Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of



Support person present: Yes

My name is QCV QCV is my married name, my surname when I was born was QCV My date of birth is 1957 and I am presently sixty years of age. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

- 2. I have four brothers, **and the or and the who is three years older than me and then** who is one year older. **Control** is dead now. My other brothers are **control** who is two years younger than me and **control** who is three years younger. Both my mother and father are dead now, they died some time ago.
- 3. I never lived with my mum and dad because my mother had tuberculosis when I was born and was put in a sanatorium. My mother was a drinker and I never had a normal relationship with her or my father. She was a nasty woman and was not someone I could get close to. Years later I discovered she also had a problem with prescription painkillers.
- 4. She and my dad had what I would call a "yo-yo" relationship. Sometimes they were together, other times they were not. My dad would go between my mum and a woman called I don't really know much about my father's side of the family either.

- 5. My father had been in the army and I know now that something happened with one of his army friends. My father was a boxer and I was of the belief that he hit this man who then fell over and died. I later found out from paperwork I obtained that he and some other men had broken into a house and killed a man. He was put in prison and I don't have much recollection of him. I have no memory of even having a proper conversation with him.
- 6. I lived with my grandmother and uncle**stic and** on my mother's side until I was twoand-a-half, when they tried to give me back to my mother. I wouldn't stay though, I wanted to go back to my grandmother's. I think my brothers stayed with my other aunts and uncles, my mum was one of eight children.
- 7. I had a very good life. It wasn't a life of luxury, but it was a loving life. My uncle was single and he was like a father to me. One of my aunts and her husband also stayed there at first until they got a house of their own. I was the only child in the house and I was treated with kid gloves.
- 8. The house was in a village **control of the same village**. I would see them from time to time. My brothers also lived in the same village, but I didn't have much contact with them. I would see them at school, but that was about it.
- 9. I had a happy childhood at my grandmother's until I was unfortunately taken away and put into Weedingshall Children's Home in Polmont when I was seven. My grandmother was a member of the Women's Guild and went on a trip to Blackpool with them. I was ill so I had to stay with my mum and that was the weekend that my mum decided to leave. My mum always said that she left a babysitter, but I remember waking up and there not being anyone there.
- 10. I left my mother's house to walk home to my grandmother's but one of the neighbours, **but**, saw me. She spoke to me and realised there was nobody home with the five of us. **but would** only have been five and **but only** four at the time. Things just went crazy after that. **but went and got my uncle and then the police**

and social work got involved. I wasn't aware of there being any contact with social services before that.

- 11. The social work took my brothers into care immediately, but I was allowed to go home with my grandmother. A few days later they came and took me away as well. It was very distressing, I can still see it picture-perfectly. I got called out from school and had to walk home. As I got near the house, I could see my uncle at the door, which was very strange because he should have been at work. I started running because in my little mind I thought my grandmother had died.
- 12. When I got home it was a relief to see she was there but there was also two strange people there and my grandmother was crying. She had a little suitcase packed and told me I had to go with these people. She never told me where I was going.
- 13. They put me in their car and my grandmother came out with a koala bear that I used to sleep with. She told them I wouldn't be able to sleep without it and the man said "she won't need it where she's going". I remember being in the back of that car and crying the whole way until I fell asleep.



17. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

18. The lady that took me to Quarriers Village was a social worker called Mrs Wilson. I remember she had an artificial hand and drove a little Mini.

Quarriers Village, Bridge of Weir

- 19. Quarriers Village looked fantastic, but it wasn't the ideal it was supposed to be. The cottages were lovely, they were actually great big houses, it was a beautiful village.
- 20. All my brothers were already there, except who had been put into Bellsdyke Hospital because he got a brain injury when he was younger. He'd been struck by a Landrover when he and I were walking to school and never recovered fully.
- 21. I was put in the same cottage, number twelve, as my older brother **control**. I think that's when **control** and I became close. He had problems and although I was smaller and younger I used to try and protect him. **Control** and **control** were in a different cottage.
- 22. At the back was a cloakroom, which was more like what we would now call a conservatory. Our coats and shoes were kept in there. We had to take our shoes off and leave them there whenever we came in from outside. That cloakroom became a place of horror for me.

