

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

IAG

Support person present: No

Others present: Stephen Teasdale, Joe Egan Solicitors, Bolton (solicitor for IAG in relation to St. Vincent's allegations); Alexander Raeburn, George More & Co., Edinburgh (solicitor for IAG in relation to Smyllum allegations)

1. My name is IAG IAG is my married name. My surname was IAG when I worked at St. Vincent's and Smyllum and the children would have known me as Sister IAG. My date of birth is IAG 1949. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I joined the Daughters of Charity on IAG 1966. My ministry history, as provided by the Daughters of Charity, is accurate. However, it omits my formation years following my entry to the order. I went to the postulatum in Mill Hill, London for nine months. I was then in the seminary, novitiate, for just over a year. Then in 1968 I went to juniorate, Blandford Street, London. When you are accepted into the novitiate, you are a full Daughter of Charity. You don't make vows until you have practised for a while. I lived as a full member of the Daughters of Charity, but vows are made five years after entry into the seminary.

3. I have provided the Inquiry with a chronology of my service and professional life. It includes the period of time after I left the order of the Daughters of Charity and my career in social work. I retired as a senior social worker for Central Regional Council in 2010.
4. Prior to commencing work at St. Vincent's in Newcastle, my training was mostly religious. I didn't have any professional training in childcare. I studied theology, scripture and church histories, that kind of thing. I was placed at St. Vincent's in [REDACTED] 1969. We were given a placement at the end of our training. The order had lots of children's homes, schools and nurses all around the country, as far north as Kingussie. My placement was at St. Vincent's, which I was delighted about. I didn't have an interview. I was told that because I was so recently from a family, I would have lots of memories of family and I should try and recreate that at St. Vincent's. I remained there until 1972.

St. Vincent's Children's Home, Newcastle

5. I didn't know anything about St. Vincent's before I went there. The Sister Servant was the name given to the superior, because she was there to serve and look after the sisters. Sister Rosalie Riordan was the Sister Servant at St. Vincent's. The other sisters were Sister Mary, Sister [REDACTED] AFJ [REDACTED] Sister Collette and Sister Louise. Sister Louise had a purpose built house out in the local housing estate, built specifically for the children so they could live in a normal estate, play with children in the street and go to school with the local children.
6. I remember being keen to get started when I arrived. One unit in the main building was called Kyle House. There was another building at the back called Tudor House. There were four units in the home. My house was called Seaton House. Our building was a little separate, which made us feel special. The grounds were extensive so there was plenty of space for the children to go out and play without leaving the premises.

7. Seaton House had been the shower block when it had been a larger boys' home. It had been newly refurbished to have little rooms and a back door and a front door. There were bedrooms upstairs. I had a bedroom in the middle. The staff room was to the side and there was a room for older girls up some steps. There was plenty of space. I thought it was really nicely planned. I was glad to be there.
8. I was responsible to the Sister Servant. She would assist me with my religious life, as I had not yet made my vows. She more or less left me get on with the day to day running of the house, but I always felt supported. At that time, the community was seeking to professionalise the sisters all over the country. They were hoping sisters would be trained in childcare and nursing. Some of the sisters had already done that. I would obtain advice from sisters who had expertise in certain fields. For example, I had a boy who wet his bed, so I sought advice from a sister who had been trained in that regard. Otherwise, I tended to just get on with it.
9. Each unit had two members of staff. One member of staff would be on duty at any given time, although sometimes they would overlap. When they were on duty, there was a bedroom which would be used by whichever staff member was on duty. The staff were answerable to me. My role was house mother and I looked after the children. I played with them. I liked the children to be active. I was quite young, as I had just turned twenty, and I had a lot of energy myself.

Children in my care

10. There were between twelve and fourteen children in my unit. It was set up to be family orientated. I had a boy and a girl who were brother and sister, so they shared a room. I had three brothers, so they also shared a room. The ages of the children ranged from little tots to school leaver age. We didn't tend to have babies, although I did look after an eleven month old baby for a short time. When the children left school, they moved across to a hostel in Jesmond, Newcastle, also run by the Rescue Society, or they went home. There were two boys of fifteen, sixteen who moved on within weeks of my arrival. The children were lovely and not really any bother. I wasn't given any kind of induction, but I didn't feel like I was being thrown in

at the deep end. I felt as if I was joining something that was already established. The children were family to each other.

11. Most of the children were there for a while. I didn't have any knowledge of the children's backgrounds, other than what the children told me themselves. Often, they didn't know much themselves. I didn't have any files about the children. I presume there were records in the main office. The only child I remember arriving during my time there was a little eleven month old girl called [REDACTED]. She arrived late at night. I didn't know anything about her, other than that her father would be coming to collect her at some stage. He arrived three to four weeks later. I asked him to wait whilst I contacted the office. I was told that it was okay and that the social worker had agreed she could be returned to his care.

