

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HUI

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is HUI. My date of birth is 1973. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in my gran's house at Coatbridge, and brought up in that area. I lived with my mum, and dad, . I have eight siblings, my older sister and my younger siblings, , , , , and .
3. My mum did some part time work later in the marriage prior to my father taking ill. My dad was working most of his adult life. He later suffered from Epilepsy and the seizures were so severe he also had a heart attack and was not fit for work anymore. I think I was about eight years old at that time. Mum then became dad's carer, until we were old enough to help out.
4. There was a time when mum and dad had split up for a short period and mum and the rest of us stayed with my gran.
5. I was already going to St Monica's Primary School, but when we went to grans, I moved to St James Primary School. We stayed with gran for about a year and a half. When mum and dad got back together we moved from our original home at to . I would have been eight or nine when we were at .

6. When I had been going to St James Primary School, for two years I had great attendance in the school. After my dad took ill and mum became his carer my attendance at school dropped. Mum was the one that usually woke us up and got us ready, but by this time she was too tired looking after dad and I started missing school. This was when the social work became involved. We were allocated Patrick who we knew as Pat McCluskey as our family social worker. He was from the Coatbridge office.
7. He sent me to the Children's Panel in Bellshill. That was supposed to be an independent process, but one of the panel members was a man called Hugh Traynor. I knew him [REDACTED]. When I went to the panel mum and dad were both there. The panel recommended that I was to be sent to Calder House for a three week assessment. I was about nine years old then.

Calder House Children's Unit, Bardykes Road, Blantyre

8. I was taken to Calder House from the panel by Pat McCluskey. I know it was Easter time as I was allowed home for the Easter Sunday but just for a couple of hours. Mum and dad were with me at this time and they were shown around the home where one of the staff pointed out where I would be and where the school and everything else was. They pointed out the hall where we were allowed to play football or badminton.
9. When I arrived at Calder House I found that the other residents there were mainly teenagers, both boys and girls. They were all in there for being involved in some form of criminal activity, where I was the only one there for being absent from school. The boys constantly took the mickey out of me because I was so young and so small in build. They started calling me "Wee Rambo" and "Wee Action Man".
10. The building was on two levels. At the bottom left was the girl's dormitories. I was in the dormitory above them and there were another two dormitories for boys upstairs. The offices were on the ground floor and the school was on the bottom right.

11. I think there were about fifteen other boys in the home but I am not aware of how many kids were in total. They were all much older than me, the eldest probably fifteen or maybe sixteen. I don't remember any of the names of the staff and the only one I could describe in anyway was he was bald and wore glasses.

Routine at Calder House Children's Unit, Bardykes Road, Blantyre

12. The first night I was in the home I was introduced to all the older boys. I was really scared because I had never been away from my family.

Mornings and bedtime

13. I shared a dorm with four other boys, one of the them was called [REDACTED]. He was about fourteen and would smoke all the time. He would hide cigarettes in the fabric of the curtain so that he always had access to them. At night he would pull one of his cigarettes out and smoke it while the night watchman was away having his cup of tea.
14. We were woken early in the morning. We then headed to the bathrooms to get washed, back to make our beds and into the dining hall for breakfast. After our breakfast we all headed to whatever classes were on at that time. I can't remember anything about the food there.

School

15. Although there was a school in Calder House it was catered for teenage kids and there was nothing for me to read which was appropriate for my age. During the school time I just did pottery. I found I liked that and I also found I was quite good at Art. If the Pottery class was full then I would always be in the Art class.

Leisure time

16. For some of our free time we might play badminton. I can also remember doing a cross country run.
17. There was one time when we were sitting around and not doing very much and were joined by the other units. At that time some of the boys were playing pool and one of them snapped the cue and I thought he was going to use it to hit somebody. The staff were demanding to know who it was that broke the cue. I was warned by some of the boys not to tell who it was. The boys told me that no one was allowed to grass on each other.

Healthcare

18. I remember one time we were playing football. I did not want to as I was so small compared to the others. During the game the ball got kicked right into my face. I did not see it coming and was knocked out cold. The next thing I was aware of was someone picking me up and telling I would be alright. I was just told to sit at the side of the hall. I never saw any nurse or matron as a result.

