

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HOK

Support person present: Yes.

1. My name is HOK. My date of birth is 1962. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in in Garthlamloch. My mother's name was and my father was. My mother had six kids with my dad. She left him and had another two kids with another man before getting re-married to a scouser in Liverpool.
3. My oldest sister was, then there was, me and who is two years younger than me. Both my sisters have now passed and one of my older brother's died last year, leaving three of us. and are my half siblings but I don't know them.
4. I was two when my mother and father parted company. I didn't actually see my mother again until I was eighteen years of age. I never saw my dad in another relationship. I don't think he ever got over her leaving. He always loved her.
5. My father did his upmost to bring the six of us up. He was a steel erector, a working man. He would skelp us and there was a lot of discipline but we thought that was normal back then.

6. I went to St Mark's Primary School. If I was truant from the school they would put a card through the door. My father would take it out on me. That was just the done thing back then.
7. Sometimes the police would stop me in the street and take me back to the school. I would get the belt then run out the fire escape. I knew they would put a card through the door and I'd get a doing so I wouldn't go home. I ended up getting involved in criminality at a very early age. I had very little schooling. I actually only ever went to secondary school for one day.
8. My father had three sisters and they would keep an eye on us as well. We all stayed in the same area. Social work were involved from a very early age. Probably prior to dealing with me because of the trouble my older siblings got themselves into. We've all been in trouble at one time or another. I remember my brother got three years for stealing a bag of coal.
9. I was breaking into cars, scrap yards, travellers yards and caravans and started getting sent to children's panels. They used to say they wouldn't send me to a home if I stayed at my aunts but I was always running away from their houses as well. As we got older my family started moving away from the area.
10. I didn't feel safe at my dad's house and used to be frightened to go home. I would sleep in bottle works and bakeries and can remember doing that from six years of age right through my childhood. It's not that he was a bad man, I was just a wayward child. Hitting us was par for the course growing up in that environment. Everybody got hit with a belt or carpet beater. The only memory I have of my grandad is him busting my backside with my school belt. I still think of them both fondly.
11. I broke into a car one day. I must have been six or seven years of age. We used to pass a scrap yard on the way to school and there were cars parked outside most of the time. There was this old Morris Minor. I smashed the quarterlight window with my elbow and took a handbag that was lying on the seat. I ran up onto this railway

embankment with a younger boy from my class. There were packs of cigarettes in the handbag and the other boy took them back to the school and got into trouble for it.

12. I kept searching through the bag and found a wage packet with thirty seven pounds in it. I went over to Tollcross Primary and shouted to one of my friends in the playground. We went to Kelvinhall where the carnival would be at that time of year and spent half the money there. I thought I would give my father the other half which would save me getting a doing but that didn't work. He took me to the police station. I was sent to an approved school for two years for that. I was six or seven years of age.

### **Cardross Park Assessment Centre**

13. I remember going to a children's panel on Albion Street in Glasgow city centre. They drew up an order for me to be taken to Cardross. They had this big Bentley motor car and I can remember being taken from Albion Street down to Cardross in that.
14. I think there was a chauffeur and a social worker in the car. I was always kicking and screaming getting taken to these places. I remember my dad being at the panel and the feeling of being taken away from him. It was like being an adult, not a nice experience. No one told me what was happening or how long I was going to be away for. It's all a bit of a blur now to be honest.
15. I don't remember much about Cardross. It's vague because I was so young. I don't know how long I was in there but it was weeks rather than months. I can remember being in a game's room and there being lots of young kids in there. I think the age range was from young kids up to sixteen years. It was just boys from what I can remember.
16. I think I have a poor memory of being in there because there was no trauma. Cardross was fine.

17. I think the doors were locked at the back of us but I couldn't say that for definite. I do remember chairs getting thrown through windows but that's about it.
18. I'm really not sure why they sent me to Cardross. Maybe they were just assessing me at the time.

### **Larchgrove Remand Home**

19. Larchgrove had a large centre area with wings coming off both sides. It was just boys and again all aged between small children up to sixteen years. I would still have been around six or seven years of age. I think there were about one hundred boys in Larchgrove.
20. We all slept in dormitories and there were five maybe six in my dorm. We were all of a similar age. My dad stayed in the Eastend of Glasgow near to Larchgrove. I could sit in the dining hall and see buses going passed heading towards the street I stayed in. It was a stone's throw away.
21. It was very secure and more like a prison than a place for children. The playground was intimidating for a child. It was very confined and the exercise yard was very low with a large wall. It is deceiving when you see it from the Edinburgh Road side. The wall is only about six feet high but there is a drop of thirty feet on the other side. There were railings with spikes on them back then.
22. I remember a staff member called McElhone or similar to that. He was a nice person. Some places you went had house mothers and house fathers and they were normally okay people but we didn't have that in Glasgow. We didn't have many female staff members, most were men. That was the same all over Glasgow, it was always men.
23. I don't remember having a key worker or anything like that.

