

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

**Helen HOLLAND**

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is Helen Holland. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1958. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Life before going into care**

2. My earliest memory is of my dad stealing me from my mum. My parents had separated when I was very young and I initially went to stay with my mum. I have no memories of that time. I remember my dad being in a car and he had his arm round my waist. My mum had hold of my feet, she was screaming. Eventually, I don't know if my shoes fell off or what happened, but I was unceremoniously tossed into the other side of the car and I was in the passenger seat. My dad then drove off.
3. I was taken to a house. It was my grandparents' house, my dad's parents. I remember my dad getting out of the car and saying "come on then, are you not wanting to come and say hello [REDACTED]?" When I was taken into the house, there seemed to be loads of people. There were my grandparents, my dad [REDACTED]
4. I remember my gran well. She was the matriarch of the house. I can't remember my gran's face but I remember she always had her hair tied up in a bun and she always had a flowery apron on. She was always in the kitchen cooking. I remember she would cook toffee frying pans and things like that. The children of the village would come to the back door and she would sell them sweets as there wasn't a shop in the

village. My papa was the local bookmaker. People would all come down to the house and put their bets on the horses. I didn't realise that was what it was at the time. I remember in the coal house there were all these bags of change.

5. We ■ stayed in my grandparents' house. Their address was ■ Hurlford, just outside Kilmarnock in Ayrshire. My gran and papa slept on a sofa bed in the living room. ■  
■  
■
6. I don't know what age I was when I went to stay with my dad. I stayed there until I was about four and a half. I think initially I was quiet ■  
■ I remember there was a big family that lived next door, the ■. There were about six children in that family and we ■ played with each other.
7. I remember my gran grew rhubarb in the garden. I would be sent in by the other kids to get a bag of sugar ■ My gran tended to give me things that she wouldn't have given ■. We would pick the rhubarb and dip it in the sugar and eat it. ■ would sometimes light a fire in a tin and stew the rhubarb.
8. It was a happy time. I have no recollection of being smacked or physically chastised. I only remember if my dad was annoyed, if we were making too much noise, he only had to raise his voice and say your name and that was enough. You would hear by the tone of his voice you had done something wrong.
9. My gran was always up in the morning and had the sofa bed back up before we came down for breakfast. My gran would be in the kitchen making breakfast when we got up in the morning. ■ I would be left alone with my gran. I liked being alone with my gran. It meant I could have some time alone with her after she had done all her baking and housework. She used to sit me on her knee and read me wee bible stories. She would talk about

Jesus and his compassion and how he loved children. She didn't actually read the bible to me but she told me the stories in her own words so they made sense to me. I used to ask loads of questions. My gran used to call me "forty questions." That was her nickname for me, "little Miss forty questions."

10. I remember the day my gran died. The sofa bed was still down when I came downstairs in the morning. I was asked to go outside and my job was to tell [REDACTED] not to go in the house [REDACTED] I sat on the step for ages as other people came and went. I didn't know what had happened. I think I was about four when my gran died. I think I had been living with her for a year and a half to two years.
11. After my gran died, the parish priest spoke with my dad and told him that it wasn't moral [REDACTED] living in the house with three adult men, even though the three adult men were my papa, my dad and my uncle. The priest's advice to my dad was to put [REDACTED] me into the care of the nuns.

### **Nazareth House, Kilmarnock**

#### *First day*

12. Not long after my gran died, I remember going to mass and coming back to my grandparents' house. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
13. My dad drove [REDACTED] to this massive building. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The driveway was shaped like a heart. I remember that the grounds were absolutely immaculate. There was a plinth at the top of the driveway with the statue of the sacred heart on it, I think the heart was bleeding. There were stairs leading up to the house. [REDACTED] up the stairs, there was an archway door that halved down the middle. Inside of that was a rectangular door. There was

a wrought iron knocker and a doorbell on the wall at the side. My dad rang the doorbell. They must have been waiting for us as someone answered it quite quickly.

14. This person answered the door, I later found out her name was Sister LHZ. She said "██████████, say goodbye to your dad." I had no idea what ██████████ there for. I remember thinking at the time maybe ██████████ staying there for a party or something. My dad turned and walked back to the car.
15. When my dad drove down the drive, his exhaust was scraping against the wee pebbles causing sparks to fly up. I thought the car was on fire and I remember screaming. Sister LHZ hit me about the head and told me to be quiet and said "you don't scream like that in this place child." ██████████ about-turned and the door was closed.
16. ██████████ taken through another door and on the right hand side there was a big door, it was open. ██████████ guided through to this corridor and then taken to a washroom. There were three sinks in it. Sister LHZ told ██████████ to strip off. ██████████ I remember thinking "why on earth ██████████ being told to strip off?". ██████████ stripped off and she gave ██████████ what I would call 'rags' to wear. She checked ██████████ hair for nits, she was not gentle, it was more like pulling ██████████ hair.
17. ██████████ then taken into this other room. I remember there was a couch and there were square cupboards on one side and there was a window on the other wall. There was a TV in the corner and a table with chairs about it. This was the recreation room. I remember a bell went and all these children appeared from nowhere.
18. All that first day I was questioning why I was there in the first place. No one explained anything to me. You just followed what everyone else was doing, like sheep. You hoped you were doing the right thing. No one told ██████████ how long ██████████ going to be there or why ██████████ there.

### **Routine at Nazareth House, Kilmarnock**

19. When [REDACTED] first went into Nazareth House, Sister **LHZ** was in charge of all the girls and Sister **LGO** had the boys. That changed after about a year, there were boys and girls in each group. Sister **LHZ** had the biggest group. There were about thirty in her group. Sister **LGO** group was slightly smaller. The age range of the children was between three and fifteen or sixteen. Sister **LHZ** was in sole charge of her own group, the two sisters never crossed over each other's group. I don't remember there being any little babies at that time in the home. There may have been but I have no recollection of that.

20.

### *Daily routine*

21. We would get up at about 6am. We got washed and dressed and then went straight to mass. After mass we went to breakfast in the dining room. After breakfast, those going to school would change into their uniform and walk through the town to the school. We would walk in twos. A member of staff walked at each end of the line.

22. In winter, after breakfast, we had to line up in a queue and Sister **LHZ** would give us a dessert spoon of malt extract and cod liver oil. She used to force the spoon to the back of your mouth. I didn't mind it but a lot of the children hated it. It made them sick. It was horrible to watch as I could see them choking on it but Sister **LHZ** held their mouth shut until they swallowed it. I think the nun's attitude was that it was medicinal, to try and keep the colds away. They didn't want the kids to get ill.

23. When we came home from school, we changed out of our school clothes and into our play clothes. Some children had to polish the shoes as their chore. It might have been two people's job to polish the shoes. We went in the back door and the

shoes were all lined up against the wall at the back door. Homework would be done in the recreation room.

24. At 5pm it was supper. We would say the rosary but I can't remember if we said it before or after our supper. We said a lot of prayers at Nazareth House.
25. After dinner we did benediction or we had to kneel down and say the rosary. We also had to do the Angelus, and bells would go off every six hours in relation to that. Everyone stopped for those and said the Angelus when the bell went off no matter what you were doing.

### *Mealtimes*

26. I quite liked breakfast. Sometimes it was cereal and sometimes it was fried bread with tinned tomatoes. Some of the children didn't like the food and we would swap on to each other's plates. That was okay as long as you didn't get caught. If you were caught, you were made to eat the whole lot and if you didn't eat it, you got the food again for lunch and then dinner that night. I hated the porridge at breakfast, it always had lumps in it. I used to bend down and put the lumps in my sock to try and get rid of them.
27. We had our lunch at school. I hated the suppers at Nazareth House. We were sometimes given soggy celery in a cream sauce for supper. It was disgusting. I wouldn't eat it. We were sometimes fed meat, I think this was on a Sunday. On Friday we were given fish to eat. I hated that too. If you didn't eat the food, Sister LHZ would force-feed you it. She forced the fork of food to the back of your mouth. You would gag as it was hitting the back of your throat. You would sometimes be sick and she would scoop up the sick and spoon it in your mouth. That was vile. You were not allowed to leave food on your plate. She would force-feed you until the plate was clean.

28. Sister [LHZ] did not sit with us while we ate our food. She supervised us. The nuns ate their food separately, they had their own dining room and ate at different times.
29. We were not allowed to eat or drink outside of the dining room. If you were thirsty, you would go into the toilet and flush the toilet and drink the toilet water.
30. Someone stole crab apples one time from the vet's garden next door to the home. Sister [LHZ] found out and we were made to eat them for days. They were not meant for eating and they gave us sore stomachs.

### *Clothing*

31. Sister [LHZ] gave us what she called 'play clothes' to wear. I was given a scratchy jumper, navy pants, a vest, a skirt and a pair of socks. We were also given a pair of shoes that didn't really fit. I remember one time a black bag coming into the changing room and it was put in the middle of the floor. We were told to find a pair of shoes that looked like they would fit us. I remember I wanted a pair of black patent shoes and I spotted these ones so I decided that they were mine. They didn't fit me, they were too wee. I was determined I was having them. For punishment, because I was determined I was having them and had lied and said they fitted me, I was made to wear them but they cut all my feet. They made my feet bleed. That made no difference to Sister [LHZ] as I had picked them so was left with them.
32. You couldn't say that something didn't fit you. If you were given a jacket or other item of clothing that didn't fit, you didn't say anything. If you did, you would be slapped for being ungrateful.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

33. I remember there were a number of dormitories. One of the dorms had four beds in it and Sister [LHZ] slept in the cell off it. There was another dorm which had the same amount of beds and one of the lay staff slept off that one.

34. I remember on my second night at Nazareth House, I woke up in the middle of the night. I was scared [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I climbed into bed with her and I snuggled up and went to sleep. [REDACTED] I was pulled out the bed by my hair by Sister [LHZ] and she hit me with a bamboo stick. She asked me what I was doing in bed with [REDACTED]. She told me that I was a brazen hussy. I didn't even know what that meant. I was frog marched back to my own bed. She more or less flung me back into it and I was told I wasn't to get back out of it. I told her that I wanted to go home. She told me that no-one loved me and that I was going nowhere and not to think about complaining. I never believed that to be honest, that no-one loved me, however as time went on I started to believe it.
35. We were woken in the morning by a bell at about 6am. Sister [LHZ] would come in the dormitory and shake the bell. If you didn't get up straight away, Sister [LHZ] dragged you out of the bed. First thing you did in the morning was kneel at the side of your bed and say your morning prayers
36. After prayers, you put the sheet over your head and put your clothes on. You were not allowed to be naked at any time. We then had to make our beds. When you were dressing, the sheet you had used to cover yourself was put on the top of the bed. The children were all made to make their own beds. If the beds were not properly made, if the corners were not folded properly, Sister [LHZ] would strip the beds and make you do them until they were right. It didn't matter what age you were, that's what would happen
37. Bedtime was about 7pm. Again we had to put the sheet over our heads to get our night clothes on. We had to sleep with both hands on our shoulders with our arms crossed over our chest. It was hard because sometimes you would fall asleep with your hands in that position but your hands wouldn't still be in that position in the middle of the night. If Sister [LHZ] got up in the middle of the night to check hands and your hands were not in that position, she would call you a filthy hussy and give you a beating. She would hit us with a bamboo cane, we called it the switch. She would hit us with the switch wherever on the body that it made contact. Sometimes



you would get big welts up the back of your legs. It was horrible when the switch split, it would cut you and sometimes you would get wee splinters. That was horrible, especially if you were getting in a bath shortly after. It would sting like mad. Sister [LHZ] ruled the place with fear the whole time. Everything on a daily basis was fear.

