

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

**Alexander MCLEAN**

Support person present: No

1. My name is Alexander McLean. When I was in care I was usually referred to as Sandy, but as I have got older people started to call me Alex. My date of birth is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 1983. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in Stranraer. My mum's name was [REDACTED] and my dad's name was [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]
3. My dad was a very abusive man, he was an alcoholic. That's why [REDACTED] in and out of the care system from when I was three years old until I was sixteen years old.
4. My first memory of when I went into the care system, when I was three years old, when I was at Windsor Lodge.

### Windsor Lodge Children's home, Near Newton Stewart 1986

5. I was at Windsor Lodge for a brief period, about six weeks. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

6.

7.

### [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Foster care 1987

8. After being in Windsor House I went to stay with a couple called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] but I couldn't tell you their surname. [REDACTED] They adopted a girl but I can't remember her name.

9. [REDACTED] had a Christmas at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] house. They were really lovely people. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] n't at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] house long before [REDACTED] moved again. They cried when [REDACTED] left. If they see [REDACTED] down the town they still remember [REDACTED]

**The [EPL-EPM] Family, [REDACTED] 1987**

10. When I went to the [EPL-EPM] I was four years old [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] at the [EPL-EPM] house.
11. I only remember Mr [EPL] s name, which was [EPL]. I can't remember Mrs [EPM] s name.

**Routine at The [EPL-EPM] Foster care**

*First day*

12. [REDACTED] was about twenty miles away from Stranraer. The house looked like a cottage. It had upstairs and downstairs. [REDACTED] only there very briefly before [REDACTED] removed again.
13. The house was weird. I felt the [EPL-EPM] were involved in some kind of cult. I believe they were into witchcraft or something. There were weird feelings in that house. I know that might sound crazy but I am a strong believer in the paranormal.

*Mornings and bedtime*

14. I had my own room at the [EPL-EPM] house. When I went to bed at night the [EPL-EPM] would say goodnight and shut the door. I used to see a black figure in the corner.

*Mealtimes/Food*

15. They used to force us to eat things we didn't like. There were these white beans, I think they were called butterbeans, and I didn't like them. They forced me to eat them. I was told I better eat them or I would get a slapped hand or something like that. I forced them down even though I didn't like them.

*Schooling*

16. I wasn't old enough to go to school when I was at the [EPL-EPM] [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] I was on the farm with [EPL] [REDACTED].

*Religious instruction*

17. I don't remember the [EPL-EPM] being religious or taking us to church.

*Work*

18. They had a pen out the back with geese and chickens. I used to feed them in the morning but I was too young to do any heavy lifting or anything like that.
19. We did have to go out in the morning to milk the cows. I got trapped in a pen with a bull, when I was four years old. I can't remember how I got in the bull's pen. Luckily the bull didn't do anything but I could have been killed.

*Review of care*

20. I remember my social worker at that time. His name was John Small. He used to work as the Reporter to the Children's Panel as well. He was based in Stranraer. He is retired now.
21. [REDACTED] saw him a couple of times at the [EPL-EPM] [REDACTED]. He came to the farm. [REDACTED] made allegations of being hit and John Small removed [REDACTED] from there. I remember having red marks that I showed him. On the same day I showed him with teddy bears what the [EPL-EPM] [REDACTED] adopted daughter had done to me and [REDACTED] removed straight away.

## Abuse at The [EPL-EPM] Foster care

22. The [EPL-EPM] did lift their hands to me but it was more the wife than [EPL]. She would slap your bum or your hand, but she would do it aggressively. It wasn't a light tap like you would give a child. It happened more than once.
23. I fell in a ditch at the [EPL-EPM] farm. I was four years old and didn't know what a ditch was. I got hit by Mrs [EPM] for that. [EPL] was more of a soft man, he wasn't really physical but she was. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
24. The [EPL-EPM] adopted a girl. She told me to put my hand inside her. I was only four years old, I didn't know it was wrong. Obviously a four year old isn't going to know. I can't remember her name but I remember her face. I can't remember how old she was but she had pubic hair below. She was probably between fourteen and fifteen years old. She was old enough to know that what she was doing was wrong.
25. As I got older, I realised that she shouldn't have told me to do that. I think the social workers thought I would forget about that.
26. The [EPL-EPM] adopted daughter also abused [REDACTED]. She had sex with him, he told me about it years later. He would have been six or seven years old when that happened. She had long hair at the time, and she seemed tall to me.
27. The adopted daughter is now working as a carer in Stranraer, that's what I got told. I don't know if she is in child care, care of the elderly, or what. I told the social workers that years ago but they never did anything about it.

## Leaving The [EPL-EPM] foster placement

28. The social workers removed [REDACTED] from the [EPL-EPM] because of the abuse. I showed them with teddy bears what the adopted daughter had told me to do. The funny thing



is that my files mention [REDACTED] farm briefly but they don't mention that [REDACTED] removed from there because of abuse.

**EPQ-EZB foster placement, [REDACTED], Dumfries and Galloway 1987 to 1988**

29. [REDACTED] got moved to EPQ-EZB from EPL-EPM the same day I told the social workers about the abuse [REDACTED] suffering. [REDACTED] stayed with EPQ-EZB for roughly one year. EPQ-EZB didn't have any other children staying with them when [REDACTED] went to stay there.
30. EPQ-EZB were EZB and EPQ, but he was known as EPQ. I couldn't tell you the age of them but EPQ died a couple of years ago. As far as I know, EZB EZB is still in the Dumfries and Galloway area.
31. EPQ was a very moody man, he was not a nice man. EZB wasn't very nice either. She never hit [REDACTED] but she didn't come across as a nice person either. It was work for them, they were getting paid to look after [REDACTED] I'm not sure if I knew at the time they were getting paid, but it is in my records.
32. The house was like an old fashioned Victorian house. When you went in the front door, the stairs were right in front of you. On the right was where EPQ-EZB slept, [REDACTED] On the left hand side was the living room [REDACTED] The kitchen was at the back, they still cooked on a stove. EPQ-EZB farm was about a mile away from another farm. At that time, the road to the farm only went to the farm. There was nothing else apart from the fields.

