefs this is looked after during religious periods.
57. That was one thing I learnt during my disabilities training was that someone who is possibly autistic would not want people touching their food. That is difficult in a prison to manage. There is a little bit more awareness now so it is a bit better in that respect.

*Dining set up 1999 - 2014*

58. All of the halls had dining rooms attached to them in the past and so you would have sixty or seventy prisoners all eating at once. It was referred to as 'social dining'.
59. The violence was quite bad then. A prisoner might get a kettle on the head or something. It was stopped because of that.

*Dining present*

60. Nowadays, there is no social dining with the young people. There is with the females, they have a choice to eat with the others or take their food back to their room.
61. All of the prisoners have their meals in their cells. The top end prisoners, the well behaved ones, get the choice to sit out and have dinner with each other as they are trusted to an extent.

*Bathing 1999 - 2014*

62. The showers back then were communal. They were like in a gymnasium, with shower heads only and no partition. I think there were about six or eight people showering at once.
63. Showers were supervised but if you were supervising you just kept an eye on the area and used your discretion. They could be violent places too. I remember one slashing happened while I was supervising and I only knew when I saw the blood in the water. The weapon of choice was the blade hidden in the toothbrush. The nurse treated that prisoner with steri strips. The guy responsible was locked up until he could see the governor and it was reported to the police.

*Bathing present*

64. At the moment all of the cells have a toilet and shower which is generally shared with two inmates.

*Education 1999 - 2014*

65. It was Motherwell college who provided the education back in the day and prisoners could sit their O'Grades in the prison.

*Education present*

66. In the new building there is a part dedicated to education.
67. It is Fife College who come in and do the education side and prisoners can gain qualifications such as National fours or fives. There is no compulsion to attend though.

*Work parties 1999 – 2014*

68. Back then we had textiles which was using sewing machines and the prisoners would make prison clothes. We had a 'pool party' which was unskilled labour and the prisoners would paint road signs or break up pallets. There was a joinery party to train them to be joiners but I don't think they got qualifications then.
69. Prisoners were allocated to a work party, they couldn't choose. Protected prisoners generally went to textiles.

*Work parties at present*

70. There are set work parties still. The females have the kitchen, laundry, plumbers and painters. The males have joiners, bricklayers, plumbers and industrial cleaners. There are also 'dogs for progress' for both sexes but they don't go together. There is also youth work and education.

**Recreation time**

*Reading materials 1999 - 2014*

71. The prisoners did have access to reading materials, some halls also had libraries.

*Reading materials present*

72. There is a purpose built library in Polmont now and each section has a day they can go. A librarian goes around the halls with books as well. There are also CD's and DVDs.

*Televisions 1999 – 2014*

73. There was only one television per unit, so one television to one hundred prisoners.

*Televisions at present*

74. Televisions were put into cells around? That took away the boredom due to the times that they were locked up in their cells. It was a distraction. It reduced some of the stuff we had to deal with like smash ups.
75. There are two prisoners to a cell but it doesn't cause too much of an issue.

*Healthcare 1999 - 2014*

76. There was a nurse on the back shift and day shift but not night shift. During the night you would phone '111' or '999' if it was a medical emergency.
77. There were people trained in first aid so we had that as well.

*Healthcare at present*

78. The biggest change for me in the prisons nowadays is the fact we have mental health nurses. In 1999 there was no such thing. We now have seven or eight mental health nurses. They are now realising that the young people have so much more to deal with, things such as trauma.
79. It's a personal officer who would refer a young inmate to a mental health officer. Each prisoner when they come in is allocated to a personal officer. Their job is to make sure they have all of their entitlements in prison, to make sure they have contact with their family and to basically look after their wellbeing. It is the prisoner's point of contact in prison. A lot depends on the relationship with each other as they don't get to choose their personal officer. It's usually daily contact they have. It was the same then as it is now.

*Religion*

80. The prisoners had access to a chaplain for Church of Scotland and for Catholic inmates there used to be a Sunday service as well. It's the same now.

*Pocket Money*

81. Prisoners got a cell wage for being in prison it was not connected to the work parties. In those days they could buy cigarettes and sweets. Nowadays there are no cigarettes but they can buy vapes and can only vape within their cell.

**Visits**

*Social work 1999 - 2014*

82. Outside social work would book in and visit just like now. I think there were resident social workers but not as many as nowadays.
83. A visit from social work would not count as a visit as such.

