

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

AAH

Support person present: No

1. My name is [AAH] My date of birth is [] 1960. My contact details are known to the Inquiry

Background

2. I don't know much about my life before I went into care. I believe I was between two and half to three years old at the time. I haven't really got any memories before then. The family home was in Greenock. I asked my mother later in life why I was put into care, but she always cried whenever I asked her and never told me the reason.
3. I was in care in Scotland initially and was later transferred to Newcastle. I was in Nazareth House in Glasgow and then Smyllum in Lanark. I was moved from Smyllum to St Vincent's Children's Home and then to St Philip's Hostel, both of which were in Newcastle.
4. When I was younger, I thought that my brother [AAF] was my only brother. [AAF] and I were always together in the homes until I got moved to the hostel. I met other family members later. I met [] and [AAI] in St Vincent's Children's Home in Newcastle. I also met [] when I was there. He used to come to see us after he had left the care system. I also have another brother called [] who I've met only twice, and a sister called []
5. To my knowledge, the responsibility for arranging our care lay with the authorities in Scotland. I think we were under the care of an organisation called

St Cuthbert's Care when we moved to Newcastle, but we still had a Scottish social worker. His name was Mr Miller.

Another Institution

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13. I think I moved to Smyllum when I was about five years old.

Smyllum Children's Home, Lanark

14. We were taken to Smyllum by Mr Miller. I learned later in life that all of my family were under his care. He didn't explain anything about the move. We didn't take anything with us. All we had were the clothes we were wearing.

15. I remember my first impression was that it was scary. It seemed like a big place as a child. I've been back as an adult and it's not as big as I thought. I remember getting out of the car with Mr Miller, going up the front steps, and a nun answering the door and taking us in. We were put in what they called the parlour room. Miller and the nun had a discussion, I presume about AAF and me, and we were taken from there to the house we were to stay in, which I think was called Kentigern. We were part of that house for the next five or so years.

16. I was shown to the dormitory and a bed was allocated to me. I was in a different one from AAF I think there were around eight to ten beds in mine. I didn't get a medical when I arrived.

17. Smyllum was run by nuns and there were some civilian staff as well. I was never shown any love or affection by any of them. We were only there so they could

make money. I don't remember the names of any of them. I don't want to remember them. They're not worth remembering.

Routine

18. We were woken each morning around seven o'clock. You got yourself washed and if the nun wasn't happy with your efforts, she'd grab the flannel and scrub your face excessively. They weren't gentle at all. We had a coat hanger to put our things on and a little bag to keep our toothbrush in. There was a pot with powdered toothpaste and we all dipped our brushes into that. You brushed your teeth in the morning only, not at night. I don't remember there being any showers there. I think we got baths every three or so days.
19. We were taken to the dining room for breakfast and after that we went off to school. We got porridge for breakfast - one lump or two. It wasn't smooth like it is nowadays. When I think back to the food they gave us, I wouldn't give it to a pig now. It was appalling.
20. From what I remember, we ate our dinner at school and only returned to our house at the end of the school day. After school, we took our uniform off and put on what I call our 'gladrags', so called because they were rags. We were never taken to a shop to get new clothes. I only ever got new clothes once and that was for my First Communion. They were issued in-house and were taken away from me afterwards. You had Sunday clothes for wearing to church, which you took off after church and put back in the cupboard up beside the bath house.
21. When I was younger, there was no playtime after tea. It was straight to bed at six o'clock. Nobody came to tuck us in. A nun or a member of staff used to come round, I think just to make sure we were in bed. As I got older, I went to bed about an hour after the younger ones and got to go out into the yard for a while after tea. There were some older lads there who were allowed to stay up until about half past eight. I think they were about fourteen to sixteen years old.

22. There wasn't much opportunity to do anything outwith Smyllum. You were kept within its confines. The grounds were massive though. You could walk all day as a child and not reach the boundary. You weren't really allowed to mix with the outside world. Some of the older lads did. I think that was only because they went to a different school, which was called St Mary's. The school was basically just outside the gates of Smyllum though, so that's how far they got in the world.

Religious instruction

23. At certain times of the year, you spent most of your time in church and getting bible-bashed all day, every day. I'll never go to church again in my life.

24. I didn't really have anything to do with the priests in Smyllum. The way I would put it is that the priests were the directors and the nuns were the understudies. Whether or not a nun had much contact with a priest depended on her rank. The priests came round to the house about once a week. I was aware that they were there, but I didn't know what they were doing. They didn't talk to me. I was just a little piece of shit to them.

25. Trainee priests used to come in sometimes as well. I remember one who used to come every fortnight and spend the weekend there. I think he was called Bertie. He was probably the only person who did actually show any kind of love towards me. He used to bring a big bag of toffee bars. There was a park with a lake on the premises and we went for walks there.

Medical inspections

26. We got regular medicals. It didn't matter what sex you were, we all lined up together naked. They were done by a nun, not a doctor. Maybe she was a doctor. I don't know about that. It was done the old fashioned way. You stuck out your tongue and said "Ahh", and they spooned your testicles and got you to cough. To be fair to them, it was probably done like that because viruses and colds spread so easily and there were about seven hundred children in the

place. You never saw a doctor. The nun did it all. She was the one who administered any drugs. I had warts on my hands at one point and I used to have to go and see her in a different part of the home. She put orange stuff on them which helped clear them up.

