

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HQJ

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is HQJ. My date of birth is 1965. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I have four brothers and one sister. was the oldest, then there was , , , then me. I was the youngest. My mum and dad and lived in Cowdenbeath. I was born in Dunfermline. My mum died when I was four years old. My dad had to look after all of us. Some of my brothers were quite a bit older so maybe needed less help.
3. , Cowdenbeath, where we lived, was quite community spirited and a lot of the neighbours helped us out. My dad worked as a miner and used to do nightshift. When he was at work the woman next door, Mrs , used to look after me as he slept through the day. I lived with her for many years. She took me to school, made my dinner and picked me up after school. Mrs then became unwell and was not taking me to school. This lasted roughly about a year and then the school and my father found out, so I went back to live with my dad. Another woman who lived across the road did my dad's shopping.

4. My dad would make sure I was in my bed by half past nine in the evening and he would leave to go to work maybe between ten and ten thirty. When he got home in the morning, he would get the coal fire going then wake us up.
5. I was a bit hyperactive as a child and had dyslexia. Broad Street Primary School, in Cowdenbeath didn't identify my dyslexia and just thought I was badly behaved. I have an eye defect too which is related to my dyslexia and my optometrist has told me only a couple of years ago that with my condition I wouldn't have been able to copy from the school blackboards. Looking back, I remember that I had great difficulty in the classroom copying stuff from the blackboard. The school put this down to bad behaviour. I went on to go to Old Beath Secondary School and was in a [REDACTED] there.
6. I just got on with things at home and used to go wandering round the streets on my own quite a lot. I suppose I used to let off steam on my own because I was hyperactive. There was no social work involvement with the family until I appeared at court.
7. When I was thirteen, I was walking home about six or seven o'clock at night. I bumped into a group of other guys who I knew from school. I wasn't really friendly with them apart from one guy, [REDACTED]. He told me they were waiting for another boy who could break into anywhere and he was going to help them get into Broad Street Primary School. He wanted me to come along, and the rest of the group weren't happy at first but agreed that I could. The boy managed to get in a window and opened the fire door for the rest of us to go in. The boy who broke into the school then disappeared.
8. Another day we all met up again and decided to break into St Bride's Primary School. [REDACTED] said he wanted the boy who was good at breaking in to have a harder challenge. We were told to wait at the corner of the building while he got in, but I followed him and [REDACTED] around. I heard them talking and the guy who was good at breaking in said a teacher at the school was a bitch to him and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] said don't worry I have something planned for that. The guy who was good at breaking in managed to get in and then let us in and left. We were wandering about in the school then after a while we left and made our way home.

9. Before we left, I saw one of the boys, [REDACTED] turning on the water taps but I turned them off. I saw he used his sleeves to wipe down the taps so when I turned the taps off, I used my sleeves too. I also saw him typing on a typewriter, but I couldn't read and did not know what it said. [REDACTED] knew I was in [REDACTED] and had problems with reading and writing. He asked me if I had problems with reading and writing at the time and I said yes. After we had left, he said he had forgotten something, so I helped him back in the building and I stayed outside. When he came back we caught up with the rest of them and he said to us that we were all meeting the next day at the same school.

10. The next day we met at the school, but [REDACTED] wasn't there. The others were panicking saying that someone had left the water tap running. No one wanted to go back in to turn it off. I went into the window again and the place was swimming with water. The taps were still running so I turned them off. I realised that [REDACTED] must have done it when he went back in. I came back out and a guy called [REDACTED] said I this is nothing to do with me and I said it was nothing to do with me either. We all split up and left.

11. I tried to forget all about it but at my school lots of people were talking about it. I didn't let on. I also heard through the grapevine that [REDACTED] had told his mum what had happened, and she took him to the police station, and he told all. [REDACTED] and the boy who broke in came to my house later. They told me they had all talked about it and had agreed to keep the boy who actually broke in out of it because he just helped give us access and left. I didn't agree to anything.

12. The next day I got arrested and the police had to get my dad home from his nightshift. I had my fingerprints and swabs taken before my dad arrived then I was taken up to some offices. There was stuff spread out on the tables and I was told it was all stuff related to unsolved crimes that they were looking at and I was asked if I recognised them. They showed me a book which they said had details of unsolved crimes and wanted me to point out if I had done any of them. I couldn't even read at that time, but I was nose-y and started having a look through.

13. My dad then arrived, and I was asked to write a word on a piece of paper. My dad said I couldn't read and write. The police had to try and tell me or describe the letters so I could write them. After they told me what to write, letter by letter and how to write the letter, they then said, 'got you'. My dad spoke up and said how could it be me when the police had told me how to write the word. I later found out it was the same misspelt word that [REDACTED] had typed on the typewriter. I now think [REDACTED] deliberately misspelt the word because he asked if I had problems with reading and writing. The police then asked me the order of who had left the school, but I said I didn't know. I don't think I was charged with anything.
14. When we were leaving the police asked my dad to sign a book which may have just been to say he had been at the police station. He refused to sign it as he wasn't there when I was processed, so the police grabbed him and stopped him from leaving. My dad asked if I had been charged with anything and the police said no so my dad told me to go home. I don't know what happened to my dad after that. He caught up with me walking home five, ten minutes after.
15. Sometime later we received a summons to go to court. My dad took me to court. Apparently, there was thousands of pounds worth of water damage to the floors in the school. All the other boys' names were on the summons apart from the boy that actually broke in. I went to the sheriff court in Dunfermline. Judge Forbes heard the case.
16. The social work wanted it referred to the children's panel, but Judge Forbes didn't allow that because he wanted someone to be punished in court for causing the damage. He then started shouting at all of us and wanted the person who had turned the taps on to speak up. I turned and looked at [REDACTED] waiting for him to speak up. [REDACTED] started to cry but I knew he was putting it on. The judge took pity on him and lost the head at me for some reason and sent me to Saughton prison. Apparently, it was because I never showed any remorse, but why would I. I never did it.

17. When the judge told me I was going to be remanded to Saughton until the case was recalled he said that he wanted a psychiatric report done on me and a social work background report. I know now that there was a social worker in the court. All the other boys were released and told the case would be recalled in the future. I was still only thirteen. I was put into another room until some transfer papers were completed. After a while I was handcuffed and put in the middle part of a police van and was taken from the court in Dunfermline to the police station.
18. When we were driving, the policeman pointed out my dad walking up the road on his own. The policeman made a comment that I could have been walking up the road with him. After he said that I became quite upset and felt a lump at the back of my throat. He went on to say that once the court had finished with me and the prison had finished with me, it would then be the turn of the police. I didn't understand what that meant until I completed my sentence and got released. I became a target of the police after that.
19. Later that day I was transferred from the police station to Saughton prison, Edinburgh. I can't remember if it was in a police vehicle or by prison transport.

HMP Saughton, Edinburgh

20. I knew that I was going to be held at Saughton until the case was recalled and reappeared in court along with the other boys. I have no recollection of how long I was at Saughton prison. It was anything between one week and six weeks. I was in a cell with a single bed and toilet pan underneath.

Routine at HMP Saughton

First day

21. When I arrived, I went into what was like a massive changing room. One guy was mopping the floors. When I saw his face, it was completely covered in scars on top of scars. I could see his eyes but because of the scarring it was impossible to make a face out. I was terrified when I saw him. He made comments to the prison officers querying why they had done that to him, and he stormed off. I think the prison officers had put him there just to frighten me.

22. I was told to undress, then before I was allowed to put my clothes on one of the guards made me bend over when I was naked. One guard said he didn't want to do it and the other shone the torch between my legs. Now looking back, I think he probably didn't want to do cavity search as I was a child. There was no other adult there with me. I was then allowed to dress. I was taken through doors into a big area surrounded by doors and there were prisoners walking about. I wasn't allowed to wear my socks or my shoes. When I was handed over from one guard to another one of them asked why I was there. He was told that the judge sent me there because I didn't show any remorse or emotion.

23. When I was in the main prison building, they didn't know where they were going to put me because they didn't have the facilities. They put me in a television room and left me to sit with other adult prisoners who were watching the TV. One guy started swearing and another prisoner told him not to swear in front of a child, meaning me. After a short while another twenty adult prisoners came in. He swore again and a big prisoner sitting behind him whispered something in his ear. The guy swore again, and a fight broke out. The big guy just stood back and watched the fight take place in front of him. The guard ran out the room to get help, so I was alone in that room with all these men. The guards came in and a couple of guys were taken out. I was removed from the room then I was transferred to the hospital wing. I was then moved to a cell upstairs.

