

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

GLR

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is GLR. My date of birth is 1958. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Background / Qualifications**

2. My background is in mining and I worked in the mines until 1993. When the mines started closing down I decided to apply to Geilsland for a position.
3. I had next to no formal education as I didn't really attend school myself. After I started working at Geilsland, I got a Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Child Care which I got at Langside College. I also have a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ), Level 3, in Children in Care which you do while you're working in the care sector. I did both of the courses while I was working Geilsland, probably around the early 2000's.

### **Experiences at Geilsland Residential School, Beith**

#### *My recruitment and role at Geilsland*

4. I applied to work at Geilsland because I just thought it was something different. I contacted the school and went for an interview with Chris McNaught who was the deputy head, at the time. He asked to me to come and do some voluntary work to begin with. I would work around five unpaid days a week, on either dayshift or nightshift, but I got a petrol allowance because I lived in Cumnock. That was around 1993 or early 1994.

5. I started working with the boys in the Old White House Unit. I did that for a while, maybe six months, or a bit longer. After a period, I don't know how long it was, a care worker position opened up. I was interviewed again and offered paid work as a dayshift care worker. I was basically already doing that job as a voluntary worker because I was already taking the boys on outings for clothes and things like that, sometimes myself with three or four boys. The last seven or so years I worked at Geilsland, I was a nightshift worker.
6. As a care worker, you would either be on an early shift or a late shift. My role was to get the boys up, prepared and out to education. The boys would come back for lunch. They got an hour for lunch so I'd maybe play pool with some of them. Then, they came back about half past three or four o'clock. At that stage the late shift would take over. After education, we would take the boys on outings or they liked to go up to the sports hall to play football, which happened most nights. We would make sure all the boys got to bed and the nightshift staff would take over. As a care worker, I was really there to look after the boys basic needs.

#### *The Institution / Culture*

7. Geilsland was an approved school for boys in Beith, Ayrshire. It was run by the Church of Scotland. Its purpose was to accommodate boys who found it difficult to live in the community and to build their social skills. The boys might be out with parental control, not attending education, getting into trouble or displaying sexually aggressive behaviours.
8. When I first went to Geilsland, I really didn't know what I was getting into to be quite honest. I didn't have a clue how to engage with the boys at all. There were occasions, before I was a fulltime worker, and to me, I wasn't qualified, I would be doing the nightshift by myself in the unit. We were told that if the boys played up during the night, we were to tip them out of bed in the morning. I did it to a boy called [REDACTED] one morning. I'll never forget it, he went downstairs and started ripping up the kitchen. I thought I'd be out of a job, but the unit manager came across and said we had to restrain him, so we put [REDACTED] down on the floor. My team leader came in and I told

him what I'd done and he assured me I'd done the right thing. After that, I refused to tip a boy out of bed and I was taken across to the mansion house and spoken to by SNR and SNR and told that it was my job to do that. Some years later, I was spoken to again by the deputy head and told that, instead of tipping boys out of their beds, I was to pull the mattress off the bedframe so they didn't hurt themselves. Again, I didn't do it. I felt it wasn't appropriate as the boy could be lying in bed with nothing on, you just didn't know.

9. There was only one female worker at Geilsland when I started. I think her name was Nancy. They liked to employ big men to work there. That was the kind of culture. If there was any trouble in any of the units, they'd call for the big men to go in. It was a very male culture and it remained like that for years.
10. When it came to the staff, some were ok with the boys, some let the power and control get to them. I suppose I was a bit like that at times too. Don't get me wrong, it wasn't easy because there were some really difficult boys in there, but there were also some good boys that you could have some good conversation and good times with. I got on fine with most of the staff, but you'll always get some that are the exception. There were some staff I didn't like to work with, but they might have felt the same way about me.
11. Geilsland liked to hire staff for their size and those who weren't afraid to confront the boys, if needed. As I said, you were told to do things like tip boys out of their beds in the morning. Things like that were all good with management, until a boy complained. Then, it was us at fault.

#### *Layout and Structure*

12. When I first went to Geilsland, there were three units and the mansion house. The units were New Vic, Old White House and Lomond. Lomond was the unit specifically for kids with special educational needs and sexually aggressive behaviours. I wasn't in there very much, maybe only a couple of shifts. During my time at Geilsland, New Viv and White House were knocked down and rebuilt and all the units were renamed.



They became Cunningham, Garnock and St Inan. St Inan became a specialised unit for boys with sexually aggressive behaviours.

*Staff structure / Staffing levels*

13. [KMJ] was [SNR] the school and [ ] was [SNR]. Christ McNaught left at some point during my employment to be head of Ballikinrain before becoming the director of children's services within Crossreach. When Chris McNaught left, David Barr came in to fill his position, but his title was head of care at Geilsland.
14. Below the senior management, there were the unit managers. Billy Roy was in charge of New Vic, [HNL] was in charge of the Old White House and Jean Cullen was in charge of Lomond. My wife actually worked at Geilsland too and she was a unit manager at one point. Below the unit managers were the team leaders. Grant Kerr was the team leader in the Old White House, but I'm not sure who the team leaders were in the New Vic or Lomond, but each unit had a manager and a team leader.
15. [KMJ] was mainly concerned with saving money, right from the off. Don't get me wrong, he did have the boys wellbeing at heart, but wherever he could save a pound or two, he did. That's why we never had a full quota of staff. When I started, instead of bringing in existing staff to do extra shifts, he would use me to fill in the gaps on a voluntary basis.
16. There were usually three members of staff on the early shift and three on the late shift in each unit. Sometimes it would be more, sometimes it would be less depending on how the unit was. There were stages, later on in my career when the units were renamed, it would only be me and one other staff member looking after sixteen boys in Cunningham Unit. The units could be difficult to supervise because of the layout and with just the two of us, you just couldn't do it properly.

