

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HMR

Support person present: No

1. My name is HMR. My date of birth is 1957. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mum and dad were and . My dad has passed away. I am the oldest of five boys from this relationship. My brothers are , , and . There is roughly one year difference between each of us. I was born and spent my early years in Glasgow. My dad worked away from home and left the family home when I was about five. I have no recollection of my dad. My step dad subsequently came on the scene and with my mum they had three more children, , and . They are all much younger than me. I considered to be my dad.
3. My first school was in Morrison Place but I cannot recall the name of it. At some point we moved house to Carntyne and I went to Bluevale primary school. Bluevale was a Protestant school and when my father came on the scene we went to St Mary's which was Catholic. My grandmother came to live with us in Carntyne because I think my mum needed help. She brought with her several other children. We subsequently moved house again to Bridgeton and I moved to Sacred Heart Primary School.

4. I started getting into trouble in Carntyne because I was stealing coal for our coal fire. I remember things were so tight that my mum lifted and burned the linoleum to heat the house. My mum had no money and there was a railway yard nearby. I used a Silvercross pram to collect and carry the coal. I was about five or six when I used to offer to watch people's cars when they were at the local dog track. If they didn't pay up I might break into their cars and steal. Breaking into cars wasn't unusual for me.
5. When my mum was pregnant with [REDACTED], my youngest brother, she was admitted to hospital. My father was working away from home and couldn't be contacted so my mum apparently asked my grandmother, my father's mother, if she would look after the four of us but she refused. Because there was no alternative me and [REDACTED] were sent to a home in Dunoon. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were sent to a home in Saltcoats.

Unknown care setting in Dunoon

6. I don't know the name of the place we went to in Dunoon but we weren't there for very long, possibly only three or four weeks or less and I might have been six or seven. I believe that when my dad heard we had been put in care he did all he could to get us out. I have no real recollection of this place apart from the memory of a wishing well and getting taken out for the day to Dunoon town centre. I have no unhappy memories from Dunoon. When we left all four of us went back to my mum's.

Life back with mum

7. My mum was seeing my stepfather by that time. He had his own place and didn't live with us but he was at our house quite often. We moved to Bridgeton and my stepfather moved in with us. I was continually getting into trouble. I would have been nine or ten. I was breaking into cars and I broke into a bakery to get food for the house. One time I broke into a car and stole a wallet with money in it. On the way home I went to the chip shop and bought loads of fish suppers. I took them home

and I told my mum I had found the money. She gave me a row for spending so much on the food. My mum would have taken the money from me if she knew I had found it, that's why I bought chips. I am not sure what her reaction would have been if she knew I had stolen it. When I got the money my instinct was to share it with my siblings.

8. I was caught by the police several times and I went to court where I was given probation and warnings. When I was put on probation it was for three years and I worked with a social worker during this time. I can't remember his or her name or what contact I had with them. The court I was in was below the Sheriff court and my mum and grandmother were there. I don't remember having any legal representation. I think it was a court for minors. When I was sentenced I remember hearing my grandmother screaming. I only found out a few months ago that my mother was run over by a car outside the court when she was leaving. Her mind was obviously elsewhere. No-one ever thought to tell me about this.
9. The first place I was sentenced to was approved school on [REDACTED] 1967. This date has always stuck in my mind. I was nine years old. My sentence was for between one and three years. I went to Larchgrove first until a place came up at an approved school.

Larchgrove remand centre, Glasgow

10. Larchgrove was a remand centre. Inside the main gate was a corridor which led up to the gymnasium at the back. There was a square in the middle and there were probably other off shoots from the square. The windows were made up of cast iron squares.
11. I would guess there could be 150 boys living there. There were staff in each wing and these staff also sometimes did the PT classes. All the staff were males and there were at least four on duty at any time. We always called them Mister followed

by their surname and they called me HMR. No one was called by their first name.

12. I was there for around six to eight weeks I am but not really sure. Larchgrove was a real shock to me. I was only nine and there were boys in there up to fifteen. There was a range of ages in my dorm. I can't remember if the dorms had names. I wasn't shown around on my first day and it was the other boys who told me what and when I was supposed to do things, not the staff. I more or less had to follow the other boys.

Routine at Larchgrove

First day

13. I remember arriving at Larchgrove. Even though I was only nine it was the first place I had ever been. It was daunting. The staff were loud and aggressive, and it felt like I was in the army. I collected my kit and was put in the dormitory.

Mornings and bedtime

14. We would get up in the morning, make our beds, go for a wash then go back to the dorm. We waited until we were called to go down for breakfast. After breakfast we went to classes.

Mealtimes/Food/Washing/bathing

15. The food must have been alright because I don't remember having any complaints about it. There was no privacy in the showers and all the boys showered together.

Clothing/uniform

16. The kit I was given when I arrived was shorts, brown jumper, khaki shirt, grey socks, pair of sand shoes and another pair of shoes. My clothing had a number written on the labels so I knew it was mine.

Schooling/Healthcare

17. There were classrooms where we went after breakfast. I can't remember being taught any maths, English or anything like that. We had parades at certain times and we had to walk round then stand in lines. It was quite disciplined and there was no talking but we didn't have to march army style. Some of the much older boys were allowed to talk but we weren't. The day after I arrived I was given a medical examination by the matron.

Bed Wetting

18. I wet the bed now and again. Staff would make you strip your bed and carry your sheets to the laundry basket. Other boys would see you with your sheets and they would call you names. It was embarrassing.

