

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

KLX

Support person present: No

1. My name is KLX. My date of birth is 1964. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I don't know and can't remember much about my family life as myself and my brother went into care when I was four years old. My mum was and my dad was. I have a brother who is eighteen months older than me.
3. For all of my life I lived at my granny's house in Tollcross in Glasgow. She was my mum's mum. I lived in the house with my granny, my uncle, who was my mum's brother, my mum, dad and brother.
4. My dad got the jail in 1968 and at the same time my granny was taken into hospital. A social worker woman, came that day to take and I away. I was screaming the place down because I didn't want to go. I remember my Uncle was sitting at the fireplace and he couldn't do anything to help us. I remember we went away in a grey Humber motor, I'll never forget that.

Care placement summary

5. I have been in and out of care since I was four years old. I was first taken to Dunavon Childrens Home in Strathaven and stayed there for three years. My dad then got in tow with a woman, who had 6 kids of her own and we left Dunavon to go and

stay with them. We lived in Baillieston with my dad and [REDACTED] and her family for two years. After that I went to Wooddean Childrens Home in Blantyre/Bothwell area for one month, which was in 1973. I was then fostered to a family in Bishopbriggs on a farm, when I was nine years old. I ran away from there and was then placed in Calder House, Blantyre for eight months. After there, I went back to Dunavon Children's home for another two years. I was about ten years old when I went back the second time. During that time, I moved to another home, still in the same grounds, it was called Glenavon. After Glenavon I was fostered by the [REDACTED] family in Strathaven and lived with them for two years. At fourteen years old I ran away from their house and when I was caught I was taken to Calder House again. I was only there a few months and then went to live with my brother at a foster family called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in East Kilbride. I stayed with them until I was sixteen when I ran away to work for the shows. I had only been with the shows for about six months but social work found out where I was staying at the shows and they came and got me and took me back to Glenavon. During that time my gran died. I went to the funeral back to Glenavon for a wee while. I worked at the slaughterhouse at that time. I then stayed with a woman called [REDACTED] for four months, I'm not sure if she was regarded as a foster carer or not. I then moved by a social work to a Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] who had a bed and breakfast place.

6. My mum was an alcoholic and she was found dead [REDACTED] in 1974/1975. I never even got to her funeral. I was staying at Dunavon at the time and the staff wouldn't let me go.
7. After I was nine years old I never saw my dad for about eleven years. I saw him again when I was twenty and it was totally by accident. It was around March 1984 I found him when I was doing a delivery for a company. I happened to bump into my old auntie [REDACTED] in Baillieston. She asked me if I had seen my dad but I told her I hadn't. She told me he was staying in a place for men who were sick with drink, it was called [REDACTED]. I visited him the following day. I asked him why we were in all of those homes and why he never came back for us. He said it was because my mum was a cow. I said 'Aye, nae bother'. That was the last time I saw him.

8. I found out he had died through the police who contacted me on [REDACTED] 1984 when I was working in Melrose. I went to the funeral and saw [REDACTED] and a lot of my dad's friends and relatives. I made a point of telling them that not one of them had come to visit us while we were in the homes or sent us cards. Not one of them bothered about us. I'm really bitter about my family and the way they treated my brother and me.

Dunavon Childrens Home, Strathaven

9. My brother and I weren't told where we were going that day I just remember getting in the car with the social worker, I can't remember their name.

10. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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14. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Dunavon

62. The first time I left Dunavon it was with my brother [REDACTED]. My dad had settled down with a woman called [REDACTED] who lived in Baillieston. I was seven years old. She had six boys of her own. I believe she didn't know anything about us for the first two years of them going out. They never married.

63. We went to live at [REDACTED]'s house in [REDACTED] Baillieston and stayed there for two years. I went to Caledonian Primary. It was chaotic living there. There were fights between us all the time as all eight boys were living in a three-bedroom house.

64. When I was staying there my dad took me to see a psychiatrist. He thought I was off my head because I was always in trouble at school. There was no ADHD then but I think they thought that was what I had.
65. I ran away from [REDACTED]'s house and was away for a week. I stayed in Strathaven with pals from my other school. I got caught by the police and was taken back to Baillieston but not long after that my dad was arrested for arguing with [REDACTED] and he got put into jail. [REDACTED] couldn't keep us. Social work then took us to Wooddean Children's Home.

