

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GDE [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is GDE [REDACTED]. My name as a child was GDE [REDACTED]. I removed my middle name by deed poll seven years ago. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1983. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I lived in Kilwinning before I went into care. I was the eldest of four children and the only girl. My brother, [REDACTED], was born exactly two years after me. He stole my birthday. [REDACTED] is about nine years younger than me and [REDACTED] is ten years younger than me. My home life was horrendous. My father, [REDACTED], was an alcoholic. My mother, [REDACTED], physically and emotionally abused me. I was sexually abused by my uncle. I don't have one, single happy memory of my childhood.
3. I couldn't handle my dad's alcoholism and my mum's abuse. Even if my brothers did something wrong and I wasn't even in the house, I would get the blame for it and I would get a beating from my mother. She always put me down and said I was no good to her. Even now, she would tell you I was the worst thing that ever happened to her and that she wished that I was dead.
4. On my thirteenth birthday, I had a couple of friends round to the house. My mum and dad got into a big argument. My mum chucked a plate at my dad and then tried to stab him. She walked out of the house and I stayed with my dad.

5. I think the social work department became involved when I was in first year at Kilwinning Academy. They became more involved in the winter time of my second year. I had been at school and I had an investigation to do for history on John F. Kennedy. We were supposed to write about his assassination. I was really into sport and my schoolwork. It was a Wednesday. After school, I went to the school library to use the internet. I did tell my dad before I left for school in the morning, but because of his drinking he forgot to tell my mum. When I got home, she beat me really badly because I was late.
6. Normally, my mum would try and keep the bruising where nobody could see it. The next day, I had PE. I told the PE teacher that I couldn't do it. He asked why I couldn't do it and I said that I got in a fight with my brother. He saw through it. Two teachers, Mr McKenzie and Mrs Lamont, took me aside. They sat me down in the office and said that they knew I was lying. They asked me to tell the truth about what had happened. I told them it was my mum.
7. The teachers took me to the hospital because they thought I might have broken my arm. I also had a black eye. I hadn't broken any bones. The social work department became more heavily involved at that point. I was taken to a social work office and the social workers took me home. I argued with social work constantly. I kept asking them to allow me to go into care.
8. After my mum assaulted me, the social workers got me involved with a group. They picked me up once a week and took me out to places. Sometimes, we would sit in a room and chat about what we were feeling. Sometimes we would go on trips to McDonalds and Laser Tag. I really liked it.
9. When I was still in second year, we were in social education. It was winter time, just before my fourteenth birthday. We were getting told about inappropriate behaviour. I had been getting sexually abused by my uncle for as long as I could remember. My uncle's name was [REDACTED]. He was my mum's adoptive brother. He lived at my gran's. I actually thought it was a normal thing. There wasn't as much awareness then

as there is now. Back then, it was a thing done behind the door. I approached my guidance teacher and told her what was happening with me.

10. The police got involved. At first, the police made me feel like it was my fault. I remember getting really angry at the police station because they were making out that I was lying. They also wanted me to get examined by a male doctor. I didn't feel comfortable with that. I ended up getting so angry that I broke my glasses.
11. My mum made me drop the charges. She told me that if I continued with the charges, I would kill my Papa. I didn't have a relationship with my mum. I was close to my dad, but because of his drinking I wasn't that close to him. I always went to my gran's at the weekend and I was really close to my gran and Papa. My Papa didn't keep well. He had renal failure and he was on dialysis. My mum knew that I would do anything for my Papa and that would be the one thing that would stop me from continuing with the charges. It went no further.
12. After I told the teacher about my uncle, I really wasn't coping at home. I asked the social work department to take me into care. I couldn't handle my dad's drinking, the way my mum was treating me and my uncle's abuse. My mum's treatment of me got worse after I had reported my uncle's abuse, even though she admitted years later that she believed me. I had to do all the housework. I started to self-harm. The social workers just weren't interested at that point. I took three overdoses. It was a cry for help. I took [REDACTED] and things like that. I was trying everything at that point to say that I needed out of there.
13. The night before I took my third overdose, I got hold of my dad's [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] It was just scratches. I snuck down the stairs after everybody had gone to sleep. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I put it in my school bag and approached my guidance teacher at registration. I showed her my arms. I wasn't intending to kill myself, I was just trying to get help.

