

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HQV

Support person present: No

1. My name is HQV although I prefer to be known as HQV. My date of birth is 1986. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born and spent my early childhood in Glasgow. My mum and dad, and both worked. Mum was a full time mother and dad was a painter and decorator. I am the youngest of five children. was the oldest, then, then. There is about ten years age difference between and myself.
3. I had a good, happy childhood and I was probably spoilt because I was the baby of the family. I went to a local primary school and I enjoyed my time there. I was at this school right up to primary seven. After primary I started at a local secondary school. About half way through my first year I fell in with a bad crowd. I got involved smoking cannabis and started drinking alcohol. I started stealing to fund my habit. I got more and more involved with the police and they were taking me home and reporting it to the social work department because my behaviour was becoming increasingly alarming. I was suspended from school on several occasions and subsequently got expelled.
4. I can't remember how it happened but I was put in a day care centre in the Gorbals. I can't remember the name of it but it was beside the sheriff court. I was still living at home and was supposed to go this day care centre during the day but after a short while I stopped going. My behaviour got worse and after one or two months of going

to the day care centre I ended up in front of a children's panel at Candleriggs in Glasgow. My mum and my social worker, whose name I don't know, were there. I can't remember what was all discussed at this children's hearing but it was decided that the best place for me to go was to a children's home.

5. I can't recall very much about Hollowglen children's home in Shettleston because I was only there a couple of days. The home I went to after that was Ailsa House in Partick. As far as I know I went straight from Hollowglen to Ailsa House and I was taken there because I ran away from Hollowglen. I would still have been twelve or thirteen at this time.

Ailsa House children's home, Partick, Glasgow

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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When I left there I was taken to the children's hearing at Candleriggs in Glasgow.

27. I was handcuffed to the police at the children's hearing, one on either side. There were four people on the panel facing me, and there were people at the sides. My mum and social worker were there. They said that I was unruly and there was a space available at Kerelaw and that I was going there. Nothing was said about how long I would be there for. I was upset because I was getting torn even further away from my mum. I knew she wouldn't be able to visit me. I was spitting on them and screaming and they had to drag me out. I was still thirteen. I can't remember how I got to Kerelaw because I was upset and I lashed out. It is all a blur to me.

Kerelaw residential school, Stevenston

28. Kerelaw residential unit was in Stevenston. There was a shop at the bottom where, if you were driving, you would turn right into a long country road. It went to the left then

up a hill then there was a right turn to go into the grounds of Kerelaw. The road went down a hill and the secure unit was on the left. Further round were the residential units. The school was in the middle and the gym hall was at the back. There were four units which had the dining hall between them. There was a corridor connecting the units to the diner. Two units on one side were for the boys and the two units on the other side were for the girls. The units were called Millerston, Fleming, Baird and I can't remember the name of the other girls' unit. The secure unit was separate from the other units and that was where the very bad boys lived. We didn't get to mingle with them.

29. There were probably about a hundred boys and girls in Kerelaw. The age range was from eleven up to sixteen. It was run by Glasgow city council and SNR was Mr LEF. He was English. I never spoke to him at all when I was at Kerelaw. He brought his child into the school at the weekend to play with the remote control cars in the field. There were roughly fifteen members of staff in each unit.
30. I was in Millerston unit. Shona was the manager, KBS SNR and was my key worker. Other members of staff were EUL who was known as EUL FSY FSY zFST HQP, HQQ and INM. There were others but I can't remember their names.
31. I had a room to myself. It had a bed, drawers and a TV on the wall. It was well kitted out. Our bedroom doors weren't locked at night. There was a toilet at the end of the corridor if I needed to use it through the night.

Routine at Kerelaw

First day

32. I was feeling scared on my first day because I didn't know what to expect. I went into the office and the member of staff KBS welcomed me. He had a boxers nose and

he was scary looking. He told me to go outside and play with the others who were outside in the snow. I joined in and was throwing snowballs and hit an older guy. I found out later he was a member of staff called ^{FSB} [REDACTED] and he was my PE teacher. He chased after me and restrained me. I ended up having to go to the hospital.

33. When I was taken back from the hospital it was quite late at night and someone showed me around. I can't remember what else happened that night or how I was feeling.