Wooddean Children's Home, Blantyre Road, Bothwell

66. I was nine years old when I went to Wooddean, around 1973. I think I only stayed there for about a month. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

67. My dad came to visit me one day and he showed me two pieces of paper and he said he had a house. He told me he would get us out of Wooddean in a few weeks, but he never did.

68. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

69. I was taken from Wooddean to foster parents in Bishopbriggs along with my brother. It was the staff in the home that told me on the day I was leaving. Social workers came and took us that day.

Unknown foster family, farm, Bishopbriggs

70. I don't remember the name of the family I went to stay with in Bishopbriggs. I know I was nine years old. This was roughly 1973. The guy worked for Cadbury's and the woman ran the farmhouse. She had one son and a daughter. The girl was a bit younger than me and the son was a little bit older. I stayed with them for six months.

71. I was supposed to go to Bishopbriggs Primary but I never went. They would walk me there but I always ran away from the school.

Abuse at unknown foster family, Bishopbriggs

72. I battered one of the sons while I was there and I got battered by the dad. That was the only time there was abuse. He also punched my brother one day.

Leaving foster family Bishopbriggs

73. I set fire to their hay shed one day and then ran away. I didn't want that family, I wanted my own. When I was caught I was taken to Calder House, Blantyre.

Calder House Children's Unit, Blantyre

74. The social work or the Police took me to Calder House. They took [REDACTED] back to Dunavon. This was the first time we had been split up. I was nine years old. I stayed at Calder House for about eight months. I never saw [REDACTED] when I was in Calder House.
75. Calder House was an assessment centre, you were locked up there. You went in the front door and that was where the office was. There was a corridor which took you to the kitchen and dining hall. The girls' dorms were on the ground floor and the boys on the first floor. There were classrooms in the building. There was a big store outside which had outdoor equipment in it.
76. It had about fifty children in it, both boys and girls. I was the youngest in there at nine years old and the oldest was about sixteen. The kids were in there for car theft, solvent abuse and all different other things, including skipping school. I was in there for running away from foster parents and for setting fire to their shed.
77. We slept in dorms. It was all boys in mine and there were five of us in the dorm.

Staff

78. Mr Healy was in charge, he lived on the grounds [REDACTED] BHN [REDACTED] who was SNR [REDACTED] also lived at the home but he stayed in the main building in staff accommodation. Mr BHN [REDACTED] basically SNR [REDACTED]

First day

79. BHN [REDACTED] met me on my first day. He took me into the office and basically read me the 'riot act'. He then put me into a cell and locked the door. I was in there for three days. They would give me food through the door and there was a toilet in the cell. It was freezing and there was wire mesh on the windows. No one told me why I was in there. After the three days I was put upstairs into a dorm.

Routine

80. Calder House was regimental. The staff would get us up in the morning and the first thing we did was make our bed. We got washed, brushed our teeth and then went downstairs and got breakfast. We went to school in the place. We did lessons, had lunch then did more school after. We went for a shower every day at a set time at night. You then had to get all your stuff ready for the next day. Bedtime was 7:00 pm.

Food/mealtimes

81. We all ate in the dining hall at the same time. It was regimental in that everyone had to pull their seat out at the same time and then sit down. We said grace before we ate.

Uniform

82. We wore civvy clothes but everyone wore the same, it was a red top and brown jogging bottoms.

Chores/Leisure time

83. We didn't have to work in Calder House, all we had to do was make our bed. We didn't really have any time but if we did, we could watch television.

84. There was a gym there which they would take us to. BHN would take us there but I can't remember any others. They would beat us there, they ran us into the ground until we collapsed. They had us doing circuit training, running and they would put boxing gloves on us and have us fight each other. We would just have to keep punching and punching even though we were knackered. If you had a burst nose they would get us to keep going. The activities weren't for enjoyment.

Christmas/Birthday

85. They didn't celebrate either Christmas or birthdays at Calder House when I was there. I never got any presents.

Religious instruction

86. We went to church every Sunday and the staff walked us there.

Visitors

87. I did get visitors when I was there though not my mum and dad. Another lassie who was in the home used to stay over the back from me in Baillieston, [REDACTED]. When her dad visited her he would come and see me as well. He knew my dad as well. He was my only visitor in the eight months.

