

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

[REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is [REDACTED]. That's the name I was known as during my time in care. I have seen in my records that sometimes I'm described as having the middle name of [REDACTED]. I don't know why it says that because that isn't on my birth certificate. It could be that they just stuck that in because that was my father's name. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1959. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. My dad was called [REDACTED]. He worked full time in a jute mill. My mother was called [REDACTED]. She worked part time in a jute mill. Both my mum and dad are now deceased. I was born in Dundee. I have an older brother called [REDACTED]. He is about three years older than me. My younger sister, [REDACTED], is about three years younger than me.
3. I have learnt a lot of the information surrounding my early life from social work records I recovered but I do also have some memories. Some of the social workers wrote in those records a bit of history and that has allowed me to fill in some of the gaps. My mother got divorced from my father in 1965. I think financially it was tough after my mother and father divorced. I think at that time we were just impoverished more than anything else. In those days there were a lot of aunties and grandparents who would help out. They all chipped in to help my mother get going again. I remember going up to my auntie's and my gran's with letters and returning back with envelopes from them. Over time I realised that it was money in the envelopes I was

taking back. My mother then met a man called [REDACTED]. She married him during the time I was taken into care. He's now deceased.

4. Before I was taken into care the family lived in an area called [REDACTED] which is to the rear end of Dundee. The social worker in my reports describes it as a delinquent area of the city. I wouldn't agree with that. To me it was just a working class area of the city. I remember that I was a hardy streetwise kid. There was none of this "lovey dovey" type of thing with kids in my house back then. Everybody was just surviving. Sometimes you would come back and you had to make your own tea. Sometimes you had to make do with just a packet of crisps. That's just what happened and what it was like back then. I went to [REDACTED] Primary School. That was the school that was in the housing scheme where we stayed. My siblings also went to that school before going to secondary school. I got on ok at primary school and attended regularly.
5. I am not 100% sure whether there was ongoing social work involvement before 1969 but there could have been. I do remember things were going on in the lead up to me attending children's hearings. My oldest brother, [REDACTED], went up to Kinloch Rannoch to stay with an auntie and uncle we had there. My uncle worked as a forestry manager there. My sister, [REDACTED], went to live with my auntie and my grandmother. Looking back on all of that, I think there were problems with [REDACTED] getting in there and the kids were sent away to allow my mother and him to have a wee bit of space. I'm not quite sure whether that is the real story but that is my feeling looking back on that time.
6. I remember being arrested for theft on a couple of occasions. I can see from my records that the first time I was arrested was in 1968, when I was nine years old. The second time was when I was ten years old in 1969. On both occasions I was caught stealing food out of Marks and Spencer in Murraygate in Dundee. I would take the food and hide it in Peters Lane then go back and take some more until I had a bag full. I would then go back home with what I had got. Looking back, I must have been hungry to have been doing that. I probably would have taken the food back to my mother's and said that I had got the money to buy the food from doing a

job or something like that. I don't fully recollect what happened but I am sure that that is likely what was happening.

7. I think there was a children's hearing after the first time I was caught stealing in 1968. I don't think anything happened after that hearing other than me being "earmarked." After the second time I was caught in 1969 I was referred to a children's panel again. The referral was definitely because of thieving rather than not attending school or problems at home. The hearing was held in a building on Reform Street in Dundee. The building is now partly used as an office for a parcel delivery service.
8. I remember the second hearing. I had no representation during any of the hearings I went to. The way we were back then meant that even the idea of solicitor would have meant nothing to me. Nowadays you would not only expect but demand legal representation for something like the children's hearing that resulted in me being taken into care. My mother and [REDACTED] were with me throughout. We went into the room separately and altogether. I remember that when my mother and [REDACTED] were in the room they provided their stories in support of me. I remember there were some arguments. I think my mother was being loyal to me but saying that she wasn't involved in any misdemeanours. She must have known where the food was coming from though.
9. There was no one there who sat me down and explained what was going on in either of the hearings. All I remember is three people sitting on a table in front of me firing little questions at me. One of the panel members was the chairman and the other two were from other departments. I imagine, given the age I was, those questions were probably more intended for my mother rather than me. Even were I to have been questioned directly I don't think I would have confessed anything because my mother was sitting next to me.
10. Looking back on the hearing it felt more that the people on the panel were speaking in confidence than in front of me. It wasn't a long hearing and I was maybe only in and out of the room a couple of times. I think we waited outside on wooden

benches. I have worked out from my records that it was ultimately decided by the panel at the end of that hearing that I was to be placed into an in-between place whilst a transfer to Balgowan could be officially organised.

11. Being taken away was an absolute shock to me. Nobody had told me that might happen. My mother and [REDACTED] left and then I was taken directly from the hearing to an interim place called Harestane by a social worker. I don't remember who that was. I remember that I didn't have anything with me when I was taken away from the hearing. All I had was what I was wearing

#### **Harestane, Balgowan, Dundee**

12. Harestane was less than a mile away from the back of Balgowan. The back of Balgowan actually went out onto Harestane Road. Harestane was like a big house rather than an approved school. It was a wee bit more like a community centre rather than anything else.
13. I was only there for a couple of days. Looking back, having seen my records, I think children were sent to Harestanes before going to approved schools and whilst they did the documentation and things like that. I think that was a stopping off place that they used before everything was legal and you could be sent to Balgowan.
14. I don't really remember much from my time in Harestane other than playing billiards during the day. There's nothing in any of the records that I recovered about the couple of days I spent there. I think I was taken in a minibus with other boys up to Balgowan at the end of my stay at Harestane.

#### **Balgowan List D School, Balgowan, Dundee**

15. According to my records I was placed into Balgowan on [REDACTED] 1969 and released on [REDACTED] 1971. That means that I would have been there between

the ages of ten and twelve. The records say that I was placed there under registration number [REDACTED] and that the decision and number was recorded in Edinburgh on the [REDACTED] 1969.

16. I was in Balgowan for a total of 628 days which works out at about 89 weeks. To me that seems an awful long time considering what I had done. I have undertaken some research and discovered an exchange in parliament about approved schools recorded in Hansard from 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1968 between Donald Dewar MP and Willie Ross MP, who was the Secretary of State for Scotland at that time. It must have been around the time of the The Social Work (Scotland) Act coming in. In that exchange the average length of stay at approved schools in Scotland is discussed and what is said is that it was about 26 weeks. That makes me think that there may have been something more than me just being sent to Balgowan for theft and that there could have been some sort of welfare issue in the background. Looking back, if there were other things going on then I don't know whether Balgowan was the appropriate place to place me after I served my time.
17. I think Balgowan was owned by Dundee Council at the time it was knocked down but I don't know who owned and ran the place when I was there. I haven't been able to find that out. I find that very peculiar and have come to a bit of a dead end with that. I know that it was a List D approved school when I was there but beyond that I don't know anything further.

*Layout of Balgowan List D School*

18. In total Balgowan must have covered a number of acres. The main building was a massive old Victorian building. A Scottish millionaire built the building for the good and benefit of children and adults. It was a beautiful building which, if it was still around today, would no doubt be a Grade I Listed building. There were some grounds to the front of the building with a 300 metre long driveway so that people could drive up to the front door. That door was for visitors only. The boys didn't really go into the front of the building. They gained access by going round to the back of the building.

19. To the rear of the building was a massive area that contained gardens, greenhouses and workshops. It was basically an area where people could work. To the back of that was a big locked wooden fence. I think there was an area that was a bit like a compound in the middle of the building. It was an area that was outside but within the building at the same time. We would play football and run around in that area. It was very rare that we would go anywhere else outside. As you entered the building to the rear there was a reception area. Further on from that was a dining hall and some small classrooms. The toilets were outside.
  
