

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GHR

Support person present: No

1. My name is GHR. As a child in care I was known as GHR. My date of birth is 1987. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Inverness and lived with my mother, and my stepfather. My parents separated as a result of my father throwing my mother down the stairs when he found out she was pregnant with me. I don't think the police were involved because my father was free to go and start a new relationship with a woman called and have another son.
3. and my mother got together shortly after I was born. I was eight years old when my mother married my stepfather and my name was changed to GHR.
4. I attended Crown Primary School until Primary Three when I moved to Drakies Primary School. I found things difficult when I was a child and I was bullied at school by other boys. I had been bullied at school since Primary Five and that continued into first year at secondary school. I started fighting back when I was in secondary school.

5. There was a conflict between what my mother and stepfather would tell me to do. My stepfather told me if somebody hit me I was to hit them back and my mother told me that it took a bigger person to walk away.
6. I was always young for my year and I was small for my age. I was in trouble an awful lot. My school work was good and my grades were brilliant but I tended to mess about and get into trouble for silly things like talking back to teachers and for a lot of fighting. I think I was just too sharp for my age.
7. My mother and stepfather had four children together. [REDACTED], who was five years younger than me, twins called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who were twelve years younger than me and [REDACTED] who was fifteen years younger. I used the surname GHR until my partner was expecting our first child in 2009 when I changed it back to [REDACTED].
8. It was confusing for me because I felt that I was singled out and treated differently from my siblings when I was growing up. I had a different relationship with [REDACTED] than my friends at school had with their fathers. The only time he said anything to me was when I was in trouble or when there was something to be said. My brother, [REDACTED], would get away with murder. The same rules didn't apply to him as applied to me.
9. There was violence at home mostly generated at me. I was grounded all the time. I felt scared and constantly under the threat of violence from my parents. I was punished for everything.
10. My stepfather was always at work and, as I got older, I felt that he was hiding there. There was a definite awkwardness between us and that is what led me to question things. I felt different and I felt that I was treated differently.
11. I started using drugs at secondary school. The first secondary school I attended was Millburn Academy. I was suspended when I was in first year. I was given a punishment exercise for jumping over a teacher's car but I was terrified to tell my

mother about this because I knew she would punish me. This turned into a detention when I didn't produce the signed punishment exercise. I forged the signature on the detention slip but that was discovered and then I got suspended for four days. After that I was grounded by my parents for what seemed like the rest of my life.

12. I believed my stepfather to be my natural father until I was about thirteen years old when I found out that my father was actually a man called [REDACTED] and that I had a half-brother called [REDACTED] who was a year younger than me. This came out during an argument with my mother and stepfather.
13. I tracked down my real father when I was fourteen and started doing a Saturday job with him in a salon in an attempt to get to know him. On the fifth or sixth Saturday after I had started, he vanished. He had run off to London. I was left with lots of questions and that had a bad effect on me at that age when you are trying to find out who you are.
14. Things started unfolding after that and I was using cannabis from then on at break times. I got Valium one day when I couldn't get cannabis and several of us overdosed so I was put in front of the senior management team. Before the headmaster arrived I walked out and stole ice cream from the janitor's house. There was no social work involvement at this time.
15. I went on the run for two days and when I was caught they took me into hospital and pumped my stomach because I had still been taking drugs. I pulled the drips out of my arms and left hospital. I didn't want to go home.
16. One day at school I knocked out a boy, broke his nose and knocked out four of his teeth. To prevent me getting expelled for good I was sent to live with my granny and grandad in Edinburgh. My granny was my mum's mum. I attended Boroughmuir High School for second year and then I got expelled for fighting. I returned to Inverness for third year and back to Milburn Academy. This didn't last long because once again I was fighting and so I was expelled.

