

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

**Francis MCCOURT**

Support person present: No

1. My name is Francis Christopher McCourt. I like to be known by the name Franny. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1975. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Life before going into care**

2. My mother's name is [REDACTED]. My father's name is [REDACTED]. He stays in Elgin now and is a retired paramedic. My sister's name was [REDACTED]. Her married name is [REDACTED]. She was born in either 1976 or 1977. She's about two years younger than me.
3. My parent's marriage broke down when I was eighteen months old. My sister was young by that time. My sister and I were brought up by my maternal grandmother and grandfather in Barlanark in Glasgow's East End. Our address was [REDACTED]. My grandparents' names were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. My mother had been offered a job in Germany and my grandparents said that they would become our legal guardians so that she could pursue that. I initially lived with my grandparents, sister, three uncles, two aunties and one of my cousins. We all lived together in the one apartment. There were three single beds in my bedroom alone. I attended St. Jude's Primary School in Barlanark.
4. I remember my early childhood as being happy. So much so that, when I speak to my mother now, I say to her that I am glad that she left us with our grandparents. We were brought up in a loving family and we had a cracking life. I remember that

we became quite well known in the area. People would assume our surname was [REDACTED] and that our mother was our older sister.

5. My grandmother died when she was forty-five in 1986. I was either nine and a half or ten years old at that time. That was a horrible time. My grandfather was left with a load of children to look after by himself. I remember that he was struggling to look after us all. He was old fashioned and didn't know how to run a household. There was fighting going on surrounding all of that and my aunties, who had been helping, ended up moving out. It was quite a turbulent time and that had a major impact on me. It felt as if the family was breaking down and things were falling apart. That environment was the catalyst that led to my behaviour changing and me starting to play truant from school. That behaviour continued after my aunties moved back in. By the time I was in Primary Seven I was 'dogging' school very regularly.

#### **The lead up to being placed into care**

6. There was a social work department in Barlanark within the housing scheme I came from. Their office was on Bressay Road before it was shut down. The first social worker I became involved with was a lady called Muriel Gillies. She came to visit me at the house. I was taken to see a child psychologist in Shettleston around that time. The man's name was Dr Brown. His advice was to go and live my life and do what I wanted. After hearing that, my grandfather said there was no point in going back to see him. He didn't approve of that advice and didn't want me "doing what I liked."
7. Eventually the police began to get called out about me not attending school. That led to me becoming involved in the children's hearing system. There was nothing criminal going on that led to that happening. I only attended one hearing before I was placed in care. That was when I was about eleven years old. I remember that my Auntie [REDACTED] and my Auntie [REDACTED] went with me. My grandfather wasn't really in a place to be able to deal with it. My mother, at that time, was down in England. My social worker, Muriel Gillies, was also there. I didn't really get spoken to by the panel. That was my experience with all the hearings I was at. I would just

sit there like a wee scared rabbit. All the decisions would just be made in front of you. Everything just happened. At that hearing it was decided that the authorities were going to step in. Their ultimate decision was to send me to Larchgrove for assessment.

8. Looking back, I think that the decision to send me to Larchgrove had been made prior to me going into the hearing. I was taken to Larchgrove on the day of the hearing. There was already a staff member from Larchgrove waiting at the hearing venue. He drove me in his car directly to Larchgrove. I remember crying when I was being taken away. I was upset about being taken away from my family but there was nothing I could do about it.

#### **Larchgrove Remand Home, Edinburgh Road, Glasgow**

9. I went to Larchgrove in 1986 when I was about eleven years old. I was there for a period of about seven days. I knew that was how long I was due to be there because that was what I had been told at the hearing. Larchgrove was an assessment centre located on Edinburgh Road in Glasgow's East End.
10. I remember going into Larchgrove, but I don't remember any of the staff. I was there for such a short period of time that I don't remember much. There were wee classes during the day. I remember being in the unit and meeting lots of different people. I remember my grandfather saying to me when I saw him that I should stay in for the week and try to be a good boy. He told me that if I did that and got through the week then I might get out.
11. I don't remember anything surrounding people doing anything to understand what was going on. I don't remember anyone sitting me down to talk with me. I didn't know what discussions were going on in the background. Looking back, I didn't really know what an assessment centre was. I was only a wee guy and didn't know what was happening. I didn't even realise how in trouble I was. I was more concerned about getting the permission needed for me to smoke than anything else.

## **Leaving Larchgrove**

12. Larchgrove was located right next to where I was brought up. I was only there for a couple of nights before I jumped over the wall and ran back to my grandfather's. I just wanted to be with my grandfather. The police were then called out and took me back. I then did the same again. I think that was when the authorities felt that Larchgrove wasn't working. A children's hearing was then called.
13. I think the hearing was held at a place on Albion Street in central Glasgow. During the hearing, my aunties asked for me to be sent to a local school but still stay at the family home. Unfortunately, the panel wouldn't accept that. I always remember my aunties saying that I wasn't a bad boy and that all I struggled with was staying in school. My aunties were treated by the panel as being inadequate and not having a voice. There was nothing that they could have done. The people sitting on the panel and the social worker were always going to be the ones who were in the right.
14. I think, what they called a s.41(b) order was then made to place me in care residentially and full time at St Phillips. The panel thought that if I was further afield then I wouldn't run away as much. I wasn't told by the panel, or anyone else, how long I would be there. After the hearing someone drove me, my aunties and Muriel Gillies out to St Phillips.

## **St Phillips School, Plains, Airdrie**

15. St Phillips was located near Airdrie in North Lanarkshire. I went there when I was eleven years old in 1986. I was there for three years so I would have left in approximately 1989. I believe it was considered a List D school for children more of primary school age or those who were slightly younger. I think St Phillips was run by the Catholic Church for the Council. It was an open school that you could walk in and out of.

### *Layout of St Phillips School*

16. The dorms, kitchen and dining hall were all in the main building. The classrooms were mostly in a separate portacabin type building with a little bit of the school in the main building. Separately, there was a yard. There was a big mansion within the grounds where the headmaster would stay. St Phillips is all totally different now. I am aware that the main building at St Phillips has been flattened and they have rebuilt a secure unit in its place. I believe the house where the headmaster lived is still within the grounds.

### *Staff structure*

17. I have fond memories of the staff at St Phillips. There were two residential staff members on shift per each unit at any one time. Those two staff members would oversee up to thirty boys. At night there was a nightwatchman who would work on his own. He would sit on his chair in the hall, with a coffee and his fags, and watch who was going to the toilet and so on.

### *Staff*

18. Mr Kane was the headmaster. He stayed in a big mansion house within St Phillips's grounds. He either owned a lot of the surrounding land or the land and house came with the job. He lived in his house with his daughters and his dogs.
19. Danny Hilferty was my key worker in St Phillips throughout my time there. He is still a friend to this day. He was a good guy. I remember that he used to come out to Barlanark. All my family have met him.
20. John Hughes was a residential worker at St Phillips. His nickname was 'Yogi.' He was a former Celtic FC player who was one of the Lisbon Lions. My grandfather was a big Celtic fan and would come up to St Phillips on a Sunday to speak to him.

21. There was a matron at St Phillips called Mrs Sweeney. She was a lovely old woman. Her cousin, Thomas Hamill, was the beat police officer in Barlanark and knew me. I remember him jokingly asking me how his cousin was treating me up at St Phillips when he saw me.
22. There was a nightwatchman who worked in our unit. I don't remember his name. He was an old guy.
23. There were a few women who worked in the kitchen. I don't remember their names. They were all lovely and came from the surrounding area. They all knew each other and had been working there for years.

#### *The children at St Phillips*

24. It was all boys at St Phillips. The children were split into three units called Mallaig, Morar and a unit that sounds like Loch Islach. I was in Loch Islach throughout my time at St Phillips. There were between twenty and thirty boys in each unit so there could have been as many as ninety boys in total at St Phillips. The age range was between eight or nine and sixteen years old. It was pretty much all boys from Glasgow. I wasn't the only boy in St Phillips who had been placed there purely because they had been dogging school. There were two other children from Barlanark I knew who also had Muriel Gillies as their social worker. They too had only been placed into care because they had been dogging school.

#### **Routine at St Phillips**

##### *First day*

25. My aunties and social worker dropped me off then left me. A staff member then took me to my unit. They then took me to the big dinner hall they had there. Everybody was eating and saw me when I came in. There were a couple of boys I knew from Barlanark who recognised me so that made things easier. It made me less nervous

when I realised I would have a couple of pals with me. Those boys then told me the routine and what I needed to do.

#### *Daily routine*

26. We would get up, get dressed then all march down to the dining room. We would go out into the yard for a cigarette after having our breakfast. We would then go up to the classrooms for 9:00 am. We would have classes for forty-five minutes then have a break followed by more classes until lunchtime. We would march back to the dining hall in the main building for our lunch. After lunch we went into the yard for another cigarette. We then had further classes in the afternoon. I think we only had classes until about 3:00 pm. We would all go back to our individual units after school. In the evenings we would either sit around watching television, play football or carry on with the staff.
27. You would usually go home at weekends but if you misbehaved you might have your weekend leave taken off you. That happened to me on a couple of occasions. If you were kept in there was no school over the weekend. They would close two of the units down and pool all the boys who were being kept in into one unit. We'd either watch television or the staff would take you out swimming.

#### *Sleeping arrangements*

28. Each unit had about ten or eleven rooms with three beds in each room. There were a further five or six rooms with two beds in them. You worked your way up to having your own room with no one else in it. That was all dependent on your behaviour.

#### *Washing / bathing*

29. It was a shower room with cubicles. That was located on the first floor. We would take it in turns, four at a time, to go for showers. There were staff who sat outside to speed us up with our showering. You didn't have any privacy because there were four boys having showers at the same time.

*Mealtimes / food*

30. The food was brilliant and was freshly cooked every day. All the meals were had in the dining hall in the main building. It was all women who worked in the kitchen who cooked the food.

*Work / chores*

31. I remember that if you wanted extra pocket money you could help the women out in the kitchen by doing things like peeling potatoes.

*Clothing / uniform*

32. The clothes that we wore made us look like characters out of the film 'Scum.' We all wore these old denims. We wore blue and white striped shirts like ones you would wear in a prison. We all wore old donkey jackets. We wore civvy clothes when we went home at weekends. You would get access to that before the weekends, but you had to hand those back when you returned.

*Possessions / pocket money*

33. You didn't really have any possessions other than your clothes. You were given a wee brown envelope each week with your pocket money in before you went home for the weekend. The amount you got was dependent on what chores you did. If you were bad, you didn't get rewarded so you wouldn't get as much. You'd just get the basic amount handed to you on the Friday.

*School*

34. The school was Catholic and it was on site. It was a normal school and structured like what I had experienced before. There was Science, English, Maths, Sport, Art and all that sort of stuff. I learnt more at the school in St Phillips than I did at Kerelaw. They tried in St Phillips to educate you.



