

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LIL

Support person present: Yes.

1. My name is LIL but I'm known as LIL. My date of birth is 1948. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Background

2. I went to Jordanhill University and graduated with a Diploma of Education – Physical Education in June 1970. After gaining my Diploma from Jordanhill I worked at Summerhill Academy in Aberdeen which was a state school, for four years as a PE teacher.
3. At the time, I knew some people who worked at Oakbank and they were keen to get a PE teacher in as the previous teacher had just left. When I was at Summerhill, apart from teaching PE, I was taking swimming classes and community classes and I thought it might be good to do it all under one roof at Oakbank. When Oakbank cropped up, I was actually looking for job opportunities at the time, so I applied for, and got the job there. I started at Oakbank in October 1974. After I accepted the job, I was actually offered another job at Cults Academy which was a prestigious school in Aberdeen but I thought 'in for a penny, in for a pound' and committed to Oakbank.
4. Whilst I was at Oakbank I obtained a Bachelor of Arts Open University degree in Social Science in 1979. Again, whilst still employed at Oakbank, they sent me down to Glasgow University and I completed my BA Advanced Certificate in Childcare in

August 1996. It was a new course they were running so I was sent down to sample it and report back.

### **Experiences at Oakbank Residential School, Aberdeen**

5. The building itself was a big granite building which was a bit imposing. I was taken in first thing in the morning on the day I started and the first thing I saw was young men on parade in the play ward. They were wearing jeans and tatty tops and looked like ragamuffins in a way. They were dismissed from there to go to various places. It really was a bit of an eye opener.

#### *My role and recruitment at Oakbank*

6. I applied for a job at Oakbank and was interviewed by [REDACTED] who was SNR [REDACTED], and SNR [REDACTED] and a senior staff member. I was offered the job and took it up. I had to provide references, although I can't remember if it was written references or just names. The people who gave me the job knew me so that was probably enough to satisfy them that I was the man for the job.
7. As far as I remember, the induction only really consisted of being shown around the place. It was a bit of an eye opener to be quite honest. There were these young men, in an institutional setting, I just thought, 'Oh dear'. I have no regrets about working there but at the time it was a bit of a shock to my system to see the situation as it was operating then.
8. I initially started at Oakbank as a PE teacher. SNR [REDACTED] at the time, [REDACTED] liked what I was doing so I got the first promoted post that came along as a senior assistant. That was in 197 [REDACTED] so I'd been at Oakbank for three years by then. The next move came after there had been a change in SNR [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] to HMY [REDACTED]. In 198 [REDACTED] Mr HMY [REDACTED] promoted me to SNR [REDACTED]. That was a new post that was created and he was showing a bit of faith in me. One of my additional responsibilities in this role was to oversee the small number of day pupils that Oakbank

had admitted who were not coping in mainstream education. This was a new initiative at Oakbank to provide respite for mainstream schools, social work departments and it gave the kids a place of safety.

9. In 199█ I then got the post of SNR █ You had █ and █ together in the same building, so I was tasked to bring the two together as a link to both. In 199█ I was given the post of SNR █ and at the time there was a big change over in the local government. Mr HMY █ was put under a bit of pressure in relation to finance and politics and eventually he resigned that same year. At that stage, the SNR █ LIQ █, out of the blue, was made redundant. The other SNR █ ILG █, saw the writing on the wall so decided to take a redundancy package and that left me.
10. I'm sure the board planned what they were doing as I was called into a meeting in the boardroom with the board members. They turned up with Crawford Langley, who was the law and administration guy, and the acting director of education John Mager. They asked me to take on the role of SNR █ as it was now called. On the one hand I was interested in the job, but on the other, they had just got rid of all of the other senior staff, leaving me. To be fair to the pupils and the school, I was the only person who knew what was going on in there. Bob Middleton, who was a councillor and a very brisk, straightforward guy, basically just said to me across the table, "Right Mr LIL █ do you want the job or not?" so I accepted the job and that was me SNR █ SNR █ That all happened within 199█.
11. They were obviously wanting a SNR █ and John Mager took me aside and said that I should apply for the job of SNR █ as it was by then. He also said that if I didn't get that, then I had to apply for the role of SNR █ I was interviewed for the SNR █ role and I think there were four interviewees for the post in total. I didn't get the job of SNR █ It apparently went to a casting vote for the chairperson and █ got the job. █ didn't take up the post for about six months and I was left █ by myself for that time. I discovered that the incoming SNR █ had made some derogatory comments about the old senior management team. I found out later that █ didn't want me there either as █ wanted

a clean sweep. [REDACTED] was basically told that I was the only experienced member of staff there and as [REDACTED] didn't have any senior management experience, I was staying in post and we'd have to work together. I was in the post of SNR [REDACTED] for two or three years before I retired.

12. [REDACTED] had actually been employed at Oakbank previously, as an assistant teacher and was involved with learning support. [REDACTED] was keen to stay at Oakbank and get a promoted role but there weren't any posts available at that time. I advised [REDACTED] to go elsewhere and get some experience and that's what [REDACTED] did. [REDACTED] went to Rossie Farm in the SNR [REDACTED] role before applying for and coming back to Oakbank.

#### *Staff structure*

13. When I arrived at Oakbank [REDACTED] was SNR [REDACTED] EJU [REDACTED] was the SNR [REDACTED] side and GZG [REDACTED] the SNR [REDACTED] HMY [REDACTED] came to Oakbank in 198 [REDACTED] and when I got the SNR [REDACTED] role in 199 [REDACTED], ILG [REDACTED] was the SNR [REDACTED] and LIQ [REDACTED] the SNR [REDACTED] I took over from ILG [REDACTED] as SNR [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] when he left. EJT [REDACTED] was the SNR [REDACTED] at some point but I can't remember where in the timeline he came.

#### *Recruitment of staff*

14. As a member of the senior management team, I was involved with the recruitment of staff, both on the education and care side of Oakbank. I don't recall any specific training for that.

#### *Training / supervision of staff*

15. We used to have training days where a number of topics were discussed; how do you deal with this, what's happening there, what should we do with that. Basically just a brainstorming situation. Sometimes there was an agenda behind it, but it was a case of getting people sitting down, thinking and talking and hopefully carrying it out.

16. We had an educational psychologist, Frank Woods, and a consultant psychiatrist, Gill Wilson, onsite and they had some input into training as well.
17. We all took part in CALM (Crisis, Aggression Limitation Management) training which was taken by an external agency and it was a two day course in Peterhead.
18. It was probably just an evolution thing. As far as I was concerned, we started pretty low down the ladder in terms of training. There were things that as they occurred or time passed, we'd think that we could do that better and the training would evolve. I was part of the management team and they would have their own ideas and we would normally come to a consensus of what was best for the staff.
19. There were staff appraisals. The deutes would have been asked to write an appraisal of their staff, whether that be on the social work or education side. On the education side of things you would have school inspectors coming in as well and that was an appraisal and a half. That gave you a clear picture of where you were at.

#### *Policy*

20. When I started there were no written policies. There was an evolution as the staff and hierarchy changed. We had to move with the times and the rules and regulations. Organisations had to put things in print, you had to have guidance. In [REDACTED] time, [REDACTED] I have a lot of respect for, there wasn't much coming from [REDACTED]. When HMY [REDACTED] took over, he was a great guy for paperwork and I mean that nicely. He wanted everything done properly in terms of guidelines, rules and regulation. He was the man who would've kickstarted the written policies. There were general teaching policies as the children sat examinations.
21. The different guidance documents went out to the different units but I'm not clear where they were kept. I would've had a copy in my office, as would the others on the senior management team but I'm not sure where else they would be.

