

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

ILN

Support person present: Yes.

1. My name is ILN. On my birth certificate and throughout my time in care, my first name was spelt as ILN but on many of my documents, like my brain injury identity card, which is approved by Police Scotland and Headway, it is ILN. It's basically because I'm a very Scottish person and I like the spelling of ILN. My date of birth is 1985. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Glasgow in the Rottenrow Maternity Hospital. My mum was called and my dad was. My mum was a nurse and my dad was in the Royal Navy so we had an upper working class upbringing. I would go to child minders during the day. I have one half sibling, same mum different dad. His name is. He is five years younger than me.
3. We originally lived in Maryhill. The first house I can remember living in was across from which is now. It was next to. I lived there with my mum and dad.
4. When I was two year's old my mum and dad divorced and my mother moved to. It was at the back of. My mother was a Christian, a Roman Catholic, so she had very traditional views. There was a bit of an issue because my mum didn't believe in divorce. My dad was a Presbyterian, really

in name only, he wasn't a Christian although he was respectful of the church. He wanted a divorce because he didn't feel it was right that they were arguing in front of me when I was younger. They were both good parents. My dad moved in with my gran and grandad and my Aunt [REDACTED] who is still alive today. That's when my mum moved to [REDACTED].

5. I was more of a mum's boy than a dad's boy so I chose to stay with my mum and lost contact with my dad's family for a long period of time. My dad's family were hard working and he always contributed but it wasn't until later on in life that I got back in touch with my dad's family.
6. A while after the divorce my mum met a man called [REDACTED]. I think they got engaged and were going to get married. [REDACTED] was in the army and is my wee brother's dad.
7. We moved from Glasgow to Coatbridge when I was eight years old. I went to Kirkshaw Primary School for a period of time and then to Coatbridge High and then St Patrick's High School Annex in Coatbridge.
8. I was diagnosed with ADHD when I was young. My mother used to take me to the Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy to see a Doctor Steer. He used to give me Ritalin to help with my ADHD. I continued to take that until I got to a certain age when for some reason they said it wasn't suitable to adolescents, so I came off it. I haven't been on medication for a long time.
9. My dad died in [REDACTED] 1998, I would have been twelve years old. My mum died in [REDACTED] 1999, two months before my fourteenth birthday.
10. When my mum became ill I struggled. I was a bit unsettled and struggled at school. I was disruptive in class because I had ADHD and the teachers didn't know how to deal with me.
11. I do remember my mother going along to a parent's night at Coatbridge High. She went into every single class. The teachers said I was so disruptive and wouldn't settle

down. The final class she went into was history. The teacher said it was a joy, a privilege to teach me, that I was the best pupil in the school. My mum nearly fainted. He was the strictest teacher in the school, his name was Mr Hope. I loved history. I still love history today.

12. I left Coatbridge High. The teachers didn't think it was right to put me into the mainstream St Patrick's High School so they put me into the annex school where I could have one-to-one with the teachers. I was there for a few years until I was put into care. I was then put into View Park IT Centre. That was also a school that helped people with learning disabilities.
13. I was looking after my brother at the time. We had moved from Kirkshaws in Coatbridge to Townhead. My brother was moving school at this point and was going to St Bartholomew's across the road. I had to see him out to school.

Foster care, [REDACTED], Craigneuk, Wishaw

14. I was twelve when me and my brother were put into foster care for a wee while. That was in a place called Craigneuk next to Wishaw. They were reasonably okay and were called respite carers. That was because my mum had cancer the first time round. We were in respite care to give my mum time to relax and get herself together. I don't remember having a social worker when in respite care. I think it was only when I went to Cecil Street Children's Home that social work really became involved.
15. I think we were in the respite care for a few months, maybe up to a year. The girl's surname was [REDACTED] and she and her husband were reasonably nice and they had two young boys. We used to play football all the time and I remember watching the wrestling on the TV. My experience there was quite positive.
16. I was still attending St Patrick's Annex School and was picked up every morning by a taxi.

Foster Care, ██████████, Coatbridge

17. I was thirteen when me and my brother went to stay with ██████████ in Coatbridge. ██████████ had a husband but I can't remember his name, it might have been ██████████, I'm not sure. They must have been in their late fifties, early sixties. They had two natural sons and two natural daughters but they were older and most had left the family home. They had adopted another wee girl called ██████████ and she stayed in the house with them.
18. I didn't get on with ██████████ or ██████████, if that was his name. I didn't like it there and I was unstable. I didn't run away but I really just wanted to be with my mum. It was okay and they were alright people but I just didn't get on with them, I didn't want to be with anyone other than my parents.

