

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

**Derek ALLAN**

Support person present: Yes

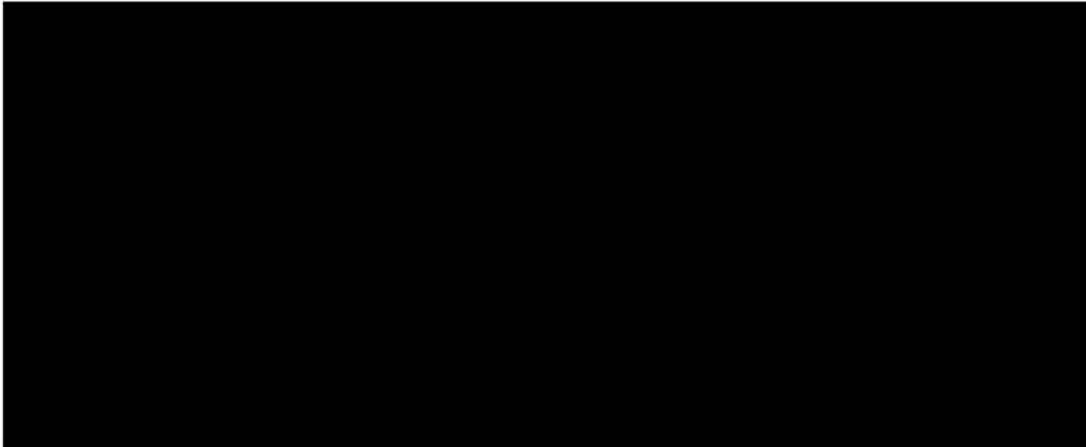
1. My name is Derek Allan. That is the name on my birth certificate. I have never really used any other surname. However, in my medical records from my time in care there are a whole load of surnames that I don't even recognise. I don't know why my mother had that happen or have ever got to the bottom of that. One of the surnames in my childhood records is Turner. That is a surname I have seen in my records in adult life too. [REDACTED] was my stepfather but I have never used that name. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1960. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Life before going into care**

2. I was born in Dalry in Edinburgh. My dad was called [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] He was a self-employed painter and decorator but he was also a bit of a "Jack the Lad." He has now passed away. He used to buy houses. Back then you could buy property like a packet of cigarettes. You didn't have to go through lawyers and all this sort of stuff. Looking back, my father was a crook and buying property was how he laundered his money.
3. My mother's name was [REDACTED] but she had different surnames at different times. Her maiden name was [REDACTED] but she also had the surnames of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. She has now passed away. She didn't work when I was a child. My mother was never diagnosed with anything but she did have mental health

issues. She wasn't right. I don't remember her ever being hospitalised or anything like that but I know she was on sleeping tablets and anti-depressants.

4.



5. We moved about a lot when I was a child. We were lucky if we were ever in a single house at any one time for more than eighteen months or two years. I don't know why that was. It was just the way that the family worked. My home life up until the age of six was pretty basic but pretty stable at the same time because my father was bringing in an income.

6. [REDACTED] treated me as if I was the black sheep of the family. Most of the time when my father was at work he took me with him but sometimes I was left with [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] used to batter me. Sometimes [REDACTED] used to batter me with a metal dog lead. [REDACTED] was very cruel to me. I remember going to bed when I was a child wishing [REDACTED] would die. I hated [REDACTED]. That is a sad thing for a child to think but that is what I thought.

7. When I was four or five I came down with German measles. My mum and dad were told by the doctor to cover the lights up in the house because, if they didn't, there was a risk I could go blind. My father did all of that. Later on my mum took all of the shades down. Because of that I was blind for about six months. I remember all of that really clearly.

8. I remember another incident with [REDACTED] from when I was about five years old. I was out with [REDACTED] going somewhere. Because I was only five I wasn't walking quite as fast as [REDACTED] was. [REDACTED] pulled me and told me to hurry up. I then fell and smashed my forehead on a stair. [REDACTED] didn't take me to a doctor or a hospital. [REDACTED] stuck a plaster on it and that was it done. [REDACTED] probably didn't take me to a hospital because that might have exposed other things that were happening. [REDACTED] told my father that I had tripped but I only fell because [REDACTED] pulled me. I have a scar on my forehead to this day because of that.
9. My father died when I was six years old. That would have been in about 1966. After my father died [REDACTED] placed into foster care in Portobello. There must have been some sort of involvement with social services but I don't remember that. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

#### **Foster care placement with unnamed couple, Portobello**

10. I was maybe at the foster care placement only for two or three weeks. I think that was during the time of my father's funeral. I remember that because I wasn't allowed to go. I can't remember what happened in foster care. I can't remember exactly where it was. All I remember is that it was a big massive house and the family [REDACTED] stayed with were lovely. They were really nice fantastic people. There was no abuse or anything like that.
11. Towards the end of that placement I was told that I was going to be going back to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and that she had moved to a place on [REDACTED] in Edinburgh. I remember being really upset because I didn't want to leave. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## Life after father passing away and foster care placement

12. After my father passed away and [REDACTED] returned back from foster care [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] My mother married a man called [REDACTED] about six months after my father's death. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] That marriage lasted until about 1974 or 1975.
13. We started moving about even more often [REDACTED]  
We were moving houses about every nine months to a year. I don't know why we moved so much but it could have been to avoid debt collectors. I think that my mother squandered all the money that she inherited from my father. It's hard to know exactly what was going on because I was so young. There was one occasion when I came home from school and my mother had moved house without telling me. I didn't have a clue where she was. To give my mother credit during this period the houses we lived in were spotless and [REDACTED] well fed. However, she never clothed [REDACTED] very well.
14. There was absolutely no encouragement from my mother surrounding my schooling. I attended school but the ones I went to varied depending on what area we were living in. I'd go to a school, start making friends and, before I knew it, I'd have to go to another school and start all over again. All of that affected my schooling. I fell behind because of all of the moving about. It got to the stage where I just stopped going to school. I couldn't see the point because I knew I was only going to be there for a matter of months before being moved on somewhere else.
15. Sadly, the abuse [REDACTED] inflicted increased tenfold after my father died. It got far worse. The abuse went on right the way through my childhood. It only really stopped after I went into care. I remember that I wet the bed a lot. [REDACTED] would beat me

because of that and make me sleep in the dirty sheets. I remember the sheets getting that dirty that there would be maggots and stuff in them. [REDACTED] would just say that it would teach me a lesson for wetting the bed and that I was a "dirty wee bastard." That was [REDACTED] way of doing things.

16. I remember when I was about seven or eight I stopped a policeman to tell him about what was happening at home. I told them that [REDACTED] was battering me. Nothing happened after I reported what was happening to them. I was told that I must have been doing something wrong and that I probably deserved it. They just sent me on my way. After realising that nobody was ever going to listen to me I started running away from home.
17. I ran away from home a few times. Each time the police brought me back home. By that time I was being constantly battered and picked on by [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was drinking a lot by then and was probably an alcoholic. [REDACTED] was never diagnosed as that but [REDACTED] was in the pub seven days a week. I remember [REDACTED] would come home with all these different men. The men would be physically abusive towards me and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] would allow that to happen. These men were coming into the house drunk and telling me what to do. I would tell them to fuck off. They then felt that that entitled them to give me a slap and then I would go back at them. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
18. There ended up being social work involvement at some point. I think I ended up attending children's hearings because I wasn't attending school. They probably started when I was nine or ten in about 1970. When I attended those it was my social worker, my mother and myself who were present. If I remember rightly there were about five or six people sitting on the panels. They never really allowed me to speak. When I was asked questions I was only really asked why I was running away from home. I would tell them it was because of the way [REDACTED] was treating me. There was no time when I was taken away separately when [REDACTED] wasn't there to speak.