Birthdays and Christmas

27. I can't remember getting anything for Christmas, and birthdays were just another day. I don't remember ever getting a card. They treated Easter a little bit special.

Relations between the children

28. The oldest kids used to bully those younger than them, and they in turn would bully the younger again ones. Everybody bullied somebody. It went all the way down the line. I used to protect **AAF** all the time. I was forever sticking up for him and fighting with other kids.

29. Some of the kids used to touch each other inappropriately. A lot of the older kids used to get in to bed together and play with each other. The dormitories were single sex, but there was just a corridor separating the boys from the girls. I used to get woken up with the noises of them carrying on with each other. Nothing like that ever happened to me there. I was too young.

School

30. **AAF** and I didn't go to school with the rest of the kids when we first got there. He went to the nursery and I went into a section which was like a junior school induction section. I think there were only civilian staff there. I don't remember any nuns being there. I can't remember any ill-treatment in the first couple of years.

31. The school was in-house. The classrooms had the old fashioned desks with inkwells. We were taught mainly by civilian staff but there were nuns around too. I don't think the nuns did any of the actual teaching. They were there to oversee things. As I got older, the teachers were always shouting and bawling at us and throwing blackboard dusters at us. None of the nuns or teachers ever showed any interest in what we were doing. You were never going to learn anything as they just put you down all the time. I never learnt anything.

Physical abuse

32. We were beaten by the nuns and the civilian staff. I can honestly say that the beatings were a daily occurrence for me. I have no reason to lie. I was always up to mischief, although it happened even when I was just doing things that young kids do. If I climbed a tree, I got beat; if I fell over and got dirty, I got beat; if I didn't eat my dinner, I got beat – it was constant. The dinner thing in particular was a beating every day for me. To this day, I live on eggs, chips and beans. The only other thing I sometimes eat is a pizza. I'm diabetic and the doctors try to advise me, but I just can't eat anything else.

33. I don't know why, but throughout my time in care I was deemed a 'bad apple'. That was the case through the whole care system. The nuns called me [REDACTED] but they also used to say to me that I wasn't a [REDACTED] because I behaved differently from [REDACTED] AAF [REDACTED] is more laid back than me. The first time that was said to me was very early on in Smyllum. I was the black sheep of the family.

34. One particular incident sticks in my head. It happened at the back stairs of the house I stayed in. Tramps used to come up to the home. One day I asked one of them to tie my shoelaces for me and a nun came walking out and saw him. The hiding I got for that was unbelievable. She punched me all over and hit me on the head with a wooden hand brush. I had bumps all over. I was told that I was never to speak to any of them. I was then put into the laundry room and told that I couldn't come out until I had learnt how to fasten my lace. Nobody tried to show or teach me how to do it. It wasn't that kind of place. There was

never any kind of display of love like that from them. I was there for about a week and a half, during which time I didn't go to school or do anything. That's why it sticks in my head. I slept on top of dirty clothes. I think I was kept there for that length of time to allow my injuries from the beating to heal. That's how I see it.

35. The beatings I got were severe enough to mark me with bruises, but I didn't suffer broken bones so I was lucky. Some kids did and were taken to hospital. I was taken to hospital when I fell from a very high height down a ravine while playing on a rope swing on a tree. I managed to get myself back up to the top. I then got a hiding for being dirty and a hiding for breaking my leg, and was taken to the hospital after that. I had cracked my shin, which the doctor said was worse than a break. I had bruises from the hidings as well as the fall, so maybe the doctor didn't think anything of it and just thought that all of the bruises were from the fall.

36. I don't know whether a discipline book was kept. I doubt they would have done that. Why keep a record of beating kids up?

37. I was force-fed every single day. As I've said before, I didn't eat fish or meat and there was some form of meat given to us every day. They would shove the food down my throat and tell me that there were kids in Africa who were starving. There were occasions when I was sick on the plate and they would just continue shovelling that in as well. We didn't get a lot of food, but everybody who left anything got it shoved down their throat. Sometimes the nuns would be at church, for whatever reason, when we were having our tea and the civilian staff force fed us in exactly the same way as the nuns.

38. There was [REDACTED] who was a very violent bloke. I don't remember his name. I saw him beat up a few kids. I was lucky as he didn't do anything to me. I can't back this up with anything, but I'm sure one lad died because of the hiding he got off him. I remember the 'hush-hush' around the whole place and the lad was never seen again.

Contact with social services

39. Mr Miller used to come to see me about once every three to four months. I'd be called out of class if he came when I was at school, otherwise I'd be called into that parlour we were taken to when we first arrived. He would ask if everything was alright and he'd have a meeting with the nuns, which I was never involved in. I never raised any concerns. I was too frightened. This is what people don't understand. If I had said that the nuns were beating me up, I would have disappeared. I know that sounds like an exaggeration, but the Catholic Church had so much power in those days. They had the ultimate power.