### *Recruitment of staff*

17. I was never involved in the recruitment of staff and I'm not aware of the recruitment policy. I know there were some voluntary staff taken on after me, when I had a paid position. All the vetting of staff or volunteers was done by management.
18. When I had my interview, they told me that I was the kind of person they were looking for to work with these kids, because I had worked in factories and the mines. I know management insisted that staff be members of their local church. They asked potential staff to get a letter from their local church to say they knew them and they attended. I was asked for that when I started, but I actually wrote the letter myself. Management found out, but they kept me on anyway. I think they did away with that requirement years later when they were struggling to recruit staff. I don't remember being asked for any other references.

### *Staff Training*

19. As I said, I had no qualifications when I went to work at Geilsland. I didn't get any qualifications in child care until I had been there for a number of years. There was really no training at all when I started.
20. As the years went on, some training was introduced such as Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) which taught us de-escalation skills to apply when the boys went into a state of anxiety. TCI instructors would come to Geilsland and I think it was maybe a five day course which we did once or twice a year. At some point, Individual Care Management Plans (ICMP) were also introduced which gave us a much greater understanding of the boys we were working with and what would best help them in a state of crisis.
21. Latterly, sometime after 2000, there was some child protection training introduced, some e-learning and GIRFEC training which was 'getting it right for every child'. Most of the training, apart from the e-learning, was done in house and sometimes we linked up with other schools, such as Ballikinrain or trainers came to Geilsland from Kibble.

### *Supervision / appraisal / evaluation*

22. There wasn't really any formal supervision or appraisal of staff. I used to always ask for feedback especially when I was involved in restraints. I would always say to a manager 'should I have done that', 'should I not have done that'. I was never told by a manager that I shouldn't have done something.
23. Later in my career, I had two female members of look after. When new staff came in, they would be put with someone to show them the ropes for a few weeks. We were expected to show them how the units ran, the routines of the units and how we interacted with the kids. It wasn't really supervising them in any official capacity and all the staff did that.
24. Quite often, staff that came to work at Geilsland would come from other schools like Kibble or Kerelaw for example. They would already know what they were doing. Permanent staff didn't really supervise voluntary staff. We just made sure they were doing what we were doing. Other than that, I didn't have any involvement in staff training or supervision.

### *Policy*

25. I wasn't involved in the making of policy at Geilsland. When I started working there, there were policy and procedure folders available in the staff office. Those folders contained information on the Church of Scotland care guidelines. Later on, there were policy and procedure handbooks in each of the units that we had to read. The handbooks really covered everything we needed to know, like discipline and complaints procedures, and I believe they were updated over the years. The very senior managers who were in the headquarters at Charis House, Milton Road East, Edinburgh were the ones responsible for creating all the policies.

### *Strategic Planning*

26. I was not involved in any way with strategic planning at Geilsland.

## **Children / Routine at Geilsland**

27. Children were placed in Geilsland by the local authority. Sometimes it was planned and sometimes it would be an emergency. If it was planned, the boys could visit before they came to stay although, that was something that was introduced later on, not in the early years. I couldn't tell you exactly when that was introduced.
28. All the boys at Geilsland were between fourteen and eighteen. Very occasionally, we would have a slightly younger boy. After eighteen, the boys would hopefully go back to their families or would be moved out into the community with Throughcare/Aftercare support.
29. The length of time the boys stayed depended on their progress and ultimately, it was up to the local authority. Some boys were there from fourteen to eighteen, some would be moved elsewhere for various reasons and some would be able to go back to their parents. Our main aim was to try to keep families together, but very few managed it.

### *Mealtimes / Food*

30. I thought the food at Geilsland was alright. The food was cooked in one unit, but the boys ate separately in their own units and the food was carried to each unit on trays. For breakfast it was cereal, toast and sometimes a boiled egg. At lunch it was usually sausages or burgers. For dinner, it was things like steak pies. There wasn't a great choice at mealtimes, but if boys didn't like the food, we always managed to get them something they did like. After GIRFEC came into effect, the boys got to choose their own menus. There would be a list put up in each unit letting them know what the food was for the week. Some of the older boys got a weekly allowance for food and could cook their own meals with supervision.

### *Sleeping Arrangements*

31. There were three units at Geilsland. Each unit was separated into four flats, two upstairs and two downstairs with up to sixteen boys split between them. There were

usually three to four boys sharing a flat and each had their own room. The largest unit usually had about sixteen boys, then another unit had around twelve and the smallest had seven or eight. There were around thirty-five or thirty-six boys in total, if the school was full, but it rarely was.

### *Washing and Bathing*

32. In the old units, New Vic, Old White House and Lomond, the boys had shared bathrooms. Then when the units were rebuilt and renamed, the boys in Cunningham and Garnock had individual rooms in the flats, but they still shared the toilet and shower room. There was a bathroom upstairs and a shower room downstairs. In St Inan, the unit for boys with sexually aggressive behaviours, each boy had their own bedroom, toilet and shower due to the nature of their behaviour.

