

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GSC

Support person present: Yes

1. My full name is GSC. This has been my name since birth and as a child in care. My date of birth is 1967. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before care

2. I was born in Australia, where I lived with my mum, my dad, and two big brothers, and was about two years older than me and was about a year older.
3. We moved back to Scotland when I was about four or five years old, and lived in Kirkcaldy. I started school at Kirkcaldy North Primary School. My two younger brothers, and were born in Kirkcaldy. I also had a sister, but she was given up for adoption when she was born.
4. Social work had been involved with my family for a long time because me and my brothers had to be put in children's homes when my mum was pregnant with my younger brothers and my dad wouldn't look after us. There is me and my brothers in St Olive's Children's Home in Kirkcaldy while my mum was in hospital having the baby. It was a lot better in there than being at home. That was when I realised that my family was horrible compared to other families.

5. I remember having a social worker called Mr Mackie. Life at home was horrible because my dad was an alcoholic, used to have affairs, batter my mum and batter us kids as well. I grew up hating him. Social workers would also come to the house all the time because of my dad being drunk and violent.
6. I remember starting high school aged twelve and had only been there a few weeks when I got into a fight with my dad at home. He had started hitting my mum and me, so I attacked him back and threatened to kill him. Social work came and decided that I was to be put into care in a residential school after that. I think it was so I could have care and protection from my dad. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were also in care, but not with me.

Oakbank Residential School, Aberdeen

7. I was told by my social worker, Mr Mackie, that I was being taken to visit a place and he took me away in a car, up to Aberdeen. When we arrived at Oakbank, Mr Mackie told me that I would be staying there, so I had been tricked. I was twelve years old at the time.
8. Oakbank was on three levels. It was like a mini prison for boys. If you had to go anywhere, staff would take you because all the doors had to be unlocked to let you through and then locked again behind you. They had a school in the place as well.
9. Everything in the building came off one long, main corridor. There was a main hall, which was the common room, and it had a snooker table and table tennis table, and another pool room behind it. Further along the corridor was the place where all the clothes were kept. Further along the main corridor, there were showers, the staff offices, and then the place where you had your meals. There was a smoking room at the other side of the building, at the back.
10. There were stairs going up and there was a telly room and three long rooms on the first floor, which was where the boys slept. They were called houses and had their own names. The one on the left was called St George's. I was in the middle one, which

was called Roslyn House. The rooms were really long and were partitioned into dormitories with four beds in each.

11. There was a gymnasium and a weights room, and a swimming pool that was being built while I was there.
12. There was about thirty or forty boys in there, aged from twelve to sixteen years old. The boys were in there for doing some really bad things and were from all over Scotland so they split themselves into gangs. There were the Dundee boys, Aberdeen boys, Fife boys, Glasgow boys and some from Orkney. The Glasgow boys acted like they ran the place. I was the youngest and smallest in there and I hadn't actually done anything bad to be put there so I wasn't like the other boys. I came to be known as **GSC** while I was in there. Nobody used my actual name.
13. I don't remember the name of the headmaster. There was Mr **GSD** who we called **GSD**. There was Mr **EJV** who was my worker, and there was Mr Findlay.

First day

14. I remember going through the front doors and meeting the headmaster. I don't remember his name. I was given a uniform to wear and was told I would be staying there to be educated because it was too dangerous for me to be at home. I thought this would be a good place to be and better than being at home.
15. I was taken to the main hall and then into a snooker room, which led into the pool room. I was left there and there were other boys around. I was twelve years old and was quite small for my age. I remember it started to get dark and that was when I was assaulted for the first time. One of the boys hit me on the back of my head with a pool cue and cracked my head open. It was a boy with the nickname **██████████** who was a Fifer from Lochgelly. He was about fourteen or fifteen years old. There was no staff around at the time.

Routine at Oakbank

16. We got up in the morning at about 7:00 am and had to make a bed block by folding all the clothes up in a perfect square at the bottom of the bed. We went downstairs to the common room, then to the shower room, which had rows of sinks in it. We got washed at the sinks and got dressed. When everybody was done, we went to the common room and waited for someone to march us to the dining room, where we got our breakfast. After we had breakfast, we were moved back to the common room. Then we were told what work group we were joining that day. That could be brickwork, painting, joinery, gardening or school. We would go and do that for the morning with a staff member.
17. The staff members would bring their groups back to the common room just before lunch time. Then we got marched into the dining room again for our dinner. Then we were brought back into the common room after our dinner. If anyone wanted to go for a fag then they could. Boys were allowed six cigarettes a day. When everyone was back in the common room again, we were told which work group we would be in for that afternoon, then we went and did that for the rest of the day.
18. We came back to the common room after we'd finished for the day and stayed there, playing snooker or table tennis. If boys wanted a fag, they could go to the smoking room and do that.
19. We then went to the dining room at tea time to have our tea. It was back to the common room after tea and boys could use that time to go to the smoking room again. We had some time in the evening to do what we wanted, like play games, go to the gym or play football. Sometimes the staff would organise trips out to the cinema or swimming during this time.
20. Everyone met back in the common room after evening activities, then we all had to go and have showers, brush our teeth and change into pyjamas. Then everyone was back in the common room for a bit and if anybody wanted a last cigarette for the day,

