

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

BFD

Support person present: No

1. My name is BFD. My date of birth is 1960 and I am 57 years of age. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

### Background

2. I have four children. I am not married but I get on well with my kids who are all doing well in life. I am unemployed and have been for many years. I had a drug problem with heroin which I gave up about twenty years ago but I've been on a methadone programme ever since.
3. My family life as I was growing up was chaotic and I went into care at the age of thirteen. I was living in Drumchapel at the time and my mum had a drink problem. At the time, I had two brothers and three sisters. In order of age, these were , , then it was me, then , and . has since died. I don't recall if my dad was there.
4. They say I was maladjusted which is why I went into care. I don't recall any involvement with the panel but I do remember seeing a psychiatrist which a social worker called Mathieson organised. I only saw the psychiatrist once.
5. My mum took me to Kilmarnock but I didn't know why we were there. I had a packed bag with me and all I remember is my mum crying. I would say I was

twelve years old because I recall that I had gone to Kingsridge Secondary School in Drumchapel for a couple of months.

**Institution : Barnardo's, Kilmarnock**

6. My first recollection of being there was being in a dining hall. I had long hair and somebody kept pulling it. I told him if he did it again, I would "have him". He pulled my hair again and we ended up fighting.
7. A member of staff grabbed me, a Chinese looking man. He forced my fingers against the palm of my hands which was extremely painful. That was my introduction to the place.
8. The home had both boys and girls therein who were in separate dorms. As you got older, you eventually got your own room but that was when you were close to leaving. I don't recall being introduced to anybody though I recall meeting a boy called [REDACTED] who I got on well with.
9. The place was run by Dr Barnardo's. There was no uniform. You wore your own clothes and had your name tag on every item of clothing. The place was split into houses, each of which were called after an island like Skye, Jura, Iona and the like.

**Routine**

10. We got up at about 7:00 am then had breakfast followed by school though there was no education given to you in that place. The classes were mixed but I didn't go to them. I used to just sit up by the swings.

11. We were never marked into the school and they didn't teach us anything. If I wasn't up at the swings, I would spend my time walking over the fields to get a pack of five cigarettes or play in the woods. You weren't allowed to smoke but as long as you didn't smoke in the building, they turned a blind eye to it. I just don't recall going to class much, though if I did, it was chaotic.
12. After lunch, you went back to school or, in my case, didn't. After school was finished, we had tea and then I think we could watch TV. You could also play football and there was a gym. You could play pool, darts, badminton and table-tennis all of which the staff would supervise if they weren't busy.
13. I got on alright with the staff. They were quite good though they did tend to have their favourites.

#### *Chores*

14. I don't recall us having to do any chores

#### *Food*

15. The food was okay, better than I got at home though the only thing I really remember is that there were always big jugs of milk.

#### *Doctors/dentists*

16. I don't recall seeing any doctors or dentists. I think if anything happened to you the staff simply took care of it, probably to cover things up.

#### *Visits*

17. My mum visited me once during an open day. No social worker ever came to see me. I am not aware of any official reviews of my care. In fact, I never did find out why I was put in that place.

18. We used to get home every second weekend. We would be given money for our train fare and you would make your own way home. You would leave on the Friday night and return on the Monday morning. On the weekends, you didn't go home you just mucked about playing in the woods and things like that.

19. We didn't get any official inspections that I was aware of.

#### *Holidays/outings*

20. I recall going to London once but the only thing I remember about it was walking the streets looking for cigarette butts.