40. I was never aware of anybody coming over to the actual house where we were living. We always saw Mr Miller in that parlour. Maybe they did go over when we weren't there. I was only a young kid so I don't know if anyone else ever came to inspect the place. I can't remember speaking to or seeing anybody.

Contact with family

41. AAF was the only brother I knew about when I was in Smyllum. I have a clear memory though of some kid coming up to me when I was playing on the roundabout and saying "Your brothers have gone to Newcastle". I didn't take any notice. At that point, none of the nuns or anyone else had ever spoken to me about there being any other people in my family.

42. I think my mother came to see us once. I remember her telling me that she had given Mr Miller presents for us but we never got them. I wasn't bothered as nobody else had anything anyway. I never said anything to him about it. It sounds stupid now, but you were too frightened in those days. You were there to be seen and not heard. That was drummed into us. Kids nowadays interrupt and argue with you. One of my grandkids is only seven and she tells me what to do. We wouldn't have dared do that. I'm not saying it was right, but that was just the way it was in those days.

43. I was nine when I left Smyllum. I was in the second top class in primary school. I was given no notification that I was going to Newcastle. A boy came to my classroom and spoke to the teacher, who then shouted out my name and told me to go down to Kentigern. A nun then told me that I was going to Newcastle. She didn't explain why. We went immediately.

St Vincent's Children's Home, Newcastle upon Tyne

44. Mr Miller took **AAF** and me to Newcastle in his car. Again, I just went in the clothes I was in which was my school uniform. I had no personal belongings to take with me. He told us that he was taking us down so that we could be with our brothers. I didn't know I had other brothers until that moment.

45. I remember getting out of the car when we got there. The building wasn't as intimidating as Smyllum. We were then taken to Seaton house. That's the house **AAF** and I were in throughout our time there.

46. I always remember thinking that St Vincent's felt more like a family home than Smyllum. The dormitories were smaller, with only two to five beds in them. I was in the same room throughout my time there. It had five beds. **AAF** was in a different room. One other lad was in the same room as me the whole time I was there. The other beds were used by kids who came and went.

47. A nun called Sister **IAG** was in charge when I got there. She wasn't there very long. She was replaced by Sister **AFZ**. There was also a Sister **HAE** who was English. She was one of the good ones.

48. They used to take us down to a shop, called Farnons, every four or five months and let us pick something to wear. In that respect, things were a bit better at St Vincent's but you still got the beatings.

49. We used to go to Bridlington on holiday. I remember we stayed in the gymnasium of a Catholic school one year and in a bed and breakfast another time. I had quite a good time to be honest. We went to a caravan in Scarborough one year as well.

Sexual abuse

50. A trainee priest called Bernard Traynor used to come to the home every fortnight and he more or less stopped with us for the full six weeks' holiday in the summer. He used to come into my room when I was in bed at night and touch my genitals. He made out that he was coming to tuck us in. He never said anything. He just came in and did what he wanted. It slowly progressed from touching me to masturbating me. It happened every time he came to the home. The abuse actually started in the caravan in Scarborough .

51. He did it to another lad who was in the same room as me. I saw him doing it. He'd do it to me one night and the other lad the next. I used to tell [redacted] AAF but I never spoke about it to the other lad. He knew it was happening to me and I knew it was happening to him.

52. I never told any of the nuns or staff. I don't know if they were aware of what was going on. Again, if you'd said anything to anybody you'd have disappeared. If I had accused a Catholic priest of something like that, I would have been history. One way or another, they'd have got rid of me. Whether it would have been to another home or whatever, they would have done what they had to do to hush it up.

53. Traynor had a relationship with one of the members of staff called [redacted] or [redacted]. I don't know her second name. I don't know if it was a sexual relationship or whether they were just really close. I don't think she knew what he was doing to us though as she was actually a nice woman.

54. The way the nuns washed us was inappropriate. I know that now, but didn't think about it like that at the time. They used to pull our foreskin back and wash us. I just stood in the bath and let them do it. It wasn't just me, it was everybody. There was a queue of us. There weren't any boys there over the age of fourteen, as they moved you on when you got to that age. Once you started to speak up and retaliate, they moved you on. Once you got to fourteen and started to get a bit of strength, you could retaliate and throw them to the ground. I'm not saying it's okay to hit women but these people weren't women. They were animals.

Physical abuse

55. I got hidings from the nuns, the helpers and Traynor. I saw Sister IAG give out hidings but she never hit me. As I said before, the nuns preferred to use implements to hit you. The first hit would maybe be with their hands, but they usually then picked up something like a brush or metal dustpan and whacked you with that. Bashing you over the head with a dustpan was a favourite of theirs.

56. My sister [redacted] moved down to St Vincent's at one point and I never got on with her. [redacted]

[redacted] We were like chalk and cheese. She used to wind me up and I would chin her. The nuns would give me a hiding for that. I probably deserved that, but there were plenty of other hidings which I didn't deserve.