20. The accommodation itself was old and cold. In my head at the time I thought that they did that deliberately so that you would want to get out even quicker. I can always remember how tight it was in there. There were 107 children, rooms, bedrooms, a gym hall and everything else all crammed into the same space. Added to that we couldn't walk into the front of the building or access that part. That just made things even tighter. If I am honest, I found the nature of the accommodation, rather than what happened there, good. I had things like clean sheets, blankets on my bed and three meals a day. In that way I can't really complain because it was better than what I was used to at home.

*Staff structure*

21. I can't remember whether staff solely had the role of teacher or looking after the children outside of classes. I don't know whether some staff members did both roles in there. I don't know where the staff stayed. The nature of the building meant there were corridors and rooms here and there that we didn't go into. It really was like a maze. There could have been areas that staff stayed in that were locked and we didn't get to see.

*Staff*

22. I know there was a headmaster because I see him featured on some of the paperwork I recovered. However, I don't remember seeing him.

23. Mr <sup>IQH</sup> [REDACTED] was one of the staff members who taught lessons in the classrooms. I don't know whether he was qualified but he was a teacher there. I remember him only having one hand. He was a nice guy. He was sort of well-spoken so I am not sure where he was from.
24. Tommy Traynor would sometimes teach stuff in the classrooms during lessons but he mostly worked on the residential side of things. He was ex Black Watch. I think he was Scottish. He was a little guy. I remember that he wore brogues with segs attached to their soles. You could hear him coming from a mile away because of them. I think he did that deliberately to avoid confrontation with the kids. He was sort of half a nice guy. I think he felt a wee bit sorry for some of the kids. During the better times, when everything was calm, I remember children crowding around him and having a chat. He had a wee bit of a heart.
25. Mr <sup>LUP</sup> [REDACTED] was the gym master. <sup>LUP</sup> [REDACTED] may have been his first name because I remember a song that was sung by the boys about him that called him that. He was a Dundee man. He had no bend in one of his knees. When he walked he sort of bobbed along because of that. He had a big nose. He had quite a powerful upper body. I would say that he was either in his forties or fifties when I was at Balgowan. I think he had some sort of say in the place so I took it from that that he had been there for a while.

*The children at Balgowan List D School*

26. Amongst the records I recovered there is a letter from the headmaster to the registrar in Edinburgh saying that there were 107 boys at Balgowan just before I joined. As a child it is difficult to gauge the ages of people around you but I think it was all boys between the ages of about ten and sixteen. I don't think I saw anyone there who was much younger than me.
27. The boys were from all over Scotland. A lot of the children and older boys were from Glasgow. My impression was that the older boys from Dundee went to Glasgow and

the older boys from Glasgow went to Dundee. Back then what religion you were seemed to be something that was taken into consideration. I can see that from my records. I do wonder whether there were only so many religious places that the children could go to in Glasgow and that was why so many Glasgow children came across to Dundee. Balgowan didn't seem to have that segregation between different religions.

28. I don't remember any of the other boys. You didn't really have a lot of friendships with people. I wasn't a loner but I had to do what I had to do to survive. I decided that the more people I was in hoc with the harder it would be to survive so I took the path of being alone.

### **Routine at Balgowan List D School**

#### *First day and earliest memories*

29. I realised that I had met my match on my first day there. I soon realised that the guys who were going to be in charge of me were regimental and authoritative. I remember being ordered around the place and being told to do things. There was no "oh you are going to be alright son", "you'll be alright" or "this is a great place to be." I could sense that it wasn't that sort of place from the moment I went in. It was more a feeling of "here's another one" from the staff. Even as a ten year old boy I could feel I was being treated like an inmate. I didn't know it at that time but I soon came to realise that there was no such thing as "children" in there.
30. They did everything to you after you arrived. You were scrubbed, deloused and given a haircut. I didn't need that done to me but obviously some of the boys who came in will have done so they did that to everyone. I think that was sort of their standard drill. I can't remember there being a medical examination. All I think they did was check you for head lice and scabies. I don't think it went further than that.



31. The staff did give you a tour of the place on the first day. As a ten year old that was hard to take in. I was basically taken from one room to the next and then it was “right that is you done.” I think I must have just tagged on with people as they went along. After that I had to learn where everything was myself.
  
32. I wouldn't define the staff as having made “an effort” when I started that first day. They made an effort to talk down to you when you were getting changed, to say “you're here now, we're the bosses and don't step out of line” and “we run this place like an iron rod” but nothing further than that. They made the effort to show you stuff but not to care for you. You were basically shown everything once and then it was “get on with it.” There was no empathy whatsoever. I don't think they wanted to make it easy for you. They wanted you to suffer because a suffering boy would repent. They wanted your treatment to be short and sharp. They didn't want you to be comfortable. They wanted you to feel uncomfortable so that you would then conform to whatever it was they were looking for. It was clear that you being there was a punishment rather than anything else.
  
33. I think I went into survival mode after I arrived. I didn't know anyone and was homesick. I remember feeling confused because nobody had told me what the plan was for me next. I was having to find my own way about and that type of thing. Looking back, I find it hard to believe given how old I was that I had a survival plan but I would have had to have done because I survived to the other side. I remember that over the first couple of months I was very awkward, inward and didn't speak. I think I was just scared of the environment I was in. I wanted to be invisible and avoided anyone seeing me. I learnt very quickly not to do things that would result in attention being paid to me.

*Daily routine*

34. Timings were regimental. Everything had a time for when we had to do it. I think that taught you to be quite punctual in the end. Looking back, having had children of my own, I can appreciate that they had to do that to get everyone up, ready and moving around. I don't think there were bells. I think you were just told when and

where to go by the staff. I don't think they wanted you to know what was ultimately happening in terms of what you were doing from one lesson to the next. They didn't want you to get comfortable and by doing that they put a bit of chaos in your life. It kept you on your toes and let them keep things moving all of the time.

35. We got up at 6:30am. I can't remember how we were got up. After getting up we made our beds and went to get washed at sinks in the bathroom. We then went back to our rooms, got dressed, tidied up the room a bit then went down for breakfast. After breakfast we tidied up before being read out the programme for that day. I think that was at about 9:00am. Some people would go here, others there and then the day would start. You would move around between classrooms and the gym. If you had gym there was no shower afterwards. You would just get dressed then go to your next lesson.
36. Mornings would usually be lessons followed by a break in the compound, another lesson then lunch. There were more lessons in the afternoon. I think when the weather was on the good side we got to do gardening or woodwork. I think the teachers did that to reward us. Either that or they used the gardens and woodwork area when teachers didn't turn up. Those occasions were like a free period. After lessons or activities in the afternoon we had dinner. I am not quite sure what happened in the evenings. I have really tried to remember but I can't.
37. I can't remember what I did on weekends for the first few months other than going to church on Sundays. Saturdays changed after about six or seven months because I was allowed to go home for four hours. Towards the very end of my time there was a change again. For the last couple of months over the summer holidays I got to go home during weekdays. When I did go home I would have to return to Balgowan to sleep each night.

#### *Sleeping arrangements*

38. I think the routine was that you were expected to go to bed early and get up early. The room I was in was a really big one with over twenty beds. There wasn't a lot of space to yourself. People were right next to each other. It wasn't a "bonnie two to a

room” kind of situation. I can’t remember whether we were in bunkbeds or had lockers. I would say it’s more likely they were single beds because I don’t ever remember going into a top bunk whilst I was there. If I had I would have remembered that because I was a bed-wetter and the guy below would not have been impressed. I remember no incidents like that.

39. There were boys of all different ages in my room. Looking back, I think the thinking was perhaps that the older kids would maybe “babysit” the younger boys. I think the staff thought that the older kids would make sure that the younger ones were not crying and moaning by slapping them down. I think that was the mentality behind all ages being mixed in together.