### *Outings / Leisure time*

33. During leisure time, within the school, the boys mostly played football in the sports hall. For long periods of my placement there, that's all the boys did. Sometimes, they would play hide and seek and there were board games and things like that available in the units.
34. We would take the boys on regular outings or runs out in the van. We regularly took the boys out to buy clothes or took them to the cinema, swimming and sometimes to play golf. We also took them on overnight camps to places like Fort William, Arran and Craigmalloch. Camps were usually Monday to Friday during the school holidays. The boys weren't actually camping. They stayed in hostels when we were away. I know a couple of the boys were taken to Turkey when I was there, but I wasn't involved in that.
35. When I first worked at Geilsland, there weren't one on one outings with staff and the boys, but they did happen latterly when keyworkers were introduced. If you were keyworker for a particular boy, you would take the boy out on their own, but never overnight. Being a Keyworker involved getting to know the boy's background, working



more closely with that boy, building their case file and writing their panel review reports. Staff were not supposed to take any of the children to their own house, but I know some staff did it. I didn't.

#### *Healthcare*

36. We had a matron in the school called Willma Smith. She already worked there when I started. If a boy was feeling unwell, he went to see her. When boys came in, they were registered with a local doctor and dentist, but some boys weren't interested as they wanted to be kept with their own doctor and dentist. Boys who had regular home leave tended to stay with their local doctor and dentist. If a boy was really unwell or injured, we would take him to the doctor or to the hospital in Paisley.

#### *Schooling*

37. Most of the boys at Geilsland did engage with the schooling. I think they were taught the usual English and maths, but they also had things like painting, motor mechanics, electronics and woodwork.

#### *Chores*

38. The boys didn't do any of their own laundry, but they were encouraged to help out around the unit with the cleaning. When they came in from school, they had wee jobs to do like Hoovering the sitting room, mopping the floors or cleaning the showers. Some boys did it and some boys didn't. The ones who did could earn themselves extra pocket money which came out of the monthly budget for the unit. Each unit was given a monthly budget for things like taking the boys on outings.

#### *Visitors / Home Leave*

39. The boys had regular visits from parents or family. Sometimes, if the parents couldn't get to Geilsland, we would maybe meet them somewhere in the community or drop the boy at their house and pick them up a couple of hours later. Sometimes we would

pick visitors up from the station and drive them to Geilsland. Some of the boys at Geilsland were able to have overnights with their parents, some weren't.

40. Family visits would happen in the mansion house, before the new units were built. There was a room there for them to sit and talk. After the new units were built, there were visitor rooms in the units. I don't think the visitors were necessarily vetted, but we would have information from social work so we knew who was allowed to visit each boy.
41. The boy's social workers also visited regularly. When the social workers came, the boys would have the opportunity to speak to their social worker on their own.

#### *Review of Care/placement*

42. I think the boys were supposed to have a child care review every three months or so. Nine times out of ten it would be in the school and the boy would attend along with the unit manager, social worker and myself, if I was the boy's keyworker. Possibly someone from Throughcare or Who Cares would also be at the meeting.
43. The outcome of the review would depend on the boy's progress at the school and how well he was coping in the community, during home visits. After a review took place, sometimes the boy would stay with us longer, some got to go home and sometimes they were moved somewhere else. You did sometimes get boys who were placed back in the community or at another institution coming back to Geilsland for whatever reason.
44. If a boy was leaving Geilsland, they were supported in the run up to them leaving. We would encourage boys to be more independent by doing their own food or clothes shopping. We would also try to let them get out into the community as much as we could. Some boys got work placements and money would be taken off them to help them budget for food, gas and electricity. They would get all that money back when they left. Usually when the boys got a place of their own, they were given a grant to help them furnish their flat.

### *Living Arrangements*

45. I didn't live on site when I worked at Geilsland. I lived in Cumnock which is about a forty-five minute drive. I did stay overnight quite regularly because of the travelling. When I did stay overnight, I slept in the student quarters. When we got students in from local authorities, sometimes they stayed in there too. It was a wee house with four bedrooms in it for students or staff. Most of the staff who worked at Geilsland lived in one of the three local towns, Stevenson, Ardrossan or Saltcoats. Some even lived in Beith where the school was.
46. All members of staff had access to the boy's residential areas throughout the day. At night, there was one staff member on shift per unit and one staff member who was known as a 'floater', who went round all the units. If I was staying overnight at Geilsland, I would be in the unit until around midnight, then I would go to the staff quarters. There was a room where staff could sleep in the unit, if they wanted to, but it was often noisy so I didn't do that.

### *Discipline and Punishment*

47. The boys were never physically disciplined when I worked at Geilsland. The time of corporal punishment was all by with by the time I started. If boys stepped out of line, I would say they were sanctioned rather than disciplined or punished. The main forms of sanction would be deducting pocket money or stopping them going on an outing. For example, if a boy damaged something in the unit, like a window, he would have a deduction made from his pocket money each week for a period of time. It was never usually to the full value of the damage, but the boys would pay part of the cost.
48. Pocket money was dished out on a Friday. If a boy was having pocket money deducted, they were told in advance. I was never one for dishing out punishment or discipline for trivial things, but I'm not going to lie, there maybe were occasions where I deducted a boy's pocket money just because his behaviour was annoying me. They could always earn it back by doing chores or something like that.

