

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of Steven Stuart EMSLIE

Support person present: No

1. My name is Steven Emslie. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1973. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Stobhill Hospital in Glasgow. On my birth certificate my name is Steven Stuart Dickie. That is [REDACTED]. My dad's name was [REDACTED]. He was a waste of space. I never knew him. I think he died when he was thirty-six. My mum was born in 1951 and I think he was a couple of years older than my mum. My mum's name was [REDACTED]. My mum was a hippy and my dad was a 'Blues Angel', which was a biker gang in Glasgow. [REDACTED] was from Possil and my mum was originally from Milton.
3. In my earliest years we stayed in Springburn and we then moved to Queenslie. The house was haunted so my mum moved us out of there. My mum then married a man called [REDACTED]. My name was never officially changed to Lister but my mum registered me at school with that surname. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] have an older brother, [REDACTED] who is about four years older than me, but not to the same dad.
4. So I was Steven Dickie but this was changed to Lister in 1976 or 1977. We moved from Glasgow to Montrose. My earliest memory is from three years of age. My mum didn't marry [REDACTED] but she married [REDACTED]. Looking back on it over the

years I always thought my mum was looking for happiness, but obviously she wasn't. But she is still my mum. I have different feelings towards my mum from what I've been finding out over the years, but I understand what she had gone through as well.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I think that's been a factor in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] abusing me. When I found that out about what happened to my mum, I wanted to go and do something to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] wants to go for a cup of tea with him.

5. [REDACTED] name is [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] When I've looked up different photographs to do with my mum's brother, the way [REDACTED] is and how he has been over the years, and I've mentioned [REDACTED] [REDACTED] sexually abused me. Not intercourse but got me to perform oral sex on him. That is when we were in [REDACTED]. I would have been about four and a half years old. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

6. [REDACTED] said children should be seen and not heard. We stayed in a cottage in Montrose. To get to the toilet you had to go through the living room, but if he had his friends over drinking or whatever we were thrown in a room and left there and no matter what happened we weren't to come out. I needed the toilet and ended up going through to the living room, I passed the back of the couch and [REDACTED] caught me and battered me. He took me back through to the bedroom, threw me down and [REDACTED] My mum came home later and she got a doing. He picked up the iron and was going to smash her head in with it. My older brother [REDACTED] stepped in and that's when the police came. I'd have been about four years old then and I remember that incident clearly.

7. I don't know what happened to [REDACTED] He was locked up, but not officially. He was kept in the police station. The police came to my mum and told her he was going to get bailed in a few hours time, so my grandad came to the house from Glasgow in a taxi and picked us up. I remember getting in the taxi in my pyjamas, we had nothing on our feet and we had a couple of bin liners with clothes and some bedding and

stuff and my mum took the washing machine with us as well. [REDACTED] came out of the police station and approached the taxi. My grandad asked him what he was doing and he headbutted my grandad, breaking his nose, but my grandad did manage to get us back down to Glasgow in his taxi.

8. We moved back down to Glasgow in 1977. We had been in Montrose for eighteen months. We went to stay at my granny's flat at [REDACTED] which is in the east end of Glasgow. We stayed there for a couple of months then my mum got a flat in [REDACTED] which was the old tenements. We used to call it the concrete jungle. The playground was an old midden. We played with the old steel bins filled with coal and ashes, with rats running about. I was four years old.

9. After my mum passed away in 2016, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

10. Me and [REDACTED] shared the bedroom in [REDACTED] We had an old can opener that had a corkscrew in the middle of it that you jabbed into the can. One day I was asleep and [REDACTED] got on top of me with the can opener and cut me down my side. He cut me from my testicles all the way up my side. I screamed and my mum came running in. I remember standing up in my pyjamas holding my nuts and blood was running down me. My mum thought [REDACTED] was going off his head, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] but I believe that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] to go and get a knife and cut me.

11. Not long after that incident, my mum decided to go out. I remember crying. By this time she was seeing her second husband. She met this guy through my grandad. He was a taxi driver called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] came across to look after me [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] got me

into the bathroom with him, he shut the door and got me to perform oral sex on him. [REDACTED] was ranting and raving wondering where we were. I was sick in the bath, [REDACTED] ran out the bathroom and I bolted the door. She then booted the door open, the frame came flying off the door and she battered me because I'd locked myself in the bathroom and had been sick in the bath. She threw me in the bedroom and left me there. I didn't tell anyone about the incident.

