

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Fiona YOUNG

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is Fiona Margaret Isabella Young. My maiden name is Fraser. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1967. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mum and dad split up when I was very young. My mum liked to party hard back then. To a certain extent, she neglected me [REDACTED] n't looked after very well.

3. [REDACTED]

4. I can't remember very much about my life before going into care. We lived in Carnmuir Street in Forth. I remember some bad experiences, like our bedroom window being put in one night and our garden getting trashed when I was a flower girl on Gala Day.

5. Most of what I know is from stories I've been told by my family. Supposedly, my father physically abused [REDACTED] I think it was dealt with through the court at the time and he got a £25 fine. I think that's the reason [REDACTED] ended up going into care. My

mother's side of the family were very bitter towards my father. It was a very bitter family feud and [REDACTED] in the middle of it.

6. I was told that my father left me [REDACTED] on my Auntie [REDACTED] doorstep. She lived in an upstairs flat at the time and had 3 children of her own. She couldn't accommodate [REDACTED] and that's why social services got involved and placed [REDACTED] in Smyllum. That's the story I was always told when I was growing up. [REDACTED] was actually my maternal grandmother, but I always called her "auntie". I didn't know she was my granny until I was older.
7. [REDACTED] I [REDACTED] in hospital with scabies shortly before [REDACTED] went into Smyllum. [REDACTED] I don't remember which hospital it was or where it was. It was tiny. [REDACTED] in there for a wee while.
8. [REDACTED] spent a night or two in an emergency foster care home as well. I remember [REDACTED] taken there at night. I don't know if that came before or after the hospital. Something in my mind tells me that [REDACTED] found to have the scabies in foster care and [REDACTED] taken from there to the hospital.
9. I don't remember exactly when I went into Smyllum. It was about 1974 or 1975. I was around 6 or 7. I think I was there for between a year to a year and a half. I left in about 1976 or 1977.
10. [REDACTED] taken to Smyllum by the social worker in his wee, yellow sports car. [REDACTED] loved that car, [REDACTED] The social worker was Tom Sage. He was a lovely man. My aunt, who is supporting me to give my statement, thinks he would be in his mid-sixties now. I don't know whether it was Strathclyde or Lanark District Council he worked for at the time, but I know he was based at Lanark social work office.

Smyllum Park, Lanark

11. I remember pulling up outside Smyllum in Mr Sage's car and going into a big room in the front house. All the stairs were carpeted. I think [REDACTED] got lunch that day in a different dining room from the one [REDACTED] ended up eating all [REDACTED] meals in. It was downstairs. [REDACTED] taken to our dorms after lunch. That's all I can remember.
12. Smyllum was a big place. There was a big front building and different annexes. I think a lot of the nuns, priests and older people were in the front building. [REDACTED] in the annexe to the left of the building, which was directly facing you as you went in the courtyard.
13. I would say the age range of the children in [REDACTED] annexe was from very young to about 17 or 18. We all mixed together in the playroom. There was a house in the grounds where older girls were kept separate. They were much older. I don't know if it was some kind of halfway house.
14. Smyllum was run by nuns. They were the staff. I don't know which organisation it was when I was there. I knew it was Catholic. That had a big impact on us because [REDACTED] Protestants. I didn't strike up any sort of relationship with the nuns. I only knew them as the "sisters". I don't remember any of their names. I remember a cleaner called Margaret. I think she was in her forties. She's the only other staff member I remember. She was really kind.

Routine at Smyllum Park Orphanage

Mornings and bedtime

15. The bedrooms were called dorms. There were four dorms in different colours: pink, green, blue and orange. I remember there being only one girls' dorm. It was the pink room. [REDACTED] I shared a single bed in there when [REDACTED] first arrived because there weren't any spare beds. There were between 6 to 8 beds in the room.