Mornings and daily routine

24. In the morning the guard opened my cell door, and I went to another room which was part of the hospital wing. There were a few inmates in the beds. I was told to sit at a table where there was a pack of cards. I was just left in the hospital wing with the other prisoners. All I had to do all day was sit about, chat with the other prisoners and play cards. A lot of the time they wanted to play more adult card games. I never got taken outside for any fresh air. The prison guards only came to give us lunch or tea. There was never any attempt to teach me anything, encourage me to read books or provide me with any sort of education. I was in the hospital wing every day I was there.

Mealtimes/Food

25. Food was brought to us on a tray. It took a wee while to get used to eating from a tray where the pudding was on the same tray as everything else. I was shown how to make a jam and cheese sandwich. The food was okay. I got enough food and never went hungry.

Washing/Bathing

26. There wasn't a toilet in my cell. If I needed the toilet through the night I had a tray under my bed where I did the toilet and I took it to the toilet in the morning and emptied it. I never had a wash or a shower when I was there. I didn't even know where the showers were, and nobody ever told me. I never even brushed my teeth.

Clothing/Uniform

27. They didn't have any prison clothes, including shoes, that would fit me, so I had to just wear my own clothes. At night I just slept in the clothes I was wearing through the day.

Visitors

28. My dad came to visit me which was good because I told him I didn't have any other clothes, so he brought some in the next time he came. Until he came in with other stuff for me, I wasn't wearing shoes. At some point another prisoner actually made me a pair of slippers to wear on my feet. He used to be a cobbler. My dad visited me a couple of times. He couldn't come every night because he was working.
29. I never saw any social workers and no one else came to see. The only person who I saw was the psychiatrist. He asked me questions about who I liked in my family and where they and I were in the pecking order and other strange questions. He asked me about my family and where I felt I fitted in. I didn't understand what he was getting at.

Abuse at HMP Saughton

30. One morning the guard opened my cell door, and I went through to the hospital room which was like a ward and the prisoners had beds. I could see that something was wrong. One of the prisoners looked at me as if to tell me I shouldn't go in. I didn't understand it at the time. They normally got out of bed and came to play cards with me. I sat down at the table and asked if anyone wanted to play cards, but no one wanted to.
31. There was a new prisoner sitting in the corner and I asked him if he wanted to play but he didn't. He asked me why I was there, and I told him I was innocent. He replied saying that hundreds of people in there say they are innocent and that I should join the queue. He asked me my name and where I lived so I told him. I was taught as a child that if I got lost to always remember and tell my name and address, so I didn't have a problem telling him. He told me that I shouldn't talk to or try to play cards with the 'paedos' in there. He told me he was in there for murder and was waiting to see the psychiatrist.

32. He turned to me and advised me not to tell anyone in prison my name and address and that I should keep myself to myself. He told me about the first prisoner with the scarred face who I had met when I arrived. He said I shouldn't worry about him. He was a 'grass', and it is the person who caused the injuries to him that I should be worried about. He explained to me what a grass was, as one thief talking to the authorities about another thief. After he said that I decided that I couldn't go back to the court and name [REDACTED] as the one that turned the taps on because I didn't want to be a 'grass' in case that happened to me. I didn't know if I was going to end up back in this prison after court.
33. One morning, in the early hours when everyone was still locked up, a guard came to my door and woke me up. I was taken down to a room where there was a big table with a pile of white tablets in the middle. The prisoner told me to help him roll the tablets onto paper. He said he needed help as there was no one else and he would not be finished in time. The guard left and locked me in the room with the prisoner for a few hours before he took me back to my cell. The next morning, I was really tired when the guard got me up because I had been up half the night helping the other prisoner.
34. Apart from being left with adult prisoners and not getting to wash or have proper toilet facilities I wasn't physically assaulted or hurt by anyone in this prison.

Leaving HMP Saughton

35. I was taken from Saughton back to the sheriff court in Dunfermline. It was a different sheriff, but I can't remember his name. All the other boys who had been charged were there and my dad was there too. I had intended saying who left the taps on but was too frightened because of the warning I got from the prisoner at Saughton about being a 'grass'.
36. The judge said he was going to release me pending a further court appearance. The social worker, who for some reason wanted me to stay in custody, told him that Judge

Forbes didn't want that to happen and wanted me to remain incarcerated because he wanted to deal with the case personally. The judge said he could see no cause for me to remain in custody, so I was released. I can't remember the name of the social worker who tried to convince the sheriff to keep me in custody. I had never spoken to this social worker before. I went back home with my dad.

Life back at home

37. I went back to Old Beath secondary school. When I was in a gym class, I accidentally passed wind. The gym teacher started calling me scum and other things, but I think this was just because everyone saw me as being guilty because I had been in prison. I was treated differently by the teachers. When I walked into one classroom, the teacher walked out. Another class I went in, everyone was talking, but I was the one sent to see the headmaster, whose name I can't remember. He told me they no longer wanted me at the school as I was uncontrollable. My dad was called to the school, and I was expelled. This all happened on my first day back. My education suffered after that.
38. I had become friendly with a girl from Cowdenbeath, and she suggested that we run off together, so I didn't have to go back to prison. I told her it wasn't me that had done the crime, but I couldn't say who it was because of what would happen to me. We ran away and I was caught and taken home.
39. Eventually the court date came up for me to reappear. I still hadn't seen a social worker in the meantime. I went back to court, and it was Judge Forbes again. He asked why I had been released and when the social worker explained what happened he said that he would speak to the other judge about it. Judge Forbes then became annoyed when he found out that my dad had visited me at Saughton. I think the judge was still annoyed that I didn't show any remorse. He then decided that I should go to Howdenhall Assessment Centre for five months. This wasn't a sentence. I was still on remand. He also made an order that my family were not allowed to visit me. I was still

thirteen years old. All the other boys who appeared in court with me were released. I was taken straight from the court to Howdenhall Assessment Centre by the police

Howdenhall Assessment Centre, Edinburgh

40. Howdenhall was a locked facility so there was little chance of getting out. There were boys and some girls, but the girls were on the other side in a different part of the building. We only saw the girls at mealtimes when they were in part of the same dining room. The age range was from ten or eleven up to fourteen or fifteen. I am not sure how many children there would be in total but maybe thirty or forty. I am not sure how many girls were there. There were dormitories and I was in a dorm with another two boys. There were three single beds in the room. I can't remember the names of any of the staff or of the other children.

Routine at Howdenhall Assessment Centre

Mornings and bedtime

41. We would get up in the morning, have breakfast then go to school classes which were within the assessment centre. We would stop to have our dinner then go back for more classes in the afternoon. In the evening we just sat about in the TV room then went to bed.

Mealtimes/Food

42. The food was okay, and I don't remember ever going hungry. I am not aware if there were any issues if you didn't like anything. I saw one girl being dragged out screaming and shouting from the dining hall, but I don't know what had happened.

Washing/Bathing/Clothing

43. There were showers there, but I am not sure how often we were allowed to use them. I remember one staff member being in charge of the showers and he would keep the shower times to a minimum. Our clothes were regularly taken away and washed. They supplied me with clothes. It was not uniform and just normal clothes.

Leisure time

44. We weren't allowed out at any time. There was nowhere we could go outside to get fresh air. All we could do in the evening was sit and watch the television. After being there a couple of months, another room opened up which was better because I could go in there and didn't disrupt everyone else watching the TV. I couldn't sit still. There were no games to play or books to read. When the other room was opened, we just made up our own games in there.

Schooling

45. When I started at Howdenhall I was put in a classroom suitable for my age but not for my learning abilities. They weren't sure if I was having them on, but I couldn't do any of the work put down in front of me. They took me down several age levels into another class. The teacher there gave me a piece of paper and told me I could do what I wanted with the paper. I was told I could draw on it or make paper aeroplanes. He told me he didn't care what I did as long as I sat there and kept quiet. He was quite aggressive. After that all I did every day was sit in the classroom with a piece of paper and a pencil in front of me. They had an electric pencil sharpener so for a bit fun and to pass the time I would occasionally go up and sharpen my pencil.

