

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HCE

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is HCE My date of birth is 1944. I am aged 73. My contact details are known to the Inquiry. Within the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul I am now known as Sister HCE When I was at Smyllum I was known as Sister HCE

Background

2. I joined the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul on 1963. From that time I had a number of postings within the order. From 1964 to 1966 I was at Glenmaroon, Dublin involved with the care of children. From 1966 to 1967 I was at Stillorgan, Dublin helping with postulants and studying. From 1967 to 1969 I was at St Teresa's, Blackrock involved with the care of children. From 1969 to 1976 I was at Smyllum involved with the care of children. Again I completed a child care course. From 1976 to 1978 I was at West Denton, Newcastle as a house mother. From 1978 to 1984 I was at Bebington Children's Home in Cheshire as a sister servant. From 1984 to 1990 I was at Provincial House as sister servant. From 1990 to 1991 I was at Blandford Street, London. During this time I also undertook a course at Loreto, Dublin. From 1991 to 1993 I was at West Derby, Liverpool as sister servant. From 1993 to 1994 I was in Romania as sister servant and visiting. From 1994 to 1995 I was recovering from illness. From 1995 to 2000 I was at Birmingham. During this time I was sister servant and also involved in pastoral care and prison visits. From 2000 to 2005 I was at sister servant. I was also involved in pastoral care and acted as the coordinator for From 2005 to 2011 I was at Liverpool. I was sister servant and involved in pastoral

care. In 2011 I was at the [REDACTED] as a provincial councillor. From 2012 to 2014 I was at [REDACTED] as a sister servant and a provincial councillor. From 2014 to the present day I have [REDACTED] as sister servant.

3. Before I arrived at Smyllum I was at St Teresa's where I helped to care for special needs children. I knew that at some point I would be asked to move somewhere else as this was the way that the community worked. I had a consultation with a sister where I was asked if I would go to Smyllum. I had no issue with this as we could expect to be asked to go anywhere in Great Britain and Ireland.

Smyllum

4. As I have said, I was at Smyllum from 1969 to 1976. It was my first time in Scotland when I arrived at Smyllum. It was a very big house with large grounds. The other sisters there made me feel very welcome. The superior at that time was Sister [REDACTED] EAA She introduced me to the rest of the staff. I felt that the staff were very friendly and supportive.
5. The names of the other sisters that I can remember when I arrived were Sister [REDACTED] EAC Sister [REDACTED] AEG also known as Sister [REDACTED] AEG Sister [REDACTED] AHO and Sister [REDACTED]
6. I can't remember being given an induction course or anything similar when I arrived at Smyllum.

Role at Smyllum

7. My role at Smyllum was to be responsible for the children within St Kentigern's. St Kentigern's was one of the named houses within Smyllum. St Kentigern's was at the far end of the main building. Before I arrived it was Sister [REDACTED] ADE who had been responsible for this house.

Staff

8. I had three staff members that assisted me, Margaret McEwan, Theresa O' Bryne and one other whose name I cannot remember. There were no individual roles we all just helped each other to do what was required to be done. Everyone was very hands on. There were no other sisters in my group.

Sisters

9. I wouldn't say that there was a hierarchy between the sisters. Even the sister superior I would say was the same as the other sisters. She did have more responsibility. I think that the staff were recruited directly by the sisters. Margaret McEwan was at Smyllum before I arrived. Theresa came later. I appointed Theresa.

Training

10. When I was at Smyllum I attended a course and obtained a certificate for the Residential Care of Children. The course was residential at Langside so I was there Monday to Friday for the duration of the course. I started the course on [REDACTED] 1971 and completed it on 1 [REDACTED] 1972. I still have the certificate a copy of which I have provided to the Inquiry.
11. When I was at the course my staff members were responsible for looking after the children. My staff were accountable to me. If I had any issues I would go to Sister [REDACTED] EAA [REDACTED]

St Kentigern's, Smyllum

12. The group I was responsible for at St Kentigern's were mainly boys. The age range was from young children up to the age of 16 or 17. By this time there was an emphasis on keeping family groups of siblings together to try and de-institutionalise the children. A lot was dependant on what beds were available whether this could be achieved or not. I think that there was about sixteen or seventeen in my group. This

was another thing that had been looked at it. The smaller groups of children made it feel more like a family rather than the large groups there had been before. Siblings were encouraged to speak with each other.

