

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HQG [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is HQG [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1968. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was not aware at the time but I have since been told that my mum and dad split up when I was a baby. I was brought up believing that [REDACTED] was my dad. I have two brothers. [REDACTED] is one year older than me. [REDACTED] is two years younger than me. We lived at various addresses in Ayr.
 3. I didn't have a good childhood at home and that started with [REDACTED]. He sexually and physically abused me as a child. I wasn't allowed to be a child and I just had to look at him the wrong way and he battered me. He did the same to my mum. Because of that I was wetting the bed and having nightmares. I often ran away from home.
 4. On one occasion he had a big argument with my mum and it ended up that he battered me with a belt until I was bleeding. I remember I showed my mum. The police were there too. [REDACTED] disappeared for a few weeks and I thought he was in jail for hitting me, but I found out later he had punched his boss. He came back and it all started again.
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5. When I was ten my mum and [REDACTED] split up and my real dad came back into my life. Life was brilliant for a while. I had what was probably a far more normal life. Within two years they split up again. My mum got another boyfriend, [REDACTED]. He wasn't a nice man either and it just went even more downhill after that.

6. I started getting into trouble, breaking into shops and things like that. I wasn't going to school either. There was a children's panel for me at some point and I got sent to Coylton Children's home which is in a village just outside Ayr. I think I was about thirteen when I went in there.

Coylton Children's Home

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Kirkland Park Children's Home

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Kerelaw Residential School, Stevenston

29. Kerelaw Residential School was divided up into four separate units. I was in Fleming Unit. Another one was Millerstone. I can't remember the names of the other two. In Fleming Unit, **EUM** Mrs Mack and an older man called **zKAI** were the unit managers and they were in charge. I think Mr Jamieson was the assistant headmaster of the school. I saw him about six times in all the time I was there. There were other staff, like cleaners and kitchen staff. The teachers at the school were members of staff and they also came into the units and worked shifts.
30. It was all boys at Kerelaw. In Fleming unit we were all roughly the same age. The bedrooms were upstairs. There were between six to eight bedrooms. There were two

single beds and a couple of small units in each room. I shared a room with [REDACTED]. The toilets were upstairs. Downstairs was the office, and there was a long hall that took you to the recreation room. The dining hall was downstairs too. The outside door of Fleming unit was always locked but our bedroom doors were never locked.

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31. I was in Kerelaw Residential School for two years, maybe less. I was there from the age of thirteen or fourteen. Initially I thought it was brilliant.
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Routine at Kerelaw

First day

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32. I remember it was [REDACTED] when I moved. I am not sure if it was just before my birthday or just after. The first person I saw in Kerelaw was a woman member of staff called Mrs Mack. She was strict but lovely. She was a member of staff in Fleming unit which is where I was. Her exact words were "What the fuck are you doing in here son?" and I just shrugged my shoulders.
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Mornings and bedtime

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33. A staff member came in to wake us up at 7 o'clock and you were fed at 8. You knew what you had to do. You got up, made your bed, made sure that your cupboard and bedroom were tidy. There was nothing strict about it really. You just did normal things that you would be expected to do. After breakfast we just hung about until 9am to go to class. At night-time I think it was lights out at 9pm. The staff never came in and checked on us through the night.
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Mealtimes / Food

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34. Food was excellent. You didn't need to ask for second helpings. There was plenty of food on the table. If you didn't want any food you just left it. There was no pressure
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to eat it. If you didn't like a meal I seem to recall that they would make you something else.

Clothing / uniform

35. I wore my own clothes in Kerelaw. I was in there a week or two then Mrs Mack shouted me into the office. It was a Saturday. She took me into Irvine and spent about £200 on clothes for me. She said I got an allowance for clothes. I got another one at the turn of the year.

School

36. There was a school within Kerelaw. I had four teachers. Mr Cruickshanks taught us painting and wallpapering. He was absolutely brilliant. LYW taught home economics. He was good. FSR was the PTI. He played for ██████████ at the time. Matt George was my art teacher. He had long hair and a moustache. If you wanted to learn a subject they would teach it but if not they didn't bother. There were no certificates. All the teachers, apart from Matt George were brilliant. I got to pick my own subjects. I blundered because I picked art.