Morning and bedtime

19. ██████████ and I had bunkbeds. I'd sleep in the top bunk and ██████████ on the bottom. I think ██████████ must have slept in with the older daughter.

Washing/bathing

20. We were able to shower and had privacy to do that. There was no problem.

Mealtimes/food

21. The food was alright. It was just normal food, it was fine.

Trips

22. They didn't really take us out to do things it was really just based within their home. They had a garden out the back and sometimes they put a swimming pool out there.

Religious instruction

23. I don't know if [REDACTED] was a Christian or not. I certainly wasn't at that point. I always believed in God but I wasn't a Christian. She was quite strict though and had very strong moral views.

Christmas/birthdays

24. I may have had a birthday when I was there. I probably was given a gift or something, I don't remember.

Schooling

25. I was still attending St Patrick's Annex.

Visitors

26. Maybe there was social work on the scene and they identified [REDACTED] as an appropriate foster carer for us to stay with. I was aware of social work involvement at that time. The social worker's name was Steve Collins.

Family Contact

27. I didn't see my mum at all during the time I was with [REDACTED] because she was in hospital with cancer.

Discipline

28. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] would just raise their voice if there was something I did which they thought was wrong. I struggled to take authority from anybody other than my parents. My mum would have given me a look and then raised her voice and I would have realised I had gone too far. Both my mum and dad were quite strict.

Support

29. I don't remember having anyone to speak to at the time. My wee brother was too young and I was only a stone's throw older. I wasn't even fourteen when my mum died.
30. ██████ was a well behaved wee boy. I was harder to deal with because I had ADHD. We were very different, ██████ was more emotional than me. My mother would always say I was the generous one and willing to share, ██████ wasn't, we were very different.
31. When my mum passed on ██████ wanted to adopt us. She said to the social work that she was looking to adopt me and ██████ but that she realised that I wasn't up for it. She told them that she didn't think it was going to be appropriate for her to take me because I wasn't willing to agree to it and just wanted to be with my parents. She asked the social work to find somewhere appropriate for me to stay. That's when Cecil Street came along.
32. I was a wee bit upset. Even although I wasn't that close to my brother, I was still protective of him so I was upset. We did still get to see each other once a week.
33. We never attended children's panels at this time. There was social work involvement when they were talking about the adoption again that was Steve Collins.
34. My mum was a determined lady and always wanted to have us as much as she could. She used to pray every day and went to prayer meetings and was prayed for. Then the cancer went into remission and she got the all clear. Sadly it came back and it was absolutely terrible, she lost one of her breasts and all of her hair and then she died. It was awful. The last trip I remember going on with my mum was her taking us on holiday to see a Priest she was pally with in Ireland. That was the last quality time I had with my mum.

Cecil Street Children's Home, Coatbridge

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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86. There was a thing I learned about later when I was in Geilsland School, it was called TCI, Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. It was mainly only for people who were being violent but nine times out of ten when they were trying to stop me from getting out it was because I was trying to get away to see my mum.

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Closeburn Residential School, Dumfries

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Closeburn Residential School, Dumfries

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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127. I remember going to a children's panel. It was the last panel I went to because I was just about to turn sixteen. They made a decision that it wasn't right for me to be there. I remember being put in a car and having to be restrained all the way down to Ayrshire. I'm not sure where the children's panel took place. It wasn't in Closeburn but probably in Dumfries.

128. After the panel made their decision I went back to Closeburn and then at a certain time I was taken to Geilsland.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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129. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

There were three units in Geilsland. There was the Cunningham Unit, the Garnock Unit and the Lomond Unit. It was an all-boys' school, Crossreach Christian run school and Cunningham and Garnock were just normal mainstream units for residential boys. Cunningham also had an independent unit within it. It was very secure probably more secure than Closeburn. I was put in the Lomond Unit which was a high security unit. There were people put in that unit who had committed sexual offences. I had never committed a sexual offence in my life. I believe I was put in

danger by being put in that unit. I never understood why they did that. It may have been because it was high security and I was so volatile and flying off the rails running away to see my partner.

