

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

BHE

Support person present: Yes

1. My full name is BHE. My date of birth is 1970. I am 47 years old. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

Background

2. I understand that my mother spent some time in a mental health institution in Edinburgh. She met another inpatient while she was in there and became pregnant with me. I believe that I was born into a family in Edinburgh, but my father walked out on us. I have this information from having obtained records as an adult, and also from talking to people.
3. I had two brothers and a sister who were around when I was born. The eldest was my brother and then it was my sister, then . I was the youngest. I believe they were with my mum when I was born, but they were sporadically taken in and out of care.
4. I also have two half-brothers called and . They are older than all of us. I also have a younger sister called who I only traced a couple of years ago. had a different father from me, and she was adopted at birth.

Life before going into care

5. I was in and out of care in the first eighteen months of my life, before I was taken into care properly. I was taken to a place called St Helen's in Corstorphine, Edinburgh. I think it was a place for infants.
6. I don't know if any of my other siblings were there with me. I don't remember anything about the home because I was very young, but the name of it has always been in my head. Reading my files has also confirmed that I was in there.
7. I think I was four or five years old when I left there and went to Clerwood Children's home in Corstorphine, Edinburgh.

Clerwood House Children's Home, Edinburgh

- 8.
- 9.
- 10.



Secondary Institutions - to be published later

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

19.

20.

21.

22.

23.

24.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

25.

26.

27.

28.

29.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

30.

31.

32.

33.

34.

35.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

36.

37.

38.

39.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

40.

41.

42.

Leaving Clerwood

43. I was six or seven years old when I left Clerwood. I think it was winter because I remember being in the field and trying to build an igloo. I saw a van coming up the drive. I went back into the house and I remember people saying good bye. I remember getting into the van to leave with a man called Sandy. I was taken to Barnardo's on South Oswald Road in Edinburgh.

Barnardo's - South Oswald Road, Edinburgh

44. Sandy was in charge of Barnardo's home. I felt very comfortable and safe at Barnardo's. It was strange being somewhere where the abuse didn't happen. I think I was there from the age of seven until I was thirteen or fourteen years old. My siblings didn't come with me to Barnardo's. I know from my file that moving [REDACTED] with me had been considered, but it was thought that both of us together would be too much of a handful.

45. I had my own single room in Barnardo's. I have read in my file that there was an occasion when a female member of staff was reading me a book at bed time and I acted inappropriately. She said that she was finishing the reading and not continuing. I asked her why and she told me because what I had done wasn't very nice. The social worker has also written in my file that the key worker later asked me about the incident and I had said: "that's just what the [REDACTED] do."
46. I remember the female member of staff reading the book, 'Flat Stanley,' to me as I was lying in bed. I had a black and white panda cuddly toy, which had been ripped. A sewing lady had sewn a felt green patch on it that looked like underwear, which was quite funny. I can't remember what I had done that was inappropriate. It must have been something sexual because of the abuse. Nobody investigated why I had said that it was what [REDACTED] do. There are a lot of things in my file that could have been picked up as clues.
47. I continued to go to Restalrig School while I was in Barnardo's. A boy called [REDACTED] shared a room with me for a couple of nights because he also went to Restalrig School.
48. I used to have contact with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who were in other care homes, but that slowly fizzled out. [REDACTED] was in a family group home for a while, near to Howden Hall Assessment Centre in Edinburgh.
49. Barnardo's was the most stable place I had been while I was being brought up in care. It was the place where I felt most comfortable. Towards the end of my time in Barnardo's, I was put into a residential school in Peebles, called Craigerne.

Barnardo's - Craigerne, Peebles

50. Craigerne was basically a boarding school. I felt very comfortable in Craigerne. The housemaster, who was in charge, had an office on the ground floor. He had boxes

and boxes of toy cars in his office. His door was always open so you could go in a play whenever you wanted to, even if he wasn't there.

51. They used to let off fireworks on fireworks night and we'd be told to go and find them the next day. We would then be given a smartie sweet for every one we found. That was a ritual every year, which was very good.
52. There was a massive woodworking shop in the converted garage attached to the house. The housemaster would take us in there to make things. It was always with other people so there was nothing fishy about it.
53. They used to have something that was called the 'Ride Out' where they would ride the boundary of Peebles on horseback. I felt more comfortable and relaxed around animals than I did around people. There was a member of staff called Bob Soboneiska, or something like that, who lived in a flat within the main grounds of the Barnardo's Craigerne School. He had a couple of horses in the field. He would let us ride them every so often. There was also a teacher called Claire Trunda who had a cottage and small holdings just outside Peebles with a lot of horses. She would pick me up at weekends and take me riding.
54. One time there was a weeklong activities week and each member of staff was in charge of one or two children for the whole week. You would stay with them for the week at their house, and they would take you to do activities, such as canoeing. On one occasion we covered a fair length of the River Tweed and ended up camping out. We'd taken camping stuff in the canoe with us.
55. I did a lot of outdoorsy stuff with the school like cycling and horse riding. I felt really comfortable at Barnardo's.