Leisure time

37. We were allowed to have between four and six cigarettes every day. The staff would give them to us at certain times of the day. In our leisure time we could play table tennis, or play pool or just sit and watch the television. You weren't allowed out the unit but I used to go and sit out the back of the unit at the burn. You could get permission from the staff and they knew that I was there. If their backs were turned you could just sneak out without asking and chase some of the local girls from the housing scheme at the back. If you were caught it wasn't major and you might only lose your pocket money.
38. A couple of times we jumped out the bedroom window during the night and went down to Stevenston. We might have sat down at the burn for a couple of hours. I

always went back and as long as you were there for the morning check-in no-one missed you.

Trips / excursions

39. They used to take us out a couple of times during the week. We would either go to Ayr baths or to the Magnum Leisure Centre in Irvine. These trips were good.
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Visits / Inspections/ Review of Detention

40. I don't remember ever seeing Mrs Kennedy the social worker when I was at Kerelaw. I am not saying she wasn't there but she never came to see me. I didn't have anyone else visiting me. I don't actually know if you were allowed visitors but nobody came to see me anyway because I was getting home at the weekend.
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Pocket money

41. We used to get pocket money, something like £3.50 a week. The staff would buy things if we wanted from the shops for us or sometimes they would take us out to the shops.
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Discipline

42. At Kerelaw they assessed my school work and behaviour during the week. From that they decided if you got home for weekend leave or not. I went with the flow and I knew what staff to avoid. I regularly had my weekend leave taken off me. I wasn't bad I was just an idiot. I never went out to hurt anybody but sometimes I didn't care so I went for weeks and weeks without getting home.
43. I never saw any of the boys getting hurt by the staff or even anyone getting man handled. Staff sometimes had to restrain boys by sitting on them, but some of them were big boys. I can honestly say that most of the staff in Kerelaw were cool.
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44. If you did something to get punished you would lose your pocket money, you wouldn't get to go on any trips or you would lose your weekend leave.

Weekend leave

45. When I got weekend leave it would start on the Friday afternoon. They gave me a bus pass at 2 o'clock and you bolted down to Stevenston to get the bus into Ayr. I had to be back for 7 o'clock on a Sunday night. They weren't too strict if you were a bit late if you phoned and told them.

Abuse at Kerelaw

46. I thought Matt George was just being pally and cuddly when we were in the art class. He was always up cuddling me. Looking back he was creepy. One time Mr Jamieson was in the class and he told us that we were being allowed to go to Matt George's house to do some art work. Some of the boys wanted to paint boats and water and I wanted to paint a landscape.

47. Matt George took us in a minibus to his house which was in Fairlie. There was wee [REDACTED]; a guy from Springburn; [REDACTED], I think his nickname was '[REDACTED]', from Port Glasgow; a boy called [REDACTED], he was actually called [REDACTED] or something, from Port Glasgow; and there was one other person and I think it was big [REDACTED]. What an amazing house this was. We were all sitting with our pencils and I wanted to do a landscape. He took me through to another room away from the other boys. They would have been too busy going on about his house or doing their artwork to care where I had gone. I can remember seeing boats or something like that from his house. When we were in this other room I don't know what happened but he stuck his dick in my mouth. I just remember I was boking and the smell. That was the one and only time that this happened.

48. My friend [REDACTED] used to shout at Matt George in the classroom "get your hands off me you beastie bastard". I never suspected a thing but I know now why he said it.

49. One Saturday me and another boy ██████████ had lost our weekend leave because we had run away when we had gone swimming. ██████████ is now dead and not here to tell the tale. A member of Staff, EUM ██████████ was working that weekend. He told me and ██████████ that if we behaved he may let us home on the Saturday afternoon. I didn't really like this man and I kept my distance from him. He took me and ██████████ on a round of golf for us to caddy for him. ██████████ was a lovely boy but he was a cheeky and kept noising up the staff. I kept telling ██████████ to "Shut up or we are not going to get home".

50. At one point EUM ██████████ hit a ball. He then handed me cigarettes and his golf clubs and told me to go down to where his ball was and face the flag pole for two minutes. I did what I was told. I was petrified and didn't know what was going on. After a few minutes ██████████ appeared from nowhere and he was as white as a ghost. I asked him over and over if EUM ██████████ had hit him and he kept saying "no". Eventually he told me never to tell anybody and that "he put his hands down my trousers". He told me I had better behave. EUM ██████████ must have known that ██████████ had told me what happened because after that he kept his distance from me.