Mornings and bedtime

34. I think we got woken up about eight o'clock. I normally got up, went downstairs for a shower then went back up to my room and got dressed then went down for breakfast then to school. I went back to the dining hall for lunch. After lunch it was back to school until the school day was finished. Lights out was between nine or ten o'clock at night.

Mealtimes/Food

35. Food was pretty good and I can't remember there being any issues with it. We got some supper about seven o'clock.

Washing/bathing

36. We showered in the morning but we could shower at any other time if we wanted. Showers weren't supervised and we were in private cubicles.

Clothing/uniform

37. Clothing was paid for by Glasgow City Council. It was bought for us and it was always trendy tracksuits and trainers. We got the best of stuff that normal families probably couldn't afford. I think my clothing had my name on it. At some point when it was needing it we took our dirty clothes down to get washed. I have a vision of me doing

my own washing but I am not sure if I actually did. We definitely got taught how to do our washing.

Leisure time

38. In the evenings we sat about in the unit. There was a games room with a pool table, board games, TV and videos or a radio we could listen to. At the weekend we spent a lot of time playing in the grounds. We played football. The girls used to come down to our unit and we would go out with them. Sometimes they would be allowed into the unit. If you had a girlfriend she would be allowed in and the staff gave you a room to sit in, but not a bedroom. I had a girlfriend, although I can't remember her name, and she came in and we sat in the living-room. I was only in the girls unit once when it was Halloween.
39. I don't remember there being any books or comics that we could read. There was no organised sport but towards the end of my time at Kerelaw I got special leave to go out to Ardrossan to do weight training at a football club
40. After school if we had been good we would get taken out. We went to lots of different places. We were taken swimming quite a lot. Some of the boys with me used to steal from the lockers so we were barred from all the local pools. I never stole anything. We ended up having to go from Kerelaw to the swimming pool in Dundee. The teacher HQQ used to take us. He was a good driver.

Trips and holidays

41. Sometimes at the weekends we would get taken out for the day or go somewhere on a day trip. One time we went hiking somewhere. I don't know where it was but it must have been a Munro we climbed. Me and a few other boys fell back from the main group including the teachers and the guide so we could smoke cannabis. We thought it would be good fun to get high on a mountain. We were caught in a blizzard and got separated from the main group. It was one of the most terrifying experiences of my life. I thought we were going to die. The guide came back and rescued us and put up a tent where

we took shelter until the blizzard passed. The guy who organised these trips did a lot of hiking and I always wanted to go with him. I think his name was [REDACTED] KBN. This was the only time I went with him. The supervision wasn't great on this trip the fact that this was allowed to happen.

42. There was another time when we were out and we stayed in a bothy overnight somewhere. I must have been sleepwalking because through the night I woke up and I was outside and the member of staff called Robert McVey was talking to me and telling me I was alright and that I had been sleepwalking. It took me a while to realise where I was and how I managed to be outside the building. In the morning all the other boys were well away from me. I think I must have been having night terrors and I scared them.

Schooling

43. I didn't go to school immediately when I arrived at Kerelaw. I think they let me settle in for about a week and got to know the other boys before I went. The school was in the middle of Kerelaw. There were maybe five other boys in each class and the age range was between eleven and sixteen. School was a joke. In English we sat and watched the Simpsons. At Techy we made wooden boards to roll joints. At home economics we could make cakes or things with cards. [REDACTED] KBN taught geography or history. Basically there was no attempt to educate me. The only subject that I really enjoyed and I was good at was art. I loved painting. The art teacher was Matthew George and he helped me but he went on to abuse me.

Healthcare

44. I think a nurse came in and occasionally checked me over. Quite often she would check boys over if they had been injured when they were restrained. She took lots of notes but I don't know what she did with these notes. A dentist came into Kerelaw. There was a room that the health professionals used when they came in.

Religious instruction

45. We didn't have to go to church on a Sunday and there was no religious instruction at any other time.

Work

46. I helped EUL [REDACTED] remove toilets and fitted a new kitchen when I was there. I enjoyed doing this. I occasionally helped wash the dishes and clean up but there wasn't a regular rota made up. If anyone didn't want to help, the staff just did it.

Birthdays and Christmas

47. I went home over Christmas so there were no celebrations at Kerelaw. Birthdays weren't celebrated. It would never be a celebration to be in there on your birthday apart from for someone who didn't have any family.

