

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HCZ

Support person present: No

1. My name is HCZ. My date of birth is the 1957 I am 63 years old. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. What I will describe to you is my experiences as a child. I was so young I was not able to process the way I was treated by my father. It is only as I have grown older that I have realised and been able to verbalise what happened.
3. I was born in Paisley and my parents' names were and . I had two older sisters and who were four and two years older than me. I had a younger brother called who was seven years younger and a younger sister called who was nine years younger.
4. My father was a policeman and very much a career policeman who put his job before everything. He ended up a policeman. I don't think that my parents were very happy together as my father spent a lot of time away from home working. He also attended a lot of courses at Tulliallan Police College.

5. I was not aware of any domestic violence but my father wanted a very old fashioned type of marriage where the wife was at home and the husband was out working. My mother was a free thinking intelligent who was ahead of her time. She did not agree with this and my mother resisted her role in the household. We lived in a police house and this also meant that members of the public could call at the house if there were any issues or problems because there was a landline telephone. The conditions for living in the police house meant that my mother couldn't work.
6. From an early age I was a very sensitive child and my father did not like me because I didn't aspire to his perceived macho image. As a child I did not understand this and it was in later life in conversation with my mother and sister that I learned about this behaviour. I strived to please him but he just rejected me. My mother was able to protect me and tried to stand up to my father on my behalf.
7. When I was about five or six and came home one day my father told me to come to his bedroom. He thought that I had stolen some money from his pocket. My father did not take to me like he did my older sisters. I was beaten by him and he always beat you where it would not show. After he had beaten me he left me in the room for two or three hours, He came back and told me that he had remembered and had in fact given the money to a charity. That was when I first realised I was going to get the blame for everything.
8. My father would always beat me with an open hand but he used it very effectively. I learned not to cry because he always said that if I didn't stop crying he would give me something to bubble about. My father didn't like me running to my mother because he viewed that as being weakness and he wanted me to be a "man's man".

9. My father was very controlling and despite the conditions my mother took small part time jobs. I learned years later that my mother was having an affair and fell pregnant. One morning when I was about eleven and was sitting polishing my school shoes my father said to me that my mother had gone and wasn't coming back. I was not given any explanation but told to go off to school. It was a few months before I was legally allowed to see my mother who was now living in Glasgow with her new partner. My father had legal custody of all his children. I would be in my twenties before I was told the real reason why my mother left home.

10. I used to run away a lot from home. I had a friend who was the son of a policeman who had been disgraced and sacked from the police. I know my father didn't like this man but I was very friendly with his son. I was being regularly beaten by my father. I would also get the blame for things that my sister [REDACTED] had done and she knew how to put the blame on to me. I can't recall my father ever hitting any of my sisters. It was all part of his macho thinking.

11. When I ran away I was usually brought back by the Paisley Police which was very embarrassing for my father. I can remember when I was in the police station a lot of the officers would come and just take a look at me. None of the police officers ever asked me why I was running away. I was just a troubled child in the eyes of the police and I am sure that everything would have been brushed under the carpet.

12. [REDACTED] had mental health problems and attended Dykebar Hospital where she was treated for her mental illness. [REDACTED] my oldest sister would try and stand up for me.

13. After my mother left home my father still put the police before everything and he was hardly ever home. There was a lady who came in and cooked us meals. I think my sisters also looked after us all. About a year after my mother left my father married another policewoman called [REDACTED] who was [REDACTED] and became my step-mother. I recall on one occasion when I had run away I got a lecture from [REDACTED] at the police station [REDACTED]. I think my father had asked her to speak to me.

14. [REDACTED] was quite nice to us initially. She was an older lady with no children. I can recall them going on honeymoon and they left me in the care of [REDACTED] sister who lived in Pudsey near Leeds. I don't know where they went on honeymoon but they picked us up on their way home. That day [REDACTED] changed and her attitude towards me was completely different. We didn't like each other. I did visit my mother about once a month at her home in Glasgow where she lived with her new partner. My mother told me that I was never allowed to live with her. My mother was my protector and I think that not being allowed to live with her was the cause of me running away.