Reporting of abuse at Kerelaw

51. I didn't trust anybody enough to tell them about Matt George when I was at Kerelaw.

Becoming a day pupil at Kerelaw

52. Sometimes, if a pupil was well behaved, lived nearby and home conditions were suitable and some other stuff they would be allowed to become a day pupil. This meant you got to live at home but travel to school every day. I must have been at Kerelaw six months when Matt George abused me, and it was not long after that when I was made a day pupil. For someone like me to become a day pupil, especially when I lived so far away, was very unusual. I had to travel every day from

Stevenston to Ayr. There was nobody in that home for years that had ever been made a day pupil. As far as I know Matt George recommended it to Mr Jamieson that I become a day pupil. I think Matt George was worried that I was going to tell people what he did. They were worried that I was going to spill the beans on those beasts.

Leaving Kerelaw

53. I signed papers when I was leaving Kerelaw. I don't know why but I left in the [REDACTED] just before I was sixteen. I left there and went back home to live with my mum. I was able to leave because I had passed school leaving age. I never saw anyone from the social work department when I was leaving.

Living back with mum

54. I initially worked as a milk boy. I loved it. I did that until I was seventeen. I never classed that as a job because I was up at four in the morning and back in my bed for eight. My first real job was on the fishing boats in Ayr harbour. I loved that until it got into the winter and then it was not for me because you were dicing with death. I worked there for between six and eight months. I was never out the fisherman's mission where I spent most of my time drinking. I basically stayed between there and the fishing boat. I was still getting into bother with the police. I was going joy-riding in cars that my pals had stolen. I got caught and was sentenced to thirty days detention. I was still seventeen.

Glenochil Detention Centre

55. I was sent to Glenochil Detention Centre. The staff were animals in there. It was definitely short, sharp, shock treatment. You had to march everywhere. You weren't allowed to smoke. It was all "excuse me sir", "thank you sir". It felt like you couldn't

even go to the toilet without them watching you. I think I was in for three weeks and I remember saying to myself that I never wanted to go back in there again. There were chores that had to be done. We had to polish our boots and our kit had to be spot on. If we were cleaning the floors you had to be able to see your face in it. It was very disciplined and regimental. I never saw a social worker when I was in Glenochil.

Abuse at Glenochil

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56. When I first went into Glenochil I remember getting marched into the dining hall. The officers were telling us to do this and do that, and you had to play along. We had to say "excuse me sir, thank you sir" all the time. They were trying to get the discipline into all the boys that hadn't been there before. I picked up my dinner then sat down. It was fish and chips and three bits of bread. I was starving so I got the bread and put my fish and chips onto the bread. I flattened it down then took one bite out the piece. All of a sudden this big guy, a member of staff, appeared and hit me hard on the side of my head. I will never forget it. My mouth was full and I was slavering and there were tears. He told me I wasn't allowed to make a sandwich. My words to him were "You want to fucking tell me then". For saying that I got booted between the legs. The boys sitting at my table thought it was really funny.
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57. There was one member of staff who was either a SO or a PO, which is a senior officer or a principal officer. He was horrible. He called me a little scummy bastard. He used to tell us that he used to batter fuck out of Jimmy Boyle. Some boys actually wet themselves with fear when he was on duty. Your boots, your kit and everything had to be perfect. If it wasn't right he would hit you across the head with his hand.
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58. I was locked up at six o'clock on a Friday night through to seven o'clock the Saturday morning. All you had in your cell was a piss pot. They came and gave me a cup of coffee and a biscuit at night. You were actually glad to be locked up because when you were locked up you were not getting shouted at, hit or ridiculed. The staff would call me a wee useless bastard, and ask if I had ever had sex before, or ever had to
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shave before. Other officers, but I can't remember their names shouted things like "I probably shagged your ma ya wee loser". At Glenochil we were made to run a mile. I was last. I had never run a mile in my life before. I did one circuit and thought it was okay then a member of staff was behind me and punched me in the back all the way until I finished. I did it in seven and a half minutes. Some of the staff you just had to look at them the wrong way and they would hit you across the head with their hand.

59. They used to do what was called the 'magic square'. The 'magic square' was when they made you go on your knees for two minutes and brush the floor for two minutes. All the time your arms were screaming at you to stop and he was hitting you at the back of the head screaming "I will fucking tell you when to stop" Everything was done along those lines.

