

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LDF

Support person present: No

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

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Dundee to my mother and father. At this time we lived at Dundee, but this has now been demolished. I had three younger brothers who was a year younger than me. was three or four years younger than me and about seven years younger. and are now deceased.
3. My father was an alcoholic and a violent man. During my time at home he beat up my mother and each of us kids. When we were taken into care I never saw my mum again. I don't even know if she is alive or dead today. I last saw my father in and not long after that he was murdered by another alcoholic in Dundee.

Nazareth House, Aberdeen - foster care

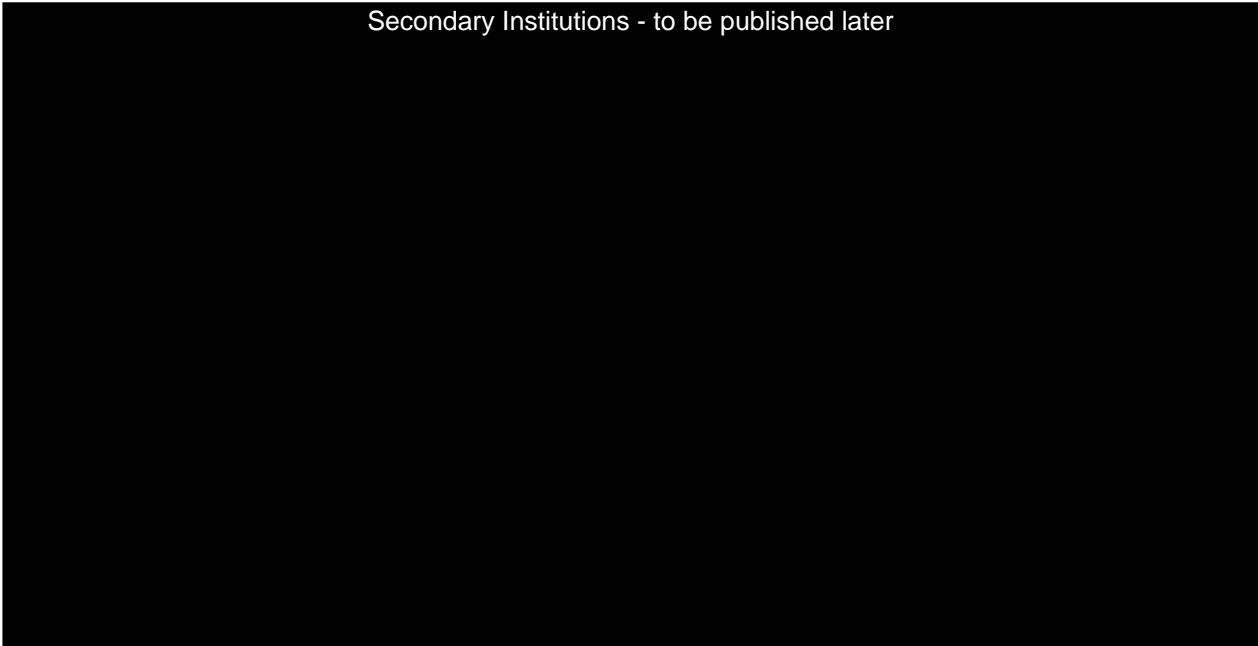
4. I don't recall how I was sent to Nazareth House, which was run by the Sisters of Nazareth. I am not sure but presume we were put into care by the social work department because of my father's violence. I was about five or six years old when I went there. The only thing I remember about this Nazareth House was that it was a

large silver building and had high walls with white flowers on them. The home was run by nuns who wore black habits. I don't remember any of their names.

5. We slept in dormitories but I don't remember how many of us slept there. I was there with my younger brothers. The only thing I remember from there was that if we were caught talking during the night the nuns would punish us. They would make us stand outside on the fire escape, in the open air, dressed only in our underwear. This would happen even if was snowing.



6. Secondary Institutions - to be published later



- 7.

Nazareth House, Lasswade

8. Between my tenth and eleventh birthday we moved from Glasgow to Nazareth House in Lasswade. I don't know why we moved. When we arrived there I remember it being a really long building. As you entered the door there was a reception area. There was a long corridor leading to the chapel, where we had to attend Sunday service. Off the corridor were three or four sections where everybody was separated

into groups. Each group had a nun allocated to look after them. My group was looked after by Sister [REDACTED] LFZ [REDACTED]. I am not sure of the names of any of the other nuns.