49. Later on in my employment, the deduction from pocket money was stopped for a short period. I had been out in the van with a group of boys and a lad called [REDACTED] from Glasgow, was smoking up the back of the van. The boys weren't allowed to smoke in the van so I brought it up at the team meeting and he was fined a pound of his pocket money. When his social worker came down to visit him, she challenged [REDACTED] on it. Her view was that deductions from pocket money shouldn't be made as the Social Work Department gave the school funding for the boys placement at Geilsland. I don't know what the level of funding was but after the social worker's challenge, it stopped for a short time before it picked back up again.
50. The boys got TV's in their rooms at one point and some of the staff, for whatever reason, didn't like it. They would sanction the boys by taking their TV's away for a period. I never understood that as I didn't see the point in it. I remember one night when I was on nightshift, one of the boys had had his TV taken away. I gave it back to him because I didn't agree with it. I did feel that some of the staff were very quick to sanction the boys.
51. Home leave was never used as a sanction. It was never taken away for something trivial. The only way a boy might be stopped going on home leave was if he wasn't coping during his time at home.
52. It was only ever the responsibility of staff to sanction the boys. Older boys in the units were never allowed to sanction younger boys. Don't get me wrong, there was quite a lot of bullying from time to time because you had a mixture of boys in each unit, some were quite aggressive, some were quite vulnerable.
53. Staff could sanction boys there and then, if they felt it was necessary, but we also had regular team meetings where behaviour and sanctions were discussed and decided. The team meetings would include all the staff in a particular unit, including the unit manager, team leader and occasionally, the head or deputy head would be involved.
54. I'm not sure if the boys were made aware of the rules when then came in. They definitely weren't at the beginning of my employment, but they might have been later

on. When the handbooks were introduced, I think there probably was information in there about sanctions.

### *Restraint*

55. When I started working at Geilsland, there was no official training on how to restrain a boy and no one ever showed me how to do it. I have no idea if there was any written policy on the use of restraint. I would just try to get the boy on the ground as safely as possible. There really wasn't any training until the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention came in.
56. I was involved in quite a lot of restraint. A boy would be restrained if he was behaving aggressively towards other boys or staff or wrecking the place. Restraint was used for the boys own safety. That was my take on it anyway. There were occasions when some boys were glad you did it, but other occasions where the boys weren't happy about it.
57. I remember an incident when I was coming out of the mansion house one day and there were two boys knocking lumps out of another boy outside Garnock House. Tom Morman was the unit manager then. Tom came walking across but never intervened. I ran over and grabbed a hold of the two boys and said 'enough is enough'. That was all it needed to stop that incident. However, if either of those two boys had made a complaint against me, I would have been suspended because I was there on my own. That's what happened to me quite a lot. If any form of restraint was used, it was supposed to be used with other staff assisting or present, but I couldn't stand back and watch two boys knocking lumps out of another boy. That's not in my nature.
58. I never saw any of the staff using excessive restraint on any of the boys. I wasn't involved in every restraint in the school, so I can only speak to what I witnessed. We didn't get it right every time, but I never saw a boy being hurt intentionally.



### *Concerns about the institution*

59. The only concern I really had while working at Geilsland was staffing levels. That is something I highlighted while I worked there. There just weren't enough staff on duty all the time to allow keyworkers to work with their boys, or to allow one member of staff to take boys on outings. It wasn't just me who voiced those concerns, other staff felt like that too.
60. There were some external concerns about Geilsland while I worked there. I think Inverclyde Social Work Department refused to send boys there for a period of time. I don't know the details of that or whether it's true or not.

### *Reporting of complaints/concerns*

61. If a boy came to me with a complaint, I would need to inform the duty officer or, if my team leader was working, I would pass it on to him to pass up the chain. That was the reporting process that I was aware of and followed. Sometimes, the boy himself would go straight to management. That's what happened to me quite a few times.
62. I do remember one occasion where a boy called **IVW** came to me about a prank that two staff members had played on him. Basically, he was at college and two staff members had called him, pretending to be from the college. I didn't get all the details, but I knew it couldn't have been the college phoning him because it happened around five or six o'clock at night. **IVW** was all upset about it so I reported it and it turned out to have been two Geilsland staff. They lost their jobs over that.
63. If a boy made a complaint against a member of staff, **KMJ** or  would have a meeting with the boy's social worker. Then, there might be a fact finding meeting with the social worker and the boy to decide whether the staff member needed to go to a disciplinary meeting.

*Trusted adult/confidante*

64. If any of the boys had any worries or concerns, they could speak to their keyworker, social worker or, if Who Cares were involved, they could speak to them. Sometimes, Children's Rights workers would come to meet with the boys and work with them every so often, so concerns could have been raised with them too.
65. If boys weren't happy, they were encouraged to speak to their social worker and I think they did do that. Latterly, the procedure for keeping the boy's social workers updated on their progress was improved. When I was on duty on a Monday, I would read the unit log book and the boys case files. Then, I would call their social workers to give them an update on what kind of week the boys had.

**Allegations of Abuse**

66. I think Geilsland did have a definition of abuse when I worked there, but I couldn't tell you what it was. I'm sure it would have been in the policy and procedure handbooks when they were introduced. **KMJ** held meetings every so often in the school, with the full staff. It's likely to have been something that was discussed at those meetings.
67. I didn't see anything that I considered abusive when I worked Geilsland. Unless you consider shouting or swearing at the boys as abuse. I won't lie, I did that myself on occasion. If a boy did something stupid, I might say 'why the fuck did you do that'. Some of the boys we got in, raising your voice and swearing was the only language they understood. It was the only way to get through to them.
68. Although I didn't see anything I considered abusive, I'm aware of some instances where staff were disciplined following allegations of abuse. For example, there was a staff member called **GPL** I can't remember his first name. I heard he punched a boy and ended up getting sacked. I didn't witness that, so I don't know any of the details. There was another member of staff called Russell Conn who got sacked from Geilsland. The school found out that he had a phone number for a boy who had left

and he was still in contact with him. Russell is in jail now for sexually abusing young kids. I don't know if his convictions relate to his time at Geilsland. He worked at the school for a long time and was a care worker there for a few years when I was there. I worked with Russell quite a lot and never had any bother. The boys seemed happy and relaxed in his care. He was very popular in the units, but I never understood why. I was really shocked to find out that he had been convicted.