Work

19. When I was in the home they wanted me do some sewing. I was supposed to sew my name into my clothes. I did not know how to sew and one of the other boys had to help me. This was the only chore they tried to get me to do when I was at Calder House.

Family contact

20. As it was Easter time when I was in the home, I was allowed out for the Sunday to go with my mum and go and see my gran. I think it was my uncle that came with mum and drove us to gran's.

Running away

21. On the weekend when I was back with the family we were at Grans' house and I tried to run away when they told me I had to go back to Calder House.

Abuse at Calder House Children's Unit, Bardykes Road, Blantyre

22. When I was in Calder House I cried a lot as I was so homesick. On one of the occasions I was missing the family, as a form of discipline, one of the staff decided that I should get a pail of water and a tooth brush to scrub the floor. When I returned with the pail of water, I was crying and he told me that he was only kidding and thought it was really funny that I listened to what I was told. This was just to show me what would happen to me if I did something wrong.
23. The staff did lots to intimidate me if they thought I had done something wrong. They would stand and shout at me and call me names. They saw it as a success when they made me cry.

Leaving Calder House Children's Unit, Bardykes Road, Blantyre

24. I did not know the exact day I was getting out but when my time was up it was the social work that took me home to [REDACTED].
25. I always felt that it was unfair that I was sent to Calder House as my brother was also missing school and the only thing that happened to him was he was sent to a different school.
26. There was also another boy in our street whose father was ill. His dad was receiving kidney dialysis. That boy was given help by the social work and was taken out for the day when his dad was having his treatment. They also provided new clothes for him going to school. I was the opposite it was just a case of pack your bags as you are

going into care. I was not getting into any trouble, just missing school because my dad was ill.

27. When I was back at my own home I was going to school each day. That lasted for a while but eventually after a couple of years I began to miss some days and then when I went into Columba High School in Coatbridge it was less and less attendance at all. The social worker, Pat McCluskey was again having me appear at the Children's Panel. They said there were no other schools available for me and decided to send me to Mitchell Street Children's Home, Airdrie. I was sent there for three weeks.

Mitchell Street Children's Home, Airdrie

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Mitchell Street Children's Home, Airdrie

37. When I left Mitchell Street I was back at the family home but not for long before things went back to the same as before. I was back at the Panel where it was decided I was going to be placed at Bonnyhill Residential School at night, while I was going to Columba High School during the day. Bonnyhill was just across the road from Columba High.

Bonnyhill Residential School, Coatbridge

38. I was sent to Bonnyhill for three to four weeks. This was supposed to give me extra help with catching up on my education.

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Leaving Bonnyhill Residential Home

42. Bonnyhill stopped taking boys staying overnight and the social work were needing to see if they could find another place for me.
43. After the three or four weeks Pat McCluskey had me back at the Panel. He told them that I would not stay in school and as a result he was recommending that I was to be placed in either St Johns or St Philips. I had interviews and visits for both schools, I did not like St John's. Eventually they came to the decision it should be St Philips.

St Philips Children's Home, Plains, Airdrie

44. I was in St Philips Children's Home in Plains, Airdrie from what would have been second year at High School until just before my sixteenth birthday. Up until my time at St Philips I had never been in any trouble with the police.
45. On one side of the school building was the canteen. On the opposite side of the school building was the Headmaster's house. There were three units at the school and they were all named after places in Scotland.

Routine at St Philips Children's Home, Plains, Airdrie

46. When I went to St Philips it was at the same time as one of the boys from Bonnyhill, KNA. It was all boys in the home, between twenty and thirty in each unit. It was usually four per dorm and there were six dorms available in each unit. The dormitories

were all in the first floor of the building. The boys were all aged between twelve and sixteen. The boys in my dorm were all the same age as me.