19. The panel wouldn't listen to me because I was just a child. I think it was partly down to how my mother was during the hearings. She was a short, good looking woman who spoke prim and proper. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] It was as if she wrapped everybody around her finger. The panels would just believe her and put things down to me being a "problem child" because my father had died.
20. I was eventually referred to see a psychiatrist at the Sick Kids Hospital on Chalmers Place in Edinburgh. I don't remember the name of the psychiatrist I saw. I was never brought in to stay at the hospital but I did see him on about four occasions. It was the same psychologist each time. I remember that during the last appointment I was taken into a room and asked to peel a plastic banana. He then showed me a photograph of my dad. After he did that I smashed the place up. Me and my dad were really close and I really thought the psychologist was "taking the mick." After that appointment I never saw a psychologist again. It all stopped.
21. I remember that my mother made out to both social services and the psychiatrist that I was "just a wee bastard" who wanted attention. I don't want to beat about the bush. I probably was a bit of a wee bastard, as my mother would call me, and I was pretty rebellious. However, I was being abused by [REDACTED] at home. I would tell the social workers and the psychiatrist that [REDACTED] was doing things to me. I told them that I didn't want to live with [REDACTED] but they didn't listen to me.
22. In the lead up to ultimately going to Liberton I attended a number of children's hearings. Those were all to do with my running away. I remember that I had a social worker at that time. Her name was Miss Steele. She was based in Greendykes. I had a later social worker but I don't remember her name. She may have been there too. Wherever she was based she had previously drafted a report on me which basically said I was a problem child and that the problems erupted after my father died. Everything seemed to be put down to my father's death rather than the way [REDACTED] was treating me.

23. The final time I ran away from home before being placed in care I was caught by the police with one of my friends in Dunbar. That would have been in either 1971 or 1972. They took us to a police station and called Miss Steele. Miss Steele drove my friend and I back to Edinburgh. She dropped my friend home and then took me to Liberton. She took me into the building saying that she just needed to pop in before dropping me off back home. That was at about 2:00am. I didn't have a clue where I was. Miss Steele then signed some paperwork before one of the staff members came out and tried to take me away inside.

### **Howdenhall Centre, Liberton, Edinburgh**

24. I was probably only there for about six months. It could have been a bit longer. I'm sure I was there in either 1971 or 1972. That would mean that I was approximately between ten and twelve when I first went there. Looking back, I think I was probably eleven when I was there.
25. I know the place was called Howdenhall but I referred to it as Liberton during the time I was there. I didn't know it at the time but I do know now that it was an assessment centre that was run by the local authority. It was a secure unit. I don't think the windows were barred but they did have reinforced glass. There were locks on the doors.

### *Staff*

26. I don't remember the names of any of the staff who were at Liberton at the same time as me. I don't remember the way that any of them looked. I don't remember them being in uniform.

### *The children at Howdenhall*

27. I couldn't even hazard a guess as to how many children were in Liberton when I was there. I don't remember the exact age of the youngest boys there but it was pretty

young. I think the oldest boys there were about fourteen or fifteen. We were all mixed in together. I don't remember hardly any names of any of the other boys who were there at the same time as me. I know the surname of the boy who ran away with me was [REDACTED] and that his family came from Broomhouse and that is it. He is now dead.

## **Routine at Howdenhall**

### *First day*

28. I was angry when the staff member came out to take me into Liberton when I was first dropped off. I kicked off and ended up assaulting Miss Steele. I was never told why I was there. I have heard that it is an assessment centre but that was never mentioned to me at the time I was there. All I knew was what I had been told by Miss Steele and she hadn't told me anything. I continued to kick off against the staff as they took me inside. In the end they locked me up in a room until I calmed down.
29. The following day it was explained to me that the reason I was there was that it was for "my own protection and safety." Those were the words that they used. I was told by one of the staff members "you'll not run away from here in a hurry you wee bastard." I can't remember the name of the staff member who said that. I gave him a bit of backchat and I was slapped because of that. At the time I thought that I asked for it because I had chatted back but looking back it wasn't their job or place to do that. I remember thinking that I had to escape from the place there and then.

### *Daily routine*

30. You got up in the morning, had your breakfast then basically lounged about and did nothing all day. I remember just sitting in this big room with a big bay window watching television all day.



### *Sleeping arrangements*

31. I was given a room to myself when I was in Liberton. I never shared a room with any other children. The room I was in had a door that was able to be locked and a buzzer you could press if you needed to go to the toilet through the night. I can't remember anything else about the room other than it was small. I think all I had in there was a bed.

### *Washing / bathing*

32. We shared a shower room and toiletries were provided. Shower times were supervised by staff. They would pop in every now and again to check there wasn't any fighting or anything like that happening.

### *Mealtimes / food*

33. We all ate together in the dining room at the same time. The food was fine. You got your breakfast, lunch, tea and supper. I had no problems surrounding any of that at all.

### *Chores*

34. You were given bits and pieces to do. You had to keep your own bed space tidy. You had to make bed bundles and so on. There were inspections to make sure you did all that. What happened if you failed the inspection depended on who was doing the inspection. Some staff members would give you a slap. Others would take away privileges or your recreation time. I was given chores to do following gaining the staff's trust.

### *Clothing / uniform*

35. You were given clothes to wear. It was jeans and a blue pinstripe shirt. It was basically the same as what you would wear in prison. All the boys wore the same

thing. The only difference was if you had run away. All the boys who had run away were made to wear brown shorts. I remember I was made to wear brown shorts after returning to Liberton when I ran away.

*Smoking / possessions / pocket money*

36. I smoked back then but you weren't allowed to smoke there. Everybody managed to do that though. There was basically a cigarette currency. I can't remember whether you got pocket money. However, I do think you got sweeties. I think there was something they called "canteen" once a week where you got sweeties and bits and pieces. That makes me think that I must have got pocket money in some way.

*School*

37. I never got any schooling whilst I was there. I don't remember attending a class or anything like that.

*Leisure time*

38. It was the usual activities that were available to do back then in these sorts of places. It was television and table tennis.

*Leave home*

39. I didn't get to go home at any point whilst I was in Liberton. I don't remember there being a children's hearing at the start of my time in Liberton. I was just taken there and that was it. The only times I left there was when I escaped and when I went to the hearing just before I was sent to Dr Guthrie's.

*Birthdays / Christmas*

40. I'm not sure whether I was there during Christmas or at a time when it was my birthday.

### *Visits / Review of Detention / Inspections*

41. No one from my family came to visit me. I think Miss Steele popped in a couple of times to visit me. I don't remember what happened during those visits. I was switched off to the world back then. I didn't trust anybody and was too busy concentrating on getting out.
42. Nobody came up to me and talked with me to say that they were assessing me to work out where they could put me for my own safety. As far as I was concerned all I thought was that I had been taken to this place, locked up and that was it.
43. I don't remember there being an inspection or anyone coming in to inspect the place back then.

### *Healthcare*

44. I remember being checked up when I first went in. I think there was a matron who did that. I don't think there was a medical wing. I think it was a room and she just happened to be there. It was just like a room like you'd go into if you went to see your doctor. She asked me how I was feeling and asked me if I had any bruises, marks or injuries. I had long hair back then and she checked it for head lice. I can't remember receiving any other medical treatment or being checked up again during my time there.

### *Running away*

45. I remember sitting during the day in the big room looking out of the big bay windows thinking "I need to get out of here." I think because I was concentrating so much on escaping I blanked a lot of what was going on around me out. That was all that was going on in my head.
46. I was a clever kid and I was very streetwise. I realised that the only way I was going to escape was through building up trust with the staff. I ended up getting involved in

the cleaning and doing things for the staff. I became the "blue eyed boy." I eventually was trusted to pick up rubbish in the area where we played football in the grounds. One day me and my pal, a boy who had the surname [REDACTED] got over the fence and got away. That was probably around about half way during my time at Liberton.