69. If a boy was being abused, I would like to think it would have come to light, but I can't be sure. It might have happened and I did know about it. It might have happened and the boy was too embarrassed to come forward.

### **Child protection arrangements**

70. We did occasionally do child protection training and it was something that was discussed in team meetings. Changes like that were only introduced sometime in the 2000s, after the new units were built. It wasn't a focus when I started working at the school.
71. There was a consultant psychologist called Joe Nee who visited the boys and did some group work with them. We also had Edwina and Dom who I think were independent psychologists. They engaged with the boys on individual programmes of work and child protection matters. That was something that was available through the school, but it was up to the boys whether they wanted to engage. If boys did speak to them, they would write a report which would come to us and the boy's social worker.

### **External monitoring**

72. During my time at Geilsland, the Care Commission came in. I can't remember how often that happened. During inspections, Care Commission members would speak to the staff and the boys individually. If there were any issues that needed to be addressed, they would provide feedback to the school. I don't remember being made aware of any feedback.

### **Record-keeping**

73. There were a few forms of record keeping that I'm aware of. There were log books in each unit and now that I think about it, there were sanction books in each unit too. There were also individual care plan case files on each of the boys. The boy's progress, details about their home leave, sanctions and any concerns were all recorded. All the staff would have access to those records. Initially, records were hand written, but latterly, they were computerised.

### **Investigations into abuse – personal involvement**

74. I had no personal involvement in investigations into abuse at Geilsland.

### **Reports of abuse and civil claims**

75. I had no personal involvement in reports of abuse and civil claims.

### **Police investigations/ criminal proceedings**

76. The police were up at the school on occasions where boys were being troublesome and on occasions where boys did make complaints. I was never involved in any of those complaints, so I don't know what they were about. Other than that, I have no knowledge of any police investigations or criminal proceedings relating to Geilsland.

### **Other Staff**

GHS

77. I knew <sup>GHS</sup> very well. He was a care worker at Geilsland when I started working there. He was bit younger than me I thought he



was a good worker. He could be quite fiery from time to time, but he was like that with everyone. He was good with the boys. He could shout, but nothing more that we all did at times. I never saw or heard of him unreasonably disciplining or abusing any boy.

HVI

78. HVI was the nickname of a guy called HVI. He started working at Geilsland as a care worker a while after I did. He must have been in his late twenties, early thirties when I knew him. He was someone who would be nice to your face, but not necessarily behind your back. He was quite relaxed with the boys. He was a bit of a goody two shoes around the boys to be honest. He would take them out and buy them food and he would never challenge them.
79. HVI lived from the school and he took boys to his house. I had to go to his house to see him one day. When I was there, a boy who had just left Geilsland, maybe sixteen years old, came out his bedroom in just his boxer shorts. I went straight back to Geilsland and reported it to management. I'm not sure if HVI got the sack or was asked to leave, but it was all hush hush. I was never spoken to by the police about what I witnessed.

80. Geilsland while I worked there, HVK and Kenny Weir. HVK worked at Geilsland most of the time I did. He was a care worker too. He was a big guy who was into his body building. He was good with the boys and I never saw or heard of him disciplining or abusing any boy.
81. Kenny Weir was only around the last few years I worked there. He had enough after a fairly short time. He was a pretty laid back with the boys. I couldn't imagine any complaints being made about him and I never saw or heard of him disciplining or abusing anyone.



HNK

82. I don't know any staff member at Geilsland by the name of HNK

ERW

83. I remember ERW. Again, he was a care worker when I started. He could shout and bawl at the boys if they weren't doing what he wanted. He was really quite verbal with them, but he did a lot of work with them like taking them fishing and things like that. I never saw or heard of him disciplining or abusing anyone. He moved to Australia to set up his own business.

HVF

84. I worked with HVF in St Inans unit. I'm sure he lived in Dalry and adopted three kids. He was good with the boys and I never heard of any complaints being made about him. I also never saw or heard of him disciplining or abusing any boy.

GHU

85. I worked with GHU in the early 2000s. He got on fine with the boys, but he got seriously injured while working at the school. One of the boys hit him over the head with half a slab in one of the workshops. I never saw or heard of him disciplining or abusing anyone. He left because he got a job in Ireland.

HYL

86. I think HYL lived at Geilsland. I didn't really work with her or know her well. She was possibly there 2004 or 2005. I couldn't tell you what her role was.

ERT

87. ERT was the nickname of a guy called ERT. He already worked at Geilsland when I started. He got on okay with the boys, but he could be quite loud and aggressive. I know he had a lot of run-ins with management. He left, but I don't know what the circumstances were. I never saw or heard of him disciplining or abusing anyone.

### **Allegations that have been made to the Inquiry about me**

GLP

88. GLP has given a statement to the Inquiry. At paragraph 65 of his statement, he has said "*There was another member of staff, GLR who assaulted me. One night he came to the room but I never heard him arriving. He said he was shouting on me, but I tried saying I never heard him. He then came right up to me and punched me in the ribs. He told me that I better keep my mouth shut.*" I knew GLP well. I have no idea why he has said this as I thought I had a good working relationship with him. He was a boy who struggled to get up in the morning. He loved football so I used to take a football into his room in the morning and bounce it off the wall. He would header it back to me. It seemed to work.
89. GLP had his own problems, but he wasn't aggressive in any way. I would have no reason to hit him. I'm struggling to understand why he has said that I did. I don't even remember ever sanctioning him for anything. I know from reading his statement, he also says I called him 'pishy'. I didn't do that either. I don't think the passage of time has affected my memory because I didn't do anything to the boy. I accept that if someone punched a child in the ribs, it would be abuse, but it didn't happen.