*Leisure time / trips*

35. They did everything with you. They bred chickens, ducks and rabbits there and you could help with that. There were horses kept on the grounds which the boys used to help to feed. Every unit had use of the minibus on rotation each evening. If it was your unit's evening with the minibus, the staff might take you up to Strathclyde Park, hillwalking or swimming in Wishaw. They did all sorts of different things like that with you.

*Smoking*

36. You were allowed to smoke in St Phillips if your parents provided you with permission to smoke. The staff would keep your cigarettes in a drawer with your name written on the packet. They tried to restrict your smoking to three or four cigarettes a day. You mostly smoked after mealtimes with one later in the evening. I remember the staff would use the cigarettes like wee bargaining chips. I remember the nightwatchman asking boys to make him a coffee at night and him giving them a cigarette in return. Sometimes staff would ask you to clean their car, or something like that, in return for an extra fag.

*Leave home*

37. My understanding when I went into St Phillips was that I would stay there during the week until 12:00 am on a Friday and then I would get home for the weekends. I was told that, if I behaved, I would get home on a Friday and go back the following Sunday. That all kind of worked out for the first wee while that I was there.

*Birthdays / Christmas*

38. If you were in the home for your birthday, it was just a normal day. You might have a phone call from your family or get sent in a card with money. I was lucky and got home for Christmas and New Year every year I was there. You would leave the day

before Christmas Eve. You would be back either on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> of January. There were some boys who were kept in over Christmas. That could be because they were misbehaving, or they had no family to go to. I remember feeling sorry for them. I don't know what those boys did over Christmas. Knowing the staff, I would be surprised if they didn't try and make the boys who stayed over Christmas as comfortable as possible. They might have invited them back to stay with their own families on Christmas Day or something like that.

*Visits / Inspections / Review of Detention*

39. Visiting was kind of pointless because I would usually be home for weekends. I think because of that I wouldn't usually get visits during the week. I had an uncle who was in the army who might visit me if he was on leave. He would occasionally ring up, arrange the visit and drive up from Hereford to see me. If you were kept in over weekends, you could still be visited by your family and that did happen with me.
40. I had three social workers during my time in care. They tended to work with me for a couple of years before moving on and being replaced by someone else. My first social worker was Muriel Gillies, my second was called Lena Tweedie and my third was called Louise Wright. They all worked out of the social work office in Barlanark on Bressay Road before it got shut down. I think Muriel Gillies and Lena Tweedie were my social workers during my time in St Phillips. They would come to visit but I also saw them after times I ran away. Sometimes I would get fed up whilst on the run and just walk into their social work office in Barlanark.
41. There were loads of children's hearings held either at Mackenzie House or on Albion Street in Glasgow. I used to get taken back and forth to those hearings by staff and social workers. During those hearings the panel would just continue the s.41(b) order, or whatever it was called.
42. I never saw anyone coming in from the outside to inspect St Phillips. There was nothing like that during my time there. That was the same for all the homes that I was in.

43. I had no idea that I was going to be at St Phillips for three years when I first went there or throughout my time there. All I knew was that I had been placed in St Phillips under some sort of section and it was up to the panel to decide when that section would be taken off me. Nobody ever said to me that, if I behaved, I could get out of the place at a certain time. I don't think any of the boys I was in care with were told things like that back then. There wasn't anything like a goal or something to aim for. They didn't, for example, say if you behaved you would become a day boy or be returned to normal education. There was nothing like that mentioned. It probably would have made a difference if there was something like that in place. However, as things were, I was just kind of left in limbo.

#### *Healthcare*

44. There was a matron at St Phillips who would deal with you if you were ill or injured. Her name was Mrs Sweeney. She was a lovely old woman. There was a wee mini hospital in St Phillips where you would be taken to be treated by her. If there was anything she couldn't treat you for you would be taken to Monklands Hospital in Airdrie.

#### *Running away*

45. For the first wee while it all worked out fine. I needed to find my bearings. However, I was sussing out how to get back to Barlanark at the same time. I spoke to the other boys and discovered that there were ways to get out which boys called 'the five paths.' Those escape routes had been passed down from one boy to the next for generations. Following any of those five paths got you to Airdrie train station. Airdrie station was probably roughly about two and a half hours walk from Barlanark. You could be back in Glasgow in thirty minutes if you took the train. The staff all knew about the five paths so, as soon as you ran away, they would position themselves ready to jump out and try and catch you. It was all a game of cat and mouse.

46. I started running away again after a short time at St Phillips. At the start it was all about running away to get to my grandfather's house. I was running away with other guys to other communities as things progressed. I started to change as a person as I learned more from the other boys about crime and glue sniffing. I remember meeting a couple of boys from the Blackhill area and hanging about in the East End of Glasgow with them. I would disappear for two or three weeks at a time. Sometimes I might be away for as long as a couple of months at a time.
47. I would always end up getting fed up and bored and head back to my grandfather's in Barlanark. My grandfather would just pick up the phone and either the standby social worker or the police would come to collect me and take me back to St Phillips. I remember my family being worried sick when I was out and about running about. They would be out looking for me. They would come and try and hunt me down if they heard of any sightings. Sometimes my uncles would catch me and threaten me if I ever ran away again. They'd tell me that I was breaking my grandfather's heart and that people were worried sick about me. They'd tell me that my grandfather was losing sleep, constantly looking out the window and waiting for a call from the police saying that something bad had happened to me. I'd promise not to run away again but I usually did.
48. I would be taken back to St Phillips on occasions where I walked into the social work office after running away. There was a driver who worked with the social work department, called Roddy Cherry, who would drive me back to St Phillips. I was never quizzed by any of the social workers during my time in care to find out why I was running away or whether there was something making me unhappy. There was nothing like that happened.
49. My exposure to crime whilst I was running away ended up with me getting more seriously involved with the police. I was being charged with lots of things, but I didn't really care. I knew I wasn't going to end up in jail. The worst they could do was send me back to the home for the level of criminality I was doing. Nothing really happened with the charges because of that.

50. If it was the police who collected me, or caught me, they would take me down to London Road police station in Glasgow and place me in the detention cell. Two standby social workers would come to collect me and drive me back to St Phillips if it was at night-time. They would hand you back to the staff then leave. You would be made to have a shower then be sent to your bed if you were returned through the night. It would just be your normal routine the following day. The only way the staff responded by way of punishment was to take my weekend leave away.

*Bed-wetting*

51. Bed-wetting wasn't a problem for me. I don't remember anyone being punished for that or anything like that.

**Discipline and abuse at St Phillips**

52. I had a brilliant time at St Phillips. I have fond memories of my time and the people there. I never saw any children being restrained. There was nothing like that during my time there. I think we all kind of knew not to take things too far because the staff were so good. The staff would intervene if they saw fights breaking out between the boys but didn't do anything beyond that.
53. The only form of discipline the staff used was keeping in boys over the weekends, or delaying weekend leave, if they misbehaved. Any messing about would end up with them taking away your weekend leave or saying that you weren't getting home until the Saturday. That worked for a lot of the boys. I remember being kept in over the weekend on a couple of occasions for reasons other than running away. On one occasion, I'd got into a fight with a boy and that was my punishment.

## Leaving St Phillips

54. It was the running away that led to me being moved to another institution. That was the only reason I was taken out of St Phillips. The number of times I ran away increased over time. There were times when I would behave and not run away. I would build all that up for a couple of months then just do something stupid. I'd go glue sniffing, get hold of alcohol or go out with someone who was up to no good. One of the last times I ran away from St Phillips, I ran away with a couple of boys and ended up down in Blackpool. I was away for two weeks and my family was worried sick about me.
55. I ended up going to a children's hearing in MacKenzie House in Glasgow. I attended the hearing with my Auntie [REDACTED], my Auntie [REDACTED], my keyworker from St Phillips, Danny Hilferty, and my social worker, Lena Tweedie. Also in attendance were the three members of the panel. When I went to that I just thought that it was going to be a normal review like I had had over the years. I thought that I would be attending that, everything would be hunky dory and then I would be taken back to St Phillips. However, during the hearing it was mentioned that I was a danger to myself and that nobody knew where I was at times. I remember that I didn't have a voice during the hearing. It was all happening around me with the adults speaking. I just sat there with my arms crossed. It was ultimately decided by the panel that St Phillips wasn't cutting it for me anymore and that I would be transferred to Kerelaw.
56. Nobody was expecting that decision to be made. I was in a daze and didn't know what was going on. My aunts were the same way. I know that Danny Hilferty had no idea that I was going to be sent somewhere else when that decision was made. He would have told me if he knew that I was going to be taken away. Both Danny and I were crying. The two of us were distraught because we couldn't believe what was happening. I remember Danny Hilferty saying to me that he'd tried to warn me that I would be taken away if I didn't behave.
57. A man called Ian Fleming was then introduced to me as my new key worker. I asked when I would be going to Kerelaw and was told I would be going straight away.

Being transferred basically happened there and then. I didn't know what was happening because it was all happening that fast. I was then put straight into a van to be shipped off down to Stevenston in Ayrshire. I was already trying to work out my escape route and how I would get home whilst I was being driven to Kerelaw. I remember realising that it was miles away when I saw signs for Saltcoats and Ayrshire.

58. I haven't really learnt what was going on around the time of my transfer to Kerelaw. Things had obviously been going on in the background without me knowing. The authorities must have wanted to step things up and move me further afield. I don't know whether they thought a new school, or a new challenge might change the way I was behaving. I think all that behaviour perhaps just led to the staff at St Phillips thinking that I had maybe just outgrown the place.

#### **Kerelaw Secure Unit, Stevenston, Ayrshire**

59. I was in Kerelaw between 1989 and 1991. Kerelaw was a List D school that was used more for children who were of secondary school age. That was different to St Phillips. Over the time I was in Kerelaw I was in both the open units and the secure unit. I spent about a year in the open side, a year in the secure unit then a final year in the open side again.

#### *Layout of Kerelaw*

60. There was a wee country road past some red ash football pitches that led up to the units at Kerelaw. Everything at Kerelaw was contained within the same grounds. The open side of Kerelaw had four big units laid out in two pairs. Your unit was where you slept and spent your time outside of mealtimes and schooling. Each pair of units were connected to one another by a corridor and shared a single dining room. All the units had strange names. The ones I remember were called Baird Unit, Fleming Unit and Wilson Unit. Two of the units were for boys and the other two were for both boys and girls.

