

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

**Adam McCallum**

Support person present: No

1. My name is Adam Drummond McCallum. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1950. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before being put into care**

2. I was born in Stirling. I was my parents' third child. I had an older [REDACTED] [REDACTED] FBV [REDACTED] We moved to Ullapool and then to Singapore because my dad was in the army. [REDACTED] FDA [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were [REDACTED] Then there were another [REDACTED] FDB [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I had another [REDACTED] who were born when we came back to Stirling, called [REDACTED]
3. My family then moved from Stirling to Dundee. I lived with my parents [REDACTED] [REDACTED] on [REDACTED] in Dundee. I went to Rosebank School in Dundee, which was a Protestant school. The Catholic school was next door.
4. My father never worked after the army, and was an alcoholic. My mother [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I think she just had enough and left. [REDACTED] FDB [REDACTED]

5. We were left with my dad. He was an alright man but drink was his vice. He was always drunk and would give us a slap when he came home. We learned to hide when he got in to avoid being beaten. We were poor people but life was alright.
6. The cruelty people, who are called social workers these days, came to our door. I was about eight years old at the time. They took all our furniture out onto the street and set fire to it. They just told everybody to get out and locked up the place. I think people in the street must have phoned them. I don't know why because I thought we were just an ordinary family.
7. The social workers took us away. I didn't want to leave. All the kids were put in a van and dropped off somewhere. Nobody told us why we were being taken away. It was the government and they'd already made their minds up, so they didn't tell you things.
8. All of us were taken to the same children's home to begin with.

### **Care homes before foster care**

9. The first institution we were all put into was a children's home. I don't remember the name of the place. The first day was strange. Nobody knew what was happening. We were just shown our beds and that was it. The boys were in a separate part from the girls. I think there were about thirty kids in the place.
10. I remember we would get up in the morning, get our breakfast and go to school. I was still going to the same school. I remember it being alright.
11. The home was a big house and the bedrooms were downstairs so I kept climbing out of the window and running away. I was in there for about six weeks before I was moved to a secure house. My siblings were all separated after that.

12. I was then in a secure house in Dundee, but I don't remember the name of it. It was called Hope Park or Rose Park, or something like that. It was near to where the zoo used to be in Dundee. I think I was only there for a month or six weeks.
13. I was about eight or nine years old when I went to the secure house. I got clothes when I went in and they were washed once a week. There were about a dozen boys in there from about seven to twelve years old and we all shared one big dormitory. It was just a room with windows.
14. We got up in the mornings and made our beds. We then got washed, dressed and went down to have breakfast. We were then sent down to the cellar where we stayed all day. It was a plain room with a couple of tables and chairs. It had steel gates and bars. We didn't get out the house and there was no school. I don't remember having any books or toys to play with. We just sat about and did nothing. The other boys spoke about why they were in there and they were all there for committing crimes. In the evening, we went upstairs to bed.
15. The staff were guards who were employed by the government. They gave us a slap if we didn't do what we were told.
16. The windows were all barred in the secure house and the place was all gated up. We didn't get out anywhere and nobody came in to visit me. It was like a prison for unruly kids. It was for kids that they believed were out of control, but the truth was that we were kids that weren't being listened to.
17. I was then shipped out to a young, working class couple. I don't think they were able to have kids. It was in Scotland somewhere but I don't know where. I wouldn't settle there and was doing anything to annoy them. I would go out and come back in the early hours of the morning, and start kicking the door. I was there for a month before I left because they couldn't cope with me. They were nice people and it wasn't their fault; it was definitely mine. I made their life difficult so they called the social services who came and took me away.

18. I was then sent to stay with a different foster carer when I was nine years old.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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**Leaving foster care**

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49. The social services people came and picked me up one day when I was twelve years old and that was it. They only took me. Nobody told me why or where I was going. They talked amongst themselves but I just sat in the back of the car. I didn't ask any questions because you know not to ask these people any questions. I was happy to be going away from Mrs **BGC**

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51. I was taken to Aberlour Children's Home just outside Elgin.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Aberlour Children's Home**

55. I remember arriving at Aberlour, which was just outside Elgin. I was twelve when I went to Aberlour and I stayed there until I was fifteen years old.