22. From what I remember there were policies and clear guidelines for a lot of run-of-the-mill things in relation to the running of an organisation. With guidelines means policies as far as I'm concerned; things you could do, can't do and should do or shouldn't do. Those lead into the ethos of the school too.

### *Strategic Planning*

23. The [REDACTED] side and [REDACTED] side were very separate and when I got the role of SNR [REDACTED] that was the whole point of the role; to try and bring it all together. It meant that all senior staff were involved with all discussions and decisions that affected the well-being of the school.
24. However, any strategic plans were negated by the fact we had a changeover between unitary authorities and the local regions. There was a lot of backstabbing and infighting between the politicians.
25. HMY [REDACTED] right at the very beginning, was under pressure because we changed back to the unitary authority from the Grampian region. The Grampian region had been running Oakbank and saw a future for the place. [REDACTED] and Councillor Campbell who was chairman of the council then, went to Edinburgh to the court of session and fought for Oakbank to have List D status, and to be maintained as an independent school whereas others were swallowed up. They won that battle which was brilliant.
26. However, as a unitary authority, labour councillors didn't like Oakbank and didn't like the relationship Mr HMY [REDACTED] had with the conservatives. The labour council just wanted the money; they didn't want HMY [REDACTED] and they didn't want Oakbank school as such. They saw it as an eight million pound goldmine up the hill that would help balance their books. This went on for quite some time and it soured people. We had numerous meetings with the board and in fact, at one point, they were going to change the conditions. Not only the conditions, but the pay and all the rest of it, so you had unhappy staff for a long time. On one occasion there was a meeting with the board in the school and the staff protested about what they were trying to do. There was a lot going on at that time.

27. The regional council and then unitary authority had a lot to do with the governance of the school. I had my eyes opened. I used to be called to board meetings down in the council headquarters, Aberdeen Town House, and I'd be sitting there and hearing things that I probably didn't want to hear because a lot of it was negative and not for the benefit of Oakbank school. Whereas previously, Councillor Campbell, who was a high flyer and [REDACTED] were fighting the school's corner and they weren't going to be bullied so to speak. When the labour councillors came in, led by three or four of them who had it in for the school and for Mr <sup>HIMY</sup> [REDACTED] in the end they broke the man and he went off sick and ultimately retired. There was a lot of uncertainty that didn't help anybody. The only certainty was that the school was probably going to go down the tubes. Personally, I was glad to get out of that.

### **Children at Oakbank**

28. The children usually came to Oakbank as a result of a children's panel. Sometimes the children at the panel were told to go home but knew that they would be coming to Oakbank. Sometimes, depending how serious the situation, the young person could be escorted straight to Oakbank by their social worker or key worker from the children's panel. That could be a pretty trying situation but that was the reality. If somebody didn't have a safe and secure background to go back to they had to come into care.
29. We had emergency placements every now and again but I can't say there were many of them. That would be for the young person's safety and security, where they couldn't be allowed to run out in the big wild world creating mayhem or putting themselves at risk. Somebody had to get a hold of the situation.
30. I don't remember anybody being sent directly from the court but obviously that was mostly to do with our age group. There was maybe the odd one but they'd have to go through the panel or emergency placement from social work.

### *Discipline and Punishment*

31. The most severe punishment at Oakbank was that kids were belted over the backside. It wasn't something I approved of. When I had been at Summerhill Academy, corporal punishment was banned there as the headmaster didn't agree with it and I had no problem with that. Thankfully shortly after that, national guidance came in that corporal punishment was banned, so that went out the window at Oakbank as well which I was glad off.
32. If kids did something wrong, appropriate measures were taken, such as loss of privileges. Loss of home leave was always a tricky one because social work partners didn't like kids not being allowed home but sometimes you couldn't do anything about that. If they were out of control at home and we were sending them back there to go and get into more trouble or to cause mayhem, it didn't make sense. That was a bone of contention, but sensibly you could see why it didn't make sense to take a child out of a situation, to just put them back in there. There were minor sanctions as well, such as not being allowed to go on a trip. At one stage there were financial incentives for the kids. If the young person got so many credits, they got extra pocket money, got trips out or various other rewards.
33. There was no other physical punishment allowed, other than corporal punishment when it was still permitted.
34. I don't remember there being a written discipline policy. It was just guidance that came from the top, and from one SNR [REDACTED] to the next. [REDACTED] was SNR [REDACTED] when I went to Oakbank and [REDACTED] was a very able, astute [REDACTED] who had experience in the care system. I think [REDACTED] came to Oakbank from Kibble School, along with SNR [REDACTED] from there. They were experienced and knew what they were doing in terms of how to run an establishment like Oakbank.
35. Mr HMY [REDACTED] was a totally different experience. He came to the school in about 198 [REDACTED] from the north of England where he was working in care and education down there.



He had quite a different manner about him but I got on fine with him, hence the reason why I was moving onwards and upwards.

### *Restraint*

36. To be perfectly frank, early doors, there were no official guidelines in regards to restraint, other than stopping the young person harming themselves or others or doing damage to property. In March 1998 I took part in the Crisis and Aggression Limitation and Management, Physical intervention training course (CALM).
37. It was a national training programme that came in and all of the staff at Oakbank took part in the CALM course. It was a two-day course for all staff to go through which was very helpful. It outlined exactly what to do; guiding, turning, steering, secure comfort hold, directing and it gave us a framework to use when dealing with difficult situations.
38. Before CALM training, if you needed to restrain someone there wasn't really any guidance. If a child was acting out, it was just a case of holding them to stop them doing damage, hurting themselves or others.

### *Concerns about the institution*

39. I had no concern about Oakbank. It might sound like me claiming some of the credit but things moved on a lot during my time there, in terms of the conditions. The physical conditions, the whole routine and the whole operation change dramatically over the time I was there. I'm not claiming all the credit for that but things moved with the times at long last.
40. I provided a lot of the physical improvements at Oakbank which aided and helped the practices that were going on. I have a list of things that I was party to or organised which made the young people in Oakbank's lives much easier. When I went there first of all, the previous PE teacher hadn't done very much. He'd kicked a ball with them but not much else. There was a large grassy area in front of the school which was just treated by the head gardener as a garden. I got a full-sized football pitch marked out

there and also a couple of hockey pitches. In front of one of the units, I got a five-a-side pitch set up there for them, tennis courts as well. In front of another unit, I got a putting green put in.

41. One of the major things we did was build a swimming pool. I reconstituted the friends of Oakbank committee and we raised £6000 or £8000 to kickstart the swimming pool build. There was a redundant building which I decided was ideal for a swimming pool because it was adjacent to the gymnasium. We cleared it all out and removed the old roof and put on a new one. The staff were all willing and some of them had trade credentials and they did their bit to help out. Between the money we raised, help from staff and volunteers, we managed to build the swimming pool. EJV who was the building instructor did a lot of that. ILG who was the technical teacher, had a few useful contacts and most of the volunteers were friends of staff. ILG was also in the scouts so a few scout guys came and helped too. The boys from Oakbank helped out much of the time, as far as possible. Vocational training used to be a big part of List D school's curriculum and some of the boys really enjoyed it. A lot of them were delighted just to get their hands dirty. Others didn't want to know but that was fair enough. A lot of the ones who didn't help got time in the gymnasium, as that was just next door and they could be supervised.
42. I set up a weights room in an old store after the school purchased a full set of weights through me. We had hobbies afternoon on a Thursday where we had canoeing, walking, cycling, archery. These were all things that were a big improvement on what wasn't there before. We also had a school concert which was a bit of fun.