Befriending

56. I was also part of a thing they called 'befriending' while I was at Barnardo's, which they arranged. I specifically remember a husband and wife couple who lived in

Musselburgh. They worked at the really snobby school out there, which I think was called Loretto School. The woman ran the tuck shop at the school and I don't know what the man did. They lived near the racecourse in Musselburgh. I would spend the whole day with them, at their house, every other weekend. I don't remember if they had their own children and I don't remember if I ever spent the night. I went by myself and it was absolutely brilliant. That lasted a couple of years, if that. It was a good experience.

57. I then had another set of befriending foster parents. I think they were a man called [REDACTED] and his wife, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] had worked at the Barnardo's Home, and was maybe still working there. They had a German shepherd dog called Shane who I immediately took to. We used to go out to places like Peebles for a day out with the dog. We'd walk around and see things, and we went to a place called Gino's for ice cream.
58. There was a Barnardo's fostering or adoption type thing in Glasgow, just off Byres Road, where the market was. There was a social worker there called Eilidh Grain, I think, who arranged for me to go on radio. It was a publicity thing about adoption for Barnardo's on Radio Clyde. I think Steve O'Donnell was the presenter, and he interviewed me on the radio about how I was looking for a foster family. A large part of me wanted a foster family, but a small, niggly part of me thought that I didn't want one because I had a family somewhere. I went along with it though, because being on the radio was a big thing back then.
59. Towards the end of my time at Barnardo's, I had behavioural problems. Looking back, they probably stemmed from the abuse. I would act out. It was just silly things with other kids. I was getting quite strong and the staff reckoned I was getting too physical for them. I was sent to stay at an assessment centre in Edinburgh at Howden Hall. It was like a borstal, which was locked down. They kept telling me I was only there to attend the school.

Howden Hall Assessment Centre, Secure Unit, Edinburgh

60. I was in the assessment centre when I was roughly between the ages of twelve and fourteen. Everything was locked down. In the morning, your room door would be unlocked. The room had a bed, chair and a set of drawers. The windows were all break proof glass.
61. My brother, [REDACTED] had been in there, but he had been moved to the actual house which was in the same grounds. There was also an open section, but I can't remember the name of the house he was moved to.
62. Barnardo's still kept a connection with the assessment centre, and there was still a room and bed for me at Barnardo's. I would still sometimes go back there at weekends, but not too often.

Dr Guthrie's List D School, Liberton, Edinburgh

63. After the assessment centre, I went to a school called Dr Guthrie's, which was at the top end of Liberton in Edinburgh. This was a List D school that I stayed in. It was an approved school. It was approved by everyone else but me. I was there for about a couple of years from the age of fourteen.
64. My experience there was hellish. I was brought up knowing there were consequences if you did something wrong. I didn't like the consequences so I didn't really go down that route, but I was put in a school with people who did wrong things. I stuck out like a sore thumb and felt really uncomfortable.
65. In the mornings, we were woken up, got showered, dressed and went downstairs for breakfast. Breakfast was normally cereal, toast and a drink of some sort. The food wasn't good, but that's just institutional food.

66. We had lessons during the day, including maths and English. I remember really enjoying art although I wasn't any good at it. I also loved woodwork, which I was good at. We also done motor mechanics on the side, but it wasn't part of the curriculum.
67. They had two trial motorcycles and I remember there being a track that we could take the motorcycles around on, which was on the edge of the football pitch. I enjoyed that.

Bedtimes

68. There were two dormitories with fifteen people in each dormitory. Bedtime was about 9 or 10 pm. The lights would be switched off fifteen or twenty minutes later. A staff member would come in, make sure everybody was in bed, put the lights out and leave.
69. There were fights between the boys every single night and I would be covering in my bed. Sometimes I would get dragged into them and sometimes I wouldn't. At other times, I would face the brunt of it. I just really wasn't interested in fighting. I don't know if the staff just didn't care or whether they didn't know.
70. One day, a boy pushed me too far as I came out of the dining room. I punched him and knocked him out. I carried on to class. Nobody spoke to me about it or asked why I did it. I wasn't bullied again after that.