## **Routine at Larchgrove Remand Home**

### *First day*

24. I don't remember who took me from Cardross to Larchgrove but I do remember arriving. It was very disciplined at the time. I remember they lined us up in the gymnasium and slapped this stuff on our head whether we had lice or not. I remember the really bad medicated smell.
25. I remember dormitories were basic at Larchgrove. We were allocated all our kit and a wee box to put all our stuff in. You were allowed to smoke in there. If you smoked you were allocated so many cigarettes per day.
26. People would literally throw themselves through glass windows to get away from the place. The only way to escape in Larchgrove was through the windows.
27. People were desperate to get out because there was a lot of scare mongering going on in there.
28. My memory of Larchgrove was that it was just a containment place. A processing place to get you to somewhere else. I went on to St John Bosco and that was my first experience of an approved school.
29. I don't remember if I was in Larchgrove three times or just twice before being allocated to somewhere else. I was only in there for a few weeks on each occasion I was there. I do remember being sent back to Larchgrove when I was fifteen and a half years old.
30. I don't remember much about Larchgrove as I don't think there was much in the way of structure to it.

*Mornings and bedtime*

31. The routines are very vague. I remember getting up in the morning and going up for breakfast.

*Mealtimes/Food*

32. We had breakfast at these big rectangular tables with pieces of wood across the middle. I'm not sure why the wood was there, maybe to separate us. You could look out over Edinburgh Road and see the Olivetti typewriter place. That is my main memory from there because I spent quite a lot of time in the dining area. I remember it was up a flight of stairs.

33. There was no structure to your day. We were left to our own devices.

*Clothing/uniform*

34. We were given clothing when we arrived and they took what we were wearing from us.

*Leisure time*

35. There wasn't a pool table or anything like that in Larchgrove. There was a TV and that was about it. It was just a containment place.

*Trips and holidays*

36. I remember Mr McElhone taking us to STV studios and us watching acts getting filmed.

*Schooling*

37. I don't remember going to school there. Maybe it was just containment because I don't think there was any education there.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

38. I was only in there for a few weeks and don't remember any birthdays or Christmas times.

### *Personal possessions*

39. We did get some pocket money for completing our chores. It was put into our PCC, our personal property card. I can't remember how much we got back then probably not much. I think we used the money at the tuck shop although I don't actually remember the shop now. Most of the homes had one. My memory is vague because I was still so young.

### *Family Contact*

40. My dad did visit me, not very often but he did visit. He was a kind man.

### *Running away*

41. I ran away from Larchgrove. They would put me in a padded cell for a few days when I was taken back to the place.

### *External inspections*

42. I think there was an enquiry going on into Larchgrove back then. That was something to do with Glasgow City Council and about things that were happening in there. I never had anything happen to me. I remember a guy distributing leaflets about underage sex.

## Abuse at Larchgrove Remand Home

43. We used to pillow fight in the dorms. The night watchmen would come in and push us against the radiators and they were burning hot. I don't remember any of the night watchmen or what they looked like. We didn't really see them that often. The dorms had those old cast iron radiators and they got really hot.
44. It just wasn't a nice place. I think there was sexual abuse going on in Larchgrove but it never happened to me. It was kept under wraps. People didn't want to talk about those things.
45. There was a padded cell in Larchgrove. I was leaving by that time but I was in there a couple of times. It was stereotypical, like you see in the movies. Padding with the big buttons and on every wall, on the ceiling and the door was padded as well. They would put you in there for running away and for more trivial things. You would be in there for two or three days but there was a limit to how long they could keep you in there. I don't know if it was legal to lock us up like that back then. There wasn't a hatch in the door to serve you food so they would hand it in to you. We wouldn't get out to the toilet, it was potties at that time.
46. They didn't make us do bed blocks but there was still quite a lot of discipline. They would shout and bawl at us and I didn't like it. It was a horrible place to be in. I don't think we had to march but we had to keep our hands out of our pockets. There was a disciplined structure to it and it was intimidating.
47. There were a lot of bullies and peer pressure going on. We were so young, just children. There was a lot of fear. I think it was just institutional fear because we were in that confined space along with another hundred kids.
48. The staff used to slap us about but I don't remember if we got the belt or the cane. They would slap us for being out of line, just trivial stuff. My memory really is minimal of my first time in there. I didn't like speaking back to the staff, I was intimidated by



them. I was so young and that was my first experience of being away from my family apart from being at Cardross.

### **Leaving Larchgrove Remand Home**

49. I was in Larchgrove for three to six weeks. Larchgrove was just an assessment centre. Maybe I was at Cardross for some clerical thing, then sent onto Larchgrove for assessment before they sent me to St John Bosco for two years.
50. I don't remember who my social worker was as I've had so many over the years. We used to have to come into Glasgow city centre to see the social work back then. It wasn't the same as it is now. You used to dread social work being round about you and your family did as well. We used to say it was easier to get rid of a rottweiler than a social worker. These men were putting themselves in positions of authority. You don't see many males in social work these days.