57. One day AAF and I were playing outside and we found an old fashioned cider bottle. Kids being kids, we thought we had found treasure. I started digging a hole under a tree and AEZ who was a deputy bishop at the time and later became a bishop, came out and was shouting and bawling at us for waking him up. It was about two or three o'clock in the afternoon. A nun called Sister AHQ who had been hoeing a little bit of garden came over and started hitting me on the toe with the hoe. I was wearing plastic sandals and it cut right into my

big toe. It was quite a deep cut. She carried on hitting me with it and the bishop just stood there watching her. He never said anything to stop her. If anything, I think he encouraged her. I never got any medical attention other than a plaster on it. I've still got the scar on my toe now.

58. I retaliated against Traynor one day because he was trying to get me to eat meat with gravy, which had been served up to me each day for a fortnight and I wouldn't give in. It had fluff and mould on it and they still tried every single day to make me eat it. I know it's hard to believe but I'm not lying. The only square meal I was getting during that time was what I was eating at school. At weekends, I only ate what my brother was able to sneak out for me. That day, Traynor said to me "Are you eating that?", and I jumped to my feet and started swearing at him and then got stuck into him. I gave him some of what he'd given me. Whether it was right or wrong, that's what I did. I was asked by him if I wanted to go to the hostel only days after that. They must have had a discussion and realised that I was getting too strong for the nuns to handle. By then I was starting to become more conscious of the sexual abuse and was thinking that I wasn't putting up with that. They painted a great picture of the hostel, saying things like I'd have more independence and more pocket money. They made it sound really great. I didn't get the chance to go and visit it or anything like that. It was just a case of me agreeing to go and moving there as soon as a bed became free.

School

59. My first school was St Cuthbert's. My education in that school was zilch. As I've said before, for some reason I was always the black sheep of the family and it always seemed to be me they aimed for everywhere I went. One day the headmistress got me up on the stage in assembly and tried to pull my pants down and whack me with a belt. I wouldn't let her. I can't remember what I'd done. I was then made to stand outside her office for six months until I said sorry. Around that time I was starting to get a little bit rebellious and didn't get on with the teachers. I never ever said sorry. I happened to tell one of the nuns

how I spent my day and she went to the school and had a heated discussion with the headmistress. I was sent back to my class after that.

60. The secondary school was St Aiden's. I was very rebellious at that school. I wouldn't do as I was told and wouldn't join in the lessons. I was also violent. I had lost it by then. I was just going down a lonely road to hell. It had been a gradual thing. I had started to think "I'm sick of getting hit", and I started to hit back. I found out that I was good at it and then began to hit more and more. I'm not proud of it. If my grandkids were acting like that, I would know something was up and would try to get to the bottom of it. None of the teachers showed any interest in why I was like that. I continued to go to St Aiden's when I moved to the hostel.

61. The [REDACTED] was a smashing bloke, although it was his responsibility to dish out the punishments. He used to give me six of the cane on each hand. It wasn't just me. I think he had to do it otherwise he'd have been seen as weak. He was called Mr [REDACTED] HAI [REDACTED]. He was also [REDACTED]. I think he became a [REDACTED] in Newcastle. I believe he's dead now. He was in charge of the [REDACTED] and I was the [REDACTED] so he liked me. I think he knew what was going on. I imagine he didn't speak up because he would have lost what he had. He was the [REDACTED]. The priest could have removed him from there. They could do whatever they wanted.

Contact with siblings

62. My two older brothers, [REDACTED] AAI [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were in [REDACTED] house when we first got there. [REDACTED] AAI [REDACTED]

Contact with social services

63. Mr Miller came down to Newcastle about once every six months. I only saw him if he came when I wasn't at school. He'd have meetings with the staff, which I was never involved in, and make decisions about my life. I think he was our social worker until around the time I got moved to the hostel. A social worker called David Ingram then came in. He was based in Newcastle. I think he worked for St Cuthbert's Care.

St Philip's Hostel, 94 Osborne Road, Newcastle upon Tyne

64. If there is a hell on earth, this is it. I've been in a lot of prisons in England and there's not a prison in this country as hard as that [REDACTED]. After I left the place, Sister HAE came to visit me at my mother's house and said to me that I should never have been sent there. I think she must have known what it was like.