Routine at St. Vincent's Children's Home

Mornings and bedtime

12. There were little bedrooms. One had four beds, one had three beds, one had two beds and then there was a separate large room that had three older girls in it. All the children had their own wardrobe and set of drawers. I remember one of the boys' rooms was decorated with Newcastle United striped wallpaper, which the children did themselves.
13. In the mornings, I used to wake up the older boys, who had paper delivery jobs, before I went to the chapel. The older children were woken up earlier because they had slightly further to go to school. When they went off to school, we'd get the little ones up. There were two pre-school children, [REDACTED] who was two, and [REDACTED] eleven months, who was only there for short time.
14. The little ones went to bed around seven, maybe a little later in the summer. The next age group went to bed around half an hour later, as long as it was later than the little ones. I don't think the bigger ones had much of a bedtime. They were normally

in bed by ten o'clock, but I never had any problems with them going to bed. They could lie and read in bed if they wanted to.

15. I slept between the rooms, but there was no routine to look in on the children. My door was never locked and there was a member of staff along the corridor. They could come and wake me if they had a nightmare. There was no restriction on children if they needed to go to the toilet during the night. There was one boy who had problems with bedwetting. We made sure it wasn't an issue for him. His sheets were removed and nothing was said about it. He would go and have his shower and go off to school. The doctor advised that he go to the toilet before bed. He suggested waking him for the toilet before I went to bed, but he was a heavy sleeper so often didn't wake for the toilet.

Food

16. We did all the cooking and washing in our house. We had our own kitchen. Myself and the members of staff would prepare the food. We had a dining room with two tables so we could sit the children down nicely at mealtimes. In the winter, we would give the children something hot for breakfast, porridge or bacon. They would have cornflakes and toast as well.
17. The children stayed at school for lunch. The evening meal would be a hot meal, served at around 5 or 5.30. If the children didn't want to eat something, we would try and encourage them but there was no compulsion. It wasn't a problem. If they didn't want it, they didn't want it. I'm a fussy eater myself. Cabbage was always a horror and we always had tonnes left over. I didn't have any problem eaters. I remember one girl didn't like beetroot, so we just worked around that.
18. Some of the children would help with cooking, if they were interested. I remember them making pancakes and tablet with staff.

School

19. The children went to the local schools. The older children went to English Martyrs Secondary School. The younger children went to the local primary school, which was just along the road. The primary school children didn't get any homework. The older girls were quite good at getting on with their homework, but the boys would often tell me they didn't have any.
20. I didn't attend parents' nights. I didn't have much contact with the schools, other than to phone up if one of the children was ill.

Clothing

21. The children wore school uniforms. Some of them had uniforms for cubs, scouts and guides. Outside of school they had their own clothes that they had chosen. Each child had a clothing allowance. If a child needed new clothes, myself or one of the staff would take them into town to choose them. It was a special day out and would be done individually. Some of the boys didn't bother. They tended to want jeans. Sometimes, clothes were handed in. If they weren't very nice, we didn't use them but if they were nice we would let the children use them if they wanted to.

Laundry

22. We had a washing machine in the kitchen. The staff and I would do the laundry, although some of the older girls liked to do their own. I never found a boy who liked to do that.

Washing

23. There was a bath with a shower in it. There was one bathroom for the house to share. There was also a washbasin and toilet downstairs. The staff would supervise the little ones washing before bed. They washed every night, but they didn't have a bath every night. When they had finished, the next age group would get ready for

bed. I think the children bathed or showered twice a week. I didn't supervise the older ones. They were free to have a bath or a shower any time they wanted. Like in many families, bath time could be changed to fit with activities.

Leisure time

24. The children started coming home from school at around 3, 3.30. They would change out of their uniforms, have a snack and go out to play. There was a telly room, which tended to be a quieter room, and a playroom, where the younger ones could cause a rumpus. After dinner, some of the children went to cubs and scouts. The children were able to get out to play in the grounds. They would play football, on bikes and with skipping ropes. Sometimes, I would play skipping or football with them. I wanted them to know that it was good for them to go out and play. I can't remember trips to the cinema or swimming.
25. There were no restrictions on what they watched on telly. The little ones were allowed to watch telly till about seven o'clock, then the older ones could watch it. I remember Top of the Pops on a Thursday night was sacrosanct for the girls.

Personal possessions

26. I don't remember the children having any special personal possessions, other than their clothes. They might find a stone or something in the garden and keep that in their own drawer. They had their own wardrobes. There wasn't a specific area for the children to keep their toys in. They tended to have their own corners of the playroom. The playroom was messier than the sitting room for the telly.

Jobs

27. Two of the older boys had jobs. Two of them had a paper round and one had a milk round. I had to get them up earlier in the morning and have their breakfast ready for them when they got back, before they went to school.

Holidays

28. I do remember taking the little ones to Bridlington. I was on my own with six little ones at a bed and breakfast. I think the older boys went off camping, presumably with the scouts. I can't remember any other holidays.

Religious instruction

29. Religious instruction took place at school. It didn't happen in the house. We didn't have time. The only thing I recall is that I encouraged them to say their evening prayers. I would say, "Don't forget your prayers." There was a chapel for the sisters in the main house. I can't remember the children going to Mass, but they must have gone somewhere.

Access to the children

30. I remember student priests coming to visit on a Saturday morning. They would come in a mini bus. Three or four of them would get out and one would go to each unit. They stayed for the day. I don't remember how often that happened. I don't think they stayed the night. The only trainee priest's name that I remember is Tony.