*Social work at present*

84. Outside social work phone up and book appointments with prisoners, they are usually day appointments.
85. We have social work in Polmont as well. There are about six or eight full time. They deal with things like access to children.

*Family visits 1999 - 2014*

86. Prisoners were categorised as basic, standard and advanced in respect of visits. This meant an enhanced prisoner got three visits a month, a standard, two and a basic, one visit per month. That was policy at the time.

87. Residential officers and Operations could issue 'strikes' on prisoners in respect of their visits. If they misbehaved they could be issued with a strike. If they received three strikes they dropped down the grade above. There was paperwork for a strike and it would have to be signed off by a manager.
88. South wing was protected prisoners. East wing was long term convicted and then went to younger people, sixteen to eighteen. East was also allocation. It depended on certain things how long a prisoner was in allocation. It would depend on if they were on remand or convicted. It also depended on length of sentence so a prisoner could be there for a year or two. If their sentence was longer they would go to north wing and any sentence over four years they would go up to east wing. It was also known as the 'ally cally'. West wing was protections. Protections are sex offenders or those prisoners who couldn't be kept in mainstream prison for their own protection.
89. Protection prisoners could be self-referred or intelligence led, depending on where in Scotland they were from and what other prisoners were in at the same time.

## **Reintegration**

*1999 - 2014*

90. There have always been programmes to tackle offending, Back then we had a big project on sex offenders to address their offending behaviour. It was prison officers that delivered it having been taught by psychologists.
91. There must have been other programmes but I can't remember and certainly not as much as there is now. There was also more likelihood then of prisoners not getting any work or programmes involving them to tackle their offending behaviour. It is better now.
92. Apart from a young person going into prison and being allocated a personal officer there was nothing else for a young person that would set them up with life skills on the outside

*At Present*

93. We carry out far more programmes for work nowadays to tackle offending. We have programmes on youth justice for young people to address all types of offending behaviour. It covers topics such as drugs, alcohol, stealing cars, domestic abuse. At the start its one to one to understand the needs of the prisoner and then gradually they go into groups to discuss things.
94. We also have 'ultimate self' programmes for females. That is more compassionate group delivery.
95. We have parent officers. There is a life skills work shed. It has beds in it to teach them how to make a bed and how to use cookers, washing machines and irons. The purpose is to show prisoners how to uses these things. There are also financial things they are shown. That is a choice if a prisoner wants to go to somewhere like that.
96. There is also a ? which would help them to gain access to employment like the SCS card where they can do the training to help them get a work card to work on a building site.
97. Prisoners need to fit the criteria of the programmes and therefore there are people who miss out on them.
98. There are definitely people who are missing out on the sex offenders' stuff as there isn't a programme just now for them. They are re-writing it now and it seems to be taking ages. It's a shame as especially when the sex offender population is the fastest growing one in Polmont. There are some who may be coming up to the end of their sentence and haven't completed any programmes.
99. In terms of other things that a prisoner would require going back out to society after a period in jail for such things like housing and benefits there is a life skills centre. Officers deal with houses and appointments and things for them going out.
100. About four years ago they brought out a role called ' through care' which I think is fantastic. It was prison officers, based in the prison who would, when the prisoner was due to be released, take them out to the appointment that had been set up for



them on their release. They would also take them to other appointments out with. It definitely worked. I see it, especially with females, now that the role has gone where the females are back in the system because they didn't make it to certain appointments.

### **Policy**

101. I have not been involved in any policy changes until my new job where, as a federation representative, I have to sign things off.

### **Strategic planning**

102. I have not been involved in any strategic planning in respect of the way in which the establishment is run.

### **Other staff**

103. When I joined in 1999 it was Dan Gunn who was the governor. He was there for about five years. After him it was Paul McKinlay then Derek McGill, Mike Inglis. Gerry Meechie and then Sue Brooks. Now, its Gerry Meechie, as he returned. Most do it for about four or five years at a time as governor.
104. When Dann Gunn was in charge, his deputy was John McCaig and his head of operations was Derek McGill. There were four of five first line managers assisting in operations. That was visits, escorts and control room. Every residential wing also had three first line managers. One covering each shift. You then had Operation's officers. At the moment we have one hundred and twenty Operation's officers but I'm not sure how many it was back then. They would be split up over early shift and back shift front of house and early shift, back shift reception. That was three for each area and also a team covering constant night shift.
105. The governor who is in just now is doing a great job but the impact the governor has on the running of the prison depends on person to person.