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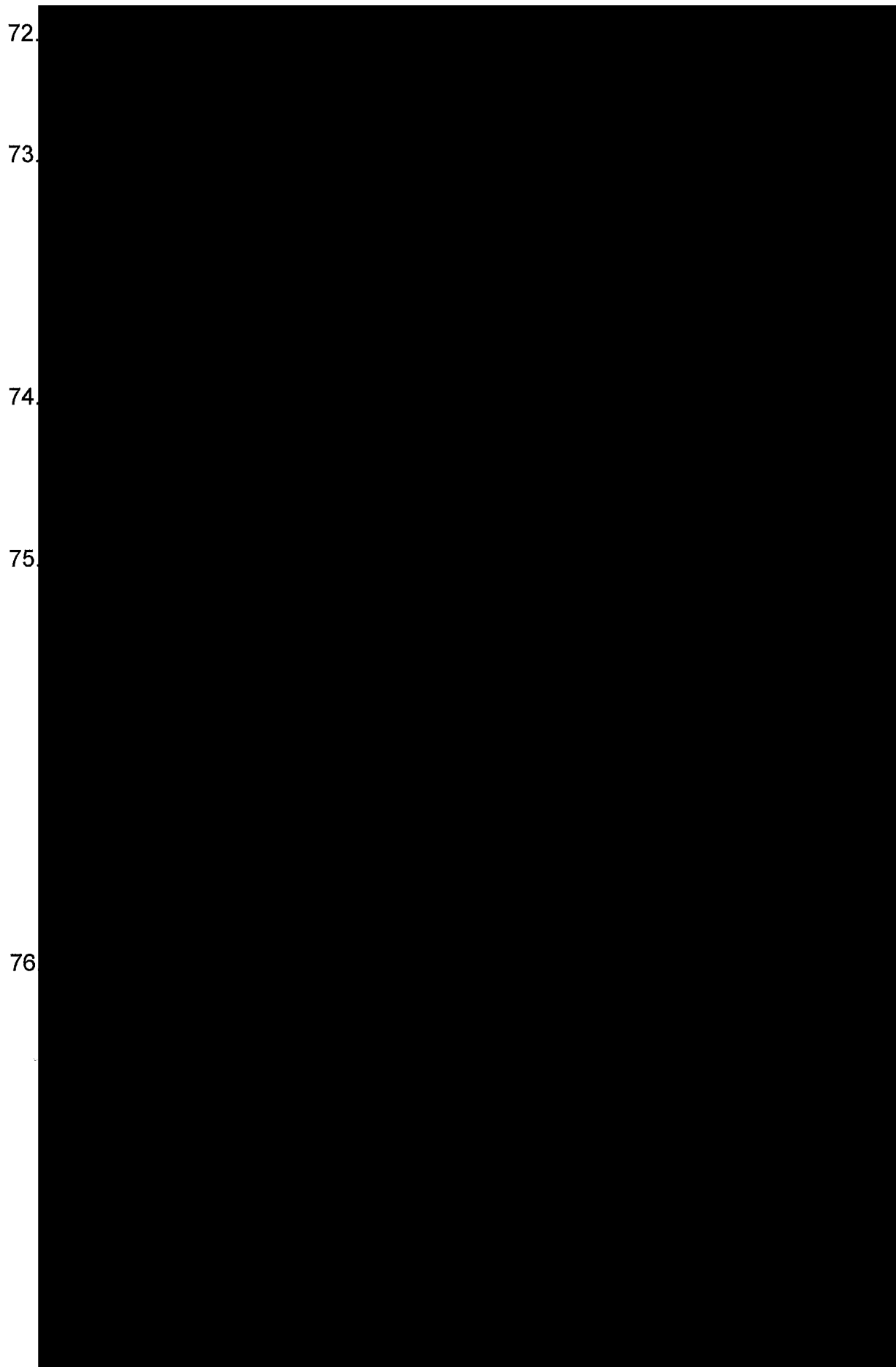
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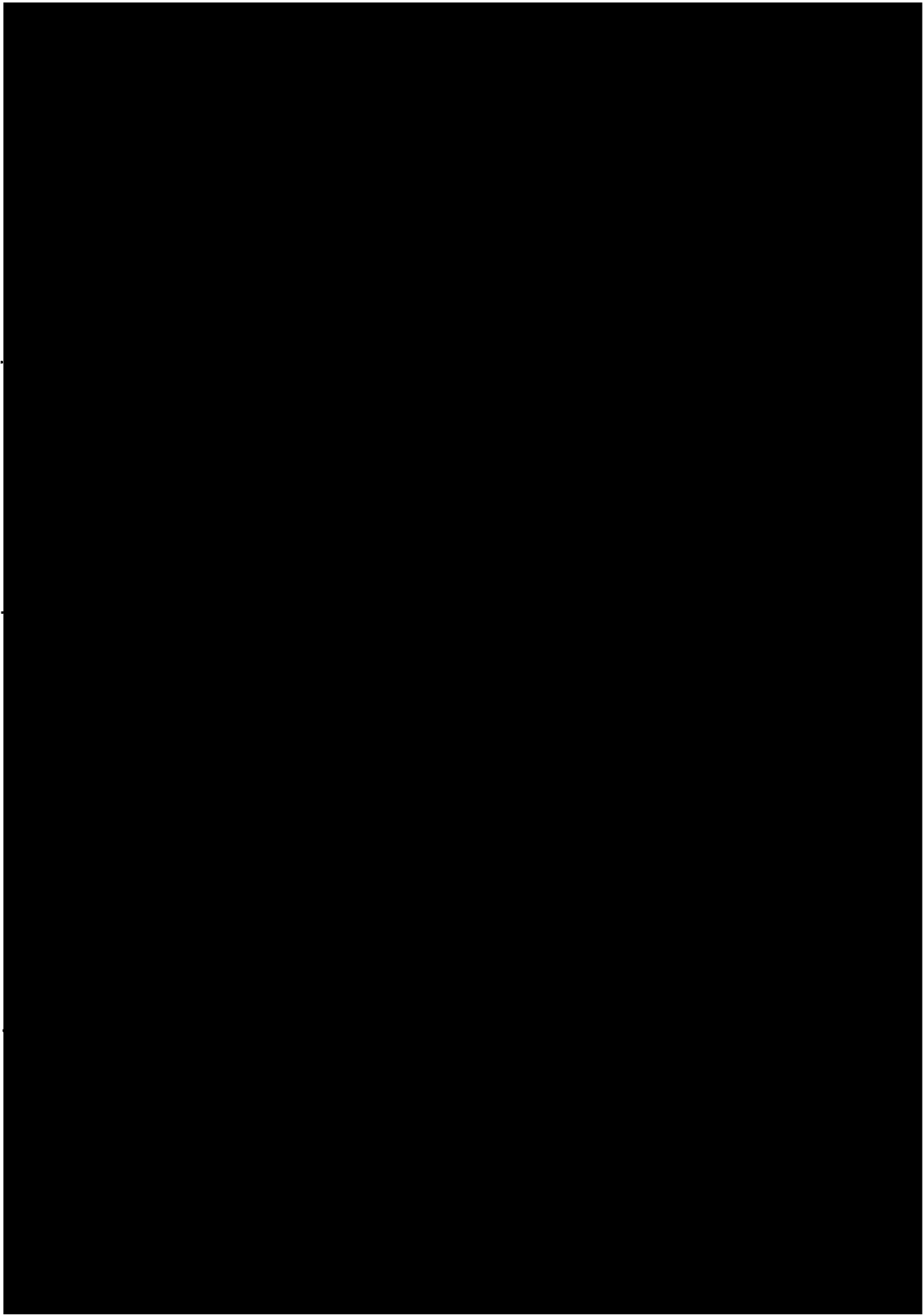
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80. Apart from the sexual abuse, I've got no grudge against St Vincent's. I was young when I was in Smyllum so I got over that. The beginning of my problems was when they transferred me to the hostel. I was there for two and a half years and that was the hardest part of my life. [REDACTED]