47. I stupidly went home to my mother's after I escaped. At that time she lived on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Newington in Edinburgh. I remember that after getting home she gave me a plate of homemade soup. Whilst I was eating the soup she opened the window and shouted for a policeman who was going into a police box that was right outside our house. The policeman then came up to our house. It got a bit hairy after that. The police eventually took me back to Liberton.

#### *Bed-wetting*

48. My problems surrounding bed-wetting had stopped by the time that I was at Liberton. I never saw anyone else having those issues because I was in a room by myself. There was a buzzer to press in the room if I needed to go to the toilet through the night. A member of staff would come and escort me there and back.

#### **Discipline and punishment**

49. They had rooms where they flung you so that you could calm down. I don't know whether they had that as a policy in the place. I just took it as it came. The boys did know that it was a possibility if you did something or were caught after running away. You did know there were consequences for your actions. The rooms weren't padded or anything like that. I was flung in a room the first night I was there. That wasn't the only occasion they did that, that happened a few times. The length of time you were locked in rooms varied. Sometimes it was two or three days. Other times it could be for a week. During your time in the rooms they brought food to you. They would escort you to the toilet and back when you needed to go. All of your recreation and

luxuries were taken away. You had nothing to do. You were basically in solitary confinement.

### **Abuse at Howdenhall**

50. I can't name or describe any of the staff members. However, I can say that the way the staff kept discipline was through physical abuse. The staff used restraint. I remember occasions where a couple of members of staff sat on me so that I couldn't move and told me to calm down. They'd hold me down and stuff. Looking back, I was quite loud and rowdy so they needed to do that.
51. Sometimes they would either give you a slap in the jaw or a punch in the gut. That's how they dealt with most things. I was certainly hurt when that happened but it wasn't anything I would class as excessive. By that time I wouldn't cry for people. I'd keep my pain inside and cry when the person who hurt me was away.
52. After I arrived back at Liberton following running away I was hit a couple of times by staff members. It was the usual, a slap to the face and a punch in the stomach. I don't remember who the staff members were who did that. Looking back, if you were a child who had escaped back then you were basically someone who had made a fool of these guys. By escaping you had made them look stupid. I appreciate that because of that they would have been upset but I don't think that gave them the right to act in the way they did towards children.
53. The staff then flung me into a room on my own and the door was locked. Later a change of clothes, which included brown shorts, were thrown into the room and I was told to get them on. I ended up being in the room for about three or four days. I remember all the other boys thinking I was a hero when I came out because I had managed to run away.

### **Reporting of abuse whilst at Howdenhall**

54. I never reported what was happening to anyone in Liberton. I think all of the other staff knew what was going on in Liberton whilst I was there. I saw nothing to suggest that but I can't see how they couldn't have known in the environment they were working in.

### **Leaving Howdenhall**

55. I don't think it was all that long after I was taken back to Liberton after escaping that I attended the only children's hearing during my time there. My mother and Miss Steele were there. I think that before we went into the hearing Miss Steele told me that she was going to see if they would allow me to go home.
56. I remember that during the hearing a decision was made by the panel that they wanted to send me home. My mother, when they made that decision, told the panel that she didn't want me, didn't love me and didn't want me back home. After that the panel decided that they would send me to Dr Guthrie's. They didn't tell me how long I was going to be there. They didn't say anything like I was going to stay there until the end of my schooling. There was nothing said like that.
57. They never explored various places they could send me. They just decided that Dr Guthrie's was the place for me to go. I didn't think that that decision was based on an assessment or anything like that. I found that decision fine. I never really wanted to go home anyway. As far as I was concerned it got me away from my mother.
58. At the time I put the decision to send me to Dr Guthrie's all down to my mother saying that she didn't want me to go home. I thought that they just had no option other than to send me to Dr Guthrie's. Looking back, if there had been some sort of assessment being undertaken they didn't assess me very well because I had a history of running away and they decided to put me into an open rather than a secure place.

59. I went straight from Liberton to a children's hearing then straight to Dr Guthrie's. I think it could have been a different social worker who then took me to Dr Guthrie's. By this time I had a different social worker who was involved. I didn't really know anything about Dr Guthrie's at that time. All I had heard was that it was one of "the jaggy jumper schools." That was how my grandmother described those sort of places. That was how my grandmother described being "in care in a home."

### **Dr Guthrie's List D School, Edinburgh**

60. I spent three years at Dr Guthrie's between about 1972 and 1974. That means I would have been there between the ages of approximately eleven and fifteen. I can't remember what surname I was placed under when I was there. It could have been either Turner or Allan. [REDACTED] I am pretty positive that I was known as Allan but I can't be sure.
61. It wasn't a secure unit. You could just walk out if you wanted to. That's what I did anyway as the front door was open. You could come and go when you wanted to. If you decided to leave the place you would be asked where you were going by a staff member when you were leaving. At the back there were playing fields and you could go out that way. I think it was Liberton Road the fields faced onto. If you wanted to leave without the staff you could just get to that road and leave.

### *Layout of Dr Guthrie's*

62. The place was set in its own grounds. The building itself was like something out of the sixteenth century. It was a gorgeous looking building. When you got inside you discovered that it wasn't one big house and that it stretched out at the back. The back was massive. I think there was a North, South, East and West Wing at Dr Guthrie's. Each wing had a different dorm in them.

63. As you walked in you passed the headmaster's office to the right hand side and his living quarters to the left hand side. There were cabinets with trophies and photographs on the walls in the hallway as you entered. There were then stairs to the right that took you up to dormitories. If you carried on through to the back it took you to a big square outdoor area. That was where people played football and hung around. That was the area where everybody congregated. There was a sort of gymnasium where we played football. I don't remember there being a swimming pool. There was a big huge room where we all ate together. The kitchens were off that. There was a big room we called the TV room where assemblies might have also been held. I think there were three floors in the place. I think the classrooms were on the first floor. The dorms were on the second floor. I think Mr Keddie's office was also on the second floor.
64. There was a big field right at the back where we would play sports in the afternoon. They had posts they could put in if we were playing football. The whole area was probably about the size of two or three football pitches.

#### *Staff structure*

65. There were both male and female staff there. There was a mixture of ages of staff. They didn't wear uniform. They just looked like normal people. How we referred to the staff was a mixture. Some of them allowed you to call them by their first name. A lot of the staff wanted you to call them "Sir." Looking back, that was probably a power thing. I do remember people getting punished if they didn't call staff that.
66. I think the headmaster and assistant headmaster were in charge of all the staff below them. I think that there was a mixture of part time and full time staff. I think some were called care workers and others were called teachers. I think the staff were all called "teachers" irrespective of whether they taught a subject or not. There were quite a few teachers there who were decent.
67. Staff, other than the headmaster, did stay overnight at Dr Guthrie's if they were on duty. I don't know where they slept. However, they did stay overnight and there



were staff patrolling basically twenty four hours a day. I think it was different staff to the ones who worked during the day who did the night shifts. The staff who did that varied. I never had much to do with them.