Personal possessions

48. I had my own room but didn't really have any personal possessions. We did have a ghetto blaster which just seemed to get passed about or sold between the boys. I am sure we got pocket money if we helped doing chores or when they bought some of my paintings and my mum gave me money too. I didn't actually get the money but it was written in a book and held by the staff. If I wanted anything I would have to steal it or steal things to sell so I could buy what I wanted.

Bed Wetting

49. I wet my bed all the way through my time at Kerelaw. For me, I realise now, it was obviously a behaviour thing. I think I wet the bed before I went in to Kerelaw but I am not sure about that. I remember trying to hide that I had wet the bed from the other boys otherwise I would have been slagged. I remember taking my sheets down to the

washing room and washed them myself so that no one found out. I think when the staff found out they just tried to help me. They didn't laugh at me or ridicule me.

Visitors

50. My mum visited me as often as she could at first. When I started to get home leave she didn't need to come and see me. When she visited me it was usually at the weekend and she was with me a couple of hours or sometimes the whole morning or afternoon. We were given privacy to chat.
51. Once I went to Kerelaw I don't recall any visits by any social workers. I probably did get visited by them but I just can't remember. If they did come they never did anything for me otherwise I would remember.

Review of care / detention

52. I regularly went to the children's panel at Candleriggs. I can't really remember what was discussed but I was never asked what I wanted.

Home Leave

53. After I had been at Kerelaw for around six months I was given home leave. Sometimes I would be allowed to go home on a Friday after school and come back on the Saturday but other times I would be allowed out the whole weekend. This meant I could come back on the Sunday night or the Monday morning.

External Inspections

54. There were some people who came in a couple of times, I presume to see how Kerelaw was being run. Beforehand staff were running around trying to make sure everything was tip top. I think these people spoke to a couple of boys but I have no idea what they were asked. I was told to stay in my room and keep out the way because there was an inspection. They obviously didn't want me to speak to them.

Discipline

55. The only discipline I saw was in the school when my face got dragged across the carpet by Matt George when I was avoiding him. The only other thing they would do if you misbehaved, or didn't do what you were told at school they would cancel home leave so I didn't get to go home and see my family.
56. They taught us discipline with aggression. If you didn't do what they wanted you to do or if your behaviour was becoming a bit hyper, or even if you were too happy they would restrain you. The police were often called to Kerelaw by the staff to deal with situations.
57. There was never a time that anyone sat me down and asked me if I was okay or if I had any problems. The police never helped me in fact they were just as brutal as the teachers at Kerelaw.

Running away

58. They took our trainers away from us at night to stop us from running away. I think I managed to run away three times. I managed to get to Glasgow but got caught by the police. On the way back in the car with the social workers I wound the window down and opened the door when the car stopped and managed to get out. I ran away from the social workers but I got caught again and they took me back. The other time I ran away I went with other boys from Kerelaw. We went to Saltcoats where I saw a JCB in a yard where an Aldi store was getting built. I climbed in thinking I would try and steal it. The police came and were trying to get in the yard. I managed to get away and ran into a toilet where I hid but the police found us. We were taken to the police station then back to Kerelaw.
59. I am not sure why I was running away from Kerelaw but no one ever asked. When the police caught us they never asked. Teachers at Kerelaw never asked me why I had run away either. I stopped running away because my older brothers didn't like the police going to the house, invading their bedrooms and searching for me.