13. There were five separate bedrooms in my area. Each bedroom had three or four children. The rooms were on either side of the corridor which led up to the playroom and living room. I had a separate room next to the bedrooms. I was in earshot of the other bedrooms. The staff had their own accommodation which they used other than when I was on the child care course. When I was away they would use my bedroom.
14. All the children had their own clothes, they didn't share their clothes. Sometimes when a child arrived they had come from a very poor background and we would have to get rid of the clothes that they were wearing. They would wear uniforms for school and change into what were called play clothes when they came back from school. The children had their own little wardrobes and drawers in the bedrooms to keep their belongings in.
15. The social worker would bring in any new children to Smyllum. They were normally taken to the dining room so that they could be eased in. Any new arrival always had a bath and their hair washed. We would also use a fine comb on their hair.

Routine

16. I went to morning mass every day about seven. This was as part of the community. The children would get up at about seven thirty. It was the staff that made sure the children were up. There were the usual struggles to get some of the children up.
17. There were sinks where the children could wash. These were separate from where the baths were. All the children were taken together.
18. It was important that the older children were ready for school as they went to secondary schools in Wishaw and Motherwell. The rest of the children went to school at Smyllum.

19. After school the children would change into different clothes so that they could go out and play. The children would play football or if it was wet there was a play room with board games.
20. After the evening meal there was still plenty of time to play unless the children had homework to do. The children were allowed to watch television except when they misbehaved. There were some behavioural issues and there were a lot of tears dependant on the child's background.
21. The younger ones had certain times for bed. The older children went to bed later. There was a washing routine for the children before they went to bed. We made sure that their teeth were done. There were always issues with this.
22. The children were allowed to settle down at night. Reading was encouraged. The children either read themselves or the staff would read to them.
23. During the night a lot of the children had nightmares. If this happened I would go and comfort them. If the children needed something during the night they would come and knock on my door.
24. Any letters that were sent to Smyllum for the children were always given to them. The children were always encouraged to write back.
25. The children had their own toys, which they shared with the others. They were able to keep these at the bottom of their wardrobes. The larger toys were stored together.

Bed wetting

26. The staff would get the children up in the morning. If they had wet the bed then they would take their own bedding off. If they were able they would also take the bedding to the laundry. There were washing machines in the laundry room. There was a cleaner who worked there during the day but I have no idea what her name was.

27. The older children would be embarrassed if they had wet the bed.
28. There was no punishment for bed wetting. There would be a bit of moaning if it happened a lot. We were only annoyed because of having to change sheets. The bedding would be washed whilst the children were at school and we would make the bed up.
29. If a child was always wetting the bed they would be taken to see the doctor. They would try and resolve this. The children would be encouraged to drink less before bed. There were also machines that were fitted to the beds. An alarm would sound if the child wet the bed.

Food

30. We would usually have prepped breakfast the night before. Breakfast would normally be cereal, porridge, toast and sometimes bacon.
31. I think that the primary school children came home for lunch. I can't remember.
32. The evening meal would be similar to mince and potatoes. The children generally ate the food that was provided.
33. If the children didn't like the food they were encouraged to eat it. Money was scarce so there were not many alternatives. I thought that the quality of food was okay. There were always staff in the dining room to keep an eye on the children.

School

34. The younger children went to primary school, which was on site in Smyllum. The older boys went to Our Lady's High in Motherwell or the secondary school at St Aidan's in Wishaw. The older girls went to St Mary's.

35. We had some dealings with the schools for things like the parents evenings. We tried not to show the children up as we were wearing habits. Sometimes the staff would go to the parents evening.
36. The staff were encouraged to help the children with their homework. We tried to ensure that the children had done their homework before tea. Education was seen as important for the children.

Religion

37. There was a mass every Sunday at Smyllum. All the children were encouraged to attend the weekly mass. There were no issues around this. There were also times where we would attend a mass in Lanark.