17. I went to Inverness Royal Academy aged fourteen. I got on very badly there. I should never have been sent to the Royal Academy because the children from Drakies fight with the children from the area where the Academy was situated. I was only there for a matter of weeks before I was expelled.
18. I started running away from home when I was attending Inverness Royal Academy because I was constantly being punished and I was never allowed out. I did try to stay out of trouble but the bullies at school wouldn't leave me alone. The twins were toddlers and I felt I was being treated like a babysitter. I ran away for months on end and stayed with friends who were usually a bit older than me. The police would get me eventually and take me home.
19. Social work became involved with me at this stage because I had told a friend's mother who was a social worker that I was being beaten at home by my parents but mainly by my mother. Ultimately, I had to withdraw the complaints I had made to the social work department because my mother told me the younger children would be removed from her care if I did not.
20. I was then sent to [REDACTED] which used to be called [REDACTED]. This was an old primary school way up in the hills about twenty five miles outside Inverness. I was picked up in a minibus from outside a derelict cinema in the centre of town and driven there.
21. It had three pupils to a class and not many classes. They tried to get me to engage but by this time I was heavily into cannabis, drinking and girls. There wasn't a hope in hell of educating me at this point. You could count on your hand the number of times I attended.
22. When I was fifteen, I ran away again and I used a friend's National Insurance number and started working in a restaurant. Every time I was caught by the police the social workers took me to stay in a flat in [REDACTED] in Inverness.

23. During this time I was drinking with two older boys on Market Brae steps. One of them threw a Buckfast bottle at two Glaswegian men who were just out of prison and it hit one of them in the face. There was a fight, the police lifted us and we were detained overnight. The other two blamed me. I was taken in front of a Children's Panel in Inverness and placed under an indefinite Supervision Order. My mother said she didn't want me back home.
24. I was taken to Wick Children's Centre by a social worker. I was told I would be there until I was sixteen. I stayed there for two weeks and made friends with a boy called [REDACTED]. A girl who moved into the unit took a fancy to me and I think this is why I was moved.
25. I was then taken to Geilsland by a different social worker from the one who took me to Wick. I think she was called Susan. She told me Geilsland was a residential school and that I would be in a unit with other boys. This was in [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] 2002. I remember the date because it was life-changing.

Geilsland School, North Ayrshire

26. I was terrified going to Geilsland. I knew I would be there for a long time and that it wouldn't be easy. I was due to turn sixteen in five or six months but they told me that because of the Supervision Order I could be kept indefinitely. I didn't understand this. If you could legally leave home at sixteen I couldn't understand why I had to remain in care. I believe the Supervision Order was to be reviewed but I never went back in front of a Children's Panel.
27. I was devastated that my mum didn't want me around as much as I wasn't around. I was only at home for a couple of days every month.
28. Geilsland School was south of Johnston, which is south of Paisley and Glasgow. The drive in was narrow and went past the gatehouse and then opened up. It had lots of outbuildings surrounding a grassy area and a car park in the middle. There was a

gatehouse and a mansion house which housed the offices of the administrative staff and the head of the school. A staff member called GHU lived in [REDACTED]

29. There were three residential units, a separate school and a church. The units were called Cunningham House, Garnock Unit and Lomond Unit. I was in Garnock which was for the most troubled boys. Lomond Unit was for sex offenders. There was a big fence all around the property but the gates weren't locked.
30. Geilsland was scary. It was all boys. It was full of proper car thieves and people in for serious assaults from Glasgow and the surrounding areas and I was from the Highlands.
31. I was with boys who had quite happily stabbed people and were proud of it. I had never mixed with people like this before. As much trouble as I had been in, I had never done anything like that and I wouldn't have dreamt of it.
32. I remember a boy called [REDACTED] who was from Greenock. He reminded me of the character Ray Winstone played in the film Scum where he became the hardest boy in Borstal. [REDACTED] was sixteen years old. He got expelled from Geilsland and my friend, [REDACTED], got his old room underneath me.
33. [REDACTED] was an orphan whose parents had died due to heroin abuse. [REDACTED] was the youngest boy in Geilsland. He was fourteen years old and had been in care all his life. I was able to talk to him at night through my Velux window.
34. Geilsland SNR [REDACTED] KMJ [REDACTED]. Some staff members were good and some were bad. My keyworker was called GHV [REDACTED] and he was a really nice guy. I remember a woman called Sheena who quit. I don't know why she quit.
35. There was a man called HVK [REDACTED] who was ex SAS or special forces, He had gone into childcare once he left the forces. He was like Mr Universe. He was giant. He was really cool. He took us to see 'Gangs of New York' in the cinema even though we were under age.

36. GHS [REDACTED] was another staff member and Debbie was the unit manager.
37. There were three or four staff members on duty at any one time including the unit manager. There were cleaning ladies who hoovered our rooms and they also did all the laundry. The canteen cook was called Gail.
38. Each flat had a kitchen but we weren't allowed to cook because we weren't considered to be responsible enough. There was no preparation for independent living.
39. We were allowed to phone home whenever we wanted. You just went to the office to ask to use the phone. They were pretty flexible about this.