#### *Personal Influence*

43. From the day I walked in, I looked at what was happening and I just saw room for improvement.
44. In terms of putting in place measures to help protect the children at Oakbank, I influenced a lot of it. For every new child or young person admitted, Gill Wilson the consultant psychiatrist, Frank Woods the educational psychologist, myself, the

provisional keyworker and a recorder would sit down and put together treatment plans for each kid. The keyworker was then expected to implement that plan within their unit. There were also individual education plans put together with teaching staff. The young persons community social worker would also get a copy of the treatment plan and education plan. We had regular reviews of the young persons progress and the treatment plan was updated accordingly.

45. We had group counselling sessions where we split the school into groups and would sit down and have an open discussion with them. We tried not to lead it, but we would discuss things about the school. It was generally pupil orientated things, anything they would like to see done better or in a different way.
46. Oakbank was seen as the house on the hill for the bad boys and nobody really knew anything about it. With the new football pitches, I had some connections with the police football club and they came to me and asked if they could hire the pitches for their home games. It was good for relations because they obviously saw the kids in a different light from having them locked in a cell, and the kids could sit on the bank or overlook and watch the police play.
47. There was a women's badminton and keep-fit group looking for a venue so they approached me and asked to use the facilities and I was happy for them to do so. I just wanted to open the whole place up so that people could see what we were doing instead of the place for bad boys up on the hill.
48. Much of the changes were to do with the ethos of the place. I met and came across lots of good kids. A lot of them came from pretty bad backgrounds where there was no support. It was my ethos, or my feeling, that I wanted to give these young people a better start in life, or just a better life. To see them into adulthood and maybe getting into employment or into a job. It was all about improving their lot so to speak, that was my personal ethos.
49. I think I had a large part to play for bringing Oakbank into this century so to speak, in terms of practices and resources. By the time it came to me leaving, I felt I'd had

personal influence on the improvements that had been made and a considerable influence on young people's behaviour and attitudes.

50. When I first of all walked in and saw the culture of the place, I was shocked. The culture changed, there were physical things such as their attire. It was all boys at Oakbank when I started and they looked like scruffy ruffians. The practice of showering where were you were thrown in a communal shower and after that, they had clean pyjamas and clean underpants handed out to them through a hatch. They weren't even referred to by names, it was numbers. Smoking was a big thing, all these kids wanted to smoke. They used to pile into this corridor at the end of the school. Most staff didn't even want to be there either and one of the staff members, an older guy did most of it. He didn't even address them by name. They had a tin with tobacco in it and he'd call out the number and they'd collect it.
51. That practice of referring to the young people by a number changed very quickly. Once we started improving the facilities around the school the culture started to change. We revamped the bedrooms totally and kids had their own clothes in their wardrobes. They had their own washing baskets to go into the laundry and just normal things that you'd expect a normal home to have. It was much more personal and most of the kids just knew me as LIL

#### *Reporting of complaints/concerns*

52. There was a complaints process at Oakbank. The local authority social work department had a registration unit and they would come round Oakbank on a regular basis. They would speak to the kids and find out their concerns and find out their story. They would make observations and they expected their observations to be taken onboard and acted upon. They got all of their information by sitting down and talking to the kids.
53. On an everyday occurrence, if a child had any concerns, they could bring them up with their keyworker or get in touch with their social worker. That would then be recorded in an incident book. Every unit had its own incident book and the keyworker would

have noted it in the young person's file. If a keyworker took a complaint from a young person they, or another unit staff member, could act upon. If not, the young person had every right to take it further. The obvious follow up in that case would be to the young person's social worker or to the registration unit.

54. When a young person first came into the school, or at some point along the line, they would've been made aware of their rights and responsibilities. I think the children were only too aware of the process to follow if they had a complaint.

*Trusted adult/confidante*

55. The children each had a keyworker in school, a social worker out of school and the registration unit so that was three layers that each child had.

**Abuse**

56. I don't think there was ever a definition of abuse, or certainly not that was written down in black and white. There was an understanding of what constituted abuse. One of the benefits of Oakbank was that we had a lot of mature staff, family men and women who had their own children and knew some of the things that could go wrong. For the most part, I was happy with how unit managers were handling situations.
57. There were staff meetings and unit meetings on a regular basis, certainly on the care side, to discuss what was going on in their unit and we would discuss anything causing any concern. We'd also talk about how staff should carry out their duties appropriately.
58. During my time at Oakbank, I didn't ever see any behaviour that was excessive, inappropriate or abusive. The corporal punishment situation took care of itself because it was banned. There were undoubtedly situations where there was a young person who was badly out of control and three members of staff would be involved in a restraint. Without the CALM guidelines, it was open to interpretation.

59. I didn't ever administer corporal punishment at Oakbank. It was administered by the deputy head of social work. The reason I know that is because when I started there, I was asked to witness an incident of corporal punishment and I remember thinking at the time that I was glad they were planning to ban it. Basically, the person concerned had to lean over the table and a leather belt was taken out and they were hit across the buttocks over their clothes. I was the 'newbie' and I'd never seen it before so I was asked to check if the laddie's skin had been broken.
60. I am confident that during my time at Oakbank, if any child had been abused or ill-treated, it would have come to light. There was a mature group of staff. The unit managers were all mature family men and they had a job to do as well. It wasn't in their best interest to ignore if anything was going on and if something was obviously untoward, I have every confidence that the guys I'm thinking of, would've done something about it.

#### **Child protection arrangements**

61. We took our child protection guidelines off of the local authority. We had a local inspection group who came into the schools regularly and all of the guidelines came from that level. They inspected the building itself and looked at practices. If they didn't like it, they would voice their concerns and if they were happy, then fine. Again, they were there as an advising body. There was feedback from the inspection unit to the headteacher and that was filtered down through the school in relation to what observations had been made.
62. If there were any allegations of abuse, then it could have been the unit manager or senior staff member who would go and investigate the circumstances initially. Depending on what the investigation came up with, someone else would be advised, senior management or social work. I'm not aware of any instances, but in those circumstances somebody would be taken aside and told that this was inappropriate or given advice on a better way of doing things. It wouldn't necessarily go back to external social work. However, if a report was made to the people from the local inspection

group, they would feedback and the young person's social worker would get the feedback too.

63. In terms of any arrangements in place to reduce the likelihood of abuse towards the children, it was really a question of observing staff and what was going on. If there were any inappropriate practices, then that would have to be addressed. We also had regular child case reviews with the senior social worker overseeing what was happening.
64. As a senior staff member, there's always things that you regret and think that you could have done better. At the same time, I had a good understanding of what was going on round about me and if I had to take somebody aside and talk to them about how they could do something better or in a different way, I would. I reckon I had a pretty good relationship with most of the kids too. Instead of being stuck in an office, I was out and about and was involved with what was going on on the shop floor and that was part of the remit of my role.

### **External monitoring**

65. On the education side of things we had school inspectors who came in. We also had regular visits from the city council review officers. They would discuss individual kids and their progress but were also quick to point out any issues or concerns.

### **Record-keeping**

66. Every kid had an education plan and a care plan. Frank Woods was an educational psychologist based in Oakbank. He was a smashing guy and I got on well with him. He spent a lot of time advising HMY as to what the way ahead was. We also had a psychiatrist called Gill Wilson, who was from the Elmhill House, Young Peoples Psychiatry Service, Cornhill. They would both advise us on the way forward in putting a treatment plan together for the young people. It was joint exercise.

