

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

LWB [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is LWB [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1967. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before going into care**

2. I was born in Aberdeen. My mother is called [REDACTED] and my dad was [REDACTED]. He's dead now. I have one sister and four brothers and I am the oldest. After me there is [REDACTED], who was born in 1968, [REDACTED], who was born in 1970, then there are twins [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], who were born in 1972 and then there is GTO [REDACTED], who was born in 1976.
3. When I was a baby, my parents moved from [REDACTED], Aberdeen, where they stayed with my grandmother, to [REDACTED], which is also in Aberdeen. [REDACTED] and the twins were born at [REDACTED].
4. From photos that I've now got it is clear that I was a happy kid when we stayed at [REDACTED] and some of my memories are happy ones, but we didn't have a lot. When mum was pregnant with my sister and I was about three, I remember [REDACTED] got a plastic guitar for Christmas. It always sticks in my head because I got a plastic bag with an umbrella stuck on the side of it.

5. There were about five other kids in my stair and we all used to play in the back green and jump off a bomb shelter that was there. There was an old sprung mattress that we used to jump onto and I remember one time one of the springs caught me and I had to get seven stitches to a cut that I got.
6. If ever anything happened to any of us children mum would just panic and start screaming. She made things worse and she made me fearful.
7. My mother was bullied by the neighbours around us and I recall a neighbour across the road wanted to beat her up at one time. My mother wasn't a tough woman, she was a pushover. She was called 'unfit' and a 'slapper', words that I didn't even know how to say because I didn't know what they meant at the time. The neighbours always used to think my mother was drunk, because she used to stagger a lot, but ten years ago she was diagnosed with having a birthmark on her brain and that was obviously the reason why.
8. I got into some scraps and fights when I was young and if I didn't win, my dad would make me go back out. It was his way of teaching us to be tough.
9. I can remember the rag-and-bone man coming along the street with his horse and cart, offering balloons for rags. I gave him a pair of my dad's trousers, but they were the trousers he'd had on the night before and there was still money in the pocket. I remember him running down the road, chasing after the cart. I was only an innocent kid and all I wanted was a balloon.
10. My first school was Walker Road Primary School and I have a photograph of me that was taken on my first day. Mrs Reid was my teacher there and she was really nice. I think she took pity on me because in my school photos you can see I've got my nightie on underneath. I'd obviously dressed myself because my mother was so busy with all the rest of children.
11. We were really poor. Dad had a job filleting fish and then got a job as a bricklayer and then had an accident at work. He injured his back somehow and could no longer work.

Apparently he changed after the accident and was put on painkillers and he started drinking, became violent and he wasn't a good provider. I remember mum taking us all along to the unemployment benefit office, what she used to call the 'Buroo'. She wanted to catch my dad when he came out before he spent all the money on drink.

12. I've no recollection of my mother and I ever having a bond. I remember an occasion I couldn't get in the house when I was about six or seven years old. Mum had locked us all out and when I looked through the letterbox I could see her fastening her bra. My dad had taken in a friend as a lodger and she was obviously having it off with the lodger. I didn't even think, I just ran up to the bar where my dad was. I can't remember what I said to my dad, or what he did, but my mother always hated me from then.
13. We moved to [REDACTED] in Aberdeen when my mum was pregnant with GTO [REDACTED] and I was about eight. Mum loved to change houses. I was moved to Kittybrewster Primary School and I started having a lot of problems at school. I was bullied by the [REDACTED] sisters there, who used to bully a lot of lassies.
14. When we moved to [REDACTED] we were closer to my mum's family, including my Aunt LWM [REDACTED] who I always called LWM [REDACTED] and my Aunt [REDACTED], who my mother had named me after, and who I called Aunt [REDACTED]. I didn't take a liking to Aunt [REDACTED], but LWM [REDACTED] was like a mother to me. They stayed next door to each other and just across the road from us and I always had to go past aunt [REDACTED]'s house if I was going to see LWM [REDACTED].
15. Aunt [REDACTED] had a daughter [REDACTED] who was just four days older than me. I was always close with her, but when we moved to [REDACTED] we started going to school together and would see much more of each other. I would often go and chap at the door for her and vice versa, we spent a lot of time together.
16. [REDACTED] had married a man called [REDACTED] and I've since learned that he was going through all the kids, sexually abusing them. I never knew him as [REDACTED] he was always called [REDACTED] after a country and western singer and that's what I knew him as.