Running away

88. I only ran away once when I was at Calder House. Just because it was more difficult to do it. There was a farm over the back and we would help out at their yearly gymkhana. I ran away the first time we did it and got back to [REDACTED]s at Baillieston. The police came though and I was taken back there. I got a 'doing' for running away. My

punishment was that I was given a bucket of water, carbolic soap, deck brush, knee pads and I started at the West End Bar and had to scrub every lamp post as far as I could reach. I was only ten years old. It was a distance of about one mile. I was beasted because I ran away.

Cigarettes

89. We got cigarettes in there. It was those Woodbine ones, the really strong ones. You would get one after a meal.

Abuse at Calder House

BHN

90. I was physically assaulted and punched about. My hair would get pulled by BHN. When we were out hiking he would boot us if we weren't going fast enough. That man was evil and I don't think he had time for weans.

Mrs KPF and Mrs KRR

91. Both Mrs KPF and Mrs KRR would slap you for no reason whatsoever.

Mr KJY

92. KJY was a bit funny with the lassies, my opinion now is that he was interfering with them but I didn't see anything. It was just the places he took them on his own with them. He was there the first time and would have been in his early thirties. He was a big guy with a beard. He was vicious with the boys for nothing just because he was in that position of authority. He would press his thumb onto your forehead and make you dizzy. He would also get the boys to fight each other for his satisfaction. He would then mock whoever had been battered.

Abuse of others

93. Every Thursday the staff put out the newspapers on the floor and got the bone comb out for the beasties and brush our hair. Either Mrs ^{KLS} [REDACTED] or Mrs ^{KRR} [REDACTED] did it to the girls and I remember one time in particular. I was only twelve and I think it was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was getting lumps of hair brushed out of her and she was crying in agony.
94. There was a time when we were away at Balmaha on a trip and we were canoeing and one of the staff whacked a boy called [REDACTED] with a canoe paddle. He near enough knocked the boy's head off and he had to go to the local doctor and get stitches. The staff would also come behind us in the canoe and deliberately tip us over to capsize us.
95. There was an old caravan up the back of the home and an old woman who looked like a witch lived there. The staff would take us up there saying the bad woman would get us. They would frighten us.
96. I can't exactly say how often I was physically beaten up there. It could be every day, every second day or sometimes once a week. It was mostly by ^{BHN} [REDACTED] but all of the staff did it. They were horrible individuals. I didn't experience any sexual abuse going on in Calder House. It was the physical abuse that was the worst.

Leaving Calder House

97. I stayed at Calder House for eight months before returning to Dunavon. I think I had been sent there to teach me a lesson or to try to calm me down but it certainly never worked.

Dunavon Childrens Home – second time

98. I believe I was nine years old when I returned to Dunavon the second time, around 1973. ^{Secondary Institutions - to be published later} [REDACTED]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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101. Dunavon shut during my second time there and they started building another home called Glenavon in the same grounds. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

the fact that another was getting built we moved. I moved to Glenavon when I was eleven years old, it was around 1975 when it opened.

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Glenavon Children's Home, Strathaven

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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got fostered not long after that.

Strathaven

114. I had been going to [redacted] and [redacted]'s home for weekend visits while I was staying at Glenavon. Secondary Institutions - to be published later I went for a few visits and then there was a meeting, that I wasn't at, which resulted in me being fostered by them. I was twelve years old and it was about 1976. My brother [redacted] didn't go, he stayed in the home.

115. [redacted] and [redacted] were in their forties and their daughter [redacted] was in her twenties. [redacted] worked on the roads at the council and [redacted] was a retired nurse. I stayed with them for about two and half years. They had two other daughters. One of them, [redacted] was about three years older than me. She was the only one still at home. They also had a son but he didn't live in the house.

116. The social work would get stuff for me like clothes but I don't remember who that was and didn't see them very often.
117. I got a job on a Co-op delivery van while I lived with them. I used to get £7.50 per week and I had a bank account. I was also playing a lot of football.
118. When I was with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I went to school at Strathaven Academy. I was getting on okay.
119. There was nothing that happened when I stayed with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] that I want to tell the Inquiry. They were lovely people and I had a good time there.
120. I ended up running away when I was about fourteen or fourteen and a half because I wanted to be with my brother who was staying in foster care in East Kilbride. I was on the run for about two weeks. When I was caught I ended up at Calder House again for about a year.