14. My guidance teacher sent me to the deputy head teacher. Instead of asking me what the problem was, he had a right go at me as if I'd done something wrong. He said he'd need to report me to the Children's Panel. He gave me a late slip to take back to my class. I just walked out of the main school gates. I walked all over the moors. I ended up [REDACTED] as I walked along the moors. The next thing I remember is waking up in hospital. I don't know if somebody found me or if I made my own way to the hospital.
15. I ended up in intensive care in Crosshouse Hospital. I told the nurses why I had done it. I just couldn't cope with my uncle's abuse any more. That was the main thing. I remember overhearing the psychiatrist talking to my mum, asking, "Is there any chance it's her dad, because they normally say it's somebody else when they actually mean that?"
16. I just refused to go back home. I wasn't going to leave the hospital. I was adamant about it. I would either stay in the hospital or stay with my aunty. I wanted to go into care. The night I was discharged, I ended up staying with an aunty whom I was close to, Aunty [REDACTED]. On [REDACTED] the following day, the social work took me up to Clark House.

Clark House, Largs

17. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
18. [REDACTED]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

19.

20.

21.

22.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

23.

They drove past Largs. I asked where we were going. The social worker made up a story, probably so I wouldn't freak out. I think she said they were taking me to get new clothes or to McDonalds. The next thing, we were at Kerelaw Secure Unit. Even at that point, she didn't tell me that's where I was going to stay. She pretended that we were just popping in for paper work.

Kerelaw Secure Unit, Stevenston, Ayrshire

24. Kerelaw had an open school and a secure unit. I was always in the secure unit. In the secure unit, there were two normal double doors at the entrance. There was an office on the left hand side, which had a couple of seats, a table and some magazines, like a reception area. There were stairs and then another set of double doors, which were locked. There was then another set of doors which had bars on them. They were also locked. After the doors, there was another set of stairs and an office on the left hand side. It had windows around it. It was the duty officer room where the staff could go to do their paperwork and have their coffee. There was a further set of doors. They were solid, but they had small windows in them. All the doors were kept locked.
25. Unit 1 was through the solid set of double doors and on the left hand side. There was also the main area, which they called the recreation area. There was a pool table in the recreation area, but the balls weren't left out. There were doors from Unit 1 which led up to the school area. Then there was Unit 2 and Unit 3. I was in Unit 3 initially, but I ended up in Unit 2. Unit 1 was boys only but Units 2 and 3 were mixed. There were eight children in each unit. The ages of the children ranged from twelve to

eighteen. Each unit had its own living area with a sofa and a television. There was also a small kitchen area with a cooker, a fridge and dining area. We ate in our units. We only mixed with the other units when we went to school.

26. Matthew George was in charge of Kerelaw. We knew him as Matt, but we didn't have many dealings with him. There were three members of staff on duty for each unit, except on night shift. There was also a duty officer during the day, up until 10 o'clock at night. There were four members of staff at night to cover the three units and a night time duty officer as well. If anybody had to go to the hospital, there would still be two members of staff. There always had to be at least two.

Routine at Kerelaw

First day

27. I realised I was staying at Kerelaw when I went through the gates and they closed behind me. I wasn't happy. I thought it was a prison and I didn't know what I'd done to deserve to be there. I asked the social worker about all my stuff at Clark House. She told me not to worry about it and that they would pack it up and send it down to me.
28. I was taken into a little room on the left hand side. I was told to sit there and wait. They brought me a drink. Two members of staff came in and introduced themselves. I was taken through to Unit 3 and told that would be my living area. I was shown around and then taken up the stairs and shown my room. Whilst I was upstairs, I was searched to make sure I didn't have any contraband. I was then taken back downstairs.

Mornings and bedtime

29. We were woken up at 7.30, 8 o'clock. A staff member would open the bedroom door and tell you to get out of bed. Nobody was allowed downstairs until everybody had had a shower or a wash. We got our washing together, got dressed and got washed.

Even getting dressed, we didn't have privacy because there was a window on our doors. We eventually got down the stairs at about 8.30.

