

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GLI

Support person present: No

1. My name is GLI. My date of birth is 1979. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mum and dad were and I have two brothers and four sisters. was the oldest and is about eighteen years older than me. is about twelve years older, is eight years older, seven years older, who is six years older, then me and my twin brother GIU. My mum worked in an art gallery. My dad didn't work. I was brought up in Priesthill which is near Pollok. My house was a dive. Neither and lived there as they had moved out to their own houses. I don't have any unhappy memories from my early childhood.
3. My mum got a brand new washing machine. It came in a big cardboard box so my mum let me and GIU play in the cardboard box. I have no idea how old I was but I must have been not much more than a toddler. There wasn't polystyrene packing at that time so we scrumpled up a whole lot of newspapers to pretend we were in a boat and the paper was the sea. After an hour or so someone came to the door. It was a woman I now know to be Margaret Gray, a social worker. She said she couldn't believe the mess in the house because of all the scrumpled up newspaper. She said it wasn't acceptable. My mum told her that we were just playing. This woman was furious. I don't know why she was there or what her involvement was with the family.

4. As a child I went to Burnbrae primary school which is in Priesthill. The main thing I recall about there was regularly sitting in the front foyer having to write out lots of lines as punishment for something. This meant I had to write the same sentence over and over and it usually began 'I must not..'
5. At some point, and I cannot be sure if it was when I was still at home or when I was in care, but I once jagged myself with a hypodermic needle which I found outside. It was in the national newspaper at the time. I also remember that I was circumcised as a child and to this day I still don't know why this procedure was carried out. I find it quite traumatic not knowing why.
6. I am not sure of the exact order of my first couple of placements. I may have been in Park Lodge first then went to Alva then back to Park Lodge, or I may have just gone to Alva then to Park Lodge.

Alva Children's home, Crookston, Pollok, Glasgow

7. I am not sure what age I was there as I was very young. I vaguely remember being put there but I think I have blanked things out from my memory. I have done this a lot through my time in care. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Park Lodge, Newlands, Glasgow

8. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Park Lodge

44. I don't remember any lead up to me leaving Park Lodge or any transition between Park Lodge and St Philip's school or Johnston Resource centre. No one sat down with me and explained what was happening. I think I was just taken straight from Park Lodge to Johnston Resource centre. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

GIU

Secondary Institutions - to be published later didn't come with me. He went to Ballikinrain. I am not sure why we were separated and no one ever told me why.

Johnston Resource centre

45. I am not sure how or why I ended up at Johnston Resource centre. I would have been about fourteen when I went there. There were bars on the windows and the windows only opened a small distance. There were locked doors then more locked doors then even more locked doors. It was very secure and there was no escape. I am not sure how long I was there for. It could have been two or three weeks or two

or three months. There is only one member of staff that I remember and he was a big guy. I can't remember his name.

Routine at Johnston Resource centre

46. I don't have any memories about the daily routine at the resource centre and I can't describe anything about it or the people there. I have vague memories of going up the driveway to the building and it was positioned between two motorways. The building was like a big bungalow but not a mansion. It was like a typical social work building.

Abuse at Johnston Resource centre

47. I got battered in there by a senior member of staff. I can't remember his name but he was a big guy. He had a Neo-Geo which was a computer game. I asked him for a shot. He said something like "Who the fuck do you think you are" and the other people in the unit went on about me demanding the computer. They leathered me. I was getting hit all over my head and body. I can't remember who all the staff were that were doing this. I remember seeing a ghetto blaster later and I was so tempted to smash it up because I was so angry, but I didn't.
48. After that incident I realised that I needed to keep my head down but I got picked on again and again. There were a lot of people who had been there a long time so their roots were well established and they didn't like outsiders coming in and messing things up for them. This was both the staff and the children.
49. I got hidings in there when I was attacked by other children on a couple of occasions and I also remember getting restrained by the staff. The big guy who owned the Neo Geo definitely retrained me.

Reporting of abuse at Johnston Resource centre

50. I never told anyone about my time at Johnston Resource centre.

Leaving Johnston Resource centre

51. I have no real memories of why or how I was taken from the resource centre to St Philip's school in Airdrie.

St Philip's school, Plains, Airdrie

52. I was about fourteen when I went to St Philip's school. The main house was a beautiful big stone building with a greenhouse at the rear. There was a lawn at the front. There were bungalows in the grounds which had been the staff quarters. When I was there two were being used to store bikes and the other sports equipment. There was a big gymnasium up at the back of the building with a big indoor football pitch. Beechwood house was a sandstone building which contained the offices. There may have been some bedrooms upstairs. At the back was a garage for a car and next door was a storeroom.
53. Valerie Gunn ran the cookery, Tam Colletta ran the woodwork class, Frank Colletta a computer class and there was an art class. These were in a building between Lochisla and the main house. Beside them were the kitchens and the assembly hall and the outdoor football pitch. The head teacher, but not from the start, was a Paddy Hanrahan. He came towards the end of my time. He was a big African guy. There was a manager of each of the three units. HWJ was one of the unit managers. Pat McMillan was the manager of the education building. Other members of staff I remember were Bob Haley, Maggie and HKH. Bob Haley was my key worker. There was a member of night staff and he was called GLM. There was a big greenhouse and there was a gardener. I spent a lot of time helping him. His name was Mr Gardiner.