Abuse at Kerelaw

60. On my very first day, just after I arrived I was encouraged to go outside and play in the snow with the other boys. I started throwing snowballs and I hit ^{FSB} the PE Teacher. He chased after me so I ran into the unit but got trapped at a locked door into the dining hall. He grabbed a hold of my legs and started pulling at me. I was holding on to the door handle so I was dangling in mid-air like superman. The next thing I felt was someone ramming their fingers into my armpits to make me let go and a towel in my face. I later found out that this was something they did so you wouldn't smash your head off the tiles.
61. There were other members of staff there that joined in to help but I am not sure who they were. They performed a restraint on me and shoved my arms up my back. The shock of being restrained, or the pain, was so bad for me that I wet myself. When I was on the ground and they were restraining me ^{FSB} said in my ear, and I will never forget what he said, "This is the Kerelaw way" and that I would do what they told me to do. ^{FSB} was very strong and easily overpowered me. The police were called and I was taken out in the snow in my bare feet and went to the police station. All the others were laughing and some were making comments when I was taken away because I was crying and had wet myself.
62. I had to go from the police station to Crosshouse hospital where they found that the ligaments in my arm had been torn. I was told that they would heal and I was taken back to Kerelaw. I remember I was terrified and didn't want to go. When I got back the other boys were laughing at me because I had wet myself. It turned out that ^{FSB} ^{FSB} was my PE teacher and he was a bully. He became a big part of my life in Kerelaw. I know that I was probably out of control a bit but I didn't deserve what he did to me. He was a big strong bloke.
63. Matt George was a sexual predator. He was my art teacher and I loved painting. When I first met him he was really nice to me and seemed to be a good guy. I was really good at art and the unit even bought some of my paintings. I thought Matt was interested in my work but it turned out he was more interested in me. He wanted to

know what I did outside Kerelaw and what my sexual preferences were. He wanted to know lots of details about what I got up to at the weekends when I went home. He would ask if I had sex at the weekend and whether I had been with boys or girls. He did this at first and looking back I can see this was him grooming me.

64. One night I woke up and Matt George was sitting on my bed in my room. He didn't even work in my unit so I don't know why he was there. He just said everything was okay and telling me to be quiet. Nothing happened that night, there was no foul play, but I have no idea why he was there. He might just have been there to intimidate me, but he left me scarred by sneaking into my room.
65. I was in Matt George's class about a year before anything happened. He sat beside me in the classroom and that was when he started to grope me under the table between my legs. He always touched me over my clothing and at the same time he often stuck his tongue out in a suggestive manner. A few times he grabbed my hand and put it on his groin area over his clothing. I would have been thirteen or fourteen and I was confused, felt dirty and didn't know what to do. This really made me question my sexuality. I wasn't sexually active at all by this time and I didn't know if I was straight or gay. I had a rollercoaster of emotions.
66. I allowed him to do this to me over a long period and I don't know if I let him because he was paying me attention. He groped me at every opportunity he could. It happened regularly for almost the rest of my time there, probably about a year. He was always careful and did it when the classroom was quiet and no one could see what he was doing under the desk. I never saw him doing to any of the other boys what he did to me.
67. Matt George had a house in Largs. I always wanted to go and see his house because he told me he had a soda making machine and I loved drinking ginger. Luckily I didn't ever go to his house. He wanted to take me to his house but it never happened. I was gutted at the time because I wanted to see his soda maker.

68. I eventually realised what he was doing was wrong and I didn't want it to continue. One time I left the art class to get away from him and instead went into the English class with the teacher [IWN]. When I was in there Matt George, who obviously knew I was avoiding him, came to the class and pulled [IWN] outside. They came back in to the class and got all the other boys to leave. I sat in the middle of the class and wrapped my arms and legs around the table leg and told them I wasn't going anywhere with Matt George because he was a beast. They started poking me in the eyes with their thumbs so I would let go of the table and eventually I had to let go. They grabbed me in the groin area then twisted my testicles when they were trying to put me into a restraining position.
69. They then dragged me from one side of the classroom with my face pushed down almost buried into the carpet with a knee on my back or on my head. I was screaming with the pain. My sides were kicked and kneed at some point. I thought I was going to die. It ended up my face was red raw and scabbed. Matt George started it but [IWN] helped him. This is the only time that I remember this happening to me.
70. They dragged other boys across the carpet too. Me and the other boys were sent out of the class so we wouldn't see. Sometimes there were up to four teachers doing it. One teacher would be standing at the classroom door keeping us away so we couldn't see what they were doing, but I could hear the screams and I knew what was happening. When my face was scabbed they didn't let me have home leave. They didn't want my family to see the injuries to my face.
71. There was one time at [REDACTED], not long before I left, when I was in one of the girls' unit for a party and I was dressed as a girl. When the food came out for the buffet I grabbed a plate and rushed up to the table. Matt George grabbed the plate from me and told me that I would be at the end of the queue. I left in a rage and went back down to my unit and smashed up my bedroom. I threw a chest of drawers through a double glazed window. I ran out and was chased by staff across the field.
72. When I was running I was hit on the back by a massive set of keys that the staff had thrown at me. They did this often when you ran away from them. I fell to the ground.