38. The boys and girls slept in different dormitories. There was a boys' dorm with about eight to ten beds in it. There was a girls' dorm with about eight beds and there were two smaller dorms which had about three beds in each.
39. If Sister [LHZ] felt that you had misbehaved then she would put your bed out on the fire exit. This was one of her punishments. It depended on what you were scared of. If you were scared of thunder and lightning, she would put your bed on the fire exit during a thunder and lightning storm.

### *Bedwetting*

40. I didn't wet the bed [REDACTED]. Sister [LHZ] used to inspect the beds every morning. If a kid had wet the bed, Sister [LHZ] used to pull off the sheet and rub it in the child's face. They were then made to put the sheet over their head. Sometimes the other kids were made to ridicule them, call them 'pee the beds.' Sometimes the bedwetters were put in freezing cold baths, it was just horrible. Sometimes Sister [LHZ] used to make the bedwetters put the wet sheets back on and they were made to sleep in the bed for the next few days with soiled sheets. There were industrial washers and dryers in the outhouse and the sheets were all taken down there to be washed and dried.
41. I remember being glad that I wasn't a bedwetter but I used to see [REDACTED] getting that kind of treatment.

42. Some of the older children were responsible for the younger ones and if the younger ones wet the bed, Sister [REDACTED] would beat the older ones and then the younger ones.

### *Bathing*

43. Friday night was bath night. We were never at any time to be naked. We had to get undressed and put a towel around ourselves and leave our pants on. We only had our underwear changed once a week. When we were waiting to get in the bath, we would hand Sister [REDACTED] our pants and she would inspect them. If they were dirty she made you put them on your head. You would then hand them over to be put in a pot and she would hand you another pair of pants.
44. There were two baths in the room. You were lined up, you never had a bath on your own. Jeyes fluid was put in the bath. I actually liked the smell of it. When you got to the front of the line, Sister [REDACTED] handed you a pair of bloomers. They were made out of shower curtain material. You had to change into them under the towel. At no point were you allowed to be naked. These bloomers were okay to put on if you were first in the line. However, once they were wet, they were hard to get on and off. The boys had to wear them too.
45. You had to get in the bath and wash quickly. Then get out the bath, step forward, pick up the towel and wrap the towel round about you. You then had to drop the bloomers. The first three people would get the bloomers dry but the fourth person got the wet bloomers from the first person. The water was never that warm in the bath. It wasn't changed between children. It was the same water for the first person to the last person.
46. We all used to check each other's head for lice. We would line up on a Friday night waiting for our bath and check the head in front of us. I didn't know what I was looking for, I used to pass them all. If you did pass someone and Sister [REDACTED] checked and found nits, then you would get battered for not finding them. This was carried out at wash time. Mr Heffron was the name of the barber that would come in

and cut our hair. I didn't like him. He used to cut the girls' and boys' hair the same style. They didn't like you having long hair. I remember a girl came to stay for a short period of time. She had long dark hair. We used to stand in front of her and pull her hair over our head to see what it would be like to have long hair. We all wanted to have long hair and we couldn't have it.

47. In the mornings we would wash our face and hands. We would brush our teeth. This was carried out in a wee washroom area with about four sinks. There was a peg with your name next to it with a flannel on it. You had to put your flannel and toothbrush back where it had been

### *School*

48. I think I had attended at St Paul's Primary School for a couple of weeks before I was taken to Nazareth House. After that I was sent to St Columba's Primary School in Kilmarnock. I remember my primary one teacher was Mrs Crangol. She was nice to me.
49. At school, we were known as the 'nazzie' children. The town called us the nazzie kids. We never played with the other kids at school. We either played with each other or became isolated and hung about, standing against the wall or something like that.
50. We did our homework back at the house. We didn't get any help with our homework. We were never taught life skills at school or in the home.
51. When I was in primary seven, I was voted the school's vice-captain. I was given responsibility and used to take the younger children to their elocution lessons. On a Friday, I also went round the classrooms to collect money for the Black Babies charity. I also used to make the headmaster tea for his morning and afternoon breaks. At one point I decided to pinch some of the biscuits and I handed them out to the other kids. I decided to find out what would happen if you did something

wrong, if people would batter you for it. I was waiting to see what would happen to me, but nothing happened. It didn't have the effect I was looking for. I was always testing people.

52. I remember taking my eleven-plus exam at school. Mr McCreadie, the headmaster, was behind me as I was writing out my details. He told me that I had written down my date of birth wrong. I had put down [REDACTED] not [REDACTED] It was the first I heard when my birthday actually was.
53. I remember once when we were in secondary school I came second in my class. I thought Sister [REDACTED] LHZ would be so pleased as someone from a children's home had done well. I took my report back to Nazareth House and told Sister [REDACTED] LHZ that I had done really well. She gave me a slap and told me that pride was a sin. I thought "what's the point?" after that. No matter what you do, you do well you're too proud. If you don't do well, you were lazy, being a sloth was a sin. You couldn't win no matter what you did. We were seen as bad children. We were not allowed to go home with another child from school so we were never asked. I don't remember being in class with another child from Nazareth House. I don't remember having any friends in school, I was a loner. I played with a ball against the wall at lunchtime on my own.
54. I once took my French teacher back to the home when I was in second year at school. I felt sick after I had been given my tuberculosis jag. I got really sick, I must've taken a reaction to it. I took my teacher in the side door to the house. This was a mistake. I should have taken her through the front door but because I wasn't feeling well, I just wanted to get in. So we got to the kitchen door and Sister [REDACTED] LHZ was about to tell me off and she realised the teacher was behind me. Her whole mannerism changed and she said to the teacher "why is Helen being brought back?" and the teacher explained I had taken not well at school. That was the only time I saw someone from the outside in near the children's area. That was only because I wasn't well and brought my French teacher through the back door by mistake. I got off with it that night but I got it from Sister [REDACTED] LHZ the next day.

55. Some children went to a special school called Park School in Kilmarnock. Sister LHZ called them dunces and idiots and all kinds of names. They would go in a minibus and as we were walking to school, we would hear her speaking to the other children, calling them names.
56. A part of me questions the schools as well. They never encouraged the other children to include the Nazareth House children in activities at playtimes. We were isolated at school as well, we were the outsiders. I think this feeling of not belonging stems from then. We didn't belong in our own home anymore, we didn't belong in the school and we didn't belong in society. We were the off casts of society. It's as if we were forgotten when that front door shut to the children's home.

*Religious Instruction*

57. The whole regime in Nazareth House was religious based. At the weekends we said more prayers than during the week. Most of Sunday was spent in church. We always went to mass every morning. Different bells were heard throughout the day for the Angelus.
58. We went to mass every morning in life, sometimes twice if it was a holiday of obligation. The home was opposite Johnny Walker's whisky factory in Kilmarnock. The workers in there worked early, so on a holiday of obligation, the public would be allowed to come to mass. These masses were always busier.
59. The priest would come up from St Joseph's Church in Kilmarnock to take mass, that was about three hundred yards from the home.
60. On a Sunday, we would go to mass in the morning. Then we had the rosary in the afternoon and then benediction at about four o'clock. I struggled with that because of the incense. I would get battered for fainting. Sister LHZ would use her knuckle in between my shoulder blades to jolt me. That would only work for a couple of minutes and I would end up fainting anyway. When I did faint, I was left to sit in the pew till I came back round. I knew I was going to get battered when I got back to

the home. Sister LHZ would tell me I was an attention-seeker. She would beat me with the stick.

61. Later on a Sunday night, we would go back to church, I think this was just for evening prayers. We basically lived the same life as the nuns in relation to religion except we were children. There was no way we couldn't go to church, it was not by choice that we went.

62. The nuns loved St Patrick's Day, they were all Irish. The kids would be given a bunch of shamrock, my name [REDACTED] was Irish so I received a big bunch of shamrock. After that we would go to mass. Sometimes the nuns would come down from the homes in Aberdeen, Lasswade or Cardonald and the children from Kilmarnock home would put on a concert for them. We would do Irish dancing and have fun. It was a change from the norm. I didn't mind that.

#### *Recreation*

63. There were cupboards in the recreation room that were supposed to contain things to play with. There never seemed to be anything in them that you could actually play with. For example, the jigsaws had missing pieces or there would be a broken doll. There was nothing in the cupboard that you could really play with like cards or tiddly winks. It seemed to be all bric-a-brac. I don't remember a lot of toys at any time, it was the same old rubbish in the cupboards. I remember there was an etch-a-sketch. I remember using that at one time. I don't know where it came from. There were some books. Sometimes some of the books had half pages ripped out of them. The books were not replenished.

64. The recreation time was the only time you were free to talk. Sometimes we would sit and talk to each other in the recreation area. There was a TV in the recreation room and at the weekends we were allowed to watch the Waltons or Little House on the Prairie. Sometimes, Sister LHZ would come into the recreation room and watch the news on the TV. We would not talk when she was doing this. After she left, we would talk amongst ourselves.

65. We always got recreation time after our dinner once we had completed our chores. If the weather was nice we would go outside to play. The two different groups, Sister [REDACTED] LHZ and Sister [REDACTED] LGO were not allowed outside at the same time.
66. There was a field behind the house. We were allowed into the field to play. There were also tennis courts out the back of the house but the children were not allowed to play on them. These were used by the nuns.
67. In the field there was a big top/witches hat that you could play on. There were two swings and a rocking horse type thing that you could go backwards and forwards on. I used to spend my time in the field catching dandelion seeds. Sometimes the kids would just wander about or just sit there. That was the weird thing about the place, you didn't get close to anyone, you didn't make friends. If you got too close to someone you were given a beating and separated. You were warned not to speak to each other.
68. A woman called Mrs Barton came in maybe once a week, she had her own dance school. She would come in on a Saturday and she taught us highland dancing and the majorettes.
69. Sometimes someone would come in to the home with a cine projector. That would be set up in the outhouse on the white wall. Sometimes they would show old cine films. Sometimes people from the Royal Variety Club would come in and do a concert. When things like that were happening, the perception to the outside world was totally different because there would be a big show made of going up with a box of Quality Street chocolates and the children would be given two or three chocolates down the row. That's why I liked these kinds of things.
70. We would line up to be given pocket money. Sometimes on a Saturday, the children who had behaved would be given pocket money. They would be allowed out, that was mainly the older children. I was always told that I had been 'bold' and I wasn't allowed any. This happened to me all the time. I only remember getting my pocket

money twice. I remember going out and buying chips from the chippie under the arches. That was a real treat.

71. I ran away once and went out with [REDACTED] I jumped up on the wall and I saw [REDACTED] through the spear heads on the top of the wall. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I wasn't allowed out so I jumped over the wall and we went to Woolworths. When we were in there, other kids from the home came up to me and said that I was going to get it when I went back to the home. When I did go back, Sister [LHZ] beat me with the switch on my bare feet till they bled. She whacked my feet over and over and said that would teach me to run away. She knew that the minute I put my feet in the bath with the Jeyes fluid that it would sting but I just gritted my teeth and bared it the best I could.
72. The nuns would call you by your surname, I don't ever remember being called Helen. I was always called [REDACTED]. The children would also call each other by the names the nuns used. You just automatically fell into line to what was expected of you.

