

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

AAQ

Support person present: No

1. My name is AAQ. My maiden name was AAQ. I was referred to as AAQ during the time I was in care. My date of birth is AAQ 1939. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I lived with my mother and father when I was born. I had a sister and three brothers. The oldest of us was AAQ followed by myself. Then it was AAQ and then it was AAQ. My mother and father were married. We originally lived with my paternal grandmother but my mother got a new house later on. We lived there with my father. We were practising Catholics.
3. I have papers that say that my father was in the Cameron Highlanders during the Second World War. The family story, however, is that AAQ. That doesn't make sense to me. After the war, my father had a job as a AAQ. My father had to do what my paternal grandmother wanted. She didn't like my mother and us. She didn't want us. As it turned out, my father didn't want us either.
4. My father wasn't around the house much because he was a womaniser. He would come in with his pals and take money from my mother for his drinking. The money was meant to be used for buying us food. My father used to take an unfair share of

the food ration. He took the bread out of our mouths. If my mother couldn't find my father any food, she would get kicked stupid.

5. We weren't allowed in the living room. That room was for my father and his pals. My father kept a luger gun in the room. I went into the cupboard when he was out and got it out. [REDACTED] told my father on me. My father kicked my mother up and down the lobby for that. She got it because she was supposed to have locked the living room door. I got kicked as well.
6. I remember my father whipping my eldest brother [REDACTED] with electrical cables. He pulled off the outer rubber bit on the end so that the metal prongs stuck out. I also remember him kicking [REDACTED] with his size ten boots. He would crack me round my head for looking too much like my mother. He once knocked my sister's teeth out and burst her nose. My father was a very violent man. It was a house of horror.
7. The reason I ended up in care was because my mother had to go into a sanatorium. She had TB. My father and my paternal grandmother should have looked after us. At the time, we were going to an infant school in [REDACTED] Johnston. We were taken out of the infant school by Renfrewshire Council and taken to Smyllum. I was six or seven when that happened. We were bundled into a car by Mr Johnson. He was the head man for children at Renfrewshire Council.

Smyllum Park, Lanark

8. [REDACTED] wasn't put into Smyllum but my other two brothers and my sister were. When we went to Smyllum I was about six or seven. [REDACTED] was seven or eight. [REDACTED] was four or five. [REDACTED] would have been a baby. I didn't see Mr Johnson in Smyllum after we were dropped off. I remember going in. We were just bundled into a dorm.
9. I would say that I was in Smyllum for about one month. We were put in an isolation dorm in case we had TB. We just sat in the dorm and looked at each other. We

were too frightened to move. We were scared stiff. We had never experienced anything like that before.

10. All I can remember is our experience of the isolation dorm and getting in and out of there. I don't know much about what else happened inside the place. All I really remember is that I never liked it there.

Staff

11. The only person we had any contact with was Sister AGU. There were no other nuns we had contact with. It was just her.

Routine at Smyllum

Sleeping arrangements

12. There were about four or five iron beds in the room. We had a bed each. That was new to us. We had been used to all sleeping in one big bed together.

Washing and bathing facilities

13. I don't remember anything about washing facilities. I suppose there must have been a toilet and a sink but nothing comes to mind.

Food

14. I don't remember anything about the food at Smyllum.

School

15. We didn't have any education during the month we were there.

Healthcare

16. When we went into the isolation dorm, we had a plaster put on our backs. We were left there for about a month. After the nuns took the plasters off they found out there was nothing there. That meant that we were alright. I think we were kept at Smyllum for about a week after that.

Leisure time

17. After they took our plasters off they allowed us out in the playground. We did that for about a week. There were no other children there. I played with my brothers and sisters. We had to go back into the same dorm. We were never allowed in the main home.

Abuse at Smyllum

18. My [REDACTED] brother, [REDACTED] was crying all the time. My sister took him in beside her. Sister [REDACTED] AGU then came in. My sister got it because she had a boy in her bed with her. Sister [REDACTED] AGU squealed and shouted at us. I can hear that woman's high pitched voice now. We were used to doubling up. That's just what you did in those days, it was a different time.

Leaving Smyllum and being placed into care again

19. My mother recovered from her TB for a while. I think it was our mother who got us home again. I can't remember who it was that actually took us home from Smyllum.
20. After getting home my mother took ill again. That's when my father and paternal grandmother put us into the court to get us really put away. We were taken to Paisley sheriff court. It was my father and my paternal grandmother who signed us away through the courts. They swore our lives away.