47. I remember some of names of the staff there, Mr Hefferman, ^{KQP} Mr Coogan, Miss McFadden and the Headmaster was Mr Kane. Mr Kane's son was also a key worker in the home. There were usually two members of staff on duty per unit and they all worked on a shift rota basis.
48. Mr ^{HWI} was one of the staff and he was extremely brutal. He was in his late twenties, early thirties. Like other members of staff he did not stay on the premises but like the others he worked on a shift rota basis.
49. Other than Mr ^{HWI} there were no issues with any of the other staff. If the other person that should have been on duty with Mr ^{HWI}, and he was off for any reason, then a person from one of the other units would come over and cover.
50. I was a bit scared when I first arrived as the others were all sitting around the TV and as I walked in they all went quiet and turned to look at me. One of the staff was introducing me to the other boys there. As he went round he pointed out one boy and said this is "", he is your top boy here. I never thought anymore about it at the time but soon found out what he meant by being top boy.
51. It was on the Thursday that I arrived there and was allowed home the following day for the weekend. I spent it with my family and was back in the home permanently from the Sunday night. It was okay that first night but it soon changed when I was back on the Sunday.
52. At that time some of the staff were playing cards and one of them shouted over and said "I can smell your Ma". That was the start of how they spoke to me, it was never in a nice manner, just shouting at me and the other kids.

Mornings and bedtime

53. In the mornings we would get up, into the bathroom to get washed, make our beds and in for breakfast. After breakfast it was into whatever classwork they had decided we were to complete.
54. If you were in the good books with the staff you might be allowed to stay up a bit later at night. We would usually sit up and watch some TV. The night watchman was also good to us. He would let us stay up later on the understanding one of us had to make him a cup of tea.
55. There was one night we were all carrying on and it was obvious there was going to be a riot in the home. The Headmaster and some of the other staff came in and they managed to calm everyone down.

Mealtimes/Food

56. Before our meals we had to line up together and then walk into the canteen. At meal times if it was Mr HWI that was on duty he would make everyone sing a song. This was based on a song from a film of the day, possibly "Scum" which was about life in a borstal. He would amend the song to his own version.
57. I knew one boy who came to stay there and he was placed in a different unit. I saw him sometimes at mealtimes and often he and some others did not finish their meals. There was never an issue with that, other than you went hungry.

Washing/bathing

58. The showers that were available were communal. If Mr HWI was on duty he would be standing watching as we showered. He would then mock each of the boys about the size of their penis. He was supposed to supervise the shower area to make sure there was no fighting.

Clothing/uniform

59. When we were at St Philips we had to wear their uniform which consisted of a blue sweatshirt, jeans and school shoes. When you arrived at the school you had to change out of your own clothing and into your uniform. At the end of the week you changed back into your own clothing for going home. We were issued two sets of uniform, one set being worn and one set at the laundry. You had a clean set waiting for your arrival back from weekend leave.
60. We were allocated a number which was sewn into our uniform. I was allocated number [REDACTED].

Leisure time

61. Each week we were taken to the local swimming pool, at perhaps Airdrie, Wishaw or Shotts. We were also allowed to go to the shops where we spend our pocket money on sweets or cigarettes. There was also the swing park where we were allowed to play.
62. When it came to staff supervision it could be any of them that would take us to the swimming or be with us in sports hall. If there were kids not going out for any activity then a member of staff would stay behind to look after them at the home. So long as Mr [REDACTED] was not involved the atmosphere was quite good.

School

63. At school there was no structure to any of the education. We were handed books but no instructions other than we were to read them ourselves. I did get to learn woodwork and some painting and decorating. When I was in woodwork class the home had me build some barrels which they turned into plant pots and sold for profit.
64. Even during class work there were still fights taking place, not just when Mr [REDACTED] was around but in general.

Healthcare

65. Miss Sweeney was the Matron at the home and she had a son who stayed in one of other units in the home. After having suffered the gauntlet there was many a boy who would need to visit with Matron to see to his wounds. Very often I might have been there with a bloody nose. Other times we might just use tissues to stop the bleeding

Work

66. Any chores we did were quite basic and would involve tidying up the dormitories or setting up the dining room for meals. If they were not tidied properly then we would have to do it again.