54. It was all boys at St Philip's. The age range was from ten right up to eighteen. There were roughly fifteen to twenty boys in each unit. There were three units, Lochisla, Arasaig and Morag which I found out later are places on the west coast of Scotland. Lochisla was for the older children, Morag was for the middle aged children and Arasaig was the youngest unit. I was in the Morag unit first then progressed to Lochisla unit as I got older. There was a TV room in each unit and all the bedrooms were upstairs. The smoking room was downstairs and there was a staff office. The rest was almost open plan.

Routine at St Philip's

Mornings and bedtime

55. I don't remember arriving at St Philip's or what happened on my first day. For some reason I don't really remember much about the morning and bedtime routine either. There are other aspects about my time there that is quite vague.

Clothing/uniform

56. We got our clothes from the clothes store which was behind Beechwood house. They had waxed jackets and Timberland jumpers. I ended up with five jumpers. I loved this store and it was my favourite thing through the whole of the care system.

Leisure time

57. After being there for a while, maybe around a year, I was given lots of different responsibilities. I had helped the gardener a lot and they must have seen how well I was looking after the plants and the equipment. Then I was given the job of sweeping up all the wood shavings and sawdust after I had finished churning out baseball bats in the wood shop. The staff often gave me keys to lock up some of the rooms at the end of the day. I was the first person to start up the tuck shop. The tuck shop lasted a while but people started to break into it and stole lots of stuff. Every

day I would go over to the kitchens and bring the trolley back with the food for the unit.

58. I did lots of hill walking, abseiling and skiing. I loved all the outdoor pursuits. There was a smoking room next to the television room which looking back I think was so wrong.
59. If anybody ran away the staff would always come to me and tell me to find the person and bring them back. I organised discos in St Philip's and one time I convinced staff to let me write to the Good Shepherd to allow girls to come to one of the discos. The Good Shepherd agreed and allowed a minibus full of girls to come and it went fine for the first six discos until the boys and girls disappeared into the fields at the end of the night. They stopped after that.
60. One of the staff was called HKF and he was ex-army. He used to bring in a car boot load of army gear. We put on this army gear and we would get split up into two teams. We would then go into the fields at the back of St Philip's where we hid and then had to find all the members of the other team. We did this quite often.

Trips and holidays

61. Staff took each unit walking nearly every day. Whenever there was an organised walk like this I was asked to go too. I was treated more like a staff member. This also helped me stay out of trouble. I also went on skiing trips to Aviemore. We were taken camping onto some Lord's estate in the highlands. It was beside a loch, possibly Loch Long or Loch Ness. We were in big army tents.

Schooling/Leisure activities

62. I don't remember ever being in normal classes getting taught maths, English or history. There might have been cookery and computing. I didn't get any certificates when I left but I got lots of experience in different activities which I wouldn't have got in mainstream school. I learned to take people skiing along with other members of

staff. I took people hillwalking every week sometimes several times in a week. I also did cycling, abseiling, canoeing and other things like ice skating. We spent a lot of time in the Time Capsule Aquatics Centre in Motherwell. There were lots of extra-curricular activities.

63. As my time went on at St Philip's I was given more and more responsibility. As a result of setting up the tuck shop and things like that, it was recognised and this was my reward. Another way of looking at it was they may have done this to try and keep me out of trouble. For me St Philip's was an excellent educational establishment because of all the activities and this suited me.

Religious instruction

64. St Philip's had some connection to the Catholic church. I didn't know and didn't really care what the difference was between a Catholic and a Protestant. I had always believed that I was Protestant but at some point I was taken to a Catholic church. I was offered the bread and wine and I told the priest or bishop that I wasn't Catholic but if it made him happy I would take it. He patted me on the head and said well done before he gave it to me. I didn't have a clue what this all meant. This happened a couple of times.