30. After breakfast, the smokers would be taken for a cigarette at 8.50. We had a smoking area, which was the hallway between the double doors and the school area. We were allowed six cigarettes a day at set times. At 9.30, everybody went up to school.
31. My bedroom didn't have a proper bed. It was solid wood, built into the wall. It couldn't be moved. It had a really thin rubber mattress and a really thin pillow. We were given a sheet to put on the bottom, a woolie blanket and another sheet. There was nothing else in the room, no wardrobe, sink or anything. There were no curtains on the windows and bars on the outside. If you wanted furniture, you had to earn it. It was a proper cell door. If we wanted out, there was a buzzer. We didn't even have control of our lights.
32. Just before 9 o'clock, we had our last cigarette. Everybody had to be up the stairs and in their bedrooms by 9 o'clock at night. If we had light privileges, we were allowed to keep our lights on till 10.30 and then the night shift would switch it off.

Mealtimes / Food

33. At breakfast time, cereal and bread were already in the unit. We just helped ourselves. There was always bread, cereal and things to make sandwiches in the unit, along with tea, coffee and squash. At lunch time, we came back down to the unit from the school. The kitchen staff would wheel the food through into the unit. The same thing happened at dinner time. The food was awful. I was anorexic so I didn't really eat it. The staff didn't force us to eat. If we didn't like the meals, we didn't get anything else but we could make whatever there was in the unit for ourselves.

Washing / bathing

34. Upstairs, there were three corridors for each unit. The bedrooms were upstairs and there were two different toilet areas. There was only one toilet and two showers for the

girls. I assume the boys' area had the same layout. We didn't really get much privacy because we had to go into the bathroom with three other girls. We were left to get on with it, unless we were shaving our legs. We weren't allowed to shave without a member of staff being present. We had to ask for the razor, then hand it straight back when we were finished.

Clothing / uniform

35. We wore our own clothes. They had packed some stuff for me when I arrived, but I eventually got the rest of my stuff from Clark House. If we needed new clothes, the staff would go out and buy it for us or we would get somebody to bring stuff in.

School

36. The only time the different units mixed was at school. We didn't get an education at Kerelaw. We went into the classrooms and we just did whatever we wanted. The teachers were permanently attached to Kerelaw, but they didn't stay overnight. They didn't teach us. For example, if we didn't want to do maths we could just sit and draw. We were there for the full school day and we'd go to different classrooms, but we didn't do any school work.
37. We were mixed into classes with children from different units. There were eight classrooms. There was a P.E. classroom, but it was a small room so I'm not sure how we were meant to do any form of sport in a space like that. The boys did weights, but the girls didn't really do anything. We had an art room. There was a room that was meant to be for maths and a room with computers in it for computing studies. There was a room for English.
38. We didn't get homework. We didn't even get lessons. Home economics was the only class we actually did something in. Even in that class, we only had to do it if we wanted to. Linda, the teacher, encouraged us to participate and she was quite firm about it. If we wanted to learn, the teaching wasn't there. I wanted to learn, but I didn't want to

ask because that was how people got bullied. I don't know about anybody else, but I didn't get my standard grades.

Leisure time

39. In the evening, we could sit and watch telly or read a book. We got 45 minutes or an hour in the rec room where we could sit and chat or play pool. There were no books for us to read, we had to get someone to bring them in. There was nothing to do. There were no board games or anything. If we wanted to, we could bring drawing stuff down from the school.
40. Twice a week, there were two teachers who acted as duty officers. One of them was the home economics teacher, Linda. She was really nice. As long as she didn't have loads to do, she would take a handful of us up to the school. We could make cakes or sit and embroider. We could even just sit and have a coffee and a chat.
41. At the weekends, we were bored. There was nothing to do. I would sit and draw and spend most of my time in my room. The door would be locked.

Trips

42. I remember I was allowed out on one occasion, during the summer. A few of us went on a trip to Edinburgh. They carried out risk assessments to see who was most likely to run away. They did carry out good risk assessments if they were taking us out. The art teacher arranged a visit to the art galleries in Edinburgh. We were also treated to lunch in an Italian restaurant. I like art so it was really good. That trip is the only good memory I have from my time at Kerelaw.

Birthdays and Christmas

43. Christmas was celebrated but I don't remember presents being issued. We put decorations up. I was allowed to go home for Christmas and spend it with my brothers. I was dropped off at about 10 o'clock on Christmas morning and picked up at 5 o'clock

that evening. I wasn't too happy about going home, but I was happy at the thought of spending the day with my younger brothers and my gran. I think people got birthday cards, but I think they came from family and not staff.

