

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HLP

Support person present: No.

Background

1. My name is HLP. My maiden name was HLP. I have never been known by any other name. My date of birth is 1940. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. My qualifications include a SEN in Auxiliary Nursing (NHS England), a diploma in the Care of Children and Young People, from Langside College, and a SVQ in the Care of the Elderly.
3. I was an auxiliary nurse between 1960 and 1969, deputy matron of Calder House Children's Unit, Blantyre between 1969 and 1971, and matron of Calder House Children's Unit between 1971 and 1987.

Calder House Children's Unit, Blantyre

4. Calder House Children's Unit was situated on Bardykes Road, Blantyre.
5. Calder House was a remand home and assessment centre for children who were the subject of referrals from Court and Children's Panels. At Calder House, they would be assessed for their suitability for placements at whatever other institutions would best serve their needs.

6. When I first arrived at Calder House in 1969, I could see that it was a purpose built, modern facility.
7. I enjoyed working there, staff morale was good and the welfare of all children was priority to everyone who worked there.
8. From my perspective, staff attitude was generally very good, and their interaction with the children at that time was to build a good understanding of the children's needs while they were in Calder House.

Time at Calder House Children's Unit

9. I was deputy matron of Calder House between 1969 and 1971, and matron between 1971 and 1987. In both positions, my responsibilities included managing and supervision of all domestic staff which included ordering supplies, staff rotas, menus and the health and welfare of the children in our care.
10. I was recruited following an interview with Strathclyde Regional Council. I was employed solely on my experience as an auxiliary nurse and having a family of my own.
11. I had regular informal meetings with my line manager, but I do not recall any appraisal process taking place.
12. When I started, I was given instruction on the use of the different cleaning machinery, laundry and kitchen appliances.

Structure and recruitment of staff

13. The staff structure was that there was an Officer in Charge, Deputy Officer in Charge, Third in Charge, Matron and Deputy Matron. There were also senior care staff, care

staff, teaching staff in woodwork, pottery and education, domestic staff, including cooks, laundry, cleaners, etc, and there was a groundsman.

14. BHN [REDACTED] was SNR [REDACTED]. He was very professional, he was very hands on, and he made a point of getting to know [REDACTED] staff and worked alongside them.
15. I was involved in the recruitment of staff. I was involved in the interviews of the domestic staff only.
16. I recruited people mainly who were recommended by another member of staff.
17. Volunteers did not work at Calder House.
18. I did not manage others in positions of care or responsibility at Calder House.

Training

19. I was involved in the training of domestic staff at Calder House. I trained them in the use of appliances within the institution.

Supervision/ appraisal/ staff evaluation

20. I was involved in supervision of domestic staff to carry out their duties.

Policy

21. I did have involvement in policy in relation to the care, including residential care, of children. Policies were set out by the local authorities and one of the changes I remember taking place was the policy change in children being able to wear their own clothes rather than the uniforms that were provided.

Strategic planning

22. I had no Involvement in, or responsibility for, strategic planning in relation to the institution.

Children

23. Children came to be placed at Calder House through the local authorities. They tended to stay between fourteen and twenty-one days.
24. There were usually approximately twenty-four boys and thirteen girls of between twelve and sixteen years of age staying at Calder House. The ratio of children to staff was twelve children to one supervisor.
25. The children were provided with breakfast, lunch, dinner and supper. All meals were made on site. If they did not like anything provided, they were given something else.
26. There were rooms with four beds in each unit and there was also one single room in each unit. There were also, in each unit, approximately three showers and one room with a bath.
27. Leisure time was organised and the children had access to board games, TV and sports, which included badminton, shinty and gym football. There were also disco nights.
28. There were organised trips, which were mostly at weekends. Children were taken in the school bus to swimming, hillwalking, parks and the museum. There were no informal trips.
29. Children were schooled in two classes, with two qualified teachers. There was a woodwork room and a pottery room with two qualified instructors, which children attended throughout each day.