12. Our bedroom in [REDACTED] was at the front and my mum's bedroom at the back of the house. The kitchen and living room windows were also at the back. So we would sit and look out the window a lot. We hadn't been there long and I saw a guy running up and down the street with an axe in his head and blood running down his face. I used to climb up and down the drainpipes to get in and out.
13. I started smoking when I was about four years old. Our tenement was three storeys high, I think it was [REDACTED]. One day my mum threw a cigarette out of the kitchen window. My mate and I were downstairs and we picked it up. We were sitting on the step at the front of the close and smoking the cigarette and the smoke rose to our kitchen window. My mum looked out the window and saw my trainers sticking out. She shouted down, asking if I was smoking and I started coughing. She saw me throwing it away. To try to get me to stop smoking my mum bought me about sixty cigarettes and made me smoke them, then cigars, then a pipe. I smoked every cigarette, then I smoked the cigars, inhaling every one of them. So my grandad thought he would give me a pipe, I smoked that too. They knew they weren't getting anywhere so thought, if he is going to smoke, he's going to smoke, but they didn't encourage it. I used to steal my mum's cigarettes. As such, I've been smoking since the age of four.
14. My mum had a couple of jobs. I remember her working on the juke mill in Montrose, that was working with cotton. She worked in [REDACTED] Springburn, Glasgow. This was all before I was five years old. After that she never worked.
15. As I said, my mum had been sexually abused [REDACTED] for a number of years. She had been gang raped as well. So this had messed with my mum's head as well

as the way she was treated by husbands too. My mum wasn't an angel either but looking back on things as I got older, I know she suffered a lot. A lot of my life has been similar to my mum's life, whereas [REDACTED] had a silver spoon in his mouth. I really believe right up into my twenties he was trying to kill me or get me bumped off in some way. I thought, 'What have I ever done to you'. He had already got [REDACTED]

16. When we moved from Montrose into my gran's we were twenty-three stories up. I was about four and [REDACTED] was eight. Our bedroom had a veranda. [REDACTED] got me to climb over to the other side of the veranda with him. There was a little ledge about two inches wide and my toes were on that, my hands were holding on to a bar that went across the window. He said, "Let go with one hand". He then told me to let go with my other hand and catch the bar with my free hand. I did that about two or three times, just as [REDACTED] told me to do. He even did it as well. I didn't know any better. That was the second incident that happened where [REDACTED] tried to kill me, as I believe he got [REDACTED] to cut me.

17. I look back to all those years ago and think he was trying to hide this secret that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is his dad. I found out about my dad when I was about seventeen, so it made me want to help [REDACTED] find his dad. I asked him what his dad's name was and he hesitatingly said it was [REDACTED] I asked him what the surname was but he wouldn't tell me. So I just left it. My grandad's name is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] son [REDACTED] then [REDACTED] was born and his name is [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

18. I last saw my mum's brother when I was about nine. He brought me a Scalextric set for Christmas, but I think it was more for [REDACTED] than for me. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] he never came near the family. He didn't go to my gran's funeral, which was his own mums. He didn't go to my grandad's funeral. His dads. As far as I know he still stays in the same house in Glasgow.

19. We left [REDACTED] and went back to [REDACTED], number [REDACTED]. We moved into there in 1978 until 1988, when we then moved to [REDACTED] Cannock, Hednesford. I went into Cardross in 1987. I was fourteen years old. Not long before I went there, [REDACTED] moved out and got his own property in the next block, [REDACTED] so at the time it was just my mum and myself in the house.
20. The reason I went to Cardross stems back to my days in nursery. Because I came back down to Glasgow from Montrose and had an accent from up there, straight away I was a target for bullying. I was fighting, getting my head kicked in, things like that. That was from about the age of about four. I was going into Bonnybroom nursery and speaking differently. I went to Bonnybroom primary school too. I was there from primary one to primary four, when they closed the school down and it turned into the social work department.
21. When I was in primary one I saw my brother go behind a portacabin with his mates and climb over the fence. I went after him and asked him where he was going. He told me to get back into school. I told him I would tell our mum about it unless he took me with him. I ended up going with him and he took my pocket money from me and bought cigarettes. He gave me one and put the rest in his pocket. So he bumped me for my money, but that was a taster for me and showed me that I had a bit of freedom.
22. With all the other things that were going on, I then ended up turning to glue with a kid who lived in the same block of flats. It was the glue out of a modelling kit. We would get a packet of Golden Wonder crisps, empty it and put the glue in the bag. He had been doing it, I asked to try it and I got the taste for it. I liked it. I didn't realise then, but it was taking me away from everything else that was going on around me. So from then on, I began sniffing glue. I think they realised the kids were sniffing the modelling kit glue, so I went on to puncture outfits, which was chemical. You could get that for about twenty-five pence. My mum never had money. She used to smoke Kensitas Club cigarettes and she got the coupons with them and you could exchange them for money. So I'd do that, buy the puncture outfits and the crisps and be off sniffing glue.