### **Recruitment of staff**

106. I have never been responsible for recruitment of staff.

### **Training of staff**

107. I have been responsible in the past for training new probationers who come into the establishment. I became involved once the recruits had been to the college and came back to the establishment. I then became their first line manager. After college they have a week shadowing and then they go live. My responsibility was to ensure they had all of the support they required. I tried to allocate them a mentor if possible as well.

### **Supervision/staff appraisal / staff evaluation**

- 108.

### **Culture within – YOI Polmont**

109. There was a lot of bullying amongst inmates back in the day when I started. Things like cigarettes being taken from inmates happened a lot. Usually, you would try to remove the victim from the situation. There was a bullying programme you could put the prisoner on as well. They did have that in 1999 but I don't ever recall putting a prisoner on one.
110. As a Residential officer I did find myself putting a prisoner on a bullying programme or into segregation for bullying but that was probably after 2014. Bullies are not tolerated in prison and sometimes it is dealt with in house.
111. I don't recall getting any training to help to be able to identify bullying or coercion it was very much based on instinct and gut feeling.

112. At handovers we would discuss things like bullying or if someone wasn't eating.
113. I do think the violence in prison was worse back then. I think it's because prison officers are getting better at doing their jobs and that may well be down to better training. Training in mental health first aid, learning difficulties and disabilities training has definitely helped. These courses give us more tools in our tool bag to recognise that behaviour may be down to something undiagnosed. We can then refer the prisoner to the appropriate support.

### **Discipline/punishment/segregation**

114. A prisoner is sent to segregation usually if there has been an act of violence or they have been unruly. They are generally taken out of the area in which they usually stay so there can be an investigation and following that there will be a decision on whether they can return or not. A female unruly would go to HMP Stirling.
115. I worked with females for about a year and there is virtually no violence with them. They come with a whole host of other issues like addiction and trauma.
116. We had a segregation unit back then. It was situated between 'ally cally' and north wing, right in the middle of the prison. There were eight cells in the unit. Back then there was no policy on how long someone could be in the seg unit. It very much depended on the offence or act of violence It was left up to the governor. It was the unit manager of the wing in which the prisoner had come from who would have to apply for an extension to keep a prisoner in there. I think it had to go to Scottish ministers for approval. The governor would make the initial call to put someone into the segregation unit in the first place.
117. The unit manager would see the prisoner twice a day while in the segregation unit.
118. While in the segregation unit the prisoner was entitled to a shower, a phone call and an hour's exercise period each day. If you had eight people in the unit it would just depend on who got what at what time as you had to try and fit everyone in.

119. In the segregation unit cell there was a bed, toilet and sink, just basic provisions and no television. There were also two cells that didn't have beds but had a concrete plinth as a bed. They would get a mattress.
120. Going back in the day the prisoners would often be disruptive during the night as there were less staff on. They would sleep during the day. At one point we used to take the mattresses out of the cells during the day and return them at night so they couldn't sleep during the day.
121. Meals were taken to the prisoners in the segregation unit. As staff you would go three at a time as you were generally dealing with the most violent prisoners. To keep them and us safe it was three staff dealing at all times.
122. There was no further punishment like withdrawing food or taking someone's clothes from them.
123. It was a different colour of clothes for prisoners in segregation.
124. If a prisoner was in seg unit they were entitled to three visits a month if they behaved. If they didn't behave they only got one visit in the month.
125. There was no limit for the time someone could be in segregation, it could be for a few months. There has been in the past. I think I recall someone being in there for about a year.
126. I think for some of the prisoners who went to seg it was a hiding place for them. They felt safer down there than in the halls.
127. If you were put on report and got a governor's report back in the day you could also miss out on recreation. They got PPC, money for tuck and all of these things could be reduced or taken away for seven days.

