

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LUC [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is LUC [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1975 and I am 42 years of age. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background


2. I am unemployed and am on disability benefits due to the fact that I have been diagnosed as being ADHD and OCD. I also suffer from epilepsy. I have two children these being [REDACTED] who is thirteen and [REDACTED] who is eleven. They are presently in care and I have been fighting to get custody of them for two and a half years. At present I only get to see them for a couple of hours once a month but the social work are trying to reduce even that.
3. I've never met my dad though I know he is now dead. My mum, [REDACTED], is still alive and is 68 years old. I have a twin sister called [REDACTED] an older brother called [REDACTED] who is 43 and a younger brother called [REDACTED] who is 32.

Life before going into care

4. I was thirteen when I first went into care. I was always getting into trouble with the police. I was also having a lot of problems at school. This was mainly because I had dyslexia and was having difficulty keeping up with the lessons. In addition, though it wasn't diagnosed until years later, I had ADHD.

5. During my early years I lived with my gran but my mum stayed across the road from us. My gran died on [REDACTED] 1989 though I didn't get to go to her funeral because my mum and my uncles didn't think I would be able to handle it. I think they were jealous that I had been closer to her than them. I then moved in with my mum but continued to get into trouble with the police for shoplifting and things like that.
6. My mum had a drink problem and one night in 1988 she came home drunk and called the police to say I was in danger from her. The police were called and then the social work came and took me from the house. They had to physically carry me from the house because I refused to go and was fighting back.
7. The main reason I didn't want to go was that I felt it was my responsibility to protect my siblings from my mother's alcohol abuse and also to stick up for them against others in the street who wanted to pick on them. I knew I couldn't protect them if I wasn't there.
8. The social work took me to Nimmo Avenue which was a residential home run by Perth and Kinross social work. The next day I was taken in front of the panel and they sent me to Florence Booth House in Dundee which was run by the Salvation Army.
9. I was there for 3 ½ months under a section 44(1b) order [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be put
[REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED] At
the end of my time there I got taken back to the panel who sent me back to my mum's.
10. I was still having difficulty at school and eventually the Education Department dropped me altogether. The social work decided that, instead of going to school, I had to attend at a building where I had to get one to one tuition with a teacher,
[REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later




12. In addition, to give my mum a break, they would take my sister [REDACTED] and me away every second weekend. We normally went to wooden chalets in places like Kilicrankie, Kinloch Rannoch and places like that.

13. These places were residential for us at the weekends. I certainly didn't volunteer to go and as far as I'm aware I wasn't under any sort of order. I think the social work simply decided we should go and that was that. It was definitely the social work who were responsible for us and it was them who looked after us.


Institution: Various places run by Perth and Kinross Social Work Dept.

Routine

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



Secondary Institutions - to be published later



Secondary Institutions These weekend outings continued until I was sent to Oakbank.

Going to Oakbank

19. In [REDACTED] 1990 I was sent back to the panel having got in trouble with the police again. They told me I was being sent to Oakbank in Aberdeen. I went berserk and threw a chair at the panel which made them all run out of the room. The reason I was so angry was that I knew, if I got sent away, I wouldn't be able to look after my siblings again.

20. The panel came back to the room and told me I was to go home for four days and prepare to go to Oakbank. I did and I planned to jump out the window and run away but the police were waiting on me and they and a social worker took me to Oakbank.

Institution: Oakbank, Aberdeen

21. Oakbank was split into four houses and I was at first put into the one called Oakhills which was where the girls slept. I arrived there on [REDACTED] 1990 and on my first day I was in a fight with a girl from Perth and a member of staff called zLIM [REDACTED] punched me on the head.

22. Mr ^{HMY}[REDACTED] was ^{SNR}[REDACTED]. In Oakhill there were six members of staff on at any one time, both male and female.