Healthcare/ Religious instruction/ Work

46. I never had to see a doctor or a dentist when I was there. I don't remember any teaching about religion, and we didn't say prayers, but we did go along to the hall area for some sort of religious thing one time. I remember a guy in colourful robes and folk

going to confession or something like that. I think you had a choice if you didn't want to go to the hall and I think I only went the once. I was never given any chores to do when I was there. Everything was done for us.

Trips and holidays

47. I was taken out once on a trip and stayed in a cottage house. It was in the Highlands somewhere. There were older boys there from Howdenhall. One of the things I remember from that trip was walking up the side of a mountain.

Birthdays and Christmas

48. My dad was told what to buy me for Christmas. He bought me a truck which I had to assemble and paint. I was only allowed to do it in the evening when they were able to open up the extra room. It wasn't really mine to keep. On Christmas day we had a special Christmas dinner. My dad brought me birthday presents but I wasn't allowed to get them because of the court order. My birthday wasn't celebrated in any way at Howdenhall.

Bed Wetting

49. I heard some of the staff screaming at some other boys when they had wet their beds. I wasn't in the room when this happened. I just heard the commotion. I have vague recollections boys having to take their sheets to a particular area to get them cleaned. I also remember a younger guy telling me he had to stand outside in the corridor all night for wetting his bed and mucking about. He said he saw me standing in the corridor outside the TV room and he wasn't going to put up with it. He was in my classroom. I don't remember his name.

Visitors

50. My dad came to visit me on my fourteenth birthday. He had presents for me. My sister was with him. They wouldn't let them give me any of the presents or let them come in

to speak to me because of the court order. I could see them as I was standing in the corridor as a punishment, and they were at the front door. This was the only time they came to try and see me. I didn't get any other visitors and I never saw any social worker when I was there.

Review of care / detention

51. None of the staff ever sat down with me and discussed why I was there or gave me any indication as to what was happening. I never saw a psychiatrist or anyone like that.

Running away

52. The young boy I spoke to who wet his bed said that he was planning on breaking out and asked if I wanted to go with him. All the doors were locked, and the dorms were upstairs, so I asked how we would do it. I wasn't sure at this point if he was just setting me up. He told me to put the mattress against the window, smash it then shimmy across and climb down the drainpipe. He said he knew people on the outside that would keep me safe, and we would never be found again. When he did break out, he did exactly what he said he would, but I didn't go with him. He ran away and I never saw him again.

Abuse at Howdenhall

53. I consider it to have been abuse that my family were not allowed to visit me. Even on my birthday they were turned away because of the court order. I could see them through the glass door, but they weren't allowed in. I was really disappointed. They were begging to be allowed to see me. I could see by the look on my dad's and my sister's faces that they were both disappointed and upset. They even asked if just my sister could see me, but they refused. It was horrible and there was no need for it to be that way.

54. Because I was hyperactive when I got excited, I couldn't sit still. When we were watching the television, I kept standing up and sitting down. One member of staff got fed up with me and removed me from the TV room and made me stand in the corridor for the rest of the night. He did this to me on a regular basis, probably nearly every day because I couldn't sit still.
55. If you misbehaved in the extra room they sometimes opened up, they put paper into a funnel shaped cone with a big letter 'D' on it which stood for Dunce. They made you put it on your head, then stand in the corner of the room to let off steam.
56. One time I was sitting having lunch and a boy was sitting across the room looking at me. The younger guy who wet his bed was sitting next to me and he told me not to say anything to this guy because he was part of a wrestling team and had won awards. Later a couple of other boys from the wrestling team asked if I wanted to join them in their team. They arranged for me to go training with them and I started off wrestling with one of the boys the same age as me and thought it was good fun, but I now know it was a set up.
57. One of the teachers who worked in the gym had apparently been a professional wrestler, but I can't remember his name. He went on all fours and told me to try and get him on his back. I thought it was strange because he was a grown man and there was no way I could flip him over. I tried but ended up getting thrown about by him. At one point he pinned me on my back and applied pressure to my throat. He then told me that in future when I am told to sit, I was to sit still. I nodded that I would. When we came back into the main building he told the other teacher, who normally took me out the TV room and made me stand in the corridor, that it had all been sorted.

Leaving Howdenhall

58. I knew I was going to be held at Howdenhall until the next court appearance date was set so I basically just had to wait until I was given the date. The first I knew about when I was to go to court was the day before. My dad must have got notified through the

post. I was taken back to the sheriff court in Dunfermline. All the other boys and the same social worker were there. Judge Forbes was there again. He wanted a report done on us all by the social work department and to be made available for the next court date. I was released for the purposes of allowing the social worker the chance to come round and speak to us all individually and to compile the report. I was fourteen when I left Howdenhall and after the court appearance I went home to my dad's.

Life back at home

59. It was good to be home and I went out playing as much as I could. I heard rumours on the street that the social worker had seen some of the other boys from the school break in and that one of them was getting off with it because his dad had a bad heart. Another boy was told he was getting off with it. The social worker came to see me, and I remember I wasn't happy because I could have been out playing. The social worker never spoke to me but spoke to my dad in the kitchen. He told my dad that the judge wanted someone to pay the price for all the damage that had been caused and it was his report that would decide who that would be.
60. My dad suggested that he speak to me rather than him then came through to where I was in the house. My dad asked if I had been responsible for causing the damage and I just kept saying I was innocent. He asked me who had caused the damage, but I couldn't say because of what I had seen and been told at Saughton prison. I went back up to court, which might have been a week after my previous appearance. My dad and the other boys were there.
61. Judge Forbes started reading through the reports while we were in the court. He told the first three boys that they could be released. That just left me and [REDACTED], who I knew had left the taps turned on. A policeman was there, and he produced a wee bit of paper which he passed to Judge Forbes. He looked at it then he told [REDACTED] [REDACTED] he could go and told me I was getting a year in prison.

62. Judge Forbes was told a place had been found but said it wasn't suitable as he wanted me outwith a fifty mile radius from my house because they didn't want my dad to visit me. Oakbank was picked because it was the furthest away. They were trying to figure out who was going to transport me there and the social worker volunteered to help, and the judge agreed. The judge said that I was to be remanded to Rimbleton until arrangements were made and it suited the social worker to take me to Oakbank.

63. I was put into a waiting room with my dad so I could say cheerio to him. I again told my dad I didn't do it. When the social worker came in, my dad asked if there was any way we could appeal. The social worker told us that we couldn't because the judge had transferred it or was going to transfer it to the children's panel. There was no means of appeal once it had been transferred. My dad wanted to fight it but couldn't. The police said my dad's time with me was up and him and the social worker had to leave. The social worker then said he had to stay as he was waiting on a handwritten letter from Judge Forbes to hand deliver to the headmaster at Oakbank. The social worker said it was for headmaster's eyes only. The police then took me to Rimbleton.

Rimbleton House, Glenrothes.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

64.

65.

66.

67.

Leaving Rimbleton

68. The same social worker who took me there came back with another man who may have been another social worker. I was put in the back of the car with the child locks on and driven to Aberdeen but stopped off at a petrol station in Dundee. One of them went into the shop and came out with sweets. In the meantime, the other social worker allowed me to open my window.
69. The social worker who had the sweets was the original social worker that dealt with my case. He didn't offer me any of the sweets and told me there was no point buying me sweets because where I was going, I wouldn't be getting them. He offered a sweet to the other social worker, but he refused. Looking back now it felt petty and almost like the other social worker had picked up on that and that's why he refused the sweet. When the social worker who had the sweets saw that my window was open, he

demanded that I shut it and told the other social worker who had let me open it that he didn't realise how serious a criminal I was. We then carried on to Oakbank.

Oakbank School, Aberdeen

70. Oakbank was a big old building like a country manor house with huge front doors. It was a secure facility, and the outside doors were always locked. It was on two levels. The first level did not have any windows you could see out of. The dorms were upstairs and so was the isolation room. When you went in the front door the doors were like school fire doors that swung back and forward but could be locked. There was a door on the left hand side and the headmaster's door was on the right. Stairs were straight ahead taking you up to the next level. Further along past the headmaster's office was the canteen.
71. There were lots of beds in the dorm which was a massive room sectioned off with wooden partitions into individual sections. There was a curtain used as a door for each section and there were three or four beds in each section. I was put in a section on my own. Beside them was the night watchman's room.
72. It was all boys at Oakbank. The age range was from about fourteen up to sixteen. I can't remember the names of any of the other boys who were there at the same time as me. I am not sure how many boys were there. We were all given numbers and I was number [REDACTED].
73. I can't remember the headmaster's name. I am not sure if his title was headmaster, but he was the person in charge. I can't remember the names of any of the other teachers or members of staff. All the teachers, including those that taught the bricklaying, and decorating all came from outside and were only there through the day for the classes.