Visits / Inspections

44. My dad came to visit me twice. The second time, it was in the summer so I was allowed to go out into the grounds. That was the only time I was allowed to see my dad because he wasn't coming into the unit. On other occasions, he was refused entry because he smelled of alcohol. My mum came up to visit three or four times. I'm not sure how visits were arranged. When she visited, I sat in the unit with the other kids and staff. It was supervised. I never sat with her by myself because I didn't want to. She was more interested in the other teenagers than me anyway.
45. I don't remember any social work visits. I had a different social worker every three months because they were short staffed. You couldn't run away because Kerelaw was so secure. If you were going to run away, it would have to be when you were out with a member of staff or if you were allowed out for a home visit.
46. I went to one Children's Panel whilst I was at Kerelaw. It was just before I left. They discussed how I was getting on and future plans. I told them I didn't want to go back to my mum and dad's. I was adamant about that. I wasn't due another Panel until the end of [REDACTED] but it came within two weeks of me reporting abuse. It was as if Kerelaw wanted me out as soon as possible.

Healthcare

47. I remember when I first went into Kerelaw, a health visitor came up to see me. I can't remember her name, but she was about five foot two, medium build and she had short, blonde hair. It was like a medical admission procedure. If you were taking medication, she would go back to the health centre in Stevenston and get it all sorted. As well as any other medication, all the girls in Kerelaw were put on the pill. They just said it was a standard measure to help regulate our periods. Considering I was sexually abused

in there, I look back on it now and wonder if it was because they knew the history and they knew things like that were going on.

48. We weren't allowed the medication ourselves, we were given it. The medication was kept in the unit in a locked cupboard. We were given the pill every morning. The staff would make sure we had taken it and get us to open our mouths and lift up our tongues. I was on medication for my asthma. I had to go to the office every day and ask if I could have my inhalers. I wasn't even allowed to hold onto my blue inhaler. I never saw a dentist.
49. The first week of being in Kerelaw, I split my head open. We were all play fighting, mucking around. A female member of staff pushed me onto the sofa. I was really underweight at the time because I had an eating disorder. I was only about six stone. Because of the way I landed on the sofa, my head went right back and hit the radiator behind me. I rubbed my head, thinking I'd bumped it. When I moved my hand, it was covered in blood. I think it was a genuine accident.
50. I'd been at Kerelaw for two or three days when that happened. My mum had come up to bring me stuff in and she arrived just before I hit my head. I didn't want to get my head stitched up or glued. My mum said that if I didn't go to the hospital, she wouldn't consent to me getting cigarettes. My mum said I was concussed because I was arguing with the doctors and I don't normally argue with doctors.
51. I was in Ladyfield East for twelve weeks when I was at Kerelaw. Ladyfield East was a child and adolescent psychiatric unit ran by the NHS. I stayed there because of my eating disorder. I would stay there overnight from Monday to Friday and go back to Kerelaw at the weekend. It must've been some help to me, but I still have the eating disorder. I didn't go to school when I was there.
52. I went to the GP once when I was at Kerelaw because I had a urinary infection. It was quite a bad one. I needed to go to the toilet more frequently because of the infection. If we needed the toilet during the night, we had to ring the bell on our doors and the staff would come and let us out. The night I had the infection, I would go to the toilet

and then need it again after ten minutes. The man on night shift actually refused to let me out. He was in his fifties, quite stocky and had grey hair and stubble. I was left in my room for four and a half hours. I ended up urinating on myself. I'm ashamed of it. It was really degrading. I ended up peeing on my clothes because they wouldn't let me out for the toilet.

Discipline

53. We would be put in our bedrooms as punishment. We didn't get chores to do. We had to tidy up our own mess and make sure our rooms were tidy. If we made drinks or food, we had to make sure we cleaned it up. We were made to do it. We didn't get much in there. I eventually got my own music player because my mum brought it in. They controlled our electric. If we didn't do what they said, they could tell us that we'd lost our privileges which would mean we'd lose power in our rooms and our lights. I once lost my privileges for answering back. They actually emptied my room and all I had left was my bed.
54. I never saw other girls in Kerelaw get sexually abused, but I saw other girls get hurt. Staff would take advantage if we didn't do what they wanted. They wouldn't let us go for our cigarettes. They would grab us by the arm to put us in our rooms. We were scared. We were all scared. We had very little and they had control. They had control if we got TV at night, they had control of our lights, they even had control over whether we could go to the toilet. Somebody might say, "For God's sake, do you want to shut up?" That would be it, she'd lose something or she could be restrained and put up to her room.
55. There was once an argument between two girls. Somebody was attacked by a pool cue. The staff let that happen. The person who carried out the attack wasn't disciplined. The person who had to go to the hospital had her room emptied for speaking up.