### **The St John Bosco School, Aberdour**

51. I don't remember how I got from Larchgrove to St John Bosco. Probably social work or staff drove me there. I was still so young as I was probably between six and eight years of age.
52. St John Bosco looked a bit like a private school. We slept in the place and went to school there. It was mainly workshops if I remember correctly. We did joinery and these sort of things.
53. I think the main building was a red sand stone building with main offices, the headmaster's office and clerical offices. That was the centre building and there were wings branching off it. These were more modern looking buildings.

## **Routine at The St John Bosco School, Aberdour**

### *First day*

54. It was much the same as other places. You were allocated clothing and they took what you were wearing from you.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

55. The dormitories were in the wings of the building. It was chaos in the dorms, there were things happening, bullies making me and other kids do things to them. It wasn't just the teachers or people in authority. The housemaster was in another room but he would fall asleep and wouldn't know what was going on.
56. I don't remember the routine really. It's more the trauma I remember.

### *Leisure time*

57. We went to the gym quite a lot. We did lots of sports, things like boxing. We had a sports day where your family could come and watch. We also had a play barn and an adventure playground.
58. We went hill walking, to the cinema and did ice skating in Dundee. We were allowed to go on our own and I was still quite young.
59. One of the housemasters was a nice man. I don't remember his name but we used to go to his house in Dalgety Bay on a Thursday. He would make us a quiche and we'd sit and watch Top of the Pops. That side was enjoyable.

### *Schooling/work*

60. I don't remember any education but there was joinery and steelwork. I enjoyed that. One of the brothers called Brother LMW, would make go-carts and we would give him a hand. They would have a frame with an engine and a guard at the front.
61. We always occupied our time and did gardening with Mr Green. That was a nice place with nice scenery and fir trees. That was one of the nice things about the place but there was a dark side as well.

### *Visitors*

62. I didn't have any visits from social work when in there. Once you were put in these places you were in the hands of the care system.

### *Family Contact*

63. My dad would come in and visit me on occasion. If you weren't in trouble you would normally get home for the weekend as well, Friday to Sunday. That was their carrot and stick. They had that to take off you if you didn't behave. I'd get dropped off and picked up in the city centre. I'd sometimes jump on a bus out to my dad's in or I would meet him in some other part of the city.
64. The abuse wasn't something I was going to go home and speak to my family about. My father and I weren't so close that we could sit and speak to each other about that. I think at the time I thought I would get into trouble if I said anything about it.
65. It was just good to get home but it didn't stop me getting into trouble though.

### *Running away*

66. I was always running away and did it a few times a year. I ran away from every place I was ever in. I just didn't want to be in these places. It was a wee adventure as well

especially when there were five of you running away. Running through fields, carrying on and getting up to no good. We would try and stick to the fields, we didn't want to go on the main roads.

67. I remember on one occasion the five of us ran away from St John Bosco. I remember the boy's faces vividly. We were only kids running through forests, coming across clay pigeons and putting them up in the trees. We went to the Kincardine Bridge, there used to be an old transport café there. It was like something out of Dickens, all these wee Glaswegian toe-rags. We were outside this transport café and the guy was calling us in to have our breakfast. He was feeding us but as soon as he turned his back he was on the phone to the police. Next thing the police arrived and we all scattered. We ended up getting taken back eventually. Normally we would be away a day or two. It was like playing truant from school and being taken back.

#### *Discipline*

68. If you didn't behave they would stop your weekend home visits.

#### **Abuse at The St John Bosco School, Aberdour**

69. Abuse in the dorms started a few days after I arrived there. Our housemaster had a room next to the dormitories. I don't know if that was the same for all the dorms but it was for the one I was in. He tended to fall asleep and wouldn't know what was going on. The dormitory door was shut. It was the bullies, the older children. They would make me and other kids and do things to them that wasn't natural. It shouldn't have been happening. People say it happened to other people but it happened to me as well. People putting things in your mouth and making you do things. Kids would pretend they were sleeping. They would make us give them oral sex and masturbate and things like that. It just went on and on and you were in a place where you just couldn't go anywhere.

70. I remember one boy in particular called [REDACTED]. I told the police this. He was a bully but I still know him. I grew up with him. I've never called him out on it, it's just something you don't talk about. He was an instigator. He was older, about fifteen or sixteen. He was a lot more developed. They were older, peers abusing us younger and weaker kids.
71. When you were in the dormitories there was nowhere to go. You couldn't speak to people about it. You just couldn't stop these bullies when you were a child and didn't know any better.
72. You just didn't confide in people about stuff like that. We were young. It wasn't so much about snitching or grassing, it wasn't that, we were just frightened. We didn't know who to speak to and didn't want people to think we were weak.
73. We used to go into this workshop at the bottom of the main building. It had a basement with big metal doors. It had what looked like cells, wee work rooms. We would take the backs off these analogue TVs and remove the copper wire from the cogs. It was just something to occupy your time at night.
74. One of the Fathers was down there with us. I don't remember his name. He must have been art and part because he would allow you to be taken into this room where they kept all this alcohol. Bottles of spirits and cases of lager all piled up. I got taken in there. I can't remember who was abusing me but I was getting abused in there. It was like a shadow in the night. The Father must have been well aware of it because I was getting sent into this other room. The light was always out. Next thing you were getting things done to you and told to do things. I don't remember his name but the Father was a member of staff.
75. I remember we broke in to this room one time and all got drunk on the lager.
76. Father [LUF] ended up [REDACTED]. I used to take mail to the post box everyday so I was allowed outside the walls and able to go down to the village in Aberdour. I would go to the pharmacy and pick up prescriptions. Father [LUF]

would meet me on occasions and get me to do stuff to him. He worked for [REDACTED] Social Work and had access to a lot of places.