23. I went from Bonnybroom primary school to Balornock primary school. Not long after getting there I broke my leg, so I was off school again for a number of months with a stookie right up the full length of my leg. I went back to Balornock primary with my crutches but I was expelled from there for fighting or something. I then went to Blairtummock primary, primary six, for a couple of months. I was then in Barmulloch primary for a couple of months until I went to Albert secondary school, then to Thomas Muir secondary school at Bishopbriggs. That only lasted a day and a half before I was put back to Albert again which I didn't want to do. I don't remember why that was. Going to all those different schools ties in with all the different places my mum was living, at that time.
24. My mother ended up having a load of cats. She suffered from depression and when [REDACTED] moved out, we had no help. I was basically left to look after my mum, and I had that from an early age. I'd have to take her book to the post office and cash it, do the shopping and pay the bills and feed the cats. I ended up being her carer until she died in 2016.
25. I was six when I was abused by [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. Me and [REDACTED] used to be in the back bedroom when it came to the winter because it was freezing. When it came to the summer, they would switch round and throw us into the middle bedroom. [REDACTED] was on the top bunk bed and I was on the bottom and I don't know what time it was, but it was late and the door opened. The hall light was still on. I was lying on my side, squeezing my eyes tight shut. I knew he was going to do something, but I thought physically because he had battered me umpteen times. He climbed in behind me, pulled down my pyjama bottoms and sexually abused me. I wanted to scream but I couldn't. He said to me, "No matter what you say, no-one will believe you". I had that drummed into me for years.
26. I stole money out of his wallet. The first time it was a fiver and he didn't notice. Me and my mate went down the Barras. You got a lot for a fiver in those days. The next day we decided to do the same. It was about seven or eight in the morning. I thought I'd taken a tenner this time. I looked when I was shouting up at my mate's window

and saw that it was actually twenty pounds. He stole a tenner from his dad, we got our other mate, jumped in a taxi and went to the Barras again. We bought walkie talkies and other things and went back up the road. We went back up to the flats and I saw my mum and [REDACTED] walking towards us. My mate's mum and dad were walking towards us from another direction. His dad got a hold of him and battered hell out of him, [REDACTED] grabbed hold of me and battered me. He was about six feet two and nineteen stone. He took me home and through to the back bedroom where he punched hell out of me, off the four walls, nearly putting me through the window. He then took hold of me, put me across his lap and hammered me across the backside with his slipper, which was like hard rubber. I literally shit myself. My backside had the print of the full slipper across it. It was black and blue. My mum heard the screams and came in and seen him and saw the state of me. I was kept off school for a few weeks until the bruising died down a bit. I was left on the sofa for at least a week. When [REDACTED] cut me open with the can opener I was never taken to the hospital. So with regards to the beatings from [REDACTED] I had bruising sometimes, concussion, but I was never taken for medical treatment.

27. Not long after my mum married [REDACTED] me and [REDACTED] ended up moving into [REDACTED]'s house, [REDACTED] in Easterhouse. I didn't even know why I was there or what was going on. We were just dumped there. [REDACTED] went to Westwood secondary school and I got put into Blairtummock Primary School. One of my stepcousins accused me of throwing a stone and hitting him in the eye. [REDACTED] battered hell out of me for that. I told him I didn't do it, but I got the blame for it. I was also on a curfew there and had to be home for 7:00 pm. One night I was out with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] on our bikes. It was about 8:00 pm, 8:30 pm, and [REDACTED] was out looking for me. He found me, battered me and dragged me to the house, battered me again and threw me into the bedroom.
28. [REDACTED] took off one night on his bike and never came back. I was left there. I don't know how it came about, but I've ended up back at my mums at [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. When I first went back to my mum's I was getting a bus about seven or eight miles to Blairtummock school and because I wasn't from that area, I was a target. So everywhere I ended up going I wasn't from that area, or if I was from the area,

because of my mum's cats, she had well above twenty, I was always a target. I got the nickname 'Kathmandu' because of all the cats. I was always a target, then when I went home I'd get a kicking from [REDACTED]. So I thought, what was the point in going to school. Even at Albert secondary, I was walking to school and a guy appeared from a hedge and battered me about the head with a golf club.