## Routine at EPQ-EZB foster placement

### *First day*

33. EPQ and EZB forced [redacted] to call them mum and dad. [redacted] couldn't understand why but [redacted] did it because [redacted] told to. It's in my files that they were trying to adopt [redacted] Luckily, that never happened.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

34. [redacted] up early in the mornings, about 5.00 a.m. Sometimes it was EZB who would wake [redacted] up, sometimes it was EPQ. It varied with them.
35. I would go up to the where the chickens were and feed them. The cows would just be lying there doing their own thing. [redacted] mostly on the farm helping at that time.

### *Mealtimes/Food*

36. We ate our meals in the kitchen. The food was the stuff you would see on a farm, they grew their own vegetables. They had their own potatoes and carrots. I remember eating sweet potatoes for the first time at EPQ-EZB.
37. I couldn't really say there was anything wrong with the food at EPQ-EZB. I remember [redacted] got fed [redacted] breakfast, lunch, and tea. [redacted] maybe got a bit of toast at night.

### *Clothing/uniform*

38. [redacted] wore wellies and cords around the farm. [redacted] had a school uniform.

### *Leisure time*

39. [REDACTED] always working on the farm, EPQ-EZB never took [REDACTED] anywhere like swimming, or things like that. It was always the same thing every morning, [REDACTED] had to feed the chickens, and do things like that. [REDACTED] never got to play, [REDACTED] just had to do what EPQ [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] to do.
40. The only interaction I had with children of my own age was either at school or at the Beavers or Cubs, I can't remember which one I was in. The only other leisure time I remember was if [REDACTED] went out with [REDACTED] mother or father when they visited. I can recall a toy chest with a couple of toy cars but I don't recall playing with them. When [REDACTED] got back from school [REDACTED] were either doing homework or chores on the farm.
41. I don't remember watching TV much. I remember watching E.T. but the only other time I remember being in the living room was when the police interviewed [REDACTED]

*Trips and holidays*

42. I know through my files that they did take [REDACTED] on holiday once, to Weymouth. They took [REDACTED] to stay with EPQ [REDACTED] family down there. They had children and EPQ [REDACTED] told us they were [REDACTED] cousins.

*Schooling*

43. [REDACTED] went to school in Moffat, just [REDACTED] miles away from the farm. I think it was called Moffat High School. It was a big building, it was for primary and secondary school children. I think it was from the age of five up to sixteen years old. I remember the lollipop lady would make [REDACTED] paper aeroplanes. EPQ-EZB [REDACTED] took [REDACTED] to school in their car, a red Panda.
44. I would say that I had learning difficulties at that time. I think it was from both the abuse at home and in care. I've got it in my records that I was fully dyslexic, even though I like to read a good book. I got mixed up with letters and numbers and I couldn't count



properly. I would have to use my fingers. People would come and they used to do tests on me as a child.

45. I had friends at school and I used to go and visit the janitor. At that time school was O.K. but I couldn't go and play with other children after school or have them round to play with me at the farm. I was told by both EPQ and EZB that I couldn't do that. I had to do farm work when I got home from school.

*Healthcare*

46. I was under the care of a psychiatrist later on as a child. I trusted her and told her about the abuse from EPQ-EZB. She told them that and I got a beating that night. I don't know if she is still a psychiatrist but she should have been fired for that. I trusted her as a child and I got a beating as a result.

*Religious instruction*

47. I don't remember EPQ-EZB being religious. I don't remember ever going to a church with them.

*Work*

48. [REDACTED] had to feed the chickens. It wasn't done as some kind of enjoyable thing [REDACTED] just had to do it and I didn't like being around the chickens.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

49. Although [REDACTED] at EPQ-EZB for about a year, I don't remember celebrating my birthday or Christmas there.

*Personal possessions*

50. I don't really recall getting any toys or things from EPQ-EZB .

*Visitors*

51. My mum used to come up and visit [REDACTED] So did my father, even though [REDACTED] didn't want that at the time. [REDACTED] would see [REDACTED] mum and dad on different days, although my mum was back and forward with my dad and the abuse. My mum was terrified of my dad. That's what people don't understand about domestic violence and people going back to it. For my mum it was because of fear.
52. Sometimes [REDACTED] would just see mum or dad in the farmhouse, sometimes they would take [REDACTED] in to Dumfries. They used to take [REDACTED] to the Wimpy in Dumfries for a burger and a blether but they never took [REDACTED] to a park, or swimming, or stuff like that. John Small the social worker was with us but he just observed.

*Review of care*

53. [REDACTED] would see the social workers when my mum or dad were coming up for access to [REDACTED] The social workers would bring [REDACTED] mum or dad to EPQ-EZB farm and take them back again. I feel that they were there to supervise the access with [REDACTED] mum or dad.

*Running away*

54. [REDACTED] too young to run away from EPQ-EZB house. Also, because the abuse started [REDACTED] at such a young age, [REDACTED] just thought it was normal. [REDACTED] didn't know any different. It was only as I got older that I questioned it.