Visitors

19. My mother visited a couple of times. There was a visiting room. I am not sure how often she was allowed to come. There were always members of staff hanging about when people visited.

Homesickness

20. I was homesick when I was at Larchgrove. It was the first place I had been and it was tough. I had to keep my emotions to myself. It wasn't the sort of place where you could show emotion or let on that you were upset. There was no-one there that you could ask for help or support. At times I saw other kids crying and the bully kids

would ridicule them, call them names and make it even worse for them. If the staff saw children crying they wouldn't offer any support and instead would tell the boys concerned to 'man up'.

Abuse at Larchgrove

21. The staff ran a bullying regime at Larchgrove and there was bullying between the boys too. I was made to fight against other boys in a boxing ring against other boys as part of the PT class which was once or twice a week. The staff made me put boxing gloves on then put me in the ring. There wasn't a choice, I had to fight. The staff chose who you fought with and they were selected randomly. It was often with much older and bigger boys. Sometimes the boys were as old as fifteen. I can't remember how often this happened.
22. The staff put a lot of pressure on you to do things the way they wanted. They would tell you if you didn't do something properly the rest of the boys would have to do ten press-ups. This really put pressure on you to do whatever it was otherwise the boys would suffer. The staff would often say things in front of the other boys just to embarrass and ridicule you. They did a lot of things and said a lot of things just to try and toughen all the boys up but it was done in a cruel way. I was slapped, punched and kicked on occasions by staff. I was slapped if I was caught talking. I was kicked on the backside if I had forgotten something and had to go back for it.
23. I tried my best to keep my head down and make sure that I wasn't caught in a position that something might happen. I knew not to be last out the showers because the last boy out regularly got a slap on the back of the head. I didn't see any of the other boys being abused in any other way apart from being slapped and kicked by staff. I never witnessed, saw or heard about any sexual abuse. I don't think I was picked on or abused any more than any other boy.

Leaving Larchgrove

24. I think it was a couple of days before I left Larchgrove that a member of staff approached me and told me that I was leaving and going to St Ninian's. I had never heard anyone talking about St Ninian's until I was told I was going there. When I heard I asked some of the other boys what they knew about St Ninian's. The general chat amongst the boys was that some of the Brothers were okay and some were to be avoided. I was told it was a better regime than Larchgrove and the atmosphere was a bit more relaxed. I had heard that I would be taken swimming and hill climbing amongst other things. On hearing this I was quite relieved to be leaving Larchgrove.
25. I handed all the kit I was provided when I arrived back to the staff. I can't remember who took me from Larchgrove on the journey to St Ninian's, probably a member of Larchgrove staff. I remember arriving at St Ninian's.

St Ninian's approved school, Gartmore

26. St Ninian's was run by the De la Salle order of Brothers but I only really learned that in my adult life when I went to court. I had heard St Ninian's referred to when I was at St Ninian's and there was a special day celebrating something about the De la Salle order. The Brothers wore long black robes with collars.
27. I remember when I first saw St Ninian's it was like a country mansion or a castle in a forest. There was a driveway leading up to it which curved round at the top and in front of the building was a big roundabout. When you entered the building it was a very grand hallway in either Victorian or Georgian style. There were big bannisters going upstairs either side of the hall. There were ornate plaques or shields or religious drawings or paintings on the walls.
28. The boys were divided into houses. The whole wing I was in was called St George's. There were three or four other houses in different parts of the building but I can't remember what they were called. There were about six or eight boys in my dorm and

there were other dorms next to mine in the same corridor. The dorms were big and spacious. My housemaster was Brother Benedict whose nickname was 'Bootsy' and his quarters were next to the dorms.

29. My first impressions were that it felt good because there was so much space and it was such a grand but modern building. There was also a bit of an eerie feeling about the place. There were various stories about the 'grey lady' who frequented a spiral staircase beside the dorms.

Routine at St Ninian's, Gartmore

First day

30. I recall getting taken to the reception where I was given my St Ninian's uniform and changed out of my own clothes. I was taken to the dorm and shown my bed space. I put my kit in the locker beside my bed and I was given toothpaste and a toothbrush. I was given sheets for my bed which I made then went to see matron and given an examination.

Mornings and bedtime

31. We were woken up about 7:00 am when the big lights came on. The usual routine would be to get up and make my bed. I got washed, brushed my teeth then got dressed for the day. I then went into the hallway where we all paraded. There was a roll call for each house then we went for breakfast. When breakfast was finished we got up and left when our house was called out. We lined up again in the school yard and they called out what the classes were going to be that day and we went into school. Bedtime was about 9:00 pm.

Mealtimes/Food

32. I don't remember there being any issues with the food so it must have been alright. I don't remember ever going hungry.

Clothing/uniform

33. The kit consisted of two woolly 'V' necked jumpers, vests, pants, socks, a pair of shoes and a pair of gym shoes. Every item had numbers on the labels so we got the same clothes back. If you played football, which I did, there was a boot room where you went to collect a pair of football boots that fitted you. They were returned after each match and you had to get issued a pair every time you played. The same applied to the team kit. When we came back we put the dirty kit in the washing basket and it was cleaned and ready for the next game.