Routine at Geilsland School

First day

40. The social worker and I went into the mansion house and met SNR [REDACTED] KMJ [REDACTED]. He told us the layout of the building, showed us around the grounds where the school was and then took us to Garnock Unit where we met the staff and we were shown around the residential block.
41. Garnock consisted of three semi-detached houses in a row. I was never in Lomond but Garnock and Cunningham had exactly the same layout.
42. There was a main office for staff, a meeting room, an open area which had a pool table, a canteen and a laundry room. This was opposite three flats. In each flat there was a downstairs toilet and a downstairs living room. There were two bedrooms downstairs and two bedrooms upstairs and an upstairs bathroom. There were twelve boys in each unit and four in each flat. There was one shower and bath per flat. One canteen served the three Units.

43. I was in Flat Two which was in between Flats One and Three. My bedroom was upstairs. I had my own bedroom which had a single bed, a built in cupboard a dressing table and a television. I had my CD player from home. I made my bed in the morning as part of my morning routine but we weren't made to do this.
44. If you were part of the painter's class you were allowed to paint your own room.
45. We weren't locked in our bedrooms at night. After bedtime you had to be in your room but we sneaked about.

Mornings and bedtime

46. The morning staff came round and gave you a shout or a knock on your door to make sure you were up. We would get up, have a shower if we wanted, get dressed and go down for breakfast to the canteen area. We had cereal and toast with different kinds of jam. We were allowed to sit with our friends. We had about 25 minutes to get ready before we went across the grounds to school.
47. We went to bed at the same time every night. This was 9.30pm or 10pm. The staff would tell you when it was time to go to bed and you would get a couple of biscuits and a carton of milk to take up to your room with you. There was a Sky box in the office and a different flat was allowed to choose a movie each evening to watch in bed. The night staff would come into your room at night to check on you so I didn't sleep too well. You weren't allowed to leave your room after bedtime but if somebody had cannabis we would find a way to sneak into other rooms.

Mealtimes / Food

48. All of the boys ate in the canteen at the same time. You usually sat with your friends and the same crowd kept to each other. The food was fairly good. There was a selection of food for lunch. Gail served the food through a hatch and there was a table with extra food on it which you could help yourself to. On Friday it would be a

chicken burger or a cheese burger and a big selection of chocolate. I think Gail provided the chocolate at her own expense.

Washing / bathing

49. I showered every morning. I was never told to shower but a few of the boys were.

Clothing / uniform

50. You wore whatever you wanted. We were given a clothing allowance of fifty pounds per month by the social workers and were taken out by our key worker to spend it. [REDACTED] and I had the same key worker.

School

51. School was absolutely terrible and we had no interest whatsoever. It was vocational so was geared towards careers as electricians, painters, joiners and mechanics. I was allocated to the electricians' group. You weren't allowed to choose your group.
52. There were three or four boys to a class. You spent half the day in a workshop and half in class where you did Music, Maths, English and other academic options. We also did PE in a big gym.
53. Teachers came in from outside Geilsland to teach us. You could choose to work or go on the PlayStation 2. We also played cards for cigarettes during classes. The teachers sat back with their feet on the desks. The teachers were happy with this because they had an easy day. It was an absolute disgrace.

Leisure Time

54. After school we went back to the unit and played pool and hung around. We didn't have any homework. There weren't any books or board games.
55. If the PE hall wasn't booked and there were enough staff to supervise, we could play football. I was very good at football and instigated a team being formed. [REDACTED] liked me for this because the other boys followed my lead. We played against other schools and the local police. I got a sportsmanship award for this.
56. Before I left Inverness I was signed by [REDACTED] who was an ex-Aberdeen footballer for [REDACTED]. I got sent away to Wick and then to Geilsland so I couldn't continue with that.
57. If we wanted to go for a run we were taken to Ayr beach in the minibus.

Religion

58. The school was owned by the Church of Scotland so they marched us up to Church on a Sunday. We just wore our normal casual clothes. I was christened as a baby but I didn't believe in God.

