

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

MNA

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is MNA. My date of birth is 1966. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born at Kinning Park, in Glasgow. We eventually moved to Priesthill when I was five years old. My father's name was my mother's was They came over from Ireland looking for work, aged fifteen.
3. My dad worked in construction and my mum was a stay-at-home mum. I had six siblings, and I was the second youngest. There was about one year between each of us. My sister died in 1994.
4. In the area I was brought up in, I got into trouble for silly things such as shoplifting sweets, and skipping school. This was when I was living in Priesthill, Glasgow. I went to St Robert's Primary School and then to Bellamy's Secondary School.
5. I went to several Children's Panels for shoplifting. I think it was just the social worker in attendance representing me. I don't remember having a lawyer, or being told that I could have a lawyer. I can't recall if my mum or anyone else was present. They decided that they were going to send me to St Ninian's but they remanded me at Larchgrove assessment centre in Glasgow first.

6. I have no complaints about Larchgrove.
7. I went to the Children's Panel at Ingram Street again and I was sentenced to two years' residential training at St Ninian's, Falkland but I spent four years there. I don't understand why that was. That was in 1978. I went straight from the Children's Panel to St Ninian's.
8. I went to St Ninian's in the social worker's car, which was green. There was no central locking in those days, so I jumped out at a set of traffic lights. I got caught though, and we carried on to St Ninian's. I didn't get any further punishment for trying to escape.

St Ninian's, Falkland 1979 to 1982

Routine at St Ninian's

9. St Ninian's was built in the sixteenth century. It had over 200 rooms. It was run by the Christian Brothers. Brother LNA he was the [REDACTED] at the beginning. Brother [REDACTED] showed me around. He showed me the quiet room, the assembly hall, the dormitories, and the classrooms.
10. It was all boys at St Ninian's. There were about 45 to 50 boys from the age of about twelve to sixteen. I left when I was sixteen-and-a-half.
11. The staff were Brother MHG Brother [REDACTED] MCG Brother Farrell, Brother Kelly, Brother MBS and Brother MHJ They dealt with the classes. There wasn't a specific thing each of them had to do. Basically, they were all alcoholics.
12. Brother LNA he's dead now, he would have been in his forties. He was a big guy, his nickname was LNA I can't remember what type of accent he had. I was only in St

Ninian's a week or so and I was wearing striped pyjamas. He had me on his knee and started to fondle me.

13. Brother Kelly took over from Brother LNA and also fondled me which I'll describe later. His nickname was [REDACTED]. He was in his thirties, he was tall, thin, and had black hair.
14. Brother Farrell ended up as headmaster after Brother LNA. He had glasses. I think he was from Motherwell. I have nothing bad to say about Brother Farrell from my time at St Ninian's
15. MBV was the [REDACTED] at St Ninian's. He was a Christian Brother, but he was a [REDACTED] at the time I was there. Brother MCG was the [REDACTED] teacher.
16. There were a lot of civilian staff as well. There were cooks etc. MIK was the [REDACTED] teacher.

First day

17. My first day there, I wanted to run away straight away. I probably felt scared. It was a big building, with all these men with collars on. They all had different accents as well. I was scared by these authority figures, rather than being scared of the other boys.

Mornings and bedtime

18. Upstairs in St Ninian's were the dormitories. There were senior dormitories and round the corner, younger ones. In between was Brother LNA room at the top.
19. I don't know how many dormitories there were. Each dormitory room had about four to six beds. The boys in each dorm were all roughly the same age. There was also a shower room upstairs.

20. We got up at 7.30 am, one of the Brothers would come in to the dormitory rooms, turn the lights on, and shout us to get up. We got up straight away, got washed, got our clothes on, and went for breakfast.
21. Bedtime was the same for all ages. We went back to the dormitories at 9.00 pm and had lights out at 10.00 pm.
22. You moved dormitory depending on your age. We each had a number as well, but I can't remember mine. We each had an old-fashioned bedside cabinet to keep our stuff in.

Personal possessions

23. We didn't really have personal possessions, just clothes. The Brothers gave you your clothes and a toothbrush.
24. I can't recall getting any pocket money, but they must have given it to us because they had a tuck shop. Maybe we didn't get the money, just the sweets. I'm not sure.