Leisure time

34. I played football for St Ninian's in a league. We often played matches against other schools so had to go to places like Callander and Dunblane. During the school day there were various activities. On Wednesday we sometimes played football as part of PT after our studies. There were ponies so we got to ride them maybe once a week. We played football or cricket on the outdoor pitches, or there was badminton. There were lots of activities.
35. In the evening there was recreation time when we could play football, cricket, table tennis, snooker, and darts. I think it was at St Ninian's there were evening classes we could go to too. I learned to play the guitar although that may have been later at St Joseph's. There were books or comics to read if you wanted.

Trips and holidays

36. We were sometimes taken hill climbing somewhere up in the glens of Scotland and one time we went to Inverness. We stayed in Inverness for a few days in a massive

mansion and we climbed a different mountain every day. We went out with backpacks and sandwiches and there was snow up on the mountains. This was a good experience which I thoroughly enjoyed because I loved going away to the mountains. We were taken to swimming and football competitions against other schools which were good fun.

Schooling

37. We would go to classes in the morning then line up and go for dinner back in the main building. After dinner we had to line up in the yard again before we went back to whatever we were doing. The teaching was done by the Brothers and by some civilians. I thought the school was okay. I would say I got most of my basic education between St Ninian's and St Joseph's. I could read and write before I went to St Ninian's but there were some kids who couldn't.

Healthcare

38. There was a matron there who dealt with any minor injuries or illness. I was taken there after a time a horse accidentally hit my chin and knocked me out. She gave me a quick examination and probably gave me a couple of paracetamol or aspirin. I don't remember having any other health issues that needed treatment.
39. There was a dentist who came in to treat boys at St Ninian's. If you needed treatment for anything you were taken to somewhere else to get it but this didn't happen to me.

Religious instruction

40. Religion was a big thing at St Ninian's. We had to go to Mass every Sunday and Benediction regularly. There were prayers every day through the day and before bed. At school we were taught religious studies and had to do readings given from the Gospel which was all part of the curriculum. I wasn't a very religious person but I continued going to church in later life.

Work

41. We were given tasks to do. These included sweeping, scrubbing, polishing and bumpering the floors. We were allocated different areas because it was a big building. Other jobs were doing things like dusting ledges. Quite often we did this on a Saturday morning. This wasn't done as a punishment, it was just part of their regime.

Birthdays and Christmas

42. At Christmas I went home for a week or two. I was dropped off and picked up. Birthdays weren't recognised at all. None of the staff even acknowledged when it was my birthday.

Personal possessions

43. I had a locker beside my bed but I wasn't allowed to keep any personal possessions. You could keep birthday cards or letters which had been sent in to you but nothing else.

Bed Wetting

44. I sometimes wet the bed. It happened when I first arrived then got less and less. There were toilets near the dorm so I could go if I needed but there was only a small blue night light so it was dark and eerie. I didn't sleep well because of the worry of wetting the bed. If you wet the bed you were punished and everyone had to get up and stand at the end of their bed. Other boys wet the bed too so even if I hadn't I had to get up and stand at the end of my bed. I heard that the same thing happened in the other dorms so it wasn't just Brother Benedict who punished the boys.

Visitors

45. I don't recall ever getting a visitor at St Ninian's. Because I was getting home leave quite regularly there was no need for anyone to visit. I am not sure if any of the other boys got visitors.

Home Leave

46. I think I had been there about six weeks before I was given any home leave. After that I automatically got home leave every second or third weekend. There was a list put up on the noticeboard where I could see if and when I was getting home leave. On a Friday the bus took me to Buchanan Street bus station then I made my way home from there. On a Sunday evening I had to be back at the bus station by a certain time where I got picked up and taken back to St Ninian's. I enjoyed home leave because I got a break from St Ninian's.

External Inspections

47. I was aware of official looking people coming in to St Ninian's. I am not sure if they were councillors, judges or the board of managers or staff like that. They were given a guided tour but before they arrived we were always warned to be on our best behaviour and told what we were and weren't allowed to do. We were paraded for them to walk round and they could see what we did. A Bishop came in one time and we had to kiss his ring. There were other people from the church came in. I think the board of managers were there to inspect how the place was being run. I didn't get the chance to speak to any of them.

Family contact

48. Once a week we were encouraged to write home and were given a letter headed piece of paper. It was your choice whether you wrote a letter and you had to return it to the office by a certain time if you wanted it posted. This was when I could tell my mum I was coming home for the weekend. Sometimes I went home and my mum

wasn't expecting me. We handed them in to the office and they would put a stamp on it and posted it. We weren't allowed to seal the envelope so I assume the Brothers read the letters before they were posted. If you didn't want to write home you had to return the blank letter. Some of the boys couldn't read and write so they were paired up with the older boys to help them write letters home. During the school day they read out names from letters that had come for the boys from outside and distributed them at playtime.

Discipline

49. There was a points system for good and bad behaviour. If you were awarded four points this could give you an extra weekend leave. Bad behaviour would result in points being deducted and leave would be refused. I think the house master kept a book where he recorded the points but the boys generally knew how many points they had. As far as I remember the points system only related to weekend leave. I think I only ever got an extra weekend home leave once. Points might be lost for talking after you were told to be quiet, being somewhere you weren't supposed to be, stealing or any sort of bad behaviour. Boys tried to be careful not to lose points.
50. If you had done something which perhaps didn't merit losing a point they would make you bumper the floors during the night. This could be if you were caught in another dormitory or just mucking about in the dorm. The only light you had then was the blue night lights and this was while all the other boys were in bed. Using the bumper was heavy for me as I was only nine or ten but you were only made to do it for fifteen or twenty minutes.
51. Discipline within the school was dealt with by giving the belt for any bad behaviour. I got the belt many times for talking in class or other silly things.

