

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

[REDACTED] LDH [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is [REDACTED] LDH [REDACTED] but I was born [REDACTED] LDH [REDACTED]. When I was confirmed at Nazareth House my middle name was changed to [REDACTED]. I have used [REDACTED] as my middle name ever since. My date of birth [REDACTED] 1957. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. Before I went into care I stayed with my mother, [REDACTED], and father, [REDACTED] in Hamilton. My mother left her first husband and moved in with my dad. I have two older sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and an older brother [REDACTED]. They were all from my mother's previous relationship. I have two younger brothers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and a younger sister [REDACTED].
3. My mother and father were both alcoholics and it was common for them to leave [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and I alone in the house. At that time my sister [REDACTED] was not born. My sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were staying with my grandmother.
4. At that time I was attending St Paul's primary school in Hamilton. When I was going to school I can remember the dinner ladies would give me a piece and sugar to help with the hunger. I often saw lumps of sugar and sometimes asked for that but she said that was used for giving medicines to the kids.

5. As I was so young I am not sure why the social work would have been involved but presume there were concerns from neighbours and /or the school. I know from records that there was a court order to have us placed in care. Mum and dad always made comments that there was a conspiracy and they were being picked on. My three brothers and I were all placed in care. My young sister was not born at that time. At that time it was the best decision for us kids.

Nazareth House, Cardonald

6. Arriving at Nazareth House I was so young and I do not have any memories of the routines. I arrived there when I was about five years old and stayed for approximately a year. I do not remember being with my brothers while I was there. I don't remember anything about the daily routines, just all the abuse.
7. The first memory I have of being in Nazareth House was having to kneel on some stone steps and my knees were in agony sitting on them. There was a nun who was using a nit comb on the heads of some kids. The nun had a towel laid over her lap. She dug and scraped the comb into our scalps. She kept digging and because of this our heads would bleed over her towel. Everybody had blood running down their faces. I don't remember the name of that nun or any of the others there.
8. As far as healthcare was concerned I can remember there was a room at the end of a long corridor. All the boys and girls were crying. Some of the girls had scarves around their heads because their hair was falling out. We were stripped to the waist and they took tests like heartbeat, weight etc. They also took different blood samples during this time. We were given an injection into our backsides which was really sore. This was happening regularly at least one a week if not more and I don't know why we had the injections as I and the other kids were not ill or had any ailments. There were men there, not just nuns, but I don't know who they were.
9. One girl was trying to run away from the nun giving the injections and was grabbed by the arm and dragged back. I ran away with another girl and when we got into town we were stopping and asking people where our mother was. Someone took us

to the local police station. It was dark when the police took us back to Nazareth House. When they left us in the company of the nuns we were given such a beating that there was a pool of blood underneath the girl. Her hair was lying on the ground and there were scrapes all over her head. The nuns hands were covered in blood from our beatings.

10. I remember waking in a room recovering from the beatings. A nun was looking over me and I could see the white bit round her head had blood spatters on it and on her hands. I was screaming in pain and blacked out. When I came round again there was a girl, between fourteen and eighteen, but I did not know her but she told me to be quiet as we were not allowed to talk.
11. A few weeks after this I was out in the grounds and saw a nun hanging some white linen on the washing line. In the grass area there was a strip of ground maintained with a statue of the Virgin Mary. I was told to do the weeding in this piece of ground. There were a lot of weeds and nettles and got jagged by them. She gave me a dock leaf to help with the stinging. There was some moss on the surrounding wall and on the statue which she told me to scrape off. As I did this some of the moss fell onto the statue. She went into a frenzy and grabbed one of the wooden poles for the washing line and started hitting me with it over my back. She pointed to the ground and said I would end up there along with the others. I was absolutely terrified she was going to bury me there.
12. There were no good memories while I was at this Nazareth house we just lived in fear on a daily basis. I know from the records I have received that my parents tried to visit once but I did not see them. I think they were causing problems with the staff and sent away. During my time there was when I started having nightmares and still have them to this day.