One of them was definitely Matt George but I can't be sure who the others were. They pounced on me and restrained me.

73. I was taken back to the unit and the police were called and they took me to the police station. After being there about six hours I begged the police not to take me back but they didn't listen and they took me back to Kerelaw. When I was taken back it was the same guys that had battered me that were there. They were laughing at me.
74. You could be rewarded in Kerelaw if you battered someone. Staff would sometimes give you a nod that one of the boys was getting too big for his boots and needed taken down a peg or two. They wouldn't say directly but it was obvious that they wanted you to do it. They played games with us to do things for them. If we beat the boy up that they wanted us to we would be rewarded with a Chinese meal outside or bought a pint of beer. I can't remember who rewarded me like this. **FSY** was an absolute bully and he set boys up to fight with each other. He was horrible to some of the boys. Some staff encouraged us to hate other boys in there. I used to stick up for a lot of boys because I felt sorry for them. They were defenceless and I would step in and fight for them.
75. Some boys had a grievance with each other and it was fair enough for them to sort out their differences if they wanted to fight. Other boys were made to fight just for the sake of it, even if the boys didn't want to. **FSB** the PE teacher did this. He would make boys wear boxing gloves and fight. I was one of the bigger boys in there but I was frightened. You never knew who you were going to be made to fight with but you didn't have a choice. If at any time, you showed any sense of fear or weakness you would be mocked. This wasn't just from other boys. It was from the staff too. I was never relaxed in there and always carried a sharp pencil in my pocket just in case I needed it if someone attacked me or if I was bullied.
76. **FSY** encouraged me to hate a boy called **IXQ** who was moved in to the secure unit for bullying. He told me so many bad things about **IXQ** that I really hated him. **FSY** made it clear that he wanted me to batter him. Because of this, one day I saw **IXQ** outside in the grounds and I chased him. He ran into

the secure unit so I went in after him. I hit my hip off the railing and fell over him. I started hitting him and was dragged away by staff. I wasn't restrained and [FSY] [redacted] told me that I was a good boy and that I had done well and would be rewarded for what I had done.

77. There was a girl in the school who was disabled. I can't remember her name. She had been running about flashing her boobs and everyone was laughing at her. The staff kept restraining her and put her into the secure unit. I think this happened three times. She was very badly treated and shouldn't have been in the unit. She should have been in a special needs school. I did a protest by standing on the school roof for a whole day. The police were called. At some point I was sitting on the edge of the roof and the police grabbed my leg and pulled me off. I was taken to the police station where I think I was charged and returned to Kerelaw.
78. Kerelaw was very regimented and disciplined. The staff weren't as bad as the teachers. At school in the classes if you didn't do what they told you to do or if you were disrupting the class the teachers would put you to the floor and restrain you. It only happened to me once. We were never given the belt at Kerelaw. Any time I was restrained it was usually by Matt George. Quite often they would put a towel over you before they hit you. I think this was so you didn't bruise as much. They would dig their fingers into your ribs under your armpits to get you down then they would twist your arms up your back. Matt George did another thing where he grabbed your fingers and bent them right back and when he was doing this he would laugh.

Reporting of abuse at Kerelaw

79. I would have told the nurse at Kerelaw how I had got the scabs on my face after my face was pulled along the carpet. This was probably just part of her normal day to get told something like that. I think she used to just look at my arms and legs and ask me to look at something which she held up. I assume this was a check for concussion.

80. I told my mum about the physical violence at Kerelaw but she just thought I was at it. FSB [REDACTED] one time took me home and came in and had a cup of tea with my mum. I couldn't believe it because I knew how violent he was at Kerelaw and here he was all 'nicey nicey' sipping tea and chatting with my mum.
81. I never told anyone at the time about Matt George and what he did to me in the art classroom. I didn't think anyone would believe me. [REDACTED] was my key worker and I sat with him or went for a walk with him on a weekly basis. It was just him and me. I am sure he asked me how things were going but there was no way I would have shared anything with him. I didn't trust anyone and as far as I am concerned they all worked together. Anything I told him would have been fed back to the other staff.
82. What Matt George did to me was never discussed with any of the other boys. It wasn't the sort of thing that was talked about. We were all young men and it wasn't manly to talk about such stuff. The only thing that came up in general chat was boys telling each other to keep away from certain staff but didn't say why.
83. All the staff at Kerelaw knew what was going on with the violence. There is no doubt that a lot of the staff turned a blind eye and ignored it because they were frightened they would lose their jobs if they spoke out. I regularly heard them saying they were well paid and it was easy money for them.

