

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GKI [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is GKI [REDACTED] or GKI [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 1974. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Truro, Cornwall, with all my records held under GKI [REDACTED]. My mother [REDACTED] was from Glasgow and my father [REDACTED] was from Devon. I think we stayed in Devon for about a year. I have an older step-sister [REDACTED], my sister [REDACTED] and my younger brother [REDACTED]. I also have an older step brother [REDACTED], but I did not meet him until many years later as he had been adopted.
3. We moved about a lot, I think because of my mum's itchy feet. My mum and dad got divorced, got back together again and finally split for good when I was about seven or eight years old. My step-sister [REDACTED] went into care when I was about two or three years old. While we were in England [REDACTED] was in an out of foster care in various homes. I seem to remember I may have been in a few places as well, probably during periods when my mother was not in a fit state to look after us. I can't remember anything about those places.
4. My mum was not a faithful woman and this caused my father some mental health issues. I have a memory of being about four years old when I was placed into care when we were in England. My memory was that around that time I recall my father having my sister [REDACTED] and I in his arms and walking into the water, and I ended up under the water. He didn't go through with it, I am not sure if he changed his mind or someone stopped him.

5. After that, there was just my mother, my sister [REDACTED], brother [REDACTED] and I living together. We moved about a lot in Wales, England and then came to Scotland when I would have been about eight or nine years old.

6. We arrived in a small town, [REDACTED], just outside [REDACTED] in the Borders. Mum always seemed to pick somewhere that was isolated. It was usually some big house well away from anywhere too public. I think she preferred the isolation because I believe people may have become suspicious of the way my mother was looking after us. We were always hungry, dirty and living in fear. She was very controlling and manipulative and it all depended on the mood she was in. She could be very aggressive and violent, just as much as she could be warm and welcoming. I think we were there for about a year and I went to the local primary school but I can't remember the name of the school.

7. The next place we went to was with my mother's cousin in [REDACTED]. His name is [REDACTED] but we called him [REDACTED]. We stayed with him for quite a while, nearly a year. When we stayed at there the social work department got involved with the family. My sister [REDACTED] fell pregnant and had my niece [REDACTED]. My mother decided it would be better that [REDACTED] stay with us, but [REDACTED] was not happy with that arrangement. That was the first the social workers became involved.

[REDACTED]

8. I seem to remember we moved to [REDACTED] near to [REDACTED]. The social work became more involved with us when we were at [REDACTED] as they were concerned was for [REDACTED] being near to [REDACTED]

9.

[REDACTED]

10. My sister, [REDACTED], had been to the police to make a complaint of having been raped by my mother's cousin, [REDACTED]. The case was dismissed as being nonsense. When I was about ten years old [REDACTED] raped me. About two years after [REDACTED] made her complaint, I too went to the police. Again they took no action and dismissed the investigation. I know he was taken in for questioning but I am not sure if he they even got to the stage of charging him. This was despite my complaint being similar to the rape of my sister. The police told me that the report I made to them was later lost and a few years later they wished me to go through it all again, but I refused to put myself through it for a second time.
11. I know that my sister [REDACTED] has tried in recent years to try and have him prosecuted. The police came back to me asking for me to give another statement but I again refused to put myself through it again. They were quite horrible telling me it was my responsibility to protect other children. [REDACTED] is in is seventies now and still living in Dunoon.
12. As a result of the complaints being made the social work were more involved with my family. At this time I was also running away from home and refusing to go back there. While I was away I was staying overnight with a friend and [REDACTED] went away on a long holiday. The first place I was sent to was Gartnavel Adolescent Unit. The official reasons for being placed there were that I was out with parental control, parental desertion and neglect.
13. I was there for around five or six months but I don't have many memories of my time there. I was suffering badly from night terrors and often no one could waken me up. The night tremors started after I was raped by [REDACTED]. I think my time at Gartnavel was to find out if there was anything psychologically wrong with me. I was given a lot of different tablets to sedate me. When I was taking those tablets they did horrible things to my body causing me to have spasms. After a while I would keep the tablets in my mouth and spit them into the sink when the staff were not looking. Even then the tablets made my mouth go all funny. I do not think I got any better while I was there, if anything I think my mental health deteriorated.

14. My behaviour at that time can only be described as wild. There was no police involvement but I was drinking alcohol, getting angry and unable to control my emotions. This started at Gartnavel and continued when I moved from there to Sycamore.

Sycamore Cottage, Aberlour Trust, Kirkcaldy

15. Although my home was still in Dunoon I was about twelve when I was sent to the Sycamore Cottage at 44 Wightmans Brae, Kirkcaldy. I was under the impression the reasons for me going so far away was they worked with children who no one else would take, were classed as maladapted and was a home for misfits. As I was growing up I hated my social worker, Margaret Munro, but in reality she was really lovely. She was the one that fought really hard to get me into Sycamore because it was one of the better places for me. Margaret Munro worked from the social work office in Dunoon. I stayed at Sycamore for about eighteen months.
16. Sycamore was run by the Aberlour Trust. They had different services, Sycamore Cottage where I was, another one was for older children situated around the corner from us. It was called Cedar Cottage and was for children around fifteen or sixteen and was to teach them to be independent and what would be needed when they left care and went back to routine life.
17. There was another placement, Veronica Crescent for younger children. You stayed there until you were a teenager before moving to Sycamore.

Routine at Sycamore Cottage, Aberlour Trust, Kirkcaldy

First day

18. I remember having packed all my things at Gartnavel into a bin bag and arriving at Sycamore. It was a home which was a long extended building on two levels. I was really frightened when I arrived. There were lots of other children who spoke to me

when I arrived and they showed me where I would be staying. I shared a bedroom with another girl. I would prefer not to name her.