Routine at Oakbank

First day

74. When we got to Oakbank both the social workers came in with me. There was another kid there who was also being transferred to Oakbank with his social worker. My social worker told his social worker that he would look after this boy, and he could go because he had to wait with me anyway.
75. Myself and this other boy were then taken through to the dining hall where we were given some food. There were comments made between the two social workers who took me, and they obviously didn't see eye to eye. When I was eating my lunch the social worker who dealt with my case said on the upside the food was good here. He turned to the boy and said the food is good isn't it and kept repeating it. It was like he was being patronising. The other social worker that came with us said there was no need for that, and he just smiled and said all I have to do now is pass this information to the headmaster from the judge.
76. After lunch I was taken through and given a change of clothes to put on. The staff were asking what I was in there for, but I just kept telling them I was innocent. They told me I was profiled, and I would end up in jail all the time. This was the janitor who had said that.
77. I was taken to a big gymnasium with wooden floors. There were windows but you couldn't see out them and there were radiators on the walls. I was told to sit down on my own and I wasn't allowed to talk to anyone. This then happened every day. After a while I was taken from there up to the dorm and I was given a bed which was separate from everyone else. There wasn't a bed next to me.

Mornings and bedtime

78. We were woken up around six or seven o'clock in the morning when the staff came in shouting at us telling us it was time to get up. I would then get up and took the sheets

off my bed. They got changed every day. I then made my bed in a way that we had been shown. The sheet had to be flat, neat and tidy. After making the bed we made our way down to the washroom facility where we got washed. After washing we dressed and went down for breakfast.

79. At night time we all sort of congregated in different areas before it was time to go to bed. We had a bit more freedom in the evening. When it was time, we just got ready for bed and the lights went out about nine or ten o'clock.

Mealtimes/Food

80. All the meals were okay at Oakbank. If you liked something and were still hungry you could go up for seconds. That was only if they had it. There were no issues if you didn't eat any of your food. After breakfast we were allowed to have a cigarette.

Washing/Bathing

81. There were showers in a massive room. On the other side were rows of sinks. I can remember there being soap to wash with. I do recall they used to put toothpaste on my finger, and I used my finger to brush my teeth. I did have a toothbrush at first, but it went missing. The janitor was in charge of them.
82. The shower room was all open and there were no cubicles so you couldn't get any privacy. We had showers at night. We were all taken along and had to strip naked then wait in a line for your turn. Ten or fifteen could shower at the same time. I didn't have to wait long until it was my turn. The water was warm enough, and there wasn't an issue with the water being cold.

Clothing/Uniform

83. They gave us a uniform to wear. It was jeans, a top, trousers and underwear. My own clothes which I put on when I was going home for the weekend were kept in a basket

in a holding facility somewhere else in the building. We swapped over clothing before we left to go home.

Leisure time

84. After school we went down and waited until it was time for our next meal. We were allowed out to the outside area if we finished work early enough for ten or fifteen minutes. After that I would just go and sit in the big gym hall. There was nothing in there. I was put in there with a few other boys, and we just sat around. There was nothing for us to do.
85. I was allowed to smoke at Oakbank because I had permission from my dad. I got pocket money every week and with it I could buy tobacco or whatever I wanted. I never actually got the money. I was just told how much I had. I would just hand over my tin and they would put tobacco in it and take the money out the book. There was a tuckshop but I never used it. My money always just went on tobacco. When I wanted a cigarette I would roll one out the tin and hand the tin back to the staff. That was only on a smoke break.
86. There were two rooms, one was a TV room and the other had a pool table and other things. I wasn't allowed in the TV room. The janitor told me I was to sit on my own because if I was seen talking to someone, it was seen as I was scheming and I had to keep out of trouble to get home. I didn't really get to play on the pool table until later on in my time there. There were no board games, indoor games or books to read.

Schooling/Work

87. After breakfast we either went to school or to a work placement. I think I went to a work placement first because they hadn't received any information about my schooling yet to assess what class I should be in. I think everyone did so long at school then after a while they would integrate you into a work placement. They made it out to be like what you would experience when you left school. It was all to prepare you, so you knew

what to expect. Work placements were working in the kitchen, bricklaying or painting and decorating. I worked in the kitchen.

88. When I did go to school they did exactly the same as they had done at Howdenhall. I was in a class of other children who couldn't read or write. They gave me a piece of paper and I was told I could do whatever I wanted with it. The teacher wasn't horrible about it. He told me that everyone called him Dad or Papa or something like that and he said it was because everyone got on with him. He actually called himself that.
89. I didn't get any education in all the time I was at Oakbank. I just sat and drew pictures all the time. There was no actual teaching and as long as I was being quiet doing my own thing the maths teacher didn't care. The teacher and a boy played chess all the time in the class so one day so I asked if the teacher could teach me how to play. Because I didn't know how to play I was told to sit and watch them and once I got the hang of how all the pieces moved I could join in. I became quite good at chess because it was just about the only thing I did all day. I even started beating the teacher who had told me to watch and learn from the others. Some of the other children in the other classes got taught stuff but I didn't get any proper teaching.
90. I did have a science teacher for a while when the maths teacher got his class. I think he had to do so many hours to keep his teaching licence. There was only me and another boy in the class. Near Christmas time they were doing lots of practicing for miniature plays and stage work. I was asked, along with another guy, if we could do Russian dancing and cartwheels and I could. For a while after that, in the evening, rather than doing other work for the janitor, myself and the other boy practiced doing that. It was good fun. At the Christmas party they videoed us doing it.
91. My first work placement was in the kitchen. I got on great with the lady that worked in the kitchen. I worked hard with another boy and we cleaned the tables, did the cutlery and stacked the dishwasher. She often let us sit down with her and gave us a cigarette. Another staff member came in and saw us sitting down having a cigarette and objected because we were sitting down. I saw her having an argument with him. Not long after that she was sacked and replaced by another dinner lady.

92. There was a science class, English class, art class and a maths class. I got on good with the art teacher. I never went to the English or maths classes. I didn't go to the science class until much later on. I liked the science teacher and he told me that he didn't sweat because he didn't have any sweat glands which is impossible because everyone sweats. He said his wife was a skin specialist.

Healthcare

93. There were two nurses that came in through the week occasionally if ever we weren't feeling well or needed some medical attention. I saw a community nurse after I had burned my foot by accident in a bucket of water. She apologised for taking hours to come and said all she could give me was a couple of paracetamol and a couple of cigarettes. I didn't get any cream or bandages. After that she came in a few other times to check and see how my foot was. It took me weeks to recover and there were red marks where the blisters were for a long time and it was tender. It eventually did heal and doesn't bother me now. There was no one in there you could go to if you were unwell.
94. I got chickenpox in Oakbank and I got put into the isolation room for a few days. There were two of us in there. We had to stay in there until we were no longer infectious. This was just like a bedroom with a lock on the door and I was put there when I burnt my foot as well.

Religious instruction

95. We weren't taught anything about religion. We didn't go to church or say prayers.

Trips and holidays

96. I remember getting taken out to see the psychiatrist. He got permission to take me to show me a book about chess. The less privileged kids were taken out on a Saturday because they either didn't have a home to go back to or they were still on the twelve week good behaviour. We were taken skiing one time and another time we were taken

grouse beating. We had to walk through the heather to scare the birds to get them to go up. The rest of the time we would just sit in the hall while other kids went out.

Birthdays and Christmas

97. We had a Christmas dinner and there was a show at Christmas. There were no presents. Birthdays weren't recognised in any way.

Personal possessions

98. All that was in my section of the dorm was my bed and nothing else. There was no cupboard but I didn't need one anyway as I had nothing else. There was a boy who came in from a wealthy family and his birthday was on [REDACTED] He had a very expensive watch and it went missing. I don't know if it was ever found.

Bed Wetting

99. I didn't wet the bed. There was one boy who did. I am not sure how the staff dealt with him and I was just aware that he was a bed wetter.

