

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LYU

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is LYU. My date of birth is 1946. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in Renton near Dumbarton. My dad was and my mum was called being her maiden name. I have two sisters who are, who is 78 and lives in Australia and who is 69 and lives in Arizona. I haven't heard from them in a long time. I also had a brother called who would have been 74 but he died a few years ago.
3. We stayed in Renton for a number of years then moved to nearby Alexandria for three years before returning to Renton. My mum was a housewife but died aged 39, when I was fourteen. Dad worked as a steel erector in England and I only saw him about every three months.
4. We didn't have much money and struggled financially. We tended to live on tick and used the pawn shop often. We had a lot of relatives who lived nearby and mum had two brothers and four sisters who lived nearby who would help us out if we were desperate. Dad would also send mum money.
5. I went to St Martin's Primary School in Renton and to St Mary's Primary when we stayed in Alexandria then back to St Martin's when we moved back to Renton. School was alright but nobody from the schools I went to went to University. When I reached

the age of Secondary Education I went to St Patrick's in Dumbarton but was only there for about four weeks before ending up in remand homes.

6. When I was about ten or eleven years old I broke into a shop with my brother [REDACTED] and we got probation. I think I then broke probation and got sent to Bellfield Remand Home in Dumbarton for fourteen days and I ended up going there twice roughly four years apart. When I broke probation the police gave me a doing, knocked hell out of me to stop me doing it again, and then took me to court.
7. I'm sure we broke into the shop to get sweets and were taken to the Juvenile Court in Dumbarton Sheriff Court. That was the way it was all set up in those days, you got two years' probation then sent to a remand home if you broke it or reoffended and then got sent to an approved school.
8. There was no social worker in court and everything we got was an automatic sentence from a Justice of the Peace. When myself and [REDACTED] broke our probation it was about six months into it and we were sent back to the same court where, this time, they sent us to Bellfield Remand Home in Dumbarton. The police took us there straight from the court.

#### **Bellfield Remand Home, Dumbarton**

9. Bellfield was a red sandstone building. It was an old Victorian House that had been turned into a remand home. Mr Johnstone was in charge, like a headmaster [REDACTED] [REDACTED] LYV [REDACTED] who we had to call mum, was the matron and was like a nurse who dealt with you if anything happened. You rarely saw [REDACTED] except when you were sitting in the room where we ate our meals and when you went to bed.
10. I think there were five other adult members of staff. Mrs LYV [REDACTED] was also the cook and sometimes taught in the classrooms. The other staff members just sat around making sure you didn't disappear. Mr LIG [REDACTED] was a member of staff and I recall him just sitting about playing his ukulele.

11. There were somewhere between ten and fifteen boys in the home and sometimes as many as twenty. The numbers changed every day and some were only there for a night waiting to go to court the next day. There was only one dorm with about twenty single beds in it. Each of us had a locker. I was eleven and [REDACTED] was ten when we first went there. I think the oldest boy would have been fifteen.

#### **Routine at Bellfield Remand Home, Dumbarton**

12. We would get up in the morning and get washed and dressed before getting our breakfast from Mrs LYV [REDACTED]. After that we would clean the place polishing the floors though twice a week we had classes from Mrs LYV [REDACTED]. Otherwise we would just be sitting in a big room all day. We went to bed at about 8:00 pm and lights went out at 9:00 pm. You weren't allowed to talk after that.

#### *Mealtimes/Food*

13. I don't recall much about the food which, I suppose, would suggest it wasn't bad.

#### *Washing/bathing*

14. There were no baths, just frozen cold showers. There were three of them so we showered three at a time in separate cubicles which had no doors. Those waiting to take a shower had to stand naked in the corridor beforehand.
15. There was a member of staff present while we showered. I don't remember his name but he was about thirty. He was one of the younger members of staff and used to whip you with a damp wet towel to make sure you got in the shower as you stood there naked waiting to go in.
16. We might have had carbolic soap or something like that but we didn't have shampoo. Sometimes you had to wash yourself in front of the supervisor to prove you were washing yourself properly.