61. The units all had a similar setup to St Phillips. On the ground floor was an office, toilets, a shower room, a television room, a room where there were table tennis and pool tables and a wee kitchen. On the first floor were the bedrooms. Most of the rooms were double rooms but there were a few single rooms too. It was all single beds with a bit of furniture in the rooms. You could work your way up to having your own bedroom if you behaved.
62. Separately there was a big education block, a big gym hall and a portacabin annexe area that was used for learning. There were a few staff houses which weren't used for staff to live in when I was there. They tended to be used for meetings instead.
63. The secure unit was located behind the portacabin annexe area. It had a giant wall all around it so you couldn't see into it. The secure unit contained both boys and girls. Within the secure unit there were three units numbered 'one' through to 'three.' It was a big warren with bars on all the windows and double gates. You couldn't see the outside world and they couldn't see you. It was essentially a mini jail.

#### *Staff structure*

64. I found all the staff in the secure unit to be good. They were a wee bit more relaxed with you. I found their approach towards me a little bit easier when compared to the way the staff in the open units behaved.
65. There were different teachers on the open side and the secure side of the school. There was a set of independent teaching staff who worked solely in the secure unit. The only teacher that crossed over both sides of Kerelaw was the PT Instructor, FSR He did sessions with everybody. His classes only happened once per week for the residents in the secure unit because it was such a hassle to transfer and supervise people across to the gym.



*Staff*

66. SNR [REDACTED] was a guy called [REDACTED].
67. LEF [REDACTED] was SNR [REDACTED] of Kerelaw whilst I was there. He was a big English guy.
68. EUM [REDACTED] was a residential worker on the open side of Kerelaw. He was known as EUM [REDACTED]. He worked in Wilson Unit. He had a kind of key worker type role. He was a local man who came from the surrounding area.
69. Isabelle Surgeon was a residential worker in the open side of Kerelaw. She worked in Wilson Unit alongside EUM [REDACTED].
70. Mrs KAM [REDACTED] was a senior care worker at Kerelaw. I don't remember her first name. She was a lovely old woman who was a bit like a matron. She came from Largs and was as hard as boots.
71. Ian Fleming was my key worker in the open side at Kerelaw when I first arrived. He might have been attached to Fleming Unit, if I am right about the name of the first unit I was in.
72. GUJ [REDACTED] was a care member of staff in Fleming Unit. She was from Ayr.
73. John Muldoon worked in one of the units I was in on the open side. I am aware he has been prosecuted but he never touched me during my time at Kerelaw.
74. KBW [REDACTED] was a care worker who worked on the open side in Wilson Unit. I don't remember his surname. He came from Mount Vernon in Glasgow. I would see him in the local shops in my area from time to time because Mount Vernon was right next to where I came from

75. KGH was a night shift worker who worked in one of the open units I was in. I don't remember his surname but know that he lived locally to Kerelaw. If I am right about the first unit I was in, he would have worked in Fleming Unit.
76. FSR was the PT Instructor at Kerelaw. I think he was a more senior member of staff. He worked with boys and girls both from the open and secure units.
77. Matt George was the Art teacher. He worked solely with children in the open units. I have heard from the police that he worked at Kerelaw from 1975 until the day it closed. I think he was a more senior member of staff.
78. Winnie Goodman was the English teacher who worked solely with children from the open units.
79. KBK was a Maths teacher. He worked solely with children from the open units. He was an older chap.
80. Bill Easton was an English teacher. He worked solely with children who were in the open units.

*The children at Kerelaw*

81. Kerelaw was for both girls and boys. There were two units in the open side that were solely for boys and two that weren't. The secure unit was for a mixture of girls and boys. Kerelaw was for children who were slightly older. The age range was between about thirteen and sixteen or seventeen years old. I would have been one of the younger children there. I don't think there was anyone over the age of sixteen years old in the secure unit. I remember that there were a lot more children from places outside of Glasgow there. There were children from Kilmarnock and other places in Ayrshire.
82. I was in Kerelaw with some unsavoury people. That was particularly the case in the secure unit. I was in there with murderers, child prostitutes, drug dealers and people

like that. I was in there with some seriously dangerous characters. In that way, my time there was definitely an eye opener. The secure unit contained a full mix and catalogue of offenders and there was me who was there for dogging school then running away from places I had been placed in care.

83. I remember the names of a few people who were in Kerelaw at the same time as me. On the open side I shared a room with <sup>IWQ</sup> [REDACTED]. He was a boy from Govan in Glasgow. He was with me during the first year I was at Kerelaw. Other children include [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. In the secure unit I was in the same unit as a boy called [REDACTED]. He had killed a wee boy and been prosecuted for that.

### **Routine at Kerelaw**

#### *First day*

84. I was nervous and scared because I had heard a couple of things about Kerelaw before going. I remember that some of the staff at St Phillips would say that you would "know all about it if you ended up there." From that, I took it that Kerelaw was a no nonsense kind of place. I also knew that the children who went there were slightly older and that it wasn't a place for wee boys.
85. After arriving I was taken into one of the open units. I think the name of the unit I was taken into was called Fleming Unit. I was taken into the office to meet staff members. I was reminded that Ian Fleming was my keyworker and told that the routine would start the following day. All that I was interested in hearing about was whether the staff had received confirmation from my aunties that I was allowed to smoke. I was then taken down to my room by Ian Fleming and introduced to the boy I would be sharing a room with. That boy's name was <sup>IWQ</sup> [REDACTED]. After Ian Fleming left, <sup>IWQ</sup> [REDACTED] told me a bit about Kerelaw and how all the Glasgow boys stuck together. It all happened quickly. The first wee while was me trying to find my feet

and meeting new people. I didn't know anyone when I first went there. My first impressions of Kerelaw, and the staff there, was that it could be alright.

#### *Daily routine*

86. The daily routine on the open side was that the staff would get you up, you would get dressed then you would go for breakfast. After breakfast you would have a cigarette before going to your first class at 9:00 am. You then had maybe three classes until lunchtime before going to your unit's dining hall for lunch. After lunch you were allowed another cigarette before having another three classes in the afternoon. You would go back to your unit at the end of the school day. In the evenings you would be taken out on trips if the unit had access to the van. If we weren't taken out, we would play football in the grounds or watch television in our units. It was a similar routine in the evenings to what we did in St Phillips.-.
87. During the weekends you were allowed to go home for leave if you had behaved yourself. If you hadn't then you would be kept at Kerelaw. During those weekends we would be pooled into one unit so they could shut the other units. They might take you on a trip at the weekends to Largs or something like that, otherwise you would just sit around the units watching television.
88. The daily routine was the same on the open and secure sides of Kerelaw. The only difference was that everything was done within the secure unit itself during the day rather than having access to the other parts of Kerelaw for things like school or for leisure. You weren't allowed leave to go home at weekends. During the weekends, you wouldn't have classes and would exercise in the yard instead.

#### *Sleeping arrangements*

89. The bedrooms were segregated between girls and boys. How that was done varied depending on what unit you were in. In some units there were separate corridors for the boys and the girls. In other places you would be on the same corridor with the rooms next to each other segregated by gender.

90. It was more mixed in the secure unit but there were fancier bars on the windows, the rooms were all locked at night, and you were checked. I remember the bars weren't straight and went around in a loop. The beds were secured to the walls, square boxes fixed to the floors for your stuff and the desks were all fixed to the ground.

*Washing / bathing*

91. In the secure unit you would go for a shower one at a time. They would lock boys up between each boy having their showers. The layout in the open units was all the same across the units. In the open side there were individual cubicles. There were about five in the room and we would all shower at the same time. The shower rooms and toilets were opposite the staff offices. We weren't really supervised but if you were in the shower too long a staff member might come out of the office to hurry you along. There was a bit of privacy because there were cubicles, however, there weren't shower curtains and the cubicles were open. The staff could come in when they wanted so they would see you showering. I remember both male and female staff members coming in to hurry us up. I remember in particular a female staff member called **GUU** walking in. She came from Ayr. She was notorious for doing that.

*Mealtimes / food*

92. In the open side you had breakfast, lunch and dinner in the dining rooms that were connected to your unit and shared with another unit. In the secure unit all meals were had within your unit. There was a single room with a wee kitchen to the side of it. I think the food would be made in the open side of Kerelaw and brought into the secure unit. At the weekends staff would occasionally use the kitchen to make things for the residents like Thai green curry and things like that. They'd try to get you involved and try to show you how to cook.

### *Work / chores*

93. In the secure unit they were limited with what they could do with you, so we didn't really do chores. If I remember rightly, you could do extra chores in the open units that allowed you to get more pocket money at weekends. It was things like mopping the floors or tidying up the pool room. You might wash a staff member's car. It was all things like that. You would be given that on top of your pocket money before you went home for the weekend.

### *Clothing / uniform*

94. There was no uniform and you wore civilian clothing. You were given an allowance every month for clothing. You could save your allowance for up to three months and then go out and spend it on yourself.

### *Possessions / pocket money*

95. I didn't have anything with me when I was taken from the children's hearing to Kerelaw. All I had were the clothes on my back. I had clothes and bits and bobs that I left behind at St Phillips, but I never saw any of those again.
96. You were given an allowance every month. I tended to buy clothes with my allowance rather than anything else. If you bought anything else, and took it back, you were in a place full of thieves so you wouldn't have that thing very long. There was no point buying a Walkman or something because you knew it would just end up 'walking' itself.

### *School*

97. All the schooling was done on site. They had English, Maths, Art, Computing, Woodwork, Metalwork and PE. The teaching was kept separate between the open and secure sides. The only teacher that worked across both sides was the PT instructor, FSR. You did a bit of everything in the classes in the secure unit and

it could be quite a full day. The teachers there tried to make you work and educate you. On the open side the teachers would just put on a video and make you watch a film. If you hadn't finished your film the video would be taken to your next class. There was no teaching being done. It was all about just keeping you occupied for forty-five minutes. There was no educating done with staff choosing to chat up the girls or doing something else instead. It was an easy shift for them.

*Leisure time*

98. We would watch television, play pool or football when we had free time.

*Trips / holidays*

99. On the open side of Kerelaw they took you out to places like Largs and places like that. That didn't happen whilst you were in the secure unit. I think during the time I was in the secure unit, I was taken on a holiday to the Isle of Arran. It was an outdoor activity centre and we stayed there for a week. Only specific children who were behaving were taken on that holiday. If you were playing up, you didn't get taken anywhere.
100. In the open unit you stayed in over the summer holidays. There was schooling but it was a bit more relaxed. I remember being taken out camping on a couple of occasions on the open side. It was the same as the secure unit, you only got to go on trips and holidays if you were behaving so not everybody would be taken. I remember boys running away on those trips and the staff going crazy trying to hunt them down.

*Leave home*

101. You were allowed to go home for weekends and at Christmas and New Year in the open side if you behaved. You got no leave in the secure unit.

### *Birthdays / Christmas*

102. On your birthday they gave you a wee bit extra money as part of your allowance. It was £10 or something like that. It was the same at Christmas. I can't remember exactly how much it was, but it could have been something like £50. They would take you out to the Magnum Centre in Irvine so that you could spend that. I usually just bought clothes or trainers.
103. I think I was quite lucky and made it home for Christmas every year. There is something makes me think that you would be allowed out for a week. I know there were people kept in for Christmas though. I think you usually would end up only going back for a couple of days before being back out the following weekend for New Year. I think you got another longer wee period at home for New Year.