Calder House Children's Unit, Blantyre – 2nd time

121. I went to Calder House for the second time around 1978 when I was about fourteen years old.
122. It was similar to the first time but a bit stricter. They would beat us with physical activity, hiking and things. Or give us a beating in the gym with circuit training.
123. There were two boys the second time I was there who wrapped themselves in duvets and threw themselves out of the windows up one floor just to get away from the place. I can't remember their names.
124. I probably spent just under a year at Calder House that second time. When I was about fifteen the social worker said to me I had three choices. I could either work in a

handicapped centre and live on site or go and work in a children's home and live in the place or go and live with my brother at foster carers in East Kilbride. I chose to be with my brother.

East Kilbride

125. I was about fifteen years old when I went to live with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I stayed with them for about a year. They had a son and two daughters. I shared a room with their son [REDACTED] who was a bit older than me. I think that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] will be dead now.
126. I went to Duncanrigg High School and finished school when I lived with them. [REDACTED] was working in a meat factory by then.
127. Christmas and Birthdays were brand new. They bought me my first digital watch.
128. I didn't see social work but I think grants came from them for clothes for me.
129. Life was okay there, there was no abuse.

Leaving [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

130. I left [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] when I was sixteen to go and work with the show's [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was ready to go to the Air Force. I told [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I was going. I never saw any social work around that time.
131. After working at the shows for about five or six months I heard that my granny had died. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] told me as I used to phone them once a week. The social work came and got me at East Calder and took me back to Glenavon. We picked up my brother and social work took me to her funeral. After the funeral, the social work put me back to Glenavon for a couple of days as I was no fixed abode. I then went back to Calder House for about a week.

██████ (unknown surname), possibly termed as a foster carer, St Leonards, East Kilbride

132. After a week at Calder House for a third time I moved to an old woman's house in East Kilbride, her name was ██████. She lived in St Leonards at East Kilbride. She had contacted social work to offer to take someone in. Her husband had not long died and her daughter lived in Australia. She was brilliant and I had a good time there.
133. I was working in the slaughterhouse at that point.
134. I stayed with ██████ for three or four months and then left her's to go and stay with a Mr and Mrs ██████ who had a bed and breakfast place. I was put up there by the social work. I was about seventeen years old by this point.

Life after being in care

135. I was with the shows for years, though I was in and out of jail. I have been in jail for the last forty plus years of my life and the most time I have spent outside is twenty-one months.
136. I mostly worked on the waltzers and bikes and I used to build up the rides when they first arrived in a place. It was a 'life of Riley', with no responsibility. Mr ██████ who ran the shows, would take us to sign on the 'brew' and collect our giros. He would be waiting outside in his Mercedes to take us back. The shows to me were like an addiction, it was brilliant. I never really stopped working on the shows because even a couple of years ago I was still helping out.
137. I have done some other jobs during my time when I have been out of jail. I have tried lorry driving, joinery, painting and decorating and welding.
138. I have been married twice. Both times I was married in prison. The first time I was about thirty-one years old. It was in 1994 and I married ██████ in Shotts prison. The

second time was in 2001 when I was thirty-seven years old. My second wife was [REDACTED]. I am not married now.

139. I have twelve kids that I know about. I have five to one of the wives, [REDACTED] and one to [REDACTED] and the other six are scattered about. My oldest is forty years old and the youngest is twenty-seven. I also have seventeen grandchildren. I do keep in touch with some of my kids but not all of them. My oldest son was in jail for a murder.
140. I got out of jail at one point in 2002 and it was chaos as my daughter who had been born unwell, died during that year. I took to the drink as I couldn't deal with it. I left my then wife to deal with it all. That was really hard.
141. I've been out of jail five times since 2016 and I have not committed any offences, but I'm currently doing a recall part of a sentence. That's what I am in for all of the time recently. The problem is my licence conditions say that I should not associate with known criminals or drink alcohol. The last time I got out of jail was in [REDACTED] 2022. I asked who was making these decisions. I told them they were dealing with a man with an alcohol addiction. When you're alone in a wee flat you get lonely, you want to go out for a fish supper but you can't because you're wearing a tag that restricts your movements.
142. I'm in prison for another year, until [REDACTED] 2025. I have been in and out of jail for the last forty-four years. I know I need to get home leave or community access first but my understanding is that Dumfries and Galloway don't have the facilities for that. There are only three hostels in Scotland and these house drug addicts and criminals, how does that fit with my licence conditions? I'm going to break them straight away. I've said that to my social worker. She then said to me could I not get an address from the Priest for a home leave visit. I've told her I wouldn't ask the church for anything.
143. I have had a hard and colourful life and associated with a lot of criminals. Many people have told me I should write a book about my life.