ILN

90. ILN has given a statement to the Inquiry. At paragraph 184 of his statement, he has said *"The staff used to take us away for camps. I think we went to Fort William. I remember Celtic were playing FC Basel in the Champion's League. We didn't watch the match because there was a ceilidh on in the town. There was two male members of staff, [Redacted] and GLR. When we came back that night, they were in the room with the boys. I remember going to my bed and there was a live bat put under my pillow. I didn't understand why that was there but one of the boys told me it was GLR playing a prank. I lifted my pillow and the bat flew out in front of my face. I got the fright of my life. I was shouting and bawling and people were laughing."* I knew ILN well. He used to get called ILN. I have no recollection of anyone having a bat under their pillow and if they did, it certainly wasn't me who put it there. Where on earth would I get a bat?

91. ILN goes on to say the following at paragraph 185 of his statement *"I fell asleep and they dyed my hair green. I got up in the morning and went for a shower and my hair was green. One of the staff had dyed it, apparently it was a prank. One of the boys told me it was staff. One of the other boys had his hair dyed purple that night too."* I remember this camp well. It was only me and a member of staff called ILP there with the boys. I don't remember ILN having his hair dyed, but it wouldn't surprise me if he did. I do remember the boy who had his hair dyed purple. His name was [Redacted]. As I said, it was only me and ILP there and it was not me who did it, I can assure you of that.

*Brian Heron*

92. Brian Heron has given a statement to the Inquiry. At paragraphs 21 to 24 of his statement, he has said *"I went to see IVT and IWC at Geilsland. Whilst I was in IVT's unit in Geilsland, GLR came up to me and told me that someone had attempted to steal his car the previous weekend. He told me that his car had previously been stolen a number of times. He told me that he had taken the starter motor out of his car in an attempt to catch who*



was stealing his car. He then told me that he caught the boy who had been trying to steal his car and that he had assaulted that boy. He said he gave the boy "a few boots". He told me that he had been angry and upset. I didn't find out what the boy's name was and I have never met the boy.

I was shocked that GLR [REDACTED] would tell me that he had been involved in something like that. It seemed a crazy thing to be telling a social worker. All I said to him was "You need to watch or you will end up in court yourself". He then stopped talking about it. After my conversation I went to see IVT [REDACTED] I then went to see IWC [REDACTED]

I visited IWC [REDACTED] with ..... [REDACTED] was IWC [REDACTED] unit manager in Geilsland. After the meeting I was walked across to Geilsland's main building with IWC [REDACTED] key worker, ..... IWC [REDACTED] social worker, Dave Gillies, was also there. On the walk across, ..... asked me whether I had heard about the "Carry on with GLR [REDACTED] I told him that I had. .... told me that the father of the boy who had been assaulted by GLR [REDACTED] had called ..... to complain. .... told me that he had informed the boy's father that the boy had been trying to steal GLR [REDACTED] car. He told me that the boy's father then said something along the lines of "I would have booted the boy's arse as well".

The conversation I had with ..... provided me with, what I felt was corroboration of what GLR [REDACTED] had told me. My mind became firmed up at that point that I needed to report the incident. I then left Geilsland and made a note of what I had heard."

93. Brian Heron goes on to say the following at paragraphs 26 to 28 of his statement "...On 12/01/00 I was in a car with four young persons. Their names were IVT [REDACTED] IVT [REDACTED] IWC [REDACTED] ..... and ..... I was travelling back to Geilsland to drop IWC [REDACTED] IWC [REDACTED] off before dropping off the other young persons. During the car ride, IWC [REDACTED] started talking about GLR [REDACTED] assault on the unnamed boy. He was sharing information without realising that I already knew about the assault. IWC [REDACTED] thought I didn't know about the incident. IWC [REDACTED] also reported two other incidents. He said that he had heard that another resident of Geilsland, by the name of IVZ [REDACTED], had been physically assaulted in the presence of police officers by GLR [REDACTED] following his return to Geilsland in

the early hours of the morning of 08/01/00. He implied that GLR ██████ had given another resident "a difficult time" when they had been alone in a room...

After IWC ██████ talked about the incident concerning GLR ██████ and the unnamed boy, IVT ██████ reported to me that he had been assaulted by GLR ██████. IVT ██████ said "He done it to me as well". IVT ██████ said that, about six months previously, he had returned to Geilsland under the influence of heroin. GLR ██████ got upset with him and physically assaulted him. He said GLR ██████ had waited until he was in a room alone with him. He said that GLR ██████ then punched him forcefully in his stomach. He later told me that he had reported the incident to his mother but she hadn't believed him."

94. Brian Heron goes on to say the following at paragraph 46 of his statement "Following reporting the incidents disclosed to me by GLR ██████, IVT ██████ and IWC ██████ there was an investigation launched into Geilsland. Glasgow City Council and Inverclyde Council took the decision to stop placing young people at the institution whilst the investigation was underway. Other local authorities continued placing young people in Geilsland throughout that period. IVT ██████ was taken out of Geilsland for his own protection. IVT ██████ co-operated with the investigation. IWC ██████ chose to remain in Geilsland.

95. Brian Heron goes on to say the following at paragraph 54 of his statement "Elaine told me that she had visited Geilsland in 2002 and met with GLR ██████. She informed me that GLR ██████ had been suspended during the investigation. She told me that Geilsland tried to give GLR ██████ a verbal warning. She told me that GLR ██████ trade union had fought the possibility of him being given a verbal warning and that he was now back at work. GLR ██████ was able to keep his job at Geilsland."