30. I as Matron and also my Deputy dealt with any health problems the children had.
31. Children did manual work, which consisted of making their own beds and keeping their units clean.
32. People, including parents, family and others did visit the children. There were two visiting days, which were Sunday afternoons and Wednesday evenings. Outings with parents were allowed, usually at weekends.
33. Social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists visited the children. There were regular visits from social workers and others as and when required. I have no knowledge of any reports or recommendations implemented.
34. Reviews were held, depending on the length of time a child would be waiting for a placement in another institution.
35. Children were discharged through the social work department and the Children's Panel system. They were given help towards finding a job.

Living arrangements

36. I lived in a flat [REDACTED].
37. The third in charge lived in a flat [REDACTED], the Depute lived in a house [REDACTED] and most care staff lived within the surrounding area and commuted.
38. Care staff, senior staff and night staff had access to the children's residential areas. Two night staff were responsible for the children's residential areas overnight.

Discipline and punishment

39. Discipline and punishment was carried out by care staff, teachers and senior staff.
40. I was not aware of any written policy or code of conduct in relation to discipline and punishment, only verbal induction.
41. Senior child residents did not have any responsibility for discipline.
42. The type of behaviour that resulted in discipline or punishment included absconding, stealing, smuggling of drugs and violent behaviour.
43. Care staff administered discipline to the children for things that were not permitted. They did so by way of restrictions, which included bans on smoking and leisure activities. Children might also have to carry out cleaning duties and visiting rights were stopped.
44. Children were not physically disciplined and punished.
45. If there were children causing disruption in the dining hall, kitchen or laundry, I would verbally tell them off.
46. I remember any punishments carried out were put in the daily log book.

Restraint

47. Restraint was used on children during my time at Calder House. If a child had been acting aggressively towards a member of staff or another child, or becoming violent, it was the care staff who would deal with this. I was aware of verbal disapproval of their actions being used, but sometimes physical restraint was necessary to remove the child from the situation.
48. I did restrain children, but only in a verbal capacity.

49. I do not remember any written policies used.
50. I do not have any memory of seeing any excessive restraint used on children at the institution.

Concerns about the institution

51. Calder House was not, to my knowledge, ever the subject of concern, within the institution itself or to any external body or agency, or any other person, because of the way in which children and young people were treated.

Reporting of complaints/concerns

52. There was a reporting process if any child at Calder House, or another person on their behalf, wished to make a complaint or report a concern.
53. I do not know details of the process; I just knew there was a procedure. I did not receive any complaints of abuse that I remember.
54. Complaints were recorded, probably in the daily log book.

Trusted adult/confidante

55. A child could speak to their parents or social worker about any worries they had, including concerns about the conduct or behaviour of other children, staff or others, towards them.
56. I don't know how practice changed over time. I have no memory of whether children in practice raised concerns in this way, nor whether any child raised such concerns with me.

Abuse

57. I can't remember any definition of "abuse" that the institution applied in relation to the treatment of children.
58. I did not see any behaviour that I considered to be abuse of any kind taking place at the institution. I have no memory of what I would constitute as abuse.
59. I have no recollection of any abuse being reported to me.
60. Looking back, I cannot be confident that, if any child was being abused or ill-treated, it would have come to light at or around the time it was occurring.
61. Abuse in Calder House during my time there could have happened and gone undetected.

Child protection arrangements

62. Staff, including managerial staff, were given guidance and instruction on how children in their care in the institution should be treated, cared for and protected against abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate behaviour towards them through regular staff meetings.
63. If a staff member had raised concerns over an incident which may have occurred, discussion would take place as to how it was handled and advice would be given going forward.
64. I am not sure how to answer how much autonomy, including discretion, was given to staff and other adults, including managerial staff, in relation to these matters.
65. I don't remember what child protection arrangements were in place to reduce the likelihood of abuse, ill-treatment, or inappropriate conduct by staff, or other adults, towards children at the institution.