Chores

38. I don't remember the children being asked to polish any floors. They would make their beds. When the older boys were aged about 16 or 17 they would go strawberry picking.
39. The children were provided with pocket money every Saturday.

Discipline and punishment

40. I can't remember if there was a code or guidance about discipline and punishment at Smyllum.
41. If the older children misbehaved we would deprive them of the TV. If it was the younger ones then they would not get all of their pocket money. These were things that cost them. They liked going to the town and having their pocket money.
42. I can't remember any other punishments. There was no corporal punishment that I ever witnessed. It was something that I certainly was not in favour of. They might get

a slap on their bottom or on their legs. It would be a slap with your hand over their clothes. This would only happen if the child was totally out of control and you needed to get them back into line. It would be myself or one of the other staff that would administer this. We would talk to each other to make sure that everyone knew when a child had been punished. This was to make sure that they weren't punished again for the same thing.

43. The older boys weren't slapped. They wouldn't be allowed out to play football. The children who were slapped would be aged between 7 and 10. This normally worked as you were setting boundaries. It was all about introducing discipline. If this didn't work I wouldn't know what was done. I never saw a child being slapped or hit in any other way. I can't speak for the other groups. I had enough to do with my group.
44. When I walked from St Kentigern's to the main house, I would walk through one group, which was called St Mary's. But I didn't poke my nose into what was happening with this or any other groups. I didn't know how children were punished in these other groups.
45. There were problems with some of the children kicking in doors if they weren't allowed to go into town. We would keep an eye on them whilst the other children were away.
46. I don't remember if there was a punishment book or log book for when children were punished.
47. We wouldn't dwell on the punishments. Once it was dealt with we would move on. The staff that I had were experienced. We worked well together and we were able to work through situations. I look back on my time at Smyllum as a happy time. That is why what is now being said about Smyllum has knocked me for six a bit and is very disturbing.
48. I would honestly say that I never saw or had knowledge of anything happening towards children that I would consider to be abusive. I would hear from the other

sisters during community meetings about children playing up. I wouldn't have heard of how this was dealt with. I think it was the same as with a family, everyone dealt with their children differently. I was never an inquisitive person and wouldn't be one to interfere. That's not to say that I had tunnel vision. I never got involved with what happened in other groups. I had enough to deal with in my own group.

49. The only thing I can remember was [REDACTED] BAC [REDACTED] being tough on the boys and shouting at them, calling them names on the football field. I never saw him hitting any of the boys. If he had I am sure that the boys would have told me.
50. I had no experience of children telling me that they were being abused or unfairly disciplined. If it had happened they would have come to ourselves, if not maybe Sister [REDACTED] EAA [REDACTED] or Sister [REDACTED]. If the children didn't want to speak to me they would have spoken to staff and it would have been talked through.
51. I think that there was an openness in my group. There wasn't an element of fear. If they had told staff that someone had been picking on them then the staff would tell me. Ultimately the group was my responsibility. I would then ask if they had made sure they had the full story. A lot of the time you got half a story. I can't remember any specific occasions when this happened but I do remember vaguely that it did happen.
52. If a child felt that they were being picked on by a member of staff and I found out about this I would speak to the staff member. I would find out what had happened and discuss this. I wasn't afraid to speak to staff about things like this, as I said there was an openness in the group. I wouldn't always provide feedback to the child as sometimes this could cause more problems. It was never anything serious. It could be something like another child had got a certain toy. You would never set out to be unfair to the child. They had suffered enough.

Holidays/trips

53. There were not too many trips. We used to visit the navy at Helensburgh. The navy would provide buses and take the children to see the fireworks display when it was Guy Fawkes time.
54. Every year the children went as a group to Girvan for a fortnight. The sisters who were there had a secondary school so when they were on holiday we went there.

