

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GDK [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is GDK [REDACTED] and my date of birth is [REDACTED] 1959. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

Background

2. I was born and brought up in Edinburgh. My mum is still alive and stays near to me but is not in good health and my father died in the 1980s. I have one brother and one sister. When I was growing up I hated my mum and related more to my dad and I believe I had a fairly normal happy childhood until I had my accident when I was five years old.

3. I can tell you from my records I started at Sciennes Primary School in Edinburgh on [REDACTED] 1965. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

4. [REDACTED]

Ladyfield West Children's Unit, Crichton Royal Hospital, Dumfries - first visit

5. I was sent to Ladyfield West Children's Unit which is part of the Crichton Royal Hospital when I was six years old. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Edzell Lodge, Newbattle Terrace, Edinburgh

6. In 1967, when I was about eight years old, apparently to try and get me back in to circulation I was moved to Edzell Lodge in Edinburgh. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later



Ladyfield West Children's Unit - second visit

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later



Secondary Institutions - to be published later I was in Edzell until the beginning of 1968 then went back to Ladyfield West in 1969.

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later




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Secondary Institutions - to be published later



Corsbie Hall, Newton Stewart

19. I left Ladyfield West to go to Corsbie Hall, Newton Stewart in  1970. I was

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later



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Balgowan Young Peoples Unit, Dundee

28. Secondary Institutions - to be published later I was sent to Balgowan because that was the only place that would take me. My records say that I was at Balgowan for about nine months.

Schooling

29. I didn't go to any outside schooling and only got a little bit, like getting shown pictures and things like that.

Visits

30. I can't remember seeing any of my family when I was at Balgowan apart from my mum who came up a couple of times with my dad. I think the only other person I saw was someone from the children's panel. I never saw Dr Rogers when I was there.

Abuse - Balgowan

31. The headmaster, I can't remember his name, used to hit us regularly with his belt over the table. I think he was the only one that hit us. Sometimes he would get other members of staff, or I seem to think that sometimes it was the bigger boys, to stand either side of you and each would hold an arm, and pin you onto the table and the headmaster would belt you. He would hit you, a number of times, on the back of the legs or on the backside through your clothes although it was only shorts I had on. You would get the belt if you tried to abscond or if you stole food and lots of other things. Balgowan was run like a military camp, and they were very strict. They used to have a scoreboard and I was never off the bottom of the table. The more points you had the bigger the prize you got and if you had enough points you got to go home. You would get points if you tidied up, made your bed properly, things like that. In the nine months that I was there I was never allowed to go home.
32. I used to steal food sometimes because I was hungry. One of the punishments if you were bad was that they would give you less food. Sometimes you would only get bread, sometimes only water or milk. If you were caught stealing food you would be taken up to the headmaster's room and belted.

Reporting Balgowan

33. When I was at Balgowan I told the children's panel what was going on, including that they were very handy with the belt. I also told my mum and I remember her shouting the odds about it all the time because, rather than them helping me, my behaviour was

getting worse. I think that's why I only lasted nine months there. When I told the children's panel for the second time that's when I got moved out of there to go to Liberton Assessment Centre. They said it was time for me to go to a different environment.

Liberton Assessment Centre, Edinburgh - First Visit

34. When I went to Liberton Assessment Centre I felt that I was starting to get somewhere. I was starting to get some kind of schooling and they were giving me projects to do, like making candles. I have mostly happy memories about my time at the assessment centre. I think I was only there that first time for a few weeks.

Schooling

35. When I was at Liberton Assessment Centre they sent me to Panmure House for my education. Panmure was a day care centre and in there they would assess deprived children or children who are on their way into a life of crime. I didn't last there very long because I was getting into trouble and I even broke into their safe and stole money. There were bad influences in Panmure House.
36. After that I went to Liberton High School and it was good to be in a mainstream school until they tried to get me to read from a book and I still couldn't read and write. They started making fun of me which put me on the warpath. I was only there for a matter of days because the head master tried to give me the belt so I smashed his office up. I would have been about 13 at that time. I was sent home for a while but ended up back at Liberton Assessment Centre.

Liberton Assessment Centre – second visit.*Running away*

37. I ran away from the assessment centre and regularly broke in to houses and stole things. When I got taken back to the assessment centre there would be more charges by the police. I was only there for a few weeks and I regularly ran away until eventually one time when I got taken back they refused to take me back in. Because they refused I was taken to the police station in the High Street where I spent the weekend and was taken straight to the children's panel where under the unruly act I was sent to Saughton Prison.

