

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LCG

Support person present: No

1. My name is LCG My date of birth is 1961. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in Edinburgh. I lived in Glasgow with both my parents. I think my mother was about eighteen when she had me. She and my father went on to have another four children together,
3. When my mother was about six months pregnant with her sixth child, I think the stress got too much for her and she ran away to Manchester. I think my dad had been beating her. I think that was just normal in them days. Me and my father haven't discussed it much because it's not something he wishes to discuss.
4. I was about eight years of age when my mother ran off. My father was then stuck with five children and trying to work at the same time.
5. For about two months, we were all farmed out to different relatives while my mother and father tried to sort things out. It wasn't really discussed with us though. I don't think families talked then.

6. I stayed with my gran in Hamilton and my brothers and sisters stayed with different aunts and uncles. We were all about twenty-five miles apart from each other, between Glasgow and Hamilton.

### **Nazareth House, Cardonald**

7. My mother wasn't coming back so I think my father decided the best thing was to gather everyone up and send us to Nazareth House. At first, it was just the four of us that went. [REDACTED] the youngest, appeared a couple of months later.

### **Routine at Nazareth House**

#### *First day*

8. I think that I have blocked a lot out from that time and I don't remember being taken to Nazareth House, but I do remember no-one told us we were going.
9. I think we all went to a wee home for a short time before we were taken to Nazareth House. It was only after a few months of being at Nazareth House, when we started going to school, that we realised we were staying.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

10. We all slept in bunk beds in dormitories. I remember the first week I was there, I was crying and everybody else was crying. They wouldn't let me go to the toilet for some reason, so I started screaming and I wet the bed. They took me away and locked me in a wee area on my own somewhere.
11. In the mornings we had to go to the chapel to pray. I don't remember going to church before I went to Nazareth House and I rebelled against it. I was dragged along though and I wasn't given any food because I was rebelling.

12. I remember I passed out twice for lack of food in Nazareth House.

*Food*

13. After chapel we went to breakfast, but I don't remember much of what we were given because I wasn't there half the time. I think there were tea urns and we were given cereal or porridge, but no toast.
14. I don't remember what sort of food we got for evening meal. All I remember is the plastic plates and cutlery. I don't remember any food that was nice.

*School*

15. After breakfast we were marched round to the school, which was just around the corner. At the end of school, we were marched back. We weren't allowed to talk, it was like one of those chain gangs.
16. I was off school a lot and I hardly have any memory of it, except that I was constantly playing catch up. Often I had been awake half the night because I had wet the bed. The nuns made me try and sleep with no mattress and I was exhausted all the time. I just sat up at the back of the classroom and slept.
17. It felt freezing in Nazareth House because there was not enough blankets. The school was warm, so I just dozed.
18. At school you got playtimes and break times. I got to see my brothers and sisters then. They couldn't control that too much.

*Religious Instruction*

19. Education was purely religion-based. I was taught the rosary, but not my times-tables. They weren't going to teach you anything until you got the faith. I'm not sure I had even been taught to read by that time.
20. I don't see the need to be praying twenty-five times a day and I just thought it was brainwashing. I was told if I didn't go to chapel, I couldn't get breakfast or go to school.
21. I remember there was little black and white tiles there and even now, when I see tiles like that, I feel faint. I think that comes from fainting when I wasn't being fed. The black and white tiles were the last thing I would see when I fell to the ground.

#### *Chores*

22. There was an old folks home at the side of Nazareth House. I was taken there to clean or help take the old folks out into the garden. I did nothing but chores there and remember brushing leaves and picking up cigarette butts.
23. I was there a lot instead of being at school and I hated working there. I was only a wean and I had nothing in common with the old folks.

#### *Leisure Time*

24. After school or after I'd finished working at the old folks home, which would be about the same time; four o'clock, we would be allowed to watch the cartoon, "Scooby Doo" on TV. That was our one treat. We then had to do our homework. After that, we were fed and we were sent to bed. We weren't allowed to speak.
25. They also used this as a punishment too though. If they thought you'd misbehaved, they would not allow you to watch the cartoon "Scooby Doo".

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

26. I'm not sure if I was at Nazareth House over my birthday. I certainly don't remember getting a card. I don't remember any presents or parties for anyone else on their birthdays either.
27. I do remember there was a Christmas party and Santa came, although I don't remember getting a present.