19. The bedrooms were on the upper level and there was a staff room on that floor and another downstairs. Also on the ground floor was the living area, large hall, dining room, utility room at the back.
20. SNR ██████████ Sycamore was KNU ██████████, I remember some of other members of staff but again would prefer not to name them. There were good staff as well as staff who were terribly bad. Most of the staff who were really bad have been charged with sexual crimes or other offences relating to abuse of children.
21. My key worker, Tanya Brooks itemised everything that I had with me. She would be my main point of contact while I stayed there. She was a lovely woman and I still see her today.
22. I think there were five or six of us in total staying at Sycamore and it was mixed boys and girls. I shared the room with another girl. The mix between boys and girls was always changing as some moved out of Sycamore and others replaced them. At one stage I was the only girl of the six children there.

Mornings and bedtime

23. I can't remember what time I got up in the morning but I was always in time for us to get washed, dressed, eat breakfast and get to school. At night there was a set bed time but I can't remember what it was. I would get upset as I was in bed earlier than most others as I was the youngest at the time.
24. When I was suffering from my night terrors the staff were extremely frustrated. The staff told me that I would scream a lot, thrash about in the bed and would often be found crying in bed.

Mealtimes/Food

25. There was a cook at Sycamore and the food was quite good. There was never any issue with force feeding or anything similar. We were usually back for lunch at Sycamore before returning to school. When I was transferred from Kirkcaldy High to Viewforth High it meant I had to run home and run back after lunch as there was only an hour available. After school I would have been back at the home for evening meal. Again there were no issues.

Clothing/uniform

26. When I went to school I had to wear a uniform. The clothing was all provided by Aberlour and they kept a detailed list of each piece of clothing they provided. As far as clothing was concerned I was well catered for.

Leisure time

27. The home did encourage us to mix with the local children and pupils at the school. We were allowed out of the home to spend time with those children. The home did try to allow you as normal a life as possible, as far as mixing with people was concerned. Some staff did not like the people I chose to hang out with.
28. We were allowed to go on outings for skating or to the swimming pool. So long as we were not in any trouble we could go without supervision. There were other times that I was allowed to go to gymnastics. It was a separate thing from the home and school. I also had a go at horse riding for a little while.

Trips and holidays

29. I did go away to places while I was at Sycamore. On one occasion I remember going to Wales and staying in a caravan. I think I enjoyed that. I never ran away while I was on leave.

30. One other time they tried to help me visit my dad when he stayed in Wales. They put me on a train and while I was sitting on it I thought I can't spend time with him as I did not know him. I hid from the staff on the train and when they found me I told them I did not want to go and I was taken back to Sycamore.

School

31. When I was at Sycamore I attended Kirkcaldy High School. The high school was split in two. Years one, two and three were in one building and the older children were in a separate building on the other side of Kirkcaldy.
32. I did not like my time in the school, I got on well with the other kids, I just felt I did not fit in there. I stopped going to school. We were supposed to walk to the school but because I stopped going, I was usually taken by staff in the van. Although I was taken there by staff in the van and escorted into the building, as soon as they left I kept walking and left by another part of the building. This escalated to the staff escorting me straight to the class room. As soon as the teacher's back was turned and she was distracted I would climb out of the window and run off.
33. There were only a few occasions I would stay in school. When I did run off I would be away drinking somewhere, buzzing gas and shoplifting. I would just fill my day like this or hang out with other kids in a similar situation.
34. There were times the school would bring in psychologists to test me educationally to see if that was the reason for me running away. I always passed there tests.
35. Eventually I was placed into [REDACTED] within Kirkcaldy High School. It was really nice there and for a while I went to school each day. There were probably four or five of us there. The lessons were great because it was almost on a one to one basis. The staff at the school mothered me and I loved it. One of the teachers who was really nice was a lady Wynne Brown. She used to take me out after school, sometimes to McDonalds. Although I never explained how I felt about being in Sycamore she seemed to be aware of how I was feeling. She just wanted to help me.

36. The head teacher was the one who stopped my time at learning support as he said it was supposed to be a temporary thing and children should be integrated back into the main class rooms. Every time they tried to make me go to the class rooms I would refuse or if I knew beforehand they were placing me in the class room I would not go to school.
37. Mrs Brown took me aside and told me I had to go to the class as it was my last chance. I refused and I was expelled from the school. I was then transferred to another school nearby, Viewforth High School. I was there only for a short time. When I did go to class I insisted on sitting at the back of the class. While I sat there I would have a can of gas and buzz from it. That was the only way I could handle going to school.

Healthcare

38. Every time someone arrived we were taken to the local doctor's surgery for a check-up. We would be able to see the doctor regularly while we were there and if we were having any illnesses. The same could be said for dentists, if we had toothache we were able to see someone.
39. During my time in Sycamore there were times I would self-harm and cut myself. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I was taken to the local hospital for treatment. I did ask KNU [REDACTED] if he believed me in relation to the rape. There is an entry in my records about that conversation and he told me that he did not believe me.
40. During my time at Cardross there were many times that I was self-harming again and the staff would have to take me to the local emergency department at the hospital to get stitches in the cuts.
41. The centre did have a doctor who you were allowed to see, but no one wanted to see him as he was not interested in you when he was treating you.

Chores

42. The only chores we had were to keep our rooms clean and tidy up after yourself. We did not have to dishes or anything like that. There was a set time on a day that we had to do any washing of our clothes.