### *Staff*

68. I can't remember <sup>SNR</sup> [REDACTED] proper name. I do remember that the boys all nicknamed him <sup>GFC</sup> [REDACTED]. He lived with his wife and daughter in Dr Guthrie's itself. His office was to the right hand side [REDACTED].
69. I think Mr [REDACTED] was <sup>SNR</sup> [REDACTED]. His office was right at the top of the building. He was quite a tall slim guy with big bushy grey sideburns. He was older. I don't know whether he taught a subject. He didn't teach a subject to me.
70. Mr <sup>KMI</sup> [REDACTED] was one of the teachers. I don't think he taught a subject. I think all he did was run the cycling at Dr Guthrie's. There's something makes me think that he might have taught maths as well. He was an older man and I think he must have been in his fifties. I got on really well with him. He was a really nice man. It was his class that I was mainly in.
71. <sup>GFG</sup> [REDACTED] was one of the teachers. I can't remember what he actually did. He might have been in his late thirties.
72. Mr <sup>GBD</sup> [REDACTED] was a teacher of some sort. He was probably about five foot seven inches. He was quite stocky. He was quite a chunky guy. He wasn't skinny. I think he had quite bushy dark hair. He was Scottish but I don't know where he was from.
73. There was one female staff member, who I don't remember the name of, who was maybe only nineteen or twenty years old. She was really nice. I think she was just like a student. She was possibly like a social worker who was there just to get experience.

74. There was a matron. I don't remember her name but she was a big woman. She would have been in her late forties or fifties back then. She was ok.

*The children at Dr Guthrie's* [REDACTED]

75. It was all boys. I'd say that there were between a hundred and a hundred and fifty boys in there at any one time. There were children at Dr Guthrie's who were younger than me when I arrived. There were people from Glasgow and other parts of Scotland. There were people from all walks of life in that place. There was a lot of coming and going of boys. You would see new faces practically every day. Boys regularly left the place.
76. There were a lot of boys in there for care or protection, or "COP" as they called it. I remember that the boys who were COP were the ones who got "slagged off" by the gangs that were in Dr Guthrie's. I never thought about it at the time but I was one of the COP boys. I never viewed myself as part of that though because I always felt I was there "for being a wee bastard" and nothing else.
77. A lot of the lads had nicknames so I don't remember their proper names. My own nickname was "Spooky." One proper name that I remember is a boy called [REDACTED]. He came from Broomhouse in Edinburgh. There was a boy called [REDACTED]. I remember a boy called [REDACTED] and another called [REDACTED]. I was a loner when I was at Dr Guthrie's. I was very particular about who I hung around with. The main person that I hung about with was [REDACTED].

78. [REDACTED]

## **Routine at Dr Guthrie's**

### *First day*

79. It was all the usual stuff on my first day there. After arriving at Dr Guthrie's I was taken up to what I think they called "North Wing." It was a big dormitory with beds down both sides. There were a couple of other boys in the dorm when I arrived. I was handed a bed bundle and told to make my bed. I remember sitting down on my bed and crying. I thought that that was now going to be my life. I was going to be locked away until "whenever." I didn't realise at that point that Dr Guthrie's wasn't a secure unit. The two boys then came across to me and asked me what I was in for and I told them.
80. The staff did the usual stuff when I came in. They said that I had been sent there by the children's hearing. They didn't tell me how long I was there or the exact reasons why I was there. They didn't show me around. It was all regimental. I was basically given a bed bundle and told to get on with it

### *Daily routine*

81. The staff would come around the dorms and shout to get you up. I'm sure that was at about 7:00am. You then went for a shower. You then got dressed and got the dorm cleaned up before going for your breakfast in the dining hall. I am sure there was an assembly. I can't remember where that was. It could have been in the TV room. I think during that assembly you were allocated certain things to do during that day. I think you were only given those tasks if you weren't attending academic classes during the day. I mostly went to Mr **KMI**'s class. After the morning classes we had lunch.
82. What you did after lunch varied. Sometimes I went back to classes with Mr **KMI**. Other times I had recreation. We would play football or whatever at the back. After that we had our evening meal then recreation. We would either just hang about smoking or watch television during recreation.

### *Sleeping arrangements*

83. I think there were only four dormitories, one in each wing. I stayed in the same dorm in North Wing throughout my time there. The ages were all mixed in in the dorms, it just all depended on who was in. There were over twenty beds in the dorm I was in. There wasn't anything like positions of responsibility in the dorms amongst the boys.

### *Washing / bathing*

84. There was a big shower room. There were toilets, wash hand basins and about five or six showers in there. The showers were open. There were no cubicles so there wasn't any privacy. Nine times out of ten the showering was not supervised.

### *Mealtimes / food*

85. All the meals were cooked for us. Nobody was allowed into the kitchens. I think everybody had their meals in the same room at the same time. The food wasn't too bad. It was ok. I remember having porridge for breakfast. As far as I remember there wasn't a penalty if you didn't eat anything. You couldn't go and ask for something to eat outside of mealtimes. There were times when we were hungry at night and would sneak into the kitchen for things to eat. I do remember being hungry quite a bit when I was there but that could just be because I was always someone who liked their food.

### *Chores*

86. Your chores were basically to keep your dorm clean. You cleared your own plates away after meals. I can't remember being made to do anything else by way of chores.

### *Clothing / uniform*

87. You were given jeans and a shirt to wear. It was like a uniform. They gave you your pyjamas. You wore your own clothes at weekends when you got to go home. I think you had a number sewn into all of your clothes. I don't remember what mine was. Once a week they came round with a basket for you to put your dirty clothes in and they would issue you with a set of clean clothes. That was the same with your bedding.

### *Possessions / pocket money*

88. When you got weekend leave you got given pocket money for that weekend. You were given it to take with you. If you didn't spend your money whilst you were on leave you could spend it on sweeties in the canteen during the week. I remember always having a couple of bob in my pocket just in case.

### *School*

89. I never really got an education as such when I was in Dr Guthrie's. I was never taught English, maths or any of that stuff. I don't recall ever receiving "the three Rs." The only thing I remember doing in a class was cycling with Mr <sup>KMI</sup> [REDACTED]. He was the one who got me into cycling. I don't really remember anyone else teaching me other than that during my time at Dr Guthrie's.
90. Dr Guthrie's provided all the bikes for us. There was a set of rollers which we used to train on. You could be on the rolling road for up to an hour at a time. Sometimes Mr <sup>KMI</sup> [REDACTED] would take us out in groups of about twelve. It wasn't the whole class that he would take on those trips. All the bikes would be loaded into the back of a van and we would go out cycling. It wasn't local places that he took us, it was places some distance away from the place. I'm sure that he took us to the Borders on one occasion. Another thing I did with Mr <sup>KMI</sup> [REDACTED] was fixed wheel racing. I remember participating in races at Meadowbank in Edinburgh.

### *Leisure time*

91. Dr Guthrie's had a football team, a cricket team and other stuff like that. I was never involved in any of that stuff. Cycling was my thing that I got involved with.

### *Smoking*

92. You weren't allowed to smoke at Dr Guthrie's. Boys managed to do that though. Looking back, probably the majority of boys there smoked. There were penalties for boys that were caught smoking. What those were depended on who caught you. I remember a couple of times when GFG caught me. All he did was take my cigarettes off me. He said something like "you know what would happen if Mr GBD caught you?" I would just say "aye I know." GFG was ok like that.

### *Religious instruction*

93. I didn't attend any church services or anything like that. I think there was a chaplain or a minister there. I don't know whether you could have gone to speak to them. I'm not a religious person so I wouldn't have gone near them anyway.

### *Trips*

94. We used to go camping with Dr Guthrie's during the summertime. We would all get into a couple of minibuses with about four staff and off we would go for two weeks or something like that. I think the place we went was in Dunbar. It was always the same spot that we went to. I remember that there were chalets. Those boys who wet their beds were put in the chalets. The rest of us were in tents. I remember those trips being ok. The good thing about those trips is that it got you away from a lot of the staff and the home.
95. My family are from the travelling community. Everyone in my family have the ability to speak to the spirits and stuff. I've been to church and been asked to take the platform because spirits come to me. One year when we were camping at Dr



Guthrie's I saw my dad. I absolutely freaked out and something happened but I don't remember what. People who saw me said I lifted the whole tent out of the ground. I don't know where I would have got the power to do that from because it was a big tent. Ever since that moment I had the nickname "Spooky." It's not a nickname I particularly like.