Visitors

65. I started to get weekend leave when I was at St Philip's so my mum never visited me. I left on the Thursday night and got the train home. Because I was regularly doing this and returning when I was supposed to I was allowed out earlier as time went by. By the end I was going home on the Tuesday for the rest of the week. My mum was very ill by this stage through her alcohol abuse and she died on my seventeenth birthday. I don't recall any visits at St Philip's from any social workers.

Review of care

66. I don't remember going to a children's panel after I was sent to St Philip's. There was a boy in St Philip's called [REDACTED]. He was getting upset at one point. Staff told him to calm down as he was only going to be there for three weeks. He ended up being there for three years. I don't remember anyone sitting down with me and telling me how long I was going to be there for.

External Inspections

67. I don't recall any external inspectors coming in to check St Philip's. In fact I don't remember seeing anyone at any of the places I have been.

Sibling Contact

68. I didn't have any contact with my sisters when I was at St Philip's. They were all much older and had their own children by that time. Because [REDACTED] ^{GIU} was in Ballikinrain I never had any contact with him. I was never given the opportunity to phone him.

Abuse at St Philip's

69. Some of the staff at St Philip's were good and some were nasty. In my time at St Philip's I just felt there was no support. [REDACTED] ^{GLM} was nightshift and he used to shout and swear at us to get to our beds. He would also hit us.
70. There was a lot of fighting in St Philip's. Sometimes it would start off being playful but often it turned violent. When it turned really violent windows were getting smashed and people were getting hurt by the furniture getting thrown about. This happened quite a lot. This wasn't just the children, the staff did this too.

71. Some of the staff were real bullies. I was heavily restrained by staff and they just did it to break my temper. They did it to others too. If they were restraining me by bending my fingers or pushing my arm up my back they didn't hold back and you knew you were being restrained. It was a karate move that they used to get you down to the ground. If you did something they didn't like or if you didn't do what you were told they would restrain you. There was usually a reason they would do it and if it was for something more serious they would react more seriously. Being restrained happened quite regularly to me and I saw it happening all the time to other children. There was rarely a day went by without someone getting restrained, whether it was in my unit or one of the other units.
72. There were regular, what could be called riots, in St Philip's. I remember sitting outside the unit one day when the base of a bed came flying through a window. Sometimes it was a chair that was thrown through the windows. This seemed to happen quite a lot.
73. There was a boy, [REDACTED] who died at St Philip's after buzzing a fire extinguisher through the sleeve of his jacket. I vaguely remember this happened when I was there but don't remember much else about it. There was another boy there called [REDACTED] who regularly buzzed the petrol from the grass strimmer.

Reporting of abuse at St Philip's

74. I never told anyone about St Philip's.

Leaving St Philip's

75. I got into bother when I was at St Philip's and there was a court order granted which put me on a bail order which said I had to stay there an extra year. This meant I couldn't leave in 1995 when I was sixteen.

76. Towards the end of my time at St Philip's I became involved with an aftercare group in [REDACTED] called [REDACTED]. This was in 1996 when I was seventeen. This group subsequently moved premises to [REDACTED].
77. Nobody at St Philip's tried to teach me how to cook, budget with money or in any way look after myself.

Life after being in care

78. When I left care I felt that I wasn't prepared for life. As a result I became involved in a number of support groups for children leaving care. I participated in the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] which I became involved with when I was still at St Philip's was a group set up to support people transitioning from care into life outside the care system. I was also [REDACTED] for a number of related magazines. I was also involved in a number of working groups and steering groups all formed to try and support people who have been in the care system.
79. At [REDACTED] when I was between sixteen and eighteen there was a member of staff, possibly called [REDACTED] and some of his comments were quite inappropriate. He was quite seedy and vulgar and his comments were often homophobic. I felt quite uncomfortable with his comments. There was another member of staff who did things that made my blood boil. Every Thursday night there was an art class run by an art teacher but this was quite positive. Through [REDACTED] I also did a computer class.
80. At some point, and I think it was through [REDACTED] I wrote to the [REDACTED] Access Centre and asked if I could become a volunteer. I worked with them for a while and was given some responsibilities signing in and out cameras and other equipment and checking for damage. This didn't last very long then I went for three

months to [REDACTED] I hoped to get permanent work at these places but it didn't work out.

81. I would still have been seventeen when I left care and I went to live with my mum. She died very soon after I got home. I went to stay with my older brother for a while but I didn't really get on with him. After that I lived in various homeless accommodations around Glasgow until I found my feet living in the James Shields project, where there were thirty rooms of drugs addicts. I was around 24 or 25 by this time. After there I am not actually that sure where I went.
82. I worked in a few clothes shops for a short while then I started up my own business as a removal firm. Because I was caught drink driving the police took my van off me and that was the end of my business. I have been in my current house since 1999.