Birthdays and Christmas

55. Birthdays were always celebrated with the children. There was always a cake made in the kitchen. We would always try and get them something different. For the little ones it was a toy and for the boys a football. We would have a party in the evening after school.
56. At Christmas the children would be invited to John Lewis. They would put on a meal and give the children a toy. We would receive a lot of donations of toys for the children at Christmas. These would be kept and given out to the children on Christmas morning. We divided them up between the groups. We got some monetary donations before Christmas as well which would be divided equally between the groups.
57. We did try on one occasion to put the toys at the end of the child's bed. Someone woke up at 3 am and then everyone got up so we changed it the next year.
58. We had a special Christmas meal in the dining room. The children would also be given different clothes for Christmas.

Visits

59. There were no set days for visits. Saturday or Sundays were the best days as the children were off school.

60. The families of the children were always made to feel very welcome and they were encouraged to visit. There were a few families who would always visit. They were always given privacy when they came to see the children and were provided with tea.
61. The children could see their families on their own dependant on the age of the child. During visits parents were encouraged to take their children out for treats.
62. The problems were that families would regularly make arrangements to visit and then cancel. This was very upsetting for the children when you had to explain this to them.
63. You could always expect a backlash if their parents didn't turn up as expected on a Saturday. These kids came from very sad backgrounds and we didn't always know what this was.
64. We tried to have a talk with the children on a one to one basis. This wasn't easy as it was such a big group. We would try and talk to the children in the laundry area. This was where the ironing was done as well so you could talk to the children on a one to one. We would also speak to the children in the dining room when the tables were being set.
65. Once or twice Bishop Thomson visited Smyllum. We also had students from Cardross that were studying to become priests, who would come to Smyllum. They would play football with the boys.
66. I don't know if any checks were made on the adults that visited the children at Smyllum.

Inspections

67. I can't remember any inspections at Smyllum or any follow up visits after inspections.

68. The social workers didn't do regular visits other than to visit a particular child. This might have been dependant on the area that they were from. I can't remember if the social workers asked to meet children on their own. I never had a lot of dealings with them.
69. I can't remember any specific meetings that I had with the social workers. I do have a vague recollection of meetings between the sister superior, myself and social work to discuss if a child would have to stay with us or leave.
70. I am asked if I remember any visits or inspections from the Catholic Welfare Society. I remember that Father Tom Gibbons came out to Smyllum from Glasgow. He was from the Catholic Welfare Society. I don't think he did an inspection. He came round to do a visit and chatted to the children. I couldn't say how often he visited. From my memory it wasn't that frequent. I can't remember exactly what the purpose was but it was to do with the Catholic Church. He was always friendly and pleasant.

Medical care

71. If any of the children had headaches or minor illnesses then Sister FAM would deal with this.
72. There were two doctors who came to Smyllum every week. If it was something more serious then the doctors would see the children. If the doctors couldn't treat the children the children would be sent to Law Hospital.
73. I can't remember if there was a log book for any medical treatment provided to the children.

Deaths

74. There were no deaths in my group whilst I was at Smyllum. I can't remember any deaths in Smyllum during my time there. I don't know what the procedure was if there had been a child death.

Observation about Abuse

75. Even with the benefit of hindsight I couldn't say that I recall any situations or specific incidents that I would now think could be considered as abuse. In general conversation I would pick up from some of the other sisters that they were more strict than I was. I think that there were different personalities. I was only young and some of the other sisters who were older than me had more experience in dealing with the children.

Specific sisters and staff

76. I am asked about my recollections of specific sisters and staff.

BAC

77. I have been asked about BAC BAC was a BAC BAC would supervise the boys' football. Sometimes he would bawl and shout at them. I got on okay with BAC Sometimes a child would come and tell me that they had an argument with BAC They never said anything about BAC ever punching them.

78. If BAC was shouting and bawling at the boys it would be because they were messing up a game of football. BAC would tell me that he had to shout at the boys if they had kicked the ball away.

Sister

EAC

79. I remember Sister EAC The house Sister EAC supervised was on the outside part of Smyllum. Sister EAC had mainly girls in her group. I wouldn't be in

Sister [EAC] house when she was dealing with her group. I wouldn't be able to say how she dealt with individuals. Sister [EAC] wasn't soft. She was strict but she was very good with the girls.