77. He used to take photographs of everybody, in clothing and without clothing. He did that at Kirkcaldy Swimming Baths too. He did that to me and to a lot of kids [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. There would be other staff members there [REDACTED]. He always had a camera with him. He'd do that in the grounds of St John Bosco and take you places in there as well. He would take your clothes off and take photographs of you. Some of the photographs were of kids in clothing on the driveway but other times he told you to take your clothes off. I was only between six and eight years old at the time. I think the abuse from Father LUF [REDACTED] started a few months after I arrived at St John Bosco.
78. Not at the same time but my older brother went to St John Bosco as well. He was thirteen at the time and remembers Father LUF [REDACTED] taking photographs of him.
79. These people were supposed to be looking after us and they weren't. As a Catholic growing up we were taught to believe in these people.

### **Leaving The St John Bosco School, Aberdour**

80. I don't remember leaving St John Bosco.

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

81. There were quite a few dormitories in St Joseph's called Savoy, Bonaldis, Sinclair and Augustus House. There were staff houses, a game's area and a TV viewing room. Apart from the bad stuff it was an okay place. I was at St Josephs for around two and a half years from the age of eight until ten or eleven.

82. There was one member of staff who was sleeping with a female member of staff. There was this atmosphere surrounding it. We used to find used condoms outside our room window and wonder why. It was only males in there. I can't remember his name but he used to stay in the house along with the house mother and father. He had the back room in the house. This female member of staff had a cottage down at the bottom of the field.
83. I remember a Mr Gilchrist. He was a really nice person, a pleasant man.

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

#### *First day*

84. I was in Bonaldis House and our house mother and father were really nice people. I don't remember their names.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

85. There was a bit more structure in St Josephs. I was bit older and growing up towards my teenage years. We were in dorms of maybe five or six, no more than that. We were all different ages, up to fifteen years of age. I don't remember names of the other boys in the dorm, it's a bit too blurry.

#### *Leisure time*

86. There were pool tables, table tennis and a big gymnasium. They also had a tuck shop.

#### *Trips and holidays*

87. Brother Benaldus would take us cycling. I remember nice stuff like going to Port Seaton and Portobello open air swimming pool. We went to the beach and to Silver Sands and to the swimming pool in Tranent. They took us to an adventure playground

in Blairgowrie and to the Commonwealth Pool. I remember going to the Bon Accord in Aberdeen one time. There was more structure in St Josephs and I have more memories of my time there. You had these coping mechanisms and started to think things were alright.

88. I used to go to Smith's Bike shop on Portobello Road. It was quite a distance and I'd cycle bikes home. Brother Benaldus was a very nice person. He took the cycling group. I liked the idea that I was trusted to go on my own to pick these bikes up and cycle all the way back to Tranent.

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

89. Brother Benedict was good with electrics. At Christmas he would do a nativity set with lots of lights.

#### *Family Contact*

90. I went home at the weekends. Sometimes my siblings were there. They were in and out of prison lots of the time, maybe not so much my sisters. My dad didn't have many options being a single parent. We were all little toe-rags. Seven out of the eight of us spent time in institutions, some more than others. I just look back on it with total regret now. I need to get a coping mechanism and learn to deal with that.

#### *Running away*

91. I ran away from St Josephs as well. It wasn't all bad but I ran away because there was bad stuff happening. I was breaking into cars and buildings when running away and when I was home at weekends. There was hardly any premises in the centre of Glasgow that I hadn't broken into. It's not something I'm proud of.



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

92. My story is very similar to other boys who have been to court over this man. Brother Benedict was just a predator. We would call what he did 'ribbers' because he would dig his knuckles into your ribcage. He would grab you by the scruff of the neck. He had this workshop where he played with wee train sets and magnetic coils that would give you an electric shock. He would put coils onto tobacco tins, electrocute them and leave them lying so people would pick them up. People weren't allowed to smoke in there but would smuggle tobacco in and steal the tobacco tins. He didn't get me because I didn't smoke at the time.
93. He also bugged the rooms. He would listen in to folk. He was a bit of a boffin kind of person. People used to wonder how they got caught smoking. He would be listening in to their conversations. He had these speakers in each dormitory in Savoy House where he was at the time. I was in Bonaldis House. He used to play the top forty songs through the speakers on a Sunday morning. I think the listening devices were in the speakers. That's what was said anyway and he was in to those things.
94. Brother Benedict had a workshop where he had train sets and lots of electrical stuff. There were also booths in there. He would get you in and masturbate in front of you and get you to sit on his knee and touch him. You could sit with headphones on and listen to the top forty if you wanted. He was at it constantly. When I think back his workshop was just a place to groom kids.
95. I had a friend who was in his seventies, he passed away recently. He was dying and opened up to me about Brother Benedict and what he did to him. I realised he was talking about the same person that did things to me and other kids. He had a free reign to do what he wanted in there.
96. Brother Benedict had already been sentenced to two years in prison for physically abusing kids in St Ninians. Why was he re-employed? The Catholic Church send them away to do penance and then get them back again. He had control over these children over the years.