Abuse at Kerelaw*Physical Abuse*

56. I asked for a razor and it was refused. I said I needed to shave my legs. I didn't take kindly to being told no, like any normal teenager. I wasn't being abusive, but I had a bit of attitude. I said to one of the members of staff, GUS, "For God's sake, I just want a razor to shave my legs. It's not as if I'm going to be long with it." She said, "Right, you're going to your room." She grabbed my left arm and bent it right the way up my back. She forced me up the stairs. There was no need for it. I was just being lippy. I wasn't being abusive or threatening. That wasn't in my nature.
57. I said, "You're hurting me. Can you stop it?" I was kicking her. She wouldn't let go so I bit her. I was just trying to defend myself. I was stuck in my room for the rest of the day. I didn't get my evening meal and I wasn't allowed out for my cigarettes. My room got dark early. They switched my light out at 8.30 and said I wasn't entitled to it because I'd lost all my privileges.
58. I can't remember how it came about, but another staff member, GUU, ended up restraining me. She fractured my right elbow. I can only vaguely remember what happened. I think I said something to her that she didn't like. She took me up to my room. I said, "But I've not done anything." She started getting really aggro with me so I got aggro back. She ended up restraining me and forcing me up the stairs. She grabbed my right arm by the wrist. It was really painful because she was holding on so tightly. She held on even tighter. Because I was trying to get free, she ended up holding on to both my arms. She yanked my right arm right up my back. I still have problems with my right shoulder because of that incident.
59. I whacked my elbow on a door at the top of the stairs. She was restraining me and I was fighting back to get out of it. I think I hit my arm because of the way I was struggling. I was screaming with the pain. I pressed the panic button. Only staff were meant to touch it. I was kicking out because of what she was doing. She just wouldn't let go of my arm. If she'd let go of my arm, it would have been fine. I was put in my

room. I rang my buzzer about six times. Each time, I told the member of staff who came to my room that I thought my arm was broken but the staff didn't do anything.

60. My mum came up to visit at about 7 o'clock that evening. I had hurt my arm at lunch time. My dad wasn't allowed to come because he was always smelling of alcohol. I told my mum that I thought my arm was broken. My mum went ballistic at the staff. She could see that my arm was clearly swollen. That was when I got taken up to accident and emergency at Crosshouse Hospital. Staff members took me to the hospital. I had a hairline fracture of my elbow and my arm was put into a sling.
61. I suffered badly from nightmares when I was at Kerelaw. I was put in a cell by night shift. I think it was because I was being cheeky. On another occasion, it was when I had the urinary infection because I had started kicking my bedroom door. It was a really cold room with no windows. It had a concrete floor and there wasn't even a mattress. It was winter time. I was put in there with what I had on. I just had pyjamas. I wasn't even given a blanket. I was in there for four or five hours. I fell asleep curled up in a ball. Matthew George, who was in charge, saw me being put into that cell.

Sexual abuse

62. On 22 December 1997, I was sexually abused by the art teacher, [REDACTED], for the first time. I'd come back from the mental health unit in Dumfries. [REDACTED] was the duty officer at the time. He was in his late forties, early fifties. He had grey, messy hair. He was stocky. He always wore navy or beige cargo trousers and a striped short, sleeved t-shirt with the top two buttons undone. He told me he lived in Ayr with his wife, son and daughter. He said his daughter was coming up for four or five.
63. The first time it happened, I was upstairs, drawing in the art room. Even now, despite the abuse, I still enjoy drawing and painting. My shoulders were really sore. I said that they were sore and [REDACTED] said that he'd massage them. He started off massaging my shoulders and then his hands made his way to other places. He started off touching me over my clothing. I was wearing a vest top and he moved the straps and started touching my chest area, underneath my clothes.