Sister [AGD]

80. My memory of Sister [AGD] who was also known as Sister [AGD] was that she cared for the children. I remember that I would see her doing ringlets in the girls' hair for them before they went to school. I think the girls were called the [BAC]. From what I picked up from Sister [AGD] she had quite a hard group. It was a big group and she had told me that there had been a lot of changes in the group.

Sister [AEG]

81. Sister [AEG] was also in a different house. I had the same sort of contact with her as the other sisters. She was strict with the children but very caring. I never heard anything that caused me any concern or alarmed me.

Sister [EAA]

82. Sister [EAA] was a very sensitive and sympathetic person. Sister [EAA] was Glaswegian and a very warm person. I had no trouble at all in communicating with her as my superior.

Sister [BAH]

83. I don't remember Sister [BAH]

Sister [HBP]

84. I don't remember Sister [HBP]

Sister AHO

85. I vaguely remember Sister AHO She was in Sister AEG house before her. I couldn't tell you when she was at Smyllum or when she was left. I don't think that there any great overlap.

Priests

86. I can't remember the names of any of the priests who came to take mass.

Father ADB

87. I haven't heard of Father ADB

Allegations

88. I am told that allegations have been made by some children who were at Smyllum, against sisters and staff. I am asked about some of these.

[REDACTED]

89. I remember the name [REDACTED] who I have been told may have been at Smyllum between 1969 and 1980. [REDACTED] was never in my group. I think that he was in Sister AEG group.

90. I have been told that [REDACTED] has said that a nun would show him how to make the bed, with envelope corners. I have also been told that [REDACTED] has said if it wasn't done right then the nun would strip the bed and slap him. I can't comment on that. I've never heard of anything like that.

91. I have also been told that he has said that on one occasion when his parents were visiting, his father had an argument with a nun and as a result the nun automatically banned the parents from visiting. I would say that this would depend on the

circumstances. Sometimes parents could be very aggressive. It might have happened. As far as I was concerned I would always encourage the parents to visit. It could sometimes become difficult when you were discussing things with them. I never heard of any times when parents were banned from visiting.

92. I don't know anything about [REDACTED] being told that his mother had died and then two years later him finding out that she hadn't died. I really can't imagine that happening.

93. I have been told that [REDACTED] has said that he and other children were beaten by a nun for bedwetting and that the nun thought she would beat it out of them. I have no knowledge of this. I didn't hear of anything like this but I don't know what went on in any other groups. I have also been informed that [REDACTED] has said there were group beatings where the children would stand in line and be put over a sister's knee, beaten with a brush, and then sent to bed and told to stop crying or they would get more. I find it hard to believe that this happened.

94. I have been told that [REDACTED] has spoken about [REDACTED] BAC and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] saying that [REDACTED] was caring and tries to help people but that [REDACTED] BAC was the opposite. I have also been told that [REDACTED] has said that [REDACTED] BAC ruled by fear, never missed a thing and was violent to the boys if they didn't do what he said. I couldn't comment on that, I never saw that. I do know that [REDACTED] was helpful and caring.

95. I have been told that [REDACTED] has said that he had his mouth washed out with soap and was made to eat cigarettes. I have no knowledge of this. I never saw anything like this happening. I have also been told that [REDACTED] has said that when he was sick in the middle of the night he smacked very hard for this. I have never heard of this. I certainly never saw this happening.

[REDACTED]