*Washing / bathing / toilets*

40. We all would wash at two lines of sinks in the mornings. Every couple of days in the evenings we would have a shower. The showers were open plan at the end of the room. There were no curtains, cubicles or anything like that. There was no privacy whatsoever in Balgowan. Washing times weren’t supervised by staff. I don’t remember someone coming in and checking or anything like that. I know that because if any staff member had seen the sort of things I saw happening then I would remember them not being happy. There could have been a staff member outside of the door or in the building but they weren’t in the room when we were showering.
41. I don’t remember anyone checking whether we were cleaning ourselves properly and doing things like cleaning our teeth. I can’t remember anything surrounding toiletries and towels. I do know that I wouldn’t be getting that sort of stuff from home so I can only assume Balgowan provided it.
42. The majority of the toilets were located outside of the main building in a separate enclosed building. They certainly weren’t like the normal public toilets that we have now. I’m quite sure that the toilets were in cubicles with either half a door or no door on the front. I think that was to stop guys going into the toilets to have a smoke.

*Mealtimes / food*

43. We all ate together in the dining hall. All the tables were plastic and easy to clean. It had that smell about it as if the dishwasher had been on forever. I think all the meals were made in a kitchen there but I'm not sure who did that. The food was ok for me and I quite enjoyed it. I'd come from a background where sometimes food was not a priority. I had come from a place where I was getting crisps for my dinner, didn't get breakfast and had to survive on school meals so that side of things was ok. I was now getting three meals a day. I think I got enough food and would have reacted if any of the other boys took my food away. I think the other boys realised to leave me alone on that. I never experienced anything like being force fed when I didn't like things and didn't see that happening to anyone else. I don't think the staff were around enough during mealtimes to do that sort of thing.
44. I never saw the staff eating with us. I remember them just walking around asking whether the food was ok. You just knew to say "it's lovely" whatever it was. They should have been walking around checking whether there were children who were isolated, being bullied and where everyone was sitting but I think they just walked around and occasionally chatted with people. That sort of thing might have been going on in their heads but that isn't anything that I saw. To me, it just looked like the staff were wandering around doing nothing.
45. You could pick where to sit but we all sat at the same chair and table throughout our time there. I seem to remember the older Glasgow boys sat in one corner and other groups sat elsewhere. Kids just found their own places and areas to sit and congregate. I would never go and sit next to some Glasgow skinhead at their table. That just wouldn't happen. I think I just sat at a table I felt safe on.

*Chores*

46. I don't think they had cleaners who came in but there was always cleaning going on amongst the boys. The boys did that all themselves. You can imagine what the place was like with all those boys in the one place. I don't think I got picked on too

much to do the cleaning because I was too young. I think that was more a thing for the older boys.

*Clothing / uniform*

47. You were dressed in what looked like a set of tight corduroy shorts with straps that went over your shoulders. They were a wee bit like lederhosen. I can't remember whether we wore those both in winter and summer time. I think it was a brown shirt underneath them and shoes. I don't think we had a gym kit. I think all we had were a set of pumps that they provided us with. There was no need for any clothing from your parents. The only reason you might need that was if you were let out on a Saturday. Everybody had brill creamed "cut to the back" hairstyles. I think we all had haircuts like that both for hygiene reasons and to keep us in line.

*Pocket money*

48. There's nothing springs to mind surrounding pocket money and whether that was something that they did at Balgowan. There was a tuck shop so there must have been something. I can't remember getting anything from the tuck shop.

*School*

49. The only staff members I remember teaching lessons in the classrooms were Mr <sup>ZLID</sup> [REDACTED] and Mr <sup>QFH</sup> [REDACTED]. I can't remember how big the class sizes were but I knew when I was there that there were that many kids in the classroom that it was awkward and tight. All the children were mixed together in the classrooms during the day. There were kids as young as ten and as old as fifteen all sitting together. It must have been impossible for staff to teach such a range of children. It must have been hard even for those teachers who wanted to educate us. We all had different moods and some of us were grumpy.
50. I can only guess that they were supposed to be teaching subjects but my recollection is that the lessons we had weren't structured in any way like that. The teachers were

pitching things at a level that inevitably caused animosity in the class. I remember teachers talking about grammar, nouns, verbs and things like that. If you're a child sitting there who can't even read then you aren't going to stick your hand in the air and say "I'm struggling with this." When I think now about the children who got violent in lessons, it wasn't because the children were animals it was because they were embarrassed they couldn't read and terrified that they would be asked a question.

51. I was taught to do things in the workshop but was never made to work in there. All the boys were taught how to make things in there. I remember there were a lot of boys refusing to make things and deciding to make what they wanted. There was a lot of that went on in there. I wouldn't go as far as to say, from what I saw during those lessons, that the teachers were teaching the older boys life skills for after they left. I've read that they were training the boys trades but to me that is just crap. I can only think that they put that on for people who were visiting the place to see. To me the times when we were in the workshop were just a way of filling time.

#### *Leisure time*

52. I can't remember having much leisure time. It was a totally different place to Harestanes. I remember playing billiards, table tennis, there being books and a library and things like that at Harestanes. There was none of that at Balgowan. If those sorts of things were there then I didn't see them or wasn't invited to participate in them. I think they didn't want you to have much of that because it might lead to trouble.
53. I can't remember any of the boys being taken out of Balgowan to go and play sport or anything like that. It was very rare that we went outside. When we did get breaks we would go out into the compound for maybe fifteen minutes at a time. I think it was only one class at a time got to go out during a break because the compound wouldn't have been big enough to fit us all. I think it was all staggered. We'd kick a ball about and the older boys would go off and have a fag. Looking back on mixing in all the age groups, that lead to one or two things happening. After that time a staff

member would come out and shout you in to go to wherever you were meant to go next.

*Religious instruction*

54. I don't recall Balgowan being either Protestant or Catholic. I didn't really know the difference between the two at the age I was when I was in Balgowan. That was something that was irrelevant to me at that time. The only time you were really outside was when they marched you to church on a Sunday. The church is still there. I think it is Church of Scotland. I don't think everyone went because some of the children would go home for weekends. I think the local community attended the service as well. I think they took you there to make you better. You didn't run around when they took you there. Everything revolved around going to the church on that day and coming back.

*Trips / holidays*

55. We weren't taken on any trips or holidays. The closest thing to that was a trip to church on Sundays. That was the furthest they ever took me.

*Leave home*

56. After about six or seven months you were given a pass to go home for four hours on a Saturday. You would put on your civilian clothes and just go. I could just walk home. Towards the very end of my time at Balgowan, Dundee Council experimented with children going home during the day and coming back in the evenings. That was the set up I was under for the last couple of months whilst I was there. I think that happened for a short period during the summer holidays in 1971 before I was due to start secondary school. I don't know what the thinking was behind that experiment.
57. I remember that when I could go home I would just stay in Balgowan. I would never bother going home because home wasn't somewhere I wanted to be at that time. I

felt at that time that I was really between “the devil and the deep blue sea.” I wasn’t sure whether going home or staying in Balgowan was better for me. I made the decision that I would be better to stay there and that was the decision I stuck to.

*Birthdays / Christmas*

58. I can’t remember whether birthdays and Christmas were celebrated at Balgowan. Birthdays were never a thing for me growing up anyway. There could have been things going on with the other boys behind the scenes and their families but that wasn’t something that happened with me.

*Letter writing*

59. I don’t know whether there were things provided for boys to write home.

*Visits / Inspections / Review of detention*

60. I had no visits from my parents or any of my relatives during the time I was there. I didn’t see a social worker during the time I was in Balgowan. Social work contact all started happening after I got out. Other boys did get visits from people. I think they had a room where children could meet people. I remember boys having parents who had driven from all over Scotland to see them.
61. I can’t remember things like open days or people coming in to inspect the place from the outside. I don’t remember anyone coming into the place from the outside and asking me a question. I can’t remember there being anyone from the council or a charity coming in. Looking back, the only people in authority we ever saw were the staff who worked in Balgowan itself.
62. Nobody ever told me from the start, or as I went along, how long I was going to be in Balgowan. Nobody even asked me “how long have you been in here” during my whole time in Balgowan.