97. There was an adventure playground in St Josephs as well. There was lots of concrete and some structures underground for the water. You were hidden from view in quite a few places. He would come in and do things to you. I'm not saying it was petty but it wasn't as bad as the things he would do to you if he had you in a confined space. He was just a bad person. These things happened to me quite regularly but I think he was doing it to a few boys. He didn't seem to be playing with a full deck although he was clever with all these gadgets and things he made.
98. I remember going to the Bon Accord swimming pool one time. Brother Benedict took me and another boy away. He was with another male and we did some things with them. I don't know who the other male was but he wasn't a staff member.
99. It was summer and I remember we were staying in this school. The school was closed due to it being the summer holidays. We used to have what they called siesta in the afternoon when we would go for a nap. Brother Benedict came in and took me and this other boy away on the pretence we were going to the cash and carry.
100. It ended up we went to this other male's house and me and this other boy were made to do things to them. I wasn't aware this other boy was getting things done to him with this other guy. We were separated.
101. I don't know how Brother Benedict got away with it. We were selected out of a group of kids. It's like paedophile rings, they seem to know who to target. I don't know if it was my history in St John's Bosco that followed me there.
102. There was a guy called MJK as well. He was an older guy and he used to throw hammers and other tools about the place. He'd hit people at times although no one ever needed to go to hospital. He was a blacksmith and was full of alcohol all the time. He was a really cheeky man and had ideas above his station speaking to kids the way he did.

### **Reporting of abuse at St Joseph's, Tranent**

103. I did report the abuse at St Josephs and got caned for it. I said that it wasn't right. It wasn't normal but it was just hopeless speaking to anyone about it. I spoke to Brother MJG about Brother Benedict. MJG was SNR at the time. I had to take my trousers down and he caned me for what I said about Brother Benedict and told not to mention it again. Nothing was done about it. Brother Benedict had already served a two years sentence for historical things he had done and yet he was back in the same position.

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

104. I think I got released from St Josephs and went back home for a period of time. It felt good getting home with my dad. My criminality continued and I was still sleeping rough.
105. I was probably supposed to be going to St Mark's Primary School but I didn't go. I have no memories of going to school after seven years of age other than getting taken into the headmaster's office, getting the belt and then running out the back door.
106. I must have been back home for quite a while before I got back into trouble and sent back to Larchgrove.
107. I went to a Rangers and Celtic match with this bayonet down my trouser leg. My friend was a Ranger's supporter and I took this with me. I never had any intention of using it. The game was at Hampden but I had left and gone back to the Eastend of Glasgow. I got off the bus at Duke Street with my friend and the bayonet fell out my trouser leg. It was just stupid. I don't know why I was carrying that. I got caught and convicted.

## **Larchgrove Remand Home, Glasgow**

108. I ended up at court this time and was given a section 32 or section 62 court order. I was sent back to Larchgrove for assessment before being sent to St Andrews. I was fifteen and a half years old.

## **Routine at Larchgrove Remand Home, Glasgow**

### *First day*

109. I remember arriving back at Larchgrove and being allocated all the kit again. I think I was in there for four to six weeks this time. I was waiting to be sent to St Andrews basically.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

110. I think we were woken by a bell in the mornings. That would have been the between 7:00 am - 8:00 am. It was the same with most places. We would be told to go to our beds around 9:00 pm or maybe the lights would go out at that time.

### *Mealtimes/Food*

111. We went upstairs for breakfast to the dining hall. There wasn't much room in the place, just these enormous rectangular tables. We sat in rows of eight at either side of the tables. I sat whiling away my time looking out the window at Edinburgh Road and watching the buses going down towards the area I stayed. We had lunch and dinner in there too. There was enough food for us but it was bland. You would have to take it or leave it. Most of the kids in there probably never had three meals a day. I certainly didn't. I looked forward to getting my meals, it was a bit of structure.

*Washing/bathing*

112. We did our ablutions in the mornings before breakfast.

*Clothing/uniform*

113. We had our own clothing taken off us when we arrived and given what looked like a prison uniform of t-shirts and jeans.

*Leisure time*

114. I think I went to the gym in Larchgrove and we did circuits with the older guys. At night time they would put something on the big screen, a movie or something like that.

*Trips and holidays*

115. I remember my brother was getting married and I was allowed to go to his wedding and then go back again. I was watching the Scotland game that day but was allowed out for that.
116. They used to take us to the local swimming clubs. We would go out to play football and sometimes the DJs from Radio Clyde would come in and play football with us. It was more sport orientated then. I started getting into long distance running.