#### *Visits*

28. I remember my dad came to visit a few times. I think he came on a Saturday, but I don't think he visited very often. When he came to visit he would take us swimming or to the cinema. The nuns never took us anywhere. It was worse when he left. It was the only time my brothers and sisters and I were all together. At all other times we were kept separate.

#### *Contact with siblings*

29. Relationships were not encouraged and I had very little contact with my brothers and sisters. I think they tried to keep us all apart as a way of controlling us. It was like they wanted all the girls to be girls and the boys to be boys. If they separated us, they could control us better and we couldn't bond.
30. [REDACTED] was so small when he arrived that I think he probably found it easier to adapt to the regime. The one who took it the hardest, I think, was [REDACTED] my sister. She had a much closer bond to my mother before we went in to Nazareth House.

#### *Friendships*

31. I don't remember having any friendly conversations with anyone. I think they wanted all relationships destroyed. You couldn't have any normal relationships in there.

32. I never saw any of the nuns smiling or acknowledging us or even each other. They never spoke to us like human beings and there was no small talk or chit chat between us.

*Clothing*

33. I don't remember what tops we wore, but we wore short trousers and wee open-toed sandals with a buckle. We wore those sandals so our feet wouldn't grow out of them. They were never new and were probably charity clothes.
34. I remember the shorts because you were always on your knees and my knees always hurt and used to get bloody.

*Pocket Money*

35. I never remember getting any pocket money and I don't think my dad gave us any either. I don't think we were allowed money because we were never taken to the shops. I never saw an ice cream or an ice cream van either.

*Bathing*

36. I think we got a shower once a week, on a Saturday or Sunday. The water was always cold. During the week we washed our face, hands and neck at the sink when we went to bed.
37. There was no such thing as privacy. All the boys showered at the same time and the nuns were always there.

*Access to toilet*

38. You weren't allowed to go to the toilet at night. If you needed to go to the toilet in the daytime you had to ask and the nuns took you. You were not allowed to go on your own. They would deny permission to go during prayers.

*Inspections*

39. I don't remember anyone official coming round to inspect Nazareth House. I'm sure if they did, I would have been hid. I certainly have no memory of anyone asking how I was doing.

**Abuse at Nazareth House, Cardonald**

40. I was very stressed throughout my stay at Nazareth House and I wet the bed a lot. I don't know if it was for badness or what. I remember they separated me from the rest of the boys in the dorm. My mattress was taken off me, I was beaten and I wasn't given any food. Sometimes I was made to sleep on the floor.

41. There was one nun in particular who seemed to take against me, Sister [REDACTED] LFR [REDACTED]. She was like my jailer. I don't know if it was just me or my brothers and sisters too, but she used to beat me all the time.

42. I can understand a wee bit where the nuns were coming from. They were dealing with problem children going through stress and they needed to control them. The level of cruelty in Sister [REDACTED] LFR [REDACTED] was not human though.

43. She would use a rubber hose, or whatever came to hand, to beat me every time she saw me. Her punishments were just cruel. It wasn't normal. She didn't hit me because I had done anything wrong. I think it was her method of control. You had to do absolutely everything that she said.

44. You couldn't look Sister [REDACTED] LFR [REDACTED] in the eye, if you did, she thought you were being cocky and she would beat you.

45. Every time I wet the bed, they took the bedding off me and she would beat me. The more she beat me, the more I wet the bed. One time I was made to sleep on the floor.
46. My sister [REDACTED] told me there was a lot of sexual abuse going on in the girls' bit, but I can't corroborate that. I was not sexually abused, but I was physically and mentally abused.

### **Leaving Nazareth House**

47. I only stayed at Nazareth House for a year. When I turned nine, I was told they couldn't keep me any longer because I was too old. I think it was really because I wasn't conforming to all the praying though. I thought it was a load of rubbish.
48. My father came to see me and told me he had spoken to his mother in Galway and I was to go there. I was to go on my own, my brothers and sisters were to stay at Nazareth House. I didn't want to go, but I was sent anyway. It was traumatic.
49. When I got to Galway my granny went crazy when she discovered my head was full of lice. I must have got them in Nazareth House and nobody had checked. I was sent to the local school in Galway and I gave all the other kids them. Apart from the lice, I was healthy.
50. After I had been in Galway for six months, life was a hell of a lot better. I was out all the time playing football. I knew it was a better place.
51. Education was a nightmare because of the different curriculum. I sat in a class with all different age groups and was put with other kids at the same level. I came on leaps and bounds because it meant that we could help each other.
52. I stayed with my granny till I was eleven, when my mother came to get me. I think my granny got too old. My mother had met a fella in Manchester and I went down to

live with them. My mother had had two other children. My brother, I don't remember his name, had been put in care and I had a half-sister too, [REDACTED]

53. My mother became ill and I was sent back up to stay with her mum, my gran, in Hamilton. My mum later died of a brain tumour.