17. One evening when I was nine years old, my mother went to the bingo with [REDACTED] and I went round to see my cousin [REDACTED] at her house. [REDACTED] was there and he asked me to make tea and asked [REDACTED] to go and get his tobacco tin. When I came back into the livingroom with the tea, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] weren't in there and he shouted me through to the bedroom. When I went through he was kneeling on the floor, totally naked, and he was between my cousin [REDACTED]'s legs as she lay on her back at the end of the bed. [REDACTED] was naked as well.
18. I've no recollection what happened with the tea, but the next thing I remember is I was on the bed as well. We were laughing because he was tickling us and it wasn't until he stood up that I saw his private parts. I got up and ran back to my parents and I just had my vest and underwear on when I got back. I must have pulled them on, but I don't remember doing so.
19. When I got back home I told my parents, but I didn't know that my uncle [REDACTED] was in the house at the time and heard everything as well. Before my dad did, uncle [REDACTED] ran over to my Aunt [REDACTED]'s house where [REDACTED] was and when he came back there was blood all over his hands. I don't know what happened but the next time I saw [REDACTED] his face was all stitched.
20. I was made to go back to my Aunt [REDACTED]'s house with my parents and told to sit down in the living room with [REDACTED] there too. LWM was there as well and told us to swear to God that we would tell the truth. I did and I said what happened, but I couldn't understand why my cousin [REDACTED] lied and said nothing had happened.
21. [REDACTED] wouldn't look at me and I was confused why she wasn't telling the truth. Her mother, my aunt [REDACTED] was there as well and she was staring at her daughter [REDACTED]. The way she was staring was pure evil and when Aunt LWM left, [REDACTED] cursed at me and told me I was an evil witch for telling lies.
22. I started truanting from school because I was still getting bullied by the [REDACTED] sisters, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They used to take me to the shops and make me

steal clothes, but every time I did I got caught. Eventually the social work got involved with me, but I'm not sure when that was.

23. My social worker was a woman called HZJ and she was a bitch. I used to have to make my own way to her office by myself, which is right across town, when I was just nine years old. It was scary.
24. HZJ never believed a word I said. She wrote in my records, which I have since seen, that 'she looks like an angel, but believe me she is not'. I told her about and she called me a liar. She called me a liar when I told her I was being bullied and she called me a liar when I told her I was being made to steal by the sisters.
25. I had no reason to lie and I didn't understand why nobody was believing me. I hated social workers. To me it felt like HZJ hated me and she had it in for me. One time she got annoyed with me, got right in my face, grabbed me and shook me and said "why do you fucking lie?" That wasn't the first time she swore, she was just aggressive.
26. I'm not sure how many Children's Panels I went to, but I was at every one. I have a letter in the records I have since recovered that says I was placed under a supervision order at a Children's Panel Hearing on 7 December 1976, following charges of theft and truancy.
27. I had just turned eleven and HZJ had arranged to have me put in care, but I don't really know why. She just told me it was because I was a liar, but I thought part of the reason was because of me saying what had done. It felt like I was being punished for telling the truth.

**Balnacraig School, Perth - 1978**

28. I was put into Balnacraig School in Perth in 1978 when I was eleven years old. I know now that it was a 'List D' school, but I didn't know that at the time.
29. Balnacraig to me as a kid was scary. It was huge and it looked like a green castle with a long, creepy, dark road leading up to it. The front was all grass and there were fields all around as well. At the back, past the grounds, were forests leading up into the hills. Inside there was what we called the Rec room, a dining room, several dorms, offices for the staff and outside there was a separate building for the school.
30. Mr **SGQ** was **SNR** and had a house in the grounds **██████████**  
**██████████**  
sometimes you could hear him battering his partner **██████████**, who he lived there with. He would go to the pub down the road in the evenings, come back and you could hear **██████████** screaming as he battered her.
31. **SNR** was Mr **GHG** and he was harsh, although I have no recollection of him hitting me. There were a lot of staff, some males, but mainly females and I don't know how many there were. The only ones whose names I remember are Miss **GHF**, Ma McDonald and Ma McLeod. Ma McDonald and Ma McLeod were two elderly women who taught us how to cook and bake cakes. I think they also did the cooking, although I'm not sure.
32. Balnacraig was only for girls and the only boy we saw in the place was Mr **SGQ**'s son who came to visit him sometimes. I'm not sure how many girls there were, or what their ages were, but I was the youngest there. **SGQ** actually said something about my age when I arrived because I don't think girls my age were normally accepted.
33. I shouldn't have gone to Balnacraig because I was too young, but I found out from records I later obtained that Aunt **██████████** had arranged it with **HZJ** in the social work behind my back. My cousin **██████████** had gone to Brimmond in Aberdeen and I

should have gone to Brimmond too, but ██████ made sure I was getting nowhere near her daughter.

34. At Balnacraig we were always told we had to behave like ladies. We had to eat and dress in certain ways and we weren't allowed to curse. It was all very ordered.