## **Restraint**

128. The restraint training was taught at college by prison officers. They were licensed instructors. Re-training was done once a year back at the prison.
129. Over the years the training has changed. I think it was always a case of trying to instruct the best thing. The purpose of restraint has always been to keep yourself and the prisoners as safe as possible and use as less force as necessary to achieve that. That is one of the prison rules; as much force as necessary but no over force . You wouldn't use excessive force if you didn't have to.
130. The type of restraint tactic used years ago was very dependent on the situation you were faced with. Everything was risk assessed. It was a minimum of three folk to do a restraint. A number one was in charge of the head and to ensure the safety of the head. A number two and three would be in charge of an arm each. This was for the safety of everybody. There would always be a supervisor present.
131. Nowadays officers carry personal alarms. There will always be that out of control moment, when something catches you unawares. You generally have to try to contain it with a hold or something and then once assistance is sought you then group for a proper restraint. Officers also carry batons and they did then.
132. Cuffs have been in and out throughout my service, there were none when I first started, you would use a hold on a prisoner. Certain types have been withdrawn due to injuries to prisoners and officers being injured during training. We are currently using soft cuffs and personally I think they are excellent.
133. If you restrained someone you had to complete a paper report. It would go to the first line manager of the hall and then the governor and it would go into the prisoner's file. If there were three of you involved, all three would do a report.
134. There was a policy then on restraint, I think it was rule 41 of the prison rules. There is a copy in every hall and on the intranet. Prisoners can access the hard copy.
135. Back then there were buttons on the wall so that would be used to summon assistance.
136. There were cameras years ago but less than now.

### **Concerns about Polmont**

137. While I have been at Polmont I have never had any concerns about the way in which the establishment has been run. For sure, looking back it was more violent. That was down to the number of prisoners we had and the different factions we had and it was definitely more challenging. I do think there were more instances of violence back then.

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

#### *Prison Officer*

138. If I had had a concern about a colleague there wasn't whistle blowing then but had I had a concern then I would have spoken to the individual myself. I suppose it may have depended on the relationship I had with that individual. If I knew them I would speak to them myself. If that wasn't good enough I would have reported it to my line manager at the time. I never had an occasion to speak to anyone back then about anything I wasn't happy with. I wasn't aware of any policy as such as to what you would do.

#### *Prisoner*

139. If a prisoner back then had an issue with an officer then they did have a procedure where they could fill in a PCF, Prisoner Complaint Form. The forms were on the wall in the hall. Or they could ask the first line manager. A PCF 1 went to the hall manager and a PCF 2 went to the governor.
140. The prisoner could either personally hand the form to a supervisor or post it through a letter box in the hall. Staff would then give it to the manager, allegedly.
141. They could also hand it to a social worker or someone else.

142. As a manager, fairly recently, I have had to have difficult conversations with staff. I do feel as a manager I have had the right training and we have the right tools to deal with such circumstances.
143. I have been involved in disciplinary procedures in the past. I would sit down with another manager and a member of staff and we would have a discussion about the officers' behaviours and how they are bordering on the excessive. This meeting would be recorded. It can depend on the circumstances it may not always be about violence it could be the way the officer is speaking to the prisoner. None of them have led to expulsion.
144. The matters where I have been involved with, could have been raised by other staff or I would see if for myself. The situation would be monitored thereafter and there would be paperwork completed.
145. Nowadays there is whistle blowing and ?

**“Abuse”**

146. [ ]

**Child protection arrangements**

147. There was no such thing as child protection training as far as I know between the period 1999 to 2014. The young people were not referred to as children and that is probably why not.
148. There is child protection training now.

149. I would say there is perhaps a recognition amongst the younger generation of staff that we are dealing with children but I cannot say there is that same understanding by the older generation of staff.

### **External monitoring**

150. I think inspections happen yearly. They can come in anytime but I think they usually let us know beforehand. I can't really remember what happened when I first started.
151. I have spoken to inspectors in the past where they have asked me how things are going, it's generally chit chat. They also speak to the prisoners, I've seen them speaking to them. They also get access to cells.
152. I haven't had to provide any written reports to inspectors when they have visited in any of the roles I have been in.

### **Record-keeping**

153. If, in the course of your duty you used restraint on a prisoner you had to write up a report which would ultimately go into the prisoner's file.
154. Nowadays there is a sheet on the intranet that is filled in, much the same as previously. I believe the form goes to our internal management unit. It also goes to our Violence reduction unit team who look at them all.
155. As a Residential officer and as part of your duties you would put in narratives on a prisoner. It could be daily or weekly depending on the officer. When I was a Residential officer I would put them in weekly. It would be something along the lines of the prisoner having a good week or whatever. You would maybe have ten or twelve prisoners to complete them for.