AAI [REDACTED]

This place is where all my hatred comes from.

HAK [REDACTED]

Life after the institutions

81. My last day in school was in [REDACTED] 1976 and that was when I was put out of the hostel. I got the bus back that day from school to the hostel, which I thought was my home, and my suitcase was at the door. They basically told me that I was a bit too old to be there and sent me round the corner to speak to a man who would sort me out with a bedsit. That was how I was introduced to the big bad world. Nobody from social work was involved.

82. Things didn't work out in the bedsit. I was just drinking all the time and I didn't pay the rent so I got kicked out.

83. By that time my mother had moved [REDACTED] and I moved in with her.

AAF [REDACTED]

84. I couldn't settle at my mother's as I couldn't get on with her. There was never an apology from her and she didn't show any love. She was just the same as a nun really. She carried on as if nothing had ever happened. She tried to be in charge of my life and I didn't think she deserved that privilege. I used to argue with her all the time. I had no sympathy for her when she cried every time I asked her why I was put in care. I was only interested in finding out why I was put in care. She's dead now. My step-father was a fantastic bloke. He died about four years ago. I still miss him. He tried to help me through my journey.

85. There comes a point when you get a choice in life and I chose to go down the wrong road. You're very naïve when you come out of care. You're not really street-wise and you just learn as you go along. I drank too much, took drugs and was in and out of prison for fighting and thieving to feed my drugs habit. I come from a large family and every one of them took the right route in life and I went the other way. I was more violent and rebellious than them. I just didn't give a shit. I've often asked myself why I was different from the rest. I had plenty of opportunity to take the right road.

86. The first time I was in custody was when I was seventeen. I was on remand for about nine months. I got acquitted and was out for about three or four days and was back in again. I loved it. I was out of the big bad world and back living with systems I had grown up with. And, it wasn't half as bad as the hostel had been. It sounds stupid, but I loved it. I just got my head down in solitary confinement and went to sleep for twenty four hours. It sounds impossible, but you can just sleep for that length of time as that's what I did.

87. I spent time in a detention centre. The lads in there were aged between eighteen to twenty one. A prison officer was sexually abusing some of the lads there. It didn't happen to me. The police are currently investigating that now.

Impact of experiences

88. I left the hostel full of pure rage and a lot of innocent people paid the price for it. I was a really, really violent person. I was a nutter. People who didn't do anything other than just look at me the wrong way at the wrong time got it. That shows that it's not just people who've been in care who suffer. That's the only regret I have. I get really emotional when I think about that place. I was going to go and smash it up, but it was being used as a kind of family centre and they didn't deserve that. I have got a conscience, but not when it comes to them.

89. I was the Catholic Church's Frankenstein. They taught me how to be violent and not surrender. I remember having a fight with a lad who wasn't from St

Vincent's and the nun gave me a stick and told me to batter him with it. They taught me what to do. I've got a reputation in this town for being a hard man. I'm not proud of it. I think I'll always be an angry man, but the rage has gone now. If I tried to give my evidence to the Inquiry three years ago, I wouldn't have lasted the morning. I would've walked out.

90. I've become intolerant to pain. At school the other kids used to cry when we were getting the cane, but I always just stuck my hands up and took six whacks on each hand. I injured my finger the other day when I was drilling through a door. I was feeling for the drill coming through and it came out and caught hold of my glove and twisted my finger round. I just straightened my finger myself and didn't seek any medical assistance.

