

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

GDI [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is GDI [REDACTED]. My birth name was GDI [REDACTED]. I changed my name to protect myself from my family. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1968. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before going into care**

2. My mother did not work and my father was in the army. Our family home was in army barracks accommodation at [REDACTED] in Edinburgh. It was number [REDACTED]. I went back to visit it with my husband but the numbers jump from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED]. Number [REDACTED] has disappeared.
3. My parents were married and their married name was [REDACTED]. My mother was called [REDACTED] and my "father" was called [REDACTED]. My mother is not on my birth certificate. She did not sign it. My father's name on my birth certificate as [REDACTED] but he is not my real Dad. He did sign my birth certificate but it was either fraudulent or he did not know that my mother had had an affair.
4. I do not know where I was born. I have asked for my birth certificate. Different people have told me that I was born in Ayrshire Central Hospital in Irvine and others had said that I was born in the Simpson Centre in Edinburgh.
5. I had two brothers and two sisters. My brother [REDACTED] died when he was sixteen in 1960. My other brother is called [REDACTED]. He was born in 1965. My sister [REDACTED] was

born in 1967 and [REDACTED] was born in 1962. I do not have contact with any of my siblings.

6. I was the only one from our family to go into care. I do not know why I was put into care. I went into care from the age of fourteen months. I only know that from looking at my social work records. My records noted that I was a malnourished child and had only put on three pounds from my birth weight. I was 5lb 8oz at birth and 8lb 8oz when I was taken into care fourteen months later. It also noted that I had head lice and bruising all over my body. I don't know whether I was premature. I don't know who made the decision that I should be in care. I didn't know that I was in care in Edinburgh until I saw my records. I was a really unwanted child.
7. I was sent to St Katherine's Children's Home at Morton Hall. I don't know who was in charge. I can't remember anything about being there. All I have is a letter to my father [REDACTED] from his superior in the army called Major Crowe. Major Crowe was writing about the food voucher that my mother was still receiving. He said that it needed to be sent to St Katherine's Children's Home and that [REDACTED] had accrued a debt of £12 that needed to be paid.
8. In 1970 I was sent to East Park Children's Home for crippled children. It was in Largs on the West coast of Scotland. I don't remember anything about being there either. I have only learnt about it from accessing my social work records. I do not know why I was sent from a normal children's home to a crippled children's home.
9. I left East Park in 1972. My mum and [REDACTED] had split up by that time. My grandmother had died so I went to live with my grandfather and my uncle [REDACTED]. My mum and my siblings joined us a bit later. My grandfather was called [REDACTED]. He built our house. He built all the houses around Irvine. My grandfather was more of a mother and father to me than anyone had ever been. He was my rock until I was sixteen.
10. Whilst I was living with my grandfather I went to Bank Street Primary School in Irvine. It was 1973. I loved school. I remember getting certificates at school. I never took a

single day off. I even went to school with chickenpox. The best days of my life were at primary school.

11. My mother came to live with us in the house. She would physically and emotionally abuse me. I don't know how she got me back from the care homes. Whenever she got me back the abuse would start again. I wish I had just been left at St Katherine's or aborted at birth. She said that it was my fault that my brother [REDACTED] had died. [REDACTED] had a hole in his heart and had been glue-sniffing. It wasn't my fault. She told me that she was going to cut my throat. She sat me in a twin-tub washing machine and put it on a boil wash. I am still scarred from head to toe. She stuck a poker through my ear and stuck my toes to an electric heater. She would scald me with cups of tea and kick, punch and hit me with a belt. She would also starve me.
12. I went to the headmistress at school and told her about the abuse at home. The worst thing was that she said she had to phone my mother. I asked her to call my grandad instead but she said that she couldn't because my mother was my legal guardian. That was the first time I ran away.
13. I started to run away from my grandad's house a lot after that. I used to be found sleeping in the school doorway by the janitor in the mornings. I would just wait for school to start. Once I went to chap on someone's door to ask for some piece and jam for breakfast. I got into trouble and they brought me back to school. Nobody asked me why I had run away or why I was asking a stranger for piece and jam.
14. I was also being sexually abused at home but I don't know who by. I told the nurse at school about it. I had my periods when I was very young. They said that the only way that I could have started so early was if I had been penetrated. They told my mother. She said that I had mentioned it before. She said that I was picking my nose until it bled and wiping my pants with the blood. That's when they got a social worker to visit and talk to me.
15. I remember speaking to the social worker. Her name was Jean Shepherd. I told her that I was scared that my mother was going to kill me. I told her that if she didn't take

me away that I would end up dead. I told her about my mum hitting my head with the shaft of a brush and hitting me with her belt buckle. I asked to be taken into care.