Routine

23. The routine was like the army. They would kick your door in to get you up at about 7:30 am. You would then get a shower and get dressed. We all wore the colour of our particular house which, in our case, was green tops and green jumper. The other houses used red, blue and another colour that I don't recall.
24. After you got dressed you would have breakfast then help clean up. After that you would go to school in the main building which would start with us all sitting in rows on the floor in a big assembly room.
25. At lunchtime those of us from Oakhill would go back there for lunch then it would be back to school which finished at about 3:30 or 4:00 pm then it was back to Oakhill. Between then and 5:00 pm we would again have to help clean up about the place. Dinner would be at 5:00 pm.
26. After dinner I would be taken up to the main building because it was more secure and I would play pool or snooker until about 9:00 pm. At that time two social workers would escort me back to Oakhill. Normally the door to my room would be left unlocked though sometimes they felt it appropriate to lock it. The room was basic but I had it to myself.

Food

27. The food was okay.

Bedwetting

28. Bedwetting was never a problem for me. Those that did wet their beds got abuse from the other children. I recall hearing SNR [REDACTED] Mr HMY [REDACTED] in the

boy's dorm one time and I could hear him slapping a boy and saying "pishing the bed". All the washing was sent elsewhere.

Doctors/Dentists

29. We were taken to a dentist when it was needed though I was always scared of them. I don't recall ever having to see a doctor. I did take a fit one day but didn't realise at the time that it was an epileptic fit so didn't report it to anybody. The staff were aware that something had happened because the girl who was with me told the staff that something had happened to me. However, when the member of staff approached me I told him I was alright and it was left at that. The fit happened just two days after I was punched in the head again.

Schooling

30. I only did school for about a month. However, the staff thought I was disruptive so they took me out of school and put me into what was basically a YTS brick-laying scheme within the grounds of the school. I did that every day thereafter instead of going to school.

31. On two occasions we were taken to building sites in Aberdeen. I was the only girl in the group. I was fifteen years old and I was embarrassed because all the men in these places were whistling at me. After it happened the second time I refused to go back to those sites.

32. The guy that taught me brick-laying was called zEJV something or other. He was really nice. He was quite old.

Visit/visitors

33. I never had any visitors but after four weeks I would get home every weekend unless I was bad by doing things like fighting or running away.

34. I wasn't visited by any social workers because, as far as I was aware, the place was run by the social work. I had a social workers in Perth but none of them ever came to Oakbank to see me. One of my social workers was called John Robertson though he wasn't my social worker when I went to Oakbank. He was okay.

Trips/outings

35. The only outings we would get was at the weekends if you didn't get home. However, all that happened was that we would all be put on a bus and driven to Aberdeen harbour to look at the prostitutes.

Pocket money

36. We got £6.50 a week but if you were really good you got an extra £10. That only happened to me once.

Running away

37. I ran away constantly though always made sure it was with somebody who came from Aberdeen and knew the area. I was always trying to get to Perth but I never made it that far. If I took the bus the police would stop it and take me back and if I tried to walk it then the traffic police would pick me up.

38. I tried to run away almost every single day. The only real punishment I got for it was not being allowed home at the weekend but eventually they didn't even do that. The exceptions were LIL, zLIM or SNR Mr HMY who would all slap or punch me for running away.

Abuse

39. One of my main complaints was that, after 3 weeks, I was transferred to the main building in Oakbank which was where the boys slept. I was the only girl put there.
40. I was the only lassie who was physically abused and I think this was because I would fight with the other boys and girls almost every week. zLIM [REDACTED] who [REDACTED] and LIL [REDACTED] were the main ones who used to assault me regularly.
41. LIL [REDACTED] used to take me to watch a football team, some amateur team. Once I was sniffing gas while he watched the football. That was on the Saturday and when he saw me again on the Monday he battered me. On one occasion he punched me in the head and it was two days after this that I took my first seizure. I'm sure he caused it by punching me on the head.
42. There is no history of epilepsy in my family and I've been epileptic ever since that incident.
43. zLIM [REDACTED] used to restrain me by holding my thumb and pulling it back to my wrist. He would then hold me like this for about 1 ½ hours pulling me with him wherever he went though it was usually just about his office. This was incredibly painful. He did this at least three times a week. I still have pain in my hand to this day because of it.
44. He would do this if he caught me fighting and, often, for no reason whatsoever. If he did this during the week I wouldn't be able to go to my brick-laying class because my thumb and wrist would be too painful to work.
45. Sometimes zLIM [REDACTED] would have me in this hold in his office and Mr HMY [REDACTED] would come in. I would be on the ground and HMY [REDACTED] would stand on my ankle or kick me in the ribs and then just walk off. If LIL [REDACTED] came in and I was in