15. My older sister described this situation later in life as being perfect for my father and [REDACTED]. They moved house to a new area. My two sisters left home and all they had to do was get me out of the picture as there was a seven year gap between me and my younger brother and that would have the perfect family for [REDACTED] with my father and two young children. When I thought about that I had to agree with my sister's reasoning.

16. I was attending Johnstone High School in Johnstone and I was being bullied because the other pupils knew I was the son of a policeman and spoke with a posh accent. It all came to a head after I had come back from a holiday in Scarborough. I did not like my home situation and when I had been in Scarborough I had made some friends and had enjoyed their company. I was very immature for a thirteen year old but I managed to hitch hike back to Scarborough to be with my new friends.

17. I was in Scarborough for a few days before I was picked up by the police. I recall that my father had to travel to Scarborough to pick me up. He never said a word to me the whole journey home. When I got home he made me strip down to my underpants. He had taken everything out of my room. It was like a police cell. He then locked the door. I would be given food on a tray. I had a small bowl which I recall was fawn coloured to use as a toilet. I think that I was there for about three days and I didn't see my step-mother [REDACTED]. It was one occasion when my father never beat me. I didn't realise at this time that he had another agenda.

18. On the last day of being locked in my bedroom he brought me my school clothes and he told me to get dressed. He let me use the bathroom to wash and told me that I was to be ready to go in half an hour. He didn't say where we were going.
19. He then took me to a court building in Paisley. I appeared before a panel of three people in a small court room. I didn't know who they were. I remember my father telling the panel that I was causing disruption in the family and that the only way he could keep me at home was to take all my clothes off and lock me in my room. I didn't say anything and I don't think I had any input at all.
20. The next thing that I remember was sitting in a police cell at the court building and then being taken by the police in a police car to Bellfield Remand Home in Dumbarton. I would have been around thirteen years old at this point.
21. In later life my sister told me that a few weeks after I had gone to Bellfield my father took all my clothes including my scout uniform and put them in plastic bags and out to the rubbish. It was clear that I was not going to be returning to the family home. I was in the way of their perfect family.
22. Over the next five years or so when I was in care I only saw my father on one occasion when he came to visit me at Kirkmichael for a brief time. I didn't really see him again until I was in my late twenties at my brother in law's funeral.

Bellfield Remand Home, Dumbarton

23. There was a steep driveway that took you up to the main building. I think there was some sort of bars on the windows but I can't be sure. The doors were all locked. The main building had two storeys but there may have been an attic. There was a fenced off basketball court at the back of the building where you could play different sports. The gate to the court was also locked most of the time. It was always supervised by staff.

24. I would estimate that there were about thirty boys at Bellfield and it was for boys only. I think that it was run by the local authority. I cannot remember the names of the staff but the main man running the home was a very small man and was known as "the wee man". His wife also worked at the home. The "wee man" was a very nice man but the staff ran rings round him. He must have been in his fifties.
25. I have no idea how long I spent at Bellfield. It may have been just a few months but I am unsure of the times. I still to this day have no idea why I was sent to Bellfield Remand Home as no one took the time to explain it to me.

Routine at Bellfield Remand Home

First day

26. I was taken to Bellfield in a police car and I did not know where I was going to and no one took the time to tell me. I remember when I arrived there I was terrified. I was a posh boy and very small and skinny and I was afraid to be there. I remember feeling that I was there because I had run away and was a problem to my family and I recall feeling that I didn't want to go home anyway. I didn't know what a remand home was. I was very intimidated speaking to the other boys.
27. I did speak to the "wee man" who was in charge and he spent some time explaining to me what was going to happen. I think that he realised I was totally out of my depth and that is why I got a job in the kitchen which kept me away from the other boys.
28. I was one of the youngest boys at age thirteen but there were no boys there who were over the age of sixteen. As it always did it eventually got put that I was the son of a policeman and I would have to suffer the consequences of the disclosure which usually amounted to more peer abuse. It was the staff who usually informed the other boys to their amusement.