Gang culture/bullying

100. Initially there was a group of boys from Glasgow who considered themselves to be the leaders. After a while the dynamics changed and it became a team from Dundee, then when the ringleader of that group left Fife became the top group. The janitor tried to keep on the right side of the ringleaders of the top group. He would allow them into his room for a smoke and things like that. I tried to join them at some point in the janitors room but I wasn't allowed. I was with a couple of other boys and the janitor told us to wait outside then he came out with one of the cleaning buffers and some liquid and told us to polish the floors. One of the guys knew how to work the buffer so showed us what to do.

101. There wasn't a lot of fighting between the groups. When I first arrived some of the boys took a dislike to the boy that arrived on the same day as me. He was from Aberdeen. He was beaten up by them. I never got beaten up by any of the boys when I was there.

Visitors/Family contact

102. I was told if I behaved for the first twelve weeks then I would be considered to get home for the weekends. That was part of Oakbanks policy.
103. My family didn't visit me at Oakbank. I saw them when I was home for weekend leave although when I did get home, I spent most of my time out and about on the street. My dad came to Oakbank once when I had absconded. I don't think there was a phone that we could have used if we needed to phone home. We weren't encouraged to write letters home. I couldn't write anyway.

Review of care / detention

104. I saw a psychiatrist when I was at Oakbank. It was when I first arrived. I was asked similar questions to what I had been asked before when I was at Saughton prison. I had a few meetings with him. I even played chess with him and apparently, he thought I was intelligent because I played chess. I told him he was just being nosey because of what I had heard in Saughton prison. I think he found me interesting after that.
105. I was taken to two children's panels when I was at Oakbank which were in Cowdenbeath or Dunfermline. My dad was at them both. One was to decide my release date, and another was because I kept absconding. I was never asked how I felt or what I was hoping for. They just decided what was the best thing for me on my behalf.
106. The panel to discuss my release date had my dad, the original social worker and three other people there who must have been panel members. The social worker recommended I was to stay at Oakbank until I was eighteen and I again stated I was innocent. The social worker hadn't seen me for over a year. The panel obviously took

into account what he had said in his report and they wanted me to stay longer. When I heard that I felt I had nowhere to go. In my head I had done my year and had been of good behaviour and did everything that I was asked to, so that is when my attitude changed to there was no point doing what they asked because it didn't make a difference.

Discipline

107. The only discipline I was aware of was getting held down and given the belt at SNR office. I didn't see any other discipline being administered.

Weekend leave

108. If you were sent to Oakbank for more than three months and you were of good behaviour you were allowed weekend leave. There was no contact by phone or letter in those three months. The staff drove me home on a Friday and picked me up on the Sunday morning. I managed to get home a couple of times on weekend leave then there was an incident where I burned my foot. After that happened I wasn't allowed to go home until I was able to walk with shoes on. When I had burned my foot I had to crawl from one end of the building to the other because it was so sore. When it was getting better I had to use the wall to support me because it was too sore to put any weight on my foot. I missed out on three or four weekend leaves because of my foot.
109. When I was at Oakbank over the weekend the place was much quieter as a lot of the boys had got home. It wasn't any different than any other week day apart from it was quieter. The boys would get taken on a bus and get dropped off at various locations like, Perth, Dundee, Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline and Glasgow. Apart from when I burned my foot I got home for the weekend after the twelve week good behaviour.
110. Most of my time when I was home for the weekend was spent outside. It was a bit of freedom for me. It was a bit harder to fit in with my friends because they had made new friends and were doing their own things.

Running away

111. When I went back to Oakbank after the panel that extended my time I knew I had to get away from there and ran away. Because I couldn't read I wouldn't have been able to find my own way home so I spoke to another boy and he agreed to run away with me. At the four o'clock break the bell went for everyone to go back in, myself and this other boy ran down the brae towards Aberdeen. I didn't have a clue where we were going but he seemed to know. He grabbed someone's bike and I sat on it when he cycled. We got right down to the bottom of the brae where he dumped the bike. We crossed a bridge then started walking along the motorway. We walked for an hour, maybe two, then a police car stopped beside us.

112. We were taken to Forfar police station where we were put in two cells and told to leave the doors open. We both shut our doors and that's when they told us they didn't have keys. They had to get the fire brigade out to get us out. The headmaster was there to take us back to Oakbank. When we got back we were both punished with the belt by SNR

113. That same boy ran off another time and I never saw him again. There was another boy who ran off at a different time and I never saw him again either.

114. I spoke to one of the ringleaders of one of the groups. who was from Fife, and I told him I needed to get out of there and go home. He came up with a plan and suggested that, again at four o'clock in the afternoon, we should break into one of the outbuildings and wait. What normally happened was that as soon staff realised that someone had run away they immediately got in their cars, travelled a set distance then retraced their route back to the home to try and catch the runaways. He said we should wait until all the staff had returned to Oakbank, then we should run away.

115. We broke into a building next to the washroom and me, and another guy hid in the attic. We stayed there until it was dark, probably about ten o'clock then made our way out to head home. was a bit older and we managed to get a lift. We broke our journey up rather going all the way in one trip. We slept rough when we were on

the run. In Glenrothes or Cowdenbeath we slept in a coal bunker at the bottom of some flats. The floor was concrete and it was really cold. We used some of the door mats from outside some of the flats to lie on. We were on the run about a week. I eventually found my way home to my dad's house. He was relieved that I was okay. Apparently if we had been missing any longer they were going to put us on national TV. My dad phoned Oakbank to tell them I was there.

116. I was told that at the weekend when they were dropping the boys off for weekend leave they would pick me up. This meant I got to spend a couple of more days with my family. I met [REDACTED] at the pickup point and I didn't want to go back to Oakbank. We planned to go to London and be on the run down there. He managed to get a car and he could drive so we started to head to London. We only got to the Forth Road Bridge but at the pay booth the car conked out. He got it going again and we got a bit further near to where the watch tower is but it conked out again. I think it had run out of fuel. We knew there was a filling station not far away and we started to push the car but a police car turned up. We were caught and they took us back to the a police station in Fife.
117. The policeman at the station knew [REDACTED] and kicked him right between the legs. He fell to the ground. The policeman turned and looked at me so I put my hands between my legs to protect myself, but he didn't hit me.
118. We were both taken back to Oakbank but the janitor wasn't happy because he didn't want [REDACTED] to get the belt from ^{SNR}[REDACTED]. Because [REDACTED] was one of the gang ringleaders the janitor liked to keep him on his side. [REDACTED] was the best fighter and no one could beat him. Apparently he was annoyed that ^{SNR}[REDACTED] got someone else in to belt [REDACTED] and had gone ahead to belt [REDACTED].

Abuse at Oakbank

119. Eventually I got the chance to go back to work in the kitchen. Another boy was helping out in there and he was a little bit older than me. He was about fifteen and a half. I don't remember his name but he was quite muscly and spent a lot of the time in the

gym doing weights. He told me that he had had sex with the lady that works in the kitchen. She was in her twenties. I can't remember her name. He said he had gone upstairs and had sex with her in one of the dorms. The day after he told me this she took me upstairs and I was worried what she was going to do. We were passing where he told me it happened and she asked me if the boy liked her. They quite often would sit in the kitchen in a wee cubby hole smoking cigarettes. I think she kept giving me jobs to do to keep me busy and out of their way.

120. One job she gave me was mopping the floor and she gave me a bucket full of hot water. I managed to accidentally put my foot in the bucket and burned my foot and I was screaming. The next thing I remember was she picked me up and she had a bunch of keys. She took me to the isolation room and put me in there and locked the door and left me. My foot started to blister. I am not sure how much later it was but it could have been hours because I may have passed out or fallen asleep. When I woke up the community nurse came to visit and had a look at my foot.
121. I wasn't allowed to go home until I could walk with shoes on. I remember after a few weeks the janitor gave me a pair of shoes to try on, but they were hard and it was too sore to wear them. I think he did that deliberately as the shoes I had been given before were soft. I wasn't allowed to work in the kitchen after that happened. For a good while after I left the home, I had to be careful with what shoes I bought because my foot was still sensitive.
122. I was told that I had to try a few of the different work placements so that I could decide what I wanted to do. There was a member of staff who was in charge of the boiler room. One time we were in the classroom in the evening doing a taster session and supposed to be getting an introduction to working in the boiler room rather than sitting in the hall. Apparently I wasn't worthy enough to go with the rest of the class so the boiler-man locked me in the classroom and took the other boys down to the boiler room. On the second day I asked him what I was supposed to do when they went down to the boiler room. He gave me a lantern and told me to polish it then I got locked in the class again. I must have done a good job because on the third day he gave me other pit lanterns for me to polish.