16. Jean Shepherd told my mum that I was being taken into care for my own safety. It started off as voluntary care. She arranged for me to be sent to Dalrymple Place Children's Home. I went there so that I could continue at the same primary school. I was eight years old.

**Dalrymple Place Children's Home, Irvine**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Newfield Assessment Centre, Johnstone**

71. The three week assessment turned into eighteen months. I had to be resident at Newfield for twenty-four hours a day for three weeks consecutively for them to do the assessment. I kept running away so each time I came back the clock started from zero again.
72. It was an all-girls unit to begin with and then it became a mixed unit. It was partly good.
73. I went to school at Newfield. I learnt how to do woodwork and typing. I took up a lot of sports. I did a lot of running and badminton. My attitude was that I wanted to be better than this. I thought "I'm going to join the army or be a PT instructor". It never happened.

### **Abuse at Newfield Assessment Centre, Johnstone**

#### *Staff/Social work abuse*

74. My social worker was abusive. He was called **GXZ** He was my social worker for eighteen months. I ran away from Newfield and on one occasion **GXZ** picked me up. It was during the time when Caroline Hogg and Susan Maxwell had been murdered. He shouted at me. He said that children like Caroline Hogg and Susan Maxwell were getting killed when it should have been people like me who deserved it.

He punched me right in the face and I fell backwards onto the bonnet of his car. I remember he had a green Capri. He said he had had enough of "wee bastards like me" running away. I had a burst lip and a cracker of a black eye.

75. I reported the assault by **GXZ** to a woman called Hylda McNair. She worked in the office at Newfield. She asked me what had happened. I told her that **GXZ** had hit me in the face in the car park. She went and had a chat with him and then came back to me. She asked me "Why did he hit you?". I said "because there are two girls in the news and it's my fault because I keep running away. He said he won't be my social worker anymore". She said that was exactly what **GXZ** had just told her. She said that nothing could be done about the assault as there were no witnesses.
76. **KMY** became my new social worker. She was mental and had no respect for any child. She was cheeky and arrogant to us. We would be cheeky back. I didn't go to a single meeting with her. When she would come for meetings I would not turn up. She saw me once and shook me my the shoulders. She said "When I want you to be there I need you to turn up!". She kept saying that she was going to send me to a juvenile prison called Ogilvie Wing. She kept threatening to lock me up forever and throw away the key if I kept running away. She would hit and poke me and the other children.

*Punishment room*

77. There was a room called the punishment room. It had wire squares covering the windows. There was nothing else in the room except a mattress. You would be thrown in there with a vest and pants on. You were left in there for as long as the staff **Secondary Inst** **Secondary Institutions -** You were allowed to go to the toilet but not shower. You had to bang on the door to get a member of staff to take you to the toilet. They did feed you.

**Langland's Park Approved School for Girls, Port Glasgow, Lanarkshire**

78. After the assessment at Newfield Assessment Centre, I was sent to Langland's Park Approved school for girls. It was 1982 when I arrived. I was fourteen years old. There were approximately 100 girls at Langland's Park from ages twelve to sixteen. The Church of Scotland ran the home. We had to do collections for the Church.
79. Langland's Park was a D list school in Port Glasgow beside Greenock. It was a very big old-fashioned school. It had East and West wings and large dormitories where we slept. There were offices in the middle part of the building. There was a separate dining room and laundry room. We had sewing class and English class in different classrooms. There were separate kitchens.