Leaving Kerelaw

84. I would have been at Kerelaw about two and a half years. After the time Matt George and JWN [REDACTED] dragged my face across the carpet, that day changed my perspective of Kerelaw and I realised that I had to get out of there. I realised they could do what they wanted to me and I couldn't stop it. Even when I did manage to escape the police just took me back.
85. Towards the end of my time at Kerelaw my key worker [REDACTED] and KBS [REDACTED] told me I had a choice. I could either go to prison or they would put me in a house and get left to get on with my life. I chose the house. I was sixteen by this time.

Life after being in care

86. Kerelaw didn't get a house for me when I left. I went to my mum's. One of my friends, [REDACTED] who had left Kerelaw before me had a flat so after a while I went to stay with him. It ended up he was evicted from there. He ended up being convicted and sent to prison for a long time. When I was living with him he had a social worker but no social worker ever came to see me. I think I was supposed to be under a supervision order until I was nineteen or twenty one but I don't remember them ever coming to see me. I am sure if I wanted anything I had to go to their office in Pollok. I had to go there every now and then just to let them know what I was doing. No one ever sat down with me and helped show me how to deal with money or show me how to live on my own.
87. When I left Kerelaw I just wanted to better myself and get on with life. I got a job in a laundry house and worked there for a while. I lost that job because I wasn't turning up. I did a construction foundation course for a year and I got certificates for that. I then started work which after two years became an apprenticeship with a big firm. During this period the social work managed to get me a house where I lived for two years. In the second year of my apprenticeship I dropped out. I was taking too many drugs and wasn't making it to college or work. I lost this opportunity which would have ended up with a good job.
88. When I was doing my apprenticeship I was having night terrors. One night I threw my drill through one of the windows and I was up on the fifth floor. The flats were full of older respectable people and I just woke up as the drill was leaving my hand going through the window. The police came and put in my flat door then the social work said that I couldn't live there any more so they got me another house where I stayed for two years.
89. After I left my apprenticeship my life was just a rollercoaster. My behaviour was erratic. I was drinking, taking drugs and was gambling. Gambling really brought out the worst in me. I went off the rails sometimes then I would straighten myself out then I would fall off the bandwagon again. I got involved in crime with a local gang and was breaking

into places. I ended up in court and was sentenced to two and a half years in prison. I only served one year and was released three years ago.

90. I had two children with my partner but we have split up and she has the children. We split up as soon as the children came along. Our relationship became volatile and the best thing I could do was leave the house. The social work department got involved because she made allegations about me, calling me an abuser, narcissistic and that I wasn't fit to look after my children. I was treated like a paedophile. I was put in a room with my children with cameras to show that I was capable of looking after them.
91. I have a new partner and she has a child. I have been with my new partner for six years and she has stood by me.

Impact

92. When I was at Kerelaw I was regularly taking drugs. I took cannabis, ecstasy or Valium, just whatever I could get my hands on. I can't say it was to block things out it was just because that's what everyone did. This might have been the case when I was older that I took drugs to block things out.
93. I attempted suicide when I was at Kerelaw. Because I had let the abuse go on so long I was really confused. I loved doing art but hated what Matt George was doing to me. On a couple of occasions I took overdoses of tablets to end it. I did it when I had run away and was in the local area. [REDACTED]. I must have ended up in hospital but don't really remember.
94. I think I suffered mental health issues when I was at Kerelaw but it was never identified when I was there. If it had been caught early then things may have turned out much differently for me. I could have been given medication or got some therapy to help me. I started having panic attacks about five years ago. Shouting or if there is a crowd of people set me off. I get agitated and feel I need to get out of there.