Routine at Quarriers Village, Bridge of Weir

First day

23. When I arrived, I was introduced to the house parents who were called Mr and Mrs

They wanted me to call them "mum" and "dad", but I refused and called them "aunt" and "uncle" instead. I was shown around and to my dormitory. I liked it because I got the bed next to the window.

24. I had long hair when I arrived and before long it was all chopped off. I was really upset at the time, although I can understand now that they did it for health reasons.

House parents and staff

- 25. Mr and Mrs ^{QCY/QC}/₇ weren't too bad, they didn't beat you, but they had three kids called **Game**, and **Game** and **Game** were a lot older and they were nasty. I think **Game** must have been about four years older than me and **Game** a bit older than him.
- 26. Mrs QCZ did a lot, but you never saw Mr QCY so much. He was there in the background if you had to get a talking to or something. I think he probably did a lot of the administration work.
- 27. Mr and Mrs QCY/QC retired after about a year and the person that came after them was worse. He was called QCX and had been a prison guard. It's difficult to tell, but I would say he was in his late thirties or early forties then. We used to call him QCX though not to his face. I'm not sure if they told us his surname at the time, it's only from records I now have that I know it was QCX.

- 28. I can't remember his wife's name either, which is strange because I have a very good memory. They had kids too, a boy and a girl. The son was awful, he was about the same age as and the girl was about two years older than me.
- 29. I think QCX took against and I because he knew our father as one of his former prisoners.
- 30. There was also quite a few other people that came in and helped out with basic cleaning, cooking and other stuff. I don't think a lot of them were there because they cared about children, I think they were there because it was a job. The overall feeling was that we were in their custody and they could control us and they could do whatever they wanted to us. They looked on us as flawed children.
- 31. There was no love or affection from any of the staff, it was just a job for them. You couldn't go to them and tell them if you were upset or anything, you were just told to stop being silly. We were treated as if we were all to blame for being there. It took me a long time to realise it was not my fault. You were made to feel that you were insignificant.

Cottages

- 32. I was in cottage number twelve for about two years and then there was a fire and we all got transferred into other cottages. There was a storm one night and the cottage went on fire and we all had to be evacuated. There was no fire escape and we had to jump out of the dormitory window.
- 33. **Construct** and I were kept together in the same cottage, I think it was maybe number forty-eight, although I'm not sure. Both cottages had much the same arrangement of rooms. I can't remember if **QCX** became the house parent in this other cottage too, although I can't remember any other person being there. The person that sticks out most in my mind is **QCX** because he was such a cruel person.

Mornings and bedtime

- 34. Boys and girls were in two different dormitories on the first floor. There was about twelve children in each. Six beds on one side and six on the other. We were all taught how to make our own beds. We had to do them perfectly and if we didn't we were punished.
- 35. Every morning when the QCY/QCZ were in charge, Mrs QCZ would come into the dormitory and blow a whistle to wake us up. The first thing we had to do was make our beds and then we would go and get washed and dressed. Then we would be taken to breakfast.
- 36. Bedtime for me was half-past six. It was different times for different ages and the older kids were later. You were allowed to read for half-an-hour. That was one good thing that came from my being in there, my love of reading. I could escape to another world.

Food

- 37. We ate every morning and evening in the dining room in the house. We all sat together with boys on one side and girls on the other. The staff would bring the food to us.
- 38. The food was basic but it was okay. If you'd been good you would get a dessert of ice cream or custard or something. If you'd been naughty you wouldn't. Sometimes they wouldn't feed you at all if you'd been bad.
- 39. Every morning after breakfast we would all get taken into the cloakroom and have to line up while they gave us all a spoonful of cod liver oil. We would then get taken to school where we'd get our lunch, which was usually sandwiches. Dinner was served back in the cottage, usually about half-past four or five o'clock.

Washing and bathing

40. Every day we would wash at the sink and once a week we got a bath. Different kids were on different days, I was on a Friday. We would wash our hair at the same time. We were left to it, the staff would come and check on us, but we would wash ourselves. Sometimes we would share a bath, but the water was always changed after each person.