21. During the hearing they made out my mother was a bad woman. My mother wasn't a bad woman. I know the beatings that we got off my father and I know the beatings we got off my mother. I remember the court asked us who we would rather stay with. I said my mum. My brothers and sister said my father. They said that because they were frightened of him. I was scared of him too but I was always mouthy.
22. Later on I discovered from my mother that she had fought to get us all back. She went to the court and asked for us back. She wasn't successful. We weren't part of that process. We didn't go back to the court. I'm not sure when she tried to do that.
23. My brother [REDACTED] got sent somewhere else before we went to Crosslees. I found out later that [REDACTED] was sent to a farm run by the people who ran Smyllum. I'm not sure, but I think it was down Carluke way. They sent the bigger boys there to work on the produce.

24.

25.

26.

27.

28.

29.

30.

31.

32.

33.

34.

35.

36.

37.

38.

39.

40.

41.

42.

43.

44.

45.

46.

47.

48.

49.

50.

51.

Bellevue, Clincarthill Road, Rutherglen

52. My sister and I we were put into Bellevue. I was about seven or eight years old when I went there. I must have started around 1947. I know I was definitely at Bellevue by the time I had my first holy communion on [REDACTED] 1947. My sister was put into the year above me.

53. The home was run by nuns from the Sisters of Charity. It was a hard regime. The boys and girls were kept separate. We were kept in different areas. We had nothing much to do with the boys. Looking back I realise that the Sisters of Charity would've been paid by the Council to look after us. They would have held our ration books. I think it would have been Mr Johnson overseeing the payments.

Staff

54. There wasn't much supervision. The nuns were about but you knew what you had to do. You just got on with things.
55. Sister [AEX] was one of the nice nuns. She was nice to everybody. If you got the cane off her you would deserve it. She wasn't like the rest of them. They would give you the cane for nothing. I got on alright with Sister [AEX]. She worked all over with the girls. She was also in charge of the refectory when it was her turn.
56. I found out later that my mum had cleaned for some nuns when she was about fifteen. She cleaned for some nuns at a home on [REDACTED] in Glasgow. My aunties and uncles were in the home at that time. Sister [AEX] was at that home during that time. One of my aunties, Auntie [REDACTED] was her favourite child there. That's why Sister [AEX] took to me.
57. Later on during my time at Bellevue, Sister [AEX] got a retirement job as a Mother Superior in [REDACTED]. Sister [AGU] replaced Sister [AEX] when she went to [REDACTED]. She was transferred from Smyllum. When I saw Sister [AGU] for the first time, my feet stuck to the ground. She knew my sister and I straight away. When she saw us she pointed at me and squealed "I know youse very well." I think she had it in for us. She did not like us. She called us "filth".
58. The Mother Superior's name was Sister [EAB]. Sister [FAM] was in charge of the laundry. She also had to do her turn in the refectory. There was a nun called Sister [BAH]. I think Sister [BAH] looked after the boys. She wasn't too bad. There was a nun called Sister [BAF]. There was also a lay helper who I can't remember the name of.

Routine at Bellevue

Routine

59. You got up at seven o'clock in the morning. You would then kneel at the side of your bed and say your prayers. Then you would get washed and dressed. You would then go for mass in the nuns' private chapel. Then you went for your breakfast. In the evenings you would have your dinner. You would wash up after that. You did your prayers before bedtime. You were in your bed for seven o'clock.

Sleeping arrangements

60. I was originally put into the smaller girls' dormitory. My sister was put into the middle girls' dormitory. I couldn't say how long I was in the smaller girls' dormitory. The beds in the smaller girls' dormitory were too small for me. I would sleep with my knees up to my chin. The beds were very little.
61. I later got a bigger bed in the middle girls' dormitory when one of the older girls left. I was still classed as one of the smaller girls when I went there. Sister FAM had a room next door to the middle girls' dormitory.
62. We had very thin pillows. Some of the children had to sleep without them in order to straighten out their backs. I didn't have to do that though.

Washing facilities

63. You had your own pigeon hole with a number on it where you kept your toilet bag, toothbrush and comb. You had your own tin of toothpaste. There were bathrooms and baths. Bath night was on a Friday night. You had to share the same water with the other children but not at the same time. If you were lucky you would get into the water first. Some of the other children would wee in the water.

64. There was a nun who would flit between all the bathrooms but really we had to supervise ourselves. As long as we weren't squabbling, we were left to get on with it. Generally, the smaller ones got the baths first. Outside of bath night you "top and tailed" in a wash basin.