**Routine at Langland's Park Approved School for Girls, Port Glasgow, Lanarkshire**

*First day*

80. I can't remember much of my first day. I was flung into the day pen. I met a member of staff called Cathy Farin with my social worker. I was taken to the office where I met my keyworker Isobel Mason. I was not introduced to the other kids.

*Mornings and bedtime*

81. There were six girls in my dormitory. We would get up at 8 am. We would wake ourselves. We would have breakfast and go to school. School was at 9 am.
82. Bedtime was at 9.30 pm. Lights out was at 10 pm. We would talk after lights out but we were told to go to sleep. We would have pillow fights and hang out of the windows smoking. We also ran away after lights out sometimes. There was a staff member on duty each night. They would say "Get your heads on those pillows and get some sleep!". They didn't verbally abuse us.

*Mealtimes/Food*



83. All of the girls would sit together. We would all speak to each other at meal times. I ended up being part of a clique. We got up to mischief so the staff tried to separate us.
84. There would be jugs of water on the tables. We would have cereal for breakfast and two courses at lunch. For dinner we would have meals like pie, chips and beans. The food was generally good.

#### *Washing/bathing*

85. We had a saying that you had to make sure you had your three "F's" clean. The three "F's" referred to your face, your feet and your fanny. There were shower blocks where we washed. The showers had plastic curtains. You could have a shower in the morning or the evenings for as long as you wanted.

#### *Chores*

86. We had to keep our rooms clean. We only had to scrub the floors as a punishment. It was not part of our daily chores.

#### *Staff*

87. There were quite a lot of staff. A couple called <sup>MSH</sup> [REDACTED] and his wife [REDACTED] were <sup>SNR</sup> [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was also a teacher in the school. My key worker was a woman called Isobel Mason. She was really good and understanding. I went to stay with her for a couple of weekends. She did a lot for me. She was one of the managers. She would come to the Children's Panel down in Ayrshire with me. There was also Betty Graham, Cathy Farin, <sup>GYJ</sup> [REDACTED] and Miss Murdoch who were all staff that I remember.

#### *Clothing/uniform*

88. We didn't have a uniform as such but we all lived in a pair of jeans, a pair of trainers and a sweater. It was the fashion to have tight jeans. I remember we all took our jeans in by sneaking into the sewing room in the middle of the night.

*School*

89. School started at 9 am. It was within the same building as the home. We would have morning lessons with a break in the middle. We had lunch and then afternoon lessons.
90. I couldn't sit my O'levels. It was really disappointing as I wanted to do something in history or PE. I asked my teacher if I could go to Greenock Academy. She said that I couldn't because I would just run away. Some of the other girls went to Greenock Academy. I would have liked to have had the chance to go to college or university.
91. A woman called Eva McCallum was one of my teachers.

*Leisure time*

92. I really enjoyed running so I would spend some of my free time going for a run. I would run from Port Glasgow to Greenock every week.
93. There were no grounds so we couldn't play outside. There were just trees covering the main building but no garden to run about in. There were three staff members houses but nothing else. We were allowed to play table tennis and snooker and I learnt to play the violin. My Granddad bought me a violin in 1982. I remember he paid £500 for it.
94. We received pocket money of £3.50 a week. There was a tuck shop in the school where you could spend your money. We did not go to the shops. We could go to the cinema if we behaved ourselves for over two weeks. I spent my money paying my friend's fine from the court. She had a £10 weekly fine so me and two other girls put our pocket money together to pay it.

*Trips/Holidays*

95. If we couldn't go home for a weekend Isobel Mason and her husband would treat the girls and take them to the pictures.
96. We were offered the chance to go on trips to Normandy and Berlin. There was supposed to be a trip to Italy too but the boys from another school ruined it. They were pilgrimage trips to learn about the history of things. The trips were run by the government.
97. Certain girls got to go on the pilgrimage. It depended on your key worker. I put my name forward thinking that I would never be chosen. It was announced in assembly. My keyworker Isobel Mason had arranged for me to go. I remember hearing "If she's able to stay in one spot without running away, GDI [REDACTED] can go". I went to both Berlin and Normandy.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

98. We went to an old folks home at Christmas time. I played the violin to entertain them. I had to sing too. We would put a bucket out for donations. The money was not for us. We were told it was for the church.
99. Birthdays were not celebrated. We were not allowed to sing "Happy Birthday". We did not send or get cards or presents. My granddad did take me out for a birthday meal.