*Schooling*

117. We did have some schooling at Larchgrove this time. There were classes like art. We didn't sit down and get taught things, there was no maths and English. You did what you wanted basically and more often than not someone would pick up a guitar and teach us a song. We just chilled really.

### *Work/chore*

118. We had to clean the place, clean the floors and put polish down. We had to buff the floors and the buffers were quite heavy machines. We did get some pocket money for that. I would spend mine in the tuck shop.
119. I remember I had to cut the grass before the football matches.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

120. I don't remember celebrating anything at Larchgrove but anytime I was in these places over the Christmas time was not pleasant. You were missing your family and being with your family at Christmas and New Year was a big thing as a child. You would miss all that. Maybe things weren't going well at home but you still wanted to be with your family. Experiencing that as a child was not pleasant but you got through it.

### *Family Contact*

121. My dad did visit me in Larchgrove. He wouldn't come that often but he did visit. He was a caring father. My dad sent me letters now and again when I was a bit older.

### *Running away*

122. I kept running away all the time. The police would generally take me back. I don't remember if I was punished or not this time.

### **Abuse at Larchgrove Remand Home**

123. I didn't have a mum so used to get taunted from the other kids. They used to call it Andy Capp, which was from an old cartoon in the newspapers. The CAP stood for care and protection and other kids would know that's why I was in there. People in for

care and protection got taunted and they would say no one wanted us. They used to sing the song, 'Where's your mama gone' at me.

124. I learned to stand up for myself. You had to stand up for yourself with the other kids because you had to live with them. You'd raise your hands if somebody was taunting you or physically challenging you.

### **St Andrew's School, Shandon, Dunbartonshire**

125. St Andrews was a very plush place with nice grounds and big grandiose red sand stone buildings, clerical buildings. I remember it was well maintained.
126. I didn't spend much time in St Andrews. Most of the time I ran away so I'm not sure how much time I actually spent there. It must have only been a few weeks out of that six months. I was due to stay until my sixteenth birthday. I was criminally aware by then and knew if I ran away all they could do to me was take me back.
127. I met Miss McNeilly, she was a really nice person. She was a house mother at St Andrews. I don't recollect her husband or any other people other than some people I worked with in there.
128. I remember sitting at my dad's one day and I got this parcel through the door. It was from Miss McNeilly. She was really nice and a person I got to know in the short time I was actually in there. She reached out to me one day and she was very pleasant. I had never had that in my life before. There were six changes of clothing and a postal order for fourteen pounds. I have fond memories of her. She was a house mother but not in the house I was in.

## **Routine at St Andrew's School, Shandon, Dunbartonshire**

### *First day*

129. I was put in a dormitory with five or six beds in it. It was single beds with quilted bedding. We were in houses there as well but I don't remember their names.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

130. They locked me in my room but as soon as I was let out I ran away. The rest of the building wasn't secure.

### *Trips and holidays*

131. I remember going swimming at Faslane Naval Base.

### *Schooling*

132. Because I was fifteen and a half at St Andrews I didn't go to school. I was never in a class room there. I remember they had lots of amenities outside that kids would get involved in like the Prince's Trust. It seems a shame that you had to get into trouble to get all these beneficial things.

### *Work/chores*

133. I worked in this old Nissen type hut making up concrete slabs. There would be three or four in a group and we would make up concrete hexagons and crazy paving slabs.

### *Family contact*

134. I remember my dad came to see me one time and we walked down to the waterfront at the Holy Loch. We went to a restaurant or a café and it was okay. I didn't get any other visitors. The social work didn't visit once you were put in these places.



135. I don't remember ever getting home leave from St Andrews because I wasn't there very often.

*Running away*

136. I ran away all the time. I'd get out a window during the night and run along the old railway line. I'd go to Helensburgh and into the train station and jump on a train back to the Eastend of Glasgow. I'd jump off at Bellgrove and stay with this guy that was a landscape gardener. We would go to Bearsden and do jobs.
137. By this time I was a criminal. I was breaking into houses and factories, stealing stuff, really valuable stuff and I'd sell it to this guy. It's not until you're older that you realise the value of this stuff you gave away for pittance. I was a full blown criminal by the age of fifteen and a half.

*Discipline*

138. I just remember we had to keep our bedroom area clean. It wasn't until I went to borstal that discipline really came into it.

**Abuse at St Andrew's School, Shandon, Dunbartonshire**

139. Every time I was taken back after running away I was put in this locked room. That was to let me settle down for a few days. It wasn't a big deal but I don't believe they were allowed to keep us under locked conditions back then because it was a List D school. They used to do that with kids that ran away. I would just run away again as soon as I was out. I'd manage to get out during the night, out one of the windows and along the old railway line.
140. Nothing ever bad happened at St Andrews.

## **Leaving St Andrew's School, Shandon, Dunbartonshire**

141. Once I turned sixteen I was released from St Andrews. I didn't return to my dad, I was just staying here and there. By that time I was sixteen years of age, I was a career criminal and I intended making money from it. I thought I was going to have a good life and have nice clothes and expensive shoes.
142. I continued thieving and was eventually charged with fifty seven housebreakings. I pled to a specimen charge of sixteen. There wasn't much alternative other than to send me to borstal training. I was sixteen years old at the time and was sentenced to eighteen months in Polmont. I spent one week in Barlinnie before being sent to Polmont.