External monitoring

66. I was aware of visits from inspectors and of inspections being carried out. They came unannounced and spoke with staff and children in the institution.
67. I don't remember whether they spoke with children individually or in a group, nor whether other adults or staff would have been present.
68. The inspectors spoke with me when inspections of the kitchens, laundry and dining areas were taking place.
69. I am not sure whether inspectors gave feedback.

Record keeping

70. The care staff wrote a log sheet, which they then passed ^{SNR} [REDACTED] to write up in a daily log book.
71. I had no access to any record keeping, except for the records I kept on domestic duties.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

72. I was never involved in any investigation on behalf of the institution into allegations of abuse or ill-treatment of or into inappropriate behaviour by staff or others towards children.

Reports of abuse and civil claims

73. I was never involved in the handling of reports to, or civil claims made against, the institution by former residents, concerning historical abuse.

Police investigations/ criminal proceedings

74. I did not become aware of police investigations into alleged abuse at the institution.
75. I have never given a statement to the police/the Crown concerning alleged abuse of children cared for at the institution.
76. I have never given evidence at a trial concerning alleged abuse of children at the institution.

Convicted abusers

77. I do not know if any person who worked at Calder House was convicted of the abuse of a child or children at the institution.
78. I did not at any time have any personal dealings with any such person.

Other staff etc. working at Calder House Children's Unit at the same time

79. I have been provided with the names of staff and others who may have been employed at Calder House at the same time as me and asked to comment on them. They are BHN, Mr HWE, Mrs GGR, Mr GGS, Mr GGT, ERL, ERM, ERM, Mr HQS, Mr GOJ, GOJ and Willie George.

Mr HWE, Mrs GGR, Mr GGS, Mr GGT, ERL, ERM, Mr
HQS, Mr GOI and GOJ

80. I recall Mr HWE, Mrs GGR, Mr GGS, Mr GGT, ERL, ERM,
Mr HQS, Mr GOI and GOJ.

81. I cannot remember the exact years my time at Calder House coincided with theirs,
probably between 1978 and 1987.

82. I recall they were all between their thirties and forties in age and that Mr HWE was
a Care Officer, Mrs GGR was a Care Officer, Mr GGS was a Care Officer, ERL
ERL was Depute Matron, ERM was SNR, Mr
HQS was a Care Officer, Mr GOI was a Care Officer and GOJ was
SNR, BHN.

83. I don't remember anything specific about any of them, they were part of a team, who I
knew as work colleagues. All were ordinary people, married with families of their own.

84. I saw them with children and found them to be understanding of their needs, they
would spend time talking with them and getting involved with activities on the unit.

85. I occasionally saw them discipline children by removing privileges, i.e. TV, smoking,
games, etc.

86. I did not see any of them abuse children, nor did I hear of any of them abusing children.

Willie George

87. I do not know Willie George.

Leaving Calder House Children's Unit

88. I left Calder House Children's Unit because it closed down in 1987.

89. I can't remember what references I was provided with relating to my time at Calder House. I was redeployed to the Care of the Elderly.

Helping the Inquiry

90. I was not aware of any abuse going on at Calder House during my time there. I always felt it was a happy environment and that the children were treated very well. Yes, there were restraints on some of the children, but I never saw what I would construe as child abuse.
91. I cannot comment on the assertion that the Inquiry has information to the effect that the experiences of abuse some children had at Calder House has continued to affect them and impact on their lives. To my knowledge I did not see or hear of any child abuse taking place at Calder House.
92. Anyone intending on working in this field should have an understanding of children's psychological needs and mental health issues, and be able to provide the appropriate training, experience and qualifications to be able to work well within this field.