Birthdays and Christmas

43. I hated Christmas and New Year as they were always difficult for me. I think there was an allowance for what was spent on each child. I don't remember if I actually picked my present or one was randomly given out. Birthdays were much the same.

Visits/Inspections

44. There were regular checks by Margaret Munro, my social worker. She phoned me more than visited me at the home, just to see how I was. She did take a sabbatical and was replaced by a male social worker. He would visit me at the home quite often. I do have a vague recollection of visits from other social workers, but I cannot recall anything said during those visits.

Family contact

45. While I was at Sycamore as in Gartnavel I did get visits from my mum, [REDACTED]. There was no weekend visits to her house then or later as I never left care until I was sixteen.
46. I never wanted to go home to visit. I felt that if they told me I was going home for a visit that that would have been the worst punishment they could give me. [REDACTED] would visit but I did not want to see her. She insisted on coming to see me and she would also phone the home wanting to speak to me. The staff would try to encourage me to see her but that caused me more anxiety than anything else.

Personal possessions

47. I liked to read a lot of books but I was not allowed to get any from charity shops or anywhere like that. They were quite strict about that as it reflected bad on them. Other books I got from the school or from the library. I read a lot, sometimes a book in a day. There were no particular subjects I just liked to read and I could get lost in whatever I was reading at the time.

Running away

48. Running away was big part of my life at Sycamore. I was constantly succeeding in running away or attempting to run away. I never cared where I ran away to just so long as I was not at the home. Sometimes it was far away, sometimes local and on other occasions I would stay overnight with others who were deemed as misfits. They would hide me under the beds whenever the police came to check at their houses. Sycamore Cottage would report me missing to the police. In the eighteen months I was there I would often run away daily and there were periods where I only ran away occasionally. I would say that on an average I would run away at least two or three days a months.
49. To try and stop me staff would make me take my shoes off and wear my pyjamas, all with a view to try and stop me running away. It didn't stop me as I would still run away, however I was dressed. It is not the first time I would be running along the street in my long pyjama t-shirt, pretending to be a jogger.
50. I was often caught by the police when I had run away but I got the sense from them that I was just wasting their time. They were not interested in any reasons for me running away. They would tell me they were more interested in catching criminals than wasting time looking for me. They were always rude to me and I would be rude back to them. I knew there was no point in telling them anything as I had so many labels attached to me that it would have been a waste of time.

Discipline

51. The punishments ranged from being grounded, having to be dressed in your night clothes or being confined to your room with an alarm on your door. If you opened it for

any reason then staff were alerted. Windows were all locked to stop you trying to escape. Sometimes staff would make you stay in the living room where they could keep an eye on you. All and any of those methods were used on me along with the restraints.

Abuse at Sycamore Cottage, Aberlour Trust, Kirkcaldy

52. An episode is recorded in my files where it says that I was upset and had to be undressed and made ready for bed. The report says that I refused to do this myself so they took my clothes off and dressed me in my night wear. It further stated that I was having to be restrained to facilitate this. The report says that I was still upset and building myself up into hysteria and after a further fifteen minutes one of the female staff had to lightly slap me on either cheek. This was not the case and it was a full slap and unnecessary. She was screaming at the top of her voice and she was losing it so much she was spitting as she screamed. I do not want to name the member of staff.
53. I remember very early into my stay at Sycamore I was still having night tremors. It was common for me to be suffering from this issue and be dragged from the bed to stop others from being woken and I was dragged downstairs to the living room. It was common for me to waken up in the morning having been dragged out of bed and I was covered in bruises. But those bruises were not visible to anyone else, the staff were quite careful about that. They knew how to hurt you without marking you. Anyone outside of the home, like teachers, would not be able to see any of the bruises and possibly take some sort of action.
54. One night I woke up in the living room lying on the floor. As I woke one of the male workers was sitting right on top of my chest as I was on the floor. He was a really big man, grossly overweight and in excess of twenty stone, shouting at me "Shut up you retard". I do know his name but would prefer not to name him. This episode is also recorded within my files where he says that I reacted violently to the mention of an injection and he had to pin me to the floor while he sat across my chest, pinning my shoulder blades to the floor with his knees.

55. There was a time when they used a chair to pin me on the floor. While they sat on the chair and me on the floor screaming, they just turned the volume of the television up to mask my screams. This is recorded in my files.
56. There were numerous other occasions where I would waken up while being restrained by staff. This was a big issue for me and where I consider most of my abuse took place. My overriding memory of being in Sycamore was being restrained most of the time. There were some good staff but they were heavily outweighed by bad. I know there were some situations where they had no other choice other than to restrain me, but not to the extent of the number of occasions it was happening.
57. I have read in my records that during the first five weeks of my staying at Sycamore they recorded over thirty occasions when I was restrained. That is just the times when it was recorded on paper.
58. The types of restraints used were not what I now know to be a correct procedure, CALM is a process of restraining children who are out of control. Although it was not officially around during my time in care I am qualified and now teach others in those methods. It is a positive behaviour support. I have written numerous essays on the subject to a Masters level and fully understand it's use and implications.
59. I can see that the bad staff in my time used it as an abuse of their power, they liked to hurt me, they enjoyed it and they got a lot out of winding me up and breaking me where they then be able to restrain me. The good staff only did it as a last resort and as a necessity. It was not always as a result of my night terrors but sometimes during the day because they deemed I had committed some misdemeanour.
60. I have some quotes from my files involving some of restraints and on occasions where they called out doctors to have me sedated. That happened on a least four occasions and one was particularly traumatic. This was because staff, I don't want to name them, would wind me up to such an extent that I would retaliate. The bad staff looked at this as some kind of sport. During a boring back shift they would find a way to upset me that would result in them restraining me for lengthy periods.