### *Visits / Inspections / Review of Detention*

104. My family visited me during my time both in the open side and in the secure unit. I remember that my aunties used to come down to see me. My mother's partner's brother lived in Stevenston so when my mother was in the area, particularly during the summertime, she would visit then. I got more visits whilst I was in the secure unit. On the open side I would either be on the run or would have been allowed to go back home during the weekends.
105. Lena Tweedie and Louise Wright were my social workers during my time at Kerelaw. Louise Wright was my last social worker during my time in care. They just used to turn up when there were children's hearings. Either that or I would see them if they were returning me to Kerelaw after I had run away. Louise Wright saw me more often because she was around during the lead up to me leaving Kerelaw.
106. I never saw anyone coming in from the outside to inspect Kerelaw. There was nothing like that during my time there. That was the same for all the homes that I was in. Nobody came in to assess the place or anything like that. None of that sort of thing happened.



107. Throughout my time at Kerelaw there were multiple children's hearings. I think I had one a year so I must have attended three or four hearings. The panel would basically say that they were keeping the order in place. It just felt that there was never a light at the end of the tunnel because I would just be returned to Kerelaw to the staff who were doing the things they were doing. The only positive hearing was being moved back into the open side. The last one I attended they were basically them washing their hands of me and gearing me up to go out into the outside world.

*Attempt to have me fostered*

108. Towards the end of my time in the secure unit I was introduced to a man and a woman within the secure unit. I remember thinking that was strange at the time but didn't think anything of it. Later, I was taken to a meeting in one of the staff houses with my two aunts, my social worker, SNR [REDACTED] of Kerelaw, LEF [REDACTED], my key worker and introduced again to the man and woman.

109. After the man and the woman introduced themselves, it was explained that they were foster parents who the authorities were trying to get me fostered out to. That was the first time I heard anything about the potential for me being fostered. When my two aunts heard that they hit the roof. They refused to allow me to be fostered. I told the people in the room that they were barking up the wrong tree if they wanted me to play happy families with another family. Looking back, the authorities were trying to make out that my family were the problem. My family were never the problem when it came to the way that I behaved. It was me being bad not them. I just wanted home to stay with my grandfather.

*Healthcare*

110. There was nothing in place when it came to healthcare at Kerelaw. There was no matron like they had at St Phillips. There was no internal medical treatment for injuries or illnesses you may have. If you needed treated you would be taken to a doctor, hospital or to a dentist if need be. There probably were first aiders but I don't

remember them as such. I remember that I never received any proper first aid when I injured my hand following the incident with FSR. All that was done was a tea towel was wrapped around it and I was taken to hospital.

### *Running away*

111. I didn't ever run away from the secure unit whilst I was there. I tried to break the bars on my bedroom window to get out but didn't manage to escape. All the staff did when they discovered I'd broken my bars was to move me to another bedroom whilst they repaired things. I wasn't punished in any way. At the end of the day there was nothing they could punish me with because I was locked in the unit all day every day. They couldn't do anything further with me.
112. I ran away from the open side of Kerelaw on multiple occasions. I didn't run away all that much during the first few months I was in the open side but as time went on, and more and more things were being done by the staff towards me, I started to run away more often. Ultimately, the only reason I was trying to escape was because of what was happening rather than wanting to get home. I ran away during the night, from classrooms and the gym hall and during trips away to places. It didn't matter where I was, I used it as an opportunity to escape.
113. At any one time, you could disappear if you wanted to. It was easy to run away because there were only two staff members per unit. They couldn't keep their eyes on all thirty residents in their unit all the time. There would be residents spread over all the rooms in the unit so it would be easy to disappear. It was the same thing as when I was at St Phillips when it came to why I would return. If I got bored, I would walk into the social work office in Barlanark, and they would organise for somebody to take me back.
114. The way that the staff at Kerelaw initially dealt with my running away was to make me go to school in slippers. That's what they did with all the boys who ran away. I would be walked by staff there and back. When the slippers didn't stop me from running away, they made me walk back and forth to school with staff in a pair of

socks. That didn't stop me either. I remember an occasion when I walked all the way from Kerelaw to Glasgow in my socks. I followed the railway tracks all the way back. I think that was the point when the authorities decided they needed to do something else.

115. I remember that the last time I ran away from the open side, during the first year I was there, I was on the run for two weeks. I ultimately wound up in Shettleston Police Station. I remember it being strange because my mother came to collect me alongside the social worker. That had never happened before. There followed a children's hearing. I had no idea that I was going to be placed in the secure unit until I was told that at the hearing. I was told that I was going to be placed into the secure unit at Kerelaw purely because of my running away. Nobody ever asked me why I was running away. Not one staff member asked me why I was doing that. Instead, I was placed in the secure unit at Kerelaw after a year. I would have told them if someone had turned round to me and asked what was happening. At the end of the hearing, two big men walked into the room and took me to the secure unit. My social worker knew that was going to happen, but I didn't.

#### *Bed-wetting*

116. I never had an issue with bed-wetting. I never had that problem so I wouldn't be able to say how the staff dealt with that.

#### **Abuse at Kerelaw**

117. The abuse I suffered happened at different times over the three years I was at Kerelaw. It was all either physical or emotional abuse. I didn't experience anything sexual beyond inappropriate sexual language used by staff. I only suffered abuse in the open side of the place rather than in the secure unit. That was during the first and third years I was there. A lot of it was happening around the same time surrounding the same incidents. I would be getting it off one staff member then another the next day and so on. Although it wasn't happening with individual staff

members every week it was happening across those staff members that were abusive all the time.

118. The incidents that I set out in this statement are all the ones that I recall. However, there are others where I don't remember the detail. I remember seeing other residents being assaulted and restrained on multiple occasions by staff members. It was always full grown adults restraining people and kneeling on their chests. They used to steam right in heavy handed. They used to just swing people about. It was full on to see. You could tell that there wasn't any procedure or training behind the way in which staff would tackle the residents. It was as if they were fighting and 'anything went' if the staff member got the upper hand. Looking back, I think a lot of the abuse I witnessed and experienced just came down to whatever sort of mood the staff members were in.

FSR

119. FSR was a PT instructor at Kerelaw. He worked with residents both from the open units and the secure unit. He just wasn't a nice man. I remember on the first day I was at Kerelaw, the boy I was sharing my room with, IWQ, said that I needed to watch out for FSR. He told me that if I ran away FSR would give me "a doing for it." I didn't believe IWQ because up until that point I had never had a finger laid on me by any staff member at any home I had been in. My first impressions of FSR were that he was alright. I remember that the first time he met me he asked me where I was from. I told him that I was from Barlanark. He asked me whether I knew a guy called Frank Quinn. I said that I did and then FSR FSR said he used to play amateur football with him. I thought that, since I knew someone he knew, that might leave me in good standing.
120. After settling into Kerelaw for a while I started planning how I could run away. I familiarised myself with the place and did a bit of enquiring with the other boys about where the nearest train station was and how you could get to Glasgow. I decided to take my chance to run away after a couple of months. I realised that FSR's class would be the easiest one to run away from. During one of his classes I asked

to use the toilet then used that as an opportunity to run straight out of the gym hall doors.

121. I was on the run for a couple of weeks before I was caught by the police and taken back to a police station. It was through the night, so a couple of social workers collected me from there and returned me to Kerelaw. When I went back to my bedroom IWQ ██████ was there. He said that I should have listened to him because FSR ██████ was now "gunning for me" because I had run away. I didn't believe IWQ ██████ at the time.
  
122. Later that week I had a run of classes. I think it was Art with Matt George, followed by English, then PE with FSR ██████. As I walked into the gym FSR ██████ directed the rest of the class to pull a trampoline out of the back cupboards and told me that he wanted a word with me. He told me to go into the area in the shower room and toilets where we got changed. The room was located right next to FSR ██████'s office. I then went into the room before FSR ██████. He shut the door behind him when he entered. There was no one else in the room. FSR ██████ then started punching and kicking me all over. It was a barrage of punches and kicks to my head, my face and my body. I was down on the floor balled up in a foetal position. I was only thirteen, a wee boy and he was a man. As he was doing what he was doing he was saying "ye wee prick, don't ever run away in my class again." Once he had finished, he said that again before going into the gym to take the class. I entered the gym a little later all red and dishevelled. I wasn't bleeding but I was certainly roughed up.
  
123. That was the first time that anything like that had happened to me during my time in care. Looking back, in FSR ██████'s world I must have made him look bad by running away from one of his classes. He was in charge of me and I had bolted away. From that day onward my relationship with FSR ██████ was tainted. There was always an undercurrent of him not liking me.
  
124. A few months after the incident after I was assaulted by FSR ██████ I ran away again during the night. On that occasion I was returned at 2:00 am and physically assaulted by KGH ██████ who was the nightwatchman in our unit. The following day I had

a PE class with FSR I knew what was coming because of what had happened the first time round. I remember that I held back as we were all going into his class in the gym hall. I was holding back because I just knew I would get punched again. FSR couldn't contain himself when I walked in. He lunged at me, I about turned on my heel to get out of the door and he punched me twice on the back of my head. I ran to the left towards a nearby annexe. I could see a staff member by the name of Winnie Goodman in that annexe. I ran up to the window she was the other side of to bang on to raise the alarm. As I did that my hand went right through the window.

125. FSR stopped in his tracks after my hand went through the glass. Blood was gushing from my wrist. He didn't try to help or do any first aid. He didn't do anything at all. Winnie Goodman and some of the other care staff came out to see me. I think Bill Easton, who was an English teacher, may have been there as well. A bandage or a tea towel was then put around my hand. I was then taken to Crosshouse Hospital in Kilmarnock by two male staff members. They weren't teaching staff. I can only remember one of their names which was HWV. He was a big guy from Kilmarnock. I ended up getting ten stitches all around my wrist and my hand was all bandaged up. I remember that during my time in the hospital HWV and the other guy stopped me from speaking and spoke to the hospital staff on my behalf. They said that I had banged a window and my hand had gone through. They didn't mention that I had been getting chased by FSR following getting punched.
126. When I returned to Kerelaw from the hospital Mrs KAM, who was a senior care worker, asked me what had been going on. I told her that FSR had punched me a couple of times and that I had been trying to get away. Mrs KAM said something like "Just forget about it, it's all alright." I didn't report it after that, and nothing further was done.
127. After the incident where I sustained an injury to my wrist I didn't have to go to gym for a while. When I eventually returned to gym, FSR never assaulted me again in the way he did before I injured my wrist. He must have got a fright because he never put a hand on me again. Instead, he would use sports as a pretence to do

things. He did that so, if he was ever questioned, he could say it was all just part of sports. That continued throughout the rest of my time at Kerelaw.