Pocket Money

59. You were given nine pounds per week if you had attended classes and had no sanctions. This was given out on a Friday by the staff in the office. You got sanctions for breaking a pool cue or being in trouble.

Trips/Holidays

60. Once a week you had an outing. This was laser tag, bowling or the cinema or something like that. This was behaviour dependent. If you hadn't behaved you weren't allowed to go. Your key worker or the duty manager would make this decision and there was a whiteboard in the office which had this information on it.

61. There was a trip to Alton Towers and camping trips to Lake Windermere where we stayed in a youth hostel in Ambleside. Names were drawn out of a hat to decide who went on these trips. I got a space on the trip to Alton Towers but I gave up my space to another boy because I had the prospect of going home instead. It turned out my mother didn't want me coming home so I missed out on Alton Towers. I was in the unit on my own for three days.
62. GHV [REDACTED] and GHU [REDACTED] took us to Lake Windermere on one occasion. The boys on this trip with me were [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. At the end of this trip GHU [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] grabbed me and threw me off the pier into the lake. I didn't find this funny. This was because I had climbed out of the window one night on to the ledge and hidden the trainers belonging to one of the members of staff. It was a practical joke. I was too stubborn to change out of my wet clothes and sat in them on the bus back to Geilsland.
63. We were allowed day passes at the weekend. I got regular day passes to go out with my friend [REDACTED]. This had been arranged with his mum. [REDACTED] was a year older than me and he used to take the other boys' pocket money to buy drugs.
64. The staff knew we were taking drugs but we were given passes anyway. They didn't monitor where we went. This always involved drugs and alcohol. [REDACTED] mum would take him to the local drug dealer's house to get drugs. We would hang around Ayr or Largs and meet up with girls we had met when the staff had taken us to the park or the cinema.
65. I was allowed to go anywhere but not back to Inverness because the social workers said it was too expensive. Anne Kealey one of the social workers told me this. We were allowed home leave every weekend or every fortnight but I didn't get to go back to Inverness regularly because the social work department wouldn't cover my travel expenses.
66. Eventually I did get a travel warrant from Geilsland and I went back to Inverness about once a month. My mother had agreed to this. Sometimes I didn't go back to

my mum's and I stayed with friends, got drunk and got lifted and taken back to Geilsland. Sometimes I just took the train back to Geilsland when I was supposed to.

Birthdays and Christmas

67. At Christmas there were decorations and a Christmas tree. We got a Christmas bonus which you were allowed to spend on yourself. I don't know if this came from Geilsland or the social work department. I used it to buy presents for my family. They said I was the first person ever to do this. I was proud of that.
68. I think you got a cake for your birthday. I was in Inverness for my birthday and I remember my friend's mum giving me twenty pounds and I used it to buy three bottles of Buckfast.

Visits / Inspections/ Review of Detention

69. My mum, step-dad, brothers, sisters and my girlfriend came for the school sports awards ceremony. I won the [REDACTED] memorial trophy. This was in memory of a boy who had been killed walking from the train station up to the school. It felt good to see them but we were mixed with the sex offenders that day and I was worried because my little brother and sister were only toddlers.
70. A couple of months after I arrived at Geilsland I was introduced to Anne Kealey my new social worker. This was the only visit I had from her and I never saw her again until I left Geilsland.
71. I was under an Indefinite Supervision Order. I think it had a review period but I can't remember it being reviewed. I never had a panel after I was sent to Geilsland.

Healthcare

72. I never went to the doctor or had any medical help and I never saw a dentist.

Running away

73. We ran away sometimes. This depended on the weather and how much money we had. We would go to the local shop and steal alcohol. We ran away until we got caught by the police, usually after a few hours. The unit wasn't locked. Sometimes we could creep out at night and get back in again without being noticed.

Bed Wetting

74. I had an issue with bed wetting from I was quite young. There was a protective cover on the mattress in Geilsland and the cleaners would change the bed. Sometimes I would pull the sheets off if they were wet and put them next to the washing basket. I was able to take a shower after this happened.