this position he would also assault me and they would have a laugh about it. At times him and zLIM would both have a hold of my hands in that very painful position.

46. On another occasion zLIM threw a big heavy bunch of keys at me. I avoided them but in doing so I burnt myself on an extremely hot water tap. I have a scar from that on my arm to this day.
47. On my sixteenth birthday zLIM and LIL, along with an older man whose name I can't recall, grabbed me and cut my ponytail off. The next day I went into their office and saw they had actually got my ponytail framed and put it up on the wall.
48. I was horrified by what they had done. I had grown the ponytail for years and loved it. They had actually told me in the days leading up to my birthday that they were going to cut off my ponytail but I simply didn't believe that somebody would do something so nasty. That incident really upset me.
49. I was also sexually abused, not raped, by male members of staff though I don't wish to talk about it and don't wish to name those involved. I feel it was more a power trip on their part rather than them getting any sexual gratification from it. They did it simply because they could. The physical abuse was far worse than the sexual abuse.
50. They weren't allowed to give us the belt but, in place of it, they just slapped, punched and kicked us though they called it restraining.

Reporting of abuse

51. I never reported the abuse to anybody except my brothers and sister. I think the reason I told them was to scare them out of ever ending up in one of those

places. I never reported it to the police. There was no point. Nobody ever listened to me and I felt that those in charge simply wrote me off.

Leaving Institution

52. Four days after I turned sixteen I went to a panel and they took me out of Oakbank and put me into an independent half-way house. I left Oakbank on [REDACTED] 1991.
53. I was only in the half-way house for two weeks before they kicked me out for not being in at the time of night they demanded. I then lived on the streets for a few months.
54. After that I went to stay with my pal's mum and that lasted for about two years. Just before I turned 18 I went back and lived with my mum for about a year and then me and [REDACTED] got a flat for ourselves just across the landing from my mum.
55. It was after my son [REDACTED] was born that I started to settle down.

Impact

56. The impact this has had on me has been the violence. I think they made me a more violent person. My mum had been violent and then the social workers were violent to me and it became my way of life as a teenager.
57. However, I feel one of the biggest impacts is the way I am now being treated by the social work as I fight to get back custody of my children. I simply don't trust them because of the way they treated me as a child and this is being used against me by the social work.

58. The problem is that the social work simply don't appreciate what I went through as a child. A good example of this is the fact that the social work only allow me to see my children a couple of hours every month. This is done under the supervision of the social work. And where did they first want me to see my children Colansay House

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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60. The social work claim this was proof that I was refusing to cooperate with them and used it to put a further barrier in my way of getting back custody of my children. I feel as if they are abusing me all over again and that I am again being punished, not for what I did as a child but for what happened to me and the way it has affected my attitude to them.

61. Having endured what I did as a child under the social work, I now fear for what is happening to my children under their supervision. I would like to think that things have changed but my experiences as a child mean I am constantly worried for my children's safety.

62. The social work eventually changed our meetings to Almond House but are still accusing me of being obstructive to them and don't understand the basic mistrust I have of them for what they did to me as a child. This is so unfair as it means my children are caught in the middle of it.

Records

63. I've never tried to get my records but I know they are out there somewhere.

Lessons to be learned

64. The social work have to take into consideration a person's childhood when they are dealing with people, especially when it concerns a person's children. They have to understand people who have been through what I have, especially given that that was at the hands of the very social work department deciding what is happening to my children.

65. 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... LUC

Dated... *4/1/18*