### **Reporting of abuse at Nazareth House**

54. [REDACTED] my sister, phoned round the family about the Nazareth House Inquiry and she asked me to participate. This was a few years ago. I thought it was just for money grabbers though and decided not to get involved. I have since had therapy and I realise now that a lot of my problems have stemmed from my childhood.
55. The beatings I received were always around the middle part of my body. They never hit my face or hands. I think that was so I could still work in the old folks home. I never showed anyone the marks. I just took it as normal and it never crossed my mind to show anyone.

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

56. The move to Hamilton to stay with my gran meant another change of curriculum and I had difficulty again at school. The constant change meant there was no way I could sit exams so I decided to join the army when I was sixteen years of age.
57. I stayed in the army for about twelve years and got blown up a couple of times in Northern Ireland by mortar bombs. When I was posted in Northern Ireland, I met a woman and stayed there for about thirty years.
58. I never had any children, I didn't want any.

## Impact

59. I wet the bed for years after I left Nazareth House, it has been very difficult for me and it still happens today. When I feel stressed, I wet the bed. I now take precautions before I go to bed if I am feeling stressed. I have since found out that I've got post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, through my experiences in the army and I still have bad dreams.
60. I have been getting counselling and therapy through Veterans First for my PTSD. I brought up my childhood and Nazareth House experiences with my therapist. I told him about the bed wetting. He told me that a lot of things stem from childhood and I think everything has a knock-on effect.
61. I think if I had had a more sympathetic childhood I would have been able to turn to therapy quicker after getting mortar-bombed. I think that people that have been damaged when they're young just learn to shut up. They carry on and just take it. Instead I turned to drink and had bad alcoholism for a couple of years because I thought that was the only way.
62. I think the stress of that year, leaving a loving mother and father and going into care at Nazareth House, had a huge impact on me for the rest of my life.
63. I actually lived in my house for two years, because I felt that because of what happened to me, I didn't have the confidence to ask anyone for help. I didn't think I would get any. Some of that is the army's fault too, they didn't recognise that. I think if I'd had a more stable and understanding childhood though, I might have been able to deal with this a lot better.
64. None of my brothers and sisters came out great either, apart from [REDACTED] She met a great man and got married thirty-five years ago. They have two children and she has brought them up well. However I have recently found out that the marriage is not as strong as I thought. She is currently suffering from Parkinson's Disease and

is having paranoia attacks. [REDACTED] Irrelevant [REDACTED] This might be down to her medication.

65. [REDACTED] is the most damaged. She left Nazareth House at sixteen and went into the sex trade in Newcastle. She later married someone that was thirty years older than her and moved to Blackpool. It was the best thing that could have happened.
66. [REDACTED] is an alcoholic and went to live in Blackpool with [REDACTED] He declared himself gay a long time ago.
67. I haven't heard from [REDACTED] for about six years. He got into drugs and I assume he's still living, though I don't know where he is.

### **Therapy**

68. If I hadn't joined the army, I would have been dead. The army has a lot to blame for my PTSD, but they've got their act together and the support network is second to none. I have found Veterans First to be massively beneficial. The therapist there is the only other person I have told about my time in Nazareth House.
69. I have been in touch with Future Pathways and I think I would like a wee bit of counselling from them as it would focus on my childhood trauma.

### **Records**

70. Future Pathways are going to assist me with trying to get my records.

### **Other information**

- 71. I hope the Inquiry will stop anything similar ever happening again. The cruelty of the regime there in Nazareth House was totally unnecessary. I don't think what happened to me should happen to anyone else.
  
- 72. I hope that those who went through worse than me can understand that they're not on their own.
  
- 73. 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.

LCG  
Signed. \_\_\_\_\_

Dated. *9/10/17.* \_\_\_\_\_