96. I remember the name [REDACTED] but that's all. I have been told that [REDACTED] may have been in Smyllum from 1969. I have been informed that she has said Sister [REDACTED] AEG was the cruellest nun. I have also been told that [REDACTED] has said that she was put in a cold bath for wetting the bed. I can't remember this happening. The one thing I do remember about the [REDACTED] was that I thought they got on really well with Sister [REDACTED] AEG
97. I have also been told that [REDACTED] has said that she was punched and slapped in the face by a nun with an anything the nun had in her hand. I can't remember that happening.
98. I have been told that [REDACTED] has said that when she was 10 years old she was made to wash clothes and polish shoes for other children. I have no recollection of this. I have also been informed that [REDACTED] has said that she was battered for having her period and making a mess of the bed. I have also been told that [REDACTED] has said that she was battered for the least little thing like having lice or making a noise when eating her dinner. Again I have no knowledge of this. I have no memory of this happening.
- [REDACTED]
99. I remember the name [REDACTED] but I don't know [REDACTED] in particular, who I have been told may have been at Smyllum between 1965 and 1971. I know that there was a few [REDACTED] at Smyllum. One of them had long hair but I couldn't tell you what one this was. I have been informed that [REDACTED] has said that she remembers that Sister [REDACTED] AGD was the cruellest nun.
100. I have been told that [REDACTED] has spoken about a time when, along with her sister and another girl, she ran away from Smyllum because they could not take anymore. I have also been told that [REDACTED] has said that the girl who was with her and her sister was killed outright by a car. I can't remember this happening or any occasion when anyone ran away and was killed.

[REDACTED]

101. I have been informed that [REDACTED] who may have been at Smyllum between 1965 and 1977, has said that she was forced to eat inedible food and sour milk. I have also been informed that [REDACTED] has said that she had to share a bath with other children, was beaten with various instruments including a broom handle and a cane, had wet bed sheets put around her and her wet underwear on her head if she wet the bed and was forced to watch her older brother and sister being beaten. I have never heard of any of these things happening. This is like a foreign language to me.

[REDACTED]

102. I have been told that [REDACTED] has said that Sister AGD [REDACTED] was the nun who was most cruel. I have also been informed that [REDACTED] has said that she was beaten with a wooden coat hanger, a clothes brush and a metal spoon, had her head banged against the sink when her hair was washed, had custard put in front of her that was two or three days old after she didn't eat it when it first presented to her, and wasn't told what her period was. I have no knowledge of any of this.

103. I have given a child the same food at dinner time if they hadn't eaten it at lunchtime but not days later. If a girl had a period I would provide them with towels and try and explain to them what was going on or they could also go to staff for a better explanation.

[REDACTED]

104. I have been told that [REDACTED] who may have been in Smyllum from 1964 to 1970, has said that she had to wear shoes that were two sizes too big for her. I have no knowledge of this. We would always make sure that a child's shoes were fitted properly.

June Smith

105. I don't remember anyone called June Smith or June Miller who I am told may have been at Smyllum between 1969 and 1981. I have been told that June has said she was a regular bed wetter and that Sister [REDACTED] AEG who was in charge of her house, would pull her out of bed and dig her knuckles in the top of her head. I have also been informed that June has said that Sister [REDACTED] AEG would make her strip the bed then put her in a bath which tended to be cold and pour disinfectant over her causing her skin to go red and that Sister [REDACTED] AEG would then tell her to put talcum powder on it. I don't know anything about this. I have no idea how Sister [REDACTED] AEG dealt with bed wetters.
106. I have been informed that June has said that on one occasion Sister [REDACTED] AEG made her wash her sheets then hang them out at nine o'clock so that when the other children were going to school they would know she had wet the bed. I have no knowledge of this happening.
107. I have been told that June has said that on a trip to Holy Island she wet the bed and that Sister [REDACTED] AEG threw her in the shower. I have also been informed that she has said that Sister [REDACTED] AEG then made civilian staff stand over her and watch her in the showers whilst she was naked. I don't know anything about this happening. I don't remember the children going to Holy Island, it could have been before my time.
108. I have been told that June has said that her nose was held and she was force fed when she didn't eat the food. I have also been informed that she has said she was dragged out of bed and hit by Sister [REDACTED] AEG for reading in bed. I haven't heard about this happening. I would encourage the children to read in bed. I have been made aware of other allegations made by June, including that she was made to scrub floors, on one occasion was not allowed to see her family when they visited Smyllum, was not allowed to speak on her own with her social worker, and that she had her personal possessions taken off her. I have no knowledge of any of these things. I am told that she has said that on one occasion she was left outside in the rain in her bare feet until eleven thirty at night by Sister [REDACTED] AEG I have also been

made aware that June has said she was abused physically by Sister [REDACTED] AEG including in the staff room where she has said she was hit over her clothes with a belt, and sometimes with a large clothes brush. I have no knowledge of any of these allegations. It is not something that I saw going on.