21. I think the only outing I got was a survival weekend which was just at the time when my mum died of an overdose.

#### *Birthdays/Christmas*

22. I don't recall either Christmas or birthdays being celebrated.

#### *Pocket money*

23. I think we did get pocket money which was how I was able to buy cigarettes.

#### *Washing*

24. I seem to recall that we had access to baths rather than showers.

#### **Abuse**

25. I recall one occasion when a member of staff stopped me fighting with another boy by grabbing me by the neck and choking me. I don't remember which member of staff that was. I don't think I was bruised as a result of this.
26. I once got caught giving myself a tattoo. The housemaster Mr [BDP], who we called [REDACTED] saw what I had done and took me aside to clean where I had tattooed because he said I could get an infection.
27. However, what he did was get a cloth and soak it in water which he then placed on the tattooed area. The problem was that the water he had dipped the cloth in was scalding hot and the result was that my arm blistered. That night I had to keep my arm in a jug of cold water to cool it down.
28. That weekend I was at home but went out shop-lifting and got caught. A security guard grabbed my arm. The bandage which had been put on it, following me getting burned, came off causing the scabs to burst and bleed.
29. The police were called but they took me to my mum's and asked for permission to take me to hospital to get my arm checked out. The result of all this was that Mr [BDP] was charged and taken to court though I think the case was found not proven. He said he hadn't realised the water was so hot and that he hadn't meant to scald me.
30. I gave evidence against him but there were no repercussions, mainly because my time at the home was almost up.
31. There was another occasion when I went out one night and broke into somewhere. I found a load of paint and poured it all over the place. I was caught and when the police questioned me about it, I told them that that was the sort of thing we did in art class. A member of staff called [BEF] battered me for telling the police that.

32. I would have to say that there was no real bullying in the home but you did have to stick up for yourself when you first went in.
33. If you ran away you got threatened with being put in a worse place but I ran away three times and I don't recall there being any repercussions.
34. I don't really think that they had a discipline system in place. All I recall is getting the odd slap, especially from the Chinese guy.
35. I don't recall seeing any other children abused. The police asked me that about ten years ago but there was nothing I could think of to tell them.
36. I don't recall anybody talking about sexual abuse. Certainly, I wasn't sexually abused.
37. My main complaint against Barnardos is what happened to me after I left with no education or qualifications . I wasn't even taught how to cook or how to handle money.

### **Reporting of abuse**

38. Other than giving evidence against Mr BDP, I have never reported what happened to me in care to anybody.

### **Leaving Institution**

39. I left after I turned sixteen. There was no preparation for leaving. I left with nothing and with no education. All I had were the very few possessions that I owned.

## Life after the Institution

40. After I left, there was no help from the home or from the Social Work Department. As I said earlier, my mum had died while I was in the home. What had happened was that my mum's social worker used to give her a regular dosage of her medicine. However, this social worker went on holiday and the social worker Mathieson covered for her. Instead of giving my mum regular dosages, she gave her two weeks' worth. My mum took them all and ended up in a coma and died.
41. I recall getting out of the home to go to my mum's funeral but, when I got home, the social worker called Mathieson wouldn't let me or my brothers and sisters go to the funeral. These days, I don't really keep in touch with my brothers and sisters even though some of them stay quite close to where I live.
42. My brothers and sisters all moved in with my aunt in Possilpark. I also moved in with her after I left the home but only stayed for two weeks before I left and got a flat on my own. I was sixteen.
43. I got a job [REDACTED] delivering lemonade and then got a job with the Community Industry which I did for about a year. At the Glasgow fair that year I went berry-picking for two weeks but stayed for six weeks and lost my job. That was the last time I worked.
44. I got caught up in drugs, heroin, when I was 24 but have now been on the Methadone programme for 20 years. Personally, I think it's worse than being on heroin though it does keep you stable. I did stay off it for a year and was in rehabilitation but was back on it two weeks after coming out.

## Impact

45. My time in care has had a big impact on my life because of the way I was when I came out of care and what I came out to. I was only sixteen and very immature even for that age. My mum had died and I never really knew my dad.

46. I don't understand why there was no after-care, no support from either the home or social work. I was left to my own devices with no education or knowledge about how to survive life. I had a flat of my own but didn't know how to run or organise a home.

47. It was that as much as anything that lead me into a way of life that resulted in me getting into drugs. I feel that if I had been better educated or given some sort of support, I would have had a better chance in life and could have made more of myself.

### **Counselling**

48. I have never had counselling for my time in care.

### **Recovery of records**

49. I have thought about trying to obtain my records but I wouldn't know how to go about it.

50. 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.

BFD

Signed...

5/12/17

Dated.....

5/12/17