#### *Leave home*

96. If you were a good boy you were awarded privileges. One of the privileges you could get was weekend leave home. When you got that you either got to go home on a Friday or a Saturday then came back on the Sunday. When you went for weekend leave or a holiday home you just went yourself. Nobody dropped me off at my mother's. I was given my bus fare, I walked out the door and that was it. It was £3 or £4 they gave you. No one ever checked where I was going.
97. I used to go and stay with friends rather than go back and stay at my mother's. I remember times when I went through to Glasgow for the weekend. I used to go there with another boy called [REDACTED] Dr Guthrie's didn't know that because I was supposed to be staying at my mother's. I hated the woman so I was never going to be going to stay with her.

#### *Birthdays / Christmas / Easter*

98. I don't remember anything surrounding birthdays. You did go home for Christmas and Easter during the holidays. Sometimes you were home for as long as a week or two. You were only allowed to go home if you were a really good boy.

#### *Visits / Inspections / Review of Detention*

99. My mother used to visit me now and again. She never took me out. It was always in Dr Guthrie's itself. When she visited she would give me 50p or whatever. That was a fair bit of money back then. I would take it because I could buy cigarettes and things with the money. That was the thing I looked forward to about her visits.

100. I don't remember inspections or inspectors coming in to look at the place. According to my records I had visits from social workers, however, I have no memories surrounding that. I don't recall them ever visiting me. There is also mention of psychiatrists visiting me but I don't remember that happening. There is mention of me having a split personality but I don't remember anyone telling me of that diagnosis. Looking back, I really don't think those visits happened. I don't think it was the case that they did and that I don't remember. If those visits happened then nothing was ever done to help me in any way.
101. I don't ever remember having anything like a one to one with staff in Dr Guthrie's. The only one to ones with staff in there involved fists. I think I only saw a social worker on one occasion when I was in there. I can't remember what her name was. She just asked me how it was going and so on. The only other times I saw a social worker was when they picked me up to take me to a children's hearing.
102. I attended at least two children's hearings over the time I was at Dr Guthrie's. The hearings were held in a place up on Howden Street in Newington in Edinburgh. I would just turn myself off during those hearings. I used to treat it as a day trip. I don't remember anyone taking me aside to ask how I was getting on.

#### *Healthcare*

103. There was a matron who had her own room. There was always a matron on duty. She would check children regularly for things like head lice. I remember that when she did that to me she was a bit rough but that was just life back then. I never saw a dentist whilst I was there. They did issue you with toothpaste, toothbrushes and all of that though.

#### *Attempted suicide*

104. Some time before I ran away from Dr Guthrie's I attempted to commit suicide. I would have been either twelve or thirteen when that happened. To put things into



perspective, I had been put into Dr Guthrie's and told that I wasn't loved or wanted. Everything was running around in my head and I'd had enough. I wasn't aware it of the time but I was probably depressed and had anxiety. I made the attempt after lights out. For some reason the staff member on duty came back into the dormitory and found me. I don't think I was conscious when he found me. I think I became semi-conscious because I remember being taken to the matron's room to be checked over. No medical assistance or ambulance was called. There was nothing like that.

105. Nothing was offered to me that could help me after I attempted to commit suicide. I was taken to the headmaster's office to see the headmaster. I was asked by the headmaster why I had done what I had done and so on. I told him that I didn't want to live and I didn't want to be in there. Someone then got in contact with my mother. My mother then turned up at Dr Guthrie's. I remember that she said to a staff member that "you should have let the wee bastard hang."
106. I didn't then go to see a psychiatrist or a psychologist. There was nothing put in place to help me at all. I don't know whether my social worker was aware of my suicide attempt. I assume they would have been informed by Dr Guthrie's but I don't know. I don't remember ever speaking to one about what happened. I think my suicide attempt came up in my final children's hearing before I left Dr Guthrie's. That makes me think that it must be in my records somewhere.

#### *Running away*

107. It was during one of the afternoons when we played football at the back of Dr Guthrie's that I decided I would be leaving. That was the only time I ran away there. It was about eighteen months to two years into my time at Dr Guthrie's. When I ran away I wasn't away for just a day or two. I was away for a few months. I ran away with [REDACTED] I didn't visit home at any stage whilst I was on the run. I know that the police visited my mother's after I ran away to try and find me. From what I heard she played the card of being concerned when she was informed. Most of the time I was away I spent with a woman I knew back then. She was a friend of the

family. When the police got wind of me living with her I ended up living in a derelict church on Liberton Place in Edinburgh. I had to do various things to survive whilst I was on the run.

108. I wasn't ultimately caught when I was on the run. It got to the stage that myself and ██████████ had had enough. We saw a policeman and told him that we were escapees from Dr Guthrie's. The policeman then took us back to Dr Guthrie's. When we got back we were taken into the headmaster's office.

109. The headmaster asked us in his office where we had been for all the time we had been on the run. I said nothing, however ██████████ told him where we had been. After he said that there was a big fight in the office. I leathered ██████████ ██████████ and the office got wrecked. I was then restrained by a member of staff and taken away up to the dormitory. I wasn't locked away or anything for it. I can't remember whether they dressed you in shorts like they did at Liberton if you were returned after running away. I wasn't charged or anything for getting into the fight in the office.

110. I didn't really hear of a lot of other boys running away. It could be because I was different to a lot of the other boys and a loner that I didn't hear these things. I kept myself to myself because I trusted nobody.

#### *Bed-wetting*

111. The bed-wetters were the weak ones. They were the ones who got bullied and picked on by other boys. I don't know whether they went to the staff and reported that. The staff weren't silly. They would have known who was weak and who was being picked on or not.

## **Discipline and punishment**

112. If there were rules there I would break them. That was the type of guy that I was. Rules are made to be broken. I don't think there was a formal discipline and punishment system. It all really depended on who caught you doing whatever you were doing. There were some staff members who were ok and others who seemed to let the authority go to their head.
113. I don't know what they did when you kicked off. I never received the belt when I was there. I am not sure whether they every used corporal punishment as punishment during my time there. I don't remember them having a room like Liberton where you could be locked away. When I kicked off I was just put into the dormitory. I was never locked away in a room or anything.
114. I suppose their only real form of discipline surrounded taking away weekend leave. Your main privilege was getting out and going home. They had a system in place where you would lose your weekends if you did certain things. I think there was a star system there. If you got a certain number of stars you were ok to go home. I think you were told the previous Wednesday or Thursday whether you would be going home or not. If your behaviour was excellent you got to go home on Friday and come back on Sunday at about 7:00pm. If you were alright you left on the Saturday. If you were a wee bastard then you didn't get anything. Nine times out of ten that was the case with me. That didn't bother me because I didn't want to go home to my mother's anyway. I really don't know other than that what they did when I kicked off.

## **Abuse at Dr Guthrie's**

115. The environment and the atmosphere in Dr Guthrie's was intimidating. I would describe the feeling that I had there as being always "walking on egg shells." I don't know whether I was targeted by the staff at Dr Guthrie's. It's hard to say because I was young and had spent most of my life in that environment. Because of that you

thought that that was the way that every child got treated. It became a normality. I just viewed it that I had done something wrong and the staff just needed to come in and do what they needed to do. When you reach a certain age you look back and realise that the way they behaved was wrong. I now look back on some of the things I experienced and saw happening both in care and at home as disgusting.