Food

65. You had all your meals in the refectory. It had big, long tables and benches. Later on the benches were replaced with wooden chairs. You had tin mugs and plates for your meals. They would bring in a big bowl of water for you to wash your plate, mug and cutlery after your meals. Sister **AEX** would stand and watch you as you were eating. You had to eat in silence.
66. The nuns didn't eat with us. You could smell the food coming out from where they ate. There were lovely smells came out of there. We never got anything they got.
67. On a Sunday morning breakfast we got a wee scotch round sausage and a slice of bread. We made a sandwich out of them. That was our treat. On other days you got porridge and bread and margarine for breakfast. I've never taken to milk. When I was born I wouldn't take to breast milk. I used to run away before the nun poured milk from a big jug onto my porridge. One time a girl who didn't like me, told on me. The sister in charge made me take milk on my porridge. She made me eat it. As I was eating, I was being sick. I was as sick as a dog. The sister made me clean it up.
68. I remember that the girl who dobbed me in got a right kicking. The nuns didn't like the children telling on each other. After that incident, nobody else told on me when I ran away before the milk was poured on my porridge.
69. At mealtimes you used to get malt and Virol. Everybody was given it off the same spoon. I didn't mind the Virol but I hated the malt. One time, because I wouldn't go up for the malt, I got the cane off of Sister **AGU**

Clothes

70. We all got dressed in either blue or pink floral dresses. Everybody had those dresses. They generally liked to keep the pink dresses for Sundays. All the dresses were doled out to you from the laundry.

Pocket money

71. You didn't get any pocket money in there. There were no savings books or anything like that.

School

72. The Sisters of Charity did all the education for the younger children. There was a classroom inside the home. It was next to the refectory. One of the nuns was the teacher. I can't remember the nun's name. I didn't like her. She was very strict. You had to keep your head down and your mouth shut otherwise you would get caned. My sister didn't go to the classroom with me because she was older.
73. It was alright for the children who could read and write. They could understand what was being written on the board. I didn't have a clue what the teacher was writing. I do remember sometimes being made to print out letters that the nun had written on the board when the other children were reading. That was so that I could learn my "ABC." I felt like a baby. It didn't really help me. It just didn't connect.
74. When you were older you went to the big school called St Columbkille's School in Rutherglen. You went there about the age that you sat the 'eleven plus'. I didn't know anything. I was put at the back of the classroom. My sister was put in there too. We used to get laughed at by the other school kids. We were dunces.

Religious instruction

75. Before we went to St Columbkille's, we had to learn the Catholic catechism in the classroom during the day. I was quite good at the religion. I would say I was better than anyone else in my class. When the priest came in to ask questions my hand was always up. Other people would always get picked to answer. They would get the answer wrong. There was a prize for religion. I didn't get that prize. I got a prize for "effort". I thought that was disgusting. They gave me a pair of black rosary beads. I would've preferred it if they'd given me nothing at all. They knew I was good but they didn't want to give the religion prize to me. They had it in for me.
76. We had to go to mass in the mornings. It was in Latin. There was a resident priest who took mass. I can't remember his name.
77. I remember my first holy communion. It happened on [REDACTED] 1947. They gave me a white dress and a veil. It didn't fit me because I was tall. You had to know a bit of catechism, then they put your holy communion wafer on your tongue.

Chores

78. The chores were done on a daily basis. It was a four storey building. You had to kneel down and scrub the stairs from top to bottom. We had to do that every week. We had these big dummies with shafts on them. We had to polish the wooden floors in the big dormitories. You would have to go up and down. You also had to polish and lace the boys' boots. Some of the other children had to do sewing. We also had to do the bathrooms. All the taps and knobs were brass so we had to polish all of them.
79. When you were a wee bit older, maybe between ten and twelve, you got sent down to work in the laundry. It was nothing but darn right hard work. You weren't allowed to speak when you were doing your chores.

Leisure time

80. We were allowed out into the yard. They had a couple of swings. There was a big playroom. We weren't allowed in there if it was nice outside. There was a choir. The home put on plays. One Easter time, we had to do the Passion. My friend [REDACTED] got to be Our Lady. I was the soldier. I had to go on stage and say "Indeed this man was the son of God."
81. After mass on Sundays, the nuns would take you out for a walk. We would go on long walks. We had to hold each other's hands in long lines.

Holidays and trips

82. During the summer holidays you just played in the playground. It was all the same thing all the year round. We did get one or two trips though. There was a family called the Smiths. They owned the company that made [REDACTED] They were very good to Bellevue. They would take us on day trips "doon the water" on the Clyde. We would get on the boat at Clydeside. We would then go to Millport or some place. We would get our dinner and an ice cream and play on the beach. We would then get back on the boat and go back again.
83. At Christmas time the Smiths hired the Kelvingrove for the shows. They would hire the whole fair for all the boys and girls in the home. We all went. They gave you half a crown and you got to go on anything you wanted to. We got a fish and chip tea and an ice cream. That was a good day.
84. When we went on our trips we went on old buses with wooden seats. The Smiths had arranged a trip to Glasgow to go to the zoo. We were coming back. I was sitting on the top deck of the bus. All of a sudden a big branch hit the front of the bus. It smashed all the windows. I ducked but left my hands on the seat in front of me. All the glass came in. My hands got filled with splinters of glass.