Birthdays and Christmas

67. We were all at our own homes for Christmas and there was never any acknowledgement of birthdays when I was there.

Visits/Inspections

68. There were meetings between staff regarding my stay at St Philips. I had gradually made improvements and Miss McFadden, one of my teachers, was suggesting that I should be allowed to be a day pupil for two days a week rather than a full time boarder. Pat McCluskey, my social worker, was refusing this and it caused the two them to have arguments about what was best for me.
69. Miss McFadden was suggesting with the improvements I was continuing to make that the best answer overall was that I would just be a full time day pupil. She was aware I was having issues and that they were affecting my mental health. There was nothing specific she was aware of, it was more a general change in attitude. She was recommending that I should get the bus to St Philips each day.

Family contact

70. One weekend I was at my parent's house on leave. Things got so bad in the home that after about a year in there I wanted to commit suicide. Anyway I did something to myself and ended up in hospital. When I came round Pat McCluskey was standing in the room. As soon as I was fit he returned me to St Philips.
71. As time went on I was allowed more days as a day pupil. As I did more and more school work I was allowed more days.

Discipline

72. If we did anything wrong during the week then our names were entered in a punishment book. If your name appeared too often then there would be a deduction in your pocket money and if really serious then we would lose your weekend privileges.
73. Each Friday the Headmaster would have us all in for an assembly. During the assembly he would read out what each boy had been in trouble with during the last week.

Bed Wetting

74. There were some kids who had a problem with bed wetting. The staff on duty during the night would wake the boys between four and five in the morning and get them to go to the toilet. Although it was to help them there were many who could not get back to sleep again and were tired for the rest of the day.

Abuse at St Philips Children's Home, Plains, Airdrie

75. Mr^{HWI}, a member of staff, based a lot of how he operated in the home based on the film "Scum". He was forever approaching everyone asking who the top boy was. He would then arrange for that boy and some of the others who thought they were top, to

fight each other. Again this was something contained in the film. None of the fights organised by Mr [HWI] were ever entered into the punishment book.

76. One of the things Mr [HWI] did, was he would arrange for a race involving all the boys. He would make everyone race to the racks where the shoes were stored. We would run along the corridor and scramble to get our shoes on. The last one to get his shoes would then be forced to run the gauntlet.
77. Mr [HWI] lined the boys, usually ten on either side of the corridor. The last boy then had to run between the two lines as quick as possible. As he ran the boys were all made to punch and kick him until he reached the other end. Mr [HWI] also joined in. This was a daily occurrence that Mr [HWI] was on duty. If he was backshift then Mr [HWI] would still have people run the gauntlet, usually about 5:00 pm.
78. Mr [HWI] had favourites between the boys. He would encourage those boys to fight with me and some of the other boys. He would take one of them aside, ask him if he could beat someone in a fight and then tell the boy to fight that person.
79. There were times some of the boys might be sitting and relaxing, perhaps watching television. It was obvious he had set one of his boys up to be ready to fight someone. One of the boys, [REDACTED], was given a nod from Mr [HWI] and went to another boy, [REDACTED], and came from behind him. He then put his fingers into the [REDACTED]'s eyes and kept pressing. [REDACTED] was almost blinded as a result of this. After giving the nod, Mr [HWI] would stand near the fire exit to give the impression he saw nothing, but in fact he could see clearly what was happening.
80. [REDACTED] was also involved in hitting me on one occasion again on Mr [HWI]'s instigation. After I had tried to report what was happening he was told not to hit me again. Trying to tell what was happening made the atmosphere in the home worse for me as everyone saw me as a grass.