*Clothing/uniform*

17. The home didn't provide us with clothes or a uniform. You wore what you arrived in and if you needed any more clothes then your family brought them in.

*Leisure time*

18. The only thing we did all day, unless we were at class or cleaning the place, was sit around in the big room and on the odd occasion, we worked out in the garden. There were books always lying around if you wanted to read.

*Trips and holidays*

19. We didn't go on any trips during either the times that I was in Bellfield.

*Schooling*

20. The only schooling we did was a couple of days a week when Mrs LYV [REDACTED] took us for class.

*Healthcare*

21. No doctors or nurses were ever called to Bellfield. Mrs LYV [REDACTED] was the person who looked after us if we got scrapes or cuts.

*Work*

22. We would polish all the floors, peel the potatoes and sometimes work out in the garden.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

23. I wasn't in Bellfield at Christmas and have no recollection of anybody having their birthday celebrated.

### *Personal possessions*

24. I only had what I was wearing when I arrived, nothing else. We didn't get any pocket money.

### *Bed Wetting*

25. If a boy wet the bed he was made to just lie in it and the sheets wouldn't be changed until the end of the week. The staff would know that a boy had wet the bed, we all did as you could smell it. I can't remember exactly what the staff would say to such a boy but they would verbally abuse them and make a fool of them in front of the other boys making them feel so low. This didn't happen to me as I didn't have a problem with bed wetting.

### *Visitors*

26. My mum wasn't fit enough to visit me and [REDACTED] during our time in Bellfield and no social workers ever came to see us. Some people did get a visitor in the afternoon. I don't remember seeing any official inspectors and there no welfare officers who came to see us to review our detention.

### *Discipline*

27. If you did anything wrong you would get a punch from a member of staff but I don't think this was noted down anywhere. In the big room, that we would sit around in, there was a belt in the middle of the table and the staff would slap it off the table now and again to frighten us. It was about six feet long and an inch thick, much longer and thicker than your typical tawse.

28. I never saw anybody actually get hit with the belt but Mr <sup>LIG</sup> would lash out and punch and kick you. It was not unusual for him to punch you if you didn't do something properly like polish the floors. Such punishments were done in front of the other boys.

*Running away*

29. I didn't run away the first time I was in Bellfield but I did the second time which was about four years later. What happened was that we were in the recreation room which was next to the showers. Mr <sup>LIG</sup> went in to the showers and I locked him in. Several of us then got out of the recreation room via the window and ran off.
30. We went to Balloch and sneaked on to a boat but I then went back to my house where the police caught me and took me back to Bellfield about three days later. When I got back I was put in an underground room and got bread and water for three days. There was no window but it did have a small grating that let in light and fresh air. You used a chanty for the toilet while in there.
31. When I got out and sent back to my dorm I was handcuffed to the bed each night for the rest of the 28 days I was there. The boy who had run away with me had cut his head and had to go to hospital and I didn't see him again. That was the first and only occasion that I had seen the underground room. Nobody asked why we had run away.

**Abuse at Bellfield Remand Home, Dumbarton**

32. On one occasion, during my second spell in Bellfield, I was in the class with Mrs <sup>LYV</sup> when I pointed out to her that she had spelt something wrong. She hit me with the board pointer which broke one of my fingers. I got no treatment for that and, to this day, the finger is still misshapen.
33. On another occasion I was peeling the potatoes and Mr <sup>LIG</sup> told me I was peeling off too much and gave me a warning to get it right. I must have kept doing it because he suddenly punched me in the mouth. Because he was wearing a ring he gave me a



nasty cut in my mouth which Mrs LYV [REDACTED] had to put three stitches into. I still have a scar because of that assault.

34. Getting punched, slapped on the back of the head or kicked by the staff, especially by Mr LIG [REDACTED] was a daily occurrence and you got it anytime you did something the staff perceived as being wrong or if you spoke without being spoken to.