### **Routine at Balnacraig School, Perth**

#### *First day*

35. I don't remember what time of day or what time of year it was when I was taken to Balnacraig, I just remember being scared. I was taken into Mr ██████ office and that was quite intimidating. He had a big fancy desk with a fireplace across from it and a wee patio area outside.
36. My social worker ██████ was there too and I had to sit down and listen to all her lies about me. She told Mr ██████ I was out of control and not to believe anything I told him. In the car on the way there she had already said the same thing to me. She had called me "a little liar" and said that she was glad to get rid of me.
37. I was shown to my dormitory, dorm A, up a big set of stairs. They kept all the props for the plays that the school put on in my dorm and people used to say it was haunted.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

38. There were four or five beds in my dorm and we all had a single bed and a wardrobe to keep our clothes in. I was scared to sleep because I thought the dorm was haunted and I used to cry in bed at night. I also remember standing crying at the window a lot of the time when I first got there. All I was doing was crying to get home.
39. We were woken up in the morning by whichever staff was on duty and then we had to get ourselves washed and dressed in our uniform for school. God knows why we had

to wear a uniform when the school was only outside the door. After we got dressed we would go down and get our breakfast before we all went to school.

40. When our bedding was to be changed, we had to strip our sheets off and then they would be washed by one of the staff. Once we'd stripped the beds we had to make them up again and we were taught how to make them up properly. They had to be made exactly as we were shown, a bit like being in the army. Sometimes someone would help me because I was so wee, but it depended who was on.
41. In the middle of the evening we had supper and then later on there were strict bedtimes. Early on school nights, but I don't remember what time. Before bed, we always had to wash and brush our teeth. We actually brushed our teeth four times a day, in the morning, after lunch, after supper and again before we went to bed.

#### *Mealtimes/Food*

42. A lot of the girls ate together in one big dining room, but I don't know if all the dormitories ate at the same time. The dining room was always very neat with circular tables all around the room.
43. There were six or eight girls at each table and we were told where to sit. Some of the older lassies always sat at the same place and we younger ones weren't allowed to go near their table or we would get a battering from them. I learned quickly that I had to keep quiet and I just sat wherever was free.
44. We were taught to be a lady at every meal by all the staff. We had to sit upright in our chairs and there could be no elbows on the tables. If you were caught with your elbows on the table a member of staff would slap them off.
45. All the tables had to be laid in a certain way, with teacups upside down on saucers and teaspoons at the side. Plates had to be upside down as well, with a knife and fork laid at the side and in the middle of the table there would be a jug of milk.

46. We weren't allowed to eat with just a fork, we had to use a fork and knife. I used to get into trouble because I always just wanted to use a fork. If I was caught just using a fork I would be put out of the room and I wouldn't eat because I wasn't being a lady and I wasn't doing as I was told.
47. I don't remember there being anything wrong with the food. To me, food was a luxury because I'd never been fed like that at home. If someone didn't like what they were given, they would have to stay at the table until they did eat it. Some of the girls would pass what they didn't want to a black girl who was known as [REDACTED].
48. There was always a staff member at a few of the tables and there always seemed to be one at the table I sat at. If they saw someone pass food to [REDACTED] they would get put out of the room and it would be reported to SNR [REDACTED] Mr SGQ [REDACTED] but I don't think there was any further punishment at that time. I don't recall any harshness in the dining room.

*Washing/bathing*

49. The bathroom wasn't far from our dorm and I had a shower or a bath every morning at Balnacraig because I wet the bed. Usually we washed ourselves, but one time I was scrubbed down in the bath by one of the female staff. I don't remember who it was, but they said I wasn't washing myself properly.

*Clothing/uniform*

50. The uniform for school was a navy skirt and jacket, which Balnacraig supplied along with the rest of our clothes. I felt like I was rich because when I got there I got all this new stuff.
51. I came from a very poor family and I didn't really have appropriate clothing, but when you're accustomed to being poor you don't really know the difference. Within a week of me getting to Balnacraig I was taken into town and it was like Christmas. I was allowed to choose what clothes I wanted as long as the staff thought they were

appropriate. Although I don't specifically remember being taken out again to get more clothes, I would assume I was because I was obviously growing.

52. I also had to get my hair cut, even though I didn't want to. I had long hair when I arrived and I was taken to a hairdresser in Perth and it was all cut off.
53. The girl called [REDACTED] stole the majority of everyone's clothes. I've no idea why, because they wouldn't have fitted her. She must have been stealing them for her siblings or something.