Leisure time

- 41. There was a big playroom with a TV in it and we could play games in there or outside in the garden. There were board games and books to read. Sometimes, when <u>QCY/QCZ</u> were still in charge, they would take us into their sitting room and they would play games with us. Boys and girls were all in there, but the only one I really spoke to was my brother
- 42. There wasn't much contact with the kids in the other cottages, only at school. I suppose we could have if we'd wanted, but we tended not to. Sometimes they would take a few kids from different cottages out to the cinema and we would mix a bit then.
- 43. I wasn't a kid that interacted much with the other kids. I didn't want to make friends with people. My world had been turned upside down. I had been living in a house where I was the only child and I was the centre of attention. Suddenly I was in a place with all these people and all the noise. Everything was totally alien and I don't think I ever totally adjusted to living there. I always woke up in the morning with the hope that that day would be the day I was leaving.
- 44. There were big playing fields in the village and we would play football and hockey on them. The village also had its own swimming pool. I already knew how to swim and they would take us on certain days to the pool. It was usually divided into ages and I would often go on a Wednesday evening.

Holidays and trips

- 45. I remember a group of us being taken by plane to Ostend in Belgium for the day. That was for being good in school. I wonder now how they took us there because of passports. There must have been some arrangement.
- 46. Sometimes we were taken out on excursions and we were taken to caravans in Girvan for a couple of weeks holiday occasionally. All the cottages went to different places.
- 47. A couple of times I had been given permission to go home for the weekend. I only went twice though and decided I didn't want to go again, it was too hard going back to to the seeing my grandmother and uncle upset.

School

- 48. The school was in Quarriers Village, you didn't have to leave for anything. There was an emphasis on school, but that was okay because I liked school. It was just like a normal school, we were in classes according to our ages. I think the teachers came from outside the village, I don't think they lived there.
- 49. I did quite well at school, I was happy there. I used to compete against one of the boys in my class, to get the best marks. They encouraged us to do that and I quite liked that, it gave me an incentive.
- 50. After school we would walk back to our cottage and we had some leisure time. There was never much homework to do, but if we had some we were given the time to do it when we got back to the cottage.
- 51. Eventually I got sent out to Linwood school because they felt that their school wasn't good enough for my capabilities.

Healthcare

- 52. If you were ill a doctor would come, I don't know if it was a resident doctor. There was also a nurse at the school. The nurse would check you over, your hair and whatever, about once a month.
- 53. If you were in your bed ill you were told to stay there. If you didn't and you got up for anything other than the toilet, you got punished.
- 54. I remember being ill one time and being in bed. I don't remember what was wrong with me. The rest of the cottage went on an excursion and I was left there, I think they forgot about me. They hadn't left any food or anything for me so I went down to the kitchen to get something to eat. There was a woman in there and I gave her such a fright she jumped when she saw me. She was okay, she made me some soup and took me back to bed.
- 55. We would get taken to Linwood every six months or so to see the dentist. I never had any problem with my teeth luckily.

Religious Instruction

56. Every Sunday and on special days we would go to the church in the village. I don't even know what denomination it was, but there was a minister there. We had to say a prayer every morning before breakfast, but religion wasn't pushed on you.

Chores

57. We had various chores to do after school. There was a rota system and we all got changed about. One week you would be doing one thing and the next you would be doing something else. We might have to stack the linen in the linen cupboard, or clean shoes, or clean up the breakfast dishes. I didn't mind that.

Birthdays and Christmas

- 58. Birthdays were celebrated, you got a card and a little gift. I remember I got given a doll, it was the ugliest thing, a porcelain doll, but I loved it. Later on, Sandy Wilson destroyed it, I don't know why. I think I'd maybe been told to do something and I refused so he ripped its head and legs off.
- 59. Christmas was celebrated too and it was a happy time. We got to make decorations and there was a Christmas tree. We got a gift and there was a Christmas dinner.