Visits/Inspections

31. Social workers never came to see the children. Other than when [REDACTED] father came to pick her up, no relatives ever came to visit either. Other than the student priests, I don't remember any visits. The only social work contact I was aware of was when the Sister Servant phoned [REDACTED] social worker. I never prepared any reports for the social work department and there were no reviews of care at that time. I don't recall any inspections. The superiors of the order would visit, but not as an inspection. I had no involvement in keeping any records in relation to residents. I don't know if records were kept.

32. As far as contact with families was concerned, I didn't encourage nor discourage writing home. I didn't know what family the children had or who was at home. There was one boy called [REDACTED] He went home to Darlington every weekend.

Healthcare

33. I don't remember regular medicals. If a child was unwell, we made an appointment with the doctor. I remember cards arriving for dental appointments. We would accompany the children to dental appointments. I presume medical records were kept in the main office, but I don't remember.

Discharge from St. Vincent's

34. During my time at St. Vincent's, there was no specific preparation for a child who was leaving. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] departures had been arranged before I arrived. [REDACTED] moved on to the hostel in Jesmond and [REDACTED] went home. There were also three older girls who left. I think they went back to family. I had no follow up with the children. Other than [REDACTED] AAI [REDACTED] none of them ever came back or wrote letters back. [REDACTED] AAI [REDACTED] joined the navy along with a boy called [REDACTED]. They were quite young, about fifteen. [REDACTED] AAI [REDACTED] still had one sibling at St. Vincent's. He came back to stay for one night over Christmas to show us his uniform.

Discipline

35. There were no written or unwritten codes of behaviour that I was aware of, nor records of discipline. The children weren't often in need of discipline. They weren't naughty children. They would sometimes squabble with each other and we would separate them. Sometimes, they would be deprived of a telly programme that they liked or they wouldn't be allowed out to play for an hour. There was no corporal punishment during my time there.

Allegations of Abuse at St. Vincent's

36. I didn't witness any behaviour amongst fellow sisters or staff members that, judging by today's standards, I would consider to be abusive. If I had been aware of a child in my care being struck by anyone, that would have concerned me. I didn't see or hear anything of that nature, or any cruelty. I wasn't aware of any abuse amongst the children themselves. They would squabble and tell tales on each other, but nothing that gave me any worries. I never received any reports from children that concerned me. If they did have a difficulty, I can only imagine that they would have told myself or a staff member.

Allegations by [AAF]

37. I can't remember [AAF] at all. I remember [AAI] and [] [] I was aware they had an older sister called [] and two older siblings, but I didn't know their names. I don't know of another Sister [IAG] at St. Vincent's. There was nobody else of that name when I was there. This family had six children as far as I can remember. The older three siblings, [AAF] and [AAH] had left by the time I came to St. Vincent's.
38. I have been asked about an allegation made by [AAF]. He alleges that Sister [IAG] used to tip off the edge now and again and set about him. He describes playing football in the yard at the back of St. Vincent's, using a gate at one end and a rendered wall at the other for goals. That is a description of where the boys played football, but I never played football round there. He describes an incident when he let a goal in and Sister [IAG] reaction was over the top. He alleges that she called him useless and slammed the ball against his face, knocking the back of his head into the wall. I don't remember that at all and it didn't happen. He states that it was painful, his nose was bleeding and his head was covered in cuts. That didn't happen. I did not act in the way he described with him or any child nor did I see anyone act in that way. I only encouraged the children to play. I did not belittle any child because of the way he or she played.

39. He has described fear, intimidation and bullying at St. Vincent's. I never saw bullying or intimidation of any description. He mentions being force fed a couple of times and that on one occasion it was turnip. He says a nun opened his mouth and put the food in. I have no recollection of anything like that ever happening in my experience.

Allegations by [AAI]

40. I do know [AAI] He left to go to the navy when he was fifteen. He was a very well behaved boy. I have been asked about an allegation made by [AAI] that I slapped him on one occasion. I never slapped him on any occasion.

41. He states that the physical abuse at St. Vincent's was really harsh, harsher than at Smyllum. He states that the beatings were more sustained. I don't have any memory of that and I don't remember seeing or hearing of any violence, beatings or intimidation taking place. I looked after [AAI] for a year and a half. In that time, I didn't witness any beatings or anything of that nature. He was a nice lad and easy to get on with.

Allegations by [AAH]

42. I have no recollection of [AAH] He was never in my care. I don't think I met [AAH] or [AAF] I have been told that he states he got hidings from the nuns, the helpers and Bernard Traynor. I don't remember Bernard Traynor. He states that he saw Sister [IAG] give out hidings but she never hit him. I just don't recognise that statement at all. I have never hit a child in my life. He has stated that the first hit was usually with the nun's hands and then implements were picked up. I never saw that, heard that or did that.

43. [AAH] like his siblings [AAF] and [] had moved on from St. Vincent's by the time I got there. He alleges that the way the nuns washed the children was inappropriate. He states that the nuns would pull his foreskin back and wash him and that was done to other children as well. I didn't bath the children in that manner. I didn't bath the bigger children at all, just the little ones.