Mealtimes/Food

25. We had breakfast in a room down at the bottom of the building, we called it the Dungeon. Lunch was at 12.00 pm, between school classes. Tea was about 5.00 pm. We got supper, a glass of milk and a sandwich or a biscuit about 8.00 pm.
26. The food was fine, breakfast was black pudding, sausages, a full fry-up. Dinner was usually something like mince and tatties or a stew.
27. If you didn't like your food, you were made to eat it. If you refused, you were punished. You might have got the belt, or made to stand on the spot for sometimes four to five hours without moving. You learned to eat what was put in front of you.

Washing/bathing

28. Everyone had to use the same showers. It was all open, there was no privacy. You could get a shower every day, but I don't recall actually having a shower every day. The Brothers supervised the showers. It was mainly Brothers **MHG** **LNA** or Kelly that supervised the showers. I don't recall any of the other Brothers doing this. They controlled the temperature and how long you got in the shower. We were all young boys, naked and being watched as we washed. It was a bit degrading.

Clothing/uniform

29. They supplied you with clothes at St Ninian's. It was a uniform, everybody wore the same clothes. You had black trousers and a white shirt. They supplied sports gear too, a red football top and socks. The football boots were like 1930's style boots.
30. I think my own clothes were put into storage. I wore my own clothes when we were going home for visits. As I was growing in the four years I was there, my mum would buy me new clothes when I went home for a visit.

School

31. After breakfast, we had school from 9.00 am to 12.00 pm. Then we had a dinner break for an hour, then back to classes until 4.00 pm.
32. The schooling was fine, I learnt a lot in St Ninian's. We had maths and English, and I got caught up on a lot of stuff I had missed before, from playing truant from school in Glasgow. I was catching up from the stuff I missed outside. We didn't get any homework, we did homework in the classrooms.
33. I learned how to play the mouth organ, the piano, and the flute or rather the penny whistle.

Chores

34. We all had to do cleaning at St Ninian's. I had to clean and mop the back stairs, every day Monday to Friday, before school. There would be two boys cleaning the stairs, and two cleaning the halls with big buffers.
35. I did work experience when I was at St Ninian's. When I was fifteen, I worked at the Mother's Pride bakery for about three months, other people worked in the iron foundry. It was like a full-time job but I didn't get the money from working. [REDACTED] MBV [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] got the money. When I finally left St Ninian's, I got the money in a brown envelope. It was maybe £100 or more.

Leisure time

36. After school, we got free time, when we usually played football. We got more free time after tea, until 9.00 pm.
37. Saturday was sports day. We did all different types of sports and cross-country running. I learned a lot about a lot of different sports, it was the only good thing about St Ninian's.
38. We used to build rope bridges and rope swings on the nature trails in the woods near St Ninian's. As well as playing football, rugby, and cricket we did canoeing and abseiling.
39. I got medals at St Ninian's for sports, but I didn't get any religious medals.

Religious instruction

40. The Brothers were very strict about religion. We went to Mass on Sundays. I ended up being an altar boy. You had to go to Chapel and you had to say prayers before bed. I can't remember about prayers in the morning. We had to say Grace before each

meal. We also had religious education in the classes, but it was just the Catholic religion.

Trips/Holidays

41. We used to go on trips to Leisham House, which is in Stoke-on-Trent. It was a big building for all the boarding schools, and had plaques on the wall for St Ninian's and other schools. We sometimes used to visit a community centre. We went on camping trips to Wales, with Brother Kelly supervising.
42. Myself and another boy, [REDACTED], went down to Stoke-on-Trent. We went to the community centre, there were about twenty of us, and then these families came in. We were down there to play rugby against their sons. I was taken in by a family willing to take me in to their house. Other boys were taken in by other families. We played rugby, football, and hockey. We went down there twice, for two to three weeks at a time.

Birthdays and Christmas

43. We went home for Christmas, it was just a couple of days off at the weekend. I don't remember what the arrangement was if Christmas was mid-week.
44. They did have a tree at St Ninian's but Christmas was not really celebrated the way it should have been. Your birthday was not celebrated at all, as far as I can recall.