128. Those assaults happened in various ways. He would boot me when he was taking the ball off me if we were playing 5-aside football. I remember on one occasion, just before I went into the secure unit in the first year I was at Kerelaw, we were playing cricket up at the big field at the top. It was summertime and it was the school's sports day. I was the batter and, suddenly, I saw [FSR] walk up to the boy who was supposed to be bowling to take his place. [FSR] wasn't trying to bowl when he bowled the ball at me. He was trying to hit me with the cricket ball. It wasn't an overarm bowl. It was a full on pitch and he was going in for the kill. He ended up hitting me on the leg. I threw my bat down and refused to play after he did that.
129. Both [FSR] and I knew what he was doing. He was doing it in plain sight of all the other staff. He was using the cricket ball to hurt me. It was all put down to being "just sports", [FSR] taking it seriously and him just being competitive. It wasn't competitive though because the only reason he was throwing the ball was because I had run away from him during one of his classes.
130. [FSR] would sometimes get other boys to bully those boys he didn't like. He had his favourites who would do that for him. That would happen during sports. I wasn't athletic but I could run for Scotland. [FSR] would put the older boys who would do it for him on you during whatever sports you were playing. The older boys would give you a hard time when they were tackling you. They would come in rough when they went into you. It was the same thing as with [FSR]. They were using sports as a cover to assault you.
131. I didn't have to deal with [FSR] during the time I was in the secure unit because the gym hall was in the open part of Kerelaw. The staff ordinarily would have to grab hold of the boys and girls when they took them across to the gym. I would refuse to go and kick off instead. In the end, the staff just gave up trying to take me across for gym classes. By the time I was back in the open unit again and returning to [FSR] [FSR]'s classes, I had grown a bit. I still wasn't being physically assaulted by him in

the way he had before I injured my wrist. However, there was still an undercurrent of him not liking me. He would still make snide remarks about me and carried on with all the stuff in sports he was doing before. He'd belittle me and say that I was a waste of space. He'd say that he wouldn't have let me out of the secure unit and if it was down to him he would have thrown away the key.

132. I didn't see FSR assaulting boys in the manner he did to me in the shower room. However, I do remember seeing him hitting other people. I remember seeing him whacking a table tennis paddle right off another boy's head. I can't remember the boy's name, but the incident occurred in the upper part of the gym hall. I can't remember why FSR did what he did. Knowing him, he had probably lost a game of table tennis, or the boy had given him some backchat. The guy had a really short fuse. FSR must have done what he did to me to other boys otherwise why would everybody else know that that was what he did when boys ran away? Why would IWQ have warned me in the way he did when I first arrived?

133. FSR was both physically and verbally abusive to boys in Kerelaw. I know that he will try and claim that the things he was doing, outside of the physical assaults, were all part of playing sport and because he was a sports teacher. I know that he used sports as a cover to hurt and to bully boys. The sports were used to get at you.

KGH (surname unknown)

134. KGH was the nightwatchman in Fleming Unit. That was the unit I was in over the course of the first year I was at Kerelaw. KGH's forte was to target boys who had run away during his shifts after they were returned. You would climb up the stairs, go to your bed and think everything was 'hunky dory'. You would then hear your bedroom door open, and KGH would beat you up.

135. I didn't learn my lesson following being assaulted the first time by FSR because I ran away again a few months later. On that occasion, I climbed out a unit window at night. I got to Kilwinning train station, found the tracks and followed them towards Glasgow. I knew that if I stayed on the line, I would hit Glasgow eventually. I



counted down the stations until I was where I wanted to be. It took me ages. I was on the run for a couple of weeks before I was caught, collected by a standby social worker and returned to Kerelaw. It was 2:00 am by the time I was returned.

136. I was taken up to my room and then I got into my bed. I was in my bed for five minutes thinking everything had settled when KGH opened the door and came in. KGH then threw a quilt over me and punched me all over my body through the quilt whilst holding my head. Although the quilt softened the blows, and I wasn't injured, it still hurt. I was still a wee boy being battered by a man. Whilst he was doing that he was saying "don't run away during night-time whilst I am on shift. Got the message?" I ran away on multiple occasions through the night after that and KGH battered me a good ten times in the same way. It was the same routine every time. You just knew what was coming.
137. IWQ the boy I shared my room with, would have seen KGH assaulting me each time I came back. I remember that one of the nights I ran away with IWQ. We got as far as Kilwinning Station and gave up. When we got back to Kerelaw we went up back to our room and KGH physically assaulted the two of us together. He did IWQ first then he did me. I remember seeing IWQ getting his doing and thinking "of fuck I'm next." I knew what was coming.

*Matt George*

138. Matt George was my Art teacher on the open side of Kerelaw. He taught me throughout the two years either side of the year I was in the secure unit. At first, I thought he was a cool funky kind of guy. He was in a way. I remember him having a big moustache like Tom Selleck from Magnum PI and acting just like you would imagine a quirky Art teacher would. I remember that he would go on about doing martial arts and having a black belt and that sort of stuff. There would be about five girls and five boys in Matt George's classes. He was always a creep and 'nicey nicey' towards the girls. He never did anything physical towards them. However, he used to treat the boys like shit. He used to do all the things he was doing in front of the girls in the class and would be laughing whilst he did that.

139. I remember that Matt George used to make inappropriate comments to me and others in front of the girls in the class. I remember him calling me "baldy balls" and saying that I was a virgin. I don't know whether he said those things because of something sexual but, to me, I think he did that because he like to belittle people. He was trying to embarrass you in front of the girls in the class.
140. About three or four months after arriving at Kerelaw I had an Art class with Matt George. I remember that during the class, he rubbed his hands together then slapped me around the back of my head. He then grabbed me by one of my 'pressure points' and said that it was good for me. He was grabbing me by the back of my neck and squeezing the back of my shoulders. He was kidding on that it was a massage, but I could tell he was trying to hurt me. It was sore and was done in front of everybody else in the class. He continued to do those things in classes from then on. Things progressed from pressing my pressure points to doing choke holds on me. He would put his arms around my neck and apply the pressure on and off to my throat with his arm. I would be choking, and he would just be smiling. He would just treat it all as a laugh after he did all those things to me and others. He'd kid on that it was some sort of massage. However, him applying full force to pressure points and choking you was sore. Matt George didn't do those things every week, but he did it every now and again. It happened multiple times throughout my time at Kerelaw when I was in the open side the years either side I was in the secure unit.
141. There were never any other teachers around when Matt George was physical with you. However, he would do what he did in front of other residents. It wasn't just me that Matt George would put in chokeholds, grab pressure points and make inappropriate comments towards. He did that to other people in my classes as well. It sounds terrible but you used to be happy when it happened to other people because it wasn't happening to you. That was selfish but that was the way that I would think back then. Ultimately, the grabbing of pressure points, the chokeholds and the inappropriate comments towards me kind of stopped. I think they stopped because I was getting older and there were younger newer kids who were coming into Kerelaw.

142. There were three occasions when I was taken, alongside other boys and girls, to Matt George's house. I don't know why he took us there. He stayed in a big fancy house in Largs. I can remember his house as plain as day because it stuck in my mind. It was quite somewhere for a boy from the East End of Glasgow to be taken. The first time I was taken to his house I met his wife but on the second occasion it was just him that was there. I remember Matt George showing us pictures of his daughters and saying that they were at Art College in Glasgow at the time. Nothing ever happened to me like what happened in the classrooms when I was in his house. However, I remember waiting in the living room whilst he disappeared with some of the other children. I remember him going off to collect a box from somewhere else. Looking back, it was inappropriate for a member of staff to be taking children back to his house.

*Abuse in the secure unit*

143. I did great in the secure unit and didn't run away. I kept my head down and got on with things. It got to the stage in the secure unit where I was that trusted that I would be given a video card and allowed to go into Stevenston on my own, to Blockbusters. I would pick up a video for the residents in the secure unit to watch. That would have been all part of me being built up to returning to the open side of Kerelaw.

144. There was no abuse whatsoever towards me when I was in the secure unit. Not one staff member laid a finger on me whilst I was there. The staff members who were abusive to me had no access to me during my time in the secure unit because they all worked in the open side of Kerelaw. The only staff member I potentially could have encountered was FSR, who was the PT Instructor, but I would kick off so I wouldn't have to attend his classes. In the end, I didn't cross Matt George, KGH or FSR's paths for a year.

145. I saw fights breaking out amongst the residents and saw staff having to intervene in the secure unit. I saw staff members getting assaulted by residents. I remember seeing a staff member hit with a pool cue. The pool cue was wrapped around his

skull for picking on a particular boy from Easterhouse. At the end of the day the children there had nothing to lose. I think because of that a lot of the staff were more 'easy oasy' with the residents than perhaps others were on the open side of Kerelaw.

146. Looking back, being placed into the secure unit was the best thing that could have happened to me. It was a period when I didn't have to deal with any abusive staff members. I had quite a happy wee life when I was locked up there. Sadly, as soon as I was released back into the open side the abuse from staff members all started again.

EUM

147. I was placed in Wilson Unit after I left the secure unit. That unit was a mixed gender unit located at the very top of the grounds. EUM was a care worker who worked in that unit. He wasn't bad like Matt George, KGH or FSR. The physical abuse I suffered from him was only one time around about the middle of the third year that I was there. It would have been about six months before I left Kerelaw.

148. There was a small housing scheme located to the back of Wilson Unit. The local lads from the scheme would come up and try to chat up the girls that were in Kerelaw. A lot of the boys didn't like that happening and would jump out the window to chase those boys off. It was all a game of cat and mouse and was all mediocre stuff. One night there was a squad of us who had decided to chase off the boys. One guy had a rolling pin, I had a table leg and someone else had something else. We all hid what we had under our beds. Around that time, for some strange reason, I had decided to shave my hair down only one side of my head. On one side was jet black hair and on the other it was completely shaven.

149. Somehow, the staff got wind of us hiding our weapons under our beds and took them into the office within the unit. Me, a guy called [REDACTED] who was from Drumchapel and another boy who I can't remember the name of were called in to speak to EUM. There was only EUM and the three boys in the office.

The weapons were laid out on the desk and EUM started shouting at us. The next thing I knew EUM snapped, picked up either the rolling pin or the table leg and hit me twice round the head with it. He hit me on the side of my head which was shaven. I went down on the floor and started crying. I then got up and ran to the toilet. My head had a massive bump on it, but it wasn't split open. It was bloody though and swelled right up.