Nazareth House, Lasswade

13. I don't know how or why but when I was about eight I was sent away from Cardonald to Nazareth House at Lasswade and was there for nearly two years. I also found out from the records that the rest of the family also went but I do not recall seeing them.
14. When I was at Lasswade I remember there being large and long dormitories with many iron beds. Near the entrance to the dormitory was a separate cubicle where the nun would stay. She could observe the room from there through her curtains, In our dormitory it was all boys and the girls were all in separate dormitories. There was anywhere between ten and twenty in our dormitory.
15. Sister **LQI** was in charge of our dormitory. I was told by some of the older kids there not to go anywhere with her, the other nuns, priests or **LTM**. They were describing to me that they would strip off and lie on top of you. I did not know much about sex at that age and thought they meant they peed on you.
16. When I was due to be baptised and confirmed I was told that Cardinal **LRM** would be attending and carrying out the ceremony. We had to do lots of practice runs as to where we were to be seated, where to move to and what we were to do for the ceremony. I was dressed in white shirt and a pair of shorts. For some reason it was changed from being held in the chapel to a separate room in a separate building.
17. Other adults were there and I just presume they were receiving a blessing or something from the Cardinal, they were not part of Nazareth House. I was taken upstairs to a room there. There were also more girls and boys in the room. I was sat in a metal chair with bars for backing. I got really scared when two nuns came and took hold of me. I struggled and wrapped my arms in the bars to stop being taken away. She was trying to get me out the chair causing it to drag along the floor. Because of the earlier warning I thought they were going to pee on me. A boy and girl were taken to another room and I was taken back to the main building.

18. As I walked past the other room the door was open I could see the priest I believed was Cardinal LRM standing there. He was stripped to the waist but was still wearing braces to hold his trousers up. I could also see the boy and girl that had left the earlier room.
19. The boy was partially undressed and was in front of the Cardinal and the girl was completely undressed. She was standing in front of the other guy, who was seated and who had previously been sitting at the front with the other outsiders. I did not know his name at the time, but later found out this was LVR. Cardinal LRM shouted at the nun with me to shut the door. She could not have missed what was happening but did nothing.
20. I was able to get into the loft space without anyone being aware. I remember there lots of brass instruments being stored there. From the loft space you could see through some of the gaps into the dormitories and the nuns cubicles. I was with a couple of other boys and when I looked into the room I could see LVR was with another man in the room. They were facing two young girls. I was scared they would see me and stepped back from the window.
21. It was not until later when I went to St Joseph's some of the residents who had also been at Nazareth House would describe and name the nuns and some others who abused them. It was at that time the someone actually named LVR and from the description they were giving that it matched the man I saw in the room.
22. There was another time I was in the attic and when I looked through the glass into the room I could see a priest who was naked. I could see he was with one of the boys from my school. It was obvious the priest was having sex with the boy.
23. Similar to when I was in Cardonald we were given injections. Mrs LJH who was when I was baptised and confirmed told me I was helping people by taking the injections. I remember the after effects of the injection causing burning and scraping down my legs. The effects were so bad I was scratching at my skin so

much I was bleeding until my underpants were sticking to me. The pain would last for hours and the injections went on for days in a row.

24. Another time I was standing outside the room and refusing to go in. I was stripped to the waist and dragged into the office supposedly to see the doctor. There was a big oak table in the room. As I went into the room I was told the priest was coming to give me the belt and told me to take my trousers down. I was bent over the table and told not to turn around. I was expecting to get hit with the lump of wood but when I looked round I could see the priest with his cassock raised and he had his penis in his hand and was masturbating. I screamed and ran round the other side of the table.
25. I had previously been warned to stay away from the man that [REDACTED]. I remember one day walking out of the grounds through some of the bushes and I saw the [REDACTED] LTM [REDACTED] as we called him. I could see he was having sex with one of the boys from the school. When I saw him later he grabbed his hammer and made a threatening gesture to me to keep quiet.
26. I can't remember if was before or after the boy but I was at the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] He was hitting me with his brush to keep me in [REDACTED] Every time I tried to run around to the other side he would be there and hit me again with his brush. I saw there were two nuns standing watching [REDACTED] and laughing as he did this.
27. On the days when I did manage to go to school I could not do any of the work because I was so scared thinking whether I was going back and be beaten or going back and being sexually abused.
28. I always suffered from nightmares and sometimes in my sleep I would waken up screaming. Staff would catch me sleep-walking during the night. Sister [REDACTED] LQI [REDACTED] would give me a battering then leave me standing in the stairwell. The other nuns would be walking about but no one did anything.