Geilsland School, Beith, Ayrshire

130. Geilsland School was in Gateside Road in Beith, which is in Ayrshire. Beith was a wee village. The local train station was Glengarnock and Beith was quite close to Dalry.
131. You would drive up from Beith village until you came to an old townhouse. One of the staff would live within the townhouse so there was always staff on duty there twenty four hours a day. There was a big P.E. complex with a football pitch at the back. There was a painting department and right across from that was the independent unit and Cunningham Unit proper. Across from that was the joinery department and the engineering department, different departments dotted around the place.
132. The closest unit to Lomond Unit was Garnock Unit which was just a walk across the road. Cunningham Unit was up at the back of the school near to the painting department. The school block was just along a wee path from Garnock Unit. The teachers were Jim Holmes, Margaret Sharp and another guy. There were three classrooms, one was computing, one was maths, one was English and one of the other teachers did history as well.
133. There were three different buildings behind the school block, that was where the departments were. I would go there for the car mechanics.
134. I didn't have a choice in going to Geilsland and I was put in the Lomond Unit. I was sixteen when I moved.
135. I did eventually get into the Cunningham Independent Unit at Geilsland, which was ultimate freedom. You went out the school whenever you wanted, all you had to do

was tell staff where you were going. It was a bit like the flats the older kids had at Cecil Street.

136. For just under two years I was in the Lomond Unit. It was a high security unit. If you were going up the stairs to your room there had to be a member of staff that went with you and only two boys were allowed up at any one time. There wouldn't have been any more than ten boys in there. Lomond Unit was smaller than Garnock and Cunningham Units because it was a secure unit within a residential school. Garnock and Cunningham had up to maybe twenty boys each, I'm not sure.
137. I never realised until I was in there that there were boys in there for committing sexual offences. I felt terrible when they told me that because I should never have been in that place. I think the staff might have clocked on to that and that's why they moved me to Cunningham.
138. I remember Anthony Quinn was my keyworker in Geilsland. He had to take me back up to Dumfries and Galloway because I had to attend court for the summary offences I had committed in Dumfries and Galloway.
139. The units used to mix when we had a football night for the boys. The staff from each unit would go up and the boys would play football. The boys from different units would always end up fighting. If someone put in a dirty tackle they would end up fighting. That was one time all the boys in the school got together.
140. There would be an annual match where the boys would play the staff. Some of the staff would play in the boys team if they were short of players.

Routine at Geilsland School, Beith, Ayrshire

First day

141. I was very timid when I arrived at Geilsland. There were a lot of big boys in there, sixteen to eighteen years old. I was at the younger end of the age categories. I was petrified, it was a real residential school and was a lot stricter than Closeburn and even more secure.
142. I think Lomond Unit was a secure unit within a residential school. Garnock and Cunningham were very like Closeburn. In Lomond Unit you couldn't go out at all without a member of staff. Staff would sit in the staff room and they had cameras and they could see right through into the lounge. I had never had my freedom curtailed as much as in there.
143. I was very emotional when I arrived. One of the staff members, Agnes, came over and tried to support me. I was introduced to my keyworker Anthony who was reasonably supportive.
144. There were men called KMJ and . They were SNR Geilsland. It was to do with the Church of Scotland from Crossreach.
145. I was shown my room which was upstairs.

Mornings and bedtime

146. I had my own shower and toilet in the room. I had a TV, a wee desk and my bed. No one could get into my room apart from the staff.

Mealtimes/Food

147. After my shower I would go down for breakfast. The food was basic, cereals, toast, bananas and apples. We would come back to the unit from the school block for our

lunch. We had to eat food in the dining room, I think we could take a can of juice into the living room.

Washing/bathing

148. In the morning I had a shower. I had plenty of privacy. I could lock the shower room door and lock my room door as well.

Clothing/uniform

149. There was no school uniform at Geilsland. I believe anciently there was a uniform but not when I was there.

Leisure time

150. There was a P.E. hall, a recreational centre and once a year the staff used to play the boys at football out the back on the football pitch. Geilsland also played Kerelaw and St John's Residential School at football sometimes. Some of the girls from Kerelaw used to come along. There used to be a fight between Geilsland and Kerelaw because the Geilsland boys used to try and chat up the girls from Kerelaw.
151. I used to get day passes and would go into Glasgow or go to watch a football match.

Trips and holidays

152. We went to the camps to Fort William and Oban. They were cabins that the staff would rent out in an outdoor centre. You made your own food, self-catering. We would swim in the lochs and rivers. They would take you out for the day, like to Saltcoats, Stevenson or Ardrossan. They would take you to the seaside.