16. A bed then became available in the orange room, which was a boys' dorm, and I was put in there. I think there were 6 beds in that dorm. I hated it. I didn't say that to anybody. You daren't say anything. The boys used to taunt me. They made sexual innuendoes and gestures. They were 2 or 3 years older than me. They used to do stuff with their body parts. They tried to make themselves look like me and say they were girls too. It just wasn't pleasant.
17. The boys were split into dorms by age. [REDACTED] the younger kids in either the blue or green room. There were older boys in the other dorm, which was diagonally across from the orange one. One of the nuns slept in a room, which I would now call a sleepover room. It had a bed and a place to keep their documents. The pocket money was also kept in there.
18. We got up early in the morning for school. I don't remember what time. I think they just put the lights on and told us it was time to get up. Sometimes I remember a bell ringing, but I don't know if that's right.
19. We got washed in the vanity room. There were about 4 or 5 sinks in the room. It was like a production line of kids. There was a long mint green shelf which was curved at the top. Our toothbrushes, cup and brush sat on top and our flannels and towels hung below. We all had different coloured stuff.
20. After washing, we got dressed and went down for breakfast in the dining room. I don't remember what we ate. All the kids in the annexe ate in the dining room. We walked to school after breakfast.
21. In the evenings, we got washed again at the sinks in the vanity room. We then got into our night clothes and had our supper before bed. You had a section in a wardrobe and a bedside cabinet to keep your personal stuff in. The only thing I remember having is a wee figure doll I got for Christmas. After that, it was lights out. I don't remember what time we went to bed. Quite often it was still light outside. If you needed the toilet during the night, you just got up and went.

22. [REDACTED] was a bed-wetter. He was treated badly. He got slapped and sometimes he'd be stripped naked and made to walk, with his wet pyjamas and bed linen, down all the stairs to the laundry in the basement. They didn't always change his bed. It was appalling.
23. Sunday night was bath night. We all stripped and stood naked, boys and girls, in line for a bath. Again, it was like a production line. The bath water was shared.

Food

24. We ate all our meals in the dining room. We were supervised during the meals. I remember the bain-marie type terrines that came up from the kitchen in the basement. If they ran out, they quite often sent down one of the kids to bring more stuff up from the kitchen. The terrines were red hot. You had to carry them back up the stairs. I was sent down a few times. I used to be terrified, as there was a beggar who sat at the kitchen door. He was an old guy with a tin.
25. I don't remember what we ate for dinner. I just remember seeing it and how it was served up. I can't remember what it tasted like. Supper was a small snack, like a biscuit or a scone. You daren't not eat your food. When we were finished, we took our plates up and put them on a trolley.

School

26. I went to the school within Smyllum initially. It was a real Catholic education. Mr Sage complained about it because it wasn't the right education for [REDACTED] I think my family had input too. [REDACTED] then sent to the Robert Owen Primary School in Lanark.
27. I laugh about this now but it wasn't funny at the time. [REDACTED] got bigotry from both sides. In Smyllum, the other kids taunted [REDACTED] because [REDACTED] Protestants. They called [REDACTED] "Proddies". When [REDACTED] went to the Robert Owen school, [REDACTED] had to walk up Smyllum

Lane past St Mary's, the Catholic school, with [REDACTED] school uniform on, so [REDACTED] taunted by the kids there. Then, when [REDACTED] got to our school, [REDACTED] got bullied because [REDACTED] lived in the Catholic home. They called [REDACTED] "Fenians". It was terrible [REDACTED] at that age.

28. [REDACTED] walked down Smyllum Avenue and then up through the lane to the school. [REDACTED] ate [REDACTED] lunch at school. I can't remember what time school finished.

29. I don't know how long I went to the school in Smyllum. I remember we sat at benches, not desks. It wasn't a big class. The kids were about my age. I also remember getting a book with a robin on it for good work, which was a positive experience.

Chores

30. We had work to do after school. Chores always came first. We got changed out of our uniforms into our play clothes. Our clothes were brought in for us by our families. I don't know if they also brought in the school uniform. The school shoes were taken off and lined up on the stairs, black on one side and brown on the other. One of our jobs was to polish the shoes. You'd go up the stairs with your black or brown polish and clean all the shoes.

31. You always had to tidy your area in the dorm. The clothes were washed mostly by the older girls, but I remember having to put them through the wringer. I also had to take the laundry up sometimes and put it into the correct dorms. The clothes all had names on them.