123. I think it was on the fifth day I was invited down to the boiler room with the rest of the boys. I saw the boiler man counting cigarettes. When we were there he said I was small so I could climb into the boiler and make sure the poles that he was going to put through holes to clean it were going through to the other side. He put me in then shut the door. It was completely dark, and I heard laughing but then it went quiet. It was difficult to breath because it was smoky and the air was full of soot. I frooze and couldn't speak. Sometime later he opened it up again and let me out. I am not sure how long I was in there but I thought I was going to die. When I came out I then saw the boiler man scrunch up and empty cigarette packet. Another boy said he wanted to try it and when he went in the door was shut. He started screaming straight away and the door was immediately opened. He ran out the room still screaming.
124. I asked the boiler-man if I could wash my hands and then I asked to get some cold in the water as it was too hot. He just said that it wasn't hot enough to burn me but his hands were a lot tougher than mine. He knew it was really sore for me and he looked at me in a very smug way. He knew I wouldn't choose to go back to work in the boiler-room again and I didn't.
125. We were given the belt if we misbehaved or ran away. I got the belt twice at Oakbank because I ran away. The first time was when we got taken to Forfar police station.
126. Both times there were three members of staff present. It was ^{SNR} [REDACTED] the gym teacher and I think the janitor might have been the third person. They pulled my pants down and made me bend over across the table. One would hold my arms on the other side of the table and the other held my feet. ^{SNR} [REDACTED] then used a belt and hit me a number of times across my bare backside. It was a thick leather belt with two or three prongs. He did it as hard as he could and did it until he was satisfied that he had done enough.
127. The second time I ran away there was me, [REDACTED] and this other boy. The other boy was in before us. It was done the same way to all of us. I saw other boys getting belted and they saw me getting belted. The second time was with [REDACTED] and he never

flinched when SNR [REDACTED] was whipping him with the belt. I think that frustrated SNR [REDACTED]

128. I have no idea how many times SNR [REDACTED] hit me. One of the men who held me one of the times I hadn't seen before. He had curly hair any may have been a groundsman.
129. I think SNR [REDACTED] wanted to leave bruises where the other boys would see them in the showers to deter them from running away. My backside and my testicles ended up all bruised. The first boy I ran away with was bruised the same as me. A member of staff later warned me not to go running off with that boy again. He said he was brainless.
130. It was always the same team that did the belting with SNR [REDACTED] I heard that a guy who came and became the junior janitor asked if he could be part of this team. He was told he couldn't because they had certain people to do it.
131. There were two night watchmen who did alternate shifts. I was abused at Oakbank by one of the night watchman. I can't remember his name. He might have been about thirty. At night time we went to the dorms usually about the same time every night to get ready for bed. The night watchman regularly walked round at night making sure everything was okay. He started coming into my section where my bed was and he would stand there watching me. I could hear him breathing. I would close my eyes and pretend I was sleeping. Sometimes I woke up in the morning and realised that I must have fallen asleep with him standing there. He did this quite a lot and I tried to stay awake until he left but he must have stood there so long that I fell asleep. I thought it was weird that he would just stand there but didn't really think anything of it.
132. The first time I saw him at my bed he asked if I was thirsty and offered me some juice. I just thought at least I have one friend and I was happy about it. It tasted different and I think it made me more thirsty. He did that a few times and I didn't want to drink it, but he kept trying to get me to drink it and I didn't. I woke up one night and saw him lying

at the back of me. I closed my eyes and just wanted it to be over with. He was sexually assaulting me.

133. Another night, one of the other boys was standing beside the night watchman's office drinking a cup of hot chocolate. The nightwatchmen's room was in between the different sections. He let some of the other boys have a sip of it but when I asked, the night watchman said there wasn't enough and there was only enough for one person. I looked at the night watchman and he said he would bring me one later on. He became distracted and I got a drink of another boy's hot chocolate when he was looking. I never thought any more about it.
134. Another night he told me he had some hot chocolate for me, and I got a shiver. It was just the way he approached me. He gave it to me and then became distracted again. I shared it with another boy who had asked for a sip and he drunk half of it. It was the same boy that shared it with me the last time.
135. That night I was lying in my bed and I opened my eyes and the nightwatchmen was standing there. He moved my hand and got me to touch him between his legs. I am not sure what happened but I passed out. The next thing I knew was that I was standing at the end of the bed, bent over and he had penetrated me and was inside me. As that what happening I could hear another boy shouting on him. I was just lying there. When he was finished he pulled my pyjamas up and threw me onto the bed. The nightwatchmen opened the curtain to my section and the boy who pee'd his bed was walking towards us with a sheet. This boy had a problem with his hair and it was thinning. The nightwatchman was angry at him and took him away. I fell unconscious again.
136. The next morning I was lying in my bed and I could hear someone shouting at me to get me up. I couldn't move. I didn't know if I was just in shock because of what had happened. I saw the night watchman and I heard him telling someone that I had had a rough night. I couldn't believe he was standing there as if nothing had happened without a care in the world. The other boy who had drunk half my hot chocolate was also unconscious on his bed and the staff couldn't wake him up either. The staff asked

the nightwatchmen if he had had a rough night too. You could see the panic on the night watchman's face when they were trying to wake him up. He then said he had to go but came back as he had forgotten his other flask.

137. I stayed in my bed and at bedtime one of the staff came in and took me downstairs but I was dizzy and losing my balance. I asked if the other boy who had shared my hot chocolate was up yet. He didn't answer me. He took me downstairs to join a que of boys who were waiting to go back up the stairs to bed. I don't know what the point was in taking me downstairs. That was the staff member that had a problem with me sitting in the kitchen having a cigarette when I first arrived.
138. Looking back I think the night watchman had obviously drugged me with the hot chocolate. I was maybe lucky that I only managed to drink half of it. I wasn't injured with what the night watchman did to me. I knew then that I just had to get out of there. In my head I just thought I had to wait the short period until my time was up and stay away from him. I used to hide from him. When a new person came it was like he focused on them, and I was relieved.
139. I used to wonder why I didn't fight him off, but I realise now that the night watchman must have drugged me. I couldn't understand why I let it happen. I am not sure why I acted the way that I did. I didn't realise that what was going on when it was happening. It was just three, four years ago I realised that I was drugged. I don't even know if it happened more than the two times. I would have been fourteen, fifteen at the time.
140. Years ago my wife and I went to buy a chess set from a man. We had a long chat with him about different things and he happened to tell us about a time he was on holiday abroad somewhere. He said he started chatting with guys in a bar and was drinking with them. After a while the guys turned and asked him for his wallet and his bank details and for some reason he just handed them over. He realised that his drink must have been spiked and became incredibly compliant. That made me think back to the night watchman and how exactly the same thing happened to me but I was sexually abused rather than robbed.

141. I used to hide behind curtains to keep away from the night watchman. When he had gone I would go back to my bed. I told the kids in the section of the dorm next to me that if I banged on the wall could they come in and help me. I never told them why.
142. From a very early point I knew that I was going to be there for a year so I was counting down the days until my year was up. After I had been at school for so long, I had to choose what work placement I wanted to do for either three or six months try to get experience and prepare me for work after I left care. I had tried working in the boiler-room but the boiler-man obviously didn't want me. I wanted to try painting and decorating as well but the man who ran that said that there were no vacancies. It was obvious that they didn't want me in their classroom.
143. Within Oakbank they were building a swimming pool and they were using the boys at the school to build it during the bricklaying taster sessions and work placements. The taster sessions took place in the evening. When I was at one of the brick laying taster sessions the bricklayer had someone helping him. This boy used to sit in the dinner hall with me. The bricklayer went away leaving this boy to show us what to do. An older boy who was a bit of a ringleader in the class tried to do what we were being shown then I had a go. The bricklayer came back in and told me to stop what I was doing and go out, but I don't know why. I went out and the session finished shortly afterwards.
144. Later on I was sitting outside, playing chess with the art teacher. The subject of bricklaying came up and he wondered why I was thinking about doing that placement because the bricklayer couldn't stand me. I think he just wanted to make me aware but I know he also wanted me to do art. This confirmed that I wasn't wanted in the work placements.
145. There was one time when I was washing up in the washroom at the sinks in the morning and I accidentally splashed another boy that was there. He kicked me and I turned round and the janitor was in the washroom staring at me. The boy kicked me again but I didn't react because I was trying to be of good behaviour. I only had a month or two to go and I didn't want to lose my weekend leave. The janitor didn't do

anything. I saw the boy that kicked me picked a fight with another boy and it got broken up. It wasn't connected to what he did to me. They got belted for that I believe.