Visits/Inspections

45. We were allowed to go home every couple of weeks. On the Friday, we were taken in a single decker coach to Buchanan Street bus station, your family would be waiting for you. We went back to Buchanan Street station on the Monday, to go back to St Ninian's. There were a couple of times I never went back

46. MBV was the [REDACTED] at St Ninian's. Social workers did come to visit, but I can't remember their names or how often they visited. I can't remember any social worker speaking to me on my own about how things were at St Ninian's. I didn't see any other official inspectors. There was no-one who came to St Ninian's that I would have been able to talk to about what happened to me there.

Healthcare

47. There was a nurse, I think her name was Mary. I can't recall much about her. She was a heavy woman in her fifties, she is probably dead now. I do recall going to see her one time, after I got belted on the buttocks because I couldn't sit down. There wasn't much she could do about it. She knew what had happened. I told her I had been belted but she didn't note it down anywhere. Certain other things were used to hit you. Plimsolls were used a lot or anything he could get his hands on. By "he" I mean the [REDACTED] Brother MCG
48. I can't recall seeing a dentist. I can't recall any doctor visiting for inoculations or anything like that.

Running away

49. I tried to run away from St Ninian's a few times, every few weeks. A couple of times I got away, a couple of times I got caught by the local police trying to escape. The local police were alerted when any of us ran away and usually knew where to get us. It was a fair distance from St Ninian's to anywhere I would know.
50. Whenever I got caught, the police would take me back to St Ninian's. They didn't ever ask me why I had run away.
51. One time I got caught by the police, they took me to Falkland police station, which was really just a wee house. I managed to open a window, and I got away again.

52. One time, I stole a Chopper bicycle, in Falkland village. I managed to cycle as far as Kincardine Bridge, to try and thumb a lift. That's the furthest I went trying to get a lift.
53. I thumbed a lift in a delivery van, putting the Chopper in the back and they took me as far as Paisley. I remember I was sat in the back. I could hear the wife of the driver in the front saying to her husband that she thought I was dodgy, because of the way I was dressed. I was ready to jump out of the back of the van, but I was able to get out at Priesthill then I was on the run.
54. When I was on home leave, I sometimes didn't go back for the bus on Monday morning. I would do that every couple of months, it was treated as running away. When they then caught me in Glasgow, I would go back to Larchgrove and then two social workers would come and get me and take me to St Ninian's.
55. I got punished for running away. It would either be six of the belt, standing on the spot, or not being allowed home leave for three months. The worst was not getting home, then the next worst was the belt. Standing in the corridor which was a regular punishment would not be as bad as the other two. All of these punishments would be decided by Brother [REDACTED] LNA You always got the belt anyway but getting your leave taken away was much worse because it meant that you couldn't see your pals. I am not aware of any punishments being noted down by staff anywhere.

Bed Wetting

56. Some boys did wet the bed. I can't remember the names of any boys who wet the bed. Boys who wet the bed tended to be the more vulnerable ones. They would just be made to lie in it. The next morning, they would get the belt on the hands or the buttocks from Brother [REDACTED] LNA
57. I can't remember what happened with the wet bedclothes.

Discipline

58. The belt was used for discipline. It was a big solid bit of leather, with a split at one end, and a hole at the other end, to hang it up. If you got belted, I am not aware of them recording it anywhere.
59. I couldn't take six of the belt on the hands, it was too sore. I could only take four of the belt on the hands. If I was getting six of the belt, I would get the other two on my bare buttocks. Brother **MHG** also gave out punishment with the belt. He loved using the belt.
60. When I got belted, there was just the Brother there who was doing it, no one else was in the room. There was no holding back on the force used. I got belted approximately once a week. So that was either **LNA** or **MHG**
61. The other thing they did for discipline was called, "the long stand." You had to stand in the corridor in your shorts and a T-shirt. You had to stand still and be quiet, you weren't allowed to move. That could be for four or five hours, maybe longer.
62. At school, they used the belt, or a long stand for discipline. I was always getting the belt for stupid things. I got caught smoking, at the age of twelve. I burnt myself trying to put the cigarette out. I got six of the belt for that.
63. We were just wee boys. If we did anything wrong, it was because we didn't know any better. We were very frightened of the Brothers, they were very strict, especially Brother **LNA** and Brother **MHG**