Abuse at Geilsland School

75. I got picked on by [GHU] for wetting the bed. He was always polite but after I made a complaint about another staff member, he totally changed and he told the other boys I wet the bed. The other boys then teased me. [] told me that [GHU] had told him. I remember that [] also wet the bed.
76. The night staff came on duty every evening at around 9pm. They always worked in pairs. One would come into your bedroom and one would wait outside. One night when I had been at Geilsland for about two or three months there was a new member of staff who came in to check on me. She was blond with blue eyes and five foot eight or a bit taller. She was late thirties or early forties. She told me my television was too loud so I turned the volume down.
77. I heard footsteps go downstairs so I turned the volume up again a couple of notches. She must have been pretending to go downstairs because she burst back into my room along with a staff member called [HVN] who was also on duty for the first time. He was a big guy who looked like Charles Bronson. He had a shaven head and was in

his late thirties. When we were initially introduced to them in the corridor before they started their shift, they said that they had both worked at Kerelaw before Geilsland.

78. They gave me the fright of my life. I jumped up on to my bed because I felt threatened. **HVN** grabbed me by the scruff of my neck and my legs and flipped me right over his head and on to the floor. I landed on my back. **HVN** put his knee on my chest and pinned me down. He knelt on me so hard I could feel my ribs cracking and I still have an indentation on my rib cage to this day. I felt that I couldn't breathe and I was being suffocated. They both sat on me. They were trying to hold me a certain way in order to restrain me. The woman sat on my legs.
79. My friend, **[REDACTED]**, from downstairs came up and tried to get in to help me. He was screaming for them to let me go. The woman got off my legs and put her foot against the bottom of the door so that he couldn't get in. They tried to blame me for what had happened saying that I should have got off the bed. They were saying they felt threatened because I was standing on the bed. The incident felt like it went on for an hour and a half. They tried to calm me down and get me to admit I was wrong. They eventually agreed to leave me when I calmed down.
80. I felt like shit. I had a sore chest and I was scared but I didn't see a doctor. Every time they came in after that I thought it might start again. They came in every hour, looked around and then left. I think because they were new they wanted to do things their way. I felt there was a presumption of guilt every hour, every night.
81. The usual member of staff who did nights was called Stevie Watson and he just used to stick his head round the door and ask if you were all right.
82. One night when I had been in Geilsland for a few months, I slammed the door of my room. I think I had slammed the office door too and all the other doors. Christine and **GHS [REDACTED]** came charging into my room. I told **GHS [REDACTED]** he wasn't going to restrain me but he grabbed me and spun me around.

83. Christine and [GHS] tried to put me on the floor. I tried not to go down because I didn't want adults lying on top of me for two hours. [GHS] couldn't get me down so he pushed me back on to the bed. I kept on goading him by saying that he wasn't going to restrain me and calling him names. He had me by the scruff of the neck and he punched me in the face twice using a clenched fist.
84. I had never felt a punch like it in my life. I was only a boy and he was a grown man. I felt helpless. Christine screamed at him to stop and pulled him off me. There were [redacted] that [GHS] and Christine [redacted]. They both left and I had a sore face and felt like absolute shit. I had a shiner. I was swollen around the eye but I didn't get any medical attention. I just wanted to be with my family but I wasn't able to.
85. Following the incident with [GHS], [GHU] would verbally abuse me when he met me in the corridor. He would ask me how many pubes I had as he walked past me and tease me about my height. He always made derogatory comments.
86. A new boy came into Geilsland and he was really bad news. His mum gave him drugs to take into the unit and he flooded the place with Valium. [redacted] and I had taken it and we were full of it. We were meant to be going on a trip and we were on the minibus. I plucked the hat off [redacted] head as a joke. [GHU] said something to me and I was cheeky to him.
87. He got me on the floor of the minibus, trying to restrain me. I felt one of his hands grab me by the head and he smashed my face into the floor of the minibus. [redacted], [redacted] and [redacted] witnessed this. They kept me in the minibus restrained for ages until I calmed down.
88. I witnessed other boys being restrained inappropriately. I remember [GHU] restraining [redacted]. This happened in the third flat living room. [redacted] was deeply emotionally upset and this just made matters worse. [redacted] was only being verbal because he was upset about something but he was physically abused when he was being restrained. He was grabbed and thrown to the floor.