Mornings and bedtime

29. All the boys slept in very small dormitories. You were woken up at a certain time and most of the boys made their way to the dining room while I made my way to the kitchen to help to prepare breakfast. Myself and another boy called [REDACTED] who also worked in the kitchen would then clear up after breakfast. There were two members of staff working in the kitchen who were responsible for all the cooking. I ate all my meals in the kitchen and it was a perk because you got extra food. I didn't cook but did the job of a kitchen porter.

30. I spent most of my day in the kitchen with [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was an older boy who was well respected by the other boys and he took me under his wing. It meant that I was not subjected to any bullying. The kitchen door was usually locked but the rear door was unlocked and gave access out the back. It meant that I could have run away at any time but I didn't have the courage to do so, I was terrified of the consequences. I met up with [REDACTED] again in the care system when we were both at Redheugh Children's Home.

31. There was a classroom for teaching which was in a building at the bottom of the driveway. I think that I only attended the classroom for a couple of days when I first arrived. The classroom was manned by members of staff who I don't think had any teaching qualifications. It was a very strict routine.

32. I think that we were all in bed by about eight o'clock. I do recall that you had a cup of hot chocolate before you went to bed which was served in a plastic beaker. There was always things going on after lights out. Nothing was ever reported to the staff. There was no "grassing" to the staff and that was the culture. I learned this very quickly.

Mealtimes / Food

33. I was working in the kitchen so I was never short of food. Another boy called [REDACTED] and I used to eat in a storeroom off the kitchen. The food was very basic but all the boys ate it. I don't recall punishments for not eating the food.

Washing / bathing

34. There was an old bathroom with a row of sinks that you washed in every morning when you got up. Every two days you would be required to have a shower in the showering room. All the boys had to shower at the same time and it was supervised by three or four members of staff. On reflection I think that it is dodgy that the staff were there. There was no privacy. I was always very embarrassed being there as I was a very small skinny boy.
35. The staff would give you some shampoo on the end of a ruler which you had to wash your hair with. I think it was probably some sort of antiseptic mixture to deal with head lice and other related things.

Clothing / uniform

36. I can't recall what clothes we wore at Bellfield or who provided them. I had no personal possessions. My sister sometimes brought me some clothing.

School

37. There was a classroom in a building that was near the entrance to the home. It was a very small classroom and I think that I only attended there for two days when I first arrived. It was members of staff who did the teaching and I don't think that there was much teaching done. I was not forced to go to the classroom as I was "no scholar". I think that the boys spent a lot of time outside the classroom with the member of staff having a smoke.

Leisure

38. We were made to play five a side football on the basketball court we had no choice. I think that there probably was a television but I can't recall ever watching it.

Trips / Holidays/birthdays/Christmas.

39. I do not recall going on a trip when I was Bellfield. I don't think I was there at Christmas time and I don't recall having a birthday at Bellfield.

Visits / Inspections/ Review of Detention

40. The only person who came to visit me at Bellfield was my oldest sister [REDACTED]. She had to visit without my father knowing. My father step-mother and mother never came the whole time I was there. I wasn't aware of any official visits when I was there.

Healthcare

41. As I remember I did not have to see a doctor or a dentist whilst I was at Bellfield.

Running away

42. I recall that some boys ran away and when they were returned to the home they were placed in a locked room for a period of time. I never managed to run away although on one occasion [REDACTED] and I made a bid for freedom. I don't know why as we both were very well looked after in the kitchen. We had to take the bins to the bottom of the drive which was across the road from a small satellite railway station. [REDACTED] said to me come on and we crossed the road and got onto the train platform. I didn't want to go but I was easily led by [REDACTED] and I didn't want to argue with him.