67. Any concerns or day to day items would be recorded in care plans. There was also an incident book, and every unit had their own incident book. Any issues of concern would be noted in there.

### **Investigations into abuse**

68. I had to deal with complaints of abuse as part of my remit. I was duty bound to deal with any reports. I was overseeing what was going on in Oakbank but there is nothing of any extremely serious matter that I could say I can remember. I certainly had instances where I had to speak to staff but I couldn't give any of those in detail now.
69. If I wasn't comfortable being able to deal with a complaint at my own level, I would've taken it to the rest of the management team and Mr HMY or his predecessor I remember probably two occasions where I put my concerns in writing to HMY and he would've then discussed it with the rest of the management team and Frank Woods.
70. One of the very first weeks when I started in Oakbank there was an incident with a young man and he actually threatened me. I reported that to SNR and as a result worked with the boy. As far as I was concerned that was me covering my back and the boy got the message as well.
71. Another case where I intervened and put my concerns in writing, involved a staff member. I can't remember the details but that person involved actually moved on from Oakbank.
72. We also had review officers from the city council coming in regularly to discuss individual kids and their progress. I remember one review officer who wrote a comment about a member of staff but she was told to rewrite it by her senior because the comment could be seen as defamatory and could lead to action being taken against the local authority. She had to rewrite it and tone it down a bit. It was do with a member



of staff we had called IAA who was very friendly with a group of boys. He was in a small unit overseeing four boys and at one stage there were concerns that he was grooming one of the boys and the review officer raised it. IAA was removed from that situation and he did leave voluntarily. I'm pretty sure that it was dealt with inhouse and not referred to the police. This was probably in the late 1990's. We had no proof that it was going on, but it was recorded by the reviewing officer so there would be a record of it.

73. IAA also had a colleague who was a friend of his and she left voluntarily at the same time. She hadn't been involved with the incident but she was a difficult character. She applied for a job elsewhere and she left voluntarily too. I remember having to write a reference for her and I had to be very careful about what I wrote as I couldn't write a positive reference for her. I do remember that that female member of staff had come from down south where she was in a relationship with another member of staff, and he was found to have been involved in some dodgy practices down there. I'd rather not give her name.
74. I don't remember any other staff member being dismissed because they had been found to have abused or ill-treated a child. It was a long time ago but nothing springs to mind. I don't remember anybody resigning either as a result of a complaint of abuse. Again, I can't really give an accurate answer.

### **Internal Investigation**

75. I wasn't aware of any major internal investigation during my time at Oakbank.
76. On one occasion, my colleague and I were called to give evidence at the district court. We had a young man who was extremely difficult and it ended up that he was arrested. The social work department weren't happy with the way things went. The bottom line was that he was a very difficult young man. He'd been at Rossie Farm, but the local authority wouldn't pay for that so he came to us and he was really difficult. One night he went on a rampage and was downstairs kicking doors and the like. Myself, and

LIM [REDACTED] who was the unit manager on with me that evening, tried to resolve it but we had to call the police and he was lifted and taken away.

77. The social work department weren't happy with the fact that we had called the police and it was dealt with like that. We had to go down and give evidence to the Sheriff and speak to the boy being out of control and the police dealt with it. That's the only occasion I can remember giving evidence. That resident was so out of control that they couldn't get anywhere to put him and the social work department ended up putting him in a house with a full-time carer because nobody could manage him.
78. In relation to any internal investigations, specifically, it's difficult for me to put my finger on anything. We were always very aware, to put it bluntly, that the social work department knew that we were doing a better job than they were doing in the children's homes and they didn't like it. That's a very biased point of view, but they were always criticising us and in the meantime the kids in their children's homes were trashing the places. Two children's homes were actually closed down.
79. We'd upgraded our facilities big time when I was there. The school was just originally a big mansion with outhouses. When I went there, the bedrooms or dorms, which had been open plan, were then sectioned off which still wasn't good but it was progress. When I was there over the next couple of years the whole place was revamped. All the bedrooms were enclosed, new toilet facilities, new stairs and all sorts of things to bring it back into a more modern era or standard of care. That made a huge difference.
80. I can't remember any specific investigation into Oakbank but I do recall that in around 1991 or so, a female member of staff, who had a grudge to bear, alleged that myself and another guy, who was nothing to do with Oakbank, had approached the woman and offered her money and furniture. This was so that she wouldn't make a complaint about what had happened and to placate her. Her complaint involved an Oakbank pupil or pupils, but I can't recall the details. I was obviously at Oakbank but the guy we're talking about, who was supposed to have supplied the furniture, wasn't employed by Oakbank, he was just a local guy involved in furniture. It was nonsense, it was hard to believe what was being said, it didn't happen.

81. I wasn't interviewed by anyone from Oakbank or Grampian Council about that as the whole thing wasn't true. It was a bitter woman, ex member of staff who was trying to stir the pot a bit. She might have still been a staff member at the time she said this. She was the staff member that one of the residents, LUC [REDACTED] was gunning for because she'd called LUC [REDACTED] a dyke and I had to rescue her from LUC [REDACTED]'s clutches and get there first and lock the door.
82. That's the only internal investigation or inquiry that I can think of.
83. The social work didn't like us and my stance was; we were doing a better job. Oakbank was under scrutiny from the external social work department on an almost full-time basis because they didn't like us. They would try to find anything they could to stick on us.

#### **Reports of abuse and civil claims**

84. I don't recall ever being involved with any investigation about reports of abuse that came into Oakbank from out with. It would be flippant to say that there was always someone with a chip on their shoulder, it would depend on what the claim was. If it was social work bias then the head social worker would look at that, as it would land on his plate. From the education point of view, I would have certainly been involved at some point along the line but I can't remember any specifics. I was there many years, and I've seen many young people coming through. I've previously mentioned a couple of cases that stood out.
85. I don't remember any civil claims at all at Oakbank.

### **Police investigations/ criminal proceedings**

86. I think it was about the time I left but the PE teacher, Andy Porter, was suspended by [REDACTED] as he was involved in an incident with restraint and the laddie ended up with a broken arm. It went to the court because Andy said that he didn't do anything wrong and it was the way the boy landed. As it was, the Sheriff dismissed the case and Andy was innocent of that. The Sheriff suggested that [REDACTED] evidence, was a bit iffy. That would be sometime between 199[REDACTED] and 200[REDACTED] when [REDACTED] was there. Quite frankly the Sheriff more or less implied that [REDACTED] was being economical with the truth. I don't think Andy went back to the school after the case was concluded.
87. I can't remember ever having to give a statement or being interviewed in regards to any abuse of children at Oakbank.
88. I have never given any evidence at a trial in relation to the alleged abuse of children at Oakbank or been the subject of any criminal proceedings.
89. I wasn't aware of any other staff member being the subject of a police investigation in relation to abuse of a child or any staff member being convicted of the abuse of a child at Oakbank.