29. My name had changed from Dickie to Lister to Emslie and I'd been in several schools, so the records wouldn't be up to date. As such by the time I was thirteen or fourteen I had still not come to the attention of the social work. But by then I was getting into trouble for glue sniffing, I was drinking and I was into drugs. As a result I was staying off school, breaking into places and getting into trouble with the police. It was a scream for help, but nobody helped me. I ended up having a social worker. Her name was Marina Devine. She was from the social work department that was housed in what used to be Bonnybroom Primary School. No-one from the school came to the house to ask why I wasn't going. I think Marina came to the house. My mum would go to schools with me and see the headmasters. I got expelled from schools for fighting and things. But if I'm getting picked on, what am I supposed to do.
30. I went to a children's panel at Anderson House, next to the bus station. I didn't know what was happening. I didn't have a clue why I was there. I went up a lift and met Marina. I didn't know who she was at this point, I didn't even know I was going to a hearing. I was thirteen or fourteen years of age. The panel sent me to Cardross for six weeks. It was the first time I'd been before a panel. There were a couple of judges there, it was basically like a courtroom. Marina tried to console me and she offered to take me there. It was never explained to me where I was going. I had been in trouble with the police before this on numerous occasions, but there hadn't been any social work involvement.
31. Marina took me and my mum from the panel to Cardross in her XR2 car. On the way she got me a Mars bar, a packet of crisps and a bottle of orange.

32. I was never told why I was going to Cardross. Marina told me that I was being assessed and that I would be there for six weeks. It didn't really sink in as I didn't have a clue where I was going. When I came out, I was still under the social work and still seeing Marina. She got me involved in an IT group which was run by the social work department. They would pick me up on a Tuesday in a minibus about five o'clock. They would go around picking up a few others then take us to a school in Springburn. It was like a walk-in community centre, but only for troubled kids. Occasionally they would take us swimming and things like that. As well as that I discovered I had to continue going to Cardross at Weekends, from Friday to Sunday. During this period I was locked in a room for the whole weekend.

Cardross Park Assessment Centre

First day

33. I went in the car with Marina and my mum. I remember going through country roads and entering a little village. As you turn into the assessment centre there's a golf course on the right-hand side. There was a house off to the left, which I found out was for education. There was a long driveway up to the centre, which was surrounded by lots of short grass and a few trees. I remember the front of the centre was all lit up. It was a massive building. It had big glass windows. It was dark when I got there. We walked into a reception area and there was a male member of staff there to meet us.
34. I can't remember any of the names of members of staff. He reassured my mum that I was ok and in good hands. I was still a bit emotional, fighting back the tears. I was anxious and scared. I'd been sent away from my mother before but going into that place made me scared. I had nothing with me except what I was wearing.
35. It was set on two levels. My bedroom was upstairs. There might have been other bedrooms downstairs but I'm not sure. I met a boy in there, [REDACTED] who was from Easterhouse. He was a couple of years older than me but we got on well. When we

walked into the building he went off to the right and I went off to the left. I didn't know what was on his side of the building, only my side. When you enter there is a big area, like a hallway, reception sort of thing. You go through doors, along a corridor and it takes you to the stairs that lead to the bedrooms. I think we had our meals upstairs, but I'm not sure. There was a dining room downstairs but I think it was rarely used. I can't remember eating downstairs. I can remember eating in my room. Where the bedrooms were there was a sort of living room with lots of seats and a TV. That was our chill out area for our side. I think the opposite side had exactly the same. It was a mixed place, with boys and girls. On my side there were between six and eight of us, but there were other corridors with other sections and I never saw any of them.

