

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

AAP

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is AAP my date of birth is 1939. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

### Background

2. I was born in Bellshill, Lanarkshire. My mother and father were and who are both now dead. is my maiden name. I have three older sisters and . I also have three brothers, is older and and are my younger brothers.

### Life before care

3. I was only young before I went into care, so I can't remember much. My sister, told me that the reason we were first put into care was because we were left in the house on our own. My mother went to the cinema and my father was also out. One of the neighbours phoned the child cruelty people and told them about this. At this time my brother wasn't born yet.
4. Myself, and were put into care at Smyllum in Lanark. My older brother was looked after by my auntie. At this time I was 5 years old. was 9 and was 7.

### **Smyllum, Lanark (first time)**

5. When I first arrived at Smyllum in 1944 I didn't like it. There were over a hundred children there. I was given a number, [REDACTED], when I arrived. When I first went to Smyllum there were French children there as well, who were evacuees. The war was still going on at that time.
6. It was a big building. The boy's dormitory was on one side of the house and the girls was on the other side. I remember there was a big dining room and a toilet area. Some of the girls were okay but there was a lot of bullying.
7. The home was run by the nuns, the Sisters of Charity. I remember a couple of their names, Sister [REDACTED] BAF and Sister [REDACTED] EAB.

### **Routine at Smyllum (first time)**

8. Every morning we had to get up at six thirty. You had to make your bed. Sometimes you were expected to polish the floors on your hands and knees. We would go to church every morning. After church we went for breakfast before going to school.
9. After school you went back to the main building for afternoon tea or dinner. You went to bed at eight thirty.

### *Bed-wetting*

10. The nuns would get you up at midnight for the toilet but I still wet the bed. When you wet the bed you had to take the sheets off and go to the laundry room to wash them. There was a woman, Miss [REDACTED] HBO who ran the laundry room. She used to hit us with a stick when we went in with wet sheets. The stick was like the leg of a chair. If you had to go to the laundry you might miss your breakfast as you had to go straight to school.

*Food*

11. I thought that the food was okay at Smyllum. I can't remember a lot about what we were served. I think it was porridge for breakfast. Lunch was sometimes at the school. If you didn't eat your lunch you were given it for your dinner. I can remember getting bread and jam in the afternoon after school. I think that the nuns were given the same food as us but they ate in a different part of the house.

*Bath time*

12. There was a bath night. You had to get in the bath after someone else had been in. It wasn't very healthy doing this.

*School*

13. The nuns took the lessons at school. If you spoke in class you were given the belt by the nuns. This happened to me quite a few times. I didn't think that I deserved it.

*Holidays*

14. I don't remember any holidays or going home at weekends. When you were older you went for a week or a fortnight to camp at Aberfoyle. The nuns still kept an eye on you and made sure you were under control.

*Running away*

15. I ran away from Smyllum twice by climbing out of a window. One time I went to my father's at Coatbridge, and the other time I got as far as Glasgow. The police seen me in the street and took me back to Smyllum. I was locked in the attic for a couple of hours as a punishment.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

16. They would have a party for everyone whose birthday was that month. Christmas wasn't too bad. You were sent presents from people outside. Smith's Clocks, a local factory, would send in presents for us. We were provided with a Christmas dinner.

*Visits/Inspections*

17. When I was in Smyllum my mother and father had split up, but both would come and visit. My father came more than my mother. My father would give me pocket money when he came. This was the only time that I saw my brothers and sisters.
18. I can't remember any social workers coming to see me or any inspections by the authorities at Smyllum.

*Medical care*

19. There was no doctor resident at Smyllum. There was a doctor who came to the home regularly to check if anyone needed to see him.

**Abuse at Smyllum (first time)**

20. One day I was in a queue and my sister was in front of me. She turned around and stuck her tongue out at me. I pushed her and told her not to be cheeky. Sister [REDACTED] hit me with a stick on my left elbow. I had seen Sister [REDACTED] carrying a stick about with her before. I didn't see other children getting hit by the nuns.
21. I went to the doctor about my elbow when he came to the home. I told him how it had happened and he said it was tennis elbow. I was punished for telling the doctor about my elbow. I was locked in the bathroom in the loft. This shouldn't have happened to me.

**Leaving Smyllum (first time)**

22. The first time I left Smyllum was in 1945. My grandmother came and took us out. My father had to work in [REDACTED] then [REDACTED] so that's where we moved to. At this time my brother [REDACTED] was born.
23. We eventually ended back up at Coatbridge. I think that I was 8 when my grandmother died and as we were staying in her house we were put back into care. This time [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] went into care with us. We were put into Tom Dunnachie Children's Home.

Another Institution

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33. We had to leave Tom Dunnachie as the house was being sold. My father still didn't have a house so we had to all go back to Smyllum in 1950. [REDACTED] went there as well.