32. I know now that I shouldn't have been doing those chores. I was too young. Back then, you just did it. After you did your set chores, you had dinner and then playtime.

Leisure time

33. We had free time before supper during the week and after we'd done our chores at the weekend. Chores came before everything at the weekend. We had a TV room, which had a music system in it, and a playroom. There were tents, lots of toys and a piano in the playroom. We'd play in the playroom first, and then they'd call for us to go into the TV room. I think that was to settle us down before bed.
34. I didn't go into the playroom much because of an incident I witnessed in there. Most of the time, I liked to be outside playing, listening to music or watching TV in the other room.
35. We were allowed to go outside and play. We used to play in the fields across from the home. I played with [REDACTED] get sticks and play with the cow pats, climb trees, catch caterpillars and put them in jars – all the normal things kids did. [REDACTED] also went for walks to see the horses. Outdoors was always better. [REDACTED] very rarely supervised when [REDACTED] out. I think that's why I liked it so much. Every now and again there'd be a disco in a big hut in the grounds. It wasn't all bad. There were good times as well.

Holidays

36. I can vaguely remember going to Girvan in Ayrshire. The sisters took us. It was a smaller group, not the whole annexe. We stayed in a sort of boarding house. It was by a beach and there was a big wheel and helter skelter. It really wasn't much different to being in Smyllum. It was just like another institution in a different area.

Birthdays and Christmas

37. I can only remember one Christmas there. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] We got up in the morning to a pants and vest set, a cheap figure doll and maybe also a colouring book. There was a girl, whose bed was in the corner of the room by the window, who had bikes, dolls and all sorts of things – it was toys

galore for her. I think her family provided all the stuff. I've got a photo on my Facebook page of Smyllum and that girl's in it. Her name began with an [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] something like that.

38. It's not that I didn't appreciate what I got at the time. I was delighted that morning to get a wee doll. I've always been appreciative of any little thing I get. I've brought my children up to be the same. It's just when you look back, you realise that it made you feel unworthy. I don't remember anything else about the day.
39. I also remember getting dressed up to go to a Christmas party or pantomime. I can't remember where we were going. It was a trip out around Christmastime. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. They were long, brushed velvet dresses. Mine was burgundy and [REDACTED] was a sort of teal colour. I remember standing waiting for a bus to collect us at the front doors of the main building. We waited ages and ages, but the bus never came because of the snow.
40. When kids had a birthday, we would usually get cake and either milk or a hot drink at supertime, and Happy Birthday would be sung. It was usually the families that brought the cakes in. We got cakes at Easter and Christmas too. The only [REDACTED] birthday I remember is [REDACTED] It wasn't a good day for him.

Religious instruction

41. I think [REDACTED] taken to chapel initially and then it stopped. [REDACTED] treated differently to the other kids because [REDACTED] Protestants. [REDACTED] had to sit at the back of the chapel. I remember all the children, except [REDACTED] had a palm branch on Palm Sunday. That really annoyed me.
42. I also remember wanting to take Communion, which I called "bread". To me it looked like those flying saucer sweeties with sherbet inside, which were my favourite. I used to buy them every day at Gibby's shop across from the school. I was crying one time because I wanted a flying saucer, and a nun dragged me out into the corridor. I'll remember this until the day I die. She asked what I was crying

for, and I said I wanted some “bread”. She said to me, “You’re not worthy of our father’s bread”. Every time I see one of those flying saucer sweets now, I hear those words in my head.

43. We also had to say the rosary at night before bed. The rosary beads hung above our beds.

Healthcare

44. I can’t remember if there were any doctors or matrons in Smyllum. I remember being ill just once. I chapped the door of the nun’s sleepover room. She didn’t have her habit on. I can’t remember her face. I can only remember seeing her long, white nightie and what looked to me like a shower cap on her head. I told her I was sick, and she put me into bed in the sick room. There was a sewing machine and loads of material in the room. I think I slept in there just that one night. I was kept off school the next day, and the sister made me go with Margaret to do the cleaning in the home.