### **Other Staff**

Mr <sup>HQT</sup> [REDACTED]

90. I knew Mr <sup>HQT</sup> [REDACTED] He left soon after I arrived.

Mr <sup>EJU</sup> [REDACTED]

91. He was the <sup>SNR</sup> [REDACTED] He is deceased now.

HMY

92. As I've said, he came in SNR during my time at Oakbank and I worked with him as the SNR and SNR

Mr GSD

93. The name GSD rings a bell but he must've been just before my time maybe.

Mr EJP or EJP

94. EJP was on the care staff and he got the title of SNR temporarily.

Mr EJR

95. He was a special needs teacher in the school.

EJT

96. He was SNR and is now deceased.

Mr EJV

97. EJV was the building instructor, I'm not sure if he's still alive.

EJS

98. EJS was on the care staff at Oakbank. He wasn't a particularly good care staff member shall we say.

LIQ

99. LIQ was the SNR and he got the golden goodbye when they wanted to clear out everybody.

EJW

100. EJW was the joinery instructor.

ILF

101. That could have been He was a keyworker, not particularly good.

ILG

102. He was the SNR and went down to another List D school near Edinburgh. He must be retired now.

IAB

103. IAB is retired now and lives locally. He was a keyworker.

LIM

104. LIM was on the care side of Oakbank and was a unit manager.

KNS

105. I forget his full name, KNS something or somebody KNS but he was on the care side of things.

KNT

106. I'm not sure who that would be.

KFJ

107. KFJ was a unit manager at Oakbank.

zLIM

108. I've no idea who that was.

LJK

109. He was care staff.

LIR

110. He was a unit manager and is now deceased.

LIW

111. LIW was a member of care staff. If I had to point a finger at anybody with iffy practices, it would be him. It was an honesty thing with LIW. There's something at the back of my mind that there were suspicions that there was maybe money going missing or something to do with finances. I had concerns about how honest and upfront he was but I can't go into any detail really.

LIX

112. He was in the Rosemount unit.

Mrs LIY [REDACTED]

113. Mrs LIY [REDACTED] was the matron. She was a nice woman and did her bit.

LIU [REDACTED]

114. LIU [REDACTED] was in the unit as well and he left to go to a children's home.

FZR [REDACTED]

115. FZR [REDACTED] was the son of KFJ [REDACTED] and worked in the care side of Oakbank.

FYZ [REDACTED]

116. FYZ [REDACTED] worked on the care side of Oakbank. He is now deceased.

FZF [REDACTED]

117. He had a brother [REDACTED] and they both worked at Oakbank on the care side. FZF [REDACTED] is deceased.

HPW [REDACTED]

118. HPW [REDACTED] was in the care side of Oakbank but is now deceased.

119. Of all of those named individuals, there is not one person there who I saw abuse a young person, or ever heard of them abusing a young person. I didn't ever witness anything that I considered to be abusive.



## Allegations that have been made to the Inquiry about me

KFI

120. I remember KFI. She was a tall thin girl and very quiet. She started in one of the main units in the school, but because she was getting older, she was moved into the independence training unit as things seemed to be going ok. She was actually moved into a flat in the community as part of her training for independence.
121. Before that, I used to be involved with a local community football team. When we had midweek games on, KFI and LUC asked if they could come with me to the football. LUC was a bit of a tomboy so it was probably her idea. My mind ticked over as LUC could be a bit of a handful, KFI not so much. LUC persevered so I agreed to put my neck on the block. For midweek games, I'm not sure how many there were, but I'd pick the two of them up from school and take them to the football. Whilst I'm on the touchline coaching, they would either stand or lie on the touchline and to give them their due, they never gave me a moments concern. After the game, I took them back to school and I was delighted with their behaviour. I'd laid myself wide open as if they'd decided to abscond, I was the one who would look silly.
122. I never had any cause to sanction or punish KFI. She was a sad case, she didn't seem to have any parental involvement. If she did get out of school, she'd visit her grandparents. They couldn't take her overnight but at least she got time out of school. Unlike many others she didn't have the same family connection.
123. I never in one hundred years abused KFI.
124. KFI has given a statement to the Inquiry. At page 12, paragraph 62 of her statement, she has said, 'LIL was responsible for most of the abuse I suffered. If I did anything wrong then it would be him who would be notified as he mainly dealt with me rather than SNR. When I was taken home by the police he would sit on a chair right in front of me and tell me to turn to face him. He would be right in

*my face and if I didn't listen he would grab or skelp my ear for me to listen to what he was saying."*

125. That did not happen. The passage of time has certainly not affected my recollection. I can't explain why she would be saying these things. I thought I had a success story there with those two, being able to take them out in the community, allow them a bit of freedom and take them back into the school. As far as I was concerned, I put that down as a plus and I certainly didn't abuse her.
126. If a child had been treated in a way that she's describing, I accept that it was abusive but it didn't happen. If she was being abused like that, why didn't she complain at the time? It's total rubbish.
127. **KFI** goes on to say the following at page 12, paragraph 63 of her statement, *"When I was fourteen **LIL** had had a pint of blood taken and he was running about the hall of the main house at night playing football. One of the members of staff told him I had done something wrong and the next thing I know he was laying into me in the lobby. He nearly fainted. I don't remember what it was that I had done wrong.*
128. Where does my pint of blood come into this? This is total rubbish. There is absolutely no way that the passage of time has affected my recollection. As I said earlier, I thought my work with **LUC** and **KFI** was a bonus. I thought that I'd actually had a good relationship with her and I did things like taking them out and about, and all the rest of it. As far as I'm concerned, it was socialising.
129. I can't say why she would be saying this, maybe she's seeing a psychiatrist or something. If she had been treated in this way, I accept that it is abusive but I didn't abuse her. For me to get that report after all these years, after what I did for her and **LUC**, I'm angry and upset.
130. **KFI** continues in paragraph 63, *"He was punching at my stomach telling me I had better start listening to staff in the place. He was swearing at me, pulling my hair and*

*ear and skelping round the back of my head. I think this went on for about 20 - 30 minutes."*

131. I'm going to use the same words again, rubbish. It didn't happen and I'm totally disgusted to hear those allegations.
132. The passage of time hasn't affected my recollection of events, it's sharper than ever. I don't know why she would be saying it, I'm not a psychiatrist or psychologist. If somebody had been treated like that, it would be classed by me as abusive.
133. **KFI** goes on to say the following at page 13, paragraph 64 of her statement, *"If I swore or something **LIL** would come and see me in my room. This happened once or twice a week and he would be alone. He would make me sit down and listen to him. He would slap my head, pull my ear and punch me on the arm. All of this was sore. This went on the whole time I was there until I left."*
134. That is so far-fetched, it's just not true. The passage of time has certainly not affected my recollection, it has heightened it. I have no idea why these things are being said. If she had been treated in the way she's describing, it is undoubtedly abuse, but not by me.
135. **KFI** goes on to say the following at page 13 paragraph 65 of her statement, *"Another time I was in the main hall for doing something wrong and **LIL** punched my stomach and was hitting my ear."*
136. This is becoming ridiculous, it didn't happen. The passage of time has not affected my recollection. I have no idea why these things are being said. I accept that was abuse, but not by me. I have a letter that was sent when I was applying for **SNR** job at Oakbank and it was signed by forty kids. I wonder if they would agree?
137. Finally, **KFI** goes on to say the following at page 15, paragraph 74 of her statement, *"I did not feel safe in Oakbank because of the torture from **LIL**. I was put in there to be safe but I didn't feel safe at all because of him."*

138. This is basically nonsense. By her own admission, she abused drugs and whether that has coloured her thinking or thoughts, I don't know. There is so much rubbish, I'm looking for a back door for her here because it's nonsense. It was well known that of a weekend she was on the streets, meeting her friends and taking drugs. When she was in the independence training unit and given a flat in town, it only lasted one weekend because we got a phone call from the owner telling us that the flat had been trashed. SNR [REDACTED] sent me down to inspect the damage and it had been trashed. There was rubbish lying everywhere, blood splashed about the place and we had to cover the damage. She was only out the door a day and she went back to her old habits. That's an illustration of what she could get up to.