44. He states that once children got to the age of fourteen, they would start to speak up and retaliate and they would then be moved on. He recalls that he got a bit of strength and could throw the nuns to the ground. I never heard of any sister being thrown to the ground.
45. He states that he was the Catholic church's Frankenstein and that he was taught to be violent and never to surrender. He recalls being in a fight with a boy who wasn't in St. Vincent's and a nun gave him a stick and told him to batter the boy with it. That's a shocking statement. I have no knowledge or memory of anybody behaving in that way at all.

Response to allegations at St. Vincent's

46. With the benefit of hindsight, nothing took place at St. Vincent's that I now think I should have reported to the police. If any of the allegations of abuse by [AAF] [AAI] or [AAH] had occurred at St. Vincent's, I absolutely accept that they would have been abusive. I think I have a pretty good memory of my time at St. Vincent's. I don't think the passage of time has affected my recollection of any of these alleged incidents. I have no explanation as to why these allegations are being made. I don't know why the children would make these statements.

Criminal proceedings

47. I was the subject of a criminal investigation in relation to allegations made by [redacted] I was interviewed by the police. I have always denied all of the allegations, which alleged assault by occasioning actual bodily harm, unlawful wounding and occasioning cruelty to a child I was responsible for between 1968 and 1972. They are all untrue. The charges were formally withdrawn by the Crown Prosecution Service and I recovered costs. The judge apologised to me that the case had been allowed to reach that stage.

Leaving St. Vincent's Children's Home

48. In 1972, I was coming up to the time when I would take my vows. My superiors wanted me to train in childcare. They also wondered if I might like to teach. I was placed in Boston Spa School for deaf children in Yorkshire. I was there for a year, but I still wanted to be a social worker rather than a teacher. I was sent to Langside College, Glasgow to study childcare.

Smyllum Children's Home, Lanark

49. I was sent to Smyllum after I had completed a year of studies in childcare at Langside College. I was studying for a certificate in childcare. I arrived at Smyllum in [REDACTED] 1975 and remained there until 1979. I left to go to Jordanhill College to study social work in [REDACTED] 1979, having been interviewed in [REDACTED] 1979. I knew some of the sisters at Smyllum before I arrived. We tended to know all the other sisters in the community because we'd have retreats together. At that time, the Sister Servant at Smyllum was Sister [REDACTED] AGK. I was responsible to Sister [REDACTED] AGK but otherwise autonomous within my house. I had two staff members in my unit, much like at St. Vincent's. I don't remember their names.
50. I was aware that Smyllum was being looked at for closure. The whole community was changing. As a result of the second Vatican Council, the community was trying to modernise. All over the country, the order was being brought up to date. The community was investing in smaller units and trying not to use large institutions. Sisters were being trained in nursing, teaching, social work and childcare. I felt very pleased that the community was moving into a new era.
51. Smyllum was a very imposing building. There had been an attempt to split the children into smaller family group homes, but it wasn't as easy a building as St. Vincent's to adjust to. I was allocated to a house on the top floor of the main building. There were two other houses in other parts of the building. Our kitchen and dining room were downstairs, but all the other living facilities were in the unit. It was mixed,

boys and girls. There were fourteen to fifteen children in my unit. Four moved out and four moved in not long after I arrived.

Children in my house

52. The children ranged from toddlers right up to girls of sixteen. The youngest children in my unit were eleven month old twins [REDACTED]. Their older sisters were six [REDACTED]. I had [REDACTED] who was eight, and her big sister, [REDACTED] who was ten. Their father was deaf and I was able to communicate him because I know sign language. I had [REDACTED] who was fifteen, and [REDACTED] who was thirteen, [REDACTED]. Initially, I had [REDACTED] who was fifteen, [REDACTED] who was fourteen, [REDACTED] who was twelve, and [REDACTED] who was six, [REDACTED]. I had [REDACTED] who was fourteen [REDACTED] who was ten. I had [REDACTED] who was fourteen, [REDACTED] who was sixteen. I had [REDACTED] who was fifteen, his brothers [REDACTED] who was thirteen, [REDACTED] who was twelve and [REDACTED] who was eight. Four of the older ones left before the [REDACTED] family arrived.

53. When I arrived at Smyllum, I had a bit more training. I don't suggest my training was perfect, but I had more of an idea of what children needed. I did feel it was a very large and imposing building. It was a bit more difficult to create a family atmosphere, but we tried. There was plenty of property and plenty of fields for the children to run around. I felt that the children were quite well integrated into the local community.

Routine at Smyllum

Admissions

54. I was aware of the need to be particularly sensitive to children after they arrived. The only children who arrived in my time there were the [REDACTED] family. The older twins had been there for a few days when I arrived, but we were aware that they had a little brother and sister who would join us a few weeks later. We moved all the

bedrooms around so they could share a room together. They were allowed to get teddies for their beds and things that they would like.

55. My recollection is that the younger twins came from foster care. I think they were being moved to Smyllum in order to keep the siblings together. I don't remember getting a written briefing. There were a lot of phone calls before they arrived. I was told that [REDACTED] wasn't quite as developed as [REDACTED] and that she wasn't walking, but he was. We were given quite a lot of information about their family circumstances.