### *Healthcare*

63. I don't know whether there was a nurse or a matron that worked inside Balgowan. I can't remember seeing a doctor inside of Balgowan. I'm sure there was one who came in from the outside but I never saw one. I think the only time that you went to see a doctor was if someone had told you to go and see them. It wasn't the sort of place where you could put your hand up and ask for medical help.

### *Running away*

64. I would think about running away all of the time but never did. It was something that would have been pointless for me because my mother only lived fifteen minutes up the road. There was always that threat that people could sneak out of the back door and just go. Some of the older boys did abscond. There was a lot of that went on. There were no great plans like *The Shawshank Redemption*. Kids would notice a way out then they were gone. They'd try to get back to Glasgow, hitch lifts and that type of thing. A couple of weeks later they'd come back to stay again or come back and be sent somewhere else. I don't know whether those boys who ran away got punished. They obviously wouldn't be moving up the graph that they used to discipline children but further than that I don't know.

### *Bed-wetting*

65. I used to wet my bed because I didn't want to leave my bed. The bed-wetting made things worse for me because the other boys did not take to "wet boys" and the staff frowned upon bed-wetters.
66. A lot of the time when staff spoke to you about something they spoke to you in a group and in front of the other boys. I think they thought that the best way to teach you was to make a fool of you in front of the other boys and then you would stop doing whatever it was you were doing. The staff enjoyed doing that because it was a good teaching tool. It meant they didn't have anything and the boy would have to teach themselves what to do. That was what happened when I wet the bed. The staff would make me stand there in front of the other boys with my wet sheets and

ridicule me. You would want to get your bed changed and they would come storming in to do that. They would say things like "LWY [REDACTED] have you pissed that bed again? What have we told you about that? You're ten or eleven years old now. What sort of boy pisses the bed at that age? You're a wee piss the bed." That was embarrassing. You would then have to put your sheets into a big laundry bag and new sheets would be put on during the course of the day. You weren't made to have a shower after that. There certainly was no one who made sure you had a shower before you put your clothes on.

67. There was never any discussion about me seeing a medical practitioner about the bed-wetting. However, those boys who wet their beds had maroon rubber covers put over their mattresses. They only did that so that they could wipe down the mattress easily.

#### **Discipline in Balgowan List D School**

68. The way in which they disciplined children was a carrot and stick approach. On the dining hall wall was a massive chart made out of graph paper. It was on display for everybody to see. Along one side was a colour code and on the other was a number system. It was over three foot square in size. Everybody was allocated a number. My number was [REDACTED]. That number was placed on a token. It was like one of those little discs that you would attach to your keys. The token was put on a little nail on the wall.
69. When you came in your token was placed at the bottom of the chart. As the weeks went on your token would be moved up the chart to the nails that were above. Moving up the chart would trigger different privileges that you could get. It could be that you were allowed out for three or four hours on a Saturday or for the whole afternoon. Once you got to the top of the chart you would maybe get a whole day with your family or you could travel away to visit your family. If you hit a bad turn then your token might be moved downwards and privileges could be taken away.

70. Although there were no names you could determine where everyone was in terms of privileges because you knew what numbers everybody was. Everybody could see where everybody else was because the chart was in full view. I seem to remember that I stayed at the bottom for a wee while. The older boys would whinge and moan about not being moved up one week or being moved down but I never got involved in any of that.
71. There would be staff walking around all of the time because of the fights amongst the boys. I don't think when fights broke out they had the mentality to lock the building down but I do think there was definitely a feeling of "let's calm everything down and start again tomorrow." Looking back I can appreciate all of that given how difficult a place it must have been to run. For staff members it must have been extremely difficult to control at times. I don't know what the consequences were for the boys who had fights with the staff. That was something that happened in exceptional cases. It wasn't something that I was ever involved with. I can only imagine the consequences for those boys would have been pretty severe.
72. The staff didn't get fond of me but I think they became a little more comfortable around me because I had been there so long. They got to learn my traits. I think they got to learn what to do when I was in a particular mood and when to leave me alone. They never grabbed me or threw me about or anything like that. I wonder whether that was because I was so small. There really wasn't a lot of me to "throw about." My punishments more surrounded being belittled or basically made a fool out of by the staff. Looking back, I wonder whether staff being physical with boys of my size was maybe seen as something that was taboo. I also wonder whether I just became conditioned to everything that was going on around me and accepted what was going on.
73. I never experienced anything like corporal punishment or receiving lines from the staff. I never saw or heard of anyone receiving the belt or the strap. I didn't get given chores as a punishment. I am sure though that if you were "a little arse" who wasn't behaving then there would have been jobs that the staff would make you do.

There probably was a lot of other things going on in terms of discipline but they weren't things that concerned me. I was never involved in any of that.

### **Abuse at Balgowan List D School**

74. I have kept this part of my memory of Balgowan school in my head under the banner "guard from everyone and everything with no exception." I do not wish to go into full details about my sexual abuse and have set out below the extent that I am willing to describe. There were lots of little things that happened but they aren't major things that I want to speak to in this statement. They were things like staff belittling you in class, mental abuse and showing a lack of care. They were all things that I think would go on in any place.

LUP

(the gym master)

75. Unfortunately for me my menace was the gym master. He was my nemesis. He was a brutal and wicked man. The words used back then to describe this type of man would be "dirty old man." In reality his actions were brutal. Today the tag would be sexual predator or even beast. He had that irreproachable "I've been here a wee while" air about him. It was almost as if he had some sort of invincibility about him.
76. He was a man for putting boxing gloves on the kids and himself. He'd have that authority on you when he did that and he would use the boxing to show that. He'd sometimes hit you under the guise of showing you what to do. He'd walk into the room and box your ears and things like that. Looking back, I realise that that was all part of his power game.
77. The sexual abuse started after a couple of months. I was just ten years old when he identified me as his target or object. I think before then I had been trying to be invisible and it was only then that he saw me. His ploy was to make me stay behind to assist with putting medicine balls or other equipment away. At the beginning he would take me into a small room and squash himself up against me. He'd be rubbing my neck and I would try to slither about to get away from him. That moved

on the next time to him touching me a bit more. He would put his hand down the back of my trousers. Things escalated further over time. They were all bits adding up to the point that he would have his penis out and ask me to play with him or to suck him. Very rarely did he touch my penis. It was always him asking you to come to him. Things further escalated to the point where he would touch my backside and look to penetrate me with his fingers. Things didn't go further than that but to me that constituted rape.

78. I remember that he would always carry a duster type cloth thing to wipe himself and you off after he was finished. He'd then just tell you to "piss off next to your next lesson." I remember him making threats too. The threats I received from him were always along the lines of "Balgowan stops at fifteen or sixteen, you could then head to Glasgow to Borstal and then from there it is prison. Do not rock the boat because that will be what happens to you." He made me feel as if I was just a piece of scum and that everybody would just think that I am lying. It was all that type of conversation. Even to this day I can still hear him behind me. That body odour smell always catches me out.
79. The abuse continued until the time the Dundee experiment started getting talked about. I think that it was when there were conversations about which of the boys could start going home that he started laying off. I think he realised at that time that my time was done. I don't believe that I turned up and he just turned that way. He had an air about him that made me think that I wasn't the first and that he knew he could get away with doing things. I remember thinking at the time that he knew he could get away with what he was doing.
80. The boys at Balgowan all understood the gym master was a predator. There were other boys who would be late after gym classes coming into the next lessons. When you are in that environment kids all speak to one another. I remember other boys saying "keep away from him" and "don't go near him." A lot of what went on between the boys in terms of acknowledging what the gym master was like was more like just a look when you walked into the classroom late. I appreciate that doesn't make sense but you just knew from the way the other boys looked that they knew what

was happening. It was a look of “I know that if it hadn’t been you then it would have been me.” Those boys I remember as being the younger boys in Balgowan. It was more the skinny smaller kids. Looking back, I wonder whether it was just the younger boys because the older boys might have been able to fight him off a wee bit more.