139. I'm disappointed that she's going down this route. I put my reputation at stake and she kicked me in the teeth.

LUC [REDACTED]

140. LUC [REDACTED] has given a statement to the Inquiry. At page 7, paragraph 38 of her statement she has said, *"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 [REDACTED], ..., or .... Mr ... who would all slap or punch me for running away."*

141. I have no recollection of punishing her or sanctioning her in anyway. I have described my relationship with her. LUC [REDACTED] ended up with us because she had terrorised the [REDACTED] area of Perth and they couldn't wait to get her out of there. She was a bit of a tomboy. Not only the kids, but even staff were frightened to cross her because she was so unpredictable. There was one occasion where it was fed back that one of the members of staff had called her a 'dyke'. It fed back to me and I had to go up to the classroom concerned and luckily I managed to get the teacher out of the way, but LUC [REDACTED] was going jumping mad. Years later, I was reading about delinquent behaviour in Perth and LUC [REDACTED] was in court for a variety of offences and none of them were straightforward.

She was a walking disaster, not that she was like that with me. She wasn't physically abused, that's for sure.

142. LUC goes on to say the following at page 8, paragraph 40 of her statement, *"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. ..., who .... and LIL were the main ones who used to assault me regularly."*
143. That is not true. I never abused her in anyway. I accept that what she's describing is abuse.
144. LUC goes on to say the following at page 8, paragraphs 41 and 42 of her statement, *"LIL 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."*
145. *There is no history of epilepsy in my family and I've been epileptic ever since that incident."*
146. I never took LUC out on her own and it was always the midweek games that I took both KFI and LUC to, never a Saturday. For her to suddenly develop epilepsy, considering her background, I find that hard to believe. What is she trying to do, claim compensation or something for this? I don't know why she's saying that, if I could explain LUC's behaviour, I'd be worth a lot of money. I accept that what she's describing is abuse, but not by me.
147. LUC goes on to say the following at page 8, paragraph 45 of her statement, *"Sometimes ... would have me in this hold in his office and Mr ... would come in. I would be on the ground and ... would stand on my ankle or kick me in the ribs and then just walk off. If LIL 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 ... would both have a hold of my hands in that very painful position."*

148. This is more rubbish. I accept this would be abuse.
149. LUC goes on to say the following at page 9, paragraph 47 and 48 of her statement, *"On my sixteenth birthday ... 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.*
150. *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."*
151. This girl is delusional. I have never heard such a cock and bull story in my life. I can't even remember her having a ponytail. I have a photograph from Oakbank from 1985 – 1987 of the children and staff. KFI and LUC are in the picture and LUC does appear to have short hair, you can't even see a ponytail there.
152. I cannot explain why she is saying this, other than that she has mental illness. She has had it for years, even as a kid. That's all coming out there. Her behaviour before she even came to Oakbank would suggest there were serious problems with her and her family.
153. I accept that what she describes is abuse.
154. The passage of time has not affected my recollection of any of those allegations made, it is as clear as mud.

GCY

155. I don't remember GCY at all.

156. GCY [REDACTED] has given a statement to the Inquiry. At page 27 paragraph 159 of his statement he has said, *“Other times would be getting an elbow in the ribs or a punch in the head or back of the knee. The staff members that I remember doing this to me were ... and LIL [REDACTED] I also saw them doing the same thing to some of the other boys. ... was the worst. He was prolific. He was just a big bully. LIL [REDACTED] was aggressive but not as violent as ...”*.
157. I have no recollection of the boy and I certainly have no recollection of what he accuses me of doing. There was another PE teacher, who I don't want to name, who started at the school after I moved into a promoted post, and I can only think that GCY [REDACTED] is getting me mixed up with someone else. I accept that if he had been treated in the way he describes, that is abuse.
158. GCY [REDACTED] goes on to say the following at page 27, paragraph 162 of his statement, *“... and LIL [REDACTED] would also pretend to be playing with you but it was really rough. They would hurt you and you will be screaming but they just called you a ‘Jessie’.”*
159. Apart from the fact that I can't remember who the boy is, I didn't do it. If I don't know who he is, how can I answer that, but I would not have done that. The other PE teacher that I mentioned earlier, I could imagine him behaving in that way. I accept that the second part of that allegation is abuse but he uses the word playing so it doesn't suggest it started off as abuse.
160. The passage of time has not affected my recollection, apart from the fact I can't remember the boy concerned. I have no idea why he would be saying these things.

HZY [REDACTED]

161. I remember HZY [REDACTED] I have read his comments and his whole experience at Oakbank was not good. Without making a lot of the fact that he was quite a quiet lad and kept himself to himself. He took a lot of stick for being what he was, shall we say. I remember some of his comments about Oakbank in general and I actually echo them

myself because it was very much in the early days of the institution. I remember the day I walked in and watched my first parade and literally I can remember this clearly, I just took one look at what was going on and I just said to myself, "What have I done?". I had come from a mainstream school into an institution where things needed to change as far as I was concerned.

162. My own opinion is that over the years, I changed quite a lot. I can understand how he felt about the place. For a laddie like him, having to change in a communal shower and obviously risk abuse from other young people, he was an easy target for bullying. I have to say that most staff were aware of the situation and would try and protect him but, as I say, he did have a hard time of it for what he was. I didn't ever have cause to sanction or punish him and I certainly didn't abuse him.
163. HZY has given a statement to the Inquiry. At page 28, paragraphs 155 and 156 of her statement, she has said, *"On 11th March 1992, I was assaulted by another pupil called ... I was hospitalised. ... was very close to one of the senior staff members called LIL who was another bully. LIL did not want me to press charges but I did because I didn't want anything like this happening again to me. LIL didn't and he tried to blackmail me not to press charges. He actually threatened me that if I pressed charges I wouldn't know what had hit me. I don't know if he meant me pressing charges would instigate some kind of oversight of Oakbank and that another agency becoming involved in Oakbank petrified them. I think his threats were motivated by that.*
164. *He threatened me by saying I had seen nothing yet. Those were his words. I had my arm in a sling and he basically threatened me that that was nothing compared with what would happen if I pressed charges."*
165. He's obviously a very articulate young man. Reading between the lines he obviously might have gone into further education somewhere. That is just total bunkum. There is no way that I would conduct myself in such a way as to defend what happened to the laddie. I spent a lot of time protecting him and defending him. I don't like the reference to somebody else that I was very close to or friendly with. There's just no



way I would take that stance. I don't recall the incident he's talking about although there is something at the back of my mind, but I don't have a clear reflection of it. There's no doubt that the guy was subject to abuse from fellow pupils and for that reason he was protected as far as possible.

166. If a child had been treated in that way, I accept that it's abuse. I can't explain why these things are being said. I don't know in HZY's case if he was maybe pointing the finger at me because he needed to blame somebody. The passage of time has not affected my recollection, I quite clearly remember young HZY
167. HZY goes on to say at page 31, paragraphs 175 and 176 of her statement, "*... bullied me because I didn't press charges against ... and I didn't understand why. I told him I wasn't pressing charges against ... because I had been threatened and that I had been told it was being dealt with internally. He said he would believe it when he saw it.*"
168. *After running away on 23 April 1992, the police came to my father's flat looking for me. I remember saying to the police officers who came to my dad's flat that I couldn't go back to Oakbank because I was being abused. The policewoman was very nice and sympathetic but said she had to take me back. I told her of the abuse I was enduring and other people were enduring at Oakbank."*
169. Similarly on page 40, paragraph 222 she says, "*I reported the abuse one year after leaving Oakbank. There was an enquiry into Oakbank and I was the only pupil giving evidence. This was run by Grampian Regional Council as an internal enquiry. I give a statement to that. That was in 1993. I also attended at the hearing and gave my evidence. That was held at Woodhill House Council Building in Aberdeen."*
170. Again on page 41, paragraph 229 she says, "*In 1994, I reported the abuse to the police. I think they were investigating something else to do with Oakbank and they approached me. They took a statement from me about the abuse I had suffered. I heard nothing further about it. Nothing happened."*

171. It didn't happen. I wasn't aware of him going and giving any evidence nor was I aware of any internal inquiry. I wasn't aware **HZY** had reported anything to the police.