Birthdays and Christmas

85. I remember one of my birthdays. The nuns had brought in a wee television to watch the funeral of King George VI. It would have been 1952. Somebody said to Sister FAM that it was my birthday. Sister FAM had a bag of sweeties. She came in and said "Here you are, that's your birthday present" and gave me the bag of sweeties. Not one sweet did I take out of that bag. I had my principles. I don't remember any of my other birthdays. You'd be lucky if you got a piece and jam.
86. I think Christmas day was just a normal day. There was midnight mass the night before. The nuns got presents. The only thing I got was a book off of Mr Johnson. It was useless because I still couldn't read. ██████ got a book as well.

Visits

87. Before visits we would sit and wait in the playroom upstairs. One of the bigger girls, who didn't have a visitor, would come in to get my sister and I when our visitor arrived. If you didn't get a visitor you were supposed to be given a McCowans toffee instead. I remember ██████ and I being denied that when our mum didn't come to visit.
88. You were watched by the nuns when you had visitors. You had to watch what you said in case the nuns heard.
89. The only person that really came was my mum. She visited us after she came out of the sanatorium. She came to visit us once a month if she could manage it. She had to find the bus fare to visit us. I know that sometimes she borrowed the bus fare off of my Aunt ██████ It took her over an hour to get to Smyllum from where she lived. I think I only remember mum not visiting us only once. She must have been poorly or she couldn't afford to come.
90. Mr Johnson visited every three or six months. I think he just showed his face. One Sunday we were walking in the park in Rutherglen. We always passed these

bungalows with gardens on the way out. As I passed one of the bungalows, I saw this man bending down. He lifted his head. Who should it be but Mr Johnson. I said "Hello Mr Johnson." His face changed. He said hello and then he ran away back into his house. That's when I thought to myself, "He lives so near to where we are and yet we never see him."

Visits to see relatives

91. The only relative, other than my mother, that was interested was my Aunt [REDACTED]. She stayed in Shettleston. When I was ten, she got in contact with Sister [REDACTED] AEX to see whether she could have us for the weekend. We were allowed to go. She collected us. She was a sick woman. She had had TB.
92. She found out that I couldn't tell the time. She taught me how to do it. Within an hour she had me telling the time. I could do it because she taught me in a different way. It just clicked. She also tried to help me with my reading and writing as well.

Healthcare

93. There was no real healthcare. You got on with it. There were no injections, vaccinations or BCG. There wasn't a nun that was always in charge of the sickbay or looked after children in that way. It was just whoever was on duty on that particular day.
94. I once had the mumps. I wasn't the only child who had them. The nuns just tied a bandage around my neck. They kept me off school and put me in the playroom.
95. The only time I got any sort of bed rest was the time when I was sick and had diarrhoea at my bedside. I threw up green bile. I had terrible stomach problems. Sister [REDACTED] FAM made me go and get a bucket to clear it all up. I was having diarrhoea as I was cleaning up. I remember taking the sluice into the bathroom whilst being sick and having diarrhoea. Sister [REDACTED] FAM let me go back to my bed after that. The

next thing I knew Sister FAM was pulling my head up and putting a pillow under my head. I thought "What's going on here?" Then Mr Johnson walked into the room.

96. I think the pillow was given to me to make it look as if I was nice and comfortable for Mr Johnson. He said "You're not so good. I hope you get better soon AAQ" I daren't say anything to him. I was then given the beaten whites of an egg. As soon as Mr Johnson walked out the door, Sister FAM came up to my bed and whipped the pillow back. That was all the treatment I got. It was all about letting folk think they were treating you. I would've felt better if Sister FAM hadn't given me the pillow.
97. After the visit to the zoo, when my hands got filled with splinters of glass, the nuns didn't take me to the hospital. They picked out all the bits of glass themselves. It was awful. My fingers got damaged.
98. I never saw a dentist. I don't know whether other children saw a dentist.

Bed-wetting

99. You weren't allowed to get out of bed at night to go to the toilet. You weren't allowed to go to the toilet before your prayers in the morning. I remember crossing my legs. I was bursting to go to the toilet during my morning prayers. I had to wet myself and take the consequences. If you wet yourself during prayers you would get slapped. You were then sent to get a bucket to clean the floor. That happened many times to me.

Abuse at Bellevue

100. If you did something wrong, you got caned by the nuns. The cane was always in the corner or at their hand. I really don't know what was considered bad behaviour. I think they just caned us if they were in a bad mood. They just took their bad moods out on you. If you were in the way you got it. You didn't ask questions. If you did

ask questions the response would be "Why do you want to know? You're nobody to ask questions? You're nobody".