29. I remember being awake each night and saw Sister LQI bring a girl from another dormitory into her cubicle. I could hear the girl crying and whimpering from the room. The nun who should have been watching her dormitory must have been aware Sister LQI had taken the girl away and did nothing to stop her.
30. Bed wetting was a problem for lots of the kids in Nazareth House, but that was not surprising with all the abuse going on. If the nuns found you had wet the bed they would batter you. They would make you wear the wet sheets over your head and call you names. This happened every morning but not to me and the kids were always screaming from the beatings.
31. My whole time there I had no toys to play with. There was a black and white television but I couldn't concentrate watching anything because I was always scared I was overdue for another beating. The atmosphere in the home was that they hated anyone bonding and did everything they could to cause divisions.
32. If you went out the back door of the building there was a tall wall which me and some of the other kids climbed up. The staff tried to get us down but we were refusing. We were up there for what seemed ages. They got some of the kids down with bribery of ice cream. When there was only a few of us left who were refusing to climb down, the police and the social work were called. I was shouting at them to tell them about the staff giving us injections all the time but no one was interested. One by one the rest of the kids climbed down and were taken away in cars. I was the last on the wall and they used two sets of ladders to try and get near me to get me off the wall. I started moving away and fell from the wall and luckily landed in some bushes.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Reporting of abuse

81. After many times of running away while I was in care I did report the physical and sexual abuse that was happening to me and to others. I reported this to the police, social work, children's panels and psychiatrists, but nothing was ever done to stop any of this abuse. At that time no one wanted to listen or believe about any sexual abuse that took place.

Life after being in care

82. After my time in care there was some flexibility in my life. I was starting to see girls, building relationships but I was still getting myself into trouble. I joined the army cadets for a while and passed my marksmanship with just my good left eye. As I was blind in the right eye I was not accepted as a suitable candidate.
83. I got married in 1978 but through various circumstances, my life in and out of prison, my marriage failed. My wife later took me back and I still stay in the same house but this is a platonic relationship. We both have our own friends and do our own things. We did have a child who died as a result of a cot death at six months old.

Impact

84. My life in care showed me the dark side of life. Everything to do with being protected, nurtured and educated were things I was never given. Nazareth House was just there to break the children's spirits. The nuns were either involved or watching the abuse that was happening to the people in their care.
85. If it was not for moving to Ochil Towers I would not be here just now. The social work completely changed my life. It would have been so different if I had been left in the care of Mr Lewis and some idiot had decided that was not for me and sent me back to my alcoholic parents.

86. I got addicted to over the counter medicines like co-codamol. I was taking about thirty two tablets each day. I did go to my doctors for help and asked to see a psychologist. His answer was to break my confidentiality and spoke to the chemists and told them not sell my any tablets. I lost all confidence in any medical people to keep my issues private.

Records

87. I was advised to contact Future Pathways from the leaflets the Inquiry supplied. Through them I contacted Birthlink and they were able to get my social work records and arranged for them to be sent to the Inquiry.

Lessons to be Learned

88. There needs to be a proper place for children to go to when something like this evil has happened to them. If you are running away it is usually because something bad is happening to you. The kids need somewhere safe to run to and it be safe to tell them what has happened. There should be something like the Care Commission that would go into these homes and check nothing is happening to the kids. They should also not be listening to the sugar coating these people are supplying in some of the records.
89. In care, people have told me that no matter what I did, right or wrong, they were able to write bad reports about you and they could hide behind those reports to continue to abuse again.

Other information

90. I am not interested in any of the names of the people who abused me. They are not human beings and are cowards for the way they carried out the abuse on me and the other children in their care. I have spoken to the police over the last couple of months about the abuse.

91. In 1979 my lawyer at the time, Mr Pirrie was supposed to represent me but for some reason he was unable to continue. As I waited, [REDACTED] LVR came in and I recognised him as the second person that had been in the room abusing the boy. I also remembered he had the nickname [REDACTED] LVR because that was what he did with the boys and girls in care.

92. 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 [REDACTED] LDH

Dated 17-5-18