96. Brian Heron goes on to say the following at paragraph 56 of his statement "I heard from IVT ██████ that after the investigation had been concluded into GLR ██████ GLR ██████ took a bus load of kids out of Geilsland and drove them to Greenock. IVT ██████ said that GLR ██████ drove the bus past IVT ██████'s house. GLR ██████ saw IVT ██████ in the street and waved to him. IVT ██████ felt that he was in danger and that GLR ██████



GLR was mocking him. IVT reported the incident to Action for Children. Action for Children then reported that GLR excuse was that he was just being friendly.”

97. I don't recall Brian Heron at all. I couldn't even tell you what he looks like, but obviously I must have come across him at some point. I don't have any recollection of the conversation he says I had with him. I certainly didn't tell him I had assaulted a boy. When I read Brian Heron's statement, it seems to me that wherever Brian has been working, he has had boys coming to him with all sorts of allegations. I'm quite angry about what he's said because it's a total fabrication.
98. My car did get stolen one night at Geilsland. It was found the next day, just along the road a bit, and whoever stole it had damaged the locks. The next time I was on a late shift, it happened again and they took it down and just left it on the road. I thought it might have been IVZ. Later on that night, one of the boys came back to Geilsland in the back of a police van with two police officers. I'm pretty sure it was IVZ and I was accused of punching him in the mouth. Six police officers were interviewed about that and I think I got a verbal warning. I appealed the warning and had to go to Charis House. When I got there, they had in their possession a statement from the boy saying that it was another boy who punched him in the mouth, not me. I won my appeal and the disciplinary decision against me was overturned.
99. What Brian Heron is saying in his statement doesn't make sense. He's lying through his teeth. The other boy he mentions, IVT, was a heroin user and he did nothing but tell lies. I did not assault IVT, I did not assault the boy Brian Heron is talking about and I did not tell Brian Heron that I had. If I had assaulted one of the boys, when on earth would I tell him that? I've got no idea what Brian's end game is in saying those things about me.

**Allegations of abuse for which there have been no criminal investigation or conviction – Geilsland disciplinary record**

100. During my employment at Geilsland, a number of complaints were made against me. These complaints were dealt with by senior management at Geilsland and in some cases, disciplinary action was taken against me. If a complaint was made, the staff member would be suspended while a fact finding investigation was carried out. That could take forever. I was never spoken to by the police about any of these complaints.

IVU

101. I was accused of verbally and physically assaulting IVU in 1997. I can't really remember what that was about. I didn't have a very good working relationship with IVU. He was a boy who could be quite aggressive and push the boundaries all the time. For example, the boys weren't allowed to smoke in the corridors. He would walk about smoking all the time and other staff wouldn't challenge him. I challenged him once and took his cigarette off him. I think that probably led to him kicking off and me having to restrain him.
102. After he made a complaint, I had a meeting with his social worker and KMJ. The social worker said 'could you not have just let him walk into his flat with the cigarette'. I suppose I could have, but we were given rules that the boys had to follow.

ITF

103. I was accused of assaulting ITF during physical intervention in 1997. He had started a work placement and Chris McNaught asked me to phone to see how he was getting on. I called and introduced myself and said I was from Geilsland School. When ITF came back that day he was absolutely raging that I had said I was from Geilsland. He went nuts and started throwing the dining room furniture about and at me. I had to restrain him, but when I was holding him down, he was scratching and punching himself in the face. I got a fright and panicked so I let him up. His face was in some mess, but it was nothing to do with me. He did all that to himself. I think I got

suspended for that and got a final written warning. I know in the paperwork from Geilsland it says I was potentially charged with a breach of the peace. That's news to me. At a later date, ITF [REDACTED] actually admitted to causing those injuries to himself.

IVX [REDACTED]

104. I was accused of assaulting IVX [REDACTED] in 1998. I know IVX [REDACTED] was in the school, but I have no recollection of working with him at all. I don't even think I worked in the same unit as that boy.

IVT [REDACTED]

105. I was accused of assaulting IVT [REDACTED] in January 2000. As I said, IVT [REDACTED] was a heroin user and did nothing but tell lies.

IVZ [REDACTED]

/ IWA [REDACTED]

/ IWD [REDACTED]

106. I was accused of assaulting these three boys in March 2000. I think this is connected to the allegations Brian Heron talks about in his statement, but I can't be sure. I don't remember IWA [REDACTED] at all. As I said, I think IVZ [REDACTED] was the boy who was brought back in the police van after my car was stolen. He accused me of punching him, but he later admitted it wasn't me. I don't know if that is what these disciplinary matters are about of if they are talking about getting restrained.

107. When staff were involved in restraining any of the boys, it was my face they would see because I was always up at the top. Other staff would be down taking their legs. I think I was involved in restraining IVZ [REDACTED] and IWA [REDACTED] at some point. That's the only reason I can think of why my name would be mentioned although, I never ever restrained IWD [REDACTED]



IWB

108. I was accused of assaulting IWB in 2001. Me, David Blair and a staff member called Sandy were away on a camp with the boys. Some of the boys were carrying on and they kept knocking on our room door. There was a bit of a fallout in the van on the way home between [REDACTED] and IWB. IWB then complained to KMJ that I kicked him up the backside. It wasn't me, it was [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] later came out and told KMJ that it was him so no disciplinary action was taken against me.