91. I struggle to this day to show love. I didn't learn how to give affection until I was about twenty three. I didn't know how to be a father when I had my two kids. I was hardly there. I was always in prison. Even when I was out, I didn't know how to be a dad. I hadn't learnt. My wife always corrected my behaviour towards my kids. I would talk to them in the same way I talked to the idiots who I knocked around with down the town. I'm not meaning to insult those people as I was an idiot too. Thankfully my kids have turned out alright.

92. My relationship suffered because of my behaviour. My wife's a faithful woman and has stood by me through everything. I used to disappear on drink and drug binges for three weeks at a time, and then acted as if I'd done nothing wrong when I came back. Not many women would put up with that. I love my wife but I struggle to show it.

93. Many times over the years, I've been on a bridge or on cliffs at the seaside wanting to jump off. I haven't had the bottle to do it. The thoughts were there, especially when I was on the drink and drugs. AAF talked me out of it on the phone. I say he's talked me out of it, but I don't think I ever really had the heart to do it. I don't think I've ever been that far down there mentally. I would have done it if I had been.

94. I lost two houses through depression and alcohol. I lived in one and rented the other out, but I lost both through not going to work.

95. My relationship with my siblings has also been affected. My family is not what you would call a conventional one. AAF and I are close, but I wouldn't care if I didn't see my other brothers. It's not my fault. It's because we weren't brought up as a family. I didn't know my other brothers existed until I was moved to Newcastle. I've said that I always felt like the black sheep of the family

HAK

AAI

96. Between social services and education services, my education was knackered. The education in Scotland was completely different from England. For example, when I came down to Newcastle they tried to get me to write in italics and I just couldn't get the hang of it. I never really had an education, which was partly because of my behaviour and partly because I didn't understand it all. I feel that my education was robbed. The only reason I got CSEs was because they had just introduced a system in England so that you got judged on the work you did throughout the year instead of final exams. I only passed the subjects I liked. I also passed English literature, oral and language but that's because the interviews were verbal rather than written.

97. My identity was also robbed. I was born in Scotland, but don't really feel that I'm Scottish because I was shifted to England. My accent's gone too. I was moved at a bad time. If it had been after I'd turned fourteen or so, I would have had a better chance of keeping my accent. I lost my accent, identity and home.

98. One good thing that came out of it is that I'm tidy in the house. Everything is spotless. In saying that, I get it from my wife for getting on to the kids when they make a mess so maybe it's not actually a good thing. I remember a prison officer saying to me that he could always tell if someone had been brought up in a home as the cell would be immaculate.

Treatment and support

99. All the counselling in the world has never done anything for me. They tried to give me counselling in prison but it didn't work. Nobody ever got to the bottom of my behaviour as they just asked stupid questions and got me to do stupid things. The screws were always called in to put me into the solitary block because of the way I responded to that.
100. It's fair to say that the prison system couldn't handle me. I spent ninety per cent of my time in prison in the solitary block. I used to set about the prison officers. I just didn't care. They couldn't hurt me any more than the sexual abuse or being in that hostel. They couldn't fathom out why I was like that. Nobody ever thought of asking me why. I was embarrassed about the sexual abuse at that point in time. That's why I never spoke about it.
101. I spoke to the National Confidential Forum in Glasgow. They got someone local to get in touch with me, but it was just to talk and I wasn't keen on that. I didn't take the woman up on her offer when she phoned me. I was working away from home anyway and just couldn't commit to it. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I wasn't going to go in as I didn't want it bringing back all the bad memories. I broke down when I was in there. I don't usually show emotion or cry. I'm known as a hard man, and there I was sitting there just talking and breaking down. It was more formal than giving my evidence to the Inquiry. The people were nice but I feel this is more relaxed.
102. My wife is the only one who managed to get through to me and put me right. She sat me down when I was in my early forties and told me that I had to let go of my hatred. She told me that I would ruin my marriage and everything else, and would be left with nothing. The penny slowly dropped then. It took a couple more years after that for me to calm down. I never really talk about it to her now because she's heard it all before and she's got to the stage where she's a bit fed up.

103. I used to get intrusive thoughts about my time in care. I've decided now just to tuck it away. I realise now that the more I hate them, the more they're winning. I'm not going to let the bastards beat me anymore. I've got all the love in the world for my two grandkids and nothing is going to stop me giving them the life that I never had.

104. I'm fine talking about it now. I now have no embarrassment about telling anybody I was sexually abused because I know it wasn't my fault. I used to feel guilty about it. It's a much talked about subject nowadays and if it comes up in a conversation, I say that it happened to me. Talking about it and not hiding it has helped me.

Reporting the abuse

105



Court proceedings – sexual abuse

106. Traynor abused [AAF] and [redacted] as well. We reported it to the police to try and help [redacted] who was having a total breakdown because of what Traynor had done to him. I hadn't talked about it in my adult life up until that point. We thought we could maybe help [redacted] put an end to it by reporting it to the police.