56. I was taken to the governor's office. He was in charge. He told me what was going to happen and to see him if there was any problems; just the usual stuff. Then I was taken to the surgery, which was a hospital on the grounds. I was kept there for a week. I was given a good check over there. I was then monitored for the rest of the week.

57. I was allowed to get outside and walk about the place for that first week. The staff just watched me and kept an eye on me to see how I behaved with other kids. That would then determine what house I would go into, so if you got into fights then you would be put in a different house from if you just argued now and then. There were different houses in Aberlour for different people.

58. I don't remember which house I was put into but it wasn't one of the easy ones. I think that was because I had a few fights while I was in the hospital. There were a couple of hundred kids in the hospital bit, and you had to do that to assert yourself so nobody would give you any trouble.
59. Aberlour was called an orphanage but it wasn't really an orphanage. I wasn't an orphan because I had a mother and father and so did other kids. It was for kids who were a bit unruly or kids they didn't know what else to do with. They were then going nowhere because there was nowhere to go.
60. There were about 4000 kids in Aberlour from babies up to fifteen year olds. It was huge. There was a church, a graveyard, the hospital, a school, and six houses for the kids. The girls and boys were kept in different houses. There were also playing fields and a swimming pool.
61. The orphanage was almost the whole village. There were only about 500 people in the village, outside of the orphanage.
62. Each house had about thirty kids, but maybe more. They each had a house master and a house mistress. My house master and mistress weren't married and had separate rooms. One had a room at one end of a corridor, and the other had a room at the other end. I don't remember the name of any of the staff in there but they were all English.
63. I had the same house master throughout my time there. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
64. There were two dormitories in my house and they had single beds in them. We also had our lockers in the room. I was in a room with about fifteen boys and they were all from about seven years old to fifteen years old. I was then in the same dormitory with them for the time I was in there. Some boys got moved away.

**Routine at Aberlour Children's Home**

65. We got up in the morning and went to the bathroom to get washed. We went back into the room to get dressed. Then we had our breakfast downstairs and had to go to assembly and then school.
66. After school, we came back and did housework for a couple of hours. All the boys had to do a bit. We cleaned the floors and the bathrooms. We cleaned our dormitories. We were allowed to go out and play in the grounds for a few hours, after cleaning.
67. All the boys would go to bed by about 9:00 pm. The house master or mistress would check on us at night. Sometimes they would have their mates over and they would walk them through the corridors to show them where the kids slept. They would just look at you.
68. Some kids wet the bed. The house master or mistress would wake you up at night to take you to the toilet if you had wet the bed. If someone had wet their sheets, they would change them.
69. We had a bath once a week. There were six baths in the bathroom. It was huge. We all got in there, stripped off and queued up to get into the bath. I had to share the bath water with other boys but got to have a bath myself. The water was hot enough.
70. We had to get dressed up in our kilts and go to church twice on a Sunday. Everybody had to go for a big walk on Sunday with their housemasters, whether they wanted to or not.

*Leisure time*

71. We could go out and play in the evenings, after cleaning. I would go to the tip to meet some of the boys. That was where they burned all the rubbish, so it was always

smouldering. I used to muck about with two boys called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. We would try to catch and kill rats at the tip. We weren't supposed to be there.

72. There were two tramps in the village called Jocky and Brocky. They lived in the quarry and we would sit and talk to them. It was a man and his wife. They were decent people; they just didn't have anything.
73. We had sports nearly every day. We would have football and rugby and each house would play against the other. The sports teacher was called Mr [REDACTED] and he took sports class most of the time. We sometimes had gymnastics but it was football most of the time.
74. We only had rugby when the housemaster was with us, because he was an English rugby player. We would gang up on him and beat him up in rugby. Everybody would jump on him, and then quickly get off. He couldn't do anything to us because everybody did it.
75. We would have to get back to the house and the doors would be shut by about 8 pm. We could sit around and listen to the radio if we wanted to for a while, before going to bed. There were only certain stations you could listen to.
76. Boys and girls weren't supposed to mix out of school, but they did. If you wanted to meet up with the lassies, you would break out your house through the window, and go to the swimming pool. I was just a young boy so I just kept a look out for the big boys who were inside the swimming pool with the lassies.