*Discipline*

55. EPQ [REDACTED] had two dogs. He had a boxer called Bonnie that stayed in the house. He had another dog that stayed in the barn to protect the barn. I can remember EPQ [REDACTED] taking me down to feed the dog in the barn and I put my hand out to pet it. EPQ [REDACTED] slapped me right round the face. I started crying, I couldn't understand why he had hit me for going to clap the dog. He tried to explain that the dog was there to protect the barn, but he shouldn't have slapped my face.

**Abuse at EPQ-EZB [REDACTED]**

56. EPQ [REDACTED] was always hitting [REDACTED] EZB [REDACTED] never lifted a hand to [REDACTED] but EPQ [REDACTED] did. The last time EPQ [REDACTED] hit [REDACTED] they had visitors over. Because [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had to go to bed. [REDACTED] jumping up and down on the bed, [REDACTED] EPQ [REDACTED] came up the stairs in a rage and hit [REDACTED] with a slipper to a degree where the back of my legs, my backside, and my back, were all bruised. [REDACTED] It wasn't over [REDACTED] clothes, he hit [REDACTED] bare skin. I can prove that because it is mentioned in my files.

57. EPQ [REDACTED] was a very aggressive man, he was very moody. He trapped my fingers in the tractor door. [REDACTED] He was always frustrated about something and I think he just took it out on me. I don't think he should have fostered children. I heard through the grapevine that he abused other children.

58. I had a nightmare one night and I went through to EPQ [REDACTED] and EZB [REDACTED]'s room. I told EPQ [REDACTED] I had a nightmare and he told me to put my hand out. Then he hit my hand twice with a slipper and told me to get back to my bed.

59. The thing that makes me angry is EPQ-EZB [REDACTED] response to why [REDACTED] hit with a slipper. They said it was because [REDACTED] deserved it. I have got it in black and white in my records.

**Reporting of abuse at** [REDACTED]

- 60. Back in the 1980's kids might have got a pat on the bum or whatever but they didn't get battered, and [REDACTED] got battered black and blue. My mum saw it when she came up to visit the next day. [REDACTED] getting changed in the kitchen and she saw the marks. She swore, asking what that was. She said that she didn't hit [REDACTED], and she didn't expect them to hit [REDACTED]
- 61. John Small was still [REDACTED] social worker and he came up the same day. The police were involved as well. One was called P.C. Nish but I can't remember the names of the other ones. There were definitely Polaroid pictures taken of the bruises on me, [REDACTED] had to take [REDACTED] clothes off for [REDACTED] injuries to be photographed. [REDACTED] got removed from [REDACTED] the very next day.
- 62. [REDACTED] got examined by a doctor in Stranraer after that. I can remember a few medical examinations after leaving [REDACTED].
- 63. My mum had seen bruises on [REDACTED] before that. She had come to see [REDACTED] one day and took [REDACTED] to the toilet in [REDACTED] farmhouse. She reported that to the social workers as well but nothing was done about it.

**Leaving** [REDACTED]

- 64. Although I was happy about getting removed from [REDACTED] house, I was forced back to my father's house. He was a very abusive man. [REDACTED]
- 65. I was back at my dad's house from the age of about five until I was about seven years old. [REDACTED]



- 66. My dad was abusive. My dad choked me one time and I was bruised from one side of my neck to the other. I had to wear a polo neck jumper.
  
- 67. My dad got away with a lot of the abuse that he did. He was a smart man and when he would leave a bruise, he would keep [redacted] off school. He would tell [redacted] to tell the school that [redacted] unwell. [redacted] I spoke out about the abuse by my father and got removed to foster care. [redacted] [redacted] went to stay with [redacted]

**[redacted] foster care 1990**

- 68. [redacted] was a very caring woman. I am still in touch with her through social media. [redacted] only with [redacted] for about three weeks. When [redacted] stayed with [redacted], [redacted] went to Kirkcudbright Primary School. Then [redacted] lost a close friend and she couldn't cope. She didn't feel it would be fair [redacted] to stay when she couldn't cope so then [redacted] went to stay with another woman called [redacted].

**[redacted] (Surname unknown) foster care 1990**

- 69. [redacted] was a foster carer in Stranraer. I can't remember her surname, or her husband's name. She had a son too but I can't remember his name either. [redacted] [redacted] forced to go back to my dad's. [redacted] told the social workers [redacted] didn't want to go but the social workers forced [redacted]

**Return to parental care 1990**



70. Before [REDACTED] went back to stay with my dad, when I was seven years old, [REDACTED] went to stay with my mother for a couple of months. Then [REDACTED] forced back to my dad again. He said that my mum couldn't handle [REDACTED]. My mum suffered from depression. Anyone who met my mother would know that she had been through the wars.
71. My dad stayed in a village called [REDACTED], about three miles outside Stranraer. They had a primary school in the village.
72. There were various Children's Panels that [REDACTED] had to go to. I have done some research and it says that a child should have a voice at a Children's Panel from the age of eight or nine years but [REDACTED] n't allowed to express [REDACTED] opinion. [REDACTED] sitting there, but [REDACTED] n't given any options about where [REDACTED] going. The adults decided where [REDACTED] went. My dad was a very intelligent man, he knew how to manipulate people.
73. My teacher Mrs Clanachan sat at Children's Panels and lied. She said I was doing well at school and I knew that I wasn't. I was very destructive at primary school. I couldn't focus on one thing long enough. They were doing these tests on me, getting me to move shapes and make cubes. It was Mr Higgins who used to do different tests with me. Mr Higgins was a teacher in the school. It is in my records that I was diagnosed as dyslexic at that time. They could see that I had behavioural problems. It is one of the contradictions that my lawyer has picked up on, that they were saying I was disruptive and at the same time saying that I was well behaved. I was no angel as a child, believe me.
74. When [REDACTED] forced back to [REDACTED] dad's house, when I was about eight or nine years old, before Gifford House, I was assigned a psychiatrist called Elaine Powell. I trusted her and told her what my dad had done to me. My dad was sitting outside in the waiting area and she called him in to speak to him. She told him everything I had said. I had to go back in and deny it but I got a hiding when I got home.
75. My dad threw me against a door when I was nine years old. He broke my arm in two places. I went to a hospital called the Garrick Hospital in Stranraer, which is no longer there. My doctor, Dr Balmer, examined my arm and said it was done with either a

punch or stick but the social work never did anything about it and I was still stuck at my dad's house. The social workers never really came out that often. I find it strange now. Things have changed since then.