### **HMP Barlinnie**

143. I was given a pass the week I was in Barlinnie waiting to go to Polmont. That was a job cleaning, maintaining the hall and toilets.
144. I had an altercation with an older guy in Barlinnie. It wasn't sexual just bullying. He tried to take a mop from me in the toilet and we ended up fighting. I wasn't going to let him get the better of me, you really needed to stand up for yourself in there.

### **HMP & YOI Polmont**

145. I had a good time in Polmont and met a lot of nice folk in there. The people I met in these places tended to be the same, you knew them throughout your lifetime. Some of them turned into major criminals and drug addicts.
146. I was in south wing which was quite modern at the time. We had a swimming pool and I did some waitering and chef type work and worked on the machines with textiles.

147. Polmont had the old Victorian segregation unit in the North Wing. Officers were arrogant to you. They were difficult back then and would discipline you for trivial things.
148. I was in the segregation unit. You could hardly get a book from them to read. It wasn't a nice place. It was drab and dreary down there in the north wing. I had three reports in the first four to six weeks I was in for fighting with people. Unless you stood firm, people would walk over the top of you. It was a kill or be killed attitude. You had to stand up for yourself or someone would put a battery in a sock and whack you with it. That was the world we lived in.
149. Borstal was a good thing for young people. It made you fitter and cleverer with the college you went to. You came out fitter and healthier.
150. I remember speaking to a staff member in there. His name was Jim Smith, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and his dad was a steel erector same as my dad. They were from Manchester. He was the only one who ever offered me a bit of guidance. He told me I was a good machinist and said that I should do what he did and go into shops like M & S and BHS and buy all their seconds, bras and knickers with stitching missing, things they're not allowed to sell to the public, and take them to the markets. By then I was a criminal and wasn't about to do self-employed work. I felt I already was self-employed.
151. From there onwards I was in young offenders institutions until I reached adulthood and Barlinnie at twenty one years of age.

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

152. I remember from the age of fifteen I was cutting about with two intravenous drug users. I didn't know anything about that scene. We were breaking into chemists and they were injecting in the back of the car. They're both dead now. I could drive by then and remember their money always ran out before mine as I didn't take drugs or alcohol and was able to put money by. It was down to me to buy the petrol and steal the cars.

We travelled all over Britain breaking into cash and carry's, sport's places, anywhere really.

153. All the people I associated with were career criminals. It's when drugs came along that I went awry and started spiralling out of control. Other than that I would have remained a career criminal and made a decent living from of it. I went to a bad place with drugs.
154. I started taking drugs in my late twenties and went on a downwards spiral. I ended up in places like Low Moss Prison when it was billets. There would be twenty five people in the billets and out of those twenty two would be taking class A drugs. When they brought in mandatory drug testing people turned to opiates because you could get it out of your system quickly. I had never bothered but because I couldn't smoke cannabis, I turned to opiates. You could wash it out your system in hours.
155. I had always done well in prison with governor's passes and getting good jobs but people who took opiates weren't to be trusted. I couldn't get a good job after that.
156. I was in and out of prison until I had my youngest son twenty seven years ago. Even then I was sent to prison in his younger years. His mum would bring him through to visit me in prison. It can't be good for your kids to see that.
157. I was back and forward to children's panels for nine years bringing up my son. I was a single parent by then. He's twenty three now. I put him through the ringer for years with my substance abuse. I was taken methadone, Valium and smoking weed. After twenty seven years, I've made a conscious decision to stop it.

### **Impact**

158. We were never told that we could be what we wanted to be in life. We only knew one route. The institutions I went to were colleges for crime. It's only years later that you have regrets.

159. Some of the boys I was in care with I've known all my life. They are doing life sentences for rioting and cutting people up. That's what the care system seems to produce. I don't know many people through my experiences that have come out and benefitted from it.
160. A lot of people I remember from these places are dead now. They became drug addicts, criminals or gangsters. Locking people up in institutions or care homes just fuels criminal minds. I know it's got to be done in some cases but with children at an early age there needs to be more intervention because it isn't working.
161. I went into the care system knowing how to break into a car and came out knowing how to break into a safe. All these things you learn in these places.
162. Kids need to be taught from a very early age that they can be anything they want to be in life. I never had that said to me. All these people kept us down, society kept us down.
163. I remember a friend talking about sexual abuse in these places. I told him I didn't know what he was talking about. I just didn't want to speak about it. Now I think why should I not speak about it? At least there are people who can corroborate my experiences. It's just living with it that's the problem.
164. Some of the people I met when I was six or seven in Larchgrove I've known all my life. I went through the system with them, List D, borstal, young offenders and then prison. That was my life for a long time.
165. I think bringing my eldest son and his kids up kept me out of prison. I've now been out for twenty-seven years. Before that I couldn't say I was out of prison any longer than a year
166. It's only later in life you think about your education. The only education I've got is through reading. I often wonder why I didn't go to secondary school.