they could go then. Everyone gathered in the common room again before going upstairs to their dormitory areas.

21. There was a TV room upstairs and boys were allowed to watch TV until about 10:00 pm and then it was into our dormitories to go to bed. That was what happened every day.
22. There would be a member of staff on all night doing the night shift. He would wake boys up in the night to take them to the toilet if they were bed wetters, which I was. The room wasn't locked at night.

Mealtimes / Food

23. The food was ok in there but I never had much of an appetite the whole time I was in there because I was always in fear.

Washing / bathing

24. When you went in the bathroom, there was a hatch on the left hand side, where you went to get your clothes from. Someone would be there to give you your clothes for the day. We got our day clothes from there in the morning and our jammies from there at night.
25. The bathroom was a big square room and had about five rows of sinks, which was where we got washed and brushed our teeth in the morning and at night.
26. There was a big, massive shower room with about twenty showers in it at the end of the room. We had a shower at night in the communal shower. There were no cubicles so there was no privacy. We all showered in front of each other. Then we brushed our teeth, gave our clothes back at the hatch and got our jammies. We all rolled our jammie tops over and tied it round our waist like a belt, so we were all topless. I don't know why we did that but everybody did it.

Clothing / uniform

27. I only had the clothes on my back when I arrived at Oakbank. They had their own uniform, which I was given when I arrived there.
28. When you went to bed at night, you would take your pyjama top off and tie it around your waist so you would sleep bare bodied on your top half.

Schooling and work parties

29. We got schooling about once a week so I never learned much or got an education. I went to school on Thursday, which was just in a room on the first floor on the other side of the building from the dormitories. It was a woman who came in from outside to teach us. I don't remember her name. I never learned anything. It was more just a time to carry on.
30. I did learn a lot of skills, like painting and decorating, which I was good at. We got gardening but I was no good at that. I also learned some building because the boys helped build the swimming pool and put the tiles on it. I was good at that. The pool wasn't finished by the time I left.
31. Boys were taken somewhere just outside Aberdeen to do grouse beating a few times a year. We would be out all day, and had to walk for miles. Then we would beat sticks to get the grouse up for them to be shot. It happened at a certain times of the year. I am sure Oakbank would have gotten paid for us being there and doing that. We never got anything for it.

Bed Wetting

32. I was a bed wetter and so were a couple of other boys. If I wet the bed, I would get clean sheets for my bed whenever I woke up, whether that was in the middle of the night or in the morning. The night staff would give you that. After a while, I used to get woken up by the night staff and taken to the toilet during the night. This happened to

the other bed wetters too. We were taken twice throughout the night. That did stop me wetting the bed so it worked for me.

Discipline and punishment

33. If boys misbehaved they would be punished by having their pocket money reduced. I remember they used a numbers system to calculate this. If a boy did something really bad, like running away, then they'd get their home leave stopped for four weeks.
34. I was punished once for running away by not being allowed home for four weeks, and half my pocket money was taken off me.
35. I know that there was a belt and it was used by the headmaster sometimes as a punishment. It wasn't banned in schools back then. I never got the belt and I never saw anybody getting it but I heard that people did. That would have happened in the headmaster's office and not in front of everybody.
36. I never saw the staff use any serious physical punishment towards the boys. They would sometimes slap you over the back of the head to move you along quicker, but they never really hurt you. They did kick you, push you and slap you over the head, but they didn't seriously hurt us by breaking any bones or doing any major damage.

Weekends and family contact

37. Boys got to go home at the weekends. The only boys who didn't get home every weekend were the ones from Orkney because it was too far, or boys who had their home leave taken away as a punishment.
38. The school had their own bus which they took boys home in on a Friday morning. The Aberdeen boys got off first, then it went on to drop off the Dundee boys, then the Fife boys, then the Glasgow boys. Then everybody would be picked up again from these places on a Sunday at a designated pick up place.