### *Chores*

73. The children did all the chores, I don't know what the staff did. It was the kids that kept the place clean.
74. One of the chores some of the kids had to do was to wash the dishes. There was a room off the dining room which was a kitchen area. It had a sink and this was used by the kids to wash and dry the dishes. Other kids cleared and wiped the tables down in the dining room and others had to sweep and mop the floor. The same kind of thing would go on in a family home except this was on a bigger scale.
75. [REDACTED] used to work in the kitchen. It was easier if you worked there as you were out of the normal routine of things. She used to get to sit with the kitchen staff and get cocoa and cups of tea. We would sometimes get cocoa at night, not every night. It could either be a good experience or an unpleasant one, depending



on whether you got the skin of the milk in your cocoa. It used to sit on the top, it wasn't nice.

76. I hated a Friday evening. There was a big massive corridor in the home. I don't know if the flooring was linoleum or parquet flooring but it was wooden anyway. We had these square tins of beeswax. We were told to polish the floor in the corridor. I did this quite a lot, maybe not when I was younger but as the years went on. So on a Friday night, someone would be told they were doing the corridors and they had to stay up until it was done.
77. Firstly, we had to put the polish on the floor from the top to the bottom. We did this on our hands and knees. We then tied old rags to our feet and we walked up and down the corridor to polish the floor. The good thing was when it became slippy, you could run halfway down the corridor and slide the rest of the way. We liked that bit.
78. It did not matter how long it took, polishing the floor had to be completed before you were allowed to go to bed. It took about three hours to complete and you couldn't go to bed until it was finished, no matter how tired you were. Sister **LHZ** used to supervise this. She would inspect the floor. If she was in a particularly nasty mood, she would deliberately spill something on it and tell us we had missed a bit and we would have to start again. Sometimes it was pitch black which made it worse.
79. The bedwetters had to wash their own sheets in a bath. Some of the older children would help the younger ones. After washing the sheets you had to get them as dry as possible by folding and squeezing them. There was a drying cupboard outside the dorm with wooden rods and the sheets were put over these rods to dry. Sometimes Sister **LHZ** put you in this cupboard as a punishment depending what kind of mood she was in.
80. The little kids didn't escape chores. They would set the table for lunch and dinner. When you got to about eight or nine you would help with polishing the shoes.

81. The children would do the laundry in the long pig troughs outside. They would clean the sheets by using old washer boards. This was during the summer. I don't know if the nuns took in laundry for people but there seemed to be a lot of sheets. You would be at it for hours. No-one was paid for their work

*Trips/Holidays*

82. I remember going out of the home a couple of times with [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was about fourteen or fifteen at the time. She would come to the back door to get me. She knew if she went to the front door she would be told I wasn't allowed out.
83. I remember going out of the home to what must have been a family event. I remember being taken to the Red House on the A77. I think this was a restaurant. [REDACTED] I then remember being taken back to Nazareth House after the meal. I think I was about nine at the time.
84. Mrs McCreadie was the headmaster's daughter-in-law and the school secretary. She had started to take me out of the home at weekends. She had three sons called [REDACTED] I remember she took me to a caravan place at Gatehouse of Fleet. She bought me a green leather pinafore dress and a wee white blouse with sticky out sleeves. I thought I was the bee's knees. She also bought me other clothes. She kept them at her house to be worn when I got out to stay with her, I thought it was really good. She wasn't aware of what was going on in the children's home.
85. One night when I was staying with her, I was crying in my room. One of her sons told her I was crying. She asked me what was wrong. I wouldn't tell her what was wrong. She said she couldn't help me if I wasn't going to tell her what was wrong and she went back down the stairs.
86. The next week, at school, I decided to test her so I stole some of the money that was meant for the Black Baby charity. I gave it to some of the other children at lunchtime

so they could go to the van and get sweets. Nothing happened to me. I did it again and again. The last time I did it, unbeknownst to me, someone had marked the money and when I handed out the money to the other kids, it had marked their hands. Someone from the school was checking the kids' hands and when they were asked where they had got the money from, they said it was me. I was asked about the theft and I admitted that it was me. I admitted that I had stolen the money. They said that I wasn't even sorry that I had stolen the money. I never said anything, I was waiting to see whether I was going to get the response you got in 'Little House in the Prairie.' If this person, Mrs McCreadie took me out because she cared about me. I hoped it would have been a case of 'that was wrong Helen, you shouldn't have done that.' After that I did not get weekend visits to Mrs McCreadie's house and my vice-captain badge was taken off me.

87. After I was caught stealing at school, I expected to be beaten black and blue but Sister **LHZ** didn't do anything, she never even mentioned it. I don't even know if they told her about it.
88. We were taken to St Mary's school in Saltcoats for the summer a few times. We slept on low canvas camp beds in the school gym. There were rows and rows of them. Both groups from the home would be brought together for this holiday.
89. Most days when we were staying at St Mary's, we would get up and have breakfast and then we would be taken straight to the beach, hail, rain or snow. When we were on the beach, some people would come up and give the nuns money or come up to us and give us ice creams from the ice cream van.
90. The nuns and the lay workers would be with us on these holidays to Saltcoats. I don't remember having to clean the kitchen or do the chores when we were on holiday there. Sometimes we had times that would not be that bad to be honest.
91. My dad worked as a draughtsman. He paid into the social fund to pay for a Christmas party. Nine times out of ten **██████████** not allowed to go. One time **██████████** I went on a bus to the Kelvin Hall in Glasgow for a party. I think it was Jimmy

Smart's circus or something like that. I was given a wicker sewing box as a present. The top of it was padded and it had rows of coloured threads. I remember holding it all the way back on the bus to Nazareth House. As soon as I got there, Sister LHZ said "I'll take that girl." I never saw it again, I don't know what happened to it. I never saw it in the cupboards. I did look but I never saw it.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

92. I don't remember celebrating anyone's birthdays in Nazareth House. I didn't get any presents on my birthday. What I do remember is getting told to write a letter to the social work department to thank them for my birthday present. Sister LHZ would tell me what to write and I would sign it. That's what the other children did as well. This was from when I was nine years old and onwards. I don't remember doing it when I was younger.
93. I can't remember very much about Christmas. We were given a nice dinner. We would go to midnight mass and because we were up late we were allowed to sleep for an extra hour the next morning. On Christmas morning, we went to mass and then we had breakfast. I only remember one Christmas present. It was a doll with one arm with ink drawn all over its face. I took a temper tantrum with that doll. I battered it up and down till the head came off. I didn't realise Sister LHZ was watching me. I got battered for that because I was being ungrateful. She hit me too hard and I ended up in isolation for three weeks till the wounds healed. The welts were deep where she had hit me with the switch. She said I was ungrateful because I didn't want the doll. It was horrible.
94. If the Royal Variety came in to do a wee Christmas show, I do remember a Santa would come in. He would give us a wee book. The presents he gave were not your own and they would end up in the cupboard in the recreation room. The presents would become communal. We had no personal possessions. I can't remember having something that was mine and solely mine.

95. At Easter time we made all the crosses with the palm leaves. I didn't mind that, it was quite good learning how to do that. We did it for weeks in the recreation room. An awful lot of our life revolved around the church to be honest.

*Visits/Inspections*

96. When a social worker came to visit [REDACTED] wore [REDACTED] Sunday best clothes. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
never saw a social worker to start with. The first one [REDACTED] saw was a Mr Gallagher or Mr Murphy. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I think I was about nine the first time I saw him. I saw him maybe about once a year. It was a case of "[REDACTED]  
get changed into your Sunday clothes and sit there at the end of the corridor. The social worker is coming today." [REDACTED]  
Sister LHZ would warn [REDACTED]  
not to take anything from the tea tray. The door would be open and a nun would be sitting in a chair outside so [REDACTED] couldn't say anything as they could hear everything that was being said.
97. The social worker would ask how [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] would speak to them for about half an hour. [REDACTED] only ever saw the social worker in the front parlour. They never asked about any of the other rooms anywhere else in the home. This was the same arrangement for the other children. I don't remember ever seeing the social worker coming into the dining area or the recreation area. I think Peter Murphy came into the Chapel once on a holiday of obligation.
98. I have no idea if a review was ever carried out [REDACTED] to remain in the home.  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] No-one told you anything. I don't know if the attitude was that children should be seen and not heard. [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
99. My dad came to visit [REDACTED] twice. I remember one time my dad came [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to go to Kendal for a week. I remember I sneezed in the back of the car and I gave him a fright. He shouted at me as he was driving down the motorway. I remember the car breaking down. My Uncle [REDACTED] came and towed the car back. I remember my dad being really anxious as we were in the car being towed. [REDACTED] put back into the children's home when we got back to Kilmarnock.
100. Another time my dad came to visit, he had a lady friend with him called [REDACTED]. He was told not to come back because she was a bad influence [REDACTED]. I never saw my dad again until it was time to leave.
101. My aunts and uncles never came to visit. My papa never came to visit either. Because of their deep religious upbringing they just accepted that it would not be good for them to visit. I've never had that discussion with my aunts and uncles. I feel like I lost my family, lost my identity and I lost my own self-worth. I don't think of them as my aunts and uncles anymore, they didn't exist, they just disappeared. I just became an object.
102. A couple used to visit, Mr & Mrs Neil. I think their visits were arranged through the church. They were in and out all the time. They would visit with staff members [REDACTED] I think [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were children who had grown up in the home and never left. When Mrs Neil would visit them, she never came into the children's quarters. Mr Neil would visit the elderly. I think they took some children out in small groups. I didn't go out with them.
103. The Neils were involved in the organising of the black taxi trip that would take us to Butlins. I think the taxi drivers used to put money aside throughout the year. They would decorate their cars and they would come and pick up the children. We were taken to Butlins in Ayr. It was children from various children's homes. Your name

would be called and you would go off with these two strangers. I was always in a huff as I wanted to go with a young couple. I always seemed to get old people.

104. A procession of cars and taxis went down to Butlins in Ayr. Whoever's car you were in were responsible for you that day. We were given sweets and treats all day long. This happened once a year. Mr and Mrs Neil came a few times.

105.



106.



*Staff*

107. There were staff members who looked after us that were not nuns. I don't remember a lot of staff there. There were different people there at different times. I think there was one woman named [REDACTED]. I also remember twins called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. There was also [LWP] she was [REDACTED] I think they had all been residents in the home as children and were now employed there. There was also a woman called [REDACTED]. There was [REDACTED] who had a voice

like a foghorn, she scared the children witless. There was a woman called [REDACTED] and she was responsible for the answering the front door. I think [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had learning difficulties, thinking about it now.