64. It made me feel uncomfortable but I was too scared to say anything because I could lose all my privileges. When you don't have much to do, losing privileges like cigarettes or telly is a big thing. Later on that night, G UW came along to my room just before he went off shift at 10 o'clock. He took me downstairs to get drawing stuff. He took me down the back stairs and he started touching me more and kissing me. He said that if I wanted more art stuff, that was what I had to do.
65. The first few times, he touched me on my chest area under my clothing. By the middle of January, he started touching me on my private parts underneath my clothing. It happened on the back stairs or in his classroom, mainly in his cupboard. If he could get me on his own, he would abuse me. Mostly, it was on a Wednesday night. He would take me up to his classroom to draw at about 7 o'clock but he would take a couple of others as well. Just before he went off shift, he would come and get me from my bedroom to make sure I took art stuff back up the stairs.
66. I didn't like the touching. But by then, my mum had stopped coming to visit and he would give me cigarettes and things. It's difficult. It got worse, but I don't want to talk about it in any more detail.
67. It went on until the summer, after the art trip to Edinburgh. The staff had been searching my room and they found two notes G UW had written me. They were underneath my mattress. He would write me notes to build my confidence, saying I was doing well with my art. At the end, he wrote, "Love G UW but they weren't love notes. A member of staff took me into the office spoke to me and told me that somebody had seen me kissing G UW in the cupboard. I denied it. There was only one staff member I trusted in there and that was Christine McCreadie, who was permanent night staff.

Reporting of abuse at Kerelaw

68. On nights when my mood was really bad, Christine would sit and talk to me for hours. About four or five days after my room was searched and the notes from G UW

were found, I told Christine what had been happening. I told her that the staff had spoken to me and I had denied it, but that it was just because I felt uncomfortable and I didn't trust them. I told her it was true. She asked me for more detail and I told her everything. Christine was upset and angry for me. She reported it straight away.

69. After I told Christine, ^{GUW} [REDACTED] was suspended. The abuse was reported to the police, but I don't know who reported it. The police came and spoke to me about it and I had to give a statement. I never heard anything further from the police at that time. Other than Christine, all the staff started treating me differently. It was as if I had done something wrong. I lost all my privileges and I wasn't told why. I was put into foster care in [REDACTED].

Leaving Kerelaw

70. Kerelaw was just a horrible place. I don't know why I was put into foster care. Looking back on it now, I think the staff at Kerelaw wanted me out of there because I'd spoken up. It happened about [REDACTED] after I reported ^{GUW} [REDACTED]'s abuse to Christine McCreadie. My social worker told me that they didn't think I needed to be in a secure unit any more. She told me I was going to start visiting a family. I did a couple of visits with my social worker and then a couple of weekend visits before moving in with the foster carers full time.
71. My visits went well. The foster carers had children aged six and eight. On one of my weekend visits, it was the eldest daughter's birthday. The youngest daughter got some presents too. They included me in that and got me a couple of things.
72. My departure was planned and my bags were packed. A member of staff from Kerelaw took me to Tillicoutry by car. I felt sad, because I got used to certain things. Although the experience I had there was awful, I felt a mixture of emotions. I think I was upset because I was so close to Christine, but I was happy at the same time. I stayed in contact with Christine for a good few years after I left.

Foster care in Tillicoultry

73. My foster carers were called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I don't know their second name. It was a challenge for all of us. I was their first foster child. [REDACTED] also worked in [REDACTED], a residential school for girls in [REDACTED]. When she worked night shifts, her sister or mum would stay at the house so I had female company there.
74. I had my freedom. They encouraged me to go and do things I wanted to do. I learned how to ski. I was in the army cadets. They encouraged me to cook and things like that. I went to Alva Academy. School was difficult. I had been out of school for over a year because I never got any education at Kerelaw. I was repeating third year so I was the oldest one in the whole year.
75. I had arguments with my foster parents, but just normal teenage arguments about staying out late or staying at a friend's house. I had my own room there. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] got £75 a week for looking after me. They didn't keep it. They put half aside for me and I got to keep the other half. I would save the money they put aside to go skiing and things like that. I could go out shopping with the rest. I would save it up over the month and then go shopping in Stirling.
76. I didn't see social workers when I was in foster care. I went to stay at my mum and dad's every second weekend. I don't know who organised it because I wasn't told things like that when I was in care. It was alright because I knew I wasn't going to be at home for long. Initially, [REDACTED] would take me to Stirling and I'd get the train but I then started to get the bus to Stirling by myself. I'd call [REDACTED] when I reached Glasgow. I'd go from Glasgow Queen Street to Glasgow Central and get the train to Kilwinning. I would call [REDACTED] again to let her know I'd reached my mum's. I did the same again on the Sunday, but [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] would collect me from the train station in Stirling.