Running away

52. I never ran away. There was no need because I was getting home leave fairly often. I know that some of the other boys ran away or didn't come back after their weekend

leave. Eventually everyone came back but boys who persistently ran away apparently get sent to another approved school.

Abuse at St Ninian's, Gartmore

53. I sometimes wet the bed at St Ninian's. Brother Benedict, who was creepy, would come in and pull the sheets back and check to see if anyone had wet their bed. If I knew I had wet the bed I would try and quietly push the wet sheet down to the bottom of the bed so I didn't have to get up and wasn't found out. The bed wetters had rubber sheets. If he found that one of the boys had wet the bed he would make all the other boys get up and stand at the end of their beds wearing their pyjamas or vest and pants for about an hour. There were a few of us wearing pants because we had wet our pyjamas.
54. The bed wetter was made to stand out in the corridor by Brother Benedict and face the wall. Brother Benedict would tell you what to do, not the night watchman. Both however would slap you on the back of your head when they felt like it. Sometimes it made your forehead hit into the wall. I can't remember the name of the night watchman. Whoever had wet the bed was later bullied for a while by all the other boys for making them have to get up.
55. There was a time when we were working with the horses when a horse raised its head and hit my chin and managed to knock me out. I don't remember what happened afterwards but I was told I got up and ran around in a circle then collapsed. I remember 'coming to' in the stables sitting on a chair, and Brother Benedict had his hand on my knee. I don't know how I got back to the stables. There was another guy there who worked in the stables but I can't remember his name. He used to wear a duffle coat. Brother Benedict was rubbing my leg and I felt very uncomfortable and the other man was standing only a few metres away. I was quite confused and asked what had happened. Brother Benedict told me there had been an accident and a pony had caught my chin.

56. Brother Benedict used to regularly play with himself under his robe. He never showed me what he was doing under his robe but he was obviously touching himself inappropriately. I know I can never prove that is what he was doing but I know he was. This is the only sexual thing that I ever witnessed. I didn't realise at the time what he was doing but looking back now I know he was playing with himself and that it was very wrong.
57. On another day I went to the toilet and there was a little guy already in there. He was called [REDACTED] but I can't remember his last name. He was about the same age as me, possibly Italian and had dark curly hair. Brother Benedict came in to the toilet behind us and I just knew to get out of there and keep away from him. [REDACTED] didn't follow me and came out half an hour later. I asked if anything had happened but he wouldn't say. That evening or possibly the following day we were at Benediction in the church and [REDACTED] started screaming as if he was possessed. I put this down to something that happened in the toilet with Brother Benedict. I don't know what it was but it must have been something to do with that. [REDACTED] was taken out of the church to the matron but I don't know what happened to him. I can't remember seeing or speaking to him again after that.
58. Brother Benedict gave us new shoes when we needed them. I used to get them from him in the boot room. Again I didn't think anything about it at the time but looking back he used to touch my legs when he was helping me with my shoes. The way he did it was inappropriate. I used to think that Brother Benedict was just being a kind caring person, but I know now there was more to it. There was a sexual intention behind his actions.
59. Sometimes I heard boys crying at night but I am not sure if it was coming from another dorm or from the Brother's quarters. There were rumours going about that it was boys being abused by the Brothers in their quarters but I never witnessed this and it never happened to me.
60. One time we went to play football against Queen Victoria school in Dunblane. As usual Brother Benedict drove us there in the minibus. I am not sure what happened

but one of the boys must have done something bad. After the game we drove back, still wearing our muddy kit, which is what usually happened, and we showered at St Ninian's. After we had showered we were all taken up to SNR quarters. Every boy was then made to lie over Brother GSU's knee and he slapped our bare backsides. Brother Benedict and Brother MBZ were both there and watched. This was the only time this happened with Brother GSU. I didn't know any better and didn't think then that it was inappropriate because the whole team had it done to them.

61. One time Brother GSU took us swimming in a river. One of the boys lost their shoes in the mud and he said that whoever found it would get two extra points which would get us home leave for a weekend. By that time the water was murky because the mud had been stirred up looking for the shoe. I was determined to get it and despite Brother GSU several times telling me to stop I carried on time and time again, but failed to find it. I didn't think about the risk at the time but looking back as an adult I think that to send kids in to muddy water to look for a shoe doesn't seem very sensible. I was only nine or ten at the time. I suppose this also showed how unhappy I was at St Ninian's and how desperate I was to go home and get away from there.
62. When my grandfather died, Brother GSU gave me a letter in front of all the other boys when we were in the exercise yard. The letter had been opened and I have no doubt that Brother GSU had read it and knew of the content. The letter was to tell me my grandfather had died. I was really upset and cried in front of the other boys. Brother GSU should have taken me aside and given me that letter in private. What he did was cruel.
63. Brother MBZ sometimes slapped the boys on the side of our heads and it made our ears ring. He did this to me. I saw him doing it to other boys too. He would do it if he caught you talking or something like that. Brother Benedict was the scariest and the worst of all the Brothers. Brother GSU, SNR was okay and I quite liked him.