### **Leaving Bellfield Remand Home, Dumbarton**

35. The first time I was there I went back home after being there for fourteen days. Going back to school was hard as everybody knew I had been in a remand home. You weren't given any help or guidance, you were just let out. I went back to St Martin's Primary School then on to St Patrick's Secondary School before I ended up in St Joseph's Tranent.
36. A few weeks after getting out of Bellfield, I broke into another shop and was caught and sent back to Dumbarton Sheriff Court. I was sentenced to 1-3 years at St Joseph's and taken straight there from the court by a probation officer whose name I don't recall. I was twelve years old. I was sent to St Joseph's because I was from a Catholic family.
37. The second time I left Bellfield, about four years later, I was again taken to court then sent to St John's, Edinburgh Road, Glasgow.

### **St Joseph's, Tranent**

38. St Joseph's was about ten miles outside Edinburgh and I was taken there by car and we got there at lunchtime. I was handed in at the front door and taken into the dining room where everybody was having dinner. I was taken there by the lady who did the laundry.
39. St Joseph's had big pillars outside it. It had been a big country house with a lot of grounds. The boys there were split into houses called St Joseph's, St Andrew's, Bruce and De La Salle and there were about a hundred boys there split into two dorms. Each

house had a different colour and when you lined up you lined up in your houses. St Joseph's House wore red.

40. St Joseph's was run by the De La Salle Brothers and I think there eight or ten Brothers who worked there. The ones I recall are Brother **GEC** who was **SNR** until he died about nine months later then Brother **PAF**. There was also Brother **GRE**, Brother **MJE**, and Brother Benedict, who may be the same Brother Benedict who recently got eight years in prison, and Brother **LAA** who assaulted me twice a week. Brother **LVD** and Brother **GWM** arrived later, maybe in my last year. They all wore black cassocks.
41. There was only one boy I knew, [REDACTED], who came from Alexandria. I don't now recall the names of the other boys but I could name them if they were standing in front of me.

*First Day*

42. When I was taken to the dining room just after I arrived I was sitting at a table with three other boys. As I sat there Brother **GEC** slapped me on the back of the head and said "haircut". The boys at the table told me that meant I had to get a haircut. I then got a plate of potatoes, cabbage and meat with a lot of fat and I couldn't eat it.
43. Brother **GEC** smacked me on the head again forcing me to eat it. I was sick on the plate and I was forced to eat that too. This continued until I ate most of it. Thereafter I always had a hankie with me to put food into that I didn't like as you always had to clear the plate. Many a boy was smacked on the head till they ate their food but most got wise to it and would hide the food they didn't like.



### **Routine at St Joseph's, Tranent**

44. You would get up 7:30 am in the morning having been woken by a night watchman, Mr Mulgrew, who stayed in a cottage near the school and was also a gardener. We would then get washed in a hand basin then go downstairs and get ready for school before getting breakfast after which we walked to school which, for me, was St Martin's in Tranent. In the summer I would walk and in the winter I would get the bus.
45. I would go back to St Joseph's for lunch and after school I would go back to St Joseph's. At night we would play games or I would do homework with the other two boys who also went to St Martin's. After tea I would have to do housework that I hadn't done in the morning due to me going to a school outside St Joseph's. If we had time we would maybe play football out in the yard. We would go to bed about 9:00pm.

### *Health care*

46. What I do remember is that I never did see an optician and was very short-sighted. I used to be put at the front of the class so as I could see the blackboard but nothing was ever done to improve my sight. I don't recall ever seeing a doctor or a dentist.

### *Clothing*

47. We were given uniforms by the school. I wore a red jacket and short trousers and a shirt. I also had a separate uniform I wore when going to St Martin's.

### *Work*

48. There was a tailor's class where they taught you to sew, repairing trousers and things like that. This was run by a Mr **GW** and whenever you saw him he was usually drunk.

*Pocket money*

49. You would get the equivalent of about 5p on a Saturday which would maybe get you a bar of toffee or you could maybe go to the local cinema in Tranent on a Saturday afternoon. I remember there would be about sixty of us all walking up in file to go to the cinema. If you had done something wrong you weren't allowed to go.