Leaving foster care

77. My dad died on [REDACTED] 1999. I spent four weeks in Kilwinning when he got rushed into hospital. I missed my exams because I was there. I had to spend more time at my mum's after he died. My mum wouldn't do anything so I had to arrange the funeral. Social work decided I should just stay at my mum's after that. I left foster care in [REDACTED] 1999. I was sixteen years old.

Life after being in care

78. We all moved to Rothesay at the end of July. My mum got a new partner. I wasn't coping with my dad's death. Even though he was an alcoholic, I was very close to him. My Papa had died the previous [REDACTED], so I lost two of the people I was closest to. Things broke down with my mum. She was with a new man so soon after my dad died and then she fell pregnant. He was an alcoholic and he was physically abusive to my mum.
79. It was a lot to process. I was dealing with bereavement and everything else that had gone on. I was on an island. Making friends was difficult because everybody there had grown up together. I was an outsider, I was sixteen years old and I had nobody. I took an overdose just before the millennium and I was in hospital over new year.
80. I was given a social worker in Rothesay, Ian. He was nice. He was really supportive. He sorted me out with my own house and I moved out of my mum's in January 2000. The carpets were really old. The local nursing home was getting rid of a lot of furniture so I got my furniture from there. It was really old, but it was mine. Ian helped me with all that and he was there for me to talk to. I could see him whenever I wanted.
81. I stayed in that flat for two years. It was lovely because it was near the beach and things, but it wasn't in the town centre. I moved to a bigger flat when I was eighteen. My contact with the social work department stopped at that point. When I was 21, I moved back to the mainland. I moved to Largs, where I lived in a private let. I was

really depressed on the mainland. I was doing daft things like self-harming and overdosing.

82. I met my ex-partner in Largs. We were engaged to be married. When I met him, he was a recovered alcoholic. He had been off drink for years. He suddenly started drinking again. He turned up at our wedding rehearsal drunk. He could hardly stand and was wearing one of my tops, inside out, covered in cigarette ash. I had already been having my doubts, but that made my decision easier. We had been living together so I moved out and stayed with my gran, then I got my house in [REDACTED], Irvine. I moved to Jedburgh in 2013.
83. I met my current partner when I was 22. We have a seven year old daughter, [REDACTED]. I've had no contact with my mum for over four years. I don't have any relationship with my brothers. Except for my cousin [REDACTED], I have nothing to do with my mum's side of the family at all. I want to know when my mum dies so I can have a big party.

Impact

84. After the member of staff in Kerelaw, GUS [REDACTED], bent my arm up my back, I used to get pain in my forearm. I fractured my scaphoid bone last year. I had an operation on my left arm four weeks ago because of carpal tunnel. The surgeon, Mr Tiemessen at Borders General Hospital, had to do an ulnar nerve re-section. The nerve in my arm was actually loose and moving around in my arm. I told Mr Tiemessen that I'd been badly restrained years ago and he said that the nerve damage could've been caused by what GUS [REDACTED] did to me. I've continued to have problems with my right shoulder ever since GUU [REDACTED] yanked my right arm up my back. It still comes out of the socket all of the time.
85. I've had short jobs. I worked as a carer for elderly people and I worked in a call centre. Because I bottle everything up, I ended up getting signed off work a lot because of stress. I think that's one of the impacts of being in care. When it comes to authority figures, I'm scared to say anything in case I'm the one that suffers.