43. While we were waiting for a train we were caught by the very glamorous wife of “the wee man” who was much younger than him. She asked us what we were doing there and I left the talking to [REDACTED]. She told us to go back to Bellfield which we did. To her credit it was never mentioned by anyone and she had obviously kept it to herself.
44. There were always occasions when boys were running away. When they were brought back they were put into “the locked room”. Sometimes you saw these boys again but often they would be sent to somewhere more secure. I think that boys who ran away also had to sit on their own and were kept away from the other boys.

Bed Wetting

45. I think that I was a bedwetter up until the age of about thirteen. When I left home I stopped bed wetting. I don't recall boys being humiliated for bed wetting.

Punishment

46. I do recall that there was a locked room somewhere in the building which had nothing in it. The windows were nailed shut and if you needed to calm down or were being punished you would be placed in the locked room. The boys that ran away were usually put into the room when they were brought back to the home and had to sit on their own.
47. I did see and receive the odd slap round the head but it was never excessive. Some of the staff were just bullies. There was an occasion when my sister visited. She was a very attractive seventeen year old. One of the members of staff who had slapped me a few times came across to the visiting table where my sister was. I had intended to tell my sister about the slaps I was getting but because he was there I was not able to tell her. The staff member was trying to chat her up.

Peer bullying

48. There was always fights going on between the boys. I was in a very fortunate position because I was under the protection of my co kitchen worker [REDACTED] and he was feared by all the boys.

Abuse at Bellfield Remand Home

49. There was one occasion early on in my stay at Bellfield when I was playing on the basketball court. A new boy had just arrived and he was quite a bit older. He was also a loud mouth. He was telling people what to do. One of the staff said to me that someone needs to have a word with him. The member of staff then shouted across to this boy telling him that I wanted to have a word with him. It resulted in the boy punching me in the mouth.
50. The staff thought that this was very funny and they knew that I didn't stand a chance against him. I was very timid and small and would run a mile to escape any conflict and so it was quite a shock to me. They staff were always giving you slaps round your head. It was just an accepted practice amongst them. I never witnessed any systematic beatings or cruelty ay Bellfield.
51. Some of the staff would slap the children for no apparent reason. It was like a sport to them and kept them amused. It became acceptable behaviour but I suppose in this day and age it would be considered to be abusive. I think that some of the staff were just bullies.

Reporting of abuse at Bellfield Remand Home.

52. I knew from my experience with my father that you didn't tell him if you had been punished at school because he would say that you deserved it and he would punish you for being punished in the first place. My father's punishment was always twice as hard as the initial punishment.

Leaving Bellfield Remand Home.

- 53. It all happened very quickly. Nothing really bad happened to me at Bellfield and I never saw any sexual abuse there. I wish I knew how long I was there but I really have no idea. It was a massive shock to me being at Bellfield as my only experience of being with other boys was being at school and you could walk away from any situations at school. At Bellfield there was nowhere to escape to.

- 54. I think Bellfield was like a holding centre before you were allocated the institution that you would be sent to. I think that you were being assessed for your suitability for other places. I do recall being told that I was going to Kirkmichael and I recall that I got into a panic in case someone didn't tell my sister and she came to visit me and I was no longer at Bellfield. As it happens my sister did come to Bellfield to visit only to learn that I had been moved to Kirkmichael. And she was unaware of the move.

Care at Kirkmichael Children's Home, Maybole, Ayrshire

- 55.  Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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58. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving care at Kirkmichael Children's Home.

66. When I just turned fifteen I left Kirkmichael and went to Redheugh Adolescent Unit in Kilbirnie.

Care at Redheugh Adolescent Unit, Kilbirnie, Ayrshire.

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Redheugh Adolescent Unit, Kilbirnie.

95. Secondary Institutions - to be published later the next morning a member of staff appeared with breakfast and told me to get ready as I was leaving although he didn't say where to. I was taken to Mount Bruce Adolescent Unit in Glasgow. This was a unit also run by the Salvation Army and was a sister home to Redheugh. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Care at Mount Bruce Adolescent Home, Bruce Road, Glasgow.