*Visits/Inspections/Review of Detention*

100. My granddad came to visit me every six weeks. My aunt and cousin came up occasionally. My siblings never came. The visits were not supervised. Visits were quite open. I never told my granddad about MSH [REDACTED]. I didn't want my granddad to punch him.

101. There were school inspectors who visited occasionally. We were told to lie to them and to our families. We were told to say that the house was cleaned three times a day. If we cut ourselves with the sewing machines we were told to say that we hadn't cut ourselves.
102. Once the Children's panel had sent you to Langland's Park you had a one year review.

#### *Healthcare*

103. There were no nurses or doctors on the premises. If you were ill you were made to go to school.
104. I have some flash backs of being in Inverclyde Hospital in Greenock. I don't know what I was in the hospital for. I also have flashbacks of being in Paisley Hospital. I had wires put on my head and my body was shaking. I don't know why. Isobel Mason took me to these hospital appointments.
105. I never went to the Dentist. I had a big fear of the dentist. I remember my jaw swelling up one day. I think I had an abscess. One of the other girls said "We'll just pull it out". I got a string and wrapped it around one of my teeth. The girl tied the string to the door and slammed it shut.

#### *Running away*

106. I ran away often. The standby social worker would pick me up. Nobody ever asked me why. If the social worker had ever asked I would have told them about being assaulted.

#### *Religious instruction*

107. We went to church in Greenock every Sunday. We were made to say our prayers, go to confession and sing. It was Church of Scotland.

**Abuse at Langland's Park Approved School for Girls, Port Glasgow***Peer bullying*

108. I played the violin in front of five hundred people at Greenock Town Hall. I saw my granddad in the front row. I played Highland Cathedral and Amazing Grace. I was in [REDACTED] newspaper. One of the other girls saw that I was in the newspaper and said "You are just doing that so you can get out of here". I said "Yeah" and she grabbed my violin and smashed it over my head. I never got another violin so I stopped playing.

*Pregnancy*

109. On one of the occasions that I ran away I was raped. I don't want to go into the details of it. I told <sup>KMY</sup> [REDACTED] my social worker and she took me to the police station. I reported the rape at the police station in Kilmarnock. I was examined by the police surgeon. The police surgeon said that I had not been penetrated so I couldn't have been raped. I was then taken back to Langland's Park.
110. I told Isobel Mason that I thought I was pregnant. It was arranged for me to see another doctor. The doctor said that I wasn't pregnant. Everyone insisted that I wasn't pregnant even though I was showing. Some months later I gave birth to a baby boy. His birthday was [REDACTED] 1985.
111. The staff and my social worker <sup>KMY</sup> [REDACTED] told me that my baby had died. I had no knowledge that they took my baby away and had him adopted. The Children's Panel had had a hearing without me. They had made the decision to take away my baby. <sup>KMY</sup> [REDACTED] signed the adoption papers on my behalf.
112. I remember one of the other girls had become pregnant at Langland's Park. She was sent to the mother and baby unit and supported. I was not given the opportunity to go there.

*Physical abuse*

113. MSH [REDACTED] was a mad man. Even the staff said that they were frightened and "walked on egg shells" around him.
114. On one occasion MSH [REDACTED] punished me in front of the whole school. He stood me up in front of everyone in assembly. He said "This is what happens when you run away". I was small. He stood me in front of the table tennis table. He opened up one side of the table and dropped it shut so that it smashed down on my head. My head split open and I collapsed on the floor. I was given a wet towel and sent to bed. I wasn't taken to hospital. I was made to clean the gym floor with bleach and a toothbrush the next day.
115. At the same assembly MSH [REDACTED] hung another girl up on a clothes hanger. She had to stay there all day. Two girls tried to help her down and they got punished too.
116. On another occasion MSH [REDACTED] hurt me when I was pregnant. He threw me down a spiral staircase. It was the spiral staircase leading to the sewing room. He said that next time he would kick me to death. It was five months before I gave birth to my baby.
117. The typing teacher was a man called GYJ [REDACTED]. He would slap me across the face. He would do it frequently. I witnessed him slapping other girls as well as myself.