86. I had no qualifications when I left school. It's affected my ability to get a job. I was doing well at school before I went to Kerelaw. I liked PE, home economics, art and design, sciences, accounting and finance, English and maths. I was top of my class at most subjects. Employers look for qualifications. When they ask why I don't have any, I freeze up because it's to do with Kerelaw. When I was at Clark House, I was at high school and I was doing well. When I went in to Clark House, I wasn't going to school initially. They arranged for work to be sent from Kilwinning Academy. Even when the other kids were at school, I sat and did my school work. I managed to get a degree in psychology through the Open University in 2008.
87. Because of my time at Kerelaw, I don't trust people. I've got one really good friend, but other than that I don't trust anybody. I go out shopping, but I don't go on nights out. I don't talk to people. When I do the school run in the morning, I wait until quarter to nine to take [REDACTED] to school so I know I'll get to school just before the bell rings. That way, I don't have to speak to any of the other parents. I do the same at home time so I don't have to hang about the playground waiting for her. I won't even take [REDACTED] to the park so I don't have to interact with people.
88. When I was pregnant, the GP in Peterhead referred me to the social work department. The social worker contacted me when I was in hospital for gestational diabetes. She said that I hadn't been attending my antenatal appointments. I had been attending but at the time I was in maternity hospital so I couldn't. She said my daughter might be at risk because I had been in a secure unit and I had been abused. I was so angry. The stress I was under made me go into labour early.
89. [REDACTED] was placed on the child protection register before she was born and remained on it for the first year of her life. It was awful. They wanted me to go on anti-depressants as a precaution. I refused because I didn't need them. 24 hours after she was born, they wanted me to undergo a psychiatric assessment and they held a meeting to discuss whether [REDACTED] could go home with me. Eventually, a different social worker became involved. I proved them all wrong and [REDACTED]'s name was removed from the child protection register. That first year, I was so petrified if she scratched herself or

got bruised that she would be taken away from me. They visited me every week. They used the fact that I'd been abused and the fact that I'd been in care against me.

90. My daughter does a lot of sport and things, but I'm really wary of her around adults I don't know. She's a sociable child and I encourage that in her because I know what I'm like and I know it's because of everything that went on in Kerelaw. I very rarely tell my partner that I love him. I don't show my emotions.
91. I've thought about Kerelaw more recently because of the Inquiry. I heard about it from my friend, [REDACTED]. He was in Kerelaw. He committed suicide last year because he couldn't cope with what happened to him in Kerelaw. When I get angry, stressed or anxious, I clean. I've got obsessive compulsive disorder. Everything has to be done within set times. If they're not, I get agitated. I need to have set days for set things. On Sunday, the beds get stripped and the carpets get cleaned. That was something that happened in Kerelaw. If people are late for appointments and they don't tell me, I get agitated and wound up.
92. I was referred for psychiatric treatment when I was fifteen and in foster care. I'm on anti-depressant medication. I've been on them since the age of sixteen. The doctor says I'll be on them for life. I was an inpatient at the psychiatric unit at Inverclyde Hospital a few times between the ages of eighteen and twenty. I would be triggered by smells and things that reminded me of one of the staff in Kerelaw. Even now, there are certain smells that remind me of the things that ^{GUW} [REDACTED] did to me. Sometimes, I see somebody from a distance that looks like him and I get flashbacks. That happens two or three times a week.

Reporting of Abuse

93. When I was 21 or 22, I was living in [REDACTED] in Irvine. The police traced me through the council. They got in touch and told me that there had been further allegations against ^{GUW} [REDACTED]. They told me that they were reinvestigating and that there was a witness to my abuse. They asked me to give my statement again and go

to court. I was reluctant to give another statement because I'd dealt with the abuse through my psychiatrist. They really pressurised me. They said that if I didn't do it, there would be more victims and it would be my fault. I spoke to my psychiatrist in great detail. I ended up speaking to the police. About a year later, I got a letter from the Procurator Fiscal saying that there wasn't enough evidence to proceed.

94. Two years ago, I spoke to DCI Scott McKurdie about the sexual abuse and the assaults. I found out that Kerelaw was being reinvestigated and I got in touch with him. I gave a further statement to DCI McKurdie and a female officer. I have heard nothing from the police since.

Lessons to be Learned

95. You can't stop abuse happening in the future. I'm Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checked. I would never abuse a child, but just because I have that doesn't mean I can't. Just because somebody is PVG checked, doesn't mean you know them. A police officer was imprisoned recently for being in possession of child pornography. That's a person in a position of trust. You can't stop it happening. If an adult is going to sexually abuse a child, they're going to do it.
96. We need to listen to kids when they try to tell us something instead of dismissing them. Maybe case studies should be looked at for warning signs and behavioural changes in children. Somebody they trust could then sit them down and ask them if there's something going on that they want to talk about. When I was being abused, my behaviour changed. I started spending more and more time in my bedroom and away from people.

97. 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.

GDE


Signed.....

Dated 2/10/2018.....