76. Then when I was nine and a half years old, [REDACTED] removed from my dad's and [REDACTED] sent to Gifford House.

**Gifford House Children's Home, Castle Douglas, 1992 to 1993**

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

**Milton House, Stranraer 1993**

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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**Hillside Residential School, Fife 1994 to 1998**

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Leaving Hillside Residential School**

135. I didn't get a chance to do the independent living lessons at Hillside, where they taught you how to cook and things. I got accused of something I didn't do, and which I was cleared of, but they moved me to St Mary's.

### **St Mary's Kenmure Boys' School, Bishopbriggs 1998**

136. I was only at St Mary's for a month, when I was fifteen years old, before they moved me to another residential school again.
137. St Mary's wasn't a nice place for me. It is like a prison for children. It was the first time I had been in a place like that. I got on well with everyone, I made friends there as well.

### **Routine at St Mary's Kenmure**

#### *Leisure time*

138. I started to write my story when I was in St Mary's Kenmure. I had help from a worker and she couldn't believe what I had been through. I never got to finish it.

### **Leaving St Mary's Kenmure**

139. My lawyer at the time didn't agree with me being in St Mary's so I got moved to Moore House in Bathgate.

### **Moore House School, Bathgate 1998**

140. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Leaving Moor House School**

143. As I have said, it says in my records that I was only at Moore House until they could find me somewhere more suitable. I think they were waiting for a placement in Geilsland for me.

### **Geilsland School, Beith, Ayrshire 1998 to 1999**

144. I was still fifteen years old when I went to Geilsland. I was in Geilsland for over a year. Geilsland was run by the Church of Scotland. Geilsland is in Beith, a small town about twenty miles south-west of Glasgow. [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] Geilsland when I was there. Chis McNaught was the Assistant Manager.

145. I think a lot of the staff were ex-military or ex-police, two in particular called zHVK and ERT. If you took one look at zHVK, you would think he was in the army. He was about six feet tall and full of muscle. ERT was a bit smaller but there wasn't an ounce of fat on that man. Nancy was an old lady, I think she was in her sixties. She said she used to work for a prison. Alan was an average guy. There was Tom Mormon and another Tom but he didn't come across as a friendly guy which seems unfortunate if you're going to work with children.
146. There was a woman called Claire, a man called zHVI another called Tam, and a guy we called Wisp because of his hair. Everybody like Wisp. He was into music and we played guitar and piano together. He was a pretty cool guy, I don't believe he would have done any harm to kids.
147. When I think about it there was no-one younger than me in Geilsland. They were all fifteen years old, or older because you could stay in Geilsland until you were eighteen years old.

### **Routine at Geilsland School**

#### *First day*

148. Before I even moved to Geilsland they took me there for a visit. My social worker, Audrey Reid, took me and showed me round. They showed me the workshops and what to expect. Then I was taken back to Moore House and it was a week or two later that I moved into Geilsland.
149. I felt like I was being moved from pillar to post. I felt I shouldn't be getting moved about like that but I thought I would give Geilsland a go.
150. When you came into Geilsland there was Lomond unit, and you could see Garnock unit and the workshops. The third unit was behind the workshops but I wasn't ever in

it. On the left hand side was the main building where the main offices were, where they had meetings.

151. There were three units in Geilsland. When people got move into Geilsland, they went into Lomond unit first. Everybody went in there to be assessed. Then they decided if you got moved into one of the other units or if you stayed there. If you were moving on from Lomond unit, you went to Garnock unit. I can't remember what the third unit was called. I was in Lomond unit for maybe a month or two. Then I got moved over to Garnock unit.
152. I noticed how some of the boys acted in there, I knew some of them weren't straight. I knew I was gay back then but I was in the closet. There was a boy called [REDACTED] who was open about his sexuality but nobody really cared about your sexuality in Lomond unit. I suppose they might have been more bothered in the other units.
153. There were twelve boys in Garnock unit. The regime was just the same in Garnock unit as it had been in Lomond unit but the layout was different. In Lomond unit, all the bedrooms were upstairs but in Garnock two of the bedrooms were downstairs. The only difference was that there were three dormitories in Garnock. Each of the dormitories at Garnock had its own living room, kitchen area, a bathroom with a shower, and four bedrooms.

*Mornings and bedtime*

154. From Monday to Friday you would get up in the morning, shower, have breakfast, and then go to school from 9.00 am until 12.00 pm. We would get woken up by whichever staff were on duty in the morning.
155. When we went to bed at night they had night staff. In Lomond unit the bedrooms were upstairs. There was a man who would watch over the boys to make sure we weren't doing anything stupid or running away. There was a bit in the middle he could sit at and there was a little office for him. There could be staff staying over at night, sleeping, but the little guy was always there awake. I didn't ever have to call on the night staff,

when I went to bed that was it, I was straight to sleep, then back up in the morning for a shower, and then back to school again.

156. Every unit had three different night staff. In Garnock unit they were [REDACTED], and Robert, who we called Rab. Rab was usually up for a laugh and a carry on. Thirdly there was an older chap whose name I can't remember. Sometimes there was one member of night staff on duty, sometimes there were two.