81. Other times Mr ^{HWI} would say to people that two particular boys were going up the stairs to do some sort of cleaning. We all knew that was never the case and what was really happening was Mr ^{HWI} was setting two boys up to have a fight up in the dorm.
82. There was one person, [REDACTED], who was deemed to be the top boy in the school. When [REDACTED] left the school it did not take Mr ^{HWI} long before he was organising fights every couple of weeks to try and find who would be the new top boy. He would sometime re-arrange the layout of the beds in the unit so it would resemble a boxing ring. He would stand at the side while the boys fought.
83. There was one time it came to my turn with having to fight on Mr ^{HWI}'s instruction. I told him I would not be fighting anyone. The boy I was to fight was called [REDACTED] and he just gave me one punch on the nose and that was the end of the fight.
84. Sometimes Mr Hefferman would be on duty at the same time as Mr ^{HWI}. If there were fights taking place, organised by Mr ^{HWI}, then Mr Hefferman ignored what was happening. I think he was too new to argue with Mr ^{HWI}. You never saw the Headmaster when any of the fights were taking place.
85. Mrs [REDACTED] also worked in the school and she covered Mallaig Unit. She sometimes came into our unit when Mr ^{HWI} was on duty. If she heard any of the banging upstairs he was always telling her that the boys were doing some version of spring cleaning.
86. There was a boy with red hair that I can remember called [REDACTED]. He tried to report some abuse by one of the teachers, I can't remember which one. This teacher was banging [REDACTED]'s head against some of the metal lockers. [REDACTED] was telling other staff about this but was not believed and when he was in the class trying [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Lucky for him [REDACTED] stopped this from being worse than it could have been.
87. I can remember Mr ^{HWJ} was quite handy at kicking the boys in the unit, if they had done something wrong in his eyes. One of the boys he would kick was ^{KNA} [REDACTED]. Later in life ^{KNA} [REDACTED] suffered from depression and committed suicide. There was another

boy ^{KNB} [REDACTED], who only lasted about six months after leaving St Philips. He took his own life. He was so depressed and could not take it.

Reporting of abuse at Abuse at St Philips Children's Home, Plains, Airdrie

88. After my suicide attempt Pat McCluskey was taking me from the hospital back to St Philips. I told him as we drove back, part of the reason for my issues was the abuse we were all suffering at the hands of Mr ^{HWI} [REDACTED]. Pat did not believe me. When I got back to the home I was to go with him into a room where I was supposed to tell the Headmaster what was happening. I was then asked by Pat to tell it again. When I went into the room it was Mr ^{HWI} [REDACTED] who was actually there. I was never given any chance to speak with the Headmaster.
89. In 2018 all of this abuse was reported to the Police, including some of the names of the boys who were at the school and involved in the fighting.

Leaving St Philips Children's Home, Plains, Airdrie

90. By the end of my time at St Philips I was no longer getting into trouble and going to classes on a regular basis. I was also no longer boarding, but a full time day pupil. I would have been fifteen by this time.
91. A month before my sixteenth birthday I told the social work I was not going back to St Philips. I knew that by the time I reached my sixteenth birthday the social work no longer had any control over me. I left St Philips where the only life skills they taught me was what to do with a paint brush.

Life after being in care

92. When I was back at my family home I was only there for about a year, when things were getting out of control. When I returned to the house I no longer had a room there and was having to sleep on the couch. We did try to build a make shift partition in the living room to give a little space for me.
93. I never felt I was part of the family anymore. After my mum died the relationship with my sisters was non-existent. As soon as you are sent to places like St Philips you are branded by people on the outside. In my case my family treated me the same.
94. Later in life I ended up on remand and it was Pat McCluskey that completed the background reports on me. With the issues I had previously had with him I did not think there would be any chance of things getting better. This was the only time I ended up in the prison system and I was about eighteen years old. I spent many months on remand at Longriggend. When I appeared for sentence at Airdrie Sheriff Court I was put on probation for three years.
95. Part of the probation order was I had to appear at the court every three months to confirm I was keeping myself out of trouble. There was one time I had not turned up and ended up being remanded again. When it came to social work reports being done it was Pat McCluskey that did this. The good thing was they just continued the probation.
96. I was about sixteen or seventeen when my daughter [REDACTED] was born. She was followed by [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was the mother of [REDACTED] and the other kids were from different relationships after that. I don't have any contact with the other mothers.
97. I am now with my partner [REDACTED] who I have known since we were teenagers. We have been together for the last four or five years.

98. As far as work goes I have carried out different manual labouring jobs and my last job was a fork lift driver in a recycling plant. I did that for around five years and left there in 2015/16 when my mental health deteriorated.