97. [Redacted]
[Redacted] I think that it was a social worker that took me to Mount Bruce in a car. I think that the person taking me there told me where we were going [Redacted]
[Redacted] I was now fifteen years of age.

98. [Redacted]

99. [Redacted]

100. [Redacted]

101. [Redacted]

102. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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107. When you reached the age of sixteen you were asked to leave Mount Bruce. The Salvation Army couldn't get funding for you when you turned sixteen. You were not thrown out on the street or anything like that. They would fix up some digs for you.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Leaving Mount Bruce, Glasgow.

108. I moved into a bedsit which was not far from Mount Bruce. I think that either the local authority or the Salvation Army had organised it for me. The landlady was an alcoholic who was always looking for more money to buy drink. She hassled me on a daily basis for more money and I wondered how she was considered to be suitable for homing adolescent boys.
109. I had a friend that was living in a bedsit close by and I used to visit him in his room. One of the days he told me that I had to leave as he had a visitor coming. The visitor arrived while I was there and he was a very elderly local Magistrate who was there to have sex with the boy. The boy whose name I forget got into big trouble for me being there at the same time and seeing him. You couldn't tell anyone because that is what happened in the early 70's.
110. I started working in a butchers and then through my mother I got a job as a trainee chef in Lochgilphead which only lasted a couple of months. I was no longer under the care of the authorities and as a result I started to run wild around the streets of Glasgow.

Life living on the streets of Glasgow.

111. I was abandoned by the system that had allegedly cared for me for the past three years. I had none or limited life experience, I was on my own. I started getting into a life of petty crime and I had no thought about the potential consequences. I think that everything I ever did I was caught for and paid the price in the prison system. I was associating with other youths who were just like me and we would steal cars together. I was living on the streets. There was never any violence. I always knew I was going to get caught and usually did.
112. I was uncontrollable and on occasions when I needed a bed for the night I would go with men who were always in the area looking for young boys to pick up. I don't really want to elaborate on that. I hated doing that as I thought I was gay but I only felt attracted towards women. It was all very seedy and disgusted me. I had no one to speak to as my sister had moved to London.
113. I always told the police when I was arrested who my father was as he was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] police officer. I felt that by telling them this it would protect me from any abuse by the police officers which was common place in those days. I don't know why I did this but it always made me feel better. I stopped doing it when I realised that this could appear in my notes if I was sent to jail and it was the last thing that I wanted other prisoners to know about as that could have caused me real problems.

An inmate of the prison systems of Scotland and England.

114. Inevitably as a result of my lifestyle I ended up going to Glenochil Detention Centre for what was known at that time as "the short sharp shock treatment". The prison systems at that time were there to punish you and not to rehabilitate. The three months at Glenochil was pure hell. It was like being in the army and all the staff were ex-army. They tried to make it that you would never want to go back there but all the prisoners knew that you only did the "short sharp treatment" once and wouldn't go back anyway.

115. I also spent short prison sentences in Polmont, Longriggend and Barlinnie. When I was fourteen I do recall being in Perth Prison for one night because I lied about my age. I was terrified when I was there so I told them my true age and I was sent to a remand home in Dundee which I can't remember the name of. When I was about eighteen I moved down to England and spent some time in the prison system in England. I was in and out of several English prisons until I reached the age of 23 when I met my wife and my life of petty crime stopped.
116. When I was in the prison system it is well documented what went on. I do recall that the more brutal places were Glenochil, Longriggend and Barlinnie where assaults on prisoners by members of staff were regular occurrences. In Glenochil you had to run everywhere. The prison officers who didn't wear uniforms would give you dead legs all the time. They were mainly ex-services and all wore steel capped boots which were used to good effect when kicking you. In the Young Offenders Unit at Barlinnie the main stream prisoners and the younger prisoners were all mixed in together.
117. I learned to be the silent one and that way you didn't stick out. The loud mouths had a difficult time and it didn't go well for them. I was never sexually assaulted and I conformed to the routine. Everyone was physically assaulted at some time but it was part and parcel of being in jail. I learned how to survive in that environment.