156. As an Operation's officer I would only do a report if there was an incident such as a drugs pass in visits. I would write up a report which would likely go to the police and the governor.
157. As an Operation's manager I would have to put in incident overviews when an incident occurred. I would get the papers from the officers and then summarise the circumstances in a paper and send it to senior management and headquarters.
158. I found the narratives and records were helpful for me when I was a Programme's officer as I could see how the prisoner had behaved the week previous to coming up to group. I could then challenge them on their behaviour.

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

159. I am not aware of any investigations at Polmont into abuse of a prisoner.

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

160. I was not aware of any instruction as to how to deal with a report of abuse from a prisoner.
161. I have never been involved in a civil claim.

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

162. When a prisoner makes an allegation about an officer there is an internal investigation. The prison also reports it to Police Scotland. It can be the unit manager or first line manager of the hall in which the prisoner is in. The individual themselves can report it to the Police. I believe it's a matter of course that Police are contacted.
163. Internally, the enquiry is allocated to a colleague a rank above the officer. My understanding is that they speak to all involved, including to the manager in charge at the time . They then make a decision and a report goes to the governor.

164. Police also then carry out their investigation .
165. Depending on the seriousness of the allegation depends on if the officer is suspended.
166. I've had allegations made by prisoners in the past. Three times, all involving the Police. Each time they have been marked 'no case to answer'. The three were of prisoners making allegations of assault during a violent removal. I have never been suspended.
167. None of the three times has the case ended in court. Twice I have been interviewed at a police station and once, the one that happened around the start of my career, I was interviewed in the prison.
168. There was one when I was assaulted at the very start of my career and the other two around the middle of my career.
169. I believe the one at the start the prisoner was sentenced for what he did.
170. One of the ones in the middle was a removal and I was on the head and the young person's wrist got broken during it. Nothing was done about that at the time but once he was out of prison he tried to make a compensation claim.
171. As far as I recall no one came to us after the event but the three of us would have had to complete a report.
172. Everyone is made up different and I wouldn't necessarily have expected an enquiry on the back of a broken wrist. Nowadays I think it would be looked into. There isn't a procedure as such if there is a broken bone in prison.
173. The other incident was a violent removal in the segregation unit and I can't remember much about it but he made allegations about us.
174. I attended Falkirk police station on both occasions but was never charged.

### **Convicted abusers**

175. I am not aware of anyone who has been convicted of abuse from Polmont.

**Knowledge of specific alleged abusers at Polmont YOI**

HKI

176. I remember HKI he was my first line manager at one point and I have worked with him two or three times during my service. I believe he finished up as a unit manager. He has moved about to different jails. I would say I have worked on and off with him for about ten years.

177. I thought he was alright, he was a good manager and he was quite a funny person.

178. He must be about five or six years older than me.

179. I have seen him supervising restraints but not actually restraining anyone. There was nothing about HKI that gave me cause for concern. I never saw him abuse prisoners.

HJY

180. I know him as well. He was one of my first line managers when I started. I worked with him on and off for about eight years. I think HJY would be about ten years older than me.

181. I believe he was a first line manager until he retired.

182. He was a good manager, he had your back and was very supportive of staff. He had a bit of humour too.

183. I can't say anything bad about him. There was nothing that I saw as abusive towards prisoners.

HJU

184. I do not recall HJU [REDACTED]

HJW [REDACTED]

185. HJW [REDACTED] still works at the prison. He was a cook for most of his service. He was a prison officer but specialised as a cook. He worked a lot of the time with protected prisoners. I never actually worked with him, I knew him as someone who worked at the same establishment.

186. HJW [REDACTED] is semi-retired and works part time, night shift. He has been there for about thirty years.

187. I have seen him with prisoners and he is okay with them. There is nothing I have seen in his interactions that I would consider as abusive.

HJV [REDACTED]

188. HJV [REDACTED] still works there and he is a cook just now. I think he came from Shotts prison. HJV [REDACTED] must be over sixty.

189. I have never seen him speak or behave wrongly to prisoners.

Mr HJX [REDACTED]

190. He was a really nice guy. HJX [REDACTED] was part of the initial set up team which introduced control and restraint in the prison. He was a national instructor.

191. He passed away a few years ago of cancer, he was only in his forties. He was great with the laddies. Always having a laugh and joke with them. I never saw him behaving in an abusive way towards prisoners.