61. On the four separate occasions where they sedated me it was with an injection. The most difficult one was during a period when I was really upset. On this occasion there were three male members of staff on duty and they said that I tried to get out of one of the windows on the upper storey and they had to pull me back in. My memory is different in that I was in the hall on the ground floor. I was being brutally restrained by those three men. They decided that this was not enough and in front of some of the children who could see what was happening from the living room, they called for the ambulance staff to be called out.
62. When the ambulance arrived it was then a total of five men who were involved in trying to hold me down. This was overkill as I was still really small built and it did not need all of them to pin me down. The male staff took down my trousers and removed my pants in full view of everyone. They tried to sedate me but I was struggling so much that the first three attempts resulted in the needles snapping off on my backside and only on the fourth attempt were they successful. I don't remember anything else after that.
63. There were many occasions while I was being restrained, being dressed in usually night wear, that during the struggle it was a regular occurrence for my shirt to be pulled up exposing my chest.
64. There were times when I was crying in my room and the staff would come in and shout at me saying I was just attention seeking. They would escalate their behaviour and I would react, this would increase until they felt they had to restrain me. From my notes on one of those occasions a female member of staff has noted that she ignored my sobs and turned on the television. This was one of those days when I was upset in my room and I was dragged from the bedroom, down the stairs by the two members of staff. They bumped me down each step. One of the staff, a female, told me stop my crying, that I was just an attention seeker. If I did not behave she said that she would stick the needle in herself. She knew that I was frightened of needles.

65. I was not the only child being restrained. There were other girls being treated the same way and some of the boys were also restrained.
66. During this time I was going through a period where I was still self-harming. Some of the good staff would try to talk to me to get to the bottom of why I was doing this. They would remove any access I had [REDACTED] but I would go such an extent that I would [REDACTED]
67. I later wrote down how I felt at the times I was being abused. One of those notes I described how they would pin me to the floor. They had their knees between my shoulder blades, my wrists and arms were twisted so hard behind my back that I felt they were about to snap. My thumbs were being pushed back and a hand pushing my face harder and harder into the carpet. Hands were pushing down on all parts of my body in an effort to stop me getting up. It was total domination of me and the only thing I could do was scream, loud painful screams. They never let up, not until I apologised to them. They just kept shouting at me to calm down. I couldn't because they were hurting me so much. The restraint would go on for as long as an hour if not longer. My bones and muscles were in complete agony. I knew then that no one was coming to help or save me from this abuse.
68. None of the residents could interfere. If they did they too would be restrained by the staff. As it happened to me some of the kids were standing helplessly watching what was going on. There were also times when I would be the one standing and watching but not able to do anything. It was a normal part of life that when I got up in the morning to go to the bathroom that I would have to step over someone being restrained on the floor.
69. There were the good members of staff who were probably not aware of how bad the others were, as they may have been on different shifts, but they did have some sort of feeling that they did not want to work with them. They all worked on a shift pattern, but sometimes the good members of staff would try and arrange the shifts where they worked together and the bad were teamed together. This meant when the good team

were on we all had a good time, but the flip side was when the bad were on together we were all aware that we would be in for a difficult time.

70. During my time at Aberlour I did make a complaint against one member of staff at Sycamore which was also reported to the police. His name was GZB. He previously worked in before his arrival at Sycamore. Looking back I knew I was a needy child and I really liked being given cuddles. GZB would spend a lot of time cuddling me.
71. I began to notice that when we were cuddling up watching television his hand would start to move up towards my breasts. He would also toy with the zip in my jeans. At that time I did not care what was happening, I was just happy he was showing love to me. When GZB got up for a bit and left the room another of the kids said to me that they noticed that GZB was getting very touchy. I thought this is bad if others are starting to notice. Then yet another kid made more comments about what he was doing.
72. Eventually things were getting to the stage that when he was involved in restraining me his hand would touch my bottom. There were also times during those restraints that my t-shirt happened to ride up. I began to realise that he was instigating the restraints in order that he would be able to touch me.
73. I ended up telling Mrs Brown, a teacher at the school, what he was doing to me. She reported it on my behalf and he was investigated. They did not take it any further at that time. He was allowed to continue to work at Sycamore. It showed that they did not believe a word that I said. When he was working with me there were more incidents of him touching me. He was later reported for touching another girl but again no action was taken. I think this went as far as being reported to the Procurator Fiscals Office. It was in February 1988 when I told the teacher at Kirkcaldy High School. I later received a letter from the Children's Panel at Dunoon telling me the incidents were investigated and not being taken any further.
74. Although I know a lot of the children I was at Sycamore with I would prefer not naming them. There was one girl who I will name, . She lived at Sycamore

House for about a year and I shared a bedroom with [REDACTED] for a while. I later found out that [REDACTED] ran away when she was about sixteen and she was found in bed with GZB [REDACTED] GZB [REDACTED] at his house. I was told this by a girl who I am still friendly with from Sycamore and again I would prefer not to name her. Nothing was ever done about this. One of the main reasons for me coming to the Inquiry is for [REDACTED] and people like her. When she was in her early twenties [REDACTED] committed suicide. She had no voice to express herself.