Schooling

153. After breakfast the staff would take you over to the classroom block. You could make money by completing modules in the classroom and the departments but more so the classroom. It was an incentive to get the boys working. There were SVQs, Scottish Vocational Qualifications, which were recommended qualifications. Some of the classes you could get up to NC, national certificate level and maybe one or two, up to HNC, higher national certificate. It was preparing young boys for life so their aim was to get you qualifications for coming out. I think I got two NCs and maybe one HNC.
154. My favourite subject in school was history. I'm very Scottish and love Scottish history, the Scottish reformation, battle of Bannockburn, Braveheart, Mary Queen of Scots, John Knox. I used to love all the church history, cultural history of Scotland. I loved studying that, it was fascinating, the Jacobite uprising, religious history. I studied all that at Geilsland.
155. You could save up the money and it would be kept in an account for you at Geilsland. You got the money when you left Geilsland.

Healthcare / medication

156. I don't remember seeing a doctor or a dentist at Geilsland. If you needed to they would probably have taken you into Beith. I don't know if they ever got people out to see you, I can't really remember.

Religious instruction

157. Geilsland was to do with the Church of Scotland and Crossreach. Crossreach was the governing body for care for the Church of Scotland. Geilsland was labelled as a Christian school so the staff had to have some respect to the Christian faith to work there but from my understanding none of them were Christians other than Fiona Cunningham and Agnes who was a Roman Catholic. It was very strict, military style. Even the boys from Garnock and Cunningham were marched up to the Church every

Sunday. It was a Church of Scotland Chapel imported from Millport. You had to go there every Sunday and a minister came in to take the service. It was very strict. There was a ceremony every year where the boys could be rewarded.

158. I always wish I took staff member Fiona Cunningham up on her offer. She always tried to get the boys out of school to take them to her church. I think she went to an Evangelical church in Dalry. She was a Christian, she came in with her bible all the time and always asked the boy's how they were doing. I never went to the church with her. She was a nice lady.
159. They did have religious education in the school as well but at that point I wasn't really interested. I was interested in history although there was an overflow because I looked into Scottish Christianity through history.

Work

160. You could earn money in Geilsland. In the morning you could go to the classroom block and like Closeburn learn maths, English and geography. In the evening, because the boys were older and to help them get a trade, they had what was called departments. I went to car mechanics and learned how to change car tyres and stuff like that. There was also painting and decorating. I remember there was a guy there called Tony O'Brien, his claim to fame was that he played with Celtic. He was training people to be painters and decorators so I remember him. There was plumbing and electrician training as well.
161. One of the guys there, they called him Jinky and he used to work in Barlinnie Prison. He taught in the joinery department.

Personal possessions

162. I did take my own stuff to Geilsland and had my posters up on my room walls. Because it was a Christian School and run through Crossreach they were very strict about what

you could put up on the walls and what you watched on TV. I think they even had certain channels blocked so you couldn't watch certain things.

Family Contact

163. I never saw my brother once whilst I was at Geilsland. I don't think I saw him in Closeburn either. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
Secondary Ins My Aunt [REDACTED] and Uncle [REDACTED] came up to visit me in Geilsland from my mum's family. I think I went down to Leeds when I was in Geilsland too.

Running away

164. You would need a miracle to get out of the Lomond Unit so I never ran away from Geilsland. Actually, I did manage to get out once and made it all the way down to Glengarnock Train Station. The staff caught me there and returned me to the unit.

Discipline

165. We had to clean our rooms in the Lomond Unit and I think there was a rota for cleaning the dining table. If you were eating you had to tidy up your mess. It was very strict. If you swore or misbehaved they would take your TV out your room, or dock you pocket money. They would stop you going on an outing as well. If you didn't make your bed in the morning you could have pocket money taken off you. I don't know what it was like in Garnock or Cunningham Units but in Lomond it was extremely strict. The discipline obviously did me very well, it was good for me. That's why my house is so clean now, because of Geilsland. It was a shock, I'd never had that kind of discipline in my life.
166. It was a bit like team challenge for people who had been in for drug and alcohol addiction but for people who couldn't handle mainstream school.
167. The staff looked after you in the unit, teachers in the classroom block and other teachers in the departments. The staff were always in the unit in case something

kicked off in the school and they would come up but they gave you over to the classroom staff in the morning. I remember some of the teachers, Jim Holmes, Margaret Sharp and Alistair, who was a Kilmarnock supporter. Then there were people in the departments in the afternoon.