*Food and mealtimes*

77. The food was cooked in the orphanage in the kitchen, and brought to the house for us. We had a dining room with lots of tables and you could sit where you wanted to. Everybody ate together and the house master and mistress dished the food out for us. The food was good.

78. You would have to finish your food or you would get a slap until it was gone. You could be made to sit there overnight if you didn't eat it. It would have to be gone. It never happened to me. I was too wide for that.
79. I would sit next to someone I could batter and put anything I didn't want on their plate. I didn't like fat, grease or gristle.

### *School*

80. It was a proper school. We had proper classes and sports. The teachers came from outside. It was like any other school, and you got the belt if you did something wrong.
81. Some people like school and some don't and you can't make someone like school. The kids who wanted to learn did really well, but I wasn't interested in school. I was fifteen years old and still struggling to read. I don't see how learning that Henry VIII killed his seventh wife is going to help me in life.
82. Boys and girls mixed when they were in the school, but there was not supposed to be any mixing when they got out of school.
83. I left school with no qualifications. I didn't even do my eleven plus. I wasn't interested and school wasn't interested in me, but that's no excuse. I should have learned and I can see that now, but I thought it was a waste of time then.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

84. There was a room called number nineteen, which had lots of toys and things in it. We would go there if it was our birthday and you were allowed to pick one thing out of the room and keep it. I only picked something I could sell. The room would be locked again straight away.
85. We used to get a birthday cake on our birthdays and had to share it with everyone in the house. I decided I didn't want to share with everyone one year and cut it in half,

and shared it with my pal. I got a hiding from the house master for that, for being a selfish person.

86. There was a woman who used to post me things through the Salvation Army in Dundee. She ended up in Canada and used to send me a couple of dollars and a tie each year at Christmas. I don't know how she knew about me. I used to be allowed to look at what was sent in and then it was taken away from me.
87. Anything that was sent in for you should have gone into your personal property and kept for you, but it was taken from me as soon as I had seen it. I never saw it again.
88. Christmas was celebrated just as it would be if you were at home. We had a tree and presents.

#### *Trips and Visits*

89. My mother came to visit me once in Aberlour when I was about fourteen years old. You could walk around the grounds or walk down to the village when you had a visitor. That was the only time I had a visitor, and I spoke to her for about an hour and that was it. I can't remember what we spoke about, but she was the last person I wanted to see.
90. No social workers came to check up on you in there. There was no need for them. It was the governor's job to make sure everything was alright and the system was working. That's all it was, a system from start to finish.
91. People would come looking for kids and they would just walk about from house to house. We knew what they were up to. They would look and see what lassies looked nice and what boys looked strong and decide who they wanted to take. Nobody looked at me, because I was a hooligan. That's all we were, daft wee hooligans, but we weren't bad people. We just wanted to mess about and do stupid things.

*Healthcare*

92. There was a proper hospital in Aberlour. They did operations and things. I never needed to go to the doctor, but people would if they needed to. We would be told to go to the dentist but I never did. Everything we needed was there.
93. One boy got moved to a mental hospital. He liked to touch things. He would touch the table and touch the walls and things and people next to him. They just took him away and that was it. We believed he was taken to a mental hospital but we didn't really know. Nobody told us what was going on. There was nothing wrong with the guy; he just liked touching things.
94. Our housemaster tried to teach us about the birds and the bees but we weren't interested.

*Discipline and punishment*

95. ██████ fell into the dump once and burned himself. He was up to his waist. Me and ██████ had to pull him out. We made a stretcher to drag him home. He had to get taken to hospital because his legs were all burned, but he was ok and able to walk afterwards. We were about thirteen years old.
96. Me and ██████ got in trouble and had to scrub the assembly hall floor for three days. We were still getting up in the morning and going to school, but after school we had to clean for hours. We had to clean through the night sometimes too. They didn't use violence when they did that, because that was punishment enough.
97. We would get punished for sneaking out at night and for stealing apples. The punishment would mainly be cleaning and scrubbing. You would also be made to stay in your bed sometimes until you were told to get up.
98. You weren't allowed to listen to pirate radio. We would get seriously beaten up by the house master for that.