IVV

109. I was accused of using excessive force and shouting at IVV during physical intervention in 2006. I remember this incident very well. I was on the phone in the office when I heard IVV roaring and shouting. He was a big guy and got worked up quite easily. I went out and saw Fiona Cunningham, a member of staff, walking out the flat and he was still pointing and shouting at her. I think Grant Kerr, who was a team leader, was there too. I walked into the flat and closed the door behind me. IVV tried to get out the door, but I wouldn't let him out. As he tried to get passed me, he shoved me. I grabbed a hold of him and we both fell down. I held him down on the ground for around thirty seconds while he calmed down. Following that, he was sitting at the dining room table. He had a bottle of tabasco sauce and he was putting it on the boy's dinners. There were other staff there, but they weren't doing anything, so I took it off him. He went nuts and stormed off.
110. IVV was pissed off about the restraint and had a meeting with Fiona Cunningham about it. She wrote a report and I got hauled in with KMJ. KMJ let me read the report and the first two paragraphs were all lies. Fiona Cunningham didn't like me and I didn't like her to be quite honest. I think whatever IVV said, she added more to it. I think I got a final written warning for that.

IVW

111. IVW alleged that I physically assaulted him in 2007. Me and two other members of staff, KGV and a guy called HVE were on a trip down to Alton Towers with the boys. On the way back, we stopped in at Newcastle to go into the football stadium. IVW went into a shop and bought himself two bottles of Pepsi Max. HVE then went in a bought a bottle for each of the other boys. IVW took the huff because HVE didn't buy him any, despite the fact he already had two bottles. On the way back on the minibus, there was a bit of carry on. IVW was getting the back of his head slapped and he seemed to think it was me. It wasn't. It was another member of staff, KGV. I was spoken to by the social work department, but no action was taken against me.

IWE

112. IWE alleged that I pushed, shouted and swore at him in 2007. After the complaint was made against me, there was a meeting held between myself, Jean Ferguson and Debbie Stewart. Jean was the team leader for the unit I worked in and Debbie was the unit manager. During the meeting, I was questioned about the allegation. When I left the meeting, Chris McNaught approached me and told me the matter was going no further as another boy was with me when I was alleged to have pushed, shouted and sworn at IWE. The boy who was with me confirmed I didn't do anything. There was no further action taken, but it just goes to show how easily your name can be brought into things.

ITG

113. I was accused of injuring ITG during physical intervention in 2010. He was throwing stones at one of the windows. I went and got him, took him up to the unit and put him in his room. The boy he shared a flat with was also in his room. I was accused of strangling him and he had marks on his neck. I hadn't, but I was suspended. When I came back to work, HNL, a member of staff, told me that the marks on ITG neck were there the day prior. Apparently he had been play wrestling



with other boys in his unit and that's how he got the marks. HNL never came forward before my suspension because he said he didn't want to get involved. After my suspension, I was given another final written warning. In hindsight, I put myself in some silly situations and there are things I could have handled better.

ITE

114. ITE alleged that I physically assaulted him in 2010 by biting him. This was when I was doing nightshift. ITE was in Cunningham unit and during nightshift, I would go there to see how things were. ITE was a guy who liked a carry on with staff if he felt comfortable with them. One night when I went up to Cunningham to check on things, ITE and another boy jumped on me. They were just messing around but ITE had his arm round my head and over my mouth. I tried to tell him to stop because he was squeezing me too hard and it left an imprint on his arm. He went around showing it to everybody and I didn't think any more of it. Unknown to me, there was a worker called Ian Carruthers who had come into the school to take boys out. He had seen this. He manipulated ITE into reporting it and saying I did it deliberately. It wasn't deliberate and there was another member of staff there who witnessed it.
115. I was suspended as a result of the allegation. My wife, who was working in Geilsland at the time, was also suspended because ITE had shown her the mark on his arm. When ITE found out, he wasn't happy and he complained to quite a few members of staff that it was Ian Carruthers who put him up to this. I think I was suspended for three weeks and I got a letter saying I was dismissed, but I appealed it and got my job back.
116. To give you a taste of what Ian Carruthers was like, he also accused my wife of harbouring a child abuser. We had a boy called who left Geilsland to live in Largs. Ian Carruthers started telling people in the community that he was a sex offender and he had to move out. We also had a boy called die while he was at Geilsland. He had diabetes. When he died, some of his paperwork went missing from the mansion house. Ian Carruthers name was mentioned as being involved in

that. However, I was told that Ian walked away with a golden handshake because he had too much evidence on the school or the organisation.

### **Leaving Geilsland**

117. Around 2013 or 2014 Geilsland School campus closed down and the children were relocated into two houses in the community. One house was in Beith, it was called Rockwood House. The other was called Mount Pleasant and it was in Dalry. I worked in both of those houses until around 2019, when I took early retirement.

### **Helping the Inquiry**

118. I can't tell you why the three people who have provided witness statements have said the things they have. I never assaulted anyone during my time at Geilsland. The only thing I would say is, we didn't always get restraints right. It was never intentional, but occasionally a boy could get hurt, depending on the circumstances. The way to prevent that, would have been training, which is something I didn't get when I started working there.
119. The way to protect kids in care, now and in the future, is all about training. That and employing people who can be trusted to work with the kids. I couldn't say that about everyone I worked with at Geilsland. Geilsland was understaffed and some of the staff that were there were lazy. That made it impossible to manage unless you had the boy's full cooperation. That said, there were also a lot of good workers there, people who were really kid centred, like my wife and Diane McQueen.

### **Other information**

120. There are some situations from my employment at Geilsland that I regret. There are also some situations I could have handled differently, but I have never ever physically assaulted a boy in my puff.

121. 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..... 9 - 4 - 24.....