**GTO**

172. I remember **GTO** very well, He was a wee boy who lived in Torry in Aberdeen and ended up in Oakbank. The nicest thing I could say about him was that he was a bit of a scallywag. He was out of the control of his parents, or shall we say the parenting wasn't very good. Any controls on his behaviour were exerted by an older sister who seemed a bit more sensible. He was capable of being deceitful.

173. I didn't ever directly sanction or punish him as he was in a unit where they were keeping a close eye on him. Any sanctions I would have been involved with would have been part of the overall sanction regime. For disappearing, he could have lost his home leave and for him that would be paramount because he was so keen to get back into Torry and just be **GTO**. I always remember, there was a kids club in Torry, the Pheonix club. He managed to convince the staff in his unit that he was a regular attender there before he came to Oakbank, and he would get out of an evening, whichever night it was, to attend the Pheonix club. In itself that seemed fair enough but **GTO** took full advantage of that. Sometimes he didn't even go, sometimes he didn't come back in time. He was not reliable in terms of any arrangements that were made with him.

174. **GTO** has given a statement to the Inquiry. At page 8, paragraphs 43 and 44 of his statement, he has said '**LIL** was a care worker at Oakbank. He was in his 30's when I was there. He was tall with a local accent. He had short brown hair with a moustache. He was able to take us out on trips without any of the other staff questioning him on where we were going.

175. **LIL** sexually abused me. He also abused another pupil called ... It was well known amongst the boys that ... was his pet. ... would wash **LIL**'s car and he would go out on trips with him. He was treated a lot differently than the other boys. He

*was spoilt by Mr LIL and got gifts from him. I recall on one occasion ... stole Mr LIL's car which was a white Ford Sierra and I think that he pranged it."*

176. I did have a white car at one stage but it was never stolen, it was never pranged. It was a Ford but that's all I can remember about it. Everything else that I've heard just now, is a nonsense. I've been bald since the early 70's and certainly had a receding hairline by the time I started at Oakbank. I had a moustache when I was teaching at Summerhill Academy but not at Oakbank. I can't think of any other staff members who would fit that description.
177. His recollection of events is not true and he was just a little mischief maker as far as I'm concerned.
178. GTO goes on to say the following at page 9, paragraphs 45 and 46 of his statement, *"I was groomed by Mr LIL He would give me money for sweeties. He had the run of Oakbank, and he sexually assaulted me there and also on the occasions he took me out in his car. I find this very hard to talk about, ...*
179. *It was because of the sexual abuse that I was running away. LIL had the keys to the place and there were other boys being taken out of their beds at all times of the night. He could go anywhere in Oakbank because he had these keys. I couldn't stay at Oakbank because of LIL"*
180. It is a fairytale; he was never in my car, I never gave him sweeties. He was maybe jealous because he didn't get the attention that he would've liked. Maybe in terms of some of the others who were seen as being better treated by me. He didn't do anything to help himself.
181. Also, I was not at Oakbank overnight. The latest I worked was say, 10:00 pm. I understand that senior staff had an evening that they were in charge but at 10:00 pm the night staff took over. I didn't stay on the premises, I lived out-with the school boundaries. There was no way that I was wandering about in the middle of the night or middle of the morning visiting bedrooms.

182. The passage of time has not affected my recollection and what I've just heard is total nonsense. He was a wicked little boy who obviously made up stories to excuse his own behaviour. I accept that how he describes being treated was abuse, but he wasn't.
183. GTO goes on to say the following at page 10, paragraphs 50 of his statement, *"I had no one to tell about what was happening to me at Oakbank. I was running away so that I would not be sexually abused by LIL I tried to tell my mother about what was happening, but she told me to stop telling lies or I would be in worse trouble. My own mother wouldn't believe me and that was very hard to take. I couldn't tell any other adults as I didn't trust them. That was it for me I wasn't going to tell anyone else if my own mother didn't believe me."*
184. He was not running away because he had been sexually abused, he was running away to suit his own purposes. His mother didn't exert a lot of control over him. The only person in the household who seemed to say the right things was an older sister, who I met once. GTO's very capable of concocting a story like that. He is a liar.

ILE

185. I think ILE came to Oakbank from another residential establishment, possibly Brimmond. He was a sporty boy. I'm not sure if it was when he was with us, or when he came back to visit us, but he had a broken leg. He'd had a road accident after stealing a motor bike or something like that. For all intents and purposes, he came across as a decent laddie. Underneath the skin there was something else maybe. To be quite honest, I can't remember if I ever sanctioned or punished him. He wouldn't have been sanctioned or punished for breaking his leg or stealing a car or whatever he did. I honestly can't remember. I didn't abuse him.
186. ILE has given a statement to the Inquiry. At page 19, paragraph 100 of his statement, he has said, *"LIL was a P.E. teacher and again if you were not working to his satisfaction he would punch you in the ribs, another one who would use his knees in your back. He never hit you in the face, always body blows. He had a*

trainee called [REDACTED] and if she was in the class he would calm down and ease off from hitting you.”

187. Again, that is not true. This was not me. I can again only think that ILE is getting me mixed up with the other PE teacher, who I don't want to name, who took over from me in that post. The trainee called [REDACTED] was actually [REDACTED] would have had a dual qualification and went between PE and [REDACTED] base class of learning support. [REDACTED] would help out generally when there were in the class. But in terms of abusing him physically, no.
188. The passage of time has not affected my recollection. I remember his road accident so I'm pretty sure that I could remember anything else that had happened. I can't explain why he would be saying these things but ILE could be a bit of a chancer at times. I accept what he is describing is abuse.

GVU [REDACTED]

189. I remember GVU [REDACTED], his mother and his sister. The boys would call him a bit of a bampot. He was in a world of his own. I honestly can't remember if I ever sanctioned or punished him but I certainly did not abuse him.
190. GVT [REDACTED] has given a statement to the Inquiry on behalf of her deceased son GVU [REDACTED]. At page 9, paragraph 47 of her statement, she has said, *“I do remember that the man called LIL [REDACTED] was reprimanded for something that happened at the school and that he was suspended. I have no idea what he did it is just something that sticks in my mind.”*
191. I was suspended latterly and that was when I decided that I was retiring. He would've been dead by that later stage, I'm sure. That was the only time I was suspended.
192. GVT [REDACTED] goes on to say the following at pages 10 and 11, paragraph 53 and 54 of her statement, *“GVU [REDACTED] changed completely. He was now an angry boy fighting authority at every opportunity. There was one particular evening when I went to visit GVU [REDACTED] with*

my sister. G V U came into the visiting area in his pyjamas with his ankles tied together with rope. He shuffled across to meet us it was like a scene from an American prison. I was shocked I couldn't understand why they were doing this.