192. I don't think there is anyone who would have a bad word to say about HJX [REDACTED]

Mr HLC

193. I knew a [REDACTED] who was an instructor at the college. I doubt it's him as I never knew him to work at Polmont in my time.
194. HJU [REDACTED] was a residential officer who worked in north wing. I never worked alongside him and nor did I see him act in a way that was abusive towards prisoners.
195. I think HJU [REDACTED] ran the prisoners football team. His team played in an outside league.

INL

196. I haven't a clue who that is. There are a few INL [REDACTED] in Polmont now but none that I know of as INL [REDACTED]. In terms of all of these INL [REDACTED] I have never observed anything by them that could be described as abusive.
197. I think it would be difficult to abuse a prisoner without someone else knowing about it. There are so many cameras and you are very seldom working on your own. The only time that would really happen was if someone didn't turn up for their shift one day, like a last minute sickness.
198. There would still be people around in the vicinity though, even if you were working on your own. I can't think of an opportunity for someone to be abusive to anyone without someone else knowing about it.

**Specific allegations of abuse made against me for which there has been no criminal investigation and/or conviction [applicant / witness allegations]**

IKH

199. IKH [REDACTED] has given a statement to the Inquiry. At paragraph 87 of his statement, he has said '*The abuse wasn't as bad at Polmont but the prison officers did batter*

*you. There was a prison officer called Mr [REDACTED] I was charged with assaulting him. When you were going to court, or coming back in, there was a little desk where they would take your name. You had to put your civvy clothes on if you were going and take them back off when you return. One day when I was going to court, he was pushing me about and searching me so I punched him in the face. I was charged with assault. Him and a few others put me to the floor and battered me. This was before I even went to court. They then put my arms and legs in ties, carried me to the van and put me on the floor of it, face down. I was like that from Polmont to Glasgow Sheriff Court. You could see I'd been assaulted but the judge isn't looking at that.'*

200. The name [REDACTED] doesn't mean anything to me.
201. If it's the incident where I was assaulted at the start of my career then I was not punched. I was headbutted. I got headbutted in the reception area back at the start.
202. Listening to that, we didn't have cable ties or anything like that at reception. We didn't have authority to tie somebodies' legs. We always had a duty to get someone to court and at the time it was prison staff who did the transport. He would have been cuffed and he may have had to be in a lock before that. That may have happened. We wouldn't have cuffed his ankles either. I certainly wouldn't have used any more force than was necessary.
203. I only recall one incident where a guy was charged with assaulting me and that was when I was headbutted. The same incident where I was interviewed afterwards by Falkirk CID in Polmont. I don't remember the prisoner involved in that assault and nor do I remember restraining him. I recall he did get some time added to his sentence but I'm not sure how long. If I remember correctly when I was assaulted it was the time when there were dog boxes in reception. When the prisoner headbutted me the door on the dog box was shut. I also think the head of operations came down to check everyone was ok and he said he was reporting it to the Police. I never had an injury as such, only a small mark at the side of my face. I certainly don't remember any other incident where I was punched in the face.

204. I don't recall the incident read out to me. I did work at reception at one point and I did work on the desk.
205. At paragraph 88 of his statement, he has said *'I went back to Polmont after it and straight to the digger. I was in there all the time. The digger is a four foot by four foot cell , concrete walls and floor. In Polmont when you are in the digger you wear a purple jumper and purple track suit bottoms. There's a small window which looks into a compound, but it's never opened so you don't get any fresh air. There was a porta potty in it that you had to slop out every morning. There was no sink or bed. They would give you a thin mattress at about 9.00 pm but the prison officers would come in at 7.00 am and take it from you. Your meals were brought to you. It was freezing in the cell. I was there all the time. There were about eight of these cells. I was in there for most of my sentence.'*
206. He refers to the digger which is the segregation unit. That is a common term for the unit, even now.
207. There were eight cells in the digger unit all these years ago. The cells in there are the same size as a normal cell, about eight feet by six feet.
208. The prisoners in the digger did wear a different colour of clothing but I can't remember if it was purple. Other prisoners wore dark jogging bottoms. One of the halls wore orange tops, the segregation unit burgundy. Another hall wears green. Females wears purple and another hall wears grey.
209. I think back when I started the prisoners wore pin striped shirts. They wore red pinstripe for visits and blue pin stripe for every day. All the units wore the same, along with denims and black jail shoes.
210. I think the pinstripe shirts were better for visits but the shoes now, they get to wear their own trainers, are far better.
211. In terms of the compound he talks about, that is where they got their fresh air and exercise. That is correct about the slopping out back then. Taking the mattress out probably did happen then but I'm not sure as early as that.