*Leisure time*

54. Sometimes we had good fun in the Rec room at Balnacraig, especially if there were no staff around. I remember a few girls were into the 'Bee Gees' and some of the older girls would teach me how to do the dance moves. That was good, because everybody could let loose and be happy. I never got to put anything on the record player, but we played music and danced.
55. I think there were games in the Rec room as well, but I don't think anybody was interested in reading books, even if there had been any there.
56. Staff would also take us into the forest at the back of the main building for a hike sometimes. We did that a good few times over the years.
57. It wasn't always bad at Balnacraig. We were taken to different activities in the evenings, mostly in Dundee. A van load of us would be taken swimming and I was also at Judo in Dundee. I remember I got up to a yellow belt.
58. I went to a disco in Perth when I was twelve. A bunch of us girls got to go, so I must have been on my best behaviour beforehand. It was actually good fun. We got dressed up to go and some of the older girls helped me to get ready. I'd never worn makeup before because I never had any.

59. At the disco I met a boy called [REDACTED] who became my boyfriend. All the other girls had boyfriends as well that the school didn't know about, but I didn't know that. I didn't understand and afterwards, when [REDACTED] and his friends came up to Balnacraig, they all got caught. [REDACTED] and I were speaking to them from the window before we snuck out the back for a kiss.
60. Unfortunately when the boys got caught it was all stopped and I never saw [REDACTED] again. I don't remember what punishment we got, but I know for a fact we would have been reprimanded.
61. Sometimes I was the only one at Balnacraig over the weekend and I used to have to spend a lot of time with Miss GHF [REDACTED]. I went to the cinema for the first time while I was there. She took me to see Neil Diamond, but it wasn't for me, it was for her. I was only twelve and I never understood the storyline.
62. There was also a sports day once a year in the grounds when there were the usual things like egg races and sack races.

#### *Trips and holidays*

63. We never went anywhere on holiday and, other than going swimming and going to the judo, we didn't go on many trips either. They did take us all to a Rabbie Burns night at a home for boys called Balgowan in Dundee. There wasn't a minibus or anything at the home, so they must have hired a bus. Balgowan was kind of like Balnacraig and it was a bit intimidating with all these boys there.
64. When we arrived a boy ran up and hugged me and I was so happy because it was my cousin [REDACTED]. He told everybody I was his sister and because we were related we got to sit next to each other. I think I was happy because I was with family and I wasn't scared because he was there.

#### *School*

65. The school was in the grounds at Balnacraig in a separate building, but I can't remember much about it. I do remember there was a sewing room because I quite enjoyed that. I already knew how to knit because LWM had taught me how.
66. There was a guy who taught at the school, but I don't remember what subjects he taught. I don't remember any of the other teachers or what the lessons were like, all I do remember is that the older girls were in a different class.
67. Ma McDonald and Ma McLeod taught us how to cook and bake cakes, which was good fun and Mr SGQ's partner taught us drama.
68. We were never asked if we wanted to join the drama class, we had to do it because it was part of school, although took it in the Rec room. She was quite strict at times and she didn't like me much. A girl called was the second youngest and she was's favourite. She got all the lead roles in the plays we put on.
69. One time we put on 'Oliver Twist' for the Lord Provost of Perth, who came to watch us with a few other people. I played one of the boys that picks pockets. Some of the girl's parents came to see it as well, but mine never did. My parents did come down, but they were late and they missed it. I never knew it at the time, but SGQ gave my mum and dad a picture of me in 'Oliver Twist' because they hadn't managed to see it. I've still got the photo.
70. When I got out of Balnacraig we were in the middle of doing 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat', but I never got to finish it.

#### *Healthcare*

71. I don't remember going to the doctor or the dentist when I was at Balnacraig. I don't recollect being ill anytime and I don't know what happened if a girl was ill. I do vaguely remember something about a girl having to go to hospital, but I don't know why.

#### *Religious instruction*

72. I don't remember anything about religious instruction. I've no recollection of having to pray at any time or having to go to church whenever I was there at the weekend.

*Work*

73. Even though I was just a kid, we had to set the tables before every meal and do all the dishes afterwards. We all took turns setting the tables and washing up afterwards. There would be four of us, one washing the spoons and the plates and then another putting them in boiling hot water to sterilise them, another taking them out and drying them and the other putting them away.
74. I was confused setting the table at first because I always used a fork with my right hand and I would put the cutlery down that way. I would get a clout from whichever member of staff was there until I mastered it.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

75. I never had a birthday party while I was at Balnacraig. I think I got cards sent by my family, but the home never had any sort of celebration.
76. I remember spending one Christmas at Balnacraig. I think there was a Christmas tree put up in the Rec room and I can vaguely remember making decorations and putting them up. Ma McDonald and Ma McLeod taught us all how to make a cake, which we could take back to our families.

*Visits/Inspections/Review of Detention*

77. My dad came to visit, he always made sure he saw me. He would drive there to the best of his ability, but he couldn't read or write, so he never knew what the street signs meant. My aunt LWMM would have come as well, but I don't remember seeing her.