193. I was told by the staff that this was the routine when the children ran away. I was very angry and my sister and I made a complaint to Mr L I L . He told us that this was what happened when the children ran away. Mr L I L was very arrogant and he just said that this was the punishment for running away.”

194. I can't remember any of that, I have never ever experienced that in Oakbank. In all my years there, I didn't ever see someone with their ankles tied together. That is an absolute total lie. It's just not true. The passage of time hasn't affected my recollection of that. I have no idea why she would be saying that. G V U was a bit scatty so I don't know if the rest of the family are of that ilk. I accept that what is described is abuse.

F Z X

195. I don't really remember F Z X There was a wee laddie who came from up North but I'm not sure and off the top of my head, no.

196. F Z X has given a statement to the Inquiry. At page 22, paragraph 146 of her statement, she has said, 'L I L was a nice guy, and I did get on well with him but, when I had to stay at Oakbank over Christmas and New Year he gave me a fiver to go into town drinking. I know that's wrong now, but back then it was like party time.”

197. That sounds like generous me but I have no recollection of giving her a fiver to go drinking. If I had given her a fiver it wasn't to go drinking anyway; "Here's your Christmas, buy yourself a bottle of something." That's rubbish. The passage of time has not affected my recollection. I don't know why she would be saying that. I accept it's abuse, but obviously I wouldn't accept that giving them money was abuse but to buy drink, yes.

198. I do remember KNR to a certain extent. I don't remember ever sanctioning or punishing KNR I can't remember anything specific about him. I certainly didn't abuse him.
199. KNR has given a statement to the Inquiry. At page 11, paragraphs 68 and 69 of his statement, he has said, *"I remember being in the assembly room in Oakbank. A boy became aggressive and abusive towards me. He started fighting me and I hit him back. My key worker ran over and put my arm up my back. He started marching me away and as we walked, my arm was getting sorer and sorer and I was telling him to get off me. He was putting my arm further up my back and I punched him.*
200. *He threw me into SNR office. There was a big table with lots of seats round it. In came ..., Mr ... and LIL ... They took me by the scruff of the neck and started shouting in my face. They leant me over ... table and started smacking me round the head. Then I was belted on my backside a couple of times, on top of my clothes. It was sore and I was crying. I was then thrown up stairs into my dorm and into my bed. I don't remember if they left marks on me. The three of them were in the office throughout. That was the first time I felt abused."*
201. I wouldn't have thought the belt was still being used. I don't know when he was there. If he was born 197 then that would be 198 as a minimum and there's no way he was belted in 198 or anything else for that matter. In Oakbank they stopped using the belt. I witnessed a child getting the belt when I was first there in 197, and I'm talking early doors, so I can't see it happening in 19 whatever it was. I certainly don't remember anything about what did happen, I wasn't there. The room he is talking about was the old boardroom and it was next to the public office, next to the main corridor. You wouldn't go around slapping and kicking and abusing people in more or less a public space.
202. The passage of time has not affected my recollection but I accept that if he had been treated in the way he is describing, that is abuse.

203. It's a strange world. I've had my eyes opened, especially with KFI and LUC because I just cannot believe the stuff that they accused me of.

### **Other Allegations**

204. There was an incident just more or less before I left Oakbank. It was deemed that I was no longer fit to continue in the profession. That suited me actually as after twenty-five odd years, I'd had enough. My mind was gone. The abuse was misreported anyway, but it was a shouting match between a young man who was shouting at me and I responded by shouting back at him and it was seen as inappropriate so 'c'est la vie'. I was suspended as a result of that. I was in the SNR role at the time.
205. Following the incident, asked for witnesses. I could be pretty nasty here and say that there was a campaign to blacken my name and get me out the door. didn't want me in the first place. I started to find out things and heard that actually said that the whole early management team were 'corrupt', to use words. didn't take the post when should have, because was playing for time as didn't want me in post. The powers that be said, "No" and that I was staying in post. We worked together for the best part of a couple of years. I didn't enjoy it and the whole situation got to me. couldn't wait to suspend me.
206. got then SNR John McNally, to go and investigate the incident. He was the same level as me in terms of job. Funnily enough, ended up employing John's two sons as well which I didn't think was right. It didn't help the relationship there. The investigation and reports that came back are inaccurate. You could say that's just me saying that, but there was definitely a move afoot. I later learned that had been logging my form so to speak because obviously couldn't wait to say, "Bye, bye".
207. I was suspended just long enough to sign the papers and get my early pension. I never went back to Oakbank. In fact, I had ended up in hospital prior to this incident and



when I went back to Oakbank, I just thought, "No". So, after my suspension, I applied for early retirement on medical grounds and had to go through the process. I had medicals etc. and in the meantime, I was off work. The early retirement package came through and I just thought, "Thank you and goodnight".

208. It's very interesting because even though I had left Oakbank, I had a small family business and I ended up employing some of Oakbank pupils. There was one of my pupils who was quite a guy and he asked me for a reference for a job he was going for. Not only did I have boys playing football for me, but I had others working for me and I have a letter of reference that I've written for a pupil at Oakbank. I had employed him in casual employment in September 200█ and he was an excellent hardworking employee. I had employed him and then gave him a reference as he was moving on.
209. I have a letter sent to the Chief Executive of Aberdeen City Council which is stamped as received by them on 13 May 199█. It reads, "I am writing on behalf of the pupils of Oakbank school and their rights. We the pupils of Oakbank have read the statements and functions book and also the Children's rights. It says in both books that children's views should be heard if it effects their future. With this in mind we have come to the conclusion that if we the pupils of Oakbank have not been consulted about SNR █ SNR █ job, we do have a right to have a say as it will affect our future. We feel that Mr LIL █ has done more for this school in a couple of months than Mr HMY █ did in the time he was here. We know that Mr LIL █ is capable of doing the job and feel that it is only right that he fills the place. As a pupil in Oakbank school, I feel that Mr LIL █ knows the school and will try to do his best for it. The children prefer Mr LIL █ as SNR █ because he is there for you if you have any problems or have anything you don't agree with. He will sit and ask you about it and some pupils will only tell Mr LIL █ their problems. On behalf of the pupils at Oakbank school, yours sincerely, █". On the other side of the letter it states, "This has been enclosed on the back of this letter so that the pupils that wish for Mr LIL █ to stay as SNR █ have signed this letter". There is a list of thirty-two names who have signed that. They championed on my behalf, it'd bring a tear to my eye. The list doesn't include any of those who have made allegations.

210. I got sent a copy of that by Aberdeen City Council. There is a criticism there or a comparison against Mr HMY and that part I don't agree with. He did as best as he could.

### **Leaving Oakbank**

211. I had been in the post of SNR for two or three years. I had health issues and stress for which I'd ended up hospitalised. I did come back to work but as I mentioned earlier, I was suspended and that was the final straw for me. I decided that after being there for twenty-five years, I couldn't handle it anymore and it was time to move on. I applied for and got early retirement on health grounds in 200 and left Oakbank.

### **Helping the Inquiry**

212. You need a reliable capable staff group. If kid's lives are being supervised in care properly, they need to have keyworkers and care staff who look after them properly. It's important that the young person is protected and made to feel welcome. Also, any issues or problems should be dealt with as you normally would do in a family group. You can't ignore issues, bad behaviour and bullying.
213. You are never going to totally replace a family home as such, but you must make it as safe and secure and happy for the young people in there. It's important that they have somebody to talk to.

### **Other information**

214. 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.

LIL [Redacted]

Signed.....

LIL [Redacted]

Dated..... 21.9.24