168. Sometimes at the weekend you would get a day pass or an overnight pass to go out. It depended on how you behaved during the week. I sometimes got a day pass when I was in the Lomond Unit. I would go to the football or through to Glasgow.

Leaving the Lomond Unit for Cunningham Independent Unit

169. The staff must have made a decision to move me from the Lomond Unit, where I should never have been in the first place. I would have been turning seventeen at that time. I was moved to Cunningham Independent Unit. There was in Cunningham Unit but within that was the Independent Unit. You basically had a flat with another guy. There were two bedrooms, ██████████ stayed in one and I was in the other one. There was a shower room and down the stairs there was a cooking area. ██████████ stayed in the independent unit and we got pally. He actually met members of my mum's family when they came up to visit me in Geilsland and I met his mum and dad and his wee brother. We got on quite well and used to go to the football together. He was from Cranhill in Glasgow.
170. It was in the independent unit that he told me about him and ██████████ being paid to assault me by the staff member ILO ██████████. He gave me a hug and said that he hadn't wanted to hit me. I told him it was alright and was water under the bridge.
171. Nothing bad ever happened to me in the Cunningham Unit. It was like the flats downstairs in Cecil Street. The staff didn't come into your flat unless you invited them in. I ended up living in there myself because ██████████ got moved out of the school before me. It was basically freedom living in Geilsland School. I could go out whenever I wanted, I just had to let them know for the fire register and they would give me a day pass. If I had somewhere to stay and the school could verify it was

appropriate, they would give me an overnight pass. I was seen as a more mature pupil who was ready to leave the school at that point.

172. I had to make my own food and staff would take me out to do my own shopping. After a few times I would get a day pass and go shopping myself. I had to learn budgeting skills as well. The staff didn't really help me with that other than tell me the places to go that were reasonably cheap. Staff did help you to a degree but their main aim was to help the boys in the residential school. We were just seen as people living there before leaving the school.
173. What the school did for me before I left was they put me on a program, I think it was YTS, Youth Training Scheme or something. I would get the train to Saltcoats, the staff would help me and drop me off at Glengarnock Train Station. I would go to a place where you looked for jobs, like a job centre. I would do modules online and Geilsland contacted them to see if I could do that. Me and [REDACTED] both did that. We were going into the community and doing a bit of work within the IT Centres. That was to give us the taste of working. They would get you work placements in supermarkets and stuff like that although I never did any of that, I don't think I was there long enough.
174. I stayed in Cunningham Independent Unit for about six months. The last two months of that I was on my own in there after [REDACTED] left. We had struck a friendship and looked out for each other. It was difficult when he left because I was isolated in there all by myself. Although I could go into the unit and speak to the boys and have dinner with them I had kind of moved on from that. I was no longer seen as a member of Geilsland Residential School, I was someone ready to move out. I was lonely, I got day passes and tried to get out as much as I could. I met a girl up there and we started going out.

Abuse at Geilsland School, Beith, Ayrshire

175. I remember the staff would come into your room in the morning and say it was time to get up. If you didn't want to get up and you were tired they would tip your bed and you

would fall out onto the floor. At times they would tip your bed and pull the covers off you. There's rules and then there is going beyond rules.

176. They would take your covers off you so you couldn't sleep. It was mandatory that you went to school. If you didn't you would get your TV taken out your room. If you complained about it or kicked off you would be restrained. It was extremely strict, borderline controlling.
177. Restraining only happened to me a couple of times in Geilsland because it was so strict and I feared that stuff. The discipline worked on me. I believe there is discipline which is right and just but there is a line and you cross that when you are tipping peoples beds and pulling their covers off them.
178. I remember once when I was up in the classroom block. I don't know how it came about I think I was playing up in the classroom, I didn't want to do something. The staff were called up to support the teachers although the teachers were trained to restrain the boys if they were kicking off. I was only restrained two or three times.
179. There was a guy called ILO I really didn't like this guy. He was a tall guy with a bald head. I really didn't like him. He came up once and he grabbed me by the arm, really violently and said it was time for me to go back to the unit, that it wasn't working in the school. He said my TV was coming out of my room and he started grabbing me. I was a wee bit older by this point so I shoved him and asked him who he was talking to. He went to grab my arm again and I went to punch him. He just flipped my legs and I remember my head cracking off the concrete floor and he started pinning me down.
180. Anthony my keyworker came along and he tried to calm things down, gently picked me up and said, "right come on ILN, let's take you back down to the unit son." He pulled ILO a mucky look as if to say you have overstepped the mark. I don't know if I had a cut on my head or not and I don't know if Anthony ever said anything to ILO about it. Anthony took me back down to the unit.