108. A man called Mr O'Hagan used to drive the minibus. Sometimes they would take the little ones to school in the minibus, not all the time. I remember the minibus didn't have anything on it. It might have been Mr O'Hagan's minibus, I don't really know. He used to do the gardens as well.
109. Apart from that, the only other staff in the place would be priests or visiting monks. The visiting priests and nuns would visit every day, they were usually from St Joseph's Church in Kilmarnock. There were about four different priests that would come and visit. I can't remember how often the monks used to come and visit. They used to wear the brown garb.
110. There were other nuns about the house. There was the Mother Superior who we only ever saw in the chapel. I can't remember what her name was. There was also Sister Phinnian, she was in charge of the old men who stayed in the home. There was another nun who looked after the old ladies but I can't remember her name. The old ladies were on the first floor and the old men were on the ground floor. There was also a nun who was in charge of answering the door and a nun who was in charge of the chapel. I think there were about eight nuns altogether.

### *Healthcare*

111. Sister [REDACTED] LHZ mainly looked after our health needs. Once a year, a doctor would come to the home from the local surgery. He was [REDACTED] LXE from [REDACTED]. We would line up with a towel around us or a housecoat on. It was a case of one in and one out. He sometimes would give us an injection. Sometimes he would examine us. He used to put his hands down your pants, I didn't like that. I thought it was just part of the medical. It was quite quick. He examined both the boys and the girls. I don't remember a doctor ever visiting me when I was ill in bed.



112. I once went to the hospital when I had a lump on my hand. They hit my hand with a book and the lump disappeared.
113. Sometimes we would try to tend to our injuries ourselves. If we had welts from being hit with the switch, we would go out into the field and use a dock leaf or a dandelion leaf to see if it would cool the welts down. We did this to ourselves.
114. If you had a bad stomach, Sister [LHZ] would sometimes know from your breath and she would give you a drink. The drink was a brown liquid like gravy and you would have to drink that. If someone had a cold, sometimes she would rub Vicks on you. Sometimes I had a bad cough, I would get up and put the sheet over me to get dressed but Sister [LHZ] would tell me to go back to bed. I was glad to get back in my bed as when the rest went to mass I could get an extra hour's sleep. Sister [LHZ] tended to deal with health issues on her own.
115. Sometimes there would be an outbreak of measles or chickenpox in the home. The older ones would look after the younger ones. The younger ones would be put back to bed and the older ones would go up and feed the younger ones. I used to give a spoonful of food to them and then a spoonful to me so I could catch the bug but it never happened. If a child had the mumps, Sister [LHZ] would tie rags round their chin and tie it up above their head. I never caught any childhood ailments.
116. Chickenpox was horrible, the kids would be crying and scratching. Sister [LHZ] used to tie their hands to the side of the beds so they couldn't scratch. The older kids would sometimes go up with calamine lotion and put it on the wee spots which could be weeping. I don't remember a doctor coming in for the chickenpox.
117. If we had toothache, Sister [LHZ] would tie something round the tooth and tie it round a door handle. She would then kick the door causing the tooth to come out. We also received dental checks at school. That's where we received our freebies, free toothbrushes, toothpaste and a cup. Once our free toothpaste ran out we would use soap. I don't remember ever being taken to a dentist.

118. I remember [REDACTED] needed glasses. Sister LHZ gave [REDACTED] a pair of pink glasses. He refused to wear them. He used to put them in his pocket after he left for school. [REDACTED] If a kid had a squint, Sister LHZ would put a patch over the other eye and they were made to wear glasses. [REDACTED] had that but I don't remember an optician coming in or anyone being taken out to an optician. I just remember them being given NHS glasses and a white plaster thing was put over the other eye.
119. I remember waking up one day and there was blood on my sheets. I got up and washed them. Sister LHZ thought that I had wet the bed and she battered me. I told her that I hadn't wet the bed, that I was bleeding. Then she battered me again for not telling her. She put me in the toilet and threw in a box of sanitary towels. I didn't know what to do, I was in there on my own. I put the towel over my mouth as it looked like the masks used at the dentist. When I walked out and she saw me she battered me. I tried to tell her I didn't know what to do with it. She battered me for that. She eventually told me to put the towel where it was bleeding. The next day, I was crying in the toilet at school. A teacher found me and told me what was going on. I still was only getting a bath once a week.

### *Discipline*

120. We were not allowed to talk outside of the recreation room. If we did talk then we would get punished. We were made to kneel in front of a life-size statue but we were not allowed to kneel back on our hunkers. If we kneeled back on our hunkers, Sister LHZ would hit your feet with the switch. We had to kneel up straight. Sister LHZ told us that the eyes of the statue would move if you moved. We were terrified of these things. We were too young to understand that the eyes of the statue would appear to follow you about.
121. One time I think I had been speaking in the dorm and I was made to kneel. Sister LHZ went to bed and I could hear her snoring. I remember shouting "Sister LHZ,

please can I go to bed?" I never got any answers. I eventually fell asleep and I woke up in the morning still lying there. I had no idea what time it was but I wasn't slow in getting back on my knees as Sister LHZ had not woken up yet. I think I was punished because I was speaking in the dorm and we were not allowed to talk after the lights were out. This was a regular punishment.

122. Another method of discipline that Sister LHZ used was to bring her middle knuckle out and pound at the top of your head. That punishment was terrible and really painful. It got to the point you couldn't touch your hair it was so sore. She tended to use that if you answered back.

123. I was once put inside an industrial tumble dryer. I can't remember what I did wrong. The other kids were made to stand and watch. I remember seeing [REDACTED] through the glass looking at me. It was a big industrial tumble dryer. I was about seven or eight at the time. Sister LHZ turned it on. I tried to hold on at the start but the metal inside got so hot, I let go. I would fall to the bottom and then up to the top and then fall to the bottom again. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I thought I was going to die in there, I couldn't breathe. It was getting hotter and hotter. Eventually Sister LHZ stopped the machine and let me out. My face was really red and I was sweating. I felt sick. The other kids who were standing watching were told the same would happen to them if they did something. I always remember that incident [REDACTED]

124. The only way I could describe Sister LHZ is sadistic. That's a word I don't like using. She took great delight in inflicting pain on people. If she inflicted pain and you got used to it, she would think of something even worse to discipline you and that's exactly what she did. She ruled the whole place with terror. Sometimes Sister LHZ would use a plastic tennis bat to punish children, she used that on everyone.

So instead of having one welt from the switch, you would have lots because of the criss-crosses on the bat. She probably used this bat when she couldn't find the 'switch.'

125. I remember once I was going to tell my dad about the punishments and Sister LHZ beat me even more. I was told the reason I was there was because my dad didn't want me. Her exact words were, "You of all people, you are a little bastard." Me being Helen, she hated me from the day I went in. The second day I was there, she told me that my name was Helen, that 'hell' was in my name, so the devil was inside me. I learned more about the devil in that place than God.
126. Sometimes I was put in a pitch black cupboard as a punishment. If it hadn't been for my gran, I don't know how I would have survived. Sister LHZ would stand outside and say the devil was in the cupboard with me. I would sit in there terrified, curled up in a corner and think about what my gran had told me. I would think God was with me and God was stronger than the devil. Sister LHZ told us we were there because no-one loved us, no-one cared. I would remember what my gran had told me, the basic catechism, who loves me? God loves me. I would try and hold on to that. I took Jesus as my imaginary friend as a child. I was locked in the cupboard for anything, fainting in church, not saying prayers properly, even for not combing my hair properly. She would do it for not cleaning properly and if the main floor was not shining like a shilling she would lock you away. She had punishments for everything.
127. We were not allowed to talk about punishments with one another. We were warned in no uncertain terms that no-one was going to listen to the likes of us. If another child was being punished you were made to watch. Sometimes that was just as bad as being beaten yourself. There was a silent rule among the children that we never discussed the punishments and we never encouraged each other to tell someone.
128. I remember a time when [REDACTED] ran away with [REDACTED]. They ended up in the cemetery and something had happened there. I think some man had exposed himself to them or something like that, so they had run away. [REDACTED] had tried to cross this bridge and she had lost her shoe. The police had to bring

them back to the home. Because it was the police that brought them back all the children from both groups were made to form a circle in the recreation room. Both [REDACTED] were made to stand in the middle and they were both beaten systematically by Sister [LHZ] and Sister [LGO] using the switch. If you didn't watch, you were hit on the back of the legs and told to watch. How dare they bring the police to their door? That was an example for all of us.

129. I ran away to the social work department one time. I remember I had to ask a lady where it was. I was still crying. She took me down to the social work office. I went in and I asked for Mr Murphy. My social workers were Catholic and I would sometimes see them in mass at Nazareth House. They took everything that the nuns told them as gospel when they were told that the children were lying. I remember Sister [LHZ] once said that I did not know the difference between reality and fiction. I was well aware of what was real and not real.
130. Sister [LHZ] forms of discipline were daily. She wasn't happy unless she was beating someone or if she was being deliberately cruel. She would behave like this even towards the little ones, telling them they were there because no-one loved them, no-one wanted them. She told them not to shout for their mum, if their mum cared for them, they wouldn't be there. Psychologically we were getting all this codswallop thrown at us constantly. We took what they were saying as factual. I don't remember her coming and saying "your dad [REDACTED] had come to see you."
131. I have a scar above my right eye where Sister [LHZ] pushed me down the stairs. I was going up the stairs to bed one night after I had done my corridor, it was late. It was pitch black. Unbeknownst to me, Sister [LHZ] was hiding beside a life-size statue. She stepped out and I screamed. She slapped me for screaming and I fell backwards down the stairs and cut my eye. I still have the scar to this day. There was blood everywhere and she gave me a beating for making a mess. She then made me clean up the mess. I was trying to hold my finger on my eye to try and stop it from bleeding any further.

132. Sometimes Sister LHZ would keep you off school if she had hit you somewhere visible. Because then nuns said you were ill, it was just accepted. We were not allowed to go to school with visible injuries. We were kept off until the injuries eased off a bit. She would just phone the school and say you were being kept off for a few days. I remember being kept off when I had a belt mark down my face. You would not be hit at on your legs if you had gym the next day. The types of welts you had at the top of your legs wouldn't be seen at school.
133. There was no-one to speak to in the home about your concerns. We never questioned when we were older why the little ones were still in bed and you had to take the trays up. It was an unspoken understanding as to why they were there, as something had gone wrong with the beatings or whatever. If you did question, you would be next for punishment. It was a bit like self-preservation.
134. I remember a child jumped off the fire exit from the fourth floor. I remember she ran from the start of the corridor right to the fire exit and straight over the barrier. I can't remember the wee girl's name to this day. We were all put into our dorms and our doors and curtains shut. We were told not to move from our beds. It was never ever spoken about. I never saw that wee girl again, I don't know what happened to her. I have to assume that she died. I can still remember her running and everyone screaming. We never discussed our punishments with each other. We never discussed anything that was wrong with each other. We were not encouraged to be friends with each other, that was seen as insubordination so you would be separated. It was an existence, not a life.
135. I don't think a punishment book was kept by the nuns. Sister LHZ would sit in the corridor outside the dorm at night at her desk with a dim light and write up notes. Maybe it was a punishment book she was writing up, I just don't know.
136. I don't remember the workers hitting us but they were bound to have seen it. They would definitely have seen abuse in the dining room if someone was being force fed.

137. I have never come across another human being who took pleasure out of causing misery. I don't remember any happy times with Sister [REDACTED] LHZ. It is a poor reflection on the Order but I am wary enough to know it was one individual in the Order, because people came after her who were the opposite. The nuns who arrived after Sister [REDACTED] LHZ were the opposite. It depended who was looking after you at the time.
138. To me that's what is so cruel, we were not 'in care,' no one cared. How could they possibly call that care? Everything about the whole upbringing defies logic.