**Leaving Langland's Park Approved School for Girls, Port Glasgow,**

118. I left Langland's Park in [REDACTED] 1985. I found out that I was leaving in assembly. It was announced that me and another girl "were leaving Langland's Park in an hour". I had no warning. I saw Isobel Mason after assembly and she said to us "Right girls, the world is your oyster!".
119. I had given birth to my baby boy a month before I was told to leave. I was sixteen years old. The home never helped me. They just threw me out. I was not given a travel

warrant. I was told "Right, you are over sixteen, out you go". I left with the clothes on my back and that was it. None of the presents or things that people had sent to me were given to me.

120. I have heard that other kids got help with hostels and getting prepared for life outside. I was never offered any help. My friend [REDACTED] was put into a hostel with drug addicts. She left after two days and moved to London. She called me and told me not to go into a hostel. That was the only advice I received.

### **Life after being in care**

121. I presented as homeless to the local council. I went through some paper work with a woman called Jennifer Querapal. I got a one bedroom flat and applied for a job. I didn't get a community care grant because I had applied for a job at the same time.
122. I met a man and got pregnant. I discovered that he was in fact married to another woman. He said that he wanted to support me and our baby but I said "No, I'm not breaking up another family". So I left him and took my daughter with me. Her name is [REDACTED]. I raised her until she was eighteen years old. I then met my current partner [REDACTED]. We have been together for twelve years.

### **Impact**

#### *Mental Health*

123. My mum died last year and it stirred everything up again. I sensed that my mother was going to die. I was making a cup of tea and I felt a cold presence go past me. Almost immediately I received a telephone call telling me that she had died. It is a good thing that she is dead but it has stirred up a lot of painful memories. I keep getting flashbacks of the abuse. I couldn't sleep with the light off for years. It got better over time but now I am terrified of the dark again. I keep forgetting things and repeating myself. I think

back to my time in care often. I have bad dreams. I am trying to deal with it. I see my counsellor Sergio from ICSSS once a fortnight.

124. There are long term effects on my lifestyle too. I still can't drink water. We were given water with every meal in care. Water for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I can't drink it by itself even now. I am also an early riser. I can't wake up late. It must be psychological from having to get up so early in care.
125. I have taken medication for my mental health for years. I need something to give me the "oomph" to get up and go.

#### *Siblings*

126. I do not have a good relationship with any of my siblings. I do not keep in touch with them. When I discovered [REDACTED] wasn't my real dad my siblings came to the restaurant where I work. They sat and ate a three course meal and left without paying. They told the waitress that I was picking up the bill for them. I got suspended from work whilst the police investigated. That is how my siblings treat me even now.

#### *My son*

127. My son was adopted without my knowledge. I was told that he was dead. I grew up not knowing that he was in fact alive and had been adopted. When I got my care records I learnt about the adoption. My daughter [REDACTED] spent time trying to find him. Eventually she found him and we agreed to meet him. [REDACTED] and I travelled through to Glasgow. We were on the bus and [REDACTED] started chatting to a couple that she knew. The boy was called [REDACTED]. They wouldn't stop chatting and it started to get annoying. When we got off the bus I was anxious to get to the appointment to meet my son. I went for a cigarette around the back of the building. The guy that [REDACTED] had been chatting to on the bus appeared out of nowhere. He asked me for a cigarette and I said "Get to fuck, you have been in my face all day!". I went into the building to meet my son. Sitting there was the same guy that had been outside and on the bus.



██████████ I said "Why is he sitting there?". It turned out that ██████ was my son. That was eleven years ago in 2007.

128. We discovered that ██████ had lived just around the corner from me and had gone to the same school as ██████. He had been inside my house before and at parties with ██████. All that time they never knew that they were related.
129. I think ██████ knows that he was conceived through rape. We do not have a good relationship.

