

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

ABF

Support person present: No

1. My name is ABF My date of birth is 1956 and I am presently 61 years of age. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was abandoned by my mother as a baby and put into care in 1956 when I was three months old. My first memories are from being in children's homes.
3. About fifteen years ago I managed to get hold of some records and found out I was put into Clerwood Children's Home in Edinburgh first. I was there for about a year-and-a-half and then went to Smyllum Orphanage in Lanark. In 1964 I was fostered out to a couple in Edinburgh, LNQ and . I stayed with them until 1967 when I was moved to Nazareth House in Aberdeen. I stayed there until 1969 and then got moved to St Ninian's in Fife.

### Clerwood Children's Home, Edinburgh

4. I have no memory of Clerwood Children's Home, although I now know that I was baptised a Catholic in St John's Church at Corstorphine while I was there. I don't know why I was moved from there to Smyllum.

## **Smyllum Orphanage, Lanark**

5. I don't remember much about Smyllum, other than it was a big white building with fields all around. I used to wander by myself in the fields. There was a farm at one end and I remember chickens there. I was very young and don't remember much about the daily routine. My recollection is that my experiences there were not bad. It was my home, I didn't know anything else.

## **Routine at Smyllum Orphanage, Lanark**

### *Mornings and bedtime*

6. We slept in big dormitories and boys and girls were kept separate. I remember being carried back to bed by one of the nuns one time after I'd got up in the middle of the night and was crying. I don't know why I'd been crying.

### *Food*

7. I can't remember what the food was like, but it was a home and if you didn't like the food you would still just have to eat it. If you didn't eat it you would be made to.

### *School*

8. The school was at the side of the main building. The nuns took the lessons, but that's all I remember.

### *Leisure time*

9. I remember "Coco the Clown" came once and there were a few toys and games for us to play with.

*Holidays and trips*

10. We got taken to an army camp near Perth one time for a holiday. We were there for a couple of weeks and I remember sleeping in army camp beds. Another time we went on a day trip to Rosslynlee hospital at Roslin. I remember playing in the river with the patients there. Another time we went on the train to Dunoon or somewhere. I don't know if everyone went, but there used to be quite a few of us on the trips.
11. On another trip we were taken to Edinburgh and went to St Margaret's Loch. I slipped at the side and fell in. I almost drowned because I couldn't swim.
12. We also got taken to the pictures a couple of times.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

13. The first birthday I remember was my eighth, when I was at Smyllum. I got chocolate eggs and I remember dishing them out. I'm not sure if my birthday maybe fell on Easter weekend that year.
14. At Christmas it was a big scramble for the presents, we weren't each given our own.

*Visits/Inspections*

15. Nobody came to visit me and I don't remember any inspections.

*Healthcare*

16. I liked going to the dentist when I was at Smyllum, because you would get a sweet. I don't remember much about going to see the doctor though. My records say that I had a few illnesses when I was at Smyllum, but I don't remember that. They say I had bronchitis in 1956, dysentery in 1957, chicken pox and mumps in 1958 and measles in 1959. I must have had treatment, I just don't remember.

**Incident involving Sammy Carr**

17. I used to play with a boy called [REDACTED] who got transferred to Lasswade. One time I was with a boy called Sammy Carr and another lad, I think it was [REDACTED] when Sammy found a dead rat in with the chickens. It was covered in lice and Sammy started throwing it about. Sammy was a lively boy and a joker. He got hold of it and put it in his mouth, the whole tail. It was shocking. With the force of putting it in, little spots of dried blood were left under his mouth.
18. The nuns never saw us, but it was the talk of the place and they must have found out. Sammy got put into quarantine straight away after that and I never saw him alive again. About three weeks later he died and we all had to kiss his body in the coffin. I remember it was a white coffin.
19. That was about 1963 or 1964 and people were getting put into quarantine quite a lot anyway because there was a typhoid outbreak. We all had to give stool samples. I wanted to get quarantined because I thought it was special treatment, but I never did.