36. The member of staff took me off to the left and upstairs. There was a little corridor and when I got to the end there was two doors lying open. I was taken into the right-hand side and there were three or four rooms in there. I was in the left-hand corner. I think there was a couple of seats in the room, with a TV. I opened my room door and the bed was in front of me. It was a single room. Behind the door was a cupboard to hang clothes up. There was a table and chair, like the old school desk and chair. The window frame was brown and wooden and the window would only open about six inches. On the outside of the window there was a bar that came out from the brickwork and went around the window.
37. The staff allowed you to smoke but you were only allowed five cigarettes a day and they handed them out over the course of the day. My mum came into the room with me. I remember the jacket that I had was a ski jacket and the hood was tucked into the collar. My mum got her cigarettes out, took my jacket from me, took the hood out, wrapped cigarettes in it, rolled it back up and put it into the collar again. So I had extra cigarettes and my mum gave the staff a packet for me. So at night, when I was in my room, I had a box of matches and my cigarettes in my jacket, so I would smoke out the window.
38. The next day I was introduced to other people in the place. I remember a young kid there called [REDACTED]. He was about seven or eight years old. The oldest kids there

were about sixteen. When I first got there [REDACTED] had run off. He did this a lot seemingly, seeking attention. He only done it for the staff to chase him. Ultimately, they stopped it and let him go. I can't remember if they locked the front door or not. It was deemed to be a secure unit.

39. There was a girl there from Coatbridge. She would have been about the same age as me. There was an Asian boy there as well, I can't remember their names. He was on the opposite side of the place from me. There were six to eight of us from both sides, about four on each side. There might have been more there, but I didn't see them.

Mornings and bedtime

40. We got up about 7:00 am. You came out of your room and there was a room off the hallway where you got a wash. I think we ate our breakfast in the area where all the seats and the TV was. After I'd been there a few days I settled in. The atmosphere was ok, I got to know a couple of the lads and the staff that worked on my side were fine. I didn't have any problems with them.
41. After breakfast we would walk down to the house where we got education. The window frames were white and I think some of the windows were stain glassed. We would go there every morning, but only occasionally in the afternoon. I think that's because the old lady who taught us could only be there certain hours. While we were there me and my friend [REDACTED] would ask to go to the toilet, and when we left the class we would walk to the shop, buy cigarettes and come back and nobody realised we were gone. If we were caught with them, they would take them from us but split them between us and give us them back one at a time as part of our five a day.

Mealtimes / Food

42. I think we ate all our meals upstairs. I'm sure there was a canteen downstairs, but I think it was hardly ever used. I can't really remember what the food was like. Even when I went back there from the Friday to the Sunday it was just sandwiches and

crisps, an apple or a banana. They would open my room door, hand it in and shut the door again.

Washing / bathing

43. I think there was a shower area but I can't remember having a bath or shower while I was there. I can't remember what facilities were there. I didn't have any problems when I was there for the six-week assessment. I could go to the toilet any time I wanted but when I was locked in over the weekends, they would occasionally let me out to go to the toilet. I'd do that, go back in the room and they would lock the door.

Schooling

44. As I said, the age group in Cardross was from about seven to sixteen years of age. The English that they gave you in the education house was what you would get at primary school. The work I got was really inadequate. You would do English for about half an hour, then muck about, maybe do art class and draw. I remember there was an old teacher. She was well into her fifties or sixties. She got us to cut out these things from wood. They were like seagulls. We used plywood for the wings, drilled holes, put string through, hooked it up and the wings flapped. To buy one now would probably cost about a hundred pounds. I think teachers came in specifically to teach, but the only one I remember was the old woman.

Leisure time & chores

45. We could watch TV in the room off the bedrooms, where all the chairs were and there was a pool table downstairs in a sort of games room, but to be honest, I don't think it was ever used.
46. We used to clean up in Cardross. We hoovered and things like that. Not all over the place, just in our section, the area we lived in. We would go round it with dusters and empty the bins. We would mop and brush the stairs at the back as well. That was about it really.

Trips / Holidays

47. One day they organised a day out for us. They took us fishing to Oban. We went in what used to be buses for the handicapped. They were blue and yellow. There were between six and eight of us. We went from Cardross to Oban pier and they took us sea fishing. We didn't catch anything apart from a cold. They bought us fish and chips and then we came back. We also went to Coatbridge swimming baths on one occasion, I remember they had a wave machine there Those were the only times I ever got out of the grounds in the six weeks I was there.

Visits

48. Over the six-week period that I was in the assessment centre family did come up to see me. On the first week my mum came with my grandparents and my brother and his girlfriend. Only three could get it so my mum, gran and grandad came in first, then they swapped round and my brother and his girlfriend came in. I think they all had to sign in and my grandad gave his car registration.
49. On the second visit the staff let me and my mum go outside and walk into the village. While we were talking, I walked into a lamppost and my mum burst out laughing. I done this outside an old people's home and they were all sitting outside. They were all laughing at me.
50. My mum did come on other occasions and the staff would let me stay with her until she got the train back to Glasgow and I'd walk back to the assessment centre.