Visits/Inspections

- 60. My uncle only came to see me at Bridge of Weir once. He said that he didn't like to see me there. I can understand now what it must have been like for him, but it was hard for me.
- 61. My grandmother would come to see me every two weeks, every second Saturday. It was a long journey from **Contraction** by bus, then train, then another bus. There was a little coffee shop in the village that I worked in when I got older and we would go there. She wasn't allowed to take me off the grounds.
- 62. It was unfair though because if I'd been naughty, or if they considered I'd been naughty, she would come all that way and I wouldn't be allowed to see her. All that I might have done was not clean my shoes properly, or not do a corner of my bed correctly. It was as simple as that. My grandmother had a telephone, they could have called her and told her not to come, but they never did. I can remember sitting at the window and seeing her coming and then going away again.
- 63. It was heartbreaking for me and for my grandmother. I would scream at the window and then I would get into trouble for screaming. What was I meant to do? They were taking the people that I love away from me.
- 64. I remember my father came to visit, which was very strange. I'm not certain whether it was while I was at Weedingshall or Quarriers, but I remember he was in handcuffs and I didn't know why. I wasn't aware at that time that he had been in prison. That's

the only time I remember my father coming. My mum would promise my grandmother that she would come to Quarriers, but she never visited me. I would see her visiting but I was always left.

- 65. One time we were on an episode of the came to the village and filmed us all there.
- 66. The social worker Mr Forsyth used to visit every so often and he was good. I don't think he would come routinely, but he would come if there was a problem. I could speak to him, he was nice and he would ask what the problem was. He was replaced after a couple of years by a Mr Borthwick but I didn't like him.
- 67. If I told Mr Borthwick anything, he was just dismissive. He would tell me it was nothing and that I had to get over it. I learned not to tell him anything.

Siblings

68. They tended to separate siblings at Quarriers. There were people in my cottage that had siblings in other cottages. **They and I never got to see the and I didn't have much of a relationship with them.** We would maybe see them once a week or so, which was just the way things happened. I do remember **Control** coming to visit us once when he ended up fighting with **QCX** son, but that was about it.

Personal possessions

69. My grandmother was allowed to bring me clothes and things. After the second week of me being there grandmother brought me my koala bear. We all had units beside our beds that we could keep our own things in. If you misbehaved they were taken away from you as a punishment.

70. Mr and MrsQCY/QCZ knew I liked reading and would get me a book sometimes. When QCX took over, if he knew you liked something he would try his best to make sure you didn't get it.

Pocket Money

71. We all had a little tin each and any pocket money that we got was put in it. I got a small wage for working in the coffee shop in the village when I was older and that was put in the tin too.

Bed wetting

- 72. I never had a problem with wetting the bed, but my brother **sector** unfortunately did. The punishment for wetting the bed was to be put in a bath with cold water and ice in it and left there. I got put in it more than once because I would help **sector** strip the bed and got caught.
- 73. Sometimes they forgot about you because they were busy doing other things. You might have been supposed to be in the bath for an hour and you were there for half a day. The bath was a big tub and a piece of wood was put on top of us with a bit carved out for our heads to poke through. You couldn't get out of it.
- 74. This happened with all the bed wetters. When I think about it now, what sort of cure was that? That would make it worse. **Continued** to wet the bed until he was about fifteen or sixteen.

Running away

75. I ran away a couple of times when I was about nine after being punished yet again. In your little mind you think if you run away and they find out why, they won't send you back.

- 76. I wonder now how on earth I made it from there to **provide 1**. I knew where the key for the wee tin with my money in it was and I took that, nothing else. I got the bus to Linwood school as usual and it was a different driver so I just stayed on and didn't get off at the school. The bus carried on to the train station and I got off and got the train from Glasgow to Falkirk. After that I got on another bus and got to
- 77. When I got to **Example 1** my grandmother was waiting for me. Quarriers had contacted her and I was taken back and punished for stealing my own money. To this day I wonder how I could have been punished, but then I hadn't asked their permission to take the money so to them I had stolen it.

Discipline

78. There was nothing brutal with Mr and Mrs QCY/QCZ Punishments if you were naughty were they would give you the odd slap on the bottom, or not allow you into the playroom, or you would get put in a corner. There was nothing vicious, but I had never been smacked by my grandmother so it was hard for me. There were lots of punishments, but with QCX it wasn't just punishment, it was abuse.

Abuse at Quarriers Village, Bridge of Weir

- 79. There were some things that you could say were discipline, others were abuse. Being put in a corner was discipline, being put in the corner, taking off your bottom half and being hit with the buckle of a belt, as QCX did, is abuse. Being dragged up the stairs by the hair, again by QCX is abuse.
- 80. I had a problem after I'd only been in Quarriers for a short time because we got served shredded wheat for breakfast and I hate shredded wheat. I couldn't eat it so I was taken out of the dining room by one of the assistants, who was possibly called
 and put in the kitchen. That shredded wheat was served to me for the next three days, nothing else.