95. Over the years I have tried quite a few times to end my life. I have taken overdoses of tablets but I failed on each occasion. Looking back it was probably just cries for help.
96. I didn't get an education in Kerelaw. I was robbed of it, although I believe it was partly my fault because I didn't behave and didn't go to school. The teachers just instilled fear into us all. There wasn't an atmosphere where you could learn because you were frightened all the time. Because of lockdown I have recently been trying to home educate my children. I have found it really difficult because I was never taught. I don't even know how to work an ipad.
97. Because I have been in care and not living with my own family I have always felt like an outcast. I have always felt like the scum of the earth and that I didn't fit in anywhere. Whenever I met anyone I always compared myself against them. This caused me lots of pain because I shouldn't have been doing that. I can't hold down a job. I do things to things to the best of my ability and just as I am about to complete things or qualify, I will drop out or do something to completely ruin it for me. It's like I press the self-destruct button because inside I feel that I don't deserve it.
98. If ever I fall asleep and I am lying in the position that I was in when my face was dragged across the floor by Matt George I sometimes wake up in a panic and check to feel if my face is stinging or if it is scabbed. That incident still haunts me to this day.
99. Looking back at what Matt George did to me and what he made me do to him under the table completely disgusts me. I still draw in my spare time and I don't want my memories of what he did to me in the art class to spoil this.
100. When I was caught after I left care for breaking in to places, I straight away admitted my involvement to the police. One of the policemen said to me my behaviour was such that it looked like I always wanted to get caught. In a way I probably did because I wanted wiped out. I didn't want to be here.
101. The only positive thing from being brought up in residential care is that it made me grow up faster. I saw things in there that children brought up by a normal family would

never see. I saw bad things in there and saw how bad people can be and that made me grow up fast. It was only after I left there that I realised half the girls in Kerelaw were prostitutes. I don't trust people in authority, because it was people in responsibility who abused me and no one else in authority listened to me.

Treatment/support

102. I got cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) for eight weeks because of my panic attacks. At the end the doctor prescribed me Bi-Polar medication even though I am not Bi-Polar. I was also told that I might have a border personality disorder but apparently half the nation might have one. I then did mindfulness classes which is all about learning to talk about your issues rather than them building up inside you. It helps release it out your system. At the end I was refused more therapy because they were so busy. The doctor told me they had no resources.
103. I have been to many groups for my drugs, alcohol and gambling addictions, Narcotics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous. Someone described me as a walking textbook addict.
104. I am now in my third year of therapy from Anchor organised through Future Pathways which has given me tools and life skills which were hidden away and I wasn't aware of and never been able to use. I had masked everything and blocked it out of my life with drugs and continual offending. I can't thank Future Pathways enough for what they have done for me. I now understand how to deal with panic attacks when I feel them coming on, and how to deal with certain situations. Previously if I wasn't able to talk to someone I would lash out with violence because that was the only way I knew how to process it and to get out of that situation. I didn't have the life skills then.

Reporting of Abuse

105. I have never reported anything that happened to me to the police. I was telephoned by Irvine CID when I was about twenty and was asked if I wanted to make a statement about my time at Kerelaw. I told them that everything was fine and declined to make a statement

Records

106. I presume any time there were incidents at Kerelaw or when I was punished for something that it will all be recorded somewhere. I have applied for my records through Birthlink and am still waiting for them.

Lessons to be Learned

107. Matt George was an adult with power in charge of young vulnerable children and he was allowed to abuse his position. He should have been helping children not helping himself. He should be back behind bars.
108. There should be more independent inspections done at places like Kerelaw. People like Matt George shouldn't be allowed to stay in power and abuse this power. If anyone outside had seen how staff were restraining young vulnerable boys then that place would have been closed many years earlier than it was. Anyone reading this statement should see that it wasn't right how it was run. Anyone working there must have an interest in the job and the children they are dealing with. They must be prepared to give the child care and support or they are in the wrong job.
109. It has been difficult for me to speak to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry but I had to do it to help other children in care and other people wanting to go into the care profession.

Other information

- 110. About five years ago I happened to 'Google' Kerelaw, although I don't know why. I found some stuff on line about it and that other people had spoken out about what went on in the school. It brought back memories for me and I decided that I wanted to help these people that had come forward. I think that those responsible should be locked up away from the public. It is only now that I feel I have the courage to talk about what happened to me with Matt George.

- 111. What Matt George did to me was just touchy feely and I was lucky that I escaped a lot worse. Having read about him a few years ago I know that he did a lot worse things to other boys. Although it still has an impact on my life I do consider myself to be lucky.

- 112. 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..... 27 April 2021