Staff

71. There was a member of staff there who we called "Mr BFX" because he had massive hands and when he hit you, you knew about it. He hit me a couple of times but I can't remember the reason.
72. There must have been some form of discipline but I can't remember what. The staff didn't generally hit the boys because they weren't allowed to. I was treated alright by

the staff. I had started smoking by then. Anybody who smoked had to get consent from their parents, but I was still in the care of Barnardo's who wouldn't give their consent. This meant that I wasn't allowed to smoke in the school, but every so often the staff would call me into the smoke room and give me a couple of cigarettes, which was nice.

Trips and visits

73. I was still under the overarching care of Barnardo's, but I don't recall spending a lot of time there. I still had a Barnardo's social worker called Mary Pacey, who had a little spaniel dog called Coo. I remember spending time with her and going out for chips and coke. We would drive around and talk. I remember driving out to Peebles with her too. It had been hard for me to leave Craigerne, so Mary would occasionally take me there so I could have a look around. I never went in.
74. I think I would have spoken to Mary about what was going on at Dr Guthrie's school. I don't recall telling her about specifics, but I must have told her at some point. I remember reading in my Barnardo's file that I was really unhappy there and couldn't understand why I was there, because I wasn't like them. They were boys who had come through the assessment centre and who would likely be in prison now.

Leaving Dr Guthrie's List D School

75. I think my time under Barnardo's care stopped when I left Dr Guthrie's List D School. I don't know the exact date, but I remember there was a ritual when you left. You would have a massive blancmange fight outside when you were leaving the home. Even the staff would get involved. This happened outside Barnardo's after I left Dr Guthrie's. This clearly marks the day I left the care of Barnardo's.
76. I must have still been of school age when I left because I managed to persuade them to send me to Boroughmuir High School in Edinburgh. This was a normal, mainstream school. I went to stay with a foster family.

Foster care

77. During the time I was at Boroughmuir High School, I lived with what you would probably call community carers. I lived as part of their family but they were paid for it. For want of a better phrase, I suppose you could say they were like foster parents. They were Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] and they had two daughters. I lived in Dalkeith with them and joined the local cadet force in Dalkeith.
78. I had another foster family after that and I lived in the Oxcgangs area of Edinburgh with them. They were Mr and Mrs [REDACTED]. I think the dad's name was [REDACTED]. They had three sons of their own. I shared a bedroom with their oldest son, who also went to Boroughmuir High School. The younger two boys were still in primary school. I went to school every day and to all my classes, and did everything I could. When I went to sit my O'Level English exam, I threw up when I went into the room and had to leave. I then didn't bother going in for any of my other exams.
79. I transferred from the Cadets in Dalkeith to the TA Centre near Redford Barracks, in Oxcgangs. I also started going to the local church in Oxcgangs, and had made lots of friends. They used to run a disco at the local church hall on a Saturday night. We, as a group used to run these nights. We had music decks, lighting and a non-alcoholic bar. We would charge people to come in and we were making money from it. There were a few occasions when I went home with a few hundred pounds.
80. One night the foster parents said I wasn't allowed to go out, for no reason. I kicked off and went anyway. I got back about midnight and let myself in. The mother and father started mouthing off at me asking where I'd been and saying that they'd been worried about me. They said they were just about to phone the police and had to call social services to say I'd run off. I told them that they knew where I was because it was the same place I went every week. Things went downhill after that.
81. Things were okay in general terms from day to day, but when they kicked off it was really bad. This could be over anything. One time I swore at my foster parents and

walked out. I had a friend [REDACTED] at that time from school and church. I used to speak to her, but she didn't really understand.

Social work

82. I had a social worker during this period. It was a lady who I think was called Helen Henderson. I would meet up with her, but I wouldn't really tell her things. I remember nagging Helen for months for a new bicycle, because I had heard that you could get a leaving care grant. Eventually I was taken to the shops and I picked one out. About a week later she brought it round for me. I had a photograph of me with Helen and my new bike. This was while I was in Dalkeith.
83. I still saw Mary Pacey occasionally but I don't think it was legitimately within Barnardo's and social work care. I think she just felt a duty to provide after care for me.

Residential Home in Wester Hailes, Edinburgh

84. After Dalkeith, I went to a home in Wester Hailes in Edinburgh. I don't know how old I was. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Dean House Children's Home, Edinburgh

85. After Wester Hailes, I stayed in Dean Village, in Edinburgh. It was called Dean House and Brian MacLennan was in charge of it. I walked through the door and saw him. It was weird. I recognised him from Clerwood Home and hated him straight away.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

86.

87.

88.

89.

90.

91.