Abuse

38. Mr ^{EWA} the Gym teacher at the assessment centre liked playing around and he got me to stay behind one time to help him put the gym mats in to the store room where he shut the door and tampered with me and forced me on to him. He put his hands down my trousers and was masturbating me and forced me to masturbate him. This happened twice. Once was that time in the gym and once in the changing room. The second time was when I was getting my pyjama's on in the changing room upstairs and he tried to force himself upon me but I managed to wriggle out and ran into the dorm. This happened to other people too.

Reporting

39. I told other staff at the assessment centre what Mr ^{EWA} was doing; Mr ^{MTQ} who was ^{SNR}, Mr ^{HTY} ^{SNR}, and the ^{MTQ} Mrs ^{MTQ}, who was Mr ^{MTQ}'s wife. Me and others told all of them but they didn't listen and just said it didn't happen and it was all in our heads.

40. When I was at the children's panel I told Donald Stirling the reporter about what Mr ^{EWA} had done to me, and I remember he wrote it down. I don't know if he did anything after that with the information. I later heard that someone else had made a complaint about Mr ^{EWA} and he had been caught. I think my social worker at that time was Mary English who worked from the Newtoft Street office.

Saughton Prison

41. I spent 6 weeks in the untried prison section under the unruly certificate. When I was there I was told Mr ^{EWA} who by that time had been arrested for abusing somebody else was in there too.

Geilsland School

42. I went from there to Geilsland and was there from just over thirteen and a half years old until I was about sixteen.
43. They were really strict at Geilsland but it is the first place I had been that I felt they were trying to help me. They were quick to give you the belt but it was like a holiday camp and I don't compare it to any of the other places I had been. Mr Rooney and Mr ^{EZD} took a liking to me and I learned about plumbing. They gave me a weekend's leave to go and find a job. I went to a house and I was going there with the intention of breaking in but the people were in and the next thing I know I asked if they had a job and they offered me a job as a heating engineer. When I got this job I was finished at Geilsland.
44. I would never have run away from Geilsland but sometimes I didn't go back after I had been home for the weekend.

Reporting

45. I told the police from about 1996 the things that had happened to me in all the places and since then the media were regularly getting in touch with me and that is what made other people come forward and tell them their experiences. Lots of newspapers approached me looking for my story but I was told to refer them to my lawyer so I did.

Life after care

46. I was sent to Glenochil in 1977 and was in and out of various young offenders and eventually went in to Saughton when I was about 20 and then Perth Prison. I continued breaking in to houses and was involved in crimes of dishonesty and went in and out of Prison. From the age of 21 until I was 34 in 1994 I spent most of my time in prison. Sometimes I was just about to get released when I was re-arrested at the gate and didn't get out.
47. I have been married twice and have lived with my current partner for quite a long time. I have one child to her, and she has a child from a previous relationship. I have other children and step children from my previous partners. I keep in touch with my family.
48. I had a few jobs when I was younger doing bar work and things like that. I haven't worked for years because of medical reasons. I tried to get a job as a lay visitor to the police custody centre and I went through the whole process but I was turned down at the last hurdle by the Chief Constable who said I would be a bad influence. I have tried to get a job with Cancer research but was turned down because of my previous convictions.
49. I started a business doing the bouncy castles for parties and I had a number of show rides out at [REDACTED] but that fell through, as a result of my poor health. I haven't been able to work since.

50. In 1994 my wife was involved in a car accident and this brought my accident all back to me. I kept having visions of houses and I thought it was houses I was breaking in to but it wasn't it was places like Corsbie Hall that I was seeing. It was at this time I found out about my accident and my [REDACTED] injury and that is when I stopped committing crime.

Impact

51. As soon as I was sent up the steps into Ladyfield West that's when the relationship with my mother deteriorated because I didn't want to be there. I wanted to stay at home.
52. When I was at Balgowan my crime got worse and started stealing from a shop just outside the school. The police didn't really get involved and the school dealt with it all.
53. When I was at Geilsland and I was home for the weekend I carried on breaking in to houses and eventually they caught up with me when I was at Geilsland and I was sent to Polmont Borstal which is a young offenders now. I would have been 17 when I went in to Polmont.
54. I think that the problems I have had as a young adult stem back to the accident I had when I was five and then because I was put in all these homes I was institutionalised. If I hadn't had my accident I wouldn't have resorted in to a life of crime and my behaviour would have been different. I always wondered why I wasn't normal like my brother and sister.
55. The flash backs I was having I was seeing inside houses and I thought it was houses that I had broken into over the years when I was younger. Because of the injury I sustained in the accident when I was five years old this has affected my life and had it not happened I wouldn't be where I am today. My [REDACTED] injury stopped me from knowing the difference between right and wrong and pushed me in to a life of crime. I ended up in and out of List 'D' schools, detention centres and prisons.