101. One of the things I do remember is people getting caned for was not sitting up straight. After you got caned you would just go back to how you were sitting before.
102. After the time I visited Aunt [REDACTED], I went back to Bellevue. The following Monday I was in the classroom. I can't remember the name of the nun who was teaching us. She was evil. She said [REDACTED] AAQ "what's the time?" I didn't answer. I was determined not to tell her that I knew the time. The nun then got on with the lesson. All of a sudden she turned to me and asked again. I said "Ten minutes to eleven". She almost lost her coronet. She shouted at me "How do you know that?" I said that my aunt had taught me. She then gave me the cane for not telling her the time when I knew it.
103. One time, we were sitting at the table in the refectory. There was a bowl placed at the end of the table for washing your cutlery. You had to take your turn to take the bowl, once everyone was done, to the kitchen to empty out the dirty water. I got up to lift the bowl. A girl pushed her chair back. I got caught in the spar on her chair. I went flying. All the water went everywhere. It was an accident. Sister [REDACTED] FAM caned me six times on each hand for that. She made me get down on my knees on the floor and dry the water up. She made me clean up with a pair of old green knickers. Everybody was laughing at me. My hands were stinging.
104. About the time we started going to St Columbkille's School, my sister ran away with another girl. My sister had her own friends. I didn't know they were running away. I remember sitting at the back of the class and realising my sister was not there. Sister [REDACTED] AGU pulled me up when I went back to Bellevue. She asked me where my sister was. I said I didn't know that my sister had been planning to run away and that I didn't know where she was. I got caned and slapped because I wouldn't admit to knowing my sister and her friend was running away. My sister and her friend came back the following day. They got beaten. I told my sister that I had got beaten as well.

105. When I was a wee bit older, maybe between ten and twelve, I got sent down to work in the laundry. Sister **FAM** was in charge of the laundry. There was washing and starching to do. They had these big steam iron presses to iron out the washing. I pulled down the press and it fell right across my hand. I squealed. Sister **FAM** then ran across to me with a big sweetie jar that was filled with sea water and seaweed. The nuns were great ones for remedies and that was one of the ones they had made up. She took my burnt hand and put it into the jar with the seaweed and seawater. She then made me hold out my other hand and gave me three canes at the same time. I daren't say anything otherwise I would've got another caning. I was punished for burning myself. I wasn't careful enough. I got big blisters. It went right to my veins.
106. One time, I was running around with some other girls. In the kitchen they were piling up the bread and the butter. There was a hatch that went from the kitchen out to the outside. The bread and butter was put on the hatch. One of the girls said to me "Come on, let's steal a bit of bread." We weren't hungry. The girl said to do it as "a bit of devilment". We went up to the hatch. As I put my hand up to steal the piece of bread, Sister **EAB** saw me. I was the one who was caught. I was caned by her and classed a thief. The other girls weren't caned because they weren't caught. I was marked a thief until I left Bellevue. It followed me to Crosslees when I went back there. It had just been a prank.
107. Another time, I was cleaning the house chapel as one of my jobs. Sister **EAB** asked me whether I would like to clean her office. I said I'd do it. She told me to just dust around things. There was a roll top desk in her office. I dusted it. I cleaned the office, then went. Later on I discovered that a £5 note had gone missing from the office. I was blamed because I was "the thief." I was given six of the best and punched in the face for that by Sister **EAB** was called a liar. They took my bed apart looking for that £5 note. I was stripped naked to see if I had planted it somewhere.

108. The nuns made me go to the priest to confess that I had taken the money. I couldn't confess to something that I had never done. I'd never even seen the money. I went into the confessional and said "Excuse me father but they're making me go into confession here. I never saw any £5 note. If there was a £5 note there it should still be there. I didn't take it." The priest said that he believed me. He didn't tell the nuns what I said. What happens in the confessional is not talked about. He saw how upset I was.
109. I was then accused of stealing the £5 note to give to my mother on the Sunday. That was their theory. When my mother came to visit on the Sunday, a girl was made to sit beside us to see if I handed across the money. A nun was standing in the doorway to also see if I slipped my mother any money. I told my mother what had happened. I said "Mammy, they've accused me of stealing £5. They're saying that I'm going to slip that to you." My mother then went and played up "merry hell". She told the nuns that I had not stolen anything or slipped anything to her. I didn't see what the nun's response was because they went through a door to talk.
110. I think the sister who took the money was Sister [BAF] There was also a helper who was a lay person. She was supposed to look over us like a guard. I suspect it was one of them who took the money. To this day, I have suffered for what they did.
- [REDACTED]
111. My niece gave me a newspaper article about the abuse that happened in Bellevue. I read through the article. What half of the folk were saying in the article was true. In the article there were two brothers called [REDACTED] who said their sister, [REDACTED] had died whilst she was in Rutherglen. I knew [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was my best friend in Bellevue. She was a beautiful [REDACTED]
112. One day [REDACTED] had gone. Her bed was empty. I didn't see her for ages. I kept on asking where [REDACTED] had gone. She wasn't in the sickbay. When I asked about [REDACTED] the nuns just said "None of your business. Mind your own business."