99. The housemaster gave the punishments in there. The house mistress wouldn't give you the punishment herself but she could tell the housemaster and ask him to punish you. He was the top dog. He was alright I suppose. I just thought of him as a keeper or jailer, whose job it was to make sure we didn't go anywhere. He could have been worse. There were only two of them and thirty boys, so they didn't stand a chance.
100. We never listened to the adults in there. You only listened to your own, and found out what you could get away with and where you could hide. Some of the kids smoked and if they got caught, they'd have their tobacco taken off them. They would also get whatever punishment the adult saw fit.
101. I never thought about speaking to anybody about what was going on. I just believed that was the way it was, and it was their right to beat us.
102. We just did boys stuff in there, but didn't get into too much bother. We weren't always caught either.
103. There would be a big meeting in the assembly hall once in a while. The governor would pick on one person. It was a bit like Jeremy Kyle. He would pick one person and start slagging them off in front of everybody. It was bad craic and people got bullied for these things afterwards. I spoke up a couple of times about it.
104. One time the governor was making fun of a boy in assembly for peeing the bed and the boy was hiding under the table. I stood up and said it was all wrong. The whole place didn't need to know about it. I was about fourteen years old at the time. I got a big speech from the governor about it afterwards but that was all.

*Peer bullying*

105. People got bullied by the other kids after the things the governor would say in assembly. You could tell the housemaster if anything was wrong but they didn't do



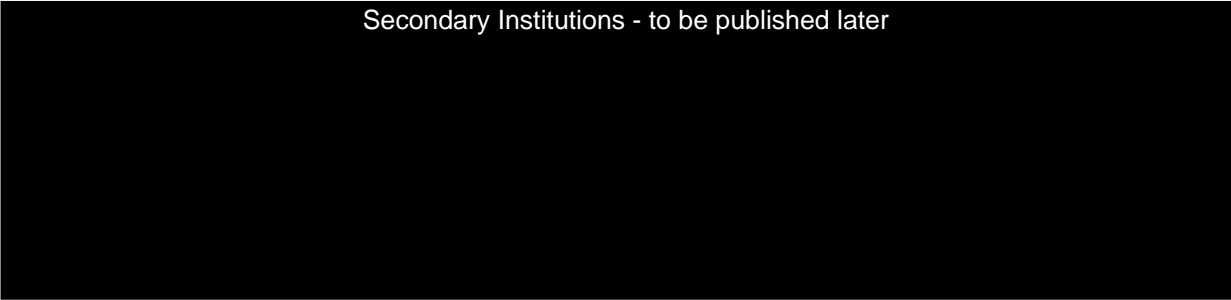
anything about the bullying. They would just tell you to stick up for yourself. It was just what happened, especially with so many boys in one room together.

106. I never got bullied because I slapped the first boy who tried to bully me and I never had trouble after that. That's what it was like. You have to assert yourself to make sure nobody comes near you. It's like being in jail and you have to show people not to mess with you.

### **Leaving Aberlour**

107. It was time to leave Aberlour when you were fifteen years old. You had to go and see the governor the day you turned fifteen, and take a pledge. You had to say that you promised to be hardworking, honest and agreeable.
108. The governor gave you your papers, told you to get the bus to Elgin and then a train to an address in Aberdeen and then you left. That was it.
109. They sent you to a house in Aberdeen for a wee while after you left, and from there you were to make your own way in life. Nobody told you what help you were entitled to.
110. I think the house in Aberdeen was on Commercial Road or something like that. It was an ordinary house and I had my own room. There were boys from other places in there who were about the same age as me. There was furniture and a TV and everything I needed in there, but nobody was ever around. The place felt empty because I had nobody to talk to. There was supposed to be someone in charge but I never saw them.
111. I had enough of being on my own all the time so I took off. I only stayed there for three or four days.