#### *Mealtimes/Food*

157. They had a small dining area in Lomond where we would sit. They had that in all the units. We had breakfast there in the morning and at lunchtime we would come back from the educational unit and after lunch we would go to the workshops where you learned a trade.
158. In Lomond unit the food was good, it was a lot better than in Garnock unit. I can't remember the name of the lady who cooked in Lomond unit but everybody liked her food. She was only there for lunchtime and tea, she was away after that.
159. For supper, you could make a bit of toast or something. The staff would take you into the kitchen to do that. They had a main kitchen, but in Garnock unit, every dormitory had its own little kitchen to make a coffee. The staff were fine if somebody wanted a bit of toast or a packet of crisps.

#### *Washing/bathing*

160. They had showers in Geilsland, not baths. Every dormitory had its own shower. I think there was a bath in the dormitory up the stairs but nobody used it. There were no restrictions on when you could go for a shower. I had a friend in Geilsland called [REDACTED]. He was from England, he had a really strong accent but he got on well



with everyone I think he had a severe problem with cleanliness because he would have three or four showers a day. People used to mock him for it. If he had any bit of sweat on him, he was straight into the shower. To the best of my knowledge, he didn't get any help with that cleanliness obsession. I don't know his background, maybe there were reasons for that.

*Clothing/uniform*

161. They had two washing machines and a tumble dryer in Garnock unit so everybody took their turn doing their washing. I think everybody knew how to use the washing machine.

*Leisure time*

162. Near the dining area in Lomond was the games area. Normally, after we finished in the workshops, people would come home and play a game of pool, play on the Playstation, or watch TV. They also had a smoking area in there as well. You were allowed to smoke in the building.
163. If you went for P.E. they had a pool table there and most people would just play pool. I can't remember the P.E. teacher's name but he was good at pool. Most people couldn't beat him. He was in his fifties, he was muscular, and had a metal plate in his head. He had a heart attack in Geilsland but he was OK. Most boys liked him.
164. They did have a kind of football pitch but nobody was interested in physical education. It was rare that you saw boys running about with a football. I think a lot of the boys were lazy at Geilsland. They did have equipment for badminton and other sports but nobody was really interested in them. They were more interested in getting into trouble or running away.

*Trips and holidays*

165. Sometimes, but very rarely, the staff would take us on an activity like ice-skating or something like that.
166. Sometimes the staff would take us to their houses. They would hire a video that maybe wasn't in our age group, maybe an 18 certificate. Instead of taking us back to the unit we would watch it there. In Garnock unit there were two members of staff who did that. The first was [REDACTED], who we called [REDACTED]. The second was [REDACTED].
167. [REDACTED] took us to his dad's house which was near an airport but it wasn't far from Geilsland either. [REDACTED] dad was there too. I don't know his name, he was just an old man. Nothing physical happened when I was there but I did find it a bit strange that certain people took us to their houses. [REDACTED] did have gym at his dad's house and me and the other boys would lift weights, mostly with our t-shirts off. I don't know if it was grooming, I don't want to make an assumption.

#### *Schooling*

168. The school at Geilsland was for the whole place. There were classes in English, maths, and computing. I think those were the only three school subjects they had but you could study joinery, painting, plumbing, to be an electrician, and I think you could learn to be a mechanic there too. I think they were trying to get people to learn a trade.
169. I would go to my classes in the morning and go to joinery and plumbing in the afternoon. The only time that changed was on a Tuesday, because everybody had to go to church.
170. There were people who came to Geilsland for the educational part, and then went home again, back to mum and dad or whoever. I can still remember a boy called [REDACTED]. He would come from Glasgow on the train. He was at Geilsland every day from Monday to Friday, then he went back home again every night. The school day ended at 3.00 pm. He wasn't there at all at the weekends. He used to be in my class but then he got moved to another class.

171. We had teachers who came in for the classes in the morning but they didn't work in the residential units. The staff from the units were the ones who were teaching in the workshop sheds in the afternoons. There was one teacher called Doreen who would fill in for staff in the units if someone was off sick. Everyone got on with Doreen. She was quite a hardy woman. Some boys would try and wind her up but she wasn't one to be messed around with.

#### *Healthcare*

172. I don't think there was any healthcare, like a nurse or anything, in Geilsland. The only place I went to like that when I was in Geilsland was when the staff took me to get glasses.
173. I wasn't taken to see a doctor in Geilsland. If I fell ill, if I had flu, they would just let you sleep in bed. I never saw anyone being taken to the doctor.
174. One thing that happened when I was in Geilsland which I found strange was that when I was fifteen years old, we were given the choice whether to get the Meningitis vaccine by two nurses who came to the unit. At least, that's what they told us it was. The reason I took it was that my cousin, [REDACTED], had died from Meningitis. I thought I didn't want to chance it.

#### *Religious instruction*

175. There was a small chapel at Geilsland. We had to go to church on a Tuesday. Even if it was against someone's religion, they still had to go. People were forced to go. Some boys didn't want to go but I went because I have a belief in God. They used to make fun of me for believing in a higher power, but that's the way I was brought up so it didn't bother me going to church. I never understood why we didn't go to church on a Sunday. We were only at church for about an hour. They would teach us a bit of the bible. Sometimes other people would come to the church. There was a man from America who came. He had a hard life, he was raised by mice. There was even a choir

from America that came. After we had been to church we just went back to the workshops or the classes. I wasn't aware of any sectarianism at Geilsland

176. The chapel was on the grounds of Geilsland. I have seen pictures of the church recently and it looks a lot different from when I went there. They do weddings there now.