81. There was never an explicit type of conversation between the boys whilst I was there. I never went to the extent of saying that the gym master was targeting me and doing what he was doing. All I said was that he was bullying me. I would never have gone into the detail of exactly what was happening with the other boys. I would have just denied things to the end. In a place like that if you told one person you told everybody.
  
82. I never reported anything to the staff but I believe that some members of staff understood what was going on. Nine times out of ten the reason I was late for my next class was because of the gym master. None of the staff ever said anything to me when I turned up late. I think it was just accepted by the staff that the gym master could keep you behind. They would know that I had just been to a gym class before theirs. There was no follow up by any of the staff when I came in late they just said “where have you been? Have a seat.” There was no time when I was late that a teacher sent someone to get me. There was none of that. I think that the staff knew what the gym master was like but nobody confronted him. My feeling is that they just viewed him as “a dirty old guy” rather than what he really was. I do believe in my heart that people knew and nobody stopped him.

*Other children*

83. The younger kids did suffer from the violence from the older kids. Sadly, and unfortunately for me, over the eighteen month period I was at Balgowan it was impossible to keep them at bay. Trying to defend yourself was at times futile. The beatings you received for fighting back the other boys were severe. Communal showers, toilets and dormitory bed time was a nightmare for the younger boys like

me because of that. The lack of supervision from the staff only encouraged the older boys to continue their terror and abuse.

84. It really was a volatile place. There was violence between the boys all of the time. I think that was because there was nowhere to go. It wasn't like a secondary school where that was a bit of back chat and a scuffle in the corridor. It just wasn't the sort of normal environment where kids could get spoken to by staff and that would be it. At Balgowan it could blow up at any second. If guys wanted to have a go then they would just go. One little thing could escalate in a second. It would sometimes be the case that other kids who were frustrated would then join in. Things could get out of hand very quickly. There was a little bit of the seasons affecting how the children were. I remember it being worse in the summer time because there was more time outside and more chance to intermingle with the other boys. The days felt shorter during the winter time and it was dark so I think that people were perhaps more happy to just sit about.
85. The fights would be because of the pecking order or because boys wanted stuff. There was stuff surrounding the tuck shop and cigarettes and smoking. In exceptional cases guys would be chatting away nicely with the staff in the morning then trying to fight them in the afternoon. The violence in there was always physical rather than anything involving weapons. There was the odd Glasgow thing of saying "you'll get cut when I get you" but I don't remember knives ever being used. I think that was all just words certain boys used to terrorise you with rather than that being something that could actually happen.
86. You just knew to stay away from certain people when they were in a bad mood. They might be in a bad mood because of a bad phone call, they had gone away home and had a bad time, they were a bit homesick and never got away or they had been downgraded on the graph. For me, seeing or not seeing my parents didn't affect me but I could see that it did for the other kids. They still had that emotional attachment to their parents. I think for those boys in particular Balgowan was a hard place for them to be when things went bad. You just knew when to stay away from guys when they were like that.

87. There were two worlds in there. The one where the staff turned out the lights and thought everyone was sleeping and the one that was actually happening. The lights going out was the dreaded bit for me. Once they went out everybody would be quiet for a while before the older boys started moving about in the dorm. You would be trying to get to sleep and the next minute one of them would be in your bed. It was never the case that you were made to go to their beds. It was always the case that they came to you and it was one on one. They would slip into my bed and sexually abuse me. They would touch me, masturbate themselves and so on. After the business was done they would go back to their bed.
88. Those boys would have been either fourteen or fifteen. I don't remember any of their names. The abuse in the dorms didn't happen every night. When they came they came. I knew it wasn't right so at first I would fight back. The guys were quite big compared to me so through time, and after being given a couple of slaps and beatings, the fear factor settled in. It was then that you just accepted what happened.
89. Once I went to bed I never got up again. If I needed a pee then I just had it there and then in my bed. Regardless of the consequences there was no way that I was going to go anywhere at night. I realised that if I stayed in my bed then when they got into my bed they would have to be silent. If I left my bed and was caught by an older boy somewhere else outside of the dorm then they would have even more power over me. If I had found myself in that situation I would have been even more vulnerable.

#### **Reporting of abuse whilst at Balgowan List D School**

90. Reporting older boys for their actions to the staff was just taboo. As with all the crazy acts that happened at night in a place like Balgowan, where the strong pray on the weak, there was always a code and a line you feared to cross. I was aware of other boys reporting things and the treatment they received from the older boys. However,



I never found out exactly what they were reporting. Nothing was kept a secret in there in that way. It seemed nothing was confidential between the staff and the boys who had been reported. The boys who reported things would get booted, thrown about and slapped by the older boys afterwards. It was just not “the done thing” and you knew that you would have ended up being bullied for being a “grass” on top of what was already happening if you went there.

91. Reporting the gym master was different. The predator hook that he used to keep me from reporting and keeping me in line was “how would anyone ever believe a thief and now a criminal in care?” Any failure to comply would make your stay even longer. If that happened, and you reached the age of fifteen or sixteen, then you were bound for Borstal in Glasgow and then possibly on to prison. I think another hook that he had on me was that he was aware I wouldn’t have been in there if I had had any street cred. He held the power and I just accepted it. It was almost as if you took your medicine, just got it over with and hoped that he moved on to someone else. At the time it felt pointless me going anywhere and reporting what he was doing to me. I just felt that nobody would believe me because of my history.
92. Looking back, I knew what would happen if I reported anything to the staff. It was pointless doing that. You just knew that there would have been a little arm put round you and you would be told “don’t cause problems.” I think that would have been what they would have done if you reported anything to them.
93. I didn’t report what had happened to my mother whilst I was there. That was a really hard conversation for a ten year old to have. Looking back, I wonder if there had been people who came in from the outside I would have reported what was happening to me. Thinking back to what I was like I do think I would’ve gone out on a limb to speak to people. I know I would have done that and just taken the consequences after that. I think I got to the point where I’d been there so long, and was that battle hardened, that I would’ve spoken up. Towards the end I felt unbreakable and had stopped caring what people did to me. I’d got too wise to the people that were abusing me and the fear and bullying element had gone. I’d

realised that what had happened had happened and I was never going to get it back. I would have told them straight what was happening.

### **Leaving Balgowan List D School**

94. I left Balgowan on [REDACTED] 1971 when I was twelve years old. From what I remember, and can work out from my the dates, it looks like they were trying to slot me into the Dundee experiment over the summer holidays and then back into secondary school when term started. That was the first time since starting at Balgowan that I had any type of education outside of that institution. I don't know whether there were other boys leaving Balgowan about the same time as me for similar reasons.

### **Life after leaving care**

95. When I came out my mother and stepfather had married and they'd moved to a bigger house in Linlathen, which is to the east of Dundee. Their house was only about [REDACTED] from Linlathen High. After my mother and stepfather moved there my siblings all came back. Everybody seemed to know where I had been after I came out. All the neighbours knew. My wife's family, who knew my family back then, all knew where I had been. There was no getting away from it. It was a very hard thing to break.
96. Social workers became more involved with me after leaving Balgowan. A male social worker appeared at my house and said he would be looking after me for the next while. He told me the rules, that I would have to come and see him at the community centre every second Thursday and to make sure that I went to school. My experience of him, and all the social workers that followed him, was that they were soft and weren't battle hardened. To me they were all laddies who had finished their degrees and not much else. They were easy meat who could be bluffed and conned. In my experience they weren't the right people for the type of person I was.