150. As soon as EUM did what he did he knew what he done. He came running into the toilets after me. Another staff member by the name of Isabelle Surgeon also came in. EUM kept on saying "sorry" to me whilst I was crying and looking at my head in the mirror. EUM was basically kissing my arse because he knew what he had done and was panicking. EUM and Isabelle Surgeon dampened the bump and put something over it. I wasn't taken to the hospital and didn't receive any medical treatment following the assault. I think that decision was made because my head wasn't split. The top layer of skin had been scraped off, and it was bloody, but my injury didn't require stitches.
151. Following the incident EUM phoned my family. I think that was on the day he hit me. He was only doing that to try and cover himself. By this stage my mother had moved back to Scotland and was staying at my grandfather's waiting for a house of her own to be offered to her. She told me later on that EUM told her that there had been an incident where he had hurt me. He didn't tell my mother exactly what he had done so my mother said something like "oh he must have deserved it." I think she took it as me getting given a slap around the back of my head rather than something more serious.
152. The staff in the unit kept me in for about four weeks until the swelling on my head went away and my hair grew back on the shaved side of my head. That meant I was kept in for three weekends in a row. I heard from my mother later on that she was asking why I wasn't being let out during the weekends, but EUM just said it was due to my behaviour. In the end, my mother and her boyfriend, whose name was [REDACTED], was visiting Stevenson and decided to visit me at Kerelaw. I remember that EUM and Isabelle Surgeon were on shift that day and sat there during

the visit. My mother asked me what had happened, but I still felt I couldn't tell her what was happening during the visit. The following weekend I was allowed out on leave and went back to my grandfather's house. That was when I told my mother and grandfather exactly what had happened. I told them that I had a massive bump on my head and that was why I had been kept in for three weeks.

153. Every single staff member that worked in Kerelaw would have known that something would have happened if they'd seen me. That goes for the staff who came on after EUM and Isabelle Surgeon's shift and all the teachers in the school. They would have known because I walked about for a week with a massive egg on the side of my head. It was an obvious injury to the side of my head that had been shaved. It was a good week before the swelling started to go down and my hair started to grow back. It was common knowledge that EUM had hit me across my head with a rolling pin or table leg because I was going about telling everyone what he had done. Every one of the staff members will have known where that bump came from and not one of them spoke up. Even the staff members I regarded as good people didn't speak up for me. Nobody did anything.
154. Looking back, it's hard for me to think even those people I thought were good people, were good. Not one of them voiced any concern. Any normal person would have said it wasn't right what EUM had done to me. However, that wasn't what happened. They all covered each other's arses. I was the one who was punished through being kept in for three weekends in a row rather than EUM being investigated. There was no investigation, no suspension and no reporting to the police. I was kept in so the swelling would resolve itself and nothing was done about EUM.
155. About eleven or twelve years after the incident, when I was about twenty-seven or twenty-eight, I met EUM. My life wasn't going well at that time. I used to hang around Paddy's Market when it was located behind the High Court in Glasgow. I was still bad with the drugs and was yet to report EUM to the police. I bumped into EUM and his wife in the market. I walked right up to EUM and asked whether he remembered me. I could see in his face that he knew

exactly who I was. The first thing that came out of his mouth was something like “I do remember you; I have told my wife that shouldn’t have happened and I’m really really sorry.” He effectively admitted what he had done there and then.

**KBW** (surname unknown) and unnamed staff member

156. **KBW** was a care worker who worked in Wilson Unit. He never gave me a hard time, but he did to others. Wilson Unit was on the open side of Kerelaw rather than in the secure unit. **██████████** would have been about thirteen or fourteen when she was in Wilson Unit with me. I remember witnessing her being dragged about and battered by **KBW** and another male staff member in the unit. It all started at the office door in the unit. I don’t remember the name of the other staff member. Back then staff didn’t have any training in restraint, so they were swinging her all over the place. I remember **██████████** looking all dishevelled and red after the incident.

157. As far as I know there was never any investigation undertaken following that incident. When I met **██████████** in adult life we talked about that incident. She told me that she had asked the staff for a cigarette, and it had all kicked off over that. I think she was cheeky when she was turned down or something like that. That was enough for the staff to decide to manhandle her all over the place.

*Unnamed staff member*

158. I heard during my time at Kerelaw that there was an incident where a boy had his wrist broken during a time when staff were trying to restrain him. He had been placed in a hold, a lock or something like that. I can’t remember which staff member was involved. That happened in my unit during my time there, but I didn’t witness it. I think that was in Wilson Unit rather than Fleming Unit. I think the boy’s name was **██████████** and he was from Kilmarnock. I’m sure that is the name of the boy that it happened to.

## Reporting of abuse whilst at Kerelaw

159. I didn't report what Matt George was doing because you saw it happening to that many other people. I wasn't going to moan because doing so might end up with his behaviour becoming intensified. I had tried to report FSR and been told by Mrs KAM to forget about it. Every one of the staff knew what happened with EUM so there was no point in reporting it. Everybody knew about what had happened and nothing was done about it. I was just told to "shut up" whenever I tried to tell any staff members about the things that happened. There was never a sniff of any investigations being undertaken. In the end, I was left thinking that nobody was going to be interested if I tried to report something. That's where I was left mentally in my world.
160. When I ran away I would either be brought back by a duty social worker, if I was caught during the night, or my own social worker, if it was during the day. I never reported what was happening to social workers because I classed them the same as the staff in Kerelaw. I blamed social workers for me being in care and what was happening to me. When the police were involved during the times I was caught when running away I could tell they weren't interested. I never reported anything to them. I was well known to them, and they just wanted to get me back to Kerelaw. At the end of the day, I was taken off my family for dogging school and that left me with no trust in anyone.
161. When I would tell my grandfather about what was happening at Kerelaw he would remind me that it was "bad boys' school" and say that was just what happened. His mindset was that that was the norm for those sorts of places and those were the things that just happened. Looking back, I think that was the start of me accepting what happened in Kerelaw as the norm. It wasn't until nearly thirty years later, when I spoke to the police properly, that I started to think that the things that people like FSR, KGH and Matt George did constituted child abuse.



## **Leaving Kerelaw**

162. They didn't know what to do with me when it came time for me to be leaving Kerelaw. There was initially talk about releasing me directly from Kerelaw back into the world. I think it was my social worker, Louise Wright, who was the one who stepped in and said that I wasn't ready for the outside world. She said that after I told her I wasn't ready. There was a part of me that wanted to go home but there was another that told me that I wasn't ready for it. In the end, Louise Wright followed my wishes and fought to get me into Geilsland.

## **Geilsland Residential School, Beith, Ayrshire**

163. I went to Geilsland when I was about sixteen years old. That would have been in about 1991. I stayed there for a period of about six months. All these places have very similar set ups. There are different housing units with different staff attached to different units. I think there were only about three units in Geilsland. It was smaller in size than Kerelaw and possibly even smaller than St Phillips.
164. It was all boys. I don't think it had anywhere near the number of residents as Kerelaw. I would say there was about twenty-five boys per unit so there can't have been more than seventy-five or eighty residents there in total. The age range was between twelve and thirteen and sixteen or seventeen. I might be wrong, but I think you could stay there right up until you were eighteen if you wanted to. I think that might have happened with me had I behaved myself during my time there. The boys themselves were from lots of different places but it was mainly Glasgow and Ayrshire.
165. I don't really remember many of the staff there. I can't remember names. I recall a big heavy Irish woman who taught me to play the guitar whilst I was in there. There was another staff member who was into fixing up old Saab cars and would get the boys in there to help him on the grounds. I remember they had finished one car and were moving on to another two during the time I was there.

166. I stayed at Geilsland during the week then went back to Barlanark at the weekends. I shared a room with one other boy. The food was alright. The big Irish woman taught us how to cook things like mince and tatties. However, there were no other life skills taught like managing money. There was nothing like that. I think, because it was the tail end of me finishing my time in care, there's not a lot that I remember.
167. It was pretty much the same routine as the other places, and they provided you with schooling. The difference with the school though was that you were being taught skills rather than subjects. They weren't trying to educate you but were trying to get you prepared to get a job in the outside world. I can't remember the teacher's name, but I remember attending a painting and decorating class.
168. Louise Wright, my social worker, did visit me whilst I was at Geilsland. She organised a grant to be provided to my grandfather for when I came out. I didn't run away once. I knew that the end was in sight because Louise Wright had told me that, if I behaved, I would be staying there until I was between seventeen and seventeen and a half years old.
169. Nothing bad ever happened to me at Geilsland. All the staff were good to me and not one of them laid a finger on me. None of them spoke to me in a bad way and were all pleasant people. Up until the point that I got into a fight the staff at Geilsland didn't really have any issues with me. Looking back, I think the staff all realised that I was just going to be one of these guys who was just passing through. They knew that I wasn't going to be there for years and years and was on my way out. I don't think they saw me as a lost cause, but they could see the exit sign hanging over my head.

### **Leaving care**

170. I only lasted six months in Geilsland before I was kicked out. I had a couple of incidents where I was found fighting other residents. The fight was a stupid thing. I

had a fight with one boy and a friend of mine, who was also from Barlanark, stepped in to beat up that same boy later on. I hadn't asked him to do that because I wasn't bothered. Unfortunately, the staff stepped in and found that I had ordered my friend to do that, which I hadn't. I ended up getting the blame for what he did.

171. In the end, the staff at Geilsland decided they couldn't allow me to stay any longer. They asked me to leave, got in touch with my social worker and arranged for me to stop staying there. Louise Wright, who was my social worker, came to visit me and just said something like "that's you, your order has been lifted and you can go." There wasn't anything like a children's hearing or anything like that. That was basically me free to go and the end of my time in care. As mad as it all started it was just as crazy as it finished.

### **Life after leaving care**

172. When I left care my aunties and my grandfather were given some sort of 'coming out grant' by the council to get me a bed, some furniture, clothes and all that sort of stuff. Other than that, there was no social work involvement. Over the years my uncle had said that I should come down to where he lived in Hereford in England to get a job and make a new start. I ended up going down there and managed to get a job in a hairdressers. Unfortunately, the job wasn't for me, and I only lasted one day. After that I got a job in a kitchen. Something then happened between my auntie and me over housework and it ended up with me having to leave.
173. When I came back to Glasgow my grandfather refused to let me stay with him. He felt that, because I had moved out then given up my job, it was my fault. He couldn't believe that I had walked away from a good job to come back to everything that was going on in Barlanark. I ended up having to get back in contact with my social worker, Louise Wright. By that time, I would have been seventeen and a half or eighteen years old. That was the last time I had any dealings with social workers connected to my time in care. I was told by Louise Wright that there was nothing further that they could do for me and that I needed to make my own decisions in life.

She told me that I couldn't keep coming back to her asking for this, that or the other. In the end, Louise Wright managed to get me into a hostel that was nicknamed by those who stayed there 'The Spike'. No other hostel would take me.