**Abuse at Smyllum Orphanage, Lanark**

20. I am not aware of being abused when I was in Smyllum and I don't remember seeing anybody else getting beaten. Maybe I'm blocking things out. That's not to say it didn't happen, I just don't remember. I must have been hit sometimes, I wasn't always a perfect boy, but you just thought it was part-and-parcel of living in a home. Some people might call it a beating, some people might say I deserved it.
21. All us children were warned to stay away from [REDACTED] BAC [REDACTED] because he had a temper on him. Sometimes I heard him swearing, but I just avoided him and I never saw him doing anything.

**Leaving Smyllum Orphanage, Lanark**

22. I don't know why I was fostered out from Smyllum to the LNQ/SPO in Edinburgh. I would imagine it must have been Edinburgh social work that put me there. The LNQ/SPO might have picked me up from there, I don't remember. The first I remember seeing them was at their home. I don't remember them coming to visit me before at all and I don't remember being told I was going.

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**Nazareth House, Aberdeen**

47. I got taken to Nazareth House by a male and a female and I remember they bought me a Chinese meal on the way. I don't know if they were welfare officers or not. I was all excited because I was happy to be going back to a home.

48. There was all ages there, from a baby right up to about fifteen.

**Routine at Nazareth House, Aberdeen**

*First day*

49. Nazareth house was a massive building with a big front door. I remember meeting the mother superior on the first day and then getting taken to a field where all the

kids were playing. I joined in straight away, running and jumping about, I felt at home again and comfortable because everybody else was in the same boat.

50. One of the first things they did was take me to the dormitories. I was on the first floor and there was another floor above. There was a few rooms for each dormitory, with three or four boys in each. Next to my room was the kitchen and doors to an old folks home. We got told to never go there. The girls stayed on the other side of the place.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

51. Sister [REDACTED] LFZ was in charge of my dormitory and her room was right next door to the one I was in. She had a window that she could look at us through. There was about twenty-five boys in four or five rooms along with a baby that was only about a year old. The cook was always concerned that the baby wasn't getting proper attention.
52. We would get up about seven, have breakfast and do our chores and then get the bus to school about half-eight. In general we were in bed by nine o'clock at night.

#### *Food*

53. Food was starchy but was okay. I was never a vegetable eater but you had to eat your vegetables if you wanted a pudding. I liked pudding, so I did.

#### *School*

54. We went to the local school, St Peter's, where we all got called the "Nazzies" and got taken there by bus. I started in the primary school there and then went to the secondary. I never had any trouble while I was there.
55. One of the boys there challenged me to a fight, so I did and I got the better of him. I got a bit of respect because I'd beaten him, but I'd held the bus up so the conductor

gave me a wallop off the side of my head. I had a sore head for two or three days after.

### *Clothing*

56. All of the kids from Nazareth House had to wear a yellow and blue top for school, it was horrendous. You could tell us a mile away. Sunday clothes were similar but better quality and we wore a tie that had elastic around the neck.
57. An old guy died in the old folks home next door and I got given his suit to wear. It was terrible, a pea green Harris tweed suit and everybody took the mickey out of me.

### *Sport and leisure*

58. I was quite a good footballer and got to play for the school in first and second year. The boots we had to wear were terrible though and the other lads used to take the mickey. We would play back at Nazareth House as well and Sister LFZ would play too, she was the star of the show.
59. There was a room in Nazareth House where we all got to play in the evening after dinner. There was a record player and toys in there and I also had a stamp collection that I kept in there.
60. I had kept up swimming and got to the finals of a competition at school. I broke my finger in a fight though and never got to swim. I had to wear these horrendous big trunks and everyone used to take the mickey out of me.
61. At the weekends we would get to play in the park. The girls would play at the bottom and the boys at the top. We weren't separated, that's just what happened.
62. Sometimes we would get shown a film on a projector in the TV room. I probably saw four or five films when I was in there. In general we didn't get to watch much TV though.

*Pocket money*

63. We would get a shilling pocket money a week, which we got to spend in the local shop at the weekend. Sometimes I would go to the local baths and spend it there.

*Bed Wetting*

64. Some boys would wet the bed and if they did I would sometimes get woken up and taken to the toilet. The toilet floor was always swimming in urine because there was all these boys that were half asleep having to pee. I don't think there was any punishment if someone wet the bed.