They were very easily manipulated. I remember situations where I would walk into the room and they would be wanting to give me a “bollocking” and by the time I left they would be the ones who were apologising and doing exactly what I wanted. At the end of the day it felt as if they wanted to avoid me as much as they wanted to speak to me.

97. Social workers were involved right up until I was sixteen. I was basically on probation until the time I left school. I don't remember any of the social workers' names but there were different ones over the years and they're all set out in my records. It stood out to me from my records that there was a large turnover of social workers who were assigned to me.
98. I remember that social workers were up at my school all of the time. That was because the teachers knew my background and would contact them when I didn't attend school. Over the course of first, second, third and fourth year the threat of getting sent back to Balgowan was kept up. I would counter balance that by going into school every couple of weeks. That would show the social worker that I was a good lad and I would be praised for that. I'd then stay off for another period of time. I would push the envelope so far until I knew there was a chance that the social worker might do something. I was just playing them along. I left school officially in fourth year but in reality I'd already left by second year.
99. I found going back to mainstream education difficult. I remember at Linlathan teachers talking about things like long division and I just didn't know what they meant. I remember teachers looking at me as if to say “where have you been?” There was one particular maths teacher called Mr Chambers. He was a great guy and made a fantastic effort with me. I played rugby and he was involved with that. When he found out where I was that made the difference and he tried to help me catch up. I did the work, he helped me and that worked. Looking back, Mr Chambers just had that instinct to go and help me. I will always remember him saying to me “there is nothing wrong with you.” I remember him helping me out with getting school uniform from the lost property basket and then getting me into his class. Most of the other teachers went the other way though. They decided that

they couldn't teach me anything and gave up trying. I think that was why I ultimately ended up making no effort at all.

100. I left Linlathen High in 1975 when I was sixteen years old. I started with a few manual jobs. I had a couple of jobs in jute mills doing lathering type work. I then found myself with a bit of a drinking problem that I needed to break so I decided to join the Army in 1978. I don't know how I passed the exams to get in but I did. I think in that era the Army was more about giving people a chance than anything else. At that time the Army was also looking for people to join because of what was going on in the world. In all I completed sixteen years' service reaching the rank of Sergeant. The Army was good for me. I ended up living in Germany, Canada and Cyprus. I had a great life but I decided to leave the Army because my son would have needed to go to a boarding school and I wasn't prepared to do that. Given my background, that was just not the option for me and that, in a roundabout way, brought an end to my Army career. Even though everyone in the Army rallied around me and supported me I didn't want to do that so that was the end of it.
101. After leaving the Army we moved back to Dundee and I found a job with the Michelin Tyre Company. I went on to work there for the next twenty five years. I retired in 2019. I now fully finance my own retirement and receive no assistance from the state or benefits.
102. I have been married for forty years to my wife [REDACTED]. She works as a part time shop assistant with [REDACTED] in Dundee. We have a son called [REDACTED]. He used to be in the RAF and now is a fireman. He is married to [REDACTED] who is a paediatric doctor. They have two children, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They live in Uddingston in Glasgow.
103. When my wife retires I'm looking forward to travelling and us doing what we want. I'm hoping that after speaking to the Inquiry to do something to help other people. I'd like to help a charity or something like that a couple of days a week. I don't know whether that will be with kids or not. I still have a connections to Linlathen and people who live near Linlathen Community Centre. I have thought about volunteering there and going right the way back to where it started or getting

involved with sports and children. I want to give back to people. When I do do that I want to do that with a clear head so that is why I am giving my statement to the Inquiry first.

### **Impact**

104. Suffering the shame and stigma of my experiences in silence has at times been difficult. It has required a lot of endurance to keep silent for over fifty years. I've kept that silence at times to my wife of over forty years, my son, my parents, my brother and my sisters. The experiences I had, and the silence I kept, has had an effect on my daily life. I have learnt that if you suffer in silence you will suffer a long time. Some people may think that given what I have gone on to achieve that I haven't got anything to complain about. The art of hiding shame, and shameful acts that have happened to you in the past, can become a great skill you develop over a period of time. However, it can also be something that leads you to questioning your own honour. When I was in Balgowan I was a skinny timid boy who could be bullied, intimidated and touched. By the time I left there people had learnt not to come near me. I would fight to death for my pride. My mentality changed pretty quickly and it was because of what I experienced there.
105. Once you get stigmatised it is very difficult to come back from that. I remember that my wife's family knew my family when I was a child. My wife's mum in particular was very judgemental of me. It was only on my wife and I's silver anniversary that she said sorry. After leaving Balgowan I never trusted teachers or conformed to my state education again. I found my time in secondary school between 1971 and 1975 extremely difficult. I used the art of aggression to hide my shame and embarrassment. That was just something that I could not keep up with the other kids.
106. Getting myself into the Army with my poor education was just lucky I guess. They were desperate to fill the slots available. I remember the results of some of my entry tests were unbelievable. They were just above the pass marks. It took me the next

nine years to learn to teach myself all my Army drills and duties. The only way I could do that was by endless hours of repetition learning. The nine years I spent learning things by repetition in the Army were very uncomfortable. I remember having to sit for hours on end trying to learn how to do things because that was the only way I could get things through my head.

107. My luck run out in 1987 in Dortmund, Germany, when I was selected to do my Sergeant exams. The Army Education Officer handed me my entry exam back suggesting I see him at the end of the lesson. I was then informed that somehow I had survived in the Army for nine years with an education standard of no more than a primary six or seven child. Thankfully, the young Officer did not return me to my barracks but instead made a deal with me to work hard for the next six weeks. In the end I passed the four tests that were needed. I even got a distinction in maths and for man management.
108. Once I got education from the Officer and learnt that there other ways of going around things, like reading books, I started to get more involved in stuff. I will forever be grateful to that young Officer. I mention this story in my statement to highlight what can be done with the correct personnel. If you have people that will go the extra mile to help educate people, to achieve their goals and to make the difficult seem clear then sometimes the impossible can happen. I now know that anything is only impossible until someone actually does it.
109. If you are not educated, haven't got that chip off your shoulder when you come out and people have been doing things to you that they shouldn't have been doing you are going to carry those things with you for a very long time. It follows you right through adulthood, parenthood then on to grandparenthood. It has sometimes felt like you just don't know when it will stop. I don't think anybody who has experienced what I have is ever alright.
110. My wife has picked up a few things from me over the years. She has told me that she picked up on black moods and times when things have come on and I have walked away from the TV. Over the last couple of years the news has really opened

up on the topic of child abuse. I would find myself flicking the news over and going up the stairs to avoid it. Those were things that I never really noticed myself but did happen.

111. I've had a great relationship with my son. I have been protective and done everything that I can. I've done everything I could in the world that is possible. I think that is the way that you should be. I don't mind doing that and have never minded doing it. I've enjoyed doing it because I've realised that it is great to give to people. That sort of thing wasn't something that I ever got growing up.
112. When you break free from places like Balgowan, no matter how much help that people give to you you've got to be able to do a wee bit yourself. You need to have that little bit of drive in you to sort yourself out. At the end of the day I have been given a lot of responsibilities in my life, I have kept to them and honoured them. When you leave a place like Balgowan the only thing that you have left is your honour. I have been honourable to my wife, my son and my friends. If you are not honourable to people they will let you down in the end.
113. It's very hard for me to say what the full impact has been on me. I think that until I tell my son what happened I won't be able to know what collateral damage there has been in opening up and talking to people about what happened. I'm hopeful that then I can put it all behind me and move on.