#### *Work*

177. If you were doing good in the workshops you would get a very small payment. It wasn't very much, but you would get something. In the plumbing workshop I learned how to fix a toilet and how to fix a sink. I remember when I was in the joinery workshop, I used to build chairs and tables. They were then sold on to people. So you were learning but they were making profit off of us doing that. I was told that by the guy who was the head of that workshop. His name was [REDACTED] but we used to call him [REDACTED] I heard him over-saying to someone that the chairs were getting sold.

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

178. I never saw anyone having their birthday celebrated in Geilsland. We maybe had a Christmas dinner but it was nothing spectacular, nothing like you would have in a family home.

#### *Personal possessions*

179. We got pocket money and because I was a smoker, the staff would take us down to the shops to get cigarettes. They had permission from my mother that I was allowed to smoke.



*Visitors*

180. I was the only boy in Geilsland that didn't get home leave. When I got moved to Geilsland, I think I only go to see my mum once when I was in there, when she came to a fun day at Geilsland. Other parents were there too. They had a sports event on that day. People had to lift weights and see how far they could carry them, things like that.

*Review of care*

181. I was hardly ever in the offices in the main building but if I had a Children's Panel, it was in there. I can't remember who my keyworker was in Garnock unit. Everybody had an allocated keyworker.

182. My social worker was Audrey Reid. I never liked her at all. The manager from social services back then was David Drake. I never got on with him either. I think Audrey Reid came and saw me once when I was in Geilsland, I think it was for a meeting about my progress. They had meetings like that to see how I was getting on at school, how I was getting on with other boys. Those meetings were in the conference room in the main house at Geilsland.

183. There was a guy called Tom Mormon who used to come to all my meetings with me. Tom Mormon was the manager of the unit before HNL [REDACTED] took over. Tom lived in Beith and we got on very well because he played piano as well. He taught me some pieces. He was a really nice guy. Then he left and HNL [REDACTED] came on as manager. He is another one who would have smelled the drugs ERW [REDACTED] was bringing in and did nothing about it.

*Family contact*

184. At weekends most boys would go home to see their families. There was myself, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and IVZ [REDACTED] who were the only four who didn't go home. Other boys were committing crimes all the time but they still got to go home. Some boys were

running away from Geilsland to Beith and getting drunk or throwing stones at windows and other boys were committing crimes when they were home for leave but they still got to go for home leave again after that.

185. My dad and mum were always fighting and I couldn't see my mum when I wanted to. It wasn't the school that was trying to stop me, it was my dad. My dad was trying to prevent me from seeing my mum. He was working through lawyers to create a stigma. He always liked to control people. My mum used to be scared of my dad but not now.
186. There was a guy who worked in Geilsland called Tom Mormon. He was the manager of Garnett unit at one point, before a guy called HNL took over. Tom was a good guy, he had a sports car. He took me down once to see my mum

#### *Running away*

187. Every home I was in, I always ran away to see my mother. Geilsland reminded me of Bishopbriggs but it was open. You could walk out if you wanted whereas you were locked in at Bishopbriggs.

#### **Abuse at Geilsland School**

188. I didn't have any problem with being bullied by any of the other boys, I could hold my own.
189. There was a report in the papers years ago about a man abusing boys in the unit. His name was zHVI because he had . He didn't do anything to me. It was a female member of staff who found out about it, I think her name was . She went to do something about it but he murdered her and then killed himself.
190. The reason I knew there was something dodgy about zHVI was that he took me out in the minibus one day, when he had to pick up something from home. He was telling me stuff about other boys that he shouldn't have been telling me. He told me that a

boy called [REDACTED] was bi-sexual and that he fancied me. A member of staff shouldn't have been telling me that.

191. ERW [REDACTED] punched a boy in the eye and gave him a black eye, but he blamed it on another boy called [REDACTED], I can't remember his second name, and [REDACTED] got put out of Geilsland. [REDACTED] was the type of boy who would stand up for himself.
192. ERW [REDACTED] was the kind of guy who if he liked you, he liked you, and if he didn't, he didn't. ERW [REDACTED] certainly didn't like me, he made threats against me. It was through ERW [REDACTED] that [REDACTED] got moved to another placement. Me and [REDACTED] were like brothers but I can't even find him online because I can't remember his second name, it's that long ago.
193. ERW [REDACTED] was the one who was bringing drugs into the boys at that time, and the boys couldn't afford to buy the drugs. ERW [REDACTED] ended up emigrating to another country. It was [REDACTED] who told me that at a later date, that it was ERW [REDACTED] who was bringing the drugs in and that he emigrated. Apparently staff found out about him bringing cannabis in to the boys and he took off. In my opinion it should be an automatic prison sentence for someone in that position bringing drugs to vulnerable young persons.
194. Every time ERW [REDACTED] was on duty, the smell of cannabis would hit you. I don't know why ERW [REDACTED] was bringing drugs in to the unit. I don't know if he was getting paid. The boys he used to associate with were [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] something, and a fifth boy whose name I can't remember. They always used to be in the unit together all the time.
195. I knew it was ERW [REDACTED] bringing the drugs in, I think that was the reason he moved me to the bottom dormitory. There was [REDACTED], myself, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in that dormitory. I think ERW [REDACTED] realised that I had worked out what was happening.