113. One day I went back into the dormitory and there was [REDACTED] in her bed. Her head was all shaven at the back of her head. Looking back, maybe she had a tumour or something. I don't know. She didn't say anything to me at that time. I came back up later on in the afternoon. I asked her whether she was alright. She then whispered "Water. Can I get some water?" There was a jug of water and a glass in the dormitory. Then Sister FAM came through the dormitory. She asked me what I was doing. I said "I'm only talking to [REDACTED]." Sister FAM said "Don't you go giving her any water." Sister FAM then left the dormitory. What I then did was put my finger in the water and moistened [REDACTED] lips.
114. The next day [REDACTED] was gone. That was her away. She must have died. She was dying when I saw her. I realise that now. I don't know where she was buried or what happened to her. I was crying but the nuns didn't take any notice. I had compassion but I was told that it was none of my business. I think it is wrong that I wasn't told anything about what happened to [REDACTED]

Leaving Bellevue

115. We were given no reason at all as to why we had to leave Bellevue. We were just told that it was time to leave. It was sprung upon us. We were then given clothes and a pair of dark stockings. It wasn't new stuff. We were then taken back to Crosslees. One of the other social workers came for us. She was a blonde woman. It was just [REDACTED] and I who were moved.

116.



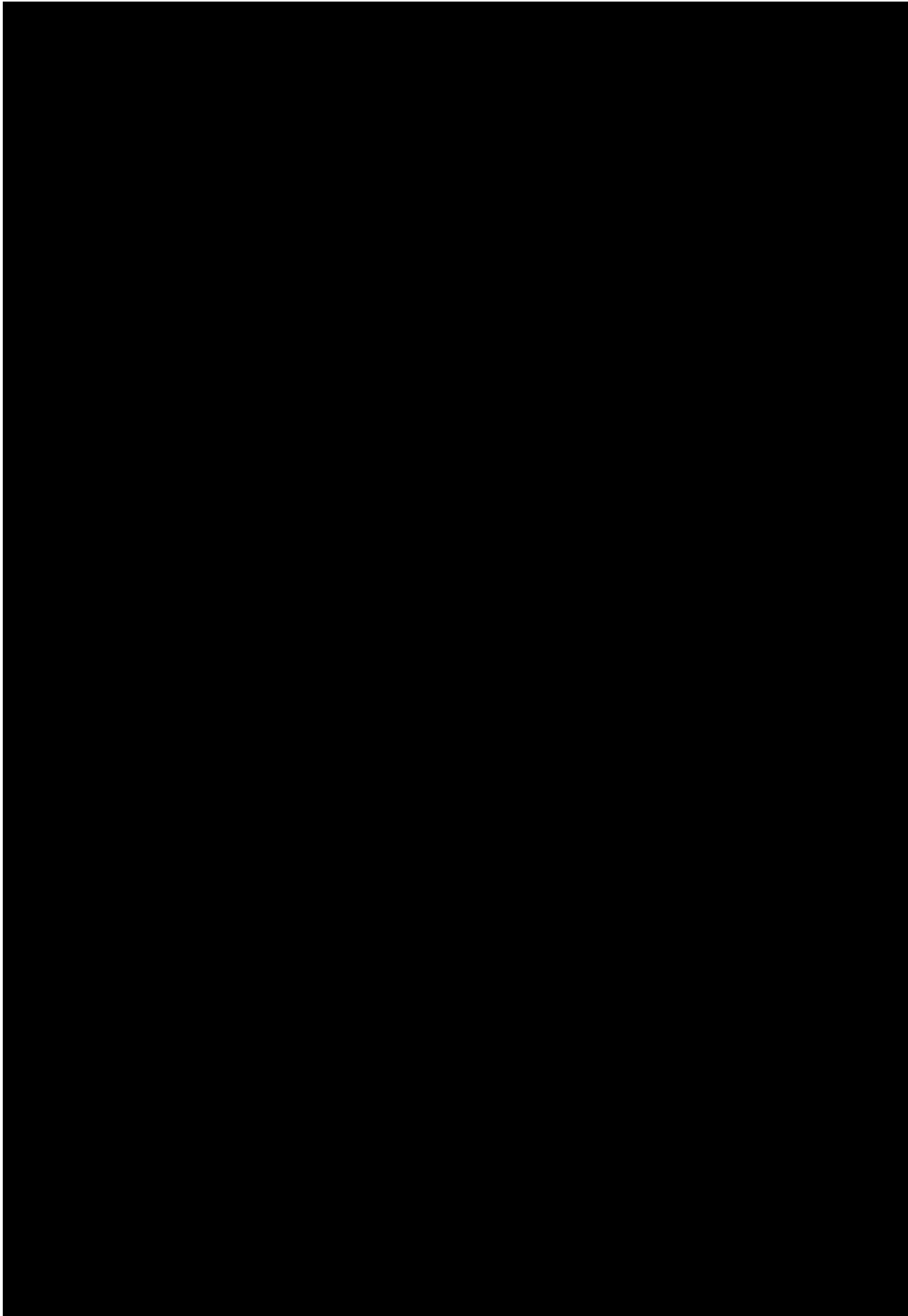
117.