39. My family never asked about the marks on my body when I was home at weekends. They must have noticed. I did also start getting quite funny about my body around that time and covering up more, but they must have seen my face and arms. My dad would be home at the weekends and things were the same with him.

Trips / Holidays

40. We were taken on trips to the swimming pool and the cinema I remember being taken to see The Elephant Man.

Visits / Inspections

41. I never saw Mr Mackie again, after he dropped me off at Oakbank. No social worker visited me during my time at Oakbank and I was there for a year and a half. I didn't get any visits from anyone while I was in there, not even from my family.
42. Nobody ever came in from outside to ask me how I was or to check on the place.

Abuse at Oakbank

43. The abuse started from my first day there and then carried on regularly. I was a nervous wreck in that place because of all the abuse. I was shaking all the time and just waiting for the next assault, which kept happening. The violence happened all the time between boys and the staff just couldn't control it. The older boys controlled that school, not the staff.

Peer abuse

44. I was hit on the back of a head with a pool cue on my first day there by a boy called [REDACTED] from Lochgelly in Fife. That was the first assault. There was no staff around at the time. I still have a dent on the back of my head from that.

45. Some of the abuse that happened to me, happened in the smoking room. I would have cigarettes put out on my arm in there by other boys. I also got abused in the shower room, the common room and dormitory. The Glasgow boys thought they ran the place and assaulted me a lot, but it wasn't just them. All the boys were abusive in that place.
46. The boys that assaulted me were a group of Glasgow boys called [REDACTED] and two of their pals. [REDACTED] was about thirteen and a half, and [REDACTED] was fifteen years old.
47. The Glasgow boys jumped on my arm and smashed it to pieces one day when we were playing football in the gymnasium. There was a staff member there but I don't remember what his name was. Nobody said anything and I just got up and carried on playing. I didn't even realise it was broken because I was in so much pain all the time because of everything that was happening to me. This happened after about eight weeks of being there. I remember the film, the Elephant Man was on at the pictures at the time because we had been to see it during the day and then my arm was broken that night.
48. It was only afterwards when the pain in my arm didn't stop, that I was taken to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, which was near Oakbank, and had my arm put in plaster there. I was told my arm was broken in three places, at my wrist and two places above it. After I had my arm in plaster, I used to lie on it when I was in bed to protect it. I still do.
49. I had my foot broken in another attack. Another time my jaw was broken. I was playing five a side football with some of the boys during our free time. I fell down while I was playing and the Glasgow gang were egging each other on to hurt me. [REDACTED] was one of them. Then one of the boys came and booted me in the face. I can't remember his name. He kicked me in the jaw and my tooth came through the skin under my lip. I was taken to the Royal Infirmary again for that.
50. I had a really visible injury on my face that time so I wasn't allowed home for eight weeks. I ran away during that time because I didn't think it was fair that I didn't get to

go home. I was then punished for four weeks for running away. Nothing happened to the boy who had kicked me in the face. He didn't get any punishment.

51. I was raped in the dormitory by some of the Glasgow boys. This happened four times, and it was always at night in the dormitory. I was in a dormitory with four beds but only two were used. I shared the room with another boy called [REDACTED] who was from Dundee. The Glasgow boys would come in and throw [REDACTED] out whenever they wanted to abuse me, and then they would ambush me. Three of them held me down while the fourth raped me, and they all took turns. It was always [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and two other Glasgow boys. All four of them did it to me.
52. Boys would bite the edge of a comb and make it into a point, and use that to scratch smaller boys with. That happened to me and a boy called [REDACTED]. They would do that to me after we'd been for a shower and were getting changed into our jammies. My body was covered in scratches from that and bruises from other beatings. There was no way staff couldn't have known what was happening to me because they would have seen the marks when I was in the showers, getting changed or when we were topless after our showers with our jammie bottoms tied round our waist. I know that staff must have known that I was being abused because I had so many injuries. I had my jaw broken, my arm and foot were broken. I had to be taken to hospital so many times. They just didn't ask and never did anything about it.
53. You couldn't tell anybody because if you told on one or two boys, their whole school would be against you and hurt you and it would be worse for me. The whole place was run by gangs.
54. The abuse only stopped when I learned to fight and started to hit them back after about a year, and started sticking up for myself.

Staff abuse

55. [REDACTED] ^{GSD} was a staff member who would stay overnight to look after the boys. He would wake me up at night to take me to the toilet because I was a bed wetter. It was

during these times that he raped me in the toilets. He did this to me on two different times when I was thirteen years old. I don't really want to talk about it. He was a wee man, under six foot tall and was a medium, bulky build. He was a flubby kind of man and was about fifty years old. He always wore glasses, and a hat like the one the old man wore in the TV show Only Fools and Horses.