116. They did use all of the mental stuff if I lost my weekends. A number of staff would say things to me. The sort of sly comment I remember was along the lines "you don't miss your weekends because you have a mother doesn't fucking want you anyway." It was all stuff like that. I used to just laugh at them because they were right. The main staff member who would say things like that was Mr <sup>GBD</sup> however other staff members said those sorts of things too.

117. I was never sexually abused in there. I think they knew better than to do that. Paedophiles know who to pick on and who not to. For me it was more mental and physical abuse that I suffered during my time there.

<sup>GFG</sup> (*sumame unknown*)

118. <sup>GFG</sup> gave me one or two hits but I don't know why he did that. He gave me a wee scuff over the head on a couple of occasions but I took it on the chin. It wasn't anything like a skelp. He wasn't like Mr <sup>GBD</sup> He was an alright guy. Looking back I feel as if I deserved that treatment for things that I had done.

Mr <sup>GBD</sup>

119. I expected the physical punishment in the form of kicks or punches from the staff in Dr Guthrie's as just part of what they did. I thought that was just the way staff responded when I did something wrong in all these sort of places. That was especially so if Mr <sup>GBD</sup> was on duty. He was an absolute bastard and the worst staff member there. He should never have been employed in that job because he was an animal. He would hit me quite regularly. I wouldn't go as far as to say that he hit me daily because he wasn't on duty every day however it was often. He was



always on his own when he hit you. There were never any other staff members about.

120. There would be times when you were just walking past him and he would give you a slap around the head. You wouldn't know what it was for when he did that. He was a chunky guy and I was a child so to be hit like that was quite powerful to me. If he hit you you went down. If you fell down he would drag you up and say "will you stand and fucking look at me when I'm talking to you." He'd maybe then punch you in the gut or whatever. If Mr <sup>GBD</sup> caught you smoking he would slap you and punch you. I remember occasions where he caught me and stood telling me off before he slapped me around my face.
121. There were repercussions to me running away. I was having a shower in the shower room after I came back. Mr <sup>GBD</sup> came into the showers and said something like "ah there you are." I said "aye" then he skelped me round the jaw with his fist. I turned around and said to him "what the fuck was that for?" He then punched me again and I slipped to the floor. As I fell over I split my head open on the lip that was on the shower room floor. I think that when Mr <sup>GBD</sup> saw the blood he panicked. There was quite a lot of blood as it was made to look worse because of the water. He then took me to the matron's office for treatment for my head. Mr <sup>GBD</sup> told the matron that I had slipped. The matron didn't even ask me what had happened. I think she knew because I shook my head at her when he said that. I wasn't taken to hospital. I have a scar on the top of my head to this day because of that incident.
122. I saw Mr <sup>GBD</sup> hitting quite a few of the other boys. I never witnessed anyone else who got hit as bad as they required medical help. However, from what I witnessed of Mr <sup>GBD</sup> and the way he acted I daresay there would have been times where that might have been something that happened.

*Night watchmen removing boys from the North Wing dormitory*

123. The night staff used to come round to my dormitory at night and get certain boys out of bed. They were woken up well after lights out at 9pm. It would have been in the

middle of the night. It would have been during the middle of the night or 1:00am. All the boys who were got out of their beds were those that were known as the "wet the beds." Back then I just thought that they were getting woken at night to be taken to the toilet. When boys were taken away they were taken away for a wee while. It was probably forty five minutes plus. Whenever those boys did come back they would always be crying.

124. We always classified the member of staff who took boys out as "the night-watchman." The staff who had that role were never around during the day. I wouldn't be able to describe any of the people who did that job. I don't know whether they had a room that they stayed in overnight. Other than seeing them come into the dorms and taking out boys I never saw them any other time.
125. We did interact with the other dormitories in Dr Guthrie's. [REDACTED] was in the dormitory that was over from me. Everybody mingled. It was just like a school. We all got together in the mornings, went to classes together and played football together. However, I only stayed in one dormitory during my time at Dr Guthrie's. I can only assume that boys were taken out of the other dorms during the night.
126. I was of the opinion during my time in there "go in there, do my time and get out." I wasn't interested in looking out for the younger boys or any other boy. I was just a loner. As selfish as all of that sounds, I was out to make sure that I was the one who was ok. Looking back, I wish I had done something but I recognise that I was just a kid back then.
127. I've exposed paedophiles for over twenty five years. Looking back on what was happening at Dr Guthrie's, with the knowledge I have gained from doing that work since, I know that the children who were taken out of the dorm weren't bed-wetters. If you're a heavy sleeper, you have a problem with bed-wetting and you're woken up to be taken to the toilet you would be back within ten minutes. You certainly don't get taken away for more than forty five minutes. You certainly don't come back to your bed crying. Added into that I remember that it was always the same group of

lads who were woken up and taken out of the dorm. They were all younger and weaker boys.

*Peer on peer abuse heard of after leaving Dr Guthrie's*

128. [REDACTED] was a pupil who was at Dr Guthrie's during a time when [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was there. He was a sexual abuser but I don't know anything more than that. I heard that from [REDACTED]. I never witnessed him sexually abusing anyone.

**Reporting of abuse whilst at Dr Guthrie's**

129. I used to report what was happening in Dr Guthrie's to my mum when I saw her. She never seemed bothered. As far as I am aware she never raised anything with Dr Guthrie's. I never reported what was happening to anyone else.
130. There probably were opportunities to say how you were getting on with staff or report things but there would have been no point in doing that. None of the staff would have listened to you. By the time I was there I would never have done that with anyone. I'd learnt by that point that nobody was interested in me. I think all of the other staff knew what was going on in Dr Guthrie's whilst I was there. I saw nothing to suggest that but I can't see how they couldn't have known in the environment they were working in.

**Leaving Dr Guthrie's**

131. It wasn't long after returning to Dr Guthrie's from running away that I was released. That would have been about six or nine months after I came back. A children's hearing was arranged. I would have been about fourteen or fifteen by that time. I was discharged from Dr Guthrie's by mistake and there were events into the lead up to that decision.

132. Me and [REDACTED] broke into Mr Kebbie's office. We stole a load of money and bits and bobs. The staff found out about that. Shortly after that I was due to go to a children's hearing. GFG [REDACTED] approached me before that day and asked who was taking me. I told him some other member of staff, who I knew would be away on the day of the hearing, was going to be taking me. By the time GFG [REDACTED] had found out that the other member of staff had been away with the minibus rather than taking me to the hearing I was already away on my own to attend the hearing. The reason I did that was to avoid the staff at Dr Guthrie's passing on the information about me breaking into Mr Kebbie's office. I knew if the panel had been informed of that I wouldn't have been released. At the end of the hearing I was given a "liberation date." That was about a month to six weeks after the hearing.
133. I then went back to Dr Guthrie's. When Mr GBD [REDACTED] came on duty that evening he found out that I had pulled a flanker around the office. He found me and slapped me across my jaw for being a smart bastard. I just laughed at him and told him I would be out of Dr Guthrie's in a few weeks. I also told him that I would be coming back for him. He punched me a couple of times after that and said something like "you think you're a fucking smart arse don't you?"
134. A few weeks later I was released. I was given my bus fare and away I left. There was absolutely no preparation for me leaving. There was nothing like them lining me up with a job or an apprenticeship. I was a fifteen year old with no education and I was out on my own. There was no follow up from Dr Guthrie's at all after I left.