Other staff

45. I first got to know Margaret the day I was off school ill. She took me round and showed me parts of the home I’d never seen. She was cleaning all the different areas. She took a liking to me. There was a bond between us. Margaret was kind. She would listen if I was worried or annoyed about anything. I could speak to her and wouldn’t get a slap.
46. That day she took me cleaning, she took me into a cupboard which was like an Aladdin’s cave. It was full of sweets and brand new toys and games. I remember it because it was after Christmas, which had been quite a poor one for [REDACTED] me. I think that’s why the room was so intriguing to me. I’ve never really thought about why all that stuff was in there in the first place, or why I would be taken into a room like that and not be given anything from it.

47. Margaret used to take [REDACTED] to her house in Lanark. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I remember her house well. I don't know the address, but I know exactly where it is.

Visits/Inspections

48. My Auntie [REDACTED] and my granny used to visit at the weekends. My granny was actually my great-granny. My mum came too at times. They'd take [REDACTED] out to the café sometimes and [REDACTED] get ice cream. If it was a nice day, [REDACTED] have a picnic out in the grounds. Other kids with their families would be there too. I've got a picture of one of those days. The nuns didn't supervise the visits, but you daren't say anything to your family about how you were being treated.
49. Most people got visitors at the weekend. The families would leave money for the kids. The money was kept in a tin and we all had a wee purse with our name on it. We used to queue up for our pocket money. If you were going out, or your visitors were coming, you'd get 5p or 10p. You only got pocket money if your family had left you some.
50. My dad used to come and take me out. He had married again. He used to take me to his in-laws. [REDACTED] The nuns frowned on me going out with my dad. They would say, "What makes you so special?" [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I always felt that I wasn't allowed to love my dad.
[REDACTED]
51. The social worker also visited. He came to take [REDACTED] to court and hearings. He didn't come and have meetings with the sisters. [REDACTED] went to court and hearings [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] for decisions to be made about where [REDACTED] to live. I can't remember much about it. I just remember going into these big rooms, which seemed massive as a child, and there'd be a man sitting with a wig on. I was terrified. I was asked questions about my dad which was really, really difficult for me.

52. I think the hearings were children's panels. [REDACTED]n't there for bad behaviour. [REDACTED] sat in front of a load of people and were asked questions, at that young age, about who [REDACTED] wanted to live with. I was a daddy's girl and wanted to tell them that I wanted to see my daddy, but I knew I couldn't. Courts and hearings were a big issue for me. It was as if I was making a decision that I didn't want to make. I couldn't express myself as a child. I'm a bit more vocal now.
53. I don't remember any inspections being carried out. Apart from the visitors I've mentioned, the only people within the Smyllum walls were priests, the sisters and Margaret. There were no other people from the outside world. I don't even remember any other cleaners.

Abuse at Smyllum

54. The nuns were really, really strict. It wasn't a nice place to be. You were slapped across the jaw for little things, like running instead of walking and speaking when you hadn't been spoken to. [REDACTED] weren't naughty children but that didn't matter. You still got slapped or pulled by the hair. [REDACTED] has learning disabilities. She would get tongue-tied and was slapped for not speaking properly. It was just constant abuse.
55. You got slapped if you didn't eat your meals. The sisters would stand over you and slap you hard across the jaw to make you eat. You'd be sitting there crying, having to force the food down. You weren't allowed to leave the dining room until the plate was finished. It happened to me and other kids on numerous occasions. It was an everyday thing.
56. The sisters didn't put any time into doing anything with us, other than punishments and their own chores, like supervising bath time. You were just like a number to them. There was no attempt to have conversations. They didn't make time for anything like that. Maybe that's why I can't remember any of their names. The girl in the pink dorm, who got all the toys at Christmas, was one of the sisters' favourites.

She would hang about with them. She didn't seem to get the same punishments as everybody else. It seemed to be that kids who came from wealthier families were more thought of.