118.

119.

120.

121.



122.

123.

124.

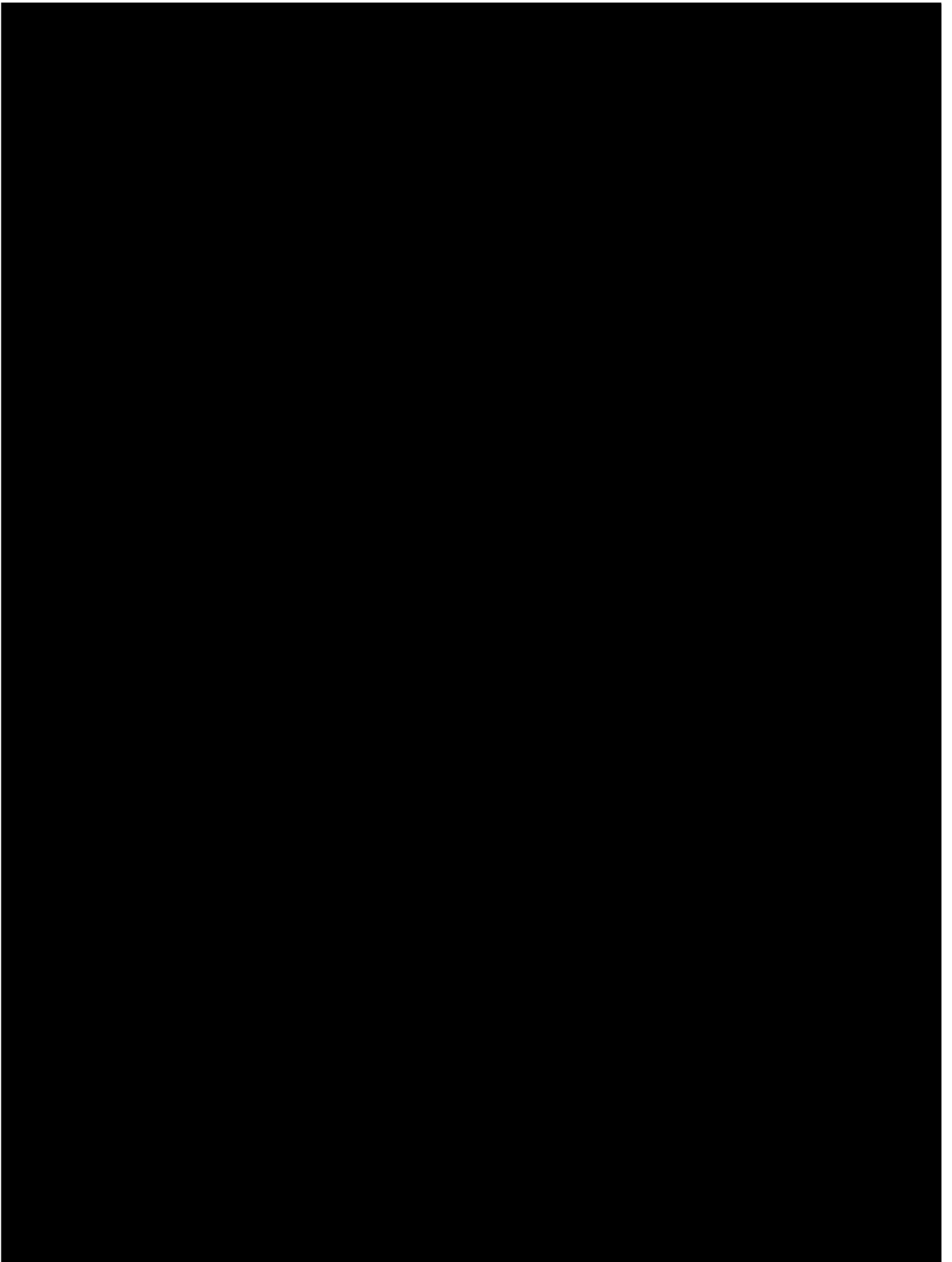
125.