89. GHU had his knee on the back of [REDACTED]'s neck and another staff member called KDU was trying to sit on his legs. He was pinned down. It was excessive force. It went on for ages, maybe at least an hour. [REDACTED] and I were screaming at them to let him go. It was upsetting for us. The situation would have been different if [REDACTED] had been trying to harm himself in some way but he was just upset about something.
90. [REDACTED] was also restrained excessively when he was upset. He was flung about like a rag doll. This happened regularly and you felt powerless. GHU had been a prison officer in Barlinnie and he restrained boys countless times. He behaved like a prison officer in a boys' home. He had the wrong temperament for the job.
91. The restraining happened in the painters' class once to a boy called [REDACTED]. HVW and GHU did this. They had one person on his upper body and another on his lower body. GHU knelt on his neck and twisted his wrist.
92. It was standard practice for the staff to restrain you if you were cheeky or misbehaved in some way. Restraining was their answer to everything. They would restrain you until you were exhausted then you had to go and complete paperwork and sign a form. I know this should have happened every time you were restrained
93. There was a feeling of us against them. Things would have been different if the staff had been trained properly to have more patience and taught to speak to the pupils rather than restrain them. HVK knew how to talk to us. He dealt with us completely differently. He treated us totally differently.
94. One day when I had been at Geilsland for about eight months [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and I were on a day pass and we went to the beach at Largs. We were meant to go to Kilwinning but we went to Largs because it was the same train. The staff knew we were on Valium but they gave us passes anyway. We had stolen Southern Comfort from Safeways. We had drunk Buck Fast and we had taken Valium the day before. We were absolutely smashed. We shouldn't have been there. We met a few girls we

had been seeing on the beach. One of them had the Christian name [REDACTED]. I was arrested later that day for being drunk and incapable and I was taken back to Geilsland in a cage in the back of a prison van.

95. HYL [REDACTED] was a key worker for [REDACTED]. She started working in Geilsland in the summer of 2003. She used to walk up and down the halls singing hymns and pretending to be God-fearing. She was married with children but she was having a relationship with [REDACTED]. I know this because [REDACTED] told me. He told me that he loved her and that she told him she loved him. [REDACTED] was two years younger than me.
96. When we had a day pass at the weekends we would go to HYL [REDACTED] daughter's house in Kilwinning. I had a short sexual relationship with her daughter and then [REDACTED] went out with her. We would take drugs and alcohol. The first time I saw [REDACTED] and HYL [REDACTED] together, HYL [REDACTED] was sitting in the room smoking a joint with [REDACTED]. I saw them kissing and fondling each other. They had clothes on. We left them in the room and left them to it.
97. HYL [REDACTED] always took [REDACTED] out of Geilsland. She brought drugs and alcohol into Geilsland for us. I could tell she was stoned when she was at work in Geilsland and I got hash from her once. The staff in Geilsland knew that we took drugs because we were high but they couldn't control it. [REDACTED] got copious amounts of cannabis and Valium from her. [REDACTED] hated heroin because his parents had died of a drugs overdose. HYL [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] relationship continued for months while [REDACTED] was at Geilsland and they were both still there when I left.
98. [REDACTED] subsequently died tragically of an overdose when he was about eighteen. The [REDACTED] that this was as the result of the breakdown of a relationship. He had been living in a flat in Greenock. He was really clever and he had the brightest future out of all of us. I believe HYL [REDACTED] robbed him of his youth and of his life.
99. I was picked up by my key worker from the train station after I had been home to Inverness and taken to the police station where I was stripped searched. This was

degrading and they didn't find anything. This happened twice, two months in a row, after I had been back to Inverness. It wasn't me who was taking drugs into the unit. They had their own staff doing that.

Reporting of abuse at Geilsland School

100. I made a complaint about [GHS] after he punched me. I reported it to Debbie the same day. She was the unit manager in Garnock. I spoke to her in the meeting room next to the office. Christine was also present because she had witnessed [GHS] punching me. Debbie wrote things down and I'm pretty sure she got me to sign the form. She talked to me about the complaint and I told her that I wanted it to be taken seriously but I can't remember if she mentioned contacting the police. I think [GHS] was suspended. I never saw him again after that.
101. I felt the staff had it in for me after I reported the abuse by [GHS] I felt singled out and constantly run down. All the staff members except [HVK] and Sheena Davidson pressured me and would say that he didn't mean it. [GHV] tried to get me to withdraw the complaint by guilt tripping me and I thought he would have been my biggest supporter because he was my key worker. He would say that [GHS] was a nice guy and that he didn't mean it and he had children. [GHV] was [redacted] key worker as well and he even persuaded him to try to encourage me to withdraw my complaint.
102. [GHU] was close to [GHS] because they were both Celtic fans and they played football together so he also put me under pressure. He was a bully as well. He tried to make me feel bad about [GHS].
103. I think I told the day shift the following day about what [HVN] had done to me because I couldn't play football as a result of my chest being so sore. [HVN] subsequently took me into the living room of Flat Two and apologised for what had happened that night and started telling me about his responsibilities.