212. *At paragraph 89 he goes on to say 'I remember once I had been in the digger for two months. I got out and came up to the main hall. It was dinner time and everybody was sitting eating. I still had the purple jumper and tracksuit bottoms on and sat down to get my dinner. These boys that pass out the food were saying that this big boy was bullying a small guy and they were going to do something to him and asked me to help, so I said I would. I got up and I ended up setting about this guy and I got put straight back down to the digger. None of the other boys done anything. It was nothing to do with me but I was the one who done something. The digger is away from everything, at the end of the jail, like a big hole, all on its own. You are in the cell day and night. You are meant to get an hour exercise but a lot of the time that never happened.'*
213. I don't remember anything about that incident or that guy. They would get asked if they wanted their exercise but it was up to them whether they took it or not. Sometimes the exercise period would be in the morning and they wouldn't want to get out of their bed. That would be classed as them refusing their exercise. As far as going to another hall with a segregation top on that was unlikely to happen as they would stick out. I suppose there is a possibility it did though.
214. The segregation unit at the old jail was in the middle of the jail.
215. *At paragraph 91 he goes on to say 'I was getting out Polmont the day before [REDACTED] and they took me to Falkirk Sheriff court on the day of my release for the assault on Mr [REDACTED] and I got sentenced to six months in the jail.'*
216. That could happen. I really can't remember that. I didn't have to go to court so I think he maybe would have pled guilty to the assault.

#### **Lessons to be learned from the past**

217. I think every day is a school day for me personally but I believe the prison are trying to do that, to do things better for the prisoners.
218. The whole soft cuffs are a real plus, they are basically velcro handcuffs and it means we don't have to do as many holds on prisoners. These have reduced violence and



reduced injuries. It was a pilot at Polmont and now they are rolling them out to Low Moss to see how they are in the adult prison. The roll out of those shows me the prison are always looking at ways to improve.

219. I think they need to throw more resources into Polmont. One of my ideas would be to employ more staff so they can spend more time with prisoners and then the prisoners wouldn't have to be locked up as long. They could have the prisoners out doing more purposeful activities which they could then do on the outside. More resources would give more options for developing skills for them.
220. To my mind society is failing them but if we can give them the skills all the better. The problem is if they go back to where they came from and there is nothing there for them or they can't use these skills then they are going to fall back into old ways.
221. There is a lack of prisoners in Polmont at the moment as they aren't jailing as many people as they used to. The ones who are in there could do more if they were given more educational skills and people skills. Again though, the problem is, the prisoner has got to want to do it. If they are not interested how do you fill that gap?
222. Having dealt with the programmes side of prison where you go right back to the prisoner's childhood, how their schooling was and their upbringing. It makes me think a lot more should be done at school with kids.
223. The through care officers were prison officers and on the lead up to a prisoner's release they would work with that person to make sure that they had housing on the outside. They'd makes sure they had money when they went out. If they had appointments for things, the officers would go outside and take them to the appointments. On liberation date if they were going to a hostel they would take them there. Some of the prisoners can be quite anxious about getting out and so by having the throughcare team they are missing out on that in between time. For example, that time when they say they'll get a train. then they see a shop, they buy a drink, they miss the train. They don't know where they are, they have nowhere to stay, they've missed their appointment and its then a downward spiral.

- 224. Those through care officers were there to support them through the initial stages of that journey after getting out and getting them settled. I think it especially helped females as I've spoken to females who have come back into jail who had through care help and have said they would have been lost without it. I understand it's all down to funding but we don't have them now and I think it's a big loss.
- 225. I think prison officers going into schools to give children's talks in say late secondary school would also be a good thing.
- 226. The Scottish Prison Service have a policy of recruiting officers from aged seventeen years. Personally, I don't agree with that, I think it's too young that they are managing prisoners who are perhaps older than them. I don't think they have enough life experience. I applied when I was seventeen but the minimum age was twenty one then. There are some excellent officers at seventeen years but I think a minimum of eighteen years old would be better.
- 227. I love my job and I always have. I could probably go another level but I will retire in seven years and I want to go then. I'm in post until March 2027 but it depends if I am re-elected by the members.
- 228. 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 December 2023 .....