Life after care

92. After care, I stayed in different bedsits and housing. I was between sixteen and eighteen years old. I'd occasionally go back to see Mary at Barnardo's. They had set up an after care club, which they had plugged me into. I would go to that every week. We'd drink tea and talk about any problems that they could help with. I didn't talk about the abuse but they'd help with housing issues and things like that.
93. I joined the army when I was about eighteen. I joined the [REDACTED] Army Medical Core, so I started off in the Territorial Army in Tollcross, Edinburgh. I was in the army for about four years.
94. When I left the army, I messed about for a while. Then I got married, settled down in England and had kids. I became a father for the first time in 1995, when I was 25 years old, then again in 1998. I have two daughters.
95. I had lost contact with my siblings, but I bumped into [REDACTED] in a pub in Soho. We re-established contact for a while but then it fizzled out.
96. The police contacted me in 1996 or 1997 about the abuse. My contact with them lasted a few months. I gave them my statement and they also came to my house. The police investigation resulted in court action against Brian MacLennan, Gordon Knott and Michael Cull. I had a friend called [REDACTED] who I went to school and church with, during the time I lived in Oxfords. She went on to become a social worker and we spoke regularly over the period of the court case.
97. I had not had contact with my siblings for years, but after the police contacted me, I decided to get in touch with them. The police gave me [REDACTED]'s address so I went to his house. He was no longer there and I was told he moved to Ireland. I later found [REDACTED] via Facebook, and then also found my other siblings.
98. I am still in contact with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I had contact with [REDACTED] for a while, but I am no longer in contact with her.

99. I had no contact with my parents after leaving care. I remember turning up at my mother's door with [REDACTED] once, while we were still in care. She was not happy. She ended up marrying a man called [REDACTED] who had an adult son in the cadets. He and I didn't like the fact that our parents were getting married so we would give each other dirty looks. This was when I was still young. I am told my mother died in about 1994 of a heart attack. I have no idea about my dad or where he is.
100. After the army, I found it difficult to find regular work. I worked sporadically in bars, as a doorman. I even worked as a trouble shooter for [REDACTED] for a while. I worked as a door supervisor for a private members club for about six years, until I had a stroke in 2012. I have not been able to work since 2012.
101. I have committed two crimes in my life, which were theft and I have been to court for them. I didn't like the consequences of offending. I didn't like going to court and being on probation.

Police and court proceedings

102. I didn't tell anybody about my abuse in Clerwood House until Lothian and Borders Police phoned me out of the blue. My daughter was about eighteen months old at the time so it must have been in 1996 or 1997. They also called me at home and at work a couple of times. They asked me what I remembered about my time in Clerwood House, and I said Gordon Knott and Brian MacLennan. They asked exactly what I remembered and it all came out. I can't remember if I told them immediately about the abuse, [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED] [REDACTED] They obviously found that worth investigating.
103. I met the police a few times, then the Procurator Fiscal came down to see me at Victoria Police Station in London. He told me that the police investigation was resulting in court proceedings against Gordon Knott and Brian MacLennan, as well

as Michael Cull. I was going to be called as a witness.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

104. I gave evidence at Edinburgh High Court in 1996 or 1997. It was a very difficult process. Gordon, Brian and Michael were on trial. Brian and Gordon were found guilty, but I think the verdict against Michael Cull was a not proven one. Michael Cull had tried to commit suicide during the trial. I don't remember any police follow up after the trial.

105.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

106. After the court case, I asked my solicitor if we could sue the local authority for the abuse. I wanted to go for Brian but he had nothing. The original lawyer bumbled proceedings so I went with another lawyer, who I also think messed it up. I wanted a written apology or to sue them. I got six thousand pounds from the original criminal court case, which was like a slap in the face. The local authority decided to settle at between £34,000 and £36,000. I don't really know which action was which, but I got £40,000 in total. I don't think that was enough for them to learn a lesson. They let the abuse happen.

Impact

107. The abuse started Secondary Institutions - to be published later and that's when I was made to move school. I think, looking back, the abuse was the reason I started acting out in school and had to be moved. It was my way of coping. I believe the abuse affected my education because I left care with no qualifications. This made it difficult for me to find regular work after I left the army.