- 81. I couldn't eat it, I was sick, but I was forced to eat it. Even now my skin crawls at the thought of shredded wheat. This didn't just happen to me, it happened to other people too. You had to finish everything you were given, if you didn't you were forced to.
- 82. If I didn't like to do something I would be honest and would say "no". One time QKR
 QKR tied me to a clothes post with the clothes line and left me there for two hours.
 I'd been helping her hang the washing and QKR said "you don't want to do this, do you?" I said I didn't and she tied me to the post and left me.
- 83. Even for the slightest thing there was abuse, it was pretty much a daily occurrence. If you weren't sitting properly, for example, you would get a kick or get your hair pulled. If you put your elbows on the table you got slapped. If you ran down the stairs, as kids do, you got a slap across the ears. QCX was the worst, some of the staff did it too, but I think that was just because QCX expected them to.
- 84. There was mental abuse as well, you would get called names, especially after QCX came. He would say we would just end up like our father. As a kid, you take that to heart. I think that's why I tried so hard at school, I wanted to show that I was not useless or stupid. Those were the sort of things we were told.
- 85. One of favourite punishments was putting you in the corner and beating you with the buckle of his belt. If you got caught calling him 'QCX' that's what you would get. One time I got it after I hit his daughter. I'd been playing with a toy and she wanted it but I refused so she hit me and I retaliated. Sometimes you were taken away and hit, but on this occasion it was in front of everybody.
- 86. After I ran away the first time, I was put in the cloakroom, stripped naked and given a good thrashing by QCX. Afterwards I was left there in the freezing cold. There was a storm while I was left in there and even now the sound of the wind reminds me and terrifies me. I usually didn't tell anyone about these things, but I did tell my social worker, Mr Forsyth, when he came.

- 87. Just had to look at QCX the wrong way to get beaten. I've seen being picked up by QCX and flung against a wall. He was bleeding but QCX just picked him up again and flung him against another wall.
- 88. I later found out that was possibly sexually abused as well. He had never discussed it with me, but in later years I had been in the kitchen while he was watching the news on television. He called me through and said "that's the bastard on the TV that did that to me". I asked him what, but he just said "you know what I mean". I don't know who the man was other than he had been a member of staff in Quarriers and had been convicted of paedophilia.

Leaving Quarriers Village, Bridge of Weir

- 89. I left Quarriers when I was eleven, the day after my birthday. I'm not certain of the circumstances why. I think my mother had got her life back on track and my brothers and I all eventually got taken out. It was the happiest day of my life up to then.
- 90. I went back to my grandmother and uncle and my brothers went back to my mum. It was just the same though and my brothers were eventually taken away again and put in Doctor Guthrie's approved school in Edinburgh. They hadn't done anything wrong, they were just put there.
- 91. My mother moved away from **Constant of** when I was about thirteen and stayed **Constant of** in Edinburgh. Before they were taken away, one of my mother's boyfriends got hold of my brother **Constant of** and hung him out of the window by his feet.
- 92. I remember going to a children's panel and my father being there. It was for my grandmother and uncle to get permission to look after me and that was it. I later

learned that they tried to adopt me but they weren't allowed because of my grandmother's age and my uncle being single.

Reporting of abuse at Quarriers Village, Bridge of Weir

- 93. I told Mr Forsyth what had happened to me after I had run away, when I was stripped naked, thrashed and left in the cloakroom. I think it should be in my records because there was an investigation. All the kids were asked questions, but it was swept under the carpet and the only thing that happened was Mr Forsyth got replaced by Mr Borthwick. I don't know if they were independent or if they worked for Quarriers. Nothing else changed after that.
- 94. I spoke to Mr Borthwick, but his attitude was that I just had to get on with it. He never took any interest. My grandmother knew things were going on, she wasn't a stupid woman, but I never told her anything. I didn't want to hurt her. When I left and went back to stay with her I just put it behind me and compartmentalised things.