Leaving St Ninian's, Gartmore

64. I think some sort of board must have sat and they decided that I could go home. I don't know who was on this board but I assume it was the board managers and some of the Brothers. I believe they assessed me and looked at things like whether I had run away and what my behaviour had been like. By that time I had been at St Ninian's for around eighteen months which I believe was a fairly standard length of time to be there. I knew that I was getting close to leaving and I got a couple of weeks' notice that I was going home as it was posted on the notice board. I wasn't part of this process, I just knew from the noticeboard that I was going home.

Life back with mum

65. I left St Ninian's and went back to live at my mum's and returned to Sacred Heart primary school. Because I had been back at home quite often on weekend leave I found it quite easy to slot back in to being at home. It was awkward initially but probably more so for my family. Unfortunately I fell back into old habits and started getting up to no good again. There was still poverty in my house and I got back in the company of old friends. The police got involved again and I was in trouble a couple of times. I may have been put on probation at some point but I am not sure. On the second occasion I ended up at a children's panel. I went there with a social worker and my mum. I can't remember the social worker's name. We all sat round a table and discussed my case.
66. The judge or magistrate decided that I be sent to St Joseph's. I had only been out for six months. I am not sure of the exact order but at some point I was at Lagarie, Bardykes Road Children's Home in Blantyre and Larchgrove. I am not sure of the exact order. I have a feeling that I went to Bardykes Road Children's Home for a couple of weeks after I had been sentenced at court until a place became available at St Joseph's.

Larchgrove remand centre, Glasgow

67. I am not sure how long I was at Larchgrove but I am sure I went there a second time. Larchgrove was exactly the same as it had been before but I was a little bit older and wiser. I knew what to expect and how I should behave. It was still strict but I knew how to cope this time.

Lagarie House, Rhu

68. I think I was eleven and a half when I went to Lagarie. Secondary Institutions - to be published
Secondary Institutions - to be published later

69.

70.

71.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

72.

Secondary Institutions - to be

I was only in Lagarie four or five weeks.

Bardykes Road Children's Home, Blantyre

73. I am not sure if I was in Blantyre House in-between St Ninian's and St Joseph's. It is possible I went there after I was in St Joseph's. It was definitely before I was sixteen. I was only there a matter of weeks.

74. The staff in Blantyre House were good and my time there was ok. The attitude of the staff was much better towards the children and the general atmosphere was relaxed and much better. There were school classes through the day which I enjoyed and there were quizzes at night. The couple who were in charge of the wing that I was in were caring and nice and I sometimes had a good laugh with them. They were not authoritarian. It was probably the best out of all the places I had been in. There was nothing that happened in there that I want to tell the Inquiry about.

St Joseph's, Tranent

75. I am not sure how I got to St Joseph's but assume I was driven there by a member of staff. The setup, layout and routine was much the same as the previous places I had been. This was a U shaped building with a yard in the middle. There was a gymnasium, recreation hall and a dining hall. We slept in dormitories and there were classrooms upstairs. There were playing fields too where there were lots of outdoor activities. Out the back of the main building were workshops for metalwork and woodwork and there was a place for all the gardening machinery.
76. I don't know who was in charge but I know that by the time I got there Brother Benedict had been transferred there from St Ninian's. He was my housemaster or at least was in charge of the group that I was in. I can't remember the name of the house I was in. When I found out that Brother Benedict was there I was full of trepidation and worry that it was all going to start again.
77. We were taken swimming, played baseball and played in football leagues. I was part of the football team and we were taken in the minibus to play. Brother Benedict would drive and Brother PAF would come too. This Brother PAF was not the same one that was at St Ninian's. They also dropped us off at the train station when we were on home leave. My recollection of the routine at St Joseph's is slightly vaguer than St Ninian's which is strange because I was at St Josephs after St Ninian's. Brother Benedict played the harmonica and I played a bit too.

Abuse at St Joseph's

78. Brother Benedict was the same person as before and his behaviour continued as it had been at St Ninian's. He still punched with a raised knuckle and kicked, punched and slapped. He did it to me and I saw him doing it to other boys. He did this to me probably more often than at St Ninian's. It may have been because I was older and bigger but he was more aggressive and more violent. He was still very seedy too and he continued touching himself under his robe. I knew by then that what he was doing

wasn't right. He occasionally put his hand on my shoulder and squeezed it. I felt quite uncomfortable when he did this but I was scared to say anything. Complaining about anything or talking back to him would result in a slap, kick or punch.

79. There was one time I was running and I tripped and fell. When I was lying there Brother Benedict kicked me in the ribs for no reason whilst shouting at me to get up. It was only later that I felt the discomfort in my ribs. I was about twelve or thirteen when this happened.
80. I saw an incident when boys were in the corridor and one of them was talking. Brother Benedict charged into the group and randomly struck out at anyone in front of him. That was what he did if he didn't know which boy was talking. Sometimes when we were in the exercise yard I saw him looking over his glasses then he would run into a pack of boys and hit them with his knuckle on their head or kicked and slapped. There would probably be over a hundred boys there so he obviously didn't care who saw him. Other staff would be there and they just accepted what he did.
81. We were taken to Forfar to do some berry picking. There were a couple of stories that came back about boys having been touched inappropriately at the camp. I didn't see anything. They used to take us to the cinema sometimes on a Saturday. I heard stories about one of the Brothers touching one of the boys before they got to the cinema.
82. Brother Benedict was often there at shower time watching the boys showering. He didn't have to be there. I always made sure that I was never caught anywhere in a situation where I was in a room alone with him.
83. Some of the other Brothers hit the boys but nowhere as much or as bad as Brother Benedict. I can't remember the names of the other Brothers. It was obvious that Brother Benedict thought he could do what he wanted and no-one was going to pull him up about it or stop him.