Impact

99. My time in care hurt my education and my ability to read properly. My partner [REDACTED] has to help me make sense of the letters I get sent to the house. She also helps me with any forms I might have to fill in. I couldn't even help any of my kids with things like their homework.
100. I still have flashbacks and there are triggers from perhaps a TV programme or social media which affect me and memories of St Philips come flooding back. These flashbacks and nightmares are quite regular, but the medication I am prescribed do help me with my sleep.
101. Other than [REDACTED], I have no trust of anyone. When I am on my own I get very paranoid. I have seen me use a metal pole to barricade my front door, just in case someone tries to break into my house to beat me up.
102. I am also scared to go into Glasgow City Centre just in case I bump into someone from St Philips. I remember when I was on remand that there were many people from St Philips in prison at that time. I can say I felt safer in Longriggend than I ever did at St Philips. There was no Mr ^{HWI} [REDACTED] or the like making me fight or make me watch others fighting.
103. I have suffered from a lot of mental health issues and recently had a mental breakdown and all the memories came flooding back. Once more I attempted to commit suicide. I went to my local GP and afterwards a CPN, Denise who referred me onto see a psychologist called Lorraine McGinnis. I had several sessions with Lorraine and during one of those sessions she was asking about my early childhood memories. I told her about my life in care at Calder House and St Philips. She was saying to me that what

I was telling her about was abuse. I had always considered abuse to be if you had been the victim of some sort of sex act. She said to me that she was duty bound to make the police aware of those offences, which she did. It was as a result of her saying this the police came to see me at my house.

104. As a result of their time in care at St Philips there were many kids who suffered from depression and went on to commit suicide. How come there are so many from that particular school that felt that suicide was their only option.

Reporting of Abuse

105. As a result of my appointments with my psychologist I reported the abuse. The first time was in 2018 when a Sergeant Martin McInnes called at the house and noted a statement from me. I left it with them for a while and when I later contacted them for an update I was told that they were not progressing this any further as they had marked the file saying that I did not wish to take the matter any further. It was never even sent to the Procurator Fiscal. This was definitely not the case and this really upset me. Once more when I told someone about my time in care they did not believe me and took no action against any perpetrator.
106. In 2021 I was advised to go back to the police and report the matter again. I did so and spoke with Constable Gillian Gillies from Airdrie Police Station. She later updated me saying that the matter was being passed to the CID. One of the updates I received from the police was that they felt they could not charge Mr HWI with assault as he was instigating this and not taking part. But I had described to them times when he did punch me and some of the other boys. To date I am not aware of the current status of that investigation.

Records

107. I have been trying for a number of years to get access to my social work records without success. I have spoken to Lynn McKerley at the Coatbridge Social Work Office and to start with she said I would be able to get access. I was also asked who my Social Worker was during that time and I told her it was Patrick McCluskey. She told me I was to write a letter to get access to the records. I was later told that they could not get my records as there had been a fire after and they were destroyed. [REDACTED] and I have had checks made with the Fire Brigade and they have no records of a call to the office where the records were stored. We were told one minute the records were stored then next this fire was supposed to have happened. It leaves me with only one thought and that for some reason they are trying to cover some of the things up.
108. I have had contact with Alan Graham from North Lanarkshire Advocacy and my solicitor at Digby Brown. Both have been trying to help with advice about my time in care.
109. I am hoping the Inquiry can help in me in obtaining me records about my time in care. I am hoping the records will be able to tell me the reasons for being placed in care, what happened to me in care and to help fill in some of the blanks I still have from that time.
110. I would also like to see the likes of Mr [REDACTED] being taken to task with what he did to me and many other kids.

Lessons to be learned

111. There should have been more checks made on the staff looking after the children. There should have been better education provided by those looking after us.

Other information

- 112. I know that if I had not been sent to Calder House I would have had a much better life and I would not have been in trouble with the courts. I never caused any trouble before I was in care. The only reason I was sent into care was because I was missing school as my father was ill. I hope the Inquiry stops other kids being put in the same position.

- 113. 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.. 2/2/22