Leaving Sycamore House, Aberlour Trust, Kirkcaldy

75. When I was about thirteen and a half I had cut my arms as part of my self-harming. At that time my sister had phoned for me at the home. I told her on the phone how much I hated it at Sycamore. A short time later she turned up at the home with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and GZB [REDACTED] had a huge argument and while this was ongoing they each had a hold of my arms. I was able to get away from the home with [REDACTED] and we went away to London, without the permission of the local authority.
76. When I was in London for a little while I left [REDACTED]. I think I phoned Childline and they managed to get me in a teenage refuge for a few days. I don't know the name of the refuge. That was when Sycamore made the decision that they could not take me back there. The social work from home were in touch with staff at the refuge. It was agreed between them that I would be sent Cardross Assessment Centre, later renamed Cardross Park Resource Centre. I was then flown from London back to Glasgow where I was picked up by Margaret Munro to go to Cardross. There was no contact with [REDACTED] as she had gone into hiding in case there was any prosecution.

Cardross Assessment Centre

77. When I was sent to Cardross it was supposed to be for a three week assessment but I ended up staying nearly four years, There were about fifty kids in the centre, a mix of boys and girls. The people in there varied from kids truanting from school all the way to some who were the subject of court cases. The main reasons I was there was there was nowhere that would be able to give the care that I needed. I couldn't go into

another home because we tried that and it didn't work. I wasn't bad enough for a secure unit but it was something they threatened me with on a regular basis.

First day

78. On arrival there I remember the long driveway to the front of the building. The building was really large and L-shaped. It was a grey building with bars on all the ground floor windows, which only opened a few inches. As you entered the building there was a massive dining room, big enough to cope with around fifty kids there at the time and the relevant staff as well.
79. There was an induction when I arrived where they noted your details and measurements. I think the person in overall charge of Cardross was a guy called Alex, I don't know his surname and I rarely saw him or had any interaction with him.
80. The separate units within Cardross were Fruan, Ettrick, Carman and one other unit that I can't recall the name of. There used to be another unit for day pupils and it had a school attached to it, which in the past used to be a remand home. The building where the school was situated was really run down and the top two floors were collapsed. We were not supposed to be in those floors but needless to say that was where I spent a lot of my time.
81. Fruan was the first place I was sent to and this was where most new arrivals were sent. I was there for the first three weeks, which was normal, but you could stay there for as long as six weeks for a proper assessment to be made. You were then transferred to one of the other two main units, Ettrick and Carman. There was a big mix of kids in there, whether it was loss of parents, truanting or having been in trouble with the police.
82. As you entered the building there was a long corridor with maybe six or seven bedrooms to one side. On the other side was a living room, staff room and a leisure room. There was a kitchen there as well. The building was on a slope and this was all

on the upper floor. There was a lower floor but I was not in there. Next to the living room there was an area where a pool table was situated.

83. I spent most of my time in Carman unit and I had my own room. Carman was a communal unit with the boys and girls having their own washing and bathing facilities. The dining room was where we all ate together. I was in with a mix of age of other girls. I know there was a boy in the unit who was only eight years old and I was horrified that someone that young was there.
84. In my room you had a built in half wardrobe which also had drawers in it. The rooms were very small and there was a window. I still had lots of my clothes that I brought with me from Sycamore. There was no uniform that we were made to wear at Cardross.

Routine

85. After getting up in the morning it was washed and dressed then headed down for breakfast. The food in general was mass produced and fine. There was plenty of food available and it was around this time I became a vegetarian. This meant I had some control of the food that I ate. My vegetarian food consisted mainly the same food as everyone else, the only difference being was that where others had meat on their plate I had a gap.
86. During the night I still suffered from night terrors. Sometimes I would waken and there would be staff there shouting at me to be quiet and there were other nights when different staff were on and they were trying to comfort me.
87. I did have to attend Children's Panel on a regular basis. It was better than before as they moved it to Dumbarton and meant I did not have to go all the way to Dunoon. I was allowed to sit in the room while my case was being discussed. I did not know at that time that the panel was made up of ordinary working people.

88. I did make friends with some of the people coming into the unit, but those friendships were very intense as they only lasted three weeks before the other person would leave. This was much the same as having to prove yourself to people, you would manage that but again another person would arrive after three weeks and it would all repeat itself again.
89. Getting friendly with boys was an issue as most of the staff always believed that as soon as a boy and girl got talking or friendly with each other it meant that they were going to have sex. The staff would separate you and make sure you were sat some distance from each other.
90. When I was around fifteen the section I was being detained under was amended and it allowed me some freedom of movement. I was allowed out of the unit, so long as I had behaved, and would be expected back by a certain time.
91. We were allowed to smoke but the cigarettes were rationed. We had four a day and I think they had to have parent's permission for us to smoke. We were given one just after each of the meals of the day, breakfast, lunch, dinner and supper. Sometimes we were given a cigarette by staff as an extra but we had to share it around with others in our company.

School

92. When I first started I went to the local school within Cardross. I spent a lot of time on the computer playing maths games. I did lots of different craft making from basking weaving, pottery and shrinking bags of crisps and making badges out of them. I hated them all and can't go near any of them now. I only spent a short time there and I think because they realised I was going to be at Cardross for a longer time and as a result I was sent to a mainstream school, Clydebank High.
93. I was on their books for about a year. I was given travel vouchers for the train so I would go to the school. The staff would give a lift to the train station and put me on the train. I would get off at the other end and make my way up to the school. I would have

been about thirteen then going on fourteen. I did enjoy the English classes and there was one teacher who was really good with me and I am still friends with to this day. As a result of my night terrors there were times I fell asleep in the class but they understood and never gave me any grief for this.