*Washing and Bathing*

65. Every two or three nights we would get a bath. There would be two or three boys in the bath and the nuns would wash us and dry us. Sometimes some of the younger boys would dry us and I used to hate that. I ran away one time because I hated it so much. I got caught and afterwards I told the deputy headmistress at school, Mrs Shaw, why. She was nice and took pity on me.

*Holidays and trips*

66. If it was a nice day the nuns would take us on the bus to the beach near Pittodrie. Sometimes people would give the nuns some money and they would buy us an ice cream.
67. Every two years they would take us on a daytrip to a big monastery somewhere. I didn't like that though, it was just lots of praying.
68. There was a posh girls' home near Nazareth House and sometimes on a Sunday the girls would take some of the boys for a burger at the "Wimpey" bar in Aberdeen. They were wealthy girls and would buy us a milkshake or an ice cream or something.

69. We got taken to a place in Dumbarton for a couple of weeks holiday once in the summer. Different families would take three or four boys in. The couple I stayed with took me to a Celtic football game while I was there.
70. Another time a few of us went to a place with the Boys' Brigade in Fraserburgh.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

71. When it was your Birthday at Nazareth House, the mother superior would give you a present. That was the only time you would see the mother superior. We would get sent to her room and she would wish us a happy birthday, ask us how we were getting on and give us a present.
72. I used to hate Christmas because it was a lucky dip for the presents. The presents had been donated by people and I had got a game with bits missing. The baby got a jumbo jet that time, so I just took it. The nuns would put decorations up in the canteen and there was a tree. All the presents would go in the cupboard afterwards.
73. I got sent to a family in Fraserburgh to stay for one Christmas. That was the best Christmas I ever had.

*Religious Instruction*

74. There was a church inside the place where we would go every Sunday. At Lent we used to have to kneel and say about sixty "Hail Marys" every day for six weeks. We had to pray before meals and before bedtime.
75. I was an altar boy and sometimes had to get up at five o'clock for the six o'clock mass. It wasn't my choice, I just got told I was to be an altar boy a few months after I arrived at Nazareth House. I think there were three altar boys and we would all take turns doing the Benediction.

*Chores*

76. Every evening and Saturday mornings we had to do chores. Cleaning and polishing the dormitory floors. Some people might have found it hard but it didn't bother me.

*Visits/Inspections*

77. I remember seeing Mr Thomson when he came to visit Nazareth House one time. I don't know if there were any inspections.

*Healthcare*

78. I don't remember seeing a doctor when I was at Nazareth House. I did have to see a dentist when I got a problem with my teeth after eating a "Crunchie" bar.
79. When there were bugs going about we had to take two big soup spoons of this jelly stuff. It was horrible.

*Running away*

80. The time I ran off I went with another boy and we were away for about fourteen hours. We just kept on walking and ended up near Peterhead, about 30 miles away. The police were looking for us and we ended up getting picked up.

*Discipline*

81. They were very strict at Nazareth House. When you've got a few nuns looking after all these kids from all different backgrounds, things are going to snap sometimes. If somebody did something wrong and nobody owned up to it, we all got hit.
82. Sister LFZ was basically our mother and would look after us and control us. She was hard as nails and we were scared of her, although at times she was alright. She used to keep a cricket wicket and would wallop us with it over the knuckles if

we'd done something wrong. One time I dropped a bible and got a skelping, she had a terrible temper on her.

83. Some people were bad-natured and I remember they got a few beatings. One of them was a lad [REDACTED] who was pretty bad and he got it a few times.

### **Abuse at Nazareth House, Aberdeen**

84. Another time, just before I left Nazareth House, Sister [REDACTED] LFZ snapped and burst my nose. I had been doing my chores and told her I needed to get away to play football. I kept pestering her and eventually she grabbed me and battered my head twice against the bedframe. I swore at her and about two or three months later I got sent to St Ninian's.
85. A girl called [REDACTED] at school stuck a big needle in the top of my thigh one time. She was a nutcase and got punished by the school for it.