#### **Life after leaving Dr Guthrie's and before going to HMYOI Polmont**

135. I went to stay with [REDACTED] when I left Dr Guthrie's [REDACTED] was ok to begin with. However, after a short time [REDACTED] tried to start the abuse again. [REDACTED] hit me one day and I hit [REDACTED] back. I left [REDACTED] with a scar on [REDACTED] eye. That stopped [REDACTED] abuse there and then. I then decided that I didn't want to stay with [REDACTED] any more. I then went to stay with [REDACTED]



136. I did see my social worker after I left. She was based on Loaning Road in Craigentiny. At that time I was living at [REDACTED]. That period was a bit like I was on probation. I saw her once a week at an office in Greendykes. We'd talk about everyday things during those meetings like how my week had been and what I had been up to. I think I maybe carried on doing those meetings for about a year. I also went to a place called Panmure House on the Cowgate in Edinburgh city centre. I was definitely under the age of sixteen when I went there and it was after I left Dr Guthrie's. It was a big place. It was a place for recreation. You would go there to play pool and all that sort of stuff. It was basically a place to get you off the streets.
137. I tried going to school after I was released. I went to a secondary school called Castlebrae in Craigmiller. I can't remember exactly what I had done but it ended up with two teachers holding out my hands so as I could be given the belt. I then smashed all of the toilets up and they expelled me for that. I then went to James Gillespie High School for about four weeks. I was turning sixteen, they couldn't handle me and they let me go.
138. There was a whole build up to me getting into trouble again. After leaving Dr Guthrie's I just turned to crime. I'd learnt a lot of stuff during my time in care and continued to do that after I left. I got caught because I was in a car that a friend had stolen. I was the passenger when he ran down a policeman in Queen's Park. The guy tried to stop the car by jumping in front of it and ended up underneath. My friend then crashed the car into a roundabout near The Commonwealth Pool and we were both arrested and charged. By that time I had stopped seeing my social worker and my mother wasn't supporting me. I didn't have anyone supporting me by that time.
139. I ended up in Edinburgh Sheriff Court. I remember that the original charges were attempted murder, car theft and driving without a licence. I was initially remanded to HMP Saughton in Edinburgh for detention reports. I think I was there for fourteen days. I treated HMP Saughton as if it was "another day." By that time I was immune

to the place because I had been in and out of there on remand that many times. I was institutionalised and used to the system.

140. During the trial at Edinburgh Sheriff Court I plead not guilty. I was ultimately found guilty. It all happened pretty quickly. In the end, the Sheriff said that I wasn't fit enough to go to a detention centre for three months and sent me straight to Polmont instead.

### **HMYOI Polmont, Brightons, Falkirk**

141. I think I was about sixteen or seventeen the first time I went to Polmont. That would have been in either 1976 or 1977. When I first went there I did not know how long I was going to be there. However, I'd known people who had been to borstal so I was aware that the minimum time I would be spending there would be nine months and the maximum would be two years. I ended up only spending eighteen months there. I left when I was about eighteen. Looking back on my time there, I thought I had done wrong, I deserved jail and that was just how everybody was treated.
142. All the boys there were between the ages of sixteen and twenty one. We were all basically first time offenders or people not ready for the prison system. I can't really describe the place because I was taken there in a prison van and didn't really see the outside of it. All I could see was a big building with fences around it. It was just a prison.

### *Staff*

143. I don't remember the names of any of the staff there. All the prison wardens who supervised us were called "Civils." They didn't wear uniforms, they wore civvies instead. You had to address them as "Sir." They referred to us by our number.

## **Routine at HMYOI Polmont**

### *First few days*

144. I went straight from the court to Polmont in the back of a prison van. There were quite a few of us going in that day. When I went in I was sent to what they called "Alicante." I was given my prison uniform and was given a medical. I was then taken to a prison officer who explained the rules. That prison officer was a bit like the head teacher of the place. I don't remember his name. Before I went into the room I was told to half run towards a bit of carpet in there and shout my name and number. When I landed on the carpet it slipped and I fell right under the desk that was in front of me. I later found out from other prisoners that they did that to all the people who went in there. It was a wee trick that they did with everybody.
145. I was then told what would happen if I did this and that and that I would lose privileges and all the rest of it before being taken up to a cell in the allocation unit. They placed new arrivals in that unit for about six weeks before they decided where they put you. It was basically a remand wing within the prison. You're either put into a single cell or dormitory in another part of the prison after those six weeks. After those six weeks I was allocated into a dormitory in a wing that I don't remember the name of. It could have been North Wing but I am not sure.
146. The dormitory I was in, in the wing I was allocated to, had about a dozen guys in it. There is always one guy in every dorm who thinks they are the bees knees and causes trouble for everyone else. At that time I was a red head. He picked on me because of that. I was called all the usual names by him. I found that fine because I was used to all of that. He then proceeded to slag my dad off. Because of that I snapped and got into a fight. I lost privileges because of that incident. I was taken out of a dormitory and put into a cell by myself. I spent the rest of my time on my own in a cell rather than a dormitory for the remainder of my time there because of that.

*Routine and amenities*

147. I was locked in the place all of the time and locked in my cell at night but it did feel like a normal day. Each day was spent getting up, getting dressed, breakfast, work, lunch, work, dinner. I remember the food consisting of a lot of steamed stuff. That was the same in all the prisons I went to. The food was ok at the time. I was hungry because I was grafting all day. You were allowed to smoke. I used to sneak tobacco in and had a bit of a business in there selling it.
148. I had no academic education in any form at Polmont. However, I did undertake an apprenticeship in brick laying. At that time I felt it was positive and that it might lead to me getting a job when I came out. After I finished that course I got a job within the borstal building in the new gymnasium that they were building there. I was laying breeze blocks, bricking, mixing cement and so on. I found that all brilliant. I loved doing that during my time there. I basically completed my sentence through working on that building site during the days. They were still building that gym by the time I left
149. My mum used to come up and visit me. She used to sneak me in money to spend whilst I was in there. By the time I was in Polmont she had sort of changed. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] However, my mum wasn't a stupid woman, she was making the visits for a reason. I think she knew that I would be earning money when I got out and might give her some too. That was why she was visiting me around that time.

**Abuse at HMYOI Polmont**

*By unnamed staff*

150. I was abused as soon as I walked in through the door at Polmont. I was shown to my cell by the prison officer who took me up there from Alicante. I can't remember the prison officer's name. I remember that at the time I had a tattoo which said "King

Billy.” When the prison officer saw that he called me an “orange bastard”, punched me in my face then gave me a kicking. He then said something like “you’re in fucking borstal now. You think you’re a hard man but I’m a bigger and harder than you.” To me that incident and the incident where I was made to run into the office when I arrived and shout my name and number before slipping on the carpet was abuse. They knew what they were doing on both those occasions.

151. Back then your tobacco used to be wrapped up in silver paper. We would make frames out of that silver paper to put pictures of family or loved ones in. There were two or three times when I would come into my cell and the photographs and frames would be lying there on my dresser all ripped up. I don’t know who did it but I assume it was the screws. That was abuse.
152. I did have other physical altercations with staff over the eighteen months I was there but I fought back. By rights staff members and myself, when those things happened, could have been charged with assault. However, we both just viewed it as “fair cop” and walked away from one another. I don’t think that, because of that, I would class that sort of thing as abuse. I know that some people might but I don’t. I saw all of that happening between staff and other boys as well.

*Peer on peer abuse by unnamed individual*

153. I saw someone get raped by a who load of other guys during my time in Polmont. It was like something out of the film Scum. They picked on the weak guy and did that.