78. Even when my dad did come and see me, I never got a chance to speak to him on my own, there were always staff there. My dad would ask me if everything was okay, but I could never speak properly to him.
79. I think my social worker **HZJ** came to see me at Balnacraig once or twice, but I'm not sure. I don't remember anyone coming to do an inspection or anything. I certainly never spoke to anyone.
80. I went to a few Children's Panels in Aberdeen while I was still at Balnacraig, but I don't remember how many. Mr **GHG** always drove me there and my dad was always there too. Eventually my aunt **LWM** came to some as well, but my mum never did. Dad couldn't read or write and he struggled to understand what the Panel were saying. I could hardly understand because they kept using all these long words.
81. Dad and **LWM** were always trying to get me back home, but **GHG** kept putting up a big fight, making sure I wasn't going to get home. **LWM** became my legal guardian at some point and that speaks volumes. I still had a mother, but my mother never once came to a Panel and my auntie became my guardian.

#### *Peer relations*

82. I became friendly with a girl called **[REDACTED]** who took me under her wing. She wasn't in my dorm, but I wish she had been. She was older than me and she looked after me. I recently found her on 'Facebook' and I was glad because I'd never had a chance to thank her.

#### *Siblings*

83. There was always friction between me and my brother **[REDACTED]**. He always says that if it wasn't for me, he wouldn't have been so tough. That shouldn't be a compliment. I had a hardness instilled in me from the beatings I got from Mr **SGQ** and from the fights I got involved in with other girls. I was standing up for myself fighting and beating

other girls and even though I was still wee I started putting a wall up and I didn't trust anybody.

84. I remember battering my brother [REDACTED] when I went home at thirteen. I didn't feel guilty and that's bad. I didn't understand at the time, but I realise now that he thought I was being spoilt and favoured because I had all these new clothes and my siblings had nothing. The latest fashion was donkey-jackets and he stole mine. I remember going to [REDACTED] school, marching into the class and kicking off until I got the jacket from him. I didn't know any different at the time, but it wasn't a nice thing to do.

*Family contact*

85. Every night girls got phone calls from their families. We all had different nights that our families could phone and my family used to phone quite a lot. We used to go into a room across from Mr SGQ [REDACTED] office to take the call, but Miss GHF [REDACTED] used to listen into all of them.
86. Miss GHF [REDACTED] would shout me into the room and tell me my parents were on the phone, but every phone call was hard. It wouldn't just be my parents, my siblings would be on as well and I used to cry all the time. Eventually Miss GHF [REDACTED] would stop the call and take the phone from me. Sometimes I would fight back to keep the phone.
87. If I didn't get home at the weekends I used to get phone calls all the time from my family, but they were too hard. I just wanted to go home. It felt like I was on the other side of the world.
88. If we weren't being punished we could go home once a fortnight at weekends. I was punished a lot for running away so I only got home very occasionally. It was confusing getting home though because the environment at Balnacraig was so different. We were constantly being told to do things in certain ways at Balnacraig and 'be a lady' and it was nothing like that at home.

89. When I did get to go home I was put on a train at Perth by one of the staff and somebody would be waiting in Perth when I came back. There was no staff with me on the journey, just two other girls for part of the way. One of them, I think her name was [REDACTED], got off at Dundee and the other, who was a girl called [REDACTED] got off at Montrose or Arbroath, I don't remember which. I was on my own for the rest of the trip and when I first went I was only eleven years old. I was scared.
90. I would watch all these older people, some of them drunk, getting on the train and some of them taking more drink on the train. I couldn't wait till we picked up [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] on the way back.
91. We would leave on a Friday afternoon and be driven by one of the staff to the station. My family would meet me at Aberdeen station and then take me back on a Sunday. I've still got photos that we took in the photo booth at the station when I was going back. I always got upset because I didn't want to go back to Balnacraig.
92. My family got upset too. My dad never used to show emotion, but he would have a tear dripping. [REDACTED] was always there too and she would take me onto the train to get a seat. She would keep on reassuring me that she would get me home, but nothing changed. It felt like it was never going to end and I was never going to get home.
93. After a while my mother moved the family to [REDACTED] in Aberdeen and it seemed alien when I went back home. All my friends were near [REDACTED] where we stayed when I was put into Balnacraig and I didn't know anyone at [REDACTED]. I was always fighting with folk there because they would call me a 'Weegie'. They thought I spoke with a Glaswegian accent.
94. I think now that the reason I kept running away was that it was too hard going home.