181. I remember two boy residents, one was called [REDACTED] and the other [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] came into the living room once when I was in the Lomond Unit. I was sat in the living room and stood up when one of them came over and punched me on the side of the face. I fell back onto the sofa and when I stood up again the other one came in and punched me on the side of the face and I fell back again. They both stood looking down at the floor shaking their heads before they walked out. It was like they had come in and done something that they didn't want to do. I found out later that that guy [ILO] had paid them both five pounds each to assault me because he would have got into trouble for doing it. [REDACTED] told me about it later on when I was in the independent unit with him. This was off the rails, how could that be allowed? I don't remember if I had any injuries or not, they may have burst my nose or something.
182. [REDACTED] used to try and control me for cigarettes and stuff. He would come over and not necessarily be violent but he would be aggressive with me. He was bigger than me and I caved in quite a bit. I remember once getting into an altercation with him and I turned round and punched him. He got a shock and we got into a fight and he got the better of me.
183. There was a staff member called [GRL] who assaulted one of the boys. It wasn't me but it's on record. He was sacked from Geilsland. I was in the school when it happened but I never saw it. Apparently one of the boys was kicking off and he picked him up and threw him on the floor.
184. 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, [ILP] 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.

185. 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.
186. There was a staff member called ILQ [REDACTED]. She was quite abusive to some of the kids. She was verbally abusing them, really putting them down, saying stuff about them and telling them they were useless and no good. She once told me I was useless and I said, "you're just a fat mess, away you go." She told one of the staff and I got into trouble for saying that. Because I hadn't used abusive language I got warned.
187. I remember once during the individual work, she was insulting me. I went off the rails and kicked the table over and ended up getting restrained. Three fully grown men came in and restrained me, pinned me down on a sofa, pinned my arms and legs down. My legs were on the floor and my head and neck were on the sofa. ILP [REDACTED] had his knee on the back of my neck at one point. HVF [REDACTED] was reluctant to get involved but he had my arms. I was quite strong and wriggly. I used to go to boxing so it was hard to keep me down, I could handle myself. I was just angry because she was making allegations, saying I was no good and stuff, so I kicked over the table.
188. Afterwards, HVF [REDACTED] turned round and said, "ILN [REDACTED] calm down son, that's out of order." He was saying to ILP [REDACTED] that it was ridiculous, that ILQ [REDACTED] comes in and winds up the guys and expects them to come in and deal with it. They left HVF [REDACTED] with me himself, he said it was alright and he took me into another room and we had a cigarette. I told him that ILQ [REDACTED] was out of order.
189. I believe she was actually sacked from Geilsland. There were heads of each unit and Fiona Berry was head of the Lomond Unit. I think Fiona pulled ILQ [REDACTED] into the staffroom and we never saw her again.
190. Restraint was used by staff but not so much in the Lomond Unit because it was so controlled. Restraint tended to happen more in Garnock and Cunningham.

191. Apparently there were sexual things happening in the Lomond Unit between the boys, between each other, homosexual acts, which is really disturbing. It never happened to me. There were rumours getting out that boys were doing certain things for favours to get cigarettes. Nobody did anything to me though.
192. The atmosphere in the Lomond Unit was very intense, the staff were very controlling.

Reporting of abuse at Geilsland School, Beith, Ayrshire

193. I think I told Anthony my keyworker about [REDACTED]. He was the only one I got on reasonably well with. I do believe he could have done more but I did get on reasonably well with him. I just told him that I didn't feel comfortable around [REDACTED], that he was getting physical with me going to the department in the evening. We went to the same department. He didn't say anything but the staff kept a closer eye on it and it kind of stopped for a while.
194. I think it all stopped when we got into a fight. He realised I wasn't going to back down, he might be able to beat me each time but he was going to get a bloody nose. I was getting a bit bigger by that time so I was fighting back.

Leaving Geilsland School, Beith, Ayrshire

195. I ended up getting moved to a supported accommodation place when I came out of Geilsland. It was called Glengowan House which was in Nithsdale Road on the Southside of Glasgow. The care system helped me get that. I was still involved with the social work for a while when I left Geilsland. It was like a hostel for people who were homeless and I was in there for around a year.
196. It was a mixed place, boys and girls, we all had our own rooms. There was a lounge up the stairs. There was a girl called [REDACTED] in there. I knew her from the football

matches between Geilsland and Kerelaw, she had been at Kerelaw and sometimes she came to watch the football between the schools.