**Life after being in care**

112. I hitch hiked everywhere after leaving care. I went to a place called Sandy Road in Partick in Glasgow, and stayed there for a while. It was a room with a kitchen, single bed, cupboard all in one room. I knew about it through word of mouth.
113. I started an apprenticeship as a pipe lagger with J.D. Installations, working on boats and schools. The job was obsolete after a year because they started putting foam and jackets on boilers.
114.  Secondary Institutions - to be published later
115. I went to London for a while. I knew where to go when I got there for places to stay. You learned this from talking to people. There is always somewhere to go and sleep and find food in this country if you know where to go.
116. I worked in in hotels and in holiday camps for a while, including in Butlins and Pontins. That was wonderful. I was working in catering and it wasn't hard. I had fun.
117. I went travelling around the world in the 1970s, and then I came back for a while. I then went off travelling again and didn't come back until the mid-1980s. I went all around Europe, Russia, Mongolia and then from the top of China to the bottom. I was mainly hitch-hiking or on my push bike, but I got a plane a couple of times. I got stopped in Hong Kong for being an undesirable alien, and spent thirty days in a Chinese prison. I managed ok in there because all people want to do in or outside prison is to trade.

118. I did all sorts of jobs like picking fruit and veg when I was away travelling. There is plenty of ways to make money, and move onto the next place. Money wasn't important to me.
119. I ended up coming back and landing just outside Reading. I got a bus into Reading and stayed there. I got catering work in race course and football grounds. I did that for a couple of years. I then worked on building sites and as a security guard. I don't have any qualifications for anything. I was a Jack of all trades and master of none of them. I got by and got a wage.
120. I retired about four years ago because my legs don't work anymore. I know that it is because of cigarettes and drugs, but none of it matters anymore when you are 68 years old. I have lived a life and I don't regret my life. I have done some bad things to people, but I have enjoyed my life and I don't regret anything.
121. I have been married three times. I married a Chinese woman in an arranged marriage in England in 1980 when I was thirty years old. We were married for a year and a day. I had another arranged marriage to a Chinese woman in China when I was 33 years old, but she was too scared to come across to England.
122. I met my third wife in Reading and we have been together for eighteen years now. It is the longest time I have ever been in one place. I never had any children; I could barely look after myself so I don't regret it.
123. Places like Aberlour told me how to look after myself, especially in jail. I have spent time in a few prisons across the country.

124.



125. I wrote a letter to my dad when I was about 26 years old. I sent it to social security with my dad's name and national insurance number, and asked them to pass it on. They wrote back and told me that he was dead. I never met my father as an adult. It used to bother me when I was younger but it doesn't anymore.

126. I took the letter to my mum and told her that her old man was dead. She is also dead now. [REDACTED]

127. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED]

128. I never reported anything to anyone because I never thought to. I have never been interested in getting any records either because I know what social services would have written about me would not be true. I was getting kicked from pillar to post and they would probably just write two lines in a book about me. They didn't know what was happening so it wouldn't be true.

129. My life is an open book and I don't care who knows about my life.

**Impact**

130. [REDACTED]

131. I don't think my time in care has really affected me. I think it taught me how to live and how to be sneaky. It made me savvy to handle life. That is how I was able to travel the world. If I had stayed with my mum and dad, I probably would have been married at seventeen and would be an alcoholic by now. I never became an alcoholic because I never stayed long in one place to sit and drink all day.

132. If I was a bit smarter when I was younger, I might have made something of myself but I just couldn't settle anywhere.

**Final thoughts**

133. Social workers should know that something is going on with kids when they are misbehaving and stealing and causing trouble. I did that to get attention when I was in care and they should have known something was going on.

134. Social workers should turn up unannounced for home visits, and look at the whole house. They should talk to the kids on their own.

135. Kids should get more information when they are leaving care to help them know what options are open to them. They don't know what they are entitled to. They don't know they can go into higher education or that they can get help to get into the army and navy. They don't get told these things and what is available.

136. Nobody knows where they stand with the government and authorities in this country. One person will react to something completely different from another. One police officer could arrest you for something that another one would just give you a warning for. If somebody breaks the law, they should be arrested and locked up for it. Everybody should know that and it would stop them committing offences.

137. 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  .....

Dated *19/6/18* .....