94. Eventually I stopped attending Clydebank High School. I was either refusing to go or would be dropped off and walk out another door. This only went on for a while before I was told I was to stay at Cardross. I think they did that as Clydebank would have taken the decision to expel me and that would have looked bad on them. Officially I was supposed to be in class at Cardross but was back in the habit of staying in my room.

Leisure

95. I was taken out on a regular basis and have been to most of the swimming pools and skating rinks in the country. There were activities or outings organised most nights, but usually because most of the people were there for only three weeks they did not see as many of the places I saw. There are only so many times you can go to those places before you begin to hate it, but for those who had never been to ice skating it was a great experience. You all went as a group, and there were only a few occasions when I said I was not going. If I did that I was told I was the difficult one.
96. At Cardross there is some grounds on the outside of the building but you were not usually allowed to go outside. There were times my key worker, Peter, could not find anything for me to do and he would tell me to get my shoes on and he would take me out for a walk, in the grounds to start with and then out onto the hills. He was really good and came from the construction industry. I am not sure he had ever come across a child like me before. That actually started my passion for long walks and is still something I enjoy today.
97. Peter told me that one of the criteria for him getting the job was that he looked intimidating and by his own admission having just come off a construction site he fitted

the bill. He had no previous experience in child care. I am not sure what training they were given when they came to Cardross, but they were all trained in restraint.

Birthdays and Christmas

98. When it came to my birthday they did help celebrate. Each child was allocated fifteen pounds for a present and it was the same at Christmas. Sometimes I might get an extra present from Peter, my key worker. He would pay for it out of his own pocket. One time I got a ghetto blaster. It definitely cost more than fifteen pounds.

Healthcare

99. During my time at Cardross I was getting on/off psychological support. Cardross were really good as they realised that a lot of my issues began long before I was placed in care. One of the people who they managed to get me in touch with was a lady called Winnie Bain. She specialised in supporting problem children and worked for Strathclyde Social Work in Glasgow. She did a lot of work in Orkney, where there were previous allegations of abuse in the past. I was probably in Cardross for about eighteen months before I was involved with Winnie Bain but was under her care for the remainder of my time there.

Family contact

100. I did get visits from [REDACTED]. I always wanted to be able to see my sister [REDACTED] but for some reason [REDACTED] seemed to have the power to stop her coming to visit me. I had been at Cardross for quite a long time before I was able to go out for any visits. That was when I was able to go to Dunoon and see [REDACTED]. To get visits away you had to earn it. If you misbehaved or failed to go to school then you would not be able to get out. They would be able to use the threats over the kids who were only there for a few weeks that if they were cheeky in any way then they would not get a weekend visit to their parents.

101. Any other time [REDACTED] tried to visit me when I was in Cardross, I told the staff I did not want her to visit. Sometimes I found it too distressing when she came to see me. It was not until I was around fourteen when the staff began to believe what my earlier life was like. There were many times when I considered committing suicide at the thought my mum was coming to see me. I tried on four occasions to commit suicide. I [REDACTED]. On one occasion I had to have [REDACTED] at the hospital, all because she was coming to see me. After that the staff began to protect me more. When she was phoning in to speak to me I was no longer being forced to answer her calls.

Chores/Tasks

102. Other than keeping your room tidy there were no chores for you to be allocated. They had cooks, cleaners and people who did the laundry.

Running Away

103. At Cardross you were not allowed be out of the building without permission. No one even walked in the grounds alone. If you wanted to go to the shops at the bottom of the drive you had to be escorted there. The only ways for me to get out would be to try and run the length of the building without being caught by one of the staff, or if you managed to get out by the fire escape. I did manage to get out that way sometimes. The different rooms in the building were all locked and the staff all walked around with large bunches of keys attached to their clothes.
104. I still ran away while I stayed at Cardross. My usual method of escape was getting out via the fire escape. There was even a time when I had been taken out for the evening to the circus. The staff were on high alert with me because I ran away so often. When at the circus I went to the toilet which was just a big tent. When I was there I noticed that if I lifted the tent at the back of the toilet I could get out. That was what I did for no other reason than I could. That time I think I went over to Dunoon.

105. I never usually had a plan in mind I just wanted to get out. I never stopped running away while I was there. Even if they were escorting me to the shops I would run away. I tried to time it right for when the train was due. I never had any money and just used to hide on the train and avoid the ticket collector. Sometimes I would even hitch hike on the road, just to get anywhere away from the home, never a planned destination.

Abuse

106. Cardross was a really violent place to survive. There was a lot of bullying from the kids and you had to fight back to survive. I can remember there was one girl who had a razor in her hand and she went up to another girl and just slashed her right across her face. I can remember another time when someone had part of their ear bitten off.
107. As far as punishments were concerned the restraints used on me was more brutal and lasted longer than at Sycamore. The only real difference was the restraints were perhaps not as often as they were before. Other punishments would involve less pocket money or doing something nice at the end of the week. They had a points system in place at school. You would need to attend and be angelic most of the week to earn the ten points needed to get out for the treat. There were times when I would be at school all week and be good while I was there, but during that week I may have had to be off to attend the Panel and they would take points off me for being away from school. So I was punished for going to my own panel.
108. One of the methods of restrain that was used at Cardross is called "Pin Down". There was an incident that happened when I had been at Cardross for about two years and was probably about fourteen years old. I had been bunking off school and had got the train back to the unit. I tried to sneak back into the my room and was creeping along the corridor. When I entered my room I with horror that there was absolutely nothing in my room, the bed and everything inside had been removed.
109. I knew that there was going to be trouble. I turned and ran in an attempt to leave the building. It was too late and staff saw me and gave chase. They caught me on the driveway and after a prolonged bout of restraining me I was dragged back to my room.