Leaving St Joseph's, Tranent

84. I would have been at St Joseph's around eighteen months and I was around twelve and a half to thirteen when I left. I think I was aware that my case was coming up for review and a panel must have sat and I got released. I was then given a release date and I believe I was given two or three weeks' notice that I was leaving. From St Joseph's I was driven to Waverley railway station in Edinburgh where I was dropped off. I then got the train to Queen Street in Glasgow then made my way home.

Life back at home

85. I settled back into life at home and went to Pirn Street Secondary School in Bridgeton. It didn't take long before I was running around with the wrong people and I started getting into trouble again with the police.

Longriggend detention centre

86. I was in Longriggend on two or three occasions between the ages of sixteen and nineteen. My first time there was before I went to Polmont. I was remanded there awaiting my date in court for my trial or to be sentenced and was remanded rather than being bailed. This was to stop me from reoffending. I was sixteen the first time I was in there.

Routine at Longriggend

87. It was a bullish regime at Longriggend. I was locked up a lot of the time. At meal times I was let out and I collected my tray of food and took it back to my cell to eat it. Each of the three times I was at Longriggend was for around two months. Some of the staff were okay, but most were quite authoritarian and looked down their peaked caps at you. Some enjoyed instilling fear in the boys.

Abuse at Longriggend

88. I remember lining up in the gym then one of the prison officers, GUA [REDACTED], walked along the line and punched some of the boys in the stomach. GUA [REDACTED] was known as GUA [REDACTED]. There was no reason for him punching the boys but everyone was aware and tried to be ready for it. It was random and he didn't do it to anyone in particular. Other gym staff and prison officers would be there when he was doing this but they didn't do anything about it. I was punched in the stomach once by GUA [REDACTED]. I was expecting it and he was just making a statement because he did it to any of the new boys. It was just a quick dig and wasn't a full punch. I suppose he was trying to live up to his reputation.

Leaving Longriggend

89. When I was released from Longriggend one of the times I was given a ticket for the bus to get home. Because there was heavy snow the buses weren't running so I had to walk all the way back to Airdrie.

Glenochil detention centre

90. I was only in Glenochil once. It was a young offenders centre but I didn't go into that part. I was in the detention part. The maximum time you could be there was three months. Everyone there had been sentenced to three months, no more and no less. Most of the boys were there for similar type and seriousness of crimes. I was in the detention centre which was designed to be run like an army camp which was designed for short, sharp shock treatment. I was in a single cell. They were all single cells.
91. It was tough in Glenochil. On Monday we had to run a mile, Tuesday we ran 200 or 400 metres, Wednesday we ran half a mile. On Thursday we did the assault course.

We had circuit training in the gym and marching every day. At the weekends we had army style parades which included marching in time.

92. Our boots had to be polished and sparkling. Our bedding had to be folded into a bed block with creases on the corners. I sometimes slept on the floor under my bed rather than disturb my sheets. The floors had to be polished and sometimes I woke up with red polish from the floor on my face. Our pyjamas had to be folded in a certain way also with creases. If your bed-block wasn't done properly they would pull it all off and you had to start again. It took ages.
93. I was probably a bit overweight when I went into Glenochil so all the training and gym work was a shock to me but by the time I came out I was much fitter and felt much better. We got recreation which was almost always exercise. It wasn't snooker or pool but there was a table tennis table and playing cards.
94. There were young offenders in Glenochil doing life sentences and some of them were training to be hairdressers so they used to cut our hair. That was the only real contact I had with them. Although at times of the day I was in my cell for several hours there was a structure to keep us occupied the rest of the time.
95. The staff all had an army style mentality, like sergeant majors, and everything had to be done to their standard. Sometimes they made us scrub parts of the marble floor with a big scrubbing brush then would come back and inspect it. If they didn't think it had been done well enough they would make you do it again using a toothbrush. That was an example of their mentality. There was a rota for cleaning the floors. They would choose ten different boys each time.
96. Visits were allowed at Glenochil but I am not sure how often. This happened in the gymnasium. I didn't get home leave.
97. To be honest I didn't frown on the regime they ran at Glenochil. Although it was tough it was good typical army training. They were firm and I didn't consider any of what happened to me as being abuse or unfair bullying. I was never assaulted or

physically abused. There was a lot of shouting and I suppose it could be seen as being mental bullying but it was all just to toughen us up and instil discipline. At the time I probably didn't enjoy it but towards the end of my detention I realised it had done me the world of good physically. It taught me a lot of good discipline although unfortunately didn't stop me getting into trouble on the outside. I possibly found it easier than some of the other boys because of the other places I had been. I was in Glenochil for three months.