Healthcare

51. I didn't see anyone that needed any health care and I didn't see any medical staff at all. I heard of a couple of attempted suicides while I was there but I don't know who they were.

Running away

52. I think the front doors to Cardross were locked but the bedroom doors and the fire exits were never locked, but it never entered my head to escape as there were always consequences. As well as that I didn't have a clue where I was. The young boy [REDACTED] ran away regularly, but he was seeking attention and would only run to the golf course then stop there.
53. I remember seeing [REDACTED] being brought back by staff once, after he'd run off, I'm sure it was during my first week, and the member of staff booted him up the arse. [REDACTED] was only about six or seven. I couldn't tell you the name of the staff member but it was a bloke.

Abuse at Cardross Assessment Centre

54. One day [REDACTED] and I were coming back from the education, smoking a cigarette on the way back up. We entered and he went to the right and I started running left, when I heard someone shouting, "Stop fucking running". I thought it was [REDACTED] and I shouted back, "Fuck off" and carried on. I then felt a hand on me and I was spun around to face a member of staff. He shouted, "Don't you ever tell me to Fuck off" and grabbed me by the throat. He lifted me off my feet by the throat and told me again not to tell him to fuck off and not to run in the corridor. It was a male member of staff but I hadn't seen him before. He was about six foot tall. I had only been there four or five days when this happened. On my side I only ever saw a woman and a man working there. That incident open my eyes and I thought to myself, I'm not mucking about in here.
55. As I've said, I saw the young kid [REDACTED] get booted up the backside after he had run away. This is when some of the other lads told me that he was always running off, doing it for the attention.

Children's panel decision and ongoing assessment

56. After my six-week assessment was up I went back to the children's panel, who arranged for me to go to these renovated flats within tenements, which were run by the social work department. So every day, I didn't go to school but instead I went to this tenement building in Possil. Upstairs in the building the walls to flats were knocked into each other to make a centre where there were pool tables and a teaching area where they would teach English and maths. After an hour of education you could go through and have a game of pool, have a bag of crisps and a can of coke and leave about lunch time. This was on a Monday to Friday.
57. On a Friday I left the tenement, went back to my mums, got a change of clothes then got on a bus to Glasgow Queen Street station then a train to Cardross. I had to be there for 3:00 pm on the Friday afternoon until about one o'clock on the Sunday afternoon. This time, when I went there, I would get off the train, cross over the bridge and walk-through Cardross to the assessment centre. I'd go to the doors, tell them my name and that I had to report there. I was taken to the right-hand side of the building, upstairs to the second floor and a room door was opened with a mortice key. I was put into the room with two pieces of paper and a pencil. There was a bed, a chair and a desk. It was a duvet on the bed, not blankets. My first six weeks at Cardross was the first time I'd ever had a duvet. They then locked the door on me. I had no sink or toilet. That was me left in there from 3:00 pm on the Friday until 1:00 pm on the Sunday afternoon when I left there and caught the train back to Glasgow. I had no idea why I was there.
58. You were supposed to get something to eat at breakfast, lunch, dinner and about 8:00 pm or 9:00 pm, that's what I remember from my first six weeks there. This time, from the Friday, sometimes they would come round and give me a cup of tea, a sandwich and biscuits and at other times they just left me and gave me nothing. Sometimes I would get no breakfast or lunch and have to go about 14 hours without any food or drink. If that happened I'd sometimes get several packs of biscuits to make up. I never had a cooked meal on any occasion over those weekends, it was always a sandwich, crisps, an apple and biscuits, that was it. When I needed the toilet, I had to bang on the door. Sometimes I had to pee out the window. One time I

sat there all night needing the toilet and I was banging on the door and shouting for someone to let me out. No-one came. I had to defecate in the pillowcase and attempt to clean myself with the two sheets of paper they had given me. Obviously, I couldn't do it properly. I threw that out the window. I actually put my backside out of the window, to defecate. I thought it had gone out, but some of it was all over me. I couldn't wash, as no-one came to the door, so I had to go from Cardross to Glasgow Queen Street on the train, then from there get a bus, then walk home and I was stinking. That whole thing happened to me at least three times at Cardross. I was having to defecate with no way of cleaning myself afterwards, and then had to travel home in public transport. I would clean myself up at home and I would never tell my mum a thing, I was too embarrassed.