Mornings and bedtimes

56. The older children got up first to give them time to get washed and have their breakfast before school. They would have breakfast while the little ones got up.
57. Bedtime routine was similar to St. Vincent's. The little children were bathed and put to bed earlier than the older children. I slept on the same floor as the children. My door was never locked. I tended to keep the little ones nearby. I don't remember any of the children having a problem with bed wetting. The children were free to go to the bathroom during the night if they needed to.

Food

58. Breakfast would be bacon, porridge, cornflakes or toast. The staff prepared and ate the food, but I ate my meals with the sisters. The food was nice. Other than the toddlers, all the children had lunch at school. I don't remember any of the children having any problems with eating. If they didn't like something, they didn't have to eat it. Children served themselves from dishes on the table. Only the little ones needed help in serving it up.

School

59. The older children went to Our Lady's High School in Motherwell. Some of the children who were less academically able went to St. Aidan's in Wishaw. I think it was called a junior secondary school. There was a primary school at the bottom of the gate, St. Mary's Primary School. The school within the grounds had been closed for a while by the time I arrived.
60. I didn't go to parents' night at high school. I would meet the teachers from the primary school going up and down the path. I had a couple of meetings with staff at St. Aidan's. A mother of girls attending that school was diagnosed with [REDACTED]. The teachers were trying to talk to the girls about it and we had a meeting to discuss it. The girls weren't very academic and it was difficult to explain it to them. I recall they had a good social worker, but I don't remember her name.
61. The children at Our Lady's High were the only ones who got homework. They didn't have much time before dinner so it would be done afterwards.

Clothing

62. There was no uniform at Smyllum. We were provided with an allowance for each child. I thought it was important to take them out individually to buy new clothes or shoes. Myself or staff would do this.

Laundry

63. The staff would wash the clothes. Some of the older girls preferred to iron their own things.

Washing

64. There were two bathrooms. The little ones would be bathed by myself or one of the staff. I think there were two or three bath nights per week and on other nights they

had a wash before bed. The older ones would be encouraged to look after themselves. Boys needed more prompting than girls.

Leisure time

65. Those who didn't have homework would watch telly or go out to play after dinner. It was their time to do what they wanted to do. I can't remember outside groups, such as cubs or scouts. I'm sure there were books around, but I can't remember a library.
66. There was a telly room and a play room for the little ones. There were communal toys, but if the children had their own toys they just knew what belonged to whom. They tended to play outside a lot, skipping and hopscotch and the like. I played outside with them a lot. I don't remember organised sport. There was a big Lanimier's day in Lanark once a year. It was a big fiesta and the children loved going to that. I can't recall any trips to the cinema or the swimming pool. We would take the children out for the day in the mini bus.

Personal possessions

67. The children had their own wardrobes, which would move with them if they wanted to move beds. By the time I was at Smyllum, I was more aware of their need to have somewhere to keep personal possessions.

Jobs

68. There was no work or chores allocated to the children in Smyllum. [REDACTED] ACB had a job in a café outside the home. [REDACTED] had a job in the Cartland Bridge Hotel. I think [REDACTED] had a paper round, but I don't think it lasted long because he didn't like getting up in the morning.

Holidays

69. There was a holiday place in Girvan, but I can't remember ever going there.

Christmas and birthdays

70. We tried to encourage family visits at Christmas time, wherever possible. I remember one or two children coming back up the drive on Christmas Eve because the visit had failed before they got to Christmas day. We tried to make a big deal out of Christmas and give them what they wanted. I remember [REDACTED] wanted a football strip when she was five or six. She didn't think she would get it because she was a girl, but we got it for her.
71. We always had a cake and a party on the children's birthdays. If there was something specific that they wanted, we tried to get it but they didn't get big presents. I remember one of the boys wanted a Ben Sherman shirt and he got it.

Religious instruction

72. Religious instruction took place at school. I encouraged prayers at night time but I was too busy to do morning prayers. The chapel had been closed off so the sisters used the sitting room for prayers. The children would attend the local parish church. They would go down there with staff, their friends or schoolmates.

Access to the children

73. I don't remember any students coming to visit. A new estate was built nearby, so it was easier for local children to visit. The children would sometimes have their friends for dinner or to play. I recall a man called [REDACTED] He had a donkey and some of the children used to follow it around. I have heard of [REDACTED] BAC [REDACTED] but I think he had retired by the time I was at Smyllum. I didn't have any dealings with him, nor did my group.

Visits and inspections

74. I would urge social workers to visit the children and to talk to me about the children. There weren't case reviews in place at that time. That wasn't a tool used in social work at that time. Most of my contact with social workers was by phone. I asked them to visit and speak to the children themselves so they weren't just going through me. They weren't great at visiting. We were quite far away from some of them, as we had children from Greenock, Gourock, places like that. Some of the social workers would visit and take the children out. There was one who would take children out for a coffee in Lanark. Others would see the children in the home. We had a parlour for visitors. Some of the social workers would have dinner with us in the evening. I don't remember any formal inspections.
75. Mr [REDACTED] visited his children fortnightly. He was [REDACTED] and he worked on the Channel Tunnel. He would travel back to Glasgow on the Friday night and he'd be sitting in my living room on the Saturday. He would stay with them for the full day. Sometimes he would take them down to the shop to get sweets with their pocket money. If he couldn't manage it, his two older sons would come to see the girls and [REDACTED]
76. [REDACTED] dad came regularly. I could communicate with him because I use sign language. I could give the girls a lot more information about their dad. The [REDACTED] went home every weekend. The [REDACTED] went home every second weekend.