It might seem okay but when I say there was nothing in the room that is exactly what I mean. The carpet had even been lifted, the window had been boarded up and the light shades were all removed. The only thing in the room was the mattress on the floor and the empty built in wardrobe. Pyjamas were mandatory when being kept in the room. I was refusing to get into my night clothes and I remember all my clothing been torn from me and they dressed me in my pyjamas.

110. I was kept in the room like this for two weeks. No one was allowed to talk to me and meals were put through the door. Toilet trips were limited, escorted and without any conversation taking place. Before you were allowed to be taken to the toilet the hallway was cleared of all other children. I felt I was going mad while I was locked up for those two weeks. I was like a caged animal. Staff sat at the end of the corridor to ensure I could not make any attempt to escape. After the first week a meeting was held to find out if I could be allowed to return to normal life in the unit. One of the staff, who I really liked, came to tell me that the result of the meeting was that I was to spend a second week in the room. He said to me that if I could assure senior staff that I would behave and be a good girl there was a chance I could get out. I could never give him that assurance.
111. Unfortunately with no one having spoken to me for a week I went into a rage and was shouting and screaming. I could not stop the anger coming out and was once more restrained by staff. I was forced face down onto the wooden floor and they were grabbing at any part of my body they could reach. I was thrashing out at anyone within reach. There were so many staff that I had no chance. There were a lot of staff that enjoyed the struggle and I paid the price with bruising on all the areas they held my body and my face was bruised from being forced onto the wooden floor. One of the staff even kicked me to the head, which was brushed off as an accident. I refused to apologise and it went on and on. It took nearly two hours before the pain became so intense that I eventually gave in and stopped struggling.
112. They left me in the room and I stayed lying in the same position they abandoned me. They had finally broke me and part of my inner self left me. During the second week I was left in the room I looked for [REDACTED] I could use to cut myself

with. I had [REDACTED] and that was never replaced and I was left in total darkness. I was slowly allowed out for an hour during the day. When I was allowed out I was told to scrub the skirting boards outside the office, dressed in my pyjamas. There was still no permission for anyone to talk to me. Staff would be making stupid comments about me and they were encouraging other kids to do the same. The kids didn't join in their game as they knew that the next time it could be them. Some even tried to pass some sweeties to me without staff seeing them.

113. During that hour I was also forced to make the staff their coffee. My rage with what they did to me was still there and I would sometimes spit in their coffee and on other times I would add toilet water.
114. A few weeks after this my hair started falling out. I would waken up each morning with more and more clumps of hair on my pillow. I was taken to see the doctor within the unit. After carrying out his examination he told me he did not know what was wrong with me and referred me to a specialist. She explained that it was a result of the stress I was under. She explained that my hair may or may not grow back.
115. It was not just me that this happened to, there were at least three other children who were also in a similar situation, restrained and kept in the their room with no furniture. It was not a common thing, but I do know that there was one boy who was kept in his room for three weeks.
116. I remember there was an occasion when we were seated in the dining room and there was a young boy who came running into the dining area being chased by a male member of staff, GZJ [REDACTED] I think was his name. I can't remember any of their names. The boy was caught and the staff member gave him a right going over and kicking the boy as he was on the ground. GZJ [REDACTED] had his foot on the boy's back. I know from speaking with the boy later that he had a huge bruise on his back which was a perfect impression of GZJ [REDACTED]'s shoe. The police were called and all of the kids who were in the dining room, around fifty kids, were spoken to. At the end of it we were told that we never actually saw what happened and no action was taken. GZJ [REDACTED] continued to

work within the unit. How can fifty kids, most of which told exactly the same as I had seen, be disbelieved and dismissed by the police.

Reporting Abuse

117. There was no one you could speak to with regard to any issues you might be having in Cardross as all the staff you were interacting with on a daily basis may have been part of the problem you were experiencing, There were no independent people coming in to check on the welfare of the residents.


Leaving Cardross


118. I was allocated what was called a through care worker, Morag Smith, when I was about fifteen. The social work obviously realised that I would be leaving at some point in the near future and this person was there to help me through the process. This role was in its infancy but it was there to teach me things I would need to know, like looking after a house, cooking, etc.
119. When I was allowed out of Cardross I went to work in a nursing home. When I turned sixteen they sent me to college on a course for nursing auxiliary work. It was a youth training scheme so was not earning a great deal. I did offer to make a token gesture to pay for some of my stay there. One of the girls that was on the course with me had a brother, [REDACTED], who I was later introduced to and he later became my husband.
120. While I was working at the home I fell pregnant. I told one of the nice members of staff that I got on well with. She told me that I would have to leave within a couple of days as they could not risk anything happening to me or the child.

Life after Cardross

121. [REDACTED]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



122. When I left there I was still being cared for by my through care worker, Morag Smith. She helped me get my own flat. She was supposed to be there for around two years and ensure that I was able to look after myself, but ended up being a friend who has been around for thirty years. She would give me list of things that I needed to look after yourself, silly little things like tin openers and anything else that I never realised I needed. She also assisted in getting me a £200 allowance which was due to anyone who had been in care and was leaving when they reached the age of sixteen. Morag Smith would have been my last official contact with Strathclyde Council. I can't be sure of the exact date as we continued to be friends afterwards.
123. Although I was pregnant I was not looking to get married at that time. I had spent all my life under the influence and control of someone and was not looking to be married right away. After giving birth to my first son, I was eighteen when I had my second boy.  and I got married when I was about twenty. We had our third child, my daughter, a year later.
124. Although I did not stay at school long enough to keep up my education over the last ten years I have made big efforts to alter this. I went to work with another social care charity in 2002 and at that time they had an internal HNC qualification you could work towards. As I was a practitioner looking after children it was part of my registration that I had to attend college to get my basics, English and Maths. I was not interested in going to college for this but the opportunity arose for me to qualify through that charity themselves. I completed my SVQ and all my other qualifications through them, and it was either funded by them or paid for by myself..
125. Up until about three years ago I had contact with my dad. I don't have any issues with him it is just that he is like a bloke who just pops into your life now and then and is gone again for a while. Around that time we had a family get together after my first

grandson [REDACTED] was born. He must have been about seven months old by the time of this party and my dad arrived and during this time he was asking how my granddaughter was. He did not even remember it was a grandson. It was the last straw for me and I told him to leave.