109. It surprises me that these allegations are being made as I was totally unaware of any of these things going on.

[REDACTED]

110. I have no knowledge of anyone called [REDACTED] who I told may have been at Smyllum between 1964 and 1969. I have been asked about [REDACTED] before by Mr Bradley, a solicitor for the Daughters of Charity, but I didn't know her. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] may have left before I arrived.

[REDACTED] AAI

111. I remember a family with the surname [REDACTED] I think that [REDACTED] AAI was in my group. From what I remember he was a troublesome kid. They were all very troublesome. It is more the surname I remember than the first names. I can't picture [REDACTED] AAI

112. I have been told that [REDACTED] AAI has said that he received many beatings, and that these beatings would be for anything, like speaking or not eating your dinner. I don't remember this and I would certainly remember if someone had been hit for just talking or for no reason. I don't remember Sister [REDACTED] AGJ or Sister [REDACTED] AGI

[REDACTED] AAX

113. I don't remember anyone called [REDACTED] AAX

AAF

114. I don't remember AAF who I am told may have been at Smyllum from 1964 to 1970. Again I remember the surname but I couldn't identify him. I have been told that AAF has said that he was in St Kentigern's and there was one nun and two female members of staff. Sister ADE was there before me and Sister AHM was there after me.
115. I have been informed that AAF has said that you really only spoke to the nuns when you were replying and you wouldn't start a conversation with a nun. I have also been told that AAF has said that you had to sleep with your hands on top of the blankets, that you had to eat everything that was put down to you and on one occasion was force fed by a nun when he didn't eat a salad. I have no knowledge of any of this. I wouldn't make anyone sleep with their hands outside the blankets.
116. I have been told that AAF has said that he didn't get a birthday card or a present. I would say that this would be most unusual.
117. I have been told that AAF has said that he was hit by both the staff and the nuns and that they would slap him so hard on the face it would put him on his back. I am told that he has said that as time went on it was constant hitting, constant bullying and constant keeping you on your toes. I can't remember this ever happening. I can only speak for myself but I never had any experience that the children were frightened of me. I wasn't aware of this if they were.
118. I have been informed that AAF has said that he wasn't a regular bed wetter but that if you wet the bed or were sick on the bed that you were punished for that. I don't know anything about that. I never punished anyone for wetting the bed.
119. I am told that he has said that and that he was given a hiding when he contracted the measles. If anyone had the measles you would make sure that they were treated for this. Sister FAM had her own surgery within the main building and wouldn't be able

to get to our house as she was crippled with arthritis and walked with a zimmer. Sister **FAM** would never in a hundred years hit a child for being ill.

120. I have been informed that **AAF** has said that he was put in a room by himself and that he must have been in the room for about six weeks. I know that there was an isolation place for children with measles but I can't remember anyone being there for 6 weeks.
121. I have been told that **AAF** has said that on one occasion that he walked past the boiler house and saw the door was open, and that he momentarily looked up and saw two nuns who had their arms around each other. I am told he has said that the nun whose arm was around the other grabbed him and attacked him, that she strangled, punched, kneed, kicked and pushed his face in front of something that was on fire. I haven't heard anything about this. The boiler house was out of bounds and as far as I know was always locked.
122. I am told he has said that after that incident until he left Smyllum that that same nun was always at him and that she would strangle, slap, spit on him and set about him. I don't know anything about that.
123. I have been informed that **AAF** has said that one Christmas he was given a chocolate Santa wrapped in tin foil, and that this was taken off him by a nun who stood on it, and the nun then kicked him in the chest. I don't remember this.
124. I have been told that **AAF** has said that **BAC** gave him a beating when someone broke a window at school and **AAF** got the blame for it. I'm not saying this didn't happen but I have no knowledge if it did.

AAH

125. I have been asked if I know **AAH** who may have been at Smyllum from around 1965. Again I remember the family name but not the first name. I have been told that **AAH** has said that he was in St Kentigern's and was beaten daily by the

nuns and staff for anything at all, such as getting dirty or not eating the food. That doesn't ring a bell with me. I wouldn't go along with this at all.