126.

127.

128.

129.



130.

131.

132.

133.

134.

135.

136.

Reporting of abuse

Reporting of abuse whilst in care

137. You couldn't really tell anyone how you were treated. You wouldn't tell people because you were scared of getting duffed up again. I did tell my aunt what was happening the weekend I went to visit her. She said to me "You're not happy there are you AAQ" I said no. I told her I was getting caned.
138. I couldn't have told Mr Johnson or Mr HBH about the abuse. Mr Johnson never asked us. I couldn't have said anything to Mr Johnson when he visited anyway because Sister FAM or Sister EAB were always there. How could I say they were caning me when they were standing there? There was no opportunity to speak to Mr Johnson alone. Mr HBH was hitting me himself. How could I tell him? Mr Johnson and Mr HBH knew what was going on in these places. How could they not?

Reporting of abuse after leaving care

139. I told my mother and my aunt everything that happened to me after I left Crosslees for the second time. My aunt never spoke of getting beatings at the homes when she was in them. My mother was never in the homes. She had only worked in them.
140. In 1989, I had my bladder removed in a hospital in Preston. I was in for three months. I was very ill. I got depression. I went to see a psychiatrist in the hospital. I wouldn't speak. I eventually spoke to him. It was the best thing that ever happened to me. He had a different way of speaking to me and getting through to me. He opened it right up. If I hadn't spoken to him it would have still all been locked away.
141. Later on a social worker came to my house. She helped me to bring myself out of myself again. She wanted me to write a book about it all. I didn't speak to anyone else about it again until I spoke to the Inquiry.

Life after being in care

142. I was eighteen or nineteen when I got married to my husband. I regretted that marriage. It was a violent marriage. We moved down to Preston. I got an annulment at Preston Crown Court in either 1967 or 1968. The annulment was put down to failing to consummate the marriage but it was really because I had been battered. During a later visit to the Holy Land in 2004, a priest told me that I wasn't divorced in the eyes of the Catholic Church. I then had to go to the diocese and go through it all again. My brothers had to give testimony as to how I got beaten up by my husband. It took about a year for all of that to come through.

Impact

143. When I left care I was nervous and I had no confidence in myself. If I think I'm alright. I will stick up for myself. I've had to be strong for myself to get where I have got today. When you are down, nobody wants to know you.
144. I just ploughed my way through it and taught myself how to read and write. I wonder sometimes how I have still got my faith. There are times now that I think to myself that I could just walk away. I would have no qualms with that.
145. I couldn't do a lot of jobs in later life because of the injuries to my knee and my fingers. My hands are not what I want them to be. I can't kneel down. That's affected me. I have to use pain patches for pain in my back.
146. I don't think being in care stopped me being close to my sisters and brothers in later life. When we got back together that was us back together. That was it. We were close.

Records

147. The only thing I have is a document entitled "Remembrance of Holy Communion." The document says that I had my first holy communion on [REDACTED] 1947.

Other information

148. You weren't supposed to have any feelings in any of the places I was in care. I had feelings. You were told to "shut up" and told to "go about your own business" when you asked about other people. You daren't show your feelings. You didn't go looking for trouble. It just came to you. It felt as if it was one form of cruelty to another when we went into care and when we were in care.

149. In 2015, I went through to the cathedral in Edinburgh for Easter. Cardinal O'Brien talked about the sexual abuse children had suffered. I sat there thinking that he wasn't saying anything about us children who had been battered. After the mass he came outside to shake people's hands. I grabbed his hand and said "You just wait a wee minute there. You're talking about sexual abuse but not about us who were mentally and physically abused? There's no apology for us." He went as white as a sheet. He then said "I will pray for you." I just said "Yeah, you do that." It was not that long after that that he got defrocked.

150. When I heard Archbishop Mario Conti saying that we were only after "pots of gold", I just thought about his big fat belly and them living off the donations we give on Sundays. It made me angry. I would like the Catholic Church to come out with an apology. I don't think the church is going in the right direction. There is too much covering up going on. I hope that what happened does come out. I hope that we are believed. I'm not in it for the money. I just want to tell my story. It has taken all these years for me to be able to tell my story. If what I have said helps someone else, then fair enough.

151. I'd really like to let [redacted] brothers, if they're still alive, know that [redacted] did have a friend. She really was my friend. There was no compassion given to her. She shouldn't have been brought back from the hospital to die. There would've been nobody there when she died. I think that was terrible.

152. 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.

AAQ

Signed...

Dated... 17.8.2019.....