*Personal possessions and pocket money*

95. The weirdest thing is that I don't remember having any photographs of my family or posters of pop stars in the dorm. I don't think anybody did and I don't know why. I don't know if it was because we weren't allowed them.
96. I can't remember if it was for a Christmas or my birthday, but my mum and dad bought me a small record player. I would listen to 'Blondie' singles and stuff like that when I got home at the weekend. I wasn't allowed it in the home though. You couldn't have anything like that in the home. The only personal possessions you could have were your clothes.
97. I think we got pocket money, but I don't remember how much. We were driven into Perth so we could spend it there. I remember getting my photo taken in a booth because I wanted to send it to my parents.

*Running away*

98. If anyone ran away from Balnacraig, they were stuck in blue overalls and slippers when they came back and they weren't allowed to go home for a visit. You always got a hiding from Mr SGQ as well.
99. I started running away within the first year I was there and I was always running away after that. There was one period I never got to see my parents for four months as a punishment. I kept clothes under my bed so that I could run away again, until the staff found out so the next time I just ran away in the blue overalls.
100. I used to run away with [REDACTED] and a girl called [REDACTED] to Kilmarnock, where [REDACTED] was from. I was the only girl there from Aberdeen so there was nobody to run away there with. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were both older than me and I just used to follow them.
101. We would walk into Perth along the side of the rail track and then jump on a train. I remember staying in [REDACTED]'s mum's house one time. She hid us there overnight, but

the police came and got us the next day and took us back. I don't know how many times I ran away, I lost count, but we were always caught and taken back by the police.

102. To start with when we got back, it was just [REDACTED] and then [REDACTED] that got hit by Mr SGQ [REDACTED] for running away, because I was still little. As I got older though I got it too. He was a grown man and we were just kids, but he would grab us by the hair and punch us about the body.
103. After that we would be sent to our rooms and told we had to stay there. We weren't allowed to go to school or the rec room, because the rec room was a privilege. All our clothes were taken out of our wardrobes and we were given the blue overalls, underwear and slippers to wear.
104. You had to wear that blue overall for weeks afterwards and everybody would know you had run away. You weren't allowed to interact with anyone, you had to stay in your room. I think the only thing we did get was a book to read. I used to stand at the window and cry.

#### *Bed Wetting*

105. I never wet the bed when I was at home, I was a happy kid, and yet when I first went to Balnacraig I did. I used to get embarrassed by the staff, I can't remember who, but Miss GHF [REDACTED] was one of them. They would make you take your sheet off the bed and take it through to the bath tub and wash it by hand. It was embarrassing because all the other girls would see you carrying it through and they would know what you'd done. I was only wee and I couldn't wash it, but I was made to even though there was a washing machine.
106. As well as being embarrassed, you would get hit by whichever member of staff was there. I don't remember Miss GHF [REDACTED] hitting me, but the ones that did would give you a slap across the back of the head, or something like that. At the time I just thought it was bad to wet the bed and being treated like that was normal. I stopped after about a year-and-a-half of being there.

**Abuse at Balnacraig School, Perth**

107. Mr SGQ was awful handy at grabbing you by the hair and punching you. I was punched by him many times and I saw him punch other lassies too, sometimes in the mouth. He always used a closed fist when he hit us, I don't think I ever saw him slap someone.
108. I learned very quickly not to say anything if an older girl gave me a battering. I was in SGQ office one time when a girl came running in shouting that I had taken her black cord trousers. I had taken them and I would have admitted it, but it was the first time I experienced Mr SGQ and I told him I hadn't.
109. The girl had long curly hair and before I knew it, SGQ grabbed the girl by the hair and bashed her head off the wall. Then he punched her in the face, right in front of me, just for shouting. I could see the girl's mouth was burst and her lip was bleeding.
110. He asked me while he had the girl pinned to the wall whether I had stolen the trousers, but I was never going to admit I'd taken the trousers after I saw that. I thought he would do the same to me and, shame on me, that was the one time I did lie. I couldn't believe what I'd seen, but then I became accustomed to it and then it started happening to me.
111. Whenever girls were caught fighting with each other, Mr SGQ would make us put on boxing gloves and box each other. He would line all the girls up around the room and the rest of the staff would be there as well and we would have to punch each other until he told us to stop.
112. I have a recollection of a belt being used by GHG SNR but I can't remember who and I can't remember if I got hit with it. I do remember him twisting my arm, but not hitting me with the belt.
113. I was scared of Mr GHG but I don't know why because I don't remember getting hit by him. He used to like us to sit on his knee and I don't understand why I would have

done that after what happened to me before I went into Balnacraig. I remember I was in his office with another two girls and I was sitting on his knee laughing. That's not normal. I have no recollection of anything else that might have happened though.