174. The Spike was located next to HMP Low Moss and near Bishopbriggs. It was run by the Talbot Association. That place was a real eye opener for me. It was one of the roughest hostels in the city. You didn't have a room and had to stay in a space that was like a big army barracks with beds lined down the walls. I was sharing a space with men who were alcoholics, junkies and all sorts. I was in there with men who could be sixty or seventy years old. It was a wet house, so I remember the older residents just getting drunk whilst they were there.
175. Not long after I arrived someone mentioned heroin. I didn't even know what heroin was at that age. I hadn't had much experience and jumped straight into it. I didn't start slowly. I advanced straight to injecting it intravenously. I woke up feeling ill after about a week of doing it. I asked my friend in there what was wrong with me, and he told me that I now had 'a habit.' I was that naïve that I didn't even know what a habit was. My friend then told me that I had to go out and steal, beg and borrow to feed it. That was me then for about ten years. It was ten years of chaos.
176. I used to go about between different hostels in Glasgow city centre. I was always floating about the town. I would run about getting involved in crime, going to Paddy's Market, getting some money then going to get my fix. I would then get arrested, get remanded, go through cold turkey, then I would go straight back into it. It got to the stage where I was getting into trouble in the hostels and Glasgow city council refused to take me in. I ended up being only able to stay in the private hostels.
177. After a couple of years on heroin it started to have a physical effect on me and started to show in my appearance. It got to the stage where I was being recognised by people across the city centre. That, alongside an improvement in surveillance, led to me not being able to do what I was doing in the town. I ended up having to become involved with some serious characters and had to do other things to get money to feed my habit. When I made a mess of that I ended up targeting other

people who were doing things to feed their habit. I was desperate so I had to do what I could to get money. It was very heavy duty stuff I was doing by that stage. I was a violent man.

178. By the time I was about twenty eight I was homeless. I remember that I would go and see my uncles in a pub in the East End of Glasgow and ask them for money. They would only give me £9 because they knew what I would use £10 for. It was their way of being able to look out for me but say they weren't giving me money for drugs at the same time. At that time there was a total breakdown in my family. I eventually got into a hostel on Bell Street in central Glasgow.
179. Whilst in Bell Street someone asked me whether I knew about 'the Homeless Addiction Team', or 'HAT team.' The team had newly started working in the hostel. That was the first time I had heard of them. I remember that around that time I went into a toilet and looked in the mirror. I didn't even recognise myself. I asked, "who the fuck are you?" when I saw my reflection. I had lost my family and my life, and I wanted that all back. People were dropping like flies around me who were addicts. I went to see a doctor who was part of the HAT team. I told him that I wanted my life back and didn't want to die. The doctor said that, if I was serious, he would help me get off heroin.
180. By the time I sought help I was hitting up about £70 of heroin a day. I had no veins and had hit rock bottom. All that led to me needing a lot of methadone to begin with. It worked though and got me to the place where I was holding myself together and was stable. After six months I spoke to my doctor again and he suggested reducing my dosage. I stood my ground and lowered it to a lesser amount than he wanted. I told him that if I ever got the jitters, and felt like relapsing, I would tell him. I never did though.
181. After about a year I got to a very low dosage. By that time, I had become the poster child for the HAT team. They used to bring me along when they were trying to get funding and things like that. By the time I was about thirty years old, I ended up getting my own flat and was trusted enough to take all my methadone for the week

from the chemist home. One day I decided that I just wouldn't go back to the chemist. About three weeks later my doctor called me to check whether I was alright and I told him I was. I told him that stopping taking the methadone was like a heavy dose of the flu but after that I felt brilliant. I never relapsed and I never looked back.

182. The following Christmas my mother was due to visit me as we were going to go out shopping. I was emotional that day and I could hear whining. There was a wee dog shivering outside my door. I took the dog in and looked after him. I don't know what happened after that, but I couldn't stop crying over this wee dog. My mother was there to support me, and we called out the RSPCA. I eventually found out that the dog had been getting physically abused by its owner which I responded to. Looking back, I think I had a nervous breakdown. My senses had all started coming back and I was back in contact with my family. My family had finally started trusting me again.
183. I really started to live the life I should have been living had I not been on heroin from then on. I ended up getting a job in demolition. I did other wee jobs after that. I would go out dancing and buy all my own clothes. I did all the stuff that I should have done when I was a younger guy. I was a different guy and generally just getting my life together. For the first time in my life, I was feeling like a normal man.
184. I had girlfriends that would come and go until I was about thirty-nine. I then met the woman who I would go on to have a daughter with. She had two kids of her own. We got a house together in Shettleston. It came as a surprise when my partner got pregnant. I had always thought that I couldn't have kids. My daughter was born in 2015. We moved back to Barlanark when I was forty-one. We all stayed together for about a year and a half. My partner then hit the drink badly. I didn't know she was drinking because she was disguising it from me. I thought I would have it in me to help her, but it just wasn't in me. The relationship just went right down the toilet.
185. I moved out with my partner's two children and my daughter to a friend's house. I did that for about nine months. In the end, I had to get my ex-partner's children's father involved. My partner's daughters ended up staying with him. I then got my

own tenancy and a flat of my own. I have brought up my daughter on my own for about the last six years. She is now over seven and a half years old. My daughter is the best thing that has ever happened to me. After my daughter came along, I basically did a 180 degree turn with my life. It was a bit rocky when my relationship with my partner broke down, but I have an amazing life now. I was Santa Claus every year at her nursery, and I'm still involved. I am helping my sister out through being the Easter bunny at her daughter's nursery this year. No one believes me when I tell them I used to be addicted to heroin.

### **Impact**

186. I was left with trust issues after leaving Kerelaw. When you are in a place where people are supposed to be looking after you and you are being regularly physically assaulted who can you trust? Although I wasn't hurt in Geilsland, I still didn't trust the staff there. I just didn't know whether things were going to go the same way. I have carried that lack of trust into my adult life. I trusted friends and family but when it came to authority figures, I couldn't do it. I couldn't trust the police until very recently. It was only when I saw my nephew passing out as a cadet in the police that that trust came back.
  
187. You weren't educated in Kerelaw. I could have ended up being a film critic the number of videos they put on during the classes I went to. It was all just watching movies. Nobody picked up on those things back then, but I think I am dyslexic. I'm self-taught when it comes to my reading and writing, however, you would have to get a translator in to work out what I am writing. I can't sign my own name. I write the way I talk, and my spelling can be all over the place. I remember that my mother would show me the letters I sent her when I was in jail because she wouldn't be able to read them. I would later read those letters and wouldn't know myself what I was saying. I continue to have difficulties with reading and writing. My daughter is now in Primary Four. It kills me when she comes back from school and asks me to help her out with her homework. It all goes right over my head and is just all a muddle when I look at it. It affects me not being able to help and embarrasses me like

anything. I feel as if I am letting my daughter down. Fortunately, my ex-partner helps my daughter when she sees her.

188. I don't know what it was that made me turn to drugs. I do think it was a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time and it was just put in front of me. It was like all the things I did when I was in St Phillips and Kerelaw that involved criminality. The experience was offered to me, and I impulsively became involved. I walked into it so blind not realising what could happen. In just seven days, I was an addict and woke up every day thinking about how I could get money for my fix. That was my world. There are a lot of people in Barlanark who don't believe me when I tell them that I was a heroin addict. I think part of that is because I never returned to Barlanark during the period when I was on heroin. I stayed more in the town where there was money to be made. My heroin addiction has had a physical impact on me. I have no veins all over my body because of all the years injecting heroin. I nearly lost one of my legs because of heroin. I had an abscess and that was considered as something that might be done.

189. From the age of sixteen, just after leaving Kerelaw, up until the present day I have suffered from seizures. My first one happened when I was in Geilsland. It was only when I turned thirty-two, and was clean off drugs, that I sought any proper treatment for them. I went to my doctors and ended up getting a series of tests. That was when I was diagnosed with severe epilepsy. I never suffered a seizure before the assault by EUM [REDACTED]. The only ailments I had was that I was allergic to penicillin and been diagnosed with a heart murmur when I was younger. The doctors haven't been able to exactly pinpoint what caused the seizures, however, they have said that the blow to my head by EUM [REDACTED] could have caused them to start. They have said that the assault could have caused the damage that led to my epilepsy. For years I thought my seizures were all drug related. Now I have discovered that it could be because of what EUM [REDACTED] did to me.

190. I will have to take medication for the rest of my life for my epilepsy. I have tried various things over the years because I've had to battle the side effects. The stuff I am on now is strong stuff. Fortunately, at the time of providing this statement I



haven't had a seizure in about three months. I can take a seizure once a week rather than once every few months if I don't take my medication. I currently can't work because of the seizures I suffer and am on disability allowance.

191. The circumstances surrounding me being placed in care and my family not being able to do anything has had an impact on my family. All my family are straight shooters. They haven't been in the care system or involved with crime. I'm the black sheep of the family in that way. To this day my aunties hold themselves responsible for not saying something that might have avoided me being taken into care. My aunties were only young and wouldn't have really known what was happening. My mother became a social worker because of seeing what happened to me. She is only recently retired. My auntie has also become a social worker. She works with women who have suffered domestic violence. She has also said that part of the reason she became a social worker was seeing how much I was let down.
192. I link the breakdown in my relationships to my time in care. My sister always said that I was a wee toerag and that I was always laughing and smiling before I went into care. She said that within a matter of months I had turned into somebody else. By the time I came out of Kerelaw I was a different guy and didn't return to the way I was before I was in care. My relationship with my family totally broke down during my time when I was on heroin. I would see them from time to time but there were problems down to the way I was. I didn't care about all of that because all I was concerned about was getting heroin. I ultimately got banned from all their homes. There was a time during that period that my family didn't know where I was, and my mother put an advert in The Big Issue to try and find me.
193. My relationship with my family only improved after I got clean and started to get my life turned around. It took a long time for that trust to return after some of the stuff I had done. I am now close to my mother and my wee sister. I had always been close to her, but the relationship broke down after going into care and getting involved in drugs. We didn't talk to one another for years. She is like my wee pal now. I love the relationship that I have got with all my family now. It's all in a good place. We always were like that until I was taken away and put into care.

194. I have no friends from my time in care or the world I was involved with on heroin. There are people who reach out to me on social media, but I don't reply. I don't want to be part of that world because I am happy with what I have now. I want to surround myself with good clean people. I am a stay at home father and my daughter is my purpose. She is the best thing that ever happened to me, and I wish that she had come along years ago.

### **Treatment and support**

195. I haven't had any counselling directly connected to my time in care. Since speaking to the Inquiry, I am in contact with Future Pathways. I have asked for them to help me to get a wee bit of counselling. I appreciate that can all take a while to sort out.