### **Treatment and support**

114. My wife has said that sometimes she could see from my mood that I was in "dark places." However, I have never seen myself as being like that so I think that is why I never thought about treatment until recently. I have had an involvement with Future Pathways and that has led to me having four counselling sessions. The lady was fantastic but I never told her a thing. I ended up just wrapping her up in circles and boring her silly. That's not something I am proud of. I know that I did that deliberately even though she was a great woman. I wouldn't play the game with her

and I think she knew that I wasn't going to play the game with her. I ended up calling it a day with the sessions. They were really good but they couldn't help me. I realised at the end that the lady was a listener who wasn't judgemental and that made me feel a bit rotten. At the end of the day I was wasting her time and wanted her to go on to somebody else.

### **Reporting of abuse after leaving care**

115. It's really hard to have discussions with your family about the sorts of things I experienced when in care. I remember having a conversation with my wife about why I didn't return to Balgowan in the early eighties and get the man who abused me. I had been trained in the Army and could have done things. I wasn't violent but I had the ability to sort things out. I wasn't able to answer my wife why I didn't go back. Even to this day I still don't know why I didn't take them on.
116. By the late eighties society was opening up about abuse a wee bit more and I could have done something. I could have got a solicitor or spoken to the police but I didn't. I never thought that I would go down the road of talking to someone official about what happened. I think I always thought it was something that had gone on in my life but not realised how deep it went. Not having done something has left a little bit of a bad taste in my mouth. My hope is that speaking to the Inquiry can start something. I do worry that I won't be believed because I haven't done something for such a long time. It's excusable for a ten year old not to report things but I don't know whether it is for someone is an adult later on in their life.
117. It is only really now that I have openly spoken to my wife about things. She isn't a solicitor but she asks the same questions ten different ways until she gets the answer she wants. I've been quite open with her. I think I have been as open with her as I am ever going to be with anyone in my whole life. My wife has now been told everything.



118. I still haven't told my son about what happened. That is the next big step for me that I need to do. It is sort of like my last battle. The first thing he is going to say is "tell me everything." He's a Jack Russell just like my wife and will just want to know everything. To me that is going to be so uncomfortable. I'm at a loss as to what to do with my son and am running through the consequences of maybe doing that in my own head. My wife is supportive and has said to me that I should do whatever I want to do. However, I am concerned about my son's wife, her family and her background. I know that if I tell my son he will tell his wife and I don't want things to be affected there. I am concerned that they might in some way look at me differently and that might affect the relationship I have with my grandchildren. I can't help thinking that a problem shared isn't always one that is halved. I'm not so much concerned about saying things to my son, it's more that I don't know what is going to happen next. The potential for there being a change in the dynamics is the most terrifying thing for me right now.

#### **Visiting Balgowan List D School in adult life**

119. I have visited the site where Balgowan was on a couple of occasions. The truth is that I only visited years after leaving because I knew it had been demolished. For some reason when I am in a particular frame of mind I will go up and have a look. The whole lot is housing so, unless you were in there, it is very difficult to visualise where everything was.

#### **Records**

120. The first thing I was asked when I started the process of trying to join the Army in 1978 was whether I had any convictions and whether I had been in any trouble. That got me worried so I went to the social services department on North Lindsay Street in Dundee to check whether there might be anything that would prevent me from joining the Army. When I spoke to the people there they said to me that they had a file on me but it had a "fifty year drop" on it. It was explained to me that the file

couldn't be opened for fifty years or until I died. She told me that I didn't have to say anything to the guy in the Army careers office because it would be fifty years before my records could be opened. I thought that was fantastic, didn't saying anything and ended up joining the Army in 1978. I didn't tell the recruiting officer anything about my time in care or anything else.

121. In about 2019 there was increased coverage of the Inquiry and the protests that were ongoing outside Holyrood surrounding the waiver against future claims in the financial redress legislation . I also became aware that if I were to apply for a job somewhere like the council then I would have to go through a disclosure process. Those things, combined with remembering that my social work file could now be possibly opened as fifty years had passed, led to me being worried that something would show up if I started a new job. That's what started the ball rolling with me wanting to recover my records. I then made a subject access request for whatever records I could obtain.
122. When I spoke to someone in the archives department at the council they told me that there was no such thing as a "fifty year drop off" regarding records. I was told that if I had wanted to get my records I could have done that at any time. I had been spun a wee falsehood for all those years. In the end the man I dealt with to obtain my records was really nice and fought for me right through the subject access request. It took between about 2019 and 2020 for them to find my records and get them to me. I think the pandemic had a role in that and made things difficult when staff needed access to offices to retrieve records, photocopy them and then redact them.
123. I have discovered that following Balgowan being knocked down in 1984 a lot of records were lost but I did obtain my social work records. A lot of the records I recovered are redacted. I was a bit shocked when I read through my records. Some of the language that was used by the people making the records wasn't good. A lot of the records aren't very complimentary. They're not something that I would like to show my own son. There were derogatory comments along the lines of saying that my family were delinquents and we were all living in squalor. It also provided

categories on the form registering me to Balgowan for whether the child was illegitimate. I don't think that had any place there.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

124. Talking through my experiences with the Inquiry has left me thinking how difficult it can be to summarise a very difficult part of your life experience. It can be really quite a challenge to do that. I am aware that a man went to the moon in 1969 and that it was a great achievement for mankind. However, it amazes me to think that whilst that was achieved, I was receiving the barbaric treatment I did at Balgowan. That treatment was avoidable and should never have happened.
  
125. After visiting the site where Balgowan had been I decided I wanted to do some research. That led to me reading a news article describing what it was like at Balgowan in the sixties. It is in The Herald dated 1<sup>st</sup> March 2003 and says *"They were up by 6.30, fed porridge and dressed in brown corduroy short-trousered suits. Their hair, already extra short, would be smartened up with Brylcreem in true 1960s style. Sunday was different from the other days: it meant a break from woodwork and mending shoes. Instead, they would go to church, followed by a walk around the neighbourhood. As the boys walked in pairs among the elegant stone villas, there was no doubting who they were. They were from the "bad boys' school". Mothers peering at them from their windows would turn to their own sons and say: "That's what will happen to you if you don't behave." These boys stole, and broke windows, and their home lives were dismal. Yet for all their petty criminality they were enigmas. People felt a little sympathy for these young inmates of Balgowan Approved School in Dundee. They knew that life inside was difficult. Discipline was strict and the conditions were Dickensian: high-vaulted dorms had beds in rows of three; the routine was grinding; the boys were edgy and mysterious. Everyone knew what they were in for, but they didn't quite know what went on. Stories would circulate about another boy having absconded..."* The article goes on to describe how a teacher was killed by some of the boys there during a mountaineering expedition in 1962. The way that article describes the routine of the place does ring

true with me. However, the reason I want to highlight this article in my statement is because it shows that people did know, and know now, what was going on in these sorts of places.

*Staff*

126. I'm a wee bit caught in the middle because I realise that it must have been hard for the staff to look after us all at Balgowan but at the same time I know that they never did look after us. I question myself why I am giving them so much leeway considering the bad things that some of them did but I can't help giving them the benefit of the doubt in some areas. I didn't feel that way when I was twenty five but now I feel as if I have to give them a little bit of leeway. However, I don't want that to creep in too much.
127. They should have had better staff working in Balgowan and have been better organised. I don't know, for example, whether there were staff on duty throughout the night at Balgowan. If there were then the staff who were on night shift shouldn't have been treating their shift as an opportunity to sleep. Nobody came and looked in after you at night time. There should have been staff walking about, observing what was going on and interacting with people.
128. There should be the right personnel in place in care settings. Those persons should be trained to educate, to listen, to think and to act to help prepare all young people for the future. The Scottish Government should be fully committed to making the role of care worker something that is regarded as an honourable profession. The people who get employed to do jobs in care should really want to do the job. It should be treated just like nursing.
129. The people in these roles should have aspirations for the children that they care for and not just themselves. If you don't provide validation for those sorts of jobs then it is inevitable that it will attract the wrong sort of people. Those people should be allowed to work for decent hours so that they can have breathing space and time for

themselves. Everybody knows that looking after children can be exhausting so that needs to be in place.