Polmont borstal

98. When I was there Polmont was classed as a borstal. It is now a prison. There were two wings, east and west. I was in the east wing. There were two in each cell although sometimes I was on my own which I preferred. Boys were in there for lots of different reasons and sentences were between nine months and three years. Some were there for fairly minor crimes right up to the most serious, like murder. There were wings off to either side. On Sunday you could go to chapel or to church. After that you might get an hours recreation then in back in your cell until dinner time. I read books to pass the time. They came round with a trolley of books but only a few were good reading
99. There was a choice of training and I chose to work in metalwork. The other choice was carpentry and there may have been others. When I was at Polmont I did a vocational training course then went to the machine shop and was working on the machines. We were taken out to an orphanage where we made go-carts for the children.
100. Polmont was okay. I didn't see any bullying. I saw some boys getting dragged away by staff when they had been fighting. My personal experience of the nine months when I was there was almost all positive. I enjoyed doing the training and working. I was encouraged to do the training and learn a trade and got on with everyone at Polmont.

101. I was allowed a certain amount of visits a week. I think visiting was on a Tuesday and a Thursday.

Leaving Polmont

102. Before I left Polmont I went in front of a board to review my progress and decide how well I was doing. They would have looked and saw that I had done the course that had been offered to me and did other work with children from an orphanage. I was involved in doing other work outside Polmont for a charity. This was looked upon positively by the board. This was the reason I was released after nine months.

Life after being in care

103. When I left Polmont I went to London and got a job painting with my cousin. In 1978, when I was nineteen, I got a four year prison sentence. I was sent to Jessiefield prison in Dumfries. When I was released I went back to London but got a three year sentence. This was in 1982 and this was the last time I was convicted. When I was released I got married but divorced a year later. I then met my partner who has unfortunately passed away. I had to fight for the children I had with her and had to go on various courses and got a lawyer to help me get custody.
104. When I was in prison in Liverpool I sat and passed my English and maths O' levels. I then did a six month Construction Industry Training Board course in painting and decorating and then a six month course which at the end got me a City and Guilds in painting and decorating. I actually sat that exam in Perth prison because I had been released by the time I was due to sit it. I found out I had qualified when I was back in Barlinnie prison. The governor called me in and gave me a medal and told me that I was [REDACTED] in the 1981/82 City and Guilds examination. When I moved to England I did a course at British Gypsum.

105. Because of the training I had received in Polmont this helped me get a job in a machine shop in later life. I also did some carpentry work. I had my own company for three or four years and employed over twenty people. Unfortunately this was at a time when I was getting divorced and the company collapsed. I was also a supervisor for a decorating company. I have worked most of my life and never found a problem getting work because I liked to graft and wasn't afraid of hard work.
106. I still have good contact with my family and regularly visit my mother although her health is failing.

Impact

107. I have been left with a very bitter taste in my mouth about St Ninian's. The Brothers were supposed to be teaching us about religion yet they were abusing children at the same time. I always thought this was very hypocritical as they represented the church and they abused their position of trust. This became a mental issue for me and left me with a lot of questions about religion. I do however blame the individuals and not the religion. I would never discourage anyone from following their religion if that is what they want to do.
108. I would say my lifestyle contributed to me not getting the education I should have. It was partly my fault as I probably could have applied myself better. However because I was moved about so much my education was very disrupted and there wasn't a teacher who had a grasp of where I was in my education and help mentor me through any exams.
109. I am positive that the struggle I had to get custody of my two sons was made more difficult and it was held against me that I had been in care and in prison. I had to fight hard to show that I would be a good dad.
110. I know that I am a very cold person and always find it hard to hold down a relationship. I have had a few girlfriends since my partner died but they haven't

lasted because I am so difficult to live with. I have no doubt that it is not easy for people to live with me. My sons have told me that I can't have a reasonable conversation with them without shouting, bawling and arguing. I told them that I paid the bills so I made the rules. They reminded me that they lived there too. I put this down to how I was treated when I was growing up. My sons had to teach me not to shout or dictate to them. It has only been in the last couple of years that I have changed the way that I approach people or situations.

111. I think the physical side of things in the detention centre was good for me. It meant I was fit and the discipline was helpful in later life.
112. I have COPD and asthma but have never smoked. I was generally fit until five or ten years ago when it started to deteriorate. I have a great problem sleeping and am on medication to try and help me but I am trying to reduce it. My concentration is poor. It starts off okay but I tire quite quickly and lose focus. I had flashbacks for a while when I was going through counselling but I have not had any for a while. I try to avoid thinking about my time in care and I had more or less buried it. Since things have started coming to the fore again with the court case and this Inquiry it has brought things back to me and it is there all the time in my head. I am learning to deal with it, compartmentalise it and keep it there, even though I can't bury it.
113. It was quite late on in my life that I realised that I had mental health issues so went to my GP about two or three years ago. I was feeling very depressed and finding it difficult to cope. I had mental health issues since I was in care but didn't know it. Until then I had just tried to get on with things.
114. I used to go to chapel when I was growing up because I was encouraged by my mother. Sometimes the priest was used as threat to get me to do things. Because of what happened to me at the hands of the Brothers I lost faith in the church and stopped believing for a while but then I realised it wasn't the church that was abusing me, it was the individuals who were abusing their position in the church. I would never try and dissuade anyone from following their religion. It hasn't affected how I feel about religion but it has affected how I practice. I no longer go to chapel.

115. A while ago, after my father died in 2020 I was looking through old family photographs. The whole of my family are in these photographs apart from me. This was quite upsetting and it brought it home to me that these were the years that I missed out and wasn't part of my family because I was in care.