Healthcare

77. I think we had doctors coming in on a regular basis, but I don't remember how frequently. If we had any concerns, we would go down to the GP surgery. None of the staff in my house were medically trained and I don't know of any medically trained sisters in Smyllum. We had a regular dentist in Lanark and I accompanied the children to appointments. There were no deaths amongst the children nor any of their families when I was at Smyllum.

Records

78. I kept records for each child. I wrote in the records and the staff wrote in the records. We would discuss what we had written every week. I'm not sure whether that information moved on with the children if they left Smyllum. They were for our own purposes. I don't know what happened to these records when I left. It wouldn't have been appropriate to take them with me and the staff continued on with the children when I left. I certainly didn't destroy them. I wasn't required to prepare case notes for the social work department and there were no case reviews that I knew of in those days.

Discharge from Smyllum

79. I didn't think the children should be in this big institution. I didn't know when Smyllum was going to close, but I knew it was being considered. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. When [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was fifteen, I asked her social worker if it was possible for a foster family to be found for her. I thought she needed family and she could have really succeeded. The social worker thought she was too old. I never told [REDACTED] [REDACTED] that foster care was considered as a possibility, because it would have been an incredible disappointment if it didn't happen.
80. There were older girls who were ready to move away. I felt it was important to speak to their social workers regularly on the phone about where they might move on to. I was conscious of the need for them to be familiar with where they were going. It wasn't a protocol as such.
81. We had hopes that most of the children would return home. Mr [REDACTED] [REDACTED] couldn't take his children home so they went on to another children's home. The [REDACTED] [REDACTED] did go home to their dad. The [REDACTED] [REDACTED] went home to their sister. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] went on to the hostel, as did three of the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] went on to his mum's. The [REDACTED] [REDACTED] all went home to their gran. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] went to the hostel. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] went on to university. She didn't want to go to the hostel so her social

worker found her a place in digs. It was all done in conjunction with their social workers. I couldn't move them without the involvement of their social workers.

82. The boys' hostel was in Nithsdale Road. The girls' hostel was on Wilton Street. That was an aftercare hostel. The Daughters of Charity had three houses on Wilton Street and the sisters were running the hostel. One of the houses was for the sisters, one of the houses was for working girls and there was hostel for girls who had been in care. The girls might have jobs, but they would also be looked after. It was a kind of halfway house.

Discipline

83. As far as I was aware, there were no written or unwritten codes of conduct. If children misbehaved, the TV was turned off or they weren't allowed out to play. We had a wee Labrador. The children liked to take him for a walk. They wouldn't be allowed to do this if they had misbehaved. They would be punished for fighting with each other and that kind of thing. It didn't happen very often because they were quite well behaved. I never used corporal punishment and I never saw it being used.

Allegations of abuse at Smyllum

84. Even with the benefit of hindsight, I never witnessed any behaviour I would describe as abusive at Smyllum. None of the children ever reported anything of that nature to me. I didn't have much contact with children in other houses. I would just meet them in passing. I wasn't aware of any abuse in the other houses.

Allegations by [REDACTED] ACB

85. [REDACTED] ACB was one of the children in my care. She was clever. She was hardworking, sensitive and easy to look after. [REDACTED] she got on with the other children. She wasn't a loner or isolated. I did think she would have fitted in with a foster family better, rather than being in the home. After I left, I went to

Wilton Street Hostel. I lived there whilst I was studying at Jordanhill. [ACB] came to visit some of the girls who were in the aftercare hostel and had been in Smyllum. I met her at that time. She said she was finding it hard in university digs. She said she was struggling financially. I suggested we could get her a place in the hostel for working girls if she didn't want to be in the aftercare hostel, but she wanted to be independent.

86. She came to visit again towards the end of my course and hers. She came to tell me that she was graduating and that she had got engaged to a Norwegian Diplomat. Often on Saturday night at Smyllum, after the telly was switched off and the girls were ready for bed, they would talk about their ambitions. Some of the other girls wanted to be hairdressers or mothers. [ACB] ambition was to be a writer. I asked her what had happened to her dream of being a writer and she told me that she still going to do that. She gave me a photograph of herself. I found it in my loft recently. She seemed to be doing well. I didn't hear from her again after that. I just presumed she had gone to Norway.
87. I've been told that [ACB] says I didn't like her from the outset. She states that I thought I was better than her and did my best to break her down. That does not accord with my recollection at all. I wouldn't have even known she felt that way. I thought she was quite open with me and we talked quite a bit. I don't know where she gets the idea that I wanted to break her rather than build her up.
88. She also alleges that I tried to break down a boy called [REDACTED] This is not true. I haven't seen [REDACTED] for a number of years but I keep up with him. He came to Smyllum because his parents were quite elderly when he was born and they were unable to manage him. The school asked educational psychologists at Notre Dame Clinic to get involved and he was sent to Smyllum. He arrived when he was about ten. He exhibited frequent tempers.
89. I would accompany [REDACTED] on his visit to the psychologist. She would see [REDACTED] then she would see me, then she would see us both together. We would discuss how to deal with the temper tantrums. She would advise me to try and keep the other