130. The number of staff in a place that provides care will always be an issue. That is like any other type of role that provides a service to the general public. All that should be covered in legislation. There should be no ifs or buts about it when it comes to the number of staff per children. If you don't have enough staff then they shouldn't be taking on as many children. There should be a sliding scale. We as a society have not been looking after children properly. At the moment there is pressure piled on to everybody to take on too much and it shouldn't be like that. There has to be firm rules in place to cover all of that.

#### *Education in care institutions*

131. Education is a part of Balgowan that really concerns me looking back. They never did what they were supposed to do. My impression from things that I have read is that they must have been telling people on the outside that the education was going well in there. The reality was that they never did anything with us in terms of teaching. I would be very surprised if there were many children there who went on to do their Highers and even fewer of them would have gone on to university. If kids miss out on education at the stage we were at they will rebel even more.
132. Balgowan has got to stand up and say that they never educated the kids. The people involved in educating the boys at Balgowan had no understanding of what it meant to do that job. The words "too thick" or "stupid, dull and useless" were often used. We were made to get out of the classroom and help in the gardens or do manual labour cleaning areas of the school. Nowadays they would have specialist trained teachers to teach children like we were in Balgowan. Back then they didn't even have the basics in place.
133. In the article in The Herald dated 1<sup>st</sup> March 2003 it goes on to say "*Balgowan's main emphasis was on teaching useful working skills such as shoemaking, gardening, crafts, and woodwork.*" There was that mentality, however, the people who were

running these things as well as the classes were not teachers. Looking back, I don't know how children could be in these sort of places for the length of time I was and nobody qualified was actually teaching them. Nowadays, education for children of the age I was then, is seen as vital and can result in you missing out on things in later life. Whoever was in charge of Balgowan had a duty to make sure that the children were educated and that was not something that went on whilst I was in there.

134. Looking back, I've always had the feeling they were just going through the motions. I do not believe that they were fully qualified or had been to universities or teaching colleges sufficiently enough to be in the roles that they had. I can speak from my personal experience in the Army that there is an art in trying to educate boys from hard or broken backgrounds. Those boys may have plenty of attitude and lack social skills. Educators in care settings should be armed with special skills and be caring and forward thinking. They must have that to gain anything worthwhile in education terms from the children they are looking after.

*Length of stay and follow on care*

135. Once someone has been in somewhere for a certain length of time they become conditioned. In my experience you don't learn anything new after a certain length of time. There should have been something in place for children who did more than the average or reached 52 or 60 weeks. Something like a review to look into what was going to be done with that child. You have to set children ready for getting out and integrating back into society. They should have taught me from the start what was required for getting out. They should have been saying "you're in here, you're staying here but when you get out you are going to be ten times better." They should have been asking me what I needed to get back into society and what was bothering me. If they had I would have told them that I can't do this or that. They could have then piled everything I needed into me and got me going again. If they had done that then, even if my parents had not sorted themselves out, I would have at least known what behaviours, like drinking and so on, were wrong and would have had a chance of moving forward quicker.

136. It was different for me when I came out of Balgowan because you didn't necessarily need qualifications to get a job. Nowadays there are application forms, interviews and qualifications even for a job in a supermarket. If you're a young lad now and you are leaving these institutions without having been educated you are just not going to get an interview at somewhere like Tesco's. There are that many forms to fill in that it leaves these kids on a downward strait straight away. That is why the job of the people providing care is vitally important and should continue even after the child has come out. That is absolutely key. If you don't provide care after children leave then you are only going to see them back in these places again and again. Before you know it one child has cost the country "x" amount of money, rather than being invested in the community, because ongoing care for that child hasn't been put in place.

*Records*

137. It took me over fifty years to discover that I could access my records because I was told a falsehood by the social work department in 1978. It was only because I spoke to someone nice in the archives department at Dundee Council that I discovered that. There should have been a better system in place so that those in authority couldn't bluff people. When I did obtain my records there were comments in them that weren't good. I would suggest that social workers should refrain from using derogatory comments in records that could be kept for many years. It isn't something nice to see when you're looking through them years later and certainly doesn't reflect well on the social worker making those comments.

*The "bible"*

138. I would like to see a proper "bible" written on what people providing care for children should have to do. There should be one bible covering every part of Scotland. There shouldn't be one for Glasgow, one for Dundee, one for this region, one for that region and so on. Those persons providing care should not be allowed to deviate from what is contained in the bible or try and wriggle past it. Everybody who

is employed in the care sector should know that that document is the one that counts and there should be no excuses for anything. The law contained in that bible should be the law and that would be the end of it. There needs to be rules in these places and children and the people working there can't be allowed to just do what they want. If the bible is never printed then it is inevitable that people will find a way to just do what they want to do.

### **Hopes for the Inquiry**

139. Sometimes I feel other people's perception of the sort of sexual and mental abuse I suffered was something just because of the era I lived in. I would strongly dispute that thinking. Abuse is no more dreadful and disgusting today in 2021 than it was in 1969. Sadly people are still suffering because adults failed to discharge their duties. Lots of victims will have passed away now and lots of others just can't find the courage to speak out. For me, reflecting back on my experiences, any justice which is delayed is a justice which is denied.
140. The question of who was at fault keeps going through my mind. I don't know whether it was the school, the employees or the individuals involved in what happened. I don't think you can ultimately blame the whole world for what happened so for me it ultimately has to be the gym master. Another question I have is who was in charge of this ship whilst all these things were happening? I don't know what the headmaster was like. He might have been a great guy as far as I know. He might have been dealing with things behind the scenes with my family. However, my impression from what I experienced day to day is that he was sitting in his office when people from the outside came in saying "everything is great, go to another school, everyone is happy here." Looking back, that headmaster should have been nailing the gym master's arse to the wall. If other staff members were aware then I am in no doubt that the headmaster would have known also.
141. What I experienced in care was destructive and disgusting but I have moved on from it. I think that if you want to do that then you can. That is what I have done.



However, I know that many people, particularly from the Glasgow area, haven't moved on. There's some who have never been employed and been on invalidity. I appreciate that not everyone comes out good and that there are long term effects. I want to get my side out and hopefully help other people at the same time. I would hope that by sharing my experiences of being incarcerated in a List D approved school environment in the late sixties and early seventies I can hopefully encourage other persons to come forward and obtain justice, peace and closure for themselves.

142. My hope would be that all the effort and good will from Lady Smith, and her colleagues, can finally result in an excellent report. When all is said and done, I hope the report leaves not one inch of wriggle room to allow adults to think that any form of abuse can go under the radar.
143. The experiences I had during my time in care happened in the past but the impact is never-ending. I am aware from things that I have read about the redress scheme that it is the intention that all those people who have applied will receive a letter of apology from the minister concerned at the Scottish Government. That for me feels like a Holy Grail at the end of everything. However, I do want people to know that that would not be the end of things for everybody. For some people, including myself, the effects of what happened will always be there.
144. A letter doesn't stop the suffering. It will go on throughout the generations. Although the children of persons who have been abused in care don't experience the abuse directly they do indirectly. There isn't a single day that goes by when I don't think about my son and his family. Sacrifices were made by him because of the experiences I had. There were sacrifices that I made even before he was born.
145. Unfortunately for me the process of deciding to provide a statement, and providing this statement, has necessarily resulted in me looking back over a shameful period of my childhood between 1969 and 1971. I hope this statement has set out those experiences to the Inquiry. Sadly I was a victim of sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect whilst I was incarcerated at Balgowan. However, I hope that my experiences

will assist the work of the Inquiry and Lady Smith's ultimate report on behalf of the government.

146. 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..... 07 May 2021 .....