107. There's a law in England which prevents the police from going direct to a priest and arresting him. They had to notify the bishop first, who told them that Traynor was in [REDACTED]. He had moved on though by the time the police went to get him. The Catholic Church hid him in a monastery down in Hampshire for twelve months and said that they were counselling him. The bishop wouldn't disclose his new whereabouts until a bloke called Chief Inspector Campbell Findlay went to arrest the bishop. [AAF] was the one who dealt with the police as he's more diplomatic than me. Campbell Findlay phoned [AAF] to warn him of his intention to arrest the bishop as he was concerned that doing something as big as that would result in our names coming out in the papers. It didn't come to that anyway as the bishop then disclosed where Traynor was.

108. The criminal court case was a farce and big cover-up by the church. They got a so-called expert to say that we hadn't been affected mentally. I had never met the bloke before in my life. Traynor got two years' probation, kicked out of the priesthood and banned from working with kids again. I've been sent to prison for a hell of a lot less than what he did. There's no justice. The scales of justice only lean one way in my eyes.

109. We also got a letter from that Cardinal Hume, who is now dead, which basically said we were nothing but a bunch of gold diggers. [AAF] still got the letter.

110. Apparently there was an offer made in court by the Catholic Church to give us counselling. It never materialised. I wouldn't want their help anyway.

111. [REDACTED] It was a barrister who said he could get compensation [REDACTED] sent to [REDACTED] at our own expense, to speak to someone. The bloke said he was going to ask me questions and I was to answer those and add nothing else. The end result was that he said [REDACTED] for three reasons: the fact that [REDACTED] had been in care, because [REDACTED] abused, and as a result of life in

general. [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] I got £6500 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] I blew it on drink and cocaine.

112. I've got a lot of hatred for the Catholic Church. They were able to do anything they wanted. They still can and still are. They're still in denial about what they did. They only stopped covering it up when that Pope instructed them to admit to it all. The children's homes were all about making money. Forget the charity side – the whole purpose was to make money and to do so by whatever means possible. People have said to me many a time that they're not all tarred with the same brush, but I've had it with them. I'll be buried an atheist. A statue of that Hume was put up in Newcastle. I urinated on it one night when I was drunk and got arrested. It wasn't pre-meditated. I was just walking past it after I'd been drinking. I'd do it again if I was drunk. When they took me to the police station, I told them to go ahead and charge me and, if they did, I'd be going to the papers the next day because I was one of the lads who was sexually abused by the bastards. They must have made some enquiries to confirm what I'd said as they let me go a while later without charging me.

Records

113. St Cuthbert's Care are based at Jesmond Park West in Newcastle. They have files on me [REDACTED] I made an appointment and met with a woman in order to see the information they had on me. I can't remember when that was. It was around the same time as [AAF] met with them. I feel that my memory is gone now because of the medication I'm on. I'm diabetic and have had a heart attack. The woman had a file about twelve inches thick and the only thing I got to see was a school report from a school in Newcastle. She said that was the only bit of information they had that had my name only on it. That's the excuse she gave me. She flicked through all of the papers and kept saying

she wasn't allowed to show me them because they had the name of one or more of my brothers on them.

114. AAF got to see a little bit more than I did. He got to see something about the reason we had been put into care. It said that we had been living in squalor or something like that. I never even got shown that. I don't think the people who dealt with the compensation claim got my records. They were only dealing with the sexual abuse by Traynor, not anything else that happened in the homes.

Child Abuse Inquiry

115. I hope that no other kid gets treated the way we were. The likes of Traynor should never get the opportunity to do that to kids. It screws the kid up for life.

116. I also hope that there'll be more understanding towards children in care. The children didn't do anything wrong. Their mother and father maybe made wrong decisions, but the children themselves are innocent parties and should be treated as such. They should be treated a hell of a lot better than I was.

117. More questions need to be asked and the kids should be involved in discussions and decisions. I know that you can't ask really young kids questions, but when kids reach the age of nine or ten they should be entitled to sit in on meetings which are going to decide their life. You can go to court at nine in this country. If they can be judged legally responsible at that age, then surely they can take part in meetings. It might come across as a juvenile's point of view, but it's worthwhile hearing it. I don't think we would have ended up in England if we had been allowed our say. I certainly didn't want to come here. I think it was said at some point that one of the reasons we were moved was because there would be better opportunities for us down here. We'll never know if that was right.

118. It shouldn't be down to kids to report things. The teachers in my school should have noticed something was going on with me. I was a bastard at St

Aiden's. I think the only reason I never got expelled was because the headmaster was a governor at St Vincent's. I was shopping with my wife in a supermarket one day and felt my shoulder being tapped. I turned round and it was my old form teacher. She was a music teacher. She just looked at me and said " I am really, really, really sorry". I told her that her apology meant nothing now. I could have gone further with her, but didn't want to do that in the shop. My name was never in the paper when we took Traynor to court, but she had obviously been able to work out who we were [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

119. Whether it was a Catholic-run organisation or whatever, it was the state system we went through and they should pick up the consequences of what they created. Properly focused treatment to help with the mental effects should be provided for people who've been in care.

120. I also think it's important to teach kids to be independent. We learnt to do some things like household chores, but we lived in a cocoon and you are very naïve when you come out of care.

121. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed.....
[REDACTED] AAH

Dated..... 24/01/2017