57. My dad witnessed me being hit when he came to collect me one time. The sister was waiting on me in the vanity room to brush my hair. My brush was purple and [REDACTED] was mint green. I couldn't find mine, so I handed her [REDACTED] and she rattled it over my hands. She said, "That's [REDACTED] brush". I tried to say it was mine. There was already a bit of anger in her because it was [REDACTED] me who was being taken out by my dad. I was crying and my dad walked in. I think my dad reported it at the time, but I'm not sure. I don't know who he would have reported it too. It's a fuzzy memory. I remember him going ballistic that day. He was angry and really upset.
58. I wasn't severely physically abused. It was more mental torture and the lack of dignity for me. Being stripped naked and having to stand in a queue for a bath, being made to do those chores at such a young age, and being told you weren't worthy are the kind of things I'm talking about. [REDACTED] aren't "God's special children", because [REDACTED] n't Catholics. [REDACTED] made to feel that [REDACTED] didn't belong there.
59. [REDACTED] was physically punished more [REDACTED] because of [REDACTED] bed-wetting. [REDACTED] was a wee bit more traumatised than me. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The climate was warmer, so you could get out to play in the evening. [REDACTED] birthday was on a Sunday, which was bath night. [REDACTED] was out playing and one of the sisters asked me to go and fetch [REDACTED] used to play about in the allotment. There was a raised plant bed with covers on it. [REDACTED] used to call it Dracula's coffin. [REDACTED] was only tiny. I went out and told [REDACTED] to come in and get [REDACTED] birthday cake for supper, but [REDACTED] was enjoying himself and wouldn't come in.
60. One of the sisters then went out and practically brought [REDACTED] in by the ear. There were stairs from the annexe that went down into the courtyard. The vanity area was at the top of the stairs. She had a hold of [REDACTED] by the ear and pulled [REDACTED] up the stairs

to the vanity area. She stripped him and put him at the end of the queue for the bath. By the time [REDACTED] got in, the water was freezing. [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
61. After we got our bath, we all went to the dining room and his birthday cake got cut up. They didn't sing Happy Birthday to him. Everybody got a piece of cake and a glass of milk, except [REDACTED] and I. We didn't get anything. [REDACTED] had brought the cake in. That was the punishment for [REDACTED] not coming in when he was told.
 62. I witnessed other kids being physically abused. One day there was talk among the kids in the playroom about a boy who was under the influence of alcohol. The name [REDACTED] springs to mind, but I don't know if that's right. All the kids were saying that he had "brought his stomach up". I remember thinking that he had literally brought up his stomach, so I went for a peek into the dorm. The sister had the boy by the hair and was pushing his head into what I now know was vomit. I thought it was his stomach at the time. The boy was screaming. He had obviously been drinking and had vomited, and she was forcing his head into it.
 63. I mentioned before that I didn't like to go into the playroom. That's because I witnessed something that really stuck with me. We were in there playing and the sister came in and shouted for us to move into the TV room, which was the normal routine. A boy was playing the piano. We started to tidy the toys away and the boy carried on thumping away at the piano. The sister came over, got him by the back of the head and started to bang his head off the piano. She was thumping his head off the piano and shouting, "You were told. You were told". The blood was everywhere. It was horrific. The boy was in my dorm. He was about 2 or 3 years older than me and had red hair. He didn't sleep in the dorm that night. He was probably taken to the sick room. I don't know if I saw him later on. I just remember the incident. That was the most severe incident I saw.

Leaving Smyllum

64. My Auntie [REDACTED] legally fostered [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Smyllum while she sorted out getting bigger accommodation from the local authority. She got a house in the street [REDACTED] lived in before [REDACTED] went into Smyllum. I can't remember packing up in Smyllum. I can't remember anything about leaving. The next memory I have is living in Carnmuir Street and starting Forth Primary School.

Reporting of abuse at Smyllum

65. You daren't say anything to anybody. You couldn't complain. You couldn't go up to a sister and say, "Sister so-n-so did this". You were just slapped and sent on your way. I didn't tell Margaret, but she would have seen it anyway. Everybody in the home would have witnessed it. The sad thing is that they all seemed to stick together. The difference with Margaret was that she showed kindness, whereas the others didn't. I'm not saying Margaret was an angel, because I wouldn't tolerate seeing anything like that happening to children.
66. I didn't say anything about the abuse to the social worker. The sisters made you feel that you couldn't tell anybody. Somehow you knew there was a hierarchy. I didn't even tell my family about it. If I had told my Auntie [REDACTED] half the stuff that happened, she would have said to me, "Be glad you had a roof over your head". I've discussed it with [REDACTED] now. I've never reported it to the police.
67. I first started to talk about it at counselling after I had my daughter. I took postpartum thyroiditis after she was born in 1994. I was down and depressed, so my GP referred me for counselling. The counsellor asked me about my upbringing and that's when I started to talk it about it all.