*School*

50. Because I was quite clever I went to St Martin's in Tranent after the first few months. Three other boys also went there and I went to that school for 2 ½ years. In St Joseph's Brother GRE had tried to teach me but the education was very poor and he just wasn't interested in teaching us. He was more interested in teaching the pipe band.
51. While I was at St Martin's the gym teacher sent me to see the headmaster a few times because of bruises he saw on me. However, we were always told to say that the bruises had been caused by us playing football and the headmaster seemed to accept this. The bruises had usually been caused by Brother LAA who would punch me near a green door. He would punch me until I cried which was when he thought I had learned my lesson.
52. Most of the teachers at St Martin's were alright but some didn't approve of us being there. [REDACTED] was in my class at St Martin's and was the niece of Mr Mulgrew, the night watchman and gardener at St Joseph's. She would often bring me in something to eat and ask me if I had any more bruises today.

*Home visit*

53. My mother died while I was in St Joseph's and they allowed me and my brother home for the funeral. I just remember them telling us our mum had died, there was no sympathy or anything like that. We were supposed to be home for three days but my sister was getting married shortly after that so they allowed us to stay home for a

couple of weeks. However, because we had been at home this length of time we weren't allowed home at Christmas.

#### *Visitors*

54. I didn't receive any visitors while I was there as it was too far away. I don't remember seeing any of the boys getting visitors and have no recollection of seeing any official visitors. No social worker ever came to see me. The place was supposedly run by East Lothian Council but nobody from there ever inspected the place as far as I was aware.

#### *Running away*

55. I never ran away. I enjoyed going to St Martin's and knew they would stop me going there if I ran away so I never did. My brother did run away and he got sent to St John's because of it.

#### **Abuse at St Joseph's, Tranent**

56. I think that three of the Brothers, LAA, Benedict and MJE who was in charge of the chapel and was a teacher, were retarded and were only there to stay out of the army or to stay out of an asylum. All three would be care in the community cases if it was these days.
57. Brother LAA was at the school full-time and would be on duty at night twice or three times a week. I wouldn't see him if he was working during the day but in the evening he would force me to clean the toilets. He would grab me by the hair and tweak my nipples. He was maybe in his forties. This happened twice a week for 2 ½ years. He said I was "a weed" in his garden. This was because he didn't like me going to an outside school.
58. Brother LAA also made me scrub the yard with a toothbrush and a pale of water. One of the other Brothers, Brother GWM, saw me doing this but when I told him Brother

LAA had told me to do it he just shook his head and walked away. The Brothers never seemed to speak to each other.

59. Brother MJE would shout at a boy simply because his shirt was hanging out the back of his trousers. He would then tuck the shirt back into the boy's trousers touching the boy's bum as he did so.
60. Brother MJE would also sometimes grope a boy at night on the pretence of checking whether or not they had wet the bed. I saw him do this several times. Sometimes a boy would be taken away from the dorm in the middle of the night for about thirty minutes. We all knew something was amiss but nobody ever talked about what happened.
61. This never happened to me and that might have been because I went to a school outside of St Joseph's and they might have been worried that I would say something to somebody outside of St Joseph's.
62. The boys it did happen to had, I think, mental disorders and I don't think anybody ever reported what was going on. There were no social workers or outside visitors so it was only the De La Salle Brothers who dealt with everything.
63. About a year after I went to St Joseph's my brother [REDACTED] arrived having been sent there for not attending school. He was thirteen years old. One day I came back from school and got told [REDACTED] was in hospital. Brother Benedict had beaten him up badly with a board pointer and broken his cheek bone and collar bone. I saw him the next day and he had two big black eyes and a bandage on his collar bone. I was going to kill Brother Benedict.
64. [REDACTED] said that he had told the nurse that the injuries had been caused when he was playing football. She apparently didn't believe him but nothing was ever done about it. That assault played on [REDACTED]'s mind for a long time.