197. At first I was in a room at Glengowan and the staff would cook for us. Once I was moved into an independent flat I had to do my own cooking and shopping.
198. I was then moved to a scatter flat they called a TFF, a temporary furnished flat. That was outwith and further down at [REDACTED]. From there the social work gave me a place in Coatbridge. That was the last I heard from them. I was nineteen years old by then.

Life after being in care

199. Sometimes I don't think I've made the transition from boy to man. I'm thirty eight and I still feel like I'm in a boys body. Because of losing my parents so young and being passed around like a parcel in care I don't think I've been fully prepared for life. I look after myself, I live myself and have my own flat which is reasonably clean.
200. When I moved to Coatbridge I got pally with [REDACTED] wee brother, [REDACTED]. We were just drinking and smoking dope in the flats. We used to get the religious parades passing by, the orange walks and republican parades. Coatbridge was a predominantly Catholic area so there was always trouble at the orange marches. We used to hang Irish flags and Scotland flags outside the flats and they used to throw stuff at them and we got caught up in that. That was me getting involved in the sectarian stuff. That's when I went off the rails again. I lost that flat because we were playing Irish rebel music and hanging out the flats and throwing stuff at the orange walks.
201. My mother was very hard working. She left me £35,000 in a grant for when I was eighteen. I wasted all the money. I was way too young. I was buying season tickets for the football, drinking and still smoking dope. I was staying in hotels in Belfast, in

Derry, Leeds and in Glasgow. It was just absolutely nuts. My Aunt [REDACTED] told me that my mum and dad had left me money. I'm not sure if the social work new about it. My Aunt [REDACTED] asked if I wanted to keep it until I was twenty one but I didn't. I spent a lot of the money on a girl I was seeing in Leeds. I'm quite a generous person and I bought her a lot of clothes

202. I also received a brain injury around this time. I was drunk and shouting and bawling at a rival supporter's bus. I walked out in front of it and it hit me and run me over. My head hit the road and I suffered a fractured skull, had a brain haemorrhage and was in a coma for two weeks. That had a debilitating effect on my life and trying to sustain work. I struggled quite badly with my mental health.

203. I got a high rise flat in Royston. Then I went to Derry in Northern Ireland for about a month and got involved in some sectarian stuff over there before I came back.

Sustain

204. When I was nineteen the social work contacted Sustain to come out and help me with shopping and make sure I was okay. I went through a phase where my mental health was terrible. I was literally eating one pound microwave meals from Farmfoods, I was a skinny wee runt and I had lost the will to live. I was eight stone and the social work were worried about me. Sustain came out and that really helped me.

205. I then managed to make contact with my mum's family. They got me a flat and decorated it and I moved down to Leeds for a year. I met a girl but it didn't work out. I ended up giving up my flat and moving back to Glasgow.

206. I then put down six month's rent on a flat on [REDACTED] in West Belfast and lived there for seven months. I got a job in the [REDACTED] in Belfast but I only lasted one night. I got caught up in sectarian stuff and a Catholic Priest helped me because I ended up homeless.

207. I came back to Glasgow in 2008 and I was still off the rails, fighting over football and stuff. I was homeless until I encountered this place called the Glasgow City Mission, a Christian place that helps people who are homeless. They helped me and I started volunteering with them. I managed to get another flat in Royston. They demolished those flats and I moved to a new build where I live now.
208. I've struggled to sustain work for most of my life. I have a brain injury identity card on me and it's approved by the police and headway. I have an impulsive disorder, balance issues and short term memory loss. I was diagnosed with these things so would need a job that was very repetitive. Maybe a job working in a hotel cleaning rooms or similar. I don't think I am totally incapable of working. I did manage to get a job for a short time selling solar panels but I couldn't sustain the job, I was forgetting things. I am barista trained and I have done waitering work before which is repetitive work.
209. I ended up meeting a girl and she invited me to her church and I started going there because I liked her. That worked out for about three years. I ended up going to Uganda with the church and working with the children over there.
210. When I was moved to Geilsland my brother was put up for adoption. My mother didn't want me and my brother being separated so she put my dad down as [REDACTED]'s dad. So basically a letter came to my dad. Obviously my dad had passed on so his family, my aunt [REDACTED] and my grandad and my gran got this conformation about [REDACTED]. They said they had nothing to do with [REDACTED] and that I was their grandson. That was the way they found out I was in Geilsland School. My gran and my Aunt [REDACTED] wanted to come and see me but Geilsland said that I wasn't ready to see them. Now that I am back in touch with my Aunt [REDACTED] she says that if they had managed to get in touch with me they would have taken me out of Geilsland straight away.
211. I think it was 2009 or 2010 I got a message over Facebook from a woman called [REDACTED] who asked if I remembered her. I didn't but she said she had a friend called [REDACTED] who thought she might know me. That turned out to be my Aunt [REDACTED] and we ended up meeting up for dinner and have been in touch ever since.