Life after being in Smyllum

68.



69. We lived in Carnmuir Street at first and then moved to another house in Forth. That's where I lived until I left home. I was a normal teenager. I went to school and worked hard. I didn't get much help at home with my homework. My uncle helped me a bit. Essentially, I brought myself up. I took my own path.

70. When I left school, I wanted to go to college but was told I had to get a job because social work were no longer paying for me. I wasn't aware when I was younger that [REDACTED] was getting paid. They wanted me to go and work with a cousin who worked in a packing station in Lanark. I didn't want to pack tatties for a living. I wanted to work and care for people, like I should have been cared for. I dug my heels in and applied for two college courses; one was a preliminary certificate in social care and the other was a nursery nurse course. I was accepted for both and opted for the social care one because it had a bigger scope. I went to Motherwell college for 2 years. Thank God for bursaries.

71. While at college, I got a placement at Bellefield hospital, which was for adults with learning disabilities. I loved it and applied for a job there. I wanted to be a nurse. My auntie said to me that I didn't have the brains for it. I told her I had a good heart and common sense and was going to do it.

72. I ended up going to live with a couple I called "mum" and "dad". I still call them that. They were my best friend's mum and dad. I was actually thrown out of my house because I was going to stay with them for an overnight. They then took me under their wing. They encouraged me to go and do my nursing, and I never looked back from there.

73. I am now a qualified pharmacy assistant. I had a number of jobs before that. I was happy to turn my hand to anything after I took voluntary redundancy from my job with Key Housing, which is a care provider. I worked in a pub and also did kitchen work. It didn't matter to me what I did, so long as I had a job.
74. I love the job I'm in now. I've got a good rapport with the patients. My colleagues always say that I'm great with the methadone patients. Because of what I've been through, I understand that people have issues and we all deal with them in different ways. I don't judge or frown upon people.

Impact

75. I would say my experiences in Smyllum have had a major impact on my health. I've suffered from anxiety and been on anti-depressants. I was very anxious when I was younger. When I was with my daughter's dad, I used to sit up at nights, terrified to go to sleep. I used to have really bad nightmares. I've also had thyroid and stomach problems.
76. I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety after my daughter was born. That's when I got the counselling. It helped me to deal with my relationship with my daughter's dad. I was living with him as a father figure. That all came out in counselling. I had been going for counselling for about 2 or 3 weeks, and I broke down in floods of tears when we were talking about my favourite film, which is a weepie. I cried for about half an hour and the counsellor just cuddled me. There wasn't a word spoken. That's when we realised the impact on me of not having been allowed to express my feelings about my dad when I was young, both in Smyllum and when I was with my auntie.
77. The counsellor was absolutely brilliant. I didn't need any medication that time for depression. The counselling saw me through it. She made me see that I didn't need to tolerate things from my daughter's dad. We discussed my relationship with him

and how I was feeling then, and she helped me to see that it was all linked to my childhood experiences. I parted from my daughter's dad 4 years later.