Impact

83. I suffer from anxiety and depression. I couldn't write down a list of everything I was going to tell the Inquiry in this statement as it was becoming too much for me. Glasgow city chambers has a massive stained glass window and I have always wanted to fire marbles through it, because of all the pain and suffering that they put me through by putting me in care and the way that I was treated. In time they can sell that building but they can't change what they did to me in care.
84. My memories from growing up are sometimes quite vague. I am not sure if this is because of my addiction over the years to alcohol or if it is my own brain protecting me and blanking things out. I have never been that close to my sisters or my older brother. They are all older than me and because I didn't grow up with them they now have their own lives. It has only been recently in the last few weeks that I have been talking to them but I was drunk and basically I fell out with them in a big way. I am not close with any of my siblings. They weren't there for me when I was in care and now they treat me like I am a silly young boy.

85. I don't have any friends. I had some friends but they owe me money and are into drugs. I don't want friends like that. I have no doubt that my inability to make friends stems from my time in care. I haven't had anyone in my house in the last ten years. The last time I had two people in my house ten pounds went missing. I don't trust people and don't know who I can and can't trust.
86. I have virtually no educational qualifications because of my time in care. The education provided was poor. At St Philip's I spent a lot of my time in the woodwork department just churning out baseball bats. It was only when I got involved with [REDACTED] that I got a Scotvec qualification.
87. [REDACTED]
Secondary Institutions - to be published later
[REDACTED]
Secondary Institutions - to be published later I relive moments of my time in care every day. I thought about it yesterday, and it will be there again tomorrow and the day after.
88. I started drinking alcohol virtually since I left care when my mum died. I was drinking every night. For the last twenty five years I sit at home at night on my own and drink alcohol. I have been doing it so long I just can't stop. I started drinking to block out the pain and the bad memories from my childhood. It works for that night but it is always there the next day.
89. I found it difficult to keep any sort of job. I found there was no structure because I didn't know what a structure was. When I got money I couldn't budget properly because no one had ever taught me how to. The longest job I kept was my own removal business but drink caused me to lose that. The police impounded my van.
90. I have been in Barlinnie prison three times. Each time it was because of alcohol and the three sentences were for two months and were for assault or police assault. I have also been banned three times for drink driving.

Treatment/support

91. I have tried to stop drinking alcohol. I went to a group called 'We are with you' which is a support group for alcoholics. I didn't think the facilitator was very good and he kept saying the same thing over and over and it didn't make sense to me. From there I was sent to a place called Park, a group for people wanting to stop a drink or drug addiction. I wanted to give up alcohol but didn't feel like listening to everyone's stories or telling everyone my own life story. I didn't find this helpful for me.
92. I have also been to six or seven alcoholics anonymous meetings but I just feel like I get humiliated at these meetings. They asked for donations afterwards and I was told to just put a pound in. I did, then someone asked me in front of everyone else if I was skint. This made me not want to go anymore and I haven't been back.
93. About five years ago I managed to stop drinking for around a year and a half which was just before Covid lockdown. This didn't happen at a good time for me and made it really difficult because I was in the house all the time.
94. I went to a group called Constructs because I had bad relationships especially with authority. I think I was referred to them by the court. The whole point was to recognise that the person wearing the black police uniform was not the same person that arrested me years ago and that things had moved on. I had to learn that they were only doing their job. This was good for me because I had a very negative attitude about the police.

Reporting of Abuse

95. I have never reported anything that happened to me in care to anyone in authority. I didn't feel I could talk about my abuse and tell my life story to anyone.

Records

96. I haven't tried to get any of my records. I know that when I was at St Philip's they had a booklet which contained all the information about me. I am not sure if I want to see my records.

Lessons to be Learned

97. There is no support network in place for children in care. I think there should be someone, like a lifelong coach, who could keep children updated with their progress and what is happening in the future. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

98. The staff shouldn't have a good cop/bad cop attitude. All this does is it turns children against them. The attitude of a lot of the staff was poor and they obviously weren't doing it because they loved what they did.

Hopes for the Inquiry

99. In this modern 21st century society where technology has become so advanced and if there was an unlimited budget a brand new system could be built where you could monitor people at every step of their childhood whilst in care. This would mean a centralised computer system with a database which could be accessed by authorised individuals. This means children can be followed at every step and the staff could read the up to date notes on that child. This could include the number of times they have absconded. This would mean staff could communicate information quickly between each other and also a method that all the regulatory bodies can use to talk to each other.

100. Children in care could be given limited access to this database and could voice any concerns or anything that they didn't feel was right. This could hopefully be done anonymously if the child did not want to be named. That way the issue would be recorded and actioned accordingly, openly and not swept under the carpet.

Other information

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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102.