### **Leaving Nazareth House, Aberdeen**

86. When I left Nazareth House, Sister [REDACTED] LFZ gave me a jewellery box she said she had got from her mother. I've still got it. I think she liked me and I think she had just lost it when she hit my head off the bedframe.

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

87. You would never complain or report anything. If you did, it would go straight back to the mother superior and you would get punished.

### **St Ninian's School, Falkland**

88. I got moved to St Ninian's in January. All I remember is that I was told I was getting moved because I was getting too much of a handful. I can't remember who told me that, I just thought it was because I'd sworn at Sister [REDACTED] LFZ I don't remember how long before I went I was told, probably a few weeks. I'd never heard of the place before.

### **Routine at St Ninian's School, Falkland**

#### *First day*

89. I remember turning up at St Ninian's, but I don't remember how I got there. It was night time when I got there and I remember seeing this big sixteenth century house. The entrance hall was all wood and I remember the brother standing there wearing a black cassock with a big belt and rosary beads. I thought "Oh my God!"
90. St Ninian's was all boys from about twelve to fifteen. I would say there were no more than fifty boys there and probably eight or nine monks. There was also an outside teacher and an odd-job man. Sometimes a monk would come for a month at a time and then leave.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

91. We slept in rooms with about three or four boys in each. Eventually I got a room on my own because I became head prefect. Dorm thirteen was where they put the lads who wet their beds.
92. We would go to bed about nine o'clock and got woken up about seven o'clock.

#### *Food*

93. Food was just normal, nothing special. We all ate together in a big canteen. The cook was a local woman and she was really nice. At teatime, after sport, we got milk and as much bread and jam as we wanted.

### *School*

94. We didn't get the best education at St Ninian's. The school was in the place and there was no special stuff, just reading and writing. The brothers were clever enough to see you got a basic education and each brother would take three or four different subjects. There was also a part-time teacher who came in from Falkland. He did sport, woodwork, metalwork and craftwork.
95. We would get classes in the morning, then sports in the afternoon. After sports we would get afternoon tea and then classes again from four o'clock to seven o'clock. Dinner was after that and then we got leisure time until bed.

### *Clothing*

96. On Sundays we wore a blue jacket with gold trims. I can't remember if we had to wear a uniform to school.

### *Sport and leisure*

97. Sport was a big thing at St Ninian's, in the afternoons we would play rugby, they were very keen on that, or football. We also did cross country runs.
98. After dinner in the evening, we got about an hour-and-a-half leisure time. There was a wee gym and you got to play table tennis and games. Sometimes we would get taken to different youth clubs in the evening to play in table tennis leagues. We also did really well in five-a-side football and ended up representing the whole Fife area in a tournament in Glasgow.

99. I was really good at sport so eventually I got made head prefect. I was captain of the football team and captain of the rugby team. I had also been put forward for Scottish schoolboys rugby, but I was too old for it.

*Washing and bathing*

100. Every day after sports we would get a shower. The monks would supervise, usually Brother LNA

*Pocket money*

101. We would get a shilling pocket money on a Wednesday and a shilling on a Saturday. The would also put two shillings away, to be kept for holidays.
102. Once a month, because I was head prefect, they gave me about ten shillings and I got dropped off in Kirkcaldy. I got to spend four or five hours there, it was good of them.

*Holidays and trips*

103. Most of the other boys there were from broken families and some would get home at weekends and for holidays. I was different, I was an orphan and had nowhere to go so I got sent off to different places during the holidays. I think it was the welfare department that sorted that out.
104. One time I got sent to a place in Warrender in Edinburgh and another time to stay with a retired colonel in Argyle. I was there for two weeks and I liked that. I went with another boy from St Ninian's and the colonel would take us out fishing and shooting. He was eccentric, but he was good and I enjoyed staying there.
105. Another time I got sent to a halfway house in Claremont Street in Edinburgh where people with issues were trying to recuperate. I would have been fourteen or fifteen and slept in this room with four or five working men. I was there for seven weeks

over the summer holidays and I absolutely hated it. I was terrified of these people. Most of them were alcoholics and “druggies”.