78. I'm back in contact with my own dad now. He looked for me for 30 years. One of the things that gets to me is that he still looks upon me as the wee orphan who wasn't cared for. He has other children, who've all had a really good life. He sees them with their good jobs, fancy cars and houses, and he always says to me that I've had a terrible life. He tries to give me money, which I don't need. I've always taken care of myself. All I want is for him to notice that I've made a good life for myself.
79. It's only when you get older that you look back and realise how all the things have affected you. All the experiences have an impact on you, one way or another. Being forced to eat the food in Smyllum affected how I dealt with my son when he wouldn't eat vegetables as a child. He wasn't a great eater, and I was told by a dietician that I had to make him eat. I couldn't do it. I couldn't follow the dietician's advice and force him to eat, because of how I had been treated in Smyllum as a child. Fortunately, he grew out of it and is a good eater now.
80. It's affected my kids in other ways. I'm a very protective parent, which has resulted in my daughter being very dependent on me. She got my anxiety problems as well. She's actually worse than me now. She has very bad anxiety problems. I worry now that the anxiety will show up in my grandchildren.
81. As I said, the feeling of unworthiness carried on when I went to live with my auntie. I allowed myself to be sexually abused [REDACTED]. I kept this secret until my [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
82. I think I ended up in the caring profession because of my experiences in care. I just wanted to be a good person. I was made out to be something different in Smyllum, and I knew I wasn't. I knew I was a good person. I believe in treating others the way you want to be treated yourself. To this day, I will not tolerate abuse or anybody being put down in any circumstances.

83. I worked in an institution and reported staff who weren't treating people with respect and dignity. If I see anybody being abused, I will take it as far as it needs to go. I caused people to lose their jobs. I don't care. Those people weren't worthy of the job. Folk might say there's a bad bit in me to do that, but I think it's the right thing to do. I know what it's like to be treated badly and made to feel different from everybody else, and it's not a nice feeling. Everybody's equal.
84. [REDACTED] I don't regret it. That's the extent my experiences have affected me. That's the extent I will go to.
85. My experiences have also made me consider things in work that other staff maybe wouldn't think about. One of the residents in the institution I worked at had a lot of funding, and a staff member of mine was going out and buying him lots of stuff for Christmas. She was excited and could only see the positive side to what she was doing. I had to speak to her and explain how the other men, who didn't have the same level of funding, would maybe feel on Christmas morning when they didn't get all that stuff. That came from my experience of Christmas in Smyllum.
86. Being a whistleblower caused me problems in my employment, which led to me being on a slippery slope at one time with alcohol. I was an assistant manager with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] witch-hunted me for 9 years because I was a whistleblower. She made my life hell. Myself and my team ended up going through a year's suspension. I was interrogated about abusing the people I supported. It was all lies. It was horrendous. We were cleared, but I took voluntary redundancy because I couldn't go back to work with her. I was then unemployed and started drinking a lot.
87. I went through a bad time for a while, but I was honest about my drinking and sought help. I was getting vitamin B12 injections, and I told the nurse I was worried that I was drinking too much. I had a brilliant GP. I was referred to the Lanarkshire Addiction Team, but I had myself sorted by then. I knew I had a problem and it had got to the point it was affecting my liver. I had been having too much thyroxine as

well, so that was also affecting my liver. I was quite ill for a year or two. I lost a lot of weight

88. I think being in Smyllum made me stronger and a better person. It's taken me a lot of years to get to where I am now. I'm happier now. I've got my children, grandchildren and good friends. I'm a lot less nervous. I've tried to put it all behind me. I'm not 100% cured. There's things that happen in my everyday life which bring back memories that sometimes put me down for a wee while. I think it will go to the grave with me.

Records

89. I've never tried to get my records. I didn't know how to go about it. I would love to get them. I think they would flag up more memories. I think seeing the records would maybe help to bring closure for me.

Hopes for the Inquiry


90. I explained when I first made contact with the Inquiry that I'm not looking for anything for me. I feel for those families who want justice for the things that happened in Smyllum. I know what happened, and I've come to give evidence in the hope that it might help those families. I think it's only through the kids who were there coming forward, that these things can be proved.
91. I hope the kids who suffered more severe abuse than me can get closure. It might even help them just knowing that people who witnessed it are coming forward and giving them that wee bit of backing and support.

92. I don't think there's any hope for the sisters from Smyllum. I don't know how they've been able to live with themselves. Part of me hopes that every one of them is now gone. I'm not a vindictive person, but those people weren't human and didn't deserve to have a good life.

93. In terms of lessons that might be learned, I don't think they had a care commission back then. We've got one now. I would say, no matter what type of organisation is involved in providing the care, be it a religious order, charity or local authority, there should be a general care commission that deals with them all in the same way.

Other information

94. 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.. 

Dated... 07-11-17