Treatment/support

116. I was referred a few years ago to a mental health group recommended by Camden health authority. When I went to them I started getting flashbacks to my time in care and these were so upsetting I had to stop the counselling. I was then referred to a counselling group called 'One in four'. They were a separate organisation specifically structured to deal with victims of child abuse. Future Pathways agreed to fund this for me. Unfortunately this was around the time of the trial and it was getting too much for me so I cancelled it.
117. I was on medication for depression and anxiety and I know that I have mental health problems. I take my medication when I feel I need to and when it suits me. I try to take it so that it doesn't interfere with my day to day life and only when I can't cope.

Reporting of Abuse

118. A few years ago after my partner died I had a discussion with my sons and they convinced me that I should contact the police and tell them about what happened to me at St Ninian's and St Joseph's. Initially I was reluctant because I was brought up with the mantra that you don't speak to the police. I contacted the police and I was interviewed by officers from Metropolitan police and gave them a report. I struggled to open up about my experiences because I hadn't talked about it before. My report was supposed to be sent to Police Scotland but it didn't arrive or they couldn't find it. I ended up contacting my MP Jeremy Corbyn and eventually it was found.

119. After Police Scotland found my report a policeman called Ian Shanks compiled my statement and sent it to me. I checked, added a few things, and returned it to Police Scotland. I subsequently went to the High court in Edinburgh and gave evidence against Brother Benedict. He was found guilty and was given a seven years prison sentence. He was already serving a seven year sentence for similar things. I think Brother Benedict got off very lightly. I was angry initially when he was sentenced. A while later the thought came to me that I would have liked to have had the chance to stand in court and tell him how, what he did to me and the other children, affected the other children and me for the rest of my life.
120. The court gave me good support throughout the trial and kept me informed every step of the way. Brother Benedict refused to look at me when I was giving my evidence and just sat there looking at the floor. The policeman Ian Shanks also gave me good support throughout.

Records

121. I obtained some of my social work reports about a year ago. I got them through a freedom of information request. I contacted a firm called Glasgow Life and they suggested I ask for my social work reports. I was emailed some of my records. Before I read them I had an inkling that when I was first taken into care in Dunoon my mum may have self-harmed at some point. In the records it says something about my mum being unwell and being admitted into hospital. I asked my mum about this in later years and she said it was something to do with her pregnancy with [REDACTED], my youngest brother.
122. My records appear to be quite well documented although there is very little recorded in relation to my day to day life in any of the institutions. There are accurate admission records but otherwise there is very little personal information. Basically the records I have obtained just confirm that I was in care and the dates. I suspect that these records were made and kept for administration purposes and to establish who was to pay for my care.

123. I have also managed to get details of my previous criminal convictions. It was sent to me and I have downloaded it. For some reason my time at St Ninian's is not recorded on there. It also states that I was put on three years' probation while or after I was at St Ninian's. This would not have been possible because when you are at St Ninian's you don't get probation. I found this very strange. I was certainly on probation before I went to St Ninian's so the information is not factually correct.

Compensation

124. I have recently applied for compensation from the redress scheme.

Lessons to be Learned

125. The culture of bullying was just accepted in the institutions. Other staff would have been aware of what was going on but they just accepted it or were too frightened to report it.

Hopes for the Inquiry

126. I hope that no child in the future who is in care goes through what I went through. Adults dealing with children have to have their backgrounds thoroughly checked and be properly trained. I think more background checks are done nowadays on care staff which is good. I would like to see a rule coming in that there must be more than one member of staff present when dealing with a child. A member of staff shouldn't be allowed to be alone with a child at any time.
127. Children should be educated in what is right and what is wrong and what they should do if something wrong happens to them. This has to be done in such a way that the children aren't frightened. This education should perhaps start around the age of ten

and should be more of an awareness and it has to be age appropriate. This will hopefully give children the confidence to speak up.


128. There has to be a better structure in place for staff to report any behaviour which they consider to be inappropriate. When I was in care other staff were present when abuse took place but, possibly through fear, they did nothing about it. Before new staff take up their posts they should be educated on what is right and what is wrong and how to report it. This should result in a change of behaviour for the better.
129. There should be someone independent that the children can trust from outside the organisation that children wouldn't be afraid of the consequences of talking about their concerns.

Other information

130. I went to court to give evidence against Brother Benedict. I was shown a photograph and there were two wearing the Brothers robes and two were wearing civilian suits. For some reason Brother Benedict was wearing a business suit and I was asked to pick him out from the photograph. I think they expected me to pick out one of the other Brothers but I easily recognised Brother Benedict. The other Brothers in the photograph wearing their robes were Brother **GSU** and I think Brother **GWM**. They showed me another photograph of Br Benedict with two children.
131. When I was giving evidence the prosecution kept asking if I had spoken to anyone about my time at St Ninian's. The judge stepped in and asked the lawyer to stop asking questions along those lines. When I was at the court I met another man who was giving evidence against Brother Benedict but he was at St Joseph's two years after me. This was the first time I had ever met anyone involved in the same case as me.
132. I have recently heard from the police that Brother **MBZ** who was at St Ninian's has been traced and is in the final stages of being extradited back to Britain for trial. This

may mean that there is a possibility that I will have to go back to court again and give evidence.

133. Since I left care and since I appeared at court and gave evidence against the Brothers I have never been approached by anyone from the Catholic Church.
134. I have tried to protect my mum from knowing that I was abused in care. I know that she would feel responsible and guilty for anything that happened to me. She was worried about me contacting the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. I don't blame my mum in any way.
135. 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..... 1-3-2022