167. I struggled in later life because I was used to being told what to do. It can be difficult out in the world. I'm ashamed to say this but the most enjoyable periods of my life have been when I was in prison.
168. I never even looked for a job, I was just a thief. I wasn't bad to the core and never had to rob anybody to fund my addictions. I always had this stupid belief that anybody I stole from could afford it. That's not the case, everybody gets harmed through thieving. Whether it's a factory you're stealing from or whatever. Someone has to bear the brunt of it.
169. It seems mad that I've reached the age of sixty and woken up smelling the coffee. It has taken me so long to realise what I've been doing is so wrong. Not good for me and not good for my kids. Not good for my life.
170. No one tells you any different apart from judges and social workers. You don't listen to judges or social workers, you listen to your parents. Unfortunately I only had one. He did try with us all. Maybe I was born bad but I don't think I'm a bad person. Society makes people what they are. I believe if someone is nurtured and told right from wrong, they'll not go wrong. Children learn to live and need to be educated from a young age. Empower themselves through education and guidance.
171. I was self-harming around a year ago. That was because of all the drugs I was taking. I've tried to take my life on a number of occasions. I just didn't want to be in this place.
172. I once left a suicide note before going down to Clydeside. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I was found lying behind a fence. I just wanted to die. I've been in and out of hospital with over-doses. They weren't accidental over-doses, I just didn't want to be here. I shouldn't be here really. I don't know what I was thinking about, I have a beautiful son, beautiful kids.
173. I was on seventy-five milligrams of methadone for twenty something years. No case worker ever asked me if I wanted to detox or come off it or reduce my intake. I did it myself apart from the recent eight years of madness where I didn't know what I was

doing. I'm conscious that I was doing wrong and I don't want to believe it's too late for me. My son saw the state I was in, it's not nice. A lot of this is to do with my trauma.

174. My social circle is so small and I don't know how to get through the day. I need to avoid people's houses where I know they're all sitting taking drugs. I don't want to go back to that again.
175. I can't keep dealing with the trauma in my head. Trying to get to sleep at night, getting up in the morning and it still being there.
176. It's terrible when you can't look at a man of the cloth without thinking bad of him, or you have no trust in him. I don't bother with religion anymore because of all my experiences in care.

#### **Treatment/support**

177. I've never spoken to any counsellor about the abuse. It's because other people have started speaking about it that I'm thinking I can speak about these things and be believed. I wouldn't have spoken about it if there was no one corroborating me. People have been mentioning wee snippets to me and asking if I remembered what went on. It turns out I experienced the same things at the hands of the same person.
178. I have been in touch with Future Pathways but Covid has delayed anything happening.

#### **Reporting of Abuse**

179. I did speak to the CID at Springburn. I contacted a solicitor and he told me to speak to the police about it. They've been to my house a couple of times in the past two months but I was withdrawing from drugs at the time and had shut myself away in my house. I was going through a bad patch and was up and down with my health and addiction. I've just not committed myself to speaking about it to them. I just thought

now that I have some clarity of mind I needed to get something done about it. I've given my solicitor a statement to allow him to access my records but so far I've not given a statement to the police. They seemed to be more focused on St John Bosco.

### **Records**

180. I haven't applied for my records but I would like to get them and go through them. Parts of my history was written in [REDACTED] as well. When I went missing for weeks at a time it was [REDACTED]. I need to go down to the Mitchell Library and look through [REDACTED] from when I was a child.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

181. Someone needs to find a solution to care homes. There's so many children in care, what is the solution? I'm not sure what it is. It's for people in positions of authority to sort all this out.
182. Lifting your hands to kids serves no purpose, it certainly served me no purpose. My dad hit us. It has a detrimental effect on your mind. It made me rebellious. I have four kids and I've never lifted my hands. I'd rather sit them down and speak to them.
183. I never had any goals in my life. I just didn't know any better. I used to love stealing cars, why did someone not tell me to get into driving or something to do with cars, a mechanic or formula one? Do something you are good at. I just wish someone had sat me down and told me that I could be anything I wanted to be. It seems such a waste of a life.
184. There are all those kids out there that are going to go through the exact same thing I did because there is no future for them. They only know one thing in life. They either end up doing one life sentence or they do a life sentence in instalments.




185. There maybe needs to be less males in the care environment, especially the clergy. These people were supposed to be guiding people and fearing the wrath of God. Why did they do it? Maybe there needs to be cameras everywhere. I don't know the solution, there's too many predators out there and they are in all walks of life.

186. I want to say to children in care or about to go into care not to dwindle their life away on criminality. Unless you're really clever you're not going to get away with it. It will catch up with you one way or another and somewhere along the line you will get roped in to drugs. It's not a pleasant life style and I wouldn't advocate it to anybody.

187. I'm sixty years of age now. I just want to enjoy my life and look after my kids. I've never been abroad and I'd love to go on holiday.

**Other information**

188. 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. 8. 2. 23.....