Leaving Glenochil Detention Centre

60. At Glenochil you had to work your way up through the colours to get released. They would take days off you as punishment. It was blue then yellow then red. If you went for any of those colours and you never got it, you automatically got two days added on plus you got no recreation. My liberation date fell on a Sunday which meant I would get out on the Friday. I was up on the Tuesday to get my 'blue'. Between my bed-block and everything else, it was useless. It was like a bomb site. I never got my blue and I was standing there. I could have burst into tears because if I was given two extra days that meant I was in until the Tuesday. They must have taken pity on me and they said I could leave at the end of the week. I was so glad to get away from that place. I was sentenced to thirty days but I actually only served three weeks.
61. After I got out I got into more bother. Me and my pals stole sofa beds out a warehouse. I think I got sentenced to either six or nine months in Polmont. I got my eyes opened in there. I got assessed and within a couple of days they put me in an open jail up at Castle Huntly, I can remember my social worker giving me a wee slap and saying what are you playing at, At that time I just went along with the system.

Polmont Young Offenders

62. I got the jail possibly in [REDACTED] and within a couple of days I was assessed. I was classed as a low risk so I was to get transferred to Castle Huntly which is an open prison. I was kept in Polmont over Christmas and New Year as they were worried that we would run away.

Castle Huntly open prison

63. I remember going up to Castle Huntly Prison [REDACTED] Because I was a young offender I still had a social worker. I remember my mum and my step father coming up to visit me. I told them not to come back and see me because it was too far for them to travel.

Life after being in care

64. I met [REDACTED], my daughter's mum when I was 22 but it wasn't a good relationship and we split up. She was battering my children but no-one in the system would listen to me. I eventually got full custody of my children through the courts. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

65. After I left [REDACTED]'s mum in 2003 I met [REDACTED] who I married and we had two children together. That marriage only lasted four years.

66. I have had over forty jobs since I came out of care. I am not afraid of hard work. All my jobs were all manual, labouring type jobs. My last job was working for a plastic guttering and drainage business.

Impact

67. A big impact on my life has been from my time with [REDACTED] the man who I'd believed to be my father for the early part of my life. My school reports at that time said I was lacking in concentration. That was because my mind was elsewhere and I was sitting in class wondering what that animal was going to be like when I got home. My mum also had a horrible life with him and regularly got beaten up. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] died around 1988. I told my mum after he died about the sexual abuse but she didn't believe me. I had resentment towards my mum years after that because she put me in a home and because she didn't believe me.
68. When I left care and prison I had a lot of anger and hatred inside me. I felt used, unloved and unwanted. When I was in Polmont I know of one boy who put his leg on the bed and got his pal to jump and snap his legs so that he could get out.
69. The police used to come and lift my children out my house. They would say "HQQ [REDACTED] fucking dick, Court order 1999 not worth the paper it is on" and flung it to me. The minute they heard my name they took my children off me. It was always made out that I was the bad one. My children were running to me saying they wanted to stay with me but I had a criminal record so it didn't happen because the authorities were judging me. I tried to tell the police about [REDACTED]'s mum but they didn't listen. They said I was the bad one. I was never lifted except for, I am ashamed to say, one time I attacked the police and I ended up getting six months for a breach of the peace in 2003.
70. When I was about twenty there was a fun run organised in Ayr. Me and some of my friends went to watch everybody running past for a while. Matt George was running and he saw me. He asked me to go into Hadow's Off Licence to get him a Mars bar. I tried to launch my Buckfast bottle at him but the police were about. I nearly got arrested for that but I got away with it. The boys I was with asked me what it was all about but I just told them we had had an argument in the pub the week before.

71. I turned to alcohol because of everything that was going on in my head. It is only recently that I have been trying to give it up. In the last few years I have contemplated suicide but my children and especially my grandson has given me a focus and a reason to be here.

Reporting of Abuse

72. About two years ago I had been locked up overnight at Ayr police office and I got released on New Year's Day morning. I had been drunk. When I was leaving I told the custody sergeant that I wanted to make allegations about Kerelaw List D School. He told me that he would get somebody to come and see me at home when I was sober. No-one ever came.

73. Last year I was contemplating suicide and the police came to my house. I told them I wanted to tell them about Kerelaw List D School. I don't know who they were but they told me they would get someone to come and speak to me but no-one ever came.

Treatment / support

74. I have never had any treatment or support from anyone for everything that happened in my life. I have had a couple of appointments with a counsellor but I didn't go.

Records

75. I have never tried to get any of my records. I didn't know I could get them. I would love to see them so I can put things together in my life.
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Lessons to be learned

76. When I was in care, if there was somebody who I could have trusted, I would have told them about things. I don't really know if anything can be done to stop it from happening now.

Other information

77. I would love to see Matt George, my abuser, being hung. I would love to be able to look him in the eyes and ask him "What did I ever do to him? I did fuck all to him. He sensed that I was vulnerable and weak. He was a predator and you can't describe him any other way.

78. 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..... 18/5/2018.....