#### *Relationships*

130. I never trusted men. I would never have a man in the house alone with my daughter.

#### *Overprotective of daughter*

131. When I got pregnant I decided not to get a job. I made that decision so that I could look after my daughter. I would get up in the morning so I knew what she was wearing to school in case she went missing. I would check that she had a proper breakfast. If she went to a friend's house she had to call me from their house or from the local phone box. I knew all of the phone box numbers. I wouldn't let her stay overnight with her friends. I would double and triple check where she was. I think she suffered because of how overprotective I was.

#### *Education*

132. If I had followed a different path I could have become a PE teacher or something to do with history. That is what I always wanted to do. I am addicted to history. On job applications I can't even fill out the high school box. I have no qualifications.

#### *Crime*

133. I pretended that I was doing a sponsored walk and got people to sponsor me. I just pocketed the cash. I also used to shoplift. I don't know why. I always had the money in my hand. As a teenager I stole things like sandwiches or a change of clothes but that was for survival more than anything else.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

134. In 1999 at King Street police station in Ayr I did try to report the abuse. The social work department said that they couldn't do anything about it. They were not interested. The teachers couldn't do anything about it because they worked there.
135. When I was thirteen I told the police about my mother abusing me. They said "But she is your mother, you can't do anything about that".
136. When I was raped I went to Kilmarnock Police Station. I would like to see if they have a report detailing my attendance and what they did.
137. Nineteen years ago I contacted the police again. It was September 1999. I had cancer. My daughter [REDACTED] was thirteen and caring for me at that time. She said "Why don't you go to the police and get your mother charged?" [REDACTED] said that I needed to "get the poison out". I went to King Street police station in Ayr but they weren't interested. The police said that they couldn't do anything as there was no such thing as reporting historical abuse.

### **Records**

138. I heard stories about myself and where I had supposedly been as a child. I wasn't sure what was true. I spoke to Sergio at ICSSS about it. He acted as my advocate and got my paperwork. It is the biggest file he has ever seen. I haven't managed to read it all yet. It is difficult to read.

139. I still don't know why I ended up being moved from a normal children's home to one for crippled children. I have asked my doctor for my medical records but they don't exist before I came out of care. My ability to walk is deteriorating and I am falling quite a lot. I would like to know if there is a link.
140. Every single detail about my baby son and his history is in my file. It includes the address where my baby was sent to live. They should never have sent me all that paperwork and personal information about him.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

141. Children should be "seen and not heard" is the worst saying I've ever heard. If children were listened to a lot less abuse would take place. When kids run away ask them why. If a child says that someone has touched them they are telling the truth. Children don't lie. Even if you ask them to lie they trip themselves up. I want children to feel safe.
142. I think all survivors of abuse should come together and listen to each other's stories. They should work out how to change things for the better.
143. The social work department have a lot to answer for. It was them that kept sending me back to my mother who kept abusing me. They are just as much to blame for every scar I have.

### **Other information**

144. I went back to visit Newfield Assessment Centre. It was a drop-in centre for kids. It doesn't exist anymore. I have had contact with my keyworker Hylda Macnair on Facebook. I have also spoken to a few other women who were girls at Langland's Park on Facebook.

145. I am a member of an organisation called "Hubs". It is for people that were abused in the care system. It's an open secret. I don't generally like secrets. I tell my grandchildren that we don't have secrets. We all get together and talk at Hubs. There is an open discussion. We all have each other's backs. We don't tell people on the outside what we discuss.
146. At one of the Hubs meetings I met one of the other girls who was at St Euphrasia's with me. She was assaulted by the staff too. She remembered me because I had protected her. I had fought for her. She is now in a wheelchair.
147. There was another girl called [REDACTED] who was in Langland's Park with me. She was bullied at Langland's Park and had a miserable time. As an adult I believe she hanged herself at Cornton Vale women's prison.
148. I agreed that the police could contact me following information I supplied to the Inquiry and as part of the risk notification. The police contacted me within a couple of days and said that someone would be in touch within a week. It took them three months to be in touch and since then I have not been able to make contact with the officers in question. They provided me with a phone number which I have contacted several times and it just has a message that no one is available to take the call. There is no facility to leave a message. It would be better if they had been realistic and not raised my expectations and let me down again.
149. 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..... 9/11/2018 .....