196. Anyone could smell the cannabis. The thing that angered me was that **KMJ** **SNR** walked in to that unit and would say that he was just popping in to see that everything was alright. He was there less than two minutes and then he would leave. He was basically turning a blind eye to the drug use.
197. I was assaulted by the member of staff called **ERT**. Me and my friend **██████████** planned to run away. I was going to see my mother and he was willing to come with me. There was a train station near Beith and we had it planned when we were going to get the train late at night. We were going to sneak onto the train to Glasgow, and from Glasgow down to Stranraer but it didn't go according to plan. We got outside the building and that's when **ERT** caught us. He was one of the night staff at Garnock. I think there was another member of the night staff on duty that night but I'm not sure who.
198. When **ERT** caught me he threw me against a wall and cut my head open. I still have a scar there. Normally **ERT** was OK with people but that time he came behind me, put me in a headlock, and threw me up against the wall.
199. The funny thing is, **ERT** didn't do anything to **██████████**. I was the main target that night. **██████████** just went back to his room. I have no idea why **ERT** did that to me. I wasn't threatening him or acting in a threatening way.
200. After he threw me against the wall **ERT** pushed me back to the building and I went away from him. I did say to **ERT** that he had no right to do that to me. I could understand that if I was acting up, he would have the right to restrain me, but not to throw me up against the wall.
201. I know I wasn't the first person to be hit by **ERT** because one night **ERT** gave **██████████** a black eye. **██████████** didn't take it any further, he didn't get the police involved. I didn't witness it but it got around the unit. **██████████** must have told people what happened. I am pretty sure **ERT** hit a few other boys as well.



202. zHVK was the one who assaulted me with a chair. It was another night when I was running away. I can't remember who I was going to run away with, it is that long ago. I hid in one of the built in wardrobes in the bedroom and my friends hid in the others. zHVK came storming into my room looking for me and then I heard him up on the roof. I could hear him swearing. He said, "No one's going to be fucking running away when I'm on!"
203. He came back from down from the roof, through my bedroom window. He then found me in the wardrobe and he threw me to the other side of the room. He was capable of doing that, he had very muscular arms. He was in a rage. He lifted a wooden chair and threw it at me. It broke on my foot and my whole foot was black and blue. If that chair had hit me differently, it could have killed me.
204. When I confronted zHVK about it the next day I took my trainer off and showed him what he had done to me, he didn't show any remorse or say he was sorry. He said, "Well you will know not to fucking run away when I am on." He said it quite aggressively. I would say a lot of the boys were scared of zHVK I heard round the unit that other boys had been hit by zHVK and ERT too.
205. I don't know if my injured foot was noticed by any other staff. The P.E. teacher was off work for a few months after he had a heart attack and that might have been the same time that zHVK injured my foot.
206. I tried to stay away from zHVK after that. The only time I would see him was at the dinner table. I tried to stay away from ERW and ERT as well. I would ask the day staff who was going to be on duty that night. If they said it was ERT, I would be in my bedroom before he even came in the door. If he could get away with hitting children, I just wanted to stay away from him.
207. I believe that there was more staff that were lifting their hands to children. I think it was well known what was going on. I think some of them shouldn't have been there. I think some of them were ex-forces. I thought that at the time. You can pick up on people's

mannerisms. Also, it was going around the school that zHVK was in the S.A.S. and that ERT was a Royal Marine.

208. I got threatened in my bedroom by zHVK I was accused of doing something I hadn't done and he was threatening to get me done in if I went to prison. The way he sounded, it was believable. Luckily a few months later I was able to leave.

### **Reporting of abuse at Geilsland School**

209. When ERT threw me up against the wall and cut my head open, the police were involved. I was really angry and I smashed my room up and demanded he phone the police. The police came the same night. I think it was the police from Beith. The police took a statement from me in the office and ERT was in the office with me when I was giving my statement.
210. The police were there for five or ten minutes and then they left. I don't know if ERT had shown my files to the police. Something tells me he did because the police were not friendly, they were not nice at all. The police told me that I had done it to myself. As I said to the police, what reason would I have for throwing myself against a wall? I didn't get any medical attention. The next day I spoke to other staff about what ERT had done but no one was interested.
211. I did mention at a couple of my progress meetings that I had been assaulted by zHVK and ERT. They said they were going to investigate but they did nothing. David Drake, Audrey Reid, KMJ, Chris McNaught, and Tom Mormon would all be at my progress meetings. I presume that they would have written down what was happening at the meetings.
212. I am not aware of the police being called out for anything like that any other time. When I was assaulted by zHVK, I didn't bother phoning the police because I didn't think there was any point.

### **Leaving Geilsland School**

213. What angers me is that I didn't get to go to an independent living unit, I was just thrown in at the deep end. The social work department actually went against what the children's panel told them to do. When I left Geilsland I was over sixteen years old. Audrey Reid came and collected me and took me to the Rhins of Galloway. It was a bit like a hotel but it was run by the council. It was one room and it had a bed, wardrobe, a TV, a fridge, and a bathroom. There were drug users in there so I got put back into care. One of the drug users they were moving me away from was [REDACTED], who I had been in care with at Geilsland. He had a troubled life but he is doing a lot better now.
214. At my last panel I told them that there were drug users in the place I was living and I got put into a place called Ladyacre in Dumfries, for two weeks. It was only until they could get me into another bedsit in Stranraer. But the social workers were told by the children's panel to get me a fully furnished flat with support continuing on until I was 21 years old, and they didn't provide either of those things. It says in my file that I was to get support until I was 19 years old but I can still remember the last panel saying it was until I was 21 years of age. They never once put me into a fully furnished flat but because I was no longer under a supervision order the social work could do what they wanted.

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

215. I got my first house when I was 17 years old but I wasn't ready for it. I didn't last because I wasn't taught how to cook and things like that. I was in and out of homeless units until I was 21 years old.