212. [REDACTED] lives in Coatbridge now. He has his own house, a car and he works. He has a girlfriend and a wee boy called [REDACTED]. We had a bit of an argument on Facebook and haven't really been in touch since. If he gets in touch with me I'll go and see him.

Impact

213. I struggle with my mental health even today, with anxiety and depression and get flashbacks from my time in care. That's really the only memories I have because I lost my parents when I was so young. I still get flashbacks now. I'm hoping by speaking with the Inquiry I may get some release by sharing it. I don't know but I hope so.

214. Sometimes I have flashbacks to happy times, at Benidorm with my mum when I was a wee boy but they're so far back, most memories are from my time in care and they're not very positive.

215. I struggle with loneliness and anxiety. I get flashbacks and it's still traumatic now. The church helps but I struggle with church because it's such a family setting and I'm on my own.

216. My Christian faith is important to me but church and society in general has a major lack of understanding of mental health issues and experiences I've had in care. There's so much support out there for people with drug addiction and alcoholism, and rightly so but no where near as much support for people with mental health issues and people who have been through care.

217. I struggle to move forward. I'd love to be married and have children, have a normal life, get up and work. I just don't see a way forward, I struggle with that. I have thought of suicide and had an attempt three years ago. I just had so many flashbacks from my past. There was a minister I knew and he was called to come out and help me. The police also came along and helped me. They said their job wasn't just to arrest people but also to help people who were struggling as well. It was a female and male

officer who came along. I was down at the River Clyde. I still struggle with thoughts like that because of my past and not seeing a way forward.

218. I think I've struggled to make the transition from boy to man. Sometimes my anxiety is so bad I struggle to get out of the house. My sleep pattern is awful and I've been known to walk around Glasgow at 2.30 am. I have no rhythm to my days.
219. There was definitely an impact on my education. I struggled with concentration because of my ADHD as a wee boy and I struggled later on in life because of my brain injury.
220. I've been a Christian for the past ten years and I have been single for all that time. I went on a date with a girl in Northern Ireland but that didn't work out. It would be nice to have someone but I don't see anyone around that I would click with at this moment in time. I think the magnitude of getting married and having children could literally transform my life. I don't know, I just try and take each day as it comes.
221. Around two or three years after I left Geilsland, I went back for the anniversary day just to see the people there. I walked into Lomond Unit. The difference was I was walking in and could walk back out again. I spoke to some of the staff I got on with, Agnes and Fiona Cunningham. It wasn't too bad.
222. I never went back to Closeburn or Cecil Street.
223. I've never taken any steps for compensation. I don't know anything about that.

Treatment/support

224. I was referred by my GP to a brain injury clinic in the Gorbals. They did tests and that was when I was given the brain injury identity card. They said I have an impulsive disorder. I struggle in crowded environments, have short term memory loss and balance issues. I suffer really bad with anxiety and depression.

225. I don't get any ongoing support. To be honest [REDACTED] is my biggest support and we meet up and go for a coffee when he is free. [REDACTED] is a [REDACTED] Minister and a support worker at the Bethany Christian Trust.

Records

226. I've never asked for my records from my time in care. I didn't know you could.

Lessons to be Learned

227. I think they really need to check and see who is going to be working with the kids. They really need to have a stricter view on who they are letting in to care for the kids in the care system. A stricter criteria, really examine these people who are working with kids. There are a lot of kids who are vulnerable in there.

Hopes for the Inquiry

228. I hope as a result of the Inquiry, people's experiences in care will be more positive. That the recommendations from the Inquiry will make it better for people going into care.

Other information

229. 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..... ILN [Redacted Signature]

Dated..... 7. 7. 2023