Abuse at St Ninian's, Falkland

64. Within a week or two of arriving at St Ninian's, I was taken into a room, I think it was Brother LNA room. I was just dressed in my pyjamas. There were other children in the room. Brother LNA had one hand on my knee, and was fondling me with the other hand. I was very young, I didn't realise what he was doing. He would do this every couple of weeks. Other boys who were there were [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who is no longer with us.
65. When Brother Kelly moved into the room, after Brother LNA moved to another room, the fondling happened again with, this time, Brother Kelly fondling me. I don't recall Brother LNA and Brother Kelly ever being in the room at the same time. When I say "fondling" I mean that Brother Kelly was touching my private parts under my pyjamas. I can't recall if he would touch himself while doing this. Brother Kelly did this to me every couple of weeks and it went on for maybe a year.
66. Neither of them went further than fondling, with me. I don't know if it went further with the other boys, but I did see Brother Kelly fondling the other boys though I can't recall their names. There would be about six or eight boys in the room and he would go round us all fondling us in turn. We could all see what he was doing to each of us. As I said, this happened every few weeks over about a year. I don't think I was ever alone with Brother Kelly.
67. Brother MHG used the belt on me. The time when I was caught for smoking, I got belted four times on the hand and twice on the bare buttocks. I had to pull my trousers down. Brother MHG was not involved in any sexual abuse of me.
68. When Brother MCG took us for [REDACTED] we sometimes used to have to go out and play rugby in -12 degrees, with a pair of shorts, a pair of socks, and boots. Obviously, you tried to put extra clothing on. He would search you and if he found you wearing extra clothes, he would whack you on the back of the legs with a plimsoll.

69. The Brothers used to patrol the dormitories at night. None of the Brothers did anything to me in the dormitory at night, but you could hear them going into other boys' rooms. I don't know which brothers but I could hear them moving around. Basically, they were prowlers,
70. When I was thirteen, we went down to Leisham House in Stoke-on-Trent to play rugby. We were there about two weeks. Someone stole some money, it was £1.50. I didn't steal it, but someone else did. We all got made to stand naked in a corridor, while the Brothers walked round us, as if they were doing an identity parade. I can't think of the reason for doing that to investigate a theft. The other boys with me that day included [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Brother Kelly was there. I'm not sure about Brother LNA, and I can't recall the others.
71. I got belted for breaking into the Brothers' rooms, it was easy to do. I did it to steal their cigarettes. I once broke into Brother MBS room and stole a carton of cigarettes, not a packet. Brother MCG the [REDACTED] teacher whose nickname was MCG, heard me from his room next door. I was only twelve. I ran up onto the roof and Brother MCG chased after me. I refused to come down as I was worried about getting punished. I told them that if anyone came near me then I would be jumping off. A groundsman, a civilian worker whose name I don't recall, got the gardener to come along with ladders to try and get me down. I can't remember the gardener's name. I threatened to jump, just to keep them away from me. The Brothers, I don't know who, got the fire brigade and the police. I got six of the belt, made to have a long stand, and lost six months of home visits. When I went to the High Court to give evidence against the Brothers, they just said this incident never happened, but it did.
72. I know that quite a few boys went to the matron with injuries from being belted. She would have known herself what caused those injuries.
73. Brother MBS and Brother MHJ didn't do anything to me. Brother Farrell didn't do anything to me, although I know he was convicted of abuse at St Ninian's. I met Brother Farrell later, when I was in Shotts prison. He was there as the priest for the prison.

Reporting of abuse at St Ninian's, Falkland

74. There wasn't anyone I could tell about the abuse. When you were being abused, the Brother would threaten you with the belt and things, Brother LNA would threaten you not to tell anyone. I don't recall what exactly he said to me or when he said it but I clearly recall him making sure I was too scared to tell anybody about what was happening. I didn't tell my family when I went home for visits, I was trying to blank it all out.
75. The lay staff were down in the kitchen and they went home at night, so they wouldn't have seen the abuse. They might have had a different opinion about the place from me.

Leaving St Ninian's, Falkland

76. I was sixteen-and-a-half and it just came time to leave. I think the social worker decided when I was to leave. I can't recall being told what was happening, or how much notice I was given.
77. I felt relief when I was leaving. I can't recall how I felt trying to fit in with my family at home.