106. I got a police warning for stealing a car radio while I was there, but I hadn't stolen it, one of the men that stayed there had. He made me go to a pawn shop and sell it. He gave me ten shillings for doing it and he took six pounds, but I got caught. I was back in St Ninian's by that time and I got taken to Methil police station and got a warning.
107. I only had ten shillings for the whole seven weeks I was at Claremont Street. Eventually the woman that ran the place, Mrs Rider, got in touch with welfare and they gave me another ten shillings. She had a son and eventually she let me sleep with him for the last couple of weeks.
108. Another time we all got taken from St Ninian's to an army camp near Dundee for a week. We had been getting careers advice about joining the army and this was to show us what it was like. We got to shoot and did a lot of running about, assault courses, stuff like that.
109. The monks also took us to stay at a college in Liverpool for a week to play a rugby match. While we were there they took us to see Manchester United play Chelsea at football.

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

110. I don't remember spending any Christmases at St Ninian's, I always got sent away. They had nowhere to send me though so one time they sent me to a working boys' hostel called Ponton House in Edinburgh. I met the [REDACTED] brothers from Nazareth House there. They were “nutters”. While I was there I went to visit the [REDACTED] LNQ/SPO and saw [REDACTED] there too, he was still staying with them and must have been about nineteen by then.

111. I don't remember where I spent the other Christmas and I don't remember any birthdays either.

*Religious Instruction*

112. St Ninian's wasn't as religious as Nazareth House, although there was a church in the place that we would go to on Sundays.

*Chores*

113. Every night we had to take turns to do all the dishes after we'd eaten. At weekends all the other chores had to be done, polishing the floors with this big buffer thing and cleaning.

*Visits/Inspections*

114. I remember a guy I knew from Nazareth House, [REDACTED] LHN [REDACTED] came to visit me. He was a bit older than me and had become a monk. I don't remember the welfare coming.

*Healthcare*

115. A boy flicked a toothbrush when I was at St Ninian's and it went in my eye. I got taken to Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy and was in there for about five days for observation because they thought my pupil was damaged.
116. Every now and then there would be lice going about and the female staff would pull a metal comb through our hair.
117. A dentist came once a year and one time I had toothache so I had to get it drilled out. He over-injected me and I was squirming about because it was sore. He had just put the injections in anywhere and the pain was awful. He slapped my face and told me to sit still. I hated going to the dentist after that.

*Discipline*

118. They were very strict at St Ninian's. I started smoking when I was there and if the monks caught you, you got it. They would belt you if they smelt it and it was always a "doubler", five or six strokes. Generally, if someone got the belt we all saw it, but we didn't ask why. I accepted that if you did something wrong you would get the belt. It was part of the game.
119. There was a disciplinary committee of five third year boys, with one of the brothers supervising. I was on it because I was head prefect. If anybody did anything wrong they would get reported and we had to issue the punishment. It could be polishing the floors, cleaning the toilets for the next two weeks, or whatever. The monk would advise us and make sure it was fair.

**Abuse at St Ninian's School, Falkland**

120. Brother **LNA** came about a year after I got to St Ninian's. He slept in a room next to all ours and he used to get the first year boys to sit on his knee or on his bed. We weren't allowed to wear underpants under our pyjamas and our willies would be sticking out. He didn't bother me though.
121. Brother **LNA** was weird and when he gave the belt, he seemed to enjoy it. When we would have showers, Brother **LNA** was always there, staring at us. He would be walking about looking at us all. Even then I knew it was strange
122. When I was staying in the hostel in Claremont Street in Edinburgh, one of the men tried to assault me. I was lying in bed and he took the covers off me and tried to jump on me. He was trying to sexually assault me, so I kicked him and he went away.

### **Leaving St Ninian's School, Falkland**

123. You left school at fifteen at that time and there was a leaving dance when it came time for me to leave. I had nothing to wear and the cook's daughter was about the same size as me, so she gave me her top and jeans and a big gold chain to put on. I must have looked a sight, but it was the seventies.
124. I got sent to a working boys' hostel at Pollockshields in Glasgow that was run by the monks of St Vincent de Paul. That was just the natural progression and I just thought of it as a new adventure.