**Reporting of abuse whilst at HMYOI Polmont**

154. I didn’t report anything to anyone whilst I was there. You just don’t do that sort of thing in jail.

### **Leaving HMYOI Polmont**

155. Once you've done so long in borstal they give you a long weekend home. They give you that weekend to get you used to being back in society. During that time you're not supposed to drink alcohol, associate with known criminals and so on. When I was released for that period of leave I went back to Polmont drunk and not giving a shit. I had a bottle of vodka in my pocket. When I got back to the prison a prison officer ordered me to go down to "the digger" as a punishment. The digger was basically a part of the prison down below where you were isolated and not allowed to have any privileges. It was basically solitary confinement. I think I was in there for six weeks.
156. After the six weeks they had to decide how much longer I was going to be there. There wasn't a hearing or a court appearance or anything like that. All I remember is that a female prison officer had to make the decision. Because I went back in the state I was she initially wanted me to do the full two years. When I was told that I said "fine, I'll just make your life hell for the remainder of my time here." I knew that they couldn't make me do any more time there. I also remember that I had had a letter from my uncle saying that I had a job waiting for me upon release that I showed to a female prison officer around the time they were considering my release. I think that helped. In the end I was released after only eighteen months. When I left it was a fantastic feeling. I remember there were people cheering in the wing.

### **Life after leaving care**

157. After leaving borstal no one at all kept contact with me to offer me direction or support me. There was no one like a social worker or anything like that. The letter I gave the prison officer before my release was a load of rubbish. There was no job waiting for me and I basically started a life of crime.
158. I've never been married but I have had a few partners. About a year after coming out of borstal I met a woman who was fifteen years older than me and we had a child

together. I also have two step daughters and a son. I now have two grandchildren. I love my family.

159. I have had various jobs over the years. I've worked on building sites, been involved in the demolition game, done painting and decorating, been a motor mechanic, worked in factories and worked for various charities. I've turned my hand to a lot of different things. My life hasn't been terrific and there have been one or two burdens. Over the last few years it's sort of turned around. I have not been in trouble for a long time. My life is positive now and is going forward as best it can.

### **Impact**

160. I've done a few bad things in my life. I don't think the care system would have helped with me making those decisions. I went into these places straight and came out knowing how to steal cars, how to break into places and so on. They turn you into a criminal. However, that has left a positive impact too. It has left me with the ability to mix in with either a dodgy crowd or a high class crowd. I can just fit in anywhere I go.
161. I was always a bigger kid when I was younger. I looked older than I really was. I didn't really have a lot of friends when I was in care or younger. I kept myself to myself. I'd learnt after being locked away over the years not to trust anybody. I have no trust of authority. That's something that has followed me my whole life. I avoid interacting with the police or social services if I can. I'm seeing a social worker now for various reasons and I've told her plain that I just don't trust her. As far as I see it she works for a system that has let me down. Even to this day there are very few people that I trust. I don't even 100% trust my daughter. It probably hurts her knowing that but it is just the way that I am.
162. I never really received an education during my time in care. Even to this day my spelling is atrocious. I get by and people can understand what I mean when I write. In that way it doesn't bother me.



163. After my father died nobody ever showed me any affection or gave me a hug during my childhood. It effects your whole life because you don't know how to love somebody properly. I find it difficult to show affection. That should be natural but it is just something I don't know how to give out. Even as a kid I found it difficult to cuddle people. I just didn't know how to do it because I never experienced that.
164. Today I have a very high pain threshold and tolerance. That is thanks to the way that I was treated by adults during my childhood. In some ways that is a good thing but in others a bad thing. A few years ago I had what I thought was tummy ache. I tolerated the pain no problem and tried to get to sleep. It turned out that I was having a heart attack and I didn't realise it.
165. I do attribute my mental health problems to my time in care but also other things. I think I felt stronger after my attempted suicide and what my mum said in Dr Guthrie's. I think because of that I never really had those thoughts again. I have since been diagnosed with severe depression, anxiety and PTSD. I have been told that I have probably had that since I was a child.
166. I've never got involved with drugs. I've never been an alcoholic. I've never been addicted to anything like that. When I look at how I have turned out and the experiences I have had in the care system I am kind of lucky. A lot of the guys I was with in the care system have ended up drug addicts and so on. I was lucky to have not gone down that route.

### **Treatment and support**

167. About ten or twelve years ago the relationship I was in broke down and I started pushing all my family and friends away. I shut the door, didn't answer phones and really ended up doing nothing. I ended up going to the doctor. At that time I did that because I wanted to save my relationship. After explaining everything to the doctor he referred me to a psychologist called Dr Meldrum at St Johns in Livingston. He has



said that it is likely that I have blocked certain parts of my life out and diagnosed me as having severe depression and anxiety. He also mentioned that I may have PTSD. His words were that I had probably been like that since I had been a young boy. I am now on fluoxetine for my depression.

### **Reporting of abuse after leaving care**

168. I've never reported anything about what happened during my time in care to the police. There's never been an official report or investigation into what happened during the time I was in care. I have never seen the point in reporting things. I've never been contacted by anyone else's representatives who have been in the places I was in at the same time as me.

### **Records**

169. I have recovered my medical records. I got those through applying to my GP. Those records only start from the age I was thirteen. The period before going to Liberton and coming out of Dr Guthrie's aren't featured in those records. It is as if those records have just disappeared. There is nothing regarding my early life where I was blind following contracting German measles.
170. I'm trying to officially get hold of my care records. I have been asking loads of people in different areas for them. I am writing a book and I'm looking to get hold of some dates and things like that. They must have kept care records during the time I was in Liberton. I know that they did when I was in Dr Guthrie's because, whilst I was in Polmont, I broke into the prison officer's office and read some of my records from there. I remember reading in my records that someone at Dr Guthrie's had described me as acting like a robot. They said something like "if he turns himself off then there is nothing on this planet that will turn him back on." They said that to show how determined I was. I don't think my suicide attempt was mentioned.

However, I didn't finish reading them by the time I was caught in the office so I can't be sure.

171. I have found some care records in my house bundled in a blank envelope. I have no idea where they came from and I have no memories of ever applying for them. They were lying in a pile of other documentation in a box. The records I found are redacted and cover the period between Liberton and Polmont. I don't know whether they are complete. It does look as if pages have been removed. I have read through the records and there are things that I am not happy with in them. I don't like the way in which certain social workers and staff members have described me. There are parts which don't marry with my memories like being visited by psychiatrists and social workers in Dr Guthrie's. The entries surrounding my mother and the way she acted doesn't sound right. They say that she was trying to get me out but that's not how I recall things. I certainly wasn't told that was what she wanted during my time in care. Incidents I recall happening aren't there. I do find all of that very suspicious. Looking back, I do wish that some of the things in the records, if they are true, were told to me during my time in care. If I had been told these things then I may have had a completely different perspective on my time in care and my family.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

172. I was in the system since I was seven years old. In all that time nobody would listen to me. I tried to tell various people in different parts of the system what was going on and it was all brushed under the carpet. I now know that the sort of people who sat on the children's hearing panels were people who owned shops or whatever. They were volunteers and they weren't anything spectacular. They didn't listen nor did anyone else I tried to report things to in my childhood.
173. My mum kept saying to everyone she could find that I was saying things because I was just looking for attention. She may have been right. However, even if that was right why was nobody asking the question "why is he seeking attention?"

**Hopes for the Inquiry**

- 174. The way I describe it to social workers when they speak to me now is that the system fucked my life up. I will take that opinion to the grave with me. I don't think that can be changed. Locking someone away and saying "you can't break the law again or you'll go back to prison" just didn't work for me. By the time I went to Saughton and Polmont I was institutionalised.
  
- 175. I'd love to see care homes done away with all together. They don't work. Borstals don't work. The care system clearly doesn't work. It leaves people who have been in care institutionalised. I'm just hopeful that part or all of my statement can be used to either help the Inquiry or help someone else.
  
- 176. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed  .....

Dated..  .....