59. I wasn't aware of other boys going to Cardross for the weekend like I was. I didn't see anyone. As soon as I went in a member of staff came downstairs, took me along the corridor and into the room and locked the door. I never saw another kid.
60. Going to Cardross from the Friday to the Sunday lasted a few weeks. I'd stay at my mum's Monday to Friday, while I was going to the centre in the tenement building. I'd see my mum on the Friday and she would give me my train fare and cigarettes. I don't know why we had to pay the train fare, but we did. In fact, I don't know why I had to go there over the weekend. I was never told.

Reporting of abuse at Cardross Assessment Centre

61. When my mum came to visit me at the assessment centre, I told her about the member of staff grabbing me and shouting at me, but I told her not to speak to anyone about it. I thought there may be consequences for me if she complained about it.

Leaving Cardross Assessment Centre

62. The reason behind the weekend stay at Cardross was, after the six-week assessment, and attending a children's panel, these were the conditions that were set. You had to attend the tenements at Possil from Monday to Friday and thereafter go to Cardross for the weekend.
63. On March 20th, 1988, my mum and I moved from Glasgow down to Cannock. The dad of my mum's second husband, [REDACTED], was down there and he was dying of cancer. [REDACTED] had gone down there to look after him. He got in touch with my mum to see about giving their marriage a second try and her moving down there. My mum didn't tell me until years later that if she didn't take me down with her the social services were going to lock me up until I was eighteen. They weren't interested in the reasons why I was going off the rails, they just wanted to lock me up and keep me out of the way. So it took me out of the Scottish jurisdiction and into the English system.
64. We moved down here just before my fifteenth birthday and I was enrolled in the Blake Comprehensive School in Cannock. Some of the stuff they tried to teach me I had done in primary school. I told them I had already done most of the work they were teaching me. I sat tests, the average one took about forty-five minutes. I done it in ten to fifteen minutes. The teacher didn't believe I'd finished it but took it from me and marked it. I got about eighty-seven per cent. So, I did go to school down here, but not a lot.
65. Again, I had a different accent, so I went through the same things as in earlier schools. I left when I was fifteen. The teachers asked my mum to get me to sign up for another year to get to GCSE level. I wasn't stupid, but I'd had enough of schools and the system. I just wanted out, to go and work and earn money. That's what I had to do as a young kid. My mum was a single parent most of the time. Sometimes we went without food and electricity.

Life after being in care

66. I ended up starting my own window cleaning business. I got it up and running and I was doing pretty good. I was seventeen years old. I went up to Glasgow to see my grandad and my brother for a couple of days. While I was up there, I found out [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had attempted to commit suicide and was heavily in debt. I decided to leave what I had in Cannock, go back up to Glasgow and sign on the dole. I also got a job, changed my name and paid his debt off with the money I was getting. As soon as I did this, he kicked me out. He also started seeing my girlfriend, who he now has a kid with.
67. I ended up moving back down to Cannock in 1992. I got another job as my window cleaning round was gone. I've done all sorts of jobs, factory work, labourer, fork-lift driver. For whatever reason I can't stick at a job. I think it's because I'm anti-authority. I rebel against being told what to do constantly. Nobody has the right to tell me what to do or how to do things. That's just developed since I was a kid. If I've done something wrong then fair enough, but if gaffers jump all over me when I've done nothing wrong then I'm not going to take it. So I've done all sorts of jobs.
68. Sometime between 1994 and 1996, my mum assaulted her husband down here in Cannock. She got bailed and went back to Glasgow and ended up staying in a hostel. I followed her back up the road two or three weeks later. When I was in Glasgow I was introduced to my dad's side of the family, who I have never known. I didn't want to be nasty and say they were twenty-one years too late, so I was polite. I became close with my Auntie [REDACTED] and cousin [REDACTED] but ended up moving back down to Cannock.
69. In 1998 I was sentenced to six months in prison and in 1999 I was back in again for another six months. I was then charged with another offence. I was remanded, then I was bailed. I was still living in the same area, but I didn't go back to court. I was arrested again in 2001. There was a warrant out for me for the first one and they put the two of them together and I was sentenced to ten years. I served just under seven years of that sentence. I underwent ten months of therapy while I was in prison.