### **Reporting of abuse at St Ninian's School, Falkland**

125. I reported the guy who tried to sexually assault me at the halfway house the next morning. That's when Mrs Rider let me sleep with her son and the guy got sent away. All I remember of him is that he was a man in his forties.

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

126. I never had any qualifications and at first, when I moved to the hostel in Glasgow, I got a job as a store boy. I got paid £7 a week and had to hand £6 of that to the priest for my board and lodgings. I got to keep the £1 that was left over.
127. I then got a job delivering coal, which was better paid. I was working from seven in the morning to nine at night and I got £11 a week for it. I got to keep £1.50 and gave the rest to the priest. I always got the top flats to do, it was hard work carrying all the bags of coal up.
128. When I turned sixteen I went to the careers office and sat a test. I was told that I had just failed the test for becoming an apprentice, but that I would make a good

infantryman. There was a Guards officer there and he encouraged me to sign up, I was told there would be plenty of sport.

129. Before I joined, the welfare gave me £70 to buy clothes and then I got the train down to the training camp at Pirbright in Surrey.
130. At first, in training, there was lots of sport and I did rugby, football and athletics. I also got into boxing. Then I got sent to join the battalion and I didn't like it. I was in for five years in total and went to Belize for six months at first. I enjoyed it there but then I got sent to Northern Ireland and then Germany and I hated it.
131. I got discharged from the army in 1977 and went to stay with the LNQ/SPO for a while. I'd stayed in contact with them after I'd been to see them when I stayed at Ponton Street Hostel. They stayed in Dalkeith by that time and were in their late sixties. It was handy for them and it was handy for me.
132. I got a job with a catering firm in Edinburgh putting marquees up and worked there for a while before I got a job as a warehouseman in Dalkeith. That would be in 1978 when I would be twenty-two and I have worked there since.
133. I met my wife in 1980 and she has been my rock. We have one daughter, who is now twenty and is at university. She's spoilt rotten, but she has a great personality.

### Impact

134. My wife tells me that every time I get down it's because of my time in care. I was always getting moved about from place to place. It's not a regular thing that I get depressed, but it comes every now and then. Sometimes I get moody and feel sorry for myself. Sometimes I feel quite bitter, especially if I see other people getting a pat on the back for something and I don't.

135. I have been to see a counsellor who has told me that he thinks I'm blocking quite a lot out. He thought I should have some counselling sessions, but I'm not interested in that.
136. I've always been a bit of a loner and even now I don't have any close friends. You've more control if you just keep yourself to yourself. I follow Celtic football club, but I don't like big crowds so I don't go to any football matches. I think that's because of my time in care.

### Records

137. About fifteen years ago my wife encouraged me to try and get my records and find out about my family. I got in touch with a place in Castle Street in Edinburgh and found out that I have two sisters. I'd always been told I was an orphan and had no family. I was told that from early on, when I was at Smyllum.
138. The records say that my mother is [REDACTED] and my father is called [REDACTED]. He was apparently in the Royal Canadian Navy and was married with three children. My mother had been in care as well because her mother had been put in prison for child abuse.
139. The records also say that my older sister was born in 1954 and that she was legally adopted in Glasgow. She had been called [REDACTED] but she is now known as [REDACTED] and lives in East Kilbride. My younger sister, [REDACTED] was born two years after me, in 1958. She was adopted by a family in Fife who then moved to America and she now lives in New Jersey. Seemingly all our fathers were sailors.

### Other information

140. [REDACTED] had got a genealogist to do a family tree and we found out where my mother now stays. About eight years ago I wrote a letter to her and sent her a picture of

myself and my daughter. She replied through a friend that she did not want any contact though and threatened legal action if I tried.

- 141. I have been in touch with my sisters and have been out to New Jersey a couple of times to visit [REDACTED] [REDACTED] doesn't want any contact now though, but I don't know why.
  
- 142. I have read in the newspapers that people have said Sammy Carr was beaten to death by one of the nuns, that's not my recollection at all. Maybe he got hit and I didn't see it, but I don't think so. I also read something about a rat and that's why I've come forward to the Inquiry. To me, Sammy Carr died because he put that rat's tail in his mouth.
  
- 143. 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] ABF .....

Dated..... 15/12/17 .....