### **Abuse at Nazareth House, Kilmarnock**

139. Sister [REDACTED] LHZ hated me from the day I went in. I felt like it was constantly a case of breaking me. I don't think she saw me as a child.
140. The physical abuse started on the second day I was there when she pulled me out of [REDACTED] bed. She called me a whole load of names that I didn't understand. The physical abuse from Sister [REDACTED] LHZ happened on a daily basis, if not me, then some other child.
141. Sister [REDACTED] LHZ would use the 'switch.' It was a bamboo cane and she kept it up her sleeve. It would just appear as if from nowhere. She would also use a plastic tennis bat to hit the kids. I don't know where that appeared from.
142. Sister [REDACTED] LHZ would hit you with her fist or knuckles. Sometimes she would use her keys, she would whack the keys down on top of your head. You would be hit anywhere on your body. She would aim for the legs or the arms.
143. Sometimes Sister [REDACTED] LHZ would go too far and she would draw blood when she beat you. The welts would eventually go down. Sometimes if the welts were bad, you had to wear thicker tights for school or wear a longer dress. Sister [REDACTED] LHZ wasn't daft, she would cover up your injuries. There was always someone getting battered.

*Emotional Abuse*

144. We were abused emotionally on a daily basis. If you did something wrong she would call you stupid or spawn of the devil. I would like to say that I heard her say something nice to somebody but I don't remember her saying anything like that.
145. If she caught you talking or if the table was not set properly or if you didn't genuflect properly or not following the rosary, she used any excuse to punish you.
146. It would be silly things like if you became friends with other children or if she saw you being friendly with other children, she would move your bed. You learned not to make friends and to make yourself as invisible as possible.

*Spiritual Abuse*

147. Sister [LHZ] almost undid everything I had been taught from my gran before I went in to Nazareth House. My gran had taught me about God's compassion. She taught me about forgiveness and honesty. Sometimes if someone else was getting a beating that day you would thank God that it wasn't you. That was against what my gran had taught me.
148. I never saw any forgiveness or compassion from Sister [LHZ]. She never even showed compassion or kindness to the other Sisters. She never laughed. She didn't show any emotions. She could show anger. Everyone was terrified of her so she didn't need to shout.
149. I remember as children, going to confession and telling the priest the same old rubbish every week. You would make it up as you hadn't done anything wrong. As children, we had to think of something we had done wrong. I was constantly fighting with what was in my heart and what I saw in reality. I thought I had been abandoned by God as well.



150. I don't remember witnessing any abuse between children. I can't remember any specific child doing anything like that. There were older children and I remember there were three sisters. One of them was put to a List D school. She could be a bit of a bully. I think she was unhappy and she would take this out on other people.

*Sexual Abuse*

151. I was sexually abused by Sister [LHZ] and by priests. The abuse started when I was eight years old. I was due to take my first communion. I was in the recreation room comforting a wee girl. She was sobbing and I lifted her onto my knee. Sister [LHZ] came in, grabbed the girl by the arm and threw her across the room. I was pulled out of the chair by my hair and Sister [LHZ] asked me what I was doing with the child. She said I was a brazen hussy, that I was evil. She said that the devil was inside me and that I was the most wicked person she had ever met. She dragged me out of the recreation room and took me to the lift.

152. I was taken to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bedroom area and taken to her cell. It was the first time I had been there. She was shouting at me that the devil was inside me. There was a bed and a sink in the room. Under the sink was a wooden handled brush. She told me to take my clothes off. She put the handle of the brush inside me and asked me if I could feel the devil. She kept screaming this at me. She asked if I knew what it was like to have the devil inside me. Eventually I said "yes sister." She told me that I would never amount to anything and she threw me onto her bed. When I stood up, I was sore and I struggled to walk. I was bleeding and I told her that I was bleeding. She told me that was the devil in me. She filled a bath with water and she put Jeyes fluid in the bath. That nipped like mad when I got in. She told me to scrub myself where she had put the brush. I didn't realise at the time that this was sexual abuse, I thought it was another form of punishment. I couldn't work out what I had done wrong. I think this happened about a month before my first communion.

153. I remember I took my first confession. I thought I had better tell the priest what had happened to me, what Sister [LHZ] had done to me. I thought the devil was coming out of me. I started to tell the priest what had happened, I believed the confession

was you talking to God. The priest's name was [REDACTED] LNN He was based at [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] He grabbed me out of the confessional box and told me I was the most evil person he had ever heard.

154. He walked me back to Nazareth House, I was terrified. Sister [REDACTED] LHZ came down to the front parlour and he told her what I had said. There was a look between [REDACTED] LNN and Sister [REDACTED] LHZ Next thing I was aware of was me being put up onto the table and Sister [REDACTED] LHZ had hold of my hands. He then raped me. My punishment for telling him what Sister [REDACTED] LHZ did was for him to rape me. I didn't know what it was then. I thought that the devil was inside me. It was just the two of them in the room. After he raped me he left the room and went out the front door. He never said a word.
155. At the end of it, Sister [REDACTED] LHZ yanked me upstairs and shoved me in the bath and told me to scrub myself. I was then told to get back to the others. I never said anything. I thought if I waited until my first communion then spiritually everything would be put right.
156. I remember the words of my communion song. I remember specifically thinking that nature can not harm me. I thought things would change after my first communion, but it didn't. I thought that when you received the body of Christ, he comes into you. So again, it was a case of, if the devil was inside me then God was too. That kind of abuse continued until I was eleven. It wasn't just [REDACTED] LNN who raped me. I was raped by other unknown priests. Each time after I was raped, Sister [REDACTED] LHZ would say "goodnight father." That is how I knew it was priests raping me.
157. I was sexually abused regularly. Sister [REDACTED] LHZ would take me down to the parlour or sometimes out to the outhouses where I would be raped. One time Sister [REDACTED] LHZ put me over a bar stool and tied my hands to the bottom. She put a toilet bag over my head and I was raped. I don't know who did it, I couldn't see.

158. Sister LHZ would also carry on her sexual abuse of me. It was her instilling in me that the devil was in me. She was adamant I should know that the devil was inside me. I think she knew that terrified me more than anything else. She used the brush to abuse me every week or every other week.
159. When I was eleven or eleven and a half, I came home from school and Sister LHZ was waiting for me and she frog-marched me up to the cell where she slept. I thought she was going to do her usual again.
160. After I had taken my first period, Sister LHZ had put a packet of towels in my locker. She had noticed that I hadn't used them. She must have been checking them at some point. When she took me into her cell, she had laid out the sanitary towels on top of the bed and she asked why I had not been using them. I told her that I had had no need for them. She started to question me, when I had stopped using them. I was getting scared as I didn't know when I had stopped using them and I was scared as I didn't know why she was angry at me.
161. She got me by the hair and she swung me round and I fell onto the floor. She started kicking in at my back and then into my stomach. She did that for ages. This started at the back of four and continued until about six, the first call for prayers. She told me to stay in her cell as she went for prayers. I was in agony. When she came back she started to kick me again. I knew there was something different about it that time. She was red in the face and sweating. There was a kind of desperation to her. I knew something wasn't right. I told her I wanted to go to the toilet. She wouldn't let me go, she told me I wasn't allowed to go to the toilet. She kept kicking me constantly and telling me the devil was inside me. At nine o'clock, she went off to prayers again. She then came back and started again. I don't know how long this went on for. She would stop for a little while and get her breath back and then she would start kicking me again.
162. I told her I needed to go to the toilet. There was a stainless steel basin under the sink and she told me to use that to go to the toilet. I thought that I needed to go for a poo. When I went to do the toilet in the bowl, it was all blood. As an adult, I know

what it was, but as a child, to me it was what looked like a little alien in the bowl. She took great delight in lifting it up and showing it to me and telling me that it was proof that the devil was inside me.

163. After that, I was made to go to bed. I was still bleeding. I never saw a doctor. I was in bed for two or three weeks. Children would come to me in bed with a tray of food and it was left on my bed.
164. Sister LHZ sexual abuse of me stopped after that. All that sexual abuse of me stopped after that.
165. I don't know if any of the other children were being sexually abused. I remember [REDACTED] [REDACTED] would be taken out by Father LQH at the weekends. I think he used to take her up to his mother's house in Glasgow. I thought that was odd at the time. [REDACTED] was protective of the whole situation. She thought she was special and that's how she got out. One time she came back and she was bragging that she got to sleep beside Father LQH. I never questioned it at the time. As an adult, that has raised questions for me but I never spoke to [REDACTED] about it.

### **Reporting of abuse at Nazareth House, Kilmarnock at the time**

166. Around about that time I was trying to tell people that something was wrong. I didn't know how to. I had started to misbehave at school and with the McCreadies, the people I stayed with at the weekends sometimes. Up to that point, everyone thought of me as good, I was quite a quiet and shy girl. I thought they would realise that something was wrong. I acted out in ways that I thought people would ask me what was going on but no-one did. At school, I went from having responsibilities and being trusted to nothing. It was at the time I was due to move on to secondary school.
167. There was no-one to speak to in the home about concerns we had within the home. The adults never spoke to us.

168. I remember running away to the social work department. There was still blood running down my legs from the abuse from Sister [LHZ]. I can't remember the words I used with Peter Murphy the social worker. I lifted my dress up and he could see the blood running down my leg. He took me back to Nazareth House and we were put in the front parlour. Sister [LHZ] told Peter Murphy that I had been fighting with another child and he believed her.
169. I was too scared to tell anyone else in case they joined in with the abuse. [REDACTED] I believed I was being abused because it was something inside me. By telling anyone then they would know the devil was inside me as well. Sister [LHZ] brainwashed me into believing the devil was inside me. It wasn't just words, I was seeing things too, that always confirmed everything she said.
170. I think when Sister [LKE] came after Sister [LHZ] left, she picked up on some of the stuff that had been going on. She was nice. I think people did try to say something but they just did not know how to put it into words. Also, how could you say to one nun what another nun had been capable of? The nuns did not mix on a day to day basis when we were there. It was not even as if I could have gone to Sister [LGO] who was the nun that looked after the other group. They didn't interfere with each other's groups, the groups were kept totally separate.

### **Leaving Nazareth House, Kilmarnock**

171. I think I was about fourteen years old when I left Nazareth House. Sister [LHZ] had left by that time. She had been there for about seven years. Sister [LKE] had replaced her, she was lovely. She was a young woman. She was full of fun and a carry on. It took us by surprise to hear a nun laugh. I don't remember Sister [LHZ] smiling once all the years I was there.
172. Mr Gallagher and Mr Murphy, my social workers, came to the Nazareth House and told me I was going home the next week.