9. Each of the groups had a TV room and their own dining room. From the corridor there was a set of stairs leading to the accommodation upstairs, which were rooms as opposed to dormitories. There was a mix of boys and girls but we were separated in different rooms.
10. Food was brought to the groups in their respective dining rooms by a series of heated food trollies. We were not allowed to leave the tables until we had finished our food. I did not like eating vegetables and would hide them in my pockets. When I got to the toilet I would flush them away. I can't remember if there was any punishment for not eating your food.
11. We attended a Catholic primary school at Bonnyrigg, despite the fact we were all Church of Scotland. I was in primary seven at the time. After Bonnyrigg when I went to secondary it was Lasswade High School. We would walk from Nazareth House to school, which was fine for primary but Lasswade High School was a much longer distance. I was at the high school for a year.
12. One of the chores we had was to take the food waste and feed it to the pigs on the land as swill. I remember the pigs quite well as they were affected when there was an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. At Christmas we were given a gift which I assume was donated. I do not remember birthdays being celebrated at all.
13. One of the punishments we were given by the nuns, was if someone was caught swearing. The whole group were made to stand in the bathroom and we had toothpaste smeared down the side of the face and soap was put in our mouth. I can't remember how many times this happened.
14. I did try to leave the home once and walked off to some fields with one of the other boys. We didn't know where we were going and eventually just walked back. Nobody seemed to have noticed we had gone.

15. Life there was not what could be described as enjoyable but it was still better than being with my father.

[Redacted]

16. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving foster care

24. I left St Ninian's when I left school and I was given a train ticket by staff and made my own way from Markinch to Dundee. I moved in with my aunt [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Dundee. By this time my gran had died, but my aunt helped look after me. She also had her daughter [REDACTED] staying with her at this time. I did meet some social workers at my aunt's because I was under age, probably fifteen and still under their care.

Life after being in care

25. I started work as a van boy with Homepride Bakeries. My brother [REDACTED] had been to the Army recruitment and had a guaranteed acceptance date in 1979. [REDACTED] eventually joined the Army but was later dishonourably discharged.
26. I had not been shown any life skills at any of the residences I had been at. I decided the army would be a good place for me. I went to the recruitment office on [REDACTED] 1978 and joined the Black Watch a short time later on [REDACTED] 1978. I served a total of twenty three years and travelled throughout the world. The army seemed a natural progression from my life in care as it was disciplined and regimented. I did well in the army and rose through the ranks to warrant officer class 1. This is as high as you can go without a commission.
27. I met my wife, [REDACTED] in 1982 and we married in 1984. We have two children, a daughter [REDACTED] who is 28 and a son [REDACTED] who is 23.
28. After leaving the army I managed to get work on offshore oil rigs working in catering. I am now the head of the hospitality and catering for the rig. My son also works on the same rig but in a different area.

Reporting of abuse

29. I have never reported any abuse to the social work department, the police or any other authorities.

Impact

30. I feel that my life in the various homes showed that I missed out on many life skills such as how to relate to other people. I always keep myself to myself and do not mix very well. I do not have many people I can call friends other than one in Dundee.

31. I particular struggled in my family life at Christmas because it was not celebrated in the homes. As this was something I was denied throughout my childhood I had difficulties showing any enthusiasm to celebrate it with my family. Steadily as I grew older in my married life this became a bit easier.
32. Life in care had a huge impact on my brothers and I lost two of them through addictions to drink and drugs. My brother [REDACTED] collapsed and died in 2010. My brother [REDACTED] died [REDACTED] through HIV while he was in prison in Perth. [REDACTED] has been in the social system throughout his life because of issues with drink and drugs. He stays in Dundee and I do go down to see him and offer him some help if required. I have never taken any drugs during my life.
33. In 1985 I got in trouble and was charged with drink driving. It had been raining this particular night and I drove home. I was only just over the limit but it may well have been ten times the limit. On another occasion a friend challenged me to see if I could punch a hole in a fence. I took up the challenge, punched a hole in it and ended up being charged with criminal damage.
34. I try not to think much about my time in care. I have made sure that my children would not have this kind of life and ensured they would never end up in care. I did find it difficult to show affection to my kids as this was nothing I had been shown through my experiences in care. They have both done really well in their education and will have a great future. [REDACTED] got a degree at university and [REDACTED] qualified as an Instrument Technician.
35. The way we were treated in the care homes and at times kept separate had an impact in that my brothers and I did not have a close relationship.

Records

36. I have never had any interest in seeing my records. I know what happened to me by my parents and do not need to know anything else from the care homes.

Other information

37. Years ago I heard about some of the issues with the care homes where I had been placed. I compiled a letter to send to the solicitor involved but never actually got round to sending it.

Hopes for the Inquiry

38. I would like to see improvements in the education system in care. Properly trained teachers, instead of the permanent members of staff filling in. As I said previously the staff were teaching things a year behind where everyone else was at, which having already listened to those subjects for a year, detracts you from any willingness to learn.

39. I would like more life skills shown to kids in care especially in building relationships and how to react to the big world outside the care system

40. 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  LDF

Dated 27-3-18