children away because he would lift things and throw them. It was a matter of staying with him and not letting him harm anybody else or himself. The psychologist and I talked to him about why he was having the tantrums and gradually they became less frequent. He never ever harmed anybody else. After he left, and I was no longer in the order he came to see me. He said he was glad that I hadn't left him when he was in his tempers because he thought he would be on his own. He was a great cook and he found himself a job in the [REDACTED] Hotel. He still works in that field and has his own business.

90. [REDACTED] ACB [REDACTED] has alleged that I would pick on her because she didn't cry as part of her defence strategy. I don't remember her crying but I didn't pick on her. I wouldn't pick on her because of that. She has alleged that I tried to make her cry in front of other children and that I'd say deeply personal things in front of them like, "Your mother was a whore, you'll end up the same as her. You fucked your uncle." That didn't happen. I don't use language like that. I didn't know she had an uncle and I had no knowledge of her mum. She has alleged that I would say, "Don't think you're going to be anything in life, young lady."
91. She has also stated that I would poke her in the chest with my finger, causing lots of little bruises, and say, "You need to cry, it's not good for you. I need to break you down. You can't have a wall up. You can't be this hard." I wouldn't say those things to her and I didn't think those things. She has alleged that I made her seem abnormal for not crying. She states that she did not want me or the other nuns to see her cry because if they thought she was weak or vulnerable, they would take advantage. I don't recognise these statements at all.
92. She has alleged that I would find extra punishments for her and that I sent her to bed without food or prevented her from doing her job at the weekend to prevent her from getting a wage. I never sent any child to bed without being fed. She had her job at the weekend but I didn't stop her going to it. I would never have done anything to try to harm her in any way.

93. She has alleged that I would try to belittle her achievements. She says I would say things like, "Even though you have five As in your o'levels, it doesn't mean that you'll go to university." I didn't say that. I was delighted that she was going to university. She states that she won the modern languages prize and a trophy for the most outstanding pupil at Our Lady's High School. She states that I drove her to Motherwell for the prize giving and that she was wearing her hair loose and moccasin shoes. She alleges that in the course of the journey, I told her she had to wear her hair tied back and put on horrible clumpy shoes. I don't remember, but I could see myself asking her to tie her hair back. I had five girls with long hair in my care. I was forever saying to them, "Let me see your face, get your hair back out of your face." I don't remember anything about the shoes. I didn't want her to look bad at the prize giving. She was always lovely and smart. I don't remember driving her to Motherwell, but I do remember her being awarded the prize because we had a cake to celebrate.
94. She has alleged that I tried to ruin her running competitions by preventing her from having shoes to run in. She states that sometimes she had to run in bare feet. I have no recollection of her running competitions at all. She alleges that I deliberately made her look bad and bring her down when she was doing well. She states that she remembers thinking, "Why aren't you proud of me?" I was very proud of her. She worked very hard.
95. She alleges that I tried to sabotage her schoolwork and that I spilled things on her homework deliberately. That didn't happen. She alleges that I made her go to bed at nine o'clock so that she couldn't finish her homework and that she would have to sneak into the toilet at night to finish it. That's completely untrue. We actually left the parlour available for her to do her homework, especially in the winter. There was an electric fire in there she could use.
96. She states that she told her social worker, Lindsey Cameron, what was happening. She then alleges that I told her off, gave her a couple of thumps and said, "You stop telling tales." I have no memory of that at all. She states that her head teacher, Mr Tully, told her that her schoolwork was slipping a bit. She states that she told him

that I was making her life difficult. She states that I left Smyllum abruptly after that. That's not true. My interview for Jordanhill had been in February or March, so it wasn't a sudden departure. I left [REDACTED] to start college.

97. I have no recollection or knowledge of [REDACTED] ACB being placed with a teacher as part of a foster care arrangement.

Sister [REDACTED] AEG

98. I remember [REDACTED] AEG who was known as Sister [REDACTED] AEG She was at Smyllum throughout my time there.

Allegations against Sister [REDACTED] AEG *by June Smith*

99. I have been told about allegations by June Smith of Roncalli House. I don't remember a girl by the name of June Smith. She states that she was a regular bed wetter and that Sister [REDACTED] AEG would pull her out of bed, dig knuckles into her head, put her in a cold bath and pour disinfectant over her. I never heard anything about that. She alleges that she was made to strip the bed, wash the sheets and hang the sheets out to dry so everybody knew she had wet the bed. I never heard anything about that.
100. June Smith also alleges that on an occasion in Holy Island, she wet the bed and Sister [REDACTED] AEG threw her into the shower and made the staff watch her and was laughing at her. I don't know anything about that. She has also alleged that Sister [REDACTED] AEG made her say twenty rosaries to try and stop her from wetting the bed. She alleges that she was given a pill to stop her from wetting the bed. I don't know anything about that. She alleges that Sister [REDACTED] AEG hit her for reading in bed and battered her when she overheard her talking about her birthday being forgotten. I don't know anything about this and I never saw any physical violence.
101. She alleges that Sister [REDACTED] AEG took personal possessions from her. I have no knowledge of that. She alleges that another child made her get into bed with her and

Sister [AEG] hit them when she found out. I have no knowledge of that. She alleges that Sister [AEG] locked her outside and that she had to stand in the porch until 11.30 at night in the cold and dark. I have no knowledge of that. She alleges Sister [AEG] would hit her with a clothes brush and a belt. On one occasion, she couldn't find her glasses and Sister [AEG] slapped her and hit her with a belt. I have no knowledge of any of these things.