56. I don't know if ^{GSD} [REDACTED] was abusing other boys. I was a nervous wreck and was so withdrawn that I wasn't paying attention to anything that was happening around me.

Healthcare

57. I was taken to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary a lot because of my injuries from being battered. I had my arm put in a cast there after some boys jumped on it and smashed it. I remember telling the doctor I had broken my arm because I fell and somebody had broken it while taken a penalty. That wasn't the truth.
58. Another time I was taken to hospital after a boy kicked me in the face and broke my jaw.

Running away

59. On one occasion I was kept in Oakbank for eight weeks without being allowed home for weekend visits. That was after my jaw was broken. That was the first time I absconded.
60. I was caught by police and taken to Rossie Farm in Montrose for a night. The following day I was taken back to Oakbank. I wasn't physically punished when I went back even though they did have the belt in there. I just had another four weeks knocked off my home leave and had my pocket money halved.

Reporting of abuse at Oakbank

61. I didn't tell anybody about the abuse at the time. That would have been like a death sentence in Oakbank. If you told on anyone, then you knew things would get worse for you because whole gangs of boys would turn against you. The people who were doing bad things to me threatened me not to tell anyone.
62. I don't remember the staff ever asking me about my injuries. I don't remember ever seeing any police at Oakbank. Nobody at the hospitals ever got the police involved either.

Leaving Oakbank

63. I had been in Oakbank for a year and a half when my first panel hearing came up. I was taken to the meeting in Kirkcaldy by a social worker. My mum was there and she asked for me to be taken out of Oakbank, and the panel agreed to let me go home. I was thirteen or fourteen years old when I left.

Life back at home

64. I was a nervous wreck by the time I left Oakbank and went home. I was petrified of everything and had become really violent because I felt like everyone was a threat to me and I had to protect myself from getting battered or raped.
65. I started at Viewforth High School. A teacher there tried to give me the belt so I stabbed him in the hand with a pen knife. That was how bad I was. I did it out of fear because I was petrified. I was then put into a Children's Home called Rimbledon House in Glenrothes.

Rimbleton House, Glenrothes

66. I was about fourteen years old when I was taken to Rimbleton, and I was there for about four or five months. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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I told my mum about the abuse at Oakbank but she never believed me so that was that. I never spoke to anybody about it again.

70. Secondary Institutions - to be published later I was moved out of there after about four or five months but I don't know why. I had been in there just for an assessment until they decided where to put me next.

Melville House, Fife

71. I was put into Melville House, which was a residential school in Fife. I went in when I was about fourteen years old and was there for almost two years. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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75. Towards the end of my time at Melville House, I got work with one of my older brothers for two days a week, on a Monday and Tuesday. It was working in a scrap metal place. I also did some voluntary work with Age Concern, working with the elderly on a Wednesday and Thursday. I started staying at home with my family Monday to Thursday and then was back in Melville House Friday to Sunday. That went on for a while until I got the scrap metal job full time, so I left Melville House when that happened. I was almost sixteen years old when I left.

Life after Care

76. After leaving care, I was very violent and would attack people a lot, whenever I felt scared. I attacked someone at my job because they threatened me, so I lost that job.
77. I had lost contact with [REDACTED] but then we got back in contact, and started going out again. We got married when I was about seventeen or eighteen years old and we lived in Glenrothes together. She was really hard working and I was really messed up so we didn't stay together long. We broke up and got together a lot. We never had any kids together.
78. I got married a second time to a woman called [REDACTED] and she was a bully and a half. She was like the folk at Oakbank. I would never hit a woman so I just took all the abuse from her. We had four kids together, as well as two kids she had from a previous

relationship, and I didn't want to leave the relationship because of the six kids. I love my kids and was very protective of them. They were brilliant.

79. [REDACTED] kept having affairs and then ran away with my best friend so we broke up. I ended up taking drugs, which I did for years. I ended up on the mental health ward in hospital a few times because I was taking drugs and self-harming. I haven't taken any drugs now for years so I have done well coming off them.
80. I never really worked much as an adult. I tried but I couldn't do it. I was too nervous and scared of everything. I met one man who I was able to work for. That was when I got my Heavy Goods Vehicle license and was a delivery driver for a while, when I was much older. My boss there seemed to know how to explain things to me a little bit at a time so I could understand, so I was able to work for him for a while.
81. My brother in law committed suicide in my house so I stopped working after that. I now have severe lung cancer, which is terminal and am in hospital.