70. Around 1996 I was in the hostels in Glasgow and going to soup kitchens. There was a guy that stopped me in the street and he said he was from City Centre Initiative. He gave me a card and told me that if I ever needed to talk then go and see him. I put it in my pocket and thought nothing of it after that. A couple of months later I was walking towards my grandad's through Glasgow and I saw this City Centre Initiative, so I went in. I went a couple of times, then I saw the guy who had given me the card. I started talking to him and we got to speaking about my childhood. That was the first time I had spoken to anybody about it. Cardross didn't come into it with so much having happened with my family, the physical, sexual and mental abuse over such a period of time.
71. My head was all over the place trying to come to terms with different things. I was a drug addict at the time too. I thought it was time for a change. I needed to get back down south. The guy got in touch with the DWP and got me a travel warrant for the train and some cash for food and things like that. The City Centre Initiative got in touch with a hostel in Wolverhampton, which was the closest to Cannock, where my mum was so I came back down here. When I was at the City Centre Initiative in Glasgow I had some counselling which was the first therapy I ever had. I was twenty-three then.
72. It would have been five or six years later, in 2001, when I was twenty-eight and was convicted, so a year to eighteen months later in 2002 I had my next therapy in HMP Dovegate. While in prison I got on the Therapeutic Community (TC). It was because of what happened to me that I have a really bad attitude towards sex offenders, and they are included in TC. A lifer in the jail gave me a bit of advice and it made me look at myself a bit more in relation to the violence side of things, which is all I'd ever known. I didn't want to go down that road anymore, and I didn't want to feel angry anymore, I just wanted a normal life. I was getting therapy for just over ten months. It was supposed to be for eighteen months to two years, but there was too much politics involved in it and I needed to get away from it. What I picked up from the therapy and the lifer I met actually turned my life around. Since then I've been on the straight and narrow. It hasn't been easy, I've had a few struggles in between but I haven't been violent.

73. Since then, over the last seven years I have been diagnosed with PTSD, anxiety and depression. I have been working with my mental health team on and off. They are based at St Michael's in Lichfield, Staffordshire. I was housebound for a while, suffering from panic attacks, but since I have been working with my support worker my confidence has been growing to the point where I think, I'm not keeping my mouth shut anymore. Knowing that I'm talking about it helps me pick up the pieces and move forward.
74. Because of all the baggage I have carried with me, from Glasgow down to here, my future was put on hold. So I have basically by-passed my future, kids and things like that. I've never been able to settle down. The longest relationship I've been in is about three years. I'm on my own now.
75. My mum got married a third time to [REDACTED] in 1989. They were married for almost twenty-six years. I was sixteen, almost seventeen. Her life totally turned. She married someone that wanted her just for her.

Impact

76. I won't have anyone telling me what to do, even though it may be for my own good. Because of what I've gone through I can't take it. When I was seven or eight my brother wanted his own room, so I was put into a box room. It was like a storage room but you could get a single bed and a chest of drawers in it. It had no windows. [REDACTED] locked me in it. So I had the fear from that and then when I went to Cardross the first time round I don't think my room door was locked, but when I went there for weekends and they took me down the corridor, shoved me in a room, locked the door and left me there and I banged on the door hours later to get to use a toilet. Nobody came and I thought I was in the place myself. Being in a prison cell brought back memories. You are in your twenties but you feel like a kid again.

77. I have never been back to Cardross. I was speaking to a local police officer about a separate matter and it was mentioned, so I googled it to see if it was still a home and saw that it was under investigation and lots of memories came flooding back. I think it was that night I sent an email to the Inquiry.

Reporting of Abuse

78. I have not reported the incident that happened at Cardross or being locked in a room all weekend to the police.

Records

79. I have never applied for my records in relation to my time at Cardross but it is something I'd like to see. There would have to be something recorded as it was through a children's panel and the social work were involved. I don't know if my records would be sent down here for the information of the schools.

Lessons to be Learned

80. They mixed males and females together in Cardross, they were definitely asking for trouble. Whether it was coming from the kids themselves, or from a member of staff to a kid. They shouldn't have been mixed. Looking back, there were men on the night shift. There were no women on. Whether it was understaffed, I don't know. You had girls in there, who were thirteen or fourteen years old and an all-male night shift. Cameras would have picked up an awful lot, even on the ends of corridors. The way you have surveillance now, if they had that back then it would have cut down a hell of a lot of abuse.
81. I'm not sure but I think a lot of the kids managed to get home at the weekends by the time I was there from the Friday to the Sunday. When I was there for the six weeks I

would see kids there, even on a weekend. I was treated better in prison than I was when I stayed at Cardross over those weekends.

Other information

82. 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.. 15-6-2023