146. I saw another incident at mealtime. A boy, who was quite a big guy, went up for seconds. He was about 6'2. He spilt a wee bit of his pudding and another boy laughed and it ended up a few boys were throwing their bowls about. The staff grabbed a few of the boys who had done it and took them aside and belted them. I didn't actually see them getting belted but I saw them in the showers later and saw bruises on their bums. Sometimes when I was showering, I could see that some of the other boys had bruises on their bums. When I first arrived, I asked the staff why they were bruised like that and he said they did that to deter other boys from doing what they do. They were deliberately bruised to frighten the other boys from stepping out of line.
147. One guy came in with a necklace with a figure of someone doing karate. He said don't mess with me I know karate. When he was in the dorm boys came in and put a pillowcase over his head and battered him. I didn't see this happen but saw him going into the dorm and heard about it later. I think he was then moved dorms.
148. All the time I was there I wasn't allowed to mingle with all the other children. I slept separately and the janitor told me it was so they could keep their eyes on me. After we showered I was put to a different part to get changed beside the staff. We all had numbers. I was number [REDACTED] and that was beside the staff.

Reporting of abuse at Oakbank

149. When I had run away no one asked me why. I think they assumed the first time I ran away was because I had been told I was going to have to stay there longer than a year. Oakbank never knew about the attempts on my life.
150. After I had run away the first time, my dad came up to Oakbank to see me. This was the first time he had been at Oakbank, although I had obviously seen him when I was

on weekend leave. He saw the marks on me and went straight to the headmaster's office. I didn't go with him so I don't know what was said.

151. If anyone ever asked me about my time in care I learned to hide and cover up the things that happened. I buried the things that happened to me so no one would find out. I never told anyone about the abuse while I was there.

Leaving Oakbank

152. After I had run away the second time they had a children's panel for me. I had been at Oakbank just over a year when I went to the panel. I was taken there by the janitor and it was either in Cowdenbeath or Dunfermline. My dad was there but the original social worker couldn't make it. There were three other people on the panel. They were trying to decide if I should or shouldn't get out. I was then asked to leave the room.
153. One of the panel then came through and started speaking to me. He asked me again about the damage to the school and I told him I was innocent. My dad was there too. I was still too frightened to say who it was. The panel then decided that I could be released. They said that no school would take me and if I was released would it bother me that I didn't go to school. I was happy with that. I was still fifteen when I was released. The police then came to my house and told me that if I was seen in the High Street or anywhere else I would be lifted and charged with a breach of the peace.

Life after being in care

154. After I was released at the children's panel I went back home to live with my dad. I was still fifteen. Two of my brothers had left home by then and there was just my dad, one of my brothers and my sister living there. It was my house but it didn't feel like it in a way and it felt strange. I didn't go back to school but it was arranged for me to go to an after school club.

155. When I left care my brother was starting up a stable to be run like a riding school. He had left home by then and was living in a caravan. My dad asked him to take me just so I was out of the area away from the police. My dad paid my brother to look after me. At some point they were building some false floors for the horses. I said I had learned how to do bricklaying at Oakbank which was a bit of a lie because I had only been shown and had watched what to do. I asked my brother's business partner if I could have a shot at the weekend. He told me to do a corner bit, then after he saw my work he sacked the rest of the workers and I got to complete the job.
156. I wasn't aware at the time that my dad was ill and he took me to Ireland to visit his mum, dad and brother. We were there for a couple of weeks then when we got home my dad started chemotherapy. I had just turned sixteen when he passed away. It was after that the police seemed to target me and at every opportunity they arrested me for breaches of the peace.
157. I started sniffing glue and when I was caught by the police they would always charge me with a breach of the peace and I was taken to court. At one point I got a different lawyer and he told the court that glue sniffing was not a criminal offence. The police said the reason it was a breach of the peace was because someone had reported it. The lawyer asked to see this report and they couldn't so I it was dropped. I used to go into the woods with my friends and do it where no one would see us. The police had to come into the woods looking for me. This was all when I was sixteen or seventeen.
158. After I was sixteen I tried to get a job in a young people's joinery workshop. When I went for interview the manager refused to give me the job but I don't know why. I got a job cutting peat but that only lasted a couple of weeks. I have always just been in and out of different jobs, sometimes in stables. I worked down a coal mine too where my dad had worked. This was after my dad died so when I got my wages I just gave them to my brother because we were still living in my dad's house.
159. I met a girl and we got married and had a child but the child died of cot death. My marriage broke up shortly after that. It lasted about a year. I met my current partner

when I was about twenty six and have been with her since. I am the step dad to her oldest child and we have had a further two children together.

Impact

160. After the thing happened to me at Oakbank with the night watchman I tried to kill myself. I thought that if I died they would find out about him. I did it that weekend after it happened when I got home on weekend leave. My dad knew something was wrong and he thought I had been drinking. He made me drink salty water to make me sick. When I woke the next day I wasn't feeling that great but my dad never spoke to me or asked what was going on. After my dad died when I was sixteen, I tried taking my life again but just kept on being sick.
161. After I left Oakbank, when I was lying in my bed, I started having feelings that someone was chasing me and I kept hearing heavy breathing and felt as if there was something at the end of my bed holding my feet. For a long time I found it really difficult to sleep unless there was a light on in the room. I always curled up in a ball to keep my feet away from the end of the bed because I was frightened something was going to grab my legs. I also had and still have nightmares where I see faces at the side of my bed and I am paralysed and unable to move or shout for help. My dreams were all distorted and didn't make any sense. If anyone tried to wake me up I would start lashing out and punching. I went through most my life feeling like that.
162. I missed out on so much of my education when I was in care because no one tried to teach me anything. After I left care I tried to go back and get an education through Early Learning but jobs would come up and I needed the money so had to stop it to go and work. Some of the job interviews I went to as soon as they found out I was dyslexic they weren't interested in me. The police had also told me that I had to disclose my convictions when I was applying for jobs. I ended up telling lies to try and get jobs. Some jobs I got I had to pretend I could read.

163. My family was all I ever had, yet I was kept apart from them. Because of the court order I wasn't allow to see them. It felt like my family were the abusers and the court were trying to keep me away from them. This affected the relationship I had with them. I felt like I lost a lot of time with my dad who died not long after I turned sixteen.
164. When I was sixteen I worked down the coal mine. There were a lot of things going on in my head at the time. When you were down the mine if you switched your light off it was so dark you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. This freaked me out a bit and I had to take a couple of days off. I wasn't able to sleep and kept thinking someone was chasing after me. I started sniffing glue as a relief and to try and escape but even when I was doing that I still felt that someone was chasing after me.
165. I had a difficult relationship with my siblings. They always saw me as a trouble maker. They didn't believe that the police were picking on me and thought I was a drinker and was getting myself into fights.
166. I am very cautious, probably too cautious with my own children. I drive them everywhere and probably baby them a bit too much. I have always insisted that they get a good education because I missed out on mine.
167. All my life I have had issues with trust especially with people in authority. Neither the courts, police or social workers ever did anything to help me. It was always me against them. I no longer expect anyone to go out of their way to help me.
168. Not long after I had been together with my wife I woke her up with my arm around her neck and I was calling for help. I was sleeping and I was choking her. Apparently there are other times through the night when I have shouted out for help when I have been sleeping. It happened just a few days before I was due to give this statement so it was obviously on my mind.
169. I have always felt that after I left care I was a target by the police. One time I had been in the High Street when a police car went past and they were looking at me. I was fifteen. I hid from them for a while then made my way up the road. Days later a police

car stopped across from me at the bus stop and waved me over. The policeman said to me something along the lines that if I ever ran away from him again, he would wrap me in a blanket and "kick the shit out of me". I didn't say anything because my bus came so I jumped on.