Impact

82. I was good at school before I went into Oakbank but I only got school once a day in there so I left without any education. I was so behind other kids of my age when I came out that I couldn't catch up so it ruined my education. I have never been able to work much as an adult, even though I tried. I couldn't take things in when they were explained to me and I was always too nervy and scared about everything.
83. I was so messed up from Oakbank that the most important thing to me was to protect myself, and I didn't know right from wrong when it came to doing that. I didn't realise at the time, but I was a very dangerous person. I attacked my teacher at Viewforth High School because I was petrified when he tried to belt me, and that landed me in care again. Even after leaving care, I attacked people all the time because I felt like they would attack me if I didn't. It was out of fear. I never got in trouble with the police, though. I managed to avoid that.

84. I have always feared being around men since I left Oakbank because all my abuse came from males. To this day I feel scared being around men and have to attack if I feel fear. I don't feel like I have a choice.
85. I had so much self-hatred when I was at Oakbank and it never stopped. It stayed with me my whole life. That was why I started self-harming and have always done it to try and handle the self-hatred I feel. I feel the need to rip myself to bits [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to feel calm in any way. I also started taking drugs and wanted to end my life a few times, which put me in the mental health ward in hospital a few times. I never told anybody in hospital about the abuse. I never told anybody about it and kept it to myself because I didn't want to be a clipe.
86. I have always felt different and less than everybody else. I have always thought that people are better than me and that I didn't fit in. I tried really hard to fit in by copying what people wore and trying to look like them, but it never made me feel better.
87. My time in care destroyed my life, and I in turn ruined my first wife [REDACTED]'s life completely because of the way I was. I struggled being with her because I never liked anybody seeing my body. We never had any kids together.
88. I never ever hit [REDACTED] but I did damage her house, which she worked really hard to make. Nobody was physically hurt but it was sheer stupidity and I live with the shame and regret every day. Looking back, she was the best thing that happened to me but I was too messed up to realise it. I had so much self-hatred that I didn't believe anybody could love me, or know how to show love to anyone else.
89. I want [REDACTED] to understand that I was the way I was because of the abuse I got in care, and not just think that I was a nutcase. I would have been a different person if I hadn't been abused so badly in care, and life could have been better. I know that I am dying and don't have long to live and I want to try and make things right before I die. I want her to have everything that is mine because I have so much guilt. I live with the guilt of what I did to her every single day.

90. I think about the abuse in Oakbank every day and have flash backs a lot. I self-harm when I have a flashback because it helps me. I am in hospital now with terminal cancer and have had a few flashbacks here, but the nurses here stop me from self-harming. It is more than thinking and flashbacks though, it is the feelings I live with every day. It is who I have become because of the abuse and the guilt and shame of that.
91. I have had a horrible life full of self-hatred and I can't see that changing. I would rather not be here anymore. I would rather be at peace. When death comes, it will be a relief to me.

Reporting of abuse and records

92. I never reported my abuse to the police. I didn't trust anyone enough to tell them.
93. When I found out that girls had started to go to Oakbank, I got so angry because I thought to myself that they would get raped in there, so I went to the papers. Journalists from the [REDACTED] came to see me and tried to get my records from Oakbank, but there were none. They had nothing about me even being there, so I have never seen any of my records. There are bound to be records somewhere.
94. Oakbank told the papers that they admitted all that had happened to me there but that they couldn't do anything about it. That was a lie because the staff there must have seen the marks and bruises on me and could have done something to stop it. [REDACTED] did an [REDACTED] about my abuse and I really want to get a hold of it but haven't been able to find it.

Treatment and support

95. I have never had any counselling or psychiatric help for the abuse I suffered. I was in ward eighteen of Victoria Hospital quite a lot, which is the psychiatric ward, because I

was self-harming all the time. I got some mental health support for self-harming and taking drugs, but they never knew the real reason because I never told them about my abuse.

96. I am in hospital now with terminal lung cancer, and I get agitated when I think about my abuse. I am on medication to help calm me down.

Lessons to be learned

97. There is no way the staff at Oakbank didn't see my injuries. I should have been protected and staff should have stopped it. The place needed more staff and better trained staff to work with that many kids. Staff who work with kids need to be caring and protective, and there should be enough of them to deal with the number of kids they are looking after.
98. I had no social work contact, so nobody to trust or open up to. Kids need to have regular contact with a social worker so they can trust them enough to tell them about any abuse.
99. It is time for the truth to come out about what happened. If even one person's life is helped from me talking about mine, then I will feel like I have achieved something rather than just living a miserable old life.
100. 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... ^{GSC} 

Dated... 1/11/22