**Smyllum, Lanark (second time)**

34. Everything was the same, it was the same staff and the dormitories were still there. As I was now a bit older I would go and help pick potatoes and milk the cows at the local farms. You didn't get paid but you always got a nice meal after. I think the nuns got the money for us working there.

*Visits/Inspections*

35. I can't remember any inspections. The social worker would come and visit. When she met with me there wasn't any of the nuns there.

*Trips/holidays*

36. We would sometimes be taken to the local cinema. If I had pocket money I would sneak out to the cinema. There was still holidays to Aberfoyle for camping.

*School*

37. I passed my eleven plus and went to a secondary school in Lanark. I managed to get some good grades. I left with history, geography and domestic science.

*Illness*

38. When I was at Smyllum the second time I had pleurisy, chicken pox and mumps. If I was ill the nuns would keep me off school until I was better. I don't think it was because I was at Smyllum that I had all these illnesses.

*Trial period of foster care*

39. When I was 15 I was boarded out with a foster family for a trial period from Smyllum. It was the [REDACTED] family, my father knew them but that wasn't the reason I was put with them. I was only there about a week.

40. I was accused of stealing a book from their daughter. It was all a mistake as I thought the book was a present for me. Even though I apologised the family told Smyllum, and because of this they decided to send me to Bishopton. I felt that this was a punishment.

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49. I was 18 when I left the Good Shepherd home in Bishopton. I was told that I was going to work at St Joseph's School for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind. It was all boys there. I stayed on the premises, it was my job to look after the boys.

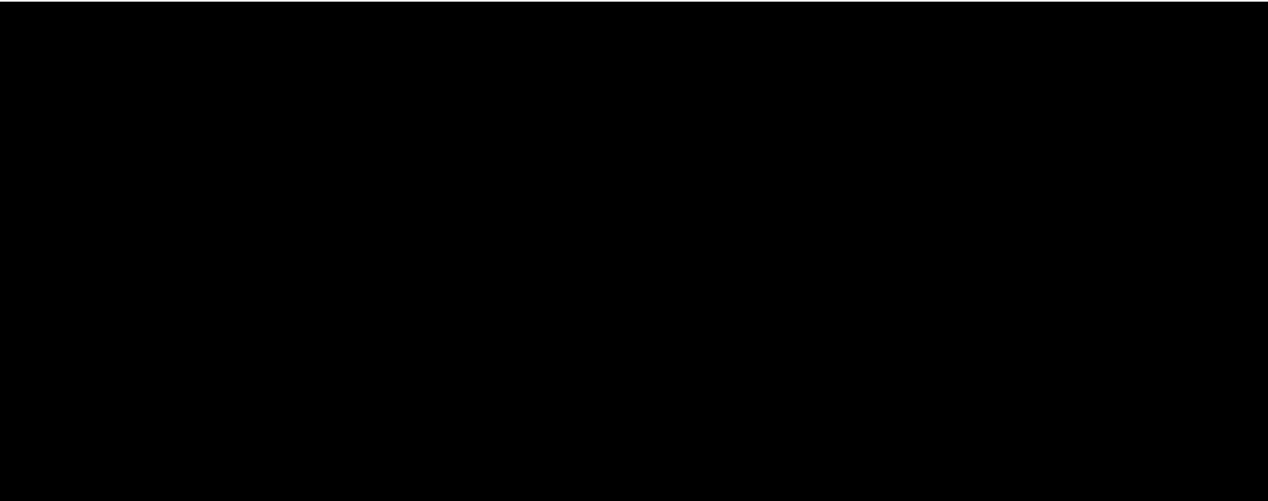
**Life after care**

50. In 1958 my father got a house and I was able to go and stay with him. All my siblings were there. I told my father about being hit with a stick by the nun at Smyllum. My father wanted to go and see the nun. I told him not to as I didn't want him to end up in jail. [REDACTED]

51. My father died in 1966. After this I moved to Glasgow then London. I met my husband in London. We were married in 1969 and moved to the Fort William area. We never had any children. My husband died in 1996.



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**Impact**

54. I used to have terrible nightmares about Smyllum. My doctor suggested I went to a psychologist. I went to the psychologist a few times and she was very good. She has retired now.

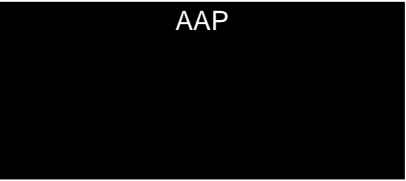
55. I used to meet up in Dunoon with some of the girls from Smyllum. I wouldn't call them friends, just people I knew from Smyllum.

**Records**

56. I have never looked into getting any records of my time in care. I thought they would all be destroyed now as the places are closed down.

**Lessons learned**

- 57. We should have been looked after better. They shouldn't have been hitting people for wetting the bed. They should have been helping you more. I don't know if the staff were sufficiently trained to look after us.
  
- 58. 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.  .....  
The signature area is redacted with a black box containing the text 'AAP'.

Dated..... 17 August 2017 .....