173. I remember going into my school and I sought out my French teacher Miss Neil. I thought if I was going home then I wouldn't be going to the same school. I gave her a set of rosary beads. I remember giving them to her and telling her I was going home. She said she was really happy for me. When she unwrapped the rosary beads, she said she wasn't a Catholic and didn't use rosary beads. I said "what does that mean? You still have to pray?" I kept in touch with her for years. She became Jean Armour and I would still meet up with her even after I got married. I felt like she was someone who cared. I didn't feel that from a lot of teachers. To a lot of the teachers, we were just Nazareth House kids.
174. For the week after I had been told I was leaving, I carried on as normal. On the day I was leaving, Mr Murphy appeared and I was told to put on my Sunday clothes and to wait at the chair at the end of the hall. I was then taken into the front parlour and given a holy picture and a set of rosary beads. Mr Murphy took me to my dad's place.
175. I was to go home to somebody I didn't even know. I didn't really see my dad as my real dad. My father was living with another woman at the time who I didn't really know. That scared me. I was really shy and I didn't want to talk to her or my dad as he was a stranger at that point. Everything I had been taught said that my dad living with this woman was wrong, it was sinful. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Mr Murphy took me into my dad's house and then just left.
176. My dad had paid money to the home [REDACTED]. He had paid one pound and six shillings and thruppence weekly [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] financial commodities. [REDACTED] used to go every week to the social work department and pay that amount [REDACTED]. That hurts me to this day, my dad paying this money and not realising what kind of life [REDACTED] going to have. To all intents and purposes, he thought he was doing the best [REDACTED]  
It was nothing like [REDACTED] life at home. Even if I had had half of what I had had with my

gran it would have been bearable but [REDACTED] had nothing in relation to what [REDACTED] had had at home. That's what annoys me when people say that's how it was in those days. No it wasn't. I remembered what it was like with my gran and life in Nazareth House was nothing like that.

### **Life after being in care**

177. I felt like a stranger when I went back to stay with my dad. I wasn't getting on well with him. I remember when I was fifteen, my dad told me that I had to leave school and get a job. I got a job at the Halfway Hotel in Symington. I worked in the kitchen. I asked the owners, Len and Judy Holmes, if I could get a live-in job. They put me through a course with Reo Stakis. I had been away from home for about four months and my dad came to visit me at the hotel and he took my wages. He said that he was going to come back the next week and take my wages again. I was upset and I told a woman who worked with me what my dad had said. She told me he couldn't do that.
178. She got the number of the social work department and phoned them on my behalf and then passed the phone to me. I spoke to Mr Murphy. He came out to see me and he spoke to my dad. He told my dad he couldn't take my wages and my dad never came back the following week. That was the last time I had any contact with the social work department until I was about sixteen and a half.
179. I felt like I didn't fit in anywhere, that I didn't belong. I didn't have a lot of the knowledge that other people had. I didn't know anything about clothes. I just wore the clothes I had been given. I thought electricity was free, I didn't know you had to pay for it. I didn't know about emotions because I had shut them off. I felt like a robot. I felt like I didn't belong in the world.
180. My mum came home from Australia. [REDACTED] I had built up an impression in my mind of how my mother would be. I went to where she was staying with a big bunch of flowers. She came to the door and she was so cold

towards me. I remember just standing at the door and not knowing what to do. There were other people in the house and she invited me in. I didn't realise that they were my gran and papa.

181. Initially her reaction was cold but she changed. I spent time with her, about two or three weeks. I decided I wanted to go and live with her in Australia. I went to Australia House to organise my entrance to Australia. I cut off all ties with my family. They were angry with me for going to see my mum. [REDACTED]
182. My mum went back to Australia. She then sent me a telegram saying that she had changed her mind and she didn't want me. She didn't want me to go over. Everything Sister [LHZ] had to said to me about not being wanted came back to me when that happened. The "nobody loves you, nobody cares," all that came back to me. I decided I didn't want to be here anymore. That's when I decided to commit suicide. I was sixteen and a half years old.
183. I was in hospital after that. I wouldn't give the hospital staff my name. My mum had told me that my dad wasn't my dad and I was confused as to what name to give them. They tracked down my dad and they told me my name was Helen [REDACTED]. I told them that I didn't have a dad. They contacted the social work department.
184. I was put into the Ailsa hospital, Loudon House as a voluntary admission. I was only sixteen, I was the youngest person in there. [REDACTED]. I withdrew into myself because she was there. The doctors wanted me assessed in Carstairs Hospital. I went in one day and came back.
185. In my records there were letters from my doctor begging the social work department to help me, that I still needed care. Their response was I was sixteen and I was no longer their responsibility, no longer in their care. I thought, what chance have I got?
186. I think I was in Loudon House for about a week. I then went to live with [REDACTED]. I went back to work at the Halfway Hotel. Mr and Mrs Holmes, the owners, decided to move back to London. They told me I could visit them. I went down to



London and stayed with them and I decided I liked the place, you could disappear easily in London. I visited Westminster Cathedral and attended mass there. I saw a group of people wearing strange clothes, something drew me towards them. I asked someone who they were and I was told they were nuns from the Missionaries of Charity Order. I was given their address in Paddington and I went to visit them. They were about to do a soup kitchen and I decided to stay and help them. There were mixed ages of homeless people there. Afterwards, I was 'buzzing.' It just felt right. I went back to Len and Judy Holmes and I was telling them about it. They said I was too young for anything like that. I was coming up to being seventeen at the time.

187. I came home to Kilmarnock for two weeks and I couldn't settle. I told my family that I wanted to join the Order. I'd never felt that way in my life. I felt like I belonged, I felt I understood the homeless people and the feeling of not being wanted. My only comfort in my life at the time was my relationship with God. It made sense and I believed that was what God wanted me to do.
188. To join, the Order needed my baptism certificate, a letter from my Parish Priest and a dowry. I had no money but the people in the Halfway House did a collection and gave me one hundred pounds for my dowry.
189. I went and told my family I was leaving and I moved to London. I met Mother Teresa and I told her I wanted to join the Order. She told me I could join and I could live in the convent with the sisters. I celebrated my eighteenth birthday there. It was amazing. They put on a special tea and the Indian sisters did special dances with the candles in their hands.
190. Mother Teresa had an aura around her, for me, it was Christ-like. To me that is what Christianity is supposed to be, reaching out to people with love and compassion. Mother Teresa did that in abundance. I remember sitting about the table and she asked me what I wanted to be called. She said I had to give up all my worldly goods and that included my name. I think I was the first person from Scotland to join the Order. She asked me what I thought was the most important time in the Christian

calendar? I said that I thought Christmas was the most important, if it wasn't for the birth of Christ we wouldn't be here. She said I could be called 'Natalia' and that was Italian for Christmas. I then became Sister Natalia.

191. I was with the Order for nearly four years. I loved the life, I loved everything about it. I started to question theology once I had to learn about it. I didn't know what was wrong with me, I didn't feel the same as everyone else. I decided to leave the Order before taking my final vows.

192. I met my husband after that. I was working in a nursing home. I was pulled towards the caring sector after I left the convent. I used to go to this wee restaurant around the corner at lunchtime. My husband was the chef in the kitchen. He used to torment me because I was trying to eat and he wanted to talk to me all the time and it used to get on my nerves. One of the other carers came in one day and said that she thought the chef fancied me. I said don't be stupid and he then came up and asked me out for a coffee. After two or three days I relented.

193. He was like a person from a fairy tale. I will never forget the first time we went to the park. He always had a handkerchief in his pocket. He took it out and put it on the park bench so I could sit on it. He was an absolute gentleman. I think this is what drew me to him more than anything to be honest. It wasn't anything about the physical attraction or anything like that. It was his mannerisms. One day he turned up at my bedsit and he asked me to marry him. I told him not to be so stupid, I hardly knew him. I think there was a part of me that thought this was what I was supposed to do, this was expected of women. The last thing that was said to me before I left the convent was if being a sister is not your vocation, then perhaps you should go and get married and have children. It was almost like if you weren't a nun, you got married and had children. That to me was the sort of natural road to take.

194. We were then married and I then had [REDACTED] my first child. We stayed in London until [REDACTED] was about eleven months old. We moved back to Scotland as I wanted him to be around my family. I didn't have any family in London. We stayed

with [REDACTED] for about eight months. I think this was before we actually got our own house.

195. My husband went to college to do his PhD in English or whatever it was. I would keep the house tidy and have his dinner on the table for when he came home. We would have our arguments like anybody else, usually over food. I would ask him what he wanted to eat and he would say anything. That would drive me nuts. He was obsessed with cleanliness, this bothered my family more than it did me. I remember [REDACTED] used to get really angry with him and say "for God's sake, weans get dirty," but [REDACTED] always had to be clean. My husband was a Muslim so that kind of went against his faith. I was a Christian and he was a Muslim. We were married in a Catholic church. I knew the priest who married us as he used to come into the convent.
196. We had a second child together. My youngest boy died after his first birthday. Apart from my gran, I had not suffered loss like that before. My way of dealing with it was to try to keep him alive. I used to play videos of us together constantly and I used to lay out his clothes. About seven or eight months after our son died, my husband left, he went off with someone else. I hit rock bottom. I didn't know what depression was. I just knew I didn't want to be in the world. The only people I had loved unconditionally were my children.
197. I had been married to my husband for four years. I don't blame him for leaving. I think it could probably have been a good marriage if I had been 'normal' but I never really was normal in that way.
198. I would go through spells of really bad depression. I kept hearing Sister [REDACTED] LHZ saying that the devil was in me, and in my mind I wanted the devil out. I would cut myself, I would try to self-harm and try to get the devil out. I couldn't really explain to anybody, but that was my way of trying to get rid of that feeling inside. I can honestly say that that feeling has never ever really left me 100%.

199.

200.

201. After seeing Sandra for about two years I started telling her about Nazareth House. I told her about my experiences in care and some of the abuse. I didn't go into everything that happened.

202.

[REDACTED] Not long after that we moved to Alexandria. At the age of 18, I helped [REDACTED] get his own flat so he could be an independent adult. [REDACTED]. I see him every single day as he comes for his dinner. We are extremely close and have a loving relationship.

**Reporting of abuse at Nazareth House, Kilmarnock, to the police and procurator fiscal**

203. I reported my abuse within Nazareth House to the police in roughly 2000. I had been to see a lawyer called Cameron Fyfe at Ross Harper's office in Glasgow. I had to fill out a tick box questionnaire about the abuse. There were questions like 'were you made to eat food? Were you made to eat your own vomit?' I was advised by my lawyer to go to the police and report the abuse.

204. I found the whole process with the lawyers cold and hard to do. I was trying to tell them as much as I could but not go into detail as I didn't trust them. When I told them about the sexual abuse, they said that this was a crime. They told me to go to the police.
205. I phoned the police in Kilmarnock and they sent out two female officers, WPC McLean and WPC McEwan. They phoned me at work six weeks after I had first met them and they told me they were not going to pursue the case.
206. At this stage I knew I was not on my own. Other people had started to come forward. For years I used to question whether the abuse had actually happened. When the first person spoke up and it was in the papers about the abuse, people needed to know it was true and how bad it was in these places. That was my motivation for coming forward.
207. I went to see my MSP Jackie Baillie and she wrote a letter to Jim Wallace, the Lord Advocate at the time. He then contacted the Procurator Fiscal in Kilmarnock. I then gave a full statement to PC Ian McIntosh from Dumbarton Female and Child Unit based at Dumbarton police station.
208. I remember the Procurator Fiscal, Will Andrew, phoned me on a May bank holiday. He asked me to go down to Kilmarnock to meet him and one of his colleagues. This was about 2002. I started to tell him some stuff. I said I couldn't go into it more as I had said enough that day. He kept in touch and would meet up with me. I did tell him about the abuse by Sister LHZ.
209. I remember saying to him that it wasn't about getting Sister LHZ punished, it was about facing her and her knowing she doesn't have that control over me anymore. He told me what Sister LHZ did was criminal. He told me that if it was up to him the case would be prosecuted in the High Court. I said I didn't care what court it went to. He put his report into Crown Office.