114. When I was about fourteen a girl called [REDACTED] came into my bed one night. I don't know what her proper name is, but I've got a photo of her. Everybody in the home, even the staff, just called her [REDACTED].
115. [REDACTED] was about fifteen and she was in the same dorm as me. She touched my chest when she came into my bed and I knew it was wrong so I pushed her away. I made such a scuffle that one of the staff came and put the dorm light on. I don't remember which staff member it was, but [REDACTED] told me to "zip it" and not say a word. I never said anything.

#### **Reporting of abuse at Balnacraig School, Perth**

116. After I had been at Balnacraig for a couple of years I told my dad about Mr [REDACTED] hitting me and he came down to batter him, but he was restrained. [REDACTED] was in his office and someone, I don't know who, stopped my dad from going in.
117. I paid for that because afterwards I got ripped right into by [REDACTED]. He didn't beat me, but he scared me. His voice was different. He wasn't yelling, but he was really intimidating and I never told my dad anything ever again. My dad would ask, but I would just tell him everything was fine, I was too scared to say anything.
118. When I got to fourteen, Mr [REDACTED] took me to another Children's Panel and he was chuckling because he thought I was going back to Balnacraig again. I don't remember everything I said, but I do remember telling the Panel about the lesbians that were there. The Panel put Mr [REDACTED] out of the room and I told them the truth about [REDACTED] coming into my bed.

119. It was a relief that for the first time somebody actually believed me. The Panel got Mr GHG back in and I was told I was getting home with my dad. I was so happy. Mr GHG was still fighting for me not to get home, but the Panel weren't having any of it. I know for a fact that if it hadn't been for that lesbian I wouldn't have got home.
120. I don't know if anything more was done about what I told the Panel or if there was any sort of investigation. I was just pleased to be getting home.

### **Leaving Balnacraig School, Perth**

121. I was fourteen when I got out of Balnacraig and my family were still in the house at ██████████ in Aberdeen.
122. I thought the nightmare was over once I got out, but it wasn't. It was just beginning again, but it was a different nightmare. It got worse.

### **Life after being in care**

123. I didn't fit in anywhere. I didn't know anybody. I had no friends because I couldn't make any when I was only getting home for the odd weekend. I could hardly recognise my wee brother GTO because he had grown so much.
124. My mother couldn't handle me and instead she kind of threw me to my Aunt LWM to look after me. LWM eventually moved near us in ██████████ and I know now that if I hadn't had LWM there I wouldn't have had sanity.
125. I stayed with my aunt LWM more than I stayed with my family because she understood me and she knew me better. My mother had never been in care, but LWM had been at Nazareth House. Her ordeal hadn't been the same as mine, but she could relate to the part where you didn't fit in, even with your own siblings.

126. I was given another social worker because [redacted] had moved on. She was a woman called Claire, but I can't remember her last name. Then I had a 'befriender' called Yvonne and she was the only person that was nice to me.
127. I went to Hilton Academy for a while, but I didn't last. Everything [redacted] had insisted I was before I went into Balnacraig I turned out to be. I was expelled when I was fifteen for battering a teacher. I'm not proud of it, but I didn't know any different.
128. After Hilton Academy I was put to Summerhill Academy and that's when I was given Yvonne as a befriender. I was there for six months, but I was hardly actually there. They found out I'd been skipping classes so I was put to another school, but I was almost sixteen by this time and I never went.
129. I got pregnant at sixteen. Nobody had told me about the 'birds and the bees' and I never knew I was pregnant, my stomach just kept growing. Eventually I went to an anti-natal clinic and a letter came through addressed to 'Mrs [redacted]'. My mother thought it was for her and she opened it and told my dad. When he heard, my dad punched me right in the stomach. My dad wasn't a bed of roses either when he started the drink.
130. I gave birth to my daughter [redacted] and my parents looked after her at first, but she was put in foster care when she was two. She came back, but eventually she was taken off me for adoption when she was five years old. I was in prison at the time and I was asked to sign the adoption papers, but I refused. She was taken off me anyway though and put to a Catholic family, even though we weren't Catholic. The woman, [redacted] already had five older kids.
131. The social work said that my parents were unfit to look after [redacted], but they weren't unfit. My brother [redacted] was disabled and my parents had been looking after him all his life. You can see from all the photographs I now have that [redacted] was a happy child.
132. I started getting into trouble and ended up in prison at eighteen for fraud with cheques. A judge told me I needed to have a job, a stable environment and a partner who

worked if I wanted to get my daughter back. I got the partner, but I never loved him. We married when I was twenty-one, but for all the wrong reasons and we divorced when I was twenty-three. I never did get [REDACTED] back.