170. The police had a hit squad on me and at every opportunity they would charge me with a breach of the peace anytime they saw me. It didn't matter where I was or what I was doing. They went out their way to look for me. I used to drink in a certain pub but the police would be waiting outside for me and start pushing me so they could arrest me for a breach of the peace.
171. There was an incident in the pub one time and there was an ex-policeman there with his family. There was a bit of bother and I ended up getting hit across the face just when we were leaving. The police were waiting outside, and I got arrested for a breach of the peace. It went to court, and I found out later that the barman was going to go into the witness box and testify that it was the ex-policeman who had instigated the trouble and not us. They deliberately withheld that evidence in the court. I got community service for that. I asked the court if I could able and not one person aswerd.
172. I went to a different pub but the police came looking for me. It was usually the same older policeman and each time it would be a less experienced policeman who would be with him and it would be the less experienced policeman that would charge me with the breach of the peace. One time they called me out of the pub and as soon as I stepped outside of the door with my pint in my hand they said something about a breach of the peace and carrying a lethal weapon because I had my pint in my hand. My friend who was with me grabbed my pint from me and smashed the glass then ended up getting chased by the police. The younger policeman pushed me against a bus stop and held me up. I didn't resist arrest and even pretended that I knew him to try and get a conversation going.
173. I later got a call from my brother's friend, who was high up in the police, [REDACTED]. He told me they were going to get a hit squad out to deal with me unless I left the younger policeman alone. The younger policeman thought I was going to retaliate for

the wrongful arrest because I had said I knew where he stayed. When I told him there was already a hit squad out for me, he said he would speak to them, and they would leave me alone if I left the young policeman alone. They left me alone after that. I felt like the police were using me to train the young new starts in the police. I always seemed to get arrested on a Friday meaning I was kept in the cells until I appeared at court on the Monday. The police did that deliberately. I had drunk in other towns and there was never any trouble.

174. One time I was working for a company and one of their vans was caught on a speed camera. I went to the police station because I didn't know if it had been me or another employee. I explained why I was there then waited for a while before I went back and asked how long it would take. About fifteen minutes later I was invited through and I gave them a statement. I left then they phoned me and told me to come back the next day. When I went back the next day with my wife they said they weren't going to ask me any more questions but I had annoyed the sergeant so he wanted me to come back to the police station. There was no reason for them to do this to me and I just pretended it wasn't bothering me. I learnt to do that in Oakbank. I didn't want to give them the satisfaction that they were getting to me.
175. Another time I phoned the police because there was a group of kids trying to set a fire opposite my house next to a church. They queried why I was phoning them and that I should have phoned the fire service. I didn't expect this response as I would have thought they would want to catch them. I have a real mistrust of the police.
176. About two years ago my son was with a girl and the police asked them to be a witness for something. He said he didn't want to be a witness and the policeman started shouting abuse at him in my house. I told him to stop. He asked who I was and then disappeared.
177. The next thing I was charged with speeding. They stopped me at the time. Initially a young inexperienced police officer came over and said my speed was okay but then he changed his mind. Another police officer hid away and I am positive it was the one that was at my house with my son. There was no point in arguing with him. He said if

I didn't have any previous convictions he would let me go. He went to the back of the car and spoke to someone on walkie talkie and then came back and said he had to charge me. I asked what I previous convictions I had, and he just said he couldn't let me off.

178. I subsequently got a letter from the procurator fiscal saying I would have to pay the fine for speeding or to go to court. It also said because I am under the Queen's order, I could be put in prison. The previous speeding fine I had had no mention of the Queen's order. That one was outside Fife. This was the trigger for all my memories coming back as it took me right back.
179. I can't believe that something that happened when I was thirteen would still be held against me. If I want to go and live abroad now I can't because of this Queen's order.

Treatment/Support

180. I went to my doctor when I was sixteen because I felt that there was something wrong because of the thoughts I was having. I didn't link it to what happened to me at Oakbank. I kept thinking there was something else that was affecting me. He wanted me to see a psychiatrist and gave me a number. I called the psychiatrist and I spoke to him about my feelings. He wanted me to come in. I was worried I would get put away in a mental hospital and backed away from it. That's when I was having the nightmares and thought someone was coming for me even though there was no one there.

Reporting of Abuse

181. After the speeding incident and the letter with the Queen's order on it I went to see a lawyer. They said it would cost a lot of money if I wanted them to deal with it. I chatted with this lawyer and this letter which related to why I was in care in the first place and it brought back some unhappy memories and I became quite distressed. We started

to talk about Oakbank and I got upset because I told her about getting whipped with the belt. She told me that I should give a statement to the police and they may be able to locate my records. I had my doubts because the police had never helped me in the past.

182. I went to Cowdenbeath police station and told them about being in Oakbank and how I got beaten with the belt when I had absconded. I gave them the names of the other boys who would be able to verify my story. He wrote it all down and said he would transfer it to Aberdeen and they would get back to me. They were dealing with other stuff from Oakbank.

183. The police from Aberdeen called me and mentioned the night watchman's name and asked me if I remembered him. I can't remember what his name is now but as soon as they mentioned it I remembered him as being the one who sexually abused me. When I heard his name it nearly blew my head off. I confirmed that I knew him but when he asked, I denied that he had done anything to me. I wasn't ready at that time to talk about the sexual abuse. I only wanted something to be done at this time about the beatings with the belt by SNR. I never reported anything to the police about the sexual abuse because I have never trusted them. They were always out to get me so they would never have believed me.

184. I only told my wife about what happened to me at Oakbank recently. I have never told anyone else.

Records

185. When I went to see the lawyer about the speeding ticket I asked her if she could help me get my records. I told her that I needed to find them to try and help me prove my innocence. About a year later I contacted the lawyer and she said she had sent me a letter but I must have missed it. They said they had tried to get my records but because I was under the children's panel they could not get access because I was under the

age of sixteen. When I said I was sentenced at court they said it didn't matter because it had been transferred to the children's panel.

Lessons to be learned/hopes for the Inquiry

186. The police could have nipped this in the bud and taken steps which would have stopped me from going into care in the first place. If they had given me a chance to speak when I was arrested for breaking into the school, they could have checked and found that what I told them was the truth. The police didn't investigate it properly. It was clear to them that I couldn't write, and they dismissed that. They could have checked that with the school.
187. Throughout my whole time in care I wasn't listened to. No one asked me for my thoughts or what was going on in the background. No one ever sat with me and asked me if I was happy or if I had any issues. I was never visited by a social worker to check on my welfare or to let me know what was happening. I only saw them at court or at children's panel's. They never seemed to be on my side.
188. I hope by giving this statement that sometime in the future my children will be able to read it and they will see how difficult my childhood was and they will also see that I was innocent and wrongly punished.
189. I know it will never happen but the best outcome for me would be if some independent lawyer and prosecutor reviewed my case to see if everything was done correctly and they can decide if there was any miscarriage of justice. I never had any defence, and I didn't even know what the charges were. I still don't. I think children in these circumstances should have their own defence lawyer to have the opportunity to talk to them about their story. I was just left in the hands of the judge and the court appointed social worker.
190. The social worker was able to convict and release people on his authority rather than the court's authority. It was so wrong that based on what he said, the other boys got

off and I was held responsible. There should have been more independent people who were able to make the right decisions based on fact and not family circumstances. Someone independent who was there for me only to help me and encourage me to talk. They should be part of the process too so nothing is missed.

191. The court, and by that I mean the judge, should be more patient in the way they deal with things. He should have listened to everything before he reacted. I got sentenced because I looked at the other boy the wrong way and the judge interpreted that I didn't show any remorse. What he did was unprofessional. It shouldn't all just go on one man's word. I didn't have a lawyer to represent me. My dad was behind me and he didn't know what the process was either. If the judge hadn't just immediately shouted at me I would have told him it was [REDACTED] that flooded the school.
192. It is probably more difficult for a boy to talk about sexual abuse because they find it easier just to hide it. Children should be heard. There should be something in place where children can speak to someone they can trust. I didn't have anyone I could speak to and I don't think if I had spoken to anyone I would have been believed anyway. I just felt like it was me against everyone else.
193. I hope by coming forward that this will go some way to help me getting a Queens pardon for what happened when I was thirteen. Apparently there is some sort of order in place which says if I commit any sort of crime now I will end up in prison. I really just want everybody to know the truth that it wasn't me and that it was me that switched the taps off to stop the damage. I accepted that I was there when the schools were broken into but it wasn't my actions that had caused all the damage. I got the blame for it and the judge punished me wrongly. I was frightened into not naming who it was that had been responsible.

Other information

194. 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. [REDACTED].....

Dated... 26/01/2023