216. When I got out of the care system I was wild, I was no angel. I got in with the wrong crowd and did stupid things. I went to prison four times after I came out of the care system. When I hit 20 years old that was my turning point. I decided I wasn't going down the same route as my father, going in and out of prison. I had my first gay relationship when I was 21 years old. That didn't go very well so I moved down to Blackpool where I was playing the piano in restaurants. I met a new partner and moved to Germany.
217. I moved to Germany in 2004. I stayed in Germany for twelve years. I can speak perfect German. I worked in a supermarket and played piano in two different restaurants. After my relationship broke down, I spent time in London and Blackpool where I was again playing the piano in restaurants. When I moved back to Scotland I was playing in piano in a hotel up here. I think if I didn't play the piano, things could have worked out quite differently for me.
218. I don't play piano as well as I used to because I don't practice as much. I stopped working as a piano player because the money wasn't enough. I took on a better job offer. I was getting paid more working in big supermarkets than I was playing piano.
219. I [REDACTED] didn't turn to drugs like heroin and cocaine. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### **Impact**

220. I have had problems with my emotions since being in care. I think you learn to live with it and deal with it but you never forget it. Some people are lucky because they can block things out but I can't.

221. I suffer from bad anxiety and I do have an alcohol problem but I do get help with it, I have cut my alcohol consumption right down. I used to drink seven days a week. Now, if I do drink, I might drink for two days but then I might leave it for a fortnight. I believe that my alcohol problem is related to my experiences in care. Luckily I never turned to drugs.
222. The social workers lied to me in the past, to cover their own tracks. One of them even said to me that my mum had cancer but she didn't. When my mum challenged it, the person who said that left. That's the thing about the social services, if you challenge them and you have the evidence, they leave. That happened a few times in my case. I look at the social workers as a cult. They don't help children, they do more damage to children.

### **Treatment/support**

223. I spent a lot of time playing the piano, making up my own music. That was my therapy, I never had any other help.
224. I have tried to contact people I was in care with on social media. The only person I have been able to contact is [REDACTED] I always wondered what happened to [REDACTED] and a lot of other boys. Normally everyone has got a Facebook account but I couldn't find them.
225. In certain ways I am glad I don't live where my family live. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Where I live now is nice and quiet and I get on with all my neighbours.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

226. I have not reported the abuse I suffered to the police or anyone. One of the main reasons I didn't make a report to the police is that nobody believed me about the abuse



back then, so no one was going to believe me now. Staff or social services get believed over the child. It should never have been that way but unfortunately that is still the way it is.

## Records

227. I asked to see to see my files when I came out of the care system. The files that Audrey Reid and David Drake showed me contained very little. I said to them that there was stuff missing from my file. They lied to me and told me that's all they had. They never told me I could apply to data protection for a copy of my files.
228. My social worker Audrey Reid and her manager, David Drake, said that was all that they had. When I spoke to Data Protection, they said the social workers had lied to me. The person I spoke to was called Neil Whiting and he told me that they had 1250 pages of records on me, which was more than I had been given by Audrey Reid and David Drake. This is what angers me, because the social workers are trying to cover up their own mistakes. The lawyer who is dealing with my claim against the social workers has said that she has seen a lot of cases like mine.
229. I have got all of my files now. The social work department told me a lot of lies. When I was seventeen years old they presented me with the files they had but I said it didn't add up because there was a lot of information missing. When I got my records and I saw that things like the abuse at **EPL-EPM** foster care were missing I said to the social workers that they were trying to hide things from me.
230. From what I have read in my files I would say that about twenty per cent of that is the truth and eighty per cent is lies. It says that **EPQ-EZB** n't well behaved at **EPQ-EZB** but **EPQ** terrified of **EPQ**. In my files it mentions that **EPQ-EZB** admitted to hitting **EPQ** is dead now.
231. Audrey Reid and David Drake told me I was too late to put in a claim for compensation. It was one of my support workers in adult life who told me I could apply to get my files.

Helen, my support worker, told me how to get my proper files because the social workers lied to me years ago. The files they presented to me years ago had virtually nothing in them. I challenged that and said there was virtually nothing in it. Helen told me to make the request via data protection and when I did that I got records that were 1250 pages long. My support worker also told me that I could submit a claim for compensation about the abuse that I suffered. I have a lawyer dealing with a claim now.

232. My lawyer is dealing with the historical abuse. She has read through my files and knows that social workers lie to cover their own tracks. She is going to check with Dumfries and Galloway police about [REDACTED] because when I tried two years ago they said they couldn't find any record of [REDACTED]. It's got to be somewhere because there are pictures and the police and John Small wrote things down when they removed me from [REDACTED].

### **Lessons to be learned**

233. I think there will always be someone who will get through the loopholes. Some of the people who abuse children don't have a criminal record and if you get a clear disclosure, nine times out of ten you could get a job working with children. They don't really look into anything else. The man who was sexually abusing children in Woodlands for over twenty years didn't have a criminal record. It took over twenty years to catch him out. There should be better police checks looking into people's backgrounds. I don't think places should be run by churches. A lot of sexual abuse comes from religion. It's not just priests, it's pastors and others.

### **Hope for the Inquiry**

234. I am grateful that the Inquiry is happening. Maybe other kids will come forward and something will happen and maybe the people who abuse children will be brought to

justice. I think if someone was to get a really proper sentence it would scare some of the others and stop them.

235. I hope that the people who abused me will pay the price for it. When you are in a home and you are a vulnerable child, the staff are there to look after you, not to lift their hands to you. When I was thrown against the wall by <sup>ERT</sup> [REDACTED], I was disbelieved.

236. All I can hope for is for a bit of justice for kids who are in abused in the care system. I believe that kids who have been abused in the care system should get compensation. Regardless of where it may be, it will still be happening somewhere.

**Other information**

237. 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..... [REDACTED] .....

Dated..... 09 March 2022 .....