126. I have been informed that [AAH] has said that he was deemed a bad apple and that the nuns called him [family name]. I am told that he has said he asked a tramp who had come in the back stairs of the house if he would tie his shoe lace and a nun had seen him and had given him a beating. I don't know anything about this. If it was a tramp this would have been at the front of the house, not where St Kentigern's was. I have also been told that [AAH] has said that the beatings he got were severe enough to mark him with bruises but that he didn't suffer any broken bones like some other children did. I have no memory of any child with broken bones. I can't say that within my group anyone received a beating. It was always a slap, as I have already said.

[AAN]

127. I know the family name [] but I don't know [AAN] he wasn't in my group. I think that the [] might have been in [AGD] group. I have been told that [AAN] has said that has said that the bath water was always dirty when it got to his turn. I couldn't comment on that. I have also been informed that [AAN] has said that it wasn't a nice regime and that the first time he was leathered he was about six years old. I am told he has said that he had a stutter and could not pronounce one of the nuns names, Sister [FBE] or [FBE]. I don't know anything about that. I do not know these names. I am told he has said he that if they didn't make their beds properly every day that they got leathered. I don't know anything about this. Nobody in my group was ever hit for not making their bed properly.

128. I have been told that [AAN] has said that children would be beaten if they saw a nun's hair and that he cracked his teeth on a trip to the pictures to watch "Herbie" which meant the nun missed the film as well and that he got leathered for that. I have no knowledge of this happening.

Looking back

129. I think that it would stand out in my mind if I saw a child being regularly beaten and humiliated for things like wetting the bed. I can only speak for my group. I would say that if these things did happen, beatings, punishments for wetting the bed, being force fed, then I would definitely say that it was a form of abuse.

Other Statements

130. About 10 years ago I provided a statement about my time at Smyllum to Mr Bradley, the solicitor for the Daughters of Charity. I also provided a statement in July 2017 to a solicitor for the Daughters of Charity in connection with the Inquiry. I have been referred to this statement and a section where I mentioned that I would reprimand children if they didn't eat their food and said that I wouldn't provide a substitute to children if they didn't eat what had been given to them. This is correct. This was because the children would play up sometimes and they would rule the day if you gave into them. They thought that they were more streetwise than me.
131. I have never provided a statement to the police in relation to Smyllum.

Reporting of abuse

132. If the children wanted to speak to someone outside of Smyllum about something that was happening to them they could speak to the teachers at school. They were very good at listening to the children and had a good understanding of the situation. The teachers had a good rapport with the children, especially at the primary school. We also had a good relationship with the teachers. It was independent teachers supplied by Lanarkshire Council. I don't know if any of the children ever spoke to the teachers about things that concerned them. I can't remember any teachers speaking to me about things that they had been told and that concerned them. I never had a requirement to report anything.

Children leaving Smyllum

133. I can't remember any child returning home when I was at Smyllum other than when they were old enough to leave.
134. There was a process for leaving. If it was going to happen the child would be told but we had to be sure before we told them as it could be unpredictable whether or not a child would in fact be leaving.
135. When the older boys had to leave Smyllum they would go to a hostel in Glasgow. I never kept in touch with anyone who left Smyllum. I don't know if the social workers kept in touch with them.

Records

136. I can't remember where records or log books were kept. They might have been kept in the office or even in my room but I can't remember. I can't visualise anything like this in Smyllum.

Conclusion – helping the Inquiry

137. I have been asked why I think that people have made the allegations that I have been made aware of. I think that people obviously feel they have a grievance against the sisters. I think that everyone is looking for justice, that's what we would all want for people. However, I can't believe that all these allegations are true. The atmosphere in Smyllum was caring throughout the building and it was a happy place. That's my memory of it. So I have no explanation as to why so many allegations have been made.
138. When I arrived at Smyllum there were a lot of other things going on. I was trying to adjust to the community and to being in Scotland. I would say that as a group of sisters we were very happy at Smyllum.

139. 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... HCE

Dated... 19 / 10 / 2017