Leaving Geilsland School

104. I was at war with a boy who had come into the unit. He had stolen a purse from an old granny in Paisley. He bullied [REDACTED] who was a gentle soul and stole his dad's gold ring which was the only thing he had left belonging to his parents. I felt nobody else was going to say anything to him so I did. He threatened to stab me.
105. I got a boy to leave the fire exit for Flat One unlocked. After the staff had done the checks, I crept out of my flat using the fire exit and into Flat One through the fire exit. I went to this boy's room where I was caught. He was trying to hit me with a lamp but I ended up leathering him. I was taken back to my room that night but was excluded from Geilsland the following morning after a meeting. This was because I had been caught in his room and I was considered to be the protagonist.
106. Social work were contacted and I was given a travel warrant and put on a train back to Inverness. I think I went to my mum's that day and my step-father took me to the Social Work Department. The social worker took me to the Council and then to a Bed and Breakfast.
107. They had to call a Children's Panel shortly afterwards. I can't remember attending it. They had a review in Culloden Social Work Department which the unit manager and my key worker from Geilsland attended. Anne Kealy, my allocated social worker, was also in attendance. This was the first time I had seen her since I was sent to Geilsland. They said I couldn't go back to Geilsland. It felt like Geilsland had kicked me out, put me in a Bed and Breakfast in Inverness and left me to my own devices.
108. I had only packed enough clothes to last me for a few days. I didn't have a clue about housing benefit and I didn't have a clue about the Job Centre or signing on. There was no view down the road for your progress.

109. After that I stayed with a friend and his mum and dad. His mum allowed him to smoke cannabis so for me that was a dream come true. There was a meeting with social work and his mum in their house and his mum made an agreement with social work. I stayed there for a couple of months until we fell out. After that the social work helped me get into a Bed and Breakfast and I stayed there about four weeks. I know the Supervision Order ended but I don't know how that came about. Social work vanished out of my life after that.

Life after being in care

110. I got a flat from Inverness Council when I was seventeen but I stayed across the road with a friend in his flat and my flat was used to store things. I ended up on amphetamine, ecstasy and cocaine. I was awake five days out of seven. Before I knew it, eight months had gone by.
111. A friend told me that I needed to slow down and stop with the drugs and this was the wakeup call I needed. I didn't realise how many months had disappeared out of my life because I was under a drug induced psychosis. One woman who worked for the Council was really nice and she tried to help me by encouraging me to live in my flat but by then I was a lost cause and I couldn't look after myself.
112. When I was eighteen I ran away to Edinburgh. I worked in Pizza Hut for two months. I got a trial in [REDACTED] with [REDACTED] and ended up training under him. I attended college on day release but I was an alcoholic and a drug user so I couldn't sustain this. I missed days at work due to alcohol and then I would get sacked. I committed daft crimes. I wasn't able to hold down a job or a tenancy. I could barely hold a relationship together.
113. I moved back to Inverness in 2019 and I started injecting heroin a week after that. I overdosed four times. I am now clear of all drugs except cannabis. I am doing voluntary work in a kitchen at [REDACTED] and I enjoy this but I recognise that

in terms of employment, the pressure in a kitchen is not right for me and physical work is much better.

Impact

114. I went to see the doctor about eight years ago because I was having chest pains and I thought I had heart problems. It transpired it was due to my drug abuse. I showed the doctor the indentation in my chest and he said that was something which had happened years ago when I was younger. That's when it all flooded back to me about being restrained.
115. The impact of being in care has been greatest on my mental health. I don't think what went on in Geilsland will ever leave me. I learnt from it but I wasn't prepared for anything. I think I would be in a better position if the social work had left me alone in Inverness. I was working and I was happy. I had a good job in a restaurant. By the time I was twenty I could have made junior Chef de Partie.
116. I started a relationship with [REDACTED] at the end of 2006 or the beginning of 2007. I stopped working in the catering sector due to alcohol and for better hours as she was diabetic. I was in a good place in 2014. I was living in a privately rented flat in [REDACTED] and I was earning fourteen pounds an hour in York Place laying cobbles for the trams. Things between [REDACTED] and I were good and we had two small children.
117. Then my father died. I had only just tracked him down again in 2012 to tell him he was a grandfather and we were speaking every couple of months. He choked on a piece of steak in a restaurant and had a cardiac arrest. I completely fell apart and I started taking legal highs. My relationship with [REDACTED] lasted for more than ten years on and off but it was a toxic relationship. We were violent towards each other and I spent periods of time in jail. Social work were involved and our two children were removed from her care.