210. I then received a phone call to go to Will Andrew's office in Kilmarnock. He said that he believed me but he had received the report back from Crown Office and based on Sister [LHZ] age and infirmity, they had decided to not pursue the case. He said "but please don't think it was because we didn't believe you."
211. I knew Sister [LHZ] was in Nazareth House [REDACTED] Ireland. I decided to phone Nazareth House [REDACTED] and I asked to speak to Sister [LHZ]. I was told to wait. She said hello and I told her my name was [REDACTED]. She knew right away who [REDACTED] was. She said "oh yes, from Nazareth House in Kilmarnock." There was nothing wrong with her faculties. I asked her how her health was. I was shaking like a leaf. She said she wasn't too bad, that she walked with a stick, that she had a bit of a problem with her leg but apart from that she was fine. I rattled a crisp packet down the phone and pretended there was a fault in the line. I put the phone down and went to the toilet and was sick.
212. I phoned Will Andrew, the Procurator Fiscal, and I asked him why he had lied to me. I was angry. I told him that I had phoned Nazareth House [REDACTED] and spoken to Sister [LHZ]. He said he had to phone Crown Office to let them know what I had done. I didn't hear anything back. I never heard anything back from the police and the Crown. I don't blame Will Andrew, I believe he put the report forward to Crown Office.
213. I attended the open day for survivors recently at the Concert Hall in Glasgow and I asked a representative of Crown Office if they could find out what went on. I want to know the real reason for not pursuing the case against Sister [LHZ]. She was alive for seven years after I had reported it. It upsets me that she was never spoken to. I recently received a letter from Crown Office that said she had not been prosecuted because of her age and her infirmity and that she would have to have been extradited as she lived in Ireland. The letter also said that in order to pursue a criminal case against Sister [LHZ] through the courts, they would have required other direct corroborating evidence.

**Compensation and civil action**

214. Ross Harper solicitors applied to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) for compensation on my behalf. Initially all applications were refused on the basis of time. An appeal against this decision was made and the Chief Constable from Aberdeen came down and spoke to CICA officials. My understanding is that he told them based on his knowledge, if the children were in these homes, then there was every chance they had been abused. On that basis, they started taking and looking at cases.
215. I asked for a copy of my police statement under the Freedom of Information Act. I was told it was not in the public's interest to give me the statement. We went before a panel and it was adjourned because they were still waiting on my police statement. I had to go back again and there were different panel members. The Chair of the panel was female, it was clear she was some sort of judge. Anytime I tried to say something she told me I couldn't and that I had a lawyer representing me and he spoke on my behalf. I told my lawyer we were wasting our time and that we should go. She told my lawyer that we had obviously not processed the application for my statement properly and that is why we did not have it. She then said that they would try and get it. They didn't get the statement either.
216. On my fourth occasion at the panel, I told them that if it didn't come to a conclusion that day, then I would not be back. They decided to call Dr Sandra Grant and the police officer, Ian McIntosh, who had taken my statement. He came out of retirement to come and speak to them. I still did not have my police statement because the police had refused to give it to me. The panel said that they had never experienced that before.
217. The panel found in my favour and I was awarded something like £34,000. After the lawyers took their fees off it was something like £28,000. If it hadn't been for that award of money, In Care Abuse Survivors (INCAS) couldn't have done half the stuff

it did. It was quite good from that point of view as we refused to take any government funds. INCAS wanted to help people out. For example, some members were getting a home for the first time and we were able to get them pots and pans or a microwave.

218. I never saw that money as compensation. I saw it almost like a conclusion and an acknowledgement that the way I had been treated was wrong. I didn't see it as compensation of what had happened to me as a child. I saw that people recognised that there were still injustices going on. I know other people were awarded £1,000 and different amounts. At the end of the day, it wasn't the amount being awarded, it was the fact it was an acknowledgement that what had happened shouldn't have happened. People were being believed.

219. When I initially went to see Cameron Fyffe at Ross Harper, I thought I was taking out a civil action against the Order. This was about 2006. The solicitors took on my case on a "no win, no fee" basis. I was working at the time and was not entitled to legal aid, so I was charged for letters and every so often I would receive a letter requesting that I pay a certain amount to lodge a writ at court or things like that. I still have all the receipts in the house. Cameron Fyffe then took three test cases to the High Court and they failed on time bar. He wrote everyone a letter saying that he could no longer represent us and that was the end of that. I phoned the office and asked about getting my money back that I had paid as the case had been taken on as a "no win, no fee" basis. I was told that I would not be getting my money back as it was a group action. I never signed anything to say I was part of a group. I did not know that another child had gone through the same as me or had gone through something different. I thought he had taken on each case on each individual person's merit. I had never been involved with anything like this before so I didn't really understand how they could say that.

220. I received my compensation from the CICA in about 2008. I think Ross Harper solicitors were running the two procedures at the same time. That was the end of my involvement with the lawyers.



### Media and INCAS involvement

221. After the failed legal cases, I felt that the survivors were not being believed. Bishop Mario Conti from the church was going to the media and telling the people of Scotland that these children were delinquents and misfits of society. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] It was always that these children, now adults, were only after a pot of gold. He said they didn't believe that these things occurred and that they had all colluded with each other. I hate injustice, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The more I thought about it the more I decided I couldn't let it drop. At that time I had no idea how politics worked. I was not involved with INCAS at this time.
222. A journalist had been in contact with Cameron Fyfe during the time of our civil actions. Her name was Catherine Devaney. She was doing a piece for the Scotland on Sunday and someone at Ross Harper had suggested that she speak to me. The solicitors phoned me that day and asked if I would be willing to speak to her. I phoned her later that day and we arranged to meet up.
223. I spoke with her and I said that I wanted to use a pseudonym, I did not want identified because I had not spoken to my family about what had happened to me in Nazareth House. At this time I had not told my family half of what had gone on in that place. She used the name Sandra to identify me within the piece.
224. The newspaper received quite a response from the article. The way she had used my experience within the piece was 'what has Helen got to gain from sharing her experience'? I didn't hold everybody in the church responsible and that I didn't hate everyone in the church.

225. About six or seven months later she contacted me again and asked if I would do the One to One programme on television. It was a Tern Television production. I had to waive my anonymity to do this as they wouldn't do it with just my silhouette.
226. I think the programme was aired on a Sunday morning. It was a half hour programme and it aired every Sunday for eight weeks. It had different people on it every week. The week before my programme aired, Sandra Brown from the Moira Anderson Foundation was on. A few months after we had both been on, Sandra contacted me and advised that one of the speakers who was due to speak at the Moira Anderson Foundation conference had had to pull out and she asked me if I would do it in their place. I was not a public speaker and I didn't know what was expected of me. She asked me if I could come along and speak about my childhood. She explained that the Moira Anderson Foundation was for helping people that had been sexually abused. I agreed to do it, I thought that if it helps somebody else then I need to do it.
227. After I spoke at the conference, there was a break and Frank Docherty came and approached me. He told me that he wanted me to know that I was not alone, that there were hundreds of other people out there that were still suffering. He said that he was trying to set something up. He said that if I wanted to help then to give him a call, he gave me a leaflet. I think I phoned Frank the next day and as they say, the rest is history.

### Impact

228. I think my time in Nazareth House has a daily effect on my life. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] If I was in dire straits, the chances are that I would probably go to a good friend before I would go to my family. I hate saying that but it is true.
229. I couldn't be a good wife. I could be in all aspects except for the thing that is expected of being a good wife. I loved my husband and I would have done anything

for him. If he came to my door and said that he was in trouble, I wouldn't think twice about helping him but he looked elsewhere as I was not able to function properly as a wife and that is how that manifested itself.

230. I hate anything to do with money, I find it vulgar. The fact that the biggest majority of the survivors that I know struggle financially on a day to day basis, I hate the injustice of that. I hate that some survivors might have wanted to go on to university and weren't able to. I did not want to leave school at fifteen, I didn't have a choice. It was a case that you are out of care and you need to leave. I didn't know that you could go back to university or college, I didn't know anything about that.
231. The impact of having my children was massive. Something that was supposed to be the best experience of a woman's life, something that is supposed to be the connection between a mother and child, I was terrified the whole way through. I was scared to go to the ante-natal classes for a start, I didn't trust authority. I really didn't understand what was happening with my body. Every time it moved it reminded me of what happened as a child. I remember the time when the baby turned. I was lying on the couch because I wasn't feeling well that day and all of a sudden I see this bump, the head. It was as clear as anything and I thought "oh my God, this is the devil coming out of me". I had to keep telling myself that it was not.
232. I remember the day my son was born, it was a Sunday. I was in hospital and I was asked if I would like to go to mass. I said that I wanted to go but they said that I couldn't go because of something to do with the baby's heartbeat dipping and that I was to go up to the labour ward. I couldn't let a doctor do an internal examination. They had to put an electro thing on his head and I remember the nurse trying. She said to me that my baby was holding her finger. She said because of the way he was lying and when she had been trying to put on the electro thing on his head, he grabbed her finger. This absolutely terrified me. I couldn't have him naturally, I had to have a caesarean section. Everything about that should have been a nice experience but all I had in my head was that the devil was in me and stuff like that. Every time something bad happened in my life, I would believe that was the reason.

233. I struggle if I need to see a doctor, if I need to be examined in anyway whatsoever. In January of last year, my GP was really concerned about me, she wanted me to be hospitalised. I had problems with my bowel, I wouldn't go into the hospital. I actually had to end up signing something saying that I was relieving the doctor of responsibility. This also meant that another doctor had to come to talk to me for competency because my doctor told me that I could die. I said to her, if I die, I die in my own home and not an institution. To me that is what a hospital reminds me of. The long corridors remind me of the children's home. It meant that the GP was coming to my house about two or three times a day. She spoke to my son [REDACTED] about the amount of pain I was in and he said he had never seen me in such pain before. This is the impact it has on me. I was willing to take the risk but I wouldn't go into hospital because they remind me of the children's home. It is like the footsteps coming for me at night, not knowing when I am going to get the tap on the shoulder and taken out of bed to take me elsewhere.

234. I still to this day have night terrors [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

235. I had to go back for counselling. I went privately because I had gone into the homeopathic hospital and I started getting really bad flashbacks in there. It was a quiet hospital and probably the footsteps sound louder. I would have night terrors in there and I would leave the building in the middle of the night and I would end up in the garden area. I didn't recognise the staff and because of what was happening they recommended that I go and see a counsellor. This was about seven years ago.