Applicant allegations

HLO [REDACTED]

93. I have been provided with a copy of the statement of HLO [REDACTED]
94. I cannot remember HLO [REDACTED]
95. At paragraph 50 HLO [REDACTED] states: 'Mr ['BHN'] and Mrs HLP [REDACTED] were SNR [REDACTED] and they lived in [REDACTED]'. She then states at paragraph 65: '... as long as you did whatever Mrs HLP [REDACTED] said there were no real issues. Mrs HLP [REDACTED] had a lot more to do in the day-to-day SNR [REDACTED] than Mr ['BHN']'. They both

shouted at us quite a lot. Mrs HLP often said there was no wonder that my family didn't want me and that she wouldn't want me in her house either'.

96. HLO continues at paragraph 66: 'When I got back after that first time I ran away Mrs HLP gave me a toothbrush and took me round to the sports barn where she made me go on my hands and knees and scrub the floor with the toothbrush and a bucket of water. She stood there watching me and I did it for maybe two or three hours until she said I could stop. When I got up my knees were all cut to bits. It was dark by the time I finished and I thought I would be able to go to bed. When we went in the building she told the night security man that I was to stand for two hours before I was allowed to go to my bed. I wasn't even allowed to lean over onto one leg. I had to stand straight. She told him to hit me with a cane even if I leant over to one side. He hit me a couple of times in that two hours'.

97. At paragraph 67, HLO states: 'The first time I ran away was after about three months. When I was taken back I was punished and after that I just didn't want to be there. There was a cell which was just like a prison cell. I got put in there when I ran away. There was a bit at the bottom where they could pass a tray with your food on it. At eye level there was a small hatch they opened to speak to you. I was in there a few times'.

98. I have no knowledge of what HLO is stating about me.

99. I did not abuse HLO.

100. I feel sadness that HLO has felt the need to raise these accusations about me. I have no knowledge of acting inappropriately towards HLO in any way.

101. The passage of time has not affected my recollection of what is alleged.

102. I don't know why these things are being said about me.

103. I do accept that would be abuse if a child was treated in the way described by HLO [REDACTED] HLO [REDACTED].

104. I did not abuse HLO [REDACTED] in any way.

KJX [REDACTED]

105. I have been provided with a copy of the statement of KJX [REDACTED]

106. I cannot remember KJX [REDACTED]

107. At paragraph 53 of her statement, KJX [REDACTED] states: 'The couple SNR [REDACTED] Calder House were Mr ['BHN'] and his wife Mrs HLP [REDACTED]. I forget her first name. They were an English couple, they had a daughter who was a horrible lassie, she wasn't much older than me. [REDACTED] their daughter would walk about freely, bringing her pals to the back door, eating food in the kitchen and making comments all the time. I can't remember her name. The mum just shouted at everyone all the time'.

108. KJX [REDACTED] then states at paragraph 63: 'I remember Mr ['KJY'] being party to several strip searches of me, that actually happened, it wasn't always females searching females. Mrs HLP [REDACTED] a female member of staff was sometimes present when he was searching me. I was pinned face down on the stone floor, everything was taken off me and I was searched. I became quite hysterical and I had one hand up my back. They took all my clothes away, threw in the clothes they had for me and shut the door. I was then left in that cell for hours and hours and no one came to see me. Searches like that happened to me at least eight or nine times and most of the time I spent the night in that cell. Only sometimes would it be for a few hours'.

109. At paragraph 71, KJX [REDACTED] states: 'Looking back, the only thing that wasn't right was Mr ['BHN'] and Mrs HLP [REDACTED] daughter being allowed in the kitchen area when we were there. It's obvious to me now that she knew about everybody, she knew about

me. She could make comments about things that she could only have got from a member of staff.