126. I did not have any relationship with my mum after being in care and she passed away twelve years ago. Her death was not something affected me as I was not allowing what she did to affect my family life.
127. The night tremors stopped around the time that my first son was born, around me being sixteen. I think it was because I came to a conscious decision not to allow them to affect me and to affect my son. I just wanted to concentrate on being a mother.

Impact

128. The night terrors I suffered from continued throughout my time in care and lasted until I was around nineteen years old. The terrors could be as many as three or four a night, sometimes I would go for a couple of days without having any. Obviously I was really tired on the days I had the disturbance to my sleep. I am not sure, context wise whether the staff were trained specifically for my night tremors or self-harming. They were given training days but I am not sure if those areas were covered.
129. While I was in care at Sycamore and the other places in care during my childhood I did see many psychologists about the night tremors but there never seemed to be anything that could be done. It just seemed that they would have to talk about things you did not want to discuss. You never felt any better after the sessions but were back at their offices the following week, repeating it all over again. I think this was organised through Aberlour but I am not certain of that.
130. My mental health improved after the birth of my children. My night terrors began after the abuse at home and before I went into care. Other mental health issues were attributed to my life in care. I do remember when I was doing my studying and there was a lecture involving surviving abuse. When the lecturer was describing things it

was like he was describing my life in care. I had not realised how much all the issues were affecting me until I was listening to him. I ended up crying my heart out and I was not going to let it affect my children and made sure nothing like that happened to any of them. This was around the time my daughter was sixteen.

131. I have been with my husband for over thirty years and he along with many of the people who know me, know nothing about my life before I was sixteen. In some ways I see it as some sort of deception. It is not like my husband wouldn't listen, because he would listen to anything I wanted to tell him and he would not judge me. I feel I cannot burden him with any of this. I do not want to traumatise him or anyone I know with what happened. I can't hide the scars from my self-harming and it is obvious to all that I had problems, but again it has not been discussed. The self-harming stopped when my first son was born.

Reporting of Abuse

132. The incidents involving [REDACTED] when he raped me was reported to the police in Glasgow and I was in the adolescent unit at the time of reporting. I can't remember the female officer's name, but later when I was in Cardross she arrived there on a separate matter. We both recognised each other. She came to speak to me just checking on how I was. This would have been around 1984.
133. The incidents at Sycamore with GZB was reported to the staff. I also mentioned it to my mother and told my teacher. I can remember the unit manager Tim talking to me about it, but nothing being brought up again. There was police involvement but the female officer who attended gave the impression she was bored and juts sat on the end of the bed smoking a cigarette. This would have been around 1986. To be fair to the staff I never showed any sign of being affected by what he was doing. The incidents involving restraint have never been reported.
134. The incidents in Cardross were never reported as the people who were carrying out the abuse would have been the people I could have reported anything to and that would have been pointless.

Records

135. For years as I was bringing up my family I wanted to see if there was anything in my records to help me find out what may be recorded about my time at Sycamore. I wrote to Aberlour. I got a reply from John Ryan, from the safeguarding unit at the trust, saying that my files were lost, as they had been destroyed. This was about five years ago. I had a friend that worked there and she was able to tell me that the files were exactly where the others were, in the attic. She said she would make sure I got them. Not long after that John Ryan phoned me back saying that they had been found.
136. I asked him to send the records to me but he said that was not possible and I would have to call at the office to view them. About two weeks before I was due to see them I was getting strange calls from John Ryan asking if I was bringing anyone with me to view the records. He was quite adamant that if I had a lawyer with me I could not see my file. When I went to see the records I was alone and he put me into an office. He offered me limited copies of the pages but I said I wanted copies of all of them, which I got.
137. I can say they only recorded what they wanted. The things they recorded were so one sided it definitely showed me in a bad light and they were able to justify what they were doing.
138. Some of the records I have detail some of the occasions when I was restrained. The staff recorded what can only be described as a short story of an incident and many of those entries were complete fantasy. It does describe their thoughts of me at that time.
139. I have never looked for my medical reports but the reports I do have are from the staff at Sycamore. From Strathclyde Council I have my Children's Hearings reports and my review reports. This was a large stack of paperwork weighing nearly a stone in weight. I have not been through all of it so far. I think I have all the reports that I was looking for.

Hopes for the Inquiry

140. I think that moving forward there will be less demonising of children in care. I hope that as a country we accept responsibility for what happened to children in care. At the end of this Inquiry I hope that we believe what children are telling us, especially when they tell you they are unhappy where they are in care. So many of the children I was in care with have ended up trouble with the courts, have drink and drug addictions and some like the girl [REDACTED] have committed suicide. I feel she was been forgotten by society and that is not right.

Other information

141. 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..... GKI [REDACTED]

Dated..... 04/11/19