236. I started to see a counsellor privately. I did this for about two years but my money was drying up. I went to see my GP as I couldn't afford to carry on paying privately. I had had to give up my work and I was on benefits. My homeopathic doctor gave me a number for a counsellor. She thought she was dealing with only my night terrors. For two years, we only talked about my night terrors. I had not told her anything about the children's home. After about two and a half years of seeing her, I mentioned the children's home and she had to start from scratch. She had been dealing with the night terrors on the basis of something different from what it actually was.
237. She introduced me to a Dr Frank Corrigan from Garelochhead. He apparently writes books about the brain's pathways and things like that. He was the first person to ever explain to me that sometimes what happens is if I am too scared or under stress, the brain shuts down and I go back and it dissociates. He explained that and it made sense. It made sense throughout my life. At one point they were testing me for mini strokes but Dr Corrigan explained exactly what it was. It is because of the level of trauma that I had gone through as a child, it manifests itself in this way so it was my way when I was younger of protecting myself. Sometimes when the abuse was at its worst, I would imagine myself being on the back of a golden eagle. It sounds weird, but I could feel its heartbeat, I could feel the fur and feathers. I was flying over the hills of Scotland. There were no human beings, just the beautiful scenery. That is where I would take myself to when I didn't want to be where things were happening to me. I think I started doing that quite a bit as a child because it made what was happening somehow easier to live with. In that sense, it makes sense now, but the consequences are that it still happens on a daily basis.
238. I still go through the night terrors. The question is now whether it is night terrors or whether it's that I have been asleep and maybe had a dream and waking up in that state, that dissociated state and I am running away. I don't really know but that is one of the things that the counsellor is working on just now.
239. I go for counselling every week. My biggest problem is that I don't want to look at the child I was because as far as I am concerned she died. That is the way I relate

to that child, she doesn't exist anymore. I went into Nazareth House as a normal child. I have memories of my gran and her compassion but that all disappeared. When that was all stripped away, you are only left with all the horrible stuff. It is dealing with all the horrible stuff on a day to day basis that is difficult. I find it easier to say to someone else that it wasn't their fault but I can't say it to myself. I still carry the shame, I still carry the guilt and I still live with, "could I have done anything different?" Maybe if I had shouted a bit louder, maybe if I had run away more often? The logical part of me tells me that if I had run away more often I would have ended up in a List D school. My inside tells me something different and that is what is so difficult.

240. I don't care what anybody says, I think if you have been abused as a child, you carry it until you die. Everything you learn as a child is what you take forward into adulthood. It is part of me so I just have to live with the fact that there are some parts of me that are able to deal with things in a rational way and there are others that perhaps manifest themselves differently when I am under too much stress, or I am upset about something.

241. I'm not sure if I would benefit from other support. You can't get your childhood back. No amount of compensation is going to give you that back. I wish that I had gone into counselling years ago. I wish I had studied and was able to understand the complexities of how the mind works. If I had been able to years ago, I would probably have gone down that road but I am too old for that now. I can do it the way I do it with other survivors. I always tell people that I am not a professional counsellor, that I can only draw on my own experiences. Sometimes that means more to a survivor than anything else. Talking about the abuse helps me understand the way I behave and probably for other survivors I think that is a good thing.

242. I don't believe that because you have been abused as a child it is an excuse for your behaviour as an adult. I find it difficult in the legal system when people use what happened to them as a child as an excuse for their behaviour as an adult. If that was the case, then every single person that has been abused would have ended up in prison. We know that that is not the case. We all have to be responsible for our

own actions. Just because we were treated very badly as children, I don't think that gives us the right to be abusive or disrespectful towards other people or equally expect other people to be understanding towards us just because of what happened.

### **Apology from the Sisters of Nazareth**

243. I did receive an apology of sorts from Nazareth House. I was at a Scottish Government conference on child abuse in a hotel in near Stirling and a nun called Sister Brenda from the Sisters of Nazareth Order was there. There were people there from Sisters of Charity, Christian Brothers, Quarriers, and various other institutions who had been service providers. Sister Brenda was the only nun there who was wearing a habit. She had gone to Moira Hawthorne from CELCIS and she asked Moira if she could point me out to her. Moira came over to me and told me that Sister Brenda wished to speak to me. I said that I didn't have any issues talking to her and she came over.
244. Sister Brenda came over to me and took my hands and she looked me straight in the face, straight in the eyes. Her eyes were starting to fill up and she said "Helen, I am so so sorry for what happened to you when we were supposed to be looking after you." I remember looking at her and I said "Sister, you weren't there so why are you saying sorry? It wasn't you that did it" and she said "It doesn't matter, it was our Order, it was our responsibility." She was visibly upset and I knew it was a genuine apology. I can honestly say that for me personally on that day, it was like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. Here was somebody who represented the Order who wasn't questioning what I was saying. She was not telling me that what I was saying wasn't true and that we were all after a pot of gold. She genuinely gave an apology and that has kind of helped me to move on.
245. I have held on to that apology because I actually changed what I said that day. I hadn't intended to say what I did say when I went up to speak. I remember I spoke about what Sister Brenda had said and I could hear her sobbing in among the delegates, she was breaking her heart. I said that I wished I could help everyone understand what exactly that meant from a survivor's point of view because it meant

the world. It was so different to be able to stand there and say that I had been able to look into the eyes of somebody and see the compassion that I learned about as a little girl. I saw someone reaching out to somebody and give a heartfelt apology and not worry about the consequences. That spoke volumes to me, more than anything and it totally changed my attitude.

246. I went over to Sister Brenda at the break after I had spoken and I gave her a hug. I asked her if she was alright and she said yes. She couldn't believe some of the stuff that I was saying. We went for lunch and she said to me that she questioned whether or not to wear her habit to the conference and I said to her "why wouldn't you? It is who you are." She was worried that it may upset people. For the first time I saw the pain that it was inflicting on the Orders now that they are left with this legacy. It helped me when I speak to service providers because, yes, we have got the pain and heartbreak and we were the ones who suffered but the reality is, they are now the ones suffering because of what their predecessors did.

247. Sister Brenda's apology had a massive impact on me. I believe that nobody has a right to ask for forgiveness if you are not prepared to give it yourself. That is the way I looked at it. She was reaching out, if I couldn't forgive her then what right would I have to ask for forgiveness for the mistakes I have made in my life. None of us are perfect.

## **Records**

248. I did try and recover my records from Kilmarnock social work department under the Freedom of Information Act. I think this was just after 2000. I was told there was hardly anything. I remember saying to the social work department at the time, "is that supposed to represent ten years of my life?" I was told they couldn't access all my records and that maybe my records were in [REDACTED] but I was not allowed to go through them. I was given three or four bits of paper. I wasn't allowed to photocopy them or take them with me.



249. One of the bits of paper was a note from my social worker that he had been to visit and it said that Helen had become unnaturally quiet. I thought, why did he never ask why I had become unnaturally quiet? He had written down that he put it down to me becoming shy. That comment stood out for me as it was dated about the time I was eight and that's when the sexual abuse started.
250. I think there was also a comment about when I had run away. I had gone to see Mr Murphy at the social work department on John Finnie Street in Kilmarnock. I went down and Peter Murphy took me back to Nazareth House. He was told by Sister LHZ that I had been fighting with another child and he believed that. That is not what I told the social worker.
251. Peter Murphy had also written that "Helen does not know the difference between fact and fiction." I knew exactly when I was taking myself elsewhere, away from Nazareth House. It annoyed me that was how Peter Murphy referred to it as he automatically believed what the nuns were saying was right and had not asked the children.
252. I had written in a jotter "My life in Nazareth House." I had written about things that had happened and that we were ruled by the bells and that Sister LHZ used to like battering us. This was the kind of thing written in my jotter. I think I had written at the end, there was loads more happened but some of it I will never tell. They gave me some photocopies of what I had written in the jotters. I would be prepared to share these notes with the Inquiry.
253. I felt the social work department were annoyed that I had asked to see my records. I had to ask them more than once. I asked them under the Freedom of Information Act for medical records and my social work records. I told them they had 28 days under the Freedom of Information Act to respond. They told me who the person was who would locate the records but said they were busy. I had to keep phoning them. I was told there was not a lot there, but I said there might be something there that would mean a lot to me. I had heard some people had found birthday cards from

their parents. I wanted to know if my parents had tried to come [REDACTED] or if the social work department had kept in touch with my parents.

254. There was nothing like that in my records. I think there was something about going home. Peter Murphy had put that he had visited 'Helen' and told her she was going back home. I thought that was quite cold. It didn't say whether my dad wanted me back home.

255. I don't have medical records, my GP doesn't have records before 1980. I have medical issues. I can't tell the hospital anything as I don't know my family medical history. I just tell them no to all the medical questions and hope for the best. I do this so I don't have to give them an explanation.

#### **Other information**

256. I have listened to the Sisters of Nazareth's initial response to the Inquiry. I don't get where half of that came from. It may be that within their Order they believed that they were treating a child with respect. I don't understand how they could say that the abuse never happened when the same kind of reports were being made all over the world from the same Order. Although I have had the apology, it is like they are withdrawing it if they don't acknowledge the abuse. If you don't acknowledge the abuse then why would you apologise in the first place?

257. The service providers need to be responsible for the lack of action that took place in there. I am not saying that every single day was bad in Nazareth House. There would be bad things happen on an almost daily basis but there would also be other things that would happen, like the concerts, that was a good experience for the children.

258. The sad reality is that everything about Sister [REDACTED] LHZ was bad. There is nothing to balance all the horrible stuff that she did. The people left having to balance it are the sisters that are left. I was angry about the police not even interviewing her.

Catherine Devaney, the journalist, found this out. I was not told this by the procurator fiscal.

259. I don't trust the justice system because I have been lied to the whole way through. If they had told me at the time that they had decided not to interview her for whatever reason, then, I might not have liked the reason but I would have to have accepted it. The fact that they lied to me hurts me more than anything. I believe I would be a different person today if I had been able to face her and say I am being strong enough to do this. I was denied this opportunity. I feel like she died still in control. I am the one still left having to deal with everything she said and did.


### **Lessons to be learned**

260. We can't change what happened in the past but we can make a good attempt that it doesn't happen to children in the future. If you give one person total power over children, you set up children to be abused. I don't care what the situation is.
261. When a child is taken away from everything that they know, that is when the psychological damage starts. Children are not given psychological support and I think every child in care needs psychological support. Every child growing up not with their natural family needs to know the reasons why. If they have got a healthy attitude towards that, that will go with them right through their adult life.
262. I don't like calling it in care, it is not 'in care'. Society needs to understand that. Society's attitude towards children in care is that it is the children that have done something wrong. Using a child as a commodity is the worst thing you can do. Foster parents being encouraged by money is the worst kind of attraction that you could possibly put out there. If you are going to find abusive parents, that is where they will be, the ones that are only doing it for the money. They are not doing it because they want to give love and nurture a child.

263. I think the social work department make bad decisions due to the pressures on them. For every bad decision that has been made you have got a child whose life has been destroyed. I think the government need to look at the care system afresh. I think they need to strip the whole thing back and start again. None of the Children's Acts have been followed through, they are not having the desired impact that people expect. People need to think if it was my child, how would I expect my child to be cared for. If they put that expectation into how children are dealt with in care, then we are on a road to win. If they just see the child as a commodity you lose the fact that it is a child they are dealing with. This has happened all the way through. If you are talking to a 94 year old or a 14 year old that has experienced care, they all say that they didn't feel they belonged anywhere. They all say no matter how good the placement was, there was something inside them that knew it wasn't their home.

264. I am scared that at the end of the Inquiry, Lady Smith writes up a report and it goes back to the government and it gets forgotten about. I think it would be criminal if after all of this, that society does not learn lessons, then there is something far wrong with us as human beings.

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

Signed  .....  
Dated 8/3/18 .....