Other Action Taken

56. I kept in touch with Mr ^{EZD} from Geilsland and after 1994 I spoke to him and I told him about the flashbacks I was having and that according to my mum my behaviour appeared to be changing. He was on holiday but when he got back he sent me a letter and it detailed where I had been after my road accident and that's when I went to a lawyer.
57. My lawyers at the time, Robbie Burnett raised an action in 1996 at Edinburgh Sheriff Court against [REDACTED] for my accident. He was strongly advised by the Sheriff to take the case to the Court of Session. That is when the case was taken over by Andrew Gibb of Balfour Manson. The case is currently sleeping and it has been since 1996. Balfour Manson took the action on, then I had to put it to sleep and it cost me £37. A report came out from the Royal Edinburgh Hospital and I apparently went in there in 1984 and told them about my accident, Balfour Manson have abandoned me and I have tried taking it to another lawyer but no one else is interested, especially because legal aid has been withdrawn. My current lawyer is Mark Thorley of Thorley Stephenson and the QC is Angela Graham.
58. I have been back to Ladyfield West about four times trying to get information about myself. What they did was send all my medical records to Dr Hunter who was my GP and I went to see him and he has given me my medical records. I couldn't understand a lot of what was written in my records. I still had a criminal lawyer, Robbie Burnett, at that point and he did a lot of enquiry to find out where I had been but eventually suggested I take out a civil claim against [REDACTED] for my road accident, and he sent me to a Doctor David Johnstone to do a Psychiatric report on me. His report indicated that I wouldn't be where I am now if I hadn't had the accident.
59. I have been to the Criminal Case Review Commission and they have said that I have a case for appealing against my criminal convictions because my defence lawyers were not aware that I had a [REDACTED] injury as a result of a road accident so they couldn't try and get me a shorter sentence. I didn't know at that time so I couldn't tell my lawyers, and this could have been the reason I was committing crime, instead it was put down to my

abuse of alcohol. The first I knew that I had been involved in a road accident was in 1994.

60. I used to drink but I didn't see that I had a drink problem. I did drink for a while after my dad died but I went off the rails and ended up in jail again so that stopped me from drinking. I was never dependent on alcohol.

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later Mr EWA I was told died in 1991.

Treatment / Support

62. I saw Dr Rodgers from the time I went in to Ladyfield for the next nine years until I went in to Glenochil in 1977. He came to see me at various institutions or I went to see him at Rillbank where he worked from. I have never had to get any medical treatment for any time I was hit when I was in any of the homes.

63. I have Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and currently on oxygen 24/7 and take anti-depressants along with lots of other medication. I used to go to [REDACTED] which is the [REDACTED] injury association but that has stopped and now I only sometimes communicate with other [REDACTED] injury groups across the world. I find this really helpful.

64. I used to get counselling from Dr McCabe from HITS in Glasgow which is the Head Injury Trust for Scotland and I had a number of sessions with him, and I benefited a lot from these. I saw him in the 1990s although he has retired now. I have also seen Dr Pullan from the Royal Edinburgh Hospital who I first saw in the 1980s. My own GP, Dr Euan Alexander knows all about my history.

65. I am getting a counsellor through In Care Survivors Support fund after I have finished dealing with the Scottish Child Abuse inquiry. This is with somebody in Albany Street, Edinburgh.

66. My family know everything about what happened to me in the past. I don't have any secrets from them and I think it is better that they know.

Records

67. I have managed to get almost all of my records and they are all contained within the six volumes of files which are all copies of documents my solicitor and I have. I am happy to pass these documents if it helps your inquiry. There is some reference about the abuse that I suffered in these records. In these files there are medical records, Social enquiry records, records from Geilsland, Ladyfield, Edzell, some for Corsbie Hall, and children's panel records. I tried to get records for Corsbie Hall, and think they will be held by Borders Council. I couldn't find anything for Balgowan. Dundee social work referred me to Edinburgh social work. There are also all the writs for my civil case against [REDACTED].

Hopes for the Inquiry

68. I think things are much better now and children in the homes are better protected than when I was there. People listen to what children say now and action is taken. These homes were supposed to be looking after me and I know my behaviour was unpredictable and that I deserved some punishment but I don't think I deserved what I got.

69. 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... GDK

Dated... 27/2/2017