65. The Brothers all lived in their own section of the school and I was only ever in there once. I was leaving the school at the Easter break and Brother PAF called for me. I went up to his room and saw five or six small well-dressed children between seven and eight years old. As I went in Brother PAF called me 'LYU' for the first time ever, he always called me LYU.
66. There was a wee blue-eyed boy standing in the middle of the room staring at me as if asking for help. I had no idea why the children were there as they were too young to be at the school though they were just sitting on the carpet playing with cars and did seem happy enough. I was only fifteen and didn't know what was going on but I've remembered that wee boy to this day.
67. Looking back, the fact that Brother PAF called me LYU that night makes me think that he was asking me for help that night, though what he was asking help for I don't know. Years later I wondered to myself if that night had something to do with paedophiles. There was definitely something wrong with Brother PAF but it wasn't caused by alcohol. I think I was in the room for about half an hour.
68. I ended up leaving St Joseph's the very next day which was a week earlier than I was supposed to. I don't know why I was allowed to leave early and I never did find out why I had been called to Brother PAF's room.

#### **St John's Approved School, Edinburgh Road, Glasgow**

69. There's not much to say about St John's where I was sent after breaking into another shop and being sent there by Dumbarton Sheriff Court. I was about fifteen years old. It was also run by the De La Salle Brothers. It was similar to St Joseph's, Tranent though it was more like a prison with most of the doors being locked. However, I was bigger by then and could look after myself which you had to to survive. All the boys there were about fifteen years old. Jimmy Boyle was there at the same time and a couple of years older than me.



70. Brother PAM was supposedly SNR but a new man took over and all the staff changed and I was let out along with most of the other boys. I think the new guy wanted a complete change of regime and that included the boys who were in the school. I was only there a year.

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

71. When it came to leaving St John's at the age of sixteen they basically just kicked me out. There was no support from Social workers or anything like that. After leaving St John's I went home. My mum had died when I was fourteen and my sisters had gone to America. At first my brother had gone to stay with one of my sisters but came back after a year. However, he got married at seventeen so wasn't in the house for long. I then lived in the house myself as it had been kept on by my dad. I got married at 28 and had three children. I now have eight grandchildren. My working life was spent running bookies for a while and I eventually owned my own bookies.

### **Impact**

72. St Joseph's was a terrible place and those Brothers should never have been in a place supervising children. Thinking about the young boy in Brother PAF's room has been with me for about 28 years and it often puts me in mind of the film The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas. I don't have any friends except those in my family and I think a lot of people who went through the schools I went to became loners after spending so much time trying to avoid the Brothers.
73. I also found it difficult to trust people and was often quick tempered. I've no time for cheeky people but how much that has to do with my time in care I don't know. It also affected my eating habits and mince is about the only thing I eat these days.

### **Treatment/support**

74. I have never sought or thought that I required any treatment or support regarding my time in care.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

75. I have never reported anything that happened to me in the various places I was in to the police or to any other person of authority and at the time nobody would listen to you.

### **Records**

76. I contacted the De La Salle Brothers but they told me they didn't keep records as it was actually East Lothian Council who ran St Joseph's in Tranent. I e-mailed the Council five times without reply. However, I contacted St Martin's School in Tranent and they confirmed that St Joseph's Tranent was given as my home address when I attended St Martin's.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

77. Those who ran St Joseph's should be held to account though I've heard the place has long been since pulled down and those involved will all be dead and gone. The De La Salle Brothers should be held to account and those responsible should be named and shamed.

### **Other information**

78. I left St Joseph's, Tranent sometime before my brother [REDACTED]. Thereafter my dad would give me 17 Shillings and sixpence that I had to take to an office in Alexandria. I would take a piece of paper with me that the staff there would either stamp or sign which would be the receipt to show the money was paid. My dad said that this was

what he had to pay to contribute to [REDACTED] being in St Joseph's. I assume he had to do the same for me when I was there.

79. 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.

LYU  
[REDACTED]

Signed.....

Dated..... 10 SEPTEMBER 2021 .....