108. I started to self-harm a couple of months after I left care. It only really stopped a couple of years ago. I have not really had help about this.
109. I have always had trouble watching anything on television or even in films where there is any indication of abusive behaviour against children. I obviously remembered that something had happened, but I had pushed it so far back in my mind, and then every so often I would get a tug. It sometimes hits me hard when I see or read something about abuse.
110. When the police contacted me, the memories all came back. I had always thought that the abused becomes the abuser, and that scared me because I had a young child. I was a house husband and looked after my eighteen month old daughter at the time. I was so self-conscious when I was looking after her. I felt awkward changing her and taking her to playgroup. Most of the people there were mums and I was a novelty. I didn't know if my wife trusted me with my daughter.
111. I had always been a bit sulky and mopey, but I got depression after the police contacted me. I still have it and it sometimes hits me like a freight train. I think this is due to the abuse, and discussing it during police and court proceedings. It just popped its ugly head up. My self-harm became much worse after the police got in touch too. I would [REDACTED] my arm and end up in hospital with infections. I had to get plastic surgery [REDACTED].
112. I have never been physical with my children, but I can shoot my mouth off. When the police got in touch, I didn't know who I was anymore. I already had some problems, but it got worse. It came close to wrecking my relationship with my wife.
113. I am difficult to live with, and my wife would tell you that too. She says that I have a short fuse; I am uncooperative and tend to retreat into myself. I would often just get on my motorbike and disappear for a few hours. It was my way of trying to cope. I think this all stems from the abuse. I have tried to see psychologists, but I have a tendency to walk away when it gets too hard.

114. I find it difficult to trust people. It takes me a long time to make friends, which is why I don't have many friends. I can be in a room full of people and still feel lonely. It is hard for me to form relationships with anyone. I think it all stems from the abuse.
115. My faith as a Christian teaches me to accept what happens and try to forgive, but I can't. I can't forgive it and I can never forget it. It has been put in my mind and engraved into it. It can't be scrubbed clean. I think it is something that will be with me for the rest of my life.
116. [REDACTED] I wanted people to know my story and didn't want to sweep it under the carpet and be a victim any more. I am not a victim, I am a survivor and nobody can take that away.

Treatment and Support

117. My health problems started after I got diabetes in 1999. Since then, it has been one thing after another. I had a stroke in 2012. This has left me with weakness on my right side, short term memory loss and extreme fatigue. I had a stammer for a while as well.
118. I was diagnosed with depression at least ten years ago, after the police contacted me. I am on anti-depressants now. I tried to have contact with psychologists and psychiatrists. They have all said I am depressed and want to continue to see me, but I leave when it gets too hard. I feel that they try to make my abuse too clinical and put it in a pigeon hole.
119. I am not getting any support at the moment. When you walk away from one psychiatrist, it's hard to get plugged in to support again. The GP just says that they have tried to plug me in to help so many times. It makes it virtually impossible to get referred again. They don't seem to understand that it's so hard. I was comfortable

with someone at Kings Hospital, but the hospital is geographically difficult for me to get to.

120. I have not had any specific counselling for my self-harming.

Records

121. I asked for my records from Lothian Regional Council, as they were called back then. They said that I had to travel up to Scotland to get them. They refused to send them down. I have no records from social services at all.
122. I managed to retrieve my Barnardo's records a few years back. I went to their head office in Barkingside to get them. Someone read them with me, and then I was allowed to take them away. It covered my time at Barnardo's on South Oswald Road, Craigerne and bits and pieces about being in other places. There were a few things in it that I think should have rang alarm bells to social workers.
123. I have destroyed my files, which I think was a mistake. I will probably try to get them back again.

Final Thoughts

124. When children are in the care of a local authority, they are acting as your parents. The staff need to be vetted with criminal background checks done. I don't know if these were done when I was in the home, or if they were sufficient enough. Once they are in the job, there needs to be continuous and rigorous checks, as well as on-going training for staff.
125. The local authority have a vested interest in ensuring that things are running smoothly, otherwise their jobs may be at risk. I don't know if that then leads to them just ticking boxes to say that everything is fine.

- 126. There should be a child advocate, separate from the social work department, who children can trust and talk to about anything. This person should be independent. They shouldn't be responsible for multiple homes at a time because that leads to them having to rush and keep to timescales. It should be one person per residential unit, who can go and spend time at the home and speak to the staff and children. They should spend time there and see how the place is run, and if it is a happy place where children feel content.

- 127. There needs to be spot checks carried out in care homes without pre-warning.

- 128. There should also be a number that children can call if they have problems. They should have access to a phone somewhere without staff being around. There should be information about child abuse near to the phone that children can see, explaining what child abuse is and what forms it can take.

- 129. I don't know why it has taken so long for everything to come to light. All the signs were there with the children themselves, or within their file entries at the time the abuse was happening. I hope the Inquiry leads to changes being made.

- 130. I don't care about confidentiality and if people know my name. What has happened has made me who I am, [REDACTED] I want to get it out there because I am not a victim anymore. I am a survivor and nobody can take that away. It will hopefully never happen again to another child if people know about it.

- 131. 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.

BHE
Signed [REDACTED]

Dated 22/8/2017