102. She alleges that Sister [AEG] battered a girl called [REDACTED] with a belt, kicked her up and down the hall and pulled her hair because she allowed the bath to run over. She alleges that [REDACTED] phoned her [REDACTED] and mentioned being hit by Sister [AEG]. She thought Sister [AEG] must've been listening in and alleges she was hit for talking about it on the phone. I have no knowledge of these things.

Allegations against Sister [AEG] by [REDACTED]

103. [REDACTED] alleges that Sister [AEG] beat her with a clothes brush and that she was placed in a cold bath for wetting the bed. I have no knowledge of that. She alleges that she was punched in the face and slapped with anything Sister [AEG] had to hand. She has also alleged that she was sexually abused by older children and that the nuns knew about this. Instead of helping her, she alleges that she was battered and made to feel dirty. I know nothing about this. She alleges that she was made to eat lumpy salty porridge and lumpy custard. She also alleges that she was made to polish shoes for thirty children. I know nothing about any of these allegations.

104. She also alleges that she was battered for starting her period at eleven and making a mess of the sheets. She states that she was battered for the least thing. I know nothing about any of this.

Allegations against Sister [AEG] by [REDACTED]

105. I have no recollection of [REDACTED]. He alleges that Sister [AEG] was the most cruel nun. He states that he was beaten for bed wetting. He alleges that wet

sheets were wrapped round him and other bed-wetters and they had to wear them. He states that the Catholic religion was forced on him without the consent of his parents. He states that his parents weren't allowed to visit him and believes this was because they were Protestants. He alleges that he was told that his mother had died when, in fact, she was alive for a further two years. I don't have knowledge of any of these things.

106. He alleges that Sister [REDACTED] AEG beat a child who threatened to say he was being abused or mistreated and that children were forced to say that they were happy to police or third parties. He alleges that he was made to eat cigarettes when he was found smoking. He states that he was told he would be getting a present and was then given a bath plug. He alleges that children were slapped or had their hair pulled if they spent too long in the bath. He states that he was hit with a pool cue and that birthday and Christmas gifts were taken from the children. He alleges that he was beaten for being sick in his bed. I know nothing about any of these allegations.

Allegations against Sister [REDACTED] AEG by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

107. I can't remember these children. I am advised that Sister [REDACTED] AEG was charged in relation to alleged offences involving them between 1967 and 1971, including locking them in a cupboard. None of this was known to me and I am really alarmed to be told this.

Allegations against Sister [REDACTED] AEG by [REDACTED] AAT

108. I don't remember [REDACTED] AAT I am told he was at Smyllum from 1961 until 1976, so he may have overlapped with me for a short time. He's alleged that he lived in fear of Sister [REDACTED] AEG and that she made his head bleed with a steel comb whilst checking for lice. He alleges that all the children were placed in the same bath, so it was too hot at the beginning and freezing at the end. He alleges that Sister [REDACTED] AEG struck him with a brush and that he was beat for running away. He alleges that on holiday in Girvan, he had water blisters from sunburn. He states that he was beaten by Sister [REDACTED] AEG and the beating burst his blisters. He states that he broke a light

when he was eleven and he was taken to the laundry, stripped naked, made to stand for hours and beaten with a heel. I have no knowledge of any of these things. I don't remember any children running away when I was at Smyllum.

109. [REDACTED] AAT alleges that he had limited or no contact with his family. The only time he was visited by his sister was when he was in hospital following Sister [REDACTED] AEG alleged attack. I don't recall any children being in hospital when I was at Smyllum.

Response to allegations at Smyllum

110. I have no knowledge of any of the things alleged by any of these children, nor have I even heard about them. I never heard or saw anything negative in relation to Sister [REDACTED] AEG I would accept that the alleged mistreatment of bed wetters, as described by these children, would be abusive if it happened. Nobody ever made any report of anything nasty happening to them to me.
111. I'm astounded by these allegations. As far as I'm aware, the sisters, myself and the sisters that I know, were there for the purpose of caring for the children.

Hopes for the Inquiry

112. I think it's right that the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry looks at the things that have been said by children in care. Society failed these children. If nothing else comes of it, I hope that, as a result of the Inquiry, society as a whole has a better attitude to how we bring up children.
113. We have a responsibility to each other. If the Inquiry can bring that to the Scottish society as a whole it would be a positive thing. I hope that childcare will improve overall and that we will get better at it.

114. 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..... 15 - 12 - 17