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

*To lawyers in 2007*

196. I was thirty-two when I first started to speak about what happened at Kerelaw. I can't have been that long finishing my drug treatment by that time. I spoke to a lawyer about the incident with EUM and the rolling pin but didn't go into the detail of the other incidents. I didn't do that because, at that time, I didn't consider those incidents as abuse. I knew the incident with EUM wasn't right but all the other stuff I experienced wasn't on my radar as abuse. I viewed it as the norm for places like Kerelaw. Following providing the lawyer with a statement, I spoke to a psychologist. I think the psychologist spoke to me in my lawyer's office. Ultimately, the psychologist couldn't link what I had reported at that time to the abuse I had suffered. I think because of that nothing further happened.

*To the press*

197. After speaking to the lawyer, and discovering that nothing happened, I decided that I still wanted to do something. I felt, at that time, that I was in a 'last chance saloon'. I then spoke to a journalist by the name of Graham McKendry who wrote for the News of the World. That would have been in 2007. They took a photo of me for the article standing outside of Kerelaw. Even after the article was published nothing further came of it. I wasn't contacted by the police at all.

*To the police in 2022 and ongoing prosecution of abusers*

198. I just put it all to bed after attempting to report what happened to a lawyer in 2007. I'd tried shouting from the rafters all those years ago, but nothing happened. I'd had a hard life, been in and out of jail and wanted to move on with my life. Just before Christmas 2022 I was sitting watching 'Scotland Today' on STV. During the news broadcast there suddenly appeared an image of Matt George and John Muldoon. I was gobsmacked when I saw their faces. At the end of the article the police put out a call for anybody else who had experienced abuse at Kerelaw encouraging them to come forward. It knocked me for six when I saw that news article. I started reliving it all again. I couldn't sleep for three weeks thinking about what I had seen. I just couldn't switch off and stop talking about it.
199. I didn't know what to do so I phoned a nephew of mine, who is a sergeant in the police, for advice. He is based in the East End of Glasgow. When I spoke to my nephew about my experiences in Kerelaw I told him about everything that happened rather than solely the incident with the rolling pin and EUM. My nephew told me that it wasn't normal, acceptable and was child abuse when he heard about the other incidents. Up until that point I had never thought about what had happened in that way.
200. My nephew informed me at the end of the conversation that he couldn't become involved if I wanted to report what happened to the police because he might be considered as biased. He told me that he would do a bit of phoning about to see if

he could find out who was investigating Kerelaw. When he phoned me back, he informed me that the investigation was called Operation Chalk and advised me to call 101 to report things properly.

201. Within two days of calling 101 there were two police officers interviewing me in my house. It took three days to provide my statement. That would have been in late 2022 or early 2023. I provided evidence concerning EUM, Matt George, KGH the nightwatchman and FSR. I provided names of witnesses surrounding all the incidents where I could. The police said that they would be interested in seeing my medical records to corroborate the incident where I put my hand through the glass. I have since signed a mandate so that they can have access to them.
202. As part of the interview process the police asked me to write down anything that I remembered when they were not there. What I ended up doing was drawing a plan of Kerelaw and all the areas that I was talking about. When I handed that to the police, on the third day of them interviewing me, they told me what I had drawn was identical to the layout they had in their office. They told me that I had got every wee thing right in the drawing and that I must have a photographic memory.
203. I was told by the police that I wasn't the only boy who FSR had battered with a cricket ball and that he was a teacher of habit. They told me that when it came to the abuse I was reporting, people from 1975 to the day Kerelaw closed were all singing from the same hymn sheet. I was told that there is a good chance that all the things I was saying could be corroborated through other persons coming forward. They said that when there are lots of people saying the same thing it just isn't coincidence.
204. At the end of the interview, I said that, as far as I was concerned, the investigation was a long time coming and that nobody had been interested when I had previously spoke to a lawyer and the press. I mentioned that I had spoken to the press in 2007 about what I experienced. The police told me that they didn't know how I had been missed. They said that they could see that I was screaming out for something to be done. The police have said that they are happy with the statement I provided and how it is going to help them with their investigations. Looking back on speaking to

the police and trying to report things, the police were brilliant. I am not one for talking to the police, but they responded the right way this time round.

205. Following providing my statement, I have been told that I am going to be involved in a big trial concerning FSR [REDACTED]. I believe that there is a trial going on in June or July 2023. I am not going to be on that indictment but have been told that I will be when FSR [REDACTED] has his second trial. The police contacted me in late March 2023. They informed me that they were in the process of organising ID parades. I know that one of the people who will be involved in that is Matt George, but I don't know about the other people I reported. Apparently, they're trying to do things quickly but there are more and more people coming forward.

206. I tried to start reporting what was happening at Kerelaw to a lawyer and the press in 2007 but nothing ever happened. It's only now, nearly thirty years after I was at Kerelaw, that people have started to listen. Matt George has received a sixteen year sentence and John Muldoon received thirteen years for offences where I wasn't the victim. I've been told by the police that there are that many people who have come forward since those convictions that Matt George will probably die in prison. I have been told by the police that there is an unbelievable amount of people who have made complaints against FSR [REDACTED].

207. I'm not bothered by going to an ID parade or when the trial will start. I am nervous about going to court because I have never been a witness. However, I'll do whatever is needed wherever I need to be. I know that I won't be alone when that time comes and that there will be lots of other people in the same position as me. I don't know whether Matt George will admit what happened. If he has half a brain, he will admit it because there are that many people who have come forward. If he takes it to trial, he's going to be found guilty. I have a feeling that EUM [REDACTED] might admit what he did to me. There are too many witnesses around the incident where he hit me with either a rolling pin or a table leg at Kerelaw.

*Instruction of new lawyers in 2022*

208. I spoke to a lawyer at Livingstone Brown after starting to report things again. My lawyer has advised me that I should raise a civil claim against the council. I had to step in and say that I didn't want to do that. It's not about getting the maximum amount of money or getting money for me. That's why I just want to do redress. Any money I do get will be going into a trust fund for my daughter. I have now made an application for redress. As part of that I needed to fill in forms. I am in the process of doing that but, because of my reading and writing, I have had to involve my sister to fill in the forms. I have put in the forms what I have said in this statement when it comes to my care, but it more focuses on my time in Kerelaw.

**Records**

209. My lawyer has access to some of my care records through my medical records. He is in the process of obtaining my full care records. He has said that I need my care records before I can gain compensation. After some toing and froing, Glasgow city council have said that they have found my file, allocated it but can't tell me when it will be sent to me. My lawyer has said that they are doing that with everybody now. It is what it is.

210. I have provided a mandate to the police so they can recover my medical records as part of their investigations. They were particularly interested in seeing whether my trip to the hospital with my wrist injury could be used to date the assault by **FSR** **FSR**. I am not sure, but I think the police do now have my records from Crosshouse Hospital.

**Lessons to be Learned**

211. I shouldn't have experienced what I did. I was taken off my family for dogging school. That decision was what laid out the path I followed. I appreciate that social

workers don't do that sort of thing now but that shouldn't have happened with me back then. My daughter is aware of my past and that I grew up in care. She is aware that I have spoken to the police and am speaking to the Inquiry. I tell her things, but I don't tell her too much. When I mentioned the name of Kerelaw she said "Dad, what did they call it Kerelaw for? There doesn't sound as if there was a lot of care in there?" That's just the way that she looks at things, but she was right. There wasn't a lot of care provided there.

212. The world was a different place in the late eighties and early nineties. When I was in care and being punched about or having other things happening to me, I saw it all as the norm. I know a lot of other people who have been in care and sometimes ask them whether anything happened to them. They usually say that they received a couple of 'doings' and things like that. The first thing that comes out of their mouths is that it was "just the way it was" and that "it happened to everybody." I used to be the same. There are probably a lot of people out there who experienced these things but don't class it as child abuse.
213. The abuse I suffered in Kerelaw was so normal that I didn't question it until I reported what happened to the police last year. I've lived most of my life thinking that it was just the way it was, and I couldn't report it. Everybody who worked there knew what was going on and nobody did anything about it. It took a long time for that can of worms to be opened. I believe it took a local lady who worked there to whistle blow on the place but that was a long time after I left. One woman saw what was happening and spoke up. Looking back at my time at Kerelaw, the abuse went on and the lower members of staff were scared to question what the more senior staff were doing. The junior members of staff just couldn't question the hierarchy. I think that was why they didn't say anything.
214. My time in care slowly but surely made me deteriorate and turned me into a wee criminal. I was placed into care purely because I was dogging school rather than there being some sort of criminality. I didn't know anything about serious crime when I was eleven years old. It was only after I was placed in care that I was exposed to criminality. All I found the places to be when I was there were mini

colleges of crime. I would speak to the other children and learn how to do various things. It was like a wee fraternity of toerags, and I would learn things from them during the times I was running away. By the time I came out of St Phillips I had the knowledge of how to steal a car, how to take an alarm off a building, how to sniff glue and so on. All of that led to my eyes being opened and me starting to be involved in crime. I would never have learnt all that stuff had I not been placed into care.

215. Looking back, no matter where they would have placed me, I would have still run away. They could have placed me on the moon and I would have still found a way back to my grandfather's front door. Being home was always the thing that I most wanted throughout my time in care. The one thing that was in my head throughout was "no matter where they place me, I will find my way home." It was that thought that got me into a lot of trouble over the years. I ran away so much that I started to be viewed as a danger to myself. That's how I ended up being placed in the secure unit at Kerelaw. When I look at Kerelaw, given all the stuff that was going on, it's no wonder that I wanted to run away.
216. I appreciate it has all changed now but back then nobody vetted staff to see whether they had criminal records or anything like that. I was in care during a time when people could walk into job centres and get a role working with children. There were no police checks and anybody could get a job. I think that's why there were so many people who grew up in the local areas working in places like St Phillips and Kerelaw.
217. A lot of people say that it must have been hard for the staff at Kerelaw because they were dealing with a bunch of tearaways. However, that didn't mean that they didn't need to put in any effort at all when it came to educating us. There were some nice people in Kerelaw. However, they knew what was happening with those staff members who were abusive, and they never spoke up about them. They were good people because they weren't hitting me, but they weren't that good when it came to reporting things.



### Hopes for the Inquiry

218. I'm an open book when it comes to talking about my experiences in care. I want to make sure that I am heard. I want to take my opportunity and make sure that everything is out there and that I have my day in court. Speaking to the police and then to the Inquiry is me putting all of this to bed. I hope that after I have provided my evidence, I will be able to switch it off in my brain and move on with my life. When it comes to the trial, whatever happens at the end of that happens. When I walk out of that court after providing my evidence that will be it for me.
219. I just hope that through the statements that the Inquiry are taking from people everything comes out. I want Kerelaw to be exposed and the truth really to come out about what happened there. I want it out there, in black and white, what the place really was like. I tried in the past to do that, but nothing happened. I am glad that something is happening now and I want people to see how bad it was. My daughter and stepchildren are around about the age I was when I was taken off my family or when I was in the places I was in. It isn't about money for me. It's all about me doing something to stop what happened to me happening to other children in the future.
220. 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



16/5/23