110. [REDACTED] then states at paragraph 128 of her statement: *'Another punishment was to get you up in the middle of the night, often with another person who was on a punishment, and the staff would take you to this outside barn. It was where we played indoor football, netball and games, things like that. In that barn we would each be given a bucket of water and a toothbrush and we would be told to scrub the floor. We would start at different ends, scrub the whole floor of the barn, and meet in the middle. If you stopped or spoke to the other person, sometimes the staff would kick the bucket of water over and make you start again. Sometimes daylight was coming up before we got back to our beds'*.
111. She continues at paragraph 129: *'I remember Mr ['BHN'] and Mrs [HLP] once being at the barn when we were doing the toothbrush scrubbing thing. I don't know if they were overseeing that or if they just walked in on it, but they were definitely aware of it'*.
112. I can't remember [REDACTED].
113. I have no knowledge of what [REDACTED] is stating about me.
114. I did not abuse [REDACTED].
115. I feel sadness that [REDACTED] has felt the need to raise these accusations about me. I have no knowledge of acting inappropriately towards [REDACTED] in any way. I was disappointed that my daughter was mentioned as well. I do not accept the reference made about my daughter by [REDACTED]. Yes, she did come into the building occasionally, [REDACTED] but children's circumstances were never disclosed to any of my family.
116. The passage of time has not affected my recollection of what is alleged.
117. I don't know why these things are being said about me.

118. I do accept that would be abuse if a child was treated in the way described by [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
119. I did not abuse [REDACTED] in any way.

Other allegations

120. I have never been the subject of any other complaint in relation to alleged abuse of children in the institution.
121. I am aware that the Inquiry holds records indicating that "scrubbing" was used as a punishment at Calder House Children's Unit, including late at night. Scrubbing was very occasionally used as a punishment. It was imposed by Senior Care Staff on duty, but never late at night. A floor cloth and a standard scrubbing brush were used.
122. I did not impose scrubbing as a punishment.
123. I am not aware of children using a toothbrush to clean areas of the establishment, including floors.
124. I accept scrubbing would be abusive without the necessary tools.
125. I am aware that the Inquiry holds records indicating that "Standing out" was used as a punishment. I have no recollection of this practice. I did not impose such a punishment.
126. I have no recollection of children being made to stand for lengthy periods late at night as a punishment. I accept that standing out would be abusive only if it was unnecessarily prolonged.
127. I am aware that the Inquiry holds records indicating that a detention room/cell was used as punishment. A detention room might have used for an overnight admission, which occurred when police brought a child late at night. It also could have been used

if a child was acting out and could not safely be with other children in the home. This would only be for short duration.

128. Senior Care Staff on duty would impose such a punishment. I did not impose such a punishment.
129. I do not accept that using a detention room would be abusive, because its use was for the safety of the child and those around them.
130. The detention room itself was small, with a window and a fixed bed on a block with a mattress and bedding. There was a separate toilet and wash hand basin for the child to use, which was attached to the detention room and accessible through a non-lockable door.
131. Children were visited on a regular basis when they were in the detention room. They were given reading materials to occupy themselves.
132. I am aware that the Inquiry holds records indicating that three mile runs were used as a punishment. Depending on the circumstances, some children would be taken on a run, which was a punishment imposed by Senior Care Staff on duty.
133. I did not impose such a punishment.
134. Such a punishment would only be abusive if it was unnecessarily prolonged.
135. I am aware that the Inquiry holds records which refer to "Restrictions" or "restriction". Restrictions were the removal of privileges, which would include, for example, no smoking, the removal of TV privileges and the removal of participation in other leisure activities. I do not recall children being told to sit or stand for periods of time in a corridor.
136. Privileges were removed only when children misbehaved. They were never deprived of food.

137. I do not accept restricting privileges or leisure activities would be abusive.
138. I have already stated that staff attitudes were generally very good. I do not recall hearing staff talking about children in a derogatory way. I never spoke about children in that way.
139. I am not aware of children being described by staff as "insolent", or as a "shower of bitches".
140. I am not aware of staff describing their interactions with children as being "like talking to a toilet seat". I never spoke about children in that way.
141. To my knowledge, children who wet the bed were treated with respect and great privacy. They were not shouted at, to my knowledge.

Other information

142. 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..... HLP
HLP

Dated..... 16.07.2024