Life after being in care

- 95. I went to Woodlands High School in Falkirk while I stayed with my grandmother. When I was seventeen I left and went to live with one of my grandmother's friends in Edinburgh. I got a job in a shoe shop and stayed in the sevent sevent and the sevent seven
- 96. When I was nineteen I went away to live in America. I wanted to see a bit of the world and there were friends of the family there. The man worked on a cruise liner and I got a job on one too. I started as a cleaner on the ships, but I sat my exams and worked my way up to We used to sail round the Caribbean and up the west coast of America.

- 97. While I was back in Edinburgh one time I met who I ended up marrying and having my children with. After we got together I had my son **solution**, **solution**, and then we moved to northwest Spain to live. **Solution** s parents were there and his father ran a school where I got a job teaching English. While we were there I gave birth to our two daughters.
- 98. In 1991 had a nasty accident when he was on the oil rigs and was in a coma. He was never the same person afterwards. He started being very controlling, drinking heavily and was very nasty to **Section** One time he hit **Section** on the back of the head, smashing his face into the table and I made the decision then that I was leaving.
- 99. I came back to Britain and went to live with my aunt She told me that my mother was dying of cancer so I made contact and ended up nursing her until her death. We made peace, but I never forgave her. It wasn't just the hurt she caused me, it was the hurt she caused my grandmother too.

Impact

- 100. In some ways my time in Quarriers had a good impact on me. It made me a stronger person and I probably grew up more quickly because of my time there. I think it gave me a determination I might not have otherwise had.
- 101. It had a very negative impact on me in a number of ways though. I find it easier to speak to strangers than I do to people that are close to me. I can't seem to be able to talk freely with people I am close to, I don't know if it's because I don't want to affect them or hurt them. I tend to be quite solitary. If I am faced with difficulties, I don't go to other people, I want to be by myself.
- 102. After I left Quarriers and was living in **Control of** I used to be terrified if I saw a strange car coming into the village. I panicked, I thought it was maybe someone coming to take me away.

- 103. Being treated as we were in Quarriers stays with you forever. You try to bury it, but you end up thinking about it when nobody's around. There are certain things that trigger memories, for example I can't stand the smell of lavender because they used to spray it on the pillows. The wind blowing strongly always reminds me of being left naked in the cloakroom after getting beaten.
- 104. I have suffered depression over the years and I put that down to Quarriers. I had been prescribed medication, but I stopped taking that because it didn't help, it made me even worse.
- 105. I've never had much of a relationship with my brothers other than **because** we were separated for our time in Quarriers. It was the destruction of my family and our familial bond. Even when I went back to my grandmother's I was terrified that I would be taken away again. It made me lose faith in human beings and unable to trust people. I was always looking for something bad to happen.
- 106. I have never received any counselling previously, although I have just started speaking to a lady called **speaking** from "In Care Survivors". I spoke to my doctor about it and he set me up for counselling, but things always seemed to happen and I never got round to it.

Records

- 107. I went back to Quarriers when I was about seventeen to get my records, although I never did get them. I started to walk around, but I couldn't face it and I left without getting them.
- 108. One of my cousins has encouraged me to go and get my records and I have made arrangements to do so. I spoke to a woman in Quarriers' archives called Diane and I arranged to go there and get them. She thought it was better that I went there to

pick them up, rather than her posting them to me. I now have my records, although there is not much in them.

109. After reading the records I doubt the accuracy of them. They record me as being a disobedient child who dominated my brother **That** is not the case. I was never like that. There are a lot more discrepancies as well. There are no signatures on anything and it looks to me that some information has been taken out from the files and re-written into what I have been given.

Other information

- 110. When I went back to Quarriers at seventeen QKR was still there, working as a house mother. I think she'd left and came back to work later on.
- 111. My grandmother had thirty-seven grandchildren and I have only recently discovered that two of them, my cousins, were in Quarriers at the same time as me. We didn't know we were related.
- 112. died seven years ago. He had turned into a bit of a bohemian after he left Quarriers and never settled in one place. He was fitting a bathroom for me when he had a massive stroke. He took one stroke after another and eventually I had to put him in care where he died.
- 113. 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.

	QCV			
Signed			 	
Dated	29.5-2	018.	 	