Life after being in care

118. It was strange that I had so many contrary feelings and experiences in the places I was in when I was in care. Bellfield was a wild place and not a pleasant experience.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

You

lived in constant fear of what could happen.

119. I was about 23 when I served my last 21 month prison sentence at Wormwood Scrubs. I completed eighteen months and was released from Ford Open Prison at the end of it. I was moved to Ford Open Prison towards the end of my sentence.
120. On release I met the woman that was to become my wife. After I met her I never had so much as a parking ticket. I never appreciated what the cost of committing crime was and what you could potentially loose. This was my first ever proper relationship and thanks to her this was the turning point in my life. I think that if I had not been put into care I would not have got into trouble. It was the company that you met in care. I suppose I was at "criminal college" and that you learn very quickly how to survive.
121. I married my wife in 1980 and divorced her in 1995. I had two children a boy and a girl. My wife passed away in 2008 having suffered from cancer. I did have contact with my father at my brother in law and sister's funerals as I was the funeral director for them. I think I must have seen him on two occasions since I was put into care. My father died a few years ago having married for the third time. He was living in Bournemouth. I was invited to the wedding but declined to go because I would be too uncomfortable. My father very publically cut me out of his will making sure I would not inherit any of his estate.
122. I worked principally as a funeral director but stopped when our small business was taken over. I did many other jobs. I also worked on the railway. I retired in 2019. I am still doing some part time jobs delivering flowers to supplement my pensions.

Impact

123. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
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124. I still don't trust homosexuals and feel uncomfortable in their company. Secondary Institutions
Secondary Institutions I struggled with my own sexuality and thought that I was gay even though I preferred women. This led to self-doubt and many years of relationship problems. I have been around gay people in my visits to Thailand and have also worked with a few but it just makes me feel uncomfortable. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
Secondary Institutions - to be published later

125. I think that my own family environment made me unstable. I felt that I had been treated unfairly by my family and what happened to me. When I came out of care I was totally unsupervised and during my life involved in petty crime the only person that I hurt was me. I didn't know any better.

126. I am not good at relationships. When you are treated as I was you would think that you would learn by your own experiences. I think that the opposite happened and I started a behaviour which was similar to how my father had behaved. I didn't beat the children but I did not have a good relationship with my son. I was much stricter with my son compared to my daughter. It is interesting that my father hated his father and I hated my father. I do not have much contact with my son.

Reporting of Abuse

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

Records

128. I have thought about getting my records but I don't need to know about some of the places. I can't see any benefits for accessing them. The good and the bad people in the care system will never be accountable. I suspect that a lot of these people will have passed away.

Lessons to be learned

129. People now are more accountable and are aware of what went on in institutions. There are more watchdogs and governance. There is more of a public awareness and conscience of how children should be treated. The people need to listen to children. In my day children didn't complain or report to adults. I suspect things are still going on but not to the extent I was subjected to. Thank god for the good ones in the care system.
130. I suspect that the internet is a new means of abusing children. It also means that the abuse of children is more widespread. In my opinion there is no crime worse than child abuse. The abusers fear "being outed" more than anything else. We as the public are too soft on child abusers.

Hopes for the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry.

131. It is good that someone is listening and that I am being believed. It is my hope that anyone in an institution in the future will not be abused. It is punishment enough for children to lose their liberty. How could my father have been able to manipulate me being put into care and especially a remand home like Bellfield? It doesn't feel right.
132. I feel that the authorities should be made to realise how badly affected and let down I've been by the system. I feel that I have been keeping a "dirty secret" for nearly fifty years. I do not want children to miss out as I did on not having a guide through formative years. The authorities need to believe what children tell them.

133. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed..... 

Dated..... 19 April 2021