118. I worked at boat building in Granton for [REDACTED] for a while. I worked in landscaping and construction for years and I did groundworks for my uncle. I was sometimes homeless when my relationship broke down and I was unable to work then.
119. I have been to the doctor loads of times about my mental health. In times of stress and crisis I turn to drugs. I got back in my partner's life after our children were removed from her care and I discovered she was being taken advantage of by some Polish men. She got me on to heroin and we were both addicts.
120. I was subject to a drug treatment testing order but I came off methadone as it didn't agree with me. It was increasing my tolerance to drugs and I was needing to take more heroin. [REDACTED] is still an addict. I talk to her every couple of days. I have occasional contact with my children when I am clean. They live with my mother and step-father in Inverness who have guardianship rights over them.
121. I put my addictions down to emotional baggage from when I was young. For that period in my life I wasn't prepared for life at all. Things weren't good at home. I have never finished anything.
122. I didn't see anything through. I always felt it was my fault. I felt condemned from quite a young age and that I was going to be a loser for ever. Everything is one big regret. I wasn't there for my brothers and sisters. I used to tell them when they were growing up, 'I'm showing you how not to be.'
123. I think of Geilsland every day. It could be a song or somebody that looks like somebody from Geilsland. When I think about football and how far I could have gone, it is seriously depressing but I have learned to live with it. I was never a career criminal. I have been charged with being drunk and incapable, resisting arrest and assault. I am anti-establishment as a result of being in care.
124. I have had good stages in my life and then something happens that sets me back. I have been diagnosed with depression, anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I

have tried anti-depressants and anti-psychotics but they never helped. I have never had counselling because I'm not one to talk about things. I made a suicide attempt recently and the police took me to New Craig's Psychiatric Hospital. I have now been referred there for outpatient treatment.

Records

125. I haven't tried to get my records but I would like to get them.

Lessons to be Learned

126. I think there should be independent people, aside from social work and independent of any government body, who should check out and monitor institutions and foster care and check the welfare of the boys and girls. Ideally, I don't think residential homes should exist anymore.

Other information

127. My mother and stepfather are still together and have been married for 25 years. I have an amazing relationship with [REDACTED] now although there have been tensions recently. We started seeing eye to eye a couple of years after I left care.
128. I went back to Geilsland once when I was seventeen. There was one boy from the time I was there and Debbie was there. It felt quite strange to be back. Nothing much had changed apart from the faces and it felt nostalgic, strangely enough.

- 129. I called to see my friend, [REDACTED], and he was married with two children. He didn't drink or smoke and he had found God. He had turned his life around and it made me think that maybe I could have a life like that one day.

- 130. My main grievance is against Geilsland, the way things went in the school and the way that they treated us. I also feel a grievance against social work in Inverness. I was placed in that school but I was getting day passes in an area I didn't know and wasn't from. I was allowed to hang around but I wasn't allowed to do this in Inverness where I was near family and friends and I was working. They plucked me out of a situation and dropped me into an even worse one. The reasoning behind it doesn't stand up to logic at all.

- 131. I didn't finish school and I never went to college. I haven't done any school work since the age of thirteen because I was running away and then I was at Geilsland. I have educated myself because I am interested in physics, space and nature. When I was grounded by my parents, the television was removed from my room and all that was left was encyclopaedias which I read from back to back.

- 132. I saw [REDACTED] one day in Edinburgh about four or five years ago and later that evening I saw him on television. He is now [REDACTED]. Somebody who was [REDACTED] school like that, knowing what went on and turning a blind eye, shouldn't be in a position [REDACTED] like that. Without a doubt he would have known what was going on in Geilsland.

- 133. 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.

GHR

Signed.....[REDACTED].....

02 September 2021

Dated.....