Life after being in care

78. After I got home from St Ninian's, I ended up in St John's List D School, in Glasgow. It was for theft. I was there until I was eighteen. I have no complaints about St John's.

79. After that, I was always in trouble. I ended up in prison. I was in Barlinnie, and then I got a big sentence when I was 21 and ended up in Shotts prison, for five years. I was in prison a few times between the ages of 18 and 38. The last time I was in prison was 15 or 16 years ago.
80. When I was eighteen, I learned painting and decorating in Noranside open prison and I went to college for it in Dundee.
81. I have two daughters, but I don't get to see them. I was an alcoholic for years.

Impact

82. I have blocked a lot of stuff out. I have had some counselling, but I have just tried to get on with life. I blame the social work department in Fife for everything.
83. I did attend some meetings with INCAS, when Nicola Sturgeon was there. The woman who was organising the meetings seemed more interested in other groups, so I didn't go back.
84. My G.P. recommended the Moira Anderson foundation to me for counselling. The relaxation technique was a bit helpful, but it got boring. I went for about fifteen sessions, but it was not much use to me.
85. I previously applied to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority, for compensation. They said I was not eligible because of an unspent conviction, even though I had done my time. I now have a lawyer pursuing a compensation claim.
86. No-one came to see me at St Ninian's. I turned to drink after leaving care. I was in and out of prison for years. I have had nightmares and flashbacks for years. I struggle to sleep. I have lost everything. I don't get to see my children.

87. I think that as you get older, you get wiser. Eventually, I decided enough was enough with the drinking.

Reporting of Abuse

88. I didn't report the abuse to the police or anyone else after I left care. Someone gave my name to the police as having suffered abuse at St Ninian's, so the police contacted me in either 2013 or 2014 to give a statement, which was the first time I spoke about it. They took a statement from me, over three or four meetings. I then went over my statement with a woman called Michelle from the Procurator Fiscal's office.
89. My family don't know about the abuse I suffered. I would have taken this stuff to my grave, if the police hadn't contacted me.
90. I then gave evidence at the High Court in a trial against Brother Kelly and others in July 2016. I don't know the precise dates I gave evidence. I was questioned for a couple of days, because of the amount of people on trial. There was a screen round the Brothers so I didn't have to see them. Two of the Brothers were convicted. They were Brother Kelly and Brother Farrell, although Brother Farrell had no involvement with me. Brother Kelly got ten years and Brother Farrell got five. Brother Farrell was due out last year, but it got blocked. I was contacted by a reporter called Peter Smith after the trial and myself and five others I had not seen since we were all boys at St Ninian's gave interviews to him. He is still trying to chase after the Brothers who were not convicted.
91. When I gave my statement to the police there were two officers present one of whom was called Hay. I felt that he was trying to pressure me into saying things that didn't happen, to make the abuse even worse than it was. It was as if he was trying to ensure a conviction. When I spoke to Michelle in the Fiscal's Office I pointed out to her that there were some things in the statement that I hadn't said though I don't now recall exactly what.

92. Giving evidence in the High Court was a horrendous experience. There were a lot of defence advocates and when each one was questioning me all the others would turn round and stare at me which was incredibly intimidating. When each one questioned me they simply tried to make me out a liar and that nothing that I said was true. I felt I was being kicked all over the court as they tried to rip my evidence apart.

Records

93. When the police came to see me, a police support worker said they tried to find my records, but they didn't have any luck. I have not gone looking for my records myself, but other people have gone looking for them for me, and they have been told the records have been destroyed.
94. [REDACTED] MBV [REDACTED] was the [REDACTED] at St Ninian's but the majority of our paperwork was destroyed which is what I was told by Michelle from the Fiscal's Office. She didn't explain exactly what she meant by this. When I gave evidence against some of the Brothers at the High Court, their defence lawyers tried to make out I wasn't even at St Ninian's. They tried to say I wasn't there when Brother Kelly was there, but I was.

Lessons to be Learned

95. I don't think abuse will ever stop, but I would like to see it stopped. It has been pushed under the carpet for years. I don't know why it has taken so long to come out.

Hope for the Inquiry

I think the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry is a good thing. I am aware the Inquiry is looking at all groups, it is on the news all the time. However, there has been no apology from the Catholic Church.

96. 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.....  MNA

Dated..... 30/5/19