133. I started a new relationship with a man called [REDACTED] when I was twenty-five and we were together for six years. I had two ectopic pregnancies while we were together before I had IVF (in vitro fertilisation) and gave birth to twin girls [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Although [REDACTED] and I split up, we are still friends, he is a rock and he is the only person in my life I have felt safe with.
134. I went to college when I was in my late-twenties. I was studying psychology and sociology because I wanted to be a social worker. I became pregnant with the twins while I was studying and once I had them I focussed on them and dropped out of college. There was no way I was ever leaving my kids. I was a very over-protective parent.
135. I wanted my kids to have stability and not have a childhood like I'd had. They've had a good upbringing and now they're both qualified nurses. [REDACTED] has two children of her own, a boy and a girl.

### **Impact**

136. Being in care as a child isolates you. I have no trust in people. I have few friends. I had no sense of fear.
137. I came out of Balnacraig as a dysfunctional delinquent. I didn't care about anything. It broke every tie I had with my family and I was always arguing with them. It broke any relationship I had with my mother and it badly affected my relationship with my siblings.

138. I was carrying so much anger inside me that when I was sixteen years old and my brother [REDACTED] was fifteen I took a bat to him and broke his arm. I never apologised to [REDACTED] for that, but I swore I would never hurt any of them again.
139. At either fifteen or sixteen I tried to commit suicide. [REDACTED] because I just wanted to die. I lost consciousness and was taken to hospital where I was put on a life support machine where I eventually woke up. The first person I saw was my dad who was crying.
140. I never got to see my youngest brother GTO [REDACTED] when he was born and I never got to see him as he grew. I never got to see him learn to crawl or when he was a toddler. I really feel I missed out on that.
141. I have held so much hate towards HZJ [REDACTED] my social worker for the way she treated me and the lies she told about me. I know I need to let it go, but it's hard.

### **Treatment**

142. I twice tried to go to a counsellor that my doctor recommended because I wanted to get help. The first time was a long time ago and it was a guy, but I couldn't tell him what had happened to me, so I stood up and walked out.
143. The second time was more recently and I asked to see a woman, but she was foreign and I couldn't understand her. I just thought it was a waste of time so I gave up. I just got a letter to go and see a psychologist, but I'm not sure if I'll go or not.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

144. When I was fourteen, not long after I'd left Balnacraig, my cousin [REDACTED] ran away from home and came to LWM [REDACTED]'s house where I was at the time. She said that she had told

her mother what [REDACTED] had done to her when she was nine and her mother's reaction was to banish her from the house.

145. She took us to the police station where we were put into different rooms and both of us gave a statement, but that was it, nothing more was done at that time.
146. When I was thirty-eight, officers from the police child protection and investigation unit came to my door. They told me that the man my aunt [REDACTED] had married, [REDACTED] [REDACTED], had been sexually abusing a lot of children and they were investigating several complaints. I told them everything he had done to me and gave them a statement.
147. It came out that my aunt [REDACTED] knew about all the kids getting abused by [REDACTED]. She had seemingly said that she was petrified of him and that seemingly he had sexually abused her as well. I don't think that's true though. I've been told that my aunt [REDACTED] watched [REDACTED] sexually abuse children, so she's just as much to blame. She should have told the police. She could have stopped it.
148. [REDACTED] got charged by the police, but it never went to court. I'm not sure why, but I think it was because he had a stroke. He's now dead.

### Records

149. I decided to apply for my records when I was in my early thirties. I think I wanted to know what HZJ [REDACTED] had said about me and I wanted to know how I had ended up in Balnacraig. I had so many questions, possibly because I'd become a mother myself by then.
150. I went along to an office of Aberdeen City Council with my brother GTO [REDACTED] and filled out forms for myself and GTO [REDACTED]. I collected them about two weeks later and I can provide copies to the Inquiry if required.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

151.

152.

153.

154.

155.

156.

**Lessons to be Learned/Hopes for the Inquiry**

- 157. I think care homes do more damage to kids than anything else. I went into care as a victim of bullying and by the time I came out I was a nightmare. That's what it taught me. It didn't teach me to be a lady, it taught me how to be a delinquent.
  
- 158. I want HZJ [redacted] to apologise for treating me the way she did and for lying about me. I want to know why she put me to Perth and not to Aberdeen, where there were lots of other homes. My guess is that it wasn't just my life that HZJ [redacted] ruined. I'd also like to know why she just brushed aside what I told her about [redacted] and called me a liar.
  
- 159. I want the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry to get the truth of what happened to me and all the others. The Inquiry needs to make sure that people know about what happened in the past. Everyone responsible for doing all that damage to us children should be named and shamed. I want the truth and I want justice for me and all the other children.

**Other information**

- 160. Balnacraig wasn't all evil and bad, there were some good times, but it ruined my life. Balnacraig took me away from my family and made me feel as if they were no longer a part of me. Perhaps if I'd got home more it might have been different, but I felt isolated and separated from them all.
  
- 161. 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.. LWB [redacted] .....

Dated.. 20/11/19 .....