Impact

144. Being in care from four years old has definitely had an impact on me. There are reports that say that, especially by a psychologist I saw fairly recently.
145. I never committed myself in relationships, particularly to my two previous wives. I always held back. They were two good women. I ask myself about other relationships. Was I ever really in them? I would never settle and was always on the move. That's what I liked about the shows.
146. I never once shouted at my bairns and if I heard one of my wives or someone else shouting at them I would fall out with them.
147. Also, when my kids were being changed and I maybe had my brother or someone else in the house I would say "C'mon we're going out." I never wanted to have anyone else seeing my bairn being changed. I was very protective even when I picked them up.
148. I have made my own decisions in terms of criminality but I believe my time in care has been a major factor. If I had been brought up with life skills or some sort of normality it may have been different, but I was on my own and left to my own devices. When you have to find your own way and stand on your own two feet, when you have to fight or flight, when you are terrorised at school because of the situation you are in through no fault of your own, it definitely has an impact. When you get into bother every day and that continues and continues, you think then there is nothing else. It made me very clever though.
149. I have been a drug addict in the past. I don't know if care has impacted that.
150. I do have flashbacks but I don't tell anybody. I've woken myself up screaming. I've seen things in my sleep. I also might be watching the television and I see something that triggers me. Or if I see something in the paper about abuse in children's homes it triggers me as well.

151. Being in jail with people who have committed offences against boys is hard for me to deal with. I just want to punch their head off. They walk about as if they are the victim and they just don't realise the impact their crime has had on the victim.
152. I'm definitely institutionalised. I walk about and I don't even know I'm in the jail. I've got a good cell, I keep it clean. I don't cause any bother unless I need to. I don't tolerate bullies. I believe I self-sabotage when I'm on the outside. After two months outside I get bored. I start clock watching in my own house, thinking that's the boys going to get washed and locked up. I then think I've got more in the jail than I have outside. That's mental really.
153. In March 2017 I was helping a Priest, Father O'Donnell, in his house and he was really good to me. He asked me to sit in silence for ten minutes and think about the worst that had happened to me and to ask the Lord to forgive these people. I thought about all of those that I have told the Inquiry about. After I left the house that day I felt I was on stilts. I thought I had a spring in my heels and felt like I was skipping. I talked to the Priest after it and told him I felt I had been unchained. It was a massive lift.

Treatment/support

154. I have only seen one psychologist and that was very recently for a couple of months. The reason I saw her was because they are not doing the group rehab in the jail just now and I had to see her for one of my reports. I haven't seen any other professionals.
155. I am diabetic and found out about five years ago when I was in the jail. I take medication for my stomach. I don't take any other medication.

Records

156. I have never tried to get my records, it is maybe something I would look to get in the future.

Hopes for the Inquiry


- 157. I'm not expecting anything to happen overnight and many of the people I have spoken about might still be alive. I would like to look them in the eye and ask them why? Why did they do the things they did to me and the other children in their care?.
- 158. It's hard because there is more poverty out there than when we were young. There are more drugs and more internet but hopefully those in power can give those bairns the support now and the help they need for the kick start in life they need if they are in those places.
- 159. I don't see why those homes can't have classes at nighttime for cooking and other life skills. We never got that.
- 160. I just hope that by telling my story that I can help others to come forward.

Lessons to be learned

- 161. There should be more vetting of staff. The whole care system needs looked at including the criminal justice system. Neither are working. The number of guys in prison for recalls is unbelievable.

Other information

- 162. There was that much abuse while I was in care that I might not have told the Inquiry everything but it's because there was so much.
- 163. 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 *24/6/2024*.....